

WEDLOCKED

Pilot

"If You Spend Time With Boys..."

Written by

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INT. LAXMI'S HOUSE - ATTIC - DAY

LAXMI (28, Indian-American, has too many feelings and hates that she does) pulls a picture of a Hindu God from a trunk and hands it to VENKAT (30, Indian-American).

Venkat scrambles around, handing her things to put in the trunk.

Dusty pictures of Hindu Gods are taken out and replaced with dildos, vape-pens, and fuzzy handcuffs.

Laxmi and Venkat each take a large hit from a bong. Laxmi coughs.

VENKAT

I feel like we're forgetting something.

They look at each other - a moment of unified realization.

LAXMI/VENKAT

Idris!

Venkat rushes out of the room.

Laxmi stuffs the bong into the trunk. She makes a face when she finds anal-beads in the pile of things going in.

She finds several Polaroid photos. With a sigh, she stuffs all the pictures in the trunk except for one.

We can't see what she's seeing, but she looks wistful when --

Venkat rushes back in with a life-size cardboard cutout of a shirtless Idris Elba, clearly a bespoke piece. He runs his hands over Idris' glistening torso sensually.

VENKAT

What are you going to do to him?

LAXMI

Fold him and stuff him in?

VENKAT

Don't you dare! Look into his eyes.
Those eyes caused my sexual
awakening.

Laxmi looks at cardboard Idris and has to take a deep breath to recover from the hotness.

LAXMI

Mine too... Take him to Gary's
place?

VENKAT

We need to stop using my fiancé's
place as a storage unit.

Laxmi giggles. She opens up a jewelry box with two wedding
bands and hands one to Venkat.

LAXMI

You ready?

Venkat nods. Laxmi stares at her hand before slipping the
other band onto her finger.

MATCH CUT TO:

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. RAVI & CHITRA'S HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: CHENNAI, INDIA, 3 YEARS EARLIER

A south Indian Bungalow.

Laxmi's bare hand floats close to Venkat's as they stand in
front of Venkat's parents: RAVI (50s, Venkat's father, goofy)
& CHITRA (50s Venkat's mom, overbearing).

VENKAT

(selling his parents on
Laxmi)

She belongs to our caste and is
extremely fertile.

Laxmi nudges him.

VENKAT (CONT'D)

And I love her and I want to marry
her. I... I can't live without her.

LAXMI (PRE-LAP)

(re: Venkat)
I can't live without him.

INT. BANU & SUBU'S HOUSE - DAY

Laxmi and Venkat now hold hands in front of Laxmi's parents: BANU (50s, Laxmi's mother, always on the verge of hysteria) & SUBU (50s, Laxmi's father, stern but loving). Subu is visibly ill.

BANU
(to Venkat)
Do you have a job?

VENKAT
I'm a Market Research Analyst

LAXMI
(emphatic)
Senior--

VENKAT
Yes, Senior Market Research Analyst
at a tech startup - Nincon.

At the mention of 'Startup', Subu and Banu exchange a worried glance.

SUBU
Salary?

LAXMI
Hundred and forty thousand dollars,
plus a yearly bonus.

Subu and Banu both light up. Laxmi subtly fist-bumps Venkat.

INT. RAVI & CHITRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Back with Laxmi and Venkat standing in front of Venkat's parents.

Note: Italicized portions are spoken in Tamil and subtitled.

CHITRA
(to Laxmi)
Can you speak Tamil?

LAXMI
*Yes, of course. I was born in
Nigeria. But I moved to India when
I was 12, and I've been back and
forth from America since then. My
mom always speaks to me in Tamil.*

CHITRA

Okay, okay. I don't need your life story. Can you sing?

LAXMI

Uh--?

CHITRA

Sing a devotional song for Lord Krishna.

VENKAT

Ma! She doesn't need to have a concert for you.

RAVI

That's all well and good, son. But it never hurts to have a wife with a nice singing voice. I wasn't that lucky.

Chitra glares at Ravi.

INT. BUNGALOW - DAY

A *Mehendi* (Henna) ceremony for Laxmi and Venkat's wedding. Both sets of parents dote over everyone.

In a throne-like chair, Laxmi sits wearing an expensive traditional salwar, getting her hands henna'd by a cheery HENNA ARTIST. SARA (20s, White, Laxmi's best friend) sits next to Laxmi also getting her hands henna'd.

SARA

This is crazy! You can't just marry your gay--

(off Laxmi's warning look;
whispering)

Venky is gay! And you don't actually want to get married.

(to Henna artist)

Could you do the fingers too?

The Henna Artist nods and continues tattooing Sara's hands. Sara turns back to Laxmi.

SARA (CONT'D)

This is a stupid, convoluted, messy, stupid plan!

LAXMI

You don't get it! This is a BRILLIANT plan.

(MORE)

LAXMI (CONT'D)

Our families will think we're married and chill the fuck out. Venky and I will go back to LA and live our real lives. Everyone wins!

SARA

But, you ARE getting married! To a gay man. What happens when your parents find out the truth? Or what if you meet someone you actually want to marry?

Laxmi gives Sara a look - like that's going to happen.

SARA (CONT'D)

Do you seriously not understand how absurd this is - you're going through so much trouble instead of doing the easy thing and being honest with them?

Laxmi looks at Sara again - now, who's the crazy one?

LAXMI

This IS the easy thing, Sara!

Banu, Laxmi's mother, walks past them. Laxmi and Sara immediately quiet down, pasting on smiles.

BANU

Make sure your pale, skinny friend eats something, Laxmi, I thought Americans were supposed to be fat.

(to Sara ; sweet)

Are you having a good time, Sara?

SARA

Yes, Mrs. Banu. Everything is great. Thank you!

As soon as Banu is out of earshot --

SARA (CONT'D)

Everything is not great. Seriously, Laxmi, this is insane.

LAXMI

Look, I thought about faking my own death, but that's super complicated and kinda sad. Also, I don't wanna deal with the government.

(MORE)

LAXMI (CONT'D)

In 3 days I get married and I'll be free to live my life - no more questions about prospective suitors, no phone calls saying I told you so, no more nightmares about marrying M. Night Shyamalan. I'll officially be another man's problem. No more bullshit.

Sara puts her head in her hands and immediately messes up the henna.

HENNA ARTIST

You fucked up my hard work!
Dumbass!

SARA

Ugh.

Laxmi laughs. Sara hurries off to clean her hands.

Banu walks up to Laxmi with a plate of food and feeds her so she won't mess up her Henna.

BANU

You look beautiful, *kanna*. I'm so happy this is finally happening.

Banu takes Laxmi's face in her hands and looks at her. Banu's intense gaze overflows with affection. Laxmi is overwhelmed by the overt display - this is the first time in a long time she's felt genuine love from her mother.

BANU (CONT'D)

We need to get your mustache waxed before the wedding.

Laxmi sighs.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - DAY

Venkat and Laxmi get married in a traditional, lavish Hindu ceremony. Laxmi's father, Subu's health has deteriorated visibly.

The moment Venkat puts the ceremonial necklace around Laxmi's neck, the guests go nuts. Laxmi clocks how ecstatic her parents are at this moment.

MONTAGE

- On their honeymoon in New Zealand, Laxmi and Venkat take "romantic" pictures to upload onto a joint "family" Facebook account, instantly gaining likes and comments from their families : "lukin nice, kids!"

On the same honeymoon:

INT. NZ HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Venkat stumbles along, groping and kissing a SILVER FOX (50s, male).

Laxmi giggles drunkenly, trying to pry open her hotel room, while a barely legal AUSSIE DUDE unhooks her bra through her clothes.

Venky and Laxmi head into separate hotel rooms with their respective hookups and slam their doors shut.

INT. LAXMI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In their current house. Laxmi and Venkat pose for a picture dressed in traditional Indian clothes. Post it on the family Facebook captioned: "First Diwali as a married couple."

Laxmi and Venkat both change into skinny jeans and crop tops, take their wedding bands off, and rejoin...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

... a Diwali celebration with their AMERICAN FRIENDS. Pictures of them shotgunning beers and grinding up on each other to Bollywood music go up on Laxmi's Instagram (@laxative).

Venkat chats up GARY (30s, very attractive black dude).

END FLASHBACK**INT. LAX INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS - DAY (PRESENT)**

Laxmi fiddles with her wedding band standing next to Venkat. The PEOPLE waiting look miserable, bored, and sweaty.

VENKAT

(bad British accent)
Whenever I get gloomy with the
state of the world, I think about
the arrivals gate at LAX.

LAXMI

Do you have to recite the stupid
Love Actually opening EVERY time
we're at the airport?

VENKAT

You mean the opening of the best
movie in the last two decades?
Yeah, I do. Now, where was I ? Ahem
--
General opinion's starting to make
out that we live in a world of
hatred and greed --

A GIRL rolling her trolley up the ramp sees her BOYFRIEND,
gets excited, and lets the trolley roll back down the ramp
bowling over an older Indian woman, Chitra, (Venkat's mom
whom we recognize from the flashback), knocking the bags off
her trolley.

LAXMI

-- and they are fucking right.

Laxmi rushes to help Chitra with her bags. Chitra ignores
Laxmi and waves frantically at Venkat, drawing stares.

CHITRA

(yelling)
Venky! I'm here.

Venkat hugs Chitra, happy to see her. They start walking
together, leaving Laxmi to trail behind and struggle with the
bags.

INT. LAXMI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Recently cleaned. A cute, married couple's house. We
recognise the house from the Diwali party, except now, photos
of Venkat and Laxmi at their big fat Indian wedding dot the
walls.

Laxmi and Venkat stand in silence while Chitra inspects the
house. She moves around, scrutinizing every inch of the
place.

Chitra stops in front of a prayer shrine decorated with Hindu Gods -- the same ones Laxmi and Venkat got out of the trunk earlier. Chitra finally smiles - they've passed the test -- the first of many to come.

CHITRA

Such a beautiful picture. Venky, remember? Your uncle went all the way to Tanjore to get it for your wedding.

VENKAT

Yep, Kalyan uncle must really love me to make that 26 minute drive.

Laxmi just looks relieved.

INT. LAXMI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Plain walls. Looks like a guest room.

Chitra unpacks an insulin injection from her luggage and gives herself a shot as she talks to Venkat and Laxmi.

CHITRA

Such a curse, this diabetes. At least now my son and daughter-in-law can take care of me.

VENKAT

About that... how long are you staying with us, Ma?

CHITRA

I have been here ten minutes and already you want to kick me out.
(to "God")
Rama! Where did I go wrong raising such a disrespectful son?

LAXMI

Venky didn't mean it like that. He's just --

CHITRA

You think you know my son better than the woman who raised him for twenty-three years?
(to Venkat)
My return ticket is booked two weeks from now.

Laxmi and Venkat exchange a look.

INT. VENKAT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Chitra blasts loud Hindu devotional songs and sings along. It's all happening in the next room, but the thin walls do nothing to muffle the sound.

Laxmi sits in bed staring at the Polaroid picture from the trunk: a photo of Young Laxmi with her father, Subu.

BEGIN FLASHBACK**EXT. PARK - DAY**

SUPER: PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA, 20 YEARS EARLIER

YOUNG LAXMI (8, thick glasses and pig-tails) in a dirt-stained school uniform gets a piggy-back ride from her dad, SUBU(30s, impressive handlebar mustache). Subu tells her a story animatedly.

SUBU

-- Then, Phantom charged into the pitch black forest riding his horse, Hero.

LAXMI

In the dark? Why did they go into the forest like that?

Subu approaches a park bench.

SUBU

He is brave, Laxmi. He knows that the forest may look scary, but the real fear is not the forest, it is not knowing what lies ahead.

He guides Laxmi off his back and stands her on the bench so they're eye to eye.

LAXMI

What lies ahead in the forest, Pa?

SUBU

You'll find out tomorrow when the story continues. Now, my one and only daughter, put your shoes on and let's go home.

LAXMI

What happens next, Pa? Tell me.
Pleaseeeeeee.

Off Young Laxmi's pleading we--

END FLASHBACK

INT. VENKAT'S BEDROOM - DAY (PRESENT)

Laxmi sits in bed staring at the photo. Venkat enters, shutting the bathroom door behind him.

VENKAT

Best not to go in there for a while.

(re: photo)

What are you--

Laxmi uses her phone to take a picture of the Polaroid photograph of her father. She sets the picture as her phone's wallpaper. Venkat sits on the bed next to her and sees the picture.

VENKAT (CONT'D)

Aw, Laxmi.

LAXMI

Found it in the trunk.

Venkat takes the picture.

VENKAT

You look like such a dork, but your dad... is kinda hot. Not a lot of men can pull off a handlebar mustache.

LAXMI

Can you not sexualize my deceased father?

VENKAT

(talking to Subu in "heaven"; at the ceiling)

It's a compliment, Subu!

(to Laxmi)

I'd say it to his face if he were alive.

Laxmi rests her head on Venkat's shoulder. Venkat puts an arm around her.

LAXMI

I miss him.

A long sweet moment until--

VENKAT

So... how are we gonna trick my mom
into believing you can cook?

CUT TO:

INT. LAXMI'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

CLOSE ON: Take out food from a restaurant meaninglessly called India's Crown. Sara holds out several containers to a fidgety Laxmi.

LAXMI

Get in! She is about to get out of
the shower.

SARA

They didn't have the *korma*.

LAXMI

That's fine.

Laxmi unpacks an assortment of Indian food. Sara helps her put the food in bowls. Laxmi gathers the empty take-out boxes and ...

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S DUMPSTER - EVENING

... gets rid of the evidence.

INT. LAXMI'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

Chitra, Venkat and Sara sit at the dinner table. Laxmi stands and serves everyone. Chitra glares at Sara's blonde highlights disapprovingly.

CHITRA

So, Sara, are you married?

SARA

No.

CHITRA
 You have a boyfriend or
 (the word tastes bad in her
 mouth)
 A girlfriend?

Venkat clocks Chitra's expression at the mere possibility
 that Sara might be gay.

SARA
 I live with my boyfriend, Mark.

CHITRA
 You two **live** together?

SARA
 Yes.

CHITRA
 Does your mother know?

Laxmi sits down and tries to diffuse the awkwardness.

LAXMI
 Sara's mom is sick.

CHITRA
 That's terrible. I have diabetes.
 (guilt-tripping Venkat)
 You never realize how much your
 parents mean to you until they get
 sick.

SARA
 My mom's addicted to heroin.

Awkward silence around the table. Chitra rolls her eyes and
 glares at Laxmi, disapproving of her taste in friends.

VENKAT
 So, Ma... How's retirement treating
 you?
 (to Sara)
 Ma used to be a doctor.

SARA
 Oh, cool. What kind?

CHITRA
 (smug)
 Obstetrics and gynecology.

VENKAT

Talkin' about looking at vaginas!
Like mother, like son, amirite?

Chitra glares at Venkat. Laxmi starts coughing, choking on her glass of chocolate milk.

CHITRA

I'll get you some water.

Chitra leaves to get water from the kitchen.

SARA

You guys are going to blow this.

LAXMI

It'll be fine. We just need to get through the next 2 weeks. Then, Venky can go back to screwing dudes and I can go back to... you know, the things I want to do.

Chitra pops back with water.

LAXMI (CONT'D)

Thanks, Ma.

Laxmi sips on the water. Sara shakes her head.

INT. LAXMI'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Laxmi loads the dishwasher. Chitra rinses the dishes and hands them to her. Laxmi is nervous to be alone with Chitra.

LAXMI

I can do this myself, Ma. You must be tired and... and jet-lagged.

CHITRA

It's fine, dear. I noticed that you have the olive oil next to the *masalas*. That's an interesting choice.

LAXMI

I just put things I use frequently within reach. Ergonomics. Do you want me to make you some tea?

CHITRA

(ominous)
No, no, dear. You work so hard.
(MORE)

CHITRA (CONT'D)

Hard enough that you don't seem to have any time for your family. I'm here now to help you. Why don't you sit down, and I'll make you some chai?

LATER - NIGHT

Laxmi sips on her tea as Chitra stares at her intensely.

CHITRA (CONT'D)

Laxmi, dear, as you know, your father-in-law and I are not getting younger. You and Venky... It's been three years since you got married.
(off Laxmi's anxious face)
Don't you want children?

Laxmi fiddles with her wedding ring - a nervous tick.

FLASH TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Laxmi smiles, stretching in bed. An engagement ring sparkles on her finger. She talks to her fiance, HARRY (late 20s, White). Yep, she was engaged to this other dude, but we'll get to that.

LAXMI

Babe, three kids is too many.

HARRY

Fine, we'll have two. We need at least one spare if anything happens to the first one.

Laxmi smiles and shakes her head, amused and in love. Harry leans over and kisses her.

BACK TO:

INT. LAXMI'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Laxmi zones back into her conversation with Chitra.

CHITRA

Are you listening to me? Don't you want children?

LAXMI
Of course I do!

CHITRA
Well, then let me examine your
uterus and see if there's a
problem?

LAXMI
Yeah, okay, let's probe my uterus.

Off Laxmi's deeply uncomfortable face --

CUT TO:

INT. VENKAT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Laxmi walks in from the hallway, shutting the door behind her
and whirls on Venky.

LAXMI
There's no way your mother is
probing my uterus!

VENKAT
What?

LAXMI
She wants to make sure my womb is
fertile enough to nurture your
seed.

Venkat is disgusted at "womb".

VENKAT
Why didn't you just tell her that
we aren't ready to have kids?

LAXMI
I tried! She was so serious though.
I'm too young to have a fake child!

VENKAT
How would you even have a fake
child?

Laxmi glares at him.

VENKAT (CONT'D)
What? I'm just curious.

Venkat smiles and turns the lights off.

LAXMI
She's your mother!

VENKAT
Exactly, she's my mother. You're lucky your dad is dead, but both my parents are still alive and I gotta keep lying to them.

Laxmi is angry.

VENKAT (CONT'D)
Look, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that about your dad, but for real, he died with the perfect memory of you - happy and settled in life. My life will crumble if my mom and dad find out I'm engaged to Gary. And think about how your mom will feel about our fake marriage pact.

Venkat turns away.

VENKAT (CONT'D)
(to himself as much as to Laxmi)
We'll be okay. It's just 2 weeks and she'll leave.
(to Laxmi; reassuring)
Don't worry, I will handle her.

CUT TO:

INT. VENKAT'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Laxmi wakes up to see Venkat's already left.

LAXMI
Son-of-a --

CHITRA (O.S.)
Laxmiii!

INT. VENKAT'S BATHROOM - DAY

Laxmi texts Venkat while sitting on the toilet:

LAXMI: *WHERE ARE YOU? YOU LEFT ME ALONE WITH HER*

VENKAT: *At the gym, working out.*

LAXMI : *You never go to the gym!*

Dots appear as if Venkat is typing a response and then disappear. Laxmi is frustrated.

Laxmi scrolls through Instagram still sitting on the toilet and sees Venkat's insta-story of him and Gary trying on different ties - he's clearly not at the gym. Laxmi sends him a flurry of angry texts.

INT. VENKAT'S BATHROOM - LATER

Laxmi plays Swish by Tyga - "Back dat ass up" and gets in the shower singing along.

Chitra knocks on the bathroom door and yells over the music.

CHITRA

Laxmi, can you turn down the volume?

Laxmi rolls her eyes and leans out of the shower to turn the volume down.

CHITRA (CONT'D)

Actually, turn it off.

Laxmi frowns as she turns it off and steps back into the shower.

INT. VENKAT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Laxmi gets out of the shower to find Chitra separating the laundry.

LAXMI

Ma, what are you doing?

CHITRA

I was just looking for some fresh towels. There weren't any in my room.

Chitra holds up a red lacy panty. Laxmi grabs it out of her hands.

Chitra continues rifling through the closet. Laxmi edges past her to grab a blue, slightly low cut blouse. Chitra intercepts her...

...and for 40 awkward seconds, Laxmi and Chitra have a tug of war with the blue blouse... until with one last tug --

Chitra wins!

Still holding onto the blue blouse, Chitra hands Laxmi a more modest red blouse with a super high neckline.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Laxmi sits at a conference table wearing the red blouse Chitra handed her. Sara sits nearby.

BEN (40s, boss man, just racist enough to make you uncomfortable, but not enough to warrant legal action) is at the tail end of his presentation to a board of OLD WHITE MEN in suits.

BEN

Gentlemen, you've heard our plan. Our team's strategy will add 2 million dollars in revenue to your merchandizing division within 18 months. Laxmi is our numbers lady, obviously.

Laxmi smiles awkwardly at the veiled racist comment.

BEN (CONT'D)

What do you say?

One of the old men winks at Laxmi and then shakes Ben's hand.

OLD WHITE MAN

Let's do this.

Laxmi and Sara exchange a meaningful look.

INT. LAXMI'S OFFICE - DAY

Laxmi sits at her desk, chugging one of those bottled, "fat free" double chocolate Nesquiks, when Sara pops in.

SARA

I have five minutes before my meeting.

Laxmi ignores her phone ringing with a call from Chitra (her ringtone for Chitra is a spaceship landing). When it finally stops ringing, we see that Laxmi has 23 missed calls from Chitra.

Laxmi looks at the phone and then looks up at Sara.

LAXMI

Is anyone's life worse than mine?

Sara narrows her eyes as the telltale BBC News alert goes off on her phone. Sara reads the headline.

SARA

342 people killed in building
collapse off the east coast of
China.

Laxmi sighs dramatically and flops her head onto the desk.

LAXMI

Everything is the worst.

Sara rolls her eyes.

EXT. OFFICE ROOFTOP - DAY

Laxmi is perched on the parapet, watching the traffic go by. Sara lights up a joint and stands next to her.

LAXMI

Our families have no idea who we
really are.

(melodramatic)

I don't know who I am.

SARA

You are a relatively normal twenty-
something with soul-crushing levels
of anxiety.

LAXMI

There's just this part of me that's
waiting for the proverbial "coming
out" moment when I can be honest
with mom. Tell her that I am single
and happy -ish. Tell Chitra that
Venky is gay and--

SARA

Also happy -ish?

Laxmi nods.

LAXMI

-- That I get off to a black man.

SARA

Idris?

LAXMI

Mostly. Sometimes Michael Jordan.

SARA

B or Classic?

LAXMI

Both. I'm terrified that she'll hate the real me.

SARA

Okay, I'd like to point out that I told you and Venky that it was a stupid idea when you two came up with it.

LAXMI

It just seemed like the perfect plan. Everyone was happy.

Laxmi's upset as she stares at the picture of her father on her phone wallpaper.

LAXMI (CONT'D)

It's just... not fun anymore.

SARA

Pretending to be someone you're not is never fun. Just ask Caitlyn Jenner.

Sara passes Laxmi the joint. Laxmi inhales deeply.

INT. LAXMI'S OFFICE - DAY

Laxmi and Sara, both high, return to find Chitra holding a cup of tea and talking to Ben.

CHITRA

-- in India we like to add milk, sugar, and some spices to the tea. And that's what we call chai.

LAXMI

Ma! What are you doing here?

BEN

Laxmi, your mother--

CHITRA

I'm her mother-in-law. She clearly doesn't have my bone structure.

BEN

Your mother-in-law was just telling me the difference between chai and tea.

SARA

They're the same thing.

BEN

(genuinely surprised)
Who knew?

SARA

1.3 billion Indian people.

Laxmi tries to subtly check her breath.

CHITRA

Hello, Sara. How are you?

SARA

Hi, Mrs. Chitra. I'm fine. Thanks.

CHITRA

Laxmi, we need to talk.

Laxmi hides behind Sara and fans herself frantically.

LAXMI

(to Sara ; sotto)
Do I smell like weed? I need deodorant! Did I already put some on? Oh good God, I think I'm dying. How are my eyes? Are they red? I'm not wearing my wedding ring! Don't leave me.

SARA

I got work to do, dude.
(to Chitra)
Bye, Mrs. Chitra.

Sara trots away leaving Laxmi, Chitra and Ben staring at each other. One intimidating look from Chitra has Ben scurrying out of the office.

BEN

Thanks for the chai tea... I mean tea. Chai.

MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Laxmi sits across from Chitra, hiding her hand since she isn't wearing her wedding band.

LAXMI

Ma, *why* are you here?

CHITRA

I just thought we could finish our little chat. We can talk openly - "Woman to woman" outside the house.

Laxmi sighs - let's get this over with.

CHITRA (CONT'D)

Are you getting your period regularly?

Laxmi is still high and is startled by Chitra's bluntness.

LAXMI

Let's talk at home. I really don't want to --

CHITRA

I'm a doctor, Laxmi. I just want to know whether your eggs are maturing on time. Are you getting your period regularly?

Laxmi considers arguing but realizes resistance is futile.

LAXMI

Yes.

CHITRA

How long is your cycle?

LAXMI

27 days.

CHITRA

Are you and Venkat having intercourse regularly?

LAXMI

(horrified at the thought)
It's none of your... sure.

CHITRA

And when did you get your last period?

Laxmi does the math in her head and realizes it's been longer than she thought.

LAXMI

Um.

Chitra sips her tea before continuing.

CHITRA

I'm just worried, dear. These days, so many things can go wrong. In my day, you got married and nine months later, we would have a little bundle of joy. Nowadays, so many couples come to me crying about not being able to conceive. I don't want that to happen to my son. We should get your uterus checked.

(as Laxmi starts protesting)

I know you might not want me examining you, but I have a friend who practices in San Jose.

LAXMI

We'll talk when I get home.

CHITRA

(desperate)

But... Laxmi, I saw this American TV program, 'The Handmaid's Tale,'

--

LAXMI

I have work. Please.

Chitra leaves. Laxmi is miserable. She pulls up a period tracker App on her phone and checks the calendar.

INT. SARA'S OFFICE - DAY

Laxmi fidgets, moving her foot incessantly while looking over Sara's shoulder.

Sara uses a small key to open her desk drawer.

Lifts the top drawer to reveal a secret compartment.

Uses an even smaller key to open a smaller locked drawer labelled 'Essentials'.

Inside the drawer, Sara rifles past a vial of weed, tiny bottles of Bacardi Rum, a cordless vibrator and several knives.

Laxmi hears a hiss from one of the drawers.

LAXMI
What was that?

SARA
(cagey)
Nothing.

As Sara continues rifling, there's a distinct scurrying sound from the closed drawer. Laxmi shoots a worried glance at it.

Sara finds a pregnancy test and hands it to Laxmi.

INT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM - DAY

Sara waits while Laxmi pees in a stall. Laxmi walks out with a pregnancy test. She washes her hands, gets on her knees, and prays.

LAXMI
Please, God. Please. Just this one time. Get me out of this.
(Hindu prayer)
*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna
Krishna Hare Hare.*

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. GRASS FIELD - DAY

SUPER: PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA, 15 YEARS EARLIER

Young Laxmi (13, thick glasses, hair in sloppy cornrows) clutches a bleeding cut on her face. UZO (14, Nigerian boy, charming) helps her up.

A few other shirtless NIGERIAN BOYS in cutoff trousers continue playing soccer.

UZO
Laxmi, are you okay?

YOUNG LAXMI
(in perfect Nigerian pidgin;
re: the bleeding cut)
My mama go kill me.
(MORE)

YOUNG LAXMI (CONT'D)

(praying ; still in pidgin)
 Please, God. Please. Just this
 time. Help me, God. I beg.
 (same Hindu prayer)
*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna
 Krishna Hare Hare.*

INT. HOUSE IN NIGERIA - DAY

Young Laxmi stands with her bleeding cut in front of her mother, Banu (in her late 30s, wearing hospital scrubs but still sporting her **pottu*). Uzo holds Laxmi's hand.

**pottu* = red dot on forehead worn by Hindu women

Banu is pissed -- but more flustered and scared. She wipes away tears as she steadies her hands to finish stitching up the wound under Laxmi's eye.

BANU

When are you going to learn? You
 are a girl! You could've gone
 blind.
 (lashing out; in Tamil)
*And what have you done to your
 hair? You want to look like them?*

YOUNG LAXMI

(ashamed)
 No.

Banu finishes stitching up the wound and shoots a glare at shirtless Uzo. Banu takes Laxmi's hand out of his and pretends to check her pulse.

BANU

You know Laxmi, if you spend this
 much time around boys, you'll get
 pregnant. Is that what you want?

Uzo is scared and looks at Laxmi. Laxmi avoids his gaze and shakes her head.

END FLASHBACK

INT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM - DAY (PRESENT)

Laxmi stares at multiple positive pregnancy tests.

SARA

The good news is, you're fertile.
So maybe open with that when you
tell your mother-in-law?
(beat)
How did this even happen?

Sara sees the look of intense guilt on Laxmi's face--

SARA (CONT'D)

Oh come on, you slept with him
again?

LAXMI

I was drunk and he was making that
puppy face.

SARA

Good God, woman.
(beat)
Are you going to tell him?

Off Laxmi's horrified face --

INT. VENKAT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Laxmi's on her laptop in bed. She Googles: "How to tell your
gay husband you're pregnant?" Laxmi shuts her laptop when
Venkat enters from the bathroom, wearing only a towel.

LAXMI

Dude, put on some pajamas!

VENKAT

You're such a prude. We're married.

LAXMI

I swear to God, Venky, I will show
your mom the Halloween pictures.

VENKAT

Geez.

LAXMI

(blurting)
Your mom accosted me at work and
then I got pregnant.

VENKAT

That's cool...
(realizing)
Wait, what?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - SIMULTANEOUS

Chitra tends to a steaming pot of chai. She calls up to the "kids" - Venkat & Laxmi

CHITRA

Venky! I'm making some tea. Come and get it.

(beat)

There might be some left for Laxmi too.

Chitra waits to hear back and when there's no response, she sighs, turns the flame down and walks out of the kitchen...

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

... And up towards Venkat's bedroom.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. VENKAT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Venkat has dropped his towel and is fully naked arguing with Laxmi.

VENKAT

This complicates everything.

LAXMI

You don't think I know that?

VENKAT

You can't be pregnant, that's...

(realizing)

You slept with him again?

LAXMI

I was drunk! People always tell you not to drink when you are pregnant, no one tells you not to drink before you get pregnant. Well no one except for my parents.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Chitra makes her way down the hall towards Venkat's closed bedroom door.

INT. VENKAT'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Venkat and Laxmi are fully arguing now. Laxmi holds the positive pregnancy tests, waving them in the air as she yells.

VENKAT

Why d'you have to go and make things so complicated?

LAXMI

For the last time, I wasn't trying to! What are we going to do about it?

VENKAT

Don't call our baby an it!

LAXMI

It's not OUR baby.

VENKAT

We're married. You're pregnant. It's our baby!

LAXMI

I'm the one whose pregnant and--

Just when Laxmi is about retort, Chitra opens the door and barges in. She's thrilled!

CHITRA

I just heard the news from outside your door! The walls in this country are SO thin. They need to use higher quality construction materials.

Venkat rushes to cover himself up with the towel.

VENKAT

Ma! Knock or something!

CHITRA

(ecstatic)
We're pregnant!
(beat; to Laxmi)
I'm so happy I don't need to fix your uterus.

Chitra takes the positive tests from Laxmi, before she can hide them. Laxmi is annoyed by the use of 'We'.

VENKAT
Ma, actually --

LAXMI
I'm not sure that we--

CHITRA
Congratulations, dear. I'm going to
be a grandmother. Finally!

Chitra hugs Laxmi, surprising her. Chitra has never hugged
Laxmi before.

VENKAT
(whispered behind Chitra as
she hugs Laxmi)
What are you doing?

LAXMI
(whispered back)
What do you want me to do?

CHITRA
*Praise Lord Krishna. I prayed to
him for a grandchild and he
delivered.*

Chitra looks at Venkat in his towel. She smiles coyly.

CHITRA (CONT'D)
I'll let you two return to
business.
(to Venkat)
Let me go tell your father. He's
going to be so happy.
(to Laxmi)
And your mother, she will be
thrilled.

LAXMI
Ma, maybe we shouldn't jump the
gun.

CHITRA
What gun, schmun. Everyone needs to
know.

Laxmi and Venky look at each other, trying to find the words
to stop Chitra, but she's already rushed off to call the
family.

Venkat sits next to Laxmi on the bed. They talk in angry
whispers.

VENKAT

How could you let this happen?

LAXMI

I don't know. I was drunk and Harry was making that face... It doesn't matter. We'll figure it out.

VENKAT

How? You think my parents won't notice that the kid is half-white?

LAXMI

This is LA, I'm sure there are places that will spray tan it for us.

VENKAT

Don't call our baby an IT!

Laxmi's phone starts to ring with a call from Banu. Laxmi stares at her ringing phone.

LAXMI

If you hadn't screamed it, she wouldn't know. Besides, I don't have to keep it, do I?

VENKAT

Stop calling our baby an it!

LAXMI

It's not OUR baby.

Chitra pops back in with a tray of chai. Venkat and Laxmi both put on smiles.

CHITRA

(to Laxmi)

I've even used that "agave" sweetener you like, Laxmi.

Laxmi is genuinely touched by the effort Chitra made. Chitra notices Laxmi's phone ringing with Banu's call and picks up.

CHITRA (CONT'D)

Hi Banu... yes, congratulations to you too, we are both grandmothers! Here, speak to Laxmi.

Chitra holds the phone up to Laxmi's ear.

LAXMI

(into phone; to Banu)
Hi Ma... yes... yes... okay...
yes... yes... yes... okay...
okay... you're coming here?

Laxmi looks at Venkat panicked.

CHITRA

Tell her not to worry, I will be
here taking care of you as well. I
have already emailed my travel
agent to cancel my return ticket.
(yelling into phone)
Don't worry, Banu.

Laxmi puts on a pained smile.

LAXMI

(into phone)
Okay Ma, I'll talk to you later.
Love you, bye.

Laxmi hangs up.

CHITRA

(emotional)
Our family is finally growing. I
think we should name him Krishna if
it's a boy. It will be a boy, I can
feel it.

Chitra opens a box of Indian sweets. She takes a bite and offers them to Venkat and Laxmi. Venkat takes the sweet away from her.

VENKAT

You have diabetes.

CHITRA

It's a special occasion.

Chitra hugs Venkat, still ecstatic. Venkat is torn by how excited his mom is.

EXT. LAXMI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Laxmi chugs yet another bottled Nesquik as she dials a number from memory.

INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

Harry, (the ex-fiance whom we recognise from Laxmi's flashback), takes his drink from the BARTENDER. His phone starts to ring with call from Laxmi popping up with a picture of the two of them from happier times - Laxmi showing off her ring right after their engagement.

BEGIN FLASHBACK**INT. BAR - NIGHT**

SUPER: SAN FRANCISCO, 3.5 YEARS EARLIER

Harry, his best friend SAM (20s, White, absurdly optimistic) and a bunch of GUYS drinking together. Harry's Bachelor party. Sam talks into his Snapchat, filming himself with his arm around the BARTENDER.

SAM

(to Bartender ; re: Harry)
My buddy's getting married this weekend and I got him a surprise... Are you ready for this? - A Stripper. She's going to be here at midnight and Harry...

Sam turns his Snapchat towards Harry - to see him kissing a Random Woman up against the wall.

SAM (CONT'D)

Oh, looks like he's already having a good time. D'you think the Stripper will give me my deposit back if I cancel right now?

The Bartender looks at Sam annoyed.

INT. HARRY & LAXMI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Laxmi's engagement ring shines on her finger as she holds her phone. She watches Sam's Snapchat story of Harry cheating on her.

Laxmi wears a large penis-shaped hat from her bachelorette party. Her eyes are red. She watches the Snapchat story over and over again, disbelieving.

LAXMI

(drunk; to phone)
Really dude?
(MORE)

LAXMI (CONT'D)

(beat)
Why the fuck would anyone Snapchat
this?

END FLASHBACK

INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Sam is on stage, dancing like the whitest of dudes that he is, and singing along to Enrique Iglesias' "Hero".

Harry looks at his phone, still ringing from Laxmi's call, and silences it. He's too scared to speak to her.

SAM
(singing)
I can be your hero baby.
I can kiss away the pain.
I will stand by you forever.

Harry stares at the silenced phone, still ringing with the happy picture of Harry & Laxmi in love. He hangs up the call.

EXT. LAXMI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Laxmi stares at her phone as Harry's voicemail greeting plays. She's about to cry. She sends Harry a text.

LAXMI: *Dude, I'm pregnant*

Venkat comes up behind her, smoking a cigarette.

LAXMI
(re: cigarette)
Oh, Venky. No. You've been so good
about quitting the past couple
months. Put it out.

Venkat blows the smoke right in her face.

VENKAT
When a guy hears his wife is
knocked up with another man's
child, it's only natural that he
gets stressed out.

Laxmi hugs him. He hesitates before returning the hug. Laxmi shoots a glare at Venkat's cigarette as he takes another drag.

LAXMI

You know the smoke is bad for our baby.

Venkat looks at her, touched she said "our baby" --

CHITRA (O.S.)

Venky! Laxmi! Come talk to your uncle. We just told him the good news.

Venkat panics at the sound of his mom's voice and tosses the cigarette into an old dog bowl. Laxmi laughs.

VENKAT

The woman might be a witch. She asks for a grandchild, and boom! She gets one.

LAXMI

Meanwhile, none of my prayers are ever answered.

(beat)

Technically, not her grandchild though.

Venkat looks at her: come on, it's OUR kid, so it's her grandchild. Laxmi shakes her head, smiling through her tears.

INT. KARAOKE BAR - MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Harry stares at the text on his phone and re-reads it, shocked. His hands shake as he dials Laxmi.

EXT. LAXMI'S HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Laxmi's phone lights up and a picture of Harry replaces the picture of Subu on the screen. Laxmi looks at Venkat and back at the ringing phone. She picks up.

HARRY (O.S.)

Hey.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT