

CAMUS

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**Two friends discuss existentialism, while dealing with the dilemma, a
colleague's death has put them in.**

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EXT. AKSHARA THEATRE - DAY(PRESENT DAY)

Two men standing in front of the gate of Akshara Theatre seem to be having a conversation. A couple of seconds later they shake hands, one of them walks away from the theatre towards the inner circle and the other turns his face and starts walking towards the camera, crosses the road.

The guy is **GAURAVA VASAN**, a performance poet. He is 24 years old, full time into performing. He likes reading philosophy and writes about contemporary issues with a pinch of classical theories of romance, life, meaning added to most of his pieces.

He reaches this side of the road and sits and rests against the siderail on the footpath, sitting next to a guy who was already sitting there.

This guy is **ADITYA SAINI**, a stand-up comic. He is 23 years old, the guy is pursuing MTech currently and is an aspiring comic. He is a regular performer in Open Mics across the city and has always been looking for a breakthrough, be it a viral video on the web or a much anticipated comedy tour. He is not much well read on philosophy and deep enlightening stuff, almost all the things that he knows, he has learnt them through his interactions with performers and people in the circuit.

Gautam is holding a cigarette in his hands.

GAUTAM

Nahi maan raha wo.

He puts the cigarette between his lips and taps his pockets to check for his lighter, but seems like he gave it to someone and forgot to take it back.

GAUTAM (CONT'D)

Lighter hai?

Aditya is not listening to him, he has his head down seems, is doing something with his fingers and then looks away to the other side.

Gautam pulls the cig out, keeps it in his pocket, takes out a lollipop, unwraps it and puts it in his mouth.

ADITYA

(frustrated)

Yaar terko idea hai kitne comics
aate the open mic mein, aadho ke
toh naam mai ni jaan paaya roz
milke, itne launde the.

(MORE)

ADITYA (CONT'D)

Ab saala ek slot bharne ke liye koi nahi hai inpe.

GAUTAM

(sucking on the lollipop)
Hain toh sahi he's just saying they are not good enough...

ADITYA

(mocking manner)
Ohh

GAUTAM

Producer's like they've seen you perform you're pretty good.

ADITYA

Okay yea now I am pretty good.

Gautam takes out the lollipop out of his mouth and holds it.

GAUTAM

Yaar you decide your problem first okay uske baad we'll sort it. First you wanted to perform, now they give you a slot...

ADITYA5

Yea they give me a slot!

GAUTAM

...yea..yea and you got issues with that. Decide what you wanna do keep sitting here kabhi mat jaaiyo andar stage pe. Baitha reh. Likhta reh joke, karta reh open mic, set banaunga. Kya saale yahan spit karega kya set. Kaun kisko hasayega, hasa, suna de joke.

ADITYA

Saale terko milta aisa slot tu karta.
Nai jaa na kar aise slot pe perform boldio, ki sorry guys jise perform karna tha that guy passed away a week ago but how the fuck does it matter aap kavita suniye.

GAUTAM

Han kardeta mai.
(puts the lollipop in again)

ADITYA

Yea sure.

GAUTAM

Kardeta. aise nahi bolta buss.
Kardeta.

GAUTAM (CONT'D)

(after a few seconds)

I don't even know what's stopping
you from performing.

ADITYA

(looks at Gautam with
disbelief)

Fuck you dude.

GAUTAM

No seriously I don't

ADITYA

(animated, like explaining
a concept to a child for
the nth time)

Aarav died, okay? He was supposed
to perform there.

GAUTAM

Yea but when the line-up was
revealed you didn't like that his
name was up there and not yours,
right? And it wasn't long ago.

Aditya stays quiet, he is guilty-for reasons he himself is
not aware of, he keeps staring at the ground with teary eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. AKSHARA THEATRE - NIGHT(THREE WEEKS AGO)

Aditya is sitting in the exact same position, his expressions
are a little different-more of anger, frustration and
helplessness.

START WITH CLOSE-UP SHOT OF ADITYA AND THEN DOLLY OUT TO
REVEAL A MEDIUM FULL SHOT OF BOTH.

ADITYA

(picking up his backpack
from his side)

(MORE)

ADITYA (CONT'D)

Chal yaar, no point of staying here.

Gautam looks at his wrist watch.

GAUTAM

25 ho rahe hain 7:30 pe nikalte hain baithja. Ghar jaake bhi kya hi karega.

Aditya rests himself back against the siderail. Looks at the cars moving on the road in front of him and the theatre on the other side of the road.

ADITYA

(a few seconds later)

Yaar is it okay to feel this way.

GAUTAM

I guess so.

ADITYA

Then why does it feel wrong?

GAUTAM

Maybe 'cause you have never had the time to justify it. Maybe.

ADITYA

What if you can't.

Guatam all this while folding a paper poster with his hands, constantly looking down at his hands.

GAUTAM

What

ADITYA

(looks at him for a few seconds and at his hands, then speaks)

What if you can't justify it.

GAUTAM

You can. You do. You just don't realize it.

ADITYA

(points at the paper, speaks with frustration)

Ise chhod pehle.

GAUTAM

Yea just a second.

Aditya looks away then in the front at the theatre.

SHOT OF AKSHARA THEATRE

Gautam starts speaking but the camera moves back at him a couple of seconds after he begins.

GAUTAM (CONT'D)

Terko kya lagta hai moments before
doing something wrong, kisi insaan
ke mann mein kya chal raha hota
hai.

ADITYA

Bhai ye karne ke liye roka hai kya?

GAUTAM

(looks at Aditya, for the
first time)

I am just giving you the answer you
wanted. Buss iss sawal ka jawaab
de.

ADITYA

(reluctantly)

What do you mean by wrong?

GAUTAM

Smart. Wrong as in jo insaan wo
kaam karne wala ho wo uske khudke
existing set of thoughts and morals
ke against ho.
What do you think a person thinks
before doin' it?

ADITYA

What?

GAUTAM

They justify it to themselves,
before doing anything they feel is
wrong, they make themselves believe
that maybe, and that's a bit big
maybe, maybe it is not that wrong.
You believe you should not be
violent, but let's say you are
pretty angry someone did something
to you and now you want to go nuts
on them, what's the first thing you
do? You remind yourself again and
again what they did to you, jab tak
tujhe itna gussa nahi aajata ki
terko sab justifiable lage.

(MORE)

GAUTAM (CONT'D)

Whenever you do something, you've probably already justified it to your brain, even if you don't realize it.

ADITYA

(slightly frustrated
because of his
cluelessness)

H...how does it help me?

GAUTAM

You asked if it is justifiable to be jealous of your friend?
If you are jealous of your friend, then it isn't wrong in your brain, not no more.
Nobody does something knowing it's wrong. As simple as it gets.

Aditya looks at Gautam for a few more seconds, trying to grasp what he just threw at him. He's battling the incoming theory and that is pretty clear from his face.

He looks away(2s), looks down(3s), with teary eyes, he speaks.

ADITYA

(stands up straight,
facing Gautam)

It just took so much to get here,
40 km door har weekend open mics
karne jaao, pura set tayyar kara,
aur ab yahan aake ruk gaya. I so
wanted to be there,

(points at the paper in
Gautam's hands)

In the lineup, this was my chance.
Aarav mere saath perform karta tha
har jagah, and don't take me to be
arrogant here, but har weekend usse
better crowd reaction pull kiya
tha. And, I know I should be happy
for him but...

(stops midway, he's too
full of emotions to say
anything more)

He rests back against the siderail and takes his backpack off his shoulders and throws it down.

SHOT OF THE AKSHARA THEATRE.

BACK TO:

EXT. AKSHARA THEATRE - DAY(PRESENT DAY)**ADITYA**

I don't even know how I feel right now. Guilt is the most obvious thing that I can feel.

GUATAM

Guilt? For what? You feel guilty 'cause you were jealous of a guy's success and then he died during the tour that you were jealous of in the first place?

ADITYA

No. Ofcourse not. I feel guilty 'cause I don't know what else to feel right now.

GAUTAM

Hmm

ADITYA

And to your question, what's stopping me from performing. It happened on the way to the club only he was supposed to perform at. If I had been there, it would have been me. But maybe that's how destiny and the universe is. Badi baatein hain I know but what do we have in our hands? Maybe it is all predistined, and all our actions are just absolutely insignificant. How the hell does it matter what I do or don't when all we are, all this is

(points towards the theatre)

is just a mere speck of dust in the larger scheme of things.

GAUTAM

(looks at him for 3s then)

You know it's bullshit.

ADITYA

No...it is not.

GAUTAM

Yea good luck explaining that to me.

(MORE)

GAUTAM (CONT'D)

You know what you're doing right now, just kuch bhi haan kuch bhi you are making in your head to escape the situation. Saala hedonist.

GAUTAM (CONT'D)

(a few seconds later)

And vaise toh I know all that is clear bullshit, nothing is predestined but if you believe in it, then if Aarav's tour was predestined then you getting to perform in his place was too. Sorry to say but his death was too, for that matter.

ADITYA

Well if it's bullshit then just tell me how else should I be feeling right now?
Or how anyone else would have been feeling if they were in my place. The guy I wanted to be in the place of, my friend, is dead, and now you say just go on that stage tomorrow and perform the set I've build in front of whom, Aarav? Oh yes the same guy who is dead. Okay?

(stands straight, picks up his backpack, takes a step forward, still facing Gautam)

just why the fuck am I still, standing here with you if the producers have refused to listen. I guess I'll just call in sick. Fuck them.

GAUTAM

Abe saale koi show nahi milega kabhi.

ADITYA

Yea, fuck them, fuck it. If that's how many fucks they give about it, then let it be. Jo hona hai wo hoga vaise bhi, just
(faces the theatre, and waves his middle finger in the air)

Aditya leaves. Gautam keeps standing there, looks at him, sighs, puts the lollipop in his pocket, gross.

Takes out his phone, taps a few times. Then brings the phone's speaking end close to his mouth and starts speaking.

GAUTAM

(scratches his head)

Look asshole, existentialism and destiny all of that, just put all of that up your butt, alright? Aajaiyo kabhi ghar, mai aajaunga tere aur karlenge discuss debate kya theory sahi hai kya nahi. But ye call in sick karne ke liye college chhodne ki soch raha tha toh take my advice mat chhodio, nahi hoga terse.

He sends the voice note.

Gautam takes a sigh, takes out the lollipop, blows some air and then sucks on it, a couple of seconds later takes it out in hurry, throws it away. He starts recording yet another voice note.

GAUTAM (CONT'D)

Bhai shit agar terko sach mein lagta hai ki sab predestined hai and all.

(takes a pause for a couple of seconds)

But okay, if that's the case. Just know the fact that we all are free to do what we feel like doing alright? And I am not saying this 'cause I am a privileged piece of shit standing in Connaught Place talking about freedom, I know sab nahi hote itne fortunate, everybody's getting fucked by their life, but freedom se I don't mean that. Free maane,

(pauses for a second)

Freedom is what you do after what has been done to you kisi ne toh kaha tha. But ahhh okay cut all the crap, you don't wanna perform tomorrow 'cause you feel ki kya hi farak padta hai and all na, right. ki we are just a recent blip in the cosmos...

DREAM SEQUENCE

It's dusk. We see many footsteps at the metro platform, the gates open.

GAUTAM (CONT'D)

Phir toh bhai ye baat bhi kyu hi kar rahe hain na? Jo banda metro jisme tu jaa raha hai, wo kyu hi chala raha hai.

POV SHOT

We run out of the metro station, climbing up the stairs. We walk through the streets of C.P.

THE CAMERA IS SHAKY.

GAUTAM (V.O.)

Ye saale show dekhne jo aa rahi hai kal janta kyu hi aa rahi hai. Kya farak padta hai agar yahi sochlein sab, toh abhi aadhi aabaadi toh yun hi mar jaayegi. Aadhe hum sab aa jaate hain saath mein kood jaate hain, jab kuch karne se kuch hoga hi nahi toh.

GAUTAM

And actually you know what, theek hai kuch karne ka koi point nahi hai, phir kya karega bata, kyun kar raha hai phir college, chhod de ghar mein baith, kuch mat kario koi farak toh waise bhi nahi padne wala.

GAUTAM (V.O.)

That metro driver is driving the metro and getting you home, people are gonna come watch the show and laugh off even though one of the comics on the line-up died, and we can't do anything about it. But what can we do? What can you do, you can either do what you are meant to do or sit at home and get lost in all these theories you feed yourself to believe that yes you respected a guy after he passed away.

GAUTAM

But you know how you can truly respect him or any other human for that matter, by doing what you are meant to do.

Gautam looks away from the screen at the theatre in front of him.

AKSHARA THEATRE IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF US. THE CAMERA TURNS FROM POV TO ADITYA'S CLOSE-UP SHOT.

Aditya starts running towards it, he has a blank face, but hopeful eyes filled with emotions.

GAUTAM (V.O.)

'cause there might be no meaning of this life or anything we do in it, but that's what a sick-fuck life is, you gotta do everything knowing that maybe it won't make meaning or sense to the universe.

GAUTAM

You said jo hona hai wahi hoga, and we can't do shit about it.

Aditya is in the wings.

THE CAMERA TURNS FROM HIS FACE TO THE BACK OF HIS HEAD.

He starts walking towards the stage, and stops at the middle.

GAUTAM (V.O.)

But maybe that's what true freedom is, knowing that probably none of what we do is impactful, but still doing it...'cause that's the only thing we can do.

THE CAMERA STOPS FOLLOWING HIM RIGHT BEFORE HE REACHES THE MICSTAND, DOES A FULL 360 SHOWING THE BRIGHT WHITE SPOTLIGHT, THE AUDIENCE ALMOST INVISIBLE BECAUSE OF IT'S BRIGHTNESS. THE CAMERA STOPS AT ADITYA'S CLOSE-UP.

Aditya's eyes are full of hope, dreams, and remorse. He now has a smile on his face, looks at the audience, he just begins saying something.

CUT TO BLACK.