

APARTMENT 7B

A Mystery/Crime 1-Character Solo Monologue in Hinglish

Genre: Mystery/Crime	Format: 1-Character Solo Monologue (Single Actor)	Runtime: 4 - 6 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 1-Character Solo Monologue (Single Actor) Character: Suspicious Building Superintendent (Male, 36-42)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Apartment 7B ka corridor raat ke bahut baad bhi zinda lag raha tha, par insaanon se nahi — pipes ki ghurr-ghurr, fluorescent light ki teekhi bhin-bhin, aur emergency exit sign ki laal roshni se. Main, Ravi Kumar, building superintendent, apne work boots ke saath us narrow hallway mein khada tha, faded polo pe halki si grease, utility belt kamar par, clipboard haath mein. Mujhe bas water damage inspect karna tha. Aam kaam. Lekin 7B ke baare mein kuch bhi aam nahi tha.

Tenant ko weeks se kisi ne nahi dekha. Mail jam ho chuki thi. Doormen ne kaha tha ki door kabhi kabhi raat ko halkasa khadakta hai. Neighbour ne complain kiya tha ki bathroom side se paani tapak raha hai. Main maintenance log khol kar line by line dekh raha tha, par entries ajeeb thin — pehle ek delivery, phir ek missed inspection, phir kuch noise complaint jo file mein kisi aur ne close kar di thi. Main yaad karne laga: 7B ke saamne ek din ek cardboard box pada tha. Agle din nahi. Phir ek aur box. Same size. Same tape. Same corner par crushed.

Main master key ring ko ungliyon par ghumaata hua door ke paas gaya. Lock untouched tha, par frame ke neeche paint ke upar ek patli si brown line thi — paani ki nahin, kuch aur. Maine flashlight on ki. Beam ne floor par ek faint drag mark pakda, jaise koi heavy cheez ko andar se bahar ya bahar se andar kheench kar le gaya ho. Maine tape measure nikala, hallway ki wall se door tak distance note ki. Sab kuch record karna aadat thi meri. Building mein jhooth se zyada dangerous hota hai aadat ka ignore kar diya jaana.

“Apartment 7B,” main clipboard par bolte hue likh raha tha, “external leak evidence not consistent with plumbing.” Meri awaaz corridor mein wapas aayi, thodi khokhli, jaise building khud meri baat sun rahi ho. Maine door ke neeche se ek halki si hawa mehsoos ki. Closed room se aane wali hawa mein ya to khushboo hoti hai ya garmi. Isme dono nahi the. Sirf ek stale, metallic smell thi. Mere kaan ne pehle notice kiya — paani ki boond nahi, ek rhythm. Tap. Tap-tap. Pause. Tap. Jaise koi andar se signal de raha ho.

Main ne maintenance log ke pages palte. Har entry ke saath ek delivery note ka mention tha. “Groceries left at door.” “Laundry pickup.” “Package returned.” Par 7B ka tenant to gayab tha. Kaun receive kar raha tha? Kaun door tak aata

tha? Aur kyun har delivery ke baad hallway mein wohi low hum sunai deti thi, jaise fridge ka motor ya koi machine jo wall ke andar chhupi ho?

Maine flashlight ko door frame ke neeche sweep kiya. Ek tiny gap. Us gap mein se mujhe kuch dikh gaya — paper ka scrap, fold kiya hua, phansa hua. Main ghutno ke bal baitha, utility belt se flathead nikaala, aur us scrap ko bahar kheench liya. Yeh receipt thi. Grocery store ki. Par item list mein normal cheezein nahi thi. Nails. Plastic sheeting. Bleach. Duct tape. Aur ek line jo kisi ne pen se circle ki thi: “industrial bags.”

Mere haath thode tight ho gaye. Main superintendent hoon. Main leaks dekhta hoon, broken locks, burnt bulbs, clogged drains. Main kabhi kabhi late rent ka drama sunta hoon. Lekin yeh shopping list nahi, cleanup list lag rahi thi.

Corridor ka buzz achanak aur tez ho gaya. Ya shayad mere andar kuch tez ho gaya. Maine door ke neeche again dekha. Is baar gap mein se ek aur cheez chamki — ek chhota sa metal corner, jaise scale ka hissa ho, ya drawer ka handle. Aur phir mujhe yaad aaya: pichhle hafte 7B ke neeche se jo deliveries aayi thi, unmein se ek box unusually heavy tha. Driver ne sign liya hoga? Nahi. Logon ne building office mein complain nahi kiya? Nahi. Kyun? Kyunki complaint kabhi aayi hi nahi. Kisi ne sab kuch quietly manage kiya tha.

Main seedha khada hua aur maintenance log ke last page par note likha: “Possible concealed activity. Repeat deliveries. Unusual odor. Door secured from inside.” Phir maine apni flashlight ko door ke peeche ke wall par point kiya. Wahan fresh patch paint tha — rectangle shape mein, thoda sa alag shade. Kisi ne recently wall kholi thi. Aur band bhi ki thi. Bahar se.

Mera gala sookh gaya. Main pehli baar samjha ki water damage bas shuruaat thi. Paani toh bas cover story tha. Jo bhi 7B mein hua, woh chupaya gaya, shift kiya gaya, aur phir lock ke peeche seal kar diya gaya. Koi tenant weeks se gayab nahi tha. Koi tenant kab ka hat chuka tha. Aur building ke records, deliveries, noises — sab uska trail the, jo kisi ne clean karte karte bhi poora mita nahi paya.

Main key ring ko dheere se band karta hua door ke saamne khada raha. Corridor phir bhi khaali tha. Koi aaya nahi. Koi bola nahi. Sirf pipes ki aahat, fluorescent ka buzz, aur emergency sign ki laal roshni. Main ne clipboard ko chest ke paas pakda, jaise usse mere haath ke kaanpne ka pata na chale. “Apartment 7B,” main aakhri line bolta hoon, “needs immediate police attention.”

Aur uss khamoshi mein, mujhe pehli baar laga ki building bhi apni saans rok kar meri report ka intezaar kar rahi hai.