

ARRANGED

Written by

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We move across the room (just a few customers) as we hear:

ALEX (O.S.)
She's here. NOW. Get over here.

UNDER A COUNTER we find: A gangly white dude, clutching his cell phone. This is ALEX WHITE, 20-something, good-looking in an undistracting way and white, as his name would suggest.

A WAITER walks by and gives him a look.

ALEX (CONT'D)
...sorry, I'm not hiding from an active shooter, it's way scarier than that.
(into the phone)
Seriously, hurry up and get here 'cuz the eagle has landed and by eagle, I mean your mother.

He peeks around and we see from his perspective: SEEMA PATEL, a slim, nicely dressed Indian lady in her 50's. Calm, steely.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I'm afraid of her. You know that. Her ability to hold eye contact freaks me out. It's like a truth serum. Three minutes? Okay, HURRY.

He rises, walks towards Seema. Seema is looking at a distinctive leather folder which she tucks away in her bag.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Mrs. Patel! What can I get you while you wait? Coffee? Breakfast? On the house!

SEEMA
Why?

ALEX
Because I'm kinda dishonest so I steal from my bosses and give away free food DAMMIT. TRUTH SERUM.

SEEMA
No, thank you. I don't want your stolen coffee.

Just then the door blows open and AASHITA (ASH) PATEL enters-- Indian, 20's, bursts in. Her style is no makeup, Converse, ironic T's, etc. She rushes over. Turns to Seema.

ASH
 Sorry I'm late. I didn't adequately
 calculate for your overpromptness.

ALEX
 (backing away)
 I'll give you two your privacy.
 Great to see you, Seema.

SEEMA
 Thanks, Steve.

ASH
 (Alex is gone)
 Steve? His name is Alex.
 (Seema shrugs. Sure.)
 He's my roommate, you could be a
 little warmer. Anyway, what's this
 emergency we had to meet about?

And Seema is off and running. Through the following, she
 doesn't let Ash interrupt, though Ash tries.

SEEMA
 It's about Shulpa. You know, one of
 the Philadelphia Patels, the ones
 who are radiologists with the weird
 curly hair? Shulpa's younger sister
 Divya is married, but Shulpa is
 not, she's a country western
 singer, don't get me started.
 Anyway, last Friday, she was
 walking home from a "gig" and you
 know what happened? She got MUGGED.
 They took her fringed purse and her
 turquoise bolo tie, she fell,
 banged her head, lost her memory
 and now she thinks she is Carrie
 Underwood.

(off Ash's look yeah, and?)
 Shulpa's mother spent 15 years on
 an arranged marriage website,
 writing profile after profile for
 her, but Shulpa said "no" to every
 marriage prospect. Now she's alone,
 old and in the hospital, insisting
 she was on American Idol. None of
 that would've happened if she were
 married and at home.

ASH
 Mom--

SEEMA

You're Shulpa. You refuse to get married. She has her weird country music, you have your weird career.

(talking over Ash)

I've had enough. I set up a date for you. Tonight.

ASH

Oooh no... no more fix-ups.

Alex returns with some tea.

ALEX

You said you didn't want coffee, but this is tea, it's cheap, it's just hot water and a bag.

SEEMA

(ignores him)

Your father's gone. I won't be here forever. You have to settle down and get married or you won't have a family, and that's the thing that matters--

(turns to Alex)

Dave, don't you agree? That family is the most important thing?

ALEX

Me? Oh.... Yes... Yes yes yes.

2 INT. ASH AND ALEX'S APARTMENT -- DAY

2

Ash and Alex in a cramped apartment, furniture by Craigslist and Garbage Thursday. Alex is splayed on a gross sectional.

ASH

You're such an ASSHOLE. "Yes yes yes." You don't even talk to your family. You know I hate these set ups. I don't even like Indian dudes-

-

ALEX

I know, it's so weird. I don't get it. I wish I had that cocoa skin.

ASH

--they're always either nerds or momma's boys. And don't say, "What about Dev Pa--"

ALEX

What about Dev Patel?

ASH

A. Giant celebrity. B. Hot Dev Patels are not about alla this. They date blondes.

ALEX

(bored)

Cool, while you're yelling at me, I need help on my edamame bit. It's not landing--

ASH

Because edamame isn't funny. Hasn't been since early Obama.

ALEX

(ignores her)

--I was gonna do this whole thing about how they serve edamame in CHINESE restaurants which is so silly because it's... Korean?

ASH

--yeah it's Korean, you nailed it.

(thinks)

The only thing left in the soy area is, like: "Twenty years ago, nobody knew what soy was, now it's my milk, my lotion, my sex candles..."

ALEX

Sex candles, ha. Writing that down. That's mine. I said edamame first--

ASH

Take it, I don't need my castoff brain farts, keep 'em. Thanks to you and your family values, I gotta go on this dumb date. Put my name on the list, I'll see you in 15.

ALEX

What? How're you gonna do a date in 15 minutes?

3

EXT. OUTSIDE DINER, LOS ANGELES -- NIGHT

3

RAJ, a pleasant Indian man in his 20's, sits at a table. Ash rushes over at high speed.

ASH

--Raj? Hi, listen, sorry for wasting your time but I'm not into this arranged marriage thing, okay if I bail? You ordered an iced tea, it's on me, keep the change?

(puts down a twenty)

Whaddya say we go our separate ways, then tomorrow we text our moms, say we had a nice long date, etcetera, just wasn't a match?

RAJ

Seriously? Yes! Now I can meet my boyfriend downtown!

ASH

(as he walks away)

Great! You won't tell your mom, right?

RAJ

Never!

4

INT. OR EXT. TACO STAND PARKING LOT -- NIGHT

4

Alex paces. Ash trots over to join him.

ASH

Am I on the list?

ALEX

..yeah, yep, and while you were gone I came up with something, want you to hear it before I try it out.

ASH

Uh, I kinda wanna get ready myself--

ALEX

Please? It's about my dick--

ASH

--great comedy area for you--

ALEX

--Ha. Ha. Ha. It's about how, when I was 17, my dick was like a lightsaber. Any stimulation at all and it was like whoomp--

(mimes a lightsaber)

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

--but now that I'm in my 20's, it's more like an old flashlight from summer camp, it maybe works, if I have batteries--

ASH

"--and I shake it and hold it at juuuusssst the right angle."

Alex touches his nose, points to her. Yes, that. Thank you.

5

EXT. TACO STAND -- LATER

5

We see a sign that says: STAND-UP NIGHT. There are about 8 people in the audience. Alex is relaxed, confident, appealing. Himself, basically.

ALEX

--I just have to shake it and hold it at juuuusssst the right angle.

Big laugh. Alex looks over at Ash nearby. She mouths, "I'm amazing, me," and points to herself. Alex winks at her.

LATER. Alex finishes his set and walks off, passing Ash, who is being introduced by the MC (not an old school MC, a girl wearing a rainbow unitard.) As they cross paths--

ALEX (CONT'D)

Go get 'em.

Ash walks on stage, less comfortable than Alex. Her energy is cerebral and quiet, almost shy. Her delivery is dry, deadpan.

ASH

Taxidermy is the one thing young hipsters have in common with old racists. It's both fun to look at the head of a dead ibex when you're at a hipster coffee house AND when you're at a Klan meeting. Coffee is better at the Klan meeting though.

She gets a solid but more modest wave of laughter than Alex.

6

EXT. TACO STAND -- LATER

6

Alex and Ash are now drinking with their friends: NASREEN, Persian, hot, always in search of a career, and ZION, nerdy African-American, an aspiring producer.

ASH
 ...I was okay tonight. I'd give
 myself a C.

ALEX
 I'd give myself an A.

NASREEN
 Of course you would.

ZION
 I thought you guys did great.

ASH
 Uh, you missed the whole show.

ZION
 Yeah, no, I hate standup. It's so
 cringey. It hurts my fingernails.
 Jokes about airplane food, blugh.

ASH
 Dude, we don't do that kinda shit.

ZION
 Yeah, still kinda thirsty.

Just then, SOPHIE, 20's, pretty, pierced, tats, walks over.

NASREEN
 Hey, Soph.

Sophie gives Alex a kiss.

SOPHIE
 Sorry I was working late. Guy came
 in wanting a giant back dragon.
 Sad. How was the show?

A. ALEX C. ASH

Ash's phone buzzes. She looks down. A rapidly scrolling text
 from Seema. WHAT HAPPENED TONIGHT? HOW WAS THE DATE? RAJ HAS
 NOT TEXTED HIS MOTHER EITHER--

ASH (CONT'D)
 My mom is the worst. Indian moms--

NASREEN
 Uh, I hear you. Persian parents are
 not easy.

(MORE)

NASREEN (CONT'D)

My mother was not supportive of my angora yarn business and she's acting the same way about trapeze.

(off their looks)

Told you I'm doing trapeze, right?

ZION

My dad burned my comic books as a kid. He couldn't see how I was going to make money writing comics.

ASH

You don't.

ZION

Not the point.

ALEX

My parents are white and very detached. They are fine with me being a waiter for the rest of my life and they only say, "I love you" to the dog.

(people laugh, he thinks)

Ooh, is that a bit? Could that be something?

ASH

(rolls her eyes)

You know what, we're not drunk enough, who wants more beers!?

They nod. Ash goes to the bar as Sophie gives Alex a kiss.

SOPHIE

Wanna sleep over tonight?

ALEX

Stay at my place?

SOPHIE

I don't have any stuff there.

ALEX

Sure you do, you have all that crap in the bathroom.

(she pouts)

Okay, you win, I'll stay over. I'm powerless against that pout.

They kiss. Zion and Nasreen mime barfing, dying. Ash reappears.

ASH

Guys, you're not gonna believe it, I just ran into Joe, that loser that used to live across the hall from me? Look at him. What a dork.

Angle on Joe, nerdy. Ash hands out the beers.

ZION

I remember him. He's the guy who failed Scientology, right?

ASH

He's an idiot, I'm gonna go have sex with him, see you guys later.

She walks away, waving to her friends, locks arms with Joe.

SOPHIE

Wow. She's so sex positive.

ALEX

She really is, it's very empowered.

NASREEN

She's kinda just a whore.

And from the next scene we hear:

ALEX (O.S.)

So is he gonna call? Are you guys gonna be sweethearts?

7 INT. ASH AND ALEX'S APARTMENT -- THE NEXT MORNING

7

Ash stands at the counter, checking her email. Alex lays on a gross sectional, eating yogurt directly out of a tub.

ASH

Do you and I need to go over what a one night stand is again?

Suddenly Ash's computer FaceTime lights up. Seema. We intercut between Ash and Seema on screen.

ASH (CONT'D)

Oh shit. Hi, Mom--

SEEMA

You conspired with Raj to lie about going on your date?

ASH

What? No, I didn't.

(to Alex)

Indian dudes. The WORST. He sold me out. I'm totally gonna out him to his mom.

Seema moves her face closer to the camera. Scary close.

SEEMA

You embarrassed me! Raj's mother has a very big mouth. I'm getting texts from people coast to coast. Aashita, I've almost had enough, you hear me? We are not discussing this anymore. You're going to the convention. I booked your plane tickets, your hotel--

ASH

What? No, Mom, I told you--

SEEMA

Aashita, you will do what I say. Don't push me. You don't know what I'm capable of.

ASH

What does THAT mean? You murdering people now?

SEEMA

Forwarding you your travel.

Seema clicks off.

ALEX

Convention? What is she talking about? What convention?

ASH

Patel convention. It's gross. Buncha people named Patel get together and if you're single, they try to marry you off.

ALEX

Wait, it's all Patels? It's relatives, trying to hook up?

ASH

We're not relatives, we're from the same region of India, it's where Gandhi was from, which everyone brags about and it's like, calm down, he beat his wife and hated Black people... anyway, I'm not going. I don't care how many free plane tickets or New York City hotel rooms she offers me--

ALEX

Wait. New York? It's in New York?

ASH

Yeah why?

ALEX

Because Barry Goldberg asked me to do his UCB show next time I'm in New York--

ASH

His Friday midnight show? That's... huge. Why didn't you tell me? WHY?

ALEX

Well, I thought you'd be a little jealous. But from your angry brow crinkle, I can tell I was wrong.

(thinks)

I have an idea. Two birds, one stone. We go to New York on your Mom's dime, go to your incestfest to appease her and do Barry's show.

ASH

We? He wants you.

ALEX

He'll give you a slot. I'll talk him into it. I got juice.

ASH

Never say, "I got juice."

(thinks)

Okay. You get me five minutes and we have a deal.

ASH

So I'm thinking about the order for my five minutes--

Alex is not listening. He's looking at a brochure he printed from the Gujarati Council of America's website.

ALEX

Did you know there are 9.5 million Patels in the world and over 150,000 of them live in America? It's amazing! Wow, so many cousins for you to marry, hope your kids aren't defective!

ASH

Stop talking.

ALEX

The first event is a mixer with piña coladas and samosas! I can. Not. WAIT.

ASH

Let's be clear. We're going for 30 minutes to stave off my mother and then we're leaving for the show.

ALEX

God I can't wait, I'm totally gonna get my Slumdog on, whoo!

He does a few "Jai Ho" moves. She puts his hands down.

ASH

You're going to be so disappointed.
(then)
Anyway, back to my set, I was thinking about doing taxidermy, backpacks, Teen Wolf--

ALEX

You should do that bit about how your mom made you wear a sari to the prom and then when you were grinding to "Let Me Lick You Up and Down," it unspooled on the floor like a roll of toilet paper--

They head towards the metal detector. A TSA OFFICER eyes Ash.

ASH

...that's not the name of that song and that's not a bit.

(MORE)

ASH (CONT'D)
It's a story from my life and you
know I don't do Indian stuff.

Alex goes right through but the officer points at Ash.

TSA OFFICER
Will you come with me, ma'am?

Alex looks around. Wait. What's happening?

9 INT. AIRPORT -- A FEW MINUTES LATER

9

The other side of security. Ash walks towards Alex, with an Arab BUSINESSMAN in his 40's.

ASH
Nice to meet you, Khalid.

KHALID
You too. Good luck with your show!

He walks away. Alex stares at her, flummoxed.

ALEX
What just happened? Why did they
pull you out of line?

ASH
Uhhhh...

ALEX
Wait, this is outrageous! This is
an assault on your civil rights.
You got pulled aside because you're
brown! You're not even that brown.
(holds his arms up to her)
We're the same color, sir! Some of
my family is from Estonia! This
shall not stand!

ASH
Oh God, can we just go? I wanna
grab a water and a Star Magazine.
Kylie is on the cover wearing a
dress made out of tires.

Ash walks away, rolling her bag. Alex follows, giving the TSA
guy a dirty scowl as he goes.

ALEX
I'm going to tell my friends at the
convention about this.

10 OMIT 10

11 INT. HOTEL BALLROOM -- NIGHT 11

Instead of whatever Alex was picturing, the Patel convention is some nicely dressed Indians socializing to soft jazz.

Alex, the only white person, rants to someone.

ALEX
PULLED HER OUT OF THE SECURITY
LINE. Can you BELIEVE?

Ash rolls her eyes, checks her watch, as a WAITER walks by with piña coladas. The person Alex is talking to escapes.

WAITER
Coladas? We have mango, tamarind,
cardamom--

ALEX
Cardamom colada sounds nassssty.
I'm in.

Alex and Ash each grab one.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Namaste, sir.

ASH
Don't. Don't do that. Don't say
that to anyone ever anywhere.

Ash's cousin BHAVYA, 20's, pretty, bounds over, interrupting.

BHAVYA
Ash, you're here! My mom said you
weren't coming because you hate
your family and Indians!
(points to Alex)
Who's this?

ASH
My roommate He wanted to tag along
for some cultural rubbernecking
which is not as amusing as I
thought it might be.

BHAVYA
Whatever, look! I got a new
biodata. New photo.

She hands Ash a piece of paper that looks like a resume. It has a glamor shot of Bhavya in one corner.

BHAVYA (CONT'D)

This photog is amazing. He also does dogs and newborns, like, those little bitty babies perched in their mother's palms, so cute--

ALEX

What the hell is a biodata?

(takes the paper)

Is this like, a... resume for... dating? Whooooaaa. You guys are serious about this shit.

BHAVYA

Look at the ones I've gotten back!

Bhavya shows them a stack of biodatas of some eligible men.

BHAVYA (CONT'D)

I like this guy. Cornell, Yale, five ten, which for Indians is like, Armie Hammer.

Alex checks out the biodata -- tasteful, almost arty.

ALEX

Oooh a charcoal drawing, love it.

(beat)

Give me and Bhavya a sec, wouldja?

They walk away, leaving Ash standing there.

ASH

Half an hour!

ALEX

Namaste!

12 INT. HOTEL BALLROOM -- LATER

12

Later, Ash stands in the corner, bored, holding a new drink, getting her ear talked off by NEHA, a woman in her 60's.

NEHA

...my nephew Vicas is a lawyer with a very prestigious firm in Denver.

Neha expertly whips out Vicas's biodata from her purse and hands it to Ash. Vicas is not a young or handsome man.

ASH

Ohhh wow. He's so... distinguished.
Has he had those moles looked at?

NEHA

Hmm. I don't know what you're so
high and mighty about--

She whips out another biodata.

ASH

My biodata, where did you--

NEHA

Your mother asked me to put a stack
by the door. According to this,
you're not exactly qualified to
look down on my nephew. You studied
"media arts production," whatever
that is, at Emerson? And you're not
getting any younger--

ASH

Okay... this is why I don't like
coming here. This. Right now.

She turns around, clutching her drink, trying to escape and
takes a few steps before she runs into...

...a handsome man her age, JAY PATEL.

JAY

Owww. Ow.

ASH

Oh god. I'm so sorry. I was trying
to get away from Neha Auntie, she
was trying to foist her nephew
Vicas on me--

JAY

Old guy, face full of moles?

(she laughs)

Hi, I'm Jay. Last name you probably
know. And is it just me or are
these conventions horrible?

ASH

Horr. I. Ble.

JAY

I only agreed to come because my
mom harassed me into submission.

She laughs and notices: he's cute.

ASH
You mostly date blondes, huh?

JAY
Yeah, but, not for any reason, just seems to happen that way.

ASH
Yeah, I understand...

She smiles. They're having a nice moment. Until Alex and Bhavya walk over. Alex sticks Bhavya's phone in Ash's face.

ALEX
Oh my God. You have to see Jyoti and Aakash's wedding. Geeorgeous.

Angle on the phone screen: a video of an elaborate Indian wedding. It's all very corny.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Isn't it colorful and bright and pretty!? Love all the colors!!!

BHAVYA
Rigghheet?

ASH
Ew, no. I would rather be married by Gary Busey than do this. And you know how I feel about Gary Busey.

ALEX
You're crazy. This is amazing.

BHAVYA
Oh my God, Ash, I love Alex. I'm totally coming LA to visit you guys.

JAY
You guys are from LA? So am I.

ASH
Really? Where do you live?

JAY
Toluca Lake. It sucks but it's near my office. I work at Hullabaloo... most people haven't heard of it

ALEX

Uh, Hullabaloo, the streaming service devoted exclusively to standup comedy? Uh, yeah, we've heard of it, and actually--

He looks over at Ash. She looks weirdly panicked. Starts making a knife-across-the-throat gesture.

ALEX (CONT'D)

What're you doing tonight?

On Ash's face. She looks TERRIFIED. Match cut to:

13 OMIT 13

14 INT. HOTEL BAR/OUTSIDE BALLROOM -- AN HOUR LATER 14

Ash's FACE. And now, instead of terrified, she looks traumatized. Widen to see Jay, Alex and Ash in the hotel bar. Jay and Alex are laughing. Ash is staring. Jay gets up.

JAY

I'll get us another round.

Jay leaves. Alex turns to Ash.

ALEX

Dude, stop. Get the rape shower look off your face.

(off her look)

So you had a bad set. So what?

ASH

A bad set? A BAD SET?

She looks into space, remembering. From offstage we hear:

MC (O.S.)

All the way from sunny Los Angeles... Ash Patel!

15 INT. ND FANTASY SPACE 15

Ash's TERRIFIED FACE, a spotlight on it. She's FROZEN. She mutters a few words. It's like a nightmare. Back to:

ASH

It was so quiet up there, Alex.
Someone farted in the back row and
I heard it, clear as a bell.

ALEX

So you shit the bed. And sat in the
shit and smeared it in your hair.
Happens to everyone. You're still
super fucking talented and you're
here, at drinks, with an
influential guy, and it's not too
late for you to win him over.

(looks)

Okay, he's coming back. Pull
yourself together.

JAY sits, hands out drink, turns to Ash who smiles. Gruesome.

JAY

Look, Ash, I liked your set, the
writing was great--

ALEX

--crowd was just kinda tired,
daylight saving last week, they're
still catching up. Ash usually
kills. And she's been working on
some great new stuff. She has a
hilarious bit about the prom and
how she was wearing a sari and the
whole thing just unravelled like --
OW! What was that?

Ash, who has just kicked him, stands up.

ASH

I think I've hit my limit, but you
guys have fun, I'm going to crash.

JAY

You sure? You okay?

ASH

Yeah, I'm just a lightweight. See
you tomorrow.

She walks away, maintaining her smile until she turns away
and we see her real expression, embarrassed and humiliated.

17 INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT 17

Walking away, Ash passes the piña colada waiter from earlier, now in street clothes. He smiles at her.

ASH
You look familiar.

WAITER
I'm the colada guy.

18 INT. HOTEL BAR/OUTSIDE BALLROOM -- NIGHT 18

Alex and Jay are still drinking.

JAY
...when we're back in LA, I'd love to bring you in to meet my colleagues, we're looking for some up-and-coming comedians...

ALEX
(not really listening)
...you know how Ash and I met? Two years ago, we both did a crappy open mic at a garbage facility--

JAY
The Dump? Love that place.

ALEX
Afterwards she came over to me and pitched me better versions of, like, SIX of my jokes, my BEST jokes too...

19 INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT 19

Ash is now making out with the pina colada guy.

20 INT. HOTEL BAR/OUTSIDE BALLROOM -- NIGHT 20

Jay and Alex notice people walking towards the ballroom.

JAY
Ooo. Come on. They're about to do the slide show. It's pretty funny.

ALEX
Slide show?

21 INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT 21

Ash and the waiter are now making out even harder. Ash feels along the wall and finds a door. She opens it, pulls him in.

22 INT. BALLROOM -- NIGHT 22

JAY and Alex walk in, joining other Patels as we hear:

ANNOUNCER

...each year at this convention, we bring together young people who are ready to create the families that will ensure our future and uphold our shared values...

23 INT. N/D DARK SPACE -- NIGHT 23

Ash and the waiter rip each other's clothes off. Ash sees a chair, pushes him onto it and straddles him, kissing him. She tries to brace her hand on the wall, but weirdly there is no wall, just a curtain...

24 INT. BALLROOM -- NIGHT 24

The curtain parts and we see a screen with a slide with a collage of happy couple on it...

And Ash, straddling the waiter. The waiter immediately FLEES, pulls up his pants (we don't see his face). Ash FREEZES. A beat. In the silence, Bhavya snaps a photo. From the next scene--

ALEX (O.S.)

Ash, it's not that big of a deal.

25 EXT. STREET -- DAY 25

Ash and Alex walk home, carrying their stuff.

ASH

You don't understand. My mother gets SO mad. One time in high school, I got a C in bio, she made me re-roof the house. With, like, real shingles.

ALEX

Hey, so maybe this is your chance to stand up to her.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

Tell her you don't want an arranged marriage or any kind of marriage right now.

ASH

Ooh great idea. I'll have a chat with her and centuries of ingrained cultural beliefs and expectations will go poof. EVERYONE SAW ME up there. Not to mention that seconds before that, I had the WORST SHOW OF MY LIFE in front of Jay. This was the worst weekend of my LIFE--

ALEX

You're so upset. Gotta say, I don't always understand what upsets you and what doesn't.

ASH

I'm sorry, what?

ALEX

Nothing, you're right, let's go.

ASH

No, I'm curious, what am I supposed to be upset about?

ALEX

Well, if you're asking, I think you might have a wee problem with intimacy, there are a lotta randos--

ASH

Mmm hmm. And what else?

ALEX

Personally, I woulda been a TON more mad about the TSA thing. That's systemic racism. Doesn't that bother you?

ASH

No, actually, systemic racism I LOVE, thanks for bringing it up! I don't get to think about THAT enough. Really, thanks for telling me WHAT TO BE UPSET ABOUT and IN WHAT ORDER. I can't thank you enough for that priority reset.

She storms away, suitcase bumping.

26 INT. ASH AND ALEX'S APARTMENT -- DAY

26

They walk back in.

ALEX

Look, I'm sorry. I'm sorry the weekend sucked and I'm sorry if I said the wrong thing.

ASH

WHAT ELSE IS NEW.

ALEX

I AM SORRY. You're my best friend. I love you. Okay?

ASH

(stops her, she calms down)
Okay. Give me a few months and I'll be fine. Luvya too, I guess.

ALEX

Great. Now, if that's settled, I gotta take a major shit. I haven't crapped since we left for New York, so much tension...

ASH

Was it that? Or the 19 potato-based appetizers you ate at the event?

(Alex laughs)

Okay, go. I will start writing an artful apology email to my mother, asking her not to disinherit me--

Alex disappears into the bathroom. Suddenly there is a knock at the door. Alex calls out:

ALEX (O.S.)

Can you get that? It's Sophie--

Another knock. Ash opens the door. Seema, not Sophie.

ASH

Mom! I was just about to call you...

Seema walks in, looking calm.

27 INT. BATHROOM -- DAY

27

Alex is on the toilet when he hears the women's voices. He looks up from his cartoon book, cracks the door to listen.

28

INT. APARTMENT -- DAY

28

Seema looks at Ash.

ASH

--okay go ahead yell at me--

But Seema is shockingly calm. Extra steely.

SEEMA

I didn't come here to yell. I came to give you this.

She pulls out something we recognize. A distinctive leather folder -- and takes out an official-looking document.

ASH

What is... this?

SEEMA

When you were fifteen, I tried to get you a passport.

(off Ash's look. And?)

And I realized they made a mistake when you were naturalized. It never went through. You're not a citizen.

ASH

Wait... what? Wut?

SEEMA

I was going to fix it. I was. But it was right after your father died... You were SO rebellious, shaving the sides of your hair and listening to that ska music. I thought as you got older, it might be harder to deal with you. I needed insurance, and this is it.

(as Ash stares, appalled)

You don't have to live in India forever. Just meet with the marriage broker, find someone you like. After you're married, you can come back and I won't tell anyone about this mistake--

ASH

Anyone being--

SEEMA

The authorities.

ASH

You're going to have me deported
unless I get married?

SEEMA

Deported is a harsh word. It's more
like... temporary relocation until
your life sorts itself out.

ASH

Wow. It's finally happened. You've
gone completely fucking crazy.

SEEMA

I'm not crazy, I'm desperate. And
worried. I know you think I'm
unreasonable. I'm not. Your career
is embarrassing -- doing comedy at
board game cafés?

ASH

Wow. Wow wow wow.

SEEMA

At first I wanted you to marry a
Patel, then I wanted any Indian,
then any college graduate and
honestly, now I would take anyone.
My standards are gone. What I'm
asking you is so simple, Ash...

29 INT. BATHROOM -- DAY

29

Alex looks around. His eyes land on something. Sophie's junk
on the bathroom counter -- bras, cosmetics, jewelry...

30 INT. APARTMENT -- DAY

30

The women stare at each other. Ash is still in total shock.
Then, we hear a FLUSH. Alex enters, smiling.

ALEX

Mrs. Patel! Didn't know you were
here. Sorry about what happened.
(off Seema's confused look)
That little PDA thing Ash and I did
at the convention. We have trouble
keeping our hands off each other.

He puts his arms around Ash. Kisses her. Ash freezes.

SEEMA

That was you on stage with Aashita?

ALEX

What? Wut? Of course it was me.

SEEMA

I thought you two were just
roommates, Aashita always says...

ALEX

We were, but you know how these
boy/girl friendships go. We fell in
love. Ash didn't want to tell you,
but the cat is out of the bag, so--

Alex pulls something out of his hand. A ring with a sparkling
black stone and two skulls on the side. Clearly Sophie's.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Here, Hon. You left your engagement
ring in the bathroom.

Seema and Ash stare at him as he smiles. Seema looks at Ash.
A beat. Ash puts the ring on her finger, smiles at her mom.

ASH

Yep. My engagement ring. Because
we... are engaged.

From the next scene we hear muffled Indian music and Ash.

ASH (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Are you sure about this?

31 INT. INDIAN RESTAURANT -- DAYS LATER

31

Angle on Alex and Ash, so close we only see shoulders up.

ALEX

Of course I'm sure. You're my best
friend, I love you and I don't want
you to be mom-deported.

ASH

That's very sweet. I appreciate
that. What I meant was, are you
sure that's your color?

Widen to see, they're both wearing Indian formal wedding
costumes. Bright red. Better look on her, to put it mildly.

ASH (CONT'D)

Red makes you look whiter, which I didn't think was possible.

ALEX

I look AMAZING. Like a sexy candy cane. Now let's go. You ready?

They turn. We reveal they are in an Indian restaurant. There are about 15 Indian relatives plus Sophie, Nasreen and Zion, who are wearing Indian outfits with varying degrees of success. Angle on Sophie:

SOPHIE

It's just for a while, right?

NASREEN

Oh yeah, of course, just until Seema calms down.

SOPHIE

Yeah, Alex said it wouldn't change things between me and him at all.

Nasreen and Zion exchanges a look. Uh...

ZION

Yeah, I'm sure it won't.

Angle on Alex and Ash, greeting and hugging relatives.

ASH

What part of this is, you care about me, and what part is you want me in the country so I can punch up your material?

ALEX

Oh, all the second thing. All.

They laugh. Just then, Seema walks towards them. She is glowing and happy. She reaches them and sighs, pleased.

SEEMA

What a great evening. Not as extravagant as I hoped but you're married. That's what's important.

ASH

Yeah. Yep.

They all smile. Seema remains smiling as she says the following:

SEEMA

It does seem like such a funny coincidence that the day I threatened to send Aashita back to India was the day I found out you two were engaged.

(their smiles fade, she turns to them)

Please remember the following:
There are only 10,000 ICE agents in America. There are 150,000 Patels. And I'm one text message away from each and every one of them.

Ash and Alex are starting to quietly panic.

SEEMA (CONT'D)

If I find out anything about this marriage is fake, Aashita is on a plane to India. Tell me the truth, Alex. Is this a real marriage?

Seema stares directly into Alex's soul. He fights the truth serum that is her eyeballs.

ALEX

100% real.

SEEMA

Wonderful!

And just then music starts. It sounds not a LOT, but maybe a LITTLE, like Jai Ho. Seema, thrilled, starts to dance, trying to get people to join her.

But we stay on Ash and Alex. As it lands on them. What the hell did they do? Ash and Alex turn to each other.

ASH

We're screwed.

ALEX

Oh, indeed.

The music continues and we...

FADE OUT