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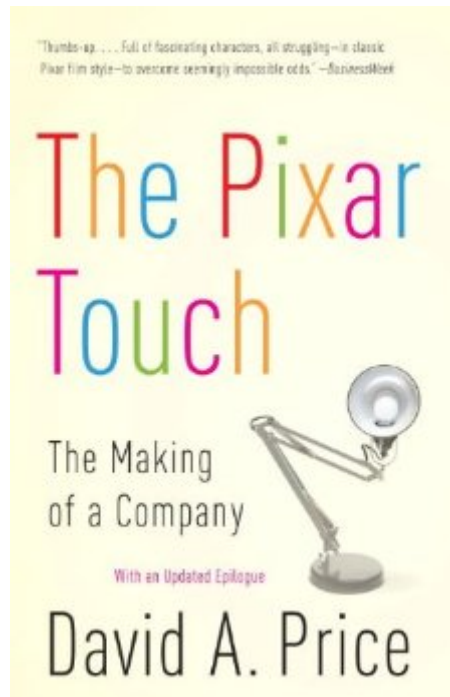
The Pixar Touch

Synopsis

The Pixar Touch is a lively chronicle of Pixar Animation Studios' history and evolution, and the â œfraternity of geeksâ • who shaped it. With the help of animating genius John Lasseter and visionary businessman Steve Jobs, Pixar has become the gold standard of animated filmmaking, beginning with a short special effects shot made at Lucasfilm in 1982 all the way up through the landmark films Toy Story, Finding Nemo, Wall-E, and others. David A. Price goes behind the scenes of the corporate feuds between Lasseter and his former champion, Jeffrey Katzenberg, as well as between Jobs and Michael Eisner. And finally he explores Pixar's complex relationship with the Walt Disney Company as it transformed itself into the $7.4 billion jewel in the Disney crown.From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

I was glued to this book about Pixar's humble beginnings and inspiring ascension into the firmament. In true Cinderella fashion, the company starts with nothing, gets no respect, but eventually its dreams come true. It's a thought-provoking journey.Pixar's story interweaves with that of the Walt Disney Company throughout its history. Founding CEO Ed Catmull's college dissertation

involved creating a texture map projecting Mickey Mouse and Winnie the Pooh onto undulating surfaces. When Disney decided to replace its ink-and-paint process with computers, it had Pixar test the system with a scene from The Little Mermaid. In 1991, Disney agreed to finance Pixar's first full-length feature film, Toy Story, but production was shut down in late 1993 because the plot dictated that Woody be mean and petty. Disney rewrote the script to make the toy cowboy more sympathetic. And in January 2006, Disney agreed to acquire Pixar for 287.5 million shares of Disney stock.The story works in the biographies of some fascinating men. Catmull turned down Disney when it approached him to help design the Walt Disney World attraction Space Mountain. Steve Jobs, newly thrown out of Apple Computer, bought Pixar for just $5 million, only to discover he had to spend twice that to keep it afloat. You read how John Lasseter advances from a skipper on Disneyland's Jungle Cruise to the principal creative advisor of Disney and Pixar animation.

I don't expect anyone to believe this, but I have to get it off my chest. Price's book gives credit to John Lasseter's wife for creating the character of Jessie in Toy Story 2. Nothing could be further from the truth. I wrote the second draft of TS2 as an independent contractor at Pixar for three months when Ralph Guggenheim was the producer and Ash Brannon was the sole director. Ken Mitchroney was a story artist on the project and the person who had recommended me to try to fix the ungodly mess that was the first draft. He had suggested the film have a cowgirl, and I agreed.Ken did preliminary character sketches, one of which was quite similar to the final character (and modeled on his redheaded wife). The final design was done by Jill Colton, also uncredited. I created Jessie on the page -- she was named and partially modeled after my friend Jessie Horsting, former West Coast Editor of Fantastic Films Magazine -- along with most of the film structure as it currently exists (the major exception being the third act, which I was much less involved with).Not only did Lasseter's wife not have a thing to do with the movie, Lasseter didn't have much to do with it either. I never saw him once during my time at the production (and his taking co-credit for, and accepting awards on behalf of, the movie was a factor in Ash Brannon [SURF'S UP] leaving Pixar as well). After I left Disney showed up with their army of useless middle management, fired everybody, replaced them with their corporate flunkies, and let the project languish for another year. Rita Hsiao wrote a credited version, yet as far as I know what she did was stick post-its under storyboards. But, you know, she worked for Disney and was credited with Mulan. Woo hoo.

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