



RAR 86 – 5 Authors You Might Not Know About (But Probably Want To!)

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.

Hello, hello, Sarah Mackenzie here. You've got episode 86 of the Read-Aloud Revival podcast, really glad to have you joining me today. Today, I want to introduce you to five authors and illustrators you might not know about but you probably want to. You may know some of these, but I'm hoping to delight you with at least one brand new author or illustrator. And, I don't mean that the authors or illustrators are brand new but I don't hear them talked about much and I don't see their works being shared quite as widely. I don't think I've mentioned these particular books on the podcast much, if at all. So, on today's show I want to highlight a few authors who I think are making really good, compelling work for kids that you might not have read with your kids, yet. Some of these may not be new to you but I'm hoping at least one will be, and will be a good fit for your family's reading stack. As always, all the books and links will be in the Show Notes. You can find those at ReadAloudRevival.com/86, so you don't need to keep track of those on your own. And, actually, speaking of the Show Notes, do go check those out because we're experimenting with a new format we think you're really going to like—there are time stamps there for different parts of the podcast so you can go back and find something you want to hear again without having to re-listen to the entire podcast, or you can just skip ahead to something you want to hear in particular. We have downloadable

transcripts now for the podcast. We've listed some of the best take-aways from the Show, there in the Show Notes. So, you go to ReadAloudRevival.com/86 and that will take you to where you can see the Show Notes for today's podcast. OK, I'm going to jump right in—I will give you a couple of picture book recommendations today, a new favorite middle grade author, and then a couple of recommendations for your tweens and teens. Alright? Let's start with a picture book author and illustrator.

2:24 Ben Hatke

Today, I want to tell you about Ben Hatke. Now, I love Ben Hatke's work, and my kids adore his picture books. *Nobody Likes a Goblin* and *Julia's House for Lost Creatures* are a couple of favorite picture books at our house. I'm not even totally sure why. I usually can kind of pinpoint, 'OK, this is the thing I love most about this author or this book' but, *Nobody Likes a Goblin* is one of the best ways I know to calm my little kids when they're throwing a fit. I think I've talked about this before on the podcast—I have three small children and three older kids, but the three small children are the ones that sometimes throw these big tantrums (and you know when a young child is throwing a tantrum and you just can't even, you can't calm them down, you can't say anything to cool them off?) a lot of times I find the best solution to be just to sit down and start reading aloud. And, I never say, "I'm going to read now," or "Do you want a story?" because that will not go well. I just sit down and start reading. There are a few books that work better for this than others, and I'm telling you if I start reading, *Nobody Likes a Goblin* I will have all three of my small children in my lap or hanging



onto my shoulders to see the book within the first page. They love that book! And, I kind of do, too. I mean, I just don't ever get tired of reading it. So, a lot of times we'll read it multiple times in a row. *Julia's House for Lost Creatures* is similar—they're both, kind of, fantasy picture books... well, they're not 'kind of fantasy' they are fantasy picture books, really funny illustrations, and a plot line that moves along so your child actually wants to know what on earth is going to happen next. Lots to look at in the pictures, too, for multiple reads and re-reads. So, *Nobody Likes a Goblin* and *Julia's House for Lost Creatures* are both wins in my book. He's also written and illustrated some really great graphic novels, especially for your 8-12 year olds. So, if you're looking for good graphic novels (and I keep promising you that we will do an episode here at Read-Aloud Revival on the best graphic novels for kids, and we will), but I can guarantee you that these books are going to be in that lineup: *Zita the Spacegirl*—there's a whole series on *Zita the Spacegirl*. There's a graphic novel about *Little Robot* and then several about *Mighty Jack*, a play on Jack and the Beanstalk. And, these are sci-fi fantasy adventures in graphic novel form that you will approve of, that your kids will adore. So, highly recommend those. And, for your high schooler or your middle schooler, *The Ball and the Cross* is a book, of course, written by none other than G. K. Chesterton, and Ben Hatke illustrated a version of *The Ball and the Cross* published by Chesterton Press; that's my favorite one to give to teens and preteens. So, it's the original *The Ball and the Cross* by G. K. Chesterton with illustrations by Ben Hatke. So, we'll put links to all of these in the Show Notes, but, pretty much, Ben Hatke can cover a lot of ground for your family with his picture books, his middle grade

graphic novels, and then his illustrated version of Chesterton's *The Ball and the Cross*.

5:27 Kyo Maclear

The next picture book author I want to tell you about is Kyo Maclear. Now, our Read-Aloud Revival Community Director, Kortney Garrison, first introduced me to the work of Kyo Maclear—she sent me a whole stack of it, actually. And, I loved them. I loved all of the books I've read by her so far. OK, so the books that I've read and loved so far are *The Good Little Book*, *Julia, Child*, and *The Wish Tree*. So, let me start with *The Good Little Book*. You might actually recognize this one—it has a red cover with eyes on it. I've seen it around several places recently so you may have recognized this one, I think it's getting a little more press than the others. My five year old daughter carried *The Good Little Book* around with her like a pet for weeks after we first read it. She loved it. She even brought it to our homeschool co-op for Show and Tell, which she's never done with a book before. That one's called *The Good Little Book*. There's another one called *Julia, Child*. That one is a huge favorite, in fact, my own twins recorded a Let The Kids Speak for the Read-Aloud Revival podcast—they're own little voices saying what they love most about *Julia, Child*. Here, I'm going to play it for you. I'm going to play both of my twins talking about *Julia, Child* because it's really, really sweet: [

6:38 Emerson and Beckett!

Sarah/mom: what's your name?] Emerson Thomas. [Sarah/mom: Emerson Thomas, how old are you?] 4. [Sarah/mom: that's right. And, what's your favorite book?] *Julia, Child*. [Sarah/mom: yes, by Kyo Maclear. Can you say that?] Kyo Maclear. [Sarah/mom: good job. Do we read it at



bedtime? Yeah, how many times do we read it in a row?] Three. [Sarah/mom: three times in a row. What's your favorite part in *Julia, Child's* book?] When everybody eating and acting a muffin part. [Sarah/mom: oh, the cupcakes? When they're not quite as beastly as they used to be? OK, say, "See you later, alligator."] See you later, alligator.

My name is Beckett. [Sarah/mom: how old are you, Beckett?] 1. [Sarah/mom: oh, you're 1, really?] No, 4. [Sarah/mom: you're 4. And what is your favorite book?] *Julia, Child*. [Sarah/mom: *Julia, Child* and what part is your favorite in the book, *Julia, Child*?] All. [Sarah/mom: all? Do you have a favorite picture?] Yes. All. [Sarah/mom: all of them? Wow. What would you want to eat out of the *Julia, Child* book?] All of it. [Sarah/mom: all of it? Really? Even the squid?] Nah. [Sarah/mom: ok, maybe not that part, but definitely the chocolate cupcakes, right?] Yeah, even a baking cake.

They love this book. So, the first time I read this at bedtime I literally read it three times in a row, and then that just became the standard. So, each of my little kids, 5 year old Clara, and the 4 year old twins, they get to pick a book and take turns sitting in my lap for bedtime read-aloud. And, if one of them chooses this book (they usually choose different books) but if one of them chooses *Julia, Child* they all want *Julia, Child* so we read it three times in a row a lot of nights at our house. It's just a play on Julia and her friend who want to make the world more beautiful in the kitchen, and you can just imagine—it's very fun. *The Wish Tree* is a winter tale that I just think is really spell-binding. This is another picture book—I just love it. I love the lyrical text. I love the sing-song rhythm of reading this one out-loud. My kids love the illustrations by Chris Turnham, and they just stare and stare and flip back and

forth. So, Kyo Maclear—and we will put links to definitely those three books in the Show Notes, and also to her kid's website because she's written lots of other picture books that I have yet to get my hands on, but I will. You may want to seek her out at your local library, see if her work is there, because it's possible you haven't seen it yet and that your kids might like it as much as mine do.

9:30 The Read-Aloud Family

We'll get back to today's episode in just a moment. But, I wanted to take a quick minute to make sure you know about *The Read-Aloud Family*. This is a new book I wrote just for you. Here's what I know: you will never, ever regret the time you spend reading to your kids. Connecting deeply with our families can be, kind of, difficult, right, in our really busy and technology-driven world? But reading aloud is one of the best ways to be fully present with our kids even after they can read to themselves. In the new book, *The Read-Aloud Family* you'll find the inspiration you need to start a read-aloud movement in your own home. You'll discover how to prepare your kids for academic success, how to develop their empathy and compassion, all through reading aloud. You're going to learn how to find time to read-aloud in the midst of your really busy day; school, sports, dinner dishes, all those pressures on your time and attention. And, you'll learn how to choose books across a variety of sibling interests and ages. The best part is that you'll discover how to make reading aloud the very best part of your family's day. *The Read-Aloud Family* also offers age-appropriate book lists from infancy all the way through adolescence. So, from a toddler's wonder to your teenager's resistance, you're going to discover practical



strategies to make reading aloud a meaningful family ritual. The book releases wherever books are sold, March 27, 2018, but if you order the book before March 27 you're going to get some extra gifts and I am so excited Zondervan let me do this, because I made you a brand new video Master Class to show you how to choose books for your kids. So, you know that feeling when you walk into a library or a bookstore or maybe you're cruising around online or something, and you don't know if a book is worth your time or attention or your child's time and attention? In this video Master Class you're going to find out exactly which two characteristics make a book worth reading and you'll find out the three question test I use to decide if a book deserves a place on my family's reading stack. So order *The Read-Aloud Family* before March 27, 2018 to get a promo code to access that Master Class for free. I am thrilled Zondervan is letting me do that. Go to TheReadAloudFamily.com to grab your copy. I can't wait to get it in your hands.

11:49 The Vanderbeekers!

Alright, let's move on to some middle grade writers. And, if you follow me on Facebook or Instagram you know that I love this debut's author first novel, *The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street*. Betsy Farquhar who joined us last week on the podcast, she writes at RedeemedReader.com, she actually recommended *Vanderbeeks* to me and, I'm trying not to gush too much about it, but I'm sort of failing, because I love this book so much! This is the book to hand to your kids who love *The Penderwicks*. It's perfect for kids who love books by Eleanor Estes or Elizabeth Enright or Edith Nesbit, it's just wonderful. It's the story of a family of seven, so five kids in this bi-racial family who

are about to lose their apartment in Harlem, New York, and the kids end up banding together—all the siblings band together to try to keep this brownstone home that they love so much. And, of course, as always happens in the best big family tales, adventures and misadventures ensue. So, I think your kids will absolutely love this one—it makes for a great read-aloud, also makes for a great read alone, whether you're 8 or you're 36, as in the case of me. There's a new *Vanderbeeker's* book coming out in 2018 and I think a third one coming out in 2019, and I'm pretty downright giddy about it. So, we've actually invited the author, Karina Yan Glaser, to come to the Read-Aloud Revival podcast soon, so you're going to get to hear from her yourself in an upcoming episode. For now, get your hands on *The Vanderbeeker's of 141st Street*, you'll be glad you did.

13:25 Gloria Whelan

My next recommendation is not a debut author at all, and you might be familiar with some of her work but I'm going to highlight one of her books anyway. Her name is Gloria Whelan and she's the author of several really wonderful books for middle grade kids, which we usually think of as being about 8-12, and then teens as well. And, the book I want to mention today, I don't think I've mentioned it before on the podcast or on the Read-Aloud Revival website anywhere, which, by the way, if you have been listening to the Read-Aloud Revival podcast for a while and have never visited the website you're missing out, because there is a lot of really great resources on the website that are free. So, you want to go to ReadAloudRevival.com to visit and get in on that. And, if you want to grab our Read-Aloud book list by texting the BOOKS to the number 345345,



we'll send you emails that give you the best of what we've got going on—there at ReadAloudRevival.com and get you started. If you're liking the podcast you definitely want that booklist and you're going to want those emails.

OK, so the book I want to mention today actually won a National Book Award in 2001, but I think it's worth mentioning here because it's possible you haven't heard of it before, it's called *Homeless Bird*. It's the story of Koly who's a 13 year old girl in India who has to face an arranged marriage and basically, what she already thought was going to be terrible, just gets worse because she has to find out if she has what it takes inside of her to face the loneliness and to figure out who she is in the world and what she's going to do next with her life. It kind of sounds like a depressing book when I talk about it that way but I found it difficult to put down and really inspiring, and I'm sure you've heard me say before the best books for kids, actually, the best books period leave readers with this overall sense of hope and optimism—I really believe that. I really believe that the most important role of a book is to help the reader see the world afresh. And, this book does that—even when it's gritty and hard, even when our favorite characters face really difficult situations, a book that can still leave you with hope and optimism at the end is just a masterpiece. This book does that. Gloria Whelan does that with *Homeless Bird*. She's written lots of other books as well. I haven't actually read half of them, but a lot of them are on my 'to read' list and I've really enjoyed everything I've read that she's written like *The Miracle of Saint Nicholas* which is a longer form picture book and *Listening for Lions* which I read aloud to my kids a couple of years ago—that one is the story of Rachel Sheridan, she's a child of missionary parents in

Africa and right at the very beginning of the book she loses her parents to illness and she has to figure out who she is in the world when she's surrounded by these greedy, dishonest, unkind people—adults, that she's forced to live with. It's a really good book. I would recommend *Listening for Lions* probably for age 10 and up, I think you could read it with younger kids if they're not particularly sensitive because it starts out on a pretty tragic note. It's just not a sunshine and roses book, but it's deeply moving, it's beautiful, and it was one of my favorite read-alouds that I read with my kids, my older kids. *Homeless Bird* I would recommend probably for kids 12 and up. I think the publisher recommends it for 8 and up, but I really think a 12 year old's going to appreciate it way more than a younger child will. So, I think teens are going to like *Homeless Bird* a lot and I think they'll be able to read it quickly, like I did. I had a hard time putting it down.

16:50 Piecing Me Together

Speaking of teens, if you're looking for something new for your teens to read, I recommend Renée Watson's *Piecing Me Together*. This is a story about a young African-American girl who's trying to find her own success in a world that just doesn't always play nicely or play fair. You may have heard me say before that I really struggle to find YA (which stands for Young Adult) – it's a whole kind of book, it's a whole genre of YA books, oftentimes geared for kids who are about 13 or 14 up until the early 20's, and I don't tend to love YA books. I just haven't found a whole lot of them that I love, but there are a handful, and this is one of them that I really enjoyed. *Piecing Me Together* by Renée Watson. It's a book about what it means to really help someone or what it feels like when someone tries to fix you instead of



trying to help you. It's a book about friendship and what that really looks like and a book about having what it takes—it's sort of a coming of age book, really. It's really, really well done. I recommend it for teens. That's Renée Watson's *Piecing Me Together*. So, let me review these really quickly for you: Ben Hatke, he has picture books, *Nobody Likes a Goblin* and *Julia's House for Lost Creatures*, a whole bunch of graphic novels, and an illustrated version of G. K. Chesterton's *The Ball and the Cross*. Kyo Maclear who has some really great picture books like *The Wish Tree*, *The Good Little Book*, and *Julia, Child*. Karina Yan Glaser who wrote *The (wonderful) Vanderbecker's of 141st Street* (I told you, I'm trying not to gush, but I'm having a hard time with that one), Gloria Whelan, and I recommend *Homeless Bird* and *Listening for Lions*, and Renée Watson's *Piecing Me Together*—and that book is actually new, as of last year, so that one came out February of 2017, so it's possible your teens have not read that one yet, but it's a good one. We'll have links to all of these books, and also to all of these author's websites in the Show Notes at ReadAloudRevival.com/86.

18:25 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: Hello, my name is **[**inaudible**]**, I'm 10 years old and I live in New York. My favorite book is *School Stories* by Andrew Clements. I really recommend it as a good book because it's about making your dream come true no matter what it takes.

Child2: Hi, my name is Lydia, I'm from Ontario, Canada, and I'm 6 years old, and my favorite book is *James Herriot's Treasury for Children*, and my favorite part about it is that a baby kitten is drinking from a mommy pig.

Child3: Hi, my name's Chloe, I'm 12 years old. I live in Ontario, Canada, and one of my favorite series is *The Redwall Series*. My favorite things about it are that it has action, mystery, it's funny, and it has a lot of unexpected twists.

Child4: Hello, my name is Lydia and I'm 4 years old. I live in Virginia Beach, Virginia. [Mom: good, Lydia, what book are you reading right now?] *Frog and Toad All Year*. [Mom: good, and what's your favorite part of *Frog and Toad All Year*?] They slip down that big snow hill.

Child5: Hi, I'm Ezra. I'm 4½. I live in California. I like **[**inaudible**]** because they have a party and they dress up. Bye.

Child6: My name is Dane, and I am 4 years old. I live in Portland, Oregon. My favorite book is **[**inaudible**]**. I like it because **[**inaudible**]** name's Odis.

Child7: My name is Caleb and I live in Portland, Oregon. I'm 4 years old. My favorite book is **[**inaudible**]** and I like it because the penguin's in the book.

Child8: My name's Sylvie. I live in Portland. I'm 2 years old. [Mom: my favorite book is...] **[**inaudible**]** [Mom: and what do you like about it?] **[**inaudible**]**

Child9: Hi, my name is Emma and I'm 4 years old. I live in West Virginia, and my favorite book is *Felicity*. My favorite part is Felicity finds **[**inaudible**]**.



Child10: [Mom: what's your name?] Jack. [Mom: and how old are you, Jack?] 4. [Mom: what's your favorite book?] *I'll Surprise My Friend* book. [Mom: really? Why do you like *I Will Surprise My Friend*?] Because Jared gets scared because he thinks Piggy is getting eaten by a monster. [Mom: and that's funny?] Yeah.

Child11: [Mom: what's your name?] My name is William. I'm 9 years old. I live in Massachusetts. My favorite book is *Harry Potter* because of all the magic.

Child12: My name is Israel and I live in Massachusetts, and my favorite book is *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Last Olympian*. I like it because of all the Greek mythology.

Child13: [Mom: what's your name?] Asher. [Mom: where do you live?] I live in Rhode Island. [Mom: and how old are you?] 3. [Mom: what's your favorite book?] *Storypath*. [Mom: and why do you like it so much?] Because you flip the page. [Mom: you flip the page? And what are you doing on the page?] We use our finger. [Mom: use your finger to do what?] Make up stories. [Mom: make up stories.]

Child14: Hi, my name's Daniella. And I like to do this a lot. I'm 8 years old and my second favorite book is *Peter Pan* because me and Daddy haven't finished it but I really like that Wendy gets shy and then she is in the little house that they make, that the Lost Boys made, and she wasn't actually dead she was like, knocked out, and then she goes in the little house that the Lost Boys made, and then she comes back to life.

Child15: Hi, I am Sammy. [Mom: and what's your favorite story, or your favorite book?] It's *Magic World*. [Mom: ooh, and why do you like the *Magic World*?] Because a boy turns into a cat. [Mom: a boy turns into a cat?]

Child16: Hi, my name is Joy and I'm 4 years old and I live in Franklin, Tennessee. And, my favorite book is *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*. And my favorite part is when they have the battle.

Sarah: Thank you, thank you, so much kids. I love your recommendations. And, thank you for listening to this episode of the Read-Aloud Revival podcast. If you wouldn't mind, if you had just a second to go into iTunes or your podcast app, and rate and review the podcast, that would go a long way toward helping us get the word out. The more ratings and reviews every podcast has the more people iTunes shows it to who are looking for this kind of podcast. So, we'll reach more families who want to make meaningful and lasting connections with their kids if you rate or review the podcast in iTunes—would really appreciate that. Hey, we'll be back next week. Don't forget to go to the Show Notes for today's show, ReadAloudRevival.com/86 and until next time, go make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books.