



THE WOMAN IN THE BOOTH

A Mystery/Crime 2-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

Written by
Story Dil Se Team
(storydilse.in)

LOGLINE: Inspector Dev questions Sana about a missing man who was last seen in her café, but every answer she gives seems to hide another layer of truth. When Dev notices she's been sketching the same face all evening, he realizes the missing man may have been sitting across from her only minutes before disappearing.

CAST / CHARACTERS: FORMAT: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast) | Character 1: Inspector Dev (40)

LOCATION: A roadside café booth near closing time, lit by warm yellow bulbs and neon from the sign outside. The rain-blurred glass, empty tables, and the smell of coffee create a tense, isolated pocket of space.

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INT. ROADSIDE CAFÉ BOOTH - NIGHT

Warm yellow bulbs. Neon light from outside bleeds through rain-blurred glass. Empty tables. A distant HUM of traffic. Closing time ka mahaul.

INSPECTOR DEV (40), rolled-up sleeves, rain-speckled trench coat, enters with a police file. He scans the café, then sits opposite SANA (27), nervous waitress in a black apron, holding a notepad and tray.

DEV

(steady)

Arjun Mehra. Last seen yahin.

SANA

(mildly confused)

Sir, main... mujhe yaad nahi.

Dev opens the file, slides a photo across the table.

DEV

Aaj raat yaad karna padega.

Sana glances at the photo, then away.

SANA

Woh bas customer tha.

DEV

Customer log booth mein baith ke ghante bhar kya karte hain?

SANA

Coffee peete hain.

DEV

Aur dar ke maare idhar-udhar dekhte hain?

Sana tightens her grip on the tray.

SANA

Aapko kaise pata?

Dev notices the notepad. A rough sketch peeking from the top page.

DEV

Notepad mein orders se zyada faces ban rahe hain.

SANA

(quickly)

Practice hai.

DEV

Arjun ka face.

Beat.

Sana says nothing.

DEV

Tum usse pehchanti ho.

SANA

Har customer ko yaad rakhna mera kaam nahi, sir.

DEV

Par is face ko yaad rakhna tha.

He taps the sketch paper. Sana instinctively covers it.

Dev produces another photo from the file. Sana's face drains.

DEV

Yeh reaction mujhe pasand nahi aaya.

SANA

Maine kuch nahi kiya.

DEV

Maine abhi kuch poocha bhi nahi.

A tense silence.

DEV

Arjun ne kya order kiya tha?

SANA

Coffee.

DEV

Kis type ki?

SANA

Black.

DEV

Sugar?

SANA

Nahi.

DEV

Kis se phone par baat kar raha tha?

Sana freezes.

SANA

Mujhe sunai nahi diya.

DEV

Sahi jawab.

He leans in.

DEV

Galat jawab do, toh main yahin se case close kar dunga.

SANA

(small)

Woh akela nahi tha.

DEV

Kaun tha uske saath?

SANA

Koi nahi. Par woh kisi ka intezaar kar raha tha.

DEV

Kis ka?

SANA

Pata nahi.

DEV

Phir sketch kyun?

Sana hesitates, then reaches into her apron pocket. She pulls out a folded sketch paper and hands it over.

Dev unfolds it.

It's a SKETCH OF DEV. Tired eyes. Rolled sleeves. Trench coat. Exact.

Dev looks up, stunned.

DEV

Yeh... kisne banaya?

SANA

Arjun ne.

DEV

Kaise?

SANA

Usne bola, "Agar Inspector Dev aaye, toh samajh lena main sach ke kareeb tha."

Dev's jaw tightens.

DEV

Aur sach kya tha?

SANA

Usne mujhe ek envelope diya tha.

DEV

Kahan hai?

SANA

Mere paas nahi.

DEV

Sana.

SANA

Usne bola tha... pehle isse dekhna.

She points under the booth.

SANA

Woh bola tha, "Booth ke neeche."

Dev kneels, pulls out a flashlight, checks beneath the booth.

Nothing. Just old gum residue. Then a tiny METAL SLIVER stuck to tape marks.

DEV

(quietly)

Yahan kuch chipaya gaya tha.

SANA

Mujhe laga woh bas paranoid tha.

DEV

Paranoid log usually sahi hote hain.

He stands, looking at her differently now.

DEV

Arjun kaun tha, Sana?

Sana's eyes fill.

SANA

Mera bhai.

Beat.

DEV

Missing man report mein yeh nahi tha.

SANA

Kyuki usne bola tha police par trust mat karna.

Dev absorbs that.

SANA

Woh kisi corruption ring ke against evidence laaya tha. Usne kaha tha agar kuch hua, toh pehle aapko check karna.

DEV

Mujhe?

SANA

Usne bola tha aap ya toh last honest cop ho... ya sabse dangerous.

Dev opens the file again, flips to the last page. A hidden PHOTO falls out: an old POLICE BADGE and a familiar face.

Dev stares.

DEV

(under breath)

Nahi...

SANA

Kya hua?

DEV

Yeh file jis officer se judi thi... woh mera purana partner tha.

Sana is shaken.

SANA

Toh Arjun sach mein...

DEV

Haan.

He closes the file.

DEV

Woh yahin se gaya tha. Aur koi uske baad aaya.

SANA

Kya woh zinda hai?

Dev meets her eyes.

DEV

Aaj raat ka answer main tumse jhooth bol ke nahi doonga.

He takes out a small notebook page from the file.

DEV

Statement likho.

Sana nods, opens her notepad with trembling hands.

Rain intensifies outside. Neon flickers.

SANA

(softly)

Sir... agar sach nikla, toh?

DEV

Toh pehli baar kisi ka sketch evidence banega.

He sets the sketch of himself on the table between them.

A beat. Then Sana starts writing.

FADE OUT.