

Gray Martyn

ARISTOPHANES' PLAYHOUSE — ONE-PAGE SYNOPSIS (SPOILERS**)**

STEPHEN works as a reluctant enforcer for LUCKY LOU, an aging crime boss with a fondness for birdcages. But after a botched job leaves his partner, PAULIE, dead, he flees straight into a space that will make him question his very identity: Aristophanes' Playhouse — a theatre staging intimate performances about love and wholeness.

There, he is captivated by EMMA, an ethereal, scarlet-clad performer whose presence speaks to his yearning. Expelled from Lucky Lou's orbit, Stephen joins Emma and her troupe for a night of philosophical debate and chemical experimentation. But when FRANKIE, Paulie's vengeful twin, comes looking for him, Stephen flees with the troupe back to the Playhouse. Under moonlight on its rooftop, he and Emma form an intimate connection, drawn to each other like two halves of a once greater whole.

However, when Stephen sees Emma with another man, his reality fractures. Upon entering his apartment, he is transported to a lively Irish pub. From there, he is guided by an OLD MAN down a path to a cottage where PEARL shelters him until an unseen intruder forces his flight. He then stumbles upon a rose garden where he meets ANNA — Emma's doppelgänger. Finally, passing through a hall of mirrors that reflect his unstable identity, Stephen emerges into a theatrical space where he is at once actor, audience, and author — engaging with otherworldly figures as he writes the lines he performs.

His dreamlike journey collapses, and he is pulled back into Lucky Lou's criminal world. Forced to partner with Frankie for one more job — a raid on an abandoned warehouse haunted by the people who killed Paulie — Stephen is shot and left for dead... but somehow he survives.

A phone call from a mysterious number linked to a radio ad offering to help him "flip the script and take back control" connects him to an eerily familiar voice. By this surreal transmission, Stephen learns to let go and "submit" — not so that he may die, but so that he may seize potential rebirth.

Stephen makes his choice and, guided by an enigmatic ALBINO MAN, leaves his apartment with his three-legged cat, SAOIRSE, and a blank notepad. As they drive away, the clouds part, light breaks through, and for the first time, Stephen truly smiles — no longer a reluctant participant in someone else's script, he is now a willing one in his own.

At its core, *Aristophanes' Playhouse* is a noir that operates at the juncture between grounded reality and theatrical dreamscape, concerning itself with a world where scripts dictate identity, authorship is negotiated, and the only way forward in times of trouble is through radical acceptance of the unknown.