

COVER  
STORY



# Sense and Sensibility

Calm, composed, and compassionate, Rakul Preet Singh has charmed her way into people's hearts since her very first film. The star on the rise talks about her biggest learnings, the ups and downs of the industry, and her pursuit of happiness.

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STYLIST **MEAGAN CONCESSIO**

HAIR **DHANASHREE AATE**

MAKE UP **SALIM SAYED**

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**T**all, sprightly and enthusiastic, Rakul is here to change the way things are done in showbiz. From her journey in Bollywood and the South Indian film industry, to her treasured childhood memories, the actor bared it all, giving us more than just a glimpse into her life. Rakul on screen is phenomenal, but off-screen, she is grounded and her world is as simple as it gets. As we wrapped up the shoot, we couldn't help but appreciate her work ethic, which was devoid of the starry air that one would expect of an actress who has made her mark in the film industry barring all language barriers and putting haters to shame. The chirpy actor reveals—what makes her feel sexy and what she likes about her co-actors—Allu Arjun, Sidharth Malhotra and Ajay Devgn. Also, in this exclusive rendezvous, she talks to us about her love for cinema, the concept of gender inequality, and finding her ideal man. Edited excerpts...

**Growing up, who did you admire the most, and what inspired you to become an actor?**

I've looked up to many people while growing up, because I believe that there are so many individuals who have achieved so much. But most importantly, I have always looked up to my father. He is such a learned and aware man, who knows everything, be it about the stock market, current affairs or even the environment. Acting for me happened all of a sudden when my mom suggested that I take part in the *Miss India* beauty pageant, and thereafter it all happened organically.

**How was your initial journey on the silver screen? What**

**were the challenges that you faced?**

It's been beautiful, and luckily, it has been a consistent upward journey all through. I do not abide by the term "challenges", as it gives a negative connotation. But I think that when I started out, it was a brand new field for me; where I got the opportunity to explore and learn about a whole new world that made me focus on my goal.

**You have completed a decade in the industry. Did you ever think that things will work out like this? Has failure ever intimidated you?**

I started out in 2009, but only after completing my graduation did I enter the industry in 2012. I never set out by doubting myself whether things will work out for me or not. I have always believed in myself, and my instincts.

Failure does not intimidate me. Rather, it is a great teacher as you learn to respect, and value yourself, and your craft.

**You started your career with modelling and won five beauty pageant titles. Do you think beauty queens still have an edge over others?**

Beauty pageants, groom you in a way that you are prepared for the industry of which you otherwise know nothing about. And that's how, many outsiders get a chance to be a part of the showbiz. But at the end of the day, to be a proficient actor, you need a lot more than just beauty pageants. You need passion, zeal and eccentricity towards your craft.

**Tamil, Kannada and Telugu, you seem to have crossed language as well as awe-inspiring performance**

**barriers. How has the experience in each industry been?**

It's been a beautiful experience and I have never treated them as different industries. Whether its *Telegu, Tamil, Kannada or Hindi*, I want to do good films and play different characters. My first film, *Gilli*, was in *Kannada*. *Telegu* has been my 'home' language for which I am extremely grateful that the industry welcomed me as one of their own and showered me with love.

I am just a couple of films old in the *Tamil* film industry. But I really believe that whatever the industry or project might be, it all comes down to the people you work with. And, I've always been fortunate in that area.

**The song *Haiya Ho* from the film *Marjaavaan* was a chartbuster with over 14+ million views, and you received an ecstatic response from the audience. How was your experience?**

It is always very humbling to receive a good response for your songs, and especially in Indian cinema, where our songs define us completely. It indeed is a difficult feat to recreate an old song that was such a big hit even back in the day. But I had a blast shooting for it and was very happy with the audience's response.

**How are you planning to balance *Hindi* and *Southern* cinema? Tell us, how do you prepare yourself for an on-screen role transition? What is your process?**

I try my best to balance them out equally. But recently I have slowed down my work in the South, because I cannot work on four

*"It's been a beautiful experience and I have never treated them as different industries, rather I seek on being a part of varied projects, films and characters."*

Bralette : Clovia

Blazer: Rajesh Pratap Singh; Trousers: Dhruv Kapoor; Heels: Charles & Keith; Choker & Cuff: Zoya Jewels; Bralette: Maheesh Notandass; Fine Jewellery:

**THIS OR THAT**

- Romantic chick-flicks or Action movies?  
Depends which one I am in.
- Laidback or Adventurous?  
Adventurous
- Netflix & chill or A day out with friends?  
A day out with friends, any day.
- Salad or Burgers?  
Salad
- Beaches or Pools?  
Beaches
- Bubble Baths or Shower?  
Shower
- Heels or Sneakers?  
Sneakers
- Strength training or Cardio?  
Strength training



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different films in *Telegu*, *Tamil* and *Hindi*. For now, I am happy to explore the realm of *Hindi* cinema, as it's a new professional space for me.

When it comes down to how I prepare for a role, well that entails a little bit of homework, where I often study the character's body language or focus more on their characteristics.

**In *De De Pyaar De*, you played a girl who falls for a man who is double her age. Can you really love someone like him in real life?**

Age is just a number, it's all about how the person is and how compatible I am with him. In the end, it all boils down to how we are together.

**You have been paired up with co-stars such as Ram Charan, Allu Arjun, Ravi Teja and Sidharth Malhotra. Was there any moment when you developed a celebrity crush?**

"Well most of my co-stars are married men, and I do not generally have a crush on a married man," (laughs) Rakul. Moreover, all of them are extremely polite, kind and respectful, and Sid is a dear friend. I haven't really had a crush on any of my co-stars as of yet.

**The industry has been struggling with gender-based wage inequality for a long time. What is your take on this?**

Well, there is a gender-based wage inequality in every profession across the globe, but the good thing is that there is a dialogue about it now. I hope that one day we do not have to talk about it anymore. But I feel that, when there is a female-oriented film such as—*Saand Ki Aankh*, which was completely riding on Bhumi Pednekar and Taapsee Pannu, then the pay should be higher. I believe it all comes down to what you bring to the table and your performance as an actor, which in the end would justify your pay.

**We have seen you be cast alongside the versatile Tabu, and the Bollywood newbie Tara Sutaria. How**

## QUICK FAVOURITES

**Film**

Joker

**Pick me-up song**  
Anything from the 90s.

**Dessert**  
None

**Thing in your closet**  
Shoes

**Lipstick shade**  
Twig by M.A.C Cosmetics

**Holiday destination**  
Any place with a nice beach, I am a beach bum.

**Actor**

Ranveer Singh

Trench Coat: Rajesh Pratap Singh Heels: Love Moschino Rings: Outhouse Jewellery



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Dress: Bhaavya Bhatnagar Jacket: Dhruv Kapoor

*"Age is just a number, it's all about how the person is and how compatible I am with him. In the end it all boils down to how we are together."*

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**do you bond with your onscreen female co-stars?**

I have always been a people's person, and bond pretty well with everyone. I completely adore Tabu ma'am and have always looked up to her, in fact the first song that I sang was from one of her films. We often make plans to catch up, but more often than not, they don't work out because of our busy schedules. Tara is a very sweet girl, though we did not get more than 5-6 days to shoot with each other, but while we were around each other, it was a very pleasant experience.

**You have been appointed as the brand ambassador for the *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* programme by the Telangana State Government. How do you envision the future of the girl child in the Indian society? What positive steps have you taken towards achieving the same?**

It's an absolute honour to be chosen as the brand ambassador for such a noble cause. I have personally interacted with a lot of families, and it is definitely an eye-opener to view the disparity amongst the genders. There are people in the high-society who are not even aware of the hardships and concerns that the masses at large are facing. The families who live in the interior of the country are not privy to the awareness schemes that the government has for the protection of their child's rights. It's high time that we stop viewing the girl child as a burden, and begin valuing her by giving her the right to education.

Now, the positive step is that we have begun engaging in a dialogue wherein we discuss these problems and will work to resolve them in the near future, for generations to come. Along with the Telangana government, we have created a

positive change and aim at doing the same in the future as well.

**If you had the power to customise the perfect man. What qualities would you add to or remove from the love of your life?**

I love this question. I sincerely wish that I had the ability to customise my perfect man. But what I truly seek in a man is, genuineness, good sense of humour, drive and passion for life. He should also follow a healthy and disciplined lifestyle. Do let me know if there is someone who fits the bill.

**When we talk about relationships, what makes you happier in the long term, sharing or sacrificing?**

I am a big believer in the philosophy of true love, and I feel that the term has now lost all its meaning. Today we use the word so casually that it just comes out to be more temporary rather than fulfilling. I truly believe that in order to maintain a successful relationship, the feeling of contentment with your partner is a must. As no two people are alike, making sacrifices for the one you love, respecting them, and paying attention to their likes and dislikes results in a bond that blossoms for years to come.

**It is said, "Today's actions are tomorrow's results." We would like to know how do you manage your fitness regimen despite your busy schedule?**

I truly abide by the statement above. I believe that what you sow is what you reap, and if I do not take care of my body today, it won't take care of me few years down the line. I prioritise my workout in such a way that even though I am tied up while shooting,

I find a way to workout.

**How do you unwind after a long day? What is your mantra for relaxation?**

Unwinding is the most important part of my day. Yoga, working out and hanging out with my friends help me unwind. A great meal or reading also helps me relax after a long day. Moreover, I don't think that you get worked up when you follow your dreams and do something that you love.

**Social media is a great way for fans to connect with their dream celebrities and vice versa. But, how do you deal with Internet trolls?**

Social media has its pros and cons. It surely gives us a medium to be connected to our fans, but I don't get affected by trolls. I do not read their comments or pay much heed to them. But whenever I come across remarks that aren't positive or are extremely personal, I feel bad for the person trolling me rather than feeling bad for myself. Hiding behind a digital medium does not actively give them the right to shove someone down.

**Tell us something about your future projects?**

There are a couple of films that I am working on at the moment, also there is an upcoming film with Arjun Kapoor that is being directed by Kaashvie Nair. I have also signed three other Hindi films, that I am not supposed to talk about as of now, but their details will be out soon. *Indian 2* by S.Shankar along with a *Telegu* film in which I've been cast alongside Nithin, are on floors.

**How was your experience with FHM India?**

I loved the entire shoot, the concept was great, and it exuded all things—fashion, style and oomph.

Bandeau Top: Clovia

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Blazer: Rajesh Pratap Singh Trousers: RSR by Riti Rahul Shah Ring: Gehna Jewellers

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## RAPID FIRE

**What is that one thing that you are grateful for?**

For life, and for being able to follow my passion as an actor.

**A co-star that you would love to work with next?**

I would love to work with everyone, as my journey has just begun. But if I had to pick and choose someone, then it would be Ranveer Singh.

**A movie genre that you would like to explore?**

All of them

**Five things that we can always expect in your handbag?**

Lip balm, mobile charger, wallet, sunglasses and my phone.

**Fitness routine(s) you enjoy the most?**

Aerial yoga and strength training

**Describe yourself in 3 words.**

3 words are not enough.

**What is that one quality that makes you feel sexy?**

It's all about self-confidence and believing in yourself that makes you feel good inside out.

**What would your ideal cheat meal include?**

Ideal would be anything and everything, without even putting on a gram of weight. But, I majorly eat large quantities of clean food.

**The one movie that you're most proud of?**

I am proud of every movie that I have done. Each project has taught me something in my journey.

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