

New Fairy Tale Brings Light to Life - 02/20/2006

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NEW FAIRY TALE BRINGS LIGHT TO LIFE

(BATON ROUGE, La.) The second book for children by the author of *How Christmas Began* is a sweet and simple tale of a little girl in heaven receiving God's light in preparation for her new life on earth.

But Claire Boudreaux Bateman believes that the conversation between the little girl and God in her second book, *This Little Light of Mine*, could also open a door for parents to discuss difficult issues like death or illness and to teach a gently positive lesson.

In language appropriate for very young children and beautiful watercolor illustrations by Baton Rouge artist Katie Norwood Alexander, the book describes a heavenly setting in which angels are preparing a child for life on earth. As God gives her His beautiful bright light, she worries she may lose it, or not know how to use it. God gently assures her that His light is permanent. The light is simply love.

"You see, little one, I have given my light to everyone," God says. The child is excited to see all of God's love and light on earth, but she is torn. Once she leaves heaven, how can she be sure she will remember Him?

Bateman says *This Little Light of Mine* was inspired in part by the Bible verse that reads, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you" (Jeremiah 1:5). Inspiration came also from a dream she had not long before she discovered that she was pregnant with her second child, Avery Claire, now two years old. Bateman and her husband, attorney David Bateman, also have a nine-year-old son named Drew. After Drew's birth, Bateman endured six years of secondary infertility before she was able to conceive again.

"I tried to get pregnant for a long time after I had Drew," Bateman says. "One night I had a dream, over and over again, that David and I were standing in a long line of people, and there was a man shouting 'Who is next? Who are the parents? It's a girl and we're ready to turn on her light.'" Soon after, she discovered she was pregnant, and nine months later, she had a baby girl.

"It was like Avery Claire had a long talk with God in preparation for her life on earth," Bateman says. The Lake Charles, Louisiana native and self-described "passionate storyteller" was inspired and comforted by the concept of God's involvement in each person's life even before we are born. Her book touches lightly on some of life's struggles, such as illness and disability, but emphasizes that every person has a special gift based on God's light within him or her.

"The main theme is that we all have this incredible gift, this incredible light within us, no matter what. No matter who we are, what we believe, where we come from, this is where we begin," Bateman says.

"This book touches on infertility for me. But I think it gives other parents an opportunity, no matter what issue they are facing – if there is a diversity issue, a health issue, a death – to

address it in their own way,” Bateman says. “It opens the door just ever so slightly. It says two things: that God is involved, and that if we go back to the belief that we all have this light within us, then any problem is approachable. It’s solvable.”

This Little Light of Mine (ISBN 0-978-0-9706732-2, \$18.50) will be released by Shell Beach Publishing in March 2006. It will be available for purchase from the author at www.howchristmasbegan.com (225.766.8807) or locally at Cottonwood Books (Perkins Road), as well as through Barnes & Noble bookstores and online at Amazon.com.

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- Claire Bateman is available for interviews by request
- Advance review copies are available for book reviewers by request