

Screenplay

EXT. GARDEN. AFTERNOON

PART I

It's Monday, the 6th of February 2017, a sunny day in a really gloomy winter.

A distorted image of a child swinging is reflecting on the eye of Charles, a man in his 40s.

A woman in her late sixties is swinging her grandchild (6 years old).

Charles, is observing scrupulously from a distance, sitting on chair near a wooden table. He smiles as the child screams in delight while playing with his grandmother.

Charles stares at them in a chimerical way. He snaps out of it and focuses on a a 3x5 postcard he is holding. On the back of the postcard, there is a picture of an Hourglass. On the front, he reads the following:

Name: Eugenie Honein Age: 68 Assignment on Monday, the 6h of February 2017 at 4h00 pm. Location : Garden 33.8853° N, 35.6387° E.

He looks at the woman, scans her as she is still swinging the child, and becomes assured. He looks at his wristwatch, on the face there's the picture of an Hourglass, the hands point at 9h28.

He puts the postcard in the pocket of his coat.

Charles turns to his right, grabs a leather brown bag placed on the table, and pulls up a Nikon F3 with a 50mm lens camera.

The camera's brown strap is already on his neck, he removes the lens cap, puts it in his pocket and marches serenely towards the old woman.

His soft shadow merely touches the light covering the boy, but the sound of his smooth voice grabs the attention of the old lady.

CHARLES:

Miss Eugenie

OLD WOMAN:

(turning around alarmed)

Yes?

CHARLES:
My name is Charles, they told me
I'll find you here. Can I take some
pictures?

The old woman approaches Charles as he talks to her. He, however does not wait for an answer. He brings her in focus, and snaps rapid pictures of the confused Lady. As he's taking the pictures, he compliments her in a really calm way.

CHARLES:
Perfect as usual.

Eugenie is jaw dropped. Her grandchild, out of the frame, is swinging on his own while starring at the photographer.

CHARLES:
I'll send you the portraits
tomorrow!

EUGINIE:
Portraits?

Eugenie looks over to the left at the boy. She turns back to Charles and cocks her head to the side.

CHARLES:
Oh, no that's not their time miss.

Charles gives the nod and turns away. As he is getting away he hears the old woman calling to him.

EUGINIE:
Sorry but who sent you? Who are
you?

Charles puts the lens cap back on his camera. His pace gets faster with each question asked.

Charles reaches his audi parked just outside the garden. He gets inside the car and drives away.

INT. INSIDE THE CAR. AFTERNOON

Charles drives on a hazy road. On the radio, let it be by the beatles.

Charles keeps his focus on the road, it is nearing Sunset.

Charles watches as the nearly absent sun swifts back into the ocean.

On the red traffic right, he turns around to observe, and sees a pale, brown short haired woman, looking straight, but worried. She looks at him, but he does not turn his head. They exchange eye contact until she drives forward.

INT. DARKROOM. NIGHT

The red safe light is on: the ambiance of the entire space reveals Charles's vast dark room.

Charles mixes the developer with water in the cylinder. He pours the liquid on the developer tray.

He is examining the negative. It's filled with the pictures of the old woman, starring in a confused yet shocked way.

Charles picks a picture in the middle of the negative and puts it inside the enlarger. He focuses well, makes sure he catches the grain, turns the timer on and exposes the photography on an 8x10 print for 10 seconds. He brings another 5x7 print, and exposes it as well.

Charles drops both of the prints carefully inside the developer tray. He rocks the tray side to side. The chemicals convert all the silver ions into silver metal. They reveal a strange unknown pattern.

Carefully, he slips the papers into the stop bath, then into the fixer. He then hangs both of the papers on the clothesline.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

The fire is being lit, the food is in the oven. Charles puts some kibbles inside his cat's stainless steal plate. The cat rushes in to eat. Charles caresses her hair before heading to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

In a huge living room where only the half is traditionally furnished and the rest is covered in white sheets, Charles cuts the marinated chicken carefully as he is watching TV. The room is lighten as if we are in a reality show, the color BLUE is dominant. The walls are covered with picture frames, but they are all out of our focus. On the table where he is putting the plate, we see a book: Fate and Destiny, the Two Agreements of the Soul by Michael Meade.

We don't see what's on the TV, but we hear two people talking in what sounds like a reality TV show, about how the lottery changed the lives of a family and opened huge gates to the future.

INT. DARKROOM. MORNING

It's Tuesday, the 7th of February.
The Sun is rising.

The camera is on the table, the film is hanged on the clothesline, pictures of the old lady confused. Just near it, the prints that Charles developed... but something is different...

He grabs the 8x10 print, and studies his work:

The confused old lady's face is replaced by a young woman's face, perhaps 50 years younger. She is standing by a swing set, she looks very happy.

Charles smiles, and puts the photograph in an envelop. He seals it. On the seal there is the logo of an hourglass.

Charles takes the postcard he had a day ago, and looks to the bottom right. The address of the old lady is written below. He copies that on the envelope, along with the name, but does not write a return address. He turns away, the 5x7 print is still hanging on the clothesline.

EXT. ROAD. DAY

Charles is driving, Stairway to Heaven by Led Zeppelin is on the radio.

On the passenger's seat, his camera and the envelope.

EXT. OLD LADY'S LOCATION. DAY

Charles searches the mailbox for the old lady's name. He finds it, and slips the envelope in it. He looks at his watch and then around, trying to discover something new, but it's all the same to him.

He leaves.

INT. CAFE. DAY

Charles is unfolding the newspaper. He turns to the obituaries. The coffee is on the table. He closes it, drinks from the coffee, and stares to the outside.

A familiar glimpse catches his attention. The pale worried short haired lady is waiting for someone. Charles stares to see where this is going. She then receives a phone call and rushes out in the crowd. Charles turns his look away from the outside and focuses on his coffee. A hearse passes over on the road, but this does not touch his curiosity.

Looking to his right, two men, in their early adulthood are talking about starting a business. They discuss in excitement a promising future.

Charles observes and listens. As the notion of the future is mentioned, Charles focuses even more, somehow waiting for their interpretation.

INT. LIVING ROOM. AFTERNOON

Charles is cleaning the living room. He removes the dust off the photos in the wall. First one is of his mother, colored picture, middle aged, poker faced, yet her eyes seemingly hiding some deep wounds. He wipes the dust off it very gently while starrng at it. He turns to his left, and sees a picture of his father, black and white picture: he is outdoors, standing, holding Charles's camera, and is smiling, he is about Charles's age now. Charles looks at his watch: it's 4 pm sharp.

INT. CAFE. DAY

It's the 8th of February.

The pale woman is in the Cafe, Charles drinks his coffee while peaking at her. She has her laptop and a few papers on the table and is working a few things out. She takes her lighter, tries to light her cigarette. But the lighter seems damaged. Charles is not a smoker, he does not have a lighter on him. The woman struggles with the lighter but doesn't give up on it until it nourishes the tip of the cigarette with fire.

Charles takes the newspaper, and turns to the obituaries: He reads Eugenie Honein's name. He stares to the outside, it starts to rain.

INT. DARKROOM. DAY

Charles takes the 5x7 print of Eugenie off the clothesline, along with the negative. He attaches the negative on the print. He turns around, goes to an not seen yet wall in the room, turns the neon light on, and attaches the picture on the wall. As we go back, we start discovering a wall full of pictures of people. Charles stares at his archived work and leaves the room.

EXT. HOUSE GARDEN. DAWN

Inside: Charles pours a glass of red wine.
 Outside: As he is drinking it, he watches tailights fade into dawn.

EXT. ENTRANCE CHARLES'S HOUSE. MORNING

PART II: WHEN YOU DEAL TOO MUCH WITH DEATH, YOU FORGET TO LIVE.

It's Monday, the 13th of February.

Sand is sealed inside the glass. When the glass tips over the sand pours slowly through the pinched center at a constant rate until all of the sand in the top flows to the bottom which is of equal size and shape. The image freezes right before the last grain reaches the bottom, we go back, it's the logo of the hourglass on the back of a newly received postcard.

Charles, near his mailbox, reads the following on the front:

Name: Nicholas Hachem **Age:** 31 **Assignment** on Monday, the 13th of February 2016 at 12h00 pm. **Location :** Florist-Ashrafie 33.8849° N, 35.5179° E.

He checks his mailbox another time and sees a film stock on which an hourglass is painted on the front.

He loads his camera.

EXT. ROAD. DAY

Charles is walking amongst the crowd, his camera strapped on his left shoulder.

He arrives to the front of a florist shop. Charles reexamines the HOURGLASS postcard, checks the time on his wristwatch. As the minute hand moves closer to 12, Charles's stomach churns, nausea sets in.

He takes his camera, pulls the shooting lever.
Deep breath: Inhale, Exhale.

INT. FLORIST. DAY

Charles enters the florist shop.

A tall man in his early 30s is buying yellow daffodils. As he puts the change in his pockets, Charles approaches.

CHARLES:
Mr. Hachem?

Nicholas pinches his eyes together, looks down at the camera, then meets Charles's eyes.

Raising his camera,

CHARLES:
I'm with hourglass photography,
they told me I'll find you here.
Mind if I snap some pictures?

By the time Nicholas starts asking Charles who he is, the photographer is snapping pictures.

Before Charles can finish taking photos, the pale woman approaches Nicholas.

Charles, a bit surprised, lowers the camera and stares at the woman.

NICHOLAS:
Aline my dear, you asked someone to
photograph me?

The woman does not fully recognize Charles, but she examines him in a DEJA VU way. As she slightly nods no, Charles turns to leave, but Nicholas grabs the camera and spins him towards him.

NICHOLAS:
Who the hell are you?

Charles, looks at Nicholas in a confused way, then at Aline. Charles peaks at his right, there is a vase of daffodils flowers on the table. Quickly, Charles drops the vase off the table, between him and Nicholas. It breaks, breaking the man's strong grip and allows Charles to escape.

EXT. ROAD. DAY

Charles, without looking behind him, walks very fast on the street, nervously.

He crosses the street, but nearly gets hit by a car. Screams and horns start to pollute the already crowded ambiance of the street. Charles retaliates to his car.

Charles arrives to his car, sits inside of it, still confused about what happened.

INT. DARK ROOM. AFTERNOON

The safe red light flickers, but it helps show the anxiety yet stiffness on Charles's face. Sitting near the clothesline, he waits for the developer to do its job. Slowly he turns around, removes the print and puts it in the fixer.

EXT. CAR. DAY

Charles is driving. blue oyster cult's: Don't fear the reaper is on the radio. His face more pale than ever, his eyes speaking many unsettling words. Near him, an envelope and his camera.

INT. DARK ROOM. LATE AFTERNOON

Charles watches the copy of his work on Nicholas. He takes the photograph which we do not see. He attaches it on the wall on the right of Eugenie's photo. Charles looks at all the photographs, they give him a haunting feeling. He's dealt too much with death in his life.

INT. LIVING ROOM. LATE AFTERNOON

Charles is facing the window from the inside of his living room. It's raining cats and dogs outside. Calmly yet in a still shocked manner, hands a bit trampling, Charles continues his red bloody colored glass of wine

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

It's night time. Charles is sitting on the sofa. The lamppost near him is on, a clear blue light dominates as usual the ambiance of the living room. He is looking at the television without focusing. Weather forecasting is predicting a rainier next day. Charles is playing with a

lighter. It looks the same as the one the woman had. Green with a silver rounded tip. On. Off. On. Off...

INT. HOUSE. NIGHT

The cat is meowing. The clocks are ticking: In the living room it's 12 am sharp. In the kitchen it's 1 am. In the dark room it's 2 am. On his wrist watch, it's 3 am.

INT. DARK ROOM. 3 AM

We hear something burning, we see eyes dominated by a flickering orange glow. Charles is facing a wall of fire. It's the wall that had all the archived pictures.

A sweating Charles turns away from the wall.

EXT. CAFE. DAY

PART III

It's the 21st of February.

Charles drinks his coffee.
Charles looks to the outside, checks his watch: it's 3 pm. He still looks the same, with his greenish shirt, and same hair, his hourglass wristwatch and his daily newspaper. Charles opens the obituaries.

WOMAN

I knew I'd find you here.

Charles, lowers his newspaper, and looks at Aline. She puts her black purse on the table, sits facing him.

Charles looks, does not speak a word.

The woman pulls an envelope from her purse. It's the same one Charles puts his pictures in. She pulls out the photograph of Nicholas. She shows it to him.

ALINE:

You did this?

Charles does not know what to say.

The woman starts sobbing:

ALINE:
 Nicholas, he told me this is the
 most amazing photograph he's ever
 seen

Aline waits for a reaction, but Nicholas stays still.

ALINE:
 Who are you?

Charles hesitates to answer, but decides to

CHARLES:
 I'm photographer.

Somehow, this relieves Aline who takes a napkin offered by
 Charles to wipe her tears.

ALINE:
 Nicholas...

CHARLES:
 I know. Not everyone gets to see
 themselves that way before they go.

ALINE:
 Nicholas... Was he happy?

Charles smiles, and nods.

Their conversation ends here. They stare at each other, and
 everything else becomes out of focus.

Charles notices something for the first time:
 A reflection
 Himself...

In her eye, the wrinkles are gone, the face is smooth, a
 thin smile, his own eyes, wide and big staring back at him.
 Charles is startled.

EXT. NEAR THE CAFE. DAY

Charles is outside, looking as if he woke up from a dream.
 Few drops of rain pokes his hand. He looks up but is
 interrupted by the sound of a shutter.

Charles turns, and sees someone introducing themselves.

ANONYMOUS PHOTOGRAPHER
 Mr. Kamel. I'm from hourglass
 photography, you'll be receiving
 these pictures by tomorrow.

Charles smiles, but answers:

CHARLES:

No need.

Charles walks a few meters before it starts raining. He looks up, it starts to rain heavily. He keeps his head high and eyes open. For the first time in quite some time, he is living.