

"Send me an email about the issue"

By

Anup Narayanan

SCENE 1 - INT - ENTRANCE OF SANJAY'S OFFICE

The lift reaches the 6th floor. The doors open. Sanjay Menon, in a crisp blue shirt with a tie and black trousers alongwith his mother, Mrs. Menon, in a simple saree, step out. They are in the lobby of Sanjay's office, "Integrated Technologies and Solutions" ,a big and successful corporate firm.

Sanjay's mom looks at the huge and stylish entrance of her son's office. She is a simple but elegant woman and is impressed by what she sees. Sanjay, haughty and proud, holds his Mom's hand, urging her forward.

SANJAY

Come Maa

They walk to the door.

SCENE 2 - INT - INSIDE SANJAY'S OFFICE

They enter the office and there is a huge poster in the reception.

"BRING-YOUR-FAMILY-TO-WORK DAY. JUST FEEL AT HOME"

Sanjay stops for a while in the reception allowing his Mom to view his impressive office. He wants to show off. Mrs. Menon slowly looks around and is impressed. She looks at her son and nods proudly. They walk towards his work cabin.

SCENE 3 - INT - INSIDE SANJAY'S CABIN

They enter Sanjay's cabin. There is a plaque on Sanjay's desk that reads, "Sanjay Menon, Vice-President".

MOM

(Looks at the plaque, reads softly and proudly)...Sanjay Menon, Vice-President....

Sanjay adds a rejoinder

SANJAY

(Haughtily and assertively)...the youngest in the history of the company...

Mom smiles as Sanjay adjusts his tie.

(CONTINUED)

He holds his mother's hand and guides her to his big black leather executive "chair-of-power" behind his desk. He gently makes his Mom sit on the executive chair and she does so nervously.

SANJAY

How does it feel Mom?

MOM

Well...(smiles nervously, running her fingers over the edge of the desk, admiring the shine), I don't know what to say Sanjay. I am so happy for you.

Sanjay's secretary Anita, a young and smart executive, enters the cabin.

ANITA

Hello Sanjay.... (sees Mrs. Menon and smiles) and... this is Mrs. Menon?

Mrs. Menon gets up from the chair.

SANJAY

(Nonchalantly, as if Anita is not very important) Maa, this is Anita, my secretary.

ANITA

(Smiles sincerely) Hello Mrs. Menon. Pleasure to have you with us today.

MOM

(Smiling) Hello Anita.

Anita looks at Sanjay and addresses him.

ANITA

Are you gonna give her some work? Maybe swap your position for a day? (laughs nervously)

SANJAY

(Smirks)No... I guess, I could let her take over your position

ANITA

What! (Nervously smiling as if it is a joke) are you firing me?

Sanjay does not reply immediately. He starts unwrapping the power cord of his laptop that he has taken out of his bag. While unwrapping the cord, he stares at Anita, without a trace of emotion on his face, giving an impression that he is in fact very seriously contemplating the prospect of firing her. The slow and steady unwrapping of the cord and the silence in the room turns a little uneasy. Anita looks at Sanjay nervously and so does Mrs. Menon, dreading his next move. Suddenly, Sanjay breaks into a laughter, as if he thoroughly enjoyed the short opportunity at sadistic pleasure.

SANJAY

Naa....just for a couple of hours.  
Let her take care of the emails.  
You can show her how to.

ANITA

(Relaxes visibly and addresses Mrs. Menon) Sure. Mrs. Menon, are you comfortable with the computer? I mean, Internet, email...

SANJAY

(Cutting Anita off, as if he does not have time for all this)  
Yeah..yeah..she knows her mouse from her keyboard.

ANITA

(A little taken aback and embarrassed by Sanjay suddenly cutting her off) Sure...Please come Mrs. Menon.

SANJAY

(A little arrogantly, as if asserting his authority to demonstrate the power of his position to his Mom) Well, doesn't mean that you can escape. I want all the sales reports for the western region on my desk within an hour. Right?

Mom looks at Anita, feeling sorry for Anita and then shifts her gaze, embarrassed that Sanjay is being arrogant to a nice girl in her presence. She tries to smile, but it comes out weakly.

ANITA

Yup! Got that.

Anita guides Mrs. Menon out of the cabin and Sanjay starts to work on his computer.

SCENE 4 - INT - ANITA'S WORK DESK

Anita guides Mrs. Menon to a chair with a laptop computer on the desk in front of it. Anita logs in and opens the email screen.

ANITA

Well, there you are. Just watch out for new emails as they come in. Read them and feel free to ask me if you need help.

MOM

(A little nervous) Sure

ANITA

Give me a moment (She walks away from the table)

Anita returns in a short while with a cup of coffee and some biscuits on a plate and places it in front of Mrs. Menon.

MOM

Thank you. (She looks very pleased with the kindness Anita is showing). Thank you very much.

ANITA

(Smiling) No problem. You look a little nervous...

MOM

Yes, big office and all. I was a school teacher you know? 30 years. Now, it's been 5 years since I retired.

ANITA

(Smiles sincerely) Just relax. (Pauses) Well, I have to run and get some files from another department for Sanjay. Will you be alright?

MOM

Absolutely. You run right along. Don't get him all upset.

(CONTINUED)

ANITA

(Smiles and rolls her eyes as if she is used to Sanjay's arrogance) Don't worry about that.

Some time passes. Mrs. Menon is intently watching the computer screen and an email comes in. She eagerly reads it and then looks around for Anita. She is nowhere to be seen. She hurriedly gets up and walks to Sanjay's cabin.

SCENE 3 - INT - INSIDE SANJAY'S CABIN (RETURN)

MOM

Sanjay. There is an email from a certain Mrs. Thomas. She seems a little upset with some product design ISSUE.

SANJAY

(Casually, as if dismissing the issue outright) Don't worry Maa.

MOM

(Earnestly) Well .... she seems really upset. May be you must do something about it.

SANJAY

Maa, people always send emails about issues. Just tell Anita to reply, asking Mrs. Thomas to send an email about the ISSUE to ....to (trying to recall)..ah yes, Syed in the design team.

Mom does not look convinced. She slowly walks back to her seat.

SCENE 4 - INT - ANITA'S WORK DESK (RETURN)

After some time, the next email comes and Anita is again, nowhere to be seen. She goes back to Sanjay.

SCENE 3 - INT - INSIDE SANJAY'S CABIN (RETURN)

MOM

Well, there is an email from Mr. Mohan. He is upset that he has not received his payment. He says this ISSUE has been pending for some time.

(CONTINUED)

SANJAY

(A little disturbed at the interruption, does not even bother to look up from his computer) Well ask him to send an email about the ISSUE to finance.

SCENE 4 - INT - ANITA'S WORK DESK (RETURN)

Mom, again does not look too pleased. She walks back to the desk. Another email comes. She goes back to Sanjay again.

MOM

It's Mrs. Rupa Nair. She wants to know when she can expect the delivery of the prototype. She says that she is not happy with the delay.

SANJAY

Well, ask her to send an email about the ISSUE to....(thinks)....well, the delivery team, of course (smiles as if he has solved a big problem).

Mom does not say anything and she trudges back.

SCENE 4 - INT - ANITA'S WORK DESK (RETURN)

She is back at her seat and the phone rings. We hear snippets of a conversation. "Well...Anita is not here, (pause)...well yes...(pause),.... I understand....sure, (pause).... I will tell him....(pause) well, I am his Mom...before she can complete saying the last sentence, the phone cuts. She keeps the phone down, thinks for a while, and goes back to Sanjay.

SCENE 3 - INT - INSIDE SANJAY'S CABIN (RETURN)

MOM

Aah...(a little nervous, clears her throat), there was a ..Mr. Rashid on the phone. He sounded angry about some errors in a product....

SANJAY

(Exasperated)....Well, ask him to send an email about the ISSUE...to, .... whomsoever (giving up and continues to type on his system).

(CONTINUED)

Mom does not go back. She stays her position. She slowly but deliberately folds her hands across her chest and stands there staring at Sanjay as if confronting him. Her eyes sharpen and focus. She is now ANGRY.

Sanjay initially does not notice that his Mom has not left the room. Then he notices her.

SANJAY

Maa? ...(noticing the change in her, forehead slightly wrinkling in question) What happened?

MOM

(Looking sharply..)Sanjay, I don't know if you recall....when you were 5, some bullies in kindergarten thrashed you? You almost peed your pants and came home crying.

SANJAY

(Does not reply..his eyes just flicker at the invocation of an old and humiliating memory )

MOM

...(continues...)Well, I did not just listen to the ISSUE, Son! I phoned the bullies' parents and told them to tell their kids to keep their hands off my son. I solved the ISSUE (emphasizes). They never touched you again.

SANJAY

(Nervous, his haughtiness starts crumbling, he tries to sit up straight) Maa....

MOM

(Cuts off Sanjay ruthlessly)...Remember, in college, you had a crush on Rose and wanted to ask her out for a date, but did not have the BALLS to ask? I understood what the ISSUE was and told you how gentlemen ask a girl out, like how your Dad did when he asked me out. You tried and it worked. Again, I solved the ISSUE.

SANJAY

(Has a stupid, embarrassed and slightly shocked look on his face)..

MOM

Of course it's another matter that you ditched her when you got your first big IT job....you said something like...."She was not ambitious enough and that you wanted to make a (PAUSES) what was that??? (sarcastically....) PARADIGM SHIFT in the way you view relationships". Right? .... But, nice girl she was.

SANJAY

Maa...why now?

MOM

(Continues, as if she is not bothered about what Sanjay has to say...) And,... remember? A couple of months back, you called me and you sounded all upset. You said that you were overlooked for a promotion. You were almost crying ...like a kid who had his lollipop taken away....

SANJAY

Maa...(looks as if he is under a hail of gunfire and wants to run for cover)....

MOM

Yes...Internal politics ... that's what you said.... right? Well, that was an ISSUE that I could do nothing about, but I listened, and I listened for an hour and more. And, when you got your lollipop...sorry...(PAUSES), I mean, promotion a few weeks back, I was so happy and proud.

SANJAY

(Just stares at his Mom)

MOM

But....Look at what you are doing? (PAUSES to emphasize) I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MOM (cont'd)  
thought you did a noble job,  
(PAUSES to emphasize) I thought you  
listened to people and (PAUSES to  
emphasize) I thought you solved  
their problems.

SANJAY  
(Does not what to say)

MOM  
...I was so happy and proud in my  
mind thinking that people loved and  
trusted you.....

SANJAY  
(Bows his head in shame)

MOM  
...I was wrong (she shakes her head  
in sadness and resignation).....

Mrs. Menon is about to leave the room but she sees the  
plaque on Sanjay's desk one more time.

MOM  
(She reads the words loud and a bit  
sarcastically) Sanjay Menon,  
Vice-President. Seriously Son?  
(PAUSES to emphasize) Is this what  
big corporate managers get paid  
for? ... Sending emails about  
issues ...eh? (PAUSES to emphasize)  
So, when do you guys work?

She is about to turn and walk away. She stops, turns half  
around and looks hard at Sanjay.

MOM  
(Assertively) Send me an email when  
you grow up Son.

She turns and walks away. Sanjay just stares at her and  
slowly bows his head down in shame.

The following text appears on screen -

"Issues? Don't worry, just send me an email"