

# Stories for Lipreading

---



## **WHITE LILIES AND PINK CARNATIONS by Jean Hulme.**

[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 'White Lilies and Pink Carnations' by Jean Hulme. It has been filmed in two episodes. Here is Episode One.

### **White Lilies and Pink Carnations by Jean Hulme. Episode One.**

He looked at her, his big brown eyes burning into her soul.  
'That will be £48, please,' she stammered.  
He smiled at her and handed her the money. Her stomach did something funny, it sort of lurched – no – it somersaulted – and then he was gone. She gazed after him, lost for a moment in time.  
'Earth calling Miss Millie Jones! Back down to earth, please, Miss Jones!' said her employer in a sing-song voice. Millie giggled, embarrassed to have made it so obvious she had been bowled over by the handsome young man.  
'Sorry, Mrs Wilmot. He's ordered a bouquet for his mother's birthday. White lilies and pink carnations.'  
Mrs Wilmot peered over Millie's shoulder as she read the address and smiled.  
'I think he may be out of your league, young lady. His mother's a politician and his father owns that big factory on Ryland Place. He went to Eton and then on to Cambridge, I think.'  
Millie shrugged her shoulders. 'Just my flaming luck,' she said sadly.

\*\*\*

It was four months before she was to see him again.

She'd been asked by a girlfriend if she'd like to make up the numbers for a girly night out at a club in town. The evening started well. They were a fun crowd. A couple of hours seemed to fly by and then one of the girls laughingly said, 'Hey, girls, check out the talent!' as a group of young men walked into the club.

Then she saw him and her heart flipped! He saw her at exactly the same time and he looked puzzled, obviously weighing up how he knew her.  
'That bloke's looking at you Millie,' said the girl sitting next to her. 'Who is he?'  
'Never seen him before in my life,' lied Millie.  
Her heart raced as she saw him making his way across the room to her.  
'Hi,' he said. 'How are you?'  
'I'm fine, how are you?' she replied.  
'It was at the Dawsons' party, wasn't it?'  
'That's right,' she lied again.

# Stories for Lipreading

---



'Can I get you a drink?'

'Oh, thanks,' she said and got up to follow him across to the bar.

'What's your name?' he asked. 'I don't think we got that far before, did we?'

'Millicent Jones – and yours?'

'Tom, Tom Osbourne. I recognised you the moment I walked in.'

There was that smile again, the one that sent her stomach into spasm.

'So, where do you work, Millicent – or are you still at uni?'

Her heart was beating wildly. How could she tell him that she was just a Saturday morning flower girl, otherwise unemployed? Before she knew it, she had blurted out, 'St. Andrews; I went to St. Andrews. I was there at the same time as Wills and Kate – but I can't discuss it – sensitive – I'm sure you'll realise that.'

Why did she say that? She knew at that moment she was way out of her depth and couldn't go back – somehow she had to keep up the lie!

'So where are you working now?' he persisted.

'I'm between jobs at the moment. How about you?' she said quickly, trying to deflect the conversation back on to him to gain thinking time.

'I'm working for my dad at the moment. Hey, enough of work, we're here to enjoy ourselves. Let's dance!'

\*\*\*

## **White Lilies and Pink Carnations by Jean Hulme. Episode Two.**

Millie stayed 'between jobs' for the next month, side-stepping every conversation about work – or lying about it.

As they became closer and closer, she knew it wouldn't be long before he would expect to be invited to meet her parents – to be invited into her home – into her two-bedroom, council house home on the other side of town. She'd Googled his parents. She knew they lived on the posh side of town.

How could she invite him back to her home? What would he think of her parents? Her dad worked on the production line at the car factory. She'd told Tom they were away on holiday – but they couldn't stay away forever! She always got him to drop her off outside her friends' house – told him she was staying with them while her parents were away.

One Saturday, he picked her up from outside Marks and Sparks. He hadn't yet twigged she always had some excuse ready, meaning she had to be picked up in town.

As they drove off, he said, 'I've just got to pop back home to give Dad a file he needs to look at before tomorrow morning. It won't take a minute.'

When they pulled into the drive, Millie couldn't believe her eyes. It was the most beautiful house she had ever seen. He parked the car and said, 'Come in and meet the folks. It won't take long.'  
'No, I'm fine. I'll stay in the car and wait. They'll be busy.'

# Stories for Lipreading

---



‘Don’t be daft!’ he said. ‘They’d give me hell if they knew I’d left you outside in the car and hadn’t taken you in to meet them. Come on.’

So she got out and reluctantly followed him up the steps. He opened the door and ushered her inside. Her heels sank into thick pile carpet. She followed him across the hall, through some double doors and, as she walked into the room, his parents rose up smiling to greet her.

‘Hello, Millie! We’re very pleased to meet you at last! We’ve heard so much about you!’ said his father.

Millie reached out to shake hands but they laughed and kissed her on both cheeks.

‘We’re not staying, Mum – just needed to give Dad this file for his meeting tomorrow morning. We’re off now.’

‘OK, darling,’ said his mother. ‘Don’t let him rush you off next time, Millie!’

‘I won’t,’ said Millie, backing towards the door.

‘Let me out of here!’ she thought as she clasped the door handle between sweaty fingers.

After that evening, Millie knew that things couldn’t go on the way they were. She really liked him and knew that he had feelings for her. But she’d dug herself in so deeply now and told so many lies that he would never forgive her. So, totally ashamed of herself, she sent him a text telling him it was all over – telling him that she had met someone else.

The next few weeks were dreadful. All she could think about was Tom. Her friends were all worried about her – and she hadn’t been able to tell her parents about him at all. How could she tell them that she was ashamed of her own home? She hated herself.

Then, one Saturday, while she was working in the florist’s, a young woman walked in. Millie had never seen her before but she thought she reminded her of someone.

‘I would like to order a bouquet of flowers, please,’ said the young lady. ‘White lilies and pink carnations?’

‘Yes, certainly. When would you like them for?’

‘As soon as possible, please. I’m ordering for a friend of mine and they have already written a card; if you could attach it, please?’

The young woman paid and left the shop.

‘What is it, Millie? What does she want?’ called Mrs Wilmot.

‘Lilies and carnations, Mrs Wilmot – ASAP. And she’s left a card here to go on them.’ Millie shouted back.

Within the next hour, Mrs Wilmot had made up the most beautiful bouquet.

‘Could you possibly deliver these for me, Millie? It’s not very far away.’

‘Of course, Mrs. Wilmot, I’ll go now.’ Millie took the flowers and then looked at the address – and she frowned.

‘I think there’s been some sort of mistake. The address says ‘The Flower Shop, High Street.’ That’s here!’ Then she looked up and saw Mrs Wilmot smiling at her.

‘I’m sorry, Millie, but I’m afraid I told Tom the truth. I couldn’t bear seeing you both so unhappy!’

Then Millie turned the card over and read:-

‘MILLIE , I LOVE YOU! I DON’T CARE WHERE YOU LIVE! PLEASE COME BACK TO ME! Tom.’