

# Clara bow the 'it' girl

Business



“ You either have it, or you don't.” and Clara Bow had it. But what is ' it'? In the twenties, and still today people copy what they see in the movies. And does that mean whoever is the one that they copy has a lot of pressure on them to be perfect? Think of an ' it' girl in Hollywood today.

Well, you must have copied them at least once. So how did they influence you? Clara Bow was born July 29th in 1905. She grew up “ on the rotten side” of Brooklyn New York. She once recalled that she never owned a doll as a child. When she was born, her parents didn't want her.

Her mom had a nervous disease where Clara often had to stop her mom from killing herself. She recalled that numerous times she had to knock a knife out of her mom's hand when she was holding it to her own throat in the middle of the night, standing above Clara. Even with this tragic upbringing, Clara somehow became “ the it girl” of the 1920s. The way she became famous was interesting though. When she was 17 she entered a contest looking for “ the most beautiful girl in the world”. She sent in two pictures of herself.

She had flaming red hair, and a beautiful body to match, and since she won the contest she was put into a movie. It was a small part, but she was happy to have it. Even though her scene was cut later on, a director saw, and she was brought to Hollywood, where she caught the eye of Elinor Glyn. In 1920 Elinor Glyn (a novelist and scriptwriter who pioneered mass-market women's erotic fiction, and popularized the concept ' it') dreamed up two magic words to Clara Bow's measurements. It girl. “ The it girl is an indefinable sort of sex

appeal," Elinor Glyn said, " you either have it, or you don't," and Clara Bow had it.

In fact only a few people have " it", Mrs. Glyn said, " There are few people in the world who possess it. The only ones in Hollywood who do are Rex, the wild stallion; actor Tony Moreno, the Ambassador Hotel doorman and Clara Bow." Some also say that " The ' It Girl' was the next step from the Flapper to Flaming" in the twenties people looked to the movies to know how to talk, smoke, dress, act, and appear sexy. And they mimicked vamps like Theda Bara, and the sexual gestures of Clara Bow. She had to be under a lot of stress, because America copied whatever she did.

But as the time went on, Clara Bow faded away. In 1931 Clara married Rex Bell, (another person that possessed ' it') and in 1933 she ended her career to become a rancher in Nevada. Then a note from her was found that said she preferred death over a public life, and in 1944 Clara Bow tried to commit suicide. Could it have been that she grew tired of the publicity? Then in 1949 she checked into the institute of living to be treated for her chronic insomnia and diffuse abdominal pains. She was told that her pains were delusional, and she was said to have schizophrenia, even though she had no hallucinations or psychosis. But then on September 27th 1960 when she was 60 years old, Clara died of a heart attack.

Later the autopsy showed that her heart had scarring from an earlier undetected attack, and that she had atherosclerosis, a heart disease that could have begun in early adolescence. Clara had begun life in the care of parents who didn't want her, and she admitted to some that she always felt

alone. Then after her career in Hollywood ended she was told that she was crazy. Could you deal with that? Maybe that explains her (probably numerous) attempts at suicide. Still, Clara influenced many women, the way she acted, the way she dressed, and some other ways.

She represented all the glamour of the twenties. She was even in 46 silent movies, and 11 'talkies' or movies with sound. The way she acted made many want to try to copy it. But did she always influence them in good ways? Do you know any 'It' girls from nowadays? How do they influence you?