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*Dramatic Publishing*



# Happy Worst Day Ever



Comedy  
by  
Arlene Hutton

*Happy Worst Day Ever* (winner of the Macy's New Play Prize)  
is a delightful tale of four young teens trying to balance  
their normal age-appropriate preoccupations with even larger  
problems that they may not fully articulate but which  
circle their home lives. *examiner.com*

**Happy Worst Day Ever – Comedy. By Arlene Hutton. Cast:**  
*1m., 2w., 1 either gender.* We drop in on the lives of sixth-graders  
in the thick of heartache, heartbreak and homework in this funny/  
sad story about disappointment, friendship and reality TV. Smart,  
socially hopeless Jacob wants nothing more than for his father to  
come home from an overseas deployment in time for his birthday  
party. His good-natured, troublemaking best friend, Chris, wants  
nothing more than to do explosive backyard science experiments  
with cockroaches. Glorie, the most popular girl in school, and  
her right-hand echo chamber, Emma, are obsessed with their  
favorite contestant on “America’s Next Singing Sensation.” Their  
worlds collide when Jacob starts helping Glorie with her math  
homework, kicking up a storm of disastrous parties, clandestine  
text messaging and fractions, all with a mix of heartwarming,  
earnest humor. A winner of the Macy’s New Play Prize for Young  
Audiences and a hit at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, the Last  
Frontier Theatre Conference and the New York International  
Fringe Festival, *Happy Worst Day Ever* “delineates a universe  
that is at once believable and subtle, even beyond the regular  
daily histrionics of being a kid.” (*Brooklyn Theater Examiner*)  
*Bare stage. Approximate running time: 50 minutes. Code: HF2.*

*Cover: The Journey Company and Cincinnati Playhouse  
in the Park, Cincinnati, Ohio, production. (l-r) Dana  
Brooke, Jacob Moore, Kelly Pekar and Mark St. Cyr.  
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# HAPPY WORST DAY EVER

By  
ARLENE HUTTON



**Dramatic Publishing**

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## IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

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In addition, all producers of the play must include the following acknowledgments on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and on all advertising and promotional materials:

*“Happy Worst Day Ever* was commissioned by Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park through the generous support of the Macy’s Foundation. Originally produced by Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Edward Stern, Producing Artistic Director, Buzz Ward, Executive Director.”

*Happy Worst Day Ever* was presented by the New York International Fringe Festival, a production of the Present Company, co-produced by the Journey Company and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park.

*Happy Worst Day Ever* was produced by Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park for a tour to schools and community centers in the Greater Cincinnati area October 2 - November 5, 2010. It was directed by Mark Lutwak; the costume design was by Chad Phillips; the set design was by Roy W. Jones; the properties were by Jen Lampson; the sound and music were by Grant Cambridge and the stage manager was Grace Briner Rockstroh. The cast was as follows:

Glorie ..... RAE DOHAR  
Emma ..... ANNE MARIE DAMMAN  
Chris ..... MARIANNA FERNANDEZ  
Jacob ..... MARK ST. CYR

*Happy Worst Day Ever* was presented at the 4th Street Theatre for the 2011 New York International Fringe Festival, produced by the Journey Company and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park in association with Wild Card Productions. It was directed by Mark Lutwak; the costume design was by Chad Phillips; the set design was by Roy W. Jones; the properties were by Jen Lampson; the sound and music were by Grant Cambridge; the technical direction was by Eric Nightengale and the production stage manager was Kate Erin Gibson. The cast was as follows:

Glorie ..... DANA BROOKE  
Emma ..... KELLY PEKAR  
Chris. .... JACOB MOORE  
Jacob ..... MARK ST. CYR



## SPECIAL THANKS

To the actors, dramaturgs and others whose work helped the playwright develop this script:

Tim Abrahamsen, Lily Blau, Dana Brooke, Anne Marie Damman, Rae Dohar, Mariana Fernandez, Lindsey Gates, Kate Erin Gibson, Michael Evan Haney, David Hudson, Lori Wolter Hudson, Kristin Jackson, Margaret Ellen Jeffries, Anthony Vaughn Merchant, Dawson Moore, Jacob Moore, Kelly Pekar, Jacqueline Raposo, Alicia Roper, Lisa Rothe, Mark St. Cyr, Ed Stern, Buzz Ward and Y York.

# **HAPPY WORST DAY EVER**

## **CHARACTERS**

JACOB  
GLORIE  
EMMA  
CHRIS

NOTE: Jacob, Glorie, Emma and Chris are all the same age. However, the characters could be anywhere from 10 to 13, depending on the actors and/or the audience, and they can be played by actors of their same age or older.

## **TIME AND PLACE**

Now. In and around Jacob's school and home.

# HAPPY WORST DAY EVER

## 1. AT SCHOOL

*(Just off the school bus, backpacks still on, cell phones in hand, GLORIE and EMMA are laughing as they furiously text each other.)*

GLORIE *(to EMMA, referring to something EMMA just texted her)*. Yeah, like right?

EMMA *(to GLORIE)*. Yeah!

*(CHRIS runs on.)*

CHRIS. Emma! Emma! *(Engrossed in their texting, they ignore CHRIS without really meaning to.)* Emma! You left this on the bus. *(He holds out a hair scrunchie or headband.)*

GLORIE *(grabbing it from CHRIS)*. That's mine.

CHRIS. Emma dropped it.

*(EMMA is engrossed in her texting.)*

GLORIE *(examining it closer)*. Oh. No. It just looks like mine.

CHRIS. It's Emma's. *(He takes the hairband or scrunchie from GLORIE and holds it out to EMMA, placing the prop between her gaze and her phone, interrupting her texting.)*

EMMA *(to CHRIS)*. What?

CHRIS. You dropped this.

EMMA *(taking it)*. Thanks, Chris.

GLORIE. Emma!

EMMA *(reads her latest text)* Yeah.

GLORIE. Like right, yeah? *(She and EMMA both laugh and continue texting.)*

CHRIS. What's so funny?

GLORIE *(looking up from texting. To EMMA)*. Since I was like five.

EMMA. I've been watching that long, too.

CHRIS. Watching what?

GLORIE *(finally noticing CHRIS)*. It's like the best show ever.

CHRIS. What are you guys talking about?

EMMA *(to CHRIS)*. If you had a cell phone I could text you.

*(JACOB enters.)*

JACOB. Hi!

GLORIE *(to CHRIS)*. This season is the best.

CHRIS. The best what?

GLORIE *(to CHRIS)*. You're like kidding, right?

JACOB. Chris. I talked to my dad this morning

CHRIS *(to JACOB)*. Emma left her hair thing on the bus. I found it.

JACOB. I talked to my dad. On the phone.

CHRIS. Cool.

GLORIE (*still to CHRIS*). You really don't know what we're talking about?

EMMA (*to CHRIS*). You're kidding.

CHRIS. Kidding about what?

JACOB (*to CHRIS*). My mom woke me up in the middle of the night to talk to my dad.

GLORIE. Didn't you watch TV last night?

EMMA (*overlapping*). You didn't watch it?

JACOB. Chris was at my place.

CHRIS. We didn't watch TV.

JACOB. We were looking at maps.

CHRIS. Yeah. Playing games and doing stuff with maps.

EMMA. You didn't watch "America's New Singing Sensation"?

GLORIE. That's weird.

EMMA (*to JACOB*). You're weird.

JACOB. My dad's unit moved from the desert to some mountains—

GLORIE (*interrupting, to CHRIS*). You missed it.

JACOB. We were trying to figure out where my dad is.

CHRIS. Did you ask him to look for fossils in the mountains?

JACOB. He has more important things to do.

CHRIS (*to EMMA*). We've been tracking his dad. On a big map.

GLORIE. You missed the semi-finals of "America's New Singing Sensation."

CHRIS. I can watch it online.

GLORIE. That doesn't count.

CHRIS. It's the same show.

EMMA. It doesn't count.

JACOB. Why doesn't it count? It's the same show.

GLORIE. You don't know anything. "America's New Singing Sensation" is like live.

EMMA. It's live.

GLORIE. If you're not like watching it while it's happening, it doesn't like count. The Superbowl's the same way.

JACOB. How do you know?

GLORIE. My dad says. You have to like watch it at the same time it's happening, so you can like root for the best one. I know who I'm for.

EMMA. Me, too!

CHRIS. Who?

GLORIE. You have to like watch. Next week.

EMMA. Next week.

GLORIE. Live.

EMMA. I watch it at Glorie's house. Every week.

GLORIE. Next week is the finals. It's going to be the best day ever.

EMMA. David—

GLORIE (*interrupting*). Shhhh. (*Chanting softly*.) "Nobody sings like David Ying."

GLORIE & EMMA (*starting softly and getting louder*). "Nobody sings like David Ying." "Nobody sings like David Ying." "Nobody sings like David Ying."

*(The school bell rings. EMMA and CHRIS go inside. JACOB lags behind as GLORIE is gathering her stuff.)*

JACOB. Ms. Adkins says we're supposed to study together.

GLORIE. This wasn't like my idea.

JACOB. I know.

GLORIE. Ms. Adkins and my mom like—

JACOB. I know.

GLORIE. —like *decided*.

JACOB. I know.

GLORIE. So, I like have to study with you.

JACOB. I know.

GLORIE (*mimicking him*). “I know.” “I know.” “I know.”

Do you like know everything?

JACOB (*feebly trying to make a joke*). Well, I’d better know everything if I’m going to help you study.

GLORIE. You think this is like funny?

JACOB. No. I don’t.

GLORIE. It’s not funny.

JACOB. No.

GLORIE. It’s like not. Not fun. Not funny. (*A beat.*) And don’t tell anyone.

JACOB. Okay.

GLORIE. My mom says your mom said you have to like show me stuff with our homework.

JACOB. Yeah. Your mom and Ms. Adkins got together with my mom.

GLORIE. Since your mom said you like have to, I’m like doing this to like help you out. Okay?

JACOB. Okay.

GLORIE. I don’t really like need your help. But I’m helping you. It’s good to help people. So I’m like helping you.

JACOB. Okay.

GLORIE. Okay. (*A long pause.*)

JACOB. Glorie?

GLORIE. What?

JACOB. Do you want to help me help you with English first or math?

*(The school bell rings.)*

## 2. IN JACOB'S BASEMENT

*(JACOB and CHRIS are each blowing up a balloon.)*

CHRIS. I want a cell phone.

JACOB. Why?

CHRIS. So I can call people.

JACOB. Who do you want to call?

CHRIS. Friends at school.

JACOB. You see them every day. You don't need a cell phone at school.

CHRIS. What if you got sick?

JACOB. I'd go see the nurse.

CHRIS. What if you got really sick and wanted to tell your mom?

JACOB. My mom works at the school.

CHRIS. Oh, yeah. *(They blow up their balloons in silence.)*  
What if you wanted to call me?

JACOB. I don't have to call you. We hang out together.

CHRIS. Yeah. *(He blows his balloon.)* My mom likes it when I hang out with you.

JACOB. Is that why you do it?

CHRIS. My mom says you set a good example.

JACOB. Yeah. Everybody's mom likes me.

CHRIS. You never get in trouble. I always get in trouble.

JACOB. Don't do bad stuff.



CHRIS. I don't know it's bad until after I do it.

JACOB. Well, then, don't do it the next time.

CHRIS. I forget.

JACOB *(with his balloon)*. There. Now tie it off. *(He and CHRIS tie the ends of their balloons.)*

CHRIS. This is really how they make soccer balls?

JACOB. That's what my dad says.

CHRIS. Cool.

*(JACOB picks up two kitchen towels and hands one to CHRIS.)*

JACOB. Now wrap the towel around the balloon.

CHRIS. Are we gonna get in trouble?

JACOB. For what?

CHRIS. For taking your mom's towels.

JACOB. We'll put them back after.

CHRIS. Sometimes things are trouble one day and the next day it doesn't matter.

JACOB. Like what?

CHRIS. Like messy rooms.

JACOB. I like my room neat.

CHRIS. My room would be boring if it was neat.

JACOB. Now wrap the rubber bands around the balloon.

*(They attempt to keep the towels on the balloons with the rubber bands.)*

CHRIS. I'm gonna be in trouble when I get home.

JACOB. Why?

CHRIS. I didn't make my bed.

JACOB. Why not?

CHRIS. What's the point when you're just gonna get right back in it again.

JACOB. I make my bed every day. And I help my mom. And I promised to do my homework.

CHRIS. I promise stuff too, but then I forget that I promised.

JACOB. I never forget what I promised my dad.

CHRIS. But he's not even here.

JACOB. It doesn't matter. A promise is a promise. And when you make a promise you keep it. I promised you we'd make soccer balls, didn't I?

CHRIS. Yeah.

JACOB. And here's our soccer balls.

CHRIS. We could make a bigger ball if we had sheets. And if I took the sheet off my bed I wouldn't have to make it anymore.

JACOB. You know what? When my dad comes home for good I won't make my bed anymore. Why waste time making my bed when I can spend it with my dad?

CHRIS. Yeah. *(He is still trying to finish making the ball.)*

JACOB. He'll walk with me to the bus stop. He'll wear his uniform! He'll help us with our science projects!

CHRIS. Science projects! Yeah! Wanna do something with mice?

JACOB. We'd get in trouble if we got real mice.

CHRIS. How do you always know what's trouble and what isn't trouble?

JACOB. Magnets would be cool.

CHRIS. Maggots? Yeah!

JACOB. Magnets.

CHRIS. How about cockroaches?

JACOB. Put stuff between two magnets and see if they still attract.

CHRIS. Something with cockroaches and magnets.

JACOB. Something with candles. Something scientific.

CHRIS. Do you have candles? We could catch cockroaches and see if they go towards the candles.

JACOB. My mom bought birthday candles.

CHRIS (*visualizing and thinking as hard as possible*). Fill the balloons with water and hold them over the candles while the cockroaches are... (*He gestures while thinking this through and then trails off.*)

JACOB. GPS.

CHRIS. Yeah! GPS. Put little GPSs on the cockroaches.

JACOB. Like little army vehicles.

CHRIS. My dad has a GPS. He yells at it.

JACOB. My dad doesn't yell.

CHRIS. My dad yells at the GPS. And his computer. And the TV, when it's football.

JACOB. They get to watch football over there. And sometimes they play football. In the sand.

*(They play with their homemade soccer balls.)*

CHRIS. That's cool.

JACOB. You don't want to get tackled. The ants bite you if you fall down in the sand.

CHRIS. Are there cockroaches?

JACOB. He didn't say anything about cockroaches.

CHRIS. Ask him about cockroaches. Call him up. Ask him about cockroaches.

JACOB. He doesn't get phone calls when he's on a mission.

CHRIS. Next time he calls, ask him about cockroaches.

JACOB. He can't call until his mission is over.

CHRIS. Yeah, his mission.

JACOB. Then he gets fifteen days leave. To come home.

CHRIS. Maybe he'll come home for your birthday.

JACOB. It's called leave.

CHRIS. Maybe he'll leave in time to sing you "happy birthday" in person.

JACOB (*wistfully*). He promised he would someday.

CHRIS. Where's the candles? Let's see how fast they melt when we blow on them.

JACOB. They're for my birthday party.

CHRIS. You're gonna have a birthday party?

JACOB. That's what my mom says. You can come.

CHRIS. Your mom's giving you a birthday party because your dad's coming home.

JACOB. He would tell me if he was coming home.

CHRIS. He wants to surprise you. Maybe it'll be on the news. Give me the candles.

JACOB. They're for my birthday.

CHRIS. There's more than enough here.

JACOB. I don't think we're supposed to.

CHRIS. It's for science.