



THE THIRD CUP OF TEA

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

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LOGLINE: Harsh wants to impress his mother-in-law by making tea, but every step becomes a family referendum on sugar, strength, and respect. His wife keeps correcting him while her mother keeps praising him for the wrong reasons, until the final cup becomes a quiet peace offering that finally tastes like home.

CAST / CHARACTERS: FORMAT: 3-Character Short Film (Trio Cast) | Character 1: Harsh (31)

LOCATION: A compact kitchen in the early morning, lit by soft window light and the blue flame of a gas stove. Steel containers, a chipped mug, and a small dining counter make the space intimate and domestic.

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INT. COMPACT KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Soft window light. Blue flame on the gas stove. Steel containers line the shelves. A chipped mug, tea kettle, sugar jar, spoon, and biscuit tin sit on a small counter.

HARSH (31), in a simple shirt, stands over the stove like a man defusing a bomb.

RADHA (56), in a cotton sari, watches with calm authority.

ANITA (33), in house clothes, leans near the fridge, tired-eyed and amused.

HARSH

(too polite)

Mummy ji, main bana deta hoon chai.

RADHA

Arre haan. Bana lo. Dekhte hain.

ANITA

(dry)

"Dekhte hain" se hi family court lag raha hai.

Harsh ignores that. He pours water into the kettle.

HARSH

Do cup?

RADHA

Do nahi. Teen. Anita ka bhi.

ANITA

Main toh bas witness hoon.

Harsh places the kettle on the stove. The flame hums.

RADHA

Chai patti.

Harsh opens the tea tin, measures carefully, and adds it.

RADHA (CONT'D)

Thodi aur.

ANITA

(to Harsh)

Mummy ko chai nahi, colour chahiye.

RADHA

Respect se bana raha hai. Galti ho bhi gayi toh maaf.

Harsh forces a smile.

HARSH

Ji. Bilkul.

ANITA

Woh “bilkul” abhi hai. Baad mein “oops” aayega.

The water begins to boil. Harsh reaches for the sugar jar.

RADHA

Do chammach sugar.

HARSH

Ji.

He adds one spoon.

RADHA

Kam.

ANITA

Mere liye toh bas naam ka chai rakh do. Main diet pe hoon.

Harsh adds another spoon.

RADHA

Ab theek.

ANITA

Mummy, aapko “theek” ka matlab “thoda aur” hota hai.

Harsh looks from Radha to Anita, confused.

HARSH

(careful)

Toh... aur?

RADHA

Nahi. Bas ab milk.

Harsh pours milk. The tea rises.

ANITA

Ab ek boil aur.

RADHA

Haan. Chai ko zinda rakhna padta hai.

ANITA

Maa, aap chai bana rahi ho ya army training?

Harsh stirs, trying to follow every instruction.

HARSH

(muttering)

Respect se... respect se...

He reaches for cups. He picks up the chipped mug.

RADHA

Yeh cup purana hai.

ANITA

Is ghar mein sab purana hai, bas expectations nayi hain.

A beat. Harsh almost laughs.

HARSH

Ye wala theek hai?

RADHA

Haan. Yeh hi.

He pours tea into three cups. Radha takes hers first, sips.

Silence.

Harsh waits, nervous.

RADHA

Aaj chai theek bani hai.

Harsh lights up.

HARSH

Sach?

Radha nods, then extends the chipped mug toward Harsh.

RADHA

Par yeh cup Harsh ke liye hai. Usne banaaya hai.

Harsh blinks.

HARSH

Mummy ji?

RADHA

Pehli baar kisi ne mere kitchen mein khade hoke sirf chai nahi, ghar samjha hai.

Anita looks at Radha, then Harsh.

ANITA

Wow. Emotional approval. Rare.

Harsh takes the mug, a little overwhelmed. He sips.

A beat.

A small, surprised smile.

HARSH

Mummy ji... is chai mein thodi si...

(searching)

...namak jaisi respect hai.

Anita bursts out laughing.

Radha finally smiles.

RADHA

Ab next cup Anita banayegi.

ANITA

Main emotional load sambhal rahi hoon, chai ka load nahi.

RADHA

Ghar chalana bhi chai jaisa hota hai.

ANITA

Aur overboil ho gaya toh?

RADHA

Toh teenon peena padta hai.

Harsh sets the spoon down, relieved.

The three stand in the tiny kitchen, steam rising between them like a soft truce.

FADE OUT.