

# Stories for Lipreading

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## **IF I HAD A HAMMER by Sherri Turner.**

[This text is read aloud at the beginning of this video:]  
Welcome to Stories for Lipreading. If you haven't used our website before, we suggest you look at our 'How to Use' page before you begin. We hope you enjoy this story, which is called 'If I Had a Hammer' by Sherri Turner.

### **If I Had A Hammer by Sherri Turner.**

Emily was not going to scream. It was a tiny little mouse. If she was going to be independent then she had to deal with these things herself.

Emily had seen the mouse scuttle behind the bookcase in the sitting room. The flat wasn't much, but it was her first home on her own and she was proud of it. She was proud that she had come this far after her short-lived marriage to the unfaithful Dave.

Now she was being tested and she was determined not to fail. Her books were still in boxes so the bookcase wasn't heavy. Emily moved it aside, then stepped back hastily. There was nothing there. All she could see was an area of raised carpet and a gap between the floorboards - not large, but big enough for a little creature to squeeze through. Nailing down the carpet would probably do it, but her independence didn't stretch to owning tools yet. She supposed that now was as good a time as any to meet the downstairs neighbour. At least it was more original than asking to borrow a cup of sugar.

Matt opened the door. A petite blonde with a twinkle in her turquoise eyes smiled at him. "Hi," she said, her soft tones making even that one syllable sound special. "I'm Emily. I've just moved in upstairs and I've got a little furry visitor – a mouse. Do you have a hammer?"

A hammer?

"Yes, but..." Matt hesitated.

"Could I borrow it? I'll bring it straight back," Emily said.

"Are you sure you know what you're doing?" Matt asked.

He watched the smile fall from her face and regretted his words instantly.

"Why? Because I'm a woman? I'm perfectly capable of using a hammer; I just don't own one yet. If you don't want to lend it to me..." Emily snapped.

"No, sorry, of course," Matt said and fetched the hammer. He handed it to Emily with a weak smile.

So much for his vision of female perfection.

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Matt was no fan of rodents, but surely there were better ways to deal with them than that. When he had seen Emily at the door he had felt an immediate attraction that he hadn't experienced for a long time. Surely someone so lovely couldn't be so heartless? He waited for the banging to start.

Emily returned upstairs, trying not to fume. She had liked the look of her neighbour and had hoped they would be friendly, but the sexist comment about the hammer had reminded her of Dave. She would show them. She approached the lifted carpet, then stopped short. Oh, bother.

Matt heard a tentative knock on his door.

"Don't say anything please," Emily said. "Nails. I forgot to ask for nails." Her expression hovered between frustration and embarrassment.

Matt started to laugh.

"Thank goodness for that," he said.

"What's so funny?" Emily asked.

"Well, when you wanted a hammer but didn't want nails, I thought..." Matt watched Emily's expression change to one of horror.

"You thought I was going to kill the mouse?" she said. "With a hammer? But I'd never do such a thing! I wanted to nail down the carpet to stop it getting in the flat."

Matt smiled. "That's a relief. It wouldn't be a very practical way anyway. They move pretty fast, you know."

Emily shuddered. "Yes, I do know. I'm a bit afraid of them, if I'm honest."

"I could help, if you like," Matt offered.

"No, thank you. I want to do this myself. If you could just let me have the nails," Emily said.

He fetched them and handed them to Emily.

"I'm sorry for getting cross before," she said. "I thought you were being sexist."

"And I'm sorry for thinking you were a mouse-murderer," Matt said. "It seems we both jumped to conclusions. Listen, hammering is thirsty work. Do you want to get on with it and come back for coffee afterwards? I think maybe we need to start again."

"That sounds like a plan," Emily said, and headed back to her flat.

Matt filled the kettle as he listened to the hammering from upstairs. He didn't want to jump to any more conclusions, but he had a very good feeling about this.