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A fantastical holiday film

by Sarawathi Balgam

Comedy Drama
80 minutes

Project identity Sheet

Title- Merry Gulabi Christmas

Writer(s) - Saraswathi balgam , Aaron Shact

Length - 80 mins

Target audience - Family

Saraswathi Balgam - CV (with reels & its links)

Link to the CV of Saraswathi Balgam - [Click here](#)

Two Scenes with the dialogue

Link to the document : [Click here](#)

logline

When eight-year-old GULABI wishes for SANTA to rescue her from a disastrous family trip to India, she never imagines that the Christmas legend would show up himself in Punjab... Or that her headstrong step-grandmother, NANI, would kidnap him! After Nani accidentally steals Santa's magic by taking his famous red pants, Santa escapes and gets lost in the Indian countryside. Now all Gulabi and Nani have to do is find Santa, save Christmas, and hardest of all... connect as a real family!



introduction

Everyone in the world has unique challenges getting along with their families... but not everyone has a step-grandmother who kidnapped SANTA!

8-year old GULABI was perfectly happy to spend Christmas at her London home, so when an emergency trip to India to meet her new step-grandmother, NANI, spoils that plan, Gulabi wishes for Santa to bring her back to the UK. But when the Christmas legend himself shows up in India, Nani accidentally steals his magic and sets off a chain-reaction of misadventures that threaten to destroy Christmas for everyone!

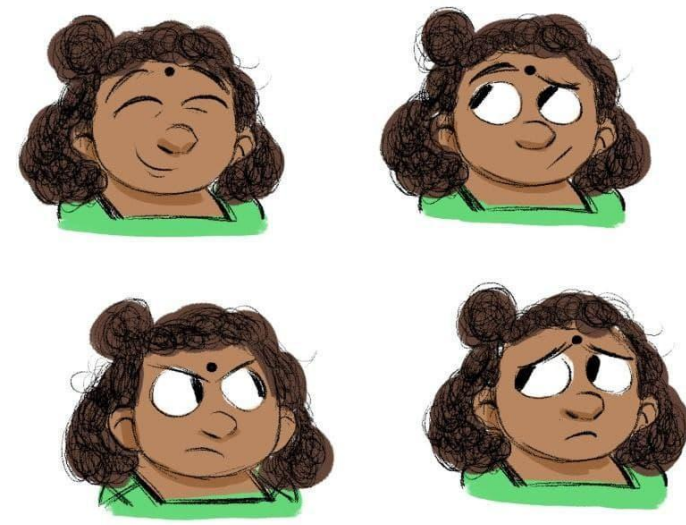
The story of Gulabi, Nani, and Santa is both a classic Christmas tale and a modern parable about learning new cultures, finding acceptance, and most importantly - connecting with family, no matter where in the world they are.

Gulabi and Nani's relationship gets off to a rocky start, and only gets worse once Santa escapes and gets lost in the Indian countryside... But with the help of Rudolf the Reindeer and one of Santa's elves, Gulabi and Nani will discover that they have more in common than they originally believed.

This is a story about the magic of Christmas in all its forms - and through this misadventure, Gulabi and Nani discover their own real-life magic - how to forge the bonds of a modern, international family!

similar to





tone



- Though brighter and more colorful than ours, Gulabi's world is basically the real 21st-century world in almost every way, with ONE BIG EXCEPTION... In this world, Santa is REAL, kids believe in him... and adults do not!
- This particular suspension-of-disbelief is putting our own spin on the magic rules in modern Christmas classics like 'Elf' and 'The Santa Clause'. Somehow every adult has completely forgotten that Santa could be real...
- Additionally, as in many beloved Christmas classics, our Santa uses a very practical type of magic.
- Santa may be "magic" in Gulabi's world, but he has real-world concerns and problems like a normal boss.
- Santa depends on magic "technologies" like his sleigh, his red robes, and his magical Jingle-Bells staff to do his job properly... and if these go missing, then no magic!
- Specifically for our story, it's important to note that Santa's "Jingle-Bells Staff" acts as a type of magic wand (think Gandolf's staff in 'Lord Of the Rings'). For practical purposes (like recharging his magic robes), Santa NEEDS the Jingle-Bells to do his job properly.
- Similarly, Peter, the Elf is also magical...but he's just trying to navigate the workplace politics of his job!
- The one other suspension-of-disbelief in our world involves beloved animals - Rudolf the Reindeer and Surabhi the Cow.
- Like the best of the classic Disney animated sidekicks - these two animals in Gulabi's world are smart - and apparently can understand human speech - even though they cannot speak themselves (Think Sven the Reindeer in 'Frozen').
- In terms of animation, Rudolf the Reindeer and Surabhi the Cow are basically really smart, big dogs.
- Otherwise, everything else in our world is grounded in reality!

short synopsis

With only one week left until Christmas, 8-year old GULABI is perfectly happy in her snowy hometown of London. Sure, this holiday season is going to be weird since Gulabi is still getting used to her new step-father RANA, but Gulabi is too busy preparing for her Christmas dance performance to worry about that. However, when Rana announces that their whole family will be taking an emergency trip to India, Gulabi is devastated! She's going to miss her big chance to dance with "Santa" (an actor) all because they have to visit some step-grandmother (NANI) whom Gulabi has never even met! In a last-minute desperation move, Gulabi emails Santa a Christmas wish - to get a plane ticket back to the UK in time for Christmas. Gulabi hits "send", and the family is off to India...

Meanwhile, at the North Pole, the real SANTA CLAUS frets that modern technology and apps are keeping today's kids from understanding the true "spirit of Christmas". Santa HATES apps!!! They aren't real presents, and "giving" them means nothing! Enter Santa's Chief Elf assistant PETER TOMTENNIS - Peter has secretly been developing a "CHRISTMAS APP" that will revolutionize Santa's entire operation (wish lists, present delivery, etc.) Using his app to intercept Gulabi's Christmas wish, Peter challenges Santa to a wager - Peter's app vs. Santa's old-fashioned hand-delivered presents! Santa accepts, and Peter sneakily stacks the deck in his favor by hiding away the CHRISTMAS JINGLE-BELLS that power Santa's magic so that the big guy won't be able to recharge... Together Santa and Peter head off to India...

Gulabi arrives at Nani's village and discovers that her new step-grandmother has orchestrated this entire "emergency" trip with the flimsy pretext of a minor injury Nani suffered when her beloved TRACTOR broke down. Even worse - Gulabi learns that Nani's ulterior motive is getting Gulabi's whole family to stay in India! After an initial series of comical stand-offs - TWIST - Nani and Gulabi end up bonding over local Indian BHANGRA DANCING. Nani learns about Gulabi's love of Santa, while Gulabi learns Nani is terrified of flying! Nani schemes to rent the "ultimate Santa costume" to convince Gulabi to stay in India.





short synopsis

But when the REAL Santa shows up to deliver Gulabi a PRINTED PLANE TICKET back to London... Nani assumes this guy is a thief trying to steal her rented Santa costume... Nani kidnaps him! Nani wrangles Santa's robes off him and then tries on the "costume". Uh oh... The robes magically fasten up and Nani can't get them off! In the ensuing chaos, Santa escapes and Peter informs Nani that by putting on Santa's robes, she stole his magic, and that to return his suit to him, Nani needs to RING the magical Christmas Jingle-Bells... which Peter left at the North Pole! Too bad Nani is terrified of flying and won't even touch Santa's sleigh... Meanwhile, a confused and disoriented Santa wanders the Indian countryside. Without his magical robes, every person he meets in Punjab assumes he's just another lost Westerner tourist! Gulabi discovers the printed plane ticket that Santa left for her and is horrified to find out what Nani has done... Even worse - if Nani won't fly Santa's sleigh and retrieve the Christmas Jingle-Bells, there won't be another CHRISTMAS! Gulabi can fly home with the plane ticket, Nani can keep her son nearby, and Santa learned how kids use modern technology - but he lost his magic! Everyone got what they wanted, but not what they NEED...

With only ONE DAY left until Christmas Eve - Nani resolves to face her fear of flying!!! Nani flies Santa's sleigh to the North Pole and locates the magical Christmas Jingle-Bells. Back in India, Gulabi locates and purchases Nani's TRACTOR ENGINE PART using money she earned by selling Santa's plane ticket. Gulabi bonds with Rana by fixing Nani's broken tractor with him. Nani returns from the North Pole with the magic Jingle-Bells as well as her own surprise for Gulabi... FIRST CLASS PLANE TICKETS for Gulabi's whole family to return home to London! Nani finally understands the lesson she needed to learn: Love is going to keep their family together, no matter where in the world they are! Santa BEAMS with pride: Everyone gave presents that showed their love for each other! This was the true 'Spirit of Christmas' all along! And there's still time for Santa to deliver all the world's presents before Christmas Eve! Nani RINGS Santa's magical Jingle-Bells as everyone in the village breaks out in song and Bhangra dancing! Gulabi finally gets to dance with Santa as his robes magically return to him. In an echo of how we first met Gulabi while she was dancing alone and practicing for her Christmas performance, we end with Gulabi and Nani dancing together - surrounded by their loving family, and partying with the Real Santa!

inspired by

As I saw my nephews grow up in London and the USA , I was concerned it they would have a connection to their roots in INDIA.

Would they love their grandmothers.

This simple idea, inspired me to do plenty of research and talk to my sister in laws, brothers and family friends to see how they were raising their kids outside of their birth place.



gulabi



gulabi

Gulabi is sweet, rambunctious, and a bit of a punk. She is a completely Westernized kid and an astute observer of the adults around her, so when Gulabi is forced to miss Christmas in London to meet her new step-grandmother (Nani) in India, she sees right through the old lady - and suspects this is all a scam to get Gulabi's family to move to India permanently...

Well, that's not going to stand with Gulabi!

Deep down, Gulabi is searching for her place in the world, and though she likes and respects her new step-father (Rana), Gulabi isn't sure about this new family dynamic.

Want- To leave India so she can celebrate a traditional Christmas in London.

Need- To connect to her new step-family



nani



nani

Though they're not related by blood, Nani shares some of Gulabi's personality traits... namely that she isn't above using a bit of mischief to get her way!

Of course, Nani's been playing this particular game a lot longer than Gulabi, so Nani knows exactly how to manipulate her son (Rana) - alternating between spoiling him like a kid and guilt!

Nani is ferociously independent, but deep down she's afraid of losing her son to his new family in London (and additionally, she's too proud to admit that she's terrified of flying - which could keep her from ever seeing them in the UK!)

Nani has a true heart of gold, and an exceptional level of motivation to make things work out, no matter the cost.

Want - For her son to stay in India.

Need - To overcome her fears and to connect and trust her family, no matter where they are.



santa



santa

Our Santa is a traditional, jolly guy with a twist - Kids these days only want APPS for their phones, tablets, and computers and Santa HATES apps! They aren't real presents!!!

Specifically, Santa dislikes how modern technologies seem to make kids so impatient, and how people are beginning to forget that the value of giving is that it allows you to authentically connect to those you love.

Santa is desperate for a way to show modern kids (and his Chief Elf, Peter) how to understand the true spirit of Christmas!

In fact, our Santa is starting to suspect that he hasn't spent enough time out in the world lately, and it's what spurs him to travel to India right before Christmas in order to check out the wish of this Gulabi-person...

Santa is correct - he's been a bit sheltered lately. Perhaps an adventure in a new part of the world is exactly what he needed!

Want - To find a way to make modern kids appreciate the 'True Spirit of Christmas' and not be so distracted by technology.

Need - To experience the world so he understands modern kids.



elf

Peter is Santa's top assistant, and like Nani, he isn't above a bit of manipulation to get his way! Unfortunately for Peter, his ambition to impress Santa has come at the expense of his ability to understand the true spirit of Christmas.

Peter needs to repair the key relationship in his life - by connecting with Santa!

The Peter/Santa relationship is a funhouse mirror version of Gulabi's relationship with Nani. Can Peter and Santa connect and save Christmas!

Want - To get a promotion in Santa's organization.

Need - To embrace the true spirit of Christmas.



father

Gulabi's new step-dad Rana is a good guy who has a bit of a problem trying to be too much of a people-pleaser...

That's a big issue when it comes to trying to balance the three most important women in his life - his mom, his new wife, and his step-daughter Gulabi. Rana has always been a bit of a mamma's boy, but this journey to India is going to give him some unexpected opportunities to step forward as an adult.

Want - To please his mother, Nani.

Need - To grow up and show Nani that he can be a leader of his family.



mother

Like the other two main characters in our story, Priya shares Gulabi and Nani's wit, independence, and resourcefulness... and this plays a big role in how she treats Gulabi.

The most important thing to understand about Priya is that she knows how stubborn Gulabi can be - but she trusts her daughter - and that's why Priya chooses to let Gulabi establish a relationship with Rana and Nani in her own way.

Priya knows that if she is too pushy about forcing Gulabi into relationships with these new family members, it will make things more difficult in the long run.

Gulabi's mom doesn't play a huge role in our story - but it's important to understand that Priya loves Gulabi and Rana, and is determined to make their new family with Nani strong and happy!



voice talent



Dev Patel



Frida Pinto



Jack Black

locations



Punjab House



united kingdom



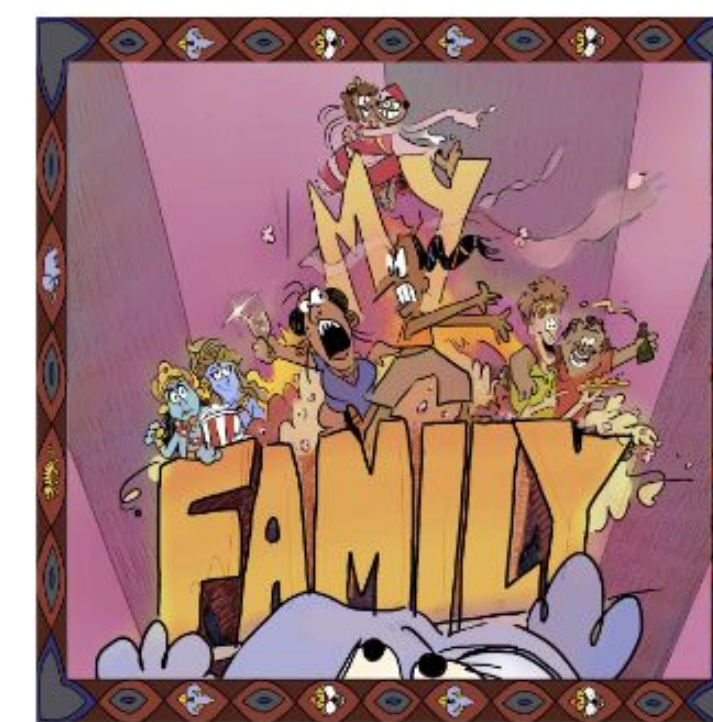
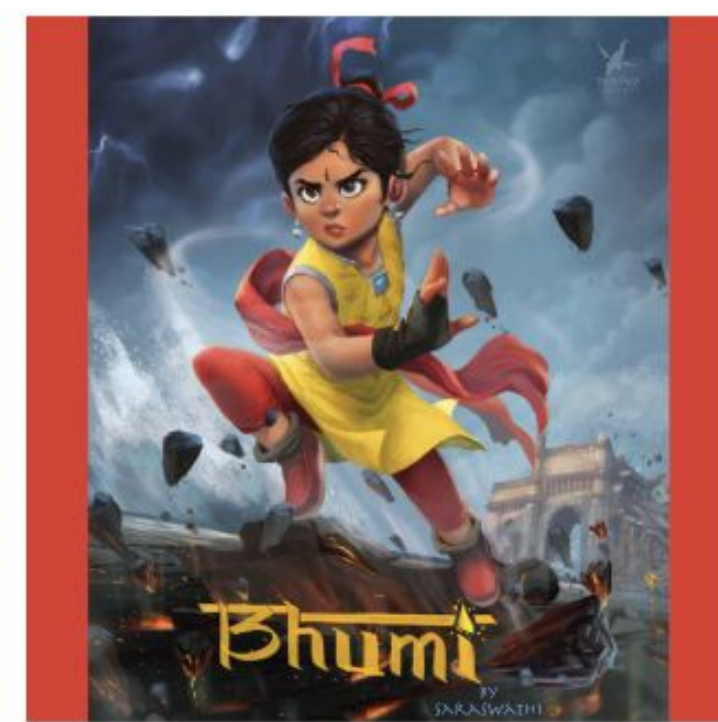
santa's world



development studio



Dancing Atoms Studios is a boutique development studio that creates original content and provides services to bring unique concepts to life. We focus on powerful storytelling told through the authentic voices of a diverse team of creatives. Dancing Atoms Studios believes in bridging the gap between Asian and North American storytellers and bringing their content to the world.



producing animation Studio partner

INSPIDEA

Producing Animation Studio Partner
INSPIDEA STUDIO
Malaysia

<https://www.inspidea.com/works>

budget

Around 16 million US dollars

development phase





story beats

story beats



ACT ONE - OPENING IMAGE -

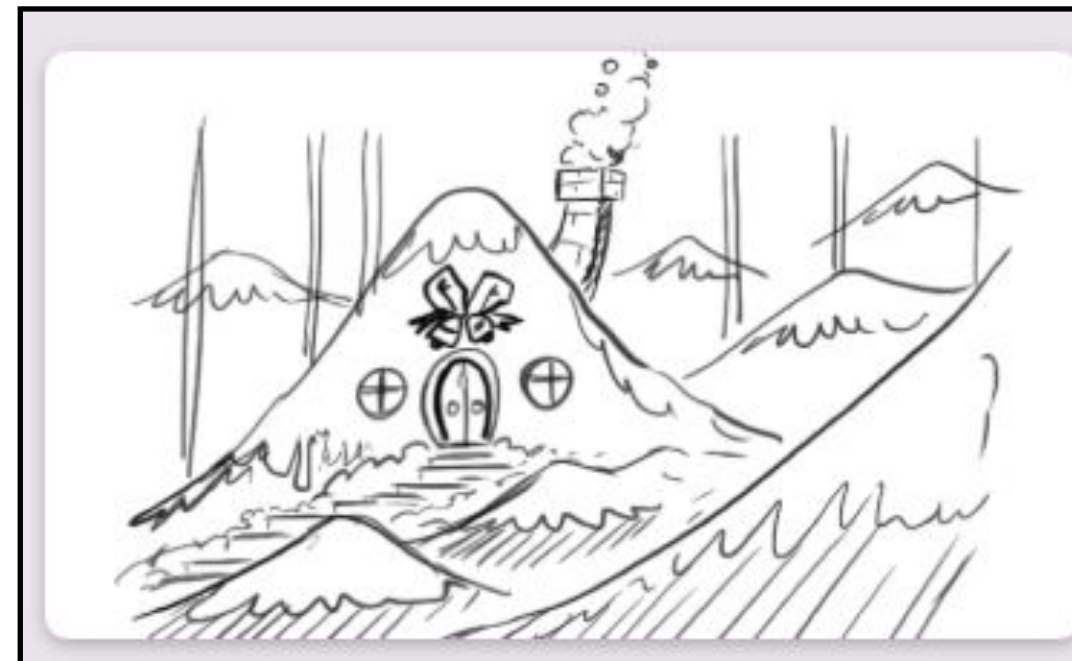
HEADLINE: Our Hero GULABI Practices For Her Christmas Audition

KEY CHARACTER: GULABI (8-years-old)

SETTING: Gulabi's bedroom in a snowy suburb of London.

ACTION: GULABI records herself practicing for her audition to be the lead dancer in her town's Christmas festival.

story beats



SET-UP -

HEADLINE: But at the North Pole, SANTA Has A HUGE Problem!

KEY CHARACTERS: SANTA CLAUS and his Chief Elf, PETER TOMTENNIS

SETTING: Santa's office at the North Pole, with windows looking out down on the work-floor of Santa's toy factory

ACTION:

story beats



Santa gestures down to his nearly empty toy factory floor while he dresses in his famous red CHRISTMAS ROBES using the magic of the CHRISTMAS JINGLE BELLS STAFF (think like Gandolf's wizard staff adorned with silver bells - this is the magical source of Santa's powers).
REVEAL: As Santa complains, Peter prepares to reveal the CHRISTMAS APP he developed that will handle all of Santa's tasks...

story beats



CATALYST -

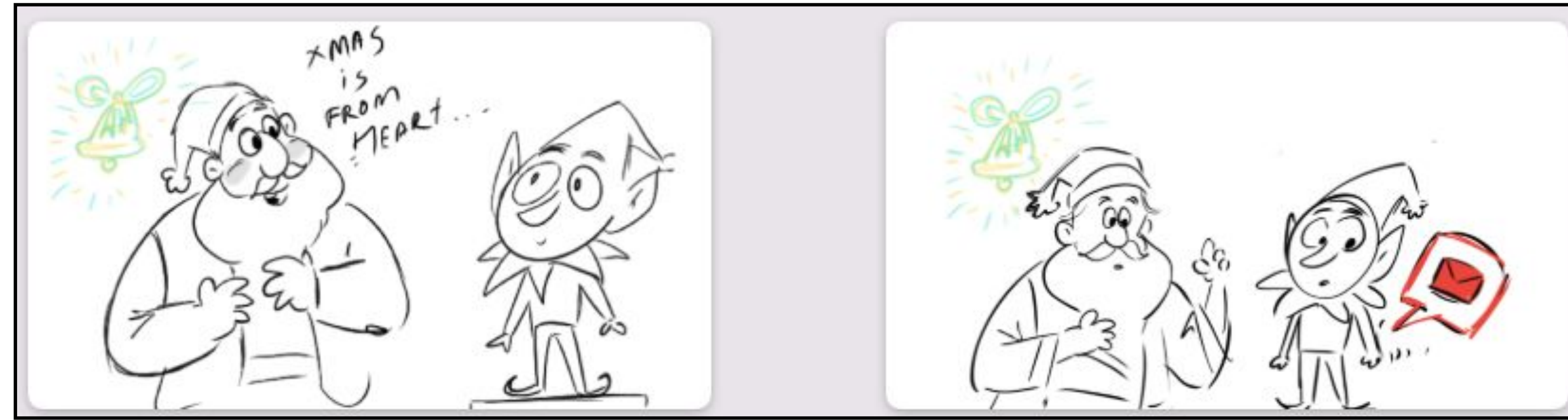
HEADLINE: Gulabi Has An Even BIGGER Disaster!

KEY CHARACTERS: Gulabi, Gulabi's MOM, and Gulabi's step-father RANA

SETTING: The family room of Gulabi's home in London.

ACTION: Getting off the phone - Rana reveals the news that the family is heading to India and they're already packed. Gulabi is devastated!

story beats



BREAK INTO TWO -

HEADLINE: Gulabi Sends Santa Her Wish, and Santa and Peter Make A Christmas Wager!

KEY CHARACTERS: Santa, Peter, Rudolf the Reindeer, and Gulabi (on a video screen)

SETTING: Santa's office at the North Pole.

ACTION: After receiving Gulabi's "Wish Video" (on-screen), Santa and Peter agree to a wager: Santa will personally hand-deliver beautiful **PRINTED PLANE TICKETS**, and Peter will use his new Christmas App to get Gulabi back to London...

story beats



BREAK INTO TWO -

SETTING: Santa's office at the North Pole.

ACTION: After receiving Gulabi's "Wish Video" (on-screen), Santa and Peter agree to a wager: Santa will personally hand-deliver beautiful **PRINTED PLANE TICKETS**, and Peter will use his new Christmas App to get Gulabi back to London...

story beats



ACT TWO -

HEADLINE: Gulabi Meets Her New Enemy - NANI!

KEY CHARACTERS: Gulabi, Gulabi's parents, NANI, SURABHI the cow

SETTING: Nani's Indian village in front of her BROKEN TRACTOR.

ACTION: Gulabi and her step-grandmother Nani meet for the first time - and instantly dislike each other!

story beats



BREAKTHROUGH! -

HEADLINE: Maybe Nani Isn't All Bad...

KEY CHARACTERS: Gulabi, Nani

SETTING: Nani's village

ACTION: Nani shocks Gulabi by revealing that she is an AMAZING Bhangra dancer - she shows Gulabi some moves!

story beats



ACT TWO - MIDPOINT -

HEADLINE: Nani Meets the Real Santa... and Kidnaps Him!

KEY CHARACTERS: Nani, Santa

SETTING: Nani's home

ACTION: After capturing and tying up an intruder (Santa), Nani puts on Santa's red robes, which magically tighten up... Nani can't get them off!

story beats



BAD GUYS CLOSE IN

HEADLINE: Santa Escapes - and Gets Lost in Punjab!

KEY CHARACTER: Santa

SETTING: Indian countryside

ACTION: After escaping Santa is confused and disoriented... without his magical robes, every person he meets in Punjab assumes he's just another LOST TOURIST!

story beats



ALL IS LOST TWIST -

HEADLINE: Gulabi Accidentally Tracks Down the Real Santa...

KEY CHARACTERS: Gulabi, Santa, Surabhi the Cow

SETTING: Street Food Market

ACTION: Gulabi bonds with the now-lost Santa over Samosas

story beats



ACT THREE -

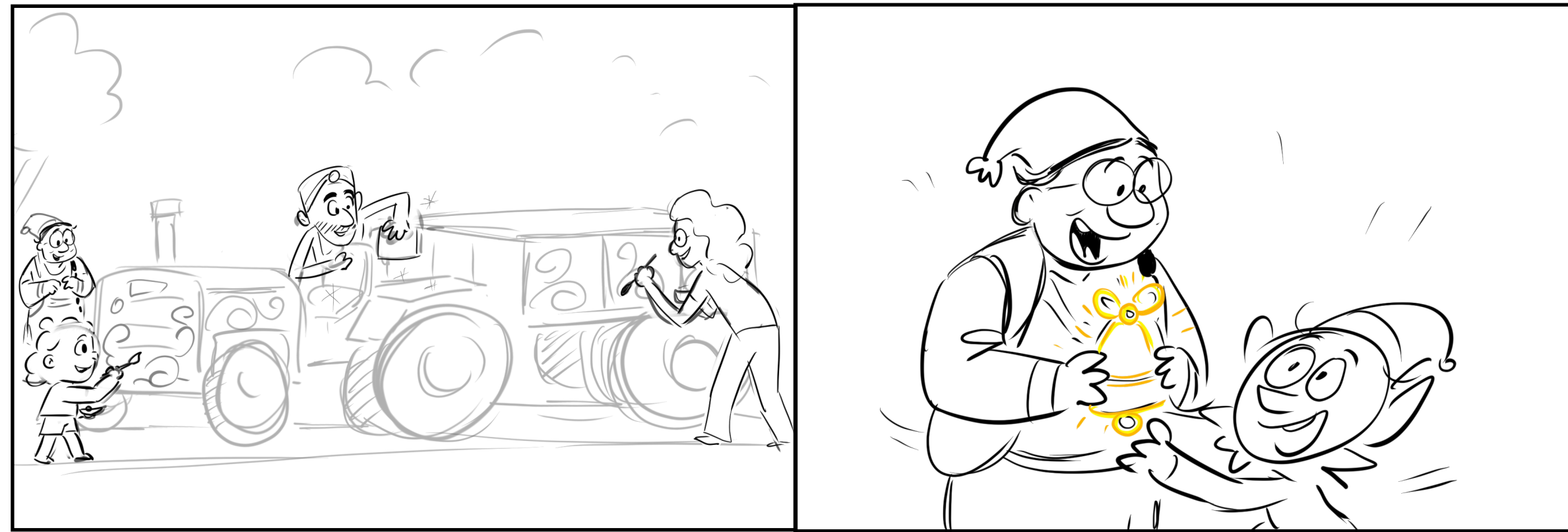
HEADLINE: Nani Faces Her Fears!

KEY CHARACTERS: Nani, Peter, Rudolf the Reindeer

SETTING: Santa's Sleigh

ACTION: Nani conquers her fear of flying and launches Santa's sleigh over the Indian countryside on her way to the North Pole.

story beats



CLIMAX TWIST -

HEADLINE: Nani and Gulabi Save Christmas!!!

KEY CHARACTERS: Gulabi, Nani, Santa, Rana, Rudolf the Reindeer, Surabhi the cow

SETTING: Nani's village square

ACTION: Nani returns from the North Pole with Santa's magical JINGLE BELLS STAFF, while Gulabi and Rana surprise Nani with her REPAIRED TRACTOR. Santa looks on proudly!

story beats



MAGICAL ENDING - FINAL IMAGE -

HEADLINE: Everyone Parties!!!

KEY CHARACTERS: Gulabi, Nani, Santa, Rana, Rudolf the Reindeer, Surabhi the cow

SETTING: Nani's village square

ACTION: After Nani uses the magic staff to return Santa's magic to him, everyone in the village breaks out in song and enthusiastic Bhangra dancing - even Santa!

director

Saraswathi Balam, aka Vani, is a writer, director and creative producer with several award winning shorts and documentaries to her credit. She is currently developing a slate of animation and live action projects based on her original stories. Under the banner of her production company, Dancing Atoms, Vani is also overseeing several hand picked projects conceived by creatives in the USA and India. Previously, Vani served as the Head of Creative Management for DreamWorks Animation in Shanghai, where she championed Chinese storyboard artists to tell authentic Chinese stories designed for global audiences. Vani was also the Executive Director of Rhythm & Hues India, a multiple Academy Award winning Animation and VFX studio. She started the studios in Asia, and managed the teams of artists and technicians that created the digital characters in "Life of Pi" (Winner - VFX Academy Award), "Snow White and the Huntsman" "Night at the Museum", "The Golden Compass" (Winner - VFX Academy Award), "X-Men", and "The Chronicles of Narnia". She also contributed to visuals of over 30 other tentpole Hollywood feature films throughout her career. Vani is extremely passionate about supporting the artistic community. She has volunteered tirelessly and served as the President of ASIFA India and Women In Animation India for 10 years. Through her efforts, she has become an indisputable icon in the history of Indian animation.



director's reel

FEARLESS

LINK: <https://filmfreeway.com/Fearless914>

PASSWORD: fear-less

JEET

LINK:

<https://filmfreeway.com/JEEt-vICTORY>

PASSWORD: TeamSpitzer

BHAUVRA

LINK: <https://filmfreeway.com/949104>

PASSWORD: MAA

SISYA

LINK: <https://filmfreeway.com/sisya>

PASSWORD: vista810

SOCH SAMAJ CHAL

LINK: [https://filmfreeway.com/ SochSamajChal](https://filmfreeway.com/SochSamajChal)

PASSWORD: TUMSSC

RAJ

LINK: <https://filmfreeway.com/raj-development>

PASSWORD: UNrealraj

executive producer



Andrew Ooi and CJ See
INSPIDEA

A co-founding partner of Inspidea, Andrew has a Master's degree in Urban Planning but gave it all up to dive into the world of cartoons because of his strong passion for film and animation. Currently the owner of 5 cats and counting, Andrew's lifetime goal is to produce an Oscar-nominated film.

CJ See is the other co-founding member of Inspidea who oversees the financial and administration side of Inspidea. He started his career as a financial analyst before taking a leap of faith with Andrew to set up Inspidea. One of CJ's many passions in life includes aviation, travelling and enjoying good food.

co-writer



Aaron Shact

Aaron Shact is a screenwriter and Emmy-nominated Creative Director with an extensive background in visual effects.

Aaron began his career at Ridley and Tony Scott's company, Scott Free, before moving to their commercial production company, RSA. Aaron went on to work creatively with several other commercial and music video directors including Spike Jonze.

From 2011 to 2018, Aaron developed a range of creative content for the visual effects company Digital Domain. His work at Digital Domain included directing commercials, writing video game trailers, creating virtual human holograms, and developing Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) experiences.

Aaron's recent work includes attending the Unreal Virtual Production Fellowship as well as writing and/or directing work for Google Home, Activision, the NBA, Charles Schwab, Nike, the UFC, and DC Films. Aaron grew up in Chicago before moving to Los Angeles to attend the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California.

creative development assistant



Disha Agrawal

A young upcoming storyboard artist and passionate film maker, She strives to make every thing to seem integrated wither development work.

She works with dancing Atoms and creatively contributes on projects. She is currently studying design.



treatment

ACT I

- OPENING IMAGE - Meet our hero, GULABI, as she dances alone in her bedroom
- In a snowy suburb of London, GULABI (8-years-old) records herself practicing for her audition to be the lead dancer in her town's 'CHRISTMAS JUBILEE' festival.
- Gulabi's big WANT: She's finally old enough to audition to dance with "Santa" . It's her dream - she is so excited!
- PROBLEM - Gulabi is a klutz and can't dance (yet...) What Gulabi really needs is a teacher who can show her some sweet moves...
- SET-UP (Part 1) - GULABI at home and school
- Gulabi lives at home with her mom and her new stepdad, RANA (It's awkward - Gulabi is still getting used to the situation).
- At school, Gabi shows off a video of her practicing her Christmas dance audition.
- The "MEAN GIRLS" CLIQUE mocks Gulabi's audition reel... this is a disaster!
- SET-UP (Part 2) - At the North Pole, the REAL SANTA argues with his Chief Elf, PETER
- It's only ONE WEEK until Christmas - But kids these days only want APPS for their phones, tablets, and computers!
- Santa HATES apps! They aren't real presents! Kids now are so impatient and don't understand what giving is all about.
- "Does no one these days understand the spirit of Christmas!?!"
- Even worse, If this trend continues, Santa's toy factories will shut down - Santa is NOT going to let that happen!
- Santa's big WANT: "How do I get kids to understand that the spirit of Christmas is about the giving - not just instantly downloading these crummy apps!?!"
- Enter Santa's elf assistant, PETER TOMTENNIS - Peter is a schemer and trickster, but he gets the job done (and ultimately wants to do the right thing).
- PETER'S WANT: How can he impress the big guy and move up in Santa's operation?
- ... But Santa is beginning to worry that even Peter doesn't understand the spirit of Christmas. What is he going to do?
- Sneaking the RULES of Santa's Magic into the story

- As Santa frets and Peter schemes, we learn how Santa's MAGIC is tied to his famous red CHRISTMAS ROBES and the magic of the CHRISTMAS JINGLE- BELLS (think like Gandolf's wizard staff adorned with silver bells - this is the magical source of Santa's powers).
- Santa and Peter chat while the big guy dresses in his magic robes for another Christmas (think a superhero armoring up in a super-suit).
- It's all very impressive and ceremonial... but Santa is distracted this year with other things on his mind...
- REVEAL - Peter has secretly developed his own CHRISTMAS APP that will handle all of Santa's tasks (letters to Santa, delivery logistics, etc) - How can Peter convince Santa to buy in?
- CATALYST - Gulabi returns home to a HUGE DISASTER!
- A call from a HOSPITAL IN PUNJAB reveals Gulabi's step-grandmother (whom she has never met) was in a tractor accident out in her fields and is in the hospital!
- Rana is a momma's boy - so there's no question that Gulabi's family will have to fly immediately to India...
- Rana even surprises Gulabi and her mom by exclaiming how he can finally get a "proper" haircut from his mom... Rana might be more of an "eternal child" than they suspected...
- The emergency trip means Gulabi is going to miss the Christmas Jubilee and her chance to dance with Santa!
- DEBATE - There's only one person who can help Gulabi now!
- Gulabi, of course, does not want to go to India.
- She tries everything to stay: negotiation, compromise, protest, outright rebellion.
- This step-grandmother (AKA, an old woman Gulabi has never met) is actively ruining her opportunity to ever be on stage with the greatest icon ever in the history of kid culture... SANTA CLAUS!
- As far as Gulabi is concerned, this makes her step-grandmother the enemy!
- In a panic, Gulabi decides to reach out directly to Santa -

- If Gulabi is going to be forced to go to India, then all she wants for Christmas is plane tickets home - and most importantly Gulabi needs these tickets BEFORE Christmas so she can get home for the Jubilee (this will be important later).
- As Gulabi makes her video message for Santa, she vents her frustration - "I wish this step-grandmother I've never heard of didn't exist!"
- ("Wait, was that too mean?" - but it's too late now, Gulabi already hit send on her computer and the wish is off to Santa.)
- Gulabi loses the battle against her parents - Mom and Dad promise: Christmas won't be ruined... it'll just be in India...
- Gulabi finds herself on a plane to India. Miserable.
- BREAK INTO TWO - Peter makes a wager with Santa... and conspires to get him to India!
- Never one to miss a chance to move up - Peter intercepts Gulabi's Christmas wish on his experimental Christmas App.
- PETER'S SCHEME: Peter reveals to Santa how the Christmas App handles Gulabi's wish - AND can send the (electronic) plane tickets with only the push of a few buttons...
- SANTA IS APPALLED! - He insists Peter is missing the entire point of Christmas spirit! No apps! (Of course, Peter argues that everyone uses Apps for plane tickets these days...)
- SOLUTION - Peter and Santa agree to a wager to test Peter's hypothesis:
- Santa is going to personally hand-deliver beautiful PRINTED PLANE TICKET to Gulabi before Christmas to show how important delivering actual presents is...
- Peter schemes to make sure Santa does not bring his magic Jingle-Bells Staff on this mission...
- With no way to summon Christmas magic - they head off to India... What could go wrong?

ACT II part I

- FUN & GAMES (Part 1) - GULABI MEETS NANI
- Here's the emotional core of our story: The "love story" between Gulabi and Nani.
- Like any good love story - there's an iconic meeting, an initial period of friction, hints that maybe they are good together, an unexpected "breakup", and then a reunion... Here's how it works out for Gulabi and Nani...
- FISH OUT OF WATER - Gulabi can't figure out India.
- Gulabi is not only frustrated because her want is being thwarted (dancing with Santa), but she also gets quite the culture shock in India.
- The sights, sounds, smells, colors, food, music, and languages are all foreign to this kid who's spent all of her life in the UK.
- As Gulabi tries to decipher local television, the NEWS details a ring of nationwide SANTA SUIT THEFTS. Rana scrambles to explain this story in a way that keeps Gulabi believing that Santa is "real".
- TWIST - Gulabi meets Nani, and they instantly dislike each other!
- They meet Gulabi's step-grandmother (NANI) working the fields - next to the tractor she "fell off"... Which is true - mostly...
- Nani has the ARM CAST to prove it...
- But what got lost in translation (deliberately?) is that a simple broken arm would never be enough to stop Nani. The lady is a tank.
- Gulabi expects her grandmother to be like the plump little aunties she knows back in the UK. But to her surprise...
- Instead, NANI gallops up to them at the Haveli riding an enormous white horse and followed by her companion-pet cow, SURABHI.
- Gulabi learns Nani's grift - Gulabi gets a tour of Nani's village and grandma's agenda reveals itself:

- Nani is turning 70 and wants her son to stay in India. Oh, snap...
- Even worse - Nani is a MASTER at humorously playing up her “bad” hearing... that’s an advanced-level old-person manipulation skill!
- Gulabi WANTS to go back to the UK. Grandma WANTS her son to stay in India. Conflict is transactional: Grandma is in the way of Gulabi’s want, and Gulabi’s pressure to GET BACK TO LONDON is in the way of Grandma’s want.
- SOLUTIONS: Gulabi subverts every experience in this amazing new part of the world to serve one goal - GO HOME. She does not want or care to bond or empathize with Nani.
- TENSIONS ESCALATE - Gulabi gets swept up into her stepdad’s family drama.
- Gulabi was hoping that when Rana saw Nani, he would give a “Hi - okay, you seem great - we’re heading back to the UK!” - but he has the opposite reaction.
- Nani’s injury came from a falling off her DECORATED MAHINDRA TRACTOR which is still broken (the cause of Nani’s arm being in a cast).
- To Gulabi’s frustration - Rana is obligated to stay now (and repair the tractor)...
- Of course, Nani merely sees Rana as her “little boy”. The old lady has NO faith that her sweet son can repair ANYTHING, let alone her beloved tractor.
- Gulabi doesn’t understand why this stupid tractor is even important at all (yet)...
- Nani gripes - the TRACTOR ENGINE PART she needs to fix her beloved tractor is impossible to find... (hmmm... Gulabi takes note).
- As they watch Nani even curses out an incompetent tractor repair-man -
- “A real Indian knows how to fix anything!!!” Nani sneers!
- TWIST - Nani is going to win over Gulabi and convince her to stay in India!
- Nani learns of her step granddaughter’s WANT - to dance with Santa.
- It sounds insane to Nani. Santa is not a big deal in this part of the world.
- As Gulabi’s urgency ramps up so she can find a way home, Nani pivots to connect by engaging in Gulabi’s Santa obsession.
- Nani even helps Gulabi decorate a CHRISTMAS TREE.

- Gulabi relents... maybe Nani isn't so bad?
- **BREAKTHROUGH!** - Nani and Gulabi connect on a personal level!
- As the family tours Nani's farmland, Gulabi overhears her grandmother confessing to her beloved pet cow (Surabhi) the real reason she never came to visit Gulabi's family in the UK - The same reason she wants her son (and family) to stay in Punjab...
- Nani is terrified of flying! - It's her worst fear!
- For the first time, Gulabi begins to think of Nani as a human being...
- Gulabi and Nani start connecting on a deeper level and Gulabi's tough facade finally cracks (a little) - Gulabi admits she can't dance!
- Nani springs a surprise
- Nani insists that Gulabi learn **BAGRA** dancing - the **BEST** dancing there is! And perfect for Gulabi's obsession for dancing with Santa!
- To Gulabi's embarrassment, Nani gets them both involved in a humorous "dance-off" in the village square...Ugh... old people, right?
- Nani dances last. At first, she seems stiff and frail... and then she **SHOCKS GULABI** -
- Nani is an **AMAZING** Bhangra dancer - she can show Gulabi some moves!
- To Nani's own surprise - she's falling in love with this little granddaughter she never knew she wanted!
- **NANI LAUNCHES HER PLAN** - Get Gulabi out of the house and create the "Best Christmas EVER" for her new Granddaughter.
- There are only **THREE DAYS LEFT** before Christmas.
- As a final surprise to win Gulabi over, Nani secretly contacts a costume company to rent the "World's Best Santa Costume"...
- Nani arranges for Gulabi's family to be invited by a Guru to visit the nearby city of **AMRITSAR** for a few days so that she can decorate her house. This is Rana's chance to show Gulabi the **GOLDEN TEMPLE**.
- Stepdad and stepdaughter finally begin connecting... and Rana explains why the tractor is so important to Nani.
- Turns out, it was a final gift to Nani from Rana's father before he died. The tractor is a treasured family heirloom.
- Back at her village - Nani gets measured and everything for the costume, but learns these costumes are in high demand...
- Nani is told to be aware that there are some sketchy people out there trying to **STEAL** these costumes from unsuspecting suckers...
- **B-STORY** - **SANTA** gets lost in Punjab
- Meanwhile, the real Santa and Peter arrive just outside of Amritsar in Santa's **MAGIC SLEIGH** (led by **RUDOLF**, the famous red-nosed reindeer).

- Since there's no snow in Amritsar, SANTA'S MAGIC SLEIGH immediately gets stuck in the mud in a field - and begins to attract a crowd.
- Santa leaves Peter to the sleigh and heads off to deliver Gulabi's early Christmas present...
- With Santa gone, Peter goes off to find Gulabi (who he can track on his Christmas app) so he can win his bet against Santa...
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ACT II part 2

- MIDPOINT - Nani meets the real Santa... and kidnaps him!
- Santa finally locates Nani's home. He delivers Gulabi's PLANE TICKET under the tree... but he BANGS into the couch...
- Ever vigilant - Nani wakes up - There's an intruder in her house!!! She corners him... thinks it's the guy delivering the suit. But Santa refuses to give her his suit...
- Happiness curdles into suspicion... "This must be one of those guys going around stealing Santa suits!"
- Nani is no one's fool - she and Santa scuffle and she eventually knocks the big guy out. Job well done!
- Nani wrangles Santa's robes off him, ties Santa up, and then tries on the "costume".
- Uh oh... The Robes immediately (and magically) fasten up... Nani can't get them (or the hat) off!
- Nani dashes out to find the police and take care of this strange intruder who she has tied up!
- TWIST - Peter's plan backfires!
- Peter finds Gulabi and activates the Christmas App to get her digital plane tickets...
- But Gulabi - a modern 21st-century kid - takes one look at Rana's phone - and deletes them!
- Gulabi: "I think your phone got hacked."
- Rana: "Yeah, that must be a scam."
- COMPLICATIONS - Nani runs into Peter - who reveals a much bigger problem!
- On the way to the police, Nani runs into Peter the Elf who realizes his plan has gone completely off the rails... but maybe he can manipulate the situation to his advantage.
- Peter explains - by putting on the suit - Nani stole Santa's magic and has control over Christmas!!!
- Even worse - Nani can't just "give back" Santa's suit - she needs to RING Santa's JINGLE-BELL STAFF to recharge Santa's magic and fix the damage... And the Jingle-Bells are at Santa's home at the NORTH POLE.
- TWIST - But Peter blocked any of the other elves at the North Pole from helping Santa win their wager!

- If Nani can't get Santa to ring the Jingle-Bells, recharge his magic, and get his suit back, there won't be anyone to deliver presents on Christmas Eve!
- Christmas Eve is only THREE days away - THE CLOCK IS TICKING!
- PROBLEMS ESCALATE - Santa Escaped!
- Nani and Peter return to the house to find Santa gone! Where is he! This is a disaster!
- Even worse - Gulabi and her family return home at that moment.
- Nani can't let Gulabi know she's ruining Christmas!
- BAD GUYS CLOSE IN
- SANTA ON THE LAMB: The police show up at Nani's house looking for the intruder, but the real Santa is long gone and Nani and Peter slip out as well.
- MISADVENTURES OF SANTA: Meanwhile - Santa himself is confused and disoriented... without his magical robes, every person he meets in Punjab assumes he's just another LOST TOURIST!
- GULABI GETS HER CHRISTMAS PRESENT - WITH A TWIST!
- Gulabi finds the PLANE TICKET under the tree! Her Christmas wish!
- Proof that Santa got her message!
- But Nani is missing and the Police are here - OH SHIT!!!
- DID GULABI'S WISH ABOUT NANI COME TRUE?
- This is all her fault!
- Seeing Stepdad's panic (play this comedic... the funny momma's boy type)... Gulabi decides to keep her clues to herself... and SOLVE THIS CASE because it's HER RESPONSIBILITY TO SORT THIS OUT!
- Rudolf & Surabhi - Elsewhere in the Village, Rudolf tries (and fails) to impress Surabhi by showing off... He is developing a hopeless crush and none of his magical charms are working!
- ALL IS LOST - Gulabi discovers the kidnapping

- With only TWO DAYS left before Christmas - Gulabi finds Nani - and learns the truth... Santa didn't kidnap Nani - it was the other way around - Nani KIDNAPPED SANTA and then LOST HIM!
- And even worse - by doing all these "Santa tasks" while wearing his magic robes - NANI IS STEALING SANTA'S POWERS!
- Only Nani can fly Santa's sleigh to get the Magic Jingle Bell Staff.
- If Nani won't fly the sleigh, there won't be another CHRISTMAS!
- Gulabi bursts into tears and runs away...
- TWIST - Gulabi accidentally tracks down the real Santa...
- COMEDIC VISUAL - It turns out Surabhi the cow has a nose like a bloodhound! Gulabi uses Surabhi tracking skills to try to find Peter... in a comedic montage, Surabhi manages to lead Gulabi all the way back to Amritsar City.
- Instead of Peter - Gulabi inadvertently finds Santa at the Golden Temple during a beautiful display of candles glinting off the surrounding lake -
- BUT - Gulabi doesn't recognize that he's Santa (without his famous costume, she assumes he's a Western tourist, like her).
- As they chat Santa eventually explains,
- "When you have your family, it's like Christmas every day".
- Gulabi is not so sure... with her plane tickets in hand, she heads to the airport.
- BREAK INTO THREE - Everyone gets what they want, but not what they NEED
- Gulabi can fly home, Nani can keep her son nearby, Santa learned why kids use modern technology - but he lost his magic!
- Everyone got exactly what they wanted... and they are realizing that this journey showed them what they really needed...

ACT III

- CLIMAX - Nani faces her fears!
- With only ONE DAY left until Christmas Eve - Nani finally knows what she has to do...
- She's going to use Santa's magic to face her fear of flying!!
- Nani flies to the North Pole and finds Santa's magic JINGLE-BELL STAFF!
- But there is still one more task Nani wants to accomplish before she returns home...
- TWIST - Gulabi sells the plane ticket for a cause...
- Gulabi realizes how much she has learned about Nani's village, its people, and its culture during her time in India.
- Gulabi uses her newfound street-smarts to go door-to-door and locate Nani's TRACTOR ENGINE PART!
- Gulabi purchases the tractor part with the money she earned by selling Santa's Plane Ticket present.
- As Gulabi returns to the village, she bonds with her Stepdad - who finally shows his worth!
- A smart one - that Gulabi! Rana is so impressed by Gulabi's gesture towards his mother that he helps Gulabi to repair Nani's tractor.
- Gulabi and Rana bond and finally respect each other!
- Nani returns with Santa's Jingle-Bell staff - and discovers that Gulabi and Rana fixed her tractor!
- But HOW? - Nani wants to know!
- "Because a real Indian knows how to fix anything!!!", Gulabi replies!
- Nani & Peter finally understand the 'Spirit of Christmas'
- It turns out, Nani has also returned to the village with her own surprise for Gulabi: FIRST CLASS PLANE TICKETS for Gulabi and her family to return home to London!
- At first Gulabi (and even Rana) don't get it - Doesn't Nani want them to stay?

- Of course she does! But Nani has finally understood the lesson she needed to learn: Love is going to keep their family together, no matter where in the world they are!
- Santa BEAMS with pride: Everyone gave presents that showed their love for each other! This was the true 'Spirit of Christmas' all along!
- And there's still time for Santa to deliver all the world's presents before Christmas Eve!
- Nani returns Santa's magical Jingle-Bells to him as everyone in the village breaks out in song and enthusiastic Bhangra dancing!
- Santa RINGS the Jingle-Bells - and the magical sound joins into the rhythmic beating of the Bhangra drums.
- Nani begins to dance and even (humorously) throws off her arm cast - what a trickster!
- Nani gestures for Gulabi to dance with her, and after a moment of connection - they motion for Santa to join them!
- Gulabi finally gets to dance with Santa!
- As they dance, something AMAZING happens...
- After Santa joins them - MAGICAL LIGHT FLARES - and surrounds Nani and Santa - Santa's Robes return to him - only now they are patterned in spectacular Indian fabric designs.
- Surabhi & Rudolf finally connect!
- Upon his heroic return, Surabhi gives Rudolf a big smooch... Rudolf's face sheepishly turns red (but this time it's his cheeks instead of his magic nose!)
- Everyone got what they wanted... AND what they NEEDED!
- And Nani even found a new flying companion for visiting the UK... this Santa guy sure knows how to travel in style!
- FINAL IMAGE - GULABI DANCING
- In an echo of how we first met Gulabi while she was dancing alone and practicing her audition, we end with her dancing once again...
- ... We even get to see (via the internet) that the Mean Girls back in the UK watch Gulabi jealously... take that!
- Gulabi and Nani dance - surrounded by their loving family, and partying with the Real Santa!



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A fantastical holiday film

by Sarawathi Balgam

Comedy Drama
80 minutes

Wga registered

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THANK
YOU!