

## EXTRACT

# *The secret to making the perfect aloo paratha*

a short play

by

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## **Characters**

NATHAN

WENDY

CAROL

CRESSIDA

MAY

JENNIFER

MONICA

MRS KIM (SARAH)

JASMINE

## The Secret to making the perfect aloo paratha

IN SPOTLIGHTS – **NATHAN** AND **WENDY**.

NATHAN: Oh Vishnu! She said yes! What a surprise this was!

WENDY: Yes I will be coming to your for some khanna-some dinner.

NATHAN: Now this is a big event, even bigger than an Indian wedding because 1. I've never actually had dinner with a girl before, and that too alone! and 2. Especially when my parents are away for the weekend. I'm being such a rebellious. I mean I'm not expecting anything to happen. I wouldn't even know what to do if something did happen, I mean what if we touch hands, and all of a sudden her saree comes down a little... Anyways, Wendy Malvern, the cutest girl in school, in my opinion. But then she had to go and say it.

WENDY: Only if you promise to cook.

NATHAN: Cook? I can't cook.  
(TO WENDY) "Sure, and what do you like to eat?"  
Please say toast, I know how to cook toast. But then she says it – the death sentence:

WENDY: Aloo Paratha!

NATHAN: Aloo What?

WENDY: Aloo Paratha! Potatoes stuffed in bread! It's my favorite dish. Mama makes it all the time.

NATHAN: And then she looks me in the eyes. She has these beautiful majestic brown eyes and she gives the final warning:

WENDY: And don't buy it frozen or order it. I'll know – and I won't be happy. And you don't want to make me unhappy. Understood? (EXITS.)

NATHAN: So she said yes – Wendy Malvern said she would come to my home for dinner. That's a positive and you've always got to focus on the positives. What is that American saying? Make lemons from your lemonades. But Aloo Something? How do you even make Aloo Something? Haii Bhagwann. This has to be perfect Aloo Something.

**NATHAN** GOES TO **CAROL'S** HOME. SHE COMES TO LIFE.

NATHAN: So I decided to consult the experts. The womens in my family. Luckily I have a very large diverse family. We are all Internationals, Multinations, all over the place nationals.

CAROL: (ENTERS) (IRANIAN) The secret to making the perfect Aloo Paratha...Well if I told you then it wouldn't be a secret. Ha, ha. Oh golly, I'm just too good.

NATHAN: Firstly I go to see Iranian (crazy) cousin Carol. My Indian uncle, married her mother, but then he divorced her and married Carol, for a younger model. She must know something about Aloo Parathas.

CAROL: I suppose it wouldn't harm me to share it with you ...

**NATHAN** TAKES OUT A NOTEPAD.

CAROL: but only a little! My secret to making the perfect aloo paratha is to go down to this little Indian restaurant in the Karama (looks away thinking)

NATHAN: And?

CAROL: Buy one. Presto.

NATHAN: But I'm not allowed to buy it. It has to be made from home.

CAROL: Well ... why? That doesn't sound too practicalistic?

NATHAN: I'm trying to impress a girl.

CAROL: And she's impressed by you making aloo paratha? Girls are very strange these days. (BEAT) Okay, go down to the little Indian restraurant in Karama, buy an aloo paratha, remove it from the foil tray, put it in your own dish, pop a sprig of spice on top and voila! She'll never know the difference!!

NATHAN: Aunty Carol!

CAROL: What? Darling, I'm exhausted. Go ask Auntie Cressida. (EXITS.)

NATHAN: I'm not sure why we call Auntie Cressida – Auntie.

LIGHTS UP ON **CRESSIDA**.

NATHAN: She wasn't my mum's sister. I don't think she was related to my mum at all. Hi Auntie Cressida!

CRESSIDA: It's Cressida dear.

NATHAN: That's what I said! Qeusadilla!

CRESSIDA: No no, let's break it down. Cre

NATHAN: Cre

CRESSIDA: SSi

NATHAN: SSI

CRESSIDA: DA

NATHAN: DA

CRESSIDA: CRESSIDA!

NATHAN: QUESSADILLA

CRESSIDA: Nooo. Ugh never mind.

LIGHTS UP ON **MAY**

NATHAN: She lived with Auntie May. She wasn't my Auntie either. But we called her Auntie too.

CRESSIDA: First and foremost:

MAY: The difference between a good aloo paratha

CRESSIDA: and a great aloo paratha –

MAY: lies in the crispiness of the bread –

CRESSIDA: and the subtle nuances of the herbs.

MAY: The aloos need to be brimming with full coriander flavor

CRESSIDA: and a rich brown colour that stains the plate.

MAY: To obtain this you have to use a lot of potatoes.