

THE FORGOTTEN BOOK

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EXT. TOM AND NORA'S TRACT HOME - DAY

The lawn is manicured. Rubbish containers sit at the curb.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A thick, yet shapely, middle-aged housewife, NORA, 38, lies on the couch in her bathrobe. She has a scarf on her head. Crumbs from a bag of chips dangled over her mouth drop in.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - LATER

An open recipe book displays a meal fit for a king.

Nora retrieves ingredients from the freezer, refrigerator, and pantry. The phone CHIRPS. Laura looks at the caller ID and answers with a smile.

LAURA

Hey honey.

TOM (V.O.)

I've got to work a little late tonight.

NORA

Not again? I had planned--

A crisp CLICK of the phone hanging up. Nora's smile turns into a pout. She shakes her head, tosses the phone down, and begins putting the items back from where they came.

Nora grabs another bag of chips.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nora crushes a bag of chips, tosses it on the coffee table, reaches under the couch, and retrieves a box of chocolates. A "judge" show plays on the television. Nora laughs at the antics.

KEYS JANGLE. Almost choking on a chocolate, Nora swallows, slides the box under the couch, jumps up, turns the TV off, then hotfoots to greet her dressed-to-a "T" husband, TOM, 45.

NORA

Hey, honey.

She tries to hug him. He holds her at bay. He peeks over her shoulder at the blinking light on the television and observes the crushed bag of chips.

TOM

Hey.

Tom heads toward the couch, she tries to block him. He feigns right, she moves, he slips past her to the left. He reaches under the couch and pulls out the chocolates.

TOM (CONT'D)

Same old thing, no dinner, laying around, watching other people live fake lives, and stuffing your face.

Tom tosses the chocolate box next to the crushed chips bag.

TOM (CONT'D)

What were you watching? Jerry Springer?

NORA

First, I was planning a feast for you. And for you information, I was watching a judge show, I'm going back to law school.

Tom busts up laughing.

TOM

The only law you should be looking up is divorce law.

Her jaw draw drops in awe leaving her mouth agape.

He holds his arms out motioning around.

TOM (CONT'D)

What are you good for? You could have, at the least, rolled the trash receptacles in.

Nora smirks and holds up her polished and manicured nails.

NORA

That's a man's job. I might break one of these. Oh, if you were ever here, you would know trash day is tomorrow.

TOM

I work all day --

She parades up to him.

NORA

-- and sometimes half the night!  
But not here, and not with me. Now  
you've home early when you said you  
would be late. For what? An  
inspection? I'm not your private  
and this is not boot camp.

He throws his hands up and starts to turn away. She grabs his  
shoulder and spins him around.

NORA (CONT'D)

Oh no. You're not getting off that  
easy. I've cooked for you, cleaned  
for you, birthed your children,  
virtually raised them alone, and  
wash your nasty ass underwear.

Nora pokes him in the chest.

NORA (CONT'D)

What about me? I need some love  
and attention.

She pokes him in the chest at each word.

NORA (CONT'D)

But-you-are-always-working.

He pushes her hand away, backs up, and points at her.

TOM

You know how hard I've worked...  
To get this family where it is.  
I've worked overtime, weekends, and  
late nights. It's always about  
you, you, you. You need some love.  
You need some attention. So do I.

NORA

Here you go.

Nora makes a circle with her hand.

NORA (CONT'D)

Turning this around on me again. I  
used to work until you wanted me at  
home --

TOM

-- Okay, go back to work.

NORA

Are you going to work less? Spend more time with me? And more time with the kids when they visit?

Shaking his head, he walks away.

TOM

I can't promise that.

NORA

Well, I have needs. They are going to get met! One way or another.

She angrily turns and walks away. They both stop to turn and briefly stare at each other. The look at each other like they might make up. No.

TOM

My needs will be met also. One way or another.

NORA

Stubborn trifling ox!

Tom walks away speaking under his breath.

TOM

Nobody's going to want your fat potato chip eating butt.

Tom looks over his shoulder at Nora.

TOM (CONT'D)

Wives are supposed to submit. You, are supposed to submit to me!

She whips her head around.

NORA

Here you go with your paraphrasing the bible and speaking Christianese. The last time I read, it said Christians should submit themselves one to another.

TOM

You're supposed to submit first and then I submit to your submission.

NORA

Please!

Tom and Nora retreat to opposite ends of the room like boxers retreating to their corners.

Nora covers her face and sobs. She peeks over her shoulder in his direction.

NORA (CONT'D)

Jackass, you make a donkey look  
like a sheep

Tom hits the wall HARD with his fist.

TOM

Well, you make the Road Runner look  
like the coyote!

About to laugh, they look over at each other, then avert their gaze.

Nora thinks to herself.

NORA (V.O.)

We used to finish each other's  
sentences. Now we won't let the  
other finish a sentence. What  
happened to us? It didn't use to  
be this way.

Tom ambles back to the front door then turns to look at Nora. She looks away. Tom thinks to himself.

TOM (V.O.)

What happened to us, it didn't use  
to be this way, we used to finish  
each other's sentences. That seems  
like an eternity ago.

Shaken, Tom slides down the wall to sit on the floor. He drags his fingers through his hair and shakes his head.

FADE OUT

A motor revs, there is the screeching sound of tires burning rubber, then a thump of something being hit, and objects hitting the ground.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Tom's sedan cruises the streets.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

At a stop light, Tom idly looks around. Scantily dressed women of the night pull up their skirts, wiggle their bottoms, blow kisses, and make gestures to lure him over.

His gaze takes in their sensuality, then he has a

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

She tries to hug him. He holds her at bay.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

He turns to look straight ahead,

the women continue their show,

The light turns green, Tom

hits the accelerator, and speeds away from the women.

EXT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Strangely, the light turns yellow, then red, before he can clear the intersection.

Tom's sedan whooshes through a yellow light. It turns red when his sedan is halfway through the intersection.

He looks over his shoulder to see the light has returned to green.

TOM

Oh my God!

The women continue their antics. A police car spotlights them, pulls up with a whoop of their siren, their multicolored light bar making the scene surreal.

TOM (CONT'D)

Wow! That could have been me.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nora sits on the couch eating one chocolate after another. She is on the phone talking to a friend, JERRI, 45.

NORA

This just isn't working, I'm  
thinking about calling Frederick.  
You remember him?

JERRI (V.O.)

Yeah, the wanna be French guy from  
Atlanta. He was a jerk. It's slim  
pickings' out here, Nora.

The door opens and Tom lumbers in.

NORA

I gotta go.

Looking away, Nora disconnects the call. Tom looks at her and  
shakes his head.

TOM

You don't have to be off the phone  
for me. You gotta meet your needs.  
Meet your needs. I give up.

NORA

Is that what you were doing? What  
were you giving up? What need were  
you meeting?

Tom looks at her with an expression of sadness, hangs his  
head down, and ambles away.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Photos of them at happier times are on a dresser. Nora and  
Tom lie on opposite sides of a huge bed with their backs to  
each other. His and her bibles lay on matching nightstands.

Nora nosily files her nails. Tom glances over his shoulder  
with a look of disgust. Nora smugly glances back at him, then  
files her nails faster and noisier.

TOM

Be careful. Don't sand them too  
low. You won't have an excuse for  
leaving the trash receptacles out.

Tom sighs loudly and breathes heavily. He snatches his  
massive bible, dust flies, and he coughs. Nora looks over.

NORA

Don't burn your hands. That might  
be like silver to a werewolf.



Ignoring her, he whips it opens and flips some pages and stops. His eyes squint to read. His breathing calms. Nora slows her filing to turn and peer at him. He reads the words.

TOM (V.O.)  
Husbands, love your wives, and be  
not bitter against them.

Tom flips more pages. He stops, laughs, and shakes his head.

TOM (V.O.)  
...Husbands, love your wives, even  
as Christ also loved the church,  
and gave himself for it.

Not to be outdone, Nora puts down the file, picks up her pink lady's bible, and blows the dust off. Her back to him, she flips pages and stops to read these words.

NORA (V.O.)  
Wives, submit yourselves unto your  
own husbands, as it is fitting in  
the Lord.

Nora grunts and leers in Tom's direction. Tom ignores her and continues reading. They simultaneously read the next lines in each bible.

TOM AND NORA (V.O.)  
Become one to another kind, tender-  
hearted, forgiving one another,  
according as also God in Christ did  
forgive you.

Tom and Nora slowly close their bibles and lay them on the nightstands.

They look over at each other, then look away. They murmur simultaneously.

TOM AND NORA  
Good night.

They turn off their lamps.

BLACK

Tom's lamp switches on. He turns and looks over at her.

TOM  
I didn't do anything wrong.

NORA  
You never do.

TOM  
Like I'm the only one.

NORA  
Stubborn ass mule.

TOM  
Pig!

Nora huffs.

NORA  
Well, this pig is going to be  
cooking your bacon when I file for  
divorce tomorrow. Chew on that.

The light goes off.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY (MORNING)

They have slept themselves into each other's arms, their  
faces only inches apart. An ALARM goes off.

Their eyes pop open to stare at each other. They lovingly  
look in each other's eyes then frantically disengage from  
their embrace to turn their backs on each other.

In front of their faces, the bibles on the nightstand stare  
at them. Tom sighs. Nora's eyes tear up. They simultaneously  
pray.

TOM AND NORA (V.O.)  
Lord have mercy on us.

EXT. TOM AND NORA'S TRACT HOME - DAY

Nora is in the driveway righting the trash can Tom had hit  
the night before and picking up the spewed trash.

EXT. TOM AND NORA'S TRACT HOME - NIGHT

Tom's sedan pulls into the driveway.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nora sits on the couch, wearing eyeglasses, and typing on a  
laptop wearing a robe and scarf. A judge show is on the TV.  
KEYS are heard.

Tom peeks in, he hesitates before coming through the door.

TOM  
Hey, sweetheart.

She looks up at him, closes the laptop, turns the TV off, and strides to face him.

He is holding something behind his back. She tries to peek around. He turns this way and that to stop her.

NORA  
You're home early. Are those  
divorce papers behind your back? Or  
were you fired?

She fakes a smile. He genuinely smiles back.

TOM  
No, sweetheart.

NORA  
That's good. We need your income.

She steps back and removes the scarf revealing a stylish hairdo underneath.

NORA (CONT'D)  
'Cause I can't get a refund from  
the hair stylist, but

She removes the robe to reveal a sensual low-cut dress that clings to her curves. Tom's eyes get big.

NORA (CONT'D)  
I probably could return this dress.

He stammers.

TOM  
I, I wouldn't want you too. You  
look... stunning.

He pulls out flowers from behind his back and kneels.

TOM (CONT'D)  
I have been such an idiot--

She gently places her lips to stop him speaking.

NORA  
-- You have. But so have I.

He takes her hand in his and gently caresses it.

TOM

I've been working so long to provide for you that I forget what you really want from me, was me.

NORA

You. That's all I ever wanted.

She caresses his hair.

NORA (CONT'D)

It's okay, while you've been having an affair with work, I've been having affairs at home.

He looks surprised and then hurt. She lifts his chin up.

NORA (CONT'D)

Nooo. Not like that silly spruce. With Oprah, and Wendy, and Judge Judy.

Toms sighs relief, then laughs

TOM

I thought you said Oprah didn't come on anymore.

NORA

She doesn't. I've been over her a long time. I only wanted one --

Tom stands and passionately kisses her. She drops the flowers and wraps her arms around him breathing deeply while kissing him in return.

Suddenly, she pushes him away.

NORA (CONT'D)

Oh sweetie! Dinner is ready. I made you brisket of beef for the main course and your special desert --

TOM

--You!

NORA

No, peach cobbler.

TOM

Mmm.

Smiling, she shakes her head.

NORA

You can get ready for dinner, I'll run you a bath--

TOM

--That all sounds good. I thought we might go out for dinner.

NORA

No, I want to be alone, with you.

They try to go in different directions and bump into each other. Nora points.

NORA (CONT'D)

The dining room is that way.

Tom points in the opposite direction.

TOM

The bedroom is this way.

She swings him in the direction of the bedroom.

A door slams shut. Muffled conversation and sounds of laughter is heard.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

They lie in bed facing each other. A spark is in their eyes.

TOM

Maybe we should--

TOM AND NORA

--read our bibles more often?

They speak simultaneously.

TOM AND NORA (CONT'D)

We're doing it again.

They laugh, cuddle up, and spoon.

SUPER:

Love suffers long, and is kind; love envies not; love vaunts not itself, is not puffed up,

Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. But the greatest of these is love.

I Corinthians: 4,7, 13.

FADE OUT.