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~~A STORY OF FLOATING WEEDS~~ (Ukigusa monogatari), 1934, silent, 89 minutes

Sunday December 12, 1 p.m.

Screenplay: Tadao Ikeda. Photography: Hideo Shigehara. Art Direction: Tatsuo Hamada. Costumes: Taizo Saito.

Cast: Takeshi Sakamoto (Kihachi), Choko Iida (Otsune), Hideo Mitsui (Shinkichi), Rieko Yagumo (Otaka, the leading lady), Yoshiko Tsubouchi (Otoki, the ingenue), Tokkankozo (Tomibo), Reiko Tani (Pops, the old veteran), Seiji Nishimura (Kichi), Nagamasa Yamada (Mako, the fat actor), Kiyoshi Aono (the choreographer).

On a visit to a remote and dingy town, Kihachi, the leader of a band of travelling players, sneaks off to visit a woman with whom he has carried on a long affair--and by whom he has a son. The boy, now in his teens, has always been led to believe that his father is dead and the itinerant Kihachi is his uncle. When Otaka, Kihachi's leading lady, discovers his secret she is furiously jealous and intent on exposing him. She coaxes a young actress in the troupe to seduce the boy and herself goes to confront the boy's mother. Kihachi and Otaka have a bitter row, and after a disastrous run during which the manager makes off with all their funds, the troupe breaks up. The young couple fall in love and elope and Kihachi, after briefly considering settling down with his mistress, takes to the road again.

Ozu took his idea for this film from George Fitzmaurice's 1929 film, The Barker, about a travelling circus barker whose well-educated son falls for a performer in his father's troupe, alarming the father who had hoped his son would find a higher path in life.

"Ozu turned this slightly melodramatic story into a picture of great atmosphere and intensity of character, one in which the story, actors and setting all combined to create a whole world, the first of those eight-reel universes in which everything takes on a consistency somewhat greater than life: in short, a work of art."

(Donald Richie)

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