

1 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - MORNING - FUTURE

Nelli, with a pale face, walks into the room. The room is very, very plain. There is a simple bed, a desk with a picture and a notebook, a chair, and a closed Bible on the floor.

Nelli walks up slowly to the desk. She opens the notebook.

NELLI (V.O.)
September 3rd, 2009. As of today, I,
NELLI TROFIMUK, will dedicate the
rest of my life to God.

She sits down. She looks at the picture of her and Elina on the desk. They are both smiling.

2 EXT. PARK - DAY - SUNNY

NELLI, a pretty brunette girl, is standing by the volleyball net with a big smile on her face. Next to her is Elina, concentrating on the ball in the air. Around them are several guys and girls all focused on the game, except for MIKE TARASENKO, an easy-going skinny guy, who is looking at his cellphone while standing on the court.

They are in a public park with a large grass field. A few trees are off to the side. There is playground in the back with several kids playing in it. Some people are walking along the various pathways. Some boys are riding on skateboards. A mother is playing with her small daughter. A few people are sitting down on the grass next to the volleyball net watching the game. LILY is sitting by herself alone on the side, plucking at the grass. A few other people are sitting in folding chairs by the trees. There is a water cooler off to the side.

The volleyball game is heated, with plenty of yelling and excitement. There is a long rally before the ball finally goes out of bounds. Vadim wipes his forehead as he waits for the ball. MICHAEL throws it to him.

VADIM
(loudly)
Twenty-four twenty-five, game point,
servus!

The serve successfully lands on the other side and the opposing team receives the ball. They hit it back over the net. The ball is rallied back and forth.

Suddenly, the ball is poorly received on Vadim's side and is about to go out of bounds. Nelli runs for the ball and saves it by diving forward. Vadim races up behind her and sets up

the next hitter for a spike. Michael leaps into the air for the final hit and unfortunately slams it directly into the net. He groans in disappointment along with the rest of the team as they lose. Someone from the winning side yells: "GAME!"

Vadim gives Nelli a hand.

VADIM
(impressed)
Go Nelli. Nice hustle.

Nelli smiles at him as she gets to her feet. Elina walks up to them.

ELINA
(sarcastically but not mean)
We were so close. Michael just had to ruin it.

MICHAEL
(arrogantly)
Miracles happen every once in a while.

The two teams shake each others hands, giving high fives, and saying: "Good game." The next team in line to play gets up and starts going in the court.

Nelli gets to her feet, and runs off to get a drink from the drinking fountain. Behind her, Vadim and Elina (talking) walk off the court together. She runs along the park pathway going past several trees and the playground before she reaches the fountain.

She thirstily drinks the water.

She begins to run back toward the volleyball net and suddenly trips over her feet, landing harshly on the cement.

NELLI
(painfully)
Oww.

She slowly sits up, a confused look on her face. She looks at her knee, noticing a slight red scratch. Someone approaches her from the front. Nelli looks up to see Vadim standing with an outstretched hand.

VADIM
(kindly)
Are you okay?

NELLI

(flustered)
Ohh. I'm fine. That was weird. I
don't even know how I tripped.

VADIM
Well, sometimes these things happen.

He notices the scratch on her knee.

VADIM
You're bleeding.

Nelli looks closely at her knee. The blood is slowly oozing
out.

NELLI
Oh!

Vadim bends down by Nelli observing her knee.

VADIM
I have a first aid kit in my car. If
you want I can go get it.

NELLI
No. Its okay. I'll just wash it off.
I think it will be fine.

VADIM
Are you sure? It might be better to
take care of it. It could get
infected or something.

NELLI
Nah. Its only a little scratch.
Thanks for offering though.

Vadim gets up and helps Nelli to her feet by giving her his
hand. She stands up and brushes herself off.

VADIM
Are you still going to play the next
game?

NELLI
Oh yeah. Definitely. Save me a spot.
I'll get this cleaned up and then
I'll come.

VADIM
Don't push yourself too hard.

NELLI
(confidently)

I can handle a little thing like
this.

She leaves Vadim's side and goes toward the bathroom. She has a satisfied smile on her face. Vadim walks back to the volleyball net.

3 EXT. PARK - DAY - UNDER THE TREES

Michael, Vadim, and Elina are sitting in folding chairs in the shade.

MICHAEL
School and work, school and work.
That's about everything that I hear
nowadays.

Nelli walks up and sits next to Elina in an available folding chair. She glances at Vadim. Vadim and Elina are sitting next to each other. A volleyball game is being played in front of them.

MICHAEL
(intently)
School and work have somehow gotten
to be way more important than
church. No one will ever admit this
if you ask them, but given a choice
between going to school, going to
work, or going to church. Guess
which one gets sacrificed the most?

ELINA
Church.

Michael nods his head.

Mike Tarasenko is sitting in a chair next to Michael texting with his cellphone.

MICHAEL
Right Nelli?

NELLI
(innocently)
What?

MICHAEL
People sacrificing church for
school.

NELLI
(defensively)
I already told you that I can't join

Choir. Do you know how hard it was to get into some of the classes that I need. I would rather skip choir for a few months than spend ten years getting my bachelors.

MICHAEL
I'm just saying...

NELLI
(self-conscious)
And its not like I completely ditch church. I always try to make to make it whenever I can.

MICHAEL
Really? Let me see. You also miss Wednesday Church, Youth Service, Friday Prayer, and...

Nelli gives him a guilty smile.

VADIM
(interrupting)
I think that its about finding a balance between how much time you put into school and how much you give to God. You can't do too much of one thing and neglect the other Some days you go to church and some days to school and some days to work. There is a time for everything.

NELLI
Exactly. I go to school during the week, and go to church on Sunday.

VADIM
Its not even about going to church. It about how much personal time you put into God. How much you read the Bible and pray.

ELINA
That's true. You could go to church everyday, but if you don't read the Bible and pray, it won't matter at all.

MICHAEL
Anyway, its just frustrating. Whenever I ask someone "Why aren't you in choir?" they say "I have a

class". Why don't you come to Youth?
"I have a class" They never come to
church on Wednesday, never come to
Friday prayer, don't go to Yecheyka
on Saturday because, I don't know,
"I'm taking 21 units or something."
Same thing with work.

VADIM

That's just the way things are.

MICHAEL

But its not the way things should
be.

Nelli frowns at Michael. He doesn't notice.

4

EXT. PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

The volleyball net is down and several guys are folding it
up. One guy is telling the other the best way to do it.

Lily is walking away all alone.

Sidlovski is folding up the chairs. He puts one over his
shoulder.

SIDLOVSKI

Alright everyone. I'm out.

He is shaking hands in farewell. Some of the younger guys
give him a hug.

NELLI

Good Night.

Nelli is walking towards the car with Elina. She wipes her
forehead.

NELLI

(looking at her hand)
I'm sweating.

ELINA

Really, I'm kinda cold.

NELLI

I'm cold too, so this is really
weird.

ELINA

You might be sick with a fever or
something. Here, let me see.

Elina touches Nelli's forehead.

ELINA
Its not a fever.

NELLI
Really? I do feel kinda sick.

They come up to Elina's car.

ELINA
I'll see you on Saturday.

She gives Nelli a hug. She peers at Vadim who is slowly approaching them.

NELLI
Bye.

ELINA
Bye...
(looking at Vadim)
Bye Vadim.

VADIM
Good Night.

Just as Elina is about to get into the car, Nelli turns around to face Vadim and suddenly falls over, roughly landing on the cement.

ELINA
Are you all right?

Nelli laughs. Elina also.

NELLI
(flustered)
Yeah, yeah, I'm fine. That was weird.

She gets up and examines her injured knee.

VADIM
(approaching)
You seem to be falling a lot lately.

NELLI
(trying to laugh it off)
I know. I'm really clumsy today.

VADIM
(way too nice)
Will you be okay?

NELLI
(embarrassed)
I'm fine, I'm fine.

She gets up.

NELLI
I'll see you guys later.

Nelli and walks to her car, there is pain on her face after she turns away from Vadim. Vadim looks at Elina with a puzzled look. Elina returns the look and shrugs.

5 INT. NELLI'S ROOM

Nelli comes into her room and sits on the bed. She looks sick. She gets up to leave the room and abruptly loses balance crashing into the wall.

She lies there for a moment moaning. She carefully sits up.

Slowly she stands up supporting herself with the wall. She stands on her legs for a while as if she expects to fall down at any time. Nothing seems to happen.

She breaths in and out in an unhealthy fashion and walks out of the room, supporting herself with the walls.

6 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

The Doctor walks into the room. Nelli is lying on the bed. She is dressed in hospital clothes. He smiles at her.

DOCTOR
Hi, you must be Nelli.

Nelli's eyes actually brighten up when she sees the doctor, but she still looks sort of sick. (She has been sitting there for a long time)

NELLI
Yes.

DOCTOR
Trofimuk. Did I say it right.
(she nods her head)
It's Russian isn't it.

NELLI
Ukrainian.

DOCTOR
(slightly surprised)
Oh really. Well, I'm Doctor Stan.

Pleased to meet you.

They shake hands.

DOCTOR

So. Tell me what's wrong.

NELLI

(points to her knee)

First of all, the muscles in my legs were acting out yesterday. I was just walking normally when suddenly my legs gave out for no reason.

The Doctor examines her injured leg.

NELLI

And when I came home, my head started hurting badly and I felt nauseated.

JOHN

How do you feel now?

NELLI

I still feel horrible.

DOCTOR

Has this sort of thing ever happened to you before?

Nelli shakes her head in reply.

The Doctor looks through some papers on the desk.

DOCTOR

Are you on any medications?

NELLI

No.

DOCTOR

Did you ever have any previous medical conditions?

NELLI

No.

DOCTOR

Do you exercise regularly?

NELLI

Kinda.

The Doctor turns back and scribbles something on the papers.

DOCTOR
(professionally)

So, Nelli, we'll have to run a few tests to figure out what's going on. However, since you complained about being nauseous and having a muscle spasm, I'm guessing that its probably linked to a stress-related strain on your body.

Nelli nods in agreement.

DOCTOR
I think that you are just not getting enough sleep and stressing out too much. Do you work somewhere?

NELLI
Yeah. Retail.

DOCTOR
And how many hours do you work?

NELLI
About twenty five to thirty hours a week.

DOCTOR
And do you go to school?

NELLI
CSUS.

DOCTOR
Really. Good for you. What's your major?

NELLI
I'm environmental sciences.

DOCTOR
Oh, a science major. You are probably taking a lot of classes.

NELLI
Yeah. Sixteen units.

The Doctor moves closer to Nelli.

DOCTOR
Do you live with your parents?

NELLI

No. My parents moved out to San Diego. I decided to stay here.

DOCTOR

So you live by yourself?

NELLI

Yes.

DOCTOR

So are you living in a dorm, or apartment...

NELLI

I live in my parent's house...My parents actually planned to sell the house before they moved, but its a really bad time to sell a house right now, so I'm living their until we find a buyer.

DOCTOR

It must be hard living by yourself.

NELLI

I'm used to it.

DOCTOR

(concerned)

Nelli. You are still young, and you have a very very long future ahead of you. You won't help yourself later if you overwork yourself now.

NELLI

(weakly)

Yeah. I guess.

DOCTOR

I am going to prescribe some medication for the headache, but the thing you should focus on the most should be getting a lot of sleep and rest.

Nelli nods her head.

7 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

The Nurse comes into the room with a case. She smiles at Nelli. She sticks a needle into her arm and draws out some blood.

DOCTOR
Well, we're all done here. We'll
have the test results in a few days
and we'll call you in later.

NELLI
(half-heartedly)
Thank you.

DOCTOR
Take care. Remember don't be active
and be sure to get plenty of rest.
Eat a healthy meal too.

NELLI
I will.

The nurse walks out the room with the Doctor. She is holding
the blood sample in her hand.

8 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - DAY

Nelli comes home looking only slightly better than she did
before.

9 INT. BATHROOM

She takes a shower.

She opens up her prescription and takes some pills. She
drinks them down with a water bottle. She is frowning from
the bad taste of the medicine.

10 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - GETTING DARK

Nelli sits down on her bed and takes out her Bible to read.
Her head starts bobbing and her eyes begin to close. She
puts the bible on her desk and gets on her knees.

NELLI
(solemnly)
God. Thank you for everything...
Heal me of this sickness. You are
the Healer that I depend upon. All
my trust is in You. Amen.

She gets up and crawls into bed, turning off the lights.

11 INT. NELLI'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Nelli drives into the parking lot at MGC Church. The time is
7:20 on her car clock.

12 INT. MGC CHURCH - MAIN HALL

Nelli walks into the sanctuary. The back rows are blocked of with white ropes. Nelli spots her friend, Dina, standing towards the back. She goes over to her, walking by a few people. Nelli smiles sweetly at them. A surprised Dina returns the smile.

DINA
(whispering)
Don't you have a class today?

NELLI
(whispering)
Yes, but I decided to skip.

DINA
Really?...

NELLI
Yeah. I just decided to come to Youth. I haven't been her in a long time.

The worship leader begins the final prayer. The music stops and Nelli voice grows to a whisper.

NELLI
(surprised)
Is worship already over?

DINA
Yeah.

NELLI
Why so early.

DINA
They changed the time. Youth starts at seven now.

NELLI
Oh.

Nelli looks around the hall at the people in church. No one around them is praying at all. She sees Lily standing all by herself in a corner of the church.

13 INT. MGC CHURCH - MAIN HALL

SIDLOVSKI is preaching. The topic is James chapter 4.

SIDLOVSKI
And here James is saying that our life is like a mist. A bit of steam that will disappear like it never

was there...

Nelli is listening attentively. She eyes Vadim sitting in the front.

14 EXT. MGC CHURCH - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Nelli, Dina, and Random Girl are standing in a corner of the church talking amongst themselves. They see Michael leave a group of guys and head towards them. Dina says something and they all giggle.

Michael comes up to them.

MICHAEL
(in Russian)
Girls. Hi.

He and shakes their hands.

MICHAEL
So Nelli, I see you finally came to Youth.

NELLI
Yeah. I decided to come. I haven't been to Youth in a while.

MICHAEL
And what do you think of it? A lot has changed.

NELLI
Yeah, its different. It used to be more, more...

Michael raises his eyebrows waiting for her reply.

NELLI
I don't know how to say it. Its just different.

MICHAEL
Is it better or worse?

NELLI
I don't...I guess its better.

MICHAEL
Did you notice...

Carina breaks into the huddle.

CARINA

(oblivious towards Michael)
Hi Nelli.

NELLI
Oh, hi...

They hug each other. Michael looks a bit annoyed.

CARINA
You look really nice. Where did you
get that skirt?

NELLI
Oh, I got it on sale from Nordstrom.

CARINA
I really like the strips. It looks
really cute.

Michael is impatient.

NELLI
Thanks. I like your outfit also.

CARINA
Aww. Thanks. My hair is a mess
though. It took me forever to get it
combed.

NELLI
No, I think its fine.

MICHAEL
(gently but with feeling)
Carina!

Carina turns around and finally notices Michael.

CARINA
Oh, hi. I'm sorry.

She shakes Michael's hand.

MICHAEL
You just interrupted our
conversation.

CARINA
(clearly upset)
Uh... Okay. Okay. I'm sorry. I'll
just leave then.

She turns around starts walking away.

MICHAEL
(rolling his eyes)
Carina, I was just joking.

CARINA
No, no. I understand.

She demonstratively walks away.

MICHAEL
Carina!

She doesn't look back. Michael shakes his head. The other three girls give him a look.

MICHAEL
Yes. I agree, I'm the bad guy.

Dina whispers something into Random Girl's ear. They both look accusingly at Michael. Michael raises his eyebrows at them and returns to Nelli.

MICHAEL
Anyway, Nelli, I was saying. Did you notice that we barely pray anymore at Youth. We used to actually pray during Youth Services before. Now Worship is all big and loud, but the moment the music stops, its dead silence.

NELLI
Yeah, it was a bit awkward when the music stopped.

Mike Tarasenko is sitting on a bench texting.

MICHAEL
Its like no one realizes that you can pray without music.

DINA
Its not like everyone stops praying. Prayer doesn't have to be loud to be good.

MICHAEL
(smirk)
There is a big difference between a quiet prayer and dead silence.

NELLI
Anyway. I think I should go. I have to get up early tomorrow.

MICHAEL
You have school tomorrow?

NELLI
Actually, I'm not going to school
tomorrow.

MICHAEL
Oh. Where are you going?

NELLI
(eyes gleaming)
Its a secret.

MICHAEL
(sarcastic laugh)
Girls and their secrets.

Nelli and Michael walk in opposite directions.

15 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Nelli is sitting on the hospital bed, dressed in regular
clothes.

The Doctor enters the room.

DOCTOR
(nervous)
Nelli. Hi, how are you doing.

NELLI
Well, I feel a lot better. I took a
few days off work and slept a lot.

DOCTOR
I'm very glad to hear that.

The Doctor starts fumbling about with some papers.

NELLI
My legs acted up a few times, but I
think its getting better.

She kicks her leg back and forth. The doctor brings out some
x-rays.

DOCTOR
Nelli...

Nelli's eyes widen. (She knows something is wrong)

DOCTOR
(pause)

The test results came in and you
have been diagnosed with a genetic
disorder.

Nelli swallows.

DOCTOR

The muscle spasm that you are
experiencing is due to a very rare
malfunction in your DNA called a
spinocerebellar ataxia of an
autosomal recessive inheritance.

Nelli stares. (Very scared and very confused)

DOCTOR

In other words, there is a gene in
your DNA that is destroying your
immune system and damaging your
nerves.

Nelli is white. Her heart thumps in her chest.

NELLI

(fearfully)

And what will happen to me?

DOCTOR

Well the symptoms differ from
patient to patient, but usually
there is a lack of coordination
between the internal organs due to
nerve damage.

NELLI

And how do I stop it?

DOCTOR

(sympathetically)

Modern medical knowledge has not yet
discovered a treatment for it.

Nelli starts gasping for air.

NELLI

So what will happen to me...

DOCTOR

I can't say for sure, but as the
disorder progresses you may run into
any number of complications ranging
from decreased muscle coordination
to organ failure.

NELLI
(slowly)
Am I going to die?

The doctor doesn't answer.

NELLI
How much longer do I have?

DOCTOR
I can't give you a time line.....
but patients with this disorder
generally live about one to three
years.

NELLI
One Year...

DOCTOR
I'm very sorry.

Nelli shakes her head in denial and closes her eyes.

NELLI
(mumbling/teary-eyed)
No, no.

DOCTOR
I'm very sorry.

Nelli starts crying, her faced contorted with grief. The Doctor sadly puts his hand on her shoulder and waits.

16 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nelli bursts into the room and falls on her knees.

NELLI
(sobbing unintelligibly)
Oh God... Oh God... Please forgive
me...

She covers her face with the bed.

17 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - DAY

Nelli is silently laying on her bed staring off into space. Her phone vibrates. Elina sent her a text message.

Nelli picks it up and looks at the message. "Are you going to Alex's birthday party today"

She types "I'm busy" and sends it. She throws the phone on the ground and hugs her pillow. She stares at the phone on

the floor. She picks it up and sends Elina another text.

"Can you come over right now"

"Why, is something wrong"

"Tell you later"

18 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - LATER

Elina walks through the door. She takes one look at Nelli and knows that something is very wrong. At the sight of Elina, Nelli starts crying hysterically. Elina comes over and silently hugs her friend. Nelli cries into her shoulder.

19 INT. NELLI'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nelli is sitting by the table. She is covered with a blanket. Elina brings her a cup of tea and sets it in front of her.

There is a moment of silence. Elina doesn't really know what to say. Nelli sips her tea. Elina is about to say something, but then changes her mind. Nelli takes another sip of tea.

20 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - MORNING

Nelli is staring off into space. Curled up next to her is Elina, sound asleep.

Elina's phone vibrates. Elina jerks herself awake. She looks at the time. It is 7:00am. She sits up.

NELLI

You need to go to school.

ELINA

(sleepily)

Its okay. I'll stay here.

NELLI

No. You should go.

ELINA

I only have one class.

NELLI

Please. I'll be fine.

The two friends stare at each other. Finally Elina submits.

ELINA

Okay.

She gets up, wiping her eyes and looking around the room.

ELINA

I'll come back as soon as I can.

21 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - DAY

Nelli bits her lip. She picks up the pillow and throws it across the room. She swings her hands wildly and knocks the textbooks off her desk. She goes to her closet and throws the clothes on the floor.

She collapses on the floor, once again crying.

22 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Elina comes in and sees Nelli lying on her bed. She looks around the messy room.

She quietly starts picking up the clothes from the floor. Nelli turns around on the bed facing Elina.

NELLI

I won't be able to get married, will I?

Elina sympathetically looks back at her.

NELLI

(crazy laugh)

I can't even do the Walk to Remember thing.

ELINA

Nelli please don't talk like that. Remember that God can still heal you.

She embraces her friend.

ELINA

You have to believe that God will heal you.

23 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - MORNING

Nelli is staring off into space. Her hair all mangled. She looks really bad. She looks at the Bible lying off in a corner. She reaches for it.

24 INT. VADIM'S ROOM - MORNING

Vadim is kneeling by his bed.

VADIM

...I believe that You are the one who put these feelings into my heart. I pray that you bless her, and help her in all the problems that she may have. If it is Your plan for us to be together, give me, give us the strength to be pure and righteous before You. In Your name I pray. Amen.

Vadim opens his phone and looks for Elina's name in the directory. He opens the menu for a new message. He types.

"Hi Elina. Just wondering what happened to Nelli. Haven't seen her in church."

Vadim looks at his message and then shakes his head, deleting all of it. He types a new message.

"Hi Elina. What happened to Nelli?"

He frowns.

VADIM

(to himself)

That's stupid.

"Hi Elina. How.."

He stares at his phone with an undecided face. He deletes the message and puts his phone down. He lays on his bed and looks up at the ceiling.

25 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nelli is reading her Bible. Elina comes in.

ELINA

I got some food.

Nelli nods and starts getting up. She eats hungrily, without saying anything. Elina watches her. Nelli goes back to reading the Bible. Elina leaves her alone.

26 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - MORNING

Nelli is asleep with the Bible in her hands. Elina walks in with some shopping bags. She puts them down and begins covering Nelli with a blanket. Nelli's eyes open. Elina attempts a smile.

ELINA

(softly)

Hey.

Nelli sits up. She puts the Bible on the drawer next to her.

ELINA
I bought you some new clothes.
Though you might want to wear
something new.

Elina points out the purchases. Nelli ignores them.

NELLI
Elina. Did you tell anyone that I am
sick?

ELINA
(shocked)
No. Why would I go around and tell
everyone?

Nelli looks at herself.

NELLI
I need to take a shower.

Elina grins.

ELINA
Yeah. You really do.

Nelli gives her a weak smile.

27 INT. NELLI'S BATHROOM

Nelli is wearing a bathrobe and a towel in her hair. She is brushing her teeth. She combs her hair. She looks through the clothes that Elina bought her and tries them out.

28 INT. NELLI'S KITCHEN - MORNING

She goes into the kitchen dressed very nicely. Elina is baking cupcakes.

ELINA
Hey. You look really nice.

Nelli smiles.

ELINA
Are you going somewhere today?

NELLI
I guess I'll go to church. I'm tired
of sitting home.

ELINA

You want me to go with you?

Elina gives her a cupcake with sprinkles on it.

NELLI

You have to go to work.

ELINA

I can call in sick.

NELLI

Its okay. Its not like I'm going to die tomorrow. I have a few years left.

The comment makes Elina look very sad.

NELLI

I have to email my professors and tell them I am dropping out of school.

ELINA

(unexpected)

You're going to drop school?

NELLI

There really is no point in going to school anymore. Its not like its going to matter to me anymore if I have an education or not.

ELINA

Don't give up hope, yet. God...

NELLI

(ignoring Elina)

And I think I already got fired from my job. Haven't come in for a week.

ELINA

I always said that you were wasting your time there anyway.

They sit there is silence as Nelli eats her cupcake. Nelli is trying not to cry.

ELINA

Nelli. Don't forget about God. He can...

NELLI

I know, I know. God can heal me, its

just...

ELINA

You just have to believe.

NELLI

I do believe. I really do believe that God can heal me, its just... maybe this happened for a reason.

Elina sits down in a nearby chair.

ELINA

Nelli...

NELLI

I remember a preacher saying once that nothing coincidental happens in the life of a Christian (although I'm not much of a Christian). He said that everything that happens has a point to it. And so I was thinking that maybe I am doing something very wrong in my life, and this is God's way of giving me a wake up call. You know what I mean.

Elina nods.

NELLI

They always say that when you get sick you get closer to God and start reading the Bible and stuff, and most of the time sickness is more of a blessing than a curse.

A tear escapes Nelli's eye. She really didn't want to cry so she furiously wipes it away.

NELLI

I think this is God's way of saying that he has another plan for me. Its like what we were talking about at the park. School and work, school and work. That was about everything that I was doing. I mean, yes I went to church and everything, but to really spend time with God. The last time I actually spent quality time with God was at Camp, and that was four months ago. I mean, perhaps God is trying to tell me that he wants more from me, not just the little

bit that I give him on Sunday.

ELINA

Nelli. God doesn't punish people like that. Just imagine what would happen if God started punishing people for everything that they did wrong. You can't say God gave you the disease because you were doing something wrong.

NELLI

I understand that. I do. But I see things differently now. I feel as if my eyes have finally opened to what is really important. Like they were closed my whole entire life and I have wasted most of my time on nothing. God is really teaching me something through all of this.

29 INT. MGC CHURCH - HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Nelli walks into the door to the church. She can hear the worship band preparing themselves for Youth Service. They are singing "Our God is Greater"

Mike Tarasenko walks by her, holding white ropes in his left hand and a cellphone in the right hand.

30 INT. MGC CHURCH - CHOIR ROOM

Nelli walks into the choir room and sits down in the third row. The door opens.

MICHAEL

(coming through the door)

Nelli?

She turns around. Michael walks up and holds his hand in greeting. She shakes it.

MICHAEL

You are uncommonly early today.

NELLI

(frowning)

Is that a compliment?

MICHAEL

(smiling)

Yes it is.

She smirks at him.

MICHAEL
Are you here for prayer?

NELLI
Uh. Yeah. Dennis tested me. It's
here right.

MICHAEL
Yes.

Michael sits in a chair across from her.

MICHAEL
Did you drop your class or
something, now that you're actually
coming to Youth?

NELLI
(hiding the truth)
Yeah.

Nelli pretends that there is something important on her
cellphone that she needs to do.

MICHAEL
So that means that you are free on
Tuesday nights? You can join choir.

Nelli smiles.

NELLI
I'm was thinking about joining choir
this Tuesday.

Michael grins in satisfaction.

MICHAEL
Good. Tuesday at seven o'clock.
Don't be late.

NELLI
I'll try.

Dennis and Vadim walk through the door. Michael takes out
his cell phone and looks at the time.

DENNIS
Nelli. Nice to see you.

They shake hands.

VADIM
Nelli.

Vadim and Nelli share a brief moment of eye contact as they shake hands, but Nelli quickly looks away as if she is suddenly horrified. Vadim doesn't seem to notice.

MICHAEL

Okay guys. Thank you for coming on time, it is six thirty and so we should start praying.

NELLI

Wait. Is this everyone?

She looks around the room at the empty chairs.

MICHAEL

You think people would actually come early to Youth just to pray?

Nelli doesn't say anything.

MICHAEL

So today lets pray for the Worship Bands, especially Dima's Band. They are going through a period of reorganization and they really need our prayers.

Michael gets on his knees to pray. Vadim remains standing where he is. Dennis walks to the back of the choir room. Nelli is sitting there not knowing what to do.

They start praying. Michael prays loudly in Russian. Dennis prays in English and he walks back and forth waving his arms around. Vadim is standing there slightly swaying side to side praying quietly. A somewhat confused Nelli gets on her knees to pray.

31 INT. MGC CHURCH - MAIN HALL

The church clock says that it is 6:59pm. There are very few people in church.

Nelli looks at the empty church.

NELLI

Doesn't church start at seven? Where is everyone?

MICHAEL

(smug)

You haven't been here in a while. Everyone has been corrupted by lateness. No one thinks its important to come on time.

VADIM
That's just the way life is.

MICHAEL
As long as the leaders are
consistent. Right Vadim?

Vadim shrugs. Sidlovski, the Youth Pastor, gets a mike and goes up on stage.

SIDLOVSKI
(no sound)
(Hello everyone)

Sidlovski flips the mike around to see if it is on. It is. He sort of waves it in the air. He tries to talk again. Still no sound. George runs up the aisle and goes into the sound room. Sidlovski smiles when he sees George run.

SIDLOVSKI
Am I on. Okay. Yes. Alright
everyone, it is seven and time to
start Youth...

Nelli sits down alone in an aisle.

32 INT. MGC CHURCH - MAIN HALL - LATER

The Worship Band is on stage. Some of the girls have their hands in the air praising God. Zanko is going off on the song "Our God is Greater"

Nelli looks around at the audience. No one is singing along at all. (maybe one or two people)

Some people are talking to each other during Worship. Mike Tarasenko is busy with his cell phone. People are walking in one at a time and taking their spots, making other people move out of their way for them. They all shake hands and give hugs before they join Worship. (although barely any of them sing)

Lily is sitting by herself. Mouth shut.

33 INT. MGC CHURCH - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nelli walks out into the corridor and observes the Youth after church. Everyone is talking loudly, enjoying themselves. Girls flirting with guys, and guys hitting on girls. A group of people are standing in the doorway, blocking the exit. People have to squirm around them to get through.

Nelli looks very sad as she looks around at everyone. She

notices a lonely Lily standing in a corner looking at missionary pictures. Everyone else ignores her, preoccupied with talking to their friends.

34 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nelli comes home and goes into her room. She sits on the bed and lets out a heavy sigh. She falls back and stares at the ceiling. She closes her eyes. (she is thinking very hard)

She thinks for a very long time. She suddenly gets up. There is a decisive look on her face.

She grabs an empty notebook and sits down on the desk, furiously writing in it.

NELLI (V.O.)
September 3rd, 2009. As of today, I,
NELLI TROFIMUK, will dedicate the
rest of my life to God...Every
minute and every second of my time
will be focused on God.

She cleans up her room. She starts taking down all the pictures and decorations. She takes away the flowers. Takes out the drawer. She reorganizes her closet. Throwing away bathing suits and unneeded clothing. A lot of shoes are thrown away. (All her high heels)

35 INT. NELLI'S HOUSE - MORNING

She goes around her house and cleans in thoroughly, sweeping, vacuuming, and wiping the dust. She packs all the books on the bookshelf into boxes. She only leaves a Bible. She carries all the boxes and furniture (only from her room) and places it near the door.

Elina walks through the door.

ELINA
(alarmed)
Nelli. What is all this?

NELLI
I made my decision.

ELINA
What are you trying to do?

Nelli continues dragging the last piece of furniture to the door. Elina puts her stuff down and quickly goes to help.

NELLI
The doctor said I have one to three

years left. At least a year.

Elina has a "please don't be crazy" look on her face.

NELLI

So I was thinking. Do you know how most people become very selfish when they are about to die. They start doing the things that they always wanted to do and they go visit other countries or go jump of an airplane and stuff. Well, I was thinking about what I really wanted to do with the rest of my life. At first thought things like I want to be an actor in a movie, and then go to Italy for the summer, but...

Nelli is all heated in her conversation.

NELLI

But, I realized that it would be meaningless. I have only a year left to live, maybe more if I'm lucky, and I should be trying to so something useful with it. I should do something good with the rest of my life.

ELINA

(trying to calm her)
Nelli...

Elina raises her hand and puts it on her friend's shoulder.

ELINA

Did you tell your parents?

Nelli's excitement falters.

NELLI

If I tell them, they will either want me to move back to San Diego, or they will come here.

ELINA

They are your parents, they love you. Of course they would want to spend time with you.

NELLI

(impatient)
But listen. Let me finish. What I want to do is dedicate the last

year, (or maybe more) of my life to God. I mean, completely to God. Every minute and every second of my time.

Nelli points to the pile of furniture.

NELLI

I'm going to donate everything that I don't need. I packed most of my books. The only book I pretty much need anymore is the Bible. I packed most of... So basically, I getting rid of everything that I don't need and giving God twenty-four hours of my life. No school, no work, no personal enjoyment, from now on I will either read the Bible, pray, or do something good for God.

Nelli looks at her friend.

NELLI

And I won't tell anyone that I am sick. Not even my parents.

ELINA

Why?

NELLI

Its' better that way.

ELINA

(concerned)

Are you sure?

NELLI

Everyone will find out later. It won't matter that much.

Elina frowns. She doesn't know what to say. Nelli turns around and goes back to her room.

36 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - MORNING

Elina enters the room. She is surprised at what she sees. Nelli is carrying out the last box.

The room is very simple. A bed and a desk.

ELINA

You pretty much got rid of everything.

NELLI
If you think about it, I don't
really need anything else.

ELINA
(worried)
I guess.

Elina walks over to the desk. There is a notebook.

ELINA
What is this for?

NELLI
That is my promise to God.

Elina starts opening the notebook.

37 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - MORNING - FUTURE

Nelli flips the pages in the notebook. She comes along a
list of her goals.

NELLI (V.O.)
Number One: I will read the Bible
everyday for at least two hours.

38 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - MORNING

Nelli's alarm clock on her phone vibrates. She quickly sits
up in bed.

NELLI
(self-motivating)
Don't be lazy Nelli. Get to work.

She gets out of bed and heads to the bathroom.

39 INT. NELLI'S BATHROOM

She showers. Brushes her teeth. Flosses. Does her hair.

40 INT. NELLI'S ROOM

She gets on her knees before an open Bible.

NELLI
God. I no longer want to do anything
for myself. I want to do Your will.
I want to obey Your voice. Help me
hear what You are saying to me.

She reads the Bible and prays.

INT. MGC CHURCH - SUNDAY MORNING

NELLI (V.O.)
Number Two: I will become a friend
to people who don't have any
friends.

Nelli goes to church. She sits in the pews. She sees Lily
sitting on the other side.

42 INT. MGC CHURCH - HALLWAY - MORNING

Nelli slowly makes her way through the crowd to where Lily
is standing. She shyly walks up to her.

NELLI
Hi.

Lily looks up.

LILY
(quietly)
Hi.

NELLI
(blushing)
My name is Nelli. Nice to meet you.

Lily shakes Nelli's hand.

NELLI
What is your name.

LILY
Lily.

NELLI
Oh. That's a pretty name.

Lily stares at her. Nelli turns more nervous.

NELLI
Are your parents members at this
church, because I don't really
remember seeing you before.

LILY
Yeah, we are.

NELLI
When did you guys join?

LILY
We've been going here for almost

five years.

NELLI
(shocked)
Five years...I wonder why I haven't
seen you before.

LILY
(shrugs)
I don't know. I see you all the time
though.

NELLI
Really?

LILY
Yeah.

NELLI
That's funny. I can't believe I
never noticed you until now. Five
years?
(pathetic laugh)
Well, nice meeting you,...finally.

Lily squirms in her spot.

NELLI
You go to Youth service on
Thursdays, right?

LILY
Sometimes.

NELLI
Well if you want, we have prayer
right before Youth at six thirty. If
you want to join us.

LILY
Maybe, I'll see. I might not go to
Youth this time.

NELLI
Well, if you can make it, you should
come to prayer.

LILY
I'll try.

NELLI
So, I guess I'll see you later?

LILY

Yeah.

Nelli walks away with a frustrated (I'm an idiot who can't speak normally) look on her face.

43 INT. MGC CHURCH - CLASSROOM - MORNING

NELLI (V.O.)

Number Three: I will support all church activities. Sunday school, Teen school, Wednesday Church, Youth Service, Prayer...

Nelli helps with a lesson in Sunday school class.

She goes to church. (Wednesday, Friday)

44 INT. MGC CHURCH - CHOIR ROOM

NELLI (V.O.)

...and Youth Choir.

Nelli walks into the choir room. She sees Dima, the piano player, sitting by the piano playing something. Michael is standing next to him. Nelli goes up to them. Dima stops playing and both he and Michael smile at her.

MICHAEL

So you actually came.

NELLI

(nervous)

Yeah.

Nelli looks around and sees only two other people in choir. She sees Vadim and a Random girl.

MICHAEL

What do you usually sing; Soprano or alto?

NELLI

Soprano.

MICHAEL

(pointing)

Go sit over there for now, I will test you later.

Nelli goes and sits down in the soprano section. Vadim is seated only a few seats away. Nelli turns around and is about to smile and say something to Vadim, (who is reading a textbook) when suddenly Michael speaks up.

MICHAEL

Okay, everyone. Thank you for coming on time. It is seven o'clock and time to start.

NELLI

(looking around)

Are you serious? There's only three people.

MICHAEL

Everyone else is late and that's their problem, not mine. Choir starts at seven no matter how many people are here.

45 INT. MGC CHURCH - CHOIR ROOM - LATER

The time is 7:30 and people are coming into choir one at a time. Michael is doing warm ups.

MICHAEL

(singing with hand motions)

Some-where o-ver the rain-bow.

A few people follow along with him as he sings. Some people sit back and put their feet on the chairs in front of them. Other people just talk with each other ignoring Michael. Some people have textbooks and are busy doing homework. Others are reading books. Others, especially Mike Tarasenko, are sitting and engaged in their cellphones. Almost no one is looking up at the conductor.

Nelli peers at the commotion around her.

MICHAEL

(waving his hands)

Guys we're singing.

Everyone ignores him. Nelli sits silently.

Michael gets angry. David and Jason are busy talking with each other.

MICHAEL

David, stand up and sing by yourself.

The noise level goes down. David reluctantly stands up.

MICHAEL

Sing. Somewhere over the rainbow.

David starts singing, but a few guys behind him start

singing along.

MICHAEL
Let him sing by himself.

DAVID
(upset)
You know what Michael. I was doing
it, but now I'm not doing it.

He abruptly sits down. He and Michael stare at each other.

Zhanna turns around and tells Carina something. Michael catches them with a corner of his eye.

MICHAEL
Zhanna and Carina. You're next.

CARINA
But I didn't say anything.

MICHAEL
Carina, just stand up and sing. You
should know better than to talk
during choir.

CARINA
But I was only picking up her
pencil. I didn't say anything.

MICHAEL
Just do it.

CARINA
(upset)
Okay, fine.

Carina gets up and sings "Somewhere over the Rainbow". Zhanna gets up and sings after her. While Zhanna is singing Carina gets out of her seat and leaves. Michael coldly watches her go.

46 INT. MGC CHURCH - CHOIR ROOM - LATER

The choir sings a final chord for a song and Michael cuts them off and motions for them to sit down.

MICHAEL
When does choir practice start?

CHOIR
At seven.

MICHAEL

Can you guys make an attempt to come on time?...Anyways remember to come on Sunday at five thirty so that we will have time to warm up.

(beat)

Lets get up and pray before we leave.

Everyone gets to their feet.

MICHAEL

Who wants to pray?

Silence.

MICHAEL

(smirks)

Wow. I can't get you guys to stop talking during practice, but the moment we start praying...dead silence.

No one makes eye contact with Michael. He looks around the choir room for anyone willing to pray. Dennis and Vadim are the only ones that meet his eyes.

MICHAEL

Dennis, will you pray?

Dennis nods his head.

MICHAEL

Okay. Lets pray.

The prayer starts. There is barely any noise. People are just mumbling something under their breath. Nelli looks around awkwardly at people.

DENNIS

Thank you God...Help us remember that we are singing for You, that this is a service and ministry that we give to You, and help us put all our effort and strength into this work...Amen.

"Amen" is repeated, and suddenly the room becomes loud again with lots of people talking all at once. Michael sits on the piano bench and motions to Nelli. She comes over to him. Everyone else shuffles through the doorway. There are papers and binders left all over the choir room.

MICHAEL

So what did you think of choir?

NELLI
(not being honest)
Its fun. I liked it.

MICHAEL
I'm telling you, no one is serious
about choir. People just don't get
that choir isn't some social
gathering where we get together and
have fun. Its a ministry, a service.
We are ministering to the church and
to God.

Nelli stares at the floor.

MICHAEL
And what's funny right now is that a
lot of fifteen and sixteen years
olds are joining choir, and all the
older Youth is ditching one at a
time. Out of all the college age
Youth that we have in our church,
only about five people actually
attend choir regularly.

NELLI
Why?

MICHAEL
(smiling)
Guess. Its either school and work;
how singing in choir really be that
important. Or, some of them just
feel too old to come anymore.

Moment of silence. Nelli is thoughtful.

MICHAEL
(change of character)
Anyway, I need to test you. Sing
DO-RE-MI-FA-SOL for me.

He starts playing a scale on the piano. Nelli looks
thoughtful.

47 INT. NELLI'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nelli is sitting in front of her Bible, thinking. Elina
walks into the kitchen.

ELINA
Are you hungry?

NELLI

No.

She sits back in her chair.

NELLI

I'm thinking about what I can do...
something with the Youth in church.

ELINA

You mean like an event or outing?

NELLI

I just want to try and do something
useful with the Youth.

ELINA

You don't need to start with a big
event. I think a small one is okay.

NELLI

It just has to be spiritual, you
know. I don't want to do something
that is purely for fun and that
doesn't help us grow spiritually.

ELINA

Well you can try getting people
together for prayer. Maybe something
similar to Worship Night, but
instead it'll be called "Prayer
Night".

NELLI

(smiling at the idea)

I was thinking something simpler,
like volleyball in the park?

ELINA

(frowning)

Don't we do that all the time?

NELLI

Yes, we do, but this time we do it
differently. We can have our
volleyball and fun and yadayada, but
afterward we make it productive? We
can have a special discussion
afterward, or sing and pray,
something like that.

ELINA

That might work.

NELLI

But I can't figure out what exactly we should do to make it useful, because if we just sing and talk a lot of the people might be out of it.

ELINA
You can try playing a game.

NELLI
(sarcastic)
Like Surades or something?

ELINA
No! That's not productive at all. What about doing a Bible trivia?

NELLI
(thinking)
That...well...actually...yeah, I think that would work.

ELINA
We can divide everyone in two teams and have them compete against each other.

NELLI
Wait. Isn't it usually just a few people who actually participate in the Bible trivia while everyone else just sits there and doesn't do anything?

ELINA
Oh yeah. That does happen.

NELLI
We need to somehow get everyone involved.

ELINA
Yeah.

They think. Suddenly Nelli's eyes brighten up.

NELLI
What if, we print out all the questions and then pass them out to everyone.

ELINA
But isn't that...

NELLI

And we make it multiple choice too,
so that if people don't know the
answer they can just guess.

ELINA

Ahh...

NELLI

This way everyone has the questions
in their hands and its not just one
or two people playing.

ELINA

Yeah. Even if people don't say
anything they'll still be involved.

NELLI

This is such a good idea! I'll write
the questions and print them out.
Maybe I'll talk to the Youth Pastor
about it on Thursday.

Elina smiles happily at her friend.

48

INT. MGC CHURCH - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nelli spots Lily standing in a corner of church.

NELLI

Hi Lily.

LILY

(weak smile)

Hi.

NELLI

I haven't seen you at Youth for a
long time. Where have you been?

LILY

Oh, I was just busy...with things.

NELLI

Are you going to come to the park on
Saturday?

LILY

What's at the park?

NELLI

Didn't you hear. They announced it
after church.

LILY

Oh, really. I think I missed it.

NELLI

We're just getting together for some volleyball and fellowship. So if you can make it please come.

LILY

I guess I can make it.

NELLI

Good. I really want you to come.

LILY

Alright.

Dina and Carina come up to Nelli and start talking to her, ignoring Lily. Lily slowly retreats and goes away. Nelli sees a final glimpse of her as Lily walks out the door.

49

EXT. PARK - DAY - SUNNY

There is a lot of people in the park. The volleyball net is up and a serious game is under way. Nelli walks toward Elina carrying a big binder.

They sit down in two available chairs. All around them are people playing volleyball or just having fun.

NELLI

(reaches for a binder)

I stayed up to three o'clock last night writing down Bible questions. I went to Kinko's today to print them out.

ELINA

(amazed)

Wow. You really worked hard.

NELLI

Yeah. Its actually pretty hard to come up with decent Bible questions.

ELINA

So when are you planning to start the game?

NELLI

I think we'll start right after we eat. We should let the guys play volleyball for now.

ELINA

Sounds good. I asked Vadim to bring his guitar yesterday, so that we can sing a little bit after the game.

NELLI

That's sounds good.

Nelli spies Vadim playing volleyball. Vadim suddenly waves his hand in her direction. Nelli waves back.

50

EXT. PARK - DAY - SUNNY - DINNERTIME

Everyone is eating. Some people are sitting on the ground eating, while other are in chairs. Some people are standing. There is no one playing volleyball. Mike Tarasenko is holding a plate of food with one hand and his cellphone in another. Nelli, Elina, and Lily are sitting together. People start throwing their plates away and gathering there stuff.

RANDOM

Are you going to Erica's birthday Party?

RANDOM 2

Yeah. Its at six isn't it.

A concerned Nelli looks at Elina. Dina comes up to them.

DINA

Bye Nelli, bye Elina.

ELINA

Wait, you're leaving already?

DINA

I'm going to Erica's birthday party.

There are a lot of people getting ready to leave. People are even folding up chairs. Nelli silently watches.

ELINA

Who else is going?

DINA

Everyone was invited. You guys can come if you want.

Elina gives Nelli a concerned look as Dina walks away. People are already driving out of the parking lot. Vadim is also walking toward the parking lot. Nelli watches him go.

51

EXT. PARK - DAY - UNDER THE TREES

There are only five people left in the park. Sidlovski, Michael, Nelli, Elina, and Lily. The remains (trash) of the party are all over the park. They sit in awkward silence

Vadim appears carrying his guitar.

NELLI
(a bit glad)
I thought you went to the birthday party.

VADIM
(pure minded)
There's going to be too much people there. I'd rather stay here.

He sits down.

SIDLOVSKI
Hey, do you still want to play the Bible trivia?

NELLI
Its okay. There's no point now.

ELINA
(anxiously looking at Vadim)
Well we could still...

NELLI
(upset)
Lets just sing for a bit. We could play the game at another time.

SIDLOVSKI
We could do it when we have Fellowship Night.

NELLI
I guess.

Vadim starts playing "Our God is Greater". Everyone sings along. The song ends and Vadim keeps strumming the guitar.

MICHAEL
(standing up)
I think we should clean up. I can't believe that some of these kids don't understand the basic concept of throwing the garbage away after yourself.

Michael starts cleaning up the place. Nelli and Elina just sit there.

LILY
(to no one in particular)
I should call my dad so that he can
pick me up.

Lily's statement is ignored. Nelli looks sadly at the binder lying in her lap. Vadim fidgets for a moment, looks at the girls, (both Elina and Nelli) gets up, packs his guitar, and starts helping with the clean up.

52 INT. NELLI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nelli walks into her house and drops the Bible trivia questions on the table.

NELLI
(depressed)
That was a total failure.

She sighs.

53 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - DAY

Nelli is sitting on her knees before an open Bible, reading. The doorbell rings. She gets up, wipes her eyes from tears, and goes opens it. Elina greets and embraces her.

ELINA
How are you?

NELLI
I'm okay.

ELINA
I feel bad that I haven't visited
you for a while.

NELLI
Its okay. You don't have to visit me
all the time.

They walk into the kitchen. Elina puts down a plate.

ELINA
I made you some cookies.

NELLI
Thanks.

ELINA
So what have you been up to?

NELLI
Nothing much.

ELINA
Doesn't it feel weird not going to
school or work?

NELLI
It used to in the beginning, but not
anymore. Its like summer break.

ELINA
So any new plans?

NELLI
(grin)
I'm thinking about starting a
Yeheyka.

ELINA
(thoughtfully)
Okay.

NELLI
I prayed and thought about it. Doing
a one time event isn't very
productive in itself. I need to do
something regular, something more
consistent.

ELINA
(nodding)
Its more productive if it happens on
a regular basis.

NELLI
I think its worth a try.

ELINA
Who are you going to invite?

NELLI
Everyone. I don't think it matters
who comes.

ELINA
Are you going to do it by yourself?

NELLI
Probably.

ELINA
And who's going to do music.
Ahh...its perfect, you can ask
Vadim...

Elina realizes her mistake. Nelli stares at the floor.

Silence.

NELLI

I don't think I should ask Vadim. He might think something, you know.

ELINA

That's true.

NELLI

We can do a Yeheyka without music, its not like music is so important anyway. I already prepared a few topics that I can discuss. When do you think I can start?

ELINA

You need to announce it at Youth.

NELLI

Of course. I should probably get started as soon as I can. I don't have much time left, right?

Elina grows sad. Nelli looks away.

54 INT. MGC CHURCH - MAIN HALL

SIDLOVSKI

Are there any more announcements?...

Nelli makes her way up the aisle. Sidlovski hands her the mike. She is nervous.

NELLI

Hi everyone. So we are going to have Yeheyka at my house on Saturday at seven thirty. We'll be doing a bible study following the book of James. Everyone who wants to go is invited to come. Thanks. Oh, and if you need directions please talk to me afterward. Thanks. Hope to see you there.

She hands the mike to Sidlovski and goes back.

SIDLOVSKI

Alright. So lets get up and pray, and remember that we are having Fellowship in the Fireside Room afterward, so don't hurry home.

55 INT. MGC CHURCH - FIRESIDE ROOM - NIGHT

The tables are set up and covered with tablecloths. Teenagers are standing in a line getting food. Several girls are busy in the kitchen preparing food. Nelli goes up to a group of girls sitting together on a table.

NELLI

Hi everyone.

EVERYONE

Hi.

NELLI

Are you guys going to come to Yeheyka?

RANDOM GIRL

(excited)

I really want to go. I miss having Yeheyka.

Nelli smiles happily.

RANDOM 2

I don't know. I'll try, but I might not get a ride.

NELLI

Ask your brother to come. He could give you a ride.

RANDOM 2

I'll try, but he usually goes to the gym on Saturdays. He might not want to go.

Nelli spots Lily sitting by her lonesome self in a corner. She walks past a table where Vadim is sitting and talking to others guys. Vadim notices her as she walks by, but neither of them say anything.

Nelli sits down next to Lily. Lily smiles shyly at her.

NELLI

Hey Lily.

LILY

Hi.

NELLI

Mind if I sit here?

Lily shakes her head. Nelli takes a seat.

NELLI

So are you going to come to Yecheyka
on Saturday?

LILY
I don't know.

NELLI
(surprised)
Why not?

LILY
(shrugs)
I might be busy Saturday Night.

NELLI
With what?

LILY
(making up an excuse)
Well...I'll probably need to help my
mom and stuff.

NELLI
Really.

LILY
Yeah...but I'll try to come. I might
be free.

NELLI
(smiling)
I really want you to come.

Lily uncomfortably looks away. Nelli smiles sweetly at her.

56 INT. NELLI'S LIVING ROOM - SATURDAY NIGHT

A large group of teenagers, about fifteen of them, are gathered around in Nelli's living room. Some of them have Bibles and some of them don't. Lily is sitting close to Nelli with a Bible in her lap. Nelli is sitting at the head of them and telling them something.

Nelli says something and everyone laughs, then Nelli asks someone to read from the Bible and they do. Afterward she begins saying something and waving her hands to prove her point. The teenagers listen to her attentively.

Elina watches from the side with a content smile on her face. Vadim is there to, with a Bible and notebook, and he is writing down the things that Nelli is saying. Elina's smile disappears when she looks at Vadim.

57 INT. NELLI'S HOUSE - DOORWAY - NIGHT

The girls give Nelli and each other hugs as they leave. Vadim says bye to Nelli, and shakes her hand. He waves bye to Elina as he exits the door. Nelli watches everyone go with a happy smile on her face. She goes back inside.

NELLI
(to Elina)
So how do you think it went?

ELINA
I thought it went good. I mean, I really liked it and I think everyone else did also.

NELLI
I feel so excited. Its like I'm finally doing something for God.

Elina joins in smiles with Nelli.

NELLI
I can't wait until next week for Yeheyka to happen again.

58 INT. NELLI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

One week later.

Nelli, Vadim, and Elina are sitting in the living room. A lot of empty chairs all around them. The time is seven forty-five. (No one else is there)

NELLI
(confused)
Is there something going on tonight?

VADIM
Not that I heard of.

NELLI
Where is everyone?

ELINA
Dina called me and said that she wouldn't be able to come, she has a research paper that she needs to write for Monday.

VADIM
And I think that Serge is working today till nine.

NELLI
What about everyone else?

Vadim and Elina just shrug their shoulders.

NELLI

Anyway. Lets start. We can still have Yeheyka even if we have only three people.

Vadim and Elina look at each other and agree.

59 INT. NELLI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

One week later.

Nelli, Elina, and Vadim are sitting around in an empty living room. A lot of empty chairs around them. Nelli looks a bit angry.

ELINA

I heard that it was someone's wedding today and a lot of people went to help out.

NELLI

But doesn't a wedding usually end around six to seven o'clock? You have time to shower, change, and still come to Yeheyka.

VADIM

People are probably tired.

Nelli looks at the printed lesson in her lap. She sighs.

60 INT. NELLI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

One week later.

Nelli and Elina are sitting by themselves in the living room. The chairs are set up for Yeheyka.

NELLI

Do you think anyone other than Vadim will come today?

ELINA

I don't know. I tested some of the girls, only Dina replied and she said that she has to work today.

Nelli thinks for a second.

NELLI

Can you text Vadim and tell him that we won't have Yeheyka today?

ELINA

Why?...I know that Yeheyki always have it rough in the beginning. I think if we just keep doing it eventually things will work out.

NELLI

I don't mind doing Yeheyka even if there is only one person who comes, but...Vadim doesn't know that I'm sick. He might be expecting something...you know.

Silence.

NELLI

What do you think. Should I tell him?

ELINA

Its up to you.

61 INT. MGC CHURCH - CHOIR ROOM

Michael, Dennis, Nelli, and Vadim are praying. Nelli looks up at Vadim as he prays. He is intently praying. Nelli sadly looks at him and turns away.

62 INT. MGC CHURCH - MAIN HALL

The Worship Band is singing. Nelli looks at the Youth around her. No one is serious about singing or praying to God. (except the Worship Band on stage)

Mike Tarasenko is looking at his cellphone.

63 INT. MGC CHURCH - MAIN HALL - LATER

Sidlovski holds up the mike and gives it to Nelli.

NELLI

(nervous)

I just wanted to announce that we will be having Yeheyka at my house this Saturday at seven thirty. Anyone who wants to come is invited. I invite absolutely everyone, of all ages and interests, please come. We are finishing up the book of James and will soon start the book of Romans. If you want to study the Bible and have some fellowship with others, then you should definitely come.

No one in the audience is really listening to her.

64 INT. MGC CHURCH - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nelli walks out into the hallway. All around her are teenagers laughing and talking with each other. She looks at them sadly. A random girl comes up to her.

RANDOM GIRL
Hey Nelli. You look tired.

NELLI
(weak smile)
Sort of.

RANDOM GIRL
Well, I wanted to invite you to my house after church.

NELLI
Oh, is it your birthday?

RANDOM GIRL
No. My parents are gone, so we are just having a get together at my house.

NELLI
Well, I guess I can. Who else is going?

RANDOM GIRL
(laughing)
Everyone.

The girl runs off to invite another person.

65 EXT. RANDOM HOUSE - NIGHT

Nelli drives up and parks her car. There are a lot of cars crowding the streets. She gets out and walks to the door.

Standing in the dark is a young guy with another young girl, talking to each other.

NELLI
Hey guys, what are you doing out here.

GUY
Nothing.

They wait for her to leave.

NELLI
You guys shouldn't be out here in
the dark.

GIRL
We're just talking.

NELLI
Aren't you guys too young to be
dating?

GIRL
(angry)
We're not dating...we're just
friends.

Nelli shakes her head and goes inside.

66 INT. RANDOM HOUSE

A lot of teenagers are spread all over the house. Some are in the living room, others are in the kitchen. Some are outside. Nelli walks through the door and glances around at the commotion. There are a lot of shoes in the doorway.

Nelli makes her way through the crowd of people. She sees a circle of teenagers playing "ninja" in the house. One of them jumps back and accidentally bumps the table. A cup of juice spills.

Nelli makes her way to the kitchen and gets a drink from the available bottles. No one pays attention to her.

RANDOM
(loud)
Let's move the table.

A couple guys gather around to move the table and make more room for the ninja game. One of them takes the Bible of the table and puts it on the floor. Nelli stares at the neglected Bible.

She goes into the living room. The wide screen T.V. is on and a bunch of teenagers are gathered around watching a (bad) movie on T.V. Nelli looks at the screen.

NELLI
Guys, what are you doing?

Only some of the teenagers look at her. Most of the other ones don't, but keep watching. Someone with the remote turns the T.V. on louder.

NELLI

You shouldn't be watching this.

They ignore her.

NELLI

We just came from church. You can't just forget about God and do whatever you want.

RANDOM

Its just a movie.

NELLI

(pointing at the screen)
What kind of movie is this? This isn't a Christian film.

RANDOM

Why are you acting all Holy all of a sudden? Is watching a movie a sin all of a sudden.

NELLI

I'm just saying that...

There are gunshots fired in the background. Nelli looks at the teenagers pleadingly. No one makes eye contact with her, but instead they continue watching the movie.

NELLI

Can you guys please turn it off. These kinds of movies make you feel bad after you watch them. They don't bring you closer to God.

RANDOM

You sound just like Michael.

NELLI

(hurt at the reference)
I'm not...

Something happens in the movie and everyone burst laughing. Some of the girls glance sideways at her. A frustrated Nelli turns around and leaves.

67

EXT. RANDOM HOUSE - NIGHT

Nelli walks outside. She sees the previous guy and girl still talking with each other in the dark. She glares at them as she walks by.

She suddenly sees a new couple sitting in the driveway.

NELLI
(under her breath)
Another one?

She walks between them, gets into her car, and drives away.

68 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nelli is lying on her bed. Elina is sitting next to her.

NELLI
Maybe I should go to Ukraine or
Africa on a missionary trip. I'll
probably be more useful to God there
than I am here.

Elina gives her a worried glance and is about to say something, but she changes her mind.

NELLI
I want to do something for God. I
really want to do something for him,
but I still don't know what.

ELINA
I don't think that God expects only
big things from us. He also wants us
to be faithful in the small things.

NELLI
I just don't know what to do with
our Youth. I don't want to go around
and tell people that, "You guys
shouldn't be doing this" and "You
shouldn't be doing that". I want to
help them get closer to God, to grow
spiritually. I don't want to be the
next Michael.

Thoughtful silence.

ELINA
Nelli..I think you should tell your
parents that you're sick.

NELLI
Not yet. Let me figure things out
first...and plus, I won't really be
able to do anything if my parents
find out. They'll probably come here
and lock me inside the house.

ELINA
What about...Vadim? He seems really

committed.

NELLI
...I probably should tell him something. He might get really hurt if I don't.

ELINA
Yeah. Imagine if you trade places with him. Wouldn't you want him to tell you?

Nelli thinks about it.

NELLI
I just don't know what to say.
"Sorry Vadim, I'm dying so we can't be together". Its not like were dating or anything. I mean if he was my boyfriend than yeah, I would have to tell him. But right now we're just... friends.

69

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Nelli sits on the hospital bed. The doctor comes into the room. He looks very relieved.

DOCTOR
Hi, Nelli. How are you doing. I have...

NELLI
(very serious)
Doctor...
(beat)
How much longer do I have?

The doctor smiles at her. She looks shocked at his expression.

DOCTOR
Nelli, I have some very good news for you.

He takes a moment to make a sigh of relief.

DOCTOR
Your initial diagnosis was wrong. Somehow your blood sample was mislabeled and the x-rays were...uh...basically we made a mistake about your illness..

NELLI
(confused)
What do you mean?

DOCTOR
It means that you do not have a genetic disorder. You were misdiagnosed. You are perfectly fine and you could live to be eighty for all we know.

NELLI
I'm not going to die?

DOCTOR
No. I'm sorry you had to go through all of this.

Nelli is shocked. She stares at the floor and mumbles something to herself. The Doctor sits there smiling at her.

DOCTOR
You don't know how happy I was when I realized the mistake.

NELLI
(suddenly angry)
Do you know what I went through?

DOCTOR
Look, Nelli, I'm very sorry this happened...

NELLI
Do you have any idea what I went through? I dropped out of school, quit my job, donated my furniture. I was even writing my will. Do you know how many hours I spent crying myself to sleep.

DOCTOR
Nelli, I'm...

NELLI
I really thought I was going to die. Do you know what that feels like?...I...

Nelli walks about the room and then starts both smiling and laughing and crying all at the same time.

NELLI
This is soooooooo funny...

Her anger doesn't remain for long as she can't help but be pleased at the news.

70 INT. NELLI'S ROOM

Nelli comes into her room and lays down on the bed. She sits back up. She is all smiles.

She goes to her phone and calls Elina.

NELLI

Elina? Can you come over right now?

ELINA (V.O)

Did something happen?

NELLI

Yes. Its very important. I'll tell you about when you come.

ELINA

Okay. I'm on my way.

Nelli puts the phone down and prances about the room.

71 INT. NELLI'S DOORWAY - DAY

The doorbell rings. Nelli runs over and opens the door to Elina. She hugs Elina as soon as she sees her.

NELLI

(very excited)

I'm not sick!

ELINA

What do you mean?

NELLI

The doctors made a mistake. They mixed the blood sample and gave me the wrong diagnosis. I'm not going to die.

Elina breaks into smiles.

ELINA

Really?

NELLI

Yes.

ELINA

(hugging her)

I'm so happy for you. I was praying

about you so much. I guess God did
answer, in a way.

The girls laugh and dance around and even cry together from
their happiness.

72

INT. NELLI'S ROOM - DAY

They sit on Nelli's bed. Giggling and stuff.

NELLI

I am so happy right now. You have no
idea how happy I am.

ELINA

God is so amazing, isn't He.

NELLI

(looking around her room)
I feel kinda dumb now doing all
this. I'll have to buy back some
stuff...hopefully my parents won't
be mad that I donated a my
furniture.

ELINA

At least you are alive and well. You
can always get furniture back.

NELLI

And I need to find a new job.

ELINA

This time find a better job. Retail
is too cheap for you.

NELLI

And school. I'll have to take summer
school to catch up...I missed a
whole semester.

ELINA

Its okay, you'll be fine.

Nelli lies down on the bed smiling at the ceiling. She
quickly bounces up and looks into Elina's eyes.

NELLI

I guess it was a good thing that I
didn't say anything to Vadim.

ELINA

Yeah.

NELLI

Although, I wonder what would have happened if he knew all about it...maybe it would have worked out better if I really did tell him.

They grin at each other.

73

INT. MGC CHURCH - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nelli winds her way through the crowd of Youth standing in the hallways. Elina is next to her. She sees Michael sitting by himself alone in one of the available chairs writing something down in a blue notebook.

NELLI

I need to talk to Michael.

She leaves Nelli's side and heads towards Michael direction. She passes Lily on the way and doesn't even bat an eye at the girl. Lily sadly looks at her and walks away.

Nelli almost bumps into Vadim unexpectedly.

NELLI

(very sweetly)

Oh. Hi Vadim.

VADIM

Oh, hi. How are you?

NELLI

(can't help be smile)

I'm fine, thank you. What about you?

VADIM

(nervous)

I'm good, I'm good.

There is a very awkward silence. Vadim keeps looking around. Both of them fidget.

NELLI

How's school?

VADIM

Its coming along. Midterms are coming up. I'm probably going to go home early to study.

NELLI

Yeah.

VADIM

Well, I'll see you around.

NELLI

Okay. See you.

He gives her a quick smile and walks away. Nelli walks past him to Michael. She has a delighted smile on her face. (from talking to Vadim)

NELLI

Hi Michael.

MICHAEL

(looking up)

Oh, hi.

They shake hands. Behind them Vadim walks up to Elina.

NELLI

I wanted to talk to you about choir.

Michael looks seriously at her.

NELLI

The thing is that I got a new job recently and I need to work Tuesday nights. I just wanted to tell you so that you wouldn't think I was ditching choir just like that.

Michael frowns at her. Nelli is a little nervous under his merciless eyes.

NELLI

I want to go to choir, but, you know, I also need a job.

MICHAEL

What about Thursday? Are you still going to go to Youth service?

NELLI

(squinting)

I'll have to miss Thursday also. I just got hired so I don't really get to decide when my schedule is.

MICHAEL

Are you still going to do Yeheyka...?

Carina comes up out of no where and interrupts Michael.

CARINA

(super excited)
Oh, Nelli.

NELLI
Hi.

CARINA
Guess what happened?

NELLI
What...

CARINA
Well, George just told me that...

MICHAEL
(angry)
Carina!

Carina stops.

MICHAEL
I was talking to Nelli. You can't
just barge in and interrupt a
conversation.

CARINA
Oh sorry...

MICHAEL
Once we finish our conversation then
you can talk to her for an entire
hour for all I care.

CARINA
I'm sorry...

MICHAEL
You got it?

Carina nods.

MICHAEL
(returning to Nelli)
So, Nelli. Are you still going to do
Yeheyka?

NELLI
Well, it didn't really work out for
me. The only people who came were
Elina and Vadim.

Michael sits back. A hurt Carina walks away.

MICHAEL

So you're going to quit everything again.

NELLI

No! I'm not quitting. Its not like I want to leave everything. Its just temporary.

MICHAEL

You know what. I was actually proud of you for a while. A few months ago you were completely out of it. I would never see you anywhere except Sunday morning. But then you changed and I was really happy for it. I don't really know what happened to you that you decided to come back to the Youth, but you actually started getting involved in church. You even came to prayer, when almost no one else does. I was like, Wow, Nelli is really trying to do something ...And now, you're going to ditch again.

NELLI

Its not ditching. Why do you keep saying that. I just didn't have a job for the past two months. I had more time to get involved and stuff.

MICHAEL

Don't you just hate work....It always seems to get in the way, doesn't it?

NELLI

You don't understand...

MICHAEL

You know what, I don't even care. Its your choice after all. God gives everyone a choice. If you think getting involved with church is not as important as going to work, then...

NELLI

You're making feel really bad. I still really, really, want to be involved in church, and I know that its very, very, important, but you need to understand that its not that simple.

MICHAEL

I know, I know.

NELLI

And its not going to be like this forever. After I work for a couple of months, I'll be able to get my schedule changed and I'll come back to choir. I promise.

MICHAEL

(disbelieving)

The thing is Nelli, this happens all the time. You can ask just about anyone, "Is it important to get involved in church?" and they will tell you "Yes, it is very important". But, if you look at the way things are, only a small percentage of people are actually active in church. Everyone says that they should get involved but almost no one actually does. Its always either work or school that stop people from getting involved in church.

NELLI

But, I'm still...

Michael stops her with a lift of his hand.

MICHAEL

...Listen. Its one of the things that frustrates me the most with our Youth. Everyone knows what the right thing to do is. Everybody knows without a doubt that getting involved in church is not only recommended but it is also essential...And its not only that. "Is reading the Bible a good thing?-Yes" "Do we have to read the Bible?-Yes" But when it comes to actually reading the Bible, almost no one does it like they are supposed to. Everyone understands everything. Reading the Bible, praying, helping each other, going to church, all that good stuff, people will always say that yes, we need to do those things. Yes, we absolutely must do them, but in reality there is almost no one who

actually does what they say they should do. Everyone will say that God is number one, but then school and work take up ninety-nine percent of the time, and God only gets two hours (if he gets that much) on a Sunday morning. And I'm not the first person to say it. Every preacher in church says that same thing again and again. We must give more time to God, we must be holy and live holy lives. And everyone in church agrees and says "Yes, we must, we have to do it"...But almost nobody actually does what they say. Even the preachers themselves.

Michael sighs after his animated monologue.

MICHAEL

Anyway, Nelli, like I said, its your choice. You have the freedom from God to do whatever you want.

Nelli just frowns at him. Both of them are upset and both of them coldly stare at each other.

Behind them Vadim and Elina walk out the church doors together.

74

INT. NELLI'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nelli and Elina are sitting by the dining table. Both of them look distracted. Finally Nelli breaks the silence.

NELLI

Michael is so annoying.

ELINA

What happened?

NELLI

He was upset at me for quitting choir.

ELINA

Well of course he would be upset, he's the choir conductor.

NELLI

He started saying stuff like I think work is more important that church. Kinda like I'm betraying God or something by having a job...And then

he started giving me a lecture about how everyone says that getting involved in church is important, but nobody actually does it, and...
(pause)

ELINA
He's just Michael. He's always been like that.

NELLI
I mean, what does it matter to him what I decide to do. He probably thinks that its everyone's calling to sing in choir or something. My life is between me and God. I don't have to answer to Michael for anything.

Nelli sits back in her chair and takes a big breath.

NELLI
...I'm also upset that I didn't really get to talk to Vadim today either. He went home early.

Elina suddenly looks very guilty.

NELLI
(smiles)
At least I'll get to see him at Yeheyka...Its going to be the last time we do Yeheyka so we should really make it fun. I was thinki...

ELINA
(softly)
Nelli.

NELLI
What?

ELINA
Well, about Vadim...

Nelli stares at her.

NELLI
What? Did something happen?

ELINA
Sort of.

NELLI

What is it?

ELINA
(very uncomfortable)
I don't know how to say this...but I think we were both wrong about Vadim.

NELLI
(shocked)
What do you mean?

ELINA
After church, when you were talking with Michael, Vadim came up and said that he wanted to talk to me... and we went outside and he asked me out.

Nelli turns pale.

NELLI
(disbelieving)
He asked you out?

ELINA
Well, he said that he really likes me and that he has liked me for a long time and he wants to get more serious and start dating.

NELLI
And what did you say?

ELINA
I was so surprised that I didn't know what to tel him, so I told him that I'd think about it.

Silence. They both sit and stare at the table in front of them.

NELLI
I feel so stupid.

ELINA
I had no idea. I really thought that he liked you. I mean, it looked that way...

NELLI
It all makes sense though. The reason why he always came to Yeheyka and why he stayed at the Park....We were both there. I'm such

an idiot.

ELINA
(pleading)
I didn't know anything.

NELLI
I feel so stupid. So, so stupid.

She suddenly laughs.

NELLI
Imagine how embarrassing it would
have been if I told Vadim that I was
dying and we couldn't be together.
That would have been really bad.

Elina looks like she's about to cry.

NELLI
(holding back tears)
Things never turn out that way you
expect them to. There is always some
kind of twist, isn't there. Always
something you'd never expect. First
I'm dying and I only have year left
to live, and then Wow, I'm not dying
anymore but Vadim never liked me in
the first place.

Elina doesn't say anything.

75 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - MORNING

The phone alarm vibrates. Nelli sits up in her bed. She
turns the alarm off. She looks at her Bible.

She goes back to sleep.

76 INT. RANDOM WORK

Nelli goes to work. She sits by the computer doing
paperwork. She sits back and stares, deep in thought.

77 INT. NELLI'S ROOM NIGHT

Nelli walks into her room and looks around. She sees her
notebook and the Bible on her desk. She puts her phone down,
takes of her clothes, and goes to sleep.

78 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - MORNING

The phone alarm vibrates. Nelli sits up in her bed. She
turns the alarm off. She looks at her Bible...

INT. MGC CHURCH - MAIN HALL - SUNDAY MORNING

Nelli sits in the aisle next to a few grandmas. The preacher is saying something in Russian. Nelli isn't listening. She looks very depressed.

80 EXT. MGC CHURCH - PARKING LOT

Nelli drives up to church in her car. She parks, but doesn't get out right away. She sits there staring up in front of her.

81 INT. MGC CHURCH - MAIN HALL

Nelli walks into the sanctuary. The back rows are blocked off with white ropes. She sits down in a spot available in the very back.

Someone is preaching but Nelli doesn't listen.

Sidlovski comes up to her during the sermon.

SIDLOVSKI

Nelli.

She is a bit startled and looks up at him quickly.

SIDLOVSKI

Can I talk to you right now?

Nelli nods. He motions for her to follow him.

82 INT. MGC CHURCH - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hallway is empty. Sidlovski leads her close to the exit. He looks sad.

SIDLOVSKI

(softly)

Nelli. We just received a call from Elina's parents. She got into a car accident on the way to church.

Nelli goes deathly pale.

NELLI

Is she going to be alright?

There is evident pain on Sidlovski's face.

SIDLOVSKI

She died on the way to the hospital. I'm sorry.

Nelli's face shows an expression of shock. It slowly turns to a very painful expression. She starts trembling and crying. She covers her face with her hands. Sidlovski watches silently as she starts sobbing.

83 EXT. ROAD

Sidlovski and Nelli drive down the road and see red lights flashing. There is a cop car parked to the side. Broken glass on the road. A wrecked car being loaded on a truck.

Tears roll down Nelli's face.

84 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nelli comes into her room, sits on the bed, and blankly stares at the wall. She gets up and walks to her notebook. She starts writing.

NELLI (V.O.)

A vanishing mist. Our life is exactly that. A vanishing mist that appears momentarily and then disappears.

85 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

NELLI (V.O.)

What advantage does a healthy person have over the sick and dying? Is death really closer to a sick person than to a healthy one?

Nelli is crying after hearing her fate from the Doctor.

86 INT. RANDOM SHOTS

Mike Tarasenko on his cellphone. Boys and girls standing in a circle talking with each other. People watching T.V.

NELLI (V.O.)

The fate of humanity is to die. You may live to be a hundred and die of old age, or you may live to be nineteen and die in a car accident. Everyone's fate is the same.

An old grandpa sitting in church, surrounded by his grandchildren.

Nelli in the cemetery putting down flowers at Elina's grave.

NELLI (V.O.)

We all have certain plans for life.

Everyone has personal goals and dreams that they wish to fulfill, but, in truth, things never work out the way we expect them to.

Vadim sitting in his room looking very sad and depressed.

NELLI (V.O.)

We may plan ahead for good and happy things, but the future is not in our hands. We are powerless against our own fate.

Michael complaining to Nelli about the people in church. Michael yelling at Carina for interrupting him.

NELLI (V.O.)

Life is cruel, and it will never be the way we want it to be. No matter how hard we try to fight against it, and no matter how much we complain about the way things are, and the way things should be, life is just not fair.

Nelli leaves Elina's grave and walks away.

NELLI (V.O.)

I had such a romantic idea for the rest of my life. To dedicate myself fully to God. To read the Bible everyday for two hours. To become a helpful friend to all in need. To be a perfect, flawless, and committed Christian...but it was all in my imagination.

Nelli reads the Bible. She prays. She goes to church. She does Sunday school. She does Yecheyka.

NELLI (V.O.)

How easily did I break all the promises I made to God.

Nelli walks right by Lily without even looking at her.

NELLI (V.O.)

Having a good job and getting an education isn't the most important thing. Having a boyfriend or a girlfriend and getting married isn't the most important thing.

A boy and girl walking together. A married couple in church

holding hands.

NELLI (V.O.)

Going to church every day and knowing the Bible by heart is not the most important thing. Giving away all our money and being heavily involved with church ministries is not the most important thing. There is still something more important.

Michael conducting the choir. Michael going to church.

NELLI (V.O.)

But what I am saying. We all know that. I am sure we all understand what is important and what is not important in life. But the funny thing is, despite our knowledge, for some reason we still don't do what we really should be doing. We always put it off for tomorrow, thinking that we will have time later.

Nelli not reading her Bible but going back to sleep.

87 INT. NELLI'S ROOM - MORNING - FUTURE

Nelli finishes reading the notebook. She closes it and puts it down. She looks once more at Elina's picture.

NELLI (V.O.)

I know what I have to do and I know how I'm supposed to live my life. I pray, with God's help, that I will actually start doing it. That I will finally start living the life that I should.

88 INT. MGC CHURCH - HALLWAY - SUNDAY MORNING

Nelli makes her way through the large crowds of people standing in the hallways after church. She spots Lily standing in her usual corner of church. Nelli promptly goes towards her.

NELLI

Lily.

Lily turns around and grins at her.

LILY

Hey.

Nelli smiles. The two girls start talking to each other.
Carina and Dina show up. The girls greet them.

Vadim comes up.

VADIM

Girls. Hi.

They shake hands and smile at each other. Sidlovski comes up
and joins the growing circle.

Church life continues all around them. Sidlovski tells Vadim
something and they both laugh. Carina starts talking
excitedly and smiling.

All of them are smiling and laughing.

FADE OUT: