

Looking Into Aaina

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INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE COURTROOM - DAY

AAINA and ELIJAH stand facing each other, doors of courtroom visible in background. Aaina is wearing a blazer-skirt set with red details and red heels. Elijah is wearing a dress shirt tucked into pants. OMINOUS MUSIC plays in the background.

ELIJAH
(concerned)

Hey. Look at me. You're gonna be ok. You don't have anything to worry about.

AAINA
(nervously joking)

What? Is a murder charge not enough for you?

Elijah holds her hand with both of his hands.

AAINA
(under her breath)

I mean I'm literally a freshman, what the hell am I gonna do if this goes wrong.

Elijah tilts up Aaina's head by holding her chin. Aaina gives him a small smile.

ELIJAH
(whispering)

It won't. Just keep your head up.

AAINA
(lightheartedly)

Easy for you to say.

ELIJAH
(looking down)

You'll be fine. If I've learned anything from Mock Trial, it's to smile at the jury. Be yourself.

AAINA
(eyes dart from hands to Elijah, tearing up)
How can I even be myself if I don't even remember what I've done?

Aaina removes her hands from Elijah's grip. We FOLLOW BEHIND HER as she opens courtroom doors.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Aaina walks with confidence to left side of courtroom and takes a seat next to her attorney.

As she walks PEOPLE IN COURTROOM are all staring at her. We SWIVEL 180 DEGREES FACING AAINA and ZOOM OUT until we are behind the judge. We see Elijah and AAINA'S FAMILY seated behind her. JUDGE BANGS GAVEL and we CUT to facing the JUDGE who is seated.

JUDGE

Does the prosecution have an opening statement?

We PAN from Judge to PROS ATTORNEY who stands up.

PROS ATTORNEY

Yes, Your Honor.

We FOLLOW PROS ATTORNEY from the front at a LOW ANGLE as she walks towards JURY.

PROS ATTORNEY

Remember high school? When friends felt like family. When relationships felt unbreakable? But what if a bond is severed? At this vulnerable age, on the cusp between high school and college, you have to look at yourself in the mirror and be willing to move on. To start fresh. Ladies and Gentlemen of the jury, today's case is about a girl who could not move on. A girl who carried those severed bonds into college with her. Aaina Gelani murdered her ex-best friend Lily Pham, in a fit of rage on February 16, 2021.

CUT TO

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM (2020 GRADUATION) - DAY

SHOT OF GRADUATION STAGE, CLOSED FRAME.

PRINCIPAL (V.O.)

Aaina Gelani.

Aaina walks across the stage, gets her diploma and shakes PRINCIPAL's hand. Aaina poses for a picture. We PAN TO her DAD holding a camera. CLICK.

CUT TO

AAINA'S PARENTS take pictures of Aaina and her BAA. Baa is wearing a sari. We PAN to a MEDIUM SHOT of Baa and Aaina.

BAA
 (squeezes Aaina's cheek)
 We're so proud of you betu.
 Wishing you lots of good luck in college.
 Aaina rolls her eyes and smiles.
 AAINA
 (drawing out her words sarcastically)
 Thanks Baa.
 LILY enters from behind Aaina and Baa.
 LILY
 Can Lily get in on this Gelani family photo?
 AAINA
 I think we're done taking photos for today. Love you Baa.
 LILY
 (to BAA)
 Love you too!
 We SEE THE FRONT of Aaina and Lily as they WALK.
 LONG SHOT.
 LILY
 Don't be a bitch. It's our last high school party. Are you coming or what?
 AAINA
 (jokingly)
 Babe it literally wouldn't be a party without me.
 LILY
 (annoyed)
 Mmm yeah for sure.
 AAINA
 (chuckling)
 You know I'm just kidding! But for real like who would you talk to if I wasn't there?
 LILY
 (stops walking)
 What do you mean by that?
 Aaina and Lily stop walking and face each other.
 AAINA
 No! I just mean that like-
 Aaina pauses to think and Lily interrupts her.
 LILY
 Like what.
 AAINA
 Well if you weren't there I'd get super bored too. It's not that big of a deal. Stop over- analyzing

things like you always do.
 Aaina and Lily start walking again.
 LILY
 Yeah ok. Um, how is everything with you and Neil?
 AAINA
 It's fine. We're just chilling.
 LILY
 (raises eyebrows)
 Chilling?
 AAINA
 Ok shut up. I'm gonna miss him so much next year.
 LILY
 Yeah it's literally been three years. Honestly, I don't understand how you guys haven't broken up yet. Everyone was expecting it to happen.
 AAINA
 NO WAY! Did they really?! I mean nice to prove everyone wrong, I guess.
 LILY
 So are you guys going together? Tonight?
 AAINA
 Yeah he's giving me a ride.

CUT TO

INT. MATTE BLACK TESLA - NIGHT

CLOSE UP. NEIL and Aaina making out.

AAINA
 (flirty tone)
 What time is it? We should get to the party. Aaina rolls off of Neil. Neil pulls Aaina's collar towards him.
 NEIL
 (whiney)
 Oh, come on... five more minutes?
 AAINA
 It's already 11:27, we want to be late... but not THAT late.
 NEIL
 Who cares, we're going off to college soon, do you even want to stay in touch with these people?

AAINA
I mean we've known them for over
six years now, it'd be weird
not to.

Neil rolls his eyes and Aaina smirks at him,
opening the car door.

AAINA
Come on, let's go!

CUT TO

INT. INSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT
We see Aaina, Neil, Lily, and their FRIENDS sit
on a couch in the living room LONG SHOT. Aaina
and Neil sit next to each other and Lily sits
across from them. The room is pitch dark with LED
light lining the walls. Other high schoolers fill
the room, holding red solo cups. "What Goes
Around" by Justin Timberlake plays loudly in the
background.

FRIEND 1
Guys, can you believe that
VEER is going to Berkeley?!

FRIEND 2
(sarcastic)
Believe me, California can
have him...

GROUP LAUGHTER.

LILY
(slurring her words)
Well, I didn't get in... good
for him, I guess.

Lily takes a swig out of her red solo cup.

AAINA
Please, Cascade isn't that
shitty. The parties there are
literal fire-and let's not
forget the hot Asians guys
we're going to meet.

Neil shuffles uncomfortably and checks the
notification on his phone.

AAINA
You can bag your own Nick
Young.

FRIEND 2
(interrupting)
Did you guys hear about Carly
and Liam's messy break up? It
was BAD, BAD.

AAINA
Damn really?

FRIEND 1

Well, they hadn't been dating
that long.

AAINA
That's expected then, I mean
Neil and I have definitely
been together longer.

Lily rolls her eyes. Aaina attempts to grab
Neil's hand, but he is turned away looking down
at his phone. His phone lights up with a
notification. He swipes to respond. Aaina glares
at him. Awkward silence.

FRIEND 1
(directed towards Aaina and Neil)
So... are you guys going to
make it work long distance?

NEIL
(hesitantly)
We're thinking about it...

Aaina looks at Neil quizzically. Lily texts
someone on her phone.

AAINA
Guys, get off your phones.

Ignoring Aaina, Lily whispers in Friend 2's ear
and stumbles away.

NEIL
(to Aaina)
I need to take a piss.

Neil leaves his phone on the couch. Friends
converse in background. Aaina, reclined on the
couch, drinks from the red solo cup, and notices
a text message reminder go off on Neil's phone.
She looks over, grabs it, and sees a text from an
unsaved contact number that says: "U comin?"

AAINA
(directed at Friend 1 and 2)
Do you guys know this number?

Aaina reaches out across the couch and shows them
Neil's phone.

FRIEND 1
No, but it's been like 10
minutes... didn't he just have
to take a pee break?

FRIEND 2
Yea, go collect your mans.

Aaina gets up and we follow her as she stomps up
the stairs yelling Neil's name.

AAINA
(under her breath)
Where is he?

Aaina opens a couple more doors, calls his name,
and finally opens the last door in the hall,
looks inside, and sees Lily and Neil making out
on the bed.

AAINA

(angry)

What the fuck...