

This is a transcribed English version of Dagbladet's article "Emely på benken". It is only intended for viewing and judging purposes for the w3 Awards jury. The original digital project in Norwegian can be found here: <https://www.dagbladet.no/spesial/emely-paa-benken>

Emely on the bench

In January of this year, 12-year-old Emely Frantzen took her own life. As her mother Monica sat by the coffin, her father Bengt stood in front of the gathering. He looked out over the church benches filled with children, teenagers, and parents.

Then he told them about his daughter who had tried for several years to speak out about her experiences of exclusion, bullying, and threats.

The school created numerous action plans and various agencies were involved. But for Emely, things only got worse. She was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department, where they linked her trauma directly to the bullying she reported.

Why was no one able to help Emely? What went wrong?

Read CHAPTER 1 - Emely

Read CHAPTER 2 - I am invisible

Read CHAPTER 3 - The search

Read CHAPTER 4 - "Fly high, Emely"

Read CHAPTER 5 - The accident

CHAPTER 1: "It's Emely. They are trying to resuscitate her."

Monica can't say more. She has called and called. Finally, she got through to her husband Bengt. She can hear the ambulance crew upstairs in her daughter's room. From the kitchen table, she looks straight at the front door. Another person in red rushes in.

Outside, a surveillance camera on the house wall captures three ambulances and two doctor's cars. The street through the quiet residential area in Tjelta in Sola municipality is blocked off by neon yellow vehicles. It had just passed half-past one on January 24th this year when the ambulance team got Emely down the steep stairs from the second floor and into the ambulance.

Bengt hears static on Monica's phone. Hello? The person from the ambulance team sitting with her at the kitchen table takes the phone: "You should come to Stavanger University Hospital right away."

Bengt is in a meeting an hour's drive away from the hospital. He had feared this call for a year.

Emely was the baby of the family and the love child. Monica and Bengt Frantzen's eldest children were grown, Alice was 19 and Lars Ove 15 when Emely was born on February 16, 2010. Monica stayed home with Emely until she was three years old. With a large family and kids everywhere, Monica and Bengt saw no need to send Emely to daycare just yet. She was a quiet baby, at least as long as her Dumbo comfort cloth was nearby.

A few weeks after Emely was picked up by an ambulance that Tuesday in January, Emely's older sister, Alice, contacted Dagbladet. She, Lars Ove, and their parents believe that those responsible for keeping Emely safe at school did not do so. The family has therefore filed a police report against Sola municipality and the principal of Dysjaland school for breaches of the Education Act.

"Everything has been taken from us. We can't get Emely back, but we can perhaps prevent others from experiencing what we had to. The police report is our way of raising the alarm and speaking out," says Bengt.

Despite the school implementing a long list of measures and several agencies being involved, things went wrong. Why didn't the measures help? Why did everything just get worse?

"We are doing this for Emely and for all other children who are not heard when they speak out about bullying. It must not be silenced, and it must not happen again," says Monica.

Emely didn't start speaking as she should have in her toddler years. Her tight frenulum was clipped and her language slightly improved, but her vocabulary remained limited, and Emely struggled to string words together. However, the parents were not overly concerned. They saw a fearless girl who learned to swim long before school started and who climbed to the top of the climbing wall without hesitation.

When Emely started kindergarten at three years old, a daycare worker noted that she did not play with the other children. Emely kept to herself. The health station referred her to the Educational Psychological Service (PPT) in Sola municipality. When the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department later examined how Emely had been followed up before school started, PPT informed them that they had conducted three different language tests on Emely in kindergarten:

"She scored below the normal range on the index for language understanding. Her speech could not be tested as she spoke very little."

PPT further informed that they provided the kindergarten and parents with "basic language stimulation measures," but Monica does not remember any concrete measures being taken. The kindergarten managers told BUP (Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department) that PPT observed, but the kindergarten did not have more follow-up from PPT after that, and they did not receive extra resources for Emely.

"I remember saying at a meeting with the kindergarten and PPT that 'I'm quite sure we will need to contact you again when Emely starts school,'" says Monica.

Dagbladet has contacted the principal of Dysjaland school several times in connection with the Emely case to hear their side of the story. The principal has been presented with the information that comes out in the report but has not wanted to comment on the case because it is under police investigation and therefore refers to the municipal director of Childhood and Culture in Sola municipality:

"This is just a deeply tragic event, and it is impossible to fully understand and comprehend what the parents and family have experienced, and what they are going through now. That a child takes their own life is a tragedy that should not happen, and which also deeply affects fellow students, staff, and the local community," says Rune Moen, director of Childhood and Culture in Sola municipality.

He says that he will not comment on individual claims in the case because it is under investigation, but writes the following in an email:

"The municipality is required by the Education Act to work actively and systematically to promote a safe and good school environment, so that all students feel safe and included. This is a mission we in Sola take very seriously, and which is worked on every day at each school. In the effort for a safe and good school environment for all students, schools work closely with the educational-psychological service, school nurses, and other help services and agencies. Close dialogue with students and guardians is an important part of this work. Ensuring a safe school day for all children and youth is a demanding and important mission, where we must continue our efforts, and a job we can never check off as completed," says Moen.

One August morning in 2016, six-and-a-half-year-old Emely sat deeply concentrated and drew on the sheet she had been given by the teacher. It was the first day in the first grade at Dysjaland school. The combined elementary and middle school was located 250 meters down the road from their house. Monica had just started working at the school's after-school program.

Emely quickly found a rapport with a girl who became her best friend and security at school, a girl who was as quiet as Emely. They preferred to sit and draw together.

"Tuppen and Lillemor, I used to call them," says Monica, referring to the Norwegian title of the American song "I Don't Want To Play In Your Yard".

At home, Monica and Bengt noticed little of Emely's language challenges. Emely could be thoughtful and in her own world, but as long as she was safe, the words came quickly and in the right order. It was when Emely met new people or did not feel safe that she would become silent or start to stutter. Often, it seemed as though she had to think twice or hesitated. Luckily, she had her best friend, thought Monica and Bengt.

The parents still noticed that she struggled with language, social codes, and interaction with other children.

"I know I can't speak," Emely told her mother when PPT was contacted again.

The results of the language tests PPT performed varied, but on several of them, she scored below the average for her age group. PPT suggested several measures to strengthen Emely linguistically and socially. According to a report from PPT, they agreed with the school and parents that the measures would be tried out and assessed during the fall of the second grade.

However, neither in Emely's student file from the school nor in the journal from PPT is there any trace of these measures. Because the case is being investigated by the police, neither the principal of Dysjaland school nor PPT wanted to answer whether any measures were implemented without being documented. Both schools and PPT are obligated to document this type of information.

Then Emely's security at school disappeared. The summer between second and third grade, her best friend moved. When school started again in August, Emely stood alone in the schoolyard.

CHAPTER 2: It hadn't been many weeks into third grade when Emely began waking up with a stomachache. Her best friend had moved away. Emely felt alone, she told her parents. From the windows of the school's after-school care where Monica Frantzen worked, her mother watched her daughter walk across the schoolyard, always a few meters behind the others:

"Mom, I am invisible. The others just walk right past me. If they look at me, they say I'm ugly and fat."

All children have the right to a "safe and good school environment." When Emely told her parents about the exclusion and bullying and they reported it to the school, Dysjaland school—as they are obligated to—created an action plan. It is a plan with measures to ensure that students feel safe and secure at school. Emely's action plan detailed her experiences of exclusion, degradation, and bullying at school.

"We were relieved that the school took it seriously," says Bengt Frantzen.

He brought up with the school the idea of moving his daughter to another school, according to the first action plan.

"That was quickly dismissed. The principal believed that Dysjaland was best equipped to handle what Emely was going through. We chose to trust that. We hoped and hoped. I'm angry at myself for not insisting on changing schools," says Bengt.

Over 3.5 years, the school created thirteen action plans to stop the bullying. The documents show that the school tried. At one point, the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department, PPT, school nurse, inspector, and anti-bullying officer were all involved. Their documentation shows that they also tried.

But Emely said the bullying only got worse. This is evident in the action plans, emails between the school, parents, and the anti-bullying officer, and the documents from the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department and PPT.

Autumn 2019. Emely was nine years old and had just started fourth grade. Now, both the school and her parents saw her struggling even more socially and with language, as shown in the action plans and correspondence between the school and the parents. The Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department therefore conducted a comprehensive assessment of Emely, including observing her at school.

In the classroom, they noted that she took a long time to respond to questions. They saw that it was difficult for her to start tasks and that she needed support during class hours. But they also saw that she was a calm and diligent girl who did not give up.

After recess, the psychologist noted that Emely had “few or no detailed conversations with other students.”

Following the assessment, the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department, in collaboration with PPT, diagnosed Emely with expressive language disorder. It is a language disorder that means one has a limited vocabulary and understanding of words, can forget words or what things are called, and struggles with understanding messages.

Children with expressive language disorders often do not understand rules in social interactions or activities and usually prefer to be with one person at a time, PPT wrote in their report about Emely.

PPT, however, did not think Emely needed special education. They asked the school to follow up on Emely’s language difficulties, especially during recess and considering her social difficulties. In Emely’s student file, there is no documentation that the school did this. Neither they nor PPT have been willing to comment on the case due to the police investigation.

By the time Emely was diagnosed, it had been six years since her language challenges were identified in kindergarten. Dagbladet has asked the school and PPT why it took so many years, but they have not wanted to comment.

Of the thirteen action plans created for Emely, twelve were made after she was diagnosed with the language disorder. The diagnosis affected her socially and included difficulties speaking in groups:

“The others speak so well, while I just stand there and can’t find the words,” she told her family at home.

“Since Emely couldn’t speak up, it often ended up that she wasn’t heard or believed,” says Bengt.

Yet, measures in the action plans included that Emely should speak in “girls’ groups,” where everyone would be heard.

“All children should be heard and taken seriously. It was not the children’s responsibility to stop the bullying, it was the adults’. The school promised Emely to stop it, but it never happened,” says Bengt.

Throughout fourth grade, Emely often came home sad, her parents observed. She kept a lot hidden, they felt, but occasionally she opened up and talked about how alone she felt. She talked about exclusion and comments about her appearance and bullying. Increasingly, Monica observed from the windows of the after-school care how her daughter went and sat alone on the bench in the corner behind the brick wall.

At home, the parents tried to do everything that could bring a smile to Emely's face. Every other weekend, they packed the car and drove along the south coast eastward to Skottevik camping outside Kristiansand.

During the summer holidays, they traveled abroad. Crete. Rhodes. Several times they flew to the USA, rented a car, and drove south down the east coast. From Washington to Orlando and all the way to Key West.

Emely loved to travel, preferably with the whole extended family and the four girls she was an aunt to. Emely relaxed her shoulders, she "owned the world" and was fearless in amusement parks. And they always had to visit Disney stores to buy a new Dumbo, so the comfort cloth had company. Emely loved to shop. Monica knew they spoiled her. But the worse Emely felt, the more they said yes at home.

That's why they also said yes when Emely wanted to start horseback riding.

"She was a completely different person when we drove home from there than on the way out," remembers Monica.

She and Bengt saw that the stable was a place that made the pain disappear for a few hours.

"A horse doesn't judge and doesn't demand. In the stable, she was free from all thoughts," tells Monica.

Autumn 2020. The pandemic had been going on for half a year when Emely started fifth grade. Part of this school year, Emely had home school.

The pandemic day to day life felt safe and predictable, but during the periods with school, Emely still experienced bullying. This is shown in emails between the parents and the school. The action plans reveal that the parents were concerned and wondered why the bullying Emely experienced at school continued. Why didn't all the measures they had agreed to implement work, they wondered.

"After two years of action plans and meetings, we lost faith in the school," says Bengt.

The parents contacted the anti-bullying officer in Rogaland County. Monica and Bengt initially felt that the anti-bullying officer did a good job and advocated for Emely's case with the school.

When Emely started sixth grade in the autumn of 2021, the anti-bullying officer withdrew from the case—despite an action plan showing that Emely reported she was still being bullied.

“At that point, I assessed that the parents needed more than what I as an anti-bullying officer could assist with,” says Marit Nygård Roth, the anti-bullying officer for kindergarten and elementary school in Rogaland. She recommended that the parents report the case to the County Governor.

The County Governor is the appeals body for school environment cases and can assess whether the school is breaking the law and demand measures. The parents did not report the case to the County Governor, as they perceived the County Governor and the county as the same body.

“In hindsight, maybe we should have done that,” says Bengt.

“It is incredibly sad that Emely is dead, and I have the deepest sympathy for the parents and family in the grief they are experiencing,” says Marit Nygård Roth, the anti-bullying officer for kindergarten and elementary school in Rogaland.

“The role of the anti-bullying officer is to provide advice and guidance when children and students do not feel safe and secure in kindergarten or at school. Additionally, we can assist more when there is a desire for this, for example by participating in meetings with the school and partners to ensure they follow up with the student in the best possible way. At that point, I assessed that the parents needed more than what I as an anti-bullying officer could assist with,” says Nygård Roth.

She therefore recommended that the parents report to the County Governor to get an assessment of the extent to which the school had fulfilled its obligation to provide Emely with a safe and good school environment as stated in the Education Act. The County Governor can decide what the school must do to stop bullying, while the anti-bullying officer provides advice and guidance.

“My hope was that Emely would experience an end to bullying, and again feel safe and comfortable at school.”

This fall, the parents noticed the first signs that their daughter was becoming mentally ill. She was 11 years old, but in her mind and body, she already felt like a teenager. Emely was over 170 centimeters tall. She loved clothes and makeup.

“But I think it was also about protecting herself from comments about her appearance,” says Monica.

In an email to the parents, the school's inspector wrote that Emely had told at school that she felt she must not wear too many clothes, as someone might say she was fat. She could not wear too little, as then adults said that rumors were going around.

In the recesses, she no longer just sat on the bench; she locked herself in the school toilets. She began self-harming, she developed obsessive thoughts and eating disorders, shows the journal from the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department.

At home, Emely ran straight up to her room after school and stayed there all afternoon and evening. Only later did she reveal that the bullying had turned into threats. In the last action plan created, it is revealed that she told the school that she received threats via Snapchat,

but also at school. Emely was afraid to snitch, it is stated in emails between the school and parents. This made it challenging for the school to implement measures without taking Emely's fear of reactions and revenge seriously.

Traces of bullying on Snapchat disappeared within seconds, but Emely occasionally told her parents and older sister about what was written in chats and about threats in "code language."

Emely also had several TikTok accounts. One account was dedicated to horses. It was from this account that Emely shared the most. From the other accounts, she published few videos, but her phone's photo gallery is full of attempts at selfies.

"Maybe we let her be on her phone more than we should have, but social media was also a refuge for her, something positive and a place where she could cultivate her interests," says Monica.

In the action plans, several of the measures are repeated over a long time. Four of the measures are the same through twelve of the thirteen plans, without documentation that they are evaluated. The measures largely targeted Emely, such as there should be "ongoing student conversations" with her and that she should have "conversations with the school nurse."

"It was as if it was Emely's own fault that she was bullied," says Bengt.

In the action plans, the school described Emely as: "perceived as somewhat rigid and locked in thought patterns," "Emely has become very determined that she does not want to be with any girls or have friends," and "she is attempted to be included by fellow students, boys, and girls. Emely chooses not to accept the invitation. She rejects support and suggestions from adults."

In the action plans, there was gradually less correspondence between what Emely herself told and what the school believed. She herself told that she had "experienced the school environment as difficult and not safe and good over a long time" and "expresses that she is disappointed that the adults do not fix what is not okay when she notifies them about it." In the school's own assessment, they wrote "the school assesses that Emely feels safe and good at school."

"No child chooses not to have friends. Emely gave up. It didn't help to speak up. She had lost all trust in the school," says Bengt.

In January 2022, Emely was referred to the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department, where she began attending weekly sessions. Here she opened up and shared how she experienced being subjected to threats and severe bullying in the schoolyard. She also told them about her dark thoughts:

"Feels very alone. Has thoughts of taking her life."

CHAPTER 3: It was eight in the evening. The parents had just called up to Emely that they were going to the store. She had been waiting for this opportunity, she would later say. Now

she had her chance. She switched the location sharing feature on her phone from green to light gray, and left. No one was to know where she was. Then she sent the message.

Her older sister Alice Frantzen was puzzled. The message from her little sister was unusually long for Emely. The words flowed into each other, but the last word she clearly saw was: "Goodbye." Alice called Emely, but got no answer. She called her parents, they were in the store. She ran the short distance down to their house. Empty.

"At the same time, I kept trying to call Emely. Over and over again."

Alice had to go out and search, but where? She began to drive randomly around Tjelta.

Quite soon, the whole family was out searching. The parents in one car, the older sister and brother-in-law in their own. The father called the police when he noticed that Emely had turned off the location sharing on her phone. The minutes passed.

Then, while the police were tracing the phone, Alice got hold of Emely.

"All I thought about was that I had to find out where she was. She must not hang up. I tried to be as calm in my voice as I could," says Alice.

The police located the phone in Håland forest a few kilometers away, around the same time Emely told Alice where she was. Alice drove up the long hill towards the forest. Just before the road turned, she saw her little sister.

"I see her screaming for help. But she doesn't know how," says Alice.

Two days later, Emely sat in the office of the specialist psychologist at the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department. He wanted to assess if she would try to take her life again. She wouldn't answer, she said. "Then you'll just try to stop me." Emely sat with her jacket on. She fidgeted with her foot and was distant in her gaze, noted the specialist psychologist. Emely had done as Alice asked in the woods and got into the car with her. She regretted it immediately, she told.

Emely knew how she would do it if she tried again, she told several psychologists she spoke with. They assessed that there was a risk to her life and health and told her parents what Emely had said about her suicide plans.

After that, Emely did not tell her therapists much more about what specific suicide plans she had or didn't have. Bengt purchased several safes to lock away anything he thought Emely could use to harm herself. They searched her room and watched over her around the clock.

When Emely was to describe how good or bad she felt, the specialist psychologist introduced her to a scale she could use. 0 was bad, 10 was very good. In the months following the suicide attempt, Emely sometimes answered 3 or 4, other times 2 or 2.5. Emely also expressed herself through her drawings, which grew increasingly darker.

The Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department considered psychiatric hospitalization, but there was a waiting period. The therapists were also afraid that other patients might have a negative impact on her. It could worsen the situation for Emely.

"We understood the assessment, but we felt very alone with a responsibility we had no professional competence to handle. We were told to sit by her bed through the night or let her sleep in our bed. She should not be alone," says Monica.

"When the parents have experienced that they stood alone with the responsibility for their daughter in such a serious and difficult situation, it is understandable that this has been an additional burden. Looking back at the case, as a service, we can always think that we should have done more," says Lars Conrad Moe, clinic manager for mental health care for children, youth, and addicts.

"We tried to provide comprehensive and tailored treatment that was directed at the underlying causes of her difficulties. Our assessment is that she received close outpatient follow-up in the year after the suicide attempt with several different measures. But when a 12-year-old girl takes her life, everyone thinks that this had a very tragic outcome. This must be acknowledged and learned from by all of us who have been involved from various agencies," believes Moe.

He reports that BUP (Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department) has thoroughly reviewed Emely's file with involved professionals following her death.

"The case is also being evaluated in the clinic's quality council. Our assessment is that the services offered to the parents have been in accordance with professional responsibility requirements throughout the case history. We have reported the suicide to the National Health Supervisory Authority, and we are now awaiting the assessment of our role in the case from the County Governor of Rogaland."

Dagbladet has also been in contact with PPT (Educational Psychological Service). They do not want to comment on the case as it is under police investigation.

Emely was prescribed several types of sleeping medications, shows the journal from the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department. Yet, she still slept poorly. At the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department, she shared how thoughts and flashbacks kept her awake. Bullying episodes from recent years replayed over and over in her head, she explained. For a long period, Emely only slept between two to four hours each night. And when she finally fell asleep, she dreamed that someone was killing her, she told her therapists.

During the day, for the parents, it was about getting Emely to go to school, then having to console her when she came home. Or they had to pick her up because she had panic attacks. Even after the suicide attempt, the school failed to stop the bullying, she told her therapists. Several emails from her father reporting bullying after the suicide attempt are in Emely's student file.

"School refusal," concluded the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department. The parents had several discussions with them about Emely's school situation.

"The school promised that Emely was safe. She was not," says Bengt.

The parents felt they had tried everything; they were desperate and at a loss. Until a therapist asked them why they hadn't done what they had considered since third grade:

"Why don't you change her school?"

CHAPTER 4: On Monday, May 23, 2022, Emely walked out of the gates of Dysjaland School for the last time. She was switching schools.

"In hindsight, I think we should have done it much earlier, but it had been so important for us to collaborate with the school and believe that they knew what they were doing," says her father, Bengt Frantzen.

The day after, her parents drove Emely to her new school. When Monica Frantzen picked her daughter up at the end of the day, she saw Emely walking across the schoolyard with three other girls. They hugged her before Emely got into the car.

From monitoring Emely twenty-four hours a day, her parents were now driving her back and forth to school, to the stable, to handball practice, and to visit friends.

A week after switching schools, the specialist psychologist at BUP noted:

"Mood: Says she's at 4.5 now. Remembers herself saying 2.5 last time. It's all about the school change."

Although the new schoolyard was not free from glances and comments according to Emely, she explained to the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department that she at least had someone to talk to during breaks. She no longer dreaded going to school.

She was spending more time at the stable, which was also evident on her horse-themed TikTok account. Clips of Emely brushing, mucking out, and "flying high" on horseback with her arms outstretched.

"Emely got a fresh start. It's good to think about all the nice things she experienced last year," says Bengt.

Emely no longer ran straight up to her room and shut the door. She wanted to sit on the couch with mom and have a series marathon, and when the youngest nieces visited, she did their makeup and wanted the newborn in her lap.

"There were signs that Emely was doing better, but also signals that she was afraid of being alone," says Monica.

Emely had started to put away her mobile phone. The bullying had continued on Snapchat, she told her mother.

As autumn 2022 progressed, the family noticed that not everything was okay. Emely was now malnourished. At the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department, they assessed that she was now showing strong symptoms of panic anxiety, social anxiety, and obsessive thoughts. They diagnosed her with eating disorders and planned a treatment course. She was also diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD:

"Has very strong flashbacks (where she experiences it as real when it happens), nightmares, and a lot of avoidance behavior in general. The traumas are primarily related to past bullying."

The therapists at the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department assessed that even though Emely was now doing well at her new school, she was afraid of being rejected by new friends and of experiencing more bullying. The therapists believed Emely needed trauma therapy, but Emely did not want it.

Throughout autumn 2022, the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department made several attempts to start treatment, without success.

"We understood that she had to be motivated for it to be worthwhile, but it was frustrating that the treatment depended on her willingness. As we saw it, she did not know her own best. She was a child," says Bengt.

At home, Emely argued with her parents. She felt that they did not understand her. Afraid of what Emely might do if they said no, they said yes to most things. Clothes, makeup, riding lessons. They saw that it wasn't ideal, but dared not do otherwise. As Christmas 2022 approached, the flashbacks occurred many times a day, Emely told her therapists at BUP. They also lasted longer. Self-harm happened more frequently.

Three days before Christmas Eve, Emely was to tell her therapists at BUP how she was feeling and where she was on the scale:

"Zero."

At home, they also saw a different Emely. She celebrated Christmas Eve with mom, dad, older brother Lars Ove, and his family. To those around her, she now seemed full of life and plans for the future. Emely got up early, played with her nieces, and wanted to join the breakfast with the youngest.

"Emely was the world's best aunt. She always found fun things to do with the girls," says her older brother Lars Ove.

She went skiing with her father, and as 2022 turned into 2023, she shared photo highlights with friends from the new school. She told her parents she was looking forward to becoming a teenager in February. She wanted to invite the whole class, she said. Emely talked about a handball cup and riding camp in the summer, and she wanted her and her parents to travel to the USA. Or maybe Italy. Or London.

On Wednesday, January 12, 2023, Emely started with a new therapist at the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department:

"Emely appears expressionless and closed in today's conversation. She tells little on her own, and answers briefly to what is asked. Says a lot that she doesn't remember. The undersigned focuses on getting to know her and makes no assessments in today's conversation in terms of suicidality. Doesn't get the opportunity to do this as Emely leaves the session without saying anything."

Friday, January 21, there was to be a school dance. Emely had been looking forward to it. She had persuaded her parents to buy a new dress and she was going to get dolled up with false eyelashes. The ball started well. Emely smiled and laughed, but then it became too much. She felt a panic attack coming on, and the evening ended with her older sister Alice having to pick her up.

The next day, Emely didn't want to get up. After a while, she asked her mother to come and make a ponytail for her, as she usually did. While Emely sat in front of the makeup mirror, she said:

"Mom, you know the scale I use at BUP?"

"Yes. Where on the scale are you now?"

"Minus five."

CHAPTER 5: "Emely?"

Monica Frantzen calls up to her daughter. She gets no response. She turns on the coffee machine. Calls again.

"Emely?"

Silence.

Tuesday, January 24. Emely has been to BUP (Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Department). On the way home, Monica needs to stop by the store, but Emely doesn't want to come, and her mother drops her off at home. When Monica returns home twenty minutes later, Emely doesn't answer.

"I ran up the stairs," Monica recounts.

The white-painted door to Emely's room is closed. Monica knocks. It's completely quiet. She opens the door carefully and finds Emely. She is unconscious, and Monica starts chest compressions.

She tries to dial 113, but her fingers tremble, and she misses the keys. She tries again. Then she gets through to the 113 operator. He instructs her to continue cardiopulmonary resuscitation. An ambulance is on its way. The 113 operator counts while Monica presses, releases, breathes.

Soon, the street outside is blocked off by neon yellow vehicles.

At Stavanger University Hospital, the doctors are ready. Emely is placed in an induced coma. Monica is led to a secluded waiting room. Her older sister Alice has also arrived. Her father Bengt and older brother Lars Ove get to the hospital shortly after. Eventually, they are allowed to see Emely. They sit around the bed. Monica strokes Emely's cheek.

"It was horrible to see her lying there. In hindsight, I think that at least at the hospital we could be close to her. Hold her and stroke her," says Monica.

Over the next few days, the family takes turns sitting with Emely.

Three days later, on Friday, January 27, they learn the extent of the damage. Bengt has sat up all night watching over Emely.

"I started to think that maybe there was hope," says Bengt.

But Emely does not revive as they had hoped. Then Bengt feels a doctor's hand on his shoulder.

"We need to talk."

The extent of the damage is too great to be compatible with life. Two nurses place an extra bed next to Emely's. Monica needs to lie next to her one last time. Afterwards, she makes a plaster cast of Emely's hand and cuts a lock of her hair.

"Emely was very fond of her hair. She wouldn't have liked it," says Monica.

"But I'm glad I did it."

At 8:30 PM on the last Friday of January, the machines are disconnected. Emely dies surrounded by her mom, dad, older sister, and older brother. They hold her hands and stroke her.

When Emely lies in the coffin and the family sees her one last time, Monica brings out Dumbo. She places it next to Emely's cheek.

"I didn't want her to be completely alone."

Emely wears a silver necklace with a heart pendant. She and her niece Thea had matching ones, after Emely bought the necklaces for them as Christmas gifts. And after Emely died, all the girls in the family received one.

Friday, February 10. Rain gathers in small puddles between the gravel paths at the cemetery outside Sola Church. Mourners in dark clothes move hesitantly in. Children and youth fill the rows of benches.

In the front, a dark figure is bent over a white coffin. Lars Ove has brought a chair for his mother. The family gathers around her and the coffin that will soon be filled with last greetings from Emely's family and friends. "Beautiful Emely." "You were more than good enough." "Love you, my little friend, hugs from your big sister." "Mom and dad's angel." "Fly high, Emely."

Half an hour later, the family steps forward in front of the congregation. Bengt pulls out the paper from his inner pocket. The day before, he had gathered the family and read the speech to them. They agreed. Everything had to be said. Then he tells the story of Emely:

"Emely, you experienced a lot of pain that no one deserves. You experienced not being believed or seen. You were told that you had to change yourself so that others would want to be with you. You were left sitting alone on the bench during breaks. Dear irreplaceable,

kindest Emely. A huge thank you with all the hugs in the world from all of us for everything you gave us. Rest in peace, Emely. Until we meet again. You are now our angel."