

# Shazia's week



**Being a footballer's girlfriend or wife takes practice, believe me. I just looked like a lemon**

I have never really fitted in anywhere, nowhere at all. I have always been quite aware of feeling slightly out of place in a variety of situations. It started at tap-dancing class, where my ability was so distressing that I felt the only way to conceal the substandard shuffle ball change was to make as much noise as possible with my tap shoes to distract from the unsatisfactory goings-on in row three.

Another occasion came recently, when I was performing in the red-light area of Amsterdam. The doorman refused me entry to the club, bellowing in my face: "Hookers are not allowed in here. This is a comedy club." "I am a comedian," I replied. "Well, you don't look like one. Let me just check with the management."

Not only did I *feel* out of place, but I was now paranoid that I also *looked* out of place. I was perturbed that this man would assume I didn't look like a comedian but did look like a hooker.

This week, I once again felt misplaced while filming a new TV show. The episode was about how we perceive beauty, and for this investigation, what better place to go than Liverpool? Home to orange women, or, as Dulux describes them: Golden Bark 4.

I had to spend the day with a glamour model, whose role models include Jordan and Coleen McLoughlin. She was a very nice girl and I got on with her very well. It was her job to

take me shopping in Liverpool and turn me into a Wag (wife and girlfriend of a footballer). It should actually be called Wog (wife or girlfriend of a footballer), because – as we all know – you can't have both. But I understand this could have racist connotations that could take Liverpool back five years.

First off, she took me directly to the trendy boutiques frequented by real Wags and decided to pick out a dress for me that would help

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me fit in to the Wag scene. I was to wear this dress to a fashion show, which was to be attended by real-life footballers' wives such as Alex Curran.

She picked out a lovely strapless lemon number for me, which consisted of a top half made of Lycra and a bottom half with masses of layered frills spouting out like a tutu. All this and a massive pair of gold earrings for the bargain price of £150. It was a big departure from my normal Matalan wear, but it fitted well. My new glam-model friend wore a similar dress, except much shorter. We were due to attend the very glamorous, celebrity-packed fashion show in the evening.

We were to be filmed arriving for the event and it had been pre-planned that the paparazzi were to "pap" us as we arrived. I thought it would be sufficient for me to be myself, even though I knew there would be a significant chance I would be the horse in a pigsty. As we approached the entrance, the paparazzi stopped to take our picture as planned.

My glamour model started posing left, right and centre: teeth, breasts, legs in a variety of yogic positions. I stood there in my yellow dress looking like a mouldy lemon. Looking like I should have been locked up in a fridge.

"You have to practise," she told me. "Where do you practise?" I asked. "In the bedroom in front of a mirror, in the kitchen in front of the window." "How often do you do that?" "Every day. It's like brushing your teeth – you have to practise to be a Wag."

I hadn't realised that the obsession with fame had risen to such heights, and that young girls everywhere were cultivating and training themselves to become the wife or the girlfriend of a footballer. No doubt, there will soon be a Wag Academy, where content will include: Chesterspeak, deportment, sneering, and how to look sad but glamorous on the day your husband's eight-in-a-bed romp has been revealed in the *News of the World*. ●  
Shazia Mirza

## PAYNE'S GREY BY CHRIS PRIESTLEY

