



Dir: David HAND / USA
Released in Britain: 1938
Running Time: 83 minutes
Colour: Technicolor
Estimated Attendance: 28 million

The third most popular film for British audiences is animated. But then this is no mere cartoon: this is Disney at his best. The film is simplicity itself, yet the devil is in the details: the affectionate characterisation of the seven dwarfs, the enduring songs and a journey through the enchanted forest that turns out to be no picnic.

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS

Director **David Hand**
 Producer **Walt Disney**
 Screenplay/Story **Ted Sears, Richard Creedon, Otto Englander, Dick Rickard, Earl Hurd, Merrill De Maris, Dorothy Ann Blank, Webb Smith**
 Director of Photography **Maxwell Morgan**
 Music **Frank Churchill, Lee Harline, Paul Smith**

Voice of Snow White • Adriana Caselotti
 Voice of Prince Charming • Harry Stockwell
 Voice of the Wicked Queen • Lucille Laverne
 Voice of the Magic Mirror • Moroni Olsen
 Voice of Sneezy • Billy Gilbert
 Voice of Happy • Otis Harlan
 Voice of Sleepy/Grumpy • Pinto Colvig
 Voice of Bashful • Scotty Matraw
 Voice of Doc • Roy Atwell

THE STORY

A Wicked Queen is jealous of the beauty of her stepdaughter, Snow White, and plans to have her killed. The huntsman who is charged with the deed cannot bring himself to do it, and Snow White escapes, terrified, into the forest. She flees through the dim wood – which her fears people with clutching hands, glowing eyes and evil beasts of prey – to fall, sobbing, on the ground. And then the sun strikes through the trees and the little forest creatures come out to welcome her. They lead her to the miniature, dishevelled home of the Seven Dwarfs, who work in a diamond mine. Snow White, with the help of the animals, tidies the house before they return. With the coming of evening the little bearded men – Grumpy, Sneezy, Happy, Bashful, Dopey, Doc and Sleepy – arrive home. After some hesitation they agree to allow Snow White to stay with them, although they fear the vengeance of the Wicked Queen.

Informed by her magic mirror of Snow White's escape, the Queen disguises herself as an old woman selling apples and takes poisoned fruit to the dwarfs' cottage. Snow White bites an apple and falls to the ground in the sleeping death to which the only antidote is love's first kiss. The dwarfs, warned by the animals, return too late and chase the Queen through a thunderstorm and over a precipice. The men build a shrine for Snow White in the woods where they keep watch through the seasons. A Prince who loved Snow White and had been seeking her hears of the sleeping maiden. He visits the shrine, recognises the Princess and kisses her. Snow White awakes, the dwarfs' tears turn to joy and 'they live happily ever after'.

WHAT THEY SAID THEN ...

It is difficult to find any flaws in this lovely film; there is beauty here and tenderness, fantasy and humour and, above all, a perfect understanding of a young child's dreams. The animation is almost perfect, giving, except on very rare



OSCARS

1 nomination, 0 winners

Music (Scoring): Leigh Harline (Score by Frank Churchill, Leigh Harline and Paul J. Smith)

1938 – SPECIAL AWARD:

Walt Disney for significant screen innovation

WHAT WON THAT YEAR (1937)

Actor: Spencer Tracy *Captains Courageous*

Actress: Luise Rainer *The Good Earth*

Directing: Leo McCarey *The Awful Truth*

Outstanding Production: *The Life of Emile Zola*

BAFTAS BEGIN IN 1947

Above The meticulously spectacular *Gone With The Wind*, the Technicolor mother of all romantic historical epics **Opposite page** changed the movies and the way they are marketed

occasions, the illusion of life. Snow White herself and the Prince are perhaps a little doll-like, but the gay little Disney animals, the Wicked Queen and the Seven Dwarfs are real 'living' creatures. There are certain incidents in the picture nevertheless which make this film unsuitable for young and nervous children. For older children and adults, however, it is impossible to imagine a film that can be more highly recommended.

WHAT THEY SAY NOW ...

The picture labelled 'the greatest film ever made' by the brilliant Russian director Sergei Eisenstein contains reserves of sweetness and horror that cannot be found in such potent quantities anywhere else in the Disney canon. Certainly the death of Bambi's mother, and to a lesser extent the murder of Simba's father in *The Lion King*, are traumatic for a young audience.

But *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* retains the power to astonish and unnerve young and old alike. From the moment Snow White sings 'I'm wishing ...' into a well, you know the songs will be enchanting, and they don't disappoint. The Queen is suitably dreadful, her old-hag alter-ego even more so. The poisonous apple, like Snow White's blood-red lips, throbs with Freudian overtones. The tomfoolery of the Seven Dwarfs is delightful without being cloying, and the activities of the woodland creatures keep the frame lively, and the eye busy. Only the Prince is blandness personified, but then he's just there to be Snow White's saviour, and her arm-candy.

CLASSIC QUOTE

Grumpy: 'Angel, ha! She's a female! And all females is poison! They're full of wicked wiles!'

SCENE STEALER

Snow White's expedition through the enchanted forest, with its tree branches that seem to grab at her, is one of the most disturbing sequences in Disney's work, and introduces genuine jeopardy into the largely whimsical atmosphere. Indeed, the power of the film lies in the constant friction between humour, represented by the Seven Dwarfs, and horror, as embodied by this sequence, and the appearances of the Wicked Queen, who suggests Joan Crawford on a bad day. The BBFC was so concerned that it slapped an 'A' certificate on the film, requiring all children to be accompanied by an adult. You can now discern the influence of the forest sequence on everything from *The Night of the Hunter* to *Repulsion* to *The Evil Dead*.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Walt Disney's first full-length animated feature – also the first US animated feature – employed 32 animators, 20 layout artists, 25 artists specialising in watercolour backgrounds, 65 effects animators, and 158 inkers and painters; 1,500 shades