

FREEZE FRAME

A Sci-Fi/High-Concept 2-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

Genre: Sci-Fi/High-Concept	Format: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast)	Runtime: 5 - 8 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast) Character 1: Neil (31)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Neil bridal suite ke andar camera check kar raha hai. Soft golden light window se aa rahi hai aur vanity mirror ke bulbs ek warm, almost dreamy glow de rahe hain. Room mein shaadi ka décor untouched pada hai—phool, ribbons, invitation card, aur ek half-open sherwani bag. Tariq sherwani pehne khada hai, ek wedding garland aadhi pehni hui, aur apni watch baar-baar dekh raha hai. Uske face par nervous smile hai, lekin aankhon mein ajeeb sa darr chhupa hua hai.

Neil ka kaam simple hai: groom ki pre-wedding portraits. Woh casual shirt aur rumpled trousers mein professional banne ki koshish kar raha hai. “Bas ek confident look do,” Neil bolta hai. Tariq halki hans ki saath bolta hai, “Confident? Bhai, main to abhi tak ye decide nahi kar paaya ki main is shaadi mein hoon bhi ya nahi.” Dono mein light banter hoti hai. Neil camera uthata hai, Tariq ko mirror ke paas khada karta hai, aur first click leta hai.

Photo review karte hi Neil ka expression change ho jata hai. Frame mein Tariq wahi nahi lagta jo saamne khada hai. Ek photo mein woh perfectly composed groom hai—straight posture, settled eyes, jaise life uske haath mein ho. Neil sochta hai lens ka issue hai. Dusra shot leta hai. Is baar Tariq ka chehra pale hai, sherwani ke buttons jaise struggle kar rahe hon, aur uski watch ke upar ek dark shadow sa dikh raha hai. Tariq notice karta hai Neil ka reaction aur puchta hai, “Kya hua?” Neil casually bolta hai, “■■■■ ■■■■, light weird hai.”

Lekin jaise-jaise photos badhti hain, images aur disturbing hoti jaati hain. Ek frame mein Tariq wedding hall mein akela khada hai, garland zameen par padi hai, aur uske face par divorce ka thaka hua, hollow sa expression hai. Dusre mein woh hospital bed par dead sa dikhta hai—white sheets, closed eyes, aur same watch wrist par. Neil ka haath thoda kaanpne lagta hai. Woh memory card nikaal ke phir se dekh■■■ hai, sochta hai maybe corruption hai. Par images same hain. Har shot mein Tariq ka ek different version. Confident. Terrified. Married. Divorced. Dead.

Tariq ka nervous smile dheere-dheere tootne lagta hai. Woh mirror ki taraf dekhta hai aur turant peeche hat jaata hai. “Maine subah se yahi dekha hai,” woh dheere se bolta hai. “Mirror mein kabhi main dulha hota hoon, kabhi koi aur. Kabhi mera chehra thoda sa bada lagta hai, kabhi aankhen bilkul khali. Main bas isliye idhar udhar dekh raha hoon, taaki samajh aa sake ki main kaun hoon.” Neil uski taraf dekhta hai, ab serious. “Tu mazaak kar raha hai?” Tariq seedha jawab deta hai, “Kaash kar raha hota.”

Neil ek aur photo lene ki koshish karta hai, lekin Tariq uska camera pakad leta hai. “Bas. Please.” Uski awaaz mein ab panic hai. “Agar camera mujhe dekh raha hai, to mat dekh mujhe.” Neil, ab tak skeptic, poochta hai, “Tujhe lagta hai ye future dikhta hai?” Tariq mirror mein apni hi reflection ko dekhte hue bolta hai, “Future? Nahi. Ye woh sab dikhta hai jo main pehle bhi jee chuka hoon.”

Neil confuse ho jaata hai. Tariq explain karta hai ki jab se usne subah sherwani pehni hai, har reflective surface mein alag version dikh raha hai. “Ek mein main shaadi ke baad khush tha. Dusre mein main shaadi se bhaag raha tha. Ek mein ring thi. Ek mein bas khaali haath.” Neil usse dekh hai, phir camera ko. “Alternate timelines?” Tariq halki hansi ke saath bolta hai, “Shayad. Ya main har baar wahi galti repeat karta hoon.”

Twist ka final layer tab aata hai jab Neil memory card ke last file ko open karta hai. Usmein Tariq ki ek photo hoti hai—same room, same light—lekin is baar Neil bhi frame mein dikh raha hai, camera ke saamne khada, jaise ye moment pehle bhi hua ho. Photo ke corner mein wedding invitation ka naam clear hai: Neil aur Tariq. Dono freeze ho jaate hain. Neil ka chehra safed pad jaata hai. “Ye... ye impossible hai,” woh whisper karta hai. Tariq dheere se mirror ki taraf mudta hai, aur wahan reflection mein woh groom nahi, balki ek aadmi dikhta hai jo baar-baar alag lives mein is shaadi tak pahunchta raha hai—kabhi saath, kabhi akela, kabhi toot kar.

Tariq ek deep breath leta hai aur bolta hai, “Camera future nahi bana raha, Neil. Ye bas yaad dila raha hai ki hum yahan pehli baar nahi aaye.” Neil apni camera strap ko pakadta hai, aur is baar uska professional confidence gayab hai. Bahar shaadi ke shehnai ki halki awaaz sunai deti hai, jaise koi aur reality unhe bula rahi ho. Tariq apni watch band ko seedha karta hai, garland ko thoda aur adjust karta hai, aur muskurata hai—nervous nahi, resigned. Neil camera ko dheere se lower karta hai. “Toh ab?” Tariq mirror se nazar hataaye bina bolta hai, “Ab ek photo mat lena. Shayad iss baar hum finally wahi jee lein jo pehle kabhi jee nahi paaye.”