

THE EMPTY BOOTH

A Comedy 1-Character Solo Monologue in Hinglish

Genre: Comedy	Format: 1-Character Solo Monologue (Single Actor)	Runtime: 4 - 6 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 1-Character Solo Monologue (Single Actor) Character: Overprepared Podcast Host (Male, 35-42)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Rohit ne apne tiny home podcast booth ko aaj kisi space mission ki tarah prepare kiya tha. Blanket walls ko aur tight clip kiya, foam panels ko seedha kiya, ring light ka angle teen baar check kiya, aur desk mic ko aise polish kiya jaise usme se career ka future nikalne wala ho. Usne casual blazer pehna tha t-shirt ke upar, glasses theek kiye, beard neat thi, lekin forehead pe halki si pasina ki layer thi. Coffee mug side mein thi, laptop open tha, aur red recording sign jal raha tha. Aaj ka episode uske liye sirf ek aur recording nahi tha. Aaj woh soch raha tha, bas aaj, breakthrough mil jayega. Viral. Shareable. "Finally, he has arrived" type episode.

Woh headphones pehenkar mic ke paas jhuka aur deep breath li. Intro ke liye usne pehle se likha hua script khola, jisme usne khud ko "India's most relatable voice" tak bol diya tha. Phir usne dekha laptop screen par calendar. Blank. Aaj koi guest booked hi nahi tha. Rohit ka face freeze ho gaya. Pehle usne socha, shayad guest late hai. Phir emails check kiye. Messages check kiye. WhatsApp check kiya. Koi booking nahi. Koi reminder nahi. Koi invite link nahi. Uski aankhen dheere-dheere widen ho gayin. Usne whisper mein kaha, "Nahi... nahi, aisa nahi ho sakta."

Woh panic mode mein gaya, lekin uska panic bhi overprepared tha. Usne apne notebook mein likhe backup topics dekhe, "Top 10 productivity hacks," "How to build a personal brand," "Morning routine," aur "Failure se success." Sab kuch tha, par guest nahi tha. Tab usne apne aap se hi bol diya, "Theek hai. Problem solving. Main khud hi guest ban jaata hoon." Pehle yeh line joke thi. Do minute baad yeh plan ban gaya. Usne posture change kiya, throat clear kiya, aur apni chair ko thoda angle dekar ek side "host" aur doosri side "guest" bana li.

Phir show shuru hua. "Welcome back to The Empty Booth," usne deep radio voice mein announce kiya. "Aaj humare saath hain... main hi." Usne apni hi taraf dekha, jaise doosra version sach mein chair par baitha ho. "Rohit ji, aapka bohot swagat hai." Usne apni aankhon ko narrow kiya aur khud ke hi tone mein reply diya, "Thank you. Main yahan aane ke liye emotionally available tha." Usko pehli baar hasi aayi. Chhoti si, guilty si, lekin real.

Jitna woh self-interview mein ghusta gaya, utna hi sach bolta gaya. Usne apne "guest" se poocha, "Aap itne overprepared kyun ho?" Aur usne khud hi jawaab diya, "Kyuki mujhe darr lagta hai ki agar main perfect nahi hua, toh

koi mujhe sunega hi nahi.” Yeh line bolte hi room thoda chhota lagne laga. Ring light ki roshni mein uska face funny bhi tha aur thoda vulnerable bhi. Usne coffee mug uthayi, sip li, aur bola, “Wah. Ye toh therapy nikli.”

Phir questions aur absurd hote gaye. “Aapka greatest strength?” — “Main mic on karke bhi awkward reh sakta hoon.” “Weakness?” — “Main ‘casual’ blazer pehenkar bhi corporate crisis jaisa feel karta hoon.” “Any advice for listeners?” — “Apne aap ko seriously lo, par itna nahi ki hasi chali jaaye.” Har answer ke saath uska confidence thoda aur nikalta gaya. Woh pehle host tha, phir guest, phir critic, phir apna sabse honest friend.

Ek point par usne headphones hata diye. Booth ke andar achanak silence aur bhi loud ho gayi. Usne mic ke saamne seedha baithkar bola, “Sach bolun? Main breakthrough ke liye itna prepared tha ki main live hona bhool gaya. Main content banana chahta tha, par shayad mujhe bas suna jaana tha. Aur aaj pehli baar... main khud ko sun raha hoon.” Uski smile mein embarrassment bhi thi aur relief bhi. Woh line scripted nahi thi. Woh nikal gayi thi.

End mein usne red recording sign ko dekha, phir laptop screen par waveforms ko. Usne softly kaha, “Aaj ka guest nahi aaya. Lekin jo aya... woh kaafi tha.” Phir woh thoda sa hansa, chair mein back lean ki, aur bola, “And that, ladies and gentlemen—jo exist nahi karte—was The Empty Booth.” Booth ke andar sirf ring light ka glow tha, mic ka tiny red light tha, aur ek aadmi tha jo pehli baar apni hi awaaz se dosti kar chuka tha.