



The Golden Age of Children's Books, Carole Joy Seid

"... you burn them out, they will never love literature, that will make it the kiss of death. We want them to fall in love with books first."

Sarah: You're listening to the Read Aloud Revival podcast. This is the podcast that inspires you to build your family culture around books.

Hey, hey, hey, Sarah Mackenzie here with episode 51 of the Read Aloud Revival podcast. So, if you're not following the Read Aloud Revival on Instagram, you should do that! My favorite thing to do is to give away books on Instagram. I get a little addicted to it. My team has to, kind of, rein me back. So, make sure you're checking us out. We're just at Read Aloud Revival on Instagram, and you can follow the official account and I share my favorite books and then of course, we do giveaways. You can get our 2017 calendar for what's happening at the Read Aloud Revival next year. That's up and ready for you at ReadAloudRevival.com. To say I'm excited about 2017 is the understatement of the century! I decided about a year, maybe longer than that, ago to go all in at the Read Aloud Revival and it has been the best decision. This has been so much fun for me. And I cannot wait to see what our community does together in 2017. You can check out the calendar, see the authors we're having coming up, Master Classes we have coming up, all the good stuff, just good stuff. You'll have to go check it out to see for yourself- ReadAloudRevival.com, that's where you can see it. I don't want to keep you any longer because today's guest radiates joy and enthusiasm. You're going to adore her. If you haven't heard her already you're going to love her by the end of this episode. Let's go find out why.

Today's guest first joined us on episode 22 of the Read Aloud Revival podcast and we have heard from so many of you that she put your hearts at ease. I am thrilled to welcome back Carole Joy Seid. Carole is a well-loved speaker and consultant who helps parents make homeschooling and raising children simple and enjoyable and affordable. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts and a Master's Degree in Education and has taught in pre-school, elementary, and junior high classrooms in both public and Christian schools. And, of course, she's a veteran homeschooler. At the heart of Carole's educational philosophy is a simple idea: books, books, and more books. And today she is joining us to talk about the golden age of children's literature. Carole, thank you so much for joining us again, we are thrilled to have you.

3:30 A little more about Carole

Carole: Oh, I am more thrilled to be here. Thank you, Sarah.

Sarah: Well, refresh our memories a bit or for those who haven't heard episode 22 yet, and tell us a bit about your family and your work.

Carole: Well, we were blessed with just one son, which was a heart break at the time. But God had wonderful plans. He's now pastoring and has soon-to-be four small children that are just the most delightful things in the world. And ...

Sarah: Not that you're partial or anything!

Carole: Yeah, right! Exactly! And, they are well-read and being read to, I should say, they can't read yet. But they're well-read children. And the ministry that the Lord, kind of, threw me into just came out of teaching women's Bible studies and mentoring younger moms than myself, even just a couple of years younger at that the time, and



just opened the doors for me to begin speaking nationally about my passion for books, and reading aloud to children and how that can just change your children's character, their intelligence, their spiritual destiny, and it's just like a fire burning in my bones and I've been doing it about 29 years now. I started when I was 12, so it's been a wonderful, wonderful ride. And as you know, Sarah, when you can reproduce a vision in other families and then they take it and run with it, you feel like 'wow, that is a life well lived.'

Sarah: Yeah.

Carole: 'I can die at peace.'

5:00 The Golden Age of Children's Literature

Sarah: Exactly, exactly. So we are going to talk about the golden age of children's books. Tell us about that. What is the golden age, when was it, and just give us a little history on that.

Carole: Well, some people, I mean everyone has an opinion on that, some people feel that it was really kind of early in the century, around the turn of the century, like Beatrix Potter's era, Wind in the Willows, A. A. Milne's era. For example, Edith Nesbit was writing in the 1900's, 1902.

Sarah: OK, yes.

Carole: Peter Rabbit was written in 1902, also Little Princess 1905, Wind in the Willows 1908, so Pooh was written 1926 though and then Little House 1932, but for me, personally, Sarah, although we're going to talk about some of those books if you don't mind, I really feel that there was a wonderful period right after World War I and into World War II, that that is one of my favorite periods of children's literature. It just, I think the idea of family stories really came into it,

a lot of wonderful history books were written in that period. Children were not being preached to. It wasn't this goody two shoes writing. That literally was a character before the Victorian era. Goody Two Shoes was her name if you can just picture that.

Sarah: I'm sure very inspiring to these children!

Carole: The children were probably burning the book when their parents went out. But it was, 'Gag me' It was just they were always sermonizing and laying a trip on children that if they don't practice the Sabbath bears were going to come out of the woods and eat them and things. And so that was the early years of childhood writing for kids and then someone like Louisa May Alcott came along during the civil war and wrote a book that treated children with respect as Charlotte Mason would have been so happy about, that she treated children as though they were intelligent and were not to be spoken down to. And so she really changed the era and the way that people wrote children's books. Louisa May Alcott really did that, and it came out of her father's philosophy, Bronson Alcott. He was friends with Thoreau and Longfellow and everybody, and they all lived in Massachusetts together. But then as the years wore on some great stuff came out of England, but then when America really jumped on the band wagon, I feel was more after World War I, where we started writing some of my favorite children's books. So can I just jump in and start talking about some authors?

Sarah: Oh please do. Yes.

7:45 Carole just jumps right in!

Carole: OK, great. So, I thought I'd start with someone who is just in my ... like when I get to



Heaven I am just going to look for her. Her name is Eleanor Estes.

Sarah: Oh yes!

Carole: You're familiar with her, I'm sure. Some of your listeners may not be. She was raised in Connecticut and her dad worked for the railroad and her mother was a dress maker. And when she was a married woman she got Tuberculosis and was...and was put to bed basically. And during that time she wrote a book about her own childhood, really. But did it in such a creative and zesty way and that was her first book, and it was called *The Moffats* and it was based on her childhood, she set it in a fictional town called Cranberry, but she based it on her life, her brothers and sisters, and her mother being a dressmaker and her dad died when she was a little girl. So, really based on her own childhood.

Sarah: I didn't realize it. I love that book but I did not realize it was based on her childhood. How incredible!

Carole: Isn't that great? I love knowing details like that, and telling children. Because children, the number one question they always ask is what? "Is this true?" So I love when we can give kids some information about the authors and the illustrators, it makes it more personal, you know, for our kids. So, she wrote a series of books on *The Moffat Family*, and my favorite is *The Middle Moffat*, that I consider one of the greatest childhood books of all time, but the book that I think really stands out in terms of being a groundbreaking book is her book, *The Hundred Dresses* where she talks about, what we would now call, maybe, bullying or a child peer pressure or being dependent. Urie Bronfenbrenner talks about that dependency, going down to that preschool level that we make when children are around their

peers more than their parents what happens in that, kind of... Urie Bronfenbrenner calls it social contagion that takes place from peer pressure even down into the preschool level. And that's really what the book is about, and it is the most beautifully written, simple, profound book. So, I love her. She won the Newbery Award. It so often happens, Sarah, a lot of times an author wins the Newbery Award years after she should have, or he should have, and so I think she won it for *Ginger Pie* which is a darling book, but she should have won it for *The Middle Moffat* in my opinion, or *The Hundred Dresses* but sometimes you earn a medal just out of honoring you for your lifelong accomplishments.

Sarah: Interesting, yeah, that's good to know. That makes a lot of sense when I kind of look at Newbery Awards and think, 'but their other book was better than this one even.'

Carole: Exactly!

Sarah: Yeah, yeah.

Carole: Because maybe they weren't that aware of it back then but then it rose to the top and they're like "wow, we kind of missed it" so then they start to pay attention to that author.

Sarah: So, is a Newbery Award, this is a good question I bet a lot of our listeners have too, which is, is the Newbery Award only for books that were published that [preceding] year?

Carole: Yes, it is. So, the Newbery is considered the best children's literature for that [preceding] year in America. It needs to either be an American author or someone residing in America. And then there are British medals as well. There are other medals but ours is called the Newbery. And then the best illustrated book by an American author or resident of America is called



the Caldecott, as you of course know. So those have to be American people to qualify for that medal.

Sarah: I did not realize that. That is very helpful to know.

11:40 The books of Lois Lenski

Carole: So let me jump to another author who I adore as well, and her name is Lois Lenski. And I am just in love with her, there is just no other way to describe it. Her Mr. Small books, like Policeman Small and Cowboy Small and things like that, are just absolutely the most precious books for small children, particularly little boys. Just will sleep with them, hug them, kiss them, and want you to read them a thousand times. But my favorite of the Mr. Small books is Papa Small, which isn't as well known, but it's a story of Papa Small (obviously) and Mama Small and then the little children and they go to church, the baby cries, and the baby has to be carried out. On Sunday Daddy cooks for Mama and the children ...

Sarah: Ooh, I like it!

Carole: ... and they help, which is right up my alley in terms of my whole idea of work and service, and it is the most precious, precious book and probably a little bit harder to find. Some of her books are very, very pricey, to find them used, but see what you can do. But what she's best known for, Sarah, as I'm sure you know, are her regional books, so Strawberry Girl, Cotton in My Sack, Bayou Suzette, and what she did is, Lois Lenski would do this extensive research and then she would write a book about a regional child. Like, for example, Strawberry Girl is about a family of, what are called, Florida Crackers, which are like native central Floridians, and each

of her books, there's one about a little boy in San Francisco who's Chinese.

Sarah: I didn't realize they were based on regions. That is so cool.

Carole: Yes, so each of them, Bayou Suzette, I think is Louisiana, and Cotton in My Sack is in the south where they're picking cotton as a family. And then you learn so much about the culture and the region but her characters are so dear, they're not just two dimensional paper cutouts but they have character and feelings and struggles and pain, which is what every child relates to.

Sarah: Yeah. Yeah.

14:40 The books of Marguerite de Angeli

Carole: And then, probably, you know, on my death bed the book I want to be holding is, other than the Bible, would be the books by Marguerite de Angeli. And she, to me, personifies this kind of golden age period. She was very prolific. And some of my favorite books are Thee, Hannah! and Door in the Wall but the book I want your listeners to be aware of, which is a much less known and a little harder to find is a book called, Bright April and it's the first children's book that ever dealt with racial prejudice.

Sarah: I've never seen this book.

Carole: It's precious.

Sarah: OK.

Carole: And it's about a family in Germantown, Pennsylvania and they're lovely and just a charming fun family, beautifully educated, and kind, and full of character, and this little girl, April, is the daughter, one of the daughters, she goes to



her Brownie Troop and there she experiences the very first experience of prejudice that she's had in her life. And, how her mom, especially, handles it. It's a lovely, lovely book, and the fun thing about Marguerite de Angeli which your listeners might not be aware of, is that she started out as an illustrator of other people's books, and then she decided to start writing her own, and when she would write a book, she would spend a whole year in researching the culture. So it was like the Amish in Yonie Wondernose, there's Skippack School, the German Pennsylvania Dutch, or whoever she was writing about, she would do extensive research. Thee, Hannah! was about a Quaker family, during the civil war period, underground railroad period, so she didn't just ... you know, sometimes Sarah, we'll see books that are "historic fiction" and all they are is people from our era dressed in costumes basically.

Sarah: Yeah, exactly. So disappointing.

Carole: It is so disappointing; the way they talk, the way they interact with adults, things that no child in that era would have ... I mean, you know, they would have been murdered, you know, by their parents. But Marguerite de Angeli she did her homework. And I just so appreciate, her illustrations are magnificent, and she loved the Lord, and she wrote books into her 90's. She lived in Lapeer, Michigan and they have named the library in Lapeer after her, and my favorite of all of the parts of her books is the beginning of Door in the Wall where at the dedication page of the book, she has a little door, and then underneath it she quotes Revelation 3 "behold, I've sat before thee an open door and no man can shut it. I know you have a little strength, you have not denied my name." And this was a Double Day book, Sarah. This was not a Christian published book, but this was the era that these

books, the 30's, the 40's, the Christian work and woof as Francis Schaeffer talks about it, was still so much a part of the publishing world, and was so accepted and welcomed in those days.

Sarah: Interesting.

Carole: Yeah. We miss those days.

Sarah: That's the only book by Marguerite de Angeli that I've read. It is Door in the Wall and so, as you were talking, I put Thee, Hannah! in my Amazon cart and Bright April but there's only a couple left.

Carole: Yes, Yes! Well those are amazing books and there's Skippack School, Yonie Wondernose, Henner's Lydia, Copper-toed Boots. She's a very prolific author, and so once you read one you're going to want to read everything...

Sarah: OK.

17:40 The books of Alice Dalgliesh

Carole: ... which she ever wrote. And then that brings me to another author from her era, and she was actually a children's editor at Scribner's, when Scribner kind of ruled, it was the gold standard of publishers, and her name was Alice Dalgliesh.

Sarah: Oh yes! She's a favorite of mine. OK, go ahead.

Carole: She was born in Britain, but came to America, I think as a married woman, and she herself was a fabulous author, and she's well known for her book Bears on Hemlock Mountain because, I believe that won the Newbery, but I love her historic books. So The Fourth of July Story, The Columbus Story, that type of thing. She just wrote history in such a simple, clear way.



And that just brings me to a whole other principle, and that is I read older books when I'm reading old history because they tend to be more idealistic, more edifying, more uplifting, and a lot of them, living authors, they tend to want to show the warts and the flaws of historic people, and that's fine when you're an adult, but when you're five years old, or seven years old, I think it's very, very important that you just have some ... and I think even as adults, you and I, Sarah, we need heroes, we need heroines that we can look up to and our children do as well.

Sarah: You're right.

Carole: So I love these older books because they are, they're just simple, and they're sweet, and they're positive.

Sarah: That reminds me of something, and I just grabbed it to see if I could find the quote. Have you read Anthony Esolen's Ten Ways to Destroy the Imagination of Your Child?

Carole: I have heard of that book and it's wonderful.

Sarah: It is. It is totally wonderful. Of course, it's written as a satire, so the whole time you're kind of scratching your head, like wait, you kind of forget which viewpoint you're supposed to take, but one of the chapters is called "Cut All Heroes Down to Size" and he talks about how we destroy our children's imagination when we build in them this habit of sneering at what is great or noble. Here it is, here's the quote: "the really effective killer of the moral imagination will want to raise children who snicker at anyone who possesses a remarkable virtue." And he talks about that, kind of, modern habit we have of wanting to focus on the heroes' faults instead of using their strengths as something to aspire to.

20:15 The work of the d'Aulaires

Carole: I love that. I couldn't have said it better. Yay. Well, let me share another team that do exactly what we're talking about, and that is Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire, very long names, but Ingri and Edgar, both European children, they met in art school in Munich and they moved here to America and they wrote some of the most unapologetically patriotic books that I think are in print. And they're so politically incorrect and I adore them. They also, of course, were primarily artists, and so what your listeners may not know is that they worked on litho stones. Now, imagine that I had a B.A. in Fine Arts and I was a student in lithography as part of my college experience, so a litho stone is this massive white stone that's, I mean, it is maybe a foot thick, huge, the top of it is polished, the sides of it are rough, and you draw on it with something greasy, like a crayon or a grease pencil, and then when you ink it, the ink only sticks to the part that has been greased with the pencil, and that is how you create your surface to print from, and so it's incredible expensive, super, super complex, nobody would ever use lithography to do illustrations today because it's just out of the reach of, you know, publishing. But back then, that is how every one of their illustrations was done.

Sarah: That's amazing. The owner of Beautiful Feet Books republished the d'Aulaire books. She was on the podcast, Rea Berg. We'll find that episode and make sure it's linked in the show notes because she talks about meeting the son.

Carole: The son.

Sarah: Yes. And I thought, 'oh my goodness, this is amazing.'



Carole: Isn't it? And they wrote a book about him. I mean, they're just an amazing couple and I collect their books like a maniac. I love, of course, their Greek Myths book which I always talk about in my seminars. Obviously, it needs to be read when you're children are about nine or 10 and up, not to a four year old, they don't need to be burdened with that confusion, but it is the best book on Mythology for your older kids anywhere, and there's no one quite like them. Now, I mentioned Alice Dalgliesh and she discovered someone who I consider one of the greats and Rea and Russ also have republished her books, and that is Genevieve Foster.

Sarah: Oh yes!

22:40 The work of Genevieve Foster

Carole: Yes. So Genevieve Foster lived in Aviston, Illinois. She had a son and a daughter, and when they would bring home their school books, their history books, she would just, kind of, roll her eyes and shake her head and think 'these are so lame' and you would think that the world began in 1492 and that the map of the world consists of America. And so Genevieve Foster decided to write a book for her own children, and that was George Washington's World. And then she went on to write The World of Abraham Lincoln, The World of Captain John Smith, The World of Columbus and His Sons, and The World of William Penn, and Augustus Caesar as well. So those were her World of books and then she also wrote some others. But what I love about those books, Sarah, is (a) she illustrated them all herself, I mean, this is unheard of. These people are renaissance people; they're writing life-changing books but they're also illustrating them. I mean, who does things like that today?

Sarah: Right.

Carole: And what she did, Sarah, as I'm sure you're well aware of, is she brought in the entire world's history. So she would use a famous person, let's say Abraham Lincoln, OK here he is, he's being born in this soddy or log cabin, and then this is going on in his life, but then this is going on in France, and this is going on in China, and this is going on in Africa, and she goes on. Now Abraham Lincoln is walking and putting pranks on his, you know, precious step-mother who was so good to him, and this is going on in his life but this is going on in England, and this is going on in Germany, and so she gives you this world view and she uses a famous person as the spring board to do that, so it gives you, kind of, a frame work – this is his lifetime but the world doesn't revolve around the United States.

Sarah: I love this so much because I think it's so refreshing when I'm reading with my kids about history, to paint a picture of the whole world. And then it also makes more sense as to why this was happening. You know, can you really understand the American Revolution if you don't know what was happening in Europe at the same time?

25:20 The work of Howard Pyle

Carole: Exactly! You got it, Sarah. You got it! So, Sarah, I thought it would be great to talk about Howard Pyle who to me is, kind of, the gold standard of American illustrators and his life and work is really the cornerstone of what many people call the golden age of children's literature. So, he was born in Wilmington, Delaware, and his mother read them classics, folklore, mythology. She bought beautiful books for her children with fabulous illustrations, and really exposed them to a lot of British, you know, publications, and he



drew his whole life. Like in school books he would draw in all the margins and he went to a Quaker school and then he studied art in Philadelphia, and he wrote his first book in 1876. But he wrote his book on Robin Hood in 1883 and when he designed a book, he designed the typeface, the binding, the illustrations, and the text, and then wrote the book, a total renaissance man.

Sarah: Yeah, yeah. I can't even the scope of a project like that.

27:30 The Brandywine School

Carole: I can't either. Some of his books, which our son just loved so much, things like The Wonder Clock and Salt and Pepper and then, of course, he did all the King Arthur books, Robin Hood, but my favorite is Otto of the Silver Hand, which I consider his masterpiece. But in addition to being an incredible contributor to the annals of children's literature, he started an art school, and at his art school some of the students that he influenced are some of the greatest illustrators of all time for children. One is N. C. Wyeth, who is Andrew Wyeth's father and Jamie Wyeth's grandfather.

Sarah: OK.

Carole: And N. C. Wyeth homeschooled all of his children and his grandchildren and he would dress all of them in costumes and make them pose for his illustrations, he always drew from models and he had these fabulous, fabulous costumes that he collected all through his career, and then Maxfield Parrish who is probably not as well known today but was considered one of the greatest illustrators of all time.

Sarah: OK.

Carole: And then my beloved, Jessie Willcox Smith, who I have always used as, kind of, my trademark, so all of these people studied under Howard Pyle at his school. It was called the Brandywine School and it was in Pennsylvania and huge contributor to what we consider the greatest children's illustration period, that golden age. Another author I wanted to talk about, who is also a fabulous illustrator, was James Doherty.

Sarah: That name, I don't think it's familiar to me.

Carole: Really?

Sarah: Maybe I would recognize his art.

Carole: So, James Doherty has written some historic biographies like one on Daniel Boone, one on Ben Franklin, but the one that I just love the best is Andy and the Lion which is the story of Androcles and the lion, and he was an illustrator that I feel every little boy will connect with and relate to because his illustrations feel like they're going to jump off the page and punch you in the nose. They're so full of masculinity and power and energy, and they're just delightful, is the only way I can describe him, and he was a wonderful, wonderful writer, and children, especially boys, I've always recommended James Daugherty's books for boys.

Sarah: Oh, The Magna Charter! Yes. I'm looking at it online now to figure it out. OK yes, I do recognize his work.

29:15 The work of Taro Yashima

Carole: Yes, exactly. So, his books are great, his illustrations are superb. And then an Asian artist that I really feel so fond of is a gentleman named Taro Yashima, and he's best known for his award winning book, Crow Boy but he also wrote the sweetest book about his daughter named



Umbrella, the book is named Umbrella, and it's a story of a little girl who is given an umbrella and some rubber boots, and they live in a city, and for some reason after she's been given these gifts, it never rains, and her name is Momo, and every day she looks out the window hoping it's going to rain, and tries on her boots, and walks around with the umbrella in the sunshine, and then, you know, one day it rains. And it's a story of her daddy, you know, he picks her up, I believe from the library and they walk home together in the rain; she with her boots and her umbrella, and the daddy who's the narrator says it was the first day that Momo didn't hold his hand.

Sarah: Oh.

Carole: It was like a rite of passage, and kind of, you know a daddy and a daughter. Yashima's illustrations are so sensitive, so brilliant. Crow Boy again, is about that peer, kind of, bullying/rejection, not fitting in and it's about a little boy in Japan who lives way, way out in the country, in the mountains, and all of the city students kind of think he's, you know, kind of a loser but they get a new headmaster who realizes the amazing gifts and talents that reside in this little boy, and he can imitate all the different calls of the crows that live in the mountains, and at the end of the school year the teacher asks him to come up and perform and all the children are like, 'that loser?' and he gets up and they're just wowed, they're just bowled over by his gifts and abilities and they see him a whole different light. And it's just so helpful as we're building character into our children, these are the type of books, without making a sermon out of it and getting all annoying with our teacher voice, but just letting the Holy Spirit work in our children's lives and as Charlotte Mason used to talk about treating our children with respect, knowing that they can

figure things out for themselves. You don't have to chew it up and predigest it for your children, but she said, "Leave your children alone with great authors and anything else will be to exert undue influence. Just leave them alone, don't analyze, don't dissect, don't make school out of books. Save that for college. If they're raised loving books and loving authors and illustrators when they get to college, trust me, they will ace all of their literature courses. So many people think 'well, they won't know what to do' no, it's just the opposite, if you burn them out they will never love literature, that will make it the kiss of death, but if you let them fall in love with literature, when they get older they will be able to do all that mindless stuff we do in college, and it's fine, but we want them to fall in love with books first.

Sarah: So good. Oh my goodness, that's solid gold right there!

Carole: Thank you. And then may I talk about one last author?

Sarah: Yes, I would love, yes absolutely.

32:40 Carole's favorite book from childhood

Carole: Alright, so the last author is someone who is very, very near and dear to my heart, and the reason is that, Sarah, I was raised in a non-Believing home and I was not read to ever in my whole life, and my mom's a very, very intelligent woman, and very articulate, amazing vocabulary, studied four languages, but in our culture back in the 50's and 60's it just wasn't normally done - where people didn't read a lot to children, unfortunately. So when I had the flu one day as a, probably a pre-teen, I begged my mother to go to the public library and get me something to read



because I was always complaining that there was nothing to read, because I read from morning until night. I read practically in the shower. I just read all the time.

Sarah: You and my 12 year old are like kindred spirits, I think.

Carole: Exactly.

Sarah: If she could figure out a way to read in the shower, she would.

Carole: You'll have to tell her that we need to talk, to figure this out! But anyway, so my mom came back from the library where she had gone under duress because my mother didn't go to the library for herself, she came back with this green book handed it to me and said "this is a book I read when I was your age." And I thought, 'Oh my word.' This wasn't, we didn't have literary conversations. So I began to read it and I fell wildly in love with the book. I read constantly but I had no guidance. I would literally go to the public library and just read the whole section of B, and then I'd read the whole section of C. I mean, these were adult books. I was so not reading appropriately, but I just read. I couldn't get enough. I was like a starving Armenian. So, having said that, when I read this book after reading the dribble that who-knows-where I'd been reading, it was like someone finally gave me my first glass of real water. And so it went back to the library and that's why it's so important to own the right books, because it went back to the library and the rest of my life into my adulthood I was searching for this book. And I would say to people, "Well this girl lives really far away from school, and she has a lunch pail with a custard cup" and they would look at me like, "we don't know what you're talking about." And so one day I was reading Edith Schaeffer and she was talking

about some of her favorite books and she mentions this book, *Girl of the Limberlost* and I just screamed, "ah! That's the green book!" And I drove to the Newport Children's Bookshop in Newport Beach that was owned by a woman who you would have loved, her name was Sarah Brandt, of course, it's no longer there. I drove there at 90 miles an hour, they had a copy of it, I brought it home, I felt like I was reconnecting with my twin who I had been separated from birth.

Sarah: Oh!

Carole: Oh, it was such a wonderful experience. So then I was told by a friend years later, we were talking about books, and I said that that was my favorite book, and she said, "Well have you read *Freckles* it's even better?" And I kind of went "excuse me, but there's nothing better than *Girl of the Limberlost*." So then I went to our library and of course, they didn't have room for these books because they have to have really important people like Danielle Steele and so they didn't even exist in our library, and I went on these massive searches, and by the Grace of God, you know, University of Indiana began at that point to reprint her books. So the author I'm talking about is Geneva was really her name, but her pen name was Gene Stratton-Porter.

Sarah: Yes.

Carole: And she lived in Indiana, and she really started her career as a photographer and a writer of nature books, but her publisher was frustrated that her books really didn't sell very well, and so she started to write fiction for which we are all so grateful, and she combined nature in all of her books, so she kind of hid that spoonful of sugar, the medicine in the spoonful of sugar, I should say, and she wrote some of the bestselling books of her era, anywhere. And then, 10 of her books



were made into movies. She was extremely successful and popular and all of her books, I can remember recommending Laddie to someone and they said to me, "I've felt like I had gone to Sunday School after I had read that book, I was so edified, I was so blessed" yet there is no preachy-ness. Gene Stratton-Porter was the baby of 13 children and her father was a farmer but he was a man of the Word, and he memorized the entire Bible...

Sarah: What?

Carole: Yes. The entire Bible and he would be invited to speak places and he would say to them, "Well, I've memorized all of Scripture except the begats," he said "those are just not worth my brain power, you to know, to memorize those." So he would be invited to a church and they would say "First Timothy" and bam, or "Second Samuel" and off he would go. And he'd memorize all of it. And when she was a little girl, she was the baby in the family, the big farming family, her father told her mother, "I want you ... she's kind of high strung, or she's very sensitive ... I just want you to let her run wild like a little lamb" and so, even though the other girls were forced to sit inside and sew and do things like that Gene Stratton-Porter, Geneva, was just allowed to run in nature. And she had an older brother and his name was Laddie, he was tragically killed, I believe in a car accident, but she wrote a book about her childhood, which is Laddie, and it's autobiographical, and then I consider her all-time masterpiece to be Keeper of the Bees which is the only one of her books set in California. She eventually moved to California to write for Hollywood, and she was sadly killed, I believe it was in a train accident.

Sarah: Oh! Sad.

Carole: But I have gone on record recommending to families that if they have to pay their children \$100 to read her books it would be the best money you'll ever spend, they are life-changing, character building books. And I read them over and over again, which to me is a test of a good book. I read the same books over and over again.

Sarah: Yep, over and over again. My 14 year old has, in our homeschool group, there's a group of girls that has a book club, they've just kind of organized it themselves. And right now, they're all reading A Daughter of the Land by Gene Stratton-Porter, and so I don't think she's quite finished it yet, I think they're finishing it this month, and then next month they're going to have their little group meeting where they get to talk about it.

Carole: Yeah. Now, that I'm sad to say, don't tell her I said this, but that is my least favorite of her books.

Sarah: That's interesting because she's our pretty voracious reader. I know she's read is it Freckles? She's read some other works by Gene Stratton-Porter and she said "this one is fairly slow." I think she's been a little disappointed in it, actually.

Carole: Yeah, there's some things in it that are really are grievous to the Holy Spirit in my opinion.

Sarah: Keeper of the Bees - I should grab Keeper of the Bees for her?

Carole: Oh, oh yes! A friend just called me and said, "Carol, I finally just read it. Oh my word!" When our son read it, it's so funny, I really felt he was supposed to read it, I felt impressed by the Lord actually that he was supposed to read it,



and he was getting ready to leave for Bible College at Calvary Chapel Bible College and I said, “JJ, I really feel like you’re supposed to read this book” and he was like, “OK, OK, I will” but at the time, believe it or not, he was reading Crime and Punishment which I have never read; it’s work to read Crime and Punishment. He was like, “OK mom, I’ll get to that but right now I’m kind of busy.” So he was getting ready, school was ending and his life was making a change, so he took the book, he read it, and when he finished it he said, “Mom, you were right. Thank you.”

Sarah: Oh wow.

Carole: Yeah, it’s a life changer.

Sarah: I’m just reading the description of it because I’m putting it in my Amazon cart as we’re talking, and it says it is her very last novel she wrote before her death, which kind of makes sense that it would be this culminating masterpiece.

Carole: That’s right. That’s exactly right.

Sarah: “A book that examines the healing power that nature and kindness can have upon someone’s life” that’s how it’s described.

Carole: Yes. You know, I worked for many years with a family in Minnesota and the husband was a stockbroker. And, he came up to me when I was speaking one time, they always came to our seminars. He held the book up against his chest and he said (the name of the star of the book is Jamie McFarland), and he pointed to the book and he said, “This is who I want to grow up to be.”

Sarah: Oh wow.

Carole: And then at Christmastime he asked me to send him a case of those books to give to

everyone in his stockbrokerage firm. This is the thing: she is a master, truly a master. It’s a character, this is what character looks like, is what I could say over each one of her books.

Sarah: We’ll put links to a lot of Gene Stratton-Porter books right there in the show notes, so if you are listening to this and think, ‘Oh my goodness, I need to get my hands on some of these,’ head to ReadAloudRevival.com and look for episode 51. Well, this is beautiful. Carole is there anything ... actually, I have another question.

Carole: Yes.

42:15 Carole’s number one piece of advice

Sarah: If someone’s listening today and they wonder how they can start living this reading life with their kids, what is the number one thing you would tell her?

Carole: Well, the number one thing I would tell her is to unplug her family because as she long as electronics are competing for your children’s heart and mind, you’re fighting a battle that you probably will never win. So, I hate to say it, but in my seminars we spend a great deal of time talking about that, and giving research from everyone and their brother, from the American Association of Pediatricians on down, and they’re all saying the same thing: screens are not your children’s friend if you want them to be intelligent and personally, for me, if you want them to be Godly.

Sarah: I had Dr. Daniel Willingham on the show, on episode 43, he wrote the book Raising Kids Who Read just recently, it came out earlier this year, or maybe it was last year, anyway one of the



things he said was that, if he was to offer his children watermelon for dessert, they would be happy because they enjoy watermelon, it's sweet and they like it, but if he was to say you could have watermelon or you can have candy, it would be very hard for them to choose the watermelon. And he said that's what happens we make our children choose between reading and screens. We need to make that choice for them because, you know, we're human. And they're humans-in-training.

Carole: That is a really, really good word picture. Thank you for sharing that. I'm going to steal that if you don't mind, from him.

Sarah: Yeah, yeah absolutely.

Carole: That is really, really helpful. So that's the first thing I would say to a mom. And then the second thing, and to a dad especially, is read to your children from the moment they're conceived until the night before they get married, and every day in between. They're never too young, they're never too old to be read to. And make it the high point of your day. Let your children associate being read to as rewards and never punishment. You know, "you get to be read to, you've been so good today that Daddy's going to read two chapters to you instead of one tonight, when we read as a family."

Sarah: I love that so much. So different from the culture or the summer reading programs that say "if you read this many books, you will get a prize like an iPad." So, it's like when you say use the reading itself as the reward, that's so wonderful, I love it.

Carole: Yes, yeah.

Sarah: Thank you so much. I am just so grateful for your work, and for blessing us here, and I

know our listeners are going to be blessed by what you've shared and I appreciate you giving your time to us today.

Carole: My pleasure. Can I share one more thing that we're working on?

Sarah: Absolutely.

44:03 Carole's Great Book Course

Carole: OK great. So, as we speak, Sarah, I am creating a history of children's lit. course, and by the time that this segment plays it will be on our web store at carolejoyseid.com. And it's going to be history of the children's lit, subtitled Carole's Great Books Course.

Sarah: Oh my goodness. I'm going to take this! I'm so excited, I'm like jumping out of my seat.

Carole: So this is really going to be, kind of, a culmination of my life's passion, and everything that I've loved and lived for all these years. I'm going to do it, like if you took a kiddie lit. course in a college, as I did. When I was in graduate school, I had a teacher that, I mean, we were kindred spirits, but when she started quoting A. A. Milne poems and things, and I just wanted to jump up and hug her and kiss her on both cheeks, and just the power that a children's lit course can empower people with, so they feel knowledgeable. They walk into a library, they're making out the Christmas wish list for grandma's for Christmas, that I want to equip families so they know as much about children's literature as I do. And that's our goal, and that's what we're working on as we speak.

Sarah: I am so excited about that. I am definitely going to take your course! We will make sure there is a link in the show notes at episode 51, so



if you're listening to this and think, 'I need to learn more from Carole, especially because she's such a joyful and enthusiastic teacher' head to ReadAloudRevival.com, look for episode 51 and we'll have a direct link to her course there. Or you can go to CaroleJoySeid.com. We are absolutely thrilled to share that because I know I'm going to want to take that. As you're talking about these authors, these children's authors, I was making myself on the page "I need to learn more about these children's book authors, this is magnificent." So, you've made it so easy for me.

Carole: I'm so glad. Yay! You are my sister separated at birth, I think, Sarah. You're just such a kindred spirit, and you are doing Kingdom work, and I just praise God for what you're doing.

47:00 Let the Kids Speak

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.

Child1: My name is Sophia, and I'm three years old. And I'm from Missouri, and I'm three years old. And my favorite book is Runaway Hug. And it's a dog that gives a peanut buttery hug. That's my favorite part.

Child2: Hi, my name is Jonah, and I am seven years old. I live in Louisville, Kentucky. And my favorite book that I like to be read to is called The Case of the Missing Rubber Duckie by Linda Hayward. My favorite part is the part when Sherlock Hemlock gives the rubber ducky mixed up with the rubber ball, the rubber glove, the rubber rafts, the rubber stamps, and last of all the rubber band collection.

Child3: I'm Felicity and I'm nine years old, and I live in the sweetest place on earth, Hershey,

Pennsylvania. I'd like to tell you about The Water Horse. The Water Horse is about two children that find an egg, it turns out to be a water horse egg, and they have great adventures. I'd also like to tell you about The Willabees. The parents and the children don't really prefer each other, but don't be worried, it's very funny and it's comedy, and it has a very happy ending, and it was my favorite read aloud of this year. Thank you. Goodbye.

Child4: Hello, my name is Merci, and I'm five years old. I live in Hershey, Pennsylvania, and I like The Moffats. I like the beginning chapter and the last chapter and also one of my other favorite chapters was the chapter with the kitty. I also like The Water Horse, it's about these two kids that live by the ocean and they find this egg and it turns out to be a water horse egg. A water horse is, kind of, like the loch ness monster, and it is a sea monster, and they have tons of happy adventures with it, and we read it one day.

Child5: Hi, my name is Edward Bolton. I am seven years old and I live in Alberta, Canada, and my favorite book is The Green Ember because of all of the excitement and the adventure that Picket and Heather have.

Child6: Hello, my name's Charity and I'm from Florida and I'm eight years old. My favorite book is Misty of Chincoteague and I love when he jumped out of the boat and swam to keep the, her up and have air, so she wouldn't sink in the water. And I also love the part after the book, I had a dream about Mystie and the Phantom.

Child7: Hello, my name's Sarah, I'm nine years old and I'd like to tell you about The Green Ember. The Green Ember has great characters and Picket, at first is a scaredy-cat but he saves



someone but I don't want to tell you because I want you to read the book.

Child8: Hi, my name is Lucy Boyd. I am 10 years old and I live in Chicago. My favorite book is Smile by Raina Telgemeier. My favorite character is Raina. I like her because she has a little sister just like mine. My favorite part in the book is when she's getting ready for high school.

Child9: My name's Annika. [Mom: how old are you?] Three. [Mom: You're three. What's your favorite book?] Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel. [Mom: Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel. Why do you like that book?] Because it has a steam shovel in it. [Mom: What's your favorite part?] My favorite part is they dig a hole. [Mom: They dig a hole.]

Thank you for your messages kids. I love those. Your kids can leave their own message for the podcast at ReadAloudRevival.com. I'll bet you'd be surprised at just how easy it is to leave that message. You can do it from your phone, your computer, your iPad, just about any device you want. It's as easy as the click of a button. Alright, remember to get your calendar of what's coming down the pike at Read Aloud Revival. You aren't going to want to miss out on all the good stuff we're doing in 2017. Head to ReadAloudRevival.com to get your calendar, and I think that's it for today. So we'll be back in two weeks with another episode for you. Until then, go build your family culture around books.