

Pas de Trois at Pompeii Pizza

Louis Balsamo

I was walking home from work and spotted Connor's car in the lot next to Ivan's and, well..., I sorta went berserk. I got so angry at him for leaving me, and for not needing me, and for being able to go out and have fun just one week after we broke up. It didn't seem fair. Everything's so easy for him.

I pictured him squeezed in at the packed bar next to some conceited frat jock, their thighs suggestively touching, their beer buzzes kicking in, Connor flashing that winning smile. It made me so furious that I felt like I was going to explode. So I took off running to pound out all my feelings. I bolted home and flew up the three flights to my apartment. It wasn't until I found myself standing in the kitchen, still fuming, that I thought about slashing Connor's tire.

It all happened so fast. I whisked a butcher knife out of the drawer, wrapped it in a dishtowel, threw it in my backpack, and ran back down there, trying hard not to let good sense stop me from doing something so insane. I channeled that country song where the girl smashes up her cheating boyfriend's car with a baseball bat. It egged me on. I was pumped.

When I got to his car, I crouched down low behind the trunk. I was scared, but determined to do it. Still panting from the run, I looked both ways to see if anyone was around. There wasn't. So I pulled the knife out of my backpack, curled my fist around the handle, and got ready to plunge it into Connor's back tire.

But I choked.

Jesus, I thought, what am I doing?!

I couldn't go through with it.

I was thrown off partly by this faded old bumper sticker from the car's previous owner that says *Practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty*. It seemed like a sign.

But mostly I didn't do it because I knew if I did, I'd be destroying any chance I had of getting back with Connor. I missed him so bad it hurt. What I really wanted was to talk to him, to hold him. I thought about looking for him in Ivan's, but decided I'd better not go in there with that big knife. I mean — I wasn't proving very responsible with it.

So I went across the street to Pompeii Pizza. I figured I'd hang there until Connor came out of the bar. I ordered a 10-inch with everything except pineapple. I wasn't even that hungry, but it seemed like a night for excess.

As I'm sitting there at the counter along the window, wolfing down this pizza that I don't really want and waiting for Connor, I rehearsed the conversation we'd have and how I'd convince him to come home with me so we could try to work things out.

Jeez — I am such an idiot. I had finished most of that pizza when Connor finally walked out of Ivan's. He was not alone. He had his arm around the shoulders of some clueless twink in that same loose, dangly way he used to put his arm around me.

One week! One fucking week single and Prince Charming already had himself a new boyfriend. Slack-jawed, I dropped my last slice into the box and watched them.

When they got to his car, they leaned against it, talking and laughing in a way that made me think that Connor had known this guy for some time. I grasped at the pathetic hope that maybe they were just friends and that I was jumping to conclusions like I sometimes do.

That's when they kissed. Not just once. No. It wouldn't stop. It was Smooch City, big time. They were seriously making out. Right in front of me. Grinding. Hands all over each other. Shit.

I had to look away. I couldn't watch for even one more second. My eyes started tearing up. And it felt like a bomb had gone off in the pit of my stomach. Then all of a sudden, I was gripped by the miserable, growing awareness that I was about to throw up. Jesus. So I tore out the door and around the corner to the alley. I made it just in time.

When I slunk back to the front of the pizza place, I saw Connor's car turning onto Chase Street.

There he was, prancing away with a brand-new beau.

And there I was, standing alone. With puke on my sneakers. And a butcher knife in my backpack.

Back home, Madonna kept sniffing my shoes and meowing, probably trying to figure out why the hell they smelled like anchovies. I threw them in the bathtub, closed the bathroom door, poured my first shot of Jack, and wanted to die.

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