

NOONIE begins to feel the weight of MALIK'S words. He's rattled.

MALIK (CONT'D)

You keep lookin' at me like I'm the devil, when truth is, I'm just the mirror. I taught you! I made you! Built you! Brick by brick! You think you gon change the Gardens Noon? You are the Gardens!

NOONIES slows his breathing to gather his words.

NOONIE

You're right. You taught me alot Malik. How to read a room. How to navigate profit on every corner. How to lead and build through fear. I can't lie. I fell in love with The Gardens in a whole new way because of you.

NOONIE takes a step closer to MALIK.

NOONIE (CONT'D)

But you think I'm you because of what you taught me? Yeh you showed me how to move, but Cliff Ward showed me how to stand. Took me a long time to heed that, but I'm here now. And I'm not going nowhere.

MALIK chuckles, amused.

MALIK

So you the gardens new janitor huh? Just like ya pops. Gon mop up the streets huh.

MALIK backs away from NOONIE. Police sirens blare by in the background.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Good ole Cliff. Your father was good man. Guess I should owe him thanks too. Cause the day he died, he handed you straight to me.

NOONIE'S face scrunches in rage and his fists tighten so hard then turn red. MALIK walks away with a sinister smile.

BEGIN FLASHBACK...