CHINTUKA BIRTHDAY

by

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(Final Draft - 25th November 2017)
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**KITCHEN - NIGHT**

It is dark. We cannot see much.

WHOOSH. A match stick comes to life. Lights a little candle, revealing a birthday cake.

One by one, all the candles on the cake are lit.

**DRAWING ROOM - DAY**

FRAME FILLED with high-energy TV ANIMATION. ADAM and EVE dance to a funny singing voice. The SNAKE too!

FUNNY VOICE ON TV
It was just a silly little apple
that brought us all our woes,
One bite that stole our right to
live there with friends and foes...

CHINTU (M6) is watching the TV. T-shirt. Specs. Wet hair.

SUDHA (F37) joins him from behind, with a tie.

SUDHA
Bechaara saanp ko dekho villain
banaa diye hain.

Sudha is the most wise-looking woman in all of small-town India. And warm, as mothers are.

She makes Chintu wear the tie. A tie with a T-shirt!

SUDHA (CONT’D)
Nayaa sirt-pant aa gaya hai. Theek hai? Aur kya likhe the list mein?

CHINTU
Tophee!

SUDHA
Tophee bhi Papa le aaye hain... Sab achcha-achcha hoga beta.

Chintu nods. He believes her.

Sudha starts tucking his T-shirt.
FUNNY VOICE ON TV
We had to leave, we - Adam and Eve, and there we lost the Land... Her labour pains made a million Cains, the Garden got stone ‘n’ sand!

SUDHA
Papa ko jyada paresaan mat karna  
haan! Humko bolna jo bhi bolna hai.

On the TV:

FUNNY VOICE ON TV
Once the land of goodness and beauty, the Garden of Eden ceased to exist with one little sin. But do you know where it existed? Take a wild guess as we take you there!

SUDHA
Darwaja peeto.  
(aloud)
Arre kitna nahaenge Chintu ke Papa?

Chintu smiles. Rushes away.

Animation GIVES WAY to REAL FOOTAGE of a war-devastated land.

Sudha’s eyes follow Chintu for a bit.

She picks up the remote. TV goes off. No blasts today!

OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM – DAY, CONTINUOUS

Chintu bangs on the bathroom door.

CHINTU
Jaldi kijiye Papa! Aaj toh late nahin kar sakte hain na!!

Chintu waits. After a beat:

The door opens. MADAN TIWARY (M42) emerges. Wearing an old vest. A towel around his waist.

He is mumbling a prayer with his eyes on Chintu.

MADAN
Jo ye padhe Hanumaan chaalisa,  
Hoye siddhi saakhi gaurseesa,  
Tulsidas sada hari chera,  
Kijaye naath hriday mah dera!
Madan folds his hands and shuts his eyes.
Chintu folds his hands too.
Madan opens his eyes and smiles. His entire face beams.
OMITTED: SCENES 3 TO 7

MADAN’S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER
A cupboard opens. Two cans of candies EXIT.
Chintu smiles, receiving the cans from Madan.
Madan moves to Chintu with comb. Sits on the bed. Chintu is busy inspecting the candies in one of the cans.

MADAN
Kaa bolte hain Chintu babu? Dost log khus hoga ki nahin?
Madan starts combing Chintu’s hair.

MADAN (CONT’D)
Achcha suniye. Mummy ko jyaada paresaan mat kijiye. Hum hain na? Jabardast birdday manaayenge!

Chintu’s smile vanishes. Looks at the cans for comfort.

CHINTU
Kitna-kitna baatenge?

MADAN
Aise baantiyega ki thoda mummy-papa ke liye waapas aa jaaye!!!

Behind Chintu Sudha enters with a shirt and a tiffin-box.

SUDHA
Do-do tho baantna beta! Bacha toh raat mein balloon mein daal denge.

Sudha places the shirt near Madan. Moves toward Chintu’s school bag on the other side of the bed.

CHINTU
(to Sudha)
Aur cake?

Madan makes Chintu face him.
MADAN
Hum divya-dristi se dekhein? *
(shuts eyes like a seer) *
Cake bahut sundar ban ke taiyyar hai. Didi ke school se nikalne ka intejaar kar raha hai! *

Sudha smiles, shoving the tiffin-box in his school-bag.

SUDHA
Ye kya hai? *

She PRODUCES a pack of DVDs. Stares at Chintu incredulously. *

CHINTU
Waheed ka gift.

SUDHA
Ye gift hai? *

Sudha exchanges a glance with Madan.

Madan takes the DVDs from her. *

SUDHA (CONT’D) *
Sadak par khaali phutaani karta hai ee Waheed. Hum bahut baar dekhe hain udhar bank ke paas. *

CLOSE on DVDs: a cheap cover with a picture of men holding Kalashnikovs and something written in Arabic. *

MADAN
Waheed toh wahi hai na? Jo Saddam ka haath gift kiya tha? *

Chintu nods proudly. *

Madan and Sudha lock eyes for a beat. Then Madan gets up, leaving the DVDs on the bed. *

MADAN (CONT’D)
Chaliye koi baat nahin. *

SUDHA
Baat kaise nahin? Beta, oo aayega saam ko? *

Chintu nods. Madan moves toward the mirror with his shirt. *
SUDHA (CONT’D)
Hum baat karenge. Aisa atrangi gift koi deta hai boliye?

Chintu appears confused.

SUDHA (CONT’D)
Total kitna dost aayega saam ko?

CHINTU
Twenty-five.

Sudha cannot believe this.

NANI (O.S.)
Chintu!!!!

MADAN
(buttoning his shirt)
Nani ka pair chhuye, Birdday Boy??

Without bothering to answer, Chintu DARTS OUT of the room.

SUDHA
Aap hi bole honge, poora baanar-sena jutaane ko??

MADAN
Bole toh the pachaas log ko bulana. Pichhla hisaab bhi clear!

SUDHA
Haan toh kitchen mein baith ke poori chaaniyega humre saath!

MADAN
Birdday mein khaali cake ho jaaye tagda, aur kisi ko kuchh nahin soojhta hai madam!
(approaches Sudha)
Waise aap saath mein bithaaiyega toh kitchen aur chouka kya, maidan-e-jung mein bhi poori chhaan denge!

Sudha makes a face.

SUDHA
Ek baar belan le ke baithiye. Tab bujhaayega aapko. Poori chhaanenge!

Madan smiles lovingly.
NANI’S ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Chintu touches someone’s feet. He is eager to rush back when he is held by:

NANI (F60), tiny and plump, with a generous grin. Presently busy with some edibles from her very important personal box.

NANI
Aadha din beet gaya tab yaad aaya
babu ko, Nani ka pair chhoona hai?

Nani kisses Chintu clumsily. He wipes off the saliva.

CHINTU
Papa yaad dilaaye Nani!

Her smile weakens at Madan’s mention. She holds it back.

NANI
Didi kaa chhod ke gayi hai, dekho.

Nani points at a note lying over the study table.

Chintu PICKS IT up. And Nani’s glasses. Urgently.

NANI (CONT’D)
Khoob plan banayi hai. Batayen?

CHINTU
Nani, ye sab bataate nahin hai.
Surprise dete hain. Isse cake kaatne me jaada majaa aata hai!

Nani puts on the glasses. Reads the note aloud.

NANI
Kaatne ke pehle ungli mat lagana.
Gift mile toh laalchi banke phataak se nahin kholna, pit jaoge...

Chintu makes a face. His excitement dips.

Nani SCANS the never-ending note. Puts it aside.

NANI (CONT’D)
Chhodo ee bakwas chitthi! Khaali mera bouwa ko daanti rehti hai!!!
Nani pulls Chintu’s cheek lovingly.

NANI (CONT’D)
Ohi sabse husiyaar hai kaa?? Aane
do... Aisa kaan amethenge na!

Chintu’s smile is back. RINGING OF A PHONE distracts him.

**DRAWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

With the DVDs still in his hand, Madan excitedly rushes to the mobile phone: an old Nokia model, with a monophonic ‘Saare jahaan se achcha...’ as its ring tone.

Chintu appears from Nani’s room.

MADAN
Aaya lagta hai, aaya phone!!

Madan drops the DVDs near the phone that he picks up.

MADAN (CONT’D)
(reads the phone’s display)
Nahin bhai, ye toh Zaid hai.

Turns to Chintu and hands over the phone to him.

MADAN (CONT’D)
Lo beta.

CHINTU
(receiving the phone)
Hello.

Indistinct voice on phone.

CHINTU (CONT’D)
(in Arabic)
But my sister has gone in the morning!

Madan observes Chintu, realizing something is wrong.

The indistinct voice quickly completes the call. Disconnects.

MADAN
Kaa hua Chintu Babu?

No reply from Chintu. He looks upset.
SUDHA (O.S.)
Kiska phone tha beta...

Chintu turns to Sudha who has just joined them.

CHINTU
Aaj phir school cancel ho gaya.

SUDHA
Cancel... Didi toh gayi hai?

CHINTU
Uska bhi bahut pehle chhutti ho gaya hai.

Sudha, surprised, locks eyes with Madan. Urgency setting in.

MADAN’S ROOM - A MINUTE LATER

From the drawing room, we see Madan, with the phone to his ear. Sudha stands with him. Both are visibly anxious.

Chintu is at the door, eyes set on his parents.

SUDHA
Nahin lag raha hai?

Madan shakes his head.

Sudha takes the phone from him. Dials and moves away from our sight. Madan follows.

Left alone, Chintu looks increasingly upset. He quietly leaves the scene.

And enters Nani’s room.

NANI’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

From the bottom drawer of the table, Chintu takes out an old can of his favorite candy.

NANI
Kaa ho gaya bouwa?

Chintu does not reply. He produces old balloons, a half-burnt candle resembling number ‘4’ and faded ribbons from the can.
CHINTU (V.O.)
Phir iss baar mera birthday chaupat!! India mein hote toh ye sab naatak hota?

PANNING TO SHOW Chintu’s sketches on the wall beside the table. Sketches of his family. It LEADS TO:

13 ANIMATION

A stunning animation sequence, rich and colorful, in ONE LONG TAKE, with a DRAMATIC MUSICAL SCORE.

- ALL characters are animated. Madan with a 6-yr old Lakshmi and infant Chintu. Sudha looks on adoringly.

  CHINTU (V.O.)
  Hum jab bahot chhote the na, toh Bihar mein rehte the.

- Munger (in Bihar) located on the globe.

- GIRISH JHA (50, M), a lowly Bihari businessman, deals with cartons of water filters. His WORK-FORCE includes Madan.

  CHINTU (V.O.)
  Papa the Water Filter ke salesman aur unke boss ka naam tha Girish Chachaji.

- The illegal route of smuggling electronic items from Nepal.

  CHINTU (V.O.)
  Nepal se saamaan laana, phir bechna. Girish chachaji karwaate the, Papa karte the...

- Girish Jha reads reports of deaths in Iraq in the newspaper. People dying because of polluted water.

  CHINTU (V.O.)
  Ek din Girish chachaji ko pataa chala ki door des Iraq mein peene ke paani ka bahut problem hai.

- Girish Jha FILLS a glass of water from his water purifier.

- His eyes turns scheming.
Girish Jha EXAMINES brand new water purifier with joy. Dozens of such cartons lie around him.

Girish Jha instructing Madan who nods sincerely.

Girish Jha in instructing Madan who nods sincerely.

- ZOOM OUT: Madan’s journey from India to Iraq via Nepal.
- ZOOM IN: Madan’s plane LANDS ON a street in Baghdad.

An image props up: SADDAM HUSSEIN.

- Saddam’s lavish life in his palaces.
- Saddam observes a banana. Shakes his head.
- Bananas disappear from someone’s hand, plate, market-place, all of Iraq.
- Tintin comics disappear from all of Iraq.
- We move through the streets of Baghdad to reach Madan.