



JEAN THERAPY

TODAY, IT'S ESSENTIAL to look cool, which means not just good, but beyond fabulous. And not just the clothes but the entire look.

But is "cool" an intrinsic trait or can it be acquired? Exactly when did everyone become so terminally hip? How much time do these fashionistas devote to attaining the look? The perfect hair, the sculpted body, the blank gaze. From Prada to Valentino, from Gucci to Versace, fashion images taunt me with "attitude" I will never have.

But why not? If it's genetic, where can I buy those genes? And where can I buy those *jeans*, perfectly ripped and frayed and faded? Should they be low rise, boot cut, flared bottom? Whatever happened to a pair of naturally distressed Levi's? Hugh Grant once said that men over 40 shouldn't wear jeans. Apparently Hugh Grant is no longer on anyone's cool list.

My anemic wardrobe craves something new. And while I'm not yet ready to swallow extreme fashion, a taste of the trendy probably won't kill me. I too can wear my shirt untucked or a pinstripe suit jacket with casual pants. So what if I look like a ridiculous fop? Some people get paid to look that way.

But wasn't it Saint Laurent who said: "Fashions fade, style is eternal." Instead of masquerading in hip clothes that aren't me, why not find solace in wise investments: cashmere instead of wool, custom instead of off-the-rack, a perfect hand-stitched leather belt.

Still, I tip my Prada cap to the latest trends. And as I pass the jeans department, I wonder if it's time to introduce a pair of "beyond fabulous" jeans to my decidedly un-fabulous body and maybe, just maybe, trim a few years off my naturally distressed attitude. ●