



Mouse in Transition: An Insider's Look at Disney Feature Animation

Steve Hulett

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AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT DISNEY FEATURE ANIMATION

When Walt Disney died, the studio went into a creative lockdown. The mantra "What Would Walt Do" comforted the old-timers, but it shackled the up-and-comers who wanted to take big risks on new approaches to animation.

Into this sleepy studio walked Steve Hulett, whose father Ralph had been an artist at the studio for nearly four decades. Hulett was hired as a storyman during a transitional time in the company's history, when Walt's spirit was receding and Hollywood kingpins Michael Eisner and Jeffrey Katzenberg were taking over.

Hulett takes you into the sometimes dark Disney heart of power, politics, and the cult of personality as he recalls:

- Helping Ken Anderson on the ill-fated feature *Catfish Bend*, and how Anderson in return tried to get him fired
- Enduring intense, marathon story meetings with Woolie Reithermann, which Hulett recounts in colorful, unexpurgated detail
- Working on such Disney features as *The Fox and the Hound*, *The Great Mouse Detective*, and *The Black Cauldron*
- Meeting Eisner and Katzenberg for the first time, and the seismic shock their edicts sent through the Disney Studio
- Learning the ropes through candid conversations with such Disney luminaries as Ward Kimball, Claude Coats, and Eric Larson

Hulett's wit and dry humor, coupled with his first-hand accounts of working side-by-side with Ken Anderson, Woolie Reitherman, John Lasseter, and *Little Mermaid* co-director/writer John Musker (who wrote the foreword), provides unique and unprecedented insight into the rapidly changing Disney Studio of the 1970s and 1980s.

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