

**A Tribute Honoring**  
**Charlie Chaplin**



*The Champion*, 1915. Chaplin's screen character developed gradually into a comic Everyman underdog. (Courtesy Jeffrey Vance Collection.)

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## PROLOGUE

Let's all become Charlie Chaplin – like characters in our own unique way!  
Shuffle, kick the left leg, then the right. Raise the bowler hat made out of stiff paper, if necessary. And never, ever lose the one and only cane. It points, dances, attracts, repels... magic, I say!

Even though I am in my mid-eighties, I am still the refugee child – lonely, badgered, wishing for a kinder world where families don't disappear and courage sprinkled with perseverance wins out.

They say America is the land of freedom and possibilities. Let's help to make it happen!

Let's meet our friend, Charlie, in his film "The Immigrant". Most of us came with high hopes. Is that right? Let's see!

Eve Nussbaum Soumerai  
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## Scene 1

### Misery

(Young Charlie Chaplin, Voices 1 – 4, Chorus)

Voice 1: Repeat after me, "Charlie!"

Chorus: Charlie!

Voice 1: Chaplin!

Chorus: Chaplin!

Voice 4: Everybody... clap your hands, stomp your feet! Charlie Chaplin, welcome! We salute you!

Charlie: Did I hear you call me?

Chorus: You did! Tell us about your misery.

Charlie: Was I ever miserable! I was 7 years old and on my way to the Hanwell School for Orphans and Destitute Children.

*(raise and wave arms)* I empower you to help me tell my story!

Voice 2: You went on the 12 mile trip in a horse-drawn bakery van.

Chorus: You loved the scent of fresh bread.

*(deep breaths, rubbing tummies)* Yummy... YUMmy.. YUMMY!

Charlie: Yes, and I saw chestnut trees and orchards of fragrant apple trees. *(takes deep smelling breath)*

Voice 2: Was it awful where you came from?

Charlie: Was it ever! Grim, gray, slum tenements in South London.

Chorus: Yucky... YUCKy... YUCKY!

Voice 4: And when you got to the orphanage, you were stripped and deloused.

Chorus: Oh no! Deloused?

Voice 4: Sprayed with an awful powder to get rid of any lice.

Charlie: There were 35 of us deloused kids. They shaved our heads and kept us indoors on quarantine... in case we carried any infectious diseases. We were given a scratchy uniform and stale bread.

Chorus: You were there for 18 whole months?

Charlie: An eternity! After I grew up and became the famous cinema Tramp, I returned to smell the same smells.

Chorus: Eeeww! How disgusting!

Charlie: I remembered where I sat in that disgusting dining hall.

Chorus: How did you feel seeing it all again?

Charlie: Well, I will tell you. It wasn't really me, the orphan. It was me in another life. I had become a film star... a shuffling tramp who grew and grew and knew how to defend himself. (*Show muscles and shuffle*)

Chorus: We can do that too! (*Copy Charlie and shuffle dance*)

## Scene 2

### Rude Awakening

(Charlie the Farm Hand, The Boss, Voices 1 – 4, Chorus)

Charlie: I am 18 years old and like to sleep late.

Chorus: We do too.

Boss: Stupid me. I hired this lazy lout.

Chorus: He is stupid. (*Laugh out loud*)

Voice 1: No consideration.

Voice 2: No understanding.

Boss: One more day. That is all.

Charlie: Boss, I don't like being disturbed so early. The chicken takes time to lay the egg.

Chorus: What are you talking about?

Charlie: Don't you know chickens lay eggs?

Chorus: We KNOW they do ...

Charlie: Well, you'll see. It takes time to catch a chicken.

Voice 3: Boss insists the egg is fresh.

Voice 4: And to arrange the frying pan.

Charlie: So the chicken can plop the egg into the middle of the pan.

Boss: (*Frustrated*) Is that asking too much?

Chorus: (*Everybody looks at each other and asks,*) Is it ??

Voice 1: And Boss, do you think it is easy to milk a cow for your breakfast?

Boss: I told the lazy lout I want fresh food and fresh milk.

Voice 2: We'll give our judgement...

Chorus: when we see the film! (*Everybody cheers!*)

"SUNNYSIDE" film excerpt.

### Scene 3

#### Love Thy Neighbor

(Charlie, Voice 1 – 4, Chorus)

Charlie: Did you notice the sign in the Boss's house?

Voice 1: What did it say?

Chorus: Love thy neighbor!!

Voice 2: Did the Boss treat people with love?

Chorus: Not Charlie!

Charlie: The character I played, The Little Tramp, was sometimes lazy, but did he deserve to be kicked in the butt so many times?

Chorus: No!

Charlie: Part of it was comedy, to make people laugh. But it also teaches us something about people.

Chorus: Like what?

Charlie: Do you know people who say one thing but do the opposite?

Voice 1: Like an adult who says children should not interrupt, but they interrupt all the time.

Voice 2: Or a parent who says, "No hitting" and then spanks his children.

Chorus: Not fair!

Charlie: Life is not always fair. Think of my life as an orphan. But we can always try to show love toward others. Especially if they make a mistake!

Voice 3: The Little Tramp was working for the Boss but kept making mistakes.

Voice 4: Don't kick people in the butt for making mistakes.

Chorus: Help them! Help them learn to do it right.

Voice 3: When the Boss left for church, he asked his son to come along. Did he?

Chorus: No!

Voice 4: The son threw something at his father and ran away.

Charlie: No one seemed to like the Boss.

Chorus: Maybe he should read his own sign.

Charlie: Then there was the small father and large son.

Chorus: That was funny!

Charlie: The father and son loved each other for who they were. The father lovingly fixed the son's hat.

Voice 4: What was Charlie Chaplin trying to teach us in this film?

Chorus: LOVE THY NEIGHBOR! Help each other learn!

"SUNNYSIDE" film excerpt



## Scene 4

### The Kid

(Charlie, Mother, Kid, Voice 1 – 4, Chorus)

Voice 1: You have heard of Charity Hospitals?

Chorus: That's where the poor go.

Charlie: You know about orphanages?

Chorus: We sure do. That's where you went.

Charlie: Combine the two. A very poor mother gave birth to a very poor baby.

Voice 2: Fate has it.

Voice 3: And you ended up with the baby.  
(*Charlie is sitting by a sewer.*)

Chorus: Destiny strikes! The poor mother had left a note.

Charlie: (reads note) PLEASE, please love and care for this orphan child. (*Charlie wipes a tear from his eye.*)

Chorus: How could you not?

Voice 4: And you did, in spite of being very poor yourself.

Chorus: That's what everyone should do.

Charlie: Remember the boss?

Voice 1: Over his bed it said...

Chorus: Love thy neighbor as thyself!

Charlie: What a hypocrite! He was as mean as could be.

Kid: (*Enters and takes Charlie's hand. Looks lovingly at him.*) And you shared everything.

Chorus: Loving and caring.

Kid: And then one day I got sick, SO sick, and Charlie found a doctor.

Charlie: Was he ever stupid!

Voice 1: He thought the Kid should be in an orphanage.

Kid: And the chase began!

Charlie: I loved and cared for him and will FIGHT, RUN, JUMP. Whatever it takes!

Kid: Me too! Just watch what we went through! It was a fight in the neighborhood. (*show muscles*)

Voice 2: But all was well. The real mother became rich!

Voice 3: And Charlie and the Kid had no more worries.

Chorus: None they could not handle.

Voice 4: Life teaches you...

Chorus: Loving and caring are the secret ingredients.

Everyone: Loving and caring are the secret ingredients. Practice them every day!

"THE KID" film excerpt