

## **TREATMENT 12 MINUTE FILM**

**\*\*Logline:** \*\*Seventeen-year-old Naya, a social loner, seethes with envy when her overachieving, charming roommate Leila wins the Golden Girl Award. In a fit of rage, Naya murders Leila, but jealousy and guilt quickly spiral into madness as the relentless sound of Leila's beating heart threatens to expose her dark secret.

**Synopses:** At the Sherwood School for Women in Darjeeling, 17-year-old Naya, an awkward loner, becomes consumed with jealousy when her overachieving roommate Leila wins the prestigious "Golden Girl" award. In a fit of rage, Naya murders Leila and hides her body under the floorboards but is soon psychologically tormented by the imagined sound of Leila's beating heart. When the faculty arrives to investigate a scream heard from the dormitory, Naya spirals into paranoia and, in a desperate attempt to silence the relentless heartbeat, exposes her crime.

### **PLOT SUMMARY:**

The film opens at Sherwood Women's College, set against the backdrop of a cold, dark winter in Darjeeling. Inside the lavish glass auditorium, excitement fills the air as students eagerly chatter and scramble to find their seats for the most anticipated event of the year: the announcement of the Golden Girl Award for 2022. The camera shifts to NAYA, 17, seated in the audience; despite the surrounding sea of students, she sits alone, not by choice.

The PRINCIPAL, 62, a calm, authoritative woman, declares, "The Golden Girl Award for 2018 goes to LEILA KHAN." LEILA, 17, shines on stage as she delivers her acceptance speech, embodying perfection as the audience erupts in applause.

Naya's face flushes with barely concealed rage, her hands curl into fists, and her internal monologue begins, taking over Leila's speech. "It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain, but once conceived, it haunted me every second. It was her sash; whenever it fell upon me, I felt a chill of envy twist my insides. And so, almost instantly, I made up my mind to take Leila's life."

Back in their shared dorm room, a stark contrast between their lives is evident: Leila's side is immaculate, filled with accolades, while Naya's is a chaotic reflection of herself. Her belongings are scattered haphazardly, her desk cluttered with unfinished assignments and crumpled papers.

Her phone rings; it's her mother calling, and with a resigned sigh, she answers. It is the same conversation as ever: "Leila is so accomplished and charming. I wish you could be more like her." She glances at Leila's pristine side of the room, where awards gleam like trophies of unattainable perfection. Naya's hand shoots out, grabbing a book from her bed and hurling it

toward Leila's side of the room. The book strikes the shelf with a dull thud, sending a cascade of trophies clattering to the floor. One shatters on impact, jagged shards of glass scattering across the carpet.

For a moment, Naya stands frozen, her chest heaving as she stares at the broken trophies, her eyes narrowing in contempt. Slowly, she walks over to Leila's side of the room, hands trembling as she bends to collect the shards.

Her fingers fumble, clumsily gathering the sharp pieces. A jagged fragment slips from her grip, and before she can react, it slices into her palm. She gasps, her eyes widening in disbelief as blood wells up and trickles down her hand, staining one of Leila's merit certificates.

Later that night, Leila enters, holding a bouquet of lilies and still wearing her Golden Girl sash. She coldly chastises Naya for the mess in the room, throwing in a jab about Naya's poor academic performance and lack of social connections. Naya remains silent, unable to hide the simmering resentment she feels toward Leila, who always seems to overshadow her. Leila mocks Naya's situation, making a biting remark about the flowers from Naya's mother.

As Leila settles into bed, Naya is left stewing in silence. She watches her roommate, her gaze fixed on the Golden Girl sash still draped across Leila's body. Naya's frustration intensifies, and in a fit of rage, she approaches Leila's bed, her shadow stretching over her. Naya confronts Leila in a whispered tirade, accusing her of being untouchable and perfect while she's invisible. When Leila stirs, confused and groggy, Naya snaps, violently yanking the sash from her shoulder and using it to strangle her.

The struggle is short-lived, and Leila falls limp. Naya, breathing heavily, steps back and gazes at her roommate's lifeless body, the room now eerily quiet. Naya, for the first time in years, feels a sense of calm wash over her, and she smiles.

The following morning, the principal and Sister Mary are concerned when Leila doesn't show up for morning chapel, something completely out of character for her. Sister Mary goes to check on her, but Naya, with a calm facade, denies having seen her roommate. When the Sister remarks that Leila's bed looks slept in, Naya quickly shuts the door. Meanwhile, Sister Mary learns from other students that they heard screams from Leila's room the previous night and immediately grows alarmed.

Back in the dorm room, Naya stands in silence, haunted by the pounding heartbeat she believes she hears coming from beneath the floorboards. Her mind begins to unravel as she becomes convinced that Leila's heart is still beating, echoing through the walls. As Naya becomes more frantic, the principal and Sister Mary rush in. Naya insists that Leila is still alive, her heart still thumping, but they dismiss her, attributing her behavior to confusion.

Naya spirals into a breakdown, screaming that she can't live with the sound of Leila's heart any longer. In a frenzy, she pries up the floorboards, revealing Leila's lifeless body, strangled with her sash. Naya's screams fill the room as she collapses in a heap, consumed by the weight of her guilt and the horrifying noise that refuses to stop

**Silence is Golden**

*Inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's Tell-Tale Heart*

**By Kaira Sen**

FADE IN

**EXT. SKY - DAY**

Requiem in D Minor, K. 626, plays softly in the background, and the school choir can be heard singing along.

Dark thunderclouds swirl, drizzling rain as crows circle above, cawing eerily.

**EXT. SHERWOOD WOMEN'S COLLEGE - CONTINUOUS**

A dreary winter has set in at Sherwood Women's College. The magnificent Gothic structure sits atop a hill, engulfed in thick gray fog. Its towers rise majestically against the brooding sky, their ornate carvings intertwining like twisted vines.

**EXT. SHERWOOD WOMEN'S COLLEGE CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS**

Groups of students dressed in crisp, tailored uniforms hurry along the cobblestone path toward the towering silhouette of the barely visible chapel, almost swallowed by the swirling mist.

**INT. SHERWOOD WOMEN'S COLLEGE CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS**

Students trickle into the lavish glass auditorium. Giggles and whispers echo across the room.

NAYA MEHRA, 17, looks as if she's barely slept. Stray curls of jet-black hair fall on her face, and thick eyeliner accentuates her haunted eyes. Her wrinkled shirt hangs loosely, slipping out of her waistband, missing both a belt and tie.

She sinks into her seat, slumping her shoulders and pulling her knees close, trying to take up as little space as possible. A pair of prim and proper with barely hidden smirks strut past her.

She flips a page in her sketchbook, her hand moving in rough, impatient strokes as she tries to get lost in her art.

The students settle into their seats as the last notes of the choir fade. The PRINCIPAL, 62, a calm, gracious woman with a sense of quiet authority, steps onto the stage.

PRINCIPAL (V.O.)

As you know, we've gathered today to announce the winner of the Sherwood Women's College Golden Girl Award for 2018.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

(clears her throat)

For over forty-five years, this title has been awarded to a student who embodies exceptional academic achievement, social grace, and integrity—someone with the vision and drive to make a meaningful impact in the world. As a former Golden Girl myself, it's an honor to present this year's recipient. Please join me in celebrating our 2018 Golden Girl:  
LEILA KHAN!

The door swings open with a loud creak. Everyone in the audience, except Naya, turns their heads at the same time.

LEILA KHAN, 17, steps forward measured and confident, her heels clicking against the floor as she strides. Immaculately dressed in a pressed uniform with a crisp white shirt, neatly fastened belt, and tie, she exudes perfection. Her manicured hands glint with expensive jewelry, and her slicked-back braid hangs elegantly over one shoulder as she ascends the stage with poised determination.

**INT. SHERWOOD WOMEN'S COLLEGE AUDITORIUM STAGE -  
MOMENTS LATER**

*SPOTLIGHT EFFECT*

Leila stands center stage, bathed in the glow of the spotlight. The Principal approaches with a warm smile as she delicately crowns Leila and drapes a sash over her shoulders. The shimmering fabric reads: "Golden Girl 2018."

Leila takes her place behind the podium, beaming graciously at the audience.

LEILA

I just want to take a moment of your time and say that as I accept this title, I understand the responsibility that comes with it.....

*Voice Fades Away*

NAYA (V.O.)

It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain, but once conceived, it haunted me every second. The brilliance of her smile, the effortless grace with which she commanded the room—it all consumed me. How could someone be so perfect, so radiant?

NAYA (CONT'D)

It was her sash; whenever it fell upon me, I felt a chill of envy twist my insides, but beneath that chill was a flicker of awe—and admiration I could never voice. And so, almost instantly, I made up my mind to take Leila's life.

**INT. NAYA AND LEILA'S SHARED DORM ROOM - EVENING**

On the door of Naya and Leila's shared room, their names are neatly affixed to its wooden surface. The door swings open, and Naya steps in, silhouetted by dim hallway light. She pauses, releasing a long sigh.

The room is split perfectly down the middle, each side a mirror image in size and shape but a stark contrast in order. Leila's bed is pristine, sheets crisp and neatly tucked, a decorative pillow placed in the center, her desk meticulously organized, trophies and framed certificates lining the shelves like a shrine to success.

On the right, chaos reigns. Blankets spill over the edges of an unmade bed, twisted and knotted. The floor is a maze of scattered clothes, half-read books, and crumpled papers. Naya's desk overflows with sketches, charcoal-smudged pages, and unfinished assignments scribbled with notes.

Naya takes in the state of the room with a resigned, almost tired expression, eyes darting between Leila's orderly sanctuary and her cluttered corner.

She flops onto her bed, the mattress sinking under her weight, and begins flipping through her sketchbook. Her fingers trace the pages, revealing an unsettling collection of drawings: Leila, depicted in flawless detail, yet with an eerie twist—her perfect features distorted, eyes dripping with tears, and a helpless expression. Scrawled in jagged handwriting are phrases like "*She doesn't deserve this*" and "*Perfection is a curse.*"

Naya's expression darkens as she studies the images, her smile slightly too wide and her eyes glinting with an unnatural brightness. Suddenly, her PHONE BUZZES, startling her. She looks at the screen. MOM CALLING.

NAYA

Hello?

NAYA'S MOM (O.S.)

Naya? Hi, I just heard about Leila's award. Honey, you should try spending more time with her. She's so accomplished and charming. It would do you a world of good.

Naya glances at Leila's side of the room, where awards gleam like trophies of unattainable perfection.

NAYA

(slightly annoyed, sarcastic)  
Yeah, I know. Leila's amazing—she's got everything figured out.

NAYA'S MOM (O.S.)

(oblivious)  
Exactly! She's got the perfect grades, and now this Golden Girl title! You should take a page out of her book.

NAYA

(sighing)  
I get it, Mom. But I'm not Leila.

NAYA'S MOM (O.S.)

It just feels like you're not even trying sometimes. You could be just as great!

Naya bites her lip, holding back her frustration.

NAYA

(defensively)  
I am trying, I promise. It's just... different for me.

The call ends abruptly, and Naya tosses the phone onto the bed with a sharp thud. She runs a hand through her hair, frustration boiling over as she leans back against the wall, her head hitting it repeatedly in a futile attempt to release her anger.

Suddenly, she snatches a book from her bed and hurls it toward Leila's side of the room. It strikes the shelf, sending a cascade of trophies clattering to the floor. One shatters upon impact, and jagged shards of glass fall across the carpet.



Naya stands frozen momentarily, her chest rising and falling with heavy breaths, eyes narrowing at the fallen accolades. She walks over to Leila's side of the room, her hands shaking as she bends down to pick up the broken shards. She hurriedly gathers the sharp pieces, her fingers fumbling.

A jagged fragment slips through her grip, piercing her palm. She winces, eyes widening in shock as a deep gash opens up. Blood trickles down her hand and stains one of Leila's merit certificates. The sight jolts her into action, and she collapses to the floor, sobs escaping her lips, each cry echoing in the stillness of the room as she cradles her injured hand and hangs her head in sorrow and shame.

CUT TO BLACK

**INT. NAYA AND LEILA'S SHARED DORM ROOM - NIGHT**

Naya sits on her bed, still cradling her injured left hand. The bloodied shard lies discarded on the floor. In an attempt to block out the voices outside her room, she furiously traces over a charcoal outline of Leila's sash in her sketchbook. Dark, jagged lines slice across the figure as if in an attempt to destroy it.

GROUP OF YOUNGER STUDENTS (O.S.)

(whispering, overlapping)

Oh My God, Leila, you were amazing up there. We're so proud of you! Seriously, that sash was made for you.

LEILA (O.S.)

Aw, stop, you guys, you're too sweet.

YOUNGER STUDENT TWO (O.S.)

We'll leave you be now You deserve to rest.

LEILA (O.S.)

(warmly)

Thanks, you guys. That means the world to me.

GROUP OF YOUNGER STUDENTS (O.S.)

(whispering, overlapping)

Goodnight, Leila!

The door creaks open, and Leila enters, holding a gigantic bouquet of lilies. Her Golden Girl sash still draped over her shoulder, shimmering under the dim light. She pauses, taking in the room: the shattered trophy, the blood-stained certificate. Her face drops.

LEILA  
 (irritated)  
 NAYA! What is all this? What the  
 fuck happened here?

Naya doesn't respond. Her gaze is fixed on her sketchbook; she continues drawing.

LEILA  
 (sighing condescendingly)  
 You know, you could at least try  
 to keep things tidy.

Leila crosses to her side of the room, carefully hanging the sash on the back of her chair and shoving the lilies in a glass vase. She turns to Naya, her voice softening slightly but the condescension still lingering.

LEILA  
 (softly)  
 Look, I get it.  
 (beat)  
 (insincerely)  
 You've not been doing well in  
 school, your grades are pathetic,  
 and you have no one to talk to,  
 you're always in my shadow, but  
 you don't have to make it so  
 obvious.

NAYA  
 (quietly)  
 I'm not in your shadow.

LEILA  
 (smirking)  
 Aren't you?

Naya's fingers twitch, her frustration building.

LEILA  
 (snickering)  
 Oh, and thank your mom for the  
 flowers! Guess she finally found  
 someone worth sending them to.

Naya shuts her eyes for a moment, but she doesn't respond. She picks up her pencil again and digs it harder into the page. Leila walks towards their bedroom window and rolls the blinds up; the moon shines bright in the dark sky.

LEILA  
 Anyway, enough for tonight. I need  
 my beauty sleep.  
 (MORE)

LEILA (CONT'D)

Turn off your light before you  
head to bed. I don't need it  
hurting my eyes.

Leila turns off her bedside lamp and jumps into bed, rolling over. The room falls into a heavy silence, broken only by the faint rustle of Leila's breathing.

Naya sits in the dim light, her body rigid on the edge of her unmade bed. The sketchbook lies discarded at her feet. Her fingers tighten around the edge of her mattress as she studies Leila, her lips pressing into a thin line.

With a quiet sigh, she rises from the bed, tiptoeing and moving slowly. Reaching her desk, she turns off her lamp, plunging the room into near darkness. The sudden absence of light allows the moonlight to seep through the thin curtains, casting a pale glow over the room.

Naya stops in her tracks, her shadow stretching across the floor and stopping right at the edge of Leila's bed. The moonlight illuminates Leila's side like a spotlight, bathing her figure in soft, silver light. It's then that Naya sees it—the sash, still draped across Leila's body, its bold golden letters gleaming defiantly in the moonlight. Golden Girl. Even in sleep, Leila clings to her prize.

Naya's breathing quickens. Her chest rises and falls in uneven bursts as her gaze locks onto the sash, her vision narrowing. Her fingers curl into fists at her sides, nails digging into her palms.

A low, guttural sound escapes her throat—a mix of a growl and a sob—as she lunges for her desk. The moonlight now casts Naya's shadow over Leila, a dark, looming figure that stretches across the bed. The sash catches the light again, sparkling. Naya takes a step forward, her movements now purposeful and heavy, her eyes glinting with a dangerous mix of fury and desperation.

NAYA

(whispering)

Do you even know what it's like?  
To be... nothing.

Leila stirs faintly, deep asleep.

NAYA

(quietly, venomously)

You don't care, do you? You're  
Untouchable. My mom thinks you're  
a fucking saint. Everyone does.

NAYA  
(louder, unhinged)  
I FUCKING HATE YOU.

Leila's eyes flutter open, her face groggy and confused as she takes in the sight of Naya looming over her.

LEILA  
(groggily)  
Naya? What the hell are you doing—

Before Leila can finish, Naya grabs the end of the sash and yanks it off her shoulder, her movements jerky and frantic. The golden fabric twists in her hands like a serpent.

LEILA  
(alarmed, sitting up)  
What the—Naya, stop! What are you?

Naya lunges forward, wrapping the sash around Leila's throat. Leila gasps, her hands clawing at the fabric as she struggles against Naya's grip. She tightens her hold, her face contorted with a mix of fury and anguish. Leila lets out a scream, and then it is over almost instantly. Her body goes still, her head tilting slightly to the side as if she's fallen into a deeper sleep.

The room is silent except for the faint rustle of the curtains. Naya steps back, and the floorboard creaks. Her chest heaves as she stares at Leila's lifeless form. She brushes her hands against her wrinkled shirt. Her movements are unhurried now, no longer tense or shaky. She glances at her reflection in the mirror above her desk. Her face is pale, her curls wild, but her haunted eyes have softened. For the first time in years, there's no trace of torment in her gaze—only calm. She smiles.

NAYA  
It's finally quiet now.

She picks up her sketchbook from the floor, flipping through the pages. The haunting drawings of Leila—the distorted features, the anguished expressions—no longer seem to trouble her. She tears one page free, crumpling it in her hand, and tosses it aside. Then another. And another.

NAYA  
(whispering)  
It's my turn now.

CUT TO BLACK

**INT. SHERWOOD WOMEN'S COLLEGE CHAPEL - THE NEXT DAY**

PRINCIPAL

What is this, Leila's never been late for a morning sermon before! This is so unlike her. SISTER MARY, Please go check on her at once.

Sister Mary, 76, a petite, elderly woman with frail hands, approaches Naya and Leila's room. She pauses for a moment, then raises a hand and knocks softly on the door, the sound barely louder than a whisper.

NAYA

(cheerfully)  
COMING!

FLOORBOARD CREAKS LOUDLY, and the door swings open

NAYA

Morning Sister Mary! What brings you here?

SISTER MARY

Naya dear, you haven't seen Leila anywhere, have you? She's late to the morning sermon. She's never missed it.

NAYA

(innocently, a confused look on her face)  
No, Sister Mary, I'm sorry I haven't seen her since last night.

Sister Mary timidly tries to peek into the room, but Naya is careful to keep the door mostly closed, blocking her view.

SISTER MARY

(Muttering)  
That's so odd; her bed looks slept in.

NAYA

What's that?

SISTER MARY

Oh, nothing! I'll ask the younglings I'm sure they'd know.

NAYA

Yes! Bye now!

She slams the door shut.

Sister Mary spots a group of younger students walking by, concerned expressions donning their faces.

SISTER MARY  
Children! Have you seen Leila  
anywhere?

GROUP OF YOUNGER STUDENTS (O.S.)  
No Sister Mary, but we did hear  
screams from her side of the  
dormitory in the middle of the  
night.

SISTER MARY  
Oh dear lord, something isn't  
right I must speak with the  
Principal at once.

Sister Mary walks away from the room, her footsteps growing fainter as she moves down the hallway.

**INT. NAYA AND LEILA'S SHARED DORM ROOM- CONTINUOUS**

Naya, standing by the door, breathes heavily, The bloodstains on the carpet and the broken shards of glass from Leila's trophy are still there, but she doesn't move to clean them up.

NAYA  
It's almost like I can hear it.  
The beating. Like a drum beneath  
my ribs, it echoes in the quiet.  
At first, it was just a flutter—  
soft, almost imperceptible. But it  
grew louder. Faster. More frantic.  
It's still there, isn't it? It's  
beneath the floorboards, pounding  
through the walls.

Naya lifts her hand to her ear as if trying to block out the sound, but it's there, unmistakable. The thud. The thud.

NAYA  
It's as if she's still here. Still  
alive. Her heart is beating, and  
it won't stop.

She presses her palm against the wall. The sound seems to be coming from everywhere.

NAYA  
(speaking to herself,  
frantic)  
Stop! Stop it! She's dead. Why  
doesn't it stop? It should be  
over!

Suddenly, the door creaks open. Sister Mary and the Principal rush in.

PRINCIPAL

Naya? What's going on in here? Are you—?

Before she can finish her sentence, Naya looks at her, her face twisted with wild desperation.

NAYA

It's still here. It won't stop.  
I hear it!  
It's her! It's Leila—her heart!  
She's still here!

Sister Mary takes a cautious step back, uncertainty flashing across her face.

PRINCIPAL

Naya... Child, I don't hear anything. You're just... you're just upset. We'll find Leila, don't you worry.

NAYA

Find her? No! You don't hear it? It's in the floorboards. It's in the walls! She's here! She's still alive!

SISTER MARY

Naya, listen to me. It's okay. It's okay; you're not hearing anything. You're just... confused.

Naya's face twists with a mix of terror and frustration as she rocks back and forth. Her hands grip the floor tightly, her nails digging into the wood.

NAYA

I can't— I can't live with it anymore!

She jumps to her feet, her body shaking violently as she presses her hands over her ears, but the heartbeat only gets louder, Her face contorts in agony.

NAYA

(screaming)  
Stop! STOP!

Sister Mary and the Principal watch in horror as Naya's outbursts grow more erratic.

The room feels suffocating, the air thick with tension. Slowly, they approach Naya, reaching out in an attempt to help.

SISTER MARY  
(speaking softly)  
Naya, it's okay. We'll get you  
some help.

But Naya pushes her away, her eyes wide and unseeing, her breath ragged as she stumbles back toward the window.

NAYA  
There's no escaping it. It won't  
stop. I hear it.  
I hear her.

NAYA (CONT'D)  
I- I-I did it, I killed her! But  
her heart... Here here- it is the  
beating of her hideous heart.

With a final scream, Naya collapses onto the floorboards, her body shaking under the weight of the unbearable sound. Her cries reverberate through the empty room as her hands claw desperately at the wood, splinters flying. With a frenzied pull, she pries the planks apart-revealing Leila's lifeless body strangulated with her sash beneath.

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