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Calendar

By Atom Egoyan

Hi, it's either the end of January
or the beginning of February.
I can't be more precise
because I'm out of town,
And I will be until
the end of the month.
If you need to get a hold of me,
you can call the studio at...
Hello, accept
the charges from who?
...55, uh, and...
I can't hear you.
Can you speak louder?
Louder.
Thanks for calling.
Hello?
Yes, yes.
He says the location
is really great,
But the story behind it
is really sad.
Mm-Hmm.
Apparently, 40 virgins came here
in order to spread christianism.
Shorgha,
ribsinee and, uh, kayanee...
Gayanee were really
beautiful women.
And durta the king fell
in love with ribsinee.
So he wanted to court her,
and, you know,
Have an affair with her.
Excuse me just one second.
Is your camer going?
My camer?
- Yeah, the, the video.
- No.
Want to check?
I think it's still on.
Yeah.
You know, it's ridiculous.
We only brought so
many batteries with us,

- And it's just going to do...

- It's just a few seconds.

No, it's not a few seconds. It's the third time you've done that.

Do you want to hear the story...

I would prefer, first of all, if you let me.

Do the videotaping, you know. I mean...

Ok. I want to use it too.

I told you.

I mean, you're taking the photographs.

Let me do the video, ok?

- Ok, ok, ok.

- It'll be fine.

Wow, look at this corner.

That's really interesting.

Apparently, um, they built it and then they realized.

It was really very harsh as a corner, as a structure,

So they made a sculpture out of it.

Are you talking about this section here?

Yeah...

Hi, are you there?

Hello?

Well, I finally received the calendar.

It turned out really great.

But I'm very upset though.

You just sent it without a letter or anything.

I really want to know what's going on in your mind.

We've known each other too long to play these games.

We've loved each for too long.

It's very mean to send me something that, I don't know,

Something that meant so much to both of us,

Without letting me know
how you feel about it.
I know, you must be so angry,
But I try not
to be cruel to you.
Why are you being
so cruel to me?
Just share with me whatever
there is to share.
Please...
Please, write to me.
I do miss you.
May I use your phone?
Yeah, um, it's just on top
of the water cooler.
He says, he says it's
a wonderful idea.
That you're making pictures
of the churches.
Oh, because apparently, the
churches are supposed to be.
Completely in relation
with their, uh...
Oh, actually, the spot is...
has something to do.
With the actual, uh,
importance of that,
Of that place, so it had
to be in a particular landscape,
But regardless of, uh,
if it's beautiful or not,
It was more based on where the
actual energy of that place is.
So is there a specific energy
associated to this place.
That we're seeing now,
or that I'm looking at?
What's he saying?
Oh, apparently, uh, like,
before actually building.
The church or the complex,
whatever,
They would bring in people
who had specific...

Like actual ability to sense
the energy,
And they would sort
of show or specify.
Where that particular
spot of energy is.
So they would locate it
and then...
So I guess he must place a lot
of importance as to where I put.
My camer right now to take
this image or something.
I can ask him.
Do you want me to ask him that?
Well, yeah.
Nothing is accidental...
He says if you have put
your camer in this place,
It's really not accidental.
I hope not.
Because he says that the link
between heaven, the skies.
And the church is a very strong,
specific kind of relation.
So it has nothing
to do with chance.
Well, speaking of chance,
you know what?
The light is really
perfect for me right now.
Could you just move
out of the frame,
That way, and, so
I can just take the picture.
No, the light, the sun.
So, yeah...
I got it, ok.
This way?
It's April 24th. I'm working
in the darkroom all day.
Please leave a message at the
sound of the tone. Thanks.
Do you have a phone I could use?
Yeah, sure. It's just on top

of the water cooler.

Thanks.

It's a dwelling dating

from the 13th century.

At the same time as the church.

Does this mean anything to you?

The things he said?

No, the history behind
the things he's saying.

Well, they're, they're
interesting stories.

Just interesting?

I guess.

What does it mean when you
hear me tell you his stories?

What does it mean?

Yeah, it's practical, right?

What's practical?

My services as a translator.

I guess.

They started

the construction in 1213.

He finds it very special
as architecture.

Why?

- Should I ask him?

- Yeah.

A very special solution.

A very special solution
to what?

To the typical...

the architecture, I guess.

You guess, I mean...

I want specific answers.

He has told the story
apparently,

But I wasn't listening obviously,
so I wasn't translating.

- So is he upset?

- I don't know.

Why don't you ask him?

13th century, probably built

at the same time as the church.

The village was built at

the same time as the church.
It was built on the image
of mamahatu,
But I don't think mamahatu would
have looked anything like this.
But I guess it's under her
auspices that it was built.
I'm not sure...
do you want me to find out.
What does he mean
by the image of mamahatu?
- I've no idea who mamahatu was...
- Obviously it's a woman.
Mother of chatum.
The wife of bache-Bache.
A prince from
the times of the...
Who were?
- Hmm?
- Who were?
It was kind of dynasty.
Have you received my letters?
Have you received my messages?
Are you receiving this message?
Why aren't you answering?
Don't you feel like letting me
know what you're feeling?
Why aren't you writing?
Yes, Ive
received all your letters.
Yes, Ive listened
to all your messages.
And yes, I feel I can now
begin to write to you.
It's may 23rd.
And Ive been
in the darkroom all day.
So finally I get
to his office,
And, uh, I go into his room.
And he looks at me,
at all strange places,
Makes me sit down and then goes,
Well, I have an audition

script for you."
I'm really excited
at this point.
And then he gets up, comes next
to my chair and says,
How willing are you to go,
you know, do different things?"
And I'm really in a fix
what to say to this man.
And, uh, finally,
I start doing the stuff,
And he's just telling me,
he's narrating the script to me
And saying, "you're meeting
your long-lost lover"
After seven years,
and you're locking this..."
Um, excuse me, do you know
where the phone is?
Yeah, um- Just on top
of the water cooler.
What can you tell me about
these, the facades here?
It's manyk who did also
the decoration.
And what you're seeing
is Jesus, uh...
Uh, wait, where
am I seeing that?
Right here.
Could you ask him
to move for a second?
This is Jesus and that's...
one of them is Peter and Paul.
So that's Jesus
and Peter and Paul on the side.
I positioned myself
by the entrance.
And pointed my camera
at the two of you,
Waiting to see how
long it would take you.
To notice me standing there.
2 minutes and 54 seconds.

I tried to convince myself
that it might take that long.
For someone to notice
their loved one,
Waiting a few yards away.
2 minutes and 54 seconds.
He says he was watching how hard
you were trying to come up,
On these rocks and try
to settle your camer.
Well, Im trying to find
the right composition.
He understands.
He says you seem to be
interested in what you're seeing.
You're asking
a lot of questions.
Well, I guess that's
part of why we're here.
Don't you feel the need,
To come closer?
Feel, like actually
touch and feel...
Touch and feel the churches?
...realize how
it's made, constructed?
To touch and feel the churches?
Yeah.
Um, hasn't occurred to me.
- Hasn't occurred to you?
- No.
You didn't feel yet...
Would he like to caress them
or something?
No, you know what he means.
Well, no, I don't really.
He says, if you had seen
someone else's photograph
Of these places,
you would have wondered, like,
What it must be inside,
what it would look like inside...
No, I mean, Id just
Think that they were very,

very beautiful places.
And I'd think that they were,
Very, very well composed,
And beautifully lit,
And very seductive.
Is that what he wants to hear?
Mm.
Hi, it's Julia.
I'm just calling to say that
Eva cannot speak Turkish.
Will Macedonian be all right?
Please let me know.
Would you excuse me for a moment
so that I could use the phone?
Oh, sure.
Just over there.
"She's the girl
all dressed in blue,
I'll let you know
just what to do,
Shakin' those hips,
she movin' a thigh
She got the motion
and a look in her eye, yeah,
She's a rocker,
She's a roller,
How shocking, baby,
I want to rock and roll her"
Arsinee.
He's wondering why you're
taking a picture of a place.
It was on a list of the things
I had to photograph...
- It's not a church.
- What do you mean?
It's just not a church.
It's a pagan temple.
- A what?
- A pagan temple, temple.
It looks like a bank.
What do you mean,
"a pagan temple"?
Well, he says it's a temple.
Before he keeps talking,

Is it possible that
we make clear as to whether
Or not he sees himself
as the guide or just a driver?
Because I just sort of
have this impression...
What do you mean?
He keeps telling stories,
and they're great, but...
Yeah, so?
I just don't really know
whether or not,
He's expecting
at the end of this,
That he's going to get
something extra.
What are you talking about?
- I don't know if he'll expect.
More money
or something like that.
Uh... more money?
It's just that...
I want to clarify things.
I just find that,
uh, you know...
- I want to clarify the situation.
- What? Clarify what situation?
The guy is explaining that
the place has a history.
He knows that history. He's
not asking for anything more.
Ok, that's fine.
Tell him Im sorry.
I didn't mean it that way.
Just tell him Im sorry.
I mean it's... right?
It's not a question
of money or something.
It's fine. I shouldn't
have brought it up.
You don't want him to...
it's ok, it's ok.
You moved towards him like.
A beaten and punished animal

begging for forgiveness.

Forgiveness of what?

Who is he to forgive you?

"See the girl

with the diamond ring...

There wasn't a man...

...she can do it fast

She can do it slow,

And they all play along,

but you want to go,

She's a rocker...

She's a roller..."

Hi, it's Julia. It's July 13th.

I just have a couple

of questions about your account.

Please give me a call.

So, what do you do exactly?

I'm an oriental dancer.

Oh.

- That's funny?

- No, I just, uh...

The, um, the first woman

I actually touched.

Was an oriental dancer.

Um, well, I mean it was this,

it was this...

My father had taken me, for my

birthday, to this restaurant.

He owns a Greek restaurant, and there

were some of his friends there.

And at a certain point,

he gave me a \$2 bill,

And he said, "just put

this in her waistband."

So I went... waited till

the dancer came to the table,

And, um, took the bill,

and I opened up her, you know,

Kind of pulled back

her waistband.

And she wasn't really wearing

anything underneath, I remember.

It was actually kind of odd.

And kind of put the \$2 bill in

and kind of... lingered there.

I don't know, I mean it's...

It just left an impression

on me, I guess.

I hate when people touch me

when I dance.

I find it very intrusive.

And I think if they want

to give me money,

They should come

shower in on my head.

It's a compliment.

- Showering it on your head?

- Sure.

That's what you do for

a singer or a musician.

I don't necessarily

shower money on a singer's head.

But, I mean...

I mean, I guess it was just

something that happened.

Excuse me... can I make

a phone call?

Yeah, it's just on top

of the water cooler.

Thanks.

What can he tell us

about this place?

He wants to know if you know.

Anything about

this place at all.

Um, well, if I did,

I wouldn't have just asked him.

What he could tell me about it.

He says that he doesn't normally

like giving out information.

About this place

when he comes here.

It's all a matter

of watching it and letting.

Your eyes discover

what's out there.

Uh, I guess that's what we're

in the process of doing, right?

Yeah, yes.

You can thank him
for his help, though.

- Huh?

- You can thank him for his help.

He wants to know if it wasn't
an important thing.

To do some research about
the place before coming here.

He's telling me

I should have done research?

Well, he wants to know
if there wasn't any need for it.

Oh, um, well, I mean, I am
just doing this as a job, right?

I mean, it wasn't my idea.

The organization, I guess,
must have done research.

Before they gave me the list of
places they wanted photographed.

What's he asking?

He says if you didn't have
the calendar project.

Proposed to you, you would
have never come to Armenia.

Does that bother him
or is that an issue?

I don't know.

Well, I don't... see...

no, I wouldn't have, probably.

You wouldn't
have come to Armenia?

Well, no, I mean,
not if I didn't have.

A specific reason
to come here, no.

How can you be so passive?

How can you ask me to respond
to these questions.

When you know all the answers?

How can you pretend that my
responses are a surprise to you?

Why can't you refer
to our history of each other?

Why can't you tell him what
you know I would think?
You make me feel
like a stranger.
You make me believe that my
answers are disappointing you,
That I'm disappointing you.
You leave me stranded,
alone to defend myself...
Alone to convince you
of so many things
You must already know.
Or have you forgotten?
Has this place made you
forget our history?
Has this place that
you've dreamed of...
Made you forget
all of our dreams?
We're both from here.
Yet being here has made me
from somewhere else.
He says, probably the calendar
project was just a...
Catalyser of something.
Otherwise, you would've just...
A catalyser, what like
a catalyst?
Yeah, that's what I mean,
a catalyst.
Well, I guess. I mean...
Otherwise you would've just done...
Any other research
about any other topic.
I guess, yes.
Hi, it's Julia.
I just realized that sash
speaks three languages.
And it occurred to me
that you might like her
To come with three different
changes of clothing.
Please let me know.
She's beautiful.

Yeah, she is.

How old is she?

Uh... I guess she'd be 8.

- She looks older there.

- Yeah, yeah.

How much does she cost you?

It just went up. It was \$28
a month, and now it's about \$30.

What do you get? You get
a picture... what else?

They send a picture,
I've got a videotape, yeah.

And, no it's...

It's nice.

It makes you... I don't know...

I like it.

It's funny because I sort of...

I wrote a letter.

- She answered?

- Yeah.

Do you have children?

Oh, yeah. I've got two.

How much do they
cost you a month?

I have no idea.

It's a ridiculous question.

You don't think
about those things.

But if you had
to ball-parked it...

I have no idea.

Do you want children?

I don't know. It's...

Do you mind if

I make a phone call?

Uh, the phone is just
on the water cooler.

What are you talking about?

- Children.

- Children?

What does he have
to say about children?

He says if we had children,
we would have better reason.

To come and salvage
ourselves in Armenia.
He thinks that if we had children,
we would come to live in Armenia.
What's he saying now?
Probably it would've been
the best thing for the child.
To live in his ancestors' land.
- And, do you think that?
- Me?
Well, you know what I think.
Which is what?
What are you saying?
I'm saying exactly what we've
been always saying to each other...
That it's a big problem for me
too have a child, I don't know,
Which culture could be best
for him, or for her.
Dear lucine,
How are you?
I miss you very much.
And I think about you
all the time.
I showed your picture
to a very nice lady today,
Who told me how pretty
she thought you were.
I hope your English lessons
are going well.
It's my dream that one day, we'll
be able to speak to each other.
You can come and visit me,
And stay as long as you like.
I like to have guests.
Now I have a question
to ask you.
Do you ever see my wife?
I gave her your address.
And she promised she'd
come and visit you.
Does she come alone?
Does she bring a man with her?
Does he have a mustache?

What does she call him?
A friend,
A boyfriend.
Please let me know
what she calls him.
You must promise that
you'll never tell my wife,
That I'm asking you to do this.
It must remain
our little secret.
A secret between Lucine
and her loving foster daddy.
He says perhaps this spot
is really nice
But he's not really sure
about something.
He says every time he comes
here, he has the feeling,
That he knows so much
about this place, but...
He realizes also every time that
he actually doesn't know much.
He says perhaps you didn't need
really need him
To be around because you
could've found the right spot,
And make perfect images,
For people to look
and appreciate anyhow.
He says that he feels
that he has actually,
Really, uh, become very...
Insignificant man to compare
to the rocks and the stones...
And their history and the people
who made that history.
He says, don't pay attention.
He's saying... dumb things.
He says, why would
that interest you, anyhow?
The things that he is saying.
He doesn't know why he's really
telling you those things.
He says everything is fine.

Don't worry.
What are they saying?
How much longer
are you going to be?
It's hard to say. The light is
really kind of flat right now.
And the sun should be...
about an hour, I guess.
So, do you want
to come along with us?
We're taking just a walk.
- A walk? To where?
- Yeah. I don't know.
I guess, around.
Um... well, no,
I better stay here.
I mean, the camer is here.
It's all set up, and I think...
So?
Well, Im not going
to take it with me.
Well, nothing is going
to happen. Come on.
- You want me to leave the camer here.
- Yeah, so what?
Are you joking? I mean...
No, Im not. It's beautiful.
Let's, let's just take a walk.
There's no one around.
No, I know it's beautiful, but
Im not leaving the camer here.
- I'll have to carry it around.
- Who's going to take it?
I don't know. Anyone could.
Anyone could just show up.
Come on, there's no one.
Just us three.
- No, no.
- Come on, you'll enjoy it.
It's not a question
of wanting to go or not.
It's much stranger than that.
What I really feel like doing
is standing here and watching.

If you change your mind,
come around.
Watching while
the two of you leave me...
And disappear into a landscape
that I'm about to photograph.
Bye!
A strange
thing happened today.
As I was letting this woman in,
our neighbor across the street,
An old Polish man,
called your name.
I have no idea why
he would think she was you.
The only thing you have
in common is your hair,
Your long, beautiful hair,
Which I still dream of running
my fingers through.
Do you know this song?
A church
and a fortress.
A fortress in ruins.
All that's meant to protect us
is bound to fall apart,
Bound to become contrived,
useless and absurd.
All that's meant to protect
is bound to isolate.
And all that's meant
to isolate is bound to hurt.
We're sorry,
your call did not go through.
Will you please hang up
and try your call again.
This is a recording.
We're sorry, your call
did not go through.
Will you please hang up
and try your call again.
This is a recording.
What are you doing?
What are you doing?

Do you know what
he's talking about?
Do you know what
he's talking about?
Do you want me to explain?
- I guess not.
- Yeah, explain.
Explain.
Well, he's explaining
The structure
of the fortress.
In 1930... when they
were doing exploration...
He's talking non-Stop.
I can't explain anything.
They've done explorations here.
They've found metals...
Everything they've found,
They've moved it
to... the museum.
Um, he wants to know
if you mean...
Uh, or you wish to exactly
know how he feels about me.
If he has any desire
towards me or not.
Is that what you want to know?
I want to know how...
Yes, I guess I want to know
where this is all going to lead.
I mean, Ive obviously lost
something very close to me,
And I want to know
how he feels about that.
He feels that you are
two adventurous men.
That Im too adventurous?
No, the two of you are
very adventurous men.
Why? Why would he feel that way?
He says, because we know that we
are talking about something...
Where we do not... can't
find many other things,

Such as evil and the divine.
I don't understand.
He says...
He says that your mind is such
that many thoughts may, uh...
Come and, um, many deliberations
might happen in one's thought,
And the truth of the matter is
that he has to confess that,
Yes indeed, he has had
a feeling of desire towards me,
But he also has consciously, not
unconsciously, tried to, um...
Get rid of those thoughts.
No, it was really
difficult in the beginning.
I actually didn't
speak any English.
I can remember this one time,
I was on a beach,
and there are all these kids
And they're all singing,
yellow submarine.
I didn't know the words
and all I could hear was like,
Yell-A submarine,
yell-A submarine.
So, I started singing with them
and I was going, like...
Yell-A submarine...
yell-A submarine.
I mean, you're so vulnerable to
that, right, when you're a kid.
You just sort of, like...
you just sort of imitate, like,
What you think other people
w... want to hear,
But it doesn't necessarily have
anything to do with what you're
Feeling or, you know, what's
going through your mind.
Is there a phone
that I could use?
Oh, yeah, um...

Just on top of
the water cooler, there.
"I don't know
Another way it could go
I'm living my life...
Without you.
I miss you, baby.
I miss you so.
How much I love you..."
What's so funny?
He knows how to do a kgb thing.
What do you mean?
Checking your passport.
You want him to do it?
You want to see that?
Yes.
So, this is going to be him
Checking my passport
like he's a KGB agent.
- He's checking my passport as...
- Ok.
- He was a kgb agent.
- Ok, ok.
Let him do it to me.
Let him do it to the camer.
- Let him do it to the camer?
- Yeah.
Ok.
Try it.
He wants your passport.
My passport.
Ok.
Here we go.
"Surrounded by darkness,
Even in broad daylight
I keep on trying, but I...
Feel like Im losing the fight,
Tell me what's right,
Tell me what's wrong,
Only got one life,
It's only for so long,
I'm living my life,
Without you,
Without you"

Are you still listening?
You can put down the phone now.
Yeah, it's ok. Its enough.
Is everything all right?
Yeah, everything's fine.
So when you said before that
your father was Armenian,
I mean, he's not really
Armenian, or, like...
Well, he considers
himself to be...
Well, why would he...
I mean, it's ridiculous
I mean, that's like saying,
I consider myself Yugoslavian,,,
Or inuit or something.
I mean it's like...
I mean that, just
because he has...
I mean... I mean, because his
grandfather was Armenian...
Yeah, I suppose
it is strange.
Yeah, I mean, my...
I don't know, it's kind
of weird, I mean...
I mean, I consider myself
to be Egyptian
And I grew up in Canada,
born in Canada.
And I still trace myself,
you know...
Yeah, but you act Egyptian.
And like, the way you
walked in here and stuff.
How does one act Egyptian?
Just sort of like
the way you moved around.
It's kind of... like,
I can tell...
Kind of the way you...
I don't know, just the perfume.
...carry myself?
Well, the perfume and stuff.

And just sort of...
You know there's a kind of,
uh, a tendency you have towards,
Kind of appearing
in profile all the time.
You know like they do on...
kind of like cryptic...
- Nefertiti, ha, ha.
- Well, sort of, yeah. Sort of...
Oh, I see... I see.
But you wouldn't
probably get that in me
- I wouldn't think, right?
- Well, I can see it in you.
I wouldn't think
you were Canadian.
- You "conceive" in me?
- I can "see" it in you.
Oh, you can see it.
Hi,
Im not in at the present time.
Please leave a message at the
sound of the tone. Thank you.
Today is the last day
of the year.
I'm about to take
our calendar off the wall.
I looked at all
the pictures again.
I was surprised to remember
what happened in each place.
It's strange, but the strongest
memory I have has nothing,
To do with any of the churches.
It was that time we drove into
that huge flock of sheep.
The one that never
seemed to end.
You took out your camer,
and as you were taping,
He placed his hand on mine.
I remember because
I gripped his hand...
Watching you grip your

camer so tightly,
Like you knew what was
happening behind you.
Did you know?
Were you there?
Are you there?