

= The Little Mother =

The Little Mother is an American silent short drama film produced by the Thanhouser Company . The film stars Marie Eline who goes to her mother 's employer and asks for her mother 's job after she dies . Her employer is an artist with a kind heart and though the girl does not do the chores well . One of the artists models plot against him makes false charges against him , leading to his arrest . The little girl follows them and learns that they were out to obtain a large amount of money to have the false case dropped . She reports it to the police and the artist is freed , whereby he adopts the girl out of gratitude . Released on February 28 , 1911 , the film received mixed reviews . The film is presumed lost .

= = Plot = =

The official summary synopsis of the film was published in The Moving Picture World . It states , " A poor widow who supports her two children , one a baby and the other girl of six , by scrubbing , weakens under her hard work , and finally dies . Marie , the ' little mother , ' anxious that her home may not be broken up , calls on one of her mother 's employers and requests that she be given a chance to take the dead woman 's place . The artist , a wealthy , good @-@ hearted man , pleased with the child 's pluck , laughingly employs her , and makes her believe that she is really doing all the ' chores . ' The artist 's kindness , much to his surprise , brings him recompense one thousand fold [sic] . One of his models plots to fleece him . She calls at his studio , faints in his arms , and when her confederate rushes in with a policeman , she makes charges that lead to the arrest of the innocent artist . Just as the policeman is leading her benefactor away , the little scrub woman sees what is happening . She follows the party to the police station , but is afraid to enter . When the complainant and her husband come out , the child is impressed with the fact that they seem to be on the best of terms . Her suspicions are aroused , and she shadows them like a regular detective . What crook would ever imagine that a little girl , wheeling a baby carriage , was a sleuth ? This pair certainly did not , for when they meet a new friend in the park , they stop to tell him how they successfully arranged to trim a rich artist , never doubting that he would pay liberally to have the case dropped . The little girl , from her place in hiding , heard the story . So the little girl found a policeman , and told him about it . And the policeman went with her to the hiding place , and heard enough to warrant him in making what he afterward described as a ' two handed collar . ' The adventurous and her confederate were haled to the police station and locked up , while the artist was set free in a hurry . The result is that there is now a ' scrub woman ' whose duties are a sinecure although the wages are high , and the future of the ' little mother ' and her baby are assured . "

= = Production = =

The only credit known in the production is that of Marie Eline in the role of the little mother . Known and advertised prominently as the " Thanhouser Kid " , Marie Eline received more attention then other Thanhouser staff . Historian Q. David Bowers wrote , " Her versatile acting was a major contributor to the success that the Thanhouser Company enjoyed during its formative years . " The film harkens back to the role played by Eline in her film debut , A 29 @-@ Cent Robbery , in which she played a child detective to capture a thief .

= = Release and reception = =

The single reel drama , approximately 990 feet long , was released on February 28 , 1911 . The film received mixed reviews by critics with the sharpest criticism of the improbable and illogical feats the " little mother " would perform . The Billboard said , " There is too much of the made @-@ to @-@ order situations in this film , causing the spectator to stretch his imagination to the straining point . That a little tot can accomplish in a way of detective work the feat set to ' kid ' actor in this film

performs , is hardly logical . The acting of the Thanhouser tot is great , giving the picture the greater part of the interest it contains . The other players acquit themselves well . " The Moving Picture World largely agreed , but stated that the film only had one or two parts of the film were weak and the photography and acting were good . The Morning Telegraph found that the film would have been more logical should a scene with a police court to release the artist , for the police would not have been able to release them otherwise after the charges had been brought forth . The New York Dramatic Mirror review however states that this scene did occur with Marie acting outside the room and being consulted by an officer , whereupon the action take place off camera . The reviewer also stated that the production was admirably staged and acted .

The film is presumed lost because the film is not known to be held in any archive or by any collector .