

THE HOUSE ON MAPLE STREET

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: Estate Sale Organizer with a Secret Past (Female, 52-60)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Maple Street ki us purani, khali hui haveli mein aaj main akeli hoon—jaise koi saans lena bhool gaya ho aur ghar bas yaadon ki dhool mein atka reh gaya ho. Main ek estate sale organizer hoon. Seedha kaam, seedhi file, seedha hisaab. Inventory sheets, gloves, flashlight, house keys—meri poori duniya itni hi tidy hoti hai. Log mujhe practical kehte hain. Main khud ko safe kehti hoon. Kyunki safe rehna meri aadat nahi, meri aadhi zindagi ka nuskha hai.

Sheeshe se aati dhoop floor par lambi lakeerein banati hai. Har kamra khali hai, par khali pan mein bhi awaaz hoti hai—mere jooton ki halki tik-tik, kagaz ki sar-sar, aur kabhi-kabhi mere apne saans ki khatir. Mr. Vale ka ghar hai. Dead man. Quiet man. Woh category jiske baare mein clients hamesha kehte hain: “Bas jo mile, list bana dena.” Jaise zindagi bhi koi garage sale ho.

Main living room mein boxes kholti hoon, shelf numbers note karti hoon, aur har cheez ko uski jagah par rakhne ki koshish karti hoon. Purane bills. Ek chipped mug. Silver spoon set. Kuch postcards. Ek watch jo ruk chuki hai. Sab kuch normal. Sab kuch boring. Sab kuch safe.

Phir mujhe wall ke piche se ek thunk sunai deta hai.

Pehle main has deti hoon. Doston, aise gharon mein awaazein hoti rehti hain. Pipes, wood, settling, dust, whatever. Main flashlight uthati hoon, beam ko wall par chalati hoon. Aur wahin, ek panel ke kinare par, ek line—bahut saaf, bahut nayi lagne wali—jaise kisi ne purani deewar ke andar nayi jhooth chhupa di ho.

Main gloves aur tight karti hoon. House keys table par rakh deti hoon. Phir panel ko dhakka deti hoon. Ek halki si crack, aur deewar ka ek hissa bahar aata hai. Andar ek chhota sa cavity. Aur usmein ek locked box.

Mera dil ek second ke liye inventory se bahar nikal aata hai.

Box ka metal thanda hai. Lock purana hai, par recent oil laga hua. Matlab kisi ne ise chupaya tha. Kisi ne isse bhoolne ki koshish nahi ki thi—kisi ne isse bachaya tha.

“Okay,” main khud se kehti hoon. “Sirf property. Sirf contents. Bas.”

Main inventory sheet par likhti hoon: “One locked metal box, concealed behind false wall.” Mere handwriting suddenly bahut chhoti ho jaati hai. Jaise pen bhi dar gaya ho.

Box kholne ke liye chhota key nahi milta. Par Mr. Vale ke study drawer mein ek purani ring milti hai—teen keys ki, ek pe faded blue tape. Main usse try karti hoon. Teesri key click karti hai.

Lock khulta hai.

Andar pehle ek bundle of photographs milta hai. Black-and-white. Ek chhota sa bachcha. Ek aurat. Ek aadmi jiska chehra half shadow mein hai. Aur phir—ek photo jismein ek little girl ek hospital blanket mein hai. Uske wrist par ek tag. Name blurred, par room number clear.

Mera muh sukha pad jata hai.

Main woh photo uthati hoon. Dheere. Jaise agar main zyada zor se pakadungi, toh past phir se bhaag jayega.

Us box mein ek cassette tape bhi hai. Aur ek folded letter. Main letter kholti hoon.

“IF SHE LIVES, MOVE HER.”

Bas itna.

Do lineon ke neeche ek aur line: “Maple Street house is not safe.”

Main hasti hoon. Ek aisi hansii jo hansii nahi hoti. “Not safe?” main bolti hoon. “Sir, main toh isi ghar ke andar khadi hoon.”

Phir tape recorder milta hai—small, dusty. Main play dabati hoon.

Peeli hui static. Phir ek aadmi ki awaaz. Thandi. Controlled. “Subject survived initial transfer. Records amended. If she asks, tell her she was never here.”

Meri ungliyaan kaanp jaati hain.

Main apni inventory sheet ko dekhti hoon. Har item suddenly evidence lagne lagta hai. Har label, har box, har sign—sab ek cover-up ka part. Aur phir mujhe samajh aata hai: Mr. Vale dead man nahi tha. Woh keeper tha. Witness tha. Shayad jailer bhi.

Box ke bottom mein ek last object hai: ek tiny brass charm, house-shaped. Uske neeche engraved initials. Mere initials.

Aur uske saath ek hospital bracelet—same wrist tag number, same faded plastic. On the back, marker se likha hai: “Returned to sender.”

Mere pair zameen se jure rehte hain, lekin andar kuch toot jata hai. Main woh bachi hui aurat nahi hoon jo main apne baare mein sochti aayi hoon. Main woh case hoon jise close kar diya gaya tha. Main woh disappearance hoon jise file se erase kar diya gaya tha. Main woh ladki hoon jise marna tha.

Main house keys ko mutthi mein dabati hoon. Phir dheere se bolti hoon, “Theek hai. Toh main wapas aa gayi.”

Main box ko band karti hoon. Inventory sheet ko fold karke pocket mein rakhti hoon. Flashlight beam ab wall par nahi, darwaze par pad raha hai. Bahar daylight hai. Normal street. Normal log. Normal duniya.

Par ab mujhe pata hai—kisi ne mujhe bachaya nahi tha.

Kisi ne mujhe chhupa diya tha.

Aur jo aadmi is ghar ka malik tha... uske paas mere bachpan ka sabse bada raaz tha.

Main ek lambi saans leti hoon, scarf seedhi karti hoon, aur khali ghar ke echo mein apni hi awaaz ko sunte hue kehti hoon: "Estate sale kal hai. Aaj nahi. Aaj main apni inventory poori karungi."