

THE SPARE KEY

A Emotional Drama 2-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

Genre: Emotional Drama	Format: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast)	Runtime: 5 - 8 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast) Character 1: Aarti (47)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Raat ka waqt hai. Ek purane apartment ke corridor mein warm bulb ki peeli roshni pad rahi hai. Window se kabhi-kabhi passing car ki safed headlights hallway ko kaat ke nikal jaati hain. Aarti, 47, simple ghar ke kapdon mein, ek key ring ko baar-baar ungliyon se ghumati hui, thoda sa saans phoolta hua, front door ke saamne khadi hai. Uske haath mein ek duffel bag bhi hai. Woh thaki hui hai, par us thakan se zyada uske chehre par purani narazgi jam chuki hai. Woh key lagati hai, lekin lock nahi khulta. Dobra try karti hai. Phir bhi nahi.

Door ke andar se Simran, 19, college sweatshirt aur sneakers mein, arms crossed, bas usi intzaar mein thi jaise usne pehle se decide kar rakha ho ki aaj chup nahi rehna. Woh door kholti hai, chain nahi, sirf aadha sa gap. Aarti ko dekhte hi uska chehra tight ho jaata hai. Aarti seedha poochti hai, "Lock badal diya?" Simran bina jhijhak ke kehti hai, "Haan." Yeh ek shabd dono ke beech ek deewar ki tarah khada ho jaata hai.

Aarti ka pehla reaction gussa hota hai, phir disbelief, phir woh purana sa dard jo har baar gusse ke neeche se nikal aata hai. Woh kehti hai, "Meri hi ghar ki chabhi se mera darwaza kholne ka haq nahi raha?" Simran bolti hai, "Yeh mera room bhi hai, mera space bhi. Aap bina bataye aati ho, bina knock kiye andar aa jaati ho." Aarti ka jawab seedha chubhata hai: "Main teri maa hoon." Simran turant bolti hai, "Aur main bacchi nahi hoon."

Hallway mein awaaz kabhi tez, kabhi dheemi hoti jaati hai. Dono ek doosre ko sun bhi rahe hote hain aur sunna nahi bhi chahte. Aarti ke liye yeh lock badalna sirf privacy ka masla nahi; yeh uss dar ka sabot hai ki uski beti usse door ho rahi hai. Simran ke liye yeh lock sirf safety ka masla nahi; yeh uss saans ka pehla mauka hai jo usne kabhi li hi nahi. Aarti ke har line ke neeche ek aur line chhupi hai: "Mujhe chhod ke mat ja." Simran ke har reply ke neeche ek aur line hai: "Mujhe control mat kar."

Phir baat purane zakhmon tak pahunch jaati hai. Simran bolti hai ki jab woh chhoti thi, Aarti hamesha kaam, tension, aur khamoshi mein doobi rehti thi. Aarti ka chehra sakht ho jaata hai, par uski aankhon mein kuch tootne lagta hai. Woh palat ke kehti hai ki usne akeli maa ban kar sab kiya, aur agar kabhi sakht rahi, toh isliye kyunki uske paas soft hone ka time hi nahi tha. Simran pehli baar awaaz neeche karti hai aur kehti hai, "Mujhe maa chahiye thi, manager nahi." Yeh line Aarti ko seedha lagti hai. Woh kuch bol nahi paati.

Tabhi Aarti ke haath se key ring halki si hilti hai aur ek chhoti si spare key zameen par girti hai. Simran usse dekh leti hai. Woh poochti hai, “Yeh ab bhi aapke paas hai?” Aarti jawab nahi deti. Uski ungliyan us key ko pakad leti hain jaise woh uski aakhri aadat ho. Simran, jo ab tak sirf defensive thi, achanak us key ko dekhti rehti hai. Aarti dheere se bolti hai, “Mujhe laga tha... shayad kabhi zarurat pade.”

Simran lock ke baare mein aur kuch nahi bolti. Woh Aarti ke haath se key leti hai, aur darwaze ke paas lage ek chhote se purane cabinet ki taraf ishara karti hai—ek memory box jo hallway ke corner mein pada hai, jisme kuch purani photos, ek folded school report card, aur ek chhota sa tin box hai. Aarti confused hai. Simran bolti hai, “Maine lock isliye badla kyunki mujhe laga aap mere room ko bhi usi tarah khol legi jaise aap sab kuch khol leti hain. Par yeh... yeh aapka hai.”

Aarti spare key se box kholti hai. Andar kuch old photographs hain—Simran ki bachpan ki, ek birthday cake ke saath, aur ek photo jisme Aarti aur Simran kisi chhote se mela stall par khade hain. Neeche ek folded note padha hai: “Maa, mujhe maaf kar dena. Main har baar sahi tareeke se pyar nahi dikha paayi.” Aarti ka chehra ek dum se pighal jaata hai. Woh note ko haath mein le kar dekhti rehti hai, jaise pehli baar apne hi haath ka likha hua dard samajh rahi ho. Spare key darwaza nahi kholti; woh un saari baaton ka tala khol deti hai jo kabhi boli hi nahi gayi thi.

Simran ki aankhon mein aansu hain, lekin woh unhe girne nahi deti. Aarti bhi roti nahi, bas saans lekar kehti hai, “Maine bhi kabhi theek se nahi bola.” Simran halki si hansii ke saath, aansu chhupate hue bolti hai, “Haan, woh toh noticeable tha.” Pehli baar dono ke beech ek chhota sa, sachcha muskurahat ka pal aata hai. Door ab bhi locked hai, lekin hallway mein pehli baar dono ek hi side par khadi lagti hain. Aur raat ke us warm bulb ke neeche, un dono ko samajh aata hai ki kabhi-kabhi ghar ka darwaza nahi, apology ka tala khulta hai.