

A HISTORICAL MINISERIES

A TDA PICTURES PRODUCTION

SHIRLEY TEMPLE

THE LITTLE GIRL WHO FOUGHT THE GREAT DEPRESSION



During the worst years of the Great Depression, her dancing and singing, her dimples and smile, and her cuteness and charisma made her the number-one box office draw for four years running--1935 to 1938--beating out established screen stars such as Clark Gable and Bing Crosby. Temple's first major film, Stand Up and Cheer in April 1934, showcased her charm and talents, and Hollywood execs rushed Little Miss Marker and Bright Eyes, best remembered for the memorable song "On the Good Ship Lollipop," into production the same year. Until 1938, Temple played the lead in three or four movies a year including Our Little Girl, Curly Top, The Littlest Rebel, Captain January, Dimples, Stowaway, and Wee Willie Winkle. She most effectively played a loveable waif or orphan whose pluck and optimism melted the cold hearts of grumpy elders and assured happy endings for all involved. Hollywood crafted Temple's movies specifically to reassure movie audiences that the depression would end and their futures would be much better.

Temple's message of hope had a sensational impact on American culture and the economy. Her fan clubs boasted more than three million members, and her films generated millions of dollars. Her image appeared in periodicals and advertisements about 20 times daily. Her appeal captivated Americans of all walks of life, and her photograph decorated the homes of a young Andy Warhol in Pittsburgh, Harlem gangsters, and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. On her seventh birthday, coincidentally the day Captain January appeared in theaters, department stores ran Shirley look-alike contests and advertised the movie in their toy departments--stocked with Shirley Temple dolls and toys. Theaters that showed the movie set up displays of the dolls in their lobbies, and merchants everywhere sold songbooks, sewing cards, paper dolls, coloring books, soaps, and other novelties to a public eager to buy everything associated with the child star. Gary Cross, in his Kids Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood, points out that in 1935 the Shirley Temple doll priced at \$4.49 accounted for nearly a third of all doll sales that year, even though it was three times the price of similar but unlicensed dolls. Shirley Temple's films, products, and endorsements stimulated the American consumer economy at a crucial time, so much so that to some she appeared to be a relief program all by herself. The relief was hardly just pecuniary. The young star's movies cheered down-on-their-luck Americans, and her message of hope bolstered many on the breadline.

Tap-dancing across racial boundaries with Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, foiling villains, and mending the hearts and troubles of the deserving, Shirley Temple personified the hopes and dreams of Americans. To do so, she worked virtually every day of her childhood, transforming her own family as well as the lives of her fans.

How the smile and fortitude of a child actress revived a nation. Her image appeared in periodicals and advertisements roughly twenty times daily; she rivaled FDR and Edward VIII as the most photographed person in the world. Her portrait brightened the homes of countless admirers: from a black laborer's cabin in South Carolina and young Andy Warhol's house in Pittsburgh to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's recreation room in Washington, DC, and gangster "Bumpy" Johnson's

Harlem apartment. A few years later her smile cheered the secret bedchamber of Anne Frank in Amsterdam as young Anne hid from the Nazis.

For four consecutive years Shirley Temple was the world's box-office champion, a record never equaled. By early 1935 her mail was reported as four thousand letters a week, and hers was the second-most popular girl's name in the country. What distinguished Shirley Temple from every other Hollywood star of the period—and everyone since—was how brilliantly she shone. Amid the deprivation and despair of the Great Depression, Shirley Temple radiated optimism and plucky good cheer that lifted the spirits of millions and shaped their collective character for generations to come. The most famous, adored, imitated, and commodified child in the world astonished movie goers, created a new international culture of celebrity, and revolutionized the role of children as consumers.

America needed Shirley Temple. In the grip of the Depression, the dimpled, curly-haired child star sang, danced, sobbed and grinned her way into audiences' hearts. "As long as our country has Shirley Temple, we will be all right," President Roosevelt declared. "When the spirit of the people is lower than at any other time during this Depression, it is a splendid thing that for just 15 cents, an American can go to a movie and look at the smiling face of a baby and forget his troubles."

She was America's top box-office draw from 1935 to 1938, ahead of such grown-up stars as Clark Gable, Bing Crosby, Robert Taylor, Gary Cooper and Joan Crawford. In 1938, the year of Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm, her income was the seventh-highest in the country, behind six industrialists. Along the way she saved 20th Century Fox from bankruptcy.

A turbulent and unpredictable time: The Great Depression

Families and their children were living in poverty and lucky to have a meal once a day





This was not a time for playing with your friends, but a moment of insecurity and despair



And, desperation



When families lost everything and dads could not find paid work to put bread on the table



Hoping for employment

Soup Lines for children



And a vanishing American Dream



And just when a country's dreams and aspirations seemed to vanish into thin air,

Along came something to smile about, in a face filled with hope for a better life



And across a silver screen, in a darkened theater, a little girl danced and sang her way into the broken hearts of a shattered American public



And she brought with her hope and a reason to smile again



Because, when you're smiling, when you're smiling, the whole world smiles with you





When you're laughing, when you're laughing, The Sun comes shining through

*But when you're crying, you bring on the rain
So stop your sighing, be happy again*



So keep on smiling, cause when you're smiling, The whole world smiles with you



And all of a sudden, things did not seem so bad and America was able to smile once again





Because of one little girl who beat the great depression and helped a country to find it's strength to carry on

Based on the book

THE LITTLE GIRL WHO FOUGHT THE GREAT DEPRESSION

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