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PREFACE

In January 1998, the *Midwives Journal* published an article by Terri Coates entitled "Impressions of a Midwife in Literature". After careful research right across European and English literature, Terri was forced to conclude that midwives were non-existent in literature.

Why, in heaven's name? Fictional doctors grace books in droves, scattering pearls of wisdom as they go. Good and bad, are by no means absent. But midwives? Never heard of a midwife as a literary heroine? Yet midwives are the stuff of drama. Every child is conceived either in love or born in pain, followed by joy or sometimes remorse. In the thick of it, she sees it all. Why then does she remain a shadowy figure, hidden behind the delivery room door?

Terri Coates finished her article with a lament for the state of such an important profession. I read her words, was challenged, and took up my pen.