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# 395

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# gwen stefani

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# gwen stefani

The diva from No Doubt puts her *soul* into her music. Here's what's behind those

**Onstage, Gwen Stefani is a total glamazon and a serious moshing machine. But out of the spotlight, she's just a girl—which means that, like every other girl, she knows what it's like to feel jealous, insecure, confused... and totally in love. Gwen shares some of the experiences and ideas that inspired the very personal songs on No Doubt's new album.**

On our last record, I finally realized that I had a skill—I could use songwriting as an outlet for whatever I was going through at the time. On *Return of Saturn*, everything's about the last couple years of my life. A lot of the songs are about sad times; writing about them makes me feel a lot better—it's like I got something good out of something

bad. My writing talks about *exactly* how I feel. This is *me*. This is my *life*.

**Such a cute girl / I'm so jealous / I wish I looked exactly like her**

—“Staring Problem”

Everyone has insecurities. I certainly do! If you read my lyrics, you can see *loads* of things I have problems with. When girls come up to me at shows and they're like, “Oh, you're so beautiful!” or “You're so inspiring,” I'm always like, “God, if you only *knew!* I'm just like you! I've been through everything *you're* going through!” People think I don't have bad days or fat days, but of *course* I do. Like most people, I have to work on my weight every day. In fact, I would like all the girls who see my picture

in *CosmoGIRL!*—with the professional lighting and makeup—to know: None of the pants fit! They were all too small!

**A girl in the world barking up the wrong tree / A creature conditioned to employ matrimony**

—“Marry Me”

I've always been pretty traditional. When I was in kindergarten and someone asked me what I was going to be, I drew a bride. And I always played Barbies with the idea of being a wife and having children. I was conditioned to believe marriage is a *career*. You always wonder who's going to be the one to marry you. You think, “Have I met him? Is *this* the guy?” I still look forward to having a family,



amazing lyrics. As told to Elizabeth Kuster. Photographs by Mark Liddell

but now I know that's just *one* side of me. Still, sometimes I think about how self-centered I am. I mean, my band is my family, but it's also about me, me, me. I'm *praying* that having children in the future will save me from my vanity.

**Your wildness scares me.../You say you can't stand the restrictions/I find myself trying to change you**

—“Ex-Girlfriend”

We girls always want to cuddle up to somebody and try to see if we can help them in some way. Most of the time it isn't good for us. I don't think you can change someone, and I don't think you should try. But *I* always try! I'm pretty controlling in my relationships. But I don't

know—I've had only two *real* ones: Tony [Kanal, No Doubt's bassist] and Gavin [Rossdale, from Bush]. My relationship with Gavin is my first *adult* relationship. We e-mail each other love letters every day. He gets me out of my self-absorption. 'Cause usually I'm like, “Go, go, go! The energy! The band!” Gavin balances me out and brings me down to earth. When I'm with him, I realize that I really *need* that other person to share daily things with. Like during the *CosmoGIRL!* shoot, he called me and I was crying, “Oh, my pants aren't fitting me!” And he was like, “You know what? You *always* look good.” I like the intensity of being with someone for a while and feeling so comfortable we can talk about *anything*. It's hard to get to that point, you know?

**I'm so ashamed, I've been so mean/I don't know how it got to this point/I always was the one with all the love**

—“Simple Kind of Life”

You know how sometimes when you're really honest with other people and you speak your mind, it can come off as being mean? With my boyfriend, I *need* to be completely honest at all times, because otherwise I'd be lying to him about how I really feel. I don't know why, but when you love someone and know them well, you tend to be the hardest on that person. You should be your nicest and sweetest, but there's a lot of times when you use them as your punching bag because you know they're the one per-

Makeup: Mathu Andersen for The Wall Group. Top by Allen by A.B.S.



"When I was finally able to pull off red lipstick, I was really excited."

son you can trust to be there for you, even if you're being a really big jerk.

**So why do we choose the boys that are naughty? / I know I can't tame you... but I just keep trying. / Why do the good girls always want the bad boys?**

—“Bathwater”

I was always a really good girl. In high school, my best friend and I didn't drink or do drugs; we weren't into that scene. Then all of a sudden *she* started partying and doing things with guys, and it was pretty hurtful to me because it was like she was moving ahead of me; she was on a different level. It was a shock—I felt like I was being abandoned. Later, I went out with a really bad boy who was always getting in trouble. I played piccolo in marching band, and my bandleader didn't like my boyfriend. He told me, “Gwen, you're walking a *fine line*.” I was like, “What are you *talking* about?” But after high school, that guy actually got *really* bad. It's weird—you always have these guys who are like the *sweetest* guys and they're always doing stuff for you, but you don't want to go out with them.

**I kinda always knew I'd end up your ex-girlfriend / I hope I hold a special**

**place with the rest of them / And you know it makes me sick to be on that list**

—“Ex-Girlfriend”

When you fall in love, some kind of weird chemical thing happens that makes you believe that no one else in the world is more connected than you two are. It's human nature to want to be unique, so the idea that your boyfriend might have had other girlfriends before you is *sickening*. You don't want him to have loved *anyone* as intensely as he loves *you*. His past history can make you uncomfortable. It's like, “You were hanging out with someone *else*? How *dare* you!” But *whenever* you date someone, then obviously for the rest of their lives they'll be able to go, “Well, I went out with this person, this person, this person, this person, and then there was Gwen, and then this person, this person...” The jealousy part of life can totally take over, so you have to try to have control over it. But it's difficult: I *still* have problems with jealousy.

**So many different faces / Depending on the different phases / My personality changes**

—“Magic's in the Makeup”

That song started out as words in my journal. It's not literally about makeup—although that *can* be magic—it's about trying to find the *real* Gwen. Which one is the *best* one, the good person? It's about the different faces we all have and how certain people bring out certain things in you. Like maybe you and your hairdresser, for whatever reason, *cannot* stop talking. You just have *everything* to say to each other. But then you meet someone you kind of admire or have a crush on, and suddenly you don't know how to *speak* and you can't act like yourself! It's good to know that *everyone* does that. I mean, I have so many sides. When I'm around Tony, I'm a totally different girl, because he's a boy I've known for 13 years and he's my best friend and we like to get silly with each other. And when I talk to my boyfriend, I turn into a real girly girl. There are just different faces that you show, and I don't think there's anything *wrong* with that!

A lot of times, a song says more to you *after* you've written it than when you're actually *writing* it, because suddenly you see all these themes. I *love* that. I wrote this album because I needed to figure some stuff out, and I definitely feel lighter and clearer than I've ever been before. ★

## hairstyles by the dozen



★ 1996 Blondie with a bindi.



★ 1996 Mayor of scrunch city.



★ 1997 The kindest cut.



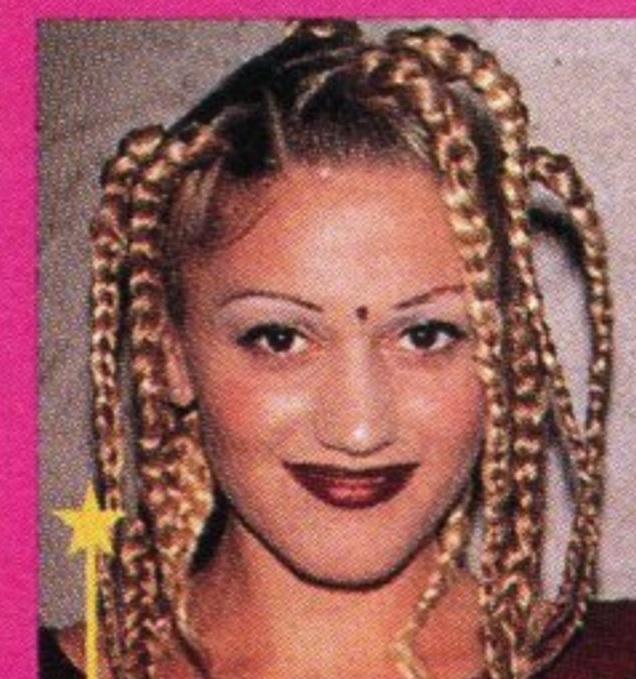
★ 1997 Knot a bad look.



★ 1998 She's a twisted sistah.



★ 1998 Just a girl next door.



★ 1998 Making the braid.



★ 1998 Lady wears the blues.



★ 1999 Bugging with butterflies.



★ 1999 Mmm... cotton candy.



★ 1999 Really banging it out.



★ 2000 Corny—but cool!

Hairstyles, left column, from top: TOM MOSENFELDER/CORBIS IMAGES; STEVE SANDS/CORBIS OUTLINE; GERARDO SOMOZA/CORBIS OUTLINE; PACE/CORBIS SYGMA; RON WOLFSON/LONDON FEATURES; DENNIS VAN TINE/LONDON FEATURES. Right, from top: STEVE SANDS/CORBIS OUTLINE;

STEVE GRANITZ/RETNA; PACE/CORBIS SYGMA; JANET GOUGH/CELEBRITY PHOTO; KEVIN WINTER/CELEBRITY PHOTO; PACE/CORBIS SYGMA. This page: Top by Richmond Denim. Jeans by Allen by A.B.S. Shoes by Holly Would. Opposite: Top by C. Ronson. Jeans by Allen by A.B.S.

"Everyone copies everyone else's style. I even copy girls who come to my show and try to copy *me!*"