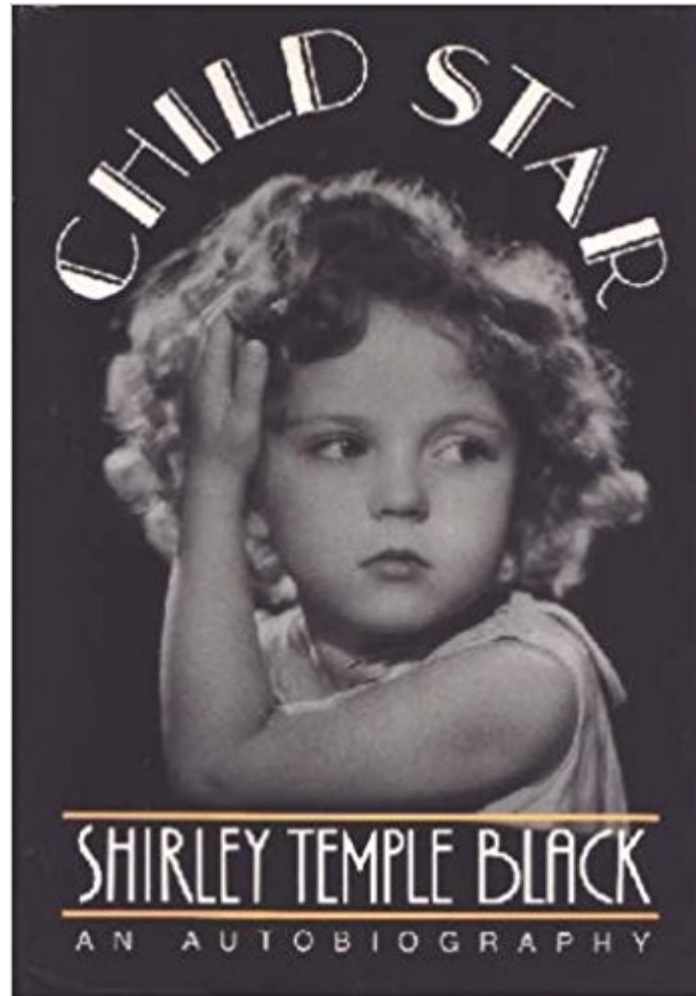




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Child Star: An Autobiography



Synopsis

With amazing clarity and total recall, Shirley Temple Black vividly describes her experiences as a child actress. Despite abuses by exploitive studio executives, her talent and perseverance could not be thwarted; before long she was making movies with the top stars of the day. And her memoirs reflect the indomitable spirit that has entranced a nation for over 50 years. 24 pages of photos.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Like many of us, I grew up watching Shirley Temple movies, mostly on television -- no longer in theaters, they were classics in the 50s and early sixties. I found Ms. Black to be a good writer, clear and concise, and as classy as I expected her to be. No "Mommie Dearest" here, although toward the end she is honest, but not bitter, about how the money she earned for the many, many movies (far more movies than I realized) had never made it to her adulthood as they were legally supposed to. Rather than add bitterness to an already difficult situation, though, she chose to let it go, and move on. Way to go, Shirley. Not sure I could have been so considerate -- but then again, ever the optimist and considering everyone's feelings, she had a family she was not willing to lose, and children who needed their grandparents, and uncles. Nothing was done with malice, at least not by her family. Any greed by the studio and/or government is also allowed to slide as water under the bridge. She worked her heart out, and she loved it, she considered that payment enough. At the time she was able to take that approach, she was in a good place in her life, and felt rich beyond words. Good for her, she earned the right to move forward. I was appalled at how studio executives

treated her as she moved forward in her adult career, as a woman in general, and indeed, as who she was -- an American icon! Sometimes I think there is no level low enough that some men won't stoop to... Again, she mentions it as an annoyance, but "part of the business" she had to learn to deal with. No sexual harassment claims for her -- though she certainly would have been justified!

This book provides a rare and fascinating look behind the scenes of the Hollywood motion picture industry, including the haphazard way in which "discoveries" were made, the almost ludicrous way decisions were made, etc. Shirley also relates how she was grossly cheated by Twentieth Century Fox by being nailed down to a five-year contract at \$150.00 a week when a few weeks later Paramount offered to borrow her from Fox at a salary of \$1000.00 per week. She goes on to quote dollars-and-cents amounts to demonstrate how she (or her mother) was repeatedly cheated, how false announcements were issued to the press as to her salary. The careful detail she goes into indicates that she (or some assistant) has done considerable "homework." Shirley cycles from intra- and inter-studio political maneuvering to financial dealings, to candid details of other stars, to her schooling and her home life, thus keeping the story interesting and appealing to a number of different tastes. Among these are extraordinary events like two assassination attempts, visits to the White House, the governor of Massachusetts carelessly slamming a car door on her hand, etc. The story gets more horrendous during her adolescent career. While her contract negotiations were going on at MGM, the fourteen-year-old Shirley was treated to sexual advances by the producer of "Wizard of Oz" with promises of stardom if she put out and threats of being washed up if she didn't. Her mother, meanwhile, was being subjected to the same treatment by Louis B. Mayer, the studio boss. Four years later, David O. Selznick pulled the same carrot-and-stick ploy during contract negotiations with his studio and on another occasion locked his office door and literally chased her around his office.

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