

THE PRACTICE RUN

A Emotional Drama 1-Character Solo Monologue in Hinglish

Genre: Emotional Drama	Format: 1-Character Solo Monologue (Single Actor)	Runtime: 4 - 6 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 1-Character Solo Monologue (Single Actor) Character: Divorced Father Rehearsing Custody Talk (Male, 45-52)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Raat ka pehla andhera dheere-dheere ek quiet suburban driveway par utar raha hai. Ek purani si sedan parked hai, aur uske andar baitha hai RAHUL—45 se 52 ke beech ka ek aadmi, clean but worn button-up shirt aur jeans mein. Uske baal salt-and-pepper hain, beard bhi thodi unkempt si, aur reading glasses uske sir par atke hue hain jaise wo unhe utarne ka bhi time nahi nikaal paaya ho. Dashboard ki halki si orange roshni uske chehre par pad rahi hai, aur windshield ke bahar poora neighborhood shaant hai—jaise duniya ne apni saans roki hui ho.

Uske haath mein ek folded note hai. Dashboard par ek family photo rakhi hai—purane zamane ki, jab hasna aasaan lagta tha. Uske side door pocket se ek child's drawing dikhti hai: ek house, ek sun, aur do stick figures ke beech ek chhota sa heart. Rahul us drawing ko dekhkar ek lamha ruk jaata hai, jaise usse koi purani language yaad aa gayi ho.

Aaj uski beti se first custody exchange hai, months ke baad. Court ne jo schedule diya, wo simple hai—par uske andar jo emotions ka traffic jam hai, wo simple bilkul nahi. Rahul ne is moment ke liye practice ki hai. Teen baar, chaar baar, shaayad usse bhi zyada. Har baar alag tone, alag words, alag courage. Wo steering wheel ko pakadkar mirror mein apna chehra dekhta hai aur apne aap se bolta hai: "Shaant rehna. Normal rehna. Bas usse daraana nahi." Phir khud hi us line par hansi aa jaati hai, kyunki usse pata hai ki darana to wo kab ka chhod chuka hai—ab bas sambhalna baaki hai.

Wo folded note kholta hai. Usme kuch lines likhi hain, shayad apology ke liye, shayad explanation ke liye. Par har sentence ke aage ek line cut hai, ek correction, ek naya scribble. "Main tumse..." "Mujhe lagta hai..." "Main bas..." Words uske haath mein aate-aate toot jaate hain. Wo phone uthata hai, screen unlock karta hai, aur ek saved voice note play karta hai—beti ka nahi, ex-wife ka nahi, sirf court reminder ka. Ek bland robotic voice: "Pick-up time 6:30 PM. Please be on time." Rahul ek pal ke liye aankhen band karta hai. Time. On time. Zindagi ka sabse bada failure kabhi-kabhi yahi hota hai—time par present hona, par sach mein haazir na hona.

Wo family photo uthata hai. Picture mein wo khud bhi hai, uski beti bhi chhoti si, uske kandhe par baithi hui. Us waqt bhi uske chehre par smile thi, par aaj us smile ko dekhkar usse lagta hai jaise kisi aur aadmi ki photo ho. Tab wo

physically sab jagah tha—birthday, school function, grocery runs, doctor visits—but emotionally? Wo jaise kisi aur room mein rehta tha. Emails, deadlines, phone, exhaustion, ego, silence—sab uske beech khade rahe. Aur usne kabhi notice hi nahi ki uski beti usse baat karte karte dheere-dheere kam bolne lagi.

Rahul practice karta hai. “Beta, main...” Nahi. “Sun, mujhe...” Nahi. “Mujhe maaf...” Wo ruk jaata hai. Maafi ka word uske gale mein phans jaata hai. Divorce ke baad usne socha tha ki sabse bada dard ghar tootne ka hai. Par ab, iss parked car ke andar, usse samajh aa raha hai ki ghar pehle hi toot chuka tha—sirf walls nahi, connection bhi. Aur us tootne ki awaz itni dheemi thi ki usne sunn hi nahi.

Wo dashboard light mein apni reading glasses ko thoda seedha karta hai. Uske haath kaanp rahe hain. Wo khud se bolta hai, “Aaj main speech nahi dunga. Aaj main sach bolunga.” Aur phir ek lambi saans lekar, bina practice ke, bina polish ke, bina kisi perfect line ke, wo apni beti ke liye woh baat finally keh deta hai jo saalon se uske andar atki thi: ki usne divorce se zyada un saalon ke liye maafi maangni chahiye thi jab wo ghar mein tha, par dil mein kahin aur. Jab wo dad tha, par available nahi tha. Jab uski beti ne usse dekhkar sikha ki pyaar ka matlab sirf presence nahi, attention bhi hota hai.

Neon ya music kuch nahi. Sirf car ke andar uski awaaz, thodi bhari, thodi toot-ti hui, aur bahar shaam ka aadha andhera. Wo apni beti ke drawing ko dekhkar muskurata hai—pehli baar genuinely. Us smile mein guilt bhi hai, acceptance bhi, aur ek nayi shuruaat ka darr bhi. Wo phone ko side mein rakh deta hai, folded note ko fold karke aur chhota kar deta hai, jaise ab usse lines ki nahi, courage ki zarurat hai.

Aur jab driveway ke saamne wali street light ek ek karke jalne lagti hai, Rahul samajh jaata hai ki aaj ka practice run asal mein practice kabhi tha hi nahi. Ye to uski zindagi ka first honest take tha.