

The Day the Music Died (and I Got Farked)

I was there, man, I was there through it all. Let me tell you something about fucking fandom.

It's not like the Carverquest books had the sanest fandom to begin with. You had your wanks, your sockpuppets, your cosplayers who got at one another's throats over who looked more like Dux Carver. Man, there was some hardcore porn in the fandom, all the wank over the underage kiddies having sex, who will think of the children? You had feuds, you do get your standard fandom feud. Seriously, the Harry Potter fandom looked at us and thought, Jesus, at least I'm not a Carverquest fan. The furies *loved* us 'cause of the werewolves, which was great and all 'cause who doesn't love a furry, deep down? Except people like to point and laugh. I'm not into that. Whatever feeds your inner fan. Werewolves fucking left and right, I don't care. But it did bring a lot of wank. Fandom_wank, stupid_free, Carversues, we had them all.

I didn't ever see anything and don't ever expect to see anything again, though, like what happened when old DLE (that's Damon Lars Eldrich, author) clawed up out of the grave to write the tenth and final Carver book. We all had bets on whether he'd survive to finish it, and the Whofans and Trekkers were standing by to comfort us with the fact that their fandom has had like a jillion different writers.

Well, he did survive, and we were all really excited because the eighth movie had just come out and you just don't get sexier than the onscreen tension between Carver and the Werewolf King. I mean, for serious, that was hot. Everybody knew DLE was writing the subtext, he just didn't have the balls to admit it. And the last book was coming out the very next week!

Anyway, the movie was awesome, really great, and they even left in the part where the twins dismantled the unicorn, which I thought for sure was going to be way too bloody to show. So three days after the movie comes out, something shows up in my mailbox. This is four days before the book is supposed to hit the shelves like a royalties-rich rocket, mind you.

I'm not any kind of a BNF, really, I mean I keep out of the wank circles and I don't really post on comms much. I've just been in fandom for fucking ever, so everyone knows me and knows my Journal. Nick's Diner, they call it. All the greasy, bad-for-you content you never knew you wanted till it was served with a steaming hot cup of sarcasm. People tell me stuff. It's awesome.

So this email turns out to be from my pal Andrea2331 (we'll come back to her, believe you me) and it had an attachment that was just a series of photographs of every page in the new book. Every page.

I did what any pirate of the high seas would do. I posted that fucker. A big old zip file on my journal.

Now, there was enough wank over whether you should read the book, and then when people did there was wank over the ending because everyone died. I'm not talking main characters, I'm talking everyone. DLE I guess thought people would try to keep the books going after he died because he ended the world. HE ENDED THE WORLD, am I getting the point across? THE END. APOCALYPSE LAST TUESDAY. EARTH NO MORE.

So in the middle of this there was also wank over whether it was real, and maybe that wank was valid. Because as soon as I posted it someone posted a comment along the lines of O RLY? with a different file attached.

Which was photos. Of the book. Every page.

Except it wasn't the same book. It was different. And nobody knew which was real. Imagine two novels, each alike in dignity, in fairest fandom where we lay our wank...

Livejournal went *nuclear*. People were screaming about spoilers but they were drowned out by the atomic winter of debate over which was real. Everyone got spoiled. You couldn't avoid it. I know people who walked away from LiveJournal for the next four days and it was good they did because just as it reached critical mass, LiveJournal? Crashed.

It crashed hard. Hardware failure. Six Apart dropped a collective brick but it was going to take days to get back online. It was still offline when people were putting on their leathers and that silk thing Anna wore in the sixth book before she got bumped off and getting ready to go to the midnight release parties. It was still down at midnight.

At five AM, and I'm getting that time from Wikipedia since I was asleep, thanks, LiveJournal came back up. It was quiet for a while, but slowly the posts began to trickle in. And it turned out the Apocalypse was the real book.

A collective howl the likes of which I have never heard arose in fandom's heart and burst forth with the fury of ten thousand suns, I am not even shitting you. Mass chants of denial, LJ comms with titles like *it_never_happened* and *10thbooksux* began to show up and oh, it was a delicious bloodbath.

You might ask what I was doing during all this? Well, I was doing what I always do, which was keeping my head down lest the helicopter blades of fandom's wrath chop it off. You laugh, but it's happened. I was posting about things like my boss being a dick and how to make macaroni and cheese from scratch and what to do when you really really really need to hear some Scissor Sisters right that minute and haven't got any on your hard drive.

So Livejournal is going bonkers, reviews are going up, and at 2:24 pm on the day of the book's release, DLE finally rolls over and departs for that big publishing house in the sky. I don't know if the books were all that kept him going or if pure hatred from every reader killed him telepathically. They say it was a heart attack and the dude was eighty years old, so maybe that's really what happened.

You could have heard the crickets chirping in fandom, when the news went out. For about thirty seconds.

Then the memorials started going up, the heartfelt letters to the dead author, the cat macros reading ILU DLE, the terrible poetry. Fanfic tributes weren't far behind. I counted at least forty where Dux ushers good old DLE into the afterlife before I gave up and metaphorically puked.

This is all still barely the day after the book came out, now. At this point Andrea2331 and another BNF called Dcrv_writer posted simultaneously on their journals. Now, Andrea was a friend, we both wrote Dux/King slash, but I didn't run in the same circles as Dcrv_writer; DC, as she was known, wrote a lot of fluffy gen and one big epic romance where Anna was resurrected and, as far as I know, swanned around in more silk a whole bunch.

The posts were identical, and they explained that both writers were in fact one person. That person was named Cyndi, and she was a sociology student at UCLA. Cyndi. Can you beat this shit? Someone found her Myspace page and she listed one of her hobbies, and I think this says everything you need to know about Cyndi, as ROXXING OUT.

You gotta admit she was a genius, though. A genius with a lot of goddamn time on her hands.

Just as the shockwave began to recede and the Cyndi_hate journals started to pop up, actual legal action occurred.

You may have read on the news what happened. It turned out (and okay, I'm a little to blame for this) that the faked copy had a virus attached which allowed some teenage hacker in Japan codenamed Tamaki to steal the identities of everyone who had personal information on the computer when they opened it. I got out okay, because my viruschecker caught it just as it kicked into gear, but they reckon about five thousand people got dinged by this guy. When the police caught up with him he was hip-deep in Wiis, iPhones, and candy bars. Joy is pure but fleeting, man.

And you know what happened next. He was Japanese. Rich, meaty racewank flowed like a river.

So there we stood, a torn and bleeding fandom, the survivors totting up the bodies of those who had deleted, flounced, or just wanked themselves out. We were a ragtag bunch, crushed by DLE's apocalypse and death, and some of us were still gunning for the rest, but for the most part we'd gone to our corners to lick our wounds and plot our AU fanfics.

And then the Christian Right stepped up in the form of Donny Benson, superconservative leader of the National Bible Truths Foundation. He'd battled with us before, but we thought Donny was too Christian to kick us while we were down. We were wrong. (My one consolation is that Donny got caught a few weeks later in a hotel room with a ball gag, a blindfold, an electrical-stimulation kit, and a teenage boy.)

You can find the clip on YouTube of Donny's half-hour sermon on what we, the Carver fans, had brought upon ourselves. Our sins were legion, among them satan-worshipping, spell-casting, indecent dress, child pornography, unnatural acts with animals, and sodomy, and so we had *only ourselves to blame*. It was the equivalent of a national broadcast of someone pissing on DLE's freshly-filled grave. And then digging him back up so they could, in fact, piss on the corpse of DLE himself.

I watched the video and saw the wank start to appear and I just couldn't even bring myself to say anything. What was there to say? It sure did seem like the wrath of someone had come to smite our fandom and kill our cats.

About the time I was seriously contemplating getting out of fandom and moving to the Himalayas, someone walked by my open window with a radio.

That was all it took.

I knew the song and I'm not ashamed to admit I liked it, so I pulled it up on iTunes and went for my webcam. About an hour later YouTube finally got their shit together and I posted to my journal.

Now, I knew when I posted that I was going to be the next Numa Numa kid, because I'm goofy to look at and I'm singing my heart and soul out, but fandom understands. Boy, did fandom understand.

*A long long time ago, I can still remember how the music used to make me smile...
And I knew that if I had the chance, I could make those people dance,
And maybe they'd be happy for a while*

I'm totally tone-deaf, by the way. As you know, if you've seen the video. But once we got out of the intro and into the chorus I belted that fucker like Mick Jagger.

WE STARTED SINGING BYE BYE MISS AMERICAN PIE
DROVE THE CHEVY TO THE LEVY BUT THE LEVY WAS DRY

AND GOOD OLD BOYS WERE DRINKIN WHISKEY AND RYE
SINGIN THIS'LL BE THE DAY THAT I DIE!
THIS'LL BE THE DAY THAT I DIE

It was like that, too. You think I'm capslocking for effect, but I'm not. I don't think you can overestimate what a dork I am.

But when I posted it, this weird ripple went out. I'm not saying I brought peace and enlightenment to fandom or anything, because it caused just as much wank as anything else, but I started getting these comments that were just links to YouTube and sendspace and megaupload and myspace music pages. Hundreds of comments.

*And there we were all in one place
A generation lost in space
With no time left to start again...*

Everyone was singing. They covered the Madonna version, they sang with their own terrible accompaniment, they put the song to doujinshi art of the characters, they did this freaky a-capella shit I can't even comprehend, but they sang. And every single one of them belted it like it was going out of style. For just one moment, everyone was singing.

Then, of course...

More wank. It got farked and featured on somethingawful and fandom_wank got ahold of it and laughed their asses off, which is actually kind of awesome, most of them are good people. CNN did a story where it was mentioned. My fifteen minutes of fame, and I wasted it on *The Day The Music Died*.

Still, it could have been worse. I got to hear a lot of great versions of the song, and people seemed to perk up after that, at least around my neck of the woods.

So, the world ended. But eh, we're still here, aren't we? The Diner is, anyway. The Diner at the end of the world, if you like.

And hey, you guys, I've heard about this new series of books -- they look really cool. I'm going to start reading them tomorrow and we'll see what happens, right?

*The Jester sang for the King and Queen
In a coat he borrowed from James Dean
and a voice that came from you and me...*

END