

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

THE TERRACE PACT

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

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE: A mother reveals long-hidden letters from the father who left years ago, forcing her two daughters to confront the truth behind the family's silence. On a small terrace at sunset, grief, anger, and the possibility of forgiveness collide in one honest night.
DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT: • Visual tone: intimate, restrained, and emotionally escalating, with the terrace feeling like a pressure chamber for buried truth. • Thematic depth: silence as betrayal, truth as both wound and release, and forgiveness as a choice rather than a duty. • Pacing: slow-burn opening with controlled dialogue, then a sharp emotional turn when the letters are revealed, ending in a quiet, unresolved tenderness. • Performance style: naturalistic, with micro-reactions, pauses, and overlapping emotional states rather than melodrama. • Spatial storytelling: keep the women physically separated at first, then gradually bring them into a shared emotional plane as the letters are read. • Sunset progression should mirror the emotional arc: orange warmth at denial, indigo coolness at truth, yellow bulbs becoming the only steady comfort.
CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS: • character: Aarti age: 52 look: Simple kurta, tired but composed face, practical presence, carrying a bundle of old letters like a guarded secret. dramatic_arc: Begins as the keeper of silence and ends as the first person to admit fear and exhaustion. She moves from control to confession, choosing honesty over protection. • character: Megha age: 30 look: Work clothes, dupatta half-tied on the shoulder, tired smile masking caution, grounded and practical body language. dramatic_arc: Starts defensive and pragmatic, treating the meeting like another burden. The letters crack her emotional armor, forcing her to confront how much of her life has been built on managed denial. • character: Pooja age: 18 look: Jeans and dupatta, upright posture, sharp eyes, visibly angry energy that can quickly shift into vulnerability. dramatic_arc: Begins as the most openly confrontational, demanding truth. Reading the letters transforms her anger into empathy and a more mature understanding of truth and loss.
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 residential terrace with a low boundary wall, a visible water tank, two to three potted plants, and a single string of yellow bulbs stretched overhead. The floor should feel slightly worn and practical, with subtle dust, weathering, and everyday domestic use. The low wall must be strong enough to become a leaning point and emotional boundary marker. The water tank should sit as a hard, utilitarian shape against the softness of the sunset. Potted plants add life and movement, their leaves reacting to the breeze. Keep the space compact so the women cannot avoid each other physically. The terrace should feel private but not isolated, with faint neighborhood sounds from below to remind us of the world outside the family conflict.

2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY:

• **character:** Aarti | **costume:** Simple kurta in muted, domestic tones; no flashy accessories. Clothing should feel lived-in and practical. | **continuity_notes:** She must remain consistent throughout the scene, with the letters bundle always physically associated with her until she places it between Megha and Pooja.

• **character:** Megha | **costume:** Work clothes that suggest she came directly from office, with a dupatta half-tied on the shoulder. Slightly tired, functional, and understated. | **continuity_notes:** Her look should suggest a long day and emotional restraint. Keep the dupatta placement consistent unless the scene naturally shifts it during movement.

• **character:** Pooja | **costume:** Jeans and dupatta, college-ready, youthful but not overly styled. Her outfit should support her sharp, restless energy. | **continuity_notes:** She should look prepared to leave or go somewhere else, reinforcing that she is in motion mentally even while physically trapped on the terrace.

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

• **prop:** Purane letters ka bundle | **details:** A visibly aged stack of folded letters, handled carefully, with the sense that they have been preserved for years. This is the hero prop and must look tactile, worn, and emotionally loaded.

• **prop:** Individual letters | **details:** Several old folded letters that can be separated, opened, and read on camera. They should feel authentic and slightly fragile.

• **prop:** Water tank | **details:** Large, utilitarian rooftop tank placed in the background or side plane, grounding the terrace in everyday domestic reality.

• **prop:** Potted plants | **details:** Two to three small plants with leaves that visibly move in the breeze, adding life and softness to the frame.

• **prop:** String of yellow bulbs | **details:** A single practical light source overhead that becomes warmer and more emotionally significant as dusk deepens.

• **prop:** Water mug | **details:** A simple mug used by Aarti at the end to water the plant, functioning as a quiet ritual object that closes the scene.

4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA):

Keep makeup natural and age-appropriate. Aarti should have a slightly fatigued face with subtle under-eye softness and a lived-in complexion. Megha should show office-day exhaustion, mild shine, and tension in the jaw and eyes. Pooja should have youthful skin with a hint of heat or frustration in the face. As the scene progresses, add subtle sweat, especially if the terrace feels warm at sunset. Use minimal SFX: no injury or heavy distress makeup, only emotional wear, eye moisture, and the slight redness that comes from holding back tears or anger. Lighting should react well to skin texture, so avoid overly matte finishes.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **character:** Aarti | **super_objective:** To stop the family from being destroyed by silence one more time. | **subtext:** I hid the truth to protect you, but I may have protected my fear more than your hearts.
- **character:** Megha | **super_objective:** To keep life manageable by controlling emotional chaos. | **subtext:** If I stay practical, I won't have to feel how much I lost.
- **character:** Pooja | **super_objective:** To force the family to tell the truth and stop treating her like a child. | **subtext:** If nobody tells me the truth, I will tear the silence open myself.

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

MEGHA

((dryly))

Agar yeh family meeting hai na, toh main pehle hi bol deti hoon—mujhe overtime nahi mila.

POOJA

Aur mujhe class presentation. So please, drama ka timer short rakhna.

AARTI

Drama nahi hai. Decision hai.

POOJA

Papa ke baare mein?

MEGHA

((controlled))

Pooja, us aadmi ka naam leke kya hoga?



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: CINEMATOGRAPHY & SOUND DEPT

1. CINEMATOGRAPHY CONCEPT & LENS PALETTE: Use intimate, observational framing with a restrained handheld or very subtle stabilized feel. Favor medium close-ups and close-ups for emotional shifts, with occasional wider frames to emphasize the terrace's smallness and the characters' emotional distance. Lens choice should lean toward natural perspective: 35mm for group tension, 50mm for dialogue intimacy, and 85mm for letter-reading close-ups. Camera movement philosophy: begin mostly static and composed, then introduce gentle push-ins as the truth is revealed, allowing the frame to tighten with the emotional pressure. Avoid flashy movement; let performance and blocking carry the scene.
2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC: Tier 1: Sunset natural light at the start, warm orange key from the sky with soft ambient fill, keeping the terrace open and deceptively calm. Tier 2: As the letters are revealed, transition into mixed dusk light with the yellow bulbs becoming more prominent, creating warmer practical highlights against cooling shadows. Tier 3: By the climax and ending, let indigo-blue ambient dominate while the bulbs provide the main emotional warmth, producing a tender contrast between truth's coldness and family's remaining warmth.
3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE: Keep the sound bed intimate and realistic: soft terrace wind, leaves rustling in potted plants, faint neighborhood voices and street sounds from below, and the subtle hum of evening. Foley should emphasize paper handling, letter unfolding, footsteps on terrace floor, and the small sound of the water mug at the end. Dialogue should feel close and dry, with minimal reverb to preserve the sense of private confrontation. Let silence become a major sound element, especially after key revelations.
4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE: Use a soft cinematic LUT with warm sunset highlights and cool indigo shadows. The palette should move from orange and amber at the beginning to blue-violet and muted steel tones by the end. Yellow bulbs should remain a consistent emotional anchor, standing out as warm points against the cooling sky. Skin tones should stay natural and slightly warm, with gentle contrast and no heavy saturation. The final image should feel tender, not glossy.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 09:30	Recce, terrace dressing, and prop placement	Art, Props, Direction
09:30 - 11:00	Rig practical yellow bulbs and test sunset simulation	G&E,, Camera
11:00 - 12:30	Wardrobe continuity check and makeup prep	Wardrobe, Makeup, Hair
12:30 - 14:00	Block actors and rehearse letter reveal beats	Direction, Cast, Camera
14:00 - 16:00	Shoot wide master and medium group coverage	Camera, Sound, Direction
16:00 - 18:00	Shoot close-ups, letter reading, and emotional climax	Camera, Sound, Makeup
18:00 - 19:00	Shoot ending ritual beat with water mug and practical bulbs	Camera, Art, Direction

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:

Use a real terrace location to avoid set construction costs, and dress it minimally with plants, a water tank, and practical bulbs. Shoot during golden hour into dusk to maximize natural lighting and reduce artificial lighting needs. Keep the cast small and the blocking simple so performance carries the scene. Use one hero prop bundle of letters with duplicates only if needed for handling shots. Rely on practical bulbs and a single soft LED fill for face control. Record clean production sound on location to avoid expensive ADR. Limit coverage to a few strong setups and prioritize emotional continuity over excessive angles.

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

