

= The World of Strawberry Shortcake =

The World of Strawberry Shortcake is a 1980 animated television special written by Romeo Muller , directed by Charles Swenson , and produced by Swenson , Muller and Fred Wolf . Starring the voices of Romeo Muller , Russi Taylor , Julie McWhirter and Joan Gerber , it was made by animators from Murakami @-@ Wolf @-@ Swenson in the United States and by Toei Doga in Japan . The music was written and performed by Flo & Eddie of the rock group , The Turtles .

The title character , Strawberry Shortcake , lives in a fictional place called Strawberryland . In the special , narrated by Romeo Muller (as Mr. Sun) , she and her friends celebrate her sixth birthday . While preparations for her party are underway , a villain called the Peculiar Purple Pieman plots to steal the berries from Strawberry 's home in order to make his pies .

Produced and sponsored by the Kenner toy company , The World of Strawberry Shortcake was the first special to feature the American Greetings character , Strawberry Shortcake . Bypassing network television , it debuted on March 28 , 1980 , in syndication across more than 90 U.S. cities , and was later released on 16 mm film , VHS , Beta and DVD . The special received generally favorable reviews in the School Library Journal , which reviewed it in 1983 and 2007 .

= = Plot = =

Strawberry Shortcake lives in a place called Strawberryland , with her calico cat Custard ; her house resembles a shortcake . Her friends ? Huckleberry Pie , Blueberry Muffin , Raspberry Tart , Plum Puddin ' and toddler Apple Dumplin ' ? also live close by . One morning , during their Market Day , Strawberry 's friends discuss plans for her sixth birthday ? all except for lazy Huckleberry Pie .

Strawberry 's villain , the Peculiar Purple Pieman , lives atop the Pie Tin Palace on a black hill called Porcupine Peak . While she is doing chores , the Pieman sends his crows ? " berry birds " ? to retrieve some berries for his pies . Strawberry tries shoos the flock away with her broom , but a moving tree helps out as a scarecrow , and she thanks him for helping . In desperation , the Pieman heads down to Strawberryland himself to get his supply , dressed as a kind old peddler .

At noon , Strawberry calls her friends over for lunch , but they leave her behind and go to Lilac Park to prepare for her surprise party . Soon after , the disguised Pieman meets her and offers watering cans for sale . To his chagrin , Strawberry cannot afford to buy a magical one guaranteed to produce strawberries seven feet tall . Assisted by Lucky Bug , Huckleberry 's ladybug aide , he goes to the Park , where Huckleberry pays for the equipment .

Strawberry soon arrives at the venue to see her friends , who greet her with " Happy Birthday " and give her a present : the Pieman 's watering can . The device fails to grow anything and spills over instead , flooding the Park and much of Strawberryland . The children are dismayed that the Pieman tricked them for his berry @-@ stealing plot , and soon they harvest every bit of that supply over to him .

The group travels to the Pie Tin Palace on rafts made of flotsam . Landing upon a mud field , they find out from Lucky Bug that Apple Dumplin ' ended up at the Palace ; they now have no way to rescue her . Mr. Sun , the narrator of the story , grants Strawberry a wish . She wishes to defeat the Pieman , and a grove of marching trees help her accomplish this ; their stomping causes the Palace to collapse . Afterward , Apple Dumplin ' gives him a note demanding that he surrender and do good deeds ; he reluctantly does so , giving the toddler and berries back to Strawberry and company . At the end of the special , Strawberry Shortcake offers him a chance to sell his pies at Strawberry Market , and become friends with her .

= = Cast = =

= = Production = =

Produced and sponsored by the Kenner toy company , The World of Strawberry Shortcake was the

first of six television specials to star the title character . The franchise began in 1977 , when American Greetings staff member Muriel Fahrion drew the first designs of Strawberry and her pet cat Custard . In 1979 , she appeared in greeting cards ; dolls , books and games soon followed .

The special was made by Murakami @-@ Wolf @-@ Swenson , which previously worked on The Point ! and Frank Zappa 's 200 Motels , both from 1971 ; RLR Associates of New York City was another production partner . Animation work was also handled by Japan 's Toei Doga . At the time of production , the producers called it a " morality play for tots " . One of the crewmembers was Romeo Muller , writer for several Rankin / Bass television specials . Muller served as writer , co @-@ producer and lyricist of the Strawberry Shortcake special ; he also voiced Mr. Sun , the narrator . After he proposed the idea to Kenner , the company and American Greetings agreed to do it . According to Jack Chojnacki , co @-@ president of Those Characters from Cleveland , a subsidiary of American Greetings , the card manufacturer considered new additions to the script , and reminded the writer that every character should be marketable . With those suggestions in mind , Muller came up with a villain called the Peculiar Purple Pieman . The Toy Group division of General Mills , which owned Kenner at the time , spent US \$ 400 @,@ 000 on the special .

= = Release = =

Upon completion , Muller was satisfied with how The World of Strawberry Shortcake turned out . Although he pointed out the lack of such influences in the special , he told The New York Times in April 1981 : " I suppose the show is a commercial , in the largest sense of the word . " Some time after the title character 's debut at the 1980 American International Toy Fair , major television networks in the U.S. were offered a chance to air the special . They also deemed it an advertisement for the toy line , and rejected it . On March 28 , 1980 , the special debuted on independent stations in over 90 U.S. cities ; it aired on WNEW (now WNYW) in the New York City market , and on KTLA in Los Angeles . Kenner launched a collection of dolls and toys based on the special , concurrently with the original broadcast . This led John J. O 'Connor of The New York Times to proclaim , " Onward and upward with the art of marketing ! "

In 1981 , the Lexington Broadcast Services Company acquired syndication rights to The World of Strawberry Shortcake , along with its follow @-@ up , Strawberry Shortcake in Big Apple City . By 1986 , the Television Program Source took over the rights for the first special . It was released on 16 mm film by the Coronet company in 1982 , and on VHS and Beta in October 1985 by Family Home Entertainment . A Region 1 DVD from Allumination FilmWorks , featuring this special and Big Apple City , was released on March 6 , 2007 . In Germany , the original special premiered on ZDF on April 4 , 1983 , as Emily im Erdbeerland . A soundtrack album , with contributions by Flo & Eddie of The Turtles , was released by Kid Stuff Records the same year as the original airing . The track list featured the " Strawberry Shortcake Theme " , along with " Smile a Sunny Morning " , " Sunflower Market " , " Monster Trees " and " Berry Talk " .

= = Reception = =

The World of Strawberry Shortcake was reviewed twice by the School Library Journal . In the December 1983 issue , Margaret Bush said that the " Story , characters , dialogue and bits of stage business are busy , bright , contrived , and will appeal of young children . " She added , however , that " Some of the lyrics and dialogue are not easily understood ? it sounds as if adult voices may be attempting to simulate the voices of small children . " In August 2007 , Kirsten Martindale gave the DVD set a positive review . She wrote that " Fans [...] will be thoroughly engaged by these two episodes " , and recommended it " For nostalgic moms and their young daughters . " She however singled out the audio and video quality : " [F] or those who haven 't experienced the charm and simplicity of older cartoons , this may be annoying , but the nostalgic effect of the original presentation is relaxed and welcome . " In 1987 , Kathleen Pulcini of The Video Directory called it " Delightful fun for children . "