

THE GUARDIAN (2025)  
PILOT: DREAM A LITTLE DREAM

Written by

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Draft completed:

Based on:

The Guardian (2016)

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FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The trees are tall. Still. Shadowed in moonlight.

A gentle breeze rustles through the branches, carrying faint whispers of nature.

We push through the treeline slowly – deliberate, like something watching.

Ahead, tucked deep within the woods:

EXT. LOG CABIN - CONTINUOUS

A weathered cabin, quiet and remote. A flicker of life inside.

Candlelight glows from the windows – soft, golden, and still.

The breeze reaches the cabin, brushing the porch. A chime swings faintly.

A moment of peace... too perfect.

We hold on the windows.

Inside, shadows move. The sound of a typewriter: CLACK. CLACK. CLACK.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

A steaming mug. It reads: "Universe's Best Writer." A hand lifts it.

THE WRITER (70s+), bearded, white-haired, glasses. Calm. Composed. Back to us.

He sips, sits at a weathered typewriter.

CLACK. CLACK. CLACK. He types with energy. Purpose. A faint smile forms.

THE WRITER  
(to self)  
That's what I am talking about!

Framed photo nearby: him, a woman, and a young boy. 1970s. Sunshine, peace.

Typing stops.

He slides the page out – the title:

“THE GUARDIAN GUIDEBOOK...”

He places it beneath a stack of pages. Seals it in a thick brown book.

He walks to a wooden, house-shaped mailbox mounted on the wall and posts it inside.

He exhales. We see his breath – icy. He freezes. Something's wrong.

THE WRITER (CONT'D)

(softly)

What are you...? You're not welcome here.

ANGLE: DOORWAY

A SHROUDED FIGURE stands in the shadows. Smoky. Timeless.

SHROUDED FIGURE

But here I am writer.

The Writer stays calm.

THE WRITER

The typewriter won't work for you.  
It only responds to us.

SHROUDED FIGURE

(laughs)

Us?

(beat)

No. Soon you will be the only one left.

THE WRITER

What do you want?

SHROUDED FIGURE

I want to mix up the story a little.

(sighs)

Things have been... Stale. Time for a mix up I say.

THE WRITER

You won't win. They will know. They will come.

## SHROUDED FIGURE

Oh let them. They won't find us.  
I've been planning this for a  
while, I know, what I need to do.

The figure floats. Lifts. Begins whispering – arcane,  
seductive.

The Writer winces. His hands move against his will. He's  
pulled to the typewriter. Sits.

His eyes turn milky white.

CLACK. CLACK. CLACK. He types feverishly.

INSERT - PAPER:

"There is no plan for anything."

The Shrouded Figure grins. Taps him on the shoulder.

## SHROUDED FIGURE (CONT'D)

Now, let's go. Take the typewriter,  
we have work to do.

The Writer obeys. He lifts the typewriter. Follows.

As they exit – the Shrouded Figure's laugh echoes, warping  
space.

FADE TO BLACK:

## THE GUARDIAN

FADE IN:

EXT. ISOLATED BEACH - DAY

A sprawling, wind-whipped shoreline. Peaceful. Bleak.  
Somewhere on the edge of everything.

Lying in the sand, half-dressed, a belt still loosely around  
his neck – GRIMLEY (40s) stirs. Disoriented. Breath shaky. He  
bolts upright, feeling his throat.

## GRIMLEY

What the f--

## ARTURO (O.S.)

Ah, good morning, Mr. Party  
Animal... Looks like you went all  
in last night!

Grimley turns. A man in 70s flares and a trilby leans on a cane with too much swagger for a funeral. This is ARTURO (50s) – somewhere between disco and divine intervention.

GRIMLEY

I- I...

ARTURO

Don't know where you are? Don't know who you are?

GRIMLEY

Yeah.

(beat)

Wait, how did you know --?

ARTURO

(grins)

Happens to everyone. Right after they die.

Grimley freezes. Eyes wide. Wind knocked from his soul.

GRIMLEY

Say what?

ARTURO

Die. Pass on. Kick the bucket. Bite the celestial dust. Take your pick sunshine – point is, you've just shifted off your mortal coil.

Arturo plops beside him, unbothered by the weight of eternity.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

Come on now. Don't be glum. Happens to the best of us. Even a few of the worst.

He smiles at Grimley.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

How about a cuppa?

Arturo snaps his fingers, then -

FLASH TO:

INT. SEASIDE CAFE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Sun pours in through the windows. Locals chatter over bacon and beans. Grimley and Arturo sit at a window-side table.

Grimley scans the room – the glares from patrons, the normalcy. Then back to Arturo.

GRIMLEY

How'd you –

ARTURO

Celestial powers duh!

A waitress drops off two coffees. Smiles at Arturo. Glares at Grimley like he smells of disappointment.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

Oh, right – wardrobe. You still  
look like death warmed up and hung  
out to dry.

SNAP. Grimley is suddenly in a devil onesie.

GRIMLEY

Really?

ARTURO

Sorry, couldn't resist.

SNAP. Grimley is now dressed, decent – annoyed, also confused.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

There we go. Much better.  
(beat, sips coffee)  
So, I guess you have -- questions?

GRIMLEY

Who Am I?  
(beat, looks around)  
And just what the hell is going on?

ARTURO

(matter of fact)  
Okay, so rule one, no memory lane.  
It helps with what comes next.

GRIMLEY

Okay so who are you? Besides a  
Saturday Night Fever reject.

ARTURO

Me, I'm Arturo. Arturo Kennedy-  
Caine. You can think of me as  
your... case worker. Here to help  
you unlive up to your potential.

Grimley lets it sink in. He sips his coffee. It tastes like disbelief.

GRIMLEY  
So, is this heaven?

ARTURO  
No. This is like a waiting station,  
a place where souls can meet. You  
don't get heaven. Not yet anyway.

GRIMLEY  
(deadpan)  
I don't get heaven?

ARTURO  
No. But we're getting to that. So,  
going forward, you're now Grimley.

GRIMLEY  
Grimley?

ARTURO  
Yeah. It's different and I like it.  
Plus I can't go around calling you  
"no name" can I ?

GRIMLEY  
No. I guess not.

ARTURO  
So, I want to offer you a job  
Grimley.

GRIMLEY  
A job?

ARTURO  
Yeah, well you were kind of an ass  
in life. And you didn't have a set  
belief, no religion, no faith, not  
even in yourself.

(beat)  
But, the universe does like a good  
redemption arc.

GRIMLEY  
Wow, waking up on a beach to this.  
Real lucky break so far.

ARTURO  
Ah come on Grimley, worse things  
happen to lesser men.

(beat)  
(MORE)

ARTURO (CONT'D)

Now, I don't have much time — and  
neither do you.

SNAP.

FLASH TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

Grimley suddenly blinks into a bustling woodland park walkway  
— MID-STRIDE — flanked by families, cyclists, and joggers.

GRIMLEY

(startled)

Oh what the—?!

A WOMAN walks straight through his chest. Grimley flinches.

GRIMLEY (CONT'D)

Alright! Personal space!

Arturo is already beside him, calmly sipping coffee.

ARTURO

Told you — teleportation's snappier  
when you don't see it coming.

GRIMLEY

She walked through me.

ARTURO

(rolls eyes)

Yes Grimley. You're dead. It's  
going to happen a lot now.

They move through the park. A GUARDIAN in business attire  
trails a businessman on a Bluetooth headset. He scribbles  
glowing notes into thin air, clocks Arturo, and immediately  
nods in respect.

GUARDIAN

Mr. Caine.

ARTURO

Douglas. He still pretending not to  
cheat his taxes?

GUARDIAN

(walking on)

You know it. Real piece of work  
this one.



GRIMLEY

Are we ghosts or just extremely  
niche stalkers?

ARTURO

We're Guardians. We watch. We  
guide. We don't haunt — this isn't  
a Charles Dickens book.

Another PEDESTRIAN walks right through Grimley.

GRIMLEY

Ah come on! I'm not a bloody  
turnstile!

ARTURO

You're in the in-between. They  
can't see you...

(beat)

Well, couple of minor exceptions.  
Most can't even feel you.

A TEENAGER sneezes and shivers as she passes through him.

Grimley looks to Arturo, who shrugs.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

Exception to the rule.

They pass a GUARDIAN in a trench coat muttering Latin under  
his breath while following a skateboarder. He gives Arturo a  
deep, reverent nod.

GRIMLEY

You have fans?

ARTURO

No. I trained most of them. I've  
been doing this a while.

Grimley looks Arturo up and down.

GRIMLEY

Yeah, you can't tell.

ARTURO

Listen to me. You are here because  
you were a disaster, with huge  
potential.

They keep moving. Grimley watches people live their lives,  
oblivious.

GRIMLEY

So, we the afterlives version of neighborhood watch?

ARTURO

Something like that.

GRIMLEY

And what exactly are we watching out for?

ARTURO

Every person, a different melody. The universe shifts – we keep the song in tune.

GRIMLEY

What knocks the song out of tune?

A DEPRESSED MAN walks by, behind him a demonic creature, BUB, dressed in a longtail suit, rides a unicycle making notes in a book follows.

GRIMLEY (CONT'D)

Never mind.

ARTURO

No.

(to demon)

Morning Bub.

BUB

Morning A.

ARTURO

(to Grimley)

Grimley, everything has its place. Good and evil. There is a plan for everything.

Arturo stops, suddenly serious.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

But something has changed. Free will is under threat, Something is coming. Something elusive.

(beat)

A guardian good or bad doesn't interfere in the mortal world. But something has.

GRIMLEY

And I'm here to fight it?

ARTURO

No. You're here to guard someone who matters – someone teetering on the edge. We don't know why yet. But we know he's a key piece in what's coming.

GRIMLEY

And that is?

ARTURO

(deadpan)  
Spoilers Grimley.

SNAP.

FLASH TO:

EXT. ERIC'S HOUSE - BACK GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Grimley blinks into a quiet suburban back garden. Overcast. Drizzle falling.

GRIMLEY

(startled, soaked)  
Seriously, could we stop with the nauseating teleports?!

Arturo, bone dry under a sleek raincoat, umbrella popped, sips coffee.

ARTURO

Lesson one: when I need you, I snap. Where we meet? My call. Could be here—

SNAP.

FLASH TO:

EXT. CITY BUS STATION - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They now both stand in the middle of a busy, inner-city bus station. Grimley looks really disorientated.

ARTURO

- Or here -

SNAP

FLASH TO:

EXT. TROPICAL BEACH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Grimley struggles to get his bearings, Arturo is cool as a cucumber as a WAITER approaches with a tropical cocktail on a tray.

Arturo, dressed in loud short shirt and shorts takes the cocktail and nods to the waiter.

ARTURO

Thank you.

(to Grimley)

Could even be here, depending on the mood I'm in. Point is, you need to be able to learn to do this quick. Now you give it a try, think about the garden, we were in.

Grimley stares blankly for a moment, he goes for it.

SNAP.

FLASH TO:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They reappear in a bathroom. A NAKED MAN sits in the tub, humming and painting his nails, singing along to the opera playing on his radio.

Arturo turns to Grimley.

ARTURO

Let's work on that yeah? Try not to come here again maybe?

GRIMLEY

(stares open mouthed)

My bad, good singing voice though.

ARTURO

Yeah, nice nails too.

Arturo takes the lead.

SNAP.

FLASH TO:

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

ERIC (40s), slouched, washes dishes in silence. Methodical. Lost. His eyes hollow. The image of someone holding everything together by routine alone.

ARTURO (O.S.)  
This is Eric, Ricky to his mates.  
But you're not there with that yet.

Grimley and Arturo peer in through a serving hatch.

GRIMLEY  
What's up with him?

ARTURO  
Eric's life is circling the drain.  
You're here to hand him a plunger.

GRIMLEY  
And how exactly am I supposed to do that?

They move to sit at the dining table.

ARTURO  
You will figure it out.

GRIMLEY  
And if I don't?

Arturo reaches under the table and slides over a thick, leather-bound book with glowing symbols.

ARTURO  
Because if you don't, your  
afterlife's going to feel like a  
customer service queue in Hull.  
Forever.

Grimley looks down at the book.

ARTURO (CONT'D)  
The Rulebook. Learn it. Live it.  
Fail it? Stay stuck.

GRIMLEY  
Does it come in audio book?

Arturo rises.

ARTURO  
Our time's up. He's your  
assignment.  
(MORE)

ARTURO (CONT'D)

(beat)

Guide him. Help him. Or enjoy  
eternal limbo with bathroom guy.

Eric finishes the dishes, gives a satisfied nod. He passes  
Grimley and Arturo - completely unaware.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

And just like that, you're now on  
the clock.

Grimley stands, watching Eric walk out.

GRIMLEY

So insightful. So warm. So  
emotionally helpful-  
(turns)  
Arturo?

He's gone.

GRIMLEY (CONT'D)

(sighs)  
Of course can't be mystical without  
being a mystery.

A heavy BANG then THUD echoes from upstairs. Grimley jolts.

GRIMLEY (CONT'D)

That doesn't sound good.

EXT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Grimley trudges up the stairs.

At the top - Eric's legs hang limp, half-visible from the  
attic hatch.

GRIMLEY

Oh! You have got to be kidding?!

FADE OUT:

TITLE CARD: ONE WEEK EARLIER

FADE IN:

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

An alarm clock RINGS out, it's 6:00 a.m. Eric's arm reaches  
out and turns it off.

Eric's eye's slowly open, still tired, rough night, he looks over at JANE, 40's asleep next to him, she SNORES loud.

Eric sits up and gets out of bed.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Eric sits eating his breakfast, his phone is in his hand as he scrolls the news eating cereal, on the radio "DREAM A LITTLE DREAM OF ME"

Eric looks up from his cereal, he smiles softly over to Jane who glares back at him, eating toast, a life full of regret.

ERIC

So me and John are thinking of heading out to trainfest this weekend.

JANE

I want a divorce Eric.

ERIC

(stunned)

Wait. What?

JANE

Let's be honest. It's been coming for a while.

ERIC

It has?

JANE

Please, you think I've been making all this effort for you?

ERIC

You've been making effort?

She stands. Calm, cold, final.

JANE

Look, I'm sleeping with someone else, have been for months.

(shrugs)

I've talked with my solicitor.

She places an envelope down in front of Eric.

JANE (CONT'D)

It was never going to work between us Eric.

(MORE)

JANE (CONT'D)

And let's be honest – look at you.  
You do the same thing every day. No  
spark. No ambition. No life. I need  
more and that's just not you!

ERIC

Oh.

JANE

I'm leaving for a few days. Think  
about things. My solicitor reckons  
you should give me the house.

(beat)

I don't want this to be awkward.  
Okay?!

She exits. Eric stares at the papers. Frozen.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CAR – DAY – MOVING

Eric stares blankly out the window. Grey skies, passing  
trees, his reflection barely recognizable.

From the driver's seat–

JOHN (30s), bearded, smooth-talking, bad taste in shirts but  
good with people – shouts mid-rant.

JOHN

Ah what a cow!

Eric blinks, snaps out his daze.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I mean seriously, just hands you  
the divorce papers and bounces? Did  
she say who the guy is?

ERIC

Nope, she just left. Reckon's her  
solicitor can get her the house. My  
mums house.

JOHN

Mate. That's brutal. Are you Okay?

Eric doesn't answer.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(sincerely)

Sorry. That sucks.

(MORE)



JOHN (CONT'D)

But hey – you do know you're the name floating around for the promotion today?

ERIC

(skeptical)

Nah. They want someone younger. New blood. I'm just the guy who kept things running.

JOHN

Bull. You saved that place from going under – twice. That proposal of yours? It's gold. Even Masters knows that.

ERIC

Yeah – Masters hates me. Had it in for me since that Christmas party when I told him he'd had too much.

JOHN

He doesn't like anyone. That's his whole vibe.

(beat)

Look, just wait. He's gonna call you in, look you dead in the eye and say–

INT. OFFICE - DAY

GREGG MASTERS (30s) – snappily dressed in a tailored tan suit, designer glasses, too much confidence for someone with a standing desk and a bonsai tree.

He taps away on a digital tablet, chewing a piece of gum like it's the last interesting thing in the world.

Without looking up–

GREGG

You're fired.

Standing on the other side of the desk Eric, stunned, taken back.

ERIC

...Sorry?

GREGG

You. Fired. You and your entire division. Donezo.

(beat)

(MORE)

GREGG (CONT'D)  
Cleared your budget lines this  
morning. Felt amazing.

Eric just stares.

ERIC  
Is this some kind of a joke?

GREGG  
Buddy – I don't even do jokes  
before my third coffee.

He finally looks up – smiling wide, eyes unsettlingly calm.

GREGG (CONT'D)  
Outsourcing, Eric. Global agility.  
Strategic reinvention. All the sexy  
words the board gets off on.

ERIC  
What about my proposal? That plan  
would've saved us without cutting  
jobs.

GREGG  
(sighs theatrically)  
Yeah, I skimmed it... Didn't vibe  
with the formatting.  
(smirks)  
Also – not really a fan of you.

Eric clenches his jaw.

ERIC  
Gregg, if this is personal.

GREGG  
(cuts in)  
Oh no. That would be  
unprofessional.  
(leans in grinning)  
But also yes.

He reclines, folds his hands.

GREGG (CONT'D)  
You're a legacy guy, Eric. Paper  
files. Lunch breaks. A soul.  
That's not the future. I am.

ERIC  
No, you're just a smug little prick  
with a thesaurus and a TikTok  
addiction.

Gregg laughs, loving it, a dark shadow moves behind him, almost unseen.

GREGG

God, you even fight like a teacher.  
No wonder Jane got bored.

Eric freezes.

ERIC

...What did you just say?

GREGG

She didn't tell you?  
(sits up, relishes it)  
We've been... exploring each  
other's wisdom.  
(pauses, smug)  
What can I say - I've got a soft  
spot for vintage women.

Something shifts in Eric's eyes.

He steps forward.

ERIC

You're sleeping with my wife?

GREGG

Technically your ex. And yes -  
often. Spiritually. Sometimes in  
the kitchen.  
(remembers)  
You're kitchen once if we're  
counting.

ERIC

You absolute -

Eric lunges across the desk, knocking over the bonsai.

ERIC (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I'll kill you!

GREGG (O.S.)

(choking)  
Security! Securit- ahhhh!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. BEER GARDEN - DAY

John sips his pint, leans back casually, watching Eric with that "you poor bastard" look.

JOHN  
Mate... they really went to town on  
you, huh

PAN TO -

Eric - face bruised, shirt untucked, sipping his pint like it's morphine.

ERIC  
Yeah sure felt like it.

JOHN  
I mean... beating your boss half to  
death with a landline phone?  
(grins)  
That's not just stress. That's old-  
school.

ERIC  
He did kind of have it coming.

JOHN  
Oh that's for sure.

They clink glasses.

JOHN(CONT'D)  
To righteous violence.

ERIC  
And poor life choices.

They drink.

A brief, peaceful silence.

Then Eric's smile fades. The weight returns.

JOHN  
You alright?

ERIC  
Ah, it's just been one of those  
days.  
(runs hand down face)  
And it's not even two o'clock yet.

His PHONE RINGS.

Display: Unknown Number.

ERIC (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Oh, what now?

JOHN

Want me to screen it?

ERIC

Nah, probably just another PPI scam.

JOHN

I'll go grab another round in.

John gets up. Eric reluctantly answers.

ERIC

Hello? Yeah, speaking, but listen – if you're calling to sell me life insurance, I might actually need it tod–

Beat. Eric pauses. His expression shifts – eyes wide, jaw slack.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Oh... God. I'm sorry. Thank you for letting me know.

Over Eric's shoulder, out of focus:

The shrouded figure stands in the distance. Still. Watching. Unmoving. Blurred by light and depth. Silent.

Then–gone.

John returns with beers.

JOHN

Bloody hell. You look like someone just cancelled Christmas.

ERIC

That was the cemetery. Someone vandalised my mum's grave.

JOHN

Christ.

ERIC

It was her birthday last week.  
Weirdly enough her favourite song  
was on the radio this morning.

JOHN

Dream a little dream of me.  
(fondly remembers)  
She could belt that out couldn't  
she?

ERIC

Yeah.

JOHN

(shakes head)  
People are trash.  
(sits)  
Ah, man. How about we start a fight  
club?

ERIC

Only if I can lose the first round.

They toast quietly.

JOHN

To your mum.

ERIC

To mum.

Clink.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Wind whistles through a nearly empty cemetery.

Eric kneels beside his mother's grave, brushing dirt and  
shards of broken porcelain into a black bin liner.

His clothes are grubby. Hands scratched. Knees soaked from  
the earth. A busted angel statue lies beside him.

No anger. Just quiet focus.

He gently sets a crooked photo frame back against the  
headstone.

ERIC

(sighs)  
Sorry, Mum... again.

A moment. Then—

ARTURO (O.S.)  
You've done a good job. She'd be  
grateful, you know.

Eric flinches. He turns.

Arturo stands a few feet away, holding a bouquet of  
wildflowers.

ERIC  
You scared the crap out of me.

ARTURO  
(sincerely)  
Didn't mean to. Just thought you  
could use some company.

He steps forward, lays the flowers at the grave.

Eric eyes Arturo up and down, bemused at the mans eccentric  
stylish flair.

ERIC  
So, you two know each other?

ARTURO  
We'd become quite close over the  
years, friendship and nothing more.  
(beat)  
She was proud of you Eric.

Arturo extends his hand.

ARTURO (CONT'D)  
I'm Arturo.

They shake hands.

ERIC  
She never mentioned you.

ARTURO  
(smiling)  
She liked to keep some chapters to  
herself. Our relationship was...  
complicated. She had fire, that  
one.

ERIC  
Yeah enough to burn through brick  
walls.

They stand quietly for a beat.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
She hated this kind of stuff. Said  
if anyone cried at her funeral,  
she'd come back and haunt them.

ARTURO  
Oh yes, she's rolling her eyes at  
this right now.

Eric chuckles.

ERIC  
I'd imagine so if you believe in  
that kind of thing.

ARTURO  
You're not a believer?

ERIC  
(sighs)  
Yeah, well... after the day I've  
had, if there is something bigger  
out there, it's got a twisted sense  
of humour.

ARTURO  
Want to talk about it?

ERIC  
(diving in)  
Divorce papers at breakfast.  
Fired before lunch - by the guy  
sleeping with my wife, no less.  
Then this.  
(gestures to cleaned mess)  
Cherry on top of the world's worst  
cake.

ARTURO  
Ouch.

ERIC  
And now I'm here, covered in mud,  
trying to tape my mum's grave back  
together like it means something.

A long beat. Arturo studies him.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
So... what's next? You gonna tell  
me I'm adopted?



ARTURO

(chuckles)

No. You're safe there. You definitely have her humour.

ERIC

Well, I didn't know my dad to get his.

Beat. Eric slowly turns to Arturo.

He already knows what Eric's thinking and laughs.

ARTURO

No, I'm not your father Eric.

Arturo looks down at the grave. His tone softens.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

Some men are chosen to walk paths that take them far from the ones they love.

(beat)

Doesn't mean they stop caring. Just means... they lose the map.

Eric glances over – that hit differently.

ERIC

That's poetic. You write that down somewhere?

ARTURO

I've been around. Heard lots of regrets.

(beat)

Your mum never lost faith in people. Especially the broken ones.

ERIC

She was the only one who believed in me. Now she's gone. And I'm stuck here – in ruins – trying to believe in anything.

ARTURO

Then maybe start small. Believe in this: she loved you. And she'd want you to keep going – even through the mess.

Eric looks away. Fights a lump in his throat.

ARTURO (CONT'D)  
Anyway - I should let you be.  
But remember... not everything is  
as random as it seems. Even chaos  
has a pattern.  
(steps back)  
There is a plan for everything  
Eric.

Eric looks back toward him-

ARTURO IS GONE.

Just the trees. The wind. The grave.

ERIC  
(softly)  
What a weird... guy.

He looks down at the grave.

A beat.

Then finally, something cracks.

His face trembles.

He kneels, shoulders shaking - silent grief, no theatrics.

ERIC (V.O.)  
This last week has been a lot. The  
road hit a bump and I think all my  
tyres are shredded.

CUT TO:

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY.

Eric checks the noose on the rope hanging from the loft.

He nods confident that it's tight.

ERIC (V.O.)  
John, I leave everything I have to  
you. My only other friend in a  
pointless world.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Eric writes the note out he sits on his bed, a pensive look  
as he scribbles.

He stops.

ERIC  
(to self)  
What's the bloody point.

He rips the paper out and screws up the note. Throwing it across the room.

Eric gets up and leaves.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Eric washes the dishes, the radio plays, the song "dream a little dream of me" plays again.

Eric turns off the radio.

He washes the last few dishes meticulously. Finishing he leaves, walking past Grimley who talks to Arturo in the background.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Eric stands on a chair beneath an exposed beam.

He's disheveled. Hands trembling.

He wraps the noose around his neck. Eyes fixed on the photo of his mum on the bedside table.

ERIC  
(quiet)  
I'll see you soon mum.

He steps off.

His legs jerk violently.

The chair clatters to the floor.

He gasps - choking - eyes wide.

Just as the light fades-

CRACK!

The beam gives way.

Eric SLAMS to the ground in a heavy thud.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Grimley stands at the bottom of the stairs - wide-eyed, horrified.

GRIMLEY

You have got to be kidding me!

He rushes up, nearly tripping over the mess.

Eric's body lies still, pale and crumpled.

ERIC (O.S.)

Who the hell are you?

Eric is standing upright - beside his own body - transparent and stunned.

GRIMLEY

I- I think I just failed my first assignment.

ERIC

What's going on? Who am I?

GRIMLEY

(looks down at body)

Oh that's...

(looks up at Eric)

You. You just died mate.

(beat)

Sorry.

ERIC

(stepping back)

Oh God.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Eric sits on the edge of the bed - still reeling.

Grimley stands nearby, awkward and sheepish.

GRIMLEY

It sucks right now. I know this myself.

ERIC

Why did I die?

GRIMLEY

I don't think you were having a good time. Think maybe you let it get too on-top of you.

Grimley takes a seat next to Eric.

ERIC

So what now? Do I stay here?

GRIMLEY

I have no idea. I was supposed to watch you and protect you.

ERIC

Doing a top job so far.

GRIMLEY

Hey, give me a break. It's my first day.

They both glance at Eric's body in the hall.

GRIMLEY (CONT'D)

For what it's worth. You gave up too soon. I think there's something planned for you.

ERIC

Bit late now isn't it.

(beat)

Why can't I remember anything.

GRIMLEY

That's the way it is apparently.

ERIC

Silly rule.

GRIMLEY

Isn't it just. I mean how are you supposed to learn your lesson if you don't even know what it was to start with.

A LOUD BANG downstairs – the front door bursts open.

JOHN (O.S.)

RICKY!?

INT. STAIRWELL/ HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

John charges up the stairs, sees the body, drops to his knees.

JOHN

Oh no no no... come on, mate—don't do this!

He starts CPR — panicked, pounding his chest.

JOHN (CONT'D)

C'mon you stubborn bastard — don't leave me now!

In the bedroom — Eric begins to flicker.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

ERIC

What's happening?

GRIMLEY

Told you. They have a plan for you. Not your time yet.

Eric's form begins to fade.

GRIMLEY (CONT'D)

Listen — remember what I said. Don't let 'em break you. You've got someone watching your back now.

(Beat)

Somehow, somehow.

Grimley points a finger-gun at Eric and fires.

ERIC VANISHES.

Grimley blows smoke from his finger.

GRIMLEY (CONT'D)

(mutters)

... Is that a thing I do?

FLASH TO:

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Eric GASPS — COUGHING — ALIVE.

John catches him in his arms, near tears.

JOHN  
Oh thank Christ.

Eric coughs again, rubbing his neck, dazed.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
You okay?! Ricky-talk to me!

ERIC  
(hoarse)  
Yeah... yeah, I think so.

He glances over – toward the empty bedroom doorway – where he was just sitting moments ago.

His eyes darken with confusion... and awe.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

John enters, two mugs of tea in hand. He hands one to Eric, who's curled up on the sofa – drained but alive.

JOHN  
Jesus, Ricky... how'd it get this far?

ERIC  
(Shrugs)  
I'm about to lose everything John.  
And what did I do about it?  
Nothing!  
(beat)  
I just didn't see a way back.

JOHN  
Then lean on someone. That's what people do.  
(beat)  
What the hell would I do without you, huh?

ERIC  
(smiles weakly)  
You'd survive. A big guy like you.

JOHN  
Maybe. But who else would help me job-hunt and hit on women way out of my league?

Eric chuckles softly. Sips his tea.

ERIC

Thanks for coming... When you did.

JOHN

Yeah. Funny thing – I wasn't even planning to stop by.

(beat)

Just... got this gut feeling, turned the car around. Like I had to be here.

He stares into his tea, unsettled by the thought.

IN THE DOORWAY:

Grimley watches them – quiet, thoughtful. A half-smile on his face.

Suddenly, a hand claps his shoulder. Arturo stands beside him, smug and serene.

ARTURO

Good work, Grimley.

GRIMLEY

That wasn't all me, was it?

ARTURO

(smiles)

Some messages come through. Some heroes need a nudge.

GRIMLEY

(curious)

So why this guy? What makes him special?

ARTURO

(smoothly evasive)

Some lives have ripple effects we can't always see.

(beat)

Your job isn't to know why. Just help him swim.

GRIMLEY

Do you ever give a straight answer?

ARTURO

I prefer good tea and vague instructions.

(beat)

(MORE)



ARTURO (CONT'D)

Now read the book – properly this time. You and Eric have a lot ahead of you.

Arturo walks into the kitchen – and vanishes.

GRIMLEY

(mutters)

Smug, magical jerk...

He glances back at Eric. Watches quietly.

A moment of peace... for now.

Grimley glances at the Rulebook resting on the table.

He picks it up. Sits. Opens it.

The words glow faintly, shifting and shaping as they rise from the page.

THE WRITER (V.O.)

Grimley... This edition is for you  
– and you alone.

Grimley leans back, eyes wide. Something shifts in him.

INT. LIVING ROOM – NIGHT – CONTINUOUS

Eric sleeps on the sofa.

John gently lays a blanket over him. Eric stirs but doesn't wake.

THE WRITER (V.O.)

You've been chosen for a task  
that's difficult... but vital.

(beat)

Eric is crucial. Guide him.

EXT. ERIC'S HOUSE/ STREET – NIGHT

Through the window:

Grimley, alone in the dim dining room, reads the Rulebook by moonlight.

In the background, John watches TV. Eric sleeps.

THE WRITER (V.O.)  
You no longer belong to the living  
world... But that doesn't mean you  
can't change it.

ACROSS THE STREET:

Arturo stands under a lamp post, watching the house from the shadows.

A Woman in White appears behind him – stern, elegant, unknowable.

MYSTERIOUS WOMAN  
Are you sure this is right? He's  
untrained. Going by his mortal like  
he is wreckless.

ARTURO  
Grimley was chosen. It's the plan.  
I trust in the plan.

THE WRITER (V.O.)  
And trust no one. Not even those  
who say they're on your side.

MYSTERIOUS WOMAN  
The Writer is gone. The Typewriter  
with him. That book? His final act  
– for Grimley.

She steps closer.

MYSTERIOUS WOMAN (CONT'D)  
An unknown... We haven't had one of  
those in a long time.

ARTURO  
That's why it matters.

THE WRITER (V.O.)  
Follow the rules. Never directly  
intervene. And beware...

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

A phone buzzes on a sleek desk.

CALLER I.D: JANE

Gregg Masters sits hunched over, eyes empty.

The Shrouded Figure whispers into his ear – unintelligible, ancient.

Gregg's hand trembles.

A tear runs down his cheek.

He fights it – but something inside is breaking.

THE WRITER (V.O.)  
Eric is counting on you.  
(beat)  
I am counting on you.  
(beat)  
The universe is counting on you,  
Grimley.

The whispering stops.

The Shrouded Figure steps back into the dark.

Gregg's hand rises.

He holds an old WWII revolver.

He glances down at the pad in front of him:

ON THE NOTE:

"He made me do it."

Gregg bites his lip. Shakes.

Pulls the trigger.

BANG.

FLASH TO BLACK:

THE GUARDIAN.