

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

THREE CUPS OF TEA

3 Female (F + F + F) | Genre: Emotional Drama | Runtime: 6 - 9 Mins

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE: A rainy afternoon at a small tea stall becomes the site of a long-overdue reckoning when Farida reveals she is leaving town to live for herself, forcing her daughter Salma and granddaughter Huma to finally see the sacrifices she made. What begins as a tense family meeting turns into a quiet, emotional first step toward mutual recognition and healing.
DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT: • Visual tone: intimate, restrained, rain-soaked realism with warm steam cutting through cold gray daylight. • The tea stall should feel physically small but emotionally expansive, with silence, kettle steam, and rain creating a private world inside a public place. • Pacing must be slow-burn and conversational, allowing pauses, glances, and withheld emotion to carry as much weight as dialogue. • The emotional arc should move from suspicion to confrontation to revelation to soft reconciliation, without melodrama. • The camera should observe rather than intrude, letting the audience feel like a quiet witness to a family truth finally spoken aloud.
CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS: • character_name: Farida age: 70 look: Dignified elderly woman in a wool shawl, composed posture, weathered hands, calm but tired eyes. dramatic_arc: Begins as a seemingly ordinary mother and grandmother using a wedding invitation as cover, then reveals deep emotional exhaustion and a long-buried need for autonomy. She ends with quiet resolve and a softened, finally-seen vulnerability. • character_name: Salma age: 45 look: Practical middle-aged woman in a simple kurta, controlled body language, guarded expression, emotionally disciplined. dramatic_arc: Starts as the responsible, skeptical daughter trying to manage the situation, then is destabilized by Farida's truth. Her arc moves from control and defensiveness to guilt, recognition, and a sincere apology. • character_name: Huma age: 18 look: Restless college student in uniform, youthful impatience, sharp eyes, emotionally reactive but observant. dramatic_arc: Begins as sarcastic and resistant, then becomes the first to voice the hidden family dynamic. She transforms from frustration into empathy, realizing Farida as a full person with her own life.
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 roadside tea stall under a tin roof, built to feel enclosed despite being open to the street. The roof should be visibly corrugated tin with rain striking it audibly and visually. The counter is narrow and worn, with a sugar tin placed prominently and a folded umbrella leaning against the wall. Three stools are arranged in a tight triangle to force proximity and confrontation. The boiling kettle should sit on the counter or stove area, with steam constantly visible. Surfaces should have a damp, lived-in texture: slightly stained wood, wet floor edges, and muted metal reflections. Background should remain minimal and soft, with the street outside suggested through rain blur rather than detailed action, keeping attention on the women and the emotional pressure inside the stall.
2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY: • character_name: Farida costume_details: White wool shawl with a dignified, slightly heavy drape; simple, understated clothing beneath it. The look should communicate age, restraint, and self-respect. continuity_notes: Shawl must remain consistent throughout; keep it dry enough to read as a cherished personal layer despite the rain environment. • character_name: Salma costume_details: Simple kurta in practical, everyday fabric and muted color. No decorative excess. Clothing should reflect responsibility and a no-nonsense life. continuity_notes: Maintain a neat but slightly tired appearance; subtle signs of work and stress are appropriate, but no wardrobe changes. • character_name: Huma costume_details: College uniform, youthful and functional, with a restless, slightly fidgety fit. Should feel like she came directly from daily routine. continuity_notes: Uniform should remain consistent and believable for an 18-year-old student; avoid stylization that makes her look older or more fashionable than the script indicates.
3. HERO PROPS MASTER CHECKLIST (PRACTICAL ON-SET ASSETS): • prop: Wedding invitation visual_details: A single invitation card lying on the counter, later flipped over by Farida. It must be clearly readable as a wedding invite in visual language, but not overdesigned. script_function: Bait and emotional trigger for the conversation. • prop: Boiling kettle visual_details: Metal kettle with visible steam and an audible whistle; it should feel central to the stall's atmosphere. script_function: Creates sonic pressure and mirrors the rising tension. • prop: Three tea glasses visual_details: Simple glass cups, warm with tea, handled carefully by the tea seller offscreen and later placed on the counter. script_function: Marks the progression from tension to shared drinking and emotional thaw. • prop: Sugar tin visual_details: A practical tin container on the counter, worn and utilitarian. script_function: Part of the stall's everyday realism. • prop: Folded umbrella visual_details: A wet or rain-ready umbrella leaning against the wall, visually reinforcing the storm outside. script_function: Environmental detail that anchors the rainy setting.
4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA): Keep makeup natural and minimal, with rain-cold skin tones and subtle under-eye fatigue. Farida should have age-appropriate texture, fine lines, and slightly weathered hands. Salma can carry restrained stress in the face and jaw. Huma should look youthful but emotionally reactive, with tears building late in the scene. Add light moisture on skin from humidity and steam, not heavy sweat. During the emotional turn, allow tear tracks, reddened eyes, and slight nose shine to register under soft daylight. No heavy SFX required; realism is key.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **character_name:** Farida | **super_objective:** To be finally seen as a person, not only as a mother and grandmother. | **subtext:** I have given everything, and I am done disappearing inside your needs.
- **character_name:** Salma | **super_objective:** To maintain control and protect the family structure, even when emotionally threatened. | **subtext:** If I stay practical, I won't have to face how much I owe you.
- **character_name:** Huma | **super_objective:** To speak the truth that everyone else avoids and break the inherited silence. | **subtext:** Someone has to say what is really happening here, even if it hurts.

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

FARIDA

Tum dono ko lagta hai main buddhi ho gayi hoon.

FARIDA

Main zinda hoon, Salma. Purani baatein nahi, meri zindagi hai.

HUMA

Bas karo aap dono. Har baar aisa lagta hai jaise sacrifice ka competition chal raha hai.

FARIDA

Main kal subah town chhod rahi hoon.

FARIDA

Kyunki poori zindagi sabke liye ghar banaya. Apne liye ek kona bhi nahi banaya.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: CINEMATOGRAPHY & SOUND DEPT

1. CINEMATOGRAPHY CONCEPT & LENS PALETTE:

Use intimate, observational framing with a preference for medium close-ups and close-ups that capture micro-reactions, hands, and eye-lines. Lenses should feel naturalistic and slightly compressed in the small stall, helping the space feel tight and emotionally pressurized. Camera movement should be minimal and deliberate: mostly locked-off or very subtle handheld drift, with occasional gentle push-ins at key revelations. The philosophy is to let silence and performance breathe while the frame quietly tightens as the emotional stakes rise.

2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC:

Tier 1: Exterior rainy daylight, soft gray ambient fill from the open street side, creating a cool and subdued base.

Tier 2: Warm practical steam and tea-stall warmth from the kettle area and interior bounce, giving faces a gentle amber contrast against the cold rain.

Tier 3: Emotional emphasis through subtle negative fill and controlled side light to shape faces during confrontation, then slightly soften the contrast at the end to support reconciliation. The progression should move from cool isolation to warmer shared intimacy.

3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE:

Dominant rain ambience on tin roof, with distinct tap-tap texture and street wash outside. The kettle whistle should function as an emotional punctuation mark, rising at tension points. Tea pouring, glass placement, and small hand movements should be crisp and intimate. Room tone should feel enclosed, with the stall acoustically dampened by rain and steam. Dialogue should sit close and dry, as if the audience is inside the emotional bubble with them.

4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE:

Use a muted, naturalistic LUT with cool gray highlights and restrained contrast. The palette should lean toward steel, slate, damp wood, and washed neutrals, with warm amber steam and tea as the emotional counterpoint. Skin tones should remain honest and slightly desaturated, while the final moments can allow a subtle warmth lift to suggest reconciliation.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 09:30	Scout, dress tea stall, place counter props, and prep rain continuity	Art, Continuity, Production
09:30 - 10:30	Block actors on stools and rehearse dialogue beats	Director, Cast, AD
10:30 - 12:00	Rig soft gray daylight simulation and kettle steam practicals	Camera, G&E,, Art
12:00 - 13:30	Shoot confrontation and revelation coverage	Camera, Sound, Cast
13:30 - 14:30	Shoot apology, hand touch, and final tea-drinking beats	Camera, Cast, Sound

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:

Keep the entire film in one controlled location to eliminate company moves. Use a real tea stall or a simple built set dressed with only the essential props: counter, stools, kettle, sugar tin, umbrella, and invitation card. Simulate rain with sound and selective exterior wet-down rather than full rain rigs if needed. Steam from a real kettle can do much of the atmospheric work. Use natural gray daylight or diffused LED through a window/open side, and rely on close framing to make the space feel cinematic. Limit coverage to a few strong angles and prioritize performance over setup count.

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

