

Curious at the End: Apocalyptic Cabaret

A Consent-forward apocalyptic cabaret conceived and written by Syr Beker and Nicole Jost for Queer Cat Productions.

About:

Curious at the End is an accessible consent-forward immersive interactive apocalyptic cabaret and queer arts showcase. The show was written in late 2019 as a way to lift up queer artists, support queer spaces, and bring strangers together. In late 2019, Trump-era San Francisco, there was a sense that only some of us (QT/BIPOC/Disabled folx) felt the impending apocalypse. We wanted to create a show that imagined a queer cabaret at the end of the world, inviting strangers to collaborate and create community and celebrate one another, to work together to try to save the world (there was a very small chance of that happening). Along the way, we also gave them opportunities to share vulnerable moments with strangers, donate to an actual organization engaged in saving the world, support queer spaces, and enjoy queer performance.

We wanted to ask: who are we to one another at the end of the world?

We planned six different apocalypses with six groups of queer artists at different queer spaces or independent artistic spaces: The Stud (RIP, 2020); Pianofight (RIP, 2023); El Rio, and Z Space.

We were able to perform one *Curious at the End*, “Climate Change Killed the World, at The Stud, in San Francisco, in February 2020. Nic A. Sommerfeld played the MC, Felix Love, the queer performing artists “The Hot In Here Revue” were Meatflap, Kitty Kapowww, and Rawiyah Tariq. The audience was cast as various community members including scientists, heroes, and stoners.

The rest of the *Curious at the End* shows were canceled and Queer Cat Productions pivoted to virtual shows, with one of the first interactive plays created specifically for Zoom.

Content Warning: Felix’s opening monologue of this show references a fictional apocalypse, including a vague reference to the possible disappearance or death of their friends.

Curious at the End: Game Structure and Script

OUTLINE:

- **Preshow: Arrivals/ Cocktails/ Settling In**
- **Act I**
 - Scene 1: Welcome Speech
 - Scene 2: The Game
- **Act II**
 - Scene 1: Costume Contest
 - Scene 2: Featured Artist(s)
- **Act III**
 - Scene 1: Goodbye, Auld Lang Syne
 - Scene 2: What About The Cats???
 - Scene 3a: Cats Save The World!
 - Scene 3b: The World Ends.

APPENDICES (a.k.a. other stuff you might want to know):

- Appendix A: List of Audience Characters -- Page 13
- Appendix B: Description of the Game (Act I, Scene 2) -- Pages 14-15
- Appendix C: Envelopes for “Climate change killed the world.” -- Page 16

CURIOUS AT THE END: APOCALYPTIC CABARET
THE SCRIPT

PRESHOW: Arrivals/ Cocktails/ Settling In

The audience arrives and is oriented by house management. They are sorted into three teams: Team Hope, Team Fuckit, and Wildcards. They are also assigned specific characters. For complete list of audience characters, see Appendix A (Page 13).

Audience also participates in preshow activities like: drawing their experience of [CAUSE OF APOCALYPSE: CLIMATE CHANGE] on collaborative mural wall, writing apocalypse letters to people not in the room tonight, taking photos in “We were here!” photo booth, etc.

The party’s host (FELIX B. LOVE) enters. FELIX circulates among the audience without revealing themselves to be the party’s host. They don’t know any of the party guests, so they meet people for the first time.

FELIX is also feeling the end of the world pressure and has no interest in small talk. Instead, they ask intimate questions like:

- *What do you dream about?*
- *What’s the best present you’ve ever gotten?*
- *Did you have an imaginary friend?*
- *Tell me about a time someone forgave you.*
- *Have you ever seen a ghost?*
- *Have you ever witnessed a miracle?*
- *What’s the weirdest thing you ever saw on a bus?*
- *What’s one of the most beautiful things you’ve ever seen?*
- *Where have you traveled? Where have you wanted to travel?*
- *And a question or questions specific to the theme of this apocalypse, i.e. (for “Climate change killed the world.”):*
 - *“Have you ever encountered a wild animal? Tell me about it.”*
 - *“Have you ever gotten lost in the woods?”*

ACT I, SCENE 1: Welcome Speech

Depending on venue, some kind of sound (bell or “ta da”) and light cue will bring on the host, FELIX B. LOVE. If that doesn’t get the audience’s attention, FELIX will motion to repeat the sound: “AHEM! TA-DA!!!”

FELIX

Theybies and Gentlefolk! Welcome to your party at the end of the world!
I’m your host Felix B. Love and you’re -

Looks around the room expectantly.

You’re a delicious cornucopia of total strangers.

I guess the combination megatyphoon and hyperblizzard we had last week scattered the invitations to the wind. Betty? Skidoo? Are you here? VaVoom? Luz? TJ? Where are all you people?

Not here.

Maybe my friends found a spaceship and left for the moon without me. Or maybe they’re (...)

Looks outside.

Well anyway. I guess we’re who we have now. I guess that means the *gang’s all here!*
New friends! Welcome to CURIOUS AT THE END: APOCALYPTIC CABARET!

Room to clap. If the audience doesn’t clap, or if the crowd is tepid:

Y’all. What are you saving your claps for? This is the end of the world. WELCOME TO CURIOUS AT THE END!

That’s better. How are you doing tonight? How are *you* doing (*to specific audience member*)?

I mean aside from the obvious.

FELIX begins to meet people, might ask questions like: How are you? What’s your name? Have you seen Betty? Is your house still standing? Did you kayak here? Are those boots nuclear proof?

FELIX returns to stage. In this next section, FELIX will prompt the audience to remember what just happened, Mad Libs style. There has been so much bullshit they honestly can't remember one fuckery from the next.

FELIX prompts audience to "remember" as needed. For example: "YOU. You remember the natural disaster. What was the New York Times calling it? What was TMZ calling it?"

FELIX

As everyone here knows, last [DAY OF THE WEEK] the [NATURAL DISASTER] hit [PLACE YOU WOULD NEVER WANT TO VISIT]. And the sky was [COLOR OF YOUR GRANDMA'S WALLPAPER] and there were... oh, what are those things called... *(confused expression, makes weird gestures until someone names an OBJECT)*. Right! [OBJECTS] raining from the sky and this politician who was it... [NAME OF POLITICIAN] said, "I'm going to buy everyone a [MOST USELESS OBJECT YOU OWN]. FEMA came to our aid with an excess number of [OBJECT YOU GOT FOR CHRISTMAS] but it was too late, and already the [YOUR FAVORITE ANIMALS] were seen migrating en masse to [THAT CRUISING SPOT]. There was a great sound like [NAME OF SONG THAT GETS STUCK IN YOUR HEAD], and the scientists agreed there were only [HOW MANY] minutes left to [THING YOU FORGET TO DO EVERY DAY].

Well that's bad news. I guess we have about [X MINUTES] until the end of the world. Our Frontline Felines *(indicates FRONTLINE FELINES)* will be giving us occasional updates on the progress of the apocalypse. Before the world ends, we will provide you a little show-- Hey!, is there a show tonight?

FRONTLINE FELINE hands them a program. FELIX reads the name of the FEATURED ARTIST

(End of Excerpt)