

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

THE THIRD CUP OF TEA

1 Male + 2 Female (M + F + F) | Genre: Slice of Life/Family | Runtime: 6 - 9 Mins

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE:

A nervous son-in-law tries to make tea in a compact family kitchen, but every spoonful becomes a test of respect, patience, and belonging. In the steam of a simple morning ritual, a guarded family slowly finds a shared, imperfect truce.

DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT:

- Keep the tone intimate, observational, and gently comedic, with emotional stakes hidden inside a domestic routine.
- Use the kitchen as a pressure cooker: small frame, close distances, layered reactions, and silence doing as much work as dialogue.
- Let the pacing breathe around pauses, glances, and micro-reactions so the humor lands naturally and the final acceptance feels earned.
- Visual language should favor soft morning realism: window light, blue stove flame, steam, steel reflections, and lived-in textures.
- Thematic focus: respect is not declared, it is demonstrated through small acts of care and being allowed into the family rhythm.

CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS:

- **character:** Harsh | **age:** 31 | **look:** Simple shirt, sleeves carefully folded, restrained posture, slightly tense face, attentive hands, the look of a man trying very hard to do everything correctly. | **dramatic_arc:** Begins as an anxious outsider performing politeness, moves through confusion under layered instructions, and ends with a quiet sense of acceptance when his effort is recognized.
- **character:** Radha | **age:** 56 | **look:** Cotton sari, calm authority, steady gaze, composed presence, practical domestic confidence, minimal movement with maximum control. | **dramatic_arc:** Starts as the family gatekeeper testing Harsh, then reveals warmth through subtle approval, finally granting him emotional entry into the household.
- **character:** Anita | **age:** 33 | **look:** House clothes, tired eyes, leaning posture near the fridge, dry wit in her expression, emotionally alert and slightly amused. | **dramatic_arc:** Begins as the sarcastic observer, acts as the pressure-release valve of the scene, and ends by laughing openly once the family tension softens.

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 compact kitchen with a small counter and tight walking lanes, designed to feel intimate and slightly crowded. Steel containers line the shelves to create reflective highlights and a lived-in domestic rhythm. The chipped mug should be visibly worn, with a distinct edge chip that reads clearly in close-up. The tea kettle, sugar jar, spoon, tea tin, and biscuit tin sit within arm's reach on the counter, creating a practical working triangle around the stove. The fridge should be close enough for Anita to lean against, reinforcing her detached observer position. Surfaces should show everyday use: faint stains, heat marks near the stove, subtle scratches on the counter, and a slightly uneven arrangement of containers that suggests a real family kitchen rather than a styled set.
2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY: • Harsh: Simple, clean shirt in a neutral tone; sleeves folded carefully to show effort and readiness. Wardrobe should remain neat but not formal, with no visible change across the scene except slight natural tension from movement. • Radha: Cotton sari with a practical, home-worn drape. The look should communicate authority through familiarity rather than ornament. Continuity should preserve a composed, unchanging silhouette. • Anita: House clothes that feel lived-in and comfortable, paired with tired-eyed morning realism. Her wardrobe should support her leaning posture and dry, casual presence without drawing attention away from her expressions.
3. HERO PROPS MASTER CHECKLIST (PRACTICAL ON-SET ASSETS): • prop: Tea kettle visual_details: Metal kettle that reads clearly under soft window light and catches the blue stove flame reflections. • prop: Gas stove visual_details: Visible blue flame with a steady hum, used as the scene's visual and sonic anchor. • prop: Sugar jar visual_details: A practical kitchen jar that Harsh handles carefully, emphasizing the tension around measurement. • prop: Tea tin visual_details: Simple tin used for chai patti, opened and measured on camera. • prop: Spoon visual_details: The central measuring tool; should be easy to read in hand and in close-up as instructions are given. • prop: Chipped mug visual_details: Old, visibly chipped cup with a worn domestic history; important for the emotional handoff to Harsh. • prop: Biscuit tin visual_details: Present on the counter as part of the kitchen texture, even if not actively used. • prop: Steel containers visual_details: Stacked along shelves, reflective, slightly mismatched, reinforcing the family kitchen's everyday realism.
4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA): Keep makeup natural and morning-real. Harsh should have a slightly tense, fresh-faced look with mild under-eye fatigue and a faint sheen of stress as the tea process escalates. Radha should appear composed, with minimal makeup and a grounded, lived-in skin texture that catches soft window light naturally. Anita should have visible tired eyes, subtle under-eye darkness, and a relaxed, home-state appearance. Add light sweat or heat sheen only if needed near the stove to support the warm kitchen atmosphere. No heavy SFX is required; the main effect is believable domestic realism and subtle lighting reaction on skin and steel surfaces.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **Harsh:** {'super_objective': 'To be accepted into the family through competence, respect, and patience.', 'subtext': 'If I do this right, I will be seen as more than just the man trying to make tea; I will be trusted.'}
- **Radha:** {'super_objective': 'To test whether Harsh understands the family's rhythm and values.', 'subtext': 'I will not hand over approval easily; he must show care, not just obedience.'}
- **Anita:** {'super_objective': 'To protect the emotional balance of the room through wit and honest observation.', 'subtext': 'I know exactly what is happening here, and I will keep everyone honest with sarcasm until the tension breaks.'}

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

HARSH((*too polite*))

Mummy ji, main bana deta hoon chai.

RADHA

Arre haan. Bana lo. Dekhte hain.

ANITA((*dry*))

"Dekhte hain" se hi family court lag raha hai.

RADHA

Respect se bana raha hai. Galti ho bhi gayi toh maaf.

ANITA

Woh "bilkul" abhi hai. Baad mein "oops" aayega.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: CINEMATOGRAPHY & SOUND DEPT

1. CINEMATOGRAPHY CONCEPT & LENS PALETTE:

Use intimate, close-quarters framing with a preference for medium close-ups, over-the-shoulders, and insert shots of hands, cups, and steam. The camera should feel patient and observant, allowing reactions to play in the frame rather than forcing coverage. Lens choice should favor normal to slightly longer focal lengths to compress the small kitchen and emphasize emotional proximity. Movement philosophy: minimal but purposeful, with subtle handheld or gentle locked-off compositions that let the domestic tension unfold naturally.

2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC:

Tier 1: Soft morning window light as the base, creating gentle facial modeling and a calm domestic atmosphere. Tier 2: Practical blue flame from the gas stove as a motivated accent, adding warmth, flicker, and a subtle kinetic source near the hands and kettle. Tier 3: Controlled bounce or soft fill from the counter side to preserve readable expressions in the compact kitchen while keeping shadows soft and realistic. As the scene progresses, maintain the same naturalistic palette but allow steam and reflections to become more prominent, especially around the final cup handoff.

3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE:

Prioritize intimate kitchen acoustics: the hum of the gas flame, kettle movement, spoon clinks, sugar jar lid, tea pouring, and the soft hiss of simmering liquid. Room tone should feel small and enclosed, with slight morning hush and no external distraction. Foley should emphasize domestic textures: cup placement, steel container taps, and the subtle scrape of a spoon. Dialogue should sit close and dry, with the kitchen's reflective surfaces giving a gentle natural resonance.

4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE:

Use a soft, naturalistic LUT with restrained contrast and warm-neutral skin tones. Preserve the cool morning window light while letting the stove flame introduce a subtle blue-orange contrast. Steel surfaces should retain realistic highlights without becoming overly glossy. The palette should lean toward muted domestic colors: cotton whites, sari earth tones, neutral shirt fabric, silver steel, and the pale steam of tea. Final grading should feel tender, lived-in, and quietly hopeful.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 08:30	Set dressing, prop placement, and continuity check	Art, Props, Wardrobe
08:30 - 09:15	Block actors in compact kitchen and finalize eyelines	Director, AD, Cast
09:15 - 10:00	Rig soft window fill and practical stove-flame motivated lighting	Camera, Gaffer, Grip
10:00 - 11:15	Shoot tea-making action, inserts, and reaction coverage	Camera, Sound, Script Supervisor
11:15 - 12:00	Capture final approval beat, cup handoff, and emotional close	Camera, Cast, Sound

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:

Shoot in a real compact kitchen to avoid set build costs and preserve authenticity. Use available window light as the key source and supplement only with a soft bounce and one practical motivated source. Keep props minimal and story-specific: kettle, sugar jar, tea tin, spoon, chipped mug, biscuit tin. Limit coverage to a few strong angles and use inserts to bridge continuity. Steam can be created with practical hot tea and careful timing rather than expensive effects. Wardrobe should be from the actors' own believable homewear palette, with continuity maintained through simple resets. Record clean production sound on location to reduce post costs and preserve the intimate kitchen texture.

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

