

IT'S COMPLICATED - LOVE CAN'T SAVE YOU FROM YOURSELF



Programmanus

Sometimes in life, you may find yourself in the middle of something new and unknown, a complicated event concerning love, sex or a friendship.

“Nicole, some things other people can't help you with, not unless you first help yourself.”

“Isn't that what we do for each other?”

You are listening to *It's Complicated*, a podcast from UR focusing on exactly those situations and each episode is about a complicated event in a young person's life.

“I wanted other people to save me, and I guess maybe that's why I fell for this girl. Because I thought she would be the person to save me.”

First, you are going to hear an acted scene based on real events, but where details and names have been changed. Later on, you will hear the real interview that the scene is based upon.

/// DRAMA ///

EXT. EDGE OF SCHOOLYARD - AFTERNOON

NICOLE and REBECCA meet up at the edge of the schoolyard,
other middle schoolers can be heard further away.

NICOLE

Rebecca! Hey!



REBECCA

Oh- Nicole! Hey, what's up? How...
was class?

NICOLE

Great! Yeah! Music class is always
a bit of a... *drag* because I need to
stay in pace with the rest of
class when I just wanna

REBECCA

Stay ahead?

REBECCA

But you will?

NICOLE

I- Yeah it's just I that I feel...

REBECCA

chuckle Don't worry I'm just
messing with you, Nicky!

NICOLE

Oh my g- Again, it's *Nicole*,
Becky! But anyway

REBECCA

I'll take Becky over *Karen*.

NICOLE

Yeah, fine, but hey I've been
thinking.

REBECCA

Yeah?

NICOLE

Yeah I... So I really like hanging
out with you.

REBECCA

Mmm. Likewise.

NICOLE

I mean I *really* do like hanging
out with you like- I love it.



REBECCA

...Yeah? What are you getting at,
Nicole? Hasn't Viv

NICOLE

What?

REBECCA

I'm saying, didn't you and Vivian
have a chat?

REBECCA

No, true...

NICOLE

So listen, I really like you, and
you like me too, right?

REBECCA

I do...

NICOLE

So if we both like hanging out
together- what's the problem?

REBECCA

I get it, Nicole, but Vivian is a
part of this too.

NICOLE

But not like this.

REBECCA

Nicole, I... Look, I know you've had
it rough, I do. But so have I and
I'm not sure this would be the
best for either of us.

NICOLE

Okay... So... Because Vivian says we
shouldn't be together, we should
follow that instead of what we
feel? Aren't we supposed to follow
our hearts?

REBECCA

That's just... So dramatic, Nicole, I



NICOLE

But why? I've never felt this
deeply for anyone and I can't just
ignore those feelings so

REBECCA

That! That right there. Did you
consider that maybe I didn't feel
as strongly as you do? And what I
just said about having it rough?

NICOLE

... But you just said...

REBECCA

I said I like hanging out with
you, Nicole.

NICOLE

I... Yes?

REBECCA

Yes?

NICOLE

So why should we hurt from not
talking to each other when we
could spend time together?

REBECCA

Because... Hanging out with you
after a certain point gets...

NICOLE

What?

REBECCA

Well it gets to be a bit much. And
I have to look out for my own
mental health right now.

NICOLE

What'd you mean a bit much?

REBECCA

Nicole... You never consider what
other people are thinking, their
perspectives or their struggles.



NICOLE
Yes I do!

NICOLE
I... Yeah because...

REBECCA
Nicole. You're a good person, you are. But maybe you need to look after yourself first?

NICOLE
Isn't that what we do for each other?

REBECCA
No, Nicole... Some things other people can't help you with. Not unless you first help yourself.

NICOLE
... Okay?

REBECCA
Yeah.

NICOLE
... You sure?

REBECCA
Yes, Nicole. I'm sorry. But you'll manage, alright? You have to.

NICOLE
Alright...

REBECCA
... See you around, Nicole.

///END.///

What's actually going on between Nicole and Rebecka? Nicole has just explained to Rebecka how much she likes her and wants to be with her. However, even though Rebecka likes Nicole too, she says she can't be with her because of Nicole's mental health. She says it's too hard, too complicated and that Nicole's problems with herself are affecting *her* in a bad way as well.

Musik

This is *It's complicated* a podcast from UR. This episode is about Nicole. We just heard an acted scene, based on real events from her life, but now you are going to hear the real Nicole tell her side of the story.

NICOLE: Learning how to play the guitar or learning how to play a certain song even, is much easier than learning how to be yourself, accept yourself or forgive yourself. In some cases.

Nicole is fifteen years old, and she loves to play music, especially the guitar. She really likes the feeling of just getting caught up in a song or a note.

NICOLE: Just completely clears my mind of all the harder things in life, and I think makes things a little bit more simple at times. Biggest problem is playing the wrong note. It's pretty nice and I don't think you can get that same experience in life. Life is definitely much more complicated than that.

Nicole is transgender, and it hasn't always been easy accepting herself. For many years she has been struggling with anxiety, and questions regarding her identity and who she is have been a big part of her life.

NICOLE: I think I wasn't always the best person when I was younger and I'm still very young, but that feels like it was a long time ago, and I think, realizing that I'm someone who's progressing and I'm not the same person as I was then is very challenging.

Nicole describes herself as a person who's always had a lot of strong emotions. One of those emotions is love. Sometimes, she feels like she has learned most things about love from tv shows and social media, where big gestures and words are very common. Nicole thinks that her way of seeing love hasn't always been the healthiest.



NICOLE: And I think because of how the media was taught, I thought that that gave me the excuse to chase after people and even bother them... um, for their affection, and it's like, that's not OK. Like, no one owes you that kind of affection, at least. They owe you respect, but they don't owe you romantic affection. And I think I didn't understand that when I was younger. And that meant that I was just unkind and unpleasant to people.

This is what happens to Rebecka, but let's take it from the beginning. When Nicole was fourteen, she started at a new school. This was a school that her best friend Vivian went to. Vivian and Nicole had been friends for a long time, and Vivian knew that Nicole had a bit of a story of falling in love with people too fast and when she fell for someone, she got almost obsessed with them. So just before Nicole began at her new school, Vivian told her not to date or fall in love with her friend Rebecka. Vivian thought it would come between both her and Nicole's friendship, but also between Vivian's and Rebecka's. But Nicole did not listen.

NICOLE: Yeah, we started texting before I got to the school, and from the second I started talking to her, in my head, I was just like, "God damn it." I... I was like, "Oh, I'm falling already." And then when I was at the school, I think just like, my break, my lunch time, any opportunity I could, even in classes, I was like trying to sit next to her, trying to spend as much time with her as possible. Because teenage romance, right? Just, you want to spend as much time with the person as you possibly can. And I think I tried to do that so much.

Nicole becomes more and more interested in Rebecka. Nicole wants to talk to her constantly. Rebecka is the girl Nicole wants, and in her eyes, she is an almost perfect person.

NICOLE: She was nice, and she was smart, and she... most of anything, she cared about things. I hadn't really known anyone with that much passion before for anything. Anyone who really just had this drive and these really strong emotions. I guess, I was



that person. I was the only other person who I knew who was really... who I felt like had a lot to say, and that just drew me to her so much. I wanted to know what she had to say. I wanted to hear and listen to it.

However, the problem is that Nicole knows that by falling more and more for Rebecka she is also breaking the trust of her old friend Vivian. Now, she is also doing the one thing Vivian told her not to. Nicole doesn't know exactly how to tell Vivian what's happening, but one day she decides to text her.

NICOLE: I said, I like this person a lot. I really want to be with her. It would make me so happy to be with her, and I know you feel like this is going to be a repeat of what happened before but I really just... if she doesn't like me back then, I... obviously no relationship can come out of that. But I really like her and if she likes me back, I don't see why we couldn't have a relationship. I would be better for her, and I would be really happy with her. And my friend was like, "Not speaking to you for the rest of the year." It was a very extreme reaction I got to be honest. But, I guess, um... I'd broken this friend's trust before on this type of thing. And so, she was like, "This is final straw."

Why is Vivian so irritated by Nicole's love for Rebecka? This is the complicated part. Nicole doesn't only have a history of getting obsessed with people she likes; she also has a history of unhappiness and, as we already mentioned, anxiety. Sometimes when she falls for someone, she pulls them into her own sadness. Therefore, Vivian reacts so strongly to Nicole's behavior.

NICOLE: She knew that I was unhappy just generally in life. I wasn't happy, and I guess I hadn't been when I was younger either. And I think she knew, deep down, that I was spreading my unhappiness to other people. Not purposefully, but I wanted other people to save me. And that was an unfair expectation to have. And I guess maybe that's why I fell for this girl, because I thought she would be the person to save me. And this friend of mine recognized that's not a fair burden to put on anyone... even if the girl I liked did like me back. It wouldn't have been fair to be in a relationship with her because I was expecting her to do something that she could never do.



That is to make Nicole happy and free from her sadness. When Vivian actually tells Nicole these things, Nicole becomes really frustrated and angry. She doesn't know what to do. So, she goes home and plays the guitar. She thinks about Rebecka. But still, Vivian's words are stuck in her head.

NICOLE: She said that... pretty extreme... but she said I ruined everything around me, including myself. And I took that so hard and it just hurt so badly to hear that I was in the wrong. I broke down at first.

Days go by. Weeks. Vivian won't talk to Nicole and Nicole feels more and more frustrated.

What gave Vivian the right to decide over Nicole and deny her being in love? Regardless of what Vivian says, Nicole decides to tell Rebecka about her feelings, that she's in love with her and wants to be with her. Nicole is almost certain that Rebecka feels the same way. But things don't go as planned for Nicole. After Rebecka has listened to Nicole's declaration of love she is quiet at first. Then she admits that she likes Nicole back but adds that she doesn't want to have a relationship with her. She says that Vivian is right. Nicole's mental health is standing in between them. Rebecka says that she can't be in a relationship with someone who's having issues like Nicole does. It affects her in a bad way, and she can't be Nicole's savior, Nicole needs to save herself first. Nicole can't really take in what Rebecka said. She doesn't understand how Rebecka can reject her like this.

NICOLE: I wanted to be with her. I felt like she liked me, and the only reason she wasn't being with me was because of our friend. And I was like, "Why? Like, just why? Why are you doing this? Like, surely, it's hurting you not to talk to me because of this? Why can't we just... you know... do what we want to do? And then if it doesn't work, it doesn't work and our friend was right, and that's not necessarily the worst thing." And I just couldn't see her point of view. And her point of view was just, "I would really like



to be with you, if you were able to take care of yourself and your mental health.” Um, and I wasn't. And then I felt attacked because of that.

Now, Nicole has no one. Neither Vivian nor Rebecka. She is all by herself and she is confused. The two people closest to her have said the same thing; that Nicole's mental health makes it hard for people around her as well. Is she literally spreading sadness and anxiety to others, and is she not allowed to be in a relationship or to love somebody because of this? She falls asleep and wakes up with these thoughts and somewhere along the line she realizes that a part of what Vivian has told her is actually true.

NICOLE: I was hurting myself, and because I was hurting myself, I was inevitably dragging down others because I wasn't getting help. It's not like I was hurting myself and I was on the road to improvement. I just thought I couldn't change and that me hurting myself was OK. And for all those people who cared about me, it just meant they had to watch someone they care about suffer and that's not... It's really sad.

With time Nicole understands that her anxiety and sadness have a lot to do with the pressure she puts on herself. She wants to be a good person people love. She wants to be happy, and she wants to have a perfect life. Then, when things are the opposite, she puts herself down.

NICOLE: And I berate myself for not being good enough, I put myself down for not being nice enough, smart enough, good-looking enough, anything. But what I didn't do then that I should have... was after I have those feelings, I never reflected upon it. I never gave it any more thought than just, “I'm bad. I'm not enough.”

Suddenly Nicole realizes she needs to do something about it. She can no longer go on hurting herself, knowing that she's also hurting people around her, people who care about her. She talks to Vivian about her behavior. She asks her to understand, and she does. Then, after many months of continuing to chase Rebecka and then not hanging out with her at all, she decides to talk to her as well. But Rebecka is no longer



interested in being friends with her.

NICOLE: She decided in the end she couldn't be friends with someone like that. It was just too much for her. And at first, I was upset again and then I made the road to improvement, and I started working on myself reflecting... I started going to therapy properly and eventually I was able to leave on good terms with this girl. She's left the school now and I don't really talk to her anymore. But before she left, she did say to me once during COVID, during lockdown, we were on call and she said, "You've really matured and improved and I'm really happy for you." And I was very happy with that.