

This Boyle Madness

Have you heard about the newest media sensation, Susan Boyle? She is a woman who appeared on the European tv show, Britain's Got Talent and wowed the judges. When I first saw the headlines, I couldn't imagine how good someone could be to get that kind of attention. I didn't click on the headlines because they were only videos on cnn.com and I avoid those – I like to read my news when I get it from the internet. But I'm a news junkie, and eventually I caught the Talent clip on the real CNN – and the story unfolded. The woman has talent. She can really sing, and she makes a difficult song seem effortless. There are plenty of people with nice voices, so what's the big deal? I think it is about the way Susan Boyle looks. When she stepped up to sing, people (and you can see this in the judges' and audience's reactions) did not expect her to be a good singer because she does not comply with society's definition of "pretty". Simon Cowell, specifically, who is a judge on the show, is known for judging people on their looks first and even making comments about them, which I think is immature and disgusting. But I have to sound off on this topic because it's been all over the news lately, and this morning, Susan was on The Early Show. For some reason that I can only attribute to the way she looks, the Early Show anchors were treating her like she was mentally challenged – they were talking slowly, etc. One of the Early Show anchors stated, "Let's see if she can sing early in the morning", prompting Susan to do an acappella version of the song that made her famous, I Dreamed a Dream from Les Miserables. It was wonderful, but maybe that Early Show anchor should be treated as if *she* is mentally challenged – it was early morning in New York, but Susan Boyle was doing the interview from her home in Scotland, where it was 11:30-midnightish! Duh.

I personally think it's an extraordinary story because Susan

Boyle is 47 and with a voice like that, I'm surprised she wasn't discovered sooner. I'm sick of everyone picking on her looks and using them to define her as a person. I think it's terrible that society says that people have to look good to have worth. Maybe that's why plastic surgery runs so rampant, but to me, plastic surgery tends to stick out. A lot of times, I can tell when someone's had something done. I think it looks fake and strange, and it baffles my mind that people would risk their lives to get knocked out and sliced open just to change something aesthetic. Not including those who get disfigured, of course – I can't blame those people, and I feel really sorry for them especially after noting how society acts about looks. Good looking people are assumed to be more successful, they're listened to more often, and they're just overall held in a higher regard in society than people who look different or what society deems as "ugly". To me, ugly is the mean, heartless person who doesn't care about others. I think Susan should be applauded for conquering society's "ugly". Bravo Susan, for a job well done – I hope you get to fulfill your wish of singing for the Queen!

For those of you who have no idea what I'm talking about, [here is a link to the clip](#) of the episode of Britian's Got Talent featuring Susan. As one of the judges put it, she is a privilege to listen to! I get chills and tears in my eyes as I watch those snooty judges eat crow while Susan triumphs!

Burn After Reading

I'm not a huge Coen brothers fan, but I do find their movies interesting. Like many of the Coen's movies, [Burn After Reading](#) is about normal people who come across an illegal way to make lots of money, become obsessed with it, and

consequently watch their lives unravel. [Frances McDormand](#), a Coen brothers movie regular (and I found out why – she's married to one of them), was great in this movie. She plays a woman named Linda Litzke, a gym employee who is obsessed with reinventing herself via plastic surgery. She, along with a gym co-worker played by [Brad Pitt](#), come across a CIA agent's (played by [John Malkovich](#)) disk at their gym and bumble through a scheme to use it as blackmail. They are truly a couple of idiots, and Brad Pitt's performance as the big doofus Chad is hilarious – might have been my favorite part of the movie, and this is not coming from a Brad Pitt fan or anything like that. Not that this movie is a comedy, don't get me wrong. I suppose it could be classified as a dark comedy, but I would say it's more of a suspense film with some comedic moments. As with any Coen brothers movie, there are numerous twists and turns, so I'm going to cut my synopsis short for fear of revealing any spoilers. Go see it, watch how the events unfold, and you'll be entertained. Besides Brad Pitt's character, my favorite part of the movie was how they told the story – as a case file being discussed by a couple of FBI agents. If you're a Coen brothers fan already, then I'm sure you'll love it – it is everything Coen: money, foiled scheme, setting – the Coens are famous for making the setting of their movies very integral in the plots, and this one is no exception. Washington, DC and the surrounding area of Virginia is the locale of choice for this one, and it's all very important to the relation of the events and how they unfold. This movie features a few Coen movie regulars like Frances McDormand, [George Clooney](#), and Richard Jenkins (who also gives a great performance as the forlorn gym manager, by the way – they really make you feel sorry for his character). Better than [No Country for Old Men](#), [The Ladykillers](#), and [O Brother, Where Art Thou?](#), *Burn After Reading* is second only to [Fargo](#) when comparing it to other Coen brothers movies in my opinion. An entertaining 96 minutes at the movies – this one goes by fast. And make sure you pay attention; if you miss something, I could see where it would be difficult to catch up

– a lot happens in those 96 minutes!