

CHERRELLE SKEETE

ACTRESS / SINGER / JEWELLER

"I HAD GROWN UP ON THE CREAMY CRACK SINCE I WAS 6"

My names Cherrelle, brummies' born and raised, after living in London for five years I have recently returned back to my home town. I am an actor, singer, jeweller deviser and all round artist, more importantly I am a partner, friend, daughter, sister, auntie, god mother and a person building oneself to be better...oh and I am training for my first half marathon.

I am very much telling you my hair story from my perspective, and I'm just a sister sharing my journey and hopefully giving back to the hair community that continues to help me in my time of need and has given me both hairspiration and motivation to continue to redefine what beauty means to me. So! this is to all the girls that were called picky head, dry head, tuff head, nappy head, and got told you had "bad hair" by

your mom, family, friends and lets not go there with the media. You are not alone. Its about building a healthy relationship with you curls, kinks and knots. Definitely kinky tight curls, tends to love moisture and heavy creams and oils like virgin coconut oil. My colour? There have been a few, I have been auburn, black and at the moment I have a hint of red brown, henna anti-climax. I have been suffering from heat damage (heat is the devil) so I am currently experimenting with different treatments to add moisture and proteins to my curls as well as a good old-fashioned cut to my ends.

A kind of beginning: So thinking about it, my hair journey officially started when I was at drama school. I was in a new city, new environment and was still getting to grips with fast paced walking, oyster cards along with Stanislavsky, Shakespeare, Chekhov and lots of pretending to be trees and fire. My broad apparently 'northern' accent

was seen as exotic. I definitely felt like a country girl and lets say it wasn't all sunshine and rainbows. I'm in my first year at drama school and the talk comes up about THE HEADSHOT. Now this is an actors calling card, its important. I had had the odd picture or photo shoot done as part of art projects, its cool" I thought, but then the teachers continued to explain "before directors or casting directors look at your cv, they look at your headshot to see if you look like the character they have in their minds, and if you have the right quality" makes sense to me I suppose.

My teachers said "This picture is there to market YOU, so think about how you want to be put across, this is your time to think, before you get to third year" so I'm thinking, how should I have my hair for this one or these two important pictures, that will get me an audition? I can think of at least five different hair-styles that would be nice, plus I change my hair every other day or week or month depending on what's going on in my life.

#HAIRSAV

HAIRSTORIES



"HOW DO I HAVE MY HAIR FOR THOSE ONE OR TWO IMPORTANT PICTURES"

I felt it was easier for the white girls to choose, it was either grow it long so you could be suited to more classical roles, or have it shorter for modern new writing, then add a brick wall behind you and your 'edgy' and a bit street (side eye). I came to drama school with half of my hair relaxed and cut into a bob with the left side of my hair shaved off, that had the odd occasional patterns etched in (influenced by Salt n Pepper and I still kinda wanted to be a b-girl) I knew a weave wasn't for me, but I didn't think there were many options, as I was half bald.

I had grown up on the creamy crack since I was six and had always enjoyed how it made my hair feel, especially just before the roots came through when it was thick, but not too thick, when you would scream as it was being parted with a long tail comb, when that happened it was time to hit the salon for my moms helping hands. My moms a hair dresser so I didn't have to pay to get my hair done. She would trim, steam, straighten giving me all the pampering my hair needed, when ever I wanted to experiment with my hair I would

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I started trawling through Google looking at the headshots of all the black female actors. Some with weaves, some with braids and relaxers and afros. This made it worse, duh! There isn't a uniform hairstyle specifically for fresh out of drama school black girls, there is not right or wrong. I say this, but I grew up thinking having straightened hair was not only more manageable but more acceptable. The black women I saw with natural hair, their hair was silky defined, ringleted curls and I knew my hair didn't do that. It was then I had to ask myself who did I want to be? I knew it wasn't Salt n Pepper anymore. I'd exhausted every hairstyle other than my original.

Now I say original because it was the hair I was born with but knew nothing about. I had a lil glimpse of my natural hair texture every time it was six or seven weeks into my last touch up and I remember thinking "this hair is tuff", I could never get a comb through it, it was like that one inch of tight coil was just waiting to evict my relaxer and it let me know it hated fine tooth combs. So that time, I listened to the call of the coil and let it grow. After all I was rediscovering me in a new city, I had entered into a whole exploration of myself.

few months later and my shaven sides had grown out enough to catch a braid. I took a trip to Harlesden and bought my red afro kinky hair, searched for YouTube tutorials and twisted it all up. Some five hours later it was done and it meant all I had to do was spray my twists to keep the dry scalp away, then I could focus on getting up on time, practicing vocal floor-bare, my strut vowel, and much needed sleep. I could forget about my hair, my hair would do what it did best; Grow.