

Stories for Lipreading



PHYSICAL JERKS 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 'Physical Jerks' by Sherri Turner. It has been filmed in two episodes. Here is Episode 1.

Physical Jerks by Sherri Turner. Episode One.

Ruth felt far too old to be grunting and sweating like this. What had she been thinking? It was all very well saying that age shouldn't be a barrier, but there had to be limits. Young, firm flesh was an entirely different prospect from the flabby, wrinkled vastness that the unforgiving mirror reflected back to her.

How much longer was this going to last? Surely it must be nearly over. It felt like she'd been at it for ages. Ruth checked the electronic screen. Five minutes! Her schedule said she should pedal for at least ten and that was only the warm up. She gritted her teeth and pushed on.

Ruth hadn't wanted to join the stupid gym. She was more of a cup-of-tea-and-cake-in-front-of-the-telly sort of woman. The membership had been a present from her well-meaning daughter – a one-month trial to see how she got on.

"Come on, Mum," Becky had said. "You're always saying how you want to get fit, shake off a bit of that middle-aged spread. What have you got to lose?"

Well, her dignity for one thing, Ruth thought, as she panted and puffed through the sixth minute. Her husband, Graham, had grinned when Ruth had told him about the gym.

"You?" he had said. "You'll never keep that up."

"There's no need to be so disparaging," Ruth had replied. "I'm not completely useless."

Graham had taken her in his arms.

"I'm sorry," he'd said. "Of course you must give it a try if you want to. It's just... well, I thought you'd find it boring. It's hard to stick at exercise unless you can find something you like."

As Ruth watched the display tick over to ten minutes, she knew that he was right. No matter what good intentions she had, no matter how Becky nagged or encouraged, she was never going to keep this up. She hated being there, she hated the monotony of it and she hated the mocking display that showed in calories how little she had achieved.

Ruth dismounted and picked up her water bottle. She wouldn't be coming back.

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“So what about your party?”

Julie was Ruth’s best friend despite being a size eight. She was always the practical one. “I thought you wanted to drop a bit of weight so you could get into something nice,” she continued. “You’re not fifty every day, you know.”

Ruth did know and she was grateful for it. She wasn’t looking forward to being fifty once, never mind over and over again. The party that Becky and Graham had insisted on was only a few months away. The limp, low-calorie salad that she had chosen for lunch lay untouched as she watched the mayonnaise ooze from Julie’s extra-large deli sandwich.

“Maybe it’s too late,” Ruth said. “Maybe I’m meant to be like this. We can’t all be thin.”

“No,” said Julie, “but we can all be the best we can be. There must be something you can find that you’d enjoy.”

And she left it at that. The implication that Ruth hadn’t really tried very hard was hovering in the air.

[Physical Jerks by Sherri Turner. Episode Two.](#)

Ruth had had a lovely birthday, so far. She’d been bought flowers and presents and received a myriad of cards. Graham had brought her breakfast in bed. As the evening drew near, though, Ruth started to get a little nervous.

Becky had offered to help her get ready, but she had insisted that she preferred to do it on her own.

“I want to make an entrance,” she had said. “I’ll come down when I’m ready.” And she had closed the door to her bedroom, a steady glass of champagne in hand, and begun to prepare herself.

The lady at the gym had been very kind when Ruth had gone back and told her that she wasn’t happy with the planned exercise programme. She had come up with all sorts of suggestions, finally hitting on something which Ruth had thought worth trying. She had certainly seen her fitness improve as a result and there were other added benefits, too, not least the increase in confidence that had allowed her to choose such a revealing outfit for her party.

Ruth took one last look in the mirror, before opening the door and ringing a small bell to let Becky know to hit the button on the CD player. As the music swelled forth, Ruth started her descent down the stairs, wisps of shimmering chiffon flowing and fluttering every curve. As her hips swayed in time to the beat there were gasps of astonishment and admiration from the assembled guests.

Becky’s mouth fell open.

“Mum, you’re not going to...”

But she was, and she did, generous hips, still slightly wobbly tummy, bangles, spangles and all. She and Julie had both been right. Not everyone can be thin, but we can all make the best of who we are. And if you’ve got it, why not flaunt it? Beginners’ Belly Dancing had been just the thing.