

THINGS WE CARRY

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1

INT. TEMPLE BACKROOM - DAY

1

JAEGIN (29) changes into her black hanbok. She puts on a white slip, a black skirt, then a black top. Jaein combs her hair into a low bun and clips on a white bow.

NOTE: Dialogue will be in Korean with English subtitles.

YOUNG JAEIN (V.O.)

(young Jaein's voice)

*Dear dad,  
You're doing okay, right? I started  
school today. I got a new American  
name, Jane. Do you like it? How is  
grandma? I want to eat her abalone  
porridge. Auntie said it's better  
here in America, but I like Udo  
more. I miss it. And I miss you.  
Love,  
Jaein*

2

INT. TEMPLE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

2

Jaegin stands still as people bow and pay their respects. There are only a few people in the room. There is a table with a few white flowers and traditional Buddhist ornaments. A picture of her FATHER rests in the middle. His name is written underneath - LEE CHANWOO. Jaein turns to the WOMAN (60s) next to her.

JAEGIN

(with heavy American  
accent)

Is she going to come?

WOMAN

I'm not sure...

Jaegin watches SOYOUNG (50s) in the back with red lip stick weeping. She sits alone. People deliberately walk around her to avoid her as they exit the room.

3

EXT. DOCKS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

3

Jaegin walks down towards the docks. She wears a t-shirt and jeans, the white bow still in her hair. A FISHERMAN (50s) sees her.

FISHERMAN

Aren't you Chanwoo's daughter?

JAEIN

Yes.

He looks carefully at her and chuckles.

FISHERMAN

You look just like your father.

Jaein politely nods.

FISHERMAN (CONT'D)

We used to go out on the boats together. And sometimes drink on days when we got a good catch.

Jaein stands quietly.

FISHERMAN (CONT'D)

Anyways, you looking for your grandma? She's over there.

He points towards the water. Jaein thanks him and walks over towards the beach.

4 EXT. OCEAN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

4

She sits on a rock and looks out into the ocean. A group of DIVERS are out in the open ocean. Some float on buoys and others dive back into the ocean. Her GRANDMA (76) surfaces from the water and puts an abalone into her net. She dives back into the water.

5 INT. BEDROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

5

The bedroom is sparse and old. Traditional Korean style housing with wooden sliding doors, minimal furniture, and a big rice papered window. A picture of her father hangs on the wall. There is clutter all over the room- stacks of newspapers, clothes, books, and other random objects. It is her father's room.

Jaein enters the room and looks around. She lets out an uncomfortable sigh. She pushes a stack of her father's belongings to the side and puts her bags down. She takes out an ORANGE PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE and takes a few pills. Then she quickly exits the room with her phone.

6 EXT. COURTYARD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

6

Jaein anxiously paces the empty courtyard with the phone. The dog trails behind her. She tries to call someone.

JAEIN  
(in English)  
Hello? Case? Can you hear me?

The call drops.

JAEIN (CONT'D)  
(in English)  
Damn it.

Suddenly the dog starts barking. Her grandmother is back.  
Jaein rushes to greet her and bows.

JAEIN  
Grandmother, it's been a long time.

Her grandmother goes straight towards the deck and takes off  
her green work boots.

GRANDMOTHER  
Yes, it has. I'm still alive.

Her grandmother finally looks at her.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)  
You got even skinnier. Did you eat?

JAEIN  
No.

Her grandmother walks into the house.

7 INT. KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

7

Her grandmother cuts vegetables and starts boiling anchovies.  
Jaein stands awkwardly by the door.

JAEIN  
Do you need any help?

GRANDMOTHER  
Do you even know how to cook?

JAEIN  
A little.

Her grandmother shakes her head.

GRANDMOTHER  
How are you going to feed your  
husband later?

Her grandmother passes her some onions, a knife, and a cutting board. She then goes towards the fridge and comes back. Jaein cuts awkward big chunks from the onion.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)

Hey! What is this? Get out, get out!

Her grandmother shoos her out of the kitchen.

8 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT- CONTINUOUS

8

The table is covered in food- small side dishes. Two bowls of rice and utensils sit on either side. Jaein sits at the table. Her grandmother brings the red snapper fish stew and sets it in the middle.

JAEIN

Thank you for the food.

Her grandmother nods and proceeds to put water into her rice bowl and eats only plain rice and kimchee. They eat in silence. The dog starts barking.

GRANDMOTHER

Didn't your father feed him?  
Chanwoo, chanwoo! Chan-

Jaein looks up confused. Her grandmother realizes her mistake. She quietly gets up and goes to feed the dog. Jaein is left at the table alone.

9 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

9

Jaein lies in the dark with her eyes open. Countryside silence- wind and crickets. She tosses and turns. She rolls to her side and grabs her phone and tries to make a phone call. The phone lights up her face- "CASEY". No service again. She sighs. She rolls over to her back. Silence again.

Suddenly, she hears muffled sounds of her grandmother crying from the other room.

10 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

10

Jaein opens the door and finds a table of food laid out for her. She looks up and sees Soyoung walk by the house. She carries flowers and a box of Pocky. They make eye contact. Jaein walks towards her and tries to greet her, but she quickly turns and walks down the street.

11 INT. INTERNET CAFE/LIVING ROOM? - DAY CONTINUOUS 11

The internet cafe is old, small, and deserted - empty rows with empty computers. Jaein sits in front of a computer in the middle of the room with a headset on.

JAEIN  
(in English)  
Okay, straight up, straight  
down...My hands are pursed Case!

Jaein mimics the hand motions of cutting onions.

JAEIN (CONT'D)  
(in English)  
I don't know...My grandma said  
something about cutting onions and  
husbands (laughs)...I'm not sure  
how she's doing and I dunno how to,  
you know, comfort her...

Casey takes out the ORANGE PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE and takes a few pills.

JAEIN (CONT'D)  
(in English)  
Yeah, I started taking them  
again...I'm okay, just have that  
heavy feeling in my chest again...

12 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS 12

Jaein lies on the living room floor. She practices the hand motions of cutting onions. Her grandmother arrives.

JAEIN  
You're back.

Her grandmother nods and takes off her green work boots and walks straight into the kitchen. She carries a black plastic bag.

13 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 13

Her grandmother begins to prepare the abalone. Jaein walks in.

GRANDMOTHER  
Hope you still like abalone.

Her grandmother begins chopping onions. Jaein walks over and takes the knife.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)  
What are you doing? Go rest.

JAEIN  
I'll do it.

She begins to cut the onions - cleaner, smaller chunks. Her grandmother peers over and smirks.

GRANDMOTHER  
You've been practicing?

Jaein continues cutting and tries to hide her smile.

14 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

14

Jaein and her grandmother sit on the deck. Sounds of the quiet countryside. They drink tea. Her grandmother peels pears. Jaein grabs the knife.

GRANDMOTHER  
What, now that you can cut onions,  
you're a hot shot?

Jaein smiles and starts cutting the pears. The two sit in silence. Her grandmother looks at her.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)  
I don't know what happened between  
you and your father, but you have  
to forgive him.

Jaein stops cutting and remains silent.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)  
He used to wait over there for the  
mailman. Waiting for your letters  
everyday. Even when they stopped  
coming.

Her grandmother points towards the entryway.

Jaein is quiet and looks out into the courtyard.

15 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

15

MONTAGE:

- Wind blowing in the trees
- Dog pacing the house

- Empty and still living room

16 LIVING ROOM - DAY

16

Jaein opens the door and finds a table of food set out for her again.

She smiles and heads to the door. She looks up at the sky and stretches.

17 EXT. DOCKS - DAY- CONTINUOUS

17

Jaein waits at the docks. There is a pile of stones in ascending order- biggest to smallest. Jaein makes a similar pile next to it. The women return and walk onto the docks. They crowd around Jaein.

WOMAN 1

Jaein! It's been so long. You're so big now.

WOMAN 2

You look just like your father.

Finally, Jaein sees her grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER

Jaein? What are you doing here?

JAEIN

I thought I would walk you back home.

WOMAN 1

Wow, Jaein is just like an American now! So sophisticated!

WOMAN 2

Bet you have a handsome American boyfriend, right?

Jaein looks slightly uncomfortable. The women laugh and continue walking to the changing room. Jaein walks down the dock with her grandmother. She helps carry her grandmother's bags. Soyoung quickly walks along the beach path up ahead.

JAEIN

Grandmother, who is that?

GRANDMOTHER

(sighs)

Ms. Lee.



Her grandmother pauses and looks over at a confused Jaein.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)  
Your father got lonely too.

18 EXT. STREETS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

18

Jaein and her grandmother walk down the streets lined with black stones. Jaein carries her grandmother's bags.

JAEIN  
I feel like there's a lot I didn't know about dad.

GRANDMOTHER  
He kept a lot of things inside. Eventually, I think that's what broke him. Keep everything inside long enough, and it will break you. (Pause). Be careful with your pills.

Jaein looks surprised.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)  
I may be old, but I can still see everything.

Suddenly her grandmother stops walking and stares at something ahead. Soyoung is headed into the temple with flowers and a box of Pocky. Her grandmother follows behind.

19 INT. TEMPLE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

19

There is a shelf filled with pictures and urns. Soyoung stands in front of Chanwoo's picture with her head down. Her grandmother and Jaein watch from afar. Soyoung kneels down and begins to cry.

The grandmother enters and Jaein follows. Soyoung looks up and immediately gets up to bow.

SOYOUNG  
I'm so sorry. I will leave.

Soyoung grabs her things to leave. Her grandmother looks down at the flowers and Pocky.

GRANDMOTHER  
(quietly)  
Chanwoo really liked his pocky...didn't he?

Soyoung stops putting on her shoes and looks over at the grandmother. She is not sure if this was addressed to her or not.

The grandmother stares at Chanwoo's picture. She then looks at all the other rows of cabinets with urns. She clucks and shakes her head.

Suddenly she opens Chanwoo's cabinet and takes out the urn and walks out.

20 EXT. STREETS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

20

Jaein follows her grandmother down the streets toward the ocean. Soyoung hesitates, then trails behind.

JAEIN

Grandma, where are you going?

Her grandmother walks quickly. Jaein and Soyoung follow behind.

21 EXT. CLIFF- AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS

21

Her grandmother stands on a cliff. She holds the urn in front of her and closes her eyes to pray. Jaein catches up, sees the situation, and closes her eyes too. Soyoung stands behind.

Her grandmother opens the urn and empties the ashes into the ocean. She looks down towards the ocean.

GRANDMOTHER

Chanwoo, I'm sorry it took me so long. Now you can rest in peace. You have suffered enough.

Her grandmother begins to tear up. Jaein puts an arm on her grandmother's shoulder. Her grandmother grabs Jaein's hand.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)

Jaein is here. Your daughter. The one you have been waiting for, for so long.

Her grandmother lets out a big sigh.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)

If only you had waited a little bit longer, you fool.

Her grandmother looks behind and beckons for Soyoung to come up.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)  
Let's greet him properly.

The three women, lined up, bow towards the ocean - two big bows to the ground and one small one.

22

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

22

Jaein walks into the bedroom. The picture of her father still hangs on the wall. She looks at it then goes over and brings it down. She sits down and lightly traces her fingers along the frame.

She begins to go through her father's clothes and belongings. She goes through his old war novels, his old photographs from the army, his old country music cassettes. She picks up his jacket and smells it.

She finds a small tin box at the bottom of the drawer. She opens it. She finds all of the letters she wrote to him as a child. She reads one of the letters:

*Dear dad,  
You're doing okay, right? I started school today...*

Jaein finally begins to cry.

23

EXT. DOCKS - DAY

23

Jaein walks towards the docks with her grandmother and the other divers. The morning sun peaks over the clouds and ocean. Deep grays and blues.

JAEIN (V.O.)

*Dear dad,  
You're doing okay right? I hope you  
can rest now that you are back in  
the ocean.*

The women begin to enter the water. Her grandmother waves at her. Jaein motions for her to go ahead. Her grandmother enters the water.

JAEIN (V.O.)

*At first I didn't get what grandma  
was doing, but now I do. This is  
where you belong.*

(MORE)

JAEIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*The ocean has a way of taking all  
that heaviness inside of us, and  
making it disappear.*

Jaein stays behind and takes out a folded letter. She puts the letter into the water.

JAEIN (V.O.)

*I carry my own heaviness too.  
There's something I never told you.  
I met someone 7 years ago, Casey.  
She is my girlfriend and partner.*

Jaein then walks into the water.

JAEIN (V.O.)

*I'm not sure if you would have  
accepted her or me, but I was too  
afraid to find out. I wish you had  
told me about Ms. Lee.*

Jaein dives into the water. She looks over at the other women diving into the water.

JAEIN (V.O.)

*The hardest part about everything,  
is the feeling that I never really  
knew you...and you never really  
knew me. Maybe it would have helped  
with the heaviness.*

*I'm sorry that it took me so long.  
I miss you.*

*Love, Jaein*

Jaein dives deeper into the dark, blue silent ocean.