

VERVE

PYONGYANG HOME VIDEO

Written by

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Inspired by True Events

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"We have nothing to envy in the world."

-North Korean State Slogan

FADE IN:

INT. R.M.S. TITANIC - LOWER DECK - NIGHT

CRREEEEEEAK! The ill-fated oceanliner MOANS its death rattle as seawater surges through the deserted corridor. The lights FLICKER in a frenzy as life ebbs from the "unsinkable" ship.

A dozen SCREECHING RATS scurry past, frantically trying to outrun the flood, followed by TWO SETS OF FEET--

A boy's TATTERED LEATHER BOOTS and a young woman's priceless PINK HEELS. PULL BACK to reveal...

JACK AND ROSE. Or, at least, something slightly resembling Jack and Rose.

Both of them are portrayed by **YOUNG KOREAN GIRLS**, as though part of some kind of role-playing game.

JACK

Keep following the rats! They'll
lead us to higher ground--

ROSE

Jack! You're going too fast!

"Rose" slows down, dizzy, cradling her head in her hands. She clings to the wall for support. The boat TREMBLES as a fresh cascade of water comes crashing around the corner...

JACK

Keep going, we're gonna make it!

She staggers forward, squinting in pain, as though her head hurts. "Jack" reaches for her hand and pulls her along.

The lights FLICKER again... then finally GO OUT. Darkness swallows the hallway. A watery grave.

ROSE

...I love you, Jack.

"Jack" keeps running, undeterred, gripping her hand tight.

JACK

Don't you do that, don't say your
goodbyes, Rose! Not yet. You're
gonna get out of here. You're--

"Jack" pauses. As though she's suddenly forgotten her lines.

ROSE
 (picking up the slack)
 ...You're gonna go on and you're
 gonna make lots of babies--

JACK
 --And you're gonna watch them grow!

Seconds before the water swallows them, they ascend a staircase towards the upper deck of the ship as we...

SMASH TO:

EXT. THE GOBI DESERT - MONGOLIAN/CHINESE BORDER - DAY (2010)

A dozen bedraggled NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES sprint towards a border crossing in the distance - signified by little more than a dilapidated trailer and a barbed-wire fence.

A caravan of ATVs pursues the panicked refugees, like a pride of lions closing in on a frantic flock of gazelle. The ROAR of their motors rattles the desolate countryside.

Among the refugees are "Jack" (NARI, 14, gritty and determined, caked with mud and sweat) and "Rose" (HANA, 10, a wisp of a girl, delicate like a dragonfly's wing).

Nari supports a weakened Hana against her shoulder as they run, reciting lines from "Titanic" in broken English. Nari YELLS over the GROWL of the approaching motors:

NARI
 Rose, you must do me this honor!
 Promise me you'll survive! Rose--?

Hana lets go of Nari's hand and starts running on her own. She BREAKS CHARACTER to speak to her in their native language (italicized dialogue will be spoken in subtitled Korean):

HANA
I can do it.

Nari nods and picks up the pace, Hana following close behind. Nari dodges a JAGGED STONE sticking out of the sand.

But Hana's not nearly as fast as her sister is. She WEAVES from side to side, as if she's having trouble seeing what's in front of her.

Nari glances over her shoulder. The ATVs are gaining ground.

NARI
Faster, Hana!

Hana makes a break for it, but suddenly TRIPS over the same jagged stone Nari jumped over just a moment ago.

HANA

Nari!

Nari whirls around in horror as Hana staggers to her feet. She falters, agonizing to put weight on her twisted ankle.

VRROOOOOM! The ATVs pick up speed as Nari backtracks and makes a beeline for her sister. But before she can reach her--

Two strong, OLDER WOMEN break free of the pack of refugees and lunge for Nari. They drag her towards the border.

NARI

STOP! THAT'S MY SISTER--!

The rest of the refugees are already waiting for Nari and the women on the other side of the border. The ATVs close in...

The two Korean women pull Nari underneath the barbed wire fence. She YELPS as the serrated edge digs into her flesh.

NARI (CONT'D)

Let me go! HANA!

BLOOD trickles down her shoulders as Nari tries to wriggle back underneath the fence. One of the women grabs her leg.

HANA

Nari!!!

Hana and a frail, elderly KOREAN MAN are the only figures remaining on the other side. The ATVs surround them and SCREECH to a halt, creating a barricade.

A swarm of CHINESE TRAFFICKERS disembark and encircle them like vultures. Hana HOWLS as they apprehend her.

ON NARI - trapped between two worlds. Helplessly watching her sister's abduction...

HANA (CONT'D)

Nari! NARI...!

VRROOOM! As the ATVs REV THEIR ENGINES like a war cry, we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JFK INT'L AIRPORT - RUNWAY - DAY (2015)

SCREEECH! A private jet ZOOMS PAST as it touches down.
Ripples of fuel exhaust frame the smoggy NYC skyline.

INT. JFK INT'L AIRPORT - DAY

A FLOCK OF REPORTERS stalk the International Arrivals corridor. They part like the red sea to reveal--

A caravan of about twenty sharply dressed KOREAN MEN, taking great pains to avoid the clamor of the reporters.

They move together as a pack, tightly surrounding one particular unseen FIGURE in the middle. Shielding him.

As one of the men accidentally looks RIGHT INTO THE LENS of a nearby camera...

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)
...This week marks a historic
milestone for the strained
relations between the UN Security
Council and North Korean leader Kim
Jong-Un, whose cabinet has refused
to recognize human rights inquiries
opened by the council last year.

The man staring into the camera BLANCHES and averts his eyes.

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)
But today...

INT. PARKING GARAGE SECURITY BOOTH - LOS ANGELES - DAY

The news footage plays out of a TINY TELEVISION inside the cramped booth. A HEFTY GUARD absentmindedly watches the broadcast, eyeballs deep in a burrito.

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)
He's come to defend himself.

A TOWN CAR PULLS UP. The guard abandons his lunch.

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)
For the very first time, the
elusive leader of the hermit
kingdom has stepped onto US soil,
accompanied by an unknown number of
trusted advisors. Their visit to
the United Nations signifies a...

The security guard slides the window open to greet...

19-year-old NARI, seated in the back of the town car. Fresh-faced and healthy, with a short, trendy haircut, she's a far cry from the girl we last saw on the Mongolian plain.

Beside her sits PAUL (mid-20s, a crisp polo with the AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL logo stitched onto the front pocket).

PAUL

Hi, we're with the Serena Show--

Paul flashes a BACKSTAGE PASS. The guard lifts the gate as we PULL BACK TO REVEAL--

EXT. EL CAPITAN THEATER - DAY

The entryway of the grand Hollywood movie theater is barricaded by REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS. As the TOWN CAR carting Nari and Paul slowly creeps past...

FLASH! CLICK! FLASH! Nari sinks in her seat and inches away from the window as the car pulls into the UNDERGROUND GARAGE.

INT. SECURITY BOOTH - SECONDS LATER

The hefty guard sits back down and scoops up his burrito. ON HIS TV SCREEN, a teaser for a daytime TALKSHOW plays:

A WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Today, in an all new live Serena Show exclusive--

We PUSH IN ON THE BROADCAST...

Effervescent TV host SERENA SANDERS (30s, black, Oprah-before-she-was-Oprah), graces the screen with put-upon seriousness.

SERENA

What do we talk about, when we talk about North Korea? Their government, cloaked in secrecy? Their customs? Their people's cloistered worldview...?

She crosses the stage and arrives beside a PROJECTOR SCREEN displaying a photo of a polished-looking 19-year-old NARI. Cue the sentimental TWINKLE of piano music.

SERENA (CONT'D)

Or the children who grew up there?
(a dramatic beat)
(MORE)

SERENA (CONT'D)

We featured the story of North Korean refugee Nari Lee on our show last year, after the New Yorker published her captivating essay, "A Trip to the Movies."

FADE TO ANOTHER PHOTO - this one older and grainy - of a YOUNG NARI and 4-year-old HANA. A GIANT BRONZE STATUE of late North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il looms over them.

The girls pose stoically. Unsmiling.

SERENA (CONT'D)

She was desperately searching for her younger sister Hana, so we decided to lend a helping hand. Today, I'm proud to announce that the Serena Show and WBC, in association with Amnesty International, have rescued Hana Lee from North Korea and brought her here, to be with her sister.

THUNDEROUS STANDING OVATION from Serena's audience!

SERENA (CONT'D)

Later on in our broadcast, Nari will be here to share her story and reunite with her sister...

We PULL AWAY from Serena's onscreen image, which is now playing on a MONITOR set up inside...

INT. EL CAPITAN THEATER - LOBBY - DAY

...the theater itself, where production is underway. Paul and Nari step off the elevators and into the show's main hub.

SERENA

(on the monitor)

But first... we'll be checking in with last week's featured guest, Jenny Wilton, the courageous California mom who's taking Coca-Cola to court...

Nari passes by the monitor and stops to watch. Spellbound.

She steps back and takes in the view: A CAMERA CREW hustles past, carrying a tricked-out jib arm.

A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT scurries through the door, struggling to get inside with two huge gift baskets and a vase of roses.

The walls are bedecked with photos and posters from Hollywood's golden age. A glass display case boasts costumes and props from - that's right - TITANIC.

Awestruck, Nari inches closer to the display. There's the Heart of the Ocean necklace. Rose's scandalous drawing...

PAUL (O.S.)
Hi, you must be Cassie--

Nari snaps back to attention as Paul steps up to greet--

CASSIE (late 20s, stress-chewing on her iced coffee straw like a madwoman) and AMIRA (30s, willowy, in a peasant skirt and combat boots) as they approach from down the hall.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Paul Traylor. Nice to meet you--

He sticks out his hand for Cassie, who awkwardly fusses with her coffee and cell phone in an attempt to shake it.

CASSIE
Likewise. This is Amira - she'll be handling wardrobe for the girls.

Amira waves to Nari, who shyly smiles back.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Are you with WBC? Not sure we've--

PAUL
Amnesty International sent me. I'll be tagging along with Nari for the broadcast. Just a PR formality.

A beat as Cassie studies him. Amira clocks the mounting tension and puts an arm around Nari's shoulders.

AMIRA
Wanna take a little tour?

Nari's face brightens as Amira leads her down the hall.

CASSIE
(after a moment)
Didn't realize they'd be carting her around with a minder.

PAUL

You were the ones who decided to stage this whole reunion show same week the hermit prince booked his All-American getaway. Comes with kid gloves.

CASSIE

Yeah, we didn't decide that.

PAUL

Who did?

CASSIE

The network.

PAUL

Either way. Probably worth the security boost, with these guys in the country all week.

CASSIE

Security? All I see is you.

PAUL

Then they're doing their job.

INT. WARDROBE/PROP CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

Nari explores the jungle of floor-to-ceiling clothing racks in the facility's enormous walk-in closet.

Paul trails behind her as Amira and Cassie sift through a different rack nearby.

An enchanted Nari caresses the sleeve of a silky, embroidered Elizabethan ball gown. But her reverie is interrupted by the shrill CHIRP of Cassie's phone--

CASSIE

Production-this-is-Cassie!

(voice drops like a rock)

Yeah, no. Tell Shel to stick a tampon in it. We're on our way.

As she promptly hangs up--

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Ladies, we gotta make tracks.
Hana's en route from the airport so we're officially in countdown mode.
Serena needs to prep questions.

AMIRA
Hey, Nari--?

Nari spins to face Amira, who holds up a demure green dress.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
You think this one would fit her?

Nari stares at the dress as though an alien is wearing it.

NARI
...I don't know. I haven't seen her
since she was 10--

As Amira turns, Nari's gaze rivets to a shelf piled high with EYEGLASSES. She picks up a pair of large black frames.

PAUL
Gonna be a little big on you.

Nari laughs as Paul moves off. Amira loads a few more items into her arms and heads towards the exit to meet Cassie.

AMIRA
C'mon, Nari!

Nari thinks, POCKETS THE GLASSES, and joins them at the door.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

A MOSTLY FEMALE AUDIENCE mills about the gilded theater, which has been transformed into an elaborate TALKSHOW SET.

THREE CREW MEMBERS march out, each carrying a PLUSH WHITE CHAIR. They place them in front of the screen.

We hold on the THREE EMPTY CHAIRS, flanked by dozens of lights on stands and a circle of heavy camera rigs.

INT. NARI'S DRESSING ROOM - SAME

Nari sits in the hot seat as a HAIRDRESSER curls her hair. Amira stands by, pinning the hem of Nari's pants.

The stolen EYEGLASSES in Nari's pocket start sliding out. She gently tucks them back in as the ASSISTANT DIRECTOR pokes his head into the room.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
We ready? Serena's expecting her--

The ladies rush to finish Nari's last looks, then whisk her to the door. The AD guides her away.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As Nari rounds the corner with the AD, navigating the crush of crew members and equipment--

Cassie PACES at the entry to the Green Room, phone pressed to her ear. Face drained of color. She chews her thumbnail.

CASSIE
(on the phone)
Check again. Sometimes they switch
terminals at the last minute--

SHRILL MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
YOU CALL THIS A FUCKING CHOBANI
SELECTION?! Know what I call this?

Cassie nearly drops her phone as SHEL (40s) thunders past the craft services table.

The Serena Show's executive producer, he wears a power tie to match his power trip and has shaved his head to pre-empt that male-pattern baldness.

SHEL
--A goddamn travesty is what I call
this. Christ, is that where we made
cuts? Cassie, this one's on you.

Cassie hangs up and RACES down the hall, trailing Shel.

CASSIE
Shel, wait. We've got a situation.

SHEL
I'll say. Nobody eats fucking plain
Greek yogurt.

He suddenly spots Nari and the AD. Makes a beeline.

SHEL (CONT'D)
Nari Lee! I'm Shel. Such an honor.

Shel snatches an overwhelmed Nari from the AD and continues leading her down the hall. Cassie runs behind them.

CASSIE
Shel, I really need to--

SHEL

Bet you can't wait to see your sister, huh?

NARI

Is she here? Can I see her now?

SHEL

We'll bring her out onstage when it's time for the reunion.

(off Nari's frown)

We owe these folks a show after everything we went through to get her here. Gotta share the moment.

Nari nods, unconvinced, as they make their way down a quieter corridor, far from the hurricane of bickering crew members.

Cassie's still hot on their heels as they arrive at a door marked SERENA SANDERS.

INT. SERENA'S DRESSING ROOM - SAME

A dim, sacred, candle-lit space. Serena lies on a yoga mat, her perfectly styled hair carefully spread around her.

An Adonis-like MEDITATION COACH (30s, M) perches nearby, playing a soothing TIBETAN SINGING BOWL. Ohhhmmmm.

YOGA COACH

As you slip into Shavasana, remember... If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete.

High off his vibes, Serena pulls a deep, cleansing breath... And releases it with a loud, guttural SIGH.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - HALLWAY - SAME

Shel storms Serena's dressing room without knocking. Nari lingers in the doorway, watching...

INT. SERENA'S DRESSING ROOM - SAME

Shel FLICKS ON THE LIGHTS. Serena YELPS and squints angrily.

SERENA

Shel! I'm in fucking Shavasana--

She notices Nari standing in the doorway and rises to her feet. Instantly swaps her scowl for a smile.

SERENA (CONT'D)
Nari! You look great, sweetie!

Cassie emerges behind Nari and flags down Shel.

CASSIE
Shel. We need to talk.

SHEL
So? Speak.

She beckons him closer. He sighs and indulges her.

CASSIE
(whispers)
Sister never met the driver.

Serena's breath catches. Nari looks from Shel to Serena with alarm. Shel glares at Cassie. So much for secrets.

SHEL
Give us a moment?

Cassie hurries off. Shel looks to the meditation coach.

SHEL (CONT'D)
You, too.

As he nods and packs up his singing bowl and yoga mat:

NARI
What happened? Is Hana all right?

SHEL
Driver probably just went to the
wrong terminal. That, plus traffic--

SERENA
I was told she was here, Shel--

A supremely uneasy beat passes as Shel waits for Serena's coach to clear the room. As soon as he shuts the door--

SHEL
Let's let me do the worrying, okay?
You two just gotta stall for a bit.
Prep a little back-up banter.

SERENA
There's no time to "prep" anything!

SHEL

What do you propose we do, Serena?
 Throw water balloons at the
 network's beehive and make them air
 a Law and Order re-run while we
 kill time? We're already on death
 row here - I can't ask for any
 favors. We stay on schedule.
 (to both of them)
 I'm sure you two can find plenty to
 chat about.

Serena opens her mouth to retort, but Shel's already gone.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Two minutes, folks!

Serena draws a deep breath and collects herself. Dons her
 game-face. She opens the door and steps into the hall.

But Nari is frozen to the spot. Serena spins to face her.

SERENA

(bright like neon)
 Hey, it's all right, sweetie. I'll
 bet she's just lost at the airport,
 y'know? It happens. I promise--
 (mispronounces her name)
 Hana's gonna be here.

NARI

It's... *Hah-na*--

SERENA

Shit. Of course. Sorry, babe. My
 brain is *en fuego*--

As the AD appears and starts guiding them away--

PAUL (O.S.)

Nari! Nari, I need to talk to--

Paul intercepts the trio, but the AD pushes past him.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

You two can chat during commercial.

NARI

Paul, Hana's not here.

A look between them. Paul nods. He already knows.

NARI (CONT'D)

Is she all right? Is she--?

Without slowing down, the AD snubs Paul and all but shoves Nari and Serena through a side-door, leading them to...

INT. MOVIE THEATER - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Serena fluffs her hair, smiles big, and strides out onstage to a wave of HEARTFELT APPLAUSE. The AD turns to Nari.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
She'll call you out. Be ready.

Nari nods distantly. A beat as she pulls the EYEGLASSES out of her pocket. As she stares at them, stricken--

SERENA
...Nari Lee, everyone!

INT. SERENA SHOW SET - CONTINUOUS

The cameras sweep across the audience and arrive upon Nari as she nervously shuffles onstage and sits down next to Serena. She shoves the glasses back into her pocket.

The chair beside Nari is noticeably empty. She fixates on it as Serena breathlessly addresses her (and the cameras).

SERENA
Nari! Such a joy to have you on our show on this very special day. Now, do you happen to know why we've asked you and your sister to meet us at a movie theater today?

NARI
Because we're... watching a movie?

SERENA
Yes ma'am! And can you guess what movie we're going to show here for the two of you, after your reunion?
(beat)
Here's a hint. It's your favorite.

NARI
(a small voice)
Titanic...?

SERENA
TITAAAAANIC!!!

The audience LAUGHS and cheers. Nari shrinks in her seat.

OVER BY THE MONITOR: Shel watches the performance. Chewing his knuckle. Seconds later, Paul comes up behind him. Stands just close enough to make Shel FLINCH. He turns.

SHEL

'Scuse me. Can I help you?

PAUL

Assuming you've heard one of your guests is MIA?

SHEL

Nothing we can't handle.

PAUL

You're equipped to handle a potential security threat?

SHEL

...Sorry, who the fuck are you?

BACK ONSTAGE: Serena continues introducing Nari to the crowd.

SERENA

Now, anyone who's read your essay knows you're a pretty serious movie buff. Tell us - how is it that you and your sister were able to see these films in the first place, with so many tight restrictions on foreign media in North Korea? Who first showed "Titanic" to you?

A faraway look washes over Nari's face. She gazes out at the audience for the first time. They stare back, expectantly.

She pulls a steady breath and begins, timidly at first...

NARI

My father traded a dozen rice cakes for three videotapes from the black market in 1999. He kept them at the bottom of a sack of corn, at the back of the pantry...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LEE HOUSEHOLD - PYONGYANG, NORTH KOREA - NIGHT

A MAN and a WOMAN each pull a curtain across either side of a picture window. They meet in the middle as darkness descends.

NARI (V.O.)

At night, my parents would close the curtains and turn off all the lights, and we'd watch them. Every day. Till we knew every word.

INT. LEE HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (2001)

5-YEAR-OLD NARI stands, mesmerized, in front of a 24-inch tube television in an otherwise pitch black living room.

A scene from Disney's ALADDIN plays onscreen. A flock of belly dancers leads Prince Ali's grand parade into Agrabah.

Nari pulls her shirt up and tucks it into her collar, exposing her midriff. She shimmies to the music.

Nari's mother, SUN-MI (30s) sails into the room, holding a sleeping BABY in her arms.

Her thin lips and angular face take a moment to make sense, giving her the illusion of an eternal scowl despite warm, inquisitive eyes.

She makes her way to the TV and clocks Nari's scandalous dance. She SMACKS her upside the head. Yanks her shirt down.

INT. LEE HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (2004)

A now 8-YEAR-OLD NARI watches the screen intently as Bruce Willis as John McClane in DIE HARD has his most famous exchange with Alan Rickman's Hans Gruber.

Nari, naturally, wears one of her father's white undershirts and murmurs the English lines along with the actors.

8-YEAR-OLD NARI

"...Do you really think you have a chance against us, Mr. Cowboy?"

Before she says the next line, Nari turns to face her father, MIN-JAE (30s, a rapturous grin that exposes his numerous missing teeth) and 4-YEAR-OLD HANA. A beat, then:

NARI AND MIN-JAE

Yippee-ki-yay, motherfucker.

The girls erupt into peals of laughter as Nari climbs up onto the couch beside her sister.

INT. LEE HOUSEHOLD - HALLWAY - NIGHT (2007)

At the top of a small staircase, 7-YEAR-OLD HANA lies sprawled out on a flattened cardboard box.

11-YEAR-OLD NARI sits a few stairs below her, clutching her hand. They gaze into each other's eyes.

TITANIC plays behind them, on the TV in the living room.

7-YEAR-OLD HANA
...I'll never let go, Jack.

Nari rolls her eyes back, sputters, and "dies". Hana lets go of her hand as Nari flops down the stairs like a dead fish.

ON NARI at the bottom of the stairs, still in character, staring up into nothingness...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE OPEN OCEAN - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE

Nari, dressed in her "Jack" outfit, sinks to the bottom of the sea, frozen arms outstretched. As she drifts away...

NARI (V.O.)
I used to have this dream, where
I'd shrink down to the size of a
bean, crawl inside the VCR, and
wait in the dark for the movie to
start. I'd wait inside, all day...

INT. LEE HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - NIGHT (2009)

An exhausted, thin Min-Jae divides a rice cake and wedge of tofu into three equal pieces. He hands one to Nari, one to Hana, and the last to Sun-Mi. He goes without.

NARI (V.O.)
...It was better than whatever was
on the outside.

Min-Jae rises from the table and pulls a SACK OF CORN from the back of the pantry.

NARI (V.O.)
By the time I was thirteen, my
parents had had enough. So we
started a business.

He opens the bag to reveal a stack of BOOTLEG DVDs: *Coffee Prince* - A South Korean Soap Opera. *Friends* - The Complete Series. *Star Wars* - Every installment, including prequels.

He hoists the sack onto his back, kisses his wife and daughters, and heads out the door as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LEE HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - DAY (2010)

The kitchen has received a few modest upgrades over the past year: A microwave. A faucet that doesn't leak. New curtains.

The sack of corn housing the family's contraband sits on the kitchen countertop. Sun-Mi takes inventory. As she pulls thumb drives and DVDs from the sack...

Nari (now 14) sails past, surveying their latest haul.

NARI

Mom? Are we supposed to get "A Frozen Flower" on DVD anytime soon?

SUN-MI

*I think it's in here somewhere.
(then)
But you probably wouldn't like it.*

NARI

Oh, I mean... it's not for me--

SUN-MI

Oh? Who's it for?

Before Nari can reply, Min-Jae rounds the corner, carefully sorting a handful of coins. He dumps a few into Nari's palm.

MIN-JAE

*Should be enough for decent seats.
(then)
Where's your sister? We ought to get going. I need to swing by the market before the movie.*

SUN-MI

Nari, who's the DVD for?

Min-Jae casts his wife a questioning look.

NARI

(stammers)

Well, Sooni said she saved up some money and asked me if I could--

SUN-MI

Sooni asked you what? Nari--

NARI

No, no... I didn't... she doesn't know we sell them. I wouldn't tell her that. She just knows I get them sometimes. Lots of people get them.

(off their silence)

Sooni's always watching stuff. She has all the Harry Potter movies.

SUN-MI

Tell her you don't know where to buy it. You have nothing to sell. Understood?

(then)

"A Frozen Flower" isn't appropriate for a 14-year-old anyway.

Nari looks to her father, hoping for some Good Cop/Bad Cop.

MIN-JAE

Don't argue with your mother.

As Sun-Mi pulls another stack of DVDs from the bag, Hana (now 10) BOUNDS into the kitchen. Rushes over to the window.

HANA

Mom, mom! Did it hatch?!

She grabs a CUP off the window sill, where a TINY BIRD'S EGG sits nestled between leaves and twigs.

NARI

It's not gonna hatch, it's not warm enough. You should've just left it.

As Hana stubbornly holds the egg up to the light--

MIN-JAE

Hana, put it back by the window so it gets some sun. We need to leave.

HANA

No, no, we can't go yet! Not till we clean the pictures--

Hana puts the egg back and pivots towards the wall above the hearth, where TWO PORTRAITS hang--

KIM IL-SUNG, father of North Korea, smiling benevolently beside his son and heir, KIM JONG-IL, the current godhead.

A SMALL BOX sits directly below the portraits, containing a bottle of polishing fluid. Hana rushes over in a panic.

SUN-MI

I'll do it after you leave.

HANA

I want to do it! You'll forget, you always forget!

MIN-JAE

Hana, nobody's going to come. We can clean them later. Come on--

HANA

You don't know that! Nobody knows when they come. Not even you.

Hana furiously spritzes the frames, then freezes.

HANA (CONT'D)

Mom! Where's the cloth?

Sun-Mi sighs and moves from her post. As she digs into a drawer to pull out a clean white rag--

Nari quickly scans the inventory on the countertop. A South Korean DVD with a steamy young couple on the cover, poised to kiss, stares up at her - "A Frozen Flower."

Nari steals a glance at her parents and Hana. All backs are turned. She shoves the DVD underneath her shirt.

As Hana finishes wiping down the portraits, Nari grabs her backpack off a hook on the wall. Stuffs the DVD inside.

NARI

Well, I'm going.

HANA

Okay, okay, I'm done! Wait for me!

Hana throws the cleaning supplies back into the box and scurries towards the door, but stops herself.

She performs the requisite BOW before the two portraits, then continues on her way.

An exasperated look between their parents. Sun-Mi plucks a THUMB DRIVE from their inventory and hands it to Min-Jae.

SUN-MI
Chang-Woo's order.

He slips the thumb drive into his pocket and kisses her.

SUN-MI (CONT'D)
Play safe.

EXT. STREETS OF PYONGYANG - DAY

The polished capitol "show city" is in full bloom on this crisp spring morning. Gardens of pristine red tulips in the plaza flank huge, regal statues of the two Eternal Leaders.

But half the gardeners tending to the greenery are barefoot, shivering in the chilly breeze. A POLICE CORPS marches past - painfully thin, wearing uniforms that comically hang from their skeletal frames.

Nari, Hana, and Min-Jae make their way down a side street, where the neatly paved sidewalk gives way to a MUDDY PATHWAY leading to an enormous CONCRETE WAREHOUSE.

INT. THE JANGMADANG - CONTINUOUS

The three of them enter the city's giant indoor BLACK MARKET.

Vendors sell fruit, vegetables, grains, and other household items from blankets on the ground. This is the real heartbeat of the city - a one-stop-shop for groceries and gossip.

Min-Jae leads the girls over to a JIN, a clothing vendor (50s, M) surrounded by stacks of shoes and shirts.

JIN
Good morning, Min-Jae.

MIN-JAE
Morning. Any new shipments?

JIN
Just last night. Come take a look!

He attempts English as he lifts various items:

JIN (CONT'D)
Adidas! Coach!

He then WHISPERS as he lifts a plastic bag out from underneath a stack of shirts:

JIN (CONT'D)
*And these. Fully loaded. You like
 Led Zeppelin? Eminem?*

The plastic bag is full of IPODS. He shakes it excitedly.

MIN-JAE
*Very nice! May take you up on that.
 (to the girls)
 I'll be back in a minute. Pick
 something out. You both had high
 marks this quarter.*

The girls beam as their father moves off, towards a YOUNG MAN ON ROLLERBLADES waiting for him in a darkened doorway.

Nari starts digging through a pile of sweaters, while Hana stares nervously at her father. Nari PINCHES HER.

HANA
OW!

NARI
*C'mon, don't stare. What do you
 think of this one?*

She holds up a PINK CASHMERE SWEATER. Hana makes a face.

HANA
People will think we've got money.

NARI
*So? Lots of people in Pyongyang
 have money.*

HANA
*I mean they'll wonder how we got
 money. We weren't rich before--*

NARI
Nobody's going to notice.

As Nari pulls the sweater on over her shirt:

NARI (CONT'D)
*Besides, Song's coming today. Maybe
 I'll look nice for a change.*

HANA
You just said nobody would notice.

As Nari glowers at her sister...

A GIRL (O.S.)

Nari! Hi!

Nari spins to face her friend SOONI (14), coming from the opposite direction. Nari WAVES excitedly.

NARI

Soonie! Guess what?

Nari unzips her backpack. Hana GASPS when she sees the DVD poking out. She YANKS Nari's arm and pulls her back.

HANA

Nari, what are you doing?!

Nari elbows Hana out of the way and runs up to Soonie.

NARI

I got something for you!

But before Nari can reveal the contents of her backpack, Soonie frantically starts SHAKING HER HEAD as--

Her sallow, toothless GRANDMOTHER rounds the corner, hobbling several paces behind her.

Nari ZIPS UP HER BACKPACK. Swallows hard.

SOONI

So uh... coming to the movie?

NARI

Yeah--

SOONI

Want to walk with us?

NARI

We're just... we're waiting for my--

Soonie and her grandmother peer over at Min-Jae, making his sale in the dimly lit doorway... then back at Nari. A beat.

GRANDMOTHER

That's a very nice sweater.

NARI

Oh! Thank you.

OVER BY THE DOORWAY:

Min-Jae whispers to his customer, holding the thumb drive.

MIN-JAE

...Dr. No, From Russia With Love--

MAN ON ROLLERBLADES

Yes, great--

MIN-JAE

All the way up to Daniel Craig.

MAN ON ROLLERBLADES

How is he?

MIN-JAE

He carries the torch.

The man on rollerblades hands Min-Jae an envelope of cash in exchange for the thumb drive.

ALONG THE MAIN DRAG:

Soonie's grandmother smiles a toothless grin at Nari and Hana.

GRANDMOTHER

We'll see you at the theater.

A beat, and they're gone. Hana exhales dramatically as Min-Jae joins them seconds later. Nari shows him the sweater.

NARI

How about this one?

He checks the price tag. Frowns. Off Nari's pleading look--

MIN-JAE

Fine. Hana, what about you?

Hana scans her options dispassionately, not quite a fashionista at her age. As she grabs for a BRACELET--

ANGRY SHOPKEEPER (O.S.)

HEY! GIVE THAT BACK! LITTLE SHITS--

Min-Jae glances over at a nearby FRUIT VENDOR, where a rag-tag group of about half a dozen filthy, skinny CHILDREN bolt past, arms laden with (what are probably) stolen goods.

They are *kotjebi* - beggar kids. Their leader, YEJUN (13, sunken eyes and long, unkempt hair) guides them away.

MIN-JAE

Yejun.

The boy stops in his tracks and meets Min-Jae's eye.

MIN-JAE (CONT'D)
Watch yourself.

YEJUN
What's it to you?

Yejun stalks off, followed by his cronies. Hana SHUDDERS as he brushes her shoulder. She cowers behind her sister.

Min-Jae sighs and makes his way over to the fruit vendor with a few coins. He presses them into the shopkeeper's palm.

ANGRY SHOPKEEPER
*Every damn day I swear ten more of
 them drop out of the sky--*

MIN-JAE
That about cover it?

ANGRY SHOPKEEPER
 (a sour beat)
More or less.

A moment as Hana and Nari observe Yejun and the *kotjebi* as they blend into the crowd, picking through trash bins.

Yejun crouches down to pluck a tiny CIGARETTE BUTT off the ground. He lights it with a match.

Hana shivers, eyes fixed on the red cherry of Yejun's cigarette, as Min-Jae approaches.

HANA
I don't like him.

MIN-JAE
*Give him lunch and a haircut and he
 could be one of your schoolmates.
 (re: their gifts)
 So? What did we decide?*

INT. PROPAGANDA MOVIE THEATER - DAY

A stunning female MILITARY HEROINE with ruby red lips graces the screen, climbing up a mountain in a blinding (blatantly staged) blizzard. She SHRIEKS to the heavens:

MILITARY HEROINE
*Dear leader, eternal in your
 benevolence! May apples cascade
 down the hillside into the bellies
 of your ever-grateful children!*

In the audience, Nari flinches, just barely enduring the cringe-worthy dialogue. She wears her new pink sweater.

She and Hana exchange a secret glance: *We've seen better.* Hana shovels rock hard, bland-looking cookies into her mouth.

Bored, Nari peers around the theater. All the other audience members are rapt with attention. Her eyes rivet to--

SONG (14), with perfect, disciplined posture, in a tailored blazer. He sits on the edge of his seat, entranced by the film. Nari's dreamy gaze rests on him a moment too long.

Hana looks over at Nari and PINCHES HER ARM. Nari pinches her right back and swipes the last cookie from the bag.

EXT. STREETS OF PYONGYANG - RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DUSK

Song and Nari walk home from the movies together. Hana shuffles along behind them, clutching her forehead, as though she has a headache.

Nari lets her fingers dangle barely an inch from Song's hand. He does the same. Their pinkies TOUCH. After a beat:

SONG

Did you enjoy the film?

NARI

Oh, yes. Definitely.

SONG

What was your favorite part?

NARI

Hmm... I guess the snowstorm?

HANA

Nari--

NARI

What?

HANA

I don't feel good. I have a headache again.

NARI

Because you always make us sit so close to the screen.

HANA

Can we just go home?

NARI
We are going home.

HANA
This is the long way!

SONG
 (to Nari)
*Go ahead home. I'll see you at
 school tomorrow.*

NARI
 (glum)
All right.

An awkward beat passes as they shyly wave goodbye. Song crosses the street and turns down the next block.

As Nari shoves past Hana with a scowl:

NARI (CONT'D)
I swear you do this on purpose.

Nari storms down the street, Hana trailing behind, massaging her temples. She is looking rather green.

EXT. A DIFFERENT STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Nari purposefully walks several paces ahead of Hana, who struggles to keep up as they pass by the JANGMADANG...

HANA
Nari! Come on! It's not my fault--

Nari ignores her, keeping up her brisk pace. Until...

BANG! She stops dead in her tracks. BANG BANG!

HANA (CONT'D)
...Nari?

NARI
Get down--

She pushes Hana to the concrete, behind a nearby apartment's trash can. They hold their breath.

A moment later... a furious, pleading SCREAM. A WOMAN'S VOICE. Nari watches in horror as TWO POLICE OFFICERS drag a limp, lifeless MAN (40s) from the *jangmadang's* entryway.

Nari's breath catches as she gets a closer look at him - it's JIN, the clothing vendor/secret iPod peddler.

Jin's misty-eyed WIFE trails behind, being cuffed by a third officer. The girls observe the grim procession as they turn at the intersection and disappear from view.

A fresh streak of BLOOD mars the pavement.

A stricken Nari rises to her feet and helps her sister up.

NARI (CONT'D)
Let's get inside.

The girls make a break for it.

INT. LEE HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The family gathers around the dinner table. Quiet tension blankets the room. CLUNK of chopsticks against bowls.

MIN-JAE
The Parks haven't been back to the border since last year. Jin had a supplier. Whoever reported them must be local. Someone nearby.

SUN-MI
We need to shut down. At least till we figure out who's got eyes where.

Min-Jae nods, if not a little reluctantly.

SUN-MI (CONT'D)
(after a moment)
At least they didn't have children.

A somber beat passes among the family. Silently chewing.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATER - SERENA SHOW SET - DAY (2015)

The audience rises from their seats. Commercial break is underway. A SET DECORATOR comes up behind Nari and Serena and picks up the THIRD WHITE CHAIR - the one intended for Hana.

Serena turns her back to Nari, whispering to one of her WRITERS, looking over notes. Nari fidgets, unsettled.

She reaches for a bottle of water beside her chair that has already been opened... before a PA SWOOPS IN and replaces the nearly-full bottle with a fresh one.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Anything else I can get you?

She shakes her head and stares at the new bottle. Doesn't open it. She puts it back on the floor.

BEHIND THE MONITOR, Paul watches the sudden set change with a frown as Shel NUDGES past, eyes glued to his phone.

Paul steals another anxious glance at Nari before following him backstage...

INT. MOVIE THEATER - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Paul jogs to catch up with Shel's brisk pace:

PAUL
What's the plan here, exactly?
You're just gonna keep telling
these folks that her sister's about
to appear out of thin air?

Shel glances up from his phone, but only briefly.

SHEL
Why exactly are you on my set?

PAUL
Pre-emptive damage control. Let's
not pretend this thing wasn't a
mess from the very beginning.

SHEL
Said damage is being controlled.

As Shel pivots away from him--

PAUL
My team helped organize the
extraction. I saw the photos.

Shel freezes in his tracks. Sucks in air.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Even if there's no real threat and
this girl shows up in the nick of
time, you and I both know that she
might not be--

Shel goes pale and DRAGS HIM further down the hall, glancing over his shoulder to make sure nobody else has heard him.

SHEL
Christ, what is wrong with you?!
(beat)
Who else knows about this?

PAUL
She doesn't know. If that's what
you're asking.
(off his silence)
And we can keep it that way as long
as you play by our rules.

SHEL
(beat)
Who exactly do you work for again?

PAUL
Amnesty International.

SHEL
(studies him)
Uh huh...

PAUL
We were willing to bite the bullet
when you went and staged this
reunion without 100% certainty. But
now both of these girls could be in
serious danger. I need your word
that their well-being remains your
top priority.

SHEL
Let's not jump to conclusions here.
Kid's lost at the airport, not in
the clutches of some Bond villain--

PAUL
You're putting two fugitives on TV
who are wanted for treason - that's
treason, the kind you get sentenced
to death for - the same week the
folks who put a target on their
backs are on American soil. And now
one of them is missing. I need to
make sure these girls aren't
getting paraded to the gallows for
the sake of a ratings boost.

SHEL
And I need to fill the next 42
minutes with whatever shit I can
scrape off the bottom of my shoe.
She stays onstage.
(MORE)

SHEL (CONT'D)

I've got a live studio audience and a network that can't wait to yank us off life support. Anyone who so much as breathes the word "treason" gets locked in the fucking broom closet.

(beat)

And don't you be telling me what not to put on TV.

Shel stalks off, past a BACKSTAGE MONITOR that starts blasting the upbeat SERENA SHOW THEME. The audience APPLAUDS. Paul pauses to watch as the interview picks back up...

SERENA

Welcome back. I'm here with Nari Lee, who's come to share with us the remarkable true story of her escape from North Korea...

Paul stops to watch. Serena's looking right into the camera, but Nari's gaze is distant. Distracted. Serena's voice may as well be a thousand miles away...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LEE HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - NIGHT (2010)

The apartment is dark and still - everyone's in bed... except for Nari, who tiptoes towards the pantry. "A Frozen Flower" DVD tucked underneath her arm.

CREEEEEAK! She slowly opens up the pantry, trying to be as quiet as possible, and pulls out the sack of corn.

She buries the DVD into the sack. As deep as it will go.

INT. LEE HOUSEHOLD - NARI AND HANA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Hana tosses and turns on her sleeping mat as Nari sits on her own, writing in a journal.

The LAMP beside her FLICKERS. She glances up with a sigh and grabs a candle from her shelf before...

ZHHMMM. All the power goes out.

The lights in the apartment across the street darken as well; the bustling showpiece city has suddenly become a ghost town.

Nari strikes a match in the dark and lights the candle. Hana GRUMBLES and tosses onto her side.

NARI

What.

HANA

Still have a headache.

NARI

Sorry.

She continues writing in the candlelight. Hana sits up.

HANA

What're you writing?

NARI

None of your business.

HANA

A love letter to Song?

Nari scoffs, not looking up from the page.

HANA (CONT'D)

*I don't see what the big deal is.
He's got that mole. And he's
worker's party, so you can't marry
him or anything. He's like Rose. He
has to marry someone rich, like
Cal. Except a girl.*

(a moment, then)

*What do you think they'll do to
Mrs. Park? If Mr. Park is dead?*

NARI

I'm not sure.

HANA

Will she go to jail?

NARI

I don't know, Hana. Go to sleep.

HANA

...I can't.

NARI

(beat)

Do Aladdin.

HANA

You start it.

(nothing from her)

Please?

Without even looking up from her notebook, Nari begins (as she's probably done a hundred times):

NARI

"Ahhh, salaam and good evening to you worthy friend. Please, please come closer... OOF--"

HANA

"Too close, a little too close! There. Welcome to Agrabah--"

Hana comes alive. Her Robin Williams impression is spot-on.

HANA (CONT'D)

--City of mystery. Of enchantment. And-the-finest-merchandise-this-side-of-the-river-Jordan-on-sale-today-come-on-down!"

Hana settles back into bed and shuts her eyes. She murmurs the monologue to herself, her version of counting sheep:

HANA (CONT'D)

"Look at this. Yes! Combination hookah and coffee maker. Also makes julienne fries. Will not break! Will not -- IT BROKE."

We PULL BACK through the girls' dimly lit window, out across the pitch black city streets as Hana rambles on...

INT. LEE HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

The girls eat their breakfast, wearing starched school uniforms - white shirts, black skirts, and red neckties.

Sun-Mi and Min-Jae pore over a list of names on a CLIPBOARD.

SUN-MI

...All of them have open orders--

MIN-JAE

They can wait. We'll be fine.

Hana gets up from the table and takes the bird's egg off the windowsill. She examines it with a frown.

HANA

*Do you think I should put it back?
So it can hatch in the wild?*

SUN-MI
Hana, finish your breakfast.

She sits back down at the table, rolling the egg in her palm.

NARI
It's dead, you know.

HANA
No it isn't--

Before Nari can retort... there's a KNOCK at the door. Sun-Mi and Min-Jae freeze. She shoves the clipboard into a drawer as Min-Jae inches towards the window.

He slowly pulls back the edge of the curtain to reveal--

SIX POLICE OFFICERS on the stoop - thin and malnourished, but no less intimidating. He blanches. Backs away.

MIN-JAE
Sun-Mi, take the girls out back.

SUN-MI
But--

MIN-JAE
Just go. Now.

Pale as a ghost, Sun-Mi beckons for the girls, who nervously rise from the table. Hana puts her egg back in the cup.

Another KNOCK, louder this time. Nari swallows hard.

NARI
...Dad?

MIN-JAE
I'll be right there.

A look between them before Sun-Mi whisks her daughters out of the kitchen, down the hall, and out a BACK DOOR into...

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sun-Mi glances around in a panic, looking for a hiding place. She spots the apartment's large DUMPSTER against the wall.

SUN-MI
In here--

HANA
Mom--

SUN-MI
Come on. I'll lift you up.

INT. LEE HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - SAME

A louder, more urgent SERIES OF KNOCKS. Min-Jae sucks in a deep breath, then lunges for the door.

MIN-JAE
Good morning, officers. How may I--

No time for formalities. The officers STORM INSIDE the apartment and SLAM Min-Jae down headfirst against the kitchen table. He groans as blood gushes from his nose.

As they cuff him, Hana's egg tumbles out of its cup, off the table, and CRACKS TO PIECES on the floor.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - SAME

Nari, Sun-Mi, and Hana peek out of the dumpster's lid, watching the chaos unfold inside their home from the window.

Out of the corner of her eye, Nari spots SOONI'S GRANDMOTHER, standing outside their apartment. She observes the commotion with a detached, stoic gaze.

Realization and dread washes over Nari's face. *She knew.*

As Min-Jae HOLLERS in agony and GLASS SHATTERS inside the apartment, Sun-Mi quietly lowers the dumpster's lid.

INT. LEE HOUSEHOLD - DAY - SOME TIME LATER

Nari, Hana, and Sun-Mi creep back into the ransacked apartment. Nari glances at the telltale BLOOD STAIN on the (now collapsed) kitchen table. She averts her gaze.

All is silent and still, aside from the CRUNCH of their feet against the broken glass on the floor.

HANA
(through tears)
...Mommy?

Sun-Mi draws a steady breath. Swallows her anguish.

SUN-MI
Nari, get rid of everything.

A beat before Nari complies. She opens the cupboard and pulls out their SACK OF CORN.

From on top of the cupboard, Sun-Mi produces a HAMMER.

Hana just stands there, dumbfounded. Sniffling in a daze.

Nari RIPS OPEN the burlap sack and digs thumb drives and DVDs from inside of it. She then grabs a large CAULDRON from underneath the sink and sets it on the stove.

Sun-Mi, armed with the hammer, makes her way to the hearth, where the TWO PORTRAITS of the great leaders hang crookedly.

The girls watch, confused, as she removes the portraits to reveal a DISCOLORED PATCH OF DRYWALL. She spins to face them.

SUN-MI (CONT'D)

Nari. Faster.

Nari snaps back to attention and starts filling the cauldron with thumb drives and DVDs.

Sun-Mi ATTACKS THE WALL with her hammer. CRUNCH! CRUNCH!

As Nari dumps the "Frozen Flower" DVD into the pot--

HANA

You never should've taken it.

NARI

That's got nothing to do with this.

HANA

Dad had a whole system and you messed it up!

NARI

Why don't you shut up and help me instead of blaming me?!

CRUNCH! CRUNCH! Sun-Mi tears a gaping HOLE in the wall.

With a quivering lip, Hana shuffles over to the stove, watching Nari melt down the family's merchandise.

Nari reaches into the sack and grabs FOUR VIDEOTAPES from the very bottom: Aladdin. Die Hard. And Titanic (Parts I & II).

Hana gasps and CLAMORS FOR THE TAPES.

HANA

Wait! Save those! Stop!

NARI

I'm sorry.

HANA

Stop!!!

Tears spill down Hana's cheeks as their beloved tapes melt down to a thick black OOZE in the pot.

On the other side of the room, Sun-Mi reaches into the hollow in the wall and pulls out a huge STACK OF CASH.

A beat passes among them before she finally speaks.

SUN-MI

*Your father and I... we always had
a plan. He was the face of the
business. That way...*

She reaches back into the wall and pulls out a SECOND STACK OF CASH. The girls look on, gobsmacked.

SUN-MI (CONT'D)

*...If anyone caught on, one of us
might stand a chance. One of us
could protect you.*

HANA

*Where did they take him? Where they
took Mrs. Park?*

Nobody answers her. She swallows hard.

HANA (CONT'D)

*Are they going to take us, too?
(in a sudden panic)
We have to go find him! Mom--!*

Hana breaks down, sobbing in a fit. Sun-Mi kneels to Hana's level and looks her in the eye. Nari hovers behind her.

SUN-MI

I'm sorry, sweetheart--

As she dries Hana's eyes with her sleeve:

HANA

*Someone has to do something! We
can't just stay here--*

SUN-MI

*You're right, Hana. We can't stay.
(after a moment)
We're going to China.*

Off the girls' astonished reactions...

INT. MOVIE THEATER - SERENA SHOW SET - DAY (2015)

A hundred sets of eyes fixate on Nari, mesmerized, as she pauses for a moment. Anxiously chewing her lip.

SERENA

How did your mother know to escape through China? Had she been planning this?

NARI

I think she decided to do it right then. But everybody knows to escape through China. There are some places along the border where you can see South Korea, but it's too dangerous to cross the DMZ. Nobody does it. China's the only way out.

SERENA

Then what?

NARI

Some people stay. But that's hard if you don't speak the language. If you have money, you can pay a broker to take you to Mongolia, where they'll send you to South Korea once they see you're illegal. If you have a lot of money, you can get on a plane with a fake passport. They pierce your ears and put makeup on you.

SERENA

What if you don't have any money?

NARI

(beat)

That's how everyone knows about China. Most people get sent back.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - BACKSTAGE - SAME

Paul huddles in a corner, whispering into his phone.

PAUL

Of course. I appreciate the update.
(listens, then)
As soon as I possibly can--

Off his anxious stare as he watches Serena Show CREW MEMBERS obliviously hustle past--

INT. SERENA SHOW SET - SAME

Serena reads from her scrolling teleprompter.

SERENA

When we come back - we'll learn how
this courageous family of film
aficionados narrowly escaped
capture and fled from their home in
North Korea. Stay with us, folks.

APPLAUSE as the studio camera SWEEPS AWAY. Serena turns to Nari, gesticulating conversation before the camera CUTS.

SERENA (CONT'D)

Back in a jiff, miss. Great job so
far. So engaging, oh my God.

NARI

Thanks--

But Serena's already flounced away. As she sails past Cassie--

SERENA

Get me Shel. Now.

As Cassie nods and digs out her walkie...

INT. MOVIE THEATER - MAKESHIFT CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Shel rounds the corner to the entry of the PROJECTION BOOTH, where a plethora of multi-cam monitors are up and running.

SHEL

(to a nearby technician)
Go easy on Camera 3 next act. Girl
keeps jiggling her damn foot--

PAUL

Shel?

Shel whirls around to find Paul lingering in the doorway.

SHEL

You again.
(then)
Assuming kid #2 is still MIA?

Paul exhales and leads Shel out into...

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Paul inches closer and lowers his voice.

PAUL

It gets better. Turns out four of those goons Kim's been traveling with were dispatched to California last night on a private jet. Current location's unknown.

SHEL

(beat)

Y'know, I volunteered for Amnesty International when I was in high school. Got a sweatshirt and everything. Pretty sure an NGO doesn't get regular security updates from the State Department.

PAUL

Guess a lot's changed since you were in high school.

CASSIE (O.S.)

(over Shel's walkie)

Anyone got eyes on Shel?

Shel yanks the receiver off his belt. Turns down the volume.

SHEL

This is some pretty serious shit, you know. What you're suggesting.

PAUL

Seems you've finally smelled what we're stepping in.

SHEL

Well, don't let anybody else catch a whiff. At least not just yet. I just got our preliminary numbers. As long as the audience still thinks she's gonna see her sister when all's said and done, we're golden. Just gotta keep things quiet a little while longer.

Paul's jaw drops. Stares at Shel like he's got six heads. At that moment, Cassie approaches from the other direction, but freezes before reaching Shel. She listens--

PAUL

Both of these girls are at risk.
State Department recommends putting
Nari into protective custody till
the threat's been contained. You're
gonna have to cut the broadcast.

Paul stares him down, expecting him to jump out of his skin.
But he remains collected.

An eternal beat passes as Shel takes a long, thoughtful sip
from his venti Starbucks cup. Finally:

SHEL

Understood. Wait right here.

Paul obliges as Shel skitters down the hall. Neither of them
notice Cassie still lingering there...

INT. SERENA'S DRESSING ROOM - SAME

Serena shuffles in, cracking her stiff neck... But FREEZES in
the doorway when something across the room catches her eye--

THE REVERSE REVEALS: a BASKET OF FLOWERS on her dressing
table. Something about the gift gives her CHILLS.

SERENA

SHEL!!!

INT. MOVIE THEATER - SERENA SHOW SET - SAME

A makeup artist powders Nari's nose as Nari fidgets and
glances around the stage... scanning the faces. A young ASIAN
GIRL in the audience catches her eye. But only briefly.

MAKEUP ARTIST

Hold still, sweetie.

NARI

Sorry. Do you know if anyone's
heard anything about my--?

But the makeup artist silences her, applying lip gloss.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - HALLWAY - SAME

Apprehensive, Cassie approaches Paul.

CASSIE

Is everything okay? Are we safe?

Paul spins to face her. Didn't realize she was listening.

PAUL
I'm not trying to cause a panic.

CASSIE
Why has no one else said anything?

PAUL
Because I'm the only one here who's not on WBC's payroll. This whole thing's been a nightmare since day one. They put me on Nari's case to protect her interests, if anything went wrong. All things considered, even if her sister does turn up... It's probably best we veto the reunion and take her off the air.

CASSIE
Why? What else went wrong? Aside from... you know. All of today.

PAUL
(quietly)
There are things she doesn't know. Things that are going to hurt her.

CASSIE
Jesus, like what?

He hesitates. Before he can get another word out--

SECURITY GUARD (O.S.)
Mr. Traylor?

He glances behind them at a suited gentleman in shades, roughly the size of a refrigerator.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)
If you'll follow me, please.

The GUARD places a firm hand on Paul's shoulder and guides him down the hall. Cassie looks on with concern.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - BACK DOOR - DAY

The guard HEAVES OPEN the emergency exit, Paul in tow.

PAUL
Hey! What the hell are you doing?!
I have a fucking badge--

As the security guard all but drags Paul out the door...

INT. SERENA'S DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Serena sits on the opposite end of the room as Shel barrels in. Without a word, she ominously points to the flowers.

SHEL
Sheesh, another one?

SERENA
Look at the card.

Shel lifts a small envelope out of the bouquet and opens it.

INSERT - CARD:

**Offenses to Fatherland punishable in all corners of world.
Send her home or a punishment for you has an hour soon.**

SHEL
It's gotta be The View. They're
dying to see us pull the plug so
they can swoop in for the scraps.
Vindictive skanks--

SERENA
Have we heard anything about the
sister yet?
(he shakes his head)
Shel, I don't like this.

SHEL
C'mon, you don't actually think
this is real, do you? "Punishment
for you has an hour soon?" Stagey
as all get out. It's a hoax, just
like the last one.

At that moment, a SECURITY TEAM barges in.

SECURITY GUARD #2
We won't keep you, Ms. Sanders--

As they carefully pick up the basket of flowers and read the note with grim expressions:

SERENA
Are we safe in here?

SHEL
Of course we are! Wait till you're
back onstage to milk the drama.
(MORE)

SHEL (CONT'D)
Every stay-at-home mom in America's
chilling the chardonnay for us.
Just keep our girl chatty.

Off Serena, unnerved, as Shel guides her away...

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - SAME

Paul struggles to pull his backstage pass out of his pocket as the security guard leads him towards the pack of REPORTERS camped outside the entry.

PAUL
You can't do this, I'm supposed to
be in there. Look, here's my pass--

He hands it to the guard, who crumples it in his fist.

SECURITY GUARD
Consider it revoked.
(then)
Raise your arms--

Flabbergasted, Paul complies. The security guard PATS HIM DOWN till he finds what he's looking for - his cell phone. He plucks it out of his pocket.

PAUL
What're you, stealing from me now?!

But he's already on his way back inside.

Paul springs to action and CHASES AFTER HIM. Shoving past dumbstruck photogs and journalists.

PAUL (CONT'D)
HEY! STOP! I have a right to be
inside with my client--

The guard SLAMS the door to Paul's face. Paul POUNDS ON IT in vain. Jimmies the doorknob. No dice. He's been shut out.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Shit--

A LOCAL NEWS REPORTER (30s, F) approaches. Sympathetic.

REPORTER
Hey, everything okay?

Paul whirls around and meets her gaze.

PAUL
I'm supposed to be in there.
There's been a threat. These girls
are in danger, but nobody's--

REPORTER
Sorry - a threat? How do you--?

PAUL
I'm uh... handling Nari Lee's
publicity. Or... I was--

A beat. The reporter beckons for her nearby CAMERAMAN, then
turns back to Paul.

REPORTER
Molly White. Channel 11.

PAUL
Paul Traylor.

She shakes his hand, then steps aside to allow the cameraman
to edge in beside her.

REPORTER
Mind telling him what you told me?

Paul pauses to consider. The cameraman starts rolling.

PAUL
I have privileged security
information regarding the safety of
Nari Lee and her sister that the
Serena Show and its parent network
refuse to acknowledge...

INT. MOVIE THEATER - SERENA SHOW SET - MOMENTS LATER

None the wiser, Serena settles back into her seat beside
Nari. Doesn't look at her. Something's not right.

Nari shifts her weight, uncomfortable, as the assistant
director COUNTS DOWN behind the camera.

NARI
Have you heard any news about--?

SERENA
We'll talk. During the next break.
(then)
Welcome back, folks.
(MORE)

SERENA (CONT'D)

I'm here with Nari Lee, who bravely defected from North Korea with her mother and sister five years ago. Nari, how quickly were you able to get out? Did you leave that night, after your father's arrest?

It takes Nari a moment to settle back into the Q&A.

NARI

...Traveling to a border town is risky without papers. We had to make arrangements first.

SERENA

And you had to stay hidden.

Nari nods. As she glances over at the empty space where the third white chair once sat...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AN UPSCALE HOUSE - PYONGYANG - NIGHT (2010)

Hana sits slumped over on the front steps of the house, massaging her temples. Another bad headache.

Sun-Mi and Nari approach the door. There are lights on inside. Sun-Mi draws a deep breath, then KNOCKS.

Nari gazes across the well-appointed front yard as they wait for an answer. Clocks the lush green VEGETABLE GARDEN.

Seconds later, the door opens to reveal SONG. He curiously meets Nari's eye, then glances at Sun-Mi.

SONG

Nari. Were you at school today?

Before Nari can respond:

SUN-MI

Song, is your mother home?

SONG

Uh... yeah. Hold on.

A tense beat before he moves away from the door and shuts it, quietly. Sun-Mi nudges Hana, urging her to her feet.

HANA

I don't feel good--

SUN-MI

*You'll feel a lot worse if you have
to sleep on the street.*

Hana grits her teeth and stands beside her as SONG'S MOTHER comes to the door.

SONG'S MOTHER

*Sun-Mi, so good to see you! Is
everything all right?*

A beat between them. Nari watches her mother's face crumble. Her lip quivers. But she remains composed.

SUN-MI

*Mi-Ja, I need a favor--
(a moment, then)
We're... having some plumbing
issues. The whole apartment's
flooded, it's a mess. Would it be
at all possible for the girls stay
here for the next day or two?*

Song's mother studies Sun-Mi with a knowing look.

SUN-MI (CONT'D)

I promise, it would only be for--

SONG'S MOTHER

Where's Min-Jae?

SUN-MI

*He's... dealing with the mess.
(beat)
Please, Mi-Ja.*

Song's Mother looks to the girls, then stares at her feet.

SONG'S MOTHER

I'm sorry, Sun-Mi. I wish you luck.

Sun-Mi casts her friend a crestfallen gaze as the door shuts in her face. Nari swallows hard. Takes her mother's hand.

SUN-MI

*(after a moment)
I have another idea.*

She leads the girls down the front steps, away from the house. As they cross the street--

ZHHMMM! The power goes out, plunging the city into blackness. The family continues on, feeling their way through the dark.

EXT. THE JANGMADANG - NIGHT

The bustling marketplace is deserted at this hour... save for the *kotjebi* kids, traveling in packs. Sifting through trash.

As Sun-Mi and the girls creep around the back of the warehouse, a nearby *kotjebi* girl MAKES EYE CONTACT with Hana.

Petrified, Hana buries her face against Sun-Mi's shoulder.

HANA

I want to go home--

SUN-MI

It's all right, Hana. You'll be safe here. Just till I'm done making arrangements.

HANA

We'll come with you!

SUN-MI

It's too dangerous.

At that moment, Sun-Mi pauses on the pathway. She's found who she's looking for--

YEJUN - sorting through a pile of potato peels on the ground.

Now Hana's really scared. Panicked, she turns to Nari.

HANA

No, no, no - NARI! Tell her! We can't stay here!

But Nari says nothing.

YEJUN

(to Sun-Mi)

What do you want?

SUN-MI

Yejun, we need your help.

(then)

My husband was always good to you and your friends--

YEJUN

So they picked him up.

Her silence confirms it. A beat as Yejun studies the girls.

SUN-MI

*It would only be for a few days.
While I get everything in order.
Nobody will look for them here.*

Yejun scoffs. Picks up a tiny cigarette butt off the ground.
As he clamps it between his teeth to light it--

YEJUN

*Makes sense - stash them away with
the scabs on the street. Nobody's
gonna come crying if one of us
doesn't make it home--*

SUN-MI

Yejun, please, that's not what I--

NARI

How much do you want?

SUN-MI

Nari--

YEJUN

Whatever she thinks you're worth.

NARI

(whispers)

*Mom, you need to pay him. He's not
going to do it for free.*

SUN-MI

(beat)

*Half now, half later. When I come
back. I need your word that you'll
protect them.*

HANA

Mom! No--

YEJUN

Fine.

He eagerly holds out his blistered, filthy hand. Sun-Mi
reluctantly opens her shoulderbag and produces TWO BILLS. She
hands them to Yejun.

He keeps his hand outstretched. She offers him a third.

YEJUN (CONT'D)

(to Nari and Hana)

*You'll need to help us, you know.
Can't just stand around.*

NARI

*I know a house with a garden. Not
far from here. We can go tomorrow.*

He nods with approval. Hana bites her quivering lip.

YEJUN

This way.

As he stalks off into the darkness, expecting them to follow--

HANA

Mom--

SUN-MI

Two days. Three at the most.

She hugs them both.

SUN-MI (CONT'D)

Take care of each other.

(to Hana)

And you listen to your sister.

HANA

No! You can't leave us here! MOM--!

Hana SHRIEKS as Sun-Mi turns and disappears into the shadows. Nari grabs her and clamps a hand over her mouth.

NARI

Hana! Shhh--

HANA

I won't stay here!

NARI

*Does it look like we have much of a
choice right now?!*

(softens)

*Mom's right - nobody's going to
look for us here. We'll be safe.*

HANA

I don't like him.

NARI

(beat)

*You just don't understand him. He
can't afford not to live like this,
you know? He's kind of like--*

(realizes)

Like a real-life Aladdin.

Hana shoots her an incredulous glare.

NARI (CONT'D)
Think about it. Maybe it'll even be fun. Remember how cool Aladdin's hideout was, on that rooftop?
 (beat)
We're no better than they are. We have nowhere to sleep tonight.

HANA
 (after a moment)
They don't have a monkey.

NARI
True. But now they have you.

Off Hana's gaze as Nari leads her into the darkness...

INT. THE JANGMADANG - THE NEXT DAY

Nari and Hana hover several paces behind Yejun as he stakes out a fruit stand. He steals a pear. Nobody notices.

He steals another, then meets Nari's eye and TOSSES ONE OF THE PEARS to her. She and Hana exchange a look before Yejun lofts a SECOND PIECE OF FRUIT in Hana's direction.

As she catches it... THE FANTASY TAKES HOLD--

EXT. AGRABAH MARKETPLACE - DREAM SEQUENCE

When Hana glances back up at Yejun, he's DRESSED AS ALADDIN - parachute pants, vest, and a fez.

His posse is similarly costumed; Hana has her own fez and vest. Nari is dressed like RUNAWAY JASMINE in a brown hijab.

The *jangmadang* has also been magically transported to Agrabah. The Sultan's palace looms in the distance. Snake charmers and harem girls linger in the doorways.

Yejun continues TOSSING PEARS to his cronies, until a PALACE GUARD grabs him by the shoulder. He takes a roguish BITE OF THE PEAR in his hand then BOLTS, Nari and Hana close behind.

EXT. STREETS OF PYONGYANG - DAY TO DUSK - DREAM SEQUENCE

1) The *kotjebi*, still dressed like Arabian street rats, dig a hole in the backyard of a nearby house.

Yejun reaches for Hana's hand, beckoning her to JUMP INTO THE HOLE with him. She squeezes her eyes shut, takes his hand, and LEAPS into the darkness.

Nari stands at the lip of the hole, waiting. Seconds later, Hana and Yejun emerge with a huge CLAY POT.

They open it to reveal several pounds of PRESERVED KIMCHI.

The kids have a feast, right there, shoveling the pickled cabbage into their mouths.

Hana peers back into the hole and HOLLERS with excitement. She jumps back in and, seconds later, sticks her hand out, producing a GOLDEN GENIE LAMP.

2) A MAGIC CARPET RIDE. Nari and Hana sail across the city, skimming the rooftops, pointing to their destination nearby.

3) DUSK. Nari, Hana, and the *kotjebi* arrive at SONG'S HOUSE. There's the family vegetable garden... ripe for picking.

As Aladdin and his street rats hungrily invade the garden...

Nari STOPS COLD. Stares straight ahead. The reverse reveals--

EXT. SONG'S HOUSE - DUSK

BACK TO REALITY. Nari sees SONG in the upstairs window.

They exchange a look. Humiliated, Nari stares at her feet. Song wordlessly shuts the curtain to her.

NARI
(to Yejun)
Someone's home. We should go.

Yejun nods, arms full of cucumbers. He WHISTLES to the gang.

An invigorated Hana, still absorbed in the fantasy, runs to catch up with Yejun. He tosses her a cucumber.

Nari lingers behind them, taking one last wounded glance at the upstairs window. But Song is gone.

INT. ALADDIN'S HIDEAWAY - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE

Nari, Hana, and the *kotjebi* make their way into a makeshift loft hung with colorful curtains and oriental rugs.

Hana collapses against a poufy pillow and curls into a ball. Nari covers her with a blanket and removes her fez.

The other kids settle in and start unpacking the day's bounty. As Hana drifts off to sleep, Nari surveys her surroundings with a frown...

CUT TO:

INT. AN ABANDONED FACTORY - NIGHT

BACK TO REALITY. Squalor. Cigarette butts and broken glass litter the floor. Trash piles up in every corner. An emaciated RAT scurries past.

The *kotjebi* congregate on a tattered couch, sharing a bowl of rice and meat scraps. One YOUNG BOY snags the bowl and dumps ALL OF THE RICE into his mouth.

Yejun leaps off the couch and PUMMELS HIM. Nari YELPS, glancing over at Hana, asleep on a blanket in the corner.

But Hana doesn't budge. She's adrift in her dreamland.

Nari watches, horrified, as Yejun STOMPS ON THE KID'S FACE. Again and again. Blood cascades from his nose and mouth.

Yejun picks up the empty rice bowl, spits on the boy, and settles back down on the couch. Nari shudders.

EXT. STREETS OF PYONGYANG - DAY

Nari, Hana, and the *kotjebi* walk as a pack towards the market. Yejun smokes his tiny cigarette butt. He picks another one off the ground and offers it to Hana.

Nari quietly slaps it from between Hana's fingers.

HANA

Hey!

NARI

Don't.

HANA

*Yejun says it'll help make my
headaches go away.*

Nari grits her teeth and keeps walking. As they round the corner, she spots a group of TEENAGE SCHOOLGIRLS dressed in their starched uniforms and red neckties.

She swallows hard and stares at the ground. Hana quietly SINGS under her breath as she trudges along:

HANA (CONT'D)
I can show you the world / Shining,
shimmering, splendid--

One of the schoolgirls MAKES EYE CONTACT WITH NARI. She turns
ten shades of red and DUCKS INTO AN ALLEYWAY.

HANA (CONT'D)
Nari?

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nari leans against the wall and sighs, waiting for the group
of schoolgirls to pass. She peers over at a nearby DUMPSTER,
where a half-eaten apple core sits on top of the heap.

As she reluctantly GRABS FOR THE APPLE--

HANA (O.S.)
Nari! Nari, look!

Hana sprints into the alleyway, FOLLOWED BY SUN-MI. Nari
drops the apple core and runs into her mother's open arms.

NARI
You're late! You said three days!

SUN-MI
*I've been waiting for you in the
marketplace! Why the hell didn't
you stay there?!*

NARI
You told us to stick with Yejun.

A look between them. Awash with relief.

HANA
*Mom, it was so cool! We went and we
dug up this giant clay pot and do
you know what was in it--?*

SUN-MI
Here. Put these on--

She opens her bag and produces two pairs of NEW SNEAKERS.

HANA
But don't you want to know?

SUN-MI
You can tell me along the way.

As she hands a pair of shoes to each of them:

SUN-MI (CONT'D)
We're leaving tonight.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATER - SERENA SHOW SET - DAY (2015)

Serena's megawatt grin lights up a nearby CAMERA MONITOR as the audience APPLAUDS.

SERENA
 ...When we come back: we'll learn
 how these brave girls managed to
 evade the authorities to escape
 North Korea and later, Nari and
 Hana will finally reunite. You
 don't want to miss this.

THEME MUSIC blasts from the house speakers. The audience APPLAUDS as the camera sweeps across their faces.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (O.S.)
 Back in five, folks!

As the Makeup Artist hops onstage for Serena's touchups, Cassie sails past. Nari waves her down.

NARI
 Cassie? Have you heard anything
 about Hana? Is she--?

Serena cuts Cassie FRANTIC LOOK.

Without missing a beat, Cassie swoops in towards Nari and SHUSHES her. She clamps a hand over Nari's LAPEL MIC.

CASSIE
 (beat)
 When we hear something, you'll be
 the first to know, okay? Promise.

Cassie's face betrays her "promise" as she re-adjusts Nari's mic. She can't bear to make eye contact. After a beat:

NARI
 Where's Paul?

CASSIE
 Sorrynotsurehaven'tseenhim!

Cassie leaps off the stage before Nari can say another word.

EXT. EL CAPITAN THEATER - DAY

The show's commercial break plays on a reporter's iPad:

SERENA (V.O.)
Next week, on the Serena Show!

A shot of Serena PUMPING IRON, then huffing and puffing as she RUNS UPHILL behind a glistening BUFF DUDE in a tank top.

SERENA (V.O.)
It's P90X week with Channing Tatum,
just in time for your New Years
Resolutions! ...And then--

A gorgeous redheaded POP STAR graces the screen. Blinking away tears with her long, false eyelashes.

SERENA (V.O.)
--In a Serena Show exclusive,
Kaylee finally breaks her silence
after the Instagram feud that
destroyed her world.

REDHEAD POP STAR
(full-force waterworks)
I just... I didn't know if I could
ever be me again. You know?

PAUL (O.S.)
Hi, excuse me--

The Male Reporter holding the iPad meets Paul's gaze.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Are you Jacob? One of the
photographers over there told me
you were looking for--

JACOB
Oh shit - Paul. Yes. Could you give
me a couple words for HuffPo? My
editor's been having a coronary
since Channel 11 went live.

PAUL
Happy to.

He activates the mic on his iPad and starts recording.

JACOB
Why exactly did they throw you out?

PAUL

I had important security information that they didn't want to hear about if it meant cutting the broadcast short. The network refuses to take responsibility for the political shitstorm they've created. Or... whatever you'd call it. Synonyms aren't my strong suit.

JACOB

So... they're basically holding this girl hostage on camera.

PAUL

(thinks, then)

If you want to call it that.

JACOB

And how come we haven't seen the other girl yet? Where is she?

PAUL

That's the million dollar question.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - SERENA SHOW SET - MOMENTS LATER

In the second row, a 20-SOMETHING WOMAN in a pink sundress scrolls through her phone with a wide-eyed stare.

INSERT, WOMAN'S PHONE: Click-bait headline du jour - "Hostage Situation at the Serena Show?"

She anxiously glances around the room. AUDIENCE MEMBERS tap away on their own phones and whisper to one another. Wary glances abound. The tension is palpable.

ONSTAGE, the makeup artist finishes Nari's touchups.

BEHIND THE MONITOR, Shel and Serena exchange whispers...

SERENA

...So what, I just keep telling them the reunion's coming up?

(off his shrug)

Don't you think our time is better spent writing a new closer instead of building up a lie?

SHEL

Not if the lie is what's trending.
As long as the numbers are steady,
it doesn't matter what happens at
the end of the show.

SERENA

(beat)

None of this feels right--

SHEL

Neither does Christmas on
unemployment.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (O.S.)

30 seconds!

Serena glances over at Nari, who meets her gaze. She looks so small, alone in her seat. As Serena moves off--

SERENA

Watching "Titanic" seems
appropriate, don't you think?
(off his blank stare)
Y'know. Sinking ship. Et cetera.

SHEL

Yeah, no - you've got writers for
that. Just get to your mark.

Miffed, Serena turns her back on him and heads back to her seat next to Nari with a luminous smile.

SERENA

Looks like your sister's on her
way! They switched terminals at the
airport. Stupidest thing, right?

NARI

You don't have to tell me that.

SERENA

(nervously)

Sweetie, what are you--?

NARI

You can tell me if it's true. But I
know what a lie feels like.

As Serena's mouth hangs agape--

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

...And we're on in 10... 9... 8--

SERENA

Nari. I promise, everything is--

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

5... 4--

He holds up his fingers now. 3. 2. 1--

Serena freezes. No turning back. The cameras roll.

A deer-in-headlights look between Serena and Nari.

The TELEPROMPTER starts up. Serena's tense frown flips upside down. Show must go on.

SERENA

Welcome back, folks. I'm here with Nari Lee, who bravely escaped North Korea with her younger sister and mother five years ago...

Serena's monologue ECHOES in Nari's ears, like they're underwater. Her eyes glaze over.

SERENA (CONT'D)

...Nari, take us back to your final night in North Korea. What was going through your head as you prepared to leave your home?

A long beat before Nari snaps back to reality...

SERENA (CONT'D)

Nari?

NARI

(finally)

I think... we were ready. We were done living a lie.

Serena squirms in her seat, determined to keep up her showman's veneer at all costs. She places a hand on Nari's shoulder. Gives it a firm, reassuring squeeze.

Nari looks into one camera. Then another. A long moment before she finally speaks again:

NARI (CONT'D)

We drove all day to a northern border town. It was raining.

Off Serena's relieved exhale--

INT/EXT. A TRUCK - DAWN - MOVING (2010)

Nari, Hana, and Sun-Mi sit huddled in the back of a covered delivery truck beside FOUR OTHER DEFECTORS - two men and two women, and their GUIDE, head to toe in black.

Nari stares out a hole in the truck's canvas cover. A light DRIZZLE falls as they roll past acres of desolate farmland. An agricultural graveyard, ravaged by famine.

Hana grumbles and re-adjusts. Cradling her head in her hands.

HANA
I don't feel good--

SUN-MI
Have some water.

She hands her a canteen. Hana blinks and RUBS HER EYES as she grabs for it.

SUN-MI (CONT'D)
What's the matter?

HANA
Stuff looks weird.

SUN-MI
What do you mean?

HANA
It's all dark and fuzzy.

She rubs her eyes again. As Sun-Mi firmly places the water canteen into her hands:

NARI
*We need to take her to a real
doctor when we get to China.*

Sun-Mi nods as Hana finishes drinking and lies back down.

SUN-MI
Just relax and close your eyes.

Hana curls into a ball. Sun-Mi strokes her hair.

NARI
(after a moment)
I'm sorry.

SUN-MI
For?

NARI

*Telling other kids at school that I
could get stuff for them. I just
wanted people to... I didn't--*

SUN-MI

*Don't blame yourself. There were
eyes all over that neighborhood.*

NARI

I just... I wanted you to know--

SUN-MI

I do.

A moment between them. Silence encapsulates the truck. Until--

The sound of a gravelly, ancient voice SINGING outside fills the void.

Nari peers through the hole in the canvas. The rain has picked up considerably.

On the side of the road sits an emaciated OLD MAN, deliriously singing to himself as rain pelts his face.

OLD MAN

(sings)

*There was a feast in the village
today! Let me tell you my friend--*

Nari perks up, recognizing the popular song: "Potato Pride."

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

*The elder received some potatoes
and then -- what a glorious day! He
made soba noodles, mouth-watering
snacks... We are so proud on this
glorious day! OH POTATO! POTATO
PRIDE! OH POTATO--*

The man's voice CRACKS. He coughs with a dry, wretched GAG as the truck passes by.

Nari watches him become smaller and smaller in the distance... rocking back and forth, singing to himself all alone in the rain.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NORTHERN BORDER TOWN - NIGHT

The truck rumbles along a lonesome dirt road, sloshing through puddles as the rain intensifies.

INT. TRUCK - SAME

It's been a long day of traveling. The canvas roof is leaking all over the weary passengers.

Nari, Hana, and Sun-Mi huddle together for warmth, trying to get some sleep when... the truck LURCHES. Then stops.

Nari's eyes snap open. Hana grumbles and stretches.

SUN-MI

How are you feeling?

HANA

Little better. Are we in China?

SUN-MI

*We have to cross the river first.
There's a family that's supposed to
meet us on the other side.*

HANA

So why did we stop?

SUN-MI

Shhh.

A tense moment of silence as the defectors exchange worried glances. Hana fidgets in her seat.

HANA

Nari? Remember how, in Die Hard--?

NARI

Hana. Quiet.

HANA

*(lowers her voice)
--But do you remember how the guy
on the plane tells John to make
fists with his toes on the carpet?
When he gets to where he's going?*

NARI

...Yeah?

HANA

We should do that. When we get to China. Don't let me forget.

NARI

(distractedly)

Okay. Sure--

The group's GUIDE, silent until now, rises and RAPS on the back of the truck's cab. A filthy, foggy window SLIDES open.

As the anxious defectors watch their guide trade whispers with the TRUCK DRIVER...

HANA

(quoting Die Hard)

Yessir, better than a shower and a hot cup a' coffee--

Sun-Mi PINCHES Hana. The guide SPINS AROUND.

GUIDE

*There's a checkpoint up ahead.
We're about a mile away from the river, so we're thinking we'll quietly roll up as far as we can then get out before we reach it.*

The defectors exchange steady nods.

Nari glances over at Hana, nervously fidgeting in her seat. She scoots closer to her. Off Hana's uneasy look:

NARI

You ready? Here's the scene...

The truck stealthily grinds back to a slow crawl as we--

SMASH TO:

INT. A PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE

An ARMORED TRUCK creeps into the garage... then STOPS.

PUSH IN on the armored truck as it idles in the lot.

The TENSE SCORE builds to a crescendo as we ARRIVE UPON the back doors of the truck. After a deathly silent moment...

The doors BUST OPEN. Nari, in character as Alan Rickman's HANS GRUBER, jumps out of the truck with a swagger, brandishing a machine gun.

Hana pops out second, as the German KARL, tossing her long blonde Fabio locks. She COCKS her rifle. Narrows her eyes.

The girls fall in step with one another and MARCH towards us, menacingly, like the gangsters they are.

They KICK OPEN a door at the far end of the garage---

INT. NAKATOMI PLAZA - CONTINUOUS

--And storm the elaborate CHRISTMAS PARTY in full swing.

Employees SCREAM. Wine glasses SHATTER on the floor as the girls deviously wield their weapons.

Their fantasy gives them confidence. Because in reality...

EXT. NORTHERN BORDER TOWN - NIGHT

The girls, Sun-Mi, and the other four defectors follow their guide THROUGH THE WOODS, on tiptoe. Holding their breath.

Rain clouds obscure the moon - it's pitch black. They feel their way between the slippery trees as VOICES echo across the forest from the road behind them.

A SHOTGUN COCKS. Nari shudders. More VOICES, louder now. CRACK. SNAP. Branches break. Someone's close. A FLASHLIGHT BEAM slices through the darkness like a lethal blade.

GUIDE

GET DOWN!

The girls and Sun-Mi lie flat on their bellies against the muddy ground. Nobody moves a muscle for an eternal moment.

The light skims over the place where they lie... but the GUARDS move along. Nari exhales. Wipes mud from her mouth.

Their guide staggers to his feet. As they press onwards:

GUIDE (CONT'D)

The river's going to be higher than usual because of the rain. We can do one of two things: there's a barn up ahead where we can take shelter for a day or two, till the water level goes down. Or we can cross it tonight.

A MAN

We can't afford to wait.

Sun-Mi nods in agreement. But the man's WIFE shivers.

HIS WIFE
He can't swim--

Her husband cuts her a sharp glance.

GUIDE
Do any of you know how?

Grim silence falls. Nobody comes forward. Their guide sighs and pulls a long, sturdy rope from his backpack.

Without a word, he leads them on towards the RIVER up ahead. The sound of RUSHING WATER intensifies as they inch closer.

EXT. TUMEN RIVER BANK - NIGHT

The four other defectors, Sun-Mi, and the girls all grab hold of the rope. Their guide takes up the lead.

Nari stares at the river ahead. It's not too wide - they can easily see the other side. But the current is strong. Hana clings to the rope, white-knuckled.

SUN-MI
Hold with both hands.

They do so. As the group shuffles ahead...

FLASHLIGHT BEAMS cut through the darkness again. Muffled VOICES not far behind them, lurking somewhere in the woods.

GUIDE
We need to move.

He jumps into the water with a shudder, pulling the rope along. Sun-Mi follows him. Next in line is Hana, then Nari.

Their four remaining travel companions take up the rear.

Nari GASPS as she enters the river... Freezing cold water stabs her like a thousand needles.

They wade across the river in silence. As they venture further out, the water level creeps above Nari's chin...

SUN-MI
You have to kick! Just keep your heads up and let us pull you--

Nari and Hana obey, but as their feet leave the riverbed, the powerful current starts to PULL THEM downstream.

Nari grasps the rope with one hand and reaches for Hana with the other, clutching her shirt to keep her from getting dragged in the wrong direction.

The older refugees in back of them aren't so lucky. One of the two women SHRIEKS. As her grip SLIPS from the rope--

The current instantly SWEEPS HER AWAY.

The guide peers over his shoulder in horror. He opens his mouth to shout further instructions, but before he can...

The woman's HUSBAND lets go of the rope with a HOWL.

HUSBAND

...Mi-Ran!!!

He screams his wife's name as the river SWALLOWS HIM UP. The girls watch, terror-stricken, as he fights to keep his head above water. He disappears below the surface.

Hana trembles with dread. Her grip on the rope loosens.

NARI

(to Hana)

Rose! ROSE--

Hana turns to look at her. Lip quivering.

NARI (CONT'D)

I'm gonna need you to swim, Rose!

As Hana nods and starts kicking in a frenzy...

SMASH TO:

EXT. THE OPEN OCEAN - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE

We're at the bottom of the sea, looking up, as hundreds of BODIES plunge into the water, desperately kicking to fight the undercurrent of the SINKING TITANIC.

Hana, as ROSE, battles against gravity, pushing her way upwards. Finally, she crests the surface with a GASP.

She desperately treads water, searching in vain for...

HANA

Jack!!! JACK--

A man without a life vest CLINGS to her, trying to use her as a flotation aid. She screams and tries to push him away as...

NARI EMERGES, as Jack. She swims towards Hana and PUNCHES her attacker. She embraces her.

HANA (CONT'D)
It's so cold, Jack--

Nari finds the iconic PIECE OF BROKEN DOOR floating nearby. She grabs it and pulls it towards them.

NARI
It's almost over, Rose. You're safe. You're gonna make it.

Nari helps Hana climb aboard the floating door as a LIFELESS MAN bobs along, lips blue with frostbite.

As Nari SHOVES the man's body out of the way, his eyes suddenly SNAP OPEN. He reanimates in a panic.

The girls balk as he starts BABBLING AT THEM... IN CHINESE.

BACK TO:

EXT. TUMEN RIVER BANK - CHINA SIDE - NIGHT

A CHINESE MAN (50s) on the opposite shore FRANTICALLY HOLLERS at the group of shivering refugees as they approach.

HANA
What's he saying?

NARI
I... I don't know--

As their guide pulls the rope towards the riverbank, he FREEZES, finally able to hear the Chinese man's words.

GUIDE
Nobody move!

Sun-Mi, the girls, and their two remaining groupmates hold perfectly still. The guide nervously scans their faces.

GUIDE (CONT'D)
You--

He points to the only remaining MAN in their group, a scraggly fellow in his 30s who has kept completely silent.

GUIDE (CONT'D)
He says he's seen you before!
(off the man's silence)
Who are you? Answer me!

The scraggly fellow digs into his belt...

SUN-MI
(whispers to the girls)
Get ready to run.

NARI
...What?

...And pulls out a PISTOL. The woman beside him SCREAMS.

SCRAGGLY FELLOW
*You have hereby committed a
treasonous act. In the name of the
fatherland, I sentence you to--*

Sun-Mi grabs both her daughters hands and BOLTS out of the water, towards the Chinese riverbank.

The scraggly man aims his pistol, but their guide BLOCKS HIS SHOT. BANG! Their guide goes down as Sun-Mi and the girls sprint towards a nearby CORNFIELD.

The last refugee remaining - a woman about Sun-Mi's age - runs after them, shrieking. The CHINESE MAN wrestles the informant for his pistol.

EXT. CHINESE CORNFIELD - NIGHT

SHOTS FIRE in the distance as Sun-Mi pulls the girls through the labyrinth of corn stalks.

Hana meets Nari's gaze as they run, but everything's a panicky BLUR.

As we CRASH IN on Nari's glassy, terror-stricken eyes...

EXT. STREETS OF AGRABAH - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

Nari, once again dressed as RUNAWAY JASMINE, leaps across a rooftop, followed by Hana, back in her Aladdin vest and fez.

A pack of BURLY PALACE GUARDS wielding broadswords pursues them. Their HEAVYSET LEADER tumbles to the ground as they attempt to jump the same rooftop. But the others press on...

Nari and Hana FREEZE when they encounter an enormous gap between buildings. It's too wide to cross.

The palace guards close in. Broadswords at the ready.

Hana tugs on Nari's sleeve and indicates a CHIMNEY off the side of the building, just wide enough to fit into...

They BOLT towards it and DIVE IN.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. AIR VENT - DREAM SEQUENCE

Now Nari is JOHN McCLANE, wriggling through one of the Nakatomi Plaza's air vents on her belly, barefoot in a white undershirt. Her forehead weeps with sweat as...

BANG! BANG! Gruber's gangsters are right on the other side of the vent, SMACKING the side with the butt of their rifles.

A GUNSHOT goes off. Nari cringes, sliding through the vent even faster, towards a BEACON OF LIGHT up ahead...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. TITANIC BOILER ROOM - DREAM SEQUENCE

...Where Hana (as ROSE) is waiting at the mouth of a smokestack. She extends her hand as Nari emerges AS JACK.

The two of them weave through the ranks of sweaty, coal-streaked LABORERS who stop mid-shovel to gape at them.

LABORER

The bloody 'ell you doin' here?!

The girls SPRINT past the workers as they give chase, into the bowels of the Titanic. But before they're home free...

ANOTHER GUNSHOT. Right behind them. They WHIRL AROUND.

BACK TO:

EXT. CHINESE CORNFIELD - NIGHT

The INFORMANT from their group UNLOADS HIS PISTOL through the corn stalks. Sun-Mi goes down, cradling her leg.

Hana SHRIEKS. As the girls rush towards her...

BANG! BANG BANG BANG! Another round of gunshots, from the OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

Nari peers over her shoulder and comes face to face with a CHINESE TEENAGER (Male, 16), clutching a hunting rifle.

Their other FEMALE TRAVELING COMPANION stands behind him.

The Chinese teen traipses into the cornfield, searching for a body, as Nari and Hana kneel beside Sun-Mi. Nari inspects her injuries. There's a BULLET lodged in her calf.

SUN-MI

It's all right. I'll be fine--

The Chinese teenager re-emerges empty-handed, CURSING under his breath. He addresses them in BROKEN KOREAN:

CHINESE TEENAGER

I bring her. Our house.

The girls nod, in a daze, as he helps Sun-Mi to her feet. She leans on him, hopping on one foot.

Nari turns to the Korean woman behind them - the last remaining member of their crew. She trembles, catatonic.

KOREAN WOMAN

*Let's go. We don't want to be here
when he comes back with the police.*

The girls nod. They follow the Chinese teenager.

KOREAN WOMAN (CONT'D)

*I should have known. He was too
quiet. I could tell--*

NARI

Did you know him?

KOREAN WOMAN

*No. He was a mole. Sometimes they
send someone. Especially if they
think they can catch children
crossing the border. That's where
they reap the big rewards.*

HANA

Why?

KOREAN WOMAN

(beat)

Everyone listens when children cry.

A bleak hiatus passes among the three of them as they follow Sun-Mi and the young Chinese man through the cornfield, towards a SMALL HUT in the distance.

Nari zeroes in on her mother's INJURED LEG. A steady stream of blood oozes from her wound, leaving a trail of red pearls on the ground behind her.

INT. CHINESE FAMILY'S HUT - DAWN

A HAZY SUNRISE crests the horizon outside.

Nari gazes out the window instead of at Sun-Mi, who lies on the kitchen table, stifling a SCREAM as the Chinese Teenager pulls the bullet from her leg. She's lost a lot of blood.

The Chinese Man from the riverbank sits slumped in the corner nearby, a bloody bandage wrapped around his arm.

Hana rests her head between her knees, rocking back and forth. The Korean Woman regards her.

KOREAN WOMAN

Is she all right?

NARI

She gets these headaches...

The Korean Woman rises and quietly asks the Chinese Teenager a question. He nods and hands her a clean rag.

She soaks it in cool water from a bowl on the table, then sits back down and nudges Hana.

KOREAN WOMAN

Here. Put it over your eyes.

Hana obeys. She sighs with relief, pressing it to her face.

KOREAN WOMAN (CONT'D)

Better?

Hana manages a weary nod and lies down on the floor.

Nari peers around the tiny country kitchen and notices a BOWL OF RICE AND MEAT sitting on the ground, near the stove.

She curiously reaches for it, eyes wide with hunger, when...

The older Chinese Man starts YELLING at her. Rises to his feet. Nari recoils.

NARI

What's he saying?

KOREAN WOMAN

He says that's not yours--

The Chinese Man WHISTLES. There's a JINGLE from the adjoining bedroom and, seconds later, a SMALL WHITE DOG emerges.

The Chinese Man opens his modest fridge and unwraps a larger bowl of meat and rice.

He hands the fresh bowl to Nari with a set of chopsticks as the dog digs into the bowl on the ground.

NARI

Oh. Thank you--

He grunts and sinks back to the floor, cradling his arm. The dog chows down on his breakfast.

KOREAN WOMAN

(to Nari)

My neighbor in Chongjin used to cross the border to smuggle eggs and pork from Chinese farmers. She once told me there are dogs in China who eat better than children do in North Korea.

As the two of them watch the dog lick the bowl clean:

KOREAN WOMAN (CONT'D)

I'll have to write her a letter.

INT. CHINESE FAMILY'S HUT - BEDROOM - SOME TIME LATER

Weak sunlight seeps through the drawn curtains as Hana and Nari lie on bed mats on the ground.

VOICES bicker on the other side of the door. Nari rises and listens. Hana stirs - the wet rag still covers her eyes.

HANA

What are they saying?

NARI

I don't know. Go back to sleep.

HANA

(beat)

I like their dog. Do you think we could get one?

NARI

That'd be nice--

HANA
*Oh, you know what would be a great
 name for him?*

Before Hana can reveal her answer, Sun-Mi emerges in the doorway. She shuffles along, wincing with every painful step.

SUN-MI
You should try to get some sleep.

NARI
I just told her that.

SUN-MI
You, too.

Sun-Mi slowly sinks to the floor beside them. Hana removes the rag from her eyes.

SUN-MI (CONT'D)
How's your head?

HANA
Okay.

After a moment:

SUN-MI
*I'm very proud of you. I hope you
 both know that. I have confidence
 in you. In your ability to survive.
 I'm very lucky to have that.*

As Hana starts to pull the rag back over her eyes--

NARI
*The other woman in our group speaks
 Chinese. We should see if she can
 ask the boy if there's a doctor--*

SUN-MI
We aren't staying here.

NARI
Where are we going?

HANA
We're not?!

SUN-MI
*We've been talking to the boy and
 his father. In a few weeks, they
 plan to take us to the village and
 sell us as brides.*

Nari balks at her mother. But Hana LAUGHS.

HANA

You can't buy brides! That's dumb.

NARI

Hana--

SUN-MI

They insist we have a choice in the matter, and that we'd get a cut of the profits. But they're not going to let us stay here or help us if they can't sell us.

NARI

So we're leaving again.

SUN-MI

I still have money left over. There's a missionary group that helps people like us cross the Gobi Desert, into Mongolia. Once you cross the border into their country, you'll be deported. To South Korea.

Nari's eyes light up... then quickly lose their glow.

NARI

But is it safe there?

SUN-MI

Safer than it is here. These men are at least giving us a choice. The next people we meet... they might not be so flexible.

HANA

(beat)

Are people allowed to have dogs in South Korea?

NARI

(to Sun-Mi)

Sorry. I might have told her we could get one.

Sun-Mi pats Hana on the head with a thin smile.

SUN-MI

Sure, people have dogs there.

HANA

I want a white one. With spots.

SUN-MI
That sounds nice.

Sun-Mi suddenly sucks in a SHARP BREATH and grabs for her injured leg. A moment passes before she speaks again, weakly:

SUN-MI (CONT'D)
*You'll see... when you get there.
You can have whatever you want.
Everything I never had. You'll be
free to write your own story. Your
life will mean something.*

HANA
*How do you know all that? You've
never been there.*

As she pushes Hana's bangs from her face and kisses her:

SUN-MI
*I've seen it. And so have you.
(beat)
Your father made sure of that.*

As Sun-Mi slowly staggers to her feet, gritting her teeth--

NARI
Mom, you should lie down--

SUN-MI
*No, no. I have too much to do.
(then)
Try to rest. The missionaries are
coming tonight.*

Nari falls silent, watching her mother as she hobbles out of the room and disappears around the corner.

EXT. CHINESE CORNFIELD - NIGHT

A NEON PINK CROSS is the only light in the dark cornfield - fashioned from two cheap glow-sticks, taped together at the center. It almost FLOATS, suspended in blackness.

Nari and Hana approach the eerie pink light; Hana keeps a wet rag pressed to her head as she shuffles along.

Sun-Mi slowly trails behind them, step by agonizing step. She's beyond pale and clammy with sweat - an ashen, blue tinge to her thin lips.

Nari sees a RICKSHAW take shape in the darkness as she draws closer; the neon pink cross is affixed to its back door.

An atypically husky, tall Korean woman - YOON-HEE (50s) - emerges from the front of the rickshaw.

We recognize her as one of the two women who pulled Nari across the Mongolian border in the opening.

Sun-Mi digs into her pocket and hands the stocky woman a wad of cash. YOON-HEE counts it and nods.

YOON-HEE
(to Hana)
You first. Get comfortable.

Hana nods, squinting as she looks up into Yoon-Hee's face. A beat as Yoon-Hee studies her...

NARI
*She's just got a headache. She'll
be fine by morning. She always is.*

YOON-HEE
Mhmm.

A woman of few words, Yoon-Hee helps Hana up into the rickshaw. Nari breathes a sigh of relief.

Hana settles down on a blanket on the wooden floor. Re-adjusts the wet rag over her eyes.

YOON-HEE (CONT'D)
You, now.

Nari climbs into the rickshaw on her own, sitting down beside Hana. She scoots over, making room for Sun-Mi.

But Sun-Mi doesn't step up.

Nari blanches as her mother meets her gaze. An eternal, wrenching look between them. *A silent contract.*

Hana is oblivious, leaning against Nari's knee with the cool rag tightly secured across her face.

Tears fill Nari's eyes as Sun-Mi finally turns away and starts limping back towards the hut. She blinks. Hot tears streak her face. She holds her breath to keep from sobbing.

A beat passes. Yoon-Hee exchanges a glance with Nari as she moves to close the back of the rickshaw. Nari nods.

FROM THE CORNFIELD: Sun-Mi watches the neon pink cross become smaller and smaller until the darkness swallows it whole.

INT. THE RICKSHAW - LATER THAT NIGHT

Hana stirs as the rickshaw goes over a BUMP. Nari stares blankly ahead. Probably hasn't moved an inch all night.

HANA

Mmm... Mom? Can I have some water?

Nari fishes into her backpack and hands Hana a canteen. Bracing herself. Hana sits up. Removes the rag from her face.

HANA (CONT'D)

Thanks--

As she starts to drink, she pauses. Looks around. Realizes.

HANA (CONT'D)

NARI! NARI, WHERE IS SHE?!

Nari starts crying in earnest. Buries her head in her hands.

HANA (CONT'D)

Where's Mom?! NARI--

Nari shakes her head. Unable to speak.

HANA (CONT'D)

Nari! Answer me!

Hana HITS NARI in the face with the canteen and releases an anguished SCREAM as she bursts into tears.

As Nari clutches her bruised cheek:

NARI

I'm so sorry. I didn't know--

Nari pulls her knees to her chest. Swallows a sob. The girls sit in horrible silence as the rickshaw rolls along.

HANA

We have to go back.

NARI

Hana, listen--

HANA

DON'T TALK TO ME--

NARI

Please--

HANA

I SAID DON'T TALK TO ME, EVER!

Nari complies, shattered, and slumps against the rickety wooden wall. Hides her face in her hands.

CREAK. SLOSH. CREAK. SLOSH. The wheels roll over yesterday's mud puddles as Hana whimpers in the darkness...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATER - SERENA SHOW SET - DAY (2015)

Nari's eyes glaze over as she shrinks in her seat. Silence falls across the theater like a heavy fog.

SERENA

And did you see her again?

(a beat)

Nari...?

Nari squints into the blinding stage lights. She looks ill.

SERENA (CONT'D)

Honey, I know this is tough--

A WOMAN (O.S.)

You don't have to do this, Nari!

Nari JUMPS as Serena anxiously scans the audience. FRANTIC WHISPERS from the crew behind the camera.

The YOUNG WOMAN IN THE PINK SUNDRESS rises from her seat in the second row. As TWO SECURITY GUARDS rush over to her--

YOUNG WOMAN

You're not safe here! You're in trouble, and they're not telling you! You have to get out--

Nervous CHATTER erupts as Serena GRABS NARI'S HAND.

SERENA

Nari, it's fine. Don't listen to--

YOUNG WOMAN

They're coming for you, Nari!

CHAOS ENSUES as the two security guards barrel through the audience and apprehend the unruly spectator.

As pandemonium descends, Nari leaps to her feet and wrests her hand from Serena's. A stricken look between them before Nari takes flight.

She dodges the crew and BOLTS backstage.

EXT. EL CAPITAN THEATER - SAME

Paul and a handful of journalists crowd around JACOB'S IPAD, watching the spectacle unfold onscreen.

As Nari runs offstage and the broadcast cuts to a TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES title card--

PAUL
Shit--

Paul makes a break for the back door, the same one he was thrown out of. He POUNDS ON IT with all his strength.

PAUL (CONT'D)
God dammit - LET ME IN!

He spots a CONCRETE BRICK in the adjacent PARKING LOT. He grabs for it and runs back over to the door.

Several other JOURNALISTS gather round to help him.

As Paul beats the door handle senseless with the brick...

SERENA (V.O.)
(from the iPad)
Next week, on the Serena Show: burn
off that holiday ham with the one
and only Channing Tatum--!

INT. MOVIE THEATER - "BACKSTAGE" - SAME

Nari shoves her way past production assistants and camera equipment, a flurry of nerves. She spots a familiar face:

NARI
Amira!

Amira whirls around and comes to Nari's side.

AMIRA
Nari! What the hell is going on?

NARI
Where's Paul?! I need to find Paul--

AMIRA
I... I don't know. I haven't--

CASSIE (O.S.)
I know where he is.

Cassie emerges and extends her hand. She leads Nari to the emergency exit. As they round the corner:

SHEL (O.S.)
CASSIE?! ...Jesus shit Christ--

He chases after them, but Cassie presses on. She leans into the EMERGENCY EXIT DOOR and shoves it open. The ALARM blares.

WEEE-OO WEEE-OO WEEE-OO!

EXT. EL CAPITAN THEATER - SAME

The back door OPENS UP, forcing Paul and the swarm of journalists to step aside.

Nari and Cassie spill from the doorway. CLICK! FLASH! CLICK CLICK CLICK! Paul pushes past the photographers.

PAUL
Nari!

She runs towards him. He wraps her into an embrace. The EYEGLASSES in Nari's pocket fall out, onto the ground.

NARI
She said they're coming! Who's coming! What's going on?!

PAUL
Come with me. It's gonna be okay--

As he guides her through the sea of journalists, towards the nearby PARKING GARAGE--

JACOB
Here. She dropped these...

Jacob hands Paul the glasses. He nods his thanks.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - SERENA SHOW SET - MOMENTS LATER

Serena sits alone onstage, in a daze. Shel finally approaches with a sigh and sinks down in the seat beside her.

They watch security escort the audience out of the theater. No words. Low, dead-sounding TEST TONE reverberates from one of the unmanned cameras. Finally:

SHEL
She's safe. With her minder. So--

SERENA

Why the hell wasn't she "safe" to begin with?

(then)

What really happened today, Shel?

INT. BLACKED-OUT SUV - PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Nari and Paul settle into the backseat, flanked by secret service. It's all very official. All very intimidating.

NARI

Where are we going?

PAUL

Nowhere, for the time being. Once the threat's been contained we'll go back to the hotel.

One of the agents nods, confirming. Nari looks to the agents, then to Paul. Off her questioning look:

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'm just a volunteer at Amnesty. I help out when I can. Most of the time... I'm working for Homeland Security. We thought it would be a good idea for me to stick with you today, in case... well--

NARI

Something happened.

Paul shrugs. Pretty much. After a moment, he presents Nari with the eyeglasses. She stares at them.

PAUL

You dropped your glasses.

NARI

...They weren't for me.

PAUL

(beat)

Nari, there's something I need to tell you. About Hana. Something you should've known from the beginning.

NARI

(a small voice)

Is she... is she dead?

(off his silence)

Paul--?!

PAUL

About a year ago, WBC contacted Amnesty International and asked them to spearhead this search for your sister. They bankrolled the whole thing because Serena wanted to feature the reunion on her show. But it's damn near impossible to get accurate information from inside your country. We were able to narrow the search, based on the date of her capture and which traffickers were working where. They had a pretty good idea which prison camp she'd landed at, but--

NARI

Pretty good...?

PAUL

Breaking her out was going to be a big operation. We wouldn't be able to pull it off more than once. We needed to be 100% sure it was her.

(beat)

Then, last month, WBC got word that your leader was coming to the US for the first time. They starting putting pressure on Amnesty to go forth with the extraction so they could reunite you guys on TV the same week he was going to be here. We told them we still weren't sure. But the money was on the table. So our people went in.

NARI

(as tears fill her eyes)

Who did they find?

PAUL

The girl they brought over... she claims she's your sister. But the pictures they sent us... at least, the ones I saw - if it is her, then a lot has changed.

(then)

I told them you might be the only one who could tell us who we really rescued. But I wasn't allowed to say anything.

Nari stares at her hands. Shaking. Unable to look at him.

PAUL (CONT'D)

When we got here today and I
realized what we'd done... that I'd
let them keep the truth from you...

(beat)

I just hope you can forgive me.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - SERENA SHOW SET - SAME

A speechless Serena glares daggers at Shel. He can't seem to
return her gaze.

SERENA

How in God's name could you have
kept this from me?

(then)

From her!

SHEL

If I'd told you, you never would've
gone along with it. I was trying to
keep you alive. This episode was a
game-changer, it would've saved us.
We had everything we needed.

SERENA

Except the right girl.

SHEL

We still don't know that.

SERENA

I can't believe you let me pull the
trigger on this.

SHEL

It was as a good plan as any--

SERENA

In what universe was this a good
plan, Shel?! We paid for an
incredibly dangerous mission
without even knowing who we were
rescuing. We went and flew them
both out here even though we've
been getting threats all week--

SHEL

All still unconfirmed--

SERENA

But you just said this psycho sent
his flunkies to our backyard!

(MORE)

SERENA (CONT'D)
And the sister's still missing!
 (after a moment)
 I want no part of this. I'm done.

SHEL
 (a cynical chuckle)
 As you wish. Network brass called
 me to the stand barely a minute
 after that girl left the stage.
 Gotta leave for the studio as soon
 as we're done here.
 (then)
 Wanna come walk the plank with me?
 For old times sake?

She rises with a stare that could cut glass. As the stage
 lights DIM on the two of them:

SERENA
 I'll let you keep handling things.

And she's gone.

INT. BLACKED-OUT SUV - MOMENTS LATER

Nari curls into a ball and rests her head against the tinted
 window. Tears brim her eyes as she stares at the pair of
 glasses sitting in her lap...

KOREAN WOMAN (PRE-LAP)
Let us pray...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GOBI DESERT - MISSIONARY SAFEHOUSE - DAWN (2010)

Another GLOWSTICK CROSS sits in the window of a tiny shack on
 the precipice of the vast desert.

About a dozen REFUGEES stand outside the safehouse in a
 circle. Yoon-Hee approaches with Nari and Hana, motioning for
 them to join the circle.

Hana doesn't make eye contact with Nari. She's cold and
 detached, staring ahead into nothingness.

A KOREAN PASTOR (Female, 40s) smiles at the girls and clasps
 hands with the two refugees standing on either side of her.

KOREAN PASTOR
Hail Mary, full of Grace--

The rest of the refugees join in with her:

REFUGEES

*The Lord is with thee. Blessed art
thou among women, and blessed is
the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.*

Bewildered, Nari listens to the strange, foreign prayer.

REFUGEES (CONT'D)

*Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for
us sinners, now and at the hour of
our death. Amen.*

ON NARI as she gazes at the desert beyond. Steeling herself.

EXT. GOBI DESERT - DAY

Yoon-Hee, the pastor, and the other refugees travel in a pack, carrying only small knapsacks and water. Nari and Hana take up the rear.

Hana squints in the harsh sunlight. She doesn't notice her shoelace is untied until she TRIPS.

NARI

Hana, your shoe.

Hana groans and crouches down to tie it. She fumbles with the laces. Squints even harder, as though she can't see them.

NARI (CONT'D)

Let me help--

HANA

I can do it.

But she continues to struggle. Nari kneels to the ground and ties it for her.

HANA (CONT'D)

I said I could do it--

Nari steps in front of Hana and holds up three fingers.

NARI

How many?

HANA

Leave me alone.

NARI

Just tell me how many!

Hana wordlessly stands and carries on. A heavy beat passes.

NARI (CONT'D)
At least have some water--

Without looking at her, Hana grabs her canteen and takes a swig, taking great pains to walk several paces ahead of Nari.

NARI (CONT'D)
 (after a moment)
You wanna play?

Nothing from Hana.

NARI (CONT'D)
 (sings)
 I can show you the world--

HANA
Stop.

Nari's breath catches. Wounded, she watches Hana struggle to march on ahead of her.

NARI
Hana--

She finally spins around and faces Nari head-on.

HANA
You didn't even let me say goodbye.

Her words choke the life out of whatever Nari was about to say next. She can't bear to return her gaze.

After a moment, Hana forges ahead, trailed by Nari's slower footsteps, heavy with loneliness.

As she presses onward, her gaze falls upon a row of CROSSES nearby, fashioned of flimsy sticks, stuck in the dirt. Graves of those who came before them.

Nari swallows hard and averts her eyes. Continues on her way.

FROM ABOVE: The searing DESERT SUN traverses the cloudless sky as the day passes, dwarfing the refugees below like ants.

EXT. THE GOBI DESERT - MONGOLIAN BORDER - LATER

Drenched with sweat, the refugees crest a dune and peer down at the BARBED WIRE FENCE about a half a mile away.

YOON-HEE
*All you have to do is tell them
 you're Korean. They'll do the rest.*

The exhausted refugees nod in agreement. Hana sinks to her knees, draining the last of her water from the canteen.

Nari nudges her and hands over her own bottle.

NARI
Here. Hard part's over.

As Hana casts Nari a grateful look and takes the canteen--

VROOOOOM!

Yoon-Hee spins around, facing towards China, and scans the valley below. Her face falls as FOUR ATVS ROAR across the sandscape, right towards the dune.

YOON-HEE
 (to the pastor)
Six o'clock--

She points across the desert, at the ATVs. Off the pastor's sobering look as she turns back to the weary refugees...

CUT TO:

EXT. GOBI DESERT - MOMENTS LATER

Nari, Hana, and the refugees SPRINT towards the Mongolian border, streaked with dirt and beads of sweat.

Hana weaves back and forth like a sidewinder snake. Panicking. Nari slows down and grabs her arm. She points to the barbed wire fence, straight ahead.

NARI
Can you see the border?

Hana frantically shakes her head. Tears in her eyes.

NARI (CONT'D)
It's all right. Just stay close.

Nari grabs her hand and keeps running. The ATVs GROWL in the distance... getting closer...

HANA
 (a hoarse whisper)
 Jack--

Nari glances over her shoulder at her sister. She looks so tiny and frail, kicking up sand, struggling to move forward.

HANA (CONT'D)

--I don't want to die down here.

A beat between them. The game is back on.

NARI

Not on my life, Rose.

SMASH TO:

INT. TITANIC - LOWER DECK - DREAM SEQUENCE

CREEEEEEEAK! The ill-fated oceanliner MOANS its death rattle as seawater surges through the deserted corridor.

As a dozen SCREECHING RATS scurry past, trying to outrun the flood, Nari and Hana BURST FORTH from the darkness.

Jack and Rose have returned for the finale.

NARI

Keep following the rats! They'll lead us to higher ground--

HANA

Jack! You're going too fast!

Hana slows down, dizzy, cradling her head in her hands. She clings to the wall for support. The boat TREMBLES as a fresh cascade of water comes crashing around the corner...

NARI

Keep going, we're gonna make it!

The lights FLICKER... then finally GO OUT.

BACK TO:

EXT. THE GOBI DESERT - MONGOLIAN BORDER - DAY

As the caravan of ATVs closes in...

NARI

Rose, you must do me this honor!
Promise me you'll survive! Rose--?

Hana lets go of Nari's hand and starts running on her own.

HANA
I can do it.

Nari nods and picks up the pace, Hana following close behind. Nari dodges a JAGGED STONE sticking out of the sand.

But Hana's not nearly as fast as Nari is. She continues WEAVING from side to side.

Nari nervously glances over her shoulder. They're only about 100 yards from the border, but the ATVs are gaining ground.

NARI
Faster, Hana!

Hana makes a break for it, but suddenly TRIPS over the same jagged stone Nari jumped over just a moment ago.

HANA
Nari!

Nari whirls around as Hana staggers to her feet. She falters, agonizing to put weight on her twisted ankle.

VRROOOOOM! The ATVs pick up speed as Nari backtracks and makes a beeline for her sister. But before she can reach her--

Yoon-Hee and the pastor break free of the pack of refugees and lunge for Nari. They drag her towards the border.

NARI
STOP! THAT'S MY SISTER--!

The rest of the refugees are already waiting for Nari and the women on the other side of the border. The ATVs close in...

Yoon-Hee pulls Nari underneath the barbed wire fence. She YELPS as the serrated edge digs into her flesh.

NARI (CONT'D)
Let me go! HANA!

Smearred with blood, Nari tries to wriggle back underneath the razor-sharp fence. The pastor grabs her leg.

HANA
Nari!!!

Hana and a frail, elderly KOREAN MAN are the only figures remaining on the other side. The ATVs surround them and SCREECH to a halt, creating a barricade.

A swarm of CHINESE TRAFFICKERS disembark and encircle them like vultures. Hana CRIES OUT as they apprehend her.

Nari gets a good look at the leader of their crew and GASPS--

It's the same SCRAGGLY INFORMANT from the river crossing. A thick BANDAGE covers his shoulder, where he was shot.

He MAKES EYE CONTACT with Nari as she struggles to break free from the barbed wire fence. Trapped between two worlds...

HANA (CONT'D)

Nari! NARI...!

A VACUUM OF SOUND except for Hana's voice as Nari stares into the eyes of her sister's captor. A face she'll never forget.

As the ATVs REV THEIR ENGINES and disappear into a cloud of sand and dust...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. INCHEON INT'L AIRPORT - SOUTH KOREA - DAY

A COMMUTER BUS zooms past an intersection to reveal Nari and a similarly ragged and malnourished PACK OF REFUGEES - all taking their first steps onto free Korean soil.

The other defectors whisper to one another and point excitedly at the city skyline in the distance. But Nari is silent. A thousand-yard stare.

The light changes. The group moves to cross the intersection.

Nari takes a final, desolate glance over her shoulder at the airport before crossing the street.

Onward, towards her new life. Alone.

INT/EXT. A VAN - DAY - MOVING

Nari sits in a window seat as the van full of defectors cruises through the streets of downtown Seoul.

She takes in the novel sights:

Teenagers sporting hair every color of the rainbow stroll down the street wearing white earbuds. Some hold hands. A couple stops to share a kiss.

A wealthy-looking woman in a leather jacket pushes a baby stroller while walking a WHITE DOG WITH SPOTS on a leash.

Nari gazes wistfully at the dog as it pitter-patters away.

They pass a mall. Then another. And yet another. Storefronts boasting colorful fashions and sleek electronics. Noodle shops galore. Rows of Hyundais parked at every street corner.

Nari closes her eyes, shutting out the sensory overload.

EXT. HANAWON RESETTLEMENT CENTER - DAY

The van pulls up at a secure, gated facility. Nari disembarks and reads the sign in front of the main building:

SUPER: The sign's English translation - **Hanawon: One People. Resettlement Facility.**

HANAWON COUNSELOR (V.O.)
Your name?

NARI (V.O.)
Nari Lee.

INT. HANAWON RESETTLEMENT CENTER - COMPUTER ROOM - DAY

Nari and a group of other young defectors get their first crash course in the world wide web.

Nari stares at the Google home page for the very first time.

Her fingers hover over the keyboard with trepidation. What to search for first?

HANAWON COUNSELOR (V.O.)
Have you come with your family?

NARI (V.O.)
No.

She finally types: "North Korea". Clicks SEARCH. Off her speechless reaction--

INT. HANAWON RESETTLEMENT CENTER - CLASSROOM - DAY

Nari sits among a group of WOMEN as their INSTRUCTOR (F, 40s) shows them various slides - a history lesson:

Images from the Korean War. The American Red Cross loading sacks of grain across the DMZ. The fall of the Berlin wall.

HANAWON COUNSELOR (V.O.)
How old are you?

NARI (V.O.)
 (beat, lies)
I'm eighteen.

EXT. STREETS OF SEOUL - DAY

A field trip. Nari and her Hanawon classmates gather round their instructor, who stands before an ATM.

The instructor demonstrates how to put the card in, enter information, and get cash.

She then hands the card to one of the defectors, indicating that she give it a try.

The WOMAN nervously inserts the card. Presses a few buttons. The machine BEEPS angrily. Tears well in the woman's eyes.

She backs away from the ATM, shaking her head. Discouraged.

HANAWON COUNSELOR (V.O.)
*You are of legal age and must
 therefore seek employment after
 your three months at Hanawon. Is
 that understood?*

NARI (V.O.)
Yes. Of course.

Unable to keep her gaze fixed upon the anxious, teary woman at the ATM, Nari's eyes drift to a nearby INTERNET CAFE.

She spots a gaggle of YOUNG GIRLS crowded around a computer in the window, howling with laughter at a video onscreen.

A YOUNG MAN (18, streaks of yellow and green in his long, shaggy hair) waves to Nari from behind the coffee bar. Startled, she looks away.

INT. NARI'S HANAWON DORMITORY - NIGHT

Nari enters the tiny space and removes her shoes and socks.

She pauses before settling into bed. Keenly aware of her bare feet against the carpet.

She starts to make "fists with her toes" against the rug, like Bruce Willis in Die Hard. But immediately stops herself.

She swallows hard. It's not time yet. Not without Hana.

HANAWON COUNSELOR (PRE-LAP)
*...Finally, as I'm sure you're
 aware, you'll be granted a
 resettlement stipend once your time
 at Hanawon is complete--*

INT. HANAWON RESETTLEMENT CENTER - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Nari sits before her HANAWON COUNSELOR (50s, bespectacled, male) who fills out a stack of paperwork on her behalf.

HANAWON COUNSELOR
*Do you mind if I ask how you plan
 to spend it?*

NARI
*I'm going to send the money to the
 missionary group who brought me
 across the border so they can go
 back to find my sister.*

HANAWON COUNSELOR
 (after a moment)
*Just to remind you, the stipend is
 meant to cover your living expenses
 after you leave us--*

NARI
That's why I'm getting a job.

HANAWON COUNSELOR
Do you know where your sister is?

NARI
In China. I think.

HANAWON COUNSELOR
 (beat)
*While we're always willing to do
 whatever we can to reunite
 families, if your sister was caught
 in China, there's a good chance
 she's already been repatriated to
 North Korea. There would have been
 a price on her head.*

NARI
I understand.

The counselor gazes into Nari's steely face. He exhales and signs off on her paperwork. A red stamp reads ASYLUM GRANTED.

NARI (CONT'D)
*Do you know where I can take an
 English class? I learned a little
 bit when I was young, but--*

HANAWON COUNSELOR
*I can recommend a few courses.
 (then)
 Big travel plans?*

NARI
 (nods)
*My father always talked about
 wanting to go to Hollywood to tour
 a movie studio.*

HANAWON COUNSELOR
You like movies?

Nari manages the first hint of a smile in weeks. Nods.

HANAWON COUNSELOR (CONT'D)
*Our library's got hundreds of
 titles. You can check out as many
 as you want.*

Off her hopeful glow as he hands over her official paperwork:

INT. HANAWON RESETTLEMENT CENTER - LIBRARY - DAY

Nari staggers up to the checkout desk with a MOUNTAIN OF DVDs
 - at least two dozen. She spills them across the countertop
 for the bewildered LIBRARIAN.

AMERICAN MAN (PRE-LAP)
 Would you like to sit with me?

CHORUS OF VOICES (PRE-LAP)
 Would you like... to sit with me?

INT. A CLASSROOM - NIGHT - A FEW MONTHS LATER

Nari sits among about a dozen Korean students of all ages,
 listening intently to her English instructor, SCOTT (25, a
 babyfaced blonde boy from Texas).

SCOTT
 Let's have dinner.

CLASS
 Let's... have... dinner.

SCOTT

Good, now one at a time.

He points to the front row. One after the other, the students slowly pronounce the English phrases, fighting against their accents. He arrives upon Nari:

NARI

(with confidence)

Would you like to sit with me?
Let's have dinner.

SCOTT

Great, Nari.

He smiles at her. She shyly averts her eyes. An ALARM on Scott's cell phone goes off.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Shoot, that's our time. Assignment
for next class, guys--

He distributes a stack of papers as his students pack up.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

--If you're not already on these
social media sites, sign up for a
couple. I've included a list of
American celebrities you might want
to follow. Note how the English
language changes on the internet.
Have fun with it.

He gets to Nari's desk and hands her a sheet. As she stands to put on her coat:

SCOTT (CONT'D)

I wanted to ask you. I teach an
advanced class on Tuesday nights.
You have to write an essay and pass
an oral exam to get in, but I'll
bet you'd ace it. Interested?

NARI

I... sure. I could try.

SCOTT

Test is next week. Hope to see you.

She manages to smile and maintain eye contact this time.

INT. A SMALL APARTMENT - SEOUL - DAY

Nari sits on the floor in front of a tiny TV set, simultaneously engrossed and disgusted.

A violent scene from OLDBOY plays onscreen. Nari winces at the tidal wave of blood and guts as her ROOMMATE (mid-20s) scurries in from the kitchen, holding a bowl of noodles.

She sits down beside Nari on the floor, offering her a set of chopsticks so they can share the noodles.

The apartment is sparse and cramped - barely any furniture aside from bed rolls on the floor and, of course, the TV.

Faithful to old habits, the girls have closed all the curtains. The room is PITCH BLACK.

ROOMMATE

What'd I miss?

As a man's horrible bone-chilling SCREAM erupts from the TV--

The girls' THIRD ROOMMATE (early 20s, another fellow defector) sails in through the door, holding a stack of mail. She SQUEALS gleefully.

ROOMMATE #2

I'm getting married!!!

Nari pauses the movie. Gives her roommate a puzzled look.

NARI

Wait... just now? How--?

ROOMMATE

Oh wow! Congratulations!

Nari watches as the two girls jump up and down and embrace.

ROOMMATE #2

I just got his picture. Wanna see?

She pulls a photo from the stack of mail and holds it up. Nari gapes at it. He's at least twice her age. Pockmarked.

ROOMMATE #2 (CONT'D)

I'm meeting him in Busan next week.

All expenses paid.

(then)

Ugh, why's it so dark in here?

She storms across the room and opens the curtains. Nari squints in the offensively harsh light.

NARI

How'd you meet him?

ROOMMATE #2

*I haven't. Yet. There's a website.
You remember Mi-Sook? She met her
husband there a few months ago.*

After a moment:

ROOMMATE #2 (CONT'D)

*Oh, Nari I almost forgot! This came
for you, from China--*

She fishes a letter from the stack of mail. Nari snatches it and tears it open.

ROOMMATE

Any news? Did they find her?

Nari scans the letter. Hands trembling. After a long moment, she puts the letter down.

NARI

*No. They don't think she's in China
anymore. She could be anywhere.*

A heavy beat as Nari grits her teeth and folds up the letter.

ROOMMATE #2

I'm sorry, sweetie--

NARI

I should get ready for class.

As Nari avoids eye contact and grabs her coat:

NARI (CONT'D)

Congratulations on your engagement.

ROOMMATE #2

*I could send you the website if you
wanted? It's free to try.*

(off Nari's silence)

*They help a lot of girls get
started here. It's probably what
your mom would've told you to do.*

Nari stiffens and spins to face her.

NARI

*You don't know anything about what
my mom would've told me.*

And she's out the door.

INT. INTERNET CAFE - DAY

Nari wanders into the same cafe she passed during her Hanawon field trip. The rainbow-haired YOUNG MAN who waved to her from the window spots her hesitating at a row of computers.

YOUNG MAN
You need a card.

NARI
Oh. I don't have--

YOUNG MAN
Here.

He sails over, holding a thin plastic card.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
How much you want on it?
(off her confusion)
We charge for every ten minutes.

She digs into her wallet and hands him a few scant bills.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
Great, I'll get you started.

A beat as he steps behind the register.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
You from up North?

NARI
(beat)
Is it obvious?

YOUNG MAN
Oh, it's not, really. I just see a lot of folks here who are new in town. I know Hanawon likes to bring classes to this neighborhood.

As he hands her the card with a friendly smile.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
I'm Min-Jae.

A sudden glimmer in her eyes. She looks up at him.

NARI
That was my father's name.

INTERNET CAFE MIN-JAE
*It's a good one. Do you have one of
 those? A name?*

NARI
Nari.
 (beat)
Do you know how to sign up for, uh--

She digs into her bag and pulls out the paper from Scott.

NARI (CONT'D)
--For Twitter?

INT. A FOOD COURT - NIGHT

Clad in an apron and hair net, Nari mans the register at LOTTERIA, an Asian fast food chain. She rings up a customer and hands him his order. As the next patron steps forth--

A YOUNG GIRL catches her eye... heading towards the trash bins to throw away her rice bowl.

Nari's jaw drops. She BOLTS from her station behind the counter, a confused customer in her wake.

She shoves past the crowd of shoppers as the girl makes her way towards the exit. Nari GRABS HER and whirls her around.

The girl meets Nari's desperate gaze. No. It's not Hana.

NARI
Oh... I'm sorry--

YOUNG GIRL
 (turns back around)
Mommy!

She RUNS out the door, where her FAMILY is waiting for her.

Off Nari's devastated embarrassment as her CUSTOMERS GLARE--

INT. NARI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Still wearing her hair net and apron from work, a weary Nari trudges through the door. Her remaining (unmarried) roommate sits in front of the TV, as per usual.

NARI
I brought today's rejects.

She produces a bag of leftovers from the restaurant.

ROOMMATE

As long as they're today's.

As Nari's roommate heads over to the kitchenette to help her unpack dinner:

ROOMMATE (CONT'D)

*Do you ever crave those corn
noodles, from back home? My mom had
the greatest recipe. If she used
tree bark, I couldn't taste it.*

NARI

(beat)

Sometimes, I guess.

As she reaches for a plate, Nari spots a STACK OF MAIL on the counter. There's a LETTER right on top - addressed to Nari. From China. A wary look between the two girls.

Nari grabs for the envelope and slowly tears it open. Her roommate puts a hand on her shoulder.

Nari exhales as though she's been holding her breath all day. Her roommate reads the letter over her shoulder.

NARI (CONT'D)

...She's alive. Hana's alive--

The girls share a giddy embrace as Nari trembles with joy.

ROOMMATE

Maybe she can be our new roommate.

Nari laughs and stares at the letter... but her ecstatic glow evaporates as she continues reading:

NARI

*Except she's in some sort of
prison. Back home. And they--*

She pauses to finish reading the letter. Hangs her head.

NARI (CONT'D)

...They need more money.

ROOMMATE

(a beat)

*Take extra shifts. We'll both get
as much free food as we can from
work. I'll help us save money
around the house.*

(off her silence)

(MORE)

ROOMMATE (CONT'D)

Listen, raising more money's a lot easier than raising the dead. She's alive, Nari.

Nari nods through clenched teeth and folds up the letter. A decisive gleam in her eye.

INT. FOOD COURT - LOTTERIA - NIGHT

An exhausted Nari works the late shift. Peppy K-Pop muzak drones from the radio as she wipes down the countertop.

NARI (V.O.)

(slow, measured English)

...My sister and I grew up in Pyongyang. But where we really grew up was in our living room, in the dark, watching our parents' black market videotapes.

She grabs her keys, kills the lights, and locks up the shop.

EXT. ATM MACHINE - NIGHT

Nari withdraws a large amount of cash and stuffs into an ENVELOPE, addressed to China.

NARI (V.O.)

In the stories we read at school, nobody died for love. Nobody fought for what they believed in when no one else agreed with them. People were thankful for what they had.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTHAMPTON, ENGLAND - SHIPYARD - DREAM SEQUENCE

Nari, as JACK, clutches a fistful of cash and a TICKET TO THE TITANIC. She darts away from a nearby pub with her winnings.

NARI (V.O.)

But the people in our parents' movies were different.

A grin spreads across her face as she hoists her meager sack of belongings over her shoulder and shoves her way through the congested crowd.

Nari reaches the enormous entry plank leading to the Titanic. She gazes up at the Ship of Dreams with reverence.

NARI (V.O.)

And I think, if we hadn't met these people... we might not have wanted to leave home to begin with. We wouldn't have known we were supposed to want something more.

At that moment, HANA ROUNDS THE CORNER, as Rose, escorted by her well-to-do entourage. She lifts the brim of her priceless, iconic sun-hat and locks eyes with Nari.

NARI (V.O.)

Our parents are gone, but people will remember them. Even if everything they ever sold gets destroyed. People will remember how they felt the first time they watched something they weren't supposed to see. How it made them feel less afraid. Less alone.

Nari approaches Hana, takes her hand, and kisses it with a very chivalrous bow. As they board the Titanic together...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Nari stands in front of Scott and her class, in the middle of her oral exam. She holds a piece of paper in her shaky hand.

Scott is frozen in his seat, riveted as she reads on:

NARI

...I bought all of Hana's favorites on DVD so we can watch them when she gets here. We'll open the curtains and have our friends over. I think... she will like that.

A pregnant pause as Nari looks up with a shrug. The end. Scott jumps to attention and APPLAUDS. The class joins in.

SCOTT

Outstanding! Welcome to Level 3!

Nari beams as she hands Scott the hard copy of her essay.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Listen, the school's got this newsletter.

(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 Don't know if you'd be interested,
 but I'd love to share this with the
 other teachers.

NARI
 (beat)
Just the other teachers?

SCOTT
Yeah. Don't worry.

After a moment, Nari confidently replies in English:

NARI
 Okay.

INT. INTERNET CAFE - DAY - A FEW MONTHS LATER

Nari sips a cup of tea and reads the news online - her new morning ritual. Min-Jae, today with blue hair, sails by and drops a piece of chocolate onto her keyboard.

INTERNET CAFE MIN-JAE
What's the good news, Nari Lee?

As she unwraps the chocolate and pops it into her mouth:

NARI
He's still dead.

REVERSE ON HER SCREEN: Kim Jong-Il's body lies in a glass coffin. Grief-stricken mourners pose, prostrate, beside it.

INTERNET CAFE MIN-JAE
 (after a moment)
What do you think's gonna happen?

NARI
He's got sons.

A grim beat between them. Nari opens up her Twitter page as Min-Jae moves off. But something odd catches her eye...

NARI (CONT'D)
Min-Jae?

He spins back around.

INTERNET CAFE MIN-JAE
Yeah?

NARI
Do you know what this means?

She points to her Twitter homepage, where the number "12" flashes on her NOTIFICATIONS tab. He laughs.

INTERNET CAFE MIN-JAE
*Means you're popular. What, no
 one's ever tweeted at you before?*

She clicks on the Notifications tab. Stares at the screen for a long, perplexed beat.

NARI
I don't follow any of these people.

REVERSE ON THE SCREEN:

"@NariLee: Fellow refugee from Darfur. Very inspiring piece. Blessings to you and your family."

"Beautiful story from @NariLee - hope she finds her sister soon! <http://www.amnesty.org>"

Nari's mouth hangs agape as she scrolls. The list goes on and on - accolades for a mysterious article written by her...

INTERNET CAFE MIN-JAE
Hey, cool. Did you write something?

NARI
I... I didn't think--

She CLICKS on the Amnesty link. Min-Jae hovers behind her.

ONSCREEN: An article loads, published by Amnesty International - **"A Trip to the Movies" by Nari Lee.**

Nari's face flushes with fury. She bolts up from her chair and quickly closes her internet browser. Min-Jae follows her as she gathers her things.

INTERNET CAFE MIN-JAE
Wait, Nari - where are you going?

NARI
I need to fix this.

She grabs her time card from the reader and shoves it into her pocket. Min-Jae watches her go with a bewildered stare.

INT. CLASSROOM - ENGLISH SCHOOL - DAY

Nari marches into the room as Scott's class packs up and files out the door. Unsmiling, she approaches his desk.

SCOTT
Nari, hey! You're pretty early for--

NARI
Who published my essay?

SCOTT
...I did. In our newsletter.

NARI
It's not just in your newsletter.
It's online, on other websites.
People sent me tweets!

SCOTT
Nari, that's great! I had no idea--

NARI
No! Not great!

The last of Scott's students glances over at Nari curiously as he heads for the door. She lowers her voice.

NARI (CONT'D)
I've been sending money to the missionaries so Hana can cross the border again. But if someone reads it, they might do something to her before she can get out. We committed a crime, and I wrote about it. I used our real names.

Scott exhales and sinks into his chair.

SCOTT
Shit.

NARI
Get it taken down.

SCOTT
I will. I'll find out which one of our teachers submitted it--

Nari stares him down and switches back to English:

NARI
Today.

SCOTT
Yeah. Today. I promise.

A final furious glance from Nari before she storms out.

INT. NARI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's so late it's early. Nari's alone in her anxious wakefulness, lying on the floor in front of the TV.

She channel surfs in an agitated daze as weak, early dawn light slowly fills the room.

INT. INTERNET CAFE - A FEW DAYS LATER

Nari sits down at her usual computer and slides her card into the reader. Min-Jae pokes his head into her cubicle.

INTERNET CAFE MIN-JAE
...So? Did they do it?

Nari immediately navigates to the Amnesty International link housing her article. The website loads.

Sure enough, the piece is still live. She sighs.

NARI
What's taking them so long?

A sympathetic glance from Min-Jae.

INTERNET CAFE MIN-JAE
Let me get you a boba.

As he sails off towards the coffee bar...

Nari opens a new tab and checks her Twitter feed. She has over 200 NEW FOLLOWERS, literally overnight.

She reluctantly clicks her NOTIFICATIONS TAB and scrolls through the tweets... but pauses mid-way through the list.

She stares at the screen for a long beat.

THE REVERSE: "@NariLee how can we help Hana?"

She clicks on the tweet for more information. It's been sent from **@SerenaShowOfficial**.

Nari considers the message for a moment, pensive, as Min-Jae re-approaches with her boba tea. He hands it to her.

NARI
I haven't replied to any of these.

INTERNET CAFE MIN-JAE
Fans getting antsy?

Nari absorbs the words, one by one: **How can we help Hana?**

NARI
Do you have a phone I could use?

EXT. STREETS OF SEOUL - DAY

Scott exits a coffee shop as his PHONE starts ringing. He digs into his messenger bag and picks up.

SCOTT
This is Scott--
(then)
Nari. I've been meaning to call you. You know Eddie, who teaches after me on Tuesdays? He says he has a contact over at Amnesty who can ask the webmaster to--

INT. INTERNET CAFE - SAME

Nari cradles the cafe's phone, behind the coffee bar.

NARI
Don't take it down.

SCOTT (V.O.)
Wait, really? But I thought--

NARI
I have a better idea.

Off the hopeful sparkle in Nari's eye, the one we haven't seen in so very long...

INT. KOTJEBI "SAFEHOUSE" - INDETERMINATE - THREE YEARS LATER

Four concrete walls. A box no sunlight can penetrate. Until:

CREEEEEEAK - the heavy iron door thrusts open, spilling light from outside to reveal--

About FIFTY CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS, curled up on the floor. Sharing only a few blankets between them.

A PRISON GUARD marches through the sleeping masses and picks up a TEENAGE GIRL by her collar.

He pins a CLOTH PATCH to the back of her ragged shirt: white, with a RED CROSS on it.

He spins her away from us and leads her out the door. We don't see her face.

The other kids in the room HOLLER and CHEER as the girl is escorted out. The Prison Guard SLAMS the door to them.

EXT. KOTJEBI "SAFEHOUSE" - CHONGJIN, NORTH KOREA - DAY

The Prison Guard leads the barefoot, shivering girl to a TRUCK in front of the secure facility.

The truck bears that same RED CROSS, in chipped, faded paint.

A DOCTOR and a NURSE emerge from the back of the truck and guide the girl inside.

PRISON GUARD
*Surgery's been scheduled at the
clinic. Have her back tonight.*

INT. MAKESHIFT AMBULANCE - MOMENTS LATER

The girl lies on a rickety gurney, her back facing us, as the truck rolls down the unpaved road.

A run-down HOSPITAL appears outside the window. The truck gets closer, but doesn't slow down.

Off the TRUCK DRIVER'S intense stare as he floors it RIGHT PAST THE HOSPITAL...

INT. BLACKED-OUT SUV - DAY (2015)

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

Startled, Nari jumps back from the car's window. One of the agents rolls it down just a crack to reveal--

Serena. Perfect hair off-kilter. Heels in her hand instead of on her feet. Looks like she's been running.

AGENT
Ms. Sanders, please step away from--

SERENA
Please. It's not me you're guarding
her from. Nari, I've been looking
all over for you. Can we talk?

NARI
Paul already told me everything.

A moment passes between them. Serena exhales.

SERENA

Then I at least owe you an apology.
(to the agent)
Can I take her upstairs for just a
few minutes? If you come along?

PAUL

Nari, you don't have to go anywhere
if you don't--

NARI

(to Serena)
Did you know? About Hana?

SERENA

No, honey. I just found out, same
as you.

A moment before Nari reaches for the door. She leaves the
eyeglasses behind, on the seat.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DUSK

The two secret service agents flank the rooftop entryway as
Serena and Nari look out over Hollywood. It feels safe up
here. Removed from all the chaos.

As Nari gazes out across the tangerine-orange city skyline--

NARI

When I was little, the kids in my
neighborhood performed music for a
group of journalists. From France,
I think. Before they left, I heard
their guide ask them if they
thought our city was the most
beautiful in the world. They said
yes. But I knew they were lying.

SERENA

(after a moment)
I'm so sorry for what this day
turned into. I shouldn't have
involved the show. No audience. No
fuss. You know? I should have just
given you what you asked for.
(off Nari's puzzled look)
In your essay?

(MORE)

SERENA (CONT'D)

You said you wished you and your sister could open the curtains and have all your friends over to watch a movie. That's what I wanted to give you today.

NARI

Because you thought it would make a good show?

SERENA

Well, it would have. But no. It was because of what you wrote.

(beat)

I moved here with some big plans, about 15 years ago. Like anyone. Everyone. Shel and I... we go way back. He was going to produce all my greatest hits and I was gonna be Meryl Streep. You know who Meryl--?

(laughs)

Sorry. Of course you do.

A small laugh escapes Nari's lips.

SERENA (CONT'D)

But it wasn't meant to be. So I decided to dust off my journalism degree and get into talk radio. Couple years later, we had the Serena Show. And it was fun. Loads of fun, at first. And there was money. But I felt like I'd missed the point. I was interviewing reality TV stars and reading off cue cards because there was nothing interesting you could think of to say to these people without them.

NARI

But you make it look like you're not even reading. That's not easy.

SERENA

(laughs)

There's one for the tombstone. But it was right around then that I read your essay and... I don't know. Something about it woke me up. The way you talked about your sister and these movies that you loved so much... I guess you reminded me why I even came here in the first place.

(MORE)

SERENA (CONT'D)

Why I thought it was so important to be a part of it all. I owe you for that. And I'm sorry I couldn't give you what you wanted in return.

NARI

What happened today wasn't your fault. All you wanted to do was bring us together.

(then)

I'm the one who lost her in the first place. If anyone's to blame, it's me.

SERENA

That's no way to live your life.

NARI

Maybe when I see her and tell her I'm sorry, I won't anymore.

SERENA

(after a moment)

C'mon. Let's get you back to your hotel. It's been a long day.

Nari nods as Serena gently drapes her arm over her shoulders and guides her toward the stairwell. The two agents follow.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

As Nari and Serena make their way downstairs...

CASSIE (O.S.)

SERENA! SERENA--!

Her voice echoes off the walls as she BOOKS IT up the stairs two at a time. Serena and Nari FREEZE. As the secret service agents instinctively move to BLOCK HER--

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Serena. She's in the car.

Stunned silence falls between Serena and Nari until... Serena SQUEALS. A more subdued Nari accepts her ecstatic embrace.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

The driver just called me. He's about to leave LAX. We need to let him know where to take her. Shel's still in this meeting up at the studio. I keep trying him, but--

PAUL (O.S.)

Nari! They got her! We're--

As Paul bolts up the stairs and clocks their expressions--

CASSIE

Sorry. Beat you to it.

Nari glances over at the two secret service agents, pressing their fingers to their ears, listening to their tiny radios.

AGENT

(to Paul)

State Department wishes to inform you that the threat's been contained. Which... I imagine you've gathered by now--

NARI

But what happened? I don't understand, is she all right?

PAUL

Turns out the CIA had intelligence about Kim's errand boys heading to California hours before her flight even landed. The minute they touched down, the pilot pulled the emergency exit so she could meet secret service on the runway. They were keeping her under lock and key all day till they nabbed the guys. Nobody else knew.

CASSIE

Serena, I'm sorry, but I've still got the driver on hold. Where are we taking this girl?

SERENA

Just tell him to bring her here. Let's stick to the plan.

CASSIE

Most of the crew's already been released. The show's over.

SERENA

Who said anything about the show? We promised these girls a movie, so let's cue it up.

CASSIE

Copy that.

As she whips out her phone, about to un-mute the call--

CASSIE (CONT'D)
...And what do you want me to tell
Shel, when he gets back to me?

SERENA
(beat)
That I'm handling things.

With an affirmative nod, Cassie jogs ahead of them down the stairs and gets back on the line.

A moment between Paul, Serena, and Nari. The mood shifts.

PAUL
Like I told you before... she
claims she's your sister. They
asked her a lot of questions--

NARI
I'm just glad she's okay.

Paul reaches into his pocket and hands Nari the eyeglasses.

A look between them before Nari makes her way out of the stairwell. Ready for whatever comes next.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - LOBBY - SOME TIME LATER

Nari, Serena, Paul, and Cassie stand at the front door, anxiously eying every vehicle that passes. Nari JUMPS as the light turns green. The traffic streaks by.

Bus. Motorcycle. Prius. Another bus. Until, finally--

A BLACK TOWN CAR slows down alongside the curb. Nari pulls a sharp inhale. Paul takes her hand. A moment between them.

The four of them watch through the window as the driver gets out and opens the back door. Time stands still as A TEENAGE GIRL slowly steps out onto the pavement.

She's painfully thin, dressed in a baggy sweatshirt and black leggings that expose how tiny her legs have become.

She also wears a cheap-looking pair of SUNGLASSES - the kind you might buy at a gas station.

Nari lets go of Paul's hand and approaches the revolving door as it SPINS OPEN.

The girl inches forward till she's face to face with Nari. An eternal moment before Nari removes the girl's sunglasses.

They stare at one another. Or at least... Nari stares. Her breath catches as she realizes the girl is looking RIGHT PAST HER. She's blind.

Her foggy eyes are caked with shimmery purple eyeshadow and clumpy mascara. Her ears have been freshly pierced - still red and a little swollen. Her face is gaunt. But it's her.

Certainty washes over Nari's face. A stranger no longer, Nari finally places a tentative hand on Hana's shoulder.

NARI

Hi, Hana.

As though struck by a bolt of electricity, Hana jumps up and down with an ecstatic SQUEAL. She fumbles towards Nari and wraps her into a tight embrace.

HANA

Hollywooooood!!!!

Nari laughs hysterically, wiping tears from her eyes, and hugs her sister even tighter.

Serena motions to Paul and Cassie, indicating that they follow her upstairs. Giving them a moment. Once they've gone:

NARI

Hana... I'm so sorry--

HANA

That's dumb. For what?

(then)

This is Hollywood, right?

Nari dries her eyes on her sleeve. A laugh escapes her lips.

Awestruck, peaceful silence falls between them. A beat before Hana wipes her eyes, smudging her makeup across her face.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - LADIES' ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Hana sits on the countertop as Nari wets a paper towel and gets to work wiping the makeup from her eyes.

NARI

Sorry. Does that hurt?

HANA

Nah. It's not like that.

Nari bites her lip to keep from crying again as she cleans off her sister's face, gazing into her cloudy eyes.

But she's betrayed by her loud SNIFFLE. Hana notices.

HANA (CONT'D)

It's okay. Really. I got lucky, if you want to know the truth. After they sent me back home, the headaches got worse and eventually I couldn't see anything anymore. But sometimes, if they like you enough, they'll let you out for a few days to see a doctor. I was supposed to have surgery. But the people taking me to the hospital took me to the border instead.

NARI

Do you think you'll be able to... I mean, if you have the surgery--?

HANA

Maybe. But I've almost gotten used to it. I think sometimes... it was better not to see anything.

A beat as Nari catches a glimpse of her reflection in the mirror and clocks the EYEGLASSES poking out of her pocket.

NARI

*I had this whole day planned for us, before I knew--
(beat)
Serena rented out a movie theater so we could watch Titanic together.*

HANA

Really? That's amazing!

NARI

But... you can't--

HANA

*Do you know how many times I've watched Titanic?
(then)
I can see it.*

A moment between them. Hana focuses on Nari... as if she's meeting her gaze. A smile finally breaks across Nari's face.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - SCREENING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The lights dim as Nari guides Hana towards two seats, right in the middle of the empty house. Prime real estate. They juggle sodas and two huge buckets of popcorn.

Serena, Paul, and Cassie stand behind them, towards the back of the theater. As Serena watches the girls settle in:

SERENA

Still no word from Shel?

CASSIE

Sorry.

SERENA

Don't be.

CASSIE

(to Paul)

Oh, I almost forgot. Here--

She hands him his cell phone back. He chuckles cynically.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Spoils of war.

SERENA

I'm glad you were here today. You did good, Traylor.

PAUL

You did, too.

SERENA

Not sure our audience would agree.

Paul fishes out his phone and SNAPS A PICTURE of the back of Nari and Hana's heads, silhouetted in the dim light.

PAUL'S PHONE: He POSTS THE PHOTO to Twitter and tags @SerenaShowOfficial with the caption "Reunion At The Movies".

PAUL

I'd give it a couple hours.

The three of them exchange a glance as the lights go down.

Over at Nari and Hana's seats, the girls get comfortable.

As the opening credits of "Titanic" roll, Hana takes off her shoes. Then her socks. She nudges Nari, who follows suit.

Together, they "make fists" with their toes on the carpet.

Hana smiles, then shuts her eyes as the movie's opening score envelops them. The music SWELLS to a crescendo. After a moment, Nari shuts her eyes as well.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LEE HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Four figures perch on the couch in the pitch black room, illuminated only by the tiny TV screen in front of them.

The family has gathered together once again.

Wedged between their parents, Young Hana leans her head against Nari's shoulder. Settling in for the next adventure.

FADE TO BLACK.