



RAR 114 - Susan Tan on Diversity in Children's Books, Writing Anywhere and Everywhere, and... Cilla Lee-Jenkins!

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. It's episode 114 of the Read-Aloud Revival podcast. I have an author here to talk with you today and I just loved chatting with Susan Tan. She is the author of a couple of books about Cilla Lee-Jenkins, who's a biracial American Chinese girl. These books are perfect for your kids if they love the antics in the Ramona Quimby books. They remind me a little bit in style of Beverly Cleary's writing. They're fun, they're spunky, they're lighthearted, but they also address some meaningful issues, and I really, really enjoyed them. In just a second I'm going to introduce you to Susan Tan. Now before I do that I want to make sure you know where you can get the online Read-Aloud Revival book list and you can download it for free by texting the word BOOKS to the number 345345 or you can go right to RARbooklist.com and you'll get a lot of really great read-aloud suggestions depending on what your kids are interested in and all that good stuff. So, don't forget to grab it and let's see, I think we're ready for the Show. Let's get on with the Show.

1:51 Meet Susan Tan & Cilla

Susan Tan has lived a life of books. From being named "most likely to be a children's book writer" in her middle school year book to working in her local library to earning a PhD in critical

approaches to children's literature, Susan has been immersed in book culture for most of her life. The author of the wonderful and completely delightful Cilla Lee-Jenkins books, based on her own family and the challenges she experienced growing up. Susan, I am so thrilled to talk to you today, welcome to the Read-Aloud Revival.

Susan: Thank you so much. Thank you so much for having me. I'm really thrilled to be here and to be chatting with you.

Sarah: Well, I discovered you last year, I think you might have commented actually on the Instagram post I had heard from somebody else, I can't remember who it was I heard it from, "this is a fun book" so I thought that looked like a fun book so I'm just going to grab it. Read it outside in the summer while I was watching my kids play ... just fell, I mean, there's so much to love about Cilla. So, for listeners, Susan Tan's first book is Cilla Lee-Jenkins: Future Author Extraordinaire and the second is Cilla Lee-Jenkins: This Book is a Classic. Of course, we're going to have links in the Show Notes to both of those which are at ReadAloudRevival.com/114. OK, so Susan, Cilla reminds me in some ways of Ramona Quimby in that she's impossible not to love even when she's being a little bit impossible. I just love her. And she loves books, which means she's a main character I think the kids listening to this podcast are going to absolutely adore, because the kids listening to this podcast and their parents love books, too. Let's start with where you got the idea for Cilla. Where did that come from?

Susan: So, Cilla is very much based on my own life. Any bit in Cilla that includes accidentally knocking something over, saying something meaning very well and making a huge mess of things, all of that is generally 100% true. Also, a lot of Cilla's quirks, for example, Cilla is bald for a



long time during her childhood and wants to wear bows and wants to tape them to her head, that's all true. So, a lot of Cilla came from my life and a lot of Cilla's family came from my life but actually, I got the idea for Cilla from the idea of reimagining actually something from my life. And so, like Cilla, I'm mixed race, my dad's Chinese and as a child, and quite frankly as an adult, I get asked, "What are you?" particularly as a child I would be asked that. And, as a child, it was particularly disconcerting because these were adults who I was supposed to answer. And when an adult asks you a question you feel, well, I need to be respectful, I need to answer, but usually, as well, the question itself is a very othering question. There you are playing with your friends and they're normal but what are you? You think, 'my gosh, what's wrong with me?'

Sarah: Right.

Susan: So, as an adult this question still gets asked of me but, of course, as an adult I have more agency, more power, more of a voice, but it still really gets to me. So, basically, the idea for Cilla came to me because I began to imagine how I would have liked those conversations to go when I was a child, and I began to imagine a child who didn't understand the question but in not understanding it was able to reclaim it. So, the premise for Cilla comes from someone asking what are you? And her saying, "Oh my gosh, I don't know. No one's ever asked me this question before, but if I have to pick now I guess I'll be a future literary genius." I was not that way at all as a child, I should say. Wish I was. It was that moment and that encounter and that claiming of identity and voice and ambition as well for this young girl. It sort of brought the idea to life and then I sort of took that idea and moved it onto a lot of the very funny things I did as a

child, and that's sort of how Cilla came into the world.

Sarah: And that's actually even a scene in the first book, isn't it?

Susan: Yes.

Sarah: Interesting.

Susan: And, actually, it's funny. I think in the first book that's chapter three, and that was actually the first piece of Cilla I ever wrote.

Sarah: Oh interesting.

Susan: So the book kind of shaped around it.

Sarah: Which makes sense because that's a very Cilla moment—her response, and so I can see how you were able to build her character off of that moment.

Susan: Yeah. That's a perfect way to put it. I think I've been thinking about writing a book for awhile but that's kind of when the voice and character solidified for me and that sort of enabled me to create the book around her.

6:29 Becoming a reader (and then an author)

Sarah: OK, so when do you know you wanted to be an author?

Susan: That's such a great question. I'm laughing, because in your introduction which is such a funny story, I loved books as a child. And actually, just to say as well, I actually had a very hard time learning how to read so that's also in the Cilla books—that Cilla, when she's younger has difficulties reading; that's absolutely true. So I loved books, I loved stories, but I couldn't access them. And I was always really behind in my classes and I actually have this very even now,



still visceral moment and memory of when I was in first grade on the first day of school. We all sat down and the teacher wrote something on the board and it was something along the lines of “Welcome to first grade.” And she said, “Please copy this down” and everyone was copying it down and I literally I didn’t even know what the letters were. It was like drawing shapes. Just like copying a circle with a line down. I remember these intense feelings of anger and anger at myself and shame and I didn’t want anyone to know so I say all this because I, for a long time reading was really fraught for me and I had wonderful teachers and my parents and everyone worked together to help me. So when I finally did learn how to read it really was this kind of magic. You know, this magic that I had worked so long for. And you know it literally felt like the biggest treat to be able to sit down and enter a book world by myself.

Sarah: You could see now that you could get the stories for yourself; these things that you already loved so much but now you could get them on your own.

Susan: Exactly. Absolutely. And, so that very much shaped who I became. I was always the kid sitting in a corner reading and with precisely that feeling of ‘Wow! What magic! I can go to Narnia by myself.’

Sarah: Yeah!

Susan: And my name was Susan, so it was perfect.

Sarah: Yeah, exactly!

Susan: So, I loved children’s books and in middle school, I always had a very close relationship with the children’s room of my public library. And once I was able to work and get an after school

job I worked in the children’s room. And it was always just a given that I would work there. So I say all this because I loved children’s books, all things children’s books, but I never actually thought about writing until, what I believe was the last week of eighth grade, when in our year book they gave everyone a most likely to be profession and most of them were really silly, like Ninja, or SNL Host, something like that. But mine was children’s book writer; when I saw that in the year book “most likely to be a children’s book writer” my reaction was to go, “Oh! That make sense. Wow.” And that the first time I ever considered writing books on my own and it just felt like it clicked. It felt perfect. So, it’s kind of a funny self-fulfilling prophecy.

Sarah: I love it. And I love that the people around you saw it in you before you did. I just love that.

Susan: I really want to find out who was on that committee because I don’t know and I’m so curious for that reason. They observed me so well. Better than I knew myself.

9:44 Representation in children's literature

Sarah: So, I know you studied children’s literature in college and one of the things I have, I don’t know if I’ve heard you say it or if I’ve read it, I don’t really remember. I know you’ve talked before about the lack of diversity in children’s books, I’m wondering if that’s something you sort of discovered when you were studying literature in college. Tell me more about that experience for you.

Susan: Yeah, absolutely. So, just to say as well, thinking about listeners and parents who are interested in writing, my path to writing children’s books was not a linear one at all. And so I had



that moment with the eighth grade year book when I thought, ‘Well, I want to be a children’s book writer,’ but actually as I got older I didn’t pursue writing very much. In fact, my studies shifted towards literature in general, so that’s how I began studying children’s literature. And I began studying children’s literature in college. I was really, really lucky and I had the opportunity to go study abroad in England, and there I took a class on British children’s literature. And I was really fascinated with the genre and I was really fascinated with exactly what you’re saying—the history of representation in children’s literature and also the uses of children’s literature. So, for example, in college I studied children’s texts that were used by merchant family, say, stationed in China. And I looked at a lot of children’s literature that was used as a justification for occupation and for hierarchies between racial hierarchies in various places. So that’s what got me into children’s literature and then later on, I was very lucky again, after college I got a scholarship to go to graduate school in the U.K. So I went back and then I pursued my Master’s Degree and then a PhD. focusing exclusively on children’s literature. And so, in those studies I was looking at contemporary, young adult, and middle grade literature, and it’s so interesting because this question of diversity, it’s absolutely something I talk about and I’ll be honest, when I first entered the field I had no idea how little representation there is. And, when I was growing up, there was really only one book I ever found that had a mixed race, Asian-American protagonist. And I treasured that book, it was so important to me, and influential to me, and it’s Laurence Yep’s *Thief of Hearts*.

Sarah: I was going to say ... I don’t know that one.

Susan: It’s wonderful. It’s absolutely wonderful. And, so finding that book was such a watershed moment for me. And I literally, it’s so funny, I could draw the cover for you if we were speaking on the stage and we had a notepad, I could draw the cover for you in perfect detail, and the passages where the protagonist, Stacy, who’s a mixed race, there’s passages where she talks about what she looks like and how she worries about what she looks like when she’s in Chinatown versus in her predominantly white school, sort of all of these things were things I had always felt but thought I was alone in feeling. And having that residence and commonality for the first time, I remember shaking and being about 10 years old and so gripped by this experience. So, all this to say, that I had the memory of that really powerful moment and then afterward I found out there weren’t many other books like it so I had that memory but as I approach children’s literature in my graduate studies I approached with the idea of ‘oh, good thing things are better now, phew.’

Sarah: Yeah.

Susan: And it wasn’t until I began to read more widely and contemporary, and particularly middle grade literature that I looked around and thought, ‘Wait a minute. Is it better?’ and that sparked me to begin researching and realizing that actually, it was a little bit better but, in fact ...

Sarah: Not much.

Susan: ... not a ton. What is it? There’s the Lee and Low statistic from the wonderful publishers Lee and Low that something like thirty-seven percent of the U.S. population are people of color, but only 13% of children’s books in the past 24 years has had diverse content.

Sarah: Wow.



Susan: I mean it's such a staggering statistic, and I think that it was those numbers and sort of the realization of that lack, that really pulled me in. And what's funny as well is that, and I'm just speaking of my writing journey that began with I can't read to maybe I'll be a writer to I'll be an academic not a writer, it was in my academic studies as I confronted this gap that I suddenly felt like where are the books that I wanted as a kid? And my sisters are getting older and my cousins were having children and I was thinking where are the books that I want them and their kids to read? And that really is what inspired me to start writing. So weirdly, going to Academia led me right back to writing.

14:39 Why kids need to see themselves in books

Sarah: So, I've heard you say it's so important to give kids literature that reflects the reality of the world they live in. Can you talk to me more about that? What do you mean by that?

Susan: Yes. What a fabulous question. Kind of going back to the story I just shared about Laurence Yep, seeing kids need to see themselves in literature. And they need to see other people in literature and in saying this I'm quoting and drawing on Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop...

Sarah: Yes.

Susan: ... who's a Professor of Libraries Sciences at Ohio State University and she wrote, as I'm sure you know about, the windows and mirrors, and the notion that there are several kinds of books. We have mirrors that will allow kids and readers to see themselves or at least a facet of themselves reflected back at them. And those mirrors affirm their humanity, they affirm

that they are not alone, they affirm their potential to have so many different facets and stories, and then there are windows where they can see other people and windows where they learn about other people, and their empathy for other people grows. And they learn about the world beyond themselves. There's so many stories out there. One thing I always say to kids is you can love books (I love books, I adore books) and growing up most books weren't about me and I could still adore them. There were still stories I needed. And I think there will, and my message to kids and to writers is always to write those stories you want to see.

Sarah: Who is it that said "We read to know we're not alone?" Was that C. S. Lewis?

Susan: Yes! It's so funny you say that because I've been thinking about that quote recently, I don't know who it's by.

Sarah: I'm going to look it up real quick.

Susan: Please do.

Sarah: I will attribute everything to C. S. Lewis if I'm not careful.

Susan: That seems fair. I love C. S. Lewis.

Sarah: The internet's telling me either William Nicholson or C. S. Lewis.

Susan: So, there's a fifty percent chance you were right.

Sarah: Right!

Susan: Really, particularly when it comes to imagination, it's so critical to be able to imagine yourself in different ways. And growing up if you'd asked me what reading was on a literal level I think I envisioned that reading is inherently reading exciting stories, about really interesting

people who inherently don't look like you, because that's what my reading experience was.

Sarah: Yeah.

Susan: And, so it was an absence that I didn't realize until I found the Thief of Hearts by Laurence Yep, and I just had this moment, it was this wonderful moment of commonality but it was also a slap in the face realizing, wait a minute, I get a story? I think it's so vital and important for kids [****inaudible****] lives. And just another resource, I would also really suggest checking out the CCBC, the Cooperative Children's Book Center releases statistics on diversity in children's literature every year. And a group of scholars, among them Dr. Sarah Park Dahlen at the University of Minnesota and others (I feel badly, I just can't quite remember their names at the moment) but they created an infographic that breaks down all the statistics in children's literature into a visual image and it's a lovely resource. It's really interesting and so I know you don't have it in front of you but I will just say that one thing that they did that I think was so brilliant is that each child—so they have children from various backgrounds—each child is looking in a mirror and their mirror is bigger depending on the percentage of the representation of literature.

Sarah: Oh wow!

Susan: And what's so wonderful, sort of what it shows and it ties in to exactly what you're saying is that you have on the far end a white child who has mirrors everywhere, and in one he's playing basketball, and in another his shoes can fly, another he's an astronaut, another he's a president. So you have all those possibilities, all those imaginative avenues opening. But as you go down the line and representation decreases your mirror gets smaller and smaller. And you

don't see all those things. You see yourself and as the mirror gets smaller maybe you just see a part of yourself or a distorted vision of yourself. So, I just think it's a really great tool and a great way to think about it because it just shows what we want is to give all children all those mirrors but all children should be able to open books and say, "Today, I'll be president. Today I'll be an astronaut," and on and on and on.

19:10 Writing in bed and on the bus

Sarah: Exactly. I'm going to look that up and we will link to it in the Show Notes so everybody can see it. OK, so let's talk about writing. I think I read somewhere that you wrote Cilla, the first book of Cilla Lee-Jenkins laying on your back in bed on your iPad. Did I make that up or no, is that something you said?

Susan: Let me just say to any aspiring writers out there that you can write anywhere. Seriously. And you should write wherever works for you. There's no one way to do it. The reason I wrote Cilla mainly on my iPad, sometimes on my phone, is that I was in graduate school and I was in my final dissertation year. So, it was so busy and hectic and intense, and I found that at night I would be working on my computer all day on my dissertation. I would close my computer but I wouldn't be tired. I'd be so wired from all that work. And dissertations can be tense affairs, I'd be kind of stressed.

Sarah: Yeah, I would imagine.

Susan: So, I wanted to do something relaxing and fun. And to me that became writing. So I would close my computer, I would get ready for bed, I would get into bed, turn off the lights, take out my iPad, and I would write anywhere from



half an hour to two hours, just however much I was feeling. And it's so funny because I realized I lived with some very close friends, those were my housemates, and they all thought I liked to just go to bed really early...

Sarah: And then you come out with this book and they're like, "Where did this come from?"

Susan: So, my friends say, "You're writing a book, what?" And I would also write a great deal on the bus on the way to the library and I actually still do that. I write a lot on public transportation and I write on my phone, typing with my thumbs. And I think one of the reasons I like it so much it's a very liberating experience. I find writing can be really hard but it can also be fun, particularly if you engage with it in a playful way. And for me, it just became this wonderful, relaxing ritual of in ten minutes I need to be at the library and I'm going to have to focus and read really obscure, dense books, but in these ten minutes I get to imagine a story about flying horses that Cilla's imagining.

Sarah: Yeah.

Susan: And so for me, that's one of the ways I keep writing fun. It's also one of the ways I keep getting inspiration. A lot of little things I see in the world find their way into my books. And I would just say, too, I have to remind myself of this as well, I am constantly amazed at how much you can get done in small chunks ...

Sarah: Oh, I love that, yeah.

Susan: And I am always sort of re-surprised by it. So, I work fulltime, so sometimes it can be hard, especially on really busy days, and not even days, really busy weeks, it can be hard to make any space for writing at all, and so I oftentimes just riding public transportation on the way back

and forth from work I'll try to carve out a little writing time and at the end of the week it's amazing to look back and say, "Oh, I actually, I did quite a bit. I completed a character study." Or, I imagined out a few different possibilities for a tough scene. So, I find it very helpful for my writing and I think necessary because most writers do other things as well.

Sarah: I'm so glad you mentioned that. We have a lot of aspiring writers listening in who are moms, who are busy, a lot of them are homeschooling their kids, too. When I wrote—and I've just written two non-fiction books so far—but the ...

Susan: Oh, really?

Sarah: ... non-fiction book I wrote when the twins were babies, who are 5 and 6, they were four months old or something. I tell people when they say, "How did you pull that off?" I say I wrote that book in 15 minute chunks. A lot of us who want to write will go, I will write when I have large expanses of time and therefore we never write.

Susan: That's right. And, I'm just so glad you said that. I also think writing is such a joy, and it's such a privilege, but historically, it's also a profession that was only available to very privileged people. I think of when I do school presentations I always show them a picture of Charles Dickens and he's sitting at his desk and he has his head in his hands and his quill pen and he's staring out meaningfully into the sky. And we talk about the fact that yes, he had all this time to write, but he also had servants, and he also wasn't in charge of the children; he had these huge expanses of time because he occupied a rather privileged place in his world. So, I'm just so glad you say that too because I think it can be first so daunting to write a book but I also think,



kind of, culturally embedded in our minds we have this idea that there's a right way to write a book and it involves, kind of, being Charles Dickens sitting at your desk and it's fancy and you have no other demands on your time and maybe someone brings you food, and that's not a reality for some of us.

Sarah: Right.

Susan: So, I just think it's so important that idea of just tiny little chunks it really builds up. It feels astounding every time it does but those, whatever time you can get makes a difference.

24:12 Two kinds of writers

Sarah: So, when you are about to write, when you're thinking about a new story, do you outline ahead of time? Do you know, sort of, plot points or where the story's going? What do you know before you start writing?—maybe that's the better way to ask that question.

Susan: That is such a great question and to answer I always think of Philip Pullman who has a quote that he basically says a story idea comes to me. I know the problem. And I know vaguely where we're going, but I don't want to know the middle because then it won't be interesting. I want to see what happens next.

Sarah: Got it.

Susan: And I find that very inspiring because that's very much my process. When I write I at least with the Cilla series and these are my first three books ever and I'm just starting on a new non-Cilla project...

Sarah: Oooh, exciting.

Susan: Yeah, I'm so excited, but I found that for me I know a story ready to start writing when I

know the beginning and the characters and I know the end, and it's so weird because when I came up with the idea for a Cilla, literally, the first thing I came up with was the what are you moments that we discussed earlier. And then I knew the final scene or the second to last scene that involves (I don't want to spoil anything) time travel. I knew those two things, I knew nothing else. But then I started from there and so it gave me something to work towards while the scene kind of left me a lot of flexibility in imagining the story. So that's generally how I work. Sometimes I will outline as I go but, quite frankly, oftentimes even when I do outline it always changes. I think, actually I think this is something for aspiring writers to think about, I also teach English and I say this to my students all the time that I think there are two kinds of people, people who think to write and people who write to think.

Sarah: Oh, that's good.

Susan: I heard that from a teacher of my own and I've stolen it forever more because there are some people who literally can't put pen to paper until they've planned everything out and I have so much respect for those people, I am not one of them. And I think most of us write to think. Sometimes I literally don't know how I feel about something until I've written about it and it's in writing about it I sort through my feelings and I get emotions out of the way and then I start thinking about it and I come at it from different angles and on and on and on until finally I have discovered what it is I actually think through the process of writing. So for me it can be really scary because you think, 'I'm going to write a book. What's going to happen? I don't know.' It's terrifying but I try to lean into that as much as possible because I think some of the most exciting moments in writing come when you



didn't even realize you were thinking about something and it just pops up on the page.

27:01 A new 'epic story'

Sarah: I think we're about out of time but before we go I want to hear about ... a little bird told me that there's a third Cilla Lee-Jenkins book coming out in the next year. Can you tell us anything about it?

Susan: Yes, absolutely. It's going to be coming out in March [2019]. It's called Cilla Lee-Jenkins: The Epic Story. So, in this book Cilla is older. In Future Author Extraordinaire (the first book) she's in second grade. In This Book is a Classic she's in third, but actually in The Epic Story she's in fifth grade.

Sarah: OK.

Susan: And, this is not a spoiler, this comes very quickly. So, the book is based very much on my own experiences. So, Cilla's YeYe (her grandfather) has a stroke, which happened to my YeYe. And he's OK (and I always want to interrupt to tell people he's OK), but the stroke affected his capacity for language and he had something called an apheresic stroke, and this happened to my YeYe, where he basically recovered one language but not the other. So, when my YeYe had his stroke, before the stroke he had been fluent in English and Chinese, after the stroke he'd retained his Chinese but he lost most of his English. So, in the books Cilla and her YeYe they very much communicate through stories and they're always telling each other stories and he's the one who's instilled the love of stories in her, and so she decides she's going to write an epic and they're always about struggles and defeating all the odds and you always win at the end, and her epic she's decided is that she's going to

teach him English again. And then that will be her epic struggle and the reward will be that he will be completely fluent again. And, of course, she has to learn that that's not necessarily how things like this work but it's very much about that process. It's also about the different ways we communicate with family and make family. And it's about—she's also in fifth grade—so she's really scared about middle school. So, it's also about all these periods of change and the adventures that come up. So, like the first Cilla books it takes on maybe a slightly heavier topic but there's a lot of typical Cilla adventures.

Sarah: Well, Susan, thank you so much for coming to the Read-Aloud Revival. I can't wait for more of our listeners to get their hands on your books. I think you are making some delightful stories for young readers today and I'm so grateful for your time.

Susan: Thank you so much. It was such a pleasure to chat with you and such a pleasure to be on. Thank you so much for having me.

29:45 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 Harriet. I am 6 years old. I live in Minnesota. My favorite book is Kiah, one of the American Girl books. And I like it because how they hunted and gathered their food and they fished and she has a horse.

Child2: [Mom: what's your name?] Gus. [Mom: how old are you, Gus?] 4. [Mom: and where do you live?] Minnesota. [Mom: what's your favorite book?] McToad Mows Tiny Island. [Mom: what do you like about McToad Mows Tiny Island?]



Because he has to mow, mow, mow, mow, stop. Drink a glass of lemonade, then put some oil it and then mow the rest, go on all those machines... [Mom: ... to get home?] Yeah.

Child3: [Mom: OK, what is your name?] Jude. [Mom: and how old are you?] 9. [Mom: where are you from?] Wisconsin. [Mom: and what is your favorite book?] War Horse because it has lots of action and adventure.

Child4: [Mom: what is your name?] Siah. [Mom: how old are you?] 5. [Mom: yeah, you've just had a birthday. Where are you from? Wisconsin?] Wisconsin. [Mom: and what is your favorite book?][**inaudible**]. And the rabbit did [**inaudible**] and the bunny's eat them all. [Mom: you like how the rabbit gets into his pen, into his garden, and they eat all the carrots in his basket?] Yeah.

Child5: My name is Joshua and I am 11 years old and I enjoy the book Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring. I like the part where the ring race they chase the hobbits around, that's a really good part.

Child6: [Mom: what is your name?] Tabitha. [Mom: and how old are you, Tabitha?] 7. [Mom: and where are you from?] Nigeria. [Mom: we used to live in Nigeria. And where do we live now?] Johnson. [Mom: what is your favorite book?] Little Pear. [Mom: and what do you like about Little Pear?] [**inaudible**] all the adventures. [Mom: what is your favorite adventure of Little Pear?] When he gets lost and the man helps him get back to his home.

Child7: My name is Hunter and I am 9 years old. I live in Okinawa, Japan and my favorite book is Turtle in Paradise. I like it because they use the word bungi instead of bottom.

Child8: My name is [**inaudible**]. I am 7 years old. I live in Okinawa, Japan. My favorite book is Harry Potter because they have house [**inaudible**].

Child9: [Mom: what's your name?] Esther. [Mom: and how old are you?] 6. [Mom: and where do you live?] Clarksville, Tennessee. [Mom: and what's your favorite book?] If I Built a Car. [Mom: and who's it by?] Chris Van Dusen. [Mom: and what's your favorite part of that book?] Where he makes the car make good smells. [Mom: like what?] Blueberry and pie and flowers. [Mom: yeah, very good.]

Child10: [Mom: what's your name?] [**inaudible**] [Mom: how old are you?] 3. [Mom: where do you live?] [**inaudible**] [Mom: what's your favorite book?] Up and Down. [Mom: Up and Down by Oliver Jeffers.] Yeah. [Mom: and what's it about?] A penguin who wants to fly. [Mom: a penguin who wants to fly?] Yep. [Mom: and what's your favorite part about the book? You like the pictures, don't you?] Yeah.

Child11: [Mom: what's your name?] Eliza. [Mom: how old are you?] 5. [Mom: where do you live?] In Germany. [Mom: and what's one of your favorite books?] The Butterfly Alphabet Book. [Mom: and who's the author? Jerry Pallotta.] Jerry Pallotta. [Mom: and what do you like about this book?] Because there is [**inaudible**] [Mom: the butterflies are your favorite?] yeah.

Sarah: Fantastic. Thank you, kids. I love hearing the books that you're recommending. Don't forget that you can get the Show Notes for this episode which we'll have links to all the books we talked about, the graphic that Susan mentioned during our conversation, and anything else that's relevant in the Show Notes at ReadAloudRevival.com/114. And, we also offer



free complete transcripts so if you're a reader, not a listener, or if you know somebody who's hearing impaired but would enjoy the Read-Aloud Revival podcast you can send them to the Show Notes to grab the transcript. Those are available for you there as well. Thank you so much for joining me. We'll be back next week. Until next time, go make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books.