The Places Where We Were Born

Written by

Alexandra Knowlton

WGA Registration Number: 1857873
Alexandra Knowlton
knowlt16@unlv.nevada.edu
(702)335-8993
FADE IN.

INT. JAIL - DAY

CHARLIE, mid 20’s, stands before a cell door and looks down at his hands. A quick moment before his attention is redirected upwards. The door opens. A POLICE OFFICER, mid 40’s, female, stands in Charlie’s way of the exit.

POLICE OFFICER
Your stays are getting longer. Think your luck will last?

Charlie politely walks past the officer.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT’D)
Just stay out of trouble.

Charlie nods to the officer, a bit more sincere, then winks at the officer and begins to whistle a tune (maybe Freebird) as he exits.

EXT. UNIVERSITY DORMS - DAY

PRIYA, mid 20’s, Indian-American, stands and looks up at the university dormitory. In her hands is a decent-sized cardboard box. KIRAN, an elderly Indian man, places a hand on her shoulder.

PRIYA
Do you think mom will get over this anytime soon?

The two look back towards the street. A parked minivan. Inside is a middle-aged Indian woman, ASHA, in the passenger’s seat. Her expression disapproving with arms folded.

KIRAN
This is very difficult for her.

Priya nods, kisses Kiran on the cheek.

PRIYA
(in Hindi)
Giver her my love.

KIRAN
Call her. Often. Or she will be calling you.
Priya smiles and waves a hand towards Asha. Asha’s eyes well behind the automotive barrier between them.

INT. KIRAN & ASHA’S HOME - DAY

A home video. Living room of an upper-class suburban home, Asha sits on the sofa and YOUNG PRIYA, an infant girl with dark hair and brown eyes, walks clumsily from the other side of the room and into Asha’s outstretched arms. Kiran’s cheers are heard off screen.

EXT. BASEBALL STANDS - DAY

A home video. WILLIAM, mid 30’s, holds a YOUNG CHARLIE, in a baseball cap too large for his head. A hand reaches from the camera to hold Charlie’s hand. William smiles and the crack of a bat against a ball redirects their excited gaze to the field.

EXT. SUBURBAN PARK - DAY

A home video. Young Priya jumps on a swing and tries to swing herself forward and back. She makes little progress. Kiran gives her a gentle push. She laughs and stretches her legs as she looks up to the sky.

EXT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - DAY

A home video. An older apartment complex, run down and uncared for. A colorful flower box sits on the windowsill of the first floor window. Young Charlie sits below the window and builds mud castles. MARIA, dark hair, hangs wet clothes on a line. Charlie creeps up behind a hanging sheet. He pops out from behind it with a shout and Maria jumps. Charlie’s muddy hands in the air. The sheet with his handprints all over it. She gives a mischievous grin and chases him through the yard.

EXT. KIRAN & ASHA’S HOME - DAY

A home video. Young Priya sits on her bike and Kiran keeps her steady. Priya smiles and holds the handlebars tightly. She looks forward with determination and starts to pedal. Kiran lets go. She rides down the street with ease and speed.
INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A home video. William sets the camera to record and joins Maria and Young Charlie at a small dining table. A clearly home-made cake with one candle sits on the table. William rubs Charlie’s hair and Charlie looks at him with a big smile. Charlie blows out the candle.

INT. KIRAN & ASHA’S HOME - DAY

A home video. Asha gives Young Priya a tight embrace at a large dining table in a living room full of ornate Hindu and Indian decorations. A large professional cake with many candles sits on the table. Kiran joins them at the table and they blow the candles out together.

EXT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The same apartment, only older. Charlie pulls up in a beat up old car. The flower pot in the window is wilted. He gets out of his car and walks up to the door. He grabs mail from a slot attached to the wall and unlocks the door.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie enters as he flips through the envelopes.

CHARLIE
Mom, I’m home.

He throws some envelopes on a table by the door. He notices a coat on the table and looks up to see HELEN, 40, blonde, and in nurse’s scrubs.

HELEN
Jail? Really?

Charlie evades.

CHARLIE
How was she today?

HELEN
She was good. We had an almost really good day.

CHARLIE
Did you tell her?
HELEN
I didn’t have to. Your friend, Jared, called this afternoon for some cash and filled us both in.

There is a silences.

CHARLIE
I- He shouldn’t have done that.

Helen goes to the door and turns to Charlie.

HELEN
The stress is not good for her.

She exits. Charlie stands in the entryway.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Charlie enters the living room and opens a cupboard. He grabs a bucket. Charlie’s phone rings. He answers it as he exits the apartment.

INT. JARED’S PLACE – NIGHT

Through the window, the sun is just starting to set. In a bedroom, Jared gets dressed with a cellphone to his ear. In bed is a WOMAN in her mid 20’s with blonde hair, asleep. Jared looks back at her.

INTERCUT:

EXT. MARIA’S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Charlie puts the phone on speaker and then turns on the flashlight. He lights the planter on the windowsill and pulls out the wilted flowers. Jared speaks quietly.

JARED
So, to toast to an injust and corrupt system overcome by comradery I picked up a little something special.

Charlie grabs a pair of gardener’s gloves from the bucket and puts them on.

CHARLIE
I’m not up for celebrating.
JARED
That’s how you are going to thank me after I spring your ass out of jail?

CHARLIE
Using my mom’s cash.

Jared puts his shirt on and opens his sock drawer. Inside is a mix of prescription drugs with many different names on the labels and picks one up and takes one and puts the bottle in his pocket.

JARED
I really need to clean this shit up off my floor.

Charlie stays quiet pulls soil from the bucket and gently poors it into the planter.

JARED
Don’t sound so sour. I thought I was doing you a favor.

Jared looks over at the woman in his bed and walks to the nightstand on her side. A glass of water, he takes a sip. The woman groggily opens her eyes and looks at him.

JARED (CONT’D)
(whispering)
Time to go home.

He winks at her.

JARED (CONT’D)
Come back later tonight. And then this weekend, we’re celebrating freedom.

Charlie rolls his eyes as he hears the whisper. She stretches and yawns.

JARED (CONT’D)
(to Charlie)
So you’ll be here this weekend, right? That way you have time to recover from the horrors of your most recent jailing

CHARLIE
If you think that was doing me a favor than you’re an idiot.
JARED
You would prefer me letting you blame yourself for getting her sick? Again? To be honest it’s fun for no one.

The woman gets up and gets dressed as Jared looks at himself in the mirror. Charlie puts seeds in the ground.

JARED (CONT’D)
Besides your mom loves me.

CHARLIE
She can’t stand you. Especially when she remembers who the fuck you are.

Jared stops, clearly affronted. The woman, now fully dressed walks up behind Jared and kisses him. Slyly pulls the bottle of pills from his pocket. Charlie places more soil over the seeds.

JARED
See you Saturday.

CHARLIE
I need that money back.

The woman exits.

JARED
Of course.

CHARLIE
Fine. I’ll be there.

Charlie hangs up the phone. Jared smiles. Charlie waters the seeds.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM – NIGHT

Priya hangs up a pair of scrubs. The side of the room she stands in is neat and organized, decorated with medical books, history books, and a hospital badge. On her desk is a shrine made from a candle and some flowers. Above is a drawing of the Hindu goddess, Durga. The other side of the room is empty. TAYLOR, the woman from Jared’s bed, enters.

TAYLOR
You’re all unpacked already?
Priya looks at her room, the answer clear. A nerd, OLIVER, follows with an overwhelming stack of boxes in his hands. Taylor ignores him and instead eyes an image of the Hindu goddess Durga over Priya’s desk.

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
Who’s that? Your mom?

Priya smiles.

PRIYA
No, it’s the goddess Durga.

Taylor raises a brow. Oliver struggles to get them in the room and sets them down. He straightens up and looks at Priya.

OLIVER
Hi there. You must be Priya, I’m Oliver – the RA. Let me know if you have any questions.

PRIYA
Oh, I assumed you were her brother.

Oliver coughs at the idea. Taylor smiles. Taylor looks back to Oliver.

TAYLOR
You mind grabbing the rest of my boxes?

Oliver anxiously nods and exits.

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
I’m Taylor. I’m glad Oliver said your name, I don’t know that I would have pronounced it right.

Priya smiles. Taylor goes to her boxes and opens them. She hangs clothes, radically less conservative than Priya’s. Taylor looks back at the image of Durga. The woman has eight arms and rides on the back of a lion.

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
Why does she have so many arms?

PRIYA
To hold all the weapons she uses to fight evil.

Taylor gives a little concern. Then looks closer at the image.
TAYLOR
She uses a water lily as a weapon?

PRIYA
It’s more to give those who worship her an understanding of how short life can be how to find the truth.

TAYLOR
So you must have it pretty put together?

Priya shrugs.

TAYLOR
That’s pretty badass.

Taylor exits. Priya smiles to herself. The smile fades as she looks at the hospital badge on her desk.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM — DAY

Priya’s alarm goes off and she hits it. She looks over to Taylor’s side of the room. It’s unpacked but Taylor is not there. Priya gets up.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAFE — DAY

Priya sits and eats a bagel as she flips through a medical textbook.

INT. UNIVERSITY HALLWAY — DAY

Priya rushes down the hall with her backpack. She enters a lecture hall.

INT. LECTURE HALL — DAY

Priya sits in class. A PROFESSOR gives a lecture. She takes notes.

INT. LECTURE HALL #2 — DAY

Priya squeezes past a few STUDENTS in the row of seats and sits. She pulls out her notebook. She looks up and takes notes.
INT. LECTURE HALL #3 - DAY

Priya yawns as she takes notes.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Priya pushes a food cart into a hospital room places trays by beds of PATIENTS. An ELDERLY PATIENT flashes her a smile and Priya gives them an extra jello.

EXT. UNIVERSITY - DAY

Priya walks to a building with her backpack in tow.

INT. LECTURE HALL #4 - DAY

Priya sits and takes notes, but struggles to keep her eyes open.

INT. UNIVERSITY CAFE - DAY

Priya downs an iced tea.

INT. LECTURE HALL #5 - DAY

Priya sits and takes notes.

EXT. UNIVERSITY DORMS - NIGHT

Priya walks up with a chinese take-out bag.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT

Priya sits at her desk and studies her text books while eats chinese food with chopsticks from the container.

INT. UNIVERSITY GYM - NIGHT

Priya jogs on the treadmill.
INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT

Priya, now in pajamas gets into bed and we watch her fall asleep. The sound of a key card scraping against the door handle and missing the slot several times. Priya opens her eyes. A click. Taylor stumbles in and the door slams shut behind her. She tosses her heels on the floor and exits to the bathroom.

TAYLOR
Priya!

Priya closes her eyes.

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
Priya!

Silence.

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
Help!

Priya’s eyes open and she goes to the bathroom.

INT. DORM BATHROOM - NIGHT

Taylor draped over the toilet while seated on the floor.

TAYLOR (drunk whine)
Hold my hair?

Priya takes hold of Taylor’s hair, an irked expression on her face. Taylor vomits.

PRIYA
I thought you needed serious help.

TAYLOR
This is serious. Is it grossing you out?

PRIYA
It’s hardly the grossest thing I have seen today.

Taylor smiles and hugs the toilet for a dry heave.

TAYLOR
Awe. You make me feel like a princess.

Priya smiles and yawns.
INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie sits at the table with Helen.

HELEN
Your mother can’t afford to continue with my care.

CHARLIE
What are you talking about?

HELEN
Her last trip to the hospital put your family in a tight spot. I’ve been taking a reduced rate as a favor, but I have got to move on to another family who can pay the amount I am due.

CHARLIE
Is this because Frank got laid off?

HELEN
Your mother is only going to get worse and she can’t afford to keep bailing you out of jail.

CHARLIE
I’m getting that money back tonight.

HELEN
It’s not just that.

Helen gets up and goes to a drawer in the kitchen. She pulls out a large pile of envelopes.

CHARLIE
You hoarding our mail, Helen?

She plops them onto the table. Charlie peels through them. Opens one, reads a moment, sets it down. Again and again.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Are these all bills?

Helen nods.

HELEN
Your mother would never ask you, but if you’re serious about helping her, you need to start dealing with this. I’m not always going to be here.
Fear glazes over Charlie’s face.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the entryway Charlie hands Helen her coat.

    HELEN
    I’m just going to cut my hours back
    for now until I find a permanent
    position somewhere else.

Charlie nods.

    HELEN (CONT’D)
    I’ll help out where I can, but you
    can figure it out. You don’t need
    my help.

Helen places a hand on Charlie’s shoulder and he continues to nod. She gives him a quick embrace and exits.

EXT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Helen pulls out of the driveway and drives off. A minivan pulls up packed with MISCREANTS. They are loud and obnoxious. The passenger door opens and Jared hops out. The miscreants hoot and hollar. He goes around the apartment.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie sits in the kitchen with a pile of bills and paperwork. Jared enters through the backdoor.

    JARED
    Getting a new pen pal?

    CHARLIE
    Why are our friends so loud? My mom
    is trying to sleep.

    JARED
    Let’s not pretend this is polite
    society, my dear. But if we woke
    your mom, I am deeply sorry.

Jared smiles at Charlie. Charlie continues to flip through the envelopes.
You look stressed. I know what will cheer you up.

Jared pulls out a small bag with a few pills inside.

Percocet for the pain.

Charlie takes two pills down with a swig of water.

Now let’s get your mind off the stresses of the world.

Charlie stands and drops the envelopes on the table. The two exit.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Taylor arrives. The party is in full swing. The PARTY-GOERS dance, a group of college students, townie delinquents and the occasional miscreant litter the house. All either drunk or high.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Priya, hunched over a book begins to nod off. Her face hits her book and she wakes up. She takes a double shot espresso drink from her bag and takes a swig. Then grabs study notecards and begins again to study.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie and Jared are among the party-goers, each with a beer in hand.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Priya walks into a hospital room and sits beside a YOUNG PATIENT.

You should probably be in asleep.

I had a nightmare.
PRIYA
Of what?
The young patient sits up in her bed.

INTERCUT:

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT
Taylor dances. The young patient listens intently to Priya.

PRIYA
Whenever I would have nightmares, my mother would tell me the story of The Priyas. A beautiful woman in the finest jewels who rides across the sky in a golden chariot.

Taylor drinks.

PRIYA (CONT’D)
My mother told me, When the evil of nightmares keep you awake, remember The Priyas. She flies over your head as you sleep, keeps you safe, a friendly warrior, and she will be there with you when the sun rises in the morning and you will both be well.

The young patient smiles. Taylor parties.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT
In the backyard Taylor takes her shirt off, alongside Jared, Charlie and other party-goers, and dives into the pool.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT
Priya sits with the young patient.

YOUNG PATIENT
You think she can make me better and scare away the monster?

Priya smiles.

PRIYA
She’ll make your path as easy as she possibly can.
YOUNG PATIENT
But if she’s a warrior, can’t she just fight off -

PRIYA
You’re a warrior too.

The young patient yawns and looks at Priya with new found determination.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Taylor, with a towel wrapped around her head joins the party-goers in the living room. Jared takes out a bag of opium powder.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT

Priya returns to an empty room. She takes off her badge and goes to her desk. She looks at Taylor’s empty bed and then at the clock. It’s late. She takes out her phone and makes a call.

VOICEMAIL WOMAN (O.S.)
... When you have finished recording you may hang up or press one for more options.

The voicemail beeps.

PRIYA
Hey dad. I know it’s late and you are both probably in bed. I just wanted to see if we could all get lunch tomorrow. Sweet dreams, good night.

Priya hangs up and goes back to studying.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Taylor and the party-goers sit on the roof and watch two TOWNIES light fireworks in the driveway. They shout in celebration.
INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT

Priya, now in a nightgown and hair down goes to crawl into bed. Her phone lights up on her desk, buzzes. She looks at it then to her bed. The phone, the bed. She then looks at Taylor’s empty bed.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie’s vision blurs. He sits on the couch between two drunk college students. Jared approaches.

    JARED
    How you feelin’ bud?

    CHARLIE
    Warm and fuzzy.

Jared smiles and disappears from Charlie’s view. Charlie watches the party rage on.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT

Priya sleeps as her phone continues to buzz.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Music blares as the belligerent party-goers dance. Taylor dances. She holds a drink in one hand and her cellphone in the other.

    TAYLOR
    Hey!

No one answers. She tosses her phone aside and takes a drink. Taylor directs her attention to the miscreant beside her. She turns him around and it is Jared. She plants a kiss on him before she stumbles.

    TAYLOR
    I need a ride.

    JARED
    To my place?

    TAYLOR
    Or I could drive myself home, I would hate to kill someone.

Taylor tries to stand and he helps her up.
JARED
I’ll take you home. You don’t have to kill anyone.

TAYLOR
Thanks.

Jared smiles and moves in closer. Taylor puts her hand on his face and pushes him away.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT
The door slams open and Priya wakes up.

TAYLOR
Did I wake you?

PRIYA
Yes.

Taylor drops onto her bed. Priya gets up and helps Taylor get ready for bed.

EXT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - DAY
The sun rises and Charlie pulls up the beat up sedan to the driveway.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - DAY
Charlie sleeps in his bed. Maria enters and pats him on the shoulder.

MARIA
Good morning sunshine.

Charlie wakes up.

CHARLIE
Good morning.

MARIA
I thought you were done staying out this late.

CHARLIE
Sorry mom.

She kisses him on the forehead and exits. Charlie gets up.
INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - DAY

Charlie enters the kitchen.

   MARIA
   Sit down, honey. I’ll make you breakfast.

Charlie sits. Maria goes to the fridge and pulls out the milk.

   CHARLIE
   Where’s Helen this morning?

Maria places the milk on the counter and pulls cereal out of the cabinet.

   MARIA
   Who?

Charlie looks at her concerned.

   CHARLIE
   You know Helen.

Maria takes three bowls out of the cabinet and then fills them.

   MARIA
   I don’t think so.

Charlie stands up and walks over to her.

   CHARLIE
   Your nurse, mom. She’s been with us here for months.

Maria shakes her head and turns to him with the two bowls.

   MARIA
   Of course, dear. Go call your father for breakfast.

Charlie places the bowls on the table and sits her down. He picks up the third bowl and places it in the sink. He sits beside her.

   MARIA (CONT’D)
   Helen is cutting back on her hours.

Charlie nods and looks at the bills now on the counter.
CHARLIE
I didn’t realize that would be so soon.

MARIA
I’ll have to cancel my doctor’s appointment.

CHARLIE
I’ll take you. When is it?

Charlie eats his cereal. His mother looks on the calendar by the wall.

MARIA
Oh, it’s today.

Charlie nods.

CHARLIE
Then we’ll go today.

He smiles at her and she smiles back at him. They eat their cereal together.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Charlie pulls into a parking spot and he and his mom exit to the street.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

The DOCTOR enters and Charlie and Maria follow. They all sit in their respective seats.

DOCTOR
I’m sorry to say that it looks as though the deterioration is moving faster than we would like...

Charlie looks at his mother and the doctor’s words fade in and out.

DOCTOR (CONT’D)
...I hear that you no longer have assisted living...

Maria looks at him, clear despair in her eyes.
DOCTOR (CONT’D)
...There are still a few things we can try, but I’m afraid...

Maria reaches out and holds Charlie’s hand.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Next to the woman’s bathroom is a flower stall. Charlie buys one. The doctor approaches him.

DOCTOR
The new medications are not covered by your insurance, and I’m afraid they are not cheap.

Charlie nods. His mother enters from the bathroom. The doctor hands her the prescription.

DOCTOR (CONT’D)
It was good to see you, Maria. Your son is growing into a fine young man.

The doctor walks off and Charlie hands his mother the flower.

MORIA
Oh, it’s beautiful dear.

He smiles and they exit.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - DAY

Taylor and Priya sit on their beds surrounded by textbooks. A timer goes off and Taylor switches it back. She picks up a laundry basket and goes for the door.

TAYLOR
You want me to switch yours to the dryer while I’m out?

PRIYA
That would be great. Thank you.

Priya dives back into her notes. Almost as quickly as the door shuts, there is a knock. Priya gets up and goes to the door.
PRIYA (CONT’D)
Did you forget your key again?

She opens the door to Kiran and Asha. They enter. Asha looks around the room in clear disgust. Taylor’s side is a pigsty. Empty cake vodka bottles fill the trashcans.

KIRAN
This is your roommate’s side I hope?

He and Priya smile. Asha stays silent.

PRIYA
I’m glad you are here. I wish you would have called.

Kiran looks to Asha.

KIRAN
We got your message and thought we would surprise you.

ASHA
(in Hindi)
How do you work in such a mess?

Priya grabs her purse and backpack.

PRIYA
It’s usually not this bad, Taylor has just been very into her studies. They say the smarter the person, the more of a mess they are.

KIRAN
Messy people say that to justify themselves, dear.

PRIYA
Let’s go to lunch. Before I have class. I think we may have time for me to show you around campus too.

The key card clicks and Taylor returns with a pile of wet lingerie in her arms. Her outfit only covers the bare essentials and as her underwear is all in her arms, she is not wearing any under her clothes.

TAYLOR
(to laundry in arms)
The dumb washing machine ate one of thongs or a shoelace, and now soap
TAYLOR
and water is just bubbling out all
over the place. Maybe Oliver will
finish my laundry for me.

Taylor looks up to see Kiran and Asha, both in shock. Taylor
joins their expressions.

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
Oh my god, hi!

She drops the soapy wet lengerie onto the floor. Her outfit
now damp.

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
You must be Priya’s parents! It’s
so great to meet you.

She rushes to greet them. Hugs them both, as they stand
motionless. Kiran avoids looking at Taylor at all. Asha
cannot turn her eyes away.

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
Did you guys just get here from
India?

Taylor looks to Priya.

PRIYA
We are actually from here. My
parents too. This is my father,
Kiran and my mother, Asha.

KIRAN
(to the wall)
So you are the roommate? A medical
student as well? First year?

Taylor grabs a dress from a pile of dirty clothes.

TAYLOR
Yeah. Priya is so lucky to have you
as her parents. I wish I had
parents around to visit me.

Asha turns to her.

ASHA
You don’t have parents?

TAYLOR
I mean I do, but they are dead to
me. But your daughter is awesome.
TAYLOR
Keeps me on track. She even volunteers at the hospital. Ain’t nobody got time for that.

PRIYA
Taylor, you want to maybe go change?

Taylor looks down at herself and nods.

TAYLOR
Yep.

Taylor enters the bathroom and shuts the door.

ASHA
(in Hindi)
I told you this would happen.

KIRAN
You never said this scenario would happen.

ASHA
(in Hindi)
You know what I said.

Kiran sighs and Asha exits.

KIRAN
Let’s go to lunch.

Priya nods and the two exit together.

INT. RESTAURANT – DAY

Priya takes a seat and looks at her parents.

PRIYA
There was a patient who was having nightmares so I told him the story you used to tell me.

Asha smiles, but does not soften.

KIRAN
How are your studies going?

PRIYA
It’s going very well. It’s not easy, but I am succeeding.
Priya takes a long sip of water.

ASHA
Your roommate not too distracting?

Priya shakes her head, still drinking her water.

KIRAN
And living on your own is going alright.

Priya sets down her water.

PRIYA
She is actually a very hard worker.
And living on my own has been nice.
I miss you both, but it is good to do these things for myself.

Priya takes a glance at the exit.

KIRAN
We are so proud of you. We just want to make sure you stay on track.

Kiran smiles and nods. Priya looks to Asha who offers no expression. They sit silently as the WAITRESS approaches.

EXT. UNIVERSITY DORMS – DAY

Priya approaches the dorms and looks up. Still with wonder. Muffled shouts from a window draw her eyes upward.

TAYLOR
Stay right there!

Priya looks on in confusion and Taylor disappears. After a moment of waiting outside Taylor exits the building.

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
Pick a place. Any place.

Priya struggles for a second.

PRIYA
Why?

Taylor lightly hits the side of Priya’s arm with her purse.
TAYLOR
Just do it.

PRIYA
The Natural History Museum.

TAYLOR
You are so fucking boring. Okay, let’s go.

Taylor pulls out her keys.

PRIYA
What are you talking about? We have class.

TAYLOR
Class is cancelled, got an email. Time to have some fun.

They exit.

EXT. NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM - DAY

Priya and Taylor enter.

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - DAY

Taylor stands in the gift shop and poses the toy dinosaurs precariously. Priya stands in front of an exhibit of birds. One large stuffed bird stands perched above her, wings outstretched. Taylor approaches.

TAYLOR
I bought you this pink rock for your shrine.

Priya looks back at Taylor and accepts it. It sparkles in the light, and she puts it in her bag.

PRIYA
Thank you.

TAYLOR
You seem to really like this place.

PRIYA
I’ve never been here before. I’ve always wanted to go, I just never really had the time.
TAYLOR
It’s like any other museum. Lots of dead shit and sparkly rocks.

Priya nods.

PRIYA
I actually really like it.
(beat)
You think they knew their bodies would end up here?

Taylor thinks for a moment.

TAYLOR
Nope. Let’s go see if we can find some cave men.

Priya follows Taylor. Priya smiles.

INT. LIBRARY – DAY

Priya and Taylor sit with a few MEDICAL STUDENTS and study medical textbooks. Jared approaches the table.

JARED
Taylor!

Everyone in the group looks at Jared. His volume exceeds that which would be considered appropriate in a library. Taylor stands and walks over to him. Priya watches.

TAYLOR
Are you stalking me?

Jared lifts up a philosophy textbook.

JARED
Returning a book. You coming out tonight?

Taylor looks at the book.

TAYLOR
Are you a student here?

JARED
On scholarship. Photographic memory. Secret genius. No need to make an event out of it.

Taylor smiles.
TAYLOR
I’ll be there.

JARED
Your friends are pretty cute. Bring them too.

TAYLOR
I doubt they’ll be interested, but I’ll pass along the invitation.

Charlie enters the library and sees Jared. Jared waves to the girls and walks to Charlie. Taylor returns to her seat.

MED STUDENT #1
Who was that?

TAYLOR
Just some idiot philosophy major who thinks he’s a genius.

The two medical student girls laugh. Jared looks back from across the room a moment then back to Charlie who is clearly angry.

PRIYA
Is he why you come home so late?

TAYLOR
No.

PRIYA
Who’s his friend?

Priya watches as Jared and Charlie get into an argument she cannot hear.

TAYLOR
That’s just Jared’s bestfriend Charlie. They are having a party tonight. You girls want to go?

The two medical students look at each other and smile.

MED STUDENT #1
Okay.

MED STUDENT #2
Sure.

Priya looks back to Taylor.
PRIYA
I should be studying.

TAYLOR
Come on, you study harder than all of us. Aren’t you at least curious?

Priya stays quiet. Taylor packs her bag and the other medical students do the same.

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
You coming to lunch?

PRIYA
I’m volunteering at the hospital.

Taylor nods and the three girls leave. Priya looks down at her notes and then back up to Charlie and Jared.

JARED
Why would you schedule an interview when you know you aren’t sleeping tonight?

CHARLIE
I need the money.

JARED
Come tonight and I’ll split my profits with you.

CHARLIE
And risk getting arrested again? I’ll pass.

JARED
At least show up.

Charlie exits. Jared follows with exasperation.

EXT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - DAY

Maria sets a pitcher of iced tea on the small table outside the apartment as Charlie waters the planter, daffodils now in bloom.

CHARLIE
I may be getting a new job soon.

MARIA
That’s wonderful. What is it?
CHARLIE
Grounds keeper at the university.
Or an assistant anyway.

MARIA
I’m proud of you. And your father
would be too.

Charlie smiles.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The neighborhood, clearly overtaken by a layer of grime. A
pair of party-goers make out in the front yard, grass not
watered in weeks beneath them. Three more sit in the
driveway and light bottle rockets. The minivan pulls up and
the miscreants all flow out and into the house. Charlie and
Jared get out of the minivan.

JARED
Relax, this is going to be fun.

CHARLIE
Sober? I guess we’ll see.

Jared nods and puts a hand on Charlie’s shoulder and escorts
him into the house. The sound of music intensifies as they
enter.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie slows down and stops. Those around Charlie dance
faster and faster. Then everything around him seems to
freeze as he places a hand to his mouth and holds back
vomit.

INT. HOUSE BATHROOM - NIGHT

Charlie, hunched over the toilet, vomits.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie enters from the bathroom, now paler than we’ve seen
him. The party-goers dance as fast as ever. Jared breaks
free from the group and moves over to Charlie.

JARED
You alright? I’ve got something for
that.
CHARLIE
I’m fine, but I may head out.

JARED
But it’s so early.

Taylor, Priya, and a flurry of medical student girls enter. In the dancing crowd a Folgers coffee can moves from hand to hand. Taylor grabs it. She pulls out two random pills and takes them. She walks up to Jared.

TAYLOR
This your brilliant idea, Einstein?

Jared smiles.

JARED
House rules, no more than two per person.

She hands him the can. He looks through it.

TAYLOR
What’s the fun if you’re going to look.

JARED
I’m building a particular remedy.

Jared takes a pill and hands it to Charlie.

JARED (CONT’D)
Bottoms up.

Charlie looks at Priya and things slow for a moment.

CHARLIE
I’ll pass. Remember I am getting up early.


CHARLIE (CONT’D)
You’re the girl from the library, right?

PRIYA
I didn’t know if you had seen me.
CHARLIE
I’m Charlie.

Priya smiles.

PRIYA
Hi. I-

Taylor intrudes. Two solo cups in hand.

TAYLOR
And one for the party virgin.

PRIYA
I don’t know.

TAYLOR
One drink is not going to corrupt you. I will.

Taylor winks at her and they cheers.

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
To getting you to finally let loose a little.


CHARLIE
I’ll help you out with that.

Charlie drinks and hands her the empty cup.

PRIYA
(whispers)
You don’t have to do that.

CHARLIE
She’s not going to stop bugging you if she thinks you’re sober. I don’t mind taking one for the team.

Priya nods. Taylor lowers her cup.

TAYLOR
Let’s see that empty cup!

Priya shows her the inside of the solo cup. Empty.

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
Badass! Let’s do another one.
PRIYA
I think I’m fine for now.

Taylor puts a hand on Priya’s shoulder and beams with pride.

TAYLOR
I’ll be back with more.


CHARLIE
I’ll be right there.

Charlie hangs up the phone.

PRIYA
What’s wrong?

CHARLIE
The police say there is something wrong with my mom. I’ve gotta go.

PRIYA
I’ll drive you.

CHARLIE
You don’t have to do -

PRIYA
I’m sober. I’ll drive you.

Charlie nods and the two leave. The party rages on. Taylor comes back with more drinks but her friends have gone.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Priya drives Charlie to the supermarket. He taps his foot nervously. The car ride is long, silent, heavy. She parks and as she reaches to unlock the door, he unlocks it himself and gets out. She follows.

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

SUPERMARKET PATRONS stop and watch the display. Two OFFICERS stand with Maria in tow. She cries like a child. She looks around, distraught and in panic.
MARIA
(between sobs)
Mom? Mom! She was just here. Where is she?

Charlie runs to her. Priya watches from the entrance.

CHARLIE
Mom. It’s Charlie.

Maria looks at him. No recognition in her eyes.

OFFICER #1
You her son?

Charlie nods.

OFFICER #2
She’s claiming to be six years old and lost. Says her parents are somewhere in the supermarket but she can’t find them.

Maria sobs.

OFFICER #1
We found your number in her wallet. We’ve tried to calm her down, if you can’t we will have to take her in.

CHARLIE
I can. Just leave her with me.

The officers release her and Maria falls to her knees. Charlie stands there in shock for a moment and then kneels down beside her.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
(a beat as he looks for the right words)
Maria?

She looks up at him with hope. Her crying becomes lessened.

MARIA
You know me?

Charlie smiles.

CHARLIE
That’s right. And I know your parents too.
Maria smiles.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Why don’t we get out of here and go see them? That sound okay?

Maria nods and he helps her up. He walks back up to Priya.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Thank you for bringing by. Could I ask you for another favor?

Priya nods. Officer #1 taps on his shoulder and pulls him aside.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
You go with this nice lady now, Maria. What’s your name nice lady?

PRIYA
Priya.

Charlie turns to the officer and Maria takes Priya’s hand. They exit.

CHARLIE
I’m sorry officer.

OFFICER #1
Your mother is sick. It’s no one’s fault and you did a good job of calming her down... but she needs help. Real help. You see that she gets it.

CHARLIE
Yes, sir.

The officer shakes Charlie’s hand and leaves. Charlie exits.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Charlie gets in the backseat and Maria sits in the front passenger’s seat with Priya at the wheel. Maria is elated.

MARIA
I love the front seat.

PRIYA
So where’s home?

Charlie leans forward. Maria buckles up.
CHARLIE

That’s actually the favor I wanted to ask you. A little detour before we head home.

Priya nods.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

The car pulls up and the three get out. Charlie and Priya hold Maria’s hands as they walk down the path. They walk towards a small plot and stop. Maria sits in the grass. Three small plaques on the ground. Priya looks at Charlie who stares at one grave in particular.

MARIA

I never thought I would bury him so soon after my parents, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I know that mom.

Maria begins to cry, but this time her sobs are softer and more reflective, not like that of a child, but of a woman. Priya sits beside her.

MARIA

Who’s your friend, dear?

CHARLIE

That’s Priya, mom. She gave us the ride here.

Priya smiles.

PRIYA

Hello, it’s nice to meet you.

Priya shakes Maria’s hand.

MARIA

(to Charlie)
I like her Charlie.
(to Priya)
Thank you.

Charlie smiles and then speaks softly.

CHARLIE

Yes, thank you.

Charlie sits beside them and they just look at the gravestones as the sun rises.
INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - DAY

Charlie sits at the kitchen table and Maria makes him cereal. They sit together and eat.

    CHARLIE
    First day of work.

    MARIA
    I hope you plant something beautiful.

    CHARLIE
    That’s the job. Maybe I’ll bring something back for you.

She smiles and they eat.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT

Priya sits in front of Durga’s shrine and recites her mantra. Taylor enters.

    TAYLOR
    Still praying.

    PRIYA
    His mom was so lost. I’ve never seen anyone like that before.

    TAYLOR
    I have.

Priya looks to her.

    PRIYA
    When?

    TAYLOR
    Before my dad killed himself.

Priya stays quiet.

    TAYLOR (CONT’D)
    I’m okay, really. I just spend a lot of time missing him. Lost or not, it sucks to think my mom is all I have left.

Taylor sits beside Priya and looks at Durga.
PRIYA
I think I know what that is like. My mother is never going to accept me for going out on my own and trying to work, instead of getting married and having children.

TAYLOR
Your lucky, Priya. Your mom loves you. My mother is on an entirely different level.

Priya returns to her mantra.

INT. WORK ROOM - DAY

Charlie enters and grabs a pair of gardening gloves from a table and walks through a door. After a moment he returns with a cart full of unplanted flowers and the like. He starts to whistle as he exits with the cart.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

Priya sits in class. Her focus wayning. Her notes sprawled across the page. She doodles birds all across her page.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Taylor and Priya sit in the library. Priya looks up from her books.

PRIYA
Do you have the notes from Dr. Alan’s class?

TAYLOR
Yeah, but that’s the 4th time you’ve asked me this week. Why are you going to class if you aren’t going to pay attention?

PRIYA
Harsh.

TAYLOR
I of course, meant it in the nicest way possible.

Priya thinks a moment.
PRIYA
Do you ever wonder if you’re where you are supposed to be? Doing what you are supposed to be doing?

Taylor nods.

TAYLOR
Sure. All the time.

PRIYA
I had never felt that before I met Charlie’s mom.

TAYLOR
Really?

PRIYA
Well, I guess I felt it for a second when we were at the Natural History Museum, but I’ve always just felt like I was doing what I was supposed to be doing.

TAYLOR
You are good at this, Priya. But the only time I’ve seen you chill out is looking at those stupid dead animal exhibits.

PRIYA
It’s not stupid. Everything comes from something else. Everything has a history.

TAYLOR
Well duh, who cares?

Priya looks at a history book on her desk under all her medical texts.

PRIYA
Why do you want to do this?

TAYLOR
Do what?

PRIYA
Become a doctor.

Taylor doesn’t hesitate.
TAYLOR
To get people to start looking at mental illnesses that kill people the way they look at cancer or heart disease. Why do you want to do this?

PRIYA
I don’t think I do.

Priya sits.

EXT. UNIVERSITY - NIGHT

Priya walks down a path. A motored cart pulls up beside her. Charlie drives it. The back is full of gardening supplies.

CHARLIE
Need a ride?

PRIYA
Hello.

Charlie stops the cart.

CHARLIE
Hop on.

Priya smiles awkwardly.

PRIYA
I didn’t know you went to school here. Or did you st- What are you doing here?

CHARLIE
I’m a greens keeper.

He Vana Whites to the supplies in the back.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Where are you headed?

PRIYA
I’m meeting my study group at the library.

CHARLIE
Hop on. I’ll take ya’.

Priya nods and gets into the empty seat beside him. They cruise down the path.
PRIYA
How’s your mom?

Charlie looks at her and then ahead.

CHARLIE
She’s alright. Worse than I thought, but I can handle it.

PRIYA
I hope it was alright, my being there.

Charlie smiles.

CHARLIE
I was really thankful you were there actually. I don’t know if I could have held it together if I didn’t have back up.

PRIYA
I’m sure you would have been fine.

The two zip off.

EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

The cart stops and Priya gets off. She grabs her bag.

PRIYA
Thank you for the ride.

He nods graciously.

CHARLIE
Anytime.

Priya goes to leave but stops and turns back to him.

PRIYA
Can I ask you a kind of weird question?

CHARLIE
To follow up that kind of weird question? Sure, why not?

PRIYA
Do you like being a gardener?

Charlie takes a moment to compose his thoughts.
CHARLIE
I’m a grounds keeper technically, but yeah. I do like it.

Beat.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
But don’t go around telling people. I’d hate to lose my edge.

PRIYA
I didn’t know you were edgy.

CHARLIE
Oh yeah. I’m kind of a big deal in edge community. Even featured in last months newsletter.

PRIYA
I’ll keep that in mind.

She smiles.

CHARLIE
Please do.

Charlie nods and she waves. Priya exits. Charlie turns his cart around.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Priya enters and joins Taylor at the table.

PRIYA
What do you know about Charlie?

TAYLOR
Random. Um, well, he’s Jared’s friend. His mom is sick. Kind of quiet, but like that kind of quiet where you don’t know if he huffs glue or if he just lacks social skills. Like that kind of thing?

Priya opens her backpack.

PRIYA
I didn’t get that vibe. He seemed actually kind of charming to me.
TAYLOR
Oo! Is this an infatuation I see blooming? Losing yourself is making you a lot more interesting.

PRIYA
I’m interesting. I’m really interesting.

Taylor laughs.

TAYLOR
Of course you are! Finally growing a pair of balls. I think I may be starting to rub off on you. No more miss nice Priya.

PRIYA
That seems a little over the top.

TAYLOR
I’m just saying, it can get pretty addicting. Saying what you think and making that matter.

Priya smiles and looks into her backpack. It’s empty.

PRIYA
I completely forgot to bring my books.

TAYLOR
You are losing it.

Priya places her head on the desk in mock defeat and Taylor laughs.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAFE - DAY

Priya sits at a table with Kiran. Kiran drinks coffee while Priya eats an ice cream cone.

KIRAN
Reminds me of when you were a little girl.

Priya smiles.

PRIYA
I’ve been thinking a lot lately and I have something really important to tell you and mom.
KIRAN
Well then why did you ask me to come without her? You know she gets jealous whenever we do anything without her.

PRIYA
I think I know how she is going to take it.

KIRAN
Take what?

Priya takes a huge bite off of her ice cream cone.

PRIYA
Brain freeze.

Kiran laughs.

KIRAN
Trying to avoid the subject are we? What is so important? Is everything alright?

Priya takes a long pause.

PRIYA
Everything is fine. It’s nothing really. I just wanted to ask you some questions.

Kiran looks surprised.

KIRAN
That’s all. That’s alright.

PRIYA
Why did you become a doctor?

KIRAN
I was a doctor in India. I wanted to work in a more noble profession than my father.

PRIYA
It’s not noble to be an architect?

KIRAN
When you get paid as much as he did, it certainly didn’t seem that way. I was surprised when you told me you wanted to be a doctor, but
KIRAN
the profession in the states is
thankfully both noble and fiscally
sound. I’m proud of you. Your
mother is especially so.

PRIYA
I wish she would trust me a little
more then.

KIRAN
She does trust you, ladla. You have
to understand that life for her was
very different.

Priya sighs.

KIRAN (CONT’D)
Your mother’s only focus for you is
seeing you as happy as she is.

PRIYA
Does that mean I have to do
everything as she did?

KIRAN
You know how I feel about that, but
your mother is stubborn.

PRIYA
I wish she and I could really talk,
but she’s always just jumping to
fix me. Like she is the perfect
example of what a woman should be.

KIRAN
I will talk to her, in the
meantime, stay focused.

Priya nods and the two finish their treats.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT
Charlie enters and sets his bag by the door.

CHARLIE
Mom, I’m home.

He looks around and walks to the next room.
INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Charlie walks in. The room is dimly lit by the light let in by Charlie and Maria lay asleep in bed. On her bedside table are various bottles of pills. He then kisses her on the forehead and leaves the room.

EXT. PARK – DAY

Priya enters and sees ASHA seated alone at the park on a bench. She looks at peace, more content than we’ve seen her.

PRIYA
I’m glad you called.

ASHA
Sit with me, dear.

PRIYA
I was worried you would never forgive me.

ASHA
I will always be your mother. I only want what is best for you.

PRIYA
When you were my age, what did you want to be?

ASHA
I didn’t know exactly what I wanted to be. I only knew what my family had planned for me. An arranged marriage.

Asha adjusts herself in her chair. Priya looks at her intently.

INTERCUT:

INT. BEDROOM – NIGHT

ON SCREEN: India, 1968.

The room is dimly lit and a YOUNG ASHA, sits on her bed. ASHA’S MOTHER stands in front of her and hands her a photograph. The photograph is of a YOUNG KIRAN.
MOTHER
(In Hindi)
Isn’t he handsome?

Young Asha looks up at her Mother and nods in agreement.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Asha stands nicely dressed in the garden. ASHA’S FATHER smiles and pulls the camera to his eyes.

ASHA (O.S.)
I had never met your father before our marriage, but it was not unusual to receive an image of one another.

He takes the photograph.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Kiran smiles as he looks at the photograph and then places it against the computer on his desk.

ASHA (O.S.)
Your father would later tell me that he would sit at his desk and think, how lucky he was to engaged to someone so pretty.

In the park Asha places a hand on Priya’s face.

ASHA
Just as you are.

Priya smiles.

INT. LARGE ROOM - DAY

Young Asha, decorated in the traditional wedding clothes, stands beside Young Kiran, also dressed in the traditional clothes. Asha looks at Kiran for a moment and then quickly away.

PRIYA (O.S.)
You never thought it might be mistake?
ASHA (O.S.)
I often wondered if it was what I 
was meant for, but it made me 
stronger, having your father and 
having you.

Young Kiran smiles at Asha and PUJARI, a Hindu priest binds 
their hands together with a string of beads.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Young Asha sits up from her bed, clearly about nine months 
pregnant and she stands. She walks over to her vanity and 
places a hand on her stomach. She looks at herself in the 
mirror and there is an uneasiness in her eyes. On the vanity 
is a picture of her and Young Kiran. She leaves the room.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

ON SCREEN: America, 1969.

Young Kiran checks his mirrors as he drives down the road in 
his modest car. Beside him Young Asha sits.

ASHA (O.S.)
Your father insisted we come to 
America to build a better life for 
you.

She looks behind her to see a baby girl, Priya, in her car 
seat. Young Asha smiles at her and places a hand on her tiny 
knee.

ASHA (O.S.)
It was very difficult for me to 
leave everything I knew behind.

Behind Priya in the back of the car are moving boxes. In the 
park Asha smiles.

PRIYA
Did you love dad?

ASHA
Not at the time, but that wasn’t 
uncommon. Love is something that 
grows. Everything takes time.

PRIYA
Thank you for coming to talk with 
me, mom.
Priya embraces her mother.

ASHA
I miss you dear. Not having you at home, is more difficult than I can admit. I’m sorry for holding it against you.

They smile at one another.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie lays in his bed in his room and pulls out his phone. A message from Taylor reads "Alright Prince Charming here’s your Jasmine’s number." Charlie smiles and adds the contact to his phone. He calls.

INTERCUT:

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT

Priya spins her chair back and forth with her textbook in her lap. She chews on the end of her pen. Taylor looks up from the mess of papers and books on her bed.

TAYLOR
Microbiology can suck a dick.

Priya’s phone buzzes. She answers it quickly.

PRIYA
Hello, who’s this?

Taylor closes her book and goes to the fridge. She pulls out a bottle of cake vodka and pours herself a drink. Charlie smiles at Priya’s voice.

CHARLIE
It’s Charlie. I’m sorry to call so late. I just thought maybe you’d be up for a chat?

PRIYA
Sure. How’d you get my number?

Taylor grabs the bottle and leaves the drink. She goes to exit.

TAYLOR
I’ll be back later. I want to see if Ollie wants to play truth or dare.
Priya nods and Taylor exits.

PRIYA
Did you answer the question? My roommate was talking.

CHARLIE
Yeah, Taylor gave me your number.

PRIYA
Oh I see.

Priya looks at her notes, a mess of incoherent highlighted paragraphs and doodles. She puts them aside.

PRIYA (CONT’D)
I need a break from studying.

Charlie takes a breath.

CHARLIE
Priya. My mom isn’t going to get better.

PRIYA
I know.

Charlie sits with this a long moment.

PRIYA (CONT’D)
I found out today that my parents had an arranged marriage.

CHARLIE
That still happens?

PRIYA
It’s still pretty common in some places, India being one of them.

CHARLIE
How’d you find out.

PRIYA
I had always assumed, but we never talked about it. My mother so seldomly talks about herself.

CHARLIE
Will your marriage be arranged?
PRIYA
Maybe. Where your parents in love
when they had you?

Charlie takes a moment before he continues, eyes closed.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

ON SCREEN: America, 1968.

The room is full of WOMEN sat at desks with telephones. One,
a YOUNG MARIA, answers a ringing telephone.

MARIA
Information.

A buzzer goes off and the women begin to end their calls and
pick up their lunch tins and exit the office.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
They met outside her office during
her lunch break.

Young Maria finishes her call and hangs up the phone. She
pulls her lunch tin from under the desk and exits.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Young Maria turns a corner and looks up to see a
construction site. She sits on a bench across from it and
opens her lunch tin. A YOUNG WILLIAM, in a hard hat, walks
from the construction site with a lunch tin in his hands.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
After that, they ate lunch together
everyday. My mother said their
connection was instant, but I don’t
know how true that was.

He smiles at her as he crosses the street and sits beside
her on the bench. He opens his lunch tin.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

William and Young Maria share a series of passionate kisses
and they begin to move towards the door.
INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Young Maria sits alone on her bed. She holds a timer in her hand. It goes off and she runs to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

In the bathroom she picks up a pregnancy test.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
My parents loved each other, but they got pregnant on accident.

The stick reads positive.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Young Maria stands at the head of the church in a white dress beside her groom, William. He straightens his suit nervously as he turns to face her. Young Maria looks down towards her abdomen for a moment and then turns to face William. The PRIEST standing before them begins to speak inaudibly.

EXT. CHURCH GARDEN - DAY

Young Maria smiles as William brings a piece of wedding cake to her lips. The two look happy.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

William grabs Young Maria’s hand as they run down the driveway and leap into a beat up little car.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

William gets out of the car in a hurry and rushes to open the passenger door. A nine month pregnant Young Maria moves slowly as she gets out of the car. William helps steady her and they rush into the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

William enters the hospital room and sees Young Maria in bed holding the newborn baby boy, CHARLIE.
CHARLIE (O.S.)
I think they were in love.

She smiles as she looks at the baby. William approaches and sits beside her. He puts a hand on the baby’s head and smiles at Young Maria.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM – NIGHT

Some time has passed.

PRIYA
...I can’t believe I haven’t even looked over the material for tomorrow’s test. I’ve always been a good student, but I just can’t seem to stay focused...

Priya pulls leftovers from the fridge and heats them up.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Some time has passed.

CHARLIE
...My dad and I used to go to baseball games. All the time. It was one of those father-son traditions, I guess...

PRIYA (O.S.)
I’ve never had anything like that with my parents...

Charlie cleans the living room.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM – NIGHT

Some time has passed.

PRIYA
...And they are paying for school. I can’t just uproot everything they worked so hard for...

She tries to eat and pulls out her laptop while holding her phone in between her neck and shoulder.
INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Some time has passed. It’s a Wonderful Life play on the television. He still holds the phone as he watches.

CHARLIE
...What do mean, you haven’t seen it? Look it up and skip to when they are dancing in the auditorium.

He looks off to a closed door then turns down the volume.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - DAY

With her laptop on her stomach she watches as George Bailey shakes Mary in the snow. Tears well up in her eyes. She still holds the phone to her face.

EXT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Some time has passed. Charlie replants the daffodils in the planter on the windowsill.

CHARLIE
...Daffodils...they’re her favorite flower. She used to keep them up, but I really don’t mind it...

He sprinkles dirt around the flowers to tuck them in.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT

The light from the sunrise begins to peel through the window.

PRIYA
...the conch, the club, she also holds this thunderbolt which is supposed to help you solve problems confidently...I wouldn’t mind having a lightning bolt of my own most days...

Priya lies in her bed and looks up at the ceiling.
INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie lies on his bed and looks up at the ceiling.

    CHARLIE
    ...Sometimes if you close your eyes tight and then open them you can
    see the entire universe...Shall we try it?

    PRIYA (O.S.)
    Yes.

Charlie closes his eyes tightly.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT

Priya closes her eyes tightly.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - DAY

Charlie sits his mom down at the kitchen table. Charlie makes her cereal. He fills the kettle and burns his finger on the stove. He puts the tea kettle on.

EXT. UNIVERSITY - DAY

Priya walks down campus with her backpack. Charlie pulls his cart up behind her. Priya stops to see that Taylor and Jared are seated in the back of the cart.

    CHARLIE
    Hop on. We’re going on an adventure.

Without hesitation she hops aboard.

    PRIYA
    To do what?

    CHARLIE
    I’ve enlisted the help of these two here, to help see if we can find you a passion.

They zip away.
INT. WORK ROOM - DAY

Charlie leads Priya through the work room. Taylor and Jared follow. Charlie unlocks the door.

INT. WORK ROOM / GREEN ROOM - DAY

Charlie and Priya enter. The room is full of rows of flowers and fertilizer filled carts. There are skylights that let light in from the ceiling. Priya steps in and turns to Charlie. The room is covered in flowers.

PRIYA
It’s beautiful.

Charlie smiles and motions for her to join him. He hands her a packet of seeds.

CHARLIE
Now let’s see if you have what it takes to be a gardener.

INT. WORK ROOM / GREEN ROOM - DAY

Jared and Taylor enter to see Charlie and Priya throw dirt at each other. They promptly join in.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Taylor and Jared throw crumpled pieces of paper at each other. Priya comes in wearing Jared’s glasses. Charlie holds her hair back as if in a ponytail. She points and shushes them. They laugh.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Priya kicks open the door with her hands held as if they were a gun.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Taylor, Jared, and Charlie sit at a table covered in cards. They play poker. Priya runs in her her "hand"-gun and pretends to start firing. Then Jared pulls out a fake machine gun and fake kills her like a gangster.
EXT. PARK - DAY

Jared tosses her an orange vest and a garbage poker. She cleans the park while Charlie, Taylor, and Jared sleep on and around the same bench like a couple of bums.

INT. UNIVERSITY THEATER - NIGHT

Jared and Taylor shout and cheer. In front of the screen Charlie kneels with his hands upward. Priya makes a showy entrance. She twirls into his arms. He dramatically dips her and they kiss.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT

Priya, in Jared’s glasses, hair up, and wearing Oliver’s RA badge points and scolds with two bottles of cake vodka in her hands. Taylor, Jared, Charlie, and Oliver over-act sobs.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Sunrise, Charlie drives his beat up car and Priya sits in the passenger seat. She fades in and out of sleep.

PRIYA
What if there is nothing I’m meant to be doing?

CHARLIE
You’ll find it.

PRIYA
So you have then?

CHARLIE
It may be simple, but I think it would make my dad proud.

PRIYA
You don’t talk much about him.

Priya looks out the window. Charlie looks at her a little sad.

CHARLIE
It was a car accident.

Priya looks back to Charlie.
PRIYA
What?

CHARLIE
It wasn’t anyone’s fault, but I just kept looking for people to blame. Then I’d blame myself. But when I spoke to you on the phone...

Priya nods and takes his hand.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
That’s the first time in a long time I’ve felt like myself. And that I could be happy like that.

She smiles and then looks back out the window and the two drive in silence for a moment.

INT. LECTURE HALL #2 - DAY

STUDENTS sit and take a test with clear focus all across the room. Priya sleeps on her paper. Time races by and students start to turn in their tests and leave the room. Priya continues to sleep until the professor walks up to her and taps her on the shoulder. Priya springs up and picks up her pencil. The instructor takes her test paper and walks away. Priya sits there with her mouth agape.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - DAY

Priya walks over to her bed and collapses. Taylor watches her and pulls a chair up beside her bed.

TAYLOR
Rough day?

Priya turns over and looks up at the ceiling.

PRIYA
Possibly the end of my life. I have never failed a test before. I’ve never failed at anything before.

Taylor opens her mini-fridge freezer.

TAYLOR
That sounds awful. I know what you need.

Priya sits up on her bed and Taylor pulls out a bottle of vodka. She grabs a solo cup and fills it up.
INT. PRIYA’S DORM – DAY

Priya and Taylor sit on the floor and lean against Priya’s bed and watch television. They both hold red solo cups. Their cheeks are flushed.

PRIYA
You are so lucky. You know exactly who you are.

TAYLOR
I know who you are.

Priya nods dramatically.

PRIYA
Yeah, like father like daughter.

TAYLOR
(whispered)
Was he a drunk too?

Priya pouts.

PRIYA
No, and I’m not.

Taylor nods and takes another sip. Priya looks around.

PRIYA (CONT’D)
Thank you.

Priya lifts her glass and Taylor adds more drink.

TAYLOR
You are such a good person. Definitely one of the nicest Indians I’ve ever met.

PRIYA
And you are only rude or racist like 69 percent of the time.

Taylor laughs and the two hug. Priya holds back vomit.

INT. MARIA’S KITCHEN – NIGHT

Charlie stands at the stove and cooks. Maria sits at the table.
CHARLIE
I invited Priya over for dinner. Is that alright?

He turns off the burners and scrapes pasta from the pan into a bowl and adds sauce.

MARIA
I don’t want to meet one of your whores, Will.

Charlie stops in his tracks and turns to Maria. Shock rolls across his face. He walks over to her and places a hand on her shoulder.

CHARLIE
Mom? It’s Charlie.

Maria looks up at him and gives a very small smile.

MARIA
You look so much like my husband.

She turns back to the table and looks at it blankly. Charlie turns away and places a hand on the counter. His eyes glaze over with water and he picks up the bowl.

CHARLIE
Here, Mom.

Charlie sets a bowl in front of her with silverware and sets a few pills beside her meal. She looks up at him and then at the side of her chair.

MARIA
Let me get you something.

She looks around the chair and the table.

MARIA (CONT’D)
I can’t seem to find my purse. When my husband gets back I will make sure he gives you a tip.

Maria taps him on the arm and nods. She then turns back to the table. She takes the pills and starts to eat. Charlie grabs a bowl and sits across from her at the table. He watches her as she eats and takes a deep breath.
INT. PRIYA’S DORM – NIGHT

Priya sits at her desk. She opens and closes her textbook over and over again. Then checks her phone. Taylor turns from her desk to face her.

TAYLOR
Why don’t you just tell them you don’t want to be a fucking doctor already?

PRIYA
I can’t do that.

TAYLOR
What’s the worst they can do? They’re your parents. They’ll still love you.

Priya turns to Taylor and sets her chin on the back of her chair.

PRIYA
They have all these expectations of me. I can’t let them down.

TAYLOR
Wow. So you’ll become a doctor and make money and have a family that cares about you. Sounds like a real problem.

PRIYA
I know I’m luckier than most people, okay?

Taylor smiles.

PRIYA
I can’t even tell them about Charlie.

TAYLOR
Doesn’t your badass goddess have something you can use to overcome this?

Priya turns back to her desk and looks at the arm of Durga holding the bow and arrow.
EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Jared sits on the pool deck with his feet in the water and his phone in his hand. Charlie enters from the side of the house.

CHARLIE
You called. What’s wrong?

JARED
Where have you been?

Charlie sighs.

CHARLIE
Work.

Jared pulls picks up the Folgers coffee can beside him. It’s empty.

JARED
All out.

CHARLIE
I’m sorry to hear that.

Jared swirled the water back and forth with his feet.

JARED
Chuckie, you want to help out a friend?

CHARLIE
No.

JARED
No?

CHARLIE
You know I got this job so that my mom could have the right medication. I didn’t do all that so you could make a profit.

JARED
Of course I’ll give you your usual cut.

Jared smiles a half smile. Charlie walks to the pool and crosses his arms.
CHARLIE
I don’t want it. Things are finally working out for me. For the first time in a long time. I think I’m done.

JARED
Done with me?

CHARLIE
Don’t be paranoid. I just want to grow up.

Jared rolls his eyes.

JARED
This isn’t kid shit. This is just the way it is. Right? Wrong? It’s all a matter of perspective.

CHARLIE
You should publish that.

Charlie leaves. Jared tosses his phone into the pool and it sinks to the bottom.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT

Priya sits at her desk and scrolls through pages on the university website.

PRIYA
Maybe I could study history?

Charlie sits on the floor across from her. He looks up at her and smiles.

CHARLIE
You like history?

PRIYA
I do.

She looks at him and smiles. Then looks back at the computer monitor.

CHARLIE
What do you like about it?

Priya continues to scroll.
PRIYA
I guess it’s listening to people’s stories.

CHARLIE
Why do you have to pick now?

PRIYA
You don’t know my parents. My father might be for it, but I’m afraid my mother will not.

CHARLIE
Like if they found out you were with me.

PRIYA
If they found out about you, even my father would not be for it. Sorry to say.

Charlie looks at her with concern.

CHARLIE
That’s awful.

PRIYA
Maybe if I can get them to think about me in a different way. As something separate from what they imagined I would be - maybe I could tell them everything. Not all at once, but someday. A little at a time.

Charlie smiles and looks up at the ceiling. He closes his eyes tightly and then opens them again. Taylor enters and sees Charlie.

TAYLOR
Hey! Good, Charlie’s here! ... Have you heard from Jared? I came by the house to pick up some stuff, but he was gone. I can’t get a hold of him.

Charlie rolls his eyes. Priya looks up from her computer.

CHARLIE
I spoke to him earlier. I don’t know where he could have gone off too.

Charlie thinks for a moment.
CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Maybe the van?

TAYLOR
I was just there. The van’s gone.
No one has seen him either.

Charlie stands up.

CHARLIE
His place?

TAYLOR
Yes. I’m telling you, he’s missing.
Should we call the cops? It may
just make things worse for
everyone.

CHARLIE
I think I know where he might be.

TAYLOR
Good. I’ll go tell the others.

Taylor exits and Priya looks at Charlie.

PRIYA
You think he’s okay, right?

CHARLIE
Jared’s gone missing. It’s pretty
typical. Nothing to worry about,
I’ll come to the rescue as always.

PRIYA
Where do you think he is?

CHARLIE
I’m not positive, but if he is
where I think he is... This is it.
This is the last thing I’m going to
do for him.

Charlie gives Priya a kiss on the forehead and then exits.

EXT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie parks his car and gets out. Charlie enters his
house.
INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT
Charlie enters and looks around the front room.

CHARLIE
Mom! Did Jared come by?

He walks to the next room.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT
Charlie enters the kitchen and Maria stands at the stove. The burner is on and she just stands in front of it.

CHARLIE
Mom?

Charlie rushes over to her and turns off the burner.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Mom. What were you doing?

MARIA
Your little friend came by and I wanted to make us some tea.

CHARLIE
You saw Jared?

MARIA
The little boy who lived down the street? Oh no, this was a nice young man. You really shouldn’t play with that Jared boy. He’s a bad influence on you, dear.

Charlie smiles and sits his mother down.

CHARLIE
I’m starting to get that, yeah. Are you sure you’re alright?

MARIA
Honestly dear, I’m fine. Why don’t we have that tea?

Charlie places a hand on her shoulder and she takes his hand for a moment. He kisses her on the forehead and turns back to the counter.
CHARLIE
I’m sorry mom. I should’ve been here. I’ll make that tea.

Charlie walks to some cabinets and pulls out two mugs.

INT. MARIA’S BEDROOM - NIGHT
Charlie walks Maria over to her bed and she sits.

CHARLIE
Let me grab your pills and a glass of water.

Maria nods and Charlie exits.

INT. MARIA’S RESTROOM - NIGHT
Charlie opens the medicine cabinet. It is full of bottles with Maria’s name on the labels. He grabs two and opens one. The bottle is empty. He opens the next one. He starts to go through the cabinet and shakes bottles. All empty. He closes the cabinet and goes through the drawers. No pills. Charlie then looks at himself in the mirror and then closes the drawer.

INT. MARIA’S BEDROOM - NIGHT
Charlie walks in and hands Maria a glass of water.

MARIA
What’s wrong?

CHARLIE
Nothing.

Maria looks at the glass for a moment and then back to Charlie.

MARIA
My pills?

CHARLIE
No pills tonight, but I’ll call the doctor first thing in the morning and get more.

Maria drinks the water and returns the glass to Charlie. He accepts it and tucks his mother into bed.
CHARLIE
Night Mom.

Maria smiles and closes her eyes. Charlie walks to the door and shuts off the light.

INT. WORK ROOM / GREEN ROOM - DAY

Charlie places flowers onto a tray and holds his cellphone between his cheek and his shoulder.

JARED (O.S.)
Wow. You called me and didn’t get an answer. Where does that put you on the social ladder? Leave me a message if you think I’ll care.

There is a beep.

CHARLIE
Jared? Dammit, pick up. If you just give me what you have left, I promise not to kill you. Pick up! If you are screening this fucking call, you’re dead...

Charlie is cut off by the machine.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Damn.

Charlie hangs up the phone.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT

Priya watches as Charlie flips through the a note pad. With a phone in hand he dials away.

PRIYA
Maybe we could run away.

Charlie looks at Priya.

CHARLIE
What?

PRIYA
Then we could start over. A new adventure without any of the old problems. No Jared and no Taylor. No parents or grades...
CHARLIE
No responsibilities.

Priya rolls over on her stomach and looks at Charlie.

PRIYA
Now you’re getting it.

CHARLIE
I can’t.

PRIYA
And we would be whoever we wanted to be. Everyone would accept us.

Charlie gets distracted by his phone. He dials the next number on the list.

CHARLIE
It’s a nice thought.

PRIYA
I wish we could.

CHARLIE
I could never leave my mom alone here, not with my dad gone. Damn, no one is answering. So much for honor among thieves.

PRIYA
You think they know where he is?

Charlie looks at her.

CHARLIE
The only reason he wouldn’t get back to me is that he’s already sold it all.

PRIYA
You really think he would do that to your mom?

Charlie shrugs. There is a knock at the door.

TAYLOR (O.S.)
I can’t find my key! Goddammit!
Priya open the door!

Priya opens the door.
PRIYA
What’s wrong?

TAYLOR
It’s Jared. He’s in the hospital. He OD’d.

Charlie grabs his coat.

CHARLIE
Let’s go.

Taylor nods and holds the door open for them. Priya stops in the doorway.

PRIYA
On your mom’s -?

CHARLIE
Let’s just go.

Priya grabs her bag and they exit.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Priya and Charlie walk at a quick pace down the corridor. Behind them, Kiran walks into the corridor and sees Priya and Charlie. He follows for a moment but stays behind and Priya and Charlie enter a room.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The room is practically empty and Jared lays on a bed by the window. He’s unconscious. Kiran watches from the hall as Priya and Charlie approach. Priya holds Charlie’s hand. Kiran exits. After a moment, a DOCTOR enters.

DOCTOR
Are you two friends of his?

Charlie doesn’t answer but Priya nods. Charlie just looks at Jared. The doctor nods and leaves the room.

CHARLIE
I’ve changed my mind.

PRIYA
What?
CHARLIE
I want to leave.

PRIYA
Okay. We can go.

Charlie turns around and walks out. Priya follows.

EXT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT
A police car sits in the driveway as Charlie pulls up to the house. His eyes widen in fear. He parks quickly and runs into the house.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT
Charlie bolts into the house.

CHARLIE
Mom! Mom?

Charlie quickly goes to the kitchen.

INT. MARIA’S KITCHEN - NIGHT
Charlie enters the kitchen and Maria sits at the table with a POLICE OFFICER. POLICE OFFICER #2 stands and walks over to Charlie as he enters. Charlie gives a sigh of relief.

POLICE OFFICER #2
Are you Charles Davis?

CHARLIE
Yes. Is my mom alright? What’s going on?

The police officer at the table stands and walks over to them. The first officer picks up a plastic bag with empty prescription bottles in it. Maria looks at them with concern.

POLICE OFFICER #2
Your mother is fine. We were looking for you.

POLICE OFFICER
Charles Davis, you are under arrest for drug trafficking.
CHARLIE
What? No. I...

Police officer #2 handcuffs Charlie. Maria stands.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Mom. I’m alright. It’s going to be fine. I didn’t do this.

Charlie looks up at the officer.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Just go to bed, Mom. I’ll see you tomorrow.

The officers walk Charlie out.

EXT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT
Charlie walks with the officers.

CHARLIE
(under his breath)
I hope she forgets this.

The officers sit him in the back of the police car and drive off.

INT. POLICE STATION OFFICE - NIGHT
Charlie sits across from his lawyer.

LAWYER
The drugs were stolen?

CHARLIE
Yes. I was at work and my mom thought he was someone else. She just let him in and probably watched him steal the medication.

LAWYER
This is more serious than anything you’ve been charged with before. If you get bail, you can trust that you won’t want to pay it. And if your friend doesn’t wake up, then you are looking a manslaughter charge on top of the drug trafficking.
Charlie sinks into his chair and becomes nearly catatonic with shock.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Charlie stands at a telephone. A police officer stands behind him.

INTERCUT:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Priya sits by the hospital bed. She holds her phone in one hand and Jared’s hand in the other.

PRIYA
(Recites the Maha Mrityunjay Mantra)
Om Tryamlakam Yajamahe Sugandhim
Pusti - vardhanam / Urva - rukamiva
Bandhanan Mrtyor - muksheeya Ma - amritat //

Charlie leans against the phone.

CHARLIE
What’s it mean.

PRIYA
It means I’m asking for help.

CHARLIE
Is that all?

PRIYA
There may be merciful and fragrant gods involved.

CHARLIE
I hope it helps.

Priya smiles and looks at Jared.

PRIYA
I believe it will.

CHARLIE
Thank you.
PRIYA
You can thank the Three-Eyed Lord Shiva when this all works out.

Charlie smiles and the police officer behind him gestures with his hand to move the conversation along.

CHARLIE
Maybe we should’ve run away.

PRIYA
With the police three paces behind?


JARED
Eh...Ah...

Priya quickly grabs the nurse call button and presses it.

PRIYA
Charlie, he’s awake!

Charlie’s eyes tear up and he gives a large sigh of relief.

PRIYA (CONT’D)
Doctors are on their way. I’ll see you soon.

CHARLIE
Alright.

Charlie hangs up the phone and smiles at the police officer behind him.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Charlie and Priya walk out of the police station.

PRIYA
They dropped all the charges.

CHARLIE
Jared must have confessed.

Charlie wraps his arms around Priya and they walk towards their car parked across the street. Priya smiles.
INT. PRIYA’S DORM – NIGHT

Priya enters her room and Kiran sits in her chair across the room.

PRIYA
Dad!

Kiran sits straight-faced. Priya approaches and the smile fades from her face. Kiran turns to face her desk. It is covered with books about declaring majors.

KIRAN
What is all this?

PRIYA
I didn’t want to say anything until I was sure.

KIRAN
Where are your medical textbooks?

PRIYA
I don’t... I don’t want that for myself, Dad.

Kiran stands.

KIRAN
What will you do then?

Priya looks at the floor.

PRIYA
I haven’t figured that part out yet.

KIRAN
You have abandoned medical school, with no alternative plan? I never thought you could be so foolish.

Priya looks at her father.

PRIYA
Just because I don’t know what I’m doing doesn’t mean I’m a fool! I thought at least you would understand.

KIRAN
I feel as though I have failed you. I had no idea you were struggling...
KIRAN
with this. I wish you would have
spoken to me.

PRIYA
There’s more.

Tears well up in Priya’s eyes.

KIRAN
This is about that boy.

PRIYA
What?

KIRAN
You think you could hide something
like that from your family? Your
mother will never approve.

PRIYA
Do we have to tell her?

KIRAN
I have never lied to your mother.
In over 40 years, I have never lied
to your mother. I won’t start now.

Priya’s heart drops.

KIRAN (CONT’D)
But for you I can stay quiet. Until
you speak with her. Trust me, that
will be better.

On Priya’s fear.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie walks in and Jared sits on the bed. Jared puts on
his jacket.

CHARLIE
You look pretty good for a guy who
nearly died.

JARED
I opted for the spa package.

CHARLIE
Thank you for calling off the cops.
I’m surprised they didn’t lug you
CHARLIE
away to jail. That’s usually their approach to these types of things.

JARED
The doctor said I wasn’t well enough to be taken anywhere for a few days. They’ve got a cop or two in the lobby to make sure I don’t run for it.

CHARLIE
You look like you’re ready to run.

JARED
Good thing I’m an expert at jumping out of windows, right?

Charlie forces a smile and places a hand on Jared’s shoulder.

CHARLIE
You ever consider taking some responsibility?

JARED
And what? Go to prison? I’ve got other plans.

CHARLIE
Like what?

Jared smiles a weak smile and stands. Charlie looks unimpressed.

JARED
Look, I’m sorry about...

CHARLIE
No you’re not. And I shouldn’t be surprised. You’ve done worse to me and you haven’t changed.

Charlie takes a step away from Jared.

JARED
Hey. I know I messed up, but you can’t keep giving me this guilty conscience shit. This is how things are. They’ve always been this way.
CHARLIE
My mom almost killed herself making you tea while you stole every pill from our house... I don’t even know why I’m still talking to you.

JARED
I never meant for your mo...

Charlie punches Jared in the face. Jared falls to the ground and puts his hand to his cheek. Charlie shakes it off.

CHARLIE
Time to make a change, Jared. You can’t keep doing the same shit.

Jared watches in shock as Charlie exits.

EXT. UNIVERSITY - DAY
Charlie clears out dead flowers from the side of a path.

INT. DORMS - DAY
He walks through the hallway to Priya’s room and knocks at the door. Taylor answers.

TAYLOR
Hello there, handsome.

CHARLIE
Is Priya around?

TAYLOR
I was actually about to go meet her, but I don’t think she wants to talk to you right now.

CHARLIE
Is she okay?

TAYLOR
Just family stuff. Do you want me to tell her you want to talk to her?

CHARLIE
No. I’ll give her a little space.

Taylor nods. Charlie leaves. She closes the door.
INT. UNIVERSITY CAFETERIA - DAY

Priya sits with Taylor and eats lunch.

    TAYLOR
    What are you going to do?

    PRIYA
    I don’t know. I can’t believe this is happening to me. I never thought in a million years that I’d ever go against my mother.

    TAYLOR
    But you love Charlie, right?

Priya takes a sip of her drink and nods.

    TAYLOR (CONT’D)
    I’d pick love, but then again, my mom’s an asshole and my dad’s dead.

Priya looks at Taylor.

    PRIYA
    Mine really aren’t, but I don’t think I could live without Charlie.

Taylor raises her brow and nods.

EXT. UNIVERSITY - DAY

Charlie walks down a path with Helen.

    HELEN
    We are all very proud of you. It seems like you’re really trying.

    CHARLIE
    I know sometimes I get distracted. I’m trying to be better. Please, tell me you will come back and help me with my mom?

    HELEN
    I’ve already been hired full time to another family, but you’re doing a great job. You’ve done better than any would’ve thought you were capable.

Charlie looks at her.
CHARLIE
What?

HELEN
I’m giving you a compliment.

CHARLIE
It kind of felt like the opposite of a compliment.

HELEN
Just take the compliment, Charlie.

Charlie smiles and nods.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT – DAY
Charlie enters the front room with a bag of prescription medicine in one hand and mail in another.

CHARLIE
Mom, I’m home. I got you a new prescription.

Charlie goes towards the kitchen.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT – NIGHT
Charlie walks into the kitchen and tosses the mail on the table. He sees a cup on its side and water all over the table. The water drips to the floor. Charlie follows the water and looks at the floor. He freezes. Maria lays on the floor.

CHARLIE
Mom.

Charlie stands frozen for a moment more and then rushes to her.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Mom! Wake up. Mom!

Charlie’s eyes start to water as he shakes her. She doesn’t respond. He holds her tightly against him and fumbles as he tries to get out his phone. He calls 911.

CHARLIE
I need help. My, my mom’s on the floor. I - I think she fell.

Charlie holds Maria tightly.
INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie attempts to give Maria CPR. She doesn’t respond.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tears run down Charlie’s face as he holds Maria. He holds his phone in one hand.

    CHARLIE
    I tried to wake her up, but I think she -

Beat.

    CHARLIE (CONT’D)
    What do I do?

Charlie nods his head a few times.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie sits on the linoleum floor against some cabinets as the PARAMEDICS attempt to get Maria to breath.

INT. MARIA’S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Charlie stands quickly, tears in his eyes. Sirens wail and approach closer and closer. His mother lies on the floor, motionless. A puddle of water starts to form where it spills from the table. Charlie turns to the sink and vomits.

INT. MARIA’S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Charlie holds his phone tightly as he stands by the table. The paramedics stand.

    PARAMEDIC
    I’m sorry but your mother is dead...

The paramedic continues to speak but he can’t be heard. Charlie watches as the second paramedic puts away her equipment.

    PARAMEDIC (CONT’D)
    ...Is there someone you can call?
Charlie nods. Charlie looks down at his phone and there is an impression of it in his hand from holding it so tightly. He calls Priya. It goes to voicemail.

CHARLIE
Priya? I need help. My mother...
She... Can you call me back?

Charlie hangs up the phone and looks at Maria.

PARAMEDIC
The coroner is on their way.

Charlie nods again.

INT. MARIA’S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Charlie sits on the couch and stares at a coaster. The front door opens and Priya sees Charlie. Her eyes are red and puffy. Charlie stands and she runs over to him. They embrace.

PRIYA
I’m sorry it took me so long to get here.

CHARLIE
It’s alright.

Priya looks around.

PRIYA
Are you? Did they come?

Charlie nods and looks at his feet.

PRIYA (CONT’D)
I’m so sorry I didn’t answer my phone.

CHARLIE
Is it alright if I stay with you tonight?

Priya gives him another hug.

PRIYA
Of course you can. Do you want me to grab your things for you?
CHARLIE
It’s alright. I’ll get them.

Charlie walks away and avoids the kitchen as he goes to his room. Priya looks over into the kitchen and starts to cry.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT

Charlie walk into the room. Charlie sets down his duffel bag and sits on the floor. Taylor turns from her desk.

TAYLOR
I’m sorry about your mom, Charlie.

Charlie nods. Taylor gets up and goes to leave. Priya catches her at the entrance.

PRIYA
You don’t have to go.

TAYLOR
I can’t stay.

Taylor leaves. Priya enters.

PRIYA
Do you want something to drink? A glass of water?

Charlie closes his eyes and shakes his head.

CHARLIE
Can we just go to sleep?

Priya nods.

PRIYA
Yeah.

Priya walks over to her bed and lays down. Charlie lays down beside her. She wraps her arms around him and her eyes tear up. Charlie closes his eyes and Priya does the same.

EXT. UNIVERSITY - DAY

Charlie and Priya walk hand in hand down a path. Charlie stops.

CHARLIE
I love you.

Priya smiles.
PRIYA
I love you too.

Charlie gives a small smile and they walk again.

INT. WORK ROOM / GREEN ROOM - DAY

Charlie takes some flowers and puts them into a box.

EXT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - DAY

Charlie walks up to the apartment and carries the box. A flower box sits on the windowsill, but all the flowers have wilted. He clears out the dead flowers and plants the daffodils ones from the box.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT

Priya sits at desk. Charlie lays on the floor.

CHARLIE
I think I’m ready to go home.

PRIYA
Are you sure? It’s okay if you’re not. I really like having you here.

Charlie smiles.

CHARLIE
I know. I went by the house today.

Priya looks at him.

PRIYA
Okay.

She gets up and lays down on the floor next to him. He looks at her and smiles. He gives her a kiss and then goes back to looking at the ceiling. Priya smiles.

PRIYA (CONT’D)
I definitely made the right call.

Charlie looks over at her.

CHARLIE
What call?
PRIYA
It’s nothing. It was after Jared, you know. My dad came and talked to me.

CHARLIE
About what? I thought you were figuring it out. About me?

PRIYA
Yeah. But it was a little about you, but mostly about me.

Charlie sits up.

CHARLIE
So what are you going to do?

PRIYA
I’m afraid my mother will disown me.

CHARLIE
So you’re going to disown yourself?

Priya sits up.

PRIYA
I’m just - I need you in my life. I never would have figured at that I can care about other things, and be my own person without you.

CHARLIE
What about them needing you?

PRIYA
What?

CHARLIE
I know you’re scared, but they’re your parents and they love you.

PRIYA
If they loved me, they wouldn’t make me choose. They’d accept me for who I am. You never questioned me or made me choose.

CHARLIE
They didn’t. You made yourself choose! Even if they did, you would have chose wrong.
Charlie stands.

PRIYA
No. I made the right call.

CHARLIE
Both of your parents are alive and well and you threw it away for what? For me?

PRIYA
I... No. It’s about more than that.

Priya gets up.

CHARLIE
Do you know what I would give to have another minute back with parents?

PRIYA
We weren’t all raised by your loving parents, Charlie.

CHARLIE
That’s bullshit. Your parents love you. You think they’re crazy, but they haven’t done anything wrong. You are the one avoiding them, you’re the one dropping all these changes on them out of nowhere. You’re the one dating an orphan with a criminal record.

PRIYA
You’re blaming me? They are the ones who are treating me like we are back in India with all their old ideas about what life is meant to be like.

CHARLIE
You’re acting like a fool.

PRIYA
My dad was fine, but I know my mother won’t be.

CHARLIE
Priya, you’re dad is a doctor. That means he’s a smart guy. If he’s fine with your choices your mom should be too.
Priya’s eyes start to water.

PRIYA
Why are you doing this?

CHARLIE
Because you need to see the mistake you’ve made. You thought that what? Your parents would disown you and you’d live happily ever after? How are you going to keep paying for school?

PRIYA
I’ll get a job.

CHARLIE
You’ve never worked a day in your life. What would you do?

PRIYA
I’ll work at the museum. I’ll figure something out.

CHARLIE
You think it’s that easy? And I’m not going to be around forever, Priya. I could be dead tomorrow, and then were would you be?

PRIYA
Please stop. I know you don’t mean it. You just want me to make up with my parents, and it’s not going to happen. I love you.

Charlie grabs his bag and starts to pack up his things. Priya starts to cry.

CHARLIE
I made a huge mistake staying here with you. You don’t get it. And how could you? I’ve been spending so much time with you, trying to impress you. Time I could have spent looking out for my mom.

PRIYA
Stop.

CHARLIE
We’re too different, okay? Go back to the life that was set up so nicely for you.
PRIYA  
What if I don’t want to?

CHARLIE  
Do what you want, but I’m not sticking around to add your name to the list of people whose lives I’ve ruined.

Charlie throws his bag over his shoulder and exits.

EXT. UNIVERSITY DORMS - NIGHT  
Charlie stands outside and leans against the building. He takes a deep breath and his eyes start to water. He leaves.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM - NIGHT  
Priya sits on her bed and cries. Taylor enters and runs over to her.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT  
Charlie parks his car in front of the house and opens up his trunk. Inside are all of his mother’s pills and pill bottles. Charlie opens the gate to the backyard and enters.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT  
Jared sits on an inner tube in the pool with a drink in one hand and a lit cigarette in the other. Leftover party-goers swim and party around him.

JARED  
Well, if it isn’t my arch nemesis. I thought you were off growing or some shit.

Charlie throws the pill bottles at him, one at a time as he approaches. He dives into the pool, swims over to Jared and throws him from the inner tube. Jared stands at the shallow end of the pool. Charlie punches him in the face. Jared punches Charlie.

JARED  
Stop punching me in the face.

Charlie and Jared fight in the pool.
INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie holds an ice pack to his head in the kitchen. He’s covered in bruises. Jared closes the freezer and puts a pack of peas to his busted lip. He is also covered in blood and bruises. Charlie looks around.

CHARLIE
Where did everyone go?

JARED
I sent them on a quest.

CHARLIE
Beer run?

Jared nods.

JARED
I heard about your mom. I’m really sorry.

CHARLIE
That she’s dead or that you stole her meds.

JARED
Both, and a whole lot more.

Charlie nods slightly.

JARED (CONT’D)
Are we, you know, okay?

Charlie takes the ice pack off his head and moves it to his neck.

CHARLIE
Probably not, but I don’t know why it matters at this point.

Jared smiles and pats him on the back. The sound of an open door and townies return fills the kitchen as they shout and wail. Jared takes the peas off his lip and tosses them back in the freezer.

JARED
Want a drink?

Charlie looks around for a moment.
CHARLIE
Yeah. I could use one. Not like I have anything else going on.

Charlie gives a weak smile. The following scenes appear in SPLITSCREEN. Priya’s scenes appear on the LEFT, and Charlie’s appear on the RIGHT.

INT. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY - DAY

Priya studies diligently. Time flies by and she continues to study. Taylor enters and taps her on the shoulder with a sandwich in her hand and Priya shakes it away. She goes back to her studies.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Charlie and the party-goers sleep spread out throughout the living room. There is a knock at the door, but no one goes to answer. Charlie turns over on his side.

INT. UNIVERSITY CAFETERIA - DAY

Priya sits with Kiran at a lunch table. The two smile at one another and Priya hands him some papers. Kiran signs them. Priya then hands him a letter.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie and Jared set bottle rockets off on the roof and drink beer. Charlie looks up at the night sky.

INT. UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM - DAY

STUDENTS sit at their desks and take a test. Priya sits in the front. She finishes before anyone else and walks the test up to the PROFESSOR #2 with a smile on her face.

INT. MARIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charlie stands in front of the stove and just stares at the lit burner for a moment. He turns it to low and sets a pan on it.
INT. PRIYA’S DORM – DAY

Priya’s side of the room is full of packing boxes. Priya puts her books into a box. Taylor goes over to her and gives her a hug.

INT. HOUSE – NIGHT

Music blares. Charlie dances with the party-goers in the living room. He takes a drink and then stops. He goes and sits on the couch. Miscreants dance around him.

EXT. ASHA’S HOME – DAY

Priya stands in front of her car in the driveway. Kiran exits the house and gives Priya a hug. Asha watches from the doorway. Kiran gets into the driver’s seat and Priya gets into the passenger’s seat. They drive off.

INT. MARIA’S BEDROOM – DAY

The room is full of packing boxes. Charlie picks up a photograph of a young Maria and William. Charlie runs out. SPLITSCREEN ends.

INT. UNIVERSITY DORMS – DAY

Charlie runs down the hallway to Priya’s door. It’s open. Charlie enters.

INT. PRIYA’S DORM – DAY

Taylor sits at her desk while a NEW GIRL moves boxes into the space. NEW GIRL’S MOM helps the new girl unpack boxes. Charlie walks in and over to Taylor.

   CHARLIE
   What’s going on?

   TAYLOR
   New girl. I can already tell she is going to be a bitch.

The new girl looks over to Taylor and the two stare off. Charlie redirects her attention.
CHARLIE
Taylor. Where. Is. Priya?

TAYLOR
I think she is on her way to the train station.

CHARLIE
Where is she going? What’s going on? I haven’t been able to get a hold of her.

TAYLOR
Then I guess you better catch her at the station. Unless you got a forwarding address for her new place in Newark.

Charlie sighs. Then he runs off. New Girl’s Mom drops a box on the new girls foot and she squeals. Taylor laughs.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Charlie drives through the street and honks as people slow to a stop for a yellow light. He passes by a cop and Charlie quickly slows down and stops as well. Then he goes back to speeding.

INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Charlie runs through the train station. He runs to the ticket booth. The TICKET MAN moves in closer to the microphone.

TICKET MAN
Where you off to today?

CHARLIE (frantic)
I’m actually trying to say goodbye to a friend. When’s the next train to Newark?

TICKET MAN
That would be 2:30PM. You want a map of where to go?

CHARLIE
If you can make it quick.

Charlie runs in place while the ticket man draws a line and a circle on a map.
TICKET MAN
Calm down, kid. You’ve got a little time.

CHARLIE
And one more thing...

The ticket man hands him the map and he smiles. He looks down and it’s about as far as possible. He runs for it.

EXT. TRAIN STATION – DAY

He runs out and sees Priya. He runs up to her.

CHARLIE
Priya!

She turns to see him.

PRIYA
What are you doing here?

Charlie takes a moment to catch his breath.

CHARLIE
I needed to tell you the truth.

PRIYA
Truth? About what?

CHARLIE
I lied to you before. I love you and I never meant to hurt you. I’m sorry.

PRIYA
You said some pretty terrible things to me.

CHARLIE
I know and I wish I could take it back.

Priya smiles at him.

PRIYA
I know you were just sad, about your mom. But you weren’t wrong. I was acting like a fool.
CHARLIE
What are you doing here?

PRIYA
I’m transferring to Princeton. They have one of the best history programs in the country.

CHARLIE
Wait. History? So that’s what you want to do?

Priya nods.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
What about your parents?

PRIYA
You were right. My dad got my mom to come around. At least a little. They’ve given me a little money, to start a life for myself. I still have to keep them updated on things, and I’m certain my father won’t talk to me for a while... but I’m free.

Charlie smiles.

CHARLIE
Free to become whoever you want to be, huh?

PRIYA
Yep.

CHARLIE
Can I come?

Priya’s face lights up.

PRIYA
What about your job?

CHARLIE
I think I was fired. I haven’t shown since, well, a while.

PRIYA
And you would just leave?
CHARLIE
I know that I got mad at for acting like I was the only person in your life, but to be honest, you are the only person left in mine.

Priya looks at her feet.

PRIYA
And what if we don’t work out? I’m just starting to figure out who I want to be.

Charlie laughs a little.

CHARLIE
That’s okay. I’ll be okay.

PRIYA
So we’ll run away?

CHARLIE
Start fresh, some place new.

PRIYA
Where no one knows us, or who we were.

CHARLIE
Or where we came from. I like the sound of that.

PRIYA
Me too.

Charlie holds Priya’s hand. They wait for the train.

FADE OUT.