

INT. ARMSTRONG LIVING ROOM

VIOLA
(calling out)
We have guests.

STEPHEN ARMSTRONG, 60's, jovial, enters.

STEPHEN
Who is it now?

He sees the women and stops in his tracks.

VIOLA
They've come an awfully long way.

Viola is amused at his surprise and then nods at him to act the host.

STEPHEN
(to the women)
Can I take your coats?

NIRMALA
Thank you. And this is for you.
Some sweets.

Nirmala hands Viola the tin of sweets, removes her coat, and gives it to Stephen.

STEPHEN
Steve Armstrong.

ELIZABETH GEORGE
I'm Elizabeth George. And this is
my daughter, Nirmala Abraham.

Stephen extends his hand for Elizabeth George's coat.

ELIZABETH GEORGE
I'm fine for now, thank you.

Viola leads them into the living room.

VIOLA
(gesturing to a settee)
Do sit down. Can I get anyone some
tea or coffee?

NIRMALA
Oh, please don't make a fuss over
us.

STEPHEN
No fuss. I'd like to try those
sweets you brought.

VIOLA
I'll serve them up.

Viola leaves.

STEPHEN
So, where are you ladies from?

ELIZABETH GEORGE
India. But Nirmala lives in
America now. I'm visiting them.

STEPHEN
(to Nirmala)
You live here in Ohio?

NIRMALA
Delaware, actually. We're on our
way to Celina to visit some
friends from my husband's divinity
school.

STEPHEN
Your husband's a preacher?

NIRMALA
No, he's still a student.

ELIZABETH GEORGE
He's getting his PHD in...what is
it in, again?

NIRMALA
Comparative religion.

ELIZABETH GEORG
And she's getting her master's
degree in diet and nutrition.

STEPHEN
Impressive.

ELIZABETH GEORGE
Not as impressive as *your* son, of
course. We were driving by and saw
the big sign that said Wapakoneta,
hometown of Neil Armstrong.

NIRMALA
Mum's a huge fan.

STEPHEN
Yeah, that sign gets us a lot of
publicity. Lots of folks stopping
by. But this is the first time
we've had visitors from India!
Neil was just there a few weeks
ago, part of their world tour.

ELIZABETH GEORGE

Indeed he was! You know, over a million people in Bombay lined up the streets to see them?

Stephen whistles.

ELIZABETH GEORGE

Didn't they tour 29 cities in 45 days?

STEPHEN

38 days. 24 countries. Whirlwind!

ELIZABETH GEORGE

It must have been so gruelling.

STEPHEN

Still easier than going to the moon.

Elizabeth George giggles like a schoolgirl.

ELIZABETH GEORGE

You must be so proud of him.

STEPHEN

Yeah, I suppose we are.

Mrs. Armstrong enters, carrying a tray. She sets down the plated sweets on the coffee table.

VIOLA

Please help yourselves.

STEPHEN

(tucking into the sweets)
Mmm. Delicious.

ELIZABETH GEORGE

Nirmala made them. She adds in cardamom-that's the secret.

NIRMALA

(shyly)
It's a family recipe.

Elizabeth George removes her coat.

VIOLA

Those dresses are beautiful. There's a special name for them, right?

ELIZABETH GEORGE

Yes, saris. These are made of silk but we also have cotton ones...

CLOSE UP on the pocket bottom of Elizabeth George's coat where a drip slowly forms and falls to the floor but nobody notices.

A lull in the conversation. Nirmala starts scanning the family photos on the end table.

VIOLA
Now, let me...

Viola catches Nirmala looking at the frames and comes over. She picks up the frames and passes them to Nirmala.

VIOLA
That's Dean, my other son and his family. That's Neil and Janet with their kids.

NIRMALA
Their daughter's adorable. She's about the same age as my girl.

Elizabeth George sidles over so she can see too.

ELIZABETH GEORGE
Daughter? I thought Neil has two sons?

Awkward pause. Viola sits down.

STEPHEN
We lost Muffie when she was two. That photo's from a long time ago.

VIOLA
(Very quietly)
She would have been 10 this year.

ELIZABETH GEORGE
I'm so sorry.

Nirmala hastily puts the frames back on the table. She steals one last look at Neil Armstrong's young daughter.

She turns away and sees the sheer curtains of the living room billow with a gentle breeze, just like the curtains in Anisha's bedroom.

Nirmala searches for their car beyond the window.

INT. CAR - DAY

CLOSE UP of Anisha sleeping soundly in her car seat.

O.C.
What on earth are they doing in there?

A man approaches the car. O.C. tenses up. He sits up and straightens his tie. The man walks by, sizes up O.C. and spots the sleeping baby. The man tips his hat and continues on.

O.C. sighs with relief. He looks at his watch and back at the house.

INT. ARMSTRONG LIVING ROOM-DAY

CLOSE UP on another few droplets dripping from the coat pocket to the floor. There's a little puddle forming.

STEPHEN

...and it was just a circus. The networks built this giant transmission tower on the driveway. They turned the garage into a pressroom...

Outside, some dogs bark loudly. Nirmala jumps in her seat.

INT. LIVING ROOM-DAY

The dogs are barking out of control now.

STEPHEN

Neighbor's dogs. Always raising a ruckus over the slightest thing.

Nirmala gets up and heads toward the window.

VIOLA

Is everything all right?

NIRMALA

Actually, my husband and daughter are outside, waiting in the car.

VIOLA

Oh my, they've been there all this time? It's getting cold.

Mrs. Armstrong walks with Nirmala to the window. Just as they reach it, O.C. abruptly appears on the other side -- horror movie style. The women jump. Nirmala lets out a small scream.

VIOLA

Is that him?

NIRMALA

Yes, yes, it is! I'm so sorry.

Stephen and Elizabeth George stand up.

VIOLA
(to Stephen)
Let them in!

Stephen, O.C. and Anisha enter the living room, their backs to the staircase.

STEPHEN
C'mon inside so she can warm up,
poor thing.

Nirmala takes a step towards the trio. She spots someone descending the staircase and freezes.

Seeing Nirmala's reaction, O.C. and Stephen also turn around.

NEIL ARMSTRONG, 40s, descends the steps in slow motion, similar to the way he came down the spacecraft's ladder on the moon.

The sound of each step echos.

When he finally lands he leaves an imprint on the carpet like his footprint on the moon.

We never see Neil's face, just the back of his head, his profile, his hands, and legs.

ELIZABETH GEORGE
(under her breath)
God bless! *It's him, it's really
him.*

She staggers back like she's about to faint. Nirmala rushes over to steady her.

NIRMALA
Mum, are you all right?

She spots the puddle under her mom.

NIRMALA
(whispering)
*Did you just..Do you need the
bathroom?*

Nirmala points to the puddle. Elizabeth George looks down with surprise.

Now everybody sees the puddle too. Stunned silence.

ELIZABETH GEORGE
I forgot all about this.

She pulls out the soggy ice cream cone from her coat pocket.

ELIZABETH GEORGE
My American ice cream!

Neil crosses over to the puddle and crouches down to examine it.

NEIL
Lemme guess. Vanilla.

Everybody bursts out laughing, including little Anisha who gurgles with pleasure.

NEIL
And who is this little one?

O.C.
This is Anisha.

NEIL
Pretty name. Does it mean something?

O.C.
No more darkness.

Neil makes a gesture to hold Anisha.

NEIL
May I?

NIRMALA
Of course.

Nirmala nudges O.C. with her elbow. O.C. hands over Anisha.

NEIL
I miss this age.

Neil raises Anisha high above his head to make her laugh. Everybody gazes upward.

EXT. FRONT PORCH OF HOUSE-DAY

The Abrahams and Armstrongs shake hands. Mrs. Armstrong wears a red coat with a black fur collar. She's holding little Anisha. Neil has a camera.

ELIZABETH GEORGE
Thank you again for indulging me.
We shall never forget your
kindness.

STEPHEN

It was our treat. A pleasure to hear your stories.

NEIL

(to Elizabeth George)

You brought a little piece of the world to my folks today. Thank you.

Elizabeth George blushes like a schoolgirl. They line up on the front porch for a photo.

NEIL

Ok, now everybody squeeze in tighter. Mom, hold Anisha up a little higher. Perfect. Now one, two, three...

The shutter clicks.

Viola hands Anisha back to Nirmala.

VIOLA

This little one's going to do great things. She has her grandma's spirit, I can tell.

The women's eyes meet in mutual gratitude.

The Abrahams walk down the front path.