

Angelos Michalopoulos



(CREATE A LIFE YOU CAN FALL IN LOVE WITH)

Translation:

Angelos Michalopoulos, Andreas Machairas

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Happiness is man's greatest quest.
Maybe that's why a heart is made of two question marks
facing each other.

If you can understand everything you did in your life,
you did much less than you should have.

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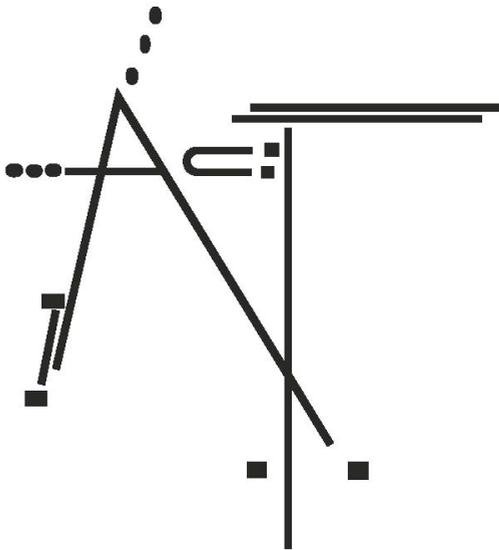
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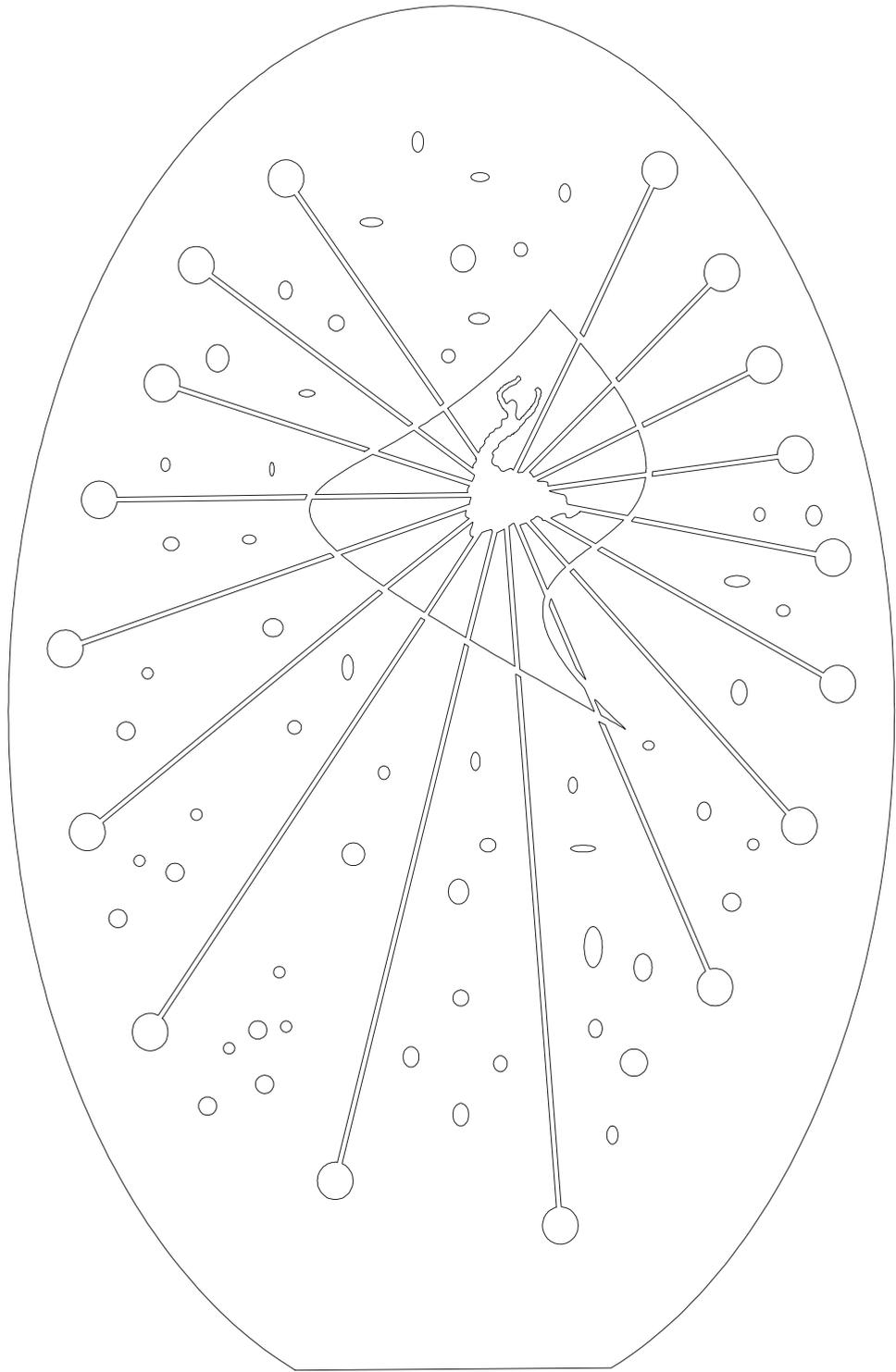
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CHARACTERS:

ZOE
THE MEANING OF HER LIFE





ZOE: You know, wanting to become rich is expensive.

MOL: Sure, because when pockets start talking, hearts run to hide in the one question they are afraid to ask their owners.

ZOE: What?

MOL: I could never figure out why you insist on living as a prisoner of your smartest thought.

ZOE: Before I answer you, allow me to remind you that dignity is the poetry of silence.

MOL: You're saying that because your happiness is the poetry of your kindness, aren't you?

ZOE: I'm saying that because I don't understand why you insist on not realizing that I like entering the next minute of my life as both a prisoner of my worst self and a jailor of my best one.

MOL: How the hell do you manage to stick whatever you really want to ask me on the back side of every answer you give me?

ZOE: What can I say? I drink to the health of any sunbeam that wants to illuminate my mind right now and help me

find the words I'm looking for. I drink to the health of those whose inner light always finds a way to be stronger than the darkness all around them. I wish I was one of them...

MOL: Have you noticed that sometimes at night, when the darkneses manage to push aside people's self-confidence and start talking among themselves, even the light of the strongest floodlight doesn't feel confident enough, but feels weak and helpless? I'm talking about those hours when brains can no longer sell the day's left-over merchandise and offer their owners' hearts at a discount.

ZOE: When my logic feels bad at the end of the day, seeing she hasn't sold out everything I gave her to peddle to the people around me, she disappointedly gives whatever's left to my soul to see if she can do it. *(Pause)* I really like living a silence away from the edge of everything I am able to understand!

MOL: What do you mean?

ZOE: I find an odd pleasure living a silence away from the first thing my life will throw at me that I won't be able to understand. Especially on some nights when I'm all alone and, while measuring the applause my victories have showered me with, I end up inadvertently counting my most painful defeats. I let my emotions walk undisturbed all over my wounds, feeling an invisible yet infinite darkness flirting with me. These are the moments when my mind gets flooded with doubts about whether I can stand rejecting its advances for yet another night.

What a shame that once again in my life I didn't dare go meet my fears during the rare moments I found myself at the top of my life, not afraid of anyone or anything. I always met them when I was feeling blue, wracked with pain. I'm talking about those times in one's life when one feels born in the spot of her life where the last step darkness took before it was forced to become light first met the questions her self-confidence had always wanted to ask her, but was

too afraid to. What a shame that, no matter how many hours I spent in my life looking mesmerized at the dense darkness, I could never figure out which part of my character my soul's light would find if it managed to penetrate it and reach its end. I wonder, which part of me lives at the end of darkness? What material is so strong and durable it can fearlessly stand living at the end of darkness?

MOL: Optimism. It's strange that you always had the impression that your soul's light reached to where you could start clearly discerning your real problems.

ZOE: And do you know why? I think that right at that very last, indecisive step darkness takes before it becomes light, live the answers to all the questions we all would like to ask that which, not knowing what else to call it, we named God. It's so strange, but when we are left alone with God, we start asking him all the questions we don't want to ask ourselves. Maybe we ask the questions whose answer we would never want to know, no matter that we do our best to convince ourselves of the opposite! I don't know what to say anymore. If God has a plan for me, why hasn't he said anything to me about it?

MOL: I have the impression that you are one of those people who like to spend countless hours of their life making love with those thoughts of theirs they don't fully understand.

ZOE: I can't tell you how much I learned about myself while making love with anything in my life my mind had already convinced me I would never understand.

MOL: Don't you think, though, that it's time you stopped looking in your surroundings, or even your knowledge, for the answers to the questions you ought to eventually ask me, hoping that the two of us can finally live in harmony?

ZOE: What are you trying to say?

MOL: Perhaps the time has come for you to ask your mind when it will stop using phony alibis to incriminate your soul. Don't you understand that you are all that your happiness wants to confide to your tears? Don't be fooled, however. It takes a lot of work to understand what this choked yet sensitive cry each tear of yours has been carrying within it for years is trying to tell you. And you know that I'm not talking about the few teardrops you invariably shed, just so the people around you and you yourself could see out of which parts of your perpetually alluring melancholy your image is made of, but those tears that decided a long time ago to never exit your eyes. I'm talking about those inner, invisible tears that know better than anyone else what material your heart is really made of.

ZOE: I often cry just to discover which part of my character my sorrow is made of. Perhaps it's that time, like you said. If you believe that success in life is not feeling sad...

MOL: Happiness is not about not being sad, but not being sad without good reason. But let's not fool ourselves. The saddest people are those who believe that joy is not about feeling sad, but about not showing your sorrow.

ZOE: There are times in life when success is the art of doing nothing.

MOL: Of course. There are times in life when your smartest word is your silence. I hope, though, you are not implying that there are times in life when joy is the art of not feeling.

ZOE: No, but often for me happiness is the art of not thinking. Why, though, don't I let my invisible tears answer you? Listen to their cry carefully. Find me in their cry. And if you can't, find the pieces of my sorrow I have installed in their cry. You should know, though, that, unfortunately, most people are not willing to listen to what their silence wants to confess to them before they convince their words to begin torpedoing their happiness.

MOL: Of course. Most people think they are not to blame for their life's ugliness, because it's always someone else's fault. The favorite delusion of their ego is that their life's ugliness is produced by the ugliness of the people around them and not by them. The second most liked one is that every defeat of theirs is the result of their bad luck. Why should an ego let its owner believe that he's to blame for every bad thing that happens to him, when there are so many other possible reasons? And if they are not enough, then there's always misfortune, the queen of cardboard excuses. The formula, "let your ego do its work, convincing you that your defeats are never your fault", has been working for years now. Luck is a lazy person's favorite excuse. That's why the geography of honesty seldom include places an ego would want to ever visit.

ZOE: I can't tell you how many times in my life I had to first learn how to produce a tear before I earned the right to produce a smile. Maybe because I felt that only this way I might deserve the happiness it would give me. I can't tell you how many times, after letting a teardrop roll down my face and stop at any part it wanted, I had to catch it with my fingertip, bring it close to my eyes and look at it for hours, trying to figure out what my sorrow is made of. How the hell can my tears be the only thing I start producing without the slightest idea what parts of my character I should use?

MOL: I hope you realize that only after you finish producing your misery, will you find out how little your joy trusts you.

ZOE: Only after I finish producing my misery will I be able to realize which victories of my shortcomings I threw inside it. I'd be so happy if I knew how to convince my worst-self to take a break from me!

MOL: Come on, you know that happiness is the reward of emotional honesty.

ZOE: In my case, the reward of my emotional honesty is a teardrop that will never be born.

MOL: Maybe, because crying is no shame, but not knowing how to laugh is.

ZOE: That doesn't apply to me. I learned how to cry from every beauty I didn't let out from inside me because I didn't want to share it with the world around me.

MOL: Certainly. Sorrow is what you feel when you can't find a way to share your inner beauty with the world around you.

ZOE: Maybe the meaning of my life is to discover in its beauty the part of my beauty I never respected.

MOL: Are you, perhaps, ashamed of your beauty, because you're ashamed of everything you are not sure you deserve to have?

ZOE: Ah, what I wouldn't give to be so cunning I could refuse to go anywhere if I didn't take every last lie of mine with me.

MOL: I wish you were wise enough to know which delusions of yours you wouldn't need to solve the next problem in your life. Tell me, what do you feel swallowing as quickly as you can every minute of your life you could not figure out what you must do to enjoy it, so you wouldn't have to see it and get upset?

ZOE: What do you mean?

MOL: Do you realize that your favorite way of self-injury is to leave your day's best part to enjoy the day after? Love the minute you are experiencing, not the next one. Love the hour you are experiencing, not the next one. Love the day you are living, not the next one. You know, this life is not a rehearsal for the next one. You only have one life

to live, one life to enjoy, one life to love. So choose! Your life itself appears before you every minute, looks you in the eyes and asks you to stretch out your hand so she can place every minute of hers in your palm, like a parent giving pocket money to a youngster to go out at night. She gives you every minute of hers like cash money, not temporal gift cards you can spend tomorrow. You either spend the currency life gives you or you lose it forever. Life is cash, not gift checks!

ZOE: Meaning of my life, please forgive me for everything I haven't done to you yet.

MOL: I hope that you won't come again today clutching the intellectual deodorant you like to apply to every word of yours, to make it sound less unpleasant the more meaningless it becomes. I cannot stand listening to you speak to me while forcing every full stop that comes out of your mouth, brimming with self-confidence and self-assurance, masquerade as a weak, irresolute comma. Stop forcing your words to first be the beginning of a valuable silence before they become the end of a useless thought. I beg you, do yourself a huge favor. Move closer to your words right now, embrace them and ask them to stop concocting heavily used heroisms out of stories that never happened.

ZOE: I don't understand. What are you asking me to do?

MOL: Let your next joy be a blank piece of paper on which you won't allow the story of your life to write a single line if it first doesn't remember every last word your ego implored it to forget. Come on! How long do you think you can stand sitting across from those dreams of yours that refuse to get in your head if they don't first make sure that the entire reality in which you live is already there?

ZOE: Every effort I made to become more phonily beautiful used its own silences, while every effort to show the people I love out what material I've constructed my emotional nakedness used its own words.

MOL: Weird! I always thought that your emotional nakedness preferred silences rather than words to express what she felt. The most wonderful words are not the ones that have a beautiful sound but the ones that refused to learn how to lie. The most wonderful words are not the ones that know how to instantly charm, but the ones that endlessly travel from mouths to ears drenched in sweat, carrying the most important truths.

ZOE: Okay, I'll go along with that. So let me describe to you what I see in me right now. I see my mind's nakedness strenuously rehearsing in front of my conscience how to extract from inside it all those words it couldn't say to me for years, not matter how much it struggled. It wants to throw them on the floor right here before us, to finally force me to choose, out of all that they will confide to me, the one word that will help me understand why I've been so mesmerized for so long by the part of my character I always feared the most.

MOL: It's so strange that the part of your character you fear the most is the one you happen to be so much in love with!

ZOE: I feel that every minute I live I am the forgiveness I owe my strengths for everything I will never allow them to make me. Can I tell you something else? I live not knowing whether I prefer being a successful director of a failed reality or a failed director of a successful lie.

MOL: I think it's time you asked your self-confidence about that.

ZOE: Do you know what it's like watching with bated breath your luck talking with your next decision, while you are denied the right to defend yourself? I lived an entire life on the boundaries between the cheapest reality I could buy from my worst-self and the most expensive dream I could sell to my best one. Every daybreak, restlessly pacing back and forth right on the edge of this most expensive dream, I try to invent from scratch the person I will be.