

The Gruesome Twosome



Lon Chaney Sr.



Tod Browning

The Director Tod Browning and the Actor Lon Chaney were first paired as a team by Producer Irving Thalberg at Universal studios in 1919. Thalberg would reunite them in late 1925 for the MGM film, *The Unholy Three*, a story about circus performers turning to theft and murder. Browning knew all about the circus from practical experience. Browning had been born into an upper middle-class family in 1880, but ran away at the age of sixteen to join the circus. He was first a “barker” (someone who shouts out what wonders people will see inside the tents) then a magician, dancer and clown. He loved the life and the people. He quickly began to understand that circus and carnival people formed a kind of family unit and looked after each other. This was especially true of those who were the attractions; the so called “freaks”.