

WARLOCKS

Pilot: "The Fall"

By Danny Homan

Logline: Kasmer Strout is next-in-line to the High Seat until a murder unravels his plans, forcing him to seek unlikely allies in a battle against power-hungry rivals.

60-minute Fantasy Drama
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TEASER

INT. ESTATE - BALLROOM - NIGHT

A party's afoot. A jazz trio plays 40s while couples whirl about a packed dance floor. By all appearances, a perfectly normal soirée at the estate of a person of influence.

INT. ESTATE - BAR - NIGHT

PARTYGOERS stare at a man, leaning against the bar, mid 30s, eyes closed. He wears a dress jacket, dress shirt, slacks. And he's motionless as a mannequin. Meet KASMER STROUT.

PARTYGOER #1

Is this where the tour starts?

PARTYGOER #2

Think so.

PARTYGOER #1

Who's that?

PARTYGOER #2

The guide.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOARDWALK [KASMER'S MIND] - NIGHT

A crackling storm, impossibly fierce, stretches across the ocean, threatening to consume the eerily empty boardwalk. A Ferris wheel provides the only light.

Kasmer gazes at the Ferris wheel, floating in the sky. He leaps back suddenly as a GREAT WHITE SHARK rips through the wood planks, nearly swallowing him whole, shoots straight into the sky.

An ice bolt rockets from Kasmer's hands, striking the Shark's tail just before it reaches its apex, becoming an instant ice cube. Tail-first, the Shark plummets.

INTERCUT ESTATE BAR/BOARDWALK [KASMER'S MIND]

A CURIOUS MAN checks his phone, pockets it impatiently, breaks from the crowd. He approaches Kasmer.

CURIOUS MAN

Excuse me, is the tour starting soon? It's after --

The Great White Shark SMASHES into the boardwalk, transforming instantly into ADI, 20s, legs still encased in a block of ice.

The Curious Man examines Kasmer, statue-still, facial expression betraying nothing of what's in his mind. A faint blue aura surrounds Kasmer.

Adi springs up into a defensive position. Smirks. Kasmer glances behind him, narrowly dodging the left hook of a sombrero-wearing SNOWMAN made entirely out of dark blue ice.

The Curious Man inspects Kasmer's jacket as a BARTENDER arrives, drink in hand, shaking his head knowingly as the Curious Man reaches out to touch Kasmer. On impact, the blue aura quickly covers the Curious Man's body and --

-- Suddenly, he's on the boardwalk as Kasmer battles a Snowman. The Curious Man falls back over a block of ice, eyes full of terror as the Shark leaps out of the water, barreling towards Kasmer, who ducks at the last moment. The Shark's great maw takes the Snowman's arm off.

The Snowman points at the Curious Man, then transforms into SERGIO, 20s. The Shark skids to a halt, becoming Adi.

ADI

Almost had you.

KASMER

Almost. How's the arm, Sergio?

The Snowman transforms into SERGIO, late 20s.

SERGIO

Fine. Anyone want snow cones?

BARTENDER (O.S.)

(distant)

Your drink is ready, Mr. Strout.

Kasmer approaches the cowering Curious Man. Extends a hand.

KASMER

You must be here for the tour!

SMASH TO TITLE: WARLOCKS

END OF TEASER

ACT 1INT. ESTATE BAR - NIGHT

Kasmer's eyes spring open. He takes a sip of whiskey.

KASMER

Hello, everyone! A quick reminder before we get started. For your own safety, please do not touch strangers! Perhaps a demonstration is in order. They say curiosity killed the cat.

A slender blue light extends from Kasmer's brow, like a magical fishing line, connecting to the Curious Man. As the blue aura forms around the Curious Man, he freezes. The crowd GASPS. Kasmer winks. Freezes.

CUT TO:

INT. BLACK EXPANSE [KASMER'S MIND]

Kasmer stands opposite the Curious Man.

KASMER

You are a cat!

The Curious Man looks down at his arms, now paws. He feels his long, full whiskers. He opens his mouth to say:

INT. ESTATE - BAR - NIGHT

The Curious Man's eyes open.

CURIOUS MAN

Meow.

KASMER

Mr. Cat, would you hand me my drink? These fine folk have been waiting for a tour, and I really shouldn't keep them any longer.

The Curious Man presents Kasmer the whiskey, then falls to all fours, MEOWING and PURRING to the crowd's delight.

KASMER (CONT'D)

My name is Kasmer Strout, and I am a Warlock.

(MORE)

KASMER (CONT'D)

I can reach into minds and control people with my thoughts. Oh, shit. Right... one moment, please!

Kasmer sets the glass down, closes his eyes, freezes. A moment later, the aura disappears. The Curious Man wakes, on all fours and licking his hand. He gets to his feet abruptly as the crowd APPLAUDS.

KASMER (CONT'D)

Welcome to Reavan, a magical kingdom that Wikipedia doesn't dare document! No major airline can fly to Reavan. Not even Delta.

Kasmer gestures for the group to follow him to a wall with a WORLD MAP, with lines drawn from most countries to a strange, other-world location labeled "REAVAN."

KASMER (CONT'D)

Now you're wondering -- where is Reavan? After World War 2, our Founders bought, bartered, and stole slices of your countries to make ours, sewn together by magic so ancient and secret I'm not allowed to finish this sentence!

BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

He leads the group past partygoers and dancing couples, snapping his fingers to the lively jazz band.

KASMER

For decades, our countries have known peace, thanks to a simple but effective truce. You don't try to nuke us into the Stone Age, and we won't make your leaders think they're cats!

A SERVER passes by. Kasmer picks off an hors d'oeuvres effortlessly as he continues the tour without missing a beat.

KASMER (CONT'D)

Before we continue, I should make one thing clear about Warlocks. We do not make pacts with the devil. Like you, the only unholy pact I maintain is with Amazon Prime.

Other guests whisper as Kasmer waltzes by like a movie star.

KASMER (CONT'D)

Did you know Reavan has the highest immigration rate per capita in the world? Take that, Americans!

The group follow as Kasmer dances around various statues.

KASMER (CONT'D)

Which brings us to why you are here. Renowned artists. Preeminent scientists. Uh... politicians! Together, we will ensure continued peace and prosperity between our nations.

Kasmer pauses next to the statue of a REGAL WOMAN.

KASMER (CONT'D)

This is Vera Esler, who gave her life defending us against the Vellum Sai. Made a diabolical mojito. She will be missed.

Kasmer approaches a stairway, where a statue of a stern-looking man stares down at the group.

KASMER (CONT'D)

And her husband, Andre Esler, your host for the evening. If not for the Eslers, we wouldn't all be standing here tonight.

Kasmer's phone RINGS: Erik Satie's GNOSSIENNE #3 plays. He silences the phone without checking the caller ID. He ascends a few stairs and spins with dramatic flourish.

KASMER (CONT'D)

Speak of the devil! I'm afraid this is where our tour concludes. Enjoy yourself, and welcome to Reavan!

SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kasmer leaves the crowd and ascends the stairs, heading down a hallway, breaking out into a brief jog. As he nears, a door opens, revealing a room with a poker table. At the far end sits ANDRE ESLER, 60s.

Esler and Kasmer stare at each other, dead-faced, for just a moment. Esler smiles warmly, gesturing for Kasmer to enter. The doors close.

INT. POKER ROOM - NIGHT

A Howard Miller poker table. Kasmer sits opposite Esler, more worn down and less regal than his statue depicted. At the table are the other members of Esler's Inner Circle:

- ANU NAIR, 40s, a Cigar-smoking businesswoman, scrolls through stock indexes on her phone amid cigar puffs.

- DANIELLE CLEMENT, 50s, KGB-esque. A glass of iced tea beside her. Meticulously dries her hand with a cloth napkin.

- GENERAL BENJAMIN PROST, 40s, a blond Orson Wells still in his prime. Prost tosses a red chip into the pot confidently.

PROST

All I'm saying is that if the Sai come back, we should be ready for them.

KASMER

Come on, General. Just how long are you going to keep beating that mushroom drum of yours?

PROST

I didn't say nukes.

Kasmer grins.

KASMER

Now you did. We've settled this already, Ben. Let it go.

PROST

What do you know, Strout? Your speeches didn't win the war.

KASMER

No, they didn't. Vera won the war.

Prost plucks a few grapes from a nearby fruit bowl.

KASMER (CONT'D)

If you want to distract from your terrible hand, Ben -- just pop a few more grapes into that cavernous maw of yours. I'd wager you can easily fit another twenty.

PROST

Behave yourself, little man.

Prost glares at Kasmer. Kasmer flashes a smile.

Clement and Nair exchange looks. They've seen this ritual play out before. Esler stares off, somewhere else entirely.

KASMER

At ease, General. I'm just having a little fun. This is a party. We're supposed to be having fun, aren't we?

(beat)

Well, that was unpleasant. I just imagined what you do for fun, Ben. It involved a pineapple and -- on second thought, never mind. I shall suffer that image alone!

Prost rises from his seat, ready to tear Kasmer apart.

CLEMENT

Sit down, Prost. You're not seriously recommending we acquire a nuclear weapon, are you?

PROST

I didn't say nukes.

KASMER

I heard him say nukes. Just a minute ago. Didn't you all?

PROST

You never take anything seriously, Kasmer. And someday, that's going to be your downfall.

Nair puts her cards down, ashes, re-lights her cigar.

NAIR

Too rich even for my blood. I fold.

CLEMENT

I fold as well.

Kasmer places his cards face down on the table.

KASMER

Have the pot, Ben. I'm bored taking your money, anyway.

PROST

Running away as usual.

KASMER

Strategic retreat. A lesson you never quite learned.

Prost's face flushes. Nair chews her cigar. Clement raises her eyes. Esler stares into a glass of whiskey.

KASMER (CONT'D)

On second thought, General -- Come get a drink with me. We'll hash out our policy differences over a piña colada. No, wait, pineapple, that's the forbidden fruit. And I depart!

As Kasmer heads for the coat rack, Esler pulls him in.

ESLER

(a whisper)

I need to speak to you later.

Kasmer nods solemnly. Composes himself. He summons a roguish grin, grabs his jacket, and leaves the room.

INT. ESTATE - 2ND FLOOR BANNISTER - NIGHT

Kasmer pauses, overlooking the ballroom. Below, all sorts of partygoers fill the room: dignitaries, guests young and old, drinking, eating, chatting, and dancing.

A small crowd surrounds the Curious Man who Kasmer enchanted earlier. The Curious Man points out Kasmer to the others. Kasmer waves half-heartedly. Looks back at the poker room, then to the door leading to a balcony.

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

A slender blue line connects Kasmer's brow to the doorknob. Then a faint aura emanates from the door. Satisfied, Kasmer leans against a balcony and gazes at the Estate grounds.

SECURITY GUARDS stand as guests step out of luxury cars, passing an illuminated fountain on the way to the party. In the fountain's center are statues of two women and a man, the FOUNDERS of Reavan

Past the fountain is a dense FOREST, set on a hilltop. No light permeates the Forest, but there's something strange about it.

There's a slender halo from the twinkling lights of REAVAN below, nestled between the folds of two mountains. Beyond the city is a bay, sparkling with the intensity of a starry sky.

KASMER

Is that what you want to talk
about, old man? Where I will lead
Reavan when you finally step down?

Below, there's a COMMOTION as guards begin to YELL.

EXT. ESTATE FOUNTAIN - NIGHT

A MAN sprints past the fountain, vaulting across the hood of an oncoming car. He runs towards a lone road leading from the Estate into the darkness of the Forest.

Two GUARDS pursue, pushing past guests who turn to gossip.

The man darts to the left of a line of cars stopped at the narrow road. He pauses. The road or the Forest? He chooses the Forest. As the man nears towards the forest's edge, the guards slow their pursuit, then stop chasing him.

EXT. FOREST'S EDGE - NIGHT

The man sprints towards the forest's edge. Then slows to a halt and looks up, face bathed in a soft blue light.

The Forest comes alive. Branches unfurl. Flowers bloom. The blooming flowers send the man to his hands and knees. Blue light covers him. He sits down, cross-legged, mesmerized.

The man begins to LAUGH, rich laughter that echoes throughout the grounds. The guards arrive at the laughing man. A slight blue protective aura now surrounds them.

They pick the man up and drag him back towards the fountain. The man continues to laugh until out of the forest's light. Then he begins to sob.

EXT. ESTATE BALCONY - NIGHT

A KNOCK at the door draws Kasmer's attention. Clement, two drinks in hand, stands on the other side of the glass. Kasmer dispels the blue aura and opens the door for her.

KASMER

Fanta? Daniel, you shouldn't have.

Clement keeps the Fanta, hands Kasmer a brandy.

CLEMENT

Nicely done in there. I swear,
Prost will be the death of us all.

KASMER

Not if I can help it. Did Esler
send you to check up on me?

CLEMENT

No. I just needed some fresh air.

KASMER

Sure you don't want a brandy? It's
quite good.

CLEMENT

I'm sure it is. The French minister
gave Esler the bottle.

KASMER

Is the Minister still trying to get
his son into the Oaken Trials?

CLEMENT

That, or he wants our help with the
Vellum Sai.

Kasmer breaks eye contact and gazes out at the Forest.

KASMER

The Sai. Five years, Daniel -- it's
time to move on. That's what Vera
wanted. The Sai are finished.

CLEMENT

Prost would have us believe
differently.

KASMER

Of course he would. Not much use
for the military these days.

CLEMENT

You're not concerned by the rumors?

KASMER

Oh Daniel, can't you ever relax?

CLEMENT

It's not one of my strengths.

KASMER

Could some of the Sai survived?
Perhaps. But what chance do they
have?

CLEMENT

I just wanted to see where you stood, Kasmer. Disturbing your night wasn't my intention.

KASMER

I know. But we won the war, Daniel. And lost Vera in the process. Her sacrifice can't be in vain. Now we have to keep the peace. I'm going to need your help in the coming years. Let's make them profitable ones, for both of us.

CLEMENT

I'd like that.

The two cheers. Clement turns to leave.

KASMER

Enjoy the evening, Daniel.

CLEMENT

I shall try.

INT. ESTATE - BALLROOM - NIGHT

Waiters make the rounds with hors d'oeuvres. Kasmer descends the stairs, navigating through sycophants and well-wishers.

Nair is on a lounge sofa away from the dance floor with some BUSINESS GUESTS. She excuses herself, joining Kasmer.

KASMER

My favorite finance minister. How's business, Nair?

NAIR

Robust. You're looking for Esler. Haven't seen him since the game. You still think tonight's the night he gives you the nod?

KASMER

Less so with each passing minute.

NAIR

Chin up, kiddo. If you were a stock, I'd still invest.

KASMER

How comforting. Enjoy your dealings.

Kasmer moves through the crowd, accepting more nods as he approaches Adi and Sergio, entertaining some DIGNITARIES.

SERGIO

...Which brings us to the story of our Founders, Rhie, Fiala, Karst -- each seeking refuge after the War

ADI

Offering their services in exchange for small, unused portions of their countries.

SERGIO

Stitching together patches of land one at a time --

KASMER (O.S.)

Until the Patchwork Kingdom was born. Everyone enjoying themselves?

The crowd breaks into APPLAUSE. Kasmer shakes hands.

DIGNITARY

Absolutely, Mr. Strout.

(leans in)

I look forward to working with you.

A YOUNG BOY whispers to an OLDER WOMAN.

YOUNG BOY

Who's that?

OLDER WOMAN

The next leader of Reavan.

Kasmer finishes his rounds, then turns to Sergio and Adi.

SERGIO

Hey, boss. Don't mind us, just doing your job.

KASMER

I was busy drinking.

ADI

Any word?

KASMER

Not yet. He's giving a...

Across the ballroom, a LITTLE GIRL is just about to touch two warlocks, RUDDS (male, 50s) and BOJET (woman, 30s), their frozen faces contorted in monstrously-angry expressions.

KASMER (CONT'D)
Excuse us, please. Adi, Sergio.
Come with me.

Kasmer races towards the little girl, catching her just as she's about to make contact.

KASMER (CONT'D)
No no, we mustn't touch strangers!

LITTLE GIRL
What are they doing?

KASMER
Dueling.

This turns a few heads. People crowd around Kasmer.

KASMER (CONT'D)
Just part of the always
unpredictable, always exciting
magical land we call Reavan!

He points to the Warlocks, as though museum exhibits.

KASMER (CONT'D)
Yes, ladies and gentlemen. While
these two may appear to be sweaty
mannequins, the telltale sign of
dueling is the dilation of their
pupils. There... and there.

Kasmer moves around the duelers.

KASMER (CONT'D)
Within one's mind, time operates at
roughly one-twentieth ours. Meaning
an hour of dueling would run --

LITTLE GIRL
Three minutes.

KASMER
Very good! An hour in the mind
equals your average pop song! Right
now, these two are using every
ounce of their imaginations to gain
control over the other. So, keep
your distance. One moment.

Kasmer pulls Sergio and Adi aside.

SERGIO
Doesn't seem to be a friendly duel.

KASMER

It's not. That's Desmond
Rudds, winner of last year's Oaken
Trials. Which makes her Nisha
Bojet, the runner-up.

ADI

Bad time for a rematch.

KASMER

Yes. If someone drops dead during
Esler's party, I'm certain he'll be
miffed. So, who volunteers to go in
there and stop them?

ADI

I've got a cold. Could be
allergies, but why chance it?

SERGIO

I'm drunk.

KASMER

I walk amongst heroes.

He turns to the crowd, brandishing an entertainer's smile.

KASMER (CONT'D)

Duels can be quite unpredictable
and dangerous, but seeing as this
is a party -- how would you like
front row seats to a duel?

The crowd backs away. Kasmer sends a knowing glance to Sergio
and Adi. Then two guests volunteer, as well as the Curious
Man from the start of the tour.

KASMER (CONT'D)

You again? So be it. Gather around!

A blue line spreads from his brow. One-by-one, the volunteers
freeze. Kasmer grins at Sergio and Adi. Freezes.

END OF ACT 1