

III. CREATIVE WORK

In this creative work, I would like to explore how someone with a bad background deals with her future, how a bad background could affect her steps later in life. In this story, Jieun is seen to be really careful with her steps. She does not know exactly where to step on, as she is torn between chasing her love, or her career. Here in this story, is not simply just a story about how a person loves another person, but also how a person struggles to balance everything in her life.

BITTERSWEET

FADE IN

SCENE 1

EXT. AN ALLEY – Day

Jieun (26) is walking on the street in a not-fancy but rather ordinary Korean neighborhood. The alley is narrow, showing that the alley is not located in the CBD area of Busan. Jieun is wearing ordinary, a bit sloppy clothes with some groceries in her hand. After walking for awhile, her phone rings. She looks at the caller ID, clears her throat then answers the phone.

JIEUN

Hello? Yes, this is Kim Jieun. Oh, let me just go back to my desk, just a second. Mmm, yes, oh? (her expression turns a little sour) I'm sorry but can I ask who gets the position? (her voice trembles a little in disappointment) I see. Please keep me in mind for future projects. Thank you.

As she finishes talking, Jieun moves to the narrower part of the alley. She leans herself against a wall which has mural that expresses one that being successful is the pursue of happiness. She looks at her phone a little desperately. She stares blankly at her phone. Not long after, she looks down tiredly before walking away.

CUT TO

SCENE 2

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Jieun enters her apartment. She switches the lights on. The lamp flickers a little bit before it's fully turned on. Jieun's apartment is messy. Unfolded clothes are piled up at the corner of the room. Empty noodle cups are in the sink. The desk is extremely messy with papers and books. She puts her bag down onto the floor as the phone rings. It's her father. She hesitates for awhile before answering her father.

JIEUN

(pick up the call) Hello?

FATHER

Jieun, how is it doing?

JIEUN

Oh, I'm fine, Father... I had another... (cont')

FATHER

(answers with stern voice) The job interview. How was it?

An inconvenient silence happened. Jieun goes silent for a moment, fidgeting with her clothes for awhile before answering.

JIEUN

It... It didn't turn out well, Father. I...

FATHER

What? (in a tone of "pardon?")

JIEUN

(bites her lips) It... It didn't turn out well, Father...

FATHER

How come?! (in a tone of asking more (?))

JIEUN

I... I don't know... I had done my best but... (cont')

Father ends the call before Jieun even answers, leaving Jieun stunned. Jieun looks at the phone screen blankly, looking worried and guilty. She then puts her phone on the table in the middle of the room, leaning herself against the wall and then covering her face with his palm in frustration.

She was rubbing her face when her phone rings again. Jieun looks at her phone in hesitation before finally taking her phone off the table and see the caller ID. It's Jihoon (26). She pats herself in the face before taking her phone and picking up the call. She smiles and tries to sound cheerful.

JIEUN

Hey, what's up?

JIHOON

I need your help...

Jieun still look worried but her expression brightens a bit as she hears Jihoon speaking.

JIEUN

Yeah? What's wrong?

JIHOON

There's not enough time to explain through phone!
Can you come to the café we usually meet?

Jieun is looking around her apartment. She takes a piece of clothing then drops it again. She walks towards the photo of her and Jihoon in which she put on the table for awhile before she goes to the fridge and see the lots of delivery menus planted on her fridge.

JIEUN

Jihoon, listen, I'm actually little busy over here... If you please just... (con't)

Jieun roams around back to the front door and finds some mails.

JIHOON

(con't) I'm really sorry, Jieun. But this time is really serious! Can we go have coffee so I can tell you more? (pause) I really need your help.

Jieun bites her lower lip, hesitating for awhile before she finally answers.

JIEUN

Uh... I guess it's okay? Let's say, the usual café in half an hour?

JIHOON

Okay, great! See you!

JIEUN

Yeah, yeah, see you!!

She ends the call before looking at the clothes she's wearing, rubbing a little here and there, trying to shake off some stain and tidying her clothes a little. She looks at her blouse, there is a stain there. She hops around her messy apartment to get something decent on to cover her blouse.

Jieun stops hopping around, only standing in the middle of the mess in her apartment as she finally finds an outer to cover the stains on her clothes. As she is getting ready, a memory from when she was 9 played in her head.

#MONTAGE FLASHBACK 1

Jieun is doing her homework, her father is watching her. She sometimes glances at her dolls, seems like she wants to play with the dolls; however, every time her Father sees her glancing at the dolls, her Father will guide her head back to the book.

FATHER

Jieun, this world is not an easy place to live in. I didn't have anything when I was your age. Now that me and your mother give you everything, you should work hard and be successful later on. You understand, Jieun?

JIEUN

Yes, daddy.

#END OF MONTAGE FLASHBACK 1

CUT BACK TO

Turns Jieun covers her face with her palm, rubbing her face a little as if she is stressed, but we can see a little smile is growing in her face.

CUT TO

SCENE 3

INT. CAFÉ - DAY

Jieun is looking at Jihoon, but her gaze is empty, meanwhile Jihoon is talking nonstop. She looks like she

has her mind somewhere else. Jihoon notices this and tries to call Jieun.

JIHOON

Jieun..?

Jieun is still not answering.

JIHOON

Jieun...? (snaps a finger in front of her face)

Jieun was taken aback from her daydreaming and stutters a little.

JIEUN

Oh!! Oh, yes?

JIHOON

Were you even listening to me?

JIEUN

I did, I did!

Jihoon looks at her, confused. Jieun tries to act normal and cover her own anxiety.

JIEUN

So, what's the big deal? (she straightens her back and recollect herself)

JIHOON

We were talking about marriage when she suddenly asked me whether I'm sure that she's the one for

me. She sound really worried, I was questioning whether she was serious or not.

JIEUN

Okay. (she holds her arm tightly, her mind wanders.)

JIHOON

As I said, of course I said yes, I was serious. But then... (a pause) she turned it back all into me.

JIEUN

Mmhm?

JIHOON

She started accusing me that I didn't actually intend to be with her, and we ended up arguing for hours because I was trying to convince her that I'm being serious with her but she believed the opposite. She was being really stubborn and kept telling me that I'm forcing her to marry.

Jieun chuckles in a mocking way when she hears Jihoon's last sentence.

JIEUN

Okay, okay. (she rests her right cheek on her palm)

JIHOON

I wanted to talk to her more but my father was suddenly hospitalized again last night. His heart

acted up again. (putting his fingers against his temples) As if the argument isn't enough, that night, my mother was asking me again about the engagement. Like, when will I officially propose her. But of course I couldn't propose her while we are still this state.

JIEUN

Uh... probably you should talk to her... again? (she says this while looking at her cellphone, looking at a message from her father, asking about her other job interview.)

JIHOON

(Looks a little annoyed) How do I talk to her when she doesn't even reply my messages?

Jieun is cringing for awhile, while Jihoon puts his palm on his face desperately.

JIHOON (Con't)

After a year together, I thought she would think even more seriously on this relationship... (groans)

JIEUN

She is probably still not sure of you. Remember how she turned out with her ex? She probably didn't want the same thing to happen again to her... (a beat) You know, what? I'll try to talk to her.

JIHOON

I really hope you do, honestly. (he exhales) I feel like, the old stuff are still bothering her

too. But I just am not too sure either. Can you please talk to her? (looks down) I want her to understand that instead of just herself, I'm worried too. My dad might not last long enough to see me get married. I... I want to make my dad happy too, at least... You know?

JIEUN

Oh, Jihoon. (she squeezes his hands tightly) You guys won't break up, I'm sure of that. Sohyun loves you so much, and you do love her too right?

JIHOON

(nodding weakly) Yeah..

JIEUN

Right. (She takes her hand away from Jihoon)

They stop talking for awhile. Both of them are looking into the window, looking at the busy street and couples there. As she is looking at the busy streets, the memory from when she was 12 flies to her mind.

#MONTAGE FLASHBACK 2

Jieun and her father are in the living room. It is a little around early night. Jieun and her little sister Jihye are doing their homework while the father is changing the newborn son's diaper. Jieun is doing her homework, her sister was too. Once in awhile, Jieun is doodling a name of a guys whom she liked. Her father was reading newspaper sees it.

FATHER (V.O.)

Jieun, be serious in whatever you do. Love can wait. When you are successful, guys will chase after you.

Jieun is a little taken aback as her father says so. She immediately stops the doodling, looking embarrassed. She stops doodling immediately.

JIEUN (V.O.)

I understand, daddy.

#END OF MONTAGE FLASHBACK 2

Cut Back to.

Jieun is sipping her coffee, looking at Jihoon in concern, while Jihoon is gazing across the room, having his mind somewhere.

JIEUN

Just give her three days. You guys have quite a long history together. It would be silly if you guys separate when you guys are this serious already.

JIHOON

(His eyes are still glued to the window) Are you sure?

JIEUN

Of course! I'm also a girl, you know. I have strong feelings.

JIHOON

(looks at Jieun and chuckles) Okay, Jieun. Okay. I'm glad I could trust you as a friend. (looks at his watch) Oh, lunchtime's over. Gotta go back to the office. See you, Jieun!

Jieun's smile is gone when Jihoon mentions about his job. She looks gloomy once again, waving politely to Jihoon as the male walks away, leaving her alone in the café. Jieun is alone in her seat. Sometimes her gaze will fall empty again, staring at the coffee in front of her silently.

SCENE 4

EXT. ROOFTOP-NIGHT

Sohyun (26), Jihoon's girlfriend as well as Jieun's best friend, bursts through the door to the rooftop, seeing Jieun is sitting there with a can of beer near her. Jieun is enjoying the night breeze as Sohyun sits beside her.

SOHYUN

Here you are! (she hops near Jieun) Why aren't you at home? It's cold.

She notices a bottle of beer near Jieun.

SOHYUN

And drinking alone! (she giggles) You naughty girl.

Jieun turns her head to Sohyun but then continues looking at the lights from the city at night. The city

looks like dark sky with lights scattering like stars.
It is beautiful.

SOHYUN

I really wanna talk to you! Remember I told you about new executive at work? I had a very interesting week with him. (rolls her eyes in annoyance)

JIEUN

Um, yeah. You told me. (a pause) Oh anyway, since you're here, I need to talk to you too.

SOHYUN

Sure! About what?

JIEUN

You. (a pause) You and Jihoon.

Sohyun looks at Jieun in silence. She then turns her head towards the city and closes her eyes for awhile.

SOHYUN

Okay, what do you wanna talk about? (a pause) As expected, Jihoon told you everything, right?

JIEUN

True. He told me about your fights.

SOHYUN

Oh, that.

JIEUN

No, no. I don't wanna talk too deeply on that. I just wanna ask you... what makes you think of him like that?

Sohyun goes silent for awhile before she exhales.

JIEUN

Are you still remembering... you know, the old stuffs?

Jieun doesn't continue, but Sohyun nods anyway.

SOHYUN

Mmhm, pretty much.

JIEUN

But... I mean, past is past, Sohyun...

SOHYUN

But, I don't know... I feel like I'm not ready yet for future commitment... (she takes Jieun's beer and drinks it)

JIEUN

But still it doesn't have to be with the fights... You guys can talk about it slowly, can't you?

Sohyun falls silence for some beats.

SOHYUN

It's hard.

JIEUN

Well, it is... But you know (con't)

SOHYUN

Moreover, with his father's condition, I feel pressured... (some beats) I feel like, with him talking about his father's condition, and marriage after, he's giving me hints that we should marry in a rush, before his father passes away. Even though he is indeed a decent man, but still I want to be ready myself too.

JIEUN

But Sohyun, still... Are you gonna let him wait that long?

SOHYUN

But—

JIEUN

You're just too selfish, that's your problem, Sohyun.

SOHYUN

What the... have you ever been in relationship before, Jieun?? Have you even ever been in love??? How would you know how it feels?

Jieun is taken aback for a moment. She turns her head back to the view, Sohyun too. The situation goes awkward for awhile. After some beat, Sohyun decided to speak.

SOHYUN

Sorry, Jieun. That was mean of me. What you say is right. I ,might be selfish that I might seem like I don't want to be with him.. But the thing is, just I'm not ready. And what will happen when two people who are not sure of each other get together?

Jieun doesn't say anything.

SOHYUN

A divorce it is. I don't want to end up separating with him or, being unhappy with him. I want my relationship to last long too, especially since this is marriage.

JIEUN

He loves you, right?

Sohyun nods.

SOHYUN

I know he loves me.

Jieun nods.

JIEUN

Great... Now you only have yourself to convince, I suppose?

SOHYUN

Yeah... (finishing Jieun's beer) I gotta really think of all of these...

Jieun is still looking afar at the view, Sohyun is staring at her for awhile before smiling.

SOHYUN

Jieun, thank you.

JIEUN

Hm?

SOHYUN

You know, for always there when we need you.

JIEUN

No, that's nothing. I feel like I should do it, as your friend. (she smiles)

SOHYUN

(shakes her head as she chuckles) No, no. Jieun, you're the best friend any couple could have.

Jieun stays silent for awhile, but she smiles afterwards.

JIEUN

So... you still love him?

SOHYUN

Of course~ You have to learn not to take our fights so seriously, Jieun. Cause that's only one side of love, not everything, silly. (she giggles)

Jieun grins at Sohyun's sentence. Then she looks back at the view.

SOHYUN

I wish he made me feel like I'm understood, like the way he seems to understand you. I want him to realize that without understanding, our marriage will be a troubled one.

JIEUN

It will still not work if you guys are not talking about this matter seriously..

Sohyun is speechless, but she nods anyway. Then silence comes between them for some beat.

SOHYUN

Anyway, you have job interview upcoming? Do you have anything prepared for it?

JIEUN

Yeah, I guess... (she looks around nervously and changes the subject) So, tell me about the new executive!

SOHYUN

Oh, him? Well, he really has an odd sense of humor. You know the other day I was in the office...

Sohyun keeps babbling while Jieun gazes into the view and again takes a sip from the bottle. As she is taking a sip, a memory from when she was 16 played in her head.

CUT TO:

#MONTAGE FLASHBACK 3

Jieun is crying in her room. A ripped paper is on the floor, and a stalk of withered flower is on the floor as well, ripped to pieces. As she is sobbing some more, her father is opening her room.

FATHER

Jieun! How many times I should tell you to forget that guy? He is not worth your time. Your education is more important!

JIEUN

But... I like him a lot, daddy. Can't we at least be friends? (sobbing a little)

FATHER

No! And no means no! You have me, you have Jihye and you have Jiseok as well!! That's the most important part for now!!

JIEUN

But Father...

FATHER

Why are you are such a rebel, Jieun! I give you everything since your mom's gone, but you turn into a rebel. We never teach you to be this way! You have Jihye and Jiseok too... If you are not serious about your education, how are you gonna take care of them later?

Jieun falls silent, not able to answer anything.

FATHER

Jieun... I'm not young anymore... I only have you to rely on now...

Father moves closer to the crying Jieun and sits in front of her.

FATHER

I know I've been really harsh to you... But it's for your own good too... As I said, I'm not young anymore... Later on, when I pass, you are the one who have to take care of Jihye and Jiseok. (holds Jieun's hand) I know it's a big responsibility, and I know it's gonna be hard.

JIEUN

Father...

FATHER

That's why, please focus on your education. Study a lot, be successful. Your mother is already gone. I can only share this responsibility with you now...

Jieun looks at her father. Father's face looks really tired. Seeing Father's face, Jieun cries even more. She then glances at the teared paper and flower before nodding to her father.

JIEUN

I understand, Father...

#END OF FLASHBACK MONTAGE 3

CUT TO

SCENE 5

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jieun closes the apartment door after meeting with Sohyun earlier. She takes off her jacket, shivering a little because of the cold wind. She then takes her phone out of her pocket and puts it on the table, while throwing her jacket onto the pile of clothes at the corner of the room. She then opens the fridge, looking for something she could probably eat. Her eyes fall to a container of kimchi on the bottom of the fridge. She opens it and tries to smell the kimchi. It looks like an old kimchi, the color is very red. She looks hesitant for awhile, but she then takes a small bowl and takes some of the kimchi out of the container and begin eating it. As she is eating her kimchi, her phone notification rings, showing her a KakaoTalk pop-up message.

JIHYE (v.o)

Hey, big sis... Sorry for disturbing you this late but... (con't)

Jieun is not yet done reading the first message when the second message appears.

JIHYE (v.o)

But I need around 80, 000 KRW for school... And Jiseok also got sick recently... (con't)

Jieun sighs, closing her eyes tightly before massaging her temples lightly. She looks stressed. She then takes her phone and replies her sister directly from the pop-up message without bothering to open the full message.

JIEUN

(mumbles) Okay, I'll try to work for it...

She presses send. She sighs again once before she looks at her kimchi with no interest. She looks like she loses her appetite.

SCENE 6

INT. CAFÉ - DAY

The scene starts at a café where Jieun and Jihoon met the other day. Jieun is drinking her iced tea, re-checking her resume while Jihoon just came and immediately sits in front of Jieun.

JIHOON

You look sharp! Interview today?

JIEUN

Don't talk about it. I'm getting nervous.

JIHOON

Oh, okay. Well then, did you talk to her?

JIEUN

Sohyun, you mean? (a pause) Mmhm, yesterday. Did she reply your messages?

JIHOON

Not yet. (he plays with Jieun's drinks) She read it but she's still ignoring it. But she did reply some of it, yes...

JIEUN

Ouch.

JIHOON

I know right, ouch. (he cringes) I'm just so confused! I feel like just messaging her "Either you marry me, or that's it for us!"

JIEUN

Do that, and you'll lose her.

JIHOON

Ouch!

JIEUN

Your brain's too small. Where is your mind??? (she frowns) If you only want to threaten her to be married to you, better for you guys not to get married at all!

JIHOON

(a rather long pause) Sorry?

Jieun shakes her head.

JIEUN

You're supposed to tell her that, not me.

JIHOON

(sips Jieun's drink) Actually I've been thinking of me and Sohyun, ever since the very first we began dating. I want to be the only guy in her life, but sure... with all the pressure and my dad's

illness, it kinda seems like I'm forcing her...
Don't you think so?

Jieun looks at him pitifully and is about to pat his head but changes her mind.

JIEUN

Don't worry. Everything will be alright. (her hand is now again holding her other arm tightly) I mean, at some point you need to apologize and talk about it with her. But—

JIHOON

But how?

JIEUN

You can explain yourself to her.

JIHOON

What do you mean?

Jihoon's gaze turns to Sohyun who suddenly comes into the café.

SOHYUN

Jieun, I thought you said you would wait for me outside—

Sohyun sees Jihoon, speechless. Shocked to see Jihoon is there too with Jieun. Both of them are still looking at each other while Jieun stands up and brings all of her belongings.

JIEUN

Now take your time! I gotta run for my interview,
bye!

Sohyun and Jihoon, both of them look at Jieun. Sohyun looks concerned but Jieun whispers without any sound that everything's gonna be okay.

SOHYUN

Okay..

Sohyun drags one chair and sits awkwardly in front of Jihoon, meanwhile Jieun is getting away from them. She walks away and hides behind a wall and sees them arguing. Jieun then leaves, shaking her head a bit. She immediately checks for her resume once again. As she is walking to the subway station, she is practicing her introduction, practicing how she would talk to the interviewer. Some people are looking at her, but she doesn't care. She keeps studying her resume and practicing her gestures.

FADE TO

SCENE 7

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Jieun comes into the apartment while whistling. She puts her bag neatly on the table and starts cleaning up the mess. She takes a big black plastic for trash and starts putting empty noodle cups, trashes, and the beer bottles into the plastic. She puts her clothes into the washing machine as well. She is tidying out her books and stuffs when her phone rings. She hesitates for a

second and looks a little reluctant before answering the call. It's a call from Jihoon.

JIEUN

Hello? (in a bit fake but cheerful voice)

JIHOON

Jieun, everything's getting even more complicated..
Can we... (con't)

Jieun hears her front door is being opened and Sohyun bursts in.

SOHYUN

Jieun! (cries)

JIEUN

Sorry, I gotta go. (she ends the call while approaching Sohyun) There, there, what's wrong?

SOHYUN

I... I can't stand him anymore! Last night he brought me to his parents... And even his mother is kind of forcing us to marry! What's with people and their obsession of marriage?!

JIEUN

Well, he's the first son of the family, Sohyun... You should've understood!

SOHYUN

But still I'm not yet ready!! And instead of understanding me, they are forcing me to follow their rules!!

JIEUN

Sohyun, no... Nobody's asking you to follow their rules in the first place! In fact, if you tell them you're not yet ready, they will understand!

SOHYUN

I did try, but... (con't)

JIEUN

Did you ACTUALLY try?

Sohyun is stoned for awhile while looking at Jieun.

JIEUN

Did you actually try to talk things out to Jihoon? (she stands up, looking at Sohyun judgingly) Did you actually try and tell him NICELY that you're not ready yet??

Sohyun doesn't answer.

JIEUN

Do you even know that you're lucky to have someone like him, Sohyun? He's gentle, he spends time with me, mostly to just talk about you, Sohyun... He's desperate. He knows that you are not ready. He doesn't want to force you either...

Sohyun closes her eyes tightly.

JIEUN

He is confused. He doesn't know what to do. He is stuck between you and his parents!! And it's hard for him to choose because he loves you and his parents both so much... Have you ever thought how it felt being in his position, Sohyun?

Sohyun hangs her head for some seconds before starting to sob. Few seconds after she is sobbing, Jieun hugs her.

JIEUN

He never intends one bit to force you, Sohyun... His words might make it feel like he is forcing you, but he never means any of that... You should try talking about this with him, okay? (she strokes Sohyun's head) I'm sure he will understand...

SOHYUN

But... but... how do you know?

JIEUN

Because I know both of you guys for years already, silly... (she hugs Sohyun)

Sohyun's sobs slow down.

SOHYUN

You're right... (she wipes her tears away) I'm gonna talk to him now then.

Jieun smiles as Sohyun stands up and get her bags and leave.

SOHYUN

Thanks a lot, Jieun! I owe you bunch!

Jieun is nodding with a hesitation on her face as Sohyun leaves.

After Sohyun leaves, Jieun is alone again in the room. She exhales then begin sobbing softly. Jieun covers her face with her palms for awhile before reaches for a work related book but changes her mind and takes her phone and looks at her wallpaper which is the photo of three of them together in the past. The photo of them where Jihoon is hugging Jieun and Sohyun in a selfie. Yet, she crops Sohyun's photo out in her wallpaper. She pulls her finger softly on Jihoon's face in the photo. A flashback of what's happening few years before happens.

CUT TO

#MONTAGE FLASHBACK 4

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Jieun, Jihoon and Sohyun are hanging out in Gwanganli beach, while having beer bottles in each hands. They are wearing hoodie with backpacks on each side. It is back to the time when they are still in college. Three of them are having fun together, and laughing loudly. Sohyun immediately finishes her beer, before she checks her phone.

SOHYUN

(shocked as she checks her phone) Oh my!!! It's late! I gotta catch the train home, guys!! See you!

JIEUN

See you!! Take care, Sohyun!

Sohyun is running towards the subway station from the beach. Sometimes she is almost tripped because she's a little tipsy. Jieun chuckles before turning her head back to the view of the sea, beside her, Jihoon is finishing his beer as well.

JIHOON

Sure it's a good night to have some beer and chill like this, don't you think so?

JIEUN

Yep! (she sips her beer carefully)

Jihoon looks at Jieun adoringly for a little while. Jieun, knowing that she is stared at, looks at Jihoon curiously.

JIEUN

What? Do I have something on my face?

JIHOON

(nods) Yes.

JIEUN

What... Is it sand?! Or does the beer foam stain me??

JIHOON

No, not that. (he leans closer to whisper in Jieun's ear) Your face's stained with beauty.

JIEUN

What... You and your sweet mouth! (chuckles as she lightly slap Jihoon's arm)

JIHOON

I'm serious, Jieun. You're pretty.

JIEUN

(smiles while looking at Jihoon) Thank you!

Silence falls between both of them. Jieun is still busy with her beer while Jihoon's busy staring at the sea. The beach is quite empty since it's quite late too, around 10PM. Jihoon breaks the silence by sighing heavily.

JIEUN

What's wrong?

JIHOON

(turning his head to Jieun) Hm?

JIEUN

You're sighing. (he sips her beer) Something must be wrong.

JIHOON

Well...

JIEUN

You know you can tell me, right?

JIHOON

Yeah... (still sounds hesitant to tell Jieun)

JIEUN

Then, tell me.

JIHOON

Um... Jieun, before that, I want to ask you something.

JIEUN

Yes, what it is?

Jihoon looks like he's nervous. He fidgets with his fingers and he keeps biting his lower lip.

JIHOON

Jieun, what do you think of getting married maybe, next two years or next three years?

Jieun looks at him with a weird gaze.

JIEUN

What? (a beat) Well, I don't think so... My dad will not let me do that...

JIHOON

(falls silent) Oh...

JIEUN

And again, it's too soon for me... I still want to earn money on my own... I want to help my siblings too. I want to make my siblings and father proud... Getting married is not in my mind for now...

JIHOON

Um... Okay- (he looks defeated)

JIEUN

What's wrong, Jihoon? Why suddenly asking me that?

JIHOON

Well... It's my parents... Since my Father's condition is getting worse and worse this year, they want me to settle down as soon as possible. So that I can continue the family business... (he bites his lower lip) But well, maybe next year or next two year's too soon...

JIEUN

Oh... (she looks down, sipping on her beer awkwardly) Yeah, I still want to work and earn money for my family too... I want to become a career woman. That's my dream ever since I entered college. I can't let anyone down, Jihoon. (she looks at Jihoon apologetically)

JIHOON

It's okay, Jieun. It really is. Go chase your dream and don't let your family down.

#END OF MONTAGE FLASHBACK 4

CUT BACK TO

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Her teardrops fall on her face as she touches Jihoon's photo. She closes her eyes for awhile and wipes her tears, puts her phone away, and stand up. She tries to continue cleaning her apartment, before she finally gives up. She puts everything aside then she sits in the middle of the room alone. She puts her head onto the table, sighing quite loudly. The lamp flickers again after a while.

She exhales few times before her phone rings. She doesn't answer it. She doesn't even bother looking at the caller ID. After a while, the phone rings for the second time. She is still stuck on the same position. She doesn't answer her phone. She just lets her phone rings and rings. After few beats, the ring stops. However, after few while, her phones rings again. This time she lifts her head. Her eyes are full of tears. She clears her throat before taking her phone, then just sloppily answering the phone.

JIEUN

Hello?

JIHYE

Big sis!!!

Jieun frowns a little. It's unusual for Jihye to call her.

JIEUN

Yes? What's wrong? Listen, if it's about school, I'll... (con't)

JIHYE

It's Jiseok, sis!! (sobs)

Jieun's frowns go deeper as Jihye mentions about the bother's name.

JIEUN

Jiseok? What's with him?

JIHYE

He has a high fever, sis... (sobs) And he keeps calling your name...

JIEUN

What??? That's just...

JIHYE

I know this is absurd, but can you please go home, sis? (uncontrolled sobs) He sounds like he misses you so much...

Jieun is stunned for awhile, still trying to process everything in her brain.

JIEUN

But... What... (con't)

JIHYE

Dad said he will repay the bus money...

CUT TO

SCENE 8

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Jieun is in the night bus on the way to Ulsan, her hometown. She is looking at a picture of herself, Jihye, and Jiseok when they were still young which she always saved in her wallet. The father is not in the photo. She softly thumbs the photo of her youngest sibling, Jiseok. As she is looking at the photo, the memory when she first went to college replays in her head.

#MONTAGE FLASHBACK 5

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE - DAY

Jieun is bringing a small suitcase with her as she is walking out from the house. Behind her, another girl wearing an elementary school uniform, Jihye, also goes out to send her off. The father follows her from behind, with 7-year old boy in his arm. They all stand in front of the house. While Jieun is looking at her family, her eyes are wet.

JIHYE

Promise me that you will call often!!!

JISEOK

If you go home, please bring a lot of gifts for us, okay?

JIEUN

I will, I will... (she is holding her tears) Be good while I'm gone, okay?

Both Jihye and Jiseok nods.

FATHER

Are you sure you don't need us to take you to the bus station? We can accompany you walk there.

JIEUN

It's okay, Father. I can walk by myself.

Father looks at Jieun with a glimpse of proud in his eyes. Smile is forming on his lips, and his free hand is reaching to Jieun to hug his oldest daughter.

FATHER

Study well, Jieun. We all believe in you. Be successful, okay?

JIEUN

Yes, Father. I will make you guys proud!

#END OF MONTAGE FLASHBACK 5

CUT BACK TO

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Jieun groans lightly as she saves her photo back in her wallet. She then massages her temple lightly. She hugs her bag tighter, and chooses to just sleep, but her expression still shows that she feels guilty that she is not able to fulfill her family's wishes towards her.

CUT TO

SCENE 9

INT. ULSAN, JIEUN'S HOME - DAY

JIHYE

Sis, welcome home!!!

Jieun jumps a little as she sees her younger sister. Jihye has grown a lot taller. The younger hugs Jieun tightly. Jieun hugs her back.

JIEUN

Hello, I miss you. How are you guys while I'm gone?

JIHYE

We were doing fine, sis!! But well, as I told you yesterday, Jiseok got sick... (her voice goes down)

JIEUN

What happened to him? What caused the fever?

JIHYE

He got exhausted, sis. We have taken him to the doctor, doctor says that he's alright. He just needs a lot of rest and food.

Jihye reaches for Jieun's bag. Jieun is about to help but Jihye shakes her head and brings Jieun's bag into the house. The younger groans a bit but she seems to be able to lift Jieun's bag around.

JIHYE

It's okay, big sis!! You can go inside!! Father is in Jiseok's room, say hi to him too.

Jieun's expression changed as she hears the Father's name being mentioned. Her expression turns anxious and her gestures turns tense. She enters her brother's room anxiously. She knocks the door twice. Not long after the knock, Father's figure is seen opening the door.

FATHER

Jieun?

JIEUN

Father...

Jieun's eyes immediately water as she sees her Father's figure. The age has done so much to her Father. Her Father has more wrinkles than Jieun even remembers. Father also became a little skinnier over the years. Jieun walks forward then hugs her Father so tight.

FATHER

Jieun, welcome home... We miss you a lot...

JIEUN

I miss you too, Father... I miss you so much...

FATHER

It's okay... Now you have been home, right? Do you miss home too?

Jieun sobs as her Father asks. She nods, hugging her Father even tighter. Outside of the room, Jihye is watching Jieun and Father hugging. A small smile is curved on her lips.

CUT TO

SCENE 10

INT. LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

JIHYE

Here you go, sis!! Have some meal!!!

JIEUN

Thank you, Jihye...

The family begins eating. Even Jiseok, still with a fever plaster on his head, joins eating too. The boy's face was bright. Even though the brightness on his face is still overshadowed by how sick he looks.

FATHER

Eat a lot, Jieun. Gain some weight before you come back to Seoul.

JIEUN

I understand, Father...

Jieun continues eating. The other kids are too.

JIEUN

How's school, guys?

JISEOK

School sucks. (with hoarse voice)

JIEUN

Ah, do you think so? (turns her head towards Jihye) How about you, Jihye?

JIHYE

School's okay... Not too bad...

FATHER

They are all doing well, Jieun. How are you?

Jieun gulps nervously. She stops chewing for awhile, and looks down quietly. The other siblings are looking at her curiously.

JIHYE

What? Sis, why... (con't)

JIEUN

I'm sorry... I'm not yet able to make you guys proud...

Jieun bites her lower lip.

JIEUN

I did a job interview again yesterday. But the company didn't call me yet, until now... I'm getting worried...

JIHYE

It's okay, big sis! Cheer up! Go have something to eat first for now, okay?

JISEOK

(weakly) Yeah, big sis. We are always proud of you, anyway.

Both of the youngers are looking towards their father, as the Father is looking at Jieun with a sharp gaze. The sharp gaze at the end, however, turns into a soft one.

FATHER

It's okay... You've tried, sweetheart... At least you have tried your best.

JIEUN

But... You guys need money for school right... I'm sorry I can't help you guys much yet...

JIHYE

Oh, you mean the one I told you before?

JIEUN

Yeah... 80, 000 KRW, isn't it... I'll try to work harder so...

JIHYE

Sis... (pause for a beat) You didn't read my message thoroughly, didn't you...

JIEUN

Eh...?

JIHYE

I also told you there in my message that I will work for it too. It doesn't have to be your own burden, sis~ We can always share it, because we are family!

Jieun's expression turns really touched upon hearing what her father and sister say. Her eyes water a little. She is about to say something when her phone suddenly rings. Jieun takes her phone, the caller ID is only showing numbers. Feeling a little hesitant, Jieun excuses herself then walks out from the house, and takes the call.

JIEUN

Hello? (a beat) Hello... Yes, this is Lee Jieun.

Jieun seems to be listening to the caller's careful explanation before her eyes widens in disbelief.

JIEUN

R...really?! (beat) I understand! Thank you so much, thank you so much! (a beat) I understand!

Jieun immediately comes back into the house, sitting back in her seat with all smile. Jihye, Jiseok and Father look at her weirdly.

JIHYE

Who was that, big sis? Your boyfriend?

Jieun shakes her head.

JIEUN

Even better!

JIHYE

Who is it?

JIEUN

The company I applied job in!! I got called for the second stage interview!!!

JISEOK

Really?! That's good, sis!

FATHER

That is indeed really good. (smiles widely)
Congratulations, Jieun! I wish you luck for it!

JIEUN

Thanks Father, Jihye, Jiseok!

They hug for awhile before they are back to their position and continue eating. The feeling around the room is no longer filled with regrets, instead, changing into cheerful and happy tone. Jieun eats a spoonful of her soup when her phone vibrates again.

Jieun takes her phone and sees the message. It's Jihoon.

JIHOON (V.O.)

Jieun! Thank you so much for your help! Me and Sohyun just talked for a long, long time!! Sohyun decide to spend more time with my family to get closer before she says yes, and it pretty much makes my parents calm. Thank you, Jieun!!

Jieun reads the message, puts the phone back into her bag, and continue eating and laughing with her family.

All of them are smiling before the focus comes to Jieun's face, she seems so contented and relieved.

FADE OUT