

The magazine rack — so it goes

by Jason_Love

At the supermarket, we face the same dilemma a thousand times: Do I get the healthy version or go for taste? Being skilled in self-deception, I go for taste. —One cheesecake won't kill me.— Times a thousand.

I arrived at the checkout stand with \$200 worth of bad decisions and got in back of the herd. Ralph's has a policy to open a register only in the event of bodily threats. Standing in line, of course, there is but one thing to do: stare at all the perfect people.

—Brittany Spears: Are They Really Real?—

—The Rock Explains How to Get Hard.—

I don't know when it happened, but the checkout stand has become a genitalia pageant. Makes you wonder what kind of rack they mean by —magazine rack.— Every month the covers dare a little more, testing the elasticity of decorum.

I took some notes while standing “aging” in line. Up top, a supermodel sported a bikini, or was that a tire chain? In the middle rack, a he-man wore Speedos, and I for one think his parents should have gone with circumcision. Two teenagers were losing their virginity below.

It’s hard to tell when a person is naked anymore.

I think we crossed the threshold when Demi Moore posed for Vanity Fair dressed only in body paint. The illusion of clothing kept her covered. America tried to process the image and, when the data jammed its system, shrugged and said, “I guess that’s okay.”

Flipping through today’s best-selling rags, I realized that America needs to get a life. Glamour, Soap Digest, National Inquirer. Is this the best we can do with our brains? Seventeen Magazine showed a girl wearing a bedspread alongside the caption, “Becky Comes of Age.” I guess she had her bat mitzvah.

Aside from the sex on a stick, magazines are depressing. As if I wasn’t already troubled with my diet, now I had to confront beauty ideals that for 99% of the population are 100% out of reach.

“Is that what I’m supposed to look like? Man, I need a drink.”

My question is, Why do we do this to ourselvesâ€”bang our heads on the genetic barrier? So long as we evaluate ourselves in magazine terms, we guarantee one giant, upside-down smile. In fact, I donâ€™t know why we even call them beauty magazines when they make us feel so damn ugly.

I saw a cover that juxtaposed Good Oprah with Bad Oprah and suggested that we kill Bad Oprah before she gets any fatter. The neighboring magazine advertised a woman who was so skinny they had to snap her photos quickly before she blacked out!

â€œAh, for crying out loud. We lost Kelly again. Can somebody give her a rice cake or something?â€•

According to Psychological Dimensions of the Self, magazines are largely responsible for our self-loathing:

â€œA large-scale survey revealed that 27% of women compared themselves to models in magazines very often or always, resulting in widespread body dissatisfaction.â€•

Twenty-seven percent of women who might have otherwise had a good day.

Men are no different; we just don't let on. Don't think a man can pass a picture of Vin Diesel without glancing at his own squishy stomach and wondering if his woman is doing the same. I wake up with nightmares that Brad Pitt likes my wife. So it goes.

Standing by People Magazine with my cart full of lard, I wondered if I shouldn't be at the gym. Then I considered how long it would take to undo 20 years of beer and pizza. Even if I were to fast for, say, autumn, I still wouldn't turn out 6'2" tall. The cover may as well read, "You Will Never Be Here."

Mercifully, the line forged ahead and I moved past the Self-Conscious Zone. As I placed my groceries on the conveyer, a sign caught my eye and a brand new battle began: Two King-Sized Snickers for a Dollar!

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