

ONE MORE ROUND

A Slice of Life/Family 3-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

Genre: Slice of Life/Family	Format: 3-Character Short Film (Trio Cast)	Runtime: 6 - 9 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 3-Character Short Film (Trio Cast) Character 1: Manish (49)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Raat ke 12 baje ke baad, Manish apni chhoti si bar ka shutter aadha gira chuka hota hai, aur bachi hui amber roshni mein counter ek thaka hua sa mandir lag raha hota hai. Glasses stacked hain, cash tin band hai, aur apron ke dhaage Manish ke kamar se dheele pad chuke hain. Aakash, jo college se seedha yahan aaya hai, apni clean haircut aur overconfident posture ke saath baithta hai jaise woh ab bachcha nahi raha. Uske saamne Jatin, family friend aur bar ka sabse purana regular, apni checked shirt mein usi tarah baitha hai jaise kisi purani yaad ne usse yahan rok liya ho. Teenon ke beech pehle halka sa mazaak chalta hai—Aakash ki fake maturity par, Manish ki “main thak gaya hoon” wali aankhon par, aur Jatin ki hamesha ki easy smile par.

Aakash ka mood kuch alag hota hai. College fees, attendance, future—sab kuch uske chehre par likha hota hai, par woh man hi man ye prove karna chahta hai ki woh sab handle kar lega. Manish uski tension ko dekh leta hai, lekin baap hone ki aadat mein seedha sawaal nahi poochta. Woh bas bar towel se counter saaf karta rehta hai, jaise har tension ko bhi polish kar sakta ho. Jatin, jo family ka hissa bhi hai aur outsider bhi, dono ko dekh kar halki si chhedchhaad karta hai. Woh bolta hai ki mard aksar pyaar ko hisaab mein chhupa dete hain—koi fees de deta hai, koi daant deta hai, koi khamosh ho jaata hai. Aakash ko lagta hai Jatin bas philosophical bakwas kar raha hai, aur Manish us baat ko has kar taal deta hai.

Phir conversation dheere-dheere zyada personal ho jaati hai. Aakash ki aankhon mein frustration hai: usse lagta hai Manish uski padhai ko samajh nahi paata, aur Manish ko lagta hai Aakash uski mehnat ki kadar nahi karta. Dono ke beech woh classic father-son wall khadi ho jaati hai jahan baat kam, assumptions zyada hoti hain. Jatin beech mein bridge banne ki koshish karta hai, lekin uski loneliness bhi uski awaaz mein chhupi rehti hai. Woh batata hai ki kabhi uske paas bhi ek aisa ghar tha jahan ek aadmi chup chaap zimmedari uthata tha, bina credit maange. Aakash sunta hai, par poori tarah samajhta nahi.

Climax tab aata hai jab Jatin receipt pad aur cash tin ke paas rakha ek purana envelope nikaalta hai. Uske andar tuition ke receipts, bank slips, aur kuch handwritten notes hote hain—Aakash ki fees ke. Aakash shock mein uth khada hota hai. Manish ka chehra ek pal ke liye blank ho jaata hai, phir gusse aur embarrassment ka mix aa jaata hai. Jatin calmly bolta hai ki woh charity nahi kar raha tha. Usne fees isliye bhari kyunki saalon pehle Manish ne uski tab madad ki thi jab Jatin ke father ke baad ghar sambhalna mushkil ho gaya tha. Manish ne kabhi paise wapas nahi

maange the, aur Jatin ne kabhi shukriya bhi theek se nahi kaha tha. Ab woh sirf usi hisaab ko aage badha raha tha—“One more round,” jaise zindagi ne unke liye ek aur turn rakh diya ho.

Manish pehle gusse mein hota hai, kyunki uske liye izzat ka matlab hi hota hai khud karna. Aakash bhi hurt hota hai, kyunki usne apne baap ko kamzor samajh liya tha. Lekin Jatin ki baat ka weight dono ko tod bhi deta hai aur jod bhi. Manish finally confess karta hai ki usne Aakash ko sab kuch nahi bataya tha kyunki woh chahta tha beta bina bojh ke bade ho. Aakash pehli baar samajhta hai ki baap ki khamoshi bhi pyaar ka ek form ho sakti hai. Teenon ke beech ek awkward, bahut human silence aata hai—phir Aakash Manish ke haath se beer glass le kar counter par rakh deta hai aur bas itna kehta hai, “Next round meri taraf se.” Manish hansi rok nahi pata. Jatin apni chair pe peechhe lean karke muskurata hai, jaise usne sirf ek tuition nahi, ek family ko phir se bolna sikha diya ho. Bahar streetlight thandi hai, andar amber light garam. Bar band ho chuki hoti hai, par un teen mardon ke beech kuch khul chuka hota hai jo shayad pehli baar sach mein ghar jaisa lagta hai.