



ANUSHKA SHARMA

PRESENTS ANYA SINGH

<https://youtu.be/s-i3Z7EZRpA>

Anushka: Hi everyone. So, I'm here today to present a brand-new actor to you all. I think this has been quite a special feeling for me because through this, I got to reflect upon my own career in cinema so far as an outsider in the film industry. Because when I got my first 'Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi', opposite Shahrukh Khan, to be produced by Yash Raj films, directed by Aditya Chopra, I honestly didn't realise what a big deal it was at the time.

Frankly, I did not even know who Aditya Chopra was or what it felt or what it would be or mean to be his heroin. That's how clueless I was. I chose acting purely on the basis of sheer instincts. I did not know anyone, not a soul who worked in movies or had any connection to the film industry.

So, I did what any outsider does? I worked to get my first break. I auditioned and in one such audition, I got Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi. Thank you gob. But you know what I feel? I feel that honestly, because I didn't have any legacy to live up to or any sense of familiarity with how cinema works and whatsoever, I feel like it gave me a kind of determination and confidence that has definitely helped me to be here and has enabled my journey so far in the movies.

Today I do a lot of films. I even produce some. So, I am very grateful. But I feel that, there are a lot of people that I've been very grateful to, and I'm very thankful for, who have helped me in my journey so far. And Yash Raj is paramount, Aditya Chopra because he believed in me, he believed in my talent when I guess nobody did.

I had come from outside. So, you know, I had no legacy or nobody knew anything of me. And he chose me purely on the basis of what he felt I possessed, which was the talent that I had. And I'm so grateful to him. And I think as a company, Yash Raj has always done that. You know, it has always backed talent first before legacies, before connections, before perceptions. And I know so now with so many examples that we have seen of actors being launched by the production house there.

That here if, no matter what, who you are, where you come from, if you have what it takes to become an actor, YRF will back you. And because they believed in my talent, I'm here, standing here today and very, very happy and proud to present to you all another very young, smart, talented actor who's also determined to make it on her own steam.

So, guys, without further ado, I would like to introduce the new YRF girl, Anya Singh. I was just having a chat with Anya and she told me backstage that she's a little nervous. So, be nice, otherwise I'm sitting here. Beautiful video.

Anya Singh: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you everybody for coming this evening. It means a lot to Aadar and me.

Anushka: So, I'm just going to ask Anya, I'm just going to ask you a few questions that I've been dying to know. I've just met her today, backstage, and we've had a chat. But please tell me, how has the journey been so far? Because there's a life, right? There's one life before you sign your one, for your first film. And then there's the other, like literally everything just changes. It starts to feel different.

So, what was it like? What was it like before you became an actor and what was the first break like? And then what are the reactions? And I don't want to ask you anything specifically, because I know that it's a thing, that it's a moment that you can't even say it because there's so much that happens. So much has happened to me. So, tell me what was the first thing that you thought of and Adi told you, yes, you're going to be doing this movie.

Anya Singh: So, I remember when Adi sir finally told me that I've got this movie. That was my first proper conversation with Adi sir. Before that, I had seen him at the cafe, you know, passed a smile, said hello. But that's it, nothing beyond that. And Shalu Ande told me that, listen, I'm coming to office to meet you. And I just want to chat with you.

So, I said, okay, cool. Like I'll wait. And Shalu Sharma takes me to the lift. And she says, we're going to the fourth floor. Now only because of coffee with Karan, I know that the fourth floor means this is Aditya Chopra's place. So, I was extremely nervous going from the third floor to the fourth floor. I went and I sat, I had a glass of water because I was so nervous. And Adi sir walks in, very cool, he says, okay, so you've got the film. And I want you to work really hard.

And so, I heard that and I was like, I was listening to what Adi sir - I was hearing what Adi sir was saying, but I wasn't actually listening to him because everything just went completely blank for me. And I couldn't believe it. Like I thought when I get the film, I would like cry or like, you know, it'd be very dramatic. But I think, I couldn't believe the fact that my dream had finally turned into reality, because it was very hard for me.

So, those five minutes, I just spent staring and not listening. And I walked out, Shalu gave me a hug and I went back home and I face-timed my entire family. I think that's when it hit me that, you know, finally what I really wanted has come to me.

Anushka: And nobody in your family has ever done movies or been associated with cinema in any way, right?

Anya Singh: No.

Anushka: So, what was that like? What was their reaction to this, to hearing this? Were they prepared for it? Did they know you're going to be auditioning for this film?

Anya Singh: So, my mother and, of course my father, everybody knew I'd been auditioning because I'd been auditioning for about two and a half months before I got the film. And my mother kept telling me that Anya, don't get your hopes too high because, you know, if you don't get it, you will be very upset. So, I think that's something I tried to do, but in my mind, I was like, if I don't get this, I'm going home. Like, that's the end of it. Like, this is it for me and I have to get this. So, I was very positive about the auditions. I think Shanu and Habib sir, and Adi sir, everyone was very motivating. So, it was quite, quite okay.

Anushka: But then you auditioned a lot. Did you face, because that's a process. Because you'll go to a lot of movie auditions and sometimes they tell you how you've been shortlisted. And you're like...

Anya Singh: So many times, so many time.

Anushka: They are like, it's down to two girls. Its you and another girl and somehow it's the other girl who's getting it.

Anya Singh: Yeah. So, that happened with me a lot. In fact, I would always, they would call me and be like, you know, you've been shortlisted and it's between you and one more girl. And I'd be like, okay, please god, give this to me. Please, please. I'd call up my mom and be like, mumma, you know, I've been shortlisted for this ad. I think I'm going to get it.

And of course, I never got it. I never got it. So, when this happened, I think my mother and my entire family was actually really, really proud because they were very apprehensive. I am the only child, and I'm a girl. And since we're outsiders, there's this perspective that this is a big, bad world. And you know, if you don't have somebody to support you, you're going to get lost or nothing's going to happen or you are going to go down the wrong way.

So, my mother was very, very apprehensive. It took me a year to convince my mother and my family that, to please let me come to Bombay because it was my dream. And I kept telling my mother, if you don't let me go and if you don't let me do this, I will always blame you. And I will always regret it for the rest of my life. Because I'd rather go, get rejected. But I know that I gave it a shot, you know, rather than, I could have gone, but then mumma didn't allow me to do, to go. So yeah.

Anushka: I know what you're saying because I felt that too. And this whole thing of, this is a difficult place to be in. And it's very hard if you're from outside and, you know, you will go down the wrong road. That's a very common perception that people had. A lot of my family members also used to say that to my parents. But tell me something, because you are from, not from the industry and you know this is the perception that is built up about it. How do you continue dreaming to be this, to become an actor? You know what I'm saying? There's a natural restraint that is somehow, is unsaid, but it's there, right? That it's difficult. It's hard. But so, how do you continue feeling motivated and focused to work towards this place?

Anya Singh: When I came to Bombay, my mother had made it very clear that I'm giving you one year Anya. And if within that year, you don't get something. You're coming right back and I'm sending you to pursue your master's because my mother was very keen that I study. So, when I came to Bombay, I had the pressure of not only a timeline, but also like, will I get anything? Then as time passed, you know, months went and I went for audition and auditions and I didn't get anything.

There were a lot of times when I questioned myself and I was like, was this the right choice? I gave up everything and I came to Bombay, not knowing anybody. Not only from the industry, but even outside. I

had like two friends in Bombay. So, was this the right choice. But then since the first movie that I watched in my life, which was Dil To Pagal Hai on screen, it stuck on.

So, obviously, there was something in me that kept pushing me and saying that, listen, your entire life, you wanted to do this. Just give it a shot and just keep trying. You have one year, that one year at least push yourself and go for every audition possible, you'll get something. So, I think that, that is what really motivated me. The fact that this was my dream and I gave up everything for my dream. So, I felt like I had to get it and I was here to get it. So, yeah.

Anushka: Nice. And how was it working with Yash Raj films, launched by the banner?

Anya Singh: I mean, it's, I can't believe this has happened with me. Oh, it's very surreal. It's anyone's dream I feel to be launched by such a prestigious banner. And Yasha Raj is now family I feel, you know. I don't feel like I'm a new person because I feel like I have a whole family backing me. So, if I have a question, if I'm uncertain about something, I know that there are 30 people I can go up to and be like, listen, I'm really confused. Can you help me with this? Which if I wasn't a part of this family, I think I would have been very nervous and lost.

Anushka: Which is the best thing. Right? Because while they give you that support and you know, you can always go to them with any kind of, when you're feeling a little hesitant about something. But at the same time, you're also always made to be your own person and they encourage that. They encourage you to be the person that you are and to not become like anybody. And when you come from outside the industry, you're anyways, there's no sense of kind of familiarity or any kind of baggage that I have to be a certain way, or this is how an actor must be and should be.

And I think that is encouraged here, which is what I think, I mean, I should share with you all also, which is what I think is most amazing about Yash Raj Films. That you're always encouraged to become your own person. And whoever you are, you build up on that. And yeah, and that's why it's, of course, with Yash Raj being such a big banner, but that's another thing which I think is equally, equally important and helpful. No?

Anya Singh: Definitely, definitely. I agree with you completely because, they do encourage you to be your own person and at the same time, they'll help you with whatever. And they'll keep motivating you and pushing you. And I think they've given me a lot of confidence, which is something I was lacking because I'm so unfamiliar with this world. So, I think that's something they really gave me, like this. It was them that said, you can do this. So yeah.

Anushka: You look lovely. Now, how is it working with Aadar? You all should know that I've recently worked with Aadar. Aadar was assisting Karan Johar in Ae Dil Hai Mushkil and he's a very talkative boy, as you all must have already experienced. So, how was it working with him? He's extremely entertaining. Some stories to tell.

Anya Singh: Aadar is an extremely entertaining person. Like just his being is very entertaining. I can watch him and be in splits. He talks a lot. He has a great sense of humor. He has these wonderful one-liners and I was never, I was always entertained on set. I was always in splits even during a really serious scene. I had to actually go to another room. So, I was away from Aadar because he was always making me laugh.

But the other thing about Aadar is that he has a very short span, of attention span. So, you could be talking to him, you could be this close to him, but he's not listening to you. And he just in his own world and I could be like Aadar, Aadar, Aadar. Does not care, doesn't matter who you are, you know, what you are saying. So, that's just one floor he has, I'd say.

But it was wonderful working with him. I think, it's nice because this is both our first film. So, starting a journey together, learning so many things together. It was because we both were equally excited about everything, first day on set, first day of shoot. This, press conference. So, everything is just a wonderful, it has been a wonderful journey together.

Anushka: Anya you're lovely and very charming, and whatever interaction that I've had with you today, it's been so refreshingly honest that I hope you do really, really well. And your first film is very successful and your work is highly appreciated. I'm hearing very good things about your work. So, I wish you all the best.

Anya Singh: Thank you so much.

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