

THE LOCKED DRAWER

A Psychological Thriller 1-Character Solo Monologue in Hinglish

Genre: Psychological Thriller	Format: 1-Character Solo Monologue (Single Actor)	Runtime: 4 - 6 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 1-Character Solo Monologue (Single Actor) Character: Perfectionist Lawyer with a Fractured Memory (Female, 37-43)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Raat ke 1:17 baj rahe hain. Ek sleek, almost sterile home office mein sirf desk lamp ki peeli roshni hai, aur high window ke bahar city lights ka thanda shimmer. Main—Aarohi Mehra, 39, senior lawyer, perfection ka living proof—apne blazer ki sleeve seedhi karti hoon, phone silent mode par, files ekdum parallel, pen exact angle par. Mere liye order sirf habit nahi, religion hai. Lekin aaj us order ke beech ek cheez hai jo mujhe ghur rahi hai: desk ke neeche right side ka locked drawer. Woh drawer iss office mein kabse hai, mujhe yaad nahi. Aur jo cheez yaad nahi hoti, wahi sabse zyada khatarnak hoti hai.

Main pehle usse ignore karti hoon. Legal files kholti hoon, case notes check karti hoon, date lines verify karti hoon—jaise agar main kaafi der tak kaam karungi, toh dimaag ka koi missing corner khud fill ho jayega. Par drawer ka handle baar-baar meri nazar kheench leta hai. Ek drawer jo symmetry tod raha hai. Ek aisi object jo mujhe lagta hai maine khud rakhi thi, aur phir bhool gayi. Ya shayad bhoolna chaha.

Phone vibrate hota hai. Screen par ek unknown number. 12:03 AM. Main call cut kar deti hoon. Phir turant ek voicemail aati hai—meri hi awaaz mein. Main freeze ho jaati hoon. Voice note mein main khud bol rahi hoon: “Aarohi, agar yeh sun rahi ho, toh drawer mat kholna. Aur midnight ke baad jo phone uthata hai, us par kabhi trust mat karna.” Meri saans ruk jaati hai. Yeh prank nahi. Yeh deepfake nahi. Yeh meri awaaz hai. Meri hi diction, mera hi controlled tone, jaise main court mein argument kar rahi hoon.

Mujhe yaad aata hai—nahin, yaad nahi aata, bas ek flash sa—ek corridor, fluorescent light, kisi file ka red tab, aur mere haath ka kaanpna. Phir andhera. Main apne aap se kehti hoon ki panic useless hai. Main lawyer hoon. Evidence se deal karti hoon, fear se nahi. Main desk ki drawer ke lock ko inspect karti hoon. Simple keyhole nahi—small cylindrical lock. Side table par paperclip pada hai. Main usse unfold karti hoon, fingers steady rakhne ki koshish mein zyada tight ho jaati hain. Pehle do baar fail. Teesri baar ek soft click.

Drawer khulta hai, aur room ka balance toot jaata hai. Andar legal files hain—mere letterhead par, meri annotations ke saath. Ek case file: “State vs. K.” Meri handwriting mein margin notes: “Do not file. Not yet.” Ek brown envelope, us

par likha hai: “If memory fractures, follow the paper trail.” Aur sabse neeche, ek folded note. Main usse kholti hoon. Usmein sirf ek line hai, mere hi handwriting mein, aur har letter jaise blade ho: “Agar tum yeh padh rahi ho, toh main already jhooth bol chuki hoon.”

Mere pair thode se hilte hain. Main file pages paltati hoon—statements, timestamps, a witness list jisme sab kuch blacked out hai except one name: Aarohi Mehra. Meri signature. Meri initials. Meri seal. Yeh case mera kaise ho sakta hai? Aur kyun mujhe yaad nahi? Phone phir vibrate karta hai. Unknown number. Is baar main answer nahi karti. Par speaker se ek aur voicemail auto-play ho jaati hai. Meri awaaz, aur is baar thodi thaki hui, thodi broken: “Aarohi, agar phone midnight ke baad bajey, toh mat uthana. Woh version tumhara nahi hai jo truth bolti hai.”

Main chair par baith jaati hoon. City lights window mein blur ho rahi hain. Mere perfect nails, meri perfect bun, meri perfect life—sab ek stage set lagne lagta hai. Shayad main koi case build kar rahi thi. Shayad main kisi ko protect kar rahi thi. Ya shayad khud ko. Drawer ke andar ek last object milta hai: ek hotel keycard, room 1408. Uske back par ek chhota sa number likha hai—mere office extension ka last four digits. Main samajh jaati hoon ki yeh sirf drawer ka raaz nahi. Yeh mera raaz hai. Aur jo version of me midnight ke baad phone uthati hai, woh mujhse zyada jaanti hai.

Main phone ko dekhti hoon. Screen black hai. Phir bhi mujhe lagta hai jaise uske andar se koi mujhe dekh raha ho. Main dheere se whisper karti hoon, “Agar main jhooth bol rahi hoon, toh sach kaha hai?” Raat jawab nahi deti. Sirf desk lamp ka buzz, paper ka rustle, aur mere own breathing ki awaaz. Main drawer ko band karti hoon—lock nahi. Abhi ke liye. Kyunki ab mujhe samajh aa gaya hai: is ghar mein sabse dangerous cheez locked drawer nahi hai. Woh memory hai jo us drawer ne lock ki hui hai.