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BLOW UP

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU'VE SKIDDED OVER THE EDGE IN THE INJECTABLES GAME? BETSY BERNE ON HOW TO AVOID (AND FIX) A DERMATOLOGIC DISASTER. PHOTOGRAPHED BY PATRICK DEMARCHELIER.

The aging process is not easy on the eyes, especially when it's your own that are doing the looking. My solution? I avoid the few mirrors in my home. Artificial light is kept minimal, and as luck would have it, there is very little natural light in my loft downtown. Picture a cave. If, God forbid, I encounter a mirror in a public space, I duck. As for general maintenance, I wash my face twice a day, apply one miracle antiaging cream or another, and, yes, I exfoliate on occasion. My excuse? I grew up in a family that regarded vanity as a sin akin perhaps to armed robbery.

The understated approach to upkeep is not the norm for everyone in the aging populace. There are those who participate in a punishing program of dermatologic treatments (wrinkle-freezing injectables, volumizing fillers) that starts out innocently enough, but, if abused over time, can produce a curious side effect: Familiar faces—say, your own—become unfamiliar. In some cases, they're virtually unrecognizable. And unfortunately, you're usually the last to know.

How does one become caught in this predicament? As Manhattan dermatologist Lisa Airan, M.D., explains, it can start when a patient has had a positive result from what she terms "a small improvement" but then throws all caution to the wind, troubleshooting every perceived problem area until she ends up with a distorted, filler-filled, alien-like face along the lines of E.T.'s. Meanwhile, she's gotten accustomed to her new plumped-up features; it's difficult to recall the starting line. Regrettably, familiarity breeds not contempt but amnesia. "They fall over the edge," says Airan. "Literally, the baseline is reset."

An art consultant in her 60s whom we shall call Lauren says, "When I first started getting filler, I got a little, and then I went back and I got a little more, and I was thinking, I look great! I happened to have a passport picture taken at the time, and now I look at that picture and think, Who the hell is that? My face looked like a balloon that someone had painted eyes, nose, and mouth on. There were no lines; that's for sure!" she says. "It was a shock. I don't know why the mirror wasn't a shock, but it wasn't until I saw that passport picture that I realized the extent of what I had done. I call it losing perspective."

Trends play a part, too—and beauty trends can create far more enduring damage than passing fads in fashion because, let's be honest, you can't exactly remove your new Angelina Jolie-esque lips like a satin Prada sandal after a mortifying

evening where twelve other women had the same exact pair. These days, it's no longer about bee-stung lips (make that stung by an entire beehive). According to Airan, at this moment, "really high, overprominent" cheeks are the rage. She doesn't get it: "If you didn't have a high cheekbone to begin with, why are you suddenly putting all this filler in? It's too much volume, and it looks like something was done—because it wasn't there naturally. I don't know where it started," she laments, "but it doesn't make anyone look younger—or better."

While many women simply get swept away and need to be reeled back in, in more serious cases, a person can develop body dysmorphic disorder, which New York-based Amy Wechsler, M.D., one of the few physicians in the country certified as both a psychiatrist and a dermatologist, defines as "a pathological preoccupation with a body part that has either no defect or a very slight problem." In layman's terms: It's when what you think you see in the mirror is not what others see. (Once again, lucky for me, I'm nearsighted, so I genuinely do not see what others see. However, much as I'd like to think otherwise, I am pretty sure it's still me.)

How to avoid getting blindsided in the first place? For starters, be conservative. "Most people who are overdoing procedures would benefit from having a more realistic cosmetic goal—erasing a few years, rather than 20—and taking their time by not doing too many procedures at once," says Wechsler. Airan describes it as a subtle "resetting": "If I have a patient who is 40, I try to reset her at 34. I think anything more than about five years looks artificial," she says. "The point is that if things are done well—small things over time—you can really look good and still look like yourself. It's just, well, it's training your eye."

Plastic surgeon Haideh Hirmand, M.D., requests that her patients bring in pictures, one from each decade, to their initial consultations. Oddly enough, she thinks a good 75 percent of them look better in the present with more mature (a nice way to put it), angular features than they did in the past, and many of them, after studying the pictures, agree. "They'll say, 'Now that I look at it, I actually didn't like the baby fat.'" Airan suggests that her patients go as far as getting a set of photos taken—"no makeup, from all angles"—once they hit 35. "So you have a good point of reference," she says. She also recommends working with one doctor who knows where you started from, rather than taking the multidoctor approach, where many hands keep adding to the cumulative work. *(continued on page 378)*

(continued from page 377) a stand-in for the play's author, and so to prepare for the role, he immersed himself in all things Tennessee Williams. "I've gotten to know him in a very intimate way—his life, what he was trying to capture and also trying to escape—and that's something that shapes my own journey from this point forward."

Quinto's point of entry into the character of Tom was Williams's description of him as someone forced to act without pity: "He cares deeply for his mother and for his sister, but he knows—as Tennessee himself did—that in order to be fully realized he has to break free, he has to take care of himself; he has to leave, ultimately. It is unbearable—and then he has to carry that with him."

As a daughter of the South and one of the greatest stage actresses of our time (not to mention a TV star, thanks to her Emmy-winning turn as President Allison Taylor on *24*), Jones would seem a natural to take on the landmark role of Amanda Wingfield. But when Tiffany first approached her two years ago, Jones, who had twice auditioned unsuccessfully for the part of Laura, told him, in so many words: Over my dead body. "I just didn't think I had an Amanda in me," she says. Then Tiffany talked her into doing a reading. "Instantly, I was hooked," she says. "I had grown up with so many elderly women exactly Amanda's age and background whom I adored—a dying breed of women born in the 1880s, who had been through so much and still had their dignity and their wit and their Southern-ladyness. They could be annoying as hell, but also quite charming and strong as oxen. I felt that, in a way, I owed it to them."

Nowhere does Jones bring the spirit of those women—and of her character—more alive than when she puts on her Southern finery and turns on all her charm to entice the gentleman caller on her daughter's behalf. "She's using everything in her playbook," she says. "She is a fierce, loving mother and a very creative survivor. Never is failure an option—until it is, of course, over."

Despite the heartbreak that she has to live through each night as Amanda, Jones feels carried by Williams's language, which she compares to Shakespeare's ("It has wings"), and transported by the chance to bring her own past alive in the present. "It's like going home," the 56-year-old actress says. "And at my age, there's nothing lovelier." Quinto, too, feels reverberations from his own life when he steps onstage as Tom Wingfield—as someone who was raised by a single mother after losing his father at the age of seven, he recognizes many of the family dynamics in the play—though, he says, "it's much too personal to talk about." Time's permeable nature, of course, is what *The Glass Menagerie* is about, and it's also at the heart of what gives all theater its singular power. "Theater is an art form of the imagination," Tiffany says. "You can have the past, the present, and the future all onstage at the same time, colliding and fusing." □

BLOW UP

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But if you have gone past the point of no return, don't panic. There is a miracle cure, stashed away carefully in most dermatologists' cabinets: hyaluronidase, a naturally occurring enzyme that can dissolve hyaluronic-acid fillers like Restylane,

Juvéderm, and Belotero. (Although it's used off-label, hyaluronidase is widely viewed as safe.) After an injection, voilà; you're back to your old self—or rather, your old but less artificial-looking self—in about a day. (Warning: For non-hyaluronic acid-based fillers like Radiesse and Sculptra, the only thing to do is wait—sometimes a year or more—for them to dissipate on their own. As for Botox, its muscle-paralyzing effects wear off after three to four months.)

New York dermatologist Patricia Wexler, M.D., used hyaluronidase recently on a new patient from out of town who came in with "cheeks so big they looked like missiles. When she smiled, they obscured her eyes." Several days after having the cocktail of old fillers dissolved, the patient came back with a huge grin, recounts Wexler. "Then she went to Barneys and, for the first time in many years, was able to buy a pair of sunglasses that could actually fit on her cheeks."

That's not to say that fillers and other injectables don't have their place. As Wexler explains, with patients who have overdosed, it is once the baseline has been restored that the real work begins: "When everything has settled down, they come and they get work where they really need it." After a few injections of hyaluronidase to remove so much excess filler that she had developed what looked like "ridges" on each side of her face, Rebecca (not her real name), a flight attendant in her 50s, began a conservative regimen of Belotero (with a new doctor) just where she had lost volume, in her nasolabial folds. "I look great . . . glowing," she says. "I look normal. No one would even know I'd had anything done—unless I told them." □

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for information. Leather sandals, \$895; Calvin Klein Collection, NYC. **228:** Stella McCartney top (\$985) and skirt (\$1,460); Stella McCartney, NYC. **View 239:** Shirt, \$395; Ikram, Chicago. Cardigan, \$450; 31philliplim.com, Manicure, Zarra Celik. **240:** On Jagger: Turtleneck, \$255; Bergdorf Goodman, NYC. Right, from top: 18K-gold multibell bangle (\$18,111), pendant (\$8,634), and ring (\$5,265). **244:** Clothing, socks (\$295), and sandals (\$1,595); select Agnona boutiques for similar styles. Robert Lee Morris sterling-silver ring, \$250; robertleemorris.com for information. **246:** Ring (\$250) and bracelet (price upon request) with palladium hoop. Bottega Veneta ankle boots, \$950; Bottega Veneta boutiques. **248:** On Wendelborn: Manolo Blahnik pumps, \$595; saks.com. On Traina Snow: Proenza Schouler heels, \$695; Proenza Schouler, NYC. **252:** Manicure, Gina Viviano for Chanel Beauté. **254:** Raphaëlla Riboud