

# *The Net*

Produced by the Thanhouser Film Corporation (1916)  
New Rochelle, New York USA

Presented by

**Thanhouser Company**  
**Film Preservation, Inc.**



in cooperation with



In 2021 Torbjørn Pedersen of The National Library of Norway informed Thanhouser Company Film Preservation that a pristine five-reel toned and tinted nitrate print of Thanhouser's 1916 production of *The Net* was rediscovered in their archive.

**Released April 1, 1916 (Saturday), Length: 5 reels**

**Character:** Drama; Mutual Masterpicture, DeLuxe Edition No. 88

**Director:** George Foster Platt

**Scenario:** Lloyd F. Lonergan

**Cameraman:** Lawrence Williams

**Cast:** Bert Delaney (the young fisherman), Marion Swayne (his sweetheart), Inda Palmer (his mother), Ethel Jewett (mysterious girl from the sea), Arthur Bauer (her former employer), Morgan Jones (detective), William Burt, James Dunne (double for Miss Jewett in an ocean scene)

**Location:** Initial scenes for the first reel were taken at the oceanside at Mayport, Florida on January 18 and 19, 1916.

## **PROVENANCE**

The film was distributed in Norway early in 1919 by the distributor Guttorm Jensen based in Bergen and his company Guttorm Jensens Filmsbureau. He had started his company just two years prior, after a trip abroad where he acquired the distribution rights for several American features. Mutual was one of the companies he cooperated with and that is probably how he got his hands on this print.

The film was reviewed and accepted by the Norwegian film censorship board the 13th of March 1919, with no cuts. The board's log entry states that the film was 1396 meters (4580 feet) at the time, and that there was just a single print going into distribution. It appears that the print at the National Library of Norway is the same single print the board reviewed and the only print that was distributed in Norway. Traces of the control can be found in the film to this day, as the censors' reference number for the particular film was stamped onto the beginning of each reel. The censorship board's entry for the film spells the title "Fanget i kjærlighetens net" (roughly translated: "Trapped in the net of love"). The title cards in the actual print, however, spells the title " Fanget i Kærlighedens net". Written Norwegian and Danish are quite similar in this time period, but the latter spelling is more Danish than Norwegian. The same goes for all original the intertitles in the film.

In the Norwegian newspaper advertisements for the film, a more Norwegian spelling is used. "Svindlersken" (this is roughly translated as "The fraudsteress" - the female form of the word scammer/fraudster). It is suspected that this print is actually a Danish print. The film most likely had a distribution run in Denmark before it's Norwegian run.

The censorship record/stamp and the newspaper advertisements give us a fairly good overview of the early history of the film. It's a bit harder to untangle the print's history after distribution. The reels entered the National library's collection around 2002, when the Norwegian Film Institute (NFI) transferred their nitrate material to the national library's archive. The NFI received it sometime between 1955 and 2002. Torbjørn suggests the film ended up in storage at a cinema or a film distributor after it's run in the cinemas. It was most likely turned over to NFI when the distributor went out of business, or someone was doing an inventory of their storage.

The film was scanned on a Scantity film scanner at 4k resolution with 25% over scan. The film transfer was stabilized, and the most egregious damages were digitally repaired. It was then color graded using the nitrate print as a reference to preserve the different nuances in the various tints in the digital copy. A 4k master copy has been preserved and a 1K copy was provided for this release.

### **SYNOPSIS, *Reel Life*, March 25, 1916**

In the home of the stalwart young son and his mother, the girl rescued from the sea grows strong again after her fearful exposure. Her attractiveness, so different from that of the fisher maidens, has a telling effect on the young man. He asks her, at length, to become his bride, and she accepts. But a few days before the wedding the affianced bride disappears, sailing away with a strange man from the city, who has suddenly appeared. Thinking that his sweetheart had deserted him for another, the fisherman is heartbroken for a time, but gradually the keen edge of his sorrow wears away, and he succumbs to the attractions of another girl, one who had recently come to the village with her father and who lived together and alone at the end of the town. In reality, the runaway girl had been a thief. In trying to escape with a large amount of money which she had taken from the store in which she was employed, she had sailed on a boat which was wrecked. She was the only surviving passenger. The stranger, for whom she left her stalwart fisherman lover, was a detective, who had hit upon her trail. She bribed him with the money which she had saved, and he did not turn her over to the authorities.

The detective, learning that the young fisherman would someday inherit a vast fortune, insisted that the girl return and persuade the youth to marry her. Between them they would secure possession of his money. The girl returns to the village and tells her former lover that it was her brother with whom she had left - that they had hurried away to the deathbed of her dying father. While she talks, the fisherman's real sweetheart and her father surprise the detective in the doorway. At first he stammers in embarrassment. Then he looks searchingly into the face of the older man, and claps a handcuff on his wrists. The father, it seems, is a fugitive from justice. Seeing a chance to accomplish his ends, the detective promises the daughter that if she will give up all claim to the fisher youth and allow him to marry his earlier love, her father will be set free. She sorrowfully agrees, and the youth, much against his wishes, consents to the sacrifice.

But the wedding is again interfered with. As the bride, ready to start down the stairs, looks over the rail she sees her former employer, the man from whom she had stolen a fortune, talking earnestly with the fisherman. Thinking that her secret has been divulged, she flees down a back stair, jumps into an automobile, and starts off, heading straight for the quick sands. The unhappy girl who had given up her own happiness for the sake of her father, tries to warn her of her danger, but, thinking it is a plot to stop her escape, she rushes ahead, and is swallowed in the treacherous sands. A letter from headquarters verifies the honesty of the unjustly accused father, and the girl and the fisherman wed and are happy ever after.

### **THE MUSIC AND COMMENTARY TRACK**

Günter A. Buchwald composed and performed the music track for this release. He is a conductor, pianist, violinist and composer who is among the co-founders of the silent film Renaissance.

Kathy Fuller-Seeley is the William P. Hobby Centennial Professor of Communication at the University of Texas. She teaches undergraduate courses on the historical development of film and media, gender and media in the 1960s, and the study of comedy, and graduate courses in media historiography and media reception studies.