In 1973, a five-year-old girl known as Pookie was exhibited as “The Monkey Girl” at the Canadian National Exhibition. Dressed only in her diaper and on display for just one day before complaints closed the exhibit down, she would be the last of many children exhibited as “freaks” in twentieth-century Canada.

Jane Nicholas takes us on a search for answers about how and why the freak show persisted into the 1970s and offers a sophisticated analysis of its place in twentieth-century culture. These exhibits survived and thrived because of their flexible business model and government support, and remained popular by mobilizing cultural and medical ideas of the body and normalcy.

*Canadian Carnival Freaks and the Extraordinary Body* is the first full-length study of the freak show in Canada and is a significant contribution to our understanding of the history of Canadian popular culture, attitudes toward children, and the social construction of able-bodiness. Based on a foundation of impressive research, the book will be of particular interest to anyone interested in the history of disability, the history of childhood, and the history of consumer culture.

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Canadian Carnival Freaks and the Extraordinary Body, 1900–1970s

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