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Kate Hepburn Stories

By Stephen Schochet

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Katherine Hepburn came to Los Angeles in 1932 and like Calista Flockart, had a theater person's snobbish view towards Hollywood. In person, she impressed no one with her looks and style, and executive David O. Selznick worried about her "horse face". She finished her first film, *Bill Of Divorcement* with John Barrymore and told him, "Thank God we're finished. I never want to act with you again". The Great Man replied, "My dear girl. I wasn't aware that you had".

Many of Miss Hepburn's co-stars couldn't stand her. The movie *Stage Door* (1936) called for her to make a speech which would cause Ginger Rogers to cry. The director Gregory La Cava knew that Conservative Ginger Rogers hated Liberal Hepburn, so he called Ginger to the set alone. "Babe I got terrible news. Your mother called, your new house burned down." After filming Ginger's tearful reaction, La Cava excused her, and Hepburn was called to the set to make her speech.

Another film that gave Hepburn problems was the comedy *Bringing Up Baby* (1938) with Cary Grant. She didn't at first understand the concept of playing comedy straight, letting the script dictate the humor. Her meddling and constant suggestions drove director Howard Hawks to distraction. Finally he confronted her on the set. "Katie, will you please shut up!" Hepburn replied calmly, "Howard, you shouldn't talk that way to me. I have many friends on the set. They might arrange for an accident to happen to you." Hawks looked up into the rafters at one of the film techs manning a huge spotlight. "Hey Joey, who would rather drop that light on, me or Miss Hepburn?" "Get out of the way, Mr. Hawks."

Hepburn at one point was declared box office poison and thought her career would be saved by playing Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With The Wind*, which she was willing to do for free. Mindful of what the reaction from the South would be to a New Englander playing the role, David O. Selznick cruelly rejected her by saying, "I can't imagine Rhett Butler chasing after you for 10 years."

Despite her liberalism, Kate Hepburn mostly got on well her political opposites, including John Wayne, who kissed her on the lips and called her a "hell of a woman". She laughed when her long time lover Spencer Tracy told the story of visiting her family home in Connecticut. During dinner, her father Doc Hepburn and Kate got into a lively discussion as to what needed to be done by the rich to help the

poor. Tired of their moralizing, Tracy went out to the porch for a smoke. After a couple puffs, he noticed a very poor, very lost looking Mexican fisherman, had come onto the property. "Hey better get another plate ready in there, the poor are here to collect," said Tracy. Old man Hepburn came out on the porch. "Hey you, get the hell out of here! I'll sick the dogs on you." After the frightened fisherman ran away Doc Hepburn told the startled Tracy, " Got to get the alarms fixed." Then the men went back inside, and the Hepburns resumed their discussion on how to help the poor.

Hepburn was a fearless and generous performer. She fell backwards into the garbage filled Venice canals five times to please Director David Lean for the filming *Summertime* (1950), causing a permanent eye infection. She gave up her close-up scenes to Judy Holiday to help advance the latter's career during the filming of *Adam's Rib* (1949). She swam with crocodiles while filming "The African

Queen" in 1951 and 30 years later dove in the freezing cold of Squam Lake in Laconia, New Hampshire without a wet suit, during the making of *On Golden Pond*. She was admired by women for her strong, independent stances, but her first marriage ended in divorce, and her lover Spencer Tracy never divorced his wife Louise. After he died in 1967 Hepburn disappointed feminists many times by saying she did not believe a woman could have it all, meaning both a successful career and a relationship.

Stephen Schochet is the author and narrator of the audiobooks "Fascinating Walt Disney" and "Tales Of Hollywood". The Saint Louis Post Dispatch says, " these two elaborate productions are exceptionally entertaining." Hear realaudio samples of these great, unique gifts at www.hollywoodstories.com.

Adoption Is A Great Option

By Analeese Burnabaker

Are you hoping to expand your family by adding a child or children to your home? If so, then you are probably busy considering all of your options for becoming a parent. Of course, there is the option of having your own biological children, which most people go for, but then there is also the option of adoption.

Quite honestly, I had never seriously considered the option of adoption until quite recently. I have been married for many years and have had no problems getting pregnant, and I always just assumed that adoption was only for people who had trouble having biological children of their own. I am so grateful that my perspective was expanded recently by a friend.

I guess it was ignorance that led me to believe that adoption was only a backup plan for couples who were trying to have a family. Perhaps because I didn't know anyone who had gone through an adoption for a child simply because they felt like they wanted to. That is, until I met my friend Kate.

Kate and her husband have been married for several years. They are able, as far as they know, to parent biological children, yet they have decided instead to go with adoption for building their family. As Kate told me this over coffee one day, I couldn't help but stop her and ask why. Why would she and

Mike go through the sometimes awful process of adoption when they could get pregnant on their own? And why, more importantly, would they put themselves through all of the emotional trauma that comes with adoption when they could just have their own kids?

Kate laughed and then began to explain the process that she and Mike went through in deciding on adoption. She explained to me that they simply have become overwhelmed with the amount of need in the world and they have determined that adoption is one small but significant way that they can contribute to making the world a better place. Kate and Mike believe that everyone has a role to play in making the world better, and for them, they are committed to adoption. They are committed to taking children into their homes that might otherwise bounce from home to home in the foster care system and never actually be adopted.

If you are looking for a way to do something great for a child, for your family, and for the world, consider adoption. Of course, it is a much more complex issue than I can discuss here. Do some research, talk with your spouse and anyone you know that has gone through the adoption process.

Analeese Burnabaker is a family therapist who has been studying the affects of adoption on the family for several months now. Kate and Mike's story intrigued her. See

for more

on adoption.



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