



THE MOTHER-IN-LAW CLAUSE

A Pure Comedy 3-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

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LOGLINE: Vivek thinks he's here to sign a simple marriage affidavit, but Shalini and Kamla have each brought their own list of "conditions" for the marriage. As the lawyer remains off-screen and the women out-argue him at every turn, the final punchline lands when Vivek discovers he has accidentally signed a house agreement, a pet adoption form, and a prenatal consent form—none of which he remembers agreeing to.

CAST / CHARACTERS: FORMAT: 3-Character Short Film (Trio Cast) | Character 1: Vivek (33)

LOCATION: A lawyer's office waiting room with leather chairs, a coffee table, and framed certificates on beige walls. The lighting is bright and institutional, ideal for turning family issues into legal comedy.

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INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE WAITING ROOM - DAY

Bright, institutional light. Beige walls. Framed certificates. Three leather chairs around a coffee table. A legal folder, a pen, two coffee cups, a handbag, and a pair of spectacles are placed with suspicious neatness.

VIVEK (33), neat kurta, sits on the edge of a chair like it may file a complaint against him.

SHALINI (30), office-casual, stands with a file in hand, dry and unbothered.

KAMLA (57), silk sari, businesslike, opens her handbag with the confidence of a seasoned negotiator.

A beat.

VIVEK

(trying to smile)

Toh... simple hai na? Bas marriage affidavit sign karna hai.

SHALINI

Simple?

She flips open a file.

SHALINI (CONT'D)

Tumhare liye simple ka matlab kya hota hai, Vivek? Jo page samajh na aaye, uspe bhi sign?

KAMLA

(calmly)

Aadmi ka yahi problem hai. Paper dekh ke emotionally unavailable ho jaata hai.

VIVEK

Main emotionally unavailable nahi hoon. Main... legally nervous hoon.

Shalini and Kamla exchange a look.

SHALINI

Perfect. Aaj ka din tumhare liye therapy bhi hai, aur punishment bhi.

KAMLA

Aur negotiation bhi.

Vivek gulps.

VIVEK

Mujhe bas bata do kis page par sign karna hai.

Shalini slides a paper toward him.

SHALINI

Pehle meri conditions.

Vivek freezes.

VIVEK

Conditions?

KAMLA

Meri bhi.

She places another file on the table.

VIVEK

Do-do?

SHALINI

Marriage mein "do" ka concept kaafi important hota hai, Vivek.

KAMLA

Especially jab "do ghar" ke beech balance banana ho.

Vivek blinks.

VIVEK

Main... bas sign kar deta hoon.

SHALINI

Woh toh tumhara default mode hai.

KAMLA opens her folder.

KAMLA

Clause one: Sunday lunch at our place.

SHALINI

Clause one: Sunday ko "our place" ka matlab surprise visit nahi.

KAMLA

Main surprise nahi deti. Main presence deti hoon.

SHALINI

Exactly. Unwanted presence.

Vivek raises a hand like a schoolboy.

VIVEK

Main kya bolun?

SHALINI

Truth bol do.

VIVEK

Mujhe truth se hi darr lagta hai.

Kamla adjusts her spectacles.

KAMLA

Then read clause two.

She points to a line.

KAMLA (CONT'D)

"Mother-in-law shall retain dignity, access to tea, and reasonable commentary rights."

SHALINI

Commentary rights?

KAMLA

Main silent spectator nahi hoon.

SHALINI

Aap live commentary ho.

VIVEK

(softly)

Main cricket match mein bhi yeh level ka pressure feel nahi karta.

Shalini takes a sip of coffee.

SHALINI

Clause two: no emotional blackmail.

KAMLA

That is not a clause. That is a personal attack.

SHALINI

Aapke style mein, yes.

Vivek looks at the pen in his hand like it betrayed him.

VIVEK

Kya main bas sign kar doon? Please?

KAMLA

Nahi. Pehle read karo.

SHALINI

And understand.

KAMLA

And accept.

VIVEK

Yeh marriage hai ya UPSC?

SHALINI

Dono ka syllabus same hota hai. Bas result zyada personal hota hai.

Kamla slides a second form forward.

KAMLA

Isme house agreement hai.

Vivek squints.

VIVEK

House agreement? Mujhe laga marriage affidavit hai.

SHALINI

Aww. Tumne laga.

She points.

SHALINI (CONT'D)

Sign kahan kiya?

Vivek looks down, horrified.

VIVEK

Maine... yahin?

KAMLA

Aur yahin.

She taps another paper.

KAMLA (CONT'D)

Aur yahan bhi.

VIVEK

Yeh teeno alag forms hain?

Shalini leans in, deadpan.

SHALINI

Abhi tak notice hua?

Vivek snatches the papers, scanning.

VIVEK

House agreement... pet adoption form... prenatal consent form?

A beat.

VIVEK (CONT'D)

Prenatal?!

SHALINI

Tumne sign kiya tha.

VIVEK

Maine? Main toh sirf... affidavit...

KAMLA

Reading clause skip kiya tha.

SHALINI

Aur negotiating clause bhi.

Vivek stands up too fast, nearly knocking the chair.

VIVEK

Mujhe yaad hi nahi.

KAMLA

Exactly. That's why paperwork exists.

SHALINI

For accountability.

KAMLA

For consequences.

VIVEK

For traps!

From off-screen, the LAWYER'S VOICE calls out.

LAWYER (O.S.)

Sorry, wrong bundle.

Silence.

Vivek stares into the middle distance.

VIVEK

Wrong bundle?

SHALINI

(very calm)

Haan.

KAMLA

Wrong bundle.

VIVEK

Toh main married hoon ya lease pe hoon?

Shalini's mouth twitches.

SHALINI

Dono.

Kamla closes her handbag with finality.

KAMLA

Aur beta, ab se is ghar mein mother-in-law clause
sabse pehle padh ke sign karna.

Vivek looks at the pen.

VIVEK

Main aaj se pen se nahi, lawyer se darrunga.

SHALINI

Too late.

Kamla lifts her coffee cup in a tiny toast.

KAMLA

Welcome to the family.

Vivek sinks into the chair as the women exchange one victorious look.

FADE OUT.