

Western Stigmas

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Western Stigmas

by [RaisinFlames](#)

Summary

Once upon a time, in south-eastern USA, a little light was born...

(If extended, will comprise of: a span of numerous pop culture flavors and moods, an ensemble cast of original characters, liberal takes on the TLOU universe, the ghetto life, the not-so-ghetto life, pseudo-sci-fi, small talk over wheezing chairs, global conspiracies with Big Red Buttons, and dragons. Just kidding. No dragons.)

[Trigger Warning: potential language/slurs]

Notes

May be continued into a longer work.

"....that's my name. What's yours?"

Rustle.

Rustle-rustle.

"Hey."

"What?"

"Hold on up, hold on. Look at that."

"Move your damn shoulder outta the way."

"How 'bout you drink some damn milk for once?"

"Milk doesn't have one bit to do with height, Everett, you idiotic nincompoop, you and I can both attest to -- well, I'll be damned."

"Is that..."

"That's... yeah, I think..."

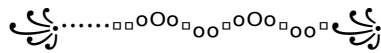
"We pro'lly don't need to be stayin' for this."

"Yeah, you right. Let's move.."

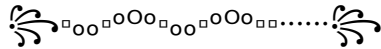
Rustle-rustle.

Rustle.

Whooooosh.....



0.1: Dresden Avenue



SPLASH!

A face, wet as the Atlantic, emerged from blue shimmers. "Hoo-hooly crap, that's cold!" Both shoulders were clasped.

"Hahahah," one burbling head drifted past. "You shoulda seen the look on you, it was so funny!"

"Shut up!" snapped boy one.

"You shut up." Boy two slugged a lame avalanche of water his way in response.

Electricity generating in one, two...

"Oh boo-ooy," swished a flash of dark-brown hair. Their tango aptly interrupted.

One slide of the door led way to naked footsteps. Another voice trembled into the air. Rosy. Yet unmistakably of a boy. A rosy boy.

"Um..." Blink. "Uh..." Swallow. "Dane?" Blink blink. "D-do I really have to...."

At the other end of his unfinished quest was a boy's swinging arm, slicing the air. "Come on, Clyde!" Splash! "It's only water! In a pool! Nothing, like, crazy or anything!"

"B-b-b-b-but I--"

Suddenly, without warning, the jittering boy was shoved inside, hurling tender-arm-first into swirls of blue. Beyond the midst of his flailing arms were the gasps and cackles of the surrounding pool and poolside, decked as it were in casually festive arraignments: the ever-classic Foreman grill, patio chairs, tidily maintained hedges, a row of plastic chairs and umbrella-equipped tables. Some sat and munched on a hotdog; others were strolling down the side of the active watering hole; some chatted on foot.

But the majority of the crowd were confined inside, in the two-story, square and typical suburban house of this century's turning -- not by force, physical or unseen. But by... well....

"YEEAH-HAAAGH!"

"THAT! THAT is why I love this game!!" A moustached, big-boned man lifted up his chicken leg as if a toast to the one above.

"Oh, come on, Horace, sit down, you're going to drop your food all over the carpet."

"Woman--" Before he could form a comeback, everyone had already taken to laughter. The grumbling man planted his butt back on his trademark spot on the sofa, eyes on the TV screen.

It was a good TV. A forty-something inch, flatscreen, HD. It matched the rug.

That's what Duncan always said.

It really, really matched that rug.

Concurrently, down the block at who-knew-where, on who-knew-what, who knew when. Wheels were rolled and pedals were pushed to little avail. Words were parlayed. Forehead wrinkles curled. Pointer fingers pointed.

In the house, a menage of cheers rattled the glassed windows.

"YEAAH! THAT'S IT, JASON!"

"TOUCHDOWN, baby!"

"That's our J."

A pointer finger was lobbed out a car window. "Over there, isn't that the chunky treehouse thing? The one they were talking about?"

"I don't know!"

"For god's sake Bea--"

"That--there! That road over there!"

"No, that's not it! He said by the big yellow sign!"

"Yeah, there it is, see?"

"Ohho crap, the one the dog's peeing on!"

"Ooh-ooh, right there right there right there, that's the street, Heath!"

"Wha--"

Another voice sliced through. "Saint Drive, Olympic Avenue, Dresden Avenue... yeah. Yeah, that's the one!"

"Nice eye, Anna," sounded one from the back.

"Could I get the stickers now?"

A chorus of no's promptly followed.

Snicker. "They rejected you!"

"Nobody cares about me," grumbled the disgruntled girl.

"Just turn right here, Heath. Here." Bea rapped her knuckle rapidly against the car door.

"Wow, Bea, you're such a genius."

"Don't you even think about it." The punk-haired girl punched their designated driver in the arm. "Or I ain't giving no board to no-body."

The slick-haired charmer boy switched on his blinker. "Oh--ok, Bea, really? Really, Bea?"

Toothy grin. "Shut up and drive, then."

Pulling her head back in from out the window, the previously road-watching girl moved some hair out of her line of sight. "Outside, people, take it outside!"

"Oh, Jenn, where have you been?"

Jenn leaned forward, donning a hard stare, before suddenly whipping out a water bottle and flicking some of its contents at Bea's face.

The van erupted into a noisy blur of laughter and shouts. Heath swung the wheels a hard right and sent a pile of rocks ricocheting against an adjacent fence.

"Any of you mess up the van and it's comin' out of *your* wallets!" his voice failed to rise above the pulmonary chaos behind him.

All but for Aaron, who decided to chime up at that moment. "I don't have a wallet, Heath!"

"Not you, Aaron," sighed mister driver.

"So I can mess it up then?"

"Very funny," Heath gritted.

This caused the boy to giggle, joined by Anna, the eavesdropper. Meanwhile, Bea and Jenn somehow found more miscellaneous objects to throw at each other, as Theresa tried to break them up. In the very back, a snore no one even remembered was there crudely transmuted into a gargle. Followed by a slight creak, blending into the quilt of noise. Up sat a heavy-eyed young lady, lips warped into a yawn, before she looked around and asked to no one in particular: "Where are we?"

"We're here!" like a pair of bells, Aaron and Anna harmonized just as Heath shifted the gear to park.

A splotch of air escaped the boy's lips. Wet-haired, dripping. But fashionably content. "Ahh. Thanks, Lyle's sister."

"Thanks, Lyle's sister," exhaled the one next to him.

"Yeah," winked the third, lifting his Caprisun in gratitude. "thanks, Lyle's sister."

Lyle's sister rolled her eyes, and set the now empty serving dish on one of the outdoor tables. "Speaking of Lyle, you boys seen him anywhere?"

A triple shake of the head followed.

"Got it," came her half-sarcastic drawl. "Thanks. Oh--" she stopped. "And tell Dane to throw his away when he comes back, will you? No trashing the place."

"Yes, Lyle's sister!"

Scuttled laughter.

As the older girl turned and left, one of them asked in a harried whisper who had been the one to push them inside the pool. The other two pointed at the retreating figure, and the boy sheepishly returned to sipping out of his already wrinkling juice packet.

Once she'd stepped back inside, she was met with a strew of gag jokes and greetings. Being the veteran socializer she was, Monica replied to them all with a handy face before finding her indoor slippers and jouncing up the stairwell.

A handy-dandy stairwell. Just like said face.

'Twas what Dad would always say.

Handy-dandy stairwell. Handy-dandy face.

Passing by one framed picture after the other, Monica finally reached the top. As she made for the door to her brother's room, a gaggle of muffled laughter could be heard behind one of the others. One curled hand ball later, she knocked on the wood slab before her.

A few non-responsive seconds after that, she sighed, twisted the knob, and pushed it open.

"Lyle, hey, Mom wants you to get the big yellow lights from the garage." Monica took one deliberated step forward. "Lyle?"

Not completely out of whack for a young, just-turned-man's bedroom, the walls were awash with posters and accessories of musical and grungy origin alike. On the flipside, there was also a case of books against one, and some eccentric artpieces -- including a picture of Albert Einstein painted in the style of Mona Lisa with a 2D picture of a pie in front of his face. A desk accompanied by a clean-kept, black monitor and computer set-up was located by the window. The floor, meanwhile, had a smattering of this-or-that's, including some other books, a 25-lb dumbbell or two, papers for who can guess. But it wasn't all messy. The bed was perfectly fine. Ruby-red sheets and still plump pillow neatly adorning the mattress below.

Atop it, a young, just-turned-man, was flipping through a laminated-paged book.

"Lyle!"

The bed-sitter turned his head back, visually acknowledged the girl at the door, and returned it forward. He continued to flip through the pages below for an interim. Then, finally, he closed it, checked his cellphone, and stood to his feet.

"Let's get those lights," he nodded to Monica on the way out.

Scoffing, Monica went after him. "'Let's?'"

The door was left open behind them. Below, the murmur continued, bubbled and bustled and muddled with the kind of vigor only limited time can turn precious. Rays of sun were drawn in through the window, past the softly billowing curtain. Lighting a ridge on the wall. Dancing shades across the bedsheets. A vased flower, somehow not out-of-place, revealed a brighter hue of orange with one sliver of its distant burn. As the sun splayed its glow across the room, they fell over the book Lyle set on the bed. The title so reading,

'Oak Photo Album,
Years 2003-2006.'

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