



# A Possible Perfect World

By Sienna

Hi, I'm Karla Sue and I'm 12 years old. I'm Deaf in my right ear and hearing in my left. Right now I'm lousily lying on my bed, flooded by noise, drowned by sound, and extremely overwhelmed from speech. I wish I could just flip a switch, and everyone could be signing but I guess I just have to accept that I live in a hearing world.

I discovered Auslan when I was 7 years old and since then, I've been using it to communicate with my mum and dad sometimes. It has truly changed my life! My sister Sharley is two years younger than me and loves music, though she's not too confident with her signing skills. When we were little, we were practically best friends. Just pulling a funny face would make us laugh for hours. Since we both learned to speak, our conversations have been mostly verbal, making it harder for me.

My thoughts are quickly interrupted. "Hey Karla, do you have my sparkly pen?" Sharley yells from the hallway. I do not understand what she says as I can't see her face. I think she might have said "do you hate my band?" so I just reply "no." Having one hearing ear doesn't make me a hearing person but most people wrongly assume that I can hear everything.

I am watching the sparkles twinkle on my sister's pen when suddenly, Sharley bursts through the door angrily, "Mum Karla lied to me." I'm so confused, the last time I lied to her was when I said that if she lets me all her chocolate, she will get good luck. "What's going on girls?" Mum follows up on the shouting. Sharley is quick to respond, "I asked Karla if she has my sparkle pen and she said no." "I didn't hear you!" I blurt out. I give Sharley her pen back and her and mum both pace out the door.

I know that I like being Deaf but I'm not sure that my sister likes me being Deaf. If only we could have fluent Auslan chats together and there would be no communication barrier. Mum comes back in with her skirt fluttering behind her "It's time for dinner." she says as I hop off my bed. "pardon?" I reply. "Dinner time." Mum signs.

I am so grateful that I have Auslan because I then understood exactly what she said without having to lip read or work so hard to understand. I'm so hungry that I leap off my bed and zip down the stairs. My light feet fly across the bumpy carpet.

I energetically sit at the table, but the mood is immediately brought down by my mother, father and sisters' tired faces. "Are you alright Dad?" I inquire. He Mumbles in response. "What?" I say. He replies, "never mind." I sigh. It's annoying when people say "never mind" when I ask them to repeat themselves because then I miss out on potentially important information. "Come eat your dinner Sharley" mum shouts with her head facing the stove.

Even though she is not talking to me it's still annoying because every single sound I hear, my brain has to work out. "Hey Karla, can you move over please?" Sharley blurts out, her face buried in an iPad. I ask frustratedly, "Can you please face me?" The sounds from her video game are playing through Sharley's headphones and she is too distracted to hear me. I wave and snatch her headphones. Once again, I say, "Can you please face me?" with an angry look on my face. "What, I didn't hear you!" replies Sharley. I point out, "Well now you know how I feel."

Sharley looks angrily at me, and I return a cold hard stare. The tension is broken as Sharley states firmly "Well, at least you can lip read." My heart sinks. Emotions come in and flood my brain. I wish I could just easily explain that lipreading is exhausting and that it seems like I can hear everything but I work so hard just to understand one word, but I can't. My lip is trembling, and a heavy tear is trying to break past my eye. I wish I can just flip a switch, and everyone would be fluently signing.

Mum says that we should do voice off Auslan time as she sees that I am struggling. The rest of dinner no one utters one sign. Everything is silent and still. Surely that was the most intense dinner we've ever had I think to myself as I plop down onto my bed. I slowly drift to sleep.

Sharley taps me on the shoulder. "Do you have my sparkly pen?" she signs. Wait, what! "How do you know how to sign so well?" I sign back. "Everyone agreed that it's totally unfair that Deaf people have to work so hard to understand and communicate with society because of a silly communication barrier, so we took the time to learn Auslan!" Sharley exclaims. My eyes well with tears as happiness fills up inside of me.

Not only does this incredible change make it easier for the Deaf but hearing too. We can sign underwater! Dad and I can chat in the library without the librarian shushing us. We can go to really loud parties and still easily chat. Deaf kids like me would find it easier to make friends if they all spoke their true language and understood that identity. I'm so excited to explore how awesome this accessible world is and I'm undoubtedly sure that it will benefit everyone.

My eyes peel open. I'm back in my bed and in the spoken world. I'm so disappointed, an accessible world for Deaf people would have been incredible. But it could be reality if people make the right decisions. As a society we are just one step away from reaching a stupendous goal.