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BE NICE

Dialogues / Romantic Comedy / 3 min
Cast 2 Female x1 Male x1

Nora and Eli have both been set up by the same friend, and both promised her they would be nice. Neither one is good at it. It is a first date at a wine bar and both of them have an exit text ready.

CHARACTERS

NORA - 28, blunt, funny, done with dating apps and done with setups
ELI - 29, self-deprecating, honest to a fault, hides the weird stuff until date three, usually

SETTING

A small table in a wine bar, early on a Thursday evening.

*A wine bar, early evening. A small table for two.
NORA, 28, has arrived first and ordered nothing.*

ELI, 29, arrives with his coat still on, scanning the room.

ELI

Nora?

NORA

You're Eli.

ELI

I am. Hi. Sorry, I was...

NORA

You're eleven minutes late.

ELI

I was gonna say I was parking.

NORA

Were you?

ELI

No, I was sitting in the car deciding whether to come in.

He sits. She blinks. That was more honest than she expected.

NORA

Okay. Well. Tess said you were nice.

ELI

Tess said you were nice.

NORA

Tess says everybody's nice. Tess thinks her dentist is nice.

ELI

Her dentist is nice, actually. I've met him.

NORA

Of course you have.

A server passes. Neither of them flags her down.

ELI

So what do you do.

NORA

I'm not gonna do that.

ELI

Do what?

NORA

The thing. The resume thing. What do you do, where'd you grow up, what's your relationship with your mother.

ELI

I wasn't gonna ask about your mother.

NORA

Everybody asks about the mother eventually.

ELI

Okay. What do you not do.

NORA

(beat)

I don't hike.

ELI

Oh, thank God.

NORA

Tess put hiking in the text, didn't she.

ELI

She said you were 'outdoorsy.' In quotes. Like she was hedging.

NORA

I went camping once. In 2019. I have not recovered.

ELI

I told her I liked cooking and I think that got translated to 'chef.'

NORA

She said chef.

ELI

I make a chili. One chili.

NORA

Is it good?

ELI

It's fine. It's a fine chili.

Nora almost smiles. Catches it.

NORA

Look. I promised Tess I'd be nice. I'm being honest with you, that's the version of nice I have. I'm tired. I've been on four of these this year and every single guy has told me about his podcast.

ELI

I don't have a podcast.

NORA

Everybody says that and then twenty minutes later it's, well, it's not really a podcast...

ELI

I have a newsletter.

NORA

Oh my God.

ELI

It's about bridges.

NORA

(despite herself)

What?

ELI

Bridges. Old ones. I go look at them.
There's forty people subscribed and one of
them is my aunt.

NORA

That's... that's really specific.

ELI

You said don't do the resume. This is the
opposite of the resume. This is the part I'd
normally hide till date three.

NORA

Why are you telling me now?

ELI

Because you're not gonna be here for date
three, so I figured, why waste it.

That lands. Nora sits back.

NORA

That's kind of a move.

ELI

It's not a move. If it was a move, it'd be
working.

NORA

It's a little bit working.

*Beat. The server passes again. This time Eli
raises a hand.*

ELI

Do you want a drink or do you want to go.

NORA

Why would I go.

ELI

Because you've been holding your keys under the table since I sat down.

She looks down. She has.

NORA

I forgot I was doing that.

ELI

It's fine. I'd have brought keys too. I had a whole exit text ready. 'Work thing.' Very original.

NORA

Mine was 'my cat.'

ELI

You have a cat?

NORA

No.

She puts the keys on the table. Then, deliberately, into her purse.

NORA

I'll have whatever the red is. And I want to hear about one bridge. One. If it's boring, I'm calling my fake cat.

ELI

Okay. There's one in Ohio...

NORA

Already bad.

ELI

Just wait.

NORA

(smiling now, can't help it)
I'm waiting. Be nice.

ELI
I'm trying. It's going okay.

END OF SCRIPT