

A BRIMFUL OF ASHA

Asha Jain

RAVI: *(laughs)* Right. So my parents agreed to these rules and I go out into Toronto and I'm meeting as many people as I can. I'm starting this theatre company so I am meeting actors, directors, artistic directors, producers—I'm trying to network in order to meet as many people as possible.

So I meet this person, a theatre-maker from Calcutta who is teaching workshops at my old high school. And we hit it off like a house on fire. And they were like, "I really like what you do! Your energy! I love how you talk about theatre! Listen, you should come to Calcutta and do a workshop for my theatre company." And I was like, "That's awesome. That's exactly what I wanted to be doing." Because, as I said, I had just come back from living abroad and I was interested in reconnecting with my culture and my roots. And, you know, it was this great opportunity to go to India and share my art with people there.

Maybe practice my Hindi. Because my Hindi is terrible. I speak French better than I do Hindi. So I could go there and connect with my roots...

Plus it was in Calcutta. And Calcutta is a city I had never been to. Actually, anytime I go to India I'm stuck in Delhi with family.

So I haven't seen much of the countryside. So here's this great opportunity to go see different parts of India, connect with my culture, and share my art while I'm there.

So I rush home to tell my parents about this plan. And they approve. And now the wheels are in motion for me to go to India in November and December of that year.

Now, in April last year my father takes a trip to India. He goes every year. And while he's there, he sends me an email saying, "Hey Ravi, I know you wanted to do workshops in Calcutta—theatre workshops—but I'm here in Delhi and I just met someone at the National School of Drama in Delhi." It's the largest theatre school in the north there. He says, "Why don't you get in touch with them and you can do workshops here?"

And I'm thinking, "Wow, Papa, for the first time you're taking an interest in my career and trying to get me more work!" What a great idea! It's fantastic. I read on. It says, "So, why don't you send me a short bio and resumé and I will make sure that it gets into the right hands."

Now some of you know where we are going with this. But for those of you who

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don't... There's nothing to suspect! That's how you would get a job. You send a bio and a resumé and then maybe you would get an interview for that job and then maybe you would get that job. But! At the end of last year when my father comes back from India, he doesn't come back with any job interview for the National School of Drama. Nor does he ever mention the idea of the workshop ever again. But what he does come back with is the Bio-Data of a girl named Neha who lives in Bombay.

Now for those of you who don't know what a Bio-Data is, let's just take a look over here. (*Bio-Data appears on the screen.*) So this is a fake Bio-Data. Actually, so this is a Bollywood star named Aishwarya Rai. And, actually, if you had come home with this, we would have been set! (*laughs*) So, the Bio-Data is a piece of paper. It's got a picture of you and all of this information that's very very important. It's got things like your date and time of birth.

That's very important. We are really superstitious. What we believe in, we match the stars of the person for time of birth, which gives them some idea about their future in married life. Because if the stars match they will have less trouble and less chance of divorce.