FEELING THROUGH

Audio Description & Dialogue

Tereek, a black male teenager wearing a hoodie, winter parka, and backpack, stands in front of a fast food joint on a busy NYC street with cars and people rushing by.

He checks his phone, taking it in and out of his jacket pocket a couple of times, as he shifts from foot to foot and glances around.

Tereek receives a text.

He had previously typed: Can I crash at your spot tonight?

A response from Corey reads: Again? Lemme hit u back later

Tereek waits outside the turnstile in a busy subway station.

He asks a woman who is exiting for a swipe. She ignores him.

Tereek jogs down a dimly lit street with shop signs in Chinese and graffiti covering the walls.

He pulls his hood up, catching his breath and collecting himself. He rounds the corner where his friends stand waiting. J.R. is Asian and the other, Clay, Hispanic, is smoking.

The three boys are in a bright neon-lit video arcade excitedly playing a game together.

Back on the street, the boys stand in a circle. Clay freestyles.

The boys eat noodles from Styrofoam takeout containers. Tereek shovels them into his mouth.

Tereek watches as J.R. and Clay playfully fight. Tereek jumps in, taking J.R.’s place. It escalates, Tereek gets too physical. J.R. pulls him off of Clay.

The boys are sitting quietly on a stoop surrounded by graffiti.

Clay offers Tereek a cigarette, Tereek declines.

J.R.’s phone buzzes.

Tereek gets a text from Corey that reads: Tonight don't work

Tereek has a worried look.

The three friends slap hands goodbye.

Tereek glances back, watching his friends leave. He turns back around, looking sad and alone.

Tereek is perched on a metal post next to a brick building. He composes a text.

To Rhoda: How have you been? Cool if I roll thru?

He pauses, changes the you to a letter “u” and the “c” in “cool” to a “k,” and hits send.

A weathered homeless man approaches, holding a worn paper change cup.

The homeless man asks Tereek for change. Tereek says he doesn’t have any.

The homeless man, looking dejected, slowly turns and limps away.

Tereek watches as the homeless man walks down the block…and approaches a man holding a white cane and sign that is too far away to read.

The homeless man shakes his cup near this man, who does not respond. The homeless man leaves.

Tereek is intrigued…and slowly approaches the man with the cane.

Tereek takes off his hood, and looks at the man's sign which reads:

I am deaf and blind

Tap me if you can help me to cross the street

Tereek looks closesly at the man. This is Artie, 40s, short gray hair, and a friendly demeanor.

Tereek, confused, looks around.

Tereek tries speaking to Artie. Then, realizing the futility, taps him to get his attention.

Artie reaches for Tereek, startling him.

Artie puts down his backpack…and takes out a pad and blue sharpie.

He writes: I need M15

Tereek says, “it’s close.”

Tereek helps Artie get his backpack on.

Tereek turns Artie toward the street, and taps him on the back.

A large white truck whizzes by in front of them.

Tereek is unsure what to do. He looks around.

Artie holds out his right arm. Tereek deliberates.

He tentatively takes Artie’s hand…placing it on his left shoulder…and leads him down the street.

Tereek guides Artie to a seat in a bus shelter.

The street is dirty, deserted, and dark, except for the light of the shelter and a string of lights behind.

Artie takes off his backpack and places it on the bench next to him.

Tereek gets a text from Rhoda which reads: How soon? It's late…

Tereek draws a breath, appearing relieved, and replies: On my way

Artie taps on his pad to get Tereek's attention.

He has written, How long until the next bus?

Tereek walks over to check the posted bus schedule.

Tereek rubs his hands together as he walks back toward Artie, hesitating momentarily as if figuring out how to communicate.

Finally, he takes Artie’s hand and slowly taps it with his index finger, counting out loud with each tap.

Artie follows along…noding with each tap.

Tereek taps to 10.

Artie nods, showing he understands.

Tereek turns to leave.

At the bus shelter across the street, Tereek sees a bus whizz by a sleeping man.

Tereek looks back at Artie, whose eyes are closed and has a peaceful expression on his face.

With a look a frustrated obligation, Tereek walks back to Artie. He takes Artie’s hand, and places it on the empty bench seat next to Artie.

Tereek takes off his backpack…sits next to Artie.

Tereek pats Artie’s knee several times to reassure him that he is there.

After a moment, Artie reaches over and pats Tereek’s knee several times. Artie sits back and smiles.

Tereek smiles in response. They sit calmly next to one another.

Artie takes out his sharpie and writes on his pad.

He shows it to Tereek. It reads: bodega nearby?

Tereek shifts back and forth, frustrated…hesitating briefly…then takes Artie’s hand. Tereek uses his index finger to write one letter at a time on Artie’s palm.

CAN…IT…WAIT…question mark

Artie clicks his pen a couple of times to make sure it's open and writes on his pad. It reads: I'm very thirsty

Tereek glances up, looking tired.

Artie walks with his hand on Tereek’s shoulder.

Tereek looks away for a moment. Artie’s cane hits a construction barrier.

Tereek, startled, yells, “sorry.”

Tereek helps steady Artie.

Artie shakes his head. He extends his arm to Tereek. Tereek puts Artie’s arm through his and says, “I got you.”

They resume walking, Tereek now with more care.

Now in the bodega, Tereek scans the refrigerated drink section and opens the door to make a choice.

Artie stands patiently by the register in front of a 30-something, Hispanic cashier who stares awkwardly at him.

Tereek approaches, places a tall can of iced tea on the counter.

Artie takes out his wallet, holding it open for Tereek to take.

Tereek thumbs through and takes out a 20. Then asks for a Snickers bar, who tells him it’s $3.

Tereek hands the money to the cashier.

The cashier hands Tereek the change. Tereek places the money back into the Artie’s wallet. He hesitates, then pulls out a ten dollar bill and places it in his own pocket before returning the wallet to Artie. The cashier notices and stares at Tereek.

Tereek stares back and says, “what, you’ve never seen a blind and deaf guy before?”

The cashier lowers his gaze and busies himself behind the counter.

Tereek glances back at him with a hostile look before opening the door and leaving arm in arm with Artie.

We follow behind Tereek and Artie as they head down a dark street.

A bus speeds by.

Tereek lets go of Artie’s arm and races after it, yelling for it to stop to no avail.

Tereek mutters to himself, “Why I gotta get stuck with this?”

Behind him, Artie pulls out the iced tea from his pocket and takes a big sip. His face lights up with satisfaction.

Tereek can't help but smile.

Tereek and Artie are back at the bus shelter, Artie drinking his iced tea and Tereek eating his Snickers bar.

Artie places the can on the ground….and reaches into his backpack for a wool cap that he puts on his head.

Artie reaches for his pad. He writes: Tell the bus driver to tap me at 129th?

Tereek takes Artie’s hand and writes back: yes

Artie takes Tereek’s hand in his and feels it.

Artie voices, “young man.”

Tereek is surprised to hear Artie’s voice.

Arite writes: your name?

Tereek spells – T-E-R-E-E-K

Artie tilts his head with curiosity.

Artie writes: Pleasure to meet you!

Tereek can’t help but enjoy this.

Tereek writes: Name?

Artie writes: Artie

Tereek writes: Why out late?

Artie clicks his pen a couple times, then writes: Date

Tereek smiles and looks a bit surprised and amused

Artie writes: You?

Tereek takes Artie’s hand, finger poised to spell but hesitates briefly this time, furrowing his brow.

Finally, with a pained expression on his face…he slowly writes...Same

Artie pauses as if understanding there is something significant in Tereek's hesitation.

The two sit, Tereek fidgeting slightly with his hands as Artie turns to put his pad away.

He reaches down into his backpack…and finds a bottle of water he pulls out.

He shakes his head from side to side in disbelief, then shows it to Tereek and begins to laugh. Tereek looks at the bottle, also with a look of disbelief, and the two share a good laugh about this inside joke.

Tereek and Artie are now both asleep, Artie’s head on Tereek's shoulder.

Tereek is awakened by the buzz of a text from his phone.

He slowly removes his hands from his jacket, and gently adjusts Artie, until Artie is sitting upright on his own.

Then Tereek reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out his phone to read a text from Rhoda. It reads: It’s late. I'm going to bed.

Tereek glances to his left at Artie, still sleeping.

He looks back at the text. Deliberating…then clicks off his phone.

Tereek looks back at Artie. He makes a move, then stops himself. Then he carefully reaches across Artie, pulling the pad out of Artie’s backpack.

It’s a small spiral notebook with messages scribbled everywhere, at different angles and in different colors of ink.

One message says: Which way is 96th Street?

Tereek flips the page. Another reads: Please leave the room and close the door.

On another page he reads: Can I kiss you?

Tereek, moved by what he just read, glances back at Artie…who’s still sleeping peacefully.

Tereek…vulnerably looks up…and directly into the camera. We get closer to his face as he puts his hands over his ears and closes his eyes.

The screen goes black.

A rumbling sound.

With picture back up, Tereek notices the sound, takes his hands off his ears and opens his eyes.

He runs out of frame and chases down a bus, tapping the side until it stops.

The doors open and Tereek addresses the driver, “you mind waiting just a quick second?”

Now on the bus, Artie is seated near the front.

He hands Tereek his MetroCard.

Tereek approaches the driver, swipes his metrocard.

The driver rubs his eyes, appearing bored and tired.

Tereek: “This guy’s blind and deaf. You gotta tap him and let him know when he gets to 129th street. His name’s Artie.”

The driver looks away, uninterested.

Tereek: “Excuse me, sir. Could you tap him and let him know when he get’s to 129th street?”

Driver: “Sure.”

Tereek: “No, not ‘sure.’

The driver now looks at Tereek.

Tereek: “He just wants to get home.”

Driver: “I’m going to take care of the man.”

Tereek: “Artie.”

Tereek is impassioned, moisture in his eyes.

Driver: “I’m gonna take care of Artie. Get him off the bus at 129th street.”

Tereek looks down, as if embarrassed to show his emotion to the driver.

Tereek: “Thank you.”

Now back with Artie, Tereek takes his hand and writes: You Ok?

Artie is smiling, eyes closed. He nods.

Artie rises, takes Tereek’s hand, and spells: You'll be OK

Tereek appears stunned and moved by this.

Artie pulls him in for a warm embrace. Tereek hugs back with feeling.

They release. Artie places his hands on Tereek's shoulders, then sits down again.

Still moved, Tereek exchanges glances with a middle-aged black woman farther back in the bus. She smiles approvingly at him.

Tereek turns and walks off the front of the bus.

Artie sits peacefully smiling.

Now off the bus, Tereek walks to the sidewalk, and watches the bus as it pulls away.

He stares longingly. He waves bye in its direction, tears visible in his eyes.

Then, something occurs to Tereek.

Now back on the same block where he met Artie, Tereek walks briskly and comes to a stop. He looks down with concern. We see he’s looking at the same homeless man from before, asleep on the ground covered in a musty, green blanket.

Tereek reaches down and drops the same 10 dollar bill he had taken from Artie in the homeless man’s change cup.

Tereek takes one last caring look at the homeless man. Then turns and walks away.

He heads back down a dirty, deserted street with old-fashioned lampposts and store signs in Chinese. He puts up his hood and places both hands in pockets as he slowly fades into the distance.

Braille appears on the screen. Then morphs into the title, Feeling Through.

More braille appears. Then morphs into, A film by Doug Roland

Black.

Credits roll.