

## Freaks and Psychos

### Episode 1: Intro to Disability in Horror

#### 1. **Intro** (10min)

- a. Welcome to the debut episode of Freaks and Psychos: the Disability in Horror Podcast, where the Freaks Shall Inherit the Earth. I am your host Andread. Unless I find a co-host, this will be something of a solo cast with a revolving door of guests. Anyone interested in being on an episode please get in touch!
- b. To give you a general idea of what this podcast is, I will be delving into all the issues related to disability in horror movies, whether that be disabled characters, disabled actors and filmmakers, cultural attitudes about disability, and issues of access in filmmaking and film viewing. The plan right now is to alternate between three different kinds of episodes: one about a classic horror movie, the next about a newer horror movie, and the third will be a themed episode on a particular film cycle or period, disability topic, or type of disability.
- c. I am recording this in September 2020, a difficult time for both me personally and the world at large. We are living in the COVID-19 pandemic which has devastated our economy, taken hundreds of thousands of lives, and endangered people with disabilities and others in marginalized groups. Here in the US, we are seeing political divides crystalized like never before as management of the virus has become a political issue. Black Lives Matter protests over police violence and racial injustice have caused ripples in our social fabric. I say all this only to acknowledge the troubled times we're living in and hope that we can help each other through this. And hopefully have some fun while we're at it.
- d. Let me stake my claim for the significance of "disability in horror" as a topic: It's not just a trivial part of the genre but an integral aspect that has shaped some of the most iconic books and movies. I hope that you give this podcast a chance because I am truly a horror fan just trying to understand his favorite genre better.
- e. If you've not thought much about disability in horror, let me throw out a few examples of how actual disabled people have shaped important horror films.
  - i. Lon Chaney, who played iconic characters such as Quasimodo and the Phantom of the Opera in the silent films of the 1920s, was born to deaf parents, and signing with them made him skilled in pantomime.
  - ii. Tod Browning's *Freaks* used actual sideshow performers with disabilities.
  - iii. For his role as Leatherface in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, Gunnar Hansen observed intellectually disabled children.
  - iv. John Carpenter's inspiration for Michael Myers came while visiting a friend in a mental hospital, where he saw the "blank stare" of a schizophrenic.
  - v. Tom Savini said that he designed young Jason to look like a "Mongoloid"—a derogatory term for people with Down Syndrome—in the original *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>*.
  - vi. Make-up artist David Miller based the look of Freddy Krueger's disfigured face on photographs of actual burn victims.
- f. Aside from how we might think about the representation of disability in the characters and films mentioned, it's clear that disability inspired many of horror's "heavy hitters."

- g. In this introductory episode, I will give you my thoughts on:
  - i. why I am talking about disability in the horror genre
  - ii. what I mean by disability
  - iii. the ways debates about disability parallel debates over the definition of horror
  - iv. an overview of the history of disability in horror from gothic fiction to recent films
  - v. and I'll be playing a few clips of people giving me their thoughts on what disability in horror means to them.
  - vi. I will also have two recurring segments: **Psycho Sounds**, in which I will recommend another horror podcast, and **Freaky Fic**, in which I will give a mini-review of a work of horror literature.
- h. But first, I want to share a bit about myself. I live in Columbus, OH and have a PhD in English Literature from the Ohio State University, where I wrote a book-length analysis of disability in nineteenth-century American literature. I am a lifelong horror fan and am also legally blind. I have presented my research around the country and around the world. My dissertation isn't focused on horror so I won't bore you with the details, but one of my dissertation chapters was about murder and madness in the work of Edgar Allan Poe.
- i. Being legally blind gives me a unique perspective on life and horror. I used to think very negatively about not being able to see as well as other people, to the point that I thought that no matter what I did, I would always be lesser than others who could see. That attitude is the reason that I went to graduate school to explore Disability Studies and why I started this podcast.
- j. Now I think of my blindness as something that gives me a unique identity, distanced from the norms of society. It makes me think differently about things than those who never have to worry about them. For example, let's talk about subtitles. It's a pet peeve of mine to hear people talk about how if you refuse to watch subtitled films, you are lazy or stupid, or both. For me, subtitles are very challenging to read. And subtitles are often formatted poorly—for example, white words on a black and white movie are often hard to read. If we had better-made subtitles, maybe more people would be willing or able to read them. Aside from looking at the depictions of disabled characters on this podcast, I also want to talk about the ways in which horror is produced and consumed—and the ways in which accessibility or lack thereof can inform the work of art or entertainment and how we perceive it.
- k. Horror movies have always been a way for me to find comfort in the pain and struggle of my life. I loved horror movies since I can remember. When I was little, my dad always watched old black and white horror movies, especially the Universal monster movies, which he would tape from AMC and I would watch over and over again. In fourth or fifth grade, I had a friend who watched the *Friday the 13th* movies with me on a regular basis. Around the same time, I started reading Stephen King novels such as *Cujo* and *It*. My uncle had a friend who knew that I loved horror and was an avid reader, so one birthday he gave me a bunch of his old King novels, and I devoured them over the next couple years.

- l. As I got older, my obsession with horror movies and fiction grew. By high school, I had written several horror short stories myself and two "novels" that are thankfully lost to time now. I continue to write creatively, and I have written a lot of horror fiction, I just haven't published much. Since college, I have gradually built my knowledge of horror even though it was often a lonely endeavor, as I did not know many others who nerded out about it like me.
  - m. Now, I'm in my 40s and with the advent of podcasts and social media, I have connected with a lot more people who are into horror. The horror community is an amazing place, and I hope to become better connected with others in it.
2. **Why Talk Disability in Horror?** (5min)
- a. Enough about myself. Let's talk disability in horror. There are a number of reasons for me starting this podcast, but the most basic one is that, despite there being a million horror podcasts out there, I don't think there's one that's solely devoted to disability in horror. And there's so much to talk about that I think it's about time for it.
  - b. There are *a lot* of disabled characters in horror, from Frankenstein's monster to Norman Bates to the much-hated Franklin in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. You'll notice that I am identifying both physical and mental disabilities in that brief list. The name of this podcast reflects these two broad categories of physical and mental disabilities even though they aren't as separate as we often think.
  - c. I am of two minds when I think "disability in horror."
  - d. **One the one hand**, I have to ask myself what it means to be a disabled horror fan when so often what I see is disabled characters who are either villains or victims. Rarely if ever is the final girl or dashing hero disabled. Rarely if ever do stories address what it is actually like to live with disability, instead giving us stereotypes of tragedy or inspiration porn. I mentioned that in the past, I thought of my disability in negative terms. There is no doubt in my mind that the negative and limited portrayals of disability in our media as a whole shaped my internal self-loathing. So I want to say to anyone out there, if you are hating on yourself, whatever your disability, whether you are even disabled or not, you do not have to ever feel like disability or whatever it is makes you a lesser person. It's a lie that society or others have told you.
  - e. That line of thought is the result of social biases such as ableism and stigma. It equates physical and mental differences with moral value or sense of worth. Everyone on this planet has value and worth as a person. But society often teaches us that some people are better than others if they are closer to the idea of "normal," and that some people are not valuable at all because they stray too far from normalcy.
  - f. **On the other hand**, what is great about horror is that it often challenges normalcy by reveling in that which is outside the normal—the abnormal, the deviant, the transgressive. That it is why it is so controversial or disparaged by critics and public figures from the mainstream, because that which is outside the status quo is perceived as a threat. There is a certain parallel in how disabled people and works of horror and horror fans have been regarded by mainstream society—as lesser.
  - g. Unfortunately, I believe that, oddly enough, it is this departure from normalcy that makes many disability advocates condemn horror's representation of disability.

They recognize that disabled people have a different life experience because of the barriers to access and prejudice that they face. Yet, at least some of them want disabled people to be seen as ordinary or normal rather than "othered."

- h. So they oppose the way that horror depicts disability as monstrous, horrifying, connected to the supernatural, or as a source of vulnerability. To see this association between disability and the abnormal as merely negative misunderstands the nature of the horror genre, which revels in the abnormal. Being a freak or a psycho is not always a bad thing, even if you are the "villain" or the antagonist.
  - i. But one of the issues that disability advocates bring up with art and film in general is that of **authenticity**. So much content about disability is created by those without disabilities, and thus it does not draw upon actual lived experience. It is undeniably true that such representations are prone to stereotypes and distortions. It is equally true that writers, directors, and actors are creative, and their job is to imagine the lives of others. But even if that is done from a place of empathy, their imagination may be unknowingly shaped by ableist assumptions.
  - j. At the same time, I do not believe in the concept of authenticity, strictly speaking. The problem is not so much a lack of accuracy as it is the lack of diversity in the kinds of stories that get told about disability.
  - k. Also, issues of character representation get mixed up with the lack of **inclusion** and **equity** in the publishing and film industries. What seems more important to me than whether a disabled character is played by a disabled actor or written by a disabled writer is the question of whether the industries are accessible and inclusive. Are disabled people welcomed and accommodated?—a question of **justice** and **material equality**—rather than artistic failing. While disabled people are more likely to tell faithful and nuanced stories, I do not think that only disabled people should tell stories of disability. The point is that the stories should be as diverse as the working conditions under which they are produced.
  - l. What I think most people have missed is the ways in which horror can be a useful lens through which to view disability, because it offers a different aesthetic that more often than not challenges the conventions and norms of mainstream society. And disability can be a useful lens through which to view horror, because it allows a deeper, richer understanding of the stories that we love, and the ways that they deal with the anxieties over our bodies and minds.
3. **Defining (or Not) Disability and Horror** (10min)
- a. Listeners may be wondering about what I mean by the term disability. As I worked on my PhD, academia instilled me with the principle that you should always define your terms. Not only should good scholarly writing do this, but it also could probably prevent a lot of miscommunication in everyday conversations. Misunderstandings often stem from two people using the same word or concept in different ways without realizing it.
  - b. My definition of disability is broad and fluid, so I do not want to fix it in stone, but one useful way to think about it is the Americans with Disabilities Act definition: "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity."

- c. My one caveat is that I would replace the word “impairment” with “difference,” because as in people with deformities or facial birth marks, it isn’t so much a dysfunction as an appearance that can lead you to be effectively treated as disabled.
- d. While many American disability advocates accept or recognize this definition, there have been many different ones through the years and in other countries. The point is that no definition is universal, and it is going to depend on the context within which you use it. The ADA definition is useful for the law, but scholars and advocates often emphasize self-identification or oppression in their definitions.
- e. At the heart of disability rights is a concept called the social model of disability that views disability as the product of social exclusions and barriers to access experienced by people with impairments. Even this has been seen as too limited, as it frames disability negatively and focuses only on society rather than the material body.
- f. My personal use of disability on this podcast will be somewhat unique because I am using it in terms of film and literature, which does not always go into everyday forms of exclusion or prejudice. The key idea is how stories create images of disability as differences loaded with some intangible meaning, whether good, bad, or something more complicated.
- g. That may seem vague but let me contrast two examples that I hope will illustrate. In *Evil Dead 2*, Ash cuts his own hand off to prevent the spread of the deadite infection and attaches a chainsaw to the stump. I do not see this as a representation of disability because Ash’s missing hand does not make his character different, and other people aren’t reacting to it in a way that draws attention to it. The film does not really assign it a moral or social value. Whereas in *Candyman*, Candyman’s missing hand, replaced with a hook, does correspond to disability because it alludes to urban legends of killers with hooked hands, and the hook adds to the image of Candyman as this grotesque and frightening figure.
- h. So to talk usefully about disability in a work of art, the impairment has to be charged with some kind of social or moral meaning, even if that meaning is challenged by the representation.
- i. As I’m sure listeners are aware, people often argue as much about **the definition of horror** as they do about disability. There are arguments about who and who isn’t disabled, and there are arguments about which movies are and aren’t considered to be horror. One way to define horror is as a set of textual devices that seek to instill dread, fear, shock, or disgust in the audience.
- j. The problem with this definition is that we do not always know the intentions of filmmakers and even when we do, we as audience members do not always respond to works of art in the ways intended.
- k. Another problem is that what evokes dread, fear, shock, or disgust in one person does not always do so in another. You can try to focus on the work itself and interpret certain elements as being designed to elicit fear, even if the creators did not consciously intend that or you personally were not made afraid by them. But that is still a matter of subjective interpretation.

- l. So the field of disability and the genre of horror share yet another parallel in how their boundaries are so contested. Who gets to define the terms, and in what context? It can get dicey when people get into heated debates but hopefully this podcast will open up dialogue and allow respectful disagreement for the sake of discussion. Talking about this stuff isn't about deciding on the right or wrong ways to talk or think about disability. Rather it should be a means of creating awareness and getting people excited to talk about both disability and horror.
  - m. I also want to say a word about stigma, a mark of disgrace applied to groups of people as well as certain types of art like horror. It is essentially a negative emotional response. Some people refuse to identify as disabled because of the stigma attached to disability. That's totally cool with me because I'm all in favor of self-identification. But if you want to resist that stigma, then why not take pride in the label? I am not a fan of terms like **differently abled** or **challenged** or whatever. I proudly claim myself as a disabled person. That's my choice, and I respect those who think differently about it, but that's how I see it.
  - n. The same is true with horror and why horror fans get upset with terms like **elevated horror** and **post-horror** or **thrillers** rather than horror—though thriller is a real genre related to but separate from horror. That's a debate for a different day and maybe a different podcast!
4. **History of Disability in Horror** (10min)
- a. Let me give a brief overview of the history of disability in horror. If we trace modern horror back to the gothic novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the villains are often described as mad, sometimes even inspired by real-life insanity defense trials. Charles Brockden Brown's 1798 novel *Wieland* was based on an actual murder case in which a man claimed that the voice of God had commanded him to kill his family. Similarly, Edgar Allan Poe published a number of short stories in the 1830s and 1840s that incorporated mad murderers, and one of his most famous, the "Tell-Tale Heart," was based on the case of James Wood, who pled not guilty by reason of insanity for murdering his daughter.
  - b. *Frankenstein*, published by Mary Shelley in 1818, is fundamentally about the disgust we harbor towards those who don't look like us and the anxiety about having children with congenital deformities or disabilities. The Creature's creator, Victor Frankenstein, is horrified by the appearance of his creation and immediately regrets having created life. Later depictions more explicitly associate the Creature negatively with disability, as in James Whale's 1931 film, in which Frankenstein's hunchbacked assistant Fritz steals the "abnormal" brain of a criminal.
  - c. Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 novella *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* popularized the archetype of the shapeshifter, which came to inspire not only adaptations of the novella but also werewolf stories, killers with multiple personality disorder, and so on. The shapeshifter archetype is a metaphor for the concept that ordinary people can be driven to do horrible things against their own will, whether it be mental illness, brain disorder, or addiction. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, Jekyll triggers his transformation into Hyde through a potion, so the story has been read as an allegory of alcoholism, which I consider to be a disability.

- d. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 1892 story "The Yellow Wallpaper," a landmark of feminism in fiction, tells the story of a woman who is driven mad by her psychiatrist husband's constraining practices. It uses the horror of madness to critique the sexism so prevalent in early psychiatry.
- e. Jump to the 1920s, and American author H. P. Lovecraft used madness in his fiction as the result of human encounters with beings and realities so weird and outside ordinary experience that they could drive people insane. Like Gilman, Lovecraft may be said to use madness as a means to point out social flaws—in this case, humanity's hubris and our inability to realize our own limitations.
- f. Disability began appearing in cinema from its earliest stages. Even though horror really wasn't a genre yet, movies like 1923's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and 1925's *The Phantom of the Opera* came to be influential in modern horror, and also gave us two early examples of disabled anti-heroes who were somewhat more sympathetic than straightforward villains in film.
- g. The 1930s saw a big spike in depictions of disability in horror, from the *Frankenstein* films to *The Old Dark House* in 1932 and *Mystery of the Wax Museum* in 1933, and perhaps most infamously, Tod Browning's *Freaks* in 1932.
- h. As far as I can tell, disability came less frequently in the 1940s and 1950s unless you take things more figuratively. As I said with the shapeshifter archetype, you could read 1941's *The Wolf Man* and 1942's *Cat People* as allegories for loss of control of the id—the hedonistic pleasure principle that overtakes your conscience and willpower, and both movies even incorporate references to psychiatry.
- i. The 1950s is a decade characterized by sci-fi/horror. The many stories of animals mutated by radiation can be seen as a figurative fear of disability—the theme of atomic age cinema seems to be that nuclear weapons weren't necessarily bad because they killed people, but because radiation causes deformities, birth defects, and so on.
- j. The 1960s saw the development of mental illness as an overt theme. Two powerhouses of modern horror were published in 1959, Robert Bloch's *Psycho*, which would be adapted into Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* in 1960, and Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*, which would be adapted into Robert Wise's *The Haunting* in 1963. Obviously, Norman Bates is the most famous "psycho" in horror history.
- k. Robert Aldrich's 1962 *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane* pitted Bette Davis as Baby Jane against Joan Crawford as her sister Blanche, who is vulnerable to Jane's torments after being crippled by an accident. It's an example of the disabled victim-turned-hero trope, which pops up most frequently with female characters, as in 1967's *Wait Until Dark*. And it's probably one of the earliest examples of an iconic disabled female character in horror films.
- l. The 70s saw a number of disabled characters in horror. There's no single overarching pattern in disability representation, but in general you start to see a more diverse range of disabilities and character types in horror films.
- m. Stephen King also started publishing novels and stories filled with disabled characters—too many to go into here, and not without their problems, but they often played more prominent and heroic roles than usual for the time, from Bill in *It* to Tom and Nick from *The Stand* to Susanna of *The Dark Tower Series*.

- n. The 80s was dominated by the influence of Freudian psychoanalysis, as in the films of Brian de Palma and slasher movies, which framed killers' motivations as the working through of some childhood trauma, grief, or sexual repression. Slasher villains also often exhibited some physical deformity as well.
  - o. The 1990s saw more disabled slasher villains such as *Candyman* in 1992, one of the rare examples of a black disabled character. Thomas Harris's 1988 novel *The Silence of the Lambs*, adapted into film in 1991, includes two serial killers—Hannibal Lecter and Buffalo Bill—who are associated with the monstrously mad.
  - p. The 2000s largely repeated many of the tropes we had seen before. *Don't Breathe*, *Lights Out*, and *Split* all deal with disability and were critical and financial successes, making over \$100 million at the box office on budgets of less than \$10 million. In *Split*'s case, it grossed over \$278 million on a budget of \$9 million, which is a huge profit on a film that continues the tradition of the mentally ill villain.
  - q. In recent times, there has been an explosion of disability characters and themes in horror. To name just a few of the most prominent examples in the last five to ten years: *Curse of Chucky*, *Digging Up the Marrow*, *Late Phases*, *They Look Like People*, *The Visit*, *Baskin*, *Hush*, *Red Christmas*, *The Monster*, *The Evil Within*, *Hereditary*, *A Quiet Place*, *Upgrade*, *Boarding School*, *The Haunting of Hill House* miniseries, *Bird Box*, *The Siren*, *Daniel Isn't Real*, *Relic*, *Color Out of Space*. I could go on.
  - r. As I hope this history reveals, disability has been with horror from the start, has always been a part of horror, and will continue to be there as long as horror exists.
5. Interviews: What Does Disability in Horror Mean to You? (10-15min)
6. **Psycho Sounds** (5min)
- a. And now it's time for Psycho Sounds, a segment in which I will review another horror-related podcast because I think it's important to promote the work of other podcasters. This episode, I am going to cheat a little bit and talk about two huge horror podcasts that mean a lot to me personally.
  - b. Horror Movie Podcast is Dead Serious About Horror Movies. HMP to me is the top tier of horror podcasting. Its three hosts, Gillman Joel, Wolfman Josh, and Dr. Shock have a great dynamic. They are always respectful, thoughtful, and insightful in their reviews, and are very engaged with listeners through comments and social media. They cover everything, from new releases to classics, and they are extremely knowledgeable about the genre and movies in general. They alternate between Frankensteinian episodes in which they talk about a mishmash of movies, themed episodes, which cover films within a particular topic, and franchise reviews. Their episodes are typically 2-3 hours long, so if you want long form content with many hours of listening, this is your show.
  - c. What appeals to me is that they are very analytical but in a fun way, which is what I am going for with this podcast. They don't just talk about liking certain parts of movies but go into their influences, the underlying themes, and even the social and political context. But it's all done in a very passionate and sometimes humorous way, so it's always a pleasure to listen to. You can find them at [horrormoviepodcast.com](http://horrormoviepodcast.com) or on Twitter @ HorrorMovieCast. I also want to thank them for kindly helping me with advice on starting this podcast.



- d. Another podcast I want to share with you is Horror Movie Weekly, One Badass Horror Podcast. One of the hosts, Jay of the Dead, actually used to be a host on HMP and is a horror podcasting legend. Now he's co-hosting with two other icons of horror podcasting, Billchete and Lady Phantom. Each week, they cover a single horror film released within the last 5 years, basically going through its strengths and weaknesses without spoilers. Episodes run about 40-50 minutes, so they're perfect for commutes or workouts. It's a great way to keep up with newer releases. Now, the hosts are great friends, but they also have wildly different sensibilities and opinions, so you will hear real no-holds-barred fights on there, which makes it very entertaining. You can find them at [horrormovieweekly.com](http://horrormovieweekly.com) and on Twitter @ [horrorunderscore weekly](https://twitter.com/horrorunderscoreweekly). I also have to shout out a huge thanks to Jay for providing me detailed and helpful advice on podcasting. Jay also has another podcast called Considering the Cinema where he reviews all movies, not just horror, so you should check that one out too.
7. **Freaky Fic** (5min)
- a. Now it's time for our final segment: Freaky Fic, where I review a work of horror fiction, whether it be a short story, novel, comic, or whatever. I'm as much a literature lover as a movie lover, so I want to promote works of horror literature as well. What I cover in this segment does not have to be disability-related, as long as it's horror.
  - b. For the first Freaky Fic segment, I will review Victor Rodriguez's short story collection, *The Sound of Fear*. It consists of twelve stories sharing the theme of sound. Some are horror, others fantasy, and a couple might be sci-fi. The settings are diverse in time and place—most are set in present day USA, but there is one in a European Castle after WW1, one in ancient Egypt, and one in ancient Scandinavia. The stories vary in length, the majority being 5-10 pages, but a few are longer, a few shorter.
  - c. This is a fine collection of short works, most of which are fairly accessible for speculative fiction fans. The characters are well-drawn, and usually the perspective is anchored to a particular protagonist. References to myth and folklore are sprinkled throughout, especially Scandinavian myth.
  - d. The most interesting aspect of the collection is the theme of sound, whether it's someone composing music for video games or musicians playing in a band or some unusual sound. This theme is unusual because, most fiction, even experimental fiction, tends to prioritize visual description over other senses.
  - e. "Farewell Concert" is my favorite story, probably because it appeals to my love for cosmic/weird/Lovecraftian horror. It's got some pretty interesting ideas about how the noise generated by industrial civilization ("the hum") may be blocking out other realities. When a musical genius figures out how to negate the hum, all hell breaks loose. The narrative is also all told through dialogue, an interesting stylistic choice that allows a selective conveyance of information.
  - f. Highly recommended for fans of horror and fantasy.

8. **Plugs and Sign-off** (2min)

- a. Well, folks, that's it for the very first episode of Freaks and Psychos: The Disability in Horror Podcast. I hope you have enjoyed my introductory guide through disability in horror. My plan is to release an episode every other Sunday. Check out the show and leave comments at [freaksandpsychospodcast.com](http://freaksandpsychospodcast.com). Please subscribe, rate, and review on Apple Podcasts, Podbean, Stitcher, or whatever app you use for listening to podcasts, and help spread the word!
- b. You can send questions, comments, or requests to be a guest at [freaksandpsychospodcast \(all one word\) @ gmail.com](mailto:freaksandpsychospodcast@gmail.com) or our voicemail at 614-721-1011. The show's Twitter is @FreaksPsychos and my personal account is @Andread the Blind. You can read my reviews on Letterboxd under Andread.
- c. Big thanks to Dark Mark, the creator of the show's intro and outro music. It was a big help not being musically inclined myself. I connected with him as a fellow Horror Movie Podcast listener. You can find him on Twitter @mark underscore longfield and on Letterboxd as Darkmark.
- d. Thank you for listening, fellow freaks and psychos. This is your host Andread signing off. Join us next episode for a conversation with Professor Angela M. Smith to discuss Tod Browning's *Freaks!* And if you find yourself wishing that you were normal, just remember: the freaks shall inherit the Earth.