

XSTACY

Written by

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OVER BLACK:

"... We are leaving our time now. There are places where time moves more slowly than here. We all know all four directions, east, west, north, south. And we are also under the fifth direction, the vertical one, which is in us today, here."

- Robert Bly

FADE IN:

INT. XSTACY LAIR - NIGHT

Flickering neon lights flash over blood-stained bedsheets. Rope coils rest ominously on top. A BLACK "X" is tattooed across exposed flesh.

A man's hand, with GOLD RING on index finger, chest-down in frame, switches on a camcorder. The red REC light blinks. A fuzzy screen turns on.

CUT TO:

BLACK.

OVER BLACK: TITLE CARD: XSTACY (IN FLASHING NEON)

CUT TO:

INT. SHANICE'S STUDIO - DAY

An old fuzzy screen T.V plays a news-report on Logan's death.

We are in a small studio apartment: stripper pole, pink frills, scattered risqué attire. Morning light cuts through the blinds.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

A young actor found dead in his
Upper East Side home...

DETECTIVE HOWARD HORATIO (50s, grizzled), lies half asleep in bed. He's a man who's seen it all, done it all. Twice married, three times looked over for a promotion and had three too many beers last night.

SHANICE (30s, beautiful in a worn way) enters with coffee cups, paper bag, today's newspaper. Diner hostess by day, stripper by night-- and Horatio's escape.

She approaches Horatio, waking him up from his hangover.

SHANICE

Morning, cowboy.

Horatio sits up, his eyes heavy.

HORATIO

How you doin'? ...What you got
there?

SHANICE
Breakfast, sugah.

Hands him coffee and newspaper. She begins undressing for shower. Horatio divides attention between paper and Shanice.

SHANICE (CONT'D)
Why not read news on your phone
like normal people? So many apps
nowadays—

HORATIO
Habit. That's how I like it.

His eyes lock onto her, like a predator stalking its prey.

HORATIO (CONT'D)
Get over here.

SHANICE
Nuh...uh...uh. Gotta get ready for
work... (pointed) And so do you.

Horatio grumbles. Reaches for her arm, she dodges it. He nearly tumbles from bed. She laughs.

SHANICE (CONT'D)
I'll be in there...
(nods toward bathroom)
...If you want to join me.

Shanice saunters to bathroom. Horatio watches every step.

She disappears inside. He returns to the newspaper.

Headlines: "WHISPERS IN CHAINS" STAR, LOGAN STACY, FOUND DEAD
AT NYC PAD IN APPARENT DRUG FUELED SUICIDE."

Horatio shakes his head and tosses the paper to the floor.

On nightstand: used condom wrapper, POLICE BADGE, box of
MARLBORO REDS, a .45 AUTOMATIC. He pulls a cigarette, lights
it. Rises from bed in boxer briefs.

He moves to the window and watches the morning pedestrians.
Stretches his aging body and takes deep drag.

SHANICE (CONT'D)
(O.S.)
You joining me?

Before he can answer, his cell rings. He answers; it's CHIEF
HERNANDEZ (60, perpetually exhausted).

CHIEF HERNANDEZ
You up, Sleeping Beauty?

HORATIO
You gotta kiss me first.

HERNANDEZ
(chuckle)
You're up. Seen this "Stacy"
situation all over the news?

HORATIO
Yeah. What about it?

HERNANDEZ
It's your next assignment, "Capt."

HORATIO
Too early for jokes, Captain
Crunch.

HERNANDEZ
Dead serious. Johnson's on Turtruo.
Putting Hobbs on yours. This one's
all you.

HORATIO
I'm already neck-deep in the Jamila
Jordan case.

HERNANDEZ
Allison takes it. I need you on
this one. (beat) Look... I'm going
to level with you—you've been
striking out lately. This case gets
you back in the saddle. Back in
good standing.

HORATIO
This has "rich acting prick
couldn't handle fame" written all
over it. And sorry, Chief, but—

HERNANDEZ
After your last stunt, I had to
kiss my boss's boss ass to save
your job. That's 2 asses, if you're
keeping count.

HORATIO
And I appreciate it. Really.

HERNANDEZ

The D.A's office doesn't like rogue
detectives shooting suspects
without provocation. You're teaming
with Jackson. Don't let me down.

HORATIO

Chief...

HERNANDEZ

Have a good one, Ratio.

Line goes dead.

HORATIO

(grumble)

Already have a good one. Just need
a longer one.

Horatio grabs his wrinkled button-up. Throws it on. He opens
the bottom drawer of the nightstand. Removes a SMALL CHROME
DERRINGER and strap. He straps it onto his leg. Begins to
button his shirt.

SHANICE (O.S.)

(sing-song)

Where is my captain oh captain?

Horatio allows himself a smile. He unbuttons the shirt and
walks into bathroom.

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - DAY

A DSLR camera blinks red. Emma sits before it, visibly
annoyed. Crew bustle around her: lights, cables, mics. She
rubs a BAND-AID on her neck.

She rises from the seat, walks off.

PRODUCER

We're on in 5.

Emma nods. Leans against a wall. She makes a call.

EMMA

You there?

MAN

Yeah.

EMMA

Ugh. these things are torture.
Can't I just call a rain check?

MAN

(soft but firm)

Torture? Try being a political
prisoner or sitting through 3 hours
of company's Shakespeare show last
week. That's torture. You're doing
this interview, Em.

(beat)

It'll be over before you know it.

EMMA

I should be writing. I have to have
Draft one the company's "Sleeping
Beauty and the Seven Dwarfettes" by
the end of the week. Its a feminist
piece--

MAN

(chuckle)

Right right. You'll deliver. You
always do. Remember why you're
there?

EMMA

(somber)

To commemorate Logan.

MAN

Exactly. Now go.

He hangs up. She walks off.

CUT TO:

INT. SET - MOMENTS LATER

Emma is mic'd up. She taps the chair arm, nervous. Across
from her sits KALIMA "KEKE" WALKER (30s, sharp, in a power
suit), all charm and camera-ready smile.

In the background, a film poster featuring Logan is partly
obscured by a standing producer. His face hidden.

Emma stares at the poster - distracted - but Kalima literally
snaps her out of it.

KALIMA

We'll start light. Childhood,
favorite movies, that kind of
thing. Sound good?

EMMA
(small nod)
Yeah.

The producer leans into Kalima, whispers something. She grins. Turns to Emma.

KALIMA
Ready? And smile, hun.
(under breath)
This should be fun.

She fixes her hair. Emma forces a smile. The director signals. The red light blinks.

KALIMA (TO CAMERA) (CONT'D)
Welcome to *Star Access*. I'm your
host, Kalima "Keke" Walker, and
tonight we reflect on the tragic
passing of Logan Stacy...

INT. XSTACY LAIR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Ropes tighten around a bedpost. A young woman lies restrained. Chains rattle. Flickering neon reveals writhing shadows, breathless gasps, blurred bodies in motion.

KALIMA (V.O.)
... He shot to fame with 'Whispers
in Chains' - hailed as the next
James Dean. But a life of promise
ended in an overdose.

A luxurious table, designer drugs, snorting lines. Cameras flash.

KALIMA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Opioids found in his system. Ruled
a suicide... but fans believe
there's more to the story of the
rising star who's ascent ended too
soon.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - CONT.

Kalima resumes, facing Emma.

KALIMA

Emma DiMasco joins us today.
Daughter of legendary director-
producer, Salvatore DiMasco, who
helmed 'Whispers in Chains',
'Velvet Curtains', 'Payne Steele:
No Limits, No Payne' – all starring
Logan Stacy. Emma... how you
holding up?

EMMA

That was... quite the intro.
(beat)
Today's a good day, Keke. How are
you?

KALIMA

I'm great, all things considered.
And please – just Keke. You and
Logan – practically family, right?

EMMA

He was basically my brother.

KALIMA

Bubble baths and all?

EMMA

No! Nothing like that. Logan moved
in during his teens. He was
troubled. We gave him safety.

KALIMA

(joking)
Just teasing, hun. So – what was it
like growing up with Hollywood's
heartthrob?

EMMA

(laughs softly)
Overwhelming.
(beat)
But he was more than–

KALIMA

(interrupts, leans in)
What I really want to know is: Who
was Logan Stacy?

EMMA (TO CAMERA)

Logan was a superstar.

NOTE: Each time someone asks "Who was Logan Stacy?" or equivalent, the scene cuts to different characters breaking the fourth wall speaking directly into the camera.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY - FLASHBACK

Emma, Stan and LOGAN STACY (late 20s, wiry, brooding) sits at a table in the corner of a Mediterranean restaurant. Logan's superstar quality radiates from his charm, good looks and mercurial nature.

Stan sits in the corner seat, and there is someone sitting besides him, who is unseen (basically there is a anonymous person in this scene... and scenes to come. You're going to want to pay attention to this... as they say "the devil's in details").

EMMA

The people sitting next to me were throwing popcorn at me because I was laughing so hard!

LOGAN

Kev is hilarious.

STAN

Must be nice working with stars like Kevin Hart, huh?

LOGAN

Its honestly just like working with any other actor. They wake up in the morning just like you. They tie their shoes just like you. They even shit just like you.

STAN

But not every actor has the red carpet laid out in front of them everywhere they go. Or paparazzi hawking them everywhere they eat...

Paparazzi across the street flash photos of Logan.

LOGAN

And not every actor has what it take. Know what I mean?

(to Emma)

I feels like forever since I last saw you... or spoke to you.

EMMA

Yeah. It has.

Stan coughs. Off screen, the figure next to him coughs.

LOGAN

Sorry, I didn't have a chance to see your last performance. The awards circuit has been insane. I don't get a second for myself anymore. Anyways, how's the Smiley Center?

STAN

(corrects, grits his teeth)

Theater company. All sold out shows.

(softens)

Thanks to Em's great play-writing-

EMMA

(embarrassed)

You should really stop by to see us perform one of these days. I'll make sure to you comp tickets.

LOGAN

Sure. That'd be nice.

Emma's eyes shift to the figure. CU of Emma, their and now, our POV.

EMMA

You too...

CUT TO:

EXT. SHANICE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Horatio, now dressed. Holster on hip, newspaper under arm. Shanice wrapped in towel at doorway.

SHANICE

Sure I can't persuade you to stay, poppa?

HORATIO

I'll stop by later.

SHANICE

Promise?

Horatio kisses her. Brief, mechanical.

HORATIO
Cross my heart.

Shanice waves as he walks off. He examines the front page.

Dials a number... RING. RING.

Its goes to voicemail.

HORATIO (CONT'D)
Hey 'Lizabeth baby, it's daddy.
Just checking in. Hope things are
good with you and Steve. Tell your
mother I said hello. Love you...
bye.

HORATIO (CONT'D)
My little girl likes your movies.
(reading) "Drug fueled suicide".
(beat)
Maybe you can bring me back from
the dead, Logan Stacy. Just maybe.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH CONFESSION BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Darkness. Wood panels. Claustrophobic space. Horatio sits,
his shoulders hunched. On the other side, FATHER MICHAEL
(60s, neat appearance, eyes too kind for this world).

FATHER MICHAEL
Back again, Horatio?

HORATIO
Yeah. Can't remember the last time
we spoke, Father—

FATHER MICHAEL
Last week. And the week before
that. And the week—

HORATIO
I get it.
(lights cigarette)
Sorry, father. Mind if I light
this in here?

FATHER MICHAEL
For you Ratio, I'll make an
exception. When's the last time you
spoke to your daughter?

HORATIO
Can't honestly tell you.

FATHER MICHAEL
Try.

HORATIO
Like I've already told you—she
doesn't want anything to do with
me. I've called more times than I
can count. Won't speak to me...
meet me... nothin'.

FATHER MICHAEL
What are you going to do?

HORATIO
(hollow laugh)
That's why I pay you by the hour,
Father.

Silence hangs between them.

HORATIO (CONT'D)
What should I do?

FATHER MICHAEL
Go to God.

Horatio weighs this. Exhales.

HORATIO
Alright. Let's go.

FATHER MICHAEL
Please join me in this prayer—

They begin to pray. Their words fade beneath their breath.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOGAN'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Quiet, expensive NYC Upper East Side street. Elderly couple
shuffles past with their small dog.

Large, expensive modern beige townhouse. Clean lines. Cold architecture. Paparazzi camp outside, devouring candy bars, waiting for scraps.

Horatio sits in "BESSY," his beat-up old two-door. He stares at faded, crumpled photo with yellowed edges. A knock at the window startles him. JACKSON (30s, clean-cut, black, pressed suit) stands outside.

Horatio exits car. Spits cigarette onto pavement.

Jackson hands him coffee, thin manila envelope. Steam rises between them.

Horatio notices a blue forensics van parked directly outside.

HORATIO
Forensics already here.

JACKSON
Lilia and her team arrived after the call. You know how she is. Here's what we got on Stacy. It's a doozy.

HORATIO
Chief sure has a strange sense of humor.

Hands Jackson his newspaper.

JACKSON
Don't know how they print this stuff so fast. Quicker than my wife putting on her makeup.

They approach the door, Horatio knocks. ERNESTINA GUZMAN (60s, sporty, eyes that have seen too much) opens it. She is woman of Dominican Descent, her accent thick.

HORATIO
Detective Horatio, Special Investigations. This is Detective Jackson.

Flashes badge. Jackson nods.

ERNESTINA
I'm Ernestina. Come in.

Paparazzi surge forward. Their cameras flash, trying to glimpse inside.

Horatio and Jackson slip in.