

Forgiveness

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE SUPPLY STORE, BREAKROOM

INDRA NAWARA (24) sits at a table alone eating her lunch and scribbling in her notebook.

Indra has a girl-next-door face that makes her easy to fall for. She wears thin-rimmed glasses with short curly hair. She wears a gray uniform with *Office Supplies* stitched in.

She draws sketches of machines and processes.

Customer flow can be optimized if we moved the stationary with the ink.

A buzzer goes off. Break time is up. Indra puts her book away and throws her lunch in the trash.

INT. OFFICE SUPPLY STORE, CHECKOUT

She stands at the cashier register in the dully lit checkout lane with monotone colors and people.

An elderly woman walks to her carrying a photo book, pocket notebooks, and pens.

INDRA

Hi. Did you find everything ok?

CUSTOMER 1

Yes I did.

Indra grabs the items one-by-one, scanning them. She scans the photo book.

CUSTOMER 1 (CONT'D)

These are for my grandkids. I want to save as many memories as possible.

INDRA

Cool.

Then scans the pocket notebook.

CUSTOMER 1

Ah my husband adores these pocketbooks. Says they're great for writing down ideas. Do you have any experience in that.

INDRA
(don't want to be here)
Can't say that I do..

Scans the pens.

CUSTOMER 1
Ah. I remember --

INDRA
Look are you going to tell a story
for each of these items?

Taken aback by her remark, the customer stays quiet.

INDRA (CONT'D)
Your total is \$34.50.

Silently, the customer swipes her card and leaves.

INDRA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry...Have a nice day.

Indra's phone buzzes. A text from Jake. Text bubbles appear as they talk.

Jake: *Want to go for a walk?*

Indra: *After my shift.*

Another customer walks up to Indra and continues the boring cycle of retail.

EXT. CITY STREETS

The city is filled with lively people shopping and decorating early for the holiday season.

Indra walks with her boyfriend JAKE PORTER (25) down the city streets.

Jake is a tall dark haired man dressed in a sweatshirt and jeans to brace the chilling autumn air.

Indra wears an autumn jacket and white beanie.

INDRA
And she kept on telling me a story
for each of the items.

JAKE
Really? Wow. That's quite a story.
How's the job hunt?

INDRA
Nothing. Rejected from everywhere.

JAKE
Dang. Not even an interview?

INDRA
No. They all say no, but never tell
how I can improve.

JAKE
Being an artist is not easy either.
Lots of rejections. At least you
have a job.

INDRA
A dead-end job. Anyway, why'd you
call me after work? I thought we
were meeting later tonight.

JAKE
Yeah... I wanted to talk. Let's
sit.

They sit at a bench.

JAKE (CONT'D)
There's no easy way to say it. I
think we should break up. You're a
great girl and friend but I don't
we--

INDRA
What are you saying?

Jake's phone buzzes. He checks it. Indra sees the name
Cynthia appear on his phone.

INDRA (CONT'D)
Who was it?

JAKE
..Just my sister.

INDRA
Really?

JAKE
You think I'm lying?

INDRA

I'm merely acknowledging the coincidence of you breaking up with me and receiving a message from a girl I don't know.

JAKE

(this again?)

It's just a coincidence, Indra.

Jake takes a deep breath.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I can't do this anymore. You give me no trust. And I give you all the trust. I see you hanging out with other guys, I don't attack. No matter how close you seem to be with them.

INDRA

Wait, no. I'm sorry. Please. Don't.

JAKE

Sometimes it's like you're yelling through me and at someone else. I can't be your tool anymore. I'm sorry.

Jake stands.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Take care. Indra.

He leaves her at the bench.

Indra stays at the bench, processing what had happened again.

After a while, she heads home.

INT. NAWARA HOME

Indra's mom, ABIGAIL NAWARA, (50) is working in the kitchen baking dressed in an apron rocking an 80s hairstyle. She quietly hums *La Vie En Rose* to herself.

Door slams shut as Indra stomps past the kitchen and heads up to her room.

MOM carries a sandwich on a plate to Indra.

Indra sits at her desk facing the ceiling.

She scrolls through her email, filled with rejections from jobs.

Her mom knocks on the door.

MOM
Where's Jake?

INDRA
We broke up.

MOM
Oh honey.. What happened? Do you want to talk about it?

INDRA
..He broke it off. I accused him of cheating, but never denied it.

MOM
Maybe it was for the best. Men can be so... Anyways, I don't think he would be good for you. You deserve better. Any interviews yet?

INDRA
No. I'm stuck. There's no way up or down. If I don't find one soon, I'll be stuck in retail.

Another knock on the door.

BENNY
Hey. Just came to see where everyone was. How you all doin?

BENNY JOHNSON (55) is the boyfriend of Indra's mom. He stands stall with short hair and hairy arms. His hands are calloused from years of manual labor.

MOM
Benny! You came home early.

She stands and kisses him.

BENNY
Yeah I got home early. How you doin kiddo? How's the job hunt?

INDRA
Still hunting Benny.

An email alert pops on Indra' computer. She checks it.

INDRA (CONT'D)

(surprised)

I got a job at the ARK plant. How?
I never applied.

MOM

They found you. Aren't you happy?

INDRA

But the plant is in Lima. We don't
know anyone who lives in Lima.

MOM

Rashid does. I was talking with his
mom earlier --

BENNY

It'd be a good job. Honest hard
work. Rashid's a good kid too.

INDRA

No-no-no. I haven't seen him in
years. It'd be too weird.

MOM

-- She was so happy. It's been ages
since you two have been together.

INDRA

It's been too long. We haven't been
that close. No. I can't.

MOM

And when I said you were applying
to jobs everywhere...she called
Rashid right away. And you know
what he said?

BENNY

He said yes.

INDRA

You never give me any space, mom.
I'm 24. Let me make my choices. You
never bothered Tanya when she was
her.

MOM

He said yes.

INDRA

You always said she was the better
twin.

Indra realizes her mother's been having her own conversation.

INDRA (CONT'D)

Wait-what?

MOM

He said yes. He has a spare room.
You'll be living with Rashid in
Lima so you can work at ARK.

INDRA

What-when?

MOM

It won't be for forever. Just until
you can get on your feet.

Indra slumps into her seat.

INDRA

What if I don't want to work at ARK
Steel? I want to work at John
Hopkins, I applied there at least.

Her mother strokes Indra's hair.

MOM

Hopkins has said no twice. It's
been 3 years without a job. This
isn't a curse. It's a gift. You'll
see. At your age, it isn't very
flattering not to be an unemployed
engineer...

(under breath, indignant)
..or single.

BENNY

Listen to me kiddo. If life gives
you a gift, you take it. There's no
guarantee it'll work out. It's good
work. Honest work. Rashid's a good
kid too.

A beat.

MOM

Rashid can help you move. But
promise me you'll at least give it
a chance?

INDRA

I'll try.

She places a reassuring hand on her shoulder.

MOM

Don't worry. Indra. You'll figure it out. Follow your heart. Let love lead the way.

BENNY

No matter what. We love you sweetheart.

INDRA

Thanks mom. Benny.

INT. RASHID'S 1 STORY DUPLEX- EVENING

In a 60s duplex home sparsely decorated, Indra & RASHID IMRAN (24) carry a desk into the room.

Rashid is Indra's childhood friend. He's a medium-build man who looks like he'd sell photocopy paper for a living. He's dressed in high school teacher attire with a button-up shirt and jeans. He's happy to help her in anyway, but knows she'll probably won't listen to him.

RASHID

Is that the 4th?

Rashid enters carrying one side of the desk, Indra the other. Both dressed in autumn attire.

INDRA

5th.

RASHID

Wow. How do you go through 5 in the span of 13 months?-- where do you want the desk?

INDRA

Here's good.

They set the desk by the window outlooking the cul-de-sac.

RASHID

Surely Tanya's not like this also? It's been a while since I've seen her.

INDRA

No, she had one breakup with some guy and never dated since And who are you to talk? You've never had a relationship.

RASHID

You should take sometime to yourself before you decide to have another relationship. Work somethings out first.

Indra scoffs at the idea, like it hasn't crossed her mind several times.

RASHID (CONT'D)

Anyway, I'm going to the grocery store. You want anything?

INDRA

No. I'm ok.

Rashid leaves Indra in her room.

She moves books around and takes her ARK keycard with *Industrial Systems Engineer* bolded on it.

She walks out to the porch to watch the sunset.

A cul-de-sac is quiet. Identical houses surround the concrete circle. A small patch of dirt incased in bricks serves as a garden on her porch.

Indra brings out a small chair and enjoys the calm autumn breeze.

Her neighbor, ARTHUR (70), sits in a rocking chair in the porch.

ARTHUR

You're new. Glad to see that kid finally has a girlfriend.

Arthur's voice speaks through years of drinking. His hands are calloused and his eyes have lived for decades beyond his age.

IARTHUR

What happened to Rancid anyway? I haven't seen him today. You kill 'em?

INDRA

What-who? No.

ARTHUR

Damn. Could've had both houses to myself. Though I'd miss Roger, he's a good kid.

Arthur sees Indra's fear and confusion.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Only joking. Should get used to the gallows humor around here. Not many funny folk and those that are, aren't very sociable people like me. You be careful, some can be real snakes.

INDRA

I will try.

ARTHUR

What's your name?

INDRA

Indra Nawara.

ARTHUR

Arthur Claypool. What brings you to Lima? Most people leave this place or die here cause they couldn't leave in time.

INDRA

I got a job as an Industrial Systems Engineer at the ARK manufacturing plant.

ARTHUR

Fancy title for a paper-pusher. At least you're living with your husband.

INDRA

Oh-no. We're not together. I'm just staying with him for a few days--

ARTHUR

(seen it all)

That's what they all say dear..

INDRA

--until I can get on my feet.

ARTHUR

..And then when something happens who do they turn to... Not many women like you work. Those that do usually live alone here.

INDRA

My mom actually went behind my back
and forced me to come here.

Rashid's car pulls up.

ARTHUR

Oh look your boyfriend, Raysh, is
back.

Rashid carries two grocery bags.

RASHID

Hey Arthur. I see you've met Indra.

ARTHUR

(jokingly)

A fine lady you have.

Indra helps Rashid with the grocery and they head back in.

INT. KITCHEN- EVENING

Rashid and Indra place the grocery bags on the dining table
and remove the contents.

INDRA

Arthur's nice...sort of

RASHID

Yeah he's something. He is a good
man.. with gallows humor.

Rashid takes out tomato sauce and elbow macaroni from the
cabinets.

INDRA

How is the town? The locals?

RASHID

It wears you down. You try to stick
to your values, but-- Anyway what
do you think about spaghetti
tonight? I forgot date fruit.

INDRA

That's ok with me. I don't like
date fruit, more of an apricot gal.

Rashid makes the spaghetti & they eat dinner in silence.

EXT. DRIVING THROUGH LIMA- DAY

Indra drives her white 2012 Honda Civic through Lima. She passes broken houses with peeling paint and cracked sidewalks.

People walk carrying large plastic bags wearing baggy and torn clothes.

The ARK company is the only non graffiti painted building on the block.

INT. ARK MANUFACTURING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Indra sits in a large conference room surrounded by men. There are 2 businessmen, 2 engineers, BRADY and KEVIN (both 40s), and her boss,. The room reeked of coffee and sweat. The screeching of steel can be heard in the distance.

BOSS

NASA's not calling on us anymore to manufacturing bolts or fasteners for Glenn Research center, they've switched to additive manufacturing. Lockheed martin has been lower each quarter for the past 2 years. And both GM and Ford have decided to go with other steel plants.

(beat)

I can't stress this enough, we need to change how we do things.

BUSINESS MAN 1

Our employees are growing older. Maybe we should layoff so we can save money in case we run into another low quarter and lose clients. We'd also have more time to think of an edge.

BRADY

We could use other steels, right? Maybe quenching the steels to a lower temp and we can build a better Martensite alloy for the bolts at least.

KEVIN

It's expensive. But it's doable. But we can't forget the rest. We still need the lathes to make the copper pipes and pistons.

BOSS

Indra. What do you think?

INDRA

(no confidence)

..What if we're looking at this the wrong way?

BOSS

(intrigued)

Go on.

INDRA

(more confident)

Looking at the process, we could move some workers around to optimize the manufacturing time for air motors. If we moved the bar stock to the beginning and had the same person handle the hole threading--

BUSINESS MAN 2

But we've always manufactured using different people for each air block for years. It'd cost too much to change it. Too many manhours, paperwork.

INDRA

But if we do we can make bolts, fasteners, everything faster. We'd get more clients--

BOSS

You're right. It would take more paperwork.

INDRA

But you're missing the point. You can save--

BRADY

Not to mention to moving the machinery.

KEVIN

Moving the coolants, saws, milling machines, lathes. It'd be a hassle.

INDRA

I think you're missing the point--

BUSINESS MAN 2

We'd lose money in the process of
trying to improve it.

Indra shrinks in her seat. The day continues in a similar manner and the rest of the week won't be much different.

INT. RASHID'S 1 STORY DUPLEX

Later this week, Rashid is cooking in the kitchen working with different spices for his spaghetti.

Indra slams the door shut. Rashid sees Indra's annoyed and displeased expression.

RASHID

What happened?

INDRA

Just like the rest of the week.
They kept talking. And didn't
listen to any of my suggestions.
The rest of the day was knowing my
place in the company. No one
listens.

RASHID

Maybe it'll improve. You need to
speak up for yourself.

Rashid notices Indra's sullen attitude about her job.

RASHID (CONT'D)

I'm going shopping, why don't you
join me? Take your mind off work
and get to know the area a bit
more?

INT. LOCAL GROCERY STORE

The store is decorated in thanksgiving fashion. Rashid and Indra walk down the aisles wearing thick jackets. Indra wears a white scarf around her neck that contrasts her crimson autumn blazer. Rashid still dresses like a high school teacher.

INDRA

So how many people do you know?

RASHID

I know a few people. Mainly from
work and other companies we
partnered with.

They walk down the bread aisle. Rashid picks the bread as
Indra watches people around them.

RASHID (CONT'D)

Hey can you get strawberry jam.
It's at the end of the aisle.

Indra walks to the edge of the aisle, browsing the types of
jam. *Blueberry, strawberry, mango orange, pineapple.*

Someone rounds the corner and bumps into her.

INDRA

Oh I'm sorry.

RALPH

Don't worry. Fault's mine. I should
watch where I'm going.

RALPH MCALISTER (25) is a man you'd find on clothing
magazines brandishing the latest suit jacket and dress shoes.
The complete opposite of Rashid. He wears an auburn colored
jacket with matching sneakers and dark brown jeans.

They both stare, entranced at each other for few moments.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Well, take care.

Ralph continues past Indra. They continue to steal glances.

Rashid pushes the cart to the infatuated Indra.

RASHID

(knowing she didn't)
Find any jam?

INDRA

What-oh no. Sorry. I just. He
bumped into me.

RASHID

That's Ralph. I've worked with him
on a few projects--

INDRA

He's cute. Do you know if he's
seeing anyone?

RASHID

--But he doesn't listen. He's kinda of a jerk sometimes to other employees.

INDRA

Of course, He must be single. I didn't see anyone with him. How do I get to him? I could try running into him again. This is your one shot Indra to pull your life back together.

RASHID

What? No I'm telling you. Take some time to yourself before getting into another relationship.

Indra looks into Rashid's eyes with a pleading puppy gaze.

RASHID (CONT'D)

Y'know, I forgot. I needed some date fruit for a dish. Can you go get them? I'll meet you at checkout.

She hugs him and leaves excitedly hunting for dates.

She finds the box of dates and searches for Ralph. She spots him at the end of another aisle looking at cereal. Indra prepares herself and walks towards Ralph.

INDRA

Hi! How are-

She pretends to stumble and drop the date box.

Ralph quickly catches her and the date box.

INDRA (CONT'D)

Wow. Great reflexes.

RALPH

I'm pretty good at performing on the spot.

Ralph brings her back to her feet and hands her the box.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Dates? Not really a big fan. More of an apricot guy myself.

INDRA

What? Me too! These are for my roommate. He likes date fruit.

RALPH

Oh you're with someone?

INDRA

No-no. Not like that. We're living together, but we're not together-together.

RALPH

Right.. we're you headed?

INDRA

Checkout.

RALPH

Great. Me too. Want to walk with me?

INT. GROCERY STORE CHECKOUT

Rashid waits patiently inline at the cashier. He looks around for Indra, but doesn't see her.

He takes out his phone and texts her.

Text bubbles appear as they talk.

Rashid: Where are you? *Did you find the dates?*

Indra: *last checkout aisle, far left.*

Rashid peers over 5 aisles to see Indra and Ralph at self-checkout.

Rashid: *I see you've found the dates. I'll pay Ralph back for those.*

Indra: *Oh no need! He insists on paying.*

CASHIER

Can I help who's next?

Rashid: *Ok. I guess I'll meet you at home.*

Indra: *Sounds good!*

Rashid walks up to the cashier and pays for the groceries.

INT. RASHID'S 1 STORY DUPLEX - EVENING

Rashid sits at the coffee table in his buttoned-up shirt and jeans in the living looking over documents for work. Dinner is on the table untouched, he's waiting for her.

He checks his phone, no replies from the 5 messages he sent Indra.

A calendar reminder goes off on his phone: help Indra w/ prepare *Lean Six Sigma presentation on Monday*.

The front door opens and closes gently. He gets up and sees Indra with her back against the wall, love struck.

RASHID

Where were you?

She doesn't reply in her love-struck trance.

RASHID (CONT'D)

Do you have the dates at least?

She snaps out of the trance and hands him the box.

RASHID (CONT'D)

I guess it went well with Ralph?
What'd you do?

INDRA

I don't need to tell you what we did. You're not my mom.
(beat)
But it was heavenly. Like nothing I've ever felt before.

RASHID

..alright. Well it's getting late you should probably head to sleep.

INDRA

Sleep? I can't sleep. I have another date tomorrow night.

RASHID

Tomorrow night? You have a presentation on Monday that we still need to make.

INDRA

I wonder what I should wear. Not this outfit again, something new and bold but not too extravagant.

RASHID

Indra. I don't think you should go on the date with Ralph. Wait until after your presentation.

INDRA

Maybe I want something more out of life than just work. Ever think about that?

RASHID

(what are you talking about?)

You worked 1 week. It was a bad week. Those happen.

INDRA

Why don't you want me to go out with Ralph? You're jealous? I know all about Mom's plan to get you and me to get together. Let me tell you now, it's not happening. I won't date you because you treat me like a child and never listen. Just like her. I am going on that date and you are not stopping me.

With that sting, she walks to her room and slams the door shut. Leaving Rashid standing alone in the living with dinner on the table...with date fruit and apricots.

INT. ARK MANUFACTURING

Weeks later the day before Christmas, Indra's working with Brady on optimizing the manufacturing process at Indra's desk. They're looking at a flowchart of the process. Both are dressed in casual clothing after working long hours on optimization.

BRADY

Nice job. Indra. I think management would approve of this.

INDRA

You think so?

Indra's phone beeps.

BRADY

Yep. You want to take it to them?

She checks her phone.

INDRA
Why don't you take it this time?
Let me know if you need me.

BRADY
Sounds good.

He gets up and walks away with the designs.

She takes a call.

INDRA
Y'know you're not supposed to call
me during work.

RALPH (ON PHONE)
And you still picked up. I'll make
it quick. Do you want to meet at
the town center at 7pm?

INDRA
What's there?

RALPH (ON PHONE)
It looks gorgeous with all the
Christmas decorations.

INDRA
Ok. 7 it is.

She hangs up and walks towards Management upstairs. She runs
into Brady in the stairwell. He's coming down from
management's offices.

INDRA (CONT'D)
Hey, how'd it go?

BRADY
Just coming to get you. They're
happy with the plan. They gave us
the day off.

INDRA
Really?

Brady walks down the stairs with her.

BRADY
Yeah. I'm going to finish some
stuff up first, but after that I'm
headed home.

INDRA
Wow. Great. I'll see you after the
holidays then. Merry Christmas.

INT. RASHID'S 1 STORY DUPLEX

Indra arrives to an empty driveway. Arthur's sitting outside
as usual.

ARTHUR
You're home early.

INDRA
(proudly)
Boss gave me the evening off.

She enters an empty and quiet duplex. Old envelopes sit on
the counter. She walks to Rashid's room and peeks in.

His room is efficiently decorated, space used for useful
things such as calendars, white boards, and a single desk.
He's not there.

She's about to leave but sees a paper on his desk with her
name on it. She plucks the paper from beneath the stack
gently.

It's her resume.

The front door opens, Rashid enters.

RASHID (O.S)
Indra? What're you doing home
early? It's only 6. I thought you
were working late.

No response.

RASHID (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Indra? You here?

INDRA
(unsure)
I'm in your room.

He makes his way to his room. She stuffs the resume in her
pocket.

RASHID
What are you doing in my room?

He sees her resume in her hand.

RASHID (CONT'D)
I can explain.

INDRA
I'm sure you can.

RASHID
Your mom was worried. 3 years and no job is not a good look for an engineer. I thought I could help out and get you one at ARK.

INDRA
I can believe my mom going behind my back. But you? I thought we were friends.

RASHID
We are. Indra. Please listen.

INDRA
And I thought you cared about me, after all those years my family cared for you.

RASHID
Indra.

INDRA
Stop. I'm seeing Ralph later tonight. I'll be at the town center.

Indra shoves the resume in Rashid's hands and storms off to her room.

Without a word, she leaves dressed in winter parka and white winter hat.

EXT. PORCH OF THE DUPLEX

Indra stands fuming at her past talk with Rashid.

Arthur rocks in his chair. He's wearing a Santa Claus sweater with Christmas themed trousers sipping hot coco.

ARTHUR
You ok? I heard shouting. Is he treating you right? This places wears down on the best of us, I know.

INDRA

What? Yes, I'm fine. It's just...things are going well for me than they have in a long time. I thought I could trust him, but he went behind my back.

ARTHUR

Wow, didn't think Rashid had it in him. Well, men at his age are disposed to bouts of...exploration until they settle down. Some still continue it.

Indra walks to her car and drives to the town center.

EXT. TOWN CENTER - NIGHT

Dec 24. Snow gently falls as Indra parallel parks. The Christmas lights decorate the snow in greens, reds, blues, and yellows. Many couples are enjoying the lights walking through the town. Restaurants are filled with families and friends enjoying each others company.

Indra looks around for Ralph. She spots him further down the street exiting a shop...with another woman. A striking red-head. Ralph and the woman embrace. She kisses him on the cheek.

Indra watches from a distance as memories flash through her mind, betrayals by Jake, her father, Rashid.

The woman leaves Ralph at the shop entrance. He calls Indra. Another phone in Ralph's pockets glistens in the shop light.

She picks up. Indra stands closer to her car acting as if she just arrived.

INDRA

Hey Ralph. I just got here. Where are you?

RALPH

I'm by the ice cream shop. It's at the far end.

He's looking around and spots her down the street.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Wait. I see you. Can you see me?

Ralph waves.

INDRA

Yes. I can. I'll be right over.

Indra hangs up and quickly walks over to Ralph. She passes by couples sitting on the benches enjoying ice cream in December and couples walking arm-in-arm.

She reaches Ralph. He leans in to kiss her on the mouth, but she turns her head for a kiss on the cheek.

RALPH

Glad you made it. You look amazing.

He sticks out his arm and she grabs it. They walk down the street bathed in the Christmas lights from the brightly lit shops and their decorations.

RALPH (CONT'D)

This is one of my favorite times of the year. Everything looks gorgeous.

The lights mask the peeling paints of the shops and trash buried beneath the snow.

INDRA

Yeah. It sure does.

They sit beneath a statue surrounded by decorated trees and ornaments.

RALPH

There's something I've been meaning to ask you.

He reaches into his pocket.

INDRA

(unable to keep it
bottled)

I need to ask you something first.

Ralph freezes, sensing the desperation.

RALPH

Oh. What is it?

INDRA

Are you seeing anyone else?

RALPH

What? No of course not.

INDRA

Then who was the woman with you
after you left the shop? I saw her
kiss you.

RALPH

That-that was--

INDRA

(under breath)

I knew it.

RALPH

Indra. You gotta understand. It's
not like that.

INDRA

What is it like?

RALPH

Y'know what. I've put up with
enough of your shenanigans. You
stay with Rashid when I've offered
you my place many times. Since
we've been together, I feel like
I've been under a microscope. You
shared my phone location at all
times-- Jesus give me some space.
Give me some trust.

INDRA

Trust? Show me your phone.

RALPH

What is this about?

INDRA

Show me you only have 1 phone and
not 2. Empty your pockets.

He hands her his phone, wallet, crumpled receipts.

INDRA (CONT'D)

All your pockets.

A beat.

He reaches into his other pant pocket and pulls out a flip-
phone and hands it to her.

INDRA (CONT'D)

And you talk about trust.

RALPH

Indra.

INDRA

Enough. I don't want to hear it anymore. We're done.

Ralph grabs his things and stands.

RALPH

Finally. Merry Christmas.

He walks off leaving her alone at the statue. The snow continues to fall gently.

Her phone buzzes. It's her boss. She pulls herself together.

INDRA

Hello?

BOSS

Indra?! Where the hell have you been? We've been looking for you. On another one of your 'family emergencies'?

INDRA

Brady told me to go home. Said that you liked our proposal and gave us the evening off.

BOSS

Our proposal? You mean Brady's proposal? His proposal was great. But I kept the execs back an extra hour to wait on you.

INDRA

What? No- we worked on that proposal together. Brady and me.

BOSS

Brady's been with us a long time. You're saying he stole your work?

INDRA

We worked on it together.

BOSS

I stuck my neck out for you Indra. I'll try to salvage what's left.

(beat)

Look there's nothing you can do about it. Take some time off.

(MORE)

BOSS (CONT'D)
Enjoy your holiday. I'll see you
next year.

Click.

Indra sits alone beneath a statue with nearly everything
taken from her. The streets fall quiet except for the gently
falling snow.

Sounds of feet walking through the snow come closer.

RASHID
You ok? I saw Ralph. He didn't look
too happy.

Indra doesn't respond.

RASHID (CONT'D)
Listen. I'm sorry if our argument
earlier ruined your date. I didn't
mean to. I--

The silence grows. He sits beside her. Indra stays frozen,
petrified of moving.

RASHID (CONT'D)
It's ok. What do you need?

INDRA
I don't know. I broke up with Ralph
and I may not have a job after
Christmas.

RASHID
What happened?

INDRA
Someone at work took my work and
tried to pass it off on his own.

RASHID
C'mon. Let's go home. Let's get you
warm first.

He helps her stand.

INDRA
I parked over there.

RASHID
You're in no condition to drive.
I'll come back later for your car.

They walk to the car. Rashid sits in the driver seat with Indra gazing out the window.

RASHID (CONT'D)
For what it's worth, I am sorry
this happened to you. And that I
kept the resume from you. I
should've told you in the first
place.

INT/EXT. NAWARA HOME & PORCH

Indra is asleep as Rashid closes the door to her room.

He grabs her keys along with his and heads outside.

The snow continues to fall. Arthur isn't sitting outside and knocks on Arthur's door.

Arthur opens the door.

RASHID
I need your help getting a car.

ARTHUR
What? Now? Can't it wait.

RASHID
No. I'll explain along the way. You
can drive my car back.

INT. NAWARA DINING ROOM TABLE

The following morning, Dec 25th. Rashid is eating his breakfast as Indra walks in.

RASHID
Merry Christmas. It's almost noon.
We'll have to get going soon to
your mom's. The party is starting
soon.

She reluctantly sits at the table.

INDRA
Listen.. I'm sorry about yesterday.

RASHID
Don't worry about it. This places
wears you down. There are good
people, but you have to find them.

INDRA

No. I'm sorry about everything. I'm sorry about me. I should've listened. I wasn't ready for a relationship.

RASHID

No you weren't. I know you're a nice person but.. you just have bad luck with relationships. Anything you want to talk about?

Indra shifts around uncomfortably.

INDRA

Before you met me, I had a dad.

RASHID

Yeah, I guessed as much. I thought you would tell me if you wanted. He seems like a nice guy.

INDRA

He wasn't always. He left us a while ago. He was.. I caught him cheating on mom. Right in our house.

(beat)

Mom wasn't home and I had gotten home early from school. Tanya was sick that day and was bedridden that day. I saw dad's car in the driveway when I came home. I thought he'd be home. I head upstairs to check on Tanya and saw him.. on top of another woman. Right in his and mom's bedroom. The door wide open. Then he looked at me, with regret and pity that I had to be the one to see him this way. I said I'll keep it quiet, but he wouldn't let me.

RASHID

Jesus. How long has it been?

INDRA

He told mom the same day and kicked himself out soon after. I didn't see him for 10 years. We only recently invited him for family gatherings, but I avoided him. Mom said it was time to move on.

(MORE)

INDRA (CONT'D)

That he's changed and deserves forgiveness.

RASHID

But you don't think that.

INDRA

Mom told me dad has a family now. With two daughters just like me and Tanya. Were we not good enough? Did I do something bad that he had to go sleep with another woman.

RASHID

You can't blame yourself for this. It--

INDRA

I play that day over and over. Thinking if I was sick also or if I took longer getting home from school then maybe I'd still have a whole family. It's my fault.

Rashid takes time absorbing Indra's confession.

RASHID

You feel that your mom, your sister, and you weren't worthy of being loved. That's why he cheated. And that carries into your relationships where you're 100 times more sensitive secrets, betrayal. You're afraid of someone leaving you, so you're hyper aware.

INDRA

How can I fix it?

RASHID

You can't go back and stop your father. But you need to forgive yourself. It's not your fault and there was nothing you could've done. You are loved. By your mom, Benny, Tanya, me.

INDRA

I spent my whole life believing I was unlovable that I broke up the family.

RASHID

You need to forgive yourself. And your father.

INDRA

How do you know so much?

RASHID

I have been in a relationship before. It didn't work out. Neither of us were ready yet, so we took a break.

INDRA

Well...I think you're ready now. You're a good friend Rashid.

Rashid smiles and stands.

RASHID

C'mon. Your mom's probably worried sick that we're not at the Christmas party yet.

INT. NAWARA HOME CHRISTMAS PARTY

The house is decorated in holiday lights. A large Christmas tree stands in the corner of the room.

Mom, Benny, and Indra's twin sister, TANYA (24), set the table for dinner.

MOM

Where are they? They should be here by now.

TANYA

Don't worry mom. You know Indra loves working late.

BENNY

I'm sure they're on their way. Lost track of time spending alone time with each other.

Tanya shoots him a dirty glance.

The doorbell rings. Tanya opens the door.

Rashid and Indra stand at the entrance with light snow layer atop their winter hats and jacket.

RASHID
Merry Christmas Tanya.

Tanya hugs Rashid.

BENNY
Hey!! Merry Christmas kiddo!. Good
to see you.

Hugs pass all around as they greet everyone and take off
their jackets.

Rashid still dressed as a high school teacher with a
Christmas sweater-vest and khakis.

Indra wears a red flannel shirt and blue jeans.

INDRA
I hope we're not too late.

MOM
Not at all. Not at all. We're just
setting the table.
(to Rashid)
Rashid will you help Tanya get the
presents from upstairs?

Rashid smiles ear to ear.

RASHID
Of course.

They quickly head upstairs.

MOM
Indra, you can help Benny and me
set the table.

They set the table as someone exits the bathroom.

DAD
Hey Abigail, the bathroom sinks
messed up again. You want me to fix
it?

MOM
Oh no that's ok, Steven. Come help
us set the table.

Indra's father, STEVEN NAWARA (50) stands tall with steely
gray hair and an aged face. Dark rimmed glasses over his dark
eyes.

Steven walks to the table seeing Indra.

DAD

Good to see you again Indra. Your mother told me you got a job?

Indra avoids eye contact.

INDRA

Yeah-I did. ARK manufacturing.

DAD

Great to hear. You're moving up in the world. They're lucky to have you.

INDRA

..yeah.

MOM

Indra? Can you check on Rashid and Tanya. What's taking them so long?

Indra heads upstairs to their bedroom. Her and her sister's room is closed and her parent's room wide open to the hallway.

The presents sit in her parent's room untouched.

Indra stands looking around the room, haunting memories of that day pop in her mind.

Her father knocks on the door.

DAD

Your mother wanted me to check in on you. I see you found the presents.

Indra doesn't move.

DAD (CONT'D)

You ok? What's going on.

INDRA

(breaking down)

It's just this room. Why'd you have to do it dad? We could've been a family.

DAD

I know. I know. And I regret my mistake every day. I try to make up for it, but I know there's nothing I can do or say to make that day go away. To make my choice go away.

(MORE)

DAD (CONT'D)

No amount of money will fix it. I was young and stupid and foolish.

INDRA

It's all I can remember.

DAD

I'm so sorry that you had to see it-- I'm so sorry dear.

INDRA

For so long, I thought it was something I did. That made you... I broke this family apart.

Indra sits on the bed, holding back tears.

DAD

No, no, no, no, no. It was nothing you did. It was me. And me alone.

He holds her face in his hands.

DAD (CONT'D)

Understand? It was my fault.

INDRA

I thought you didn't love us. Love me. Enough to stay.

He hugs her.

DAD

I love you more than anything. No matter what happens or how far we separate. I love you. I will always love you.

They embrace for a few more seconds before separating. He reaches for a small present wrapped in a white and red ribbon.

DAD (CONT'D)

I was saving this for later, but I think you should have this now.

He holds up an heart-shaped pendant necklace. He clicks open the heart revealing an image of her, Tanya, her mom, and dad in a family photo.

DAD (CONT'D)

You'll always have us nearby. Do you want me to put it on for you?

She nods. He puts the necklace on her.

INDRA
How do I look?

DAD
Gorgeous.

She hugs him once more.

INDRA
Thank you dad. For everything.

DAD
You're welcome. Let's get these presents down to your mother. She's waiting.

Tanya and Rashid enter the room.

DAD (CONT'D)
Looks like we beat you to the presents. Where were you?

RASHID
Oh.. we were uh just--

TANYA
-Just catching up.

DAD
(not born yesterday)
Right.

Indra and her father carry the presents down stairs. Rashid and Tanya carry the rest.

Everyone has a good time eating the dinner and opening presents.

Her phone buzzes. It's her boss. Indra walks to quiet space.

INDRA
Hello?

BOSS (ON PHONE)
Hey Indra. Sorry to bother you during the holidays but this couldn't wait.

INDRA
What is it?

BOSS (ON PHONE)
I pulled some strings and got you a
job at John Hopkins.

INDRA
What?

BOSS (ON PHONE)
Rashid was big help. Told me you
applied multiple times. It was the
least I could do.

INDRA
But would about the plan? The one
Brady stole?

BOSS (ON PHONE)
We're taking care of that. Don't
you worry. Anyways, you should be
getting an email from John Hopkins
soon. Merry Christmas.

INDRA
Thank you.

Click.

Indra's phone goes off once more. It's an email from John
Hopkins, a job offer.

Tanya sees Indra staring at her phone for a few minutes.

TANYA
You ok?

Indra pulls her aside.

INDRA
(disbelief)
I got a job at John Hopkins...I
start in 2 weeks.

TANYA
What! That's great!

She hugs Indra and her shouts reaches all corners of the
house.

Everyone silences to hear the news.

INDRA

I got a job at John Hopkins. They
want me in to analyze their layouts
for transporting patients and
medicine.

MOM

That's great

RASHID

Congratulations! I knew you could
do it.

BENNY

Way to go Kiddo!

Her father pats her on the shoulder with a big smile on his
face.

DAD

I'm proud of you Indra.

INDRA

Thanks dad.

FADE OUT: