

Children of a lesser God (1986)

Children of a Lesser God is a love story about a speech teacher who falls for a beautiful yet distant deaf girl in a small New England school for the deaf, and the obstacles that they face due to their differences. William Hurt plays James Leeds, a renegade teacher with an unconventional approach to education and a resume that includes stints as a bartender and a disk jockey. Upon his arrival, he is warned by school administrator Dr. Franklin (Philip Bosco) not to get creative with his instruction. Naturally, Leeds already has his mind set on his teaching plan and proceeds to play loud rock music in class in order to teach the students to feel the vibrations of the music and get them to try to speak phonetically. But a new element enters his life when he meets the attractive custodian, Sarah (Marlee Matlin). An exceptionally intelligent yet extremely bitter young woman, Sarah is a graduate of the school who has decided to remain there, in the confines of her world of silence; it's safer for her to be with her own "people" than to face what she perceives as a cruel and uncaring world. She hardly seems interested in James and will only communicate with him through signing, although she can read lips and even speak a little. James learns from Sarah's mother (Piper Laurie) that Sarah was sexually molested as a teenager; this explains why she is so wary of his attempts to form a relationship with her and why she is so full of fear. Eventually, James does get through to Sarah and the two fall in love, although both have to learn new ways to communicate their feelings. Though it seldom resembles the Mark Medoff play on which it was based, this directing debut from Randa Haines won an Best Actress Oscar for Matlin, for her first screen performance.

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/children_of_a_lesser_god/

Cast

William Hurt as James Leeds
Marlee Matlin as Sarah Norman
Piper Laurie as Mrs. Norman
Allison Gompf as Lydia
John F. Cleary as Johnny
Philip Holmes as Glen
Georgia Ann Cline as Cheryl
Frank Carter Jr. as Tony
John Limnidis as Orin
E. Katherine Kerr ad Mary Lee Ochs
John Basinger as Alan Jones
Barry Magnani as Tom Schuyler

Memorable quotes (with notes on difficult vocabulary)

James Leeds: I can't ever get close enough. Say my name, just once, say my name.

To get close enough = avvicinarsi abbastanza

Dr. Curtis Franklin: Yelling at the back of a deaf person, very good James.

Yelling at the back of a deaf person = urlare alle spalle di una persona sorda

James Leeds: You can't start a bonfire and then say night night.

You can't start a bonfire and then say night night = (fig.) non puoi dar fuoco alle polveri e poi dare semplicemente buona notte.

James Leeds: *[at the end of the school year, James encounters deaf student William who has a tendency to use his newly-developed speech skills for profanity]* Language skills can be dangerous, so use a little common sense. So long, William.

William: So long, fuck-face!

So long = arriverderci

James Leeds: Speak to me!

Sarah Norman: *[screams]* Here you go! Hear my words! Hear my voice! Ah, you want more than that? I'm gonna scream!

Ah, you want more than that? = (in riferimento alla voce) vuoi sentirla ancora?

James Leeds: Hi. I'm James Leeds. My signing is rusty so how many of you can read lips?

[after a moment of silence]

James Leeds: No one? OK. Class dismissed!

[Everybody leaves the class]

James Leeds: No, no, no, no. Just testing, sit down. Lydia and Tony, good lip-readers.

[to Johnny]

James Leeds: Do you mind closing your notebook?

Rusty = arrugginito; **class dismissed!** = la lezione è finita!; **Just testing** = (qui) volevo solo mettervi alla prova; **Do you mind closing your notebook?** = ti dispiace chiudere il quaderno?

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0090830/>