

## The Man You Want To Be: A Tale of Shaddick

[Peter Jacobs](#) interviews a York student who models in his spare time

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Be honest, you've definitely considered it. You've just got out of the shower, your hair is looking fresh, successfully de-frizzed and settled on your scalp. Your skin is clean-shaven and smooth. Your eyes hold vitality that you don't normally notice. Yep, you've definitely thought at some point that you should try to be a model. This is certainly not a projection of my own untested aspirations, this is a commonly held perception, that you, the reader, are fully relating to.

Convoluting and confusing as that introduction may seem, there is a point to this article. A very close acquaintance of mine, Sebastian Shaddick, tested his aspiration. He'd received compliments from friends and girl friends and such on his long curly hair and his fierce stare and just devilish good looks and then one day he just thought 'feck it', I could be a model. Dabbling with the idea of using his face professionally, the perfect occasion arose when a couple of French hipsters asked Sebastian to wear some of their retro clothing in Leeds. The shoot was good, the results were fresh, he was on course. Still, I doubt he ever thought he'd be strutting down a London Fashion Week catwalk a few short months later, absolutely raking in the big pay cheques.

I asked him how his fashion career first took off and in typically nonchalant fashion he replied: "I just walked in." Of course the place he walked into just happened to be the Fitzrovia offices of Select

Management and it was no coincidence that he had picked this agency. When asked to give some advice to aspiring models, Sebastian made clear that the key was to “understand how one looks” because “if you understand the way you look, then you can do research as to which agency will appreciate your niche.”

It’s not just getting in that requires research, the act of catwalking itself comes with its own intricacies. In an annoyingly oxymoronic fashion Sebastian described the act of catwalking as “very easy but hard at the same time.” Every detail of this process is scrutinised, “the way your arms are positioned, the timing of the walk, the turn and the way you are looking all needs to be in sync.” It’s not just physical either. Sebastian emphasised that, “Your job is to show the outfit in motion. You must look like you’re walking down the street, that you don’t care about anyone else.” Moreover the speed of the walk is a careful balancing act: “the trouble is not walking too fast but walking too slow.”

I wanted to gather a sense of the industry, to extract from Mr Shaddick the essential nature of the fashion world. He gave me a fascinating insight into the day-to-day realities of fashion. I pushed him to summarise fashion in one sentence and he simply replied: “For most in this industry, it’s a 9-5 job: meaning there’s very little glamour.”

There is a certain deliberacy to what Sebastian has done. It didn’t just land on his lap, there was some calculation along the way. Notwithstanding, the time he has spent honing his talent, fashion does not figure in his future priorities. Shaddick said “my focus isn’t modelling. I’m more interested in other areas of media; using this experience to understand a relatively elite industry. A stepping stone if you will.”

Does that mean he will give up the world of fashion soon? He says no and amusingly retorts that “the prospect of the monetary benefit is enough to make anyone enact a Zoolander lifestyle. It’s just a job at the end of the day.”

I admire Sebastian because he had an idea and he pursued it, and now the rewards are flooding in. This is a lesson, not of realising one’s beauty but of realising that one has talent and acting to capitalise on that. That is a lesson that we can all latch onto, one of self-actualisation, the fulfilment of our destiny.

By Peter R Jacobs



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