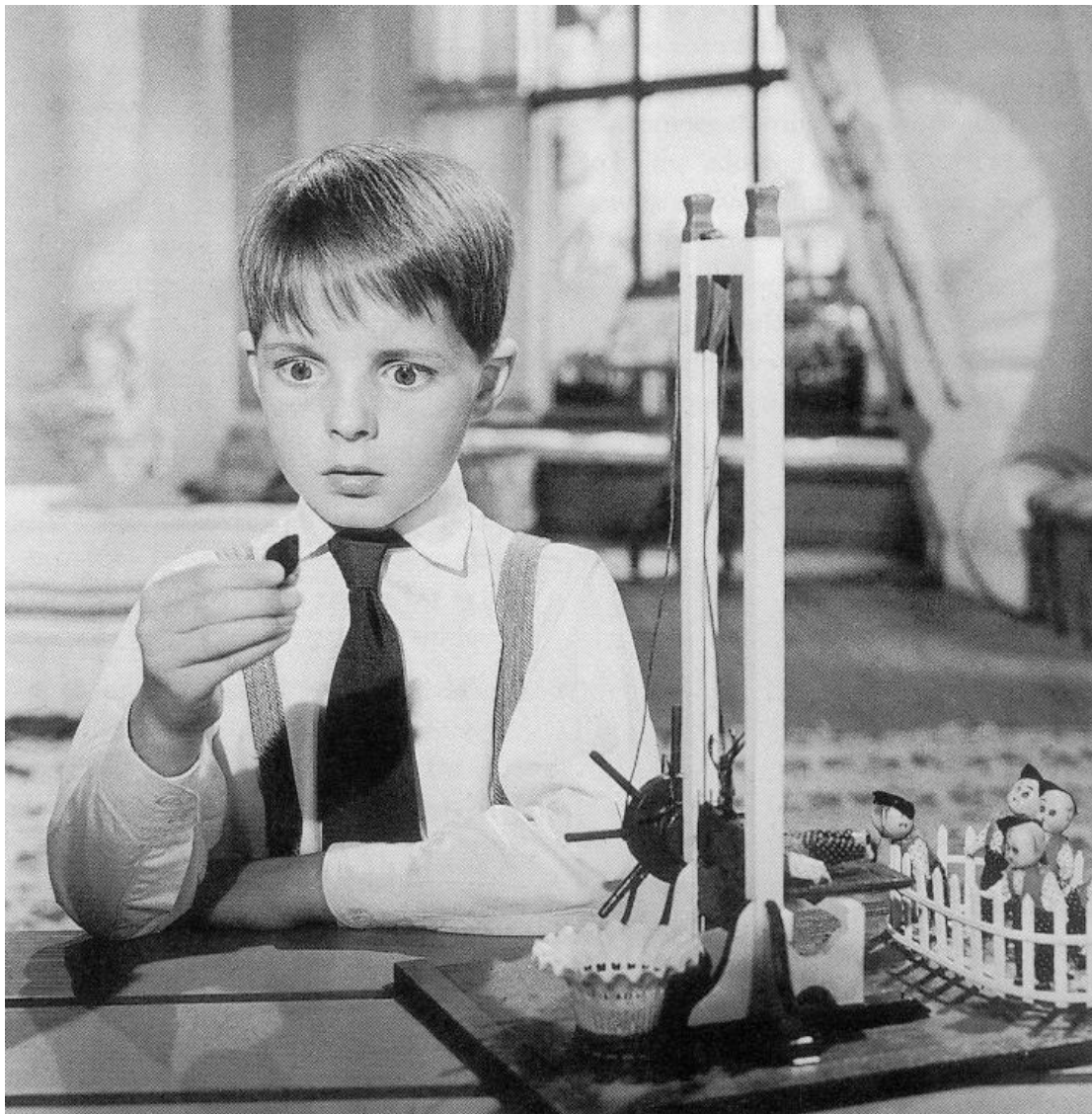


Count Your Blessings

US : 1959 : dir. Jean Negulesco : M-G-M : 102 min
prod: Karl Tunberg : scr: Karl Tunberg : dir.ph.: Milton Krasner
[Martin Stephens](#)
Deborah Kerr; Rossano Brazzi; Maurice Chevalier; Tom Helmore; Patricia Medina;
Ronald Squire; Mona Washbourne; Steve Geray; Lumsden Hare

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ ∅ Z ∞	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
3726a	2½	7	2	1,054	3 - - - -	No	unseen



Sigismond introduces the French Revolution to The Woodentops

Source: The Moving Picture Boy

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996 review:

"Unfunny comedy that even Chevalier's smile can't help. Kerr marries French playboy Brazzi during WW2; he goes off philandering for years. Their child conspires to bring them together again. Shot in CinemaScope. ** "

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review - identical to above

Halliwell's Film Guide review:

"An English girl marries an aristocratic Frenchman, but the war and other considerations make them virtual strangers until their son is nine years old, when it becomes clear that daddy is a philanderer. Slight upper-crust comedy, basically rather tedious but kept buoyant by Chevalier as commentator. Scr: Karl Tunberg, from the novel "The Blessing" by Nancy Mitford."

"Negulesco's aspirations to elegance are now familiar.. this is far too absurd an example of Hollywood's infatuation with Old Europe to arouse much interest."

- Monthly Film Bulletin

Movies on TV (1987) review:

"A slight comedy which totally relies on the trio of stars' charm and attractiveness to carry it off. The plot has a British Miss Kerr sharing a civilised long-distance marriage arrangement with Brazzi until she decides to shorten the gap. M. Chevalier plays his usual role of romantic mentor. **1/2 "

The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television review:

"Deadly comedy with some of the deadliest stars in the business: Deborah Kerr, Maurice Chevalier, Rossano Brazzi, directed by the deadly Jean Negulesco. How a che-ild brings parents together again. 77 "

TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995 review:

"Jean Negulesco, one of Hollywood's most romantic-minded directors, made this

melodrama that's faintly reminiscent of another Deborah Kerr film, **"PERFECT STRANGERS"** (46). Again, Deborah plays a wartime bride who finds difficulty in adjusting to post-war married life, in this case with Rossano Brazzi. Martin Stephens, the minor menace from **"THE INNOCENTS"** and **"CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED"**¹, contributes an amusing portrayal as the boy who tries to keep his parents' marriage where he thinks it belongs - on the rocks. ** "

The M.G.M Story review:

"Maurice Chevalier and Deborah Kerr in **"COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS"** were sparkling players in need of something sparkling to play. The public, warned by most critics, gave a cold shoulder to this tedious filming (in Paris) of Nancy Mitford's novel "The Blessing", whose brittle fun crumbled under the heavy hands of director Jean Negulesco, producer-scripter Karl Tunberg and actor Rossano Brazzi as Deborah's French husband. Martin Stephens as their son had a key part, with Tom Helmore, Ronald Squire, Patricia Medina, Mona Washbourne, Steve Geray and Lumsden Hare."

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "A Pictorial History of the Talkies", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Time Out Film Guide", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Stephens:

"Martin Angel Keller - with a middle name like that, it's ironic that he became famous for playing evil children - initially appeared before the camera as a commercial model, before acting (as Martin Keller) in the refugee drama **"THE DIVIDED HEART"**. He was the younger version of Michel Ray's "Toni". After this, and a lapse of some years, he became Stephens. Martin had an alert, intelligent little face which was capable of being funny or mischievous. He was demure and touching in films like **"THE WITNESS"**, where he was threatened by crooks and exploited by police, and amused everyone as crafty Sigismund, the

¹ Stephens was not in **"CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED"**, of course. He was killed off in the first film, **"VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED"**.

child of Deborah Kerr and aristocrat Rossano Brazzi in **"COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS"**.

It was only as the leader of the mysteriously-spawned alien children of **"THE VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED"** - sporting a loathsome bleached coiffure and luminescent eyes - that he joined the ranks of hell, consolidating his status with his chilling Miles in Henry James's "Turn of the Screw", filmed as **"THE INNOCENTS"**. By this time the icy look was

second nature. He was saved from further creepies by taking over from Keith Hamshere in the title rôle of Lionel Bart's "Oliver!" on the London stage in 1961. He re-appeared in his mid-teens in two more films: **"THE BATTLE OF THE VILLA FIORITA"** and **"LE STREGHE"** (Italy/France '66). But finally he quit show business and became a lawyer."

No further information currently available. So how are we to reconcile the two flatly contradictory statements: "Their child conspires to bring them together again" and "the boy who tries to keep his parents' marriage where he thinks it belongs - on the rocks" ? Would it be worth the misery of watching the film to resolve that dilemma?

Evidently it's the kind of Women's Picture they either don't make like that anymore, or should never have made like that in the first place, depending on your point of view. The child as adjunct to domestic harmony. Dutch singing boy star Heintje graced a similar tale in **"HEINTJE - MEIN BESTER FREUND"** (70), where he presides (and sings) over a reconciliation between mother and famous racing driver father.

Martin Stephens, here 11, crossed swords again with Brazzi in **"THE BATTLE OF THE VILLA FIORITA"**, this time as the pucker adolescent son of Brazzi's new enamorata, bent on marching his mother back home to her husband. His performance in that film was anything but entertaining, but we must put that down to the rigours of puberty perhaps, and it is a young Olivia Hussey (Brazzi's daughter) who leads the insurrection in that film. When Stephens entrusted himself to Deborah Kerr again in **"THE INNOCENTS"**, she got him killed for his pains. It is a moot point whether Miles in that story is contaminated by evil with a big E, or merely by awareness of the *Sins of the Flesh*, and whether governess Kerr is indeed the heroine, or a deeply inhibited woman whose obsession has fatal consequences for the boy.

See subject index under **COMEDY** and **MATCHMAKER KIDS / MATCHBREAKER KIDS**.