



## COOKING THE BOOKS : May 2024

**LARGE, LUSH, LAVISH!**

### Spicy Garlic Salmon Fried Rice



Dear

Have you missed me? It's been a while since my last newsletter but I have a *very* good reason. More on that shortly.

Today, I'd like to share the inspiration behind this month's recipe.

When I wrote Project Bollywood, I wanted to play with the name of my main character Salman (pronounced "Sul-maan") who is teased by friends, calling him salmon. I thought it might be funny. Thankfully, my wise editor refused and I dropped the idea. But

I do love salmon and I absolutely love my MC, Salman though the twain shall never meet.

[Spicy Garlic Salmon Fried Rice](#). We've all eaten shrimp fried rice and I wanted to try fried rice with a healthier option. Here's a super easy recipe. As always, I add a few ingredients to suit my palate so this has chopped cilantro, spring onions, and a healthy dollop of chilli-garlic oil. DIVINE!

Enjoy this double dose of Salman...I mean salmon ;)

A close-up, low-angle shot of actor Salman Khan looking upwards with a slight smile. He is wearing a red and black plaid shirt. The background is a deep blue with out-of-focus light circles. A white film strip graphic with sprocket holes runs diagonally across the lower half of the image, partially behind the title text.

*orca currents*

# PROJECT BOLLYWOOD

MAHTAB NARSIMHAN

Salman grew up on Bollywood films, as did I. They are truly large, lush, and lavish. Here are a few trailers/songs to showcase just how much money is spent on these blockbusters. Hint: It's in the millions (or crores!)

[Dhoom 3](#)

[Loveyatri](#)



I could add a dozen more but I'll stop right here. If you're a fan of Hindi movies, Netflix and Prime both have a great variety for every palate. And while you're at it, pick up a copy of Project Bollywood, why don't you?

[Britannica](#) has some interesting facts about the Indian film industry, in case you're interested. I highly recommend the docuseries [The Romantics](#) on Netflix for a behind the scenes look at some of the best blockbusters and the masterminds behind them, especially Yash Chopra.

## **PROJECT BOLLYWOOD**

### **Synopsis:**

Salman loves Hindi movies and wants to produce a short Bollywood film for his school project.

He gathers his friends when he's ready with the script, which is a mashup of all the movies he has ever seen. As director, Salman insists everyone follows the script exactly. But it's full of stereotypes and the cast and crew are not shy about expressing their concerns. Salman wants to remain true to the Bollywood model for his film but when his entire cast threatens to walk out, he has to decide whether to stand firm or find a way to collaborate.

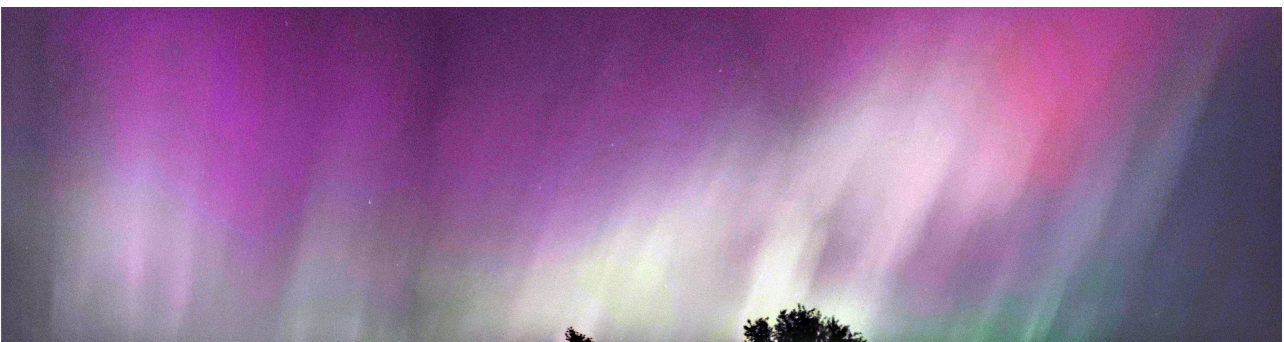
This short novel is a high-interest, low-reading level book for middle-grade readers who are building reading skills, want a quick read or say they don't like to read!

### **Review :**

"The story will interest students who have their own peer tensions...provides valuable examples of dealing with conflict. Recommended."– CM: Canadian Review of Materials

"*Project Bollywood* is a short, high-interest novel allowing Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop's analogy of allowing readers to see themselves in a mirror or open a window for others to a new perspective. Readers interested in making movies, themes of friendships, and wanting to learn more about Indian culture will enjoy this shorter novel." – Bit About Books, Laurie Hnatiuk

## **What have I been up to?**



I have seen the light...!

In early May, a few lucky millions saw the awesome Northern Lights. I've travelled with my family to Iceland and the Yukon in past years to get a glimpse of these elusive lights. Zip, zilch, nada. On a visit to friends in Seattle we saw them. All I needed was my smartphone camera and some patience to see nature in all her celestial and spectacular glory. I was thrilled!

After I got back home from my trip, I was sucked into a black hole of revision where nothing could penetrate! Not chores, nor social media. Which is why I've been AWOL for ages. What started as a 146K draft was whittled down to 127K words and I'm pruning it further to get it under a 110K words. Needless to say, *my darlings*, who are being brutally murdered, are screaming for mercy. I will not relent even as I shed tears for their untimely demise.

Hopefully, when the dust, and blood, have settled, I'll have a draft that has been distilled in the crucible of carnage to shine like a polished diamond.

**My friend, Claude 3, gave me this version of the above sentence:**

"Once the turmoil subsides and the sacrifices have been made, I aspire to craft a manuscript that emerges from the crucible of revisions, gleaming with the brilliance of a meticulously polished diamond."

Which do you think is better? Talk to me!

## **If you like PROJECT BOLLYWOOD, try these!**

- Maya Running by Anjali Bannerjee
- Sadia by Colleen Nelson
- Pashmina by Nidhi Chanani
- That Thing About Bollywood by Supriya Kelkar

## **Some final words...**

Looking for chilling fantasy novels in an exotic settings within Asia, with a sprinkling of mythology and a side order of mystery?

Check out both these series by yours truly:

[EERIE TALES FROM THE EAST](#) (Goosebumps meets Asian mythology)

[THE TARA TRILOGY](#) (A quest, a mystery, and a fairy tale, all in one)

I'm on [BOOKBUB](#) and would love to connect with you there!

Please remember to [whitelist my email address](#).

*The Comfort Book* by Matt Haig is a little treasure trove from which I pick a gem or two whenever I feel like it. Here's another one I'd like to leave you with:

**Each of us has the power to enter a new world. All we have to do is change our mind.**

I hope you enjoyed this newsletter, and if you did, please share it with people you think might enjoy it.

Until the next newsletter, I hope "All izz Well! (Line from the movie, **3 Idiots**. Check it out!)

Mahtab

### **Stardust Stories**

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