



MY SO-CALLED BOLLYWOOD LIFE

DISCUSSION GUIDE

GRADES 9 AND UP
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ABOUT THE BOOK

The romance of Stephanie Perkins meets the quirk of Maureen Johnson, then gets a Bollywood twist in this fate-filled debut that takes the future into its own hands.

Winnie Mehta was never really convinced that Raj was her soul mate, but their love was written in the stars. Literally, a pandit predicted Winnie would find the love of her life before her eighteenth birthday, and Raj meets all the qualifications. Which is why Winnie is shocked when she returns from her summer at film camp to find her boyfriend of three years hooking up with Jenny Dickens. As a self-proclaimed Bollywood expert, Winnie knows this is not how her perfect ending is scripted.

Then there's Dev, a fellow film geek and one of the few people Winnie can count on. Dev is smart and charming, and he challenges Winnie to look beyond her horoscope and find someone she'd pick for herself. But does falling for Dev mean giving up on her prophecy and her chance to live happily ever after? To find her perfect ending, Winnie will need a little bit of help from fate, family, and of course, a Bollywood movie star.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In Chapter 1 (p. 9), Winnie's friend, Bridget, says "I don't know why you trusted the whole prophecy thing...we're talking about a prediction a psychic made." How does Winnie react to this statement about a cultural belief from her best friend? Would you say something different?

In Chapter 4 (p. 43-55), Winnie's parents confront her about her actions. If you did the same thing as Winnie, how would your parent(s) respond? What are similarities and differences in reactions?

Winnie has a dream where the Bollywood actor, Shah Rukh Khan, is giving her life advice after she finds out that Raj secured her idol for the student film festival (p. 89). Why does Winnie want/need advice?

By Chapter 10 (p.119), Mr. Reece is finding humor in Winnie's Bollywood references. What do we know about Mr. Reece so far as a faculty advisor? Do you think he likes or dislikes Winnie, and why?

Winnie goes to Oak Tree Road with her mother and grandmother. (p. 158) Her friend Bridget tags along. How do Winnie and Bridget react to Oak Tree Road? Why do you think the reactions are different?

On p. 179, Winnie is reflecting on her date and believes she should "...cut her losses now." Why do you think she believes this?

What happens at the film club fundraiser? Do you think Winnie has made a choice about her prophecy? Explain. (Ch. 17 p. 203-213)

By the end of Chapter 19 (p. 224-232), Winnie must deal with the aftermath of Jenny's actions, her argument with Dev, and her fight with Bridget. Write a supporting argument as to why Winnie's actions are right and her feelings are justified. Then, write a counter-argument.

On p. 266, Winnie has a conversation with her father. Describe their relationship throughout the book. Do you believe they're close? Explain.

By the end of MY SO-CALLED BOLLYWOOD LIFE, Winnie has fulfilled her prophecy. Do you think free will or destiny won in the end and why?

CREATIVE WRITING PROMPTS

DREAM SEQUENCE: Find a Bollywood movie song online featuring Shah Rukh Khan. After watching it, write a dream sequence where Shah Rukh gives Winnie advice about her college applications.

ALTERNATE ENDING: What if Winnie hadn't ended up with the right hero? Write an alternate ending.

EULOGY: Pandit Ohmi has regrettably passed away. Winnie wants to write him a eulogy on her blog. In Winnie's voice, write the eulogy.

LOVE NOTE: Winnie wants to tell her hero how much he feels about her, so she tries to do it by comparing her love to love stories in movies. Write Winnie's love note (essay, poem, or song) using movie examples that you've seen and/or relate to.

POV: Rewrite a scene from a minor character's perspective. How does Winnie or other characters appear and/or feel from a different point of view?

BLOG: Write a daily blog for two weeks, reviewing something you love. Avoid using the same descriptors.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nisha Sharma grew up immersed in Bollywood movies, eighties pop culture, and romance novels, so it comes as no surprise that her first YA, *My So-Called Bollywood Life*, features all three.

Nisha credits her father for her multiple graduate degrees, and her mother for her love of Shah Rukh Khan and Jane Austen. She lives in New Jersey with her cat Lizzie Bennett and her dog Nancey Drew.

Nisha is available for signings, discussions and school visits. You can reach her online at www.Nisha-Sharma.com or on Twitter and Instagram @nishawrites.

