

SILENT LOVE

Written by

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1 INT. SONIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

SONIA is sleeping in her bed. She is in her mid 20s, a shy, introverted woman. In her ears she wears earbuds.

Hot summer's sun is coming through the curtains. Across the room, underneath a thick blanket, Sonia's phone alarm goes off, VIBRATING on the floor. The sound is like a stampede marching through the room, causing Sonia to jolt up. Despite just waking up, she looks as though she has barely slept.

Sonia pulls out her earbuds and begins to get ready, heading into her en suite. Sonia showers very quickly, the sound of the WATER RUNNING creating a loud and painful cocoon. Sonia proceeds to get dressed and opens her bedside table drawer.

Inside the draw, there are multiple packets of headache relief tablets and earbuds neatly stacked. Sonia takes two tablets and puts in the earbuds before covering her ears with a large pair of noise cancelling headphones.

2 INT. SONIA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sonia picks up a banana and, as she walks along the carpeted floor to her desk, she peels it slowly and begins to softly eat it.

Sonia sits at her desk and opens up her laptop. The laptop fan begins to WHIRR and Sonia flinches in pain. She looks through her emails, replying to questions about her ongoing data analytics project. Sonia keeps the replies short, ensuring that the TAPPING of the keyboard is kept to a minimum.

Sonia leans back, massaging her head. As she does, a car outside SCREECHES to a halt and the driver HONKS the horn. This sudden blast of sound sends a shock of pain through Sonia, causing her to grab her headphones, pressing them tightly against her ears.

A notification silently comes up on Sonia's phone. It is a reminder for an annual Dentist's appointment. Sonia sighs. She gently closes her laptop and puts her shoes on.

Sonia takes two more tablets and pockets the box in her coat. She takes a deep breath, opens the door softly, and walks outside.

3 EXT. A BUSY STREET - DAY

Sonia steps outside of her building and is greeted by a wall of sound that pierces her ears, despite the headphones and earbuds. There is a dog BARKING, roadworkers DRILLING into the ground, and the BEEPING of a pedestrian crossing. Sonia winces at the sudden increase in noise, pained by it all. Miserably, she walks quickly down the street.

4 INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Sonia rushes into the Dentist's office, gently closing the door behind her. She walks up to the RECEPTIONIST and whispers.

SONIA

Hi. I'm Sonia and I'm here for my appointment.

The receptionist looks up and smiles. As they talk, it sounds as though they are SCREAMING in Sonia's ear.

RECEPTIONIST

Thank you. Just take a seat and wait for your name to be called.

Sonia nods and sits down in one of the seats. As Sonia scrolls on her phone, waiting for her appointment, DAWN (mid 20s) enters the Dentist's office, finishing off her sandwich from her lunch break. She is a tall woman with short, dyed hair. She is confident and sure in herself.

Dawn walks quickly to her desk, brushing past Sonia as she does. For the moment that Dawn brushes past Sonia, everything goes SILENT. Sonia looks up, almost scared by the sudden peace. Dawn sits down at her desk and, as quickly as it came, the silence fades away, returning Sonia to the general NOISE.

Sonia is panicked, unsure why things suddenly became silent. Her face is a mixture of fear and confusion.

As she is still reeling from the moment of silence, Sonia is CALLED into her appointment by the DENTIST.

DENTIST

Sonia?

Sonia stands and cautiously walks in.

5 INT. THE DENTIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Sonia sits in the chair as the Dentist brings out their tools.

DENTIST

Now, lean back and open wide.

Sonia winces as the Dentist speaks right next to her. She opens her mouth and the Dentist examines her.

The Dentist's tools TAPPING against Sonia's teeth is excruciatingly loud, this is made worse by the DRILLING Sonia can hear from the adjacent room. The Dentist leans back.

DENTIST

You're all good! Just keep brushing at least twice a day and you shouldn't have any problems.

Sonia leaves the room hastily.

6 INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Sonia comes out of the Dentist's office and is handed a form by Dawn. As Sonia reaches out and takes the form, the SILENCE returns. Sonia, shocked and confused, looks into Dawn's eyes. Sonia sits down as Dawn returns to her desk and the NOISE comes back.

Sonia stares at Dawn. She tries repeatedly to push herself to stand up and talk to Dawn but is overwhelmed. The sound of the receptionists TYPING, other patients FLICKING through the magazines, and Sonia's own BREATHING become too much. Sonia stands up and steps towards the door before closing her eyes as the SOUND grows, her own HEARTBEAT pounding in her head.

Sonia hurriedly finishes the form and walks over to Dawn's desk to hand it back to her. As soon as Sonia comes near Dawn, the SILENCE returns. Sonia relaxes into the silence.

Sonia tries to speak but no sound comes from her mouth. Dawn looks up and points to a sign on her desk that reads:

"All questions must be submitted in a written format."

Sonia shakes her head and, before she can try to speak again, Dawn points to a sign on the wall that reads:

"This employee is hard of hearing. Please be considerate."

Sonia turns her form over and writes on the blank side of paper:

"Hi, my name is Sonia. Something really weird is happening and I would like to get a chance to talk to you. Can we get coffee sometime?"

Dawn reads the note and smiles, blushing. She then writes:

"My lunch break tomorrow is 1pm."

Sonia grins at Dawn and leaves the waiting room. Dawn fondly looks at the notes.

7 EXT. A BUSY STREET - DAY

Sonia leaves the building and the NOISE of the street returns, painfully wiping the smile off Sonia's face. As Sonia walks home, she passes a library and, after she comes up with an idea, walks quickly inside.

8 INT. A LIBRARY - DAY

Sonia walks into the library and heads quickly to the "Language and Communication" section. She picks out a book entitled "British Sign Language Made Easy" and sits at one of the tables, attempting to teach herself.

9 INT. A CAFÉ - DAY

The two women sit down at a table facing each other. Dawn is wearing a stylish jacket and has clearly put a lot of effort into her appearance. Sonia is neatly dressed still wearing her noise cancelling headphones. She nervously looks at Dawn. It is SILENT.

Sonia brings out the library book she rented and opens it to a bookmarked page.

Concentrating intensely on the book Sonia attempts to sign a sentence to Dawn.

All Sign language is in italics.

SONIA

Thank you for sitting with me.

Dawn is surprised. She looks at the book and can see the gestures Sonia is focusing on. She is flattered at Sonia's efforts.

DAWN

My name is Dawn. It's nice to meet you, Sonia.

Sonia smiles at Dawn.

SONIA

It is nice to meet you too. You seem really sad.

Dawn looks at Sonia confused. Sonia, seeing Dawn's reaction, looks down at the book trying to figure out where she went wrong.

Dawn brings her chair round to sit next to Sonia and looks at the book, seeing that Sonia intended to sign the word "friendly" instead of "sad".

DAWN

Oh. You meant to say "friendly", not "sad".

Dawn laughs endearingly at Sonia, charmed by the effort Sonia has put into this conversation.

Dawn shows Sonia the correct gesture but Sonia struggles to copy her. Dawn, then, takes Sonia's hands and gently moves them in the right way, making sure Sonia gets used to the movement.

As Dawn tenderly adjusts Sonia's fingers, the two women look into each others eyes, hesitant to look away or even blink. The two stay staring for a moment before Sonia breaks her gaze, blushing.

SONIA

I'm sorry. I am still learning to sign.

Dawn moves her chair to its original position. She starts to sign but realises that Sonia cannot fully understand her. Dawn pulls out her phone and indicates for Sonia to put in her number.

DAWN

So we can talk.

Sonia enters her number and hands the phone back to Dawn who texts Sonia:

"You mentioned that you needed to talk about something. What

is it?"

Sonia receives the notification and smiles at Dawn.

SONIA

Thank you.

Sonia looks down at her phone, then back at Dawn.

Sonia types out a text:

"I have this issue. I hear every sound as though it is magnified. It's painful. No doctor has been able to figure out why I'm like this."

She quickly deletes the message and, instead, types:

"It's nothing. Don't worry."

Dawn reads the message and stares at Sonia. She looks concerned. Sonia puts her phone down, closing herself off.

SONIA

Sorry. I know I'm being weird.

Dawn sits, contemplating what Sonia has said. She texts:

"It's okay if you don't want to talk to me. But I promise I won't bite."

Sonia looks at Dawn, wanting to explain the silence she experiences when they are together. She texts back:

"I'm sorry. I think I just wanted an excuse to have a nice lunch."

Dawn looks at Sonia tenderly and, in an attempt to get Sonia to laugh, texts:

"I have to admit, it isn't the worst pick up line anyone has ever used on me."

Sonia reads the text and smiles but stops herself from laughing. Dawn looks sadly at Sonia and texts:

"Sorry. I guess it's not really a joking matter."

Sonia looks up at Dawn and shakes her head. She quickly texts back:

"It's not that. You were funny. Don't worry about it."

Dawn reaches across the table and touches Sonia's hand for a moment. She then signs.

DAWN

If it's okay then, I'll keep trying to making you smile. You have a lovely smile.

Sonia smiles and looks down, blushing.

SONIA

Thank you. Your smile is nice too.

DAWN

Are you free later tonight? I'm meeting my friends who are also hard of hearing. I think they would love you. I promise, they're friendly, not sad.

Sonia chuckles as Dawn teases her. As she does, she realises that her laugh is silent. Sonia smiles, her grin exuding pure joy. She looks into Dawn's eyes.

SONIA

Thank you. That sounds nice. I don't think I can come though, sorry.

Dawn looks at her phone and notices the time. She sighs, annoyed.

SONIA

What is it?

Dawn texts:

"I'm sorry. I need to get back to work. I was really enjoying hanging out with you. I'll text you the details for tonight in case you change your mind. I hope I can see you again."

Sonia looks at Dawn and smiles, nodding as she does. Dawn exits the café as Sonia stares after her, watching her walk away.

The SOUNDS of the café flood in all around Sonia and she winces in pain.

10 EXT. A STREET - NIGHT

Sonia stands outside a bar. She is dressed glamorously, her dress sparkling. She holds tightly onto her headphones,

refusing to take them off, as the drunken CHEERS and CLINKING of glasses can be heard from within. Sonia steps away from the entrance. She goes to leave, shaking her head, before looking up and seeing Dawn in the window. Dawn is wearing a smart, colourful blazer and is laughing with her friends in the corner of the bar.

Sonia smiles at this sight and takes a deep breath before entering quickly into the bar.

11 INT. A BAR - NIGHT

As Sonia walks into the bar, she sees Dawn leave her friends and head to get another drink. Sonia ducks out of Dawn's sightline and heads to a nearby empty table.

Sonia sits down, hearing the NOISE of the bar all around her. Sonia tries to push the sounds out of her mind, but is unsuccessful.

The sounds of the bar become too painful for Sonia and she stands up and pushes past the crowd, trying to get closer to Dawn.

When Sonia comes close to Dawn, the bar becomes SILENT. Dawn waits for her drink to be made, looking around the room. Sonia ducks behind a small group of people who are standing between the two women. Sonia relishes the silence, happy she is close enough to Dawn.

Then, the group of people receive their drinks and leave, allowing Dawn to see Sonia. She smiles.

DAWN

You came? You look beautiful.

Sonia is flustered.

SONIA

Thank you. It's great to see you again.

Dawn can see that Sonia is distressed.

DAWN

Are you okay?

SONIA

Yeah. I saw you here and thought you could use a hand.

DAWN

You sure? You weren't hiding from me or anything?

SONIA

No. It's not that.

DAWN

Well, what is it?

Sonia looks at the ground, sheepishly. She does not give an answer.

DAWN

You can talk to me. It's okay.

After a moment, Sonia takes a deep breath and signs.

SONIA

This will sound weird but sound hurts me. It's like every noise is screamed into my ears.

DAWN

I'm sorry. I had no idea. Can I help at all? Is being here too much for you?

SONIA

No. That's the thing. Right now, with you. I'm not in pain.

DAWN

What do you mean?

SONIA

I don't know. When I'm around you, the world is quiet for the first time in my life. It doesn't hurt.

DAWN

Is this why you wanted to meet me yesterday?

SONIA

I wasn't sure what to say, it doesn't make any sense. I just knew I needed to be near you.

DAWN

Sonia. I like you, you're sweet and I

want to get to know you more. But I don't like the thought that this is the only reason you want to see me. I can't just be around to keep things silent for you.

SONIA

I know. I'm sorry. I really like you too and I don't want to put that pressure on you.

Dawn takes a moment, thinking.

DAWN

I know it's tough for you. Maybe, if it's possible for you to not be in pain around me, we can work to see if it's possible when you're alone.

Sonia smiles at Dawn.

SONIA

If you're sure you would be willing to help me. I'd really like that.

12 INT. A BAR - LATER

Sonia and Dawn are signing to each other in the corner of the bar. They are sat close together. Dawn signs something and Sonia laughs, her laugh now free and unrestrained. Her headphones have been taken off and placed on the table next to her.

DAWN

I honestly don't know how I managed to graduate after that exam.

SONIA

You're clearly just too amazing for your own good.

DAWN

And you are wonderfully sweet.

Dawn and Sonia stare at each other, both smiling.

DAWN

How about we get out of here?

SONIA

Sure thing. Thank you for tonight. I

have never had that much fun.

DAWN

*I'm glad you enjoyed yourself. I'm
really enjoying getting to know you.*

Sonia blushes, unsure of what to say. Dawn leans in slowly and the two kiss gently and passionately.

13 INT. SONIA'S ROOM - DAY

Sonia wakes up. She sits up in her bed, breathes deeply as she focuses, and takes off her headphones. For a moment, it is peaceful. Sonia can hear birds CHIRPING, trees RUSTLING, and wind BLOWING outside. Sonia sits still, focusing on letting these sounds wash over her. After a while, the noise begins to build, becoming gradually more painful. Sonia puts her headphones back on and goes about her day.

As Sonia looks at her laptop, she reaches for her phone and, for the first time, turns the notification alerts from 'silent' to 'loud'.

Sonia continues to read her emails. As she does, her phone DINGS. The sound is loud, but not piercing and painful. It is a text from Dawn that says:

'Good morning xx'

Sonia looks at her phone and smiles.

FADE OUT