

A Dog's Love

US : 1914 : dir. : Thanhouser Silent : ? min
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
[Helen Badgley \("The Thanhouser Kidlet"\)](#)
 Adult cast unknown

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ € Z ♀	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Shep and his beloved – a first strike weapon in America's cultural war against the Hun.

Source: The Silents Majority website

The Silents Majority website caption:

"The kidlet and the collie. Helen Badgley (1910-1977), known as "The Thanhouser Kidlet," and "Shep, The Thanhouser Collie" charmed pre-World War I audiences; from the tearjerker "A DOG'S LOVE" (Thanhouser, 1914)." - Diane MacIntyre

The Child Stars entry:

"Legal authorities took to task the parents of Baby Helen, Baby Doris's contemporary, in 1915. Born Helen Badgley, in New Rochelle, New York, in 1911, the petite artiste became known the world over as the "Thanhouser Kidlet," after the company for which she starred in such epics as "HER BIG SISTER", "LITTLE MISCHIEF", "A DOG'S LOVE", "HELEN INTERVENES", "THE BABY AND THE BOSS", "FIRES OF YOUTH", and many more.

Like Baby Doris, she had begun her career in vaudeville, where her "I Don't Care" song, her imitations, her fund of rattling good stories, and her yodeling – which, it was said, would make a Swiss mountaineer turn green with envy – had built up a loyal following. In between films, the demure and dimpled entertainer continued her road appearances, and it was in Atlanta, on March 25, 1915, that she ran afoul of the recently enacted child labour law. Her stepfather and the local theatre manager were arrested and brought to court. The defense, in trying to show that Baby Helen's act did not constitute labour under the provisions of the law, called the performer to the stand as their main witness.

"Do you find your work hard or irksome?" attorney Van Astor Batchelor asked the tiny star. "Beg pardon, sir?" lisped Baby Helen. "You don't dislike to work on the stage do you?" repeated the defense. "Certainly not," replied the witness. "But I'd dislike it if Mama wouldn't let me. I'd rather be on the stage than anywhere I know." The testimony, plus the fact that she earned \$2.50 a week, led the court to the conclusion that Baby Helen was an artist rather than a labourer. She was allowed to finish her engagement on condition the theatre book no children under fourteen in the future.

Bright stars in their time, Baby Doris and Baby Helen are now largely forgotten, along with most of the other top-rated child performers of the silent era."

[no listing in "Classics of the Silent Screen", "A Pictorial History of the Silent Screen", "Silent Movies: A Picture Quiz Book", "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. The name of Thanhouser studios must have grown increasingly problematic as America finally entered the First World War – many actors and directors with Germanic names adopted new "American" ones to avert prejudice, just as many actors with Jewish names continued to do until the Fifties or Sixties (and not only in the States – Mark Lester's real name was Letzer). Small children and gentle, brave dogs had proved a winning combination with soft-hearted audiences since "**RESCUED BY ROVER**" (1905), while Rin-Tin-Tin was one of the top box office draws of his day, and probably the cinema's first animal megastar, if that isn't too absurd a concept. The two sources above conflict on both the spelling of Helen's surname and her date of birth, so she was 3 or 4, depending on which you read first.

See subject index under **DOGS** and **SILENT CINEMA**.