

By Diane Feen

## FAUX FINISH

I just found out that I am suffering from an incurable disease: Aging. The good news is that there is a cure, the bad news is that it requires more ripping and sewing than the first apron I made in home economics.

Like everyone else, I am mystified by the concept of trading in one's old face or body and receiving a new one. The concept does make sense though. We trade in our old cars, renovate our old homes and discontinue consumer products after they have lost their luster.

But do I really need to go under the knife just because I am older than my mother's condominium? I am beginning to think so. Just the other day I saw Janet Jackson on TV. She is attractive, has ample breasts (which are fake), nice cheekbones (also fake), nice hair (fake again) and a cute little nose (you guessed it, fake).

I can't help but notice that everywhere I turn (especially in Boca), I see women with boulder sized breasts and hand sculptured cheekbones. Often times their facial skin is so shiny that it could be used as a reflective device to reapply make-up. Sometimes I wonder if this profusion of protruding bosoms is a by-product of the local water supply. But then common sense prevails and I realize that all this puffing up and smoothing out is the handiwork of a plastic surgeon.

It's not that I disapprove of plastic surgery or self enhancement. I think everyone should do whatever makes them happy. And if injecting poison into their faces and sliding slimy liquid sacks into their chest cavities makes them happy, then I say go for it. It just makes it rough on women like me who come equipped with original parts and old fashioned values. It seems that no matter what I do to make myself look feminine, I always end up looking like the Pillsbury Dough Boy when standing next to a Boca babe.

I don't have anything against attractive people, I used to be one. I am just concerned that if this obsession with youth continues, I will be left in the dust like an old mare at the Belmont stakes. If I forgo an eyebrow lift and inflatable bosoms, will I look like an odd-ball equipped only with my original parts?

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Perhaps like a collector's item I will become more valuable over time. That's what happened to my first sports car.

I do see another danger with this obsession to stay young. What happens when you go to a cocktail party and other women show up with the same face? It's one thing to be caught wearing the same dress, but the same face? That could be catastrophic. The other pitfall is that you could end up looking like Meg Ryan. Poor girl looks like she has been sucking on an air hose, when all she probably wanted was to look like she did 20 years ago.

I think we all want to look attractive. Especially in a society that values good looks (check out the female contestants in *The Apprentice* or *The Bachelor* if you doubt this theory). But when I heard that Lionel Richie's wife Diane was demanding \$20,000 a year for plastic surgery, \$3,000 a month for dermatology and \$1,000 a month for laser hair removal, I got worried. Not only is this a lot of money to have to shell out just to get a date, but this woman is only 37 years old. By the time she is as old as Joan Rivers she will have to remarry Richie just to maintain her mummified appearance.

Some people would say I am overreacting. Dr. Roger Bassin of Orlando reassured me that Botox is not harmful, and that collagen fillers such as Restylane (which is natural sugar synthesized in the lab) last a whole year. He also reminded me that people have been searching for the fountain of youth since the 1700's. That sounds great, but I am still fearful of anything more dramatic than a blood test.

Even though the veins on my legs are starting to look like a trip tick from AAA, I am hoping that it won't matter to people who love me. Like the elderly in Japan, I would much rather be revered in old age than ren-

ovated. I would hate to think that all the years I spent raising my consciousness would be less important than raising the skin around my earlobes.

One thing that I have learned from practicing tai chi and yoga is that the physical form is only the temporary space where the soul roams. With that in mind I

will simply try to remember the three most important anti-aging techniques I know: stay out of the sun, put a smile on my face and try to keep a flame burning bright in my heart. ■