



## AWAKE

90 feature film

*Her meets Ex Machina*

Written by Andrew Palmer and Ian Weir

Edward Morrison is a coding genius whose visionary work on the VR game *Dark Frontier* makes his reputation, and catches the eye of swashbuckling tech entrepreneur Jack Derrington. CEO and chairman of the board, at Big Pharma giant Gray Matter, Jack is convinced he's scored a major coup – leveraging Edward's cutting-edge expertise in haptic feedback to develop thought-controlled prosthetic limbs. For Edward, the project is creatively stimulating, wildly lucrative, and deeply personal: his younger sister, Cura, lost her leg in a childhood mishap for which Edward has always blamed himself.

As Edward throws himself headlong into the project, however, long-dormant demons begin to roil. His obsessive focus triggers nightmares, setting up a cycle of manic effort and emotional avoidance. The more Edward tries to bottle up issues, the more they spiral out of control. Meantime, Edward has a brilliant – and fatal – insight: a way to reverse-engineer the bio-neurological process to control the thoughts, and *dreams*, of test subjects. This leads him onto a quest to create a Dream Simulator: a means to regulate REM sleep so humans can thrive on 20 minutes of rest each night. Jack's all in, seeing this as a potential gold-mine. And Edward sees it as a chance to banish his own nightmares – forever.

But rising tensions with Jack, and his own self-destructive spiral, push Edward increasingly into isolation. This costs Edward the love of his life, Athena Cantly, who served as Gray Matter's in-house counsel and as Edward's conscience – the only one able to keep him grounded. His obsession to perfect the Dream-Simulator draws Edward into a Faustian bargain with his one remaining source of support: the AI Avatar he programmes to assist him. The Avatar begins as basic text-to-speech, but it learns and *evolves* at a rate that Edward could not anticipate. With Edward as its data set, the Avatar likewise becomes obsessed ...with an agenda that Edward never sees coming.

Part *Ex Machina*, part *Her* meets *Faust*, *AWAKE* is a white-knuckle ride to the outer edges of what it may mean to be human. It's a cautionary tale about the consequences of obsession, with reverberations for this era of Theranos and Purdue. And at its heart, it's a doomed love story and a desperate quest for redemption, as its brilliant but deeply-flawed hero confronts the full implications of what he has set in motion.