

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