



How Illustrations Nourish the Holy Imagination

You're listening to the Read Aloud Revival podcast. This is the podcast that inspires you to build your family culture around books.

Well hello, hello! I'm Sarah Mackenzie and this is episode 26 of the Read Aloud Revival. Thanks so much for tuning in with me today. One of the questions we get a lot is what's the difference between the Read Aloud Revival podcast and the membership site. And you know I don't think I have actually articulated that for you very well here on the podcast. The podcast is always free. It comes out every other Tuesday and they're free interviews that I'm doing with authors and leaders in the read aloud movement. They offer tips and conversation around what it takes to build your family culture around books.

I love the podcast. The podcast will always remain free and you can find it of course in iTunes or at readaloudrevival.com. The membership site is more of the guts. It's where we get deep in to forming a family culture around books in each of our homes. There's a lot of how to inside the membership site. For every single episode of the podcast, we've created cheat sheets, which are basically action plans plus time-stamped cheater guides to the podcast so that you can hop around the podcast to get the most important or most encouraging information from each one. And then you can take action on those episodes and instead of just letting them wash over you, really let them make a difference in your life.

The heart and soul of the membership site is found in the member workshops and these are how-to workshops. They're video workshops. Pretty soon, we're going to be adding a feature where if you don't want to sit and watch the

video, you can just download the audio instead and listen to them on the go, which may work well for some of you who are super busy and who would much rather just listen rather than watch. But the member workshops aren't just extensions of the podcast. They're more on nitty-gritty, how-to. So for example, Adam Andrews has a member workshop inside the site right now called How to Build a Perfect Reading List. What you find is his video workshop along with downloadable worksheets that help you, you guessed it, build a perfect reading list for your family.

We're working on one right now called How to Read a Classic With Your Teen. Janice Campbell's going to be walking us through that one. There will be a video workshop of course and work sheets that will guide you step-by-step through what it looks like to read a classic with your teen. We also have a member workshop on how to start a parent-child book club and how to shape your child's moral imagination through the reading of fairy tales and several other workshops coming up soon including one from Julie Bogart on How to Start a Poetry Teatime in Your Home. And I'll be doing one soon too on The Secret to Great Discussions with Your Kids.

So the biggest difference between a member workshop and a podcast is that there is a video element to them if you'd like and also there are downloadable worksheets. The main emphasis on the workshops is to help you actually take action and make things go in your home. Instead of thinking about how lovely it would be to start a poetry teatime or instead of sort of hemming and hinging over book list and not sure how to build one for your own family, we help you just actually do it. That's the whole point of the member workshops.



One of the key parts of the membership site are the live events. So these can't really be replicated outside of the membership because you have to be there live to really get in on all the goodness. Boy! I tell you what, we had our very first live author event in the Read Aloud Revival membership site and it was fantastic. It was so much fun to watch all the kids type their questions in. Caroline Starr Rose, the author of *Blue Birds* and *May B.* was live on screen answering kids' questions and the people who joined us for that event said it was just a fantastic experience for their whole family. One of the things that came as a surprise to me was how much inspiration Caroline offered for young aspiring writers. There were quite a few of them in the audience and they were typing questions into the chat box and her inspiration and encouragement for young writers was just really astounding. Both of my oldest daughters were found scratching away in their spiral notebooks, writing their own stories that night. And my husband said, "Oh these kids must have been pretty inspired." So that was pretty cool. she gave a lot of really good book recommendations and gave us a peek in to what it was like to write *Blue Birds*, which was just really fantastic.

Anyway, if you are a member or if you'd like to become a member of the Read Aloud Revival membership community, you can get in to see the video replay of that event. We'll also very soon, probably by this time this podcast airs, we should have the complete transcript loaded up there in the site for you as well if you'd rather read it instead of watching. And if you really just like to listen to things on-the-go, there's actually an audio download there too so you can snag that, listen to it on your iPod or your phone or whatever you like to listen podcast on, and you'll

get in on the Caroline Starr Rose awesome action that we had going on there. So that was really fun. To get in on all of that, just head to readaloudrevival.com and click on the button that says Become a Member. It's only \$5 a month. There's no contracts or fees or any required length of time you need to be a member. And of course, there's a 100% "all the time no questions asked" satisfaction guaranteed! So there's really no risk to give it a try. and I would love to help you step up the read aloud action in your home. I think that the membership site is probably going to help you do that.

Sarah: Alright so today's guest is Zach Franzen. He's the illustrator of *The Green Ember* by S.D. Smith. I was really excited to talk to Zach to find out a little bit about what goes on in the mind of an illustrator as he's preparing to illustrate a wonderful book like *The Green Ember*. Zach lives in Greenville, South Carolina with his wife and his adorable toddler daughter and he illustrates textbooks by day and then freelances by night. He's also currently working on *The Black Star of Kingston* which is the prequel to *The Green Ember* that I have the good fortune of reading right now and you all will be able to get your hands on this summer. Very exciting!

I started our conversation by asking him if he's always been an illustrator. I asked him if he was one of those kids who was always scribbling around, drawing little sketches while he was supposed to be doing his math assignment in school. And this is what he said...

Zach: Well I was that kid but a lot of people are that kid because nobody wants to take a math test. But for sure I was that kid and I recall my sort of my earliest memory, I remember doing a drawing. I must have been 4 years old. I did a drawing of a helicopter that my mom put on the



refrigerator and I remember thinking "That looks like a helicopter."

Sarah: That's awesome. Yeah...

Zach: And I felt very proud about that and I...

Sarah: That's kind of how I feel now when I draw something that's like, "That actually looks like what I was trying to make."

Zach: Yeah and then I remember in the K5, we had to, and this is a literary illustration, we had to write an illustrated story. And I don't think I understood the concept of a story. But I recalled the girls in my class were writing about My Little Pony and the teacher would ask us to read our stories to the class And it just went on and on. And mine was one sentence. And she asked me to read my story and there was something just behind her eyes like I could tell she was amused by it. And so she says that "Can you read your story?" And I looked down at my paper and I read my one-sentence which was - My dad can lift a truck.

Sarah: That's an awesome sentence actually.

Zach: And I had a picture of this sort of lumpy torsoed man lifting a truck in the air and it was very naively drawn but she was very proud of my drawing. She like it. And I think at that time, I thought that a story was merely something that is not true but would be cool if it was true. So the concept of narrative hadn't really occurred to me and I spent most of the effort on the illustration. So that was my experience there and I had very supportive parents who look for opportunities to nurture those gifts and connect me with people. And then the strange thing is in college, I studied the thing called the interpretative speech. It's like all on interpretations like theater. And I minored in art. Long story short, after college, I worked up in

Pennsylvania for a couple years and down in Alabama doing some theater stuff and then I realized that all my friends were getting work experience and I was just getting older and it wasn't something I want to continue really to do because it's a lot of travel and so I started painting murals and then I started with some friends at a place called Portland Studios and I worked there for a little while and then did freelance illustrations. So it was just kind was of a roundabout laying and eventually kind of settle on illustration.

Sarah: Okay. And so you have illustrated The Green Ember which of course, the community here at the Read Aloud Revival, we're pretty much raving fans of The Green Ember.

Zach: Well yeah I'm glad to hear that. Yes, I did.

Sarah: So tell me about that. How did that come about? Were you and Sam friends before or how did that all...

Zach: We were. Yeah, we were. And I'll have to say, I was so relieved that I like the book. I sort of committed to illustrating it before I read it. And I read it sort of in early stages. But I remember one night, opening up my iPad and he had sent me the file and I just thought okay... and I really found it... it felt more short-footed as it preceded and I really, really liked it. So yes. Sam and I knew each other... Oh I remember. He did a story magazine in West Virginia and he asked me to do an illustration for it and we were talking and it was something about dragon and a puppy dog. And we just sort of... Sam is just one of those very gregarious kind of people and he knows a lot of folks and he's a very hospitable guy.

Sarah: Oh he's so likable. I mean there's just nothing not to like about Sam.



Zach: So yes. We just connected and then we talk through storylines stuff and talk about The Green Ember. We just organically went from there.

Sarah: So let's talk about what the role of illustrations is as far as a child's reading life because I have noticed for all of my kids but especially for my 11-year old daughter. She's always been really sensitive to illustrations so if there are bad illustrations or ugly illustrations of books, she doesn't even want to look at it. She'll sit on the other side of the room looking at something else so that she can paint the pictures in her own mind and so that's pretty powerful right? So I'm curious what your take is on the role illustrations have in sort of flushing out the story.

Zach: Illustrations are a collaborative element of the story. And it depends on what... illustrations aren't one thing. So sometimes like in a Richard Scarry book, the illustrations are there just to provide a non-textual, non-analytical element. So you have like the Bar of Soap and there's a word called "soap" and it's a way that sometimes kids learn things in there. There are educational uses but if you're just talking about narrative, here are a couple of uses maybe. One use that is just sort of generic and simple and probably not small perhaps is that illustration helps to make a book valuable as an object. If you have a book that is, for some reason, people don't want just a sheet of paper that's stapled together and it has like great expectations on the top. People want things that are bound and sometimes they are leather-bound and sometimes...

Sarah: And more of like an artifact...

Zach: Yeah. That they want an artifact. I think it makes it more human thing to have different disciplines woven together for one end. And I do

think that anytime you'd invite a collaborator into the process of your experience with a story, you risk shattering your vision.

There's a writer Mark Helprin who said something about not liking to read his own work because an actor... I mean this is an audio book does the same thing in a way. Because the actor makes choices about the interpretation of the characters and about the interpretation of the lines and he said that he preferred... this author, Mark Helprin said he preferred... I'm going to mess up the quote but with something like there is an infinite number of interpretations. He likes the ambiguity. I think he said something like he likes the ambiguity of language that exists like water poured on water in the magic of silence. In other words, the ambiguities of language co-exist in a way that is undefined and therefore, there can be no wrong solutions. But once you make a choice about the interpretation of a line, if you're doing an audio book or if you're doing a cover or something, you're defining out of existence all the other things that is not interpreted in the other ways.

Sarah: So probably like screenwriters would feel wouldn't actors interpret their...

Zach: Right. Or speech writers, right? I'm sure that there are speech writers who cringe when their lovely speech is spoken by somebody who's not doing it justice. So all that to say, in illustration in a book, is a collaborative thing with the author, the writer. And let me give you one example, I was listening to somebody who was giving a talk about picture books. She was saying that she wrote a poem about like her grandfather and like a kid and she just assumed it would be like a white-haired man and how the grand kid... they were playing in leaves and doing things. In a lot of publishers, the author is considered too



close to the story and said they don't have input in the illustrations unless they are making all the money for the publisher. In which case, they sometimes art-direct. But in many cases, that recognizes a separate discipline. So this illustrator took that manuscript and made the grandfather a bear and the grandson a bear. And the author said that it was so much better. This is the best case scenario. It was someone fatter because this was adding something more universal to the story and when you do bears having a grandfather-grandson relationship that are in cloves and things, you don't have to worry about ethnicity and the socio-economic status and it's not limiting and it's a more universal application. So she was very pleased with that outcome although many illustrators were displeased with the act of these illustrators who insert themselves. There's a metaphor by C.S. Lewis and I think it's in his book of essays so it's like about the romance of things. He was comparing sunlight and moonlight. So there's this idea that sunlight is like prepositions You don't go out in the moonlight to see something more clearly. But you might go out in the moonlight to see something in a different way. There's a writer Jim Perrin, he said that moonlight gives otherness to landscape. There's a romance of the creative order that arises when seen through moonlight in a way that it doesn't quite perhaps seen through the full blast of sunlight. But you can see things perhaps more clearly in sunlight. In some ways, I think, text acts as sunlight and perhaps if they're doing a good job, if it works right, when it works right in a book, that you provide some of the romance and maybe some of the moonlight which is just its indirect thing.

Sarah: Well that's really beautiful. That's a really beautiful analogy to think of when you're looking

at a picture book. See the text as the sunlight and the illustration as the moonlight and when they kind of work together, it sort of weaves this beautiful wholeness to the story that you couldn't have one without the other.

Zach: Yeah and hopefully they're woven together, They're woven and so together they form something more impressive than just piles of string. Like when you look at a tapestry, you can probably find the elements of a tapestry for less than millions of dollars. If you look at an old tapestry, and it's not so much that the elements are expensive, it's that they're woven together in a way that creates value beyond their material elements. So when things like an opera or anything like that, like when you have a cultural weaving of different disciplines to that in one story, then I think there can be the potential for greater value than the some of the elements.

Sarah: Well I don't know how many people actually subscribed to this but I have heard it before. Some will say, read a story to a child without illustrations so that they can create the illustrations in their head. In your opinion, do illustrations or pictures ever hinder a child's ability to imagine the text on her own or do they aid the child?

Zach: Right. Of course they do. I mean a cover does for instance. Any information where somebody is making decisions about the look and feel and tone of the book is doing some of the work that the reader would do. And I've had the experience similar to your daughter where I've been enjoying a book and I'll turn the page and it'll be an illustration. The guy has a mustache and this person wore this thing and it feels like it interferes. So I think it does. But I do also think that there's something legitimate about entering in with other actors, other participants in



the story where it's not purely an internal thing although that's sometimes helpful. It's the same way with an audio book. They're taking some of the work off your hands when they're interpreting lines. But question is whether or not it's a good fit or not? So on one level, it does interfere with your ability to imagine. On another level, it can provide if the illustrations are well-placed and well-done then it can maybe provide a springboard for the child to imagine more things. It can also add to their visual vocabulary of the world so that they can think more articulately about the world itself. And sometimes it can even clear up things that are more difficult to stay in text.

Sarah: So when you were illustrating Heather and Picket from *The Green Ember*, what factors do you take into consideration when you're reading a book and you're thinking about beginning to illustrate it? What happens in your mind? I can't quite wrap my mind around what that process even looks like inside your head. I don't know if you do either.

Zach: We all have experience of what the things look like when we read a book and so the illustrator just has to sort of like start drawing from some place. But I think intentionally what needed to happen for Picket and Heather in my mind was that they needed to look like rabbits. They couldn't look like people with rabbit heads... so there are old illustrators like A.B. Frost and Harry Rountree, and T.S. Sullivan and stuff who are good at doing personified animals and still making them look like animals and not just making them look like Bugs Bunny or something or a person with big feet and gloves and like a big old head. So I think that was one of the things that drove me, some of the illustrations in *The Green Ember*. And it's difficult when you have a creature with a pear-shaped body like Rabbit Sue

because their hips are fairly wide compared to their chest which is really small. Because it's kind of not a threatening silhouette...

Sarah: So what's your favorite thing to illustrate? You know when you get a project. I know you illustrate textbooks - history, a lot of historical-based stuff, right? What's your favorite? Like when you get a project, what are you the most excited like I can't wait to illustrate this.

Zach: It shouldn't be a hard question to answer but it's a hard question to answer because... the easiest stuff for me to illustrate is probably stuff for adults. So either editorial illustration or it's the most natural sort of feeling thing. Or I was doing these illustrations for an American literature book where they had a bunch of selections and they have sort of (ed ground post) stories and different selections from Jamison Moore Cooper and others. And I find you can use illustrations at counterpoint more if you're illustrating for adults than you can if you're illustrating for kids. So for instance, this style is so much more of an important thing in literature for adults whereas plot is a lot more important in literature for younger kids.

Sarah: Okay. Okay.

Zach: And so because the text is so stylized, that's not something that they're wanting you to interfere with typically. So adding tone and sort of think you don't want to violate it but you're not really there to bring tone or atmosphere or anything like that. You're there to bring something meditative frequently. So for example, if there's a fight scene, I don't know why I keep telling you about fight scenes but I don't know if....

Sarah: Well *The Green Ember* is full of them so...



Zach: So for a kid's book, there's a fight scene, you might have the two people facing off. Or you might have somebody who's threatening and somebody's who's screwing their courage at the sticking spots so that they can fight and that's the moment before the fight happens. But in the book for adults, it might happen that you would instead illustrate maybe like a glass falling off the table during the fight or something. Or you could see some of really specific detail that is more meditated. It's kind of what they use in films. So if you think about illustration like a soundtrack to a movie sometimes you'll have a chase scene and you'll have up-tempo music that accompanies the chase scene and it's just adding more of what exists. And then sometimes you'll have a fight scene or a chase scene and you'll have really meditative slow music and it's a completely different emotional experience. It's more contemplative and it spirals in more. And you could do that sort of thing with illustration for adults. And it's easier illustrating for adults frankly.

Sarah: Yeah that's interesting.

Zach: So I don't know if that's my favorite.

Sarah: It's just not intent.

Zach: And it also depends like I have an appetite right now that illustrates something with cowboys. I don't know why that is. And also, I wish there were one million Indiana Jones-type stories which there aren't like strange, adventure genre. There doesn't seem to be a lot of that. Like things with artifacts and weird temples and ruin and that kind of thing. I have a craving for that too right now.

Sarah: What future projects do you have underway or what are you working on right now?

Zach: Right now, today I'm supposed to finish some interiors for a book that's coming out at Christmas time called... it's kind of like "choose your own adventure" book but it's during the first century with like a shepherd and a girl is a potter and then a boy who's a Parthian and so they have that steps. I'm doing nine interiors and I have to do a cover ASAP. So I hope to get it done maybe by Monday.

Sarah: I just can't imagine creating art that quick. I can't imagine creating art anyway the way you create art that quickly. It's amazing to me.

Zach: Thanks. So that's that and then I'm working on a thing for Bible Visuals International and it's a story about John Newton so they have a thing like in Sunday's schools and stuff or vacation Bible [distorted] like a story and you like flip the pages and you got illustrations. I'm working on that's due at the end of the month. And then Black Star which is the prequel to The Green Ember. So I hope to have the cover done in the next week. And then it's just a way to... I just got to juggle it with the other job.

Sarah: Right.

Zach: I try to get it done but hopefully, there's so many practical things about the printer and getting it on time and sometimes they need the image for the catalog. So those are the three on the plate right now. This is interesting. I talked to an editor from HarperCollins a couple of years ago. So I was talking about picture books and I said, I remember in the 90's that there were picture books that were there was a lot of atmosphere in them. And so it wasn't about the picture plain, it was about the world behind the illustration and those illustrations seem to disappear largely and anymore, it's like the



picture books are these kind of flat, it's like circle and triangle are... and so I said, "What's going on there?" So the ones strive for timelessness, and these are very timely. And in many ways, the verbally driven books and they're witty to a certain degree. But they're just not either imaginative or they don't sort of strive for timelessness or universality.

Sarah: Yeah it's like a richness or something is lost I think.

Zach: I think so yeah - atmosphere. And so she said to me, it was the results of moms.

Sarah: What do you mean by that?

Zach: This is what she said. She said that, I know this is for lack of a statement on this podcast so I know that...well this is what she said basically that librarians used to drive taste and appetites for publishers and the minimization of librarians as Barnes and Noble and people have individually taken care of buying their books and then not bought by somebody at the library has created so it has made celebrity publishing a thing like Katie Couric. No librarians are really going to be interested in her writing books or Tyra Banks writing a book called Moderland, which is a real book apparently. She's a very successful woman and I'm sure who cares what I have to say about her book. I haven't read it yet but the reviews are not flattering. But the thing is that has sort of been driven by moms who like Katie Couric and Madonna and Tyra Banks and whoever. So that drives a lot of the publishing stuff. And also that it's flattened the taste of books for kids in to "makes kids laugh" or "makes mom cry."

Sarah: Oh now that's a very good point. Yeah, I can see that. Because I see a lot of comments just generally about kids' books. Oh gosh the one

that really comes to mind is I love You Forever. Is that what it's called?

Zach: Okay. Oh yes. It's like the kid with the toilet on the cover.

Sarah: Yeah. Honestly, if you just look at it separate from the fact that it does make every mother cry, it's really about the mother. When I look at it, I think this is not a book for children because as a child, I can't imagine thinking there's anything here for a child. It's completely about mom. But it is one of the books that I think so many of us have in our home and why is that? It's because it's for us, not for our children. I think that's interesting.

Zach: I don't know what that means. I think that more and more mothers are thinking through intentionally, thinking through their libraries, and they're thinking through what books are good for kids and that sort of thing. It's more of a problem with the publishers in some ways than with the moms per se. Because what I asked basically why aren't people wanting... there are two issues. You can start to collect book that are old books that have good virtues in them and have good lessons in them but it starts to feel like these virtues are like a fly trap in amber of the time in which the book is written and we don't see them in the wild anymore. And I think that what Sam is doing is good is because these are old-fashioned. In some ways, books that are written are new. But publishers don't have an appetite for that because the view is that there's not a market for these types of books because if parents want books of that type, they'll just get the classics which are cheap to reprint for publishers who have the rights to them. And so it's not worth investing to produce new "old" books if you will.



Sarah: Right, well that makes sense. I think in the Read Aloud Revival community, in our Facebook group or in the membership site or just in show notes, we're always talking about trying to find these books that really... well the way they describe *The Green Ember* is a new story with an old soul. I think that's what we're looking for. We all are trying to share which classics have had the most impact on us and which ones have the best illustrations and how to get your hands on those. But as far as newer fiction that has the same transcending power to really move your spirit and embody that whole truth, goodness, and beauty. It's really hard to find new books that are newly published and I think when I see what a lot of the kids are reading, when I go to the library, quite frankly I think 80% of what I see on the shelf is character-based or based on movie or character. Or it just seems like it's lost [distorted] you're talking about that the older books have and I've often wondered why... I know this is easier to sell but why is that? Because we're all looking for something that's not there.

Zach: Well I think that their conception of the market is that kids are narcissists and they need to see themselves and they have this notion that there's a war between kids and adults. And kids need to serve and be pitted against the adult world. So you have all this sort of transgressive kids who are narcissists that occupy the pate and it's worse for girls than for boys because boys are largely neglected because they're not the big market. Girls view reading as a social experience so they share books a lot more and boys tend to read in isolation. It's not that a bunch of boys are reading the same books together as much as girls who tend to read the same books. And so the worst thing is that there are a lot of just horrible, narcissistic priorities in girl's literature

and in boys, they're kind of an afterthought. So they'll have adventures and that kind of thing but it's not as pervasively shallow as the girl books. I think there's a value system that exists in most of the publishing houses that is antithetical to what Christian parents would want. And so the idea is... a lot of parents think to get kids to read, you need to have something that worships them. And it makes them think that they're amazing and in my experience, that's just not the case. In college, I started [distorted] which is basically the interpretation of literature. So you do like a recital. It's a one-person show and that kind of thing that was the way that stuff went. And I took a storytelling class. This is one of the reasons that I keep what your podcasting your site's emotions because I took a storytelling class with this teacher who just persuaded us that reading to your kids is like the best thing and people like to be read aloud. And we all just bought it. We didn't have to be persuaded. She persuaded us I guess but after that, we thought this is a fact. If somebody suggested they don't like audio books or they don't like being read to, they're lying to you. This is sort of our operating thesis. We thought this is the case. So anyways, I did summer camps. In the summer after this class and I had a sport campers and they're like basketball campers in junior high and high school. And that summer, I could come in... it was on a college campus and so I'd come in to the room and I would say, if so and so is not in bed in the next 10 seconds, you guys don't get a story. And they would scuff and laugh like that was kind of ridiculous. And I would wait like a minute.

Sarah: And they would hustle.

Zach: And I would come back and they would all be in bed looking at me like a scant. And so I had



this whole collection of radio plays and I think The Hitchhiker was one. And the Orson Welles play and like dragging that radio plays and I read selections from literature and short stories about people under depression. The thing is, by the end of the week, I would go into the room and I would say, if so and so is not in bed in the next 10 seconds, you guys don't get a story. And they would scream at that guy to get in bed.

Sarah: I bet they would. That's so funny.

Zach: And what's interesting is that they were that middle grade, young adult range and those weren't stories that worship youth. Those weren't stories that made them need to feel like they are vicariously living through a transgressive kid who thinks his parents are idiots. They were stories about the broader world. It was a spiraling out situation on a spiraling in.

Sarah: My oldest daughter just read Understood Betsy by Dorothy Canfield. I have yet to meet a child and I'm sure there are them out there. But I have yet to meet one who has read that book and doesn't love it. If I could think of a story that has properly ordered relationships between adults and children and this mutual respect but it's not authoritative to the point of where you know the grownups are in charge and the children will succumb kind of thing. And also, it isn't that thing we see now in modern TV shows and books were like kids completely scorned adulthood. It's just this rightly ordered book and it is completely compelling. My daughter kept running into me. I've read it to her before but it's been like five years since I read it but... So she's reading it on her own and she kept running into me and reading me passages and she finished and said, "Mom that book was so wonderful."

Zach: So if she were to describe the appeal, how would she describe it? Would she describe it the same way that she likes that the relationships are well-ordered or would she describe it in a different way even if that was sort of behind it all?

Sarah: You know I haven't asked her exactly so I'm not really sure. And she's 13. But I think I don't think she would use those words. I think she might talk about the way she related to be how she felt so much like Betsy. My gut feeling is that maybe just deep down, there's that whole right ordering of the universe happening in the story that makes her feel good.

Before we go and I've taken up way more of your time than I said I was going to, but before we go, I have a question that I love to ask everybody which is if you were stranded on a desert island, and you could only... you were hoping I wouldn't ask, weren't you?

Zach: Well you know I listened to Sam's podcast and probably if you had just asked me and I hadn't listened to that, having time to think about it has left me with no ability to answer that question.

Sarah: It's exactly what we were talking about before... you know your limitless possibilities...

Zach: I don't know so maybe T.S. Eliot poems, maybe like collected. Just because when he talks about light like the visible reminder of invisible light and he goes down and talks about glow light on a grass blade so that invisible light is a metaphysical aspect of the light of the world. So this is a way to describe talking about God and that delight that we see around us is merely a picture of that light and so even so much as the light of the glow worm on a grass blade, that strikes me as sanity. More than a book essays and I think if sanity would be a big struggle for



me, island by myself... I'm so embarrassed that I'm making such little progress on this question so let's just say that's one of the books. Maybe The Chronicles of Narnia if there's like a one volume deal. Maybe just the Voyage of the Dawn Treader. There's this idea of terreaty that C.S. Lewis had in a letter with his friend and he was talking about the alignment of terror and beauty and that in the scripture angels say to people, "Fear not." Whereas Victorian angels look like they're saying, "They're there." And so when we read Isaiah and we read about glory of the Lord causing both fear but also causing the capacity to enjoy more the glory of the Lord that we change from glory to glory. That there's this idea that in the Voyage of the Dawn Treader where the characters are sort of the light is too bright for them. And they're drinking the water which is like drinkable light and it allows them to look upon the sun more fully. And I feel like that is a valuable thought not just as more valuable as you experience it through the process of literature than it might be if it's just purely articulated. Although it might be more clear if it's articulated directly that God is gracious to provide as transitional lights that He hides Moses in the rock as he passes by as a means to preserve the life of Moses. But also at the end of that, Moses shine. He has a veil of their space because he shines. That's a reminder that beauty isn't the sacrament thing. And I think that if it's a pretty island, then there's got to be a sense to where... there's a Welsh place, not Welsh but he's adopted Welsh culture. Jim Perrin, he writes about mountains and things and he talked about landscape. It's the objectification of our emotions frequently when we look at a landscape and feel at home there that it's because there's something in us that it represents which I don't know if I buy that completely. He then goes on to say that we

need to not cling to the joy, we need to just experience it. And if you've ever been to a place where there are a lot of mountains, there's almost this frantic need to soak it in that can diminish the experience.

Sarah: I feel that way with my photography. I'll think I have to capture this like almost a frantic. Actually, saying that about mountains and saying that about my babies is the same thing. I have to capture it because I'm trying to cling to it, like hold fast to it. It's like I'm terrified of it.

Zach: So I think there's something in the Voyage of the Dawn Treader helped me to experience the joy of creation and the natural revelation and that would be heartening and good for my sanctification and my sanity.

Sarah, I am so sorry. So that's two.

Sarah: T.S. Eliot and the Voyage of the Dawn Treader.

Zach: Yeah, Now this is terrible. This isn't a book I've read or anything but I'm just thinking like is the function of this question just to sort of say what are your three favorite books?

Sarah: Pretty much.

Zach: Okay, because I'm totally missing that. I'm actually sort of... I mean like the works of Herodotus or something might be helpful to just sort of experience a book thoroughly that you wouldn't otherwise in this day-to-day. More like War and Peace or something. But in terms of three favorite books those are completely different. But I've already taken like half an hour to answer your question so...

Sarah: Well let's tell our listeners where they can find you online.



Zach: atozach.com and I am on Instagram. Zach Franzen Illustration as a Facebook page. Twitter as well @zachfranzen on Twitter. So...

Sarah: Perfect. I'll make sure those are linked up in the show notes too so they could just click around and find you and then we'll also link to the post you put up on Amongst Lovely Things called Hospitality and Holy Imagination. That has got to be probably the best post I've ever had on my site. Man, and the reaction from readers just confirmed by gut-thought that this is amazing so I want to make sure we link to that. So if you're listening to this and haven't read it yet, head over there because Zach talks about the role that Christians have in being hospitable with their art and it is probably a way of thinking about art that you haven't done yet, certainly changed my perspective on what it means to create beautiful art. So thank you so much for writing that.

Zach: Oh thanks for posting it.

Sarah: Well, thank you so much for your time. This has been a real treat. I knew it would be. So I really appreciate you taking the time to chat with me today.

Zach: It was my pleasure. Thank you so much.

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.

"Hi! My name is Israel Harvey and I'm 8 years old. I live in Sarajevo, Bosnia. I've watched a favorite books. One of my favorite series is The Indian in the Cupboard series. One of my favorite parts in the series was when Omri the main character, entered in another world, in the Indian's world."

"Hi! My name is Maddie and I'm from the state of Georgia. I am 7 years old and my favorite read aloud book so far has been Tumtum and Nutmeg, which my mom read to me when I was 4 years old. It's about two boys which have adventures and my favorite one of these has been... and they pretend to be at circus and then they steal from other people. If you want to find out more about these adventures, sign out a book from your library."

"My name is Jeremy and I live in the state of Georgia. I am 5 years old. My favorite read aloud is The MitchellSarah: Five for Victory. It's about a family who require eating the most even though before the war started so dad said they can't make the house into a... I highly recommend this book."

"My name is Adele and my age is 6 and I live in Maryland. My favorite book is Miss Hickory. And Miss Hickory is a dog who has twin body and also twin feet like shoes and she has an acorn head and her nose is scorn and her skirt is a leaf skirt and her shirt is like a fabric."

"I am Charlie. I'm 5 live in Virginia. (What's your favorite book to read aloud?" Treasure Island. (And what do you want to tell us about Treasure Island?) They claimed it from his [distorted] pirate to pirates and the pirates lost it and they... they got find the treasure and they laid on his...and they sail and stop at Spanish America and they get...they escaped with a load of gold then they sail back to England."

Thank you, thank you kids. As always, that's my very favorite part of the podcast. Well that's it for today's episode. Don't forget to head to readaloudrevival.com and click the Join the Revival button to make sure that you get my



Friday updates. I send out my very favorite book recommendations, resources, and tips and encouragement each Friday so make sure you're on the list to get those and you'll also get a heads up whenever we have a new live author event or something else pretty awesome coming up on the podcast or in the membership site. That's readaloudrevival.com. That's it for now and until next time, go build your family culture around books.