



## Two Guys Named Joe: Master Animation Storytellers Joe Grant & Joe Ranft (Disney Editions Deluxe (Film))

By John Canemaker

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One Joe was in his ninety-seventh year when he died in 2005; the other Joe died the same year at age forty-five. Both died before their time. This book explores the interplay between personal creativity and the craft of animation storytelling, as seen through the lives and art of two of its greatest practitioners: Joe Grant and Joe Ranft.

Grant and Ranft were unique influences on storytelling at two major studios during important periods in the history of animation. Joe Grant, in fact, straddled two eras. A gifted newspaper caricaturist, he contributed ideas for Mickey Mouse and Silly Symphony shorts as well as classic masterworks like *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*; *Pinocchio*; *Fantasia*; and *Dumbo*. As Walt Disney's confidant, Grant played a leading role in defining Disney's pioneering animation legacy. He returned to the studio at eighty-one after a fortyyear hiatus, his creative spirit and abilities undiminished, and made significant contributions to *Beauty and the Beast*; *Aladdin*; *Mulan*; and *The Lion King*, among others.

Joe Ranft built on the traditions of the past forged by Grant and others to become the top animation storyboard artist of his generation, working on *Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas*; *The Brave Little Toaster*; *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*; *James and the Giant Peach*; *The Little Mermaid*; and *Beauty and the Beast*, among other films. As one of Pixar's creative founders and a close friend of John Lasseter's, Ranft had a major influence on the studio's signature originality, warmth, and irreverent humor, through his contributions to *Toy Story*; *Toy Story 2*; *A Bug's Life*; *Monsters, Inc.*; and *Cars*.

Grant and Ranft were inventive and imaginative, with keen insight into characters, and they inspired colleagues and entertained audiences around the world. Although their combined careers spanned the Golden Age of traditional animation that began in the 1930s at The Walt Disney Company and became the present digital age at Pixar Animation Studios, their extraordinary contributions remain largely unknown to the public.

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### Editorial Review

#### About the Author

John Canemaker is a tenured professor and director of the film animation program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. In 2006, his film *The Moon and the Son: An Imagined Conversation* won the Academy Award for best animated short. He has written numerous books on animation, including *The Art and Flair of Mary Blair*, *Paper Dreams: The Art and Artists of Disney Storyboards*, *Before the Animation Begins: The Art and Lives of Disney Inspirational Sketch Artists*, and *Walt Disney's Nine Old men and the Art of Animation*.

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