

*Elisabeth*  
Misha Segal

EXCERPT

It was many years later, in 1995, that Elisabeth was diagnosed with lung cancer. She had been coughing for a year. Her doctor insisted she had a pulmonary infection and so kept her on antibiotics for several months. When her condition did not improve, she insisted upon an X-ray. That's when the tumor was discovered. It was big and delicately placed. She came to Los Angeles to have an operation to remove the affected lung. The operation was fruitless: the cancer had spread to the lining of the lung and removing it would not solve the problem.

Her first oncologist gave her 6 months to live. As soon as he uttered the words "You should start preparing..." Elisabeth got up and walked right out. "Where are you going, Mama?" I asked. "*He* can start preparing" she said, "*I* am not going anywhere, definitely not in six months!"