



BEYOND THE CASTLE

A GUIDE TO DISCOVERING YOUR HAPPILY EVER AFTER

JODY JEAN DREYER, 30-YEAR DISNEY VETERAN
WITH STACY WINDAHL
FOREWORD BY DISNEY LEGEND GLEN KEANE

“I had a great time reading Jody’s book on her time at Disney as I have been to many of the same places and events that she attended. She went well beyond recounting her experiences though, adding many layers of texture on the how and the why of Disney storytelling. Yet Jody knows the golden rule in this business: If you knew how the trick was done, it wouldn’t be any fun anymore. At the end of the journey, she is simply in awe of the magic just as we all are, even today. Thank you, Jody, for taking us along on that journey.”

–ROY P. DISNEY, grandnephew of Walt Disney

“Jody may be the most organized, focused person I’ve ever met, and she has excelled in every job she’s held at the company. No one better embodies the Disney spirit.”

–MICHAEL D. EISNER, former chairman and CEO of The Walt Disney Company

“If Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse had a baby, it would be Jody Dreyer.”

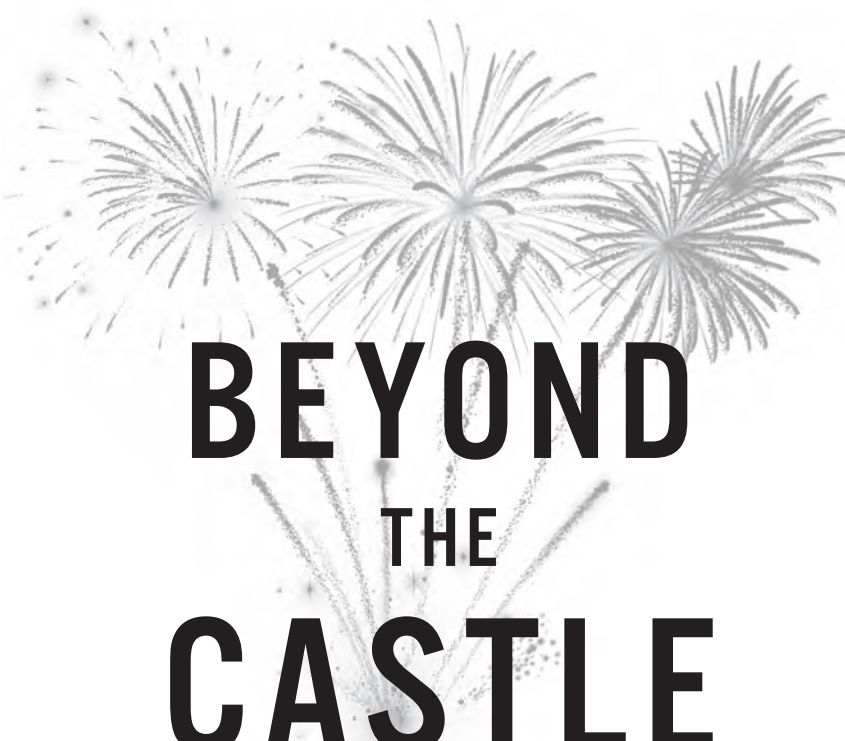
–DICK COOK, former chairman, Walt Disney Studios

“I’m a huge believer in good storytelling. And as a fellow Disney fanatic I’m really excited to see the impact of this great read!”

–KATE VOEGELE, singer/songwriter, *One Tree Hill* actress and recording artist on *Disneymania 6*

“Jody Dreyer pulls the curtain back to reveal the inner workings of one of the most fascinating and successful companies on Earth. *Beyond the Castle* offers incredible insight for Disney fans and business professionals alike who will relish this peek inside the magic kingdom from Jody’s unique perspective.”

–DON HAHN, producer, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King*



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HAPPILY EVER AFTER**

JODY JEAN DREYER
WITH STACY WINDAHL

 **ZONDERVAN®**



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Beyond the Castle

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APPLAUSE

To my Disney friends:

*You are the heart and soul of the company,
the hardworking, magic-making, smile-giving
Disney cast members of yesterday, today, and
tomorrow. Each day you make dreams come
true. I am honored to have worked alongside
you and grateful to call you family.*

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CASTLE NOTES

The conversations and events described in this book are retold from the author's best recollections and they are not written to represent word-for-word transcripts. Rather, the author has shared these personal stories in a way that evokes the feeling and meaning of what was said, and in all instances, the essence of the dialogue and attending circumstances is accurate. In addition, since The Walt Disney Company always has been and will continue to be a dynamic enterprise, the business practices described within this account were observed during the author's career but may have changed since.

Throughout this book, the author's Disney colleagues are mentioned by first names with last names in parentheses upon introduction in each chapter. Otherwise, it's first names only. Disney is a first-name company. For years, the author worked alongside cast members knowing details about their family or even a recent vacation without knowing their last names. Walt himself established the first name tradition believing that first names invited informality and enabled the flow of ideas. But if you feel the first name reference is a little unusual, we understand. Consider this encouragement from a Disney University training pamphlet entitled *Welcome to the Show*: "You may find our first name policy difficult at first: old habits are hard to break. But once you get the hang of it, we think you'll like our friendly, family way of doing things." We hope so, too.

FOREWORD

H*appily Ever After*. Can that really be true? Is there such a thing? It all seems so impossible. However, I must confess that having worked as a Disney animator on fairy tales for many years, I was particularly drawn to animating the characters who believe the impossible is indeed possible. Ariel, though a mermaid, falls in love with a prince who walks on two legs and breathes air! The Beast is determined to believe that Belle could somehow look past his ugly beastly exterior, tusks and all, and love him for who he is inside.

There is hope at work here . . . and faith . . . and love. Who doesn't want to believe in that?

Beyond the Castle: A Guide to Discovering Your Happily Ever After is a book about how the little things count in big ways. One might call them details, but they are what makes the difference.

Jody's formative years in the Midwest have left her with a home-spun practicality that she expresses with her own Mark Twain wisdom. She sees the ups and downs of life from a Disneyland roller coaster perspective and says, "Without a hill, there's no thrill!" She divides the accumulation of a lifetime of stuff into "Treasure, Trash, and Trail Mix." She shares "Lessons learned from the opening of Euro Disneyland" and how to avoid the effect of "Queue Rage" in waiting lines.

I first met Jody when she was working for Disney CEO Michael Eisner as the head of Corporate Synergy. I was an artist and not used

to chumming around with Disney executives. But Jody, in her own natural way, made me feel at ease and relaxed. She exemplified that welcoming, Disney quality. There is a certain “pixie dust” magic to her.

As I read Jody’s words I find that same magic of belief in what she says . . . she lived it, loved it, and believed in it. Now she’s sharing that with others.

This is above all a book of hope. The “castles” of our life are not always shiny spires reflecting the sunshine. Sometimes they become quite dark and in need of transformation.

I will never forget seeing Beast’s castle for the first time. It was the fall of 1989 and our animation team for *Beauty and the Beast* was in France on a research trip. We were driving down a long narrow road through the woods in the Loire Valley to visit the famous royal chateau, Chambord. Through the early morning fog a dark shadowy form emerged with its spires, walls, and towers, as if the Beast himself was personified by the stone edifice. As we approached I imagined Beast running through its rooms filled with ancient furniture and draperies. But once having stepped inside I found its hallways empty, all its interior decorations long gone. Yet, somehow I could still feel the energy and life that once animated its halls. My imagination came alive and I could envision a chateau transformed into the fairytale castle at the end of *Beauty and the Beast*.

Castles can inspire magic—in stories, films, and beyond. Now, after a thirty-year career within Walt Disney’s Magic Kingdoms, Jody transforms those years of experience into a fascinating story . . . fairytale castles, happy endings and all.

Glen Keane, Director/Animator, Disney Legend
April 2017



ONCE UPON A TIME

Every Life Can Be a Fairy Tale

My love of The Walt Disney Company started long before my internship in The Walt Disney World College Program, the first of my twenty-two positions in a thirty-year career at Disney. Perhaps it can be traced back to my earliest school years. My mom likes to tell the story of the time I organized my kindergarten class shoe by shoe. I had become frustrated with the confusion at the end of the school day as kids scrambled to find their shoes. The obvious solution was to put each kid's shoes in the same place each day. (Right?) While I don't recall much of this, apparently it made good sense to me at the time. Still does, actually. Another early indication of my Disney destiny was what I loved most about one of my favorite high school jobs, working for the American Automobile Association. I loved putting the maps in the right order and making sure that the office was set up to give proper directions to all the members that would come in over the busy weekend. All roads led to Disney, the number one vacation destination.

I guess it's no surprise that for the decades I worked at Disney,

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in one form or another, my jobs involved creating order out of chaos, finding hidden opportunities, encouraging everyone to work together, and putting plain old common sense to work for the good of the company.

And since you can't separate who you are from what you learn along the way, a little background might be helpful. My experiences have been shaped by the intersection of three themes in my life: my Midwest sensibilities, a predisposition to organization, and a love of (planned) spontaneity and celebration.

My dad was born and raised on an Indiana farm. My mom also called Indiana home and Mom and Dad both attended Purdue in the 1950s. She was a twirler in the Boilermaker All-American Marching Band, a big deal. Together they raised my three siblings and me in Ohio. That Midwest upbringing all but ensured my love of sports (with particular reverence for the Cubs and the Big Ten tradition).



My mom, Jacque, a majorette in the Purdue All-American Marching Band.



Carbiener Indiana farmhouse where Dad and his siblings were born and raised.

John Dreyer

Once Upon a Time

It also ensured that I would choose simplicity and common sense over complexity and nuance, and that the family farm would be a touchstone throughout my life. The farm dispenses truth daily. It instructs on the immutable laws about sowing and reaping, proving that today is the parent of tomorrow. It teaches about working hard—and working together, often through adversity. I discovered that growing up in the heartland with the family farm in the backdrop was a straight path to Disney's Main Street, U.S.A.

Second, my mom is a neat freak with a genetic tendency toward order. Her penchant aligned well with my dad's Navy ROTC training and service. Needless to say, I grew up knowing that a squared-away, tip-top, shipshape existence beats a chaotic one, and that order requires a practiced plan. Such a part of my childhood, this became my nature. But I don't want to give you the wrong idea here. My family is crazy fun and, as we like to say, if no one gets hurt and it's legal, go for it!



Dad, Wayne, a shipshape Navy man.



My cowriter, Stacy, with sister Chris and their worn-out dad on the first of many Disney World visits.

Which leads me to a third theme. I have realized that because we had a plan, our family could party. Good times were a part of the program. (Just check the schedule. Fun and spontaneity were in there.) I love a good celebration. And why not? We too often carry our lives with its duties and obligations like a burdensome sack on our backs when those very duties and obligations can actually be a gift we're meant to wrap our arms around.

Last—and what supersedes everything else—I love God and I read the Bible. I want to live out my faith in every part of my life. But this is not a Bible study. It's a story. Just my story.

Now about my partner in this work—another intersection. I met Stacy several years ago through our deep affection for Young Life, a ministry created to love on kids. Both of us met Young Life when we were in high school—both in Ohio. In our experience, Young Life, like Disney, practices gracious hospitality and aims to surprise and delight. And Young Life and Disney genuinely like kids and care about the happily ever after of each one they meet. Stacy has been a storyteller for Young Life for sixteen years. As a freelance writer, she has written stories of Young Life leaders and kids in magazine articles, and she has contributed to books, brochures, and all kinds of Young Life communications. Since we share a passion for faith, family, and fairy tales, it's no wonder the two of us struck up a friendship that has resulted in this writing project. It was fitting that we celebrated Young Life's seventy-fifth birthday together with five thousand Young Life friends watching a fireworks extravaganza at Walt Disney World. Some things are meant to be.

We invite you to come with us to discover some things you might not know about Disney—including the man himself. For example, I wonder if you knew . . .

Once Upon a Time

- Walt grew up in the Midwest, and Disneyland's Main Street, U.S.A. is reminiscent of his boyhood home in Marceline, Missouri.
- Walt's family also lived on a farm for a time and he said those were among his fondest memories.
- Walt tried to enlist in the armed forces in 1918. He was rejected because of his young age—sixteen. Undaunted, he volunteered with the Red Cross, traveled overseas, and drove an ambulance. His ambulance wasn't discreetly camouflaged, but instead was covered with his drawings and cartoons.
- Walt's early experiences, travels, and adventures became the foundation for the iconic enterprise that bears his name.

We have a lot of exploring to do—even more Disney treasure to unpack. We do hope you will learn some things about Disney you never knew before, and more importantly we hope you'll discover some new things about yourself and your life's adventure.

Disney was the threshold for so much wonder, surprise, and delight in my life. But, friends, there's more to discover beyond the castle.

Let's see if our shared journey can become a gateway for the discovery of *your* happily ever after.

I wrote this story for you, but when I began it I had not realized that girls grow quicker than books. As a result you are already too old for fairy tales, and by the time it is printed and bound you will be older still. But some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again.

C. S. Lewis, in the dedication of
The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe
to his goddaughter, Lucy
(New York: Macmillan, 1950)

A faint, stylized background of fireworks exploding in the upper half of the page, with various patterns of sparks and light trails.

CHAPTER 1

VACATIONS

Adventure Awaits

Walt Disney said, “It was all started by a mouse.” In my case, it was all started by a family vacation to the magical kingdom the mouse built. I will never forget my first trip to Walt Disney World in 1971, just three months after the park opened. The details are still so clear. Crossing into Florida with the smell of oranges blowing through the open windows of our wood-paneled station wagon with its pop-up third seat. Riding the monorail across the Seven Seas Lagoon to arrive at the Magic Kingdom. Standing on Main Street, jaw-dropped in awe at the sight of the Cinderella Castle. Tasting a Citrus Swirl in Adventureland for the first time. And actually *driving* the Grand Prix Raceway cars with my big brother over and over again.

Days before Christmas, we traveled from our home in Columbus, Ohio to Orlando. Now we have to stop here in my story because I need to tell you that I am Christmas crazy. I love

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this time of year when the world comes alive in anticipation. Our senses are on full alert—lights are brighter, sounds are purer, and fragrances are more alluring. It isn't about the unwrapping for me. In fact, it's all about the wrapping and the sights and sounds that proclaim a clearer message of joy than we hear in our day-to-day routine. For an admitted “Christmas Crazy,” Disney decked out for the holidays is sheer magic.

I witnessed firsthand what the pictures could only hint at, especially at night: Cinderella Castle all aglow, carolers lining the streets, and fireworks lighting up the sky in red and green. Some people would say it was over the top. (Maybe over the top and back again.) But for a ten-year-old who had never seen anything like it—*amazing*!



Grandma Ilia, Mom, and the kids take on Disney World.

Vacations

So back to this Disney World road trip. In the family station wagon were Mom and Dad, my older brother Chip (always my partner in Disney adventures), my little sister Fifi (whose actual name is Jill, but since she is the family pet, so adorable and fun, Fifi fit better), and Baby Mike (the “favorite,” our mascot and the quintessential youngest child). The Carbiener family had two sibling groups—the big kids (me and Chip) and the babies (Fifi and Baby Mike). My grandparents, Ilia and Pople, also traveled with us on this visit, which made it all the more memorable. My grandmother Ilia never met a trip or an adventure she didn’t want to take. Barely five-feet tall, she would throw back her shoulders, own all sixty inches of her height, and make her way. Pople was a friend to everyone. He collected friends and their stories like treasured souvenirs.



Dad, Mom, and the Big Kids conquer the Magic Kingdom.

We stayed just outside of Walt Disney World in the Dutch Inn, located in Lake Buena Vista (the city The Walt Disney Company named for the Buena Vista Street location of its Burbank, California world headquarters). The hotel was still under construction, and I remember people working nonstop to complete it. The innkeepers openly acknowledged being behind the construction schedule, but because they didn't want to cancel Christmastime reservations, they finished construction with an audience.

Imagine being a child and waking up in Disney World on Christmas morning. Santa and Disney are an irresistible combination for a child. (Who am I kidding? For just about anyone.) We woke up that morning to discover Santa loved Disney World too, and he'd found his way to the Dutch Inn. Chip and I might have been a little too old to truly believe, but for the sake of the babies. . . and just in case. . . .

Each of us received watches from Santa. I was given my first Disney watch: the classic Cinderella watch with a powder-blue strap. We attended a church service crowded with people gathered from who knows where. As we all sang "Joy to the World," it seemed to me that much of the big world was there in that room. That was the first time I realized how many people from so many places can come together for one purpose. During that service we experienced "a small world," making Disney even more exotic to this already wide-eyed ten-year-old.

My mental scrapbook of that first visit includes watching the parades in the afternoon and again at night, riding Pirates of the Caribbean with my dad, who held my hand and let me sit close (without letting on that he knew I was scared), and the entire family singing—practically screaming—to Country Bear Jamboree. (The Jamboree was Baby Mike's favorite. He later

worked there for a summer job.) And what visit was complete without enough boat rides through It's a Small World to put us all into a Small World coma? Feeling quite grown-up, we took the babies on Dumbo and then left them with Mom and Dad, making it clear they weren't old enough to drive the race cars like we big kids were. And, oh, the Grand Prix cars. I could spend an entire chapter on Chip and me running back and forth to the cars, each driving our own and feeling so independent, with our official Grand Prix driver's licenses to prove it.

Walt Disney World Take Two

The minute we arrived home from our first trip, we started pestering Mom and Dad to return. Disney World had become our place. But a place that special was a splurge, and we couldn't go every year. That was part of what I learned from those early visits—planning, saving, and anticipating are part of the fun. I couldn't recognize it at the time, but as a child I was living the mantra “It's not just the [Disney] destination, but the journey that counts.” Our family would talk and dream about the next trip, enjoying the anticipation. The big kids would earn spending money through odd jobs and squirrel away any gift money we'd receive. And we'd plot our route and itinerary with maps and guidebooks all around.

Based largely on these early vacations and the planning for them, I fell in love with the “before,” finding that “afters” are more satisfying when you've paid attention to the before. I came to appreciate that in the planning of an adventure I could enjoy a vacation even before I left home. Three years after our first Disney vacation we had saved, imagined, and planned enough

to return. This time we were even going to stay right next door to the Magic Kingdom in the Polynesian Village Resort.

From the start, that second trip was a different and greater adventure. We refer to it as the Disney “cow” trip. Mom and Dad were always trying to enrich us with new experiences. Mom was the schemer and dreamer and, true to form, Dad was the master planner and logistics officer. This time they decided we needed to take a train to Disney World. Train travel was becoming less frequent, and my parents wanted us to know what it was like to “ride the rails.” They booked our travel on the Auto-Train, a privately owned railroad that provided service from Louisville, Kentucky and other Mid-Atlantic cities to central Florida.

The Auto-Train allowed passengers and their automobiles to travel to Florida together for \$450 for one car and two passengers. Automobiles were loaded into double-deck carrier cars while passengers were greeted by young, uniformed hosts directing travelers into dome, dining, or sleeper cars. Think of it; traveling without the hassle of driving but having your car available when you arrived in Florida. Genius! The trip took about twenty-two hours, and the service included meals, live entertainment, movies, and even bingo. It was a fun, forward-thinking service like a cruise ship on rails. (Unfortunately, the company’s dreams were bigger than its wallet, and the original Auto-Train went bankrupt ten years later.)

Well, I like to think our Auto-Train experience was even more exciting than most, thanks to Bessie. On our first trip to the buffet car the train encountered a cow playing chicken on the tracks. The emergency brakes screeched, stutter-stopping us to a halt and sending everyone and everything flying. Big Brother Chip ended up with his tray of food over his chest, mashed potatoes dotted with green peas coating his shirt. Dad landed

on his behind on the floor, babies safely on top of him. And then there was Grandma Ilia. The sudden stop launched her into the wide-mouthed trash bin. Headfirst. All we could see of her were her little legs flapping in the air.

Once Mom and I realized that everyone was okay, we got the giggles. And I don't mean contained, polite giggles. I mean the laugh-so-hard-you-can't-stop giggles. The my-side-hurts and I-just-snorted giggles. My dad thought he'd scowl us into silence, but that made us laugh harder. Eventually we pulled Grandma from the trash bin and wiped Chip clean. No one was hurt—well, except for the reckless cow. And this encounter taught me at a young age that when the flow doesn't go, make the best of it. Even an abrupt stop can add to the adventure.

Cow stop notwithstanding, we made it to Walt Disney World and once again the trip was a *blast*. The Polynesian Village remains my favorite Disney resort because I so vividly remember walking into the entrance atrium, entranced by its exotic trees and birds. We were greeted with “Alohas” and served island-inspired punch and cookies. Our room was themed to tropical perfection. Truly, we'd found paradise.

To Save and Savor

I mentioned that we had learned to save for our second trip to Disney World. I have always liked to work, and I earmarked my early earnings for Disney trips and the souvenirs and gifts I would take home. If I received a little money for my birthday, I would add that to my stash, which I kept secure in an envelope covered in Disney stickers. I would count (and recount) my cash,

imagining the collection of souvenirs I might bring home. My favorite Disney purchases were my first stuffed Mickey, the mouse ears with my name embroidered on them, and a light blue T-shirt with Mickey on it. I could show you them all—but I wouldn't attempt trying on the shirt. Though classics never go out of style, they do seem to get smaller with time.

We made a few more family trips to Disney World before Chip and I, the big kids, left for college. After we left, the babies and Mom and Dad continued to visit. And anytime the six of us could be together at Disney World, we jumped at the chance. One Christmas we all found temporary employment as cast members. (Well, all of us except Dad. He said he already had a job.)

I can't overstate the significance of those vacations and how they set the stage for what was to come. So much to unpack. So many souvenirs that I carry with me today. I learned to read maps by Dad explaining the Disney World guidebooks on that first trip, a precursor to my job as a Disney tour guide. When our trip planning led us to a dead end, I learned to abandon the plan. And there I discovered that sometimes a plan gone bad is best. I have realized that spending time with people we love is a gift that we have to schedule into our lives. Like nothing else can, vacations provide us with treasure, trash, and trail mix: the things we keep, the things we toss, and the things we sort through the rest of our lives.

Disney World and a Paycheck Too?

And then there was my "vacation of destiny."

Since I seemed to spend most of my savings on Disney vacations, what could be better than working at Disney for a summer

job? (Not that I would lose focus and leave college without a diploma, Dad. Don't worry. It's just a summer job.) I was a freshman at the University of Kentucky when a group of us headed to Florida for spring break to stay with the grandmother of our friend Nancy (Scott), my best pal in adventure. We cooked up a stop at Disney on the way. Being fearless and a little clueless we drove right to the Casting Center and said, "We're here for a summer job. We want to work at Disney."

Amazingly enough we were taken seriously and admitted to the Casting Center where we were required to take a math test with questions like "If Donald has \$30.00 and he spends \$12.75, how much is left?" Disney character references throughout an employment test, of all things!

Janis (Petrie), the queen of casting, hired me. Janis was a Disney poster child with her infectious smile and warm personality. Believe me, to meet her is to be her friend. And so began our cherished friendship. Right from the start, Janis embodied the slogan "Join the company, join the family." At one point, those worlds converged, when Janis hired everyone in my family to work at Disney (except Dad, who *continued* to remind us he already had a job).

While my group of friends and I were applying for Disney summer jobs, we learned about a prototype program called the Magic Kingdom College Program. When we asked about participating, we were told the University of Kentucky wasn't part of the initial rollout. Well, Nance and I couldn't stand for that, so promptly upon our return to campus we met with our internship coordinators. Months later, we packed our suitcases and headed to Walt Disney World for the inaugural summer season of Disney's college program.

The Magic Kingdom College Program, now called The Walt Disney World College Program, was such a blast. What could be better than working at Disney, living with a group of college kids from around the country (and today, with Epcot, students from around the world), and learning about the company—all the while earning college credits? *Yay!* Dad was always skeptical about that last bit. A baccalaureate earned with credits in fairy tales, fries, and boat rides? Doubtful. But lo and behold, the credits materialized. And, truly, we did attend classes several times a week on serious subjects like finance, service, and operations.

The best part? We lived in Snow White Village, a nearby Kissimmee campground, populated with double-wide trailers specifically designated for summer interns. The accommodations may have been slightly substandard, but we loved them. Our double-wide came complete with a tiny bedroom, mini-kitchen with a foldout table, and a sitting room. The daily offering from that tiny kitchen was some combination of Jell-O, macaroni and cheese, and tuna straight from the can.

Since at that time the attractions in the Magic Kingdom were open until midnight and Main Street until 1:00 a.m. (to encourage last-minute souvenir shopping), most of the college kids worked the night shift from 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. That meant our days were spent at the beach (about an hour's drive) or by the pool. Our accommodations were no Polynesian Village, but we did manage to get a Polynesian tan. Who knew then that the primary offering of the Sunshine State could exact a toll on its fair-skinned visitors?

That first summer went by fast. I was having so much fun that my dad worried I might stay. Though tempted, Nancy was a

nursing student and had to return to her coursework. Reluctantly, I went with her.

But I returned the next summer—the park’s tenth anniversary. “The Happiest Happy Birthday ever!” I auditioned for the Tencennial Parade and got a job as a “summer swing.” I learned all the routines for every female character on parade so that I could fill in for full-time parade performers who were on vacation. My friends Cyd (Cunningham) and Sue (Trembly) were hired to work in Operations in Tomorrowland, both of them sporting mod polyester jumpsuits. Our friend Sara Gray (Horne) landed perhaps the best assignment of all—a job in the Main Street Confectionary. We visited her often on our days off. You know, to encourage her, and taste-test the goodies.



Howdy, partner! I always had a blast dancing the hoedown with Alex in the Magic Kingdom parade.

Entertainment is really the heartbeat of Disney, and I will always be grateful for the opportunity to have danced in the parades. From the Frontierland hoedown two-step to the parade version of the Diamond Horseshoe Saloon can-can, I learned to smile (always), to keep dancing even when I don't feel it, and to pay attention to the audience, whose enthusiasm can energize you. Because despite working in my dream job, some days dancing the can-can seemed like work. More like, I can't-can't. It's hot-hot. Please, not again. Then the music would start, I'd lock eyes with a clapping guest, and pure pixie dust! I would again realize that I was making Disney magic. In those moments, I learned how to enjoy a parade from the inside out.

When my dad suggested I might not be able to can-can my way through a career, I left my pantaloons and light-up ball gown and the happiest happy birthday ever to return to campus. (Sigh.) But a short nineteen months later, I graduated with a bachelor's degree and accepted my first professional job—a position in Walt Disney World Guest Relations. You could say I ended up where our first vacation started.

From that first position, I moved in and around the company, holding some twenty-two different positions from parade dancer to senior vice president in the Office of the Chairman. What a journey. Denny (Rydberg), Young Life's retired president, has said: "When God wants to teach you something, He takes you on a trip." And so it has been with me.

The Magic of Vacation

Vacations call us away from home and out of our comfort zones too. We eat new foods, explore new places, and go deeper in our

thinking. Most often, we move out of the familiar with someone we love by our side. Nothing connects you to someone else like shared discovery and adventure. I think it's what we were created for. Maybe that's why family vacations and Disney theme parks captured my heart from an early age and never let go.

The same may be true for you. Your first trip to a Disney theme park may have been to Disney World, like me. Or maybe you visited Disneyland. Cast members there proudly identify it as "the original." Wherever you first encountered a Disney theme park, with thousands of others who were also there that day, somehow that experience was yours alone. My friend and colleague, Jeff Kurtti, author of *Disneyland—From Once upon a Time to Happily Ever After*, has written about this phenomenon: "The bricks and mortar of the place itself may remain exactly as they have been for decades, but the encounter of each individual visitor, their own emotional reactions, and their own method in passing along that occurrence creates a place at once shared by millions, and as personal as a first kiss."¹

Disney experiences feature prominently in the childhood memories of so many, and yet the Disney brothers themselves had a childhood that was hardly "Disney" idyllic. They resolved to provide for others the opportunities they lacked. Walt envisioned vacation destinations that were neat, clean, and fun. Places that could be enjoyed by family members of all ages. Sure, they made money doing it, but I will never believe that was the primary driver.

Instead, I think the words on the Walt Disney World dedication plaque at the base of the Main Street flagpole capture the heart of it. Thousands pass by the plaque every day without giving it a first or a second glance. On October 25, 1971, Roy O. Disney, Walt's brother, read its message at the grand opening of the park:

Beyond the Castle

Walt Disney World is a tribute to the philosophy and life of Walter Elias Disney and to the talents, the dedication, and the loyalty of the entire Disney organization that made Walt Disney's dream come true. May Walt Disney World bring Joy and Inspiration and New Knowledge to all who come to this happy place . . . a Magic Kingdom where the young at heart of all ages can laugh and play and learn . . . together.

Two months later, days before my family and I visited Disney World for the first time, Roy died. His words, memorialized in bronze, were true for my family in 1971 and still ring true for me today. And now, let's walk through the castle doors and beyond to bring some Disney magic into our day-to-day lives.

SCENTS AND SENSIBILITIES

The human nose detects between four thousand and ten thousand unique scents. And when we think we are tasting something, we may actually be smelling it. (Eat a jellybean while pinching your nose. Can you tell its flavor?) e smell flavo .

Disney imagineers know that. They also know that unlike our other senses, smell is hardwired to our brain (not dissembled or remixed), and it travels a short path to the area of the brain that handles emotions. That's why smell can transport us to a time and feeling that we'd long forgotten.

Think of your favorite Disney smells. Maybe it's the familiar and still enticing smell of Main Street popcorn, or the musty leather and gunpowder smell that wafts out of the Pirates of the Caribbean ride. Those scents are emitted courtesy of a Disney-patented technology called the Scent-Emitting Systems, or as we knew it, the "Smellitzer." If you've taken a ride on Soarin' at Disney California Adventure, you know firsthand how the Smellitzer can lead guests by the nose. Whether the citrusy smell of the orange groves, the salty smell of the Pacific Ocean, or the pine scent along the ski hills, these aromas transport you in a way that a visual or auditory experience alone cannot.

Walt himself said, "Always, as you travel assimilate the sights and sounds of the world."² And my first visits to Disney World taught me that magical memories are sensory dimensional. In my future assignments, I would use "common sense" to check for the engagement of smell, sight, sound, taste, and touch, with the hope that we would delight guests across the spectrum of senses and that they would remember their Disney theme park visits with the same warm feelings I do even today.

Beyond the Castle

A Guide to Discovering Your Happily Ever After

By Jody Jean Dreyer

Beyond the Castle provides entertaining and enlightening stories from a Disney insider's three-decade career. This look behind the castle doors offers playful and practical principles that will guide readers on the path to their own "happily ever after."

The wish for happy endings is written in our hearts. Every park guest or movie watcher is looking for their own "happily ever after," as they ask the questions: What's my story? Does it matter? Will the story end well for me? Jody's personal experiences and her underpinning faith help her to offer practical and sometimes unexpected principles to better appreciate and navigate our own stories.

Jody's entertaining storytelling will satisfy your desire to open the doors and peek inside the castle – and more, to unlock and illuminate life's true treasure.

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