

Bursting a Bubble

(prompt - Talk It Out)

SCENE 1 - In a waiting room - DAYTIME.

We are inside a waiting room. We see “Wellness Centre” printed on the wall near the entrance. Our focus now shifts to a boy, who is waiting for his turn for counselling.

His name is MAHENDER, aged 18. He is foot-tapping out of stress. The camera slowly zooms to his face as we see Mahender ponder. When the camera reaches close to his face, Mahender closes his eyes and we MATCH CUT to - - -

SCENE 2 - Inside a hostel room - EVENING.

The camera angle should exactly match the previous scene’s ending. Mahender opens his eyes but this time he is in his room. His table is clean and empty.

He is sitting on a chair while holding his phone. The camera takes a behind his shoulder shot : Mahender is using Whatsapp. The family group chat is open. Mahender starts to type : “I want to tell you all something” but he then immediately backspaces the text and goes to a different chat named “Sumit Bhaiya IITM Senior” but he is again hesitant to type anything. Now he is just randomly opening different chats because of stress. He starts to tap his foot on the floor.

He takes a deep breath and then he changes the app to “Google Chrome” and we see the MITR website on it, displaying contact details, telling us that he’s been trying to contact Mitr but he does not have the confidence to do so.

Then we hear a few people laughing loudly outside the room.

OUTSIDE THE ROOM

We are now outside Mahender's room. There are 5 boys having fun. One of them is holding a packet of chips and everyone is eating from it.

The camera focuses on one boy, Suraj. He is Mahender's roommate. Then the camera focuses on Suraj's background and we see Mahender looking at them through a window in his room.

Suraj : Okay! So movie at Samar's room at 11. (everyone agrees) Fine then, we'll meet at 11. (Suraj takes the last chip from the packet)

Everyone goes back to their room. Suraj turns towards his room and Mahender quickly moves away from the window. Suraj knocks. Mahendar opens the door and quickly walks back to his chair.

The camera focuses on Mahender's table from outside. The table is NOT empty (showing that Mahender wants his roommate to think that he's studying). There is a laptop and a notebook. Suraj enters without saying anything. The laptop screen is off.

INSIDE THE ROOM

Suraj (with excitement) : Hey, are you free at 11? The balcony gang has planned to watch a movie together.

Suraj doesn't realise that Mahender is wearing air pods. Mahender turns.

Mahender (while removing one air pod, speaks quickly) : What did you say? I'm sorry, I was not able to hear you.

Suraj feels let off by Mahender's reply.

Suraj (without excitement): Will you come to watch a movie?

Mahender doesn't feel enthusiastic about it.

Mahender : Uhh... I'm not sure. I might actually sleep early so...

Suraj : Yeah sure, no problem. We'll - - -

Mahender nods and quickly turns back to his laptop. Suraj goes to his table. The camera moves in front of Mahender. His eyes are closed. He is breathing heavily and then leaves a loud sigh. He "switches on" his laptop, indicating that he was not listening to songs earlier. Suraj notices.

SCENE 3 - Inside Mahender's room - MORNING.

Mahender is alone in his room. He is watching a movie on his laptop. We hear loud banging on the door. Mahender opens the door and finds his father standing outside. He rushes into the room.

Father : (shouts) Mahender! How dare you lie to your own father! How long have you known this? Do you have ANY sense of what happens to your family... if your "secret" comes out? And what about your friends? I didn't raise you to be this egocentric!

Mahender starts crying.

Mahender : (in tears) I tried to tell you... and mom. But I was scared. I'm really sorry.

Suraj enters the room.

Suraj (slowly walking closer to Mahender) : I knew it. You should be ashamed of yourself. What would I do when people find out my roommate is a homosexual. Everyone would make fun of me! Is that what you wanted? Nobody's gonna talk to you. Ever. (reaches Mahender's face and

whispers) You'll be stuck in a small bubble... forever... for the rest of your life. CUT TO - -

SCENE 4 - Mahender's Room - DAWN.

Mahender wakes up from his nightmare. Suraj is not in the room.

He feels cold so he switches off the fan. He turns on the lights. He stands up. His heartbeat slowly increases. His vision slowly gets blurry. (camera goes out of focus). We see a blurred image of Mahender's father as well as Suraj standing in the room (Mahender's imagination)

Blurred Suraj (reverberated voice) : *Don't forget the bubble. And once it bursts, you will be lost. Forever.*

He takes support of his chair to stand. His chest starts to hurt and he tries to breathe loudly. Mahender's ear starts ringing loudly.

Blurred Father (reverberated voice) : *I am really disappointed in you. You have brought shame on your family.*

Mahender quickly stamps his feet on the ground repeatedly and breathes slowly. The panic attack stops and the voices fade away. Mahender cries quietly.

He opens his laptop. He searches for "Wellness Community Centre IITM" in google. He calls the helpline number.

Mahender : (slowly) Hello?

CUT TO - -

SCENE 5 - Wellness Community Centre Waiting Room - MORNING.

We are back at the same place from the first scene. Mahender is waiting for his turn. The counselling room door opens. **Suraj** walks out of the room.

Mahender couldn't believe his eyes. Suraj walks towards the exit.
Mahender stops him.

Mahender : What are *you* doing here?

Suraj is surprised to see his roommate.

Suraj : Uh... (takes a deep breath) I came here for MITR counselling. I have some... stress problems.

Mahender : But... you always seem happy and chill.

Suraj : (chuckles) What do they say... *Do not judge a book by its cover.*

Mahender : I... I don't know what to say. Why didn't you talk to me about this?

Suraj : Uh... I did, actually. But you ignored it, I guess. I mean you ignore most of the things I tell, well in fact, you ignore most of the things anybody tells you. You're living in your own little bubble. ***Either you make your bubble bigger or you burst it and come out.***

Mahender : It's not like I don't try. You won't understand the problems I have. And how would I burst this bubble?

Suraj : ***TALK IT OUT.*** That's why you're here right? Mitr will definitely help you. So will I. You just need to ask for it. Alright, I gotta go now. I'll see you later. Bye.

The camera takes a wide shot of the door of the counselling room and the entrance to the community centre. We see Suraj walk out of the entrance and Mahender entering the counselling room both at the same time.

Then the camera slowly zooms towards the counselling room door. Once the camera reaches close to the door, Mahender walks out of the room, his face is in the frame.

A happy, relieved and an excited face.

He takes his phone out and calls his father. He talks to him outside the building.

The camera takes a shot (from inside the building) of Mahender walking front and back talking on his phone. Mahender is really happy.

SCENE 6 : Inside Mahender's room - EVENING.

Mahender is studying in his room. Again, the balcony gang is talking outside the room. This time Mahender walks out to join them.

OUTSIDE THE ROOM

Mahender : What are you guys talking about?

Suraj : We're planning to watch a movie tonight. Will you join us?

Mahender gets a notification. He looks at his phone. The camera takes a "*behind the shoulder*" shot to focus on the phone. It is a Whatsapp text from his father in the family group, the message says : "**We are so proud of you**". Mahender smiles.

Mahender (to the others) : YES.

CUT TO BLACK

(Black screen is shown that reads 'Bursting a Bubble' with MITR and wellness centre logos, play credits)