

Story Conference

on

Sequences 1B, 2B & 7A

Meeting held: Monday, October 19, 1936 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

Present were: Bill Cottrell
Joe Grant
Dorothy Blank
Ham Luske
Walt
Harold Miles
Dave Hand

SEQUENCE 1B

WALT: The guards could cone to attention and click their heels as the Queen passes.

DAVE: I can't see any action with the guards - I just see them in a static pose.

WALT: You don't have any action on them - just sort of a "present arms" as she passes.

DAVE: I like them opening the door, then truck down to a close up of the panther, and then cross-dissolve to the next scene.

HAL: Instead of the Queen saying: ALONE - NONE NEAR - why couldn't she say something like: YOUR QUEEN IS HERE or YOUR QUERN STANDS BEFORE YOU.

WALT: I think the Queen should be consistent, when she calls the mirror, by using the same words when she calls him - such as, MAGIC MINROR ON THE WALL.

WALT: It should be planted in the dialogue or in the title that the Queen will not allow anyone to be more beautiful than she, so that when the Queen goes to the window and sees the Prince, there is a menace there.

DOROTHY: I feel that the footage you have used in this sequence for the description of Snow White, would be better used to plant the menace of the Queen where the mirror stalls her and won't say who it is.

WALT: I just have a feeling when out there in the garden you want to have this feeling that any minute someone is going to sneak up on the Prince - his life is in danger, as well as Snow White's. Then, you have S.W. pleading with him to go away; she feels that anybody who makes love to her is in danger of his life - the Prince doesn't care, won't leave. But get this menace - then when you see the Queen looking down from the window, you will feel that he is doomed - you see the panther eyes, and the pulling back of the curtain.

WALT: QUEEN, YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL 'TIS TRUE, BUT THERE IS ONE MORE FAIR THAN YOU!!
Queen: FAIRER THAN I? THEN SHE DIES.

Leave out the dialogue about so fair is S,W. that troubadours from far sing of her, etc.

WALT: I think, it would be a good idea to plant in both the title and the picture how so many have so mysteriously disappeared, who have been said to be more beautiful than the Queen.

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- Ham: Would you see any muttering on the Queen's part when she snaps the curtains?
- WALT: No. I think the way she sweeps across the room shows her anger, and the way we swell the music to a certain point - then as the Queen looks below, stop and go on with the next sequence.
- HAM: When the Queen is looking down, should she say: SHE WILL DIE?
- WALT: No. I think she should just see it, and then go to a cut back to her. I would like to keep going to cuts back of her.
- Keep the guards in shadow if you can - never see anything there but forms. You just go right by the guards. They could bring up the halberds up, and as the Queen passes, they could click their heals together.
- WALT: Instead of: FAIRER THAN I? YOU JEST! - would be better for: FAIRER THAN I? IF THIS BE TRUE, TIEN SHE SHALL DIE!
- DAVE: Why not have: FAIRER THAN I? IF THIS BE TRUE THEN SHE SHALL DIE. REVEAL HER NAME, and go right to Snow White instead of all this dialogue.
- BILL: That would be all right unless you wanted to prolong the mirror telling the Queen it is Snow White - if there is any value in suspense.
- DAVE: I don't see any value in the repetition of REVEAL HER NAME.
- DICK: What I miss in this sequence is the fact the mirror says that S.W. is the fairest of all - I don't feel that the Queen's menace has turned on S.W. I don't think there is anything in the introduction that makes the audience feel from now on S.W.'s life hangs on a hair. You must feel that the QUIEN is definitely going to take her revenge on S.W. I can't see it any other way. It would even make this sequence with the Huntsmen much stronger when she is so nicely sweet.
- WALT: That is the way I feel, too,
- DICK: I think we should play down the mirror, too, and not make him the dominant figure. In my mind he is a device. I don't see value in bringing out a conflict between the mirror and the Queen of YOU LIE! and all that. I think she has been dealing with this mirror for years. She might be surprised when the mirror says S.W. is the most beautiful, then the thought in the Queen's mind should be next - S.W. must die. She could then go on with her course with one idea in mind: to get Snow White. It builds up the Queen, too. You say she is very vain, but when you say she is so vain that her rivals in beauty have mysteriously disappeared - you prove her vanity. It is the extremes of her vanity that makes her so interesting. So, by taking out the conflict in this first scene between the Queen and the Mirror, I think the Queen could be built up more, and also build up our main idea more. Her vengeful nature, her one idea to be the fairest in the land - just hammer away on that.
- WALT: Upon that hinges the story - that is why S.W. is sent into the woods.
- DICK: I think the mirror becomes more interesting if he speaks as an oracle - just a machine that speaks the truth, that knows everything. He isn't interested in S.W. or the Queen - you ask him something - he answers it. The only time he should flare up is when she says I'LL BREAK YOU. It would become more dramatic for the mirror coming out of the monotone, with which he speaks in this first sequence, to a stronger voice when he flares up - it would give the mirror a feeling of strange force.
- JOE: The face in the mirror could be dimly disguised until it came to the part where he says: SHOW WHITE, then his face could be clear.

SEQUENCE 1B

- DICK: There are two ways of ending this sequence: one is - the mirror says: SNOW WHITE, and the Queen rushes to the window; the other - to have the Queen flare out with her hate - what she will do to the fairest of all, then she says: REVEAL HER NAME - the Mirror tells her to go to the window and look - she goes from the mirror to the window (with music behind it for suspense) and when she gets to the window she says: SNOW WHITE - then bang. The mirror could also say "Snow White", but the real climax of the scene is the word SHOW WHITE.
- WALT: I was just thinking - would it be better for the mirror to be in on this thing with her, plotting with her - whisper things in her ear. Like in Sequence 7A when she finds out that S.W. still lives, the Queen would say that she would send out several men to get her, and the mirror would advise her not to. But she wouldn't break the mirror in that case. It would save time for the Queen to think of things.
- DOROTHY: I think that would take the power away from the Queen.
- DICK: Here is a rough outline on the first sequence: The Queen asks who is the most beautiful of all, and the Mirror answers; FAIRED IS THY BEAUTY, MAGESTY, BUT I SEE A LOVELY MAID, SO FAIR IS SHE THAT A PRINCE HAS COME FROM A DISTANT LAND TO SEEK HER HAND. Give him one first long speech and get the explanation out of the way about the Prince and love, and have the Queen come back in a sneering way with one or two words about love and the Prince - then come to the point, something like: IS SHE MORE FAIR THAN I? - the Mirror answers: SHE IS THE FAIREST IN THE LAND, then the Queen, directly or indirectly, plants the idea strongly that anyone who is her rival will be in a bad way - then the Mirror warns her: IT IS WRITTEN ON THE SCROLL OF FATE THAT IF SHE TRIES TO KILL THIS GAL, SHE WILL DIE - then build up the Queen by having her defy fate, even though through the gods wrath that would throw lightning on her head she is going through to get rid of her rival. At the end of her speech where she defies fate and everything - then REVEAL HER NAME. You can plant that in directly or indirectly. In other words, First the explanation from the mirror that there is this fair maid and the thing about the Prince, then the Queen says: IS SHE MORE FAIR THAN I? - the mirror says: YES. The Queen's reaction is revenge, then the mirror warns her and she defies this warning, and defies fate - she is going through with her idea remaining the fairest in the land - come what may. Then she says at the end of that: REVEAL HER NAME, and she can either be directed to the window, or the mirror can say SNOW WHITE. In other words, leave out any conflict between the Mirror and the Queen, keep right to one idea.
- WALT: Wouldn't it be a good idea to be very obvious and direct with this thing, and then smooth it out, instead of so many indirect angles in the dialogue. I think we are trying to steer away from a lot of directness and being subtle in so many ways with this dialogue. I think the main point is to really put the stuff over to the audience, then straighten the wording around.
- DICK: I think any conflict with the mirror, or lengthy discussions with the mirror, hands the scene to the mirror and blurs the main point that we are trying to put over to the audience. The single idea of the Queen's terrific vanity and the fact that she doesn't have any rivals, and won't have then is our main point.
- WALT: If we use the mirror, he should be used to further the plot, or else as they have it in the Ames play where they merely let the voice sing out to let the Queen know, but we are trying to get something here to help the Queen so she won't have to be standing, talking to herself.

SEQUENCE 1B

- DICK: This warning I suggested wouldn't be long, but I think it gives her a good chance to make one good speech of about four lines - one powerful speech - it sort of gives her the scene, besides building her up a good deal. Even though it is written on a scroll of fate, or a book of doom that the gods have decreed - she is going to go through with it. And it builds up her arrogance too, if you want to put it that way.
- You can even bring in the thought that she isn't going to rest until one of them is dead.
- WALT: Let the mirror rhyme with what the Queen says.
- DICK: I think you should put something about the Prince in the opening.
- WALT: That is why we had the mirror tell the Queen that the Prince has come from somewhere to seek Snow White's hand. Have the Prince planted just before the Queen goes to the window.
- DICK: I think the audience would remember if the Prince were planted four or five lines back.
- BILL: The angle we took on this sequence originally, was that the Queen asks who is the fairest one of all, and she finds out for the first time that someone else is fairer than she, and she finally finds out that it is Snow White, and the Prince has come to seek her hand - the Queen is jealous.
- DICK: The point that occurred to me is that you infer that she has never seen Snow White before.
- WALT: I think the thing that comes in there when he says S.W. that the Queen should scoff at it - impossible - she is in rags - she has kept her as a scullery maid. That ties back and shows that the Queen has deliberately tried to keep Snow White from being beautiful by making her toil and slave.
- You have certain points to explain to move your story and you should write your dialogue to explain that. You are planting that this guy is a Prince, and you are planting that for the first time the Queen finds out S.W. is more beautiful than she, and you plant what fate lies in store for S.W. You should be very direct with it and develop it - then arrange your wording. As long as we are dealing with certain abstract things up there, you are not really coming down to the point - there is no real direct building for the audience. I think we should build first, and make our important points obvious.
- DICK: Snow White is the fairest in the land, and we want to plant what can expect will happen to S.W. because she is the fairest in the land, and the Prince down there is a minor point.
- WALT: No, it isn't a minor point. I think that, too, you should establish that there is a menace hanging over them now that the Queen has found out. The Prince really complicates it for the Queen, if she had known it sooner, but the mirror wouldn't tell her.
- You must plant that this guy is a Prince, and what will happen to S.W. The Queen should be surprised that S.W. is the most beautiful, because she has kept S.W. in rags slaving around the castle.
- BILL: I always visualized this sequence that the Queen for the first time finds out that there is someone more beautiful than she, regardless of what she has ever done before - maybe she has previously gotten rid of other rivals - she finds out that S.W. is more fair than she

SEQUENCE 1B

BILL; (cont.) and she looks out the window and finds out that S.W. is being wooed by the Prince, and then when you come back to her with the Huntsman you reveal her plans.

WALT: The main thing to establish is the menace right there. You want this to tie in with what the Dwarfs say, that she is an old witch.

It doesn't matter that she has had other killings.

DICK: I don't think it is necessary for the Queen to react with great surprise when she finds out S.W. is more beautiful than she. In your introduction you might say something about S.W. was so fair that the Queen feared that she might become so beautiful.

WALT: I like that FRUMPY SCULLERY MAID - FAIRER THAN I? The Queen could say that she had been trying to keep her as a scullery maid.
AW! TIS TRUE, QUEEN. THE PRINCE IS IN THE GARDEN, SEEKS HER HAND. WOOS HER (or something) AND IS GOING TO CARRY HER AWAY TO A DISTANT LAND.

ANOTHER QUEEN FAIRER THAN I? IT SHALL NOT BE - S.W. WILL DIE. Mirror: BUT TOO LATE, OH QUEEN.

WALT: When the face appears in the mirror, you might get the ripple effect like when you throw a stone in water, and reveal her face through the ripples.

It isn't bad that the Queen has been afraid that S.W. would grow beautiful - she could scoff at it at first.

Do you think we might have something between the Queen and the mirror where S.W. will be taken away and will be a Queen in another land? The idea that there shall be another Queen, that she is going to be the most beautiful Queen in all the land.

Mirror might say: IT'S TOO LATE, LOVE HAS TAKEN A HAND AND NOW SHE HAS TO DEAL WITH A QUEEN OF ANOTHER LAND.

DICK: I am afraid if you keep putting ideas in like that, that it wouldn't hold or be interesting. Stick to your main story points - one after another. I don't see so much explanation that the Prince will take S.W. away to another land.

WALT: The Queen has to ask quickly - she must do something at once. I would prefer planting that here, and not come back later and plant it.

DOROTHY: The menace is the big thing that is lacking here now.

HAM: Do you think it is all right to bring in the thought that she has killed others, and now there is another who is more fair than she?

WALT: Just so you plant that S.W. must die if she is more fair than the Queen.

Analyze it this way: The Queen goes to the mirror, like she consulted it everyday - she isn't going to let anybody become more beautiful than she, then she finds out that S.W., who she has kept as a scullery maid, is more beautiful than she, and today this Prince has come to seek her hand - the Queen scoffs at it at first, and when the mirror comes back and shows that it is true, then she plots what she will do. Build up to the point where she goes to look below in the garden, so we lead to Snow White and the Prince in the garden, and have the feeling of the Queen looking down.

DICK: I would suggest after we have written two or three versions that have a build up of ideas, that we make an organ track. I think we can

SEQUENCE 1B

DICK: (cont.) tell an awful lot with music.

WALT: I think you can tell right from the dialogue. There is still something lacking - it isn't direct enough.

DOROTHY: It seems to me a very important thing in this first sequence to decide what we want to have in the main title. You would know then what was repeated in this, and be strong on certain points.

WALT: Your main title should be written just like you were reading from a fairy book.

WALT: I like it when she says MIRROR MIRROR, etc., and with the usual answer of his to that would be like he had said it so many times - just sort of recites it - and then when he comes to the other part, he should punch his lines.

Could the Queen ask the usual question in a very nice way, expecting to get the usual answer, and again in 7A when she expects the usual answer she could get a shock again.

DICK: It would be a lighter way of handling it.

WALT: It would be better to have the slave in the mirror unwilling. He could talk some of his lines through his teeth.

Why don't you sort of get an outline on the thing, how we might carry the thing along - leading up to her down in the dungeon. That will be better than going ahead on the dungeon.

SEQUENCE 2B

- HAM: You can have the similarity of eyes between the Queen and the panther. You could be close on the panther, then go right up to the Queen on the same field.
- DAVE: I would see opening on the two of them in sort of a static pose - showing the similarity of eyes.
- WALT: In this sequence with the Huntsman, you have to plant what happens to the Prince - she has him put out of the way - he couldn't interfere with her plans. Then plant that S.W. is to be taken to the woods - she has to be disposed of in a way that it will not reflect on her; it is very easy for anyone to be lost in the woods and eaten by animals, but she tells the Huntsman to bring back her heart - she tells him, indirectly, to kill her.
- The punch in this sequence is where the Queen tells the Huntsman to bring S.W.'s heart back in the casket.

SEQUENCE 7A

- DICK: I would take out the long speeches of the mirror in this sequence. The Queen's reaction, to the mirror telling her that if she breaks him something will happen to her, would be that of arrogance: I DON'T FEAR YOUR CURSES - then she brings out the heart and says: LOOK AT THIS - HER HEART - the mirror laughs and says: THE HUNTSMAN TRICKED YOU - then the Queen comes up with the mirror to smash him - and the mirror says: BEWARE, OR YOU'LL LOOK LIKE THIS - the mirror pulls mask, and she smashes him - as the mirror falls the (Queen says: NOW LET'S HEAR YOUR CURSE. As she is walking away from the mirror, she is planning on what she will do to Snow White - she says: THIS TIME I WILL DO THE JOB MYSELF - she is then changing into a hag - her voices breaks in the middle to the HA HA HA, and she realizes what has happened.
- WALT: That is too subtle a way to have her change, Dick. The mirror just gets her so mad she can't resist it, and then after she smashed him, she realizes what she had done - then she gets afraid.
- DICK: Look at it this way: she isn't afraid when she smashed the mirror - I think it is even stronger if, for an instant, after she smashes the mirror that she isn't afraid, instead she gloats, but after being boastful and arrogant - then she changes.
- WALT: I think it should be more direct.
- DICK: That is pretty direct.
- HAROLD MILES: She could look down at her hands and see them diminish in size and become wrinkled.
- DICK: I think the high spot is where she begins to change into the hag. If you have too many of these heroic speeches and climax before, you are breaking the really high spot of the scene. Once more, it is all conflict between the Queen and the mirror, and it is unnecessary. I think, to predict the future - though it is interesting.
- HAROLD MILES: It seems to me as a pip of a touch where the mask is pulled down.
- DICK: The way it is built here it is, but I think all this has been built to an artificial climax because I think the important thing in the sequence is the changing of the Queen as the result from breaking the mirror, and I think that is interesting and dramatic enough for the climax of the sequence.
- WALT: After she smashes the mirror, and realizes what she has done, she then becomes afraid of what the mirror had said - afraid that she is going to change, maybe she tries to hide from it.
- DICK: Have you made up your mind that you want her to change when the mirror breaks?
- WALT: You never know until you work these things out. The way we have it now is the most direct way.
- DICK: In the old way where the Queen changes herself, we always discussed her as being more or less gay and kittenish - talking to the raven, but she is still the Queen. This way her personality has been changed so you can handle her most any way you wanted to.
- WALT: After her change she could then go for the poison - finds the recipe, and fade out on the recipe showing something abouts a DEATH-LIKE SLEEP and THE ONES SHE LOVES WILL BURY HER ALIVE, and have the Queen gloating over it, cackling, and when you come back to her again, she has the stuff brewing. She dips the apple in the greenish poison, and as she brings the apple up, it has the color of a blow-fly.
- We can get some good effects on the retort business. We had the stuff sobbing during the bubbling.

SEQUENCE 7A

- DICK: I would like to see the Queen arrogant after she smashes the mirror.
- WALT: You can work a lot of business with the retort stuff - working shadows, getting a lot of backviews of her working, and build it up to where she drinks the potion, and then the change. Get shots of her hands and face changing - she looks at her pet raven and scares him.
- I think our safest bet is to play for laughs - have her get a kick out of her changing.
- DICK: Even though you do play for laughs, behind these laughs there will be something pretty heavy and menacing.
- DICK: Do you end this sequence with her on shouts of revenge?
- WALT: You see what has happened to her, and then vengeance. She should blame it all on Snow White.
- DAVE: I would like to have it the longer way where she changes herself, if we can be direct with it.
- WALT: She is furious when she is down there in the sanctuary. She plans on what she will do - disguise herself. That way we could bring in what her disguise will be. She lights on this one disguise, then she goes through the business of fixing up the potion, then changes into an old hag, she is happy about it.
- The book can have the name of THE ART OF WITCHERY.
- You can have the raven look almost scared to death. He doesn't move much - just watches, and maybe he is sitting on an old sill, and let her shadow come over the raven at times.
- There might be something in these things boiling. When she puts in the powder for the change of her voice, in the fumes you could hear the old hag's voice cackling. Then she would pick up something for a hunchback, another thing as a touch of palsy, in the description, to create sympathy. During the transformation she could holler for her wart, then as the wart appears she would cackle.
- The face can change so it won't look so terrible, like when she is trying to sell the apple to S.W.
- I can see the Queen having fun, but I don't see her hopping around Like the MARX brothers.
- The talk down in the sanctuary could be in whispers.
- DICK: Even if the mirror doesn't change the Queen after she breaks the mirror, I still feel the laughing is strong.
- DOROTHY: You can use the curse and the cackling even if she doesn't change.
- DICK: If we use the longer version, couldn't we shorten the business with the Prince - leave him in the garden, and don't order his arrest, and then towards the end of the picture he looks for her - don't have him thrown in the dungeon.
- WALT: All it is, is one line.
- BILL: Dick means the scenes in the dungeon.
- WALT: We should show the Prince in the dungeon.

SEQUENCE 7A

- WALT: Just as the Queen is leaving the sanctuary, she stops and goes back to read the antidote, and then she goes to the dungeon where the Prince is chained and turns the water on.
- HAM: When the Queen is reading the recipe book, she should repeat the contents in some way. Anything of any importance in the whole story should be repeated.
- I think the part in this sequence that should be shortened is where she is deciding what disguise to use. I think as she goes down stairs that she knows what she is going to do. In other words, maybe this pacing back and forth should be taken out.
- WALT: I just sew the pacing back and forth to start the thing. She searches the raven, she says a few words, then lights on her disguise.
- DICK: Maybe you could have her change into the old hag quickly, then put most of the footage with her mixing the apple.
- WALT: You want to know what that apple does; you don't bring in the antidote at that time - bring it in the end just before she leaves and says: THE KISS OF ONE'S FIRST LOVE - she knows how to take care of that and goes to the dungeon to turn the water on.
- I think we can get a lot of interesting business with the Queen mixing the potion for her disguise, with the stuff bubbling and the crackling voice coming out of the bubbles.
- I think you can just leave the scene when the Queen finds the recipe for the poison apple and the effect it will have on S.W. - then go to S.W. and the Dwarfs, then come back to the Queen finishing preparing the apple.
- DICK: I think when the queen is mixing her disguise potion, that she can go away from the Queen character and go sort of crazy.
- BILL: We should bring in the "pedlar woman" idea for her disguise.
- WALT: She can have a book: 101 DISGUISES. She starts down the line of disguises until she comes to "pedlar woman".
- BILL: The Queen's character in the sanctuary would be cunning and diabolical.
- DICK: I think the Mirror's irritating laughter is a good thing, because it holds over after the mirror has been broken.
- HAM: On these cuts when the Queen is talking, we can be offstage on her and be on the mirror.
- DICK: I think when the Mirror says: YOU FOOL: THE HUNTSMAN HAS TRICKED YOU. IT'S THE HEART OF A PIG: the mirror would start laughing, which would madden the Queen.
- WALT: We had it at one time when the mirror said: A HEART LIKE THINE - A HEART OF A SWINE - then he laughed and imitated a pig.
- DICK: I think the mask business is good.
- BILL: The mirror could say: I WILL SHOW YOU THE ULTIMATE FATE, and pull the mask down showing a picture of death.
- I think the Queen's attitude would be one of arrogance: YOU LIE: then bang. I wouldn't have her frightened after she breaks the mirror, nor should she be worried down in the sanctuary.

SEQUENCE 7A

WALT: I like the mirror reflecting the true face.

BILL: Following this sequence we go to the entertainment sequence and where they go to sleep, don't we?

WALT: Yes. After S.W.'s death is all planned. After the entertainment sequence, we came back to her, and she is ready to leave, or have her on her way - then show the Dwarfs leaving for the mine.

Work a lot of shadows in the sanctuary with the Queen - Have steam come up in front of her, and you can see her behind it.

When you get the stuff boiling, you might get a "ka-choo" to come out of the bubbles.

BILL: If we use the version where the Mirror doesn't change S.W., should we have the prediction from the Mirror that if the Queen tries to kill S.W., that she will die?

WALT: I would change the whole thing.

WALT: The main things to bring out in this sequence are that she finds out that S.W., still lives in the forest with the little men, then she has to find another way to get rid of her, but now she is not going to leave it for anyone else to do - she is going to do it herself. Get some kind of a climax in this sequence as you would in 1B where the Queen sweeps across the room and pulls the curtains - have the climax in this sequence where she smashes the mirror, and decides she will do the job herself. Each spot should build to a climax.

HAM: Is there some way where the Mirror could tell the Queen that she is out of her power, that she will never be the most beautiful - then she breaks the mirror, and it is laughing at her. Also tell her that S.W. will remain the most beautiful.

WALT: Too much foreshadowing might remove the menace.

HAM: I think the laughter multiplying from the broken glass is good.

WALT: The mirror could be tickled because the Queen was outwitted by her own Huntsman: IT'S NOT S.W.'s HEART - IT IS A HEART OF A PIG.

The Queen could start to break the Mirror, and the mirror could tell her if she broke him it would bring the curse of 7 to her.

HAM: I would like to see the mirror dare her to break him. The head could come up closer telling her to dare to break him.

DICK: In that case, in the first sequence you would have to have the mirror sort of dislike her. He can't be too cold all of a sudden.

HAM: I like the feeling of an unwilling slave.

DICK: I like the idea when the mirror first appears to be an unwilling slave - he sort of sniffs around and says something about what crime has she up her sleeve today, and the Queen shushes him.

WALT: (1B) I like it when she says MIRROR MIRROR, etc., and with the usual answer of his to that would be like he had said it so many times - just sort of recites it - and then when he comes to the other part, he could punch his lines.

WALT: The mirror could tantalize the Queen in some way where the Queen will get so mad that she throws the box at him.