

THE CHAI LINE

A Pure Comedy 2-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

Genre: Pure Comedy	Format: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast)	Runtime: 5 - 8 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast) Character 1: Barkha (34)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Barkha har subah ek hi speed par aati hai—jaise office ki lift uske bina chal hi nahi sakti. Uske haath mein reusable cup, ek haath mein phone, aur aankhon mein clock ka permanent radar. Tiny tea stall ke saamne woh bina saans liye bolti hai, “Sumi, wahi wali chai. Exact. Thodi kam sugar. Aur foam zyada. Main late hoon.” Sumi, apni sari aur apron mein, poori shaanti se kettle uthati hai aur bas muskura deti hai. Dono ka routine itna pakka hai ki street ke baaki log bhi unki timing pe chai ka andaza laga lete hain.

Par aaj kuch alag hota hai. Sumi chai banate banate casually bol deti hai, “Aaj se emotional support extra lagega.” Barkha ruk jaati hai. “Kya?” Sumi glass mein chai daalti hai, “Aapka regular order alag. Aapka panic alag. Dono ka billing alag.” Barkha ko lagta hai Sumi mazaak kar rahi hai, lekin receipt ki jagah Sumi cash box par do ungli se tap karke ek naya rate announce karti hai. Barkha protest karti hai—“Main customer hoon, therapist nahi!” Sumi bina jhijhak ke jawab deti hai, “Customer ho. Par roz chai ke saath apni life ka adha drama bhi yahin chhod jaati ho. Uska packaging charge lagega.”

Barkha aur Sumi ki behas ek rapid-fire comedy ban jaati hai. Barkha sugar count pe atak jaati hai: “Maine bola tha half spoon!” Sumi: “Aap bolti ho half, expression se full depression mangti ho.” Barkha foam ko leke complain karti hai: “Foam kam hai.” Sumi: “Aapke office mein bhi kya itna hi foam hota hai? Upar se soft, andar se hawa.” Barkha ke paas jawab hai, par har baar uska phone vibrate karta hai aur woh phir se late ho jaati hai. Sumi uske cup ko ek baar side mein rakh kar bolti hai, “Pehle chai peeyo. Phir duniya ko bhaago.” Barkha ko yeh line irritate bhi karti hai aur thodi si hit bhi.

Jab Barkha paise nikalti hai, Sumi cash box band karke bolti hai, “Aaj cash nahi. Aaj full payment.” Barkha confuse: “UPI?” Sumi: “Nahi. Truth.” Barkha has deti hai, par Sumi ka expression serious rehta hai. Woh Barkha ke reusable cup ko dekhkar bolti hai, “Cup laati ho, par khud ko kabhi refill nahi karti.” Barkha ka laughter thoda dheema padta hai. Street noise, kettle whistle, aur steam ke beech ek chhota sa silence aata hai.

Phir twist dheere se khulta hai. Sumi cash box ke neeche se ek moti si bundle nikaalti hai—chhoti chhoti folded chits, office ID slips, aur kabhi-kabhi chai ke bill ke back side par likhe adhoore sentences. “Yeh kya hai?” Barkha poochti hai. Sumi bolti hai, “Aapke unfinished conversations.” Har note par Barkha ka half-spoken sentence likha hai: “Main

bas itna kehna chahti thi...”, “Mujhe lagta hai main is job mein...”, “Aaj main resign kar...” Barkha ki aankhen pehli baar time se hat jaati hain. Sumi calmly samjhati hai, “Aap har din yahan aakar bolna shuru karti thi. Phir office ka call, phir boss ka message, phir aapka face—same face but thoda aur chhota. Main samajh gayi thi, aap chai nahi, himmat lene aati ho.”

Barkha ke paas bolne ke liye words nahi bachte. Woh apna cup dono haathon se pakad leti hai. Sumi, bina sentimental hue, ek aur chhoti chai banati hai aur bolti hai, “Aaj emotional support free. Bas ek condition.” Barkha slowly: “Kya?” Sumi smirks, “Aaj pehli baar chai ke baad mat bhaagna. Pehle apni line complete karna.” Barkha hasti hai—pehli baar dil se. Phir woh phone screen ko dekhti hai, jo office ka call dikhata hai. Uski ungli hover karti hai, aur is baar woh call reject kar deti hai.

Noon light steam mein ghul jaati hai. Barkha seedha khadi hoti hai, saans leti hai, aur bina jaldi ke bolti hai, “Main aaj resign karne wali hoon.” Sumi bas ek second ke liye aankhen band karke smile karti hai, jaise usne yeh line pehle bhi sun li ho aur ab finally पूरी hui ho. Barkha hairaan ho kar poochti hai, “Aapko kaise pata?” Sumi kettle ko neeche rakhti hai: “Kyuki jo log roz chai pe aake apni zindagi ka draft chhodte hain, woh ek din final version leke aate hain.”

Ant mein Barkha chai ka last sip leti hai, cash box ke paas extra notes rakhti hai aur bolti hai, “Theek hai. Emotional support ka charge de diya.” Sumi counter mein ek aur note daal deti hai: “Boundary fee.” Dono has padti hain. Street corner par kettle phir whistle karta hai. Aur first time, Barkha late hone ke bawajood, bhaagti nahi. Woh apni chai line khud complete karti hai.