

Story Conference

Sequences 1B, 2A, 2B, 7A

Meeting held: Saturday, September 26, 1936 - 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

Present were: Walt, Dave, Cottrell, Grant, Blank, Hennessy, Adelquist

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Sequence 1-B (Queen and Mirror)

Walt: Start on the close up of the queen's hands with long tapering fingers, turning the key in the huge lock.

Dave: As the door swings open, I see her passing through.

Walt: I see her starting with the doors being locked, then sweeping away. The scene where she starts would be dark and maybe there would be a window further down so she is walking against the light. The foreground is very dark and she passes through the light into some more darkness and is silhouetted by the next light.

Dave: I don't suppose a big iron bar would be more descriptive. You could see the action better.

Walt: It might be a big bolt.

Joe: Suggests the paneled mirror hall.

Walt: I always thought it would be better with the one mirror at the end of the hall - rich drapes and colonnades and arches. No chairs - no junk - just hang drapes and the mirror, a setting like Fairbanks had in Robin Hood with the drapes hanging from hundreds of feet.

Dave: Do you like the idea of the lock, Bill?

Bill: Yes, but I can't see how you get in and out of it.

Walt: Just have these massive doors with ornamental locks. The hands come in and as you draw out it's the queen going down the hall. The music can be suggestive of stealth.

She comes to the spot at the end of the hall - in front of the curtain. She is stately and there's a majestic movement to her sweep down the hall. Her arms go up and you hear the gong. (Record the gong at the far end of the sound stage - way off - for a feeling of echo.) The curtains open up, and here is her reflection with the greenish glow or something, but it's her reflection - then she says: ALONE - NONE NEAR - SLAVE OF THE MAGIC MIRROR - APPEAR: Then you see the shimmering and here comes the face - the mask.

Dave: He says: I AWAIT YOUR BIDDING.

Walt: I think whenever it's possible through the picture we ought to put in a little rhyme and meter in the dialogue and there's a good chance for it with the queen and mirror.

Joe: Do you like the light showing through the sleeves of her cape as she raises her arms? (Dave and Walt signify they do.)

Walt: I have the feeling that every day she comes to the mirror and they say the same thing every day. He should start out to say OH, QUEEN, THOU ART THE FAIREST ONE OF ALL, but he doesn't - you get into the change. You get into something they haven't done time and again. It's not prepared. The first of it is regular ritual. You have a feeling that she has to repeat it to get

Walt:  
(cont.) the mirror to appear. He has an answer. Then she starts into her usual questions - and then comes the unexpected.

There are some lines in Snow White that so many people remember - "Hair as black as ebony, lips as red as a rose, etc." - Could we work that in there - that the mirror would describe Snow White? That would antagonize the queen, because he hadn't come out with it. - Some little thing where he started to describe her and the queen demands her name.

Bill: I think it has value because it's in the old fairy tale.

Dorothy: Maybe he could repeat the description and she could say: SNOW WHITE?

Walt: Would you want to dramatize a bit and have him say: THE PRINCESS..... and she'd say: YES - YES (go on) - then he'd say: SNOW WHITE. She'd sneeze and laugh as if to say Snow White wasn't worth worrying about.

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I'd like to show that the queen is a menace more than you do so that when you out to the prince in the garden, you'll feel there's going to be trouble. I would try to build everything in my business here and not depend too much on putting it over in the titles.

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Dave: The way you talk it Bill, the name would be revealed rather quickly, then the scorn would build up into the fact that Snow White and the prince are right in the garden. Then would come the laugh and the close of the curtain.

Bill: The point Walt thought necessary to bring out was, first the queen's scoffing at the idea of Snow White being fairer; second the explanation of why the fact hasn't been revealed before.

Dave: I don't see that it is necessary to explain why it hasn't been revealed before. It's beside the point.

Walt: "Queen you're beautiful it's true - but there is one more fair than you."

"Fairer than I - impossible - reveal the name"

"The princess, Snow White"

"Snow White? That ragged child - that frumpy, scullery maid - mirror, you lie!"

Dave: Then a question of why the name has not been revealed before and the answer that he didn't wish her to share the fate of other rivals...

Dorothy: I don't think even the queen would wonder about that - much less anybody else. She would only be interested in what she's going to do.

Dave: It doesn't seem to get any place.

Walt: I like the lines: "Yours is the beauty of the night - hers the beauty of sunlight." She says; "Who - Who?" and he goes on with his line - he doesn't come out of this sort of poetic attitude as he recites this, but she breaks in and demands to know.

Morey: That's before he says Snow White, isn't it.

Walt: Yes. Something should come out in her dialogue that she has kept this child in slavery - that Snow White couldn't be more beautiful.

Bill: The mirror can say that in spite of all the queen has done to keep Snow White from the world and to destroy her beauty, she grows more beautiful all the time. Then would you like to come back into: YOU LIE - THIS IS NOT TRUE.

Walt: Yes - The mirror doesn't lie if you don't bring in any reference to the fact he has been shielding her.

Bill: After she says what Snow White is in her opinion, then the mirror tells her that in spite of everything she has done, Snow White is still beautiful. Later he continues that the prince has come to seek her hand.

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Morey: Have you thought of the queen saying she'll do away with her?

Bill: We had her say it one time: "You lie - I know it cannot be, but if this be so, no one can ever know! Then he says it's too late, that the prince has come.

Walt: Her reaction to what he has said is the burn of jealousy. I like the ending with the laugh to tie in with the laugh in the second mirror business.

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Walt  
and Dave: Like using the prediction of the queen's death by the mirror - "The curse of seven will be on your head."

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Walt: Would you want to keep the mirror always moving?

Joe: I'd like a shimmer.

Walt: If you want to we could reflect our celluloids into a mirror then work the mirror to give a ripple.

Dave: The contour of the figure itself, or the background?

Walt: The whole thing, figure and all - they'd never be still.

Joe: I'd rather feel a mist working on the face all the way through.

Walt: You can paint the image on a cell. Then reflect it in a tin and shoot the tin. Move the tin up and down. It would keep the face shimmering all the time.

Joe: The feeling I had was that you lost the mirror to a certain extent when you got into the mask.

Walt: It would keep the drawing from looking too hard and give it an odd effect. (Suggests seeing the test in color of

Walt:  
(cont.) reflections on the water - now in the hands of Armstrong.)

If this thing is casting a certain light, when you cut to the queen, get the same kind of light on her. It will keep these animation drawings from being hard.

Joe: Another thing - when the mask becomes more heated in the discussion, the light underneath becomes more intense. That would work also in the later sequence.

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Bill: What we'd better do is work out the action first, then see if we can get the dialogue to suggest the action closer.

Walt: I don't think that's so important. It's just a good magic way of getting in there. The important part is the build up of the dialogue between the queen and the mirror leading up to the climax.

Morey: You punch dramatically in those last lines is that the prince is in the garden. I think you should try to work it around so you carry that idea later, and her going over to the window comes more directly after it.

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#### SEQUENCE 2A

Walt: While the prince is serenading Snow White you could cut up to the queen at the window. They are not open like you have them, but we cut up and she is looking through closed windows. As she does, we can show her anger there by having her pull the drapes closed - closing out what she has seen. Then carrying on and finishing with Snow White. Then back to the throne and the queen is giving her commands.

Dave: I like that - a cut of her during the serenading.

We don't desire a great lapse of time. It could happen while the serenading is going on.

Bill: I like that all right. In explanation of the other - After they have completed their song and we have almost forgotten about the queen, you cut up here to this window in the long shot and see the queen standing there like a bat with the light shining thru. Truck up on her and fade out and you have the menace suggested. After all they have said, here's your answer - the queen is standing in the way. The symbolism could be very effective,

Walt: I think you could move the whole thing faster. I like her calling the huntsman while they are still serenading - no lapse of time.

Bill: It's just as well to have her watching the proceedings, closing the curtains. Finish the song and go into her giving orders to the huntsman.

Walt: It should be in the song that the prince knew all the time that she was a princess - in spite of her rags. She tells him to go away - that the queen might hear - that she fears for his life - but he doesn't care. Cut up to the queen and she sees them and closes the curtain. That might be during the chorus. Cut in the middle of the song and go

Walt:  
(cont.) back for him to finish it. Come back to the huntsman bowing down and saying: "Your majesty" - You go to that scene from some top on the prince - where Snow White kisses the little bird who carries it to the prince or something. We ought to make him very romantic, but not to the point of being laughable. Ought to have her with mops and pails. Show swans and birds in the garden. They'd all register as he is singing the love song.

SEQUENCE 2-B

Walt: There ought to be some line about dressing Snow White in her best so people won't wonder why she is not in rags later on.

Dave: I thought the word "holiday" would take care of that.

Walt: As the casket comes out, dim the lighting on her and bring the casket into it.

Joe: I see just the eyes and the dim part of the face, the casket coming into the light.

Walt: The line about her being dressed in her prettiest dress could come after "On the morrow, take Snow White on a holiday."

Get a nice musical effect when the box comes up. The box will come up after "Bring her heart back in this" - the box comes up and fades out; then you fade in to the sylvan glade with the music the prince has been singing.

Dave: How do you see the opening on 2B, Bill?

Bill: Now it would be a direct cut. A shot about that long (indicating sketch) - then trucking up to the queen herself and she speaks.

Dave: Open showing the huntsman kneeling ---- I wonder if we couldn't open on a close up of her and as she speaks, truck back.

Bill: Could do that - yes.

Joe: Including a back view of him as she speaks.

Walt: At one time we thought of fading on the prince and Snow White - Fade in on this and the doors open. The huntsman comes in to the queen on the throne - bows - and she says: That prince that visits in the garden, etc.

Bill: We have a shot there cutting away because of her long speech - a shot for his reaction.

Walt: You could have her there on the throne and as she speaks move up on her in the darkness.

Joe: Do you like the idea of her getting up as she forces the knife on him?

Walt: Yes - it's a good musical chance too.

Bill: I think a good place for that is on: "She must never return"

Walt: You don't think you have two climaxes there with the knife

Walt: and the box? Be better without the knife. Better if she said: "She must never return" and his eyes opened with: "But your majesty—" and she went on: "Silence - do as I command" then brings the box out.

Joe: You see a knife on the side of the huntsman - He'd have his own knife and she wouldn't have to give him one.

Walt: On "slyman glade should be a fitting frame, etc" be up close in the darkness on the face for "She must never return" - Let the eyes sparkle.

Behind the throne there might be two lights so that it is in darkness - the light is thrown forward as it is when someone gets the third degree.

Joe: How about the throne set back in an alcove?

Walt: Lighting the huntsman from a 3/4 side view. Get a big burly guy with big shoes.

Dave: Open on her right there and truck back disclosing him during the later part of her dialogue instead of showing him with her at first.

Walt: Probably it would be better to have a long shot to begin with. It would be more effective if when you trucked up you trucked up on her, because you want to see this throne first. Then, come up on her for the punch line that Snow White must never return.

Dave: You see a door opening and the huntsman going through?

Walt: As we finish the garden scene and fade out, fade in on this.

Dave: That's why I like a close up first. Truck back and up to her.

I wouldn't like to see the huntsman coming in. The semi long shot is all right then come down.

Walt: Show her up more, looking down. Long camera angle.

(Decision to open on the long shot.)

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#### SEQUENCE 7A

Walt: Get a complete costume for this old hag - it ought to be heavy and hanging and black. Her costume and everything would change.

Joe: The cape hanging from her arms blends into the hag's costume.

Walt: Would he tantalize her with thoughts of what she would look like? Finally pulling off his mask.

---Likes the idea of the prediction that if the queen harms Snow White a bolt will strike her from the sky.

She says she will destroy Snow White herself and the mirror answers: "You can't harm her - It's written in the stars that if you try - a bolt will strike you from the sky." If you keep emphasizing his dialogue all the time with the lighting in the mirror, it will be very effective. I like the idea of intensifying the light on him when he gets angry.

- Walt: Don't you think she ought to say: SILENCE SLAVE - or I'll do thus and so. Raise her voice and build it up.
- She ought to say something about breaking something - his impish face. It tells you what she's going to do... with the box.
- I think it ought to build to a certain tempo of shouting at each other.
- How do you plan on starting this?
- Bill: Fading out Sequence 2B with the look on the box and fading into this lock (skull effect) and truck back, revealing her in practically the same attitude with a smile on her face - triumph - facing the mirror.
- Walt: The look on this little casket could be a dagger stuck through a heart. As you fade in, you see the hands pull it out and see the lock open and come back to the queen looking at it. She laughs. Some little business to show she is gloating over it. She takes it to the mirror and says for the slave to appear - and says: "Now, tell me, etc."
- Bill: Should he appear again? We had the idea she was standing there and looked up and said: "Now who's the fairest..."
- Walt: In the sequence before this you dissolve on the soap speared by the spoon. You fade out on that and in on the queen receiving the heart. It's a good carry through.
- Joe: I think the mirror should already be there. Better than going through all that rigamarole again.
- Dave: It would be right there.

Sept.28, 1936  
E. Tobelmann.