



Aron Warner

Producer

The original concept of *Shrek* was about an ogre wanting to be a knight but at that point it just didn't feel like he was a character we wanted to tell a story about, so we had to try and figure out another story and how we could best preserve the work that had already been done. Then we hit upon the idea that all Shrek really wants is his home back.

The story starts out with Shrek having this very simple objective but as the story unfolds he comes to realize that there's something more that he wants — something he never would have dreamed of having. I think that's one of the things that makes the movie so special.

Once we had worked out our opening scene with Shrek in his outhouse, we had a clear idea of how to approach the comedy and what we were trying to say. We were all brought up listening to and reading fairy tales, but not many on our team could really relate to them. With *Shrek* it was the comedy that drove the whole thing and we were lucky enough to have possibly the funniest group of storyboard artists ever assembled.

In the early days Jeffrey Katzenberg was very hands-on, always encouraging us and pushing us to make everything as good as it could possibly be. Jeffrey was our partner, our sounding board, our voice of reason and our jester. There were so many obstacles every day and we were trying to do something nobody had ever done before; but Jeffrey gave us the guidance we needed. For us, if we could make Jeffrey laugh or make him feel something, we knew we were in a good place. The great thing about *Shrek* was that because we were



at Pacific Data Images, we were the "ugly step-sister" of DreamWorks Animation; we were flying under the radar and left to our own devices. We had Jeffrey when we needed him, but he let us do our own thing and let us find our own voice.

All we were trying to do was make a good movie. We weren't thinking, "Let's make a statement about fairy tales." We didn't set out to differentiate *Shrek* from the Disney style. We were just going with what we felt was entertaining, what made us laugh and what felt right to us. There was a conscious effort for us to tell a story that we could relate to and I guess we weren't people who naturally related to traditional Disney films or fairy tales.

It was still very early on in the evolution of computer generated movies and we were facing problems that nobody had ever tackled before. One of the great things about DreamWorks was

"We basically took every fairy tale in the book and turned it on its side. Nothing is sacred; every fairy tale gets roasted. These characters are ripe for parody because they're part of the cosmic consciousness, so to speak."

ARON WARNER, PRODUCER

