A Life Without Tears

by

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EXT. - TRADITIONAL KOREAN WEDDING - DAY (1945)

It is a chilly day in February. JONG WAN, an 18 year-old woman from Seoul, South Korea, is marrying JUNG KI, a 20 year-old young man. They stand on opposite ends of a long wooden table. The marriage has been arranged by a MATCHMAKER, who is sitting in the front row. About twenty family members sit on the ground and watch.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
My family has many stories that have been told over and over again, year after year, for as long as I can remember.

A drum is beat.

The bride and groom take turns washing their hands in a wooden bowl on the table.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Some stories make me laugh.
(beat)
Some make me cry.

The bride and groom turn to face each other and bow.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT’D)
But all of them remind me of who I am.

EXT. - OUTSIDE JONG WAN’S HOUSE - EVENING

Jong Wan kisses her mother, GAUNG SHIN MUO, goodbye and begins to cry.

GAUNG SHIN MUO
Shhh. You are a woman now; do not cry like a child.
AUGGI
We are ready to go home.

GAUNG SHIN MUO
(over her shoulder to Auggi)
Yes, Jong Wan is ready too.
(under her breath to Jong Wan)
I know this is not what you dreamed of,
but I promise you will find happiness.
Goodbye, daughter.

Gaung Shin Muo pats her daughter’s cheek and walks away. Jong Wan wipes her tears and turns to the members of the Kim family, who are standing around talking. Auggi claps her hands.

AUGGI
Let’s go, everyone Time to return home.
(to Jong Wan)
As soon as we return home, we must start preparing for tomorrow’s meals. Each day we will serve all nineteen members of this family. I was told you can cook.

Jong Wan is silent.

AUGGI (CONT’D)
Can you?

Jong Wan nods.

AUGGI (CONT’D)
Good. We didn’t get much for you, but I was told you can cook.

CUT TO:
EXT. - KIM HOUSE - NIGHT

The family approaches the Kim house, a traditional wooden house in the country.

CUT TO:

INT. - KIM HOUSE, JUNG KI’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jung Ki and Jong Wan ENTER the room. He points to one of the two floor mattresses.

JUNG KI
That one is yours.

Jong Wan sits on it and stares at her feet.

Auggi and CHUNG YUP, Jung Ki’s father, ENTER. Chung Yup is older than Auggi and has a scratchy voice.

CHUNG YUP
We have gifts for the new couple.

Auggi holds out two small geese carved out of wood.

CHUNG YUP (CONT’D)
One for each of you.

Jung Ki and Jong Wan each take one.

AUGGI
Geese only choose one mate for their whole lives, and this is our wish for you two as well.

CHUNG YUP
Place them at the top of your heads while you sleep for good luck.
Auggi reaches in her pocket and pulls out a small cloth sack of nuts and dates.

AUGGI
Seeds for fertility. May Buddha bless this union richly.

The couple bows to Jung Ki’s parents. Auggi and Chung Yup bow back to the couple and EXIT. Jung Ki places his goose on the ledge behind his head and turns to Jong Wan with an outstretched hand.

JUNG KI
Here, give me your goose.

JONG WAN
Why?

JUNG KI
I’ll put it on the ledge beside mine.

JONG WAN
No.

JUNG KI
No? What do you mean, no? Didn’t you hear my parents? That’s what we are supposed to do for good luck.

JONG WAN
I can do it myself.

JUNG KI
Are you being stubborn already? We just got married and you’re causing trouble. I don’t want a stubborn wife.
JONG WAN
I’m not causing trouble.

JUNG KI
Then give me the goose.
(beat)
Jong Wan? Give me the goose.

JONG WAN
No.

JUNG KI
This is why I didn’t want to get married. Wives are troublemakers.

JONG WAN
You didn’t want to get married? Then why did you find the matchmaker?

JUNG KI
The matchmaker found us. She said you were a good deal because you could cook and sew. She said you wouldn’t mind moving up north because your father is gone and you had a small dowry. My parents said it was a good opportunity.

JONG WAN
You’re lucky my father isn’t alive because he would never have allowed me to marry you.

Jung Ki steps closer to Jong Wan threateningly.
JUNG KI

Go to bed.

JONG WAN

I’m not tired.

Jung Ki shakes his head and begins to undress for bed.

JUNG KI
(under his breath)

Just my luck to get a wife like this.

Jung Ki lays down on his floor mattress and turns away from Jong Wan. Jong Wan hesitates, then walks to the ledge and puts her goose on it. She pauses, then turns it around so its tail is in the other goose’s face.

INT. - KIM HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Jong Wan, Auggi, EUNHAE, and a few other women are cooking. Eunhae, one of Jong Wan’s new sisters-in-law, is a beautiful, petite woman of about twenty-two years with a constantly cheerful attitude.

EUNHAE

You can estimate one handful of rice for each person, one handful of kimchee for every two people, and one handful of meat for every three people.

AUGGI
(two Jong Wan)

Do you wash clothes?

Jong Wan hesitates and looks at the other women.
JONG WAN
Clothes?

AUGGI
Clothing. Do you wash clothing?

JONG WAN
Oh. Yes.

AUGGI
What was that? Speak up, little mouse.

JONG WAN
Yes. I can wash clothes.

AUGGI
In this household, we wash our clothes in the river all year round. Do you know how to break the ice on the river when it’s cold outside?

JONG WAN
I have never done that before.

AUGGI
Eunhae, you must show Jong Wan how.

EUNHAE
Yes, Umma.
(to Jong Wan, quietly)
It is an unpleasant task.
EXT. - RIVER - DAY

Jong Wan has an ice pick and is chipping a hole in the ice. When she finally breaks through, she dips the clothing in it, runs a bar of soap over it, and rubs it quickly between her hands. She GASPS from the cold water. Then she rinses it and puts it in her basket. She reaches for another shirt. Auggi APPROACHES.

AUGGI
The faster you work, the less your hands will hurt later. When you’re finished with this, I’ll show you how to do a load of whites.

Jong Wan turns back to her washing.

EXT.- BEHIND KIM HOUSE - DAY

Auggi shows Jong Wan how to wash white clothing in a boiling pot with a large stick and a bar of lye soap.

AUGGI
You have to wash all of it before the water gets too cool. Here, you try.

Jong Wan takes the stick and swishes the clothing around in the pot.

AUGGI (CONT’D)
Move the stick faster.

Jong Wan swishes it faster.

AUGGI (CONT’D)
Faster.
Jong Wan swishes it faster, and some hot water splashes out and burns her hand. She cries out and holds her hand to her chest.

AUGGI (CONT’D)
Oh, how careless of you. I said faster, not sloppier.

INT.- BARN BEHIND KIM HOUSE- DAY

The men in the family are feeding the family’s two horses, cleaning the barn, and stacking firewood. TE KI, Jung Ki’s older brother, hears a noise and follows it out of the barn.

INT.- BARN BEHIND KIM HOUSE- DAY

Te Ki sees Jong Wan crying quietly behind the barn.

TE KI
Jong Wan? Can I help you?

She shakes her head.

TE KI (CONT’D)
Are you okay?

She nods.

TE KI (CONT’D)
Is it Auggi?

She nods. He chuckles.

TE KI (CONT’D)
She made my wife cry the first day too. Listen, she’s just testing you.

(MORE)
TE KI (CONT’D)
She wants to see how you’ll fit into the family, and she wants you to know she’s in charge.

JONG WAN
But I don’t.

TE KI
You don’t what?

JONG WAN
Fit into this family.

TE KI
Unfortunately, no one is going to make room for you. You’re going to have to push your way in.

Te Ki walks back inside the barn.

INT.– BARN – DAY

JUNG KI
Who were you talking to?

TE KI
Your new wife.

JUNG KI
Is she giving you trouble too?

TE KI
No, not at all. I think she’s very sweet. Umma is being hard on her.
JUNG KI
Sweet? My new wife? Hardly. I’m waiting for the fire to die down before I try warming my hands.

TE KI
I don’t feel any fire coming from her. I think she’s lovely. A little scared, perhaps.

Te Ki walks away, leaving Jung Ki to consider this.

INT. - KIM HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eunhae is putting ointment on Jong Wan’s hands, which are red and bleeding from washing the laundry in the ice. Jong Wan bites her lip to keep from crying out in pain. The room is lit by two small candles.

EUNHAE
I told you it was an unpleasant task. But we’ll take turns and next winter Young Soo will be old enough to help us as well. How was your wedding night?

Jong Wan sighs angrily.

EUNHAE (CONT’D)
That bad, huh? Don’t worry, they are known for being unpleasant.

Jung Ki enters the room.

JUNG KI
It is late. We should go to bed.
Eunhae pats her hands and Jong Wan follows her husband into their bedroom. She climbs onto her floor mattress and begins to lay down. He takes hold of her hands and looks at them.

JUNG KI (CONT'D)
Are you okay? Are your hands very hurt?

JONG WAN
I am okay.

JUNG KI
Listen, Jong Wan. I don’t want to be angry with each other all of the time. I can’t sleep if you’re lying next to me thinking bad thoughts.

JONG WAN
I’m not thinking bad thoughts.

JUNG KI
I want us to live in peace.

Jong Wan nods, looking at the floor.

JUNG KI (CONT’D)
Okay. Good night.

JONG WAN
Good night.
INT. - KIM HOUSE, DINING ROOM - DAY

Jong Wan, Eunhae, Auggi, and a few other women are serving food to all 19 members of the family that are seated on the floor around a long, narrow table. TE KI, Jung Ki’s older brother, about 27, tastes the bulgogi.

TE KI
Who made the meat today? It is especially tender.

EUNHAE
It was Jong Wan.

TE KI
Well congratulations, Jung Ki. You are in for a life of good meals.

Jong Ki nods at Jong Wan, who quickly looks down and blushes.

AUGGI
We must be careful not to use too much sauce when we season the meat, or we will run out soon.

Jong Wan looks at her, hurt by the comment, then looks away. Te Ki catches her eye and makes the motion of elbowing one’s way into a crowd. Jong Wan smiles. Auggi notices their glances and narrows her eyes.

INT. - KIM HOUSE, MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

The women family members sit on the floor embroidering. Jong Wan watches silently. YOUNG SUN, a woman of about 35, offers her a needle and a ball of yarn.
YOUNG SUN
Jong Wan, can you embroider?

JONG WAN
No.

YOUNG SUN
Would you like to learn?

Jong Wan nods shyly.

AUGGI
Why didn’t your mother ever teach you?

Jong Wan says nothing.

AUGGI (CONT’D)
(shaking head)
Shameful.

JONG WAN
I can read. And write.

AUGGI
Why would a girl need to do those things? I only teach my Jin Ho necessary skills. She can embroider anything, can’t you?

JIN HO, Auggi’s only daughter, looks up and smiles. She is beautiful, spoiled, and about 16 years old.

JIN HO
Thank you, Umma.
AUGGI
You make me so proud, Jin Ho. Do we all agree that my daughter is going to make a man very happy someday?

Jong Wan gets up.

AUGGI (CONT’D)
Where are you going?

JONG WAN
I feel sick.

AUGGI
Something you ate?

JONG WAN
Maybe.

AUGGI
(calling after her)
Probably from too much sauce on the meat.

INT. - KIM HOUSE, KITCHEN- NIGHT

Five children are playing jacks in a circle on the floor. SODI, Eunhae’s son, about 5 years old, looks up.

SODI
Do you know any good stories?

JONG WAN
What kind of stories?

SODI
Stories about bears.
JONG WAN
Let me think.

Jong Wan sits down with the children, who forget the jacks and gather around her. A smile lights up her face.

JONG WAN (CONT’D)
Yes, I do know a story about bears. Once upon a time, there lived a little family.

INT. - SMALL SHACK- DAY

Two adults and five children sit on the floor. The father plays a flute while the rest of the family watches.

JONG WAN (V.O.)
The family lived in the woods, and a big, mean bear lurked outside.

A bear appears in the window.

JONG WAN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
But the bear knew that the mother and father were very protective of their children, so he never tried to attack them, even when his belly hurt with hunger and he drooled from his big mouth.

The bear scratches at the window. The father stops playing the flute and stands up, looking concerned. The bear runs away.
JONG WAN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
One day, the mother and father had to visit his aunt, who was very sick. They locked all of the doors and shut the windows, but the bear saw them leave and snuck up to the house.

EXT. - SMALL SHACK- DAY

The mother and father walk away from the house, waving to the children, who watch from windows. The bear peeks out from a nearby bush.

JONG WAN (V.O.)
The children could hear the bear breathing outside and licking his lips as he prepared to eat them.

INT. - SMALL SHACK- DAY

The children huddle together on the floor, looking fearfully at the window.

JONG WAN (V.O.)
Just as the bear was about to burst through the door and gobble them up, the oldest boy thought of a trick.

The oldest boy stands up.

JONG WAN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
He said loudly, ‘Yum! This meat is so delicious! I’m so glad I learned how to catch and cook bears!’

The other children smile and stand up.
JONG WAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And the other children all joined in, saying, ‘Yum! This meat is so delicious!’ And you know what? That old bear believed him and got so scared that he ran back into the woods and never bothered the family again.

The bear runs back into the woods.

INT. - KIM HOUSE, KITCHEN- NIGHT

The children watch Jong Wan intently. She smiles.

JONG WAN
The end.

The children break into smiles and clap their hands.

SODI
Please tell us another!

JONG WAN
Not tonight. Another time.

INT. - KIM HOUSE, JUNG KI’S BEDROOM- AFTERNOON

Jong Wan sits on her floor mattress, reading a book. Auggi ENTERS.

AUGGI
What do you think you’re doing?

JONG WAN
I...I’m reading.
AUGGI

Why?

JONG WAN

What do you mean, 'why'?

AUGGI

Do you have any idea how much work there is to do around here?

Jong Wan holds up her hands, which are bandaged.

JONG WAN

Yes, but my hands... 

AUGGI

What about them?

JONG WAN

The ice and the cold cracked them up. I--

AUGGI

Do you think you are a princess? The chores do not stop because you have a little blister. Stop behaving like a brat and earn your keep.

Auggi walks over, takes the book out of her hands, and throws it across the room.

AUGGI (CONT’D)

And stop pretending you’re some great scholar. You’re a housewife. Start acting like one.

Auggi EXITS.
EXT. - KIM FIELD, BEHIND HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Jong Wan washes another load of laundry in the boiling pot. She reaches for the bar of lye, but it slips out of her bandaged hands. As she bends down to retrieve it, Jin Ho EXITs the house and runs quickly out to the field behind the house.

Jong Wan watches her and stops washing the clothes. She follows her out to the field.

Jin Ho cuts through the field and into the woods. Jong Wan follows.

EXT. - WOODS - AFTERNOON

Camera follows Jin Ho through the woods until she sees BAE, her lover. He is her age and handsome.

BAE
There you are. I thought you weren’t going to come.

They embrace.

JIN HO
I’m sorry. It was hard to get away today.

BAE
I have missed your beautiful face, Jin. Tell me everything you’ve done since our last meeting.

Jong Wan backs away from the sight slowly and walks back to the house. She hears shouting and begins to RUN.
EXT. - BEHIND KIM HOUSE - AFTERNOON

SOO, a female relative in her 30’s, clutches her 2 year-old son MIN, who is crying. Several women stand around.

AUGGI
Jong Wan. Were you washing this laundry?

JONG WAN
Yes. Why?

AUGGI
Because you almost killed my grandson, that’s why. You just left that bar of lye sitting there and Min was almost poisoned.

JONG WAN
I’m sorry. I didn’t--I didn’t--

The women carry the crying boy inside, leaving Auggi and Jong Wan alone in the cold.

AUGGI
Didn’t think? No, I suppose you didn’t. Don’t eat any of the nuts or fruit gave you on your wedding night. You are obviously not ready to have a child.

Jong Wan turns away in anger, then looks out to the field where Jin Ho was.

INT. - KIM HOUSE, MAIN ROOM - EVENING

The family is gathered for dinner.
JUNG KI
How is he, Soo?

SOO
He is fine now, just resting.

AUGGI
Praises to Buddha she found him when she did.

JIN HO
Yes, he could have died.

JONG WAN
Where were you this afternoon?

JIN HO
Me? I was checking the rabbit traps.

TE KI
Rabbit traps? Since when do you check those? You hate the sight of hurt or dead animals.

JIN HO
I know, but I’ve been having cravings for rabbit soup lately.

JUNG KI
I would like to see you skin a rabbit and make some soup out of it.

AUGGI
Oh, stop picking on your sister. Jin Ho, guess who stopped by this afternoon?
JIN HO
Who?

AUGGI
The matchmaker. She is going to start looking for a suitable husband. She thinks she can find a wealthy man because you’re so beautiful. She said you have the prettiest nose she’s ever seen.

Auggi looks pointedly at Jong Wan.

AUGGI (CONT’D)
Not all girls are blessed with perfect noses. What a shame to end up with one that is too small or too large.

Jong Wan wiggles her nose, then turns to Sodi, who is sitting beside her.

JONG WAN
(whispering to Sodi)
Remember the bear story?

Sodi grins and points to his food.

SODI
Yum! This meat is delicious!

The other children perk up, remembering the story, and begin chanting.

CHILDREN
Yum! This meat is delicious!
TE KI
Yes it is! Jong Wan, did you make the bulgogi again?

Jong Wan smiles at Auggi, who turns her head away.

INT. - KIM HOUSE - NIGHT

Jong Wan enters a room full of the male family members to serve them tea. They are sitting on the floor, smoking pipes and discussing politics.

TE KI
I think it is only a matter of time before the North invades. Everything I hear in the village confirms this.

CHUL
But don’t you think they will state their intentions before attacking? I think they will try to negotiate before endangering so many lives.

CHUNG YUP, Jung Ki’s father, an old man with a scratchy voice, gestures to Jong Wan.

CHUNG YUP
What is your opinion of the matter?

Jong Wan hesitates.

CHUNG YUP (CONT’D)
Yes, you, girl.

Jong Wan looks at her Jung Ki. He raises his eyebrows.
JONG WAN
I think we should begin to prepare for violence. I think trusting such an unstable government would be a mistake.

CHUL
You have a very pessimistic opinion of our country's future.

JONG WAN
I only know what I have heard about the North, and it doesn’t sound trustworthy.

TE KI
I agree. Thank you, Jong Wan.

She nods and exits.

INT. - JUNG KI’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jung Ki and Jong Wan are getting ready for bed.

JUNG KI
Your answer today was very intelligent, Jong Wan. I think you are right about the North.

Jong Wan does not answer.

JUNG KI (CONT’D)
And you do make very good bulgogi.

Jong Wan smiles.

JONG WAN
Thank you.
INT. - KIM HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jong Wan and Eunhae are cutting meat for the next day.

EUNHAE
You cut meat like you’ve done it for a long time.

JONG WAN
I have. I’ve been cooking for my family for many years.

EUNHAE
Really? When I married Te Ki, I had never prepared meat in my whole life.

JONG WAN
What?

EUNHAE
Yes, my mother lied to the matchmaker! The truth was, my family never had much meat. We were too poor to afford any cows, so all we had was a chicken once a year during the holidays.

JONG WAN
Did Auggi punish you when she found out?

EUNHAE
She never found out! When I first moved here, I wrapped my hand up and said I had cut it on a paring knife. So she made the meat for the first week and I watched and learned.

(MORE)
EUNHAE (CONT'D)
Then I took my bandage off and pretended
I had been making meat dishes since I was
a little girl!

They laugh.

JONG WAN
I don’t think Auggi cares for me at all.

EUNHAE
I understand your dowry was small?

JONG WAN
Yes. My father was killed a several
years ago during a Japanese riot in the
village of Soo Hahm. After he died, my
sisters and I were taken out of school
and my mother taught us to become
housewives.
(beat)
Although she did not teach us how to
embroider.

They laugh again.

EUNHAE
Or wash clothing in an icy river.

JONG WAN
Right.

EUNHAE
Just think, most mothers-in-law beat the
new women in their families if they make
mistakes, but Auggi has never even said
an unkind word to me. She’s never said a
kind word, either, of course.
They laugh again.

EUNHAE (CONT’D)
Don’t worry, you’ll get adjusted soon. As long as we all work together, we can operate as one big family.

JONG WAN
I know. I just never pictured myself as a housewife.

EUNHAE
What did you picture yourself as?

JONG WAN
My father taught my sisters and me reading, writing, and arithmetic. He and his father were scholars, and I always wanted to be a school teacher.

EUNHAE
(impressed)
So you are educated. Unusual for a girl.

JONG WAN
Yes, we were lucky. When we were small, my father told us that if we studied, if we learned the things in his big books, we would have better lives than other girls. He said intelligent girls were more valuable to society, and we thought we were very special.

(beat)
When he died, my mother took us out of school and taught us to cook and sew.

(MORE)
JONG WAN (CONT'D)
As soon as she talked to the matchmaker,
I knew I would never be a teacher.

EUNHAE
Your father was a very modern-thinker.
In this household, you should be careful
about flaunting your education.

JONG WAN
Yes, Auggi has already made that very
clear.

EUNHAE
Well, despite all of the imperfections
you see at first, I have found a lot of
happiness in this household, and I think
you will too, with time.

EXT.- MAYOR'S OFFICE IN SANG HE - DAY

Te Ki approaches his office and sees the MAYOR and two
city officials talking outside.

MAYOR
(bowing to Te Ki)
Gentlemen, this man will help you. Te
Ki, these men are organizing a city
militia. I'm appointing you to help
them.

TE KI
I'm not very experienced with... .

MAYOR
Let's have at least thirty men signed up
by tonight.
OFFICIAL

Yes, Mayor.

TE KI

Yes, Mayor.

INT. - JUNG KI’S RING SHOP - DAY

Jung Ki is bent over a ring wearing a jeweler’s headband. SE GUN, his co-worker, ENTERS. Se Gun is about Jung Ki’s age, earnest, and slightly anxious.

SE GUN

Jung Ki, the sign is falling down. Do you want me to fix it?

JUNG KI

No, I’ll do it.

Jung Ki stand up and stretches.

EXT. - IN FRONT OF JUNG KI’S RING SHOP - DAY

Jung Ki climbs a small ladder to fix the shop’s sign, which has come loose on one corner and hangs crookedly. He carries and hammer and a hand full of nails. He examines the loose corner, sighs, and positions the hammer over a nail. As he tries to lean closer, he loses his footing and FALLS.

Several of the workers run outside.

WORKER

Jung Ki?
SE GUN

Are you okay?

JUNG KI
(in pain)
Yes, I’m okay. Help me up.
(they help him stand)
Alright, back to work, back to work.

INT. - KIM HOUSE, DINING ROOM- NIGHT

The family is eating dinner.

AUGGI
Jung Ki, how is the business going?

JUNG KI
Very well. I hired another worker today.

AUGGI
Another? That makes twelve!

JUNG KI
Yes, and we still can’t keep up with demands. Every woman wants these rings.

TE KI
Maybe Eunhae wants one.

Eunhae makes a face at him and everyone laughs.

AUGGI
Well Te Ki has some good news too.
TE KI
Yes, today I was promoted to mayor’s secretary.

Everyone gasps and chatters excitedly. Jong Wan looks at Eunhae, who looks nervous.

AUGGI
My ‘city’ sons are doing so well. I am a proud woman.

CHUL
And what about your ‘country’ sons? Haven’t we done well too?

AUGGI
Of course.

CHUL
I’m only teasing, Umma. We are all proud of Te Ki and Jung Ki’s occupations in the village. The crops are not as exciting.

JIN HO
So what qualified you for your promotion, Te Ki?

TE KI
Well, the mayor had me muster thirty men for a local militia today.

JIN HO
And?
TE KI
And I did.

CHUN YUP
And now what?

TE KI
I’m not sure, to be honest. I don’t know much about militias. I’m only a bookkeeper. But the mayor seems to think I am right for this position.

He looks at Eunhae and smiles. She looks down.

INT. - KIM HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eunhae is showing Jong Won how to embroider.

EUNHAE
Very good. You’re a fast learner.

JONG WAN
Thank you.
(beat)
You are not excited about Te Ki’s job?

EUNHAE
I am proud of him, but I worry about his safety. Anyone involved with the government of the South is a prime target for the North. He’s a peaceful man. I don’t know why the mayor would want him organizing troops.

Jung Ki enters, walking stiffly and holding his right lower back.
JUNG Ki
Eunhae, do you have any ointment for muscle pain?

The women set down the embroidery and stand up.

JONG WANN
What is wrong?

JUNG Ki
I fell off of a ladder today at work. How stupid of me.

JONG WANN
What? Why didn’t you say anything at dinner? That is serious.

JUNG Ki
It is not a big deal, don’t panic.

JONG WANN
Not a big deal? You are practically limping. You should not go to work tomorrow.

JUNG Ki
Not go to work? And what would those twelve workers do without anyone to instruct them?

EUNHAE
Come on, I’ll give you the ointment.
INT. - JUNG KI’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jung Ki limps home and into the house. Everyone is already eating.

AUGGI
Jung Ki, where have you been? You are almost an hour late!

JUNG KI
Sorry. It took me a long time to walk home. My back is really killing me.

AUGGI
Well, sit down and have some food.

JUNG KI
No, I need to rest.

Jung Ki goes straight to his bedroom. Auggi looks at Jong Wan.

AUGGI
Jong Wan, aren't you going to look after your husband?

Jong Wan quickly fills a plate with food and follows him.

INT. - JUNG KI’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jong Wan feeds him with chopsticks.
JUNG KI
I have to. It’s my business. Can you believe I am injured from working at a ring shop? The safest profession!

JONG WAN
I don’t think you should go to work tomorrow.

JUNG KI
I will decide in the morning.

INT. - JUNG KI’S BEDROOM - DAY

Sunlight is just beginning to filter in through the cracks in the wooden boarded walls. Jung Ki wakes up and grabs his side in pain. He looks over at Jong Wan, who is still sleeping, and stands up.

JONG WAN
(waking)
Jung Ki? You are going to work?

JUNG KI
Yes. I feel a little better.

He limps out of the bedroom. Jong Wan watches silently.

INT.- KIM HOUSE, KITCHEN- DAY

Jong Wan scrubs dishes in a large metal basin. Yon, a shy girl around 7 years old, wanders in and watches her.

JONG WAN
Want to help?

Yon shakes her head no. Jong Wan smiles.
JONG WAN (CONT’D)
I don’t blame you. Once you start this work, you never stop.
(beat)
When I was your age, I was just learning to read.

YON
You can read? I thought only boys could.

JONG WAN
Who told you that?

Yon shrugs shyly.

CUT TO:

INT.- KIM HOUSE, JUNG KI’S BEDROOM- DAY

Jong Wan sits on the floor with Yon, painting letters on a piece of paper.

JONG WAN
Now we can put them together. You say the letter as I draw it.

Jong Wan paints a letter.

YON
Na.

Jong Wan paints a letter.

YON (CONT’D)
Bi.

Jong Wan paints a letter.
YON (CONT’D)

Ya. Nabia!

Yon makes the motions of a butterfly with her hands.

JONG WAN

See, you are as smart as any boy. You’re learning to read!

Yon beams.

INT. - KIM HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family has gathered for dinner. Jung Ki is absent.

EUNHAE

Where is Jung Ki?

AUGGI

He is resting.

EUNHAE

Shouldn’t he eat to keep up his strength?

AUGGI

He refuses to eat. He says it hurts to digest food.

The family eats in silence.

JONG WAN

Should I go into the village tomorrow and find Doctor Han?
AUGGI
Yes. Take someone with you so you don’t get lost.

EUNHAE
I can go.

Eunhae and Jong Wan smile at each other.

EXT. - VILLAGE OF SANG HE - DAY

CAMERA TRACKS as Jong Wan and Eunhae walk down the main road of the village. It is alive and bustling with people selling wares, children playing, and friends visiting. Chickens walk freely, and some people have gathered around a small fire.

EUNHAE
I love the village. If I don’t come for a while, I forget that there is life outside of the Kim household.

JONG WAN
Yes, I haven’t been in a town too many times since my father died.

EUNHAE
I grew up in Sam Chee, but once I married Te Ki and moved to the country, I knew my days as a village girl were over.

Jong Wan sees a fabric shop along the road.
INT. - DOCTOR HAN’S HOUSE - DAY

Doctor Han is an old, skinny man with a cane. He is cleaning his shoes when the two women enter.

EUNHAE
Doctor Han?

DOCTOR HAN
Yes?

EUNHAE
We are from the Kim family outside of the village. Jung Ki Kim is very sick and requires a doctor.

DOCTOR HAN
What is his sickness?

EUNHAE
We don’t know.

The doctor struggles to his feet with his cane and limps over to them. They watch him nervously.

DOCTOR HAN
Does he have money to pay me?

EUNHAE
Yes, he owns the ring shop.

DOCTOR HAN
Oh yes, I know who you are talking about. Okay. Give me some time to pack my bag and I will go with you.
EUNHAE

Thank you.

The women bow and exit the house.

EXT. - DOCTOR HAN’S HOUSE - DAY

JONG WAN
(mildly amused)
Does it worry you that the doctor walks as poorly as my husband?

EUNHAE

Yes.

JONG WAN

It worries me too.

The women try not to laugh.

Three young men suddenly ENTER the frame as YOUNG MAN #1 is shoved forcefully by YOUNG MAN #2. YOUNG MAN #3 looks on pensively.

YOUNG MAN #2

Go home, Northerner.

YOUNG MAN #1

My family is from the South.

YOUNG MAN #2

You’re lying. I know your father was born in the North. I know where your filthy loyalty lies.

Several onlookers whisper and watch nervously. YOUNG MAN #1 looks around nervously.
YOUNG MAN #2 (CONT’D)
Didn’t you here me? We don’t want you down here. Go back home. What are you, some kind of spy? Trying to see how we live here in the South?

YOUNG MAN #1 begins to walk away quickly.

YOUNG MAN #1
You will regret this.

YOUNG MAN #2
Get out of here!

EXT. - OUTSIDE OF DOCTOR HAN’S HOUSE - DAY

Eunhae and Jong Wan cling together, watching the action die down. Doctor Han EXITS his house.

DOCTOR HAN
I am ready.
(pausing at their anxiety)
What is going on?

EUNHAE
Nothing. Let’s go.

INT. - JUNG KI’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Doctor Han is pressing gently on Jung Ki’s back. Jung Ki groans in pain. Auggi, Jong Wan, and Eunhae watch from the doorway.
DOCTOR HAN
When you fell off of the ladder, a disk in your spine probably slipped out of place and is pinching nerves, causing your pain and limping.

AUGGI
How can he heal?

DOCTOR HAN
He needs several days of rest and good food. If he doesn’t rest, a sack of fluid could build up, which would be even more painful and would require some sort of operation.

AUGGI
Do you hear the doctor, son?

Jung Ki groans in response.

INT. – KIM HOUSE, KITCHEN – DAY

A few days later, Auggi, Eunhae, Young Sun, and Jong Wan are preparing lunch.

AUGGI
We need more rice than this.

EUNHAE
That is all we have, Umma.

AUGGI
What do you mean? The rice sacks in the back are empty?
EUNHAE
Yes.

AUGGI
Why didn’t anyone buy more?

EUNHAE
Jung Ki usually buys it, but he is sick.

AUGGI
(irritated)
Well tell Te Ki to buy some on his way home from work tomorrow. Tonight we will just have to eat meat and soup.

INT.– KIM HOUSE, KITCHEN– NIGHT

Yon is writing letter very slowly as Jong Wan watches. Auggi ENTERS.

AUGGI
What are you doing?

JONG WAN
Yon is learning to read.

AUGGI
Yon, go find your mother.

Yon EXITS. Auggi walks up to Jong Wan and lifts her by the elbow.
AUGGI (CONT’D)
This is unacceptable. You were told not
to waste your time with this education
filth, and not only do you continue to
study it, you poison little girls minds
too? Yon is not your daughter.

JONG WAN
I thought we were all one family here.

AUGGI
Yes, we are. And I am the head of it.
Do you understand what I am saying?

JONG WAN
(bitterly)
Yes, I do.

Auggi picks up the paper, crumples it in a ball, and
throws it in Jong Wan’s face. Auggi turns to leave.

JONG WAN (CONT’D)
You know, I can teach you too.

AUGGI
You dare to open your mouth again?

JONG WAN
If you want to learn to read and write, I
can teach you. It’s never too late.

Auggi steps up to Jong Wan again.
AUGGI
I choose not to fill my mind with that garbage because I have a household to run. When you have children, you will learn to stop being so selfish.

Auggi EXITS.

(beat)

Te Ki ENTERS.

TE KI
Is everything alright? I heard loud voices. Who was here with you?

JONG WAN
Who do you think?

TE KI
I apologize for my mother. She is old. Set in her ways.

JONG WAN
It’s okay. I think I’m starting to understand her.

(beat)
You have a hole in your shirt.

TE KI
Yes.

JONG WAN
And your cheek is swollen. Did someone hit you?
TE KI
Well...yes. When I went to buy rice, there was a brawl about signing up for the militia. I tried to break up a fight. If men don’t sign up, they are labeled as Northern sympathizers. It’s getting a little tense in the village. But listen, don’t tell Eunhae. I don’t want her to worry about me.

JONG WAN
From the look of things, she has good reason to worry. Here, I will sew your shirt.

Te Ki takes off his shirt and hands it to her.

JONG WAN (CONT’D)
Good night.

TE KI
Good night.

INT. - JUNG KI’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jong Wan sews a shirt beside a candle. Jung Ki lays in bed staring at the ceiling.

JUNG KI
What are you sewing?

JONG WAN
Te Ki’s shirt has a hole in it.

JUNG KI
Why doesn’t Eunhae mend it?
JONG WAN
Eunhae is very tired. She washed the laundry today and her hands are bleeding.

JUNG KI
Well you shouldn’t have to sew my brother’s shirt when he has his own wife.

JONG WAN
We are all family now.
(beat)
Why are you so angry?

JUNG KI
Because I have been laying here for a week! I’m restless. My business can’t survive without me.

JONG WAN
You know your health is more important than your business.

JUNG KI
My business is my life. I was just starting to make some good money.

JONG WAN
You’re worried about money?

JUNG KI
Who isn’t worried about money these days?

Jung Ki turns his head away in frustration.
INT.- KIM HOUSE, MAIN ROOM- DAY

Auggi is playing a game with the children involving sticks and rocks. Jong Wan ENTERS, carrying a load of laundry on her head.

SODI
Jong Wan! Will you tell us another story? Please?

The children gather around her, begging for a story, abandoning Auggi’s game.

JONG WAN
A story about what?

MIN
A tiger!

YON
No, a boat!

JONG WAN
I could tell you a story about a tiger on a boat.

MIN
Yes, please.

Jong Wan smiles and starts to sit down.

AUGGI
Jong Wan, that laundry should be done now so we can start preparing dinner later.

Jong Wan stands back up.
JONG WAN

Sorry, Umma. You’re right.

The children groan and whine.

SODI

Will you tell us later then?

JONG WAN

Yes, if Auggi says it’s okay.

The children turn expectantly to Auggi.

AUGGI

(reluctantly)

We’ll see.

INT. – KIM HOUSE – NIGHT

Auggi, Eunhae, and Jong Wan are preparing food for the next day. Te Ki ENTERS with a large sack of rice.

AUGGI

Oh good, meat.

TE KI

I’m sorry, but I couldn’t buy any meat, just rice.

AUGGI

Why?

TE KI

Prices are very high and some foods, like meat, are becoming very scarce.
CHUNG YUP
What exactly is the situation now?

TE KI
People are getting nervous. Rumors of threats are circling.

AUGGGI
Well, Jung Ki needs meat if he’s going to get better.

TE KI
I’m sorry, Umma.

AUGGGI
Can’t you talk to the government officials you work with?

TE KI
I did. That’s how I was able to get more rice.

INT. - KIM HOUSE - DAY

The family is eating dinner. Sodi sighs loudly.

SODI
Rice and broth again? We’ve had the same thing for two weeks!

His mother, YOUNG SUN, smacks him.

YOUNG SUN
Don’t be so disrespectful! You are lucky to have food at all.
Chung Yup touches Young Sun’s shoulder.

AUGGI
He is right, Young Sun. Your child says what we have all been thinking. Food is becoming a problem, both in price and in availability.

TE KI
With the price inflations and Jung Ki not working, we can’t afford very much rice from now on.

CUT TO:

INT. - JUNG KI’S BEDROOM - DAY

Jung Ki listens from his bed and watches his family eat through the cracked door.

EXT. - RIVER - DAY

Jong Wan is washing clothes in the river. She looks up and watches as it begins to snow. Suddenly a group of men approach the house, shouting. She gasps and picks up her laundry, running toward the house. It is Se Gun and the workers from the ring shop, carrying Jung Ki. Family members rush to meet them in the front.

AUGGI
What is going on? Why is he out of bed?

SE GUN
Out of bed? He came to work today! He said he was feeling much better. He collapsed an hour ago.
AUGGI
Jung Ki! How could you do this?

JUNG KI
(bitterly, with effort)
They are ruining my business!

SE GUN
(angrily)
We are doing the best we can.

Auggi and Jong Wan gather Jung Ki in their arms and carry him inside.

AUGGI
Thank you, Se Gun.

INT. - JUNG KI’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Auggi and Jong Wan sit beside Jung Ki in his bed. Doctor Han examines him.

DOCTOR HAN
Yes, I think a sack of fluid is building up. This is not good. I recommend an operation, but I cannot perform it. These hands are too old.

Doctor Han shakes his head and reaches for his bag.

DOCTOR HAN (CONT’D)
I think you should take him to a bigger city, maybe Gah Jee, and find a surgeon to empty the fluid and put the disk back in place.

(MORE)
DOCTOR HAN (CONT’D)
Spinal injuries are very serious, and after his trip to town today, I will be surprised if his back isn’t permanently damaged.

AUGGI
Jung Ki. Why?

JUNG KI
(labored)
I heard you talking. About having no food and no money.

JONG WAN
The ring shop is not as important---

JUNG KI
They are ruining it. In two or three weeks, it will go bankrupt.

JONG WAN
I will start working.

AUGGI
What?

JONG WAN
With your permission, of course, Umma.

AUGGI
Where?

JONG WAN
The fabric shop in the village.
AUGGI
That shop makes custom tailored clothing. You think they would hire you?

JONG WAN
I can sew very well.

AUGGI
They have made clothing for the governor and his—

JONG WAN
(determinedly)
Very well.

AUGGI
Okay. Tomorrow you may go and try to get a job there.

JONG WAN
Thank you.

INT. – FABRIC SHOP – DAY

Jong Wan is measuring a well-dressed BUSINESS MAN. Two older women, the SEAMSTRESSES, watch her. She holds up bolts of fabric and the man points to the ones he likes.

INT. – FABRIC SHOP – DAY

Jong Wan spreads the bolt of fabric and starts cutting.

SEAMSTRESS #1
She doesn’t use a pattern?
SEAMSTRESS #2
This ought to be interesting.

INT. - FABRIC SHOP - NIGHT

Jong Wan sews as the two women put on their coats.

SEAMSTRESS #2
You can finish it in the morning. It’s time for bed.

JONG WAN
In the morning it will be finished so I can start on a new order. Good night.

The women look at each other and shrug, then EXIT. Jong Wan rubs her eyes and continues sewing.

INT. - FABRIC SHOP - MORNING

Jong Wan helps the business man put on the new jacket she has made, along with the matching vest and pants. The man admires himself in the mirror, nods, and pays her. The two women watch and nod to one another.

INT. - KIM HOUSE - NIGHT

Jong Wan sits in the kitchen with all of the women of the family, drinking hot tea.

JONG WAN
And he chose the most expensive fabric the shop carries!

HEE SUN
And you don’t use patterns?
JONG WAN
(pointing to her head)
The patterns are here.

The women chuckle.

INT. - JUNG KI’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jung Ki wakes Jong Wan in the middle of the night groaning.

JONG WAN
Jung Ki? What is wrong?

JUNG KI
Te Ki.

JONG WAN
You want your brother?

JUNG KI
Yes. Te Ki.

Jong Wan gets up, grabs her robe, and runs out of the room. CAMERA TRACKS as we follow her to Te Ki and Eunhae’s room, where she awakens them.

JONG WAN
Te Ki! Jung Ki is calling for you.

CAMERA TRUCKS again as we follow them back to Jung Ki’s room. Eunhae and Jong Wan comfort one another as Te Ki leans close to Jung Ki.

JUNG KI
(whispering)
I am dying.
TE KI
No, you are sick. Shhh.

JUNG KI
Listen. Brother, I can no longer feel my arms or legs. I think I am dying. Tell Jong Wan she may do whatever she chooses when I am gone. She is very wise and strong, so tell Auggi to let her choose.

TE KI
We need to take you to the city hospital.

JUNG KI
I will die before we get there.

Te Ki, not wanting to hear anymore, stands and walks to the door. The women are frightened.

EUNHAE
Te Ki, where are you going?

TE KI
I am taking him to the city hospital.

Jong Wan reaches for a cap and pulls her robe tighter.

EUNHAE
Now? It will take you five hours.

TE KI
He needs to go now. Jong Wan, you don’t have to come. You don’t even have a coat.
JONG WAN
Are we carrying him?

EUNHAE
You are both crazy. The cold will kill him if he’s not already dying.

TE KI
We are taking the cow and the wagon.

EXT. - COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Jong Wan and Te Ki walk alongside the wagon being pulled by a cow. Jung Ki is in the back, frail and sleeping. It is snowing hard.

TE KI
You can sleep in the back.

JONG WAN
I am okay. Thank you. (beat) Will they fire you for missing work?

TE KI
No. I am too valuable at work to fire.

JONG WAN
Oh I see.

TE KI
Will they fire you from the sewing shop?

JONG WAN
I am too valuable to fire.
They smile despite the situation.

TE KI
Jung Ki wanted me to tell you that if he doesn’t make it, you are free to leave this family and marry again.

JONG WAN
No.

TE KI
No? No what?

JONG WAN
No I will not leave. Where would I go? Back to my house to find the matchmaker again? It would be nice to see my mother, but I know my family would marry me off again as soon as they could find another husband. No, I think I will stay with the Kim family.

TE KI
Well, it is your decision. Eunhae tells me you read, write, and do arithmetic. Who taught you?

JONG WAN
My father.

TE KI
And yet you can cook and sew?

JONG WAN
My mother.
TE KI
Well I would say your parents have raised quite a daughter. They must be proud.

JUNG KI
(from the wagon)
Te Ki, are you trying to steal my wife?
I’m not dead yet!

Te Ki and Jong Wan laugh and Te Ki thumps the side of the wagon.

INT. - HOSPITAL - DAY

A YOUNG DOCTOR examines Jung Ki. Jong Wan and Te Ki stand beside the bed.

YOUNG DOCTOR
Why did you wait so long to bring him?

TE KI
We were told he might heal on his own.

YOUNG DOCTOR
No, I’m afraid not. The ruptured disk has pinched several nerves, and the sack of fluid is putting pressure on his spinal cord, which may cause permanent paralysis. He has also torn several muscles around the sack, making it difficult to operate, and he’s much too thin and weak to survive surgery.

JONG WAN
What can we do?
YOUNG DOCTOR
(shaking head)
Nothing. Take him home. The best chance he has is letting the torn muscles heal and losing the use of his legs and possibly his arms. I’m sorry.

The young doctor EXITS.

TE KI
I’m going to ask another doctor to look at him.

Te Ki EXITS into the hall. Jong Wan sits down beside her husband and touches his forehead.

JUNG KI
What do you think?

JONG WAN
About what?

JUNG KI
About me. Am I going to die?

JONG WAN
No, not today.

JUNG KI
Tomorrow?

JONG WAN
Not tomorrow. I don’t think you’re going to die from this.
JUNG KI
I do.

JONG WAN
Then it’s a good thing I’m usually right.
(beat)
You might lose the use of your legs. But you won’t die.

JUNG KI
Jong Wan, I am sorry about your job.

JONG WAN
What do you mean?

JUNG KI
I know you were doing very well at the sewing shop, and I’m sorry you are risking your job for this trip.

JONG WAN
Don’t compare the value of your life to the value of a job.

JUNG KI
Well, I already think I’ve ruined my own job, so if I do live, we will be poor for a while.

JONG WAN
It is better to be poor than dead.

JUNG KI
I don’t agree.
JONG WAN
Then it’s a good thing I’m usually right.

Te Ki ENTERS with YOUNG DOCTOR #2. The doctor examines Jung Ki. Jong Wan begins to fall asleep.

YOUNG DOCTOR #2
I’m afraid there is nothing I can do. I would recommend surgery, but he’s so weak I doubt he would make it. It’s best to take him home. I’m sorry.

JUNG KI
(angrily)
I’m tired of being told what I already know. Please, let’s all go home.

EXT. - COUNTRY ROAD - DUSK

Te Ki and Jong Wan lead the cow and wagon. Jong Wan’s eyelids droop and she stumbles, then wakes up.

TE KI
Let’s stop and rest.

JONG WAN
What?

TE KI
We’re exhausted. We should sleep.

JONG WAN
Here? On the road?
TE KI
No, my parents have a cousin that lives a few miles ahead. She will let us spend the night.

JONG WAN
You think she'll let a sick man sleep in her house? That's bad luck.

TE KI
She's a kind woman. She won't mind.

EXT. - COUSIN JIN SUN'S HOUSE - DUSK

Te Ki stops the cow along the side of the road and approaches the small shack.

TE KI
Jin Sun?

JIN SUN, small, frail woman about 70 years old peer out the door. When she sees Te Ki, her face breaks into a huge smile.

JIN SUN
Te Ki? Is that you? Who is with you?

TE KI
Jung Ki and his wife are with me. Jung Ki is sick.

CUT TO:

EXT.- COUSIN JIN SUN’S HOUSE, AT THE WAGON - DUSK

Jong Wan, waiting beside the wagon, squints into the twilight, then down at her husband.
JONG WAN

Jung Ki?
(beat)
Are you alive?

Jung Ki’s eyelashes flutter. Te Ki approaches the wagon and reaches for his brother.

JONG WAN (CONT’D)

We’re staying?

TE KI

Yes. We’re staying.

INT. - COUSIN JIN SUN’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Te Ki and Jong Wan are eating rice and drinking tea with Jin Sun.

JIN SUN

I’m sorry I don’t have more food. This is shameful not to be able to feed my guests.

TE KI

We understand.

JIN SUN

And on top of that, this old body hasn’t made it to the market for three weeks. It’s too cold outside.

TE KI

(to Jong Wan)
She makes and sells hair pins.
JIN SUN
I’m sure you three were freezing on your way here.

TEKI
We just had to get him to a doctor.

JIN SUN
It’s a shame no one could do anything.

Jong Wan is nodding off again.

JIN SUN (CONT’D)
Oh goodness, look at this poor little rabbit. She’s falling asleep with the cup of tea in her hands.

JONG WAN
I’m awake.

JIN SUN
I’m putting you to bed now. Let’s go.

Jong Wan follows Jin Sun into a tiny side room. Te Ki waits, then starts to fall asleep also. Jin Sun returns to find him sleeping on the floor. She smiles, then gets a blanket to put over him.

INT. - COUSIN JIN SUN’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jin Sun is making hair pins by candlelight when footsteps approach and soft knocking is heard. HYUN, an old man about 70 years old, ENTERS with an ornery smile.
HYUN
Good evening, woman. Are you going to marry me?

JIN SUN
Shhhh.

HYUN
Well that’s a different answer than usual. Should I take that as a good sign? Are you finally falling in love with me?

JIN SUN
(amused)
Hyun, I have sleeping guests.

She motions to the spare room where Te Ki is sleeping on the floor.

HYUN
Guests? This is unusual. Why wasn’t I invited to the party?

JIN SUN
Because you aren’t ill. Unfortunately.

HYUN
I heard that, woman. Who is ill?

JIN SUN
My nephew. His brother and his bride were at the hospital today. The doctors sent them home, and they are resting here before completing their journey tomorrow.
HYUN
What is wrong with him?

JIN SUN
He fell off of a ladder, poor little bird, and injured his spine. The doctors said they wanted to operate, but he is too thin and weak.

Hyun picks up a hair pin and begins playing with it.

JIN SUN (CONT’D)
Put that down. What are you thinking?

HYUN
I could look at him.

JIN SUN
What do you mean?

HYUN
I was a surgeon.

JIN SUN
Hyun! I never knew. When?

HYUN
When I was younger. In the army. But it’s been a long time...

JIN SUN
Hyun, you must help him.
HYUN
Well, I would need to examine him first of course.

JIN SUN
Let's go wake him up!

HYUN
But they must all be so tired.

JIN SUN
I think they will forgive you for waking them up to save Jung Ki's life.

INT. - COUSIN JIN SUN’S HOUSE - NIGHT ()

Hyun examines Jung Ki by the light of two candles. Jong Wan, Te Ki, and Jin Sun watch.

HYUN
Yes, the doctors were right. Draining the fluid will take the pressure off of the spine and may allow it to heal.

JIN SUN
Then you must operate. Immediately.

HYUN
(hesitant)
He is too frail... I cannot take responsibility for his life.

JIN SUN
Hyun...
HYUN
(stands)
Jin Sun, I have had too many young men
die in these hands without the permission
of their families.

JIN SUN
We are family to him.

HYUN
(shakes head)
I must have his parents sign a paper. I
will not operate without their
permission.

JIN SUN
Hyun! It will take too long for them to
go home and come back. Please...

Hyun shakes his head stubbornly.

TE KI
I’ll go.

JONG WAN
You can barely stand. I’ll go.

She grabs the paper out of Hyun’s hand and EXITS.

EXT. - COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Jong Wan runs through the snow.

EXT. - KIM HOUSE - MORNING

Jong Wan makes it to the Kim house just as the sun
rises. She runs inside, shouting breathlessly.
INT. - KIM HOUSE - MORNING

The family is gathered in one room. Jong Wan explains the situation.

AUGGI
And this man is a real doctor?

JONG WAN
Yes. He was a doctor in the army.

CHUNG YUP
How many years ago?

JONG WAN
I don't know.

CHUNG YUP
Is he old?

JONG WAN
Yes, a little old.

CHUNG YUP
everyone please leave us to speak alone with Jong Wan.

Other family members EXIT. Jong Wan is alone with Jung Ki's parents. They stare at the paper.

JONG WAN
Please. As soon as you sign the paper, I will run back to Jin Sun's house and Dr. Hyun will operate.
(beat)
Please.
Chung Yup shakes his head.

CHUNG YUP
No. I won’t give anyone permission to kill my son.

AUGGI
Chung Yup--

CHUNG YUP
I won’t sign it!

He crumples the paper, throws it across the room, and EXITS. Jong Wan retrieves it and tries not to cry.

AUGGI
Shhh . . . Jong Wan, you must be tired. You should go to bed.

JONG WAN
No. I must go back and sit with Jung Ki.

AUGGI
You can go in the morning.

Auggi leads Jong Wan to her room.

AUGGI (CONT’D)
Lately you have been a good wife to my son. You have never been my favorite girl in the family, but you try hard. That has not gone unnoticed.

JONG WAN
This doctor might be able to help him.
AUGGI
Go to sleep.

Auggi EXITS. Jong Wan crawls under the covers.

INT. - KIM HOUSE - NIGHT

Auggi smooths the paper out as she walks to Chung Yup’s room. He sits on his bed cleaning his shoes.

AUGGI
Our son will either die or be paralyzed without this surgery.

CHUNG YUP
(stubbornly)
He will die because of it.

AUGGI
Maybe not.

CHUNG YUP
The doctor wouldn’t want us to sign a piece of paper if he was skilled.

AUGGI
She is too young to be a widow.

CHUNG YUP
(struggling to speak)
She has nothing to do with it. This is my son’s life we are talking about.
AUGGI
She is our daughter now. And she wouldn’t have run all the way here if she didn’t think the doctor could help. Husband, I want you to sign this paper. Imagine if we were in their position and your parents wouldn’t help us.

Chung Yup stops cleaning his shoes and sets them down.

INT. - JUNG KI’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jong Wan is sleeping. Chung Yup ENTERS quietly and puts the signed paper by her face on the pillow.

INT. - JUNG KI’S BEDROOM - MORNING

Jong Wan wakes up. Her eyes register what the paper is, and she scrambles out of bed. As she is about to run out of the room, she stops and turns her wooden goose on the ledge to face Jung Ki’s. The she EXITS the room.

EXT. - KIM HOUSE - MORNING

Jong Wan bustles out of the house, followed by several family members. Eunhae gives her a rice ball, Auggi puts a ragged shawl on her back. They wish her luck and wave goodbye as she begins running.

INT. - JIN SUN’S GUEST ROOM - DAY

Te Ki holds ice wrapped in cloth on Jung Ki’s side, nodding off to sleep and fighting to keep his eyes open.

EXT. - COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Jong Wan is running.
INT. - COUSIN JIN SUN’S HOUSE - DAY

Cousin Jin Sun ladles three cups of tea from her old stone kettle and takes them into Jung Ki’s room.

INT. - JIN SUN’S GUEST ROOM - DAY

Jong Wan ENTERS the room, breathless. Hyun wakes up from his chair in the corner.

HYUN
Do you have the paper?

Jong Wan hands it to him and goes to sit by Jung Ki. Her nose begins bleeding. Te Ki sees it and stand up.

TE KI
No, don’t sit here, Hyun is going to operate. Come with me out by the fire and have some tea.

JONG WAN
No, please, I want to sit with Jung Ki during the surgery.

TE KI
Okay, you can come back, but first you need to wash your hands. Right doctor?

HYUN
Yes.

Jong Wan lets Te Ki lead her out of the bedroom.
INT. - COUSIN JIN SUN'S HOUSE - DAY

Te Ki leads her to the fire and they sit on the floor. Jin Sun approaches and hands her a piece of cloth and a cup of tea.

JONG WAN
What is this cloth for?

Te Ki takes it and wipes the blood from her nose.

JONG WAN (CONT'D)
Oh, how awful. It must just be from the cold. Thank you.

TE KI
Drink this tea.

JONG WAN
I just need to wash my hands and then I’ll go back--

TE KI
Okay. Drink this first, little horse.

JONG WAN
Little horse?

TE KI
You run like a little horse.

They laugh, and she drinks the tea.

TE KI (CONT'D)
Why don't you get just a few minutes of sleep before you go back in there?

(MORE)
TE KI (CONT’D)
If the doctor needs your assistance, you need to be fully awake.

JONG WAN
(sleepily)
Yes. That is a good idea.

She puts her head down and falls asleep almost immediately. Her hand lets go of the teacup, and Te Ki reaches out and catches it before it spills. He gets up and returns to the guest room.

INT. - JIN SUN’S GUEST ROOM - DAY

Hyun is laying out all of his surgical tools.

Te Ki ENTERS.

TE KI
Are you giving him anything for the pain?

HYUN
I have some herbs, but that is all.

TE KI
What can I do?

HYUN
Hold his hand.

Te Ki grips Jung Ki’s hand as Hyun begins his incision.

INT. - COUSIN JIN SUN’S HOUSE - EVENING

Jong Wan wakes up on the floor and slowly walks to the guest room.
INT. - JIN SUN'S GUEST ROOM - EVENING

She pushes the door open and sees Jung Ki laying with his eyes closed on the bed. Te Ki and Jin Sun sit on either side of him holding his hands, and Hyun cleans bloody instruments in a basin in the corner.

JONG WAN
Is he . . . ?

Jung Ki opens his eyes as everyone turns to her.

JUNG Ki
Dead? No, I'm alive. I guess it's a good thing you're usually right.

Jong Wan begins to tear up as she joins his side at the bed. She leans close and presses her forehead to his.

JONG WAN
(whispered)
Let's live for a long time.

JUNG Ki
So far, so good.

CUT TO:

INT. - KIM HOUSE, KITCHEN - MORNING

Several months have passed. Jong Wan packs up a small bundle of food and walks to the door. Jung Ki, now almost fully recovered, follows her sleepily.
JUNG KI
Are you sick?

JONG WAN
No. Why?

JUNG KI
I thought I heard you go outside and get sick this morning. I was worried.

JONG WAN
No, it must have been a dream. Goodbye.

Jong Wan hurries out of the house.

EXT. - OUTSIDE THE KIM HOUSE - MORNING

It is a beautiful spring morning outside. Jong Wan hurries away from the house and runs into a cluster of bushes as soon as she is out of sight. She bends over and gets sick.

INT. - FABRIC SHOP - DAY

Jong Wan sews a button on a silk coat. She is working slowly and stops to wipe her forehead. The two other seamstresses watch, concerned.

SEAMSTRESS #1
Jong Wan, are you sick?

JONG WAN
No, why do you ask?

SEAMSTRESS #1
You’re working very slowly.
JONG WAN

I’m sorry.

Jong Wan begins to cry. The women abandon their sewing and move to comfort her.

JONG WAN (CONT’D)

I’m sorry, I’m so sorry.

SEAMSTRESS #2

What is wrong?

JONG WAN

(crying and hiccupping)

I...I...

SEAMSTRESS #2

Is your husband beating you?

Jong Wan shakes her head.

SEAMSTRESS #1

Is your mother-in-law mistreating you?

Jong Wan shakes her head.

SEAMSTRESS #2

Well then what is it?

JONG WAN

I...I think I’m dying.

SEAMSTRESS #2

What? Why would you think such a thing?
JONG WAN
I can’t keep any food down. I feel dizzy, my whole body aches, and I am exhausted every day.

The women look at each other.

SEAMSTRESS #1
How long have you been feeling like this?

JONG WAN
Several weeks now.

SEAMSTRESS #2
How many weeks?

JONG WAN
Three, maybe four. Ever since Jung Ki has been walking, I think Buddha has transferred Jung Ki’s sickness into me.

The women smile at one another.

SEAMSTRESS #2
You’re not dying. I think you’re carrying a child.

The women laugh. Jong Wan looks somewhat relieved and somewhat nervous.

INT. – KIM HOUSE – NIGHT (1950)

It is a warm night in June, and Jong Wan is noticeably pregnant. The family has finished dinner.
AUGGI
Let’s sing some songs in celebration. My son is back in good health, his wife is carrying a child, and we are all safe and warm.

Auggi begins singing an old folk song, and all the family members join in except Te Ki, who looks down in silence. Eunhae notices and stops singing.

INT. - TE KI’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eunhae and Te Ki get ready for bed.

EUNHAE
Why wouldn’t you join in the celebration tonight?

Te Ki doesn’t answer.

EUNHAE (CONT’D)
I don’t understand why you’re upset.

TE KI
I’m just nervous about all the politics.

EUNHAE
I thought you said last week there hadn’t been any activity at the border in days.

TE KI
That’s why I’m nervous. I just hope our Allies will keep their eyes open.
EUNHAE
Let’s not speak about these things anymore. We should appreciate the good things we have in our lives right now, as Auggi said.

INT.- JUNG KI’S ROOM- NIGHT

A knock is heard at the front door. Jong Wan sits up and listens. She hears a baby crying. Another knock.

She gets out of bed. CAMERA FOLLOWS her to the front door. She opens it. A beggar woman, about 35 years old, stands with a crying baby.

BEGGAR
Please. Do you have any food to spare for my baby?

JONG WAN
Oh my. Come inside.

Auggi and Young Sun appear out of the darkness.

AUGGI
What is going on? Why have you let this strange woman in our house?

JONG WAN
Can’t you see? She has a baby. She needs help.

AUGGI
Are you from the north?
BEGGAR
Yes. My husband was killed by some soldiers a few weeks ago and I am escaping to the south. Please, anything you have.

JONG WAN
Please, sit down.

AUGGI
Jong Wan, aren’t you going to ask my permission before you let a complete stranger and her child in here?

JONG WAN
Umma, I know you would want to help them. You would never let a poor widow and her child starve. That is why I didn’t ask.

Auggi says nothing.

CUT TO:

INT.- KIM HOUSE, KITCHEN FLOOR- NIGHT

Jong Wan washes the baby in a basin of steaming water while the mother eats a bowl of rice. Everyone else has gone back to sleep.

BEGGAR
I can’t thank you enough. No one has ever shown such kindness.

JONG WAN
I am sorry about your husband.
BEGGAR

Yes. He was a good man. He was just very outspoken about his political views.

JONG WAN

But that is no reason to die.

BEGGAR

I have nothing now.

Jong Wan lifts the baby out of the water and wraps it in a towel. The woman takes her baby, holds it close and closes her eyes.

JONG WAN

Why don’t you sleep here tonight?

BEGGAR

Your heart is made of gold.

JONG WAN

Good night. Come and get me if you need anything in the night.

Jong Wan slips in her room, picks up her embroidery, and walks to the main room.

INT.– KIM HOUSE, MAIN ROOM– NIGHT

Jong Wan sits down, rips the fabric off of the frame, and begins hand-stitching it together with her bed sheets. Te Ki walks up behind her slowly, watches for a few moments, and walks away.
INT. - KIM HOUSE FRONT DOOR- MORNING

Jong Wan kisses the baby goodbye as Eunhae ties it onto its mother’s back with a sheet. The baby and the mother are wearing new patched-together clothing that has large pieces of Jong Wan’s embroidery in it.

JONG WAN

If you find yourself in need someday, please come back.

BEGGAR

Dear woman, you are the only person I have ever heard of that invited a beggar back to your home.

JONG WAN

Buddha’s blessings be upon you.

The woman EXITS.

EXT. - KIM HOUSE, JUNG KI’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jung Ki and Jong Wan are sleeping. The sound of bombs can be heard. Jung Ki opens his eyes and sits up.

CUT TO:

INT. - KIM HOUSE - NIGHT

Jong Wan runs from room to room, waking the family. They scramble to grab their belongings.

JONG WAN

Get up, get up! We’re being attacked!

Te Ki and Eunhae come to the door.
TE KI
We need to leave the house and go South as quickly as possible. Take only what you need.

He hand Eunhae her coat and her shoes.

EUNHAE
What do you mean, go South?

TE KI
The troops are coming from the North. Our only chance is to outrun them. We might be able to catch a train along the way. Let’s go, everyone!

Te Ki helps Auggi into her coat and they all EXIT the house.

INT.- KIM HOUSE- NIGHT

Jong Wan runs back inside and grabs two books that were hidden under her floor mattress.

As the family begins running into the woods, two young soldiers run up. One blocks Jong Wan from leaving the house and grabs her by the arm.

SOLDIER 1
Stop or I’ll shoot!

Everyone freezes. Sodi begins to cry.

SOLDIER 2
You are our prisoners now, and you’re coming with us. Let’s go.
Te Ki approaches the soldiers with his hands up.

**EUNHAE**

Te Ki!

**TE KI**

Wait, don’t shoot. Don’t hurt her. I am Kim Te Ki, and I work for the mayor of Sang He. My life may be of value to your superiors.

The soldiers glance at one another, keeping their guns pointed at him.

**SOLDIER 1**

(to another soldier)

Check the list of names.

The other soldier takes a piece of paper out of his pocket and runs his finger down.

**SOLDIER 2**

What’s the name?

**TE KI**

Kim. Te Ki.

**SOLDIER 2**

Your name isn’t listed as anyone important.

**TE KI**

Maybe it’s not on the list, but I work with government officials and I know many secrets.
SOLDIER 1
Okay, let’s go. You’re coming with us.

Te Ki pulls a small knife out of his pocket. The soldiers see it and laugh.

SOLDIER 1 (CONT’D)
Don’t tell me you are going to try to defend yourself with that knife when we have guns.

Te Ki positions the knife at his throat.

TE KI
I will go with you without protest if you let my family go. If not, I will kill myself and you will have nothing to show your superiors.

SOLDIER 1
We don’t make bargains with prisoners. Put the knife down and come with us.

TE KI
The choice is yours. If you take me, you will be heroes. If your men find out you killed a man with information, you will be punished.

The soldiers glance at each other.

SOLDIER 1
It’s worth it to be the ones who capture him, don’t you think?
SOLDIER 2
Yes. Other troops will take care of the rest of them soon anyway.

SOLDIER 1
Okay, let’s go.

TE KI
Let her go.

SOLDIER 1
It’s bad luck to kill a pregnant woman.

The SOLDIER 2 pushes Jong Wan forcefully. She trips but keeps running to the rest of the family.

TE KI
Now let me say goodbye to my wife.

The soldiers glance at each other and shrug.

SOLDIER 1
Hurry up, we have a long way to walk tonight. And drop your knife.

TE KI (calling)
Eunhae, come here!

Eunhae hesitates, then walks to him, crying.

TE KI (CONT’D) (whispering)
Don’t be scared. Go south as fast as you can. And listen to me: I will try to escape within one week.

(MORE)
TEKI (CONT'D)
If you do not hear from me or see me in seven days, I want you to consider me dead.

EUNHAE
Stop. . . don’t say these things to me.

TEKI
You are too young to be a widow forever. Marry again with my blessing, and raise our children with love.

SOLDIER 1
Enough. Let’s go.

TEKI
I thought my bluff was the only was the only way to save the rest of the family. I’m sorry.

EUNHAE
Don’t leave me like this. Please.

TEKI
Don’t worry about what happens to me. I want you to lead a life without tears.

EUNHAE
No. . . Te Ki. . .

The soldiers grab him by the shoulder and lead him away at gunpoint. Eunhae stumbles after him, sobbing. One soldier turns around and points his gun at her.
SOLDIER 1
Stay back, woman.
(to Soldier 2)
Burn it.

TE KI
No!
The soldier lights a torch and tosses it onto the house, causing it to erupt in flames. Eunhae begins screaming.

JONG WAN
(from the woods)
Eunhae, come here!

Eunhae stops following them and stands still, watching her husband go as she cries. Jong Wan and Auggi approach her and put their arms around her, leading her to the rest of the family in the woods.

MONTAGE - KIM FAMILY MOVING SOUTH

The family moves through the woods and over the mountains with fear and desperation. The children are carried on backs, and the adults are dirty and tired. We see their legs have been scratched and bruised.

EXT. - WOODS - DAY

The family is moving at a slower pace, showing their exhaustion.

JUNG KI
We might be able to catch a train in Su Hahn.
AUGGI
How do you know where we are?

JUNG KI
I’m estimating that we have walked almost sixty kilometers, which would put us near Su Hahn.

JONG WAN
Could we rest a little?

JUNG KI
No, we should not stop.

Auggi looks at Jong Wan and notices she is limping.

AUGGI
Jong Wan, are you okay?

JONG WAN
Yes. I’m fine.

AUGGI
We need to stop.

JUNG KI
We are not stopping.

AUGGI
I said stop.

Everyone stops and looks back at Jong Wan. She tries to continue limping.

JONG WAN
No, please, I’m fine.
AUGGI
Come here.

Jong Wan limps over to Auggi, who lifts the bottom of her skirt and sees her ankles, which are very swollen.

AUGGI (CONT’D)
Fine? This is not fine. We need to rest. She is pregnant, we must remember.

Jung Ki walks over and looks at her ankles.

JUNGKI
Jong Wan, why didn’t you say something?

JONG WAN
We need to keep moving.

AUGGI
If your blood vessels break, you won’t be able to walk at all. Lay down.

JONG WAN
Here?

AUGGI
Yes. Lay down.

Jong Wan awkwardly lays down on the ground with the help of Jung Ki. The other family members are resting on their own.

AUGGI (CONT’D)
Jung Ki, see those yellow flowers? Bring me a handful of crushed petals. Now give me your feet.
Jong Wan lifts her feet up and Auggi begins massaging them. Jong Wan gasps in pain.

AUGGI (CONT’D)
It hurts now, but trust me, it will feel better.

(beat)
When you first joined this family, I didn’t think you would last very long. Although the matchmaker sang your praises, you were so sad to leave your mother, I thought you would run away at the first chance you got. But here you are, and look at all you’ve been through.

Jung Ki brings the petals, and Auggi massages them into Jong Wan’s skin.

AUGGI (CONT’D)
These will help reduce the swelling.

CHUL
Listen. Do you hear that?

EUNHAE
It’s a train.

YOUNG SUN
It’s coming from the north. We can catch it if we hurry.

AUGGI
We need to carry Jong Wan.

Jung Ki, Eunhae, and Chul come and lift her onto their shoulders. The family begins moving again, faster.
EXT. - SU HAHN - DAY

The family reaches the village and goes to the train station where dozens of families have lined up.

YOUNG SUN

We can’t all fit on one train.

JUNG KI

We have to. The troops will be here by tonight, I’m sure.

The train rumbles up the tracks and into the station. People begin swarming inside as soon as it stops. Officials shout directions into bullhorns, but everyone is clearly panicked. The Kim family begins to get separated and jostled. Auggi reaches for hands.

AUGGI

Stay together! Hold onto one another!

They push up to one of the train cars, then climb and lift each other inside. The train horn sounds as they pull the last two men inside. The train begins to move.

INT. - TRAIN - DAY (1950)

The inside of the train is small, cramped, and dark. Everyone is smashed together awkwardly, laying on top of one another. The children are frightened.

SODI

Umma, I’m scared. Where is Uncle Te Ki?

YOUNG SUN

Shhh. Go to sleep now.
SODI
I want to go home.

YOUNG SUN
We’re going to find a new home, Sodi.

YON
(crying)
I want to go home too.

Jong Wan has been listening.

JONG WAN
Hey, have you ever heard the story of the magic pine tree?

Sodi shakes his head. The children look interested.

JONG WAN (CONT’D)
Well, it’s one of my best. It requires a very good imagination. Do you have good imaginations?

The children nod their heads.

SODI
Yes. Sometimes when we’re eating rice I imagine that it’s dol sot bibimbop!

The adults look amused.

JONG WAN
Very good. Okay, close your eyes and imagine the story as I tell it.

The children obediently close their eyes.
JONG WAN (CONT’D)
Long ago in a land far away, there lived a little boy named Yun Seok. He was about your age I believe.

EXT. - WOODS - DAY

A young boy, YUN SEOK, walks through the woods.

JONG WAN (V.O.)
And Yun Seok walked through the woods every day on his way to the market, where he sold rice from his father’s field. One day when he was walking through the woods, he saw a lumberjack trying to cut down a large pine tree.

A LUMBERJACK is about to cut down a large pine tree.

JONG WAN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Yun Seok could see that the tree was very tall and beautiful, and he didn’t want the man to cut it down. So he lied and said that his grandfather was buried underneath the tree. Of course the lumberjack did not want to disturb the dead, so he quickly apologized and left the tree alone. Suddenly the tree came to life and hugged Yun Seok with her great big branches. The pine tree’s branches bend down to cover the boy. She thanked him for saving her life and promised to look out for him and return the favor someday.

(MORE)
JONG WAN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
From that day on, Yun Seok would pass by
the tree every day and stop to rest
against her trunk and climb her limbs.

Yun Seok is shown lounging in the tree’s branches.

CUT TO:

INT. - SMALL SHACK - NIGHT

Yun Seok SITS at a table with his parents and three
siblings. There is hardly any food, and the youngest
child cries in his mother’s lap.

JONG WAN (V.O.)
But times grew hard for Yun Seok and his
family, and they soon had nothing to eat
but a little rice and broth.

SODI (V.O.)
Just like us!

JONG WAN (V.O.)
(amused)
Yes, I suppose just like us. Anyway, Yun
Seok felt very bad for his family. So
bad, that he decided to steal food at the
market. But the men he stole from were
not very happy about that.

EXT. - MARKET - DAY

Yun Seok runs through the market with a cabbage tucked
under each arm. He is chased by two angry men with
sticks. They run away from the market into the woods.
JONG WAN (V.O.)
Yun Seok didn't know where to go. He knew if the men followed him to his house, they would harm his family. But he was getting tired and knew he couldn’t run much longer. Just as he was about to give up hope, he saw his magic pine tree and ran to it.

Yun Seok runs to the trunk of the pine tree and looks up into the branches.

JONG WAN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
The pine tree saw that Yun Seok was in danger and immediately folded her branches over him. The men couldn’t see him and continued running through the woods until they gave up and went home. Yun Seok thanked the tree for saving his life, but she simply tickled him with her branches and said, 'I'm only returning the favor you once did for me.'

INT. - SMALL SHACK - NIGHT

Yun Seok and his family eat a large meal happily.

JONG WAN (V.O.)
And Yun Seok went home and ate the delicious cabbage with his family.

FADE TO:

INT. - TRAIN - NIGHT

The family members sleep in the cramped train car. Suddenly it slows to a stop and the doors slide open.
TRAIN PASSENGER
We’re stopping for fifteen minutes to use the bathroom and stretch.

The family members wake each other and pile outside.

EXT. - COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Passengers pour out of the train cars, and peddlers approach out of the darkness with bundles of food.

JUNG KI
Everyone stay together.

PEDDLER
Kimbop for sale. Freshly made. Kimbop for sale.

AUGGI
How much?

PEDDLER
Thirty won.

AUGGI
What? That is ridiculous.

PEDDLER
(moving on)
Kimbop for sale. Freshly made.

YOUNG SUN
Auggi, Umma, when will we have another chance to buy food? We should buy now while it is available.
JONG WAN
Yes, I think it is worth the high price. We need water, too.

AUGGI
We don’t have enough money for food and water for everyone.

Jong Wan looks down at the books she is carrying.

JONG WAN
Sir? Can I trade these books for food?

PEDDLER
What is so valuable about these books?

JONG WAN
They...they are hand-written by scholars from the Nabanchook academy.

PEDDLER
Fine, fine. Give them to me.

As they exchange the books and some money for food, the train whistle blows.

JUNG KI
Let’s go!

They pile back on the train. Jung Ki looks at Jong Wan.

JUNG KI (CONT’D)
Are you okay?

She nods, trying not to cry.
JUNG KI (CONT’D)

You are very brave, wife.

A desperate woman runs up to Eunhae.

WOMAN

Please, take my baby!

EUNHAE

What? No, no.

WOMAN

Please! I am sick and have not eaten for several days. I know I am not going to make it. Please take my baby!

The woman thrusts the infant into Eunhae’s arms as the train begins to move. Eunhae looks at the woman helplessly as they move apart.

INT. - TRAIN - NIGHT

Eunhae sits in the corner, holding the baby and staring at it.

AUGGI

Eunhae, you know you cannot keep it.

EUNHAE

I can’t just leave it to die.

JUNG KI

Umma, leave her alone. She tried to help someone.

Jong Wan looks at the baby in the silent darkness and rubs her own belly.
INT. - TRAIN - NIGHT

Everyone is asleep when the train stops again.

YOUNG SUN
We are stopping again? Should we buy more food?

AUGGI
I need some water.

There is a knock on the door. Jung Ki slides it open. A young woman with short, spiky hair holds up a pair of scissors.

YOUNG WOMAN
Tell all of the women in this car to cut their hair very short. We were told this would lower their chances of being raped by soldiers if we have to run on foot.

JUNG KI
How will this lower your chances of being raped?

YOUNG WOMAN
Because we will look like men.

Jung Ki accepts the scissors and looks at Jong Wan. She says nothing.

AUGGI
I will not cut my hair.

EUNHAE
Neither will I.
CHUL
It is for your safety.

JUNG KI
Jong Wan?

JONG WAN
(hesitates)
Okay. Will you cut it?

Jung Ki steps over sleeping bodies and crouches beside her. He takes hold of her braid and positions the scissors over it.

JUNG KI
Are you sure?

JONG WAN
Yes. Cut it.

Jung Ki cuts her braid. She tries not to cry.

CUT TO:

INT. - TRAIN - NIGHT

The train suddenly screeches to a halt, waking everyone. The women have all cut their hair, which lays in Auggi’s lap like a pile of snakes. Chul opens the door and looks out.

CHUL
Get up, get up! Everyone, get up!

JUNG KI
What is going on?
CHUL
The train is being hijacked! We’re going to have to run.

EXT. - COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT
Soldiers attack the train, starting at the front. Passengers pour out of the other side and flee into the woods. The Kim family jumps from the car one at a time and runs into the woods.

Auggi drops the pile of hair as she stumbles to the ground.

JUNG KI
everyone, listen! If we get separated, we will meet in the town of Hahgen Byul.

EXT.- WOODS - NIGHT
They run into a dense part of the woods and separate, running frantically. Jong Wan stops running, gasps, and holds her stomach, then continues to walk as quickly as she can. The rest of the family continues running.

JUNG KI
(loud whisper)
Jong Wan?

His eyes search the darkness as he runs. He sees Young Sun and thinks it is Jong Wan.

JUNG KI (CONT’D)
Jong Wan!

YOUNG SUN
Shh!
She points to Sodi, who is sleeping on her back. Jung Ki squints into the darkness again.

EXT. - WOODS - NIGHT

Jong Wan, separated from the family now, stops and sits beneath a tree. She takes deep breaths, rubs her belly, and closes her eyes.

FADE TO:

EXT. - WOODS - MORNING

A bird hops past Jong Wan’s eyes, waking her up. She sits up and blinks in the sunlight, realizing she fell asleep in the night. She looks around to gather her bearings, then stands with a little difficulty.

JONG WAN

Hahgen Byul.

She begins walking. She hears a noise and squints into the woods. Soldiers walk through the brush. She quickly looks around, panicked, and sees a pine tree nearby. She runs to it and climbs it with difficulty.

SOLDIER 3
What are we supposed to do with the people we find, kill them?

SOLDIER 4
If they agree to come back with us and work for the government, they can live.

SOLDIER 3
I just don’t know where they will live.
SOLDIER 4

Who knows. Probably up in the mountains.

The soldiers pass. Jong Wan, sweating, exhales.

FADE TO:

EXT. - WOODS - NIGHT

Jong Wan walks through the woods, looking up and following the stars south. She hears a NOISE, pauses, and crouches low, scared.

A few moments later, a bird hops by. She shakes her head and walks.

FADE TO:

EXT. - WOODS - DAY

Jong Wan WALKS slowly through the woods. She is sweating, her lips are swollen and cracked from dehydration, and her ankles are swollen.

She looks at the sky, debating her strength. She touches her stomach and SITS on the ground.

FADE TO:

EXT. - WOODS - EVENING

Jong Wan is lying on the ground, hopeless and presumably waiting to die.

She hears a noise and slowly turns her head to see what it is. Deer hooves trot by.

She closes her eyes.

FADE TO:
EXT. - WOODS - MORNING

Jong Wan is lying on the ground. A dew drop falls off a tree above her and lands on her cheek. She opens her eyes and stares at it.

Realizing the importance of the water, she struggles to turn onto her side so she can drink dew off of the plants and leaves around her.

She sees deer prints filled with water and crouches over them to drink.

She begins to laugh.

CUT TO:

EXT. - EDGE OF SMALL VILLAGE - EVENING

Jong Wan walks towards a small village. She holds her stomach and breathes deeply. People are milling around, eating from makeshift campfires and pots of broth set up around them.

Jung Ki appears out of the crowd.

JUNG KI

Jong Wan!

They embrace; when they pull away, she is crying. He touches her face.

JUNG KI (CONT’D)

I thought you were gone.
JONG WAN  
(touching her stomach)  
Just a little slow. I had an extra load to carry.

JUNG KI  
I thought maybe you had decided to run home to your family.

JONG WAN  
I am a Kim now. And I carry a new Kim in my belly.

JUNG KI  
The baby is okay?

JONG WAN  
The baby is ready. To come out.

JUNG KI  
To come out! Auggi! Eunhae! Come here!

Family members make their way through the crowd and embrace Jong Wan.

JONG WAN  
(to Eunhae)  
Any word from Te Ki?

Eunhae shakes her head and tries not to cry.

EUNHAE  
No, but he comes to me in my dreams and gives me strength.
JONG WAN
And the child you took?

EUNHAE
I will raise it as if it were my own. No more lives should be lost in this.

JUNG KI
Jong Wan, we must get you inside to have this baby.

The family begins to move as a cluster towards a hut.

SODI
Umma, what will we feed the baby? Where will it sleep?

YOUNG SUN
Sodi, we will take care of it.

AUGGI
(touching Jong Wan’s short hair)
We will take care of each other.

EXT.- VILLAGE - WIDE PANORAMIC SHOT - EVENING
Everyone puts their hands on Jong Wan’s stomach. Camera ZOOMS OUT as they lead her through the crowd to the hut.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
So many lives, so many stories. My grandmother passed them to my mother, who has passed them to me. They tell me of a nation have never known but often visit in my dreams.

(MORE)
NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They tell me of people I have never met but feel compelled to celebrate. Most of all, these stories tell me about the courage, sacrifice, and hope of those who came before me. May they live eternally without tears.

FADE OUT.