



## PRESS RELEASE

### Pre-arranged marriage Scandal!

#### (Mother Sumita makes plans for Nadia)

**TX: Tuesday 8 April (Scandal! Monday to Thursday at 7.30pm)**

Sumita Nahrain (Usha Khan) seeks out her daughter after rumours in the Indian community – and in the gossip rags – about the relationship between Scandal! Editor Nadia (Sorisha Naidoo) and NZH Acting CEO, Daniel Nyathi (Sello Maake ka Ncube).

She regards Daniel as an unsuitable partner for Nadia: he's much older, he's married, he's black, and he has a bad reputation. The glamorous, authoritarian head of a rival publishing empire has been overseas for a while. Now that she's back, she plans to put her daughter's life back on track – with some attempted matchmaking.

Sumita married Nadia's father for love, but they divorced as a result of his messing around and hurting her hugely. She refused the man her parents picked for her. He went on to marry a friend of hers, and has turned out to be the most fantastic husband. Sumita doesn't want her daughter to make the same mistake.

Nadia and Daniel have in fact broken up. However, a strong electric attraction still exists between them. All-knowing, ever-forceful Mama embarks on an all-out manipulative plan to set up 30-year-old Nadia with Kamlesh – a former childhood boyfriend. Will an arranged marriage – with all the traditional customs – be the outcome?

"I had such a nice connection to Sorisha, who plays Nadia, so I had a terrific time playing Sumita. I just wanted to be Sorisha's mother for real, and many times I even told her I wanted to adopt her," laughs Usha.

"Overbearing Sumita always wants to be in charge and I guess that's because of the business woman in her. She was fantastic to play. The script gave me a lot of scope to interpret the character. She has strength, she is modern, yet she is a bit traditional - especially in the way she tries to control her daughter," shares Usha.

It's hard to believe that, this year, Usha is turning 71-years-young (as she puts it). Usha went to school in Verulam in Kwa-Zulu Natal, and qualified as a teacher in Durban. "After that I worked in Natal for a few years until I left for Zambia in 1964 due to the political landscape of the country and the pending Rivonia Trials."

Although she was offered an administrative job in the then Indian Education Department, she turned it down. She chose to stay in Zambia for 28 years until she decided to return to South Africa. During that time away, she also travelled and taught in Canada and Australia, delving into acting in the early 80's. Usha says she appeared in the first Indian film to be made in South Africa, *The Web of Persuasion*.

"Before starring in that project I had never in my wildest dreams thought of becoming an actress. I had no formal training. My life changed immediately after that. I presented Horoscopes on the then newly formed TV station, m-net, and that was followed by many bit parts in various TV shows: *City Ses'la*, *Mthinzini.com*, *Home Affairs*, and *Thetha Msawawa* being the most recent ones before my guest role on *Scandal!*

"I think I'm as headstrong as Sumita. A very striking difference between us is the way she dresses... I'm more of a sari person and don't usually do my hair as she wears hers...plus, she's a mother and I'm not...but when you've been a teacher for as long as I was, you kind of get the hang of motherhood when you have to deal with up to 50 kids a day!"

In her spare time Usha writes poetry. She has had pieces published in five books: *Pink Socks in Heaven*, *Soulful Seeking*, *Departing Dawn*, *Transcending Moments*, and *Reminiscence*.

She is also currently working on her own anthology of poems and is also writing a biographical and a fictional book. "Problem is, I don't type my work, so I have a lump on my thumb! I also think faster and with more clarity when writing with a pen," shares Usha.

"I don't have a cell phone, and this year my intention is to become computer literate – please help! My motto has always been, 'never stop learning'. I love cooking, reading, and music. I always thought I had a weight problem, but am now comfortable in my own body.

"Last year, I received the best 70th birthday gift when I attended the South African premier of, "The World Unseen", an international movie, shot in Cape Town, in which I had a part alongside Lisa Ray (of Water fame), Darvin Dabass (of Monsoon Wedding fame), and Colin Moss. I also attended the Toronto Film Festival.

"I start my day with very simple breathing exercises followed by a prayer, meditation, and reading as it allows me to be still and centre myself.

"My advice for the younger generation: stay away from alcohol and drugs! And make sure you live a healthy and balanced life. Remember that happiness is not having what you want, but wanting what you have."

In between TV and films, Usha has worked in a Persian carpet shop and studied to be a consultant for a French cosmetic house.