

MEET ME IN NEW DELHI

By Thane Economou

John Wells Productions

EXT. NAVY PIER - DAY

The SOUNDS of Navy Pier are overwhelming. Tourists TRAMPLE down the pier. The waves of Lake Michigan CRASH below.

And it's here that we meet MEENA (28 and Indian). On her bicycle, she peddles past the vendors and tour groups - moving quickly but still taking it all in.

Further down the pier, we meet FREDDY (28 and white). Wearing a suit and awkwardly carrying a presentation poster and a box full of pamphlets, he walks out of The Grand Ballroom under a banner reading NAVY PIER TECH EXPO.

Meena flies down the pier - looking around.

Freddy, meanwhile, stands alone. He looks out around the pier at all the laughing, happy people. Conference attendees. Families. Couples.

Lots of couples.

Zoned out, Freddy absentmindedly steps backwards when--

MEENA

HEY!

Meena SKIDS to the left, narrowly avoiding Freddy.

Freddy, surprised, clumsily stumbles and FALLS to the right.

And his pamphlets GO EVERYWHERE.

Meena jumps off her bike, leaning down toward Freddy--

MEENA

(slight accent)

Are you OK?

Standing up, and wiping off a certainly bruised ass:

FREDDY

My pamphlets--

Meena and Freddy instantly turn and start running after the pamphlets, as the wind takes them in every direction.

Meena grabs a handful, but Freddy almost instantly gives up.

FREDDY

Actually, screw it. No one wants them anyway.

Now a bit more interested, Meena looks down at the glossy pamphlet in her hands.

FREDDY
Here I can take that--

MEENA
(reading)
Lollipop Bop. Pop Lollipops for
points--

FREDDY
(dryly)
And unlock secret game levels.
Available on iOS and Android.

MEENA
You made this app?

FREDDY
I worked on it for my team.

MEENA
You don't seem very excited.

FREDDY
Yeah, I heard the same thing in
there. But the thing is, I can-- I
have made apps that'd contribute a
helluva lot more to the world.

Freddy reaches for his pamphlet, but she pulls it back again.

MEENA
Like what?

FREDDY
You don't wanna hear about my app.

MEENA
I'd love to hear about the app of
the person I almost accidentally
murdered.

Freddy tries to read Meena - who simply smiles back.

He nods his head, and straightens up.

FREDDY
OK... So imagine you're a tourist--

MEENA
I am a tourist.
(beat)
(MORE)

MEENA (CONT'D)

I mean, I'm new here. I'm in university.

FREDDY

And what do you think of that building?

Freddy points up toward The Grand Ballroom, an early 20th Century marvel of Chicago's past.

MEENA

It's nice.

Freddy hands over his phone to Meena.

FREDDY

Now, this is just a beta version I made, but take a picture of this building with my phone.

Meena takes the phone and points it toward the ballroom.

The moment the camera CLICKS -- the screen reads: **THE GRAND BALLROOM - NAVY PIER**. Information and stats fill the screen.

MEENA

(reading)

The Grand Ballroom. Part of the original 1916 construction... 18,000 square feet... Wow.

FREDDY

And it works for any major landmark in the city. What do you think? Be honest.

MEENA

The technology's impressive. But...

FREDDY

But why do you care about some super tourist-y, old building?

MEENA

Right... Why do I care?

Freddy's heard this before. He nods his head. Thinking...

FREDDY

Hundreds of people were married here. The ends of wars were celebrated here. It's... special.

Freddy, building up steam, points toward the Ballroom.

FREDDY

People walk past this building
everyday. Hell, you were about to.
And maybe I'm a dork for this
stuff, but I want people to
interact with their city and feel
like they're a part of its history.

He smiles. She smiles.

FREDDY

That's slightly more interesting
than Lollipop Bop, right?

MEENA

Listen, this is really cool. And I
can tell you from what I know,
especially with financing, it's all
about passion. This is where your
passion is. Not *this*.

Meena hands back the Lollipop Bop pamphlet.

MEENA

So speak from the heart, and you'll
do fine.

They look at one another. It's that moment where someone
either makes a move, or...

The moment passes.

MEENA

OK. Well, I gotta get going... Bye.

FREDDY

Yeah, see ya.

Meena climbs up on her bike.

She looks back at Freddy, and then peddles down the pier.

Freddy watches her go. He turns to head the other direction--

But then he turns back again to get her attention, except--

Meena is gone.

FREDDY

... Dammit.

As if in a daze, Freddy walks down the pier.

NEAR THE CRYSTAL GARDENS...

Freddy walks farther down the pier, looking around for Meena.

FREDDY

Dammit.

ON THE PIER'S EDGE...

Meena is nowhere in sight.

Resigned, Freddy leans against the pier's railing.

FREDDY

(softly)

Dammit.

Freddy, once again alone, looks out over the lake.

And as he thinks to himself...

The sound of CRASHING WAVES starts to fade...

And faintly, we hear the sound of STRINGS.

Then HORNS.

Then Freddy looks up. At us.

And SINGS.

Freddy is nearly as surprised as we are as the words flow out of his mouth. She was beautiful, he sings. She helped him find his voice. But she got away.

Where's That Girl?

The SONG, which feels straight out of a 1950's Gene Kelly picture, is about that undefinable gut feeling when you meet someone you need to know. Someone special.

His voice is at first hesitant, but it soon grows stronger...

With supreme confidence, Freddy turns and faces the crowded Navy Pier - intent on finding Meena.

Light on his feet, and with a beat in his step, he dances to a song only Freddy can hear!

Freddy spins around a TOUR GROUP. He ducks under a selfie stick yielding TOURIST DAD. Looking for Meena high and low.

Seeking higher ground, Freddy hops from a bench onto a lamppost. Swinging from the post, he looks over the pier.

His eyes light up. He spots Meena!

But-- She's quickly peddling away from the pier and down toward Lakefront Trail. Every moment she's farther and farther away.

And Freddy is heartbroken.

He falls back onto a nearby bench. And as his motions slow, so does the MUSIC. Freddy will never catch up with her now.

Then Freddy's eyes drift to a nearby vendor. And he instantly perks up...

ROLLER SKATE RENTAL

Freddy looks from the vendor, to Lakefront Trail, to us...

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKEFRONT TRAIL - MOMENTS LATER

With purpose, and with the orchestra's STRINGS behind him, Freddy zooms down Lakefront Trail - perhaps even lighter and more nimble on skates than he was in his shoes.

He moves fast, with the agility of a dancer - skating left, right, and backwards - avoiding RUNNERS, MOTHERS with strollers, and texting TEENS.

Then Freddy spots her!

Meena is just off the trail in a small park area, in front of Buckingham Fountain.

So Freddy spins around, jumps over a small barrier, and skates into the park. He finally SKIDS up next to Meena.

Meena turns and faces Freddy.

Eyebrow raised, she looks him up and down (pausing on his inexplicable skates.) She can't help but smile.

FREDDY

Hi. I'm the guy from before who's way too into old buildings. But I figure since you're new to town, I could show you around. Test out my app.

(beat)

Maybe go to a movie too?

Freddy pulls his phone out of his suit pocket.

FREDDY

So I'd love to have your number. If
not, it's fine. I'll just skate
away forever, I promise.

Meena looks at the phone. And then to Freddy.

Considering...

But she nods, and takes the phone, plugging in her number.

And as she hands it back to a very relieved Freddy:

MEENA

I'm Meena.

FREDDY

I'm Freddy.

MEENA

Nice to meet you.

She hops back on her bike. Then pauses.

MEENA

Are you going to follow me again?

FREDDY

No. I'm good. Very good.

She takes one final look at Freddy - confused and intrigued -
and peddles down the trail.

Freddy watches her go.

Then at the very moment Meena turns a curve, disappearing out
of sight--

THE MUSIC BLASTS! And Freddy can't contain himself.

He skates around the fountain - feeling lighter than air.

*Freddy celebrates the moment, and begins to tap dance (in
skates, no less!)*

The MUSIC builds!

The FOUNTAINS turn on!

And Freddy spins around for the big celebratory finish!

INT. MEENA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Unlike the bright fantasy of before, we now re-enter the real world, as Meena pushes open her apartment door, with a bag of groceries in her arms.

Her apartment is standard university student drab. Off-white, mostly blank walls.

Her phone rings, and she answers:

MEENA
Hi Mummy, Papa. *Kaise ho?... Kya kar rahe ho?...*

As she speaks with her parents, she goes in and out of Hindi.

MEENA
Today?... Went to Navy Pier. Just looked around...
(beat)
Just by myself. But it was special.

Meena lingers on that last thought, looking off.

And in that moment, she hears the faintest of *STRINGS*...

She snaps herself out of it.

MEENA
And then I rode my bike home. And that's it.

Meena shakes her head as the conversation moves on. She listens as her mother continues speaking on the other line.

She looks to her refrigerator. Hung by a magnet is a single photo. Of Meena and her parents. She looks at it...

MEENA (V.O.) (PRE-LAP)
Are you close to your parents?

INT. 'L' TRAIN - EVENING

A sparsely filled train car rides through the city at dusk.

Sitting side by side, Freddy and Meena continue their conversation:

FREDDY
They live like 10 minutes up the road. So yeah.
(beat)
(MORE)

FREDDY (CONT'D)

But, seriously, we're super close.
Talk to them about everything
happening in my life.

MEENA

Did you tell them about tonight?

FREDDY

I would consider this something
happening in my life. Right?

Meena nods uncomfortably.

FREDDY

And are you close with your folks?

MEENA

I talk to them everyday. But it's
hard. They're back in New Delhi.

FREDDY

What's it like there?

Meena lights up.

MEENA

Delhi's my favorite place in the
world. It's vibrant. And crazy. And
full of life and good food. And
history. Like India Gate, which is
super tourist-y... but you'd like
it.

FREDDY

Yeah. Well, I've never even left
the country.

MEENA

Why not?

Freddy PAUSES - as if he'd never considered it.

FREDDY

I don't know. I guess I just...
never took that leap.

He smiles at Meena. And she smiles back.

MEENA

Well... I'm gonna move back after I
graduate. I wanna modernize my
dad's export business. Actually, I
wanna *run* it. Now, normally it
would go to the son.

(MORE)

MEENA (CONT'D)

But my brother doesn't want it. And I-- really, really do.

FREDDY

Your brother, he's back in India?

MEENA

Yeah. In fact, he just got engaged.

FREDDY

Oh congrats. You like her?

MEENA

I haven't met her yet. Actually, he only just met her a few weeks ago.

Freddy readjusts in his seat, weighing his next question.

FREDDY

So... was it... you know... one of those...?

MEENA

Arranged marriage?

Meena takes a deep breath, patiently answering a common (and annoying) question.

MEENA

No. At least not what you're thinking. It's definitely less weird than it sounds. I mean, it's not like they only get to meet once before their wedding.

FREDDY

Yeah, cause that'd be crazy--

MEENA

That's how my parents were married.

FREDDY

Cool.

(beat)

So how does it work then?

MEENA

He'd go on dates with the girls my parents found. Usually recommended through friends. Plus, my parents passed around his biodata.

FREDDY

His... what?

MEENA

Biodata. It's like a resume for parents to set up their kids. Like, my brother's says he's a writer in Mumbai. Or mine says I'm studying for my MBA.

Freddy PAUSES for a moment, before turning to Meena.

FREDDY

You have a biodata?

MEENA

I didn't make it. My parents did.

FREDDY

So they're out there trying to set you up, while you're dating?

But Freddy puts it together almost immediately.

FREDDY

Except, they don't know you date.

Meena, growing serious, gathers her thoughts.

MEENA

They're not ultra-traditional. They just don't understand the concept of dating. They don't get it.

As she speaks, Meena becomes more animated. More frustrated.

MEENA

And they'll bring up the different cultures and values and how people will talk. Like this family friend, Nidhi Patni, she went against her family's wishes, married a white guy, got divorced, and I've never heard the end of it!

Meena catches herself. She takes a deep breath and continues.

MEENA

What I'm saying is, if I really liked someone, and if we got serious, it still would never, ever work for my parents.

She nods to herself as if to justify her own logic.

MEENA

This is awkward. And mortifying.
I'm so sorry. I'm just going to get
off at the next stop.

As the train slowly BRAKES, approaching the next station,
Meena stands up and walks toward the door.

FREDDY

What if they don't need to know.

The train door in front of Meena OPENS... but she doesn't
leave.

Freddy stands, and walks toward her.

FREDDY

We don't even know what this is
yet. I know I like you. I know I'd
like a second date.

Meena turns to face him... as the door behind her CLOSES.

FREDDY

It may not be easy. But what you
said about speaking from the
heart... well I want to see where
this goes. Cause I've got a good
feeling about it.

And then, as if on cue... *MUSIC builds behind Freddy.*

And Freddy, with the utmost confidence, *SINGS* to Meena.

*He tells her that when he saw her riding away, all he wanted
was to make her stay...*

And going after her, he had one thought.

Let's Give It A Shot

*The train lights dim, except for a light directly above
Freddy and Meena - spotlighting the pair as if they're the
only two people in the world.*

*Meena briefly notices the world changing around her, but
finds it hard to keep her eyes off Freddy.*

And then... Meena SINGS.

*She sings softly at first, but as she literally finds her
voice, Meena grows louder.*

Her lyrics unveil her own take on the events at the pier. She says she doesn't even know him. He's just some cute guy who skated into her life. Should they give it a shot?

And as they begin to sing back and forth, their duet extends to their feet. They slowly move in step with one another.

Before they know it, Freddy and Meena are dancing, matching each other beat for beat.

Their pace quickens. He swings around the train's metal pole. She does the same.

Then they hop up on the train's seats. Their fellow RIDERS don't bother to look up from their books and phones - as Freddy and Meena jump, tap, and dance through the train car.

Meena spins and ends up in Freddy's embrace-- just as the doors to the train once again open at a new station.

She looks up at him, and--

EXT. LOGAN SQUARE - NIGHT

Under the bright bulbs of Logan Theater, Meena and Freddy waltz down the empty sidewalks.

Fast paced and energetic, Freddy's hand is on Meena's lower back. Her hand is on his shoulder. He moves her around the square as if she is weightless.

They slow to a stop. Wrapped up in each other's arms.

Looking directly into each other's eyes.

Then they kiss.

They'll give it a shot.

INT. MEENA'S APARTMENT - DAY

The SOUND of a printer hard at work.

Scissors SNIP at a print-out.

On the refrigerator - next to the photo of her parents - Meena hangs up a new glossy photo. It's a selfie of Meena and Freddy from their first date in Logan Square.

Still high from it, she smiles while looking at the photo.

Her phone BUZZES. Meena's eyes light up.

MEENA
(answering)
Hey!

And as she heads off frame, we--

BEGIN MONTAGE:

EXT. NAVY PIER - DAY

Back where it all began, Meena and Freddy ride the Centennial Ferris Wheel at Navy Pier. We can practically hear him describing how the Ferris Wheel was invented in Chicago by George Washington Ferris - and she's not even that annoyed!

INT. MEENA'S APARTMENT - DAY

On Meena's refrigerator now hangs a photo of them on the Ferris Wheel.

The refrigerator SWINGS open, as Meena and Freddy cook a meal together. They bump into each other, finding their rhythm.

INT. KINGSTON MINES - NIGHT

They sit at a table in the back, sharing a plate of cheese fries as they watch a blues concert on the stage ahead.

INT. RAINBOW BEACH - EVENING

Sitting on a beach towel, they look out over the lake to the dusk-lit city. He holds her in his arms, as they kiss.

INT. FREDDY'S PARENTS' HOME - EVENING

A Christmas tree in the corner. A fireplace warms the room. Snow falls outside the windows.

Freddy and Meena sit on the floor near the tree, facing FREDDY'S FATHER and MOTHER. His GRANDPARENTS rest on a nearby couch.

A sincere, joyful smile crosses Meena's face as she watches Freddy LAUGH heartily at a joke his father made -- only interrupted by the surprise of his mother placing a wrapped Christmas present on her lap.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

The sun has returned. It's late Spring. Graduation Day.

Surrounded by her cap and gown-clad classmates, Freddy poses for a selfie with Meena as she kisses him on the cheek.

But Meena, distracted, reaches into her gown and pulls out her BUZZING phone. She motions to Freddy to hang on a second.

Call from "Mummy and Papa".

Freddy knows the drill. He nods and takes a step back. Hands in his pockets, Freddy looks on as Meena answers the phone with a big, excited smile on her face.

END MONTAGE**INT. MEENA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The refrigerator is now completely covered with photos.

Standing in the kitchen, Meena surveys the snapshots of her new life over the past year.

The photo of Meena and Freddy at graduation. Photos of them playing skeeball at a barcade. With Freddy's family. In the park as Spring has turned once again to Summer.

Meena takes a moment to adjust the original photo - of her parents - now moved slightly off to the side.

PRIYA (O.S.)

Hello!

Meena SNAPS out of her stare and looks down at the phone in her hands. She's in the midst of a video-chat, and her friend PRIYA is looking back up at her.

MEENA

Sorry, I was just thinking of something--

PRIYA

(British accent)

I said when are you coming back to Delhi? I miss you!

MEENA

July. For my brother's wedding.

PRIYA

And you're still moving back here?
To work with your dad. Right?

MEENA

Yeah, definitely. I mean, I am
applying for some jobs here to
extend my visa. Cause I wanna help
Freddy get financing--

PRIYA

You're staying for Freddy?

MEENA

No. No, I'm not-- it's more
complicated than that...

Meena looks off, carefully selecting her next words.

Priya - noticeably - never has that problem.

PRIYA

Listen. We've all had our secret
boyfriends. I had a lot. Like a
lot. But now I'm with Basu and I
love him. It's nice to settle.

MEENA

You mean: settle down?

PRIYA

What'd I say?

MEENA

But... it's different with Freddy.

A smile nearly crosses her face - but she holds it back.

PRIYA

Meena... your parents. They'll
flip. Just like--

MEENA

Nidhi Patni's parents--

PRIYA

Frankly, I don't understand how
you've even kept it a secret. You
two practically live together.

MEENA

I know. My *masi* visited and I had
to scrub my apartment of all
evidence of him. Photos. Clothes.

(MORE)

MEENA (CONT'D)

And yet she still found Freddy's
electric razor.

(beat)

So I said it was mine. For my...
body hair.

Meena winces in embarrassment and disgust.

PRIYA

So what are you guys gonna do?

MEENA

... I'm figuring it out.

From behind Meena, her apartment door opens...

And Freddy enters.

Freddy looks up, and upon seeing Meena on a video call--

FREDDY

Oh shit!

Freddy instantly FALLS to the ground.

Meena spins around.

MEENA

It's just Priya.

Freddy, a little embarrassed, stands up and walks toward
Meena.

Looking over Meena's shoulder, he waves to Priya.

FREDDY

Good morning, Priya.

PRIYA

Good evening, Freddy.

FREDDY

(to Meena)

Hey, I gotta take a call inside.

MEENA

Yeah, go ahead.

Meena and Freddy share a smile.

Freddy waves to Priya and disappears into Meena's room.

Meena keeps her eyes on the door.

PRIYA
I do like him.

Meena turns back to Priya.

MEENA
Yeah. I like him too.

EXT. CHICAGO RIVER - DAY

The Chicago Line Cocktails and Architecture Cruise slowly sails down the lakeside coast of the city, as a docent speaks over the speakers.

On the deck, Freddy steps out - drinks in hand.

He sees Meena, standing at the boat's edge and looking out over the water toward the city. The setting sun cloaking her in silhouette.

Freddy pauses a moment, letting the image soak in.

Finally, he approaches, handing Meena her cocktail.

FREDDY
What do you think?

MEENA
It's beautiful. I love it.

FREDDY
We should do this again. Maybe
bring my parents.
(beat)
Maybe bring yours.

Meena turns to Freddy, with a half chuckle:

MEENA
My parents?

FREDDY
I was thinking, I wanna meet them.
Maybe you can invite them to visit.
Maybe in the Fall--

MEENA
The Fall? I mean... my visa expires
in a month.

FREDDY

Your student visa. But you
interviewed at all those places.
And when you get a job--

MEENA

If--

FREDDY

When you get a job, we can finally
think about... the Fall. And then,
invite your parents to come visit.

Meena is keeping her cool. Trying to be patient on an issue
that they've clearly discussed many times before.

MEENA

It's not that easy. Once we involve
them, please believe me, things
would get hard. Complicated.

FREDDY

See, I disagree. Cause if
something's meant to be, then it
will just... be.

Freddy smiles. So incredibly sure of himself.

Meena looks Freddy up and down before taking his arm and
snuggling in closer.

FREDDY

Things will just fall into place
for us. I really believe that.

They look off as the sun sets over the city.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Meena types away at her laptop.

FREDDY (V.O.)

You'll be here in the Fall. So
they'll be here in the Fall. It'll
be as easy as that.

Her phone BUZZES. She picks it up.

An e-mail. ON SCREEN we catch the words: "Meena..."
"Interview..." "We regret..."

MEENA (V.O.)
You're right. We don't need to
think about it right now.

Meena puts down her phone.

She nods to herself before getting back to her work.

INT. CAR - DAY

Meena rides in the back of a Lyft. She's on her phone again.

ON SCREEN: "We're sorry to inform you that--"

Meena looks away from her phone and out the window.

INT. MEENA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

On her couch, Meena's eyes scan her phone screen.

We don't need to see what it says. We know. More bad news.

FREDDY (O.S.)
What's up?

Meena looks up toward Freddy, sitting beside her.

She almost says something, but decides against it.

MEENA
Nothing.

She smiles and looks toward the TV.

MEENA
(playfully arguing)
You don't have the pause the TV
everytime I look at my phone!

FREDDY
What if you miss something?

MEENA
Then we'll rewind.

FREDDY
Then I might as well just pause it.

MEENA
Never pause it. Just play!

Freddy presses play on the movie.

MEENA

Wait. What's going on again?

Freddy pauses the movie again.

MEENA

I'm kidding! Just play it!

He smiles, and turns his attention completely to the movie.

Meena looks at Freddy...

EXT. MEENA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Moving slowly up a sidewalk, Meena is in a daze.

She's two steps behind Freddy, who is bounding up the stairs to her apartment complex.

FREDDY

Have you packed yet? Cause you
don't wanna wait too long.

She follows him inside--

INT. MEENA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Meena briefly pauses at the front door.

MEENA

I need to tell you something...

But Freddy's out of earshot, so she quickens her pace and catches up with him in the hallway as he keeps walking ahead.

FREDDY

So the flight's in four days. And
your brother's wedding is in three
weeks. And then you're back here by
the 26th--

MEENA

Freddy--

FREDDY

Which, I know, makes you nervous.
But you'll have ten days to find a
job before the visa expires--

MEENA

I need to tell you something--

FREDDY
Then we're all set.

Freddy finishes speaking as he arrives at her doorstep.

At her door, Meena turns the key in the lock, and partially opens the door.

She then pauses, keeping the door ajar.

MEENA
I really, really need to tell you something...

FREDDY
What is it? What's going on?

Now worried, Freddy moves past Meena and opening the door to her apartment.

He enters...

INT. MEENA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

And Freddy finds her apartment completely empty.

The walls are bare. The couch is gone. All that remains are some boxes in the corner.

Freddy turns to face Meena, still standing in the doorway.

MEENA
I wanted to say something earlier.
I'm sorry I didn't.

FREDDY
What's going on?

MEENA
When I go to India next week, I'm not coming back.

This hits Freddy like a gut punch. He looks for somewhere to sit, but there's nothing.

Meena takes a step in from the doorway.

MEENA
My visa will expire. So I'm going home to help run my dad's company. That's what I've been working toward. Planning for. And this...
(MORE)

MEENA (CONT'D)

(beat)

This can't work.

Freddy nods his head.

FREDDY

You're giving up.

MEENA

I'm being realistic.

FREDDY

Real? What we have is real. But for the past year you've kept a distance. You've never gone all in! Cause you're absolutely terrified of commitment.

Meena moves toward Freddy. Her sadness seeping into anger.

MEENA

I'm only terrified because I'm not living in a fantasy. You haven't been listening and have no idea how scary my situation actually is!

FREDDY

What-- that you'll disappoint your parents? That your dad won't let you take over the family business?

MEENA

So I'm supposed to give up on my dreams?

FREDDY

All I know is that I love you and it shouldn't matter the obstacle--

MEENA

They're not obstacles; they're my family! And if anyone was an obstacle to my plans it was you--

Their argument has brought them face to face.

And their anger quickly retreats back to embarrassment.

MEENA

I'm sorry.

FREDDY

I'm sorry, too. I know you have plans. Amazing plans. I just wanted to be a part of them.

Freddy, embarrassed, looks down at the floor.

MEENA

(taking a deep breath)

Let's be logical. If we stay together, my parents will find out. Best case scenario, they'll expect us to get married. Are we ready for that?

(beat)

Because if you met my parents, I don't know how they'd react. If you met my grandparents-- my God, you couldn't even speak to them because you don't speak Hindi--

FREDDY

(head still down)

Meena, I...

Meena takes Freddy's head in her hand, forcing him to look at her and confront the issue before them.

MEENA

I know you think it should be easy. But even you have to admit that this is too hard.

Freddy shuts his eyes, hoping this moment can just end.

She's heartbroken. His world is destroyed.

Meena takes Freddy's hands in hers. She searches for the words so Freddy will understand.

So she sings.

She wishes things would change. But they won't. She wants to be with him. But she doesn't know how. She doesn't want to hurt like this. But she does.

And she's afraid they'll hurt each other more if they don't deal with this now.

Therefore, she must stick to her plans. Therefore, she sings:

I Have To Go

Finally, Freddy looks up. He falls into her arms, and they hold each other.

INT. MEENA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Alone in her kitchen, Meena continues SINGING.

She watches as Freddy packs boxes in her living room.

Meena starts slowly taking her photos down from her fridge...

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - NIGHT

Walking arm in arm, her SONG continues as Freddy and Meena take one last final stroll through their city...

And the song fades out...

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

The SOUNDS of gate change announcements, dragged suitcases, and crying babies. O'Hare International Airport.

This is where they'll say goodbye.

From a distance, we watch as Meena faces Freddy at the security line.

We cannot hear the words they exchange, but we know it's only pleasantries hiding tremendous hurt.

They embrace. And then Meena turns to leave, wiping a tear from her face.

Freddy remains a moment, before turning and leaving alone, with his head hung low.

INT. AIRPORT - MOVING SIDEWALK PASSAGEWAY - LATER

In an under lit and empty passageway connecting terminals, Meena stands on a moving walkway. She cries softly, as it carries her toward her awaiting plane.

She shuts her eyes tight, fighting back tears.

Then, Meena opens her eyes. She turns around. Facing toward where she came from. Unable to contain the emotions bubbling up within her...

She SINGS.

She sings that she must be logical. She has to go.

He should have understood. She has to go.

Meena walks toward us. And against the walkway. Going nowhere.

She sings about how she'll miss him more than she's ever missed someone before. And yet, she has to go.

So Meena stops singing. Wipes her face. Turns back around. And let's the walkway take her to her gate.

Standing still, but every moment getting farther and farther away from Freddy...

FADE OUT.

INT. FREDDY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Home from the airport, Freddy enters his apartment.

He shuffles to the living room, and collapses onto the couch.

Hanging above him, black and white movie posters adorn the wall. Movies with happier endings than his own experience.

Freddy looks to his side table, stacked high with books and tapes:

TEACH YOURSELF HINDI

EXT. NAVY PIER - DAY

Back on Navy Pier, Freddy sits alone on a bench.

Behind him, the Grand Ballroom is roped off for construction.

INT. FREDDY'S PARENTS' HOME - DAY

Freddy sits with his mother and father in the living room, barely able to stay focused.

FREDDY'S MOTHER

We loved her, but she never even
told her parents about you. How
serious could she have been?

Freddy, distracted, barely acknowledges her statement.

FREDDY'S FATHER
You need to be realistic, son. It
was just too difficult.

Freddy looks up, and nods his head.

EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - DAY

Freddy walks the streets of Chicago, lost in thought--
He looks up: LOGAN THEATER. The site of their first date.
He gazes around Logan Square.
And mixed with the SOUNDS of cars, trains, and crowds...
The SOUND of STRINGS.
Freddy takes a deep breath, and--

EXT. FREDDY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

*Freddy - wearing a small backpack - bursts out of his
apartment complex and starts strutting down the sidewalk.*

*The MUSIC builds behind him. And while the busy world around
him may not see or hear it, he SINGS and DANCES with more
life and focus than we've ever seen.*

*He sings that he can't give up so easily. Nothing - nothing!
- beats a grand gesture. So...*

I Have To Go!

EXT. 'L' TRAIN - DAY

*On the train platform, as a train blows past, he hops up on a
bench and belts out that he knows it's not over till the
credits. And he can have his happy ending!*

He has to go!

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Finally, in the airport, Freddy spins up to the counter and--

FREDDY
One ticket to India.

He's beaming.

The TICKET AGENT: not so much.

TICKET AGENT
Do you have a ticket?

FREDDY
No. I, uh, need one. I guess.

TICKET AGENT
And you want to buy it here? At the counter? And not, like, online?
(beat)
I mean you can technically do it.
But it'll cost a lot. Like a ton.
(beat)
Why do you need a ticket so bad?

FREDDY
(with a shrug)
I... I have to go.

And the MUSIC swells as--

TICKET AGENT
This gonna be cash or credit?

Freddy pauses before opening his mouth to respond and...

INT. AIRPORT - MOVING SIDEWALK PASSAGEWAY - DAY

OK, so now the MUSIC swells!

Freddy marches down the same depressing moving sidewalk that took Meena away from him. Only this time, lights of every color illuminate the passageway.

Freddy sings: he can't not be with her. It's that simple.

He'll do anything - anything! - to be by her side.

So... he has to go!

He dances, spinning around and jumping back and forth on the moving sidewalk. The MUSIC builds and builds, as the colors grow brighter and brighter...

INT. AIRPORT - GATE - DAY

Finally, he reaches his gate.

His foot nervously taps. He takes a deep breath. And he sings below his breath that he has to go.

And he does - stepping beyond the doors of the gate and jogging down the walkway toward his plane.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

And as the orchestra plays, hitting its crescendo...

Freddy takes off into the air...

FADE OUT:

OVER BLACK... Drums... A steady beat...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. MARKET - DAY

Freddy - wearing his backpack and looking the part of the American tourist - smiles.

He looks left, and takes a step forward into a street--

WHISH!

A car ZIPS by Freddy, nearly running him over. He hops backward onto the sidewalk.

Rattled, Freddy's eyes dart around - perhaps now only fully taking in his surrounding.

MARKET VENDORS display their saris. Cows absentmindedly wander through the streets. A MAN sells *pani puri* to hungry customers from his cart.

Taxis and auto-ricksaws fill Freddy's view, and their non-stop car-horns fill his ears.

We PULL OUT and reveal a packed city street in the heart of New Delhi. THOUSANDS fill the market, and Freddy is only a very, very small part of what is happening around him.

And as the DRUMS continue to build...

MUSIC EXPLODES - backed by a full orchestra - and the entire crowd bursts into song!

Freddy has landed in a Bollywood musical!

[NOTE: The Indian dialogue and lyrics are a natural mix of Hindi and English - much like you'd actually hear in New Delhi's Connaught Place or Select City Mall.]

Seemingly every resident of Delhi starts SINGING. And DANCING. All while going about their lives. Whether a TAXI DRIVER or a ROADSIDE BARBER or a group of SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Hundreds of conversations are SUNG as we whip around the market. The lyrics are a small snippet of life in New Delhi.

"Cut me a deal, that's nearly half a lakh." "I need a salwar kameez for the Mehndi." "Want some chicken tikka pizza from Nirula's?" "Virat Kohli's the greatest batsman of all time."

Even with subtitles, Freddy would be completely lost.

And as they hit the chorus, they announce **WELCOME TO DELHI!**

It's the biggest apple. A city that truly never sleeps.

A magic city and an eternal city.

A city of love. A city of lights. A city of music and car horns blasting through the night.

Freddy tries his best to sing along - but he's lost, not knowing the words. And he's out of step with the dance, discovering that you can't tap dance across a street when seven lanes of traffic whiz by on a three lane road.

With now hundreds dancing in unison, completely blocking Freddy out, the ensemble comes together for the big finish.

Welcome to Delhi!

And as quickly as it began--

The song ends.

The ensemble dissipates to go back about their lives.

Freddy stands alone. He looks around, now more confused than he was before.

A look of horror then creeps across his face.

Patting his back pocket, he discovers: his wallet is gone.

FREDDY

Oh no no no no no.

He looks all around, as CROWDS casually breeze past him in every direction. He's lost. Confused. And screwed.

FREDDY

What am I doing here?

EXT. MEENA'S HOUSE - DAY

A gate opens... revealing Meena.

The past few weeks have worn on her. She looks tired. As if exhausted from weeks of crying.

She takes a deep breath, and allows a smile to fight its way to the surface.

We follow as Meena enters a driveway, passing by a DRIVER who is washing the family car.

MEENA

Namaste.

He smiles and puts his hands together in return.

Past him, Meena reaches a small barking Indian Spitz dog, running around in circles and jumping to catch her attention.

MEENA

Hi Sultan baby!

She pets her dog, and turns toward her home.

It's a large house, surrounded by greenery on all sides. But just as we get a good look at it, we follow Meena inside...

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

The house is mostly marble, with Indian art on the walls.

Meena heads toward the stairs, but takes an impulsive turn toward the kitchen...

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

We follow as Meena enters the large kitchen. Off to the side, a COOK chops onions. He doesn't notice as Meena walks to the stove.

MEENA

Kaise ho?

She takes a spoon and tries the dish being prepared. From her face we know it's delicious.

COOK

Not ready. Not ready.

MEENA

It's so good. Thank you, thank you!

With a smile, she turns and heads out of the kitchen...

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Back in the entryway, Meena walks up the stairs.

Past a sweeping MAID, with whom she exchanges a smile.

Finally, she arrives upstairs to find her parents...

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SANDEEP sits at his desk, squinting as he types on his very small phone screen. While he may wear business suits in meetings, at home he relaxes in *kurta pajamas*.

SHREE sits in a chair nearby, playing around on an iPad. Shree is never not in a traditional *salwar kameez* or *sari*.

Neither notices as Meena enters.

MEENA

Papa, did you fire the wedding planner?

Sandeep and Shree both look up toward their daughter.

SANDEEP

He was behind schedule.

MEENA

Well, now we're doubly behind schedule.

(to Shree)

Mummy, tell Papa we need a planner for your son's wedding.

Shree has returned her focus completely to her iPad.

SHREE

Whatever your Papa says.

Meena rolls her eyes, turning back to Sandeep.

MEENA

And then, without asking me, you hired this Narim Patel fellow?

SANDEEP

Narim Patel? Yes beta. I did hire him. But I may have fired him also.

MEENA

You fired two wedding planners?

SANDEEP

They were overcharging! I can cut better deals than both of them. These wedding planners are all about sending business to their friends. This way, I can instead send business to my friends.

Shree, not paying attention, lifts up her iPad.

SHREE

Do you like this photo?

Shree reveals a photo of Meena on her iPad.

MEENA

Hideous.

(to Sandeep)

Wait. *This way?* What way?

SANDEEP

We don't need a wedding planner. Let's plan your brother's wedding together. Just you and I!

MEENA

(to Shree)

Mummy!

SHREE

(revealing a new photo)

Do you like this photo?

MEENA

Better. What's the picture for?

SHREE

I'm editing your biodata. Making it snazzier.

MEENA

You said you'd stop sending it out.

SHREE

No. I said I'd be less intense. I'm very casual. Relaxed. Look how relaxed I am.

Shree stretches out to reveal just how relaxed she is.

MEENA
(to Sandeep)
Papa!

Sandeep is now once again fully immersed in his phone.

SANDEEP
Whatever your mummy says.

MEENA
(to Shree)
I'm not ready to be set up.

SHREE
This is not some old fashioned set
up, where a stranger takes you back
to his village. It's very modern.

MEENA
How?

SHREE
We use e-mail. Regardless, kids
these days get set up by computers
all the time. Just think of me as
your personal Tinder.

MEENA
Oh God.

Shree pulls up some new biodatas on her iPad.

SHREE
I've been sent some very
interesting biodatas. One's an
engineer. One's a lawyer. One's...
(beat)
Oh, nevermind.

SANDEEP
What does he do?

SHREE
He... makes apps.

Sandeep and Shree try to hold it in... but eventually GIGGLE
together at such a silly, unstable job choice.

Meena, trying to restrain her annoyance, turns to leave.

SHREE

Come on, *beta*. Is there a reason
you don't want us sending out your
biodata? A reason to hold off?

Meena turns, and glances from Shree to Sandeep.

Meena considers. But--

MEENA

It's fine. Send it out.

EXT. TRAIN TERMINAL - DAY

CROWDS OF DOZENS stand in line at the train terminal to purchase tickets. And by "stand in line", I mean that they are crowding in and constantly pushing forward.

And at the very front of this massive "line" is Freddy.

Freaked out and totally out of his element, Freddy speaks with a very uninterested TELLER.

FREDDY

I need to get to a part of town
called...

Freddy pulls a crumbled up piece of paper from his pocket.

FREDDY

New Friends Colony? Yeah. Would it
be better to take a train or taxi?

The Teller neither responds nor reacts in any way.

FREDDY

Also, I have no money. My wallet
was stolen. But I can Paypal you--
(beat)
I also have nine American dollars.

The Teller remains stoic and unmoving.

And just as Freddy nearly starts again, he hears:

DEV (O.S.)

I'll be in New Friends Colony by
tonight.

Freddy's attention darts toward a well dressed young Indian man walking away from him. This is DEV.

FREDDY
(to the Teller)
Excuse me.

Freddy turns and starts sprinting after Dev.

DEV
Yes, I'm getting on now as we
speak. I promise I'll be there.

Following about ten steps behind Dev, Freddy weaves through the crowd, bumping into way too many people, and yelling:

FREDDY
Sorry! *Namaste!* Sorry!

Freddy looking for Dev in the crowd, bumps straight into-- AN
INDIAN ARMY OFFICIAL

FREDDY
Namaste. And thank you for your
service.

A train whistle BLOWS.

Freddy looks up and spots Dev getting on a train.

He grabs the straps on his backpack and starts running toward the train.

And as it starts moving...

And he's running beside it...

He jumps on!

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Dev has settled in his seat in the first class cabin.

Freddy, exhausted, collapses into the seat across the aisle from him.

Freddy looks to Dev with a big smile.

Dev nods back awkwardly, and immediately pulls out his phone.

FREDDY
How long's this train ride?

DEV
(barely looking up)
Six hours.

FREDDY
Wow. This is a huge city.

DEV
It is...

FREDDY
I mean, six hours to get to New
Friends Colony. Didn't realize it
was that far out.

Dev straightens up, and faces Freddy.

DEV
This train isn't going to New
Friends Colony.

The smile drops from Freddy's face in horror.

FREDDY
But you said it was!

DEV
We've never spoken before.
(beat)
Were you eavesdropping?

FREDDY
Yes. I was totally eavesdropping.
Why would you have said that?

DEV
I was lying.

FREDDY
...OK. So then where are we going?

DEV
A city called Jaipur.

Freddy spins and looks out the window as the city passes by.

FREDDY
Oh shit!

Freddy looks around, panicked.

He spots a SECURITY GUARD and quickly jumps to his feet.

Freddy jogs up the aisle to the Security Guard, facing him:

FREDDY
Excuse me, I need to get off.

SECURITY TRAIN
No stop until Jaipur.

An idea occurs to Freddy:

FREDDY
Wait! But I snuck on the train. I
don't have a ticket. So you can
just throw me off.

SECURITY TRAIN
You illegally snuck on the train?

FREDDY
(proudly)
Yes!

SECURITY TRAIN
Then you'll be arrested.

FREDDY
Arrested in Delhi?

SECURITY TRAIN
Arrested in Jaipur.

FREDDY
Oh. Well. Goddammit.

Freddy once again finds himself in a awful, shitty situation.

He's then surprised when DEV slaps his hand on Freddy's
shoulder. Dev smiles to the Security Guard.

DEV
I'm sorry. He's confused. I needed
to buy his ticket.

Dev pulls out a wad of rupees, handing it to the Guard.

DEV
Is this alright?

The Guard nods, turns, and leaves.

Before he can even react, Freddy's eyes look out the window
as the city of New Delhi passes him by.

INT. RESTAURANT - DUSK

Bowls are served with steaming spinach *subzee* and *daal*.

Plates are served with crisp *dosai* and fresh *roti*.

If your mouth isn't watering, you must not understand what you're missing.

At a high-class, modern Indian restaurant, Meena sits at a table near a window overlooking a vast green lawn.

Across from her sits Priya and her husband, BASU.

Meena and Priya dig in to the feast before them. Basu, meanwhile, seems far more interested in his phone.

PRIYA

So after this, let's head over to Abinav's for drinks and to see the whole high school gang.

MEENA

I'm good. I'll just go home.

Priya puts down her *roti*.

PRIYA

No. No more of your moping around.

MEENA

I'm not moping around.

PRIYA

Let's go to Dubai this weekend! Basu's *chacha* owns Masala Air and he can get us unlimited miles.

Upon hearing his name, Basu looks up from his phone.

BASU

Babe, it's not unlimited. I get an allowance.

PRIYA

(ignoring him)

Come on, Meena. Dubai!

Basu shrugs and turns back to his phone.

MEENA

Seriously, I'm fine. But I--

Meena thinks for a moment...

MEENA

I just left Chicago. I don't need to run away anywhere else.

PRIYA

Do you think you ran away... here?

MEENA

No-- I mean, I would have stayed in the states with him if I could have. Honestly, I just wanted to be wherever he was--

(beat)

But I'm here. Work with my father's been great. And honestly I missed Delhi. And I missed the food.

She uses her roti to scoop up a generous portion of *aloo*.

PRIYA

And you missed me?

MEENA

(smirking)

Not particularly.

PRIYA

Oh go to hell.

Meena smiles. But as she gets lost in thought...

MEENA

It's just-- Chicago felt like home.

(beat)

But this is home.

Meena nods and they return back to their incredible meal.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Freddy, his head resting against the train window, slowly opens his eyes.

The first thing he notices is that the train has stopped.

The second is that the train car is now empty.

An extremely jet-lagged Freddy BOLTS UP, looking out the window at the Jaipur train station.

And he once again spots Dev quickly walking away.

FREDDY

Hey!...

(no idea what his name is)

My friend!

EXT. JAIPUR TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Dev walks through the train station, when Freddy appears beside him once again.

An over-eager Freddy extends his hand.

FREDDY

Thank you! I'm Freddy by the way.

DEV

(shaking his hand)

I'm Dev. And it's no problem. It was actually kind of amusing.

Freddy and Dev arrive near the ticket counter.

Dev points up to a TRAIN SCHEDULE.

DEV

Well, you should probably catch the next train back to Delhi...

(reading)

Tomorrow morning.

Another gut punch for Freddy. He's nearly immune now.

DEV

You don't have a place to stay or any money, do you?

Freddy shakes his head.

DEV

Let's get you a ticket.

(beat)

And a drink.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Two glasses are filled with Johnny Walker Black Label.

Turned away from Dev, Freddy stares at his phone.

MEENA

Freddy's finger hovers over the call button.

FREDDY

Ah, screw it.

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

With the TV on, Sandeep is fast asleep in a recliner.

Sitting on a nearby couch next to Shree, Meena picks up her BUZZING phone.

"FREDDY"

Meena turns away from her mother, answering softly:

MEENA
Hello?

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Freddy hears her voice, and instantly lights up.

FREDDY
Meena. Meena!
(beat)
Meena?

He looks at his phone, as its battery dies in front of him.

FREDDY
No no no. Don't die. Don't die!

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Meena looks at her phone before putting it back to her ear.

MEENA
Hello? Hello?

Confused. Sad. Slightly worried. She puts her phone away.

SHREE (O.S.)
Who was that?

MEENA
Oh... no one.

And at that moment, ROMANTIC MUSIC PLAYS.

But it's not in her head. Meena looks up to the TV screen.

A scene from the film *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*.

A woman stands in a field of yellow flowers. She looks to a man standing in the field, facing away from her. He turns, and their eyes meet. She runs to him and they embrace.

Meena relaxes on the couch next to Shree, putting her head on her mother's shoulder.

Shree looks down at Meena with a smile.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Freddy, totally deflated, sits down at a table.

Across from him, Dev hands him a glass of whiskey.

DEV
Well, cheers!

Freddy nods and the two men drink.

DEV
So, this girl. She's Indian?

FREDDY
Yeah. And I guess her family...
hates white people?

DEV
Impossible. All Indians love white
people. It's Stockholm Syndrome
from the British era. Seriously,
people are gonna love you here.

FREDDY
Really?

Freddy glances over at a nearby WAITER, who gives him a super friendly thumbs up.

FREDDY
So her family will accept me?

DEV
Oh. Almost definitely not. When it
comes to marriage, Indians can get
very traditional. Take my parents.
They kept pushing and pushing for
me to get engaged.

FREDDY
So what did you do?

DEV
I got engaged. Yeah, my parents
found a sweet girl. From a family
of orthodontists. And they want me
to be an orthodontist.

(MORE)

DEV (CONT'D)

(beat)

Please never bring up
orthodontistry around me.

Dev trails off, motioning to the Waiter for more whiskey.

DEV

But I was in love with someone
else. Someone my parents wouldn't
accept. And I nearly threw it all
away to be with them. But I didn't.

FREDDY

Sometimes it's just too hard.
(looking around)
Sometimes it hurts too much.

Dev looks his sad new friend up and down.

DEV

Take it from me, a man who's
literally running away from his
problems back home. It hurts much
more to be without the person you
love.

(beat)

Tell me. How do you feel when
you're with her?

FREDDY

I feel like... I feel like the kind
of guy who can hop on a plane and
fly across the world in the name of
love. Like some kind of... of...

DEV

Hero.

FREDDY

But maybe I'm not. Maybe I'm just a
guy who's lost.

DEV

You're never truly lost if you know
where you're going.

Dev and Freddy pick up their new shots of whiskey as...

The MUSIC pumps in. Gone are the traditional Indian drums -
replaced by electronic beats.

Freddy smiles, drawn into Dev's world...

And Dev starts SINGING.

In the form of a toast, he SINGS to Freddy about love, and why it's worth fighting for. No matter what happens, you have to take a shot.

Then, on cue, the two men take a shot.

Dev sings about how no obstacle, big or small, can stand in his way. He needs to take a shot.

And so, they take another shot.

Almost instantly drunker than a moment ago, Dev stands and grabs Freddy's shirt, pulling him up off his chair. He SINGS that Freddy knows what he must do. He knows what he must be.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Dev and Freddy burst out of a stairwell and onto a rooftop in the heart of Jaipur.

With some killer dance moves, Dev spins around. He points to Freddy, and SINGS:

Be A Hero!

Dev continues to dance around, and up to, every edge of the rooftop.

Freddy joins in - or at least attempts to. Dancing side by side, Dev gives Freddy quick pointers on this very different dancing style. Quick kicks. And a lot more hands.

EXT. JAIPUR STREETS - INTERCUT

As the song continues, Dev and Freddy dance through the streets of Jaipur.

IN ONE MOMENT, Freddy follows Dev who dances into one side of a taxi ricksaw, and then they both dance out the other side - eventually making their way across the street.

IN ANOTHER MOMENT, the two fast friends have found their way onto a motorcycle. Dev drives the motorcycle, and Freddy sits in the sidecar.

AND IN YET ANOTHER MOMENT, Dev and Freddy pass a bottle of whiskey back and forth. And soon their perfect dance steps have transformed into a more artful stumble.

But Dev has continued SINGING. And one final time, he implores his new friend: Be A Hero!

They cheers. Dev takes a final swig, finishing the bottle.

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Meena, holding a plastic binder, enters the living room. Looking up from her binder, she finds Shree reading a book.

MEENA

Mummy, I have a quick question--

SHREE

You made a binder?

MEENA

This is the first of many binders. I'm throwing myself into this completely. Not thinking about... anything else because-- we have 11 days to plan nearly the entirety of your son's wedding!

(beat)

So, why aren't you more stressed?

SHREE

Because I knew you'd make a binder. And I know your father.

MEENA

Why? What is Papa up to?

At that moment, Sandeep storms into living room - wearing a headset and speaking very LOUDLY on the phone.

SANDEEP

Listen you fool! If you want to remain our caterer, I'll need more alcohol. I want to brag to my friends not about how many bottles we drank, but how many cases of bottles we drank. Understood? OK!

Sandeep hangs up, and turns to Meena.

SANDEEP

We're going to need more alcohol. Call the guests from America. Tell them to pick up two bottles of Black Label each at duty free on their way in.

Sandeep turns and heads right back out the door and into the hallway. Meena starts following him when--

MEENA

Papa!

She nearly bumps into a man standing in the hallway. He's tall and very, very handsome. This is KABIR.

Meena is caught off guard, unsure who this stranger is.

MEENA

Hello?

KABIR

Hello.

SANDEEP (O.S.)

We have one week!

Meena and Kabir turn to Sandeep yelling from the other room, before an uncomfortable Kabir smiles and turns back to Meena.

KABIR

I'm sorry. Your driver let me in.
My name's--

SANDEEP (O.S.)

Wait! Wait!

Sandeep runs back into the hallway, skidding in between Meena and Kabir.

Out of breath, he shakes Kabir's hand.

SANDEEP

Kabir, my boy! Do you have the
paperwork?

Kabir hands over a small envelope, which Sandeep barely acknowledges before turning to Meena.

Feigning surprise at her presense, he turns back to Kabir.

SANDEEP

Oh, I forgot to introduce you. This
is my daughter Meena. She recently
got her MBA. In America!

(to Meena)

And this is Kabir.

Meena blankly looks at her father, before throwing on a fake smile and giving a nod.

SANDEEP

His father owns the largest plastic
bottling plant in India.

(MORE)

SANDEEP (CONT'D)

We're closing some deals, so I
wanted Kabir to come over and
officially introduce himself to me.
And us.

Sandeep's enthusiasm for this introduction is far beyond both
Meena, who stares straight at her father, and Kabir, who
mostly looks down at his feet.

SANDEEP

I know there could be some
potential, uh, arrangements. Not
arrangements, but we want to set
up-- I mean, we're setting up, or
rather putting together a potential
partnership. Yes! Partnership.

Sandeep beams proudly.

Meena is mortified.

Shree laughs to herself from her seat in the living room.

KABIR

... Yes sir. Thank you for having
me, sir.

SANDEEP

Join us for lunch sometime. We'll
be around.

(to Meena)

Meena, will you be around?

MEENA

For what?

SANDEEP

Lunch?

MEENA

When?

SANDEEP

Anytime.

MEENA

Are you asking if I'll be around
anytime for lunch at my own house?

(beat)

Presumably.

SANDEEP

Great! Well now that we've--

MEENA

I have to make some calls.

(to Kabir)

It was nice to meet you.

Meena turns to leave, shaking her head on her way down the stairs.

INT. JAIPUR TRAIN STATION - DAY

An exhausted Dev, ticket in hand, walks up to an extremely energetic Freddy.

DEV

Are you ready?

FREDDY

You kidding? Yeah! Even though we were up all night, I am pumped!

(beat)

Do you think I'm jet-lagged?

Dev hands over the ticket, and a stack of rupees.

DEV

Here's your ticket. And when you arrive, this should cover the cost of your taxi. Unless...

(beat)

Unless you're American. So...

(hands him more cash)

Just give him all of this.

FREDDY

Thanks.

DEV

So what are you going to do?

FREDDY

Be a hero! Win her back! And let nothing stop me!

(beat)

And what are you gonna do?

DEV

Hang out with my friends in Jaipur and continue avoiding my problems!

FREDDY

Come on, Dev. We just did a whole--
(imitating their dance)

(MORE)

FREDDY (CONT'D)

-- thing about this. You need to be with her.

DEV

It's not that simple. Because... they won't let me be with... him.

The final word hangs in the air.

DEV

They won't let me be with Raj.

Freddy pauses, finally understanding Dev's situation.

FREDDY

Oh. Raj. Right.

(beat)

Then I need to change my advice.

DEV

I figured.

FREDDY

You don't need to be with *her*. You need to be with *him*. The rest of the advice is exactly the same.

The train horn BLOWS.

Dev nods, and extends his hand to bid Freddy farewell.

Freddy instead pulls him in for a hug.

EXT. MEENA'S HOUSE - DAY

Meena sits on a small bench in her front lawn.

Her dog Sultan silently sits beside her as she pets him.

Behind her, Kabir exits the house.

KABIR

Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think your father may have called me over for more than business.

Meena turns around and looks at Kabir curiously.

Kabir walks up and stands near her.

KABIR

I had no idea. You must believe me.

She nods, giving a slight laugh at how silly it all is.

KABIR

All the same, it was nice to meet you. So, if I'm tricked into seeing you a second time, that would be fine with me.

Kabir smiles at his own (objectively) great line.

He then leans down to pet Sultan, who--

GROWLS and BARKS at Kabir, shooting him backwards.

Kabir awkwardly LAUGHS, nods to Meena, and stumbles away.

She watches him go, hiding her own laughter while petting a now extremely calm Sultan.

Meena looks up as Shree sits down next to her.

Mother and daughter watch as Kabir exits out the front gate.

MEENA

Were you in on this?

SHREE

This was all Papa. Besides, if I'd have been in on it, it'd have been so subtle, you'd never have known.

MEENA

I give Papa permission to set me up, and he waits 20 hours. And then uses it as an opportunity to seal some big business deal!

SHREE

That's not why he did it.

(beat)

That's not the only reason why he did it.

MEENA

I'm just not ready.

SHREE

You'll never be ready.

Meena shakes her head.

SHREE

So, what did you think of him? Nice boy. Family oriented. What's wrong with him?

Meena searches for the words.

MEENA

He's not... special.

Shree puts her arm around Meena. They look off, leaving the conversation for now.

INT. GARDEN - DAY

Later, Meena wanders through her parent's garden - alone.

Out of sight of anyone else, she pulls out her phone from her pocket. With a few clicks:

A PICTURE OF FREDDY AND MEENA

She stares at it. Smiling. And then--

Like being hit by a flood of emotions, Meena breaks down.

The phone drops to the ground, and her hands cover her face, as she bursts into tears.

She slowly lowers herself to the ground, perhaps finally allowing herself to feel the pain of being without him.

She wipes the tears from her face. Catches her breath.

Meena looks directly into the camera.

And with a soft, sweet voice - she SINGS.

The song is sung in Hindi - the subtitles revealing poetic language as if from another time.

She sings about the deep pain in her heart. An incompleteness to her every moment, and a fear that this missing piece will haunt her for a lifetime.

She feels torn - as if her heart lives in two separate lands.

She never thought she could feel the emotions she is feeling. She never thought she would sing the words she is singing.

And yet there's no one to speak to about this pain. No one will understand. So she sings for herself. She sings for him.

INT. CAR - DAY

Meena sits in the backseat of her car, driven through the city of New Delhi. Reflections of life hit the window, but Meena's still lost deep in thought.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The SONG continues over images of Meena sleepwalking her way through the day.

Meena walks alone, past STALLS and MARKETS. She makes eye contact with no one. She pays no attention to anyone or anything.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Returning to the garden, she paces back and forth.

Finally, Meena reaches down and picks up her phone.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Meena and Sandeep, dressed in business attire, both shake the hand of a BUSINESSMAN - as they finish a meeting together.

As he turns to leave, Sandeep looks toward Meena proudly.

Meena forces a smile.

EXT. GARDEN - DUSK

Day has turned to night.

Meena sits on a bench in the garden.

She types on her phone.

We only catch glimpses: FREDDY... MISS YOU... LOVE YOU...

Meena turns one final time toward us.

She SINGS: This pain I feel. I've created for myself. I could end it at any moment. But I made my decision. To prevent the pain for others.

She ASKS: Am I wrong? Why does this feel so wrong? Why does this hurt so bad?

And with that, her finger touches the delete button.

And her message to Freddy is GONE.

MEENA
(to herself, softly)
Freddy...

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Freddy JOLTS awake.

Wiping the drool from his mouth, he notices he's in the back of a taxi.

The TAXI DRIVER faces him.

Freddy looks out the window, momentarily panicking.

FREDDY
We're in New Delhi, right?

TAXI DRIVER
(confused)
Yes.

FREDDY
Oh thank God!

Relaxing, he looks back out the window at Meena's home.

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Meena paces inside her home, going over some documents from one of her many binders.

She hears a NOISE from outside.

Meena turns, looking out a window. The Guard has opened the gate. A man is entering.

That man is FREDDY.

Shock. Excitement. Giddiness.

EXT. MEENA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Freddy, still in a daze, looks around as he walks up the driveway.

His eyes turn toward the open front door. He spots MEENA.

She slowly walks toward him.

Soon, she can't control herself, and starts to jog.

And when they meet, they pause. Three feet apart. A smile on each of their faces.

FREDDY

Meena. I--

SANDEEP (O.S.)

Meena! Who is it?

Freddy and Meena turn to find Sandeep standing on his porch.

MEENA

(softly)

Freddy...

Meena's smile has disappeared. Reality has set in.

Sandeep, with Sultan right on his heels, walks up to Freddy.

Sultan instantly begins sniffing and licking at Freddy.

SANDEEP

Fantastic guard dog.

(to Freddy)

So, who are you?

MEENA

Papa. This is my friend Freddy.

SANDEEP

(to Freddy)

Ah. And how do you know each other?

MEENA

From... school! He's a schoolmate.

Freddy shoots Meena a puzzled glance.

SANDEEP

I see. And, Freddy, what were you studying?

FREDDY

Well, sir, I actually make--

MEENA

Buildings!

(nervously)

He's a building... engineer. He was studying... building engineering.

Freddy, extremely confused, looks to Meena.

She shrugs and mouths back "I don't know..."

SANDEEP

An engineer. Very impressive.

MEENA

Like I said, Freddy's a friend. And he's passing through India. On vacation. I guess.

FREDDY

Yeah. I actually wanted to--

SANDEEP

Of course! The answer is of course you can stay here with us!

MEENA

Papa, we don't have to--

SANDEEP

Nonsense! He must stay. I insist!

Meena (speechless and terrified) looks to Freddy.

Freddy (speechless and... excited) looks back to Meena.

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The middle of the night. The house is quiet.

A bedroom door opens. Freddy eagerly pops his head out.

The opposite door opens. Meena stands in the doorway.

FREDDY

Hi.

Meena puts her hands on her hips in disbelief.

MEENA

Hi? Hi?! What are you doing here?!

Meena catches herself raising her voice, and in a panic she ducks back into her bedroom.

A freaked out Freddy soon follows suit, closing his door.

Down the hallway, a door OPENS and Sandeep pops his head out. Groggy and half-asleep, he looks around before closing his door again.

The hallway is empty and quiet, until...

Meena's door opens. As does Freddy's.

She shakes her head, and can't help but smile. He continues speaking in half-whispers.

FREDDY
I missed you.

MEENA
I missed you too. So much... But
when the hell did you get to Delhi?

FREDDY
Well, I just came in on a train
from Jaipur. It's a long story.

MEENA
Jaipur? Were you OK? Were you lost?
Oh God - did you drink any
unfiltered water?

FREDDY
Don't worry. I only drank alcohol.

MEENA
And then you came here. To my home.
And met my father--

FREDDY
Who thinks I'm just a schoolmate.
Also, if you were gonna make up an
impressive job, couldn't I just be
an architect. The hell's a building
engineer?

MEENA
You put me on the spot. I panicked!

Both Meena and Freddy realize that he was too loud, and instinctively step back into their rooms, closing their doors simultaneously.

Down the hallway, Sandeep's door opens once again.

He rubs his eyes, looks around, and then pops back in.

Freddy's door then opens. As does Meena's.

FREDDY
I'm here to win you back. So
tomorrow, let's tell the truth. And
be together. And then you can show
me around Delhi.
(MORE)

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Maybe we can see India Gate. I know it's tourist-y, but I should see it while I'm here.

MEENA

Freddy. We discussed this. I'm terrified of how my parents would react. So, if we told them, we'd have to be 100% sure about each other. And right now, we're not even dating.

Freddy's enthusiasm deflates as she speaks.

MEENA

Our situation hasn't changed. My plans haven't changed. All you've done is complicate things for me.

(beat)

Good night.

Before Freddy can respond, Meena closes the door to her room.

Alone in the hallway, Freddy slowly disappears behind his own closing door.

And once again, the hallway is empty and quiet.

Freddy re-opens his door, waiting for Meena to do the same.

She does not.

However, down the hallway, Sandeep's door OPENS.

They make eye contact.

SANDEEP

Jetlag?

FREDDY

... Definitely. Good night.

And with that, Freddy closes his bedroom door for the night.

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - MORNING

Meena and Freddy, standing a non-suspicious distance apart, walk down the stairs together.

MEENA

Please don't say anything at lunch.

FREDDY
What would I bring up?

As they reach the bottom of the stairs, Shree exits the dining room and heads toward them.

MEENA
(to Freddy)
Oh nothing, buddy!

Meena punches Freddy on the arm as casually as she can.

Shree, confused, smiles and heads past them up the stairs.

FREDDY
That hurt.

MEENA
I'm not kidding around Freddy.

FREDDY
Neither am I. I think I'm bruised.

MEENA
You can't act romantic. At all.

Meena heads into the dining room.

Freddy, following behind her:

FREDDY
Oh yeah. Cause I was gonna make a
move on you over lunch with your
parents. Who do you think I am?

And as Freddy and Meena disappear into the dining room:

The front door swings open and Kabir enters. Kabir is trailed by Sandeep's driver, holding the door open for him.

KABIR
Sandeep Uncle?

Sandeep eagerly sprints down the stairs toward Kabir.

KABIR
I have more paperwork, sir.

SANDEEP
Of course! Of course!

KABIR
You know, next time I could just
have the driver bring it.

SANDEEP

Nonsense! You can never trust a driver--

(spotting his own driver)

Except mine who I trust with my life. Please, come in. We're having lunch.

KABIR

Oh OK.

SANDEEP

Meena has a buddy in from America.

KABIR

A buddy?

INT. MEENA'S HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

Meena stares straight ahead, as Freddy and Kabir - sitting on either side of her - look each other over.

KABIR

Hey buddy.

FREDDY

Hey... buddy.

SANDEEP

This is Kabir. His father runs India's largest bottling plant.

FREDDY

Wow. Handsome and rich.

(to Kabir)

And single?

KABIR

Yes.

FREDDY

(fuck)

Of course.

MEENA

So Freddy has to leave after lunch.

SANDEEP

Nonsense!

MEENA

Not everything is nonsense! It's not nonsense if he has other plans.

FREDDY

Oh, I have no other plans.

SANDEEP

Then it's settled. You'll spend the day with us. And then be our guest for the big party I'm throwing to welcome my son back to Delhi.

FREDDY

Sounds great!

Freddy smiles at Sandeep, and then turns to Meena, who shoots him a glance that immediately wipes the grin off his face.

KABIR

Sandeep uncle. You know we started construction on our new factory--

SANDEEP

Ah, you should discuss this with Freddy. He's a building engineer.

The table turns to look at Freddy - who is mid-bite.

FREDDY

Yes. I became one very recently.

SHREE

Well done, Freddy. Congratulations.

MEENA

(deadpan)

Yes, congratulations.

FREDDY

Thank you.

KABIR

Then Freddy you'll love this. So we're building our factory, and there was an old temple or some ridiculous thing next door. And we were given two options. Either build around it. Or spend years in court fighting to demolish it.

FREDDY

What did you do?

KABIR

Option three. We tore it down without asking permission and paid the fine.

Freddy nods, biting his tongue.

Meena turns to Kabir.

MEENA

Surely there was a solution to both
maintain the temple and--

KABIR

(condescendingly)

It was all very complicated.

(to Freddy)

And anyway, success is in always
looking to the future. Not being
stuck in the past.

Freddy takes a deep breath, gathers his thoughts, and:

FREDDY

With all due respect, you're wrong.
The future's good and all, but you
can't destroy the past. How can we
know where we're going if we don't
understand where we came from?

And with that, Freddy takes a bite from a *parantha*.

A smile ever-so-briefly flashes across Meena's face.

And at the head of the table, Sandeep leans in. Quite
impressed by Meena's "buddy".

EXT. CHANDNI CHOWK MARKET - DAY

Rows and rows of thin alleyways, packed with VENDORS selling
clothes, knick-knacks, and food, as well as THOUSANDS of men,
women, and children pushing through to look at the individual
stalls.

This isn't where the tourists go. This is Chandni Chowk.

EXT. CHANDNI CHOWK MARKET - JEWELRY STALL - DAY

Meena and Shree browse a collection of bangles.

Meena, distracted, turns back down the alley to see Sandeep,
Kabir, and Freddy walking together. She looks worried.

MEENA

What's he doing here again?

SHREE

Your father wanted to talk
business.

MEENA

Not Kabir. He's-- oh God! No,
Freddy. He should be on his way.
Not stuck talking with Papa about
God knows what!

EXT. CHANDNI CHOWK MARKET - SOUVENIR STALL - DAY

Down the alley, near a stall selling every cheesy Indian
souvenir imaginable, Freddy nods along as Sandeep continues a
very long and passionate monologue.

SANDEEP

You see, India - and this is a
proven fact! - had the greatest
culture in the world. Before the
British destroyed it.

Freddy keeps nodding along, getting just a bit nervous.

SANDEEP

They took advantage of our Indian
hospitality. And they lied! Then
they destroyed our culture. Took
what was most precious to us.

Sandeep, caught up in the emotions of his speech, takes a
step a bit too close to Freddy.

SANDEEP

For this deception, we should have
fought these Westerners. We should
have killed them!

Freddy keeps nodding, trying not to shit his pants.

EXT. CHANDNI CHOWK MARKET - JEWELRY STALL - DAY

Meena tries on bangles, while Shree eyes her.

SHREE

It's funny you brought up Kabir--

MEENA

I didn't. You did.

SHREE

I'm kidding. But he is nice.

(beat)

And cute.

(beat)

And a little bit of a kiss-ass.

Meena pauses, before picking up more bangles.

SHREE

You're like your brother. He was so against being set up. And look now. He'll have such a nice future with Anamika. And he's so very happy. He told me so himself.

MEENA

He said that?

SHREE

Yes. But I'm just glad this is something we can discuss. Because I know you better than anyone. So I know I'll find you someone special.

Meena nods.

EXT. CHANDNI CHOWK MARKET - SOUVENIR STALL - DAY

Alone, Freddy looks over the souvenirs.

Kabir walks up and browses next to him. Keeping cool.

KABIR

So, what are you doing in India?

FREDDY

I wanted to see the sights. Taj Mahal. India Gate.

KABIR

Meena?

Freddy stops, and turns toward Kabir.

Each man trying to read the other.

FREDDY

It was so random running into her--

KABIR

At her house.

FREDDY

... Right.

Kabir sizes Freddy up, taking a sip from his water bottle.

Kabir looks down at the bottle, and then offers it to Freddy.

KABIR

Water?

FREDDY

Is it filtered?

KABIR

... Sure.

Freddy looks from Kabir... to the bottle... and back to Kabir.

FREDDY

Excuse me.

Freddy darts off.

EXT. CHANDNI CHOWK MARKET - CLOTHING STALL - DAY

Meena shops alone, looking through a pile of plastic wrapped knock-offs of American clothing brands.

MEENA

How much?

CLOTHING VENDOR

50 rupees.

Meena nods, and puts the shirt aside.

Freddy slides up, and turns to Meena.

FREDDY

I don't like this Kabir guy.

Meena tries her best to keep shopping and ignore him completely.

MEENA

You're not allowed to get jealous.
We're not together.

FREDDY

He tried to poison me!

MEENA
With what?

FREDDY
Water.

Meena looks at Freddy, rolls her eyes, and returns to her shopping.

Freddy spots the shirt Meena was considering. He picks it up.

FREDDY
How much?

The CLOTHING VENDOR takes a long look at Freddy.

CLOTHING VENDOR
For you... 500 rupees.

FREDDY
(to Meena)
What a deal!

Meena takes a deep breath before picking up a new item and showing it to the vendor.

MEENA
And how much is this?

CLOTHING VENDOR
100.
(beat)
I mean 700. It's 700 rupees ma'am.

Meena, pissed, throws the item back on the pile and steps in close to speak with Freddy in hushed tones.

MEENA
Please go away. I don't want to talk. And you're going to cost me a small fortune.

Meena storms off, leaving Freddy alone with the smiling clothing vendor.

INT. MEENA'S HOME - ENTRYWAY - DAY

Back from the market, Sandeep and Shree rush ahead into the house.

Freddy and Meena, bags in each hand, hold back to speak in private.

MEENA

Hey, my brother just got to town.
So please remember: do not mention
anything. About you or us or
Chicago or love or anything.

Meena walks on.

Freddy follows behind her.

FREDDY

Why would any of that come up?

INT. MEENA'S HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

As Freddy enters, he sees Sandeep greeting his son.

Sandeep notices Freddy:

SANDEEP

Ah, Freddy. You must meet my son.

A young man turns around.

It's DEV.

Dev - completely freaked out - freezes before yelling out:

DEV

We've never met!

FREDDY

I know. Exactly. We've never met.

Both men - equally shocked - stare each other down.

Sandeep, in the middle, is confused. But goes with it.

SANDEEP

So I'll introduce you. This is Dev.
He got back just in time for his
big party. And Freddy: you should
come and meet his fiancée.

Freddy nods, trying to act cool.

He looks at Dev, incredulously.

FREDDY

His... fiancée.

EXT. EVENT CENTER - DAY

Brightly covered canopies dot the perimeter of a truly lavish outdoor party.

WAITERS walk around with trays, serving *samosas* and other appetizers to GUESTS, each wearing a more elaborate and colorful traditional Indian outfit than the last.

And in the midst of the party we find ANAMIKA - Dev's fiancée.

She's sitting alone in an elaborate *sari*, shyly smiling as guests pass.

Anamika'S MOTHER and Sandeep speak behind her.

SANDEEP

We're so lucky to have Anamika join our family. A girl with such strong values. And an orthodontist!

ANAMIKA'S MOTHER

And if Dev ever wants to give up this whole writing thing and go to dental school, he can always join our practice.

Anamika looks up and waves:

ACROSS THE PARTY: Dev stands with Freddy - who is wearing a shirt and tie and is the only person in Western clothes.

Dev waves back to Anamika before turning back to Freddy.

FREDDY

(half-whispering)

I can't believe you're going through with this sham.

DEV

You're one to talk, Mr. Building Engineer.

FREDDY

And does that poor girl know?

DEV

No. Well... she may possibly suspect. But probably no.

NEAR THE TABLES: Anamika leans forward - watching Freddy and Dev as they speak privately with one another.

ANAMIKA
Who's that with Dev?

SANDEEP
That's Freddy. He's come to visit.

Anamika watches as Freddy puts his hand on Dev's shoulder.
She raises her eyebrow.

ANAMIKA
Oh.

ACROSS THE PARTY: Dev and Freddy continue speaking.

FREDDY
And you haven't told Meena
anything?

DEV
She didn't tell me about you.

FREDDY
Let's just tell everyone everything
and be done with it.

DEV
You heard my father. Strong values.
Families coming together. He'd kill
me. And he'd kill you. And the
disappointment and embarrassment
would kill him.

FREDDY
That's a lot of dead bodies.

Freddy shakes his head and starts walking. Dev follows him.

FREDDY
(looking back)
Listen. I'm not sure I can take any
more secrets.

Freddy flips back around, nearly running into:

Shree - who turns from her conversation to Freddy.

SHREE
Oh Freddy. You really should meet
Meena's childhood friend. This is
Priya and her husband, Basu.

Freddy makes eye contact with Priya.

Priya instantly straightens up and loudly proclaims:

PRIYA
You're Meena's university friend in
town whom I've never met before!

FREDDY
Uh... right. Gosh, I'm meeting so
many new people.

Looking up from his phone, Basu eyes Freddy.

BASU
Wait. I know you.

PRIYA
(shut up)
No you don't.

BASU
Sure I do.

Shree looks around. Very confused.

PRIYA
No, Basu! You must stop that!
(to Freddy and Shree)
I'm so sorry. He thinks all white
people look the same.

All eyes turn to Basu... who instantly nods his head.

BASU
Oh. My bad bro.

And Basu returns back to browsing on his phone.

NEAR THE TABLES: With Sandeep and her mother gone, Anamika
sits all alone - eyeing Dev and Freddy across the party.

And behind her, at the table next to hers, sits Kabir.

They both stare off in the same direction. Toward Freddy and
Dev - now speaking to one another off to the side.

Kabir notices Anamika, and turns half-way to face her:

KABIR
Oh hi. I'm Kabir. Congratulations--

ANAMIKA
Do you know this Freddy fellow?

KABIR

Not really...

(considering)

But do you think there's something
he's hiding?

ANAMIKA

I'm afraid there may be.

KABIR

You're right. Look. He's clearly
here for... romantic reasons.

Still faced away from one another, Kabir doesn't notice
Anamika breathing deeply and shaking her head.

ANAMIKA

I knew it.

KABIR

And they're obviously keeping it a
secret--

ANAMIKA

Because people are so traditional--

KABIR

I mean, I've kept relationships
secret for the exact same reasons.

ANAMIKA

Exact same? Oh my.

KABIR

But see Freddy and I are after the
same thing--

Anamika turns to face Kabir. She's shocked.

ANAMIKA

Really?

KABIR

But I won't let Freddy stand in my
way if I'm actually starting to
fall for this person.

(beat)

And it's not just because my dad is
pressuring me into it.

Anamika's eyes go wide in bewilderment.

KABIR
Thank you. This was truly
enlightening.

And Kabir walks off, leaving Anamika more confused than ever.

ACROSS THE PARTY: Freddy and Dev speak in hushed tones.

Until Freddy spots Kabir approaches and instantly peps up:

FREDDY
So a building engineer is an expert
in the design, construction, and
maintenance of built environments.

DEV
Wow, that definition sounds very
accurate.

Kabir joins the two of them - facing Freddy directly.

FREDDY
Hey Kabir.

KABIR
Freddy. Listen, we need to talk--

But Kabir **PAUSES** as Sandeep walks up next to Freddy.

SANDEEP
Hello boys!
(to Dev)
Dev. Time for the speech.

DEV
Papa, I'm not giving a speech.

SANDEEP
This party is in your honor.
Everyone's here to celebrate you
and... where's Anamika anyway?

The four men turn toward the tables.

They spot Anamika sitting alone.

Dev waves.

She waves back - her face blank and her eyes wide.

SANDEEP
Dev, someone needs to thank me for
my party. I can't thank myself for
my party.

DEV

Dad, I just don't feel comfortable.

Kabir throws an overly friendly hand on Sandeep's shoulder.

KABIR

Let me say a few words. Introduce you and the happy couple. I truly don't mind.

SANDEEP

That's very thoughtful, my boy.

Not to be outdone, Freddy also throws his hand on Sandeep's shoulder.

FREDDY

And I'll speak too. See, this boy's pretty thoughtful as well.

SANDEEP

Right.

KABIR

Sure. And then after I speak, I'll get the music started. Maybe show off my *Punjabi* dance moves, yeah?

FREDDY

Sure. Or I could do that too.

Kabir faces Freddy directly.

KABIR

(gritting his teeth)
You're so helpful.

FREDDY

No. You're so helpful.

Kabir and Freddy stare each other down.

Meanwhile, Sandeep stands in the middle. Very confused.

SANDEEP

Yes. You're both so helpful.

ACROSS THE PARTY: Meena walks up to Priya and Basu.

PRIYA

Hey Meena. I spoke with Freddy and I've had a change of heart. I think all of this is now really romantic.

MEENA
Seriously?

PRIYA
(to Basu)
You'd never fly to India for me.

BASU
Why would I? You're already here.

Meena shakes her head, and begins looking around the party.

MEENA
Wait. Where is Freddy?

She spins around and sees:

Freddy and Kabir standing on the dance floor.

MEENA
Oh shit.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR: Kabir turns a microphone on and steps forward, facing the crowd.

KABIR
Hello New Delhi!
(cheers from the crowd)
Uncles and Aunties, you all look
wonderful today! Now let's give it
up for Dev and Anamika!

The crowd CHEERS as they all turn to find Dev and Anamika standing an extremely awkward distance apart.

FREDDY
Yes. And also, of course, we have
to thank our host. Mr. Sandeep.
He's so welcoming. Especially to
me. So welcome and accepting and
inviting.

KABIR
Everyone, this is Freddy. He's a
tourist from America and--

Kabir then seamlessly transitions into Hindi.

Freddy looks at Kabir as he monologues. In Hindi.

KABIR
(looking at Freddy)
Oh. That means... Well, it'd be
hard to translate.
(MORE)

KABIR (CONT'D)

(to the crowd)

But Freddy mentioned he wants to
get the music started for us. And
that he'd show us his dance moves.

(to Freddy)

Take it away.

And with that, Kabir smiles and walks off the dance floor.

Watching all this unfold, Meena is pissed.

MEENA

Asshole.

Standing alone on the dance floor, Freddy looks out to the crowd - as every eye stares back at him.

Except for Meena. She looks away. Unable to watch.

Freddy nods his head. Then he half-turns to the band, saying:

FREDDY

Gaana bajaao.

Meena's eyes fly up toward Freddy - just as wind softly starts to blow in her hair...

And the horns behind Freddy begin to play...

And a drummer starts beating a giant drum...

Freddy starts to snap his fingers in rhythm as the beat picks up. And Freddy starts SINGING-- in Hindi!

*He sings about how sometimes you have to take risks. Sometimes you have to shake things up. Jump to the front of a crowd. And sometimes, you have to be the **Life Of The Party**.*

Meena is in shock and cannot believe what's happening.

And, frankly, neither can Freddy. He wears a giddy, wide smile as he suddenly starts dancing.

Background dancers jump onto the dance floor, but Freddy goes beat for beat alongside them. He's jumping, sliding, and pumping his shoulders like any great Indian dancer.

Soon, Freddy races forward - dancing into the crowd. As he moves, the crowd jumps on their feet around him.

Freddy keeps the energy up, dancing on top of tables - and jumping from one table to the next.

Meena is in a state of blissful disbelief.

Freddy, meanwhile, has danced his way up onto the bar. The BARTENDER lobs a bottle of whiskey up to him. Freddy catches it and immediately starts pouring drinks for nearby guests.

Sandeep, holding his own bottle of whiskey, is lifted up onto the bar. As Freddy keeps singing, the two men clink their bottles together and take a swig!

Jumping off the bar, Freddy discovers THE ENTIRE PARTY IS NOW DANCING!

Guests. Drummers. Waiters. Young kids and uncles and aunties.

Freddy dances through the crowd, passing by Meena...

She's dancing too, headed in the other direction...

Meena spins back toward Freddy, and they criss-cross again...

Finally, Freddy and Meena circle one another, and the moment seems to slow in time. Their eyes locked on one another.

And as Freddy dances off toward the dance floor for the BIG FINALE FINISH, Meena watches him go with a smile on her face.

Meena is in love.

EXT. EVENT CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The song has finished. The party is lively.

NEAR THE DANCE FLOOR, Freddy speaks with a GUEST - but his gaze is elsewhere.

He spots Meena, standing across the party.

Freddy nods to the guest, and moves off - toward Meena.

When he's stopped--

Shree and two AUNTIES circle around Freddy.

SHREE

Freddy! What wonderful dancing!

FREDDY

Oh, thanks. Yeah I was just--

AUNTIE

Are you single?

FREDDY

I'm sorry. Am I--? ... Yes.

AUNTIE
My husband's business partner is
American and he has a daughter...

FREDDY
Oh. How nice.

Shree, noticing the air of awkwardness, cuts in.

SHREE
Well, it was wonderful. Freddy, you
had such joy inside. Really, you're
such a good kid.

Shree lightly pats Freddy's cheek.

Freddy smiles. He turns to face--

Anamika.

She shyly looks up at Freddy.

ANAMIKA
(softly)
I know your secret. And why you're
here.

Freddy leans in nervously.

FREDDY
You do?

ANAMIKA
Yes. But I will not stand in the
way of true love. Good luck to you.

Instantly overcome with emotion, Anamika throws her hands
over her face and rushes away.

Freddy stands alone - considering the previous exchange:

FREDDY
Cool girl.
(beat)
Bit dramatic.

EXT. EVENT CENTER - LATER

Finally through the gauntlet of well-wishing guests, Freddy
and Meena meet at the center of the party.

They almost embrace, but with guests continually swirling
around them, they catch themselves.

Instead, with a smile, Freddy walks up and stands next to Meena. They stand side by side, looking out toward the crowd.

MEENA

Why didn't you tell me you learned Hindi?

FREDDY

I wanted it to be a surprise.

(beat)

Surprise.

(beat)

I can be the kind of man you want.
I could even be the kind of man
your parents want.

MEENA

You honestly don't have to be anything you're not.

She turns to face him, and Freddy and Meena's eyes meet.

Their hands fall side by side, and her finger ever so slightly touches his, before separating again.

She smiles.

MEENA

Come with me.

EXT. EVENT CENTER - LATER

Off to the side, Meena holds the hand of a woman in her 70s.

This is her grandmother. Her NANI.

MEENA

Nani, Freddy mera dost hai.

Meena turns and introduces her Nani to Freddy.

Freddy steps up toward her, putting his hands together to greet her.

FREDDY

*Nani. Namaste. Apse milker bahut
acha laga.*

Meena takes a half step back as Freddy and Nani begin their simple, yet very sweet, conversation.

Watching this seemingly impossible event unfold, Meena is overwhelmed.

EXT. WEDDING LOCATION - EVENING

Barefoot CONSTRUCTION WORKERS climb incredibly strong bamboo shafts, fastening together the outer framework of a tent.

Nearby, Sandeep sits alone on a bench - silently watching as they construct his son's wedding venue.

From behind, Freddy walks up to the bench. Before Sandeep can acknowledge him, he sits.

Neither man immediately speaks. Instead, they just watch the workmen build the tent from the ground up.

SANDEEP

What can I help you with my boy?

FREDDY

I wanted to thank you again for your hospitality.

SANDEEP

No thank you necessary.

(beat)

But may I ask you something.

FREDDY

Of course. Anything.

SANDEEP

Does this tent look safe to you?

(beat)

In your professional opinion?

Freddy sheepishly looks off toward the tent.

FREDDY

As a building engineer, I'd say... yes. But I would get a second opinion from a tent engineer.

Sandeep, confused, nods slowly and looks off toward the tent.

Slowly, Sandeep puts his head in his hands. He looks tired.

FREDDY

You OK? Anything I can help with?

SANDEEP

No. It's just Dev. I planned that event for him, and he didn't care. I planned this wedding for him, and he's dragging his feet.

FREDDY

Maybe he doesn't want things planned out for him. Like, say, an arranged marriage. Maybe he wants more.

SANDEEP

More than what? Love? Because if you're with the right person, you will grow to love one another. And not just romantic love, which fades. But married love. Family love. Which is forever.

Sandeep turns and faces Freddy, fully engaging with him.

SANDEEP

You know, it was much stricter in my day. You barely met the bride. With my son, I let him go on dates with the girls. Hell, I was just the matchmaker. But I guess he resented even that.

(beat)

He's so modern. Both of my kids.

FREDDY

Is that bad?

SANDEEP

No. It's amazing. It was my goal. To give them the life I never had. But I don't know how to find the balance between passing along my traditions and giving them their own future. I don't know.

Freddy nods, thinking hard before responding.

He pulls out his phone, pulls up his app, and hands it to Sandeep.

FREDDY

I've developed my own app. It's about architecture and history and... it's my passion.

(beat)

But I couldn't have done if... *certain people* didn't support me to make something on my own.

Sandeep scrolls through the app's features.

Freddy sheepishly looks down.

SANDEEP

Follow me.

Sandeep stands.

A moment later, Freddy follows.

EXT. QUTB MINAR - DAY

A massively tall minaret tower stands in the center of Delhi.

And Freddy stands below it - in complete awe.

He stumbles as he walks around it. Sandeep walks behind him.

SANDEEP

Built in 1199, Qutb Minar is 240 feet tall.

FREDDY

It's incredible.

SANDEEP

You know Delhi has the maximum number of historical buildings in the world. Number one! Humayan's Tomb. India Gate.

Freddy comes to a stop, looking up at the tower.

FREDDY

Yeah. And I should probably see them all before that Kabir guy knocks them down.

Freddy looks over to Sandeep for his response, but Sandeep remains stoic.

Until he eventually breaks, and CHUCKLES.

Freddy and Sandeep look back up at the tower. LAUGHING.

INT. ANAMIKA'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Anamika and her mother ride in the backseat of their family car.

Lost in thought, Anamika looks out the window.

ANAMIKA

Mummy, there's something you need to know.

Anamika turns toward her mother...

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - MEENA'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Meena enters her room, casually closing the door behind her.

But as soon as it shuts, she falls against the door, putting her head in her hands and stomping her feet.

She works out every emotion. Shock. Passion. Excitement. Giddiness. Literally everything plays out before our eyes.

But this is Meena. Calm. Collected. Logical.

So she slows her breath, and speaks softly to herself:

MEENA

Yes, he flew to India. And yes, he
learned Hindi. And yes, everyone
likes him. And yes, that includes
Nani. And she doesn't like anyone.

Meena paces around the room.

MEENA

And yes he's sweet and charming and
can dance. And yes, he takes my
breath away. And yes, I missed him.
And yes, I love him.

Meena stops in her tracks, but keeps speaking to herself.

MEENA

And yes, I want to be with him more
than anything. And yes, I want to
spend my life with him.

(beat)

But... I can't get ahead of myself.

Meena takes a deep breath...

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Meena *BURSTS* out from her room. *HORNS* blare. Her hair dramatically *BLOWS* in the wind.

Now she's the one under the spell, dancing down her hallway and around the upstairs of her house.

Her *SONG* is classic old-school Bollywood. Her previous rationality has given way to lyrics full of poetic hyperbole expressing her deep undying love for Freddy.

Around the house, past the upstairs balcony, and through the hallways, Meena dances and spins. And spins. And spins...

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Meena looks around, no longer in her home.

Her daydream has taken her to a field of yellow flowers, straight out of her favorite movie: Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge.

She looks off in the distance. A man stands, turned away from her. But it's not Shah Rukh Khan. It's FREDDY.

She runs toward him, and they embrace among the flowers...

INT. PALACE - NIGHT

But when they separate, they're no longer in the field. In fact, they're no longer in color.

Meena has daydreamed herself into a 1940's Bollywood epic. In full traditional outfits from centuries prior, Freddy and Meena dance through the ornately decorated palace halls.

Freddy takes her by the hand, and spins her around...

EXT. FOREST POND - NIGHT

And now Meena finds herself near a moonlit pond. The reflected lights sparkle in her eyes, like a heroine from a Sanjay Leela Bhansali film.

Meena and Freddy stand at the edge of the pond. She looks ahead, eyeing rocks in the water. Meena gracefully jumps from one to the next. Following behind her, Freddy does the same.

Meena takes a leap from the final rock to shore...

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

Meena lands on a hard surface, barely able to balance herself.

The wind BLOWS hard in her face. She looks around to find herself on TOP OF A MOVING TRAIN!

Turning around, she finds Freddy. And without missing a beat, the two start dancing on top of the train as it moves through the Indian countryside

They dance CLOSER and CLOSER to one another...

They arrive face to face...

And as the SMOKE from the train's engine envelopes around them...

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - MEENA'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Meena is back in her room as the music FADES AWAY.

On her bed, she looks at herself in the mirror.

A KNOCK at the door.

Meena stands as Sandeep opens the door.

SANDEEP

We're going out for *pani puri*.

MEENA

Great. *Ek* second.

Sandeep awkwardly pauses in the doorway.

SANDEEP

I just want to say... I'm proud of you. And the work you've been doing. And I know you want to run the business... so let's start now.

Meena can't believe what she's hearing.

SANDEEP

Modernize. Digitize. Globalize! Hell, we're an export company. We should have branches around the world. And you should start one.

(beat)

What about Chicago?

Caught off guard, Meena nods her head.

SANDEEP

Anyway. Think about it.

He smiles and exits the room.

Meena stares off, considering the offer he's just made...

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

As cars and taxis WHIZZ by, Freddy stands with Meena's family near a *pani puri* cart.

The PANI PURI VENDOR takes a crisp, hollow fried ball and uses his thumb to poke a hole in it.

FREDDY
Is this sanitary?

SHREE
You'll be fine.

The vendor fills up the ball with spicy flavored water and *chaat masala* and hands it over to Freddy.

DEV
Just plop it right in your mouth.

Freddy does - rather in-eloquently - and the juice runs all down his shirt.

Just then, a car pulls in behind the family. Its headlights draw their attention.

The car door opens. Anamika's Mother exits. Anamika follows.

SANDEEP
Ah hello! You didn't have to come here. We could've spoken at home.

ANAMIKA'S MOTHER
This couldn't wait. I'm sorry...

Anamika's Mother searches for her words.

Anamika, meanwhile, stands quietly behind her.

ANAMIKA'S MOTHER
You see. Marriage is like a retainer. If it doesn't fit properly after molding--

SANDEEP
What's this about?

ANAMIKA'S MOTHER
The wedding is off.

The group goes SILENT. Sandeep and Shree share a worried glance. Dev looks to Anamika, who looks down at her feet.

SANDEEP

Off? Wait. Why?

ANAMIKA'S MOTHER

We have a difference in family values. And... and... and because of Freddy.

All eyes land on Freddy - who is quite shocked and confused.

ANAMIKA'S MOTHER

He's been lying to you about why he's here. Making a fool of you.

FREDDY

You... you know why I'm here?

ANAMIKA'S MOTHER

Yes. Because you're in love.

(beat)

With Dev.

The group processes this information.

Freddy lets out a brief, relieved CHUCKLE.

FREDDY

What? I'm-- no. No no no. I like Dev. He's great. But no.

SANDEEP

(smiling)

With Dev? Are you mad?

Shree, however, does not find any of this amusing.

SHREE

Freddy. What were you going to say? Why are you here?

Everyone once again turns to face Freddy.

He gathers his thoughts. Does he lie? Tell the truth?

But it's Meena who closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.

MEENA

Enough.

(beat)

He came here for me. Freddy and I dated back in America. We were in love. I'm sorry I didn't tell you.

The sounds of TAXIS and BUSES fill the deep SILENCE.

Off to the side, Anamika stares off into space, putting it all together.

ANAMIKA

Oh... yeah... that make sense.

Sandeep looks from Freddy to Meena in shock.

Sandeep methodically returns to Freddy. Remaining calm...

SANDEEP

Freddy. I'll kindly ask you to not return back home with us.

MEENA

Papa, let me explain--

SANDEEP

No!

(beat)

No. Freddy. Leave now. Just go.

MEENA

Why are you doing this?

SANDEEP

(re: Anamika's Mother)

Let's not discuss this here.

MEENA

No. Let's discuss this. Is it because he's American?

SANDEEP

It's not. No. No, it's because--

MEENA

Because he's different? And doesn't have the approval of your friends and cousins and business partners.

(beat)

And because you didn't pick him!

SANDEEP

It's my house, so if I don't want him there, he's not welcome!

MEENA

Then I'll go with him.

Shree takes a step forward.

SHREE

Don't you dare leave.

Meena stares her mother down--

FREDDY

Stop.

Meena looks to Freddy.

Tears welling in his eyes, Freddy looks at the angry and confused faces around him.

Sandeep. Shree. Meena.

FREDDY

This isn't what I wanted.

(to Meena)

I'm not going to do this to you.

I'm so sorry.

Eyes locked on each other, Freddy and Meena share a final moment--

Before he turns and walks away.

Freddy hails a taxi--

He turns back around, as the entire family stares back. He then ducks into the back of the taxi.

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Freddy stares straight ahead.

FREDDY

Mujhe hostel jaana hai.

As the taxi takes off, he looks out the window.

Devastated, he wipes his eyes.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Back on the street corner, Meena stares off toward Freddy's departing taxi.

SANDEEP

Why did you do this to us?

Meena turns. Pissed.

MEENA

I'm doing this to you?

SANDEEP

Yes. We're hurt. Deeply hurt that our daughter lived across the world from us living a secret life.

MEENA

Have you even bothered to ask how I'm feeling? Because I love him! I do. And I want to marry him.

(beat)

How can either of you want anything less than my happiness?

Sandeep nearly responds... But can't.

His stare is locked on Meena.

SHREE

Don't turn this around on us.

Meena and Sandeep turn to face Shree, as she steps forward.

SHREE

You lied to us for a year. Then you came home, and lied to our faces. And when this boy showed up, your first instinct was to make him lie.

Meena looks off - embarrassed.

SHREE

And you do all this - you cause all these distractions for us and for poor Anamika's family - only days before your brother's wedding.

ANAMIKA

Wait.

(beat)

The wedding is back on then?

SANDEEP

Yes.

DEV

No.

The group SILENTLY turns to Dev, stepping forward from his position off to the side.

DEV

I'm sorry, but no.

(to Sandeep)

I haven't been honest with you.

(MORE)

DEV (CONT'D)
(to Anamika)
I don't want to get married.

SANDEEP
Why not?

DEV
I want to be with someone else.
Someone you don't know.

Dev collects his thoughts.

Takes a deep breath.

And looks up toward his father.

DEV
His name is Raj.

COMPLETE SILENCE.

Meena tilts her head, smiling at her brother.

MEENA
Oh Dev.

But this sweet moment is broken as--

Shree turns and leaves.

She walks toward their car, steps into the back, and SLAMS
the door shut.

Anamika looks up toward her mother...

Who takes her hand and walks her away from the group...

Anamika looks back toward Dev. She mouths "I'm sorry"...

But Sandeep remains.

Frozen in place, he stares off toward the street.

SANDEEP
We're all upset and we're saying
things we don't mean--

DEV
Papa.

SANDEEP
We're saying things that we don't
mean! Things that we *can't* mean.

Shaking his head, Sandeep stumbles past Meena and toward the car - stepping into the backseat with Shree.

Meena and Dev are left alone. They share a glance as the SOUNDS of the New Delhi street overwhelm them.

INT. HOSTEL - MORNING

A MAN exits a small shared bathroom, and walks past...

A common area where a GROUP OF MEN sit around a TV, SCREAMING LOUDLY at a cricket match. The man then moves past...

A front desk where the HOSTEL OWNER sits, reading the paper, while a nearby radio PLAYS Hindi music from decades ago...

And finally we reach Freddy, sitting at a table across from an OLDER INDIAN MAN pouring a glass of water.

The man offers it to Freddy, who looks at it and SIGHS.

FREDDY

At this point, why the hell not.

(beat)

Haan. Shukriya.

Freddy accepts the glass and eyes it suspiciously.

He nearly takes a drink when--

His phone BUZZES. He answers:

FREDDY

Hello?

INT. DELHI BAR - DAY

Sitting at a table in the middle of an empty bar, Freddy stares down an untouched Kingfisher beer.

FREDDY

Thanks for calling. The hostel I was in last night was... not great. And you're literally the only other people I know here.

Sitting across from Freddy are Priya and Basu.

BASU

(nudging Priya)

I told you I knew him.

Priya shakes her head, ignoring her husband.

PRIYA
It's fine. We're happy to talk.

FREDDY
I-- I don't know what to do. I feel
like I have nothing. No Meena. No
sense of direction. No wallet. No
battery in my freaking phone!

Freddy frantically pulls a charging cable from his pocket.

FREDDY
My charger won't fit in any plugs!

Completely exhausted, Freddy puts his head in his hands.

FREDDY
You know Meena. You know what she's
going through. What should I do?
Should I stay here? Maybe like a
big, giant, grand gesture thing?

PRIYA
Do you want to stay here?

FREDDY
I want to be wherever she is.

Priya PAUSES - his words mirroring Meena's.

PRIYA
... then maybe ...

As Priya thinks of what to say, Basu looks up from his phone
and right at Freddy.

BASU
Why did you learn Hindi and fly to
India? Why do you want her family's
approval? Because the hard thing to
do was the right thing to do.

Freddy nods his head.

Priya is in shock at the sheer eloquence of her husband.

BASU
But now. Meena knows how you feel.
And leaving and giving her space...
that might be the hardest thing to
do. But it would also be the right
thing to do.

Priya, sneaking a proud side-glance at Basu, takes over.

PRIYA

Yeah... what he said.

(beat)

And if you need help with the flight, Basu has unlimited miles--

BASU

Babe, it's an allowance!

(to Freddy)

But yeah, bro. You can have some.

Freddy smiles. He looks to the Kingfisher beer in front of him. He reaches out and takes a sip - considering the offer.

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - DEV'S ROOM - DAY

Dev sits alone on the edge of his bed.

Sultan jumps up on the bed, and the dog snuggles in beside him. Dev pets Sultan, but even this offers no respite to the pain he feels.

In the doorway, Meena watches.

Heartbroken, she walks in and sits beside him.

Staring off toward a far wall, he barely acknowledges her.

MEENA

Dev. You're amazing. I mean that.

He looks up at her.

MEENA

And... I think I always suspected.
Or thought. But anyway. I'm really
happy I know.

She takes his hand in hers.

MEENA

Now. Show me a picture of him.

He hesitates briefly, before pulling out his phone.

He opens a picture, and hands the phone to Meena.

MEENA

Oh. He's cute

(beat)

You love him?

Dev nods.

MEENA

Then be with him. And tell everyone
to go to hell. And--

DEV

And be a hero? Love conquers all?
Like in the songs?

(singing)

Pyar Kiya To Darna Kya

(translating)

If I'm in love, then why should I
be afraid?

(beat)

I'm afraid because I saw how they
looked at me. They'll never, ever
accept it.

Meena looks away, hoping - for several reasons - that what
he's saying is not true.

DEV

I wish I thought otherwise. But I
don't anymore.

She nods her head, closing his phone and handing it back.

EXT. WEDDING LOCATION - DAY

Workers, standing atop the canvas roof towering 30 feet above
the ground, slowly deconstruct the wedding tent.

Sandeep watches from the same bench as before. He looks
exhausted. Worried.

He notices someone approaching, and momentarily looks off,
before returning his gaze back to the tent.

Freddy stands next to him.

Freddy takes a moment to gather his courage, and sits.

And for a few seconds, the two men sit in SILENCE.

FREDDY

I'm sorry I lied. I truly am.

(beat)

So here's the truth. I'm not a
building engineer. Or your
daughter's schoolmate.

(beat)

I'm the man who's in love with her.

Freddy looks for a reaction from Sandeep.

Sandeep keeps staring ahead.

So Freddy continues:

FREDDY

There's a few more things. I may not come from a rich, well connected family, but you'd like them a lot.

(beat)

My mom and dad wanted to call you. Sort everything out. I said it's a bit more complicated than that.

SILENCE.

FREDDY

And... I'm not Indian. Obviously.

(beat)

So you're disappointed that things haven't gone the way you imagined. That the life you gave your kids seems so unrecognizable.

Sandeep takes a pained breath, but-- still says nothing.

FREDDY

But, for what it's worth, you raised good kids. Good Indian kids. Loving. Caring. Family-oriented. Who want to be with loving, caring, family-oriented people.

Freddy takes a deep breath. His confidence now regained.

FREDDY

And I want to marry her...

Freddy stands, preparing to leave.

Sandeep barely acknowledges him.

FREDDY

Can you do me a favor? Cause I know I've done enough intruding. And I wanna leave any decisions to her.

Finally, Sandeep turns and faces Freddy.

FREDDY

Can you tell her I'm leaving Delhi?

(beat)

(MORE)

FREDDY (CONT'D)

And tell her I hope I'll see again.

(beat)

Anyway. Bye Sandeep.

And with that, Freddy walks away.

Sandeep turns his attention back to the tent. His stare as indecipherable as before...

EXT. MEENA'S HOUSE - EVENING

On her driveway, Meena stares up at the gigantic metal gate.

She walks toward it, motioning to the guard.

MEENA

Open the gate.

The guard nods and opens the gate.

Meena walks a few steps ahead before--

SHREE (O.S.)

Close the gate.

Meena flips around and faces her mother. Shocked and pissed, she motions to the guard.

MEENA

(to the guard)

Don't.

(to Shree)

What is your problem?

SHREE

You're making a scene.

MEENA

No. What exactly is your problem?

Your issue with Freddy. Please--

please explain it to me!

Shree, taken a back by her daughter's tone, steps toward her.

SHREE

I don't know him. I don't know his culture.

MEENA

Who cares about culture?

SHREE

Culture is tradition! And tradition is what I followed to have the life I love. To have you. Now, would I prefer if he were Indian? Of course! Because then I would know his values.

MEENA

Oh, because Americans don't have values.

SHREE

Don't turn me into the bad guy!

MEENA

(motioning to the gate)
You're literally trying to trap me behind a gate!

In control of the conversation, Meena steps toward Shree.

MEENA

Growing up, I loved watching movies with you. And cheering on the heroes to fall in love.

(beat)

And it didn't matter if he was from a village or a different state. Or if the parents disapproved.

Shree looks away, suddenly overcome with thoughts. Memories.

CUT TO:

INT. MEENA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Shree cuddles on a couch next to an 8-year-old MEENA, as they lean in watching *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*.

On-screen: a young WOMAN watches as the young MAN she loves stands on a departing train. She runs toward him, but her hand is grasp by her stern-looking FATHER.

MEENA (V.O.)

How many times did we watch *DDLJ*?
And at the end, as he's taking off on the train and Amrish Puri grabs Kajol's hand... Holding her back...

Glued to their circa-1998 TV, Shree and Meena yell at the screen for the father to let her run and catch the train.

MEENA (V.O.)
 We would yell and scream for him to
 let her go. To let her be with him.
 And then...

*On-screen: the father looks from his daughter, to her lover
 pulling away on the train. A close-up on his face as he...
 releases her arm.*

Meena's young face lights up.

On-screen: the father looks down at his daughter and says:

THE FATHER
 (from the film)
Ja, beta. Ja.
 (subtitles)
 Go, my child. Go.

Meena claps wildly as she watches the woman on-screen run off
 toward the love of her life.

Shree looks down at her daughter...

CUT TO:

INT. MEENA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAYS EARLIER

A flashback to days earlier, as Shree and Meena watched the
 same film together.

Shree looks down at her daughter, and smiles...

CUT TO:

EXT. MEENA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Only moments have passed, but Shree stands dead in her
 tracks, staring straight ahead at Meena. Breathing deeply and
 trying her best to conceal the confusion she's feeling.

Meena faces Shree, shaking her head.

MEENA
Ja, beta. Ja.
 (beat)
 You're too afraid to let me go.

In SILENCE, they stare at one another.

Shree nearly responds, when...

A car pulls up the driveway.

As it parks, Sandeep exits - on the phone.

SANDEEP

Yeah yeah. See you soon.

He hangs up the phone, and turns to Meena and Shree. He's either oblivious to the fight, or unwilling to engage.

SANDEEP

We have dinner plans.

MEENA

With whom?

Sandeep looks back at Meena. His silence says it all.

MEENA

(pissed)

Papa. Seriously?

SANDEEP

It's just for business. He wants to sign the deal tonight. And they'll expect the whole family to be there.

From the doorway of the house, Dev exits timidly.

DEV

Even me?

Sandeep turns, and barely acknowledges his son.

SANDEEP

Yeah. I don't want anything to seem... off.

Meena shakes her head, and turns to Shree--

Shree stares back - their fight still lingering in the air.

EXT. DELHI BAR - DUSK

Priya and Basu walk toward their car - their DRIVER holding a door open for them.

Freddy slows down a few steps behind them.

PRIYA

If you want, we can drop you off at the airport.

(MORE)

PRIYA (CONT'D)

(beat)

Unless there's somewhere else you'd
like to go.

Freddy looks off toward wherever the hell Meena is.

INT. FINE DINING RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Meena sits at a table in an extremely fancy restaurant,
staring down at her untouched five-star meal.

Beside her, Sandeep, Shree, and Dev all appear in various
stages of shock and exhaustion from the previous 24 hours.

Across from them, KABIR'S FATHER holds court - proudly
discussing his own achievements.

On one side of him, Kabir nods his head as his father speaks.
On the other side, KABIR'S MOTHER smiles dutifully.

KABIR'S FATHER

They said it couldn't be done. Said
it was impossible. But I did it. By
God I did it. I created the largest
plastic bottling plant for sodas
and mineral water in the state!

Kabir proudly turns to Meena - who is completely checked out.

Shree and Dev, meanwhile, politely pick at their food.

Kabir's mother maintains the exact same smile as before.

So with no real reaction, Kabir's father keeps monologue-ing.

KABIR'S FATHER

And when we expanded--
(to Sandeep)
Sandeep, you'll love this!

Sandeep forces an interested smile onto his face.

KABIR'S FATHER

When we expanded, there was some
little temple next door--

KABIR

Oh, I already told them, Papa.

KABIR'S FATHER

Boom!
(laughing)
(MORE)

KABIR'S FATHER (CONT'D)

I mean, it wasn't really a temple... Well, it was. But you know these religious types. Beggars, all of them. So... BOOM!

Kabir and his father turn and LAUGH with one another.

But when Kabir turns back to Meena: still no reaction.

KABIR

So, Meena. Did your buddy leave for America yet?

Meena looks up at Kabir - speechless.

KABIR'S FATHER

Who's this?

KABIR

Some American tourist friend.

SANDEEP

He's leaving tonight.

Meena, surprised, turns to Sandeep.

SANDEEP

(softly, to Meena)

He spoke with me.

(beat)

But he's probably already gone.

Meena nods. Accepting the inevitable.

Oblivious, Kabir's Father continues his endless one-man-show.

KABIR'S FATHER

Americans. I've worked with them all. Extreme lack of culture. Barely speak to their families. No values whatsoever.

Shree looks up, hearing her own words tossed back at her.

KABIR'S FATHER

But we Indians have our traditions. Our culture's intact.

(to Sandeep)

You and I, Sandeep, we can pass along these values because our children listen and do what we say.

Sandeep nods, continuing to bear this unbearable man.

KABIR'S FATHER

My son understands that his father
knows best, and whatever he does,
he must hold up my name.

Off to the side, Dev sinks lower into his seat.

Kabir's Father SLAPS his son on the back.

KABIR'S FATHER

I've given Kabir everything. His
whole life's taken care of. It'll
be... easy.

Meena looks up.

CUT TO:

INT. 'L' TRAIN - FLASHBACK

She remembers their first date, as Freddy stands before her:

FREDDY

It may not be easy. But what you
said about speaking from the
heart... well I want to see where
this goes. Cause I've got a good
feeling about it.

CUT TO:

INT. FINE DINING RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Lost in the memory, a smile crosses Meena's face.

KABIR'S FATHER (O.S.)

Meena? Meena?

And then she SMASHES back to reality - as the entire table
stares at her.

KABIR'S FATHER

I said, what do you think of that?

Meena looks around the table.

Kabir. Kabir's Father. Kabir's Mother.

Meena looks to Sandeep. To Dev. To Shree.

She nods her head, as if to answer, and--

Meena stands up.

MEENA

I'm sorry. I have to go.

Shree and Sandeep trade a quick worried glance.

MEENA

There's someone I need to see.

Meena turns to leave when--

Shree GRABS her wrist.

Meena looks down at Shree's hand wrapped around her arm.

And as quickly as she grabbed her wrist--

Shree releases it.

SHREE

Ja, beta. Ja.

Every emotion hits Meena simultaneously. Joy. Shock. Love.

Unable to take her eyes off her mother, Meena stumbles backwards away from the table.

She smiles toward Shree, and finally turns and RUNS.

From his seat, Sandeep watches Meena leave the restaurant.

He then takes his napkin, wipes his mouth, lays it on the table, and stands.

SANDEEP

I better go with her. Too late to take a taxi alone.

(beat)

Also, the deal's off. I believe we may have a difference of values.

(beat)

And your bottles are cheap.

And with that, Sandeep heads toward the exit.

Kabir and his father turn from Sandeep... to Shree.

She shrugs and stands.

SHREE

Well, I suppose I better join them.

Shree turns to Dev. She looks at him for a beat.

SHREE

Are you coming or not?

Dev pauses, unsure how to react... Before Shree rolls her eyes, smiles, and motions to the door.

Dev smiles.

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

Meena, Sandeep, Shree, and Dev are all jammed in the back of a very small auto-ricksaw taxi.

The taxi WHIZZES through the crowded streets of Delhi.

Sandeep leans forward, yelling at the driver.

SANDEEP

Take a right, you bloody fool.

The driver jerks the wheel and takes a hard right.

Meena, nervously looking out the window, shakes her head.

SANDEEP

If he went straight to the airport,
we've already missed him.

Meena perks up, and turns to Sandeep.

MEENA

He wouldn't go straight to the
airport.

(to the driver)

Take a left! Now-- now please!!

The driver nods and jerks the wheel, taking a hard left.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

As the taxi SCREECHES to a halt, Meena jumps out.

She's surrounded by people. Walking around. Taking pictures.

Meena wades through the crowd, looking for Freddy everywhere.

She pushes through a crowd of people, when she sees it:

INDIA GATE

A sandstone arch monument in the heart of New Delhi. Yes, it's a little tourist-y. It's also incredibly beautiful.

But Meena looks everywhere. And cannot find Freddy.

Dwarfed below the massive arch, Meena hangs her head. She closes her eyes, feeling the loss all over again.

When--

FREDDY (O.S.)

Meena?

For a moment, she doesn't believe it.

But she turns, and there he is.

Freddy motions up to the massive monument.

FREDDY

I had to see it before I left.

(beat)

You were right. It's special.

With a big smile, Freddy steps toward Meena--

But she holds up a hand.

MEENA

No songs. No dances. No big speeches. Just... talk to me.

FREDDY

OK. Let's talk.

Meena pauses a BEAT, collecting her thoughts.

MEENA

I shouldn't have left America without fighting for us.

FREDDY

I shouldn't have come to India unannounced.

MEENA

I should have said so many things to you--

FREDDY

I should listened better--

MEENA

I know things have been difficult--

FREDDY

It's only made me more certain--

MEENA

That I want to spend the rest of my
life with you.

Freddy takes a step forward.

FREDDY

Well, I want to marry you.

Meena takes a step forward. Face to face with Freddy.

MEENA

I want to marry you too.

Inches apart, Freddy looks into her eyes. He leans in...

Meena tilts her head to kiss him before--

Her eyes slowly open, and she looks off to the side.

MEENA

Freddy.

She motions to her right.

As her ENTIRE FAMILY watches from the nearby taxi.

Freddy waves to them.

FREDDY

You brought your family?

MEENA

Get used to it.

Both Meena and Freddy straighten up as Sandeep, Shree, and Dev walk up to the pair.

Freddy in particular braces himself for Sandeep.

FREDDY

Sandeep. There's something I want
to tell you--

MEENA

Papa, we want to get married. And I
know that not everyone will accept
this, but--

SANDEEP

Nonsense!

Sandeep grabs Freddy for a hug, rocking him back and forth.

SANDEEP

Freddy. You're part of the family now. Which means you're Indian now. Which means we're not going to let anyone give you any shit for not being Indian. You understand?

FREDDY

I think so?

SHREE

When shall we have the wedding?

MEENA

Mummy, we just got engaged--

Meena looks incredulous, trying to process her parents' sudden change of heart.

MEENA

Oh my God, this is so weird. So we're all good?

FREDDY

(to Shree)

Uh... we don't know. I mean, I'd marry her tomorrow if I could.

SANDEEP

Why not?

MEENA

Oh God, Papa. How?

SANDEEP

You know, there may be a tent available...

Sandeep turns and nods toward Dev:

SANDEEP

... since my son's not getting married this week.

DEV

(smiling)

Yeah... And you did essentially plan the whole wedding.

Meena, still freaking out (but also potentially weighing this new, insane option in her mind), turns to Freddy.

FREDDY

Well, that's great. But I can't get married without my family.

Sandeep and Shree share the briefest of smiles, as--

PRIYA (O.S.)

Wait!

Priya and Basu (head down in his phone) walk up to the group.

PRIYA

We can get them all here. Your mum.
Your dad. Your cousins.

FREDDY

I have a lot of cousins.

PRIYA

Well, Basu has unlimited miles--

Basu perks up.

BASU

I don't have--!

He looks around the group... and toward Priya.

PRIYA

Please, love.

Basu PAUSES then returns to his phone. Dialing a number.

BASU

Chacha, aap kaise ho?

(beat)

So you know my miles allowance?

(a painful beat)

I'm going to need... all of them.

Priya looks to Freddy.

Freddy looks to Meena.

She takes a deep breath, and smiles back.

Drums. Horns. And MUSIC.

The song: WE ARE FAMILY by Sister Sledge - the greatest American wedding song of all time. BUT, it's been given a Bollywood remix, with Hindi lyrics and tabla drums pounding. And just as the song kicks into high gear...

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Hotel lobby doors open, and Freddy leads his mother, father, and entire extended family inside...

Where they are instantly met and embraced by Sandeep, Shree, and their entire extended family.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Meena sits facing a mirror as her make-up is applied. Meena holds out an empty champagne glass...

As it's filled up by Shree, sitting beside her and having her own make-up applied.

EXT. WEDDING SITE - AFTERNOON

MUSICIANS pound drums, WAITERS serve drinks from trays, and several HANDLERS walk down a road leading a GIANT ELEPHANT.

Freddy - dressed in full Indian wedding attire - looks up at the elephant, wondering how he's supposed to ride it.

Freddy turns to Dev, who offers his hand and helps Freddy up onto the elephant.

EXT. WEDDING SITE - EVENING

The BAND of DRUMMERS and MUSICIANS leads the baraat parade...

Followed by Freddy's entire family dancing to the music...

And concluding with Freddy waving his arms on top of the elephant like he's freaking Aladdin!

They pass by a hotel, and looking out from her balcony...

Meena - wearing a stunning red lehenga - looks down at Freddy. On top of an elephant. In India. She's overjoyed.

Freddy looks up. They lock eyes.

Time slows...

INT. WEDDING TENT - NIGHT

Spotlights swing toward the tent's entrance, as the sides are pulled open, revealing Meena and Freddy, arm in arm. Married.

And as the MUSIC keeps playing, a MONTAGE takes us through their evening:

Freddy and Meena dance slowly on the dance floor - until Freddy spins her out just as the CHORUS hits...

And Freddy and Meena dance to the beat. Freddy especially shows off those dance moves that initially won her over...

Sandeep and Shree sit and laugh with Freddy's parents...

Meena and Shree dance side by side, spinning around as their outfits flow in unison...

Freddy sits with Meena's Nani, just talking...

Freddy and his father take over the dance floor with a dance-off, proving who can move their feet faster than the other...

Sandeep approaches Dev, who's speaking with a handsome young man: RAJ. After a pause, Sandeep extends his hand and introduces himself to Raj. Dev is shocked and thrilled...

By now, everyone is dancing. And I mean everyone. Over 300 people, all moving in unison to the music...

In front, Freddy and Meena lead the dance - which is itself a mix of old-school jazz moves and Punjabi shoulder thrusts. Everything's a little mixed up, but also kind of perfect...

And as the MUSIC hits its crescendo, Meena pulls out her phone. She turns it around for a selfie with Freddy. But before she can take it, Sandeep and Shree and Dev all push themselves into the frame. And just as Freddy glances down at Meena with a smile...

SNAP!

CUT TO:

The family photo now hangs on Meena and Freddy's refrigerator, surrounded by dozens of photos of their life together...

THE END