



# HOW HAS CHANGED OVERTIME

By Lucy Baldock

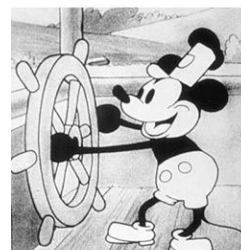
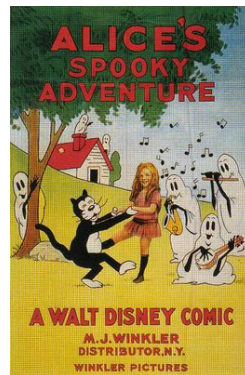


## Introduction to Disney

There is a long history behind Disney and many surprising facts that not many people know. Over the years Disney has evolved as a company and their films evolved with them, there are many reasons for this. So why and how has Disney changed? I have researched into Disney from the beginning to see how the company started and how they got their ideas. This all lead up to what happened in the company including the involvement of pixar, and how the Disney films changed in regards to the content and the reception. Now with the relevant facts you can make up your own mind about when Disney was at their best.

Walt Disney Studios was founded in 1923 by brothers Walt Disney and Roy O. Disney. Originally Disney was called 'Disney Brothers cartoon studio' that produced a series of short animated films called the Alice Comedies. The first Alice Comedy was a ten minute reel called Alice's Wonderland. In 1926 the company name was changed to the Walt Disney Studio. Disney then developed a cartoon series with the character Oswald the Lucky Rabbit this was distributed by Winkler Pictures, therefore Disney didn't make a lot of money. Winkler's Husband took over the company in 1928 and Disney ended up losing the contract of Oswald. He was unsuccessful in trying to take over Disney so instead started his own animation studio called Snappy Comedies, and hired away four of Disney's primary animators to do this. Disney planned to get back on track by coming up with the idea of a mouse character which he originally named Mortimer but when Lillian (Disney's wife) disliked the name, the mouse was renamed Mickey Mouse. The design of Mickey Mouse was altered slightly, and the character starred in several Disney films. The first Disney sound film that starred Mickey was Steamboat Willie which was released in November 1928. Steamboat Willie became popular immediately and the success was not only due to the appeal of Mickey Mouse as a character but also because of this being the first cartoon to feature synchronized sound. In December 1929 the Walt Disney Studios partnership was reorganized as a corporation renamed Walt Disney Productions, Limited. Walt Disney and Lillian owned 60% of Walt Disney Productions and Roy owned 40% of Walt Disney Productions. The New York Mirror was the first newspaper to publish the Mickey Mouse comic strip. Mickey Mouse is a primary symbol of the Walt Disney Company. Disney is best known for the products of the Walt Disney Film Studio which is one of the most popular and largest studios in Hollywood.

The children's household tales also known as Grimm's fairy tales is a collection of German Fairy tales first published in 1812 by the brothers Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm. The first volume contained 86 stories and were criticized by the public for the subject matter and information included as they were seen as not being suitable for children. Disney later produced animated films using some of the stories in the Grimm's fairy tales such as Rapunzel, Cinderella, Snow white etc. However Disney changed the plots slightly to make it more suitable for children.



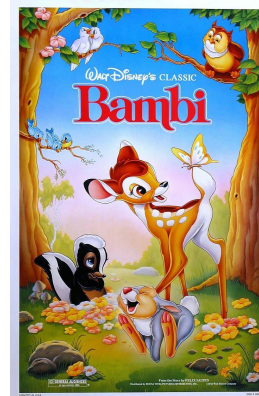
## **Facts and Information about Old Disney Films**

You have most likely seen or heard about old Disney films such as Snow White, Bambi, Alice in Wonderland, and many more. However I can bet you don't know all the facts about these films and how well they were received at the time.

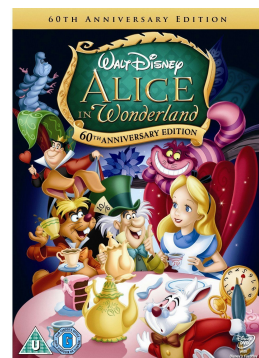
“Snow white and the Seven Dwarfs” is a Disney animated film released in 1937 based on the Grimm Fairy tale Snow White. This was the first full length animated feature film that earned the record of highest grossing sound film at the time. “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” became so popular it was released several times theatrically and ranked in the American Film Institute's list of the 100 greatest American films. The film took 3 years to create due to changing the plots, approach, and characters. The Seven Dwarfs are the characters that appealed to Walt Disney for the potential of gags in the story, in the original fairy tale the Dwarfs were not given names or personalities which gave the Disney crew the opportunity to individualise the Dwarfs. There were 50 potential names that were chosen from through a process of elimination. The leader of the Dwarfs was named Doc whilst the rest of the Dwarfs were named after their character traits. The plot follows a princess called Snow White who escapes her wicked stepmother (the evil queen) who is jealous of her beauty. Snow hides out with the seven dwarfs that later become her friends. Walt Disney was inspired by several films such as Romeo and Juliet, German expressionist films, and Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” is the oldest Disney film but still one of the most popular today.



“Bambi” is a Disney animated film released in 1942 based on the 1923 Austrian novel called ‘Bambi, a life in the woods’. In 2008 the American Film Institute ranked Bambi as third in animation in the top 10 best animation films. The rights for “Bambi” was sold to Disney in 1937 but the development for the film was put off and only slowly developed due to other projects and the struggle with trying to make the animation of the deer, as well as making the plot more suitable for a younger audience. “Bambi” was released during World War II. “Bambi” is much more appreciated in the present day instead of its own time due to a number of factors such as; losing money at the box office release due to the lack of access to the european market which was a problem caused by the war, critical reviews claimed the film lacked fantasy elements and was too dramatic Hunters especially felt insulted by the film, even Walt Disney's daughter Diane criticized the film for disagreeing with killing off Bambi's mother, Disney tried to justify this by claiming he was following the book but she felt he had the power to change certain aspects like he had before. However the re-release in 1947 helped to boost the film and is now viewed as a classic. The Rotten Tomatoes gave a fresh rating of 91%. “Bambi” is said to be one of Walt Disney's favourite films.



“Alice in Wonderland” is a Disney animated film released in 1951 based on Lewis Carroll's 1865 novel ‘Alice's Adventures in Wonderland’. The plot involves a young girl called Alice who follows a rabbit down a hole into Wonderland. She comes across many creatures and encounters the Queen of hearts. This film has been regarded as



one of Disney's greatest animated classics, as well as one of the best adaptations of the novel, but was a film that was way ahead of its time. Literary critics and fans of Lewis Carroll accused Disney of 'Americanizing' great English literature work. The response at the box office was disappointing, Walt Disney felt the film failed because the character of Alice had no "heart". In 1974 the Disney Company re-released 'Alice in Wonderland' this was so successful this encouraged another re-release. The Rotten Tomatoes gave a fresh review rating of 77% stating the film was "A good introduction to Lewis Carroll's classic, *Alice in Wonderland* boasts some of the Disney canon's most surreal and twisted images."

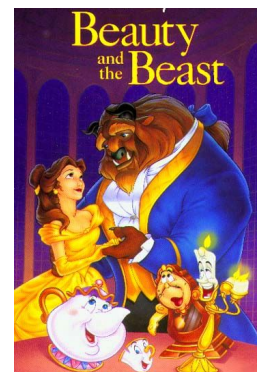
### **The Disney Renaissance Era 1989-1999**

The Disney Renaissance Era is when Disney created several successful films based on stories. The ten animated films they produced during this time included 'The Little Mermaid' in 1989, 'The Rescuers Down Under' in 1990, 'Beauty and The Beast' in 1991, 'Aladdin' in 1992, 'The Lion King' in 1994, 'Pocahontas' in 1995, 'The Hunchback of Notre Dame' in 1996, 'Hercules' in 1997, 'Mulan' in 1998, and 'Tarzan' in 1999.

In the 1970's Disney incurred several failures but with the creation of 'The Little Mermaid' became credited for bringing back life to the art of Disney Animated Films. Disney had been developing 'The Little Mermaid' since the 1930's and by 1988 decided to make the film an animated musical film. The film became a huge success earning a high weekend gross breaking *The Land Before Time's* record of highest-grossing animated film. *The Little Mermaid* won two Academy Awards for Best Original Song and Best Original Score. The plot follows Ariel a mermaid princess who becomes curious about human life. She collects objects and ignores her father's warnings. A violent storm causes a shipwreck and Ariel saves Prince Eric. The evil Ursula tricks her into becoming human by giving up her voice, which Ursula later uses as a disguise to lure Eric. The Rotten Tomatoes gave a rating of 92%. After almost 20 years from the film's initial release Yahoo! users in 2008 voted "The Little Mermaid" as No. 14 on the top 30 animated films of all time which proved the film to still be a success in the present day. 'The Little Mermaid' earned \$84 million at the domestic box office during its initial release, and \$211 million in total lifetime gross worldwide.

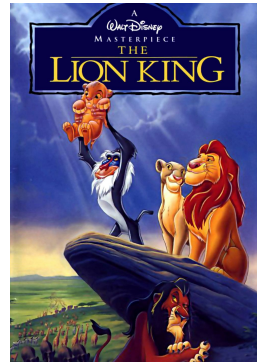


'Beauty and The Beast' is often considered to be one of the greatest Disney animated features. The film won the Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture and two Academy Awards, for Best Original Score and Best Original Song. 'Beauty and The Beast' was originally supposed to be released in the 1930's and 1950's but the attempts were unsuccessful due to being too challenging, but after the success of 'The Little Mermaid' they decided to go ahead with it. The plot follows Belle a young woman who is imprisoned in a Beast's castle for freeing her father, the Beast is a prince who was magically transformed into a monster as punishment for his arrogance. His curse can only be broken by true love and the more time they spend together the more their relationship develops. CinemaScore rated 'Beauty and The Beast' with an A+ and the



film became very successful at the box office earning over \$424 million worldwide. Rotten Tomatoes gave a rating of 93% based on 101 critic reviews. IGN the Imagine Games Network named 'Beauty and The Beast' as the greatest animated film of all time.

'The Lion King' earned \$422,783,777 at the box office in North America and \$987,483,777 worldwide. 'The Lion King' is the third highest grossing film worldwide and the second highest grossing film of Walt Disney Animations. The Rotten Tomatoes rated "The Lion King" 90% with rating of 8.2. The plot follows a young lion called Simba who will succeed Mufasa (his father) as king however his uncle Scar murders Mufasa and Simba thinking he is responsible flees into exile. Simba lives with his two friends and after time matures and returns to challenge Scar.



### **Facts and Information about New Disney Films**

The most recent Disney films have been very successful in the present day, is there a reason for this popularity? Perhaps waiting longer to release these films paid off, or maybe Disney improved with the plots and characters. Older Disney films became more appreciated after time, the newer audience may not have compared these newer films to the old ones to know what is better.

'Bolt' is a Disney Animated Film released in 2008. It was argued that Bolt and the Acquisition of Pixar created a new renaissance for Walt Disney Animation Studios. This was enforced when Tangled and Frozen were released. After the Acquisition of Pixar the first film to be released was Bolt. The plot follows a dog called Bolt who lives on the set of a television series, he believes that he has powers. He thinks his human friend Penny has been kidnapped and sets out to save her. Rotten Tomatoes reported that 88% of critics gave positive reports. The A.V. Club gave the film a B+ stating the film is "trying to recapture the old Disney instead of aggressively shedding it in favor of something slick and new. And yet it comes with a healthy cutting-edge Pixar flavor as well." Worldwide 'Bolt' grossed \$309,979,994.



'Tangled' is based on the German fairy tale Rapunzel by the Grimm brothers. The plot follows a lost young princess with long magical hair who wishes to leave her secluded tower. She accepts the aid of a handsome intruder to take her out into the world which she has never seen, against her mother's wishes. At the box office 'Tangled' earned \$200,821,936 in North America and \$591,794,936 Worldwide. The Rotten Tomatoes gave a positive rating of 89% with a score of 7.5. Metacritic rated 71/100 and CinemaScore polls gave the film an A+. 'Tangled Ever After' is a short release film that is the sequel which was released in 2012.



'Frozen' is based on Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale 'The Snow Queen'. The plot follows a fearless princess who sets off on an epic journey alongside a rugged iceman, his loyal pet reindeer and a naive snowman to find her estranged sister, whose icy powers have inadvertently trapped the kingdom in eternal winter. 'Frozen' earned



\$400,738,009 in North America and \$1,274,219,009 worldwide. 'Frozen' is the highest grossing animated film to date. 'Frozen' has been praised for the visuals, themes, musical numbers, screenplay, and voice acting especially due to the cast. The Rotten Tomatoes gave a positive rating of 89% with a score of 7.7. CinemaScore conducted polls on the opening weekend and based their A+ rating on this.

## Pixar

Some people think Disney buying Pixar saved their animations, others feel it made things worse trapping two rival companies together therefore affecting their work. The Pixar Animation Studio's is an American computer animation film studio. Pixar launched in 1979 as the graphics group which is part of the computer division of Lucasfilm, before becoming a corporation funded by Apple Inc in 1986. Pixar was bought for \$7.4 billion by Disney in 2006.

Pixar made a \$26 million deal with Disney to produce three computer-animated feature films, the first of which was Toy Story. After Toy Story 2 Pixar and Disney had disagreements, Originally intended as a straight-to-video release the film was upgraded to a theatrical release during production. Disney refused it to be counted toward the three-picture agreement that Pixar demanded. Pixar was responsible for creation and production, while Disney handled marketing and distribution. They attempted to reach a new agreement in 2004 but Disney found the conditions to be unacceptable. Pixar demanded control over films already in production under their old agreement, including *The Incredibles* and *Cars*. Steve Jobs the founder of Pixar, and Michael Eisner the Disney chairman and CEO had disagreements in the negotiation process, leading Jobs to declare Pixar was looking for partners other than Disney. However in 2005 when Eisner departed from Disney the negotiations resumed between Pixar and Disney. Eventually in 2006 Disney decided to buy Pixar in an all-stock deal.

'Toy Story' is a 1995 animated comedy adventure film produced by Pixar Animation Studios and released by Walt Disney Pictures. The plot follows toys who pretend to be lifeless whenever humans are present but in fact come alive when they are not around, and focuses on the relationship between Woody, a pullstring cowboy doll and Buzz Lightyear, an astronaut action figure. Rotten Tomatoes reported that 100% of critics gave positive reviews. Metacritic gave the film a 'Universal Acclaim' level rating 92 out of 100. The Online Film Critics Society ranked the film as the greatest animated film of all time. In total Toy Story earned \$361,958,736 worldwide. Toy Story was the highest-grossing domestic film in 1995. A further Toy Story 2 (1999) and Toy Story 3 (2010) were created. Both of the following films were successful Toy Story 2 grossing over \$485 million worldwide and Toy Story 3 topped the worldwide box office with \$145.3 million which is the third-largest opening weekend worldwide for an animated feature.

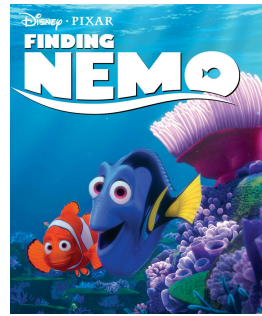


'Monsters, Inc' is an animated comedy film released in 2001. The plot follows two monsters, the top scarer James P. Sullivan, and his one-eyed partner and best friend, Mike Wazowski, who are employed at Monsters, Inc. The employees generate their



city's power by targeting and scaring children, but they are themselves afraid that the children may contaminate them; when one child 'Boo' enters Monstropolis, Mike and Sulley must return her. The total earned worldwide came out at \$562,816,256 therefore becoming the second highest-grossing animated film of all time. Rotten Tomatoes rated the film 96% with a positive score of 8/10. Pixar made their first prequel film with 'Monster's University' in 2013. The film earned \$743,559,607 worldwide and is the third highest grossing Pixar film.

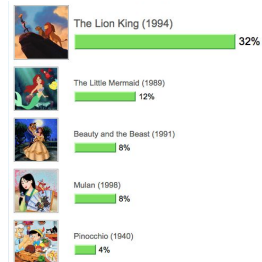
'Finding Nemo' is an animated comedy-drama adventure film released in 2003. The plot follows Marlin the over-protective clownfish who, along with a forgetful fish Dory, searches for his abducted son Nemo all the way to Sydney Harbour. Along the way, Marlin learns to take risks and let Nemo take care of himself. The film won the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature and was the second highest grossing film of 2003. Worldwide 'Finding Nemo' earned \$936,743,261. The Rotten Tomatoes reported a 99% rating and score of 8.6. A sequel called 'Finding Dory' is yet to be released.



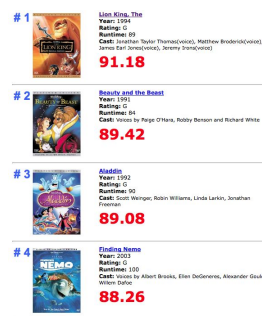
**Opinions**

I researched into several polls to see the reaction from the public on the different Disney films. Just because 'Frozen' is popular and made a lot of money doesn't mean it is necessarily the best Disney film, especially since older Disney films are more appreciated in this time. Also I wanted to see if Disney Pixar films are ranked high amongst just Disney films.

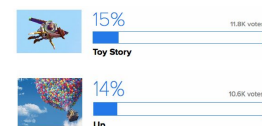
One poll asked 'Which one Disney movie do you think everyone should watch?' The Most popular answer was 'The Lion King' (1994), followed by 'The Little Mermaid' (1989), 'Beauty and The Beast' (1991), and Mulan (1998). The later Disney films such as Frozen (2013) and Tangled (2010) were included in the poll as an option to pick which people didn't choose as much. This means this poll would back up that more people think the best Disney films to watch are the ones in the Disney Renaissance Era.



A Disney Movie Ranking Guide is a list compiled from the ratings of reliable sources and combined with the ratings of users. The poll is updated daily and the best Disney film on the list again is 'The Lion King' (1994), followed by 'Beauty and The Beast' (1991), 'Aladdin' (1992), and 'Finding Nemo' (2003). Again the Disney Renaissance Era is preferred however the Disney Pixar film 'Finding Nemo' is also amongst the list which looks good for Pixar. Not far behind in the list is 'Frozen' (2013) at number 6 and 'Tangled' (2010) at number 7 which shows that the later Disney Films are still very popular to be so high in the list.

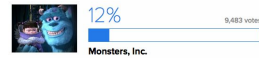


A poll asking 'What is the best Pixar movie of all time?' showed 'Finding Nemo' (2003) as the favourite, followed by 'Toy Story' (1995), 'Up' (2009), and 'Monsters Inc' (2001). Even though Disney didn't buy Pixar until 2006 they still agreed to work on projects like 'Toy Story' in spite of disagreements and released these films. It would seem Pixar





didn't need to be bought by Disney as most of the top favourite films were made before Disney bought them, whereas later films such as 'Cars' and 'Brave' didn't have anywhere near as many votes.



### **Changes and Similarities in Disney Films**

Overtime Disney characters have changed a lot in their personalities as well as their looks. In the earlier Disney Films characters are more helpless for example; Snow White is tricked into eating a poisoned apple and slips into a state of suspended animation with a prince to save her, Sleeping Beauty is cursed and is stuck under a sleeping enchantment with true loves kiss to awaken her, and Mulan needs to pretend to be a boy to join the war. However newer Disney Films such as 'Brave', 'Tangled', and 'Frozen' have stronger female characters who are involved in the action. As time goes on technology develops and more time has been spent on creating characters. 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' was a hand drawn animation, where as 'Frozen' uses a mix of hand drawn animation and computer-generated imagery, this made the characters look more realistic. The hair is definitely an important change as you can tell by the detail the more effort put into the films.



The plot of Disney Films has changed in some ways but not in others. Disney hasn't changed in terms of the love element, for example; In the older Disney films such as Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, and The Little Mermaid all the princesses fall in love straight away without even getting a chance to know the princes. The same thing happens in modern Disney films such as Frozen, Anna falls in love after first meeting a boy. Disney plots also seem to include a parent's death for example; Bambi's Mother, Nemo's Mother, Hunchback's Mother, Simba's Father, Cinderella and Snow White have evil Step Mothers, and Belle's Mother isn't around, Anna and Elsa's parents are also dead in Frozen. However Disney has changed in terms of female characters, they have evolved from helpless damsels in distresses to brave heroes.

Disney is a very successful company with many great films, I like the changes Disney made and how the films have developed over the years especially in the technological side as the characters are more realistic. I still appreciate the older classic Disney films as they give children hope for happy endings and taught valuable lessons. Disney have created some of the best films in history that will be remembered for a long time to come.

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