

WITH THE LOUD BLUE LIGHT,

INT. CHILDHOOD BEDROOM. SEOUL. EARLY MORNING.

WE OPEN in a childhood bedroom cluttered with highschool memories. The room is nicely kept but full of things piled up on top of each other. The desk faces a window looking out into the neighborhood. On the horizon is the city skyline. The sunlight shines onto an empty desk.

APARTMENT ENTRANCE.

The small entrance is cluttered with shoes on shoe racks. Mom, a 50 year old Korean woman, checks her watch and calls out to her son, 8 years old, out of frame.

MOM

Max, we gotta go. Now. We're gonna be late.

Max runs into frame, holding onto his phone. He's playing Fortnite. Mom helps him put on his sneakers. They both leave. The door announces its electronic lock. The entrance light turns off.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR. ON THE ROAD. EARLY MORNING.

Distant but audible orchestral music is playing. It is John Barnes Chance's arrangement of Arirang called the *Variations on a Korean Folk Song*. The clock reads 5:25. Mom and Dad are having an inaudible conversation in the front. Max is in the back, playing his game. As the sun sets, the car headlights are turned on.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPORT.

Orchestral music cuts. Ambient noise. Maggie, 19 years old, looks down at her phone to check her text messages. She looks worried. There are 2 luggage bags next to her with 2 jackets on top of each one. She watches a kid about her age hug her family as they walk away.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

Oh my God, could they *take* any longer.

Maggie checks her phone again. Orchestral music starts again. She sees her family and smiles. Maggie hugs Mom. Dad smiles, giving her a side hug and reaches out for her bags. Maggie ruffles Max's hair as he looks up then immediately looks back down to his phone.

MOM

I can't believe you're actually here. I feel like it's been forever since you left last fall.

MAGGIE

I can't wait to not make my own food anymore. I missed the home-cooked meals, *umma*.

Maggie and Mom continue their conversation as their audio slowly fades. The music gets louder in contrast. Dad is leading the group with the bags rolling alongside him. Max is trailing behind everyone.

CUT TO:

CAR.

Maggie is in the passenger's seat, looking out into the darkness through the window. Mom passes around hand sanitizer to everyone. Max shakes his head at the hand sanitizer and goes back to play his game. Maggie starts to audibly cry.

MAGGIE

*(Hiccuping in between words)*

I'm going to miss my friends so much. And I can't even talk to them all the time because of the time difference. Why is this happening to me.

MOM

Oh my goodness. Is that why you're crying? I thought you were just so happy to finally

see your family --

MAGGIE

I am! But I'm not going to  
be able to see them anymore!  
And who knows for how long?

MOM (CONT'D)

I thought you were happy  
to see your dad. Or your  
mom. Or Max.  
(beat)

Mom and Dad laugh. Maggie starts to laugh with them, wiping  
away her tears. She looks down at her phone to text her  
friend: "bruh i already miss you so much wtf".

CUT TO:

UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT

The car, headlights on, parks into a spot. The engine is  
turned off. Maggie, Max, Mom, and Dad get out of the car.  
Max is focused on his game on the phone and heads straight  
to the apartment door. Dad gets the luggage from the trunk.  
Maggie gets a hold of her second bag and closes the trunk.

CUT TO:

APARTMENT ENTRANCE.

Max enters first, heading straight out of frame still on  
his phone. Dad hoists the bags into the apartment. Enters  
Maggie then Mom.

LIVING ROOM.

Max is on the couch on his phone. Maggie takes off her coat  
in hand and joins Max on the couch, turning on the TV. The  
second movement of *Variations* starts. Maggie gets a text  
from her friend then smiles, replying 'haha'.

MAGGIE

Are you not even gonna look at me dude.  
It's been like a year.

MAX

Sam said if I get 5 Battle Royales in a row, he's gonna buy *tteokbokki*.

MAGGIE

(rolling her eyes)

For *tteokbokki*? That's like two bucks. A plate of *tteokbokki* is more important than me? Your *sister*?

MAX

(shrugs)

I mean... yes? It's not like you're leaving tomorrow.

MAGGIE

(shakes her head and sighs)

I'm going to sleep now.

MOM

Maggie wait do you want --

Maggie closes the door. Music stops.

BEDROOM.

Maggie plugs in the charger to her phone, it dings. She sets it down on the cabinet next to her bed. Her clothes unchanged, she gets in the bed then closes her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM. DESK.

The curtain is shut. The desk is neatly organized with post-its, highlighters, and stacked papers. In the middle is a laptop. Maggie opens it, and looks at her packed color-coded Google Calendar with excitement, logging onto Zoom. She smiles as she enters the virtual meeting. People are introducing themselves.

MAGGIE

Hi. I'm Maggie.

Maggie nods at her screen.

CUT TO:

A KNOCK at the door. Maggie is typing a document on her laptop. She turns around.

MAGGIE

Yeah, what?

MOM

Do you want your dinner now?

MAGGIE

In a minute.

Maggie finishes her sentence on the document and leaves her desk. The frame sits still for a second.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN. DAWN.

Maggie drags her feet to the fridge, clearly distressed. Her hair is a mess; she is in pajamas. The clock reads 4:17. She yawns, pouring herself a glass of water. She walks back to her room. She fumbles to turn on the light.

BEDROOM.

Maggie opens her laptop and joins a Zoom meeting. Distantly, the third movement of *Variations* starts. Maggie yawns once more, nodding. She swipes through her phone notifications of which are mostly news: Washington Post, New York Times, ABC News, various news outlets yet all of the headlines are about covid. She is annoyed and puts her phone face down. She leaves the Zoom meeting and walks to lie on her bed. After a moment she gets up again to log into another Zoom meeting. She picks up her phone to see 'No Notifications'.

CUT TO:

KITCHEN. MORNING.

Four bowls of rice are on the kitchen table. Mom brings over the pot from the stove to the table. Dad reaches for his spoon and dives in to eat.

MOM

Max, you're going to school this week. Eat.

Max hops in frame, phone in hand. He is in his school uniform.

MAX

(whines)

I don't even like this stew.

Mom gives Max a look.

DAD

Is Maggie ever coming out of her room?

MOM

Leave her be. She is busy.

MAX

(mouth full of rice, mockingly)

Busy facetimeing her friends?

MAGGIE (O.S.)

It's called participating in class.

MAX

Oh, so you can hear me.

The fourth and final movement of *Variations* starts. The family finishes their food and puts away their plates in the sink. Mom wipes the table. She covers the pot and puts Saran wrap over the uneaten bowl of rice. Dad inaudibly tells Max to do well in school. He grabs a mask and leaves. Mom looks at her watch and shoos at Max. Max whines for 'one more minute' on his game. Mom cuts him off and hands him his backpack and mask. The house is still.

CUT TO:

BEDROOM.

Maggie gets a text from her friend. She does not smile but replies with 'lol' instinctively. She jumps around different apps for a few seconds just to put her phone down again. She leaves her desk and checks her phone. Clock reads 9:17 A.M. She reaches over her desk to open the curtains. Her eyes flinch.

KITCHEN.

Maggie dries her washed face with a towel as she reaches into the fridge for water. She takes off the Saran wrap and the pot cover. She gets her utensils and eats standing up. Her phone dings: notification for a Zoom meeting. The music stops with the notification sound. She lays her utensils down to connect through her phone. She sits to continue eating. Mom enters with groceries.

MOM

Oh good, you're up. Do you --

MAGGIE

Mom, I'm in a meeting.

Maggie finishes her food and goes to her room. **She leaves her dishes on the table.**

CUT TO:

BEDROOM. NIGHTTIME.

An analog clock ticks to 12 o'clock. The desk is cluttered with notes that read "Midterm Section Overview" and "Final Content". The left curtain is open while the right curtain is shut. The laptop is open with a document that's been started with only a header. Maggie's phone is face-up on her desk. She is curled up on her chair, closing her eyes. Her phone dings a notification. She opens her eyes immediately. *Variations* plays.

CREDITS.