

A London bed-sit. The room is small, almost claustrophobic. Though worn around the edges, the furnishings are decent and put together with some thought. The overall appearance is more “lived in” than dirty or depressing. At rise the room is in darkness. Loud moans and groans are heard as ALDOUS reaches orgasm, soon followed by a deep sigh of contentment, then silence. Suddenly, after just a few moments, the loud moaning and groaning resumes.

ALDOUS

Ohhhh! Oh, fuck! Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh!

WARREN

(Clearing his throat.)

Um...in case you haven't noticed, I've stopped.

ALDOUS

Ahhhh! Oh! Oh!

WARREN

I'm not even touching you!

ALDOUS

Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!

WARREN

This is ridiculous...

(WARREN turns on the bedside lamp to reveal ALDOUS holding his foot, a pained expression on his face.)

ALDOUS

Cramps! Fucking cramps!

WARREN

(With great relief.)

Oh, thank God for that. I was beginning to think you'd started faking it.

ALDOUS

(The pain subsiding.)
Ohhh...God, that was murder.

WARREN

A man's got to take pride in his work, you know?

ALDOUS

Who, you? You've got no worries. I swear you get better every time.

WARREN

If it weren't for the fact that you say that every time I might actually believe it.

ALDOUS

You should believe it.

WARREN

And if it's a discount you're after you're wasting your time.

ALDOUS

Listen, I'm telling you: you're a pro.

WARREN

By which you mean a "professional" or a "prostitute"?

ALDOUS

Both.

WARREN

Hmm...now I'm confused. So is that faint praise or a backhanded compliment?

ALDOUS

Neither.

WARREN

I see...you're not big on specifics, are you?

ALDOUS

Look, just take the bloody compliment, why don't you? You do what you do very well.

WARREN

Alright – taken. Though as far as the “professional” part goes, I’m afraid I must humbly disagree. Never having studied whoring at anything approaching university level, I can only claim to be a gifted amateur.

ALDOUS

Picked it up as you went along, did you?

WARREN

That and a couple of other things.

ALDOUS

What?

WARREN

Hmm? – Oh, nothing.

(Beat.)

Anyway, suffice it to say in this line of work you get a lot of “on the job” training.

ALDOUS

Fascinating. Well, I’m off.

(ALDOUS gets out of the bed and begins to dress. WARREN watches him.
After a moment.)

WARREN

Since we’re on the subject of reviews, I suppose you’re aware that if I worked in...well, a shoe shop, let’s say, and I got an evaluation like that, there’s every chance I’d be up for a pay increase.

ALDOUS

Quite possibly – and if you were doing that in a shoe shop there’s every chance you’d be up in front of a judge, as well. Besides, haven’t you heard? – “The wages of sin is death.”

WARREN

That’s a no, then, is it?

ALDOUS

(Opening his wallet.)

Unless you’re considering arbitration?

(ALDOUS puts two ten-pound notes on the bedside table and continues dressing.)

WARREN

Oh, no. There's a lot I'll do for some quick cash – blowjobs, hand jobs, rim jobs – but even I draw the line at that, young man.

ALDOUS

Good. Well, that's that settled.

WARREN

(Uncertain.)
Or am I thinking of something else?

ALDOUS

I don't think so.

WARREN

(Not convinced.)
Hmm...

(He continues watching ALDOUS dress.)
You know, there's something I've been meaning to ask you – not being nosey, or anything – but, I mean...well, it doesn't make sense; a guy like you: young, good-looking – you shouldn't have to pay for it at all?

ALDOUS

(Reaching for the cash.)
So I can have this back, can I?

WARREN

I said, "shouldn't" not "don't."

ALDOUS

Just convenient, that's all.

WARREN

Mmm.
(Pause.)
Listen, I was just thinking...

ALDOUS

I thought I heard a noise.

WARREN

Oh, stop, stop, my sides are hurting.

(Slightly cautiously.)

But, I was just thinking – wondering – at the risk of sounding...well, unprofessional...I just wondered if...I don't know, if maybe you'd like to go for a drink sometime?

ALDOUS

A what?

WARREN

A drink – you know...

(He mimes holding a glass in his hand.)

...liquid beverage...in a glass? Just for a chat. Nothing more. Just as mates. I think you're a nice guy, that's all. Well...you're alright. Anyway, I thought it might be...well, nice.

ALDOUS

Sorry – out of the question. No offense, but...

WARREN

But what?

ALDOUS

But our relationship begins and ends in this room.

(Pause.)

WARREN

(A little petulant.)

Alright.

ALDOUS

There's no need to be like that.

WARREN

Like what? I just said "alright."

ALDOUS

Yeah, but like that – like I'm being an asshole, or something. Look, I think you're a nice guy, too, but Christ, I mean, come on...what if someone saw us together?

WARREN

Well, forgive me if I missed it, but the last time I looked I don't believe I saw the words 'male whore' tattooed across my forehead. They'd see you with me and they'd not know me from Adam...or Steve.

ALDOUS

It's just too risky, I'm sorry. I've got too much to lose. It's all right for you.

WARREN

What's that supposed to mean?

ALDOUS

Oh, come on, I mean look at you. With all due respect, you're hardly on the cusp of a brilliant career, are you?

WARREN

I don't know why, but something tells me you *don't* work in the diplomatic service.

ALDOUS

Look...

WARREN

Warren.

ALDOUS

What?

WARREN

Warren – that's my name. I know I've told you before, even if you never do seem to mention yours.

ALDOUS

Look...I'm not trying to insult you, I'm just saying it's pretty obvious that your life hasn't amounted to much so far. I mean, no one does what you do unless they're on the skids, do they?

WARREN

I really wouldn't know. Unlike you, I'm not a professor of sociology.

ALDOUS

It just stands to reason, that's all.