

IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Adithya Rajan

1. INT. DINING ROOM

We first see a blank screen and the following text appears on screen:

"Impostor Syndrome: Anxiety or self-doubt that results from persistently undervaluing one's competence and active role in achieving success, while falsely attributing one's accomplishments to luck or other external forces."

Scene fades into on a man sitting at one end of a dining table. He is on his laptop and has headphones on, and is typing intensely. He is dressed in casual clothes, a t shirt and sweatpants, and is working hard at something

Suddenly, another man appears and sits down across from the first man. He is identical in appearance to the first man, except he is dressed much better and appears a lot more confident in his demeanor. The first man glances up as he sits down and has annoyed look on his face for a second before he goes back to work.

IMPOSTER

What'cha doin'?

ADITHYA

(annoyed)

Go away

The imposter sits there in silence for a few seconds, tapping his fingers on the table. The tapping gets increasingly louder until...

ADITHYA

Can you stop?!

IMPOSTER

Are you busy?

ADITHYA

Yes

IMPOSTER

You don't seem too happy to see me

ADITHYA

Gee, I wonder why... What the hell are you doing here

IMPOSTER

I just came to see you is that such a problem?

ADITHYA

Yeah, I'm not trying to start some shit right now

The imposter puts his hands up as if to back off

IMPOSTER

So what are you working on?

ADITHYA

(begrudgingly)

I'm working on my next script

The imposter snickers before suddenly realizing that this is not a laughing matter

IMPOSTER

(snickering)

Oh, you're serious? Really? After that last thing you did?

ADITHYA

What do you mean, "a thing"

IMPOSTER

I mean, come on you know as well as I do that it wasn't great

ADITHYA

I think it was pretty decent all things considered

IMPOSTER

And what are all the things I should consider?

Adithya pauses for a second, taken aback by the question

ADITHYA

Well, you know, we only had a few days to shoot, it was my first time directing something, we were going really late, we were...

IMPOSTER

Ok, ok, ok, I'm gonna stop you right there. So it was your first time directing, and you had limited time to shoot, and that's why you think it was decent?

ADITHYA

I mean... All things considered...

IMPOSTER

So no good films have been made by a first time director without a budget

ADITHYA

No, that's not what I mean

IMPOSTER

Come on dude, you really think that people liked it?

ADITHYA

All my friends who saw it seemed to like it

IMPOSTER

Yeah, and you really think they're gonna shit all over their friend's first film? I'm just being real with you

ADITHYA

They did give me some honest feedback too

IMPOSTER

Oh yeah, like what?

ADITHYA

Well, a lot of people thought the audio was a little off putting in some scenes, and the camera was out of focus at some points, and...

IMPOSTER

Oh haha ok, so you want to be a big budget hollywood director and you can't even make sure your camera is in focus?

ADITHYA

No, it's not like that, it's... Look, yes maybe not all of the technical aspects of my film were top notch, but everyone I talked to seemed to like the story

The imposter snickers again and realizes that there is no joke again

IMPOSTER

(snickering)

Oh, you're serious again

ADITHYA

What the hell is your problem this time?

IMPOSTER

(laughing to himself)

You're telling me that people liked that predictable piece of nonsense

ADITHYA

Excuse me?

IMPOSTER

No, I just mean who didn't see your big "twist" coming

ADITHYA

Apparently a lot people who aren't you

IMPOSTER

Look man, what's your end goal with all this

ADITHYA

I want to make art. Movies, TV, I don't care. But I think that I have some interesting stories to tell and that people would enjoy them

IMPOSTER

(shaking his head and laughing)

Oh god, you're just in your own little world aren't you? Come on dude, none of that's gonna happen. Think about how many people are out there that are more talented than you. They all have experience on film sets or in theater productions or in creative writing classes. Come on, what have you done?

ADITHYA

Well, nothing like that, but

IMPOSTER

They've all won awards for their short films, they all have connections in the industry. And what did you say? Movies, TV, you don't care? Actually I don't think either of those industries really cares about some kid who made one film and thinks he's going to be the next Martin Scorsese. So tell me again, you really think all of this is going to happen?

ADITHYA

I hope so

IMPOSTER

You hope so? What the hell does you hope so mean? And what is your hope based off of? This shitty short film you did?

(MORE)

IMPOSTER (CONT'D)

The only reason you got that made was because your friends were nice enough to help you. But you really think that if you took that script to a producer someone would give you actual money to make it? You really think real actors would listen to you? Respect you? Ask you questions about their characters' back stories? I mean come on, you are pathetic!

ADITHYA

No, that's not what I said, stop

IMPOSTER

Why the hell do you think that people would want to hear your stories? What eventful shit have you done in your life?

ADITHYA

Stop

IMPOSTER

Are you going to make a movie about sitting in the library studying all day? Or crying about failing an exam? Or being hopelessly single and out of shape?

ADITHYA

Stop

IMPOSTER

You're not going to be a director. You're not even going to get into film school. You're just going to get stuck in a dead-end job doing the same thing every day over and over and over again and you'll never achieve anything. Why? Because you're a talentless idiot who somehow managed to fool people into thinking you're smart and so you've made it this far, but how long do you think that's gonna last? How long till people catch on to the fact that you're just an imposter. How long till people take you for the loser that you are?

ADITHYA

(interjecting through all of this)

Stop. Stop. Stop. STOP

Adithya is panting from being overwhelmed, while the imposter puts on a little smirk

IMPOSTER

Ok listen, you...

ADITHYA

No, No, YOU listen. Why do you always do this every single time? Why do you always come here and take one look at what I'm doing and try to bring me down? Everyone I know is being supportive of me except you! WHAT DO YOU WANT TO HEAR FROM ME? That I don't know what I'm doing? That I'm scared I won't make it as a filmmaker? That I might fail and go back to being an engineer? That I'm just generally a piece of shit? What the fuck do you want from me?

IMPOSTER

I'm just telling you the truth, I don't know why you're getting so mad at me

ADITHYA

You don't know why? You don't know WHY? I'm getting so mad because... Because you might just be right. I DON'T know what I'm doing and chances are I'll completely fail at becoming a filmmaker. I have no experience and I don't even know where I can get experience. I don't know anyone in the industry. It might just be a lost cause, I don't know why I'm doing any of this

IMPOSTER

So. Just. Quit

Adithya slams his laptop shut and storms off.

Adithya pauses, suddenly has inspiration and runs back to his laptop with a big smile on his face and starts typing

IMPOSTER

What are you doing, why are you back?

ADITHYA

I just had an idea. YOU just gave me an idea

IMPOSTER

What idea?

ADITHYA

Ok. You're right. I don't know what I'm doing. I have no knowledge of filmmaking, and odds are I don't be a professional filmmaker. Maybe this is all just an expensive and time consuming hobby for me. You know what? That's fine. Maybe my first short had a lot of problems. I still had a fricking blast making it. I just feel like this urge to keep on creating and I get all these ideas in my head and I feel the need to put them to paper and I can't help it. Even if I do suck right now. But you know what? I'll keep learning and I'll keep creating. I still have to keep trying.

IMPOSTER

You're so delusional! Just quit and focus on something else, you're completely lost!

Adithya is focused on typing. Suddenly he looks up.

ADITHYA

What? Sorry, I wasn't paying attention.

IMPOSTER

I thought I just convinced you to get over this stupid delusion of yours

ADITHYA

I told you, I have to do this. Even you can't talk me out of it. Damn, I can't wait to show this to everyone

IMPOSTER

You know what, screw this

Adithya keep typing. Suddenly he pauses and smiles at the screen.