

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

THE WRONG BIRTHDAY CAKE

3 Male (M + M + M) | Genre: Pure Comedy | Runtime: 6 - 9 Mins

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE: Teen doston ki birthday planning ek cramped apartment mein tab pure chaos mein badal jaati hai jab unhe realize hota hai ki cake, gift, aur celebration sab galat aadmi ke liye tha. Ek simple misunderstanding, ek auto-play voice note, aur unki collective memory lapse milkar ek embarrassing situation ko pure comedy mein badal dete hain.
DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT: • Visual tone: warm, intimate, slightly claustrophobic comedy with a lived-in apartment feel. • The humor should come from stillness, pauses, eye contact, and escalating confusion rather than broad physical gags. • Keep the camera close enough to capture micro-reactions: suspicion, denial, realization, and collective embarrassment. • Pacing should start slow and awkward, then tighten with each reveal until the voice note lands as the final comic punch. • The apartment itself should feel like a silent fourth participant: cramped, under-decorated, and mildly judgmental. • Lighting should remain practical and warm, with the flickering candle acting as a tiny emotional metronome for the scene.
CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS: • character: Arjun age: 32 look: Suspiciously hopeful, slightly formal in a coat, expressive face that shifts quickly from confidence to confusion. dramatic_arc: He begins convinced the surprise is for him, then slowly realizes he has misread every clue. His arc is the emotional center of the comedy, moving from self-assured assumption to embarrassed acceptance. • character: Vikram age: 34 look: Serious, controlled, and a little defensive; positioned near the counter like he is managing the situation even when he is not. dramatic_arc: He tries to maintain authority and logic, but each answer he gives makes the situation more absurd. He ends as the deadpan voice of practical surrender. • character: Imran age: 31 look: Busy, slightly fidgety, adjusting paper plates and handling props; the most physically active of the three. dramatic_arc: He starts as the one trying to keep the party moving, then becomes the accidental source of clues and confusion. By the end, he embraces the absurdity and helps convert embarrassment into comedy.
FESTIVAL & AUDIENCE TARGET: Ideal for Short Film Festivals, Indie Showcases, and YouTube Creator Channels. Focus on tight performances, sound design, and authentic Hinglish dialogue delivery.

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ART, WARDROBE & PROP MASTER

1. SET DESIGN & SPATIAL DEPTH PLAN: A cramped apartment dining area at night, built to feel narrow and slightly cluttered. The dining table should dominate the center frame, with just enough space for three chairs and the cake. Behind them, a sofa sits low in the background with one half-deflated balloon hanging awkwardly. The kitchen counter should be visible as a secondary layer, holding paper plates, plastic forks, and a gift bag. The wall should have balloons that are visibly slipping down, creating a subtle visual joke throughout the scene. Textures should feel domestic and worn: matte walls, slightly shiny balloon plastic, cardboard cake box, paper note edges, and a soft fabric sofa. The room should feel warm but not polished, like a real apartment where a party was assembled in a hurry.
2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY: • character: Arjun costume: A coat with a collar he keeps adjusting, suggesting he dressed with some expectation of importance. Keep it simple and everyday, with no flashy party look. continuity_notes: Collar should remain slightly fidgeted and imperfect throughout, matching his growing discomfort. • character: Vikram costume: Casual indoor clothing that reads practical and neutral, allowing his serious expressions to carry the scene. continuity_notes: No major wardrobe change; he should look steady and unbothered even as the situation collapses. • character: Imran costume: Casual homewear suitable for someone handling plates and party setup, with a relaxed but active feel. continuity_notes: Should remain functional and slightly busy-looking, as if he has been doing small setup tasks before the scene begins.
3. HERO PROPS MASTER CHECKLIST (PRACTICAL ON-SET ASSETS): • prop: Small cake visual_details: Placed at the center of the dining table, with a single flickering birthday candle and icing that includes the written name references seen in the script. • prop: Birthday candle visual_details: One lone candle, visibly flickering and nearly finished by the end of the scene. • prop: Cake label visual_details: Must read exactly: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, RAKESH!" • prop: Gift bag visual_details: A simple gift bag on or near the kitchen counter, with a tag that reads: "FOR RAKESH — FROM V." • prop: Folded note visual_details: Paper note found near the cake box, with the line: "PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO BRING THE CANDLES. - I." • prop: Counter note visual_details: Handwritten note on the kitchen counter: "TABLE SET KAR DENA. PARTY 9 BAJE. - I." • prop: Small card visual_details: Inside the cake box, card front reads: "WITH LOVE, YOUR FAVORITE ROOMMATES." • prop: Card back visual_details: Back side must read: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MR. IQBAL." • prop: Cake knife visual_details: Picked up only after the reveal; used to cut the cake at the end. • prop: Phone visual_details: Placed on the table and used for the accidental auto-play voice note.
4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA): Keep makeup natural and minimal, but allow subtle sweat and heat buildup from the warm ceiling light. The candle flicker should create tiny shifting highlights on faces, especially during close-ups. As embarrassment escalates, add slight facial tension: tightened lips, widened eyes, and micro-expressions of panic or disbelief. No heavy SFX is needed; the only visual effect is the candle flame's diminishing intensity and the room's increasingly awkward stillness.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **character:** Arjun | **super_objective:** To be the person whose birthday matters most in the room. | **subtext:** He is trying to confirm his importance without directly asking for it, and every clue he sees is filtered through that need.
- **character:** Vikram | **super_objective:** To preserve control and avoid looking foolish. | **subtext:** He keeps answering with confidence because admitting uncertainty would collapse his authority in front of the others.
- **character:** Imran | **super_objective:** To keep the situation moving and prevent the awkwardness from becoming too obvious. | **subtext:** He is improvising constantly, using humor and practical actions to cover the fact that he is also confused.

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

ARJUN
Yeh surprise hai na?

VIKRAM
Obviously surprise hai.

ARJUN
Rakesh kaun hai?

IMRAN
Ya cake ka ex.

ARJUN
Gift Rakesh ko?



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: CINEMATOGRAPHY & SOUND DEPT**1. CINEMATOGRAPHY CONCEPT & LENS PALETTE:**

Use intimate, observational framing with a preference for medium close-ups and inserts that capture labels, notes, and reactions. The camera should feel slightly trapped in the room with the characters, reinforcing the cramped comedy. Lens choices should favor normal to slightly longer focal lengths for facial compression and awkward proximity, with occasional insert shots for the cake label, gift tag, and notes. Movement philosophy: minimal but purposeful, with slow pushes during realizations and still frames during silence to let the joke land.

2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC:

- 1) Base layer: warm ceiling practical as the dominant source, creating a cozy but slightly flat domestic look.
- 2) Accent layer: the flickering birthday candle adds a small, unstable highlight on faces and the cake, especially in close-up inserts.
- 3) Reveal layer: maintain the same warm environment but allow subtle shadow emphasis during the label and voice note moments so the embarrassment feels more exposed without changing the realism.

3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE:

Room tone should be intimate and slightly hollow, with the ceiling fan's soft hum and the candle's faint crackle always present. Foley should include paper rustle, gift bag handling, chair shifts, cake box opening, and the knife being picked up at the end. The key jangle outside should be crisp and attention-grabbing, followed by the accidental phone auto-play voice note. Keep the acoustic profile dry and close, as if the audience is seated at the table with them.

4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE:

Use a warm, amber-heavy LUT with soft contrast and gentle highlights to preserve the cozy nighttime feel. Skin tones should remain natural, while the background balloons and wall should sit slightly muted so the cake and faces dominate. The palette should lean toward yellows, soft browns, and dim off-whites, with the candle flame adding a tiny point of lively orange. Avoid overly saturated comedy colors; the humor should come from situation and performance, not a flashy grade.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 09:00	Set dressing, balloon placement, cake table prep, and prop continuity check	Art, Props
09:00 - 10:00	Lighting rig with warm ceiling practical and candle test	Camera, Gaffer, Grip
10:00 - 11:00	Blocking rehearsal and insert shot planning for labels, notes, and card	Director, Camera, Cast
11:00 - 12:30	Dialogue coverage and reaction close-ups	Camera, Sound, Cast
12:30 - 13:00	Voice note playback shot and final cake-cutting beats	Camera, Sound, Cast

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:
Shoot in one real apartment with practical lights and minimal dressing. Use one table, one cake, and a few key props to carry the entire scene. Keep the camera mostly static to reduce setup time and preserve comedic timing. Use natural room sound and a single phone playback instead of adding complex sound design. For the slipping balloons, tape them loosely so they can visually sag without needing effects. Capture all insert shots in the same setup window to avoid relighting. Let performance and editing do the comedy rather than production scale.

• **Mandatory Licensing:** Completely free for student/commercial production with on-screen credit: 'Story & Screenplay by Story Dil Se (storydilse.in)'.

