

OUR LITTLE CHAMPION

Written by

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FADE IN:

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - EARLY MORNING**

A red-bricked apartment building sits on a busy street. The trees around it baren, with brown leaves scattered on the ground.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING**

A phone alarm blares and ESHA SINGH, 18, is fast asleep on her bed. The noise bothers everyone except her. DIVYA SINGH, 36, walks into Esha's room. There are clothes thrown everywhere. Her laptop is left open on her bed, and there is an empty plate with breadcrumbs sitting on her desk. Divya sighs.

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
Esha! Get up!

Esha rolls around in her sleep. Divya walks to Esha's bedside.

DIVYA (CONT'D)  
(In Hindi)  
Esha! Let's go. School is in 30.

ESHA  
Five more minutes. Please

DIVYA  
(in Hindi)  
Ok, five minutes - then you are up.

Esha turns around and falls right back asleep.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - FIVE MINUTES LATER**

Another alarm, this time with a different tune starts going off.

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
Esha! Up now!

Esha slowly gets up and trudges to the bathroom.

**INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

RAJ SINGH, 38, sits at the dining table eating breakfast. Divya finishes packing up lunch for the two of them.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Divya slips the lunch into Esha's bag.

**INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Divya takes a seat with her chai. A fried egg is sitting on a plate in front of an empty chair. Their living room is stacked with Spelling Bee trophies and pictures of Esha with Jimmy Kimmel, Conan and President Obama.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Esha picks up her laptop off her bed and shoves it into her backpack. She grabs a pair of pants, and a basic shirt and throws on a hoodie.

**INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Esha stands at the table.

RAJ

Let's try to make it to school on time today.

ESHA

It doesn't matter. They are used to it.

DIVYA

(In Hindi)  
Breakfast?

Esha looks at the eggs.

ESHA

Hmm, not today. I'm running late.

Divya sighs.

DIVYA

(In Hindi)  
Ok, get to school safe.

Esha grabs her keys and heads out.

Divya slides the plate with the egg over to Raj.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING BIKE RACK - MORNING**

Esha heads to the bike rack and unlocks her bike, and starts biking over to school.

**EXT. STREETS - MORNING**

Esha zooms on the sidewalk, swerving through different people. She stops at a stoplight with a crossing guard, ANGELA, 56.

ANGELA  
Hey girl, running late again?

ESHA  
You know it.

Angela laughs.

ESHA (CONT'D)  
How has your weekend been?

ANGELA  
Not too bad, the usual.

ESHA  
Same here.

The walks sign lights up. Angela walks to the center of the road as Esha zooms by.

ESHA (CONT'D)  
Have a great day!

**EXT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING**

Esha bikes up to the bike rack. There is barely any room on the rack. Esha looks around and shoves her bike in between some bikes, and locks it up.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING**

Esha stands in line at the desk to get a late pass. MS. MILLER, 37, looks up at Esha and writes her a pass with her name and time, and hands it to Esha.

ESHA  
Thank you!

**INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - MORNING**

Esha walks to class, MS. WOODLAND, 34, is in front going over some slides.

MS. WOODLAND  
Who said 8:00?

STUDENT 1, 16, raises their hand. Esha laughs as she takes her seat.

ESHA  
Hey, this is the earliest in a while.

Esha opens up her notebook and begins taking notes.

**INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - LATER**

Ms. Woodland hands back the quizzes from last class. Esha turns her quiz around and sees a 85. She sighs and puts the quiz in her folder.

**INT. LUNCHROOM - AFTERNOON**

Esha sits alone and takes lunch out of her bag. She opens it up and begins eating. Esha receives a notification and pulls out her phone to check. It's a snap from LIAM, 18. Esha takes a quick picture of her face and sends it back. AVA, 17, and BRITTANY, 18 join her at the table.

AVA  
Oo who are you snapping?

ESHA  
Don't worry about it.

Brittany eyes her.

BRITTANY  
Ava, it's probably Liam.

Ava rolls her eyes.

AVA  
It still shocks me that you guys are together.

ESHA  
I don't know it just kind of works you know?

BRITTANY

No I don't know, but you do you.

Ava picks around at her school lunch.

AVA

You are so lucky your mom packs you lunch every morning.

BRITTANY

I know right, we are stuck with this shitty school food and you get home-cooked food every day.

ESHA

Yeah, I could never whatever... that is.

BRITTANY

Honestly, I can't even tell. It's supposed to be sloppy joes... I think.

Brittany takes a bite.

BRITTANY (CONT'D)

It's not that bad... It tastes like a sloppy joe...?

Ava plays with her food and ends up just eating the apple.

AVA

How you are feeling about track?

ESHA

Eh, I just want to get the final season over with.

BRITTANY

If you don't want to, don't do it.

ESHA

Sunk cost fallacy, I already put three years in, what's another year at this point, and it will look good for colleges.

AVA

Remind me what you have in Calc right now?

ESHA

Hey hey, I have the rest of the year to bring it up. I'll be fine. It always ends up working out.

BRITTANY

If you say so.

**INT. FIELD HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON**

Dozens of students crowd around COACH GALE, 29.

COACH GALE

Hello everyone! Welcome to the first practice of the season! Excited to get to know some new faces, love seeing the old faces. Mile warm up - 8 laps around the track, and then stretches. At your own pace.

Everyone goes off running. Esha is struggling in the middle of the pack, running with no purpose.

**EXT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - EVENING**

Esha unlocks her bike as the sun sets behind her.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - EVENING**

Esha throws her backpack on the ground, and collapses on her bed.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Divya walks into Esha's room and sees her asleep. She opens her bag and takes her lunch containers out.

**INT. KITCHEN - EVENING**

Divya rolls the rotis, as the pressure cooker sits on the stove letting out steam. Raj walks into the house and drops off his backpack in the kitchen. Divya takes the lunch containers out and puts them in the sink. Raj makes his way to the living room and turns the TV on.

**INT. DINING ROOM - LATER**

Divya sets the dining room table, as Raj watches TV.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM**

Divya opens the door.

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
Esha wake up. Dinner's ready.

Esha gets up and drags her feet to dinner.

**INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Esha takes a seat at the table, with an empty chair next to her, that once was filled. In front of her is a plate of bhindi, roti, rice, and daal, and she starts eating.

RAJ  
(In Hindi)  
How was everyone's day?

ESHA  
Same old same old.

DIVYA  
Same here.

ESHA  
What about you, how's work?

RAJ  
(In Hindi)  
Richard is leaving us soon, and someone is going to take over his position. I talked to Brian about it, and I think that I'll take over it.

ESHA  
Oh wow, that's very exciting!  
Congrats dad!

RAJ  
(In Hindi)  
It hasn't happened yet, but I have a good feeling about this. I've been here for over a decade, it's about time.



DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
That's such good news! Let's  
celebrate.

Divya walks out of the dining room and comes back with some Indian sweets.

DIVYA (CONT'D)  
(In Hindi)  
I made gullab jammun today. Good  
reason to eat it.

Divya serves everyone and they munch down the sweet dish.

**INT. RAJ'S WORK - MORNING**

Raj enters the meeting room with the rest of his colleagues, PETER, 31, JACKSON, 39, CHAD, 34, RICHARD, 48, and his boss BRIAN, 54.

BRIAN  
Thank you all for coming here! We  
have some exciting news to share  
with everyone. As you know Richard  
will be leaving us at the end of  
the month, and we have decided who  
will be taking over his position!

Raj grabs onto the sides of his chair.

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
Congrats to Chad! I know he has  
been here for a short while, but  
that short while has been  
extraordinary and we can't wait to  
see what he does in this position!

Raj loosens his grip. Everyone claps. Chad is shocked.

CHAD  
Oh wow! What an honor thank you!

Raj zones out, not registering what is happening around him.

**INT. RAJ'S WORK - LATER**

Raj walks back to his desk in disbelief. He sits down and stares at his laptop, and eventually opens up a spreadsheet and begins working.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - CALC CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON**

MR. EDWARDS, 45, stands in front of the classroom ready to hand out tests.

MR. EDWARDS

Ok class, you guys have 50 minutes for the test. Please come up to me if you have any questions.

Mr. Edwards hands out all the tests face down.

MR. EDWARDS (CONT'D)

And you can begin!

Esha flips over the test and reads the first question. Skip. Reads the second question. Skip. The third question. Skip. She eventually gets into a flow and begins answering question. Time is running out and she rushes the last couple.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - CALC CLASSROOM - LATER**

Mr. Edwards walks back up to the front of class.

MR. EDWARDS

Time's up! Please turn your tests in, and I will have these graded by the end of the week.

Esha waits until everyone has handed in their test, and walks up to Mr. Edwards.

ESHA

Hey, Mr. Edwards, can we still correct our answers for partial credit?

MR. EDWARDS

I'll decide that based on how everyone else does, but most probably yes.

ESHA

Thanks! Have a great day.

Esha walks out.

**INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING**

Divya and Esha sit and drink chai at the table.

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
Do you want to come to the library  
with me today?

ESHA  
I have a lot of work to finish.  
Maybe next time.

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
It's been so long. They all miss  
you.

ESHA  
I will come visit. I promise. Just  
not today.

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
I'll be back at 8.

Divya packs her backpack and heads out to catch the bus.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Esha takes her phone out and texts Liam.

"Coast is clear come over."

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - LATER**

Esha gets a notification.

"Here"

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Esha lets Liam in. He gives her a big hug, and they walk into  
the apartment.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Liam starts kissing Esha. Esha pulls away.

ESHA  
Woah woah, no hello?

Liam smirks.

LIAM

Hello.

Liam goes back to kissing her. Esha pulls back.

ESHA

How was your day?

LIAM

Better now that I'm with you

Esha smiles and goes back to kissing Liam. Liam starts taking her top off. Esha takes his shirt off. Liam moves his hand down and starts fingering her. Esha sighs.

LIAM (CONT'D)

You like that?

ESHA

Yeah...

Esha pretends to moan.

ESHA (CONT'D)

Oh so good?

Liam continues to go harder. Esha takes his hand away.

ESHA (CONT'D)

Let's focus on you for a second.

Esha begins giving him a handjob. Liam moans with pleasure.

**INT. LIBRARY - WORLD LANGUAGE SECTION - EVENING**

Divya waves to KELLY, 32, and takes a seat at the table. MARCO LOMBARDI, 27, comes in and takes a seat next to Divya. Soon most of the table is filled.

KELLY

Hello everyone! Welcome to the first class of the year! I see many familiar faces and some new ones. Let's go around and say our names, where we are from, and a little bit about yourself if you can! I'll start. My name is Kelly, and I am from New York but I was born in Georgia. I am studying to be a teacher and I volunteer here at the library!

Kelly gestures to the person to her right, BRIAN KIM, 35, a Korean man dressed in a plaid shirt.

BRIAN

Hello. I Brian, I come from Korea,  
and I uh... take care of Korean  
store downtown.

KELLY

Nice to meet you, Brian!

Next up is SANDRA GOMEZ, 36.

SANDRA

My name is Sandra, and I am from  
the Mexico. For the work... I  
clean.

KELLY

Nice to see you again Sandra!

Divya is up next.

DIVYA

Hello, my name is Divya... I am  
from India... I am mother.

KELLY

Good to see you again Divya!

SANDRA

Uh...

Sandra points to Divya's head.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Blood?

Divya gets startled.

DIVYA

Blood, blood! Where?

She starts looking all over her body.

Sandra points to her forehead, where her sindhoor lies. Divya sighs and laughs.

She touches her head, and the powder comes off on her finger.

DIVYA (CONT'D)

Sindhoor.

BRIAN

What is that?

DIVYA

Uh... Shaddi... for wedding. It shows I have husband.

SANDRA

Oh, like a wedding ring!

DIVYA

Yes, but on the head.

KELLY

Very good job explaining Divya, and thank you for sharing with us! Last but not least, Marco finish us off!

MARCO

Hello, everyone! I am Marco, and I'm from Italy, and I work as a haircutter.

KELLY

Wonderful! Amazing to meet all of you. To start off we are going to take a short test. Don't worry about doing good, I just want to see where people are so I can plan our classes.

Kelly hands out a packet and pencil to everyone.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Take all the time you need.

Divya opens her packet and starts. She goes through the packet answering some questions and leaving some questions blank.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Esha is still stroking Liam.

LIAM

Tighter. Faster.

Esha complies, going along with the motion.

Eventually Liam finishes all over himself.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Fuck Esha. That was great.

Esha hands him some tissues as they clean up. Liam cuddles up to her.

LIAM (CONT'D)  
How did I get such a hot girl like you.

ESHA  
(playfully)  
I wonder that too.

Liam laughs. Esha checks her phone.

ESHA (CONT'D)  
Fuck you have to leave now! My mom is going to be back any minute. Go go go!

Liam frantically gets up. He starts putting his clothes on.

The front door starts opening.

ESHA (CONT'D)  
SHIT she's back. Ok stay here. I'm going to go out and talk to her.

LIAM  
My shoes! They are outside.

ESHA  
I know! Fuck I hope she doesn't notice.

DIVYA (O.S.)  
Esha! I'm home betu!

Esha walks outside her room.

**INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Divya is putting her bag away. Esha walks up to her.

DIVYA  
Hello betu!

ESHA  
Hi mummi. I just woke up like ten minutes ago.

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
Ok. I am going to maki roti and rice. Do you want any fruit.

ESHA

Not right now. I think I am going to go for a run. Track has started, and I haven't practiced for a while.

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

Ok, be safe. Dinner will be ready when you are back.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Esha puts on her running shoes. She opens her door to make sure the coast is clear.

**INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Esha opens the front door, and quickly signals Liam to come out. He grabs his shoes from the front door and they both exit.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS**

Esha and Liam run outside until they are out of view of Esha's apartment.

ESHA

Holy shit that was close.

LIAM

I thought I was done for.

ESHA

It's fine it worked out.

LIAM

I'm so scared of your mom.

ESHA

She's not scary. She just doesn't want me to date... especially not a white boy, but what can I do. There are only white boys here.

LIAM

Hey, we aren't that bad.

ESHA

You aren't bad at all.



Esha gives Liam a kiss.

                  ESHA (CONT'D)  
I'll walk you half way, and then  
walk back. So it seems like I went  
on my run.

Esha and Liam walk off together.

**INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING**

The Singh family sits and eats their dinner. Raj plays with his food.

                  ESHA  
I had a really hard test today -

                  RAJ  
I am sure you did well on it.

                  ESHA  
Yeah... I think I did too.

                  DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
So was work good?

Raj shakes his head.

                  RAJ  
(In Hindi)  
Chad got the job.

                  ESHA  
What the fuck?

                  DIVYA  
Esha! Language!

                  ESHA  
Why? Didn't he just join like two  
years ago?

                  RAJ  
Yeah... but he has been doing good  
work.

                  ESHA  
And you haven't? That's such  
bullshit.

DIVYA

Esha! Language! (In Hindi) I'm not going to ask again.

ESHA

Are you not mad about this?

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

I am, but there is not much we can do. We have to keep our heads down and work.

ESHA

No! Dad, you deserve that promotion. You work harder than any dude named Chad, that's for sure. He probably used his frat connections to get that job and does the bare minimum and, then gets praised for it. Mediocre white men go so far, it's infuriating.

RAJ

That's not nice to say, Esha. He works hard.

ESHA

You have to work 10X harder to get the same stuff he does and it's ridiculous. Why aren't you upset?

RAJ

I am! But these things happen. It's the price we pay to be here.

ESHA

That's bullshit! You don't deserve less because you immigrated here.

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

Esha. Enough! Please use proper language.

Esha sighs.

ESHA

I hope Chad gets caught doing some white-collar crime and the company regrets their decision, knowing they had a better option right in front of them.

Raj laughs a little.

RAJ

Please don't pray for my company's  
downfall. I need this job to pay  
for your schooling.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - CALC CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON**

Mr. Edwards starts handing back the tests.

MR. EDWARDS

Great job, class! The class average  
was a 80, with the curve. I know  
this was a hard test, so you all  
should be proud of yourself.

Mr. Edwards hands Esha her test face down. She flips it over  
and sees a 83, her curved score. Esha groans.

MR. EDWARDS (CONT'D)

Please speak to me after class if  
you want to talk about your grade.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - CALC CLASSROOM - LATER**

Esha walks up to Mr. Edwards with the test in her hand.

ESHA

Mr. Edwards, are test corrections  
still on the table?

MR. EDWARDS

Yes of course! Please get them in  
by the end of next week and you  
should be good. But if I remember  
correctly you didn't do too bad.  
You were above average right?

ESHA

Yeah, but it still isn't good  
enough.

MR. EDWARDS

Don't be too hard on yourself Esha.  
You did well.

ESHA

Thank you, Mr. Edwards! I really  
appreciate it. But my parents won't  
accept an 83. I'll get the test  
corrections in.

Esha leaves the classroom.

**INT. FIELD HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON**

Students run around the track, practice hurdles, and long jump. Esha sits on the bleachers tying up her laces. Ava and Brittany show up behind her.

AVA

Want to ditch and get ice cream?

ESHA

Oh my god yes. Let me just tell Coach.

Esha walks up to Coach Gale holding her stomach and grimacing in pain.

ESHA (CONT'D)

Coach, I'm having real bad stomach cramps, girl problems, you know. Can I leave practice early?

Coach Gale looks uncomfortable.

COACH GALE

Oh of course, please take care of yourself.

Esha walks back to her friends.

BRITTANY

Isn't that the same excuse you used last week?

ESHA

Yea... According to Gale I've had my period for three straight weeks.

The girls laugh and head out of the field house.

**EXT. DAIRY QUEEN - LATE AFTERNOON**

The girls are sitting in Ava's car eating Blizzards.

BRITTANY

So my parents came back and Elise was still naked in my bed.

ESHA

Oh my god, what??

BRITTANY

She hid in my closet as I tried to quickly put my clothes on, and then went out, talked to them, and went right back into my room.

AVA

Elise was in the closet the entire time?

BRITTANY

Both literally and figuratively.

The girls laugh.

AVA

What about you Esha, anything going on with Liam?

ESHA

Eh, not really... He wants to have sex, and I want to as well - but like not with him. I can't explain it. I get myself off all the time, but when I'm with him it just feels like a chore. I don't know why. I like him... but I feel like my vagina doesn't?

BRITTANY

So, when are you going to listen to it?

ESHA

Aren't you supposed to listen to your heart? Or even better, your brain?

BRITTANY

No, dude. Vagina's are all knowing.

ESHA

Isn't that what guy's say? Don't they get in trouble for thinking with their dick? What do they say...

AVA

That they listen with the wrong head.

ESHA

Exactly!

BRITTANY

How dare you compare penises and vaginas. That's insulting. One is a beautiful, powerful, sensual, organ, that is capable of bringing life into this world, the other is a dangling around and gets hurt at the smallest of touches.

The girls laugh.

ESHA

Hmm. I'll give it some time and see. How's that.

BRITTANY

Fair enough. But I'm telling you girl, when a vagina knows, you will know.

The girls continue eating their ice cream.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - EARLY EVENING**

Esha is sitting on her bed doing work. Divya knocks on her door.

DIVYA

Esha?

ESHA

Yes?

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

Do you want to come to the library today?

Esha ponders for a second.

ESHA

Actually, yeah. I'll go today.

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

Really? Let's go, the bus will be here soon.

Esha puts her laptop in her bag and follows her mom out the door.

**INT. LIBRARY - WORLD LANGUAGE SECTION - EVENING**

The class takes a seat. Marco shows up late with a plate of cannolis.

MARCO

Hello, new friends! I made cannolis!

KELLY

Oh, how kind! Thank you, Marco.

Marco places the plate down in the middle of the table and the class digs in.

BRIAN

Wow, Marco. These very good.

SANDRA

I agree.

Divya looks at the cannoli, and slowly takes a bite. Her eyes widen.

DIVYA

Never before I have eaten something like this!

Marco laughs.

DIVYA (CONT'D)

Like barfi, but better! I don't know how it can be better than barfi.

The class laughs.

KELLY

What a great start to class. So today we are going to practice conversation, so please pair up and talk about your life!

Marco and Divya pair up.

MARCO

Italy is where I was born. I come here 8 months before. What about you?

DIVYA

I am born in India, and come here 14 years ago.

MARCO  
Oh long time here!

DIVYA  
Yes, long time.

MARCO  
Do you have any kids?

Divya hesitates.

DIVYA  
I have 2 kids. One son, and one daughter. What about you?

MARCO  
Not yet, but in the future. My partner and I are waiting for more... uh... stable.

DIVYA  
Yes. I understand. Raising kids very difficult with little money.

**INT. LIBRARY - CHILDREN'S SECTION - EVENING**

Esha walks into the children's section. To her right, she sees the front page of an old newspaper pinned to the wall with a photo of her holding a trophy. "Holliston Library's Very Own Wins National Spelling Bee!" GRACIE, 67, sits at the main desk.

GRACIE  
Oh, look who it is!

Gracie hobbles out of her desk and goes to hug Esha.

ESHA  
Hello, Ms. Gracie.

GRACIE  
It's been too long! How are you doing?

ESHA  
I'm doing well, school is a lot of work.

GRACIE  
I'm sure. It's so good to see you.

Gracie gives Esha one more squeeze.



GRACIE (CONT'D)  
Come sit, tell me what life has  
been like. I'm sure you are up to  
so much!

Esha takes a seat next to Gracie.

ESHA  
Well, I'm in the middle of college  
apps right now. It's very  
stressful.

GRACIE  
Nothing our Esha can't handle.

ESHA  
Yeah... and...

Esha takes a pause. Tears start welling up in her eyes. She holds them back.

ESHA (CONT'D)  
Actually, I think that is it for  
now, and just getting through  
school, and finishing up my last  
season of track.

GRACIE  
Oh that sounds great, Esha. I'm so  
happy to hear all this.

ESHA  
Thank you. Ms. Gracie.

Esha smiles a genuine smile for the first time in a while.

GRACIE  
How's Ajay doing?

Esha's smile wavers.

ESHA  
He is good. I haven't heard from  
him in a while. I think he is  
liking college.

GRACIE  
Oh, that's amazing. He always was  
such a quiet peaceful boy, but get  
him talking about space and he  
wouldn't stop.

Gracie laughs.

ESHA  
Yeah, I miss him.

GRACIE  
I'm sure you do.

GRACIE (CONT'D)  
Have you been reading anything  
interesting?

Esha thinks for a second.

ESHA  
Not really for pleasure, but I have  
to read a lot for classes. I really  
enjoyed Brave New World.

GRACIE  
That is a great book!

ESHA  
Yeah I really really liked the  
beginning, but the ending was kind  
of lackluster.

GRACIE  
Hmm, interesting you say that. Why?

Esha and Gracie continue talking.

**INT. DINING ROOM - LATE EVENING**

Divya and Esha arrive back from the library and help set the  
table. Raj is sitting in the living room waiting for them.  
They take seats and begin serving themselves.

RAJ  
How was everything today?

DIVYA  
Good good, class was fun.

RAJ  
What about you Esha?

ESHA  
Yeah, it was good to be back and  
talk to Gracie. I haven't seen her  
in a while. We talked about classes  
and books and Ajay.

Beat.

Divya looks over to Esha. Raj continues eating.

RAJ

Yeah so how are classes going?

ESHA

They're fine. Nothing too special.  
Just trying to keep my grades up  
for applications.

RAJ

Good, good. We expect nothing less  
from our little champion.

Esha winces at that word and continues to silently eat.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - LATER**

Esha takes her phone out and texts, AJAY, 21.

"Gracie brought you up today"

Her phone immediately buzzes back.

Ajay: "oh how I miss her"

Esha: "Can I call?"

Ajay: "Is it safe for you?"

Esha calls her brother.

ESHA

So, how are you doing?

AJAY (FILTERED)

Eh, could be better, you?

ESHA

Same, just trying to finish up  
college apps.

AJAY (FILTERED)

Oh! How's that going? Do you need  
any help?

ESHA

Bruh, I'm struggling. I could not  
handle last year. It was too much.  
I don't have like any energy left.

AJAY (FILTERED)

Yeah, I don't know why you signed up for that many APs. I told you it would be too much.

ESHA

You know I have to... I can't not...

AJAY (FILTERED)

I know... Hey, I guess that's the good thing about being the fuck up. No one expects anything out of you.

ESHA

Bhaiya, you're not a fuck up. You go to fucking Columbia.

AJAY (FILTERED)

Try telling our parents that Ms. Champion.

ESHA

You know I hate that nick-name, and don't drag mom into this. She never said anything.

AJAY (FILTERED)

That's the point. She never said anything.

ESHA

She's getting better I promise... It's just... You know how dad can get.

AJAY (FILTERED)

When I hear from her, I'll believe it. For now, she's in the same boat as Raj.

DIVYA (O.S.)

Esha! Come say hi to your nani.

ESHA

Shit I have to go. Actually do you mind reading over my applications? I'll share them with you tonight.

AJAY (FILTERED)

Yes for sure. Text me when you do and I'll take a look at them. Take care dude. You know.

ESHA

I know.

Esha ends the call and heads out.

**INT. COLLEGE DORM - SAME**

Ajay turns his phone off. On his bed, NICK, 22, is shirtless on his phone.

AJAY

Sorry that was Esha.

NICK

You're so good. How is she doing?

AJAY

Good, she's in the middle of applying to colleges so we will see how that goes.

NICK

Ah, I remember those times... soo.. How are your parents?

AJAY

I don't know and I don't care.

NICK

How was your astro exam today?

Ajay smiles.

AJAY

Oh it went so well! I am so excited about what we are learning in the next couple of weeks! It's all about...

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Esha opens up her laptop and types away.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - CALC CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON**

Mr. Edwards is standing in front of the class.

MR. EDWARDS

Last call for test corrections.

Esha's eyes widen. She rummages through her backpack and doesn't find her test. She starts panicking. Students around her walk up and hand Mr. Edwards their corrections. Esha slumps in her chair in defeat.

MR. EDWARDS (CONT'D)  
Thank you all! I will get these  
grades in asap.

**INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING**

Divya gets ready to leave.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Divya stops by to ask if she wants to come to the library and sees Esha sleeping.

DIVYA  
Betu?

Esha groans.

DIVYA (CONT'D)  
(In Hindi)  
I am going to class ok. Text me if  
you need anything.

Esha groans again.

Divya heads out.

**INT. LIBRARY - WORLD LANGUAGE SECTION - EVENING**

The class is chatting with each other waiting for class to start.

KELLY  
Hello class! Today we will be doing  
reading comprehension. We are going  
to read an article about the  
forgotten woman of the Eiffel  
tower, and then talk about it!

Kelly hands out the article and the class starts reading.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Esha gets up from her nap and checks her phone. She responds to some messages.

ESHA  
                  (Yelling)  
MUMMI!!

No response.

                  ESHA (CONT'D)  
MUMMI!!

Esha takes out her phone and texts Liam to come over.

**INT. LIBRARY - WORLD LANGUAGE SECTION - LATER**

The class finishes reading the article.

                  KELLY  
So what did we think about it?

                  BRIAN  
It was very interesting. I didn't  
know any of this.

                  SANDRA  
Yes, and very sad also.

                  KELLY  
I agree. Women tend to be written  
out of history.

                  MARCO  
This happens to my people as well.

                  BRIAN  
The Italians?

                  MARCO  
No the gay community. We also can  
be forgotten.

The class goes silent for a bit. Divya shifts uncomfortably  
in her seat.

                  KELLY  
You're very right, Marco. The LGBT  
community also tends to get written  
out.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Liam and Esha are making out on her bed. He starts pushing  
her head down. Esha resists a little. She uses her hands  
instead. Liam tries pushing her head down again.

ESHA

I'll get there. Let me do it at my own pace.

LIAM

You're pace can be really slow sometimes Esha.

Esha sighs and slowly starts going down. She hesitates for a bit, and comes back up.

ESHA

I really don't want to do this Liam. Not right now.

LIAM

Ok fine, if you don't want to go down on me, can we try to have sex?

ESHA

Uh.. I want to, but like my vagina doesn't... Does that make sense?

LIAM

What the fuck? No, not at all.

ESHA

I still like you. I just think that my body needs to get used to you more.

LIAM

It's been over almost a year Esha. How much longer does it need to take?

ESHA

I don't know! It just doesn't seem ready.

LIAM

Uh I think we should like take a break...

ESHA

Because I don't want to have sex?

LIAM

No Esha, you don't want to have sex with me. That's why.

Esha starts tearing up.



ESHA  
I'll get there I promise. I just  
need my own pace.

LIAM  
We are graduating soon anyway. I  
don't see the point of this.

ESHA  
So that's it? You are going to  
throw away a year over this.

LIAM  
I'm sorry.

Liam leaves Esha's room.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Esha curls up and falls asleep.

**INT. LIBRARY - WORLD LANGUAGE SECTION - LATER**

As class ends Divya walks up to Marco.

DIVYA  
Marco... I have question.

MARCO  
Yes?

DIVYA  
My son also... gay

MARCO  
Oh wow!

DIVYA  
What do I do?

MARCO  
What do you mean?

DIVYA  
I don't know what to do.

MARCO  
Nothing. You continue with same  
stuff. He is still your son.

DIVYA  
My husband don't talk to him  
anymore.

Marco's smile falters.

MARCO  
Ohh. I see. Do you?

DIVYA  
Not so much. I want to. He is still  
my son.

MARCO  
Then talk to him.

DIVYA  
I just...

MARCO  
I know, it's hard. But we are  
people too. I am people too.

DIVYA  
Thank you Marco. I will try.

**INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING**

The Singh family is sitting, eating dinner.

RAJ  
Did you see there was a letter for  
you?

ESHA  
Oh really, what for?

Esha walks over to the shelf and shuffles through the letters  
until she sees her name.

RAJ  
It's from Scripps.

Esha opens the envelope.

ESHA  
"Dear Esha Singh, We hope you have  
been doing well. We want to extend  
an invitation to our 90th annual  
spelling bee. This is a landmark  
year and we would love to have past  
winners be present.

(MORE)

ESHA (CONT'D)

Please let us know if you are able to make it, and we can arrange for you and your family's travels."

DIVYA

So exciting!

RAJ

Wow, 90 years! You are part of history, beta. This will be so fun.

ESHA

I don't know if I can make the dates, I might have a meet that weekend.

RAJ

You can miss a meet. You aren't even good at track. We are going.

Esha sighs and puts the letter down on the dining table, as Raj and Divya look over it.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING**

Divya sits watching an Indian drama on her tablet, while Esha is on her phone next to her.

DIVYA

Beta?

ESHA

Yes Mummi?

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

Don't tell your dad about this ok.

ESHA

About what?

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

Can you help me write a text to Ajay?

Esha perks up.

ESHA

(In Hindi)

You want to talk to Ajay?

DIVYA  
 (In Hindi)  
 He is my son. I don't think he did anything wrong.

ESHA  
 (In Hindi)  
 Then why didn't you say anything Mummi?

DIVYA  
 (In Hindi)  
 Esha... It isn't that easy.

Esha scoots over to Divya and Divya takes her phone out.

ESHA  
 (In Hindi)  
 What do you want to say to him?

DIVYA  
 (In Hindi)  
 I just want to see how he's doing.

Divya pulls up WhatsApp. She types "How are you beta"

DIVYA (CONT'D)  
 (In Hindi)  
 Is this good?

ESHA  
 (In Hindi)  
 Yes, hit send.

**INT. COLLEGE DORM - CONTINUOUS**

Ajay's phone buzzes. He looks over and sees a message from "Mom" He smiles. He quickly responds.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - LATER**

Esha's phone buzzes. It's a text from Ajay.

"Safe to call?"

She dials Ajay.

AJAY (FILTERED)  
 So I got a text from mom today. Do you know anything about that?

ESHA

No, she actually asked me to help her send you the text, I was very surprised and happy.

AJAY (FILTERED)

You didn't make her send it?

ESHA

No, she wanted to.

AJAY (FILTERED)

Oh wow, that's really good to hear.

ESHA

See I told you she is getting better. She just doesn't know how to go about it all because of dad.

AJAY (FILTERED)

I know, Raj can be a lot. I just wish he would take time to listen, and be a little more open-minded.

ESHA

It's hard for him. He isn't used to it all.

AJAY (FILTERED)

That doesn't excuse it, I know it's hard. But he can at least make an effort, look at mom she is making an effort. Why can't he?

ESHA

You have a point. Just be a little patient with them. They want what's best for us.

AJAY (FILTERED)

At what cost though?

There is a moment of silence between them.

ESHA

I've been wondering the same thing recently.

AJAY (FILTERED)

Esha, take care of yourself ok. Remember to do that, and don't listen to everything they say.

ESHA  
I know, it's just hard not to.

                  AJAY (FILTERED)  
Trust me, I know.

They laugh.

                  ESHA  
Bhaiya... I had a really uh... how  
I...

                  AJAY (FILTERED)  
Yes?

                  ESHA  
It's kind of embarrassing...

                  AJAY (FILTERED)  
One second Esha. - I'm on the phone  
with my sister! Be there in a  
second! - Ok, I have to head out,  
but good speaking to you. Thanks  
for helping mom out, I appreciate  
it.

Esha sighs.

                  ESHA  
Of course, anytime bhaiya.

The phone call ends, and Esha goes back on her laptop.

**INT. DINING ROOM - LATE EVENING**

Raj finishes up some work. He gets an email notification from  
Columbia.

"Spring Term Tuition Due"

He sighs. He opens the email and goes to the link. He puts  
his bank info in and calls it a night.

**INT. COLLEGE DORM - MOMENTS LATER**

Ajay edits Esha's essays. He gets an email notification.

"Spring Term Bill Update."

He opens it and sees that he has been paid. He opens his messages with his dad to thank him, only to see the same message from last semester with no response. He leaves the messages and goes back on Instagram.

**INT. FIELD HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON**

After a long workout, the students head to their locker rooms. Esha walks to the corner and steps on the scale. She looks down at the number smiles and steps off.

**INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Esha takes a seat at the dining room table, as everything is already set.

RAJ  
Esha...

ESHA  
Yes?

RAJ  
Have you heard back from any colleges yet?

ESHA  
About what?

RAJ  
Any acceptances?

ESHA  
Not yet, I am still waiting.

RAJ  
You didn't apply early?

ESHA  
I tried to, but I couldn't finish my essays in time. I wasn't happy with anything that I wrote.

RAJ  
Esha, what will this look like. You should have applied early.

ESHA  
Why do you care what this looks like? That doesn't matter!

RAJ

Yes it does! What will people say when they hear that our daughter didn't get in anywhere early. Let alone apply. What an embarrassment. Get this up before the bee, Esha.

ESHA

I will. I just -

RAJ

Do you need a tutor? We can get you a writing tutor, that's ok. Just let us know.

ESHA

I can handle it, I will figure it out.

RAJ

Good, that is what I like to hear from our little champion.

Esha winces at the word.

ESHA

Dad, please don't call me that.

RAJ

Why? You are our little champion.

ESHA

I was...

RAJ

No, you still are! That was just the start. You have so much more to achieve.

Esha sighs.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - CALC CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON**

As students filter out Esha walks up to Mr. Edwards.

ESHA

I know my performance in class isn't as good as it should be.



MR. EDWARDS

What do you mean as it should be, you're struggling a little that's ok. Also last time I checked your grade is a B, that's not bad Esha.

ESHA

I can't have a B, Mr. Edwards. My parents would be so upset by that.

MR. EDWARDS

They are your grades Esha.

ESHA

It is a reflection of them. I need to get it up. Is there anything I can do?

MR. EDWARDS

I have after-school sessions, why don't you stop by some of those, and I can give you some extra credit.

ESHA

Really? Thank you so much! Will that be enough to get it bumped up to an A-?

MR. EDWARDS

Esha, It's not all about getting all A's.

ESHA

Try telling that to my parents.

MR. EDWARDS

Esha, as long as you put the effort in and try that's all I care about. Failure is normal. You know I failed two of my math classes in college, and I'm still here teaching math.

ESHA

You failed classes?

MR. EDWARDS

Yeah, and then I took them again and learned. Nothing wrong with failing, don't be scared of it, it only makes you a stronger person.

ESHA

Thank you, Mr. Edwards, I think I really needed to hear that.

MR. EDWARDS

I know senior year can be tough on people. Take care of yourself ok, and goodness get those test corrections in.

Esha laughs.

ESHA

Will do! Have a great weekend Mr. Edwards.

MR. EDWARDS

You too, Esha!

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Esha is packing her bags while jamming out to music.

**INT. DINING ROOM - EARLY MORNING**

The Singh family is standing with their suitcases.

ESHA

The flight isn't for 5 hours. Why are we leaving now?

RAJ

One hour to get there, also just in case we hit traffic don't want to be late.

ESHA

That still leaves 3 more hours for a domestic flight.

RAJ

Security always takes forever.

Esha sighs.

RAJ (CONT'D)

You packed everything?

ESHA

Yes.

RAJ

I have printed the boarding passes.  
I have our passports and our green  
cards.

ESHA

You know they have boarding passes  
on our phones now, right?

RAJ

What if it dies, or there is no  
internet. We always print Esha.

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

Before we go! Eat a spoon of yogurt  
and sugar.

They all eat a spoon of yogurt. Divya quickly hurries to the  
sink and washes the bowl.

DIVYA (CONT'D)

(In Hindi)

Ok good to go. I have packed  
snacks.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER**

The Singh family car zooms down the interstate, with no  
traffic in sight.

**INT. AIRPORT - MORNING**

The Singh family arrives at the bustling airport. Raj is  
holding onto all their IDs and boarding passes. They walk up  
to the desk to check-in. Raj hands the attendant their IDs  
and boarding passes.

**INT. AIRPORT - SECURITY LINE**

The Singh family gets through a short line of security,  
without any hassles.

**INT. AIRPORT - LATER**

The Singh family sits down waiting for their flight.

ESHA

Dad our gate isn't even open yet!  
This is the plane boarding before  
ours.

RAJ

That means we are on time.

Esha shakes her head in disbelief.

ESHA

What am I going to do for the next  
two and a half hours?

RAJ

I think studying for mathematics  
might be a good idea.

Esha rolls her eyes and takes her phone out and begins  
scrolling through Instagram.

#### **INT. AIRPORT - LATER**

The Singh family is all doing their own thing. Divya is  
knitting. Raj is reading a book, and Esha is on her laptop.

ESHA

Mummi I'm hungry. Can we...

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

I brought puri and potatoes. Eat  
up.

Divya takes out aluminum wrapped puris, and a container of  
potatoes from her purse.

Esha sighs and eats what she has been given.

#### **INT. PLANE - LATER**

The Singh family boards the plane and gets situated in their  
seats.

#### **EXT. AIRPORT - MOMENTS LATER**

The plane takes off.

**EXT. DIFFERENT AIRPORT - HOURS LATER**

The plane lands.

**INT. CALIFORNIA AIRPORT - LATE AFTERNOON**

The Singh family walks off the plane and picks up their luggage.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - AFTERNOON**

The Singh family gets situated in their hotel room.

ESHA

They are having an event for  
Spelling Bee Alumni, I'm going to  
head down.

DIVYA

Ok have fun, beta.

Esha leaves the room.

RAJ

(In Hindi)

Remember the first time we came  
here.

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

Esha was so young, only 9 years  
old. Everyone all together. So much  
fun.

Raj pauses.

RAJ

(In Hindi)

Yeah... This is even better now.  
Coming back with a champion.

**INT. EVENT HALL - LATER**

Esha walks up to the front desk, where FRANCINE, 52, sits.

FRANCINE

Name please?

ESHA

Esha Singh.

FRANCINE

Ohh Esha! So good to see you again.  
All you winners look the same, it's  
tough to keep track of you all.

ESHA

Haha yeah...

Francine checks her off the list and hands her a name tag.

FRANCINE

Have a great time!

Esha walks away from the table and wanders around the event hall. She walks up to the snack table. ROHIT MAHAJAN, 18, walks up to her.

ROHIT

Well, well, well, if it isn't the  
spelling bee's darling, Esha Singh.

Esha turns around and her eyes widen.

ESHA

Oh funny seeing you here. When was  
the last time I saw you?

Beat.

ESHA (CONT'D)

Oh, that's right, when you lost to  
me, right?

Rohit chuckles.

ROHIT

R-E-D-E-M-P-T-I-O-N. I did win the  
very next year, hence why I am  
present.

ESHA

Yeah, because I wasn't there to  
beat you.

ROHIT

Because you weren't there to  
distract me.

Esha feels the blood rush up to her cheeks.

ESHA

Yeah ok silly boy, you're being  
very G-A-R-R-U-L-I-T-Y.

Rohit smirks at her.

ROHIT  
Are we bringing out the spelling  
bee words now?

ESHA  
Just had to remind you of your  
place, which was 2nd right?

Rohit laughs.

ROHIT  
So how has life been without the  
spelling bee?

ESHA  
Honestly, kind of tough.

ROHIT  
Aw really, I'm sorry to hear that.

ESHA  
It's ok. It do be like that  
sometimes. What about you?

ROHIT  
Now I feel bad about what I was  
going to say.

ESHA  
No no, say it!

ROHIT  
Well, it's been pretty good. I  
can't really complain.

ESHA  
I'm really glad to hear that!

They both walk around, briefly talking to the other winners,  
munching on their snacks.

ESHA (CONT'D)  
This blows. I hate everyone here.  
Obnoxious Indian people are the  
worse.

ROHIT  
Hey you can't say that.

ESHA  
I'm Indian. I can say that. Others  
can't, but I sure as hell can.

ROHIT  
I have an idea.

ESHA  
I'm listening.

ROHIT  
Want to ditch? I have a fake, I can  
get us some alcohol.

ESHA  
Oo, who knew Rohit was such a bad  
boy.

Rohit laughs.

ROHIT  
You don't know the half of it.  
Follow me.

Rohit and Esha leave the event hall.

**INT. HOTEL PATIO - LATE NIGHT**

Esha and Rohit pass around a bottle of vodka, taking swigs  
out of the bottle.

ESHA  
Who would have thought we would end  
up here.

ROHIT  
I mean I always had a little thing  
for you.

ESHA  
Shut up. That's stupid.

ROHIT  
But I'm serious. I mean it sucked  
to lose, but it made it more ok  
that it was to you.

Esha tries to stop her smile. She scoots closer to Rohit.

ESHA  
I mean it did feel good beating  
you, but it will feel even better  
doing this.

Esha and Rohit lean in for a kiss. They stop and look at each  
other, smile, and continue going. Esha gets on top of Rohit,  
straddling him. They begin making out.



ESHA (CONT'D)  
 Woah, let's head somewhere that  
 isn't this public.

                  ROHIT  
 Agreed.

Esha and Rohit enter the hotel lobby, giggling the entire time.

**INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

They walk around eventually finding an empty supply closet and stumble in.

**INT. HOTEL SUPPLY CLOSET - CONTINUOUS**

Esha and Rohit can't keep their hands off each other.

                  ESHA  
 You know what I'm going to do to  
 you?

                  ROHIT  
 Say it... no spell it.

                  ESHA  
 F-E-L-L-A-T-I-O

                  ROHIT  
 Fucking hell you're so hot.

Esha slowly kisses down Rohit's body. Rohit sits back and let's Esha do her thing.

**INT. HOTEL SUPPLY CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER**

Rohit brings Esha's head up.

                  ROHIT  
 Wait, before I finish. It's your  
 turn.

Rohit starts kissing down her body as he spells.

                  ROHIT (CONT'D)  
 C-U-N-N-I-L-I-N-G-U-S

Esha arches as back as Rohit goes down on her. She moans in pleasure.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER**

Esha pops a breath mint in her mouth and tries to sneak back into her hotel room.

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
Why so late?

ESHA  
I was out catching up with old spelling bee friends.

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
Aw ok, that is nice. How were they?

ESHA  
(In Hindi)  
Mummi I had so much fun. We talked about all our memories from growing up. There aren't many kids who get this experience so it was nice to talk to them.

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
Good. Now go to bed. Long day ahead.

**INT. BANQUET HALL - MORNING**

The Singh family walks into the banquet hall. It is adorned with flowers and a massive stage. The Spelling Bee officials are walking around talking it up to past champions. There is a bee mascot walking near the photo booth.

ESHA  
Wow, they really went all out for this.

Esha looks around trying to find Rohit. She eventually finds him and his family, PREETI, 39, and ABHISHEK, 42, by the drink station.

ESHA (CONT'D)  
Do we want some drinks?

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
Yes let's go get drinks.

The Singh family makes their way to the drink table.

ABHISHEK  
Oh, look it's Esha!

ESHA  
Hello Uncle, how are you?

ABHISHEK  
I've been well. Good to see you all  
after all these years.

RAJ  
Yes it's been so long.

ABHISHEK  
How have you guys been?

RAJ  
Very good, how about you.

ABHISHEK  
Oh, exceptional! Our son is headed  
to Harvard next fall. We are so  
proud of him. He got in early so,  
no worries anymore.

Esha widens her eyes and looks at Rohit. Rohit looks at his feet.

RAJ  
Wow congratulations, man. That is  
very impressive.

ABHISHEK  
What about Esha, where is she  
headed?

RAJ  
We are still waiting to hear back  
from schools, but I hope she stays  
in Massachusetts as well.

ABHISHEK  
I'm sure you do, and I'm sure she  
will. Our champions always do well.

Esha winces at that word.

RAJ  
Let's go take a picture of all of  
us with the bee.

Esha and Rohit laugh. The two families head over to the photo booth and take turns taking photos with the bee. Esha and Rohit can barely keep it together.

Esha and Rohit step away.

ESHA  
What is up with the bee?

ROHIT  
I know it's ridiculous. But I kind  
of like it.

ESHA  
You weirdo... You didn't tell me  
you were going to Harvard??

ROHIT  
I didn't want to make a big deal  
out of it.

ESHA  
Dude that's amazing. I'm so happy  
for you!!

Rohit smiles.

ROHIT  
Thanks, hopefully you can join me?

ESHA  
I don't know, man. I don't think I  
will get in.

ROHIT  
You never know! And even if you  
don't it isn't the end of the  
world.

ESHA  
Yeah, I'm sure my parents would  
disagree.

ROHIT  
Oh trust me I know.

Esha looks into his eyes.

ROHIT (CONT'D)  
You know you are amazing no matter  
what, right? You wowed me since you  
were nine and you threw your fruit  
punch at the girl.

ESHA  
She told me I smelled like curry.  
She deserved it. I'm surprised I  
wasn't disqualified...

ROHIT  
She 100% deserved it.

Esha laughs a genuine laugh for the first time in a while.

ROHIT (CONT'D)  
I remember thinking, don't fuck  
with that girl. She will put you in  
your place.

Esha laughs.

ESHA  
It seems like I've been put in my  
place currently.

ROHIT  
It's seems like a cool place since  
I'm here.

ESHA  
Hey, you are bringing down the  
coolness points - don't forget  
that. I mean you won the spelling  
bee, what a nerd.

ROHIT  
So did you!

ESHA  
Yeah, but it's cool when I do it.

Rohit laughs.

Divya walks up to Esha.

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
Let's go take a seat at our table.  
The ceremony is starting.

Esha waves bye to Rohit and heads back to her family.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - EARLY EVENING**

Esha's phone buzzes. It's a message from Rohit.

"Want to finish the bottle from last night?"

Esha responds, "Fuck yes, patio in 30?"

Rohit: "cya there!"

Esha runs to her backpack and looks for a razor. She hops in the shower, contorting her body in many different ways to try to shave every nook and cranny.

She hops out of the shower and gets ready.

ESHA

Mummi! I am going to hang out with some of the other kids. Text me if you are worried ok. I might be out late.

DIVYA

Ok stay safe betu. (In Hindi) Do you have the hotel room card?

ESHA

Yes! See you later.

Esha speeds out of her hotel room.

**EXT. HOTEL PATIO - LATER**

Rohit is waiting with the remaining vodka and a little bouquet of flowers. Esha's heart skips a beat.

ESHA

That's really corny.

ROHIT

I know you like it.

ESHA

Shut up.

ROHIT

I stole it from the banquet hall.

ESHA

Wait, really? That's even better. I love that.

Rohit gives her a big hug.

ROHIT

I really like you, you know.

ESHA

Woah woah calm down, it's been two days,

ROHIT  
And a crush that's been festering  
for the past 6 years or so...

ESHA  
It's a stupid crush.

ROHIT  
Oh yeah, is that why you dressed up  
for this?

ESHA  
Hey, this is about you, not me.

Rohit passes the bottle to Esha.

ROHIT  
After you, madame.

Esha takes a swig.

**EXT. HOTEL PATIO - LATER**

Rohit and Esha are clearly very tipsy and are laughing their hearts out.

ESHA  
Rohit, I think that I like you  
too...

ROHIT  
I'm sorry, what did you say.

ESHA  
Don't make me say it again.

Rohit leans in and kisses her,

ROHIT  
Oh, I already knew that. You  
wouldn't have done what you did  
last time if you didn't

ESHA  
There is more where that came from.

Rohit raises his eyebrows.

ROHIT  
Oh really?

ESHA  
F-O-R-N-I-C-A-T-E

Esha spells it out as she gently strokes Rohit's arms.

ROHIT  
We need to leave this patio  
immediately, otherwise, bad things  
are gonna happen.

Esha and Rohit interlock fingers and run into the hotel.

**INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Esha and Rohit run down the hallway checking for open rooms.  
Every single room is locked.

ROHIT  
Same place as last time?

ESHA  
Do you think we are fucking in a  
supply closet? I'm horny, but not  
that horny. Let's check the banquet  
hall.

**INT. BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS**

Esha and Rohit turn the door handle to find the door open.  
The decorations from earlier in the day are still set up,  
along with the bee costume. They look over at the bee costume  
and burst out laughing.

ESHA  
Put it on!

ROHIT  
No way. You first.

Esha walks up to the costume and puts the head on. Rohit  
takes a picture.

ROHIT (CONT'D)  
Let me get a selfie with the bee!

Esha poses.

ESHA  
Your turn!

ROHIT  
No way I'm getting into that thing.



ESHA

Yeah, you're not getting out of this.

Esha passes him the head and he puts it on. Esha takes a photo. He takes the head off and they take a selfie. Esha puts the head back on him and makes him dance. The door starts to open, a SECURITY GUARD, walks in.

SECURITY GUARD

Hey you aren't supposed to be in here!

Rohit and Esha panic.

ESHA

Shit, run Rohit!

Esha grabs their shirts. Esha and Rohit, with the bee head still on start running.

**INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

Esha and Rohit take a pause. Esha looks up and bursts into laughter. Rohit takes the head off.

ROHIT

Holy fuck.

ESHA

You ran away with the head on!  
You're insane Rohit.

Rohit leans in and gives Esha a kiss.

ESHA (CONT'D)

Oh that's right. Can we continue where we left off?

ROHIT

Where? We aren't doing the supply closet again.

Esha and Rohit walk around the hallway. They come across an empty open room calling their name. Rohit eyes Esha. Esha is one step ahead already entering the room.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Rohit and Esha are making out on the bed. The bee head is sitting on the table watching. Things are hot and heavy.

ESHHA  
Do you?

ROHIT  
Do you?

ESHHA  
I don't have a condom...

ROHIT  
Neither do I...

ESHHA  
It should be fine right? What are  
the chances anything will happen.

ROHIT  
Are you sure?

ESHHA  
Yeah, just pull out.

Rohit tries to enter.

ESHHA (CONT'D)  
Ow!

ROHIT  
Are you ok?

ESHHA  
Yeah, just can you try a different  
angle?

ROHIT  
Sure.

Rohit moves around and tries a new position.

ESHHA  
Ow owww!

Rohit grabs a pillow.

ESHHA (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

ROHIT  
I saw this online.

Rohit places the pillow underneath Esha's back. He tries to enter again, this time it works.



ESHA

Oh no, it was actually mine too, I mean I've done other things just not all the way.

ROHIT

Really? I would not expect that.

ESHA

The dudes at my high school suck.

ROHIT

Most dudes do.

Beat.

ESHA

Rohit, This isn't the end, right? You're not just going to fuck and duck, right?

ROHIT

No, I wouldn't do that to you.

Rohit kisses her forehead.

ESHA

Promise?

ROHIT

P-R-O-M-I-S-E

Esha smiles.

ROHIT (CONT'D)

Can I walk you back to your hotel room?

ESHA

One floor below, I don't want my parents hearing a dude's voice.

ROHIT

Very fair.

Rohit and Esha leave the hotel room, leaving the bee head there.

**INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

Esha and Rohit kiss goodbye.

ROHIT  
Hope to see you soon!

ESHA  
Me too.

ROHIT  
Good night.

ESHA  
Good night.

Esha can't stop smiling as she walks up the stairs to her floor.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

She quietly enters her room and gets under the covers. The smile is still there on her face, and she can't seem to get rid of it.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON**

Esha, Ava, and Brittany eat lunch.

ESHA  
And then! A security guard came in  
and we ran out of the hall with our  
shirts off.

AVA  
Holy shit what?!

BRITTANY  
Esha! I can't believe these words  
are coming out of your mouth. Who  
are you?

AVA  
Yeah who knew spelling bee nerds  
went this hard?

ESHA  
Oh, he went hard all right!

AVA  
ESHA!

They all laugh.

ESHA  
I get sex now. Like I see why  
people do it.

AVA  
Right? Isn't it great?

BRITTANY  
I'm glad that you listened to your  
vagina.

ESHA  
Yea, I hate to say it but you were  
right. It is all knowing. I had no  
hesitations with this boy.

BRITTANY  
Ava! Tell Esha the exciting news!

Esha raises her eyebrows.

ESHA  
What's up?

AVA  
I have the house free this weekend!

BRITTANY  
You know what that means!

AVA  
Time to throw down!

ESHA  
Eyyy!

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - CALC CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON**

Mr. Edwards stands in front of a small group of students.

MR. EDWARDS  
Hello, everyone, welcome to our  
afterschool review session! We will  
be going over integrals today and  
any questions you have on them!

Esha sits with her notebook out and raises her hand.

**INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING**

The Singh family finished their dinner and are talking.

ESHA

Mummi I have a sleepover at Ava's house today. We have a math test and wanted to study and figured we can also hang out a little is that ok.

Divya sighs and looks at Raj.

DIVYA

Ok go.

Esha lights up.

ESHA

Thank you mummi! I'll be back tomorrow morning.

**INT. AVA'S HOUSE - AVA'S ROOM - LATER**

Esha walks into Ava's room in sweats. She takes them off and underneath it she has a mini skirt, and a crop top.

AVA

Ooo looking good!

ESHA

Thank you! I borrowed it from Brittany.

**INT. AVA'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

MONTAGE

The three girls set up for the party. They move any delicate objects into the closet. They set up speakers. They put out snacks. They write little notes to the neighbors, with cookies attached, letting them know to text them in case they have any complaints, they put all the alcohol out.

AVA

We did that!

Brittany pours out three shots.

BRITTANY

Cheers to the best friends I could ask for.

They clink their glasses and down their first round of shots.

**INT. AVA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - LATER**

Teens are crowding the rooms, as music blares around them. Esha, Ava, and Brittany are ready to do a round of shots.

                  ESHA  
To senior year!

                  AVA  
Cheers!

They clink their shot glasses and down some cheap vodka. Brittany and ELISE, 20, walks over to the dining room table where beer pong is happening.

Esha pours herself a shot of tequila.

                  ESHA  
Tequila! T-E-Q-U-I-L-A Tequila!!

Her friends cheer. Esha takes another shot.

                  ESHA (CONT'D)  
V-O-D-K-A Vodka!!

**INT. AVA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Esha calls Rohit. He doesn't answer. She leaves him a voicemail.

                  ESHA  
Helloooo. I am so horny right now,  
and am missing you and your dick so  
much. I can't stop thinking about  
that night - holy shit Rohit that  
was....

**INT. AVA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER**

Esha stumbles around the living room eventually falling into the couch. A group of teens, FRANCO, 18, RILEY, 16, AUGUST, 18, and KIM, 17.

                  FRANCO  
Hey, spelling bee champion, how do  
you spell LIGMA?

Esha takes a pause, not recognizing that word.

                  ESHA  
Can you use it in a sentence,  
please?



FRANCO  
Ligma balls!

Everyone laughs around them.

ESHA  
Hey hey. I want redemption. Give me  
an actual word.

Riley looks up a long word.

RILEY  
Ok ok, here we go. Spell fewtrils?

ESHA  
Definition please.

RILEY  
Things of little value. "The  
beachcomber gathered fewtrils from  
the sand, ever optimistic that  
someone, at a garage sale  
somewhere, would want to buy them."

ESHA  
Oh, like Franco's dick?

People laugh around her.

ESHA (CONT'D)  
Ok hmm F-E-W-T-R-I-L...L-S

August mimics the sound of a bell.

AUGUST  
Oof, unfortunately, that is  
incorrect. You added an extra L.

RILEY  
Looks like the spelling bee  
champion is no more.

Esha immediately snaps.

ESHA  
Oh really? I'm sorry did you win  
the spelling bee at 11? No, I don't  
think so, go on spell clinquant...  
Go.

Ava sees the commotion and walks over to Esha.

AVA  
Let's go get some water.

She walks Esha over to the sink and hands her a glass of water.

AVA (CONT'D)  
Drink this.

Esha chugs the water and Ava makes her take a seat.

AVA (CONT'D)  
No more alcohol for you tonight,  
ok.

Esha nods her head and slumps onto the chair.

**INT. AVA'S HOUSE - MORNING**

Esha wakes up. Ava is already up on her phone. Esha groans.

ESHA  
My head hurts really badly.

AVA  
Yeah, you went pretty hard last  
night.

ESHA  
Oh god, did I start spelling again?

Ava laughs.

AVA  
Yes.

ESHA  
Ugh, I hate when I do that.

Brittany pops up from the ground.

BRITTANY  
You kept spelling tequila whenever  
you took a shot of tequila.

ESHA  
Oh god.

Brittany and Ava laugh.

AVA  
Nerd alert!

Esha checks her phone, she sees a missed call and a message from Rohit.

"lol looks like you had a fun night last night. I miss you too <3"

She smiles.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING**

Esha is typing away on her laptop.

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

I am going to the library, want to join?

ESHA

Hmm. Yes. I can talk to Gracie for a bit.

Esha and Divya head out.

**INT. LIBRARY - WORLD LANGUAGE SECTION**

Divya sits down next to Marco.

DIVYA

I text my son.

Marco's eyes light up.

MARCO

Really? Did he text back?

DIVYA

Yes!

MARCO

That is good!

DIVYA

Thank you Marco, for helping me.

MARCO

Welcome Divya.

KELLY

Today we are starting off with -

**INT. LIBRARY - CHILDREN'S SECTION**

Esha walks up to Gracie.

GRACIE

What have I done to be so lucky to see Esha twice in the past couple months.

Esha laughs.

ESHA

I just wanted to come by and say thanks. The spelling bee had an event for past alumni recently and it reminded me of all the drills and practices we did here. Without your help I couldn't have won, so thank you.

GRACIE

Aw honey. You always had it in you. I was happy to help.

ESHA

I'm sorry I stopped coming as often as I used to, school started taking up a lot of my time, and I just lost a lot of my energy.

Tears well up in her eyes, but this time she can't hold them back and they start falling.

GRACIE

You don't have to apologize, sweetie. I'm sure it has been a really tough time, but you know Holliston Library has your back! We always have.

Gracie pulls her in.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

It's okay Esha. You will make it through this.

ESHA

But what if I don't? Everyone expects all these great things out of me, what if I am unable to do any of them. What if this is all that I can do. I will never be able to live up to what they think, and what I accomplished in the past, and I hate that my parents have to go through that. I will be such a let down to them, my community. It just is so...

Esha lets out a small sob.

GRACIE

Esha, you are more than that. What you achieve doesn't define you, who you are defines you. You are such a kind, enthusiastic, smart individual that will live a great fulfilling life, in whatever you chose to do.

ESHA

I wish it were that easy Ms. Gracie.

GRACIE

But darling it is. You have put the weight of your entire family, and community on your shoulders right now. Let's take a breath.

Esha and Gracie hold hands and breathe.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Let it all out, I know it is a lot right now. You aren't responsible for any one else's happiness except your own right now. Just focus on that. I'll be here no matter what, and know that you have always made me proud. Way before you ever won any trophy, and you still continue to do so.

ESHA

Thank you Ms. Gracie, that means the world.

Esha and Gracie hug.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA**

Esha, Brittany, and Ava sit at their lunch table.

AVA

Today is the day! Are you nervous?

ESHA

No shit I'm nervous. I feel like the fate of my future will be decided in the next couple of hours.

**INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING**

Divya and Esha are drinking chai at the table.

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
Are you coming to the library  
today?

ESHA  
Not today, it's Ivy day.

DIVYA  
Aw good luck, betu. You can do it.

ESHA  
Thank you, Mummi.

DIVYA  
Our little champion.

Divya grabs Esha's cheeks.

DIVYA (CONT'D)  
(In Hindi)  
We will celebrate when everyone is  
home.

Divya heads out to her ESL class.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - EVENING**

Esha is anxiously checking the time, it's almost 7pm. Her phone buzzes, it's a text from Rohit.

"Good luck today! No matter what happens you are still amazing ok." Esha smiles and quickly puts her phone away.

She is constantly refreshing her inbox until she sees the emails.

"Your application portal has been updated."

Esha opens the emails and opens the seven portal links. One by one she checks the update.

"After careful consideration, we regret to inform you..."

Next tab.

"The Committee on Admission has completed its meetings, and I am sorry to inform you..."

Next tab.

"The Admission Committee has completed its evaluation of this year's candidates and I am genuinely sorry..."

Esha crumbles. She slams her computer shut. Her phone buzzes, and it's a text from Ava.

"Any update??"

She ignores these texts.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Esha picks up her spelling bee trophy. She throws it in the trash and leaves her apartment.

**INT. KITCHEN - LATER**

Divya walks into the kitchen and sees the massive trophy in the trashcan. Her eyes widen.

DIVYA

Esha!

She runs to her room and finds it empty.

DIVYA (CONT'D)

Esha!

Divya frantically takes her phone out and texts Esha.

**EXT. CEDAR HILLS PARK - CONTINUOUS**

Esha is sitting on the swings crying. Her phone buzzes, it's a text from her mom.

"Where are you"

Esha turns her phone off and continues to swing slowly as tears continue to stream down her face.

**INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Divya calls Esha, and it goes straight to voicemail. Divya starts crying and calls Raj.

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

I can't find Esha anywhere.

(MORE)

DIVYA (CONT'D)  
 She isn't responding to my calls or texts.

RAJ (FILTERED)  
 (In Hindi)  
 Slow down what happened.

DIVYA  
 (In Hindi)  
 Esha is gone. Please come home.

RAJ (FILTERED)  
 (In Hindi)  
 Okay, on my way.

**INT. DINING ROOM - LATER**

Raj and Divya are pacing around the table, which has a celebratory cake on it.

RAJ  
 (In Hindi)  
 Where is she??

DIVYA  
 (In Hindi)  
 I don't know!

RAJ  
 (In Hindi)  
 You saw her last! Why is the trophy in the trash? What happened?

DIVYA  
 (In Hindi)  
 I went to class and came back and she was gone.

RAJ  
 (In Hindi)  
 Our calls are going straight to voicemail. What do we do?

DIVYA  
 (In Hindi)  
 Maybe Ajay knows.

Raj takes a second to think about this.

RAJ  
 (In Hindi)  
 No, we aren't doing that.  
 (MORE)



RAJ (CONT'D)  
 Just wait. That is all we can do.  
 She can be anywhere.

Raj and Divya slump down onto chairs. Raj's head is in his hands as Divya softly cries next to him.

**INT. DINING ROOM - LATE NIGHT**

Esha walks into the apartment at 3:18am. Her parents are sitting barely awake at the table. Esha's eyes are all puffy, she makes eye contact with her parents and heads straight to her room, and closes her door.

RAJ  
 (In Hindi)  
 She's back I can go to bed. We will deal with this tomorrow.

Divya shuffles towards Esha's room. She knocks on her door. Esha doesn't respond.

DIVYA  
 Beta...

Still no response. Divya places her hand on the door.

DIVYA (CONT'D)  
 (In Hindi)  
 Esha... Beta... Is everything ok?

No response.

DIVYA (CONT'D)  
 (In Hindi)  
 Esha we are here for you. You know that right. No matter what.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Esha is balled up on her bed still crying, shaking her head.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING**

Divya knocks on her door. No response. She opens the door to find her Esha gone.

Her phone buzzes, it's a text from Esha.

"Already left to school. Don't worry."

Divya exhales, letting go of the tension she was holding on to.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING**

Students pack into the cafeteria. Ava and Brittany drop their mouths when they see Esha. Esha sees kids wearing college merch of schools they got into, that she didn't, causing tears to well up.

AVA

Esha? In school before 8am?  
Brittany pinch me, I must be  
dreaming.

ESHA

I don't believe it either.

Brittany and Ava give Esha a massive hug.

BRITTANY

It's ok. Fuck the ivies. They are  
pretentious consulting pipelines  
anyway.

ESHA

Try telling my parents that.

AVA

It doesn't matter what they think.

ESHA

You guys don't get it. I have no  
idea how to face them about this.  
They call me their little champion,  
how can I be their little champion  
if I can't even get into Cornell?

Ava and Brittany look at each other.

BRITTANY

You got into really good schools  
Esha, what about Smith?

ESHA

I don't want to go to school with a  
bunch of lesbians, are you kidding  
me. I'd rather go to a state  
school.

Ava laughs.

AVA  
She has a point.

BRITTANY  
Hey there, what's wrong with  
lesbians?

ESHA  
Nothing, I just want some dick.

BRITTANY  
You know what, fair enough.

The bell beeps.

AVA  
Just get through class. We will see  
you at lunch ok.

Esha gives them both one more hug.

ESHA  
Thanks guys.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE CLASSROOM - MORNING**

Esha walks into class and takes a seat. Ms. Woodland does a double-take.

MS. WOODLAND  
Is that Esha Singh I see? On-time?  
Did God answer my prayers?

ESHA  
Very funny, Ms. Woodland.

MS. WOODLAND  
It's good to have you here.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - AFTERNOON**

Esha pulls her phone out and texts Rohit.

"Look's like I won't be joining you at Harvard next year. :("

Immediately her phone starts ringing.

ESHA  
Hello?

ROHIT (FILTERED)  
How are you feeling?

ESHA

I'm feeling fine, just disappointed in myself.

ROHIT (FILTERED)

Understandable, but getting into an Ivy League school isn't end all be all. We talked about this remember, it doesn't define you.

Esha's voice wavers.

ESHA

I... I don't know how to tell my parents. I don't think it will go over well. I can't face them.

ROHIT (FILTERED)

I know it's going to be hard. They are going to take a while to understand. They always do.

ESHA

I don't know if I have it in me to deal with it all.

ROHIT (FILTERED)

Esha, you 100% do. You have always had it in you. You just have to find it. Find the girl who threw punch on that bully. She is in there.

ESHA

Rohit... You... You don't think any less of me right?

ROHIT (FILTERED)

No why would I think that?

ESHA

Because of all this.

ROHIT (FILTERED)

Esha this doesn't define you. Also, it's such a crapshoot, like you can't beat yourself up over this.

ESHA

Thank you, Rohit. I still don't know why you like me but thank you.

ROHIT (FILTERED)  
Just look in the mirror and you'll realize why I do.

ESHA  
Shut up. You're silly. Ok, I have to go talk to my parents. Wish me luck.

ROHIT (FILTERED)  
You got this!

Esha ends the call.

**INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING**

Esha takes a seat at the table, with the rest of her family.

ESHA  
I'm sure you know that I didn't get into any of the schools that you wanted, based on yesterday.

RAJ  
Yes... Esha... What am I going to say to people?

ESHA  
Why does that matter?

RAJ  
We sacrificed so much for you, and you can't even get into Cornell? What does that show?

ESHA  
Dad! I tried! It just didn't work out, and I have other options, what about Wellesley. It's nearby, Hillary Clinton went to it. Or Northeastern? Boston College?

RAJ  
No one knows what Wellesley is Esha. And Hillary Clinton didn't even win, so what does that say. I can't believe that both our children are such failures.

ESHA  
Why don't you say the same to yourself?

(MORE)

ESHA (CONT'D)

You haven't gotten promoted in how long? You're telling me to try harder. I am!

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

Esha! Enough!

ESHA

You're defending him? What happened to being here for us, no matter what. That's such bullshit. You to, spending over ten years here and can't even speak a sentence in English.

RAJ

Esha! Don't speak to your mother that way.

ESHA

Why don't you guys try to see it from our side? We are trying! Ajay did everything you asked him to do, he's at Columbia and you still don't talk to him, why because HE LIKES GUYS?

RAJ

This isn't about him. Why do you always have to bring him up?

ESHA

Because he is my brother? And I miss him, and he is still a part of this family.

RAJ

You're the only person who misses him.

Esha looks at Divya.

ESHA

Do you agree with him? You like all this?

Esha hastily gets out of her chair, with food still left on her plate, and walks back to her room.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - LATER**

Esha texts Ajay.

"I fucking hate them."

**INT. DORM PARTY - CONTINUOUS**

Ajay sees the message, his eyes widen and he steps out and gives Esha a call.

AJAY  
Is everything ok?

Ajay is seen nodding.

ESHA (FILTERED)  
I didn't get in anywhere they wanted, and they made me feel so bad about it. They just don't get it. I tried so hard, and it's not like I don't have good options. I do. It just isn't the Ivies, and on top of that they...

AJAY  
Esha, they can be very challenging. Just wait until you are out, and it will get better. You are strong. Just hold on for a little longer Esha.

**INT. ESHA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Esha cries into the phone.

ESHA  
I'm trying, but they make it so difficult bhaiya, how did you do it?

AJAY (FILTERED)  
It wasn't easy. There were some very dark moments, Esha, but I promise it gets better. I am here for you. You are so close, Esha. Focus on the fun stuff for the next couple of months, prom, hanging out with your friends, graduation, and whatever summer plans you have. One day at a time. You got this ok.

ESHA  
You're right, I got this. I'll be okay.

AJAY (FILTERED)

Hell yeah you will be. You're not a champion, you're a fucking phoenix who will rise again after being shot down. That is the most beautiful and best part, but it's gonna take a lot out of you. So just text me whenever you need it ok.

ESHA

Thank you, bhaiya.

Esha ends the call and stares at her black phone screen.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA**

Esha, Ava, and Brittany sit around their table.

AVA

How did the talk with your parents go?

ESHA

Honestly not good. My dad was very upset with me.

BRITTANY

Fuck that. College is not end all be all. He needs to get over himself.

ESHA

He can't though. He cares more about what other people think and how he is perceived rather than the well-being of his kids.

AVA

It's not like Wellesley is a bad school.

ESHA

I know! It's just that the Indian community can be really judgmental, and I don't want my parents to pay for my actions like they are doing right now. Everyone is going to think they didn't do a good job raising me because I didn't end up somewhere great.



AVA

Bro fuck that mentality.

ESHA

Ava, you don't get it. I can't go against a 1600-year-old culture. It is ingrained in them, it's like in their genes.

BRITTANY

Then why isn't it in your genes?

Esha takes a second.

ESHA

Growing up here really is really different, you guys. They aren't used to this world, and they are trying, it's just really hard for them to rewrite all that they know. I just wish that my dad would try to see it from our side. My mom is trying, you know she texted Ajay the other day.

AVA

Really? How long has it been?

ESHA

Almost three years.

BRITTANY

See there are signs of improvement.

ESHA

I know that's what he said. It's just not easy.

AVA

No more thinking about this. This is our senior year and we need to make the most out of it! We only have a couple months left, and they are going to be absolutely legendary.

Ava brings Brittany and Esha in.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - CALC CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON**

Mr. Edwards hands out a quiz.

MR. EDWARDS

We have a short quiz today,  
reviewing what we went over in the  
past couple of classes. You have  
the next thirty minutes.

**INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

The Singh family quietly eats dinner at the table. Raj's  
phone rings. Raj answers.

RAJ

How are you doing man?

Beat.

RAJ (CONT'D)

That's so good to hear.

Beat.

RAJ (CONT'D)

Esha? She is still deciding between  
some schools, she wants the liberal  
arts education you know.

Esha shakes her head and continues eating silently.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - CALC CLASSROOM**

Mr. Edwards hands the quizzes back to the students. Esha sees  
her grade, 92. She smiles.

**EXT. WELLESLEY COLLEGE - MORNING**

Esha arrives on campus for admitted student's day. She walks  
around taking in the beautiful buildings. She walks into the  
welcome center and checks in, SONIA, 20 is sitting at the  
desk.

SONIA

Hello! Nice to meet you! My name is  
Sonia. Can I get your name to check  
you in?

ESHA

Esha Singh.

Sonia checks her in.

SONIA  
Can I ask a weird question?

ESHA  
Yes?

SONIA  
Did you happen to win the spelling  
bee or am I mixing that up with  
someone else?

Esha laughs.

ESHA  
Omg my god that's so embarrassing,  
yes that was me. How do you know?

SONIA  
My brother also did a lot of  
spelling bees growing up, and I am  
pretty sure we were at the one you  
won. You beat him.

Esha chuckles.

ESHA  
2011?

SONIA  
Yup.

ESHA  
I am very surprised you remember  
me.

SONIA  
I have a pretty strong memory.  
Welcome to Wellesley, we are so  
excited to have you!

ESHA  
Thank you Sonia!

SONIA  
Wellesley would be really lucky if  
you chose to come here. It's a  
great school and you seem like a  
really cool person.

ESHA  
Thanks.

Esha takes her welcome bag and looks at the itinerary.

**MONTAGE**

Esha walks into a classroom and sits in a class, looking around in amazement. She goes to the dining hall and eats food. She talks to STUDENTS.

**INT. WELLESLEY BOOKSTORE - LATER**

Esha walks into the book store and looks around. She walks up and buys a hat, smiling as she puts it on.

**INT. LIBRARY - CHILDREN'S SECTION - EVENING**

Esha walks up to Gracie, with a box of cookies.

ESHA  
Hey Ms. Gracie!

GRACIE  
Hello Esha! How are you?

ESHA  
I'm doing well. I just wanted to stop by and give you a little update on what's been going on.

GRACIE  
I am so excited to hear!

ESHA  
I'm going to go to Wellesley next fall!

GRACIE  
Esha! That's amazing, and close by!

ESHA  
Yeah I figured you would be happy about that, I can still stop by and say hi.

GRACIE  
I would love that. I'm so proud of you. You are going to do so well there. It's an amazing place.

ESHA  
Yeah I went to the admitted students and I loved it! The campus is so beautiful and the students were so kind and open. I am very excited to go.

GRACIE

Aw that's great. I'm really happy for you, Esha.

ESHA

Thank you, Ms. Gracie, thank you, for all your help throughout the years.

Gracie gives Esha a big hug.

GRACIE

I can't wait to see your journey unfold.

**INT. HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON**

Esha, Ava and Brittany eat their lunch.

BRITTANY

So, you chose Wellesley? What about getting some dick?

ESHA

Well... It's very close to Harvard and Rohit will be nearby so it worked out. So I will be getting that dick, thank you very much.

Beat.

ESHA (CONT'D)

Guys... My period still isn't here.

AVA

What??

ESHA

It's been like two months.

AVA

Holy shit. We need to get you a pregnancy test.

BRITTANY

What a straight problem to have. Sucks to suck, LITERALLY.

Brittany laughs.

AVA

Now's not the time for jokes. We need to do something.

BRITTANY  
Ok then get up. We are ditching and  
getting a test.

ESHA  
Right now?

BRITTANY  
Right now.

The girls get up and leave the cafeteria.

**INT. AVA'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER**

Ava drives down the streets and pulls into the first  
Walgreens.

ESHA  
My mom monitors my purchases. What  
if she finds out what this is?

BRITTANY  
I'll go buy it.

Brittany leaves the car and goes inside Walgreens.

**INT. AVA'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER**

Brittany is back with a pregnancy test.

BRITTANY  
They said they don't have any  
bathroom.

AVA  
There was a McDonald's a block  
away. Let's go there.

**INT. MCDONALD'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

The girls are waiting for the test result.

ESHA  
Thank you, guys for being here.

AVA  
Of course, we always have your  
back.

Brittany's phone timer goes off.

BRITTANY  
Ok time's up. What does it say?

ESHA  
It says its negative.

BRITTANY  
You are in the clear!

ESHA  
What if it is a false negative?

AVA  
Do you want to do another one?

ESHA  
Should I?

BRITTANY  
You are fine. Honestly, it is probably a stress thing. You have been so on edge the past couple months that it has been messing with your hormones.

ESHA  
That would make sense, but what if it isn't that.

BRITTANY  
Then I'm excited to be an aunt!

Ava punches Brittany's arm.

AVA  
Hey, not now.

Ava turns to Esha.

AVA (CONT'D)  
It's going to be ok. Don't worry. The test says negative. We should believe it.

ESHA  
You're right. I can't keep worrying.

BRITTANY  
Atta girl. Let's celebrate with some fries!

The girls walk out of the bathroom.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING**

Esha walks into the living room with graduation tickets in her hand.

ESHA

I have three graduation tickets for us.

RAJ

Esha. No. We aren't doing this. We only need two.

ESHA

Yes we are. He is coming.

RAJ

If he is going, I'm not going to go. I do not want to be seen with him.

ESHA

Fine don't come to your daughter's graduation. I'd rather him there than you anyway.

Divya stays silent.

ESHA (CONT'D)

Mom are you going to come.

Raj looks at Divya. Divya looks at both of them.

DIVYA

I will go.

Esha is taken back.

RAJ

Really?

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

He is my son, and I am not going to miss my daughter's graduation.

Divya takes one ticket.

**INT. RAJ'S WORK - AFTERNOON**

Raj works at his desk. Chad walks up to him.



CHAD

Hey, I have a question.

RAJ

Yes?

CHAD

I was going over these reports and don't get this figure. Where did it come from?

Raj looks over the reports.

RAJ

This is from a project we did a couple years ago. Every so often we will get some revenue from it, but it's so obscure.

CHAD

Oh I see. What was the project about?

RAJ

We invested in a small company that creates this very niche, yet expensive product.

CHAD

What did this product do?

RAJ

It was used by doctors to help with intestine surgery. Recently they updated the product so you might be seeing them more often.

CHAD

Oh wow, that's fascinating. My mom might find this interesting.

RAJ

Why?

CHAD

She's a doctor and loves keeping up with all the new advancements. She really wanted me to become a doctor, but I didn't do too well in school.

RAJ

Really? But you're here.

CHAD

Yeah, it took me a while to find my footing. I dropped out of college, moved around, and eventually went back to community college. I did some schooling, kept working and got here. Life can be hard you know, but you get into the rhythm eventually.

RAJ

Oh wow. How did your parents feel about all this.

CHAD

Oh they weren't big fans at all. We fought a lot growing up. I actually stopped talking to them for a while.

RAJ

Really?

CHAD

Yeah when I dropped out, they did not take that well, and I just couldn't handle them. So I moved out, and did stuff on my own. Eventually we found our way back to each other when my dad died.

RAJ

I'm sorry.

CHAD

It's all good. Thank you for your condolences. I regret not talking to him, and my mom tells me he always wished he reached out as well. Just never got around to it...

RAJ

Chad...

CHAD

Yeah wild story right, but we live and we learn. Anyways thanks for your help. I'll look into this company.

Chad leaves. Raj sits there pondering.

**EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - EARLY EVENING**

Robed seniors cover the fields, excited to end this chapter of their lives. Esha is standing with her Ava and Brittany taking pictures.

**EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD PARKING LOT - SAME**

Ajay gets out of his uber.

AJAY

Thank you! Have a great day!

Ajay looks around him. Divya spots him from her car. She gets up and makes her way over to him.

DIVYA

Beta?

Ajay turns around and faces his mother.

AJAY

(In Hindi)

Mummi! How are you?

Divya has tears in her eyes and gives Ajay a big hug.

DIVYA

(in Hindi)

Please forgive me Ajay. This is all very new for me, I am trying, I just need some time and your patience.

AJAY

(in Hindi)

Of course mummi. I know it is a very different world.

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

I met a gay man in my ESL class, and I talked to him about you.

AJAY

(In Hindi)

Aw mummi.

DIVYA

(In Hindi)

He helped me understand. I am sorry I wasn't there for you.

AJAY  
 (In Hindi)  
 It's ok mummi. You are here now.  
 That is all that matters... Where  
 is -

DIVYA  
 (In Hindi)  
 He didn't come.

Ajay's face falls.

DIVYA (CONT'D)  
 (In Hindi)  
 He will come around, he will just  
 need more time. I will talk to him  
 ok.

AJAY  
 (In Hindi)  
 Thank you mummi.

DIVYA  
 (In Hindi)  
 Let's go take our seats.

Ajay and Divya head to the bleachers and take a seat.

**EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS**

The graduates walk down with Pomp and Circumstance being played by the band. Esha looks around and spots her mom and Ajay sitting on the bleachers. A huge smile erupts across her face. The students take their seats.

**EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - MOMENTS LATER**

The principal announces names as students walk across the stage.

PRINCIPAL  
 E-Sha Singh

Esha shakes her head and walks up onto the stage. She whispers something into the principal's ear.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)  
 Apologies Esha Singh.

Esha walks across the stage as Ajay and Divya cheer for her.

**EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - LATER**

Esha runs up to Ajay and tackles him with a big hug.

ESHA  
I've missed you so much bhaiya.

AJAY  
I missed you too!

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
Good job, betu. That was a  
wonderful ceremony.

AJAY  
Let's get a picture!

Esha waves Ava over.

ESHA  
Ava can you take a picture of all  
of us.

Esha hands Ava her phone and she takes a couple photos.

**INT. WELLESLEY COLLEGE DORM - AFTERNOON**

Esha, Raj, and Divya move-in boxes to Esha's dorm room, where one half is already decorated.

RAJ  
At least this is close by.

DIVYA  
(In Hindi)  
Shush. Esha. This is a great school  
and we are so proud of you.

Raj looks around and sees a rainbow flag, and rolls his eyes.

DIVYA (CONT'D)  
(In Hindi)  
You know you can learn about them.  
There is nothing wrong with them.

Raj stays silent.

RAJ  
That is everything. We are going to  
head back to our hotel room, and  
will see you tomorrow morning?

ESHA

Ok. Thank you for helping me move in.

DIVYA

Stay safe betu, and have a fun night.

ESHA

Thank you, mummi.

Esha hugs her mother goodbye. Raj pats her on the back and leaves.

Esha calls Ajay.

ESHA (CONT'D)

I am all moved in!

AJAY (FILTERED)

Yay! That's so exciting! Are you ready for the next chapter of your life?

ESHA

You know it! Thank you, bhaiya, for all your help.

AJAY (FILTERED)

Esha, that was all you. You are such a strong person, you got through all that and I am so excited for the next couple of years. College is a blast. Make the most out of it, because you aren't going to get these years back.

ESHA

I will. Please come up and visit!

AJAY (FILTERED)

100%! You should come down to the city! I can take you out and you can meet Nick.

ESHA

Nick?? How long has this been going on?

AJAY (FILTERED)

A couple months... maybe almost a year...

ESHA

And I find out about this now??

AJAY (FILTERED)

Just come down and meet him, he's great.

ESHA

I'm looking forward to it, bhaiya. Talk to you soon.

AJAY (FILTERED)

Bye!

Esha ends the call and looks around her dorm room taking it in. On her desk is a photo frame with a picture of Ajay, Divya, and her, from graduation.

**EXT. WELLESLEY COLLEGE DORM - CONTINUOUS**

Raj and Divya are walking out towards their car. Raj types on his phone, "How to talk to gay son."

**INT. WELLESLEY COLLEGE DORM - LATER**

Esha jumps onto her bed and texts Rohit.

"Looks like I'm not too far from you."

Rohit texts back: "I know it's so exciting! Can't wait to see you soon."

Esha lays down on her bed and smiles.

FADE OUT.