

4 INT. A FANCY RESTAURANT - EARLY SEPTEMBER

4

*Spotlight up on PRIYA, seated downstage at a small round table for two set with a white tablecloth and a long-stemmed rose in a silver vase.*

*NEEL stands next to the table, in front of the curtain, awkwardly clutching a cabaret microphone.*

NEEL

Uh, hi.

MICROPHONE FEEDBACK

NEEL (CONT'D)

I mean, hello. I mean, good evening, everyone. I'm Neel. Neel Gupta. The beautiful girl there? That's Priya.

(beat)

She's with me.

*PRIYA smiles and inclines her head, acknowledging the audience.*

NEEL (CONT'D)

We've been together since we were kids. Our parents set us up; they think we're a great match.

*He and PRIYA exchange an awkward glance.*

NEEL (CONT'D)

Anyway, tonight we're, uh, celebrating. It's Priya's birthday, and she's graduating this year, so we're getting married soon.

(NEEL clears his throat)

We're very lucky.

*(NEEL makes a hand signal for music. 8. What Are the Odds?)*

NEEL (CONT'D)

WHAT ARE THE ODDS I WOULD HAVE FOUND YOU  
JUST BY DATING AROUND?  
WHAT ARE THE ODDS I WOULD HAVE MET YOU  
IF MY PARENTS DIDN'T VET YOU  
WE KNOW OUR INTEL CAN'T BE WRONG  
WE KNOW OUR FOLKS WILL GET ALONG

NEEL (CONT'D)

My friends think arranged marriages are so outdated. Me? I don't see how their approach is any better. Mina has a new boyfriend every season. Kim never has any boyfriends at all.

(pause)

And then... there's Marco.

TRANSITION TO THE GARCIA FORMAL DINING ROOM

*Curtains and lights up on MARCO at dinner with his parents and a nice, COOKIE CUTTER GIRL. Things are awkward.*

NEEL (CONT'D)

WHAT ARE THE ODDS YOU WOULD HAVE KNOWN ME  
SEARCHING ON YOUR OWN  
WHAT ARE THE ODDS YOU WOULD HAVE SEEN ME  
IF YOUR BETROTHED HADN'T BEEN ME?  
I'M YOUR PERFECT PARTNER BY DESIGN  
AND I AM POSITIVE YOU'RE MINE

*MARCO escorts the COOKIE CUTTER GIRL out, and enters with a BAD GIRL. Things are now antagonistic.*

NEEL (CONT'D)

IMAGINE IF WE LEFT IT TO CHANCE  
TO LOOKS AND CIRCUMSTANCE  
AT A BAR OR A DANCE  
WITH A TOUCH OR A GLANCE  
SUCH IRRATIONAL ROMANCE

*MARCO'S DAD storms out, followed by MARCO'S MOM.*

NEEL (CONT'D)

IT'S MUCH BETTER SETTLED IN ADVANCE!

*The BAD GIRL saunters out after pocketing a fifty from MARCO, who exits in the opposite direction.*

*NEEL leads PRIYA in an awkward foxtrot downstage.*

*MARCO'S PARENTS re-enter with CATALINA in tow. MARCO enters, then stops, and stares at Catalina.*

*After one final spin, PRIYA returns to her seat with NEEL at her feet.*

MARCO'S MOM

You remember Catalina.

*CATALINA moves toward MARCO. HE stares at her.*

NEEL

YOU'RE JUST PERFECT - YOU'RE THE APPLE  
OF MY MOTHER'S EYE

*CATALINA pulls Marco into a dance. MARCO goes through  
the motions stiffly.*

NEEL (CONT'D)

WHEN WE MAKE IT TO THE CHAPEL  
WE'LL MAKE OUR MOTHERS CRY  
I'M SO GLAD SHE CHOSE YOU  
I SUPPOSE THIS REALLY SHOWS YOU  
WHY MOTHER KNOWS BEST

*CATALINA twirls herself out of Marco's arms into a  
hug from MARCO'S MOM, as MARCO'S DAD ushers them  
offstage. MARCO exits in the opposite direction.*

*Lights down on all except NEEL.*

NEEL (CONT'D)

LEAVE IT TO THOSE WHO KNOW YOU BEST!

*Lights up on the Garcia household, which NEEL'S  
imagination has transformed into a den of sin where  
MARCO, COOKIE CUTTER GIRL, BAD GIRL and CATALINA  
revel in debauchery.*

NEEL (CONT'D)

IMAGINE ENDLESS FIRST IMPRESSIONS  
ON DATES IN QUICK SUCCESSION  
ALWAYS GUESSING, SO DISTRESSING  
WE'D SAY YES UNDER DURESS  
AND ACQUIESCE TO LIFELONG REGRET  
NO - MOTHER KNOWS BEST

*COOKIE CUTTER GIRL and BAD GIRL exit, leaving MARCO  
and CATALINA together. NEEL joins PRIYA at the table.*

NEEL (CONT'D)

BECAUSE THE ODDS ARE GOOD, THE CHANCES HIGH  
THAT OUR LOVE IS TRUE  
AND THESE FACTORS PROVE EXACTLY WHY  
I WAS MEANT FOR YOU

*At the table, NEEL and PRIYA kiss.*

*CATALINA reaches for MARCO, who moves away. HE exits,  
leaving Catalina alone. Blackout.*