

WHITE ITALIAN TRUFFLES IN BRINE

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EXT. AIRPORT PARKING GARAGE - LATE AFTERNOON/DUSK

A DIAL TONE--THE SOUND OF PLANES TAKING OFF AND LANDING IN THE BACKGROUND (NB: So we can cheat this somewhere else, in another parking garage and not LAX)

CAMILLE--30s, anxious--sits in the front seat of her beat-up Camry, folded up with despair.

Her phone rings again and again. Whoever she's calling is *not* picking up.

LESLIE  
(on phone)  
Hi this is Leslie Cordova, please--

Camille hangs up. She dials again.

THE DIAL TONE RINGS AND RINGS AS SHE STARES OUT INTO THE MIDDLE DISTANCE

CROSS-FADE TO:

INT. CAMILLE'S KITCHEN - DUSK

THE DIAL TONE CONTINUES

A nearly-finished risotto bubbles on the stove in the small apartment kitchen. Camille, phone pressed to her ear, covers it and turns off the heat.

She glances at the time on the stove--8:15.

LESLIE  
(on phone)  
Hi this is Les--

She hangs up and tosses the phone aside--game over.

She turns and picks up a paring knife and slices open a small cardboard box.

Inside the box, she reaches in and slips a bubble-wrapping sleeve from a small object.

A small glass jar. The label reads: White Italian Truffles in Brine. Price: \$299

She tries to open it. The lid's stuck. She tries again. It's on there tight. She grabs a towel and grips it around the jar lid.

BZZZ BZZZ

Her phone rings. LESLIE.

She jolts at the unexpected call--

The jar SLIPS. CRASH.

The jar lands on the kitchen tile and smashes open. Brine and truffles and glass all mixed together.

She stares down at the mess as she answers the phone.

CAMILLE

Hey! You make it in?

LESLIE (O.S.)

What? Yeah. A while ago. I ended up grabbing an earlier flight. I'm already at the hotel.

CAMILLE

What? Why didn't you text me?

LESLIE (O.S.)

Ah, it's such a pain driving into LAX. I didn't wanna both--

CAMILLE

I was already there. I waited for you for like two hours.

LESLIE (O.S.)

You really--

CAMILLE

(cutting her off)

Hey, it's ok. It's not a big deal. I like getting a chance to see the city.

(beat)

You on your way over, now? Need a ride?

LESLIE (O.S.)

No, hey. Listen...I think I'm just gonna crash. It's like almost midnight New York time and--

CAMILLE  
You're bailing?

LESLIE (O.S.)  
I know...I'm sorry...but my pitch  
is first thing in the morning--

CAMILLE  
It's only like 8:15.

LESLIE (O.S.)  
I know but with driving to Echo  
Park and the traffic I won't get  
back to the hotel until like  
midnight--

CAMILLE  
Just crash here. I can make up the  
couch. Or we can share the bed.  
Whatever.

Beat.

LESLIE (O.S.)  
I just need to go to bed early,  
Camille. I'm sorry.

CAMILLE  
Did you eat already?

LESLIE (O.S.)  
Why's that matter?

CAMILLE  
I made dinner. Mushroom risotto.

LESLIE (O.S.)  
I had a huge lunch at JFK--I'll be  
ok.

CAMILLE  
You gotta eat something. Night  
before a big pitch.

LESLIE (O.S.)  
I appreciate the concern, but I'll  
be all right. Maybe we can find  
time to get a coffee or something  
after my meeting, ok?

Camille stares at the seeping mess on the floor.

CAMILLE  
You sure you aren't hungry?

LESLIE  
I'm sure. I'll text you. I promise.

Leslie hangs up. Camille crouches down and pokes at the truffles in the glass and brine.

She dials again. Leslie answers immediately.

LESLIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Yes, Camille?

CAMILLE  
We planned this dinner months ago.  
We haven't seen each other in  
years.

A long pause.

LESLIE (O.S.)  
We can grab a coffee tomorrow some  
time once I have my schedule  
figured out.

Camille picks a truffle from the pile of glass and brine.

CAMILLE  
Of course, Leslie. Whatever's  
clever.

She tilts the truffle in her palm, wet and glistening.

INT. CAMILLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Camille lays in bed. Wide awake.

She's looking through the long string of her text conversation with Leslie. Photos of them together at dinner, singing karaoke, etc.

She reaches the end. The present.

The last text from Leslie: Hey it looks like tmw is gonna be craaaazy. :( I'll hit you up next time I'm in town. Promise!

The light from the phone sears Camille's eyes.

EXT. LA STREET/INT. CAMILLE'S CAR - NIGHT

Neon lights illuminate a satchel in the passenger seat as Camille drives through the LA night.

EXT. POSH HOLLYWOOD HOTEL/INT. CAMILLE'S CAR - NIGHT

Camille stares at the hotel in the dark. She reaches over and grabs the satchel. She exits the vehicle and walks towards the hotel.

INT. POSH LOS ANGELES HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Camille knocks on room 330 and waits. She knocks again. Harder. The door opens.

LESLIE--40s, put together--opens the door a crack. She's clearly half-asleep.

LESLIE  
Camille?

CAMILLE  
Can I come in?

Leslie flits her eyes down to the satchel.

LESLIE  
Of course.

CONTINUOUS:

HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

LESLIE (CONT'D)  
Is everything all right? What time is it?

Camille enters. On a desk the remnants of a delivery order...or is it leftovers from a restaurant? Styrofoam containers, plasticware, etc. Next to it, an open laptop with a work-in-progress deck of slides on its screen. Camille pushes it aside and sets the satchel down.

CAMILLE  
I felt bad thinking about you going to bed without eating anything.

Camille unwraps the satchel, revealing *the risotto*--congealed now--with truffle slices over top of it.

LESLIE  
What is this?

CAMILLE  
It's a mushroom risotto.

LESLIE  
Are those truffles?

CAMILLE  
White truffles. From the Alba  
region of the Italian piedmont.

Yikes. Leslie smiles tightly.

LESLIE  
Camille. I need to go to sleep. I  
have my meeting at 8 AM.

CAMILLE  
These truffles cost like 300  
dollars.

LESLIE  
(*Jesus Christ...*)  
I think it's best if we all called  
it a night and re-visited this in  
the morning. Once I know my  
schedule better--

CAMILLE  
Were you ever planning on actually  
coming to dinner?

Leslie laughs nervously.

LESLIE  
Ok, Camille. Thank you for the  
risotto. I gotta go to bed.

Camille doesn't move a muscle.

Leslie squirms.

LESLIE (CONT'D)  
It was just like one of those  
things where I say "hey I'm coming  
to LA for this meeting" and you say  
"oh I should have you over for  
dinner" and then I say "oh that  
would be amazing," but we're just  
like...saying it. You know?

Camille's unmoved.

CAMILLE  
Try it.

LESLIE  
And then we call it a night, yeah?

Camille waits. Leslie picks up a packet of plasticware and pulls out a fork. She scoops a bite of the rice--

CAMILLE  
Make sure you get some of the  
truffles.

Leslie pauses and then pushes a slice of truffle onto the fork as well. She brings it up and slips it in her mouth.

Camille watches eagerly.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)  
It's good, right?

Leslie holds a hand up to cover her mouth as she speaks.

LESLIE  
Ok, Camille. Good night.

CAMILLE  
Good night, Leslie. I hope you  
enjoy it.

Camille turns and leaves. She pauses at the door.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)  
Sorry if this was weird.

She exits.

Leslie waits for the door to close and then breathes a huge sigh of relief, her body untensing. Then...

She takes another bite. It's really good.

One more. Honestly, this is exactly what she was wanting, after a long day like this, a nice, home-cooked meal--

CRUNCH--she winces.

She reaches to her mouth.

She pulls a small shard of glass from between her lips and runs her finger along the front of her teeth.

She takes it out and looks at the blood.

**THE END**