

PART 1

The Lion Dressed as the Elephant in the Room

I thought it was Just Fine. The ingrained issues with being -born- very different, as well as developing more or having chronic conditions/disabilities.

I thought it didn't matter because I knew myself, and nothing phases me. I had a sound mind and a calm heart; logic and grit have always propelled me.

But every now and then, it jumps out at me. It reminds me how much I know it infected my roots, discolored my branches, and stunted my growth.

Disability is the largest minority, and the only one that can suddenly become an attribute to anyone at any point in their life. But it seems to be the one talked about the least; sexuality being the least discussed topic.

I've seen both persons with disabilities and/or visible differences as either objects to examine or as tokens for inspiration, but never -just- as humans within the umbrella of sexuality. Not in movies, photos, shows, or even in your general damn conversations.

It's an issue that seeps in without having to ever be blatantly named or shown.
The carbon monoxide of disability.

I knew it was an issue when I was younger and couldn't speak even to join a conversation.
I knew it was an issue when my "friend" groped me and I was too frozen to stop it. I knew it was an issue when I had no fear, yet tensing up or shaking from intimacy was involuntary. I knew it was an issue when a partner affectionately traced my scars and I didn't realize I reacted with crying.
I knew it was an issue when I simply retold the notions the world gave me with a blank face, but it caused my friend to sob.

I can't speak for everyone with disabilities and/or major differences, but I know of some who can relate. I know it's up to every individual to figure things out for themselves and how they relate to those around them - But how are we suppose to put ourselves in the conversation when we're left in the other room? How do we get/feel invited to the circle when we seem covered in red flags? How can we rectify the twisted connotation that disabled means nonsexual when you perpetuate it? How can we process our layers of trauma when we're too busy putting you at ease? How do we put ourselves out there when people with disabilities are 3x more likely to be sexually assaulted than literally anyone else? How can we expect healthy relationships when you'll either love us or fuck us but rarely both?

How could I have discussed attraction, desire, sexuality, or literally intimately using my body when people have shouted "what the fuck -IS- that?!" at me for just physically existing at a bus stop? How could I tell a crush I liked them after they cried because they felt bad for my condition? How could I tell you how I like it when you assume I completely don't? How could I believe your generic compliment when yesterday a friend called me repulsive? How can I pretend it's not still a problem when a stranger makes a video post mocking my tinder profile on the internet? How could I bring these things up when you give me that look on your face?

This is not about my personal gritty details, or my various private relationships.

I've already done the work. I've ripped off the bandaids. I've soothed the once debilitating hyper awareness of how I'm perceived and treated. I've dismantled the machine to rebuild it correctly, and discarded the parts not useful to me. I've translated the twisted ingrained language so I could decipher what's real and what's not. I've walked across coals and consoled you for watching.

I thought it was fine to just keep my progress and life private. Because it is what it is, right? But it's not just about my lifetime of invisible obstacles I hid under the rug.

It's less about stepping in the light and more about pointing out the lion.
It's less about me and more about why you might feel uncomfortable right now.

It's about people who look different. The people who have been "othered." The people who are wrongly infantilized. The people who have felt broken or lacking. The people who might be the most insatiable queer sluts you've ever met but get silenced into amicable pals.

It's for anyone subtly forced into the dark corners under the impression that they don't belong and are definitely not welcomed.

It'll always be an issue in some form, but like with all things, I'll keep trying to unlearn for myself and to show up for others.

Fuck that, fuck you, fuck me.