

LOST AND FOUND

A Slice of Life/Romance 1-Character Solo Monologue in Hinglish

Genre: Slice of Life/Romance	Format: 1-Character Solo Monologue (Single Actor)	Runtime: 4 - 6 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 1-Character Solo Monologue (Single Actor) Character: Soft-Spoken Museum Guide (Male, 26-31)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Raat ke nau baj chuke hain, aur museum ka main hall ab ek alag hi duniya lag raha hai—shaant, polished, aur thoda sa jaadu bhara. Soft track lights paintings par aise gir rahi hain jaise har frame apni khamoshi mein kuch kehna chahta ho. Main, ek museum guide, apni neatly pressed shirt aur khakis mein, bench ke paas khada hoon, haath mein ek scarf liye. Name tag chest par seedha laga hai, hair tidy hai, aur chehre par woh gentle smile jo din bhar visitors ko dekar ab thoda thak chuki hai, par abhi bhi zinda hai. Aaj ka din normal nahi tha. Ek lady aayi thi, shayad art se zyada kisi aur cheez se bhaag kar. Woh ek painting ke saamne der tak khadi rahi. Main guidebook khol kar usse bas itna hi bata paaya ki yeh gallery impressionist collection ki hai, but usne mujhe dekha jaise main painting ka hissa hoon. Phir woh gayi, aur scarf bench par reh gaya.

Maine socha, lost and found counter pe rakh deta hoon. Par phir scarf ko haath mein liya toh laga jaise kisi ne apni warmth yahan chhod di ho. Soft wool ka ek kone mein chhota sa thread loose tha, aur andar, corner seam ke paas, ek tiny stitched initial tha—"M". Bas ek letter. Itna sa, aur meri poori shaam ka logic hil gaya. Main uska naam nahi jaanta. Na usne bataya, na maine poocha. Guide hoon, par kabhi kabhi lagta hai main logon ko sirf rooms aur paintings dikhata hoon, unke apne stories miss kar deta hoon.

Main bench par baith jaata hoon, scarf ko fold karke guidebook ke upar rakh deta hoon. Museum map kholta hoon, jaise uska naam kahin floor plan mein chhupa ho. Ridiculous, I know. Par yeh silence aisi cheezein believable bana deti hai. Main us moment ko yaad karta hoon jab usne entrance par map liya tha. Uski fingers thodi cold thi. Usne softly poocha tha, "Is gallery mein koi aisi painting hai jo... kisi ko wapas la sake?" Tab main hansa bhi nahi tha. Bas bola tha, "Shayad. Agar koi dekhna chahe."

Ab lag raha hai, shayad usne us painting mein kuch apna dekha hoga. Aur scarf? Scarf bhi kuch keh raha hai. Main usse apne cheek ke paas le jaata hoon. Haan, ab bhi faint sa perfume hai—jaisa rain ke baad mitti aur jasmine ka mix hota hai. Ek second ke liye mujhe lagta hai main uski awaaz sun raha hoon. Nahi, awaaz nahi... yaad. Aur yaad ka bhi apna ek temperature hota hai.

Phir meri nazar scarf ke edge par lagi chhoti si museum sticker par padti hai. Us par handwritten number likha hai—gift shop ka numbering. Main seedha phone nikaalta hoon, counter ke voicemail ko call karta hoon. Koi pick nahi karta. Main khud hi bol deta hoon, “Hi, agar aapne aaj scarf khoya hai, toh yeh museum mein safe hai. Aur... maybe aapne apna naam nahi diya tha, but scarf par ‘M’ stitched hai. Agar aap kal aayengi, main yahin hoon. Same time. Same bench.”

Call cut kar deta hoon, aur ek laugh mere hothon se nikalti hai—soft, almost embarrassed. Kya pata, woh aayegi bhi ya nahi. Lekin phir main gallery guidebook ke last page ko palat-ta hoon. Wahan visitors feedback slips ke liye chhota sa pocket bana hai. Andar ek folded paper dikh raha hai. Main nikaalta hoon. Us par handwriting hai—neat, slightly slanted: “If you found this, I’ll probably be back tomorrow. I forgot my scarf because I was trying not to forget the painting. —M.”

Main ek pal ke liye sirf dekhta reh jaata hoon. Phir smile aati hai, is baar zyada real. Toh naam tha. Bas usne pehle se hi chhod diya tha. Aur yeh museum, yeh quiet gallery, yeh single bench—sab ek chhoti si meeting point ban gaye the. Main paper ko scarf ke saath fold karta hoon, jaise dono ek hi story ka part hon. Phir bench ke paas khada ho kar paintings ko dekhte hue dheere se bolta hoon, “Kal phir milte hain, M. Main yahin rahunga. Lost bhi, found bhi.”