



Tuesdays with *Maury*

If only a brilliant rascally old professor was enriching my life with his clever observations about the nature of man in an increasingly cold world, I could be finishing up a bestselling collection of wit and wisdom by this gentle crone instead of spending my Tuesdays with *Maury*.

For those of you living “the purpose-driven life,” registered to vote, or possessing personal pride, *Maury* is a morning talk show featuring troubled teens in tube tops screaming, “Whatever! You don’t know me!” to self-righteous audience members who look as if they’ve been culled from Depression-era breadlines or created by police sketch artists.

The program is hosted by Maury Povich, head of MoPo productions and husband of former serious journalist Connie Chung (some call him “husband” but to me, he will always be known as her credibility-snuffing career-ending incubus).

Maury is responsible for the trend of revealing DNA paternity results on live TV. A parade of potential fathers strut on stage, berating the would-be mothers of their might-be children as they anxiously await the scientific proof that they are, or are not, the babydaddy.

Infants of suspect lineage are shown on split screens with a host of men to whom they might be related and the audience delights in the phrenology-based pseudoscience of matching up features to determine heredity.

When the results are revealed, fathers are known to weep with regret upon realizing the offspring they have been neglecting shares their genetic profile. More often, gentlemen express dignified relief at the fact that they will not be burdened with the responsibility of childcare by whooping with unbridled joy, high-fiving the audience, and doing touchdown-style end-zone dances.

The rest of the *Maury* shows are catching cheaters employing hidden video, revealing untrue spouses with lie detector tests, and exhibiting anomalies of nature such as conjoined triplets who weigh two hundred pounds and possess some savant talent, like playing Fur Elise on the piano at age three. If the mother is unsure who fathered the massive talented triplets, well, then you have a *Maury* moment that is truly gold.

More perplexing than the crass exploitation of human suffering is the fact that I get sucked into the show every time and wile away an hour of my day fully invested in a panorama of perversity no less vile than Hieronymus Bosch paintings of hell.

I find myself uttering the phrases *Maury* has introduced into the mainstream lexicon: “Drop that zero and get you a hero!” or “Kick him to the curb!”

I sometimes feel inspired by the four hundred pound woman in spandex hot pants who yells at the audience, “I *KNOW* I look good! Only a dog wants a bone!” Where does her reserve of self-confidence come from? How can she flaunt her faults before the world and emerge victorious as a fleshy desirable Amazon? I feel I should learn from this woman and shrug off a little holiday weight gain. Her rugged American excess is sultry in its sheer forcefulness and an entire firing squad studio audience can not bring her down.

The DNA results and lie detector tests are all some search for truth. There is a comforting belief that once these formalities are ironed out, the world will right itself and the complexities of marriage, family, and love can be quantified by a cheek swab or little stress lines on a piece of paper.

The three-legged babies and wily transvestites are acknowledgement of our inner freaks. Their differences so clearly mirror our own sense of uniqueness in a vast land of homogenized housing communities and perfectly frosted housewives in search of the right purse, to go with the right shoes, to makes the right impression.

To the erudite reader who eschews trashy talk shows and has found more productive pursuits with which to elevate his or her life, to you I say: *Whatever!* You don’t know me!