

Another Kind of Silence

by L M Feldman

SYNOPSIS

Perilous & luminous in equal measure, ANOTHER KIND OF SILENCE tells the story of Evan & Chap – two already-partnered women who cross paths in modern-day Greece and find themselves falling in love. Through a landscape lush with language, myth, humor, and intimacy, we watch as their respective partnerships navigate the elusiveness of desire, the failures of communication, the challenges of long-term commitment, and the mysteries of a changing self. Bilingual & bicultural, ANOTHER KIND OF SILENCE unfolds simultaneously in English & American Sign Language, as the four characters and their four souls (a Greek Chorus) collectively traverse one of the hardest chapters in committed relationships.

ESSENTIALS

- The set design is minimalist – the more visual space, the better.
- No blackouts! Each scene *TUMBLES* into the next scene, each moment into the next.
- Dialogue is tight, so that silences can have presence. *PACE IS CRUCIAL*.
- Don't waft in the poetry of the text! Cut right through it. This play is *FUNNY, buoyant, messy, playful, sexy, honest, embodied, and kinetic!*
- All of the couples in this play should feel like totally viable pairings. Loving, healthy, imperfect.

THE FOUR CHARACTERS & THE FOUR CHORUSES

A racially & ethnically diverse ensemble of 8.

There's no need for the Choruses to resemble, in age or body, their respective Characters.

Each Chorus is played by one actor.

A Character and their Chorus share a soul-connection, even when they don't agree.

The Chorus is like the Character's daemon, or younger/older self, or a particular aspect of oneself.

*The Chorus is on the same emotional journey as their Character,
but they have their own personality & POV.*

The Choruses have influence on their Characters, but they're not omnipotent or omniscient.

The Chorus uses the opposite language from their Character.

If the Character speaks, their Chorus signs.

If the Character signs, the Chorus speaks.

Standard practice is often to place interpreters downstage and off to the side,

but the Choruses are not interpreters; they are part of the action and the fabric of the playworld itself.

They are vibrant, vital, and rife with theatrical possibility.

When the Choruses aren't narrating, they're playing the scenes alongside their Characters.

CASTING BREAKDOWN

[NOTE: You can adjust characters' pronouns (and any gendered words in the text) to fit the needs of your cast. Evan, Chap, and Ana are written as AFAB, but they could be NB or GQ instead, as long as Evan/Chap & Ana/Chap read as queer couples and Evan/Peter reads as a straight couple.]

EVAN

A writer in her mid 30s-late 40s...

hearing – only speaks

EVAN'S CHORUS

Might be Evan's courage & hunger ...

ASL-fluent – only signs

CHAP

A visual artist & chef in her mid 30s-late 40s...

hard-of-hearing

doesn't identify as Deaf

ASL-proficient – both speaks and signs

(Chap straddles two languages, never at home in either. She was raised in an oral world & culture, but when her hearing aid(s) are out, she's deaf. She learned to sign as an adult. Vocally she's clear & expressive, with a mild affect.)

CHAP'S CHORUS

Might be Chap's candor & love ...

ASL-fluent – both speaks and signs

ANA (*pronounced AH-nah*)

A café owner/chef in her mid 30s-late 40s...

Deaf – ASL-fluent – only signs

ANA’S CHORUS (*also plays Demosthenes*)

Might be Ana’s vulnerability & awareness ...

hearing – nearly always speaks

PETER

A composer in his mid 30s-late 40s...

hearing – nearly always speaks

PETER’S CHORUS

Might be Peter’s instinct & id ...

ASL-fluent – only signs

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

[NOTE: As you cast, it’s crucial that all three couples (Evan/Peter, Chap/Ana, Evan/Chap) feel equally viable, worthwhile, have chemistry, and are root-for-able. That’s what makes this so hard.]

EVAN is a novelist in her 30's or 40's who's lost her confidence and her impulse to write; has been somewhat joyless of late; she leads from the head and guards the heart; she projects emotional reserve, but you can glimpse a world of vulnerability and longing beneath her restraint; she's quick, witty, a touch of dry humor, and can be charming and loving and intimate and tender if she lets herself; she is exceptionally self-aware; she loves words and how they sound and feel, their power and vividness.

EVAN’S CHORUS might be more free-spirited, trusting, open, and transparent than Evan.

CHAP is a visual artist in her 30's or 40's who also works as a chef in her partner Ana's cafe; she grew up hard-of-hearing but doesn't identify culturally as Deaf or HOH and she's learned how to pass as hearing; she didn't learn sign until she learned it from Ana as an adult, so she's capable but not very fluent at it; she's honest and warm and vulnerable and easy-going and open and curious and bold, but there's something timid and tired and small about her that she tries to hide or compensate for; ideally she's also a bit androgynous; she doesn't lead from the head like Evan

does, nor from the will or the grounded feet like Ana does, but rather from the eyes, the body, the hands, the senses, the heart.

CHAP'S CHORUS might be shyer, older, more careful, or more spontaneous than Chap.

ANA is a chef and restaurant owner in her 30's or 40's, who's efficient, put-together, powerful, goes through the world by being strong and confident and capable and grounded, but is also loving, funny, quirky, playful, and tender when she feels comfortable and safe -- which is usually around her partner Chap; Ana grew up Deaf, is a native signer, is well-traveled, is savvy, is wise, is driven and tenacious and detail-oriented and successful in their professional ambitions; Ana works hard and loves deep; Chap is the love of her life... and this scares Ana.

ANA'S CHORUS might be more patient, compassionate, forgiving, and unafraid than Ana.

PETER is a composer and conductor in his 30's or 40's, who, like Ana, works hard and loves deep. He's either more gifted at his art than Evan is at hers, or he's simply meeting with greater professional success and recognition of late; he's certainly good at what he does, as the other three are; he's deeply passionate about his work and the art form; he can work for 12 or more hours a day and loves that kind of immersion; he's captivating and smart and witty; he's got a fun and wry sense of humor; he's way too busy these days, and he doesn't realize how lonely – and slightly unmoored – he currently is.

PETER'S CHORUS might be looser, funnier, more easeful, more available, and more observant than Peter.