

THE WRONG BIRTHDAY CAKE — VISUAL STORYBOARD GUIDE

DIRECTOR'S VISUAL APPROACH (Pure Comedy): This storyboard is designed as an easy, creative guide to help you shoot the film. Each scene beat below describes what the audience sees on screen, character movement/staging, the lighting vibe, and the dramatic purpose.

SCENE 01: THE SUSPICIOUS SURPRISE

Camera Vibe: Medium-wide table view

- **What We See on Screen:** A cramped apartment dining area at night, with Arjun seated at the table, Vikram near the counter, and Imran adjusting paper plates. The small cake sits in the center under a single flickering candle, while balloons on the wall slowly slip downward in the background.
- **Actor Movement & Staging:** Arjun leans in with hopeful suspicion, Vikram stands guarded, and Imran fusses with the setup as if trying to keep the party alive.
- **Lighting & Mood:** Warm ceiling light with a soft candle flicker; cozy but slightly awkward and enclosed.
- **Why This Shot Works (Director Note):** Establish the room as a pressure cooker for comedy and set up the first beat of uncertainty.

SCENE 02: THE NAME ON THE CAKE

Camera Vibe: Insert and reaction cut

- **What We See on Screen:** A close insert of the cake label reading "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, RAKESH!" followed by the three men staring at it in silence.
- **Actor Movement & Staging:** Arjun narrows his eyes, Vikram stays too calm, and Imran looks toward the label as if hoping it will explain itself.
- **Lighting & Mood:** Candlelight flicker becomes more noticeable against the warm room tone.
- **Why This Shot Works (Director Note):** Trigger the first major comic rupture: the audience sees the mistake before the characters fully accept it.

SCENE 03: THE GIFT TAG TRAP

Camera Vibe: Close-up on gift bag and counter notes

- **What We See on Screen:** The gift bag tag reads "FOR RAKESH — FROM V." Then the folded note and counter note are revealed, each adding another layer of confusion.
- **Actor Movement & Staging:** Imran lifts the bag, Vikram points toward the counter, and Arjun keeps trying to logically assemble the party's identity.
- **Lighting & Mood:** Warm, flat domestic light with tiny candle reflections on paper edges.
- **Why This Shot Works (Director Note):** Escalate the misunderstanding through physical evidence and keep the humor rooted in object reveals.

STORYBOARD: THE DRAMATIC BUILDUP & CLIMAX

SCENE 04: ROOMMATES, THEN MR. IQBAL

Camera Vibe: Medium close-up on the cake box and card flip

- **What We See on Screen:**
- **Actor Movement & Staging:** Arjun recoils in disbelief, Vikram looks offended by the word roommates, and Imran tries to process the landlord connection.
- **Lighting & Mood:** Still warm, but the pause in action makes the room feel suddenly more exposed.
- **Why This Shot Works (Director Note):** Deliver the biggest reveal visually and let silence do the comedic heavy lifting.

SCENE 05: THE VOICE NOTE CONFESSION

Camera Vibe: Static medium shot with all three in frame

- **What We See on Screen:**
- **Actor Movement & Staging:** All three freeze, then exchange embarrassed looks as the voice note lands like a verdict.
- **Lighting & Mood:** The candle is nearly spent, and the warm light now feels like a witness to their failure.
- **Why This Shot Works (Director Note):** Use offscreen sound and a phone playback to create the final punchline without adding another character.

SCENE 06: WRONG CAKE, RIGHT ENDING

Camera Vibe: Close medium on the table as they cut the cake

- **What We See on Screen:**
- **Actor Movement & Staging:** Arjun delivers the final line with resigned humor, Vikram and Imran join in, and the embarrassment transforms into shared laughter.
- **Lighting & Mood:** The candle flickers one last time as the room settles into warm, comic acceptance.
- **Why This Shot Works (Director Note):** End on a soft comedic resolution where the mistake becomes a bonding moment rather than a disaster.

CREATIVE SHOOTING CHEAT-SHEET FOR THE DIRECTOR:

- **Keep Camera at Eye-Level:** In small rooms or single locations, eye-level framing makes the audience feel trapped in the room with the characters.
- **Reaction Shots are Gold:** When a secret or punchline lands, hold the camera on the character *listening* to capture their silent shock.
- **Audio Drives Emotion:** Whispers, deep sighs, and awkward silences carry 60% of the dramatic tension.