

FINAL STOP

A Mystery/Crime 2-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

Genre: Mystery/Crime	Format: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast)	Runtime: 5 - 8 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast) Character 1: Constable Rupa (27)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Raat ke barah baj chuke hain. Final depot stop par khadi ek purani bus ke andar sirf dashboard ki feeki roshni aur ek overhead bulb ka kamp-kampata light hai. Bahar baarish sheeshon par dharre bana rahi hai, aur andar hawa mein diesel, geeli mitti aur purane kapdon ki woh thandi si smell hai jo sirf night shift mein milti hai. Constable Rupa, raincoat aur sensible shoes mein, bus ke step par rukti hai. Uske haath mein flashlight hai, chehre par tension hai. Woh Kiran ko dekhkar seedha kaam ki baat karti hai: ek passenger missing hai, aur last stop ke baad kisi ne bus mein kisi ko nahi dekha. Kiran, uniform shirt aur cap mein, cigarette ko kaan ke peeche fasaaye, bina ghabrahat ke bas itna kehti hai—"Madam, meri bus mein final stop ke baad koi chadha hi nahi." Uski aawaaz thandi hai, jaise yeh sawaal usne pehle bhi hazaar baar suna ho.

Rupa route sheet kholkar pichhle stops check karti hai. Kiran ka kehna hai ki woh daily route par chalti hai, same timing, same road, same depot. Lekin Rupa ko kuch gadbad lagti hai. Bus ke andar seat numbers par purane scratches hain, ek route sheet par dates itni baar overwrite ki gayi hain ki ink ka brown sa daag ban gaya hai, aur windshield ke corner mein ek chhota sa crack hai jo uske hisaab se kal ka nahi ho sakta. Woh flashlight se floor, handrail, driver seat aur rear window scan karti hai. Har cheez jaise ek hi kahani ko repeat kar rahi hai. Kiran, calm aur almost bored, uske har sawal ka jawab deti hai, lekin jawab ke beech mein ek anjaani si der hoti hai—jaise woh bolne se pehle kuch yaad kar rahi ho.

Phir Rupa ko ek ajeeb baat dikhti hai. Bus ke rear mirror mein woh apna reflection dekhne ke bajay kuch pal ke liye ek aur silhouette dekhti hai—same raincoat, same posture, bas chehra dhundla. Woh turant palatkar dekhti hai, par wahan kuch nahi. Kiran pehli baar usse seedha dekhti hai aur kehti hai, "Dhoondh kya rahi ho, Rupa?" Rupa freeze ho jaati hai. Kiran ne uska naam kaise bola? Rupa ke haath mein flashlight ka beam kaanpne lagta hai. Kiran cigarette nikaal kar ungliyon mein ghumati hai aur dheere se bolti hai ki bus har raat yahin aati hai, aur har raat koi na koi aakar wahi sawal poochta hai—"Woh passenger kahan hai?" Rupa ke chehre par pehle irritation, phir confusion, aur phir ek gehri, andheri si pehchan ubharne lagti hai.

Kiran route sheet ko palat kar ek date par ungli rakhti hai—woh date jahan ink sabse zyada smudged hai. "Iss raat ke baad," woh kehti hai, "bus ne kabhi destination tak pahunchna seekha hi nahi." Rupa us par gussa karti hai, kehti hai

yeh bakwaas hai, koi prank hai, ya Kiran usse dara rahi hai. Lekin Kiran ka calm tone toot-ta nahi. Woh bus keys ko dashboard par halki si chot se rakhte hue bolti hai, "Tum final stop par utar gayi thi, Rupa. Phir baarish mein wapas chadh gayi. Ya shayad wapas chadhne ki koshish ki." Rupa ke dimaag mein ek flash aata hai—raat, raincoat, depot gate, brake squeal, ek tez roshni, aur phir... khamoshi. Uske saans ukhadne lagte hain.

Twist dheere-dheere khulta hai. Missing passenger koi aur nahi, Rupa khud hai. Woh bus mein aayi thi ek missing case ke peeche nahi, balki us raat ke baad se har raat usi route par atki hui ek adhoori yaad ke saath. Kiran driver nahi, balki ek tarah ki witness hai—ya shayad usi bus ki yaad, jo Rupa ko baar-baar us night loop mein le aati hai taaki woh sach ko maan le. Kiran kehti hai, "Tumhe yaad karna padega ki tum passenger thi ya constable. Kyunki us raat dono ek hi the." Rupa ki aankhon mein aansu bhar aate hain. Woh apni uniform ko dekhti hai, apne haath dekhti hai, phir bus ke floor par pade ek wet badge ko. Sab kuch uske saamne bikharta hai.

Aakhir mein, baarish aur tez ho jaati hai. Overhead bulb ek baar jhalakta hai, phir steady ho jaata hai. Rupa dheere se route sheet band karti hai, jaise kisi case file ko close kar rahi ho. Kiran cigarette ko ho■■■■ se lagati hai, phir bina jale hi wapas kaan ke peeche rakh deti hai. Dono ke beech ek lambi khamoshi rehti hai. Rupa ab darr se zyada acceptance mein hai. Woh bus se utarne ki koshish karti hai, par final stop ke bahar sirf andhera aur baarish hai. Kiran bas itna kehti hai, "Jab yaad aa jaye, tab utarna." Aur bus, jo kab se khadi thi, halki si aage sarakti hai—jaise ek aur round ke liye ready ho. Final stop par khadi bus, aur uske andar do auratein: ek jo yaad dila rahi hai, aur ek jo yaad ban chuki hai.