

This won't hurt: Erica Griffiths

What was that sweet sugary smell? Something floral? Roses? No, it was definitely lavender. Was that meant to calm me down? Breathe in the lavender and relax? Well it wasn't working. I wasn't calm, I was nervous and anyway that clinical bleach dominated every smell in that small room. The door partly opened and someone in a uniform stepped inside.

'Let's get you comfortable Mr Keegan. Please just go down to your underwear and pop on the robe. I won't be long.'

Comfortable? Huh! Nothing about this was comfortable. This was akin to a minor procedure, what on earth was comfortable about that? But his friends had been so encouraging and he mentally ran through their reasons to try and buoy his spirits.

'You won't believe the difference mate; you'll be like a new man!'

'You'll definitely feel like a youngster again, dangerous and hot.'

'You know your wife will really love it, she'll be chasing you around the bedroom again,' with all their comments accompanied by a cheeky wink and sly grin.

Sure, I know they all went through the same thing, but maybe they were more courageous, or didn't feel pain like I do. I don't like discomfort, and this was nothing ordinary, this was up close and personal. The clinic had advised me to take a prophylactic aspirin, but I foolishly didn't, and now I would kill for a couple of pills to dull my painful thoughts.

I was grumpy and anxious and breathing in the lavender wasn't helping. I undressed and changed into the robe, feeling vulnerable and exposed. I lay down on the small bed, trying to tuck myself completely under the thin sheet. I was ready. The uniformed person bounced back in, their cheery voice much too loud and brash for this significant event.

But she was definitely professional, expertly flicking off the sheet, with her hands moving quickly. I bit the edge of my tiny pillow but all I could feel was heat and pain. Eventually, I heard those happy words '*all done*' as she handed me a colourful mirror to inspect her work. Oh heavens, it was worse than I imagined, my skin was red raw, angry and damaged, I swear I was almost bleeding. Then I gently touched my new smooth skin and smiled. I'd done it, a full chest and back wax, I'd said farewell to the hair!