



Shirley Temple: A Ray of Hope Allegra Molatore

Once upon a time, in 1929, America's history took a great crash. The stock market was falling quickly, setting off a snowball of events that led to the Great Depression, not only for this country, but almost every industrial country around the world. With one fourth of the workingmen losing their jobs, families breaking apart and young adults dropping out of school to help support their family, Americans were desperate for any hope of a brighter future.

During this time, Hollywood began producing feel-good movies, with plenty of happy endings. If anything, the public could watch a movie at the theatres and forget about their problems a few hours each week. In effect of this positive reaction from viewers, Hollywood rolled in the money with sweet faces and characters everyone fell in love with.

This turn towards cute faces that no one could resist meant big opportunities for a little girl named Shirley Temple. Born in Santa Monica, California, the little blond headed three-year-old was discovered at a dancing school. She began starring in movies that audiences didn't mind spending their hard-earned money on each week.

Starting such a booming career at such a young age forced little Temple to grow up quickly, and she learned that working in an adult surrounding meant she had to act like an adult. If Shirley began to act like a little girl, she was punished. She learned the hard way that in Hollywood, time meant money.

Though being a young actress, she still got all the fame and glory of any full-sized star. Shirley hit off her career with *Little Miss Marker*, one of her nine movies made in 1934. Winning an Academy Award that year had only tipped her stardom into a full career. She quickly became the number one box office star all the way through 1939, which was when audiences couldn't resist spending five cents a week on the little girl's singing and dancing shows.

The little bright-eyed beauty captured the heart of every American, giving the public a chance to forget their problems and hardships back at home. Full of life and energy, its no wonder this child star gave hope for a

brighter future. Her golden curls and sweet smile swept moviegoers off their feet.

Although audiences loved the little actress, other stars grew jealous of the six-year-old's ability to get so many rolls. She became more popular and demanded by audiences than her much older fellow stars, like Clark Gable, Mae West and even The Marx Brothers.

As the 1930's lead to the Second World War, America's industries were back in demand, and the economy was on an up-rise. The little princess wasn't as popular and her stardom slowed way down. She tried to star in a few more movies in her teens, but nothing could replace the demands she received as a little girl. So *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* turned into a faded star on the horizon, that no one could forget.

Without Shirley's golden lock and dancing sequences across the big screen, many Americans would have nothing to look forward to through one of the roughest times in American history. The little singer who melted our hearts gave us a ray of hope though the tough times. When the world was in a slump, it found inspiration in a little girl no older than ten, who helped America to live happily ever after.