

The Crowd

Written by King Vidor, John V.A. Weaver and Joseph Farnham

Sequence 1

July 4th, 1900. The birth of John Sims. "There's a little man the world is going to hear from!" says his father. "I'm going to give him every opportunity."

Sequence 2

Johnny Sims, aged 12, sitting with friends. "My Dad says *I'm* goin' to be somebody big!" An ambulance rushes past. His father is deathly sick and dies.

Sequence 3

Intertitle: "When John was twenty-one he became one of the seven million that believe New York depends on them."

John finds an office job. At his desk he also writes an advertising tagline, hoping to win a competition.

Five o'clock. John's friend Bert asks him to join him that evening and make it a double date to Coney Island. John says no. "I'm studying nights." Bert persuades him nonetheless.

Crowds leave the office building. John and Bert meet with Mary and Jane. The four ride an open bus through the city. "Look at that crowd," says John. "The poor boobs... all in the same rut!" From the bus they see a man dressed as a clown carrying a placard that advertises a shoe store. "The poor sap! And I bet his father thought he would be President!" says John.

They go to a fairground. John and Mary kiss. John sees an advert on the subway: "You furnish the girl, we'll furnish the home." He proposes to Mary.

Sequence 4

The honeymoon. The train to Niagara Falls. A couple in love.

Sequence 5

Christmas Eve, at home in their small apartment by the rail tracks. Mary's mother and two brothers arrive for lunch. They aren't much impressed by John. Mary's mother asks if he got his raise yet. "No," he says, "but everybody tells me my prospects are good."

John goes over to Bert's place to see if he has any liquor. Bert is there with two girls. John joins in the fun.

Hours later Bert walks John home. They are drunk. Mary is already in bed. They make up and John gives her Christmas presents.

Sequence 6

April. John and Mary at home, arguing. Mary starts to pack a bag. John leaves for work. Mary in tears. She goes to the window and calls to John on the street. She asks him to come back to the apartment. Mary tells John she is pregnant. John is ecstatic. He makes her breakfast and goes to work.

Sequence 7

October. John at his desk. Word comes that Mary has had the baby. He dashes to the hospital. "This is all I've needed to make me try harder," he tells Mary. "I'll be somebody now... I promise."

Sequence 8

Intertitle: "During the next five years two eventful things happened to the Simses. A baby sister was born... and John received an \$8 raise."

At the beach. Mary is frustrated. "Everything's goin' to be roses... when my ship comes in," says John. "*Your* ship? A worm must be towing it down from the North Pole!" says Mary. She encourages him to send in one of the taglines he is always coming up with.

Sequence 9

Intertitle: "Everybody wins a prize once in their lifetime... somehow. And \$500 came to the Simses... all at one time!"

A tagline John sends in wins big. Mary notes how much money they owe to various creditors. Now they can pay it all off.

Their daughter is run over by a truck and dies.

Sequence 10

Intertitle: "MONTHS... ENDLESS MONTHS. The crowd laughs with you always... but it will cry with you for only a day."

John, at his desk, unable to concentrate. He replays the death of his daughter in his mind. Bert is now his boss. John quits. Mary is upset, but upbeat. "Never mind the old job. There are plenty of better ones," she says.

Sequence 11

Intertitle: "Mary was right. There are plenty of other jobs... and John found no trouble in landing his fourth in one week."

John works as a vacuum salesman, but quits. Mary is distraught and goes to work as a dressmaker. Her brothers stop by their ramshackle house. They announce that *they* will give John a job, but he turns them down. "I can't take a charity job," he tells them. "I think I've got a line on something big."

"That's all you've been saying for months!" says Mary.

"If she was wise she'd quit you and come back home with us," the brothers tell John. "You've never been anything but a big bag of wind... and that's all you ever will be!"

Mary is furious. She calls John a "quitter." "I'd almost rather see you dead!" she says.

Upset, John goes for a walk. His son accompanies him. He thinks about jumping in front of a moving train. Walking home, his son tells him, "When I grow up I wanta be just like *you*." John, invigorated, runs off to find a job. He is given a clown suit, juggling balls and placard that advertises a restaurant.

John and his son return home to find that Mary has her bags packed and is about to leave with her brothers. John tells her he has a job. At the last minute Mary decides against leaving.

Sequence 12

The family, happy together, see a show that evening.