

Swimmer's Ear

by

Tony Foster

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

MITCHELL, *age 40*

CLAY, *age 27*

LILY, *age 38*

ETHAN, *age 42*

Time:
Present

Place:
Los Angeles

SWIMMER'S EARACT ONE

SETTING: An open air living room of a home up top somewhere on Mulholland Drive. Modern construct. Sparse, trendy furniture. Plenty of bookshelves. Fire pit. A fantastic view of Los Angeles. A massive old tree in which part of the house was forced to build around. Most importantly, a swimming pool - empty.

AT RISE: Summer. Two a.m. Dead quiet. We hear a car pulling up. Doors open and close. Keys dangling, fumbling to find their way into the lock. The front door opens and in walks MITCHELL. He is 40 and dressed in club wear. He is a bit tipsy, but manages to keep his poise. He flips on a switch. The living room and outdoor area sparkle to life - matching the stars and city lights surrounding it. He tosses his keys on a counter and empties his pockets of his wallet, loose change and receipts. CLAY appears at the doorway. He is a slightly overweight 27 year old also dressed for nightlife. He is very sober and nervous.

CLAY

Did you want me to come in? Or is this where I say goodnight?

(MITCHELL smiles at his innocence, grabs him by the hand and guides CLAY in. He closes the front door. CLAY is immediately awestruck with the house. MITCHELL goes to the bar.)

CLAY (continued)

Oh my God. Half your house is missing.

MITCHELL

Would you care for a glass of something fun?

CLAY

Sure.

(MITCHELL pulls out a bottle of wine and pours two glasses)

CLAY (continued)

Oh my God. Look at the view.

(pinpoints a spot, squinting)

My apartment is right... in there someplace. We'll be able to wave at each other.

(waves out)

Hello crappy apartment. I'll be home soon.

MITCHELL

I hope not.

(handing CLAY his drink)

CLAY

Thanks.

MITCHELL

Cheers.

CLAY

To your beautiful house.

(They toast and drink)

MITCHELL

Kick your shoes off. Relax.

(MITCHELL makes is way to the counter and searches for a remote control. CLAY sits down on the couch, still very apprehensive. MITCHELL turns on the stereo. Ella Fitzgerald plays.)

CLAY

Oh my God. Incredible.

MITCHELL

What?

CLAY

I was listening to this very song in my car tonight. You know. My crappy car that matches my apartment, sitting in your perfectly paved driveway.

(MITCHELL sits close to CLAY, leans in and kisses him. Quick but sensuous.)

CLAY (continued)

That was nice.

MITCHELL

You are so adorable.

CLAY

God, I hope so.

MITCHELL

You don't think you are?

CLAY

I don't know.

MITCHELL

Well you are.

CLAY

I could lose some weight.

(MITCHELL takes CLAY's hand in his, leans in for another kiss. CLAY's inhibitions are starting to break down. Slightly embarrassed, CLAY hides his grinning face and places his head on MITCHELL's shoulder. MITCHELL chuckles at this)

MITCHELL

What?

CLAY

Who knows?

(MITCHELL undoes two of CLAY's shirt buttons and caresses his thigh.)

CLAY (continued)

You got a lot of books.

MITCHELL

Mm-hmm.

CLAY

Like to read?

MITCHELL

Mm-hmm.

CLAY

Can I ask you something? Do you do this often?

MITCHELL

What?

CLAY

Bring guys home with you?

MITCHELL

But I didn't bring a guy home. You brought me home.

CLAY

I wasn't about to let you drive in your condition.

MITCHELL

I would have been fine.

CLAY

No you wouldn't.

MITCHELL

Would it matter much if I did?

CLAY

At this time of night? With the way these roads swerve?

MITCHELL

No. I mean bringing guys home.

(CLAY shrugs. MITCHELL kisses him again,
holding CLAY's head in his hands.)

MITCHELL (continued)

I don't. I mean I have, but... Not in a long time.

CLAY

Thanks for letting me take care of you.

MITCHELL

I'll see what I can do to return the favor.

(MITCHELL gets up and goes to the bar to
refill his glass. He then refreshes
CLAY's glass)

CLAY

So can I ask you..? What's wrong with your pool?

MITCHELL

Nothing.

CLAY

I mean it's empty.

MITCHELL

I'm having it cleaned. I kept getting swimmer's ear. So I drained it, scrubbed out all the algae, unclogged the filters, patched up a few cracks. Do you swim?

CLAY

I doggie paddle. How deep does it go?

(CLAY gets up and looks into the pool. MITCHELL stays on the couch. CLAY then sits at the edge of the pool with his feet dangling)

CLAY (continued)

I'd love to have a pool like this. Especially in the summer.

MITCHELL

Maybe I'll fill it, and you can come over.

CLAY

For little ol' me?

MITCHELL

Why not?

(MITCHELL gets up and browses his bookshelves. He finds a book and flips through it.)

MITCHELL (continued)

Have you ever read Edmund White?

CLAY

No.

MITCHELL

Or Andrew Holleran?

(CLAY jumps down into the empty pool and disappears)

CLAY

Wow. Weird echo.

MITCHELL

(stands over)

Can you not do that, please?

CLAY

Sorry.

MITCHELL

I just don't want you to get hurt.

CLAY

I'm fine.

MITCHELL

Please.

CLAY

OK.

(CLAY comes out and sits back down on the edge)

MITCHELL

I didn't mean to be a bitch.

CLAY

You weren't. I'm sorry. I hope you won't stop liking me.

(MITCHELL joins him, his feet dangling)

CLAY (continued)

Because I like you. A lot.

(MITCHELL reaches down and takes off CLAY's shoes and socks)

MITCHELL

I'll let you pretend that you're dipping your toes.

(MITCHELL removes his shoes and socks)

MITCHELL (continued)

So do you go to the Abbey often?

CLAY
Not really. My first time actually.

MITCHELL
Really?

CLAY
My first gay bar ever.

MITCHELL
Really?

CLAY
For reals. Yep.

MITCHELL
Fresh from the closet?

CLAY
Kinda.

MITCHELL
Or is this a phase?

CLAY
No.

MITCHELL
Let me guess. You have a wife and kids in Tarzana.

CLAY
I'm almost out.

MITCHELL
You put your left foot in, and your right foot out...

CLAY
I'd say I'm about... 65% out.

MITCHELL
What's wrong with the remaining 35? Never mind. I won't pry.

CLAY
I've gone out to West Hollywood a few times. Just walking down the boulevard. Trying to muster up enough courage to walk into one of the bars. Something always stopped me.

MITCHELL

That 35%.

CLAY

I have ugly feet.

MITCHELL

No you don't.

(CLAY mimics kicking water up at
MITCHELL, making splashing sounds.)

MITCHELL (continued)

I'd say you've done pretty well for yourself. First time in a
gay bar, and you drive a boy home. Cheers.

(They toast)

CLAY

Beginner's luck.

MITCHELL

Are you a virgin?

CLAY

I am. Is that going to be a problem? I mean I'll probably
disappoint you.

(MITCHELL sets their glasses down. He
takes CLAY's hand and places it on his
crotch. CLAY feels MITCHELL's penis for a
moment, then suddenly wraps his arms
around MITCHELL, hugging tightly and
burying his face into his neck. MITCHELL
lets him, stroking CLAY's hair. CLAY then
looks up and into MITCHELL's eyes. This
time he initiates a kiss. Simple pecks on
the lips, repeatedly, that leads into a
deep sensuous kiss. CLAY pushes MITCHELL
back, knocking over their wine glasses.)

CLAY (continued)

Shit. Sorry.

MITCHELL

(laughing)

It's OK. There's more where that came from.

(CLAY gets up, adjusts his erection, and heads to the bar to refill their glasses)

CLAY

Um, do you have a towel or something?

(MITCHELL takes off his shirt and mops up the spilt wine with it.)

CLAY (continued)

Oh don't do that.

MITCHELL

It's OK.

CLAY

That's a nice shirt.

MITCHELL

No it's not.

CLAY

Can I get you some water instead?

MITCHELL

Let's finish the bottle.

CLAY

(picking up the shirt)

I should rinse this out.

(MITCHELL gets up, takes the shirt from CLAY's hand and tosses it on the ground. He kisses CLAY with sloppy force. CLAY stops him, picks up the shirt and hangs it over a piece of furniture to dry.)

MITCHELL

Thank you.

(MITCHELL pulls CLAY back to him and he begins to undo more of CLAY's shirt buttons)

MITCHELL (continued)

So why me?

CLAY

Why you what?

MITCHELL

There were far more sexier boys in there tonight. Younger. Some of them were checking you out. I noticed.

CLAY

You're sexy.

MITCHELL

I'm 40. I know I said 32, but I swear that's the only time in my life I've ever lied.

CLAY

I don't care about age.

MITCHELL

Then why me?

CLAY

Because... When I saw you fishing out your car keys, I said to you, "I don't think so."

MITCHELL

I would have been fine.

CLAY

And you knew who Ida Lapino was. You know how refreshing that is? I can talk to you about Fay Wray and Gale Sondergaard without feeling like an idiot. I can't believe you saw *I Walked With a Zombie*. I mean, where have you been my whole life?

MITCHELL

I'm sort of a recluse.

CLAY

What got you out tonight?

MITCHELL

(fondling CLAY's crotch)

I was horny. Obviously. And... I don't know. My last hurrah I guess.

CLAY

What does that mean?

MITCHELL

What would have happened if I didn't introduce myself?

CLAY

I would have left the bar. By myself. Got in my crappy car.
Ball my eyes out. The usual. And you?

MITCHELL

I was going to kill myself.

(Pause. MITCHELL goes to the bar and
pours the rest of the wine.)

CLAY

Maybe you should have some water.

MITCHELL

(clinking their glasses)

Cheers.

CLAY

To life.

(They toast. MITCHELL goes in for more
groping, a hand on CLAY's ass)

MITCHELL

Sorry. I get handsy.

CLAY

No apologies.

MITCHELL

You're so goddamn cute.

(tugging at CLAY's pants)

And these need to come off soon. Right?

CLAY

Right.

MITCHELL

So tell me about this 65%. Have you ever been with a guy?

CLAY

Sort of. I'm a late bloomer. I had my first experience about a
year ago.

MITCHELL

I like this. Tell me.

CLAY

This straight guy I met.

MITCHELL

(air quotes)

"Straight."

(As CLAY continues, MITCHELL stands back and takes off his pants.)

CLAY

Nice enough guy. He had a fiancée, and I was looking for a friend. He knew old movies, and we'd go out to revival houses. One night we ended up at his place... You're taking your pants off.

MITCHELL

Go on.

CLAY

Um, and we started watching porn. Straight porn. It was ridiculous. He asked me if I'd suck his cock. I did. He finished, I went home, and never saw him again. I think he's married now. Living in Montana. I had the longest cry of my life over him.

MITCHELL

From one blowjob?

CLAY

He changed my life. How long have you been out?

MITCHELL

Since the Boy Scouts. My tent mate liked to sleep in the raw. We earned many a badge that summer.

(MITCHELL sits back down on the couch and they get a good look at each other)

MITCHELL (continued)

You're so shy, it's almost painful.

(CLAY downs the rest of his wine. He turns his back toward MITCHELL and takes off his shirt. As he slowly undoes his belt, CLAY stares into the bookshelf)

CLAY

You know, I've never read Hemingway.

Never?
MITCHELL

No.
CLAY

He's good. You should read Paul Monette.
MITCHELL

Who?
CLAY

Second shelf.
MITCHELL

(CLAY has undone his pants button and zipper. As he picks up a book, his pants drop to his ankles. He flips through the book, smelling the pages.)

You do that too?
MITCHELL (continued)

Hmm?
CLAY

Smell the pages.
MITCHELL

I can't believe you've read all of these.
CLAY

Hey. Turn around.
MITCHELL

(CLAY does, covering his stomach with the book)

You're beautiful.
MITCHELL (continued)

Thanks. So are you.
CLAY

I should read more poetry.
MITCHELL

CLAY

You weren't serious before? Were you?

MITCHELL

When?

CLAY

About killing yourself.
(a sudden shiver)

MITCHELL

You cold?

(CLAY nods)

MITCHELL (continued)

Come over here and kiss me.

(CLAY obeys. He sits next to MITCHELL and kisses him affectionately. MITCHELL turns and straddles CLAY, sitting on his lap.)

MITCHELL (continued)

Remind me of your name again.

CLAY

It's Clay. And you're Michael?

MITCHELL

Mitchell.

CLAY

Of course. Oh my God. Sorry.

MITCHELL

(a hand out)

Nice to meet you.

CLAY

Likewise.

(They shake hands. Laugh. Kiss.)

(BLACKOUT)

(LIGHTS UP on the next day. Afternoon. Bright. The room remains the same: wine glasses and clothes strewn about. The boys are gone. We hear a key in the front