

# EYES THAT HEAR

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THERE WAS A TIME WHEN DEAF PEOPLE...PEOPLE WHO HEAR WITH THEIR EYES, DEPENDED UPON THE SILENT SIGN LANGUAGE. TODAY EYES ARE TAUGHT TO HEAR ANOTHER WAY...BY LIP READING...AND LIPS ARE TAUGHT TO SPEAK, IN SPITE OF THE HANDICAP OF DEAFNESS...

*This is a story of children. Happy, intelligent children who can't hear. It's the story of how deaf children can be educated to live happily in a hearing world. A child who is deaf from birth doesn't imitate speech because she can't hear. And until she's taught to speak, she can't make herself understood to children with normal hearing. They don't want to play with her. She's unusual, peculiar. But our story is different.*

LEXINGTON SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

*It starts with a school where deafness is given human intelligent handling by specially trained people who are devoting their lives to this work. It starts with parents who realize that their natural desire to protect and help their handicapped child may be depriving her of a chance to develop a normal personality. In this big roomy nursery, deaf children learn to play together. They're all deaf, so no one's an outcast. No one's unusual or peculiar. Everyone's friendly. Everything's fine.*

*Here no one is isolated or overprotected. And it's not long before they learn to get along with each other and look out for themselves. Gone are the tantrums. In their place, a happy willingness to cooperate and follow orderly routine. There's no problem when hands need washing. And the job is done completely without further urging. Progress indeed. These happy little people, thoughtful, considerate, completely at home in this pleasant environment, are ready to discover the wonder of words. First, the child is taught how the names of simple objects appear on the lips when spoken by the teacher. Then they try to imitate, observing, imitating, matching toys, shapes, colors, and, finally, matching words. This is the start of lip reading. Some children have a slight degree of hearing. And every effort is made to utilize it. They're taught to feel the vibrations of words. And soon they try, for the first time, to speak.*

"Muriel. Bow.

- Bow. Bow.

- Bow.

- Bow.

- Arm.

- Aarmmm
- Arm
- Aarmmm. Caar. Caar.”

*Good for you! That was a very nice try! And you shall get a star for doing so well. A compliment. Encouragement is important at the start.*

*Before the children are old enough to have their hearing tested, they get accustomed to hearing aids, which will help to speed their learning if they're not totally deaf. As a group, the class imitates the teacher.*

- “Woo ooh. Woo ooh. A ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba. Ahh. Ahh.
- Ba ba ba ba ba ba. Ahh. Ehh.”

*These children who are a little older have not yet begun routine schoolwork, but they're being prepared for it while improving their lip reading and speech. They're taught to associate classroom activities with spoken and written word.*

“Bud, show me the sentence that says: ‘Louise has a green and white bow.’”

*By pointing to the correct words or objects, he proves that he has read the teacher's lips correctly. Though the going may seem slow and tedious at times, progress continues.*

- “You're a big boy. How old are you?
- I'm five.”

*Just five and doing very well. It's hard for a person who can hear to realize how difficult it is to imitate sounds you can't hear. A mirror is put to use in helping to teach the formation of difficult sounds. And with the aid of the audiometer, a record is kept of the hearing of each child so that every use can be made of what sense of hearing she has. And as they get older and more proficient in lip reading, they practice with pictures. The teacher looks at pictures and describes them while the children watch her lips. Then she lets them see the pictures, and they try to identify the ones she has talked about. In this way, they develop their lip reading ability. No, that's not the picture you're talking about. Nope. No. Yes, that's it!*

*Deaf children must learn the construction of sentences through reading and writing rather than through hearing. And, therefore, they learn to write at a somewhat earlier age than hearing children do. Their first sentences are generally written on the blackboard as news items. These items are their own ideas and they're drawn from their own lives and the things they do. Once the sentence is written, they try to read it aloud.*

“Mother and I went to a store.”

*Not perfect but good. And her slight faults are corrected immediately so that good pronunciation habits will be firmly implanted. These are the nine-year-olds. After reading and writing comes arithmetic. And their method of study not only improves their lip reading, it also teaches them the mechanics of mathematics with special stress on speedy calculations. For even though they must read lips and then work out the problems, they're given the same*

*amount of time to get the right answers as students with normal hearing. No more. Let's listen to Rose Marie.*

“John had 12 rabbits. 5 rabbits ran away. How many were left?

- There were 7 rabbits left.”

*Good for you, Rose Marie! Now we look in on the 11-year-olds. All girls, for at 10 years of age, the boys move to a school for boys. These girls are studying geography and the social sciences. The teacher is telling a story about transportation and asking a question. This discussion-question technique, not only broadens their education, but it also improves, day by day, their all-important ability to read lips and develop speech.*

“Can you tell me about the covered wagon? Joanne, tell the class why the covered wagons travel together?

- Because there were many Indians and the people could help each other.

- That's fine, Joanne.

- Thank you!”

*That is fine for a little girl who might otherwise never have learned to speak. As the girls grow older and their speech improves, they converse with ease. Those who dedicate their lives to this career of teaching deaf children possess tireless patience, sincere and unselfish consideration, and deep personal charm that shows up in their work, a combination of qualities that makes an enduring contribution to the development of personality, charm, and character in the children. But lip reading and speech are not the end point in this remarkable kind of education. The children get out and see the world they live in. The world of art and science. Here's a younger group visiting the zoo to see the kind of animals that populate the world, and enjoy the antics of the seals, all part of growing up and learning. And what they learn is practical too, for they learn how to run a home. So that it will be a delightful place in which to live.*

*They learn to sew with the skill of experts so that they can make their own clothes or make their own way in the needlework trade. They learn the newest professional methods and techniques in millinery as well as garment making. These students are learning how to make art products, decorated wastebaskets, and other items that are sold at school bazaars. And here's a girl who's learning the bookbinding trade, an industry in which many of the school's graduates find positions. They're also welcome in factories and in industrial plants, because they work hard to learn how to handle intricate machines with skill and efficiency. Silk screen work is popular with girls with a flair for the artistic. And in the school, they turn out colorful, decorative work that ensures successful careers in the commercial world.*

*When boys reach the age of 10, they go to other schools. One of these, the New York School for the Deaf at White Plains, teaches various industries. Here are two boys learning to be automotive mechanics. And this lad will soon be able to take a job in a printing plant as a Linotype operator, a job in which his handicap is no drawback. And this one is learning to be a pressman. These are learning to be bakers. And thorough their training is too, for the school makes certain each trade is taught with up-to-the-minute methods and exacting*

*standards. The business of shoe repairing also offers opportunities for deaf boys to earn their living in private industry.*

## LEXINGTON SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

*And so this school and the Lexington School for the Deaf continue to do their share in preparing young men and women to live happy, useful lives as self-supporting American citizens.*

“Let us stand and say the pledge to the flag.

- I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

THE END

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