# MARRIAGE STORY

Written by Noah Baumbach

# INT. NORA FANSHAW’S OFFICE. DAY

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

An office that looks like a suite at a W Hotel. A sheepskin throw, fresh flowers on the coffee table.

# NORA

I’m sorry I look so schleppy. 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

# NORA

(can’t help but be pleased)

You’ve seen the theater stuff?

I saw Electra.

# NORA (cont.)

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. (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. 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 offers a tissue from a box on the desk.

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 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.

(Scroll down to next page)

# NORA (cont.)

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...

(Scroll down to next page)

# 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

# NORA

(suddenly meaning it) Yes.

# NICOLE

I do.

# NICOLE

I don’t know.

# NICOLE

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

# 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?

# NORA

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

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.

(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.