



## LISTEN

### Genre(s):

- Testimonial narratives, autobiography

### Keywords:

- The hard of hearing
- Physical handicaps
- Society
- Commitment to a cause
- Human dignity

**Audience:** suitable for all audiences; fans of testimonial narratives and life stories; handicapped individuals and those who help them (hard of hearing in particular)

Right sold abroad: /

## Concept

Not deaf, but not able to hear either: how does a hard of hearing person go about having a normal life? This is the story of how one person was able to adapt thanks to her own tenacity and the unwavering support of her entourage.

## Universe and references

- Film *La famille Bélier*
- Film *The Intouchables*
- Film *Read My Lips*
- Battle for the social recognition of handicaps

## Pitch

The true story of young woman who is hard of hearing, *Listen* is her journey in a society that is ill-equipped (at least for now) for those with this poorly understood handicap.

Mélanie Hamm doesn't really fit in the deaf community, but neither does she fit among the people who can hear. This is the story of how she was able to earn her diplomas and teach at the university level; how she met the love of her life at a poetry reading; and how she was finally able to truly live.

## Author

**Mélanie Hamm** teaches educational sciences. She shares her life with the poet Jacques Goorma.

## ***At a glance***

- An unusual life story (handicap)
- Word count: 246,000 characters including spaces
- Available material in English: this presentation (including an overview of the work's characteristics) and a translated excerpt

## ***Excerpt***

In a house, there are so many vibrations that oftentimes, I anxiously think that someone is passing by or calling. Sometimes, the vibrations of my own heart give me this impression. As a teenager, I would lock myself away in my room for hours, which gave me an unparalleled sense of relaxation. I would listen to classical music so loudly that I could have gone totally deaf and would relish just being alone with myself. I would hide my fragility in my sphere of intimacy. I needed to feel protected, to know that I was safe from any unforeseen intrusion, whether it be gentle or brutal. Sometimes, I would surprise my father by calling out, "Daddy!" as he walked quietly past my door. I could feel the vibrations from the floorboards and the walls. I knew the footsteps of every single one of my family members. We did not have carpet. The first time that I was in a carpeted room, in a shoe store, I was overcome by panic ripping through my gut. I felt like I could not hear anything anymore. I ran to the bathroom, to a place where I could hear everything except for the water running. A few years later, I understood that in an environment where sounds are dulled, people speak more quietly for fear of standing out. There are therefore certain places that I avoid; malefic places where my ears seem to inevitably get plugged. I can hear much less when there is no light and I cannot hear in the dark.

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