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Grace

By Paul Solet

Woman:

And you know what's great?
You can eat whatever you want
and not gain weight.
And it's good for the baby.
Did you know you can
nurse past menopause?
As long as the nipples
get enough attention,
it reactivates the hormones.
Neuroendocrine reflex.
Oh no, that's something else.
Honey, do you have
my sweetener?
Sure, Mom.
Is there very much
protein in tofu?
It's tempeh.
It's full of it.
Vivian's been thinking
of trying Atkins.
Don't eat that.
You'll get gas for days.
So you weren't crazy about
this last doctor either.
Ma.
He had us wait two hours.
He only gave us five minutes.
He didn't even look me in the eye.
It's too bad you didn't
like Richard Sohn.
He's been treating me for years.
His niece tried a manslaughter case
in my court last week.
She looks wonderful.
You remember her.
It was a terrible case.
This woman
starved her baby to death
feeding it wheatgrass.
It's lucky she had a jury trial.
I'd have locked her up.
I'm going to see a midwife.

At which hospital?
It's an independent clinic.
It's self-contained.
There's a reason people
have babies in hospitals.

- **Son:**

- She's the best midwife working.
Madeline was her
assistant professor at Amesley.
The best is in a hospital.
I do know a little bit
about this, you know.
So do I.
I'm trying to keep
an open mind about this.
I know.
Anybody breaks out a power crystal,
we're leaving.
Deal.
Hello?
I think we're in the wrong place.
Could be.
I'm Shelly, the labor doula
and chief assistant midwife.
I assist Patty with all the births.
Sit down. Let me grab her.
Have a cookie.
They're vegan.
Great.
Herbal.
Hi, Maddy.
You look great.
Um, this is my husband Michael.
- Hi.
- Hi.
- Did you get a cookie?
- No, not yet.
She told you
they were vegan, didn't she?
I swear they are fantastic.
We keep the focus
on you and your baby.
Not just the birth, but those

crucial first moments too.
It's beautiful.
Those first interactions between you
and your baby are so powerful.
They create biochemical responses
that we don't even understand.
The sensitive period..
it's birth psychology.
Mm-hmm.

Patty:

I'm sure you have some questions.

- Michael:

- I have a PhD in holistic obstetrics.
I also spent five years
training in a dozen
different Eastern
healing modalities,
- in Nepal, Thailand...
- Medical doctor, I meant.
- I have an MD from Columbia.
- I didn't see any degrees.
The less this place looks
like a hospital, the better.
Just no reason to medicalize
a perfect process.
See, if I break my leg, I'm not going
to get a chiropractor to set it.
But with pregnancy,
there's nothing broken.
But things do get broken
in the process.
Mostly at hospitals.
Here. All the stats are all in there.
The studies are all state-funded.
Nothing is private.
Medical interventions
can be miraculous,
but not everybody needs a miracle.
Most of the time
they just create complications
and we end up treating
the treatment.

Madeline:

three to six times more likely
to die delivering in a hospital
than a midwife-supervised clinic
...or home birth. "

It's on page 14.

Madeline, you said you had
taken fertility drugs.

Yeah, for three years.

But I'd been off them for 11 months
before she came.

We got pregnant twice, but...

Hey.

I'm sorry.

Here.

You have nothing
to be sorry about.

With proper care, these cows
could supply Grade A milk...

Oh, Jonesy.

I have nice food for you right here.

Mm-mm.

Thanks for doing this.

Ahh.

- No.

- No?

Jonesy killed another rat today.

Can't feed him soy milk.

You're driving him to murder.

Did you take the car in?

\$2,000 later it's still
making the same noise.

Should have never
bought an SUV.

It's a hybrid.

- Ooh.

- Are you okay?

It's just gas or something.

I bought Patricia Lang's book.

She thanked you in the forward
and you two were really close.

Yeah, I learned a lot from her.

She was a really amazing teacher.

Some of her stuff
is pretty far out.
She revolutionized
Women's Studies.
We had a two-year wait list
for her class at Amesley.

Hmm.

Michael, we have
an answering machine.
It's Ma. I'll grab it in the kitchen.

Ooh.

Ahhh.

Ah.

- Michael?

- **Vivian:**

- Ow, my chest.

- **Vivian:**

- Can you move?

- Call Patricia.

- Is something wrong with Madeline?

- Ma, I have to go.

Don't call Dr. Sohn.

We're going to the ER.

Doctor:

she's had chest pains, sir?

- **Michael:**

- Okay, let's get some levels on her.

Man:

It's all right.

Richard Sohn, what,
are you slumming?

The mother-in-law called me.

She's a friend of the family.

Your mother's on her way back
from Hillbrook.

- She'll be here in an hour.

- We giving you some trouble, Dick?

Yes, well, par for the course
in my line.

So what do we have? Upper-right quadrant pain, elevated blood...

this is pre-eclampsia.

We're going to need to induce.

We need to induce right now.

- No, she's only 31 weeks.

- Let's get three 35mcg vaginal doses of cytotec.

We're inducing.

- No no. No!

- Michael:

- Mike, Mike, I'll take care of her.

- No.

Madeline:

Call Patricia. Michael, please!

- He's not her doctor, Ma.

- Michael, I am not discussing this.

Well, you shouldn't have sent him in the first place.

Hello? Ma!

- Shit.

- Is she okay?

They said it was something...

pre... pre-eclampsia?

If it's pre-eclampsia the only thing they can do is deliver. What happened?

We were having dinner and she just started complaining.

She called my name.

I was in the other room.

- Where is she?

- All the way down on the far left.

Is there blood?

She just said it felt like gas, like in her chest.

- Okay, what about her breathing?

- Pretty even.

It was higher because she was in pain, but I don't think it was bad.

- Madeline:

- Hold her down.

- What the hell is going on?
- You can't be in here.
- You can't be in here, miss.
- I'm her midwife.

- Madeline:

- Why isn't she sedated?
- Where's the pain?
- Upper-right quadrant.
increased blood pressure,
probably HELLP syndrome.
- We're inducing now.
- Is it moving to the shoulder blade?
- You cannot be in here.
- What are her levels?

Oh, tell me you checked her levels
before ordering an induction.

If this is hypertension,
that baby is in jeopardy.

- Not if it's a gallstone, she's not.
- I'm calling security.

I am her doctor and I'm not going
anywhere until I see numbers.

You throw me out of here and you murder
that baby because of your negligence
and I swear to God, I will see
that you never work again.

- Get those numbers now.
- What is your name?
- I'm Dr. Richard Sohn.
- Where are your scrubs?

I'm a friend of the family.

- He's not my doctor.
- If you're wrong,
- you're in serious trouble.
- Go fuck yourself.

Cancel the cytotec.

Schedule an ultrasound to confirm
the presence of a stone.

- Maybe you should just pull over.
- Where?

Asshole.

Are you okay?

Do you hear that?

Madeline:

She isn't moving.
Call Patricia.

Shelly:

coming with an ambulance.
She won't go.
She needs to go
to a regular hospital.
They'll induce her.
She won't go.
The baby's dead, Patty.

Patty:

on her own in three weeks.

Shelly:

that decision right now.
She doesn't know what she wants.
She knows exactly
what she wants.

Henry?

What's the matter?

- What?

- This room is a pigsty.

- It looks okay to me.

- Pick up your room!

Clean up!

Vivian, it's okay.

Don't.

Thank you.

Henry?

Henry?

Michael... Michael.

Michael's voice on answering machine:

Hi, you've reached the Mathesons.

Before you know it, we're gonna
have a teenager on our hands,
so leave a message
while you can still get through.

Madeline, it's Patty.

We should talk soon
about the delivery.

You should try to get out. It's not good
for you to be too stationary right now.
Um, call me, okay?
Did you find
what you were looking for?
Miss?
All right, Mad, you're doing great.
See me, see me, see me.
Look look look.
Look here, right here.
Breathe breathe.
It's okay now. You're gonna be okay.
You're gonna be okay.
Madeline, we're gonna
move you now.
- Up we go, smooth motion.
- Traveling traveling.
And shifting.
Coming around.
Get the arms around her.
The baby's descended.
We've got to put her in the tub.
She's in too much pain.
In the tub, in the tub.
Melissa, you need
to bring her back here.
- She's too tight.
- I've got her.
- I've got left... up!
- Okay, come on, get her back in.
Give me the left. We've got you,
we've got you, we've got you.
Shifting!
You'll be okay, all right.
All right, all right.
Get her head.
- Ow, I'm tearing!
- No no no.
You're not tearing, baby.
Push push push.
Can I hold her?
Please?
Suction.
Suction.

Do it now.
You're so little.
Do you know how much
I want you to stay?
Please stay.
Madeline, you can't
will a baby back to I...
...life.
It's Grace.
Her name is Grace.
Did you put those photos aside?
Vivian on phone-
Did you put those photos aside?

Madeline:

his things, Vivian. I'm sorry.

Vivian:

if you'd just put them in a box for me.
I'll spend some time with the baby.
I'm sure you could use the help.

- Ow.

- Was that the baby?

- What's wrong?

- Nothing. She's fine.

Let's make an appointment
for you to see a doctor.

Vivian, I have to go.

Why not just go in
and see Dr. Sohn?

Because Dr. Sohn isn't my doctor.

I know you've been seeing your friend,
but a midwife isn't a doctor.

- She is a doctor.

- If you can't get out to his office
I can ask him to stop by for a visit.

Vivian, this is a bad time.

I have to go.

- I will be leaving work a little early.

- My mother-in-law.

Vivian:

to have a little time with her.
I'm sure she'd love to see her

grandmother
and I know Henry is just
dying to see her.
And I'm sure you'd love
an opportunity to retrench.

- Patty:

- No, I can take care of her.
- Bye, Vivian.
- Don't forget the photos.
She breast-fed Michael
till he was three years old.
She misses him.
Um, I'm sorry.
Can I use your bathroom?
Oh, I got these.
I realized that I never gave you
a congratulations gift.
It's like a women's version
of a cigar, I guess. Heh.
Idiot.
The pressure is applied
intermittently between bleedings
to preserve the animal's blood
in its own body and ensure
the freshness of samples.
The blood must be centrifuged
before clotting begins...
Pleasant.
Animal Channel... I'm hooked.
It's like a vegan horror movie.
- Thanks for coming.
- Yeah, of course.
Oh, hey! You know what?
I got her something.
Um, here.
PachelBaby's my favorite.
Oh, and...
- You didn't have to do all this.
- Sure, I did.

Toy:

I love to hug my kitty.

- **Patty:**

- She hardly ever cries.

- How are you doing?

- No complaints.

Nipples hurt a little bit.

Keep those things stimulated,
you'll be able to nurse till you're 60.

- Neuroendocrine reflex.

- You got it.

- How was the blood work?

- It was all normal.

Of course it was.

Madeline, I know that you do not
want to take her to the hospital,
but there are some tests
that can help us understand...

We're not a case study.

- I don't need to understand a miracle.

- Madeline...

If it were up to them
she would be dead.

You said you could take care of anything
she needs. If you don't want to help...

- No, all right, I get it.

- ... I'll find somebody else.

Oh, Dr. Jones!

The prominent
North American rat surgeon lives.

Oh, he's huge.

Do you remember what Tracey Sullivan
used to call the three of us?

Ma and Pa and Baby J.

Don't.

I'm sorry.

How about this?

Grace, okay okay.

All right, out you go.

Oh my God!

Oh, Jonesy.

All clean!

No more bugs, no more stinky.

Hi, my girl.

Come on.

The stars in heaven

Tucked in the sun #
And each little flower #
Knows this day is done #
And one lonesome bird sings #
A quiet good night #
My sweet little angel #
It's time for good night #
So sleep and dream #
Just close your eyes #
And I'll be here waiting #
The moment you rise #
So sleep little angel #
It's time for good night. #
Baby, bath time's over.
Don't cry. I'm sorry.

Machine:

You've reached Nature Birth.
Leave a message and we'll
get back to you after the miracle.
Grace has a really bad rash...
she smells funny.
I don't know.
I put her in the tub...
I really don't know what happened.
The temperature was fine.
Maybe it was the soap.
I don't know, can you call me back?
Oh, piece of crap.
I know, okay okay okay.
I know, sweetie.
I know, I know.
Let's have a nice snack.
Shh-hhh.
Shhh. Here we go.
Here we go.
All right, all right.
Come on, Gracie.
Okay, let's lay down.
Are you okay?
Yeah.
- Are you going somewhere?
- No.
Uh, well, I don't know.

I thought it might be fun to go
for a road trip or something.

You know, get away?

- From me?

- No, of course not.

She's sick.

Whatever you had with her
is over.

Are you ready for a snack?

Oh, honey.

Okay.

Gentle, honey.

Ahh!

Ow!

Ow.

Sweetheart.

You have to eat something.

Oh...

Please, honey.

You need to eat something.

Baby, please.

Okay, Mommy needs a break.

The stars in heaven

Tucked in the sun

And each little flower

Knows this day is done

And one lonesome bird sings

A quiet good night

My sweet little angel

It's time to sleep tight

So sleep and dream

Just close your eyes

I'll be here waiting

The moment you rise...

Man:

Kinder kills, cleaner cuts.

Carl's Cows have no antibiotics
and no synthetic growth hormones.

Kinder kills, cleaner cuts.

Carl's Cows have no antibiotics
and no synthetic growth hormones.

Kinder kills, cleaner cuts.

Carl's Cows have no antibiotics

and no synthetic growth hormones.

Kinder kills, cleaner cut...

I know, honey, just a sec.

Come on.

Please.

Grace!

- Shelly, it's Madeline.

- She's not in, Madeline.

- When will she be back?

- I don't know, I'm sorry.

Please have her call me when she gets back. It's an emergency.

Okay.

Yes, sir.

Thank you.

Excuse me.

I'd like to see Dr. Sohn.

- Yes?

- Mrs. Matheson is insisting...

...on seeing you...

Judge Matheson.

Send her in.

- Your Honor.

- Hi, Richard.

- You look wonderful.

- Thank you.

I'm so sorry about Mike.

The woman he married...

she's sick.

Does she need a referral?

I could...

After the accident,

she told us the baby was dead,

but that she was going

to carry it to term anyway.

We were going to pretend

it was a stillbirth.

But then when I didn't hear from her,

I phoned the birthing clinic...

about the funeral arrangements.

And the assistant told me

that the baby had been born

and that it was fine.

- Who's her OB?

- A midwife delivered.
Madeline won't go to a hospital.
She won't see a real doctor.
She doesn't even
pick up the phone.
Well, have you
called the police?
I've seen this 1,000 times.
If I file with the police, that baby
will spend weeks in state care,
while Youth Services
shuffles paperwork.
I do not want this woman
raising my granddaughter.
If I...
could get a medical report
confirming that she's not fit...
And you'd take the baby?
My son is gone.
Well...
maybe there's something
that you could do for me too.
I... I got myself in a little trouble.
Shhh.
Just help me and I'll help you.
Shhh.

Sohn:

Vivian, it's Richard.
I can't prove neglect
unless she opens up.
I said I would help.
Shhh.
No one's gonna take you away.
Shhh.
Shhh.

Michael's voice:

Hi, you've reached the Mathesons.
Before you know it, we're going
to have a teenager on our hands,
so leave a message
while you can still get through.
Oh my God, what happened?

Shhh.

Okay, shhh.

Shhh. Okay.

Shhh, okay, come here.

Shhh.

- Oh.

- **Toy:**

Jonesy?

Shhh.

Baby, you just ate.

I know, honey.

Mommy's thirsty too.

When Lucy came in,

she had so many fleas,

they were literally sucking her dry.

If she stayed out there, the chill

and fatigue would get worse

and eventually the heart

just wouldn't be able to keep up.

For her to have a chance,

even without the fleas,

we'd have to load her system

with the vitamins she lost.

The owner had no malicious intent...

if you can't take care of yourself

how do you take care of your animal?

- Shelly, please!

- I can take another message.

I've been trying for two days.

I'm sure she got your voicemail.

Have you thought more about

going to the hospital?

- Just have her call me back.

- Okay.

- Who was that?

- The trailer guy.

It's a motor home.

Richard, it's me.

I need you to go back.

Today.

I need you to go back today.

I am not letting that baby

spend one more night

with that woman.
Just give me till this evening.
Good.
Patricia?
Mrs. Matheson?
There there now. It's all right.
It's all right.
I'm sick.
I'm here to help.
Come and sit down.
Come and sit down.
That's it.
We're not going to the hospital.
I can't help you unless
I know what's going on.
I'm just so cold.
Could you open
your mouth for me, please?
You're badly anemic.
I'm going to have to do a proper exam.
What kind of exam?
Well, it is a serious condition,
but it can probably be treated
with a little time
and proper nourishment.
It may be as simple as feeding
the baby a little formula
for a little bit to give
your body time to recoup.
But I need to do a proper exam
to confirm the extent of
the condition.
It, um, it can be slightly intrusive.
Maybe... maybe you'd just better get
the child and we can go to the hospital.
No! No, please.
I don't care if it's intrusive.
Hmm.
- If you're too cold to disrobe, we...
- No!
Turn around.
Unbutton your shirt.
Nice and deep.
Again.

I'm gonna need one of these.
Now I'm going to stick you.
Are you ready?
Is that it?
Just one more.
I'm sorry. I should have
explained it to you.
I'm going to need a sample
of your breast milk...
to make sure that the baby is
getting what she needs.
The newer models are
much less cumbersome,
but these old brass units provide
a much more natural suction.
- One of them is sore.
- All I need is one.
I know the pewter looks
a little archaic,
but the leather seals are much more
gentle than the plastic flanges.
And the jars were bigger because
with such a precision instrument,
your supply would be triple.
This is the original blown-glass.
Why don't you hold these?
I'm going to need both of my hands.
It's quite all right to turn around.
Whenever you're ready.
Just let me know
if the suction's too much.
Is she sick?
She's just cranky.
That baby is sick.
She's just got a little bit
of a cough.
Where is she?
Where is she?
Just let her rest.
She's fine. Please!
Please, you don't understand.
Vivian, it's Richie...
Ahh!
Oh, come on, come on.

Henry, I can't hear myself think!

- Did you get Richard?

- Please...

just...

finish the crib.

Richard, pick up.

Call me back.

I'm going over there.

Shelly:

Do you need anything?

No, thanks.

Is this Cory? Hi, it's Patricia Lang calling about the motor home.

I'm sorry it took me

so long to get back.

I wanted to go ahead

and move forward.

Cory:

but I lost your number.

I thought you left

a message with Shelly.

- Shelly?

- Shelly my assistant.

Madeline?

Are you home?

The door was open.

Um, I'm just feeding the baby.

Why don't you make yourself some tea?

I'll be right down.

Do you want anything?

I'm fine.

Okay.

Come on, honey, please.

Oh, I'm sorry.

Shhh.

Can I have a little peek?

- What are you doing here?

- I was worried.

Jesus, Madeline,

you look terrible.

I haven't been getting

enough sleep.

Can I have some tea?
I ran out.
When was the last time
you saw a doctor?
Today. I'm fine, really.
They did some blood tests and told me
to use formula for a few days.
I'm just tired.
Richard Sohn
didn't stop by, did he?
No. You asked him
to check on me?
I got worried.
You haven't been
picking up the phone.
I just wanted to see
if everything was all right.
God, Madeline, you look terrible.
Can we do this
another time, Vivian?
Could I just have a quick look at her?
No.
She's had a tough day
and I want her to sleep.
Tomorrow, okay?
Is she sick?
Vivian, really, tomorrow.
Okay.
I, um...
have to go to the loo
before I go home.
Vivian!
Grace?
Vivian!
Get away from us.
Please, you don't understand.
She's special.
She needs special food.
You're sick. Get back!
Please, just let her go.
Let her go.
You'll kill her.
Madeline?
Oh God.

Oh God.
Oh God...
Please.
Wake up.
Wake... oh, Jesus.
Oh, please, I'm sorry.
Madeline.

Patty:

How you doing, fatso?
Dinnertime, baby.
Come here, Jonesy.
It's so quiet back here.
God, she looks fantastic.
She finally had something to eat?
I told you everything
tested healthy.
It's all about
maintaining your diet.
We keep your blood levels up,
we can do this.
There's something else.
She needs more now.
She's teething.
The stars in heaven #
Tucked in the sun #
And each little flower #
Knows this day is done #
And one lonesome bird sings #
A quiet good night #
My sweet little angel #
It's time for good night #
So sleep and dream #
Just close your eyes #
I'll be here waiting #
The moment you rise #
And one lonesome bird sings #
A quiet good night #
My sweet little angel #
It's time to sleep tight.