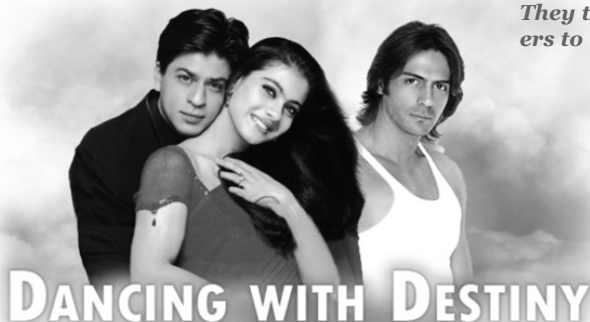


They travelled great distances to be together, broke through barriers to love one another but will destiny force them apart?



DANCING WITH DESTINY

WWW.BOLLYWOODBOARDS.COM

10

The next morning Anna felt happier. She had something to keep her busy so she worked hard at the office. She also wanted to go out with Mahi and was interested in getting to know her background.

A knock at her office door alerted her that it was probably lunch time. Getting her handbag she opened the door and greeted Mahi.

"Hey Anna"

"Ready? Any place you want to go to?"

"No I don't know anything about this place"

"To be truthful neither do I" Anna replied giggling. "It's okay we'll find somewhere"

Later they sat down at a crowded restaurant and ordered lunch.

"The payment is coming through Anna, thank you"

"No need, it was my fault – I'm glad it'll be over soon. I don't know what I was thinking when I stopped like that"

"It's okay, I understand. Was it about some man?" She asked cheekily.

Anna also laughed and shrugged it off.

"So Mahi you said you're not from around here?"

"Yea I used to live in the US – I studied accounting there and ran into some troubles. Our entire family moved back here recently"

Anna didn't want to pry anymore so she let it rest.

"Do you have siblings?"

"I have two brothers and another sister. What about you?"

"I'm an only child. Since I was young though I've had 2 best friends so I didn't feel alone at all"

"Oh! Lucky, I've never had close friends. Where are your friends now?"

"They are both here, in the same city. We all moved overseas to study and returned only recently."

A waiter brought lunch and they ate, both ravenous.

"Gosh I was so hungry" Mahi sad patting her stomach.

"Me too!" Anna replied laughing. She noticed Mahi's pendant hanging off her gold chain. It had an R on it. "What does the R stand for?"

"Oh, nothing in particular" Mahi lied.

"Then why wear an R?"

"It was a gift" She didn't say more and again Anna didn't pry.

"It's pretty" Anna fiddled at her pendant, the



one with RAJ engraved on it. Mahi noticed and sat motionless for a couple of seconds. "It's from a friend, One of my best friends" Anna explained.

"Oh, his name is Raj?" Mahi asked with curiosity

"It a combination of our first names. Raj, Anna and Jai" Anna said lovingly stroking her pendant.

"Sounds like you have two great friends!"

"I'll introduce you to them! Raj will start working at the general hospital soon. And Jai works here in the city too!"

"Raj is a doctor?"

"Yea! He's such a smart guy! And dances so well too. I'm learning dancing off him these days!" Anna said excitedly. Mahi became silent in thought.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing Anna"

"You look sad! Are you sure?"

"I'm sure, just remembered something, nothing major"

"If you say so"

"So tell me about Jai"

"Jai's not as serious as Raj, he is cheekier. We fight the most but he's good to me. We're going to the town ball next month"

"Oh? You two are together?"

"No no!! Just as friends – because I've always wanted to go"

"Isn't Raj going?"

"Probably not, he doesn't seem interested" Mahi was silent again.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing Anna, by the way we should head back"

"Oh! You're right"

They went back to the office and worked the afternoon away. Soon it was closing time and Anna stepped into the car park to find her car. There was a bouquet of flowers on the bonnet. She ran to it and picked it up wondering who it was from. There was no name on the note but it said one simple word.

Sorry

Raj walked away from the car park as fast as he could. He felt so bad for leading Anna on and he knew she did like him. It was obvious. He felt he was going to mess everything up but he had no control.

Suddenly out of no where someone called out.

"Raj?"

He turned around and faced the stranger. It was her, his past returning to haunt him.

Mahi stood in front of him feeling as shocked as he felt. She never thought she would meet him here. Anna had talked of a Raj and she had a suspicions but she didn't expect this. Raj felt rage, he thought this was all over and that he would not face this problem again.

"What are you doing here?"

"Raj...I – I" She couldn't find the right words. She was angry at him. "How dare you ask me that, where else would I be after what happened? Offcourse I'm back in India!" She raised her voice feeling frustrated. "Okay, I'm sorry"

"Well I'm not! I can't believe you're here to ruin my life, yet again!" She screamed. "I thought it was over!"

"I can say the same to you!"

"I didn't shatter your dreams jerk!"

"I didn't give you any reason to form dreams" He wasn't angry at her, he was tired. He had had enough of this problem and he was just not in the mood.

"Whatever!" She turned around and stormed off. She would get her revenge on him. Was this the same Raj Anna knew?

Anna was still standing near her car admiring the beautiful flowers, oblivious to the drama going on right outside the car park. All of a sudden she couldn't wait until Saturday and the dance lesson that was in store for her. She missed Raj and immediately had the

urge to call him. Somehow she felt the flowers were related to him, she couldn't shake the feeling off.

The phone rang, it was Anna. Raj felt his heart break. Everything felt complicated.

"Hey Anna"

"Raj! Dinner?"

"Sure, I'll meet you somewhere" before he knew what he was doing he has accepted the invitation. Dammit Raj you idiot!

"Hmmm I'll meet you at that small restaurant near Papa's office, across the street"

"Okay" He hung up. He was standing across the street from the place Anna referred to, he would reach before her and that would give away his whereabouts. He decided to

A novel

By
**Shanali
Edirisinghe**



walk around the block and return to the spot again. The moon shone brightly above the high rise buildings and was making shadows on the ground. Raj got to the restaurant fifteen minutes later to find Anna sitting at a table patiently waiting. She smiled as he walked in and took a seat in front of her.

"Raj! You look tired"

"Just a long day, how are you?" He looked at her and he couldn't help feeling his heart flutter.

"I'm great! I made a new friend" Anna excitedly recounted her meeting with Mahi.

"She sounds great, what's her name?"

The waiter arrived. They ordered and sat back again.

"What did you ask?"

"I don't remember, probably wasn't important"

"Anyway, do you have anything planned for Saturday?"

"For the lesson? Not anything in particular. We'll just learn a new routine" He smiled at her gazing eyes.

Anna swallowed hard unable to control her breathing. Dam Raj – why are you so charming! A movement at the entrance of the restaurant caught Anna's eyes. It was Mahi, she looked shaken. Anna stood up and called out.

"Hey Mahi! Mahi!!!"

Mahi saw Anna and smiled while making her way toward their table. Just then Raj turned around to look at who this Mahi girl was. For the second time that night their eyes locked and both felt angry. Mahi stopped walking toward Anna, turned around and left the restaurant. Anna was taken back by this and decided to pursue her. Mahi looked like she wasn't in a suitable state to go a lone.

"Anna where are you going!"

"My friend Mahi looks troubled, I should go help her. Sorry I'll be back in a second"

"OH okay" Raj felt his heart sinking. They were friends. He was doomed.

to be continued