

Two Part Book Review

The First Fairy Tale Book I: The Adventure Begins (2018) by Susan Highsmith. Words Matter Publishing. 43 pp. ISBN 13: 978-1-947072-60-2; ISBN 10: 1-947072-60-9.

This story embodies the essence of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology. It is the embryology of conception told in a way that demonstrates the consciousness within each egg, each sperm, and the magnificent Being (called a zygote) that emerges from their union.

A more scientific explanation of this magnificent process is included following the fairy tale. The tale is really enough. We know it by heart.
(Highsmith, 2018, p. ii)

These words are by the author who uses simple sentences and words that children can understand to describe the process of fertilization. The words are magnificently illustrated by Mark Sean Wilson whose creative designs give more understanding to the words with his brilliant colors and artistic renderings.

The adventure begins as an egg waits in “her chamber” with others who also wait to learn which of them will be chosen by the sperm. The egg has been waiting for a lunar month and is the “Chosen One,” who is anxiously awaiting her knight to join her.

What is so beautiful about this fairy tale is it is based on the embryology of conception. A more adult description is at the end of this adventure and is taken from D.M. Fraser and M.A. Cooper (eds.), *Myles textbook for midwives (15th ed.)*.

The reader feels the drama as the egg must be in the right place at the right time for conception. Is the egg prepared to leave its home and travel through the fallopian tube to meet its suitors (sperm)? When the suitors appear, some are trapped in nooks and crannies. Others sail right past the egg. The egg has the power to enable the suitor that is right and defend itself from the others. The egg and sperm fuse together.

This is a fairy tale I will be giving to my children to share with their children when they feel the time is right. It is a magical tale with delicious illustrations that could really help parents with the difficult discussions of how their children managed to get into their mother’s tummy. You will enjoy *The Adventure Begins* and you can decide when it is time to share.

The First Fairy Tale Book II: The Awakening Heart (2018) by Susan Highsmith. Words Matter Publishing. 49 pp. ISBN 13: 978-1-947072-76-3; ISBN 10: 1-947072-76-5.

Fairy tale 2 continues the journey, describing the first three weeks of gestation. As the journeys of egg and sperm were hazardous, so is the next phase of the journey traversed by the beautiful new Being evolving from the union of these two energies. Life is growing at such an accelerated pace! This essential part of development is to be especially treasured and celebrated. (Highsmith, 2018, p. ii-iii)

The egg and sperm have now united and begin to divide and multiply into individual units that will continue to grow continuing to be in contact with the others. Moving through a narrow corridor, in what appears to be a vessel reminiscent of a space capsule, it plunges into an abyss. They must find a place to settle in or they will perish. The first location fails but they find a place full of nourishment that will allow it to grow. Now is a time for rest. The units express their own uniqueness and unite to blend their qualities. Growth continues and the heart begins to beat. And a loving future awaits.

This story “symbolically describes the embryology of the first few weeks after conception which includes implantation, the formation of the heart, and concludes as the heart begins to beat,” (p. iii). At the end of this book, the Epilogue is titled *For Parent’s Eyes Only*. I can understand not sharing with younger children, but there may be a time when the older ones can read and understand it.

At the end of *The Awakening Heart*, the mission to accomplish for this growing body of cells is “*to be love on Earth.*” This is what birth psychology advocates know to be true. We often imagine what our world would look like if children were loved and fed each day. I applaud Highsmith for taking this clinical conception and expressing it as a journey of love and peace. My children will receive these books and as I think about their parenting, I know they will eagerly share with my grandchildren when the time is right.

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