

Hear Again

by

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ABSTRACT

Harry Littleton has been profoundly deaf since the age of eight. Now a vice principal at a school for the Deaf, he wakes up one morning to find his hearing has suddenly returned. Fearing ostracization from the Deaf community and especially from his wife, Lindsay, Harry decides to keep his newfound hearing a secret. He covertly explores the world of sound while pretending to still be deaf. Harry meets a singer, Penny, who encourages his passion for music. He steals time away for jam sessions and learns how to play the bass. As he struggles to keep his two identities from colliding, Harry's friendship with Penny grows while his marriage deteriorates when Lindsay begins to suspect his double life. Things become even more complicated when he unwittingly overhears a nefarious plan to shut down his beloved school. Harry must face the music and decide what's worth saving: his school and his marriage, or his secret life. Can he find a way to reconcile both worlds, or will he be forced to choose between them?

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**To Hear Again:
A Critical Introduction to Sound and Silence**

Grab the opportunity to bridge the worlds within your life.
– Heather Artinian, on *TEDx Talks*

I became aware of the existence of Harry Littleton about a year ago, after I forced my way into an advanced online screenwriting course taught by Professor Ari Posner at CSU Fullerton. I had started out the class with an ambitious dystopian sci-fi thriller I'd been working on for the past two semesters in novel form. The synopsis was written and approved, but I had no clue how to begin translating a three-chapter-deep novel into a full-length feature screenplay. The idea quickly lost its appeal as I realized I'd need to work hard and fast to churn out the requisite 20-page-per-week installments that would be critiqued by a team of five other students as well as the professor. I needed something I could write easily that would captivate the attention of my peers and wouldn't demand too much research. As a first-year graduate student at Sonoma State University with a fifteen-load semester, I didn't exactly have the luxury of time on hand.

The professor advised students to “write what we knew” in order to give our stories an authentic tone. I often dismissed my personal experiences as bland and unremarkable to others, only to be told time and again my life is far from ordinary. As someone who has been profoundly deaf since the age of six from spinal meningitis, most of my life has been your classic “fish-out-of-water” tale. I am the alien “other” who takes on a bizarre dominant culture and thrives in its misadventure. As I wracked

my brains for a way out of a dystopian screenplay nightmare, a *what-if* I'd been toying with for months nudged its way into my mindspace: what if a deaf person suddenly got their hearing back? The concept might bore me, but it could possibly intrigue others not familiar with deafness. I quickly threw out my original synopsis and pitched the idea to my classmates.

I received an enthusiastic response from my group and especially from the professor, who remarked the story was something not yet seen from major Hollywood film studios. Part of the course requirement was to build the screenplay using Blake Snyder's beat sheet from his book, *Save the Cat!: The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll Ever Need*, which details a step-by-step formula he suggests will appeal to a broad audience. Snyder's process breaks down the three-act structure into key focal points that identify moments such as the set-up, the catalyst, the B-story, the all-is-lost moment, and the finale. This helps the writer manage the story's structure and pacing, and ensures it can successfully unfold in approximately two hours onscreen.

Snyder's book played an indispensable role in the early construction of *Hear Again*. With his formula, I was able to build a strong foundation that easily bore weight as I added layer upon layer of significance in order to bring Harry Littleton and his complex world to life. The screenplay evolved from a mere class assignment to a story with an important message about a poignant search for identity in the wake of disability and cultural disparities. *Hear Again* deals with what could be perceived as a touchy subject with a dark history – that is, the stigma of deafness and the ways society confronts (or avoids) it. With this in mind, I borrowed from Italo Calvino's philosophy of balancing weight with lightness and wrote the early screenplay as a comedy. I

wanted my audience to laugh as well as learn along with Harry about the peculiar social habits of different cultures. *Hear Again* in its present form holds its lightness and remains a comedy, although some of its earlier slapstick humor has been toned down to allow for more depth of character.

In many ways, Harry is my alter ego. We have both lived most of our lives with sensorineural hearing loss, although his hearing loss is attributed to a sudden fall instead of a disease. I decided to make him eight years old when this happens so that he would remain haunted by childhood memories about when he could hear like everyone else. In the beginning of the screenplay, Harry communicates (mostly) in American Sign Language (ASL) and is fully immersed in the Deaf community, but we can tell early on he feels he's still a hearing person inside. Although he might be reluctant to admit this, Harry's deafness represents to him a loss, not an identity as it is for many deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

His wife, Lindsay Littleton, represents genetic deafness in comparison to sudden or gradual hearing loss. This plays a starring role in the shaping of her personality. She comes from a long line of families who have proudly passed down a hereditary deafness gene and are fully entrenched in a deaf-with-a-capital-D community and culture. To her, it's the hearing world that is atypical and perverse, something to tolerate but not fully assimilate. Lindsay was somewhat hard to get to know. She had been resistant to my initial attempts to dig inside her psyche. The cochlear implant documentary directed by Josh Aronson, *Sound and Fury* (2000) was instrumental in creating more depth to later versions of Lindsay. I was especially intrigued by the film's father, Peter Artinian, who is a carrier of the gene and was born deaf into a deaf family. At the time of filming, he

had three deaf children of his own, with one of them, five-year-old Heather, expressing a desire to be fitted with a cochlear implant so that she could “make hearing friends.”

The film captures the tension that builds within Peter’s family as its hearing members challenge his aversion to his daughter’s request. Like Lindsay, he can’t imagine being anything other than deaf, and wonders why his daughter would deny her heritage. Early on in the film, Peter states that if somebody gave him a pill that would make him hearing, he would refuse. “Would I take it?” he signs vehemently. “No way.” To him and Lindsay, deafness is beautiful and desirable, not something to be cured. *Deaf that*, they call themselves with pride. It is their core, the essence of who they are. There is no question of identity – and no shame. Harry, in contrast, is more conscious of the hearing world and the way society generally views deafness. Because he could hear at one time, he knows both worlds intimately, and cannot fully identify with either. His experiences are similar to mine in this respect, so it was relatively easy to imagine the agony of his in-betweenness.

Hear Again is an attempt to bridge the ever-widening chasm between sound and silence, the hearing and the non-hearing, the deaf and the Deaf, the disabled and the proudly abled. Through Harry and Lindsay, the screenplay exposes the underlying tension between two worlds and explores possible reconstellations. It re-imagines the boundaries of cultural territories and exposes its in-between places. Harry and Lindsay are presented as two people who share a unique physical trait they experience quite differently. Their connection is as much a disconnect from each other. To further complicate their union, they have two hearing children, affectionately called CODA’s (Children of Deaf Adults) who are adept in both visual and verbal languages. This

requires Lindsay to open up to the hearing world, although only enough to include the children. It doesn't stop her from monitoring their spoken conversation, nor the children from verbally bickering behind her back without fear of being overheard.

This interplay between hearing and deaf characters is an important mechanism that jumpstarts the screenplay with a typical noisy family environment that alternates with the silent spaces Harry and Lindsay occupy. The contrasting scenes of sound and silence is meant to engage both hearing and deaf audiences in ways they both can appreciate. For example, several scenes from Harry's or Lindsay's point of view are shown completely without sound to truly reflect their perspectives. In scenes where characters use ASL to converse, subtitles rather than voiceovers are used for translation purposes, requiring the audience to use their eyes to "hear" what's being said. When Harry's hearing returns, certain sounds are carefully emphasized and amplified so that the audience might feel as if they're hearing them for the first time. This renews the audience's wonderment for the phenomenon of sound, and at the same time nurtures an appreciation for silence. The hearing audience must use their eyes as well as ears to drink in the story, and a deaf audience will appreciate a film that frankly shows their everyday experiences and exposes the nuances of their language and culture.

The decision to approach *Hear Again* as an interplay between sound and silence was not something I entered into lightly. I had to decide who the story was written for, and why. I didn't want it to evolve into a tale that would preach about the misguided treatment of the deaf or turn them into victims, nor did I want to alienate a non-hearing audience by writing it from a hearing point of view. I decided the story must be written from Harry's point of view as an outsider who resides in two worlds, who loves them

both and sees their values and shortcomings. I feel as if I could offer such a viewpoint, being so much like Harry. And yet, I'm faced with what feels like an almost impossible task: how do I make deafness acceptable to a society where not being able to hear is seen as a bad thing? Harlan Lane, who wrote the iconic book, *The Mask of Benevolence: Disabling the Deaf Community*, declared that:

... even if the American deaf community were known for what it is, a linguistic and cultural minority with a rich and unique heritage, it would still be subject to a tribal stigma, as is, for example, the Hispanic-American community (7).

Even if deafness were acceptable, the Deaf community would still face pressure as a minority group to merge with the dominant culture. However, I feel the hegemonic landscape is changing, and that diversity is being more widely recognized for its value. There's no better time than now to come out to the world.

Writing *Hear Again* inspired me to research the themes of deafness in film studies and examine how the deaf have been portrayed in Hollywood. My search confirmed that the majority of commercial films about deafness have been written, produced and directed by hearing people. I came across an article by researchers Christie, Durr and Wilkens, who wrote about how hearing filmmakers "have often been criticized for their gaze at Deaf characters" (100). These filmmakers communicate mostly to a hearing audience and cater lightly, if at all, to the visual needs and cinematic aesthetics of their non-hearing counterparts. Take, for example, the box office film, *Children of a Lesser God* (1986). Though the original story is about two people in their struggle to communicate, the vantage point comes from James, who can hear, rather than from Sarah, who is deaf. James speaks when Sarah signs, and the camera rarely

frames her in full view when she does. His vocal cadence is preferred to subtitles, a clear pandering to a hearing audience. At no point in the film does the audience truly ever descend into her silence. Roger Ebert wrote of this: “Most of the people who see this movie will be able to hear, and although they may welcome the challenge of a movie about a deaf person, they aren't so interested that they want to experience deafness.” He remarks how he would have appreciated a movie without a soundtrack, replete with silent scenes filled only with sign language and subtitles.

Deaf filmmakers, however, are equally guilty of altering their gaze to exclude a hearing audience. I learned that while Deaf-made cinema is relatively new, the field is growing exponentially due to the increased accessibility to video equipment and editing software. Already, there are the foundations of a deaf filmmaking aesthetic at work, with a unique deaf-centric perspective seen in their storytelling processes. In their research, Karen Christie, Patricia Durr and Dorothy Wilkens noted that not many of the films they received for their study showed relationships between deaf and hearing people. “Rare were films,” they wrote, “which focused primarily on the borderlands between the Deaf and hearing communities and the place of conflict between these communities” (95).

The prevalence of silent films is one example of a deaf-centric cinematic aesthetic. The group's research showed that deaf filmmakers often eliminated sound in their films and conducted their dialogue in ASL with little option for translation, sometimes omitting even the use of subtitles for non-signers. “Unlike hearing filmmakers who use sound techniques to trigger emotions and transitions between scenes,” the researchers noticed how “Deaf filmmakers exploited the visual techniques

available to them.” They stated that “because Deaf people have a visual language and visual culture, it is expected that Deaf filmmakers' sensibility or instinct would be used and recognized by Deaf filmgoers” (99). Deaf-made films, they concluded, would naturally be shown from a deaf point of view, and would appeal mostly to an ASL-signing audience.

I find the results of their research rather unsurprising. Why would deaf filmmakers create films for an audience that has not been especially sympathetic to their plight? After all, hearing filmmakers don't make films for a deaf audience. Lately, I've made it a point to seek out more deaf-made films, although it has become a game to actually acquire films that exist on DVD or can be viewed on the web. I remember my first Deaf-centric film in third grade: a Hallmark television special ironically titled *Love is Never Silent* (1985) starring Mare Winningham as a CODA obligated to look after her deaf parents. Deaf producer Juliana Fjeld came to our class to present the film. She became an instant heroine because we knew she'd surmounted myriad obstacles to achieve her cinematic goals. About a year later, deaf actress Marlee Matlin appeared on the big screen with William Hurt in *Children of a Lesser God*. When I heard she'd won an academy award for her performance, I cheered for her although many of my deaf peers did not. They complained instead about how she chose to voice her acceptance speech instead of using ASL to show support for the Deaf community. Nevertheless, many later celebrated her cinematic achievements. She was, and still is, our most visible deaf celebrity, and remains one of the more recognized names in the movie industry.

Some other notable deaf people who have experienced relative success the field are filmmakers Mark Woods, Roger Vass, Jules Dameron, Peter Wolf and Jade Bryan.

Others produce, act and direct: Troy Kotsur, Deanne Bray, Sean Berdy, Shoshanna Stern. These names are rarely recognized by those not familiar with the Deaf community. At the time of this writing, the only commercially produced deaf-made feature film that has made its way to theaters is *No Ordinary Hero: The Superdeafy Movie* (2003) directed by Troy Kotsur and produced by Hilari Scarl, both who are deaf. The film features an eclectic mix of hearing and deaf actors, and attempts to address common themes and misperceptions between the hearing world and the Deaf community, especially in the education of deaf children. The film makes extensive use of voiceovers and includes a soundtrack geared towards a hearing audience. The star of the show, deaf actor John Maucere, is a well known celebrity in the Deaf community. I felt the film, although technically well-made, could have improved its story arc by focusing on the relationship between Tony (John Maucere) and the young deaf boy, Jacob (Zane Hencker). Other Deaf-made films I've seen recently were done entirely in ASL without subtitles and or sound.

As a film, I envision *Hear Again* to be unique in style and execution because the story seeks to engage a broad audience by honing in on various relationships (or lack of) between the hearing and the deaf and by attempting to normalize both worlds. One isn't better than the other, or more valid. As Harry's reality shifts from one that is mostly silent to one that is musical, he becomes a bridge to both worlds. In his new world, sound is often pitted against silence, and both are at once vilified and valued. Harry doesn't know how to bring the two together, so his solution is to keep them apart. As a writer, I had to figure out if I could even bring them together at all. It wasn't only

Harry's dilemma; it was also mine. Even now, I'm not quite sure how the Deaf community will react to the screenplay and to Harry's sudden hearing ability.

I have to admit the screenplay in its current state is very different from the original synopsis. I've had to reimagine the motives behind Harry's actions and then justify them to my readers. The more I did this, the more crystalized his character became, until finally he was without question the Harry Littleton I could be proud of. Other characters were fabricated mostly from scratch, often wearing personality traits from people I knew or observed. One thing I noticed early on was that some of my characters seemed hackneyed and two-dimensional. Dr. Kotter was villainous without a motive behind his demeanor, and Lindsay was the nagging housewife everybody disliked. As I struggled with their development, I came across Japanese filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki's work. I noticed how Miyazaki crafts his characters with a delicate balance of positive and negative qualities. To him, no one is absolutely good or evil, and even the bad guys are redeemable. This along with suggestions from my readers encouraged me to bestow my most problematic characters with an endearing trait or two. This was especially helpful for Lindsay. I realized in later edits I wanted readers to sympathize with her and to see her as vulnerable.

Part of Lindsay's development came about by studying how the Deaf community interacts with each other on the web. These days, video is the perfect visual medium for the deaf, so there has been a recent explosion of video blogs, or vlogs, on social media websites, especially on Facebook. My feed has been bursting with ASL-centric news bites, story vlogs, visual poetry and even video comments. This phenomenon wasn't quite as prevalent during the early stages of my writing, but

became more so as I was finishing up my final draft. I knew I had to somehow incorporate vlogs into the screenplay as an important trend in the Deaf community. It seemed only natural to hand this task to Lindsay. She needed something that made her stand out and also showed her commitment to Deaf pride. I had just watched a vlog where a woman was debating whether it was appropriate for a hearing person to make up name signs. Her almost militant stance and the thousands of supporting comments turned on a light: Lindsay would fit in beautifully as an internet sensation among the Deaf community. It became an important addition to the story and instantly brought Lindsay to life. From then on, it was clear who she was and what she stood for.

Creating dialogue for a hearing and a deaf audience was another challenge. Not only did I have to come up with realistic discourse between deaf and hearing characters, but I also had to decide how I would format the signed lines. ASL is a visual language similar to certain oral traditions where there is no written translation. It is a common misperception that ASL follows traditional spoken and written English syntax. Like any language, ASL has its own structure and rules, and contains unique idioms, slang and expressions that have no English translation. I felt I shouldn't write signed dialogue in straight English and leave it to the reader to envision its translation. I decided instead to make up an approximate translation in English based on ASL syntax and conceptualization, using hyphens and occasional action lines to clarify when needed. Writing it this way might not totally do justice to either language, but it would allow readers to see key cultural differences without completely alienating them. Ultimately, it is up to the director and the actors to decide how to interpret the text.

I spent many hours writing and rewriting the dialogue for the hearing characters so their lines wouldn't feel stiff and contrived or be too expository. Although I spent years in speech therapy (much like Harry) I made a conscious choice to stop using my voice in public after I exited high school. These days, I prefer to use ASL when I communicate, although I will adjust my signs to fit the ASL level of those I converse with. Despite this, the voices in my head speak in conversational English, not ASL. I *think* like a writer and craft my thoughts as I would a page in a book. Perhaps this makes me somewhat unusual, my preference to visualize words in place of signs when I daydream. I even hear these words in my head; they have a cadence and rhythm I imagine as my inner voice. I've been told this isn't common among those who were born deaf or who lost their hearing at a very early age and picked up ASL as their first language. I often see my best friend mumbling to herself in ASL, something I rarely do. Ask a deaf person whether they sign or speak in their dreams; I trust you'll receive some very interesting responses. For me, my dream characters generally speak and I respond back verbally; rarely do I find myself signing (although I've been told I sometimes sleep-sign!)

Nevertheless, because I can't properly overhear others, I had to study up on how hearing groups talk to each other in real life. There is only so much that can be learned through books and television. I turned to hearing friends and had them eavesdrop on conversations in a public places and relay them back to me. I interviewed them about their own experiences with deaf people. For example, a friend who worked at McDonald's told me about his encounter with a deaf customer. His experience helped me create the dialogue for the drive-thru scenes. I asked young people to share their

favorite slang. I even used responses from other students in my screenwriting group. For example, not knowing I was deaf at the time, a student remarked “deaf people should know better than to use a drive-thru” whereas another responded “I didn’t even know they could drive.” I researched speech patterns, such as Archie’s and Penny’s, and tried to reveal key personality traits by the way they spoke without resorting to stereotypes that might box them into assumptive roles. For example, Archie’s original dialogue was felt by early readers to be slightly racist with its heavy Jamaican-inspired accent. Dr. Kotter’s tone was overly formal and condescending. Penny sounded “blonde,” giggly and clueless. By creating unique dialectic attributes, I hoped to present them less as fabricated characters and more as real people.

Understanding speech patterns, idioms and especially slang is not easy for those who don’t hear it, and even written English is a challenge to master for the non-hearing population. It is generally recognized the average deaf person reads at a fourth-grade level – eighth grade at the most (Morere). According to an article published in *Ear and Hearing*, “low literacy levels among deaf students are, in part, due to a discrepancy between an incomplete spoken language system and the demands of reading a speech-based system” (Geers). Most deaf children are encouraged to assimilate into hearing culture by using techniques such as mainstreaming, speech therapy, and hearing aids or cochlear implants. Their unique needs for developing language skills are often ignored or neglected. Sign language, if used at all, is commonly an English-based syntax that discourages cultural identification with the Deaf community. Often, this assimilation method fails deaf children and they fall behind their hearing classmates. Harlan Lane wrote about how the “attempt to educate deaf children with teaching methods developed

for hearing children continues to prove a failure, decade after decade” (129). Regular classroom teachers don’t always help, either. Lane stressed the “general consensus that deaf students are intellectually handicapped is what handicaps them” (176). I myself have often wondered if my teachers give me high marks because I deserve them or because they are taking into account my deafness and buying into the assumption we perform “differently” from hearing peers.

As a mainstreamed student, I’d already acquired spoken language skills before I became deaf, so I managed to avoid most of the pitfalls faced by deaf children. Although I had sign language interpreters in the classroom, I was initially taught SEE (Signing Exact English), something invented by hearing educators that follows written/spoken syntax and is very different from ASL. I had speech therapy several times a week and was required spend to a portion of my day in a “specialized” classroom with other deaf students. I was encouraged to act as hearing as I could muster, and to wear hearing aids that were useless with their incessant buzzing and whistling. Although the students in my mainstream classes were usually taught how to sign, I often felt isolated and instead sought out the company of my deaf classmates.

I later attended a residential school for the Deaf as a sophomore in high school, where I was required to learn ASL or risk being estranged from my peers. It was here I decided to shut off my voice after being told I was “too oral” because I spoke out loud to those who could hear. I was also “too oral” for shaping my mouth with speech patterns when I signed. I quickly learned that assimilation into the hearing world wasn’t quite the objective of the Deaf community. Lane discussed the stigma of oralism in his book:

In the deaf community, to be called ‘oral’ we have seen, is unacceptable. Oral means you have made the wrong life choices; you have uncritically embraced alien values that place a premium on speech. Hearing people fail to see what is wrong with deaf people’s being ‘oral;’ articulateness is prized in American society; gesturing is not (7).

I didn’t quite fit in with my hearing peers, and by being oral, I was too “hearing” for the Deaf community. What choices did I have to avoid alienation from both worlds? I could continue to live out a marginal life, or I could master both languages and perhaps gain some kind of social acceptance from both – if it was even possible. This is something Harry struggles with throughout the screenplay. In *Hear Again*, although he’s fully entrenched in the community as a vice principal for a Deaf school, he often finds himself having to defend his “hearingness” to others.

Although I feel it’s important for my deaf peers to become proficient in written English, I fully support teaching ASL to deaf children at an early age. I believe that, given a chance, they can go far in life if the education system recognizes and accommodates their needs without imposing an archaic requirement for articulation. This is an area where deaf adults become essential role models, educators, and support systems. Harlan Lane stresses the importance of the deaf adult in the education of deaf children:

If deaf adults were once again substantially involved in the education of deaf children, there would be role models for those children, manual language would be reintroduced, spoken language skills would take their appropriate priority, literacy would improve, schools would no longer be speech clinics but be educational institutions. We need to recognize the deaf community for what it is and approach deaf education from the perspective of the education of language minorities, rather

than exclusively from the perspective of education of the handicapped (166).

Harry, as the vice principal of an all-deaf school, knows firsthand the influence of deaf adults on his students. His own experiences with mainstreaming have led him to conclude that many deaf students will learn better in an environment more conducive to their visual dependency. Harry's efforts are hampered by the well-meaning but often-misguided antics of Principal Kotter, who is hearing. The education system is full of people like Dr. Kotter whose mantra always seems to be: it's a hearing world, after all. But Harry and his friends wish to prove otherwise. The Deaf community expresses its desire to have Harry take over as principal, seeing him as better qualified than Dr. Kotter at assessing the needs of their students.

One might ask: does it really matter whether a person is hearing or deaf if they're qualified for the job? In truth, it shouldn't. In reality, there are other factors that come into play when it comes to employment. Although there are ADA laws meant to protect against discrimination in the workplace, it nevertheless occurs regularly. According to a report compiled by the National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes, only 47% of deaf people were employed in 2014, compared to 72% of hearing people (2). This is a significant gap, and when hearing people are taking jobs that could be filled by a deaf adult, especially in the field of education, we have to ask why. Is it because there are not enough deaf adults who have the education and/or experience needed to hold such positions? Or is it because those who *are* qualified are deliberately not being hired for administrative jobs? In the screenplay, Harry clearly has the expertise, but when people like Dr. Kotter see him and his colleagues as less

qualified because of their deafness, he sees little room for advancement, and his confidence is undermined.

So if the role of the deaf adult is so important to the well being of the deaf child, why even give Harry his hearing at all? This is something I mulled over constantly. I tried to imagine myself in his place. If I my hearing suddenly returned, would I abandon the Deaf community in favor of the opportunities that would open up as a result of hearing privilege? This is something Harry has to face, and it becomes a difficult decision when one has been deaf for a long time and is rooted in his lifestyle. I imagine most hearing people would see the return of his hearing as a positive thing. Yet, if it were, Harry wouldn't feel the need to hide it from his deaf counterparts. Although he finds joy in music and verbal conversation, he's reluctant to let go of the community he loves.

Hear Again is a spec script written in the vein of the wish-fulfillment trope where the protagonist casts an unlikely wish that somehow comes true, only to discover that life isn't richer or easier as a result. I originally modeled the screenplay after *Big* (2008) written by Gary Ross and Anne Spielberg and directed by Penny Marshall. Unlike *Big*, however, there's no wish-granting device, no Zoltan to rationalize Harry's sudden reversal of deafness. There is only a vague reference to an earthquake, something I borrowed from an article about a deaf man whose hearing returned in this respect (Daniels). The screenplay also differs in the way it ends. In most instances, the wish is reversed as the protagonist experiences disillusionment and desires to return to his original state. In *Hear Again*, Harry has his all-is-lost moment, but (except for an instance) he does not return to physical deafness at the end. Writing this way has often

tested my readers' willingness to suspend belief and accept the circumstances surrounding Harry's sudden hearing gain. Whether it works or not remains to be seen, but I feel confident the story is interesting enough to hold the audience's attention.

I am first and foremost a writer of fiction and poetry. The screenplay format provided a challenge that was both rewarding and frustrating. I started out overwriting my action scenes and embellishing them with unnecessary detail. I had to learn how to let go of wanting to control every aspect of the story, such as detailing emotional responses and gestures in parenthesis instead of trusting the actor to respond appropriately. After much trial and error, I soon found I could jot down my thoughts more quickly and concisely using the screenplay format in contrast to other mediums. Dialogue became more natural and instinctive, and a joy to write. I uncovered a passion for writing in this style, and found it immensely gratifying to see a story that existed only in theory could now be read in a visual format. Harry Littleton showed me that screenwriting is a lively discourse that invites the reader to actively construct the stage and act out the story. It fits perfectly into my visionary approach to storytelling.

I am proud to present *Hear Again* as a celebration of sound and silence, as a bridge between cultural disparity, and as a bright reconstellation of how we approach and interact with each other. I hope you enjoy Harry's journey as much as I did.

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HEAR AGAIN

Written by

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HEAR AGAIN CHARACTER LIST

Character

HARRY LITTLETON.....VICE PRINCIPAL, RIVERDALE
LINDSAY LITTLETON.....HARRY'S WIFE
ROY WOODWARD.....HARRY'S BEST FRIEND
PENNY RIVERS.....SINGER, PAPER MACHETTES
EVIE LITTLETON.....HARRY'S DAUGHTER
CAMERON LITTLETON.....HARRY'S SON
DR. KOTTER.....PRICIPAL, RIVERDALE
MARILYN.....OFFICE MANAGER, RIVERDALE
MS. BLANCHE.....INSTRUCTOR, RIVERDALE
MR. LANCASTER.....ADMINISTRATION OFFICER
ARCHIE.....MUSIC INSTRUCTOR
PAM.....LINDSAY'S SISTER
KATIE.....EVIE'S FRIEND
BRAD.....EVIE'S BOYFRIEND
EDNA.....NEIGHBOR
BOB.....NEIGHBOR
MOTHER.....HARRY'S MOTHER
JOCK SCHMIDT.....LINDSAY'S FATHER
MARTHA SCHMIDT.....LINDSAY'S MOTHER
BOARD MEMBER.....ADMINISTRATION OFFICER
LAUREEN.....LINDSAY'S FRIEND
CATHY.....LINDSAY'S FRIEND
JUAN.....CUSTODIAN
BARB.....KEYBOARDIST, PAPER MACHETTES
NATHAN.....DRUMMER, PAPER MACHETTES
STAGG.....BASS PLAYER, PAPER MACHETTES
FINN.....GUITARIST, PAPER MACHETTES

FADE IN:

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - DAY

LINDSAY LITTLETON, mid-30s, dressed for work, is hastily serving breakfast to CAMERON, 14, an athletic boy who resembles Lindsay, and EVIE, 17, a brooding girl dressed in dark colors. The two are seated at a dining table.

Cameron is thoroughly engrossed by his phone.

EVIE

Who the hell are you texting?

CAMERON

My girlfriend, Stacy.

EVIE

You? A girlfriend? Bullshit.

CAMERON

You're just jealous because you can't get any.

Evie angrily throws a piece of toast at him. Cameron ducks and smirks at her.

EVIE

You guys can't do anything anyway. You're only 14. Mom and Dad aren't gonna let you date for at least two more years.

CAMERON

We're in love and we're going to wait together.

EVIE

Oh, gross.

CAMERON

Suck a fart out of my ass.

EVIE

Eat a dick.

Lindsay continues to work around the kitchen and doesn't appear to notice the conversation taking place between Cameron and Evie.

WATER rushes noisily from the kitchen sink spigot.

INT. MASTER BATH - BATHROOM MIRROR - CONTINUOUS

WATER rushes silently from a bathroom sink spigot.

HARRY LITTLETON, late-30s, stands in front of a bathroom mirror shaving his face with an electric shaver.

There is SILENCE as he meticulously grooms his face.

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

WATER is still noisily streaming from the kitchen spigot as Lindsay exits the kitchen, oblivious of its existence.

Evie automatically gets up and slams the water off. It's as if she's used to doing this every day. Cameron snickers as she returns to her seat.

EVIE

I'm gonna tell Mom and Dad.

CAMERON

You won't.

EVIE

I so will.

CAMERON

Do it and I'll tell them about how you snuck out last night. And every night before that.

EVIE

I'll kill you.

CAMERON

You won't.

INT. MASTER BATH - BATHROOM MIRROR - CONTINUOUS

Harry examines his nose. He picks out a stray hair and winces in pain.

He checks his teeth and reaches for an electric toothbrush, loading it with toothpaste. He turns it on.

Again, SILENCE as he brushes his teeth.

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The kitchen noise returns as the kids continue their bantering.

Lindsay has returned to her puttering around the kitchen.

EVIE

I bet your girlfriend's really a dude.

CAMERON

Her dick's bigger than yours.

INT. MASTER BATH - BATHROOM MIRROR - CONTINUOUS

Harry turns on the water and rinses his hands, splashing his face a bit. He smooths his hair and admires his reflection.

As he EXITS, we see WATER still trickling silently from the faucet.

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Harry ENTERS, fiddling with his tie. He waves at the kids, who ignore him, and leans in to kiss Lindsay, but she appears to not notice him there. She turns and EXITS.

Harry shrugs and picks up a fork, using it to spear a sausage from a pan.

Lindsay returns and seems to see Harry for the first time. Her face lights up and she kisses his cheek.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)

Good morning! Don't forget tonight.

Because they are using sign language and not speech, we see SUBTITLES for their conversation.

HARRY (SIGNING)

Tonight? What's up?

Lindsay gives him a mock dirty look.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)

Oh, right. It's Friday.

Lindsay crosses her arms and sighs. He grins back.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
I wouldn't forget our date for the
world.

Lindsay shoves him lightly and hands him a juice as he juggles it with his car keys, phone, jacket and a briefcase.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
(motions to table)
Sit down and eat.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I'm already ...

As he signs, the keys in his hand fly across the room and land in Evie's bowl of cereal.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
... late.

EVIE (SIGNING AND VOICE)
Dad!

HARRY (SIGNING)
Sorry!

Lindsay walks over and plucks the keys out of bowl. She shakes them dry and hands them back to Harry.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Harry! Don't talk with your hands
full.

Harry grins sheepishly as she straightens his tie and smoothes his collar. She kisses him goodbye.

HARRY (SIGNING)
See you tonight.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
I have Y-O-G-A after work. I should
be home by six.

(Because there is no sign for yoga, she fingerspells it)

HARRY (SIGNING)
Y-O-G-A? Is that your latest K-I-C-
K?

Lindsay winks and blows him a kiss as she EXITS the kitchen.

Harry waves to Cameron and Evie. Cameron waves back. Evie ignores him as Harry walks by.

EVIE
(rolls eyes)
God.

Harry abruptly turns back to her.

HARRY
I caught that.

Harry's using his voice. We notice he has a slight ACCENT.

EVIE (SIGNING)
Caught what? You're deaf, Dad.

Cameron sniggers.

HARRY
I'm not deaf. I just ignore you.

Evie rolls her eyes again as Harry kisses the top of her head. We can see that despite Evie's attitude towards him, the two share a close relationship.

As Harry EXITS, Evie goes back to wiping off splashed milk from her clothes and the table.

CAMERON
So did Brad pork you in the butt last night?

EVIE
Wouldn't you like to know.

Lindsay walks over and plunks down a plate of sausages.

Cameron looks at Evie and makes pig sounds, hand covering his mouth.

Evie kicks him under the table.

Lindsay looks at them inquisitively.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
You-two using your voices again?

EVIE (SIGNING)
He started it.

CAMERON (SIGNING)

Did-not!

Lindsay gives them a baleful look and heads towards the kitchen. She is not really angry, but we can tell it bothers her when the children speak instead of sign around her.

As soon as her back is turned, Cameron resumes his oinking.

EVIE

Shut it.

Lindsay abruptly turns around and glares at them. It's as if she has a sixth sense.

EXT./INT. HARRY'S CAR - DAY

Harry distractedly checks his phone as he drives. He cuts off a DRIVER from behind.

The driver HONKS at Harry to no avail. Frustrated, the driver pulls into an adjacent lane and flips Harry off as they come to a red light.

Harry appears to not notice the driver and instead checks his appearance in the rear-view mirror. The light changes to GREEN. As they enter the intersection, the driver angrily speeds up and cuts him off.

Harry slams on the brakes and gestures angrily at the driver, who speeds off.

EXT. STARBUCKS DRIVE THROUGH ORDER SCREEN - A LITTLE LATER

Harry pulls into the drive-through. There are several other cars in front as he arrives at the MAIN ORDER SCREEN.

VOICE (FROM ORDER SCREEN)

Hi, and welcome to Starbucks. Would
you like to try our new fruity
Coconut Strawberry Frappucino
today?

Harry rolls down the window and studies the menu, oblivious of the voice blaring from the speakers.

VOICE (FROM ORDER SCREEN) (CONT'D)
Well, go ahead and order when
you're ready.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBUCKS ORDER BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

STARBUCKS WORKER #1, a young hipster, 20's, wearing a headset, watches a MONITOR where Harry's staring intently back, apparently scanning the order screen.

STARBUCKS WORKER #1
Hello? Can I help you? Hello?

Harry doesn't answer. He turns away and rolls his window rolls back up, his attention focused on his phone. He looks up and drives away.

STARBUCKS WORKER #1 (CONT'D)
Fucking people.

EXT. STARBUCKS PICK UP WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

STARBUCKS WORKER #2, a older haggard woman, peers out as Harry pulls up.

STARBUCKS WORKER #2
You didn't order anything.

CUT TO:

We shift to Harry's viewpoint and watch her say the same thing, but this time there is no sound coming out of her MOVING LIPS.

BACK TO:

Harry points to his ears and shakes his head.

CUT TO:

We shift back to STARBUCKS WORKER #2's viewpoint and sound returns. She points to the previous order screen.

STARBUCKS WORKER #2 (CONT'D)
(over-enunciates)
You're supposed to place your order
over there.

BACK TO:

We shift back to Harry's viewpoint. We see a CLOSE-UP of her lips moving in silent and exaggerated slow-mo.

CUT TO:

Harry cringes. Starbucks Worker #2's expression darkens.

Harry quickly points to his phone and shows it to her. Her expression changes as she reads it.

She holds up a finger and mouths "one minute" in the same overly exaggerated way before disappearing inside.

As she EXITS, Harry sighs and rolls his eyes. We can tell he's rather disgusted by the whole experience, but it's nothing new.

INT./EXT. HARRY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Harry sips his coffee as he drives pass a sign: RIVERDALE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF.

He pulls into a parking space marked: RESERVED FOR VICE PRINCIPAL.

EXT. RIVERSIDE SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

We follow Harry as he walks through the campus. He encounters various people who greet him in sign language. He's clearly a popular figure

A STUDENT exiting a building holds the door open for him.

STUDENT #1 (SIGNING)
Hi, Mr. Littleton! How are you?

Harry gives a THUMBS UP sign as he enters the building.

INT. MAIN SCHOOL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Harry is greeted by the office secretary, MARILYN, 60's, who is deaf.

MARILYN (SIGNING)
Happy Friday! Dr. Kotter's looking
for you.

Harry rolls his eyes and struggles to free his hands so he
can sign back.

HARRY (SIGNING)
What does old "coot" want this
time?

The sign for "coot" is a made-up name sign that looks
obviously derogatory.

MARILYN (SIGNING)
Don't let him see you sign that!
(takes his jacket)
He's in his office.

She straightens his tie and fixes his collar, which has
somehow become askew again.

MARILYN (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
That's better. You-going to the
game tonight?

HARRY (SIGNING)
(shakes head)
It's date night.

MARILYN (SIGNING)
Oh! I saw Lindsay's vlog last
night.

HARRY (SIGNING)
What vlog?

MARILYN (SIGNING)
About making J-U-I-C-E. You didn't
see?

Harry's walking backwards as he talks and narrowly misses
crashing into DR. KOTTER, a hearing man in his 50's with a
meaty face.

DR. KOTTER (SIGNS POORLY AS HE SPEAKS)
Good morning, Harry.

HARRY (SIGNING)
(falsely cheerful)
Oh there you are! Just who I was
looking for.

DR. KOTTER (SIGNING/SPEAKING)
(looking at his watch)
Weren't you due in my office a half
hour ago?

Dr. Kotter's signs are slow and awkward. He appears to not have a solid command of the language and also speaks when he signs.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Ah. Traffic. Big accident on 101.

Dr. Kotter raises his eyebrows but says nothing. He points towards his office and holds up a hand: FIVE MINUTES.

Harry nods and waves as he disappears into an office. The door slams loudly. Dr. Kotter looks at Marilyn shakes his head.

Dr. Kotter heads back to his office. His door also slams.

Marilyn watches both and visibly sighs. She knows they don't get along too well.

INT. DR. KOTTER'S OFFICE - SOME TIME LATER

HARRY enters and signs "GOOD MORNING" to Dr. Kotter, who is seated behind a large desk. Dr. Kotter swivels his chair and turns his attention to a stack of binders behind him.

As Dr. Kotter turns his back, Harry's "good morning" turns into a "FUCK YOU" gesture as he balls his hand into a fist and screws up his face.

Dr. Kotter pulls out a folder and turns back towards Harry, who quickly brightens up and replaces the fist with festive waving hand.

Dr. Kotter appears not to notice as he opens the folder and thumbs through the contents.

DR. KOTTER (SIGNING/SPEAKING)
How are those reports looking?

Harry looks blankly at Dr. Kotter.

DR. KOTTER (SIGNING/SPEAKING) (CONT'D)
(exasperated)
The new student assessments I gave
you a month ago. Don't tell me you
haven't started on those yet.

HARRY (SIGNING)

Oh, of course!

(hits head)

I handed them over to Marilyn. To
Check and re-check the facts.

(nervously)

You know, for accuracy. Can't be
too careful.

DR. KOTTER (SIGNING/SPEAKING)

I'll need them for the next board
meeting.

Harry smiles back accommodatingly and starts backing out of
the office.

HARRY (SIGNING)

Absolutely. If you'll excuse me ...

As Harry backs out of Dr. Kotter's office, there is a loud
commotion.

EXT. DR. KOTTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Kotter rushes out of his office to see what the noise is
all about.

We see Harry on his knees helping Marilyn pick up spilled
papers. He apparently had backed up into her when she was
walking by.

They both look up at Dr. Kotter, who looks down at them as if
they were children.

DR. KOTTER (SIGNING/SPEAKING)

Harry! Pay attention.

Harry grins sheepishly, still busily picking up papers.

DR. KOTTER (SIGNING/SPEAKING) (CONT'D)

Oh, and Ms. Blanche is out again
today. You'll have to find someone
else to supervise this afternoon's
detention.

Harry gives him a THUMBS-UP sign.

Dr. Kotter turns around and shuts his office door.

Harry's THUMBS-UP turns into a middle finger.

MARILYN (SIGNING)
Don't let him get to you. One day,
that office will have your name-
label.

HARRY (SIGNING)
That'll be the day.

MARILYN (SIGNING)
Don't be silly. I have 100% faith
in you. You're the man for the job.

Harry smiles wanly. He straightens up.

HARRY
Can you do me a favor and pull up
the latest aptitude test scores?

MARILYN (SIGNING)
Don't you worry.

INT. HARRY'S OFFICE - LATER

Harry's office is littered with sports memorabilia, various toys, educational posters, shelves filled with untidy rows of books, binders and stacks of paper.

He sits behind his desk and peers intently at a COMPUTER SCREEN. We pan to the screen. It's apparent he's doing anything but work at the moment.

An energetic man suddenly bursts into the office and closes the door behind him. He is ROY WOODWARD, 30's, deaf, dressed in athletic gear.

They bump fists as he pulls up a chair.

ROY (SIGNING)
You coming to the game night?

HARRY (SIGNING)
It's date night.

ROY (SIGNING)
Again?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Lindsay's been on my ass about it
for the past two weeks.

ROY (SIGNING)
Bring her along.

HARRY (SIGNING)
(shakes head)
She's really looking forward to
some "us" time.

ROY (SIGNING)
(rolls eyes and looks at
watch)
Lunch?

Harry nods in agreement and stands up, then sits down heavily
and shakes his head.

HARRY (SIGNING)
The old coot has me working on this
new project.

Roy imitates Dr. Kotter's poor signing skills. Harry can't
help himself and joins in. They both laugh raucously,
forgetting where they are.

The office door suddenly opens. Dr. Kotter pops his head in
the door.

DR. KOTTER (SIGNING/SPEAKING)
(to Roy)
Figured you were here. All I hear
is noise, noise, noise.

Both Harry and Roy try to suppress their giggles. Dr. Kotter
points at Roy.

DR. KOTTER (CONT'D)
I need to talk with you about
tonight's game.

ROY (SIGNING)
(points to watch)
It's lunch time.

DR. KOTTER (SIGNING/SPEAKING)
This doesn't look like the lunch
room.

Harry and Roy look at each other as they laugh weakly at Dr.
Kotter's attempt to be funny. It becomes obvious they're
laughing AT him and not WITH him.

DR. KOTTER (SIGNING/SPEAKING) (CONT'D)
(sarcastic)
I just need five minutes of your
precious time.

ROY (SIGNING)
Ok, ok. Give me a minute.

The office door shuts. Roy returns to mimicking Dr. Kotter's signs, making a point to over-exaggerate.

The door abruptly opens again, and they turn off their voices. Dr. Kotter re-enters and stares at them dourly.

DR. KOTTER (SIGNING/SPEAKING)
(to Harry)
Don't forget the report. I'd like
to have it on my desk by the end of
the day.

Harry nods and gives him a THUMBS UP sign.

The door closes again, with more force. Harry and Roy look at each other.

ROY (SIGNING)
Well. I'll let you get back to ...
(gestures to desk)
... whatever.

Roy gets up from his chair.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Wait. Think you could take over
detention this afternoon?

Roy shakes his head. Harry puts his hands together in a begging gesture.

ROY (SIGNING)
Sorry, man. No can do. Gotta get
the boys ready for tonight. Why
don't you ask Marilyn?

HARRY (SIGNING)
She does enough for me already.

ROY (SIGNING)
I'm sure you'll find someone.

As Roy exits, he pops his head back in for one last retort.

ROY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Enjoy . . . date night.

Harry waves with a smirk as the door shuts once again.

Harry sighs and sinks visibly into his seat. The door opens abruptly once again. He hastily straightens up.

Marilyn enters cheerfully. She places a thick REPORT in front of Harry.

Harry gives her a KISS-FIST gesture.

HARRY (SIGNING)
What would I do without you?

He ruffles through the report for a minute, his attention on the contents.

He waves his hand towards Marilyn as if he's going to say something else. But when he looks up, she's already left the room.

He sighs. He looks at his watch and grabs his phone.

We PAN TO a TEXT:

HARRY (TEXTING) (CONT'D)
(to Lindsay)
Gonna be late. Detention duty.

INT/EXT. HARRY'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON/EVENING

It's rush hour. Harry looks dazed as his phone lights up while he's at a stoplight.

We PAN TO a TEXT:

LINDSAY (TEXTING)
Almost home?

Harry types frantically, one eye on the still-red light.

HARRY (TEXTING)
Still in traffic. This stinks.

LINDSAY (TEXTING)
Pick up some Swedish Fish for me?

HARRY (TEXTING)
Fish? I thought you said sugar was
poison.

LINDSAY (TEXTING)
For the movies. Please?

The light turns GREEN. Harry's still typing. Cars HONK. He's blissfully unaware of the commotion.

INT. GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

Harry stands in the aisle reading a tabloid magazine. An ELDERLY WOMAN behind him tries to push her cart past him.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Excuse me, young man.

Harry doesn't respond. He's fully engrossed in an article.

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT'D)
Please! I need to get by.

Harry continues to read.

The elderly woman bumps her cart into his backside.

Startled, he looks up from his reading at her.

She flashes him a dirty look as she rolls her cart past, nearly running over his foot.

CUT TO:

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT'D)
My word! People these days. No
manners. No manners at all.

BACK TO:

Harry mouths "SORRY" but she has her back to him. He watches her angrily push her cart down the aisle.

INT. CHECKOUT LANE - A LITTLE LATER

A young CASHIER in her late 20's checks out Harry's groceries. She smiles at him pleasantly.

CASHIER
Hi, how are you today?

Harry smiles back and nods politely. He pulls out his wallet and fumbles around for a card.

CASHIER (CONT'D)

I hope you found everything okay?

Harry's attention is on the transaction terminal in front of him and not on her. He doesn't answer.

The cashier looks uncomfortable and continues scanning groceries in silence. A young male CLERK comes by to help.

CLERK

(to Harry)

Would you like a bag?

Harry remains silent, now focused on his phone. The cashier and clerk give each other strange looks.

Harry finally looks up from his phone and notices their confused looks. He points to a bag and nods.

The clerk, looking a little bewildered, slowly begins to pack up his merchandise.

As Harry leaves with his groceries, the clerk, cashier, and a SHOPPER in line exchange glances.

EXT. HARRY'S CAR - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Harry pulls into his driveway. He waves to his next door neighbor, BOB, who is outside with his wife, EDNA, watering his plants.

Bob raises a hand uncertainly in reply and watches Harry disappear inside.

BOB

(to Edna)

There goes that deaf man.

EDNA

Bless his heart. Why do they let him drive? Isn't that unsafe?

BOB

It's downright dangerous, if you ask me.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - EVENING

Harry and Lindsay arrive at the theatre and hand their tickets to an EMPLOYEE.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Go-get the caption thingie. I'll
find us seats.

Harry makes his way to the TICKETING BOOTH, where he waves to a young EMPLOYEE and shows him his phone. The employee looks confused as he reads the message.

EMPLOYEE
I don't think we have one of those
here. Sorry.

Harry points repeatedly behind the employee to where a few long-necked devices are hanging. The employee looks nervous.

EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)
Let me get my manager. Hold on.

He holds up a finger.

Harry again points and groans in frustration as the employee ignores him and disappears into the back.

A few minutes later, he reappears with a MANAGER, who immediately retrieves two CaptiView devices and hands them to Harry.

MANAGER
(carefully enunciating)
I am so sorry!

INT. THEATRE #12 - CONTINUOUS

Harry walks around straining his eyes to find Lindsay in the dark.

Lindsay, seeing him wandering the aisles, waves frantically to him. He fumbles over and hands her one of the devices as he takes his seat.

Harry struggles to position the CaptiView so he can see both the movie and the captions. The device pops out of the cup holder and clatters loudly to the floor.

Murmurs stir up around him and heads turn.

Harry picks it up and puts it back in the cupholder. He tries to crane the neck of the display in an optimal way. It again pops out and onto the floor.

Lindsay picks it up and leans over him to position the device in the cupholder and manipulate it for him. She gives him a questioning THUMBS UP gesture. He smiles and mouths THANK YOU.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Where's popcorn?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Shit. I forgot.

As Harry rises from his seat, the CaptiView is jostled by Harry's motions and again clatters loudly to the floor.

Murmurs stir up around them, louder this time.

INT. THEATRE #12 - SOME TIME LATER

Harry and Lindsay are thoroughly engrossed in both popcorn and the film.

Harry's CaptiView device begins to DIM. He shakes it a few times. It then begins to DISPLAY GIBBERISH. He bangs on it. No luck. The display spasms and sputters out.

Lindsay looks curiously at him.

HARRY (SIGNING)
(points to device)
Dead.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
We can share.

They both try to manipulate the device. Harry pulls it towards him and Lindsay pulls it towards herself.

They're making a racket. Murmurs stir up around them and heads turn.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)
Forget it. Too hard for us-both to see.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I'll be back.

He grabs the neck of his dead device and rushes from his seat.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Hurry! You'll miss the best part.

INT. THEATRE LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The lobby is partly deserted. Harry desperately searches for an employee. He spies a young THEATRE EMPLOYEE #1 sweeping the carpet and waves him down.

Harry points to his ears, then to the device, and makes a THROAT SLITTING MOTION.

The employee looks around nervously as if looking for help.

Harry, exasperated, points to his device again and mouths DEAD.

THEATRE EMPLOYEE #2 enters the booth.

THEATRE EMPLOYEE #1
Oh. Thank god you're here.

They both look at Harry.

THEATRE EMPLOYEE #2
Yeah? Can I help you?

CUT TO:

From Harry's point of view, we see this scene again, but it is silent. Harry impatiently gestures again to the device and mouths "DEAD" making a slicing motion at his neck.

BACK TO:

The point of view shifts back to sound as they watch Harry dramatically gesticulating. The employees glance at each other in mild bewilderment.

THEATRE EMPLOYEE #1
I have no idea what he's saying.

INT. HARRY'S CAR - NIGHT [DRIVING]

Harry's driving, looking a bit miffed, while Lindsay sucks on candy fish in the passenger seat.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Well, that sucked.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
I kinda liked it.

HARRY (SIGNING)
At least you saw the whole movie.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Did I finish show my new M-Y-S-T-I-C
C color-purple crystal?

She pulls out a large stone on a chain around her neck.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Nice rock.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
It's-not a rock!

HARRY (SIGNING)
How-much did that cost?

Lindsay waves dismissively.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
I-got a discount.
(beat)
The clerk tried to sell me R-E-I-K-I
sessions. She thought it might
bring my hearing back.

Harry snorts in response.

LINDSAY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
I laughed at her. I thought that so-
funny. Some people still think they
need to fix me.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Doesn't that bother you?

LINDSAY
Nah. Their problem, not mine.

Harry shrugs. He's lost in thought. After a moment, he
responds, rather cautiously.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Don't you ever wish you could hear?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Me? Never. Deaf pride!

HARRY (SIGNING)
Deaf pride?

Lindsay nods. To her, it's only natural to think so.

Harry sticks up his middle finger and makes raspberries.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Deaf pride is silly.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Silly? How can-you say that?

HARRY (SIGNING)
What-if something called "hearing
pride"?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Hearing pride? *That's* silly.

HARRY (SIGNING)
What's difference?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Not-same.

Lindsay's obviously becoming bothered by the conversation.

HARRY (SIGNING)
What-if someone wasn't born deaf?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Growing-up, I didn't E-V-E-N know I
was deaf, until hearing people told
me that. I grew up fine, no-matter.

Lindsay turns away from him. Harry waves at her until he finally gets her attention.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Lindsay. Look-at me.

Lindsay reluctantly turns to him.

HARRY (CONT'D)
To some deaf people, it's a L-O-S-
S. Not an identity.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Is that what this is to you? A L-O-S-S?

HARRY (SIGNING)
It's not a L-O-S-S. But it's not exactly who I-am either, either.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
I don't believe you.

HARRY (SIGNING)
True-true, though.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
You grow-up deaf. You social-social deaf. You sign-fluent. You speak-none. You work at Deaf-school. Deaf your L-I-F-E!

HARRY (SIGNING)
Deaf my L-I-F-E, yes. But not 100%.

Lindsay gives him a strange look. She doesn't really get it.

Harry tries to lighten the mood with a smile.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
If I could hear, know what I'd be?
A rockstar.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
A rockstar? You-kidding?

HARRY (SIGNING)
I've always wanted to play guitar on stage.

Harry turns up the radio full blast. The car shakes with booming noise they both can feel. They think it's music but it's actually a NEWS SHOW. He rocks out and makes a show of playing air guitar, giving Lindsay the devil's horn sign.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
You can-still be one. Like Beethoven!

Harry, who's still mock-rocking out, plays out this scenario in his head.

CUT TO:

INT. STAGE - EVENING

BAND MEMBERS make their way to the stage. The band is led by Harry, who is wearing a flashy outfit and is strumming a GUITAR. The band consists of four others who play instruments and prance in front of a crowd of thousands of FANS.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Thank you! Thank you!

The music starts up. Harry strums on his guitar, but it's too loud. And it sounds awful. He's completely out of tune with his bandmates. The audience starts to BOO and HISS. He stares back in growing horror.

BACK TO:

INT. HARRY'S CAR - NIGHT [DRIVING]

Still in his head, Harry's expression reflects his horror as Lindsay stares at him. He looks at her and stops acting out.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I'd be more-like Beethoven's
nightmare.

(Note: Beethoven's Nightmare is a reference to a real-life Deaf band)

Harry pulls into their driveway. The mood has changed, and not for the better.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
You never talk-like this before.
Why now?

HARRY (SIGNING)
I'm just tired of always struggle-
struggle with hearing world.

Lindsay's is silent. She's lost interest in her candy fish.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
I can't imagine myself hearing.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I know you can't. But I was, once.
I still remember what it's-like.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
But you're not hearing no-more.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I don't feel like I fit-in
anywhere.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
You fit-in Deaf world. They accept
you.

HARRY (SIGNING)
That's your world. Not mine.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Why can't it be our world?

Harry is silent for a moment before turning away.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I just wonder sometimes. What life
be-like if I'd never became deaf.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
That makes me sad.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Sad? Why?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Because then we'd never-met.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Why-not? Maybe possible still.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
You wouldn't have given me a second
glance.

HARRY (SIGNING)
That's not true. You're beautiful.
Who wouldn't fall-in-love with you?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
It's not just about *beautiful*. It's
what's inside.

HARRY (SIGNING)
You're beautiful inside, too.

Lindsay fiddles with her necklace.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Most hearing people look-at me and
see only D-E-A-F.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I'd be different.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
No you wouldn't.
(beat)
It wouldn't work-out anyway.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Why not?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Deaf-hearing relationships? Hard.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Hard, yes. But still-can.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
(shakes head)
Not-worth.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Don't say that.

She's obviously made up her mind.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Not-matter anyway. You're deaf. I'm
deaf. We're same. Perfect.

Lindsay's done with the conversation and Harry knows better than to push her when she's reached this point.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I guess you're right.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Of course I am.
(kisses his cheek)
I'm gonna-go upstairs to meditate.
You coming?

HARRY (SIGNING)
That one of your . . . ?

Lindsay's exits the car before he can finish.

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - LATE NIGHT

Evie and Cameron are still up and slouched in a dark living room in front of a blaring television. A car door slams.

Lindsay bursts through the front door and barely acknowledges the kids. She exits the room, heading upstairs.

Another car door slams. Harry enters shortly after. He waves to the kids and slowly takes off his jacket, hanging it on a hook by the door. The jacket falls back to the floor as he EXITS into the kitchen.

Cameron looks over at Evie, whose attention is intently focused on the television.

EVIE

I guess mom didn't like the movie.

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Evie ENTERS the kitchen. Harry has his head buried in the fridge. She walks over to him.

EVIE (SIGNING)

What's-up?

Harry takes out a drink and hands her one.

HARRY (SIGNING)

Movie sucked.

They walk over and sit at a table.

EVIE (SIGNING)

Is mom alright?

HARRY (SIGNING)

She went upstairs. To meditate.

EVIE (SIGNING)

Did you see her vlog?

HARRY

What vlog?

EVIE (SIGNING)

She's been ranting about hearing people making up their own signs.

HARRY (SIGNING)

Really? That's odd.

EVIE (SIGNING)
What if Cameron or I made up a
sign? Aren't we allowed to do that?
We're not deaf.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I don't see why not.

EVIE (SIGNING)
Does she resent us because we can
hear?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Of course not. Why would you say
that?

EVIE (SIGNING)
Everyone else in her family is
deaf. Except for cousin L-I-S-A.
And nobody likes her.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Cousin L-I-S-A? But that's because
she's crazy as a B-A-T. Not because
she's hearing.

Evie shrugs, not quite convinced.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Mom loves you and Cam. You know
that. You-both are her world.

EVIE (SIGNING)
It just doesn't always feel-like
it.

INT. HARRY AND LINDSAY'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Harry lies in bed and looks over to a sleeping Lindsay. Although she has her back to him, she looks lovely and serene in her sleep. He gazes at her for a moment, almost wistfully, before turning around. They are back to back. He turns off the lamp. BLACK.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY [BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE]

A YOUNG HARRY, 8, is playing with a group of children on a playground. It's a beautiful day. He climbs up a tall metal play structure. His MOTHER watches from a distance.

MOTHER
Harry! Not too high!

He grins at her, intent on reaching the top. Once there, he surveys his surroundings. He begins to realize how high he is.

As he looks down, a spell of VERTIGO hits him. The playground starts to spin and he feels himself losing his grip.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
HARRY!

He begins a slow descent to the ground. The last he sees are the faces of children looking down at him. BLACK.

INT. SOUND BOOTH - AUDIOLOGY DEPT - DAY

Young Harry sits in a large chair wearing a clunky pair of HEADPHONES. He looks small as he stares blankly at a large sound screen covered with black cloth and sparkles. His feet dangle restlessly. There is a MIRRORED WALL to his right.

A light turns on from behind the mirror, revealing an AUDIOLOGIST standing in an adjacent room with his mother.

Young Harry switches his attention from the screen to them.

AUDIOLOGIST
He's not responding to any low or mid-range tones. In fact, he's barely responding at all.

MOTHER
Is he ever going to get it back?

DOCTOR
There's no cure.

MOTHER
Oh, doctor.

Young Harry watches as the audiologist takes his mother's arm and leads her away. He rips off the headphones.

YOUNG HARRY
Mama. Don't go. Mama.

They appear not to hear him as they EXIT. Harry rushes to the mirror and bangs on it.

YOUNG HARRY (CONT'D)
He's wrong, Mama. I can hear you. I
can hear everything you say.

The light in the control room shuts off and the room disappears. Young Harry stares at his reflection in the mirror. He starts to cry.

The control booth starts to SHAKE. Things fall from shelves, the ceiling. The shaking intensifies. Young Harry frantically bangs at the mirror.

YOUNG HARRY (CONT'D)
Mama. Mamaaaa!

The mirror shatters. BLACK. [END DREAM SEQUENCE]

INT. HARRY AND LINDSAY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Harry awakens suddenly as if startled by a loud noise. The bedroom is shaking slightly. The movement stops. He notices a fallen LAMP on the nightstand. He uprights it and glances at the CLOCK, and then to the empty side of his bed. Lindsay is long gone. He yawns and stretches.

A BVVVT-BVVVT sound breaks the silence. He freezes in mid-stretch, not sure he's actually heard anything or if it's his imagination. The sound REPEATS.

He looks around frantically for the source, finally resting eyes a phone on the nightstand. He picks it up.

We pan to a TEXT.

LINDSAY (TEXT MESSAGE)
At the courts. Another earthquake!
Things okay at the house? Love you.

Harry stares at the message in disbelief. He shakes his head. Freak incident, he decides. He sticks a finger in an ear.

INT. MASTER BATH - CONTINUOUS

Harry stands in front of a toilet. Silence is broken by an amplified sound of liquid hitting water.

Harry's sleepy eyes widen.

The sound stops, then returns in a few random spurts.

Harry cautiously tips over the toilet lid. It bangs down with a CRASH, causing him to jump.

He slowly pushes down the flush handle.

A deafening whoosh sends him stumbling backwards into a bathtub.

He grabs frantically at a shower curtain that does nothing to break his fall.

CUT TO:

EXT. TENNIS COURTS - SAME TIME

Lindsay lobs a tennis ball with a little more force than necessary.

Her deaf sister, PAM, 40's, ducks and throws up her arms.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)

Sorry!

PAM (SIGNING)

I think we need a time-out.

They sit down on a bench as Lindsay wipes her brow with a towel.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)

Maybe it's the earthquake. I feel off-balance.

Lindsay pulls out a pack of PRIMETIMES from her purse and nonchalantly lights one up.

PAM (SIGNING)

I thought you quit.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)

I did.

Pam looks at her for a minute before helping herself to one. She lights up.

PAM (SIGNING)

Raspberry. Not bad.

BACK TO:

INT. MASTER BATH - SINK/MIRROR - SAME TIME

Harry stands in front of the sink rubbing the back of his head.

He turns on the faucet, the sound of rushing water makes him jump back a bit, but he is a bit more prepared for the noise this time.

He turns it off and on several times, mesmerized by the alternating of sound and silence.

Harry does the same thing with his electric toothbrush.

A tube of toothpaste slips from the sink onto his foot. He yells out loudly in pain.

Harry immediately covers his mouth with his hand and stares incredulously at himself in the mirror. He uncovers his mouth.

HARRY

Ahh?

Harry covers his mouth again. He removes it.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Lalalalalalalala. Leeleeleeleelee.
Loolooloolooloo.

He continues to make silly sounds and facial expressions before letting silence fall once again. He stares at the himself in the mirror, now serious.

HARRY (CONT'D)

It's nice to meet you.

Harry has an obvious deaf accent. He grimaces awkwardly at his reflection.

INT. HARRY AND LINDSAY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Harry opens the French doors to the bedroom terrace.

A SYMPHONY OF SOUNDS bursts from the surrounding neighborhood.

We focus on several amplified noises that catch his attention: birds singing, a neighbor mowing the lawn, a kid banging on a piece of wood, a motorcycle driving past, a leaf blower.

Harry's face shows a mixture of fear and awe as every sound comes at him, at first simple and singular, then increasing in intensity and complexity. It's too much for him.

He slowly retreats back into the house and slams the doors shut.

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - A MOMENT LATER

Harry, now dressed, tiptoes in. He absentmindedly plops his phone on the kitchen counter, and in doing so, knocks a glass to the floor. It shatters onto pieces on the floor. He winces at the sound, stares at the broken glass in shock.

Another noise from behind makes him jump again. Cameron enters the kitchen, holding a basketball. He notices the broken glass on the floor.

CAMERON (SIGNING)
What-happened?

HARRY (SIGNING)
(slightly exaggerated)
I oops-mistake. Silly. Don't step.

Harry busies himself with cleaning up the broken glass.

Cameron bounces the basketball as he walks around the kitchen. The remaining pieces of broken glass VIBRATE with each bounce. Harry, crouched over cleaning, cringes each time the ball hits the floor. With each bounce, it becomes unbearable. He can no longer restrain himself.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
(to Cameron)
Finish!

("Finish" means "stop" in ASL)

Cameron freezes in mid-bounce. The ball bounces away until silence returns to the kitchen.

CAMERON (SIGNING AND VOICE)
So-rry.

He throws Harry a funny look as he gathers up his basketball and exits the kitchen.

Harry sighs and throws out the glass -- carefully, to not make any more noise.

A BVVVT-BVVVT sound fills the kitchen and Harry jumps again. But this time he knows what the sound is from. He scrambles for his phone, almost dropping it on the floor.

We pan to a TEXT.

ROY (TEXT MESSAGE)
Where you at, bro?

HARRY (TEXT MESSAGE)
You won't believe what just
happened.

INT./EXT. HARRY'S CAR - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Harry jumps into his car and turns the key.

The radio, still on full blast, shouts out a sales jingle. Harry freaks out and fumbles wildly at the knobs, trying to gain volume control.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S FRONT YARD - SAME TIME

Edna is cutting roses and Bob is leaning against a rake.

They watch Harry as he struggles with the radio. He waves to them awkwardly. They wave back as Harry quickly backs out of the driveway and speeds down the end of the street, swerving slightly as he disappears around a corner.

BOB
There goes that deaf man.

EDNA
Bless his soul. Was that the radio
I heard?

BOB
It's downright dangerous, if you
ask me.

BACK TO:

INT./EXT. HARRY'S CAR - DAY [DRIVING]

Harry wipes away beads of sweat on his forehead, clearly trying to get his bearings. He takes a deep breath, determined.

A bit calmer, he fiddles with the radio. We hear different kinds of music, announcements, talk shows, commercials. He settles on a station.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O)
Gooood morning, Riverdale! Looks like it's warming up out there. Temperatures are in the low 80's and the birds are out singing. Aren't they always? Expect some delays if you're heading southbound on the I-15 expressway this morning. Oh, and did you feel the trembler earlier? 5.0, folks. Nothing we ain't used to.

Harry flips his turn signal. We are made hyper aware of the beeping as he hears it for the first time. He appears hypnotized by the sound.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O)(CONT'D)
So, folks. That's it for the news. We have some non-stop music coming right at ya here on the only station that plays your favorite hits of the 80s and 90s. And now, a little Wilson Phillips to start your afternoon.

Soft music fills the car as Harry rolls up to a stoplight. There is a BVVVT-BVVVT and he plucks up his phone, almost without second thought.

We pan to a TEXT.

ROY (TEXT MESSAGE)
Pick me up a mocho-coco?

The light turns GREEN, but Harry's too busy texting back to notice.

A car behind HONKS frantically.

Harry looks up in his rear-view mirror and sees the DRIVER behind him making obscene gestures.

EXT. STARBUCKS DRIVE THROUGH ORDER SCREEN - DAY

Harry drives up to the MAIN ORDER SCREEN.

VOICE (FROM ORDER SCREEN)
Hi, welcome to Starbucks. What
would you like today?

Harry stares at the screen in surprise. He then opens his mouth as if to speak.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BATH - SINK/MIRROR - EARLIER THAT DAY [FLASHBACK]

Harry grimaces at the mirror. He continues to make silly sounds and facial expressions.

HARRY
(overly exaggerated)
It's nice to meet you.

BACK TO:

EXT. STARBUCKS DRIVE THROUGH ORDER SCREEN - DAY

Harry clamps his mouth shut.

VOICE (FROM ORDER SCREEN)
Dude. I don't have all day.

Harry rolls up his window and sinks into his seat.

He accidentally presses on the horn. The sharp "honk" makes him jump.

The DRIVER in front rolls down his window and looks back angrily at Harry.

DRIVER
What the fuck?

Harry waves awkwardly and mouths SORRY. The driver flips him off.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBUCKS ORDER BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

A STARBUCKS WORKER #3 wearing a headset stares at Harry on a MONITOR. Worker #1 walks over to see what he's looking at.

STARBUCKS WORKER #1
It's that deaf guy from yesterday.

STARBUCKS WORKER #3
Dude. Don't they know better than
to use the drive-thru?

STARBUCKS WORKER #1
I didn't even know they could
drive.

EXT. PARK - PARKING LOT - DAY

Harry jumps as his car door slams behind him.

Balancing a tray of drinks, he clicks the door lock on his key.

As he did earlier with the sink and the toothbrush, Harry locks and unlocks the door several times, mesmerized by the sound.

EXT. PARK - BASKETBALL COURTS - CONTINUOUS

Roy is shooting hoops. He's wearing gym shorts and a headband, and looks sweaty.

He spies Harry and watches him make his way over. Harry seems to be overly jumpy and distracted by his surroundings.

Roy offers a fist, which Harry ignores as he seats himself at a bench.

ROY (SIGNING)
Feel the earthquake?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Earthquake?

ROY (SIGNING)
Never mind. How was "date night"?

HARRY (SIGNING)
I don't want to talk about it.

ROY (SIGNING)
You missed some good D-R-A-M-A last
night at the game. Dan was shit-
faced.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Dan is always shit-faced. Listen,
something's happened.

ROY (SIGNING)
(slaps his hands together)
This better be good, man.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Remember when I told you I lost my
hearing when I was like eight?

ROY (SIGNING)
Yeah. Big deal. I lost my hearing
as a kid, too.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Yeah, but you still have some left.

Harry points to Roy's hearing aid.

ROY (SIGNING)
So what? I'm still deaf. And you're
just as deaf-same.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Not anymore.

ROY (SIGNING)
What's that supposed to mean?

HARRY (SIGNING)
It means I can hear again.

Roy looks at him for a minute. He starts to laugh
hysterically.

ROY (SIGNING)
You are such a liar.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I swear to God I'm telling the
truth.

Roy still looks doubtful. He sits down beside Harry.

HARRY (CONT'D)
I went to bed last night, and when
I woke up this morning, I could
hear.
(beat)
I can hear *everything*. At least, I
think so.

Roy lets out a loud fart.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Roy! That's disgusting.

ROY (SIGNING)
Holy shit. You're not kidding.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Of course I'm not.

ROY (SIGNING)
You just went to sleep and woke up
and could suddenly hear?

Harry nods. Roy looks incredulously at him.

ROY (CONT'D)
What did Lindsay say?

Harry's holds his nose and fans the air vigorously with his
hand.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I haven't told her yet.

INT. BURGER STAND - DAY - A SHORT TIME LATER

Harry and Roy are at the counter ordering.

ROY
Two big boy burgers. And chili
cheese fries. Oh, and a coke.

Roy's voice is clearly a "deaf" voice.

The clerk speaks to Roy as if he were mentally handicapped,
not deaf. Harry finds this offensive as he watches the
exchange between them but says nothing. His face says it all.

They walk towards a booth and sit down.

ROY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
So what-are you gonna do-do?

HARRY (SIGNING)
I don't know. The deaf community is going to treat me different when they find out.
(sighs)
I'll never live this down.

ROY (SIGNING)
It *is* a big change.

HARRY (SIGNING)
My whole life revolves around working with the deaf. All my friends are deaf. At least, most of them.
(beat)
And then there's Lindsay. You know how she feels about the hearing world.

ROY (SIGNING)
Lindsay? But both your kids are hearing.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Exactly. She's going to feel even more left out than usual.

ROY (SIGNING)
(waves dismissively)
Did you see her vlog?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Vlog? I think Evie mentioned it last night.

ROY (SIGNING)
It was pretty intense.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I still haven't seen it. We got into it last night. And I sort of told her I wished I could hear.

ROY (SIGNING)
Weird. And *now* you can.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Seriously, I wish I could U-N-D-O
this.

ROY (SIGNING)
Really?

Harry nods vehemently.

ROY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
I don't believe you.

EXT. BURGER STAND - DAY - A BIT LATER

Harry and Roy walk towards their cars.

HARRY (SIGNING)
You can't tell anyone about this.
Not yet.

ROY (SIGNING)
Not even Dan?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Especially not Dan!
(beat)
I just need some time to figure
things out.

ROY (SIGNING)
It'll be our little secret.

They bump fists, enter their cars and drive off in opposite
directions.

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - EVENING

Harry enters to find Lindsay with Pam and two deaf friends,
LAUREEN and CATHY, all dressed in yoga gear.

Harry greets them as he walks over to kiss Lindsay on the
cheek. She's surrounded by fruits and vegetables, busy
working a blender.

Harry tries not to cringe at the noise.

HARRY (SIGNING)
New blender?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
It's a N-I-N-J-A.

She pours a glass and hands it to him.

LAUREEN (SIGNING)
(to Harry)
Did you hear about Dan?

CATHY (SIGNING)
His wife had to bail his drunk ass
out-of jail last night. Poor girl!

LAUREEN (SIGNING)
If you ask me, she should have left
him in there to rot.

CATHY (SIGNING)
He would have deserved it, too,
after his behavior last night.
Disgusting!

LAUREEN (SIGNING)
Did she show up last night? I don't
remember seeing her.

PAM (SIGNING)
No. She doesn't hang out with us
much.

LAUREEN (SIGNING)
I'm not surprised. Her signing is
so-so. And she's not that pretty,
either.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
(to Lauren)
Be nice! At least she tries.

CATHY (SIGNING)
She and Dan are quite a pair.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
I don't think those kinds of
relationship ever succeed. Sooner
or later, communication barrier
gets in-the-way.

Lindsay uses a short-hand sign that symbolizes a
communication breakdown. The other women nod in agreement.

CATHY (SIGNING)
I saw your vlog last night.

HARRY (SIGNING)
What's this vlog I keep hearing
about?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
It's nothing.

CATHY (SIGNING)
I can't imagine myself dating a
hearing man.

PAM (SIGNING)
I did, once.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
You did not!

PAM (SIGNING)
Did, too! Back when you left for
college.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Mom and dad know?

PAM (SIGNING)
(shakes head)
He couldn't sign for shit.
(beat)
He had a big dick, though.

Pam's description is visually exaggerated. The women laugh
rowdily.

Lindsay bangs around in the kitchen as she doles out juice.
She slams cabinet doors open and shut without regard to the
sound. The women are also loud as they converse and laugh.

Harry tries not to cringe at all the noise they're making but
not without Lindsay noting his discomfort.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Harry? What's-wrong?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Nothing, nothing.

The women stop conversing and stare at him.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
I have a little headache. I think
I'll go lie down.

He waves as he awkwardly exits the kitchen. The women wave back and return to their gossip.

Except Lindsay, who's quiet. She seems to have a sixth sense that something's not quite right.

INT. HARRY AND LINDSAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The blinds are drawn. Harry lies on the bed with a pillow crammed between each ear.

A LIGHT snaps on. Harry's eyes snap open. Lindsay enters the room.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
You didn't come down for dinner.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I fell asleep.

Lindsay sits on the bed besides him and puts her hand on his forehead. He brushes it away.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
You're ok-ok?

HARRY (SIGNING)
I'm fine. Long day.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
You're not still mad about last
night?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Mad? Why would I be mad?

Lindsay gets up and disappears into the bathroom.

We become hyper focused on various bathroom noises: water rushing, toilet flushing, toilet lid slamming, electric toothbrush, drawers sliding in and out.

As Harry listens, he crams the pillows tighter around his ears.

Lindsay comes to bed. She kisses his forehead and is about to go to sleep, but he stops her.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
What's this about a vlog?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Vlog? I have a lot of vlogs.

HARRY (SIGNING)
The one about hearing people. Not
being allowed to make-up signs.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Oh. That one.

HARRY (SIGNING)
You really believe that?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
ASL is our language. Nobody else's.

HARRY (SIGNING)
What about the kids?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
They don't count. They're C-O-D-
A's. Part of Deaf Culture.

HARRY (SIGNING)
What about deaf people who get
their hearing back?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
I've never heard of that.

HARRY (SIGNING)
What-if?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Not-happen. Anyway, it was just a
vlog. Go to sleep.

She settles back in and turns over, obviously not wanting to
continue the conversation.

Her lamp clicks off. Harry looks over at her for a while but
she appears to be sleeping.

He stares at the ceiling for a while, lost in thought.

Finally his lamp clicks off. BLACK.

HARRY AND LINDSAY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Harry wakes up alone. It's quiet. He looks around and seems relieved. Maybe it was all a dream. He yawns and stretches, rising from bed.

He walks over and opens the veranda doors. Like yesterday, a SYMPHONY OF SOUND greets him. His eyes widen. No such luck. He slams the doors shut.

INT. MASTER BATH - SINK/MIRROR - CONTINUOUS

Harry stares at himself in the mirror.

HARRY
(haltingly)
Hello! My name is Harry.
(in a different tone)
How are you? It's nice to meet you.
(beat)
Asshole. You sound like shit.

He brushes his teeth, occasionally making gibberish noises and faces at himself.

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Harry, now dressed, enters the living room, where Cameron and Evie are slouched in front of a loud television.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Turn that down.

Cameron and Evie look at each other and then at Harry as if he's lost his mind. They make no move to comply.

Harry grabs the remote and shuts off the TV. He waves his arms at them in a shoo-ing motion.

HARRY (CONT'D)
It's a beautiful day! Go find
something else to do.

The kids grudgingly pick themselves off the couch and head upstairs.

Harry looks around to make sure no one is in earshot and then clicks the TV back on, adjusting the sound. He flips through channels and pores over a variety of commercials, sitcoms, movies, infomercials and news shows. He starts to imitate how people converse.

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - TOP OF STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Cameron and Evie watch Harry discreetly from upstairs. They look at each other suspiciously.

INT./EXT. HARRY'S CAR - DAY [DRIVING]

Music plays from the radio as Harry drives. He turns it off and there is silence.

HARRY
(haltingly)
A ... B ... C ... D ...

He clears his throat and starts again, stronger this time.

HARRY (CONT'D)
E ... F ... G ... H ... I ... J ...
K ...

He speaks faster.

HARRY (CONT'D)
L .. M .. N .. O .. P!

His voice is now more resonant.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Q, R, S, T, U, V
(sings)
W, X, Y, Z!

Pleased with himself, Harry spies the MOVIE THEATRE as he drives by. This gives him an idea.

As we cut to the theatre, we notice the main title. It's the same film he saw on date night.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE BOX OFFICE - DAY

Harry purchases a movie ticket from Employee #2, who apparently recognizes him from the other night and reaches for a CaptiView device.

Harry raises a hand and shakes his head. Employee #2, confused, slowly returns the device to its cradle.

Harry mouths THANKS.

Employee #1 and Employee #2 look at each other as Harry walks away.

THEATRE EMPLOYEE #1
Isn't that the deaf guy from the
other night?

THEATRE EMPLOYEE #2
Sure looks like him.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

Harry sits in the theatre. As he chomps on a bowl of popcorn, his expressions show us he is fully engaged in the film.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

Harry EXITS the theatre with a look of wonder and satisfaction on his face. He deposits the empty bowl of popcorn in a trash can.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - CONTINUOUS

Harry walks down a street sipping a drink.

He's captivated by city noises. Our attention is directed to the sounds he's focused on: a jackhammer, tires squealing, a cop car siren, truck air brakes, kids laughing, emergency flashers, people shouting.

Harry encounters a BUSKER skillfully playing a harmonica. He pauses to listen.

He fishes a dollar out of his pocket and tosses it into the guitar case next to the busker.

BUSKER
(tips hat)
Much appreciated.

Harry gives him a THUMBS UP sign and walks on.

There is an EYELINE between him and a music store across the street. He walks towards it.

INT. MUSIC STORE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Harry browses around, awkwardly handling various instruments. His head bobs to background music. He fingers the keys of an old-fashioned piano and then bangs around on a pair of bongo drums.

Throughout, we are hyper-focused on the sounds he experiences and share his wonder of hearing them for the first time.

INT. MUSIC STORE - GUITAR AREA - CONTINUOUS

Harry touches the strings of a bass guitar hesitatingly. They resonate lightly under his fingers.

A buoyant hearing woman, PENNY RIVERS, early 30's, suddenly appears at his side.

PENNY

Hey! Can I help ya with something?

Her appearance/voice makes Harry jump.

HARRY (SIGNING)

Hello.

Penny looks at him curiously.

HARRY (CONT'D)

(clears throat)

Um. Hello. Hi!

Penny sticks a hand out at him.

PENNY

I'm Penelope. But you can call me Penny.

Harry smiles nervously. Penny smiles back encouragingly. She has a pleasantly punk aura about her.

HARRY

P-penny. That's a p-pwetty name.

PENNY

Thanks! You look like you could use some help.

Harry stammers, unable to find the right words. Penny looks over his shoulder at the model he'd fingered earlier.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Ooohh! Good choice! That's a classic. The Pee-Bass has the wickedest reverb.

Penny reaches over Harry and plucks the guitar from its rack. As she walks off, she nudges him to follow.

Caught off guard, Harry hesitates for a moment and complies.

INT. MUSIC STORE - AMP AREA - CONTINUOUS

Harry perches on a stool as Penny plugs the bass into an amp and manipulates various knobs. She hands the instrument to Harry, who holds it awkwardly.

PENNY
First time?

Penny shows him how to hold it. She manipulates his fingers to press down on certain strings.

PENNY (CONT'D)
See that? That's the open E-string.
Just pluck it gently.

He does, and the store vibrates with an exquisite tone.

His eyes pop wide open with an intense rush of pleasure. He plucks another string, and another.

Harry tries to strum the guitar. This leads to a mess of noise. Penny cringes and surrounding customers glance over inquisitively. Harry abruptly stops playing.

PENNY (CONT'D)
It's okay!
(beat)
Here, let me show you something.

Penny pulls up another stool and takes the guitar from Harry. She deftly adjusts the strings and proceeds to expertly strum a rock-style ballad.

Harry bobs his head in tune to the song, obviously enjoying it.

PENNY (CONT'D)
That's a song I wrote the other
day.

HARRY
Wow! It's . . . g-good.

PENNY
Thanks!

HARRY
I like your song.

PENNY
(beams)
So what kind of music do you listen
to?

HARRY
Umm. R-rock and r-roll?

PENNY
Me too! What are your favorite
bands?

HARRY
When I was little, I liked the
BeeGees. And, I think, Metallica.
Oh, and m-my friend Roy makes me
listen to the Beastie Boys.
Sometimes.

Penny notices he has a bit of an accent and a monotonous tone
but doesn't say anything.

PENNY
Awesome! Oldies. But goodies.

Her amiable nature puts Harry visibly at ease.

PENNY(CONT'D)
So, what else? Anything more
recent?

Harry looks as if he's trying to remember something. He
shakes his head.

HARRY
I couldn't hear for a-a long time.
But, I just got it back.

PENNY
Got what back?

HARRY
(clears throat)
M-my hearing. A couple days ago.

PENNY
Wow! Did you, like, have an
operation or something?

She walks around him, visually examining his ears.

HARRY
No. It was just ... back.

PENNY
Fuckin' A.

HARRY
It happened when I w-was eight. I
fell, and then I woke up in the
hospital.
(points to ears)
Deaf.

PENNY
Totally?

HARRY
Totally.

PENNY
(whistles)
That's gnarly. I can't imagine not
being able to hear.

HARRY
I know. I couldn't either, back
then. The doctors, t-they never
figured out why.

PENNY
My gosh. This is so cool.
(beat)
You have sooo much catching up to
do.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

INT. MUSIC STORE - CONTINUOUS

- A) Harry listens appreciatively as Penny plays the piano.
- B) Harry and Penny bang around on a large xylophone.
- C) Harry and Penny dance around playing ukuleles.
- D) Penny plays a violin while Harry cringes slightly at the squeaky sound.
- E) Harry and Penny play with shakers and tambourines.
- F) Penny giggles as Harry tries to figure out a didgeridoo.
- G) Penny places a pair of ear buds in Harry's ears and switches on some music from an iPod. His face screws up, and so does hers. She switches to something else. His face melts in pleasure and he bobs his head to a beat. She grins victoriously.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. CHECKOUT COUNTER - LATER IN THE DAY

Harry stands in front of the register, still wearing ear buds and nodding to music, as Penny rings up his purchases: a bass guitar, a small amp, and a soft guitar case.

PENNY

I think you'll be really happy with this one. It's a great little workhorse.

Harry looks as if he's not listening. Penny pulls out one of the ear buds to get his attention.

PENNY (CONT'D)

I took the liberty to toss in a few CD's. Free of charge.

Harry nods enthusiastically.

HARRY

(points to ear buds)
Thanks for these!

PENNY

We always have an extra pair somewhere.

(MORE)

PENNY (CONT'D)

Oh, and you're gonna want to sign up for some lessons.

(yells aside)

Archie!

(to Harry)

Archie will get you started. He's our resident music instructor.

(whispers)

He's baaa-daaaass. But don't you tell him that.

(yells louder)

Ar-chie!

A stylish black man, 40's, thrusts his head through a curtain.

ARCHIE

Damn, girl! What you hollering on about. Trying to get my groove on over here.

Penny waves him over. Archie reluctantly but good-naturedly saunters over to the counter.

PENNY

Archie, this is ... I'm sorry, I never caught your name?

HARRY

Harry. M-my name is Harry.

Archie offers a fist.

ARCHIE

Hey man. Nice to meet you.

(looks over)

The Pee-Bass! Nice.

PENNY

Harry here just got his hearing back and now he wants to learn how to play.

ARCHIE

Whoooooaaahh.

(gives Harry a once-over)

Did you like, get an operation or something?

PENNY

It just came back.

Archie looks confused but nods in acceptance.

ARCHIE
God works in some fucked-up ways.
(to Harry)
I'll have you jammin' in no time.

Harry grins and nods enthusiastically. He pops the earpod back into his ear and resumes his head-bopping to the music.

Archie looks inquisitively at Penny.

PENNY
He doesn't talk much.

Archie slaps Harry on the back and hands him a card. He motions for Harry to call before disappearing behind a curtain.

INT. MUSIC STORE - REGISTER - A LITTLE LATER

Harry, loaded up with his newly purchased gear, starts to walk out. He's stopped by Penny, who places a piece of paper in his shirt pocket.

PENNY
Oh, I'm in a band. We play at the Raven most weekends. Come by sometime, okay?

Harry takes out the paper and reads slowly.

HARRY
The Pa-per Ma-shits.

Penny giggles in admiration.

PENNY
It's pronounced "Muh-shays."

Harry grins and mouths THANKS as he places it back into his pocket.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Bye, Harry!

EXT. ROY'S HOUSE - LATER

Roy waves as Harry pulls into his driveway.

ROY (SIGNING)
What's up? Your text seemed urgent.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I need to borrow your garage.

ROY (SIGNING)
What for-for?

Harry gets out of the car and motions for Roy to follow him. He pops open the trunk. They behold his latest acquisition in awe.

INT. ROY'S GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Roy and Harry are surrounded by gym equipment cleared away to make space. Roy watches as Harry plugs his new bass into an amp.

Harry plucks some strings, marveling at the sound. Roy looks unimpressed.

ROY (SIGNING)
I can't hear nothing.

Harry looks over at Roy's left ear.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Where's your hearing aid?

ROY (SIGNING)
I left it inside.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Never mind.

Harry fiddles with a few knobs on the amp.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Feel that.

Roy walks over to the amp and sits on it.

The garage vibrates as Harry strums away, one string at a time. He's trying to remember how to place his fingers as Penny had instructed earlier. But he plays the instrument, loudly ... and badly.

Roy rocks out anyway as if it were excellent music.

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - LATER THAT EVENING

Lindsay is busily preparing a dish as Harry walks in.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Get my message? My parents are
coming for dinner.

Harry tries to hide his displeasure at the news with a smile
but he doesn't quite succeed.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)(CONT'D)
Oh stop-it. You know they love you.

(She signs this with a KISS-FIST sign, by which she means
they really "dig" him.)

HARRY (SIGNING)
We've been married for 17 years and
your dad still doesn't think I'm D-
E-A-F enough for you.

Lindsay makes a "pssssh" noise and waves dismissively.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
He likes to joke.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Joke, my A-S-S.

Lindsay notices something in Harry's shirt pocket and pulls
it out. She unfolds it and reads it. It's a flyer for Penny's
band.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
What's-this?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Nothing. Someone pass-out downtown.

He plucks the flyer from her and tosses into the trash bin.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Downtown? I thought you were at
Roy's.

HARRY (SIGNING)
We stopped there for a bit. Roy
wanted to look at some-things.
(looks over her shoulder)
What's for dinner?

Harry walks past her to the cooktop and busies himself with uncovering pots and pans. He lifts a wooden spoon for a taste and flinches as a door bangs shut.

Evie and a friend, KATIE, enter the kitchen. Harry pretends he's burned his tongue and fans his mouth, then waves at the two of them.

Lindsay eyes him curiously as Evie waves her hand to get her attention.

EVIE (SIGNING AND VOICE)
Can Katie stay for dinner?

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Harry sits at the head of a dining room table with Lindsay, Evie, Katie, Cameron, and Lindsay's parents, JOCK and MARTHA SCHMITZ.

As they pass around food items, everyone except Harry converses animatedly in sign. It's a typical noisy family scenario with everyone talking over each other, only in sign languag.

KATIE
(discreet, to Evie)
What are they talking about?

EVIE
Mom's just going on and on about stinky Barbara. And grandpa's telling us about his colonoscopy. Again.

KATIE
Who's stinky Barbara?

EVIE
(rolls eyes)
One of my mom's stupid clients. She's like 50 and still pees her bed. Like every night. So gross. They're all so gross.

CAMERON
(to Evie)
You're gross.

Cameron's talking but covering his mouth so that no one will see him talking.

Evie glares at him.

EVIE
Oh? How's *Stacey*?

KATIE
They're sitting in a tree.

EVIE
K-I-S-S-I-N ... G.

The girls make smooching faces. They don't bother to cover up their voices. The adults are too animated in conversation to notice them anyway.

CAMERON
Shut. Up.

Harry, who had been feigning interest in the conversation between his wife and her parents, overhears their talking.

He shoots them a dirty look before he can stop himself.

EVIE (SIGNING)
(to Harry)
What? I'm just telling Katie what Grandpa said. Not everybody can sign, you know.

Cameron remains silent and picks at his food.

Harry knows Evie's lying but he can't say anything.

Lindsay looks quizzically at Harry, who is still glaring at Evie. He notices her attention and nervously returns to his meal. However, everyone's attention is now on him.

JOCK (SIGNING)
(to Harry)
So! How's the V-P job? Any chance we'll see Deaf Principal soon?

Jock's signs are strong and fluent ASL. He uses many conceptual-visual signs.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I'm working on it.

JOCK (SIGNING)
Good. We need to set example with
Deaf leadership. That Kotter needs
to be kick-out.

Jock makes an elaborate motion of throwing someone out.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I'm sure he just wants what's best
for the students.

JOCK (SIGNING)
You agree with him? He can't even
sign. His signs are too-English. I
barely-understand him.

MARTHA (SIGNING)
Finish. Be-nice.
(to Harry)
I think Dr. Kotter is a very sweet
man.

JOCK (SIGNING)
He's the worst kind of hearing.

(By this, he means the worst kind of hearing people.)

HARRY (SIGNING)
Maybe he's just not good with
language?

JOCK (SIGNING)
No excuse! If he wants work with
Deaf, he should become skilled ASL.
(beat)
Why you defend? That your hearing-
sense again?

Jock uses a derogatory sign for "hearing" that circles the
top of his head instead of his lips, He's implying Harry is
too "hearing" inside although he is deaf.

Harry becomes overly aware he is indeed now . . . hearing.

HARRY (SIGNING)
No, no, no. Just trying see it from
his perspective. To be fair.

JOCK (SIGNING)
Fair? Is hearing world fair to
deaf?

Lindsay interrupts the quickly-souring conversation by cheerfully waving for everyone's attention.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Ready for dessert?
(to Jock)
I made your favorite pie. Chocolate
C-R-E-A-M!

Jock's attitude changes. He beams at her and makes brings both hands to his lips, blowing kisses *bon appetit* style.

LINDSAY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
(to Harry)
Come help me?

Harry nods in relief. He follows Lindsay and they exit into the kitchen.

Jock turns his attention back to those still seated at the table.

JOCK (SIGNING)
Anyway, doctor explained to me I
must undergo deep cleaning . . .

EVIE
(to Katie)
My family. Is. So weird.

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Lindsay stand before a large pie on the kitchen counter. Harry tries not to react to the sound of whipped cream whooshing from its canister as Lindsay puts on finishing touches.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Pie? Very healthy.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
It's 100% organic. And gluten-free.

HARRY
Oh, I seeeee.

He uses the "OIC" sign rather sarcastically.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
It's for Daddy. It makes him happy.

HARRY (SIGNING)
At least something does.

She hands him the pie.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Why would you defend Kotter like that?

HARRY (SIGNING)
I wasn't defending him. Not exactly.

He's signing with one hand, the other holding the pie awkwardly. Lindsay looks at him expectantly.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
I just think sometimes we place too much importance on group-hearing and group-deaf.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
That's how it is. Right?

Something about her attitude makes Harry think twice about answering.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Right.
(beat)
I'd better take this to the table.

Harry EXITS the kitchen with the pie.

Lindsay watches him go. She's wearing a slightly disturbed expression.

She's about to toss out the whipped cream canister when she notices the FLYER Harry had thrown in the trash bin earlier is no longer on top.

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - DEN - NIGHT

Harry lies on a couch in the dark. Everybody else has gone to bed.

He listens to night sounds: the refrigerator humming, creaks and shifts and clicks, a tree branch against a windowpane, a car passing by, a clock ticking, a distant train whistle.

These sounds become increasingly amplified.

He puts his hands over his ears as if wanting to block out the noise.

He turns on a lamp and gets up. When he returns, he's wearing ear buds. He plugs them into his phone and pecks at it.

He settles back onto the couch, his face now serene.

He shuts off the light. BLACK

INT. HARRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Harry, sitting at his desk, plays with various electronic toys and shows amusement at the sounds they make. He soon loses interest and pops in his ear pods.

He air-drums animatedly with two pencils. The door opens.

Harry pulls the ear pods out quickly, sighs in relief to see it's just Roy.

ROY (SIGNING)
What's up, hearing boy?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Shhh! Don't let anyone see you say that.

Roy plants himself into a seat.

ROY (SIGNING)
Still haven't told Lindsay?

Harry shakes his head and places the ear pods back in his ears, and proceeds to rock out to whatever he's listening to.

HARRY (SIGNING)
No. And I'm not going-to.

ROY (SIGNING)
You're kidding, right?

Harry shakes his head again resolutely.

ROY (CONT'D)
Can't blame-you. She'd probably freak-out.

HARRY (SIGNING)
"Freak-out" is an understatement.

ROY (SIGNING)
You gonna tell anyone at all?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Why should I? People wouldn't understand. They'd think me different.

ROY (SIGNING)
Not even a doctor? I mean, this whole thing could be a F-L-U-K-E.

Harry makes an elaborate visual show of being sliced up, observed and studied by bug-eyed doctors.

HARRY (SIGNING)
No doctors.

ROY (SIGNING)
Suit yourself. But you can't keep this a secret forever.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I can try.

Roy throws up hands. He's not going to stop Harry. Not his problem anyway.

ROY (SIGNING)
Gotta-go. Lunch?

Harry, more intent on his music, nods absently as Roy exits.

As the office door slams shut, Harry's jacket, hanging on a door peg, falls to the floor. Harry walks over to hang it back up.

A card falls out of the pocket. Harry picks it up.

We pan to the card. It reads: JAMS WITH ARCHIMEDES: CALL NOW.

INT. MUSIC STORE - DAY

Harry enters the store and walks up to the register.

A young CLERK, 20's is at the register. He looks up and greets Harry as he approaches him.

HARRY
Is P-Penny here?

CLERK
She's due in later. Can I help you
with something?

Harry shows him a card. The clerk looks at him expectantly.

Harry points at the card.

CLERK (CONT'D)
You want to see Archie?
(yells aside)
Archie! Some dude's here for you!

Archie pops his head through a curtain, slightly agitated.

ARCHIE
Why people yellin' all the time?

He sees Harry and lightens up.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
My man! Is that you? Harry, right?
Mr. He-once-was-deaf-but-now-can-
hear.

He laughs at Harry's expression.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
You ready to jam with Archie?

INT. ARCHIE'S STUDIO - DAY

Archie and Harry are in a room surrounded by various music
equipment.

Archie points to various parts of a bass guitar.

ARCHIE
This the body, okay? And this the
neck. These are the frets, and this
we call the headstock.
(hands Harry the bass)
Now you hold. Get good and
comfortable. Like this.

Harry struggles with the instrument, gradually finding his
groove.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
That's right. The bass is your friend.

Archie picks up his own instrument.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
Now, place your finger here. This the A string, and this the D string. Make sure you don't touch the other strings. Arch your fingers. Yea, that's right. Give it a nice strum.

As Harry strums, a head pops in from behind a curtain. It's Penny.

PENNY
Har-ry!

Harry smiles and waves to her. He tries his best to look like he knows what he's doing.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Looking good!
(to Archie)
You treating him well?

ARCHIE
You know he in good hands.

PENNY
You coming this Friday?

ARCHIE
Wouldn't miss it.

Penny looks at Harry. Harry shakes his head. Penny gives him a painful look.

HARRY
I-I don't know. I've n-never been there before.

Harry's voice is noticeably stronger but still wavers uncertainly at times.

PENNY
On, come on! Please? We're gonna play my song. Don't say no. Eight, ok?

Harry nods lamely as Penny disappears behind the curtain before he can respond.

ARCHIE

I think she likes you, Harry.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) INT. MASTER BATH - DAY: Harry practices voicing in the mirror while getting ready for work. He stops when his wife passes by, and resumes when she's out of sight.

B) INT./EXT. HARRY'S CAR - DAY: Harry plays a CD and sings along as he drives about.

C) EXT. STARBUCKS DRIVE THRU - DAY: Harry places an order using his voice at the main order screen.

D) INT. HARRY'S OFFICE - DAY: Harry studies a guitar tabs book, discreetly hiding it under his desk when Kotter walks by to check up on him.

E) INT. ARCHIE'S STUDIO - DAY: Archie gives Harry a nod of approval as he performs a simple bass riff.

F) INT. ROY'S GARAGE - EVENING: Harry and Roy rock out as he practices on his bass.

G) INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT: Harry, eating popcorn, clicks through TV programs, imitating the vocal pace and cadence of various speakers.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. THE RAVEN VENUE - NIGHT

Harry holds open the door for Roy as they cautiously enter the venue and observe their surroundings. It's dark but trendy inside, and packed with boisterous people who are drinking, chatting and dancing to the music. A band is on stage playing.

INT. THE RAVEN VENUE - HARRY'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Roy, now holding beers, make their way to a table. Roy looks around appreciatively.

ROY (SIGNING)
Look at all these hot B-A-B-E-S.
(points over to a woman)
I'd love to put my hands on that
ass.

Roy visually describes what he would do to the woman's ass.

HARRY (SIGNING)
You're a pig.

ROY (SIGNING)
It's not like I'm married or
something.

Harry spots someone in the crowd and waves. It's Archie.

Archie waves back and makes his way towards them.

They bump fists and he sits down.

ARCHIE
Hey man! You made it.

HARRY (SIGNING AND VOICE)
Roy, this is Archie. He's teaching
me how to play bass.
(to Archie)
This is Roy.

As Roy and Archie shake hands, Roy looks strangely at Harry.
He's obviously not used to seeing him speak.

ROY (SIGNING)
(aside to Harry)
I thought you weren't gonna tell
anyone?

HARRY (SIGNING)
He's hearing.

ROY (SIGNING)
So?

HARRY (SIGNING)
He doesn't know any Deaf. He's not
going to blah-blah-blah.

The crowd starts up as a new band enters on stage. Penny
takes the center and waves to the crowd as they cheer loudly.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Put your hands together for Penny
River and the Paper Machetes!

The drummer counts down and the music starts up loudly, much to the crowd's delight.

As the song ends, Penny spies Harry and waves over at him. He waves back.

ROY (SIGNING)
You know her?

HARRY (SIGNING)
She works at the music store. She
helped me pick out my bass.

ROY (SIGNING)
Oh. I seeeeeeee.

Roy uses the OIC sign sarcastically.

INT. THE RAVEN - EVIE'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

At another table, Evie sits with several other teens, including her boyfriend, BRAD, and Katie. She is apparently unaware of her father's presence at the venue.

EVIE
This band sucks.

BRAD
I don't know. I kinda like them.
(gestures towards Penny)
And she's hot.

Evie shoves him, clearly not amused. She watches the lead singer wave to somebody in the crowd. When she sees who waves back, her face changes from bored to incredulous. Katie nudges her.

KATIE
What the hell you looking at?

Evie points over to where Harry is sitting, rocking out with Roy and Archie.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Isn't that your dad?

Evie nods slowly.

INT. THE RAVEN - HARRY'S TABLE - LATER THAT NIGHT

The band has finished their set and the crowds are thinning.
Penny approaches their table.

PENNY

I'm so stoked to see you guys here.

HARRY (SIGNING AND VOICE)

You did really good. I enjoyed your songs.

(gestures to Roy)

This is Roy. My best friend.

ROY (SIGNING)

Nice to meet you.

PENNY

Wow! Is that sign language? I want to learn!

Harry interprets what she's saying to Roy.

ROY (SIGNING)

(slowly to Penny)

I will teach you.

PENNY

Awesome!

(to Harry)

Wouldn't it be so cool to do a song in sign language?

Penny waves over to the rest of the band to come on over to the table.

ROY (SIGNING)

(aside to Harry)

She knows, too?

Harry gives him a look and doesn't answer.

Penny introduces the rest of the band: FINN, a young guitarist, late 20's, BARB, a keyboard player, early 30's, NATHAN, a drummer, 30's, and STAGG, a bass player, late 40's.

PENNY

(to Harry)

Stagg plays the bass, just like you.

STAGG
Come jam with us sometime.

PENNY
That's a great idea!

HARRY (SIGNING AND VOICE)
I'm no good. I just started
learning.

PENNY
C'mon! It'll be good practice.

Roy, who hasn't been able to take his eyes off Penny, nods enthusiastically.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Bring Roy. It'll be super fun.

INT. THE RAVEN VENUE - NEAR HARRY'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Unknown to Harry and his friends, Evie has moved close enough to eavesdrop on their conversation. As she hides, she listens to them in awe.

INT. THE RAVEN - HARRY'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Penny, Archie and the bandmates chatter away.

ROY (SIGNING)
(to Harry)
I think I'm in love.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Aren't you dating that new teacher?

ROY (SIGNING)
Psshhh. We broke it off a while ago. Besides, I like hearing girls better.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Since when?

PENNY
What're you guys talking about?

HARRY (SIGNING AND VOICE)
Nothing! Just blabbing.

ROY (SIGNING)
(slowly, to Penny)
I think you're beautiful.

PENNY
Awe! You're sweet.
(to Harry)
How do you say "thank you?"

Harry shows her the sign. As Penny and Roy continue to awkwardly try to converse, Harry empties his beer. He clops it down on the table. He's a bit tipsy.

HARRY (SIGNING AND VOICE)
I think . . . I gotta pee.

INT. THE RAVEN - NEARBY HARRY'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Harry, not paying attention to where he's going, slams into the eavesdropping Evie, much to her surprise.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Evie!

EVIE (SIGNING)
Dad!

HARRY (SIGNING)
What are you doing here?

EVIE (SIGNING)
What are you doing here?

HARRY (SIGNING)
I'm an adult. How'd you get in?
You're not 21.

Evie suddenly looks nervous and doesn't answer.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
You are in B-I-G trouble. Your mom's going to freak-out about this.

EVIE (SIGNING)
What about when she finds out you're playing a bass? And . . . and . . . you're over there . . . talking . . . like you can hear or something.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I . . .

EVIE (SIGNING)
And who's that woman? Are you
cheating on Mom?

HARRY (SIGNING)
What? No!
(glances over at Penny)
She's just a friend.

Evie looks doubtful as Harry turns her around and guides her
to a more quiet out-of-sight area.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Listen. It's my hearing. It did
come back.

EVIE (SIGNING)
No. Way.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Yes way.

Evie stares at him, uncomprehending.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
I know it's hard to swallow. But
it's true.

EVIE (SIGNING)
When did this happen? How?

Now it's Harry's turn to look nervous and not answer.

EVIE (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Dad?

HARRY (SIGNING)
I woke up few . . . weeks ago. And
I could hear.

EVIE (SIGNING)
Wow. Just wow.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I need a little time to deal with
this. Okay?

EVIE (SIGNING)
Mom doesn't know, does she?

Harry shakes his head.

EVIE (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Are you going to tell her?

HARRY (SIGNING)
I have to. Eventually.

Evie eyes light up in realization as a sly Cheshire-cat grin slowly spreads across her face.

EVIE (SIGNING)
I won't tell on you if you won't
tell on me.

EXT. THE RAVEN VENUE - MUCH LATER THAT NIGHT

Harry and Roy stand with Penny and her bandmates outside the venue.

People are leaving the venue. Harry scans the area nervously. It's obvious he's looking for Evie, who is nowhere to be seen.

PENNY (SIGNING AND VOICE)
(to Roy)
Nice ... to ... meet ... you!

Roy nods approvingly and Penny claps happily.

PENNY (CONT'D)
(to Harry)
See you next week?

Harry nods. Penny gives them both friendly hugs and exits with her bandmates.

ROY (SIGNING)
(to Harry)
That girl is so-fine.

Harry rolls his eyes at him.

ROY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
You're not seeing her, are you?

HARRY (SIGNING)
No! I wouldn't do that to Lindsay.

ROY (SIGNING)
You also won't tell her you can
hear again.

HARRY (SIGNING)
That's different. That's not
cheating.

ROY (SIGNING)
You sure about that?

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Harry creeps into bed hoping not to disturb a sleeping
Lindsay. However, the light snaps on.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
How was your boys-night out?

HARRY (SIGNING)
It was fine. We had a few beers.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
(fanning nose)
I can tell.

HARRY (SIGNING)
How was your day?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Nothing special.

Harry fakes a yawn and stretches.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I'm really beat.

He turns on his side, but Lindsay pats him on the back to get
his attention.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
I found these in your jacket today.

She retrieves something from the nightstand. It's a pair of
ear buds. She dangles them in his face.

Harry snatches them from her, a little too eagerly.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Those are Roy's.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Roy listens to music?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Yeah. Sometimes. He's hard of
hearing, you know.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
He wears a hearing aid!

HARRY (SIGNING)
So?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
(points to ear buds)
So how's he gonna use those?

HARRY (SIGNING)
They're not mine. You can ask him
yourself.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
I will. Tomorrow.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Ok. You can give these back
yourself.

Harry hands back the ear buds and settles on his side. He pretends to sleep.

The light finally shuts off. Harry re-opens his eyes and stares into the darkness.

Backs to each other, Lindsay does the same.

INT. MAIN SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

Harry shuffles through paperwork as he bobs his head to invisible music.

He passes by Dr. Kotter's office, whose door is slightly open. He overhears Dr. Kotter on the phone, and stops in his tracks.

DR. KOTTER
Yes, I'm afraid that overall, our
students' math, reading and
language scores are very low. Quite
lower than average.
(MORE)

DR. KOTTER (CONT'D)

In fact, I'm going to have to recommend mainstreaming and speech therapy for our students.

(pause)

Yes, I understand what that means. Unfortunately, we have to do what's best for our kids. Give them a chance for success and all.

(chuckles)

I'm glad you agree. It's a hearing world, after all.

Harry's eyes widen as he continues to listen.

INT. HARRY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Harry frantically ruffles through stacks of paperwork and searches through notebooks and binders, making a mess. Whatever he's looking for, it's not there.

He wakes up his computer and enters a password. Denied. He tries again. Still denied.

A FLASHING from the door signaler startles Harry and he jumps. But it's only Marilyn.

HARRY (SIGNING)

Thank god you're here. I can't seem to get into the system today.

MARILYN (SIGNING)

Oh, they changed the passwords. Didn't Dr. Kotter tell you in his email?

HARRY (SIGNING)

Email? What email?

Marilyn comes around and types in a password. Access granted.

MARILYN

Did you hear Ms. Blanche was fired?

HARRY (SIGNING)

Ms. Blanche? But why? She wouldn't harm a F-L-Y.

MARILYN

A-D-M-I-N adjustments. A little suspicious if you ask me.

(MORE)

MARILYN (CONT'D)
But you're going to have to find
someone else to take over her
classroom. And detention.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Harry stares blankly across a desk at several students seated
separately from each other. They stare back sullenly.

Roy waves frantically from the front door's window, trying to
get his attention. No luck.

He knocks loudly. The door signaler goes off, snapping Harry
out of his reverie.

Harry lets Roy in and they turn their backs to the students
so they can't eavesdrop.

ROY (SIGNING)
Marilyn said I'd find you here.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Ms. Blanche was fired.

ROY (SIGNING)
Jesus Christ. I really liked her.
She wouldn't harm a F-L-Y.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I overheard Kotter talking on the
phone today. I think he's behind
this.

ROY (SIGNING)
Shit. Wouldn't be surprised. He's a
S-H-A-D-Y fucker.
(looks over at the kids)
So we're not going to band practice
today?

Harry shakes his head. An idea appears to strike Harry and he
looks at Roy.

HARRY (CON'T)
Unless . . .

ROY (SIGNING)
(backs away)
Uhhh! No way!

HARRY (SIGNING)
I'll make it worth your while.

ROY (SIGNING)
Nothing could make *this* worth my
while.

HARRY (SIGNING)
How about a date?

ROY (SIGNING)
A date? Ewwwww! Sorry, I don't
swing that way.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Not with me! With Penny.

Roy looks doubtfully at Harry. Harry gives him a pleading
look and puts his hands together in prayer.

ROY (SIGNING)
Fine. Okay. But only because you're
my B-F-F.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Just don't let them chat with each
other. Okay?

ROY (SIGNING)
I can handle these kids.

Harry mouths THANK YOU over and over as Roy waves him away.

ROY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Don't forget! Date. With Penny.

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE - GARAGE - LATER THAT DAY

Harry jams on his bass with Penny, Finn, Norman, Barb and
Stagg. As they reach the end of a song, everyone claps
appreciatively.

STAGG
(to Harry)
Much better, man.

Stagg offers Harry a fist and gathers up his equipment.

BARB
Gotta bail. See y'all later.

The others murmur in agreement as they exit, leaving Penny and Harry alone.

PENNY
Want a beer?

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Penny takes two beers from the fridge and hands one to Harry.

PENNY (CONT'D)
So, what did you think?

HARRY
You have a pretty voice. I wish I could sing as well as you do.

PENNY
I took voice lessons as a kid.
(beat)
You should talk more. I like listening to you. You have an adorable accent.

HARRY
Thanks. I've been p-practicing.

PENNY
Did you ever think about speech therapy?

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Young Harry sits in front of a SPEECH THERAPIST, an older woman in her 50s.

She places his hand on her throat, then in front of her mouth as she alternates between the sounds "sh" and "ch".

Her hot breath on his hand makes him visibly cringe.

She manipulates his face by pushing his cheeks together, encouraging him to imitate her vocal movements.

BACK TO:

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN [BACK TO PRESENT DAY]

Harry looks somewhat traumatized from his recent flashback.

PENNY

Harry?

HARRY

I did take speech therapy. In grade school.

(shudders)

I hated it.

PENNY

Let me help you.

He gives her a look, making her giggle.

PENNY (CONT'D)

I'll be nice. I promise.

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lindsay glances anxiously at the clock It says 8:45 pm. She's stuffing her face with potato chips as she fidgets with a large crystal.

She looks at her phone. There are no new messages. She starts to send a text but then sees a car pull into the driveway.

Harry enters hurriedly.

Lindsay pushes the chips out of sight and quickly wipes her salty lips as Harry approaches.

He leans in to give her a kiss on the cheek, but she moves away as if offended by his breath, fanning the air.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)

Have you been drinking again?

HARRY (SIGNING)

I stopped for a beer.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)

You haven't answered my texts.

Harry pats around for his phone.

CUT TO:

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

Harry's phone is resting on top of an amp. It displays several unanswered texts from Lindsay.

BACK TO:

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - NIGHT

HARRY (SIGNING)
Shit. I left my phone at the office.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
That's not like you at all.

HARRY (SIGNING)
They fired Ms. Blanche today. I had to take over detention.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
This late?

HARRY (SIGNING)
I told you. I went out for a beer. After.

Lindsay frowns as Harry rummages around in the fridge.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Why would they fire Ms. Blanche?

HARRY (SIGNING)
I don't know, but I think Kotter's up to something.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Kotter? What do you mean?

HARRY (SIGNING)
I don't know. But I'm gonna find out.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Ms. Blanche. Fired. She wouldn't harm a F-L-Y.

Sudden loud music (O.S.) makes Harry jump. Lindsay looks at him strangely. He pretends he didn't hear anything.

HARRY (SIGNING)
You look beautiful today. New rock?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Its not . . .

Harry abruptly EXITS the kitchen.

LINDSAY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
. . . A rock.

INT. EVIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Harry knocks rapidly on the door. Evie answers.

EVIE (SIGNING)
Oh. It's you.
(switches to voice)
Or should I use my voice now?

HARRY
Turn that shit down.

EVIE
Why?

Cameron comes out of his room and looks at them. Harry looks back at Cameron and then to Evie. He thinks better of it.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Never mind.

He glares at her as he heads to his bedroom, slamming the door.

Lindsay comes up shortly and looks at Evie and a now confused Cameron.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
What was that all about?

EVIE (SIGNING)
Daddy was just saying good night.

Her response only fuels Lindsay's growing frustration.

INT. HARRY AND LINDSAY'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Harry lies on the bed as Evie's music, slightly muffled, blares on. He pulls his pillow tight around his ears.

EXT. PENNY'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - EARLY MORNING

Harry knocks on the door. A slightly disheveled Penny answers. She's surprised to see him.

HARRY

I left my phone in your garage.

INT. PENNY'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Harry is seated with some coffee as Penny enters and hands him his phone.

HARRY

Thanks. Sorry it's so early. I need it for work.

PENNY

What do you do?

HARRY

I'm .. I'm a vice principal. For a school for the deaf. In Riverdale?

PENNY

I didn't know they had one up there.

HARRY

We're lucky to have it. The kids love it.

PENNY

Did you go to a deaf school, too?

Harry shakes his head.

HARRY

My parents didn't want me to. I went to a regular school. But they had a small group of other deaf people. Like me.

PENNY

How did you understand the teachers?

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Young Harry is seated off to the side at the head of the class.

He is obviously not paying attention to a sign language interpreter who mechanically interprets as the teacher lectures.

A balled up piece of paper lands in his lap. He opens it.

It says in scrawled letters: retard.

He looks behind him as children titter.

BACK TO:

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN [BACK TO PRESENT DAY]

HARRY (SIGNING)

We had interpreters. They usually sucked.

PENNY

It seems like you turned out okay. I mean, vice principal and all.

HARRY

I wasn't very social. I didn't have a lot of friends. Not until I went to Gallaudet. It's a university for the deaf.

(beat)

I loved it there. It felt good to be in a place where I could talk to anybody. Where I could do anything I wanted. I felt normal, for once.

He looks at his watch.

HARRY (CONT'D)

I gotta run. Thanks for the coffee.

PENNY

Wait!

Harry stops. They look at each other for a moment.

PENNY (CONT'D)

It would be so cool if you could play a song with us at the Copa this weekend.

HARRY

I'm nowhere near as good as you guys.

PENNY

It's just one song. We've been practicing every week. Please?

HARRY

Okay. But under one condition.

Penny looks at him in anticipation.

HARRY (CONT'D)

You have to perform the song in sign language.

PENNY

I'm nowhere near as good as you.

HARRY

You're great! Roy's been teaching you.

PENNY

He's kinda cute.

HARRY

He likes hearing girls.

PENNY

Oh, does he now?

They share a laugh.

PENNY (CONT'D)

You're kinda cute, too.

Things are getting a little intense between them, or so Harry thinks. He's feeling a bit uncomfortable.

HARRY

I gotta go.

PENNY

I'll see you this weekend?

Harry nods and heads out the door.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Oh, and thanks for saying yes.

HARRY
I've always wanted to be a
rockstar.

INT. DR. KOTTER'S OFFICE - DAY

A man, MR. LANCASTER, 50's, sits in front of Dr. Kotter.

Harry putters around outside the office door, which is slightly ajar. He appears to be busy, but he's really eavesdropping on their conversation.

MR. LANCASTER
Shouldn't we close the door?

DR. KOTTER
Don't worry. No one can hear us.

They chuckle loudly. Harry bristles.

MR. LANCASTER
So, are we agreed?

DR. KOTTER
I'll place my vote at the next
meeting.

MR. LANCASTER
Good. I think you'll like the new
position.

DR. KOTTER
I'll definitely love the paycheck.

They chuckle again.

MR. LANCASTER
Let's face it. It's better for
these kids. We can't baby them. The
real world won't baby them.

DR. KOTTER

What about the staff? And the teachers? Most of them are deaf or hard of hearing.

MR. LANCASTER

We'll give 'em a nice severance package. They'll find new jobs. Or the state will take care of 'em.
(shrugs)
That's all we can do.

DR. KOTTER

They're not gonna like this.

MR. LANCASTER

Nobody does. But it's the right thing to do.

INT. MAIN SCHOOL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Harry wears a disgusted expression as he listens to Dr. Kotter and Mr. Lancaster.

Marilyn comes up from behind and spooks him.

MARILYN (SIGNING)

Harry? What you do-do?

HARRY (SIGNING)

Nothing.
(points to Mr. Lancaster)
Who's that?

MARILYN (SIGNING)

That's Mr. Lancaster. He's from A-D-M-I-N. Way up.

HARRY (SIGNING)

What's he here for-for?

MARILYN (SIGNING)

Not sure. Why?

HARRY (SIGNING)

I don't know. But I have bad-feeling about him.

MARILYN (SIGNING)

Ms. Blanche told me the same thing, before Kotter fired her.

HARRY (SIGNING)
That's weird.

INT. HARRY'S OFFICE - A LITTLE LATER

Harry again ruffles through a mess of paperwork. He enters the new password on the computer and studies the screen. Something doesn't look right, and it shows on his face.

Roy enters.

ROY (SIGNING)
You buzz?

HARRY (SIGNING)
I need your help with something.

ROY (SIGNING)
Again? I'm not taking over detention this time. Oh, and here.
(pulls out ear buds)
Don't worry. I told Lindsay they were mine.

Roy gets up to exit. Harry stops him.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Stay. Please? It's important.

Roy looks at him expectantly.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
I think our jobs might be in danger. In fact, I think our school might be in danger.

Roy sits back down.

ROY (SIGNING)
What do you mean?

HARRY (SIGNING)
It's Kotter. Remember I told you I thought he was up to something?

Roy nods.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
I just got off the videophone with Ms. Blanche. She told me why she got fired.

ROY (SIGNING)
So what?

HARRY (SIGNING)
So, I need you to help me break
into Koot's office.

EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS - LATE EVENING

Harry checks his watch. He hears a commotion and hides behind
a wall.

Roy walks up, accompanied by a hispanic man, late 30's.
Harry comes upon them from behind, causing both to jump in
surprise.

ROY (SIGNING)
Jesus, Harry. You scared the shit
out of me.
(gestures)
This is Juan. He's the custodian.

Harry and Juan greet each other in sign language.

HARRY (SIGNING)
(aside to Roy)
Of course I know the custodian.
Question is, why's he here?

Roy gestures to Juan, who grins and holds up a mess of keys.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
You told him?

ROY (SIGNING)
Don't worry. He hates Kooter as
much as we do.

INT. OUTSIDE DR. KOTTER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Harry and Roy are on the lookout as Juan unlocks the door to
Dr. Kotter's office.

INT. DR. KOTTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Roy carefully search through Kotter's desk drawers,
through piles of paperwork and through file cabinets.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Look for anything suspicious.

ROY (SIGNING)
Like this?

Roy pulls a rubber duckie out of a drawer.

HARRY?
The hell?

They laugh, Roy a little too loudly. Harry shushes him.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Put that back.

ROY (SIGNING)
Let me see what-else is in here
first.

Roy plops the duckie on the desk and digs into the drawer.

ROY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
What we looking for anyway?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Ms. Blanche said it would be here.
Somewhere.

ROY (SIGNING)
(sits on Kotter's desk)
I'd love to plant my bare ass right
here. And fart.

Harry and Roy snigger.

We hear a bawdy singing voice (O.S.) As it grows louder,
Harry's eyes widen. He wildly gestures to Roy.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Hide!

They scramble around the room looking for a hiding place.
Harry ends up underneath Dr. Kotter's desk while Roy ends up
behind the door as it opens. He's almost squished, but the
door stops short of that.

Dr. Kotter turns on the light and enters the office, holding
a thick stack of papers.

INT. DR. KOTTER'S OFFICE - UNDER DESK - CONTINUOUS

Harry winces as a WHUMP of paperwork slams down on the desk.

He curls into a smaller ball as Dr. Kotter's legs walk back and forth. Dr. Kotter rummages around his desk.

The rubber duckie falls to the floor in front of Harry.

DR KOTTER (V.O.)
(baby voice)
Mr. Quackie? What're you doing out
of your drawer?

Harry's eyes widen as Dr. Kotter's legs stop in front of the desk and start to bend down.

With Dr. Kotter's back turned, Roy takes this moment to slip out from behind the door. He makes it out without being seen, but knocks an object to the floor as he flees the building.

Dr. Kotter hears it and stops in mid-crouch. He straightens up.

DR. KOTTER
Who's there?

Dr. Kotter EXITS the office in search of the noise.

Harry, still under the desk, huffs in relief.

EXT. DR. KOTTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Kotter looks around for the source of the noise. Nothing. He's about to go back in his office when another commotion breaks the silence, this time farther away.

Dr. Kotter walks towards the source of the sound.

INT. DR. KOTTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Harry cautiously creeps out of his hiding place. The office is empty.

As he rises, he spies a thick REPORT still on the desk where Dr. Kotter left it.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Kotter opens the door and peers inside.

Juan is there, emptying a trash can. He looks at Dr. Kotter impassively. His expression says it all: he's just doing his job.

Behind Dr. Kotter, we spy in the distance Harry quietly slipping out of the building. He's hiding something in his jacket.

INT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - HARRY'S OFFICE - LATE EVENING

Harry sits in his office pouring over the report he lifted from Dr. Kotter's desk. His eyes widen as he reads.

He anxiously glances at his phone. No new messages. He turns on his Skype and dials a number. Roy's face pops up on the screen.

INTERCUT BETWEEN HARRY AND ROY

HARRY (SIGNING)
You escaped.

ROY (SIGNING)
Barely. That was close. Find what
you were looking for?

HARRY (SIGNING)
I think so.

ROY (SIGNING)
How bad is it?

HARRY (SIGNING)
It's bad. They're going to cut our
funding. And send the kids to
mainstream schools.

ROY (SIGNING)
You're kidding.

Harry shakes his head.

ROY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
So we're out of a school? And ... a
job?

Harry nods.

ROY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Fuck me.

HARRY (SIGNING)
We've got to do something.

Roy suddenly looks serious. His mood has changed.

ROY (SIGNING)
We? What do you mean, we?

HARRY (SIGNING)
We're in this together. Right?

ROY (SIGNING)
I don't know. You're not deaf
anymore.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Doesn't matter. It's my school,
too. It's still my world.

ROY (SIGNING)
It's easier for you now. You have
your hearing friends. Your music.
Your new life. You don't need us
anymore.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Don't say that.

ROY (SIGNING)
Why not? It's the truth.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Roy. You're my best friend.

ROY (SIGNING)
And Lindsay is your wife.
(beat)
You haven't told her yet, have you?

Harry doesn't answer.

ROY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
I have to go. Later.

The screen goes blank. Harry stares at it.

HARRY
It isn't easier. At all.

Lindsay enters the office. Harry, still stunned by the conversation with Roy, looks up at her.

Harry's phone's on the desk, and right then, it plays a ring tone. The screen lights up and text pops up. Lindsay notices it before he does and picks it up he can stop her.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Who's Penny?

HARRY (SIGNING)
She's just a friend.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Really? A "friend"? There's nobody in our circle named Penny.

HARRY (SIGNING)
That's because she's hearing.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Hearing? Since when do you hang out with hearing people?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Since I became hearing.

But Lindsay isn't looking at him. She's looking at the phone instead.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Eight this weekend? A date?

HARRY (SIGNING)
No, no, no.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
I knew you were up to something. I knew it.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Lindsay. Listen to me.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
You'll never be hearing. Never.

She runs out. Harry follows her.

EXT. LITTLETON HOUSEHOLD - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lindsay throws a bag and purse angrily into her car. Harry tries to stop her.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Don't leave.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Leave? *You* left(abandon) *me*. For a hearing woman. For the hearing world.

She gets in her car and starts it.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Please.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
They'll never accept you. Not like I do.

She wildly pulls out of the driveway and speeds off.

Harry watches her drive off helplessly. He spies something on the ground. He picks it up.

It's a purple crystal pendant necklace.

INT. BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Harry slouches glumly against a bar. He has a couple empty drinks next to him. He's fingering the crystal Lindsay left behind.

A BARTENDER comes by.

BARTENDER
Another one?

Harry nods.

The bartender walks off.

Penny ENTERS. She gives Harry a quick hug.

PENNY
Why so sad?

Harry shows her the crystal necklace.

The bartender sets another drink in front of him and walks away.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Want to talk about it?

HARRY
Not really.

He takes a long sip.

PENNY
Talk anyway.

HARRY
I thought getting my hearing back would make life easier. But things are even more complicated than ever.

PENNY
How do you mean?

HARRY
I still don't know who I am. Or where I belong.

PENNY
I don't think anybody does. Hearing or deaf.

HARRY
I sucked as a deaf person. I suck even more as a hearing person.

PENNY
That's not true, Harry. You're awesome.

HARRY
It doesn't matter. Not if the one person you love the most doesn't think so.

PENNY
Oh, Harry.

He continues to drink and doesn't answer.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Who do you love the most?

Harry is silent for a moment. He looks at her. He looks at the necklace.

HARRY
My wife. I love my wife.

Penny puts his hand in hers.

PENNY
It's okay. I get it.

HARRY
Thank you. For being my friend.

INT./EXT. HARRY'S CAR - A LITTLE LATER - NIGHT

Harry drives through downtown. His windows are open.

We hear several kinds of city noises: cars honking, people yelling, sirens blaring, street girls calling, machinery.

The noises become increasingly AMPLIFIED.

Harry cringes and rolls up the windows to drown out the sound.

The radio snaps on and blares at him. He switches out stations to no avail. Voices and music become increasingly distorted.

He stops the car and paws at his ears and the radio. He starts yelling. The radio shuts off.

Engulfed finally in silence, he sits for a long time staring at nothing. He looks at his phone.

INT. JOCK AND MARTHA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME TIME - NIGHT

Lindsay sits at a table with Pam, who is comforting her, with Jock and Martha standing over her.

JOCK (SIGNING)
Can't say I didn't warn you about Harry.

PAM (SIGNING)
Daddy, finish-finish.

JOCK (SIGNING)
You can't take-out that hearing-
mind.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Harry isn't hearing-mind.

JOCK (SIGNING)
Look what happen. He left(abandon)
you.

Pam puts her arm around her and hugs her tight.

There is a VBBBT-VBBBT. Lindsay's phone, on the table, lights
up.

We pan to a TEXT and see it's from Harry.

LINDSAY
I can't talk to him. Not now.
Delete.

PAM (SIGNING)
You-sure?

LINDSAY
Just do it.

EXT. JOCK AND MARTHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

Harry pounds repeatedly on the door until Pam finally
answers.

PAM (SIGNING)
She doesn't want to see you.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Just let me talk to her.

PAM (SIGNING)
Is it true?

HARRY (SIGNING)
What?

PAM (SIGNING)
You're cheating on her.

HARRY (SIGNING)
It's not what you think.

Pam slams the door.

Harry pounds on the door until she answers again.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Just give me a chance to explain.

PAM (SIGNING)
I told you. She doesn't want to see
you.

HARRY (SIGNING)
At least give her a message from
me. Please?

The door slams shut. This time for good.

EXT. PAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT - MUCH LATER

Harry sits in his car across the street from Pam's house.
He's watching for something.

An upstairs room LIGHTS up.

Lindsay approaches the window in this room and opens it.

She stares up at the stars for a moment. She looks
vulnerable.

Harry watches her from afar. He has her necklace hanging from
the rear-view mirror.

He watches as she shuts the window and walks away. The light
turns off. BLACK.

INT./EXT. HARRY'S CAR - MORNING

Harry snaps awake. He's fallen asleep outside Pam's house. He
rubs his eyes and looks at his watch.

HARRY
Shit.

He checks his phone. No new messages. He sees the necklace
hanging and snatches it from its perch.

INT. MAIN SCHOOL OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A rumpled and unshaven Harry rushes in. He has Dr. Kotter's report under his arm. He's also wearing Lindsay's necklace.

MARILYN (SIGNING)
Good morning!
(beat)
Are you alright?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Is Kooter in yet?

MARILYN (SIGNING)
He's out at a board meeting.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Listen. I need your help. Can you bring up the latest aptitude test scores?

MARILYN (SIGNING)
Of course.

She works busily at the computer. He comes around and they both scan the screen. He checks Dr. Kotter's report.

HARRY (SIGNING)
The test scores. Look at them.

MARILYN (SIGNING)
That's funny. I don't remember ever seeing them this low.

HARRY (SIGNING)
That's because they aren't. I pulled a report months ago.
(both reading)
Kotter must have messed with the numbers.

MARILYN (SIGNING)
But why?

HARRY (SIGNING)
He's selling us out.

Harry shows Marilyn Dr. Kotter's report. As she reads through it, her expression becomes more dire, angry.

MARILYN (SIGNING)
That old coot!

HARRY (SIGNING)
And now, it's too late.
(sighs)
If only I had that old report.

Marilyn suddenly lights up. She rushes over to a file cabinet and ruffles around, pulls out a thick report and hands it over to him.

MARILYN (SIGNING)
I keep doubles. Just in case.

Harry skims through the pages and his eyes light up in relief.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Call Ms. Blanche. And we have to
find Roy.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dr. Kotter stands in front of a long conference table where several board members, including Mr. Lancaster, sit. They browse listlessly through the reports in front of them.

DR. KOTTER
And as you can see, the evidence is
right there. Our children are in
danger of falling behind while they
remain at an all-deaf school.

A lady BOARD MEMBER, 50's, in a severe suit with her hair pulled back in a bun, adjusts her glasses and clears her throat.

BOARD MEMBER
So, what are your recommendations,
Dr. Kotter?

DR. KOTTER
I feel that sign language hampers
their oral language capacities and
ultimately their learning ability.

The board members murmur to each other in response. Dr. Kotter puts his hands up to quiet them.

DR. KOTTER (CON'T) (CONT'D)

It's no secret. I'm a strong supporter of oralism. But, we've heard plenty of success stories about those in our mainstream programs. Our award-winning speech therapies have helped to bolster language skills and bring these students up to the level of their peers.

(beat)

It's a hearing world, after all...

The door bursts open. Harry, Roy, Ms. Blanche and Marilyn, armed with paperwork, rush in.

HARRY

Sorry to interrupt.

Everybody stares at them in amazement, especially Dr. Kotter.

DR. KOTTER

I apologize for the intrusion. This is my vice principal, Mr. Littleton. He should be leaving. Now.

Dr. Kotter tries to usher them out but Roy towers over him and points to a chair. He shrinks back, obviously no match for Roy, and sits down.

HARRY

(to committee)

You've got the wrong report.

Ms. Blanche and Marilyn hastily pass reports around the table to the board members, who look at the new report and each other in confusion.

DR. KOTTER (SIGNS POORLY AS HE SPEAKS)

(to Ms. Blanche)

Didn't I fire you?

MS. BLANCHE (SIGNING)

Yeah. After I discovered your dirty little secret.

BOARD MEMBER

What's the meaning of this?

HARRY

This is the truth.

DR. KOTTER

Harry? Are you speaking out loud?

Harry ignores him and points down at an open report. He notices Roy frowning at him and Marilyn in wide-eyed confusion at seeing him speak.

HARRY (SIGNING AND VOICE)

I'm sorry. As I was saying, This is the real report. Not the one Dr. Kotter gave you.

The board members turn their attention to Dr. Kotter, who looks increasingly annoyed and uncomfortable. Mr. Lancaster shoots him a warning look.

DR. KOTTER

H-he doesn't know what he's talking about. He's deaf.

The board members look even more confused and murmur amongst each other.

HARRY (SIGNING AND VOICE)

He's right. I *am* deaf. Or, at least, I was.

Marilyn and Ms. Blanche look at him in shock. Harry nods at her.

HARRY (CONT'D)

I didn't know how to tell anyone. So I didn't.
(looks at Roy)
Except Roy.

Dr. Kotter suddenly rises from his seat.

DR. KOTTER

I believe this meeting is over.

Roy bars him on his way to the door and shakes his head.

BOARD MEMBER

Dr. Kotter, please sit down.
(to Harry)
Harry, make your case.

HARRY (SIGNING AND VOICE)

Several weeks ago, Dr. Kotter had me compile a report with recent test scores from our students.

(MORE)

HARRY (SIGNING AND VOICE) (CONT'D)
I mean, the original report. As you
can see, they scored high all
across the board.

(points at Kotter)
Kotter then locked me out of the
system and falsified this
information to make it look
otherwise.

BOARD MEMBER
Falsified?
(looks at Dr. Kotter)
But why would you such a thing?

HARRY (SIGNING WITH VOICE)
Is there anything you'd like to say
about this, Mr. Lancaster?

Everybody's attention turns to Mr. Lancaster.

MR. LANCASTER
Me? I had absolutely nothing to do
with this.

DR. KOTTER
(rises, points to Mr.
Lancaster)
Lies! Lies! This was all your idea!

Mr. Lancaster, outraged, lunges across the table at Dr.
Kotter with the intent to throttle him. They scuffle, papers
flying everywhere. Chaos ensue, until they are finally pulled
apart.

EXT. BOARD ROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

Harry, Roy, Ms. Blanche and Marilyn watch as Dr. Kotter and
Mr. Lancaster are escorted out of the room by security.

The lady board member exits after them.

BOARD MEMBER
(to Harry)
Don't you worry. I'll make sure
this matter is thoroughly
investigated.

He nods as she pats his arm. She walks off, but then turns
back to him.

BOARD MEMBER (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Good job, Harry.

They all watch as she exits.

ROY (SIGNING)
That was fuckin' awesome.

Harry and Roy bump fists.

MARILYN (SIGNING)
You saved our school, Harry!

HARRY (SIGNING)
No, Marilyn. We did. Together.

She hugs him and then looks sad.

MARILYN
Are you gonna leave us?

HARRY (SIGNING)
N-O W-A-Y. This my life. This who I
am. Deaf or hearing.

ROY (SIGNING)
There's still something you need to
do-do.

Harry nods grimly, fingering the crystal.

INT. COPA - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Harry nervously scans the crowd as Archie helps him tune his
guitar. Another band on the stage plays loudly.

Penny approaches them and links her arm in Harry's.

PENNY
(loudly over music)
I'm glad you came!

HARRY
(cups ear)
What?

Penny grins and repeats slowly in sign language. Harry grins
back and flashes her a THUMBS UP sign.

The band plays a spectacular finish. The audience responds appreciatively and they begin their breakdown for the next band.

ARCHIE

Now, remember what I taught you.
(gestures to chest)
Feel the beat here. Let it move
you.
(shakes Harry by the
shoulders)
Loosen up, man. Breathe.

Harry takes a deep breath.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

You got this, baby. Just one song.
Okay?

He walks off. Harry turns his attention back to the crowd as the Paper Machetes begin to set up.

INT. COPA - MAIN STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Roy escorts Lindsay, Cameron, Evie and Katie to an area where several other Deaf friends, including Pam, Laureen, Cathy and Marilyn, are either seated or standing and conversing. Even Juan is present.

An ANNOUNCER takes the stage.

ANNOUNCER

And now, the Paper Machetes!

A SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER is positioned off to the side near the stage. She repeats the announcement as the crowd breaks out in applause.

Penny walks over and whispers something in the announcer's ear.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Uh, and a special guest. . .

Penny grabs the microphone from him.

PENNY

He's a really great guy who has
been deaf almost all his life. A
few weeks ago, he got his hearing
back.

People clap and cheer loudly. Many of the deaf people express surprise.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Please welcome my friend, Harry
Littleton.

INT. COPA - AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

Lindsay casts Roy a quizzical eye and he nods, directing her attention back to the stage, which lights up as band members enter one by one.

INT. COPA - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Harry watches anxiously as Penny cues his entrance. He peeks out and hesitates, unsure. Penny again waves him over.

Archie gives him a little push. He stumbles over a wire, catches himself, and makes his way onto stage.

INT. COPA - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Harry makes his way to his position. He finds himself half-blinded by the spotlight.

Penny urges him to the front. He squints and waves, and is rewarded by applause and hoots from the audience.

He grins awkwardly as Penny hands him the mike.

HARRY (SIGNING AND VOICE)
I want to dedicate this song to
someone special.

He scans the crowd until he finds who he's looking for.

HARRY (SIGNING AND VOICE) (CONT'D)
My wife. The love of my life.

Thunderous applause again, mixed with ooh's and awww's.

Harry returns the mike to Penny and takes his place. The drummer begins a countdown as the band starts to warm up.

Loud FEEDBACK suddenly pierces the arena and causes Harry to cringe. A tech guy rushes in and makes a quick adjustment to Penny's mike.

Harry, disoriented, shakes his head and tries to clear his ears with his finger. We hear a high-pitched ringing.

He sees Penny look back at him encouragingly. She appears to be singing but he can't hear her above the ringing. He hesitatingly plays a chord.

INT. COPA - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Roy, Lindsay and company watch in anticipation as Harry plays slightly out of tune with the rest of the band. The audience is lackluster as the music begins to drop.

INT. COPA - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Harry looks around in confusion. We again hear high pitched RINGING from his perspective.

Penny turns around pretending to dance as she shoots Harry a questioning look.

Harry mouths "I can't hear you" to her. She looks puzzled and bounces closer. He repeats this.

Her eyes widen in surprise as she mouths "what"?

Harry shrugs apologetically. He looks desperately backstage at Archie.

Archie gestures to his chest.

Penny turns back to the audience and starts singing again. She then turns back to Harry and starts signing the lyrics.

Harry looks around: at her signing and swaying to the beat, at his bandmates. We see the drummer drumming in slow motion, the guitar player moving in time with the music, the piano dude plunking keys.

The high-pitched ringing is slowly joined by a muted BEAT that comes from inside Harry as he remembers how to feel music.

He finds himself matching the beat. His confidence grows. Penny smiles back at in encouragement.

INT. COPA - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Cameron stare dumbfounded at Harry as he plays the bass on stage.

CAMERON
That's ... Dad?

KATIE
I thought you said he was deaf.

EVIE
Not anymore.

Lindsay watches, speechless, color drained from her face.

INT. COPA - MAIN STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Harry is getting into it with the bandmates. He's starting to act like more like a rockstar. He looks out at the crowd in the direction where Lindsay is seated.

EYELINE MATCH:

INT. COPA - AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

Lindsay's eyes lock with Harry's. Her eyes widen. Her lips part.

We see the crowd of people around her sway in time with the music, now in slow motion. They begin to look out of focus.

They have eyes only for each other. It's as if Harry is playing only for her.

The song ends and the lights DIM.

INT. COPA - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The audience thunders in applause. The lights return. Harry looks out to where Lindsay sat, but she's disappeared. He sighs.

INT. COPA - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Harry rushes backstage, meaning to rush after Lindsay, but instead and nearly crashes into her as she's come backstage herself to confront Harry.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Lindsay!

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Roy told me everything.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Everything?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
(nods)
I thought you were cheating on me.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I was. In a way.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
You lied to me, Harry.

HARRY (SIGNING)
I know. I'm sorry.

Harry and Lindsay look at each other for a while.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
I don't know if I can do this.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Because I can hear again?

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
That's your world now, not mine.

HARRY (SIGNING)
Why can't this be *our* world?

They look at each other.

HARRY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
I'm still the same old Harry.

He pulls her closer.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
Are you?

She notices he's wearing her necklace.

LINDSAY (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Nice rock.

HARRY (SIGNING)
It's not a rock.

That makes her smile. He kisses her. She reciprocates, then looks down.

LINDSAY (SIGNING)
What's everyone gonna say?

HARRY (SIGNING)
Who cares? They can either accept me. Or not.

Lindsay looks like she's warming up to the idea. She does love Harry after all.

LINDSAY
I could make a vlog.

This makes Harry laugh. They embrace.

INT. COPA - BACKSTAGE, ELSEWHERE - CONTINUOUS

Penny watches Harry and Lindsay walk off arm in arm. She has a wistful look on her face.

Roy appears by her side and nudges her.

ROY (SIGNING SLOWLY)
Buy you a drink?

Penny tilts her head, sizes him up and then grins.

PENNY (SIGNING AND VOICE)
Sure.

EXT. OUTDOOR ARENA - 1 YEAR LATER

An ANNOUNCER runs onto the stage. Hundreds of hands wave in the air.

ANNOUNCER (SIGNING AND VOICE)
Are you guys ready?

The hands become more frantic as fans hoot and holler in agreement.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Please welcome . . . Beeeeethoven's
Nightmare!

The crowd goes wild as the stage lights up.

Roy runs out and seats himself in front of a set of drums. He waves to the hand-cheering crowd.

EYELINE MATCH:

Penny, backstage, blows Roy a kiss.

BACK TO:

Roy, who catches it.

Lindsay comes out. She's sporting a tambourine, which she waves around proudly. Again, hand-cheering.

Evie comes out. She has a guitar. She makes horn signs to crowd.

After a beat, Harry makes his appearance. He's got his bass. Everyone goes wild again as he and Lindsay come together for a quick kiss.

Hundreds of deaf people as well as hearing people are in the audience. We spy Martha, Cameron, Brad and Katie, Pam, Lauren, and Cathy, as well as Marilyn, Ms. Blanche and Juan.

Also: Archie, Finn, Norman, Barb and Stagg.

Even Dr. Kotter's there. It appears he's become a friend of the Deaf. He's standing with Jock. They're an unlikely duo as they rally on with the crowd.

The band starts up. It's loud. Really loud. The crowd bounces to a deep bass-y beat.

FADE OUT.