

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

THE LOCKED TIFFIN

3 Female (F + F + F) | Genre: Pure Comedy | Runtime: 6 - 9 Mins

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE: A locked tiffin box in a railway waiting room turns three strangers into rival detectives, until a missed proposal and a shared meal reveal that the real surprise was never the food. In the heat, delay, and hunger of one afternoon, comedy slowly gives way to an unexpectedly tender temporary family.
DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT: • Visual tone: sun-bleached, dusty, observational comedy with a lived-in railway-station realism. • Performance style: fast verbal sparring, sharp pauses, and escalating suspicion that lands in warm emotional release. • Pacing: tight single-location chamber comedy; the tension should build from curiosity to obsession to confession, then relax into communal eating. • Thematic depth: ownership, loneliness, and the absurd ways strangers create connection around food. • Camera language: mostly intimate and reactive, letting the tiffin remain the center of gravity while faces and hands do the comic work. • Emotional shift: keep the first half playful and suspicious, then let the reveal soften the frame, the rhythm, and the actors' body language.
CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS: • character: Bua age: 54 look: Printed kurta, heavy presence, expressive face, authoritative posture, practical middle-aged warmth beneath suspicion. dramatic_arc: Starts as the loudest claimant and self-appointed expert on food, becomes exposed as the true owner of the tiffin, then softens into a grieving but dignified mother who turns embarrassment into generosity. • character: Ritu age: 33 look: Corporate commuter with office bag and lunch bag, tired eyes, dry sarcasm, controlled body language, understated polish. dramatic_arc: Begins as skeptical and defensive, uses logic and wit to challenge the others, then becomes the practical peacemaker who helps transform the situation into a shared meal. • character: Pihu age: 19 look: Headphones around neck, sneakers, phone camera always ready, restless energy, playful Gen Z confidence. dramatic_arc: Starts as a content-hungry observer who turns the situation into a performance, then gradually lowers the camera as empathy replaces spectacle, ending as the comic witness to a tender truth.
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 railway waiting room built as a compact, oppressive, sunlit box: peeling paint on the walls, a ceiling fan that visibly struggles, barred windows throwing hard slashes of afternoon light, and a metal bench that becomes the story's arena. The bench should feel slightly cold and institutional, with scuffed paint and worn edges. A NOTICE BOARD with train timetable must be visible in the background to support the delay beats. Spatial layering should be simple but readable: bench center, windows behind, timetable off to one side, exit implied but not dominant. The locked tiffin must sit in the exact middle of the bench as the visual anchor. Dust, heat haze, and the sense of stale air should be built into the set dressing.
2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY: • Bua: Printed kurta with a homey, slightly loud pattern that matches her big personality. Comfortable everyday lower wear and practical sandals. Continuity: keep her look consistent as a woman who has traveled with purpose and is not concerned with polish. • Ritu: Office-commuter wardrobe: neat but tired, with a functional lunch bag and office bag. Colors should be muted and corporate-friendly. Continuity: slightly rumpled by the delay, but still controlled and put-together. • Pihu: Sneakers, casual youthwear, headphones around the neck, phone always in hand. Her outfit should feel modern, lightweight, and ready for movement. Continuity: energetic and visually distinct from the older women, with a content-creator vibe.
3. HERO PROPS MASTER CHECKLIST (PRACTICAL ON-SET ASSETS): • prop: Locked tiffin box details: Single hero prop, central to every beat. Must visibly read as locked, slightly worn, and food-scented. The lock should be practical enough for spoon tapping and close-up scrutiny. • prop: Spoon details: Used by Bua to khatkhataana and later to open the tiffin carefully. Should feel like an improvised tool, not a gimmick. • prop: Lunch bag details: Ritu's office-style lunch bag, visually subdued and practical, used as a contrast to the mysterious tiffin. • prop: Office bag details: Ritu's commuter bag, functional and slightly tired from travel. • prop: Phone camera details: Pihu's phone must clearly read as recording device; screen glow and hand positioning should support the content-creator behavior. • prop: Headphones details: Worn around Pihu's neck, a constant visual marker of her age and attitude. • prop: Packet of chips details: Pihu's bribe prop; should be small, casual, and comic rather than flashy. • prop: Water bottle details: Ritu's bottle used during the shared meal beat, practical and everyday. • prop: Notice board / timetable details: Background prop that supports the delay and the waiting-room geography.
4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA): Keep makeup natural and heat-reactive. Add slight sweat sheen on forehead, upper lip, and neck to sell the afternoon heat. Bua should have a lived-in, slightly flushed face with expressive eyes. Ritu should look tired from commuting, with subtle under-eye fatigue and controlled makeup that starts to soften as the scene progresses. Pihu should look fresh but increasingly warm and animated, with a bit of shine from the room heat. No heavy SFX required; the main effect is environmental distress, dryness, and the physical discomfort of waiting.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **character:** Bua | **super_objective:** To protect her dignity and control the situation while hiding her emotional vulnerability. | **subtext:** I know more than I'm saying, and I need to stay in charge before anyone sees how much this matters to me.
- **character:** Ritu | **super_objective:** To maintain composure and solve the problem logically without getting emotionally entangled. | **subtext:** I'm tired, hungry, and not interested in nonsense, but I'm also lonely enough to join in if the moment feels real.
- **character:** Pihu | **super_objective:** To turn every moment into content and social leverage while staying entertained. | **subtext:** If I can record it, I can control it; if I can joke about it, I don't have to feel awkward about it.

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

BUA

((smelling the air))

Arre wah. Yeh khushboo toh seedha ghar se aati hai. Kiska hai yeh tiffin?

RITU

((dryly))

Mera nahi hai. Mera lunch bag itna sad hai ki khushboo hi nahi kar sakta.

PIHU

((camera on, excited))

Wait, wait. Mystery tiffin? Main record kar rahi hoon.

BUA

((suspicious, defensive))

Tum corporate logon ka khana toh salad aur guilt hota hai. Yeh masala kisi aur ka hai.

RITU

((challenging))

Okay, detective, phir proof do. Kiska hai?



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: CINEMATOGRAPHY & SOUND DEPT

1. CINEMATOGRAPHY CONCEPT & LENS PALETTE:

Use a restrained, character-driven camera with 35mm and 50mm equivalents for most coverage, reserving a tighter lens for the reveal and emotional beats. Framing should emphasize the tiffin as the center of the triangle, with over-the-shoulders and close reaction shots driving the comedy. Movement philosophy: minimal but alive—small push-ins during suspicion, stillness during the confession, and a gentle widening at the shared-meal resolution. Keep the camera at eye level or slightly below to preserve the women's presence and the bench-level power struggle.

2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC:

Tier 1: Harsh afternoon realism. Use strong directional sunlight through barred windows to create slanted stripes across the room and bench, with hard contrast and visible heat.

Tier 2: Waiting-room fill. Soft bounce or practical ambient fill to keep faces readable without flattening the sunlight; preserve peeling-wall texture and fan shadow movement.

Tier 3: Emotional softening. After the reveal, subtly reduce contrast on faces with gentler fill and slightly warmer tone so the room feels less hostile and more communal.

3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE:

The fan should be a constant, slightly uneven mechanical presence. Add room tone with distant station ambience, faint announcements, and occasional train whistle. Foley should emphasize spoon tapping on the lock, plastic rustle from the chips packet, bag zips, bench creaks, and the small sounds of eating in the final beat. The acoustic profile should feel echoey and institutional at first, then warmer and more intimate once the food is shared.

4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE:

Use a sun-bleached, slightly desaturated LUT with warm highlights and dusty midtones. The palette should lean toward faded creams, rust, muted greens, and commuter blues. In the reveal, allow a subtle warmth lift in skin tones and food colors so the aloo paratha and kheer feel inviting. Keep shadows textured rather than crushed, preserving the peeling paint and barred-window geometry.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 09:30	Load-in, art dressing, timetable placement, hero prop prep	Art, Props, Production
09:30 - 11:00	Light rigging for barred-window sunlight pattern and fan shadow tests	Camera, Gaffer, Grip
11:00 - 12:00	Blocking rehearsal around bench and tiffin center position	Director, Cast, Camera
12:00 - 13:00	Shoot suspicion and ownership debate coverage	Camera, Sound, Cast
13:00 - 14:00	Shoot delay, bribe, and alliance beats with reaction inserts	Camera, Sound, Cast
14:00 - 15:00	Shoot confession, tiffin opening, and emotional reveal	Camera, Art, Cast
15:00 - 15:45	Shoot shared meal, exit, and final laughter beats	Camera, Sound, Cast

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:

Use one real waiting room or a dressed corridor with barred-window light to avoid expensive set construction. Keep the entire story anchored to one bench and one hero tiffin prop. Shoot with natural afternoon sunlight whenever possible and supplement only with bounce. Limit coverage to a few strong angles and mine performance for comedy. Use practical sound effects in post rather than complex production design. The food reveal can be achieved with simple, well-styled plating and close-ups instead of elaborate inserts. Let wardrobe be character-specific but everyday, sourced from existing closets or thrifted pieces.

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

