CLAIMS:

1. An improvement in processes for styling hair in which a thermal protectant capable of protecting the hair from damage caused by the application of heat is applied to the hair following which heat is applied to the hair to achieve the desired styling, the improvement wherein the thermal protectant is shellac.

2. The improvement of claim 1, wherein the thermal protectant comprises shellac and a carrier liquid.

3. The improvement of claim 1, wherein the thermal protectant is alcohol-based.

4. The improvement of claim 1, wherein the thermal protectant is water-based.

5. The improvement of claim 4, wherein the thermal protectant is a solution of a water-soluble shellac in an aqueous carrier liquid.

6. The improvement of claim 4, wherein the thermal protectant is an oil-in-water emulsion of shellac emulsified in an aqueous carrier liquid.

7. The improvement of claim 1, wherein the thermal protectant is in the form of a sprayable composition.

8. The improvement of claim 1, wherein the thermal protectant is in the form of a foam.

9. The improvement of claim 1, wherein the wherein the shellac is dewaxed shellac.

10. The improvement of claim 9, wherein the shellac is dewaxed bleached shellac.

11. The improvement of claim 1, wherein heat is applied to the hair by at least one of a flat iron, curling iron, curling brush and blow dryer.