

SNOW WHITE

(tentative outline)

10-22-34

SNOW WHITE

Cast of Characters

SNOW WHITE..... Janet Gaynor type - 14 years old

THE PRINCE..... Doug Fairbanks type - 18 years old

THE QUEEN..... A Mixture of Lady Macbeth and the Big Bad Wolf - Her Beauty is Sinister, Mature, Plenty of Curves - She Becomes Ugly and Menacing When Scheming and Mixing Her Poisons - Magic Fluids Transform Her Into An Old Witchlike Hag - Her Dialogue And Action Are Over-melodramatic, Verging on the Ridiculous.

THE HUNTSMAN.. A Minor Character - Big and Tough - 40 Years Old - the Queen's Trusted Henchman But Hasn't the Heart to Murder An Innocent Girl.

THE SEVEN DWARFS:

HAPPY..... A Glad Boy - Sentimental - Addicted to Happy Proverbs - His Jaw Slips Out of Its Socket When He Talks, Thus Producing a Goofey Speech Mannerism.

SLEEPY.... Sterling Holloway - Always Going to Sleep - Always Swatting At a Fly On the End of His Nose.

DOC..... The Leader and Spokesman of the Dwarfs - Pompous, Wordy, Great Dignity - Feels His Superiority But Is More or Less of a Windbag.

BASHFUL... Has a High Peaked Skull Which Makes Him Ashamed to Take Off His Hat - Blushing, Hesitating, Squirmy, Giggly.

JUMPY..... Joe Twerp - Like a Chap in Constant Fear of Being Goosed - Nervous, Excited - His Words and Sentences Mixed Up.

GRUMPY.... Typical Dyspeptic Old Grouch - Pessimist, Woman-hater - the Last to Make Friends with Snow White.

SEVENTH... Deaf, Always Listening Intently - Happy - Quick Movements - Spry.

PRINCE'S HORSE. This Gallant White Charger Understands But Cannot Talk - Like Tom Mix's Horse Tony - the Prince's Pal.

MAGIC MIRROR... The Queen's Unwilling Slave - Its Masklike Face Appears When Invoked - It Speaks in Weird Voice.

THE STORY BOOK OPENING

We see a book bearing on its cover the title and author, the Brothers Grimm. It opens to the credit page. Then, as its beautifully illuminated pages turn, we read the prologue which plants the Queen as a vain and murderous witch; Snow White as mistreated victim of the Queen's jealousy and greed for power; the Magic Mirror, and the reason for the Prince's visit to the palace. In short, the story book opening is a footage-saving device that carries us well into the plot and interesting action, and also establishes the situation and characters in advance.

THE FIRST THOUSAND FEET

Rather than spend too much of our energy at the present time in working out the first and less important sequences, Walt prefers to start actual work at the point where Snow White finds the cottage of the Seven Dwarfs. FROM THIS POINT ON, our basic plot development is fairly definitely established. What happens UP TO THAT TIME is still rather hazy. Sufficient to say, the Prince and Snow White fall in love, much to the anger of the wicked Queen. She puts the Prince in a dungeon and sends her huntsman into the woods with Snow White, with instructions to bring back the girl's heart. The huntsman sets Snow White free. After wandering through the woods all day, she finds the Dwarfs' cottage.

SNOW WHITE FINDS THE COTTAGE

It is late in the afternoon when Snow White sees the Dwarfs' cottage. She knocks - looks in the windows - no one is at home. She opens the door timidly. The friendly birds motion her to enter.

Inside, the light is dim, spooky. Everything is in disorder, the dirt and confusion typical of bachelors' quarters. There are seven beds, seven little nightshirts on

the floor, seven little chairs, seven of everything. Inspecting, questioning the birds who answer yes or no with shakes of their heads, Snow White concludes that the cottage belongs to seven very dirty little orphans - boys - living alone, without any grown-ups to tend to them - seven children who need the ministering hand of woman - who need her, Snow White.

Helped by the birds, Snow White begins cleaning up the messy house. She tastes the soup simmering over the hearth-fire and seasons it. The birds bring her flowers which she, and they, arrange in a vase. We leave this bustling, happy scene for -

THE DWARFS RETURNING FROM THE MINES

We hear the rollicking marching song of the dwarfs as they swing up the forest trail. Probably, the lyrics tell us that they are minors and bachelors who glory in their freedom from the domineering hand of woman. At the end of the line Stubby-legs is having a tough time keeping up with the others. Doc leads the procession.

In sight of the cottage, they break ranks and run to the door. It is open! Someone has been there! Who? What? The dwarfs are apprehensive. Such a terrible thing has never happened before. They push DOC across the threshold and huddle in the door. DOC sniffs the air. The semi-dark room smells clean, fresh, fragrant. Impossible! Unprecedented! Oh, the horror of it! Perhaps, even NOW the vile vandal lurks within the spooky gloom... a scurrilous whatsit - a witch, goblin, ghost.. perhaps a steel-clawed jabberwauk!

They must be brave. They will search the house. They will tear the intruder limb from limb. They jump back in terror as the wind or mischievous birds slam the window shutter.

They light candles or stir the fire into flame. An amazing and terrifying sight socks them between the eyes. The house... IS CLEAN! The dishes are... WASHED! The dwarfs are outraged. The comedy search for the UNSEEN HAND begins.

The birds watching from the beams are much amused. After several minutes of spook comedy, JUMPY finds SNOW WHITE asleep on a bed. He is too scared to talk. He motions to the dwarfs and finally gets his words out:

"A GITTLE LIRL - ALEEP IN MY SLED, SHED, BED - A GIRL WITH HONG GOLDEN LAIR - GONG LOLDEN GAIR - THERE'S HAIR ON HER - etc."

The dwarfs gather round the bed, peering at her over the head and footboards. A WOMAN! Snow White begins to wake up. She sits up. They fall back. She sees them and lets out a startled scream. They dash for the door. DOC stops them. They are men! Men must be brave in the face of danger!

"NOT CHILDREN!..WHY..THEY'RE MEN..CUNNING LITTLE MEN."

SNOW WHITE smiles and greets them. They crowd behind DOC and nudge him. He speaks. They take up courage, question SNOW WHITE, and hear her story. She assumes that she may stay and cook and sew for them. GRUMPY warns them that a woman is bad luck on land or sea. DOC remarks that if the Wicked Queen finds out that they are sheltering the Princess, she will wreak her vengeance and witcheries upon them.

SNOW WHITE goes sadly to the door. They stop her. Perhaps the Queen will never know. There is plenty of work for SNOW WHITE to do. And then, the terrors of the woods at night - dragons, unicorns, and such - SNOW WHITE would surely be killed in the lonesome, awful woods.

DOC calls for order and puts the matter to a vote. All but GRUMPY want SNOW WHITE to stay. She stays. Introductions follow.

SNOW WHITE is about to get dinner, when she sees their disgracefully dirty hands! She makes them stick their hands out. GRUMPY sticks out his tongue. While SNOW WHITE is getting dinner, we watch the dwarfs cleaning up at the well outside the cottage. Gag stuff.

THE EATING SEQUENCE

SNOW WHITE'S call to dinner brings the dwarfs swarming to the table. There is a wild dash for grub, interrupted by SNOW WHITE'S motion for quiet. She says grace.

The dwarfs fall upon the soup. The suckings and gurglings, wishings and whoopings of the soup suggest a soup symphony.

SNOW WHITE is shocked at their dreadful manners, and in a little song or jingle she teaches them the etiquette of eating soup. We leave them at dinner and return to the castle where, in her chamber, the wicked Queen awaits the Huntsman's return with SNOW WHITE'S heart.

THE HUNTSMAN'S RETURN

Night. The Queen and her raven await the glad news of SNOW WHITE'S murder. The HUNTSMAN enters, kneels and holds out the casket in which is the heart - a pig's heart, not SNOW WHITE'S. The ecstatic Queen dismisses the Huntsman with the promise of a fine reward on the morrow. Alone, she gloats over the precious heart; and holding it out triumphantly to the Magic Mirror, she asks it to tell her who is now the fairest in the land. The mirror reveals the HUNTSMAN'S duplicity and SNOW WHITE'S whereabouts, and tells the enraged Queen that SNOW WHITE is still the fairest of all.

"If you want a job well done, do it yourself," says the Queen, and consults her Witches' Cookbook for a gruesome recipe that will finish off SNOW WHITE.

Here we leave the Queen and return to the cottage where the dwarfs are playing an entertainment in honor of SNOW WHITE.

THE DWARFS ENTERTAIN

This is a sequence of hilarity and gags. We find the dwarfs playing their rustic instruments and dancing. Perhaps there are acrobatics and feats of skill, strength, slight-of-hand, etc. They call on SNOW WHITE. Possibly

she instructs them in a dance of the court. Then the dwarfs do a dance of the hoe-down square dance, Virginia reel type. Each dwarf in turn recites a jingle to the tune, which points out the weaknesses and comedy characteristics of one of the other dwarfs - thus advancing our building of individual personalities for the little men. The entertainment winds up with SNOW WHITE singing a wistful, tender melody which tells the dwarfs of her unhappy childhood, her prince, and her romantic conviction that some day her prince will come and, far from the wicked Queen, they will ride to their castle in the clouds where the doves will ring the wedding bells. The song is a prophecy - it foretells the ending of our story.

The song is a natural transition from noisy action to the silence and yawnings which suggest sleep. SNOW WHITE sees SLEEPY snoozing in a corner. She suggests that it is time for bed. The dwarfs put their beds together to make a big one for SNOW WHITE. With their blankets, they wall off an alcove for her. SNOW WHITE offers up a prayer thanking God for her new friends. They kneel about her. We strive for comedy in this scene - the reactions of the little men who have never prayed before. The sequence ends with the dwarfs finding places to sleep - in the oven, on shelves, hanging on coat hangers, etc. A well-directed wad of tobacco extinguishes the last candle.

THE QUEEN PREPARES THE POISON COMB

The QUEEN enters the dungeon where the PRINCE dangles from chains suspended from the ceiling. He is gagged. Confronting him are several skeletons, also chained and gagged. This is a sequence of gruesome comedy - of dancing skeletons - fantastic shadows - witchcraft and deviltry.

The QUEEN torments the PRINCE by telling him of her scheme to murder SNOW WHITE with the poison comb. She introduces him to the skeletons. They were once handsome young men like himself. She hopes they will all be great friends

because they will live together for a long time. She works the skeletons like marionettes, so that they bow, shake hands, and dance.

The QUEEN leaves the PRINCE momentarily, and goes up a short flight of steps to her magic laboratory, where the witch's caldron simmers over a fire. From skulls she takes the peculiarly gruesome ingredients for her poison potion, and intones her incantation as she mixes the stuff in the cauldron and feeds the flames.

When the poison comb is done, she returns to the PRINCE and shows it to him, explaining its murderous virtues. Drinking a magic liquid, the QUEEN turns into a plump old peddler woman before his eyes. Bidding him a cheerful and hospitable good-night, she disappears through a secret panel, and we follow her a few steps to where the river runs under the castle. She gets into a boat and is carried off by the current. We leave her tying up the boat where the river enters the forest. She hobbles off into the night.

THE DWARFS LEAVE FOR THE MINES

Morning. SNOW WHITE is hurrying the dwarfs off like a mother getting her children off to school in time. At the door, she kisses each one of them. GRUMPY ducks, but she grabs him. BASHFUL gets in line twice. We follow the dwarfs into the woods.

The dwarfs decide not to go to the mines. They will take a day off and make something as a surprise for SNOW WHITE. Dialogue brings out that the dwarfs haven't been so happy in three hundred years. DOC climbs on a stump and calls the meeting to order. The meeting is conducted very seriously, and it is a burlesque on the American variety of lodge meeting. It is SLEEPY who suggests that they make her a bed. The motion is carried. DOC divides up the work. While some dwarfs are making the bed, others are making the mattress, pillows, and comforter. There must be some clever gag stuff in this sequence. The birds and little animals help. They give their fur and down for mattress stuffing.

The dwarfs cut off parts of their beards. The comforter is made of the dwarfs' shirts. We leave then making the bed, and return to the cottage where snow WHITE and the birds are cleaning up the house while the QUEEN skulks nearby in a thicket.

THE POISON COMB

Gags of the birds helping SHOW WHITE wash the dishes, take down cobwebs, bring water from the well, make a cake, make the beds, etc. The QUEEN knocks at the door. SNOW WHITE admits the fat, cheerful, motherly creature, and admires the tempting articles in her pack. But she has no money and cannot buy. The QUEEN discovers a snarl in SNOW WHITE'S curls, and taking out the poison comb, runs it through her hair, sticking the sharp teeth into the girl's scalp. SNOW WHITE swoons. The triumphant QUEEN leaves the comb in SNOW WHITE'S hair, and scuttles off.

THE DWARFS FIND SNOW WHITE

Returning to the woods, we see the dwarfs completing the bed - putting SNOW WHITE'S name on it in beaten gold - finishing the carving. When it is done, the dwarfs put it on their shoulders, and start for home. Outside the cottage door they hide the bed, and JUMPY goes inside to blindfold SNOW WHITE and lead her out for the big surprise. He finds her lying on the floor, apparently dead. He rushes out. The dwarf's try to revive SNOW WHITE. This is a comedy scene. Frantic dwarfs doing the futile, absurd things that people do in moments of hysteria and disaster. DOC, assuming his most professional air, examines SNOW WHITE. He is very serious, but our effect will be a burlesque of the usual medical examination. He pronounces her dead. But, just then, the comb is discovered. DOC smells it - Poison! He throws it in the fire where it burns with an evil, green flame. When the dwarfs turn from the fireplace to SNOW WHITE, they see her sitting up dazed. Their shock turns into joyful relief. She tells them of what has happened. They immediately connect the foul deed with the Queen herself, or one of

her agents. They warn SNOW WHITE against ever admitting a stranger while they are in the mines.

In this sequence we show GRUMPY trying to act hard-boiled, but finally breaking down when SNOW WHITE is pronounced dead. His joy at her recovery.

There is a happy scene as SNOW WHITE is presented with the bed.

THE QUEEN AGAIN

Night. The QUEEN returns to the castle. The mirror tells her that SNOW WHITE is alive and still the fairest of all. The poison comb has failed! In her rage and bitter disappointment, the QUEEN smashes the mirror. It is a scene approaching madness. The broken pieces of the mirror collect on the floor and prophesy the QUEEN'S end. Even as the QUEEN kicks the mirror to the four corners of the room, its laugh continues to echo from every piece of glass. She takes down her book, "What Every Young Witch Should Oughto Know," and finds the recipe for the Poison Apple. It never fails. It produces a sleeping-living death. The victim, though alive, is buried by his friends. Only the kiss of a great love can revive the victim. But the Prince will never know that - nor does he know where SNOW WHITE is - and even if he did - well, she will fix it so that his lips will be as cold as death itself by the morning. In this happy frame of mind, the QUEEN goes to the dungeon where she taunts the PRINCE with the glad tidings as she collects the ingredients for her poison apple brew.

The apple ready, she shows it to the Prince - gloats over him - starts the tiny trickle of water which will grow larger, larger, every minute, until the Prince will be like a cork bobbing his head against the granite ceiling of his cell. As the water seeps in faster and faster, the QUEEN, disguised this time as a skinny, witchlike crone - leaves by the river tunnel, and again we follow her into the woods.

THE PRINCE ESCAPES

Now the water is waist-deep. The Prince's struggles are futile. Birds looking in the cell window register under-

standing of his plight. They fly off, and we follow them into the castle through winding corridors and stairs - until they come to where the guard lies half asleep near the door to the Prince's cell. They try to pick the keys out of his pocket or off his belt, but he wakes up. The birds divide. One group stages a first-class fight to distract his attention until the other birds can steal the keys. Then the fighting birds swarm over the guard, pecking at him and beating their wings against his face. He gives chase, batting at them as they continue their guerilla warfare.

The other birds insert the key in the lock - they put a stick through the key and the weight of their bodies working on this makeshift lever, turns the key. The force of the water pushes the door open. The wall of water sweeps down the corridor, tumbling the guard along as the birds fly to the prince with the keys and free him.

The guard sounds the alarm and rushes for the Prince's open cell; but the Prince is waiting for him - socks him - takes his sword, and springs into the corridor. Both ends of the passage way are blocked by soldiers closing in on him. With the technique of Doug Fairbanks, he hacks his way to freedom. He whistles, and his horse leaps from the palace stables and charges to his side. The Prince springs on his horse and battles his way into the woods and to safety. He whispers into the ears of this remarkable animal that they must track the wicked queen and rescue SNOW WHITE. Although the animal cannot talk, he can nod and paw to show that he understands. They're off in a cloud of dust!

Short flashes from Queen to Prince show that the Prince has hit the trail and Sheridan is twenty miles away but gaining fast.

THE POISON APPLE

Morning. The dwarfs are already at work in their mine. This is our first shot of their mining operations - digging ore - panning gold - the smelter, etc. A rhythm scene - merely long enough to plant the whereabouts of the dwarfs.

We return to SNOW WHITE and the birds setting about the housework. Very short.

We cut to the Prince in pursuit. He almost has the unsuspecting Queen, when she disappears almost magically. At least he is thrown off the trail, and we know that for the time being the Queen has escaped his vengeance. The Prince gallops off double speed. It is still possible that he will head off the Queen.

Cut to SNOW WHITE again. She hears an apple peddler's call coming closer to the cottage. There is a knock on the door. Remembering the dwarfs' warnings, she does not open the door, but peeks out through the door window and sees the Queen in disguise.

The Queen's efforts to wheedle SNOW WHITE into letting her in are not successful at first. SNOW WHITE tells her to go away. The Queen redoubles her sales talk. The birds are suspicious and fly at the Queen.

The wily Queen begins to suffer from the heat - the long walk - old age - her bad heart - and ends up in a faint. SNOW WHITE rushes to her with water. As our heroine helps the Queen into the house, the birds fly off to get the dwarfs.

We see the dwarfs at work when the birds fly in. The birds, unable to talk, try in vain to warn them, to lead them home. The birds interfere with the work - fly off with picks - knock the glasses off DOC'S nose - wake up SLEEPY - tug at the dwarf's beards. But the dwarfs only beat them off and wonder what's come over the crazy birds.

Cut to the Prince still on the gallop but getting nowhere fast.

Cut to SNOW WHITE and the QUEEN. The QUEEN has brought out her poison apple and is selling SNOW WHITE on this idea that it is a most wonderful magic apple worth a king's ransom. One bite of the apple will make dreams come true - will bring a lover from afar to a languishing maiden's side. SNOW WHITE thinks of her Prince. She longs for a single nibble of the precious apple. But she has no king's ransom to offer - not even a penny. The QUEEN is soft-hearted but wily. SNOW

WHITE has been kind to her - she would love to do something for the sweet girlie who was so good to her - well, perhaps just one little bite - but on the other hand...

We leave the audience in suspense and return to the dwarfs. Suddenly, the light of understanding bursts. One cries out - "The Queen," - "Snow White! - the birds! - come on, boys!" The dwarfs drop everything and head for home via the short-cut through the woods. This trail leads over mountains, cliffs, rapids, ravines. The dwarfs, like monkeys, aerial performers, acrobats, swing through the trees, swing from vine to vine, make human chain bridges across ravines and streams, etc. Into flat country again, they jump on the backs of deer, and fly down the path toward the cottage. This is serious business for the dwarfs, but we should get wild action gags and comedy, especially from the frantic efforts of Stubby-legs to keep up with the others.

At the cottage, SNOW WHITE stands with eyes closed, the poison apple in her hand. She is making the wish which she expects will come true when she bites the apple. The Queen's face fills with gloating triumph, hatred. But, as SNOW WHITE'S teeth sink into the apple and her eyes open, the Queen again becomes a mealy-mouthed, smirking hag.

SNOW WHITE swallows the piece of apple. The poison takes effect. In a trance-like condition, she reels and sinks to the floor with the Queen's words of revenge, fury and hate ringing in her ears.

The Queen scuttles off just as the dwarfs break into the clearing. They see her. All but GRUMPY and DOC set off after her. These two find SNOW WHITE and begin working over her.

We follow the dwarfs chasing the Queen through a mountainous forest landscape. The chase ends when the Queen, in attempting to send a huge boulder crashing down a slope onto her pursuers, is herself knocked over a precipice. Two buzzards perched nearby on a dead tree, watch her bring destruction to herself. They nudge each other - wink - dinner! - the Laurel and Hardy vultures flap their wings and start circling

the spot where, at the bottom of the precipice, the dead Queen lies.

The dwarfs peer over the edge and see that the chase is ended. As a gentle, melancholy rain begins to fall, they turn toward home, fearful of the news that awaits them there.

The dwarfs stop on the threshold of the cottage. They read the sad news in DOC'S face. DOC removes his hat. The others take off their headpieces and file silently into the death room. They kneel beside SNOW WHITE and DOC begins his prayer. It will be a tear-jerker. In the prayer are mingled the loneliness, the melancholy of their loss, anger at a supreme being who permits such cruel injustices - the age-old questioning of the scheme of things - tribute to the goodness, beauty, and innocence of SNOW WHITE - the joy that she has brought to others - their personal sorrow - ending in the convulsive sobs of bereavement which make funerals such jolly little affairs.

At this point of our story, Walt intends to resort to sub-titles to wind up the story in a hurry. The titles, appearing over scenes of the seasons changing from the brooding melancholy of autumn to fierce winter, to early spring, will tell of the Prince's steadfast search for his beloved, his undying love, courage and hope. Then, one day, the Prince hears of a maiden sleeping in a crystal coffin watched over by seven dwarfs.

Now we see the dwarfs changing guard at the coffin of SNOW WHITE. The coffin rests on a knoll under a great tree. The birds are changing the flowers on it. Our scene is one of beauty, sadness, with a dash of cuteness.

From a hilltop the Prince looks down and sees the dwarfs' cottage. He enters the scene. He sees the coffin and advances toward it singing a song of bereavement and lamentation. The dwarfs fall back. The birds and little animals register surprise and excitement. From here on, our tempo and mood steadily builds from melancholy to excitement and a climax of joyful resurrection. At the end of his song, the Prince bends

and kisses SHOW WHITE. Her eyes open. She calls the Prince by name. She begins to sit up. He takes her in his arms and carries her to his horse. It is a scene of joy reflected in all nature, the happy dwarfs, the birds and little animals.

The farewells of the dwarfs follow SNOW WHITE and the PRINCE down the road.

Throughout the picture, SLEEPY has been trying to swat and outwit the persistent fly that perches on the end of his nose whenever he falls asleep. Now, for a final comedy touch, SLEEPY crawls into the crystal coffin and closes the lid. The fly can't get at him.

As the picture ends, we see the Prince and SHOW WHITE riding the white charger to a castle in the clouds. Doves are ringing the wedding bells.

We go back to the final page of our story book and read:

"AND THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER."

The book closes, and the picture is over.

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