

## NIKELLE'S STORY

### As told from a mother's heart

From the beginning little girls love to be mothers. How astonishing to look back and see such a striking resemblance between a favorite doll and a newborn daughter!

Who knows how cosmic wheels are set in motion, but this story began when Nikelle fell in love with Rodg, the bass player in her band. A few seasons later we hear a baby is on the way.

Nikelle was insistent that only a gentle home birth



would do, so early on in her pregnancy she employed a midwifery practice to oversee her prenatal care. She maintained vibrant health throughout her pregnancy and looked forward to the coming day with serenity and confidence.



She called her mother (me) on the evening of February 7th to say she had been having mild contractions all day long. Since she had expressed her desire that I be present at the birth, I had to make a decision whether to rush to take the last

flight out of Albuquerque or wait until morning. Too soon seemed better than too late, so I threw my bag together and asked my neighbor for a lift to the airport. They practically closed the door on my heels and I breathed a sigh of relief to be on my way.

Nikelle picked me up at the Sacramento airport (Rodg was at band practice) and drove us home in pouring rain, she having contractions, me slightly horrified, and both of us laughing that this would be a story for the grandchildren. We tucked ourselves into our beds shortly after arriving home and she spent a fairly peaceful night, waking up with contractions that were still mild and about 20 minutes apart.

Regular contractions continued throughout the following day. Midwife Claudia stopped by to sum up the





situation and told us she never gave predictions and that it could be hours or days. A sterilized birthing pool, delivered days earlier, stood empty and waiting in the dining room. Claudia answered my nervous questions about when and how to deal with the tub by assuring me, “Not to worry, we’ll take care of it.”

Throughout the day Nikelle and I were able to spend precious mother-daughter time together walking slowly

around the block (we discovered trees offer wonderful support during contractions) or just sitting quietly. Although her contractions were still about ten minutes apart, they were definitely becoming stronger. We made a pallet on the living room floor where she could lie down comfortably. With each contraction she would move onto all fours and rock slowly from side to side until it passed. She ate very little this day, but sipped on water and fruit juice. As evening rolled around I went to my room so the soon-to-be-parents could share their priceless time together privately. There was no doubt Nikelle was in active labor now. I drifted in and out of sleep for several hours, but rushed back out to the living room when her groans became alarming. Rodg informed me the midwives were on their way. I remember being faintly aware of their arrival sometime around 3:00 a.m. just before falling into a deep sleep. It was as if the energy of the entire house had changed and a peaceful veil settled over all.

The next thing I knew I awoke with a start to inexplicable quiet. My first thought was they had either taken her to the hospital or the baby had been born. I bolted for the door, glancing at the clock on my way out – 5:05a.m. Rodg was asleep sitting up on the couch and I became immediately aware of a hushed bustling coming from the dining room. Claudia and her colleague, Tosi, met my gaze as I hurried toward them inquiring, “How’s our girl?” No sooner had I uttered the words than a soft “Hi, Mama” emanated from inside the pool.

Claudia informed me that everything was going perfectly. She only checked Nikelle internally once during the entire labor and reported her cervix was 6-7 cm dilated and well effaced. I realized with the next contraction that things had definitely progressed while I had been asleep. Nikelle is a very strong



and courageous woman and I was dramatically reminded just how intense human birth is. The midwives were completely impressive. They stayed right with her through each and every moment rubbing her back, giving her juice, and uttering such things as, "You're doing beautifully" "Everything's going so well" "Your baby is almost here". Rodg shook off his slumber and once again moved to her side. She never really varied from the hands



and knees position she found most comfortable from the start. The scene was getting pretty extreme now. At one point she pushed herself up out of the water and gasped "I can't!" Tosi quickly moved around to face her, looked her in the eyes and lovingly reassured her that yes, she most certainly could. With the next contraction a small, beautiful face appeared beneath the shimmering water. Claudia en-

couraged Nikelle to reach down and feel her baby, which helped to focus her beyond the pain. Another contraction and we could see the entire head, and one more brought the baby fully into the water. Claudia quickly passed the baby between its mother's legs as Nikelle reached out with expectant arms.



ing and I held my own breath as I watched my dear daughter gently, but with great intention and instinct, command her child to breathe. Sounds of little gasps were soon heard, followed by tears of joy and laughter as we all watched this little creature stare wondrously into its mother's eyes. Meanwhile, the father urgently asked, "Is it a boy or a girl?" More bustling about as Claudia listened through



her stethoscope and instructed me to fetch another warm receiving blanket from the stack under the heating pad. “IS IT A BOY OR A GIRL?” Rodg pleaded once again.

“Girl!” Claudia finally announced. “Ah-h-h”, everyone sighed. Nori Kai is born.

Mother and baby were helped out of the pool to their resting place prepared on the couch, Nori nestled at her mother’s breast. The placenta was delivered a few moments later, wrapped in a protective cover, and set next to Nikelle – still attached to Nori and treated like the noble, living thing that it was.

What a sweet surprise when Tosi brought a candle-lit “cake” made of apples and figs to celebrate this glorious birthday.

Great fun began for all as Nori was freed from her cord, weighed, examined, and dressed. Claudia gave us an astonishing biology lesson on the placenta and showed us how the sac had enveloped Nori. The parents were given a number of choices as to how to dispense with the placenta and the decision was quickly reached that Tosi should take it home to fertilize her rose bushes.

The tub was emptied, equipment carted out, and everything put back into order by these two incredibly hard-working women. We said good-bye to our cherished midwives and spent the next several hours joyfully together and giving thanks for our magnificent Nori.





The following night brought her first bedtime story.  
Birth within birth. Perfect from the beginning.

Nori Kai – 20 days old.

