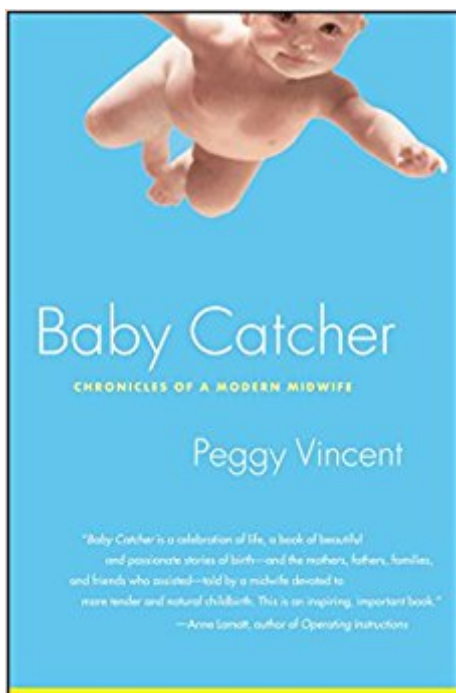


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Baby Catcher: Chronicles Of A Modern Midwife



Synopsis

An inspiring collection of birth stories by a charming midwife. Each time she knelt to “catch” another wriggling baby—nearly three thousand times during her remarkable career—California midwife Peggy Vincent paid homage to the moment when pain bows to joy and the world makes way for one more. With every birth, she encounters another woman-turned-goddess: Catherine rides out her labor in a car careening down a mountain road. Sofia spends hers trying to keep her hyper doctor-father from burning down the house. Susannah gives birth so quietly that neither husband nor midwife notice until there’s a baby in the room. More than a collection of birth stories, however, *Baby Catcher* is a provocative account of the difficulties that midwives face in the United States. With vivid portraits of courage, perseverance, and love, this is an impassioned call to rethink technological hospital births in favor of more individualized and profound experiences in which mothers and fathers take center stage in the timeless drama of birth.

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Customer Reviews

In a joyous, often hilarious ode to the Birkenstock-scuffling, tackle box-toting mobile midwives who flourished in the 1980s, Peggy Vincent chronicles her abundant life as a professional *Baby Catcher*. The wild ride begins during her nurse training years in the 1960s, when laboring women were expected to lie down, shut up, and submit to whatever drugs and procedures the doctor ordered. A rebellious patient who chants and dances through her contractions—and the hell that ensues when seasoned hospital staffers intrude—lights a permanent fire under Vincent. Her resolve to serve each

laboring woman with compassion and respect carries her from obstetrics nurse to head of an alternative birth center within Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley, California, and eventually into her own private practice as a licensed midwife. Like the most courageous home births, this collection of delivery experiences refuses anesthesia: plenty of bellowing, sweating, bleeding, and pushing accompany nearly all of the more than 40 tales. Tough confrontations with stubborn physicians, panicky labor partners, and one particularly nasty calico cat are dabbed with as many keen insights as Vincent's quieter, more heart-rending newborn encounters. *Baby Catcher* is an inspirational literary gift suitable for expectant mothers, fellow baby catchers, and anyone who loves reading about nature's greatest magical feat. --Liane Thomas --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

It was in nursing school at Duke in the 1960s that Vincent found her calling: delivering or "catching" babies. She moved to California and became a midwife, specializing in home births; over the course of 40 years, she brought some 2,000 babies into the world. There's a predictable plot structure to most of the stories she recounts: the initial meetings with the pregnant woman, the last-minute phone call once labor speeds up, the coping with contractions, the appearance of the baby's head, the wet newborn, the oven-warmed blankets, the celebratory meal afterwards. Despite the repetition, Vincent's account is a page-turner. It's not just the risk that something might go wrong (meaning a nail-biting trip to the hospital for an emergency cesarean), and not just the quirkiness of home birth settings (which can involve jealously raging house pets or leaky houseboats), but something inherent in the magic of birth itself. What sustains Vincent and her readers is this sense of standing ringside at the greatest miracle on earth. A solid writer, Vincent doesn't preach the virtues of unmedicated birthing; she just lays consistent stories of women doing it Christian Science moms, Muslim moms, spiritualist moms, lesbian moms, teen moms and just plain ordinary moms. With the midwife's axiom "birth is normal till proven otherwise" as a guiding principle, all these women have a chance to make childbirth a crowning moment in their own lives. Male readers may find this female-centered narrative off-putting, and mainstream readers might raise eyebrows at the inclusion of children in the birthing process, but Vincent addresses these issues fairly directly herself. Agent, Felicia Eth. (Apr.) Forecast: With appendices guiding readers to more technical resources, Vincent's latest baby is bound to be popular with women's health and alternative medicine readers. A cover blurb by Anne Lamott could break it out further. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

If you read only one book during pregnancy, read this one. Now, this probably wouldn't be the book you'd expect to answer all your pregnancy needs. It doesn't tell you about diet, exercise, the growth of your fetus. This is a book about a midwife and the women she's helped to deliver. For me, reading these varied stories, told with humor and consideration, almost all of which had a positive outcome, was such a relief to my anxiety about childbirth. It helped me see that there are so many types of "normal" and that my delivery was going to be "normal" regardless of the process or outcome. I wanted to start the book again as soon as I finished it. And, I repeat, Peggy Vincent is funny and fun and tells a great story! You are going to wish she were your midwife.

If you are at all interested in midwifery, homebirths, natural birth, etc., then this is a book for you. It is similar in concept to Ina May's books (a compilation of birth stories), but from a completely different framework. Ina May is a hardcore hippy in Tennessee, whose career as a midwife did not start from a medical background. Peggy is trained nurse who chose the path of midwifery after her career as a nurse had already begun in the Bay Area. I loved reading about the development of midwifery from another point of view. Peggy is able to convey her passion in such a way that it paints a perfectly clear picture. I got choked up several times throughout this book because I couldn't help but feel her emotions. I enjoyed this book whole-heartedly and highly recommend it.

I love to hear inspiring and motivating birth stories and have little tolerance for the typical horror stories. Our two children were born peacefully and completely naturally using the HypnoBirthing method, with the support of a Midwife and Doula, one in the hospital and one at home in a kiddie pool. I wish I would have known what I did with our first that I did with our second, but overall, we had the natural relaxed and spiritual birth we desired with some typical hospital distractions. In the end I was in control of my labor and felt like a birthing Goddess. I share our beautiful story with anyone that'll listen. Most are shocked while others in disbelief attributing the natural birth experience to my physical strength. Mmm...anyway. I await the day that all women are empowered, educated, supported and afforded the opportunities to birth their babies the way they want to. And equally, I await the day that Midwives are fully accepted as birthing experts, confidants and Angels. Blessings, Light and Love.

This book was recommended to me by one of my nursing instructors, who knew I was interested in entering into Nurse Midwifery. I wish I had read it back then, as it gives some excellent insights about birth. What made this book particularly interesting (and useful) to me, is that it is written by

someone who attended many births in many different settings. Vincent was a nurse, a nurse-midwife in a hospital, and a home-birth midwife. This means she gives a very well-rounded view, rather than just promoting one setting over the other. Also, unlike some books about midwifery and natural birth, she doesn't paint all medical professionals as evil. In fact, she is very careful to mention those that were wonderful advocates for the mothers, as well as those that she felt were callous or unethical. Her birth stories are enjoyable to read. Some are endearing, some empowering. She doesn't say that all births were perfect, but she does say that birth itself is perfect, and that is a refreshing point of view when so many people are taking one side or the other about natural birth. I give this book a 5 star review for being honest, concise and entertaining. It is not a how-to book, so don't expect lengthy medical dialog describing the birth process. It focuses on the characters in birth--mother, father, child, attendees. It does however prove that with proper support, birth can be a wonderful process rather than a horror-fest, even when things go wrong.

This book is absolutely amazing. I did not want this book to end so I slowed down my reading hoping to drag it out. The book was a great insight into the beauty of a woman being able to bring a person into this world the way god intended. I felt at times as I was there with Peggy the descriptions of the labor and births so perfect, loving and at time hilarious. Each birth to her during the time of her private practice was special in its own way and her ability to remember each of them. I have learned how special midwives are since "Doctors have lost sight of what normal labor looks like and how women really behave when artificial barriers are removed". It was hilarious when she would take the placentas to her kids school. Interesting was the "primal need of women to find a close, dark, protected space in which to bring safely bring forth their babies. Rejecting the prepared king size bed". I did get annoyed and upset with her when she kicked a goose so hard that it beak over tail went 15 feet above the lake vibrating her leg all the way to her hip then laughed about it. Unlike how doctors think "childbirth is normal until proven otherwise"

Oh my, this book was amazing. Reading Peggy's book made me seriously consider becoming a Midwife. She is so passionate and has so many stories to tell. It also helped me, as a pregnant woman, feel more confident in my body and in my ability to have a natural unmedicated birth. Definitely a worthy purchase. A note to expectant mothers: Please please skip through reading the chapters titled Spirit Baby and Spirit Baby II. They are both regarding the loss of a child. During Spirit Baby II, I had to put the book down and sob for an hour. It was so incredibly hard to read and had I known what I was about I probably would have skipped it. We all already fear the loss of a

child and having to hear a story like such it really struck me hard. Do yourself a favor and avoid the heart-wrenching chapters listed above.

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