

WALK IN SILENCE

Written by

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INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - SANCTUARY - DAY

ANA walks around the sanctuary with a set of cleaning tools as she dusts and cleans the interior.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - NARTHEX - DAY

Ana checks the candle inventory and the little book shop. She then leaves to return to the sanctuary.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - SANCTUARY - DAY

Over an hour later, a barely quarter-full parish stands attentively as FR. ANDREJ and the choir intones the Divine Liturgy.

Ana stands several rows from the front on the Theotokos side with her head bowed in reverence and her eyes closed.

Every now and then, a few parishioners enter discreetly even as the service resumes.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - DAY

Parishioners, mostly middle-age or older, mingle throughout the hall. They either sit or stand in clusters and most have a cup of coffee in hand. The few children present are either with their parents or they are elsewhere with other children.

Ana stands off to the side in almost complete isolation even as other small groups are near her. Sometimes a stray parishioner walks by and greets her with a nod or a wave or a simple greeting, to which she responds with a silent nod.

INT. ANA'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

In mid-afternoon, Ana stands in front of the kitchen stove as water boils in a kettle. When the water reaches the boiling point, she turns off the stove and prepares a cup of hot tea.

In no short while, Ana is seated at a small dinette table, sipping her tea and mostly staring out and occasionally looking to the sides of her.

INT. ANA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ana sits upright on the couch. He looks out onto the wall with only a few pictures. She remains silent and still.

INT. ANA'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

As the twilight fades outside her window, she lies still on top of the bed, flat on her back and her hands folded upon her stomach. At one point, she closes her eyes and a small faint of a tear circles her eye but never falls.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

The next day, Ana, leisurely, steadily and silently, unloads products from a box and places them onto the shelves.

Moments later, she walks down the shelves and writes down inventory stock, also silently.

In another moment, she stands behind the cashier counter while a customer makes a purchase. She responds very minimally in a soft voice and conveys a soft smile.

After the customer leaves, SONJA arrives in the store and sees Ana.

SONJA
{Ah. Hello Ana.}

Ana raises her hand meekly in acknowledgment. Sonja walks toward Ana.

SONJA (CONT'D)
{You are looking well.}

ANA
{And you.}

Sonja arrives at the cashier counter.

SONJA
(a beat)
{So, how's life?}

Ana gives a very faint smile.

SONJA (CONT'D)
{You know. You never seem to talk much at all.}

Ana shrugs her shoulders.

SONJA (CONT'D)
{OK, OK.}
(a beat)
{You are such a quiet and meek little mouse.}

Ana looks at Sonja without an answer. Sonja looks at Ana and then around at the store.

SONJA (CONT'D)
 {So you heard about the new choir director?}

Ana nods once.

SONJA (CONT'D)
 {I don't know what goes on in that Fr. Andrej's head sometimes. I mean why do we need a new one anyway? I've done a good job for the past month or so since Doroteja's}
 (sigh - crosses herself)
 {Memory eternal.}
 (a beat)
 {I just don't understand.}

Ana looks at Sonja in silence.

SONJA (CONT'D)
 {What do you think?}

Ana looks down and then at Sonja.

SONJA (CONT'D)
 {Just as I thought. No opinion at all. Am I right?}

Ana still looks at Sonja in silence.

SONJA (CONT'D)
 {Well I've taken too much of your time. I'll be off then. See you later.}

Sonja walks away.

ANA
 {Goodbye.}

Ana looks down and then out into the store.

FADE TO:

EXT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - DAY

The following Sunday, JOACHIM walks up the sidewalk in front of the parish building and toward the front door. He tries to open it but it is locked.

He then walks away from the door and then around the building to find another one. He finds one open that leads to the fellowship hall.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - DAY

Joachim walks leisurely through the mostly empty hall, save for some tables and chairs. He stops to see the few fliers - almost exclusively in Serbian - and pictures on the wall. A few moments later, Ana enters to see Joachim standing there. He turns and sees her.

JOACHIM

Hey there.

She stands still and nods in response.

ANA

Hello.

He walks over to where she stands.

JOACHIM

(offers a hand)

I'm Joachim Bainbridge. The new choir director. And you are?

ANA

Ana.

JOACHIM

Ana?

ANA

Ana Dukich.

JOACHIM

Lovely name.

She looks down at his extended hand and then shakes it. Her grip is weak compared to his.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

Do you know where I might find Fr. Andrej Culic?

ANA

He was up in the sanctuary. But I think he is in his office.

JOACHIM

Could you show me where it is?

She points toward where the office is.

ANA
Just over there.

JOACHIM
Thank you Ana. I'll see you later
then.

She nods in response. He looks at her for a moment and then proceeds to the door. She looks down and then at him leaving. Then she turns around, looks down on the floor and then walks onward.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - PRIEST'S OFFICE - DAY

Fr. Andrej sits at his desk and looks over his homily. Joachim knocks on the closed door from outside.

JOACHIM (O.S.)
Fr. Andrej?

Fr. Andrej looks up.

FR. ANDREJ
Yes?

Joachim opens the door and Fr. Andrej smiles.

FR. ANDREJ (CONT'D)
Ah. Joachim.
(gets up)
Please come in.

Joachim enters and he kisses his right hand.

JOACHIM
I'm not disturbing you, am I
Father?

FR. ANDREJ
If I didn't want to be disturbed, I
would remain a monk. But even
then.
(gestures)
Please. Have a seat.

Joachim sits across from Fr. Andrej's desk and Fr. Andrej walks to his chair.

FR. ANDREJ (CONT'D)
 First off, on behalf of the parish
 who isn't here yet, I welcome you
 to Saints Peter and Paul.

JOACHIM
 Thank you Father.

FR. ANDREJ
 And I personally thank you for
 accepting the call to be our new
 choir director.

JOACHIM
 (nods)
 I'm happy to serve.

Fr. Andrej smiles. Then he rummages through his desk and
 pulls out a binder full of scattered liturgical settings and
 hands it to Joachim.

FR. ANDREJ
 Here is your book.

JOACHIM
 Thank you.

Joachim looks through it and reads the various pages: some
 handwritten, some printed, most are faded and worn at the
 edges and almost all of it is either in Serbian or Church
 Slavonic, in either Cyrillic or Latin alphabets. The pages
 also contain annotations in illegible handwriting, mostly in
 Serbian and only a few in English. Fr. Andrej notices his
 confusion and pulls out a hard-bound Church Slavonic-Serbian-
 English Divine Liturgy service book.

FR. ANDREJ
 Just in case.

JOACHIM
 (takes the book)
 Thanks.
 (looks at it)
 If there's one thing I'm grateful
 for, it's the Orthodox Church's
 sense of consistency.

FR. ANDREJ
 We are all one in Christ Jesus.
 Last time I checked.

JOACHIM
 (looks up - smiles)
 Amen.

Joachim reads through the Divine Liturgy book.

FR. ANDREJ

Oh. I almost forgot.

(looks in his desk)

It's not terribly important. More a formality than anything else. But it's good to keep our records current and accurate.

(finds a registry card)

Ah. Here we are.

Fr. Andrej hands the card to Joachim and Joachim takes it.

JOACHIM

Let's see.

(reads softly)

Name. Address. Phone number. Number of children. Number of grandchildren.

(stops)

How should I answer this one?

Joachim shows Fr. Andrej the card and points at the field for "NATIVE VILLAGE." Fr. Andrej examines it.

FR. ANDREJ

(smiles)

Don't worry about that one.

Joachim looks at the card again.

JOACHIM

Yeah. Somehow I get the feeling Glastonbury, Connecticut wouldn't exactly count as a "native village."

Fr. Andrej laughs.

FR. ANDREJ

I would forgive them though. This parish doesn't know what they do some times.

JOACHIM

That bad?

FR. ANDREJ

Not as bad as any other place. But I once heard someone use this story to describe what parishes are like.

(a beat)

(MORE)

FR. ANDREJ (CONT'D)

During the Great Flood, Noah is in the ark with all the animals. The rain is still pouring outside. One day, he walks around one of the decks. Suddenly he senses a strong smell. After sniffing the air, he declares, "This place stinks." Then he looks out through a window and sees the storm still raging and says, "But at least I'm safe."

JOACHIM

(chuckles)

Right.

(a beat)

So what's your native village?

FR. ANDREJ

Cleveland, Ohio.

JOACHIM

Ah. A native like me then.

FR. ANDREJ

In a way. Listen. Don't put too much stock in nonsense like this. You are here for a purpose, which is to lead in the great worship to God. Remember that. And let nothing else deter you from that task.

JOACHIM

Thank you Father. By the grace of God, I'll serve Him and this parish well.

FR. ANDREJ

{Glory to God for all things.}

Joachim looks at him, thinks for a moment and answers.

JOACHIM

Glory to God for all things?

FR. ANDREJ

Ah-ha! The Holy Spirit has descended upon you like He did upon Christ's disciples one Pentecost long ago.

JOACHIM
 (smiles meekly)
 Well, regardless of what I can do -
 or rather what God allows me to do -
 I have to decipher this book.
 Thankfully I have the Rosetta Stone
 here too.

FR. ANDREJ
 You'll be fine. But if you need
 any assistance with the language,
 let me know.

JOACHIM
 Thank you again Father.

Joachim gets up.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
 Do you happen to know where the
 choir meets for rehearsal?

FR. ANDREJ
 There's a small room marked
 "Choir." Just past the hall.

JOACHIM
 Thank you. And I'll see you
 upstairs later.

Fr. Andrej gets up.

FR. ANDREJ
 See you then.

They exchange smiles. After Joachim exits the office, Fr.
 Andrej takes his seat and looks over his homily.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - CHOIR ROOM - DAY

IVO and JEANNE rehearse some music at a music stand. Joachim
 then enters into the room and sees them.

JOACHIM
 Oh hello.

JEANNE
 Hi.

IVO
 Hello.

JOACHIM
I'm Joachim Bainbridge.

JEANNE
I'm Jeanne Molyneux.

IVO
Ivo Zukic.

Joachim shakes their hands.

JOACHIM
Please to meet you both. And you
sing?

JEANNE
I sing alto and he sings bass.

JOACHIM
Well we are almost there.

JEANNE
And you sing?

JOACHIM
Tenor.

Jeanne's eyes open wide in excitement.

JEANNE
Wonderful!

JOACHIM
Yeah I get that a lot.
(shrugs)
What can I say? We're always in
demand.

Jeanne smiles. Joachim sets his book on one of the isolated stands, facing toward the other ones set along a line. He opens it to the beginning and begins to write down some notes. Ivo and Jeanne observe.

JEANNE
If you need any help, let me or Ivo
know.

JOACHIM
Thank you. I appreciate it.
(looks around the room)
Do you know where the troparia and
kontakia for the saints are kept?

JEANNE

We just have the Menaion. And I chant from that. Well he and I do.

JOACHIM

And no one else?

JEANNE

It's never rehearsed.

JOACHIM

It is because of music?

JEANNE

No. It's just never rehearsed.

JOACHIM

(sighs)

Well, that's another project for me. But not right now.

Joachim looks over his book and occasionally writes notes. After a few moments, LUCIJA enters the room. Joachim turns to see her.

LUCIJA

{Hello Ivo. Ivana.}

IVO

{Hello.}

JEANNE

Good morning.

Lucija looks at Joachim with confusion.

JOACHIM

(offers his hand)

I'm Joachim Bainbridge.

LUCIJA

Oh. The new choir director. Nice to meet you. Lucija Govedarica.

JOACHIM

Please to meet you.

They shake hands.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

And you sing?

JEANNE

She sings alto.

JOACHIM
Are there any sopranos here?

JEANNE
There are. In fact a few more
basses too. They usually arrive
about twenty minutes before we are
supposed to be upstairs.

Joachim looks at his watch.

JOACHIM
Better late than never I guess.

Joachim resumes looking through his book and taking notes.
Lucija walks to where Jeanne is.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
How do you typically rehearse?

JEANNE
We really don't practice that much.
It's just the same music really.
We may warm up for a bit but not
much singing.

There is a faint murmur of boisterous conversation outside
the door.

JOACHIM
So why come in twenty minutes
before Liturgy?

Jeanne shrugs her shoulders.

The door then opens and the rest of the choir enters:
MIHAILO, DUNJA, NIKOLA and Sonja. They continue conversing
in Serbian while they walk to their respective stands. Sonja
notices the book on Joachim's stand and stops.

SONJA
{Oh that's where it went.}

She looks up at Joachim for a while and then walks to her
place next to Dunja. The newly arrived continue their
conversation, oblivious to Joachim and the rest of the choir.
Lucija is the only one who listens and tries to interject.
Ivo and Jeanne ignore it.

Joachim observes this chatter. After a few moments, he lets
out a loud cough and the conversation ceases immediately.

JOACHIM
 Thank you for your attention. Now,
 for those of you who just arrived,
 I'm Joachim Bainbridge, the new
 choir director. And all you are?

DUNJA
 Dunja Markovic.

NIKOLA
 Nikola Todorovic.

MIHAILO
 Mihailo Markovic.

Joachim turns to see a silent Sonja.

JOACHIM
 And you?

SONJA
 (a beat)
 Sonja Todorovic.

Joachim looks around the room.

JOACHIM
 Well. Pleased to meet all of you.
 Now normally I'd like to rehearse
 and warm up before we go upstairs.
 But I just want to tell you briefly
 a bit more about myself and to set
 my expectations for you. I was
 born in Glastonbury, Connecticut.
 I went to Yale and studied music
 and religion there. I was received
 into the Orthodox Church shortly
 before I graduated.

SONJA
 Was it Serbian?

JOACHIM
 (to Sonja)
 Does it matter?
 (to all)
 At any rate, I then served in
 various choirs. And now I am
 taking the lead here at Sts. Peter
 and Paul Serbian Orthodox Church.
 Now I have one important aim that
 you must pursue as members of the
 choir: sing well for the glory of
 God. The rest comes from there.
 (MORE)

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

(looks at his watch)
 Again normally I would like to warm up and rehearse for a while before Liturgy starts. But we can't really do that now. So in the future, I would like for all of you to come here earlier.

DUNJA

How early?

JOACHIM

An hour. No later than forty-five minutes prior to Liturgy.

MIHAILO

An hour?

NIKOLA

Are you serious?

SONJA

Why do we need to meet hour early? We know music.

JOACHIM

But don't you want to be better at singing for God?

(looks at the book)

Plus I may want to go over some of these settings. And perhaps throw in some new ones too.

Sonja, Dunja, Nikola and Mihailo silently protest.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

Just a thought. But please be here an hour before Liturgy. Thank you. Now let us pray.

All bow their heads. Sonja is the last one to do so.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

All cross themselves as he says it.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

O Christ our God, send down your blessing upon these servants of voice and song, so that we may sing onto You a new song.

(MORE)

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

For You are holy always now and
ever and unto the ages of ages.

(crosses himself)

Amen.

All respond. All except Ivo and Jeanne walk toward the door.
Joachim takes the stand and Jeanne stops him.

JEANNE

We have stands up at the loft.

JOACHIM

Ah. Thank you.

Joachim takes his book. Ivo takes his book from his stand.
Joachim holds the door open as Ivo and Jeanne leave. Joachim
exits last.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - SANCTUARY - DAY

Joachim stands before the choir and directs them. His
directions are expressive yet subtle. All except Ivo and
Jeanne ignore him and sing out of habit. Thus the overall
sound is imbalanced and lacks both musical and theological
expression. Also, the bass every now and then drifts out of
tune, which results either in the whole choir drifting out of
tune or a clash amongst the parts. Finally, Lucija sings
timidly and often not singing alto. The Liturgy resumes in
spite of the shortcomings.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - DAY

The parishioners mingle in the hall. Joachim stands near one
side of the hall next to Fr. Andrej.

FR. ANDREJ

It went well today.

JOACHIM

It could have been better.

FR. ANDREJ

Of course it could. But this is
only the first day. You know how
long God took to create the heavens
and the earth.

JOACHIM

True.

FR. ANDREJ

But good job today.

JOACHIM
Thank you Father.

Fr. Andrej walks away and meets with other parishioners. Joachim observes the crowd and sees Ana standing at the opposite end of the room alone. He sees her and then SASHA walks up to him.

SASHA
You must be the new choir director.

JOACHIM
Yes.
(offers his hand)
Joachim Bainbridge.

SASHA
Aleksandra Vujica. But you can call me Sasha.
(shakes his hand)
I'm the President of the Kolo Sestara here.

JOACHIM
Kolo Sestara?

SASHA
You know. A ladies' group.

JOACHIM
Ah. I see.

They stand silently for a time.

SASHA
So. Bainbridge. I don't think I'm familiar with that name.

JOACHIM
It's British.

SASHA
Ah. British. So is your mother Serbian?

JOACHIM
No.

SASHA
How about your grandmother then?

JOACHIM
Nope.

SASHA
Grandfather?

JOACHIM
Nah-ah.

SASHA
Surely there must be Serbian in
your family? Distant cousins
perhaps?
(softly)
Maybe some illegitimate branch?

JOACHIM
(a beat)
None.

SASHA
Oh.
(sigh - to herself)
{A pear tree cannot bear an apple.}

JOACHIM
Excuse me?

SASHA
Nothing.
(a beat)
I have some other business to do.
But it was nice meeting you.

JOACHIM
Likewise.

Sasha walks away and Joachim looks at her. He looks over to where Ana is and then VLATKO, VECA and JOSIF approach him. Vlatko extends his hand.

VLATKO
Ah. Welcome to our parish.

Vlatko looks at him, timidly and with some confusion, as he nervously shakes his hand.

JOACHIM
Joachim Bainbridge.

VLATKO
Ah yes. Joachim. Unusual name.
I'm Vlatko Petrovic, Parish Council
President. And this is Veca
Karkunica, Parish Council
Secretary.

VECA
(shakes his hand)
Please to meet you.

VLATKO
And this is Josif Haravan, Parish
Council Treasurer.

JOSIF
(shakes his hand)
How are you?

JOACHIM
Fine. And you?

JOSIF
As well as one can.

VLATKO
Well. It's good everyone met
everyone here. And we will see
each other again

Vlatko looks at him for a moment.

JOACHIM
Joachim.

VLATKO
Ah yes! Joachim. Yes, yes.
{Goodbye!}

Joachim waves as Vlatko and Veca leave. Josif stays.

JOSIF
Don't worry about him. He's always
like that.

JOACHIM
Defining personality trait?

JOSIF
Something like that. I have to
say, I'm glad that we haven't
scared you away yet.

JOACHIM
Oh I'm sure you have to work at it
long and hard to scare me away.
(quietly)
But let's not go there.

JOSIF

(laughs)

Well I won't at least. But it was good to meet you. And if you need anything, let me know.

JOACHIM

Thank you. How about some money?

JOSIF

(laughs)

You're good.

(a beat)

So I'll see you later. Or as you may hear it: {See you later.}

JOACHIM

(timidly)

{See you later.}

JOSIF

That's it. But I wouldn't worry too much about the Serbian here.

JOACHIM

Thanks.

Josif waves and walks away. Joachim waves as well and remains standing. He looks out to see where Ana was but is no longer there. He then walks around the hall.

INT. ANA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Later that afternoon, Ana lies upon the couch with one arm back behind her and the other arm extending beyond the seat cushions, almost touching the ground. She closes her eyes and her smile subtly changes between happiness and sadness.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - CHOIR ROOM - DAY

The next Sunday, Joachim, standing in front of his music stand, looks over the book and writes notes on the page. Ana peers from outside through the open door crack to watch him. After a few moments, she quietly leaves. Joachim senses someone was there. He turns around to see the slightly open door. He then turns back to the stand and resumes his work.

A few moments later, Ivo and Jeanne enter the room. Joachim looks back to see them.

JOACHIM

{Good morning.}

IVO
{Good morning.}

Ivo and Jeanne walk toward their stands.

JEANNE
Wow. Are you taking up the
language now?

JOACHIM
Little by little. At least so I
don't come off as a complete
foreigner.

JEANNE
Understandable. Just don't burden
yourself with it.

JOACHIM
It's not a burden at all. And if
this is my cross to bear, so be it.

JEANNE
That's a good attitude to have.

Joachim smiles and writes more notes.

JEANNE (CONT'D)
Do you want to start now or wait
for a few minutes?

JOACHIM
(looks at his watch)
It's five after now. I'll wait a
few more minutes to see who else
shows up.

Lucija enters the room.

LUCIJA
Good morning.

JOACHIM
{Good morning.}

LUCIJA
{Oh! You speak Serbian?}

JOACHIM
{Just a little.}

Lucija smiles and takes her place on the stand. Joachim
continues to look over his book.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
So, Ivo and Jeanne. That's a
couple if I ever saw one.

JEANNE
(turns to Ivo)
Well.
(turns to Joachim)
Almost.

JOACHIM
(looks at them)
Ah. Congratulations. So when is
the big day?

JEANNE
It'll be after Pascha.

JOACHIM
That's wonderful. I'll make sure
the singing is joyful on that day.

JEANNE
I'm sure it will.

Joachim looks at his watch.

JOACHIM
(sighs)
Where is the rest of the choir?

JEANNE
Oh the prima donnas? They will
probably be here the same time as
usual.

JOACHIM
(sighs)
Well. Let's work with what we have
for now. I can sing soprano either
an octave lower or in falsetto.

LUCIJA
I can sing soprano.

JOACHIM
But you are an alto.

LUCIJA
I know it.

JEANNE
She used to be one.

JOACHIM
Really? What happened?

LUCIJA
It's nothing. Doroteja just wanted me to sing alto.

JOACHIM
Doroteja. She was the previous choir director right?

IVO
Yes.

JOACHIM
Well, you can sing soprano for now. But when we go out there, go back to alto. OK?

LUCIJA
{Yes.}

JOACHIM
Great. We have all four parts.
(looks at the book)
Before I begin with some specifics, I want to say in general that it was fairly decent. But I think it could be much better. There needs to be less volume and more beauty. I know it's a big sanctuary in there and we are in the back. But it's not about how much power you put into making it fill the room. It's about putting that power into making it sound good and effective. There's more I can say but we will come to it as we go along.
(flips through the book)
OK. Let's see. Let's turn to the Axion.

Ivo and Jeanne flip to the appropriate page in their books. Lucija looks at him with confusion.

LUCIJA
I'm sorry?

JOACHIM
The Axion. The Hymn to the Theotokos. "It is truly meet." I forget how you say in Church Slavonic. And I don't know the Serbian.

JEANNE

You know Church Slavonic?

JOACHIM

Some. I mean I can't read the Scriptures in it. Yet. But it's a steady progress.

JEANNE

So may I ask where you attended before coming here?

JOACHIM

Holy Trinity.

JEANNE

Don't they use English over there?

JOACHIM

They do. But I do my own studies. Plus I've been to a few other parishes.

JEANNE

Like where?

JOACHIM

Just all over. But I'll talk about it some other time. Now let's look at the Axion.

(looks at the book)

Ah OK. {It is truly meet.}

(looks up)

Here we go.

He hums the root of the tonic chord and then hums the complete chord for the appropriate parts. With his hands still in the air, he then cues the choir to start singing. Joachim's direction is relaxed, smooth, firm and not rigid. Ivo and Jeanne respond to this. Lucija sees it but doesn't vary her singing. Her performance, while lacking nuance, has mostly correct intonation. When the hymn is done, Joachim cues the choir to stop.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

OK. A few things to keep in mind. And I wish more people were here for this. Part of singing is not just saying the right words and hitting the right notes. You should actually express something deeper in the performance. This is just in general.

(MORE)

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

When you sing, it should be whatever the text dictates. And in Orthodox hymnography specifically, the music is subservient to the word. So.

(points to the book)

When you sing praises to the Mother of God - or the Theotokos or the Borogoditsa - it should be lovely and tender as well as firm and resolute. If you think about it, you are singing to a mother. So imagine singing this to your mother. And if you don't like your mother for some reason, sing to one you do like. Just keep that in mind.

(a beat)

Also - and again I wish everyone were here for this - we do have a balance problem. I need to hear all the parts blended together and not just have one part dominate over the other.

(looks at his book)

So. Let's try it again with those things in mind. Expression. Meaning. Balance. And sing to your mother.

Joachim raises his hands and all stand at attention. He hums the pitches again and then begins the setting. In a few measures into the hymn, Sonja, Dunja, Mihailo and Nikola enter. They have a loud conversation in Serbian on top of the singing that is prominent yet does not overpower the singing. They take their places and follow along with the music. The overall sound now shifts toward a loud soprano, a loud and gradually out of tune bass and overall flat expression. Joachim stops in the middle.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

OK. Now. For those who of you who just came in, did you remember what I said last time?

SONJA

We are here right?

DUNJA

Yeah.

JOACHIM

Did I not say be here an hour
beforehand? Forty-five minutes at
the latest?

SONJA

You did?

JOACHIM

Yes I did. And what time is it
now?

All look at him.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

It is twenty minutes before the
hour and therefore twenty minutes
before we go out there.

SONJA

What's so important to come here
hour before Liturgy?

JOACHIM

What's so important? You've been
serving in this choir longer than I
have and you don't know what's
important?

(sighs)

OK. Here's a reason why. If you
were here on time, you would have
heard from me an important piece of
direction. That is put some
genuine feeling and heart into your
singing. Take the Bogoroditchin.

MIHAILO

The what?

JOACHIM

The Hymn to the Theotokos. Anyway.
You are not in some public square
shouting this through a bullhorn as
if it were a protest chant. You
are singing to a mother. And not
just any mother. The mother of all
mothers. So sing it like you are
singing to your mother. OK?

(sighs)

There were other things I wanted to
go over but I'm not going to repeat
them again. This means I need all
of you to be here when I ask. Not
some of you or half of you.

(MORE)

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

All of you. And if this keeps up,
I may have to come down hard.

SONJA

So you treat us like children?

JOACHIM

Do you all really want me to treat
you like children?

No one responds. Then Joachim looks at his watch.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

We won't have enough time to go
over everything I wanted to go
over. But before we pray and go
up, I ask of all of you to really
watch me. You know this music.
Especially since you seem to use
nothing else but this music. I
shouldn't have to see any eyes away
from me. So pay attention to what
I do. OK? That's it for now. Let
us pray.

The choir bows their heads.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

Vo imya Otsa i Syna i Svytago Duha.
Amin.

All cross themselves as he says it.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

O Christ our God, send down your
blessing upon these servants of
voice and song, so that we may sing
onto You a new song. For You are
holy always now and ever and unto
the ages of ages.

(crosses himself)

Amen.

All respond. Joachim takes his book and leaves first.
Everyone else gathers whatever materials they have and leave
after him.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - SANCTUARY - DAY

Joachim stands before the choir and directs them. Again, all
except Ivo and Jeanne ignore him and sing out of habit.

The overall sound is still uniformly loud, more emphasis on the soprano than the other parts, a fluctuating intonation originating from the bass and more emphasis on the melody and the language than on the words and the content. Also Lucija sings timidly and sometimes does not sing alto. Joachim observes all of these things and the Liturgy resumes.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - DAY

The parishioners mingle in the hall. Joachim wanders around the hall, occasionally greeting a passer-by. Soon VUKASIN approaches him.

VUKASIN
You are the new director I take it?

JOACHIM
Yes. Joachim Bainbridge.

VUKASIN
Vukasin Lekovic.
(shakes his hand)
You're doing a good job. Though
it's a bit louder than I'm used to.

JOACHIM
I'm working on that.

VUKASIN
{Good.} Oh. Do you speak . . . ?

JOACHIM
I'm just learning it.

VUKASIN
Oh. Well.

Vukasin notices Sasha walking around the room. Sasha then sees Joachim and then walks to where he stands.

SASHA
Ah, Mr. Bainbridge? Is that right?

JOACHIM
Yes it is.

SASHA
And I see you met our loyal wolf.

VUKASIN
{Madam.}
(looks down)
{Excuse me.}

Vukasin walks away and Sasha looks at him leaving before turning to see Joachim.

SASHA
Doing well?

JOACHIM
As well as one can.

SASHA
Well I want to say that I'm sorry about last week.

JOACHIM
Sorry about what?

SASHA
That whole . . . Never mind. Are you doing anything today?

JOACHIM
Not really. Why?

SASHA
I was wondering if you would like to come over to my house for a nice Sunday dinner.

JOACHIM
I will be honored.

SASHA
Very good, Mr. Bainbridge.

JOACHIM
There's no need for formalities. Joachim is fine.

SASHA
But I like Mr. Bainbridge. {Of course I would like it more if it were Serbian.}

He looks at her and tries to figure out what she just said.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Is 3 too late in the day for you?

JOACHIM
Not at all.

SASHA
Alright. I'll see you then.

JOACHIM
 {See you later.}

SASHA
 {Ah! The boy is learning.}

She walks away and he looks on before he resumes roaming through the hall.

INT. SASHA'S HOME - DAY

Later that same afternoon, Sasha walks to the door after she hears a knock. She opens it to see Joachim standing there.

JOACHIM
 {Good afternoon Madam Vujica.}

SASHA
 {Good afternoon Mr. Bainbridge.}
 Are we getting comfortable with the
 Serbian?

JOACHIM
 On the way.

SASHA
 {Good.}
 (to herself)
 {You backward foreigner.}
 (gestures)
 Please. Do come in.

Joachim enters the house.

SASHA (CONT'D)
 Just make yourself comfortable
 while I get everything ready.

JOACHIM
 {Thank you.}

Joachim walks toward the living room and Sasha walks toward the kitchen.

INT. SASHA'S HOME - DAY

A few hours later, Joachim and Sasha sit opposite each other at the table with a cup of coffee.

JOACHIM
 Thank you again for dinner.

SASHA
{Certainly.}

He looks at his cup and then around the home.

JOACHIM
You have a nice home here.

SASHA
{Thank you.}

He looks back at his cup while she has hers in her hand.

JOACHIM
May I ask you a question? And
forgive me if it sounds odd.

SASHA
Of course.

JOACHIM
Are you lonely here?

SASHA
What do you mean?

JOACHIM
I mean you have this fairly
spacious place. Well it feels
spacious because it's just you
here. I'm just wondering if you
feel lonely here.

SASHA
Well I have my lady friends over at
church. So I'm not that lonely.

JOACHIM
Fair enough.

She drinks her coffee.

SASHA
Though I must confess, I do miss
Doroteja.

JOACHIM
I take it you two were close.

SASHA
We were like sisters, she and I.
You understand right?

JOACHIM

I can understand.
(drinks his coffee)
So what was she like?

SASHA

She was . . . Demanding I guess
would be the word. She was a
strong leader. She knew what she
wanted and she was determined to
get it.

(drinks her coffee)
Of course most everyone else may
have saw her as some fearsome ogre.
But they respected her. Or at
least they didn't try to cross her.

Joachim nods.

SASHA (CONT'D)

But with me, she was
(sighs)
I miss her.

She finishes her coffee.

JOACHIM

Yeah.
(finishes his coffee)
Well I better get going. I don't
want to stay past my expiration
date.

SASHA

Say again?

JOACHIM

Wearing out my welcome.

SASHA

Oh. You're not. But I understand
if you have to go.

They get up and shake hands. Then they start walking toward
the door.

JOACHIM

Thanks again for the invitation and
the hospitality.

SASHA

And thank you for coming over. It
was nice talking with you.

JOACHIM
Likewise. So next Sunday then?

SASHA
Next Sunday. {Goodbye.}

JOACHIM
{Goodbye.}

Joachim exits and Sasha walks back into the house.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - SANCTUARY - DAY

The next Sunday, Ana prepares the sanctuary for worship.
Joachim walks inside, looks around and then sees Ana.

JOACHIM
{Hello Ana.}

She looks up to see him.

ANA
{Hello.}

He walks closer to her.

JOACHIM
How are Wait a minute.
{How are you?}

ANA
(smiles)
{Good. And you?}

JOACHIM
(smiles)
{Not bad. Thank you.}
(slight chuckle)
I'm getting the hang of this.

ANA
(smiles)
Fine so far.

JOACHIM
Well, I'd better get . . . {I have
to go now. See you later.}

ANA
{Bye.}

He walks out of the sanctuary and she continues to perform
her duties.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - CHOIR ROOM - DAY

Joachim looks through the book. No sooner does Ivo and Jeanne enter the room and Joachim looks up.

JOACHIM
{Hello Ivo. Hello Ivana.}

IVO
{Hello Joachim.}

Ivo sets his book upon the stand.

JEANNE
Boy you really are taking it on.

JOACHIM
(smiles)
{Little by little.}

JEANNE
I'm impressed. It took me a while to get into the language. I'm still not there.

JOACHIM
Well it's going to take me a while too. But I figure if I get key phrases, I'll be on my way. Slowly and surely.

JEANNE
I'm sure you will.

JOACHIM
So which one do you prefer?

JEANNE
Either one. People here call me Ivana. Elsewhere I'm called Jeanne.

(a beat)
And are you always called Joachim?

JOACHIM
My legal name is Jacob.

JEANNE
Ah. So Joachim is . . .

JOACHIM
. . . My christ name, yes.

JEANNE
Why change it?

Joachim shrugs his shoulders.

JOACHIM
Felt like a change.

JEANNE
Fair enough.

Lucija enters and Joachim turns to see her.

JOACHIM
{Good morning Lucija.}

LUCIJA
{Good morning.}

JOACHIM
(looks at his watch)
Well, the always dependable ones
are here. And if the usual ones
don't show up in the next five
minutes, I'm going to start without
them.

Sonja, Dunja, Mihailo and Nikola enter silently in a straight
line. Joachim observes their entrance.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
OK then. Let's begin.
(claps his hands)
Once again, I want a blended and
expressive sound. And it's not
just because I have some sense of
aesthetics. All of this is about
God. It's about praising Him and
worshiping Him and glorifying Him
and giving thanks unto Him. We
want to offer the best of ourselves
here. That's just in general. Now
for some specifics.

(points to the sopranos)
Sopranos. Back down. Yes you sing
the melody most of the time. But
you don't need to belt it out.
This isn't a rock concert here.

(points to the basses)
Basses. Same thing. And also
watch your intonation. You start
out fine when I give you the pitch
but then you start to lose it.

(MORE)

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

Especially when we sing longer hymns like the Cherubic Hymn. I want to maintain whatever pitch is set. OK?

(points to the altos)

Finally the altos. Jeanne, you are fine. But Lucija, I really need to hear you. You either sing timidly or you end up singing soprano.

LUCIJA

OK.

JOACHIM

Do you just not know it?

LUCIJA

I don't know.

JOACHIM

Because if you need help, I can help you. But I need you to sing your part.

SONJA

What difference does it make?

JOACHIM

Because these settings are written in four parts. Therefore I need all four parts. Not just one.

SONJA

What's with this setting? I thought it was music.

JOACHIM

(to Sonja)

It is. The music here is called a setting. It's because you set a text to music.

(back to Lucija)

Can you do that for me?

LUCIJA

I'll try.

JOACHIM

Jeanne, you'll help her. Right?

JEANNE

Of course.

JOACHIM

Alright then. I think the big thing I want to work on right now is the Cherubic Hymn because it is the most demanding musically.

SONJA

Don't you mean setting?

Joachim looks at her sharply and then back at the choir.

JOACHIM

This is the most beautiful part of the whole Liturgy. This is where we the faithful start to enter heaven as it were. So it should be light. Airy. Ethereal. It should also be like eternity. That means time is not an issue. Therefore we really shouldn't rush here. And this particular setting is quite lovely. In fact you find that the great liturgical composers - and even the non-liturgical ones - have done beautiful settings of the Cherubic Hymn. So really, the setting tells you how to sing it. You just need to sing it. And I'll help you with this. So let's take it from the top.

He raises his hands and all except Sonja and Dunja are at attention. He hums the pitches and then directs. The choir sings somewhat softly but it's still off balance due to the sopranos and the basses. Everyone except for Jeanne, Ivo and Lucija ignore Joachim's direction. After several measures, Joachim cues to stop.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

OK. Again, I want it light. This is supposed to be heaven. And something that may help is 1) don't crouch forward. Stand up straight. Not too stiff but definitely upright. Also your voice comes not from here

(points to his throat)

But from here.

(points to his abdomen)

This is where you get both volume and pitch control.

(MORE)

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

If you sing from your throat, you both limit your voice's dynamic range and strain your voice so it wears down and then you start to sing out of tune. So remember, sing from here

(points to his abdomen)

And not from here.

(points to his throat)

OK?

As he demonstrates this, Ivo and Jeanne understand him and Lucija listens attentively. Everyone else just listens.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

Let's start again. From the top.

He raises his hand again and all stand at attention except for Sonja and Dunja. Once again, Joachim directs smoothly. There is a subtle improvement in both the alto and the bass. The sopranos remain loud. After several measures, Joachim cues to stop.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

OK. That was good. But I think it can be even lighter. And the voices need to blend more. If you are not hearing the other parts, you are singing too loud.

SONJA

But if we are singing soft, then no one will hear us.

Dunja chuckles slightly. Joachim looks at her sharply and walks to her.

JOACHIM

It sounds like you want to direct.

SONJA

I did once.

JOACHIM

Ah. Well, I was told by Fr. Andrej to direct. And I haven't heard anything different from him. However if you think you are a better director than me, then take it up with him. In the mean time, let's keep it to one. OK?

Joachim walks back to his stand. When she sees his back, she sticks out a short raspberry at him.

He stands behind the stand, raises his hands and they start singing the setting again. The sound improves considerably. Everyone follows Joachim and sing according to his lead except for Sonja, Mihailo and Nikola, who remain silent or very softly singing. Dunja follows Joachim but Sonja discreetly cues her to stop. Joachim notices this silence. They finally get through the first part of the setting and Joachim stops.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

Good. {Good.} It would have been nice to hear everyone there but that sound is what I want.

SONJA

But if we hear everyone, it will then be loud.

JOACHIM

Sonja! I've had enough of your snide comments. Either you say something worth saying or you don't say anything at all. Got it?

SONJA

Do you always talk to your elders like that?

JOACHIM

(raises his finger)
Don't! Start with me!
(looks at his watch)
We need to go up soon. So let us pray first.

The choir bows their heads. Joachim breathes deeply and exhales slowly.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

All cross themselves as he says it.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

O Christ our God, send down your blessing upon these servants of voice and song, so that we may sing onto You a new song. For You are holy always now and ever and unto the ages of ages.

(crosses himself)

Amen.

All respond. Joachim takes his book. Everyone else gathers their materials before they leave. Nikola walks up to him.

NIKOLA
{Excuse me.}

JOACHIM
(looks up)
{Yes?}

NIKOLA
I don't think I should be here.

JOACHIM
What do you mean?

NIKOLA
I mean I don't think I should be here.

JOACHIM
Look. I need everyone I can. I can't afford to lose people. OK?

Joachim smiles and takes his book before he leaves the room. Nikola looks out for a moment and then leaves.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - DAY

The parishioners mingle in the hall. Joachim enters with a water bottle in hand. He walks around the hall, looks at the gathered parishioners and occasionally drinks from the bottle.

Then Ivo and Jeanne walk up to Joachim. Joachim turns to see them.

JOACHIM
{Hi Ivo.} Jeanne.

IVO
{Hi.}

JEANNE
Listen. I want to say that Ivo and I were impressed that you stood up to Sonja like that.

JOACHIM
I'm not so sure if that's something to be proud of.

JEANNE

I understand. But if you really
knew

(a beat)

At any rate, I'm glad you are
strong.

JOACHIM

Glory to God.

JEANNE

Indeed. Anyways, there's something
we want to show you.

Jeanne reveals a new binder. Joachim takes the binder and looks through to find new and clean pages, some familiar settings and some new ones including some non-Serbian. There is also more English present than Serbian or Church Slavonic.

JEANNE (CONT'D)

It's something Ivo and I have been
working on for almost a year. And
we think this may help the choir.
And you.

JOACHIM

I'm impressed. I really am.

(looks at them)

With both of you.

(looks at the book)

I want to look at this more but I
think this can work.

JEANNE

That's fine. In fact that's your
copy.

JOACHIM

{Thank you very much.}

JEANNE

{You're welcome.}

She looks at Ivo and then at Joachim.

JEANNE (CONT'D)

Anyway we have to go. But we
wanted to at least give that to
you.

JOACHIM

Again thank you. And I'll see you
next Sunday.

JEANNE
Of course. {Bye Joachim.}

JOACHIM
{Bye.}

Ivo and Jeanne walk away. Joachim looks through the book and occasionally looks up and sees Ana in the distance. Finally he sees Ana has already left. He closes the book and walks out of the hall.

INT. JOACHIM'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

During a weeknight, Joachim looks through the book. He also has his laptop open to a web browser displaying search results for liturgical music. He also has choral music playing from a nearby sound system.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - SANCTUARY - DAY

The next Sunday, Joachim enters the sanctuary. He hears the faint sound of a woman singing. He looks to see Ana in a far corner. As he walks closer to her, he knows for certain it is Ana singing. Ana keeps singing softly and does not notice him approaching.

JOACHIM
{Hello.}

She looks up to see him and then nods.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
I didn't know you could sing.

She shrugs her shoulders, faintly smiles and looks down.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
Do you want to sing in the choir?

She looks up at him and then rises up.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
I mean I would love it if you could sing with us. But I don't want it to get in the way of what you have to do here.

ANA
It won't. I can do it.

JOACHIM
Great.

Both smile and look at each other.

ANA
So do you need me now?

JOACHIM
(looks at his watch)
Not right now. But do you think
you can join us at 9?

ANA
{Yes.}

JOACHIM
Excellent. See you then.

ANA
{Bye.}

He smiles and walks away toward the door. She looks on and then resumes her duties.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - CHOIR ROOM - DAY

Joachim looks at his stand. Ivo, Jeanne and Lucija enter into the room.

JOACHIM
{Good morning.}

All respond separately.

JEANNE
So. We wait for the usual gang of
four then?

JOACHIM
But of course.

JEANNE
You seem happy this morning. Not
that you ever weren't happy.

Joachim looks up and smiles. Then Ana enters the room and all take notice.

JEANNE (CONT'D)
Oh! Ana! Glad you can come.

Ana bows and walks to Joachim.

ANA
Where do I go?

JOACHIM
Just go to where Ivana and Lucija
are.

Ana walks to where Joachim points.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
(to the choir)
So you all notice our new addition.
And someone we know as well.

JEANNE
Of course. She does a great job as
sacristan.

LUCIJA
{One of the finest.}

IVO
{Absolutely.}

JOACHIM
Well thank you all for welcoming
her. Now.
(leafs through the book)
I have another announcement but
I'll wait until everyone else shows
up. So until then, let us begin
with

Sonja, Dunja, Mihailo and Nikola enter into the room and take
their places. They notice Ana standing in the choir and
subtly glare at her.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
Perfect. You guys are getting
better at this.
(a beat)
Now I have an important
announcement.

DUNJA
Aren't we going to sing?

SONJA
Yeah. Why this talking?

Joachim glares at them and then looks at the whole choir.

JOACHIM
First, I like to welcome a new
addition to the choir, whom you
already know. Our lovely
sacristan, Ana Dukich.

Ana looks at the choir shyly.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

Second, we are going to embark on a grand project. It's going to be a gradual but steady renovation of the choir.

SONJA

What do you mean?

JOACHIM

I mean it's going to involve the following set of goals. Learning some new settings so we have some variety. Making things more efficient. Being much more aware of what goes on during Liturgy week to week. And finally using more English.

Sonja, Dunja, Mihailo and Nikola object.

SONJA

What?

MIHAILO

This is crazy.

NIKOLA

{You got to be kidding?}

JOACHIM

I'm sorry. As much as I've come to know this language, we live in America. And the predominant language here - for the present anyway - is English.

MIHAILO

But we are a Serbian parish. Why do we need English?

JOACHIM

First, I defer to my previous statement. Second, we can't assume Serbian is going to be the parish's main language forever. And third, it's better to be understood rather than trying to emulate the old country.

DUNJA

{Outrageous.}

NIKOLA
{Out of line.}

SONJA
Does Fr. Andrej approve?

JOACHIM
I haven't spoken to him about it yet. But I'm sure he will approve. And if he doesn't, then I'll respect his wishes. But I think this is something that not only can be done but I also believe should be done.

SONJA
But there's no need for it now. I'm sure we got time before it becomes issue.

JOACHIM
Wouldn't you rather start working on it now? Or wait until the floor breaks from under you?

DUNJA
How are we going to do this?

JOACHIM
Well here are some of the details. In order to do this, I need you come here on Wednesday nights for an additional rehearsal, lasting for about two hours or so. And it will be strictly on this new material.

(holds up the binder)
By the way, this was compiled by Ivo and Ivana, which they gladly donated to the cause.

(puts down the binder)
We will be using what we know now in the interim. But our goal is to use the new book, hopefully in time for Pascha. Obviously if we master the new material sooner, we can then use it right away.

Sonja, Dunja, Mihailo and Nikola continue to raise objections in Serbian. After a while, Nikola raises his hand.

NIKOLA
{Excuse me?}

JOACHIM

{Yes.}

NIKOLA

I want to leave.

JOACHIM

Why? Because I would like the choir to be better?

NIKOLA

I'm sure you mean well. But I just can't take this anymore. I want to leave.

JOACHIM

If you want to leave, fine. There's the door. {All the best.}

NIKOLA

{Thank you.}

Nikola walks away from the stand and leaves the room.

JOACHIM

OK then. So remember, be here on Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Joachim looks at the book on the stand.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

Now. For today's review.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - DAY

The parishioners mingle in the hall. Joachim and Fr. Andrej stand together off to the side.

FR. ANDREJ

I'm noticing some improvements in the choir.

JOACHIM

Thank you Father. Glory to God.

FR. ANDREJ

Glory indeed.

JOACHIM

Father. I have something I want to discuss with you.

FR. ANDREJ
You want to reform the choir.

JOACHIM
That's probably too bold a word.

FR. ANDREJ
Well I know you don't want to use instruments or anything. Though the Psalmist did say to praise God with the timbrel and the harp. But in all seriousness, I think I know what you intend to do.

JOACHIM
So it's a blessing?

FR. ANDREJ
As long as the choir can perform the task and can perform it for the glory of God, then so be it.

JOACHIM
{Thank you Father.}

Joachim kisses his right hand and Fr. Andrej pats him on the back.

FR. ANDREJ
(smiles)
{God be with you.}

Fr. Andrej pats him again and walks around the hall to other parishioners. Joachim stands and looks at the crowd until Mihailo approaches him.

MIHAILO
Excuse me, Mr. Bainbridge?

JOACHIM
Yes?

MIHAILO
I would like to leave the choir.

JOACHIM
You too? Is it because of this morning?

MIHAILO
I just don't see the point of being here anymore.

JOACHIM

Well I'd hope for a better reason.
But if you want to go, then go.

Mihailo promptly leaves and Joachim looks on at him and then into the crowd.

On the other side of the hall, Sonja and Dunja walk up to Sasha, currently wrapping up a conversation with another parishioner.

SONJA

{Hi Sasha.}

SASHA

{Sonja. How are you?}

Sonja looks over to see Joachim standing in the distance.

SONJA

{Not so good. The foreigner wants to make changes. He told us so this morning.}

SASHA

{Does Fr. Andrej know?}

SONJA

{He said "not yet." But I'm sure Fr. Andrej already knows.}

SASHA

{The nerve.}

SONJA

{What shall we do?}

SASHA

{Be patient. The answer will come in time.}

(smiles)

{Don't look so down. We will protect what is ours. We will not let that foreigner destroy this parish.}

Sasha puts her hand on Sonja's arm.

SASHA (CONT'D)

{For Doroteja.}

Sonja puts her hand on Sasha's other arm.

SONJA
{For Doroteja.}

Dunja puts her arms around both of them.

DUNJA
{For Doroteja.}

They look at each other and smile shrewdly.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - SANCTUARY - DAY

Ana sweeps the floor when Joachim enters into the sanctuary and sees her.

JOACHIM
Ana.

She looks up.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
I want to thank you for joining us today.

ANA
Thank you for inviting me.

He looks around the sanctuary.

JOACHIM
Is there any way I can return the favor?

ANA
What do you mean?

JOACHIM
I mean can I help you here?

ANA
(looks around)
Oh. It's almost done.

JOACHIM
Are you sure?

ANA
I am sure the altar may need some cleaning. But I don't know.

Joachim looks at the altar and then at her.

JOACHIM
Shall I talk to Father about me
helping you out?

ANA
If you want.

JOACHIM
OK. Again, thank you.

ANA
You're welcome.

JOACHIM
So I'll see you this Wednesday?

ANA
Yes.

JOACHIM
Bye Ana.

She waves goodbye. He turns to leave and she continues to sweep the floor.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - NIGHT

On Wednesday night, Joachim, Ivo and Jeanne sit in a small circle near the entrance of the hall with only half of the lights on. In a few moments, Lucija appears and then Ana behind her.

JOACHIM
{Good evening.}

LUCIJA
{Good evening.}

Ana simply nods. They both stand as close to the circle as they can.

JEANNE
What time is it?

JOACHIM
(looks at his watch)
It's almost time.

JEANNE
So we're waiting for the usual crowd?

JOACHIM
Just Sonja and Dunja.

JEANNE
I know Nikola left. But what about Mihailo?

JOACHIM
He left too.

JEANNE
Huh. At least we don't have the bass problem.

JOACHIM
True. Not the way I would have liked to have solved it but it works.

Sonja and Dunja walk into the hall.

SONJA
Are we meeting here now?

JOACHIM
Just for the weeknights.

DUNJA
What's wrong with the choir room?

JOACHIM
Nothing. It's just we meet there all the time. I figured we meet somewhere different. Besides, don't you like the space?

SONJA
You're crazy.

JOACHIM
So did Fr. Andrej fire me yet?

Sonja looks at him coldly.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
Now then. On each of the stands are your sectional copies of the binder made by Ivo and Ivana. I have also made a digital copy as well. If you wish to have one, give me your e-mail address and I can send it to you.

(MORE)

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

And if you prefer a physical copy for your own use, let me know and I can make one for you.

(a beat)

Now before we begin, I want to take only a few moments to explain about what we should do as a choir.

SONJA

(quietly to Dunja)

{Great. More talking.}

JOACHIM

The choir is not there just to make pretty music. After all, we have regular concerts for that. The choir is also not there just to be some social club. And there are plenty of other places for that too. Our number one job here is to lead the faithful in worship. That job is essential in any choir, whether it has only three members or thirty. I think of it like Abel and his sacrifice. Or Abraham's. And the greatest one of all: the Father giving His Son to the world so that the world might be saved through Him. In each case, they gave not just some meager offering or a surplus child or some small percentage. It was the first, the only and the best. And if you want to go further, it should be total. We need to give of ourselves like the widow gave the only monetary piece she ever had. We need to give to God fully and completely. Just as the priest says near the end of nearly every litany, "let us commend ourselves and each other and our whole lives onto Christ our God." If we do that first, then the rest of it - the melody, the harmony, the balance, the tempo and everything related to the music - will come into play. So please keep that in mind.

Joachim looks at the binder in front of him.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

Let us begin.

INT. ANA'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Later that same evening, Ana stands in the kitchen as a kettle boils on the stove, softly humming and singing. She also occasionally glances at her copy of the new settings on the table. Her smile is dreamy and her eyes close in a trance.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - CHOIR ROOM - DAY

The next Sunday, Joachim, Ivo, Jeanne, Lucija and Ana are in a close circle, rehearsing material from the newer books. The sound is now full, lush, balanced and expressive than it has ever been. Everyone looks at Joachim's direction and remains focused. As they approach the end, Joachim cues to stop.

JOACHIM

Very good. {Very good.} I think we are on our way to something wonderful for the parish. So {Thank you very much.}

Everyone else smiles in response.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

And if we keep this up, we may even start using this before Pascha.

(a beat)

So if there's nothing else, let us now pray.

Everyone bows their heads.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

{In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.}

All cross themselves as he says it.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

O Christ our God, send down your blessing upon these servants of voice and song, so that we may sing onto You a new song. For You are holy always now and ever and unto the ages of ages.

(crosses himself)

Amen.

All respond. As everyone prepares to leave the room, Sonja and Dunja enter the room. Joachim turns to see them.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
 {Ah. Good morning Sonja and Dunja.
 Care to join us upstairs?}

He walks past them out the door and the others follow him. Sonja and Dunja look out into the room and then at each other and then at the choir walking toward the sanctuary.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - DAY

The parishioners mingle in the hall. Joachim walks around with a bottle of water in his hand. He comes across two PARISHIONERS, an elderly husband and a wife, who see him and then stop him.

PARISHIONER 1
 {Good morning.}

JOACHIM
 {Good morning.}

PARISHIONER 2
 {Are you the choir director?}

JOACHIM
 {I'm sorry but my Serbian is limited.}

PARISHIONER 2
 Oh. I'm sorry. I was just asking if you were the choir director?

JOACHIM
 Yes.

PARISHIONER 2
 I would like to say that we enjoyed listening to the choir today.

PARISHIONER 1
 Yes. I can't remember a time when they were this good.

JOACHIM
 {Glory to God for all things.}

The couple smiles.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry to do this but I have to go and take care of something.
 (shakes his hand)
 It was nice talking with you both.

PARISHIONER 2
 (shakes Joachim's hand)
 It was our pleasure.

JOACHIM
 {Goodbye.}

PARISHIONER 1
 {Goodbye.}

Joachim leaves and the couple look at him and then at each other.

PARISHIONER 2
 {Not bad.}

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - SANCTUARY - DAY

Joachim cleans inside the altar space and Ana cleans amongst the pews.

ANA
 So how did we sound today?

JOACHIM
 You all sounded well today.
 (a beat)
 And I'm glad that we are moving
 away from contests to see who belt
 out the language the loudest.

ANA
 You don't like Serbian?

JOACHIM
 It's not that. I like it . . .
 {The more I learn it.} But I like
 even better an honest praise from
 the heart. It doesn't matter what
 the language is.

They resume cleaning.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
 So how long have you been here?

She does not answer.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
 Ana?

ANA
 {Yes?}

JOACHIM
I asked how long you have been
here.

ANA
For a while.

JOACHIM
But I mean how long? A year?
Three? Ten?

She looks at him and then shrugs her shoulders before she resumes her work.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
Fair enough.

After a while, he stops and looks around the altar space.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
I think that's about it.

ANA
If you think so.

He walks to one of the side doors of the iconostasis.

JOACHIM (O.S.)
Can I ask you something?

He walks out from the iconostasis toward Ana.

ANA
Yes?

JOACHIM
I do admire the work you do as the
parish's sacristan. But don't you
think it's overdone?

ANA
You can always do more cleaning.

JOACHIM
OK. But why does it fall to you?

ANA
No one else wanted to do it.

JOACHIM
And you volunteered?

ANA
No one else wanted to do it.

JOACHIM
 Alright then.

He looks around the sanctuary.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
 Well, I'll be off. See you this
 Wednesday?

ANA
 {Yes.}

JOACHIM
 {Bye Ana.}

ANA
 {Bye.}

He walks out of the sanctuary and she continues to clean.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - NIGHT

The next Wednesday, Joachim directs Ivo, Jeanne, Lucija and Ana. Sonja and Dunja are standing there but only give the impression of singing. At the end of one of the settings, he gives the cue to stop.

JOACHIM
 Good. That sounded much better.
 (to Ana)
 Are you comfortable with the new
 melodies now?

ANA
 {Yes.}

JOACHIM
 {Good.} I'm glad that all of you
 have taken it upon yourselves to
 learn these new settings. You are
 sounding more and more confident
 with them. Now as we get more
 familiar with them, we can add more
 nuance and expression into them to
 reveal deeper meaning. For what we
 are actually doing is a prayer.
 And as St. Augustine said rightly:
 "singing is praying twice." So all
 in all, I'm very pleased with the
 progress made here.

SONJA

So now that we know new music, can we stop meeting here?

JOACHIM

(to Sonja)

We will keep meeting here until we really get these down.

(to all)

In fact this will be the beginning of an ongoing, long-term project for the choir as long as I'm here. I've talked with Fr. Andrej about this and I would like to gradually refine and expand our capabilities. For instance, I would like to find better settings for Pascha. And we can do more services than what we have done in the past like the forthcoming Presanctified Liturgy, the vigils for the Great Feasts and other services like baptisms, weddings and funerals. Basically we will be a group leading in worship whatever it may be. Also as we improve and grow, I like to add more settings. But at the same time, not lose sight of the fact that we lead the faithful. And thus we should open it more to the faithful by maintaining some consistency in what we sing. That way the more they hear it, the more they want to sing too. But this is all long-term goal talk and we will not get there overnight. For we all know that nothing was ever built in a day. Whether it was Rome or Belgrade or even Arlington, Massachusetts.

Everyone laughs except for Sonja and Dunja.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

But this is what I would like to see happen as Choir Director and what Fr. Andrej would like to see happen too.

(sighs)

Well, that's it for now. {Thank you very much and good night.}

Everyone except for Sonja and Dunja acknowledge. Sonja and Dunja quietly leave the hall and everyone helps clean up before they leave.

EXT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - NIGHT

Joachim walks past the building and up the street. A moderate-size sport utility vehicle is parked near the building. Sasha sits quietly in the driver's seat and looks at the departing Joachim. When he is some distance away, Sasha turns on the map light and behind her sit Sonja and Dunja.

SASHA

{So the foreigner has decided to make the parish more foreign.}

SONJA

{Yes. Such audacity for a young man.}

DUNJA

{And he even has the support of Fr. Andrej.}

SONJA

{Which of course benefits him enormously.}

SASHA

{Yes. That's been Father's plan all along. Completely change who we are. And that arrogant foreigner is his means of doing it.}

DUNJA

{How can we stop him? He has the support of that other foreigner, her fiancé and that other woman.}

SONJA

{Oh and that little mouse of a sacristan.}

SASHA

Ana?
(ponders)
{I think I may have something.}

SONJA

{What?}

SASHA

{Do you know what else our little choir director does besides making the birds chirp? He helps her in the sanctuary.}

DUNJA

{So?}

SASHA

{So what if something else goes on over there? Something other than maintaining the house of God.}

Sonja and Dunja look at each other and then at Sasha. Sasha turns around to face them.

SASHA (CONT'D)

{He may have courage. But he's also young. And the young have to know where their boundaries are. Therefore, it is up to us older and wiser ones to show him.}

She smiles fiendishly. Sonja and Dunja smile as well.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - SANCTUARY - DAY

The next Sunday, during Liturgy, the choir sings the same settings as in previous instances. Yet the overall sound is greatly improved.

Fr. Andrej, in the altar, intones his part and notices the improved sound.

Other parishioners, who are either standing or sitting, notice this improved sound as well. Even the stragglers who are late stop to hear the choir and are moved by it.

The choir remains in focus. Only Sonja and Dunja remain uninvolved.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - DAY

The parishioners mingle. Joachim and Josif stand off to the side talking. Several parishioners pass by them and express to Joachim their satisfaction with the choir. Joachim accepts the compliments well.

In another area of the hall, Sasha and Sonja, with coffee cups in hand, stand to watch Joachim and the small crowd of well-wishers in subtle disgust.

Sasha looks around and sees Veca talking with Vlatko and some other parishioners. She subtly signals to Sonja where Veca is and discreetly hands her an envelope. Sonja smiles and walks away toward Veca.

SONJA
{Excuse me.}

Veca turns to see Sonja.

SONJA (CONT'D)
{I have something of importance.}

Sonja hands the envelope to Veca. Veca looks at it and then at Sonja.

VECA
{What is this?}

SONJA
{Read it.}

Veca starts to open it.

SONJA (CONT'D)
{It does not have to be now. But
as soon as you can.}

Veca looks at Sonja and after a beat Sonja walks away toward another part of the hall. Veca looks at the envelope and Vlatko looks at Veca.

VLATKO
{What was that all about?}

Veca looks at Vlatko, shrugs her shoulders and then looks out into the crowd. She then looks at the envelope again.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - NIGHT

The next Wednesday, Joachim directs Ivo, Jeanne, Lucija, Ana, Sonja and Dunja. Sonja and Dunja still do not sing but only give the impression of singing. The sound is comparable to what was heard the prior Sunday except this is from the new settings. Joachim's direction remains clear but now the ensemble is more responsive to them. At the end, Joachim gives the cue to stop and looks at the choir with a sincere and heart-felt smile.

JOACHIM
I am very, very pleased. Very
pleased. I mean . . .
(MORE)

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

It's incredible how much we have accomplished in only three weeks. All of you sound amazing. I really mean that.

(smiles)

In fact. I am so confident in you all that I would like to debut some of the new book starting this Sunday.

The choir responds enthusiastically in varying degrees. Even Sonja and Dunja show a smile, albeit to keep up appearances. Ana herself smiles meekly.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

So thank you all for your dedication and hard work on this particular endeavor.

JEANNE

And thank you Joachim for your leadership.

SONJA

(interrupts)

Yes Ivana.

(to Joachim)

I think you have done remarkable job with choir here. {A remarkable job indeed.}

Joachim looks at Sonja with sincerity. Jeanne, Ivo, Lucija and Ana look at Sonja with shock.

JOACHIM

{Thank you Sonja.}

(to all)

Well. That's it. {Thank you again. And good night everyone.}

Everyone puts everything in order before they leave. Dunja sneaks out of the hall.

EXT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - NIGHT

Dunja takes out a mobile phone and a slip of paper. She dials a number and waits for an answer.

DUNJA

{Good evening Vukasin. I have some important information.}

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - SANCTUARY - DAY

The choir sings some of the old repertoire as well as some new. The overall sound is lovely, whether it is old or new.

The parish notices the change and receives it gladly. There is even some who start to shed tears.

Fr. Andrej notices this new sound from the altar space and smiles.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - DAY

The parishioners mingle. Fr. Andrej, Joachim and Josif stand together. A greater number of parishioners than last week stop by to see Joachim and express their gratification.

Vlatko and Veca stand in another area. Veca has the open envelope with the letter. Vukasin sternly walks up to them.

VUKASIN

{Did you hear about that awful
foreigner? Just vile behavior.}

(to Vlatko)

{You must do something!}

Vlatko hesitates to give an answer.

VECA

We don't know if this is true or
not.

VUKASIN

Who cares? He should go back to
his own land where he came from.

(to Vlatko)

This must be resolved swiftly!

She storms off and Vlatko pleads too little and too late. Veca looks on and sighs.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - JOACHIM'S DESK - DAY

Joachim sits at his cubicle and types at his work computer. Suddenly, he feels his phone vibrating and he answers.

JOACHIM

Hello?

(a beat)

Yeah I'll be down shortly.

(a beat)

OK. Bye.

He hangs up and leaves his cubicle.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Joachim walks out of the building toward a shaded bench. Josif sits there and looks at Joachim approaching.

JOACHIM
{What's new?}

Josif looks up at Joachim. Joachim then stops.

JOSIF
Please have a seat.

Joachim sits down next to Josif. Josif turns to face him.

JOACHIM
What's wrong?

JOSIF
Before I tell you what I'm about to tell you, I want you to know that I'm your friend. And will remain so.

JOACHIM
What's going on?

JOSIF
We had our Parish Council meeting last night.

CUT TO:

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - NIGHT (PAST)

Josif, Vlatko, Fr. Andrej and Veca sit along a long table at one side of the hall. Before them is a group of chairs: two sections of five chairs long and six chairs deep with a center aisle. Only half of the chairs are occupied. Sasha, Sonja, Ivo, Jeanne, Lucija and Vukasin are amongst the crowd.

VLATKO
{Thank you.} Now. Is there any new business? Before we

Vukasin bolts up.

VUKASIN
Yes I have something!

Vlatko and Veca look at each other with concern. Josif and Fr. Andrej look at Vukasin with subtle confusion.

VLATKO

Proceed.

VUKASIN

Brothers and sisters of the parish. Something awful has plagued this house of God. Our new choir director has used the altar as his own bridal chamber!

The crowd murmurs amongst themselves in disbelief. Vlatko rests his forehead on his right hand. Veca looks on with trepidation. Josif and Fr. Andrej look perplexed by this sudden indictment.

VUKASIN (CONT'D)

That's right! And do you know who his "bride" is? Our own sacristan. Ana!

The crowd responds louder. Sasha and Sonja smile discreetly and listen to the mounting contention.

VUKASIN (CONT'D)

I demand that this be addressed. And that appropriate actions be taken at once!

The crowd responds even louder and some shout their approval for Vukasin.

VLATKO

(nervously)

Now, Vukasin. This is, as far as we know, an unsubstantiated rumor. There is no basis for what you just said.

Veca timidly raises her head.

VECA

Mr. President.

Vlatko turns in shock to see Veca rise from her chair.

VECA (CONT'D)

I have in my hands a letter that addresses the very concerns just raised.

VUKASIN
Well then read it!

The crowd concurs loudly.

VECA
"To the Parish Council. I wish to bring to your attention a grave matter concerning the new choir director Joachim Bainbridge. It appears that after Divine Liturgy, he goes into the sanctuary and uses the altar space as a place to satisfy his own pleasures. The only participant in these acts is Ana Dukich, sacristan. Please address this and take appropriate action immediately."

Veca sits back down and folds the letter.

FR. ANDREJ
Who signed it?

VECA
No one Father.

The crowd resumes raising their objections.

PARISHIONER 3
{This is unspeakable.}

PARISHIONER 4
How dare he turn this temple into some palace of pleasure!

PARISHIONER 5
{Vile! Absolutely vile!}

PARISHIONER 6
Dismiss him at once!

PARISHIONER 7
{Never trust a foreigner!}

PARISHIONER 8
(bemusedly)
{He's not Serbian?}

Vlatko bangs on the table to bring order. Sasha and Sonja smile softly.

VLATKO
People! Quiet! {People! Quiet!}

Ivo stands up and only then does the crowd silence.

IVO
Mr. President? May I speak?

VLATKO
Yes. Of course.

IVO
Brothers and sisters. This claim is both completely outrageous and completely unfounded. As someone who has served under Joachim, I found him to be of the highest character. Kind. Noble. Sincere. Steadfast. And there is nothing in that claim that reminds me of him in the slightest.

JEANNE
(rises up)
I agree. Joachim has done an outstanding job in his short tenure as choir director. This claim is nothing but slander. And has no basis in reality whatsoever.

VUKASIN
(rises up)
So you condone that kind of behavior?

JEANNE
No. And that's not the issue. The issue is whether Joachim actually did something of the sort. And I say that it is not true.

LUCIJA
(rises up)
I agree with Ivana and Ivo.

Sonja looks up in surprise.

LUCIJA (CONT'D)
Joachim is a kind man and a good director. And I don't think he would do such a thing.

The crowd now argues amongst themselves over the allegation. The only ones who don't participate in the contention are Sasha and Sonja. Vlatko tries in vain to keep order but the crowd drowns out his plea. Fr. Andrej stands up and shouts very loud to where everyone stops and looks at him.

FR. ANDREJ

These are serious allegations. But it's also baseless, despite this letter. Furthermore, neither Joachim nor Ana are present to defend themselves. Therefore I consider this motion tabled until further notice.

(looks at Vlatko)
Executive decision.

Fr. Andrej sits back down and a flushed Vlatko looks back and forth and out into the crowd.

CUT TO:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Joachim, in shock, looks down at the ground. Josif looks at him.

JOACHIM

(looking up)
Wow. Even in Serbia.
(sighs)
What happens now?

JOSIF

Nothing. But I urge you to talk with Fr. Andrej as soon as possible. If nothing else, he's the only one who can pronounce an absolution.

JOACHIM

But I have nothing to confess.

JOSIF

I'm sure. But what if you do?

JOACHIM

Good point.

Joachim looks out into the distance.

JOSIF

(pats him on the back)
I know you didn't do anything. And I will help you in any way I can.

JOACHIM

(looks at him)
{Thanks Josif.}

They get up together and embrace before Joachim leaves to go back into the office.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - PRIEST'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Fr. Andrej stands and looks through his shelf of books when he suddenly hears a knock at the door.

FR. ANDREJ

Come in.

Joachim enters and Fr. Andrej turns to see him.

FR. ANDREJ (CONT'D)

(gestures)

Sit down please.

Joachim sits down opposite of him and Fr. Andrej sits down at his chair behind his desk.

FR. ANDREJ (CONT'D)

Is it true?

JOACHIM

(without hesitation)

No.

FR. ANDREJ

Good.

Fr. Andrej smiles and Joachim looks on with concern.

JOACHIM

So Vukasin and a poison pen letter
have accused me of

Joachim sighs aloud.

FR. ANDREJ

Are you alright?

JOACHIM

No. I'm upset by all of this.

FR. ANDREJ

You shouldn't be. I mean. I know
you only found out about it today.
But please. Let this pass. You
said you didn't do it and I believe
you. And there are others who do.

JOACHIM

But not everyone.

FR. ANDREJ
If you didn't do anything wrong,
then you shouldn't have to worry
about others.

JOACHIM
It's hard to ignore it.

FR. ANDREJ
I can understand. You have a heavy
charge against you.
(sighs)
But if you want some reassurance,
this really isn't about you.

Joachim looks up and ponders for a moment.

JOACHIM
I think I understand.
(a beat)
Is there anything else?

FR. ANDREJ
No. Go in peace.

Both of them rise.

FR. ANDREJ (CONT'D)
You just remember what I told you
the first day you arrived.

Joachim looks at Fr. Andrej.

JOACHIM
{Thank you Father.}

Joachim walks up to Fr. Andrej and opens his arms in an embrace, which Fr. Andrej graciously accepts. Fr. Andrej looks at Joachim and kisses him off the side of his lips thrice.

FR. ANDREJ
{Good night Joachim.}

Joachim leaves and Fr. Andrej sits back on his chair.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

The next day, Ana stands behind the cashier counter. The store itself is quiet. Suddenly, Vukasin enters and walks straight to where Ana is.

VUKASIN

{You hussy!}

Ana looks on with shock and confusion.

VUKASIN (CONT'D)

{How could you defile such a holy place?}

ANA

{What?}

VUKASIN

{Don't act all innocent. You think you are living out a fairy tale by being with some foreign prince.}

Ana looks down in sadness.

VUKASIN (CONT'D)

{And as a sacristan, you should know better.}

Ana still looks down and some tears softly form. Then Vukasin spits at her.

VUKASIN (CONT'D)

{Whore!}

Vukasin then storms out of the store. Ana stands still and looks down in order to hold back the tears. After a few moments, Sasha enters the store and walks along the cashier counter. She turns to see Ana.

SASHA

Why Ana. So nice to see you.

Ana suddenly runs out from behind the cashier counter and toward the back of the store. Sasha looks on and after a few moments, she turns and walks toward the door with a small smile.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - SANCTUARY - DAY

Ana is on the floor, cleaning and holding back some tears. In a few moments, Fr. Andrej enters and sees her.

FR. ANDREJ

Ana.

She stops but does not turn to look at him. He lowers himself down to where she is.

FR. ANDREJ (CONT'D)
I know you are upset. And I also know why. But I want you to know that whatever was said about you and Joachim is not true.

She still looks away from him.

FR. ANDREJ (CONT'D)
And if you ever want to talk about anything

She gets up and leaves as she is about to cry. Fr. Andrej looks down and then gets up.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - CHOIR ROOM - DAY

Joachim looks over music when Ivo, Jeanne and Lucija enter. He looks up and nods at them. They all look at him with concern.

JEANNE
Are you OK?

JOACHIM
Oh yeah. I'm just waiting for everybody.

Ana enters. All turn to look at her and she looks nervous and a bit apprehensive. She quickly and quietly walks over to her stand and all look at her with concern.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
Well. Without further ado, let's begin by addressing a few things.

Sonja and Dunja enter and walk straight to their stand. They stand slightly behind Ana and hover over her. Joachim notices this and resumes.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
All in all, I'm pleased with everything you've done thus far. Just remember to keep it light during the Cherubic Hymn.

Joachim looks at Sonja and Dunja looking at Ana.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
Excuse me?

Sonja looks up at Joachim while Dunja continues to look at Ana.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
(points to his eyes)
Eyes here.

Dunja looks up at Joachim.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
OK.
(coughs)
Also in regards to the Cherubic
Hymn, really watch the tempo I give
because I may want to take it
slower at certain points.

Joachim looks at the sopranos and once again, Sonja and Dunja
stare down at Ana.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
{Excuse me!}

Sonja and Dunja look up.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
{Thanks.} Now. As for the Axion,
I still think we can make it more
pastoral. But having said all of
it, it's coming along very well.

Joachim looks at the sopranos and again, Sonja and Dunja
intimidate Ana.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
{Cut that out!}

Sonja and Dunja look up.

DUNJA
My, my. Aren't we sharp today?

SONJA
What about respecting your elders,
young man?

JOACHIM
I don't think elders act like they
are in some punk biker gang.

Dunja whispers something softly in Ana's ear. She suddenly
runs out of the room. Joachim looks at her and then at Sonja
and Dunja.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
(quietly - firmly)
Get out.

SONJA
What did you say?

JOACHIM
(a bit louder)
Get out both of you.

DUNJA
You can't kick us out.

SONJA
And besides. {You're nothing but a
weak foreign simpleton.}

JOACHIM
{I am the choir director!}

Sonja and Dunja are in genuine shock and everyone else looks surprised.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
{And I have had enough of you two!
So get out! Right now!}

Sonja and Dunja leave. Joachim looks at them leave and then lets out a sigh. He looks up to see the remaining number looking at him in stunned silence.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
(softly)
{I'm sorry.}

Jeanne, almost in tears, walks to Joachim.

JEANNE
Oh Joachim.

Jeanne and Joachim embrace each other tightly for a while. Ivo and Lucija observe.

JEANNE (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry this is happening to
you.

JOACHIM
It's alright.

Jeanne backs slightly away to wipe away her tears. Joachim looks at her.

JEANNE
(smiles)
{And you speak Serbian very well.}

JOACHIM
(smiles)
{Thanks.}

Jeanne laughs softly and cries out the last bit of tears. Joachim pats her arm gently and Jeanne looks at him, nods and walks back to her stand.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
So. Now there are four. But there are no sopranos.

LUCIJA
Ivana can sing soprano. I can sing alto. I can do this.

Joachim smiles.

JOACHIM
I know you can.

LUCIJA
Because of you.

Joachim and Lucija walk toward each other and they embrace each other in tears.

JOACHIM
(softly)
{I'm proud of you.}

LUCIJA
(cries)
{Thanks.}

They linger on the embrace for a while. Jeanne places her hand on Lucija's shoulder. Then Joachim steps back, smiles at Lucija.

JOACHIM
All right then. Let's use the new material in its entirety.
(looks at all of them)
All four of us.

Jeanne, Lucija and Ivo smile.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
{Now let us pray.}

All bow their heads. Joachim put his arms around all of them. They sense this and they move closer to each other.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
 {In the name of the Father and of
 the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
 Amen.}

All except Joachim, who still has his arms around everyone, cross themselves as he says it.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
 {O Christ our God, send down your
 blessing upon these servants of
 voice and song, so that we may sing
 onto You a new song. For You are
 holy always now and ever and unto
 the ages of ages.}
 (crosses himself)
 {Amen.}

All respond. Joachim then turns to Ivo and embraces him.

IVO
 What did I do?

JOACHIM
 (smiles)
 {I didn't want to leave you out.}

IVO
 (smiles)
 {You are gold.}

JOACHIM
 {Thanks.}

Joachim and Ivo pat each other on the back. Everyone gathers their books and prepare to leave the room.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - SANCTUARY - DAY

The choir - Jeanne, Lucija, Joachim and Ivo - stand in a line with Joachim directing from his stand. In spite of the diminished number, they sing with full conviction and humility.

The parishioners below listen and are moved by the singing. Some even look at each other and smile. Some close their eyes and start to pray with more fervor.

Sasha, Sonja and Dunja stand next to each other and are not pleased.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - DAY

Joachim stands to the side and several parishioners stand in line to offer their thanks and praise. Joachim receives them gladly. Every now and then, he looks for Ana who is not there. One of the parishioners shouts for the attention of all gathered.

PARISHIONER 1

Thank you all. I must say - and I'm sure all will agree with me - that I have never, in the forty years or so being a member of Sts. Peter and Paul's, heard the choir sound so beautiful and so moving. All thanks to his fine young man. {Many years to you!}

Many shout in repeat. Then Vukasin surfaces.

VUKASIN

Are we now blessing a demon here?

All turn to see. Vlatko hides his face in embarrassment.

VUKASIN (CONT'D)

Where's Father?

Fr. Andrej enters.

FR. ANDREJ

What is going on here?

VUKASIN

He's here to defend himself. {That vile serpent.}

FR. ANDREJ

{Silence Vukasin!}

Vukasin shrinks back in shock and embarrassment.

FR. ANDREJ (CONT'D)

Is this how we are going to start the journey toward Pascha? I will tell you all this. As long as I'm the priest here, or any other priest for that matter, this is not the way.

PARISHIONER 5

{What about the foreigner?}

PARISHIONER 7
 {The sin must be purged.}

A few others raise similar concerns.

JOACHIM
 (steps forward)
 {What sin am I to have done?}

All turn in silent shock at Joachim. Joachim walks slowly.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
 {What transgression have I done?}

He stops in the middle and looks around the hall.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
 {If I have done any wrong against
 anyone here, I humbly ask for your
 forgiveness.}

He prostrates himself fully onto the ground. All circle around and look at him. After a few moments, Jeanne walks toward Joachim, kneels beside him and embraces him.

JEANNE
 I don't see anything you did that
 requires forgiving. However as God
 forgives, I forgive too.

Ivo and Lucija walk to where Joachim and Jeanne are and they kneel near him.

IVO
 {As God forgives, I forgive.}

LUCIJA
 {As God forgives, I forgive.}

JOSIF
 As God forgives, I forgive.

VECA
 As God forgives, I forgive.

Others respond, either in Serbian or in English, and they gradually move slightly closer to where Joachim is. Only Sasha, Sonja and Dunja, who stand off to the side, do not respond. As everyone responds, Joachim looks up and straightens himself up while still remaining on his knees. Fr. Andrej walks toward him, offers his hand and gestures for him to rise. When Joachim rises, Fr. Andrej puts his arm around him. Jeanne, Ivo and Lucija move away from them. Fr. Andrej waits until after everyone offers forgiveness.

FR. ANDREJ

This, brothers and sisters, is today's Gospel lesson practiced and practiced well. May all of us forgive each other on this day and on every day we need to seek it. {For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.}

Fr. Andrej and Joachim silently forgive each other by bowing before each other and then embracing each other.

FR. ANDREJ (CONT'D)

(to all in the hall)

And this is how we should start the journey toward Pascha.

Jeanne applauds and gradually all of them applaud. Sasha, Sonja and Dunja leave. Fr. Andrej and Joachim stand side-by-side facing the crowd.

FADE TO:

INT. ANA'S HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

Ana stands by the window and looks out into the distance.

After a few moments, she lies on her side, curled in a fetal position on top of her bed, and looks out onto the wall.

After a few more moments, she sits on top of her bed upright. Then she suddenly screams out loud for a while. She then gets off the bed and storms out of the room, down the stairs and out of the house.

INT. JOACHIM'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Joachim reads a book whilst listening to choral music. After a few moments, he hears a loud and pounding knock at his front door. He gets up, pauses the music and walks to the door. He opens it to find Ana, standing with silent rage.

JOACHIM

Ana.

ANA
 (shouts)
 {You bastard! You horrible
 bastard! You make me sick!}

JOACHIM
 {What did I do to you?}

ANA
 Oh! Now the foreigner can speak
 Serbian. Or can you only speak a
 little? {You stupid dog.}

JOACHIM
 Ana. I know why you're upset. And
 I'm sorry this happened to you.

ANA
 Oh you're sorry! Do you have any
 idea what I've gone through? And
 not just back there. Do you know
 what it's like to have people come
 up to you to call you the worst
 names? {Hussy. Whore. Vile
 temptress.} Do you really know?

JOACHIM
 (a beat)
 Ana.

ANA
 Spare me. You've invaded my life!

She pushes him back and steps inside the house. As she walks
 toward him, he walks back toward the living room.

ANA (CONT'D)
 I was better off not being in the
 choir! I was better off not
 knowing you!
 (a beat)
 Why did you have to come here?
 Why?

JOACHIM
 (a beat)
 {You know why I'm here.}

ANA
 (a beat)
 {Well know this.}
 (a beat)
 {You are not the knight you think
 you are!

(MORE)

ANA (CONT'D)

You are not the one who will slay the dragon! You are not the one who will take me away from the evil stepmother!}

JOACHIM

{What are you talking about?}

ANA

{Don't you know? You're supposed to be the smart one.} Or do you not know enough Serbian?

JOACHIM

Ana.

ANA

Enough! {Why is this happening to me? What have I done to deserve this?} You never should have come. You never should have come here!

(begins to cry)

I never should have known you! I never should have fallen in love with you! I never

She breaks down completely as she tries to speak. He looks at her compassionately and slowly approaches her. She then clings onto him very tightly and cries on him. He leads her gently to the couch and they sit down together. She still clings very hard to him and cries on his chest and his shoulder. He puts his arms around her gently.

INT. JOACHIM'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ana lies on her side peacefully asleep. Then she slowly opens her eyes to find the room is faintly lit by the fading twilight outside. She lifts her head and looks around the room. She slowly gets up and notices faint murmuring nearby. She looks toward the faint trace of light and then gets up off the couch and walks toward it.

INT. JOACHIM'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Joachim and Fr. Andrej sit at the kitchen table and casually converse. Ana slowly enters and sees them talking. Fr. Andrej looks up at her and then Joachim sees her. Joachim then looks at Fr. Andrej.

JOACHIM

I am going out for a while.

Joachim gets up.

FR. ANDREJ

OK. What do I need to do to lock up here?

JOACHIM

I shouldn't be long. But if you need to leave and I'm not back, you can exit out the back door and it will still be locked. I'll lock the front.

FR. ANDREJ

Alright. {Take care Joachim.}

He nods at both of them and then walks out of the kitchen. Ana remains standing and looks at Fr. Andrej.

ANA

{Father.}

FR. ANDREJ

Ana.

ANA

I . . .

She looks down, slowly walks to the table and sits down. He looks on with tender eyes.

ANA (CONT'D)

{I'm sorry about today.}

FR. ANDREJ

{That's alright, my child.}

ANA

{No it wasn't. I was}

FR. ANDREJ

{You were hurt.}

ANA

{Yes I was. But not just today.}

(sighs)

{I've been hurt for a long time.}

He takes his briefcase, moves his chair closer and puts his right hand on her shoulder very gently.

He then sets the briefcase with his left hand on the table and opens it to pull out an ikon of Christ and a plastic stand. He places both of them in front of her.

He then takes out his folded epitrachelion [stole] and puts it on him. He does all of these things discreetly while she still speaks to him.

She continues talking softly and lucidly while he continues listening and comforting her. He only interjects when necessary and always with wisdom and compassion.

When she finishes, he rises, drapes the epitrachelion over her head and pronounces the absolution. When he crosses the top of her head, she closes her eyes. Afterward, he takes the epitrachelion off of her. She kisses it and then the ikon. Finally she gets up and they embrace each other for a long while.

Then they hear the sound of keys rustling and a door opening. They then walk silently out of the kitchen.

INT. JOACHIM'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Joachim enters from the front door while Ana and Fr. Andrej enter from the kitchen. Everyone then stops.

JOACHIM
Is everything alright?

FR. ANDREJ
Yes.

Fr. Andrej and Ana look at each other.

FR. ANDREJ (CONT'D)
And with that, I'll take my leave now. {Good night Joachim.}

JOACHIM
{Good night Father.}

Fr. Andrej gives both Joachim and Ana farewell greetings before he walks back into the kitchen. Ana turns to Joachim and they look at each other for a while.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
Are you OK?

ANA
{Yes.}

JOACHIM
Good. I'm glad.
(a beat)
I've been worried about you a lot.

ANA

I know you have.

JOACHIM

And I'm really sorry you had to endure that whole ordeal. It pained me to see you suffer like that.

ANA

Thank you.

JOACHIM

Do you want to have a seat?

She looks at the couch and then sits down. He switches on several lights and then sits at a plush chair near the couch.

ANA

I want to apologize for earlier.

JOACHIM

It's alright.

ANA

No. It was wrong for me to yell and scream at you like that.

(smiles)

Though I must say. Your Serbian is getting quite good.

JOACHIM

(laughs)

{Thanks.}

ANA

I have never known anyone who didn't speak Serbian before who then learned to speak it like you.

JOACHIM

(shrugs)

When in Rome. Or Belgrade I guess.

They both laugh softly.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

You know. This is the first true conversation we have had since I met you.

ANA

What about this afternoon?

JOACHIM
(smiles)
That doesn't count.

ANA
(smiles)
Thank you.

JOACHIM
Of course.
(looks behind him)
Do you want anything to drink? Or
maybe to eat?

ANA
No. Thank you.

JOACHIM
Are you sure? I was going to eat
the last of my cheese with some
crackers. Do you want some?

ANA
You don't mind?

JOACHIM
If I did, I wouldn't have asked.

ANA
Alright. I would like some.

JOACHIM
Alright.

He gets up and walks to the kitchen and she remains seated on
the couch.

JOACHIM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Would you like a glass of water
too?

ANA
{Yes!}

She hears the pouring of water, the opening of refrigerators
and cabinets and the gathering of plates, knives and food.
As she listens, she looks at the couch and begins feeling it.
She stops when he returns with everything inside a small
tray. He places the tray on the table and she grabs her
water glass. He opens the package and takes out a handful of
crackers and puts it on a small plate for her. He then takes
the cheese, cuts it in half and places the slightly larger
half on her plate. He finally hands her plate with a knife
on top of it.

JOACHIM
Here you are.

ANA
{Thanks.}

He then prepares his plate with a handful of crackers and the other half of the cheese. Then he takes his plate and his water glass and sits back on the chair. They both cut pieces of cheese and place them on crackers.

JOACHIM
Thanks for helping me finish off my dairy inventory.

ANA
Thank you for feeding me. I have not eaten anything all day.

JOACHIM
You haven't? {You poor thing.}

ANA
I'm so impressed with you.

JOACHIM
(smiles)
Don't be.

ANA
I mean why should I not be? In a matter of months, you are speaking Serbian with some . . . What's the word?

JOACHIM
Confidence?

ANA
Yeah. Confidence.

JOACHIM
Well, I appreciate it. I still have a lot to learn though. And so, English is still my default.

ANA
{Yes.}

They eat for a while.

JOACHIM
Feel better now after some food?

ANA
Yes. Though I must say, I don't go
for cheese and crackers.

JOACHIM
Oh? What do you usually have?

ANA
Paradajz chorba.

JOACHIM
(smiles)
{Yup. The Serbian is still
limited.}

ANA
It's tomato soup.

JOACHIM
Ah OK. Anything else?

ANA
And tea.

JOACHIM
That's quite a sparse diet. Though
I must confess, I envy you. I'm
someone who lacks that kind of
culinary discipline. Well. I'm
consistent but not consistent in
the right way. My timing is bad
too sometimes.

ANA
I don't understand.

JOACHIM
Forget it. I'm not explaining it
well.

She nods. He finishes his crackers and his glass of water.

ANA
I'm not disturbing you, am I?

JOACHIM
(smiles)
Oh no. Not at all.

ANA
I know it's getting late. And I
don't want to be in the way.

JOACHIM

You're not.
(a beat)
Where do you live?

ANA

Around here. However it's quite a walk.

JOACHIM

Is it a safe one?

ANA

I think so. Though I never had to walk that far at night.

He ponders for a moment.

JOACHIM

If you need a ride, I can give you one.

ANA

Thank you.
(looks around the room)
Though this place is nice.

JOACHIM

Well. If you want to stay here for the night, that's fine too. In fact, you take my bed and I can sleep on the couch.

ANA

Oh no. I wouldn't want you to do that. I don't mind sleeping here.

JOACHIM

Are you sure?

ANA

I'm sure. I like this couch.

She pats the cushions and then she slowly caresses it. As she caresses it, she closes her eyes and breathes slowly as if in meditation.

JOACHIM

Ana?

ANA

(softly)
{Rest my dear. You are safe here now.}

She repeats this a few times very softly like a mantra.

JOACHIM

Ana?

She slowly opens her eyes and looks at him with a single tear from her eye.

ANA

{I'm remembering.}

CUT TO:

INT. ANA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - KITCHEN - DAY (PAST)

Ana, 5, walks into the kitchen of a Chicago neighborhood house and toward the cabinet where the glasses are kept. She proceeds to make a makeshift step-ladder using the drawers. When she reaches the top drawer, she moves her leg back too far and thereby pushes out the drawer. She falls down and everything crashes onto the floor.

She starts crying softly and holds back the urge to scream. In no time at all, she hears some muffled shouting from upstairs.

MILTON (O.S.)

{What's going on?}

She then hears footsteps coming from upstairs and then on the stairwell. She hears the sound of her father MILTON [Milevan] coming toward her.

Milton enters and sees the mess on the floor. He then walks toward her and grabs her violently, slaps her and yells at her in Serbian. Afterward, he throws her back away from the mess and falls hard on the floor, knocking her head. As he picks up the contents from the ground, she cries loud and hard.

MILTON (CONT'D)

{Quiet you good-for-nothing brat!
How dare you wake me up!}

He picks up the drawers and she still cries.

MILTON (CONT'D)

{Can't you be quiet?}

He walks to her and slaps her hard. She then gets up and runs out of the kitchen. He turns back to the mess and mutters to himself in Serbian.

EXT. MILEVA'S HOME - DAY (PAST)

Ana knocks on the front door. Then the door opens and her aunt MILEVA looks down at a young Ana clinging onto her legs.

ANA

Millie!

Mileva first puts her hands on her shoulders and then gently lifts her up to take her inside the house.

INT. MILEVA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY (PAST)

Mileva sits on the couch. Ana lies down on the couch with her head resting upon her lap. Mileva caresses young Ana gently.

ANA (V.O.)

Mileva was her name. Or Millie as I liked to call her. She was my aunt. And even more my angel when I needed her.

Mileva still caresses her.

MILEVA

{There now. Rest my dear. You are safe here now.}

Mileva softly hums a lullaby and Ana sleeps soundly.

INT. ANA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (PAST)

During another evening, Ana's mother SIJKA (Anastasia) sits on the couch, watches television and smokes a cigarette.

ANA (V.O.)

And there were many times when I needed her.

Ana walks up to her holding a crayon drawing she made. Sijka does not look at her but senses her presence.

SIJKA

{What do you want?}

ANA

{Look at what I made.}

SIJKA

{Am I suppose to be impressed or something?}

She continues to smoke her cigarette and watch the television. Ana frowns and walks slowly out of the room.

EXT. MILEVA'S HOME - NIGHT (PAST)

Ana runs up to the door and knocks. Mileva opens the door and lets Ana inside the house.

ANA (V.O.)
I was so grateful for her haven.

Mileva closes the door.

INT. NEIGHBOR'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY (PAST)

During another day, many people in nice clothes gather in the living room. Ana, her parents and Mileva are there. Ana's parents talk with some of the other adults. Ana sits on the couch alone even as some other adults are there beside her. She then quietly gets off the couch to go upstairs. One ADULT sees her walk by and discreetly follows her up the stairs. The rest of the adults go about their conversations.

INT. NEIGHBOR'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY (PAST)

Moments later, the adult walks back down the stairs, says his farewells and leaves the house. Ana then slowly walks down the stairs in stunned silence with her arms to her side and her dress in slight disarray. She walks past Milton and Sijka who see her.

ANA (V.O.)
And I was grateful when she could
lift me away.

Ana walks to Mileva and whispers something to her ear. Mileva then gets up and they both exit the house. Ana's parents observe all bemusedly.

EXT. CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - DAY (PAST)

Mileva and Ana sit on a bench facing out into the park. Ana looks up, softly smiles and then leans closer to Mileva. Mileva takes an arm and gently puts it around Ana.

ANA (V.O.)
Especially when she could lift me
away for all time.

INT. MILEVA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY (PAST)

Ana, 12, enters and Mileva, who is sitting on the couch with a book, sees her walking toward her.

ANA (V.O.)
Because of who she was to me, I
considered her both my mother and
my father.

They smile and talk to each other.

INT. MILEVA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY (PAST)

Ana, 16, with a backpack, walks into the house and then into the living room.

ANA (V.O.)
She was the one light in my life.
But then

She stops to see her parents on the couch. Milton slowly rises and Sijka looks up at him.

MILTON
(sighs)
{I'm sorry, Ana.}

Ana looks at them as if she is about to cry.

MILTON (CONT'D)
{Your mother and I. We are here to
take you home.}

SIJKA
{You can pack up whatever you need
for tonight.}

Ana still looks at them with some tears in her eyes and it changes to anger.

ANA (V.O.)
My light was gone. And I could not
bear to live in darkness with them
again after all these years.

Ana finally turns around and walks out of the house.

ANA (V.O.)
So I went out to seek the light.

Milton closes his eyes when the door closes.

ANA (V.O.)
Far away from the darkness.

Milton sits back down on the couch next to an upset Sijka.

INT. ST. SAVA'S CATHEDRAL - FELLOWSHIP HALL - DAY (PAST)

Ana, 23, walks around the hall and greets various parishioners of all ages with a smile.

ANA (V.O.)
I found it in New York. And I was amazed how I was cared for so quickly. I'm sure Millie had a hand in it all.

Ana walks toward a small table where JELISAVETA and HANNAH sit and Ana sits with them.

ANA (V.O.)
I even found a new family. Well, just roommates. But I felt like they were my sisters.

Ana talks with them and all laugh.

ANA (V.O.)
I was glad to find joy and happiness and peace again.

Ana looks up and sees STEFAN stand amongst the some of the established parishioners. She looks at him with an awestruck gaze.

ANA (V.O.)
And even love.

Stefan in the distance catches this glance and smiles in reply.

EXT. MANHATTAN CAFE - DAY (PAST)

Stefan and Ana sit at a table and talk.

ANA (V.O.)
Sometimes fairy tales can come true. The long-suffering girl met her prince at last.

They laugh.

ANA (V.O.)
And his name was Stefan.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT (PAST)

Stefan and Ana walk through the lighted pathways under a fading twilight, hand in hand.

ANA (V.O.)
They spent time together.

INT. MANHATTAN NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT (PAST)

Stefan and Ana dance amongst the crowd.

ANA (V.O.)
They danced the night away.

INT. STEFAN'S CONDOMINIUM - NIGHT (PAST)

Stefan and Ana look out of the window to the city below them. He stands behind her and wraps his arms around her. She leans her head back against his chest.

ANA (V.O.)
And they fell deeply in love.

After a while, she turns around and kisses him passionately.

EXT. INTERSTATE 87 - DAY (PAST)

Stefan drives in a sports car with Ana, 26, as a passenger in the middle of the afternoon.

ANA (V.O.)
And they even lived happily . . .
Ever after?

Stefan loses control and the vehicle swerves.

CUT TO: BLACK

EXT. INTERSTATE 87 - DAY (PAST)

New York State troopers surround the accident scene and tow trucks operators work to clear Stefan's heavily damaged car from the interstate. Medics push two loaded stretchers toward an open ambulance truck on standby.

INT. MANHATTAN HOSPITAL - DAY (PAST)

Ana, 29, lies in a coma on a hospital bed. After a few moments, she very slowly opens her eyes.

ANA (V.O.)
I did wake up. But it was not
because of my prince's waking kiss.

She slowly moves her head.

ANA (V.O.)
In fact, my prince lost.

EXT. CONNECTICUT ROAD - DAY (PAST)

Several months later, Ana walks up the road with worn-out clothes and in a daze.

ANA (V.O.)
And here I lived to tell this
shattered fairy tale.

EXT. MASSACHUSETTS ROAD - DAY (PAST)

Several days later, Ana walks up the road with worn-out yet different clothes, exhausted and drained.

ANA (V.O.)
I went away alone with nothing left
but faith.

CUT TO:

INT. JOACHIM'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Joachim sits on the plush chair and listens. Ana sits on the couch sadly. She then looks up with a single tear streaming down her cheek.

ANA
And I am here.

He looks down with his eyes and lets out a sympathetic sigh. He then looks up and sees her crying softly and quietly. He discreetly gets up, walks over to the couch and sits next to her. He places an arm around her very gently. When she senses this, she rests onto him and puts her arms around his waist. Her crying slowly gets louder.

JOACHIM
 {You are safe here now.}

She cries louder.

ANA
 {My dear knight.}

She continues to cry and holds onto him more tightly.

ANA (CONT'D)
 {My prince.}

He continues to comfort her.

JOACHIM
 {Do you want to lie down?}

She gets up, dries her face and gently nods. They maneuver so he can lie flat on his back with his head propped by a pillow. After he settles on the couch, she lies on her side with her head resting on his chest. His right arm drapes her back and his right hand gently caresses her right arm. She closes her eyes and softly hums something akin to a lullaby.

ANA
 (very softly)
 {Please keep them away. Don't let them touch me. Please don't let them lie. Don't let them see me.}

They both drift to sleep.

INT. JOACHIM'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Several hours later, Joachim and Ana are still asleep on the couch in the same position. He breathes in deeply and as he exhales, he opens his eyes slowly. He looks down to see her still sleeping on her side and with her arm still draped across his chest. He then closes his eyes and then suddenly lets out a short scream of shock.

She awakes due to this sudden burst of noise.

ANA
 (softly)
 {What's the matter?}

JOACHIM
 {Nothing.}

He then gets up off the couch and starts pacing around the room. She straightens herself up and sits down at the center of the couch.

ANA

What's wrong?

JOACHIM

It's just I . . . I shouldn't have fallen asleep like that.

ANA

You were tired. I was too.

JOACHIM

I should have taken you home.

ANA

Why?

JOACHIM

Why?

(looks at his watch)

It's already one in the morning.

ANA

Why should it matter?

JOACHIM

Why should it matter?

(sighs)

We were just accused of doing something improper inside the altar. Do we want to make it worse?

ANA

We didn't do anything wrong.

JOACHIM

This is not right Ana. Even if it seems innocent.

ANA

So are you going to take me home?

JOACHIM

Yes.

He leaves the room. She gets up off the couch and looks around the room. A few moments later, he returns with his car keys in hand and wearing his jacket.

ANA
What's going on?

JOACHIM
I just want to take you home.

ANA
No. I mean this.

JOACHIM
This what?

ANA
This. I don't know. You just seem. I don't know how to say it.

JOACHIM
(a bit annoyed)
Look. All I want is for you to be safe at your own home.

ANA
But what if I'm safe here?

JOACHIM
You can't stay here. I'm sorry.

ANA
Listen. If it's about us sleeping together, I can sleep here and you can go to your bed.

He sighs and looks at the couch, then up and then at her.

JOACHIM
I still think it's not right.

ANA
What's not right? I just want to sleep. Why can't I sleep here?

JOACHIM
Why would you want to sleep here?

ANA
Because.
(looks at the couch)
I like the couch. And I like who owns it.
(looks at him)
What's wrong with that?

JOACHIM

Ana. You and I were accused of acting lewdly in the sanctuary. I don't think it's right for both of us to do something that will give our accusers another excuse.

ANA

Oh, you think what we just did was somehow wrong? Look at yourself. Look at me. We are still clothed.

JOACHIM

I still think it's wrong.

She scoffs and sits back down on the couch. He walks to face opposite her.

ANA

What's going on here? Why this thing with . . . What's the word? It's {virginity}.

JOACHIM

(ponders)
Virginity?

ANA

{Yes.} I have not heard men caring about it as much as you are now.

JOACHIM

They should.

ANA

Well no man cared about me. Except for one.

JOACHIM

And look what happened. You should have avoided that.

ANA

What? Falling in love?

JOACHIM

Giving into it.

ANA

What do you mean?

JOACHIM

Did you sleep with him?

ANA

Yes.

JOACHIM

And was it like what we just did?
Or was there more?

She does not answer.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

That's right.
(sits down on the chair)
He was your prince.
(sighs)
I don't believe this.

ANA

Why are you acting like this?

JOACHIM

(indignant)
I don't know Ana.
(rubs his eyes)
I just don't know.
(sighs aloud)
{Excuse me.}

He gets up and leaves the room. She sits on the couch and hears him march up the stairs. Then she hears muffled screaming and shouting for about thirty or so seconds. Then she hears the sound of him walking down the stairs. He returns to the room without the jacket and walks straight toward the chair.

ANA

Are you alright?

JOACHIM

{Yes. Thanks.}

Afterward, he lets out a sigh and covers his face with his hands. She moves closer to him but remains seated on the couch.

ANA

(sympathetically)
{What's wrong?}

He puts his hands down and looks at her.

JOACHIM

(after a sigh)
I guess it's only fair to tell you
my story.

ANA

Oh?

He adjusts himself onto the chair and then tilts his head back.

JOACHIM

How can I say this.

(a beat)

Do you want to know how I got into Orthodoxy?

ANA

Yes.

JOACHIM

(softly laughs)

It started when I was at Yale. I was enjoying myself there, both in my studies and outside them. Then one day, I get a message from my long-time girlfriend. Basically she was no longer interested in me. She wants to see other people. The usual excuse.

(sighs)

And I didn't realize then how hard I would take it. That spring and summer was really tough for me. I didn't want to go out. I spent a lot of time either asleep or just locked in my room. Then another academic year began.

He gets up and walks to a small shelf of compact discs.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

And I had a roommate who was also into music. Then one day . . .

He pulls out a compact disc recording of Arvo Pärt's unaccompanied choral music and shows it to her.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

. . . I hear this.

He walks to the compact disc player and loads the disc inside the open tray. He plays "Triodion: Ode II." As the choir sings faintly and solemnly, he slowly walks back to the chair with a remote control in hand. She listens attentively and can even faintly understand the words. She waits after a while to speak.

ANA
{Beautiful.}

He looks at her and smiles. He puts the player on pause after it concludes and then looks at her.

JOACHIM
That was how I first heard Arvo Pärt. My roommate shared with me more of his music and I loved it all. I also learned about how faith, and particularly the Orthodox Church, was important to him. So I read everything I could about it. And the more I read, the more I liked. I wanted then and there to be a catechumen. So I found a parish nearby and became one. And then a year or so later, on Holy Saturday the year I was to graduate, I was received into the Church through Baptism and Chrismation.

He lets out a sigh and then smiles.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)
Of course my parents were in for a shock. I basically grew up without any religion in my life. I was never hostile to it or anything. But I never gave it much thought. But when I decided to embrace Orthodoxy, my parents were not at all pleased. They resented my choice and in turn resented me. Christ was right when He said he came not with peace but with a sword. And what a sword. My parents would come to disown me. And I haven't spoken to them since. I send a message asking for their forgiveness at around this time. And I never get a reply. Maybe this year will be different. But maybe not.

She looks at him after he finishes.

ANA
Who was this girl?

JOACHIM
Charlotte. Though I don't know why
you would want to know.

ANA
Because she hurt my knight.

JOACHIM
Why do you call me a knight? I'm
not some special guy here. Besides
I don't know if you want to be out
looking for knights.

ANA
As oppose to?

JOACHIM
You should know.

ANA
What? God?

He looks at her bemusedly.

JOACHIM
You're not interested in Him?

ANA
I am. I think. I don't know.
(sighs)
God is good and all that. But
unless you want to be some monk, I
don't see what is wrong with other
things too.

JOACHIM
You've heard the Liturgy. The call
is "let us commend ourselves and
each other and our whole lives onto
Christ our God."

ANA
But what does that mean? I've
heard that more times than you and
I don't get it.

JOACHIM
It means you give yourself totally
to Him. Cast off the old man and
become the new. Crucify the flesh.

ANA
Does this mean you can't love
another?

JOACHIM
Within reason.

ANA
What does that mean?

JOACHIM
It means you should do the right thing to others. Like if you are not married, you don't sleep with someone as if you are.

ANA
Where were you when others . . .
When others . . . You know.

JOACHIM
I am sorry that happened to you. Actually I'm upset that it happened to you. Very upset. However there is still self-control.

ANA
Are you saying I should not have been with Stefan?

JOACHIM
Not like that.

ANA
And what about Charlotte?

JOACHIM
You're right. I shouldn't have been with Charlotte like that either.

ANA
And me?

He looks at her.

JOACHIM
I'm sorry for saying what we did was wrong. You were right. We were just lying down side by side and nothing happened. But let's just keep it to that.

ANA
Alright.
(a beat)
But what if there's something more between us?

JOACHIM
Like we're married?

ANA
Perhaps.

JOACHIM
What do you mean perhaps? That's really the only conclusion here. Unless we are to be very close yet celibate friends. But besides that.

ANA
OK. We are married. Then what?

JOACHIM
Oh? You think marriage is just a justification for sex? There's more to it than just giving a man and a woman permission to

He catches himself and stops.

ANA
To what?

JOACHIM
You know. At any rate, there's more to it.

ANA
Like what?

He goes to a nearby bookshelf and pulls out a small book of St. John Chrysostom's homilies concerning marriage. He flips to the appropriate page.

JOACHIM
(reads from the book)
"What then is the reason for marriage, and why did God give it to us? Listen to what Paul says: 'Because of the temptation to immorality let each man have his own wife.' . . . In order that we may avoid fornication, restrain our desire, practice chastity, and be well pleasing to God by being satisfied with our own wife: this is the gift of marriage, this is its fruit, this is its profit."
(a beat)
(MORE)

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

"We should seek a wife for this reason only, in order to avoid sin, to be freed from all immorality. To this end every marriage should be set up so that it may work together with us for chastity."

He closes the book and she looks at him.

ANA

That sounded like I was going to ruin you. Do you think I'm going to bring you down?

(gets louder)

Do you think I'm like that {wench} you once knew?

(shouts)

{What kind of woman do you think I am?}

He looks at her with stunned silence. With a look of regret, he gets up, sits down beside her and gently embraces her.

JOACHIM

(whispers)

{I'm so sorry my dear.}

They embrace for a while and then they sit close to each other.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

(smiles)

{You are wonderful.}

ANA

{You think so?}

JOACHIM

{Yes.}

(sighs)

{And I wish I knew more Serbian.}

ANA

(smiles)

Don't worry. I can understand you fine in English.

They both smile at each other.

JOACHIM

OK then.

(a beat)

You are truly wonderful Ana.

(MORE)

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

You are beautiful. Gentle. Yet strong.

ANA

And I'm not too quiet for you?

JOACHIM

(with a smile)

Oh no! Though it is lovely to hear you speak. But no. You are lovely. I really mean that. And I pray that He may provide for you in every way He can.

ANA

Thank you very much.

JOACHIM

And I am sorry about earlier. It was wrong of me to lash out at you like I did. You didn't do anything to deserve it.

(sighs)

I'm the fool here. And not the good kind.

ANA

You are not a fool.

JOACHIM

I am. I've done so much wrong. I've lied. I've taken things. I've taken shortcuts. I've hurt others. And like you probably said earlier, I was with some wench who didn't really care for me in the end. Call it casting the pearl-heart to the swine-girl.

ANA

I'm sorry for calling her that. And you shouldn't either.

He looks at her with amazement.

JOACHIM

Thank you.

ANA

And you are not a fool. You've done wrong. But who hasn't? Please don't be hard on yourself.

JOACHIM
Why should I not be?

ANA
Because. I too find you beautiful.
From that first time I saw you, you
were so . . . I don't know the
word. But I felt something warm
and wonderful from you.

JOACHIM
Was it like with Stefan?

ANA
A little. But there was more with
you. A lot more. I don't know how
else to describe it. When I called
you a knight earlier, I mean that.
I look at you and you are a knight.

He takes her hand and squeezes it firmly. They look at each other for a while.

JOACHIM
Do you want to lie down?

ANA
(with a smile)
Are you sure?

JOACHIM
(with a smile)
I'm sure.

They lie down as they did earlier: him flat on his back and her on her side. He puts his right arm on her back and she rests on his chest.

ANA
Thank you for letting me lie next
to you.
(sighs dreamily)
It's so good to be with someone
like this.

JOACHIM
{Yes. It is.}

ANA
And I want no one else. Just you.

JOACHIM
So we should get married then?

ANA
I think so.

JOACHIM
That's a jump.

ANA
Why? You think we shouldn't?

JOACHIM
It's not that.

ANA
Is it because I'm not good enough?

JOACHIM
(laughs)
It's not that at all.
(sighs)
How can I put this.

ANA
You want time.

JOACHIM
Yeah.
(ponders)
That's really it.

ANA
I think I can understand. You mean
like with what happened at church?

JOACHIM
That's part of it.

ANA
Anything else?

JOACHIM
What?
(with a smile)
It sounds like you want to get
married right now.

ANA
(with a smile)
Maybe.

JOACHIM
Oh Ana.
(chuckles softly)
You really are quite something.

She smiles and nuzzles onto his chest. After a few moments, he yawns.

ANA
I've kept you up all this time.
I'm sorry.

JOACHIM
No, no. It's OK.

ANA
Do I bother you with these
questions?

JOACHIM
{No.}

They linger in silence for a while. He later closes his eyes and sleeps lightly.

ANA
One more question. I promise.

JOACHIM
(softly)
Go ahead.

ANA
Are you waiting for something?

JOACHIM
{Yes.}

ANA
What?

JOACHIM
The right moment.

ANA
What moment?

A sudden vibration startles her. He opens his eyes, looks down and feels it's coming from his phone. He pulls it out to see it is the alarm clock.

JOACHIM
Oh wow.

He shuts off the alarm.

ANA
What was that?

JOACHIM
(sighs)
My alarm.

They notice the dawn light slowly filling the room. Then they slowly get up but still remain on the couch.

ANA
That was a whole night?

JOACHIM
{Yes.}

She looks out bemusedly.

ANA
I did not realize.

JOACHIM
Apparently I didn't either.

He stretches and yawns.

ANA
Are you going to be OK?

JOACHIM
Yeah.

He turns off one of the lights next to him.

ANA
I'm sorry to have kept you awake.

JOACHIM
Don't worry. I've been up for worse reasons.

She smiles and then looks down upon the ground.

ANA
I should go then.

JOACHIM
Are you going to be alright?

ANA
{Yes.}

JOACHIM
Is there anything I can do?

ANA
Could you walk with me for a while?

JOACHIM

{Yes.}

They slowly get up and walk toward the door.

EXT. JOACHIM'S HOME - DAY

Joachim and Ana walk slowly from the door and out onto the sidewalk underneath the dawn-light.

ANA

Thank you again. For all you have done.

JOACHIM

{Not a problem.}

She smiles and looks down on the ground. They walk until they reach the sidewalk. Once there, they stop and turn to face each other.

ANA

{And I hope we can talk again.}

JOACHIM

{We will.}

(smiles)

We will.

She smiles as they continue to face each other. They embrace each other for a long while. He then places a lingering yet gentle kiss on her forehead. After which he looks down at her while she looks up.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)

(softly)

{See you later.}

ANA

(softly)

{Bye.}

They continue to look at each other and smile. She then walks away and up the sidewalk. He looks at her leave and then walks back into the house.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Ana, still in the same clothes as yesterday and slightly lethargic, takes stock of the inventory amongst the shelves. She then sees Veca down the aisle, who has been looking at her for some time unbeknownst to Ana.

Veca walks up to her slowly and Ana remains standing. When Veca gets closer to her, Ana puts down her clipboard.

VECA
{Good morning.}

ANA
{Good morning.}

Veca looks at her for a while.

VECA
{How are you?}

ANA
{Tired, but good. And you?}

Veca feels tears coming to her eyes.

VECA
{Oh Ana.}

Veca embraces Ana tightly. Surprised by this, Ana puts her arms around her. Veca softly cries on Ana.

ANA
{Why are you crying?}

VECA
{Can you forgive me?}

ANA
{For what?}

VECA
{Please. Forgive me.}

ANA
{Of course. Of course.}

Veca looks up at Ana and backs away slightly. Veca wipes away whatever tears remain on her face.

ANA (CONT'D)
{And can you forgive me too?}

VECA
{What for? You don't}

ANA
{Please.}
(a beat)
{Can you forgive me?}

VECA
{I forgive as God forgives.}

They look at each other for a while.

ANA
{Thank you.}

Veca smiles. They then embrace each other. After a few moments, they look at each other again.

VECA
{So I'll see you next Sunday?}

ANA
{Yes.}

Veca backs away but still looks at Ana.

VECA
{Bye Ana.}

ANA
{Bye.}

They kiss each other three times. Then Veca leaves while Ana still looks on and smiles.

FADE TO:

EXT. ANA'S HOME - DAY

Joachim, in a nice suit, walks down the street toward Ana's home in the midst of a pleasant and bright spring day.

INT. ANA'S HOME - BATHROOM - DAY

Ana, in a lovely yet modest ensemble, looks at a mirror and makes the final preparations. She then hears a knock on the front door and walks out of the bathroom.

EXT. ANA'S HOME - DAY

Ana opens the door and smiles. She and Joachim embrace each other and gently kiss. They then walk away from the house, side by side with arms around each other.

INT. IVO'S HOME - DAY

Jeanne, with the assistance of her party that includes Lucija, prepares herself for the wedding. Ivo and his party haggle with Jeanne's family outside Jeanne's room. After a few moments, everyone reaches an "agreement" and the pre-wedding festivities resume.

EXT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - DAY

Joachim and Ana walk along the sidewalk together and up toward the front door.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - SANCTUARY - DAY

Joachim and Ana enter the sanctuary. Ana walks toward Fr. Andrej, dressed in white liturgical robes, and assists him. Joachim walks toward the cantor's stand and sets the music, the service book and his notes.

Wedding guests and some of the regular parishioners fill the appropriately decorated sanctuary. Amongst the decor, there is a table in front of the iconostasis, adorned with a simple white cloth and contains a Gospel book flanked by two candles, two jeweled crowns and a common cup. Off to one side of the table is a censer holder.

EXT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - DAY

A parade of cars drives along the sidewalk. The lead car stops in front of the building. Ivo and Jeanne step out of the car and walk toward the front door with Lucija and the kum [sponsor] helping her with the dress. Others exit out of their cars as well.

INT. STS. PETER AND PAUL - SANCTUARY

Joachim walks to the front door. He sees Lucija standing in the narthex and nods. He then turns around and walks to Fr. Andrej and lets him know the full wedding party has arrived. After Fr. Andrej nods, Joachim looks and walks towards Ana, who stands at the cantor's stand.

Once there, Joachim gives the pitches and they both sing a hymn serving as a prelude. As they sing it, the key members of the wedding party slowly processes into the sanctuary and take their appropriate places.

When the wedding party has all arrived, the prelude ends and Joachim can see Jeanne standing in the narthex, he gives the pitch and both he and Ana sing "The Angel Cried." When Jeanne enters, everyone in attendance stands at attention and will remain standing throughout the duration of the ceremony.

When Jeanne arrives past the front pews, her father gently kisses her and leaves her to Ivo, who they then both stand together in front of Fr. Andrej.

The first half of the service consists of an exchange of rings done in a thrice manner. It ends with Ivo and Jeanne holding candles.

The second half begins with Fr. Andrej leading the couple closer to the table. He censes this table and the service resumes. Its climax is when Fr. Andrej crowns Ivo and Jeanne also in a thrice manner. The epistle and the Gospel are read and they also drink from the common cup. Fr. Andrej leads the couple and Lucija follows behind them around the table thrice as Joachim and Ana sing "The Dance of Isaiah."

Throughout the entire ceremony, people smile at certain moments. Some observe with wonder and some with confusion due to the unfamiliarity of the rituals. At a few places, Lucija is able to smile at Joachim and Ana.

The ceremony concludes with Fr. Andrej presenting the couple, who then kiss, before the assembled crowd, which in turn applaud and cheer. Lucija, Joachim and Ana smile yet maintain composure at their respective places.

INT. BANQUET HALL - DAY

Wedding guests are in the hall. Several tables outlines a large space in the center. At one side of the hall is a long table where Ivo and Jeanne sit in the center. Fr. Andrej, Lucija, and each of their parents flank the couple.

Everybody either eats, drinks, talks or some combination of all of them. A disk jockey provides music. Some are in the open space dancing to the music. Joachim and Ana sit together at one of the tables, observe the festivities and talk with each other.

At a certain point, the disk jockey makes an announcement for group dancing. Almost everyone - including the wedding couple, Lucija, Joachim and Ana - dances. Everyone in the hall smiles at the very least and many of them laugh.

EXT. LONGFELLOW BRIDGE - DAY

Joachim and Ana walk across the bridge against traffic from Boston to Cambridge as sunset approaches. They walk very close to each other with his left arm around her shoulders and her right arm encircling his waist. They smile as they look out and around their surroundings and at each other.

FADE OUT.

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