

It is dawn, sunlight is slowly creeping into Meryl's room during this scene.

The camera pans down following an admit one ticket to the circus as it floats to the ground. It lands in her room and she finds it.* I think it would be nice if she noticed the ticket and had to fully make an effort to catch it as a way to signify that her true dream is hard to get a hold of.

Her room is full of props (like posters of Trinket and the circus) that indicate that she is a circus fan but at this point in the story she is dressed normally. (Suggestion: Meryl could twirl and change into her clown outfit when she is starting to imagine/fantasise about the performance which she cannot attend) probably use this scene to indicate that she is weighed down by her current life/something is causing her to feel upset)

She can't go to the circus to use the ticket but she imagines the performance (something like the sketch below) while she looks at the big top outside of her window in the distance. (Can use this opportunity to add as many circus people as you want.)



A big Meryl looking at the tiny circus to keep the surreal feeling up in this scene (pan out to show this to conclude this scene)

After this, she sees the real trinket outside her window and she goes downstairs to meet her.

A panel could come up with text saying "please dance for me" (like a silent film)

And Trinket will dance

We could use one of those day and night wheel things to show the passage of time, showing that Meryl and Trinket met up and this happened for a few nights in a row before the next important scene. During this bit, trinket has to be shown getting progressively more and more tired the more she dances for Meryl instead of resting.

Diagram just to show that in the day they're in separate locations.

The next important event is the scene where Meryl and trinket switch places. My suggestion is that this happens at night, she's so tired and Meryl asks if she is okay (using the same silent film panel type thing). But Trinket dances anyway and collapses into a heap on the ground. The little guys carry her away and put a quilt over her (first appearance of the quilt cape she wears in her non stage design) and Meryl gets her new outfit so she can fill Trinket's role while she is recovering.

Can have a split view of what's going on in the ring and what's going on backstage this time to parallel /as a call back to what the day and night sequence was like maybe. So meryl would be backstage resting and trinket would start off being all okay but soon struggle to keep up with the repairs and such.

When Meryl starts struggling, the focus shifts to her though.

End animation: Trinket coming back and they're about to start another performance
(I was thinking maybe it would be cool if we had like, a ticket flying away here so it can loop back to the start?)

Suggestions

In the first scene/Meryl's room, there should be something to indicate her family expectations and pressures she feels, which indicates to the viewer her reasoning for not joining the circus.
This could be pictures on the walls, certificates etc.

I think we should have Meryl look into a tiny model circus, which pans inward and becomes the real circus, where we meet Trinket for real. I like this order more as it ends the scene in Meryl's room and transitions us towards the next scene where we discover the other struggles.

We see a few shots of Trinket performing, with little guys as adoring fans, and she seems happy, but as she turns to the darker backstage her smile falls.

Could have the moment of her 'cracking'

Need to find a way to bring Trinket to Meryl

Giving Trinket a reason to be there - maybe she is just wandering the streets to clear her head, and passes Meryl's house who shows the sign. So she still returns even though she's exhausted leading to her collapsing.

When the pivotal moment comes for her to switch places, there could be shadow figures looming over Meryl or their voices in her head, which she decides to disregard

Is the way they switch by Meryl hiding under the quilt on the stretcher instead? So the little guys don't realise they have the wrong person?

Or is it like an agreed decision for her to stand in?

wait it could be like

little guys are like where's trinket? and they look around and the show is about to start again so meryl has to step up there

I also think Trinket should just be asleep in Meryl's room whilst Meryl is off taking her place. Or it might get a little too confusing/convoluted.

Obviously we'll then have a transformation scene for Meryl and she does the night's performance instead

Need to figure out how to end it and re-unite them from here

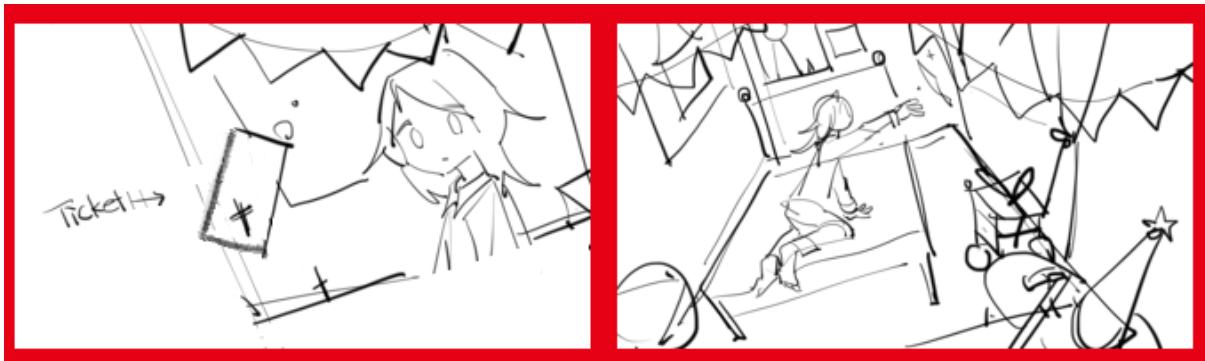
Maybe Trinket comes back with a blanket over her shoulders and watches Meryl perform in the wing. From there they become a duo instead

Basically:

Meryl longing in her room > Trinket performing in the Circus happily > she goes backstage to be sad > at night she walks and finds Meryl and performs for her > repeat until she collapses and Meryl takes her place > Meryl performing in the Circus > Trinket recovers and comes to watch > in the end they're together ?

Updated script description:

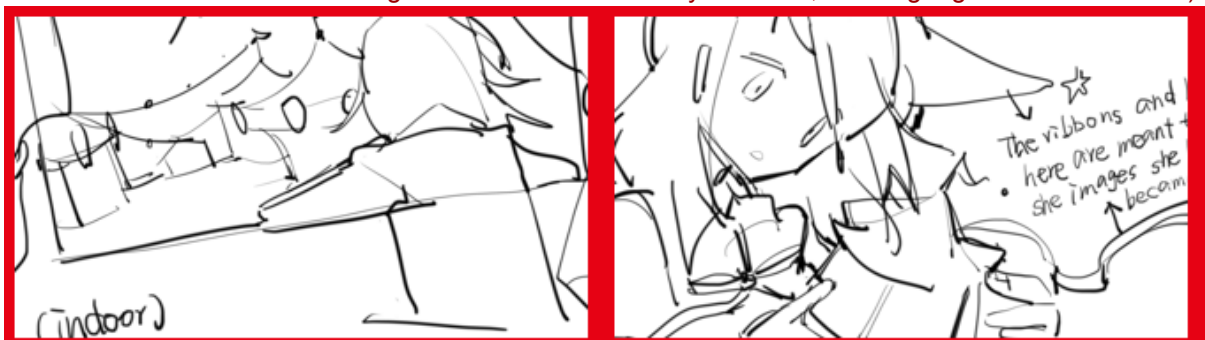
Opening scene we still begin with the camera following the ticket as it falls but in this version, the ticket never enters Meryl's room. Instead, it always drifts/remains outside of it.



At this time she will be at her desk working (change the bed in Yifei's board to a chair and a desk. I will make a floorplan of the room later). Her room is full of certificates and 'motivation' posters. Meryl tries but struggles to catch the ticket and she fails. This symbolises that her dream is hard to grasp etc.

The ticket travels towards the circus now and this directs the viewer's eyes in the same direction as both the ticket and Meryl's gaze as she looks outside at the real circus.

To transition to the next scene, she could reach out towards the circus, and 'grab' it so the little tent is in her hands. (Using Yifei's boards as a guide, my suggested transition would be between these 2 boards. Can have her outfit change to make it more fantasy-like here, from night gown to circus outfit)



From here, when Meryl is looking at the tiny model circus, it pans inward and becomes the real circus, where we meet Trinket for real. I like this order more as it ends the scene in Meryl's room and transitions us towards the next scene where we discover the other struggles.

We see a few shots of Trinket performing, with little guys as adoring fans, and she seems happy, but as she turns to the darker backstage her smile falls.

Could have the moment of her 'cracking'

After the show Trinket wanders the street in an attempt to clear her head. Meryl spots her from the window and sneaks downstairs to come see her. When she sneaks out, this could be the first time we see the shadowy figures that you suggested.

The second that Trinket sees Meryl her entire demeanour changes back to that of a happy performer. Meryl asks Trinket to dance for her.



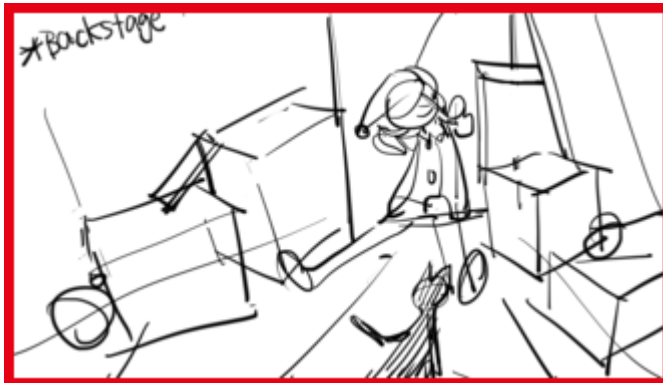
We need to think of a creative and quick way to show that this nightly meeting happens several nights in a row. (During these meetings Meryl will just be in her pyjamas, Idea: during this 'montage' we could show Meryl using her spare time to actually make her circus outfit for real, the one that appears for the first time in the tent fantasy)

Anyway, the next scene will be all of the little circus guys wondering where Trinket is since the show is about to start again but she isn't there.

Since Meryl is outside waiting for Trinket to meet her after the show, here she will be holding the finished costume in her arms since she wants to show it to her.

Meryl hears the commotion and peeks inside the tent to see what's going on. Then she steps up, and instead of the magical girl-like transformation that we see in the fantasy, she could just simply put her hat on normally but with determination. (would be funny to maybe have her apply the tear makeup here too like war paint lmao)

Audience is also like where is Trinket? Meryl starts performing anyway (the tears turn to stars here) and it is a success. Can zoom out after this to show that Trinket is in Meryl's room resting in her bed.



'Montage' scene 2: Meryl struggling more and more in her new role in the circus. (star makeup dims here) Again we need ideas on how to depict this in the animation since we also need to show Trinket recovering here too I think.

Just when she is about to become overwhelmed, Trinket comes back fully recovered and ready to help her out.

End the animation with the two of them together about to perform.

Updated script (again: 15.03.2023)

Little guys setting up the Circus for the day (in the extended cut can have them 'wake up' like how toys do in toy story i think?)

It transitions to nighttime when everything's in full swing, and Meryl uses this as an opportunity to sneak in (in the extended version we can show that she comes from somewhere that is boring)

Would still have the imagery of her parents/other relatives etc shadow looming over her (thinking about audio design, in Off the game the queen's sound bit says 'clean your room' in French whispering, we could get some friends to say some random parenting phrases and then distort them so this bit has more ambience)

She jingles across the floor between two boxes

During Meryl's sneaking, there is a brief moment that hints towards Trinket's tiredness/agitation in the background

Tiny circus fantasy can happen during the middle of the real performance, showing that during the act of watching it for real she gets sucked into the her dream further and she reaches out and 'grabs' a tiny tent and transform (start transformation here)

(in the extended version we could possibly go down the path of her trying to find trinket backstage during an intermission/after the show entirely to get her to dance for her)

Then we can have the repetition of her asking trinket every night after the show to come dance for her

before she sees her collapse.

Her snapping out of the fantasy can be prompted by the fact that the trinket on stage collapses

Then her transformation can complete itself when she jumps on stage to take her place, the act of putting on clumsy makeup being the final thing she does before she herself starts performing

Can have Trinket recover in the audience and looking at the performance go well but then suddenly the quality dips because Meryl gets overwhelmed. **With every night that passes, the performance gets worse and worse.**

Trinket can come back to help Meryl and they do the show together in the end.

End film

Basically how I'm imagining things:

The little guys are setting up the circus in the morning, at some point we see Trinket hanging around being sad. It transitions to nighttime when everything is in full swing, we pass the ticket booth and concessions etc and see the big top in all its glory. Meryl is among the set-up area, trying to sneak inside, and manages to duck under the flaps

Trinket performs tricks and the audience is like wow nice, including Meryl

We somehow include the transition where Meryl reaches to a model big top

> She reaches out and clasps the model big top in her hands, which acts as a catalyst that induces her dream/hallucination, although it's ambiguous how much of it is real

Trinket comes up to the audience and invites Meryl to join in the performance. As they swing, Meryl transforms into her clown costume. They finish the routine and land

[...]

- Needs to address why Trinket is tired
- Breaks Meryl back to 'reality'

Meryl is shown sitting on the seats again, clown makeup smeared and everyone having gone home, maybe still holding the model? But she notices Trinket still lingering who winks at her*

*for this i imagined her looking down at the tent model and a tiny trinket pops out and winks, just for the extra surreal feeling

(essentially end with a reprise of the tent grab scene(?))

*When she snaps out of this, back to nightgown outfit
She goes to see trinket*

Dance for me trinket

(repetition existed bc of punchinello, could possibly imply this more strongly in the extended version, short version has no need for this due to prior setup that trinket is tired)

Meeting Trinket

Meryl sneaks in merely to watch the circus for once

Trinket is there performing

Meryl follows Trinket backstage, maybe to express her admiration or get an autograph

But this is when Trinket could collapse

And Meryl needs to take her place

Occurs during intermission of the show?

Dream ambiguity

Changes 19.03.23:

Including the switch so it feels more true to Punchinello

Change my board so that Trinket lands from trapeze (shown via shadow over the audience), and comes up to Meryl

They start performing together

During said performance, Meryl and Trinket switch places

They switch screen sides (shown by dial thing) and Meryl transforms and drops Trinket

Trinket lays asleep on the floor and is carted away by Charlotte Car

Meryl continues to perform

Clown makeup smear scene

Ends with her holding the tiny circus again, alone on the benches

Trinket pops up

It still starts with the whole setting up the Circus thing, but shows Trinket asleep among the storage as the opening shot. Then shows all the little guys and the Circus in full swing. Meryl sneaks in and Trinket performs etc etc