



RAR Episode 47 - How to Read the Classics with Kids (even if you've never read them before)

Sarah: Hey, hey, hey, Sarah Mackenzie here. You've got episode 47 of the Read Aloud Revival. Thank you so much for joining me today. It makes me so happy that you're here and listening. Look, we are rapping another 31-day Read Aloud Challenge at the Revival. It's been a fantastic month. I've so enjoyed watching your kids on Instagram and FaceBook when you post pictures of them reading aloud everyday. The challenge ends tomorrow, May 31, so don't forget to register your kids to win some of our fabulous prizes by heading to RAR31days.com and following the instructions there. If you want to get in on our very next 31-day challenge we have another one coming. We'll be doing it again in October. So make sure you head to RAR31days.com and pop your email into the page there if you're interested in being sent all the information and downloads and prize announcements and all that good stuff when we're getting ready for the October challenge. At the Revival we're doing these 31-day read aloud challenges every January, May and October, because they are completely transformational in the lives of the family who do them. We hear such amazing stories of kids who become fluent readers, who become lovers of books, who whole relationship with reading is transformed by this simple act of them reading aloud every day. If you want in on the fun, head to RAR31days.com so you don't miss that.

Sarah: I had the enormous privilege of meeting today's guest a couple of times. Her name is Gail Ledbetter. And my kids and I got to meet her in Orlando, Florida last fall at an Institute for

Excellence in Writing Retreat. She is a writing instructor for the Institute and I'm a huge fan of everything Andrew Pudewa, the founder of the Institute for Excellence in Writing, does. I was speaking at the Retreat and I got to know Gail just a little bit while I was there. She is ... well, you're going to find out. She's just the kind of encouraging voice of experience that we all crave. And I've found everything she's said to be so uplifting and helpful. So Gail loves history and literature, and thankfully, I'm so glad she does because that interest led her to write a book on just that. Her book is Timeline of ClassicSarah: Historical Context for the Good and Great Books, and it's based on Gail's experience homeschooling her own kids and their beloved library trips to collect wonderful literature. It's a chronically organized index of classics, biographies, and resources divided into four divisions. Wow, I must have been writing that when I was tired, divided into four parts which may sound familiar to those who practice classical education. It's a wonderful resource because as a smart mama Gail organized this book to help educate kids of a variety of ages. We're going to dig into that in just a minute. Gail brings her background in elementary education, her experience as an online writing instructor with the Institute for Excellence in Writing, and her memories educating her own four kids on her grandparent's former dairy farm to us today, and I couldn't be happier to chat with her. So, Gail welcome to the Read Aloud Revival, it is so good to chat with you here.

3:30 Welcome Gail Ledbetter

Gail: Why Sarah, it is great hearing your voice again and it was good running into you a few days ago in South Carolina at a convention again.



Sarah: Yes, at the Great Homeschool Conventions, that was fun. I kind of forgot that was the conference you would be at, and so I was so happily surprised when I got to give you a hug.

Gail: Yes, well, I was happy one of my children got to meet you. So you actually met my oldest. I have four children, girl, boy, girl, boy, and the one you met is now 25 years old.

Sarah: I didn't realize that.

Gail: So, our kids are getting old on us. They're 25, 21, 18, and 16.

Sarah: Wow.

Gail: I can tell you that time has gone way too fast.

Sarah: Oh, I bet.

Gail: Absolutely.

Sarah: So, tell us a little bit about your own homeschooling days. Did you always homeschool your kids, or?

Gail: Actually, I did. I had spent all of my adult life as a public school teacher, and so when I had my own family, I just wanted that privilege of teaching my own children how to read and I started homeschooling and never stopped. And so, I've been a stay-at-home mom for well over 20 years now, and I've homeschooled all of them the entire way. The oldest one is out of college now and we've got another one about to graduate from high school, so that will leave me next year with just one more to go.

Sarah: Yeah, and that's gotta be a different dynamic than having four students down to one.

Gail: It is. And you know, they always need us no matter what's going on in their lives, even with

that said, I always read out loud to my kids and I think it's kind of interesting that even my oldest son, he's 21 and my 16 year old son, they still, we still read together. People are coming and going but there's always room for a Grimm's Fairy Tale or some funny Patrick McManus chapter.

5:50 Big library trips

Sarah: Yep, yeah. So, I know one of the things you've mentioned before is that one of your favorite things in homeschooling were these big library trips with your kids. Tell us about those.

Gail: Oh yes, well, for about 17 years I drove a 15-passenger van.

Sarah: That's what I drive.

Gail: I mean, you can't beat them for good camping trips, play dates, and all that good stuff, but we would load up and go to the library and any good mom, you walk in there and there are so many choices you just... I was just... when my kids were little it was pretty easy to find good stuff to read with them but as they got older it just became a little unnerving, to walk in there with all of that...

Sarah: Yeah, mm hmm.

Gail: And so, it got to a place where I thought 'wow, I've got to do something to clarify what we're walking into when we walk into the library. And so, I didn't actually get onto this idea of assembling a book list really until my oldest daughter entered high school, or she was about to enter high school. And so, it just occurred to me that I needed to keep a book list for her, her reading list, but you know I didn't really have any way to really go about that. And so, over time I just, as I assembled her list of studies, I thought, 'wow, I've got a high schooler who is, you know,



a high schooler, a middle school child, an elementary child who can read, and a toddler who cannot read'...

Sarah: Yeah.

Gail: ...but yet, we wanted to use good, quality, you know, literature, you know, good classics to drive our studies, and so it just turned into, "OK, let's find something for everybody so that we can talk about World War I together" you know, all at the same time. And so...

Sarah: I love that because that has been one of the struggles that I have. A lot of homeschooling resources that are broken down by historical time period are really helpful but some of them assume, you know, a particular age, like all elementary school, which is, I understand why they do it, but as a homeschooling mom it's very ... it requires a lot of leg work for me to have to find things for my young students and find things for my high schooler, and I love the way you've organized your booklist, is in a way that makes it so your whole family has discussions and reading time together. It has the same conversation basically, as having a conversation about the same time period together.

Gail: Well, exactly. And you know you'll have to remind me of the ages of your family, but it just, where you are now is exactly where I was.

Sarah: Yes! Well, it is because my oldest is about to be a freshman in high school, so she's a, she's finishing 8th grade, and then, so she's 14, and then we have a 12 year old, a 10 year old, a four and a half year old, and two and half year olds, twin two and half year olds. So we have from my daughter who is about, we're about to start homeschooling her high school years, you know, to all the way down to toddler.

Gail: Yes, well, see I am a twin, but I don't have twins.

Sarah: Oh, I didn't know you were a twin.

9:20 Keeping your wits about you at the library

Gail: Yes, I have a twin brother. But so, it was a challenge to go in and you know, keep my wits about me, walking into a library...

Sarah: Yeah.

Gail: So, as I started finding resources for all of us to use, I just didn't want to work that hard for the next one in line. And so, I just started, really, one source at a time, just putting it down, what it was that we were using, whether it was audio books or, you know, of course the classic literature that I was having my oldest daughter use, or just whatever we could find, picture books, whatever we came across. And of course, we are huge fans of Jim Weiss, our good story telling friend from Virginia, but Jim, I was actually, we've run into him a number of times over the years and I said to him once, I actually took him a copy of Timeline of Classics because I wanted him to know that we had indexed all of his audio work inside of Timeline of Classics.

Sarah: Oh, I didn't realize that. How cool.

Gail: All of his stuff is in there. It's just one of those other good, wonderful resources that any mom, you know, who found herself the way you and I have, you know, we want to pick good things and we want to use good quality stuff, whether it's an audio presentation like what Jim does, or whether it's some movie, you know, that's been made over a piece of classic literature, I would say to hands down To Kill a Mocking Bird with Gregory Peck, you know, you



just ... my family by far that's our all time favorite, but Jim said to me when he took one look at this Timeline of Classics he said, "A pearl is formed out of a single grain of sand, and it can some be like a some type of irritation or some lack in our lives that cause us to take action and do something" ...

Sarah: Yeah.

Gail: ...and I thought, 'you know, he's exactly right,' because I was irritated.

Sarah: Right. You didn't have something you needed.

11:30 A Ledbetter Family favorite

Gail: I didn't have a guide, yes. And, in fact, one of our very favorite books we ever did, was one of our first ones that we just loved. I'm sure my books look like some of yours, they are shopworn, they've been through the wringer at the house, they've got tear stains on them, some of them have pool water marks...

Sarah: Yes, exactly!

Gail: ...this one book, I remember it was our all-time favorite, and then the next time I went to this publisher's catalog to plan for the next year, they had taken this book out.

Sarah: Oh, sad.

Gail: I was like, "No!"

Sarah: So Jim Weiss, for our listeners, was on our Read Aloud Revival, way back at the very beginning, episodes 4 and 5. In fact, that was an hour and 45 minute conversation originally. We just could not stop, it was just so much fun.

Gail: Oh, I bet. I understand.

Sarah: So, we ended up breaking it up into two podcasts. And he gave us a lot of tips and tricks for reading aloud, and then had so many words of encouragement for parents who are making time and space to share stories with their kids. And so, if you're looking for those, and would like to listen to him and find out why Gail loves him so much, and we all love him so much, head to readaloudrevival.com and click on episode 4 and episode 5.

13:00 Overwhelmed by the Classics

Sarah: A lot of parents get a little overwhelmed by the classics. I'm one of them. In fact I did not read a ton of classics as a child but I feel like a lot of parents feel the same way I do. A little overwhelmed, a little bit like we don't know where to start, maybe a little unworthy of sharing this with our children, so what are some things you've learned in your years studying the classics with your kids?

Gail: Well, I have to say that I was in the same boat, if not worse, as a child growing up I don't remember anyone reading to me, reading out loud, certainly I went to school, I did what I was supposed to do, I worked really hard in school, but really, I didn't read well. I wouldn't consider myself a good reader. I was very slow and I just, you know, comprehension when you fall asleep in a book and you don't remember what you've just read, well, that was me. So, I think I mentioned that I grew up on a farm, so you know, there was so much to do outside, that I would rather, I didn't want to stick my nose in a book and be in the house, I wanted to be outside...

Sarah: Right.



Gail: ... you know, where all the animals and activity was going on. So for me, I really did not get a fire lit under me about classic literature until I was a schooling parent myself.

Sarah: OK.

Gail: And so, I was ... not in high school, not in college, you know, not even, well, I was a public school teacher so I did read, of course I read to my students but until I really got doing homeschooling with my own family, that is when I got onto the whole idea of using living, real books, classic literature, to teach history. And I thought, 'Oh, that's quite a thought' but of course, I had no idea how to go about it, until I got my hands on Teaching the Classics by Adam and Missy Andrews.

Sarah: Yay, another favorite from us here.

Gail: Yes, absolutely, yes.

Sarah: So, let me just interrupt for a second for our listeners...

Gail: Sure.

Sarah: ... there's another episode you can listen to. Adam Andrews was my very second guest at the Read Aloud Revival and he told us all about how you can talk to your children about books even if you don't feel very well versed in literature yourself, and so you can listen to that one at readaloudrevival.com, look for episode 2 with Adam Andrews.

Gail: Absolutely. Well, I tell a story when I talk to moms, I'm an exhibitor for Excellence in Writing, so I get to talk to a lot of folks, a lot of families, and I tell them if my house catches fire, I'm going to break the window and there are two things that are going out first, one is my Teaching Writing Structure and Style, you know, instruction, you

know teacher training course from IEW, and second right behind it, is Teaching the Classics by Adam Andrews...

Sarah: Oh, that is so good.

Gail: You know, seriously, because once you get the ideas that Adam and Missy have put forth in their course, it's so simple to pick up a children's book and recognize all the elements of fiction, they're all there. I would even back up and say in Excellence in Writing we do something called "The Story Sequence Chart" or discussing narrative stories and then how to write about them. Of course, we're all about composition. So those two things have really given me the how-to about how to go about writing, not only writing about literature but discussing books with our kids and not being fearful of doing so.

Sarah: So you didn't read a lot of classics as a child either, so you've been sort of learning along with your children.

Gail: Absolutely.

17:00 Studying history chronologically

Sarah: So tell me why you studied history chronologically with your kids?

Gail: Well, I would say that, not necessarily did I study history chronologically with them, however, if you walk in my house you will see all of my bookcases are arranged chronologically...

Sarah: Are they really? That is so impressive!

Gail: I have to tell you I have shelves, you know how we all are, we have so many books in our home, but there, all our shelves are arranged chronologically, and really, that's just so we can find things.



Sarah: Oh yes.

Gail: But I am not the first one, I've talked to lots of people who do that, but for me, not only did I not read a lot growing up, I had absolutely no concept of history. Really and truly I didn't understand when the Romans occurred, who was first the Vikings, it was all a jumble in my head. And so, I would say I didn't necessarily teach history chronologically as much as I wanted to have a resource that gave us a point of reference to when happened in history.

Sarah: I see. Got it.

Gail: And so, placing that high schoolers book list in chronological order, that just filled a need for myself, really, for filling in my ignorance.

Sarah: I like that. We actually don't really study history completely chronologically, some years it works out a little more chronological than others, but I do find myself in a time period of history and needing a good book list for that particular time period, so...

Gail: Exactly. Well, that was us. We started this whole project when we were working through American history and I literally had a friend come over to visit once and she was in my school room and saw, and you know how we all nose through our friend's stuff to see what they have to see what they have if there's something that we need, you know...

19:00 How Timeline of History Began

Sarah: There's nothing more fun for a home schooling mom, either, than being at another home school mom's house and being able to dig through her curriculum shelves and see what's there.

Gail: Exactly. Right. How do you like this? Really, so I had a friend over one day and she saw this thing on my table, and she said, "Gail, what is this? Where did you get it? And I want one." And I said, "Well, it's a book list, I made it, and I'll make you a copy." That was my answer.

Sarah: I love it.

Gail: So, you know, literally that's where it started. And she is the one who persisted, I was like, I will make you a copy, and she said, no no, I mean you need to share this, you need to do something with this and publish it. I was like, "You're kidding. I don't have time for that." You know.

Sarah: Of course.

Gail: So, but she really encouraged me to, she said, "If I found this and I need it, and you've made it because you need it, imagine how many more people might find it useful." So, I just kept going until we made our way through all of modern history and then we went back to the ancients, and made our way back through renaissance, reformation, and kind of made full circle. But this project was more about making a framework for history through the classic literature, that's really where it started.

Sarah: I love it. So explain for our listeners, it's not just a booklist. There are other resources and explanations inside. So let's talk about those

20:30 Not just a booklist

Gail: Well, as I said, we often would go to the library, and I had the master list of, you know, what we were working on, however much of it we had done at that time, and so I would have preselected a few titles of classic literature, say if we were studying World War I, or whatever it



might be, then I would already have a few things in mind that I was going to check out from the library, but I would say to the kids, you know, they all had a library card, and I said, “OK, we’re working on World War I, go see what you can find” and just let them loose. And I tell you, it was a good thing we drove a 15-passenger van because ...

Sarah: You need the extra room for books.

Gail: ... we would come home with so much stuff. But literally, our resource is divided, every piece of information in here, every resource that’s here is indicated whether it’s useful for a high school student, a middle school student, or an elementary, or all the above. So there’s a designation on there so we might find reference materials, we might find not only books that were classic literature, but there was a ... I’m looking through the actual book right now to see if I can find a sample for you ... but as I said, we have put Jim Weiss, we’ve indexed his work in here, his audio work, we’ve also indexed another of our favorite audio persons, which is Jim Hodges, he recorded all of the GA Henty books, those historical fiction, so all of that is in there. I’ve mentioned movies, those are in there. There’s another resource, I have to say, I was pretty well trying to make life as easy as I possibly could for a mom in our situation with a house full of kids, trying to not split our brain too badly, you know, but study together. So I found another resource that I indexed within Timeline of Classics and it’s something called Compact Classics.

22:50 Compact Classics

Sarah: Oh, I’ve never heard of that.

Gail: Yeah, these are, you may have heard of the second name they were published under was called The Great American Bathroom Book.

Sarah: Oh, hilarious. OK.

Gail: The Great American Bathroom Book, but really what they are a Compact Classics, there are three volumes of these books, and literally, the idea is that in a two page summary you could look at, I have all three of these volumes, and they are falling to pieces. My family, kids used to fight over these things, but literally, I just open the page to Oliver Twist but Charles Dickens, so on two pages here you have an entire quick list of the characters, the setting, a brief story overview and just on two pages. So, if you’re like me and you get all of your Shakespeare confused, you know...

Sarah: Yeah, yeah.

Gail: ... characters, and plot, and all of that, this was just a very helpful thing for me, not only as a schooling parent but also as a teacher, so Compact Classics, so if you in our resource Timeline of Classics if you see a reference underneath a title to Compact Classics, then it tells you exactly which volume and which page number it comes, so I was trying to make my life easy, and not have to go, you know, search and go which one of these books is that in?

Sarah: Yeah, that’s fantastic.

Gail: So that’s another helpful thing that was in there. So.

Sarah: So, you showed me briefly at the convention, you showed me the Reader Response Journaling, and I was so excited when you were describing this. So, I know it’s kind of hard to describe without being able to show people on an audio podcast, but let’s give it a



whirl, because I think people will be really interested.

25:00 Reader Response Journaling

Gail: Sure. Absolutely. Well, over time I have been a co-op teacher and I've also taught online, and in my Literary Analysis Classes we would literally take a 50 cent little composition book from, you know, Target, and that was what we used to be, I don't, I guess you could call it a commonplace book, or just a journal, to journal about literature. And so, we had a system of journaling that was very simple. It was very easy to do, I, later, I had done it for years with my own kids at home, but didn't realize that it really was a thing. You know. So I've heard it called a dialectical journal or a reader response journal but basically, in a nutshell, it's a way to do vocabulary study, if you're going through a book like *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens, or Mark Twain, any number of these classic authors that we all love, you're going to wear yourself out look up vocabulary.

Sarah: Yeah, exactly. Totally, that's exactly true.

Gail: Yeah, so, I just trained my kids and my students to do vocabulary study. We at IEW teach a study skill called Key Word Outlining, and that's another thing we were able to incorporate into these reader response journals is simply a telling back, similar to what you would do like along the Charlotte Mason narration idea.

Sarah: OK.

Gail: Of telling back what you just read in a chapter. So, on one page, really, on one page spread in our notebook, we would have vocabulary, we would have a quickie retelling or narration about this chapter right there, in key

word outline form, and then I would also have my students look for what we call notable quotes and literary devices. So as I had, would ever start a literary analysis class, we would go through the teaching classics, the Adam Andrews ideas of what are literary devices and how are they used and how effective they are on us as the reader, and how these awesome classic authors are such masters at using those. So my students would pick out as they're reading they've got to find these things in their readings, and so this journal really is just a way to make them slow down, teach them to annotate a book and to really, really enjoy the wonderful words that were put forth, you know, because so many times we can fly through a book, and read for speed. You know these books of classic literature they are not meant to be taken so fast.

Sarah: It's different than the other kind of reading our kids do.

Gail: Exactly. Yeah. We have, I will also mention I do have a website for Timeline of Classics. I actually had this up long ago before I even knew about Excellence in Writing, so I'm in the process of changing it over all to a new format, so timelineofclassics.com...

Sarah: I didn't know that.

28:30 Finding Gail's work on the internet

Gail: Yes, we have even more information there, more specific to the product, or the project of Timeline of Classics. Yeah, it's timelineofclassics.com...

Sarah: Perfect. OK, so tell us some of your family's favorite read alouds, books you all



shared together when they were younger, when your kids were younger.

28:50 Favorite read-alouds

Gail: OK. Well, definitely when they were young we shared a lot from fairy tales, Hans Christian Andersen, the Grand, and it's kind of fun that my children have come full circle and that's still what they like for me to read with them. But we always had our, you know Where the Red Fern Grows and we got into, as they grew older, we got into the Mark Twain's and the Adventures of Tom Sawyer, of course, The Prince and the Pauper. But I may have mentioned earlier that recently one of my parents was in the hospital and so on Easter Sunday I took my 18 year old daughter with me to go to the hospital to go visit, and I found it very interesting, she grabbed a book off the shelf because she wanted to read to her grandma in the hospital.

Sarah: Oh.

Gail: Yes, and so, I thought it was very interest, she grabbed The Farmer Boy by Laura Ingalls Wilder. I mentioned that I have four children, two boys and two girls, well my kids when they were young, were often drawn to any book that had four kids in it.

Sarah: Yes, yes! I see my kids being attracted to, in fact, we have at the Read Aloud Booklist, we love Booklist. We have a whole category for kids who are in big families, and that was born out of the fact that my children love reading books about kids with lots of, you know, older kids that have to take care of toddlers, and have to help, just a big family life dynamic because of course they want to relate to other kids who are like them.

Gail: Well, exactly. So as my kids were growing up, a lot of the time they enjoyed The Boxcar Children, there were four kids, you know, two boys, two girls, and in this Farmer Boy story, this is the story of Almanzo Wilder who later became Laura's husband, but in this story, their parents had left home for a week, and the four kids had to take care of the home, you know, the animals, all of the chores, everything, and it was very fun because this is just a hilarious chapter, it's called "Keeping House" and my daughter read to this to my parents in the hospital and they were in stitches, just literally... and you know, often, there'd be nurses stopping by looking...

Sarah: I love it.

Gail: I think we're in a heart ward of a hospital and there are people stopping going, "Why are you laughing?"

Sarah: Oh, that's too great...

Gail: So, yeah, so we always had our favorites. One of our favorite things to do I've mentioned a few times we live on a farm so there's always chores so as often as possible we would have books on tape so that we could keep whatever we were having to do we could listen to the story and keep talking, you know, and stop, and rewind or whatever, so once we had a chore that had to be done, and it took forever to do, which was to stain the porch around our farmhouse.

Sarah: Oh my goodness, I bet.

Gail: So this porch goes all the way around the entire house and so we were on the tallest part of the whole thing, we are, you know, we've got scaffolding in the back of a pickup truck, we're 20-30 feet off the ground...

Sarah: Oh my word...



Gail: ...so we're listening to Tarzan of the Apes.

Sarah: Oh my goodness, I love it.

Gail: ... and so the CD messed up about halfway through, of course we're not done with our work yet, and so, my youngest child he runs and grabs a yard chair, you know a lawn chair, he picks up the book, and he's definitely volunteers to be the one to read aloud.

Sarah: Oh yes because when he reads aloud he does not have to do the staining, right?

Gail: Yes, he didn't have to do the work.

Sarah: Oh that's too great.

Gail: So, we definitely have our favorites. To Kill a Mocking Bird that was definitely at the top, and I have girls too, so anything by Jane Austen, you know, is going to be in the top of their favorites list.

33:00 Reading aloud with older teens

Sarah: And, you read a lot to them. Do you still, you said you have a 16 year old and 18 year old still at home, right? So do you still read to them?

Gail: I try as I hard as I can. You know, once they are out and once they get jobs and they're out working and ...

Sarah: Yeah, it's hard...

Gail: ... being social, yeah, it gets very difficult, but yes we still do as much as possible and we still share a movie night every now and again, and so, it's so fun once they get older when you know you've given them a literary education, you know, as best you can in their young ages. My sons were watching one of the last, I think, batman movies that came out in recent years, and there was a scene at the end and it was like

at a cemetery, and they took one look at me because the quote that was being said at the eulogy was straight from the final scene of, which book was it?, a Tale of Two Cities. And my boys took one look at me and they went, "We know where that's from" ...

Sarah: Oh that's so, I love it, oh my goodness

Gail: ...who would have thought Charles Dickens and Batman, you know.

Sarah: Exactly. You never know when they're going to make those connections.

Sarah: And what I love about that is 'cause you never really know when your kids are out of your home and living their adult lives, you never know what's going to trigger that memory of a book you shared with your kids or a book that they read during their childhood.

Gail: That is exactly true. Many years ago I had first, when I first had, I guess the first prototype you would say of Timeline of Classics I was out at a small convention and I was giving a workshop, and I was excited, this is my first time to get to share, you know, Timeline of Classics and I opened a book and started to read a quote, and it was just to introduce my talk. And I had no idea of the power of, that this literature had over me, and the memories with my children and I started weeping just about...

Sarah: Oh gosh, yeah.

Gail: ...because it was so special. But this was one of the very first books that we read together talking about the Oregon Trail when the westward expansion, and to this day, this book is still very dear to us, but, yeah, who knew?

Sarah: What is it?

Gail: It's called, Patty Reed's Doll.



Sarah: I don't know that one.

Gail: It's called The Story of the Donner Party. It's by Rachel Laurgaard, and it's not a very huge book but it's one of those favorites that we read early on when we first, I definitely remember having a toddler in the little swimmys, what are those things, water wings, you know, yeah, this is one of those books that has splashes from the pool...

Sarah: Oh, that's great, yeah.

Gail: ... so

Sarah: Oh, that's so funny. Yeah we listened to the audio books, The Little House on the Prairie audio book series read by Cherry Jones on, when my kids were four, six, and eight, and we moved to the other side of the state, and we were doing a lot of back and forth, we were finding a house, and kind of coming back and forth, and every time, it's a six or seven hour drive from where we used to live to where we are now, and so every time we were in the car we were listening, and my oldest is, that was eight years ago. Was it eight years ago? No, it would have been six years ago, so it hasn't even been that long, but it still makes me nostalgic when I hear Cherry Jones reading, from when my older kids were younger. I can only imagine I'm going to be a wreck my kids are, like, you know, 15 years, 20 years from now, and I hear these audio books again, because they really do, I can picture Washington State out my car window, I can remember funny things my kids would say, and it just brings back this flood of memories, so it's really a gift, isn't it, to be able to share these kids, or share these books with our kids and make these kinds of memories?

Gail: Well, absolutely. I will say, I will make another reference back to Jim Weiss. We had, there were some books that I just thought, am I

going to really do this with my children, or am I just going to shy away from this book, 'cause there was one that I had just vowed to myself that I would never read to my kids, and that was Frankenstein, by Mary Shelley, I just thought, um, I think I'm just gonna pass on that one...

Sarah: Yeah.

Gail: But I am a big fan of you know, previewing a book before I cover it with my children or let them listen to it, so I picked up an audio version at our library, you know, there again, and got home, or driving home and we stick it in the CD player of the van, and it's Jim Weiss, oh my goodness, it's him, he was the one reading this book, and so I thought, well if it's worthy of his time, it's most definitely worthy of mine.

Sarah: Exactly.

Gail: Yeah, so. But, it's so funny how the connections you remember where you were, you almost remember what your kids, how small they felt in your lap, you know, when they were little, you know you're reading with them, all these things matter, they really matter.

38:20 One more nugget of advice

Sarah: So good. Well, thank you so much for coming on this show. But before we go, I have one last, I just want to ask you for one last thing. What, if you could just tell our listeners, anyone who might still be feeling a little bit nervous about diving into classics, or a little bit intimidated, maybe just, they feel like they're just getting started on the journey of reading with their kids, you know, reading even harder books or different books than they read as children, what kind of one little bit of a nugget do you want them to take home today?



Gail: Well, I would say, it's never too late, you know, just get started. Really and truly, if you just take the next step.

Sarah: I love that, just take the next step no matter where you are, so good.

Gail: Right.

Sarah: Thank you so much Gail, and we are all so appreciative of your work, and we'll have links to everything in the show notes, so if you are wondering about any of the books Gail mentioned, either the literature books she read with her kids or any of the resources that she recommends, they'll all be in the show notes, so head to readaloudrevival.com, and click on episode 47.

39:30 Let the Kids Speak

Sarah: Now it's time for Let the Kids Speak. This is my favorite part of the podcast, where kids tell us about their favorite stories that have been read aloud to them.

Child 1: My name is Ella. I live in Montana. I am five years old. My favorite book to read aloud is Laura and Mary, the Little House books.

Mom: But what do you like about the Little House books?

Child 1: The dug out, and how the kids can climb up the roof.

Child 2: My name is Bennett, I am four years old. I live in Montana. My favorite book that mommy reads to me is all the Laura and Mary books because of Laura.

Child 3: G'day, I'm in Plumbuck, Australia. My name is Cox. I am six. My favorite read aloud is

The Green Ember. My favorite invention is Pickett and Homer.

Child 4: Hi, I'm Xavier, and I'm from Minnesota and I'm five years old. My favorite book is The Wizard of Oz and my favorite part is when she throws water at the witch, and wolves came and the tin man hits them with his axe.

Child 5: Hi, my name is Julia, and I'm seven years old, I live in Texas, and my favorite book is the Bible. I have read it to myself, I read it a lot, and I just really enjoy it, and, I also enjoy the Boxcar Children Series, but my most favorite book is the Bible.

Child 6: Hi, my name's Judah, and I'm six years old, and I live in Texas, and my favorite book is Tum Tum and Nutmeg, and I like it because the General has eleven adventures. He forgets about his wife, and also, I like it because there's a Lucy and I feel sometimes he has good ideas. Lucy, I like the way she talks.

Child 7: Hi, my name is Simon and I'm four years, and I live in Texas, and my favorite book is the Seven Silly Eaters.

Mom: Why do you like it?

Child 7: Because it's fun to read, and I like how other people, I like the way that people talk, and I like their names.

Child 8: Hi, my name is Lacy and I'm five years old, and I live in California, and I'm gonna say my favorite book is The Princess Who Never Laughed because at the end she, Goofy tries to hold a cow, and she really laughs the hardest.

Child 9: My name is Damien, and I live in Missouri, and my favorite book is Two Towers, the second book in the Lord of the Rings, and I



like it because it's adventurous and exciting and intense.

Sarah: Lots of messages today. I love those, keep 'em coming kids, I love this part of the show, and I get so excited when I can put so many of your Let the Kids Speak messages here on air. Everybody loves to hear what your kids are reading, so if your kids want to participate, head to readaloudrevival.com, scroll to the bottom of that page, and leave your message there. It's easy and quick and we love it when you do. We've got good things happening at the Revival, all summer long, so be sure you don't miss out on any of our outstanding authors we'll be hosting at Author Access Events like Andrew Clements, he's the author of *Frindle*, that's a family favorite around here, so funny, and I saw someone on Instagram had taken my recommendation to read it, and said all of her kids loved it, it's so fun. Jennifer Holm is going to be here this summer, she's the writer of *Our Only May Amelia*, which we loved, and the very beloved *Baby Mouse* graphic novel series. If you don't know them you should probably peek at them and see what you think. Your kids will probably love them, among several others, she's going to be on as well. And a few others, a few other authors. So we have a summer full of authors to inspire your kids. We also have a brand new master class we're offering called *Ancients to Zoology: Teaching History and Science Through Story*, taught by none other than Pam Barnhill. So it's going to be a good summer and you'll be kept up to date on all the good things happening at the Revival if you sign up for our emails, they go out every Tuesday morning and they keep you in the know, so head to readaloudrevival.com and pop your email into the page there so you don't miss out. That's all

she wrote for today, thank you so much for listening, until next time friends, go build your family culture around books.