

Heidi Pulls it Off ...

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Popular culture – TV, movies, books – reflects most elements of life with one notable exception – disabled people's sexuality! When disabled characters DO appear they are kept well away from the rolling and tumbling of a sexual relationship.

Alison Blake takes a humorous look at some of the more notable sexual absentees:

In "Skalligrigg" we saw it from a distance, "Precious Bane" has a particularly disturbing one, it was suggested in "Forrest Gump" and we presume Don Brennan gets up to it, but the modest "Coronation Street" viewer would not want to see that flashed across the screen at half past seven.

I'm talking sex here, and I'm talking disabled people-words rarely used in the same sentence. Not only am I talking the big S-E X but I'm thinking of disabled people doing it on screen and enjoying it!

If I think of all, or some (I don't want to put my reputation on the line here), of the -famous sex scenes on the screen there's a plethora to choose from - on the sink in "Fatal Attraction", on the stairs in "9 1/2 Weeks", on the rug in "Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit" and on the bed in numerous others,, but who ever remembers the stirring scene in the disabled person's toilet in "Reach for the Sky", or Constance's kinky reconciliation with her husband and a hoist in "Lady Chatterley's Lover"? We don't because they never happened! Not only does society deny us the right to integration and equal participation but as disabled people we are denied positive role models in every area of the media: actors playing ordinary adult roles highly featuring on the list Daily we are bombarded with body beautiful images from TV-land which

erupt into full-blown oppression after the nine o'clock watershed. Bare unblemished bodies are projected into our living rooms frolicking with mirror-image partners - if one partner is not quite as attractive this is usually a key to the ploy: i.e. money is involved ... or pity.

After sitting back and watching this we then wonder why we sometimes find it hard to form relationships, why we dread that moment when he says "Let's do it with the lights on" and why we constantly apologise for the failed attempts or the bits of limbs getting in the way.

We have to learn as disabled people that we are sexual beings, that we are damn sexy, that because of our impairments we are sometimes forced to abandon the missionary position and find something a little more accessible (and more interesting). and we have to re-write some of those great disability classics. I for one am starting with "Heidi. I've reached the scene where Peter pushes Clara's wheelchair down the mountain because he is jealous of the attention she's receiving. Her wheelchair is trundling down the mountain about to smash into many pieces, but Clara is completely oblivious to this: she's in a log cabin, lying in front of the crackling flames well and truly getting down to it with some goat herd or other! And who said disabled people couldn't paint a romantic scene...?