

# Scream, Queen!

By Cammie Bellamy

## *LGBT Identities and Horror Cinema*

Let me tell you the plot of a film, and bear with me for a second. A man, cast out by his loved ones and socially rejected for his identity, finds companionship with another lonely man. His parents take him back on the condition that he marries a woman, but the arranged couple immediately rejects one another. This film doesn't sound far off from solid Sundance material. But what if I told you said film was released in 1935, and is remembered as an American horror classic?

*Bride of Frankenstein* (big reveal!) was the first sequel to 1931's immensely successful *Frankenstein* and featured Boris Karloff reprising his iconic portrayal of the monster. But a lesser-known name sat behind the camera: director James Whale who made such horror classics as *The Invisible Man* and *The Old Dark House*. Whale was gay, and openly so in Hollywood. Though most would expect an out man in the 1930's to have been the target of much homophobia (and indeed Whale was supposedly referred to as "The

Queen of Hollywood"), he never made an effort to conceal his identity and was by-and-large accepted and celebrated by the film community.

Film critics have given *Bride of Frankenstein's* gay subtexts plenty of attention, but not much has been said about what I would argue is the intrinsic link between the horror genre and socially marginalized identities like those found across the LGBT spectrum. Starting with early horror icons like Whale and right up through the camp horror films of today (see *Psycho Beach Party* for a real treat), the horror genre has been an arena in which to parse, explore, and always to exaggerate LGBT identities.

### *From the Golden Age to pulp*

One year after "Bride" was released, another monster movie made a big, queer splash in Hollywood. *Dracula's Daughter*, which details the experiences of, you guessed it, Dracula's daughter af-