

Childbirth
(For Men)

Written by
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INT. HOSPITAL OFFICE - DAY

A nurse, RUPERT, taps at a dusty looking keyboard, linked to an out-of-date monitor. He sits in a small hospital office.

Motivational posters with messages like "DON'T shake the baby" line the walls. Halloween decorations are up.

RUPERT
When was the first day of your last
period?

BRAM, a tall 30-something man dressed as Charlie Chaplin's Little Tramp, sits uncomfortably on the other side of the room. His fake toothbrush moustache is hanging off.

Rupert looks at his computer and taps a couple of buttons.

RUPERT (cont'd)
Sorry - we can't move on without an
answer.
(beat)
A week last Thursday...

He starts to type.

BRAM
Put a week last Friday. I went
swimming a week last Thursday.

Rupert nods understandably. The computer beeps.

RUPERT
Okay, welcome to the Mountbatten
Maternity Ward. How can we help?

BRAM
...I'm having a baby.

Bram gives a thumbs up and smiles unconvincingly.

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INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Bram leans, defeated, against a wall. He peels off his moustache, takes a deep sigh and gingerly looks into the camera.

BRAM
I can't believe she was right. I'm
actually looking forward to being a
dad. I hate when she's right.

He shakes his head.

BRAM (cont'd)
Then again, she's been in labour for
eight hours, so maybe I win after
all.

He cringes, hearing what he's said.

BRAM (cont'd)
Sorry. Bad joke. Look, let's start at
the beginning. Like most people here,
my story starts nine months ago.

INT. DINER - EVENING

A regular diner. It's quiet, almost romantically lit.

MAE, mid-20s to 30s, walks in dressed for a date. The world
slows down around her.

BRAM (V.O.)
The first time I saw Mae, I knew she
was going to be the love of my night,
the girl I'd try to respect in the
morning.

The two sit and laugh as the diner empties, until it's just
them.

BRAM (V.O.) (cont'd)
We promised never to lie to one
another.

MAE
I have low standards and I'm willing
to settle.

BRAM
I learned all my best moves from
pornography.

MAE
My biological clock is ticking and
I'm desperate to start a family.

BRAM
I'll say whatever I have to to get
into your knickers.

MAE
Do you want to come back to my flat?

BRAM
I'll give you the best three and a
half minutes of your life.

MAE
Bram - we promised we'd be honest.

BRAM
I'll give you the best 60 seconds of
your life.

INT. BRAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bram sits playing a video game. He's a little tipsy.

BRAM (V.O.)
Three months later. You already know
where this is going.

The phone rings with a jingle version of 'O Mio Babbino
Caro'. Bram stares at the phone nervously.

He picks it up.

BRAM
Hello? Who? Mae? Oh, Mae!

He carries on playing video games, the phone leaning
precariously on his shoulder.

BRAM (cont'd)
Congratulations! Three months? Wow.
Okay. Three months. Jesus. Three
months?

An explosion from the TV. A loud, exaggerated death cry.
Bram puts down the controller. He stares into space for a
beat.

INT. TOILETS - DAY

Bram sits by the sink while DAMIEN stands at the urinal.

DAMIEN
FUCK HER!

He shakes a little too liberally, zips up his trousers and
walks over to the mirrors.

BRAM
You've got the right idea, but I'm
looking for something... less
forceful. That, but nice.

Damien flicks out his hands then runs them through his hair.

DAMIEN
You want to tell her to fuck herself
but in a way that she'll like to
hear?

Bram nods.

DAMIEN (cont'd)
You're a better man than me.

He starts picking something out of his teeth.

DAMIEN (cont'd)
Women today have no sense of
responsibility. Hasn't she heard of
protection? She hasn't heard of
vinegar? If you ask me, you should
march over there and tell her...

EXT. OUTSIDE FLAT - DAY

Bram stares up at a block of flats.

DAMIEN (O.S)
...you don't want anything to do with
her.

INT. FLAT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Bram walks in purposefully. The flat is completely
overturned.

DAMIEN (V.O)
Tell her things don't always go the
way you want them to.

Mae, tired, sits. She knows what's coming.

MAE
I didn't think you'd come.

BRAM
Mae...

MAE
Just say it.

Bram takes a second.

BRAM
I can't have a baby.

Mae takes a long sigh. She slowly stands.

MAE
You don't have to, sweetie. That's my job.

BRAM
No, I mean-

MAE
I know what you mean. Go. Just go.

Bram looks towards the door. She hits him hard on the arm.

BRAM
What the hell?!

She hits him hard again.

BRAM (cont'd)
What is wrong with you?

MAE
What's wrong with me?!

BRAM
You just punched my arm!

MAE
Look at this place. I was looking for one thing - one - that would make me think I'm ready to be a mom. One thing.

She hits him again. And again. And again. The punches get weaker and weaker until she has worn herself out. She barely stands, sobbing.

Bram rubs his arms and then, noticing she is crying, puts one gingerly around her.

MAE (cont'd)
I spoke to the wall last night.

BRAM
Probably doesn't bruise in the same
way as people.

MAE
Like in Shirley Valentine. "Hello,
wall." It felt stupid at first but...

Bram thinks about this.

BRAM
I'm sorry.

He looks around the room.

BRAM (cont'd)
This is- I'm truly, truly sorry.

They hold each other for a beat.

INT. VARIOUS

A MONTAGE of big pregnancy moments.

Footage of a scan. Bram and Mae react.

Trying to figure out the pushchair.

Breathing exercise. Mae practices, followed by Bram,
followed by Damien. Damien is smoking.

EXT. OUTSIDE HOSPITAL - DAY

A busy road outside the hospital. A car quickly stops. Bram,
dressed as Charlie Chaplin, jumps out. Damien, dressed as
Death from The Seventh Seal, drags behind.

Damien blocks the back passenger seat door.

DAMIEN
You know you don't have to do this.
You've still got time to run.

BRAM
I know, Damien.

DAMIEN
It's not too late.

BRAM
You've made your views painfully
clear.

Damien nods, moving to reveal a disgruntled Mae in the car.

MAE

I am about to give birth!

Bram opens the door and helps her out. Her bump has a baby doll sticking out of it, like Han Solo frozen in carbonite.

BRAM

(To Damien)

You have to go park, okay?

DAMIEN

I can't drive. I'm drunk.

BRAM

What? You're like you always are.

DAMIEN

I'm always drunk.

BRAM

At this time of the day?

DAMIEN

I don't have a time of day.

Bram is out of arguments and he's not sure how.

BRAM

Fine. Take her. I'll be back as soon as possible, okay?

Damien theatrically rolls his eyes.

DAMIEN

Fine. Come on, you.

He marches off towards the hospital.

DAMIEN (cont'd)

Come on!

Mae looks to Bram in fear, then does her best to keep up.

Bram jumps in the car and drives off.

EXT. JOURNEY HOME

He drives through the city, car parks are full, and into the countryside. Finally he ends up in a secluded woodland.

BRAM (V.O)
You know in the movies, where the
dashing handsome hero has to
overcome all odds to rescue his love?
Anybody who has had to find hospital
parking knows exactly what I'm
talking about.

He parks at the back of a row of cars.

Bram gets out the car and looks around.

BRAM
I'm never going to find it again.

He takes a few steps.

He crosses a lush, green valley, surrounded by hills.

He walks through thick bushes, ripping his shirt. His chest
starts bleeding.

He stumbles, barely able to walk.

BRAM (V.O)
I'm not saying it was exactly like
this.

He scratches at his nose, knocking his fake moustache.

BRAM (V.O) (cont'd)
But it's what it felt like, knowing
Mae was putting up with the dual
horrors of childbirth and Damien.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Mae paces nervously. Damien sits in the only seat, annoyed.

He takes a moment, considering something.

DAMIEN
Do you like Warhammer?

Mae stops and looks at him in disgust. She shakes her head.

MAE
I love Warhammer.

Damien looks back, wide-eyed.

EXT. OUTSIDE HOSPITAL - DAY

Bram - battered, bloody and tired - walks past the spaces from before. A space becomes free.

BRAM
(Under his breath)
Son of a bitch.

He keeps walking forward, tired, breathing heavily.

Damien is waiting for him.

DAMIEN
Where the hell have you been?

BRAM
...Couldn't get a parking space.

DAMIEN
That woman is too good for you. You marry her, and you make an honest woman of her, do you understand?

BRAM
Marry her? Damien, that's commitment. We're only having a baby.

He shakes his head.

BRAM (cont'd)
I'm feeling a little bit light-headed.

Bram falls to the ground.

Damien stands over him.

DAMIEN
I told her she's too good for you.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Bram stands, staring into the camera.

BRAM
So maybe I exaggerated the trip a bit.

The sound of a door opening. Footsteps along the corridor, getting closer.

BRAM (cont'd)
I really did pass out though. Stress.
A&E shifted me to the maternity ward
so I could be checked over and still
be close to-

NURSE
Are you Bram?

He nods nervously.

NURSE (cont'd)
It's time.

A beat. His eyes drift back into the camera for a second. He looks away.

BRAM
I'm not ready.

NURSE
She's ready.

The nurse walks off.

BRAM
I'll go hold her hand. Dry her head.
I'll... buy a sponge. All the
important stuff.
(Beat)
Hey, I'm allowed to be the hero in my
own story, aren't I?

Like an inmate on death row, Bram follows the nurse.

FADE TO BLACK

The sound of a baby crying.