

MODERN LOVE

By

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MAGIC HOUR. NEW YEAR'S EVE.

To the tune of 2 PACS' "CALIFORNIA LOVE," we FLY above sexy swaying PALM TREES, glide by the glitz of a MALIBU POOL PARTY, skim the shimmering PACIFIC OCEAN, circle a GROUP of BEACH PARTY REVELERS.

As a cork FLIES thru the air it becomes...

TWILIGHT. FRIENDS on BEACH CRUISERS, take us down trendy ABBOT KINNEY BLVD., wiping camera as we enter;

INT./EXT. VENICE LOFT - NEW YEAR'S EVE - CONTINUOUS

Pushing through the well heeled CROWD of NEW YEAR'S EVE REVELERS we find;

LEENA RAI, 33, sassy, leader of the pack, American Born East Indian, in an elegant dress, chatting with best friends; MEGAN RILEY, 35, Lawyer, who enjoys a good argument as much as a decent bottle of red, and SARA NILES, 30, mid-west transplant, loves everybody, sometimes a bit too much.

LEENA

To the year of... Megan you first.

MEGAN

Me? No you. You always go first.

LEENA

Not this time.

SARA

A little rebel yell, I like it.

MEGAN

Why are you messing with tradition?

LEENA

Spicing things up, c'mon, New Year new dance!

MEGAN

Fine. This New Year, my kids will have no more then twenty-five doctor visits, I'll make Partner, and we'll be moving into that little shack in Santa Monica.

LEENA

The four bedroom with the pool and
outdoor pizza oven?

MEGAN

It's five, and yes we just put our offer
in!

Cheers, hoots, hollers.

LEENA

The career, the hubby, the kids and *now*
the house? Give me a minute to catch up?!

SARA

When can I move in?

MEGAN

My house is our house...

LEENA (CONT'D)

"Our house is a very very fine house..."

Leena, Sara and Megan toast, laugh. Sing. Megan looks to
Leena.

MEGAN

Lee?

Leena gathers her thoughts, her conviction. Then;

LEENA

This New Year I'll have my first novel
published and get knocked up by my man.
To my family to be!

The girls mid-toast.

MEGAN

Wait so you and Brad had the "next step"
convo?

As Leena nods her head "yes," a look of uneasiness in her
eyes.

LEENA

Not exactly. But soon.

SARA

Lee! You said you'd have it in Maui last
week.

LEENA

I tried, but he said we just needed to
enjoy each other and our vacation.

MEGAN

Really??? You're going on how many years--

LEENA

Not tonight, Sara your turn, go!

SARA

This New Year I will...do a handstand in yoga. Yay me!

MEGAN

That's it?

LEENA

That can't be it! You have a whole new year, for anything to happen!

SARA

Managing my expectations.

At this moment BRAD WILSON, 30, preppy hipster, slides up to Leena.

BRAD

Here you are. Ladies looking like trouble-

Pleasantries all around.

MEGAN

We were just toasting to you, Lee and your family-

BRAD

My family?

LEENA

Right...to your parents and sister and that awesome jam she makes--

Leena shoots Megan a look, as Sara downs her glass.

SARA

Drinks? My Tinder date is alone at the bar.

A chorus of "yeses" as we follow the group to the bar.

INT. VENICE LOFT - DANCE FLOOR - LATER

Moonlight shines through the windows, a disco ball spins from the ceiling above, amongst the crowd, we find Leena and Brad, mid-countdown.

CROWD

Six, Five, four...

LEENA
I love you!!

CROWD
Two... Love you, two!

CROWD
One, Happy New Year!!!

Celebration in the air. Leena and Brad come together for a KISS, as boom up to the spinning disco ball. A myriad color of light, as we begin;

OPENING CREDITS.

INT. CHUBBY KNUCKLES HEADQUARTERS, LOS ANGELES - DAY

Camera takes us thru the working HUB of the most popular CHILDREN'S MAGAZINE in publication; print and digital. We find FEATURES EDITOR Leena walking as she speaks on her phone.

LEENA
I had a great holiday, thanks. And "Holy Cow" is trending big time with the kids. Moooo to you too. You'll have the edits within the hour. What?

We track with her as she takes us to her office.

LEENA (CONT'D)
No Eric, I don't know why cows are holy in India. Enlighten me.

INT. LEENA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

LEENA
Well that's what Google's for my friend. Talk soon.

Art Director Sara enters.

SARA
Hi, time for a coffee?

INT. CHUBBY KNUCKLES HEADQUARTERS - HALLWAY

Leena and Sara, walk and talk.

LEENA

Brad was receptive...he said he understands where I'm coming from, loves me, but needs time to think about everything.

SARA

That's great!

LEENA

What part did you not get?

SARA

At least you finally had the conversation!

LEENA

And now we're walking around each other on egg-shells. Make it land mines.

Leena's phone pings. She looks at it, smiles; *a picture of her NEPHEW ANDY, 2, adorable, mouth full of chocolate.* Holds it up to Sara.

SARA

He's getting so big! Look at those cheeks. Mixed kids have the best DNA.

LEENA

I know, I'm so ready--

Her phone pings again. She looks at it. A small gasp of delight.

SARA

Another one? Lemme see.

LEENA

It's my agent Mark. Holy shit, it means he read my novel!

SARA

It's going to be a best-seller I know it!

Sara holds up crossed fingers, as Leena answers her phone and exits the building.

LEENA

Mark, hi...

EXT. CHUBBY KNUCKLES HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Leena stands against a wall, talking on her phone, with her book agent MARK FREY.

LEENA

I just spent the last six months re-writing it with your notes.

INT. GLOBAL TALENT AGENCY, LOS ANGELES - CONTINUOUS

A cluttered office with a view. MARK FREY, 45, kind eyes, over-worked, intense.

Intercut as necessary;

MARK

You're a talented writer. There's no denying that. You created an interesting world, built the tension, the suspense--

LEENA

So what's the issue?

MARK

I can't sell this.

LEENA

Why? You just said--

MARK

I know what I said. It's not quite there. You need to dig a little deeper.

LEENA

Deeper? What?

MARK

Yes. Find that voice.

LEENA

What do you mean? It is my, I wrote that novel, three years of *me*, blood, sweat and tears. I gave it everything. It's--

MARK

Lacking. We can talk later. I gotta hop and take the other line.

DISCONNECT. Leena stares out into the world. Waves of humiliation and defeat wash over her.

INT. CHUBBY KNUCKLES HEADQUARTERS, LEENA'S DESK -
CONTINUOUS

Leena, despondent, shoe shops online. Sara walks over.

SARA
So how'd it go?!!

LEENA
(game face on)
Great. Really good!

SARA
Ooooh you're shopping for fancy book tour
shoes!

Leena's phone pings. Another picture of *her nephew Andy;*
a bucket on his head. Both Leena and Sara laugh.

SARA (CONT'D)
I can't wait for yours.

LEENA
You and me both.

INT. LEENA AND BRAD'S APARTMENT, MASTER BEDROOM - SANTA
MONICA - EVENING

Leena, in a pretty dress and heels, hair done, make-up
fresh, looks at herself in the full length mirror.

LEENA
Too obvious.

She takes off her heels.

LEENA (CONT'D)
Better. But he loves the heels.

Steps back into the heels.

INT. LEENA AND BRAD'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING - SANTA
MONICA - CONTINUOUS

Leena plays Barry white on the IPOD dock.

LEENA
Way to obvious. Stop sweating. Gross.
Please stop.

She hits a button. Nelly. She SINGS along, off-key.

LEENA (CONT'D)
 "I need you to get up on the dance
 floor..., " see there's my voice.
 Perfectly fine voice.

Pulls take-out containers from the oven.

LEENA (CONT'D)
 "So hot I wanna take my clothes..."

Jumps as the container meets her skin.

LEENA (CONT'D)
 Ouch! Eat shit Mark Frey stupid agent.

She lights candles on the table.

LEENA (CONT'D)
 Lacking. What the heck is that?

Pulls a bottle of champagne from the fridge.

LEENA (CONT'D)
 You know who's lacking? You are Mark,
 idiot agent. (mimics) "I gotta hop."

The sound of KEYS in the door. Leena hides behind the
 door. Brad enters. Looks around.

BRAD
 Lee?

Leena jumps out from behind the door.

LEENA
 Boo!!!

And startles him. They both LAUGH.

BRAD	LEENA
I can't believe you still	I can't believe you still
get me-	jump!

She pulls him in for a kiss.

BRAD
 What's going on Lee?

LEENA
 Boyfriend appreciation day?

INT. LEENA AND BRAD'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM -
CONTINUOUS

LEENA
Three really great years--

BRAD
Lee, Lee--

LEENA
Brad, I love you, and more than anything
I want to start a family. Our--

BRAD
Lee. I, I can't do this anymore.

Momentary silence as Leena digests these words.

LEENA
What do you mean?

BRAD
Us. This. I can't. I'm done.

LEENA
Done? Done? I don't understand.

BRAD
I've been thinking hard about this. I'm
so sorry.

LEENA
Sorry? Sorry?! Wait. This can't be
happening. Brad look around you? We built
a life together. You can't just throw it
all away. We--

BRAD
Listen it's not you, I swear--

LEENA
There's someone else.

BRAD
No. No--

LEENA
Has to be!

BRAD
No there isn't.

LEENA
And I bet she's white, tall
and published.

BRAD
What? No, Lee listen, it's me. There's
this thing that's been brewing inside me,
I can't explain it. I just need to be me--

LEENA

You are you! And I love you and --

BRAD

I, I, I can't do it. I'm not ready,..I just turned thirty!! I need to be free, to party, to be party Brad, not--

LEENA

Party Brad? Party Brad??! Are you kidding me? It's not like we sit at home and eat bon-bons! We party. A lot! And we love--

BRAD

Lee stop. Listen to me. We're two different people, who want different things. You need to accept that.

LEENA

What do you mean different? I play flag football, fantasy football, and Madden with you! I--

BRAD

Leena! I need to be on my own. And you need to find what makes you happy.

LEENA

You. Us. What more--

Brad holds his set of keys, places them on the table.

BRAD

I'm sorry. I can't do this anymore.

INT. LEENA AND BRAD'S APARTMENT - NEXT DAY

Leena, miserable, shocked, carries a box, in which she tosses Brad's affects. Megan and Sara attempt to console.

MEGAN

He really said he wants to be Party Brad?

LEENA

Yup. I kid you not.

MEGAN

It's like he's having a mid-life crisis.

LEENA

He is?! He's only thirty! I'm the one who's thirty-three with eggs drying up faster than--

Leena holds friends "HOLIDAY" cards: pictures of cheery, happy FAMILIES.

SARA

Someone give him a Porsche and a mustache.

LEENA

I don't get it. Last week we were in Maui, in love, and I just...it's all so hurtful and confusing.

MEGAN

What else did he say?

LEENA

Nothing much. "Party Brad," peace out.

MEGAN

Lee it sucks, it really does, but I--

LEENA

You told me so. You did. And I didn't listen. I didn't think the age thing would...shit three of my most precious baby making years, down the drain.

SARA

I can't even imagine...

Both Megan and Leena look at her, incredulous.

SARA (CONT'D)

Sorry I just mean I can feel your pain. I think we should do some shots. Or break some shit.

LEENA

I even wondered what if he were to get in some crazy accident and I'd have to push him around in a wheel chair, and wipe his hairy ass for the rest for his life? Guess what? I was okay with that! Effin a hole!

MEGAN

Really? You would do that?

SARA

Ewww, like really hairy?

INT. LEENA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Empty bottles of booze and tubs of ice-cream. The NOTEBOOK on TV.

Leena, Sara and Megan, passed out on the couches. Leena opens her eyes, stares at the TV, then stands.

INT. LEENA'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

In darkness she quietly opens a drawer, pulls something out.

INT./EXT. LEENA'S APARTMENT - BACK DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Leena opens the door and steps out into the night.

EXT. LEENA'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

In silhouette Leena haphazardly moves about a garden. The SOUND of SHEERS fast at work.

EXT. LEENA'S APARTMENT BACK DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Megan appears in the doorway and hits a switch. A beautiful light illuminates a once gorgeous garden, now *completely destroyed*.

Leena's face, streaked with tears and dirt, turns to face her. They both take in the destruction.

LEENA

This was his pride and joy.

Megan takes Leena's hand in hers, squeezes it.

INT. LEENA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAWN

Leena asleep. Her phone RINGS. She jolts up.

LEENA

Brad!

As she scrambles around the bed trying to find her phone, we see she is surrounded by photos of her and Brad.

LEENA (CONT'D)

I knew you'd come back. We all make mistakes. We can work thru this...

She eyes her phone, picks it up, looks at the screen; "MOM."

INT. DR. AND DR. RAI'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - GLADWYNE, PA - MORNING

MRS. RAI, elegant East Indian, 58, physician, in a JUICY warm-up suit, pours smoothies for herself and her husband Dr. RAI, 62, who putters about next to her, in his matching JUICY warm-up suit. Her cell phone on the counter, in SPEAKER MODE. She leans in to talk.

MRS. RAI

Leena we're dying to know--

DR. RAI

Beti, (Punjabi for daughter) did the agent like the novel?

MRS. RAI

Did Brad get his promotion? I did a special puja (prayer) all month in hopes of positive outcomes.

LEENA (O.C.)

Yeah about all that...

Dr. and Mrs. Rai share a look.

INT. LEENA'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena paces, she holds a bound manuscript "CounterPlay, by Lee Rai," fights tears as she puts it facedown on her desk. Phone in her hand, on speaker mode.

LEENA

Brad and I, we...

Collects the pictures of she and Brad.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY;

LEENA (CONT'D)

Broke up.

Mr. Rai chokes on his drink, as they both reach for the phone.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Basically he said he wasn't ready for marriage and kids and needs to be single.

Leena drops the pictures in the trash.

MRS. RAI

I'm so sorry, Leena. Especially because you two shared a very close bond. But what to do? If he's saying he's not ready he's not ready. You can't force a man to change.

LEENA

Mom, after three years he dumps me and you're defending his sorry ass??

DR. RAI

Beti, I agree this is very, very bad behavior. Who does this man think he is? That he can, just like that, drink the milk and have the cow for free?

Leena sits on the edge of her bed, tearful.

LEENA

(Softly, to herself)
Cow?

DR. RAI

Most disrespectful, after all he came and stayed in my house, under my roof!

MRS. RAI

Leena listen, this is very hard, I know, but life is like a river, it keeps moving and you move with it. Okay? Chin up.

DR. RAI

Oh ho. Your mother believes she's a poet. Listen beti, anything you need or want--

Leena falls back on her bed, phone on her chest, stares at the spinning ceiling fan, as the muffled voices of her parents drone on.

INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - BRENTWOOD - DAY

Megan and Sara sit at the kitchen island. Laptop out, wine in effect. Megan's boys HUNTER 7, and LOGAN 6, wrestle in the background.

MEGAN

There's a dating site for *married* people? And a Sugardaddy.com?

SARA

You sure she's going to be okay with this?

MEGAN

Absolutely. We're taking all the pressure off of her and besides we know her better than she knows herself.

(scans computer screen)

Sports and exercise?

The two share a questioning look.

INT. LEENA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leena lies on her couch, her manuscript by her side. She stares at the TV, unkempt. Stands then slumps back.

MEGAN (V.O.)

Moderately active.

INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

INTERCUT THE FOLLOWING WITH LEENA'S APARTMENT AS NECESSARY;

As before. More wine is poured. The BOYS run about.

SARA

Oh oh running!

Leena *crawls* across her bedroom floor, grabs a sweatshirt Brad's, sniffs it, rolls over.

MEGAN (V.O.)

Weight training.

Leena in her pajamas, struggles with the weight of a huge cardboard box "Brad's Shit." The bottom opens, golf clubs, a Fraternity paddle, and a nacho libre mask fall out.

SARA

Swimming!

Leena in her bathtub; *dead man's float*.

MEGAN

Loves to swim.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Hobbies. Interests.

SARA

Cooking!

Leena answers her door, grabs a take-out bag.

MEGAN (V.O.)

Yes, loves to cook and entertain.

Take-out containers flood her kitchen and dining room.

Hunter and Logan, sing and dance, JOE, 42, Megan's husband, frazzled, tries to calm them down.

SARA

Dancing, singing!

MEGAN

Karaoke!!

Leena in her living room sings/screams along to Icona Pops' "I love it."

LEENA

"I threw your shit into a bag and pushed it down the stairs. I crashed my car into the bridge. I don't care, I love it! I don't care!!!"

Leena throws her body on the couch, buries her head.
SCREAMS.

SARA

An optimist.

Leena in her bedroom, pulls *numerous self-help books* from a bag; "Loveability," "Dumped", "Why you're not married yet."

MEGAN

Reads novels, non-fiction--

SARA

Oh oh Malcolm Gladwell, she loves him.

Leena pulls, "*First Comes Marriage-Modern Relationship Advice from the Wisdom of Arranged Marriages.*"

MEGAN

Drinks? Moderate--

Leena stands in her kitchen, throws empty wine bottles in a recycling bin.

SARA (V.O)

No, write social, one or two.

Picks up a bottle, holds it up to the light and takes a final swig. Then another and another.

EXT. BEACH - SANTA MONICA - EARLY EVENING

Leena runs on the beach. Hard. Fast. She slows to a stop. Catches her breath, stares out at the ocean. Searching for answers.

A FAMILY walks in front of her, breaking her trance. Her eyes follow them as they walk past a YOGA class. Another FAMILY in her view. Observing, she stands tall, wipes the tears from her face. Pensive. A glimmer of hope in her eyes.

EXT. LEENA'S APARTMENT - SANTA MONICA - CONTINUOUS

Leena walks briskly towards her apartment. Picks up speed, her body in agreement with her mind. Runs towards the front door. Determined.

EXT./INT. LEENA'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Leena runs thru the front door, grabs her cellphone.

INT. DR. AND DR. RAI'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Rai cooks Indian food as she speaks on the phone.

MRS. RAI

Leena we've proposed this before, but you never wanted it. Have you really thought this through?

INT. LEENA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena phone in hand, moves about with renewed energy, and enthusiasm, tidying up the place.

LEENA

Yes Mom, I have, and it's what I want to do.

INT. RESTAURANT - VENICE - EVENING

Leena, looking sharp in a dress, sits with Megan and Sara. She reads a sheet of paper.

LEENA

Passionate about my friends, family and career. Enjoys running, swimming, and an occasional glass of wine.

Continues to read, amused. Sara and Megan exchange looks.

MEGAN

With your approval, we're ready to upload that sparkling personality of yours on Match, Ok Cupid, Plenty Of Fish, Jdate, doesn't matter if you're Jewish or not.

SARA

I can't wait to share all my online dating tips and secrets! Yay, so fun!

Megan hands Leena a shoebox with a bow.

LEENA

What's?

She opens the box, and pulls out an incredibly sexy pair of Jimmy Choos'.

MEGAN

To help you get back on your feet and strut your fabulousness!

Leena admires the shoes.

SARA

Party Brad will soon be a *Pouty* Brad, perishing in the commitment phobic wasteland I like to call Bradsville.

LEENA

I appreciate all of this, I really do.
BUT.

MEGAN

No buts.

SARA

But what?

LEENA (CONT'D)

I've figured it out.

MEGAN

What have you--

SARA

What do you mean?

LEENA (CONT'D)

My plan.

MEGAN

Your plan?

SARA

What plan?

LEENA (CONT'D)
I'm going to India...and getting an
arranged marriage!

The girls pause, a moment of dead silence. Then --

SARA
India?!

MEGAN
Arranged marriage?

MEGAN
What? Did you fall? You did.

SARA
She's so accident prone.

LEENA
No I did not fall. I--

SARA
It's PTSD. I read about this. Oh Lee--

LEENA
I did not fall and I do not have post
traumatic stress disorder. I'm fine.

MEGAN
What are you on? We won't judge.

Leena shakes her head.

LEENA
I'm serious. I've thought really hard
about this, it's what I want to do.

SARA
But you've never been to India, you say
it smells funny, and--

MEGAN
You're "allergic" to curry--

SARA
That Indian men are too hairy. You didn't
even let me date that sweet guy Raj--

MEGAN
You refuse to step into any yoga class.

LEENA
That's because everyone assumes I'm the
teacher. So much pressure! Look I get it!
And that's exactly why it's time for me
to go over there. Time to get real with
my Indian roots. Be with my peeps.

SARA

But we're your peeps!

LEENA

Yes you are. But it's time I go--

MEGAN

Fine go. Discover your roots, that's great. But why on earth are you getting an arranged marriage? That's preposterous.

LEENA

Oh and finding your husband, mate, lover on the *internet isn't?? Swiping right? Seriously?* No offense Sara.

SARA

Umm, I do swipe left. Occasionally.

LEENA

I'm sure you do. Look I don't want to waste time on the internet, searching, weeding, hoping. I want to get married, I want to have kids. Now. Arranged marriages don't leave love up to chance, and the divorce rate is minimal, five or six percent. You can't beat those odds.

SARA

But what about love?

LEENA

What about it? For the past three years I thought I had it. But then "party Brad,"
(stops herself; then)
I tried it my way. It didn't work. You can't challenge hundreds of years of history. Arranged marriages work, just look at my parents.

SARA

You're too young to give up. Thirty-three is like the new twenty-two!

LEENA

I'm not "giving up" Sara. I'm moving forward. Arranged marriages have stood the test of time. Not only in India, but in Egypt, China, Europe, Africa!! And remember Jay Singh, he went over there, married that Mona chick, and they're totally happy.

SARA
She's so pretty.

MEGAN
She's such a bitch.

SARA
Are you moving to India?

LEENA
No. That's one of my criteria, HE has to be willing to live here in L.A. My world, my *friends*, are here.

Megan and Sara momentarily melt.

SARA
What if you don't even like the person?

LEENA
Of course I will like him. It's not a forced marriage. Close family select the best possible mates, based on similar backgrounds, upbringings, future goals, and arrange a meeting. After meeting we both *choose* if we want to marry.

SARA
So it's more like a set-up?

LEENA
Totally.

MEGAN
A very serious, high stakes set-up.

LEENA
Yes a very *real, life-long* commitment.

SARA
But what about passion? Romance?

MEGAN
Sex, let's talk about sex.

LEENA
It all builds over time. At the on-set, you both have each other's back, and want the best for one another. It's about loyalty, respect.

Leena hands Sara the dating profile papers, and the shoe box to Megan.

LEENA (CONT'D)
And from that the love grows, passion builds, and sex gets hot.
(MORE)

LEENA (CONT'D)

Let's be honest how many married peeps
are having hot sex here?

MEGAN

You should have never dropped out of law
school.

Leena raises her glass, Sara raises hers.

LEENA

To new beginnings.

SARA

To your potentially arranged marriage!

Megan puts her hand on her glass, does not move it.

MEGAN

I'm not sure I support this decision.

Sara raises Megan's arm, with effort.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Okay fine, but only if you learn how to
cook a good curry.

Leena fakes sneezes, they share a laugh, and clink
glasses. Sara does the Bollywood dance move "the light
bulb," with her hand.

SARA

Is there a two for one? You know I've
always wanted to go there.

INT. INDIRA GHANDI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, TERMINAL 3- NEW
DELHI - DAY

Leena, two bags in tow, and a STARBUCKS coffee cup, walks
through the massive post modern grandeur of the newly
built and rather crowded terminal. With a look of awe,
she takes in her surroundings. Stops, and types a text;
"NATASHA...I'm here! Walking out."

Leena throws back her shoulders, gathers her strength.
Takes a deep breath and walks with determination.

INT./EXT. INDIRA GHANDI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, TERMINAL 3-
NEW DELHI - CONTINUOUS

Leena steps out of the terminal, and is immediately taken
aback by the pungent smell in the air, the cacophony of
noises; traffic, chatter. The HEAT.

Throngs of PEOPLE move about, speaking, yelling in foreign languages; the taxi drivers, beggars, police, peddlers, tourists, they're all here. She stops, stunned. *Could this be hell?*

She turns, looks back at the terminal door. Hesitates, moves two steps forward, then looks back towards the terminal.

A push and pull between two worlds.

NATASHA (O.S.)

Leena! Leena!

Leena turns, her eyes search the OVERBEARING CROWD. She finds NATASHA DAWAN 29, her cousin, smiling, radiant and confident, walking towards her.

LEENA

Natasha!

She run walks towards her. They meet, embrace.

NATASHA

I can't believe you're actually here!

LEENA

Neither can I.

INT./EXT. NATASHA'S CAR - NEW DELHI - DAY

Natasha drives, navigating the hectic Delhi traffic with ease. Leena stares out the window, taking in the rickshaws, scooters, Mercedes Benz, Fiats, motorbikes with WOMEN in sari's riding backwards. Flatbeds with produce, and roaming COWS.

LEENA

So many people. Like a human zoo.

NATASHA

Second largest population in the world.

LEENA

Better odds for finding a husband.

A GROUP of BOYS approach the car, making faces, begging, several MEN spit the red paan, an OLDER MAN picks his nose. Leena shudders.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Or not.

NATASHA

Mummy has been very busy selecting your matches.

LEENA

Really?

NATASHA

Yes, she and her network of friends have been scouring all of Delhi and beyond. Thankfully that's distracted her from hounding me.

LEENA

Aren't you dating that Russian doctor at Harvard?

NATASHA

George? I guess. But Mum and Dad know nothing of him--

LEENA

Why not?

NATASHA

First, they'll ask a million questions I'm not prepared nor care to answer, second, I'm just having fun.

LEENA

Careful that's what I once said. That's what we all say.

NATASHA

Oh Leena, I'm so sorry about you and Brad. But really, I have no desire to marry.

LEENA

Honestly?

NATASHA

Honestly. Marriage and kids, not my dream. Never has been.

They share a look, as Natasha turns into her driveway.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

But it's great that it's yours and you're making it happen.

Leena takes in the beautiful lawn and impeccable landscaping.

LEENA
Yes, I'm making it happen.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - DAY

SAPNA DAWAN, her aunt (Masi) 58, classy, fit, worldly, Leena and Natasha sit at the table, a massive spread of Indian food before them. BALJEET, 50, their cook, brings hot rotis to the table.

SAPNA
Thank you Baljeet. (in Hindi)
This is our niece Leena, she's come from California. (In English) Leena this is Baljeet, he's been with us since Natashas' birth, and he's the best cook in Delhi.

Leena gets up to *shake his hand, he bobbles his head, brings his hands to Namaste*, and humbly smiles.

LEENA
Right.

She does Namaste back.

SAPNA
Leena beti, I've put a folder of selected "matches" on your bed, with their photos and bios. I think you will be pleased.

Leena swallows hard. This is really happening.

LEENA
Thank you Masi. I really appreciate all your work.

SAPNA
Don't be silly. We all want the best for you. Very wise of you to choose an arranged marriage. It's a deep commitment, and at the end of the day all marriages are...hell.

NATASHA
Mom!

LEENA
Masi!!

SAPNA (CONT'D)
Oh ho. Marriage is marriage. Now I'm trying to see who can show you Delhi. I'm tied up with work during the day--

NATASHA

I thought I'd have time, but they
switched my surgery schedule.

Natasha gets up.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

I have to run to the clinic. Leena we'll
catch up later.

Natasha kisses her Mom on the cheek, runs out.

LEENA

I'll be fine. I'll take one of those jump
on jump off buses.

SAPNA

Oh no no no. Not here. Not a chance. Not
to worry, I'll think of something,
someone to show you around.

Leena picks at her plate.

SAPNA (CONT'D)

Beti you've hardly eaten anything.

LEENA

I'm just so sleepy. This papaya is great.

SAPNA

Go rest. It's the jet lag. By tomorrow
you'll be fine.

Leena stands with her plate, Baljeet tries to take it
from her, she shakes her head no.

LEENA

I'll take it.

They tussle with the plate.

SAPNA

Let Baljeet take it.

Baljeet pulls it from her, politely.

LEENA

Thank you Baljeet.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - LEENA AND NATASHA'S BEDROOM -
CONTINUOUS

A comfortable bedroom, nicely furnished, with two twin beds. Leena sits on her bed, eating a protein bar, as her eyes scan the room. She picks up a binder labeled "Leena's Matches." Opens it. A picture of a kind, nerdy man "GOPAL," stares up at her.

LEENA

Oh my! Computer engineer. No shit.

Then in an *Indian accent, animated, she speaks.*

LEENA (CONT'D)

"Hello I'm Gopal. How do you do?"

She bobs her head.

LEENA (CONT'D)

"I'm Lee nice to meet you.."

Giggling she flips the page. An attractive man, with gold chains and an exposed hairy chest, looks up at her. "RAJEEV," jeweler.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Rajeev. Look at you! Ladies man for sure.

LEENA (CONT'D)

(mimics Rajeev's imagined
voice)

"For sure I have eyes only for you. Come to me baby."

She laughs as she flips the page. "ALOK", doctor, looks like APU from the Simpsons.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Apu!! What are you doing here?

LEENA (CONT'D)

(in APU's voice)

"Good rice, good curry, good wife, let's marry."

Leena laughs, closes the binder.

LEENA (CONT'D)

I've lost my mind.

Takes a breath. Stands, walks around the room, touching different furniture, fabrics, items. Walks to the window, looks out. LOST in deep thought.

INT. DINING ROOM/KITCHEN - NEXT DAY

Leena, holding her "MATCHES" binder, walks around the house, sees a SERVANT folding laundry, talking on her cellphone. She walks to the kitchen, sees Baljeet.

LEENA
Namaste Baljeet.

Baljeet smiles, bobs his head, does Namaste back.

BALJEET
Khanna?

Leena doesn't understand, shrugs her shoulders uncomfortably.

BALJEET (CONT'D)
Khanna? Food?!

LEENA
Yes!

She walks to a carton of eggs. Picks two up.

LEENA (CONT'D)
Eggs! Umm hard-boiled. Do you--

BALJEET
Yes, yes. Please.

He gestures for her to leave.

LEENA
And some toast?

BALJEET	LEENA
Very good. Five minutes	Yes thank you.
Okay?	

INT. DINING ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Leena sits and eats her hard-boiled eggs, toast with butter and jam, and a bowl of papaya. She makes notes in her binder. Notices a VOGUE, INDIA magazine. Picks it up.

LEENA
Vogue India?

Baljeet enters and pours her hot tea.

BALJEET
It's okay?

LEENA

Thank you! Yes it's delicious. How do you say very good?

BALJEET

Both acha.

LEENA

Both acha! How do you say egg?

BALJEET

Anda.

LEENA

Anda. That's easy and this-

Points to papaya.

BALJEET

Papaya. That toast. This tea.

LEENA

That's chai! Even I know that.

Both laugh.

BALJEET

Okay okay.

He exits as Sapna enters.

SAPNA

Well good morning sleeping beauty! Slept well?

LEENA

Masi yes thanks! Like twenty hours well!

SAPNA

Good then you'll be well rested for this evening's party.

LEENA

Party? To meet these matches?

SAPNA

No no they come later. This evening close friends are gathering to welcome the budding novelist.

Off Leena's look.

EXT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - BACK PATIO/LAWN - EVENING

A lovely garden cocktail party. Delhi's well heeled, high-society in attendance. SERVERS, circulate with trays of appetizers, and champagne flutes while the BARTENDER takes care of the more serious drinker.

Leena stands with Sapna and two of her FRIENDS, POONAM 55, VEENA, 58.

POONAM

I've always imagined the life of a writer to be so romantic, so sexy.

VEENA

Yes what do they say coffee all day whiskey all night?

SAPNA

Leena's latest novel is a thriller. Right Leena? Many twists and turns.

The friends ohh and ahh, as Leena makes eye-contact with Natasha, who waves her over.

VEENA

Thriller? Oh you must share, what is it about?

LEENA

It's a political thriller set against the U.S. Defense industry.

POONAM

Ohh politics! So sexy.

Natasha interrupts.

NATASHA

Hello Aunties.

POONAM

You're looking well Natasha. Love your dress, so sexy.

VEENA

Tell us, any Harvard boyfriend? Any handsome doctors in your rotation??

They laugh like it's the funniest joke ever.

Leena looks around the room, catches and makes eye-contact with DR. ANDREW BRIGGS, late 30's, tall, Caucasian, playful eyes, warm smile.

NATASHA

No, no boyfriend. Excuse us Aunties.

Natasha takes Leena by the hand.

EXT. COCKTAIL PARTY - CONTINUOUS

Leena and Natasha stand with PRIYA KHAN 28, and MONA SINGH, 29.

PRIYA

You'll be here for Aisha's wedding right?

LEENA

I'm not sure, when is-

NATASHA

You'll be here.

MONA

Then you must do the dance with us.

LEENA

Dance? Not me. Is it Indian?

MONA

We have a dance teacher.

PRIYA

We need a fourth--

LEENA (CONT'D)

But I don't dance. No rhythm, I--

Natasha takes her hands, leads her in a few dance moves.

NATASHA

You can. Just relax, let go. Get loose.

Dancing is about feeling the love.

The girls enjoy a laugh as they sway their hips to the music. Leena enjoying herself, looks around, notices Andrew watching her. Self-conscious she falls out of rhythm, and trips on Mona.

EXT. COCKTAIL PARTY - BAR - LATER

Leena stands at the bar waiting for drinks. She picks up on the conversation behind her.

VEENA

She's quite pretty, but in a desperate position.

Ouch. Leena is served a full glass of wine, sips as she waits for the other one she ordered.

GUEST #1

Sapna claims she's a novelist, but I
looked her up, can't find anything.

VEENA

Imagine the life? Thank God we raised our
children here only. The American born
ones are--

GUEST #1

ABCD's. Known fact. Bichari (poor thing)
not her fault.

Leena is served the second glass she ordered.

VEENA

But then the assumption that our boys are
sitting here waiting for her? Quite
something.

Leena turns away from the bar, and in efforts to numb the
sting of the overheard conversation, she gulps her glass
of wine. She takes a few steps, pauses, assesses the full
one in her other hand. Takes a sip.

ANDREW

(speaks with a British
accent)

Thirsty are we?

Leena looks up, sees Dr. Andrew Briggs. His warm eyes,
inviting. They share a look of familiarity. Flustered,
she collects her thoughts.

LEENA

Ah yeah this one is for --

ANDREW

Have no shame. In some cultures it's
considered the nectar of the Gods.

LEENA

I'd like to meet those Gods, but really
it's for my cousin Natasha--

ANDREW

Your cousin? You must be Leena. Andrew
Briggs. It is a pleasure.

LEENA

Likewise. Are you a friend of Natasha's?

ANDREW

I am, and a colleague of your Aunt's as well.

LEENA

You work at the University?

ANDREW

Indeed.

LEENA

A Professor?

ANDREW

On a good day.

LEENA

I see. So what is it you profess Dr. Briggs?

ANDREW

Socio-Anthropology. And Andrew is perfectly fine.

LEENA

Study of people, humanity, different cultures. Fascinating to say the least. Andrew.

ANDREW

Thank you. I think so too. Leena.

They assess one another. Sparks fly.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

And you? What is it--

LEENA

I take it you like India?

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Like? I absolutely love it, it's...hold on is this your first time here?

LEENA

As an adult yes. And I'm excited to explore this mysterious land of yogis, flying monkeys and spices which make me sneeze.

ANDREW

I can neither confirm nor deny the mysteries of this land, it's something you'll have to discover on your own.

LEENA

That is my intention Professor. I was planning on going around on a tour bus, however my Aunt is forbidding that.

ANDREW

Is she now?

LEENA

Yes, and truth be told, I've traveled quite a bit, I'm sure I'll be fine.

ANDREW

Of course you're quite the modern woman. Confident, independent, capable.

LEENA

Thank you I appreciate--

ANDREW

And am I correct that you're here for an arranged marriage?

Leena caught off-guard; collects her thoughts.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

I'm thinking how bloody great it'd be to do a story on you.

LEENA

A story?

ANDREW

A modern day woman comes from America, to engage in the ancient tradition of finding a husband, by way of an arranged marriage. Brilliant.

LEENA

I, I, I --

ANDREW

And your challenges make for exciting material.

LEENA

Challenges?

ANDREW

Your age of course. And then the cultural--

LEENA

Excuse me Professor Sherlock, but I'm not a "story," nor a "research project," I--

ANDREW

Sherlock? I quite like that. You're taking it wrong. I was merely suggesting the obvious--

LEENA

The obvious? Thank you Professor, but I'm really not interested in any of your intellectual English mumbo jumbo. If you'll excuse--

Sapna appears.

SAPNA

Leena you've met Andrew, an honorary Delhite, and such a dear family friend.

Off Leena's forced "polite" smile.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM, LATER THAT NIGHT

In darkness, Leena's sits on the couch, eats her protein bar, earbuds in, as *she SKYPES with Sara and Megan.*

LEENA

It just doesn't make sense. I was born in Philadelphia, I'm American. But back home, everyone's always asking me where I'm "from" and now I'm here, where I'm really "from" and I've never felt more alone. And old.

She fights back tears.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Where the hell do I belong?

MEGAN (VIA SKYPE)

Here. Come back stat. This is home.

SARA (VIA SKYPE)

But you just got there. Give it a chance. At least go shop!

Leena manages a laugh, just as the connection is lost.

LEENA

Shit! Come back.

She hits some buttons on her laptop, as Natasha appears.

NATASHA

Hey--

Leena jumps. Natasha notices her tears. Leena quickly wipes them away, shuts her laptop.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Sorry I didn't mean to startle you.
What's going on, is it Brad?

LEENA

Brad? My Ex? No. Not at all. Was
chatting with my girls. What's an ABCD?

NATASHA

Where did you hear that?

LEENA

One of the Aunties, she was saying how
I'm an old maid, an ABCD, and I--

NATASHA

American born confused desi. It's a
derogatory term used to describe American
born Indians who are confused and
conflicted about their culture.

LEENA

Abcd.

Silence as Leena takes this in.

NATASHA

Tomorrow night is my friend's Birthday
party at Agni. A fabulous club. You must
come. Cocktails, dancing, you'll love it!

LEENA

I'm in.

Leena does the "light bulb" arm move.

LEENA (CONT'D)

I'm going to soak up this country, and un-
ABCD myself. Screw those wretched witchy
bitchy Aunties.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leena in a tank top and shorts, clips her NANO on her
top, as Baljeet approaches.

LEENA

Good morning Baljeet. Namaste.

Baljeet does Namaste back to her, *refrains from making eye-contact*, bobbles his head.

BALJEET

Nashta? Breakfast?

LEENA

Oh yes after I run? Papaya, anda, toast, same as yesterday. Okay?

BALJEET

Very good. But papaya finished--

LEENA

Oh--

BALJEET

I go market, bring papaya.

LEENA

Oh that's so nice, but I'm going out, I'll get it. Me get papaya, okay?

Baljeet bobbles his head "yes."

LEENA (CONT'D)

Anything else?

BALJEET

No no. Maybe nimboo.

LEENA

Nimboo?

BALJEET

Lime. Lime!

LEENA

Okay sure! See you soon.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL ROAD NEAR DAWAN RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Leena jogs, ear buds in, smile on her face. She turns off the residential road and onto a public crowded street.

MEN of all ages STARE at her. Some smile, she smiles back. More MEN stop to notice her. Oh SHIT! Leena realizes she is the only WOMAN in a tank top, and shorts. She picks up her pace.

LEENA

(to herself)

Oh God, okay, pretend like it's nothing. Just smile. And wave.

Leena WAVES at her crowd. MEN ogle her, spit, and make cat calls.

LEENA (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Maybe not. Head down, head down.

She tries to cover her skin with her arms. She sees the MAN selling fruits and veggies, runs towards his stand.

EXT. FRUIT/VEGGIE STAND - NEW DELHI MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Leena picks out papaya as the VENDOR YELLS incoherently. She picks out LIMES, hands him money. He asks for more. She looks around, more STARES. People taking photos of her. She notices a WOMAN VENDOR she looks at the woman, "help." The WOMAN picks up a shawl, holds it open.

Leena hands the fruit VENDOR more money, takes her bag and runs to the WOMAN VENDOR. She hands the woman money, grabs a shawl, wraps it around her body and RUNS home.

EXT./INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Leena blasts through the front door, slams it shut behind her, and lays her body flat against it. Holy hell! Sapna approaches.

SAPNA
Leena? What's going on?!!

Leena shell-shocked, holds out her hand with the plastic bag.

LEENA
Papaya. Nimboo.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - GIRL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

LEENA
So I screwed up with my clothes, but why did those men have to be so awful?! This one dude spat at me! So violating!

SAPNA
Betí, I'm sorry. I-

LEENA

It doesn't make sense. I'm reading INDIA VOGUE, and sitting in this beautiful house with servants who have cell-phones, and right outside are all these beggars and maimed people, not to mention creepy men who stare and spit. So disrespectful.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Maybe this is all one big mistake.

SERVANT #1 (O.C.)

Sapnaji come!!

SAPNA

This is India my dear, and only a tiny, little slice. Until you become familiar with some customs and with Delhi you do not venture out alone.

Sapna exits. Leena finds her suitcase, opens it. Tons of protein bars. A picture falls out; she and Brad, arms around each other. She slumps to the floor. Quiet. Rips the photo into tiny pieces. Her eyes wander around her room, settling on a pretty dress.

INT. AGNI NIGHTCLUB - PARK HOTEL, NEW DELHI - NIGHT

A club to rival the best in New York and London. A luxurious, smart, sexy venue, where Delhi's monied crowd, shows off fashion forward looks and charm.

Bollywood, hip-hop music thumps the air.

Leena, stylish in a dress (the same one we saw in her room), chats with several good looking MEN; SAM 34, VARUN, 35.

LEENA

This place is really cool! Great music!

VARUN

It's your first time here?

LEENA

Yes, and I love it! Reminds me of home.

SAM

Where's home? New York?

LEENA

L.A.

VARUN

Los Angeles. Earthquakes and plastic surgery.

LEENA

What? No, more like the beach, and awesome sunsets.

VARUN

I was only joking. It's a nice place.

LEENA

You've been?

Natasha appears.

NATASHA

Leena! Here you are!! I was looking--

LEENA

This is my cousin Natasha, Natasha this is Sam and Varun.

NATASHA

Hi. Please excuse us.

Natasha takes Leena's hand and leads her away, as Leena, looks back at the guys, perplexed.

LEENA

What is--

NATASHA

You can't talk to them!

LEENA

Why not? They're cool, funny, oh shit are they in a gang?

NATASHA

A gang? No they're strangers. We only talk to guys we know.

She pulls Leena on to the dance floor.

LEENA

But that makes no sense, how the heck do you meet people?

NATASHA

Through friends! No rando's allowed.

LEENA

Is that your weird rule or--

NATASHA

No you goose, it's the culture! C'mon,
let's dance!

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE, GIRL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena and Natasha stumble into bed, tipsy.

LEENA

No tank tops on the street, but in the
club, the girls are showing it all off.
You can't talk to dudes, but in that
folder of strangers is my future husband.

NATASHA

The magic, and charm of India. I wish I
could take you around, you really need to
see--

Leena picks up a piece of paper on her bed, reads it.

LEENA

"Tour of Delhi starts tomorrow, eight
a.m. Be ready."

NATASHA

Mum found you a guide!

LEENA

"And please put together list of top ten
match selections, so I can plan
accordingly."

Leena grabs her "Matches" binder, and jumps in bed.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE, LIVING ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Leena, "Matches" binder out, writes her top ten list. The
DOORBELL. Baljeet answers the door. Leena shuts her
binder, grabs her water and bag.

ANDREW

Good morning.

Leena freezes. Slowly turns. She looks up at Andrew, who
smiles knowingly.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

(charming)

Your chariot has arrived.

LEENA
You? You're my guide?

ANDREW
Time to explore this land of flying
monkeys..shall we?

Off Leena's look.

INT. EXT. ANDREW'S CAR - NEW DELHI, DAY

Andrew drives, Leena sits in the passenger seat, drinking
her bottled water, wiping sweat from her forehead.

LEENA
This heat. I'm feeling nauseous, maybe we
should turn back.

ANDREW
You'll get used to it.

LEENA
I'm not planning on being here that long.

ANDREW
Oh right, the arranged marriage process
moves quite quickly I understand.

LEENA
Okay first of all no arranged marriage
questions. No story.

ANDREW
But why not? It'd be such fun.

LEENA
Absolutely not.

ANDREW
How about one question a day? Only one?

LEENA
Why are you so obsessed? Are you married?

Andrew holds out his hands, losing momentary control of
the car, which is now in the path of an oncoming OXEN
CART. Leena grabs the wheel turns it, and them to safety.

LEENA (CONT'D)
What are you doing? Death by oxen is not
my thing.

Andrew takes the wheel...then again, holds out his hands,
Leena grabs the wheel.

LEENA (CONT'D)
Have you lost your mind?

ANDREW
Showing you I don't wear a ring.

Takes back the wheel.

LEENA
That doesn't mean a thing, plenty of
married men don't wear--

ANDREW
I don't believe in marriage.

Silence, as Leena stares at Andrew.

LEENA
(patronizing)
Of course you don't.

ANDREW
(owning it)
Of course I don't. I'm no fool.

LEENA
So you're saying I'm a fool?

ANDREW
A bit defensive are we?

Leena is beside herself. The tension as thick as the
humid heat.

LEENA
Why may I ask don't you believe in
marriage?

ANDREW
Why may I ask are you getting an arranged
marriage?

LEENA
Really the repeat thing? Like a parrot,
you're saying what I say?

ANDREW
What exactly are you saying?

LEENA

I'm saying no questions between you and I regarding marriage, arranged or otherwise.

They continue to drive through the loud, congested streets in silence. Uncomfortable, hot, sticky. Andrew plays with the radio, finds a Hindi song, hums along. Leena steals a glance at the Professor. He catches her look, smiles, as she quickly turns her head.

EXT. RED FORT - NEW DELHI - NEXT DAY

Leena and Andrew walk along the grounds of the RED FORT. Andrew kind and polite, Leena keeping up her guard.

LEENA

Wow look at all this. It's massive.

ANDREW

It's considered the sixth city. The emperor Shahjahan built it after the Taj Mahal in Agra.

LEENA

This is pretty amazing. How long ago?

The natural pull on Leena's sense of discovery, overcomes most of her angst towards Andrew.

ANDREW

Longtime back, the sixteen hundreds.

Leena walks to a wall with intricate work carved in it.

LEENA

How on Earth did they build--

A COUPLE of INDIAN TOURISTS *approach Leena.*

MAN TOURIST

(in Hindi)

Can you please tell us which way is the Naquar Khanna?

Leena hesitates, doesn't answer.

WOMAN TOURIST

(in Hindi)

Can you please tell us the direction of the Naquar Khanna?

LEENA

Yes.

A la CHARADES, Leena acts out someone eating, then points in the direction of a food cart. The COUPLE looks at the food cart, then at Leena. Is she nuts? She smiles with pride.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Khanna? Food, right over--

ANDREW

(in Hindi)

You go about three hundred feet, turn left, and you'll see the nine arches.

The COUPLE thank him, as they regard Leena, who gives a humbled Namaste.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

(Amused)

The snack cart?

LEENA

You speak Hindi?

ANDREW

Ofcourse I

LEENA

You do

ANDREW (CONT'D)

You don't?

LEENA

(in Hindi)

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. And anda.

ANDREW

Numbers are good. Egg?

LEENA

And Olu ka patta, tuttie, sallli kutti, badir!

ANDREW

Son of a whore, shit, bloody bitch and idiot. Now that's impressive!

They walk toward the "Hall of the Public Audience" a rectangular hall, three aisles deep, with a façade of nine arches.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

The Naqqar Khanna.

Leena looks up, takes it in, with childlike wonderment.

LEENA
It's incredible...

ANDREW
At the back of the hall is an alcove,
where the royal throne stood...

As Andrew speaks, Leena hears MUSIC. She looks around and sees a MAN playing a flute like instrument, and a SNAKE coming out of a basket. Andrew finishes his thoughts, and notices Leena is gone.

INT. RED FORT, EXT. SNAKE CHARMER - NEW DELHI, CONTINUOUS

Leena stands amongst other TOURISTS and KIDS mesmerized by the SNAKE CHARMER. She hears the kids say "COBRA."

LEENA
Cobra??!!

She jumps as the COBRA swings his neck. The KIDS laugh. She looks at them, connecting with her eyes and smile, then holds her arm straight, cups her hand to make the shape of a snake's head, and playfully swings it towards the KIDS; this time they JUMP. They all share a LAUGH. Leena turns her head, and catches eyes with Andrew, watching from a distance.

EXT. RED FORT - NEW DELHI, CONTINUOUS

Andrew and Leena walk and talk, as they sight-see.

ANDREW
Seriously, impressed by a snake charmer?

LEENA
Did you not see the size of the COBRA and how he shimmied..wait what's wrong with the snake charmer?

ANDREW
A bit trite no? Come to India see a snake charmer.

LEENA
You know Professor, those of us who don't have P, H, D's, we get a kick out of "trite." Tourist or not. Did you see the kids?

Andrew looks at Leena, eyes locked. Un-spoken thoughts exchanged, questioned, respected.

ANDREW

Fair enough.

LEENA

So how long *have you* been here?

ANDREW

Almost three years.

LEENA

And how long do you plan to stay?

ANDREW

My work will be done in the next few months, then I'm off to Cape Town.

LEENA

South Africa! That's exciting. Have you been there before?

EXT. RED FORT - NEW DELHI, MOMENTS LATER

LEENA

Do you know I've never been to England? Costa Rica, Guatemala, Brazil, and Ireland all faves.

ANDREW

Ireland really? Whereabouts?

LEENA

All over. Loved Galway and the Ines islands, such fun people, salt of the earth, salt of the earth. And the beer, yumm. You drink beer Professor?

Andrew nods his head "yes." They pause, taking in the beauty and surroundings of the RED FORT. Then acknowledge one another. Smiling.

LEENA (CONT'D)

What?

ANDREW

Nothing.

LEENA

No nothing. You want to ask me something.

ANDREW

It's a bit puzzling. You clearly enjoy traveling--

LEENA

I love it!

ANDREW

Yet you've never come here, where you
have family and roots.

Andrew looks at her, she looks away. Silence, as they
continue to look about.

LEENA

In the second grade I changed my name to
Donna Debbie.

ANDREW

You did what?

LEENA

Changed my name. I refused to answer to
Leena only to Donna Debbie. My parents
were called to the school.

ANDREW

Donna Debbie? Weird. Bit young for porn.

LEENA

I was the only brown kid in my school.
I'd rub lemons on my face every day,
hoping my skin would turn white. And my
name, Leena, kiss of death. Why couldn't
I be Sarah or Susie, and have those blond
curls, and get baloney sandwiches in my
lunch-box?

ANDREW

And by becoming Donna Debbie you did?

Leena struggles with her emotions; guilt, hurt and shame
in her eyes.

LEENA

I didn't get the blond curls but I got to
sit with Sarah and Susie and share their
lunches.

ANDREW

Donna Debbie. I quite like that.

LEENA

See there's a ring to it.

ANDREW

To be honest, I prefer Leena. Leena Rai.

LEENA

Of course

ANDREW

I do.

LEENA

You do!

Leena regards Andrew...a tender moment.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - GIRL'S BEDROOM - LATER

Leena in a dress, puts on her earrings, as she SKYPES on her LAPTOP with Megan and Sara.

LEENA

It's hectic and lazy all at the same time. And one minute you're smelling sweet jasmine, the next you're ambushed with the stench of cow shit--

MEGAN

Let's see more dude pictures.

LEENA

Is this dress okay? Is it too much? Oh God I'm sweating.

SARA

You're not going to wear something more traditional? Indian?

LEENA

No. Why would I do that? I don't even have any...

Holds up a picture from her "matches" binder.

LEENA (CONT'D)

This guy is Rikin, he's an Aussie!

SARA

Hot!

MEGAN

An Indian crocodile Dundee?
He's got my vote.

SAPNA (O.C.)

Leena! Are you ready?

The girls share a look.

LEENA

Gotta go, wish me luck.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena sits on the couch, across from SANJEEV DESAI, 37, dressed in designer clothes, wears a gold ring, and necklace and a lot of cologne. Baljeet pours tea.

SANJEEV

So how are you liking it? No Delhi belly for you I hope.

LEENA

Thankfully no. Am staying far away from all the street food. Far far away.

Polite laughter.

SANJEEV

Leena your pictures don't do you justice.

Leena blushes.

LEENA

Thank you. That's very kind. I understand you are a lawyer?

SANJEEV

Indeed. I have my private practice in family law, and I've taken the liberty to inquire into some law firms there.

LEENA

Ok. Thinking ahead.

Leena surprised, a bit taken aback.

SANJEEV

After my divorce, I've become quite interested in divorce law. And you my dear will have nothing to worry about.

LEENA

Worry?

SANJEEV

I hear divorce business is booming in Los Angeles!

LEENA

I do have a career of my own.

SANJEEV

You artists are quite amusing. It's fine to have your hobbies, but once the children come, you'll be at home taking care of them, and me.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - INDIA

Leena writes in her binder. Baljeet brings her a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Her eyes light up.

Leena smiles warmly at Baljeet.

LEENA

Thank you Baljeet! Thank you!

Leena takes a bite, gives him a smile and a thumbs up.

BALJEET

Tomorrow pasta, ok?

LEENA

Really?!

Baljeet nods his head yes, Leena impulsively goes to hug him. He pulls back, it's not allowed; instead he brings his hands together in Namaste. Embarrassed she follows suit.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Oh right. Sorry.

He bobs his head, "it's okay." Sapna enters.

SAPNA

So Sanjeev is a no go. Fine by me. But understand Leena no man will be perfect, and this is an arrangement, where practicality and partnership come prior to passion.

LEENA

Wow try saying that ten times fast.

Sapna takes a moment, regards her niece, then;

SAPNA

Practicality and partnership prior to passion, practicality and--

LEENA

And partnership, prior to passion, practicality and partnership--

SAPNA
Prior to passion.

LEENA
Prior to passion.

The DOOR BELL RINGS.

LEENA (CONT'D)
I totally get it. I do.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena sits across from VIKRAM, 35, nice looking. They are enjoying themselves, making "blue steel" faces.

LEENA
You got it! You'll love Zoolander, it's a classic.

VIKRAM
I would like to take you to dinner?

LEENA
Sure. That would be nice.

VIKRAM
Tell me first, do you eat meat?

LEENA
Nothing better than a tender, juicy
filet, organic and grass fed of course...

Vikram's face turns sheet white, he stands dry heaving, hand on his stomach, and turns away from Leena.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena sits across from ANIL, late 30,s.

LEENA
Five children? How great! I love kids. So
you're divorced?

Shakes his head.

ANIL
Widow.

He sobs uncontrollably.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena sits across from DEV, mid 30,s handsome.

LEENA
You're a doctor?

DEV
Yes baby. I studied very hard.

LEENA
I can imagine. So what's your specialty?

DEV
Love. I am the doctor of love.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena sits across from RIKIN, 32, tall, good looking, confident, at ease with the world.

LEENA
Wow London, Switzerland and Sydney! How long were you in Sydney?

RIKIN
Five years. I did my grad school there, then was offered a job right after. I had a blast.

Rikin texts on his phone.

LEENA
That is so awesome! I've been wanting to go to Sydney and to New Zealand. Have you been there?

RIKIN
I have. If you like adventure and good wine you'd love it.

LEENA
Two of my favorites.

Rikin texts on his phone.

LEENA (CONT'D)
You're texting a lot. Is it work?

RIKIN
Oh no, sorry. It's my Mom.

LEENA
Your Mom? Is she okay, is everything--

RIKIN
Fine. She's asking for updates.

He looks at his phone, types. Then gets up and walks to Leena's side, bends next to her, and holds his camera up for a selfie.

LEENA RIKIN
What-- Smile.

He takes their photo. Walks back to his seat, sits.

Rikin looks at his phone.

RIKIN (CONT'D)
She says red is your color, not yellow.
Moms.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - LATER

Sapna sips tea as she writes in her notebook, Leena stands by her side drinking a soda.

LEENA
Rikin is a contender, but the whole "mom"
thing?

SAPNA
Indian mothers, like Italian and Israeli
are very much a part of their son's adult
lives. Some can be a bit much, but you
adjust.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena stands as SHAWN BATRA enters the room.

LEENA
Hi, welcome. I'm Leena Rai.

SHAWN
Shawn Batra. Nice to meet you.

LEENA
Same here. Wait? Do I detect a bit of
Jersey?

SHAWN
Hold on do I hear Philly?

LEENA
No way!

Shared laughter.

SHAWN	LEENA
Good ear. I grew up in Jersey, and --	I grew up outside Philly!

SHAWN

I was right!

LEENA

Giants or Jets? Please say Jets.

SHAWN

Giants, all the way. Although living in Northern Cal for the past nine years, I'm partial to the Niners. You're safe.

LEENA

You're in San Fran?! I'm in Los Angeles!

SHAWN

Small world. So LA huh? Are you still an Eagles fan?

LEENA

Yes! Especially now that we have Chip Kelly. Love that guy. And Sproles did well for me in Fantasy last year.

SHAWN

You play fantasy football?!

LEENA

I do. Well I did. I also bet games on sportsbook, shh don't tell anyone.

SHAWN

Are you kidding? I feel like I'm in some sort of nirvana like fantasy. Are you a gamer?

LEENA

Not so much. Are you?

SHAWN

I develop video games.

LEENA

Oh wow. Keeps you young I suppose.

SHAWN

Are you kidding? It's my dream job. Convinced my parents it was a high form of engineering.

LEENA

Clever. Someone was thinking.

SHAWN

That and I'm a VC for start-ups with big potential.

LEENA

How cool! I like that whole tech world. They think outside the box. As they should, as we all should, the world is round.

SHAWN

Absolutely. So you're really here for an arranged marriage?

LEENA

Yes. Yes I am.

SHAWN

A girl who knows her roots.

LEENA

Getting to know, is more accurate.

SHAWN

Nice. Digg'in it. And you. Lunch this week?

LEENA

Sure.

SHAWN

You like sushi?

LEENA

Sushi?! Shut-up?!

He laughs.

SHAWN

I take it that's a yes.

EXT. INDIA GATE - RAJPATH, NEW DELHI - DAY

Leena and Andrew take in the grand and impressive landmark of New Delhi, which stands 160 feet high. It is surrounded by beautiful lawns, on which hundreds of people picnic, take camel rides, fly kites, and play with soap bubbles.

Peddlers, food vendors, and kids selling all sorts of trinkets.

LEENA

I'm telling you no dolls, more into climbing trees, playing "kick the can"--

ANDREW

Every girl played with dolls.

As Leena shakes her head "no."

LEENA

And that's totally sexist Professor. Honestly, those Barbie dolls, I'd chew their hands and feet, chop their hair and sometimes;

Gestures "offing" her head with her hand.

ANDREW

You little devil!

Leena takes in all the PEOPLE, the carnival atmosphere.

LEENA

Some would get a proper burial. Wow. Amazing. So many people, so many different looks. None look like Barbie.

Andrew taps her shoulder, points out a tall, beautiful blonde woman, snapping pics with a big SLR.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Of course you'd notice her.

ANDREW

Pointing out the obvious.

LEENA

She's such a touron.

ANDREW

Touron?

LEENA

A tourist moron.

ANDREW

Your touron looks quite smart actually.

LEENA

Oh yeah, nuclear physicist.

They share a look and a smile, as a PEDDLER selling metal bracelets with the inscription OM MANI PADME OM, in *sanskrit*, approaches them. He thrusts his box of wares on Leena. Shows her the bracelet. Leena, immediately drawn to it, looks at it with curiosity. Turns to Andrew.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Do you know what this means?

He regards the bracelet.

ANDREW

Om Mani Padme Om. It's--

TWO YOUNG Street GIRLS (10), in matching little sari's smudged with dirt, run up to Leena and Andrew. Tug on Leena's shirt and jeans.

LUCY

(in Hindi)

Look at our bracelets. Much prettier. Buy from us, not him.

Leena taken in, kneels down to see what they are selling. The PEDDLER walks away. RANI presents Leena with a row of colorful string bracelets.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Mera nam Lucy, (my name is Lucy)

Ap ka nam kai hai? (What is your name?)

LEENA

Mera nam Leena.

Leena catches eyes with Andrew who gives her the thumbs up. The girls look at one another giggle and smile. Leena picks out a few bracelets, hands them rupees. Their eyes wide as they hug her, jump up and down, and run off.

EXT. INDIA GATE - NEW DELHI - CONTINUOUS

Andrew ties the bracelets on Leena, as Leena's eyes follow the girls.

LEENA

I can't believe they're street kids. They're so sweet, so full of life. And they have so little. Well you know...

ANDREW

Yes, I do know.

They share a moment, smile.

LEENA

Of course

ANDREW

I do!

LEENA

You do!

LEENA (CONT'D)

I love kids. I've been working at a kids magazine for the past five years.

ANDREW

Is that so?

LEENA

Yeah I'm the Features Editor for Chubby Knuckles.

He laughs, just as he finishes tying her bracelet.

ANDREW

Chubby Knuckles? Let me see.

He takes her hand in his, looks at her fingers.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

No chubby knuckles here, maybe this one--

Leena pulls her hand back laughing.

LEENA

It's not.

ANDREW

Hungry?

LEENA

Yes, but I don't really eat--

ANDREW

Trust me.

EXT. LODHI GARDENS - NEW DELHI - CONTINUOUS

Leena and Andrew walk, taking in the beauty of their surroundings. Andrew holds a bag, and a sheet under his arm.

ANDREW

A nice little picnic spot.

LEENA

Andrew Briggs these gardens are amazing!!
Look at all the palm trees?

(MORE)

LEENA (CONT'D)

Who would have thought we're in India?
How cool is that dome?!

ANDREW

That dome is the *tomb* of the Mughul
Emperor Humayun.

LEENA

Shut-up? A tomb? No way!

ANDREW

Yes way. And it's a great example of tomb-
building, which would reach it's peak a
hundred years later with the Taj Mahal.

LEENA

The Taj-Mahal is a tomb too?

Andrew looks at her incredulous.

ANDREW

(playful)

What exactly do they teach in your
American schools Donna Debbie?

EXT. LODHI GARDENS - NEW DELHI - CONTINUOUS

Leena and Andrew sit by a lake, on a decorative sheet,
eating sandwiches, chips, and drinking bottled water.

LEENA

Honestly, these sammies, can rival a Wawa
hoagie any day. Holla!

ANDREW

A wawa what?

LEENA

A ha Philly speak! Gotcha Professor, A
language you don't know!

Leena looks at Andrew challenging and playful. Amused he
stays quiet.

LEENA (CONT'D)

I am in awe. Seriously I had no idea
India would be like this. It's so
inspiring, and mind boggling and makes me
want to write something new.

ANDREW

For your kids magazine, Chubby Hands?

LEENA

It's Knuckles! And no. I actually write novels.

ANDREW

Do you now? Anything I would have heard of?

LEENA

Not yet. Soon. I hope. It's just...

Leena takes a moment.

LEENA (CONT'D)

So frustrating.

Andrew looks at her quizzically.

LEENA (CONT'D)

I love to write, to use my imagination, to tell stories. It's my passion and the reason I dropped out of Law School. I'm good at it, I know I am. It's just my book agent.

ANDREW

Your agent?

LEENA

For the past three years I've been writing this incredibly exciting suspenseful thriller, and he just told me he can't sell it.

ANDREW

Why not? I know nothing about it, but it sounds good--

LEENA

It is good. But...he says it's lacking.

ANDREW

Lacking? How so?

Leena looks away. Collects her thoughts, her strength.

LEENA

I don't know. He says... he says, I need to dig deeper...

The two hold eye-contact. With his look, Andrew encourages her to continue.

LEENA (CONT'D)
...find my voice.

Andrew takes this in. Leena's secret no longer.

LEENA (CONT'D)
Sooo I'm trying really hard to believe I
don't suck.

Andrew takes a second, digesting, a fleeting smile as he experiences a double entendre of "*I don't suck.*" She catches his smile, gives one back knowingly. Levity.

LEENA (CONT'D)
Anchor's Cove. Awesome book.

He looks up surprised, flattered, impressed.

ANDREW
Did you--

LEENA
Google you? Check. Read your book? Double
check.

They share a laugh. Playful, flirty.

LEENA (CONT'D)
Come on it's 2014, who doesn't do that?

EXT. LODHI GARDENS - NEW DELHI - CONTINUOUS

Leena and Andrew hold their cups and walk.

ANDREW
It's about finding what you really want
to say, and saying it with your heart,
your conviction, in your own style. In
short, it's writing your truth.

LEENA
My heart, my conviction, my truth.

LEENA (CONT'D)
Okay but this thriller is steeped in
research and it's really--

ANDREW
May I ask why you chose to write a
political thriller?

Leena is quiet.

LEENA

I wrote it, because my boyfriend at the time, loved Hitchcock, and suspense stories, and politics, so...

ANDREW

You wrote it to impress a guy? Leena Rai, you didn't?!

LEENA

Oh shit. I did. And I got into it. And people love it, they say it's like Grisham meets Clancy. It's so--

ANDREW

Stop there. Did you hear what you just said?

LEENA

It's like Grisham and Clancy.

She looks at Andrew, her eyes become moist.

LEENA (CONT'D)

It's not me.

A pause.

LEENA (CONT'D)

I'm such an idiot.

ANDREW

No you are most certainly not that. You are passionate, and curious, and...

The attraction between them has never been stronger.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Could use a history lesson or two.

They share a laugh.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Look, confidence is half of it, and you just told me you're a good writer. Don't hide behind a kids magazine or a thriller you wrote to please someone else. Trust yourself, own your voice.

LEENA

Got it.

They regard one another. With her eyes, she shows her admiration, respect and appreciation. With his look he acknowledges what she's conveying.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NEXT DAY

Leena races through the room, with a several shopping bags. Natasha, Priya, and Mona practice a dance. She stops to watch.

NATASHA

Leena! Hey we're learning the dance for Aisha's wedding. C'mon jump in.

LEENA

I have to get ready for my lunch date. I got caught up shopping at the market, and now I'm running behind.

NATASHA

Date? Where?

LEENA

Wasabi, at the Taj.

She watches the girls with a bit of longing, her body moving subtly to the beat of the music.

PRIYA

With?

LEENA

Shawn. He's one of my matches!

Natasha, Priya, and Mona simultaneously "Ohhhh."

INT. WASABI - TAJ HOTEL - NEW DELHI - DAY

A chic, trendy, peppy restaurant, with an incredible view. Leena sits across from Shawn.

LEENA

Wait, wait, wait! How about being dragged to all those adult card parties, and watching the "Love Boat" in the basements with all the other Indian kids!

SHAWN

Not a chance, it was Bo and Luke Duke, for this guy.

LEENA

Yes! And Daisy Duke, I so wanted to be her!! Loved Boss Hogg. Meanwhile, all my school friends were having sleep-overs and playing spin the bottle.

SHAWN

Imagine playing spin the bottle with all the Indian kids?!

LEENA

Not in a million years.

SHAWN

Never!

They share a laugh.

LEENA

I don't think I ever saw my parents kiss.

SHAWN

We're Indian, kissing, sex, taboo.

LEENA

That's so dumb. And isn't this the land of Kama Sutra?

SHAWN

(deadpan)

I wouldn't know.

LEENA

Good, that's good. This is delicious. Sushi in India who knew?

He looks at her, smiles with a wink. Raises his saki to her.

SHAWN

To us.

INT. TRENDY SUSHI RESTAURANT - A BIT LATER

Food on plates, almost finished.

LEENA

San Diego?! You're so lucky he's pretty close. My sister, and nephew are in Boston.

SHAWN

Yeah it's good to see him, and my nephews. And I make it to Santa Monica quite bit.

LEENA
My hood?! You like it?

SHAWN
Not so shabby. You like San Francisco?

LEENA
The enchanted city. What's not to like?
Love Marin county.

SHAWN LEENA
Sam's?! Sam's?!

SHAWN
Many a Sunday Funday at Sam's.

LEENA
Me too!

SHAWN
Next time we'll go together.

INT. TRENDY SUSHI RESTAURANT - LATER

Leena and Shawn eat dessert.

LEENA
Since you were born and raised here until
you were thirteen, which do you prefer
India or the US?

SHAWN
Both have their pros and cons. But the
States is where I have my life and where
I plan to stay and raise a family. Is
that what you wanted to hear?

LEENA
Maybe.

SHAWN
Don't you maybe me, you know it is.

Leena smiles shyly, blushes.

SHAWN (CONT'D)
Wait, are you blushing? Finally after how
many hours?

Leena grinning.

LEENA
I am not blushing.

SHAWN

You are, and you're getting rosier by the minute.

LEENA

I don't blush!

SHAWN

Ohh I like it.

LEENA

Stop!

SHAWN

I'm playing polo Friday and I'd like you to come, invite your cousin Natasha, and after we can grab a drink, you can meet some of my friends.

LEENA

Polo? Like on a horse?

SHAWN

No on a camel. Yes on a horse.

LEENA

So fancy, shmancy.

SHAWN

That's right. That's how I--

LEENA

Roll!

SHAWN

Roll.

EXT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - BACK PATIO - NEXT MORNING

Leena writes in a *yellow notebook, a beautiful butterfly on the cover; "realizing I was always trying to be someone else, some version of perfect.."* Sapna approaches, holding her cell-phone.

SAPNA

Leena beti, Saroj Batra called to say Shawn told her he had a wonderful dinner last night. She's very excited.

LEENA

Wow. Really?

SAPNA

Yes, she's very hopeful, and wants to set a time to have us all over.

LEENA

So quick...I didn't think--

SAPNA

Beti this is how it happens. He's a nice man, highly educated, with a good job, comes from a very good family. And he is very interested. Count your blessings.

LEENA

I am, I do. Natasha and I are going to his Polo match tomorrow, so maybe the day after?

Leena closes her notebook. Grabs her bag and sunglasses.

SAPNA

Let me check the calendar.

LEENA

Excuse me Masi, Andrew's here I have to go.

Leena walks past her, towards the front door.

SAPNA

Andrew? He's very nice, very charming. And the quintessential bachelor. A rolling stone beti.

INT. EXT. ANDREW'S CAR - RURAL DIRT ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Andrew drives. Leena looks out the window, notices the roaming cows, skinny dogs, a few goats, a crudely built stone wall, VILLAGERS carrying huge baskets on their heads.

He parks the car.

LEENA

Where are we? What's--

EXT. RURAL VILLAGE ROAD - INDIA - CONTINUOUS

Andrew and Leena walk along the road. Leena observes her surroundings. Takes in SEVERAL WOMEN VILLAGERS dressed in sari's squatting on the dirt ground, shifting grains on big square platters. TWO MALE VILLAGERS milk a cow. CHILDREN half dressed, RUN about, carefree.

They continue to walk in silence, quietly observing the poor, squalid living and working conditions...yet there is an undeniable peacefulness in the air.

SEVERAL VILLAGERS acknowledge Andrew with big smiles, Namastes, a bob of the head.

Leena stops. Looks around in awe, then turns to Andrew.

LEENA

How do you know--

ANDREW

I've been coming here for my fieldwork.

Leena looks out at a WOMAN dressed in a bright red sari, and covered in a layer of brown dust. She *carries a baby bundled on her chest*, holds a big shovel and digs into the earth. She works hard, her slim stature, belying her strength.

She stops, turns and looks at Leena. From across the distance, she stares, the two *make and hold eye-contact*. Then she smiles at Leena. A wide, bright, beautiful smile. Teeth missing, cheeks hollowed, eyes vibrant.

Leena smiles back, as tears fall down her face. She waves at the WOMAN, the WOMAN waves back, still smiling, then goes back to shoveling.

LEENA

Her smile is so beautiful, so full of pride.

Leena wipes the tears with the back of her hand, as more fall.

LEENA (CONT'D)

(quietly)

The kids in school used to ask "hey brownie you have a cow in your backyard?" They'd call me red-dot. Some threw stones at me and my sister. I was embarrassed for anyone to meet my grandmother because she wore saris.

Andrew looks at Leena, with his eyes he empathizes with her pain.

LEENA (CONT'D)

I can't believe I was ashamed of all of this. Oh God this is messed up.

She cries. With his arm, he gives her a shoulder of comfort.

EXT. VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Leena and Andrew walk by a FEMALE POTTER, she finishes a pot, then greets Andrew.

ANDREW

Namaste Sheila, this is my friend Leena.

SHEILA shyly greets Leena with warmth, and kindness. She shows Leena how to spin clay.

INT. VILLAGE SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

SMALL VILLAGE KIDS sit on the dirt floor, with paper notebooks.

KIDS dance with Leena and Andrew. They touch her clothes, her hair, with curiosity and admiration. They pose for pictures, mugging the camera, then crowd around her, excited to see themselves in digital photos.

EXT. VILLAGE FIELD - CONTINUOUS

VILLAGE BOYS play soccer. They notice Andrew and run up to him. They gesture for him to join. He looks at Leena.

ANDREW

You game?

LEENA

Sure.

Andrew negotiates with the boys to let Leena, a girl, play. Amidst some laughs and shyness they acquiesce. One GROUP of BOYS claim Andrew, the other GROUP takes Leena.

A GAME in play. Andrew is passed the ball, he takes it, then comes head to head with Leena, who manages to steal it. Andrew's team recovers possession, and passes it to Andrew who scores a goal. The KIDS go nuts!

They surround Andrew in glory. Leena takes in the moment, regards Andrew laughing, with abandon, the KIDS hanging on him, smiles of joy.

He sees her, they share a look; a look of mutual trust, respect and admiration. A look of mutual love.

She runs towards him with her team, trips on a rock and falls hard.

EXT. ANDREW'S CAR - RURAL DIRT ROAD

Car door open, Leena sits as Andrew applies a cream to her knee.

LEENA

That was so embarrassing.

Then the bandage.

ANDREW

We all got a good laugh. Hopefully this won't scar.

LEENA

It's okay if it does. A reminder of today.

EXT. PATH - NEW DELHI - CONTINUOUS

Leena and Andrew walk and talk.

LEENA

Indoor soccer seventh grade, going for the winning goal, hit my head on a ladder, and was down for the count. Twelve stitches.

She points to the scar on her forehead near her hairline.

LEENA (CONT'D)

By the end of the day, rumor had it my brain was on the gym floor!

They laugh, as Andrew points out scars on his legs.

ANDREW

Seventeen, motorcycling in Greece, showing off for the girls, spun out, dragged a bit, thirty stitches and a skin graft.

LEENA

Ouch! That sucks! This one...

Leena points to a scar on her elbow.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Dam sliding with my cousin to impress his friend Greg. Slid into an underwater rock quarry, split this baby right open.

ANDREW

Dam sliding?!! Ahh the scars of adventure, games and sheer stupidity.

LEENA

Stupidity? Now way more like ingenuity!!

ANDREW

You say tomatoe.

Shared laughter. Silence as they look out at the VILLAGE.

LEENA

They live in such poverty, with so many challenges...yet they manage to cook fresh food everyday.

Leena contemplates.

LEENA (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Whole foods.

She smiles, a private joke.

ANDREW

Something to be said about that.

LEENA

Right? And, they're so welcoming and generous, sharing the very little they have...there's this joy in their eyes. Happiness.

They walk a few steps in silence.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Yet the perception is success equals money, equals happiness.

ANDREW

Who's perception is this?

LEENA

Everybody's.

Andrew looks at her amused.

LEENA (CONT'D)

What? That smile! Inside I know it's a smirk--

ANDREW

Not at all. I respect your "everybody's" perception.

LEENA

You are so right. And it's a perception I'm re-evaluating, obviously. So how do you define success Professor?

Andrew takes a moment.

ANDREW

For me, it's about integrity, and human connection. And the quality of those connections. Which are defined here.

Points to his chest.

LEENA

And so how do you measure that success if it's in fact here? (points to her heart) Clearly it's not money, the size of your house, flashy car, number of likes or--

ANDREW

It's the amount of joy, love, compassion and kindness you feel towards yourself and towards others.

Leena takes this in, as she observes the villagers.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

And the taste of a cold, crisp, beer on a hot summer afternoon.

LEENA

Wow. You surprise me more and more each day.

ANDREW

More than just a handsome face.

LEENA

More than the tight ass I first thought you were.

ANDREW

Tight ass! Why I...

Andrew reaches for Leena who takes off, laughing he chases after her.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A beer and chips on the counter. Her yellow notebook open. *We notice, lots of writing; "...village today. Letting go of this shame, I feel a sense of freedom, of joy as I realize this beauty, this strength resides within me."*

Leena in her pj's, mixes a bowl of guacamole, dips chips into the guac, and eats.

LEENA

Yummm!! Guacamole I missed you!

Baljeet enters, they both jump.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Sorry sorry Baljeet! I'll clean this up.

Baljeet bobs his head "all good." Leena holds out the guac and chips for Baljeet.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Try this it's delicious.

Baljeet bobs his head, accepts her offer. She watches in anticipation.

BALJEET

Very good.

LEENA

Thank you! It's called guacamole.

BALJEET

Guacamole.

LEENA

Yes!! Have more!

They eat guac and chips together.

BALJEET

You happy.

LEENA

Yes I am. Thanks Baljeet.

BALJEET

Very very happy! I see in your face.

Leena laughs. Nods her head "yes."

LEENA

And you?

BALJEET

Me okay. Happy too. Tomorrow you try my
khanna (food)?

LEENA

Deal!

Leena does Namaste, as Baljeet reaches his hand out for a
shake.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Aha!! You got it!

Leena reaches out, shakes Baljeet's hand.

EXT. NEHRU PARK - NEW DELHI NEXT MORNING

A beautiful park, Delhi's version of Central Park, Boston
Commons.

Leena and Natasha jog along the path.

LEENA

What are the typical ages of the kids who
you operate on?

NATASHA

The best age for the cleft palate surgery
is between nine months to a year, but we
see all ages. You can come visit if you
like?

LEENA

That would be awesome. Thanks Natasha.

NATASHA

Anytime. You've been writing a lot these
days...

LEENA

I have...I'm writing a new story I'd love
to read to school kids here, can that be
arranged?

NATASHA

For sure Mum can do that.

The girls pick up speed.

LEENA

It feels so good to run! To be here!!

Natasha acknowledges her with a knowing and proud smile.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Do I need any special outfits for the polo match, and Aisha's wedding?

NATASHA

Leena Rai, did I hear you correctly?

LEENA

What?

NATASHA

Miss I only wear Western clothes, jeans, dresses--

LEENA

So I'm expanding my horizons, opening my heart.

NATASHA

You sound suspiciously like someone who is falling in love--

LEENA

With this place, the people, and...

She points to herself and FARTS...

LEENA (CONT'D)

My stinky farts.

NATASHA

Ewww.

Takes off running.

NATASHA

Good for you Leena Rai, good for you!
Feels good doesn't it?

Leena's eyes and smile conveying it all.

EXT. JAIPUR POLO GROUNDS - NEW DELHI - LATER

Dressed to impress, Leena and Natasha sit amongst Delhi's elite. The MATCH is in play, Leena points out Shawn to Natasha.

LEENA

There he is! Nice jodhpurs huh?

Shawn scores.

NATASHA

Nice everything.

The girls high-five.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Have you heard anything at all from Party Brad?

LEENA

Nope. Niente. Nothing at all. Which is fine. He made it perfectly clear, there were to be no e-mails, texts, calls, etcetera when we broke it off.

NATASHA

And you kept to it. I'm so proud of you Leena.

LEENA

Thanks. I'm not going to lie, it was ridiculously hard at first. I felt like I'd lost my right arm. But now it's almost like Brad who?! Made me really question why I was so gung ho on marrying the dude.

NATASHA

And?

LEENA

Pressure. A lot of pressure.

NATASHA

From?

LEENA

The world.

Natasha throws her a look. "You know how I feel about that."

INT. EXT. POLO GROUNDS CLUBHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Leena, Natsha, Shawn and other FRIENDS, talk and sip drinks.

INT. POLO CLUBHOUSE - BAR -CONTINUOUS

SHAWN

I'm happy you came.

LEENA

Thanks. Me too. I like your friends.

SHAWN

Yeah they're alright.

They laugh. Shawn shakes his head in disbelief.

LEENA

What?

Shawn gently removes the rubberband from her ponytail, her hair falls freely.

SHAWN

Perfect.

Shawn raises his glass.

LEENA

What?! No perfect--

SHAWN

To us.

Leena hesitates ever so slightly. Then raises her glass to his.

LEENA

Perfect does not exist.

Shawn smiles humoring her;

SHAWN

Okay.

Then goes in for a kiss.

BEGIN MONTAGE.

NOTE: We see Leena writing in her yellow notebook intercut through out the montage.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - GIRL'S BEDROOM - EVENING

We see Leena writing in her yellow notebook. Next to her on the wall, a board with POST-IT NOTES, divided into CHAPTERS.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leena practices the Bollywood dance with Natasha, Priya, Mona, and an INSTRUCTOR.

EXT. QUTAB MINAR - DAY

Leena and Andrew sightsee. Leena stops to take a picture of a MONKEY who stares at Leena and the banana she holds. Andrew notices, pulls the banana from her hand, chastises her. Leena laughs, as the monkey follows them!

INT. SHAWN BATRA'S PARENTS HOUSE - NIGHT

Leena and Sapna meet with Shawn and his PARENTS.

EXT. HINDU TEMPLE - DAY

Andrew and Leena pay their respects to the large deity statues.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

The Beverly Center on steroids. Couture stores. Leena and Shawn walk through, window shop.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - INDIAN SARI STORE - CONTINUOUS

Leena looks at sari's, tries one on for Shawn.

EXT. STREET CAFE - DAY

Andrew and Leena exit an outdoor cafe, walk by a storefront window, Andrew points to the glass, Leena turns to look; An INDIAN BARBIE in a SARI.

EXT. STORE - DAY

Leena exits the store with the Indian Barbie.

EXT. DELHI MARKET

Leena *by herself*, shops confidently, buys fruit, and flowers, we see her negotiating with ease and confidence.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - GIRL'S ROOM

Leena writes in her yellow notebook. She stops writing, pensive for a moment, then moves a few post-it's around. Does a HAPPY DANCE.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - GIRLS ROOM - EVENING

Leena SKYPES with Megan and Sara. She shows them bangles on her wrists, scarves, and some of her new dance moves. Sara tries to copy them. Leena proudly shows them her yellow notebook.

END MONTAGE.

INT. SCHOOL ROOM, NEW DELHI - DAY

Leena holds her yellow notebook, she READS to a large GROUP of CHILDREN.

LEENA

Salsa swung thru the trees, and danced thru the forest, smiling at her sparkly skin which was like no one else's. Salsa realized she was the happiest she'd ever been, because she was happy to be herself.

The kids APPLAUD with great enthusiasm. Leena smiles with self-pride and self-appreciation. She's found her voice.

INT. SCHOOL ROOM, NEW DELHI - MOMENTS LATER

Leena fields questions from the KIDS.

KID #1

When Salsa the snake sheds her old skin, does she get cold?

KID #2

Is Salsa going to marry her snake friend Ra or Louey the fearless Lion?

LEENA

That's a good question. Who do you think Salsa should marry?

A CHORUS of "Louey", mixed with "Ra"..clearly a divided crowd. Leena calls on a GIRL with her hand up.

GIRL

I don't think Salsa should marry anybody.

LEENA

Oh no? Why not?

GIRL

Because now she's so happy in her sparkly skin.

KID#3

So she should marry Louey, and they'll be happy together.

GIRL

But why? She loves her sparkly skin, she can be happy with everybody!

KID #4

When is the movie coming out?

EXT./ INT. IRISH PUB - NEW DELHI, INDIA - NIGHT

Leena and Andrew walk towards an Irish pub.

LEENA

The kids loved Salsa, and Ro and Louey--

ANDREW

When can I read it?

LEENA

It's a kids book, it's not...
(Catches herself)

Andrew and Leena regard one another.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Sure. I'll send it to you.

INT. IRISH PUB - NEW DELHI, INDIA - CONTINUOUS

Leena and Andrew, tipsy, sit at a booth, drinking beers.

LEENA

They've been married thirty-five years.
At times I felt they should've divorced
stat, then others they'd be all lovey-
dovey like two teenagers in love. It's
kind of nuts.

ANDREW

I understand, I've witnessed the same with my parents.

LEENA

Your parents? Oh so they're still married?

Andrew laughs.

ANDREW

Yes, unless you know something I don't.

LEENA

Oh sorry, I just figured since you don't believe in marriage, that maybe your parents had a bad divorce or something.

Andrew points to himself.

ANDREW

It was I who had the divorce.

LEENA

Ohhhhhh. So you *were married*.

ANDREW

Yes for five rather troubled years. In what seems like a lifetime ago.

LEENA

I'm sorry to hear that. Do you have any kids?

ANDREW

No no kids. Nothing to be sorry about. It's life. And one thing's for sure, there are never any guarantees.

LEENA

I agree. A hundred percent. But I am sorry it made you so anti-marriage.

ANDREW

I was anti-marriage before that.

LEENA

Of course you were.

ANDREW

Of course I was.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Marriage. Two people, a contract, ownership, property, forever, doesn't make much sense--

LEENA

What do you mean?! It's about two people in love, committing, the basis for a family, it's till death do us part!

ANDREW

Exactly my point. And what's the divorce rate these days? In much of Europe it's sixty percent!

LEENA

That's because, that's because--

ANDREW

Marriage, the word, is outdated rubbish.

LEENA

Rubbish?! Okay for shits and giggles, let's take the word "marriage" out of the equation," do you believe in having a life-partner?

ANDREW

How are you getting along in the marriage arrangement? Any suitable suitors?

LEENA

A ha! Deflecting from me to you. Crafty Professor. One question, you tell me I'll tell you. Deal?

ANDREW

I tell you what?

LEENA

Come on! You know, do you believe in having a life partner?

ANDREW

Do I believe in having a life partner...?

Andrew takes a moment.

LEENA

Yes, someone who you love, who you can share, grow with, and you know go the distance?

ANDREW

I'm rather content with the way things are.

LEENA

Meaning?

ANDREW

Meaning that I enjoy my bachelor life,
it's simple, uncomplicated. Neat.

LEENA

Wow. You of all people.

Leena throws him a challenging look.

ANDREW

What's that--

LEENA

You profess that success is in here
(points to her heart) yet you've closed
off a part of this that's preventing you
from a very specific "success."

ANDREW

Have I now?

LEENA

Yes, the success, the joy of sharing your
heart intimately with another. (quietly)
Scars and all.

Andrew takes a sip of his beer, a very long sip.

ANDREW

Now you. How's the search, have you met
any suitors--

LEENA

I have.

ANDREW

And?

LEENA

And what?

ANDREW

Tell me about them? Are you interested--

LEENA

We made a deal. One question.

Andrew raises his bottle to her.

ANDREW

And so we did. Touche.

Leena raises her bottle to his, he clinks hers.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
You're beautiful. Leena Rai.

Leena, surprised, touched, happy, proud.

LEENA
Thank you Professor. You're not so bad
yourself.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - GIRL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Leena wears a beautiful LANGA, her hair and make-up done,
gorgeous jewelry accenting her look. Types on her laptop,
as Natasha finishes her make-up.

SAPNA (O.C.)
Girls ready?

NATASHA
Almost!

CLOSE ON: Leena's Laptop Screen; Email to Andrew Briggs
SUBJECT: My new story. Enjoy.

EXT. AISHA'S WEDDING - MAGIC HOUR - CONTINUOUS

The GROOM on a white HORSE, meets AISHA, 33, a beautiful
Indian BRIDE. MUSIC. DANCE. CELEBRATION.

EXT. WEDDING - DANCE FLOOR - LATER

Leena, Natasha, Priya and Mona, perform the Bollywood
style dance they've been practicing. It's fun, vibrant,
sexy. Shawn watches with pride and admiration.

SAROJ BATRA, Shawn's mother, stands with her FRIENDS
excited.

SAROJ
The one in yellow, Leena, she's soon to
be my Daughter In Law!

The FRIENDS React.

SAROJ (CONT'D)
It hasn't been announced as yet, so let's
keep it quiet for the moment.

Guests on their cell-phones texting, whispering.

EXT. WEDDING - DANCE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The GIRLS finish their dance. APPLAUSE. We follow the GIRLS as they make their way back to their seats. MANY EYES on Leena, the GUESTS whispering amongst themselves.

ANGLE on SHAWN, who is surrounded by MEN who are slapping him on the back, shaking hands, hugging him. He catches eyes with Leena, smiles nervously.

EXT. WEDDING LAWN - LATER

A BAND plays. Guests DANCE. We find Leena with Natasha, Shawn, and others having fun.

LEENA

The food was so good, I went for seconds!

SHAWN

I knew you'd like Indian food, matter of time before we're cooking it together.

EXT. SHAWN'S CAR, DAWAN RESIDENCE - LATER

Shawn helps Leena exit the car.

LEENA

What a nice evening. Such a beautiful, fun wedding.

SHAWN

It was, but ours will be better.

LEENA

Shawn.

SHAWN

Leena, I would like to marry you.

LEENA

Oh my God, seriously?

SHAWN

No, I'm kidding, practicing for my other match.

LEENA

What?

SHAWN

Yes. I'm serious. It's done differently here.

(MORE)

SHAWN (CONT'D)

I have a ring being designed, if you say yes, we'll have a ring ceremony with our family and friends at our engagement party.

LEENA

So this is for real?

SHAWN

As real as it's ever going to get.

LEENA

But we hardly know each other.

SHAWN

What are you talking about? I know your favorite football team is the Eagles, you're from Philly, you think March Madness should be a holiday, you're a writer, you're close with your sister, obsessed with your nephew, your best friends are in Los Angeles, you love sushi, and your favorite color is yellow. And I know I'd like to spend the rest of my life with you.

A moment passes.

LEENA

I, I don't know what to say.

SHAWN

Say yes! What's stopping you?

LEENA

I feel like it's too soon, that we still have so much to learn about one another.

SHAWN

I'm sure we do, and we have the rest of our lives for that. You came here to find a good partner and father for your kids. Well he's standing right in front of you.

LEENA

Shawn. I'm flattered, honestly I am and you're right, it's just so fast-

SHAWN

Let's do this. Let's go to Rajasthan for a couple of days. You and me. Then make your decision.

LEENA

I, I--

Shawn cuts her off with a kiss.

EXT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

Leena walks, lost in thought. She stops and sits on the swing. Looks up at the sky.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NEXT DAY

Baljeet teaches Leena how to make Roti's. Sapna enters.

SAPNA

Beti, Saroj aunty just called asking permission for Shawn to take you to Rajasthan for the weekend!

LEENA

Yes, I know he asked--

Sapna grabs Leena's hands, jumps around in enthusiasm.

SAPNA

This is fabulous Leena! A proposal is right around the corner. Ai bhagwan thank you, thank you! I must telephone your parents.

She notices Leena's roti's.

SAPNA (CONT'D)

And you're cooking roti's?!!

Sapna grabs and hugs Leena tight. Off Leena's look.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - GIRL'S BEDROOM - LATER

Leena is trying to SKYPE.

LEENA

C'mon, c'mon c'mon, please work, I need to talk to--

Her laptop pings. An email from Andrew pops up;

"I read it, great work! Congratulations Ms. Rai! Dinner to discuss? My place this evening?"

Leena takes a moment, smiles, types "YES!"

EXT. ANDREW'S FLAT - NEW DELHI - EVENING

A two-story town home. Andrew escorts Leena to his place.

LEENA
This is pretty cool.

ANDREW
Thank you. It's two flats, I'm on the second floor.

A young BOY, AMIT 10, plays with a cricket bat and ball, he sees Andrew, runs to him.

AMIT
Hello Mr. Andrew! Did you see Virat Kohli play today! He is the best!

ANDREW
Hi Amit. I missed the match, but I'll watch tomorrow, I promise.

AMIT
You have too! I hit five runs, I'm going to be like Virat no like Sachin!

Amit swings the bat, poses like Sachin Tendulkar, India's greatest cricket player. They all laugh.

ANDREW
This is my friend Leena, she's from America.

Amit stares at her.

AMIT
Nice to meet you Ma'am. Where in America do you come from?

LEENA
Nice to meet you too Amit. I live in California.

Amit's eyes go wide.

AMIT
Hollywood?

LEENA
Pretty close.

Amit's friends yell to him from the street. He turns to join them.

AMIT

Bye.

Leena and Andrew walk towards the steps. Andrew turns his head, catches eyes with Amit, who gives him a thumbs up.

INT. ANDREW'S FLAT, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena takes in the tastefully furnished abode. Silently admiring his collectibles and the books in his shelf.

ANDREW (O.C.)

They've become like an adopted family.

Andrew enters with Champagne, hands a glass to Leena.

LEENA

What's all this?

He raises his glass to Leena, who can not stop smiling.

ANDREW

Not everyday one finds their voice.

LEENA

Oh yeah?

Andrew nods his head yes, nods towards her drink.

ANDREW

Salut!

LEENA

This means so much...and you helped me!
Salut!

ANDREW

Did I?

LEENA

Yes, you know--

ANDREW

I thought it was all
English mumbo jumbo--

LEENA

C'mon now, you know--

ANDREW

If you insist, then cheers
to me as well!

LEENA

To you and Salsa!

ANDREW

Yes, to me and...Salsa? Leena way to blow
a man's ego.

LEENA
What? Salsa is--

ANDREW
I'm sharing my toast with a snake.

LEENA
Yes but she's just not any ordinary snake, she grows, sheds her skin, she's sassy and sparkly. She becomes who she's meant to be.

Leena and Andrew hold eye-contact. A thousand words and sentiments exchanged. Andrew clinks glasses with Leena.

INT. ANDREW'S FLAT - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena and Andrew walk into the dining room. The dining table is set with fresh flowers, candles and a large pizza.

LEENA
Ohh how pretty! And pizza?? Could this night get any better?!

Andrew presents Leena with a small box.

LEENA (CONT'D)
What's?

ANDREW
Open it.

Leena opens the box and sees the *OM MANI PADME OM* bracelet she had noticed at India gate.

LEENA
This bracelet. I had asked--

ANDREW
Om Mani Padme Om, "the jewel is in the lotus."

Leena puts the bracelet on.

LEENA
Beautiful. "The jewel is in the lotus."

ANDREW
It's an incredibly popular Buddhist mantra, many interpretations.

LEENA
Like?

ANDREW

"The jewel is in the lotus", the biggest gift lies within ourselves; our own light.

Leena eyes on the bracelet.

LEENA

Our own voice.

She looks up at Andrew, they clink glasses.

ANDREW

Om Mani Padme Om

LEENA

Om Mani Padme Om

INT. ANDREW'S DINING ROOM - LATER

The candles burn mid-way, the pizza is finished, a bottle of wine almost empty.

LEENA

Hmm any superhero? I'd be my own bad ass superhero, a combo of WonderWoman and a mermaid, and flying monkey! Traversing the entire universe, sky and sea. Causing a bit of mischief along the way.

ANDREW

Here here.

LEENA

Now you.

ANDREW

Hmmm, Superman. King-Kong. And a dash of James Bond.

LEENA

So feminine of you.

They share a laugh.

INT. ANDREW'S LIVING ROOM - A BIT LATER

Time lapse; Andrew and Leena comfortable on the couch, laughing, we come in mid-conversation.

LEENA

So many silly, amazing, and scary moments here. I kind of wish I had come sooner, but no looking back. How bout you?

Andrew takes a moment.

ANDREW

It was on a retreat. We were going thru these exercises if you will, and you're feeling raw, stripped down, exposed and then you have to look at yourself in the mirror for ten minutes, really look. At. Your. Self.

LEENA

Holy shit, that's intense.

ANDREW

Terrifying.

LEENA

What did you see?

ANDREW

That's for another time.

LEENA

Come on, you must share, please. Please.

ANDREW

I saw Superman, King Kong and Bond.

Shared laughter.

LEENA

And?

ANDREW

You're really going to make me tell you.

Leena's look says it all.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

I saw pain, pride and...

He looks away. Leena quiet. Attentive.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

A boy who wants to be hugged. Clearly a work in progress.

Leena looks at Andrew with new found respect. Empathy.

LEENA

Aren't we all.

Leena and Andrew hold eye-contact. Andrew gently, naturally goes to kiss her. She kisses him back. It's tender, sweet, loving. It goes on as they relax into each other.

They pull apart, look at each other, smiles in their eyes, and kiss again, this time it's hot, passionate, intense.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They continue to make-out. Finally Leena pulls away. Looks at Andrew. Tears fall down her face.

ANDREW

Why?

She shakes her head, smiling.

LEENA

Happy tears.

He kisses her face, her tears, her lips. She kisses him back. The session gets hot. Finally Leena pulls back.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Andrew.

ANDREW

Yes?

LEENA

I was proposed to last night.

Andrew stunned. Takes a moment to collect himself.

ANDREW

Proposed to? Who? What, where?

LEENA

Shawn Batra, he's one of my arranged marriage matches. We've been getting to know one another. And well...

Andrew is visibly perplexed. Hurt.

ANDREW

An arranged marriage. Right. The reason you're here.

Conflicting emotions pass between their eyes.

LEENA

I should go, Masi will be up waiting.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - GIRL'S ROOM - NEXT DAY

A small suitcase open, Saroj helps Leena pack.

SAROJ

Definitely this dress. This man has
impeccable taste. Udaipur is exquisite.
Perfect for a young King and his Queen.

Leena distracted, mind elsewhere, places clothes in the
suitcase.

SAROJ (CONT'D)

India is good for you my dear. Count your
blessings.

EXT. BOAT, LAKE PICHOLA, - UDAIPUR - DAY

Shawn and Leena on a boat, take in the exquisite beauty
and splendor of Udaipur, the "city of lakes," the "Venice
of the East." In front of them the majestic TAJ PALACE, a
floating city of marble and luscious gardens.

LEENA

Are you kidding me? Is that where we're
going?

SHAWN

You know it.

LEENA

Holy flying monkeys!

EXT. TAJ PALACE HOTEL - UDAIPUR - CONTINUOUS

Leena and Shawn walk around the breath taking palace-
hotel.

LEENA

I've never seen a more beautiful place.
Look at all this work. Do you know the
history behind--

SHAWN

That's what Google's for.

Leena looks at Shawn *as if she's seen a ghost*. She turns
quickly, as Shawn continues;

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Or..

A TOUR GUIDE appears with a bottle of Champagne and two glasses.

TOUR GUIDE

Welcome Mr. And Mrs. Batra. I'm Ram, your guide, please feel free to ask any questions at any time. Shall we?

Leena looks at Shawn who smiles confidently. They begin their tour.

INT./EXT. TAJ PALACE HOTEL - UDAIPUR - CONTINUOUS

Leena and Shawn on their tour with Ram. Leena touches a marble wall. Her OM MANI PADME OM bracelet, catches her eye.

EXT. TAJ PALACE HOTEL - ROOFTOP- DAY

Shawn and Leena enjoy a leisurely lunch and wine.

SHAWN

So what's your novel about?

LEENA

A thriller. But I have something new now.

SHAWN

Thriller? Sounds exciting. I like those stories. Though I don't have time to read much anymore.

LEENA

Why not?

SHAWN

It's all about the gaming biz. Coming up with new ideas, then the execution.

LEENA

Aren't a lot of games today based on ideas from books?

SHAWN

I see what you're going for, maybe to an extent.

LEENA

Graphic novels for sure.

SHAWN

Bingo. More wine?

EXT. TAJ PALACE HOTEL - TERRACE - NIGHT

Leena and Shawn dance under the stars, overlooking the lake.

SHAWN

Hello Philly. Who would've ever thought?

Shawn kisses her.

LEENA

It's absolutely beautiful, thank you.

As she looks at Shawn, her arms around his shoulders, her OM MANI PADME OM bracelet catches her attention. A flash of mixed emotions in her eyes. He kisses her then whispers in her ear.

SHAWN

I envision us in a beautiful home, two, maybe three kids running about.

Slowly pull back on the dancing couple.

INT. TAJ PALACE - LEENA'S ROOM - DAWN

Leena asleep, awakens to the sound of the RINGING hotel phone. Groggily she answers.

LEENA

Hello? What? Is everything okay?

She walks to the windows, pulls the drapes; the most magnificent PINK LIGHT floods the room.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Shawn, it's beyond...wow!

EXT. TAJ PALACE HOTEL GROUNDS - MINUTES LATER

Shawn and Leena hold coffee cups, walk and talk, as they take in the early morning splendor.

SHAWN

Your prom date's name was Austin Wallace? That's just ridiculous.

LEENA

Why? What was your date's name? Did you even go to your Prom?

SHAWN

I did and we can't just leave Austin alone. Where the heck did you find that guy?

Shared laughter.

LEENA

I think you're just jealous.

SHAWN

Maybe. But look who's holding your hand now.

They turn to look at one another, as Shawn gets on one knee.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Leena Rai, will you marry me?

INT./EXT. SHAWN'S CAR - DAY

Shawn drives, he pulls up to the Dawan residence.

LEENA

Shawn, I had a wonderful time, I--

SHAWN

Leena I need an answer.

LEENA

Can I please have one night alone to think about it. It's a big decision--

SHAWN

One of the best you'll ever make if you say yes.

LEENA

I appreciate that. I really do. And you. Just please one more night.

Shawn takes a moment.

SHAWN

Fine.

Leena kisses him on the cheek.

EXT. NEHRU PARK - EVENING

Leena and Natasha jog at a brisk pace. They stop. Leena stretches, as tears fall down her face.

NATASHA

Lee what's going on?

LEENA

I can't stop thinking about him.

NATASHA

Shawn?

LEENA

No, Andrew.

NATASHA

The Professor?

Leena nods her head yes.

LEENA

He and I, we have the best time when we're together. It's easy and fun and he's such a good listener...and talker. I feel really comfortable with him. Safe. I've shared things with him I've never shared with anyone else.

NATASHA

What are you crying for? This is wonderful, and as you like to say awesome.

LEENA

Shawn asked me to marry him, and he wanted an answer yesterday.

NATASHA

Do you love Shawn?

LEENA

We get along, he lives in Cali, he really wants to start a family. He has a great job, he's fun. He's committed. Check all the right boxes.

NATASHA

You didn't answer my question, do you love him?

Leena thinks, shakes her head "no."

LEENA

I love Andrew. Oh God, I think I'm going to be sick.

NATASHA

Take a deep breath. In and out.

LEENA

He's not even Indian, yet he gets this culture, he gets me, and I really trust him...oh shit saying those words is so scary, it's like oh God oh God oh God do I want to go there?

NATASHA

But why wouldn't you?

LEENA

And we have this crazy connection. It's wild. Like I can feel so much about him without him even saying a word.

NATASHA

Now I'm lost. Clearly you're in love with the guy, so ease up.

Quiet.

LEENA

A few months ago I felt like a complete loser. Total failure. A career I've been pursuing since college has yet to take-off, not to mention Mom still pressuring me to go to law school, and the guy I thought I'd raise a family with dumps my ass, as some of my friends are going on wedding number two! Two! And kids?! I got off Facebook because seeing everyone's baby pictures was a total hit in the gut. And now to venture down that road of uncertainty...

NATASHA

Yes but this time you're in a good space with yourself! And you said you've never felt this way with anyone.

LEENA

I know, *but he's* content being lifetime bachelor guy, says it's neat, and uncomplicated.

NATASHA

Really? Does he know about Shawn and the proposal.

LEENA

I had to tell him.

NATASHA

And?

LEENA

It pretty much sucked.

NATASHA

You need to go tell him how you feel.

LEENA

And then what? He's living here, I live in California. He travels the world, and did you not just hear me say he's this happy bachelor guy--

NATASHA

I did. Listen, plenty of guys and gals say that, but when they really feel the love you're speaking of, things change. If he's feeling the same way you are, you two will figure it out.

LEENA

Then what about Shawn?

NATASHA

What about him? You don't love him.

LEENA

No but I can grow to love him. Isn't that what arranged marriages are all about? Two people committed to starting a life and staying together. He's ready to pull that trigger, I get a good husband and kids. Bada bing.

Natasha looks at Leena baffled.

LEENA (CONT'D)

I don't know what to do.

NATASHA

Stop being a whiny American brat. You know exactly what to do. Listen to your heart.

Leena looks at Natasha, unsure, conflicted.

LEENA

I'm trying it's confused.

NATASHA

No it's not, you are. Cut out the chatter, get quiet and listen to your voice. *Follow it.* It's that simple. Your heart will not betray you.

Off Leena as she touches her bracelet.

EXT. ANDREW'S FLAT - LATER

Leena KNOCKS on Andrew's door. Nothing. She RINGS the bell. AMIT sees her.

AMIT

He's not home.

LEENA

Oh hi Amit.

AMIT

Hi. He's gone to the sea.

LEENA

The sea?

AMIT

Yes to Goa. I'm collecting his mail, and watering his plants!

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - GIRLS ROOM CONTINUOUS

Leena paces, cellphone to her ear. Natasha sips tea.

LEENA

Still no answer, and for some reason my texts aren't going through.

NATASHA

Cell phone reception in Goa is dodgy.

LEENA

How long is the drive? We could try and find him.

Sapna enters in a flurry.

SAPNA

Leena, Natasha, what's going on?

Leena and Natsha look at one another.

SAPNA (CONT'D)

Saroj Batra just telephoned, saying that Shawn is meeting *two matches* this evening?! What the hell has happened?

Silence.

SAPNA (CONT'D)

We were all under the impression a proposal was in the works?

LEENA

Masi, he asked me to marry him, and I asked for more time--

SAPNA

More time, more time?! Beti, he's a good match, better than one could have hoped! He'll be a very good husband--

Leena's phone lights up.

NATASHA

Is it...?

LEENA

It's Maya.

Leena reads the text.

LEENA

"Been trying to skype, great news, I'm pregnant!"

Sapna jumps in joy.

SAPNA

Another grandchild for your mum and dad! How exciting! Congratulations! And soon with God's grace you'll have your own!

A moment passes. The phone pings again. *An adorable picture of Andy, her nephew.* Leena holds the phone.

LEENA

I'm calling Shawn to tell him I accept his proposal.

Sapna is besides herself. She grabs Leena, jumps up and down.

SAPNA

This is a very smart decision!

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - GIRL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Leena SKYPES with her parents. We see suitcases in the background.

MR. RAI

Our bags are packed! Can't wait to meet the lucky chap!

MRS. RAI

Are you sure about this Leena? It's a very big step.

MR. RAI

Of course she is! It is time. Past due. Look at my head, all grey!

LEENA

He's a good man. You'll see.

MRS. RAI

That I don't doubt. But you must be hundred percent sure this is what you want.

LEENA

I understand Mom. And it is.

Leena SKYPES with Megan.

MEGAN

I haven't seen you so happy in so long. Maybe just be single for awhile, date yourself, this really happy, stronger you.

LEENA

Megan!!

MEGAN

Shit Lee, marriage, kids, not all what it's cracked up to be.

LEENA

Megs--

MEGAN

It's like you get caught in one big wheel, and it spins and spins, and there's no escape really, and you wonder if this wheel is really it--

LEENA

Megs I have to go--

Megan continues to ramble on. Leena closes her laptop, her eyes resting on her yellow butterfly notebook.

EXT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - FRONT WALK/DRIVEWAY - DAY

Andrew steps out of his car. Notices several other cars parked in the driveway, and lots of activity. Sapna speaks with several SERVANTS, sees Andrew, waves to him.

EXT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - FRONT LAWN/DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Andrew speaks with Sapna.

SAPNA

I thought for sure Leena must have told you. Anyways the engagement party is Saturday at the Taj, you must come.

ANDREW

Is Leena here, I'd like to give my wishes.

SAPNA

She's not. But you can give your wishes Saturday.

Andrew looks around. Baljeet notices Andrew, they make eye-contact.

EXT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - ANDREW'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Andrew opens his car door, as Baljeet approaches. They talk.

INT. OSCAR'S TAILOR SHOP - HAUZ KHAUS VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Natasha stands outside a dressing room.

NATASHA

I'm going to run next door to look at some jewelry, I'll be right back.

LEENA (O.C.)

Great. Thanks.

We hear Leena's phone ring.

LEENA (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Mark? Hi. You did?!!

Andrew enters the shop. Hears Leena's voice.

LEENA (CONT'D)

A series can most definitely be in the works! Thank you!! Yep, now that I found it, I'm never losing it!

Leena steps out of the dressing room, stunning in her engagement LANA, walks to the full length mirror, takes in her reflection, as Andrew appears behind her.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Andrew?!! Holy shit. What are you doing here?

Andrew looks at her, mesmerized.

LEENA (CONT'D)

I came to see you...but you were in Goa?!

ANDREW

I had to get away, clear my head. Amit told me you came by.

Leena's eyes become moist.

LEENA

I didn't know if, when I'd ever see you again.

ANDREW

I'm sorry...look the reason I'm here... Leena I can't get you or Salsa out of my mind.

LEENA

Andrew. *This* is happening. My parents--

ANDREW

Leena you challenge me, excite me, humble me. I want to see you everyday, hear your voice, your laugh, and--

Natasha and Sara run through the door LAUGHING. SCREAMING.

SARA

SURPRISE!!

Leena stunned.

LEENA

Sara??!

Sara and Leena embrace. Pull apart.

SARA
Ohhhh look at you, Indian Princess!!

LEENA
You're really here! Holy flying monkeys!!

SARA
And you're getting *married*! Well engaged,
but still yay!!

Sara notices Andrew.

LEENA
Sara this is Andrew--

SARA
The Professor! I've heard so much about
you! It's so nice to meet you.

ANDREW
A pleasure.

Awkwardness all around.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
I came around to give my wishes. I'll be
going now.

NATASHA
How nice...so we'll see you Saturday?

ANDREW	LEENA
Saturday?	Uh Natasha--

ANDREW
Right of course the party. Wouldn't miss
it for the world.

Andrew exits. Natasha throws her a look "I don't buy it."
Leena turns away from the girls.

LEENA
Sara let's shop! We need to get you an
outfit.

Leena takes a deep breath, shuts her eyes, pushes back
her tears.

SMASH CUT to:

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - GIRL'S ROOM - SATURDAY

Leena eyes shut, opens them as she looks in the mirror; her reflection looks back at her. Off Camera a chorus of; "Leena!", "Leena come, we're getting late". Leena walks towards the door, her eyes notice her yellow butterfly notebook.

INT. DAWAN RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - SATURDAY

Leena exquisite in her engagement LANGA, and jewels is surrounded by Sapna, her Mom, Dad, Natasha, Sara and Baljeet. Her Mom holds a beautiful silver tray with Indian dessert, tika and holy thread. Her father puts the tika on Leena's forehead and a piece of dessert in her mouth. Then hugs her.

MR. RAI

Today is the day! Beti you've made me a very happy, proud father.

MRS. RAI

Shawn is a wonderful man and we wish you all the love and happiness Leena.

Sapna, clears her throat loudly.

MRS. RAI (CONT'D)

And my dear sister Sapna!! Thank you!!

MR. RAI

Yes Sapnaji without you and your meddling none of this would be happening.

Shared laughter. Sara hands Leena a box and a card.

LEENA

What?

SARA

From Megan and I.

Leena opens the box, and pulls out the Jimmy Choos from earlier.

LEENA

The shoes! They match perfectly. You guys!!

She rips open the card, takes a moment, tears come to her eyes.

LEENA (CONT'D)

Awww Sara. This is beautiful, wow and Ghandi said this?

SARA

Yeah I thought it's kind of cool, you know being in India and all--

NATASHA

Said what?

LEENA

"To love, it is the prerogative of the brave." Mohandas Ghandi.

SAPNA

Ghandi said many beautiful things, and now we MUST go, we're already late.

The hustle and bustle of everyone preparing to leave as Leena stares at her card.

INT. TAJ HOTEL - RING CEREMONY - NEW DELHI - NIGHT

Leena and Shawn greet GUESTS. Dr. Rai talks with Shawn's DAD, and Saroj.

Quick cuts of the very elaborate, very expensive party.

Leena in a huddle with Natasha and Sara.

LEENA

I can't do this. I can't. Regardless of Andrew, and anyone else. This decision to marry Shawn was a knee jerk reaction to all the stupid outside noise. But I got quiet, cut out the noise and am listening to my voice. It say's no way. Loud and clear.

NATASHA

Well well well...I so am happy to hear this.

SARA

I'm a little lost, but I think you're being brave.

Leena looks around the room, as she goes sheet white.

LEENA

I need to use the loo.

NATASHA

We'll come with--

LEENA

I need some cold water on my face and to figure out what I'm going to say to all these lovely people I mostly don't know. Hold the fort here. Buy me some time.

INT./EXT. HALLWAY & RESTROOMS - CONTINUOUS

As Leena walks towards the "Ladies Room," she sees Andrew exit the "Mens Room," they catch eyes.

	LEENA	ANDREW
Andrew		Leena

LEENA
You're here?!

ANDREW
A man of my word.

LEENA
Of course you are. I owe you an apology.
Listen can we talk quick?

He motions with his head, as they sidestep around the corner.

ANDREW	LEENA
An apology for what?	I'm so sorry, I..
Letting my heart bleed open	
at the tailor shop.	

LEENA (CONT'D)
Wait so there's more?!

He looks at her "really?"

ANDREW
If it weren't for your friend, it could have been a bloody hemorrhage. Leena yes I said I was content being a bachelor, but I'm ready to take the risk, to go for more then content. Which is how I feel when I'm with you and to be completely honest I've never felt this way before.

LEENA
Andrew the reason I came by your place was to tell you that I love being with you. That I trust you. I feel safe, and at home with you.

Andrew looks at her, with tenderness, and care. They share a look of mutual understanding. A look we've seen before.

LEENA (CONT'D)
But how will we--

ANDREW
We'll figure it out.

With moist eyes he smiles bright.

LEENA
Go the distance?

Nods his head "yes."

ANDREW
However be prepared there will be road bumps.

LEENA
And potholes...

ANDREW
Some oxen.

As they go to kiss, we hear;

NATASHA (O.S.)
Leena?! Are you there?

Natasha stands in the hallway, A GROUP of GUESTS behind her. Leena rounds the corner, sees her future mother-in law.

MRS. SAROJ BATRA
There she is. We thought for a moment you had fallen in to the toilet. Come my dear I have a small gift for you.

Before she can turn to look back at Andrew she's surrounded by GUESTS who carry her away.

INT. ROOM ADJACENT TO BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena tries to focus as Saroj speaks.

SAROJ
Leena we couldn't be more pleased with Shawn's choice for a wife.

Saroj presents her with a jewelry box.

SAROJ (CONT'D)

This is a small gift welcoming you to the family. Open it.

Leena opens the box. A beautiful, ornate, gold and diamond bracelet winks up at her.

LEENA

Mommiji, this is too much.

SAROJ

Nonsense. It suits you perfectly.

Leena looks at her wrist. Her eyes on the OM MANI PADME OM bracelet.

SAROJ (CONT'D)

Take that one off, it's so cheapy beti.

At this moment Shawn enters. Leena shuts her eyes, catches her breath. *We hear her heart BEAT, as it picks up speed.*

SHAWN

Ready? Mom, Dad needs you outside.

Saroj, gives Leena a quick peck on the cheek and exits.

Leena's heartbeat, getting louder, faster as a BELL RINGS in the distance.

EXT. TAJ HOTEL - ENGAGEMENT PARTY - CONTINUOUS

(note - the sound of Leena's heartbeat is heard continuously in the background)

MR. BATRA

We are so proud of our son Shawn, as he so passionately makes a life tri-fecta! First the perfect education; Stanford, followed by more Stanford.

LAUGHS and APPLAUSE from the CRWOWD.

INT. ROOM ADJACENT TO BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena's heartbeat, racing. Erratic.

SHAWN

Dad always tells the same jokes. Do all Dad's to that or is it--

LEENA
Shawn, I, I can't do this.

SHAWN
Do what?

LEENA
This engagement.

Silence. Leena's heartbeat, steadier, slower.

LEENA (CONT'D)
Shawn, you're a great guy and will be a wonderful husband and father. I'm sure of it. For someone else.

SHAWN
You're not making any sense. Sit.

LEENA
Listen, I can't marry you. I'm sorry, but I can't.

SHAWN
I'm not understanding. I thought this is what you wanted? What we both wanted. What we agreed upon. What the heck has changed?

LEENA
I have.

INT. TAJ HOTEL - ENGAGEMENT PARTY - CONTINUOUS

As before, Mr. Batra is mid speech.

MR. BATRA
Then the perfect job. Video game designer! And now the perfect wife. Leena Rai, also from California! Help me welcome the happy couple. Shawn and Leena.

INT. ROOM ADJACENT TO BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena and Shawn as we left them.

LEENA
A few months ago, this is absolutely what I thought I wanted. But not now. I'm so sorry.

SHAWN

You're sure it's not cold feet? You're positive you're saying no to this, to us?

INT. TAJ HOTEL - ENGAGEMENT PARTY - CONTINUOUS

As before, Mr. Batra is mid speech.

MR. BATRA

Perhaps they didn't hear us. All together "Shawn and Leena."

The GUESTS chant "Shawn and Leena."

INT. ROOM ADJACENT TO BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leena and Shawn as we left them.

SHAWN

Leena I'm not going to force you into something you don't want. And lucky for you--

He pulls out his phone, *shows Leena a picture of a very pretty woman.*

SHAWN (CONT'D)

She's on the hook.

LEENA

Oh my God! Shawn!

SHAWN

What? I had to have a back-up...This is what *I came here for.*

We hear the GUESTS chanting "Leena," "Shawn"...Leena looks questioningly at Shawn. He takes her hand.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

It'll be fine. There's good food and drink, and now some gossip. C'mon it'll be okay.

CUT TO:

EXT. SANTA MONICA COAST; THE SEXY SWAYING LOS ANGELES PALM TREES

Legend reads "ONE YEAR LATER."

INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - SANTA MONICA, CA - NEW YEAR'S EVE

Pushing through the CROWD of REVELERS, passing an intense game of FLIPCUP, we find Leena, Sara and Megan in their own huddle, drinks in hand; we notice an engagement ring on Leena's finger.

Leena raises her glass.

MEGAN

This New Year? Oh boo really me first?

A chorus of "yeses".

MEGAN (CONT'D)

This New Year Joe and I will hopefully make it through therapy so we can celebrate our ten year anniversary. Wahoo.

Megan throws back her drink, as the girls laugh and clink glasses. Eyes on Sara.

SARA

This New Year I'll be getting my MBA (pauses for effect) and getting off "on-line dating"...going to give fate a chance!

Cheers all around.

MEGAN

Ahem at my nine o'clock, is this fine specimen of a male..who's been checking you out... (looks to Sara)

SARA

It's all about timing.

As they all look to see...

SARA (CONT'D)

Don't everybody look!

She smiles, then turns back.

SARA (CONT'D)

Hello, awkward city. Lee your turn before the unicorn walks over.

LEENA

This New Year...Salsa and her posse come to life in their very own television series! I just signed the papers!!

SARA
That just made my whole
year!!

MEGAN
I am so proud of you girl!!
AND...

Megan holds up Leena's ringer finger.

MEGAN
To this!

Their glasses come together as the girls toast, laugh
cheer.

EXT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - BACKYARD, DANCE FLOOR - LATER

Moonlight through the windows and fancy twinkle lights,
illuminate the magic spell cast by the disco ball above
the crowd, where we find *Leena dancing with Andrew mid-*
countdown!

CROWD
Four, three, two..

Andrew looks at Leena with admiration and respect.

CROWD (CONT'D)
ONE!

LEENA
Happy New Year!

ANDREW
Happy New Year Leena Rai!

Andrew takes Leena's face in his hands, looks into
Leena's eyes.

ANDREW
I love you, my sassy little Salsa.

LEENA
Of course

LEENA (CONT'D)
You do!

ANDREW
I do!

LEENA (CONT'D)
I love you too.

And they KISS we pan up to the disco ball, a myriad of
colors as we END CREDITS (full Bollywood Dance w all
CAST.)