

# Features

## Damned if you do ... so just don't

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WORLD & NATION EDITOR

After seeing *Queen of the Damned*, I remembered a quote from Lamar - the movie reviewer for morning radio's Bob and Sheri (a nationally syndicated program) that went something like: if the film had lasted any longer, I'd have rubbed popcorn salt into my eyes rather than have to sit through the rest of it.

Best-selling author Anne Rice should have initiated a press conference right after this film's release and apologized to her fans. This is by far the worst film I have seen this year.

The movie begins with the return of the vampire Lestat, this time played by Stuart Townsend, usurping the role that was formerly played in the prequel *Interview with the Vampire* by Tom Cruise. Awakened from his sleep by a heavy metal band, Lestat decides to join the group as their lead singer.

Here's the idea: Lestat basically wants the world to know that he is a real vampire and that there are others like him. This, of course, puts a price on his head, and many real vampires show up at Lestat's concert in Death Valley to get rid of him.

Only a few vampires want to see Lestat stay alive - enter Queen Akasha (Aaliyah) and Lestat's friend, Marius (Vincent Perez). I know, it sounds complicated, and

it should be. When two of Rice's books, *The Vampire Lestat* and *The Queen of the Damned*, are combined to make one film, there's just not enough time to delve into the story, much less comprehend it.

For those of you who haven't read Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*, please do so and save yourself from seeing the film.

As we find out through backstory, Marius (Lestat's friend)

used to house the former Egyptian king and queen vampires in his basement. They were frozen into statues and were supposedly the oldest living vampires on

earth. If anything were to happen to them, all other vampires would suffer the same fate.

For the sake of keeping plot synopsis short, Lestat finds the king and queen while living with Marius and wakes the queen with his violin playing. She, in turn, allows him to drink her blood, which is more potent than any other that exists. Marius finds out, gets mad, and moves them to another hidden location.

And then, BAM - we're back in the present with Lestat talking

to the press about his upcoming show when we are introduced to Jesse Reeves (Marguerite Moreau) and David Talbot (Paul McGann). Let's just say these people have read Lestat's lost diary and are part of a secret occult investigative organization.

Everything erupts when Lestat finally starts performing his show. All of the vampires in the audience begin attacking him on stage (please spare me the over-used reflex special effect) and soon they, with the newly arrived Marius, find themselves entangled in a huge on-stage melee.

This is when Queen Akasha (Aaliyah) shows up again. She burns the attacking vampires to a crisp and whisks Lestat away to a secluded island in order to declare herself his eternal mate.

I really feel bad that Aaliyah, whose acting ability had already been proven in *Romeo Must Die*, had to leave us with this film as her last. It is a true shame to see such promising talent being wasted on this trite piece.

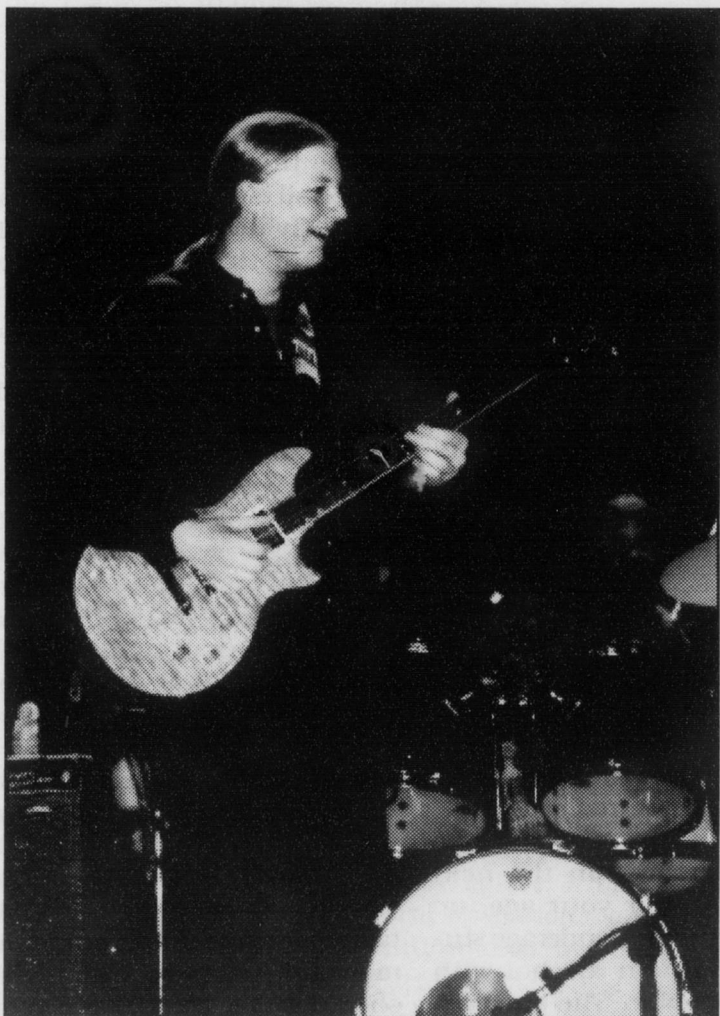
Also, where are all the characters that are supposed to be in these crucial scenes? Where is Louis? Where is Armand? They're in the novel - put them in the film! For this, we must blame the screen-writers: Scott Abbott and Michael Petroni.

I give this film only one star out of five; it's not even rental worthy.



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Don't let them fool you. This movie is nothing to get excited about.



PHIL HARALAM



PHIL HARALAM

On Saturday, February 23, the Derek Trucks Band performed in Dana Auditorium to an excited, costumed crowd. The Rude Mechanicals opened. Rumor has it that the event was scheduled as a birthday celebration for Union President Eric Leaf.



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