



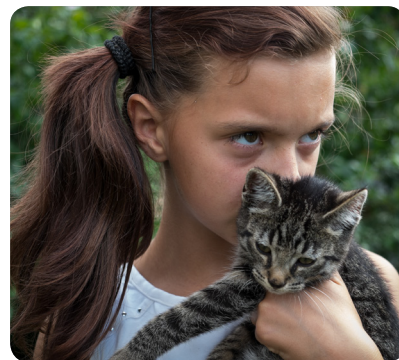
Two Worlds

Laura was born and raised by deaf parents in a small Polish town. Their relationship is unique in that both parents depend heavily on Laura's hearing to get through day-to-day events. Whether it's her mother's job interview or visits to the doctor for her Dad, Laura acts as a translator for her parents. As Laura pointedly observes, "I feel like I know my family and how it is to be an adult way better than my friends do. I know what to expect and how hard it will be. I'm afraid of being an adult." This film is beautifully shot, capturing the tender and intimate moments as well as the surprisingly ordinary ones that every family will recognize.

Recommended for ages 10+

Themes: family; childhood; identity; perseverance; disability; parenting challenges; girls POV

Director(s): Maciej Adamek | **51 min** | **Documentary** | **2016** | **Country:** Poland | **Language:** Polish, European Sign Language w/ English subtitles



SET THE STAGE | THOUGHT-STARTERS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The term "mother father deaf" or CODA (children of deaf adults) are commonly used in the deaf community to identify a hearing child of deaf parents. According to recent statistics, over 90% of all deaf parents have hearing children. There are also many children who act as translators for their parents, not because their parents are deaf, but because they do not speak the dominant societal language (e.g., children from a Spanish-speaking country who live in the US). An article published by the New York Times in 2001 documented how these children are forced to grow up fast: while acting as a translator may help boost their self-esteem, it can also lead to stress and anxiety.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Documentary:** A type of film that attempts to explain reality.
- **Sign Language:** Visual gestural language that is expressed through the hands and face and is perceived through the eyes.
- **Diegetic and Non-Diegetic Sound:** Sound whose source is visible on the screen or whose source is implied to be present by the action of the film (diegetic) or sound whose source is neither visible on screen nor has been implied to be present in the action (non-diegetic).
- **Deaf Culture:** The set of social beliefs, behaviors, art, literary traditions, history, values, and shared institutions of communities that are influenced by deafness and which use sign languages as the main means of communication.
- **B-Roll:** Supplemental or alternative footage intercut with the main shot.

For more film terms, refer to the PCFF Film Glossary (pcfri.org/FilmHub).

TALK ABOUT IT | DISCUSSION

- For much of Laura's life, her identity has been linked to being the communicator between her parents and the "outside world." But throughout the film, we are shown aspects of Laura's identity that are totally separate from her parents. How are Laura's own interests, hobbies, and friendships shown throughout the film?
- How do others see Laura's relationship with her parents? Think about everything Laura takes on (the cell phone store, her mother's job interview, calling out sick for her father). Do you think her parents put too much pressure on her? Does she put pressure on herself?
- How would you describe the relationship between Laura and her parents? Is this similar to or different from the relationship you have with your parents? Why or why not?
- Because Laura has the power of translation, there are many things she chooses not to tell her parents. Is this the same as keeping a secret or lying? Have there been things you haven't told your parents? If so, why did you choose to keep these secrets?
- What did you think about the job interview scene? Was there anything you learned?
- In addition to using current-day b-roll footage of Laura's family life, the director used old home movies to tell this story. Why do you think the director made that choice? What does this footage tell you about Laura's past and family life?
- During one scene, after Laura and her friend have finished putting up posters in Laura's room, we see the family sit down to eat a snack. Throughout the scene, they are speaking in sign language to each other, but there are no subtitles to translate the conversation for the audience. Why do you think the filmmaker chose to keep this interaction "silent" without subtitles?



Clues and Cues

Pay attention while watching

- Think about how the director uses sound to help transport the audience into the lives of this family.
- Pay attention to how Laura acts within her "two worlds." How does she act at school and with her friends compared to at home?

GET CREATIVE | EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



For Activity Reel details, downloadable storyboard template and more, visit the the Film Hub website: www.pcffri.org/FilmHub

• Writing Prompt

Materials Needed: Pens, paper

Think about why the film is titled Two Worlds. What worlds are portrayed? Describe each of these worlds and their similarities and differences. Then, think about your own life. Are there “two worlds” that you exist in? What are those worlds? Describe them and compare how they might be similar or different to the ones in the film. Think about how you would show these two sides visually.

• Learning Sign Language

Pair into groups and log onto www.lifeprint.com. Watch the video and try signing some words to a partner. Then, come up with a basic phrase to share with one another. After you have shared those phrases, think about how you might translate this for someone else. Bring in a new group member and designate one of you as the “translator” and the other two as the conversants. See if you can translate simple phrases between each other. What are the challenges of this form of communication? Take turns being the “translator.”

BEYOND THE FILM | ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Select from the following resources to complement the film and inspire further discussion or programming.

BOOKS

- **El Deafo**
by *Cece Bell*
The loosely autobiographical graphic novel tells the story of Bell’s childhood and living with her deafness.
- **Miss Spitfire: Reaching Helen Keller**
by *Sarah Miller*
The fictionalized account of Annie Sullivan’s quest to do what some considered impossible; become a teacher to the deaf and blind Helen Keller.
- **Deaf Child Crossing**
by *Marlee Matlin*
Megan and Cindy are inseparable friends, even though Megan is deaf and Cindy is just beginning to learn sign language.

FILMS

- (Short film) **Through Ellen’s Ears** (2013)
This sensitive documentary tells the story of a deaf Dutch middle school girl trying to fit into hearing society.
- (Short film) **Supersonic** (2013)
In this coming-of-age film, a deaf teenager reunites with his long-lost father and learns his father has superpowers. He has to decide whether he will use them for good or for evil.
- (Short film) **Hear This!** (2013)
This short film is told from the perspective of a hearing boy who has two deaf parents.)
- **Indicates PCFF festival selection**

LOCAL CONNECTIONS

- **Rhode Island School for the Deaf**
www.rideaf.ri.gov
- **Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island**
A social service organization working to overcome cultural, educational, economic and language barriers.
www.diiri.org

RELATED INTERNET LINKS

- **New York Times article about children of deaf parents sharing their experiences:**
www.nytimes.com/1986/12/15/style/the-family-children-of-deaf-share-their-lives.html
- **Teen Vogue article on living with deaf parents:**
www.teenvogue.com/story/deaf-parents
- **Article about children translating for their parents:**
www.nytimes.com/2001/08/26/nyregion/urban-tactics-translating-for-parents-means-growing-up-fast.html
- **CODA International:**
www.coda-international.org/

