



DANCING WITH DESTINY

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It was the worst experience of Raj's life. The way his mother cried as he told her the truth was heartbreaking beyond anything he had experienced. He wished at that moment that he was never born to see this much pain in her eyes. Anna and Jai had stayed with him through the entire thing and then Anna had stayed with Raj's mother to make sure she was okay. Anna herself wasn't feeling well, but she had to remain strong for Raj and his mother. She couldn't be selfish and think about her pain only. Jai had gone home, promising he would return early next morning. He didn't like leaving Anna there, but he didn't feel it was right to be jealous at this moment. That night, After Anna had called her parents and told them what was happening and informed them that she needed to stay with Raj's mum; she went to Raj's room. "So are we still on for the dance lesson on Monday?" She was trying to make him feel better, distract him.

"If you are up for it, I'm up for it" He said smiling. The light in his room was hitting her face, and it made her shine – like an angel. His heart skipped a beat – but now he knew and she wouldn't come anywhere near him with any offers like previously. He laughed to himself – it was never meant to be.

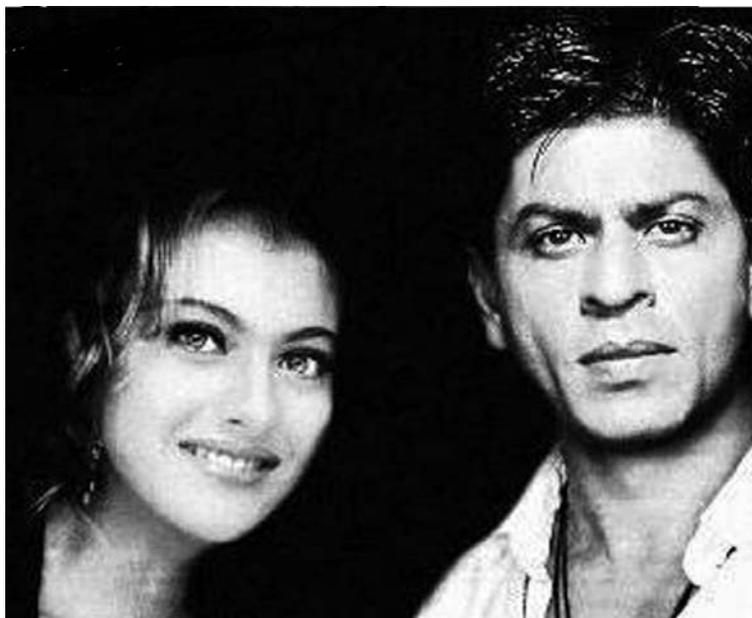
She walked closer to his desk. He was filling out some forms and stopped writing. She leaned on the desk and gazed into his eyes. She then reached out and brushed her fingers through his hair, savouring it. He grabbed her hand and stopped her midway.

"Anna, what?"
 "So this is why you're not good for me?" She asked gently
 "hmmm" He didn't know what to say.
 "What if I was okay with it?"
 "I would never let you settle for something like this" he raised his voice.
 "What if it's not settling? What if I want this?"
 "You don't know what you want – your too clouded by what you THINK is love"
 "Raj! You're being so impossible!"
 "I'm only looking out for you! Jai is better for you"

"Don't try to push me onto someone else – if you don't want to, just say so – but don't do what you're doing now"
 "I just want you to be happy"
 She took her hand from his and gently stroked his cheek.
 "I'm happy, being with you"
 "You'll be happy for what? Maximum three or four months!"
 "Then don't waste my time, Give me the happiness I'm looking for"
 "I don't –"

"I'm a big girl Raj, I know what I'm getting into and I'm doing it out of my own free will" She lowered her face to his and kissed his cheek gently. He was finding it very hard to stay in control, he didn't want to hurt her.
 "Please Anna, It will hurt you in the end"

"Then let it hurt, let it consume me – I don't care. I have months with you and I will take the chance" She kissed his jaw line and went lower to his neck. He stopped her and took her face in his hands. He looked straight into her eyes and saw moisture around them. She was on the verge of tears. He couldn't resist her anymore. He slowly kissed her cheek and moved down her neck. She shivered.



"Raj" His mother called out. Anna suddenly jumped up from the desk and ran out of the room. Raj laughed silently and got up.

"Yes?" He called out as he walked out of his room. Anna was leaning on the hallway wall breathing heavily. She looked shocked and he couldn't suppress a chuckle. He walked toward the kitchen and found the table full of food.

"Wow! Maa! Why did you cook so much?"
 "Because..." A tear fell from her eye and she brushed it aside. "Just come and eat, let me feed you" She got a plate and piled it with the food she had cooked; she then sat herself down and gestured for Raj to sit next to her. Anna watched from the hallway and she fed him lovingly and she couldn't help shedding a tear for them. If she felt like this, how would a mother feel? She thought.

She went to the guest room and sat down heaving a huge sigh. She had time with him and she would use it. She loved him and that's all that mattered for now. He would leave this world, happy.

Suddenly her phone vibrated. A new message, from Jai was flashing on the screen. "Hey Anna. How's Raj? I know you two

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

are probably together now. Just remember how much I care for you okay? Be happy" She sighed, feeling a pang as she remembered Jai. She knew he loved her, and she was sure she didn't return his feelings – but hadn't she promised to try? She felt stuck in between.

The next morning Jai had arrived at Raj's house, before Anna had even woken up. She was a little shocked to find the two men chatting away in Raj's room. Her heart skipped beats as she watched them. She loved them both so much. Her heart ached, soon one would leave. She had to control the tears that were threatening to erupt out of her.

Suddenly her phone started vibrating and she backed away from the room to pick up the call.

"Hello?"
 "Anna, it's Mahi"
 "What do you want?"
 "I need to speak to you"
 "I have nothing to talk to you about"
 "It's about Raj"
 What could she want to say about Raj? Anna was curious, but she didn't want to talk to Mahi.

"I don't want to hear it, there's nothing you can tell me that I don't know about him"
 "You don't want to hear about how he and I used to dance? Or another secret I have about him?"
 "I already know you two were dance partners!"
 "Aren't you curious about the way we danced? Him holding me by the waist and gently guiding me – oh we had so much chemistry" She was trying to wind up Anna. "I don't care!" Anna was feeling hot in the face.
 "You will care, when I tell you his secret"
 "So tell me then!"
 "He's going to die" Mahi said without a hint of remorse. "Did you know that?"
 "Is that what you called to tell me? You shouldn't have wasted your time, I already knew!"
 "What?"
 "Raj told me! He also told me what a psycho you were – leave us all a lone you mental

A novel

By
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patient" Anna snapped angrily.

Mahi was furious. She was lost for words and tried very hard to think of something. But she couldn't. She hung up hoping to come up with something to separate Anna from Raj. Anna hung up and leaned against the wall, hugging angrily. She hoped none of the men had heard her. She walked back to Raj's room and sat on his bed next to Jai. They both stopped talking.

"What were you talking about?"
 "Nothing important" Jai said casually.
 "C'mon!!! No more secrets!"
 "Anna, we were planning something"
 "What?"

"If you must know! We were planning to go to the ball together, all three of us – how does that sound?"

"EEEEEP omgg" Anna jumped with joy and started doing a little dance. "I'm so happy!! We can all go together, dance, eat and fun all night!" She felt so happy.
 "We knew it would make you happy" Jai said.
 "It was Jai's Idea" Raj said not looking directly at Anna.
 "Jai you genius, I love you" Anna said hugging him playfully. He wanted her to be happy and he knew how torn she would be after Raj....

"Okay okay" Jai laughed and pulled away from the hug, he didn't feel right hugging her while Raj was watching. He didn't know why he felt so, but Anna wasn't his.

"Oi! Why are you pushing me away!!" Anna said punching Jai hard on the arm.

"I don't want your hugs" He replied trying to sound snobbish.

"OH? You're too good for them are you? I'll show you" She hugged him harder and refused to let go, he couldn't even push her off.

"Anna!!" Jai cried, your suffocating me. Raj started laughing at the two of them. Anna let go and stared at Raj. To see him laugh made her heart feel light and all of a sudden she was engulfed by such sadness that she could barely sit up.

"What's wrong?" Jai said noticing this change.

"Oh nothing nothing" Anna brushed it off. But Jai noticed her eyes had gotten watery, but he let it go. She was suffering so much because of this, he remembered the vow he had made earlier – he would help her remain happy, no matter what.

"Since we're all here now, let's go do something" Raj suggested.

"Hey I have a better Idea, let's all go on a trip?" Anna pipped in, trying to make herself forget what she had just remembered.

"Hey yea! Sounds great" Jai said, trying to keep Anna going. "Where?"

"We can go to your parents holiday home, Raj – How about that?"

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