

TASTE TEST

by Scott Mullen

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A Comedic/Dramatic Duet

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SYNOPSIS: Beth goes into a coffee shop where she intends to try something different than her usual hot chocolate. Cashier Haylie gives her options, and the two find common ground in other areas as well.

TIME: Present.

SETTING: A coffee shop.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 females)

BETH (f).....A teenage girl. *(66 lines)*

HAYLIE (f).....Another teenage girl. *(71 lines)*

SET: A small table with two chairs, and a counter.

PROPS

- rag to wipe the counter
- 3 mugs

COSTUMES

HAILEY – dressed like a coffee shop employee.

BETH – dressed like a teenage girl.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: The coffee shop can largely be suggested. The counter can be minimally decorated or with more props. The drinks can maybe come out from behind the counter, as if they are being made there.

AT START: *HAYLIE wipes the counter. BETH comes in upset. Sits at the table.*

HAYLIE: Do you want the usual?

BETH: Of course.

HAYLIE: One double hot chocolate, coming up—

BETH: Actually no. I don't want the usual. I'm tired of the usual.

HAYLIE: But you're hot chocolate girl!

BETH: Seriously?

HAYLIE: That's all you ever order. Plus, I don't know your name.

BETH: Beth.

HAYLIE: Hi. I'm Haylie. What can I get you?

BETH: This is a coffee shop, right?

HAYLIE: It is.

BETH: I want some coffee.

HAYLIE: Okay. What kind?

BETH: I... have no idea. Can't I just have... coffee?

HAYLIE: Coffee.

BETH: Yes. A mug, I guess. Of coffee.

HAYLIE: Wait... have you never had coffee before?

BETH: No.

HAYLIE: No?!?

BETH: I was told it would stunt my growth.

HAYLIE: I don't think it's going to stunt your growth.

BETH: And make me all hyper.

HAYLIE: It might do that.

BETH: I don't care. Things need to change. I'm a grown-up now.
And that means... coffee.

HAYLIE: Do you think you'll want cream in your coffee?

BETH: I don't know. Do people take cream?

HAYLIE: Most do.

BETH: Then yes.

HAYLIE: Sugar?

BETH: I like sugar.

HAYLIE: I'm not even sure if I should talk about flavorings and shots
and espresso—

BETH: Maybe I'm not ready for this...

HAYLIE: I'll tell you what. I'll give you three cups of coffee, all on the house. A taste test. You try each one, you tell me which one you like the best, and that will be your new usual.

BETH: Okay. Three cups of coffee. Let's do this.

HAYLIE toils behind the counter.

HAYLIE: So... hard day?

BETH: The worst.

HAYLIE: Want to talk about it?

BETH looks at her.

HAYLIE: People in bars tell the bartender about their problems. I'm sort of like a bartender.

BETH: You ever feel like you don't know who you are?

HAYLIE: Every day.

BETH: I mean, I got to thinking today, I'm Beth. Who is Beth? Why am I Beth? Should I be Beth? I mean, my name is Elizabeth. There are literally dozens of versions of that I could be. Eliza or Liz or Betsy or Ellie or Lizzie or Liza or Bette or Bess. Which one am I?

HAYLIE: Pick the one that feels like you.

BETH: I don't know who I am.

HAYLIE: You don't have to know yet.

BETH: But I want to.

HAYLIE: Then you will.

HAYLIE brings a mug of coffee to the table. Puts it in front of BETH.

HAYLIE: This is number 1. Tell me what you think. Careful, it's hot.

BETH blows on it. Takes a sip.

BETH: This is coffee?

HAYLIE: It is.

BETH: Huh. Interesting.

HAYLIE: Give me feedback. Too strong? Not strong enough? Too bitter? Does it need to be sweeter, or is it too sweet?

BETH: Might be a little strong. Might be a little too bitter. Could be sweeter.

HAYLIE: All right. I'll factor that in.

HAYLIE goes back behind the counter.

BETH: Maybe I'll just be "Elizabeth".

HAYLIE: Do you feel like an Elizabeth?

BETH: No.

HAYLIE: So what brought this on. Family stuff?

BETH: Not really.

HAYLIE: School?

BETH: School's okay.

HAYLIE: Job?

BETH: Not that.

HAYLIE: So... boy trouble.

BETH: I wish. That would make it easier.

HAYLIE hesitates. Probing.

HAYLIE: Girl trouble?

BETH stiffens.

BETH: I don't want to talk about it.

HAYLIE: Hmmmm.

BETH: Don't say hmmmm!

HAYLIE: First girlfriend?

BETH: I don't have a girlfriend!

HAYLIE: But you want one.

BETH: Who are you?

HAYLIE: I told you. I'm Haylie.

BETH: You don't go to my school.

HAYLIE: I go to St. Agnes. Catholic school, couple of miles that way?

BETH: I can't share things with you. I don't know who you know. Who you might talk to.

HAYLIE: Because you're afraid I'm going to tell someone you like girls?

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