

CROSS WIRES

For First Run

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1 EXT. LAKEFRONT - MORNING

Open on a breathless woman, mid 20s, in daggy running shorts and an oversized T-shirt. She is doubled over, hands on knees in the middle of a gravel track. This is CAMILLA.

A RINGTONE. Camilla hobbles to the side of the track, other runners zip past. She fishes a phone from the front of her bra. The display reads "Incoming call: Bernadette". She accepts it wordlessly, still gasping for breath.

BERNADETTE (O.S)
Jesus, is this a bad time?

CAMILLA
No no. I'm just- I've just finished
Parkrun.

BERNADETTE (O.S)
Okay?

CAMILLA
It's like a community running
initiative, except everyone's like
super supportive. It's very progressi-

BERNADETTE (O.S)
-Sure whatever. Can you confirm you
have everything ready for tonight.
Hors d'oeuvres, the salad?

Camilla observes a couple by the lake. They exaggerate arm touches and laugh obnoxiously. Camilla grimaces; their flirting is gross.

BERNADETTE CONT. (O.S)
Because I actually want her to think
we've put effort in-

Camilla snaps herself back to attention.

CAMILLA
I know, I know. God, I'm not a child
Bernie. I'm the one who suggested th-

BERNADETTE (O.S)
-Do you want an award?. Look can you

just tell me you have it sorted

BERNADETTE CONT.

CAMILLA

(O.S)

Yes. Yes! Got it. Okay.

and you you'll be there, 6,
sharp.

Okay. Bye bye, bye.

Camilla hangs up and opens a safari tab. She types: "What are
orderves".

The screen displays results for Hors d'oeuvres. Camilla
scrolls for a beat before huffing and looking skyward.

2 EXT. FRONT OF APARTMENT - NIGHT

Camilla jams her elbow into the door bell. She balances three
large Tupperware containers stacked atop each-other.

A red door opens to reveal a tall woman, mid 50s, with a
shock of white hair. This is MUM.

MUM

(disappointedly)

Oh.

CAMILLA

Hiya!

MUM

Oh! Oh. Hello, darling, hi. I was
expecting- never-mind, come here.

Mum lunges forward, embracing Camilla. Her hug wobbles the
Tupperware tower.

CAMILA

Careful mum.

MUM

Here, let me take those. Come in, come
in.

Mum takes the Tupperware from Camilla and gestures her into
the house.

3 INT. HALLWAY - CONT.

Mum leads Camilla through a dim, narrow hallway. Camilla
sheds her coat and hangs it on the empty animal themed coat
hooks on the wall.

MUM
 (calling out)
 It's just Camilla!

4 INT. KITCHEN - CONT.

A pokey 1950's era kitchen. The mustard hued bench-top is cluttered with utensils and cooking ingredients.

Camilla trails behind Mum who bursts into the kitchen. A slight woman; late 20's, with incredible posture, stands at the stove, she tends to a simmering pot. This is BERNADETTE.

MUM
 Look what we've got here!

Bernadette spins around. She wears a "kiss the chef" apron and her hair is up in a dishevelled bun. Camilla raises a hand in greeting.

BERNADETTE
 God, finally.

Bernadette takes the Tupperware from Mum, in lieu of bench space she balances them on drying pots and pans. She turns back to the stove.

MUM
 Thanks Bernie.

CAMILLA
 Soooo.
 (whispers)
 I take it *He's* not here yet?

MUM
 (nervously)
 No, no, well not as of yet.

BERNADETTE
 (to Camilla)
 Which is shocking considering how late you already are.

MUM
 No. it's fine. He called and said there's been a teeny tiny ding on the M5 but he will be here
 (speaking each letter)
 A S A P.

Mum looks between the two girls, she shakes with nervous energy.

MUM CONT.

Okay. okay, I'm off to dress the table.

Mum dashes out.

CAMILLA

(mouths)

Wow.

Camilla approaches the bench and goes to inspect a warped vegetable.

BERNADETTE

Don't touch that.

Camilla jolts back.

CAMILLA

(after a beat)

You recon he's gonna be one of those, like, really rugged, handsome older men?

Bernadette ignores her. Camilla fiddles with a pot handle.

CAMILLA CONT.

It's either that or, like, creepy Walter from *TAFE*. Eguh God I hope not.

BERNADETTE

Can you help me please!?

Bernadette gestures to a stack of china plates.

CAMILLA

Sorry, yes.

BERNADETTE

(after a beat)

My bets on a George Clooney type.

Camilla shoots her a scandalised look.

Bernadette undoes the appetiser lids. Inside are mini croutons topped with salmon, each individually wrapped and bearing the *Woolworths* logo. She gives Camilla an unimpressed look and continues - more forcefully - removing the others.

They begin transferring the Hors d'oeuvres onto the china plates.

CAMILLA

I like this.

Camilla reaches out and tugs on Bernadette's fluorescent orange shawl.

CAMILLA CONT.

It's a bit different.

BERNADETTE nods in awkward acceptance of the compliment. She looks CAMILLA up and down but says nothing. She is stressed.

BERNADETTE

(after a beat)

So, no Max tonight?

CAMILLA

Ugh god no. Might have jumped the gun a bit on that one.

BERNADETTE

Oh?

CAMILLA

Yeah, never called.

BERNADETTE

So? It's 2024, call him. He sounded great. You seemed quite taken with him.

Camilla grunts in response. Bernadette wipes her hands on her apron and turns to her.

BERNADETTE CONT.

look, sometimes in life you have to take risks, okay? You can't moan about being alone all the time if you're not going to do something about it. I mean Darren was notoriously a little minx before I got to hi-

CAMILLA

-Egh, stop please.

BERNADETTE

I'm just saying tha-

CAMILLA

-no I know, I just - I can't. I don't
have his number.

Bernadette cocks her head at her.

CAMILLA CONT.

(resigned)

I only left mine.

BERNADETTE

Right. So, how do you normally talk?

Camilla shrugs defensively.

BERNADETTE CONT.

Oh my god. Well that just sounds like
a one night stand, Camilla.

Camilla doesn't answer which is answer in itself.

BERNADETTE CONT.

Jesus. You don't need to announce
those you know? Just move on.

CAMILLA

I did! This was months ago, you
brought it up.

Bernadette scoffs and appraises her pityingly.

A man: early 30s, tall and wiry, sweeps into the room. This
is DARREN.

DARREN

What's that about a one night stand?

He gathers Bernadette into a kiss, lingering there. Camilla
cringes

CAMILLA.

Hey Darren.

Darren mumbles unintelligibly through the kiss, holding a
finger out in a wait gesture. Finally Darren pulls away, he
and Bernadette smile at each other. Camilla mimics he smile
at them.

DARREN

Hello Camilla

Darren notices the appetisers.

DARREN CONT.

Oh heavens, these look de-lect-a-ble!

(to Camilla)

You make these?

Darren reaches to take one before Bernadette slaps his hand away.

Camilla and Bernadette look at each-other.

CAMILLA

Yeah, picked them out fro-

BERNADETTE

-from her oven.

Bernadette shoots Camilla a pointed look.

BERNADETTE CONT.

From her oven. Because... she's very talented and

(struggling to find the word)

Good.

DARREN

Oh. right. Well, must run in the family that.

(clarifying after a beat)

Being talented, I mean. This one's been running around all day, making everything perfect.

(to Camilla)

You're very lucky to have Bernie as your sister. I mean I'm jealous.

CAMILLA

Well, you're not really though...

DARRAN

(oblivious to the implication)

No I am.

CAMILLA

Okay.

(after a beat)

Well its just that th-

Bernadette shoves a plate of hors d'oeuvres into Camilla's hands

BERNADETTE
-can you take these through to the
table?

Camilla shares a scorned look with Darren and makes to leave.

5 INT. HALLWAY - CONT.

Camilla wanders toward the living room.

A muffled bang and expletives.

Camilla stops and takes a step back, lingering at the closed door from which the noise came. Frozen, she listens for further commotion.

After a beat she taps on the door.

CAMILLA
Mum?

A beat. More muffled expletives.

CAMILLA CONT.
I'm coming in.

Camilla edges the door open and peers inside.

6 INT. BATHROOM - CONT.

Dated decor. Horrific mustard tiles that match the kitchen line the walls. Mum hunches over the vanity.

She looks up at the mirror as the door opens revealing dark smudges around her eyes. She holds an eyeliner pen in one hand, a wash cloth in the other.

CAMILLA
Oh wow?

Mum glares at her, she is on the verge of tears.

Camilla suppresses a smile and approaches, closing the door behind her.

Camilla balances the hors d'oeuvres on the lip of the bath and takes the washcloth from Mum. She wipes at her under-eyes, continuing until the makeup is clear. She watches as Mum appraises herself in the mirror.

CAMILLA
Are you okay?

Mum composes herself, smiles and nods. She is grateful for the support.

MUM
Goodness me, I'm just so nervous.
Isn't that silly? I feel like a
teenager again.

Mum goes back to inspecting her reflection, Camilla shakes her head.

CAMILLA
You look lovely. I'm happy for you
mum.

MUM
I just- I want it to work out. I mean
Bernie's got Darren and you've got-

Mum waves her hands around. It's unclear who Camilla has.

MUM CONT.
-You know.

Mum turns back and inspects her reflection. She worries at her frown lines.

MUM CONT.
Don't ever get old Cammi. Its like you
pass 50 and suddenly you have all of
these folds and all these wrinkles and
then every-time you look in the mirror
you give yourself a heart attack
because there's this old woman staring
back.

CAMILLA
Mum-

MUM CONT.
-Which is fine. It is. But it seems
like the older you get the more
invisible you become, and really, it-
it all just gets a bit lonely.

Camilla watches her for a beat. She doesn't know what to say.

Mum fans her face and whirls around to face Camilla.

MUM CONT.
 (self deprecatingly)
 Gosh, sorry!

CAMILLA
 No hey it's fine, you're fine.
 (with a weak laugh)
 Fifties like the new fourt- thirties,
 anyway. Besides we're not going
 anywhere!

MUM
 No I know. I know.

Camilla squeezes mums arm they smile at each-other for a beat.

MUM CONT.
 And you- are you- okay?

A buzz from a phone on the vanity. It displays an unregistered number. Mum jumps and fumbles to pick it up.

CAMILLA
 Don't it'll be spam.

MUM
 No no it's him.

CAMILLA
 Well you should save his number.

MUM
 I don't know how to do that Cammi! I told you I need you to sit down and show me-

CAMILLA
 -yeah I wil-

MUM
 -Shhhhh.

Mum answers the phone.

MUM
 (bad french accent)
 Bonjour?

Mum waves and mouths unintelligible instructions at Camilla. Camilla, hands raised in bewilderment, nods and backs out of

the bathroom.

CUT TO:

7 INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Camilla, Bernadette and Darren sit in silence at a dark oak dining table. Darren reaches for an hors d'oeuvre, he chews it loudly.

Muffled chatter between Mum and a man grows louder in the hallway. Camilla raises her eyebrows at Bernadette and mouths "French", Bernadette frowns and mouths "what?".

MUM (O.S)
(distantly)
Everyones just through here.

Camilla's smile falls instantly. Bernadette and Darren, rise to greet the man that stands next to Mum.

Bernadette turns back to Camilla and mouths "oh my god". She is impressed.

Camilla is frozen in her seat as the other dinner guests are distantly introduced.

MUM (O.S)
This is my eldest; Bernadette and her partner Darren.

DARREN (O.S)
Hey mate.

BERNADETTE (O.S)
Hi, finally!

MUM (O.S) CONT.
And this is my youngest, Camilla.

MUM CONT.
Camilla?

Camilla snaps her head towards Mum. Next to her stands an average looking man, late 30s - early 40s. This is MAX. He wears a white polo tucked into navy chinos, his dark hair is peppered with greys and in need of a trim. Camilla remains seated.

CAMILLA
Hiya.

MAX
Lovely to meet you Camilla.

Max gives her a genuine smile and turns back to the others.
Camilla gawks at him.

8 INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER.

Everyone sits around the table each with a bowl of soup.
There is an awkward lull in conversation, the sound of slurping and dinging cutlery is amplified. Camilla keeps her eyes fixed on her bowl.

MAX
This is really good.

BERNADETTE	MUM
Thanks.	Thank you.

MUM CONT.
But oh, yes , well, Bernie prepared most of it.

MAX
Mmmm, there's like a spice of some sort, Paprika?

Bernadette huffs a laugh and mumbles unintelligibly. She is quite taken with Max. Darren shoots her vexed a look.
Camilla's gaze remains on her bowl.

MAX CONT.
It kind of reminds me of this dish I had, *Poulet au Paprika*, while travelling in Hungary last summer.

DARREN
Oh, you travel a lot?

MAX
A little yeah, I actually just got back from doing the whole of the west coast of France a few months ago.

BERNADETTE
(gasps)
That would have been incredible. I've been telling Darren for months that we should go, but its always "work this, money that". Always something.

DARREN

Well no, thats no-

Camilla interjects without raising her stare from her bowl.

CAMILLA

-sorry, what is it you actually do?

MUM

Camilla!

MAX

Oh, eh, I volunteer with GPRF.

MUM

Giant Panda Research Fund. It's amazing, they go all through the forests rehabilitating these pandas.

CAMILLA

Thats not really a job though, is it?
I mean thats great but-

MUM

-Camilla!

CAMILLA

Well its not!

MAX

No, no, I mean you're right. I took some time off last year, I just wanted to recenter, you know, mid life crisis and all that. I'm just sort of taking some time to get back in touch with what really matters.

Max reaches across and caresses mum's hand. Camilla, head still down, gags

MUM

I was telling Max actually that you're really into that sort of thing
Camilla.

CAMILA

Mmm, not really?

MUM

No you are! You're always trying something new. It's a new thing each

week! There was that yoga retreat last September, and then,
 (with a laugh, addressing the rest of the table)
 Oh god, she was sure she would be an actress last month, that was a scary one.

CAMILLA
 Sure ok, sorry I have hobbies.

BERNADETTE
 (to camilla)
 Oh yes, weren't you just saying you started *Parkrun*?
 (to rest of table)
 Apparently it's like this super progressive running initiative.

Camilla lifts her head to glare at Bernadette.

MAX
 Oh! Oh, no I know *Parkrun*! You look so familiar actually, do you do the one in South Quarry?

CAMILLA
 Mmm nope. And you don't look familiar at all so... d'know

MAX
 Huh.

Another awkward lull. Camillas head remains firmly turned away from Max

DARREN
 (clears his throat)
 Sooo... how did you two "love birds" meet?

Both Bernadette and Camilla grimace at his phrasing.

MUM
 Ooo yes. Now, it was the most bizarre thing! Quite a coincidence. I got this S M S and I had no idea who it was from!

MAX
 It was from me!

MUM

Right, it was from him. but I didn't know that at the time! and so I very politely said, "excuse me but I don't know who you are, I think you may have the wrong person" so then-

MAX

(picking up story)

-then I had to explain that I'd been conned, fobbed off after a date and given a fake number. Mortifying.

MUM

I really felt for him, I did. I mean who in their right mind?

MAX

(affectionately)

Oh! Stop it!

MUM

(after a beat)

Its true! anyway, we got to chatting, and, well, the rest is history.

MAX

She charmed me!

BERNADETTE

That's actually very sweet. Darren and I met at work which I just hate. So boring.

MUM

Well really, I have Cammi to thank for it. If she never gave me her old phone when she upgraded!

Max looks to Camilla, a frown on his face. He realises why she's so familiar. Camilla meets his eye for a beat.

MUM (O.S) CONT.

I'm still completely useless with it but it's quite fabulous what it can do, you know. I mean, apparently it can track your heart rate, I haven't worked that out yet though.

Max continues to stare at Camilla. He opens his mouth as if to say something.

Camilla stands abruptly. All eyes turn to her.

CAMILLA

I uh. I left some hors d'oeuvres in the bathroom. So, I'm just, I'm just gonna go get them.

Camilla signals to leave.

MUM

Well darling no need, we have plenty here.

Camilla ignores Mum and hurries to the bathroom.

9 INT. BATHROOM - CONT.

Camilla slams and locks the door. She leans back against it. She runs her hands through her hair and looks to the ceiling. She's fucked.

Camilla's eyes fall on the hors d'oeuvres balancing on the tub. She shuffles over, and shoves one in her mouth.

A double knock at the bathroom door. Camilla ignores it. Another three in quick succession.

BERNADETTE (O.S)

Camilla?

CAMILLA

What?

BERNADETTE (O.S)

Let me in.

CAMILLA

I-I can't, I'm sick.

Camilla coughs and gags. She throws a couple of hors d'oeuvres into the toilet, they make a vomit like splash.

BERNADETTE (O.S)

Ohhh, oh Right, okay, so this has nothing to do with Max then?

Camilla freezes. She spins to the door, yanks it open, drags Bernadette in, and closes it again.

Camilla and Bernadette eye each-other for a beat.

BERNADETTE

Oh my god. Oh. My. God.

CAMILLA

Mmmm.

BERNADETTE

That's one night stand Max? Max "he never texted me back" Max?

Camilla stares at her, she opens her mouth to speak but nothing comes out. She is panicking.

BERNADETTE CONT.

Except he did text you back...Oh my god. Oh good lord Camilla, this is bad, even for you.

CAMILLA

Can we leave please? Tell them I'm sick.

BERNADETTE

(assuredly)

I think you need to tell mum.

(less assuredly)

Should you tell mum?

CAMILLA

Oh yeah? yeah? and say what exactly?
"sorry mum I already shagged Max"

BERNADETTE

I mean at least he didn't ghost you.

CAMILLA

Bernie!

BERNADETTE

Okay! Okay, Fine. Stay here, give me a minute.

Bernie shakes her head and makes to leave, as she goes she pops her head back in.

BERNADETTE

I'll help you now, but we're coming back tonight and you're sorting this out.

Bernadette closes the door behind her.

A beat. Camilla paces the room twice before climbing into the bathtub. She pulls the shower curtain closed and leans back, closing her eyes.

Idle chatter can be heard from the living room. She shoves another hors d'oeuvre in her mouth and sulks.

A click as the bathroom door is opened then closed again.

CAMILLA

Ready?

Camilla pulls back the shower curtain to reveal Max standing on the opposite wall hands in pockets. She jumps back and pulls the shower curtain closed again.

CAMILLA CONT.

Get out!

MAX (O.S)

(with a scoff)

Running off's kinda your thing huh?

CAMILLA

Egh, you're sick!

MAX (O.S)

I'm sick?!

CAMILLA

Yes! Preying on little old women and their daughters.

MAX (O.S)

Okay, firstly, don't talk about your mother like that!

Max makes to pull the curtain back, Camilla holds it firm.

MAX (O.S) CONT.

And secondly, who the fuck leaves their mums number after a one night stand?!

CAMILLA

Well, it wasn't hers then!

Max gives up trying to open the curtain.

MAX (O.S)

Jesus!

A beat.

MAX CONT.
You can't tell her!

CAMILLA
Oh yes I can, I will.

MAX (O.S)
Camilla!

Max yanks the curtain out of Camilla's grasp, opening it fully and spilling the plate of hors d'oeuvres in the process. Max looks down on Camilla sitting in the bath surrounded by croutons and salmon.

MAX CONT.
Please.

CAMILLA
Despite your best efforts Max, You're not my dad, and you can't tell me what to do. So no, I think I will tell her.

MAX
What?

CAMILLA
Also I'm 27 so even if you were, I could still do whatever I wanted.

Camilla attempts to draw the curtain shut again, but max holds firm and climbs into the bath. He now sits opposite Camilla who shuffles up as far away from him as she can get.

CAMILLA CONT.
What are you doing?

MAX
Will you listen to me for a minute!

Max brushes an hors d'oeuvre out of his way and faces her.

Camilla glares but stays silent. The two face off for a beat from opposite ends of the bath. Max jolts forward, his hand reaches to the side of Camilla's face. Camilla closes her eyes. Oh god, he's going to kiss her and she's going to let him.

The hand disappears as quickly as it arrived. Camilla opens her eyes. Max is holding a piece of salmon he pulls back.

MAX

(gesturing to the salmon)

Oh- no, sorry, no, you just- You had some salmon.

CAMILLA

Thanks. yep.

(a beat)

I knew that was what-

MAX

-No of course I didn't mean
to- that wasn't

CAMILLA

you were doing. I know. It
fine, it's fine.

They fall silent. Both overt their gaze.

MAX CONT.

Okay. Let me begin by apologising. I know this is, weird. But I really like your mum. I like your mum more than I liked you and that seems mean but also I just want to make it very clear that whatever it was we had, it meant nothing to me. Yeah? It means nothing to me, I am fully invested in this now.

Max signals towards the dining room.

MAX CONT.

She is funny and sweet and also dorky but in a cool way, like that lady from *British Bake Off*. I love her.

Camilla cringes. Max grabs Camillas hands.

MAX CONT.

So much. You meant nothing to me. Really Camilla, you where a mistake, I- I was in a really weird place at the time which is embarrassing, but I don't want it to ruin what I have with her now.

Camilla shakes her head.

CAMILLA

(sarcastically)

Wow, wow. that was beautiful, Max. You really know how to make a girl feel special.

MAX
Sorry. Camilla, please.

CAMILLA
Do you know what hors d'oeuvres are
Max?

MAX
Not really. Entrees to the main?

CAMILLA
(scoffs)
Well you should, they're French.

MAX
I'm- I'm not French.

CAMILLA
Right, well. You make me feel like an
hors d'oeuvre.

MAX
Okay?

Bernadette bursts through the door, she glances between Max
and Camilla.

BERNADETTE
(To Camilla)
Shit, sorry. I told him to use the
upstairs one.

Max ignores Bernadette

MAX
(To Camilla)
I don't think I make your mum feel
like an hors d'oeuvre.

Camilla appraises him for a drawn out beat.

CAMILLA
Right, no. You better not.

MAX
(after a beat)
so-

CAMILLA
God Max, no! Read the room, I'm not
gonna tell her.

Max puts his hands together in thanks. He glances between Camilla and Bernadette before clambering awkwardly out of the bath.

He slips past Bernadette nodding in polite acknowledgment.

Bernadette takes his place in the tub. Camilla offers her crouton, she takes it and puts it in her mouth. They sit in silence. Mum's laugh is heard from the dining room.

BERNADETTE

Do I want to know?

CAMILLA

No.

(after a beat)

God it's hard being the bigger person.
Is it bad that I'm most upset by how
long it took him to recognise me?

BERNADETTE

I'd be fuming if I were you.

Camilla gives her a defeated smile. Bernadette reaches for her hand and squeezes it. They sit in each-others company. Unintelligible chatter continues from the other room. It's a nice moment.

CAMILLA

Do you think mum kinda looks like Tory
off of *Great British Bake off*?

BERNADETTE

(after a beat)

Yeah. Yeah, I see that actually.

10 EXT. FRONT OF APARTMENT - LATER

An Uber idles by the curb.

Bernadette and Darren huddle together, Camilla stands off to the side.

Mum is hugging Max goodbye.

MUM

Call me about Saturday love.

MAX

(to mum)

I will. Thanks for tonight.

(to everyone)

It was so lovely meeting you legends.

BERNADETTE

You too Max. Next time we want to see that E-scooter you were talking about.

MAX

Oh god, you don't want to get me started. Only if I can get some more of your soup.

DARREN

Alright mate.

(with a forced laugh)

Thats enough from you, anyone would think you were going for a hat-trick.

Darren chuckles. Mum, Bernadette and Max laugh politely. Camilla shoots a betrayed look at Bernadette who sends an elbow into Darrens side. The laughter dies.

MUM

(after a beat)

What do you mean?

DARREN

Hmm?

MUM

What do you mean by that - "hat-trick"?

Darren huffs a laugh, he looks to each member of the group. He didn't think this through.

BERNADETTE

Darren.

DARREN

(defensively)

What? wha- Oh C'mon! I mean it's, it's obvious. Camilla's phone... I- I mean...

Darren gestures helplessly. Mum glances between Max and Camilla. She's putting it together.

Camilla scrunches her eyes and rubs her hands across her face.

CAMILLA

Fuu-.

CUT TO BLACK.

END.