

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

THE LAST TRAIN HOME

3 Female (F + F + F) | Genre: Slice of Life/Family | Runtime: 6 - 9 Mins

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE: A nearly empty night train becomes a moving confessional for three generations of women in one family, where small irritations slowly reveal exhaustion, love, and the quiet need to belong. By the time the train reaches the next station, distance gives way to a soft truce and the simple decision to sit together.
DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT: • Visual tone: intimate, restrained, and observational, with cool fluorescent realism softened by passing station flashes. • Thematic depth: discipline vs care, silence vs exhaustion, and how family love often appears as correction, logistics, and small acts of waiting. • Pacing: start with dry, lightly comic friction; let pauses and train motion do the emotional work; end on a quiet, earned warmth rather than a dramatic release. • Camera language: contained framing inside the compartment, using reflections, window flashes, and bench geometry to show emotional distance closing. • Performance style: naturalistic, layered, with subtext carried in glances, micro-reactions, and the physical shift from separate benches to shared space.
CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS: • character: Madhavi age: 62 look: Retired school principal; cotton sari, composed posture, cloth bag in her lap; disciplined, observant, and physically still. dramatic_arc: Begins as the family authority figure who corrects everyone, then reveals her strictness as concern and her control as love. Ends as the quiet center who makes space for the others to come together. • character: Anu age: 39 look: Nurse in a simple kurta with an ID lanyard; visibly tired, practical, slightly hunched from a long shift. dramatic_arc: Starts as the exhausted mediator who wants peace, then admits her own invisibility and pressure to stay strong. Ends by accepting care and allowing her daughter to move closer. • character: Kriti age: 14 look: School uniform, earbuds around her neck, guarded expression, teenage attitude masking hurt. dramatic_arc: Begins defensive and sarcastic, treating every correction as an attack. Gradually reveals embarrassment and vulnerability, then chooses closeness over distance by sitting beside her mother.
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 nearly empty suburban train compartment at night, built to feel enclosed and slightly worn. Bench seating should have practical vinyl or fabric texture with subtle scuffs, muted reflections, and hard edges that catch fluorescent light. Windows must be large enough to allow station flashes and moving reflections of the three women in the same frame. The carriage should feel gently in motion through slight vibration, overhead rail details, and minimal background clutter. Keep the space sparse: no extra passengers, no distracting signage, only the essential train interior, the benches, the windows, and the sense of passing darkness outside. Spatial layering should emphasize separation at first: each woman on a different bench or with physical distance, then a gradual reconfiguration into shared space by the end.

2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY:

- **Madhavi:** Cotton sari in a modest, practical drape; no flashy accessories. The costume should read as neat, disciplined, and slightly old-fashioned, consistent with a retired principal. Continuity: sari must remain tidy, with only subtle travel creases.
- **Anu:** Simple kurta suitable for a nurse after a long shift, paired with the ID lanyard around her neck. Wardrobe should show fatigue through slight wrinkling and lived-in softness. Continuity: lanyard stays visible throughout.
- **Kriti:** School uniform, worn with teenage resistance rather than perfect neatness. Earbuds rest around her neck as a visible symbol of self-protection. Continuity: uniform should remain consistent, with no added accessories that contradict the script.

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

- **prop:** Cloth bag | **details:** Madhavi's practical bag, held in her lap and later used to reveal the folded train ticket.
- **prop:** Lunch box | **details:** Anu's bagged lunch box, simple and home-style, opened after the station flash.
- **prop:** Folded train ticket | **details:** A clearly folded ticket pulled from Madhavi's cloth bag; this is the emotional reveal prop.
- **prop:** ID lanyard | **details:** Anu's nurse ID lanyard, worn around her neck throughout.
- **prop:** Earbuds | **details:** Kriti's earbuds resting on her neck, later adjusted by Anu.

4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA):

Keep makeup naturalistic and age-appropriate. Madhavi should have minimal makeup with a composed, slightly dry skin texture. Anu should show fatigue: subtle under-eye shadows, slight dullness, and a tired complexion from a night shift. Kriti should look youthful but guarded, with a clean school-day face and a hint of teenage tension. Add gentle sweat or humidity only if needed to support the train environment, but avoid melodramatic distress. Lighting reactions should be considered: cool fluorescent light may flatten skin tones, so maintain believable texture and slight shine on forehead, nose, and cheekbones.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **Madhavi:** {'super_objective': 'To keep the family functioning through discipline, foresight, and emotional control.', 'subtext': 'If I stay composed and correct everyone, I can keep them safe and together.'}
- **Anu:** {'super_objective': 'To survive the demands of work and home without collapsing in front of her family.', 'subtext': 'I need one quiet moment, but I also need my mother and daughter to understand how tired I am.'}
- **Kriti:** {'super_objective': 'To protect herself from feeling judged or exposed.', 'subtext': 'If I act like I don't care, nobody can see how much I do care.'}

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

MADHAVI

Kriti, seedha baitho. School mein kya sikhaya hai?

KRITI

School mein kaafi kuch sikhaya hai, Nani. Lekin train mein bhi inspection chal raha hai kya?

ANU

Maa, please. Shift ke baad lecture mat.

MADHAVI

Lecture nahi. Sanskaar.

KRITI

Haan, wahi. Free with every generation.



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

Use intimate, contained framing with a preference for medium close-ups, two-shots, and occasional wide compartment views to establish emotional geography. Lenses should feel natural and human, with a mild telephoto bias for compression during confrontations and a wider lens only when the three women are finally shared in one frame. Camera movement should be minimal and train-like: gentle handheld drift or subtle stabilized sway that echoes the carriage motion. Reflections in the window are essential for the climax, allowing all three faces to appear together before the physical seating change.

2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC:

- 1) Opening: cool fluorescent top light as the dominant source, creating a slightly clinical, emotionally distant compartment feel.
- 2) Mid-scene station flashes: intermittent white light through windows to punctuate reveals, soften faces, and create brief reflective highlights on the lunch box, ticket, and eyes.
- 3) Ending: maintain the fluorescent base but allow the shared seating arrangement and warmer facial proximity to create a softer emotional impression; keep contrast gentle and shadows less severe.

3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE:

Primary sound bed is the train's gentle motion, wheel rhythm, and compartment hum. Add sparse station pass-bys as brief whooshes of exterior noise and light. Foley should emphasize small domestic sounds: lunch box opening, ticket unfolding, earbuds adjusting, cloth bag rustle, and subtle clothing movement on the bench. Room tone should remain nearly empty, making pauses and silences feel emotionally loud. The acoustic profile should be dry and intimate inside the compartment, with exterior sounds filtered and distant.

4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE:

Use a cool, slightly desaturated LUT with fluorescent cyan-green bias in the highlights and muted skin tones that still remain natural. Preserve contrast between the cold compartment interior and the brief white station flashes. The palette should lean toward steel blue, pale white, soft gray, and the subdued colors of cotton sari, simple kurta, and school uniform. In the final moments, allow a gentle lift in midtones so the shared warmth feels visible without becoming overtly sentimental.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 09:30	Set dressing, bench placement, window treatment, and prop continuity check	Art, Props, Continuity
09:30 - 11:00	Rig overhead fluorescent practicals and test station-flash effects	Camera, Gaffer, Electric
11:00 - 12:30	Rehearse blocking for separate benches and reveal beats	Director, Cast, AD
12:30 - 14:00	Shoot opening confrontation and lunch box reveal coverage	Camera, Sound, Script Supervisor
14:00 - 15:30	Shoot emotional reveal, reflection shot, and final shared-seat ending	Camera, Cast, Gaffer

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:

- Use one real train-compartment-style set or a tightly dressed partial compartment with practical windows and controlled exterior light.
- Simulate station flashes with a single strong light source outside the window and moving diffusion.
- Keep the cast to three performers and let performance carry the scene; avoid extras.
- Use practical fluorescent tubes or LED tubes to save rigging time and preserve the train look.
- Shoot most coverage with one camera and careful blocking to reduce setup count.
- Let the lunch box, ticket, and seating change do the emotional heavy lifting instead of expensive production design.
- **Mandatory Licensing:** Completely free for student/commercial production with on-screen credit: 'Story & Screenplay by Story Dil Se (storydilse.in)'.

