

## **Some fun facts about the Angel Hearts for Jesus books:**

### **Where did the idea come from for the books?**

I had always wanted to write children's books and my original plan was to author a book about a mouse that stumbles upon a lost diamond ring and becomes a millionaire. As I was beginning that process, I was literally awakened out of a sound sleep at 3:00am with a clear voice telling me that I was not to write about the mouse, but about kids loving people and the Lord and that my mom's experiences teaching Sunday school at her local church would offer me plenty of material.

### **How did I find an illustrator?**

I posted the project requirement for an illustrator on an online job site and the response and applications from illustrators poured in, almost supernaturally, from across the country. Most illustrators sent samples of their work and I was able to easily narrow it down to several candidates. When I first connected with Valerie Bouthyette via emails (since I was in MN and she was in NY), we did a test run. I shared part of my manuscript for "The Fashion Show Birthday" and then described the personalities of Macy, Gracie, Felicity, Madison and Ellie. After a few days, Valerie emailed me a first sketch of the 5 girls and when I opened it, I started bawling. The girls in her sketch were exactly what I had pictured in my own brain – but I simply had lacked the talent to create them visually. I knew this was not a coincidence from that moment and she was hired!

### **There's meaning behind the characters:**

Miss Nancy is my mom. She has taught Sunday school at her church for many years in her small hometown. The most incredible thing that happened with the illustrations was that Valerie sketched Miss Nancy with no knowledge of my mom and having never seen her - and yet the illustration actually looks just like her. It's incredible – and another moment that moved me to bawling during the process of creating the first book.

Pastor Pete is my dad and looks like him also – but my dad is not a pastor. In fact, if you know my dad – he is not someone that would do any public speaking of any sort. But, he has a BIG heart like Pastor Pete.

Macy, Gracie, Felicity, Madison and Ellie each possess some of my own character flaws as well as my strengths. For instance, I love clothes, jewelry and food – so there are characteristics of me in both Macy and Gracie. In my lifetime, I have struggled with giving sacrificially as Macy struggles in the first book.

I hate to admit it, but I have always loved to tease my mom. I mean, I can REALLY give her grief. So, I naturally took opportunities to poke fun at her within my books as well. For example, my mom actually bakes a tester cake when she bakes and she used to have my dad and I give it the stamp of approval before she would serve the larger cake to guests. In all the years I've enjoyed my mom's baking, she's never mixed up salt and sugar...so this part of "The Fashion Show Birthday" really gets under her skin and I knew it would. My mom also spills everything on herself, so the Madison character is a tribute to

my mom as well – which also drives her crazy. My mom happens to be a world-class seamstress that designs and sews dresses, wedding dresses, etc. for a living. She is so talented, she has been known to sew 7 or 8 dresses in a day. So, you'll notice that it takes Macy's mom more than 2 months to sew 5 dresses for the party in "The Fashion Show Birthday". Tee hee....love you, Mom!

My husband Frank wanted to make an appearance as a character in my books, so he came on the scene in Book #2, "The Cupcake Celebrities", as Dr. Frank Shepard. He is one of the heroes of the second book, but the best fun fact is that my husband was hugely disappointed when my illustrator sent us the sketch of him and he had no visible muscle tone.

Mrs. Babcia is my husband's beloved grandmother that we lost to cancer before I authored "The Cupcake Celebrities". She is the heroine of "The Cupcake Celebrities" and in this instance, I actually sent my illustrator her photo so she looks just like her. We miss her dearly and we miss her pierogi, too! Yum!

### **Discouragement can kill a dream:**

There have been obstacles that nearly killed these books and my passion for creating and sharing them.

- Christian publishing houses weren't looking for new material and I was forced to self-publish – which is daunting and expensive
- Christian churches showed no interest in my books as I began looking for distribution channels
- Our publisher declared bankruptcy and we lost 1800 finished copies of "A Christmas for Caroline" after full payment had been made for the books

I must admit there have been times when I have viewed my books as a complete failure, but in recent weeks I have come to realize that these books have been one of my life's greatest blessings and they have grown my joy in the Lord abundantly!

My advice to anyone out there facing discouragement – never give up on a mission that you know the Lord has placed on your heart and that stems from love for others. The Angel Hearts for Jesus books have now made it across the US (including Hawaii), the UK, Australia, throughout Africa and Canada and they are continuing to make their way into new places and hearts each day.

### **Making an impact:**

I could probably write a book just on the examples of how these books have impacted our family and others, but here are a few of my favorite quick stories:

- A Minnesota missionary that does God's work in Africa, brought our books to children there and the kids in the village actually performed "The Fashion Show Birthday" as a play for their moms on Mother's Day.
- The year my first book was released, little girls actually showed up at my parents' house on Halloween dressed as some of the characters.

- My dad gave one of the books to a little girl when she was at my parents' house for my mom's sewing services. A year later my dad ran into the same little girl in a restaurant and she ran up to hug him and she actually was carrying the books around with her.

### **A way to share my faith without fear:**

Let's face it, it can be very difficult sharing your faith – even with the people you know the best and you love the most in your life. God, religion, sin, eternity and salvation are topics that make many people feel uncomfortable and most of us avoid having these conversations with the ones we love until it is too late. As a Christian, I know that I cannot truly love someone without caring about where they will spend eternity.

For me, the books have made it easier to simply share how awesome Christ is and how limitless God's love is for His children. It is my prayer that anyone that reads these books will be encouraged and be inspired to seek God out for themselves. He has a plan for your life and none of our paths cross by accident. Miracles happen all around us every day – we only have to open our eyes to them.

[Jeremiah 29:11](#)

**For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.**

A great resource for learning about God and accessing an online Bible: <https://www.biblegateway.com/>

### **Want to help me in this mission?**

If our book series has encouraged and inspired you, please let us know. We'd love to hear from you! If you want to bless others with these books, we'd be happy to ship you some of the books (while supplies last) so you can help share God's love with the world. Once the hard-copy books are gone, we will be perfecting our ebook features so that you may download them for reading on all e-devices from this website. God-willing, there will be many more titles in the years ahead – at least in an electronic version! Email Dee at [dee@angelheartsforjesus.com](mailto:dee@angelheartsforjesus.com) if you want books or need prayer for something in your life. God bless!