



RAR 62 – Greta Eskridge

Greta: See you are Profesh.

Sarah: I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I'm really glad this is all happening with Greta and not like with somebody intimidating."

Greta: Like, the real deal. I'm just, you know, along for the ride.

Sarah: You're listening to the Read Aloud Revival podcast. This is the podcast that helps you make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books.

One thing I know is that a lot of us parents want to inspire a love of nature in our kids. Some of us already love nature but some of us don't and wish we did. Maybe it wasn't just an affection that was cultivated in our lives when we were young. On today's show I'm going to chat with Greta Eskridge about how we can inspire a love of nature through (can you guess?) children's books, of course, right? Now this is the second time Greta has been on the Read Aloud Revival. She was on the Show for episode 42 which is one of the most highly downloaded episodes we've ever done and we talked about the inspiring parents and children's literature and how reading kid's books can help us be better parents. If you have not heard that Show yet, you want to go to ReadAloudRevival.com and look for episode 42. But today, we're going to talk about inspiring a love of nature in our kids through books. So you'll probably recognize Greta from her Instagram account. She's @MaandPaModern, she's also got a fabulous website. And if you haven't met her before you're going to love her. Everybody loves Greta Eskridge and that is a fact. Greta, welcome back to the Read Aloud

Revival I am so happy to be chatting with you today.

Greta: Oh, I am so happy to be here. It's just a dream come true to be on your Show and get to talk about books with you. I love it. I'm so glad to be back.

Sarah: Well, I know the first time you and I did a Show one of the first comments we saw and then it just kept being repeated was "Oh, I hope you have Greta back on to talk about books and nature and inspiring that love of nature in our kids through books." And so I thought, 'OK, let's do it.' So here we are. I'm really glad we're doing it today.

Greta: Yeah, me too. This is a topic near and dear to my heart.

4:30 Why nature is so important to Greta

Sarah: So tell me a little bit about that. So, why is this something you feel so passionate about?

Greta: Well, from the time I was little I always felt a really strong pull to be outside, to be in nature, I loved the outdoors. And it was just this part of my heart that was calling for it. And I lived in a fairly rural town in Southern California which is not necessarily the norm down here but I didn't have necessarily the ability to go out and go on long hikes every day or even once a month with my family and so the kind of nature I wanted, really wild and to just be out where there were woods and big hills and rocks to climb that wasn't really available to me and so I had this longing and I filled it by being able to be in my tree house. We did have a tree house in the backyard, our dad built us, and we had half an acre which is a lot of property for southern California, and I would go



out and read books in the tall grass in the springtime and there would be wild poppies blooming and that was really wonderful but I still longed for even more, so I filled that void, the longing for knowledge of nature and experience in nature with books. And I just feel like there are other moms and other kids who have the same feelings and experiences I did and so I want to share with them how books can fill the void.

Sarah: I love that so much because I feel like that's a story that's common for a lot of us. We didn't have that ability to get out in nature as much as we wanted as a child. For my own self I really didn't spend much time in nature as a child because I didn't think I liked being in nature. As an adult I realized that is not even remotely true, I think I just wasn't out enough to fall in love with it, or I just hadn't had enough experiences with it with my family to realize how important it was for me and how nourishing and fulfilling it was for me to be out in nature but I think a lot of times we have these obstacles that make it hard. Like you said, location if we're not in an area it's easy to get close to nature. Or weather? In the winter months up here in the very northwest it is cold and snowy and icy and just a huge part of the world is very cold for half of the year, right? And so it makes it really, really hard to get outside and enjoy being in nature. I think a lot of us have, sort of, fears around nature like creatures we're going to maybe step upon...

Greta: Right.

7:15 Why it's hard to get out in nature

Sarah: ... and so those are all kinds of things that make it hard for us to get out so I'm really excited to hear what you have to say about that.

Greta: Right. I think those were parts of limitations we had as well. We had, for one thing, just a real practical aspect of getting to go out and experience nature. For a lot of us you need car to drive there. If it's not in your backyard, which for many of us it's not, you need to at least be able to drive to a trail head to be able to hike, and growing up, my family, we did not have a lot of money. We often only had one car which my dad used to drive to work and so unless it was something we could walk to to hike we weren't going to be able to go there and so that was a practical limitation. And then also my mom, I love her dearly and she loves gardening and she loves to be outside in that capacity but hiking or camping without my dad that was not going to happen. She's just not the adventurous kind of gal in that way and so for her, even if it was a day that we did have a car, I can't imagine her saying, "Hey kids, we're going to go for a hike. Let's go!" that would have been outside of her toolbox and so that was a limitation as well. But what she did do was she gave me books to read that were seeped in nature and I think that fueled the desire that I had to be out in nature because the books I read just made it so magical and it was just so wonderful and romantic and beautiful and I thought, 'Man, I want to be like that. I want to be Anne of Green Gables walking to the Lake of Shining Waters and through these beautiful spots in Avonlea that she gets to be in, Dryad's Bubble, and all those places, I wanted that. And so the desire that was already in my heart was fueled by the books that I read and then, in turn, when I couldn't be out as much as I wanted they filled that hole. I mean, books are so great!

Sarah: They do fill that hole. That is one of the things that has surprised me a little bit. So we live up in Spokane, Washington and in the winter here



in Spokane it is just snow and ice for months and months on end and my 13 year old is my biggest nature lover and it's hard, I think, for her to live in a place that's so cold and wintry for so long but she loves reading books that are set or have a large nature component to them or using illustrations in books to draw pictures and sketch ...

Greta: Right.

Sarah: ... and things like that so it fills that desire of hers to be in nature when it's a little bit less possible or enjoyable to be outside. So what kind of books did you read as a kid that you think were the most impactful for you and your love of nature?

9:45 Books that fuel nature love

Greta: Well, I already mentioned Anne of Green Gables. I read everything Lucy Maud Montgomery wrote. I literally read every single book she wrote, multiple times. And she is a great nature lover because there's a ton of nature in her books, not just the descriptions of Avonlea and Prince Edward Island but there's details of the names of flowers and of birds and the flora and fauna that are in her books are great. And it doesn't feel like a textbook it's just part of the story which a lot of really great books that incorporate nature that's just part of the narrative, and I love that. I also love the book, I don't remember if I ever talked with you about this book before, it's called Mandy. Have you ever read Mandy?

Sarah: I don't think so.

Greta: Do you know Mandy? Oh, you've got to read this book. It's by Julie Andrews of Sound of Music.

Sarah: What?

Greta: YES.

Sarah: How do I not know about this book?

Greta: You're going to love it. You're going to go order it today!

Sarah: I might be doing that right now not that I'm admitting to that or anything!

Greta: When she writes she uses the name Julie Edwards so that's why some people may not know it is Julie Andrews, she's one and the same. And this book Mandy was actually one of my favorites. I can't tell you how many times I've read it. It's about a little girl who's an orphan and she lives in an orphanage and she craves nature and she sneaks out of the orphanage over a wall (which is against the rules) but there's a little bit of adventure in that and so she goes into the forest that's behind the orphanage and she finds this little abandoned cottage and she fixes it up and she plants flowers and she makes it her own place because she longs for her own place because she lives in an orphanage, she longs for nature. I mean, as a little girl that story just ... I wanted my own little place to fix up. I wanted a garden to plant. I wanted to have my own space in nature and I identified with her even though, of course, I wasn't living in an orphanage and I had a home of my own but still there was just so many elements of the story that I identified with and it's a great story and all my kids, boys and girls, love it. It's a great book. So that was a big one.

Sarah: I'm putting it in my Amazon cart right now.

There are a whole bunch of books. How did I not even know this? I am just right now picking my jaw up off the ground and I'm putting massive



amounts of books in my Amazon cart as we're talking.

Greta: I feel like I just, sort of, had a really major moment, like a milestone moment in life that I get to share a new book with you!

Sarah: Oh my goodness.

Greta: That doesn't happen very often.

Sarah: Oh, I'm so excited about this. OK.

Greta: So, there's Mandy, Anne of Green Gables. I know you're freaking out, you and I maybe shouldn't do podcasts together.

Sarah: I could sit here and go shopping all day. Books, books, books.

Greta: So, of course, there's Caddie Woodlawn and there was all The Little House on the Prairie Books: Little House in the Big Woods, Farmer Boy but then there were other books too, like My Side of the Mountain. You're familiar with My Side of the Mountain?

Sarah: Yes.

Greta: That book I read multiple times. I kind of wanted to run away and live in a tree just like Sam did and I read all of those books. And even books like Little Women and Wind in the Willows which those are not necessarily books that, again, it's not like the emphasis or the focus of the book is nature but the story, the writer's were so familiar with nature and they obviously had a love for it that it just came out in their writing descriptions, it's just there. I have so many books that I feel like I could just give you a laundry list of books. That's just scratching the surface. And that's just the chapter books, older books. There are picture books as well for littler kids. Books that I've learned about since I've become a mom, so new books that I've introduced to my kids.

There's a lot out there. There's a lot. It's pretty great.

Sarah: So, if you're listening to this and you're thinking, 'Oh my goodness, I want to know all those books' we'll have links in the Show Notes and Greta herself will actually have a post upon her website, we'll link to that in the Show Notes as well. So if you go to ReadAloudRevival.com and you look for episode 62 we'll have a link straight to Greta's site, we'll have all the books we talk about in today's show right there so you don't have to stop what you're doing and write them all down because you won't be able to do anything else by the time we're done here.

Greta: We're definitely going to send you guys shopping.

Sarah: That's what we do best around here.

Greta: Book shopping.

Sarah: Yeah, yeah.

14:00 Books as a gateway to wonder

Greta: And I love this quote by Gladys Hunt, she wrote Honey for a Child's Heart and is one of my favorite authors and just really talks about, she captures the importance of bringing books into your children's lives and this book, I think, really sums up this idea that I'm talking about, of incorporating nature into your kids' life. Building a love of nature for them through books she says, "A good book is a magic gateway into a wider world of wonder, beauty, delight, and adventure. Books are experiences that make us grow, that add to our inner stature." And that quote just says it all, that books open up the world to us. And so even books like The Yearling which is one of my all time favorite books and even though I'm



never going to be able to (well, maybe I will someday, but right now thus far I have not camped in the Everglades of Florida and watched the cranes do their magic dance that they do that's described in the book of The Yearling but because I've read that book and I saw it through Jody, the character's eyes, and I've read the beautiful description it's opened up a world to me that I would not have known otherwise. So that's what Gladys Hunt is talking about, that's what books can do for us, they introduce us to worlds that we might not get to see otherwise.

Sarah: That's so beautiful and really inspiring, I think, for those of us who are in a season of life where maybe getting out in nature we can't do it as often as we'd like. I really love how this is a way for us to help our children develop and cultivate that love for nature...

Greta: Right.

Sarah: ... in a way that we can all do all year round at home very simply just through the pages of the book.

Greta: Right.

Sarah: That's really encouraging.

17:00 Falling in love with nature through picture books

Greta: I feel like for me because I have this desire as a child when I had kids of my own I really wanted to cultivate it in them as well and for me it's been easier to get out in nature with them because I don't have as many of the limitations that were there on me when I was a child. But when my kids were little, I mean, there was a time when I had a 4 year old, a 2 year old, and newborn, and going for a hike that was of any length or any level of difficulty seemed impossible

and so we just might experience nature by going to the park or if I was feeling really ambitious we would go to the nature center where there were paved trails or very easy trails to manage with a bunch of little kids but we also just read a lot of books about nature and we enjoyed falling in love with nature through picture books. I love Mrs. Rumphius.

Sarah: I do, too. Oh my goodness.

Greta: Books like that, books like The Little Island and Make Way for Ducklings those are books that just as a little child you love those sweet animals, you love seeing nature that maybe you don't see in your own neighborhood and that was sort of where I started with my kids as they were little and then we built from there.

Sarah: I think picture books are a really easy way to start. I'm thinking there are so many picture books that really, anything by Robert McCloskey (you mentioned Make Way for Ducklings) One Morning in Maine is another one, they're all taking place outside and the pictures and the text are woven together so beautifully that kind of help you fall in love wherever the book is taking place.

Greta: Right.

Sarah: Blueberries for Sal is another one.

16:30 The Burgess books

Greta: Right. Do you know the books by Thornton Burgess? He wrote The Burgess Bird Book.

Sarah: Yes! He is one of my all time favorite children's authors.

Greta: Right.

Sarah: I absolutely adore him.



Greta: We live near the ocean so we spend a lot of time tide pooling and I get messages from moms all the time who say, 'I live in the middle of the United States we're so far from the ocean how can I show my kids the tide pools?' And one of my favorite books for tide pooling is actually by Thornton Burgess and it's The Burgess Seashore Book and he talks about all these different creatures that live at the seashore, birds (and he's famous for his bird book) but not just birds, crabs, and sand dollars, and sea stars, and he anthropomorphizes them. Is that the correct word?

Sarah: Yeah, yeah.

Greta: Alright, woo! That's a relief. I haven't had all my coffee yet so wasn't sure if I said that word right. OK, so they take on human characteristics and they talk and it's such a great way to experience life at the seashore if you can't get there yourself. So that's been one of my favorite books for my kids when they were little and we still actually use it now and I have a 13 year old.

Sarah: That's so good. Thornton Burgess is one of the authors who I think is best when you're moving from (I always enjoy when I read Thornton Burgess) but especially when you're moving from just reading picture books to wanting to add some longer narrative, I think they're some of the best longer chapter books, beginning chapter books to read aloud. My kids love them at all ages but I love, even though he gives those human characteristics to his characters they still retain so much of what's true about the animals. So you're still learning so much about nature and for someone like me who just felt like I grew up not knowing much about nature at all I've gotten a lot of my education through really delightful books like Thornton Burgess. And we'll have some links to Thornton Burgess books as well.

There are some really good audio versions and there are some ways you can listen and read Thornton Burgess for free online as well, so we'll make sure those are in the Show Notes.

Greta: Oh good! I don't even necessarily know about those audio ones so I'm excited to check those out.

Sarah: I really prefer audio when it's read by a single narrator so I usually prefer to listen on Audible.com. There are some good Audible versions of Thornton Burgess' books at good prices, but there are some free versions on Librivox as well, so if purchasing an Audible version doesn't work there are some free ones as well.

Greta: Oh good!

Sarah: It's just that those free versions on Librivox the chapters are read by different narrators and it depends how much that gets on your nerves. It drives me crazy but some people don't mind it.

21:15 The Holling books

Greta: I'm exactly the same way, I totally get that. And then one last book that younger set to older that I didn't know about when I was a kid but have learned about this author and his amazing books since I became a mom are the books by Holling Clancy Holling and he wrote Minn of the Mississippi which is about a turtle who travels down the Mississippi River and you learn SO much about nature through this book. It's unbelievable. And then it's also a story so I actually use books like Minn of the Mississippi and other books that Holling Clancy Holling wrote for nature study for my kids, like as a science book but it's told in a narrative way so it's so engaging.



Sarah: Yeah, so it feels like it's this fun read aloud time but you're actually getting science in there.

Greta: Exactly.

Sarah: I know Rea Berg from Beautiful Feet Books has written a guide for the Holling C Holling books for geography where parents can use the books just telling the stories and doing some work with maps and thinking about a few things that are told in the stories to use to teach geography. That is a perfect example of a book that can do double or triple duty and just be really delightful.

Greta: It does. And another one that he wrote about the tide pools is Pagoo. There are different people that pronounce it differently but I've always said Pagoo, so I may be wrong but it's about a little crab who lives in the tide pools and that's another great book that teaches you. I use it as a science book and it's a narrative at the same time and I learned more about the life in the tide pools and marine biology from that book than I did from my marine biology class in college so that says a lot.

Sarah: That is fantastic!

Greta: It's pretty amazing. Nature study through books is really wonderful. It's a wonderful tool if you can't get to those places yourself. You can use a book. It's a great way to engage in nature study.

23:00 Books that transport us

Sarah: OK, that is really fantastic because I'm thinking about where our listeners live which is all over the world but let's just take someone who lives near you in southern California. You have a particular climate that looks very different from mine up in the northwest that looks different from

somebody who lives in the Rockies (lucky!) and we all have such different climates and we can't give our children the hands-on really in-person immersion experience in all these different climates but I was just thinking as you were talking about Listening for Lions which is a middle grade novel by Gloria Whelan and it is not at all a book about the climate of Africa but when you're reading the book, the first few chapters that take place in Africa, she does such a good job of placing you in that setting that I feel like I get the experience of maybe what it feels like to live there way more than I can here in Spokane, Washington, and it's what exactly what books do, they transport us and give us this experience that we might not otherwise have a chance to have.

Greta: Right. I mentioned The Yearling so I actually did spend parts of two summers in Florida in the Everglades but the emphasis there wasn't spending time in nature we were immersed in it but that wasn't the emphasis so I didn't get to study the whooping cranes or learn about the different plants that were in the swamp around us and when I read the book The Yearling I was able to experience the nature there in a way that taught me so much, or The Secret Garden when I haven't been to the moors of England and I don't know how cold and lonely and wild it is or how beautiful it is there in the springtime but when I read The Secret Garden I feel like I'm there and I'm learning so much about the nature that is there by simply reading this book and what I've actually done with my kids is we've read different books like The Yearling or The Secret Garden or Swiss Family Robinson is we've taken the books and we've nature journaled through the books and it's been a really great way for us, even though in southern California we have access to mountains, deserts, oceans, it's all



relatively close to us so we have a wide variety of nature but there's still so many things that we don't have here and by reading books we can get into different kinds of nature and even nature journal about it although we haven't experienced it personally we're experiencing it through books.

Sarah: So you nature your way through a story that you're reading. So give me an example, maybe pick one, how would you do that, what would that look like?

25:30 Nature journaling through books

Greta: So we actually did Swiss Family Robinson with our homeschool group as a book club read. Our homeschool group has a book club and we read a book together (all of the kids, all of the families) and then we have a meeting and a book club celebration and we come together and talk about the book so when we were reading Swiss Family Robinson together there is so much nature in that book; animals, plants, minerals that they find, like they find salt and they cure it and they grow flax and they turn it into cloths and sew clothes out of it and from the first chapter I said to the kids, "OK, we have to nature journal through this." So we went through it and as I would read aloud to them I would jot down and those kids that were able to would jot down any animals, plants, birds, any nature thing that they heard we would jot it down on a little scrap piece of paper and then maybe the next day or later on in the week we would get out our nature journals and I would write on a white board all the different things we had heard in that reading and we would look them up and we would find pictures of them, we would find characteristics, and learn about that particular plant or animal and then they would choose what they wanted to

draw from that little list to their nature journal and would write down maybe little bits of information that they found interesting about that plant or animal and a picture of it, it's name, and by the time the book was done there is big chunk of nature that we discovered as we read Swiss Family Robinson.

Sarah: OK, so you would jot them down and then, I'm not sure if you said this and I missed it or not, did they go look those things up in a field guide or online or just through the illustrations of the book, what did that piece look like?

Greta: Yes, we didn't do it while we were reading because when I'm reading aloud, just as I am very bothered by interruptions my kids are bothered by interruptions, so if I were to stop, "Oh, OK flamingo, let's look that up," it would drive them insane. And especially because that book had so much in it, we would have been interrupting ourselves constantly, so we just wrote it down as we read and the next day or a few days later I wrote all of the information down, or all of the names we came up with on a board, like a white board in our house and then we would research them so we would look up characteristics, pictures, because some of the things we had no idea – what does this thing look like? Is this even real? Because some stuff in Swiss Family Robinson definitely learned, that was a really fun observation as we read the book actually because the kids have this incredible list of animals and plants and my kids said there is no way all of these animals lived in the same place. And so it was a great time for them to learn about how sometimes in a book of fiction the author might take liberties and that doesn't mean that the book is not a great read and we can't enjoy it, it actually just made the book a little more fun because we could then laugh



about the time, “Oh sure, that animal wouldn’t live with this animal” but we still learned so much from it.

Sarah: Yeah, that’s really funny. One thing I’ve noticed that (you haven’t said this outright) in what you’ve been saying is that all of the books you’ve mentioned are really good stories on their own so you’re not just reading them because you’re trying to input scientific information about nature into your children but you’re letting them get lost in a really good story where nature is just part of the beautiful backdrop.

Greta: Right, exactly. I think we learn so much more reading a story because we care about the characters, we care about the story and if we’re just reading a textbook it just does not touch our hearts in the same way. And when I can touch my kids’ heart that makes them want to learn more, it makes them care about what they’re learning, and for me, the best way to reach their heart has been through stories.

Sarah: That’s so beautiful. It’s just so true that the way we cultivate an affection is not through transferring facts (so you don’t really hear about people falling in love with biology because they’re reading a biology textbook and they’re taking notes and writing diagrams near as much as you can hear the passion and enthusiasm and what you just said, caring about the characters and caring about what happens in this story.

Greta: Well, the book that I mentioned Pagoo by Holling Clancy Holling that, I took a marine biology class and I thought it was interesting and I learned but I didn’t really love it but when we read Pagoo I fell in love with marine biology in a way that did not happen when I took a class with the professor who had great amounts of knowledge, and we learned a lot in that class but

it did not touch me in the same way as the story about this little crab who’s fighting for his life in the tide pool. It’s just a very different experience when you care about a character even a character that’s just a crab.

31:00 Books to begin with

Sarah: If you were going to encourage a mom who wanted to start being more intentional about bringing books that have a nature element or that can inspire that love of nature in her children which, I know you know a million books and this is probably asking you a tortuous question, but could you ramble off a few of them that you think, besides the ones that you’ve already mentioned that might be a good fit for somebody who just wants to dip her toe in?

Greta: Well, I think some fun ones to start with that wouldn’t even feel to your children or to yourself ‘Oh, there is so much nature in this book it’s overwhelming’ it’s just embedded in the story would be something like Charlotte’s Web or Heidi, those books are steeped in nature and it’s part of the narrative, it’s part of the story and you love those characters. The Call of the Wild by Jack London, my son absolutely loved that book and all my kids did but I had one in particular that loved that and we learned a lot about life in the arctic north that is very different than from our life here and so much of nature in that book. For little kids I love A Tree is Nice which is a real simple book but it’s just such a sweet book about trees which you think how interesting can a book about trees be but that book is so sweet and really caused me as a kid to stop and look around and pay attention to trees instead of pass by them. The Big Snow and we already mentioned Mrs. Rumphius that’s such a great book and Time of Wonder which is a Robert McCloskey book that



I'm not sure as many people know about it as *Make Way for Ducklings* but that is a beautiful book. I remember reading it with my oldest son when he was only about six years old and the book is so beautiful and so moving that both of us had tears in our eyes by the time we were done and I knew "wow" this book is making my six year old have tears in his eyes, this is a great book! It really is touching hearts. So, I love poetry too. Poetry isn't necessarily storybooks but I think poetry is a great way also to introduce nature to kids and there are so many great poems that are great for little kids. The poem *Fog* by Carl Sandburg and he talks about the fog coming into the city on little cat feet and the picture that creates for our kids in their heads, *The Eagle* by Alfred Lord Tennyson, my kids memorized that poem and did a nature journal entry. We learned about eagles, we drew one, and we memorized the poem, and they wrote the poem in their nature journal page. It was such a simple lesson but really made them care about learning about eagles because the way that it's described in the poem is so powerful and beautiful so I think poetry is another great way besides picture books, besides chapter books, there are so many different ways to bring nature into your kids' lives.

34:30 Getting started with nature journaling

Sarah: OK, so that leads into something else that you and I didn't talk about ahead of time but I want to ask your opinion on here anyway.

Greta: OK!

Sarah: So we're talking about nature journaling and I know that for a lot of parents the idea of nature journaling sounds amazing but they don't

really know where to start. It feels really intimidating. Maybe they're not very good about drawing themselves or they don't really know how to get started and so I thought we're talking about storybooks that really capture our children's imaginations and foster that love of nature, what about books that can help our kids learn how to journal, or help us nature journal, and get better at seeing nature and drawing it or making notes about it. For example, one of the books that just popped into my mind, or one of the authors rather is Clare Walker Leslie, are you familiar with her work?

Greta: I don't think so.

Sarah: She's written *The Nature Connection*, *An Outdoor Workbook*, *Keeping a Nature Journal*, *Discover a Whole New Way of Seeing the World Around You*, *The Curious Nature Guide*.

Greta: Oh yes. I have seen those, yes.

Sarah: So in those books she'll have examples of her own nature books or others and some tips on drawing leaves or drawing trees. One of the books my nature-loving 13 year old uses all the time is *The Tree Book for Kids and their Grownups* – have you seen this book?

Greta: No, but it sounds great, I love the title.

Sarah: It is so beautiful. It's basically a field guide, a really beautifully illustrated field guide where there are all these trees and it points out the differences between the bark and the leaves, and how you can figure out which tree is which and the illustrations are beautiful but they're also simple enough that my daughter can replicate them fairly closely and so she's taking a botany class with our homeschool co-op right now and they all go learn about a certain kind of tree and she'll come home and she looks it up in this *Tree*



Book for Kids and their Grownups and paints it or draws it. It's beautiful, you could just sit with that book. That's a non-fiction book you could lose yourself in for a while, it's very, very beautiful. We'll have links to those in the Show Notes as well.

Greta: I want to hang out with your daughter.

Sarah: You two would get along just fine!

Greta: I love her already. Wow. I think that nature journaling is such a great tool for teaching science to kids but you're right it is so intimidating. I actually wrote a blog post called Inspiring the Reluctant Nature Journaler because I think sometimes nature journaling can even be a little bit like enter the realm of snooty-ness, like in the homeschooling circles, "Oh you don't nature journal, wow." Like, are you really a homeschooler?

Sarah: Or, "Do you want to see MY pages?" No thank you because it will make me feel inadequate about my own.

Greta: Exactly! Or you're a mom who doesn't nature journal, well, that's like you're in the lower echelon of homeschooling because you don't nature journal yourself. And I just can't stand that partially because I don't nature journal myself in the traditional way so I had to write a blog post to defend my point of view which is: not everybody is going to nature journal in the same way or enjoy it in the same so I wrote about it (I'll give you the link so you can link to it) because I think there are different ways that kids and adults maybe want to interact with nature and then journal about it. So for me, I really love taking pictures, photographs. My artistic skills are beyond subpar, they're non-existent, and so I love to take photographs of the things we see in nature, I research them and then I share them

with my kids and then I write about them. And that's the way I enjoy nature journaling. And I think if you had a kid who didn't want to nature journal at all because they're so stressed out trying to draw or paint maybe you could offer them the opportunity to take pictures or to even print up pictures from the internet, cut them out, and write about them. There are so many different ways to let kids engage with nature and to nature journal that doesn't necessarily mean they have to draw. Some kids love that but if the kid doesn't or a mom doesn't it's OK, you're allowed to nature journal in other ways. Some books that we love for nature journaling, the book Nature Anatomy and sadly, I do not have the author's name right here in front me. She wrote Nature Anatomy and Farm Anatomy.

Sarah: Julia Rockman? Does that sound right?

Greta: Yes, yes. Those books are phenomenal, they're beautifully illustrated, and they're almost always how I introduce any nature study that we do. We're studying rocks right now so I used her little section about rocks, minerals, and the different parts of the earth to introduce our study of rocks.

Sarah: You are doing really bad things to my Amazon cart right now.

Greta: Sorry.

Sarah: She also has one called Food Anatomy.

Greta: Yes. Your 13 year old is going to love those books. Tell her that is my gift to her.

Sarah: OK, awesome.

Greta: So that's one of our favorite. And I also love for field guides, I love vintage books (that's a whole other side conversation we could have – I really love vintage books).



Sarah: Have you have you back!

Greta: Sorry. The Vintage Golden Books and there's a whole series of field guides, The Golden Field Guides and they've reprinted a lot of them so you don't have to hunt them out on Etsy.com to find the vintage ones just look for even the newer ones and they're great because their illustrations are beautiful so they're fun to just flip through for my kids, and they have them on so many different little – each book focuses on flowers or birds or rocks or pond life and it's great to just have those out and the kids can flip through and look at them so I love to have those around. There's another series of books, Birds Every Child Should Know and they are vintage but I think you can find them on Amazon and they also have different ones like Trees Every Child Should Know.

Sarah: I'm looking these up as you're telling me them as I can see that Birds Every Child Should Know is vintage but it looks like it was reprinted in 2000.

Greta: Perfect. All of us homeschoolers are doing a good job of bringing back books that have been out of print and then so many of us want them that they're bringing them back.

Sarah: Yes, exactly.

Greta: So that's a whole series and that's a great book, too. So just books that are field guides but I think that field guides that are done in a really beautiful way are really attractive to just, like I said, have sitting out and the kids flip through them and really enjoy the beautiful illustrations and that sort of insights an interest and a passion to find those when you go out or if they're not at a place where we live near them to just know that they're out there and to learn about them anyway.

Sarah: I think so too. And I think when you're looking for non-fiction books to help nurture that love of nature in your kids, as I'm flipping through them and looking at samples on Amazon or going into a bookshop or library, and flipping through the pages, I think the question I would ask myself, 'If this was sitting on the coffee table would I just pick it up and flip through it for fun? Could I see myself getting lost here for a little while?'

Greta: Exactly.

Sarah: If it's like encyclopedia-ish and you feel like you just want to get in and get out with information there's probably a book that does it better.

Greta: Right. That's one of the things I think is that it's very helpful to look at photographs of birds online when you're trying to identify a bird, for example, but when you're flipping through The Golden Bird Book which is beautiful illustrations of birds from all over the world it's just a really different feeling. You're captivated by the beauty in a different way and I think that's why I like to have the practicality of the internet is and just the vastness of it is so helpful but I also want to always have these beautiful illustrations created by people who see these animals and plants and create them for us with their own spin, their unique artistic spin, I want to have available as well.

Sarah: So beautiful. Well, we will have links to all of the books we've mentioned today, to Greta's website and both posts that we mentioned in the Show Notes so if you head to ReadAloudRevival.com and you look for episode 62 you'll find it all there. Greta, you are awesome and wonderful. I'm so grateful for you and I'm so



thankful that you joined me today for this conversation.

Greta: Thanks for having me, I can't wait to come back and talk about vintage books.

Sarah: We'll do it. We'll do it. We're going to get lots of requests anyway.

Greta: I love you, Sarah, thanks for having me. It's great to be with you.

43:30 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.

Child1: [Mom: Tell them your name] Axle. [Mom: How old are you Axle?] Three. [Mom: And what state do you live in right now?] Oregon. [Mom: Very good. What was the name of the book that you like the best?] The Sneetches. [Mom: What story inside of that book The Sneetches is your favorite?] What Was I Afraid Of? [Mom: What Was I Afraid Of? Yes. And what's your favorite part about that book.] The pale green pants. [Mom: You like the pale green pants? Very good. Now we're going to have Gunner come tell us about his book. Very good, thank you.]

Child2: [Mom: How old are you?] Six. [Mom: Where do you live?] Oregon. [Mom: What's your favorite book?] ** Horse and His Boy

Because the horse and the lion attack. [Mom: Very good. That's your favorite part of the book?] Yes. [Mom: You want to tell anybody else about any parts of the books so that they will read it, they'll get excited about it and they'll want to read it?] The lion attack. [Mom: The lion attack. OK.]

Child3: My name is Greta. [Mom: OK, how old are you?] Eight. [Mom: K, what state do you live in?] Oregon. [Mom: OK, and what's your favorite book?] The Warrior Series. [Mom: Oh, and what's great about The Warrior Series that you want to tell other kids about?] The wildlife of cats.

Child4: Hi, I'm Madeleine, I'm three years old. [Mom: And where do you live?] Edmonton. And my favorite book is Frog and Toad because they're silly. [Mom: Good job.]

Child5: Hello, my name is Willow. I'm five years old, I live in Georgia. My favorite book is Elsa and Anna because Elsa makes ice and snow and because Anna is the only one who knows Elsa's secret, ice and snow.

Child6: My name is Aiden. I'm eight years old. I live in Georgia. My favorite books are The Hardy Boys Series because I like mysteries and the Hardy Boys have motorcycles and boats and they have friends to help them along in the mysteries.

Child7: [Mom: What's your name?] ** Judah** [Mom: And how old are you?] I'm two. [Mom: Yes, and where do you live?] Georgia. [Mom: And your favorite book is ...?] **Inaudible**

Child8: My name is Mary, I am six years old. My favorite book is Pumpkin, Pumpkin because it was the first book I read.

Child9: [Mom: What's your name?] My name is Ezi. [Mom: Where do we live?] We live in Georgia. [Mom: What's your favorite book?] The Mixed Up Chameleon. [Mom: What do you love about The Mixed up Chameleon?] That he eats flies...

Child10: Hello, my name is Trammel, I live in Atlanta, Georgia. My favorite book is Sherlock Holmes by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It's my



favorite book because it has lots of mysteries and it's set in the 1890's.

Child11: [Mom: What's your name?] *** [Mom: How old are you?] ** I'm Two!* [Mom: Where do we live?] ** Georgia* [Mom: What's your favorite book?] Brown Bear, Brown Bear. [Mom: Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?] Yes. [Mom: How come you like Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?] I love it. [Mom: Oh, you love it?] Yes, I love it.

Child12: Hello, my name is Ashley, I am nine years old. I live in Bagdad, Kentucky and my favorite book is Heidi. My favorite part is when Clara comes to the mountains and Heidi says, "This is the mountains" and Clara is so happy that she gets to come for a few weeks.

Sarah: Thank you kids. Oh my goodness, I love those messages so very much. If your kids would like to leave a message for the Read Aloud Revival and be aired on the podcast, all you have to do is go to ReadAloudRevival.com, scroll to the bottom of the page and you'll see how easy it is to do that. We've also got another button there now and that's for questions from you, the parents. And actually your kids can leave questions there too. Basically, what we're doing is collecting questions for Q&A podcast episodes and we'll just answer those, me and my awesome Read Aloud Revival team, Kortney Garrison and Kara Anderson and myself will answer those questions on an upcoming episode of the Read Aloud Revival podcast. Thank you so much for listening. Hey, you mean the world to us. If you have not grabbed your free Read Aloud Revival book list, what are you waiting for? Go to ReadAloudRevival.com and grab it there. It's our list of favorite read alouds that we think will make reading a loud just a wonderfully delightful time in your home. We're so happy to put that book list

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