

## Laid Bare: My story of love, fame and survival

Gail Porter



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Gail Porter burst on to our TV screens in the late 90s presenting *The Movie Chart Show*, *Alive and Kicking* and *Top of the Pops*. Bright, sparky and beautiful she soon attracted an entirely different audience, posing for a number of men's magazines and rapidly becoming the pin-up of the lad-mag generation. *FHM*, in a now famous stunt, even projected her naked form on to the Houses of Parliament.

But beneath her cheery public façade, Gail was struggling with anorexia and bi-polar disorder. After nine years of extreme dieting, she collapsed and through sheer determination forced herself to begin eating properly again. Having been told she would never be able to conceive, her new healthier lifestyle led to a much desired pregnancy by her then husband, *Toploader* guitarist Dan Hipgrave. But the intense pressures of juggling motherhood with her career, led to crippling post-natal depression and precipitated the breakdown of her marriage. Overwhelmed by single motherhood, one day after dropping her daughter Honey off at nursery, she took an overdose and her world very publicly began to unravel.

But Gail's ability to stay afloat as her life crumbled in the public spotlight made her an icon all over again for a new audience of ordinary women who recognised her pain. She refused to hide-away as stress-induced alopecia caused her to loose her hair, famously appearing at a charity event sporting a startling pink Mohican. Her stunning features and her unwillingness to wear a wig to hide her bald head have made her a contemporary icon.

But despite all her troubles, Gail remains upbeat and positive. She has become a role model for coming through it all as a good mother and a working woman unbowed. As iconic as Jordan, smart as Billie and as wild as Kerry, Gail Porter has written her autobiography herself - a raw, honest account of her own troubled life and the world of celebrity we now live in.

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