

LOVE & OBSESSION Alia Bhatt

When stand-up comic Radhika Vaz met cover girl Alia, hysterical giggles and eye-rolls ensued

Photographs **ERRIKOS ANDREOU** / DEU: CREATIVE MANAGEMENT
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Striped T-shirt, Topshop at www.jabong.com, ₹ 2,290; cotton skirt, Shift, ₹ 7,976; 'Secret Cannage' necklace, Dior, price on request; rings, both Valliyan by Nitya Arora at Minerali, ₹ 1,500 each; 'Flowerland' tie-up heels, Fendi, price on request



Rings, both Valliyan by Nitya Arora at Minerali, ₹ 1,500 each

When the nice people at Grazia asked me to interview their cover girl, I jumped at the chance. I had never interviewed anybody, much less a major celebrity, and I wanted that cherry popped ASAP. In hindsight, I couldn't have gotten luckier. Alia Bhatt was the perfect First Time. Not once during the course of our conversation did she make me feel the weight of my inexperience, or my utter lack of originality as an interviewer. >>



AB: That it can sometimes be unpleasant.

And it can be. Alia has had to learn to turn haters into motivators, her hilarious send up of herself in the AIB sketch being a prime example. And while it may have been difficult for someone else to pull off, let's not forget this is Magesh Bhatt's kid.

RV: I read that your dad sends you a motivational quote a day. Share one with us.

AB: A good student is one who demolishes his teacher.

RV: What sort of a teacher is your father?

AB: He's very unexpected. He would never say that being odd is wrong, which would explain why I am attracted to weird things. He is a weirdly interesting teacher.

And while her dad has played a significant role in defining who she is today, Alia credits her mother for helping build what is clearly a solid work ethic.

AB: My mum has put a lot of discipline in me. The idea of being the person who wakes up early and sleeps early – that comes from her.

It shows. Despite being under the weather, and having worked a full day she is not just nice, she is uncomplaining. She goes on to tell me that her drug of choice is melatonin, and her hangover cure is sleep (mine is more alcohol). So far the dirtiest thing she does is go to bed with her mascara on, and while I usually don't trust people with clean lifestyles, I will accept that success at the level she enjoys, is rarely just a product of raw talent. People like Alia have singular focus that can border on obsession, which is why she is a cover girl.

RADHIKA VAZ: What was the first thing you did this morning?

ALIA BHATT: I had a cup of black coffee.

RV: You just asked for green tea though, so what does that say about you?

AB: It says that I can't have more than two cups of coffee a day, and that the green tea makes me pee a lot and gets rid of all that water retention.

Instantly my petty mind wants to skinny-shame her. I eyeball for bloat but she's wearing a baggy kimono-like thing so it's hard to say. Still, I love a girl who doesn't hesitate to talk bodily functions, so I let that go.

RV: You are the most famous person I have spoken to. Tell me what's the one thing about fame you didn't see coming?

RV: Alia, February is usually about love and this month, Grazia is wondering how it can often wander into obsession. Do you think there is a difference?

AB: I do. There is a difference between the two at least when it comes to people. With obsession, there is a certain amount of greed involved, while I think love is more selfless.

RV: Lust at first sight, or friends first?

AB: Friends first. Then lust.

RV: Anything embarrassing you've ever done for love?

AB: Of course. I think lying is embarrassing, and I have lied for love. >>

Striped camisole, Rasa Jaipur, ₹ 1,450; embroidered cropped top, Anamika Khanna, price on request; cotton trousers, Shift, ₹ 7,944; moon necklace, Bansri at Minerali, ₹ 4,100; wooden pendant, www.bhane.com, ₹ 1,800; tie-up heels, Jimmy Choo, ₹ 67,500; 'Bubble' bag, Dior, price on request; metal bracelets, Pipa+Bella, ₹ 899



Knit T-shirt, Shivangi Sahni, ₹ 7,200; suede shorts, Kiss The Sky at www.koovs.com, ₹ 2,295; suede jacket, Temperley London, ₹ 66,888 approx; 'Loop Crescent' earrings, Kichu, ₹1,800

RV: A workout move you are crushing on?

AB: Pilates on a Cadillac machine. It feels so good. See, there is some greed there – definitely an obsession.

RV: Most annoying hashtag.

AB: #aboutlastnight. God, I want to kill somebody! About last night, what? Give me some detail.

RV: You have your own clothing line, so here are some fashion questions. From the inside out: Thong or Granny Panty?

AB: Boy shorts. They are sharper, cooler, and they look good.

RV: One closet you want to raid.

AB: Kendall Jenner's.

RV: Describe your perfect handbag.

AB: It depends on where you are going, but size matters.

RV: So you are a size queen?

AB: (Patient eye-roll) Yes.

RV: The bigger the better?

AB: (More patient eye-roll) Yes. Although sometimes I like the cute, little ones. (Hysterical giggling from Elton, the delightful make-up artist, who, this evening, is the head of Alia's glam squad)

RV: Which co-star would you marry, which one would you kill, which one you'd have sex with?

AB: Oh god! So boring.

She is right – this is an old set-up that she has probably had to field before. And despite the fact that I agree, I am immediately offended by her honesty assuming she doesn't want to divulge who she wants to have sex with.

AB: Actually, I don't want to answer the kill one.

RV: Favourite cuss word.

AB: BC.

RV: A word you overuse.

AB: Lurking.

RV: A word you recently learnt.

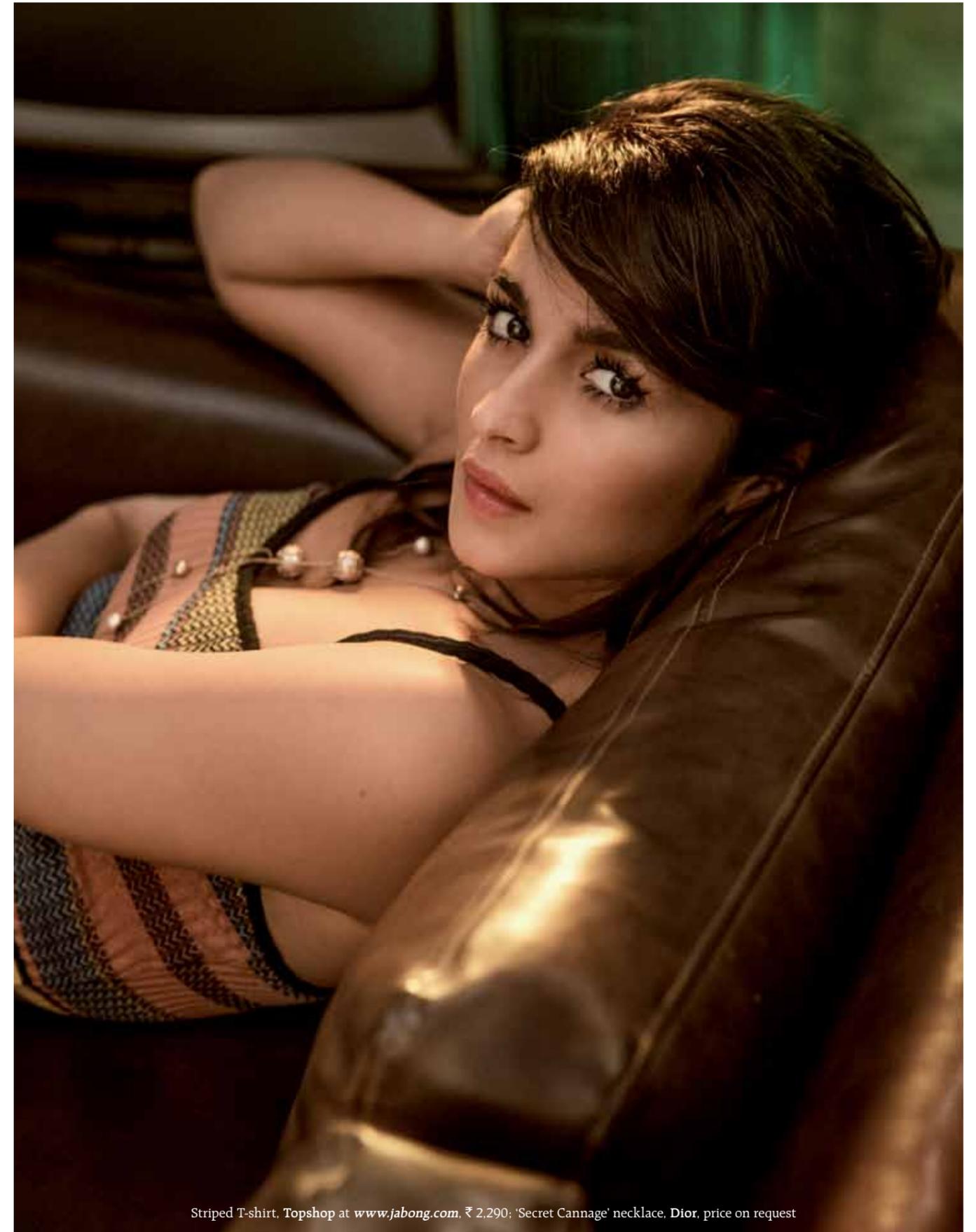
AB: Astute.

Great word I think, and one that I decide describes her well as soon as she answers the next question.

RV: Advice to your 30-year-old self?

AB: Don't get married!

It's time for me to go, so we take the obligatory selfie. As I walk away from her trailer, I wonder what it is that I have learnt about Alia Bhatt. Her spirit animal is the cat; she wishes she could play an instrument; and of all the people living or dead, we both want to hang with the same dude – Michael Jackson, but maybe with a few more people in the room, she winks. But the most indicative for me was when I asked her what advice she would give her 13-year-old self. Without any hesitation she tells me – Learn kathak and bharatnatayam. Yep – that laser-like obsession is what the girl is all about. Her career comes first. Don't let anything else you see, or hear, fool you. ■



Striped T-shirt, Topshop at www.jabong.com, ₹ 2,290; 'Secret Cannage' necklace, Dior, price on request



Printed ruffle blouse, skirt, both **Shift**,
₹ 7,320 and ₹ 8,196 respectively; collar
necklace, **Red Valentino**, ₹ 13,217 approx;
'Beyond Bird of Paradise' heels, **Fendi**,
₹ 60,973 approx; 'Diorama' bag,
Dior, price on request

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