

EPIsODE 143: **Kate DiCamillo is Back!**

- Sarah Mackenzie: [00:12](#) 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 Mackenzie: [00:29](#) Hello, Sarah Mackenzie here with another episode of the Read Aloud Revival podcast. Thanks so much for joining me. She's back, the one and only Kate DiCamillo. You know we love her around here. She's been on the show before. She's been a featured guest for RAR Premium for author access when we read *The Tale of Despereaux* for our book club and goodness, every time I have a conversation with her, it's just so wonderful. I learn so much and I just feel so satisfied. So anyway, you're going to enjoy this episode I think today.
- Sarah Mackenzie: [01:04](#) Before we get to the episode a couple of things. First of all, the 31-Day Read-Aloud Challenge is right around the corner. If you don't know what this is, every January we have a free 31-Day Read-Aloud Challenge. It's a challenge to your kids to read aloud and they can read aloud to anybody, to a grandma, a grandpa, a parent, a sibling, a stuffed animal, a goldfish, doesn't matter. They just read aloud any book that they'd like, for about 10 minutes on as many days as possible throughout the month of January. It's a really wonderful experience. We have received countless and I do mean countless emails from families who have told us that this simple challenge turned their child who was a reluctant reader into a voracious reader, who turned the kid who said, "I really just don't like reading," into a child who's hungry for books and it bonds siblings together and families together in a really surprising way and sometimes the most effective things we can do with our kids are the simplest.
- Sarah Mackenzie: [02:02](#) The 31-Day Challenge is a really good example of that. Also, it's just a fabulous way to help your child launch into a new year with good reading habits in place, so that they get 2020, it's going to be a good reading year for them if they start with the 31-Day Challenge.
- Sarah Mackenzie: [02:19](#) Our next podcast episode will actually be all about the 31-Day Challenge. So make sure you're subscribed to the Read Aloud Revival podcast in your favorite podcast app so you don't miss it and we'll be sending out the free challenge packet with all the good stuff very soon. You want to make sure you're on our email list so you don't miss that and the way to do that is go to [rar31days.com](http://rar31days.com). If you're getting our emails, you're going to get the packet but if you don't get emails from me, go get on this

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list, rar31days.com. Put your email in there and then I will send you the 31-Day packet and all the good stuff when it's ready. It's going to be a really good year to be a part of the challenge. So looking forward to that.

Sarah Mackenzie: [03:00](#)

Okay, before we get to my conversation with Kate, I wanted to answer a listener question and this week's question comes from Cindy.

Cindy: [03:09](#)

Hi, Sarah. My name is Cindy. I'm from Auburn, New York. It was great to meet you and get a chance to talk with you at the Rochester Homeschool Convention. So thank you for that. My question is, I have a six year old who enjoys reading aloud fun interactive books like Sandra Boynton and things like that, which is fine. He has an eight year old sister and I read a lot of longer chapter books with her. While I don't expect them to be on the same read-aloud listening level, I was wondering if since he does not seem to be an auditory learner, he frequently tunes out unless he has something to do with book, is this something that I should be training in him as we read longer read-alouds? Is this something that will come naturally or should I always be looking for some way to keep an interactive piece to our read-alouds?

Sarah Mackenzie: [04:14](#)

Hey, that's a great question, Cindy. I'm really glad you asked that. So, if you listen to Episode 137, Kara, Kortney and I talk about something called multi-modal reading and this is just reading in different modes at once. When we look at pictures, we're doing a kind of reading. When we look at words, we're doing a kind of reading. When we listen to someone reading aloud, in fact, we're doing a kind of reading and all of those kinds of reading, they need a different part of our brain to be activated for us to sort of make sense of what we're seeing on the page, to connect with the story, to make sense of what we're reading and what we already know. There's a lot more going on than it looks like.

Sarah Mackenzie: [04:53](#)

So, my guess is that your son is a very visual learner and not highly auditory but maybe highly visual as a learner, which is a great thing to know. I would stay with picture books for longer and just let him naturally grow into the ability to listen or read to text that doesn't have interactivity or pictures along with it. That's going to come but it needs to come on his timetable, so I wouldn't worry about it at all.

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Sarah Mackenzie: [05:18](#)

A couple of things you might want to listen to, that episode with Kara, Kortney and I. We are talking about graphic novels but I think it's toward the beginning of that episode, where we discuss multi-modal reading. Listening to that might be helpful for you. Also, the episode with Dr. Michael Gurian where he's talking about boys because he specifically mentions that for a lot of boy readers, they are highly visual readers and they will do better. This is why a lot of boys in fact, are attracted to graphic novels because they do better and they learn better when they see pictures along with the text. So we'll put a link to both of those episodes in the show notes. The show notes for this episode today are at [readaloudrevival.com/143](http://readaloudrevival.com/143).

Sarah Mackenzie: [05:59](#)

So, if you go there, you'll see links to both of those podcast episodes and then I just want to ease your mind. I think if he's loving stories, picture books that you're reading, then I think you're good to go. Now, if you're hoping to kind of ramp up the amount of text or maybe just the kind of story that you're telling your child or he's reading, check out some picture book biographies because picture book biographies are usually very well done. They oftentimes have more text than a normal picture book. They feel a little more like school for your sake but not for your child's sake meaning that it will feel to you like a really rich, meaningful and academic activity to read them but to your child, it just feels like a really great story. In fact, we have a fantastic list of our favorite picture book biographies. That was from Episode 122. So, I guess there's another episode you might want to listen to and you can get the list of our favorite picture book biographies at [readaloudrevival.com/122](http://readaloudrevival.com/122). Again, I'm going to put links to all of these in the show notes.

Sarah Mackenzie: [07:01](#)

The takeaway, I think, is to let your child sort of outgrow his desire to always have pictures accompanying his text. Let him outgrow that on his own and not rush it and what we really want to do is make sure we're sort of honoring our child's own inner time clock, right? For when they're ready to expand their reading territory, never really getting rid of picture books but adding new things to it, adding more narrative that has less pictures to it but I don't really think you need to push it. I really don't think you need to nudge even. I think he's going to get there naturally on his own. You're obviously a reading family. Books are a thing that happened in your home, he's going to get there. He's going to get there on his own time and you are, I can tell, a very tuned in loving mother because you're wondering how to help your child be a great reader. So, such

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good things and Cindy, I think you're on the right track. Thanks for calling in.

Sarah Mackenzie: [07:47](#)

Now let's jump into this conversation with Kate DiCamillo. So, Kate has been here before. We love her here at Read Aloud Revival. Most recently, she was here in Episode 121 and on that episode, we talked a lot about the reading comprehension questions that you often get at the end of a reading or literature class in school and it's sort of kill your enjoyment for the book, right? So, you're reading a book and you either love it or you don't in your literature, your reading class and then at the end, there's 10 questions that ask, who did this or did this person do this thing before or after that? Or as your kids get older, that reading comprehension questions may expand to be like, what does this thing in the chapter symbolize or what did the author mean? Or what was the point of this book? All those kinds of questions. Basically, reading comprehension questions are the kind of questions that you never answer about a book when you're a grown up, but you only do when you're a kid.

Sarah Mackenzie: [08:46](#)

I wanted to clarify the difference because at Read Aloud Revival, we're often talking about asking your kids open ended questions really as a launching point to have wonderful bookish conversations with your kids about books. The meeting of the minds of two readers, parent and child. We both loved Bud, Not Buddy and we're going to talk about it because we just can't help ourselves. That kind of conversation and the questions that you can use to sort of open up those conversations, that's awesome. The kind of questions Kate and I are talking about today are the assignments that we oftentimes give our kids after they've read something. So, read this chapter of Bud, Not Buddy, answer these 10 questions about what happened in that chapter, mostly as a way for adults to assess whether a child has read it but that also can expand into asking them to make a diorama or do a book report or write an essay or whatever it is.

Sarah Mackenzie: [09:37](#)

A lot of times we see that that kind of assignment sort of takes the joy out of reading, or at least that was my experience growing up and it was also Kate's. So we sort of jumped right in at the top of the conversation. We're right where we left off talking about how we're still thinking about that conversation we had, about the questions we adults tend to ask kids about books that sort of ruins their reading experience. So, I wanted to make sure I clarified what we're talking about there.

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- Sarah Mackenzie: [10:02](#) Also, I wanted to let you know that Kate has a new book out if you haven't seen it yet. It's called Beverly, Right Here. It is one of three books in her sort of companion stories about the three rancheros, these three girls in Florida who are such good friends. We have Raymie, Louisiana and Beverly. They each have their own book, Raymie Nightingale, Louisiana's Way Home and this new one is Beverly, Right Here. These are middle grade novels. I tend to recommend them for kids who are maybe 11 and up or so. They all deal with parental abandonment. So, you just want to maybe know that as you're kind of considering your own reader who's ready for what, just like all of Kate's books do. They don't hide from suffering and pain but they bring so much hope and light and, oh my goodness, so beautifully done. So, Beverly, Right Here is the newest book and you're going to hear us talking about that one quite a bit and I think I'll stop talking so that you can hear Kate who's probably who you're really here to hear, right?
- Sarah Mackenzie: [11:19](#) Like happens at the end of every one of your books, I felt like swollen with hope. All of your stories from my perspective as a reader, I feel like I know that this character who's going to face seemingly impossible odds and they're going have to find something inside of them to reach that hopeful ending but as I started this one I was like, I don't know how she's going to do it. I don't know how she's going to do it. How is she going to leave me not feeling completely despondent for Beverly and you did. It was amazing. So anyway, that was my experience this last weekend with Beverly.
- Kate DiCamillo: [11:54](#) Well swollen with hope is a lovely phrase and I would like to steal it but I won't but it's a huge compliment and this is that thing where I said, you weren't in the work part of my brain, but I did periodically think, I wonder if Sarah liked it and you're really good reader and you come up, you probably know this, all the time when I'm out on the road when I was at last week in Philadelphia and somebody raised their hand and said, "Oh, we heard you on the Read Aloud Revival podcast," And, "Oh, I know what it was about. It was about questions at the end of stories." It's an interesting thing to talk about in a room of people where people are coming from lots of different angles but I have to say, I don't understand why we have to pick apart something living and wonderful and dissect it. It's like pinning it to the paper and that's what the questions always made me do. So anyway, I got off track, okay, I'm-

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- Sarah Mackenzie: [13:02](#) No, that's on track. Actually, I'm going to jump ahead then because something I was thinking about after I read Beverly was, well okay, I'm always thinking, I think about that temptation for parents and educators, for us to ask kids to look for certain things within what they're reading and I think it's all very well intentioned because we want our kids to read well, right? So, we're trying to help them read well but a lot of times it ends up showing up as asking them to look for things like, symbolism or dig into what did the author mean by or my favorite, why did the author put this here, which is my favorite because when I talked to authors, sometimes they'll stare at me and go, "Did I do that?"
- Kate DiCamillo: [13:38](#) Right, either and it's like we talked about last time, I have no idea what I'm doing. So, for that to be like, what did I intend to do, but at the same time, I know it's not wrong to say, to hope that we all read more closely and one way to get closer to the text emotionally is to look for those unified patterns and that brings your heart in closer I think, don't you think?
- Sarah Mackenzie: [14:10](#) Yeah, I think that's true. So one of the things that I noticed, I don't think Raymie did this in her story, I could be wrong. It's been a little while since I've read Raymie but I know that Louisiana did and Beverly did, they both drove in their story.
- Kate DiCamillo: [14:25](#) Yeah.
- Sarah Mackenzie: [14:26](#) Okay. So I was thinking about this and I went, okay, so somewhere, someday, on a test, somebody is going to write, why do you think the author made the characters drive the car? As like a symbol for maybe, so we've got these three rancheros, these three girls, all three of them have parents who have kind of left them with a mess of things and they sort of have to rise up and find hope in their current situation, rise above it. So then, that driving of the car could easily I think, be translated into a symbol for the kids taking over a parent's responsibility for their life or something and I thought like, that is something that I could see happening on a test or in a question, or why did Kate make the characters drive the car? So, I thought-
- Kate DiCamillo: [15:14](#) Right, well and when you posed the question as if it were a blue book question, I knew immediately how I would answer it as the person who's taking the test, which is just like what you said, I would think, well, these girls have been forced into adult roles but as the person who wrote the story, I'm not thinking

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that at all. What I am thinking, of course Beverly knows how to drive because her mother is a mess and Beverly is the most capable person in the world. So there's no method to my madness other than following the character and I know emphatically like I had no doubt at all about Beverly having known how to drive for a long time and I also had no doubt at all that Louisiana would relish getting behind the wheel.

Sarah Mackenzie: [16:14](#)

And she sure did.

Kate DiCamillo: [16:17](#)

But you're right. If I were the person majoring in English and taking that test, some really interesting distinction, I would say these things are indicative of and probably were used to show that these children are having to act like adults too soon and it's funny but I would never say that as the person who wrote the story.

Sarah Mackenzie: [16:40](#)

Well, I don't know if I would say that as a reader. I think I would say that as a student maybe. It was only when I stepped back to kind of consider where, for example, symbolism, somebody might dig through to find it but you know what is interesting about what you just said, last time we talked, you mentioned about how the story is smarter than you are.

Kate DiCamillo: [16:59](#)

Yeah. Absolutely.

Sarah Mackenzie: [16:59](#)

And really is like, so there are things that come up in your stories. I think last time you might have mentioned that someone asked you why stars, there's always like points of light and you do it on purpose but that doesn't mean that that isn't meaningful in some way.

Kate DiCamillo: [17:15](#)

It's a beautiful distinction to make. That's right. It doesn't mean that it doesn't have meaning for me or coherence for the story but it's that thing it does go back to the story being smarter than me. It's that thing and I think we talked about this where it's like, I can see important things out of the corner of my eye as I'm writing and that they're connecting and I feel like if I turn and look at it directly, then I'm going to mess it up. So it's that thing of trusting the story and I can feel the pieces coming together and see it a little bit but I don't look at it directly and this whole discussion about driving would go under that heading.

Kate DiCamillo: [18:13](#)

That's an [inaudible 00:18:14] thing to talk about, it's really interesting.

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- Sarah Mackenzie: [18:16](#) Well, my assistant Kortney and I were chatting about it yesterday and she said, she almost thought that the word symbolism is what trips us up because she said, really what's happening, it takes this abstract idea of like parental abandonment or a child having to take over responsibility and makes it concrete, which is really what we do with stories anyway, right? Is we take these abstract ideas and we give them the form of a little mouse with very large ears or-
- Kate DiCamillo: [18:41](#) Right, that's right and that's why they're so powerful and I mean, they matter to adults too but why they particularly matter to kids but they do the same thing for adults in that you can't give this ambiguous feeling. You can't make it concrete, but as you're reading, all of a sudden it has been made concrete and that's why we want to talk about symbolism all the time. That's a very good point that she made because all of a sudden this thing that you don't know how to talk about, you have a way to talk about it because of the story and the things that happen in the story.
- Sarah Mackenzie: [19:23](#) As we started talking about this, I've mentioned that I really think the intentions of parents and teachers and people who are helping kids dig into books, they're very good because we really want our kids to read well. I just wonder if we really know what we mean when we think about reading well. I'm kind of on a hunt to figure out what does that mean? I'm wondering what it means to you as a writer, if you're thinking about a child reading your book, what does it mean if a child reads your book, quote on quote, well?
- Kate DiCamillo: [19:48](#) Wow. I want their heart on the page along with my heart on the page. My heart is there on the page but it's just like it doesn't become manifest until their heart is there on the page. So, that means I don't need them to know what color Opal's hair is or whether or not Winn-Dixie has fleas, which I got a long letter about once. In the midst of this, it was like clearly this child loved the book and talked about that time that Winn-Dixie had fleas, which I'm like, did that happen? And it doesn't matter to me if they're getting the quote on quote facts of the story straight, it's that they're connecting themselves emotionally to the story. So, I understand why Opal feels this way because I felt that way. Then I think they're reading well.
- Kate DiCamillo: [20:56](#) Can I ask you, the kid Sarah? So, in making a diorama, answering her 10 questions at the end of the book, doing her book report, presenting her book report but like, what was the

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thing that mattered to you book-wise or did that not happen until later in your life? Or was there like a teacher reading aloud to you? Or was there anything when you thought, what is that book? I want to get that book. I mean, did that happen at any point because I've got a friend who is a writer who wasn't a reader until after college. So, when did you become a reader?

Sarah Mackenzie: [21:34](#)

I became a reader very young. Okay, two things I remember. One is I remember my first grade teacher reading aloud to us and that being my very favorite time of day. I didn't particularly love the stories that she read. I can remember some of them now and I didn't reread them at home or go find them. I just loved being read to. I loved the way it made me feel and I don't know if maybe that just feels too nebulous. I don't know, I like the way stories made me feel but I do remember being in, I think I was a third grader and I found Roald Dahl's *Matilda* and it was a pretty fat book, well compared to the other books that were in our school library, I mean, our classroom library and I chose it.

Sarah Mackenzie: [22:16](#)

You're going to learn all kinds of things about me today Kate. I chose it because I wanted to impress the teacher and be like the one reading at SSR with the fattest book because that would definitely get good attention from the teacher I thought, right? That is why I chose it and then I fell in and it was like I realized at that point, I think for the first time, that reading wasn't just something you did, reading was like-

Kate DiCamillo: [22:40](#)

An experience. It was a happening. It wasn't a task and it wasn't just something to turn the pages, okay, now I'm on chapter two. Now I'm on chapter five. Rather, it was I'm living this.

Sarah Mackenzie: [22:55](#)

Yeah and I think if a teacher had said, "Okay, now I want you to write a diary entry from the perspective of a book character, which I remember doing with *Maniac Magee* and someone to recently asked me, "Why is that not on any of your book list?" I'm like, "Man, it was ruined for me as a kid and I have never picked it up again." I should probably pick it up again now. I would probably love it. I'm sorry Jerry Spinelli. I will read it again.

Kate DiCamillo: [23:20](#)

It is a good book. It is but I came to it as an adult. No one made me do it. So yeah, well, which is all exactly what we're talking about here, right?

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- Sarah Mackenzie: [23:30](#) The other one that I can think of is Charlotte's Web, which I remember I had to go to after school care before my parents came home from work to pick me up and I hated it because I was the oldest kid there and there's all these little loud kids there, right? And so, I remember finding that book somewhere in her house, the lady who took care of us, and just hiding myself away in a corner and feeling like what is this magic, this story that I just, I read it I think two or three times in a row where like I got to the end and then started it again and that had never happened with a book before.
- Kate DiCamillo: [24:10](#) Let's go back though to kids and how we can get them to Matilda and Charlotte's Web. So, it's like you actually, like, it's the same feeling as Walking Through the Wardrobe. That's what it is and that's what we want them to experience. That's what we get. It's just like that, it's that magical give of something solid and you enter into another world and that's what we want them to have and how do we facilitate that? We both think it's reading aloud but it's more than that too because it's also when you go off by yourself with a book.
- Sarah Mackenzie: [25:03](#) But I wonder, is that's something that just happens between a book and a child that we can sort of create the circuit, the environment, maybe where the circumstances are more likely?
- Kate DiCamillo: [25:12](#) Yeah and that's what I'm thinking as you're talking, it's like, okay, so that we make that possible in every way but we also don't push it. It's like you let them, because I've been saying this a lot in the last week talking about Beverly, writing this was like crouching down and holding up my hand and waiting for something wild to come up to me and take the peanut butter out of my hand and in a way, I think it's the same way with kids and reading. So you're there, you're present and of course, you're reading aloud and you facilitate and you have the books there and you get them to the library. I'm a big fan of the library but you don't go chasing after them and saying, "Wait a minute, what did the pearl necklace mean in that story?"
- Sarah Mackenzie: [26:05](#) Yeah, exactly.
- Kate DiCamillo: [26:09](#) But we're there always and the books are there and they can come and take them out of our hands.
- Sarah Mackenzie: [26:19](#) Okay, I'm interrupting the interview with Kate for a second to paint a little picture for you. Imagine that Kate is not an author yet. She hasn't written Because of Winn-Dixie or any of her other novels and she's working in a book warehouse and she

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stumbles across Katherine Paterson's *Bridge to Terabithia*. She's about to share with us something that she wrote for a speech that that book did to her. So, I wanted to interrupt and give you a little backstory there. That's what's happening. I've asked Kate to read a little bit from that speech about what happened when she read *Bridge to Terabithia*, which is going to inform a little more of our conversation about what books do to us to when we read them.

Kate DiCamillo: [27:01](#)

One of the first novels for kids that I read at the Booklyn was Katherine Paterson's *Bridge to Terabithia*. The Booklyn was an old warehouse with tall windows that late in the afternoon, [lead on great 00:27:12] slabs of light and one afternoon, I was standing in the warehouse reading *Bridge to Terabithia*, when I came to a passage detailing the beginning of a friendship between the two main characters Jess and Leslie. I'm quoting directly now from *Bridge to Terabithia*. Caught in the pure delight of it, just turned in his eyes met Leslie as he smiled at her. What the heck? There wasn't any reason he couldn't. What was he scared of anyhow, Lord? Sometimes he acted like the original yellow bellied sapsucker. He nodded and smiled again. She smiled back. He felt there in the teachers room, that it was the beginning of a new season in his life and he chose to deliberately make it so. End of quote.

Kate DiCamillo: [28:00](#)

Those words, the heart behind those words resonated with me so deeply standing in that patch of afternoon light on the floor of the warehouse, I understood something. You could choose who you wanted to be. You could choose to deliberately begin a new season in your life. How did I know this? Because this story told me that it was so.

Kate DiCamillo: [28:33](#)

This is a really good argument for not having the 10 questions, I think, because I spent a long time after my best friend that I grew up with, hounding her about why it was that she would reread just like you did, *Charlotte's Web*, like finish the last page and then turn it over and start again and it's just like, what do you think as a kid that you are after? I mean, did you think it was going to turn out differently? I mean, like, do you have any idea what it was that you were looking for when you were doing that and we went around and around about it and finally she's just like, "The book helped me bear it somehow. It was all so beautiful and I didn't think I could bear it but then I would read again and I found out that I could bear it."

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- Kate DiCamillo: [29:32](#) So, it's just like, and no kid is thinking that and we're barely thinking that as an adult but it's like if that's all happening... so you're going through this thing and the book is keeping you company as you're going through it and shining light on your soul and on the world, right?
- Sarah Mackenzie: [29:50](#) Were any of your books the easiest to write or the hardest to write? [crosstalk 00:29:55]
- Kate DiCamillo: [29:54](#) Yeah, Edward was the easiest because it really did kind of write itself and I was aware. I had a conscious thought of, wow, I finally figured out how to write a novel and of course, that was completely erroneous but I had a subconscious thought that I remember like walking around the lake here after I'd worked on it one day and the subconscious thought was, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you. I knew it was a gift even and it just kind of told itself. So, that was surely the easiest. The most delightful are the Mercys. They're just so much fun to write and that goes all the way to the Deckawoods are just super fun to do and just a place to rest on the page and the hardest is probably Desperaux. Did we talk about that before, that-
- Sarah Mackenzie: [30:51](#) I don't know if we did.
- Kate DiCamillo: [30:52](#) I'll try to make it very short but Winn-Dixie being the first book and this big outpouring, unexpected for me, of people loving it and then me thinking I have to read another book like that and I kept on trying to do that and I finally saw that if I was going to survive as a writer, you can't write in order to make people love you. I was going to have to go in a completely different direction and so that was Desperaux, which was just because it's like okay, she's a southern writer. We want another book like this one. So, I had to kind of like defy. I wanted to do another one like Winn-Dixie but I couldn't. It wasn't from an honest place and it was really terrifying to write Desperaux. It was so plot heavy, it was different than anything that I had done or tried before and I thought I could be doing it and I'm going to fall flat on my face in front of everybody because I know this will get reviewed. Before it was a question whether or not I was going to get reviewed but I knew that it would get reviewed. So, that was the hardest one.
- Sarah Mackenzie: [32:19](#) And that's the one that won the Newbery, didn't it?
- Kate DiCamillo: [32:22](#) Yes.

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- Sarah Mackenzie: [32:24](#) Okay, Kate, did that mess with your head then after that?
- Kate DiCamillo: [32:27](#) Everything messes with my head. So, it messes with your head to thinking, am I ever going to get published? That messes with your head. So, it's just you change, the things that are on your shoulder change out and there's always something that you have to put blinders on and it's all ego, right? It's like, am I ever going to get published as ego, am I allowed to do this? Are they going to take the Newbery away as ego? And all of that has to like, that's not what it's about, what it's about is something better than me and getting out of my own way so that I can get to that thing that's better than me.
- Sarah Mackenzie: [33:10](#) Okay, so you mentioned Mercy Watson and Deckawoo Drive. So, I have kind of a funny story for you. One of my teenage daughters was singing this song that they had done in camp and it was Mercy is falling, is falling, is falling, Mercy is falling like a sweet, sweet rain. So, Clara is in the car. Allison is singing that. Clara is my seven year old and she looks at her teenage sister says, "I like that song," and Allison says, "Oh, do you? I like it too. Do you know what Mercy is?" Clara goes, "Yup. A pig," and I always drove off the road. I was laughing so hard because I was thinking, oh my gosh, Allison has been singing this song for weeks and I can just picture Clara is just picturing Mercy Watson falling like [crosstalk 00:33:53].
- Sarah Mackenzie: [33:53](#) So out of your three rancheros, Raymie, Louisiana and Beverly, which one is most like you?
- Kate DiCamillo: [34:13](#) Oh, Raymie. Totally Raymie and Candlewick devised this little online test that you can take, which one are you, [where 00:34:22] you'd see yourself.
- Sarah Mackenzie: [34:22](#) I took it last night.
- Kate DiCamillo: [34:24](#) Wait a minute, you're Louisiana.
- Sarah Mackenzie: [34:29](#) I think so but it gave me the result of Raymie but I think I was skewing it. You know how you kind of know. I don't think I was being a hundred percent honest with my answers.
- Kate DiCamillo: [34:43](#) That's very funny. Yeah but there's no doubt I'm Raymie and I came up Raymie when I took the test. All of those girls and all of those answers are a part of me and Beverly is always, it's like I bet a lot of Raymie and Louisiana, I mean Beverly is always the kind of kid that when I was a kid, I admired so much

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and thought that's the way to be in the world. Just unapologetic and brave and it was just not, it's part of what I say in the speech that I give out there in the world for Beverly is that the moment in Raymie Nightingale when they're in the nursing home and Beverly takes the hand of the woman who's screaming in pain and holds her hand and sits and hums to her is like probably one of my favorite moments that I've ever witnessed with a fictional character because it goes back to that thing of Bridge to Terabithia. You can choose who you want to be in the world. You can be brave enough to go and sit with somebody and their pain.

- Sarah Mackenzie: [35:58](#) I don't want this to end but I think we're at the end of our time. I am so very grateful that you've carved out some time in your busy schedule to chat with us. Again, thanks so much for the conversation.
- Kate DiCamillo: [36:09](#) I've been looking forward to it all day and it didn't disappoint. It was great.
- Sarah Mackenzie: [36:18](#) Now it's time for Let the Kids Speak. I love this part of the podcast because kids share the books that they've been loving lately.
- Speaker 4: [36:35](#) Hi, my name is [Belinda Metis 00:36:37] and my favorite book is Chronicles of Narnia and my favorite one is the Lion Witch and the Wardrobe, and I'm seven years old. I like it because there's wars and there's like kings and there's battles.
- Speaker 5: [36:56](#) My name is not [Natalios 00:36:57]. I'm five years old. My favorite book is Trumpet of the Swan. Because I like it because there are lots of animals and I like Sam Beaver.
- Elizabeth: [37:11](#) Hi, my name is Elizabeth. I'm eight years old. I'm from New Jersey and my favorite book is The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame. I like it because the animals talk and I think Mr. Toad is really funny.
- Speaker 7: [37:26](#) Hello, my name is [Sugo 00:37:28]. I'm 10 years old, and I live in Monterrey, Mexico. The book that I recommend is Percy Jackson and is about a son of a Greek god and I like it because it have a lot of adventures.
- Ryan: [37:49](#) Hi, my name is Ryan. I live in the United States. I'm six. My favorite book is The Imagination Station because they always get new adventures.

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Speaker 9:	<a href="#">38:08</a>	Hi, my name is [Josie 00:38:10] and I am five years old and my favorite book is If You Give A Cat a Cupcake-
Speaker 10:	<a href="#">38:18</a>	By Laura-
Speaker 9:	<a href="#">38:18</a>	By Laura Numeroff and it's my favorite book because I love cats and cupcakes.
Speaker 11:	<a href="#">38:29</a>	Say Hi.
Speaker 12:	<a href="#">38:30</a>	Hi.
Speaker 11:	<a href="#">38:31</a>	I'm Hailey.
Speaker 11:	<a href="#">38:33</a>	Say my favorite book-
Speaker 11:	<a href="#">38:37</a>	Is Clifford's Noisy Day.
Speaker 11:	<a href="#">38:42</a>	Say I like it because it has a cat-
Speaker 11:	<a href="#">38:50</a>	And what else do you like, the dog?
Speaker 11:	<a href="#">38:53</a>	Okay, say thank you.
Speaker 13:	<a href="#">38:56</a>	My name is [Blue 00:38:58] and I'm five years old and I live in Georgia and my favorite book is Sheep in a Jeep and my favorite thing about it is when they get stuck.
Speaker 15:	<a href="#">39:16</a>	What's your name?
Emma:	<a href="#">39:16</a>	Emma.
Speaker 15:	<a href="#">39:18</a>	And how old are you?
Emma:	<a href="#">39:19</a>	Three.
Speaker 15:	<a href="#">39:20</a>	And what's your favorite book?
Speaker 15:	<a href="#">39:24</a>	And why is that your favorite book?
Emma:	<a href="#">39:26</a>	Because it has two little pigs.
Speaker 15:	<a href="#">39:32</a>	And you love pigs?
Emma:	<a href="#">39:34</a>	Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
Speaker 16:	<a href="#">39:36</a>	What's your name?

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Maddie May: [39:38](#) Maddie May.

Speaker 16: [39:39](#) And Maddie May, how old are you?

Maddie May: [39:42](#) Three years old.

Speaker 16: [39:43](#) Three years old, that's right and where do you live?

Maddie May: [39:45](#) In Georgia.

Speaker 16: [39:48](#) Yes and Maddie May, what is your favorite book?

Maddie May: [39:53](#) Mercy Watson.

Speaker 16: [39:54](#) Mercy Watson and why do you like Mercy?

Maddie May: [39:55](#) Because she eats bread.

Speaker 16: [40:00](#) Because she eats bread. She likes butter toast, doesn't she?

Maddie May: [40:10](#) And she is a baby.

Speaker 16: [40:10](#) Yeah.

Maddie May: [40:10](#) Let me see when she was a baby.

Speaker 16: [40:10](#) Okay.

Sarah Mackenzie: [40:11](#) I love it when the kids ask you to read aloud when they're talking about the book and then they just are like, "You've got to read the book to me right now." That's my favorite. Thank you kids. Hey, if your kids want to leave a message for the podcast, go to [readaloudrevival.com](http://readaloudrevival.com), scroll to the very bottom and you will find a button there where you'll be able to record your message because we love to hear from your kids. I'll be back after Christmas and it's a great episode because we're gearing up for the 31-Day Read-Aloud Challenge. If you've done it before, you know why we're excited because it's awesome. If you haven't done it before, keep your ear to the ground because January is going to be an awesome reading month for you and your family. Thanks so much for joining me. Until next time, go make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books.