

= A Dog 's Love =

A Dog 's Love is a 1914 American short silent fantasy film with subtitles , directed by Jack Harvey on his directorial debut . It stars Shep the Dog , Helen Badgley , and Arthur Bauer . The film is about a dog who loses his best friend , when a young girl is killed in an automobile accident , and focuses on his emotions in dealing with his loss . Well @-@ received because of its " universally appealing " theme , the dog 's emotions were reported as surpassing the child 's histrionics .

The film was shot on one reel by the Thanhouser Company , 1 @,@ 007 feet (307 m) in total . It was shot in standard 35mm and a spherical 1 @.@ 37 : 1 format . It was distributed by the Mutual Film Corporation upon release . Kitty Kelly of The Chicago Tribune called it a " miniature masterpiece . " Copies of the film are in the Museum of Modern Art of New York City and the National Film , Television and Sound Archive of Ottawa film archive .

= = Plot = =

The film opens with an inter @-@ title that reads " Poor little rich girl has no one to play with " and cuts to Baby Helen with her doll , looking out the window . A group of children play Ring a Ring o ' Roses in the yard . Next , Baby Helen goes to tea party set up on the yard and holds her doll , all by herself , with a lonely expression . The neighbor 's dog , Shep comes out of his dog house and barks , and Baby Helen rises with a joyful expression . She takes a piece of a muffin and tosses it through the boxwood hedge separating the two yards . Shep eats the muffin and Helen invites him to her tea party . Shep runs along the hedge and passes through to join her . Helen instructs Shep with her finger and Shep barks in understanding , Helen takes her seat and shares a muffin with Shep . An inter @-@ title announces that a week later , Helen is out on an errand . Helen passes through the hedge and skips down the sidewalk and Shep barks at her . As Helen crosses the street , she is struck by a passing automobile and Shep races to the rescue . He tugs at her dress at the waist and finding that he is unable to move her , runs to Helen 's home and jumps against the screen door , barking repeatedly . As Helen 's parents are summoned , Shep leads them to Helen , where a passerby has scooped up Helen from the middle of the street . All three depart and the scene changes to a dimly lit room with Helen laid on a bed , seemingly dead . Her parents watch over her , with sad faces as a doctor inspects her and folds her arms across her chest . Beyond saving , her parents bury their heads in the pillow next to Helen as the doctor pens a note . Then Shep is shown resting against the side of the door in a feeble and sorrowful looking position .

An inter @-@ title confirms Helen 's death by announcing the parents have gone on " a visit to their lost darling " . The scene cuts to a grassy cemetery with lines of tombstones separated by a loose line of two trees . Helen 's parents approach her grave , marked by a group of flowers and a temporary marker at the head . Shep follows behind and pauses by a tree as Helen 's parents kneel and pause to grieve . The camera cuts to Shep , who appears sad with his eyes only half open . After the parents finish grieving , they stand up and walk to the stage left . Shep stays under the tree for a moment before approaching the grave . Through an overheard split , Shep is shown to be reminiscing about the party . The next scene shows Shep back home , lying on his side in apparent despair . His master tries to get Shep to eat some food , but the Collie refuses and turns on his side . His master pets him , confused as to what has his pet troubled so , but he gives up and departs .

Another inter @-@ title announces that " Shep makes daily visit to the florist " and shows Shep approach the shop and grabs a bunch of flower in his mouth before running away . Shep returns to her grave and he drops his flowers with the others . Shep looks to the left and sees a woman watering the flowers . Shep takes her watering can and runs back to Helen 's grave . The woman picks up the watering can and waters the flowers and picks up the flower bouquet brought by Shep . An inter @-@ title announces that night has come and it shows Shep lying asleep near the hedge . A ghostly image of Helen , superimposed on the film , appears through hedge and awakens Shep . Helen leads Shep through the cemetery and to her grave . Shep crawls to her grave and lies across the flowers as Helen 's form disappears down into the grave . The camera lingers on Shep before fading . The final inter @-@ title of the film announces " Don 't cry , it 's only make believe " showing

Helen , holding flowers and leaning against Shep . This sequence and title may have served as a reminder to children in the audience it was all simply a dramatic story .

= = Cast = =

Shep the Dog as himself
Helen Badgley as Baby Helen
Arthur Bauer as Helen 's father
Ethyle Cooke Benham as Helen 's mother
Fannie Bourke as a visitor

= = Production = =

Child actress Helen Badgley , also known as The Thanhouser Kidlet , is described by the Thanhouser Company who made the film as a " precocious child actress who was very comfortable and expressive in front of the camera " . Shep the Dog , also known as The Thanhouser Collie , was a well @-@ trained animal performer who appeared in a number of the company 's films during this period . The dog 's acting , in portraying a range of emotions including " depression " , " groveling pathos " and " joy " , was noted to be superior to the child 's performance . Shep was owned by the film 's director Jack Harvey , but Shep had prior experience working for Vitagraph under Arthur Ashley . While at Vitagraph , Shep received very little coverage and recognition in comparison to Jean , the " Vitagraph Dog " . Evidence suggests that Shep starred in Shep , the Hero . Jack Harvey believed Shep to be almost human , he would direct Shep entirely by voice and would speak to him with " man talk " instead of simple commands . At an unknown , but presumably later date , Shep 's mate of four years , Bessie , became ill and Harvey saw it take a terrible emotional toll on Shep . When Bessie died , Harvey stated it would cause Shep to die of a broken @-@ heart . While A Dog 's Love was released little more than a month before Shep 's death in early November 1914 , two more films had yet to be released . Both The Barrier of Flames and Shep , the Sentinel would be released posthumously .

Official musical accompaniment for works of this period were very rare and only one studio , Vitagraph , regularly made suggestions available to exhibitors . Thanhouser 's musical scores were an exception in 1914 , but the scores would only be created for the " Thanhouser Big Productions " such as Joseph in the Land of Egypt . In 1913 and 1914 , cue sheets or musical suggestions could be obtained inexpensively through various industry sources and retained their dominance . Given that these cue sheets were prepared without any specific film in mind , the music would be chosen to match the themes of the film . The film was shot on one reel by the Thanhouser Company , 1 @,@ 007 feet (307 m) in total . It was shot in standard 35mm and a spherical 1 @.@ 37 : 1 format . It was distributed by the Mutual Film Corporation upon release .

= = Release and reception = =

The film was well received by film critics and even the passing mentions in The Moving Picture World remarked that it was a good offering with good photography . Jack Harvey 's debut film as a director was well received by the public due to its " universally appealing " theme . Thanhouser writes that the " loyal dog 's attachment to his little girl playmate is treated with pictorial beauty and simple , honest sentiment " , and notes that when it was released on October 4 , 1914 , reviewers praised the " double @-@ exposure passages for their dramatic effectiveness " . Louis Reeves Harrison of The Moving Picture World ' review of the film stated , " This play becomes one of delicate pathos toward the end through some remarkable feats of double exposure , and it is one of beauty throughout because of the acting of a four @-@ year @-@ old tot , Baby Helen , a veritable star in her class . Shep contributes with exceptional intelligence - he is not eternally looking at his master out of scope for a word of command I do not know what director handled this subject , but I suggest he apply his thought visualizations to the human characters of future stories . It is the

exhibition of what passes in the minds and hearts of characters that brings an audience into closer sympathy with them and makes tense interest possible when melodrama merely brings a laugh . The double exposures are timed with such skill in this instance that all concerned in their production deserve high praise . They give beauty and dignity to a very simple story . "

Kitty Kelly of the The Chicago Tribune wrote , " Two more attractive artists never collaborated in a single production than this star baby and this star dog . Of them it is impossible to say which is the more so , though one demonstrates the maximum of naturalness while the other is an exponent of the maximum of training As a general thing , I disapprove of the agonies of film mortality and its frequent projection of cemetery scenes , but this is one of the situations that must be handed the label ' exception ' The picture is a miniature masterpiece . " Contained within her review Kelly , also mentioned that baby Helen was placed in front of the camera so that even as she lay " dying " that she was still shown to be breathing . Kelly stated that no person would wish for a person to stop breathing for the sake of the film , but noted that it was not the best point of vision , but noted that the scene was well @-@ managed . In Britain , The Bioscope reviewer agreed with other reviewers in finding the film to be , " ... a perfectly delightful little film . Although it is true that its plot , what there is of it , contains nothing very new , it is not merely a conventional dog and child picture of the ordinary type . It is , rather , an exquisite pictorial fancy , charmingly conceived for the most part and charmingly executed throughout The picture is perfectly done , and not even in the ghost scenes toward the end is there anything banal or insincere in it . A film so full of tender sentiments and natural beauty should meet with the warmest of welcomes everywhere . "

Today , copies of the film are in the Museum of Modern Art of New York City and the National Film , Television and Sound Archive of Ottawa film archives . The film was released in Thanhouser Classics Volume II : Under the Mutual Banner 1912 @-@ 1914 . For the release , Andrew Crow composed and performed an original music score .