

= Only in the Way =

Only in the Way is a 1911 American silent short drama film produced by the Thanhouser Company . The film focuses on a grandmother who seeks the support of her only son and makes herself comfortable in his house . The grandmother is welcomed and befriended by Marie , her crippled granddaughter . The son 's wife cannot bear to live with her mother @-@ in @-@ law and delivers an ultimatum to her husband : " Either your mother or I must leave this house ! " The husband decides to put his mother in an old folks ' home and the wife informs her she is to leave immediately . Little Marie is upset that her grandmother has to leave because she was " only in the way " and decides that as a cripple , so was she . Marie pens a letter to this effect and runs away to the old people 's home . The parents frantically search for Marie and discover the note . They rush to the home and are relieved to find Marie safe and the family departs together with her grandmother .

The film was released on January 31 , 1911 and was met with generally favorable reviews . Walton of The Moving Picture News was critical , noting the similarities to a film released four days prior by the Gaumont Film Company . The film survives in the Library of Congress .

= = Plot = =

The official synopsis establishes back @-@ story that is not seen or referenced in the beginning of the film , stating that Mrs. Gage turned to her only son for support after losing the last of her savings . Seeking his support , Mrs. Gage arrives at his house and is shown in by her granddaughter , Marie . The son welcomes his mother , but his wife strongly objects to having her mother @-@ in @-@ law take up residence in the house . Shown to her room by Marie , Mrs. Gage makes herself comfortable and gives Marie a kitten . " Granny " quickly becomes friends with little Marie . The wife struggles with Granny 's presence , but her patience is tested when Granny knocks over a vase , and in recoiling , knocks over a sewing box . The mother delivers an ultimatum to her husband , " Either your mother or I must leave this house ! " Though not shown , the husband decides that his mother is to go . In the next scene , the wife appears and informs her that she must leave . Marie assists her grandmother before her departure to the old folks ' home with her son . She is upset that her grandmother was made to leave because she was " only in the way " and that as a cripple , she is no different . Marie writes a letter explaining that she is has gone to live with grandma and departs to the old folks ' home . Marie 's journey with the kitten in one arm and her crutch in the other is a difficult one . On the way , she stumbles and loses her crutch in a brook , but she limps onward . Her parents search frantically for Marie and discover the note . The parents head to the old folks ' home and are relieved to find Marie with her grandmother . The wife then informs the nurse that Granny will be leaving . After packing her belongings , the family depart .

= = Production = =

Little is known about the production or cast of the film despite its survival status . The only known credit cited by Q. David Bowers is that of Marie Eline cast in the role of Marie . The director , scenario writer and cameraman are also unknown . Thanhouser Company Film Preservation states that the dramatic theme of the film was " family disharmony " and it took the expected sentimental approach for the era . Marie who identifies with her grandmother resolves that she is also " Only in the Way " by virtue of being a cripple . The site states , " Thanhouser scenarists seemed to have had a special sensitivity for the feelings of children which is reflected in this film . "

= = Release and reception = =

The single reel film , approximately 1 @,@ 000 feet long , was released on January 31 , 1911 . The Billboard praised Marie Eline 's acting also noting the good photography in its review . The Moving Picture World 's review states , " The part played by the grandmother and the one played by the child are both pathetic and cannot fail to touch the heart . The person who can sit through this and

not feel the tears welling up to his eyes is strangely callous to human grief and emotion . " The New York Dramatic Mirror was open in its praise of the film and its portrayal of the subject through good acting , but it also noted the technical faults with film continuity . The reviewer wrote , " It was noticed that the old lady 's bag was brought on immediately , already packed , when she left the son 's house and when she left the home . It looks planned beforehand ? similar incidents have hurt the excellence of a number of this company 's superior films . It would take time in life , and a split in the film would have done it . Such things spoil the illusion to a spectator . "

Walton of The Moving Picture News , who typically praised Thanhouser films , deviated from the norm by immediately dismissing the film as a whole by stating , " This theme is getting threadbare ; a foreign film is almost identical . The son 's wife acts brutally to her husband 's mother ; things are set right by a child . Compare Gaumont 's Twilight of a Soldier 's Life , etc . The acting of the child is charming , and of the old lady a womanly concept ? even to details . The wife 's grabbing the old lady 's bag , umbrella , etc. was , as one said who sat next to me , ' a bit too rushed . ' " This criticism of the theme was accurate because the Gaumont Film Company release had a nearly identical plot except that that " grandma " was an elderly soldier . The similarities between the two films likely are coincidental because the Gaumont film was released four days prior .

Q. David Bowers wrote a modern synopsis of the production which contains more details than the official publication from the Thanhouser company . Bowers was present for the showing of this film at Iona College in New Rochelle on October 7 , 1988 and stated that the film was met with cheers by an audience of about 400 persons .

A print of the film is preserved in the Library of Congress .