



**Beauty Junkies: In search of the thinnest thighs,
perkier breasts, smoothest faces, whitest teeth,
and skinniest, most perfect toes in America**

Alex Kuczynski

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A star writer for the *New York Times* Styles section captures the follies, frauds, and fanaticism that fuel the American pursuit of youth and beauty in a wickedly revealing excursion into the burgeoning business of cosmetic enhancement.

Americans are aging faster and getting fatter than any other population on the planet. At the same time, our popular notions of perfect beauty have become so strict it seems even Barbie wouldn't have a chance of making it into the local beauty pageant.

Aging may be a natural fact of life, but for a growing number of Americans its hallmarks—wrinkles, love handles, jiggling flesh—are seen as obstacles to be conquered on the path to lasting, flawless beauty. In *Beauty Junkies* Alex Kuczynski, whose sly wit and fearless reporting in the *Times* has won her fans across the country, delivers a fresh and irresistible look at America's increasingly desperate pursuit of ultimate beauty by any means necessary.

From a group of high-maintenance New York City women who devote themselves to preserving their looks twenty-four hours a day, to a “surgery safari” in South Africa complete with “after” photographs of magically rejuvenated patients posing with wild animals, to a podiatrist's office in Manhattan where a “foot face-lift” provides women with the right fit for their \$700 Jimmy Choos, Kuczynski portrays the all-American quest for self-transformation in all its extremes. In New York, lawyers become Botox junkies in an effort to remain poker-faced. In Los Angeles, women of an uncertain age nip and tuck their most private areas, so that every inch of their bodies is as taut as their lifted faces. Across the country, young women graduating from high school receive gifts of breast implants – from their parents.

As medicine and technology stretch the boundaries of biology, Kuczynski asks whether cosmetic surgery might even be part of human evolution, a kind of cosmetic survival of the fittest – or firmest? With incomparable portraits of obsessive patients and the equally obsessed doctors who cater to their dreams, *Beauty Junkies* examines the hype, the hope, and the questionable ethics surrounding the advent of each new miraculous technique. Lively and entertaining, thought-provoking and disturbing, *Beauty Junkies* is destined to be one of the most talked-about books of the season.

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