

PINK CITY SKIES

FICTION

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CANADA

LOGLINE When seventeen-year-old Nikhil, a young South Asian man, is caught by his father having sex with his boyfriend Ajay, he leaves home and spends the night roaming the city streets where he experiences poignant encounters as well as the mysticism of the Hindu gods.

PRODUCER **LESLIE HOPE & TINA
VACALOPOULOS**

GENRE **DRAMA**

DIRECTOR **MAYA BASTIAN**

BUDGET **1M CAD**

LANGUAGE **ENGLISH AND HINDI**

FINANCING
SECURED **IN CONVERSATIONS**

Pink City Skies

A Drama Feature Film

Writer: Jagjiwan Sohal

Director: Maya Bastian

STORY SYNOPSIS:

It's a late summer afternoon when Nikhil, a teenage South Asian artist fascinated by Hindu mythology, and his boyfriend Ajay are caught in a passionate embrace by Nikhil's dad, the culturally conservative Rajiv. This results in a heated confrontation involving Nikhil's mother Mira and his younger sister Diya, ending with Nikhil escaping from his family's suburban neighbourhood, making his way to downtown Toronto.

As the sun starts to set, Nikhil begins to have visions of Hindu gods coming to life all around him. He has no idea why he's seeing these fantastical images, and guided by the presence of the different deities, Nikhil heads deeper into the city to rendezvous with Ajay. Ajay then reveals that he himself ran away from home a few months ago and he's been staying with an older gay couple, Sunil and Daniel, at their brownstone. Ajay suggests Nikhil come live with them but when Ajay and Nikhil have an argument, Sunil and Daniel ask Nikhil to leave. The heartbroken Nikhil soon finds himself in a mystically eerie Toronto park where he comes across the quirky Angie, a 19-year-old student coming back from Japanese sword practice. Angie takes a liking to Nikhil and brings him to her home, where they attempt to become intimate. However, Nikhil can't perform sexually and leaves the confused Angie.

Soon after, Nikhil finds his way to The Village, Toronto's "gay" district. After wandering into a karaoke bar and meeting a South Asian drag queen named Na Ma Slay, who tries to connect with him over shared trauma, Nikhil becomes more withdrawn as he agonizes over his homosexuality. Nikhil then looks for a place to spend the rest of the night, ending up at a condo construction site. He comes across a kind Muslim security guard named Kazmi and the two share a meal. While Kazmi does his *fajr* morning prayers, Nikhil secretly heads to the top floor where he contemplates killing himself while pleading with the Hindu gods to help him. The gods do not appear and even though thunderous night skies mirror the torment inside of Nikhil, he ultimately chooses not to end his life and makes the decision to return home to his family.

As the sun rises, Nikhil arrives home, and to his shock, Rajiv bursts into tears upon seeing him. But instead of a heartfelt apology, Rajiv tells Nikhil that he knows what is best and to always listen to him. Nikhil is devastated, believing his father will never accept him for who he is. He returns to his bedroom and embarks on a new art project. With the magic of the Hindu gods inspiring him, Nikhil sketches about the different experiences and the Hindu deities he encountered during the previous night's journey. And through this, he gains an understanding of his identity as a gay South Asian man, giving him a sense of hope and optimism for the future.

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