

Bollywood : A dream comes true



ABOUT THE STORY

Shantilal Merchant hails from a long line of gurus of Indian classical dance. As his ancestors created dances to be performed in front of kings in the courts of Rajasthan, so he created dances for Mumbai's magnificent film industry, Bollywood. Shantilal was the godfather of Bollywood films of yesterday, whereas Ayesha Merchant, his granddaughter, is the reigning queen of Bollywood films today. Although they are family, their styles of dance could not be further apart.

Shantilal believes that films should change peoples lives. Ayesha believes films should make people escape. Reality or fantasy- therein lies their conflict. When the story begins, Shantilal is far away in his ancestral home of Rajasthan. Ayesha is in Bollywood, the most wanted star of the industry. She has the Midas touch. A film is not a hit without her. They call her "Princess of Romance". Her current movie is a Bollywood version of "Romeo and Juliet". She is giving it the full Bollywood makeover: love duets on the Swiss Alps, dances in deserts, temples, fountains and fabulous glittering costumes. During the filming of "Romeo and Juliet", she receives news



that her grandfather is dying. She revisits her childhood memories, learning dance under his strict supervision and watching him at work during the golden era of Bollywood cinema. Shantilal was known as the "King of the dance." Ayesha's teenage rebellion against her classical training, in favour of modern western pop music, was the seed of their feud. The damage seems irreparable.

Jaya, the wise old dresser, has worked in the studios of both grandfather and granddaughter. She advises Ayesha that his spirit will not find peace if there are unsettled matters of the heart. Now the Princess must make peace with the dying King. Ayesha resolves to visit Shantilal. Her journey takes her to the heart of India - the deserts of Rajasthan and into the arms of her childhood sweetheart, Karan. In the folk festivals of the Rajasthan desert, she is overwhelmed by the pounding rhythms of the drums, and the power of her age-old family tradition. Her grandfather, on his deathbed, urges her to open her eyes, to create cinema to connect with humanity. All he dreams of is to dance again. As she wanders the streets of Mumbai in the days after Shantilal's death, she notices the