

THE UNSENT VOICE NOTE

A Slice of Life/Romance 2-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

Genre: Slice of Life/Romance	Format: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast)	Runtime: 5 - 8 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast) Character 1: Sana (31)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Bookstore band ho chuki hai, par andar abhi bhi lamp ki naram roshni tair rahi hai. Baarish ki halki tapping glass front pe sargoshi ki tarah pad rahi hai. Sana counter ke paas khadi hai, soft cardigan aur glasses ke saath, phone ko aise pakde hue jaise usse bas check kar rahi ho, care nahi kar rahi. Lekin uske thumb ka ruk-ruk ke screen pe aana batata hai ki kuch toh hai jo uske andar hil raha hai.

Bell softly banti hai. Ira andar aati hai, paint-stained clothes, ek sketchbook bag ke neeche dabaya hua, aur chehre pe woh nervous energy jo kisi purani jagah ko dobara dekhne se aati hai. Woh pehle shelves dekhti hai, phir Sana ko. Dono ek second ke liye bas dekhte reh jaate hain. Jaise koi purani line beech mein adhoori reh gayi ho aur ab dobara usi page pe aa gayi ho.

Ira casually bolti hai ki usse ek notebook chahiye tha, bas dekhne aayi thi. Sana equally casual hoti hai, bolti hai ki closing ho chuki hai, par agar "sirf dekhna" hai toh dekh lo. Dono ke beech ki baat normal lagti hai, par har sentence ke neeche kuch aur chal raha hai. Ira reading table ke paas apna sketchbook rakh deti hai. Sana counter se phone uthati hai. Screen pe ek unsent voice note ka thumbnail chamak raha hai. Ira ki aankh uss screen pe tik jaati hai.

Woh poochti hai, "Ye abhi tak hai?" Sana bina turant jawab diye phone lock karti hai. "Phone hai. Cheezein reh jaati hain." Ira halka sa smile karti hai, par us smile mein dard bhi hai. "Haan. Kuch cheezein bahut der tak reh jaati hain."

Sana uske samne aati hai, aur unke beech reading table ek chhota sa border ban jaata hai. Ira batati hai ki woh months baad wapas aayi hai, kaam, deadlines, life, sab kuch beech mein aa gaya tha. Sana ke paas seedha jawab nahi hota. Woh bas kehti hai, "Tumne bataya nahi." Ira ka expression thoda toot-ta hai. "Main bahut baar sochti thi."

Tab Sana phone unlock karti hai. Screen pe voice note ka naam nahi, sirf time stamp. Ira ki saans ruk si jaati hai. Sana bolti hai, "Maine delete nahi kiya." Ira dheere se, almost whisper mein, "Sun liya?" Sana aankhen milati hai. "Nahi. Par pata tha kis ke liye hai."

Ab silence zyada loud ho jaata hai. Baarish ki awaaz aur lamp ka warm circle un dono ko aur paas le aata hai. Ira apna sketchbook kholti hai, usmein kuch pages palat ke ek purana drawing dikhati hai—bookstore ka, reading lamp ka, aur counter ke paas khadi ek ladki ka rough sketch. Sana us drawing ko dekh kar pehli baar sach mein hil jaati

hai. Ira bolti hai, “Main chehre yaad rakhti hoon. Bas bolna mushkil tha.” Sana ka hothon pe ek half-smile aata hai, phir gayab. “Mere liye bhi.”

Woh voice note ka icon tap karti hai. Playback se pehle ek beat ka pause. Ira ke haath sketchbook ke edge pe kas jaate hain. Voice note play hota hai. Pehli line shaky hai: “Main ye teen baar record kar chuki hoon.” Dono ek dusre ko dekhte hain. Voice note continue hota hai, “Pehli baar maine mazaak banaya. Doosri baar maine gussa nikala. Abhi...” Chhota sa inhale. “Abhi main sach bol rahi hoon.”

Sana ki aankhen thodi nam ho jaati hain, Ira ka chehra ekdam khul jaata hai. Voice note mein Sana ki awaaz aati hai—soft, clear, finally unguarded: “Ira, jab tum jaati ho na, bookstore zyada khaali nahi hoti. Main hoti hoon.” Ek beat. “Mujhe tum pasand ho. Aur main itni der se pretend kar rahi hoon ki nahi, ki ab khud pe hansii aa rahi hai.”

Silence. Phir ek chhoti si, broken laugh Ira ke hothon se nikalti hai. “Teen baar?” Sana sharm se aankhen gira leti hai. “Haan. Pehli do baar main coward thi.” Ira aage badh kar table ke corner ko pakad leti hai, jaise khud ko sambhal rahi ho. “Aur ab?” Sana phone ko dheere se neeche rakhti hai. “Ab main yahan hoon.”

Ira usse dekhti rehti hai, phir bolti hai, “Toh phir, next time voice note mat bhejna.” Sana eyebrow raise karti hai. “Kyon?” Ira sketchbook band karti hai, smile ke saath: “Kyonki is baar live bolna.”

Aur baarish ke beech, warm lamp light mein, do log jo months se ek dusre ko miss kar rahe the, pehli baar sach mein ek hi room mein aa jaate hain. The unsent voice note accidental nahi tha. Woh teen attempts ka nateeja tha—pehle do jhoothes ko jala kar, teesra version aakhir sach ban gaya tha. Aur sach, jab finally bola jaata hai, toh delete nahi hota. Woh reh jaata hai. Jaise raat ke baad bhi window pe baarish ke nishaan. Jaise kisi ke dil mein kisi aur ka naam.