

INT. NORA FANSHAW'S OFFICE. DAY

Nora Fanshaw, 40's, looks amazing and elegant. Today she is in tight designer jeans, a YSL blazer, red pumps and full make-up.

Nicole, in old jeans and a button-down, sits on a comfortable, stylish couch, a Moroccan rug on the floor—in an office that looks like a suite at a W Hotel. A sheepskin throw, fresh flowers on the coffee table.

NORA

I had an event at my kid's school.

Nicole grows suddenly self-conscious about what she's wearing.

NORA

Let me get this out of the way, I think you're a wonderful actress.

NICOLE

Thank you.

NORA

I loved All Over The Girl but the theater stuff too.

NICOLE

(can't help but be pleased)  
You've seen the theater stuff?

NORA

I saw Electra.

NORA

I was in New York last year for my book -- which, remind me to give you a copy -- and my publisher took me.

NICOLE

Oh...great. Thank you.

NORA

Fantastic. You're awesome.

NICOLE

(almost apologetically)  
Charlie directed it.

NORA

I know. He's very talented.

NICOLE

He is. They're moving it to Broadway. Without me of course.

NORA

He was lucky to have you.

NICOLE

While I'm making a show about a plant invasion.

NORA

(really asking the question)

How are you doing?

Having been asked that question at that moment in that way, does something to her. Tears run down Nicole's cheeks.

NORA

Oh, honey.

Nora kicks off her shoes and tucks them under her feet. She rises, grabs a box of tissues and curls up next to Nicole on the couch. Nicole takes a tissue and she and Nora meet eyes. It feels intimate and safe.

NORA

You take some breaths. And while you do, I'm going to tell you about myself.

She texts something to someone and then very deliberately puts her phone down on the table. Nora puts her hand on Nicole's leg. She talks to her like a good girlfriend.

NORA

If you should choose to hire me, I will work tirelessly for you and am always available by phone or text, EXCEPT when I'm with my kids. I insist on doing drop-off and pick-up at school every day.

NICOLE

(likes this)

Oh, I understand.

An assistant enters with a tray that has green tea and cookies. Nicole starts eating the cookies, Nora does not.

NORA

I've been through this myself so I know how it feels.

NICOLE

(hopeful)

You do?

NORA

Yes. I have a kid from my ex who was a narcissistic artist and verbally abusive. I'm now with a great boyfriend, who lives in Malibu.

NICOLE

Oh, good.

(hesitates)

But Charlie's not terrible.

NORA

No, of course not, but they ravish you with attention in the beginning and then once we have babies, we become the mom and they get sick of us.

Nicole nods.

NORA

Where do you want live now, doll?

NICOLE

(takes a breath)

Well, I'm here now, obviously, and I don't know if this show will be picked up, but... it feels like home... it is home. It's the only home I've known without Charlie.

NORA

You want to stay here.

Nicole likes hearing this affirmation, but then hesitates.

NICOLE

Charlie won't want to do that. He hates LA.

NORA

We're interested in what YOU want to do. Sounds to me like you did your time in New York. He can do some time here, no?

NICOLE

(nods)

He always said we would, but we never did.

NORA

How old is your son?

NICOLE

Henry is eight. He likes LA, but I don't know if it's fair to him...

NORA

It sounds like a wonderful childhood to me: the first half New York and the second half in LA.

NICOLE

(to herself)

The second half...

Nicole processes this.

NORA

I want you to listen to me, what you're doing is an act of HOPE. Do you understand that?

NICOLE

(suddenly meaning it)

Yes.

NORA

You're saying, I want something better for myself.

NICOLE

I do.

NORA

And this, right now, is the worst time. It will only get better. Wasn't it Tom Petty who said the waiting is the hardest part?

NICOLE

I don't know.

NORA

I represented his wife in their divorce, I got her half of that song.

NICOLE

Oh, I don't want money or anything, he doesn't have money anyway, he puts it all back into the theater-- I used to think he gave TOO much away. I just want it to be over.

NORA

Of course you do. But we can do both.

NICOLE

I just worry... You know we weren't going to even use lawyers so...I don't want to be too aggressive. I'd like to stay friends.

NORA

Don't worry, we'll do it as gently as possible.

NORA (CONT'D)

(beat)

Now, can you tell me a little bit more about what's going on?  
Because part of what we're going to do together is tell your  
STORY.

Nicole wipes her eyes for the millionth time. She stands and  
grabs a tissue from the table. She takes a deep  
breath.

NICOLE

It's difficult to articulate. Sorry. It's like I know why I'm  
doing this but I don't know too. It's not as simple as not  
being in love anymore.

NORA (O.S.)

I understand. Why don't you start at the beginning, wherever  
that is for you.

And Nicole begins. As she talks she finds her voice and gains  
momentum and she starts to feel better, the tears start to dry  
up and she becomes more powerful, more herself.

NICOLE

Well, I was engaged to Ben, you know, and living in LA and I  
felt like "Yes, I want to make movies and marry Ben" - Jesus I  
was only nineteen or twenty, I've never felt older in my whole  
life - But if I was honest with myself, there was a small part  
of me that felt dead, or dead-ish, but you tell yourself "no  
one is perfect, no relationship is perfect."

(realizing)

Boy, this tea is delicious.

NORA

Isn't it? It's the Manuka honey.

NICOLE

Anyway, you were asking about Charlie. So yes, so I was happy  
with Ben, but aware of the deadness. And then I went to New  
York to meet a director for a space movie, but one where they  
take space seriously. Sex trafficking in space. It was  
political, or they wanted us to think it was. It was actually  
just fulfilling the same need certain fucked up porn does.  
Anyway, while I was there, the producer invited me to a play.  
It was in someone's living room with all the lights on and  
like nothing I'd ever seen before. A strange, surreal  
dystopian story. So well-acted and one of the actors was this  
big shaggy bear who played all his lines looking directly at  
me which I knew couldn't be really the case, but it felt that  
way, and of course later I learned that it was.

(also realizing)

NICOLE (CONT'D)

The cookies are really great too.

NORA (O.S.)

I'll give you some to take home.

NICOLE

Afterwards, I was introduced to the cast and this bear turned out to also be the director. He didn't really know who I was - or he did, or he figured it out later - and that was it. He started talking to me. And I talked back - and the dead part wasn't dead, it was just in a coma. And it was better than sex, the talking. Although the sex was also like the talking...everything is like everything in a relationship, do you find that? ...We spent the whole night and next day together, and I just... never left. And to be honest, all the problems were there in the beginning, too. I just went along with him in his life because it felt so damn good to feel myself alive. In the beginning I was the actress, the star, so that felt like something. People came to see me, at first. But then the farther away I got from that and the more the theatre company got acclaim, I had less and less weight. I became "Who?" "Oh you remember, that actress who was in that thing that time." And he was the draw. And that would have been fine, but...I got smaller. I realized that I didn't really ever come alive for myself, I was just feeding his aliveness. He was so smart and creative, it didn't matter. I would tell him things at home, in private, and then they would work their way into public conversation, into his work and for a while that felt like enough. I was just so flattered that someone like him would find an idea of mine worth using or a comment of mine worth repeating. And then I got pregnant. And I thought "having a baby will be ours, really ours, and it will also really be mine" and he was so excited. And it was nice for a while. But kids... they belong to themselves. Like the instant they leave your body, it's just a process of going away from you. And I didn't belong to myself. It was stupid stuff and big stuff-All of the furniture in our house was his taste. I wasn't even sure what my taste was anymore because I'd never been asked to use it. I didn't even pick our apartment, I just moved into his. I made noises about wanting to move back to LA, but it came to nothing. We'd come here on holidays because he liked my family, but whenever I suggested we do a year or something, he'd put me off. It would be so weird if he had turned to me and said "And what do you want to do today?" I watched that long documentary about George Harrison and I thought "just own it, own it like George Harrison's wife. Being a wife and mother is enough." And then I realized I couldn't remember her name.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

So this pilot came along, and it shot in LA and it paid so much and it was like there was a little lifeline thrown to me "Here is a bit of earth that's yours." And I was embarrassed about it in front of him, but also, it felt like "this is who I am, this is what I'm worth and it's stupid, but at least it's mine." And if he had taken me in a big hug and said "Baby, I'm so excited for your adventure and of course I want you to have your own piece of earth" then we might not be getting divorced. But he made fun of it. And was jealous, like he is. BUT then he realized about the money and told me I could funnel it back into the theatre company. And that's when I realized that he truly didn't see me. He didn't see me as something separate from him. And I asked him to say my phone number. And he didn't know it. So I left.

Nora wipes an ink-stained tear from Nicole's cheek and hugs her.

NICOLE

(realizing she forgot to include)

I think Charlie also slept with Mary Ann, the stage manager.

NORA

(Fierce)

That fucking asshole.