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# Deaf Again: Construction of the World Full of Others

## Deaf Again Annalysis

Through Deaf Again, an account of Mark Drolsbaugh's life, readers are drawn into a world of a deaf individual and the hardship that come with learning and growing in a world full of very different people. As I hearing person, this book proved to be very enlightening and I found myself drawn further into Mark's story with every turn of the page.

Right off the bat, I learned that just because someone has two deaf parents doesn't mean their life will be easier as a deaf child. All families and children face problems, and, as a parent, it is hard to know what the right thing is to do when it comes to your child's health and future. This was very clear throughout the beginning of the book.

Additionally, I learned more about Gallaudet University. While we have learned some of the history of the school in class, I discovered more in this book about what it means to have a Deaf-centered university. The book really highlighted the significant of going to university where only ASL is used. It was clear that achieving a college education after facing years and years of adversity is a huge success. Also mentioned in the book, watching older deaf kids go off to college really inspires younger kids to keep their heads up and reach for the stars.

Also, through reading this book, I learned what it is like to truly feel different in school. While every middle schooler and high schooler feels "different" at the time, being a deaf child in a school full of hearing peers is very much unlike most people's lower education experiences. This book really demonstrated the emotions that come with feeling so different and how important it is to overcome these feelings. This insight that Mark brings to the readers is a big part of what makes this book great.

What really impressed me about this book was Mark Drolsbaugh's ability to really put the reader in his shoes. As a hearing person, I could never imagined that I would relate so much to Mark's story. A really great example of this is in Chapter 6 when Mark asks the reader to imagine themselves as a scuba diver. He explains what it would be like to live underwater and then come to realize you fit better on land. This really spoke to me and not only puts the reader in the author's shoes, but also shows Mark's talent as a writer.

I was also very impressed with Mark's discussion of spirituality. In my opinion, it can be very hard to address your own personal spirituality and questions regarding a higher power and religion. This book approached the topic in a very honest way. I found these sections very easy to relate to and just made the book that much better.

On the other hand, I did find something a bit irritating about this book. Mark had a tendency to blame a lot of problems on his hearing loss. While I'm sure most, if not all, of his hardships were complicated and possibly worsened by his deafness, he seemed to use it as a scapegoat occasionally. This seemed to be especially true in his early years as he struggled with language and learning. I think the work would be deeper if Mark had examined other aspects of his personality.

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Moreover, reading this book about Mark's life really has opened my eyes to more about Deaf culture and ASL. Firstly, this book really illuminated how much of a godsend ASL is to those who are deaf. Reading about Mark's struggle to read lips and understand what was going around him without hearing anything was painful to read. I can't even imagine how difficult that must have been for him. When he was opened up to a world of ASL through his friends at Pennsylvania School for the Deaf and then with his interpreters, his life was drastically enriched. I found it shocking that Mark was encouraged by his doctors not to sign. ASL is truly a gift to those who can't hear and communicate with spoken English.

Also, this book definitely showed lots of Deaf culture. It illuminated how different it is from typical hearing culture and how beneficial it is to those who are deaf. One thing that I loved reading about was Deaf Chat Syndrome. I can't think of anything like it in my own culture!

The author's experience in *Deaf Again* really expanded upon what our class learned on the first day of class with the Deaf Awareness Quiz. I found that Mark's experiences gave context and proof to the facts we learned on the quiz. For example, Mark really showed what the Deaf community values and effective vs ineffective communication strategies through personal stories and experiences.

Furthermore, while both this author and our class guest speaker are deaf, their life experiences differ significantly. The author Mark was born to two deaf parents, while the speaker was born to a completely hearing family. Mark's family largely denied his hearing loss when he was a child and discouraged his use of ASL and participation in the Deaf community. The speaker's family seems to be very, very supportive of her deafness from the very beginning. She looked fondly on her elementary years while Mark frowned on his parent's and grandparents choices and described his youth with disdain and sarcasm. Mark also was very oral and used his voice throughout his younger years. The speaker learned ASL as a young child and used an interpreter all through school. Nonetheless, they both share the experience of growing up deaf surrounded by hearing people. They both graduated from Gallaudet University and went on to be leaders in the Deaf community.