

THAT MAKES TWO OF US

A Romantic Comedy

by

Bernard Bragg

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(The lights go on as the curtain rises. We see in front of us two readers who appear on stage establishing the set. While they are setting it up, the readers perform and interpret, either alternately or simultaneously.)

Reader I: (Faces the audience) Good Evening. We have all come together and are united at this moment to take a peek into lives in which the absence of sound makes all the difference in the world.

ReaderII: The absence of sound is really the whole reason for this performance.

(The readers go into an act which shows their function of translators in two different languages and they end up mirroring each other.)

Reader I: Now I am speaking and s/he interpreting for me.

Reader II: Now I am speaking and he is interpreting for me.

Reader I: She is signing and I am voicing for her.

Reader II: He is signing and I am voicing for him. Does that makes sense to you? Some times I will do both myself, speak and sign at the same time.

Reader I: That is true for me, also. (Reader I & II voice and sing) So, let's get on with the play. The time is present. The place is a foreign car shop.

Reader II: Here comes one of our principal characters--there are only two of them.

(BRUCE appears on stage in his shop, lowering himself under the car which is a full size two chairs form of a car)

Reader I: This is Bruce MacArtor. He works in a Foreign car shop. He has a BS degree from Gallaudet in Business Administration. His father owns a very successful foreign car dealership and is wealthy. Bruce helps his father with the business. That's why he earned a degree in Business Administration. But Bruce's true love is mechanics, working under the cars--not in an air-conditioned office. He has all the prestige of the professional and the money. But when he can get away from the front office, he can be found under a car, in the repair shop.

(A close-up slide of CHERYL is shown on the screen.)

Reader II: This is the other character. Her name is CHERYL PLANTE. She is a fashion designer. Cheryl recently graduated from the Tobe Coburn Fashion School in New York and is very excited about coming to Washington for a job interview as a fashion trainee at Neiman-Marcus. She is driving into the suburbs of Washington when she begins to think she may have car trouble. She is driving her MG and she knows that she can't get that fixed just anywhere.

(Slides show her in the car which is having engine trouble. Slide sequences rapidly show her stopping the car, looking around for help, seeing a policeman coming toward her car. The policeman asks her

what's the matter. She tells him that she has problems with the car. Then the policeman points to a sign, FOREIGN CARS, SPECIALTY. In the last slide, Cheryl is shown thanking the policeman. As the last slide goes off, the light goes on at the car shop where BRUCE is still under the car with his legs sticking out. Cheryl pops in.)

CHERYL: Hey, hey, listen. My mg just broke down outside and I am in a terrible hutty. I have a job interview and I've gotten to get there. Is there any way you can drop what you are doing and come see what's wrong? Hey? Hey? Can you hear me? Maybe I'm not speaking loud enough? (Louder) My mg just broke down outside, I really need some help...like, immediately! Could you please, please just drop what you are doing? Please? Is something wrong? Can't you hear me? I have a terribly important appointment. It's my first job interview and I don't know if you have any idea what this means to me. Why aren't you answering me? Listen. I don't really need the car done this minute, but I need someone to take care of it. My appointment isn't until two in the afternoon...but would you at least look at it and tell me if you can handle the job? Otherwise I'll take it somewhere else. I don't have to get it done here.

(BRUCE slowly gets his head out from under the hood and still not seeing Cheryl, walks toward her looking at a pice of machinery that he has just taken out of the car. When he gets almost to her, he sees her feet and slowly looks up into her face, wondering where she came from. He is startled.)

CHERYL: Will you at least answer me, yes or no?

BRUCE: (Gestures to her) Yes or no, what? I am deaf, I didn't hear you.

CHERYL: (Looks startled) Oh! You didn't hear me? You can't hear me?

BRUCE: (Shaking his head) No. I'm deaf.

CHERYL: (Begins to understnad) Well, can you read lips?

BRUCE: (Gestures to her) Just a minute. (Walk to the door to callhis assistant who is the first reader. He comes running in, dressed in a business suit)

READER I: (Signs) What do you want?

BRUCE: (Signs to the assistant) Would you please explain to the lady that I'm deaf and that you act as my assist- ant and interpreter. Ask her what she needs.

(READERI repeats what Bruce has said, in "simultaneous communication" speaking and signing at the same time.)

CHERYL: (Finally understands and turns to Bruce) Why can't you read lips? Or speak for yourself?

(Bruce looks at the interpreter, questioning, 'what did she say? and the interpreter repeats what Cheryl said).

BRUCE: (Smiles and speaks through the interpreter) I don't need to read lips and speak for myself. I have an assistant here who can do that any time I need it.

CHERYL: (Looks at Bruce questioningly again) What if I show up and he is not around? How can you communicate with me?

BRUCE: We can write.

CHERYL: Don't you ever read lips? Or talk for yourself?

BRUCE: Sometimes I talk for myself to people who understand me. Yes. I can do that, but I prefer not to.

CHERYL: Why?

BRUCE: (Avoids the question and asks instead) What's wrong with your car? Isn't that what you came here for?

CHERYL: (Looks taken aback) Oh yes. The car was stalling and then just stopped outside. It's just half a block away from here. Could you please ask someone to look at the car?

BRUCE: I'll go. That's my business.

CHERYL: (Stops him) Why is it that you prefer not to speak for yourself?

BRUCE: (Looks at her) Why do you keep asking me these questions? You are a very inquisitive person. Why is that so important, how I speak or don't speak? Did you come to interview me or to ask about your car?

CHERYL: Excuse my ignorance, but really I never met anyone like you before.

BRUCE: I never met anyone like you before either.

CHERYL: Well, I guess that makes two of us. Ok, really, all I need to know is, can you fix my car?

BRUCE: I'll look at it. I can probably fix it, but you can't have it this afternoon.

CHERYL: That's all right. Just as long as it's in good hands. (To the interpreter) I need someone to call a cab for me. Can you do that?

(READER I nods and starts to go to the phone, but Bruce stops him)

BRUCE: What does she want?

READER I: She wants me to call a cab for her.

BRUCE: Wait a minute, why can't you call your own cab?

CHERYL: Well...(Stops) I can't.

BRUCE: You can't? What do you mean you can't? Why not?

CHERYL: I'm deaf.

BRUCE: (Looks at her a minute and then turns to the assistant)
Can you believe that? She's deaf.

READER I: No. I really can't believe it. She really had us
fooled.

BRUCE: (Turns slowly to Cheryl) O.K. please give me the keys.
(Turns back to the interpreter) I don't know if I
should fix the car or fix her.

BLACK OUT

SCENE 2

(Slides appear on the screen , showing a series of pictures of a restaurant on the top of a building and a wide panoramic view of Washington. The camera follows the waitress (READER II) with drinks as she comes up to the table inside the restaurant. The slides end as the waitress appears at the table with BRUCE, CHERYL and the INTERPRETER sitting between them. Slides light out, stage lights up.)

BRUCE: I would like to propose a toast. (Speaking through the
the interpreter)

CHERYL: I'm not sure I want to drink to your toast.

BRUCE: Why not?

CHERYL: I don't think I'm going to like what you propose.

BRUCE: What do you mean? How do you know what I'm going to say?

CHERYL: I just have a funny feeling about it. What is it?
What is your toast?

BRUCE: What do you think it is?

CHERYL: I think I know, but go ahead. What were you going to say?

BRUCE: I propose better communication between you and me.

CHERYL: Without the interpreter?

BRUCE: Yes. Without the interpreter.

CHERYL: How?

BRUCE: I'm going to teach you sign language.

CHERYL: Well, I'm going to teach you lipreading. Is that fair enough? We can't have an interpreter following us everywhere, can we?

READER I: You both want to get rid of me? That's ok with me. I can't interpret for you in the dark anyway.

(They all drink the toast. CHERYL begins to think about what the interpreter said.)

CHERYL: Come to think of it, how do deaf people communicate in the dark?

BRUCE: (Look at her) Haven't you ever tried?

CHERYL: How could I? You are the first deaf person I have ever met.

BRUCE: Deaf people communicate in the dark with their hands, of course. Want me to show you?

CHERYL: (Looks shocked) Oh, of course not. Here, in public?

BRUCE: (Smiles) Give me your hand. (Takes her hand and spells into her hand) That's how they do it.

CHERYL: (Begins to understand as BRUCE spells into her hand) Oh, I understand. (Suspicious look comes over her face) What are you saying to me?

BRUCE: (Grins) I'm not going to tell you until you learn to sign and fingerspell. Are you game for that?

CHERYL: (Nods) Well, I guess so.

READER I: It's a lot better than having me put my hand in yours and at the same time listen to Cheryl. I'd feel like an electric cord. (Pause) The music has started.

BRUCE: (Walks to CHERYL and points to the dance floor and CHERYL doesn't understand, repeat) Do you want to dance?

CHERYL: (Intimidated BRUCE sign for dance and still doesn't understand so turn to the READER I for help.) Oh, sure. (During the dance) You dance so well for a deaf person.

BRUCE: (puzzles and asks her to repeat) What did you say? (As Cheryl repeats and still doesn't understand her)

(As the music stops the couple continue to dance. The READER I makes a gesture to BRUCE that the music stops and then BRUCE gestures to go back to his seat. BRUCE guides CHERYL to her seat and then return to his seat.)

BRUCE: (Speaks to READER I) What did she say over there? (READER I interprets to CHERYL)

CHERYL: Oh, I said you danced so well for a deaf person.

BRUCE: Thank you and so do you.

(READER II appears as a waitress to take the order)

READER II: Good evening. How are you? I'll be your waitress tonite. Were you ready to order, ma'm?

CHERYL: Oh yes, I'd like veal scallopini please.

READER II: Ok, would you like that with rice or baked potato? (CHERYL reponse) for rice) Would you like butter or sour cream on that? (CHERYL reponses for butter) And what kind of dressing would you like on your salad? (CHERYL responses for Italian) Ok, and anything to drink? (CHERYL reponse for coffee. and waitress takes menu, slips under arm and goes to READER I , interpreter) Were you ready here, sir?

READER I: Yes, I'd like the shrimp, please.

READER II: Shrimp...and would you like the baked potato or rice? (READER I reponses for rice) And what kind of salad dressing, sir? (READER II reponses for Blue Cheese) Can I get you anything to drink with that? (READER I responses for coffee) Ok, fine. Thank you. (Takes another menu and slips it under her arm, as she moves to BRUCE. She is concentrating on her pad of paper as she says) What can I get for you tonite, sir? BRUCE made no rely as he still concentrates in his menu and she repeats) Were you ready to order, sir? (Again BRUCE makes no rely and the waitress speaks louder) Sir, were you...?

READER I: (He interrupts the waitress) He's deaf. He didn't hear you. (taps BRUCE that the waitress is ready for his order)

BRUCE: (As he turns toward the waitress, she walks back with fear and BRUCE turns to the READER I) Tellher to come

over here. I'm not going to bite her. (READER I interprets to the waitress.)

READER II: (Nervous laugh and takes couple of steps toward BRUCE but still remains distant and bends over) Oh, roast beef. Ok (In loud, clearly enunciated voice, says) How would you like that cooked? (BRUCE responses for well done and waitress puzzles and BRUCE repeats and she puzzles again then turns to READER I) I don't understand. (READER I responses for well done) Oh, of course, well done. (BRUCE points to baked potato.) Would you like that with butter or sour cream? (BRUCE responses for butter but the waitress still puzzles and BRUCE repeats butter but she looks to READER I) I'm sorry. I can't... (READER I reponses butter) Oh, of course, butter. What kind of salad dressing would you like? (BRUCE reponses for French again waitress puzzles and BRUCE repeats. She turns to READER I) I don't understand... it's all fresh! (READER I reponses French) Oh, oh, French. Would you like anything to drink? (BRUCE reponses for Hot Tea, waitress again puzzles, BRUCE repeats and then turns to READER I for help, but BRUCE stops him and faces to WAITRESS and sign tea.) Oh! Hot Tea! Hot tea. That's very good. Thank You (As BRUCE claps) Thank you very much. (Leans over, reluctant to take menu. Makes face of panic. Waitress exits.)

CHERYL: Do you always have to order food like that in a restaurant? What a shame!

BRUCE: There you go again, picking at me. I can pay for the food, that's the important thing. It tastes the same, no matter how you order it.

CHERYL: (A little embarrassed, tries to smooth it over) Oh, well. You're right, of course. I guess it's like ordering food in a European restaurant when you don't know the language.

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BRUCE: I can't believe that I'm the first deaf person you've ever met. You come from New York. There are thousands of deaf people there. How come I'm the first one you've ever met?

CHERYL: I didn't mean that. I've seen deaf people on the street and I've seen people signing on TV, but I've never personally known any. I never paid much attention to them because..well, I've never considered myself a deaf person.

BRUCE: You never considered yourself a deaf person? What do you mean? You are deaf?

CHERYL: Yes, physically. But maybe not mentally.

BRUCE: What do you mean? There's no such thing as a deaf mind.

CHERYL: No, I didn't mean a deaf mind, that's silly. I meant, well, you know. I'm not socially deaf. Does that make sense? I can speak and read lips and you can't.

BRUCE: Ok. You can speak and read lips and I can't. That makes you one up on me. Don't you forget that I was born deaf and you became deaf at age 7. True, I'm "socially" deaf but I don't try to fool people like you do.

CHERYL: (Taken aback) Fool people? Do you mean I have to announce that I'm deaf? To everyone I meet? Do I have to explain it?

BRUCE: I don't mean you have to announce it. Just be honest about it. You are what you are. But you seem to hide it.

CHERYL: (Laughs at him) Me, in trouble? You're the one who's in trouble. Look, you have to take an interpreter

with you everywhere you go, even with a girl on a date.

BRUCE: (Looks at the interpreter and signs only to him) Let's see how she likes it without you. (READER I voices it)

READER I: (Speaks and signs) Why don't I eat across the room?

BRUCE: Not a bad idea. We'll see how we can get along without you. Ok, see you later.

READER I: Just tell the waitress I'll be sitting at that table by the window. (Leaves)

(Bruce puts elbows on the table and stares across at Cheryl. She looks a little panicky at first and looks after the interpreter as he leaves. Then she looks back at BRUCE and they remain staring at each other while the lights go out on the scene.)

SCENCE 3

(There will be a series of slides showing many people at a party at BRUCE's townhouse out in the country. It will show a number of people signing, using signs in different rooms, upstairs, downstairs throughout the townhouse. Finally we get to a scene where CHERYL is standing with another young woman who is signing. Then the lights go down on the slides and up on the scene. We see the young woman from the last slide, signing to CHERYL.)

READER II: I don't remember meeting you before. Are you new in the area or visiting someone...

CHERYL: I'm sorry I can't understand you. I don't read signs.

READER II: Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you were deaf. I don't remember meeting you before. Are you new in the

area or visiting someone. (Then begins to speak rapidly, with food in her mouth and a drink in front of her mouth, so that Cheryl, of course, cannot lip-read and still can't understand the young woman. CHERYL feels all the more embarrassed.)

CHERYL: Wait a minute. I'm sorry, but I can't read your lips with all that food in your mouth.

READER II: (Swallows all she can) What do you mean you can't read lips? Are you deaf?

CHERYL: Yes, I'm deaf.

READER II: You're deaf, and you can't sign?

CHERYL: That's right.

READER II: Oh, I see. (Swallows quickly and wipes her mouth) You know, it's funny, you don't look deaf. You don't look it at all.

CHERYL: I don't look what?

READER II: You don't look deaf.

CHERYL: Really? What does that mean, to look deaf? What is it supposed to look like, to look deaf?

READER II: (laughs) Well, you know. Deaf people use a lot of facial expression, exaggerate their facial expressions, but you have a very, a...you know, a "hearing" face.

CHERYL: A "hearing" face? Really? I never knew the difference.

READER II: Oh, yes. Look at all the people around here. Look at their expressions. Can't you see the difference? Look at Bruce, for example. Look at his expression. So animated...so alive.

(Young woman brings CHERYL to the side of the stage for slides shown of BRUCE's facial expressions. And then run back to same place.)

BRUCE: (Comes up to the two women) I saw you pointing at me. So you are talking about me. (Looks at CHERYL and signs. The young woman interprets for him) I see you're having a good time, meeting all these people.

CHERYL: (Looks at the interpreter who is interpreting for BRUCE and turns to BRUCE and speaks) Well, not quite. Maybe they're avoiding me. I have a hearing face.

BRUCE: (Laughs) Learn sign language. Then you can develop a deaf face.

CHERYL: Do I have to have a deaf face to communicate with deaf people like you?

BRUCE: Yes, you have to because the face and the body are very much part of the language.

CHERYL: Ok, then, teach me.

BRUCE: Ask her (Indicating the interpreter) She'll teach you, not me.

READER II: Fine, come to my class Monday night.

CHERYL: But I can't Monday night. I work.

READER II: I have a class on Wednesday and I have a friend who teaches on Thursday. What about those nights?

CHERYL: No, no. I may have to work every night at the beginning. It's a new job.

READER II: Well, let me know when you are free. Maybe you can make it next semester.

CHERYL: Ok.

READER II: It was nice meeting you. Hope to see you again. (turns to BRUCE) See you later, Bruce.

BRUCE: (BRUCE stops the READER II for interpret) Don't you want to learn signs? Why can't you make any of those night classes?

CHERYL: Yes, I want to learn signs, but I want to learn from you.

BRUCE: Why me?

CHERYL: (Smiling) I think I may make more progress if I have a private tutor.

BRUCE: Ok, that's a deal! (CHERYL shakes hands and exciting)

BLACK OUT

SCENE 4

(A series of slides of a park shows children playing, people walking around and from a distance, gradually getting closer, the two, BRUCE and CHERYL sitting on the bench. As we get closer, the lights go off on the slides and go on the stage. The two are sitting on the bench, facing each other. They are having a sign language lesson. BRUCE is writing to her and then showing her the signs. She copies the signs.)

BRUCE: (Fingerspell to CHERYL and she voices them)
I N F L U E N C E.

CHERYL: Influence (copies BRUCE's sign for influence)
Influence...why?

BRUCE: Why! (Gesturing with his hands from his head influence to Cheryl's head and she still puzzles. Again he makes another gesture with his hands from his chest influence to CHERYL's chest.)

CHERYL: Oh! yes, I get it. Influence. Oh! I'm so inspired. How do you do inspired (as she speaks to BRUCE.)

BRUCE: Huh? fingerspell them.

CHERYL: (Fingerspell them) I N S P I R E D (fingerspell 'D' with middle finger instead of right one and BRUCE correct this sign.)

BRUCE: (signs) Inspired.

CHERYL: (Copies his sign but stops below her breasts) They are in the way.

BRUCE: They are in the way! Ha Ha. No, don't do like this. .. do like that. (sign inspired untouched from the body)

CHERYL: Oh, I see. Inspired. Teach me more.

BRUCE: (Think for a moment and then point to the flower.) Flower.

CHERYL: Flower.

BRUCE: Grow...grow, what is it?

CHERYL: Grow?

BRUCE: Yes, that's right. (Make a star on CHERYL's forehead.)

CHERYL: (As she's surprised and stand up) I get it right, grow. Flower grows... I'm so inspired. (As CHERYL walks across behind the bench.) You influence me alot. Now me teach you.

BRUCE: Teach me what?

CHERYL: To speak.

BRUCE: Ah! no, no.

CHERYL: Yes...say influence.

BRUCE: (Impatiently speak it mispronouncely.) Influence.

CHERYL: No, say influence.

BRUCE: (Mispronounced again) Influence.

CHERYL: No, say influence. (With her hand makes rythm, first on her hands and then on BRUCE's knee.)

BRUCE: Influence. (Pronounce it right.)

CHERYL: Yeah, you say it right! Do it again.

BRUCE: (Repeat) Influence.

CHERYL: Yeah, you say it right! (CHERYL walks behind to her seat) Good work. (Shake hands and BRUCE holds her hand. CHERYL shocks and moves her hand away from him and then looks around to think of what to do.)
Teach you more.

BRUCE: Teach me more? Oh, no! My voice is tired.

CHERYL: So are my hands. What can we do now? (Bruce gestures nothing and Cheryl does the same thing.)

BRUCE: (Think for a moment.) I will tell you the story without voice and words.

CHERYL: Ok.

BRUCE: (VISUAL VERNACULAR @ five minutes)

CHERYL: (Applauds.) Your mime is so touchy and crystal clear.

BRUCE: (Doesn't understand her lipreadingly) What? Sign them.

CHERYL: Don't you find my lips readable?

BRUCE: (Smiles) Not always, but I find them very kissable.
(Kisses her)

BLACK OUT

SCENE 5

(Series of slides first showing BRUCE bringing CHERYL a gift, a TDD, and showing her how to use it, and then showing CHERYL studying the sign language book in different places like at home in her apartment, in bed, in the bathtub, alone eating. Various places. Every place she is alone, she is studying the book. The final slide shows her studying the book alone in her office. Then the lights go down on the slides and come up on the stage. BRUCE comes into her office to pick her up for a date. He watches her. She is not aware that he has come up behind her. She is studying the book and signing to herself.)

CHERYL: (Signing and speaking at the same time) I think I am falling in love.

BRUCE: (Smiles and goes around and takes her hand which is high in the air and corrects her sign, showing her how to sign the word "Fall". CHERYL blushes when she realizes that he was watching her) I think I am falling in love with you. (Speaks and signs at the same time) That's how I feel this moment.

CHERYL: (Laughs with him. BRUCE starts to sign more, but CHERYL stops him.) No, don't sign here. I'm afraid my supervisor will come up any minute.

BRUCE: Why? What difference does that make?

CHERYL: I don't want people to see us signing. Not here.

BRUCE: Why not? What's wrong with signing?

CHERYL: Don't you understnad? It's my new job. I don't want people to know that we are....

BRUCE: You don't want people to know that we are what? Deaf?

CHERYL: No. Yes, I don't want people to know that we are deaf.

BRUCE: Why not? Are you ashamed? Why try to hide your deafness? That's the story of your life. Hiding your deafness. (Signs too rapid for CHERYL.)

CHERYL: (Signs) Stop, stop... you sign too fast I don't understand you. (Then speaks alone) How would you like if I spoke that fast to you if I knew you didn't understand me but I kept talking faster and faster. See now you're angry. You can sign that fast but I can't read you that fast.

BRUCE: Sign...come on sign.(couldn't make her sign so walk to the door) Damn it. Jim,come over here. (Jim, READER I, enters and says hello and repeat to one version before CHERYL says stop, stop...)

CHERYL: No, no. You don't understand. I don't ever hide it. I don't have to hide it. You see, that's why your interpreter friend said I have a "hearing" face. People never really think that I can't hear. So what difference does it make to them? I don't have to explain to them. (SUPERVISOR enters and CHERYL puts

the READER I's hands down and grab a big poster of dress fashion and then give it to the READER I and BRUCE. CHERYL turns to the SUPERVISOR, READER II.)

READER II: Cheryl, do you have a minute? I'd like to discuss...

CHERYL: Oh, just a minute. (Hands sketch to 2 men and returns to SUPERVISOR.)

READER II: I'd like to meet with you first thing in the morning... (BRUCE bothers CHERYL, CHERYL calms him and apologizes to SUPERVISOR.) The McKeegan Company is going to be here tomorrow afternoon, so I'd like to see your spring layout again... (BRUCE interferes again, CHERYL is embarrassed and apologetic.)

CHERYL: Fine, how about 8 am?

READER II: 8 o'clock sharp. My office...see ya then. (exits.)

CHERYL: (CHERYL grabs the sketch from the READER I and return it to the table.) It'll just frighten them. I don't want to frighten them. I want people to feel comfortable with me. It's very important for my job. If people realize that I'm deaf, maybe they would be turned off.

BRUCE: To hell with other people. What does it matter what they think? Don't you care what I think?

CHERYL: Yes, I do...

BRUCE: Then why do you want to continue to live a lie? You're deaf, aren't you?

CHERYL: Yes, but do I have to publicize it?

BRUCE: What sort of experiences have you had that makes you have such a weird outlook on yourself as a person...

on deafness? What kind of upbringing have you had?
You're really not a person. You are a lie.

CHERYL: (Slaps his face.) Oh! Bruce, I'm sorry but what you just said. That's a terrible insult. I am proud of my background, proud of my upbringing. My parents, you couldn't find any more wonderful parents. They are so good. They have given me everything. They know what's best for me. My father is a psychologist. They have given me every advantage and I am successful. How dare you criticize them? And I have been trying to learn sign language, trying to understand you as a person. I would be pleased to go all the way--to really know, to try to know, the world that you live in. I have made every effort except that... Now... I just... but I need you to respect me. I ask you not to sign here in public in my office because I am worried for my job.

BRUCE: I do respect you as a person, but I have to understand you and you have to understand me before we can respect each other. Right? That's why I asked you to learn sign. I can't learn to hear.

CHERYL: Well, I'm trying to learn sign, but I really can't do it. It's awkward, ugly, I can't express myself naturally. I don't feel that you're really helping me.

BRUCE: You find the sign language ugly?

CHERYL: Yes. But it's because I can't express myself naturally. Yes, that's it. It's because I can't express myself.. I feel awkward and I feel stupid.

BRUCE: Just because you can't do it, is that why you find signing ugly? Do you think I'm ugly when I sign?

CHERYL: No, but I'd much prefer that you speak. You know I can

read lips. I can understand anything you say if you speak to me.

BRUCE: Me, speak? Why should I? There are too many words I don't know how to pronounce. I can't limit myself that way. I try, and I can't find the words to speak but I can sign them. So why should I speak? It makes me feel stupid to speak.

CHERYL: That's exactly what I mean. (sign) Funny and Cat, it makes me feel stupid to limit myself to thirty or forty baby signs. I can't express myself either.

BRUCE: Well, then I guess that makes two of us. We seem to be deadlocked.

CHERYL: Yes, maybe that's true. Maybe we have nothing more to say to each other.

BLACK OUT

SCENE 6

(Opens with a series of slides showing CHERYL and BRUCE alternately in their bedrooms. Not able to sleep, C CHERYL in her room rolling, tossing, restless. FINALLY turns on the light and takes her sign language book and opens it and tries to practice some signs. BRUCE in his room, the clock showing the same late hour (3 am) Finally gets up and goes into the bathroom and looks in the mirror and practices speech, lip movements. Lights go down on slides and up on the stage. BRUCE and CHERYL sitting at TDDs. Reader I & II standing between them.)

CHERYL: No, not really. What's wrong? Is there some emergency?

BRUCE: Yes, it is an emergency.

CHERYL: Why, what's wrong?

BRUCE: I can't sleep.

CHERYL: Funny, I can't sleep either.

BRUCE: I was hoping we could take up again where we left off this afternoon. How about it?

CHERYL: Now? On the TTY?

BRUCE: Sure. Why not? We seem to communicate better on the TTY.

CHERYL: True. We can avoid the issue of signing or speech this way, can't we?

BRUCE: We can't let this go on forever.

CHERYL: No, I guess not.

BRUCE: But at least we don't feel stupid this way.

CHERYL: Yes, but there are different ways of being stupid.

BRUCE: Do you mean that we maybe shouldn't let our feelings toward each other be disturbed or blocked by language?

CHERYL: Yes, that's exactly what I mean.

BRUCE: Great! How about breakfast? It's almost morning.

CHERYL: You're right. It is almost morning. Why don't you come over to my place for breakfast? That is if you don't mind looking at my hearing face across the table so early in the morning.

BRUCE: Great, see you in about 20 minutes. SK SK

BLACK OUT

SCENE 7

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(Lights go on on CHERYL's apartment. Set for breakfast, CHERYL brings the eggs to the table and sits across from BRUCE. Bruce takes out a book he has brought to her and shows her a poem from THE PROPHET.)

CHERYL: Oh, that's my favorite poet. How sweet. Did you bring that for me?

BRUCE: Yes, that's my favorite poet also. How do you like this one?

CHERYL: Oh, that's beautiful.

BRUCE: Would you read that for me?

CHERYL: Read that? Speak or sign it?

BRUCE: Speak.

CHERYL: (Reads poem aloud.)
Since feeling is first who pays any attention
to the syntax of things will never wholly kiss you.

Wholly to be a fool while spring is in the world.
My blood approves,

and kisses are a better fate than wisdom
lady, I swear by all flowers.

Don't cry--the best gesture of my brain is less than
your eye lids' flutter which says

We are for each other then laugh, leaning back in my
arms for life's not a paragraph and death I think
is no parenthesis. (Then looks up at BRUCE.)

BRUCE: Would you like to see that in sign?

CHERYL: Yes, please.

BRUCE: Put the book away. (He signs the same poem from memory.)

CHERYL: (When BRUCE finishes signing the poem, she speaks slowly) I never realized a poem could look so lovely.

BRUCE: Would you like to sign with me?

CHERYL: Sure. (BRUCE and CHERYL sign the first ^{verse} ~~version~~ of the poem together.)

BLACK OUT

SCENE 8

(A series of slides showing the two together in a wide variety of places. Always signing. The last few slides show the two together, driving. Final shot in the airport. Lights go down on slides and up on the stage. Showing the two standing together in the airport after entering.)

CHERYL: (Speaks to READER I) Do you know where Gate 5 is?

READER I: Yes, it's over there. (Points)

CHERYL: (Walks toward the gate 5 excitedly and turns back to BRUCE) Why don't you come to Paris with me?

BRUCE: (His arms are full of her baggage.) My business is here, you know.

CHERYL: Put down the suitcases so you can sign. (BRUCE checks baggage through. Then they walk center stage, front.)

BRUCE: My business is here, you know. It's still not too late for you to change your mind.

CHERYL: About what?

BRUCE: About staying here. Marrying me.

CHERYL: (Smiles) I've changed in many ways, you know. I can communicate now. I can accept my deafness and I can sign. I've even just developed a deaf face. But this is my big chance...to get into the designers' studios. It's important for my career.

BRUCE: But five months! That's too long!

CHERYL: I'll be home for Christmas. That's all set. We're to meet in New York, at my parents' house.

BRUCE: I'd still rather you to stay...

CHERYL: We've been through that. Again and again. You know how I feel about you. I love you. I've always love you and we have come to a perfect understanding. I understand now, I can communicate with you. I can even sign...without feeling stupid. Sign is now part of what I am. I am no longer ashamed of it, and of being deaf. But please, I have to go, let me go. You can't make me change my mind about that. I wish you could come with me. Why don't you? Come with me!

BRUCE: Sorry! No way.

CHERYL: Why not? You could spend some time going through the Renault and Mercedes plants.. you could learn a lot about your business if you spent a few months in Europe? Couldn't you go to the factories and...well do whatever people do in car factories?

BRUCE: Maybe. That's an interesting thought. There's alot to learn, for sure. Citroen, Renault...

CHERYL: Fiat is there, too.

BRUCE: You really do want your cake and eat it, too, don't you? You want both your career and me. 27

CHERYL: Yes. That's exactly what I want!

BRUCE: Hey! Look at the time. Come on, let's go.

CHERYL: What do you mean, let's go? Go on the plane? You can't
(Laughs) You're kidding. You don't have a ticket.
(Turn to get her baggage and kiss Bruce)

BRUCE: (Smiles at her and pulls a ticket out of his inside pocket.) Come on.

CHERYL: (Stares in disbelief) You're coming with me? You, too.
You want your cake and eat it too.

BRUCE: That makes two of us, doesn't it?

BLACK OUT

(Final shot on the screen shows the airplane disappearing in the distance.)