

ONI

"PILOT"

Written by

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COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. ONI'S HOUSE - 2087 S. CAVALIER DR., CANTON, MI - DAY

ONI PULKA NIRMAAN, sixteen, is a street trendy Indian female fashionista who is sweet, but tries hard not to be. She washes dishes in the kitchen sink.

Oni peers out a window -- across an empty plot of land -- to a house on the other side of it. Her cell phone rests nearby on speaker with the teenage boy who lives there, Parvez.

ONI

Welcome back to Family Feud. I'm your host, Oni Nirmaan.

PARVEZ (FILTERED)

My mom just pulled out of the driveway.

ONI

Today we have two families; the Nirmaans and the Vasudevs.

PARVEZ (FILTERED)

My dad is upstairs on computer.

ONI

That means, we are ready to play. Shall we Kanoodle?

PARVEZ VASUDEV, sixteen, in black jeans and a T-shirt emblazoned with "Romeo" busts out of his house. He sprints over, zips inside. Parvez reveals a portable puzzle game named Kanoodle.

PARVEZ

This is more fun than bubble wrap.

ONI

Baap re bapp.

PARVEZ

Is that like saying "Oh my God?"

She motions to the ceiling.

ONI

Security cameras?

PARVEZ

You think your parental units are watching us right now?

ONI
You know the drill. Grovel.

Parvez crawls on the floor under a camera to Oni.

ONI (CONT'D)
What's the biggest problem in the world?

PARVEZ
Hiding our forbidden love?

ONI
Peace on earth.

PARVEZ
That was gonna be my second guess.

ONI
I finally have a plan to bring all the people of the world together.

Parvez examines a spot on the floor.

PARVEZ
Did the cat pee here?

Oni motions to the land that's situated between their two houses.

ONI
See that land?

PARVEZ
What do cats like to eat on a hot day?

ONI
I'm gonna buy it.

Parvez is in the clear from the camera, jumps up.

PARVEZ
Mice cream.

ONI
Then, I'm gonna build a peace sanctuary on it.

PARVEZ
That land is the only thing that separates your Indian dad from my Pakistani dad, and keeps them from killing each other.

ONI

I've been studying how to buy real estate. And, I've got a few years to save up enough money.

PARVEZ

You have less than a minute.

He motions outside where a REAL ESTATE AGENT drags a "For Sale" sign onto the land.

ONI

There is no way.

PARVEZ

This is perfect.

ONI

But, I'm not ready.

Parvez's dad comes out onto his porch across the lot --

BOB VASUDEV, forties, in boxers and a wife beater. He shaves the top of his head, watches the real estate agent plant the sign.

PARVEZ

Baap re bapp. Now, I can't leave.
My dad will see me.

Oni's father --

RANVEER PULKA NIRMAAN, forties, struts in the front door dressed in a blood red Badgley Mischka designer suit.

RANVEER (O.S.)

Oni?

ONI

If my father finds you here, he'll
kill both of us.

Parvez fishes through a silverware drawer. He pulls out a flimsy spatula, wields it like a knife.

PARVEZ

This could get ugly.

ONI

Did I tell you my father has a gun?

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Oni does dishes. Parvez scrambles around for somewhere to hide.

PARVEZ
A little help?

ONI
I need to look normal.

Parvez tries to squeeze into a narrow broom closet. No luck.
Oni's father is getting closer.

RANVEER (O.S.)
Sweetie?

Parvez dives in between Oni's legs.

PARVEZ
Spread your legs.

ONI
Are you crazy?

He flips open the cupboard doors, rakes containers of cleaning supplies out onto the floor.

PARVEZ
Wish me luck.

He squeezes into the cabinet underneath the sink. Ranveer struts in.

RANVEER
Why didn't you answer?

Oni slams the cabinet shut on Parvez.

PARVEZ (O.S.)
Ouch!

RANVEER
What was that?

ONI
This? Oh, I'm really in the mood to clean.

RANVEER
I mean, that sound?

The cabinet doors creak open.

Oni smashes them shut.

ONI
Why don't you go in your office and
work?

RANVEER
Do you want some help?

ONI
Love you.

RANVEER
Are you sure?

ONI
Bye. Toodles. Alavida.

Ranveer shuffles away. Parvez slithers out, collapses on the floor. Oni's mom --

QUEEN ARJUN PULKA NIRMAAN, forties, in an elegant turquoise Salwar Kameez suit and a gold scarf, marches in. She's preoccupied with her cell phone.

QUEEN ARJUN
Did I tell you I hit ten thousand
followers on Instagram today? Soon
the world will be mine.

She brings her attention to the room.

QUEEN ARJUN (CONT'D)
Parvez?

PARVEZ
Hi, Mrs. Nirmaan.

QUEEN ARJUN
(to Oni)
Hide him in the back bathroom.

ONI
Everything is fine.

QUEEN ARJUN
Right now.

ONI
Dad doesn't suspect anything.

INT. RANVEER'S OFFICE - DAY

Ranveer fumbles to open a gun safe. Queen Arjun struts in.

RANVEER

I buy a freaking gun to protect my family. And, now I can't get to it?

QUEEN ARJUN

That gun only shoots paint pellets.

RANVEER

He doesn't know that.

QUEEN ARJUN

So, you're going to turn him into a different color?

Ranveer gets the safe open, pulls out a gun.

QUEEN ARJUN (CONT'D)

Let me handle this.

He offers her the gun.

RANVEER

Do you wanna shoot him?

QUEEN ARJUN

Go for a walk.

RANVEER

And, why would I do this?

QUEEN ARJUN

Because, you value the happiness of your wife?

RANVEER

Can I shoot him when I get back?

QUEEN ARJUN

If he's still here you can turn him into any color you want.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Queen Arjun rendezvous with Oni. Parvez peeks out of a nearby bathroom.

QUEEN ARJUN

Back door.

PARVEZ
But, my dad will see me.

QUEEN ARJUN
Do you want to live?

PARVEZ
So, you know the fear of spiders is called arachnophobia?

QUEEN ARJUN
(to Oni)
What is he talking about?

ONI
He tells jokes when he gets nervous.

PARVEZ
What do you call the fear of chainsaws?

ONI
Common sense. Move.

PARVEZ
(to Queen Arjun)
My dad likes you. Call him by his first name to butter him up.

EXT. BOB'S HOUSE - DAY

Oni and her group trudge across the land to where Parvez lives. Bob shaves on the porch.

QUEEN ARJUN
Good afternoon, Bob.

BOB
(to Parvez)
What were you doing over there?

QUEEN ARJUN
He was helping me carry groceries into the house.

BOB
Did you see this land went up for sale? I got a brother in the old country. Maybe, I'll buy it for him.

QUEEN ARJUN
That's very thoughtful.

BOB

Then, you'll have a whole bunch of Pakistanis living next door. How would your husband like that?

QUEEN ARJUN

I'll make sure to ask him.

INT. ONI'S HOUSE - DAY

Oni and Queen Arjun, scurry into the kitchen.

QUEEN ARJUN

When your father comes home you're going to tell him the truth.

ONI

About what?

QUEEN ARJUN

Everything.

ONI

Bad idea.

QUEEN ARJUN

Clean this mess up.

Queen Arjun storms away.

Oni grabs her cell, dials the number on the "For Sale" sign.

ONI

Hi, I'd like to buy the empty plot of land on Cavalier Drive in Canton, MI.

Oni digs through her mom's purse, fishes out a credit card.

ONI (CONT'D)

My name is Queen Arjun Pulka Nirmaan. I'm making a P&S bid offer with two percent earnest money to be held in escrow for 24 hours. Are you ready for my credit card?

INT. ONI'S HOUSE - DAY

Ranveer saunters in the front door. He's greeted with a hug from Queen Arjun.

RANVEER
Is he gone?

She nods, yes.

RANVEER (CONT'D)
What should I do about Oni?

QUEEN ARJUN
Go talk to her.

RANVEER
And, say what?

QUEEN ARJUN
Praise her positive attributes.
And, let her speak her mind.

RANVEER
Why am I the one being punished?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Oni hangs up the phone. Ranveer strolls in.

RANVEER
Still cleaning?

ONI
Parvez was here. But, we didn't do anything.

RANVEER
So, you just talked?

ONI
Yes.

Oni and Ranveer gather up cleaning supplies.

RANVEER
How long have you two been "just talking?"

ONI
Three months. But, we're not doing anything.

RANVEER

I'm not worried about the doing part right now.

ONI

Then, what's the problem?

RANVEER

It's the lying.

Ranveer glances outside --

Bob marches into the field.

ONI

But, if I tell you the truth, you freak out.

RANVEER

But, if you lie to me, your life will get even worse.

ONI

How can it get worse?

RANVEER

I'll ask you to move out.

ONI

Did you talk with mom about this?

RANVEER

Divide and conquer? Nice try.

Bob is at the real estate sign writing down the phone number. Ranveer slips a jacket on to go outside.

ONI

I'm not old enough to leave home.

RANVEER

You're sixteen - almost seventeen. I married your mother at that age.

ONI

But, that was in Mumbai.

RANVEER

And, we will send you back there, and you can live with your auntie.

ONI

She sends Snapchats from the toilet.

EXT. PLOT OF LAND - DAY

Ranveer charges over to Bob.

RANVEER
You are not buying this land.

BOB
Are you trying to discriminate
against me because I'm brown?

RANVEER
I'm discriminating against a brown
thief.

BOB
They proved nothing.

RANVEER
First, I get you a job at the
hospital.

BOB
I worked my butt off.

RANVEER
Then, you steal from it?

BOB
I didn't do it.

RANVEER
It almost cost me my job.

BOB
You run the hospital. You're not
gonna fire yourself over missing
toilet paper.

Ranveer grabs the sign, yanks it out of the ground. Bob latches
onto it. The two are locked in a tug-of-war.

Oni and Queen Arjun run over.

Parvez rushes up.

PARVEZ
Dad, let go.

BOB
I'm standing up for what's right.
(to Ranveer)
It's a shame, I don't have a friend
who feels the same way.

RANVEER
Criminal.

Bob digs out a can of pepper spray.

BOB
Let go.

RANVEER
I see the way you look at my wife.

BOB
That's it.

Bob tries to shoot Ranveer. But, the canister is pointed backwards. Bob pepper spays himself into submission.

He let's go of the sign.

The sudden release causes Ranveer to tumble backwards onto the ground. He lands like a heavy bag of rocks.

Bob crawls around blind.

Ranveer rolls around in agony.

QUEEN ARJUN
(to Oni)
Go get your cell phone.

ONI
Just be patient.

QUEEN ARJUN
For what?

ONI
For the future to unfold a new and wondrous destiny.

A car pulls up. The real estate agent climbs out. She charges over, plants a new sign --

"Sold."

QUEEN ARJUN
(to Oni)
How did you do this?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Oni and Queen Arjun, hustle in the back door.

QUEEN ARJUN
How can you afford to buy that land?

ONI
You're better off not knowing.

QUEEN ARJUN
Are you selling your body?

ONI
What?

QUEEN ARJUN
Drugs?

ONI
No.

QUEEN ARJUN
Are you and Parvez a shoplifting
team? You learned it from his
father, right?

ONI
Fine. But, do not freak out.

QUEEN ARJUN
Why would I freak out?

Oni holds up Queen Arjun's credit card.

INT. RANVEER'S OFFICE - DAY

Ranveer works on computer. Queen Arjun struts in.

QUEEN ARJUN
Open the safe.

RANVEER
What did she do now?

QUEEN ARJUN
I want to see paint pellet after
pellet hit her body like it's
saying: stupid, stupid.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Oni, cleans. Queen Arjun storms out the front door. Ranveer saunters in.

ONI

Do not talk down to me like I'm a kid.

RANVEER

You want grown up talk?

ONI

We have the money.

Ranveer helps her clean.

RANVEER

I have the money. You only exist because of the kindness and the good grace of your mother and I.

ONI

But, you and I, we are like two peas in a pod.

RANVEER

You think?

ONI

We both want peace.

RANVEER

All I want is peace with the neighbor.

ONI

And, I want peace for the whole world. Same idea.

RANVEER

But, you can't lie and steal your way into it.

ONI

I admit, it's not the perfect plan.

RANVEER

You need to make this right with your mother and I.

ONI

I will.

RANVEER

How?

ONI

I don't know.

RANVEER

That's your big solution?

ONI

What should I do?

RANVEER

If it was up to me you'd be in jail
right now.

EXT. ONI'S HOUSE - DAY

Oni scrolls through her phone on the porch. Queen Arjun marches up. She runs a beaded necklace through her fingers in quiet prayer.

ONI

I drove you so crazy you resorted
to reciting a peace mantra?

QUEEN ARJUN

107 - 108 - one for the guru. Done.

ONI

Mom, I'm sorry.

QUEEN ARJUN

Do you have any idea what you're
apologizing for?

ONI

I took your money, and I shouldn't
have.

QUEEN ARJUN

It's called stealing.

ONI

It won't happen again.

QUEEN ARJUN

I want you to find somewhere else
to live.

ONI

You're not giving me a second
chance?

QUEEN ARJUN

You had all the chances you need.
You can be anything you want to be
in this country, and you chose to
be a thief?

Oni searches for jobs on her cell.

ONI

You can't kick me out.

QUEEN ARJUN

No?

ONI

I'm sixteen. There's child
abandonment laws.

QUEEN ARJUN

If I call the police right now, I
can have you arrested.

ONI

I can call the police, too.

QUEEN ARJUN

And, tell them what? A lie? Like
I abused you? Now you got ten times
the problems.

ONI

You're not leaving me any choice.

Queen Arjun motions to the empty plot of land.

QUEEN ARJUN

You can live there.

ONI

How am I supposed to do that?

QUEEN ARJUN

There's a tent in the basement.

ONI

What about food?

QUEEN ARJUN

You don't wanna bring food out
there.

ONI

I'm gonna get hungry.

QUEEN ARJUN
The Michigan Panther gets hungry,
too.

ONI
The what?

QUEEN ARJUN
Technically, it's a cougar.

ONI
Are making this up to scare me?

Oni searches on her phone: "Michigan Panther."

QUEEN ARJUN
But, with his dark coat, everybody
calls him a panther. And, if he
smells food, you become food.

She finds the Michigan Panther.

ONI
Holy kitty crap.

EXT. PLOT OF LAND - DAY

Oni drags a tent into the field. Parvez saunters over.

PARVEZ
You want some help?

ONI
No. I want you to openly mock me
about being homeless.

PARVEZ
You know the best thing about
dating a homeless woman?

ONI
Don't you dare.

PARVEZ
You can drop her off anywhere and
she's home.

Oni whacks him with a tent pole.

ONI
You want another one?

PARVEZ
You're mean.

ONI
And, you have no empathy.

Parvez searches the area.

PARVEZ
I just found it over here. It must
have fallen out when you hit me.

INT. ONI'S HOUSE - DAY

Ranveer and Queen Arjun watch Oni assemble the tent.

QUEEN ARJUN
Should we bring her back inside?

RANVEER
If we did, would she learn her
lesson?

QUEEN ARJUN
What lesson is she learning?

RANVEER
Do not steal.

QUEEN ARJUN
But, this is killing me.

RANVEER
Did we put our parents through this
much crap?

QUEEN ARJUN
We were never this bad.

RANVEER
We were good kids.

They each get out their cell phones.

QUEEN ARJUN
I'm going to call my mom.

RANVEER
I'm calling my dad.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Oni huddles inside a sleeping bag with her phone. She fills out a job application. Her cell dies. She's in the dark. Scary shadows from a nearby streetlight dance on the flimsy walls of her tent.

There's rustling sounds outside in the grass. She grabs a tent pole for a weapon. There's heavy grunting. Oni jumps up, flails the pole around.

ONI
I will kill you!

Parvez crawls on the ground, peeks in.

PARVEZ
Does this signal the end of our
honeymoon phase?

ONI
I was making myself big and loud.
I read that's what you're supposed
to do if you wanna scare away an
animal. Please, meri madad karien.

Parvez creeps in.

ONI (CONT'D)
How am I gonna live?

PARVEZ
Can you steal more stuff?

ONI
That's not really working out for me.

PARVEZ
It didn't work out for me, either.

ONI
What's the worst thing you ever
stole?

PARVEZ
Can you keep a secret?

ONI
No.

PARVEZ
When my dad worked at the hospital
I stole supplies.

ONI
That was you?

PARVEZ
I'd go visit him on his lunch break.

ONI
But, he got fired.

PARVEZ
I'd grab anything of value, and
give it to my mom.

ONI
I thought you hated her.

PARVEZ
I hate my dad even more. He
cheated on my mom, then divorced her.
In our culture, she's worse than
garbage.

ONI
But, my dad thinks your dad is a
ghetto bird.

Parvez gets out a battery, plugs it into her phone. It lights up.

PARVEZ
If I were you, I'd apologize to
your parents.

ONI
It's too late. I've lost everything.
And, I only have twelve hours left to
buy this land. And, the Michigan
Panther wants to eat me.

PARVEZ
Can you think of anything positive?

ONI
Like, this tent is the start of my
new sanctuary?

She taps a support pole. The unstable tent crashes down onto her.
Oni's trapped under debris. The dust settles.

ONI (CONT'D)
This feels positive.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. ONI'S HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Oni prepares food in the kitchen. Ranveer and Queen Arjun grab a seat at the table.

ONI

Thank you for allowing me to serve you, my benevolent overlords.

QUEEN ARJUN

That attitude is not helping.

ONI

I humbly apologize. I'm hoping we can move past the unsightly incident from yesterday.

Oni serves them an unusual meal.

QUEEN ARJUN

Popcorn. Toast. Pretzels?

RANVEER

Jelly beans and ice cream?

ONI

It's all I know how to make.

QUEEN ARJUN

What did you want to talk about?

ONI

So, I build a peace sanctuary. It becomes popular.

QUEEN ARJUN

I stop listening to you in three - two - one...

ONI

...you get all the fame, and all the money.

QUEEN ARJUN

From who?

ONI

From the millions of new followers on social media who adore you because you are taking a stand against violence.

QUEEN ARJUN

Where does this money come from?

ONI

Once you're famous, you launch your new clothing empire.

QUEEN ARJUN

I'm listening.

ONI

"Queen Arjun Clothing." It will be made by fairies spun out of gold and unicorn fur.

Ranveer and Queen Arjun swap plates in a desperate attempt to find something to eat.

RANVEER

How are you going to pay back the money for the land if this doesn't work out?

ONI

By getting a job. Which I just did.

RANVEER

Is this another lie?

ONI

I start tomorrow.

QUEEN ARJUN

What does your father get out of this?

ONI

You married him. His happiness is your problem.

QUEEN ARJUN

That's your idea of a solution?

ONI

Once you're rich and famous, he will love you even more.

QUEEN ARJUN

(to Ranveer)

What do you think?

RANVEER

(to Oni)

Just out of curiosity; what does a peace sanctuary look like?

ONI

I am so glad you asked.

Oni shows him a blueprint on her phone.

ONI (CONT'D)

Here's the greeting room. This is the meditation room.

RANVEER

This is four-thousand square feet.

ONI

And, I'm gonna hire a diverse work force to construct it.

RANVEER

And, where does the money come from to build this?

ONI

Crowd sourced. Kickstarter? What do you think?

RANVEER

I think your plan needs more work.

ONI

Does it? You own the land between you and your nemesis. I bought it before he even knew what was happening.

RANVEER

But, what if I didn't want it?

ONI

Please. So, how was your breakfast?

RANVEER

Unpalatable in every way

QUEEN ARJUN

I feel sick.

ONI

The land contract is in your office ready to sign.

INT. RANVEER'S OFFICE - DAY

Ranveer and Queen Arjun slip in. He pulls out a contract, signs it. He hands the pen to Queen Arjun.

QUEEN ARJUN
We're actually doing this?

RANVEER
It gives us complete control.

QUEEN ARJUN
Over what? Bankruptcy?

RANVEER
Any time she misbehaves, we just threaten to close the shrine.

QUEEN ARJUN
And, if she begs for an expensive trip to France?

RANVEER
We say, we don't have the money.

QUEEN ARJUN
Because, we already spent it on the land? What if she does something dumb again?

RANVEER
Same thing. We take away the shrine. Worst case scenario is we sell the land for a profit.

Oni peeks in.

ONI
Are we good?

QUEEN ARJUN
(to Ranveer)
Excuse us for a sec, please.

IN THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Queen Arjun muscles Oni to a private spot.

QUEEN ARJUN
Why are you doing this?

ONI

I've been watching you and dad
fight with the neighbors for years.
I want that to stop. And, I want it
to stop for everyone else, too.

QUEEN ARJUN

But, why are you really doing this?

ONI

I don't understand.

QUEEN ARJUN

I'm about to sign my life away.
I want the real reason you're doing
this peace sanctuary thing.

ONI

I need my family to get along with
Parvez's family.

QUEEN ARJUN

Baap re bapp. Are you saying what I
think you're saying?

ONI

Do not tell dad.

QUEEN ARJUN

You love that boy? Theoretically.

ONI

And, I am not going to plan my future
with Parvez, unless I have my
father's approval. Theoretically.

INT. RANVEER'S OFFICE - DAY

Queen Arjun signs the document with Ranveer and Oni watching.

QUEEN ARJUN

There. We just rewarded a criminal.

ONI

I need to talk to you guys.

RANVEER

About what?

ONI

It's about Parvez, and his father.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. ONI'S HOUSE - DAY

Oni is cloaked in unflattering black fast food worker clothes. She washes dishes. Her cell rests nearby on speaker.

ONI

Welcome back to Family Feud. I'm your host, Oni Nirmaan. Shall we Kanoodle?

EXT. BOB'S HOUSE - DAY

Ranveer struts onto the front porch. Bob opens the door.

RANVEER

I wanted to apologize for not believing you - about stealing stuff?

BOB

I just hired a lawyer. I'm gonna fight you, and your "woke" daughter for that land.

Bob slams the door in his face.

RANVEER

That went well.

INT. ONI'S HOUSE - DAY

Oni rendezvous with Queen Arjun and Ranveer in the kitchen.

ONI

Okay, who's driving me to work?

Oni grabs the car keys. Ranveer snatches them away.

ONI (CONT'D)

I don't know about you guys. But, I'm feeling a lot of love.

She muscled them into a group hug.

ONI (CONT'D)

Today, a plot of land. Tomorrow? The world.

END OF PILOT