55 MINUTES OF FREEDOM

By Karelia Scott-Daniels

INT. BRITISH EMBASSY HOUSE, PYONGYANG, NORTH KOREA

JUNG SOOK, British Korean, agitated, fills a box with food checks rice on the stove and paces in front of a TV. Typical program. She glances repeatedly at a clock.

Doorbell rings. She looks out and runs to the gate.

KALEE, 35 American Korean dabs tears cascading down her face.

KALEE

I didn't know where else to go.

JUNG SOOK

They still haven't said anything!

KALEE

They're not gonna.

JUNG SOOK

What?

Kalee shakes her head and collapses on Jung Sook's shoulder.

Devastated, Jung Sook comforts her howling friend.

A guard bashes the gate.

GUARD

Quiet!

조용히해!

JUNG SOOK

JUNG SOOK 미안함니다.

GUARD

I'm sorry, Sir.

Kalee's body shakes with silent sobs as Jung Sook walks her inside. The minute the door closes, Kalee lets it all out. Jung Sook sits her friend opposite her and takes her hands.

JUNG SOOK (CONT'D)
You're sure? Like, it's official?

Balling, Kalee nods. Jung Sook slaps her friend. Kalee stops.

JUNG SOOK (CONT'D)

Sorry but you need to calm down. I've got the travel permits. I'm going to my family. You coming?

INT. CAR DRIVING ALONG A POTHOLED COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Jung Sook drives, determined. Kalee, stony faced.

They stop at a road-block. Jung Sook hands the guard a paper. He gestures for more. She hands another one over. He gestures for more again. She shakes her head. He gestures.

In their faces. She stands her ground. An impasse.

Finally he lets her through.

EXT. ISOLATED CROFT, COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

They park up. SONGL 20s pleading. They run to the house, practically bumping into SOLDIER and Songl pleading with him, ripping her clothes off. Behind her, two terrified girls.

JUNG SOOK

KALEE

What's going on?

Oh my God!

JUNG SOOK (CONT'D)

Why didn't you tell me?

Kalee embraces the girls. Jung Sook thrusts a paper at the soldier. She phototgraphs him and gestures for him to leave. He spits, rearranges himself, shameless and mooches off.

Songl, half-dressed, hugs her kids and her eyes meet Jung Sook's.

SONGL

It's first time...

JUNG SOOK

Come on. We've got the permits.

They all jump in the car and drive off, passing soldier.

JUNG SOOK (CONT'D)

He's just going to go and find some other girls, isn't he?

Kalee and Jung Sook look at each other. Jung Sook stops the car. She looks at Songl and Kalee, questioning. Kalee nods. They gesture for the girls to move to the floor of the car.

The girls slip down as instructed. Afraid, Songl watches.

By the boot, Jung Sook raises her eyebrows at soldier who leers. She opens the boot and leans against it, suggestively.

Soldier approaches her, slowly, unsure.

Jung Sook reaches out and strokes him, pulling him to her. She shoves something into his surprised mouth and jabs him with her other hand as Kalee rams a knife into his neck.

Jung Sook extracts herself revealing a knife sticking out his stomach. They bundle him into the boot. Kalee spits on him.

EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Jung Sook, Kalee, Songl and the two girls sit on a rug and play cards laughing, as the younger girls stuff their faces.