



Followed by many, replicated by none

"Bijli giraane, main hoon aayi, kehtein ha mujhkoon, hawaan hawaai"

When one thinks of Sridevi, this, along with many iconic moments of her is bound to pop up in his head. The morning of 25th February was quite tumultuous, particularly owing to the sudden demise of one of the greatest Bollywood actors of all time. Upon seeing the news on my social media news feed, a part of me was certain that this was a hoax, and I frantically searched around for a reliable source that said so. Unfortunately, as immortal as Sridevi might be in the hearts of her fans worldwide, her soul had left her at an age of only 54.

Born in 1963 in Tamil Nadu, Sridevi started acting at only four years old with her debut in the film *Thunaivan*. In 1971, she won the award for 'Best Child Artist' for her performance in *Poompatta*. Soon after playing her first lead role in *Moonдру Mudichu*, Sridevi started landing big roles in Bollywood films which included *Mr. India*, *Himmatwala*, *Nagina*, *Chaalbaaz* and many more critical and commercial successes.

Even though death is a natural phenomenon, Bollywood finds it difficult to accept Sridevi's untimely demise. Having ruled the 80's and early 90's, Sridevi's bold yet beautiful demeanor was the inspiration for many upcoming female actors which include the likes of Madhuri Dixit, Preity Zinta and many others. "Heartbroken and shocked to hear that my all

time favourite Sridevi is no more. May god give peace to her soul and strength to the family," tweeted Preity. Tammanaah Bhatia tweeted, "There's nothing more heartbreaking than losing someone you look up to tremendously. Sridevi was the magic that made us believe in the beauty of cinema. Still can't believe she's no more. The darkest day for cinema."

Having starred in almost 300 films with unparalleled drawing power, Sridevi was one of the few female actors in Bollywood who did not need a conventional male lead to attract audiences. Having won 6 prestigious Filmfare Awards, she was the recipient of India's Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian honor of the country in 2013. Sridevi was beautiful, Sridevi was talented, Sridevi's panache was way ahead of her time in Indian Cinema. The fact that she came back to the industry after 15 years of absence and nailed it with *English Vinglish* was testament to her character as an artist. Throughout the years, she has been cele-

brated, followed, missed; but there was and never will be an equal to Sridevi, and her success will never be replicated. As far as Bollywood is concerned, Sridevi will remain as someone "followed by many, replicated by none".

By Sadi Mohammad Shahnewaz

