

Girls Who Grew Up to Change the World



Whoopi Goldberg

(Born 1955)



Whoopi couldn't believe it the first time she saw a black woman on the TV.



The woman was Nichelle Nichols and she was playing Uhura, a communications officer living onboard the USS Enterprise as it battled its way through deep space.



Whoopi knew she wanted to be an actor. Seeing Uhura in Star Trek, she knew it was possible too.



With her dad gone and her mum always at work, Whoopi was on her own a lot. She became obsessed with movies, and would spend entire days watching them back to back.



As soon as she could, she moved to California to begin her acting career. She wasn't moving alone – she had her newborn daughter to care for, too.



To support her, Whoopi worked in a bank, laid bricks, and even put make-up onto dead bodies at a funeral home. For years, she worked during the day and spent her nights and weekends performing in theatres.



She never stopped acting because acting allowed her to escape life and pretend to be someone else for a while.



Whoopi created a one-woman show called The Spook Show, in which she portrayed various strange characters of her own creation.



The characters were all misfits and oddballs, people who didn't quite fit in, and whose ways of seeing the world proved hilarious and heartbreaking. Everyone loved it.



Through The Spook Show, Whoopi got a part in The Colour Purple, a film that chronicled the struggle of an African-American woman living in America in the 1930s.



Since then, she's played a psychic who can commune with ghosts, a nun with a beautiful singing voice, and an evil ice queen.



Eventually, Whoopi got her own role in Star Trek, playing a wise alien from the planet Nova Kron. Now, she cruises through deep space on the USS Enterprise, inspiring young girls to pursue their dreams.





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