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STAYING POWER

THE LATEST MEGA-MASCARA ISN'T MASCARA AT ALL. CATHERINE PIERCY GETS THE LASHES OF A LIFETIME.

My beauty philosophy, like that of many busy women, is generally less is more. Nevertheless, I am also quite vain, so

when I heard about a semipermanent mascara called LashDip, I was intrigued by the possibilities (which seemed to include looking better in the morning without doing any actual work).

LashDip is an inky, blacker-than-black gel-like coating that must be painted onto each little lash by a skilled technician. With only a few days until New York Fashion Week—when I have even less time than usual for morning makeup—I squeezed in an appointment at the Townhouse Spa in Manhattan, where the treatment is now available.

I was greeted by Jessica Harley and Gina Mondragon, two Chicago-based beauty entrepreneurs who are, seriously, obsessed with lashes. Harley, a makeup artist, developed LashDip with Mondragon, a colorist, because “I couldn’t find a mascara that was dark

enough or didn’t flake all over my face.” LashDip, she said, “is ten times darker than regular mascara.” And here’s the kicker: “It lasts up to six weeks.”

After being reassured that the patented formula is 100 percent hypoallergenic and safe for contact-lens wearers (which I am), we talked shop. Because LashDipping is a custom service, I needed to settle on a desired effect. Did I want my lashes to look natural—a slightly more attractive version of my own—or vampy? *Natural.*

Would I like a few extensions added at the outer corners? *Why not?*

Bottom lashes as well as top? *Sure.*

During the 90-minute application process—during which it felt like someone was sweeping my lashes with a tiny feather duster—Harley talked virtually nonstop (about eyelashes) in soothing tones that lulled me into a light sleep.

When I opened my eyes to look in the mirror, I emitted an involuntary shriek of glee. My eyelashes had attained Twiggyesque proportions. Each hair was pitch-black, clump-free, perfectly aligned. I swear I could hear an audible *swoosh* each time I blinked.

FRINGE BENEFITS

LASHDIP IS POISED TO BE THIS SPRING'S SALON SENSATION. PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVEN KLEIN, *VOGUE*, OCTOBER 2008.

I agreed to come for a mandatory touch-up two weeks later, and breezed home, where my lashes were an instant success. “You look like Edie Sedgwick,” said my boyfriend approvingly.

At work they proved equally advantageous. On Friday, my first day of shows, I sprang out of bed looking preternaturally doe-eyed, but switched to a thick wing of liquid liner and pale-pink lipstick for Alexander Wang on Saturday. Sunday, during a quick stop at the office after Derek Lam, a co-worker spotted my lashes from ten feet away. “You look incredible!” she screeched, running over for a closer look. By Monday, they’d elevated me to celebrity status. “Everyone is talking about your eyelashes,” an intern said in hushed tones in the elevator, prompting me to nod knowingly, benevolently.

It briefly occurred to me that the sudden fairy-dust effect might be psychosomatic—I felt prettier, happier, more confident, and so the world was responding in turn—but I got distracted looking at myself in the mirror and decided it didn’t matter.

Tuesday, nearly two weeks in, a chink appeared in the armor. When I woke up, my lashes felt gritty and were slightly tangled at the corners (in the interest of full disclosure, I had ignored LashDip’s cardinal rule—no oil-based makeup remover—the night before). I panicked, envisioning two matted lash-masses, and fended off a *Black Swan*-like impulse to pluck them out one by one. A careful combing restored their shape before Rodarte, but by Michael Kors on Wednesday, it was clear my lashes, now flaking slightly, were on their way down.

Then a funny thing happened. With my touch-up at Townhouse one day away, I began to miss my old lackluster lashes, with their mediocre swoop and their run-of-the-mill length. The next morning, I had Harley remove the gel coating. The sight of my regular lashes was admittedly anticlimactic. I cheered myself, however, with the thought that I would LashDip as needed for romantic vacations or major party moments. This month’s Met gala, for instance. □ *health >202*

From \$200; lashdip.com.