

# Quill & Scope

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## 8pm

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8pm

By Rebecca Nguyen

It was 8pm and this patient had a particularly difficult NG tube placement. He couldn't speak and was not happy about our efforts to place the feeding tube.

And then there was me. Scared. An accessory to the team at best. My job was to hold down his arms because he kept trying to pull out the tube. A hand applying pressure at the wrist met resistance and distress. I moved to hold his hand instead and felt him relax. He squeezed my hand lightly and I rubbed my gloved thumb over his.

I was there, connected with this man who was so afraid and so uncomfortable, stuck in this alien place. I only offered another human hand to hold his. Anyone could have done it, but someone needed to do it.

All of the chaos of the universe and clerkship scheduling had put me there to do what any person could. Right then, this man did not need my skills, my story, or any of the countless facts that I had burned into my brain. He just needed me, as a person, to be with him. To be scared with him. To see him. It could have been anyone, but it *WAS* me.

