

14 June 1960
120 E. 19th St.

Dear Jerome,

I liked "The Sand Castle" very much. Toward the end, I cried. This I take as auguring well for both of us. You asked, however, for specific suggestions. If I had a script I could make out-of-hand ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ criticisms about even more scenes than I can remember.

I think, in the beginning, when the camera focuses on the shell, the clashing of cymbals is trite. This happens twice. I am reminded of the commercial symbolism ~~XXXXXX~~ which usually accompanies Hollywood "spectaculars." I would make exactly the same criticism later in the film when the camera rises above the circle of people standing around the sand castle and there is an accompaniment of voices, sighing, on the sound-track.

Again at the beginning, I think the ~~XXXXXX~~ scene between the mother and her children is too long. The woman is stiff. The camera, as I remember, goes back and forth twice between the children and their mother. Once is enough.

I didn't like the scene in the dream sequence when the doll changes suddenly into the boy. Cardboard spirit talking to human boy destroys the illusion.

Also in the dream sequence when the indian comes to tell the knight he is wanted on the ~~XXXXXX~~ parapet, I don't think it is necessary for the indian to speak. Beckoning would be sufficient. This might do away with the clumsy business when the spirit of the shell tells boy to follow his friend.

Mabel Mercer's diction is not always clear.

The lines spoken by the lady in the tent with the bird-cage are not all necessary. When the sense of what she is doing is obvious, the dialogue should be out.

Why does the skin-diver get into the car at the end with the fisherman, as if they were friends? When the fisherman lost his rod, he offered the skin-diver money to retrieve it, as if they were strangers.

The ~~XX~~ policemen, I think, should be cut out. I doubt if the woman in the bikini would go to the extreme of asking police to arrest a little girl for borrowing a palette knife. Far-fetched. The knife had already been returned by the time the police arrive. Police have no business on beach anyway. Orange County on their sleeves places the beach. Until they arrive it could have been any beach, anytime, anywhere, ~~XXXXXX~~ outside ~~XX~~ time and place. Police in dream sequence might be replaced ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ by harlequins?

Unfortunately I did not have a chance to ~~XXXX~~ see the version with narrative. The film seemed to me poetic. Unless the narrative is also poetic, I think it would ~~disturb rather than~~

(wrote)

~~XXXXXX~~
weaken the force of the film. The little narrative that I did hear, except for one or two lines (i.e., about children ~~XXXXXX~~ turning deaf ears to parental warnings) seemed commonplace.

I realize these criticisms are not especially constructive, but they are the ones that occurred to me. Films I admire I usually go to see two or three times because the first time around I am carried away by the feeling and do not notice many details, like watching ice move on water and not being sure, for the first ten minutes, which way the ice is flowing or how fast or where to.

I appreciated the chance to see ~~XXXXXX~~ "The Sand Castle" and hope to see it again.

Regards,

Lewis



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