

FADE TO BLACK

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Shooting Script

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FADE IN:

1 INT. DIMLY LIT LIVING ROOM AND KITCHEN COMBO - DAY

1

ON A COMPUTER SCREEN: the words "FADE IN:" are being typed onto a blank page. The cursor jumps to next line. It blinks.

Once, then again. And again.

The pair of hands on the keyboard simply won't move.

Sitting in front of the computer is WRITER (mid-30s). Unshaven, messy hair, wearing only sweat pants and a crumpled t-shirt, the same outfit he probably slept in.

On his desk, several empty cups, both paper and glass, dark and stained from coffee and tea. Several plates with bread crumbs stacked next to the organised mess that is his desk.

Writer doesn't care. He cares only for one thing. That blank screen in front of him.

Hundreds of coloured post-it notes and pens scattered all over the place: walls, desk, floor. If you can stick something to it, it has a post-it.

In the kitchen, stacks of unwashed kitchenware pile up on the sink, and the bin is filled to the top with boxes from microwave meals, coffee cups, and cans of energy drinks.

An alarm goes off on his phone.

ROBOTIC VOICE ON THE PHONE  
Congratulations. You completed.  
Fifty. Minutes. Writing. Well done!

The page is still blank. And that damn cursor won't stop blinking.

Writer slams the lid of his laptop closed and springs up--

--only to immediately throw himself face first on the sofa.

Tired, he closes his eyes, seems to fall asleep.

He hears a faded laugh. Opens his eyes, startled, almost in panic. He immediately straightens himself up. Looks around.

Nothing. He's alone.

He goes to the kitchen side of the room. Opens the cabinet. It's empty. He ran out of clean cups.

He turns on the kettle, picks up one of the dirty cups from his desk, and pours himself some tea.

Writer returns to his desk, sits staring blankly at the page once again.

He leans over to grab the cup of tea, REVEALING--

--a HUMAN FIGURE, reflected on the dark side of his writing software. The Figure sits on the couch behind him.

FIGURE  
I can help, you know?

The Writer turns. A reflex.

WRITER  
Go away.

There's nobody there. He's talking to an empty room.

FIGURE  
You can't do this without me.

WRITER  
Watch me.

FIGURE  
Okay.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN: The Figure's reflection leans back, relaxed, simply observing. Mocking.

The Writer turns to his computer, feeling the presence over his shoulder. He can't fail now.

Writer types "INT. ", followed by--

--nothing else. Writer simply stares at the blinking cursor for long moments, without a single word following.

FIGURE (cont'd)  
Finished already? Wow. Let me read it  
let me read it. You know I can't  
contain my excitement.

The Figure creeps in. Its darkened face now on a close-up on the reflective surface of the screen.

FIGURE (cont'd)  
(fake gasp)  
So deep. So-- meaningful.  
(MORE)

FIGURE (cont'd)  
(ironic slow claps)  
Phenomenal masterpiece. Yes, sir.  
Your writing, it completely changed  
my life.

WRITER  
(eyes down, ashamed)  
Don't gloat yet. I'll figure it out.

The figure muffles a forced laugh.

FIGURE  
(ironic)  
Don't beat yourself up. Everyone  
knows coming up with the first slug-  
line is the hardest part.

WRITER  
Why are you here? I don't want your  
help anymore.

FIGURE  
Clearly you don't need it. When is  
your deadline again?

Writer looks away. The Figure comes closer, more serious.

FIGURE (cont'd)  
How exactly do you expect to finish  
something you can't even start?  
You're pathetic.

WRITER  
Better than have you mess up with my  
head. The things you make me feel--  
the suffering you inflict-- no sane  
person could ever come up with those.

FIGURE  
Worried about what mummy and daddy  
will think of you, are we?  
(angry)  
They're characters. They are supposed  
to suffer. That's what makes it good.  
The fact you don't understand that  
only shows how much you need me. Face  
it. You cannot write without me by  
your side.

The Writer faces the Figure on the screen, defiantly.

WRITER  
I DON'T. NEED. YOU.

Writer turns to his laptop. Takes a deep breath--

And types "DIMLY LIT LIVING ROOM AND KITCHEN COMBO - DAY".

He continues underneath with "ON A COMPUTER SCREEN: the words 'Fade In' are being typed into a blank page."

FIGURE

Are you trying to prove me wrong now?  
Cute.

The Writer keeps typing. The Figure's reflection looms over the Writer.

FIGURE (cont'd)

You really think you can do this by  
yourself?

The words spoken by both characters from now on are typed onto the page by the Writer, at the same time they are said.

FIGURE (cont'd)

Do you even know what good writing  
is? You're not a real writer. I'm the  
writer. The little voice inside your  
head, the one whispering the words  
into your ear, the real story teller.  
You just happen to have fingers.  
You're no more than an assembly  
worker, a trained monkey, responsible  
for typing it up for me.

The Writer stops typing, as if thinking about what comes next. In no moment he acknowledges the Figure's presence.

FIGURE (cont'd)

Stop wasting our time and accept how  
much you need me.

But he doesn't. The Writer keeps typing energetically, focused, as if under a spell.

The Figure can only watch, as words come up on the screen.

FIGURE (cont'd)

Fine, have it your way. I will enjoy  
when you beg me to come back again.  
To save you from your own mediocrity.

WRITER

Do whatever you want.  
(stops typing)  
Just leave me alone.

The Figure grins, then fades to black. The Writer is finally alone. Satisfied. He won.

He turns back to his laptop, lays his fingers back on the keyboard, makes the initial movement to type, but--

--nothing is typed.

His hands shake. As if some invisible force prevents him from actually pressing the keys. His fingers won't move.

A sudden realisation hits him. He can't write. The room swirls, space itself seems to compresses around him.

WRITER (cont'd)  
Nononono, write. Anything. Anything  
at all.

He presses the SPACE key. The cursor moves, then blinks. A muffled evil laugh echoes in the room.

WRITER (cont'd)  
This changes nothing. You stay where  
you are.

The Writer has a long, staring contest with the screen, waiting for inspiration.

He notices dust on the keyboard. Wipes it with his finger. Blows into the keyboard, removing the remaining dust.

He considers the index cards on the wall. Springs up and strides to them, starts following the cards with his finger.

Goes back to the beginning multiple times, confused. He picks up one card, moves it elsewhere on the board.

Steps back and considers it. No, that's not going to work. Puts the card back where it was and considers another card.

He slaps the board in frustration. Several cards fall down.

Sits on the sofa, wraps his arms around his head, shaking. A drug addict would be in a less obvious need for a fix.

He forces himself to breathe, starts calming down. He leans back, rests his head on the back of the sofa.

His eyes close, only for a second. Once, then again. Tired, remaining closed for longer periods with every blink.

He suddenly springs up, disoriented, trying to remain awake.

He grabs a cup from his desk and goes to the kitchen.

We remain with the computer screen. The reflection of the Figure shows up for a brief moment, grinning, amused. It disappears shortly after.

In the kitchen, Writer adds comically large spoonfuls of coffee and sugar to a cup, and covers it with hot water.

Then, he has a better idea. He opens a can of energy drink and pours it into the coffee.

Writer goes back to his seat, but all he does is keep staring at that bloody cursor. He doesn't even try to write.

He starts throwing a small ball at the wall. We hear the noise it makes, as we focus back on the cups.

DISSOLVE TO:

2 INT. DIMLY LIT LIVING ROOM AND KITCHEN COMBO - DAY

2

We remain in the same shot, but the position of the shadows has changed, and one of the mugs is in a different position.

Writer's still sitting in the same position, bouncing the ball on the wall.

On the computer screen, the cursor blinks at the same rhythm as the ball.

The shadow of the ball crosses over the mugs.

DISSOLVE TO:

3 INT. DIMLY LIT LIVING ROOM AND KITCHEN COMBO - DAY

3

Same mug shot, but another different arrangement, and the light changed. It's darker now. We still hear the same bouncing sound, but the writer is not sitting there anymore.

AERIAL SHOT: Writer pacing in the room. Up. Down. Left. Right. He can't keep quiet. Day turns to night.

DISSOLVE TO:

## 4 INT. DIMLY LIT LIVING ROOM AND KITCHEN COMBO - NIGHT

4

Same mug shot, another different arrangement. Ball still bouncing, but monotonous tone, filled with dread. We don't see the writer playing with it.

He's sitting on the sofa, staring at the ceiling for long moments. It's white.

He explodes in frustration. Pulls his hair, completely losing his fucking mind.

DISSOLVE TO:

## 5 INT. DIMLY LIT LIVING ROOM AND KITCHEN COMBO - NIGHT

5

Mug shot, very different arrangement from before. All the cups have changed position now. Multiple energy drink cans. One of the cups is knocked down. A question for another day.

It's still dark. We hear the ball bouncing at a much slower pace, very monotonous. Terribly quiet in the building and outside. Everybody else must be asleep.

Shots of the room: the sofa, the kitchen, the floor from the ceiling. Writer is not in any of them.

The post-it notes are not on the wall anymore.

Writer is sitting on the floor with his back to the wall, surrounded by the post-its and pages of script scattered all over the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

## 6 INT. DIMLY LIT LIVING ROOM AND KITCHEN COMBO - DAY

6

Mug shot. The arrangement of the cups hasn't changed at all, but the light and the shadows have. It's now brighter. Birds chirping outside. A new day begins.

We still hear the ball bouncing, but at an extremely slow pace, lacking any energy. Writer is sitting back at the desk. The computer screen looks exactly as it did last night. Writer hasn't typed a single word.

ON WRITER'S HAND: he throws the ball one more time. Tries to catch it, but he's too slow. The ball bounces off his fingers, then on the floor a couple of times, before rolling all the way to the kitchen.



Writer squints, too tired to keep his eyes open.

The ALARM CLOCK on his phone goes off. He's disoriented at first. Finally turns it off.

He keeps staring at the time on his phone: 08:30.

It changes to 08:31. The screen goes black. Auto-suspension.

He finally breaks. It's not going to happen today. Resigned, too tired to even care, he lays his head on the desk.

As his head sinks down, it reveals the reflection of the Figure on the screen.

FIGURE

Do you understand now? We are bound together, you and me. For as long as you want to write, you have to accept me as part of you.

(beat)

But I warn you: terrible things will happen to those perfect little characters you love so much. I'll tear them apart, and make them whole again, only to shred them to pieces one more time. And I'll make this happen over and over and over again in your head, until you scream silently for it to stop. But no one will listen. No one will be there to hear. Just me.

(beat)

Can you live with that?

The Writer hesitates, but finally nods. The Figure grins.

FIGURE (cont'd)

Then let's get back to work, shall we? Partner.

The Figure leans forward, starts whispering words we cannot hear on the Writer's ear.

The Writer immediately starts writing, completely focused, entranced, his fingers moving nimbly without any pauses.

We PULL AWAY from the writer's back. Everything else in the room remains in full colour, but his body--

FADES TO BLACK