



There was a stage when Rajesh feared the wrath of his favourite columnist-cum-keeper-of-his-secrets, more than the wrath of Anju, Dimple or God. As per her instructions, he dutifully refused all interviews and reserved his scoops for her and her alone. In a rash moment, he decided to clean up the whole mess about Anju by giving us his version of their relationship. He spoke freely and frankly and we anticipated no trouble later. After the issue hit the stands, Rajesh hit the ceiling. It took several hours (and sedatives) to uncover his *real* grouse. "Dammit", he hollered. "It was *my* story and you put *her* on the cover." Not only had he lost face, but he'd also lost his lady columnist friend. She never did forgive him for cheating her out of a scoop and giving us a story.



what really happened between rajesh and anju.

An incident-to-incident account of the break-up, in their own words . . .

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"I wanted to marry Rajesh. I never wanted to hook him." Maybe that was *her* mistake.

"I was sadly, badly, madly in love with Anju. She was an obsession with me!" Maybe that was *his* mistake.

I met Anju, heard her story. She didn't cry. Not once. And kept telling me that she was "brave". But once in a way, her voice seemed suspiciously close to breaking down, her eyes

seemed to grow misty, her laughter seemed to ring false.

And just by a coincidence, I came across Rajesh a couple of days later. The first thing that struck me was his carefree, relaxed look. Marriage certainly suited him. I said so to him, and he smiled, "I'm happy, very, very happy. All my tension's gone. I'm so totally relaxed . . . and at peace at last."

We went to his make-up room. There in the silence of the room, with just the fan whirring above us, Rajesh told me about Anju

and him . . . sometimes his voice was overcharged with emotion, his eyes blazed with bottled anger, his twisted smile revealed his cynical contempt.

Yet their story was the same. Only each had interpreted it differently! That's the irony of it all. Here it is in their own words. . . .

ANJU: Rajesh was becoming increasingly difficult to get along with. His recent flops had upset him mentally, and he was moody, temperamental, irritable. All the time he was so tense . . . almost a nervous wreck. He made mountains out of molehills. The tension was too much for me. I too became edgy and was always on

pins. Sure, I sympathised with him. I tried to explain to him that he shouldn't take his few failures so much to heart because there are always ups and downs in an actor's career. But he was so self-pitying that he just couldn't take it. He became too demanding. He wanted attention and pampering from me all the time . . . that was impossible.

RAJESH: I admit I was so shaken up by my flops that I wanted Anju by my side. I wanted her to understand me, to be with me; to help me overcome the nervous tension that was eating me up . . . to soothe me . . . when I most needed her, she was never around. . . . I remember just before the day I left for my 'Raja Rani' premiere at Delhi, I wanted Anju with me. I rang her up and called her over. She wasn't too pleased because she was getting ready to go to a party with her mother! She volunteered half-heartedly to stay back for my sake, but I knew she was angry. So I told her to go ahead to the party, secretly hoping she wouldn't. But she did. She promised to come away soon from the party. She came only when the party got over. When she came to me late at night, I was sitting up alone . . . I told her to go back home with her mother. Did I need my woman just to make love to, to go to bed with? Love is emotion, feeling, not just sex. The next day I left for Delhi. She neither rang me up nor sent me a message to wish me luck. A small gesture like that would have meant a lot to me. It would have shown that she cared about what was happening to me. It was I who rang her up from Delhi to tell her that my film was released successfully.

ANJU: Sometimes he was so petty-minded. In his insecurity, he often be-

haved like a baby. He became too possessive about me. If once in a way, I tried to spend an evening with friends, he didn't like it. He thought I was neglecting him. . . . He became so suspicious that he would ring up my house and keep track of my whereabouts. . . . All he wanted me to do was wait, wait, wait for him. . . .

RAJESH: Often after a hard day at the studios, I'd return home to find a note saying that she had gone to so-and-so's party and would I join her there? Or when I'd drop in, tired and lonely, at her house, I'd find her entertaining friends, whom I didn't particularly care for. I'd want to spend an evening alone with her and she'd be having company.

ANJU: He accused me of always having my friends around. He said there was never any privacy for us. What about his yes-men who were always hanging around when I went to meet him? So often I pleaded with him that I didn't like his *chamchas*, that at least when I went over to him, he could have the courtesy to keep them away. But no, they were always there. He needed them. . . .

RAJESH: Sometimes I used to ask Anju to have lunch with my mother, to spend some time with her . . . it would make my mother happy, but she didn't want to make the effort to please my mother. She was too bored to take the trouble. I care deeply for my mother. I wanted Anju to care for her too. Was that asking for too much? Sometimes the nasty way Anju spoke about my mother hurt me terribly. . . .

ANJU: His mother didn't like me at first. She's a typical, old-fashioned Punjabi woman, and very difficult to please. She didn't approve of me, and I knew it. Do you

know what it is to know that you are disliked? But she was scared of Rajesh, so she didn't dare object to my presence in the house. I did make an effort to get along with his mother. In fact, in recent times we'd even been getting along. Rajesh wanted me to serve and wait on his mother, imagine with all those servants around! He didn't just want me to pamper *him*. He expected me to pamper and look after his mother also. I didn't mind, of course. Besides, Rajesh himself was quite often very unpleasant with my mother. He used to tell her off so rudely that I would be shocked. I'm not saying that he didn't care for my mother. He could be very indulgent and affectionate if he chose to. Whenever he used to come in late for parties, the first question he would ask is "Where's my family?" meaning **us**, and he would always come to us first. That used to make me very happy. At such times I felt we belonged to him and he belonged to us.

RAJESH: It was always me going to them, never they coming to me. How good it would have made me feel if once in a way Anju had come to my side on her own. I would have felt so proud if in front of everybody, she had come to me with a smile, instead of sitting with her mother, and watching and waiting for me to go to her. I always showed my love. Couldn't she have bothered to demonstrate hers sometimes?

ANJU: Love is felt, not demonstrated. I'm not a bloody exhibitionist to gush over him in public. He wanted me to fuss over him like all those others who were perpetually falling at his feet. I loved him. I couldn't fawn over him. To me he was Jatin or Justin, a man I loved, not Rajesh Khanna, Super-Star or THE PHENOMENON. As much as I could, I had submerger my individuality, my personality, my identity into his — to make him happy. He wanted me to give up modelling at a time when I was paid very highly. I did. We had a big row over my role in 'Dastak'. He canned my film 'Uski Kahani'. The film till today is with him and his partner Shakti Samanta. He wanted me to quit acting so he made me get out of a film with Sanjeev Kumar for which I had already completed a week's shooting. I was keen on a film career but Rajesh came first to me.

RAJESH: Yes, I didn't want her working in films. I've always said that I wanted a non-working wife. But **what** career did she *sacrifice* for me? Those two-bit roles like 'Jewel Thief'? Where would those stray roles have taken her? To the top? Look at Dimple. Her's is a real sacrifice! She had signed umpteen films as the HEROINE, with all the topmost banners and stars. I didn't even have to *ask* her to give up films. She did it of her own accord, out of her love for me . . . because she wanted to be my wife, and nothing else.

ANJU: He never allowed me to visit him on his sets. So I didn't insist. I never tried to



interfere in his professional life — not even when I used to hear all those rumours about him and his heroines, especially Sharmila and Mumtaz. What's more, close mutual friends often used to come and tell me about his flings not only with these two — with others too. But I never wanted to believe them, even when I thought they were speaking the truth. What I hadn't seen for myself, I firmly refused to believe. However, I had told Rajesh that the day I caught him red-handed with another woman, it would be THE END.

RAJESH: I had explained to Anju that being an actor, there would be gossip about me. People would cook up romances around me. She shouldn't believe them. After all, I was also being told so many notorious tales about Anju and other men and I refused to believe them. Why even at parties, I would find her flirting the minute my back was turned. Even then I never said anything. I was giving myself a chance, giving her a chance. But she! She never understood that it was only natural my name would get linked with my heroines just because I was acting in so many films with them. Many a time she has been rude to Rinku and Mumu ... ask them if you don't believe me ... and that used to put me in an uncomfortable and embarrassing position when I had to report to work with them. Of late Anju used to be unnecessarily nasty with Dimple too.

ANJU: Dimple is a clever little girl. Rajesh and I met her for the first time. Then we were Rajesh 'Uncle' and Anju 'Aunty' to her. She was nice then. In recent times I noticed a change in her. She was always saying things which appeared innocent but were actually very calculatedly catty and aimed at me. Behind her childish exterior, she was a girl who knew how to use her eyes with men. What exactly to say. Who to say it to. With Rajesh too, I saw through her feminine tricks. She went out of her way to irritate me. Like at Rajesh's last birthday party, I was happily receiving all the guests when Dimple stood at the door and with exaggerated sarcasm, said to me, "Can I come in?" She was just trying to bug me. So I said simply, "If you've been invited, come in. If you haven't, then leave." People call him a cradle-snatcher for having married a kid. But I think she is the cradle-snatcher who's bagged a baby! Dimple is much more mature than Rajesh.

RAJESH: Anju used to deliberately snub Dimple. You know how Dimple is. Young, sweet and carefree. But Anju didn't like her. At my birthday, it was Anju who issued out my invitations. She didn't invite the Kapadias when she knew that I had wanted to. I personally rang them up, apologised and invited them over. When Dimple came, she asked in fun, "May I come in?" It was a harmless, girlish remark. And Anju snapped back and in-

sulted her. "If you've been invited, then come in. Otherwise, just go away." Imagine insulting my guests in my house? How could I bear it? There were so many instances when Anju and her family have treated my guests so badly I didn't even have the face to apologise. Their rude behaviour had alienated me from my friends, relatives, colleagues.

ANJU: Now people are spreading such a lot of lies about us. I don't deny that Rajesh has looked after my mother and me all these years. Everything I have belongs to him. This bungalow ... everything. ... But I've heard it said that he gave me this bungalow as a parting gift, that he wanted to buy his "release". For God's sake, if he wanted to go, he just had to say so. He knew I would never have clung to him. I've also heard that he has given me sixty lakhs to buy my silence. Bullshit! I don't think I have even four hundred rupees in my bank!

RAJESH: I gave her the bungalow because I loved her. I cared for her. I wanted her to be happy ... to enjoy herself ... to be comfortable. I could afford it so why shouldn't I have? And can you imagine that while it was under construction, I was shooting at Khandala and even so I used to drive down every single evening to personally supervise everything to the last detail. What need was there for me to go to such lengths if I had planned to leave her? There have been many situations in the past when I could have walked out on her. I didn't. I couldn't. Because I loved her ... I thought things would work out.

ANJU: To tell you the truth it's not so much the break-up that has shocked me. At the rate things were going on between us, we had to break up sooner or later. Why, I think I would have broken it up myself within another two months. But Rajesh took the step first. If only he had told me himself that he wanted to marry another girl, I would have understood. He owed me at least that much decency.

RAJESH: I intended to go to Anju on my return from Khandala. I wanted to tell her simply that everything was finished between us. But when I was coming back from Khandala, I met my driver who told me that 'Memsaab' had asked him to give me a message — that I shouldn't ring her up and that if I stepped through her gates, she would ask the gurdhara to throw me out! She had sent all my belongings back through him. Imagine through my SERVANT! A servant had to tell me these things! It was the biggest insult to my dignity. I decided not to go to her ... What was the point? She had had her say. I was free. to start a new fresh life.

ANJU: Rajesh loved me twenty times more than I loved him! He always came back to me after every quarrel. He needed me. I know that even though he's married, one day he'll want to come back to me. But



I'll never take him back. He knows it. So he won't even try to come back.

RAJESH: Yes, in the past, I've always run back to Anju, whatever our differences. It was me, me ringing up or going to her to apologise and patch up our quarrel. God, I gave in a lot ... too much ... in our relationship. If they used me, took me for granted, I blame only myself. It was my fault. I was a bloody fool. I had stooped so low for my woman that I fell in my own eyes. I had lost all self-respect. My decision to leave Anju was not an overnight one. My decision to marry Dimple was. Well, I'm happily married now. If Anju thinks I'll go back to her, she's absolutely mistaken! After I've saved myself from that relationship, do you think I'd ever go back? NEVER!

ANJU: I'll get back to my film career maybe even do a bit of modelling ... Maybe I'll have a better life from now.

And that's it!

They've both had their say. So has the press, the fans and of course, the other stars. But who are we to judge or condemn or pity either of them? Why should anyone accuse Rajesh or blame Anju? And since the two of them insist that chapter of their life is finally closed, let them bury their past — and live their futures — separately.

—UMA RAO