

MY ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW ADVENTURE

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I was a scrawny, scruffy, naïve little girl with hair in no specific style and no braces, although I needed them desperately. I was 14, about to be 15 (so important to say at that age), and had a friend named Liz who was just a little older than me—17, if I remember correctly. Liz was a carefree, do-what-I-want-when-I-want kind of girl. We matched perfectly! I had a wild side unbeknownst to me. One night, Liz asked me if I wanted to see a movie. It sounded like a plan, but for some reason, she had to give me a rather fashionably funny makeover first. She puffed up my hair and added makeup, including stars from my eyes to my upper cheek.

I had a cast on my right foot that was getting in the way of good fashion, so I wanted it off! I had a pair of baby blue/greyish boots begging to be worn, and I couldn't wear just one. Out came the screwdriver and a hammer! Eventually, I was able to cut and tear my way free. After all, good fashion requires two boots! Then I added my safety-pin-covered jean jacket, with my nickname "Cuddles" on the shoulder and "Cool Girls" on the back, and we were all set. Of course, we were no more a gang than "The Little Rascals." Regardless, the time had come, and we were off.

We arrived at the theatre a little early. We were allowed inside after being questioned briefly by the security guard standing at the entrance, whom Liz seemed to know. When the door opened, we were hit with a wave of smoke, but it sure wasn't smoke from regular cigarettes. It was marijuana, and who knows what else! People were all dressed up in costumes and makeup. Now it finally made sense why Liz had made me up the way that she did.

Around this time, my sister would be getting home to find a trail of plaster from the living room to the bathroom. There, in the tub, she would find a hammer, a screwdriver, and the plaster boot—or what was left of it—and realize I had cut and torn the cast from my foot. I'm sure she wasn't too impressed.

Back at the theatre, we found our way to available seats, laughing and enjoying ourselves before the show! Looking around in awe at what I was seeing, people started filling the aisles and dancing. Liz relished my expressions, laughing at my astonishment. Someone on the stage got everyone's attention and welcomed all the moviegoers.

Then, to my surprise, the announcer asked, “Are there any virgins in the house?”

My face turned red and I got nervous. “Why would they ask such a personal question in front of so many people?” I asked, but Liz just egged me on to stand up, so I sank further into my seat.

Once again, the fellow up front asked, “Are there any Rocky Horror virgins in the house?”

This time, Liz pushed me to my feet. I searched the dimly lit room for others in my position, and then it happened: the entire audience “booed” us, cheered, and laughed. Liz appeared rather pleased with herself, but I didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

The lights dimmed and the movie started to play, but suddenly, everyone in the theatre shouted a question! I was so confused until the character on screen answered that very question moments later. This sort of banter back and forth continued throughout the movie. It was hilarious on its own and surely made even more so thanks to the influence of drugs in the air and in systems.

I thought this would be the only unexpected norm for the movie, but to my surprise, chaos erupted when somebody made a toast on screen. Pieces of toast came flying through the air, and we were sprayed with a liquid toast of whatever people had in their glasses at that time.

Then came the dance “The Time Warp.” Onscreen, the performers formed rows of two. The audience, including Liz and me, rushed to the floor, mimicking the movie, and we all began dancing along to the Time Warp. “Let’s do the Time Warp again... It’s just a jump to the left and a step to the right...” I was having a blast. I smiled so hard that my cheeks hurt! It was undeniably the best thing I had ever experienced.

There can’t possibly be more, I thought to myself, but I was wrong! Next came a song called “There’s a Light,” at which point Liz handed me a lighter. By this time, I expected the audience to sing along and continue the call-and-response game of questions/answers. However, for this round we also lit up our lighters and held them swaying in the night as the characters sang, “There’s a light...a light...in the darkness...”

Happenings like this continued through the evening while people partied all around. The audience's knowledge of the movie was undeniable evidence that this wasn't the first time for many of them. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* was the strangest and most spectacular experience I had ever...participated in!

After the show, the party spilled into the parking lot, and all around me was a sea of costumes. It amazed me to see just how many participants there were. My mind raced back to the movie; I didn't understand much about the LGBTQ community at this time, and it was certainly an eye-opener for me. I was so young, maybe too young to be in that environment, but I loved it. I was left with a lot of questions about my own sexuality, which I hadn't yet figured out for myself.

My favourite part of the experience was when the cast and the audience burst into dancing The Time Warp! I absolutely loved jumping up into the aisles and joining in, and as shy as I was, it gave me a surge of confidence. While I have watched *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* in the years since this adventure, I have not yet attended another showing in-person. I want to do so again someday. I expect it may be a calmer setting next time, but then again, I might be surprised. Both the movie and the overall experience left such an impression on me that I know it's not something I will soon forget.