



# Inventing Beauty: A History of the Innovations that Have Made Us Beautiful

*Teresa Riordan*

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There are no ugly women, only lazy ones.  
—Helena Rubinstein

In this fascinating, meticulously researched romp through the annals of the beauty industry, *New York Times* patents columnist Teresa Riordan throws back the curtain on a century of shrewd, canny women who have knowingly deployed artifice in a ceaseless battle to captivate the inherently roving eye of the male.

When it comes to the opposite sex, males from many species are easily deceived. Male fireflies will flirt with flashlights. So is it any surprise that the male of the human species has been fooled by lips painted cherry red and breasts built up into silicone summits? Riordan explores that strange intersection of science, fashion, and business where beauty is engineered and finds that, for generations, social trends and technological innovations have fueled a nonstop assembly line of potions and contraptions that women have enthusiastically put to use in the quest for feminine flawlessness.

We learn why the first lipsticks were orange. Why respectable women used the first vibrators not just for naughtiness but also to eradicate their wrinkles. Why the bustle started small but ultimately grew so impressive that a proper lady could balance an entire tea service on her rump. And why, but for mascara, Greta Garbo might have been just another chunky Swede with bad teeth.

Beauty inventions, Teresa Riordan has found, can put the resourceful and the imaginative on an even playing field with the congenitally beautiful. Countless women have pushed, pulled, tweezed, squeezed, and spackled themselves into synthetic loveliness. *Inventing Beauty* is a delightful history of that noble effort, from head to tail.

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