



# DEADLINE AT THE CAFÉ

A Pure Comedy 3-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

Written by  
Story Dil Se Team  
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**LOGLINE:** Rohit promises to deliver a brilliant script in one hour, but his editor and the waitress keep exposing how little of it exists. As he improvises increasingly absurd excuses, the final twist reveals the waitress has been ghostwriting half his work for months and is the only reason he still has a career.

**CAST / CHARACTERS:** FORMAT: 3-Character Short Film (Trio Cast) | Character 1: Rohit (34)

**LOCATION:** A small neighborhood café with one corner table, warm morning sunlight through a front window, and the constant sound of an espresso machine. The space is cozy and public, perfect for deadline pressure and accidental overheard truths.

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**INT. NEIGHBORHOOD CAFÉ - MORNING**

Warm morning sunlight streams through the front window. A small corner table is cluttered with a laptop, two coffee cups, a notebook, a receipt, a pen, and a TIMER. The ESPRESSO MACHINE hisses constantly in the background.

ROHIT (34), hoodie, caffeine-stained, sits in front of the laptop like a man pretending to own his chaos.

ANJALI (32), sharp glasses, blazer, efficient and amused, sits opposite him with her arms crossed.

TINA (29), waitress in apron, moves between them with coffee and dangerous observational skills.

**ANJALI**

(timer on)

Sixty minutes. Script. No drama. No excuses.

**ROHIT**

One hour is enough.

**ANJALI**

For writing, yes. For lying, you're already over budget.

**TINA**

(placing coffee)

Black coffee. For the man with the blank page.

**ROHIT**

Thanks, Tina.

**TINA**

Don't thank me yet. I haven't seen the page earn it.

Anjali opens the laptop. The screen is basically empty.

**ANJALI**

Interesting. Very minimalist.

**ROHIT**

Main process mein hoon.

**ANJALI**

Your cursor is doing more work than you.

**TINA**

(cursor-like)

Even I'm impressed. Cursor ka self-respect zyada hai.

Rohit opens the notebook. It contains random doodles, one line, and a grocery list.

**ROHIT**

Research.

**ANJALI**

(reading)

"Milk. Bread. Existential crisis."

**TINA**

That's not research. That's your personality.

**ROHIT**

Okay, okay. I need silence.

**ANJALI**

You need a script.

**ROHIT**

Mera muse late hai.

**TINA**

Muse? Sir, yahan waiter late hoti hai, muse nahi.

Rohit leans back, offended.

**ROHIT**

I'm an under-pressure genius.

**ANJALI**

Then produce pressure.

**TINA**

Or at least produce one sentence.

Rohit sits up, dramatic.

**ROHIT**

Fine. I'm starting.

He types. On screen: "Ek café mein teen log..."

**ANJALI**

That's it?

**ROHIT**

It's an opening.

**TINA**

It's a hostage situation.

**ANJALI**

Try again.

**ROHIT**

I need inspiration.

**ANJALI**

You need a job.

TINA slides a receipt onto the table.

**TINA**

By the way, your last script's payment receipt.

**ROHIT**

Why are you giving me a receipt?

**TINA**

Because you keep forgetting reality. Receipt helps.

Anjali glances at the receipt, then freezes.

**ANJALI**

(reading)

Wait.

She flips the receipt. On the back are notes: punchlines, beats, scene ideas.

**ANJALI**

These are script notes.

**ROHIT**

Maybe... coincidence?

**TINA**

Nope. Not coincidence. I wrote them.

Beat.

**ANJALI**

You wrote his scripts?

**TINA**

Ghostwriting sounds fancy. I prefer "emotional cleanup."

**ROHIT**

(defensive)

I give ideas.

**TINA**

Yes. Like "make it funny" and "deadline ko cinematic bana do."

**ANJALI**

So that's why your work suddenly became readable.

**ROHIT**

I maintain the brand.

**TINA**

No, I maintain the brand.

Anjali sits back, amused now.

**ANJALI**

Months. You've been helping him for months.

**TINA**

Helping? I've been rescuing him from professional extinction.

**ROHIT**

I was going to tell you.

**TINA**

When? At the premiere of your honesty documentary?

**ANJALI**

(smiling)

This is better than the script.

**ROHIT**

Please don't enjoy this.

**ANJALI**

I'm an editor. Enjoying suffering is part of the syllabus.

TINA picks up the pen, twirls it.

**TINA**

Look, Rohit. You're not a writer. You're a delivery system for panic.

**ROHIT**

That is hurtful.

**TINA**

But accurate.

**ANJALI**

And yet, somehow, the industry keeps paying him.

**TINA**

Because I keep saving him.

Silence. The ESPRESSO MACHINE hisses louder.

**ROHIT**

So... you were ghostwriting half my career?

**TINA**

Half? Don't insult my contribution.

**ANJALI**

And all this time you thought you were suffering alone.

**ROHIT**

I was building a legacy.

**TINA**

You were building a dependency.

Anjali closes the laptop halfway, then pushes it toward Tina.

**ANJALI**

Fine. From now on, you handle the writing.

**ROHIT**

What?

**ANJALI**

You handle coffee orders.

**ROHIT**

That's not a career.

**TINA**

Neither is "process mein hoon."

Anjali laughs. Rohit stares, defeated.

**TINA**

Also, payment first.

She flips the receipt and writes on the back.

**INSERT - RECEIPT**

"If you want brilliance, tip on time."

**ANJALI**

That's brilliant.

**ROHIT**

I hate both of you.

**TINA**

No, you don't. We're your best work.

Anjali stops the timer.

**ANJALI**

New deadline. Tomorrow. And this time, the ghost gets credit.

**ROHIT**

What about me?

**TINA**

You get coffee.

Rohit looks at the laptop. Tina opens it and starts typing like she owns the universe.

ANJALI watches, amused, while Rohit holds the coffee tray like a man demoted by destiny.

The espresso machine hisses.

**FADE OUT.**