

# FATAL ATTRACTION

In Pursuit of Perfection *Natasha Nassar*

Looking into the mirror at my 5-foot-8 frame (OK, 5-foot 5 but with heels I'm taller) and noticing the dark circles under my eyes, I couldn't help but wince over the 30 pounds I had gained since law school. I was never fortunate enough to save money to go for a day of pampering — mainly because I had spent it all on shoes. But on that particular day, I vowed to forego the fabulous Via Spigas I had my eye on and I headed to the spa on a quest to find beauty.

Upon arrival, I was asked to fill out a form with questions like: "Do you have high blood pressure?" and "Are you claustrophobic?" I immediately wondered whether I was signing up for a day of pampering or filling out an application for *Fear Factor*.

I was led to a room for my 30-minute Jacuzzi bath. Being a spa novice, I mentioned that I had forgotten to bring my swimsuit. I was in no way prepared for her response. "You don't wear any clothes," she said.

They expected me to "relax" in a strange room wearing nothing but what God gave me? Closing the door, which had no lock, I was faced with the fear of being naked in a strange place. And to make it even more humiliating, there were mirrors everywhere.

After checking the suspicious-looking fake palm tree, the ceiling and behind the statues for hidden cameras, and convincing myself that the Jacuzzi was cleaned with lethal amounts of bleach, I gently eased my foot into the tub. Then I noticed a sign on the wall. "Warning: Hot Water Entering at 180 Degrees."

Looking for the cold water, I saw six different nozzles, none that were labeled. Knowing my choice of knob inevitably would be the one that instantly flooded the entire spa, I put on the white robe and slippers and went for help. I found myself half-naked in a lobby full of people.

The manager kindly re-directed me back to the spa to take care of the bubbling cauldron. Five minutes later, the free Champagne was gone. I was sweating and had come to the realization that I am entirely too ADD to sit in a

bath for a half hour, even with the bubbles and candles. I climbed out and dried off. Total time actually spent in the water: 5 minutes, 32 seconds.

Finally, Natalie walked in and led me to my paraffin treatment. My hands and feet were dipped into orange wax, wrapped in plastic bags and placed in strange looking mittens. She then laid cool patches over my eyes and left me once again to "relax." All I could think about is why were they patches and not cucumbers? I didn't want patches over my eyes, I wanted the luxurious vegetables I had seen in the movies. Nicole interrupted my thoughts and took me down the hall for my facial.

After lying on the table for a minute, Leslie put her face near mine and began looking at my skin under an extremely bright light. How could anyone expect me to remain calm when I was stuck under a magnifying glass with a stranger inspecting each pore? Instantly, I wished I was back in the boiling pot of water down the hall.

*"While getting dressed, I tried to digest what exactly it was that I had just experienced. My quest for relaxation and beauty had left me exhausted and in desperate need of a drink."*

She then moved directly over my face with a steaming device that looked like something from a gynecologist's office. At that moment, I regretted lying on the questionnaire about my claustrophobia.

Cream after cream was applied to my face and wiped off. As I closed my eyes and tried to put myself into a Zen-like state, which was difficult because my face was apparently covered in a mask made of acid, I recalled the

fabulous results my spa expert friends swore could only come from this process. The lights came on, the mask was removed and I ran to the mirror expecting a miracle. Instead of glowing, soft skin as promised, all I saw were pores that looked like craters on Mars and mascara running down my face, which was still burning.

Deflated, I walked into the next room for my massage — the only treatment I had been looking forward to all day. That was, of course, until Rebecca told me that she has seen construction workers with less tension in their backs. As she tried to "work out" the softball-sized knots, I experienced an hour of sweating and excruciating pain that, up until that moment, I thought could only be felt after hauling a backpack full of bricks to the top of Mount Everest.

While getting dressed, I tried to digest what exactly it was that I had just experienced. My quest for relaxation and beauty had left me exhausted and in desperate need of a drink.

As I walked back to the car, trying to keep my shoes on (thanks to the gallons of lotion that had been rubbed on my feet all day), I realized that I am the same beautiful woman I was when I walked into the spa — except, of course, for my scalded foot, red burning face and aching back.

Sitting on my couch in my pink fuzzy robe and slippers with a well-deserved glass (OK, bottle) of wine and a huge box of Godiva chocolates, I decided that tomorrow my quest will lead me directly to the mall, where a pair of three-inch Via Spiga heels that earn compliments from all of my friends will most definitely make me feel truly beautiful. \*