

= The Mermaid (1910 film) =

The Mermaid is a 1910 American silent short comedy produced by the Thanhouser Company . The film focuses on John Gary , a hotel owner , who wants to revitalize his business . After reading about a reported mermaid sighting , he has his daughter Ethel pose as a mermaid and gets a newspaper reporter to witness and photograph the mermaid . The publicity results in the hotel becoming famous , but Ethel eventually discloses the joke to the guests of the hotel in her mermaid suit . The film was released on July 29 , 1910 and was met with mostly positive reviews . The film is presumed lost .

= = Plot = =

Though the film is presumed lost , a synopsis survives in The Moving Picture World from July 30 , 1910 . It states : " John Gary runs a summer hotel at a charming spot on the seashore , but he has been unable to induce people to stop there , and at the opening of the picture he is seen lamenting the fact that there is not a single guest name on his hotel register . At this juncture his daughter Ethel returns from school . Ethel is an expert swimmer , and on reading in the paper the rumor that a mermaid has made several appearances in the water of the Atlantic , he decides to have his daughter pose as the mysterious lady of the sea . He wisely conjectures that a handy mermaid will bring guests . With Ethel clad in appropriate costume , and seated upon the rocks in true mermaid fashion , her father persuades the reporter of the local paper to take a look at the phenomenon . The newspaper man is greatly impressed with the spectacle and obtains a photo of the mermaid , which he publishes . The mermaid gains wide publicity - and vacationists arrive from near and far to see her . Tom , Dick and Harry , a trio of city sports , jump into bathing suits and the water , each bent on capturing the mermaid . She eludes them all , however , and the mystery is not cleared up until Ethel , in a pre @-@ tailored suit , presents herself to the guests and explains the joke . By this time Gary 's hotel is famous and the owner is certain of a big summer business . "

= = Cast = =

Violet Heming as Ethel Gary
Frank H. Crane as John Gary
Marie Eline

= = Production = =

The writer of the scenario is unknown , but it was most likely Lloyd Lonergan . He was an experienced newspaperman employed by The New York Evening World while writing scripts for the Thanhouser productions . The film director is unknown , but it may have been Barry O 'Neil . Film historian Q. David Bowers does not attribute a cameraman for this production , but at least two possible candidates exist . Blair Smith was the first cameraman of the Thanhouser company , but he was soon joined by Carl Louis Gregory who had years of experience as a still and motion picture photographer . The role of the cameraman was uncredited in 1910 productions . The Moving Picture World announced that the film would feature Heming and Crane , but Bowers also credits the " Thanhouser Kid " Marie Eline in an unknown role . It is unknown , but possible , that Eline may have played the role of the young boy usher . By this time , Eline had proven herself capable of handling male characters , with the first such credit as a young Italian boy in The Two Roses . Eline would also star as Hans in The Little Hero of Holland . It is unknown if Anna Rosemond , the other leading lady of Thanhouser , had a role in this film .

As reviewers would note , the production was not without its faults . One error occurred with the photographer improperly taking pictures of the mermaid . The developed photographs of the mermaid were also impossible given the distances involved . A more minor error in the operation of the hotel was given by the office boy who handled the arriving guests with remarkable speed . Despite these errors , the company was at the forefront of the Independent producers and given

great praise by Frank E. Woods of the American Biograph Company in The New York Dramatic Mirror .

= = Release and reception = =

The one reel comedy , approximately 1000 feet long , was released on July 29 , 1910 . The film likely had a wide release , but another film of the same name was released by Società Anonima Ambrosio . The Ambrosio film was released on November 16 , 1910 , but several theater advertisements are ambiguous as to the film being shown . It is known that Ambroiso and Thanouser films were sometimes shown together , as one Maryland theater advertisement shows , further complicating identification . The film received mainly positive reviews from critics . The Morning Telegraph found the story to have a novel way of advertising a hotel , but noted the error in the photographer 's attempt and result to photograph the mermaid . The Moving Picture World found the film to be an effective production , but spared few details and a short summary of the film . The most critical review came from The New York Dramatic Mirror which was neutral in its assessment of the production , but it provided a list of faults with the production that focused on continuity issues with action .