

# Colic

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*He stood in the darkened cave, watching as golden water churned over his knobby feet. His was a stony form; a polygonal round shape with coarse gray skin covered with streaks of blood. He cut an angular silhouette; muscles pushing up sharply against roughened skin emphasizing a grizzled form. Crowned with thick spiky black hair and vacant obsidian eyes, a torn red bandana draped his neck.*

*Trapped in a pyramidal cavern, the walls consisted of cream-colored rock splashed with a hint of pink. Tossed sporadically, bluish lines just below the surface seemed to pulsate like a heart beat. A rocky outcropping over his head spurted warm yellow fluid like a fountain. Water lapped up over his short broad legs and filled the air with an ammonia smell.*

*The stony man looked down and measured his choices. The sea was rising and turbulent; waves of the yellow water now crashing over his thickened legs. He took a half step back and then rolled forward, entering the water with a cannonball splash.*

*The water pulled him down, swallowing his round form and forcing his shape deep without hope. He knew where he was going, opening up and pulling himself to the center of the cavern floor with short stubby strokes and a powerful frog kick. Here he entered a small crevice, pulling himself through and struggling for air.*

*He broke the surface frightened and gasping for a breath. Ahead tracked a long tunnel; built of the same colorless stone, concentric archways disappearing in the darkness. The walls pinched tight, forcing him along the watery pathway. He pushed his spiky head up along the top of the space, the red bandana now further torn and draped over his knobby back. Kicking and grabbing he pulled himself along. Gasping for a comforting breath, the walls took him helplessly forward.*

*The watery path led him further, forcing him through a blackened hole. The sides pinched again, pushing the air out of his aching lungs. They aligned him endwise and threw his stony shape through the narrow gap.*

*When he was through the tunnel he broke the surface and gasped a long, relieved breath. In a large chamber now, he treaded for what seemed a lifetime.*

She was in intolerable pain; sweating, screaming, and grabbing the side rails of her hospital bed. Colicky pain like childbirth they said, but in childbirth the result is a

child. The woman had experienced this pain before, but today's was far worse than previously. Her torment was so horrible; she was frightened, unable to believe she could stand another wave. And then all of the sudden, it was gone. Not just a momentary relief from wave after

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wave, but the pain was gone entirely. She did not know how she knew, but she was certain that the pain would not return.

"Let's get you up to void, Honey," the nurse said to the woman. She slipped a shiny metal bed pan under the woman and pulled her gown out

from under her.

Relief continued, and the woman let a warm full bladder fill the metal pot. There was a rushing sound, a small ping, and then she was finished.

The nurse pulled the pan out from under the woman and carried it to the sink. Pouring the yellow fluid through a strainer she saw immediately the good news.

In the paper funnel it sat motionless. A round, rough, spiky, gray stone the size of the tip of her finger laid inoffensively, a bloody stripe of clot draped over one end like a bandana. ❖