



THE THIRD SEATBELT

A Slice of Life/Family 3-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

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LOGLINE: A simple drive to a family function turns into a tense three-way conversation when Mini notices her parents are no longer speaking to each other directly. As jokes and accusations bounce around the car, the final beat reveals the daughter has been silently orchestrating this ride to force them to talk before the marriage breaks apart.

CAST / CHARACTERS: FORMAT: 3-Character Short Film (Trio Cast) | Character 1: Raghav (36)

LOCATION: Inside a parked car during a monsoon downpour, with rain hammering the windshield and traffic lights shimmering on the wet road outside. The cabin is intimate and slightly fogged up, lit by dashboard glow and passing headlights.

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FADE IN:

EXT. PARKED CAR - MONSOON NIGHT

Baarish zor se car ke windshield par pad rahi hai. Road ke traffic lights wet glass par shimmer kar rahe hain. Car parked hai. Cabin foggy hai, intimate.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Dashboard glow. RAGHAV (36), polo shirt mein thoda rumpled, steering wheel ke paas baitha hai. NEHA (34), seatbelt pehne, sunglasses on, passenger seat par. MINI (16), school uniform mein back seat par, earbuds neck par latke hue.

Raghav car keys ko chhupane ki koshish mein ghumata rehta hai.

RAGHAV

Bas do minute mein nikal jayenge.

NEHA

Do minute tumhari definition mein hamesha 20 minute hote hain.

Mini window se bahar dekhte hue pretend karti hai ki usne suna hi nahi.

RAGHAV

Arre, aaj toh rain bhi attendance le rahi hai.

NEHA

Aur tum bhi.

Mini ke lips pe chhoti si smile aati hai, phir gayab.

Raghav phone uthata hai, route check karta hai.

RAGHAV

Umbrella bag mein hai na?

Neha tissue box ki taraf ishara karti hai.

NEHA

Tumhare baad sab kuch bag mein hi hota hai. Umbrella, patience, responsibility—sab.

Mini finally bolti hai, without looking at them.

MINI

Mummy, papa, aap log directly ek dusre se baat kar sakte ho na? Main middleman nahi hoon.

Silence.

Raghav awkward laugh deta hai.

RAGHAV

Arey beta, hum toh bas—

NEHA

Bas kya? Bas normal ho gaye hain.

Rain aur tez.

MINI

Normal log ek dusre ko dekh ke baat karte hain. Aap dono phone, mujhe, ya weather report ko address karte ho. Ek dusre ko nahi.

Raghav ka face soft hota hai.

RAGHAV

Neha, main bas aaj fight nahi chahta tha.

Neha sunglasses utarti hai. Uski aankhon mein thakaan aur gussa dono.

NEHA

Fight tum nahi chahte ya sach nahi chahte?

RAGHAV

Sach? Sach yeh hai ki tum mujhe har baat mein judge karti ho.

NEHA

Aur tum har silence ko 'theek hai' samajh lete ho.

Mini tissue box se ek tissue nikaal kar fold karti hai.

MINI

Toh bol do na. Main sun rahi hoon.

Dono Mini ko dekhte hain.

RAGHAV

Main bas chahta tha ki aaj function pe hum normal family lagen.

NEHA

Normal family hoti kaunsi hai, Raghav? Jahan koi kisi se baat hi na kare aur bas smile karte rahe?

MINI

Exactly.

Raghav Mini ke haath mein do car keys dekhta hai.

RAGHAV

Mini, yeh extra keys kahan se aayi?

Mini seedha un dono ko dekhti hai.

MINI

Mere paas rakhi thi.

NEHA

Kyun?

MINI

Kyuki agar aap log alag-alag ghar se nikal jaate, toh function se pehle milte hi nahi. Aur agar yeh ride cancel ho jaati, toh aap log phir se message pe hi baat karte. Ya matlab, baat bhi nahi karte.

Raghav aur Neha stunned.

MINI (CONT'D)

Mujhe pata hai aap log fight kar rahe ho. Mujhe yeh bhi pata hai ki last time jab maine aapko dinner table pe chup dekha tha, tab se kuch theek nahi hai.

Mini ki awaaz controlled, par aankhen wet.

MINI (CONT'D)

Toh main ne socha... ek car mein phans jaoge, toh shayad bol hi doge.

Outside, a horn blares. Rain intensifies.

Neha ka face crack karta hai.

NEHA

Tumhe yeh sab karne ki zarurat nahi thi.

MINI

Mujhe karna pada.

(beat)

Kyunki aap dono ek hi car mein bhi alag-alag duniya mein ho. Aur main beech mein seatbelt ki tarah hoon—tight, useful, aur invisible.

Silence.

Raghav slowly car keys dashboard par rakh deta hai. Neha tissue box ko band karti hai.

RAGHAV

Meri galti hai. Main baat avoid karta raha.

NEHA

Aur main thak gayi thi, isliye chup rahi.

Mini un dono ko dekhti hai. Raghav umbrella uthata hai. Neha apna phone pocket mein rakhti hai.

MINI

Good. Ab function pe jaake fake smile kar lena. Ghar aake asli wali kar lena.

Raghav aur Neha ek dusre ko dekhte hain. Phir dono ek chhoti, real hansi mein phoot padte hain.

Mini apni seatbelt kholti hai.

MINI (CONT'D)

Chalo. Late ho rahe ho.

Raghav car door ki taraf dekhta hai. Neha sunglasses ko haath mein pakad leti hai.

FADE OUT.

SUPER: THE THIRD SEATBELT

THE END