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Freaks



Synopsis

Originally printed in a small edition and withdrawn after one month by the publisher, Pocket Books, "Freaks" -- out of print for nearly 20 years -- was brought back to eyepopping life, with many new photos, by the renowned marginal culture press RE/Search. Now Juno Books, morphed from the now-defunct RE/Search, has brought "Freaks" back into the mainstream publishing fold with panache. In "Freaks", meet the strangest people who ever lived, and read about: the notorious love affairs of midgets-- the dwarf clown's wife whose feet grew directly from her body-- the famous pinhead who inspired Verdi's Rigoletto-- the 34-inch-tall midget happily married to his 264 lbs. wife-- the human torso who could sew, crochet, and type and other bizarre accounts of normal humans turned into freaks -- either voluntarily or by evil design!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I pre-ordered my copy of this book with a great deal of anticipation, and am still having mixed emotions about the purchase. Mr. Mannix's collection of pictures alone is likely worth the price of the book for many - I was, however, seeking something a little more researched and scholarly (not boring, just well put together and intelligent). Mr. Mannix establishes himself in the first four or five pages as an unapologetic reporter of inaccuracies (e.g. when he uses Helen Keller as an example of a 'freak', stating that she was born a blind, deaf mute... She was, in fact, born normal, and suffered these impairments as a result of a nearly lethal fever in infancy), and the publisher seems to have only given the text the most cursory of proofreadings (one 'freak', a midget, is referred to as having been the State Treasurer of "taxes" (he was the State Treasurer of TEXAS). Am I picking nits?

Absolutely. However, when I purchase a book I tend to expect something with a little more polish and depth than a high school research paper. Otherwise, for sheer anecdotal value, Mr. Mannix's book is an interesting and at times touching read. I would recommend it to anyone for the pictures, and only the the exceedingly patient for the text.

Cool Book.

This is a fascinating little book. There are lots of pictures. An intimate look at those "who are not as others." I love to show this book to my friends and just watch their jaws drop again and again as they page through it. The pictures are accompanied by interesting stories and tidbits of information. A lot is mentioned about the carnivals, freak culture, freakshows, etc. This is a Re/Search book, known for pushing the "ultra-alternative." Daniel P. Mannix is also the author of two other books I highly recommended, The Hell-fire Club and For Those About To Die. I was quite pleased by it, and since I am endlessly amused by how much it seems to freak people out, its a coffee table display book in my house.

My sister, ever since I lent her "Geek Love," is really into books set in carnivals, circuses, or with sideshow characters. This book, my first foray into nonfiction, was definitely something different. I was surprised to see upon shipping that it is actually more like a textbook than a paperback novel. It is larger in order to show more details in the photos, and like other reviewers mentioned, some of the photos are extremely graphic. This book is not appropriate for children. Also, the narrative is somewhat lacking. The writing is fine, especially because it humanizes sideshow folk, but the photos often don't match up to what is being said on that page, and sometimes photos don't have back story within the text. That said, my sister loved it. She liked getting the real story about these real people, and how they interacted with others and amongst themselves. It was a great birthday present, and I'm glad I chose it for her!

I used to have all of the RE Search books. In the days before the internet they were essential for discovering weird stuff. After a few moves I lost track of them, but remember them fondly. I was inspired by the latest season of American Horror Story (Freakshow) to repurchase this one. It's still interesting writing, but you can find way freakier photography online these days.

Originally released in 1976, 'Freaks: We Who Are Not As Others' is a bit dated in that many of the

people mentioned have since passed on. When first released, the book was quickly pulled for reasons I can only guess at, foremost it probably being too graphic for the times. Its large size and many pictures more than make up for its slimness (only 120 pages). Author Daniel Mannix gives us an inside and personal look at the old-fashioned "Ten-In-One" show: the Freak Show. Mannix worked in the carnival business and personally knew many of the people he speaks about, such as Priscilla The Monkey Girl and Emmett The Alligator Man (who were happily married). Before "political correctness" and phrases like "Differently Abled" came along, the Ten-In-One was often a haven and a home for those born with birth defects. Midgets, dwarves, giants, obese folk, "the human skeleton", bearded women, co-joined twins, those born without arms or legs, pinheads, hermaphrodites, skin conditions, the double-jointed, and deformities - all were welcomed at the Ten-In-One and many made a great deal of money at it. This isn't a book making fun of these oddities, its book that celebrates their differences, their lives, and their ability to love. Mannix's prose is informative and conversational, the stories are true (though he admits a few have questionable roots), and the many pictures are captivating, graphic, and ... well, freakish. I found the book so absorbing that I read it through in one sitting. There's a lot of history addressed, from the court jesters of historic kings to an intimate look at the most famous Siamese twins Chang and Eng, to the reasons why it's an insult to call a dwarf a midget or a midget a dwarf. Mannix keeps the book thoughtful and respectful while giving insight into the origin and history of the Freak Show. Whether curious or simply researching, this is one of the best books ever written about the old-fashioned sideshows. If you're interested in the subject, then don't miss out on this informative and graphic story of a group of amazing people living in the amazing world of the carnival. Enjoy!

This book is an adult book. I was looking for something my seven year old could read as she is obsessed with deformities in people and animals, but this was extremely inappropriate for her. A cool read for adults though.

I read this book in one day. It was that much of a page-turner. Mannix introduces his reader to freaks of every nature. This book is more of a personal account of their lives, rather than a historical or scientific one (although it touches gently on those aspects). Mannix lets his reader look into the lives of Percilla the "monkey woman", Myrtle Corbin the "4-legged woman", Emmett the "alligator man", "Happy Jack Eckert", and countless others. This book is a must-read!

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