

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

THE PROPOSAL IN REVERSE

1 Male + 2 Female (M + F + F) | Genre: Pure Comedy | Runtime: 6 - 9 Mins

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE: A nervous man arrives ready to propose in a quiet café corner, only to discover his girlfriend and her formidable aunt have turned the moment into a surprise family audition. In the end, romance survives not through the ring, but through a reverse proposal of approval, pressure, and laughter.
DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT: • Pure comedy rooted in escalating social embarrassment, with every beat tightening the noose around Nikhil's confidence. • Visual tone should stay intimate, observational, and slightly theatrical: a small café corner that feels private until it becomes painfully public. • Pacing should be brisk with clean reaction beats, allowing pauses for suspicion, reveal, and punchline landings. • The decorative plant should function as a visual divider and a comic witness to the chaos. • Performance style should be heightened but grounded: Tanya is controlled, Sonal is gloriously intrusive, Nikhil is increasingly cornered. • The emotional arc is not romance-first, but survival-first; the comedy comes from the proposal being hijacked into a family test.
CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS: • character: Nikhil age: 31 look: Smart-casual blazer that is slightly too tight, sweaty palms, anxious posture, ring box hidden in pocket, bouquet in hand. dramatic_arc: Begins as a man rehearsing a perfect proposal and ends as a man being evaluated by the very people he hoped to impress. His arc is from confident fantasy to comic surrender, then to reluctant acceptance. • character: Tanya age: 29 look: Smart casuals, phone always in hand, suspicious eyes, calm body language, controlled expressions that shift from doubt to amused authority. dramatic_arc: Starts as skeptical and probing, then reveals she has orchestrated the entire setup. She moves from observer to strategist to final gatekeeper of the proposal. • character: Sonal age: 55 look: Glittery salwar suit, heavy bangles, over-accessorized confidence, loud presence, cheerful but intimidating energy. dramatic_arc: Enters as a comic disruption and becomes the unofficial examiner of Nikhil's worth. She transforms the proposal into a practical interview and delivers the final verdict with authority.
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 small café corner near a window with soft afternoon daylight as the primary source. The table should feel slightly cramped, forcing the trio into close proximity and making every reaction visible. The decorative plant must sit awkwardly between the table and the rest of the café, creating a semi-private visual barrier that also reads as a comic frame. The table surface should hold coffee cups, menu card, napkins, and bouquet in a cluttered but believable arrangement. Background café elements should remain soft and unobtrusive, emphasizing the corner as a pressure cooker. Textures should include matte wood, glass reflections from the window, polished ceramic cups, and the metallic shimmer of Sonal's bangles.

2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY:

- **Nikhil:** A slightly too-tight blazer over smart-casual clothing, suggesting he tried hard to look polished but compromised comfort. The blazer should visibly restrict movement and reinforce his nervousness. Continuity note: keep the blazer buttoned or awkwardly adjusted to preserve the sense of discomfort.
- **Tanya:** Smart casual outfit that feels effortless and practical. She should look composed, modern, and observant. Continuity note: phone remains in hand or on table, reinforcing her control over the situation.
- **Sonal:** Glittery salwar suit with heavy bangles and over-accessorized styling. The costume should announce her before she speaks. Continuity note: bangles must be prominent for the entrance sound cue and visual impact.

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

- **prop:** Ring box | **details:** Small, pocket-sized box hidden in Nikhil's pocket and later revealed in the final beat. It must read clearly as a proposal ring box.
- **prop:** Coffee cups | **details:** At least two cups on the table, used as part of the café realism and later as a prop for Sonal's dramatic sip.
- **prop:** Menu card | **details:** Held by Tanya and later used by Nikhil like a shield. Should be a standard café menu with visible practical use.
- **prop:** Napkins | **details:** Loose napkins on the table, available for comic interruption and clutter.
- **prop:** Bouquet | **details:** A visible bouquet on the table, clearly intended for the proposal moment. It should look romantic but slightly exposed to judgment.
- **prop:** Phone | **details:** Tanya's phone is central to the reveal, including the screen showing Nikhil's draft proposal message, jeweler chat, ring box emoji, and restaurant search history.

4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA):

Keep makeup natural and performance-driven. Nikhil needs visible sweat on the forehead, upper lip, and palms to sell anxiety. Tanya should remain fresh and controlled, with minimal shine except natural café lighting. Sonal should have polished makeup with a slightly theatrical finish that matches her loud entrance. No heavy SFX required beyond sweat continuity, slight facial flush for Nikhil, and subtle lighting reactions on Sonal's bangles and glittery outfit.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **Nikhil:** {'super_objective': 'To propose successfully and be accepted without humiliation.', 'subtext': 'Please let this be romantic, not an interrogation. I prepared for love, not a tribunal.'}
- **Tanya:** {'super_objective': 'To test whether Nikhil can handle real-life pressure and family scrutiny.', 'subtext': 'I already know the truth; now I want to see if you deserve the future you're asking for.'}
- **Sonal:** {'super_objective': 'To protect Tanya by evaluating Nikhil's practicality, stability, and composure.', 'subtext': 'Charm is cheap. Show me you can survive the real world, then we'll talk marriage.'}

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

TANYA

Tum itne pehle aa gaye? Suspicious.

NIKHIL

Tanya, aaj main kuch important...

SONAL

So, salary kitni hai?

SONAL

Savings?

SONAL

Coffee baad mein. EMI pehle.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: CINEMATOGRAPHY & SOUND DEPT

1. CINEMATOGRAPHY CONCEPT & LENS PALETTE:

Use intimate, comedic coverage with a mix of medium two-shots, tight singles, and reaction inserts. Lenses should favor a naturalistic perspective: wider focal lengths for the cramped café geography and tighter lenses for panic close-ups and reveal moments. Camera movement philosophy should be restrained and reactive—mostly static or gently drifting, letting performance and timing drive the comedy. Push in subtly on Nikhil during each escalation, and use clean cutaways for Tanya's suspicion and Sonal's verdicts.

2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC:

Tier 1: Soft afternoon daylight through the window as the base, creating a warm, believable café atmosphere.

Tier 2: Gentle fill from the interior side to keep faces readable while preserving natural shadows under the plant and table edge.

Tier 3: Slightly accent Sonal's entrance with a touch more contrast and sparkle catch on bangles and glittery fabric, then maintain consistent soft realism through the reveal and final laugh.

3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE:

Ambient café room tone should remain low and present: faint chatter, cup clinks, distant movement, and subtle air-conditioning hum. Foley should emphasize bangles clinking on Sonal's entrance, the soft thud of the phone on the table, the rustle of menu cards, the tap of the ring box in Nikhil's pocket, and the dramatic coffee sip. The acoustic profile should feel intimate and close-mic'd, making every pause and awkward breath audible.

4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE:

Warm, soft daylight LUT with gentle contrast and slightly desaturated café neutrals. Skin tones should remain natural, with a mild golden afternoon cast. Tanya's calm should sit in clean, balanced tones; Sonal's glitter and bangles should pop with controlled highlights; Nikhil's anxiety can be supported by slightly cooler shadow tones in his close-ups. Overall palette: warm beige, soft brown, muted green from the plant, and subtle gold reflections.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 09:00	Load-in, café corner dressing, table reset, prop placement	Art, Props, Camera
09:00 - 10:30	Block actors, mark eyelines, rehearse interruption timing	Director, AD, Cast
10:30 - 12:00	Rig soft window daylight and fill, test reflections and plant shadow	Camera, Gaffer, Grip
12:00 - 13:00	Shoot opening beats with Nikhil and Tanya	Camera, Sound, Cast
13:00 - 14:00	Shoot Sonal entrance and interrogation beats	Camera, Cast, Sound
14:00 - 15:00	Shoot reveal, phone screen insert, reverse proposal, final laugh	Camera, Props, Cast

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:

Use a real café corner or a minimally dressed set to avoid expensive build costs. Rely on one window as the key light source and supplement with simple bounce boards. Keep the decorative plant as a practical divider instead of building walls. Shoot the phone screen reveal with a preloaded still image rather than expensive screen replacement. Limit wardrobe changes to continuity-safe adjustments. Use sound design and performance timing to carry the comedy instead of extra coverage. One table, three actors, and precise blocking are enough if the reactions are sharp.

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

