

MICKEY AND MINNIE

INSIDE THEIR 90-YEAR LOVE STORY



ROMEO AND JULIET. BOGIE AND BACALL. KEN AND BARBIE. A LIST OF THE MOST FAMOUS LOVE STORIES OF ALL TIME ISN'T COMPLETE WITHOUT MICKEY AND MINNIE.

It was a match made in cartoon heaven. He was charismatic, mischievous and a bit of a troublemaker. She was sophisticated, intelligent and often the voice of reason. He wooed her with flowers, songs and heroic overtures, and she soon found she couldn't resist his charms. Ninety years ago, Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse fell in love—and they've been by each other's sides ever since.

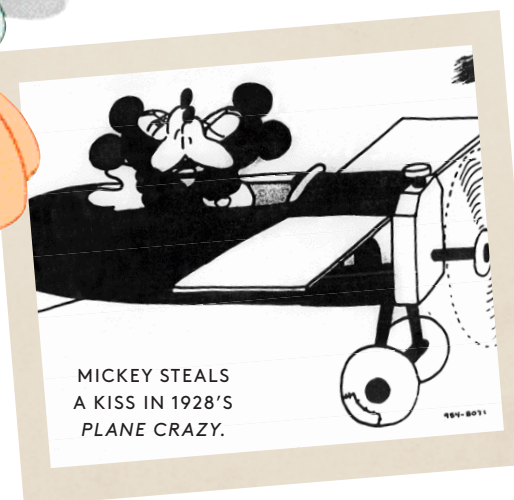
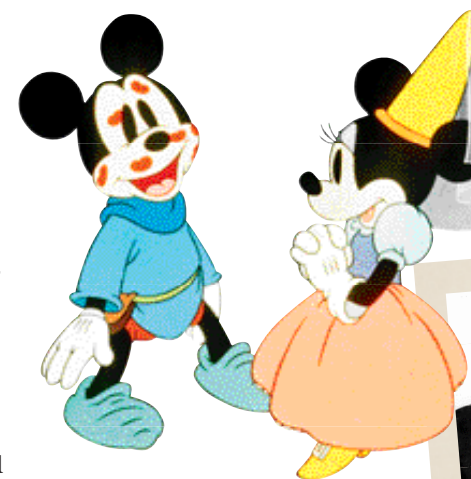
Of course, like any good love story, Mickey and Minnie's romance got off to a bit of a rocky start. When both characters were introduced to the world in 1928's animated short *Plane Crazy*, he was abrasive; she, meanwhile, played hard to get. In fact, in their very first scene together, Minnie rejects Mickey's advances and promptly parachutes out of his plane when he plants an unwanted kiss on her! But as their characters evolved, so did their relationship. "Minnie changed Mickey in many ways," says Aaron H. Goldberg, author of *The Disney Story: Chronicling the Man, the Mouse and the Parks*. "She grounded him and made him

more responsible. Mickey is constantly working on himself in an effort to gain Minnie's affections." Minnie is now a cultural icon, known all around the globe for her sweet nature—not to mention her trademark oversize bow and high heels. But she was originally brought to life as a foil for Mickey.

Walt Disney's first successful character, Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, was an incorrigible flirt who was always in pursuit of love, which provided endless material for jokes and story lines. So Walt felt he needed someone for Mickey to pine after, as well. "To put it simply, these cartoon characters needed co-stars," says Goldberg. "They needed adventures to go on and things to do. Plots with love interests worked well in other successful cartoons, so Walt also went down that road [with Mickey]."

It was another stroke of genius for the groundbreaking animator:

MICKEY WINS PRINCESS MINNIE'S HAND IN MARRIAGE AFTER SUBDUING THE GIANT IN 1938'S *THE BRAVE LITTLE TAILOR*.



MICKEY STEALS A KISS IN 1928'S *PLANE CRAZY*.

Not only did Mickey and Minnie go on to become one of the world's most beloved couples, but Minnie also provided endless inspiration for Mickey's character development in movies, comics, books and TV.

HOW MICKEY WON HER OVER

On-screen and in the *Mickey Mouse* comics, Mickey spends a good chunk of his time trying to make Minnie happy—he serenades her, takes her ice-skating and brings her chocolates. He also gets close to her family, once saving her parents' farm from egg robbers. This is all when he's not busy saving his prized "damsel in distress" from the clutches of Pete, or

"Neither fat nor skinny; She's the horse's whinny; She's my little Minnie Mouse."

MICKEY MOUSE IN MINNIE'S YOO HOO

DESPITE SOME UPS AND DOWNS, 90 YEARS LATER, MICKEY AND MINNIE ARE STILL CRAZY IN LOVE.





IN MICKEY'S CHRISTMAS CAROL, A 1983 ADAPTATION OF CHARLES DICKENS' CLASSIC TALE, MINNIE AND MICKEY STAND IN FOR THE CRATCHITS.

from a hotel fire or a rogue Gorilla. Minnie—a die-hard romantic who once said of her dream man, “Just imagine.... He’ll stride into the room; a light will glow from him. I’ll hear music, he’ll bring me flowers and he’ll sweep me off my feet! And, I’ll know he’s the one when he makes me laugh”—becomes Mickey’s biggest fan. “Minnie’s very supportive of Mickey,” says Goldberg of the couple, whose marital status is often questioned (see sidebar, below). “And he loves that she’s always there to cheer him on.”

Minnie’s style has also evolved over the decades. Her debut look was inspired by the 1920s’ flapper-girl trend, with a short skirt, black tights, a pillbox hat with a daisy sticking out of it and high heels that were a size (or two) too big. In 1940, she and Mickey were redesigned; her hat was replaced with a bow, bows were added to her shoes and she began to don her signature polka dot pattern.

Madonna or Cyndi Lauper, but a tamer version,” says Goldberg. “She became less like a Stepford wife, and more independent, more than just a sidekick to Mickey,” he notes. In 1988, she starred in her very own TV musical called *Totally Minnie*. Minnie has remained a Disney focal point ever since—and she’s more popular today than ever. The hashtag #MinnieMouse boasts nearly 5 million posts on Instagram. She’s

“I try to build a full personality for each of our cartoon characters.”

WALT DISNEY

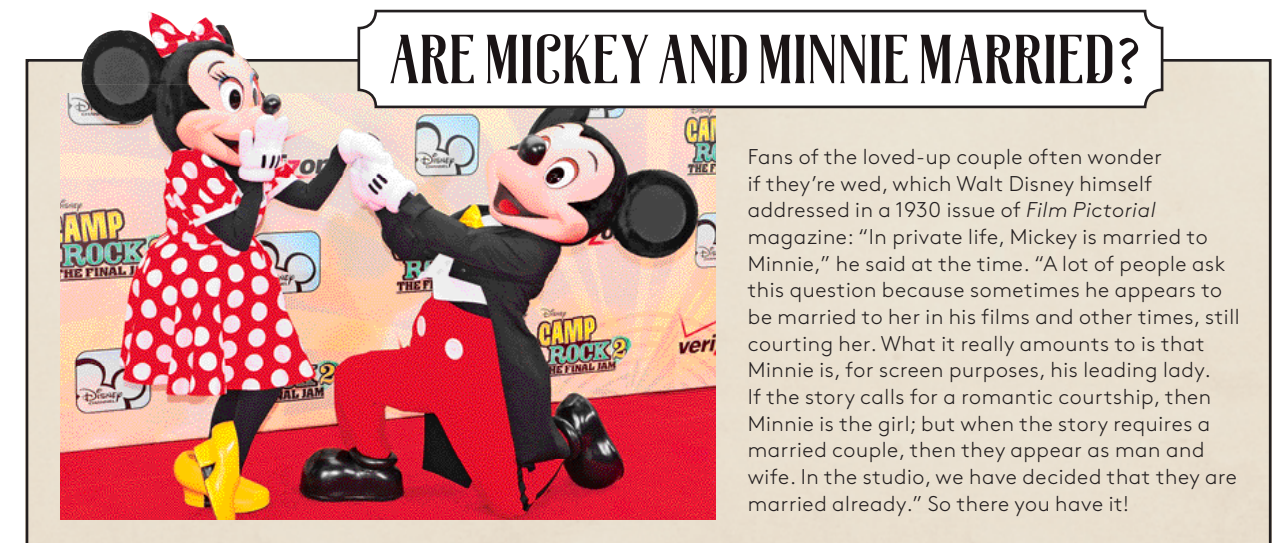
COMING INTO HER OWN

Minnie soon evolved from being just Mickey’s one-dimensional love interest. “She transformed over the years, becoming more independent,” says Goldberg of the stylish fan-favorite, who loves dancing, singing, cooking and accompanying Mickey on his wild adventures. Minnie is also seen as someone who’s just as smart—if not smarter—than her besotted beau. In the film *Pioneer Days*, she actually rescues Mickey from a band of attackers, not the other way around. And while she’s widely known for her cheerful demeanor, she can also be feisty and outspoken, putting bullies (and even Mickey!) in their place when necessary.

SECOND ACT

As adored as she was, Minnie became more of a background player from the 1950s through the ’70s as other Disney characters like Donald Duck, Goofy and Pluto were being featured more and more. But Minnie had a huge comeback beginning in the 1980s, starting with her appearance in 1983’s *Mickey’s Christmas Carol*. Then, in 1986, “Disney declared it the year of Minnie, and gave her another makeover in the mold of

celebrated as a style influencer: In 2017, she caused a media frenzy when she attended New York Fashion Week. She’s been dressed by big-wig designers like Diane von Furstenberg and sneaker brand Vans recently put out a Minnie line of kicks. In January 2018, Minnie got a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame—40 years after Mickey got his. At the ceremony, she gave a special shout-out to her main mouse: “I am so happy that you’re here to share this with me.”



Fans of the loved-up couple often wonder if they’re wed, which Walt Disney himself addressed in a 1930 issue of *Film Pictorial* magazine: “In private life, Mickey is married to Minnie,” he said at the time. “A lot of people ask this question because sometimes he appears to be married to her in his films and other times, still courting her. What it really amounts to is that Minnie is, for screen purposes, his leading lady. If the story calls for a romantic courtship, then Minnie is the girl; but when the story requires a married couple, then they appear as man and wife. In the studio, we have decided that they are married already.” So there you have it!



↑ MINNIE AND MICKEY FLIRT ON A RIVER BOAT IN STEAMBOAT WILLIE.

→ MINNIE’S STYLE HAS EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS. IN A 2014 EPISODE OF BOW-TOONS, SHE SPORTED A VERY RIPPED-FROM-THE-RUNWAY FIT-AND-FLARE DRESS.

↓ MICKEY SHOWS OFF HIS CHIVALROUS SIDE IN 1933’S YE OLDEN DAYS.