

SEEN AND NOT HEARD

PROLOGUE TWO: SPEED DATING

Content warnings: Discussion of disability, mention of illness/hospital stay, ableist language, mention of sex.

Sound of a crowd at a bar. Laughing, chatting, general mingling.

After a moment, a bell rings.

THOMAS sits down opposite BET.

BET: Hi, I'm Bet. Nice to meet you.

THOMAS: Hi. Thomas. Hey.

BET: Ever done this before?

THOMAS: Once, yeah. It didn't go so well but I figured hey, maybe it was a fluke.

BET: That's a good attitude.

THOMAS: What about you?

BET: Uh, no. My sister thought it would be hilarious to give me a ticket to this for my birthday.

THOMAS: She sounds fun.

BET: So, what do you do?

THOMAS: I'm in electrical engineering.

BET: Wow. That's quite a skill.

THOMAS: Yeah, it pays the bills, can be interesting work sometimes.

BET: Did you grow up around here?

THOMAS sips his drink, making it harder for BET to understand.

THOMAS: Nearby. I moved here when I was seventeen.

BET: What was that?

THOMAS: What was what?

BET: Oh, I didn't hear what you said.

THOMAS: *(Laughing.)* That's a first. Most people say I'm too loud.

BET: I'm, uh...deaf.

THOMAS: What?

BET: I'm deaf.

THOMAS: *(Shouting, thinking he's hilarious.)* What?

BET: I'm - oh. Heh. Yeah. I see what you're doing.

THOMAS: Sorry, couldn't resist.

BET: No one can.

THOMAS: So you're really deaf, though?

BET: Yep.

THOMAS: Wow. You speak really clearly.

BET: It's a recent development.

THOMAS: Whoa. That sucks, I'm sorry.

BET: Uh...thanks. I mean, it's okay, it's - it's fine.

THOMAS: What happened?

BET: I was sick. I got really sick, and I was in the hospital for a while, and...anyway. Yeah. I'm...hard of hearing is probably a better way to put it.

THOMAS: So do you know sign language?

BET: Not yet. I mean, I'm learning, but it's kind of pointless since no one I know can sign, so...

THOMAS: Oh, that's too bad.

BET: Yeah, it's kind of frustrating, because reading lips is a huge pain, and I can't always follow speech anymore, so I get left out a lot and...well. Anyway. That's kind of heavy for a speed date.

THOMAS: Right, sure.

BET: So. Anything you want to know about me?

THOMAS: Are you reading my lips right now?

BET: Uh...sort of, yeah.

THOMAS: Whoa. So if I just mouth something, like...

THOMAS stops talking aloud, mouthing something or other.

BET: That's not how it works.

THOMAS: How does it work?

BET: I don't - I mean, not like that.

THOMAS: My brother's friend in elementary school was deaf.

BET: Oh, really? So you've spent some time around deaf people before?

THOMAS: No, not really. I just kind of remember him.

BET: ...cool. Okay. Did you have any questions for me?

THOMAS: Uh...well, yeah, there's one.

BET: *(Relieved.)* Sure. Go for it.

THOMAS: *(Leaning forward, voice slightly lower.)* So, when you're like...you know...

BET: When I'm what?

THOMAS: You know.

BET: I really don't.

THOMAS: You *know*, like...in bed...

BET: (*Screwing with him.*) Oh, all comfy-cozy in my long johns, taking a nice nap?

THOMAS: No, you know what I mean...like when you're...

BET: Having sex?

THOMAS: Yeah. Do you...start signing stuff? Like signing "oh God" or whatever?

BET: Yeah, I do.

THOMAS: Really?

BET: No. Why would I - ? No.

THOMAS: You're funny.

BET: Weird, I haven't told a single joke.

THOMAS: No, but you're cool.

BET: Again, mystified by this conclusion.

THOMAS: I like you.

BET: Literally all you know about me is that I'm deaf.

THOMAS: I know, but you have a good vibe.

BET: Would *love* to know your rubric for that.

THOMAS: I've never done the...you know...special needs thing...

BET: My *goodness*, you have a way with words, Thomas.

THOMAS: I just mean I think there's a connection, that's all.

BET just starts laughing.

THOMAS: What's so funny?

BET: Nothing. Absolutely nothing about this is funny, and yet. Okay, Thomas, I am fairly certain our time is almost up.

THOMAS: That's a shame. Maybe we can talk afterwards.

BET: Oh, gosh, you know what? I think my hearing aid batteries are dying. Oh no.

THOMAS: Wait, you can't hear me at all now?

BET: Oh golly, oh no, sad day for Bet and Thomas. Over before it began. They'll write great poetry about this tragic event. Move over, Romeo and Juliet. Okay, bye, nice meeting you.

THOMAS: Wait, you're supposed to stay sitting, not -

BET: *(Already on her way out.)* Don't forget me, darling.

BET hightails it out of there. A beat.

THOMAS: I think that went well.

The bell rings. Outro music.

CREDITS: [CREDITS]