

Success is my mantra, my passion, my reason to live - Russhita

Russhita Singh -- the name may not ring a familiar bell -- but the young girl is already being tipped as the next big artiste to hit the marquee. She is being fondly talked about in the Indian film circle since she got the opportunity to share screen space with none other than Hollywood superstar Julia Roberts. Directed by Ryan Murphy, 'the film Eat Pray Love' is based on a novel by Elizabeth Gilbert and is co-produced by Brad Pitt. Russhita played Tulsi, an Indian girl in the film, who befriends Julia at an ashram. She plays a role, where she acts as a window for Julia's character to understand India. She shot with her for an entire month and the two bonded beautifully. Her experience of working with the Oscar winner was nothing short of a dream. Russhita talked to TAOM'S Dr Neelam Batra-Verma from Mumbai in a candid interview. Following are excerpts of the interview. For detailed interview, please visit [www.outlookcanda.com](http://www.outlookcanda.com).

***How did you get the role in Eat Pray Love? Were there many competitors and what qualities do you think you had that stood apart from the others?***

'Eat Pray Love' happened to me after I auditioned for it five times. Each time when I auditioned, I was not just sure but confident that I might get a chance to portray the character of Tulsi and share screen space with an international actor. Yes, there were many competitors. Out of them, two girls have won a National and Filmfare award respectively for their performances in Indian cinema. The fact that I had such experienced actors vying for the same role did make me nervous but my intuition kept me going that I'll eventually bag the role. My acting experience and above all my simplicity - the key trait of this particular role that I've played are the qualities that helped me get the role.

***How did it feel when you were told that you are in?***

When I received a call from India Take One Productions, at first I couldn't believe that I've actually heard news like that. I was numb. I was pleasantly shocked and extremely happy when they told me over the phone that Oscar winner actress Julia Roberts was my co-star. I was overwhelmed with joy and was looking forward for the shoot to begin. Pravesh Sahani from the production house had personally called me up to break the news to me and congratulated me for bagging the role. Yes I was expecting the same but post the auditions when there was no contact with the casting director/production house for almost two months, I thought I was expecting too much. I believe my intuition was in sync with my luck.

***How many movies do you have under your belt?***

In Bollywood, there are four - Samir Karnik's 'Nanhe Jaisalmer' and 'Vaada Raha', Raj Kumar Santoshi's 'Halla Bol' and Sanjay Gupta's 'Zinda'. And now 'EPL' is my Hollywood debut.

***Of these, which do you think are your best?***

I feel I've always worked with talented directors who very well knew how to extract the best performances out of their actors. Every film has been way too different from each other. Although I've always portrayed serious characters, no two roles were similar. Honestly, each film, each director and

each role is very special for me. Picking up one is neither fair nor easy. However, my track in 'Halla Bol' which was inspired by the Jessica Lal murder case was well appreciated by the audience and till date people praise me for that particular performance.

***What is your dream role?***

I've a lot of dream roles - right from playing a princess in 'Princess Diaries' to 'Confessions of a Shopaholic' to a 'Teenage drama queen' or do something like a 'Freaky Friday'. I would also love to do an 'X Men' film because that involves action and then a period drama in which I can play a warrior princess who is a royalty, beautiful, powerful, courageous, dares to bring about a revolution, fights evil and protects her kingdom. Of course, finally getting married to prince charming! I'm looking forward to doing rom-coms and comedy too.

***Tell me a little bit of your self.***

I'm from Bhopal and come from a business family. I've never been to an acting school and have no plans to attend one.

***When did you decide you wanted to become an actress and how did your family react?***

I'm a girl who has always been involved in a lot of cultural activities since childhood. I used to dance and gradually developed an interest in acting. I come from a business family. I've no god-fathers in the industry. I've never been to an acting school. Now, I'm planning to pursue my education as a student of mass-media. My interest in expressive academics started at the age of 3. Now, at 20 I finally make my Hollywood debut. I come from a very conservative family. I told my family about the film one week before I left for shooting of the film. They are glad and looking forward to the release in India.

***Any more Hollywood offers?***

Well, I think it's too premature to talk about any upcoming projects right now. I'm in talks with a Hollywood production house and will make an announcement soon. The reason I didn't sign any other film post 'Eat Pray Love' was because I wanted to gauge the audience reaction to my performance skills. Now that I'm ensured that I'm well appreciated and noticed, I'll soon sign on the dotted line and give you details.

***Any change in Bollywood producers lining up on your door.***

Things have changed, though not drastically. Like I mentioned, I didn't want to take up any film offers before 'Eat Pray Love's release. I'm a sucker of good cinema. I don't want to take up any kind of random roles now. I'll carefully choose them and do complete justice to them.

***Did you learn any acting tips from Julia? How was the chemistry between you two? How did you find her as a person?***

From Julia, I learnt how to be professional and committed. The chemistry between us was the way it was supposed to be. We are individualistic coming from different countries, cultures, background and age

groups but still were extremely comfortable sharing our experiences. We were real good friends who would connect to each other so well that using words as a medium to communicate wasn't really necessary.

***Are you still friends with her? Any plans of any future films with her?***

I'm not exactly in touch with her but would definitely want to meet her again because she's so charming and mesmerizing, a meeting will not be enough. I would love to work in more films with her.

***How did you find the producer/director and the rest of the cast? Would you work with them again?***

I feel the co-producer of 'Eat Pray Love', Brad Pitt is really hot and quite a charmer himself. As far as the director Ryan Murphy is concerned, he completely understands his actors and makes them feel comfortable on sets. He very well knows how to extract our best performances. He is creative and witty. The way he understands a woman - makes him really special. The rest of the cast and crew were equally welcoming and supportive from every department. I was given a lot of attention, care and comfort. I'll never miss out on an opportunity to work with them in as many films I can.

***What differences did you find with Hollywood and Bollywood actors/producers/directors?***

I feel there are certain noticeable differences. Yes, I'm working in both the industries, Hollywood and Bollywood and will continue to do so forever.

***What kind of an image you would like people/your fans to carry? A sexy item girl or an innocent girl-next-door type?***

Since I'm an actor by profession, I don't want to be categorized as either - sexy item girl or an innocent girl next door. Being an actor is about being versatile and justifying each character that you play on-screen. Also, an actor's responsibility is to breathe in life to their particular character and make the audience believe that you are not just a character they are watching but someone they can relate to.

***Your ambitions in life.***

To become a successful actor. I believe in being successful in everything I do. Be it acting or dancing, success is my mantra, my passion, my reason to live as I've been gifted with a life. Therefore as a respect to God I've to make sure I make the most of it and become successful.