

EPISODE 165: **When reading starts to feel like school**

- Sarah: [00:08](#) You're listening to the Read-Aloud Revival Podcast. I'm your host, Sarah Mackenzie, homeschooling mama of six and author of *The Read-Aloud Family* and *Teaching From Rest*. As parents, we're overwhelmed with a lot to do. It feels like every child needs something different. The good news is you are the best person to help your kids learn and grow and home is the best place to fall in love with books. This podcast has been downloaded 7 million times in over 160 countries. So, if you want to nurture warm relationships while also raising kids who love to read, you're in good company. We'll help your kids fall in love with books, and we'll help you fall in love with homeschooling. Let's get started.
- Sarah: [00:59](#) Hello. Hello. Sarah Mackenzie here. In today's episode, we're going to talk about what to do when reading starts to feel like school. I think this happens to all of us at one point or another. We let reading shift in our kids' lives from being principally about joy and delight into something that needs to be done for school. A lot of parents notice a significant drop in how much their kids are reading for pleasure, if they're reading for pleasure at all, once the school year is well underway. I think this becomes more and more true the older our kids get.
- Sarah: [01:39](#) Now, this is a problem, and honestly, it's something we want to guard against, because according to the National Literacy Trust, those who enjoy reading are better readers. They're more confident readers. They spend less time online, are more motivated by interest and achievement, and they're less motivated by approval. We also know, based on the work of Stephen Krashen, and I'll link to his book in the show notes, and actually I'll link to all of my sources here in the show notes, but we know that no single literacy activity has a more positive effect on comprehension, vocabulary, spelling, writing ability, or overall academic achievement than free, voluntary reading, not reading done for school, not assigned reading, free, voluntary reading.
- Sarah: [02:34](#) I want to sit on this for a moment, because the emphasis here is on reading for pleasure. You know, simply being able to read and then ... or simply reading something that's assigned, it just doesn't confer the same benefits as reading for pleasure, reading because our kids want to. Then it becomes obvious why it's a red flag when starts to

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feel like school. Right? It's a red flag actually if the bulk of reading your child does is school-related. The bulk of the reading they do should be their own free, voluntary reading.

Sarah: [03:13](#) If our kids are starting to do most of their reading for schoolwork, or they're starting to complain about it, or to see reading as something they want to get done so they can be done with their assignments, done with their schoolwork, then we want to take a moment and really consider our goals here. Because if our children read for pleasure and they see reading primarily as a source of delight and joy, if they enjoy most of their reading ... they don't have to enjoy all of it, but if they enjoy most of it, then they're far more likely to become lifelong readers, which is really, really important, because most of the reading your kids do should actually happen when they're adults. You know, they're only in our home for a small percentage of their whole lives. Right? You know, God-willing, 20% or something of their lives. Most of the reading they do then should happen after they leave our home, not before. That's simply not going to happen unless they love it. We know this, that adults don't read unless they love it, unless they see it primarily as a source of delight.

Sarah: [04:16](#) I think it's worth taking a few minutes to think through a few things in these moments, which, like I said, happened to every single one of us. When reading starts to feel more like school and less like joy, what do we do? How can we respond to that? First, some good news. That is that less is very often more. Look, I know this much. I want my kids to leave my home believing that Shakespeare plays are hilarious, and delightful, and moving, and lasting, and fun to read and watch. I don't care if they've read every single Shakespeare play. I want them to love Shakespeare so much that they want to keep reading him after they leave home. Whether they read Shakespeare's entire cannon or even his most famous works is far less important to me than the fact that they love Shakespeare, because then I know that they'll keep reading him. They'll keep seeking out his work after they leave home. Right? Same with the classics. I want my kids to have such a positive experience with the classics that they're eager to read more, even when they don't have to.

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- Sarah: [05:23](#) This is far less likely if we're trying to read a lot of books. Right? There's a huge difference between rushing through a book in order to get it checked off the list and to be able to say we've done it and really relishing a book. In one of my favorite books, *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction* by Alan Jacobs ... We've had Alan Jacobs here on the show a couple of times. We'll put links to his episodes in the show notes, or you can just search for them in your podcast app, but he is a professor in the honors humanities program at Baylor University.
- Sarah: [05:58](#) In *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*, he says that a student is, and here's a quote, "not just attentive to what he or she studies, but positively disposed toward it, friendly, even affectionate. Not just attentive to what he or she studies, but positively disposed toward it, friendly, even affectionate." This is the disposition we want our kids to take with the books that they read, whether they're presented for school or they're reading for fun. Right? Not just attentive, but also positively disposed toward it, friendly toward it, affectionate toward it. I can ask myself, are my kids friendly and affectionate toward the books that I'm assigning them for school? Are they friendly and affectionate toward the books that they're reading for fun? Are they reading for fun? Right? When I see a curriculum, any curriculum at any age that has a long reading list, that's a big red flag for me, because I know it's going to be much harder for my kids to savor, relish, enjoy, and immerse themselves in those books, because they're having to read so many.
- Sarah: [07:11](#) One of the other quotes I love from *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction* is on page 67 when Alan Jacobs says that, quote, "Reading is supposed to be the encounter with other minds." The encounter with other minds. Now, an encounter with other minds is going to take time. Right? He also cautions that most of us read too fast, way faster than is good for us. Having a shorter list gives us breathing room. Right? It helps us remember, we don't need to read fast. You don't get the benefits of reading by getting to the end of the book and shutting it. You get the benefits of reading by reading, when you're actually doing the active reading. You can slow down, and take longer with each book, and not feel so rushed, and you'll get the benefits. You don't have to finish the books to get it. In fact, I would argue that if you're reading a book

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slowly and relishing it, you're getting far more benefits from that book than you would by just finishing it quickly and moving onto the next. So, reading faster is not reading better. In fact, it's quite the opposite of reading better.

Sarah: [08:15](#) If we know this, if we know that less is very often more when it comes to our books and kids, I think this frees us up a little bit to, number one, assign fewer books if we're assigning books in our school. I did a whole class in RAR Premium just recently on how to assign books to your kids without killing their love of reading, so if this is a pain point for you and you're finding that you're having a hard time assigning books related to history, or literature, or for older kids and high schoolers especially, then come on into RAR Premium and watch that replay, because I think you'll find some help there. You can join us in Premium at rarpremium.com. If you're already a premium member, you'll find that replay in the For Mamas section of Premium.

Sarah: [09:00](#) But we can breathe a little easier. We can be more comfortable. Right? Because we don't have to get through some big lists. We're just enjoying books. Also, if we realize that our kids don't need to have some really impressive, long list of titles, it's more important that they're spending time every day reading than that they're finishing lots and lots of books, this can help us I think take a lot more pleasure in our reading. It takes the pressure off of needing to read a ton of books and instead just make space and time for being a reader.

Sarah: [09:32](#) Here's some more good news. Not only is less very often more, but there is no one right reading list. Like I said, if we're raising readers, then most of the reading our kids will do will happen after they leave our homes. That means our job is to help them fall in love with reading widely and then to nurture that love, not read through a list of essential books to read before your kids leave home or whatever. There's a lot of those lists out there, the classics your kids have to read before they leave home. The good news is there is no one reading list of books your kids have to read before we leave home. It is way more important that our kids are reading for delight, and pleasure, and enjoyment, and they're relishing, and enjoying, and sitting with it, and asking questions, and

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having a good time. That's going to take them so much further in their reading lives.

Sarah: [10:26](#) Keeping in mind that less is very often more and that there is no one right reading list, let's talk about a couple of tips that can make this easier and doable. If you're noticing that your kids are seeing reading as school, that reading has become a task, it has become school and a thing to check off the list, then I think there's a couple of things that we can do, a couple of responses we can have that might help a little bit. Number one is that any books that your kids are really struggling with, maybe complaining about ... This could be an assigned book that they're reading for literature, or history, or any part of their curriculum, and it could also just be any book that they're not really enjoying, but they need to read for school. I have found that my kids, especially my teens, enjoy doing those books together on audio book. We enjoy reading classics together much, much more when we listen to a professional narrator do a really good job of reading the book aloud to us.

Sarah: [11:24](#) Last year, for example, one book we read is The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, and we listened to the audio version narrated by Elijah Wood. We actually worked on this big puzzle while we listened, and the kids would ask for it first thing every school day, because we all enjoyed it so much. Now, here's the thing. If you're going to read most of your classics, or most of your assigned books, or most of the hard books, or whatever, on audio book with your kids, the truth is you're not going to be able to through a really long list of them. Right? You're going to be able to read fewer books, and that's okay, because, remember, less is quite often more. I decided that I would rather read three or four classic books and maybe one Shakespeare play a year with my kids and just have them fall head over heels with them than reading through some big lists. This I think ends up being a win for us.

Sarah: [12:15](#) Last year, I'll tell you what, we were at a bookstore. My 15 year old son saw another book by Mark Twain on the shelf, and he grabbed it, and looked at me, and said, "Hey, I bet this is good. I loved Huckleberry Finn." I am just not convinced that would have been his reaction if I had said, you know, "Read this book over the next couple of weeks

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on your own, and then write an essay," or, "Read these books and then fill out these worksheets," or, "Do this literature response workbook," or something. Right? I think we need to remember our goal. If we want our kids to be lifelong readers and to love reading, then we might want to think about how our homeschool program or how our typical ways of assigning books are helping our kids develop the skills that they need to be adult readers outside of school, because that's our goal is for them to be adult readers, even when they don't have to be. Right?

Sarah: [13:09](#)

Then after my kids read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, I want it to be more likely that they'll pick up another book by Mark Twain on their own. After we read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Hamlet*, I want it to be more likely that they'll want to go see a Shakespeare play or read through a Shakespeare play for pleasure a year from now, 10 years from now, 40 years from now, because it was a good experience. If you're starting to notice that your kids are feeling like school is drudgery and something on the to-do list, see if listening to an audio book, doing it together, reading it aloud could help, and slow down that pace so that you have time to sort of dive into it, immerse yourselves in it. Get out a big puzzle. Get out some popcorn or some brownies. Right? Do something that makes it feel more like an invitation to enjoyment, rather than a thing on the checklist.

Sarah: [14:08](#)

Another idea is simply to take a break from the books that you feel like you all should be reading and just allow some delight reading for a while. Or instead of saying, "We're going to do this instead of any of our school reading," you can just make a pocket of time in your day, a half an hour after lunch, or after dinner, or I find it easier to do earlier in the day than later. If you're homeschooling, you have your kids home with you, you have that luxury that you can do this earlier in the day. Give yourself a pocket of time that is just for delight reading, just for free, voluntary reading. This is a half an hour. Everybody reads, mom included. It does not matter if the kitchen sink is full of dishes, if we're way behind on laundry, and if we haven't gotten math yet. None of that matters. This is the 30 minutes that we read. We drop everything, and we read. Right?

Sarah: [14:57](#)

During this period of time, we read whatever we want, whatever gives us joy, and we don't have to read our

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school books or try to get things checked off during this time. This is a half an hour that we spend just enjoying books. Your kids who are younger or who are not fluent readers yet can do these on audio book. In fact, in our house for years some of my kids have been listening to audio books during our quiet reading time, and they have listened to so many excellent classics, in fact, and other enjoyable, delightful bits of literature by doing it through audio book.

Sarah: [15:32](#) We have a list with this episode of books that tend to just be wins, like fun, delightful wins. They might not match up with what you're learning in history. They might not be on your literature curriculum. They're probably not. It would be better if they weren't. Just something that is absolutely delightful to read. We're going to have a list of about 10 books that do that for a wide range of ages. If you are like, you know what, we need to read something fun to find our joy again, come to the show notes. Those are at readaloudrevival.com/165, because that's where we're putting that list for you. Those are good books for a good wide range of ages.

Sarah: [16:09](#) Now, we have been reading *The Book Whisperer*, by Donalyn Miller in our Mama Book Club in RAR Premium this fall. This is an excellent book for anyone who wants to make sure that their kids love reading more at the end of each school day. I know for most kids at the end of the school they wouldn't say that they love reading more than at the beginning. They're usually just glad to be done with their reading they had to do, but we want our kids to love reading more at the end of the school day, at the end of the school year than they did at the beginning, not less. If that's you, that's a good book recommendation for you to read. It's called *The Book Whisperer*, by Donalyn Miller. It's an excellent book.

Sarah: [16:48](#) Now, it's actually written for classroom teachers, for middle school I think classroom teachers, but in RAR Premium, what we've been doing in the forum and with our Mama Book Club is getting into the nitty gritty of how to take her ideas and principles and make them come alive in our homes and our home schools. If that's of interest to you, you can check that out in RAR Premium. If you're already a part of the Premium, but you've missed any of this, head to the forum. You'll find everything you need

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there. If you would like to join us for that conversation, we would love to have you. You can join us by going to rarpremium.com.

Sarah: [17:25](#) Now, I know it can feel like, ah, I'm failing, you know, if your kids don't currently enjoy reading, if you've got kids right now who are just not readers for fun. They don't enjoy reading. It's definitely something to check out their checklist and they don't even do that without complaining about it. There's always time to instill a love of reading. You are never too late. I have met so many adults who didn't think of themselves as readers until they became adults. Knowing that, I think it's important, because it can keep us grounded. Right? It can help us make decisions when we're looking at literature curriculum that dissects a book to death and we wonder if we really need to use this.

Sarah: [18:05](#) The question then is what's your goal? Is your goal for your child to be able to dissect *The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn* or *Heidi*, or *The Scarlet Letter* in detail, or is your goal for your child to be a reader? Right? It can help you avoid panic. When you're looking at a long list of hard books or classics that are tied to a curriculum, you can ask yourself, how important is it to me that my child has ticked all of these off the list, or is it my goal that they fall in love with some of these? It just sort of frees you up to be the master of your curriculum then, to be the master of the plan and say, "You know what? We're going to do reading a little differently than was done when I was in school, and we're going to do a reading a little differently than this curriculum might say or than the general society's expectation of what reading in school should look like, because we are raising readers in this house." Right?

Sarah: [18:56](#) That helps us avoid panic when we realize our kids don't really need to read long lists of books. They need to be reading most days for pleasure a lot of the time. I think he can just help us all enjoy the process more and help our kids enjoy reading more, because less is so very often more when it comes to reading, less titles, less pressure, less expectations that you squeeze all the juice out of every book. Don't miss any theme, or character, or trope, or alliteration. Know that they're first and foremost stories. Right? And remembering that less is so often more, that there is no one right reading list, that a delight in reading

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matters far more than having read a particular book or a particular list of books, or knowing the themes or central points of certain books, or having finished a curriculum, or a literature guide, or whatever for school. Right? Growing readers, so that they are readers well into their adulthood matters. If that matters more to you, then you're going to want reading to look a little different in your home, because love of reading matters more than all of it. Pop some popcorn. Mix up a cup of cocoa or lemonade and read something just for fun. Read it aloud, and that makes it even better.

Sarah: [20:13](#) In the show notes, like I said, we're offering a list of some of our favorite fun books that might just help you infuse some delight back into your family's and your kids' reading lives. If you're struggling or your kids are struggling to read for pleasure, I would highly recommend that you take whatever you're reading for a school day, or a week, or even just a half an hour and read one of these aloud together or on audio. Make it an opportunity for connection. These are books that are great for a wide variety of ages, so you can read them aloud with young kids and with older kids with the expectations that you're just going to enjoy each other's company and enjoy this story. Again, that list is at readaloudrevival.com/165.

Sarah: [21:00](#) Actually, one of the books on this list is brand new. It hits shelves today, the day this episode releases, in fact. I got to read an early copy. It's by one of my very favorite authors, Jonathan Auxier. He's written *Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes*, *Sophie Quire and the Last Storyguard*, *Sweep*, which I'm sure you've all heard me rave about it. It's one of my all time favorite books. But I want you to know something about Jonathan, because Jonathan told me when he was a kid, he was not an avid reader. He did not like reading for fun, and this was not okay to his mother.

Sarah: [21:37](#) From his mother's perspective, it wasn't okay that somebody in the family didn't enjoy reading. She did something rather unusual. He said this on the podcast episode number 56, which is an excellent episode, by the way. We called it *What's At Stake and Why Stories Matter*. Jonathan is a delight. If you like this next little peak, you should go listen to the whole episode. But I pulled out this little bit where he talks about what his mom did when he

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didn't love reading, so that you could enjoy it here. So, let's listen in.

- Jonathan: [22:27](#) I came from a family that they were very serious readers, and so there were always books in our home. My older sister was a voracious reader, and I knew how to read, but I didn't enjoy it very much. There were just other things I enjoyed more. My mother, actually ... I guess I got through first grade and most kids ... That was right about the time I think most kids who loved reading, it was clicking in by the time they were finishing. It was very clear talking to my teachers and just seeing me that, again, even though I knew how to read, I just didn't like doing it. It was not an activity that brought me any joy.
- Jonathan: [22:56](#) My mother sort of panicked, and she didn't know how to ensure that this would happen. She pulled me out of school. I didn't know this until only about three years ago I learned the truth of this/ but when I was growing up, the story my mother would always tell me is I did second grade twice. The first time I did it at home, and then I went back into a public school. The reason I was held back, which is the truth of what happened to me, my mother would always just say, "I didn't quite think I was ready to let you go," or something like that, that somehow made it about her emotional need. I also interpreted that as I probably wasn't emotionally quite ready or something.
- Jonathan: [23:31](#) It wasn't only until very recently, after I had published my first book, that I was talking with my mom about literacy and she told me that that wasn't really the reason that she had done that. The reason she had pulled me out of school for a year, so that I could be, quote unquote, homeschooled was because she was panicking about my reading, and she didn't know how to make me a reader, but she knew that it had to happen.
- Sarah: [23:52](#) Okay. That's good stuff. Right? I love, love, love that story. Of course, Jonathan Auxier, like I said, is now the author of some of my very favorite books. He is a phenomenal storyteller. I think of the gift that his mother gave him by prioritizing his delight in reading, so that he had a chance to fall in love with stories. Now, of course, he's paying that gift forward to the world with his wonderful tales. Speaking of which, he has a brand new book out today, the day this

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podcast is airing. It's called Willa the Wisp. It's the first book in a new series called The Fabled Stables.

- Sarah: [24:32](#) Now, this is an unusual series. It's not really a picture book, and it's not really a novel. It's something else. I managed to get Jonathan on the phone just for you to tell you what this new book is about, because I think this is exactly the kind of book that you just read because it's so delightful and wonderful. In fact, it is on our list in this episode's show notes of books that you can read with a wide variety of ages to just spark so much delight and fun and help everybody fall back in love with reading. You'll find that list, again, at readaloudrevival.com/165, but let's hear what Jonathan has to say about The Fabled Stables and Willa the Wisp.
- Jonathan: [25:25](#) This is a brand new series. It's also a new type of writing for me, because it's a series for slightly younger readers. The Fabled Stables takes place on a magical island at the top of the world. Inside that Island there's a little boy who works inside these magical stables called The Fabled Stables. And the stables are packed full of all sorts of strange, one-of-a-kind creatures, like the Hippopotamouse, and the Tattle-Tails and the Gargantula, and all of these strange and unusual creatures. It's Auggie's job to take care of all of them.
- Jonathan: [25:58](#) Now, every so often they get a new arrival. The stables will shake, and shutter, and shift, and all of a sudden there's a new stall with the name of a brand new, one-of-a-kind creature. It's Auggie's job to venture out into the wide world, with the help of his friends, and go out and rescue this animal creature, and bring it back to safety. That is really the heart and soul of The Fabled Stables.
- Sarah: [26:19](#) Well, I just recently read the first one, Willa the Wisp. I have to say the word choices that you use when you write, they make such delicious read-alouds. I've always thought that about your novels as well, but your novels are not short, Jonathan. That can be kind of difficult sometimes, especially if you're thinking, what am I going to read to the kids before bed, a bedtime story? A lot of our listeners here at Read-Aloud Revival have kids of various ages. Whenever you have kids with multiple ages, it can be a little difficult to choose a story that appeals to everybody. Either you're reading stacks and stacks of picture books,

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and maybe the older ones feel like they wanted something different, or you're trying to read a novel, and the littlest ones are kind of antsy. What strikes me about *The Fabled Stables* is it feels like a book that could invite a lot of different ages in.

Jonathan: [27:19](#) Oh, Sarah, you are making me so happy to hear you say that, because that is absolutely one of the key inspirations behind this book. Now, the core inspiration creatively is just that I am obsessed with monsters. I've spent my whole life drawing and doodling monsters all of the time. These books were sort of a repository, place for me to put all these strange, one-of-a-kind creatures, but the other very pressing need that I had came as a parent myself.

Jonathan: [27:44](#) I have three young daughters fairly close in age. They are two, four, and six years old. I, as a parent, am drowning at present, especially around bedtime. We take reading aloud very seriously, but it's hard at the end of the day, it's gotten harder in the middle of quarantine, where suddenly we are also homeschooling our children, as are I know many of your listeners. By the end of that day, it's really exhausting. One of the things that I find difficult is exactly what you said. My youngest daughter really wants to read picture books. That's what she loves. She gets excited by seeing all these beautiful, colorful pictures, and the pages are always turning. There's always a new picture. But my older daughters want to listen to longer stories.

Jonathan: [28:29](#) It's really hard to find one book that can sort of entertain them all. In fact, some of the only books I could find that sort of hit that sweet spot, where they could entertain older and younger kids, were Shannon and Dean Hale's *Princess In Black Series*, which is a series that ... We love that series in our house. I have hand sold a million copies of that book, because I think it's so great. Whenever I do, all I do is tell a parent, "Look, instead of negotiating over how many picture books you're going to read or dealing with a wiggly kid while you try to read them a novel or something like that, you're going to pull out one volume of *Princess In Black*, and you're going to knock out a single bedtime with that one book, and everyone is going to love it, you included."

Jonathan: [29:10](#) I have that experience as a parent, but I was really frustrated, because that series, it's got six, seven, eight

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editions or volumes now, which is great, but it's not enough. I'm reading aloud every night. I basically realized I needed to be the change that I wanted to see in the world. If I want more books like that, I had to write them. That's really what The Fabled Stables are. I love that you talked about the language, because I love language and wordplay. You can see that all over my Peter Nimble books especially, but everything I write there's a lot of wordplay. I don't ever want to lose that.

- Jonathan: [29:43](#) Sometimes a book like this can be confusing to categorize, because it looks like an early reader or something like that, but it's not, because the language is actually pretty complicated and robust, like you would find in a picture book, but it's 100 pages long. But instead of being like a regular 100 page long chapter book, the word count is really low. You can read this whole book in about 15 minutes, and it's a hundred pages of full color, bright illustrations, so that youngest kid is also following along in the story. Again, I wrote that because I needed it. I needed it as a parent. I knew other parents needed it. It turned out it was sort of a perfect marriage between my desire to make this fun, slightly silly series about a boy and his one-of-a-kind beasts and also this story that I could share with all three of my kids.
- Sarah: [30:30](#) This book is like all the fabulous storytelling, excellent diction, fantastic illustrations in a package, like you said, that you can read in one sitting. I cannot wait to hear what people think when they get their hands on this, so I'm excited about it. Jonathan, do you know how many books will be in this series?
- Jonathan: [30:49](#) Great question. As many as people want. I have no shortage of monster ideas. In fact-
- Sarah: [30:55](#) This does not surprise me.
- Jonathan: [30:57](#) No. This is a lifelong passion of mine. Also, even working with my daughters and reading to their other friends, the kids who hear this story come up to me really quickly later with their own ideas for one-of-a-kind monsters, which is something I love. I love the idea that kids would read this story and start inventing their own creatures that have a little bit of a kind of a wordplay or some ironic twist on a creature from the real world. As long as I have those

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ideas, and they don't seem to be stopping, I would love to keep writing these stories forever, because they have been so fun and so rewarding. It's a gentler, kinder space. Some of my other books can get a little heavy and dark. I should say, because I know the read-Aloud Revival listeners, I interact with quite a few of them when I do events, back in the days when I did events in public. They would come to libraries-

Sarah: [31:48](#)

Remember those? Yes.

Jonathan: [31:48](#)

Those good old days. I know a lot of your readers really loved the Peter Nimble books. I will say this series technically is a prequel to Peter Nimble. The characters in The Fabled Stables are going to, some of them, grow up to become characters in the Peter Nimble world, and some of the characters we see in these first three books also interact. If you are a hardcore Peter Nimble fan and you want more of that story and that world, you've definitely got to check it out. But I've just loved writing it. I will keep writing these for as long as the world lets me. I hope as the book comes out, people find it and enjoy it as well.

Sarah: [32:31](#)

Well, I know you'll enjoy it, listeners, because I got to read it early. Like I said, it's going on the book list for this episode, which is a bunch of books that will just help you infuse your family's reading life with delight if it's gotten a little less delightful than we want it to be. Again, that list is at readaloudrevival.com/165. You will find Willa the Wisp there, along with some other favorites. I've got to say, Jonathan Auxier is a favorite here at Read-Aloud Revival.

Sarah: [33:00](#)

He just this month taught a WOW, Writers On Writing, Workshop for us, where he talks about keeping a hero's journal, which is a journal where you keep all the different things that you see, and think, and daydream, and random sketches. He actually takes us inside his own journals that he's kept over years and years and then shows us how the little scribblings, and ideas, and jottings that he put in their grew into novels. We have had so many members tell us that their kids were mind blown, that they absolutely were riveted by this workshop. It is not to be missed. If you've got a young writer in your home, you don't want to miss that either. That Wow, Writers On Writing, Workshop is on replay now in RAR Premium.

EPISODE 165: **When reading starts to feel like school**

Premium members, all you need to do is go into your RAR Premium dashboard. You'll see it right there. Or you can look in the For Kids Library. If you are not yet a member, join us by going to rarpremium.com.

- Sarah: [34:07](#) 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.
- Seth: [34:23](#) My name is Seth. My age is seven, and I live in California. My favorite books are the Percy Jackson Series, because it's funny and exciting.
- Ed: [34:37](#) My name is Ed. I'm nine, and I live in California. My favorite book is [Fenda 00:34:47], because it's really, really funny and kind of creative.
- Speaker 5: [34:52](#) What's your name?
- Lizzie: [34:54](#) My name is Lizzie.
- Speaker 5: [34:57](#) How old are you?
- Lizzie: [34:57](#) Four.
- Speaker 5: [34:57](#) Where do you live?
- Lizzie: [35:04](#) I live in California.
- Speaker 5: [35:08](#) What's your favorite book?
- Lizzie: [35:08](#) My favorite book is The Princess In Black. My favorite part is where she saves the world.
- Xander: [35:19](#) My name is Xander, and I am 12. I live in California. My favorite history series is Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales, which is a hilarious graphic novel series. My favorite book in that series is Big, Bad Iron Clad, which is in the Civil War, about the naval battle.
- Kayla: [35:43](#) Hi, my name is Kayla. I'm 11. I live in California. My favorite book is the Princess Of The Midnight Ball, which is a fairytale retelling of the 12 Dancing Princesses, and it's really sweet. There are two other books in the series, Princess Of Glass, which is based on Cinderella, and Princess Of The Silver Woods, which is based on Little Red Riding Hood. They're all wonderful.

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- Adie: [36:08](#) Hi, my name's [Adie 00:36:10]. I'm nine years old. I live in Colorado. My favorite books are The Books Of Bayern and The Princess Academy Series. They're both by Shannon Hale, and I like them, because they're adventurous.
- Axel: [36:21](#) Hi, my name's Axel, and I'm four. My favorite book is Narnia, and Harry Potter, and Hello, Ninja, and Mustache Baby. I live in Colorado.
- Speaker 11: [36:43](#) Hi. My name's Quinn, and I'm six years old. I live in Colorado. My favorite book is Little Princess. The reason why I like Little Princess is because it's a sweet, fun story, and when Sarah's in a hard spot, she's still really kind.
- Sarah: [37:04](#) So very good. Thank you so much, kids, for your book recommendations. Also, thank you for your patience. If you've left a message for us to air on the podcast, know that we're getting to it. We air them in the order they're received. There are kind of a lot of you, and we love to hear all your recommendations. We don't want to miss a one, but I know that you have to wait several months. While you're waiting to hear yourself on the show ... and I'm grateful for your patience, and I'm super grateful for your book recommendations. I get the best book recommendations from Read-aloud Revival Podcast listeners.
- Sarah: [37:38](#) Show notes for today's episode are at readaloudrevival.com/165. You'll find that list of books that are fun. I hope you're able to infuse some delight into your family's reading life. We can always find a little way to add a little more joy. Hey, you know, it means a lot to us when you share the podcast with your friends. Recommending your favorite episode to a friend who you think might enjoy it, it helps us help more families make meaningful and lasting connections with their kids, and it brings us so much joy to know that all these families are reading aloud, connecting, sharing moments together that they will not forget. So, thanks for being a part of our listening community, and thanks for telling your friends about The Read-aloud Revival. I'll be back in two weeks with another episode, but until then, you know what to do, go make meaningful and .lasting connections with your kids through books.