

Now I Can Hear Your Pain

By

Amos Comenius Memorial School

Hopedale

Renee	Brenda
Renee's Thoughts	Veronica
Dr. Julie (Renee's Mother)	Toni
Ms. Marshall (Principal)	Claire
Scarlett	Alexis
Brooklyn	Veronica
Brittany	Kendra
Anne	Claire

Teacher Director: Courtney Reid

With thanks to Elaine Condon.

Renee is a 16 year old girl who faces many challenges in life. Her mother, who is a doctor, accepts a new job in California and leaves their life behind in Vancouver. Renee hopes that her life will improve in California, but Scarlett, the school bully at Oceanview High, has other plans. Will Renee have a better life in California? Or will Scarlett's antics make her life in California miserable?

Scene 1

(In Renee's Room. Renee and her mother are finishing packing)

Julie: Did you get enough sleep last night, dear? We have a very long drive ahead of us.

Renee: Yes mother, I slept very well.

Julie: Alright Renee. Looks like were all done in here. I will have to get the rest of this stuff and then we will be on our way to California. Be ready to leave in a half an hour.

Julie smiles and takes boxes out. Renee gets out her diary and begins to write in it.

Renee: September 16th, 2014. Dear Diary, Today we are moving to California. My mom got a new job there as a doctor. I am very excited and nervous at the same time. I hope California will be better than Vancouver. My biggest worry is that I will not meet anyone who accepts me for who I am. I hope I will be able to find someone who will understand and support me despite my disability. I know it will be challenging because people think I am just shy or rude, but I am mute.

Julie: OK darling, I can use some help out here.

Renee: I'm coming!

Scene 2

Scarlett and Brooklyn are told to sit on the chairs at the principal's office.

Principal: You two are NEVER up to any good. You are both to sit here in silence for 15 minutes.

Girls giggle and talk amongst themselves.

Principal: Silence!!!

Clock ticking in background. Phone rings. Principal answers.

Principal: Hello Mr. Coombs. What's the weather like in Vancouver this time of year? Do you have any snow yet? Yes, I seen that transfer come through on the fax machine. We are delighted to have Renee join us at Oceanview High School. Yes, I understand she has needs and we will do our best to accommodate her and make her feel welcomed here at Oceanview. When will she be in town? Oh, so she will be joining in the morning. Great. Looking forward to meeting her. Thanks for your call. Have a great day. Bye.

Girls looks at each other. Clock ticks again.

Principal: Ok, your time is up. You may go. And for the love of God, STAY OUT OF TROUBLE! I do NOT want to see you in this office anymore. You girls need to treat others with respect and STOP bullying your classmates. There will be harsh consequences the next time.

Scarlett and Brooklyn pack up their belongings and head out of the principal's office.

Scarlett: Did you just hear Ms. Marshall on the phone? I think we might be getting a new student!!

Brooklyn: Yeah, and I think she has some sort of special need!

Scarlett: I wonder what her story is?! I think Ms. said she was coming tomorrow and that we will make her feel welcome. We'll see about that??!!!

Brooklyn: I wonder why she is coming to our school? We have enough losers here now to keep us busy.

Scarlett: Maybe this could be fun! Someone new to bully! The others are getting boring.

Girls giggle. Walk off stage.

Scene 3

At school. Outside at the student's lockers. Renee is at her locker, looking through her school bag.

Scarlett: *(Whispering)* Hey Brook, look that must be the new student Ms. was talking about yesterday.

Brooklyn: Yeah, it must be. Why don't we go and "introduce" ourselves. *(smirking)*

Girls walk up to Renee

Scarlett: Hey, you must be the new girl. What's your name?

Pause

Brooklyn: She asked you a question. Why are you not answering her??!

Scarlett: No one ignores me around here! That is like the first rule at Oceanview High.

Renee takes out her iPod to communicate.

Renee: My name is Renee...

Girls interrupt and laugh at her for taking out her iPod.

Scarlett: Why are you using your iPod? Why don't you just answer us?!

Brooklyn: Yeah, just use your words like a normal person.

Renee: It's not that I do not want to answer you. I physically cannot speak. I am mute.

Scarlett: MUTE? *(laughing)* What does that even mean?

Brooklyn: Mute? Like on a remote? *(girls laugh again)* Girl, you are allllll kinds of crazy.

Renee: No, not like a remote. I was born mute. I can hear but I am unable to speak. I use my iPod to communicate.

Scarlett: Yeahhh...sure! If you're mute, I'm ugly...and that's definitely not the case!

Brooklyn: Don't sass us sassafra. Mute is not even a thing, is it?! Do you have a volume button?

Brooklyn walks up to Renee and pokes her forehead as if to press a button.

Bell rings.

Scarlett: C'mon, we have to get to class. We don't want to have detention again today.

Brooklyn: Yeah, detention is so lame. Let's get out of here.

Girls smack Renee's books out of her hand. Renee is left standing alone with a mess of books. Brittany sees what happens and goes to talk to Renee.

Brittany: Don't mind those girls. They think they are so powerful and intimidating. They like to pick on all the new people. Here, let me help you with your things. I know what they're like. They done the same things to me when I moved here 2 years ago. Once a bully, always a bully. Don't let them get to you.

Brittany and Renee pick up the books.

Renee: Thank you. It's not the first time I've been bullied. It happens a lot because I'm different.

Brittany: Was that your iPod speaking?

Renee: Yes, this is what I use to communicate. I was born like this. I can hear but I cannot speak.

Brittany: How awesome. My mom's friend's dog walker's neighbor is mute. Maybe we can tell her how you communicate using your iPod.

Renee: That's cool. So you don't mind that I'm different?

Brittany: No, I think it's kind of cool actually that you can communicate this way. Technology has certainly come a long ways!

Principal walks up to the two girls

Principal: I'm sorry to interrupt, but you girls are going to be late for class. Brittany, why don't you show Renee to class. Looks as though you've already met.

Brittany: Yes, I think you're in my math class with Ms. Reid. C'mon, I'll show you where the classroom is.

Brittany and Renee leave the lockers and go to class.

Scene 4

Renee's Voice Over: (October 1st, 2014) Dear Diary, Today was my first day at Oceanview High school and it was horrid. I have some new acquaintances (i.e. Scarlett and Brooklyn) at school. Those girls are so mean to me. Today they even knocked my books on the floor and treated me like a remote control. I just hope this does not continue. I don't think I can handle being in another school where I am bullied all the time just because I cannot speak what I think. Just because I cannot speak what I think, doesn't mean I have no feelings. On a brighter note though, I did meet a new friend named Brittany. She told me these girls treat all the new students at school this way and that I should not take it personally or let it get to me. That is easier said than done. I really hope Brittany and I will be good friends.

Renee's mother enters. Renee slams her diary shut and hides it under her pillow.

Julie: Hi honey, how was your first day at your new school?

Renee: It was fine. How was your first day at work?

Julie: It was good. The hospital staff seem very friendly. It's busier here than in Vancouver though. Now, tell me more about your day. Did you make any new friends?

Renee: Yes, actually mother I made a new friend named Brittany. We are in the same math class. She seems really nice.

Julie: Oh, that's great! How did you meet her? Does she live close by? Tell me all about her!

Renee: Mom, you're doing this again. Stop asking me so many questions at one time. I met her in the hallway just before math class. She showed me to class and we sat together.

Julie: How lovely, you should invite her to dinner. I would love to meet her.

Renee: I just met her mom, I'm not inviting her for dinner yet! Speaking of math, I have some homework to do. Can we talk about this later?

Julie: Sure honey, I'm making your favorite mac and cheese for dinner! It will be ready in 45 minutes.

Renee: Thanks mom.

Mom leaves her room. Renee takes out her diary and continues to write.

Renee's Voice Over: I know my mother is worried about me at school, so I'm not telling her about the bullying, not yet. I think Brittany will turn out to be a great friend because she seems really nice and knows someone else who is mute. She didn't find it weird talking to me through the iPod. That's a bonus! Well, I should get to my math homework. I'll let you know how school goes tomorrow and if mom burnt the mac and cheese again! Bye!

Scene 5

Scarlett and Brooklyn are waiting at Renee's locker waiting for her to arrive. Brittany and Renee walks in.

Scarlett: Oh look, it's the mute!

Brooklyn: So, did you find your volume button yet? [girls laugh]

Brittany: Did you find your off button yet? Just leave her alone!

Scarlett: Ugh, not you again. Didn't we torture you enough a couple years ago? Are you looking for trouble?!

Brittany: No, but I'm not going to let you treat Renee the same way you treated me. Doesn't this bullying ever get old to you?

Scarlett: Old?? Yeah, right!

Brooklyn: What's that in your hand, Renee? Looks pretty interesting the way you got it held on so tightly.

Brittany: Leave her alone, it's personal.

Scarlett: Ouuu...I bet it's a diary!!!

Girls look amused. Scarlett nudges Brooklyn and looks towards the diary implying for her to grab it from Renee. Brooklyn grabs the diary and the girls begin to walk off stage laughing. Renee grabs at her and tries to get it from Brooklyn. Brittany holds her back.

Brittany: Don't run after them, they're not worth it. (angry) You are not going to get away with this!

Scarlett: We will, we always do!

Girls run off stage

Brittany: If we show we're upset we are giving them exactly what they want. There is no way they are getting away with this any longer. Let's go!

Girls walk off stage.

Scene 6

Scarlett and Brooklyn read Renee's diary.

Scarlett: Wow, this is so pathetic. Who actually writes a diary this day and age anyways? Isn't that what Facebook is for?!

Brooklyn: I don't know. Maybe this is her private thoughts and feelings. Maybe we should stop. This seems really personal.

Scarlett: Are you kidding me?! Look at this. June 7th, 2012. Dear Diary, I have a crush on Marc O'Brien. He is so cute and dreamy. His deep blue eyes make me feel as though I'm lost at sea! I don't know if he likes me though but today he "accidentally" brushed his hand against mine at school. I think I might write him a note and tell him my feelings for him. I hope this doesn't scare him away.

Scarlett and Brooklyn laugh.

Scarlett: Do you find the lights bright in here?? They're starting to make me feel stomach sick.

Brooklyn: That's just your guilty conscience. Let's look him up on Facebook!!! I bet his eyes aren't even that blue.

Brooklyn and Scarlett use their iPhones to look him up.

Scarlett: I found him....I think? He does have blue eyes after all and he lives in Vancouver. It must be him!

Brooklyn: Meh, he isn't bad but I definitely wouldn't get sea sick with those eyes.

Scarlett: C'mon, let's keep reading. This is getting interesting! Let's see if she actually told Blue Eyes that she liked him. I wonder how that went... (laughing)

Girls read the next entry.

Scarlett: June 8th, 2012. Dear Diary, Today was the worst day of my life! Why did I think it was a good idea to tell Marc my feelings? How could I ever think that someone like that would like me? He was so cruel!!! Apparently I'm not "cool" enough. He said "Why would someone like me, the captain of the school hockey team, go out with someone like you?"

Scarlett laughs.

Brooklyn: Maybe we should stop reading now, this is getting really personal.

Scarlett: You're not feeling bad for her, are you? Whose side are you even on?

Brooklyn: No, I'm not feeling bad, and you know I'm on your side. It's just that I think we should stop reading now, I think we took it too far.

Scarlett flips through the diary to find the latest entries.

Scarlett: Ohhhh...look! She talks about Oceanview...and US!??

Brooklyn: What? Where? What does she say?

Scarlett: She says she loves us and hopes that we become her best friends!

Brooklyn: Seriously? That's really nice! Why would she say that? We were mean to her, weren't we?

Scarlett: Ugh...Brooklyn! No...ever hear of sarcasm? And they say I'm the blonde one?! (rolls eyes)

Brooklyn: Ohhh...so she IS mad at us??? Got it!

Scarlett: Look at this, this is how she REALLY feels about us. October 1st, 2014. Dear Diary, Today was my first day at Oceanview High school and it was horrid. (looks at Brooklyn) Well, isn't she a drama queen. (reading diary) I have some new acquaintances (i.e. Scarlett and Brooklyn) at school. Those girls are so mean to me. Today they even knocked my books on the floor and treated me like a remote control.

Brooklyn: Well, we didn't exactly give her the warm Oceanview welcome Ms. Marshall wanted us to give her. We were mean to her, weren't we? I mean, we DID knock over her books and left her there alone and we HAVE taken her diary and read it! Yeah...we're horrid.

Scarlett: Yes Brookie, we're mean, get over it.

Brooklyn: Are you sure you're feeling ok? You keep rubbing your neck and you look white as a ghost.

Scarlett: I've had a stiff neck since yesterday. I think it's the way I slept.

Scene 7

Ambulance siren as lights go up. Scarlett is sick in the hospital. Anne is wiping Scarlett's face with a wet cloth. Scarlett is throwing up in a bucket. Anne is wearing a mask but takes it down to speak.

Anne: How are you feeling honey? Is there anything I can do for you?

Scarlett: I feel like I'm dying! I've never been this sick in my whole life!!!

Anne: Have you eaten anything strange recently? Maybe you have food poisoning. I hope it will pass quickly. (Anne touches Scarlett's forehead with the back of her hand) Here, eat some ice cubes, it will help your temperature come down.

Scarlett: I don't feel like eating anything right now. Maybe later. I need to go to sleep, I'm so tired!

Doctor Julie enters.

Doctor Julie: OK, Scarlett, sorry you've been waiting so long. We're ready for your test now.

Doctor Julie wheels Scarlett off stage. There's a little knock at the door, Brooklyn creeps in.

Brooklyn: (whispering) Hi, how's Scarlett? I've been so worried about her.

Anne: The doctor just took her out for a spinal fluid test. They think it might be meningitis. She's been throwing up all afternoon and burning up with a fever.

Brooklyn: Meningitis? Isn't that the scary disease? I heard people die from that one. Come to think of it, she was looking pretty bad in school the last couple days. She kept complaining about a bad neck and stomach sick. I told her she should go see a doctor but as usual, she doesn't listen. I hope she don't die!!

Anne: Meningitis is very scary. It can be contagious. That's why they told me to wear this mask and these silly gloves and why you're not supposed to be here.

Brooklyn: Contagious? So I could catch it from her? I'm going to leave now, but please let me know when you hear anything from the doctor. Promise?

Anne: I will. See you later.

Brooklyn exits. Anne is left alone to pray for her daughter. She kneels on the floor to say a prayer.

Anne: Dear Lord, please watch over my daughter during this trying time. I know she can be a handful at times, but she has a real good heart when she wants to. Please let the test results come back negative and let me take her home soon. Amen.

Lights dim, clock ticks to show passage of time. Doctor Julie rolls Scarlett walks in and interrupts

Doctor Julie: Sorry to interrupt Mrs. Montgomery but we have the results of the spinal fluid test. The test confirmed that Scarlett does in fact have meningitis.

Scarlett: (crying) Meningitis? Am I going to die?

Doctor Julie: No honey, we think you will be fully recovered within a few days. The type of meningitis you have is viral, not bacterial. The bacterial meningitis is far more serious and often causes death. Viral meningitis often cures itself without any help from doctors. We are going to keep you in the hospital for a while until your symptoms improve.

Scarlett: Could you speak up, I can't hear you proper. Did you say I'm going to be ok?

Doctor Julie: Yes, most people fully recover from viral meningitis.

Anne: What are the possible complications of this type of meningitis?

Doctor Julie: There is a chance she can experience hearing loss, memory deficiencies, emotional instability or severe headaches.

Scarlett: Hearing loss? You mean I would be deaf?! How would I communicate? Is this why I'm having trouble hearing you?! Is this going to get better???

Doctor Julie: I'm not sure, time will tell.

Lights Dim.

Scene 8

A week later in Renee's bedroom.

Brittany: Did you notice this past week at school has been so peaceful without Scarlett?

Renee: Yes, no one has made any snide remarks toward me. Even Brooklyn is unusually quiet.

Brittany: She must feel lost without Scarlett. Did you notice she was hanging around with Chelsea more?

(Renee nods)

Brittany: She must have turned to her when Scarlett wasn't in school to boss her around. She is not capable of making her own decisions.

Renee: Who is Chelsea? What's her story?

Brittany: She and Scarlett hated each other ever since Kindergarten. I guess they are just too much alike. Both girls are bossy and demand attention from others. They love to bully others and make people feel small. It only makes sense that Brooklyn would turn to her when Scarlett wasn't around anymore.

Renee: Well I'm glad I haven't made it on her radar. I don't think I seen her around school at all.

Brittany: You're lucky! But if that Brad, the quarter-back star on the football team keeps giving you the eye, you'll be on her radar pretty quickly. I heard she had a crush on him for the past couple weeks. Fair warning.

Girls giggle

Renee: You noticed? You mean it wasn't all in my head?! Isn't he hot? Especially in that shirt he wore today. OMG. His biceps are huge!

Girls giggle again.

Brittany: Of course I noticed. Girl, he got it bad for you. You should follow him on Instagram, then you can stalk all of his shirtless selfies!

Renee: Did I tell you he already sent me a friend request on Facebook?

Brittany: And you accepted him, right?

Renee: It was only an hour ago. I'm going to wait a little while so it's not so obvious.

Knock at the door. Brittany leaves.

Brittany: I have to go Renee, its supper time! Make sure you accept that friend request. You need to start talking to him ASAP. I'll see you later.

Renee smiles and waves bye. Mother enters.

Julie: Hi honey, supper is almost ready. But first I wanted to run something by you. Do you remember back in Vancouver when you helped Jessica through her hard time?

Renee nods.

Julie: Would you mind coming by the hospital tomorrow after school? There is a patient who I am working with who can probably use a bit of support.

Renee nods again.

Julie: Great, I knew I could count on you. Come down when you're ready.

Julie exits. Lights dim.

Scene 9

At the hospital.

Anne: Have you gotten anymore test results back yet? Do you know if Scarlett's hearing will improve or get worst?

Dr. Julie: It doesn't look like her hearing will improve. The last 48 hours were critical and whatever damage was done will likely be permanent.

Anne: This doesn't make any sense. We just had a conversation and she could hear me.

Dr. Julie: Yes, I understand that. But, you are in a quiet room. Scarlett's has severe hearing loss in her right ear and profound hearing loss in her left ear. She is likely reading your lips to help her understand conversations. When Scarlett is amongst large crowded areas she will find it extremely difficult to understand anything that will be said.

Anne: Are there any treatments or procedures that can be done to help her gain her hearing back? She's too young to be hearing impaired. Please tell me there are options available.

Dr. Julie: Unfortunately, given the damage Scarlett has endured during her sickness, the treatment options are minimal. Her hearing loss is permanent, however, there are some technologies that can improve her quality of life.

Anne: (crying) What kind of technologies are you talking about?

Dr. Julie: Some options are external hearing aids, hearing implants, audio devices, etc. She may even decide to attend the School for the Deaf. We can discuss these options in detail later.

Scarlett sees that her mother is upset.

Scarlett: (loudly) What are you talking about? Mom, what is the doctor saying? Is my hearing going to get any better? This is so frustrating.

Anne walks over to her bed to speak to her daughter.

Dr. Julie: I'll leave you two alone for a while. If there is anything you need, please ring the buzzer.

Julie exits.

Anne: Scarlett dear, the doctor just told me you will have to learn to deal with being hearing impaired. She mentioned several options to help you communicate.

Scarlett: Like what?

Anne: Audio boxes, external hearing aids...

Scarlett: External hearing aids? You have got to be kidding me! You expect to walk around like a...

Anne: Scarlett, stop right there! You should be thankful that you came out of this alive. Do you know some people with meningitis are not so lucky? Being hearing impaired is manageable.

Scarlett: (crying) Life is never going to be the same. How am I supposed to live like this? This can't be happening to me. This only happens to other people, not me. My life is over.

Anne: It's okay, everything will be fine. We'll get through this together. You have a lot of friends that I'm sure will be very supportive during this difficult time.

There is a knock at the door. Brooklyn enters.

Anne: Hi Brooklyn.

Brooklyn: Hi Ms. Montgomery. I'm here to talk to Scarlett.

Anne: Thanks for stopping by. I don't know if you've heard but Scarlett is hearing impaired. You will need to speak slowly and louder than normal for her to understand you.

Scarlett: Hi Brooklyn, I'm so happy you came to visit!

Brooklyn: Hey Scarlett...

Anne: I'll leave you girls alone for your girl talk.

Anne exits.

Brooklyn: I came by to tell you [pause nervously] that I can't be friends with you anymore. I am not okay being friends with a deaf person.

Scarlett: Wait, what???

Brooklyn: (louder and slower) I can't be friends with you, people will think you're weird, I can't be seen with weird people. My popularity would be ruined!

Scarlett: (mad) But I'm not even deaf, I'm just hearing impaired.

Brooklyn: Whatever, it's the same thing.

Scarlett: (crying) How could you do this, Brooklyn? I thought we were best friends!

Brooklyn: I have to go now.

Brooklyn exits. Lights dim, clock ticks. Lights go back up. Dr. Julie and Scarlett are in hospital room.

Dr. Julie: Hey sweetheart, are you ok? What's wrong?

Scarlett: My best friend just dropped by to tell me she doesn't want to be friends anymore. People are so mean sometimes.

Dr. Julie: Why, what happened?

Scarlett: She told me she can't be my friend anymore because she can't be associated with a deaf person. She said it would affect her popularity.

Dr. Julie: I can only imagine how hard that must be for you. My daughter has had to deal with similar issues her whole life. Friends like that aren't true friends.

Scarlett: My whole life has changed since I was diagnosed with meningitis. I used to be the person who put others down for my own enjoyment. I now realize how terrible I made those people feel. I wish I could take back all the hurt and pain I've caused them.

Dr. Julie: First off, your mistakes do not define you. Second, you know better now and you'll find out who your true friends are when faced with life's challenges. Lastly, you're very lucky to realize this at such a young age, and it's brave of you to admit your mistakes.

Scarlett: When I get out of here, I'll make sure to be a better person and right all of my wrongs, or at least try to.

Dr. Julie: My daughter is waiting outside. I've asked her to come and speak to you, only if you're interested. She's been through pretty much the same thing.

Scarlett: Thanks, I could really use someone to talk to who understands.

Julie goes to the exits to get Renee. They both enter. Renee gasps and looks shocked. Scarlett looks embarrassed and uncomfortable.

Julie: (looking at both girls) Have you guys met?

Scarlett: Remember when I told you I wasn't nice to other people? Well, Renee is one of those people.

Julie: Renee, you didn't tell me anything about being bullied at school. Are you uncomfortable, do you want to leave?

Scarlett: Renee, I would understand if you hated me right now, but please don't leave. At least give me a chance to explain.

Renee walks over to Scarlett to listen to what she has to say.

Julie: Are you girls ok? Renee, do you want me to leave you two alone to talk?

Renee nods. Julie exits.

Scarlett: (crying and talking loudly) Since I've been in the hospital, I've come to realize how nasty I've been treating others, including you, Renee. I was diagnosed as hearing impaired and now I understand how it must feel to be different than other people. It was wrong of me to bully you and make you feel the way I did. I hope that you can forgive me for hurting you.

Renee writes a note on a piece of paper while the voice over reads it.

Renee: Scarlett, you made my life at Oceanview High miserable. I hated going to school because I feared what you would say or do to me. Thankfully I found Brittany who is a wonderful friend.

I thought when I moved to California it would have been different than Vancouver but the bullying was just as bad.

Scarlett reads note.

Scarlett: (loudly) I'm so sorry Renee, I completely understand if you still hate me and don't want anything to do with me. Your mom is a nice lady who thought you could help me, but I realize this may be too difficult for you.

Renee writes another note.

Renee: Yeah, my mom has always taught me to treat others the way I would like to be treated. I accept your apology and I will do my best to help you.

Scarlett reads note. Renee gives her a hug.

Scarlett: I have something that belongs to you.

Scarlett passes Renee back her diary. Lights dim.

The End.