



THE PRACTICE RUN

A Emotional Drama 1-Character Solo Monologue in Hinglish

Written by
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LOGLINE: A father sits alone in his car practicing what he will say to his daughter during their first custody exchange in months. As he goes through the speech again and again, he realizes the real apology isn't for the divorce—it is for the years he spent being physically present but emotionally absent.

CAST / CHARACTERS: FORMAT: 1-Character Solo Monologue (Single Actor) | Character: Divorced Father Rehearsing Custody Talk (Male, 45-52)

LOCATION: A parked car in a quiet suburban driveway at dusk, lit by fading daylight and the soft glow of the dashboard. The windshield frames a still neighborhood, while the interior feels intimate and confessional.

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FADE IN:

INT. PARKED CAR - SUBURBAN DRIVEWAY - DUSK

A quiet suburban driveway. The sky is fading into blue-grey. Inside the parked sedan, dashboard light glows softly.

RAHUL (late 40s to early 50s), clean but worn button-up shirt, jeans, reading glasses perched on his head, salt-and-pepper beard, sits alone behind the steering wheel. Anxious. Sincere. He holds a folded note in one hand.

On the dashboard: a FAMILY PHOTO.

In the side pocket: a CHILD'S DRAWING.

Rahul stares at the windshield, at the still neighborhood beyond.

He inhales.

RAHUL

(under breath)

Theek hai. Bas simple.

He glances at the folded note, then unfolds it.

INSERT - NOTE

Messy handwritten lines. Several crossed-out phrases.

BACK TO SCENE

Rahul clears his throat, rehearsing.

RAHUL

Beta, main bas...

He stops.

RAHUL

Nahi. Wrong.

He tries again, softer.

RAHUL

Sun... mujhe tumse...

Stops again.

He rubs his face, frustrated but gentle with himself.

Rahul picks up his phone. Unlocks it. Plays a VOICE NOTE.

PHONE VOICE NOTE (V.O.)

Pick-up time 6:30 PM. Please be on time.

Rahul exhales a dry laugh.

RAHUL

On time.

(beat)

Pehli baar life mein sirf time par pahunchna kaafi nahi hai.

He looks at the family photo on the dashboard. Picks it up.

INSERT - FAMILY PHOTO

A younger Rahul with his little daughter on his shoulders. Both smiling.

BACK TO SCENE

Rahul studies his own face in the photo.

RAHUL

Tum the...

(beat)

Main tha.

He swallows hard.

RAHUL

Physically.

He nods to himself, as if admitting evidence in court.

RAHUL

Har school function mein. Har birthday pe. Doctor ke waiting room mein. Grocery store ke aisles mein.

He lowers the photo.

RAHUL

Par emotionally...

(beat)

Main kahin aur hi tha.

He looks toward the child's drawing in the side pocket. Pulls it out carefully.

INSERT - CHILD'S DRAWING

A house, a sun, two stick figures, a tiny heart between them.

BACK TO SCENE

Rahul's eyes soften.

RAHUL

Maine socha tha divorce sabse bada damage tha.

He shakes his head.

RAHUL

Nahi. Sabse bada damage woh saal the jab main ghar mein tha, par tumhare saath nahi tha.

A beat. The words hit him as he says them.

He grips the steering wheel.

RAHUL

Main dad tha.

(beat)

Par present nahi.

He closes his eyes.

RAHUL

Main sunta nahi tha.

He opens them, looking at himself in the rearview mirror.

RAHUL

Main notice nahi karta tha. Main yaad bhi nahi rakhta tha ki tumhara favourite colour kaunsa hai, ki school mein tum chup kyun ho gayi, ki tumne last time mujhe hug kab kiya tha.

He laughs once, bitter and ashamed.

RAHUL

Wah. Great father award milna chahiye tha.

He shakes that off. No comedy can hide the pain.

RAHUL

Nahi. Nahi. Aaj joke nahi. Aaj sach.

He folds the note again, smaller this time.

RAHUL

Speech ke liye practice kar raha tha.

He looks out at the quiet street.

RAHUL

Par speech se kuch nahi hoga.

A long beat.

He takes a breath, steadies himself.

RAHUL

Mujhe apology divorce ke liye nahi karni chahiye.

He nods, finally understanding.

RAHUL

Mujhe maafi maangni chahiye us version of me ke liye
jo saalon tak tumhare saamne baitha raha, par tumse
milta hi nahi tha.

His voice cracks, but he continues.

RAHUL

Jo physically available tha, par emotionally absent.
He puts the family photo back on the dashboard.

RAHUL

Aur shayad... shuruat yahin se hoti hai.
He picks up the child's drawing, traces the tiny heart with his thumb.

RAHUL

Aaj main perfect dad banne nahi jaa raha.
(beat)
Bas... honest dad banne jaa raha hoon.
He lets that settle.
Rahul places the folded note on the passenger seat.
He sets the phone face down.
He straightens his shirt.
He adjusts his reading glasses on top of his head.
A deep breath.
Outside, one by one, the streetlights begin to turn on.
Rahul looks forward, toward the house we never enter.
Toward the unseen daughter he is about to meet.

RAHUL

(softly)
Practice run khatam.
He nods, almost to himself.

RAHUL

Ab asli baari hai.
He reaches for the door handle.
HOLD on his face: fear, hope, and a new kind of courage.

FADE OUT.

THE END