

Rose Tinted Glasses

**an in depth guide on what
to expect when having full body
laser hair removal**

by ya bitch, Jen Ives

Introduction

One of the first things she asks you to do is put on a pair of literal rose tinted glasses. Apparently, they're specially designed to protect your eyeballs from the totally safe, not at all scary pulsing laser that's about to systematically destroy next to every hair follicle on your body, permanently. I don't know how it works, but it does seem to. I keep my eyes closed as well as having the glasses on, not for safety - but dignity.

I've lost track of exactly how many sessions I've had at the time of writing. Lockdown sort of messed it up, meaning I essentially had a year off. We call it *The Hairy Year*. Actually, we don't discuss it at all. It's too traumatic. What year off?

I'm not naked, but I get the impression most people are at this point. I get this impression because once, a different clinician, told me that most people get naked at this point. I'm pretty much there - I've got my bra off, which is easier for me since I got a nice pair of big unnaturals from down the old bodily mutilation centre (not my words, but the words of Gender Critical Activists across the UK). I've just opted to keep my knickers on because I don't see the point in taking them off until I absolutely have to (this is a philosophy I've lived by my entire adult life. I wouldn't call myself a "never nude" - but my mother says I came out with her large intestine wrapped around my crotch like a makeshift sarong).*

The clinician has kind eyes, and I imagine an entire kind face to match - but I can't see it under the mandatory face mask she wears every session. She drapes a small towel over me and starts to mark me up.

Part 1.

A Piece of Meat

I've been drawn on a lot over the past year. Having had both breast augmentation & an open rhinoplasty - I can confirm that they do indeed draw all over you like in an episode of Nip/Tuck**.

Laser hair removal clinicians draw on you with a white eyeliner pencil, which is good for the white eyeliner pencil market seeing as white eyeliner pencil went out of style fifteen years ago. They mark out the areas they need to laser as they go, so they don't get confused and end up lasering the same area twice - which as I understand would result in instant death.

It's hard not to feel like a corpse on an autopsy table at this point because you are lying on an autopsy table (they call it a massage bed, but they aren't fooling me). There's one of those bendy ring lights above you that they can move closer for a more in-depth look at your fingers and notice there's a little piece of paper lodged under your finger nail which may or may not reveal more details about your killer (Twin Peaks reference). And the way she roughly draws a Y shaped line onto your chest reminds you of that photo you once saw online of John F. Kennedy shortly after being assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald from the book depository / a second gunman / a mysterious old lady / a time traveller / a trained dachshund (depending on what you believe) - the photo where he's on an autopsy table and his chest is opened up.

I tell the clinician that I feel like a poster of a cow in a butcher shop. You know the one - with all the different markings outlining the different cuts of meat. She laughs literally out loud and has to stop her sketching to compose herself. She tells me that no one's ever said that before and to be honest, I find it hard to believe. Then again, I am extremely witty. I then tell her she should get one of those posters for the room, but it doesn't get as big a laugh. I always mess up on the topper. Quit while you're ahead, Jen.

Part 2.

Make Me a Dolphin

Sometimes I say weird things *on the table*. The thing is, when you're having *full body*, and your body is quite *full* - it can take a while. It can actually take about three hours. I'm pretty sure my breast augmentation surgery took less than three hours.

I'm pretty good at small talk, generally. Hell, I'm good at big-talk. I'll take any size talk you got - talking is my job, afterall. But also, context is important. And as it turns out, I'm no Fran Lebowitz when there's someone essentially electrocuting me one thousand times an hour.***

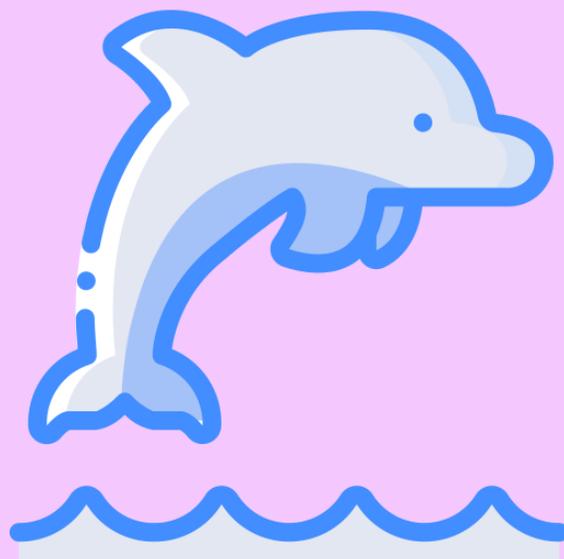
On my first session, I asked the clinician to "*make me a dolphin*". It made sense in my head - to me, when I think of dolphins, I think of their smooth hairlessness. I think of their grace, elegance & high intellect. I think of their willingness to sometimes save drowning humans. I think of their much observed bullying nature, often inflicting physical torture upon other, smaller sea animals. I think of their sexually deviant behaviours which have shocked many - and then I realise that yes, it is a weird thing to say. Dolphins are fucking monsters. I'm not a monster. I hope this clinician doesn't think I'm a monster.

At the time of writing this, there has been another "trans controversy". This time, taking the form of a *Wi Spa Protest*. In America (land of the free, home of the brave, holiday spot of the weird Disney family who live down the road) there was an uproar about a pre-operative trans woman apparently "exposing themselves" in a changing room. Again, at the point of writing this, it isn't confirmed that there even was this apparent trans woman. The spa in question welcomes trans clients, and is aware of them.

As a trans woman with a dick (attached), I have a deep seeded anxiety about accessing public services - swimming pools, gyms, massage parlours, doctors offices, libraries (ok, not libraries - but I still wouldn't get naked in one). Trans people feel excluded from these

spaces because we know that certain members of the general public are uncomfortable with our bodies. There is a huge pressure on trans people to conform to a body image that makes cisgendered people comfortable. I sometimes wonder how many people go through with SRS (sex reassignment surgery) for this exact reason. Personally, I fall into the camp of trans women who have a discomfort with their genitalia, however I wouldn't say it's enough to want to surgically alter it (and if you think that you should *have to* to really "be" trans, I need you to look up how expensive, dangerous, intrusive, painful & debilitating it is first. By reducing the trans experience to something as meaningless as a surgery, you're discounting the past decade of a life). I feel like I've surgically altered all the bits I wanted to so I could live my life in a way in which I feel comfortable. Does that mean I shouldn't be allowed in a spa?

And because I'm aware of this innate discomfort a lot of cis people have with trans bodies, being this exposed in front of one is difficult for me. I know that at some point soon, I'm going to have to remove my knickers and let this cisgendered woman I barely know see the parts of myself I hide every day. And I'm not talking about my blowhole.



Part 3.

Everything on the Table

Laser hair removal hurts. It's not unbearable pain, but it's an *unrelenting discomfort* (my old nickname at school). What's more, I requested to have the machine turned up to its legal limit because *I aint here to fuck around*. I want my body hair GONE. For good. Forever. In fact, my clinician told me that I am one of their least flinchy clients! I told her that they ought to put up a little shrine of my face with "least flinchy client" underneath, but she didn't reply.

The reason I don't flinch isn't because it doesn't hurt. I *do* feel, I *am* human after all. The reason I don't flinch is because every zap of that machine signifies another tangible step closer to bodily comfort. Also, I'm hard as fuck.

Or at least I think I am. Because what's coming now is that the clinician is going to ask me to take off my knickers. See, if you ask for the *full body*, they're going to give it to you. And that includes the perineum, which on my first visit I was completely ignorant of. The first clinician I had asked me "*are you having full body?*" to which I answered "*yes please*". Then she asked "*Perineum as well?*" and I was like "*Didn't I just say FULL BODY? ARE YOU PAYING ATTENTION, DAMMIT?*" to which she had me flip over, and proceeded to pull both my bum cheeks apart and zap my actual anus. If you take one thing away from this thing - perineum means bumhole.

In a way, that alarming experience was good for me - because it metaphorically pulled the plaster off. These days, I'm pretty ass-hole confident. I know when the perineum session is coming up, and I flip over accordingly. I even pull my own bum cheeks apart... (just like a big girl!). Really, it ain't no thing - we've all got an ass-hole (just like an opinion, am I right?)

One thing we don't all have, though, is a dick.

The woman who does my laser hair removal is really kind. She's nothing if not professional. She strives to make me feel comfortable, and is unflinchingly matter of fact with everything that's going on. But the first time she was my clinician, I had to ask her if she knew I was trans. She said she did, and that it was in my notes because I told the clinic when I booked the appointment and when I signed in at reception and also once before when I entered the room like 2 minutes ago.

So, my knickers are about to come off - and now I'm thinking: *Ok, she knows I'm trans - but does she know what that means? Does she assume I've had the surgery? Will she be uncomfortable if she sees my dick? Hell, it makes **me** uncomfortable. Maybe this isn't what she signed up for when she agreed to take on trans clients.*

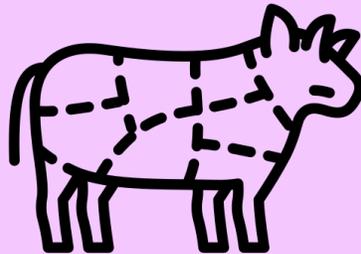
I feel shame, and I feel guilt. I don't really want to be here, but I have to be. I don't want her to have to be here, but she has to be. Every day I see a new story online about how trans women are trying to infiltrate and deceive. The stories and debates imply that we have ulterior motives, and are perverts. Is that what my clinician thinks? Does she wish she didn't have to deal with me? I think about that much publicised story about the trans woman in America who insisted that a waxing parlour touch her genitals. Is that what the clinician thinks of me? God, maybe she's gender critical. Maybe by day she helps trans women to be dolphin-smooth, and then by night takes to the forums to slag us all off and share the photos of us in vulnerable positions. Would it be better if I just killed myself?

I breathe, because I forgot that I was supposed to. I try to centre myself, and try to move past the shame cycle I've fallen into. I lift up my genitals, and I let her do what she does.

I remember that this isn't going to go on forever, and that one day I won't have to come here anymore. I close my eyes tightly beneath the rose tinted glasses on my face, and I imagine myself in a low cut bikini - standing by the pool, hairless like a sexy dolphin.

With a towel wrapped around my waist.

Written by Jen Ives.



Footnotes:

* full disclosure, I was adopted. I actually have no real stories about my birth, and have never met my birth-mother (unless you count slithering out into a bucket before being carted off to the orphanage as a *meeting*). I'm only telling you this because I want you to understand how much of a dilemma it was for me to approach that bit about my mother's small intestine. I think it's a funny image - which gets a point across - but I felt like a fraud as I wrote it. An adoptive fraud. Anyway, you can keep reading now.

** a really, really old TV series about plastic surgery that you are probably too young to remember. It wasn't good, but it had some spicy moments.

*** I'm also not transphobic. Sorry gals, I actually quite like Fran for a lot of reasons. I've read Metropolitan Life. As a feminist, I admire her unwavering outspokenness and defiant image. As a trans woman

though, it does bum me out how little she seems to have bothered to give it any proper, nuanced thought. Cool jackets though.
Some closing words by Jen Ives:

Thanks so much for taking the time to download and read this thing. I don't know what it is - maybe a pdf. pamphlet? An essay? Who cares, it's 2021 - things don't need names anymore. It's a story.

If you are someone who has considered getting laser hair removal, I hope this piece hasn't put you off in any way. A lot of people don't have the same anxieties as me, and this was just an attempt to communicate some of them to you. In truth, having it done has been a hugely liberating experience - and I am now more body confident than I ever have been. And I'm sure you will be too, if you do it.

Jen x



Jen Ives is a stand up comedian & writer from London. She has written for E4, Dave, The Skinny, Funny Women, Award Winning Podcast "SeanceCast" and been featured in The New York Times and other stuff.

You can follow Jen on twitter twitter.com/jenivescomedian

You can subscribe to her on Patreon Patreon.com/JenIves
And you can see her website at JenIves.net