

Audition Side 5: ANJALI & TARAK

Anjali holds up her cigarette.

ANJALI
You didn't see me do this.

TARAK
Cali's legal-

ANJALI
These are regular lung gunkers? They all think I quit.
Everyone in the restaurant smokes, but we all promised to try when mom started getting bad so-
Don't rat me out.

TARAK
I won't-

ANJALI
I just, I don't want to do it in front of my kid-

TARAK
You don't have to explain yourself to me-

ANJALI
I tried, okay? I'm not very good at endings, but- I did try, to quit.

TARAK
Maybe you still will? I just think-
We have a lot of time to start things-
So, we probably have a lot of time to end things too. If we really want to.

ANJALI
That's nice to think.

TARAK
Sure.

Do you-?

TARAK
Oh, uh, socially only?

ANJALI
Then would you want- Because I have more-

TARAK
Oh, uh, yeah-

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Anjali lights a cigarette for Tarak, and passes it to him. He clearly has never smoked a cigarette before.

TARAK

...Thanks for hiring me-

ANJALI

You're welcome?

TARAK

Just-

I really needed a job. Thanks.

ANJALI

We love eye candy here at The Peach Pit.

Tarak blushes.

TARAK

You think I'm- Me?

ANJALI

I think Val, might! And she, deserves some fun. Passion. Everyone does.

TARAK

Oh, I don't think she's my type-

ANJALI

There is no time for type in restaurants.

We take all of it, so y'all have no choice but to sleep with each other- Fucking and smoking and serving - that's the business.

TARAK

That's probably harder in a family joint? Unless you're into incest.

ANJALI

...Ha!

When I was growing up, my Dadi said I could have whatever type I wanted, just no BMWs.

TARAK

Huh?

ANJALI

Blacks, muslims or whites? So, now it's my type.

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TARAK
Good to know.

ANJALI
Oh, I didn't mean-

TARAK
Are you my manager? Because you hired me, but Val said-

ANJALI
No, I don't actually work here- I wanted to, Val won't-
I just help out.
My ma can be kinda-

TARAK
Intense.

ANJALI
Yeah.
Like, her first husband- Val's dad-
He passed on a Sunday? She started waitressing that Thursday.
Then, my dad - The Second Husband - I mean, she didn't miss a day on the floor when he-
I planned that funeral by myself.
This year, when the doctors told her she had to slow down, or else? She made her pulmonologist cry.
It's just like, her thing, to keep- Werkin.
Through it, despite it, because of it.
Meanwhile, I haven't gone back to a desk since- I have a kid?

TARAK
Oh-

ANJALI
Yeah. A boy.
I chose to stay home, because- But then-
Anyway, I have the time, to be here, for ma- And she requires...patience, in her golden years.

TARAK
Sorry for your loss?

ANJALI
What? Oh, my dad- No, he was an asshole.
Sorry, I shouldn't say that- I should say...-
He was my Dadi's Son.
He wasn't a very kind man, but, he was a rich one! You get it.

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TARAK

...

ANJALI

"Lakshmi" means wealth? In Hindi.

Ma was always going to live a very prosperous life. My dad bought her this place, but she...made it.

"Lakshmi" is also a god, which explains the complex, but-

TARAK

I bet you'll make something one day too.

ANJALI

Do you have a crush on me, Tarak?

TARAK

I-

ANJALI

I can tell.

Anjali stomps out her cigarette.

ANJALI

Oh god, do you feel like I just sexually harassed you-?

TARAK

Uh, no-?

ANJALI

Because I am highly aware of the power dynamic at play here-

TARAK

I have not felt harassed sexually-

ANJALI

Again, I don't even actually work here but I'm no Handsy Mike-

TARAK

Really all good, I like when you talk to me I think.

ANJALI

Are you sure-

TARAK

Yeah.

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ANJALI

Okay, okay! Good.

Because we're very short staffed. And you have a job here.

TARAK

Ok.

ANJALI

So like, go do it.

I'm not very good at endings.

She starts to leave.

TARAK

What does yours mean?

ANJALI

What?

TARAK

Your name? Anjali.

ANJALI

"Divine offering."

A sad little smile from a sad little housewife.

ANJALI

Just not for you.

TARAK

Oh, ah-

ANJALI

Okay, that's enough-