

THREE CUPS OF TEA — VISUAL STORYBOARD GUIDE

DIRECTOR'S VISUAL APPROACH (Emotional Drama): 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: RAIN-SOAKED WAITING

Camera Vibe: Wide establishing shot with a gentle observational hold

- **What We See on Screen:** A small tea stall under a tin roof in gray daylight, rain hammering the street outside, steam rising from a boiling kettle, and three stools arranged tightly around a narrow counter. The wedding invitation lies on the counter like a quiet provocation.
- **Actor Movement & Staging:** Farida sits centered and composed, Salma sits guarded to one side, and Huma sits restless on the other, each holding a different emotional distance from the same table.
- **Lighting & Mood:** Cool, overcast daylight with warm steam cutting through the frame; damp surfaces and soft reflections create a private pocket inside the public rain.
- **Why This Shot Works (Director Note):** Establish the emotional container of the story: a small space where silence already feels loaded before anyone speaks.

SCENE 02: THE INVITATION OPENS THE WOUND

Camera Vibe: Medium three-shot with emphasis on the counter and hands

- **What We See on Screen:** Farida taps the wedding invitation, the tea seller pours three glasses offscreen, and the women sit in a tense triangle. The counter becomes the center of the conversation.
- **Actor Movement & Staging:** Farida stays calm and measured, Salma tries to read the situation, and Huma answers with dry sarcasm, testing the room.
- **Lighting & Mood:** Soft gray fill with a warm practical glow from the tea area; the contrast between cold rain and hot tea becomes more pronounced.
- **Why This Shot Works (Director Note):** Show the family dynamic as controlled on the surface but already fraying underneath.

SCENE 03: SACRIFICE SPEAKS

Camera Vibe: Alternating close-ups and tight medium close-ups

- **What We See on Screen:** Farida's face hardens as she lists the sacrifices she made: selling bangles for school fees, giving up her preferred suit, carrying the family through years of need. Salma stiffens; Huma watches, unsettled.
- **Actor Movement & Staging:** Farida speaks with controlled hurt, Salma tries to shut the past down, and Huma begins to feel the weight of what she is hearing.
- **Lighting & Mood:** Faces are shaped by soft side light and subtle negative fill, making the emotional pressure visible without exaggeration.
- **Why This Shot Works (Director Note):** Let the audience feel the accumulated cost of a lifetime of giving, and the pain of being dismissed as 'old news.'

STORYBOARD: THE DRAMATIC BUILDUP & CLIMAX

SCENE 04: THE TRUTH BREAKS THE STALL

Camera Vibe: Tight three-shot that can cut into close-ups on each reaction

- **What We See on Screen:** Huma blurts out that it feels like a competition of sacrifice, and the stall seems to freeze for a beat as rain and kettle whistle rise together.
- **Actor Movement & Staging:** Huma finally says the unsaid truth, Salma is shocked and defensive, and Farida unexpectedly recognizes the honesty in it.
- **Lighting & Mood:** A slightly harsher contrast moment, with the whistle and rain creating a sharp emotional edge in the soundscape and frame.
- **Why This Shot Works (Director Note):** Create the scene's turning point: the moment the family stops performing politeness and starts telling the truth.

SCENE 05: FARIDA CHOOSES HERSELF

Camera Vibe: Close-up on Farida, then reaction close-ups on Salma and Huma

- **What We See on Screen:**
- **Actor Movement & Staging:** Farida admits her need for a life of her own, Salma's control cracks, and Huma's cup trembles as she processes the news.
- **Lighting & Mood:** The warm steam becomes more noticeable against the cool background, hinting at a new emotional warmth emerging from the revelation.
- **Why This Shot Works (Director Note):** Shift the story from accusation to selfhood, making Farida's departure feel like an act of dignity rather than abandonment.

SCENE 06: SEEN AT LAST

Camera Vibe: Intimate close-up with a soft final three-shot

- **What We See on Screen:**
- **Actor Movement & Staging:** Salma reaches out and touches Farida's hand, Huma wipes tears, and Farida accepts the apology with quiet grace.
- **Lighting & Mood:** The frame warms subtly, with steam and tea glow softening the cold rain palette; the stall feels less like a waiting room and more like a shared refuge.
- **Why This Shot Works (Director Note):** End on emotional recognition rather than resolution, leaving the audience with the feeling that a new relationship has just begun.

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.