

Mouse Trap: Memoir of a Disneyland Cast Member by Kevin Yee: A Disney Book Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

I'm a sucker for any book that's written by a former Cast Member.

I just love learning more about what it's actually like to work for the Mouse, so when I saw *Mousetrap* by Kevin Yee, which was billed as "a memoir of a Disneyland Cast Member," I was immediately intrigued. In all honesty, a lot of the books I've read before related to people's experiences as Cast Members at Walt Disney World, so this would be a new experience for me.

The author worked at Disneyland for a total of 15 years, from 1987 until 2002, and the observant ones of you will immediately realise that includes the infamous date of September 11, 2001, the events of which are covered in this book, along with many others over the years.

□ What I liked about this book was that it starts where you'd expect it to, at the beginning, and by that I mean, it has an introduction to what it means to be a Cast Member, explaining the four keys to success that I'm sure many of you already know. For those who don't, they're safety, courtesy, show, and capacity, very strictly in that order. What this essentially means is that you really don't need to know anything about Disney before you start reading, as everything is explained to you. I thought that was a nice touch, as some of the other books I've read have made assumptions that you do already have some knowledge.

□ Then you're taken through the training process, given details of how an individual's performance was appraised, before moving on to the "We Are Family" chapter. This is an interesting one, as it covers Cast Member events, my favorite being the canoe races, some wonderful stories about awards and appreciation events (you wouldn't expect anything less from Disney really…) before you get an explanation about long service. If you've ever looked at a Cast Member's name tag, and wondered about the pins on them, this section sets out what they mean, with one awarded for one year's service, then five years, and every five years after that.

Next you're presented with a fascinating map of backstage at Disneyland. It took me a while to get my head around it, and for a while, I did have to keep referring back to the map, but I actually enjoyed doing that, as then I had more appreciation for where everything was

located.

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□ Finally, you're ready to start reading about anecdotes from park life, and this is 100 pages in, but honestly, the first 100 pages are packed with so much fascinating information, that they're just as much of a joy to read as the ones that follow. As much of the author's working life was in the restaurants in the New Orleans Square area of the park, there are some stories that aren't for those with weak stomachs! The one about maggots springs to mind, definitely not one to read while you're eating is all I'll say about that.

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□ Then there's the downright terrifying. You think Tower of Terror is bad? Well, there was a real-life very close call with the elevators they had, and had the circumstances been different, my goodness, the consequences would have been horrendous.

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□ Other tales were much more entertaining. The one that sticks in my mind is the story about the plastic trays, told so beautifully that you could just picture the scene, and imagine how you'd have felt if you were one of the guests that saw it! As you can imagine, the chapter titled Stupid Guest Tricks is filled with nuggets, some of which have you laughing out loud, while others have you shaking your head in disbelief.

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□ For me, the final chapter of the book was a real highlight, telling the author's tales of his time with EntArts, which installed things like artwork, signs, banners, and floral arrangements. I love things like this, learning how the magic is created. It was here that Yee just happened to be working on September 11, 2001, and neither of the Disneyland parks opened at all that day, although the maintenance crew he was on was allowed into the Disneyland Park. The photo in the book of a completely deserted Main Street USA is eerie, to say the least, and I couldn't help but feel that the author's description of it being "quite uncanny" is probably an understatement.

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□ It's a sombre note to end on, but somehow, given the events of that day, it feels fitting that this is the finale to the book. I found it a great introduction to life at Disneyland, and really appreciated that so much time went into explaining how things worked there, as I enjoyed that nearly as much as the anecdotes from working life in the parks. All in all, if you're a Disney fan, and interested in Disneyland, or perhaps have visited the parks, this is a book I'd definitely recommend.

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They

are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

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