

The Art Contest

Marla Mouse loved art more than anything else. She loved to **draw** with pencils, she loved to color with crayons, and she loved to **paint** with big brushes.

One day as she was leaving school, Marla saw a poster on the door. It reminded her that the school art contest was next week. Marla didn't know what to do. She wanted to **show** her paintings to other people. But what if nobody liked her work? She was afraid her friends would laugh at her **pictures**.

Marla thought about the contest the whole way home. When she got home, she said to her mother, "I'm not going to enter the art contest. My paintings aren't good enough."

"Of course they are," Mother Mouse said, hugging her daughter. "You're a wonderful artist."

"What if the kids laugh at my pictures?" asked Marla. "What if they think the drawings are awful?"

"Well," Mother Mouse said, "if you always do your very best, and try your very hardest, you will succeed."

"I don't know," said Marla. "I've never shown my paintings to my friends before."

"There's a first time for everything," Mother Mouse said. "I'll help you **hang** your pictures for the contest. It'll be great! You'll see."

That week, Marla spent hours working on her paintings. She used all her favorite colors.

Finally, the day of the contest arrived. Marla hung her paintings on the wall in the classroom at school. She stood near the paintings. Marla was very nervous when her friend Katy Squirrel came over to say hello. "I really like your paintings," said Katy. "You're very talented."

"Thank you," Marla replied. "I wasn't sure that you'd like them."

Just then Marla spotted Mr. Skunk, her art teacher, coming toward her. He was carrying a blue ribbon.

"Congratulations, Marla," Mr. Skunk said. "You've won first prize!"

"Thank you!" Marla said. "Mother always says that if I try my hardest, I will succeed."

COMPREHENSION Which words tell about being an artist? Why is it important to always try your hardest?

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk



Walt Disney

What does the name Walt Disney make you think of? Do you think of a place called Disneyland or Walt Disney World? Do you think of the cartoon characters Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and Pluto? All of these are things that Walt Disney helped create.

Walt Disney was born in 1901 in Chicago, Illinois. His parents didn't want their five children to grow up in the busy **city**, so they moved the family to a farm in the state of Missouri. Walt liked the farm. He soon began to draw farm animals and other things in nature. When Walt was a teenager, he took art lessons. He went to art **school** three nights a week to learn how to draw.

As Walt got older and better at drawing, he started to get jobs. One of his first jobs was drawing ads for a farm catalog. But Walt's dreams kept getting bigger. He liked drawing so much that he started a company called Laugh-O-Gram Films. The company didn't do very well, and Walt quickly ran out of money. He had to close the company.

But Walt never gave up! He was excited about a new way to draw cartoons called *animation*. This means when you show a lot of drawings really fast, it looks like they're moving! Soon Walt created Mickey Mouse, his first cartoon character.

Walt was very happy about Mickey Mouse and how much people liked him. He decided to move to **California** with his brother and start Disney Brothers Studios. Together, they made cartoons and movies without sound. But it wasn't long before they made movies with sound. Walt used his own voice for Mickey Mouse!

As time went on, Walt thought of more and more characters. He drew them gladly and made movies with them. Walt was a very famous man. Then, in 1955, another one of Walt's dreams came true. Disneyland opened in Anaheim, California. Walt had imagined a place where families could go together and have fun, eating tasty food and going on rides. Almost twenty years later, Walt Disney World opened in Florida. At both parks, you can ride a small train that stops at different **stations**. These places tell you more about each character and about Walt Disney himself.

Today, the Walt Disney Company is still making films. You might know them better as "Disney movies." If you want to see Walt Disney's work for yourself, ask to visit the Cartoon Art **Museum** in San Francisco, California. You'll be able to see where it all began.

COMPREHENSION Which words in this selection tell about places in Walt Disney's life? What character is Walt Disney most famous for?

