

Korea.

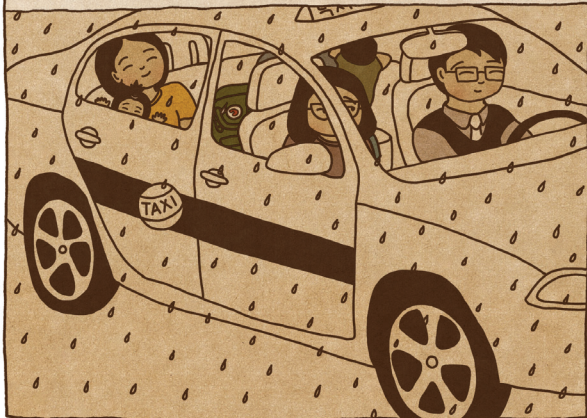
I'm back in the country where I was born.

Back in the country where I was abandoned.



Korea,
the country that sold me.

We were planning on staying at a hostel for adoptees, but instead we find ourselves in a car on our way to Min-Jeong's family. It's in the middle of the night and we're driving through a rainy Seoul.



We're exhausted after the long trip, but the kids are happy and excited. Everything feels unreal, somehow.



Min-Jeong's family is warm and welcoming, despite having unexpected night guests at twelve thirty at night in the middle of the week.



Annyeonghaseyo! I'm Min-Jeong's mom!

Come in, come in! You'll get wet!

You and Poppy get my room, and Richey and Teddy get my brother's.

Oh, you're so kind! Are you sure about this?



Eat all you want, now! And welcome to Korea!



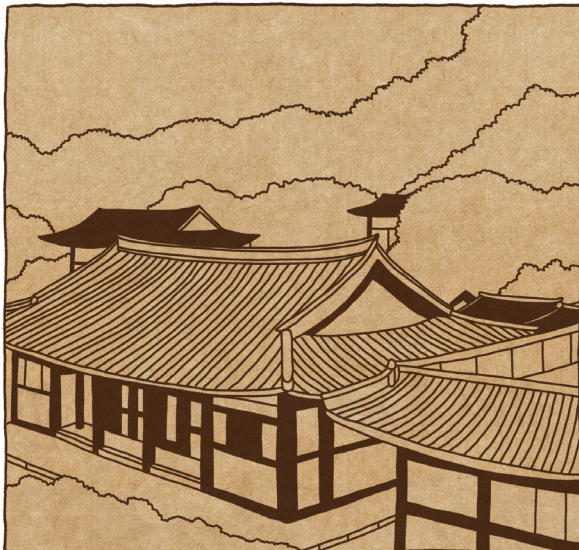
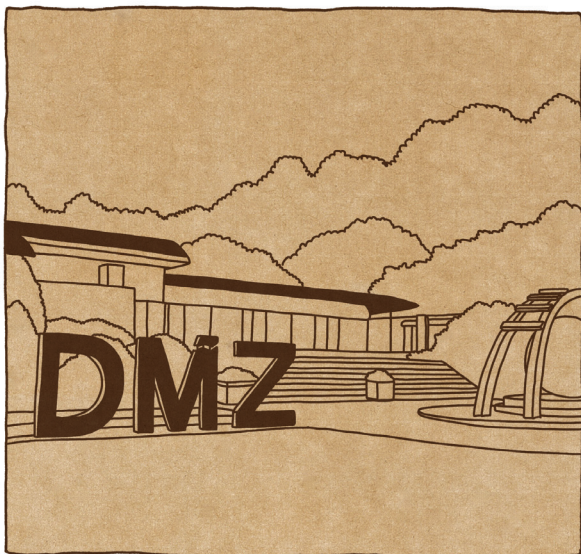
The first week, we have no plans or meetings. We just stroll around, taking Korea in. We visit beautiful parks and playgrounds.



Everywhere we go, we encounter friendly and helpful people. People are more than eager to spoil the kids and give them attention. We realize after a while how unusual this is for us, that strangers aren't treating us as intruders. In Sweden, when people walk up to us, it's usually to say something derogatory or to berate us. There, our guard is always up, shoulders raised. Here, we can finally relax and just exist.



Min-Jeong's family take us on several outings.



Sweden is my home, but I feel like a stranger there.



In Korea, I'm a stranger who feels at home.

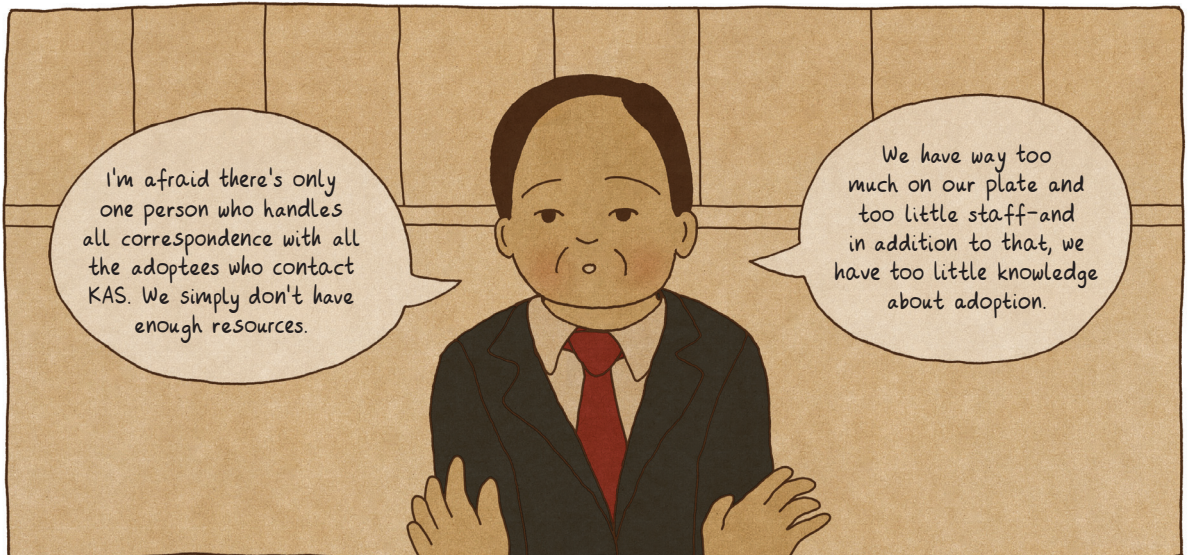
Our first meeting is with Korea Adoption Services. It's a sweltering day and it takes us a long time to find the right address.



Since KAS have been much more helpful when speaking to Richey, we decide that he should go to the meeting alone.



Two hours later they all come out of the meeting. The KAS people take us to lunch and ask me a lot of questions about my life as an adoptee. When we're alone again, Richey tells me about the meeting.



I showed them your contradictory documents and told them which ones we've had trouble acquiring.



And I asked them if they knew about Mr. Jung and Busan Children's Guidance Clinic.



A Mr. Jung, you say?

No, afraid not.

They told me that the president of KAS has adopted children himself, and that one of the staff earlier used to work for Holt.* I wonder how this affects their work with adoptees.



But the most important discovery came when I asked about the search for your parents.



Search? No, we don't search after parents at all. The agencies do that. They've got all the resources. We only act on behalf of the agencies. When they for example ask for a certain document, we can make special enquiries.



Korea never thought we would come back. The country abandoned us before we could speak for ourselves. No one knew that we would yearn for our families and roots, that we against all odds would come back to live here. No one was expecting adult adoptees to come back and claim our rights.

