

SWITCH

by

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Characters

Massimo
Earl

Setting

A bedroom.

[A bed. EARL is splayed across it on his stomach, head downstage, feet on the floor behind him. MASSIMO stands behind him, fucking him. Or trying to. With a cry of despair, he flings himself downstage.]

MASSIMO: Such a thing has never happened to me!

EARL: Um... It's OK.

MASSIMO: OK? You say it's OK? All my ancestors look down on me in shame!

EARL: It happens to everyone.

MASSIMO: Not to a Corelli! Never to a Corelli! Ah, vergogna!

[He sinks into a chair downstage and buries his head in his hands.]

MASSIMO: It's these worries oppressing my brain.

EARL: I'm sorry.

[Silence.]

EARL: Look. Obviously this isn't ideal, but I'm pretty horny. So if it's all the same to you, can I just rub up against you and—

MASSIMO: No!

EARL: No?

MASSIMO: There are standards!

EARL: Rent boys have standards?

MASSIMO: *[scornfully]* Rent boy! You call me a rent boy! What is a rent boy? A website! I am a *prostitute!* It is a long and honorable tradition.

EARL: Really?

MASSIMO: Yes, really. There have been Corellis in prostitution since the time of the Medici.

EARL: You're kidding.

MASSIMO: Why should I be kidding? Since the day Alessandro Corelli opened his little shop on the Ponte Vecchio—with a single straw mat upstairs. Luigi Corelli serviced Lorenzo de Medici himself! *And Savonarola!* (though we're not supposed to talk about that). It is said that Angelo Corelli was the model for Michelangelo's bellissimo David—and sucked the maestro's cock after every session. When the great Napoleon marched into Italy, the Corellis were there to

comfort the troops. Rent boy! I'd like to hear you call my brother Umberto Corelli a rent boy! I'd like to hear you call my cousins Enrico and Giorgio and Giuseppe Corelli rent boys! Rent boy! You insult a centuries-old tradition!

EARL: I had no idea.

MASSIMO: Who does? Who stops to think of the craft passed on from father to son? The trade secrets guarded through the years? The breeding!

EARL: Breeding?

MASSIMO: Of course breeding! Before I married my wife, I fucked her brother. I had to know: Was his tongue agile? His cock hard like iron? His asshole supple and yielding? All night I fucked him! Six times he came! And I knew! This was the woman I had to marry!

You go to Firenze and you buy a wallet and you say, "How beautiful! Look at the traditional craftsmanship!" You go to Venezia and buy some pretty glass, and they tell you how this art has been passed from generation to generation. You think it takes more skill to blow a glass than to blow a guy?

I remember my first trick. It was my sixteenth birthday. My heart pounded. Was I ready? I was ready! Two years my father had trained me. I would take his cock in my mouth and he'd say, "More tongue, figlio mio. Less teeth." I'd push my prick in his ass and he'd say, "Slowly, little Massimo. It's an art. Always remember. It's an art!" *[tearfully]* Oh, Papa! Papa!

And now my little boys, Carlo and Gianpietro, they say to me, "Papa, what is it like to have a man's pee-pee in your bum?" And I say, "Not yet, bambini. Not yet. Soon." And now, maybe never. Maybe never.

[He sinks into the chair again, buries his face and shakes his head. EARL looks at his watch.]

EARL: Maybe *I* could fuck you.

MASSIMO: Do you read the *New York Times*?

EARL: Doesn't everybody?

MASSIMO: I read the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *LA Times*, six other newspapers and twelve magazines. This, too, is craft. A prostitute should be able to discuss the great issues of the day. "Brunelleschi's new Duomo? Too busy?" Or "Mussolini. Such a bad guy?" The other day I read in the *New York Times* about an experiment with mice. Homosexual mice.

EARL: There are gay mice?

MASSIMO: Of course.

EARL: Is it this hard for them to get laid?

MASSIMO: In these homosexual mice they find a gene. You turn it off and the mouse, he's straight. You turn it on and the mouse, he's gay.

EARL: They can turn gay mice straight?

MASSIMO: Like that!

EARL: And what? They stop watching *Project Runway*?

MASSIMO: You make a joke, but soon it will be possible to flip this switch in humans. Today you look at me and hunger for my beautiful ass and sizeable cock. They flip the switch, and I'm just an unusually gorgeous guy, and you're thinking about pussy. And then what happens to this business we built with such love and care? What happens to Corelli & Sons?

EARL: But I don't want to be straight.

MASSIMO: You don't want to be straight? What are you stupid? Look at you. You're not so attractive. You're hiring prostitutes.

EARL: No shame in that.

MASSIMO: I beg your pardon. To be a prostitute is to be part of a long and honorable tradition. To hire a prostitute—not so much. So here you are. You're lonely. You're desperate. You're gonna grow up old and alone. No one to take care of you when you're old and sick and pissing on yourself.

EARL: I hired you to make me feel better.

MASSIMO: But someone flips the switch, you find a nice wife and she takes care of you. Maybe you think you're too unattractive to find a wife, but with the money you're spending on prostitutes, you could order one from Thailand. They make good wives, the Asians.

EARL: I like boys.

MASSIMO: Are you listening to me? All that means is this little switch is turned on. Turn it off, you like girls. OK, maybe you're old and set in your ways. You don't wanna change. But you gonna tell me some sixteen-year-old, seventeen-year-old kid who don't wanna be different from his friends, he's not gonna say, "Flip that switch, Mister"? Before you know it, no more gays. And maybe women won't have such nice dresses and hair. And maybe we won't have so many sensitive probing Broadway dramas or really bouncy showtunes. But who's gonna notice?

They'll think that's how it's *supposed* to be. I tell you these scientists can really fuck things up.

EARL: You could always switch to women.

MASSIMO: [*indignantly*] No Corelli has ever been the plaything of a woman!

EARL: I think you're worrying needlessly. They'll probably find out that desire is more complicated in humans than in mice.

MASSIMO: Are you kidding me? Men are animals. I know that. No, I've looked at this thing every which way, and the future is black. A whole way of life, a whole tradition, down the toilet!

EARL: But look on the bright side. I'm still here and I'm gay. You can still fuck *me*.

MASSIMO: What good would it do? It wouldn't put off the inevitable.

EARL: I really want you to.

[*MASSIMO shakes his head.*]

EARL: I really, really want you to.

[*Nothing.*]

EARL: Can I just look at you and jerk off?

[*MASSIMO stands.*]

MASSIMO: I gotta go. Maybe I should start working on my computer skills. Air conditioning repair. What am I gonna tell my babies?

EARL: [*desperately*] I really think you're looking at this the wrong way.

MASSIMO: Yeah?

EARL: I mean, it's— it's a matter of rethinking your business model.

MASSIMO: Business model? We are Corelli & Sons! We are not Starbucks!

EARL: Yes, but you're a business. And sometimes a business needs a— a paradigm shift!

MASSIMO: A what?

EARL: [*increasingly inspired*] Yes! Right now you're providing a service to a market sector that needs it. But that's an old paradigm. The new paradigm says, "Create

your market! Create the need! Convince people they want things they didn't know they wanted."

MASSIMO: How do you do that?

EARL: Well, if a switch can be turned off, it can be turned on, can't it? What's gonna happen to all those heterosexuals? What happens to most straight people? They get bored! And you can offer a very special service. You hire some kind of in-house specialist. An in-house geneticist! The customer comes in looking for something different. Your specialist flips his switch, and suddenly he's running around fucking you, your brother, and all the Corelli uncles and cousins. Flip the switch off, he goes home to his wife. Talk about creating your own market! You're doing it with the flip of a switch. You'll make a fortune!

MASSIMO: *[struck]* You think so?

EARL: I *know* it! And you'll have the market all to yourself because you thought of it first.

MASSIMO: I thought of it first!

EARL: There's no telling how far you could take it.

MASSIMO: We could open a house. An emporium!

EARL: You might not even have to work. Flip enough of those switches and you'll have guys chasing each other all over the place. You'll just have to provide the dark corners.

MASSIMO: A pleasure palace!

EARL: A thousand dollars just to flip the switch!

MASSIMO: Massage tables! An espresso bar!

EARL: Talk about gay for pay! They'll pay to be gay!

MASSIMO: Cocktails! The best Negroni and rim job in Manhattan! Maybe the world!

EARL: Lust for sale!

[MASSIMO is filled with this new vision. He struts over to EARL and stands in front of him. EARL eagerly awaits his next move.]

MASSIMO: So tell me. Do I turn you on?