

The Story of Wendy Hill

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PRESENT

THE STORY OF WENDY HILL

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This is Greendale, a friendly, neighborly town, maybe sort of an old-fashioned town. Oh, we've grown through the years here in Greendale, but still we've kept in touch with old friends. I suppose I know our people pretty well. You're bound to in my profession. And there are ever so many interesting human stories to tell about them. But I wonder if you wouldn't like to hear the story that I think is the most important one I can tell. It begins just across the street from me, over in the offices of Greendale's leading law firm. Now we're not particularly interested in "Bates & Bates", except that the girl I want to tell you about has been pleasantly employed there ever since she graduated from high school.

Wendy Jamieson, I mean Wendy Hill. I'm always forgetting to use her married name. You see, she'd just been married at the time our story begins. Well, Wendy Hill was about as fine and wholesome a girl as you'd find anywhere, and everything had been working out right for Wendy lately. Of course, she had no way of knowing that this would be the day that would change the whole course of her life.

When I heard the scream, I moved fast. You can imagine how I felt when I saw that the victim was Wendy. Our town knows how to handle emergencies. Wendy hadn't regained consciousness yet, and of course I went over to the hospital with her. It took only about half an hour to patch Wendy's bruises and send her upstairs to a quiet room. Her husband Jim had come over. Wendy wasn't seriously hurt, thank goodness, but she was still suffering from considerable shock. I just dropped in on her for a minute in her room.

"Well, here you are! Hello, Jim.

- Hello, doctor.

- Hello, Wendy. Well, young lady, look what you've got yourself into this time.

- I hope you're not gonna keep me here very long. I couldn't stand that. Oh, oh, that hurts.

- Is she alright, doctor Woods?

- Of course she is. Don't worry about her. And don't you worry, little lady. Just take it easy and we'll have you out of here in no time at all."

But next morning, I was almost forced to swallow those cheerful words. I had just finished dictating to Miss Malone when the phone rang. It was the hospital. Nurse Anderson wanted to give me the results of routine tests on Wendy. What she said was surprising, and not so good. Wendy's urinalysis showed sugar. Of course, I asked for confirmation. Nurse Anderson said

she'd make a blood sugar test immediately. Sugar. That points straight at diabetes. It might be a false alarm, but still, I thought I'd get in touch with Jim.

“Miss Malone, would you see if you can get Mr. Hill on the phone right away?”

- Yes, doctor.

- Thanks.

- I have Mr. Hill, doctor Woods.

- Thanks. Hello, Jim. Say, Jim, I wondered if you could knock off for just half an hour or so and come over to my office. No, nothing to get upset about. No, I'd rather talk to you here. Fine, Jim. No, don't rush; just come as soon as you can. Oh, and Jim. Do you think you could stop by home and bring your service discharge papers with you? Fine, thanks. Goodbye.”

While Jim was on his way to my office, Nurse Anderson over at the hospital was starting Wendy's blood sugar test.

“Well, Mr. Hill, the doctor is expecting you. Come in.

- Hello, Jim.

- Hello, doctor Woods.

- Glad to see you. Sit down.

- Has something gone wrong with Wendy?

- Well... Just a second, Jim, I'll be right with you. Hello? Yes. Yes, Miss Anderson. 2.75. Yes, I guess that's it. Much obliged.

Now, Jim, I don't want you to be alarmed. This has nothing to do with Wendy's injuries, thank goodness. But a routine urinalysis showed sugar in the urine, and that's a tell-tale sign of diabetes.

- Diabetes? Wendy? It's impossible. Couldn't they have gotten it wrong?

- That's why I had a blood sugar test made for confirmation. That was the hospital on the phone just now.

- Are you gonna tell Wendy?

- Well, of course. She has to know. She has to cooperate with us.

- You know, I... I just can't believe this about Wendy. She seems so well, good appetite, plenty of pep and all.

- Well, then you can thank your lucky stars she was knocked down by that truck yesterday.

- I don't get it.

- Well, if it hadn't been for that accident, I don't think she'd have had a urinalysis for months. You look okay, Jim.

- Sure!

- Did you bring your service discharge papers with you?

- Yes, here they are.

- Thanks. That's good.

- As a matter of fact, I just took out some new insurance last week, passed the exam just fine.

- And that's even better. We'll drop in on Wendy right now.”

“Hello, sweetheart.

- Hello, darling.

- Jim. Something's wrong. I can tell by the look on your face. What is it, doctor?

- Well, we made routine tests of your urine and blood here in the hospital. And both tests show sugar.

- Sugar? What... But that means...

- Yes, diabetes.

- Oh, Jim!
- Now, there, dear.
- Oh, Jim, what are we going to do? I wish we'd never been married.
- Wait a minute, Wendy. I thought you were a sensible girl.
- Doctor, what you don't understand... We wanted children. I know what diabetes means, I know a girl who has it. They told her that... Well, they said she can never have a baby.
- Listen to me, Wendy. You and Jim certainly can have children. The chance of diabetes affecting your children is small. We won't worry about it now.
- Well, I... But I'm still so afraid that...
- Look here. It's a fact that heredity is important in diabetes. Children in diabetic families have a far better chance of winding up with the disease than those in families without it. But the chance is well worth running, unless both parents have the disease. Now, as for you, we know about it soon enough to bring you under good control. You can live in comfort and security, and you certainly can have children, if you cooperate in your treatment.
- I'll try... Oh, my arm hurts.
- Of course, it hurts. But you know, Wendy, that accident was probably the luckiest thing that ever happened to you."

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Strange how surprised I'd been to find diabetes in Wendy. Hardly any symptoms that might have warned me. And yet that's often the case, as 20 years of practice here in Greendale has certainly taught me

Jake Wilson, for example. I never knew Jake was deliberately concealing his symptoms. He let things go so long that Dr Van Borges and I had to take part of Jake's right leg 3 years ago.

And Tommy Higgins just couldn't seem to get a hit anymore. It was breaking his heart. Diabetes often affects eyesight. Tommy's under good control now.

And Emma Thorndike. Anybody could have seen she was a setup for diabetes. It strikes much often among fat people. Emma really hated giving up those chocolates, but it saved her life. It's amazing how suddenly diabetes seems to begin in children. On Thursday, her mother told me little Jenny Barrett began complaining about being tired. She started asking for water every few minutes. A danger signal. Luckily, Mrs. Barrett brought her to me right away.

Jenny's on insulin now and doing well.

Shortly after sending Wendy home, I stopped in to see her. It was on a Saturday.

"Hello, Jim.

- Hello, doctor!
- Hello, Wendy.
- Hello, doctor Woods.
- Well, Jim, how's our patient today?
- She looks okay to me, doctor. But man, oh man, is she ever a hard one to get along with!
- Don't you believe it, doctor. This person just won't follow orders in regard to housework.
- I'll get even with you. Excuse me, doctor, I've got Wendy's lunch on the stove.
- Go right ahead, Jim.
- Put your coat over there, doctor.
- Thanks, Wendy. Now young lady, tell me: just how do you feel?
- Well, I'm still a little sore and stiff but otherwise I'm fine. And Jim has been so considerate.
- It's ready! No need to come and get it! I'll bring it in.
- Oh, you've saved my life. I'm starving!
- You've got the right idea, Jim. But you might let her have just a little bit more.
- OK, doctor.

- Well, I should say so. I guess I just love eating. What's wrong with that anyhow? It wasn't making me fat.
- No, but it was making your diabetes worse. You see, a normal person has plenty of insulin to handle a lot of sugars and starches. But your trouble is that you don't have enough insulin.
- So it stands to reason you have to go light on the starchy stuff.
- That's right, Jim. Insulin is necessary for the proper use of starches and sugars. Now with diabetic people, careful diet and other precautions are a great help. But when they're not enough, we can, thank goodness, call on outside help. And here it is in this little bottle. Insulin. One of the greatest discoveries in medical history. We're starting you off on insulin, Wendy. I don't know whether you'll stay on it or not. Most people do. Your life and happiness are secured as long as we have insulin to give you. You look pretty good. Well, you'd better be getting to your lunch. And I'd better be getting to my other patients."

Wendy was getting along even better than I had expected. She'd gone back to work just a week ago.

"Thank you. Say, you weren't here the last time I came in.

- No, I was home for a few days.
- That's right. My wife was telling me... You had diabetes, wasn't it?
- Well, I... still have it, I guess.
- Well, I'm glad I came in. You didn't know my younger sister Kelly, did you?
- No, I don't believe I did.
- Well, a couple of years ago, they told her she had diabetes. But she didn't pay any attention to what those doctors told her.
- She didn't?
- No, and she got it alright. She just took Witherspoon's Golden Remedy every morning and night right up to the day she died."

Wendy seemed to be getting a lot of free advice. At first, it didn't bother her.

"Why, Wendy!

- Why, Mrs. Barton, how are you? You never did come to see our little place.
- Yes, I know. But I heard about your trouble, my dear, and I didn't want to be getting in the way at a time like this. Diabetes is such a terrible thing.
- Oh, I'm getting along just fine, Mrs. Barton.
- Yes, I know but... You never can tell. Now Mrs. Cameron, she just kept right on going downhill. I don't know how many people I've known that just...
- Dr. Woods says there's nothing to worry about.
- Well, I hope he's right but... Well, goodbye, my dear.
- Goodbye."

Poor Wendy was becoming the target for too much uninformed talk, especially her grandaunt Henrietta's. That old lady was inspecting Wendy's new home for the first time.

"You're going to have a baby.

- Well, I hope so.
- Sit down, my dear. I wanna talk to you. You can't have a baby with diabetes.
- Oh, but I...
- Don't you know you can't have a baby?"

Worried, unhappy and confused, Wendy and her husband Jim came to my office the next afternoon. I guess I laid down the law to them pretty hard. Nothing gets me madder than loose medical talk by people who don't know what they're talking about. It's dangerous. I think I cleared things up pretty well with Wendy and Jim. And they are a sensible pair.

DELIVERY ROOM

Well, the rest of the story goes pretty fast and happily. Jim was nervous there in the waiting room, but it was my pleasure to announce to him that he was the father of a fine little baby boy. My, were they proud on the day they brought the infant Jimmy home for the first time. As Jimmy grew older, Wendy and Jim would have faced anything together for that little child. Jimmy's second birthday rolled around. There's been a couple of others since. Big Jim was always bringing something home for that youngster, seems to me. I made one call on the family back in the chicken pox season when Jimmy was 3. Now that he's a big boy of 4, he and Wendy just drop by occasionally for a checkup. What a sturdy young fellow that Jimmy is. A nice kid too.

Well, that's about all there is to the story I wanted to tell you. The story of Wendy Hill. Oh yes, Wendy is going to have another baby. Her husband Jim doesn't know it yet. He'll know before very long though. He's meeting Wendy and Jimmy downstairs. Yes, I guess the worst thing about trouble is running away from it. Letting fear keep you from doing what you should do. Wendy Hill knows that today. There's no earthly reason, now that we have insulin, why people with diabetes, if they act soon enough, can't live long and happy lives. Lives where they can sometimes do some good for other people too.

“Miss Malone.

- Yes, doctor?

- I guess it's just about time for me to have my own insulin.

- Yes.”

THE END

Transcript: Chloé Bourgogne