

LAST STOP, LADIES

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: Sameer (28)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Raat ke kareeb 11 baje hain. Railway waiting room ka peela, thoda ghisa-pita sa light, deewar ka chhilta paint, fan ki sust ghoomti awaaz, aur vending machine ki neeli chamak — sab milkar ek aisi jagah bana rahe hain jahan waqt bhi ticketless lag raha hai. Bench par Asha apni plastic bags ko ek taraf jamaye baithi hai, ek haath mein thermos, doosre mein railway ticket. Pooja earbuds gardan ke paas latkaye, pair hilate hue Sameer ko upar se neeche tak dekh rahi hai. Sameer, wrinkled shirt aur backpack ke saath, sleepy-eyed “responsible beta” banne ki koshish mein hai, lekin uske chehre par jo nervousness hai, woh uske budget se zyada transparent hai.

Train delayed hai. Announcement aati hai, phir khatam ho jaati hai, jaise railway bhi unki family dynamic ka mazak uda raha ho. Asha pehle normal sawaal poochti hai — “Platform number yaad hai?” Sameer turant confident banne ki acting karta hai, “Haan, ma... obviously.” Pooja ek eyebrow utha deti hai. Phir Asha bag kholti hai: snacks ka packet nahi. Sameer bolta hai, “Main lane wala tha.” Pooja turant: “Aur lane se pehle khana bhi yaad tha?” Asha ki voice soft hai, par usmein woh motherly scanner mode aa chuka hai jo jhooth ko line se pakad leta hai. Dheere-dheere interrogation start hoti hai — tickets kahan hain, platform kaun sa hai, snacks kyun nahi, aur Sameer ne last minute mein sab sambhala kyun nahi.

Sameer har sawaal ka jawab half-truth aur half-smile se deta hai. Woh kabhi backpack mein haath daalta hai, kabhi phone check karta hai, kabhi thermos ki taraf dekhta hai jaise usmein saare answers ghule hon. Pooja ka tone amused bhi hai, irritated bhi. Woh bolti hai ki Sameer hamesha “main dekh lunga” bolta hai, aur phir end mein family ko dekhna padta hai. Asha usko rokti nahi; bas ek nishaan ki tarah uski baat sunte hue Sameer ko aur zyada expose kar deti hai. Unki baaton mein comedy bhi hai aur pichhle saalon ka hisaab bhi — kaun school form bhoolta tha, kaun ration list, kaun ghar ka key. Sameer, jo khud ko adult prove karna chahta tha, har line ke saath aur chhota lagne lagta hai.

Phir twist aata hai. Asha apni dupatta mein se tickets nikaalti hai — aur unmein destination platform ka print Sameer ke bataye hue se alag hai. Pooja turant phone nikaal kar announcement cross-check karti hai. Wrong platform. Wrong side. Sameer ka face safed. Woh ghabra ke bolta hai ki shayad counter ne galat bola, ya app mein glitch tha, ya... phir khud chup ho jaata hai. Asha usse ghoorti hai, phir ek thandi saans leti hai aur bolti hai, “Galti platform ki nahi, beta. Galti tumhari acting ki hai.” Pooja hass padti hai. Sameer ke paas koi defense nahi bachta.

Tabhi loudspeaker se announcement aati hai: unki train aa rahi hai — doosre platform par. Teenon ek second ke liye freeze ho jaate hain. Bahar platform ki taraf log daud rahe hain, aur andar waiting room mein unka chhota sa family war suddenly ek team huddle ban jaata hai. Sameer uthta hai, bags sambhalta hai, thermos leta hai. Asha ek plastic bag uske haath mein thama deti hai. Pooja ticket aur phone dono check karti hai. Koi hero speech nahi hoti, bas ek shared, practical silence jismein pyaar zyada aur ego kam hota hai.

Running ke beech Sameer finally sach bol deta hai: “Mujhse sab manage nahi hua.” Asha bina rukke jawab deti hai, “Hota bhi nahi. Isliye hum teen hain.” Pooja side glance ke saath bolti hai, “Aur isliye tu adult banne ka natak kam kar.” Sameer phir bhi muskura deta hai — sharminda, relieved, aur thoda grown-up. End mein woh teenon wrong platform ki taraf bhaagte hain, lekin is baar direction se zyada important hai ki koi akela nahi hai. Last stop unki train ka nahi, unke false confidence ka hota hai. Aur jo journey shuru hoti hai, woh ek delayed train ki nahi, ek family ke deciding moment ki hoti hai — ki adult kaun hai, aur kabhi-kabhi jawab hota hai: sab, thoda-thoda.