

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

THREE SEATS AWAY

3 Male (M + M + M) | Genre: Emotional Drama | Runtime: 6 - 9 Mins

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE: A dawn hospital waiting room becomes the battleground for a fractured family when a father and his two estranged sons are forced to confront years of silence, blame, and unspoken grief. As a handwritten note from their mother surfaces, the men finally begin to see each other not as enemies, but as brothers.
DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT: • Visual tone: sterile, suspended, intimate realism with pale blue dawn light and one buzzing tube light creating emotional coldness that slowly softens. • Thematic depth: silence as the real antagonist; the scene is about inherited distance, misread sacrifice, and the cost of never asking each other the truth. • Pacing: restrained and dialogue-led at first, then progressively tighter emotional beats, ending in a quiet release rather than a dramatic catharsis. • Performance style: micro-expressions, controlled breathing, and small physical actions carry the emotional weight more than overt melodrama. • Blocking philosophy: the empty chair is a visual wound; the final seating arrangement resolves the family geometry without needing a hug. • Camera language: observational, close, and patient—letting pauses, glances, and object interactions reveal the subtext.
CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS: • character: Raghav age: 55 look: Retired schoolteacher, salt-and-pepper hair, soft sweater, tired but dignified eyes, seated posture that suggests discipline and fatigue. dramatic_arc: Begins as a quiet observer holding the emotional weight of the family. He finally speaks the truth, naming what he has seen for years, and ends as the stabilizing center who gives the sons permission to stop fighting. • character: Dev age: 31 look: Formal shirt, practical haircut, controlled breathing, hospital file in hand, composed exterior with restrained emotional pressure underneath. dramatic_arc: Starts as the responsible, guarded son who manages everything through control. The note and Raghav's truth crack his mask, allowing him to admit his own hurt and recognize Aman without defensiveness. • character: Aman age: 28 look: Casual jacket, restless posture, tired eyes, emotionally raw presence, carrying guilt and resentment in his body language. dramatic_arc: Enters defensive and sarcastic, ready to blame. The mother's note exposes his pain and misreadings, and he moves from accusation toward vulnerability and first real contact with Dev.
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.

SET ARCHITECTURE & PROPS

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ART, WARDROBE & PROP MASTER

1. SET DESIGN & SPATIAL DEPTH PLAN:

A quiet hospital waiting room at dawn with a sterile, suspended atmosphere. Large windows should dominate one side of the room, allowing pale blue daylight to wash across the space. A single buzzing tube light adds a harsh institutional layer overhead. Use plastic chairs with slight scuffs and dull reflections, a water cooler with visible condensation or utilitarian plastic sheen, a tissue box on a small table, and a wall clock that feels overly audible in the silence. The room should feel empty enough for sound to travel, with enough spatial depth to emphasize the distance between the chairs. Keep surfaces clean but not glossy; use matte textures, faint wear, and institutional beige/grey tones so the dawn light can flatten the room emotionally. The empty chair between characters must be clearly readable as a visual separator until the final beat.

2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY:

- **character:** Raghav | **costume:** Soft sweater in muted, lived-in tones; comfortable, age-appropriate, slightly worn but cared for. | **continuity_notes:** Should remain neat but not pristine; the sweater must support his dignified, tired presence and not distract from facial performance.
- **character:** Dev | **costume:** Formal shirt with a practical, work-ready fit; clean lines, controlled appearance, no flashy accessories. | **continuity_notes:** The shirt should reinforce his disciplined, responsible persona. Keep it wrinkle-light and consistent with a man who arrives prepared and emotionally contained.
- **character:** Aman | **costume:** Casual jacket over simple innerwear, slightly restless and less structured than Dev's clothing. | **continuity_notes:** The jacket should feel functional and worn-in, supporting his impulsive, unsettled energy. Avoid anything too stylish or polished.

3. HERO PROPS MASTER CHECKLIST (PRACTICAL ON-SET ASSETS):

- **prop:** Worn water bottle | **visual_details:** Held by Raghav at the start; should look used, practical, and slightly aged, with visible handling wear.
- **prop:** Hospital file | **visual_details:** Carried by Dev; must feel official and weighty, with papers that can be opened to reveal the folded note.
- **prop:** Folded note | **visual_details:** Handwritten note from the mother, inserted inside the file and physically capable of falling out when the file is opened.
- **prop:** Tissue box | **visual_details:** Placed in the waiting room and later offered by Aman to Dev; should be simple, institutional, and clearly visible on the table.
- **prop:** Water cooler | **visual_details:** Static background prop that anchors the waiting room environment and reinforces the sterile hospital setting.
- **prop:** Wall clock | **visual_details:** Visible and slightly oppressive, making time feel louder in the silence.

4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA):

Keep makeup naturalistic and minimal. Raghav should have subtle under-eye fatigue, slightly dry skin, and a lived-in, sleepless look. Dev should have controlled, clean grooming with only faint stress signs around the eyes and jaw. Aman should read as more emotionally worn: mild under-eye shadows, a slightly unsettled complexion, and a restless, sleepless energy. Add light sweat or skin sheen only if needed to reflect dawn tension and emotional pressure. No overt injury or heavy SFX is required. The lighting should react naturally on skin, emphasizing pallor in the blue dawn and softening as the scene resolves.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **character:** Raghav | **super_objective:** To force his sons to finally face the truth and stop repeating the silence that has damaged the family. | **subtext:** I have seen everything for years, and I am tired of carrying the truth alone.
- **character:** Dev | **super_objective:** To justify his responsibility and prove that his control and sacrifices were not cruelty. | **subtext:** I did what I thought was right, and I need you to understand that I was not trying to hurt anyone.
- **character:** Aman | **super_objective:** To be seen as more than the irresponsible younger brother and to have his pain acknowledged. | **subtext:** You all misread me, and I am angry because I was never truly included.

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

DEV*((soft, formal))*

Doctor ne bola hai reports abhi pending hain.

RAGHAV

Wait toh hum kar hi rahe hain.

AMAN*((taunt))*

Achha. Tum dono pehle se milke baithe ho.

DEV

Agar tum time pe aate, toh "pehle se" nahi bolna padta.

AMAN

Haan, kyunki tumhe toh har cheez schedule mein chahiye.



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

Use restrained, observational framing with a preference for medium close-ups, over-the-shoulders, and carefully held two-shots that preserve the empty chair as a visual divider. Lenses should feel intimate but not distorted: normal to slightly longer focal lengths for emotional compression, with occasional wider framing to show the room geometry and the family triangle. Camera movement philosophy should be minimal and motivated—slow push-ins on emotional reveals, static holds during silence, and subtle reframing when the note is discovered. The camera should behave like a quiet witness, never overpowering the performances.

2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC:

- 1) Opening state: pale blue dawn daylight through large windows as the key source, with the tube light adding a cold, institutional top layer. Keep contrast low and shadows soft but present.
- 2) Conflict state: maintain the same base but allow slightly harder facial modeling as characters turn toward each other; use negative fill to deepen emotional separation and keep the empty chair visually pronounced.
- 3) Resolution state: let the dawn brighten subtly and soften the room; preserve the tube light buzz but reduce its visual harshness so the final seated triangle feels calmer and more human.

3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE:

The sound bed should be sparse and realistic: tube light buzz, faint room tone, distant hospital ambience, soft fabric movement, chair scrapes, paper rustle, and the subtle click or handling of the water bottle. The wall clock should feel acoustically present, making time seem heavy. The folded note reveal should be supported by a crisp paper sound. The corridor announcement should remain faint and unimportant, reinforcing that life continues outside their emotional moment.

4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE:

Use a cool, desaturated LUT with pale blue and steel-grey dominance in the opening. Skin tones should remain natural but slightly muted to preserve the hospital chill. As the scene resolves, allow a gentle lift in exposure and a subtle warming in midtones without losing the dawn-blue identity. Keep contrast restrained, blacks soft, and highlights clean but not clinical. The palette should move from cold separation to a slightly warmer emotional acceptance.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 09:30	Set dressing, prop placement, and blocking rehearsal	Art, Direction, Cast
09:30 - 10:30	Block & rig lighting	Camera, Gaffer, Grip, Art
10:30 - 11:30	Rehearse dialogue beats and note reveal action	Direction, Cast, Script Supervisor
11:30 - 13:00	Shoot dialogue coverage and two-shots	Camera, Sound, Cast
13:00 - 14:00	Shoot insert of note, file, water bottle, tissue box	Camera, Art, Props
14:00 - 15:00	Shoot final seating resolution and closing beats	Camera, Direction, Cast

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:

Use a real hospital-like waiting area or a minimally dressed room with one strong window source instead of building a full set. Simulate dawn with daylight-balanced fixtures and diffusion rather than expensive sunrise scheduling. Keep the cast small and the blocking simple to reduce coverage needs. Use practical props already available: generic tissue box, water bottle, file folder, plastic chairs, and a wall clock. Rely on performance and sound design to carry tension instead of extra inserts or crowd extras. Shoot the note reveal as a clean insert to maximize emotional payoff without additional setup complexity.

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

