

white bitches in delhi

By Ellis Stump (they/them/she/her)
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White Bitches in Delhi was developed in an MFA thesis presentation at Columbia University (2023) and Williamstown Theatre Festival (2024).

Character and developmental contributions by Aaron Roitman

Developmental consultation by Zi Alikhan

Hindi language consultation and translations by Tilottama Pillai

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CAST OF CHARACTERS (5)

American college students (juniors) studying abroad:

James (m): Indian-American, Desi-fuckboi. From NYC. Simultaneously bro-y and hipster, like both a SoundCloud artist and gymrat—the whole American package. Sadboi golden retriever. In India to Find Love.

Jensen (m or nb): White. Raised by old money New England conservatives, thus violently committed to international liberalism. Witty, charming, self-aggrandizing, oblivious twink, who has never had to work a real job. Underneath his curated aesthetic, lost and lonely. In India to Save the World.

Sienna* (f): White. From the rural Midwest. Plays up a bubbly, ditzzy persona to appear more likable and less socially awkward, but deep down genuine, quirky, and a little slut for knowledge. Does too many bits, and wants to know your birth chart. Queer, but closeted. In India for a Life-Changing Experience.

***Note on Sienna:** The script references Sienna's bad spray tan. She should be noticeably bronzed out—without crossing the line into legit brown face. Think Ariana Grande and Kim Kardashian, circa 2015.

Indians living in New Delhi:

Ridhi (f or nb): Senior at Delhi University. Masc-presenting or masc-of-center, a “tomboy.” Queer, but not yet aware. Fiercely independent, sarcastic, career-driven. No time for love. Proud of her intelligence, clings to it. Angry at the world, but maybe a secret softie? Whatever, nevermind.

Pia (f): Ridhi's *Amma* [Mother]. In a financially controlling marriage; committed to arranging the best possible marriage for her daughter. On the side, she runs an NGO school for orphans that, like herself, is more than meets the eye. Motherly and doting in that annoying yet endearing way. Has a silly and playful side.

Optional:

Dance Chorus: An ensemble of performers (3-6, or more if you have access to an eager dance troupe), integrating traditional Indian dance styles (Bharatanatyam, Kathak, etc.) and contemporary Bollywood fusion, with red fabric representing the Red Thread of Fate.

SETTING

Delhi, India. Early Summer. Monsoon Season. Present.

Sets include a Delhi University canteen (outdoor cafeteria), dosa restaurant, marketplace, and Hauz Khas bar. All can be easily achieved with an outdoor table, chairs, and a clothing rack rolled in for the market. The only fixed set is Pia's living room (which might include a pull-out couch, armchair, and coffee table, upon a rug), which easily becomes James' dorm, by simply striking the table and chair and pulling out the couch.

A clothesline with hanging fabrics and twinkling lights can help backdrop the set pieces and establish the environment.

RUN TIME

1 hr 40-50 min

NOTE

[] Translation of language, lingo, or abbreviations (not said aloud)
/ Indicates interruption
— or ... Suggests pause or conversational pivot

ABOUT PACING

Dialogue should be quick, as every character is attempting to cram infinite thoughts and feelings into every line, because all are desperately, neurotically vying to be heard.

& COLLOQUIALISMS

Until the day we die, we'll try to keep this play current, but please feel free to freshen up lingo and references. While keeping in mind the audience should span generations, so dialogue should be understandable enough with context clues...pop off.

We're also happy to make these updates for you. Hit us up at theellisstump@gmail.com and neetathadani98@gmail.com.

ACT I

Scene 1: Delhi University Canteen – Sunrise

RIDHI, a driven college senior, sits at a cafeteria table alone, bent over textbooks, stressed.

Around the courtyard, an ensemble of DANCERS clad in red are lounging, sipping chai, and low-key chatting about Ridhi, who is obviously within earshot.

DANCER #1
(Bubbly lovergirl)

Well, we made it. Our girl is graduating tomorrow.

DANCER #2
(Broody existentialist)

If she passes.

DANCER #3
(Career-driven girlboss)

She's studying at 6 a.m. to maintain her 10 point CGPA. She's an academic weapon.

DANCER #2
Nerd alert.

DANCER #1
I can't wait to wrap this up so she can tie the knot already!

DANCER #2
After this? Then what would've been the point to all her /pain and suffering?/

DANCER #3
/Passion and drive./

DANCER #2
Not to mention, she's obviously inherently unlovable.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

DANCER #3

No, she's just destined to girlboss as a future lawyer.

DANCER #1

Or, she just hasn't met the One!

RIDHI

Can you guys do me a favor and shut the fuck up?

The DANCERS whip their heads in
RIDHI's direction and begin twirling
towards her.

DANCER #3

Heyyy queen, how're we feeling? Spill the chai.

DANCER #3 massages RIDHI's shoulders,
prepping her up for the big game, while
DANCER #2, vaping.

RIDHI

Well, I'm not really loving what you're saying about my future, while I'm clearly trying
to focus on the present.

DANCER #1

Today is your last chance to meet someone on campus, and manifest a love marriage,
before we have to settle for an arranged one! He'll stride in, straight out of a Bollywood
movie—

RIDHI

That is the last thing on my mind. I don't need a musical declaration of love set against
the exotic backdrop of the Swiss Alps. Bollywood films are an impractical delusion used
to draw unhappy married couples into theaters.

DANCER #2

Period.

DANCER #1

You can't control when you'll get tangled up in the Red Thread of Fate...

The DANCERS use their red dupattas to form a Red Thread of Fate.

DANCER #1 (cont'd.)

Your soulmate could be pulled by the invisible string into this courtyard right now! And it would look and feel like...

A musical flourish. Hiding their faces behind their dupattas, with an air of mystique, the DANCERS frolic to frame the entrance of the courtyard.

Dramatically, they drop their makeshift curtain, revealing...

SIENNA, a quirky girlypop in her *Eat, Pray, Love* era. She basks in the scene, dorkily entranced.

Notably, SIENNA doesn't acknowledge the dancers, indicating *they only exist inside RIDHI's head*.

For a fleeting moment, RIDHI and SIENNA's eyes meet. Music swells and.....

RIDHI

Nah, not for me.
Plus, it would never be with a *white bitch*.

The DANCERS shrug in agreement, muttering a medley of "fair" "bet" "facts" as they disperse back to their original positions.

With an armful of books, SIENNA shuffles to a nearby table.

JENSEN (o.s.)
(A hungover groan)

Ugh...Bitch...

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Summoned by the word *bitch*—the sound of her name—SIENNA blinks over to find:

JENSEN, self-styled in tacky Bushwick twink chic core aesthetic.

SIENNA

Over here! Good morning, sunshine! Look at this place, isn't it /magical—/

JENSEN

So fucking humid. God is serving cunt with this heat index.

SIENNA

No, totally, that's exactly what I was /gonna say—/

JENSEN joins his second-in-command white bitch, cooling his face with a huge, hot pink hand fan that reads "POWER BOTTOM".

JENSEN

It's steamier and slimier than a New York City Pride Parade, meat-packed into Stonewall on a mid-summer's day.

JENSEN slams down two tin breakfast trays, loaded with curry and roti.

SIENNA

Jensen. You know I hate it when you pay for me. I told you I was fine—/

JENSEN

Sienna. Need I remind you. My dad is rich. I don't have to listen to anyone.

(Inspecting the trays)

Wait. Did they forget our utensils? Or is this some sorta Indian hazing ritual? "Welcome to Delhi University!"

SIENNA

No, I think maybe you just scoop it? With your—?

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

JENSEN

Okay, ew? I don't know where my hands have been.

Fortunately, JENSEN always comes prepared. From his Patagonia daypack, he starts pulling out endless items: clorox wipes, industrial-size hand sanitizer, a bag of plastic utensils. Like Mary fucking Poppins.

The DANCERS, offended by JENSEN's general vibe, stand up.

DANCER #1

Protective bubble?

DANCER #3

Initiate the mind palace.

RIDHI

Americans will literally study abroad in India instead of going to therapy.

They get up and form a protective bubble around RIDHI so she can keep studying.

JENSEN doles out utensils, while wearing an Earth Day t-shirt proclaiming: "*Love Your Mother!*"

With no concept of irony, throughout the scene, JENSEN compulsively cleans every possible surface with clorox wipes.

Whenever SIENNA "contaminates" a spoon, he replaces it instantly, allowing litter to accumulate into a trash mountain.

SIENNA

(Making conversation)

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

So I already checked out the tent across from our hostel dormitory.

JENSEN

Slay. Smash or pass?

SIENNA

Well, did you know, no one really carries tampons? Only pads. What the girls here call “sanitary napkins.”

JENSEN

C’mon, girlies.

SIENNA

And their makeup department was pretty limited.

JENSEN

Well it’s no Sephora.

SIENNA

Fortunately, for the Instagram grid posts—

JENSEN

Those *will* outlive us.

SIENNA

I hit the spray tan booth pretty hard before we left.

JENSEN

You certainly did not hold back.

SIENNA

Because, get this: here, they only sell *whitening cream*. To *lighten* your skin!

JENSEN

That’s insane. Being white is the worst.

SIENNA

Tell me about it!

JENSEN

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Give me a cold brew and twenty minutes on Canva.

Into the canteen skulks JAMES, an Indian-American, Desi fuckboi, sporting a gold chain and Beats headphones, which he uses exclusively to listen to Drake.

On his tray sits only a single, comically oversized mango.

Jimmy!

SIENNA

James, my boy!

JENSEN

James, James, and the Giant...Mango?

SIENNA

Girl dinner.

JENSEN

JAMES

I didn't ask for it, bruh. The canteen server ladies are, like, fighting to load me up with fruits and veggies and all the legit spices they don't mix into your guys' meals. Haven't you noticed?

SIENNA
Totally.

JENSEN
Not at all.

JAMES

They assume I'm Hindu and vegan. When obviously, I'm the opposite: Atheist and /keto./

SIENNA & JENSEN
/Keto./

JAMES

And they confiscated my creatine at security! I'm fucking cooked, man.
(Sniffing pits)
Shit, do I already smell like curry?

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

SIENNA

Um, I think that's kind of offensive...

JENSEN

Yeahhhh you do.

SIENNA

(Mitigating)

Okay so maybe the mangoes don't match your macros, but they're worth a munch! I mean, they're way juicer than anything a cat's peed on at Key Foods. They burst with this...sweet, slurpy, *soul*, flowing straight from Mother Earth's *womb*...

Cupping the fruit, SIENNA stares into its "eyes," so to speak, longing, yearning, pining...

JENSEN

Gross...and...gay, question mark?

SIENNA

What? No I'm /not-/

JAMES

You can have it. I can't eat.

SIENNA

Oh. Honey...

JENSEN

Our tall chai tea with extra honey. Still all broken up about being broken up?

JAMES

Dude, it happened 24 hours ago.

JENSEN

Did you counter in the time difference?

SIENNA

I cannot believe she dropped that *literal BOMB* while we were on the *PLANE*.

JENSEN (cont'd.)

When she *knew* you wouldn't have service. Talk about a second plane hitting the tower.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

JAMES perks up at their concerning phrasing.

JENSEN

Like, pardon me for sustaining fundamental faith in human decency post-9/11. She should've triggered that disaster before we took off.

SIENNA

Or after we landed.

JENSEN

And offered to FaceTime.

SIENNA

Or recorded a voice note.

JENSEN

Hello!

SIENNA

Goodbye. The nerve of that slut.

JENSEN

The lack thereof. PSA though, Sienna darling, you shouldn't use derogatory terms like—/

JAMES

Yeah, she wasn't a slut, barbie. She was my SoundCloud muse.

SIENNA

(Overly apologetic)

Oh my god, I'm so sorry. But, your tracks will be just as dope without her!

JENSEN

You're forgiven, Si Si. And *you're* forgetting you're a frickin' catch, James James.

SIENNA

At least you know now that she wasn't The One.

JENSEN

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Or one of the Ones, if you're considering polyamory or ethical non-monogamy, which would be like—/

SIENNA

So totally cool.

JENSEN

Beyond so totally cool.

SIENNA

We'd love you just the same.

JENSEN

(Suggestive)

I'd probably love you a little bit more.

SIENNA

Than me?

JENSEN

Never, baby. No way in Hell.

SIENNA

Thank God. And Chappel Roan. And future President Kamala Harris. And...the One!

(Explaining)

That's Daoism, the practice of trusting the Universe. "When I release what I am, I become what I might be." The *One*.

SIENNA bites into the dripping, glistening mango.

JAMES

Right. Well. That's all I want, too. Just one...one.

Like, you guys know I fuck bitches.

JAMES waits for them to respond. They don't.

JAMES (cont'd.)

You've seen my roster! You've witnessed my rizz!

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

But all I need is just One Thing.
Even if that qualifies me, in your books, as old school or whatever.

JENSEN

Speaking of books—Siennie, bindi baby? Our introductory group project?

Mouth full of mango, SIENNA ushers a thumbs up and obediently dives into her textbooks.

JAMES

Yeah, you know, I watched a Bollywood film on the plane. And it kinda made me realize, maybe I *should* be with someone... who can actually *get* me. Someone... *traditional*. She could wake me up and inspire me and shit.

(Annoyed, pessimistic)

But the girl-to-guy ratio on campus—

JENSEN

Patrol your pronouns, pal!

JAMES

There are far fewer... females... I fantasize about... fraternizing with.

JENSEN

Okay, worse. But... new continent, new era! Just migrate to the apps for the summer.

JAMES

Fam. Indians don't use dating apps the way we do. Instead of swiping through Tinder and Hinge, for Netflixing and fucking and then ghosting, they use Shaadi.com, for careful matchmaking. The profiles are made and run by the parents.

JENSEN

That's diabolical. Shut up.

SIENNA

That's fascinating. Keep going.

JAMES

Yeah. You'd hear the students yapping about it, if you removed your stupid AirPods.

JENSEN does.

JAMES

The shitty thing is, my folks won't even put me up on Shaadi, because they insist they're all contemporary. Cosmopolitan. Western.

SIENNA

Western? They're Wall Street WeWork techies. Mine are legit mid-Western rednecks.

JAMES

That's what I meant, dummy. Western like modern American? It's—doesn't matter. The point is, they refuse to help make my life any easier. Instead, it's *my* responsibility to put myself out there and casually come across a soulmate, among, what, 7 billion options?

SIENNA

8. It's now 8.

JAMES

Well, that's fucking great! 8 billion highly damaged, easily distracted options. As if I don't feel alone, with all of them, always. I'm an Outsider home in New York. I'm an Outsider here in New Delhi. Even around the two of you—I know you're my besties or whatever you think you are—but sometimes, I feel like a pointless third wheel.

SIENNA

That's not true.

JENSEN

Your feelings are valid.

SIENNA

Third wheels can be the best. Rickshaws have three wheels! They're so humble and authentic.

JENSEN

Way cheaper than Ubers.

JAMES

Yeah, well. It's not as fun when you're sitting in the rickshaw *alone*.

SIENNA

Ah, Jimmy. You're such a hopeless romantic.

JAMES

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

(Angrily grabbing a plastic spoon)

I want to gag myself with a spoon just to feel something.

JENSEN

While I respect you giving 80s rom com, tragically, we're almost out.

JENSEN snatches the spoon back from James and continues intensely organizing his stock.

SIENNA

(Still to James, with a sigh)

Jeez, I just...I wish I believed "Being in Love" with you.

JAMES

With me?

Realizing what he just said, JAMES and SIENNA share a look.

JAMES

And by that I mean...

SIENNA

Oh, um, yeah, by that I meant...

JAMES

I'm gonna go throw up.

JENSEN

Gross, what?

JAMES

It's this goddamned *Delhi Belly*. I can't keep down a single mouthful.

SIENNA

(Trying to relate to Jensen, acting "old money white")

Jealous. Everyone here is, like, skin-and-bones, am I right?!

JENSEN

Sienna! What the fuck?!? That's because of the...

(Stage-whispered, gesturing out towards audience)

Poverty....?!

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

SIENNA

Oh my god, no I *know*, I am so sorry, my brain is /broken, I hate myself—/

JAMES

/I'm gonna go/ post up in the Water Closet. Do either of you have any...?

JENSEN

Mother always comes prepared.

From his sack of supplies, JENSEN presents
JAMES with a roll of toilet paper.

JENSEN (cont'd.)

Don't use it all in one go. Because it'll clog the underfunded pipes...and I only have two more IKEA bags packed of this delicacy. Good luck, babe!

SIENNA

Don't drown!

JENSEN

And if you do, just text us!

SIENNA

Well, text Jensen, because his international phone plan is better!

JENSEN

(Remembering)

Right. Poor.

SIENNA

(To James)

Once I finish our group project, I'll WhatsApp you a list of what you "contributed." Just in case our Sir asks.

JAMES, clutching his gut, nods and goes to
leave. SIENNA stops him with:

SIENNA (cont'd.)

(Explaining)

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Sir means Professor here. And also...every man.

JAMES tries again, eyeing the direction of the bathroom, but SIENNA, oblivious, blathers on.

SIENNA (cont'd.)
(Referring to her book)

The assignment is about Kamala Suraiyya, an Indian-American poet. You two will totally vibe.

JAMES

She sounds hot.
Don't do anything stupid while I'm gone, word?

Finally, JAMES is free to release the beast, but something deep within his gut, even deeper than his backed-up-bowels, urges him to warn:

JAMES (cont'd.)
(To Jensen)

Like investing Daddy's trust fund into some child labor factory.

(To Sienna)

Or fall in love with a random local.

(Referring to himself)

You two are fucking lost without your unofficial tour guide.

About to blow out his pants, JAMES lurches off, EXITS.

JENSEN

...How adorable is it that Indians call bathrooms "Water Closets?"

SIENNA

I know, right? It's like, "Don't mind me, Mom! Just getting dressed for school, picking out my fit from the Water Closet!"

JENSEN

Like, is it a walk-in, or a fall-in Water Closet?

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

SIENNA

(Super weird voice, being a little Too Silly)

Help, I'm trapped in the Water Closet! Let me out, let me out!

JENSEN

...ha ha.

Circling back...we've got to do something about this.

SIENNA

About the Poverty, you mean?

JENSEN

Ew, no. I mean—yes. 100 percent. I'm here to Save the World.

SIENNA

You touch me.

JENSEN

You tickle me. The hot-button crisis I was referring to, however, is our resident sadboi, James. Our tattooed golden retriever deserves affection. Or at least attention.

SIENNA

I know, but I just can't *give* him that. I mean, I've *tried*. But I just don't like guys. Like him. Like that. And, oh my god, I don't mean not *not-white guys*—I need a *lobotomy*—/

JENSEN

...Girl. Chill. I was just gonna say we should make him a profile. On the matchmaking app.

SIENNA

Shaadi!

JENSEN

Not any shoddier than FarmersOnly or Christian Mingle. Or Thursday, the one where you /only message on Thursdays?/

SIENNA

/I meant the site/ is called Shaadi.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

JENSEN

Facts. Like, are we not basically his parents, just wiser and more micro-managerial? You'd astound any desperate Indian housewife with your knowledge of astrological compatibility, and objectively *all* parents love me. Even my own.

SIENNA

Well...I guess if he's looking for something traditional, this might be his path to everlasting love...?

JENSEN slips out his phone.

The following is projected along with text dings:

DING! From: FATHER

DING! Dear Jensen, hope you're having a "slay" first day in India.

JENSEN

Aww, it's my dad!

The next few texts are paired with the sounds of thunder clapping, (and perhaps a dramatic spotlight on JENSEN as the action around him freezes):

DING! We've noticed you already ran through your trust fund.

DING! We're cutting you off.

DING! Use this trip as an opportunity to make your own money.

DING! Your international phone plan will only be good for the next two days.

DING! Good lick.

DING! Lick.

DING! Lick!!

DING! L u ck

SIENNA

(Noticing Jensen's discomfort)

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

What did he say?

JENSEN

He sends his love! Okay, Shaadi.com.

Hurriedly, JENSEN swipes away the notification, then navigates to the website: Shaadi.com.

Overwhelmed, he hands his phone to Sienna, peering over her shoulder.

JENSEN

You can take care of the boring stuff, like his interests and dreams.

SIENNA

What are the moral implications of pretending to be James's parents?

JENSEN

Who cares, it's an app.

SIENNA

(Filling it out)

Financial Status?

JENSEN

Grindr never asks me that.

Well, I know he just bought new Yeezys.

So, just put him high on the cast list.

SIENNA

Caste system.

But, um, okay. I mean, we don't *know* that.

(Feeling like a bad friend & dumb American)

Should we know that?

I'll just leave it blank.

Another message pops up. "Income and Caste details will help us find you *relevant* Matches."

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

SIENNA

Oh, shit. I think it's because of the, um, dowry element.

JENSEN

The who?

SIENNA

It's, like...money? Paid for the daughter's hand in marriage. From her family, to his.

JENSEN

(This is BIG, seeing his way out)

So, in this case—us?

SIENNA

Hypothetically.

But *you* certainly don't need it.

And the last thing I want is a handout.

JENSEN

(Tense, psychotically locking in)

Aren't your student loans due, like, yesterday?

SIENNA

I mean, yeah, they're low-key strangling me, and not in a hot dom way, but...I'm fine! I have my ways.

JENSEN

Okay, so the dowry's a beautiful bonus we can put towards fixing your unibrow!

We can't argue with tradition.

And we're helping James!

SIENNA

(Not fully convinced)

We're helping James....Full send I guess.

SIENNA submits the registration form, prompting a welcome screen and sitar jingle, in which the word Shaadi sounds like “shawty:”

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Shaadi makes you dance!
Shaadi makes you sing!
Shaadi translates in the end to a Shaadi wedding!

JENSEN

The WEDDING! Fuck me with a long, hard mission statement.

(Dangling a carrot)

Sienna, have you ever been to an Indian wedding?

SIENNA

I have not.

JENSEN

You *love* weddings. *And* India! We could like wear sarees! And ride elephants! Ambani wedding 2.0?!

SIENNA

(Getting into it)

Fun fact, the bride actually wears red, because here, white's reserved for funerals!

JENSEN

Makes sense. White sucks. Death to white.

(To a student walking past)

Death to white! I see you.

SIENNA

(Mortified, sneakily pulling Jens back into their convo)

Jens, you *would*...

(Experimenting with phrase he said earlier)

“Serve cunt” in a kurta.

JENSEN

I can say that. You can't. You're not gay....

Pause. JENSEN searches SIENNA's face, gauging her reaction. She holds fast. To relieve general tension, he pivots:

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

JENSEN

Should we be drunk for this? It *is* brat girl summer.

SIENNA

Bharat girl summer!

Hyping each other up, the duo skips
offstage, just as...JAMES returns from the
squatty potties.

JAMES

(To himself)

Where are my friends? Why are they always deserting me?

RIDHI

I dunno, dude. These sound like questions for a therapist.

Upon seeing RIDHI, time slows down,
music plays, and a gust of wind flows
through his hair.

JAMES

(Turning on the charm)

Hey, that's where I was sitting.

RIDHI

Are you...sure? You weren't when I got here.

JAMES

Well...I was here first.

RIDHI

Before anyone else? Ever?

JAMES

(Looks around, then...)

Wait, actually, this wasn't my table.

RIDHI

(Amused)

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Hmm, You're an expat, I assume. American?

JAMES
(Flattered)

What gave it away?

RIDHI
We don't need to delve into the history and politics.

JAMES
Yeah, no thanks. I study Business. Like an American.

The DANCERS rush in.

DANCER #1
(Swooning)
Oh my god we can fix him!

RIDHI
(To Dancers)
Should I want to?

DANCER #3
He's just your type!

RIDHI
(to Dancers)
We just met?

Raindrops begin to fall, and RIDHI
scrambles to protect her books.

JAMES
Allow me.

JAMES whisks her tray from the table,
flings off all the food, and holds it overhead.

RIDHI
Oh, um... You didn't have to do that.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

JAMES

When it rains, it pours, or chivalry isn't dead, or whatever.

RIDHI

I meant, you didn't have to fling off all that food.
There are starving children in America.

JAMES

You're funny.
Is that how you say thanks in hindi?

RIDHI

(Considers this)

You don't really have to. There's an unspoken agreement that everyone works together to help the collective.

JAMES

Wow. In the States, people only help people to help themselves. This place kinda rules for me. I'm trying to pinpoint why...

RIDHI

Well, it has its downsides.
Like no one ever asks me what I want.
They just assume what I need.

As if on cue, JAMES snaps into Bollywood
heartthrob mode.

JAMES

I think I know what you need.

RIDHI

And what is that?

DANCER #1

Say less! This is destiny. Ladies, get in formation....

The DANCERS initiate a romantic, classical
90's Bollywood romantic dance between

JAMES and RIDHI. The choreography is akin to the rain scene from [*Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*](#).

At a pivotal moment of the dance, they are locked in an embrace. RIDHI is actually into it, until...

JAMES

Do you believe in love at first sight?

RIDHI

(looking to DANCERS)

Uh...

DANCER #1

Say the lines, you know the Bollywood script!

RIDHI

(Panic ramble)

Did you know only 7% of marriages here are love marriages?

JAMES & ALL DANCERS

Huh?

RIDHI

(Hurried, tumbling out)

They claim *arranged marriage* works because our divorce rate is under 1%, but what about the shame that accompanies divorce? Yes, love marriages *are* a recent growing trend here. But they're so recent, that we don't know how they'll end yet—we can't calculate their success rate.

What if they ALL end in divorce?! Sending your kids to two Diwalis every year?? I—I can't operate without evidence. Trusting my intuition?! Is *crazy*!

And with the pace at which the planet's heating up, there's no guarantee we'll even live long enough to find out for ourselves!

JAMES

I'm gonna be sick.

RIDHI

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

I know, right? Society...

JAMES

No—my stomach. I'm about to literally puke out my guts.

RIDHI

Oh—oh my god, are you okay?

JAMES is about to run out of the Canteen.

DANCER #1

Fix him!!!

From her stack of books, RIDHI passes over an anthology of poetry. Kamala Suraiyya.

RIDHI

It's not for your stomach. Please don't use the pages as toilet paper. It's for your heart. It might—sit well.

JAMES

Oh, I know Kamala Suraiyya. I read books. She's dope.

JAMES turns again to run out.

DANCER #1

Wait! You have to see him again!!

RIDHI

Oh shit. Uh hey! What are you doing tonight?

JAMES turns back around, really trying to hold it together.

JAMES

Whatever you're doing!

RIDHI

(Attempting to act American)

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Great, um. There's a *groovy* grad party at Hauz Khas tonight...that's bound to be a *rockin good time!* Uh. See you there?

JAMES

If fate allows.

Smirking, JAMES EXITS, unrolling Jensen's toilet paper in preparation.

RIDHI smiles to herself. Hm.

Scene 2: Pia's Household

PIA, Ridhi's mother, sits with breakfast and her phone, watching the news.

On their TV, we see or hear a news report, concerning the ongoing debate over LGBTQ+ rights in India. While same-sex relations have been decriminalized, gay marriage still isn't legally recognized.

When RIDHI ENTERS, PIA shuts off the news and snaps into her playful persona, basically acting like a mom.

PIA

That is what you wore to University today? You have far nicer fabrics in your closet. Pretty sarees.

RIDHI

I'm saving those for a rainy day.

PIA

It's monsoon season, Ridhi. Every day is a rainy day. And each storm is followed by a rainbow...of opportunities to find a husband! Chai?

PIA EXITS into the kitchen.

RIDHI

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

I'll take a coffee. Like I've said every morning lately, I *prefer coffee*.
But clearly, that—oh, and you're gone.

PIA returns, cheerful and oblivious, with a
tray of chai and Parle-G biscuits.

PIA

Here. Chai. I made chai.

PIA

So I've been thinking.

RIDHI

So I've been thinking...

PIA

Oh, Nothing good ever comes from that, Ridhi.

The DANCERS emerge from behind the couch, in
an acrobatic fashion. Throughout the following
conversation, as PIA and RIDHI make points, the
DANCERS sway back-and-forth between them.
RIDHI clocks their reactions, but ignores them.

RIDHI

So, before you bring this up, I know we agreed that if I didn't find anyone at school, you
could start arranging my marriage. So, what if I just keep going to school?

PIA

For what, Ridhi?

RIDHI

More...Gender Studies?

PIA

(To herself)

How much more gender is there to study? There's only three. .

(Beat)

With a strong case like that, you should have studied Law.

Like your father.

And he's the one you need to convince, not me.

And we both know he won't budge.

I'm considering both of our best interests—/

RIDHI

All you're considering is what's going to keep Dad happy. We don't need to be financially dependent on him.

(Before Pia can interject)

Maybe, if you tried expanding your business, beyond just a passion project, you could leave him.

A stand off.

RIDHI

(Heading out)

Well, obviously I can't study here.

PIA

Arranged marriage is an investment, you understand.

RIDHI

How romantic.

PIA

Once you get married, you can have all the freedom you want, to do whatever you want.

RIDHI

Is that what you have now? Freedom?

With that insult, launched from a place of stress and insecurity, RIDHI lingers in the doorway.

RIDHI (cont'd.)

Are you going to wish me luck or not?

PIA

Ridhi, you manifest your own luck. You rise to every challenge and occasion. I have full faith you'll make your last day worth it...and bump into a wealthy, light-skinned, city husband, before it's too late! But also, in case you don't...I signed you up for Shaadi.com.

PIA proudly holds up her phone.

RIDHI

We'll unpack that later. I have a final.

RIDHI EXITS.

PIA taps her phone, which sings:

*New match! New match!
Could be the One! Check out this catch!*

PIA scrutinizes the profile, brow raised,
then...

PIA

Come to Mama.

PIA starts typing as the lights go down.

Scene 3: Outside Pia's Household– Later Morning

Outside PIA's door, SIENNA and JENSEN huddle, wearing rudimentary old-age stage makeup, learned in an undergrad theater class, and traditional Indian attire (kurtas, saris). Both are tipsy. Sienna is already guilty and rattled with nerves.

SIENNA

We should not have stopped for that round of local *apong* right before this.

JENSEN

What other choice did we have?!
There are literally zero brunch spots in the city for bottomless mimosas.

SIENNA

I'm afraid we'll slip up! Turn tongue-tied and say something humiliating...

JENSEN

No one expects us to be Hindu gods. We're only American humans.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

SIENNA

We should've deleted the app the second someone asked to meet IRL.

JENSEN

Babe. You've seen every episode of *Indian Matchmaking*. You've read more articles in *The Times of India* than anyone's ever pretended to read in *The New York Times*. And this girl I picked for James—/

SIENNA

Jignesh.

JENSEN

Bless you.

SIENNA

No, no, we—we used his non-Anglicized name on the profile, remember?

JENSEN

Copy. This girl for “Jignesh”...you'll fall in love with her, you'll be obsessed. I know your green flags and icks.

While SIENNA rants, JENSEN pulls out his phone and types, which we see projected:

SIENNA

Right. She has to be someone he can expose his authentic, always-evolving self to. And trust. And also banter and shop with. They'll hold each other accountable, but also hold up. They'll acknowledge the dark void—

JENSEN (texting)

Hey, Dad! No need to worry about little old me! I figured out a quick, easy way to make some \$\$\$;) ;) ;)

DING! Sex work???

JENSEN

NO!

SIENNA

—But defy it! Because they prioritize vulnerability, and understand how HARD it is to be a woman!

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

JENSEN, frustrated, trying to tap back into
SIENNA's rambling:

JENSEN

YES!

SIENNA

Wait—why are *you* being so adamant about this?!

JENSEN

(Whipping face up from phone)

I JUST REALLY CARE ABOUT JAMES, OKAY?!

(Projecting)

And...you! If you can't pay your loans, you won't be able to pay your rent, and you'll
wind up on THE STREETS, sticking your dick into any hole for heroin!

SIENNA

What?

JENSEN

WHAT!?

SIENNA

Listen. If we're committing to this bit. I do think you might need to....

JENSEN

Hm?

SIENNA

Just turn down your...

JENSEN

/Speak up and spit it out!/

SIENNA

/Sparkle!/ Turn down your sparkle!

JENSEN stares at SIENNA, not
understanding.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

SIENNA

Folx are staring...

JENSEN

They're jealous. If anyone ever stared at you, you'd understand.

SIENNA

This isn't Bushwick. I know what it's like to live somewhere you can't be yourself. It's dangerous.

JENSEN

What do you mean? It's so colorful here. You've seen Bollywood.

SIENNA

Life isn't a Bollywood—/

PIA

/Namaste!/

As if on cue, PIA swings open the door.

Her beaming face drops, as her expression turns to: "what the literal fuck." She was prepared for fair-skinned elites, not white morons.

Puzzled but intrigued, she decides to play the Bitches like a sitar.

SIENNA

Namaste!

PIA

Please, make yourselves at home, by freeing your bare feet.

Off JENSEN's disgust... PIA begins testing their true knowledge about Indian culture. Perhaps they'll provide a match perfect for RIDHI?

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

PIA

The house is a temple, and the guest is God. Do you not regard yourself as Holy?

SIENNA

I mean, mine has mouseholes for the rats, but that's as Holy as it gets.

JENSEN

My pad's nicer, obv.

PIA

Oh? You two live separately?

SIENNA

Oh—uh, no! We—/

JENSEN

Own multiple homes.

SIENNA

Multiple mansions! Like Barbie dream houses! From the...Greta Gerwig movie.

PIA

(Amused)

How very impressive! Please, sit.

SIENNA and JENSEN take a seat on the couch, attempting a hetero couple-y pose. Forced arms around each other.

SIENNA pulls her legs into lotus position. (Queers can't sit straight in chairs! It's a Thing!)

Meanwhile, JENSEN inspects the room, calculating how steep the dowry will be.

PIA

(To Sienna)

You demonstrate...extreme flexibility.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

(To both)

And youth.

(To Jensen)

And you, such whiteness.

(Grave)

Crystal as a ghost china doll, long forgotten in an attic.

JENSEN

Erm, yes. 'Tis my cross to bear...

PIA

Your James is...Half? Father white?

And you, *Amma*...from here?

Oh. Shit. This game-changer is emphasized by a sound effect from the [1 hour mark of *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham*](#). The sound symbolizes the Bitches being caught in their lie, and having to think on their feet.

SIENNA is reeling, about to confess, when JENSEN locks in:

JENSEN

Yes.

PIA

Well, first off. Thank you for selecting my daughter. Your child is Immaculate.

SIENNA
He's adopted!!!

JENSEN
Made him ourselves.

PIA

Your son blew me.

JENSEN
(Choking on chai, imagining blowing James)

Come again?

PIA

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

How do you say...your son blows me?

SIENNA
(Like playing charades)

Away! Blows you away!
So...Ridhi?

PIA
Her name means "Fortune."

JENSEN
Like wealth, or what you find inside a cookie?

PIA
To begin with Vedic astrology...Ridhi is a fiery, determined Leo. From your profile, I saw your son's birthdate is March 18th. Holi.

JENSEN
Cow.

PIA
(Confused)
The holiday. Festival of Love?

SIENNA
(To Jensen, tense, kinda impressing Pia)
When we forgive and rejoice the forbidden yet crackling connection between Radha and Krishna? I've mentioned them. Darling.

The *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* sound effect happens once again.

JENSEN
Doi! Love those two.

SIENNA
Jignesh is a Pisces.

JENSEN
This kid. Highkey Pisces.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

PIA

Sensitive? /Romantic?/

JENSEN

/Romantic./ Obsessive.

SIENNA

He's a...passionate romantic.

PIA

Oh, I must go strain the chai. I'll be right back!

PIA exits, giving the Bitches a knowing look on her way out.

Alone, SIENNA begins to spiral:

SIENNA

Jensen, is my spray tan actually giving brown face?!!

JENSEN

Well it's not Justin-Trudeau-bad but...

SIENNA

I know NOTHING. I didn't even know there's a difference between Vedic astrology and normal astrology!

JENSEN

(Cringing)

....Normal?

SIENNA

See what I mean?! I'm an IDIOT.

JENSEN

ENOUGH! You're talking about my best friend here! You're my Super Graphic Ultra Modern Girl! This is your chance to redefine yourself. From a people-pleasing Virgo, to a balanced, accountable Libra!

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

PIA enters behind them. SIENNA and
JENSEN jump and scramble back into
“couple mode.”

PIA

(Excited)

A Libra?! You and Ridhi will align like chakras.

SIENNA, unenthused.

PIA (cont'd.)

True. Cosmic soulmate potential. I will attempt to restrain my Resentment.

SIENNA

(Anxious as fuck)

Ha, ha, um...Does that make you /an Aries?/

PIA

/I am an Aries./

JENSEN

Bitch. I'm screaming. Same. It's like, you can *feel* the hot air circulating right now.

SIENNA

(Covering for Jensen)

Uh, thankfully, our water-sun-son Jignesh can extinguish the flames!

PIA

...Next topic. Your professions.

What do you do, Mrs. Jensen?

SIENNA

Me? Oh, I'm—nothing interesting. Right now I'm mainly focusing on—surviving?

(Pia is unimpressed, so Jensen elbow nudges)

But I teach yoga on the side.

PIA

Wonderful. What Practice?

SIENNA

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Oh, um, the...fat-burning genre? It's super relaxing. We don't allow anyone to keep their phones on volume during salutations. Only...vibrate.

PIA is thinking: what an idiot. But as long as their "son" is nice, maybe Ridhi will luck out. We can keep up this charade for a bit.

PIA

And you, Mr. Jensen? You do—?

JENSEN

Oh, I actually prefer to reframe work as not something we *do*, but rather who we *are*. I, for example, am a multi-hyphenate:

(Accompanying each role with a gesture)

Social activist–conversation starter–media humanitarian–justice of social peace.

For a total of...four hyphens.

It's like your concept of Reincarnation, but where I'm just continually reiterating into the best version of myself. The utmost Me, over and over and over again.

PIA

(Like, that's ridiculous, but it'll do?)

That sounds quite...prolific.

JENSEN

All in a day's work. And to swivel the spotlight upon you, pretty lady, *who are you?*

PIA

I run—or, I *am* the founder of an NGO. A nonprofit. It's just a passion project. Nothing big. It's a textile mill, where individuals without homes can learn skills to make a livelihood for themselves. The money earned goes straight back into the facilities. I just wish I could do more for them.

SIENNA

Have you ever thought about expanding?

PIA

That's not a possibility for me.

SIENNA

Well, what would you need?

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

PIA

First off, I suppose I'd need an investor.

SIENNA

We have money!

JENSEN

(Trying to get her to shut up)

Oh???

SIENNA

Yeah, he has so much money! He could invest in your business!

JENSEN

(fuck, fuck, fuck!)

Uh...yes! I *could*. Invest in your NGO. That is definitely something I *could* do...

PIA considers: Wow. Could this be our ticket?! Let's find out!

PIA

Potential family members.

I must simply, briefly, stress the seriousness of this endeavor... We are initiating an everlasting bond.

This is no shoddy Western love marriage, where they catch passion first. Then they attempt to contain it with commitment.

Here, we establish commitment first, then find passion *in* the promise.

To that, do you agree?

Speechless, for different reasons, SIENNA and JENSEN nod.

PIA (cont'd.)

Excellent. I shall fetch the legally-binding documents.

(Playing them)

Meanwhile, *as is custom*...Mr. Jensen? Might I kindly review your bank statements?

JENSEN

(Handing over his phone)

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Uh...thousand percent. Here's my Venmo?

PIA moves aside, into another room, gleeful.
Once she's out of earshot, the Bitches
confer:

SIENNA

Okay, so maybe things are looking up! Maybe the reason we got into this mess is so you can save Pia's NGO.

JENSEN

Oh, I'm not doing that.

SIENNA

Wait, what?

JENSEN

Don't be stupid. That is deadass a child labor factory, like James and UNICEF warned us about.

SIENNA

I...I really doubt that. And...and you just promised her you would.
I don't feel comfortable starting this marriage off on a lie...

JENSEN

(Referencing themselves)

Well, we wouldn't wanna do that now, would we!?

Meanwhile, PIA calls RIDHI.

PIA

Ridhi. Pick up your cell phone.

PIA glances over her shoulder, considering using a hushed tone for the voicemail, but plays it safe by proceeding in Hindi.
Translation below is projected.

PIA

Humari toh lottery lag gayi! Full jackpot! Shaadi.com pe do bewakoof Amriki mile hain

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Pata hani kyun, desi banne ka natak kar rahe hain! Khair, jo bhi ho, in buddhuon ko hamare rasam'o rivazon ke bare mein kuch nahi pata. Yeh shadi ke baad tumpe koi pabandhi nahi dalenge. Idhar sindoor lagi, aur udhar woh meri NGO mein paise daalen. Main, tumhare papa to chhod paoongi. Main zindagi bhar hum dono ka khayal rakh paoongi. Aur tum, jitna ji chahe, martey dam tak padhti rehna! Pyar vyar pe time barbad karne ki koi zaroorat nahi hai! Tum kehti ho na, pyar kuch nahi hota.

This is your Mother.

TRANSLATIONS

(Onscreen)

We hit the jackpot. We won the lottery. On Shaadi.com, we matched with a couple of White American idiots. They are pretending to be Indian, I don't know why. Regardless, these dummies don't know our customs. They won't force you into a restrictive marriage. You say "I do," and they'll invest in my NGO. I can leave your father. I can financially provide for us, forever. And you can keep studying until you drop dead! No need to waste your time on Love! As you say, it's not real!

This is your Mother.

Lights down on PIA, as we refocus on the Bitches.

SIENNA

Also. Like. It's one thing to set your friend up on a date. It's another to *marry him off!*

JENSEN

I'll rickshaw over and ask James right after this.

But at this point, you know he'd greenlight anyone. Like you.

SIENNA

Um. Sure. But Jens...

JENSEN

UGH, FINE. If it makes you feel better, I will personally go check out this "NGO," to prove to you, it's a Shein shit show. Right now, our objective is to line your wallet, and help our friend.

PIA ENTERS again, and SIENNA and JENSEN scramble themselves back into their spouse positions.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

PIA

Mr. and Mrs. Jensen?

SIENNA & JENSEN

Mhmm?!

PIA

Are you ready to embrace the next step, and arrange for our children to meet?

JENSEN

That's when, um...you'll be bringing the rupees to the function?

PIA

I'll run to the bank and get the cash right out.

(To Sienna)

You.

Must dress better. More traditional.

I'll direct you to my stand at the market, so you can model all the pretty dresses for your husband. And my new investor!

SIENNA

It will be a pleasure doing business/ with you.../

JENSEN

(Anxiously correcting, forced chipper)

Discussing business!

If it meets my standards! The conversation is on the horizon!

But...our children come first! Family first!

Dowry second? Business third!

Ha...ha...um.

As JENSEN spurs nervous laughter among the three of them, he sends his dad another text projected:

Not sex work. Even better. Xoxo

With one final uncomfy cackle from the group, we go to black.

Scene 4: Marketplace – Early Afternoon

Vibrant, colorful textiles are hung from clotheslines and folded, stacked on tables.

Within a tiny dressing room, SIENNA tries on a red saree—potentially, the Red Thread fabric. Alone, SIENNA talks to the unseen individual running the tent.

SIENNA

(Awkward, embarrassed)

It's true. I am...white.

I'm actually relieved you noticed, because I know my tan is...

Um. But just because I'm...white...doesn't mean I can...

SIENNA checks a price tag. Yowza.

SIENNA (cont'd.)

Do you take credit...?

It's just, like, it's weird to walk into a store here, and be bombarded with: "hi, how may I help you?!" When that's usually the question I'm asking. I used to start with "how are you!?" ...but folks usually just start ordering their appetizers.

Hello?

(No response. Plain confession.)

I think I'm an accomplice in a literal crime, because I can't speak up to my best friend.

...

He wears power soo well, while I was raised to feel ashamed for everything. For expanding my horizons and vocabulary and waist and wardrobe.

Now, RIDHI ENTERS, searching for Pia, when she overhears Sienna, and Sienna's musings resonate.

SIENNA (cont'd.)

Between you and me, deep down? I kinda worry that...no matter what I accomplish in my life, what I contribute to the world...

I'll never be more than a walking inferiority complex.

And I'm not even that good at walking!! I trip over everything!!!

...So, "what am I looking for?"

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Uh, probably a fabric that represents all that?
...Um. Is anyone out there?

RIDHI

I'm listening. I don't work here, though.

SIENNA

Oh my god, I'm so sorry, Yap City. I'll be out in a minute, just um, wrapping up a little existential panic attack moment.

RIDHI

I get those.

SIENNA

Oh. I'm sorry.

RIDHI

That's okay. You aren't responsible for my brain chemistry.

SIENNA

(Mad scientist type voice)

As far as you know.

RIDHI

(Returning to prior sentiment)

But yeah, what you were rambling about..

I get it.

I actually met someone this morning. He was kinda great, but he only seemed interested in one [visible] aspect of my identity.

It's kind of like dating apps. You get one picture and a few simplistic labels: degree, caste, income... As if any of that is relevant.

SIENNA

Right?! It's like:

(Robot voice?)

"hElLo, I am Age and Location."

And I'm usually lying about both those things.

Learned that from my mom.

RIDHI

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Don't get me started on moms.

SIENNA

(Podcasty voice)

What's your take on moms?

RIDHI smirks, amused, then grows sentimental, as she browses the racks. Touching the fabrics. Proud.

RIDHI

Mine put herself in a box.

I see how desperately she wants to break out of it, but she won't let herself.

SIENNA

Leaving the box is terrifying.

RIDHI

Uh huh!

Just strolling out in the open?? You're asking to get hurt!

And knowing you're the one who walked into that hurt...?

SIENNA

Top 5 worst kinds of hurt.

RIDHI

Because it's like, after everything...all the courage and rebellion and pain...what if someone shoves you right back in?

It's why I save them the trouble and do it myself.

SIENNA

(unserious)

Genius.

RIDHI

(still unserious)

I'm smart.

SIENNA

And I bet you're nothing else!

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

RIDHI

Besides my age and location!

SIENNA

Ok I don't want to sound crazy—/

RIDHI

Too late.

SIENNA

Maybe, just maybe, the most life-changing discoveries happen when we leave the box?

RIDHI

The cost benefit analysis of leaving the box.

SIENNA

I'd love to see the inside of your box.

RIDHI

I'd love to see the inside of *your* box.

Both freeze, realizing the sexual innuendo
they just exchanged in earnest.

SIENNA

I just meant I'd love to see your box. Like, your *box* that's not your *box*—/

RIDHI

Do you need help?

SIENNA

Please, I'm short-circuiting.

RIDHI

I think you want to see me come out...of my box?

SIENNA

I'll come out of mine if you come out of yours. On three?

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Feeling something, freaking out, RIDHI calls to her Dancers offstage.

RIDHI

(“help me”)

Hey, um, guys? Can you come in here? I think something’s happening...?

Ridhi’s DANCERS ENTER, not seeing why they were summoned.

Meanwhile, Sienna mutters to herself, to her own internal voices and version of dancers:

SIENNA

I just wanna leave my box and be accepted as my true self.

RIDHI

(to Sienna)

Uh. Yes. On three.

(to dancers)

Just...try.

Uncertainly, for RIDHI, DANCERS form a tunnel by the dressing room.

DANCER #1

One...

DANCER #2

Two...

DANCER #3

Three...

SIENNA opens the curtain. The DANCERS’ faces and poses drop.

DANCER #2

A white girl??

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

DANCER #3

With a 2015 Ariana Grande spray tan?!

DANCER #1

We do not have choreography for this number.

SIENNA and RIDHI confront each other.

SIENNA

(Awkward)

Helloooo.

Flustered, RIDHI holds out a textile she picked up while perusing—a *sherwani*, typically worn by men.

RIDHI

(Nervous)

Um. I found this. What you're "looking for."

(Re: the pattern)

It's...kind of—chaotic? And I think a little torn, but—?

SIENNA

It's one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen.

(Going off previous convo)

But, I mean, like—I don't want to judge a fabric by its pattern!

Let's get to know it first.

Doing a dumb bit, RIDHI brings the fabric to her ear, listening. Ridhi leans in to the fabric to ask:

RIDHI

("Speaking" to the fabric)

What are your hopes and dreams?

They listen.

SIENNA

"No you can't get into fracking!"

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

RIDHI

“ I don't care if Ru Paul supports it!”

SIENNA

“If Ru Paul jumped off a bridge, would you jump off a bridge?!”

They laugh. RIDHI hands the fabric back to
SIENNA.

SIENNA

...Thank you for indulging that bit.

And now, for my next trick, lemme pick one for you!

(Her retail/restaurant voice)

“How can I help you?”

RIDHI

(Sincerely moved)

No one ever asks me that.

SIENNA

They should.

(After a beat, like Willy Wonka)

And you don't need to know. You can try on everything!

SIENNA begins rifling through options,
giddy.

RIDHI

(Bashful)

Oh, I do *not* need a heroine makeover...

SIENNA

But do you want one?

(Being cheeky)

Just remove your metaphorical glasses.

DANCER #3

Girl, what is this? We have to study!

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

RIDHI

Right. Yeah.

(Flustered, to Sienna)

While this was a lovely distraction, I stave off nihilism with hard work, so—/

RIDHI rushes to leave, handing SIENNA
the fabric, but it snags on Sienna's earring.

RIDHI

/Oh, shit, um—/

SIENNA

/I'm so sorry—/

RIDHI tries to spin out, but ends up
face-to-face with SIENNA. A musical cue.

The DANCERS search for the source,
bewildered.

RIDHI

(To the dancers)

Guys what is going on?!

DANCER #2

We have no idea! We had nothing to do with this!

Indeed, the music exists in reality, streaming
from the store radio.

RIDHI gingerly untangles SIENNA. They
gaze into each other's eyes, until...

RIDHI

(Still frantic)

Welp guess I'll be on my way!

Close, but no! In her haste, now her bangle
gets caught, unraveling a red thread.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

RIDHI

/Jesus Christ—/

SIENNA

/Okayyyy/ so I'm not the BEST at picking up social cues. But this might be a sign?

RIDHI

(After thought)

Cue the Bollywood quick change.

Still skeptical, and mostly confused, the DANCERS enact a Bollywood Quick Change™.

When RIDHI is revealed, she leads a gender euphoric dance number.

After the dance, gazing into the mirror:

SIENNA

How do you feel?

RIDHI

Like myself.

SIENNA

So, is this, um...what you're looking for?

RIDHI

I don't know yet. Wanna find out over lunch?

Lights.

Scene 5: D.U. Hostel (James' Dorm) – Midday

Sprawled out on his bed, JAMES is passionately, romantically beatboxing.

JAMES

That one goes out to my new muse. She's gonna love it.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

A knock at the door.

JAMES (cont'd.)

It's open!

Before JAMES can finish that greeting, JENSEN struts in, immediately turning up his nose at the mess of vape cartridges and clothes everywhere.

JENSEN

Being dumped is no excuse for living like a Transformer that turns into a Dumpster. Somebody call Queer Eye...

JAMES

What do you mean?

JENSEN

Oh, so you just live like this?

JAMES

Shouldn't you be in class?

JENSEN

I'm busy learning *outside* the classroom, cutie. Beyond the borders of buildings and books. I'm performing miracles, as a matter of fact.

Pause. Finally:

JAMES & JENSEN

I've got great news!

JENSEN

You first.

JAMES

No, you!

JENSEN preps himself to give JAMES the best news he's ever received.

JENSEN

We—your Mother Sienna and I—went on Shaadi.
And arranged you with a little shawty.

JAMES

WHAT?

JENSEN

Sienna dabbled in brown face, I wordsmithed a bit, and boom! You're engaged.

JAMES

Say sike right now.

JENSEN

I would never say sike about brownface. It's actually kind of insane Sienna did that, and we'll coordinate an intervention after your wedding.

(Being a hype man)

So...are we "down bad" or what?!

JAMES

Uh, yeah, man. That's actually the problem. I...I fell in love, homie. It blew me like a gust of wind, from an industrial-size fan in a Bollywood movie.

JENSEN

(Face falls, grave)

Big yikes.

JAMES

(Truly conflicted)

Yeah, dude, it's Problem Central up in here!

Because, man to...

(He was going to say "man-to-man." But what *is* Jensen?)

You.

I don't know what I'm going to do about Sienna.

We all know we had a will-they-won't-they, best-friends-to-lovers, slow-burn, endgame thing going. But then, about an hour ago, I met my star-crossed, enemies-to-lovers, Desi dream girl! And now, you're tossing out a mystery wild card?!

This love triangle just turned into a love square.

JENSEN

...Okay. I'm gonna hold your hand while I ask you this.
And no, I'm not trying to make this a love pentagon.
...Has Sienna ever indicated she *likes* you?

Ouch. Harsh. But also, JAMES has never considered this.

While they chat, JENSEN might compulsively tidy up James's room.

JENSEN (cont'd.)

And this new girl. What *about her* did you fall in love with? Did she explicitly *tell* you she's interested?

JAMES

She didn't have to. There was so much unspoken.
And I could barely hear her over the musical cue in my head.

JENSEN

Think fast. What's her favorite color?

JAMES is silent.

JENSEN (cont'd.)

James. I can see that you need help right now.
I know you haven't told anyone what you're going through. I know you received life altering news at the beginning of this trip. And you're afraid. You're afraid to talk about it, because then it will become real, and soon, you'll look like the before picture of Slumdog Millionaire.

JAMES

I think that's a little /racist—/

JENSEN

And I know you self-sabotage in an effort to vye for your parents' attention. And I KNOW you didn't mean to crash their yacht! You should've tested that Molly you found on the streets of P-Town and that's on YOU!...James.
Please, please, please. Meet this girl. I promise, I won't let you get hurt again.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

JAMES

I just kinda wanna start fresh on my own terms.

JENSEN

You think you just fell out of a mango tree? You exist in the context of all in which you live and what came before you!

JAMES

What does that even mean?

JENSEN

I don't think Kamala even knew.

JAMES

No, I think I get it. Maybe I *should* take this trip to get...introspective...To reflect on myself and how I got here. Read that poetry. Touch that grass. Learn to love myself before I let anyone else in.

JENSEN

Nooooo, I definitely think the key to your happiness will be external validation from the girl I found for you!

Beat.

JAMES

Does she have cute feet?

JENSEN

Umm...yes? Here's her pic.

He looks at RIDHI's picture on Jensen's phone.

JAMES

Oh my god!!

JENSEN

Stop, James, don't make fun of her.

JAMES

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

No, no, that's her! That's the girl from the canteen!

JENSEN

The one you fell in love with?!

JAMES

What's that thing that Sienna's always on about? The red string theory?

JENSEN

I thought that was a period thing.

JAMES

Jensen, this is fire! You finally did something right! Who says you're a useless friend I should've dumped years ago?!

JENSEN

I don't know, are people saying that?

JAMES

I feel like I'm in a Bollywood film.

JENSEN

Go ahead, strike a pose!

JAMES strikes a pose that emulates Shah Rukh Khan falling in love. Lights.

Scene 6: Dosa Restaurant

At a dosa restaurant, RIDHI and SIENNA sit with a massive dosa between them.

RIDHI

You know Kamala Suraiyya?!

SIENNA

She's our first assignment. The text is so rich. The way she captures the /cognitive dissonance of the South Asian diaspora!/
/

RIDHI

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

/Cognitive dissonance of the South Asian diaspora!/
You took the words right out of my mouth.

SIENNA

Want ‘em back?

RIDHI

You can keep them.

SIENNA

(“Chewing” the words)

Yum. As scrumptious as this dosa.
So, is *this* your *hope and dream*?/

RIDHI

This is a hard thing to share with a stranger.

SIENNA

Oh. I’m sorry, you don’t have to—/

RIDHI

This dosa I mean.

SIENNA

Oh. I know. It’s awesome. Like, do we *Lady and The Tramp* it?

RIDHI

Why not?

Together, they pick up the dosa, and take
bites from opposite ends.

SIENNA

(Mouth full, mumbled)

But no, I meant, like literature and research? /Mmmm/

RIDHI

/Uh huh, mmm/ It is. But it’s not a career.

(Doing a bit, acting like a Business Person)

Clocking in at the gender empowerment factory!

SIENNA

“Identity Euphoria” wants to connect on LinkedIn!
...Fun fact, though. It *can* be. A career. You clearly really care and—/

Suddenly, RIDHI swallows and bursts out:

RIDHI

(James’ question from earlier)

Do you believe in love at first sight?!
...Um. Pretend that is a not-loaded question I asked in a normal way.

SIENNA

We’re so normie I’m almost bored.
But, uh. I’m an optimist, not an idiot.
I believe in getting to know someone over time....
(Remembering Pia’s line)
I want to find “the passion in promise.”

The DANCERS ENTER, puzzled, gunning
to intervene.

DANCER #2

Okay, who ordered a side of emotional intimacy with this dosa??

DANCER #3

Ridhi, is this.....something you’re into?

RIDHI

(To Sienna)

So, uh, I’m curious. Do you like chai? Or do you prefer coffee?

SIENNA

Oh. Chai, definitely. All the spices mixing and mingling.

RIDHI

Right. It’s beloved for a reason. But...I’m so used to chai. It’s been pushed on me my
whole life. And I’ve never been asked if I even *like* chai.

SIENNA

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Well, you *can* drink coffee.

RIDHI

But it's not... socially acceptable for me to...drink...coffee...

SIENNA

... Are we still talking about drinks?

They sit in the silence, before SIENNA
decides to announce, point blank:

SIENNA (cont'd.)

I *know* I like coffee. But I'm scared to tell anyone.

DANCER #3

Literally what are they even talking about?

RIDHI in shock.

DANCER #2

Earth to Ridhi? Hello?

SIENNA

Um. Anywayyyyyy. Moving on.

Can I tell you something that I feel really shitty about?

DANCER #2

Oh, here we go! White girl sob story incoming!

SIENNA

I kind of got...roped into something today...

DANCER #3

Ridhi, are we seriously about to entertain this?

DANCER #1

Look at her.

DANCER #2

She will *never* understand us.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

DANCER #3

She's just a basic, unaware, privileged...

ALL DANCERS

White. Bitch.

RIDHI

I have to go.

SIENNA

What? Are you okay?

RIDHI rises suddenly and starts to leave,
before turning around with parting words:

RIDHI

Thank you.
I hope you find your way out of your box.

RIDHI steps out of the restaurant, calms
herself, and takes out her phone.

Stunned, SIENNA picks up her phone and
calls:

JENSEN, who is riding on a rickshaw.
Sitting in the carriage, he bounces and flails,
absurdly jostled about.

JENSEN

Si Si! My little gulab jamun! Guess my locaysh?

SIENNA

Not jail, not another DUI...

JENSEN

Close! I'm on a rickshaw!
They're so silly! Kind of bumpy. I'm gonna give it two stars.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

SIENNA

How generous. Jens, I have to tell you something.

Meanwhile, JAMES and PIA join the others on stage, in their own respective spaces.

PIA picks up her phone. JAMES is getting ready to meet his bride-to-be.

PIA

Ridhi? Did you get my voicemail?

RIDHI

Yeah. I tried to find you at your stand, but then I got distracted, dumb side quest...

SIENNA

I'm gay.

JENSEN

I know—I mean yay!

SIENNA

And I think I'm in love?

RIDHI

I'm ready to meet Jignesh.

Thunder clap. The monsoon is brewing.

Until, on cue: *Bzzzzzz!*

Everyone's phone vibrates with an alert.

JAMES

Oh shit! It's...time to BeReal.

Each photo-bombing a character, the DANCERS hop in and pose, throwing up peace signs.

Blackout.

End of Act I.

ACT II

Scene 7: Pia's Household

Lights up on the whole big happy family, silent and painfully uncomfortable, in PIA's living room. The dancers are not present, as RIDHI feels as though she's losing her mind.

RIDHI is staring daggers into SIENNA, who is mortified.

JAMES and RIDHI are placed on the couch next to each other, with SIENNA and JENSEN, and PIA, on either side.

JAMES, with heart in his eyes for Ridhi, breaks the silence.

JAMES

So, I think I speak for all of us when I say...this is fate.

PIA

We could not agree more.

JENSEN

It sounds like we're all on the same page! So, is it dowry o'clock?

PIA gauges Ridhi's palpable energy. Big yikes.

PIA

Let the lovebirds get to know each other! Their happiness *is* key to this arrangement. Their commitment must last seven lifetimes, after all.

JENSEN

Jignesh is good for seven. We could even make it nine? Jignesh?

JAMES

(Recited, yet earnest)

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

My dedication will last however many lifetimes I am blessed to share with you, until my last breath and after.

JENSEN

Wow, ok, Shakespeare could never! Right, Ridhi?! You appreciate... words. We saw that on your Shaadi profile. Your picture doesn't even do you justice. Our James' type is usually demure....girly girls.

PIA

Ridhi, can you thank Mr. Jensen for the compliment?

RIDHI

What compliment?!

JENSEN

(Whispers)

Sienna, you know compliments aren't my love language. Help?

SIENNA

(Whispers)

I do know that, sorry, but I actually really need to talk to you—/

JENSEN

(Whispers)

About your gay awakening?

SIENNA

(Whispers)

Kind of....

JENSEN

(Whispers)

We'll binge The L Word later. Right now, we have a bag to secure. So lock in.

RIDHI

Is he adopted?

JENSEN
(enthusiastic)
He's adopted!

SIENNA
(fight or flight response)
Made him ourselves.

The sound effect from *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*. JENSEN and SIENNA, catching that they switched stories.

JENSEN
(Feeling cuckoo)

Okay. What *is* that sound?!

PIA
Oh, that's my cuckoo clock my husband got me in Schleswig.

JENSEN
What a quirky present.
So, Ridhi, just following up. I can tell you're head over sneakers for Jignesh, but what questions can we clear up, to speed this along?

PIA
My daughter would like to continue school indefinitely. Would you approve?

JAMES
I would worship my lifelong-learning queen.

RIDHI
I have a question. For Mrs. Jensen.

The whole room turns to RIDHI.

RIDHI
As a white mother with an Indian child, in raising Jignesh, how did you keep him connected to his culture?

SIENNA
I...I, uh...

SIENNA is stuttering. RIDHI is fuming.
Clocking this, PIA offers:

PIA
Chai?

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

RIDHI

Amma, you know, I've been saying I prefer...

RIDHI looks at SIENNA.

RIDHI (cont'd.)

(Pointed)

You know what? Yeah, I'll take the chai.

JAMES

I know that Ridhi will raise our children, the right way, with all the traditional values I didn't get growing up.

SIENNA

/She can speak for herself—/

RIDHI

/I can speak for myself—/

This shared moment only makes RIDHI more upset.

RIDHI (cont'd)

(To Sienna, referencing their earlier convo)

One more question.

What exactly did you get “roped into” today?

SIENNA, bewildered and deep red, wants to die. RIDHI gets in one last insult:

RIDHI (cont'd)

...And your spray tan is staining my couch.

PIA

Ridhi! That is not how /you speak to your future mother-in-law—/

RIDHI

I agree to the marriage.

JENSEN

Oh, um, okay!

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

JAMES

Sick.

PIA

Delightful!

JENSEN

Dowry?

PIA

Done. And to the NGO we go!
Ridhi, do you mind...?

RIDHI

Not at all. I'm actually *dying* to spend some quality time with my new mother-in-law.

PIA and JENSEN are stunned but
overjoyed, as she passes over an envelope.

JENSEN

We love a hard launch.

(Whispered, to Sienna)

Cant wait to see this fucking sorry excuse for a sweatshop.

(To James)

Take care of your mother for me. You're the man of the house now.

PIA and JENSEN EXIT. Beat, then...

JAMES

Okay ladies, don't start fighting over me.

RIDHI

(To Sienna)

What the fuck are you doing here?

JAMES

Whoa! You guys can work it out on the remix!

RIDHI

So what? Is this a scam? You're con artists—?

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

SIENNA

I wasn't in it for the money, that was Jensen—/

JAMES

(Slowly realizing)

So no one cares about me finding love at all?

SIENNA

Ridhi, I'm so fucking sorry—/

RIDHI

I don't care.

You're just a basic. Unaware. Privileged. White. Bitch.

Get out of my house.

JAMES

(Puppy dog eyes)

Do I have to go too?

RIDHI

YES.

JAMES

Vibes received. I'm gonna go get introspective.

Lights.

Scene 8: Pia's NGO – Evening

JENSEN and PIA overlook the valley
cradling Pia's NGO.

They're peering out over the AUDIENCE,
gesturing at them.

JENSEN

(Re: audience)

Oh my god. They look so...sad.

It's like we're *in* Slumdog Millionaire. This is real poverty.

PIA

(Taken aback)

Um. Respectfully, Mr. Jensen, no it's not.

Everything PIA shares onwards is serious,
honest, and true.

PIA (cont'd.)

These are up-to-code buildings, in which we provide these individuals—who have been rejected from their homes—with comfortable beds, current textbooks, and food-pyramid balanced meals.

JENSEN

I bet they eat and leave no crumbs.
Because of the...hunger.

PIA

If they weren't sheltered here, they could be trafficked.

JENSEN

Worse than Midtown during Rush Hour.

PIA

This isn't “real poverty.”

Take a walk outside, a mile beyond these grounds, and you'll find real poverty.

JENSEN

Paint me a picture.

PIA

Well, our poverty line is 1,059 Rupees.
That's equal to, in Western dollars, 62 a month.
And over a third of our population lives beneath.

JENSEN

Wait—*lives* beneath?! That's not living. 62 is less than I pay at Trader Joe's a *week*, for one, when I'm not restocking sunflower butter and trade-free coffee.

PIA

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

You're fortunate.

JENSEN
(Big Realization)

I was...

Finally, JENSEN meets PIA eye-to-eye, in a more grounded, somber place.

JENSEN (cont'd.)

How do you find them?

PIA
Along the streets. I approach unhoused women and boys.
And inquire if they like fashion.

JENSEN
Natural how-do-you-do.

PIA
If they're interested, I propose they live here, and learn to sew. With no forced work or quotas. They can leave their grief inside seams, and onto sketch pads pencil their dreams.

JENSEN
Some of the boys are pretty young. Their parents kicked them out?

PIA
Tragically.
But on the bright side, they display an innate knack for style and design.

JENSEN
Well, yeah, because they're...[queer.]
P. This is perfect.

PIA
Thank you. I've worked very hard to build this haven.

JENSEN
(Revvng back up into Jensen mode)
Yes, and it's a goldmine! Like, this is really fucking tragic!

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Williamsburg hipsters would eat this up, for their intermittent fasting breakfasts.
If we just created a website, added a livestream, incentivized donations—/

PIA

Livestream?

JENSEN

\$5 gets you a handmade mug cozy! \$10 gets you...a sock!

PIA

The last thing we need is exposure.

JENSEN

They'll love exposure. They're queer.

PIA

(Panicked, trying to shut him up)

JENSEN. No, they're not—/

JENSEN

It's a selling point—/

PIA

They are not for sale!

JENSEN

Woah... I never thought they were. I think we're misunderstanding each other.

(Spelling it out)

I just want...to broadcast a universal sob-story. We'll connect with Sarah McLachlan, and launch a year from now, during Pride month!!

PIA

Lower your voice, you simple-minded fool.

We can't use this angle. Don't you understand why they're here? They can not be themselves in this country. They could be killed.

This is their only safe space. A space that isn't for us.

I wanted your help raising wages. We don't need your selfish American agenda.

JENSEN

Agenda? This isn't—/an agenda...?/

PIA

Go Home, dear. You don't belong here.

Nothing else to say, JENSEN backs off.
Thunder CLAPS. The monsoon is here!

Scene 9: Around New Delhi – Continuous

The rain has come upon Delhi. Imagine, if you will, the following montage riddled with dramatic Bollywood choreography to the theme of “self-discovery.”

Lights up on JAMES. In his dorm, he's reading the poetry book. Kamala Suraiyya's poem, *Introduction*.

JAMES

“Don't write in English, they said.
English is not your mother-tongue.
Why not leave me alone, critics, friends?
Why not let me speak any language I like?
The language I speak becomes mine.
It is half English, half Indian.
Funny perhaps, but honest.
As human as I am human.”

As JAMES reads, we spotlight each character in their own introspective moment.

The DANCERS interweave them *all* with the Red Thread of Fate.

First up. PIA, in her home. She's watching the news again, a recent instance of homophobia or movement on the debate front. She's discouraged and scared.

JAMES (cont'd.)

“I was a child who asked for love,
not knowing what else to ask for.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

The weight of my womb crushed me, and I've shrank.
I wore a shirt and trousers, cut my hair short,
ignored my 'womanliness.'
'Dress in sarees,' they said, 'be girl, be wife.'"

PIA is joined on stage by RIDHI. RIDHI is back at the marketplace, wearing the outfit SIENNA picked for her, reflecting in the mirror. The DANCERS comfort her.

JAMES (cont'd.)

"'Belong,' cried the categorizers.
Fit in. Choose a name, a role."

Now, RIDHI is joined on stage by JENSEN, stumbling in, phone in hand. He's walking along the street, taking in the "real poverty" PIA mentioned.

City sounds surround JENSEN, as he sends a text, projected on the screen: "U up?" He awaits a text.

JAMES (cont'd.)

"The answer is, it is I. Anywhere and everywhere, in this world."

JENSEN'S phone rings. He answers:

JENSEN

Hey, dad.

At the same time, SIENNA walks out, also alone in the city, already on the phone.

SIENNA

Mom? Dad? Could you turn down the TV, please?

JENSEN

No, yeah. India's actually... it's been kind of beautiful?

SIENNA

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

No, I'm not watching "the big game." I'm in India, remember? In Asia?

JENSEN

Yeah, no, it's actually not like slumdog millionaire at all? But umm...

SIENNA

No, mom! No malaria mosquitoes. No ISIS terrorists.

No, I'd rather not wait until half-time...

SIENNA & JENSEN

I'll make this quick.

SIENNA

Someday? I might want to marry...not a boy.

Cheering is heard on the other side of her phone. SIENNA is euphoric.

SIENNA & JENSEN

I wasn't expecting that.

JENSEN

But thank you for cutting me off.

SIENNA

Thank you for...

Oh. You were cheering for a Touchdown? Gotcha.

Um, yeah. I said I'M GAY.

JENSEN

I've learned a lot, and...thank you for accepting me. I've come to realize, not all parents are so accepting...Who'da thunk.

SIENNA

...Yeah, no, I won't call again. Sorry to bother...

SIENNA, JENSEN, RIDHI, and PIA all take a deep breath. They exit. Leaving JAMES to close with:

JAMES

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

“I who laughs.
Who makes love, then feels shame.
Who have lost my way, and now begs at strangers doors
to receive love in small change.
I have no joys that are not yours.
No aches which are not yours.
I am sinner. I am saint.
I am Beloved and Betrayed.
I too call myself I.”

JAMES steps into the light. The monsoon
breaks. He takes a deep breath.

The DANCERS conclude their sequence.
Lights.

Scene 10: Pia & Ridhi’s Household – Dusk

RIDHI ENTERS, curt and damp, still in the
outfit from the marketplace.

PIA

Where have you been? *Mainne kol kiya.*

RIDHI

My phone died.

PIA

I thought *you* died.

RIDHI

You never worry about me like this.

PIA

And you never...look like this.

RIDHI

Lucky for you, I’m here to change. For my graduation party.

RIDHI passes in-and-out of the room,
switching from the sherwani back into jeans
and a t-shirt.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

PIA

I too have undergone a change. Of mind.
You don't have to get married. You're welcome.

RIDHI

Wait, what?

PIA

You were right. Education is of utmost importance—/

RIDHI

No, *Amma*, it's okay, I'm actually—/

PIA

It fell through with Mr. Jensen.

RIDHI

Yeah, I figured. I know this marriage with Jignesh—or James or whatever his name is—was a sham.

But I actually am ready to get married. I think...things will just be easier that way.

PIA

Come. Sit. Can I get you something?

RIDHI

(After a moment's hesitation)

Chai's fine.

I'm sorry you can't expand your passion project.

PIA

It's fine. Milk?

RIDHI nods.

PIA prepares the tea, then sits in silence next to her daughter. Something's bothering PIA. Something she's scared to ask.

PIA

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Ridhi?

My children, at the NGO.

Do you believe they—as you say—“drink coffee?”

RIDHI

(Deep breath)

Yes. Your children are sipping what Society says we shouldn't drink.

Beat. Both are growing emotional.

PIA

I...I'm scared to let...

Them...live a life considered shameful. It can be lonely, and painful.

RIDHI

I know, *Amma*. I know.

PIA

Okay, Ridhi. I...

Neither knows what to say. Eventually, the tension is broken by...

Knock, knock, knock.

JENSEN arrives at the back door, rapping on the glass.

PIA (cont'd.)

Mr. Jensen? You are a back door man.

JENSEN

Well, that's an accurate preface to this conversation.

RIDHI

What are you doing here?

With a dramatic “shhhhh,” JENSEN produces posters, like in [*Love, Actually*](#).

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

To soundtrack this moment, he presses play on his phone. *All Too Well (Taylor's 10 Minute Version)*.

The signs read:

LET ME SAY. WITHOUT HOPE OR AN AGENDA.
BECAUSE IT'S MONSOON SEASON—
(AND DURING MONSOON SEASON, YOU OUTPOUR THE TRUTH.)
PIA, I LIED TO YOU :(
SIENNA? NOT MY WIFE.
AND I'M SO NOT SLAY RN.

PIA

And I'm not an American idiot.

One more sign, before JENSEN
double-takes:

TO ME, YOU ARE PERF.

JENSEN

Wait—you knew?!

PIA

(Almost impressed)

I expected you to break earlier, but you really are Greed and Manipulation incarnate.

JENSEN

Why'd you let me go on for so long?

PIA

You were our potential golden ticket to independence.

But alas. A beat.

JENSEN

I know this is going to sound crazy. But, I think I had this preconceived notion of India. Get this—it's not a Bollywood movie. Or *Slumdog Millionaire*.

RIDHI

No shit.

JENSEN (cont'd)

I'm sorry for not seeing the full picture. You don't have any reason to believe me, because I *have* been lying this entire time, but I'm at your disposal to help in any way I can. But...plot twist: I don't have money. Anymore. Apparently, investing in OceanGate's titanic submersible was a bad idea? So, my parents cut me off. They're like, teaching me a lesson, or something.

RIDHI

I guess it worked?

JENSEN

I guess so. Who knew being financially dependent on someone else kinda blows?

RIDHI and PIA share a knowing look.

JENSEN (cont'd)

Oh, that reminds me.

JENSEN hands back the dowry. PIA looks down at the money, then back at JENSEN.

PIA

Jensen? Do you know the Red Thread of Fate?

JENSEN

The period thing?

RIDHI

It's a cord. Invisible to mortal eyes. That ties us up, tangles, but never breaks. It pulls together souls destined to meet.

(To herself)

Even when they're a basic, unaware, privileged white bitch...

(Back to Pia)

I'm headed to the party.

JENSEN

Oooh, I love a party, where at?

RIDHI

No. Don't follow me. Either of you. I've had enough of your antics. Please just let me be miserable among my peers one last time.

RIDHI EXITS.

JENSEN

And, Pia. Can I just say... You're kind of a queer icon.

PIA

What?

JENSEN

You're housing children whose parents foresaw their sexualities and kicked them out. You don't force help; you *ask* if they like—fashion?! Come on, queen. You must know what you're doing.

PIA

I do. I've always known.
But none of this is... Legally, I cannot say. Personally, I don't know how.
Your pronouns, and orientations of sexuality...

JENSEN

It's just... language.

PIA

Language.

JENSEN

But, even if you keep it hush-hush here, I think you can safely signal these concepts to a broader audience overseas.
You may not have an investor. But you have the internet.
And you know who uses the internet?

PIA

(Gesturing to Jensen)

Dumb, fashionable queers with savior complexes?

JENSEN

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Heard. And correct.

PIA

I can't believe I'm saying this, but... why not? I've got to try, no? If this business plan can create a financially sustainable future for all of us, while protecting my kids... Jensen, what do you say to being my business... assistant?

JENSEN

OMG, P. That is only my highest honor and dream. I'll root all my practices in holistic approaches, decolonize my mind daily, and be not your white in shining armor, but your white hand man. Oh, help, was *that* racist?

PIA

We'll work on the language.

JENSEN

Language.

(Beat, recalling)

WAIT! Did Ridhi say "basic, unaware, privileged white bitch?" Pia! Can the red thread of fate be like... a rainbow thread?

PIA

Umm... sure?

JENSEN

Where's Ridhi's graduation party?

PIA

Hauz Khas.

JENSEN

I'll meet you there!

PIA

But she doesn't want us there! How do we go without her seeing us?

JENSEN

Right...

Hmm. Scratching their heads and chins, they think...and think...and think...Until!

PIA

Jensen! I have a beyond brilliant plan! Do you like disguises?

JENSEN

SAY. LESS.

Blackout.

Scene 11: Hauz Khas Village – Night

Electric lights flash and music pulses.

At a Hauz Khas bar, in the outskirts hub famous for Western-style clubs, Ridhi stands alone, drink in hand. She's, like, really going through it.

Her inner thoughts are back and more alive than ever! The DANCERS are grooving, tossing back shots, living their best life. RIDHI dodges their sharp moves.

DANCER #1

Oh my god, this party is so FUN!

DANCER #2

Maybe we should've made an effort to make more friends here!

RIDHI

Can't you guys see I want to be alone?!

DANCER #3

Babe, you came to a party full of people.

DANCER #1

Yeah she did, because she's looking for Jaaames!

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

RIDHI

I am not!

DANCER #3

I mean, maybe James makes sense now? If you play your cards right, you *could* get your love marriage after all!

DANCER #2

He'd be so chill!

RIDHI

But would I be happy?

JAMES ENTERS, toting his poetry book...and some reading glasses.

DANCER #1

There he is! Don't fuck this up for us!

DANCER #3

Aww, are those...glasses? Growth maybe?

DANCER #2

Maybe, this is life, Ridhi. Sacrifice. Even in love.

JAMES

Hey!

RIDHI

Hi! You came.

JAMES

You invited me.

RIDHI

I remember.

Awkward pause. What do they say?

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

JAMES

Remember when we were almost married?

RIDHI

Yup...

JAMES

But, good news! I finally met The One...It's me.

DANCER #2

Damn, we've lost him to self-love.

JAMES

I've been reading the poetry book you gave me. Even finished our group project. By myself. I just can't get over how Kamala unpacks the cognitive dissonance of the South Asian diaspora...

DANCER #1

(Giving in)

Ah, what the hell.

RIDHI

You want a drink?

The DANCERS dart in-and-out of the following actions, as characters come and go. Potential Bollywood x Ballroom number.

JAMES and RIDHI move aside to drink, as...

JENSEN and PIA ENTER, in disguise! PIA is dressed as a janitor, wheeling a trash can. JENSEN is flaunting a trash bag, with holes for his head and arms.

JENSEN places a fake mustache on PIA, completing her fit. He gives her a thumbs up, then runs offstage.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Then JENSEN re-enters, with dazed, despondent SIENNA. From PIA's trash can, JENSEN pulls out chocolates, flowers, and notecards, forcing them upon SIENNA.

Finally, just as RIDHI and JAMES return, JENSEN leaps *into the trash can*.

SIENNA is left standing there, lifeless, arms full of unsolicited gifts.

JAMES

(To Sienna)

Well, well, well...look who came crawling back.

RIDHI

Are you fucking kidding me?

SIENNA

(Dazed, reading from the cards)

I...I'm just a girl. Standing in front of a girl. Asking her to... love... me?

RIDHI

/WOAH./

SIENNA

/FUCK THIS!./

SIENNA chucks all the items to the floor.

JENSEN peers over the trash can:

JENSEN

(Whispers)

Si Si, you dropped the notecards.

SIENNA

(To Jensen)

I AM MY OWN PERSON!

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

(To Ridhi)

I am my own person, and I'm not here to profess my love. Or ask for forgiveness. I just want to talk.

DANCER #1

Maybe we should hear her out...

DANCER #2

Nah, you should hit her!

DANCER #3

No, don't hit her! But Ridhi. Let. It. All. Out.

RIDHI

Yeah, sorry, "Mrs. Jensen," but I've reached my white guilt quota for the year. I watch versions of you every semester, eat-pray-loving your way through my country. You come here to make a difference. And you do! You make it worse. Maybe you're drawn to suffering, because you've never known it.

SIENNA

Ha! I've never known suffering?!
How do you know that? You've never asked.

RIDHI

Because I don't care! Just go back to where you came from, and spend your days sipping matcha lattes at hot yoga.

SIENNA

Hot yoga?! I can't afford classes; that's why I teach. I'm poor. And not in a "I shop at Goodwill for fun" way. In a "I haven't had a meal in 3 days" way.

RIDHI

You want to talk about hunger? Your people starved my people for 300 years!

SIENNA

Oh, please, I've seen your house. Your kitchen is the size of the trailer I grew up in. What caste are you even in?

RIDHI

(Defensive)

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

That's irrelevant...

SIENNA

Is it?

RIDHI

That money is my dad's. That house? Is my dad's. And when I get married? That house will be my husband's. And you wanna know why? BECAUSE I'M A WOMAN.

SIENNA

So am I!

RIDHI

NO—I am not competing in the minority olympics with you! You don't get it! And you never will!

And you know what sucks?! I liked you. I really liked you!

I had voices in my head, saying this was wrong, and I ignored them! I didn't even know I could feel this way, for so long, and I opened up to you, I trusted you...

(Realizing)

And my mom...what am I going to tell my mom?

“Surprise! I'm queer!”

Everyone freezes.

Slowly, PIA strips off her mustache.

Surprise, indeed! PIA walks to RIDHI and places her hand on Ridhi's shoulder.

PIA

I don't know the right thing to say.

JENSEN

Pia, it's just language.

PIA

(Deep breath)

I see you. I hear you.

And I will always be here.

With chai *and* coffee.

For all of you.

Beat, until...

JAMES

Uh...now what?

RIDHI

Well, this isn't a Bollywood film.

This isn't going to cut to 1 year later and everything's perfect—

BLACKOUT.

Projection screen reads:

Scene 11: New York City – One Year Later

An outdoor park, backdropped by the iconic NYC skyline, is decorated for an Indian wedding ceremony.

Flower garlands and string lights hang from the *mandap*—a tent with four posts.

JENSEN and PIA bustle about with clipboards and earpieces, looking out over the AUDIENCE, our wedding guests.

PIA

Our guests are arriving! Dressed to the nines...

(Unimpressed aside)

Out of 100. But in their defense, they're only American.

(To Jensen)

They're growing restless for the grand finale, but we can't begin the ceremony without James! Where's James?!

JENSEN

Bathroom.

PIA

Here? What's the equivalent to Delhi Belly?

Brooklyn Belly? Manhattan Tummy?

JENSEN

Oh, turns out, he wasn't dealing with Delhi Belly abroad.
He just had IBS the whole time.

(Receiving a text)

Ah! Text text from the Ridhster... "The fortune is ready to be shared!" And her name means "fortune," which is code for... it's go-time, people!!

PIA

(To AUDIENCE)

Look alive!! Laugh! cry!

(To Jensen, SERIOUS)

Mr. Jensen.

Let's fucking go?!

JENSEN

Pia, thank you for matching my freak.

PIA and JENSEN take their places beneath
the canopy. JENSEN is the officiant:

JENSEN

Ahem.

We open today with a Land Acknowledgment.

We are currently standing on sacred Indian Land.

Indian, like—India!

Like, we're imagining we're in India! Not, Indian like...

Restart.

....

We've all been pulled here today, by the Red Thread of Fate.

Why exactly? Are we all here?

You can decide that reason for yourselves.

Let's begin.

JAMES, RIDHI, and SIENNA all enter from
different directions and aisles.

RIDHI is wearing her outfit from the
market. SIENNA is dressed in red.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

All three step slowly to the front. Dramatic pause, and then...

SIENNA

(Reciting, like an actor, awkward)

“Love is the strongest force the world possesses, and yet the humblest imaginable.”
That’s, um, Gandhi.

RIDHI

(Also rigid and unnatural)

And now I will share a quote by a famous figurehead, who reigns over *your* land.
“Isn’t it just so pretty to think, all along, there was some invisible string tying me to you?” That’s, uh, T-Swift.

Facing each other, both snort, holding in laughter.

JENSEN

(Hushed, to only the couple)

Keep it together, kids! It’s working!

(Showing his phone)

Our viewer count is blowing up...

The girls contain themselves. Serious time.

JENSEN nods to JAMES, who strides to the couple.

JAMES speaks out to the audience/camera, talking in the same contrived manner.

JAMES

First, as the stand-in for Sienna’s family. It is my duty. To shower the couple with rice.

(Speaking to GYM BRO TOK)

Contrary to popular belief, boys, carbs can fit into your macros!

JAMES kisses his bicep, then extends his hand.

JAMES (cont’d.)

Jens? The rice?

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

JENSEN whips out a packet of steaming, freshly microwaved...

JAMES (cont'd.)

This is quinoa.

JENSEN

(To audience/camera, beaming Orbit smile)

No cap! Today's absolutely *snatched* wedding is sponsored in part by..

Natural Roots All-White Quinoa Medley!

Pardon the, um, All-White part...

JAMES

Close all your eyes, ladies, including your third...

Clumpy grains are plopped atop both their heads.

JENSEN

Cute.

And finally, we join Pia, our CEO.

Our... "SHE E O" ...under the mandap.

PIA

Typically, the mandap is held up by four people.

A pillar for each of the newlywed's parents.

(This is significant!!)

But alas. Ridhi has solely me now.

And, for all my children, I can uphold the house and raise the roof.

PIA hoists the entire tent overhead.

SIENNA

(Continuing, serious)

To finish this era, "Hell was the Journey..."

RIDHI

The flight from Delhi? That's just the struggle of living bi-continental, babe!

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

SIENNA

No, that was magical! We got to catch up on Bollywood
...and crush some bussin' snacks, thanks to...

RIDHI & SIENNA

(Sponsorship! Out to the audience)

American Airlines and Air India.

EVERYONE salutes, with broad smiles.

RIDHI

(Finishing the line)

"Hell *was* the journey, but it brought me Heaven."
And I don't know if I believe in eternal happiness.
But I enjoy this moment right now.

SIENNA

You do?

RIDHI

I do. You too?

SIENNA

I do.

JENSEN

(Into earpiece)

Cue dancers...

The DANCERS prance in, twirling their
Red Thread of Fate and **modeling PIA's
textiles**. Specifically, rainbow fabrics.

They're real people—paid actors—but:

RIDHI

Oh my god. They look just like the annoying voices in my head.

SIENNA

Do you still see them a lot?

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

RIDHI

Not really anymore.

SIENNA and RIDHI smile at each other,
earnest.

EVERYONE else freezes, posing, beaming.

PIA

And...CUT!

Cast and crew? Take tea. Then let's reset for our next livestream.

ALL

Thank you, Tea.

The actors disperse. JAMES and JENSEN
pair off to catch up.

JENSEN

James, my boy. I'm so proud.

JIGNESH

I actually go by Jignesh now.

JENSEN

Slay.

JIGNESH

I can't believe you guys live in India now. Do you hate it?

JENSEN

(Sincere)

I love it.

(Back to giddy)

I bought a rickshaw!!
What's new with you?

JIGNESH

(Proud)

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

Well. Life update.
I'm a writer now.
You know, the "SoundCloud rapper to poet prodigy pipeline."

JENSEN

...I always knew you had it in you.

JIGNESH

Actually, I'm writing "a piece" right now, about you guys.

JENSEN

Omg flattered??

JIGNESH

It's called... White Bitches in Delhi.

JENSEN

Wait. Is this fucking play about us?

Aside, RIDHI and SIENNA come together.
They're being genuine, kinda flirty.

RIDHI

Well, that was fun. Pretending to be a couple.

SIENNA

We're really good actors.

RIDHI

Naturals.

SIENNA

(Kinda embarrassed, re: the wedding...or maybe the play
hehe)

I know that whole shebang was...pretty extra, and absurd...

RIDHI

Sure, but everybody wins!
We're coming together, to uplift and financially support our communities.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

SIENNA

While you and I get to continue negotiating the dynamics of our relationship, day by day.
Over coffee.

RIDHI

If you think about it, it's kind of like an arranged marriage.

SIENNA

Call it a...marriage arrangement.

RIDHI

That should be an option on Shaadi.com.

The not-couple-couple laughs, Feeling
Things.

RIDHI (cont'd)

Thank you for letting me be myself.

SIENNA

Thank you for letting me better myself.

RIDHI

Damn, these should've been our vows.

SIENNA

They could be! Someday! I mean, like, if you'd ever even *want* that—/

RIDHI

No, yeah, that could be—cool someday—/

SIENNA

Someday!

RIDHI

If the planet hasn't combusted by then.

SIENNA

Yeah, no, we're doomed.

WHITE BITCHES IN DELHI

It's so frickin' humid, right?!

Family! It's time to BeReal!

RIDHI

RIDHI and SIENNA smirk, then turn away, blushing. Until...

PIA rushes in, waving her phone.

PIA

PIA corrals the cast in for a selfie, capturing the AUDIENCE in it, too.

Music kicks in—something vibrant, upbeat, and festive, like *Subha Hone Na De*, a wedding classic.

And both the CAST and DANCERS break into a Bollywood finale. As we celebrate, in this dark world, a relatively hopeful...

End of Play.