

"GHOST MOM"

Pilot

by

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VOICEMAIL MESSAGES OVER BLACK: BEEP. "Jocelyn from Pinetree Estate, calling for Aashna.." BEEP "..wanting to confirm pickup.." BEEP "..Ms Vinod, we're yet to hear back from you. It's Pinetree Estate, again.."

EXT. VAN NUYS HIGH SCHOOL - LAWN - DAY

At a card table, a STUDENT (16, Desi, Indian headscarf over school uniform) performs spirit readings for A LINE OF WHITE MOMS. This is SU. A sarcastic social outcast always out to make a quick buck.

On the table: a sign that says "\$5 readings (cash only), and a "TIP\$" jar.

JACINDA (50) is up. Su closes her eyes, and turns a red hat over in her hands - channelling. CHANTING.

JACINDA

(teary)  
Mama's here, baby.

The FAINT REV OF AN ENGINE. Su winks an eye open, scans; false alarm. She shuts it again. CHANTING.

SU

I see him!  
(Jacinda "seal claps")  
Fudge, it's not a clear reading.  
Not like HD clear.  
(eye contact)  
Do you really want this Molly's  
mom?

JACINDA

I do.

SU

I don't believe you, and tbh  
neither does he. If only--

JACINDA

--IF ONLY WHAT?!

SU

If only you could show Bonkers  
(at the jar)  
how invested, you really are..

Fives and tens are crammed into the jar. We now see the red hat is covered in doggie bite marks.

VROOOOM. A MOTORCYCLE ENGINE REVS LOUDLY now. Su snarls, spotting a FEMALE MOTORCYCLIST. Su knows what to do;

she calmly places the money jar inside her rucksack, and BOLTS. A MOM in the queue pipes up.

MOM (O.S.)

She did this last week too.

The moms nod.

EXT. STREETS/PARK - CONTINUOUS

Su swerves in and around an army of toddlers. But she's fast running out of steam. She swipes a pack of gummies from the tallest of the tots, necks the juice box of another, and charges up Mario-style. She bodyrolls under the fence..

EXT. CITY - CONTINUOUS

Before shooting down a passageway. Too narrow for the rider, they make a sharp U-TURN, and they're back on..

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The rev-head isn't detered.

EXT. ALLEY - DEADEND - CONTINUOUS

The teen's cornered. Su chases her breath, when -- The ENGINE STOPS. Su's breath slows. The rider tosses her a helmet.

SU

YUCK YOU!

FEMALE MOTORCYCLIST

I know what that means young lady.

SU

So u're like stalkn me now?

The mystery rider dismounts, clips the foot pedal, and takes the bike down with her. Ouch! Su eye-rolls, helping heave it back up. It's a familiar routine.

FEMALE MOTORCYCLIST

The school called me.  
(flicks face shield up)  
And I track your cellphone.

SU

You said you'd stop doing that,  
Mom!

Yep. This is Su's mom AASHNA (40). Queer but straight edge. High functioning but low tolerance. Overbearing but also kinda absent. Single. You get the drift.

FEMALE MOTORCYCLIST/AASHNA

I'm your mother, aren't I? Hop on.  
I'm back online in less than 20.

Bummed, Su climbs on the bike. Aashna rants.

AASHNA

First you're not selling school  
furniture--

SU

They should be thanking me! Those  
chairs were only takn up room in  
the supply closet.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The mom-daughter duo speed off on the bike.

AASHNA

--Now you're playing "woo"? What  
will people say? Do you ever think  
how your actions reflect on my  
business? My families?

SU

Followers?

AASHNA

That's what I said.

INT. HOME - ENTRANCE - LATER

Su and Aashna enter the house. Su's face lights up at the  
tower of merch boxes and bags at the doorway. She drops her  
rucksack, clawing for a box on top. When --

AASHNA

--NO!  
(catches herself)  
Best to leave them, Su Su.

SU

But you always let me. Why?

AASHNA

Because.. because you're being  
punished. Yes, that's it. What did  
you think was going to happen?

Su exits.

SU

I hate coming here!

AASHNA

Ah, I know you're not leaving your bag on the floor.

Su stomps back, kicking the bag towards her room. She turns --

SU

FYI. That leather jacket isn't the flex you think it is.

Savage.

INT. KITCHEN - PANTRY - DAY

Su pulls apart the pantry. She's not happy; she's hangry.

SU

There's never any snacks!

She scales a chair, and reaches for something on the top shelf. It's a box labeled Pinetree Estate; inside is a cookie jar. She opens the lid, and goes to peek inside, when --

AASHNA

You have to know where to look.

Su turns to see Aashna pull open a dishwasher PACKED with snacks. At the sink: a drying rack of hand-washed dishes.

Back to Su, now pillaging the dishwasher. Aashna swipes the cookie jar, shoving it back in the box; the lid barely on.

SU

(mouth-full)  
B-t-dubs, there's something wrong with you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Aashna watches The Kardashians on TV. Su enters.

AASHNA

Su Su come sit with me.

SU

Rather poke out my eyeballs. And don't call me that!

AASHNA

The Kardashians align with our family values, you know?

SU  
 (pulls a crazy face)  
 What family values?

INT. HOME OFFICE - DAY

Aashna cradles the PineTree Estate box. A voicemail plays: "I hope the package arrived safely. It's not how we do things here. But as we didn't hear back.. Things like this aren't easy. Take some time; spend it with your loved ones."

Aashna frowns at the cookie jar. She turns her gaze to a framed photo of her and a 12-year-old Su. Su: a toothy grin. On Aashna's face: a look of determination.

EXT. RED BRICK HOUSE/INT. CAR - NIGHT

The car pulls up to the home of Su's other parent. We'll hear about them v soon. Su puts on her rucksack.

AASHNA  
 (thoughtful)  
 Hey, why don't you come stay for the long weekend?  
 (nods at house)  
 I can talk to mom.

SU  
 What about the Mommy Influencer meet-up in Austin? It's your fav.

AASHNA  
 You're my fav daughter. I mean, you're my only daughter; but sure, I am also a daughter; if I wanted to speak in the third person.. but you're my only daughter..

SU  
 Why you being weird?

AASHNA  
 I'm being normal. We can watch movies; make nachos.

SU  
 With fake cheese?

AASHNA  
 With fake cheese.

SU  
 And no work?

AASHNA

No work, Su Su.

Su nods, and exits.

SU

Probably better if I check with  
mom. And mom.

(Aashna's waits)

You gotta drop the name.

Aashna ZIPS her lips.

INT. CAR - AASHNA'S DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Aashna's mid-Instagram Live. Her mini ring light ablaze.

AASHNA

At the heart of a healthy parent-  
child relationship is compromise,  
patience, and understanding! Not  
always in that order.

She laughs at her own "joke".

AASHNA (CONT'D)

I'm @Ashna.Millennial.Therapist.  
That's A.S.H.N.A. See you in the  
comments, fam!

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Aashna, by the tower of merch, SCREAMS bloody murder. When  
she finally calms down, we see she's holding an ice roller.

AASHNA

Fudgenugglet. They already gifted  
me one of these!

She returns it to the box. Then notices something else.

AASHNA (CONT'D)

No. No. NOOOOO!

(squeezes eyes open and shut)

"My boundaries are real, you cannot  
cross them. You're not real.."

It's NINA (61). Sitting small and critical in her Indian-  
suit. (She'll wear this throughout). She's you're typical  
desi mom. But there's something off-(color) about this one.

NINA

Some welcome party. I gave you  
life! And wadda you give me?  
Lifelong hemorrhoids.

Yep, Nina is Aashna's mom. Aashna pulls out a smudge stick,  
aggressively cleansing the air.

AASHNA

"You're not here. You're okay.  
You'll get through this."

NINA

(watches)  
Grief does funny things to people.

AASHNA

I am not grieving.

Nina studies her like a wounded bird.

NINA

(subtitle: darling)  
Beta,  
you look like you've seen a..

Aashna types manically on her phone: "wht d if se gohst?".

AASHNA

(squeaks)  
How did you? Where--

NINA

--Speak up beta!

AASHNA

YOU'RE DEAD!

Aashna spots the PineTree Estate box and open cookie jar.

NINA

(at the cookie jar)  
You rubbed the lamp, et voila.

AASHNA

Et voila? You don't know French.

NINA

Few Euro trips. People say I have  
an ear for languages.

AASHNA

"An ear for languages"? You're  
not..

(MORE)

AASHNA (CONT'D)

My mother was a bigot whose idea of "travelling" was taking the 101 after 8!

NINA

A lot can happen in 20 years, beta. I'm more open-minded than the woman that raised you.

AASHNA

"Raised me". That's generous. You kicked me out when I was 17!

NINA

You started hanging out with that Bangladeshi..

AASHNA

Afreen.

NINA

Next minute you're into all kinds of trouble. Don't you see, I've forgiven myself, and you should too.

Aashna bristles. Nina floats through the house.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nina inspects the basin. In the mirror: Aashna is AGOG. Her mother doesn't have a reflection!

NINA

Two bed? How much?  
(no response)  
Ohhh Aashna, you're not?

They exit. Entering the..

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Nina takes in the wood-framed fit-out.

NINA

Paying off someone else's mortgage?

Nina pokes her head through the fridge door.

INT. FRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Nina's AGOG at Indian take-out.

NINA  
Disappointing! We all make choices  
in life. Some are a life sentence.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Aashna brushes crumbs off the bench while Nina's distracted.

AASHNA  
What a shame. It is you. Old Nina,  
just as I left her.

Nina appears, they exit.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Aashna gestures wildly in all directions.

AASHNA  
For your information, it's a two-  
bed, two bath with an en suite and  
sizeable walk-in. The only mortgage  
I'm paying off, is my own! I own  
this home. I am a home owner.

NINA  
No one likes bragger, Aashna.

AASHNA  
Even in the afterlife, you still  
won't respect my boundaries.

Nina comes at Aashna with her shoe. Classic Indian mom move.  
But falls straight through her.  
Aashna GAGS and SHIVERS. Takes a moment to recover.

NINA  
Your just deserts. For not coming  
to my funeral.

AASHNA  
I need you to leave. NOW!

NINA  
Sure thing, butter bean. One small  
problem, Ima ghost.  
(shrugs)  
And this is my pergatory.

AASHNA  
And this is my waking nightmare.

NINA  
So I'm stuck here, until--

AASHNA

--Until?!

NINA

We reconnect; come together, kiss  
and make up; bury the hatchet.

Aashna SIGHS exhausted. She exits.

AASHNA

Just stay out of my way. I'm  
working on something important this  
weekend.

INT. HOME OFFICE - DAY

A MONTAGE of Aashna the Influencer Therapist working; and  
generally killing it.

-Aashna's on a zoom call. A GRID OF 100 FACES smiling  
adoringly. She's animated; in her element; feeling validated.

-Aashna films Q&As in front of her ring light.. and Nina.

AASHNA (FILMING)

This DM is from Mathilde in Sweden.  
"Fantastisk" to meet my global  
family. So Mathilde asks..  
(clicks "pause" on the phone)  
Can you not? It's very offputting.

Aashna's POV: Nina staring back at her.

NINA

I'm not doing anything?

AASHNA

And yet.

Later..

Live footage of Aashna records on her phone.

AASHNA (FILMING) (CONT'D)

My daughter is my best-friend. We  
share our ups and our downs; and  
she knows I'll always support her.  
Because mother-daughter  
relationships are a gift--  
(turns over shoulder)  
For fudgesake! You're in the shot.

NINA

They're not gonna know.

AASHNA

I know! And there's a strong wind right on my neck.

NINA

A wind?

AASHNA

Yes, a wind; like a breeze?

NINA

What breeze?

AASHNA

A breeze.

(Nina shrugs)

You're a heavy breather, okay? So quit breathing down my neck!

Later..

A series of HICCUPS from the other room disrupt Aashna's Live. She pushes on.

AASHNA (FILMING) (CONT'D)

Your mom did "the best she could with the tools she had". Someone put that on a fridge magnet!

(hiccup)

I'm @Ashna.Millennial.Therapist.

That's A.S.H.N.A. Signing off.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nina floats, nursing a bottle of whisky. Aashna storms in.

AASHNA

What's wrong with you?

Nina HICCUPS.

NINA

I feel sick. Faint; light headed; out of body?

Nina cackles. Aashna notices the whisky.

AASHNA

If you're looking for an emotional caretaker--

NINA

--You always were such a killjoy..  
Did you mean what you said? About  
the tools? "Ashna with one a"?

AASHNA

(sheepish)  
It's less confusing - for everyone.

NINA

We can't confuse the white people.

AASHNA

And yes, I meant what I said. I  
know you don't take it seriously.  
But this is my career.

NINA

So?

AASHNA

So?

NINA

Talk about twilight zone.

Aashna begins to notice something about the couch.

AASHNA

Tell me about it.  
(realizing it's wet)  
That whisky is running straight  
through you!

NINA

Blessed with a fast metabolism.

AASHNA

The sofa is soaking! And it smells  
like a 1950s speakeasy.

Aashna throws her arms up in the air. OVER IT ALREADY.

AASHNA (CONT'D)

I'm starting to think you're not  
here to make ammends. Not really.

NINA

Good thing you're pretty.  
(Aashna anticipates the neg)  
Thinkin never was your strong suit.  
Why else would I be here, dummy?

Before "negging" there was the backhanded compliment; every south-asian mom's go-to. Aashna clenches her fists.

Montage of Aashna's dates:

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-Aashna plates up take-out. TIA (30s) refills their wine glasses. They GIGGLE. Nina watches. BORED!

NINA

Don't worry about dear mamma. Just a rotting corpse over here.

-Aashna clears the plates. Tia exits.

AASHNA

Bathroom is the door on the left.  
How many scoops?

TIA (O.S.)

Lemme share wit you.

More giggles.

NINA

Who's your friend? No intros?

AASHNA

You're invisible?

NINA

Don't be like that. I'm doing the inner work. Diving deep. I am light. I am dust. All that. You've gotta try Ayahuasca. I did and

NINA (CONT'D)

forgave myself.

AASHNA

forgave yourself. I know! You're a regular matyr.

NINA

I guess I am!

AASHNA

She's not my friend.

NINA

But you're sharing ice cream and giggles.

(MORE)

NINA (CONT'D)  
 (Aashna averts her gaze)  
 Ohhh. Oh!

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-Aashna and Kay (38) kiss on the sofa.

AASHNA  
 It's not too damp is it?

KAY  
 Not yet.

Nina is AGOG. She's not that open minded! Back to the urn.

END MONTAGE.

INT. HOME - ENTRANCE - NEXT DAY

Su arrives with her overnight bags. Dumps them, SWIPES AASHNA'S KEYS from the hook, and leaves.

INT. HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Aashna's on her laptop. Nina's voice travels down the hall.

NINA (O.S.)  
 Y'know, en suites are the one's attached to the bedroom? You've been duped! Figures.

Aashna jams her Airpods in. Nina enters.

NINA (CONT'D)  
 But I don't blame you. How could you know? Without a man about mistakes will happen. Aashna?

AASHNA  
 WHAT?

Aashna takes out her Airpods.

NINA  
 I'm concerned about you. You don't seem well, in the..

Nina taps Aashna noggin. Aashna sees red but holds back.

NINA (CONT'D)  
 But your skin is more fair and lovely - than usual. Somone could easily assume you're a Kshatriya.

AASHNA

Unbelievable. You're referencing the caste system? People just don't talk like that anymore, Nina.

NINA

Beta, don't frown like that. You'll start to give yourself wrinkles.  
(leans in closer)  
Oh no, see I'm wrong. You've already got them.

INT. ENTRANCE - LATER

The front door CLICKS SHUT. Su creeps in, returns Aashna's car keys, and logs out of the Uber driver app on her phone.

EXT. ENTRANCE/INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Nina is around the corner, curious; watching.

EXT./INT. TOILET - CONTINUOUS

The toilet is occupied. Nina floats through the door. Aashna looks up from the toilet.

AASHNA

WOULD YOU GET OUT?!

NINA

Were you expecting someone else?

Aashna scowls at her overbearing mother. When--

INT. SU'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Su stops, listening.

SU

HELLO? YOU HOME?

INT. TOILET - SAME TIME

Aashna realizes Nina meant Su. She goes for the toilet paper.

AASHNA

BE THERE IN TWO SHAKES!  
(off her mom's look)  
You know what I mean.

NINA

Once again, throwing your life away for a pair of legs.

Aashna looks at Nina to turn around. She does. A beat. FLUSH.

AASHNA  
Once again, you're wrong.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Aashna SKIDS, almost STACKING IT. The floorboards are a wet mess. Nina hides her whisky.

AASHNA  
You know what? Yuck fou!

NINA  
What the hell does that mean?

Aashna marches into her office, slamming the door in Nina's face. Nina, unperturbed, floats on through.

INT. HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Aashna cradles her head in her hands, falling against the wall. Meltdown in 3,2,1.

AASHNA  
Since you arrived, all you've done  
is complain, nag and insult me.  
With you, hell is a place on earth!

She slides to the floor; her head hangs between her legs. Suddenly-- BOOOOOOO. What's that noise? She looks around. Then sees Nina. She's "ghost crying", which basically sounds like "BOOOO". Checks out.. Her cries get louder. Aashna switches modes, quickly trying to diffuse the situation.

AASHNA (CONT'D)  
Sorry. I got a little hot-headed.  
It's just.. you make me crazy!

BOOOOOOOO.

SU (O.S.)  
WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

BOOOOOOOO.

AASHNA  
Keep it down. Please!  
(BOOOOOO)  
OH CRUMBBUM! That girl you saw out  
there. She's your granddaughter.

A silent beat. MORE BLUBBERING. Aashna's like "what now?"

NINA  
I'M SO BLOODY HAPPY.

A knock. Aashna plugs the whisky bottle back in Nina's mouth.

SU (O.S.)  
Mom, who are you talking too?

EXT./INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The door opens. Aashna gives Su a bear hug.

AASHNA  
Let's fix you something to eat.

Su doesn't move. BOOOOO.

SU  
Hi.

AASHNA  
Hi, there's plenty of snacks.

SU  
What's up with Moaning Myrtle?

Nina waves. Su waves back.

AASHNA  
You can see her? Of course you can see her! This is my colleague.

SU  
Colleague?  
(woah)  
She looks just like me. Doesn't the ghost look just like me?

Aashna goes back n forth between her daughter and her mother; it's true. They're the spitting image of each other. Funny she hadn't noticed til now; maybe she hadn't wanted to?

AASHNA  
(steadies herself on the sofa)  
Did you say ghost? Why would you.. what makes you think she's a..

SU  
Ghost? She's at 60% opacity? And her feet aren't touching the ground. Dead give away.

NINA  
 Aashna, finally you've done  
 something right.  
 Hello beta, I'm your bibi.. Your  
 grandma!

SU  
 MY GRANDMA?! My grandma's an actual  
 ghost? This is so cool, mom. Mom?

But Aashna's.. passed out on the sofa.

NINA  
 She still does that?  
 I am grinning from head to toe.  
 Come to bibi,

Nina throws her arms around Su but falls right through her.  
 Su GAGS AND SHUDDERS.

NINA (CONT'D)  
 Oh sorry. Sorry.

AASHNA  
 (comes to)  
 We're going to need to talk about  
 boundaries, mother.

INT. HALLWAY/INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Three generations of VINOD WOMEN together for the first time.

SU  
 Wait -- when did you die!?

NINA  
 Who's hungry?

AASHNA  
 Is it hot in here? I need some air.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Nina tells Su how to make dessert "Rasmalai". Su puts noodles  
 into a pot of boiling water, and opens condensed milk.

NINA  
 So you're not scared? No problem if  
 you are. You can tell Nina Bibi.

SU

No offence Nina Bibi but on the scare-scale, you're more Casper than Hereditary. You're not even "I See Dead People" scary.

NINA

Is that a band?

SU

(laughs)  
They're movies, Nina bibi! I'm sorta a horror stan. I barely watch 'em here coz this mom hates 'em. She's a real "baby" about it; but don't ever say that to her face.

Su does a "cut throat" gesture. She checks her phone. Nina looks. On the screen: a text thread with 'MAX'.

SU (CONT'D)

Y'know I'm a spirit talker?

NINA

I know.

SU

No, like it's one of my hustles. I have a few. Gen-Z is the most enterprising generation, y'know?

NINA

I don't know about that. I had a few spinning plates of my own before.. well

Nina does a "cut throat", then a "R.I.P" gesture.

SU

You hustled too?!

NINA

Now you know where you get it from.

Su types a text to Max: "where r u? call me".

SU

(at phone)  
Max is my business partner. He takes care of the numbers, and I'm the talent.

NINA

Saving up for something special?

SU  
 Making bank to buy my own car. And  
 then I'm outta here.

VROOOOM. A motorcycle engine REVS.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

At the window, Su and Nina watch Aashna on her bike. She flirts with neighbor KIRAN (30s). She's looking pretty cool in her leather threads. But as she removes her helmet her hair gets caught! f\*&^%(!! Not so cool.

NINA  
 My bike.

SU  
 You ride Nina Bibi?!

NINA  
 Never. But your mom pinched my card  
 to buy it when she was 17. So it's  
 officially mine.

SU  
 Credit card fraud!? Woah, mom was  
 closet cool as a kid.  
 (a beat)  
 Is that why you kicked her out? Coz  
 she stole from you?

Nina watches Aashna try to yank her hair out of the helmet.  
 Kiran watching on. Su eyerolls.

NINA  
 (subtitle: let's go)  
 Challa.  
 The Rasmalai's getting cold.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Aashna enters with groceries. A SCREAM from the TV. She whinces. Nina and Su - with her bowl of Rasmalai - are on the sofa watching a scary movie.

AASHNA  
 Hi.

No response. Su reaches for her phone, noticing her mom.

SU  
 Hi mom.

AASHNA  
Yum, Rasmalai.

NINA  
(eyes glued to the TV)  
There's more in the pot.

SCARY MUSIC. On the TV: A blonde girl is mid-axe assault.  
Aashna, feeling weighed down, exits with her shopping bags.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A BLOOD CURLING SCREAM FROM THE TV. The kitchen's a mess!!  
Aashna SIGHS; dropping the bags.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Aashna's back hiding behind her bowl of Rasmalai. She watches  
Su check her text thread with 'Max'. Still no reply.

AASHNA  
Who's Max?

SU  
No one, mom! God, don't look at my  
phone. You're such a creeper.

A beat.

AASHNA  
Su, why don't we hang out?

SHHH. Nina shushes Aashna. Aashna snarls.

SU  
Isn't that what we're doing?

TV CHAINSAW. Aashna restrained, moves to the tower of merch.

AASHNA  
We could go through all this stuff?  
That would be fun. You might find  
something(s) you like, Su.

SU  
REALLY?! Cool.

Later..

Merch everywhееееееere. Su sits in the middle of lotions,  
potions; self-care wands and eggs. She presses a jade roller  
onto her cheek.

SU (CONT'D)

Cool.

Aashna smiles.

NINA

You hawk this junk to your "therapy followers"? Not sure de-puffing your face with a jade roller and bathing in rose petals is gonna fix your family?

AASHNA

You're not exactly the authority on fixing families.

NINA

So these lil videos are your "career", are they?

AASHNA

You know they are. I'm an Instagram Family Therapist.

NINA

Aashna with "one a", the Millennial Therapist.

AASHNA

(at the merch)  
I'm kind of a BIG DEAL, mother. "10 million followers" big deal.

SU

Mom connects more with her followers than her own family.

AASHNA

Su, that's not true! Do you really believe that?

But Su is busy swiping her phone. On the screen: Kim Kardashian's feed.

AASHNA (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

SU

I'm reporting all of Kim Kardashian's 'indecent' photos.

AASHNA

So you're annoyed with me?

NINA

What does Su reporting this woman's racy photos have to do with you?

AASHNA

Because she knows I.. She's doing it to get under my skin, mother.

NINA

Oh don't be such a baby, Aashna.

Aashna: F\_\*?!!!£\$K!

INT. STREETS - DAY

Aashna is on a jog. Nina floats ahead with her urn.

AASHNA

Do you have to follow me everywhere?

NINA

I'm trying here. What should we talk about? I know. Su's dad!

AASHNA

Trying to be a massive pain in my..

NINA

Say it. You'll feel better.

AASHNA

In my.. William Shatner!

NINA

How's your pulse, beta? All this "swearn" must be wearn you out. Coz this "jog" can't be doin much.

AASHNA

I didn't ask for "running commentary". And it's a hill!

NINA

That was funny for you.

EXT./INT. PARK - CONTINUOUS

Aashna waits for a stroller to pass, then continues jogging.

NINA

Beta, I'm here to help.

AASHNA

You're not! And stop filling my daughter's ears with nonsense. You told her I stole my bike!

NINA

YOU DID!

AASHNA

I do think it made her warm up to me. Ironically.

NINA

You're welcome.

AASHNA

My Kawasaki is an upgrade from the starter kit your card limit could handle. AND YOU HAD IT COMING!

NINA

Has Su told you about her business?

AASHNA

Generous to call that gift she's pulling, a business-- OMIGOD.

NINA

What?

AASHNA

I sound exactly like you!

NINA

Is that s'pose to be a compliment?

AASHNA

No.

NINA

If you stopped playing Little Miss Perfect all the time, it might help your broken relationship.

In the distance, Kiran walks her dog. Aashna doesn't notice.

AASHNA

Don't talk to me about broken relationships!

NINA

When you ran away I thought about taking my own life! You don't know how hard it was for me, beta!

AASHNA

I didn't run away! I came out to you; and you threw me out. I was Su's age.

NINA

(teary)  
You know Su calls me Nina Bibi?

AASHNA

Son of a monkey. You don't get to turn up late, and then steal Su away from me!

Kiran watches: AGOG. From her POV, Aashna is flapping her arms, and shouting into thin air.

KIRAN

Aashna? Everything okay?

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Aashna cleans up the mess of boxes. Nina puts her heavy breathing to good use, blowing it all into one corner.

AASHNA

It's Afreen.

NINA

What is?

AASHNA

Afreen? My first girlfriend; the girl you forbid me to see after I came out as queer. Remember? I refused, and you threw me out.

NINA

I don't understand why you say these things. Is it to hurt me?

AASHNA

Afreen is Su's mom. Other mom.

NINA

Afreen is Su's mom? But how?

AASHNA

Three rounds of drinks and turkey baster.

NINA

Scrappy.

AASHNA

My whole life. And if you don't stop getting in the way of my relationship with my daughter, I'll tell Su. Everything.

NINA

No! What I have with Su is.. She's like--

AASHNA

Say it. The daughter you never had?

NINA

I'm not a monster, Aashna! She's my second chance. This old soul couldn't handle any more heartache. Yes, okay. I'll help you.

AASHNA

I'M YOU'RE SECOND CHANCE!

**END OF ACT II**