

A Voice in the Silence

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Everything was quiet.

Uncomfortably quiet.

A dog walked past the Café window. Jaime could see the dog bark, but no sound ever reached his ears

The door opened and the outside breeze rushed in. Jaime watched the top of the door hit a small bell. He tries to imagine the noise it would have made, but nothing comes to mind.

One of the waitresses comes over to Jaime's table. She asked him a question, but no sound ever came. He could understand her due to her poorly coordinated hand movements, asking if he was finished with his cup. Jamie appreciated her attempt. He nodded and held up his index finger, indicating to her that he wanted one more coffee. She smiled and took the cup back behind the front counter.

Jaime didn't mind his quiet world. He used to think that all the sounds others hear would get overwhelming. He's always been like this, he's used to it. Watching people move their lips in silence. Watching the waitresses scramble around with plates and cups, imagining what noises the cups would make against the plates.

The door opened again. Jaime looked to the bell once more. Nothing came, it just swung silently. A man, around Jaime's age, walked in, shrugging off a massive coat. He walked over to the old jukebox in the corner of the café. Jaime smiled. He loved that jukebox. He never used it though. He thought others would find it weird if the deaf boy tried to play a song. So he always waited for others to play their music. The sound of blues filled Jaime's ears. It was the only thing he could hear, music. He couldn't hear the singing, but he was fine with that. He felt blessed just being able to hear the symphonies play.

'A spiced pumpkin latte please, with almond milk.'

Jaime's head shot up to where the voice came from. He saw the man with the coat, talking to the waitress at the front counter. Her mouth moved silently, but his...

'Thank you so much, have a nice day'

He could hear. Jaime has never heard another person's voice before, not even his own. It was enchanting. Jaime couldn't take his eyes, or ears, off of him.

That was until the man turned and met Jamie's gaze.

The man smiled.

Jaime could feel his ears turning red.

He waved.

Jaime shoved his nose back into his book. He sat staring at the book for a few minutes, not registering a single word or any of the pages. Why did he stare? How could he hear him?

'Hey.'

Jaime glanced over the top of his book. The man had sat across from him, a friendly smile on his face. It was such a beautiful smile. One that lights up his whole face. Jaime gave a nod, responding to his greeting. An awkward silence fell upon them, or at least, Jaime thought it was. The man reached over the table, offering his hand.

'My name is Oliver.'

Jaime placed his book back on the table to return the gesture with his own hand, and for the few seconds that their hands touched, Jaime could hear everything. The buzzing of people; the blaring horns of traffic; the soft lyrics that went along with the music he'd been listening to his whole life.

'I'm Jaime,' he muttered in return, shocked at the sound of his own voice. Oliver released his hand and everything went silent again, save the instrumental blues softly playing in the back.

'Could you hear it?' Oliver asked, his smile seemed to grow wider on his face.

Jaime gave no response, just a quizzical look. Oliver laughed.

'could you hear the music?'