



# SWAP MEET

Ivan Smith can have sex with any of the people around him. He's just not sure he wants to

**I**SIT in a big spa watching my naked friend as she pashes a naked guy she met half an hour ago. A girl whose face I haven't even seen is on all fours fellating a guy I met three minutes ago. Her trim arse also rises above the bubbles so I, um, "fondle" her from behind, mainly because I don't know what to do with my hands. I am now swinging, apparently.

We have to rewind at this point. My Saturday evenings don't normally go like this. Or even my Fridays. But I'm in a swingers club in Surry Hills, Sydney, and this is what you do. I've brought my friend Rachel\* along because if there's only one of you, you're not a swinger; you're just a greedy opportunist.

Rachel wants to know what goes on in here as much as I do. Although she's sexually adventurous, we are just friends, so the fact that we're about to get naked together feels – well, odd.

At 11.30pm, a bloke called Peter buzzes us into the blue-lit stairwell of an anonymous-looking building. Peter

is relentlessly cheery and practically cripples himself trying to make us feel at home. He points to a water cooler at the mouth of a red-lit labyrinth, as if to say, "See? Everything's quite normal."

Peter shows us the spa, where a middle-aged bloke cuddles up to a pretty girl of about 25. They give us smiles that could have many hidden meanings, but probably don't.

We're left to explore the rest of the first floor, which has been subdivided into little rooms, the floors of which are covered in mattresses fitted together. There can be only one possible purpose for these cubicles, unless you've come here for a quiet snooze. Curtains cover the entrances, but viewing holes and slots are cut into the walls. Right at the end is a big room, containing many mattresses. Boxes of tissues and condoms cover a glass-topped counter.

Hung on a wall in a corridor is a leather-and-handcuffs contraption, just in case someone feels the sudden urge to be hung up and whipped in full view of the passing public. I ask Rachel if she feels like

a burl, but she declines. She says she needs a drink.

A lounge containing a small bar is on the top floor along with a rooftop area outside, and a pool table. The pool table freaks me out most of all. Why would you come here to play pool? You can go anywhere to play pool.

At the small bar, I hand over \$150 for the pair of us, and Peter scribbles our names in a book. For our money we get free drinks until they close at 5am, and the key to a changing-room locker containing sarongs. "No nudity in the bar," he tells us. No other money changes hands between anyone in here, which is what makes this fun rather than prostitution.

We order stiff drinks, which a good-looking barmaid delivers in plastic glasses from among bottles on the counter. TV screens over the bar show '80s porn.

Feeling very self-conscious, we make our way through the semi-darkness of the lounge to a sofa, and sit making "what the f—k are we doing here?" eyes at each other. Finally, we get



\* Name changed because her mum might read this