



RAR 81 – Katherine Paterson

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.

Sarah: Hello, hello, Sarah Mackenzie here. You've got episode 81 of the Read-Aloud Revival. This is an episode I have been waiting for. I have to tell you that I got to talk to somebody who is one of my heroes and the reason why is because she has written some of the most exquisite essays and pieces on reading and writing for children. When it comes to somebody who really understands the spirit of a child and the heart of a child and what a child gets from reading stories and encounters when they read stories, is Katherine Paterson. I have a copy of her book here called, *A Sense of Wonder* and it is dog-eared to the max. Now there's some bad news and some good news; the bad news is her collections of essays are out of print, the good news is you're going to get some goodness today on the podcast, and I can't wait to share it with you. Before we dive in I want to remind you that if you have not gotten the Read-Aloud Revival booklist you definitely want it. Over 70,000 families trust the Read-Aloud Revival booklist. This is the best place you can go to find out what to read next with your kids and make sure it's a win. Get it for free at RARbooklist.com.

Katherine Paterson is the two-time winner of the National Book Award and the Newbery Medal. She's authored many of the books you are probably familiar with from your own childhood. Like, *Bridge to Terabithia*, *Jacob Have I Loved*, *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, and others. My favorite works of hers are not actually her books for children (don't tell her I said that!), my favorite

works of hers are her essays where she shares her thoughts on reading and writing books for children. Unfortunately, those essays of Ms Paterson's are out of print. You can still find used copies. You want to look for titles like, *A Sense of Wonder*, *The Invisible Child*, and *Gates of Excellence*. I have high hopes that Penguin will decide to reprint *Invisible Child* -- maybe if enough of us make noise they will. I really think that Katherine Paterson's essays are exquisite. One in particular is a masterpiece. Now, we had a fantastic conversation, I really enjoyed my time with her. But one of the things I kept doing was quoting from one particular chapter in *A Sense of Wonder* the one I think is a masterpiece. It's called, *Yes, But is it True?* You know when you read a story to your children and they ask you afterwards, "Is it true?" Well, maybe we should think twice before we tell them "No, the author made this one up." Instead of trying to just parse out my favorite parts of this essay I got permission from Katherine Paterson to read the chapter in its entirety to you here on the podcast. We're going to kick things off today by me reading that chapter aloud, then you're going to get to hear my conversation with Katherine Paterson. If you'd like a transcript of this episode (and I have a hunch once you hear this chapter you're going to want a transcript) go to ReadAloudRevival.com and look for this episode with Katherine Paterson, it's episode 81. OK, you ready?

3:52 *Yes, But is it True?* by Katherine Paterson

A friend sent me recently a Miss Peach cartoon strip. At the left is a huge hand-lettered sign that says "Arthur answers the eternal questions" with a large arrow pointing toward Arthur who is being



questioned by a ponytailed seeker of wisdom. “Arthur,” she asks, “is there anything worthwhile in life but truth and beauty?” “Yes,” he replies, “there is love. Also Chinese food.” I do not need to tell you that the reason my friend sent me this cartoon is unrelated to my devotion to truth, beauty, and love. I am, in fact, distinctly uncomfortable in the face of eternal questions, yet, there is one eternal question which, I as a writer of fiction for children and young people, am often asked by children and never asked by adults. “Is it true?” the child asks, “is your story true?” “Ha,” you say, “we adults don’t ask that question because we know you write fiction and fiction is the act of feigning or imagining that which does not exist or is not actual.” Ergo fiction by definition is not true. I’m being unfair. Some of you are wiser than that. Although you may never voice a question to the writer you will come to one of my novels, or to anyone’s novel with that same question, is it true? And my answer for you is the same answer that I give the child who asks. “I hope so, I meant for it to be true, I tried hard to make it so.” I’m a graduate of a small Presbyterian college. We had a college president who was a brilliant man full of affirmisms for every occasion. One of Dr. Liston’s affirmisms has stuck with me through the years. It is this: when the Greeks decided to get practical they began running restaurants and shining shoes, by which, I think he meant that civilization as well as education takes a downward spiral when it ceases to ask what is truth and concerns itself primarily with what is measurable. In the beginning of all things was God. And in the beginning of human consciousness was the story. In an address to the Royal Society of Literature Kipling once said that, “fiction is truth’s elder sister.” Obviously, no one in the world knew what truth was till someone had told a story.” For

proof of what Kipling says, “We need only to look at our own Biblical heritage and find that in the beginning there was a story.” Perhaps the more Orthodox among us would hesitate to say that it was the story that shaped the truth but surely it has been the vehicle for the truth for as long as the human race can remember, and such a delightful vehicle. It is almost a truism that the most exciting words in the English language are once upon a time. But for those of you who are suspicious of delight let me remind you of the practical value of the story. Bruno Bettelheim in his book, *The Uses of Enchantment* advances the idea, which, though not original with him is one that he is a psychiatrist eloquently champions, that the child who hears fairytales is able to face the dark and wild side of his or her nature and to comprehend on an unconscious level the incomprehensible adult world. Moreover, the fairytale gives the child hope that he will succeed, overcoming the giants within and without, that he will live happily ever after. Bettelheim does not feel that other kinds of stories have the same elemental power as the traditional fairytale. This is a point I would want to argue but the inarguable point is that stories will not have any power if they are never heard or read which brings me back to a concern about education. Why in places of higher learning is the reading of fiction considered some kind of aberration? A recent issue of *Psychology Today* told about a student at Princeton University who finally transferred. He felt he was socially ostracized at Princeton because in his free time he would read novels. You mustn’t embarrass college students much less college graduates by asking them what novels they have read in the past year, and yet, for those who are seeking truth, which is nearer the truth? Stone and Churches statistically



factual description of the average adolescent girl or Tolstoy's picture of Natasha at the ball?

8:19 'Eavesdrop on her soul'

Fiction allows us to do something that nothing else quite does. It allows us to enter fully into the lives of other human beings. But, you may argue, these are not real people they are fictitious, merely the figments of one writer's imagination. At this point the other side of the brain takes over. There is nothing mere about Natasha. We know with what Walter de la Mare calls 'the compelling inward ring' that Natasha is true. She is more real to us than the people we live with everyday because we have been allowed to eavesdrop on her soul. A great novel is a kind of conversion experience. We come away from it changed and just as a season with Natasha and Andre and Pierre may make us wiser and more compassionate people, a season with Heathcliff or Jude Folly has the power to shake us at the roots. The fake characters we read about will evaporate like the morning dew, but the real ones, the true ones, will haunt us for the rest of our days. We Christians have done a lot of preaching about sin, much of it incomprehensible and much of it doing nothing except laying on guilt and despair. Part of this is, I believe, because rational argument rarely convinces sinners and never saves them. But the other part is that everybody talking about Hell ain't a been there, to paraphrase the spiritual. Unlike our Lord we have not been able or willing to descend into Hell so our words of grace seep out bland and bloodless. Perhaps this is why the tax collectors and harlots are closer to the Kingdom of Heaven than we. But those of us who have followed Frodo on his quest have had a vision of the true darkness. We know that we, like him, would have

never gotten up the steep slope of Mount Doom had the faithful Sam not flung us on his back and carried us up crawling at the last. We know, too, that we never would have parted with the baneful ring of power had the piteous Gollum torn it from our bleeding finger and, in the effort, fallen screeching into the abyss, clutching his damned treasure and ours. When we read fiction that is true we do not say, "There but for the grace of God, go I" rather, "Here I am." For in such writing we recognize our naked selves with a shudder or a laugh, sometimes quite wonderfully with both. Over 20 years ago a college English professor said something that has bothered me ever since. He wondered aloud if it was possible to describe Christian experience effectively except by fantasy or science fiction. I've tried to fight this view because I don't write fantasy or science fiction. But he may be right. I say this as one haunted by visions of the great lion Aslan who's bright goodness never fails to flood my spirit with awe and joy. I was once very much involved with a young man, who when I tried to share with him my love for C. S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* said earnestly that he felt it was wrong of Lewis to distort the Bible in this way. I should have known at that moment that the relationship was doomed. Aslan is not a distortion but a powerful symbol of the Lion of Judah which can nourish our spirits as the reasoned arguments of a thousand books of theology can never do. We can dare face the dark because we've had a shining glimpse of the light. If fiction is true for the reader of it, what about the writer? Is he or she out there laughing at those of us who have become so bewitched by the mere arrangement of words upon a page? I read recently that after Hardy had finished *Jude the Obscure* he never wrote another novel. He turned instead to writing poetry, so appalled we may guess by the vision



of darkness he had created that he dared not go deeper into it himself. So it can be a dangerous business. A friend of mine who writes history books said to me that he thought that the two creatures most to be pitied were the spider and the novelist, their lives hanging by a thread spun out of their own guts. But in some ways I think writers of fiction are the creatures most to be envied because who else besides the spider is allowed to take that fragile thread and weave it into a pattern. What a gift of grace to be able to take the chaos from within and from it to create some semblance of order. I only know one writer really well and since she is the one making these observations I must, before I am through, apply what I have been saying to her.

11:44 'Among the catacombs of childhood's fears'

I can't tell you exactly when this story began, somewhere among the catacombs of childhood's fears but it began to grow in the early months of 1974 along with a tumor which, after a lifetime of blooming health, invaded my body. The cancer was removed, the prognosis hopeful, but by that time I had heard the bell toll. I could no longer pretend to be immortal. Before either I or my family had had time to recuperate from my illness our David's closest friend, oh winsome, humorous little girl of eight was struck and killed by lightning. The two events were almost more than we could bear. Every time John or I left town the children were sure we'd never return. I was known to wonder myself. David went through all the classical stages of grief and invented a few, including one in which he was sure that God was punishing him by killing off his loved ones, one by one. He'd even worked out the order of demise. I was second on the list right after his younger

sister. In the middle of all this I went to one of the regularly monthly meetings at the Children's Book Guild in Washington. By some fluke I was seated at the head of table with the guest speaker who was Ann Durell, the editor for children's books at Dutton. During the polite amenities at the beginning of the meal one of my fellow guild members said, "How are the children?" to which, as you all know, the answer is "Fine." I muffed it. I began to tell really how the children were, which lead me and my rather startled dinner mates into the long tale of David's grief. When I finally shut up the guest of honor said quietly, "I know this sounds just like an editor but you ought to write that story." I thought I couldn't. The rule is, as you may know, that a writer should wait 15 years before writing about an incident of personal history. It hadn't been five months. But I began to try. It became a way of dealing with my inability to comfort my child. After many false starts I began to write a story in pencil in a used spiral notebook so that if it came to nothing I could pretend that I'd never been really serious about it. Gradually I was encouraged by the emergence of 32 smudged pages to transfer from the tentative pencil to the typewriter and the book moved forward, gathering momentum, only to become absolutely frozen. I found I couldn't let my fictional child die. I wrote around the death, I even cleaned the kitchen, anything to prevent this death from taking place. Finally, I confessed to a close friend of mine what was happening. "I guess I can't go through Lisa's death again," I concluded. She looked me straight in the eye. "I don't think it's Lisa's death you can't face, Katherine. I think it's yours." I went back to my study and closed the door. If it was Lisa's death I couldn't face that was one thing but if it was mine, by God, I would face it. I finished the chapter and, within a few weeks, the draft, with



cold sweat rolling down my arms. And I did what no professional writer would ever do. I mailed it off to my editor before the sweat had evaporated. I wish for every writer in the world an editor like Virginia Buckley. She did not brush aside that fragile thread spun from my guts. “I laughed through the first two-thirds” she told me, “and cried through the last.” So it was all right, she understood as she always has what I was trying to do. But a thread is not a story and in children’s novels we still expect a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. And this is what Virginia gently prodded me into weaving.

14:45 'Spilled milk into ice cream'

I love revisions. Where else in life can spilled milk be transformed into ice cream? We can’t go back and revise our lives but being allowed to go back and revise what we have written comes closest. By now, I had some distance from the book. My heart had stopped pounding, my palms were dry, my head cool, my eye cooler. I was far enough away from the facts to see the truth from which they sprang. I was now ready to write fiction. If the early drafts had been conceived in fear and grief this revision was born in joy. In the mere rearrangement of words upon a page I had passed through a valley of the shadow and come out singing. In fact, when I sent Virginia the revision I wrote her that I was sure love was blind for I had just mailed her a flawless manuscript. My vision, you’ll be glad to know, has since been restored. I no longer believe that *Bridge to Terabithia* is without flaws. But to this day when a child asks me if it is true, I answer, trying not to tremble too conspicuously, “Oh, I hope so.” On 95, just before the Delaware line there is a road sign I invariably look for. In the 14 years I’ve

travelled that road this one sign has been the high point of an otherwise monotonous super highway. The sign reads “Northeast Rising Sun.” For years I had a fantasy that I would simply turn off the freeway at that point and drive until I found that Shangri-la, that Brigadoon of Maryland named by an ancient poet, “Northeast Rising Sun.” Then one day as I was smiling at my sign a horrible thought struck. Suppose there was no such place? Suppose there was no village nestled in the eastern hills answering to that wonderful name. I didn’t want to know but that ubiquitous left side of my brain decided to ferret out the truth. I heard myself asking my husband, quite against my will, if it was possible that Northeast Rising Sun was not actually the name of a town. He was driving and entirely missed the quavering tone, replying very matter-of-factly that he thought it wasn’t. Again, I let it lie. After all, husbands aren’t always right, even mine. But the demon of brutal realism refused to give up. It drove me at last to a large map of the state and forced me to look in the northeast corner. Alas, as I had suspected, but was so long to loathe to acknowledge there is no such place on the map as Northeast Rising Sun. There are, rather, two towns: Northeast on the east side of 95 and Rising Sun on the west. My poetic sign board was a fiction. And fiction, though it may be true, is not the truth anymore than a sign post is a place. But it can be a sign post. Fiction is not the Gospel but it can be a voice crying in the wilderness and for the writer and the reader who know grace it will not be a cry of despair but a cry of hope, a voice crying in our wilderness, “Prepare the way of the Lord.”

Pretty amazing, right? I love, love, love that chapter. And I was thrilled that Ms Paterson agreed to let me read it to you here on the



podcast. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. Again, you can grab the transcript for that at ReadAloudRevival.com, episode 81. You'll actually get the transcript for this whole podcast because she wanted to come to the Read-Aloud Revival and chat with us. I can't wait to share that conversation with you. So let's get right to that.

18:09 Tackling hard topics

Sarah: I started my conversation with Ms. Paterson by asking her about how she approaches tackling hard things. So many of Katherine Paterson's books, *Jacob Have I loved*, *Great Gilly Hopkins*, *Bridge to Terabithia*, *Master Puppeteer*, *Gip*, all of them basically, they tackle really deep, hard subjects. She is not afraid of going to where it's heavy and I ask her about that. This is what she said.

Katherine: Even when I think I'm starting to write a funny book, which I thought I was starting out to write a funny book when I wrote *Gilly Hopkins*, but by the time you're reading my books you're old enough to think about a whole spectrum of the human experience, not just happily ever after. And, I do get worried when I hear parents bragging about their kid is so smart and reads so well that she's reading, *Bridge to Terabithia* when she's 6 years old or 7 years old and I think, 'No, no, no. You need happily ever after when you're that age. You don't need *Bridge to Terabithia*. There's an emotional readiness as well as an intellectual readiness and you need to make sure that your kid is ready emotionally for the death of another child.

Sarah: Your collection of essays, *A Sense of Wonder on Reading and Writing Books for Children* my copy is easily the most dog-eared, underlined, book dartsed, bookmarked book in my

entire house. I love this, this is straight out of page 68-69, and you wrote: "The fairytale gives the child hope that he will succeed, overcoming the giants within, and without, that he will live happily ever after." And then you also wrote, "Fiction allows us to do something nothing else quite does. It allows us to enter fully into the lives of other human beings, to eavesdrop on her soul." And I thought, 'Oh my goodness, that's it.' One more thing that you wrote is, "We can dare to face the dark because we've had a shining glimpse of the light." And that I thought, that, really speaks to the heart of a fairytale and what that does in the life of a child. It gives them a shining glimpse of the light.

Katherine: I would hope. Even in my novels which are definitely not fairytales you would have a glimpse of the light. I don't mean to leave a child hopeless at the end of a book because I'm not a hopeless person; I'm a person of profound hope. Your hope is not that nothing bad will ever happen but that there's somehow you can survive; not only survive but grow, and learn, and triumph through the hard takes of life.

Sarah: I really feel like the best writers, especially writers for children, always leave the reader with this sense of hope. And that's something that struck me, I had read *Bridge to Terabithia* as a child and then reading, well as a teen, then reading it as an adult, what struck me is that there was such profound sadness, I mean, I'm in bed, I know what's going to happen, I know the story, I'm still weeping, and then I close the book at the end and it's just this sense of hope and light and love and goodness, and I think it takes just a really skilled writer to be able to do that, to be able to sort of span that breadth of emotion in the reader. It's a beautiful gift. As a reader, it's a



beautiful gift to be able to have that experience with a writer through a story.

Katherine: Thank you, because of course it's what I want to do. You send the book out and it's not yours anymore it's the reader's book. And so, for some readers, that experience of hope does not come true and that's sad but the reader gets to choose. I don't get to choose how readers get to read or experience a book, and in some ways, it makes the point when a reader tells me how they experienced a book, it just makes the book richer for me.

22:01 Books as assignments

Sarah: I would love to know your thoughts on teachers and parents assigning your books and that sort of idea of "read this book" ... yes, I love your laughter because I know you've got something to say about this!

Katherine: When I go to a school, I say to them, "Now, your teacher may tell you what this book means" and of course, all the teachers at the back are looking a little uncomfortable because of course they know exactly what the book means, "and if she or he does then you need to know that for the test. So just figure out what that is and use it for the test. But, that is not the meaning of the book. The meaning of the book is the one that you decide it means for you; and if it has no meaning for you that's where it is, if it has quite a different meaning from the teacher that's the true meaning."

Sarah: I don't know if it was in an interview I watched online but you had said you were always terrified of a talk of people using books. I mean, we actually really undermine the power of the story when we think we can use a book to

improve a person or a child, especially a child when it's an adult doing this to a child, right?

Katherine: A story is open-ended. The reader gets to decide what the meaning is. And you have to let go and trust the reader. And the reader may disappoint you or the reader may absolutely astound you.

Sarah: I don't remember where I heard this. I know it was an author who said writing the book was only ... maybe it was you, in fact, "writing the book is only half of it, the reader brings the other half."

Katherine: Oh, absolutely! I've probably written somewhere ...

Sarah: I probably have it underlined.

Katherine: ... you've probably read it already ... I tell when I go to a school, I say, "How many of you all play a musical instrument or sing?" Usually a number of the kids will raise their hands. And I say, "OK, when your man conductor hands you a piece of music is that music? Of course not, it's just black squiggles on a white page. And it's not music until you sit down with your instrument or you stand there with your voice and turn it into music." And I said, "My books are the same, they're just black squiggles on a white page, sandwiched between two covers, to stand on a shelf gathering dust until you pick it up and bring your life experience and your ability to read and your imagination to the book, then it becomes a story."

24:22 Don't go looking for role models

Sarah: I know that some parents and teachers may be a little afraid of handing books to their kids that they think that this child's not a great



role model for my kids and one of the things you've written in your essays is that children don't go to novels looking for role models. You write, "They may go for adventure, for escape, for laughter, or for a more serious concern to understand themselves, to understand others, to rehearse the experiences that someday they may live out in the flesh, but they don't go for role models. When they go to a serious novel they expect to find truth and everyone knows that role models are ideals, not realities. They want hope rooted in reality, not wishful thinking." I love that so much because I think there is something a little dishonest about handing a child a book that we think is going to improve them, like our child's a project, right?

Katherine: Please deliver me from books to improve. And the problem there, you see, is you don't trust your readers. All of us know of books that have profoundly changed us but it's because we chose to be changed. We have to cooperate with it and if somebody says, "OK, read this book and you'll become a good person" immediately, your act will throw up and it's very hard to love somebody who's judging you and deciding you need this book because you're not good enough. We're in desperate need to be accepted exactly the way we are and the only way we can improve by being assured that we're loved the way we are and then we want to be worthy of that love, but you don't start working to get the love. You need to love to just get going.

Sarah: Oh man, isn't that the truth? I have a book coming out in March of 2018 called *The Read-Aloud Family: Making Meaningful and Lasting Connections with Your Kids* and in one of the chapters we talk about the importance of having conversations about books. One of the things I was talking about in the chapter was, look, if you

want to just find out if your kid read a book, you can ask them what happened, but you're not going to have a good, meaty discussion and you're going to rob the story of its power. The best questions about stories are open-ended. So if you're asking a question about a book and you know the right answer to it that's not really a great question about the book, you're not going to have a good, meaty conversation.

Katherine: Absolutely. You are so wise. That is absolutely the truth. I remember when my son, David, was in the fourth grade, I was one of the volunteers at the book discussion group, what they called the great book series, and when they were training us that's exactly what they said. They said, "If you know the answer to the question, it's not a real question. You have to ask a question that you don't know the answer to and then you're engaged in the discussion of the book."

27:05 Reading books differently

Sarah: Well, it makes you read a book differently, right? I remember reading books differently when I knew I would have to take a test on it. I read books for trying to sort facts into my head so that I could regurgitate those facts but when I'm as an adult with book club, let's say, and I go to discuss a book with my friends, I don't read that same way. I read so much more deeply. I think books have the power then to transform me and my relationships and my understanding of the world, and my understanding and ability to be kind, and empathetic, and that I can understand people who are different than I am because we're not reading for that same question/answer type.

Katherine: I belong to a book club which I find very helpful because (I can't remember the book)



we read this book and I really didn't like it. Usually I like the books with adventures and I thought, 'I just didn't get this.' And then a member who hadn't been there for ages started talking about the book and I thought, 'Oh. I really didn't get this book!' And she began talking about it and I began to appreciate it in a way that I had not at all when I was reading it to be ready for book club. And I thought it helps us to talk about the books and to share what we've learned from it and then, again, it expands our own meaning and our own understanding of the book.

Sarah: When I think about the books that I read as a child for assignments those are never books that I wanted to, as soon as I was done with taking the test or writing the book report, I thought, 'Oh, I have to read that again' I never thought that as a child. You just thought, 'Thank goodness that's over!' As an adult when I go to a book club, I remember talking with a friend about *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr...

Katherine: Oh, I love that book.

Sarah: Me too! And when after I talked to a friend about it, I thought, 'Oh wait, I've got to go back and read that scene again' because when she was talking about the thoughts that she had during a particular scene, I thought, 'Woah, I missed that.' So I went back and read it again and the thought struck me: this is how we should have kids engage with books. What would happen if we started treating our kids' reading lives more like our own? They would catch this sort of, feverish enthusiasm for books that we have when we're free to engage in them without an expectation of getting a question right or wrong.

Katherine Paterson recently wrote a new book, *My Brigadista Year* put out just last month by

Candlewick Press. One of the reasons she came to the Read-Aloud Revival was to tell us about it. In this next part of the podcast Ms Paterson is going to talk, just a little, about *My Brigadista Year* and this may be one of the books you'll want to preview before handing to your kids. In fact, I'd recommend that you do read it before handing it to your kids so that you're ready for the questions and conversations that might arise. *My Brigadista Year* is a historical novel telling the story of a 13 year old Cuban teenager who volunteers for Fidel Castro's National Literacy Campaign and travels into the impoverished countryside to teach others how to read. There's nothing inappropriate or graphic in the book that causes me to recommend that you read it first, but it does have some political undertones and you might want to be prepared for those. I asked Ms Paterson why she wrote it and this is what she told me.

Katherine: I wrote it because I found out ... I've been to Cuba a couple of times and I was about to go to Cuba again and Mary Leahy, I ran into her at an event and I told her I was planning to go to Cuba and she said, "Oh, I'm so jealous. I've never been there, I've always wanted to go there. But you know, when I began working with the adult basic education in Central Vermont, I really tried to do things that I learned from the Cuban Literacy Campaign of 1961." I've never heard of a Literacy Campaign of 1961. So I thought, 'Well, I'm going to be talking to people who are working literacy over in Central South America I should find out about this Cuban Literacy Campaign. Well, it was astounding. It's astounding, the story of it. We know bad things about Fidel Castro, we know bad things about Cuba. But we don't know that he had this Literacy Campaign and in one year turned Cuba into a totally literate nation. I was looking at the



latest statistics, they're very slight, but Cuba either has 99.7, 99.8, or 99.9 literacy today. We have 84% literacy.

Sarah: Ms Paterson was so intrigued by this 1961 Cuban Literacy Campaign that she wrote a book about it. This historical fiction novel, *My Brigadista Year*, it's available now wherever books are sold.

31:52 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 Matt and I'm 5 years old and I live in Georgia. My favorite book is *Mrs. Piggle Wiggle* because there are lots of kids who have lots of bad thing that [**] like when Mrs. Piggle Wiggle tells all their parents what to do for the kids. My favorite clear is the selfish color because Dick's mom has to write stickers on his sleeve and he's like, "Ah, why do you have to do that to me?"

Child2: Hello, my name is Iona. I am 9 years old and I live in Nolensville, Tennessee. I have lots of favorite books but one of them is *Little Men* by Louisa May Alcott. One of my favorite parts is when Daisy gets her new little kitchen then Daisy and Nan have a dinner party and invite some of the boys and then Tommy steals all the cakes. When the other boys chase him he throws the cakes at them. It is just so funny, it makes the girls so mad because they made all those cakes and the boys ruined their dinner party.

Child3: Hi, my name is Stanley. I am 6 ½ years old. I live in Utah and my favorite book is *Wings of Fire*.

Child4: Hi, my name is Henry. I'm 9 years old. I live in Utah and I like *Wings of Fire*. I like *Wings of Fire* because every book is from a different dragon's point of view.

Child5: Hi, my name is Lydia. I'm from Kirkland, Washington. My favorite book is *The True Princess* it's by Angela Hunt. I'm 6.

Child6: Hi, my name is Anna. I'm 4 years old and I live in Washington State, and my favorite book is *Firebirds*. He lives for the stop sign.

Child7: Hi, my name is Iris and I live in California. My favorite book is *Red* [**inaudible**]. I like it because Mattia tried to find the master mail. My age is 7.

Child8: Hello, my name is Peter. I live in California. My favorite book is *Harry Potter* because I like Harry Potter and I like witches and wizards. My age is 10.

Child9: I'm Angelisa. I live in California. And my favorite book is *Gigi*. I like Gigi because she thinks about the life she's the only royal person.

Sarah: I hope you enjoyed this episode with Katherine Paterson. She's such a gem. I had a lot of fun with this episode. Don't forget you can get the transcript for this episode. Go to ReadAloudRevival.com, look for episode 81 and make sure you grab your booklist while you're there. It's a free booklist that will make sure that the next book you choose to read aloud with your kids is a win. You can get that at ReadAloudRevival.com as well or just head to RARbooklist.com. I'll be back next week with another great interview with a special guest. But for now, go make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books. Thanks for listening.