

<Second Verse>

by

<Jay Lee>

BLACK SCREEN.

A baby wails.

HAEDAM

Whenever she couldn't bear with me
anymore, my mother would say,

MOTHER (IN KOREAN)

End it on the first verse!

HAEDAM

And now I wonder if I am here,
because I didn't end it on the
first verse.

INT. HALLWAY - EARLY NOON

HAEDAM (20) sits on a chair beside a door. Oversized sweater and cardigan. Sign on the door reads **STUDENT WELFARE OFFICE**. She holds stapled papers. Slightly crumples them in her grip. Bounces her knees.

ENA

Hey! Are you gonna get lunch?

Haedam looks up. ENA (23), pierced nose, black jacket, stands in front of her.

ENA

I can wait.

HAEDAM

I think I'm fine, actually.

ENA

Sure, okay. See ya!

Ena waves and walks off to the staircase. Haedam waves back. A poster on the wall with an illustration of ocean.

EXT. SEA SHORE - LATE NOON

White sand. Turquoise-blue water.

Two sets of footprints trail along the shore.

One leads to Haedam. The waves lap at her feet.

HAEDAM (V.O.)

I have heard of a place, somewhere
warm, somewhere safe.

INT. STUDENT WELFARE OFFICE - EARLY NOON

A poster on the wall reads **SAFE SPACE**. MRS. URSA (46), chain glasses and long polished nails, types on a keyboard. Keeps her eyes on the screen.

MRS. URSA
Haedam Sol? Have a seat.

Haedam walks into the office. Sits on the chair across Mrs. Ursa's desk. Cluster of posters and photos on the wall behind Mrs. Ursa look almost like a map.

Mrs. Ursa sighs. Gets up. Closes the door.

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

A heavy door shuts closed.

A small dark room. Transparent wall dividers mark the quarter corner of the room. A toilet and a sink. A narrow bed takes up half of the room. A small fridge at the foot of the bed.

HAEDAM (17) wakes from the bed. Naked but an oversized t-shirt. Bruises down her neck and shoulder.

A BODY wrapped in blankets, snores next to her. A bloodied spoon on the sheet.

A letter-sized window above the headrest. It only shows the wall of the neighbor building. Haedam raises her torso. Puts her forehead on the window and looks down. People walk on the busy streets below.

Haedam tries to open the window. The latch is locked. She softly bangs her fist against the glass. The body next to her stirs. She freezes.

Slowly, silently, Haedam descends back onto the bed. The body snores.

A faint static sound. Haedam turns her head. Presses her ear onto the wall. A faint murmur of tv. Men laugh. She presses her hands and mouth to the wall.

HAEDAM (WHISPERING)
Help me.

INT. STUDENT WELFARE OFFICE - EARLY NOON

Sign on Mrs. Ursa's desk reads HELP. Mrs. Ursa takes her glasses off. Spins it around as she reads the stapled papers in her hand. Haedam fiddles with her fingers.

MRS. URSA

First, I am sorry that happened to you.

Haedam looks up.

MRS. URSA

Just to make sure - so this happened BEFORE you attended here?

HAEDAM

Yes, but he was in this school when -

MRS. URSA

I am sorry, but the school can't do anything against him, other than alerting him not to come close to you. We can't punish someone for something that was done before their time here.

Mrs. Ursa sets her glasses next to a brochure. It reads **SAFE & PROTECTED**.

MRS. URSA (CONT'D)

Regarding... the incidents... three years ago, there are some papers you can file to the Department, but we can't say for sure what actions will be taken. This can involve your classmates, too.

MRS. URSA (CONT'D)

You don't want to drag them into all that drama, do you?

Haedam's breath quickens. She looks up at Mrs. Ursa. She overlaps with MOTHER (46).

MOTHER (IN KOREAN)

End it on the first verse.

EXT. BUILDING ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The posters and photos turn into crosswalks, buildings and people of a busy city. It is the same view from the letter-sized window.

Haedam's feet on the railing. She looks down at the city.

MOTHER

I can't bear with you...

VOICES

I can't bear with you...

INT. SCHOOL FRONT GATE - LATE NOON

Haedam looks at her reflection on the glass exterior of the school.

HAEDAM
... any longer.

A car honks. Haedam sees a car parked in front of the gate. Ena waves through the window. Haedam approaches the car.

ENA
Hey! Did you get lunch?

Haedam shakes her head.

ENA
Aha! I knew it.

Ena lifts her jacket on the passenger's seat. A squashed mixture of rice and beef between two paper plates.

Haedam smiles faintly.

HAEDAM
I'm really fine.

ENA
Come onnn. I had to hide it in my shirt to sneak it out.

Ena thrusts the paper plates through the lowered window. Haedam takes it.

Beat.

ENA
So, I guess...

Ena chews her lips. Looks at her hands on the wheels. Looks at Haedam again. Smiles.

ENA (CONT'D)
I'll be... On my way?

Beat.

Ena buckles her seatbelt.

HAEDAM
Wait, Ena, uh, would you...

Ena's hands stop.

She looks at Haedam. Waits.

HAEDAM (V.O.)
Would you bear with me?

HAEDAM
Would you give me a drive?

Ena smiles. Her cheeks flush.

ENA
Of course! Where do you wanna go?
There's a poppy field that's like
ten minutes away, Magic
Mountain...

Haedam climbs into the passenger's seat. She clutches
Ena's jacket and the paper plates.

ENA (CONT'D)
Like, we can even get to the
beach. It's not too late.

HAEDAM
I was actually thinking the same.

EXT. TUNNEL - LATE NOON

Ena's car drives through a tunnel.

HAEDAM (V.O.)
Sometimes, I think I died that
night, in the dark room.

Reflection of Haedam (17) in the dark room flickers as
lights flash.

HAEDAM (CONT'D)
And this is my second verse...

The tunnel opens ahead of them.

HAEDAM (CONT'D)
Going towards somewhere safe,
somewhere warm.

White light.

Haedam hums Lights on a Dark Stream.

Turquoise-blue waves.

Two trails of footsteps on the shore.

Waves breaking on rocks.

Sun settles over the water.

Hum gradually fades.