

Audition Side 6: GAEL & LAKSHMI

2022 - After a tense conversation with her daughter about selling the restaurant, Lakshmi's business partner checks in on her.

GAEL

What are you feeling?

LAKSHMI

Pain.

GAEL

What are you thinking?

LAKSHMI

That a daughter is a curse.

GAEL

I don't suggest sons, either.

LAKSHMI

How is yours?

GAEL

I don't know.

LAKSHMI

...We need to do more for the community-

GAEL

Lakshmi-

LAKSHMI

I mean it, Gael-

Think of how much food waste is happening here-

GAEL

We're getting old, Lakshmi.

LAKSHMI

Go outside and ask one of the dozen homeless people where their shelter is- I'll tell Faaz to start making some kind of system for unsold-

Lakshmi goes up to her office, Gael following her.

GAEL

Listen to me-

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LAKSHMI
I'm not ready yet-
I have things to do.

GAEL
Life goes on without restaurants-

LAKSHMI
We just got back.
I won't leave now.
I cannot compromise on this-

GAEL
Lakshmi, the whole street has had to make compromises. Even the Italians! It's different now, it's harder to-

LAKSHMI
We make enough money.

GAEL
But we would have so much more time, if we didn't have to worry, if we just-

LAKSHMI
If we sold out.

GAEL
Anjali won't leave / Umar as long as the whole family still works here-

LAKSHMI
Leave? She's fine, she's happy-

GAEL
Val, Val could play, could breathe- Money, gives you room to breathe.

LAKSHMI
You are suffocating.

Gael closes her office door. The music cuts out.

GAEL
I would like to take our business relationship...off the clock?

LAKSHMI
Oh-
No?
I won't have three partners, it's too much stress for one life.

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GAEL

I'm not asking you to marry me, I'm asking to cook for you in the evenings.

LAKSHMI

...We would need to label everything we donated- To shelters.
In case of dietary restrictions, religious or otherwise-

GAEL

I'll make us coffees in the mornings-

LAKSHMI

I'm not allowed to have coffee anymore because of my heart-

GAEL

What of mine?

LAKSHMI

I have a responsibility to feed our community.
They have been so supportive of me, over the years. Don't you think?

GAEL

...

LAKSHMI

If you really loved me, you wouldn't end the part I love most about myself.

GAEL

If you loved me, you'd want to live long enough to be with me.

LAKSHMI

...

GAEL

Are you hungry?

LAKSHMI

...

GAEL

I'll make you something-

LAKSHMI

Don't-

The produce suppliers are late again, I'll get something down the street later. Every ounce of chutney counts til we get more mint in.

GAEL

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I'll put some aside.
Just, think about it? For me.

Gael starts to exit.

LAKSHMI
I do love you, Gael. Mujhe tumse pyaar hai. Like a brother.