

Freaky Friday vs. *Freaky*
Film Comparison

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Table of Contents

(1) Introduction	Page 3
(2) <i>Freaky Friday</i> Summary	Page 4
(3) <i>Freaky</i> Summary	Page 7
(4) Side-by-Side Table (Analysis)	Page 10
(5) Specialized Areas:	
a. Characters	Page 12
b. Story	Page 13
c. Special Effects	Page 14

Introduction

A popular movie trope found in recent years is the “body switch,” where two unlikely characters trade bodies by an unidentified mystical source until they can resolve their differences and core issues. This happens in both “Freaky Friday,” a popular children’s Disney film that was released in August of 2003, and also in the film “Freaky,” a newer horror film that was released in November of 2020 during the height of the pandemic. “Freaky” takes obvious influences from “Freaky Friday” but exhibits a twist – instead of a mother and daughter switching bodies, it’s an unpopular teenage girl who switches bodies with a well-known serial killer of the area named “The Butcher.” Both movies use this comedic switch to exhibit moral lessons found with the appreciation of being in your own body. This transformation also serves as a unique way to reveal differing perspectives regarding another person, as you get to ‘walk in their shoes.’ The characters can then better understand misconceptions within their inner relationships, and simultaneously find out truths within themselves.



Freaky Friday Summary

This movie is generally beloved by Disney fans because of its classic happy ending. It starts off with clear tensions between a mother (played by Jamie Lee Curtis,) and her daughter (played by Lindsey Lohan). The mother is overworked, about to get married, and rather high strung. She has ample expectations for her daughter and how she wishes she would act. The daughter, however, is incredibly rebellious, in a band, wearing questionable clothing, and crushing on a “bad boy.” The movie begins with all these fights and it's clear both characters are hurt by something – the mother just wants the daughter to accept her new marriage and she doesn't understand all the backlash to this, while the daughter is hurt by her mother pursuing another man after her father's passing. All of this tension could easily be resolved

with communication, but the duo resorts to fighting and refusing to hear one another out. The switch in their bodies occurs at a Chinese restaurant of all places, where they are put under a spell by one of the workers who watched them fight during dinner. In recent years, the film received criticism for this choice, considering the racist undertones of a fortune cookie having “an ancient Chinese curse...” but that discussion is for another time.

The pair switch bodies the next morning and are quick to want to reverse the spell. They return to the Chinese restaurant and ask for a reversal, but they are instead challenged with trying to resolve their issues. It's assumed that the moral lesson would come with time – but they're impatient. At first, the switch is comedic, and the mother and daughter make unlikely choices in their new bodies just because they can, but then they gain new perspectives about each other's lives when peers reveal different insights that alter their preconceived notions. The mother and daughter begin to form empathy for one another but still aren't ready to admit that to each other. As the movie progresses, the timeline grows closer to the mother's rehearsal dinner and wedding, and on the same day, the daughter's big performance with her band. Both are eager to get back to their own bodies to enjoy these moments but still haven't figured out the moral lesson.

At the rehearsal dinner, the soon-to-be stepfather is upset that the mother doesn't seem happy at the event, he wonders if the change is too soon. Meanwhile, the daughter is smuggled by her friends to play at the concert. The mother still inside of the daughter's body is incredibly nervous because she can't play guitar. The daughter, still inside of the mother's body shows up and plays backstage to make sure the event is a success. Through this, the mother finally sees her daughter's passion for music. After the performance, they both rush back to the rehearsal, where the daughter (still trapped in the mother's body,) has no other choice but to give a speech on her behalf. She says sweet things about finally accepting the stepfather, and the newfound empathy shared with her mother. They finally switch back in this moment and the movie concludes.





Freaky Summary

From the creators of a movie like “Happy Death Day,” which mimics the mystical forces in the popular film, “Groundhog Day,” we as the audience are in for a twist as to how “Freaky” will redefine a popular film trope. Taking strong influences from “Freaky Friday” a similar phenomenon occurs between a young high school girl, named Millie (played by Kathryn Newton,) and a murderous serial killer called “the Butcher,” (played by Vince Vaughn). Millie is in the marching band and has a tight-knit group of friends that seems to understand one another to a “T.” The Butcher serves as a prominent face on every news channel, and everyone is talking about him. One day after a football game, Millie attempts to approach her crush but backs out at the last second and is upset. She sits and waits for someone to pick her up outside of the school, but hours pass and no one from her family is anywhere to be seen. Before long she spots the murderer, and he runs up and attacks her. The audience assumes she might be dead this early on

in the movie, but instead, the pair swap bodies, and they wake up in their separate spaces the next morning. This point in the film is comedic, as the serial killer wakes up in a hyper-feminine teenage girl's room, and Millie wakes up in a serial killer's lair – where trash, weapons, and various body parts are strung recklessly everywhere, and she's brutally scared by it.

This is where the movie differs from “Freaky Friday,” because the pair cannot plot with one another on how to fix the problem. Instead, Millie must resort to her friend group and keep an eye on her body to make sure the Butcher doesn't kill anyone in her place. It's interesting how the body switch has nothing to do with the relationship between the two characters. “Freaky Friday” was defined by its attempt to resolve familial issues, while “Freaky” falls short of this potential in a moral message. Due to this, I believe the film fails

to meet the sincerity of “Freaky Friday.” This is partially because the friends are very self-assured. Everyone seems to accept their role in high school, and they do not deviate from their comfortable positions, therefore they alienate themselves from any other groups. The boy Millie is after doesn't even accept her for who she is – he just sees the newfound confidence presented in the serial killer as he walks around the school and is attracted to that. Eventually, she reveals her true self to her crush in the serial killer's body, but ultimately, her self-worth is defined by his acceptance at this moment.

After many jump scares, cinematic chases, and dramatic dialogues, the movie begins to conclude. Millie and her friends begin to understand that the curse is connected to the knife the Butcher was using – therefore this switch must have happened to every innocent person the Butcher killed or attacked. Minutes before the clock strikes midnight, and they are forever in the opposite bodies, Millie and the Butcher confront one another in the time crunch. Luckily, Millie

has the strength of an enormous man and can defend herself accordingly, and after a few fails in the switch back, Millie stabs the Butcher, and the movie begins to conclude.

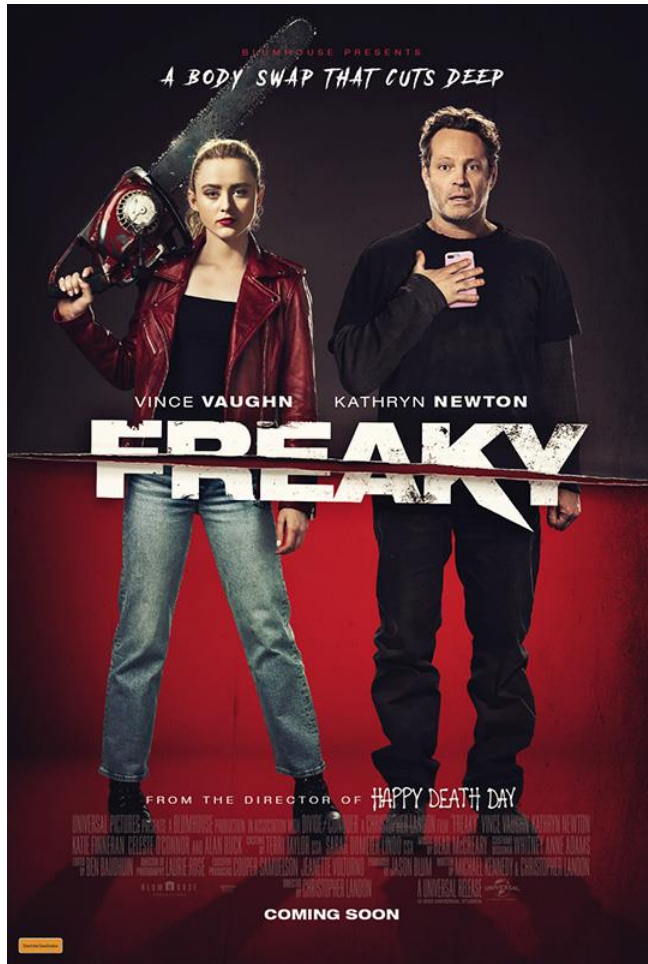




Table Analysis

Concept:	Freaky Friday	Freaky
Acting	• Lindsey Lohan plays a rebellious teen, yet also has to play the role of the mother (mimicking Jamie Lee Curtis' acting) • Jamie Lee Curtis plays an uptight and overworked mother, but also the role of the daughter (again, mimicking the acting of Lindsey Lohan) • Both actors have to pay close attention to how both roles are played.	• Kathryn Newton plays an unpopular teenage girl with insecurities and social fears • Vince Vaghn plays a raging serial killer after his own body. • Both actors must switch roles to depict one another: Vaughn must mimic a girl and even kisses Millie's crush in one scene.

		• Newton must mimic a serial killer, and is confused in many scenes by the loss of strength.
Lighting	• Corporate lighting at the mother's job. • Dark shadows and casted light during the band scenes to exhibit the rebellious look • Very bright and whimsical during the resolution scenes and wedding.	• Bright and cheery lighting during marching band scenes • Dark shadows, casted light, and backlit shots during scenes of potential threat from the serial killer (generally the classic 'low key' lighting is used, like that of any horror movie.)
Viewer Expectation	• I think because this is a Disney movie, the viewer has lenient expectations as to how things pan out – everything is generally predictable. The movie	• The viewer expects a moral lesson between the characters who were switched because of the themes in "Freaky Friday."

	follows a basic plot structure: introduction, rising action, complication, reversal, falling action, and resolution.	Instead, Millie defines herself by others' expectations and the murderer is one- dimensional and exhibits no real change.
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Characters:

Both films incorporate some similar characters such as the few comparisons shared between Lindsey Lohan and Kathryn Newton. Both are in high school, teenagers, and have a crush on a boy. What differs is that Lohan's character is rather confident in her rebellious ways. She has a set group of friends, but those relationships don't seem to define her – the band and exhibiting her talent is most important, but through ample character development she sees there's more to grasp – like having a good relationship with her mother and new stepfather. The boy she's after is just an addition to her character development too, while in "Freaky" it was Millie's main devotion and prize. Even when Lohan is in the body of Jamie Lee Curtis and she's finally connecting with her crush, she thinks it's creepy that a teenage boy would hit on her mother, and she attempts to shut the behavior down. In "Freaky," a similar thing comes up, but instead, Vaughn kisses the crush who's only a teenager in relation to the movie! This was a poor choice in having an adult kiss a minor, as it not only reveals where Millie's main devotion lies but it's very creepy within the context of the movie.

On the other hand, I don't think Jamie Lee Curtis nor Vince Vaughn share many similarities in their defined characters. Curtis' character showed a lot of development in attempting to better understand her daughter, while Vaughn's character (outside of the switch) is rather one-dimensional and more like that of a caveman. Both had to attempt to play a teenage girl, however, and in this way, they had an interesting task to unpack as actors. Curtis' rendition felt more natural, as she matched the rebellious yet free-spirited and curious nature of a girl and more importantly, Lohan's specified character. On the other hand, Vaughn didn't seem to match Millie's character whatsoever. He just changed the pitch of his voice and resorted to stereotypes of women – his portrayal was cheap.

Story:

As far as the stories go, I feel both movies stuck to their genre. "Freaky" clearly took influences from "Freaky Friday," but seemed to follow classic horror movie tropes. There were jump scares, heightened music, chase sequences, low-key lighting, etc. But at the end of the day, there was a big scary guy that felt unavoidable in his threats, the protagonist had to find a way to escape from him, a few people died, they hatched out a plan to overthrow him, and they defeat the bad guy – go, team! The only thing that sets this movie apart from other horror movies is because of the "Freaky Friday" influence. If it wasn't for the body switch, I feel this movie would've been nothing more than another scary feature. Especially since there's no underlying meaning to the switch, I think the only effect is for comedy's sake and building up to the relationship with Millie's crush. The characters don't leave the experience feeling changed besides having a new romantic interest.

As far as "Freaky Friday" goes, it also has a very typical plot structure and is rather predictable in having a happy ending. I feel that because of the moral lesson found, I can respect the

simplicity of its story more than “Freaky.” There’s the classic tension between two characters, a deceased family member, a new stepdad, a rebellious teen, and so many misunderstandings. The body switch (while this is a remake) is incredibly revolutionary in heightening the stakes for each character. The main goal is to better understand one another, and it speaks volumes in the metaphorical understanding of walking in someone else’s shoes. While the underlying plot structure is basic, the delivery of the lesson is fresh and exciting to the viewer.

Special Effects:

As far as special effects go, I feel both movies avoid having to use anything additional during the switch, as they simply wake up in each other’s body the next morning. Sound effects and music communicate the switch best, as it serves to exhibit something is off. The absence of special effects serves to show the viewer that the characters didn’t even notice the change at first, and better displays the shock value of what happened to them. “Freaky” definitely had to use more traditional special effects in having to kill off certain background characters and trying to make that action look as realistic and seamless as possible. The biggest fight scene is during the conclusion where Millie (as Vince Vaughn,) must fight off her own body with the knife. They had to make that stabbing look as realistic as possible to send home the idea their bodies were switched back.