

SPEECHLESS

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1

EXT. ROAD - BUILDING - DAY

1

Afternoon sun light comes through from the tree top. A road leading up to a building.

A Chinese woman, SUMMER'S MOTHER (30s) and 8-year-old Chinese girl, SUMMER, walk toward the building - DUBLIN ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL. They stop. Summer's shoulder length black hair is pulled back and tied with a bow clip, pinky cheeks. She wears a knee high white flowery yellow dress and a red coat; a small back pack.

Summer's mother looks down at Summer, gives her a light smile. She is sure this is the building. Then she pulls Summer's hand, but Summer doesn't move.

Summer looks up and shakes her head "no"

SUMMER

(in Chinese) mother, I don't like learning English.

Summer's mother looks disappointed. She doesn't say a word. Summer looks down trying to hide the sadness on her face.

Summer's mother squeezes Summer's hand. They walk to the building.

2

INT. CORRIDOR/CLASSROOM DOOR - DAY

2

At the corridor Summer standing still, looks at the classroom door. Summer's mother gives her a gentle push. Summer walks slowly into the classroom.

Teacher, MIA (30's) approaches Summer with a welcoming smile.

MIA

Hello. (gently) You must be Summer.
(turn to face the class)
Everyone this is our new classmate,
Summer.

The small class of students stay silent. They watch Mia leading Summer to a front seat by the window.

At the doorway Summer's mother takes a step, then turns to look back at Summer who is putting a book on the desk, but doesn't open it. Summer's mother looks worried.

Empty Corridor. Bell rings. Class ends. Students vacate the classroom.

3 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY (LATER)

3

Mia and Summer's mother are chatting. Summer looks at the ground, standing beside her mother. Mia looks at Summer. She can see Summer is unhappy.

MIA
(to Summer)
Summer I'll see you tomorrow, ok.

Summer looks at the Mia. Unsure what to say. A beat. She runs out of the classroom.

SUMMER'S MOTHER
Sorry teacher.

Mia watches Summer's mother going after Summer. A concern look on Mia's face.

4 EXT. BUS STOP - AFTERNOON

4

Cloudless sky. We see trees and an empty bus stop.

Summer is tailing behind her mother as they're heading toward the bus stop. She stops when Summer's mother suddenly turns to speak.

SUMMER'S MOTHER
(in Chinese) I know it's hard. But
you'll go to an Irish school next
year, so you must learn English.

Summer shakes her head "no". Mother looks at Summer. A beat.

SUMMER'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
(in Chinese) I'm only trying to do
what's best for you. Someday you'll
understand.

Summer nods "yes".

Summer's mother hugs Summer tight. Summer hugs her back, her eyes welling with tears. A way of showing they love each other.

An Irish boy, SEAN (10) wearing a back pack and a navy blue jumper and A MAN (40s) walk past Summer and her mother.

Sean sits on the bench, can't help but look at Summer. A curious look on Sean's face.

5

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

5

We see a word - "Tuesday" on the board. BOY#1 just finishes reading a sentence. Mia notices Summer's book remains closed on the desk, and Summer is looking down.

MIA

Summer, can you open the book
please?

Summer doesn't respond. Students are giggling.

MIA (CONT'D)

(handing out one paper to
everyone)

Okay. Let's do the exercise first,
then we will play a game.

Students say "yeah" and start writing. Summer looks like a statue sitting there. Mia looks over, can see the unease on Summer's face.

Silence. Everyone is writing.

6

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING (LATER)

6

Summer now sits at one table with Boy#2 and Girl#1. A game box is on the table. She looks at the box with interest.

Girl#1 places the cards on the game board while explaining the rules.

GIRL#1

(to Summer)

You do this, (moves the cards
around), you do that. You must be
fast before time stops.

BOY#2

(look at Summer)

You know?

Silent. Summer looks to Girl#1 like "I don't understand".

GIRL#1

(to Summer)

You don't say. We don't like you.

GIRL#1 moves the board and the cards, turns her back on Summer.

BOY#2

(to Summer)

You look.

(MORE)

BOY#2 (CONT'D)
(to Girl#1)
We play.

Summer says nothing. She is left watching as they play without her.

She looks down, counting her fingers in silence. Bell rings. Class ends.

7 EXT. ROAD - BUS STOP - AFTERNOON

7

A balloon. The balloon floats away. Below there's traffic and noise. Summer and Sean sit on each end of the bench. The man stands next to Sean as usual.

Summer looks to the sky. The balloon floats away forever.

Summer looks down, and moves her bag around to play with, visibly unhappy. She looks up. Her mother is on the phone.

Summer takes her eyes off her mother just long enough to catch Sean watching her.

Sean looks away. Summer looks down. She looks up again and catches Sean looking at her again. A bus pulls in.

The man taps Sean's shoulder gently, indicating they need to go. Sean stands up and they hurry to the bus. Sean turns quickly to offer a soft smile to Summer.

Summer smiles back.

8 INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

8

Another day in the class. "Wednesday" on the board. Girl#2 returns to her desk after writing "Wednesday" on the board. Mia sees Summer's book stays closed on the desk.

MIA
Okay (voice fading) let's...

Summer looks longingly at the field outside, in her own thoughts. Then Summer hears something, looks over and sees...

Everyone is moving the tables together. Summer stands, but gets pushed aside, unsure where to go.

Mia comes to Summer's aid. She moves her chair to the table where Boy#2 and Girl#1 sit. Summer sits down.

Again Summer is left watching as Boy#2 and Girl#1 are playing the game without her. Mia notices.

Mia comes over and leaves a art book and colouring pens on the table. She gives her a smile, then opens the book. Summer takes a pen, starts colouring.

Bell rings. Class ends.

9

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

9

Mother and Summer exit classroom, walking toward the door. Summer stops. Mother looks at her, puzzled.

SUMMER

(in Chinese) What do I do to become
a person that everyone likes?

SUMMER'S MOTHER

(in Chinese) Hey you don't try to
please others by being someone you
are not.

SUMMER

(in Chinese) But no one likes me. I
want to go home.

Summer's mother looks at Summer, giving her a bitter smile.

SUMMER'S MOTHER

(in Chinese) Because they don't
understand you. They will like you,
when you can talk to them.

Summer nods. They resume walking.

10

EXT. BUS STOP - AFTERNOON

10

Summer and Sean sit on each end of the bench with the man standing by Sean. It's just silent. Summer can see Sean's eyes on her, watching her. Summer meets his gaze. Sean smiles.

Summer's mother is on her phone again, speaking fast. She walks back and forth. Her voice catches the man's attention. He takes a quick look at Summer's mother. A wondering look.

Summer and Sean now notice a A4 size art book on the bench between them. A bus pulls in and then moves off. The book blows open, revealing a page -- it's a dot-to-dot art book.

Summer looks to Sean for a moment. He looks at her and then the book. He doesn't move. Summer slides toward the book.

Summer reaches down her bag to take out a marker. Another bus pulls in.

Summer's mother sees the bus, grabs Summer's hand and hurries to the bus. In a panic Summer drops her marker.

Before getting on the bus Summer looks back and sees Sean picking up the marker from the ground. He smiles. Summer waves goodbye. Sean waves back.

11 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

11

"Thursday". Students open their books. Suddenly Mia's expression changes. She can't believe it. Summer finally opens her book. She looks up. Mia gives her a subtle smile.

MIA

Okay. Read after me. "The boy and the girl...(voice fading) walks to the window."

Summer looks at the page, listening hard. Her figure moves along the words on the page, eager to read even she doesn't know the words. Bell rings. Class ends.

12 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY (LATER)

12

Summer watches Mia and her mother talking. She turns her head watching her classmates leaving one by one.

MIA

It's a good start now that she wants to learn.

Summer pulls her mother's hand. Mother doesn't move. Mia notices Summer's focus is on the door.

SUMMER'S MOTHER

But we're here on holiday for one month only.

MIA

I'll do my best to help her.

Summer Can't wait. She pulls her mother along heading toward the door. Her mother turns to the Mia.

SUMMER'S MOTHER

(smiles)

Thank you.

13 EXT. STREET - BUS STOP - DAY

13

Summer's mother is tailing behind Summer who walks quickly to the bus stop with a smile on her face. Until she arrives to see...

An empty bus stop. Disappointed. Sean isn't there.

Summer sits down on the bench as usual. Summer mother's phone rings. She answers the call.

In a distance Sean and the man are walking toward the bus stop. Sean's face lights up when he sees Summer.

Summer's legs swing on the bench. She is bored. Sean walks up to Summer. He hands the marker back to her. Summer looks up, momentarily loss for words, surprised. Her hand reaches out like a robot's arm to take the marker.

Sean smiles, immediately reaches down his bag to take out the art book. A bus pulls in. Summer is about to say something when the man gives Sean a caring tap on the shoulder.

Sean turns quickly. They walk toward the bus.

Summer takes a step forward.

SUMMER

Hi... Hello.

No response from the boy. He heads straight to the bus and ignores her.

Summer bites her lips. She is upset at Sean's non response, thinking...

SUMMER'S MOTHER (V.O.)

(in Chinese) They will like you,
when you can talk to them.

A bus pulls in. They walk toward the bus.

14

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

14

Kids' laughing sound. Game time. Two group of students are playing at two tables.

At the teacher's desk Mia is helping Summer to read and write. Summer is absorbed, focused. Bell rings.

Summer puts her book away. She walks quickly out of the door, past her mother who just arrives.

SUMMER'S MOTHER

(in Chinese) Xiao Lin. Wait.

Summer's mother follows her as quickly as she can.

15

EXT. STREET - BUS STOP - DAY

15

Summer sees Sean and the man sit in the middle of the bench. She goes to sit on one end of the bench deliberately and looks away. Summer's mother sits down beside the man. She's on the phone again.

Sean gets up and walks to Summer with a brand new art book. But Summer ignores him by walking away.

Sean stands. Disappointed. Then he walks back to the man.

Summer's mother sees the whole thing. She ends the phone conversations, walks to Summer.

SUMMER'S MOTHER
(in Chinese) Xiao Lin, you should
go to say "Hello" to the boy.

Summer shakes her head.

SUMMER
(in Chinese) No. I said hello
before...
(turns to look back at
Sean)
But he...

Summer sees that now Sean is talking to the man using sign language. Sean looks over at Summer and smiles again.

Summer gives Sean an awkward smile, and then walks up to him. An apologetic look on her face. She uses hand sign that indicates...

"You can't speak. You can't hear"

Sean shakes his head and smiles. He replies in sign language:

"I am deaf and dumb".

Summer doesn't know what he said. But she senses what he meant, quickly takes out a marker from her bag, and then points to Sean's bag. He takes out the art book. She takes it. They sit down together.

16

EXT. BUS STOP - BENCH - DAY

16

Sean watches first. Summer is connecting the dots on the page. Sean helps her connecting the line.

On the page we now see a picture of a bird. Summer looks to Sean and smiles. Instantly she leaps to her feet imitating like a bird flying. Summer becomes chatty.

SUMMER
(in Chinese) I knew it. It's a
bird.

Sean watches Summer circling around like a bird flying. He smiles. Summer stops and points to the next page. She hands him the marker.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
(in Chinese) Your turn.

This time Sean is connecting the dots. Summer watches. She speaks to him non stop in Chinese.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
(in Chinese) What did I tell you,
it's a dog. It must be a dog.

Sean looks up at Summer from time to time while connecting the dots carefully. Summer tapes his shoulder. Sean looks up.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
(making a face)
Woof, woof...

Sean smiles, looks down at the page for a beat. Then he uses hand sign that says:

"I see that."

Summer gives him a thumbs up.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
(in Chinese) Very good.

Sean gives Summer a thumbs up too and smiles as if they totally understand what the other is saying.

FADE TO BLACK.