

THE NEIGHBOR UPSTAIRS

A Psychological Thriller 2-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

Genre: Psychological Thriller	Format: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast)	Runtime: 5 - 8 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast) Character 1: Radhika (35)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Radhika ko pehle se hi lag raha tha ki kuch theek nahi hai. Subah se usne jo bhi kiya, uska ek ajeeb sa duplicate uske aas-paas mandra raha tha. Same grey T-shirt, same bun, same black coffee order, same phone call jisme woh baar-baar bol rahi thi, “Haan, bas thodi der mein.” Aur phir raat ko jab stairwell ki bulb ne teesri baar blink kiya, tab usne upar se aahat suni—soft footsteps, jaise koi usi ke ghar ki aadat lekar chal raha ho.

Radhika broom ko aise pakde khadi thi jaise woh koi talwar ho. Narrow landing par concrete ki thandi deewarein, ek half-open dark flat ka darwaza, aur uske saamne khadi Veda—elegant loungewear mein, calm, composed, aur haath mein key chain jisme ek purani si chabi latak rahi thi. Veda ka chehra itna familiar tha ki Radhika ko gussa kam aur darr zyada aaya. “Aap mere jaisi kyun lag rahi ho?” Radhika ne seedha poocha. Veda ne halki si muskurahat ke saath palat kar dekha, jaise yeh sawaal usne pehle bhi suna ho. “Shayad ulta hai,” usne kaha. “Tum meri jaisi lag rahi ho.”

Radhika ne hansa ka jhootha sa sound nikala. “Mazaak mat karo. Aaj subah se sab same ho raha hai. Mere jaise kapde, mera coffee order, mere calls—kal raat maine jo dream dekha tha, woh bhi tumne describe kiya.” Veda ne bina defensive hue, bas apna key chain uthaya. “Aur tumne woh dream kab dekha?” Radhika ruk gayi. “Kya matlab?” “Matlab,” Veda ne dheere se bola, “dream mein tum staircase par khadi thi. Broom haath mein tha. Bulb flicker kar raha tha. Aur tum mujhse pooch rahi thi—‘Main kaun hoon?’”

Landing par ek lambi khamoshi fail gayi. Neeche se kisi flat ka TV noise aa raha tha, lekin yahan sirf unki saansein sunai de rahi thi. Radhika ka grip broom par aur tight ho gaya. “Mujhe pata hai tum mujhe gaslight kar rahi ho,” usne kaha, lekin uski awaaz mein shak ghul chuka tha. Veda ne ek kadam aage badhaya, phir ruk gayi. “Gaslight?” usne softly repeat kiya. “Radhika, tumhara naam bhi maini rakha tha.”

Radhika ne jaise usse sunna hi nahi. “Mere paas apartment keys hain. Mera phone. Mera ghar.” Veda ne chain se latakti chabi ko ungli se thapthapaya. “Mera bhi.” Phir usne half-open dark flat ki taraf ishara kiya. “Wahan andar jo flat hai, woh pehle mera tha. Same landing, same bulb, same broken latch. Tum aayi thi—ya shayad main gayi thi—aur phir... kuch badal gaya.”

Radhika ke chehre par pehli baar sachcha darr aaya. “Main yahan six months se hoon,” usne kaha. “Mujhe kisi aur ka ghar nahi chahiye.” Veda ki aankhon mein ek thakan thi, jaise woh yeh line sun-sun kar purani ho chuki ho. “Six months?” usne dheere se poocha. “Interesting. Kyunki mujhe yaad hai jab tum pehli baar yahan aayi thi, tumne kaha tha—‘Main bas temporarily rehne aayi hoon. Kuch cheezein wapas lene.’”

Radhika ka phone vibrate hua. Screen par ek unknown voice note ka icon chamka. Usne dheere se play kiya. Speaker se usi ki awaaz nikli—par thodi purani, thodi cracked—“Agar koi aaye aur bole ki woh tum jaisa hai, toh darna mat. Bas key mangna.” Radhika ka chehra safed pad gaya. Veda ne aankhon mein koi jeet nahi, bas dard liye dekha. “Ab yaad aaya?”

Radhika ka broom dheela pad gaya. Uske haath kaanp rahe the. “Yeh... yeh mera voice note nahi ho sakta.” Veda ne ek aur step liya, is baar bahut kareeb. “Tumhare paas jo apartment keys hain, woh meri hain. Jo phone tumhara hai, woh mera tha. Aur jo life tum samajh rahi ho ki tumhari hai...” Woh thoda ruki. “Woh maine tumhe di thi, jab tum kuch aur banne ke liye mujhe chhod kar gayi thi.”

Bulb ek second ke liye पूरी तरह band hua. Andhera. Phir wapas on. Jab light aayi, Radhika ke haath se broom phisal gaya tha. Veda ki key chain par ek chhota sa metal tag chamak raha tha: RADHIKA. Radhika ne tag dekha, phir Veda ko. “Toh main kaun hoon?” usne almost whisper kiya.

Veda ne door chain ki taraf aankh uthayi, phir Radhika ke chehre par. “Tum wahi ho jo mujhe ban kar jeeti rahi,” usne kaha. “Aur main woh hoon jo ab wapas aayi hoon—jo tumne copy kiya, adopt kiya, aur apna naam de diya.”

Radhika ki aankhon mein panic phail gaya. Woh piche hatne lagi, par landing chhoti thi, aur dark flat ka darwaza pehle se hi khula hua tha. Veda ne apne apartment keys aage badhaye, jaise koi cheez vaapas maang rahi ho. “Keys do, Radhika,” usne bahut narm awaaz mein kaha. “Jo tumhara nahi hai, usse pakde rehna aur bhi dangerous hota ja raha hai.”

Radhika ne keys ko dekha, phir Veda ko. Uski saans tez ho gayi. “Agar main keys de doon,” usne poocha, “toh main kya bachungi?”

Veda ne pehli baar seedha, bina muskuraye jawaab diya. “Sach.”