

The Best Kind of Dad

Story by Melaina Faranda

Illustrations by Nathalie Ortega



PM

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Chapter 1

Snail

Sam felt sick.

Dad stopped washing up the breakfast dishes to sign. He raised two pointed fingers above his head – this meant “snail”.

On any other day, this would have been Dad’s way of joking. As the fastest kid at his old school, Sam was known for always being first in line and on time. But today, he was going to a new school – a school that hadn’t been set up specially for the deaf. Sam’s dad was deaf, too, and when he was a boy, he hadn’t gone to a deaf school. But then, Sam knew Dad was braver than him.

Sam wished Mum was with them, but she had already flown out to start her new job. It was Dad who now signed how proud he was of Sam for starting this new adventure.







“This is our new student – Sam,” Mr Wilson announced to the class. “Sam might be unable to hear me or you speaking out loud, but I’m told he’s a champion lip-reader. So, everyone, please always make sure Sam can see you talking.”

Mr Wilson sat Sam at a front table so that whenever Mr Wilson spoke, Sam had a direct view of his mouth. Mostly, Sam could lip-read the teacher’s instructions, but there was another teacher to show Sam anything he missed.



It was easy for Sam to tell when the bell rang, because the whole class sprang from their seats to stream outside into the playground.

A boy darted over to where Sam sat alone on a bench. “Can you play football?” the boy asked.

Sam nodded.

“Good. You can be on our team. I’m Rav.”



“Sam.”

He had never really had to use his voice at his old school. All the students had been deaf, so everyone signed. Out in the wider world, Sam worried that he might not be saying the words right, and that this would make him stand out even more.

There was *one* place Sam never minded standing out. The moment he was on a football field, he felt as if he had come home. He wove across the field, ducking and diving as he drove the ball into the net again and again.

“Wow!” Rav said, after the game. “Can you be on our team all the time?”

