



Mouse Under Glass: Secrets of Disney Animation and Theme Parks

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Offers a chronologically arranged look at the thirty animated Disney films, as well as the development and growth of the Disney industry and theme parks

Mouse Under Glass: Secrets of Disney Animation and Theme Parks Details

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Tracey says

I borrowed this from my brother's girlfriend to continue my behind-the-scenes Disney reading.

As the subtitle indicates - this book discusses each Disney animated feature (up to *Tarzan*) in terms of the original story source, how it was altered for the movie, bloopers, hidden elements & cutting room floor tidbits, as well as what, if any, impact the movie has or had on the theme parks. Since music is such an integral element of every Disney animated feature, there is usually a discussion of the songwriting process for the movie as well.

The history of the Disney company, with its ups and downs is neatly encapsulated in this timeline, and I enjoyed getting an insider's view of moviemaking in particular and Disney specifically. The sidebars and quizzes are a fun addition. Koenig does cite his sources in a general manner, as well as specific items for each movie. There is an index as well.

Recommended for Disney fans or for anyone interested in the world of animated features.

Debbie says

This book has some really interesting parts, like about what the original stories were before they were "Disneyfied". It was neat to read what the original Beauty and the Beast fairy tale was. I enjoyed reading about the history and making of some of my favorite Disney movies. I admit I didn't read this cover to cover because the older Disney movies didn't interest me much. I'd recommend this to people who like learning trivia and fun facts. It's a good read if you love Disney a lot. David Koenig is a great author and an expert on Disney.

Amanda Kay says

This book is for you if you: love Disney Animation and classic movies, respect Walt Disney and his imagination, and are fascinated by the company. This book is not for you if you: think Disney is perfect, dislike Disney and are looking for reasons the company should have failed, or are in some other way the Scrooge of animation.

Koenig structures this book into sections, then the sections into small chapters, each providing priceless information (or 9.99 worth of information...) about Disney Animations string of movies from Snow White to The Hunchback of Notre Dame (in the original text). It does skip some films (The Black Cauldron), but it is chocked full of interesting details, fun anecdotes, and open ended research. You will not read this book and feel you have mastered Disney animation and it's history. You should leave this book with a need to know more, an interest in certain films or animators, or an all around appreciation.

A solid 3.75 stars, a fast read, and a hell of a good time.

Bookworm007 says

The moment I flipped through this at the library, I knew it was gonna be good. Turns out, I was more than right. This book was really interesting and gives really detailed explanations about the Disney animated movies. I, for one, found it really hard to put down, as I love everything Disney VERY much. It was a spectacular book because the author included categories such as "Plot Holes", "Bloopers", and "Hidden Images". The plot holes really make you think a bit about the movies while the bloopers and hidden images tests your memory. This book also explains a lot on how the final movies were made the way they were and the different possibilities the Disney staff came up with.

A great and interesting book, recommended for all Disney lovers! ..or just people who like to pick out mistakes and stuff :P

Elizabeth says

This book brought to light all the carefully kept secrets Disney has held for succeeding in animation and amusement park attractions. I (a self-proclaimed Disney fan) have never gone this far behind the scenes of how the "classics" were made and how Disney might have been. The politics astounded me. They take so much care on the outside in being "the happiest company on earth," but below the surface they're desperately trying to hide their own personal villains.

What I like the most about this book is how simple Disney's winning formula really is. Post-Walt animators thought the formula was wondering "What would Walt say?" when really the key is asking "Is this the absolute best idea?" and listening to what your audience wants. This explains (to me) why 1968-84's animated features were stale bread compared (for the most part) to past and future Disney cuisine.

I also didn't realize how many animators, directors, producers, etc. left Disney to create or join other companies. Big companies like DreamWorks, Fox and Warner Bros. lured away some or in worst cases most of the Disney staff.

It's true that you learn something new about Disney every day, whether good or bad.

Adela says

This is an interesting book. It provides a brief history of each Disney animated feature film, from Snow White to Tarzan. Unsanctioned by the Walt Disney Company, Mouse Under Glass does rely on interviews with animators, musicians, and others who were involved first-hand in the development of many of the films discussed in the book.

Some of the fun and interesting things the book presents are:

- the original story (if there is one), followed by the Disney version
- the inside workings of collaboration (or lack thereof) that go on behind the scenes
- plots, casting, and music for early versions of many of the films
- bloopers, hidden images, and animators' inside jokes that can be found within the movies
- reactions from the public, which isn't always what you would expect it to be

I enjoyed this book, and learned a lot of interesting tidbits and factoids. It is an easy read, with only a few pages devoted to each movie (which can have the effect of leaving you wanting more).

Kattie says

Behind the scenes stories, goofs and how the individual Disney movies came to be. If you are a fan of animation or a film buff, you will enjoy this book. Each section starts off with the original story and follows with how it was transformed into the story you see on the screen, how it was reacted to, what was cut from the film, plot holes, bloopers, and if it translated to an attraction at any of the theme parks.

There was a number of interesting facts and stories in this book, and the stories are all from interviews with people who worked on the films. It could be seen as a "Behind the scenes" view of the Disney animated pictures.

Really interesting read.

Andi says

It's a shame on how fast I read this book and yet on how much I already knew. I blame it on when this book came out (97) and how much the internet has evolved since then. :/

Still, it was a really interesting book about how these movies came together and what happened after Walt Disney died. There was some really gossipy portions during the 70's. Which I think, in my opinion, made up for what I already knew.

Still, read the author's other Disney books and save this one for the last.

Riley Giles says

Mouse Under Glass: Secrets of Disney Animation & Theme Parks by David Koenig is a book that gives the secrets to Disney productions and animations. It starts off with an introduction to Disney's "secret recipe" to their success which is the mentality of what can they do better to work on previous ideas. The book is then broken up into sections to tell the reader about the original tale, how they "Disneyfied" it, plot holes, bloopers, strange reactions, and how it could have inspired an attraction at a theme park.

David Koenig received his degree in Journalism from California State University of Fullerton. He wrote his first book Mouse Tales: A Behind-the-Ears Look at Disneyland, and then followed it with Mouse Under Glass: Secrets of Animation & Theme Parks and More Mouse Tales: A Closer Peek to Backstage at Disneyland. His book Mouse Under Glass: Secrets of Animation & Theme Parks follows the many productions that have brought Disney to fame. How their "cooking book" to success is much simpler than what others think and gives additional facts for each film that have made into their own Disney fiction.

The book is written in a 1st person point of view giving opinions and facts to the reader. This point of view helps to give personal in site and lets the readers know that the author does give his opinion every now and then but backs it up with facts that they have found. The tone of this book is informational because it tells us the original tale and how the writers at Disney decided to change it to add a story with a moral message. For example, he said "What makes for great storytelling is both a great story and great telling" (17). Koenig's style is to inform the reader about Disney's secrets of animation and movies and how it became successful.

The author uses symbols from the Disney era and then explains them. Usually giving facts that the average person may not know.

The author's purpose in writing this book was to give the readers a perspective on why only Disney was successful when it came to animation. How their "secret formula" pushed the writers to continuously look for the best in an idea even if the idea was considered amazing, in other words to try and impress Walt Disney. He also stated some secrets someone may see at a theme park, "such as the icons on the large power coil in front of the Magic Kingdom's Alien Encounter" (188). This book was organized in an introduction about the overall Disney recipe and then broken up into sections for each movie.

This book was very different that regular nonfiction books and I would classify it as a "reader beware". This is because the book is not a story, it gives a background of the Disney recipe as the author calls it, and then it goes into different tales. Each tale gives information on the original, the Disney version and additional information that the reader may not know. This book is not for readers that want a story but rather want to know more particular information about multiple stories.

Bayley says

A fun book, but not as good as Koenig's others. He's a much better storyteller than historian, which is why his anecdotal Mouse Tales books work so well and his more historic Mouse Under Glass just doesn't flow as well. Not to mention the whole cookbook analogy seemed kind of forced and irrelevant. But nevertheless, I did learn many fun things about Disney films, although the book skips over some of the more obscure Disney films, which in my opinion are the most interesting to learn about, like The Three Caballeros, Make Mine Music, The Black Cauldron, etc. But its still a fun read.

Ted says

Despite the name Mouse Under Glass: Secrets of Disney Animation and Theme Parks this fantastic book is actually a quick guide to almost every classic Disney animated feature.

I really like this book. I read it once through and I go back and read a relevant chapter when I rewatch a classic Disney film.

One chapter covers each of the chosen classics. Each chapter describes what the Disney version is based on and gives a detailed summary of the original work. Then the Disney version is looked at by highlighting changes from the original work, what went into the making, and some behind the scenes drama. The next section covers how successful the movie was. There are a few other parts to each chapter the contain interesting trivia.

The book, covers up to 1999's Tarzan, but mentions a few more recent movies in the last chapter.

It seems like a lot of work went into this book and I'm glad I found it.

Jeff says

This one is fun, as it's chapters are actual movies the Disney company did. It explains the inspiration for the animated film, outlines changes to the original stories the Disney company made, explains some deleted

scenes or animators easter eggs (people get drawn in or little pieces are thrown in by the animators) and it's an easy read. I find myself checking it out everytime I throw an old Diney cartoon in the DVD player. Total changes your perspective on some of them.

Sean Wicks says

David Koenig has written several Disney behind-the-scenes books, most notably MOUSE TALES and MORE MOUSE TALES (I have only read MORE...so far) which give an all-encompassing look at the inner workings of Disneyland.

Here Koenig tackles the crown jewel of the Disney empire - the Animated features. One-by-one each feature starting with SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS gets a full chapter that begins with an outline of the original source material, followed by the Disney development of the final film - including elements which didn't make it past the development or testing stages - a list of (perceived) plot holes, bloopers and hidden images (or "Easter eggs"), then ending with the critical and public reception and what impact in terms of rides, attractions or presence each film has had on the theme parks (again even including abandoned ideas and outline the evolution of many of them over time).

Not every feature gets a dedicated chapter. Fun and Fancy Free, Melody Time (both which really are just low-rent cousins to Fantasia), The Adventures of Ichabod Crane and Mr. Toad and the Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh are relegated to minor mentions perhaps because they are essentially short films compiled together to make a feature, and Saludos Amigos, The Three Caballeros, The Black Cauldron and The Rescuers Down Under for some reason again just get mentions and not dedicated chapters (maybe for space?). In addition, the live-action/animated hybrids Mary Poppins, Bedknobs and Broomsticks, Pete's Dragon and Who Framed Roger Rabbit make the cut.

Each section of the Disney animation period is prefaced with an overview of what was going on in the studio and the animation department at the time, and these are much stronger than the separate film sections which eventually feel tiresome and repetitive. It is obvious that Koenig is most passionate about the theme park rides as those seem to be stronger than his breakdown of the movies themselves. His perceived "plot hole" gaffes sometimes feel as though he is reaching and missed the point of the fact that it's a animated film and some creative license is taken for gags and characterization (one for instance - why would the prince that is transformed into the Beast answer his own door and meet the Gypsy who turned him into a Beast when he has a staff of servants. I mean, the opening narration never actually SAYS he opens his own door. Again this and many of the other observations aren't all that necessary compared to the hidden items and bloopers).

Some of the movies feel like they get shorted. Like for instance P.L. Travers' interference in the making of Mary Poppins gets a paragraph or so, even though thanks to the recent SAVING MR. BANKS we all know that it was quite an ordeal. The Lion King as well - when released, the highest grossing animated film of all-time - gets only a few pages whereas Aladdin and Beauty and the Beast get more real estate.

I think what makes his theme park books more interesting is that many of the stories he covers - oral and otherwise - are simply not well known, while the production and history of the Animated films has been covered countless times in other books, not to mention that the films themselves are readily available for viewing in theaters, on TV, on Disc and now through Digital Applications like Disney Movies for the iPad. A lot of this stuff is already out there and most Disneyphiles have it covered and beyond.

Released in 1997, the final feature covered in the book is the 1996 film THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME, so nothing is covered from HERCULES through FROZEN (of course not the fault of the book - just pointing it out) and no mention of Pixar which at that point had only released TOY STORY. Then again this is about the DISNEY animation studios, and the impact of TOY STORY and PIXAR at that point was far from being felt, so not faulting the book for that either.

Worth reading if you want to get all the information you can about the Disney animated features, however almost better as a resource that is digested when you view one of the films and feel like getting the back-story on it rather than sitting down and reading it all the way through like I just did.

Lady Natasha says

Good for a skim read.

Krystal says

A bit outdated, Koenig presents an interesting and straight-forward look at Disney animation and what made it tick through the mid-1990s. I liked the format of the book - each movie is presented separately with a synopsis of the original story, the Disney version storyline, hidden images, bloopers and theme park tie-ins. The book ends on a high note, the end of the second golden age but it would be interesting to see what Koenig would say about the lackluster movies that followed and the new direction the studio is currently heading in. A little harsh if you can't stand any criticism towards the Mouse, but a true look at how Disney Animation develops behind the scenes.
