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Hypotheticals

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► *Hypotheticals* | Mirielle Smith

Paige is sitting at a table with a cup of coffee. Across the stage is a bed. Beth is standing a little ways away from the table, looking at Paige, who cannot see or hear her.

BETH: Ok, so maybe this is how it happens.

Lights up. Beth sits down at the table.

BETH: Hi.

PAIGE: Hi.

BETH: I'm Beth. You're Paige?

PAIGE: Yeah. It's really nice to meet you.

They stand, walk hand-in-hand.

BETH: So, I had a really great time.

PAIGE: Me too.

They smile at each other. They go back to the table and sit — this time on the same side, comfortable together.

PAIGE: ...and so my grandfather is standing there in his underwear, a pair of my mom's old cowboy boots, and a Captain America sweatshirt, screaming at the top of his lungs that he will be ready when he's damn well ready, and if we don't all stop pestering him, he's gonna stay out there on the front lawn making a scene, and then they'll have bigger problems than him making them 15 minutes late, and why are young people in such a damn hurry all the time these days, anyway?

Beth laughs fondly.

BETH: Your family is insane. You're a crazy person.

PAIGE: Shush. You love it.

BETH: Yeah. Yeah, I do.

They rise and exit together.

Paige re-enters.

PAIGE: Babe, come on, we're going to be late!

BETH: Why are young people in such a damn hurry all the time these days?

She enters with a packed bag.

BETH: Ok, I'm ready.

PAIGE: Don't think being cute is going to get you out of trouble, missy.

BETH: Paige, come on, we're going to be late.

PAIGE: I take it back. I don't love you. You're annoying.

They put the case offstage and lie down on the bed.

BETH: Hey.

PAIGE: Hey.

They lie there, relaxed and cuddling, for a moment. They get up. Beth exits while Paige sits at the table. She plays with a cup, checks her watch, and sighs. Beth enters, sits down next to Paige.

BETH: Hey, Babe, sorry—

PAIGE: It's fine.

BETH: Sorry.

They stand and move around the table, so they are sitting in new places, now on opposite sides.

BETH: I just don't see why everything has to be such a big fucking deal.

PAIGE: What? What are you — are you really bringing last week up again?!

BETH: No. Of course not. That would be stupid.

PAIGE: I never said you were stupid!

BETH: Whatever.

They rise and move to the bed. They lie down, facing away from each other.

BETH: I'm sorry.

A beat. They rise and walk together, not touching.

PAIGE: I think we should just, say goodbye now and save ourselves any more. We don't work.

BETH: I know. But...

PAIGE: I know.

Paige walks away back to the table. She sits. Beth looks glum. Paige turns to look at her.

PAIGE: That's not how it would happen.

BETH: Shush. You're a hypothetical.

Beth makes a 'turn around' motion with her finger.

PAIGE (as she turns): Yeah, but that doesn't mean—

BETH (simultaneously): Ok, let's try this.

Beth sits down.

BETH: Hi.
PAIGE: Hi.
BETH: I'm Beth. You're Paige?
PAIGE: Uh, yeah. So...

They break character, stand, and walk a bit away from the table. They stand awkwardly.

PAIGE: Well, it was nice to meet you.

Paige smiles noncommittally.

BETH: Yeah. You too.

They split off in different directions. Beth paces while Paige sits, watching Beth.

PAIGE: Was that even worth imagining?
BETH: Well, yeah. Now I know how I might react if it's really awkward.
PAIGE: I feel like you could have worked that out as you went. Besides, don't be negative. Come on, try again.

She turns forward, waiting for the scene to begin. Beth sits.

BETH: Hi.
PAIGE: Hi.

They rise. Beth opens up an umbrella, and they walk with their arms around each other. They stop and look at each other.

PAIGE: So, I wanna kiss you.
BETH: Yeah?

She leans closer.

PAIGE: But it's too cliché. So I'm not going to.
BETH: Seriously?
PAIGE: Yeah.
BETH: Wow. Yet, I still want to keep dating you.
PAIGE: Crazy.

Beth folds up the umbrella. They sit on the bed facing each other.

BETH: Gorgonzola.
PAIGE: Wensleydale.
BETH: Stilton.
PAIGE: Gruyere.
BETH: Edam.

PAIGE: Our dishwasher is just never going to get emptied. Roquefort.
BETH: This really was a terrible way to decide. Havarti.
PAIGE: Manchego.
BETH: Feta.

They rise and move to the table, sitting next to each other.

PAIGE: Hey, did you remember to book the tickets for Thanksgiving?
BETH: Yes. I'm not completely incapable of being a responsible adult.
PAIGE: Babe, last week you left your phone in the dishwasher.
BETH: That is kind of a valid point. I will grant you that.

They rise and lie on the bed.

BETH: Night. I love you.
PAIGE: Love you.

They sleep for a moment. Paige rises and exits. Beth sits up and pulls out a letter.

BETH: ...we regret to inform you that Paige Donahue was killed in the line of duty on the fifth of March. She—

Paige pokes her head on stage.

PAIGE: Seriously? What, am I a cop now? Army lieutenant?
BETH: Air Force.
PAIGE: That doesn't even make sense. How was I here so much if I was in the Air Force?

Beth shrugs.

PAIGE: I feel like less crazy normally goes into the pre-"hello" part of this kind of thing.

*Beth shrugs again.
Paige sits at the table. Beth joins her.*

BETH: Hi.
PAIGE: Hi.

They rise and go to the bed. Beth goes to sleep. After a moment, Paige carefully gets up and tiptoes away, pausing guiltily when Beth shifts. Once she's nearly to the table, Paige breaks from the moment.

PAIGE: I thought you had a three-date rule?
BETH: Yes, and this is exactly why!
PAIGE: Did you just try to use your hypothetical situation as proof?

She sits down, not giving Beth time to respond before she's engaged in the next take. Beth sticks out her tongue and gets up to join her.

BETH: Hi.

PAIGE: Hola. ¿Como estas?

BETH: Are you Paige?

PAIGE: ¿Beth? ¿Hablas Español, sí?

They sit awkwardly. Both rise. Paige sits on the table, eyebrow raised.

PAIGE: How did the date get planned without the complete language barrier being noticed?

BETH: Yeah, ok.

They sit.

BETH: Hi.

PAIGE: Hi.

BETH: I'm Beth. You're Paige?

PAIGE: No, sorry.

BETH: Oh! I'm sorry!

Paige stands. Beth stands.

PAIGE: Seriously?

Paige sits again, gestures for Beth to proceed. Beth does.

BETH: Hi.

PAIGE: Hi.

BETH: I'm Beth. You're Paige?

PAIGE: Ok, you know what? No. You're done with this. Time to just say 'hi' like a real person before I think I'm being stood up and leave. You can do it; it's a very short, simple syllable.

BETH: I'm not sure about this...

PAIGE: Well, I am, and I think that counts as good enough.

Paige stands, tugging on Beth's hand as she does until the latter rises.

PAIGE: You have got this. It'll be great. And what's the worst that could happen? Pretty sure you've planned out all the scenarios.

BETH: I'm kinda scared.

PAIGE: Yeah, well, welcome to the human race.

BETH: Says the figment of my imagination.

Paige smiles at her and sits. Beth takes a deep breath and sits down.

BETH: Hi.

PAIGE: Hi.

BETH: I'm Beth. You're Paige?

Paige nods.

BETH: It's really good to meet you.

They smile at each other.

► *Untitled* | Kaitlyn Walters

