THE SANDS OF TIME

FADE IN:

INT. PETER’S OLD BEDROOM — DAY — FLASHBACK, A FEW YEARS AGO

We see an hourglass on a bookshelf. The sand is running. There’s a little porcelain coin with the portrait of a little girl on it.

PETER (V.O.)
Time is, like a river of sand. Solid yet fluid. If you run your fingers through it, you can feel it’s every grain. What would you do with this sand, if you could grab it?

(the shelf shakes a bit)
What would you do, if you could reverse it’s very stream?

Something seems to slam the other side of the wall, and it shakes the shelf even harder. The hourglass and the porcelain coin both fall. We look at them crashing on the ground. The porcelain coin falls first, breaking in half, then the hourglass, sending sand everywhere.

PETER (V.O.)
A power many wish they had. To repass an exam. To redo a date. To repair a mistake. But all I wanted was to remember.

The crash reverses itself. The hourglass and the coin fly back on the shelf and repair themselves.

EXT. SNOWY LONDON STREET — EVENING — PRESENT DAY

We follow PETER walking in the street. He’s listening to music with his headphones, and holding his smartphone in his hand. He takes his keys out and enters a building. It’s an old-fashioned one, with creaking wooden stairs. He starts climbing them, but there’s melted snow, and he slips.

He falls down, and grunts. The music stops, because his phone fell from his hand and unplugged the headphones. Peter stands up slowly, holding onto the handrail, trying not to slip again. He picks up the phone. It won’t light up. He sighs, and puts it in his pocket with his headphones. The door upstairs open. It’s ALAN. He sees Peter.

ALAN
Hey Pete. You all right?
PETER
I think. But I broke my phone though.

ALAN
Oh crap. Want me to take a look?

PETER
No thanks, I'll go to the store.

He climbs up the stairs, and Alan lets him in.

ALAN
(closing the door)
Well, all my condolences man.

INT. PETER’S APARTMENT — EVENING

Peter walks across the living room. He opens the door, and throws his backpack on the bed, then closes it and turns to Alan.

PETER
So. Abby is coming right?

ALAN
She said that she would.

Alan goes to the window and looks through the blinders.

PETER
(hanging his coat)
Not gonna dump us for the boyfriend again?

ALAN
Well she told me he was in Ireland.

PETER
Okay. I'll go in my room, got work to do.

ALAN
Again? What's giving so much trouble?

PETER
That P.h.D. ain't gonna land in my hands by itself.
Alan chuckles. Peter goes in his room. He sits at the desk, and starts pulling philosophy treaties books out of his bag. He sees something on his table, it's the porcelain coin from the flashback, but it's in one piece. He starts writing something, and stares at his book a bit. He writes a bit more. We hear television sounds coming from the living room. Alan is watching the news. The news are presented by JOHN.

JOHN
This morning, another strange electromagnetic field was sighted in Brighton. The man responsible is suspected to be Mr.Roy Ronson, a simple office worker, with no previous incident of the sort.

Peter seems to listen.

JOHN
The event has been filmed by a passer-by. Let’s see the images.

Peter is writing. We hear the sound from the television. We hear shouts, and crashing, people screaming.

JOHN
Scary stuff. Right away, a report from George Abitbol.

We hear the door open. John turns off the TV. ABBY comes in, and puts her bag down.

ABBY
Hey guys!

ALAN
Pete?

PETER
Coming!

He starts standing up, after taking a last look at the porcelain coin.

PETER
Hey, how was it? The conference. About hum…

ABBY
The uncertainty principle. It was great.

They start leaving the apartment, the door closes behind them.
INT. PIZZA STORE — EVENING — A FEW MINUTES LATER

Abby, Alan and Peter are sitting at a table, waiting. The restaurant is completely empty except for then. Someone comes out from the kitchen, and gets to the counter. It’s JOHN, the same person as the news presenter somehow, but he looks the same age as Peter.

JOHN
The Istanbuls are in the oven. So you guys had a good week?

ALAN
Nothing very exciting really.

JOHN
Hey Abby, didn’t you go to that conference?

ABBY
Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle. Yup.

JOHN
Man I wish I could have been there. We’re beginning to study it too.

ALAN
Abby tried explaining it to me and Pete, but we didn’t get a word of it.

PETER
(smiling, but he seems a bit in distracted)
I understood it.

JOHN
(he walks around the counter)
Well basically it’s a principle from quantum physics that says that you have a limit to…

While he speaks and walks, he accidentally knocks off a glass bottle of seasoning oil. Peter sees it. Before it touches the ground, he reaches his hand towards it, and it’s course reverses, flying back to the top of the counter. They all jump, except Peter. They are all looking at him surprised, and a bit scared. He realizes it, and looks down.

PETER
Yeah, I can do that.
JOHN
Holy shit Pete! You’re one of them?

ABBY
Oh my god.

ALAN
You… Did you just levitate this bottle?

ABBY
No, no. You reversed time, didn’t you?

PETER
Yeah. Please don’t tell anybody.

JOHN
Of… of course dude.

ALAN
Pete, who do you think we are?

ABBY
But that… that was time manipulation. It… it has huge implications.

JOHN
What are you thinking about?

ABBY
First it’s breaking way too many rules…

PETER
Oh really?…

ALAN
Yeah, time isn’t supposed to be reversible. Accelerated or slowed, but never reversed.

JOHN
How do you know this kind of stuff?

ALAN
I did physics before I did computers, John.
ABBY
Yeah but the fact is there, he can reverse it.

ALAN
Hey Pete. Your phone that you broke earlier, did you try repairing it like that?

Peter shakes his head sideways.

ALAN
Try it.

Peter reluctantly puts his phone on the table, and puts his hand over it. He concentrates, and the phone’s screen lights up again. They all wow.

ALAN
So that was definitely time reversal.

JOHN
Why does that make you sure of it?

ALAN
Peter has no idea how to repair a phone. If his power was to manipulate stuff he wouldn’t be able to do something as complex as that.

ABBY
Wait, there’s something I must test out. John, can I take something from the kitchen?

Abby goes towards the kitchen, but stops in her way. She takes a transparent plastic cup from behind the counter and a bottle of soda from the fridge. She puts the cup on the table in front of Peter, and fills it with soda. She then puts the half-empty bottle on the counter, away from the table. Meanwhile John took a chair and sat at their table.

ABBY
Reverse it.

Peter looks at her, intrigued. He puts his hand over the cup. It empties itself progressively. Abby looks at the bottle. It is still half-empty. She falls on her chair.

ABBY
You just erased these 500 milliliters of soda from our plane of existence.
PETER
What?

ABBY
It came from this bottle. You reversed, and where’s the drink now?

JOHN
Wow. Wait, wait, could we try the other way around then?

ALAN
Like creating stuff?

JOHN
Yeah.

ALAN
Oh that would solve the rent problems.

He takes the bottle from the counter, and pours some of the drink in the cup, then puts the bottle in front of Peter, and the cup on the counter.

PETER
Guys… I really don’t like this. I never use my powers, I don’t know their full extent. What I did earlier was just a reflex.

ABBY
Come on Pete, please. For science.

Peter looks at her, sighs, then puts his hand on the bottle. It fills up.

INT. PETER’S BEDROOM — NIGHT — TWO HOURS LATER

Peter is looking at the coin in his bedroom. The light is off, but the moon is bright. He touches it softly, looking at the little girl’s face. He hears Abby and Alan talking loudly and indistinctly behind him. He takes a last look at the coin, and walks towards them.

EXT. LONDON — NIGHT

We see a reversed and accelerated time-lapse of London, from night to morning. We hear Alan, John and Abby speaking meanwhile.
ALAN(V.O.)
I would probably use it to be first of my class. Not that I would be proud of it.

JOHN(V.O.)
I think I would use it to get money. Just a little, so that I can stop working here.

ABBY(V.O.)
Oh the ways I would want to use it are too many. I would study it, most likely. But I think it’s possible that I would try to use at my own advantage too.
(chuckles)

INT. THE APARTMENT’S LIVING ROOM — NIGHT

Peter is sitting on the couch alone, and facing the camera, as if he was being interviewed.

PETER
(he stays silent for a bit, as if he didn’t know what to say)
I only really used it once before today. I mean I tested it a few times, but there was only one thing I really wanted to use it for.

We see a quick flashback of the scene from the very beginning, with the coin flying back onto the shelf.

INT. PETER’S BEDROOM — MORNING — THE NEXT DAY

Peter is staring at the ceiling, lying in his bed. He hears the television from the living room. He gets out of his bed, tripping on something on the ground, and catching the wall to avoid falling. He takes a look at the desk, and walks out of the room. We hear him talking indistinctly from the living room. We look at the hourglass that was on his room’s shelf. It’s sand runs dry. We see the porcelain coin on the desk. It’s broken in half.

FADE OUT.

THE END