

EPISODE **67**

Reading For the Bigger Story

Guest: Jonathan Rogers

- 2 Meet Jonathan Rogers
- 2 In this Episode
- 3 Listening Guide
- 4 Quotes and Questions
- 5 Show Notes

Meet Jonathan Rogers



Jonathan Rogers calls his novels fantasy adventure stories told in an American accent. The author of the absolutely fabulous *Wilderking Trilogy* and *The Charlatan's Boy*, Jonathan combines humor and storytelling to create middle grade novels that are perfect for fans of Tolkien or Twain.

Jonathan received an undergraduate degree from Furman University and holds a PhD in seventeenth century literature from Vanderbilt University, which actually makes him Dr. Rogers. In addition to his writing work he is head of Program at New College Franklin in Franklin,

Tennessee, and teaches creative writing both online and in live action seminars.

In This Episode

Alison joins Sarah to talk to Jonathan Furman about The Wilderking series, and the inspiration behind some of the series' characters. Jonathan and Sarah also discuss whether protagonists needs to be good role models for our kids, and a bit about Narnia!

The Listening Guide

Use this guide to skip to parts that most interest you, or listen to the entire podcast.

- 3:55 Alison is here!
- 6:35 Influenced by Twain
- 9:26 Feechie Culture
- 11:25 How Jonathan started writing
- 13:05 The power of story
- 16:23 Protagonists as examples
- 21:28 Katherine Paterson, and 'eavesdropping on the soul'
- 23:14 The moral benefits of stories
- 25:39 Ramona and Beezus
- 27:04 'A Sense of Wonder'
- 28:05 How Narnia shows us the world
- 31:18 Magic and fear in children's books

“A good children’s book dramatizes adventure and makes it seem the sort of life that nobody would want to miss out on. It doesn’t just tell the reader what’s right it helps the reader to want what’s right.”

- Jonathan Rogers

Quotes and Questions

* **A sense of calling ...**

“I’m not really a child but I don’t have a driver’s license, I’m kind of stuck right here in this in-between place. You have a sense of a calling but there’s not much you can do about it, right now, it feels like. And so living in that space is kind of where Aidan comes from, right? He has to decide how is he going to relate to the grownups in his life who maybe they’ve taught him the right things but they don’t always live what they’ve taught him.”

In what ways can we give our older kids freedom and support in pursuing their passions? And how can we set examples for our teens, who are learning so much about who they want to become?

* **Protagonists as role models.**

“I remember some books I read when I was little where everybody was doing the right thing and that was fine but nothing about it made me wish I were that person.”

Do you let your kids read books where the protagonists make mistakes, or are behaving in a way you would not want your child to replicate? Sharing books like that with our kids can open up some good conversations.

* **Practice for moral living.**

“... Seek first to understand and then be understood, and books give us a lot of practice and understanding. You don’t even have the option of being understood while you’re reading, right? All you do is understand. I can’t make this character understand me - I can just try to understand them. And that’s great practice for moral living.”

Have you read Katherine Paterson’s “Sense of Wonder?” There are so many wonderful lessons about reading in that book!

* **Awaken to our world.**

“Why would you have a swamp goblin when you have alligators?” and I was like, “I don’t know. Good point.”

Reading fantasy can help us awaken to our own amazing world! Need some ideas for good fantasy books to share with your kids? Listen to [Episode 41 with Carolyn Leiloglou!](#)

Show Notes

Books from today's episode:

- [The Bark of the Bog Owl](#)
- [100 Cupboards](#)
- [The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn](#)
- [Tom Sawyer](#)
- [The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#)
- [The Great Gilly Hopkins](#)
- [The Best Christmas Pageant Ever](#)
- [A Sense of Wonder](#)
- [The Charlatan's Boy](#)
- [The Secret of the Swamp King](#)
- [The Terrible Speed of Mercy](#)
- [The Way of the Wilderking](#)
- [The World According to Narnia](#)

Other links from today's show:

- [RAR #44: Magic and fear in Children's Books, N.D. Wilson](#)

To find more resources to help you build your family culture around books, visit ReadAloudRevival.com.