



# grim

ISSUE #1 FEBRUARY 2018

## Cinematic Witches

ILLUMINATING THE DARK SIDE  
OF THE MOON CYCLE

THE IMPORTANCE OF  
INTERSECTIONAL HORROR

A SHORT HISTORY OF  
WITCHES ON FILM

DECODING ARGENTO'S  
SUSPIRIA

PLUS:

GIGI SAUL GUERRERO:  
QUEEN OF  
TEX-MEX GORE

JULIA COTTON:  
HELLRAISER'S  
TRUE MONSTER

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# grim magazine

February 2018

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"The Love Potion" by Evelyn de Morgan

## Editor's Note

### Happy Women in Horror Month!

First, I'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped make this first issue possible, including our Platinum Sponsor Rotten Rags, the rest of our wonderful sponsors, our talented team of writers, and our amazing Indiegogo backers.

The figure of the witch has been a compelling one for centuries, capturing the imaginations of many different cultures over many different eras. Terrifying, sacrilegious, subversive, sexy, rebellious, benevolent -- whether viewed as in touch with nature or in defiance of the natural order, witches have always been polarizing figures, inspiring fear and admiration alike. The realm of genre film has long been fascinated with witchcraft. From *Häxan* to *Rosemary's Baby*, from *Suspiria* to *The Craft*, from *The Witch* to *The Love Witch*, we cannot seem to pull ourselves away from this enigmatic and fascinating subject.

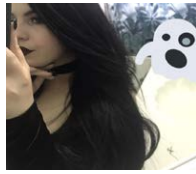
Nor should we.

The history of witchcraft has much to tell us about ourselves and about a culture's relationship to women -- and to the Other in general. The witch is a powerful figure not only because of the magic and knowledge that she wields, but because of the social marginalization and stigmatization that she endures. Whether hero or villain, the witch is a figure on the margins; she is one who has been thrust from conventional society. It's only natural that we should be interested in her story.

I hope that you enjoy the premiere issue of *Grim Magazine*. Crafting this issue has been a magical experience.

Valeska Griffiths  
@bitchcraftTO

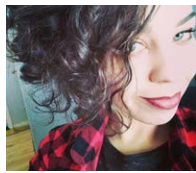
## meet the press



**Alejandra Gonzalez** When she's not passionately championing the work of Rob Zombie and her beloved *Hobbit* trilogy, Alejandra Gonzalez writes about movies over at FThisMovie.com and makes guest appearances on their podcast. She has also appeared in other podcasts such as The Screamcast and Pop Culture Case Study, and is currently working towards a degree in English with a certificate in film. Follow her impassioned musings about horror on twitter at @sick\_\_66.



**Ali Chappell** is a writer, personality, and actor. She trained in dance for a decade and acting for almost two. She holds a degree in both business and musical theatre. She is skilled in the art of balancing spoons on her face and after three drinks she is really good at throwing axes. She is obsessed with horror and romcoms and enjoys an afternoon of archery. She can often be found curled up watching *Brooklyn Nine Nine* or *The League*, or in a movie theatre with a glass of gin and bag of popcorn. Follow her on twitter and Instagram at @thealichappell.



**Anya Stanley** is a California-based writer, columnist, and staunch *Halloween 6* apologist. In addition to her monthly Gender Bashing column at Dread Central and her Video Nasties column at Daily Grindhouse, Anya's genre analyses have appeared on Birth Movies Death, Blumhouse, and wherever they'll let her talk about scary movies. See more of her work on anyawrites.com, and follow her shenanigans on twitter at @BookishPlinko.



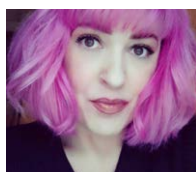
**Ashlee Blackwell** watched *A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master* on television at a very young age and hasn't looked back. Her brooding nature and talent for writing has lead her to building a scholarship on Black women in the horror genre called Graveyard Shift Sisters. She has written for Birth.Movies.Death, The Guardian, Rue Morgue, and wants to write for more. Also, feel free to hire her for horror-based lecture series or adjunct opportunities. Find her on twitter at @GraveyardSister.



**CC Stapleton** is a visual artist and writer from Atlanta. Having studied art history in college, specifically Renaissance-era devotional iconography, she can find – and rave at length about – the symbolism embedded into anything (all while telling you a thing or two about how to make great life decisions). She contributes reviews and commentary to Bloody Good Horror and Anatomy of a Scream, and hosts her own podcast Something Red, uncovering haunted worlds pressed betwixt pages. She welcomes you to get dark with her on twitter (@callsinthenight), because, to cite tattooed Buffalo bard Keith Buckley, “The cheap thrill of our impending doom’s all I have.”



**Joe Lipsett** is a TV addict with a background in Film Studies. He co-created TV/Film Fest blog Bitchstolemyremote.com and has written for Bloody Disgusting and Anatomy of a Scream. He enjoys graphic novels, dark beer and plays multiple sports (adequately, never exceptionally). While he loves all horror, if given a choice, Joe always opts for slashers and creature features. Follow Joe on twitter at @bstolemyremote and be sure to join the Bstolemyremote FB group for daily TV and film updates!



**Michelle Swope** shares her passion for horror movies with the world by writing film reviews and doing interviews for Horrornews.net, and is also a contributing writer for Anatomy of a Scream and HorrorGeekLife.com. She is a self-proclaimed spokesperson for Arctic Fox Hair Color. A fan of *Twin Peaks* for the past 27 years, she recently adopted a homeless kitten that she named Agent Dale Cooper. She has appeared as a guest on The Monster Guys podcast Welcome to the Red Table. You can follow her on twitter at @RedheadfromMars where she would love to tell you about her new favorite horror movie.



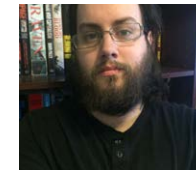
**Rayna Slobodian** is an old goth who enjoys reveling in the darker side of life. Outside of working full-time, she spends her free time as a graduate student at York University. Her research topics have included outer space settlements, anti-aging, astronomers, death, immortality and poverty. For fun, Rayna enjoys experimenting with her creative side through cosplay. She is also a songwriter and has released two albums. She plans to work on a new album following her master's thesis, so keep an ear to the ground for that project.



**Suri Parmar** If one were to describe Suri as the sum of three fictional characters, she'd be equal parts Joanna from *The Female Man*, Hazel from *Seconds*, and *Adventure Time's* Marceline the Vampire Queen. She has written and directed award-winning short films that have screened all over the world, but is reluctant to describe herself as a filmmaker and identifies as a writer. She includes Angela Carter, Kelly Link, and the Wachowskis among her literary influences and is a diehard fan of *America's Next Top Model*. Follow her on twitter and Instagram at @SOTEdfilms.



**Valeska Griffiths** Hailing from Toronto, Ontario, Valeska is the founder and editor of Anatomy of a Scream and Grim Magazine and a contributor to Horrornews.net and Nightmare on Film Street. She is a freelance writer, zombie enthusiast, and Camp Arawak drop-out who balances a passion for maple syrup with a love for blood. Valeska spends her time critiquing slasher films, watching makeup tutorials, and living deliciously. October is her natural habitat. Connect with her on twitter at @bitchcraftTO.



**Zack Long** is an independent film historian with a focus on horror, a filmmaker, and an advocate of creativity in all its forms. Follow him on twitter at @lightisfading.

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# SURVIVING RED SPRING

Jeff Sinasac & Tonya Dodds discuss their vampire apocalypse

by Valeska Griffiths

*The Walking Dead* meets *I Am Legend*, *Red Spring* is an under-the-radar gem that belongs on any indie horror fan's To Watch list. Boasting satisfying character development and a strong, full-blooded script, the film follows a group of survivors struggling to out-run and out-strategize the horde of vampires who have taken over most of the world. The film doesn't devote any of its precious run-time to investigating the source of the infection or any self-indulgent philosophizing about the infection as a self-perpetuated punishment for human ills -- *Red Spring* is a simple, down-and-dirty, bloody vampire romp with a compelling narrative and excellent performances. It was one of my favourite selections at Toronto's 2017 Blood in the Snow Film Festival.

While the film opens in downtown Toronto (represent!), the action very quickly moves out of the city as our ragtag band of survivors searches for safer pastures, eventually winding up in rural Kincardine after a thrilling rescue mission adds a new player to their party. This deceptively bucolic settings provides a perfect juxtaposition to the bloodshed to come.

While at first, the group exhibits the same level of conflict that you would anticipate in any survival situation involving a group of complete strangers, as the film progresses they settle into an easy and respectful camaraderie. The team never quite transforms into a well-oiled machine, but that is to the benefit of the audience who are able to enjoy several spirited strategizing sessions between the strong-willed characters.

The film was written and directed by Jeff Sinasac, who also plays the leading role of Ray in a low-key but effective performance. *Red Spring* was a project long in the making. It took Jeff and his producer/wife Tonya Dodds years to guide the film from a smart and savvy script to a buzzed-about indie gem. The two filmmakers are used to wearing a variety of hats: Jeff is a writer, actor, VFX artist, and occasional director who has contributed to a long list of feature, short,



web, and television productions. Tonya is an equally prolific actress, producer, and web series veteran, and co-host of the infectiously fun and upbeat *Nicole & Tonya Show* (alongside her good friend and fellow actress Nicole Wright.)

I was lucky enough to run into Jeff and Tonya at a Blood in the Snow Film Festival after-party. After I plied them both with lavish compliments, they kindly agreed to an interview.

**I know that *Red Spring* had a very circuitous production route -- can you two talk a little about the hurdles and setbacks that you ran into along the way?**

**Jeff:** During the first decade or so of the script's existence, it faced the hurdles common to most films. Optioned more than once, attracting the attention of industry heavies, there was a time when it seemed like a golden ticket. But as is the common lament of most films, these things fell through. With this final incarnation, there were no fewer hurdles. The film got off the ground initially only because of the involvement of a prominent celebrity from Los Angeles. His name alone allowed us to attract funding and personnel. When he eventually withdrew, mere months before shooting, all those things we had put in place fell with him -- we lost producers, crew members and a significant portion of our funds. In

the end, it was literally just Tonya and myself left standing, with no money, no concrete plan, and no reasonable expectation that we could still succeed. We kept going out of grim determination, almost fatalistically. We didn't want the energy we had put toward this to dissipate, and for it all to become another "remember that time when we almost" story.

**Tonya:** *Red Spring* was the first thing of Jeff's I read. I think he sent it to me after our first or second date. I remember thinking that it probably wouldn't be that good and that he was probably just trying to impress me. Then I stayed up all night reading and re-reading it because I loved it. I knew then in my heart of hearts that this script needed to be made, so when we finally got the rights back, there was no question for me. We were doing it, no matter what. It was terrifying and we both wanted to quit at times because we were scared of failing horribly. Luckily, neither one of us ever confessed that to each other until after we had wrapped.

**In a way, it kind of feels like the delay in production worked out -- dystopian stories unfortunately seem more resonant by the day (particularly those involving literal vampires). Do you think that the current climate of political strife and renewed concern about nuclear strikes lend *Red Spring* an additional layer of subtext?**

**Jeff:** It has crossed my mind that the general political climate, and the ongoing sense that society is collapsing (I know I've felt it) might give the film an added weight. Funnily, ever since we shot, I've been kicking myself for letting the story's bomb shelter remain a "bomb shelter", given Kincardine's close



proximity to a nuclear plant -- it struck me after the fact that a shelter to deal with immediate fallout from a theoretical meltdown might seem less convenient and more plausible. But, yeah, I suppose overseas drama does give the bomb shelter set a renewed resonance.

**Tonya:** I just clued into the vampire significance in our current political climate and just as a vote on a massive tax bill in the US that sucks money away from 99% of population is about to go through.

**The film is shot in location in Kincardine, Ontario, which is a very small, very rural area. What was it like working with the community, and what did shooting in that location allow you to do that you may not have been able to do otherwise?**

**Jeff:** Kincardine has been a dream to shoot in. Ever since Tonya introduced me to it, I've been in love with the town -- we often half-joke about making a permanent move there, though commuting for auditions would be a bitch! The town rallied around us, providing a wide pool of background performers as well as talented crew to help with set building and other tasks. Local restaurants provided meals, the local pharmacy gave us hundreds of empty pill bottles, the marina cleared out space on their piers to give us the desolate look we needed, and the town actually wrote a new bylaw to allow us to close the main thoroughfare for an evening.

**“One of the most memorable events occurred late at night on a country road. We were filming part of a highway chase scene when we suddenly saw the real life red and blue lights of a police car behind us.”**

Toronto is a centre for film and has infrastructure in place to help with filming, but it also makes the residents more jaded and savvy to the opportunities to profit from filming. It was liberating to be free of that, and the town's enthusiasm and passion for the project mirrored and amplified our own.

**Tonya:** I grew up in Kincardine. It's part of who I am. I grew up doing community theatre but there wasn't

really an opportunity to work on film or TV in the area. It became a goal of mine to find a way to bring film shoots home. This sounds self-aggrandizing, but I wanted to allow people the chance to work on set to see if it's something they might love. I'm a big believer in sharing knowledge so having people who may have never been on a film set before was really important to me. Because I grew up in Kincardine, I also knew that I could find someone who could find what we needed to film. Joan, Doug, and Stacey's farm was a god-send and we are forever grateful to them for letting us take over for three weeks.

*The characters in Red Spring share some great chemistry -- the group dynamic is one of the film's greatest strengths. How did you pull together your motley band of survivors?*

**Jeff:** I wrote the script in 2003 with the intention of playing Ray, so that particular casting was completed 12 years before we shot. I've known Lindsey Middleton for years, since we both traveled in the same Toronto web series circles (often literally - we've ended up in Los Angeles and Montreal together representing our respective series on more than one occasion). We had cast her to play Ray's wife in a concept trailer we shot in 2014, and she did such an amazing job that when I suggested to Tonya that we might bring her on as Bailey, Tonya immediately agreed.

**“After Jonathan left the audition room, I showed my notes on his performance to Tonya and Elysia. They consisted of one word: “Wow.”**

Elysia White was the star of the web series *Haphead*, which I had a small part in. I met her on set but it wasn't until I saw a screening of the series that I knew she'd be perfect for Vicky. An athletic ass-kicker, coincidentally proficient with a crossbow and an amazing actress to boot? We were just thrilled she said yes. The others were all cast off of auditions. My first time meeting Reece Presley was at the audition, in fact, and he fit the role perfectly, as well as being someone we instantly felt a kinship with.

Andre Guantanamo had played our vampire leader in the concept trailer, but we still auditioned him

because the actual role was quite different. The auditions for the vampire leader were particularly challenging because, how do you audition for a silent but massively expressive role? He came in with his own concept which was very, very cool, but much more animalistic than we were envisioning. His willingness and ability to adapt instantly in the audition cinched the deal.

Elysia had suggested we look at Adam Cronheim for Eric, and since he wasn't Toronto-based, we had to do that over Skype. I ended up a half-hour late to that audition because I was out buying the hard drives we'd need for the film. As with Andre, Adam demonstrated an ability to respond instantly and precisely to direction, no small task over the cold medium of Skype. He also didn't tell us that he'd bought tickets to some event that night, and that my tardiness and the lengthy audition was putting his ability to attend in jeopardy. He wanted the part, and he earned it.

In many ways, Jonathan Robbins was the trickiest to cast, only because he was so different from the character I had envisioned when I wrote Carlos. I'd known him for years and, as he knows, we granted the initial audition out of friendship, not believing there was any real chance of him booking the role. With each person that auditioned, I recorded notes for later referral. After Jonathan left the audition room, I showed my notes on his performance to Tonya and Elysia. They consisted of one word: “Wow”. It just made sense to adapt my vision of the character to his amazing portrayal. At this point, I can't envision anyone else as Carlos.

**Tonya:** A big part of casting was also the fact that we were all going to be spending three weeks with each other. With absolutely everyone we cast or auditioned, we asked ourselves, “Do we want to spend three weeks straight with this person?” A set is a very unique and personal environment and you must at minimum like the group of people you've assembled. I don't deal with divas well so a part of the audition process for me was trying to sense the people who would be a joy to be with on set.

**Working with so many people who already knew and liked each other must have made for a fun shooting experience. Any memorable stories?**

**Tonya:** On every set, there's a brief period of time where you are all just getting to know each other.



Usually, by the end, you either love or hate each other. The definite added bonus of knowing so many of our cast and crew before we got to Kincardine meant that we went in loving our cast and crew. That definitely carried through to the end and even now we just like spending time with each other.

As for memorable moments, we did some game days as a group on our days off. Let's just say we're all very competitive people. There is one scene in the film where a character writes a message on a wall. Being producer/any-other-job-that-needs-to-be-done crew person, I prepped that wall and wrote the message. In the original script, the character who writes it is supposed to be an artist so I focused on making a ridiculously simple drawing to go with the message. Turns out I was so preoccupied with that drawing that I misspelled a word in the message. Since time was tight, we couldn't wash the wall and start over. So the script ended up changing to reflect my mistake. Obviously, there are a lot more fun stories but some probably aren't appropriate to re-tell here.

**Jeff:** For me, one of the most memorable events

occurred late at night on a country road. We were filming part of a highway chase scene when we suddenly saw the real life red and blue lights of a police car behind us. Apparently, someone had seen our van driving up and down the same stretch of road and called it in as suspicious. Approaching the officer was nerve-wracking, knowing that we had replica automatic weapons in the van. However, as soon as I mentioned who we were and what we were doing, the officer smiled and said, “Oh I know who you are. Your producer contacted us and I've heard all about you. Carry on.” Evidently, we had fans on the police force.

**There's a scene midway through where Jonathan Robbins double-checks that chalk drawing in a way that seems very spontaneous. Was there a lot of improvisation while shooting or did you tend to stick closely to the script?**

**Jeff:** With regards to that particular scene, it was totally scripted. Kudos to Jonathan for making it seem spontaneous. Although there was no improvisation per se, actors did approach me occasionally with new line suggestions which I was always open to.

My favourite of these is Jonathan's comment, "Nice plie", when watching the ballet video.

*I laughed out loud at that line!*

**Tonya:** While I wasn't privy to much of the performance improvisation or adding in lines, we definitely had to think on our feet behind the scenes on different occasions as problems arose or if inspiration struck. For example, we somehow found out that we could get wrecked cars on set if we wanted. Our original plan was just to use our own production vehicles when the script called for them. Suddenly (and wonderfully), we had the option of cars that were totalled as set dec. We ended up having to figure out when the tow truck could come on set and literally drop these vehicles in place, without interfering with whatever we were filming at the time.

**“One of my most hated Hollywood tropes is the conflation of love and sex ... I definitely wanted to try to paint a more realistic distinction between those two things.**

*I found it really refreshing that Red Spring deliberately and explicitly sidesteps the trope of having the leads develop a romantic relationship. Was that decided early on in the writing process?*

**Jeff:** One of my most hated Hollywood tropes is the conflation of love and sex. Most films are only 90 minutes long, so unless you are shooting a romance or rom-com that can focus solely on this topic, I understand the need to rush to the point. With *Red Spring*, however, I definitely wanted to try to paint a more realistic distinction between those two things. I'm very proud of the fact that the film contains two separate romantic subplots that audiences seem to pick up on, despite the fact that neither is physically consummated beyond a kiss on the hand and one other halted kiss.

**Tonya:** When I first read the script, I was overjoyed to see that there wasn't suddenly a sex scene three quarters of the way through the story. A huge part of Ray's character and journey is that he refuses to believe that his wife and child are dead. To have him suddenly jump into bed with Vicky would be



a disservice to both of those characters. It just wouldn't make sense for it to happen at this point in their stories.

*Jeff, you have quite a few visual effects credits to your name. You actually worked on visual effects for two of the film at the Blood in the Snow Film Festival this year: Red Spring and Ryan M. Andrews's Art of Obsession. Do you have a formal education in VFX, or is it something that you've picked up up through practical experience over the years?*

**Jeff:** No formal education. Back in 2006, I wrote, co-produced, and starred in a VFX-heavy short called *Red Moon Over Rigger's Pond*. Though the director of that film handled the bulk of the VFX, he asked me to help. At that point, through a combination of his tutelage and extensive YouTube viewing, I began to learn. A year or so later, I was asked by the director of a feature I was acting in if I would be willing to handle the VFX on his film. There were more than 70 shots and it really allowed me to cement my experience.

*Tonya, I'd love to talk a little bit about The Nicole and Tonya Show. Between guest stars, musical breaks, and different segments, each episode manages to pack a LOT of content into a fairly short run-time. How long does it take to produce each episode, on average?*

**Tonya:** NTS is a definite labour of love. Nicole is truly one of my best friends and just working with her makes it an awesome experience. That said, we do everything from writing, to shooting, editing, and sound design so it takes a lot to get an episode put together. It doesn't help that we're endless perfectionists. Our goal is to write two or three episodes at once so we can work on those at the same time. That usually means that we're looking ahead at TV and film premieres, talking to our friends with expertise in different areas, seeing what festivals are coming up in our areas, talking to



**“In the end, it was literally just Tonya and myself left standing, with no money, no concrete plan, and no reasonable expectation that we could still succeed. We kept going out of grim determination.**

each other about things we're passionate about, and then building a block of episodes from that research. It can take a month to produce three to five episodes.

*You're both immensely creative people and obviously work well as a team -- what advice would you give to other creative couples in terms of supporting each other's projects and staying sane in the face of looming deadlines and differences of opinion?*

**Tonya:** First of all, I just want to say we both giggled when we read this question. Second, I think like any partnership you have to communicate with each other. I admit that I'm not great at that at times, especially when I start to get stressed. Jeff is very good at reminding me to say things out loud. But at the end of the day, working with Jeff has been awesome. We found that it's efficient in the sense that when I had been mulling a problem over in my

head, I could just turn to my business partner who happens to live with me and run the idea past him immediately.

When we're on set, it's easier for me to know when Jeff is done and just needs to stop for the day. And I had both wife and producer authority to tell him to do so. It is immensely gratifying to have shared this experience with my husband.

**Jeff:** Set your ego aside and remember that you're both trying to achieve the same goal. Receiving criticism, especially when familiarity overrides diplomacy, is never easy. But I can say that having someone whose opinion I trust as the first set of eyes to see any editing or visual effects work I was doing provided a great safety net. It's easy to become too close to what you're working on and having a mildly filtered opinion made the film the best it could be. PS: I love you, T! *g*



# When Being The Weirdo Means Being Black: *The Craft's* Rochelle & The Need For Intersectional Horror

by Ashlee Blackwell

*The Craft* (1996) is a film that came out around the time I turned 13. I was a freshman in high school and firmly established as a minority within a minority in my predominantly white/European immigrant, working-class suburb right outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was a painful observation. I was constantly confronting micro-aggressions about what kind of Black person I was supposed to be, and was not, from all of my peers. I was the weirdo. And I found myself socializing with other weirdos who were the pop culture nerds, especially those who occupied way too much time obsessing over *The X-Files* and *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* as much as I did.

But my racial difference only highlighted the rise of a reaction that one particular friend (who, in retrospect, I realize wasn't much of one) consistently searched for from me. As if my nerdiness, introverted nature, and his incomprehension of me not fitting his concept of a Black person was a code to crack. It was twenty-two years ago now, but I still remember this high school hallway conversation all too vividly. His urgency to recount the story of the black girl in this new movie called *The Craft*. And how this black girl, Rochelle (actress Rachel True) was told by the rottenly effervescent white blonde Laura Lizzie (Christine Taylor), after she bravely confronts her regarding ongoing harassment, that Laura simply doesn't like "negroids." Instead of being observantly taken aback, he dished this unwanted spoiler with delight and amusement. As if blatant racism, fictional or not, was something to laugh about.

**"As if my nerdiness, introverted nature, and his incomprehension of me not fitting his concept of a Black person was a code to crack."**

I don't know what I expected from a 13-year-old white guy. I don't know why I even remained casually friendly with him. But I do remember not finding it as chuckle-inducing as he did. And I additionally remember my silence. Because I couldn't quite find the words at such a young age

so quickly, not to express being offended, but to question why this particular scene was one that needed my immediate attention, expressed with absolutely no tact. It was one of those sarcastically nice reminders of my place in this massive enclave of a school community. Not that I necessarily wanted to, but I knew that I would never fit in. Anywhere. I would always be the weirdo. And in a way, that hasn't changed.



How did many of us find camaraderie, empathy, and imagination in Rochelle's broader, unseen story?

I don't remember when I finally saw *The Craft* but, when I did, Rochelle's scenes with the obtuse Laura cut deep. I was flustered and empathetic to a character that was virtually invisible to an entire school population outside of her small coven of comrades, unless to be the target of racist scorn. With not one of her own "friends" shown as an outwardly sympathetic advocate. This made her experience even more isolating in contrast to her white female counterparts who, if they did get that brief seat at the table, were promptly dismissed for their lower-class status, carefully hidden body deformities, and not performing for the teenage 'good 'ol boys' club. The most glaring difference; Rochelle was never going to get that seat along with Sarah, Nancy, and Bonnie, all making a pact to use the dark arts to channel their angst into empowerment.

**"This made her experience even more isolating in contrast to her white female counterparts who, if they did get that brief seat at the table, were promptly dismissed for their lower-class status, carefully hidden body deformities, and not performing for the teenage 'good 'ol boys' club."**

Unfortunately, Rochelle's score to settle was not explored with the emotional weight it carried. It was played as superficial comeuppance for Laura's racial intolerance. A spell was cast on her to lose what we are to assume was one of Laura's most cherished assets and core of self-worth; her hair. But it is interesting how her straight, blonde locks were a symbol in itself of an idealized status of social capital, supposed racial superiority and prosperity. It is interesting how Rochelle makes a sweeping statement to her friends, one so quick, sneaky, and easily missed, about a spell to "make me blonde." I picked up on that 22 years ago and it's still so symbolic of the damage that these experiences inflict on women of color. These are the pieces to Rochelle we could never fully put together because the entire mold was never assembled. What's missing is much more than *The Craft* could explore in its run-time. And that's more than just a little unfortunate.

**"Why is Rochelle reprimanded for being the enactor, the catharsis, of every brown teenaged girl who has had to deal with racism without the tools and know-how to combat it at such a tender age?"**

The movie for many sparked the thirst to explore the deep intersections of the weirdo. Rochelle was the social outcast with the other handful of social outcasts of St. Bernard Academy, sure. But how do we cinematize the Black girl outcast teenager that many of us felt like? That just so happens to be a practicing witch? *The Craft* opened the gate to explore these intersections, but it never walked through them. Much of what can be read of Rochelle relies heavily on those of us to whom she meant so much. What kinds of conversations did young Black girls have back in 1996 and are having now about the importance of her presence in a film that, at least, didn't blend her in with colorblind rhetoric? How did many of

us find camaraderie, empathy, and imagination in Rochelle's broader, unseen story?

It's been a welcome challenge to do some unpacking and keep the discourse on Rochelle circulating. *The Craft* is timeless by the strength of its performances and themes. What the film conveys are ideas that we carry well into adulthood, never dismissing their importance in our personal growth. On the surface, it doesn't necessarily do Rochelle any good for arc's sake to supernaturally one-up the Mean Girl factor in objection to the popular Blonde girl's accepted racist attitude, but it does bring an awareness to that other dynamics of being the weirdo and how there are those who work to shame difference simply on the basis of skin color alone. Why is Rochelle reprimanded for being the enactor, the catharsis, of every brown teenaged girl who has had to deal with racism without the tools and know-how to combat it at such a tender age?



When True sat down with HitFix.com in May 2016, she discussed the idea that Rochelle and *The Craft* offered audiences in 1996 an alternative to the kind of black characters and stories signified as black that were being greenlit by film studios. She lamented the fact that the scene with Rochelle's parents was cut and that her motivation for next-level witchcraft mastery was combating racial discrimination. Despite this, True was determined to bring her very best to the material she was given. And it shows. Her presence in *The Craft* has left an indelible imprint. [g](#)



# Julia Cotton: Queer Icon & *Hellraiser's* Unheralded True “Monster”

by Joe Lipsett



**Horror has always been a respite for me.** When I was young and closeted, I was undeniably attracted to the horror films in my local videostore (RIP, Jumbo Video) because they were forbidden. Not unlike an Adults Only section, the horror movies were kept in their own unique section: sequestered across a fake moat, complete with dim lighting and decorative cobwebs hanging from the ceiling. It was the box art and the taglines that caught my imagination: gruesome painted imagery of young nubile bodies threatened by sharp objects and chill-inducing sentences like “Who will survive and what will be left of them?” My pre-teen brain would run wild inventing different deviant scenarios for these off-limit properties because my parents would never let me rent them.

I had to wait until my older sister indoctrinated me into the cult of horror years later to get my first real taste of bloodshed. Even then, at age 12, I wasn't prepared. In

hindsight, I'm mildly horrified that she thought it was appropriate to start me off with the classic Clive Barker double bill of *Candyman* (1992) and *Hellraiser* (1987). The result was a lifelong love affair with the genre, and a connection to both films as the seminal horror films of my youth. That, and an unhealthy obsession with a certain redheaded character who never receives her due in the annals of horror history.

I love both of Barker's films, but it is *Hellraiser* that I hold most dear. Besides the iconic introduction of Pinhead (Doug Bradley) and the Cenobites, there's something that I find so appealing about the fact that *Hellraiser's* horror is, in reality, a masquerade for a domestic family melodrama. When you dig into the film, the true culprit of all of the pain and suffering that befalls the Cotton family is not supernatural, but rather the fallible humans caught in an extramarital affair. The amazing prosthetics may have transformed Doug Bradley into a horror god, but *Hellraiser's*

true villains are Frank Cotton (played by Sean Chapman and Oliver Smith) and Julia (Clare Higgins). For me, it is the latter who had the most significant impact: as a burgeoning gay, I over-identified with Julia Cotton as a gay icon.

**“Few address how resilient Julia is, how determined she is, and how unapologetic she is about pursuing what she wants.”**

To me, Julia is one of horror's most iconic characters (I'm disappointed that she isn't included in Valeska's list of 'Top 10 Female Movie Monsters' in this issue). The simple fact is that Julia is *Hellraiser's* true “monster”; she is also its most misunderstood character. Her affair with Frank is both the instigator of conflict in the film and its driving emotional force (let's be honest: no one is that invested in Ashley Laurence's Kirsty's desire to be an independent girl or Larry's quest for domestic bliss). No, *Hellraiser's* most significant character is Julia, the woman

who accepts the difficult reality that her former lover has returned from the grave as a skinless vestige of the hottie he once was. It is Julia who does the grunt work of going out to secure the bodies that Frank's regeneration requires. And when one of those men escapes, it is she who raises a hammer to strike the killing blow required to keep their secret quiet.

**“Julia Cotton is the cultural embodiment of the “bad woman,” *Hellraiser's* true villain and my own personal gay icon.**

And yet *Hellraiser* codifies Julia in strangely problematic ways. Kirsty is the Final Girl, the (somewhat) virginal girl who problem-solves her way to a happy ending by thwarting the monster. Larry is the duntz who provides the body count. Frank is the hissable incestuous uncle who is horrific to behold and punished for his sins. Pinhead and the Cenobites are the otherworldly force who grace the box art and reap the glory of genre fans.

And what of Julia? She's the whore, the bitch, the stepmonster, of course. Julia is the woman who dares to enjoy sex (it's the 80s, so those few brief thrusts and clawed sheets are tantamount to “rough” or “deviant” sex). She's the femme fatale in sunglasses, cruising for men in the middle of the day and leading them to their doom. And she is the familial interloper who stands between a father and his daughter.

She is the film's true villain, minus the credit and glory that accompanies the role.

When it comes to *Hellraiser* as a cultural artifact, Julia is also the one who is routinely forgotten. I'm unsure why Julia is often omitted from the dialogue surrounding the film - the flame-haired vixen typically doesn't really receive her due until the 1988 sequel, *Hellbound*, and even then Dr. Channard's underwhelming villain and Pinhead's WWII backstory frequently dominate the discussion. She may receive a cursory mention in the first film's logline as the philandering adultress who fucks Frank, but it's his “Come to Daddy” and Pinhead's religious-themed purple prose that have been etched into history. Few fans address how resilient Julia is, how determined she is, and how unapologetic she is about pursuing what she wants.

Yes, she's a bitch. Yes, she's a terrible mother. Yes, she cheats. And yes, haters, she looks fabulous doing it all. Perhaps it's natural, then, that as a little gay boy, my attention was drawn to Julia. Frank may be the shirtless hottie/Barker stand-in who is interested in unorthodox pleasures and



pain (read: gay sex), but he barely appears in the film. In comparison, Julia and her Disney-villainry are eminently relatable.

As played by Higgins, Julia has a regal Queen-like authority; she's basically the baddest bitch in town. As the film and I have aged, the slight touch of camp in Higgins' performance has become more noticeable. When Julia is on screen, she commands your attention. When she's not, you're waiting for her (or the Cenobites) to return to liven up the proceedings. Throw in the fact that Julia's (sexual) interests, her methods and her actions are on the fringes of acceptable, mainstream society and Julia reads like a queer allegory.

Perhaps I'm biased because I have a connection to *Hellraiser* from my youth, but as a horror film, as a family melodrama, and as a queer classic, the film delivers. It wouldn't be anywhere near as successful, however, were it not for Julia Cotton: she is the cultural embodiment of the “bad woman,” as well as *Hellraiser's* true villain and my own personal gay icon. Long may she reign! *g*

# GIGI SAUL GUERRERO:

## Visionary Queen of Tex-Mex Gore

by Valeska Griffiths

**It's hard to mistake a Gigi Saul Guerrero film for anything else.** Colour palettes both richly vibrant and darkly sinister, obsessively detailed costuming, heightened realism, folkloric narratives, and high production values are calling cards of the Vancouver-based director and co-founder of Luchagore Productions. Her works have a distinctive artistic flavour all their own, one that the auteur herself has described as "Tex-Mex" - an expression of her Mexican roots blended with her Canadian life, a scintillating and dangerous mixture of grindhouse and gore.

Having spent years honing her craft on (frequently award-winning) short films (including *Dia De Los Muertos*, *M is for Matador*, and this year's *Bestia*), Gigi has since expanded; last year, she co-created and directed the gritty Warner Brothers TV/Stage13 Network 7-episode mini-series

*La Quinceañera*. She is currently working as an associate designer and writer on a new horror game being developed by CAPCOM Game Studios. Despite her hectic workload, Gigi was kind enough to take some time to talk to me about her creative influences, her artistic approach, her advice for other filmmakers, and what makes her squirm.

**You started making films back in 2011 when you were only 19 years old -- you obviously got a very early start in the industry. Has storytelling always been a major part of your life?**

Totally! It started back when I was a little girl. I'm talking like 5-7 year old me - I had a very weird obsession with watching animated Disney films over and over just to find continuity mistakes. My dad had this machine that could play VHS tapes frame-by-frame and I loved it so much! That was my favourite "toy" in the house, hahaha! Weirdest kid ever, right?

I found mistakes in so many movies, and would get so excited to show them to everybody in my family.

**You obviously watched a lot of Disney movies, but what was your relationship to horror films growing up?**

I think the reason I love horror today is because, growing up, I was not allowed to watch anything related to horror or gore. Well, mom -- that just made my curiosity grow! I remember clearly always walking down the horror aisle at Blockbuster and seeing all the VHS/DVD covers for the films. They scared me so much, but there was something about feeling scared that attracted me. Once I turned 9 years old and *The Exorcist* was re-released in theatres, I begged my mom to take me. I told her that I was almost 10 years old and old enough to watch scary films. Yup ... that film traumatized me for a while and I loved it!

**What is it about the genre that feeds your creativity?**

It really comes down to audience reaction. I feel it is the only genre that can make create different reactions! Some scream, some cheer, some squirm, some laugh. What other genre can do that to you? None! Only horror can give you so many emotions at once. To me, as a storyteller, getting a reaction out of people watching my work is the most rewarding part of being a filmmaker.

**I've read that your first goal was to be an actress. What was it that drew you more to the work behind the camera?**

I think when we grow up we want to be different things all the time. I wanted to be a cartoonist or animator at first. I loved art! But my very first goal once I was a little older was to be an Olympic Athlete. I know, right? Super random. I was all about sports; that's all I did at a young age until my late teens. I was on a few teams, such as swimming, hockey, volleyball, ringette, and tennis, and I LOVED track and field.

Then, in late high school, I needed another elective. So, I chose theatre class. Why not? It looked easy! Goddamn, I had no idea acting was going to be something I loved! Soon enough, I started doing many one-act plays and musicals, and then I got an agent. Booked my first commercial for Wonder Bread and seeing all the cameras, lights, and the amount of crew made my jaw drop. "Nope... THIS is what I want to do!" I knew from that moment on that movies were meant for me. To be honest, I am glad I loved sports during my childhood and teenage years. It made me competitive and disciplined me to practice until perfect. Which I apply to my career everyday.

**I love those moments of realization! So where did you go from there? How did Luchagore get started?**

Luchagore started after our school project called *Choose Your Victim*, an 8-episode web series where the audience votes on who dies next and how.

**"We treat each other like a family. Everybody who comes on our film sets is treated as equal and as important as everybody else."**

After learning how to make films after CYV, we realized we had a solid team, and now we felt ready to become one! So, Luchagore Productions formed in late 2012, which is when we made our first viral hit called *Evil Dead In 60 Seconds*. After that, we knew that we had to keep making shorts and continue to show our work around the world.

**What's it like working with the Luchagore team? You've created so many films together; do you all**

*Girls on Film:*  
Female-Focused Film Festivals

As a woman working in the film festival world, I see the struggles that women can go through in the horror community. Happily, the number of women in film has grown exponentially, leading to more women feeling inspired and creating film festivals geared towards supporting women! These are some of the most prominent film festivals around the world that are supporting women in horror and helping to shape our place in the film world.

**Final Girls Berlin Film Festival**  
Berlin, Germany

Berlin, Germany is home to The Final Girl Berlin Film Festival, which showcases women and women-identifying in horror cinema. Also, it is the ONLY film festival for women in horror in Germany. Whether it be director, writers, or producers, they welcome and celebrate all women in the genre. Features, shorts, and everything in between are accepted, as long as they are horror or genre and have a woman in a leading position. 2018 will mark their third year. [finalgirlsberlin.com](http://finalgirlsberlin.com)

**Etheria Film Night**  
Hollywood, California

Founder Heidi Honeycutt started the festival as a way to showcase talented female filmmakers and get the attention of showrunners and executives. "By making sure Etheria films are amazing and indisputably made by talented directors, we're not ghettoizing being a "woman filmmaker" - we're making it a prestigious and awesome niche where people with real talent can shine and take a step up in their careers," says Heidi. Etheria's annual showcase is held each June. [etheriafilmnight.com](http://etheriafilmnight.com)



**share the same vision at this point?**

It's all about connections. I can't stress enough how important it is to get your films out there and push yourself to travel to festivals. The Luchagore team is formed because of that. It started with only two of us who believed in horror movies (Luke Bramley and myself). We started out by making shorts for local festivals here in Vancouver and slowly started meeting other storytellers. We then went to international festivals, which is where we met our composer, for example. What is amazing about the Luchagore team is that we feel and treat each other like a family. Everybody who comes on our film sets is treated as equal and as important as everybody else. There is no "boss" or "hierarchy", which is why we have had all this support over the years. We also strongly believe in giving the opportunity to let our key crew express their talents to their full potential. It's not ONE VISION we want to create... it's an entire team's vision.

Filmmaking is collaborating.

**That's really inspiring and lovely. Your films have such a distinctive style -- extremely high production values, gorgeous colour grading, incredible attention to costuming details, set design, and makeup. It's clear that your background as a visual artist informs your filmmaking. Has your filmmaking**

**influenced your other forms of artistic expression?**

I think everything we do as we grow ends up inspiring how we are. And even more who we are. Because of filmmaking, I look at my life as a movie I experience everyday, and try to keep in my mind things that impact me and constantly change me. That's where all our ideas come from -- through life experiences.

**Who would you name as your biggest influences? Whose work has most inspired your own?**

I have a huge list of my biggest influences when it comes down to filmmaking. But, as you grow in your field, you're going to go through trial and error until you find what works for you and who you are as an artist. So, my list goes from Rob Zombie to Guillermo Del Toro to Martin Scorsese. Who have nothing in common when you compare their styles.

I'm a huge fan of Rodriguez and Tarantino for their visceral storytelling.

But, if I had to mention one movie that made me want to become a filmmaker, it was *Children of Men*. I know, a bit random right? But I saw this film in theatres back when I was 16 and I was trying to figure out if movies or sports or acting was what I wanted to do. I left the theatre in love with

### Bloody Mary Film Festival

*Toronto, Ontario*  
BMFF showcases features and shorts made by Canadian women and women-identifying players in horror cinema. They just finished their 2nd year and already they are making noise within the community. BMFF is held over 2 days in November at Toronto's Carlton Cinema. As founder Laura DiGirolamo says, "Women have a lot to be scared of and angry about these days. What better way to channel that energy than by making kick-ass films!" [bloodymaryfilmfest.com](http://bloodymaryfilmfest.com)

### Stranger With My Face

*Hobart, Tasmania*  
*The Babadook* director Jennifer Lynch describes this festival as "Nothing short of magical ... I want to be there every year." Australia is known for its scary and intense horror films. I mean, *The Loved Ones* and *Wolf Creek* -- great films! *Stranger With My Face* hosts female directors in the horror industry and helps to promote open discussion of gender and genre. They screen both shorts and features, and host short script-writing contests and 48-hour filmmaking challenges. [strangerwithmyface.com](http://strangerwithmyface.com)

### Ax Wound Film Festival

*Brattleboro, Vermont*  
This cozy Vermont film festival runs for an evening and a day and features screenings, panels, and workshops to help women network. "The festival is about fostering a genuinely supportive community for women filmmakers," explains Women in Horror Month and Ax Wound Film Festival founder, Hannah "Neurotica" Forman. "Our mission is showcasing excellent horror films created by women while also providing a safe space for the many diverse voices and experiences of women filmmakers to find common ground, gain new insights, and develop relationships that help advance their careers in filmmaking." [womeninhorrormonth.com](http://womeninhorrormonth.com)

storytelling after this movie. Since that day, I started watching very mature and raw films by Mexican directors, such as *Amores Perros*, *Y Tu Mama Tambien*, and so on.

**Choose Your Victim has such a fun and inventive premise. I think that its conceit really taps into the sort of personalized, 'on-demand' culture that has developed thanks to technologies like the internet, Netflix, and VOD. How did the idea for the series come about? And how challenging was it to bring those fan-suggested scenarios to the screen?**

CYV was a project for school; we were clearly still learning how to even turn on a camera, haha! But it was the perfect challenge to graduate with a clear idea about how competitive the world really is. It's thanks to this project that we learned how to shoot fast, edit fast, learn social media skills, crowdfund -- and, more importantly, how to create a fan base. Man, we sucked at everything! But that's how you learn! Luke Bramley (now co-founder and cinematographer of Luchagore) thought of this interactive series idea and I loved it! That's how we started putting a team together from all the festivals and local competitions we would attend. It's how we met

Raynor Shima (now co-founder of Luchagore) and the rest of our team.

**I'd imagine that you're pretty desensitized to gore by now -- is there anything that still makes you wince or hide your face?**

Anything with paranormal shit! I can't do possessions or ghosts, hahaha. I am a huge believer of all that! Ahhh! Scares me so much!

**You probably don't remember this, but we met very briefly at Rue Morgue's Dark Carnival in 2016 before meeting again at the Blood in the Snow Film Festival this year. What's it like to travel to film festivals and conventions and make so many connections with fans of your work (not to mention other filmmakers)?**

I love it! It's the best way to celebrate genre film. Because you end up meeting so many people that do different things but, at the end of the day, they are just like YOU and love horror! It's so incredible. I've made so many friends this way and I always look forward to the next event.

**The 7-part web-series La Quinceañera was a bit of a departure for you, in that you were working within a big studio**

### Scream Queen Film Fest Tokyo

*Tokyo, Japan*  
This Japanese horror-focused festival was started by one woman who just wanted to help promote women in horror. They accept films from all over the world and showcase the women lead players who worked on them. Traditionally held in February, the Scream Queen Film Fest is a unique place for Asian women filmmakers -- according to the founder Mai Nakanishi, it is the ONLY female film festival in Asia right now! [sqfft.jp](http://sqfft.jp)

### Sick Chick Flicks Film Festival

*Cary, North Carolina*  
The Sick Chicks Film Festival was created by female filmmakers so that they could help bring the community of women in horror together, as well as promote women filmmakers all over the world. It was started in 2016 and is now going into its third year. The festival has a unique hometown feel to it while still boasting some terrifying features and shorts made by women. [sickchickflicksfilmfestival.com](http://sickchickflicksfilmfestival.com)

### Women In Horror Film Festival

*Atlanta, Georgia*  
"The Women in Horror Film Festival is dedicated to showcasing and celebrating the work of women creatives in horror, as well as the diverse teams with whom they work," say Samantha Kolesnik and Vanessa Ionta Wright, co-directors of the festival. Hosting a large award ceremony with tons of perks and prizes including an unique and amazing trophy modelled after an axe lodged in a film reel, the Women in Horror Film Festival focuses on supporting the women who champion the industry with networking events, panels, and other features. The amazing sense of community is an important part of the festival. [wihff.com](http://wihff.com)





system. Did working with Stage13 and Warner Brothers change your approach to filmmaking on this project?

What was amazing about WB and Stage 13 is that they wanted a Luchagore show. What is a Luchagore story? Creating this show was the biggest challenge for the entire team, because now we are making a story with real money and large crew. I'm talking over 100 people on set!

However, even if it was hard to do, it was the best learning experience I could ask for. It was the real film school for me. Now, more than ever, do I feel inspired to make a feature film! I understand fully the detail that goes in a long form story.

**When will fans be able to see *La Quinceañera*?**

2018, baby! Stay tuned, because big news is coming in the first quarter of the year!

**Let's talk a bit about your CAPCOM project. Writing a game must be interesting work; you're not as constrained by what you can make happen on film for a specific budget. What can we expect**

**from the game? Were you able to include stories or elements that you've never been able to get on film?**

Becoming a writer at CAPCOM game studios has been one of the biggest highlights of my career. Writing a new video game for such a big company was intimidating at first, also in such a competitive industry where the fans are intense! I didn't want to mess this up!

Working at this new gig has given me practice in my writing skills and also learning how to use my creative imagination in new ways! I am so used to telling ONE STORY, ONE POINT OF VIEW from start to finish. In video games, there are many outcomes, many decisions that are manipulated by the audience (the player). I have to remember that there isn't just one story to be told, but there can be many ways to tell the same story because we don't know what the player is going to do.

So excited to see what people think when this game gets announced in 2018!

**I look forward to playing it! I'm a big fan of horror games, such as Until**


**Dawn. Do you play a lot of games? I'd imagine you don't have a ton of free time, these days!**

I used to! I used to play a lot of Nintendo. I still have my PS3, Wii, N64, Gamecube and, of course... Super Nintendo! I'll get back to them! (PS, I'm freaking good as Super Smash Bros ... just saying.)

**I'm taking that as a challenge next time you're in town! How do you spend your down-time? What helps you unwind?**

Listening to music for sure! Love cracking it up and just chilling! But, I mean, I love relaxing to watching movies, getting my mind cleared while working out (gym or pole), and I still like going back to my drawing and painting days!

**What advice would you give to other female filmmakers looking to build their own careers?**

Just do what you love, no matter how long it takes to realize what you want to do make sure you find it and go with it. My biggest advice is to "NEVER BE AFRAID OF FAILURE. LEARN FROM IT AND GROW." 

FunDead Publications, a dynamic small press based in Salem, Massachusetts, offers horror lovers their spooky fix while spotlighting underrepresented writers. I spoke with founder and editor-in-chief Amber Newberry about genre writing, film, and diversity in fiction.



**Greetings! What is the origin story of FunDead Publications?**

Five years ago, FunDead Publications was a Dear Abby style humor blog, except all of the write-ins were from zombies, werewolves, and the people who love them. After self-publishing my first novel, I began to see another potential use for the domain. Other writers approached me with a thousand questions about publishing. I saw a lot of truly talented writers sit on their work for years because they weren't sure what to do with it.

I came up with the idea of releasing an anthology so that I could walk them through the process of publishing prep. I never thought that when I posted the first call for submissions for Shadows in Salem that I would receive the number of short stories that I did. Suddenly, I was the one who became overwhelmed. I relented and began to accept assistance in editing from Laurie Moran, who had previously edited my novel. Bret Valdez and Erin Crocker joined us as proofreaders. I'm so lucky to have had such smart and talented people waiting at the sidelines to jump in when I really needed them.

**What is it about genre fiction that you find so compelling?**

I've always had a passion for darker fiction. I think we all sort of grew up with the same roots in scary content. So, it was only natural that we wound up loving the 'spooky stuff' straight into adulthood. It's the excitement that keeps us wanting to read and publish the creepy and strange. Books are a safe way to experience fear. For most readers of the genre, I think it comes down to curiosity. What's it like to die? Or to kill or be killed? What happens if there really is a zombie outbreak? As a publisher, when I'm thinking up ideas for anthology calls, many times it'll be from me asking "Hm... I wonder what that'd be like..."

**Many perceive genre fiction as "escapist pulp" and not "real" literature -- even though scads of science fiction, fantasy, and horror writers have received widespread critical acclaim. How do you respond to the stigma?**

A lot of books fall into more than one category. That's why we often describe our books as dark, horror, or gothic fiction. One story might be psychological, but the next could be all blood, guts, and gore. We even have a science fiction story in our Christmas anthology, *O Horrid Night*. So, we fall into a lot of genres and horror just becomes the blanket we're all snuggling under.

If we're being honest, genre is all about marketing to find the right reader. In the end, we're writing what we like to read and we hope that those submitting stories are doing the same. The best literature comes from writers who have fought their way out of the box someone else put them into. It's not dirty to fall outside the blanket of what some call 'real literature'. If it is, then run a bath because we've been rolling in the mud and doing so with glee!

**Can you tell me how an ideal FunDead story would be structured from a writing craft perspective?**

I don't think there is any perfect way to craft a gothic story. That part should all be left to the writer. Of course, there are formulas one can follow, but we'd hope that people step outside of the 'girl running from house' sort of thing. While we will always love reading about that girl running from the English manor house in Cornwall, we hope to see something different. Maybe the girl running from the house is black. Maybe it's not a girl at all, perhaps 'she' is a 'he'. Maybe they are running toward the house. There is a formula, but we hope that those submitting will find a way to write something new, or at least something different. We've especially asked to see non-traditional characters, such as people of color, or LGBTQ+ characters in the main roles.

**Let's talk cinematic influences. Do you find that your writing and tastes are influenced by horror movies as well as literature?**

Absolutely! Suffice it to say that *Crimson Peak* is an excellent inspiration for writing gothic fiction. I watched *The Haunting* in preparation for writing *The Haunting of Lafayette Street*, an homage to Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*. (It's in our most recent anthology, *One Night in Salem*). Modern recommendations might include *Sleepy Hollow* or *The Others*. For more contemporary look at the gothic genre, you might watch *Let Me In* or *Let the Right One In*, or even *The Crow*.

**I'm definitely excited to see what FunDead has in store for the future. Thank you for taking the time to chat with me! Keep kicking ass and being amazing!**

# SEASONS OF THE WITCH:

## *A short history of cinematic witchcraft*

by Alejandra Gonzalez

Almost as alluring as they are powerful, witches in popular culture have charmed audiences with their magic for over a century. It wasn't until adulthood that I began to understand what it is about witches on screen that draws so many people under their spell. It took a lifetime as a woman to understand that what was so magnetic about my favorite witches in film was not their mysterious aesthetic or the way they conjure up magic to defeat their enemies; rather, it is the assertion of the power they find through their independence and femininity that makes them so compelling and magical.

While we see powerful women in cinema all the time, witchcraft has always been the easiest and most popular shorthand for feminism in film and pop culture. More fascinating than the witches themselves is the way that their characterization has been reworked and evolved on screen throughout the century, always reflective of the feminist ideals held by the respective decades in which they are made.

While the first appearance of witches on screen is debatable (I would argue for 1922's *Häxan: Witchcraft Through The Ages*), it is unanimously agreed that we have

1939's *The Wizard of Oz* to thank for the popularization of witches on film and most of the iconography associated with witches for the decades that followed. *The Wizard of Oz* also established the Good Witch vs. Bad Witch trope, which was particularly influential because the world had rarely seen witches portrayed as positive and righteous before. This was an important feminist cinematic development because, until then, witches were demonized because of patriarchal fear of powerful women. The existence of a witch like Glinda who is righteous and "good" acknowledged that strong women who refuse to conform are qualities that women should champion and even aspire to. This parallel between witches and feminism didn't occur by happenstance; it was directly inspired by feminist writings before it.



Women's suffragist Matilda Joslyn Gage included a chapter concerning witchcraft in her book *Woman, Church and State*, asserting

that witches could be good and were "of superior knowledge," a radical idea for the 19th century. Even more interesting? Matilda Joslyn Gage was mother-in-law to Frank L. Baum, author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in 1900, from which the 1939 film was adapted. Understanding that Glinda the Good Witch and The Wicked Witch of the West were influenced by the feminist ideals Gage asserted further establishes witches as an effective vessel for feminism in film.



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*Portraying housewives with magical abilities really attributed a sense of purpose and agency to their everyday lives, depicting women as the most powerful figure in the household.*

The middle of the 20th century saw an interesting evolution of the portrayal of witches in pop culture, introducing films like *I Married a Witch* (1942) and the 1960s

television series *Bewitched*; both brought witches out of fantastical lands and straight into the domestic household. Today, the notion of witches using their powers to simplify domestic responsibilities and better serve their husbands doesn't sound particularly empowering, but it's important to consider what these portrayals meant for feminism in these decades. Because of societal standards imposed on them, women rarely had an opportunity to feel empowered or independent in their communities and the workforce. Portraying these housewives with magical abilities really attributed a sense of purpose and agency to their everyday lives, depicting women as the most powerful figure in the household.



It wasn't until the 1970s that we began to see a new kind of witch on-screen, not coincidentally parallel to the feminist movement starting in the late 1960s. In 1972, George Romero gave us *Season of the Witch*, depicting Joan Mitchell as a bored housewife who seeks witchcraft to feed her hunger for a purpose independent of serving her family. To me, Joan is among the best examples of witchcraft as a vessel for feminism in film (sans murder, of course) because Romero makes it clear that only when Joan chooses the path of witchcraft for herself does she finally feel empowered and obtain a role outside of mother/wife.

The latter half of the century introduced even more facets of

feminism to the witch subgenre onscreen. In the late 80s and throughout the 90s, audiences were exposed to movies in which witches were a force, grouping themselves into covens and finding themselves more powerful as a result. We see groups of witches everywhere: in film - *The Witches of Eastwick* (1987), *The Craft* (1996), *Practical Magic* (1998) - and TV - *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) and *Charmed* (1998-2006). The list goes on. Feminism was now focused on the collective experience of women. While these movies focus on a "stronger together" mentality, they are simultaneously concerned with women in their adolescence or early adulthood, which gives agency and validation to the experiences and voices of women in all age groups.



Movies about witches today seem to be a more polished hybrid version of the witches we've seen on film throughout history. Anna Biller confirms that her 2016 masterpiece, *The Love Witch* takes direct inspiration from the witches in *I Married a Witch* and *Bell, Book, and Candle* (1958). She takes the feminist ideals articulated by these films and places them in today's world to represent the progress feminism has made in the decades since. 2015 brought us *The Witch*, reminiscent of period pieces such as *The Crucible*, but thematically concerned with the hysterical fear of "the other" that is so timely and appropriate for today's world.

While there certainly has been undeniable progression in the

representation of witches and feminism on screen over time, it is still important to understand that there are miles to go. There remains a lack of intersectional representation, which offers an important opportunity for another shift in the kinds of witches we see on screen. Non-white witches are rare, and when we see them they are typically antagonists. Finally, there is also opportunity to improve the representation of witches of all ages on film; most are portrayed as beautiful and youthful if they're "good" while older witches are represented as envious hags who use evil to remain young (see: 1993's *Hocus Pocus* or 2007's *Stardust*).



*The latter half of the century introduced more facets of feminism to the witch subgenre.*

There is no denying that the evolution of feminist ideals is well represented by the evolution of our favourite witches in film throughout the last century. While there are many miles to go, it is important to acknowledge the value and impact these films have had in pop culture and in the world around us. "The witch" has been used for centuries to delegitimize and isolate powerful women, condemning us for breaking barriers and seeking strength within ourselves. Because of the way "the witch" has been characterized - and evolved - in film, today she is strong and empowered. We are each proud to carry our own version of her inside ourselves. [g](#)



# Starry Eyes & the Monstrosity of Ambition

by Anya Stanley

**The horror genre gets away with a lot of commentary.** This is because said commentary is often hidden beneath blood sacrifices, gory murders, and occult mayhem. These elements all figure into 2014's *Starry Eyes*, but the most grim component of the story is not the tried-and-true horror techniques; it's the emphasis of a woman's ambition as the source of her own downfall.

Written and co-directed by Kevin Kolsch and Dennis Widmyer, *Starry Eyes* follows Sarah (Alex Essoe), a young aspiring actress as she tries to hit the big time. A failed audition with a mysterious production company triggers her to self-harm by pulling out chunks of her hair; such is her need to make it big. A casting director (Maria Olsen) sees this and sense Sarah's desperation for the "gateway part". To her surprise, Sarah gets a second audition, which is unfortunately a casting couch situation. Sarah recoils, but it becomes brutally apparent that she is willing to do anything, anything at all, to land this part.

**"Just as the evil stepmother obsessed with youth and beauty turns into an old hag by the end of the fairy tale, so does Sarah's body display her inner nastiness."**

Hunger for fame as the darkest human quality isn't a new concept in genre film; it's been done to great effect in *Mulholland Drive* (2001) and *The Neon Demon* (2016). But what sets *Starry Eyes* apart from its dark brethren is its commitment to

a visceral, repulsive representation of the theme, offering a glimpse into a textured transformation. After the audition, Sarah literally turns into a beast. Her skin begins to flake and peel. Her fingernails fall off. Her lips chap and crack. Her hair falls out in massive clumps. And the blood ... so much bleeding. Her decay is so deep that she regurgitates a pile of wriggling meal worms. Widmyer and Kolsch are patient but unforgiving in their depiction of Sarah's corporeal destruction. You are not allowed to look away as her outside sheds its innocent exterior to match the ugliness of her inner lust for fame. Despite having a poor body image, Sarah constantly attempts to exploit her image for personal gain. So it makes sense that her body is the first casualty of her own ambition. Just as the evil stepmother obsessed with youth and beauty turns into an old hag by the end of the fairy tale, so does Sarah's body display her inner nastiness.

On the surface, Sarah's monstrosity is clear. But Kevin Kolsch and Dennis Widmyer go further and add dimension to the potency of Sarah's experience by placing the blame for her fate solely on her own shoulders. While the film begins without preamble on Sarah's dead-end job at the exploitative Big Taters restaurant and her skeezy manager (played by a subtle Pat Healy) and goes on to display her needling persecution by a frenemy (Fabianne Therese), it becomes clear that Sarah's mounting abysmal decisions are her own. From the predatory casting agents to the friends that taunted

her, no one coerced Sarah into the audition, nor did anyone force her to return to Astraeus Pictures. As a character, Sarah is layered with increasing textures of coldness. Her growing hunger for success correlates with an equal drop in humanity. Superficially, this is represented by her Cronenbergian transformation, but internally, that drop is portrayed with accumulating callousness. Sarah begins to throw attitude at her well-meaning roommate, and sharply dismisses her manager before walking out on her day job.

Not least of all in this violent cautionary tale is the character herself. Alex Essoe's performance as Sarah is nothing short of outstanding. Sarah walks a tightrope between extremes, provoking revulsion at the lengths to which she'll go while earning a reluctant empathy from the viewer for her incredible bone-deep thirst for stardom. Her desperation for success gets us rooting for her, even as she stabs and bludgeons her way through her friends list. In a story that exposes the seedy underbelly of the squeaky-clean American Dream, Sarah's metamorphosis from a dreamer to a taker is an arc that's heavy, but necessary.

Kolsch and Widmyer's corrosive satire provides an intimate and unsettling angle to the durable genre theme of the dark side of ambition. Then again, considering the film's surreal ending, perhaps *Starry Eyes* is a stark playbook on what it really takes to get ahead. **g**



**"What sets *Starry Eyes* apart from its dark brethren is its commitment to a visceral, repulsive representation of the theme."**

# The Mind's Iris: Symbols Planted in *Suspiria*

by CC Stapleton

When discussing Dario Argento's *Suspiria* (1977), it's natural to immediately want to discuss its vivid color palette or its comparably electric score, as they together represented an auteur's voice unlike anything the film world had seen before (and thus will be poorly imitated ad infinitum). What's more interesting, however, is the subtle breadcrumb trail of symbols Argento quietly sprinkles throughout his fairy-tale fever dream, leading the truly curious seekers to something deeper: an understanding of becoming whole.

We're introduced to Suzy Bannion, a doe-eyed American dancer, traveling to a dance school in Germany to further her studies and ultimately, realize her ideal self (by achieving her dream of becoming a professional dancer). After several upsetting instances, Suzy comes to realize she is at the center of a dark conspiracy and eventually seeks to uncover the secrets within the walls of nefarious head mistress' Madame Blanc's keep. It is through this journey that Suzy finds herself. Mustering the courage to follow the clues whispered from ill-fated "babe in the wood" Pat, Suzy finds the irises on the wall of Blanc's office that lead to into the proverbial belly of the beast.

The walls of Blanc's office are washed in an intense pink glow and have a sprawling castle motif being overtaken by strange vines that bloom irises. These irises are iconic for more than their being a literal doorway into the witches' magical realm. The flowers are named after the Greek goddess Iris, who was a messenger to the gods and the personification of the rainbow - mirroring the spiritual message calling out to Suzy to fulfill her true self. What's more, irises often represent sacred trinities; The Mother, The Maiden, The Crone; Body, Mind, Spirit; and Creator, Destructor, Sustainer. Just as the trinity is important in Christianity, it is similarly a fixture of occult worship. The trinity illustrates diverse elements in harmony, serving the purpose of sustaining an ideal, complete, balanced whole. Much like the coven requires sacrifice to sustain its order and its collective life force, Suzy needs to sacrifice her early self and evolve toward completion to ultimately survive this ordeal.

Deepening the link between the iris and Suzy's path, the secret latch is connected to one bloom in particular. Though there are four blooms on the climbing vines (red, yellow, white and indigo); it is the indigo flower to which Suzy is drawn. Indigo irises

are known for representing depth, mystery and the shadow-self. To acknowledge one's shadow-self is to accept all the dark and mysterious places within us and to understand the repressed impulses and desires that make up the darker side of the human psyche. To be healthy is to be aware of, acknowledge, and manage these forces - in fact, this is a key tenet of mindfulness. The shadow-self similarly is a key to unlocking the spirituality practiced by the occult. Using indigo for the color of the doorway iris essentially emphasizes the critical importance of this "third eye" awakening in the pursuit of levels of consciousness.

When Argento made *Suspiria*, it was the first film in the trilogy of *The Three Mothers* - a part of a larger being, much like Suzy is at the beginning of the film. Suzy begins her path looking to solidify her dreams of becoming a professional dancer, and while that is (hopefully) momentarily sidetracked by a poor choice in schooling, she finds something far better: her whole self. While the coven outwardly represents darkness and evil and Suzy embodies light and naiveté - she must acknowledge her full self, both light and dark, to harness her power to defeat the witches and escape the forces that oppose her. [g](#)





# TOP TEN CINEMATIC WITCHES

## 10. Gillian Owens

*Practical Magic* (1998)

Probably the first instance of witchcraft on screen I ever came across, *Practical Magic* tells the story of sisters who get into quite a bit of trouble because of their magic and must use it to find their way out. While both women are great examples of the sisterhood and strength associated with witches, it is Gillian who has the biggest journey, finding power in her independence from the men in her life. She is comfortable with her sexuality and while she values romance, she learns that it is only through herself and the support of the women around her that she can truly fulfil her potential. Gillian is a real, multifaceted woman and that is why she belongs on any list of important witches.

## 9. The Queen

*Snow White and the 7 Dwarfs* (1937)

If I'm being honest, The Queen in *Snow White* may be one of the most terrifying witches in animated and live action films alike. Some would argue that 1939's *The Wizard of Oz* established the stereotypical evil witch trope in cinema, but I would say that The Queen takes that title when she uses dark magic to transform herself into the iconic "old hag" we are familiar with today. The Queen is particularly interesting because she represents evil even when she is youthful and beautiful, not just when old and decrepit looking. These became a dichotomy for witches in cinema throughout time, good being associated with beauty and evil with unattractiveness, which is why The Queen's influence remains memorable and important.

## 8. Aggie Cromwell

*Halloweentown* (1998)

Debbie Reynolds became a household name for Halloween in almost every American home when she graced our television sets as Aggie Cromwell in *Halloweentown*. Aggie is incredibly important

because she was such a stark contrast to the way older witches were being presented at the time in movies like *Hocus Pocus*. Aggie Cromwell was wise and graceful in her age, and knew that a real witch would revel in and share her wisdom with younger witches rather than be envious of them. The way *Halloweentown* depicts Aggie has been definitely influential for the way elder witches have since been presented.

## 7. Joan Mitchell

*Season of the Witch* (1973)

No list of film's greatest witches is complete without mentioning George Romero's *Season of the Witch*, still somehow overlooked and rarely discussed. Joan Mitchell is probably the best representation of witchcraft as a shorthand for feminism; she is an everyday woman who uses witchcraft to find purpose in her mundane life as a middle-aged housewife and mother. She wants to seek a role greater than that of a mother and a wife, and becoming a witch provides that for her. *Season of the Witch's* social politics are years ahead of its time, and I recommend that fans of occult film seek this one out.

## 6. The Wicked Witch of the West

*The Wizard of Oz* (1939)

I mean, sheer respect is a good enough reason to include Margaret Hamilton's Wicked Witch among any listing of the world's greatest witches. While The Evil Queen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* really established the "old hag" trope for witches in cinema, the Wicked Witch of the West is the reason we see so much of the iconography associated with witches today. Broomsticks, cauldrons, pointy hats and noses ... you name it, and it can be attributed to the Wicked Witch.

## 5. Marie Laveau

*American Horror Story: Coven* (2013-2014)

Okay, so *AHS: Coven* isn't a film so technically

this constitutes cheating - but hear me out! What would any list be without the inclusion of a phenomenal portrayal of notorious voodoo queen Marie Laveau by the incredible Angela Bassett? It's worth mentioning that accurate casting and representation brings this character a long way, as it is important that *AHS* chose not to whitewash Marie Laveau's Creole ethnicity. It is a step in the right direction for intersectional representation of witches on film, though it would be nice to see non-white witches that are "good" in the future.

## 4. Mater Suspiriorum

*Suspiria* (1977)

My personal favorite of all time, Mater Suspiriorum is slightly different than most of the witches on this list. See, we don't witness Mater Suspiriorum's physical presence until the end of the film - up until then, she is merely a force that terrorizes the girls at the academy. This is notable because as an audience we are still scared of her, which represents fear of the unknown. Ultimately, the witch trials and the antagonization of witches throughout history has been a direct result of fear of the unknown, and experiencing that perspective is unique to *Suspiria* and Mater Suspiriorum.

## 3. Nancy Downs

*The Craft* (1996)

If for no other reason, Fairuza Balk's Nancy Downs of *The Craft* belongs on this list for establishing what I call "the 90s witch." Because of *The Craft*, and particularly Nancy's popularity among audiences, witches had an incredible resurgence in the 1990s with hits like *Charmed* and *Practical Magic*. Nancy is also important because, apart from *Teen Witch* in the 1980s, I can't really think of a popular example of adolescent witches in film before *The Craft*. Having these girls embrace their powers as teenagers speaks volumes for what feminist

culture looked like in the decade, encouraging teen girls to choose the kind of woman they wanted to be and to own it the way Nancy has, even if her choices were questionable.

## 2. Elaine

*The Love Witch* (2016)

Anyone who has seen *The Love Witch* has certainly fallen deeply under its spell. Samantha Robinson's Elaine is probably the perfect culmination of the many kinds of witches we've seen in film since *The Wizard of Oz*. Influenced by Jennifer from the 1940s *I Married A Witch*, and Gillian from the 1950s *The Bell, The Book, and The Candle*, Elaine feels like a symbol of the feminist ideals represented by witches in decades past. This is particularly interesting because the film itself holds many contemporary ideals about women and sex. The juxtaposition of the two is the perfect recipe for one of the most powerful feminist films of the 21st century thus far.

## 1. Thomasin

*The VVitch* (2016)

For our #1 spot, what better witch than the literal embodiment of the persecution and demonization of women for simply being women? In *The VVitch*, we follow Thomasin and her family as they are banished from a Puritan plantation. The film is nothing short of a tension builder, as things continue to fall apart for the family and everyone seems to blame and accuse Thomasin of being a witch for no reason aside from the fact that she is a woman who is coming of age. At the end of the film, when Thomasin is released of her obligation to meet the standards of being a daughter and a sister, she decides to become the witch everyone wrongfully accused her of being. Thomasin is number one on this list because she was never good nor evil, simply woman achieving fulfillment on her own terms.

ALEJANDRA GONZALEZ

# Macabre Makeovers

by Michelle Swope

When it comes to horror movies, much of the magic is in the makeup! For this issue of Grim magazine, I had the pleasure of speaking with 3 incredibly talented special effects makeup artists about their work, favorite looks, and most-loved horror movies.

**Karlee Morse**  
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Karlee Morse specializes in prosthetics and has done makeup work for a range of clients including Disney, Blizzard Entertainment, and Ubisoft.

**How long have you been doing special effects makeup?**

**Karlee:** I've been doing makeup and special effects makeup professionally for almost 5 years.

**Which horror movies and TV shows have you worked on?**

**Karlee:** Horror-wise, I've worked on *Hemlock Grove*, the feature *The Heretics*, and several Canadian horror shorts. Most of the work I do is on kid's shows, comedy series, and commercials. It's definitely less horror-centric, but prosthetic work nonetheless! I've worked on a few unreleased projects that will be out in 2018. I'm really excited to talk about those soon.



**What was the most elaborate makeup that you've ever done?**

**Karlee:** A very elaborate makeup that comes to mind was Gloria's transformation in *The Heretics*. Nina Kiri, our amazing Gloria, had a ton of hair that had to be secured neatly in a bald cap every day. She also had prosthetics on her back, out-of-kit wounds on her face, all-over airbrushing, and hair that was laid on the bald cap. There were so many techniques that were combined to create this elaborate look. It was several hours in make-up every day. I've done a few alien looks where the actors were completely covered in prosthetics and paint - anything where an actor has to transform completely tends to be a very elaborate application.



**Do you have a favourite special effects makeup look?**

**Karlee:** The Pale Man from *Pan's Labyrinth* is my favourite monster suit/makeup of all time. It's a very effective, creepy character that consistently freaks me out after each watch (it's also performed really, really well - Doug Jones kills it). I love his fleshy, pinky colour scheme, and long, boney legs and arms. The design is effective as it's super fantasy-esque, but the colours and drooping skin textures make him so visceral and real, somehow. I also love all of the makeup in *An American Werewolf in London*. That on-screen werewolf transformation blows me away every time I see it. I've done werewolf makeup before but nothing as elaborate as this and it is so inspiring. I dream of doing something similar. I love werewolves.

**What's your favorite horror movie?**

**Karlee:** *An American Werewolf in London* for the above mentioned werewolf transformation and *The Shining*. I think that's my deserted island/one movie to watch forever choice, too, in case you were wondering. I like that all the extra disturbing scenes are filmed in bright light. It doesn't rely on the use of darkness, or a lack of light, to convey the creepiness. The sound design is also amazing and the acting!



**Jacquie Lantern**  
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Minneapolis-based and self-taught, Jacquie has done makeup for film, television, events, and music videos. She does makeup and social media management for The Dead End Hayride haunted attraction and writes for Haunt News Network. She has been featured on Dread Central, Crypt TV, and Horror Freak News and her work can be seen in *The Houses October Built 2* (now available on DVD/Blu-ray) and *Zombies*, among others

**How long have you been doing special effects makeup?**

**Jacquie:** I have been doing SFX makeup for 4 years.

**What do you like most about doing makeup for a haunted attraction?**

**Jacquie:** Haunted attractions have a wide variety of makeups. For instance, actors in dimly-lit areas do not need to be as detailed as those in the line interacting with customers in well-lit areas. I also like getting to know everyone.

**What is the most elaborate makeup you've ever done?**

**Jacquie:** I have done a few pop-art zombies that were heavily detailed. I also assisted on a very large project that was making a full body Bigfoot that was used on The History Channel.

**What's your favourite horror movie?**

**Jacquie:** *The Exorcist*. It was so ahead of its time in every way. And it STILL has better makeup/effects and is scarier than a LOT of films being put out today.





**Megan Fraser**  
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Megan Fraser is a Toronto-based makeup artist, specializing in special effects makeup for TV and film. She was the Key Makeup/Special FX artist on the film *Poor Agnes* (2017), which won Best Canadian Film at the Fantasia Film Festival.

**How long have you been a special effects makeup artist?**

**Megan:** I went to Sheridan College and took the Makeup for Media Arts program and afterwards took the Advanced Special FX Makeup and Prosthetics program. I graduated in 2015 and have been freelancing since then and now I'm lucky enough for makeup to be my full time job.

**What are some of the horror movies and TV shows you've done special effects makeup on?**

**Megan:** One of the feature films where I was the Head of Department was *Scarecrows*, a movie about a group of teens who get lost in a cornfield and made into scarecrows. I got to do some great out-of-kit effects, such as sewing up their mouths and hammering nails into arms.

The second film is called *Poor Agnes* and is about a female serial killer. For that one, I got to make some fake silicone arms, a decapitated head, as well as bruising and cuts. *Poor Agnes* had its world premiere this summer, while *Scarecrows* will be released next year. It's always scary to see your work on a huge screen, but it's also exhilarating.

**Can you tell us about the special Halloween looks that you do?**

**Megan:** Halloween is like my Christmas. I'm always asked by people if I can do their makeup for Halloween and say no because I always put far too much time and effort into my own. This year, I did two costumes. I was "Margaret It-Wood" (which was a joke I made on Facebook about a mashup Halloween costume and decided to try to pull it off) and Greta, the lady-gremlin from *Gremlins 2*. Greta was probably the most ambitious costume and makeup I've ever done since almost everything was made from scratch. I sculpted and molded my own silicone prosthetics and airbrushed a greenscreen body suit.

Last year, I was Barf from *Spaceballs*, most of which was purchased from Amazon when I was on set in Thunder Bay with *Poor Agnes*. When I arrived back home, I realized it was all awful and had to fix everything.

The year before, I was Seymour from *Little Shop of Horrors* and made an Audrey II puppet from scratch. I made a fake arm to make it look like I was just holding a plant, but I was able to scare people when they realized it moved.



**What was the most time-consuming makeup you've ever done?**

**Megan:** That might be a tie. It's either applying the Greta makeup to myself this Halloween or the zombie makeup I did for a short film. That one was time-consuming, since we had to make sure none of the actor's skintone came through while also applying four prosaide applicances to his brows and cheeks. It was also raining that day, so my assistant Kait and I had to be careful with which products we used so they wouldn't wash away. Also, makeup removal at the end of a shooting day is rarely talked about and can take a long while, especially when things are glued on well.

**What's your favourite horror movie?**

**Megan:** So, for older horror (I can't believe I'm saying *Scream* is older) *Scream* and *Halloween* are my go-tos. I could re-watch *Cabin In The Woods* many times. The story is great, the characters are funny and well developed, and there's just enough gore. The second is *Unfriended*. Probably not a lot of people have seen this one, but it's completely filmed to look like a group Skype call. The ending was a bit meh, but I love found footage horror movies, such as the original *Blair Witch*. It makes everything seem more real and shocking.

**Check out the websites of these talented artists to see more of their work or to book them!** [g](#)



# TOP TEN FEMALE MOVIE MONSTERS

## 10. Ursula the Sea Witch

*The Little Mermaid* (1989)

Okay, hear me out. No, *The Little Mermaid* is not a horror movie, but Ursula technically is a sea monster, so give this a chance. I'm including her on this list because she is not only an exceedingly clever and sadistic villain with supernatural powers (asking for Ariel's voice, of all things, is an inspired move), but she is also a paragon of body positivity. Ursula is proud to flaunt her voluptuous curves and tentacles -- just search her name on GIPHY to see numerous GIFs of her gyrating and primping. I mean, girl was based on drag legend Divine!

## 9. The Bride of Frankenstein's Monster

*The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935)

Let's kick it classic for a minute. The 1930s and 1940s were a fertile period for horror, as the Universal movie monsters offered theatre-goers delicious thrills. *The Bride of Frankenstein* was the second installment in a series of films featuring Frankenstein's monster, and starred the glorious Elsa Lanchester as both author Mary Shelley and the eponymous bride. Not only does the Bride have a timelessly iconic hairstyle and eyebrows that are undeniably on point, but she refuses to submit to the demand that she repress her own desires and agency and settle for Nice Guy (™) Frankenstein's Monster. Truly an inspiration!

## 8. Mothra

*Mothra* (1961)

Hell yeah, Mothra is on this list. A heroic kaijū that rolls with her own miniature posse and theme song, Mothra is often all that stands between the world and certain destruction at the scaly hands of Godzilla. Ensnared in a cycle

of death and rebirth, there seems to always be a larva or two waiting in the wings to continue Mothra's quest to protect her island, Japan, or even the planet.

## 7. Countess Marya Zaleska

*Dracula's Daughter* (1936)

Countess Marya has the distinction of being the first (arguably) queer female vampire on film. The original script was altered to remove certain implications, but the lesbian undertones were still exploited in Universal's marketing of this *Dracula* sequel. A complex and perpetually poised woman of leisure, Countess Marya charms men and women alike with her dulcet tones, glamorous aura (pun definitely intended), and piercing gaze. She may eventually wind up staked, but that just shows that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

## 6. Jennifer Check

*Jennifer's Body* (2009)

Unapologetically in touch with her own desires and unwilling to put up with any bullshit, succubism looks good on high school student Jennifer Check. As a literal man-eating demon, Jennifer is able to freely act on her impulses in the same way that boys and men have long been socialized to -- and she takes full advantage of this. Despite living in a small, repressive town, she's even able to express her strong attraction to her best friend, Needy. If only she hadn't stolen Needy's prom date; who knows where the two besties would have wound up!

## 5. Carrie White

*Carrie* (1976)

Carrie White could definitely be described as well-rounded. She's sweet, smart, and host to incredible powers that she is only just beginning to understand. She may be shy and quiet, but Carrie manages to pull off every current and former nerd's deepest, darkest fantasy -- total revenge over their high school tormentors. And she does it in a beautiful (if blood-soaked) satin gown and tiara. And, honestly, who wouldn't want to have incredible telekinetic powers? The non-revenge-based practical applications alone are staggering.

## 4. Ginger Fitzgerald

*Ginger Snaps* (2000)

Another high school heroine, Ginger Fitzgerald also struggles with the onset of puberty, though her transformation is a little more physically drastic. When a werewolf's bite leads to some gnarly hair growth and shifting hormones, Ginger rolls with the punches, using her newfound power to get some much-deserved revenge on a local Mean Girl. And, let's be honest here -- how many of us didn't dabble in a little bit of lycanthropy during our teen years?

## 3. Eli

*Let The Right One In* (2008)

Male in the novel and female in the American remake, Eli is a non-binary child vampire who (kind of) presents as female in the original Swedish film. I am using that as an excuse to include them on this list, because Eli is totally bad-ass. Eli may not get along with cats, but they are able to inspire incredible loyalty in those closest to them. That loyalty goes both

ways -- Ride-or-Die Eli is totally willing to throw down when their friends are in need, even if that means brutally murdering the meanest bullies in school. Not only that, but they're able to solve Rubik's Cubes, a skill of which I am terribly envious.

## 2. Xenomorph Queen

*Aliens* (1986)

You can call her a bitch all you want, Ripley, but the fact remains that the Xenomorph Queen from *Aliens* is still one of the most bad-ass female monsters of all time. The ultimate Queen Bee, the Xenomorph Queen is the mother of every terrifying, acid-blooded, multi-mouthed, human-shredding Xenomorph on LV-426. But she's not unreasonable -- she's totally willing to make a deal when it benefits her children (but god help you if you renege on your side of the pact.)

## 1. IT

*IT* (2017)

While the clown-form known as Pennywise presents as a male, make no mistake -- It, the entity, is female. Changing her appearance using glamours that specifically target the particular terrors of each of her victims, It demonstrates her own culinary prowess by "salting the meat" with fear to ensure a flavourful taste experience when she finally chows down. Sure, she's eventually defeated by a group of no-good, meddling kids, but only after an impressive millennia-long run as Queen Bitch of the greater Derry area. We should all be so lucky.

VALESKA GRIFFITHS

# INVASION OF THE POD PEOPLE

by Valeska Griffiths

When we're not watching horror movies, we're listening to other people talking about them! In each issue of Grim, we will highlight two horror podcasts featuring women sharing their thoughts on the genre. This month, we spoke to Andrea Subissati and Alexandra West of The Faculty of Horror, and Darren Rosario and Mindy Learnard of The Rants Macabre!

**For readers who haven't yet heard an episode of The Faculty of Horror, how would you describe the podcast?**



**Andrea:** It's a conversation about horror movies with your smart, funny friend! At least, that's exactly what it's like from my end. I imagine it's more like eavesdropping for our listeners. Must be frustrating!

**Alex:** I think of Faculty of Horror as fun lecture or seminar class. I loved being in university for both my undergrad and MA but hated the ivory tower aspect of it. I strive to ensure that we include fun, interesting, academic discussions that are accessible and can generate conversations.

**How did the two of you meet? What led to the launch of the podcast?**

**Andrea:** I put a want ad on Craigslist. "Seeking podcast co-host. Must hate men."

**Alex:** We met through another figure in the horror community and became friends. I was getting into podcasts at the time (around 2012) and was really frustrated by the lack of female voices in podcasts (remember this is pre-Serial) and approached Andrea about starting something.

**The Faculty of Horror is pretty uniquely positioned in the pantheon of horror podcasts, as it's a fairly academic podcast (albeit an incredibly accessible one). When did you first start applying your academic background to the study of horror and what was the initial reaction like?**

**Andrea:** I wrote my master's thesis on zombies, so I was making these kinds of connections pretty early

on. After grad school though, I didn't have an outlet to keep it up until there was Faculty of Horror.

**Alex:** Similar to Andrea, I applied a lot of my knowledge of horror mixed with theories that I learned in my schooling during my MA. After I graduated I read as many books and essays about horror films as I could, Faculty of Horror became an outlet for synthesizing my thoughts on films and theory.

**You two have literally written the book(s) on horror, with Andrea's When There's No More Room In Hell: The Sociology Of The Living Dead and Alex's Films of the New French Extremity: Visceral Horror and National Identity and The 1990s Teen Horror Cycle: Final Girls and a New Hollywood Formula -- what are the chances that the two of you will co-author anything in the future?**

**Andrea:** I'll never say never. Who knows?

**Alex:** There's always a possibility, but it would have to be the right topic at the right time.

**Andrea, how was the learning curve when it came to editing the podcast? Any tips or software recommendations?**

**Andrea:** Audacity is a free, open-source bit of software that's very simple to learn and use - I've been editing Faculty of Horror episodes on it since the beginning! The hard part was figuring out how to upload and RSS feeds and all that. Of course, that was 5 years ago so I imagine the process has become a lot simpler since then. I would definitely recommend Audacity for editing and another tip I'd share is to choose your web host wisely! Platforms like Bluberry, Podbean and Libsyn are great but it's a tremendous hassle to change hosts later on, so do your research before you start!

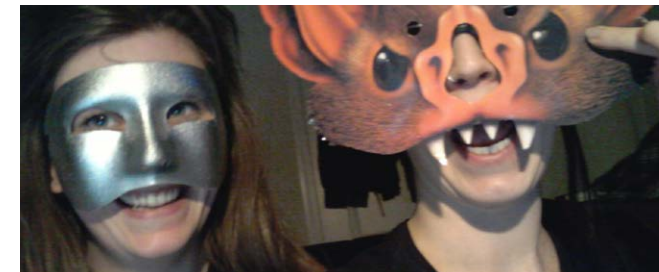
**Speaking of editing, how much do you usually have to edit out? The Assessment and Review episodes contain some pretty hilarious bloopers -- I'm sure they are only the tip of the iceberg!**

**Andrea:** I usually get at least 3 solid bloopers from each recording. I save them to a separate file called

"the cutting room floor" and then cut them together into chunks for the annual assessment episode. Between impromptu belches and sudden onsets of Pontypool virus, the funniest ones make the cut!

**Tangentially-related question: who decides which wine you drink while recording?**

**Andrea:** We decide together earlier in the day based on how the day is going. Sometimes it's beer!



**Do you have any plans to expand into video?**

**Andrea:** Nah. Video podcasts work if the show has a very conversational, free-flow format - dropping in video clips to correspond with the audio is too much of a headache. I uploaded an episode to YouTube with a slideshow of stills from the movie we were talking about and if it had received a lot of traction, I might have continued but I don't think it's worth the extra work. Besides, I like to be able to record in my PJs and pick my nose if I feel like it.

**Alex:** Similar to what Andrea was saying, I have no desire to be in front of the camera. I love podcasting because I feel free to be myself without worrying how I look. I know that sounds vapid but I growing up in a culture that values women for their looks really messed me up. Podcasting is like a safety blanket for me.

**I know that you sometimes get pushback from listeners who don't appreciate the fact that you're a feminist podcast. Which topic has sparked the most unexpected reactions from your audience?**

**Andrea:** I'm pretty unfazed by blanket dismissals from people who just aren't interested in feminist discourse, but every now and then someone will catch on to the flimsiest detail we'll mention in passing and write us 500 words about it. I'll be like, did one of us say that? I don't even remember it!

**Alex:** I very foolishly thought I could just say, I'm a feminist, mean it and that would be that. That we could say, this podcast is feminist and that would be that. There is a tremendous responsibility that comes with having a platform and I take it seriously.

Something that we say off-handedly or jokingly could upset and offend someone and I never, ever want to do that. I put in a lot of work on the regular reading various feminist scholars and writers, engaging in conversations around intersectionality and understanding concepts that stigmatize marginalized groups as well as recognizing and checking my own privilege.

**There is, even today, this lingering idea that horror is something created by and for men. Which female creators do you think are killing it currently?**

**Andrea:** We loved Karyn Kusama's *The Invitation* from last year. She has a crime thriller coming out next year that I'm eager to see. I also enjoyed Coralie Fargeat's *Revenge* and *MFA* by Natalia Leite; a pair of rape-revenge thrillers that are out in early 2018.

**Alex:** One of my favourite movies in recent years was *Lyle* directed by Stewart Thorndike. I know she's tried to get other movies off the ground but it hasn't quite materialized and I'm dying to see more of her work. I have great admiration for the work Jovanka Vuckovic has done with *XX*. And one of my all-time favourite short films I've seen was *Slut* by Chloe Okuno which came out a couple years ago.

One of my horror favourite horror creators outside of strictly filmmaking is Stacie Ponder who I got to know through her blog *Final Girl* and she has gone on to do so many cool projects. I'm always stoked when I see she's got something new on the horizon.

**If you each had to pick one episode to recommend as a good introduction to The Faculty of Horror, which episodes would you pick?**

**Andrea:** Oh geez, that's like choosing a favorite child. I'm proud of our *Ghostbusters* mini episode that we did about all the misogynist nonsense that surrounded the release. It was a topic that troubled me personally and I was frustrated that horror outlets weren't tapping into the wider subject they way I would have liked them to.

**That was a great episode. The response to that film infuriated me and I appreciated that you two addressed it.**

**Alex:** I think our *Shining* and *Audition* episodes do a good job of synthesizing what we're about and how we tackle topics, but each episode is my favourite for different reasons.



**What's the origin story of *The Rants Macabre*? How did the two of you meet?**

**Darren:** We met at work, at a midtown jewelry company back in ... 2008? Initially, we had a quite a few friends we'd have lunch with and talk movies and ridiculous stuff. Over the years, the company shrank, our friends were laid off, and in one of the last moves to re-shuffle, they sat Mindy next to me. I had just bought some recording equipment for a family project and thought it could be useful to record a podcast. It didn't take us long to figure out what it would be about.

**Mindy:** It was actually 2007! It's been that long! Yeah, the idea of the "Lunch Hour Reviews" was an homage to the fun we had with our friends who used to work with us. I think the worst idea our bosses ever had was to sit us next to each other. They didn't know it, but they really helped to create our show.

**I love the deep research undertaken in your episodes. Can you talk a little bit about your educational backgrounds and interests?**

**Darren:** My background is more artsy, I just happen to be nerdy. My interests in podcasts drove me to make a production-heavy, research-based podcast like Radiolab or Freakonomics. While I like plenty of conversation-based shows, the shows that immerse the listeners are the ones I return to again and again.

**Mindy:** Because I was in the process of getting my Masters in Classical Voice for the first two years of the show, I was in the research and music nerd mode. Now, I teach and study teaching at NYU, so I have access to some of the best research libraries in the world. I think I became very good at translating info into more palatable or easier to digest language for the show. Podcasting is a way that we can relay the same weight of information, but in a more colloquial way. That's why I try and throw in some Mindy's Music Corner when it comes up.

**You fit an impressive amount of information into the full-length episodes. How long does it take to prepare?**

**Darren:** I've never tracked the total time—it can be intimidating to think about. Depending on the accessibility of the information we're looking for, it can feel like forever. I like to prep-to-death, so I write out as much as I can. Mindy is better at absorbing

and presenting information.

**Mindy:** Ha, that's very kind of Darren to say, I just take more takes and edit my rambling out. Some episodes really take a while depending on the weightiness of the journals and research we find. If I have to read religious journals (like in the exorcism episodes), they are so dense that I have to read them a few times to just figure what's going on, vs. reading interviews done in the 20th c with filmmakers. The editing does take quite a while once we're at that point. Darren is smart and edits in small doses. I like to set my whole afternoon/evening up for it. There are times I'll finish editing at 7pm and realize I haven't moved since noon.



**Your production values are excellent. Did you have podcasting and audio experience coming in?**

**Darren:** Thank you. I've been doing home recording and editing for a long time. Instrumentals mostly, and an occasional contract job for friends. Before the podcast, I asked Mindy to sing on a few songs I'd written. (\*ahem\* - one of which is on my Fangoria album, *Apophenia*.)

When we moved to a weekly schedule, I struggled to keep up with the pace so Mindy took over the editing of our Lunch Hour Reviews. She picked it up fast. There were production tricks and dynamics she implemented that I was jealous I hadn't thought of. It wasn't long before she moved on to editing the full episodes. I think the first long episode she produced was our episode on Psycho?

**Mindy:** I had no clue how any of the production part worked and Darren literally made me a picture how-to of editing. The first long episode I did was The Grand Guignol episode and it came in at 1hr 13min, to me that was insane since I'd been doing 20-30min LHR shows. I still love that GG episode, even though there is a random accordion sound that pops up out of nowhere. I've definitely learned a lot, but I still hear errors when I listen back to my episodes and am hyper-critical. There gets to be a point when editing a long show where you go, "Everything's

terrible, cut everything where I'm talking".

**What software and equipment do you use?**

**Darren:** The mics are an SM57 and 58 going into a Zoom H5. We edit on Macs, me in Logic, Mindy in Garage Band.

**What non-horror can we find in your Netflix lists?**

**Darren:** I'm as big as big a stand-up nerd as I am a horror fan so watch a lot of comedy. I like a lot of true-crime — I loved David Fincher's *Mindhunter*, and the Discovery series *Manhunt* about the Unabomber.

**Mindy:** I have a bunch of random stuff on there when I'm not watching horror. I like series, I'm watching every episode of *Cheers* (which I just had to take a break and will start up again shortly). *Peaky Blinders* is a must watch, I think everyone that listens to the show knows how much I love Cillian Murphy, and the newest season is up on Netflix now! I also loved *Mindhunter*, that season ender really got me.

**You cover a wide variety of horror films. What are your favourite sub-genres?**

**Darren:** I like sci-fi horror a lot. Cold kinda freaks me out and I love seclusion/paranoia stories so the *The Thing* is my all-time.

**Mindy:** I love horror comedy. I like being scared and on edge, and then when the comedy hits it's like nervous laughter. I think that's why I love Adam Wingard and Ti West so much, the uncomfortable laughter.

**Darren, how are your nunchaku skills coming along? Still think you could fend off an intruder?**

**Darren:** If I get the element of surprise! I never



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practice. Whatever skills are left are from martial arts practice in my teens.

**If you had to pick one episode to recommend as a good introduction to *The Rants Macabre*, which would you pick?**

**Darren:** That's really hard. The Roger Corman Poe Cycle episodes came together pretty well, or more recently the second episode in our J-Horror series where Mindy taught me about Buddhist ghosts.

**Mindy:** That is a tough one, I think maybe I'd tell people to check out the Seances & Spiritualism episodes, we both did some great research on those episodes and I love the intro that Darren wrote and edited. I might also suggest our *Psycho* episode (it was for Mother's Day). 



# (TRICK OR) TREAT YOURSELF



Wear your love for horror on your sleeve (or chest, or back, or wherever the art ends up!) with one of the several different lines of horror t-shirts by Rotten Rags. Featuring work by seven different artists, Rotten Rags offers movie-inspired shirts, original art shirts, glow-in-the-dark shirts, and a line of "shirt-o-lanterns" inspired by pumpkin carvings and boasting incredibly durable luminescent ink. Their *Hellraiser* Lament Configuration inspired "Puzzle Box" shirt is a particular stand-out! Visit them at [www.rottenrags.com](http://www.rottenrags.com).

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I've been drooling over these incredible prints by artist Christopher Shy for almost two years now. (I already own his alternative poster print for *The Thing*, and I'm still trying to decide which to buy next.) The incredibly talented Shy takes iconic horror and speculative fiction films and creates glorious, sinister, hallucinatory dreamscapes saturated in rich, dark tones. These evocative pieces are divided into open edition and limited edition prints, so some of them may not be available for long. Catch up with them at [www.woodnickelartworks.com](http://www.woodnickelartworks.com).

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# THE HAUNTED LIBRARY

by Zack Long



*Mexploitation Cinema: A Critical History of Mexican Vampire, Wrestler, Ape-Man and Similar Films, 1957-1977*

Doyle Greene  
McFarland

Independent scholar Doyle Greene's *Mexploitation Cinema* is a 170-page book that explores a strange subgenre of the horror/exploitation film - low-budget Mexican productions made between 1957-1977, often featuring masked wrestlers and "avant-garde" (read: incompetent) editing. While only a few of these low-budget, high-concept disasterpieces have been seen outside of Mexico, Greene has clearly dug deep to unearth their subversive political and gendered stances, taking care to contrast the original releases against the few that made it into North America.

Greene has a flow to his syntax that demands compulsive reading. This stems from his independent status; it allows him to tackle gender, politics, history, sexuality, and the patriarch in an almost free-flowing cross pollination of ideas. Each chapter tackles an overarching theme and issue: Mexploitation as a style; a critical inquiry of the subgenre; an in-depth study of *The Brainiac* (1961); a study of Lucha Libre films and its las luchadoras counterpart. Even though each of these sections build off the previous, they can easily be enjoyed on their own.

Any good film studies book knows that the films are only one part of what makes a compelling read and Greene uses politics, social developments, and morals/censorship to offer depth beyond simple readings of the films. Of particular interest is the history of the lucha libra art form, which works political satire and subversive messages into the wrestling ring that would go unnoticed by the average foreign observer. The Mexican government noticed, though, and banned the showing of lucha libre matches on television. Greene explores how horror within lucha libra films allows the filmmakers to hide subversive messages behind a facade of "fantasy."

The book is not without its flaws. Editing and spelling mistakes abound (perhaps the yin to Greene's independant yang?). Unless you're a real hound for grammar, however, I doubt they'll get in the way as you join Greene for a lesson you never knew you wanted.



*House of Psychotic Women: An Autobiographical Topography of Female Neurosis in Horror & Exploitation Films*

Kier-La Janisse  
FAB Press

*House of Psychotic Women* is not just a fantastic look at female neurosis within horror and exploitation films, it is also one of the bravest books penned within the 21st century. More than just a film studies book, *House* is an autobiographical account of author Kier-La Janisse's struggles (both gendered and not) as well as her recollections of her mother's.

The book is published by Fab Press, a company known for gorgeous releases. *House* follows in the company's tradition; it is 350 pages chock full of photos that interact dynamically with its typography.

The text is divided into three sections: a 174-page main section followed by a 32-page full colour section, and a 136-page appendix that claims to be "The Compendium of Female Neurosis." This compendium contains entries for over 200 films, cataloguing year of release, alternative titles, cast and crew, as well as insightful reviews of films that all center around some form of psychotic woman. While this section alone justifies the cost of the book, the main section makes the book worthy of the praise I gladly heap upon it.

*House of Psychotic Women's* greatest asset is its author, Kier-La Janisse. Her writing flows seamlessly between examinations of cinematic patterns and brave, honest autobiography. At times the book feels like an open wound, offering direct insight into Janisse's emotional pain and struggles. She's not afraid to explore dark lived, psychotic experiences, laying bare her - and her mother's - troubled relationship with mental illness and what happens when you wander on the wrong side of the tracks. It does so not from a place of judgement but from a place of understanding. You can feel Janisse coming to terms with herself throughout the text.

Kier-La Janisse has written one of the most important, insightful books on the topic of female neurosis. It's a text deserving of the utmost respect, and one that I implore you to read for yourself. [g](#)



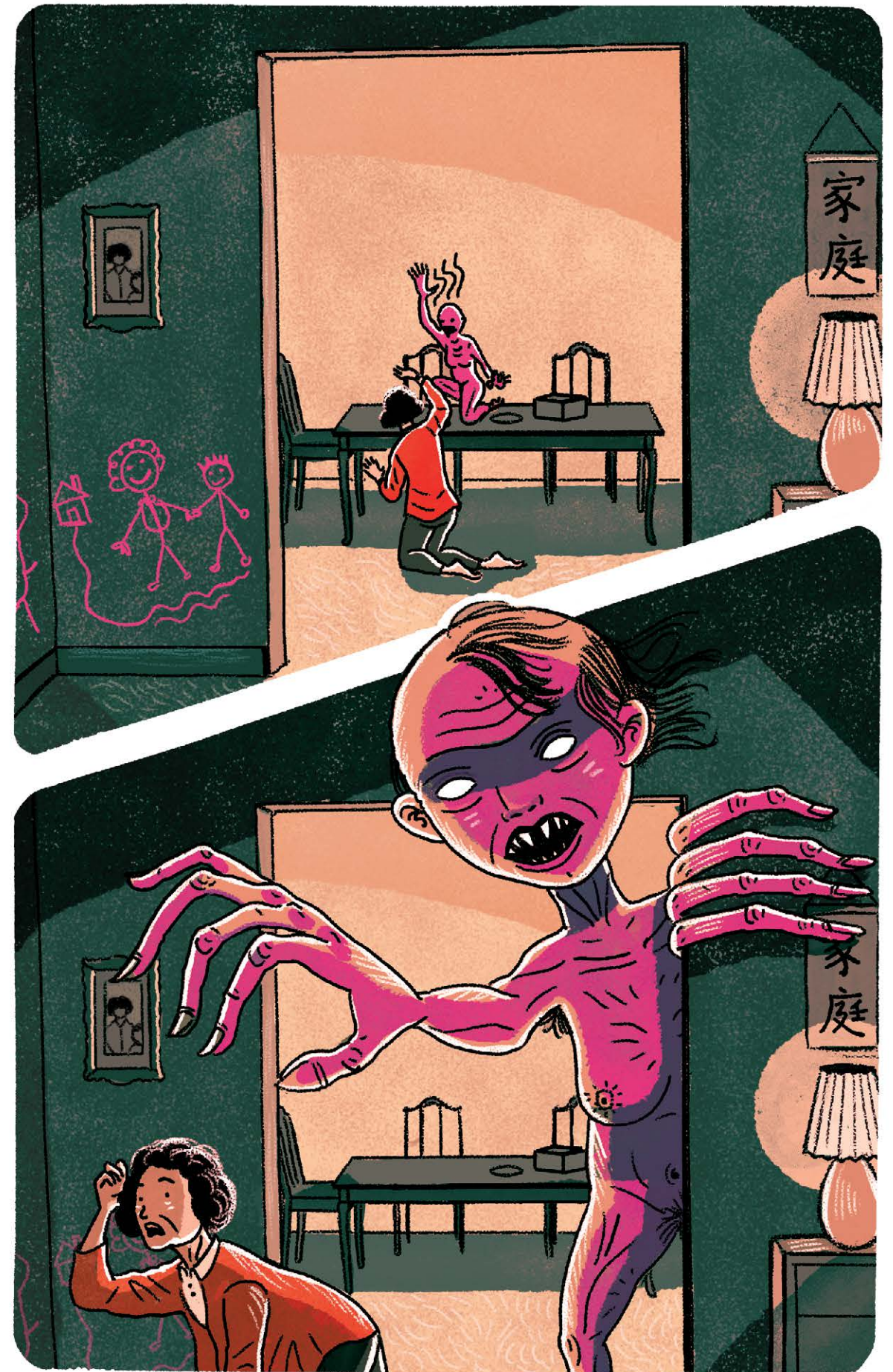


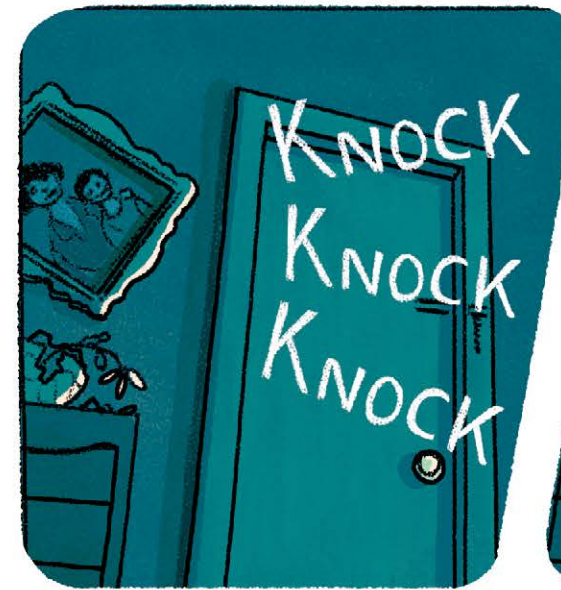


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"Mooncake Madness" was originally published in the *Hogtown Horror* anthology, available at [hogtownhorror.com](http://hogtownhorror.com)

## Dear Countess Valencia

Countess Valencia is a certified Gothic therapist, an interior decorator with a soft spot for spooky, and a 6000-year-old Vampire-Canadian with more opinions than she knows what to do with. In each issue of *Grim*, her advice column will tackle timeless dilemmas and dish out practical solutions.



*"When is the right time to reveal to a new romantic partner that you're a werewolf? Is that a first-date thing, or more like 3 months in?"*

This is a tricky one! A part of you has hidden your beast for so long, it's no wonder that dating can create some anxiety. Don't be quick to reveal your lycanthropic nature on the first date. If the person's butt doesn't smell so good, then it won't last anyway. Once you have become closer, that is when you must let them know. That could be before the 3 month mark, depending on how obsessively ... I mean, how quickly you connect. Be prepared for reactions such as fainting, running away, or laughing. If you are lucky, your date will genuinely understand and stay with you. Or even better, they could reveal their beastly secret as well! That would make those full moon nights a lot easier, and make for some fun couples activities!

*"My parents tell me that I dress "too goth" and want me to switch it up for family events. How can I satisfy their tastes while still expressing my inner existential dread?"*

Oh, fellow children of the night! You can never be "too goth". However, if you are still holed up in your parent's castle, then there will be compromises. But even while living at home, you can still express your love for life's torment. Feel free to wear colours if you dare, although keep them on the darker side. You know, like blood reds or zombie greens. Your parents will praise you for adding colour. Don't underestimate your hidden undergarments. Express yourself by wearing your ankh underwear, spider bras, or pumpkin socks. With my sartorial tips, you can enjoy your festive family events like the darling little gothling you are without upsetting the muggles.

**RAYNA SLOBODIAN**

*Have a question for Countess Valencia? Need advice about the spookier side of life? Submit your queries via the contact form at [www.anatomyofascream.com](http://www.anatomyofascream.com).*

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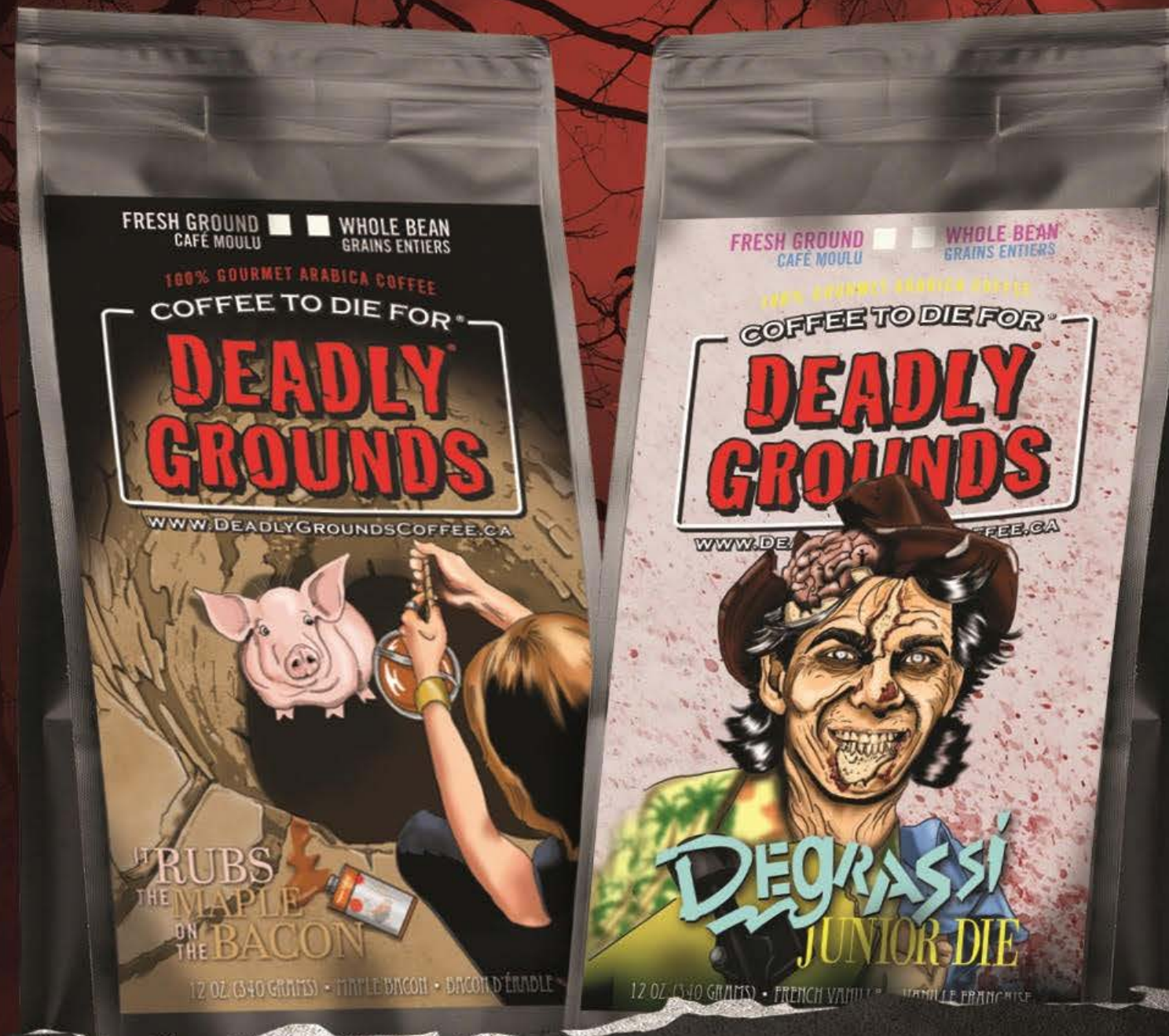
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