



# People Like Us: The Cult of The Rocky Horror Picture Show

*Lauren Everett*

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Over the past four decades, attending a midnight showing of Rocky Horror has become a rite of passage for American teens; something as ubiquitous as attending one's first rock concert, or first high school party. The raucous shows are part vaudeville's last gasp - with their explicitly bawdy humor- and part new religion for the sexually liberated and socially progressive. It's an environment where bold sexual innuendos and puns are used freely with an almost innocent humor. There's an accepting "anything goes" atmosphere, and a sense of being in a place where the rules of "out there" don't apply. For regulars and casual aficionados alike, Rocky Horror is a safe-haven where people of all persuasions can go to have a good time and be accepted as they are. People Like Us documents the tight-knit community of dedicated fans who perform in and produce the weekly shows, and who in doing so, have kept the film on screens in the pop-culture collective consciousness for forty years. Over a period of six years, photographer Lauren Everett traveled to eleven US states and photographed over 140 people as well as countless midnight screenings. Images from the live shows focus on the relationships between the cast members and the participatory nature of the film-going experience, while the environmental portraits take the performers out of the theater setting and portray them in their everyday environment. In each portrait, the everydayness of the domestic setting is transformed by the act of becoming something else, and in doing so, evoking the ritual of performance. In this sense, People Like Us explores that ineffable line when the performer ends and the character begins. The film's tag line and central theme - "don't dream it, be it" - is embodied in this phenomenon. Preface by scholar and author Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, with additional essays by cast members, and 114 color photos.

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