



RAR 67 – Jonathan Rogers

Sarah: Oh bleh, now I've got to start over. Alison, you stop laughing or I'll make you do the book talk. 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. Jonathan Rogers calls his novels fantasy adventure stories told in an American accent. The author of the absolutely fabulous *Wilderkning Trilogy* and *The Charlatan's Boy* Jonathan combines humor and storytelling to create middle grade novels that are perfect for fans of Tolkien or Twain. But he's also the author of several non-fiction books, including *The World According to Narnia* and a biography of Flannery O'Connor called *The Terrible Speed of Mercy*. Jonathan received an undergraduate degree from Furman University and holds a PhD in seventeenth century literature from Vanderbilt University, which actually makes him Dr. Rogers. In addition to his writing work he is head of Program at New College Franklin in Franklin, Tennessee, and teaches creative writing both online and in live action seminars. He lives in Nashville with his wife, six kids, and a Labrador retriever, and I am thrilled that he's joining me today. I'll tell you what. I read the first book in the *Wilderkning Trilogy*. It's called *The Bark of the Bog Owl* earlier this year and it instantly flew to the top of my own charts. It's truly one of my favorite books I have ever read. I'll expect that I'll read it over and over through the years. I have a hard time describing how much I love the whole series. I think it's one of the most well written, engaging and riveting books I've ever read. It's perfect for kids aged 9-14 although I can't really imagine anyone with kids older than that or even a little younger than that won't love it every bit as much. So, we'll have links in the Show Notes of this episode so you can get your hands on his work, *The Bark of the Bog Owl* and the rest of the *Wilderkning Trilogy* if you go to ReadAloudRevival.com and look for episode 67. Today, my 13 year old Alison is back here on the Read-Aloud Revival podcast. You'll remember she helped me interview Jonathan Auxier back in episode 56, I

believe it was. Today she's going to help me chat with Jonathan Rogers. Alison, hi.

Alison: Hey.

Sarah: So glad you're here. So before we talk to Dr. Rogers about his books what did you like best about the *Wilderkning* books?

Alison: I found them impossible to put down, personally.

Sarah: Yeah, that's always a favorite thing, right?

Alison: Yes.

Sarah: I love books like that except you were probably supposed to be doing your chores.

Alison: Most of the time.

Sarah: OK, well, without further ado let's welcome Jonathan Rogers to the show. Jonathan, welcome to the Read-Aloud Revival.

Jonathan: Well, thank you. I'm so glad to be here.

What a sweet introduction. That means a lot to me to say that these books are among your favorites.

Sarah: Well, you know, I had heard them recommended over and over and I finally picked one up at one of the Great Homeschool Conventions (The Rabbit Room Booth) and I started reading it on the plane ride home and I'm pretty sure I ignored every meal I was supposed to feed my children, all of the laundry, and everything for the next couple of days while I devoured the rest of your series and *The Charlatan's Boy* because I was not ready to leave the world of Corenwald. So, you and I have a lot to talk about but before we do I want to let Alison chat with you a little bit about the *Wilderkning* books. So to set the stage for our listeners I want to describe a little bit about the first book, which is *The Bark of the Bog Owl*. I already told you I think this book is perfect for 9-14's. Also for kids a little younger than that, kids a lot older than that (like me!) they'll enjoy it just as much. This is the story of Aidan who's a pretty well-behaved boy in a family in Corenwald who ends up being called to something a little higher and demands a little more courage than he realizes that he has. He's a shepherd boy. He's just sort of one of the younger brothers, just sort of living a normal life. The setting is set in a swamp that looks a lot like South Georgia or Florida and so you have this picture of just ordinary life. The



feature line is “According to the people who live in Corenwald, a myth, they don’t believe there are feechies living in the feechie fin. I love some of the characters in this book; the truth speaker (I can actually recite from memory some of the things that the truth speaker says to Aidan during the book because they’re such powerful, poignant moments) and the bantering and the fun between the different, the everyday normal relationships between brothers and friends in the books. It’s really ... I don’t know how you did it, Jonathan, I don’t know how you did such a perfect marrying of the spirit of Tolkien and the spirit of Lewis and the Americana, kind of, vibe of *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer* but you did it. It’s just kind of amazing.

Jonathan: Somebody reviewed book 2, commented on that it’s obvious that I was influenced by Twain and I had to acknowledge that yes, I was. It wasn’t conscious. I wasn’t saying that I want to sit down and try to write like Twain but I sort of just soaked it up so much and so it just sort of came out and sometimes you don’t know what your influences are, right? Tolkien talked about the leaf-mould of the mind; everything you’ve read, everything you’ve seen, and heard, it goes in your brain and decomposes and then things come out of it.

Alison: How long did it take you to write *The Bark of the Bog Owl*?

Jonathan: Let’s see. *The Bark of the Bog Owl* I started in March and finished in December, so what’s that, eight or nine months?

Alison: Well, what’s the inspiration for the feechies in the book of the *Bog Owl*, actually the whole *Wilderking Trilogy*?

Jonathan: Some of the old boys that I went to school with, to tell you the truth. I was really trying to, well, this is a story that I’ve told it many times but I’ll tell it again. I worked with a guy where I worked on my PhD from Vanderbilt and went down to my hometown for the summer to work on a remodeling crew and one of my partners on my crew was a guy named Jake. He was from way out in the boonies and I’d just never known anybody like him. He was just so... when he came to town and the town, one of them was Georgia,

it wasn’t a big town, but he acted like he was just overwhelmed by the hustle and bustle because he was so countrified. I’ve got all kinds of stories about Jake but one of the things he did, he would come to work looking very sleepy every morning and I figured he was up to something at night because he was just so tired every morning. So I asked him, “Jake, why are you so tired every morning?” He said, “Well, after work I go home and take a little nap until dark and then I go out and I hunt wild boar in the swamp.” And I said, “Oh OK, that’s very interesting. Tell me (I was just trying to engage him) what kind of guns one used to hunt boar?” And he said, “I don’t use a gun. I’ve got dogs and they go in and catch the boar by the ear and then I wrestle him down and tie him up and carry it on a pole.”

Alison: Oh my.

Jonathan: And I thought he was making it up. I thought he was pulling my leg but then he brought pictures, he had this little photo album of all the hogs he had caught and all the dogs and he came to work crying one day and I said, “Jake, what’s wrong, why are you crying?” And he said, “Last night I was hunting in the swamp and an alligator ate my dog.” And I thought if I ever write a book Jake is going to be in the book. So Jake became Dobro Turtlebane and Dobro became a whole tribe of the Feechiefolks.

Sarah: When you started writing then ... the whole Feechie culture – that seems like the wrong word to describe the Feechies -- but the whole feechie culture (it is very rich, you’ve got so much going on there), did it sort of unfold as you were writing or before you started writing the story did you already have that pretty formed?

Jonathan: Definitely. I had the central idea- these are people who acted like Jake – they [****Inaudible 7:56**** bayed?] physical courage, they were very emotional, love jokes.

Alison: OK. Oh by the way, I really love how all of your feechies adore their mothers. It’s hilarious. So, is Aidan like you?

Jonathan: To some extent. I mean, especially his not being sure if he’s really ready to be what he’s being called to be. I think a lot of people can relate to that.



For me, really what drove this story from the beginning was the fact that, actually Alison people your age who know God has a plan for me and from what I understand I'm going to be living out this life of adventure, really, that God has called me to but I'm kind of stuck in the middle here. I'm not really a child but I don't have a driver's license, I'm kind of stuck right here in this in-between place. You have a sense of a calling but there's not much you can do about it, right now, it feels like. And so living in that space is kind of where Aidan comes from, right? He has to decide how is he going to relate to the grownups in his life who maybe they've taught him the right things but they don't always live what they've taught him. Your question was is Aidan like me and I think every character an author writes has to come from somewhere in that author. In some ways I'm like Aidan but I don't think I'm as courageous as Aidan, for instance.

Alison: How old were you when you started writing?

Jonathan: Oh goodness, when I was old enough to hold a pencil I started writing little stories. The oldest one we know of is a story about Hazel the horse who jumped over the fence, and I spelled it fancs.

Sarah: That's because you're from the south - I love it!

Jonathan: So when I was really little I just knew I wanted to write stories from really before I could write. Before I could write sentences I wanted to write stories but I kind of lost touch with that, started watching too much television and came back to it later and really, the first time I ever wrote a book or even any fiction was *The Bark of the Bog Owl* and I had never even written a short story before *The Bark of the Bog Owl*. And I was in my 30's at that point.

Sarah: That was the first complete story you wrote was *The Bark of the Bog Owl*?

Jonathan: Yeah, it was.

Sarah: You've said this. I love this. You've said, "A good children's book dramatizes adventure and makes it seem the sort of life that nobody would want to miss out on. It doesn't just tell the reader what's right it helps the reader to want what's right." Let's talk about that for a minute because this is where I think a story has so much more power than a didactic lesson from a

parent to a child or a teacher to student to inspire that love of virtue or inspire that desire to live out the adventure God's called you to. That is a unique power that story has.

Jonathan: Yeah, story works on a level of desire.

Anytime you read anybody talks about how to write a story the question's always, what does your main character want? What is it that your main character's trying to get? What choices do they make on the basis of that desire? What consequences come out of that choice? That is story plotting 101 but it's also what we mean when we speak of character in real life, right? It really comes down to what do you want? And how are you going to untangle the conflicting desires that you have? Because I want lots of things and it's really hard for me to slow down and say, "OK, what do I really want?" Because yes, I want for everybody to like me – it is something I want. But is that what I want the most? Because I think what I might want more than everybody liking me is to do the right thing or to please God. I think this really helps with knowledge. Of course, you want all this "bad" stuff – there are all kinds of things you want that aren't good for you. It's really helpful to say but that's not what you really want, it's not what you want the most. There are all kinds of things that are true about the world we live in but then there are things that are truer and things that are truest of all and it really helps to sort through those things and I really think fiction, or let's just say narrative (let's not limit it to fiction because there's all kinds of non-fiction stories that would really help in that regard, too) that help us sort out what is it that we really want, and because the world's always offering us some shallow satisfaction. It's easy to get, sort of, cheap satisfactions and the world is dishing those out constantly and it helps to take a step back and say, "Woah, is that really what I desire?"

Sarah: Well, you see, that's what your book, *The Charlatan's Boy*, I think that's what that book is really about. You don't even realize it to the end really but it's where you have these feechees that have very primal, kind of, instinctual desires- they're very impulsive and I don't know what the word is except they seem to want all these things. Then you have this



main character in *The Charlatan's Boy* who wants something deeper and it takes him a while to figure out what it is that he really wants.

Jonathan: Yes, see I had a language for it, right?

Sarah: Yeah.

Jonathan: And because we can't give ourselves a name. It comes from outside. And so, I think now we off and way beyond fiction now but our prevailing culture now basically says you get inside what's going to make you happy, and then you pursue it. That's almost every Disney movie you've ever seen. You have the song at the beginning, the "I want" song and then they spend the rest of the time going after it.

Sarah: Yeah, exactly!

Jonathan: But the truth is we don't get to choose what's going to make us happy. We can choose whether to pursue it or pursue something else but we don't really get to choose what's going to make us happy.

Sarah: That's right. Oh. Let's talk about protagonist then and their roles as good examples or not for our kids. So, some books have the characters as really good role models for our kids as they're reading and then other books that are just as equally or maybe sometimes moreso engaging maybe the characters aren't the greatest role models- what is the role of a character or is role model the right word I'm even looking for. Can we talk about that a little bit?

Jonathan: So, one thing, what's a role model? Is it just a person who does the right thing? Is that a role model? I think a role model is somebody who makes you look at that life and go, "OK!" It's not that that person did the right thing that person makes me want to do the right thing.

Sarah: Ah!

Jonathan: I remember some books I read when I was little where everybody was doing the right thing and that was fine but nothing about it made me wish I were that person.

Sarah: Yeah.

Jonathan: And I think, that's one thing I love about adventure stories is this person's going out having adventures which always involves getting yourself into trouble, always getting yourself in some dilemma, and

again, it always comes down to desire. Does this reading experience change my desires for the better?

And so if my character does the wrong thing, if my protagonist does the wrong thing, we've got a problem if as a reader I say, "Boy, I really want to do that. That seems like a great way to live." But to tell you the truth I don't know that many books that do that; that really make me want the wrong thing. And yet, I'm not as deeply read in middle grade fiction as a lot of people are but most of the books I read I don't feel like they're pulling me in the wrong direction or pulling my children in the wrong direction.

Sarah: So, one of the concerns we hear a lot at Read-Aloud Revival is parents who are concerned that the characters and the kids' books maybe they're lying, maybe they're hiding something from the grownups, they're just doing something wrong and maybe that goes unpunished or unresolved or the child doesn't feel remorse for it, or whatever, and I think the concern from parents is if they see other kids getting away with bad behavior that will make them want to do that bad behavior. As I've watched my own kids read books in which these kinds of things happen I don't see that where they want to copy the exact play by play, I mean, our kids are not literal copycats. I think, maybe, the key is trusting that something is happening on a deeper level with our kids that they're seeing in a book a little bit of light shed on humanity and even if that is shed on a good part or on a not-so good part on someone's humanity, it helps us go, "I'm like that, too" and then think about how we would respond.

Jonathan: Does your story help your child see what kind of world they're really living in? And so that is a two-edged sword; on one hand it's true that in the world I live in sometimes people lie and get away with it and they don't feel remorse and all that kind of stuff, and so that happens on the one hand, but on a deeper level does the story help me take a step back from the life that I live? We can get very myopic in our life and the Gospel is 'this story that you think you're living in, this story in which nobody's going to look out for you if you don't look out for yourself. You've got all these other stories that encourages us; this is what we get



on television and every single commercial you've ever seen, for instance, go out and grab life by the horns and make sure you get everything that's coming to you. That's the story the world's telling us, and good fiction takes a step back and says 'Well, maybe there's something truer than that. Maybe we're living in a story that's bigger than that story.' And for me that's the real moral value of stories. It doesn't have that much to do with good examples or bad examples but so much as the question of is it introducing me or reminding me of the bigger story that I'm really living in? And I think television lends itself to the story that the world tells and fiction, I'm sure there are plenty of books in the world for children that buy in to the world's story, but there's something about – if someone's going to go to the trouble to write a whole book they tend not to go for that low hanging fruit of self-indulgence. TV is all about self-indulgence and selling you stuff.

Sarah: Yeah.

Jonathan: There [**Inaudible 18:28**] books as a genre that at least tends in a better direction.

Sarah: And I think the other thing is, and Katherine Patterson said this. I read a collection of her essays recently, which is so beautiful, and she was writing about writing for children, she was saying that the reason we feel, a lot of times, you might remember from being a kid reading a book and feeling like the characters were your closer friends or closer to you than your family or than your real friends, and I still feel like that as an adult sometimes. She says the reason for that is because when we read we are getting to eavesdrop on the soul of another. So, I think in my own reading experience, even when I've read stories where we might go, 'Well, there's not really great role models in this book, no, I don't want my children to become just and act like the children in this book, what they're getting to do is maybe eavesdrop on the soul of someone who's different from them and then grow in empathy and compassion; like, this is what life feels like to someone --- we live in such a, it's really hard for us to see the world from anyone's point of view but our own and I think one of the greatest

benefits of reading is that it forces us outside of our own little self-absorbed bubbles...

Jonathan: *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, do you remember that book?

Sarah: Yeah, I love that book.

Jonathan: Well, I only remember one of those seven habits which is probably why I'm not a very effective person but that one habit is to seek first to understand and then be understood, and books give us a lot of practice and understanding. You don't even have the option of being understood while you're reading, right? All you do is understand. I can't make this character understand me I can just try to understand them. And that's great practice for moral living. We were talking about character building and morality and all that kind of stuff, that's great practice- reading makes people understanders.

Sarah: I love that. So good. I love that that's what you mean, too, when you're talking about moral benefits of stories because I think sometimes we forget that or we don't know that and we think the moral benefit is reading Aesop Fable and then being able to have our child parrot back whatever we think the moral of the story is. And there are a lot of parents who are worried about their older kids reading books that may have a little bit of ... a good example is *The Great Gilly Hopkins* by Katherine Patterson which has a child who uses some foul language. My kids have all read that book and none of my kids have started using that foul language. We've just got to trust our kids more than that – to see something deeper and bigger and that they can read a book and I think it meets them somewhere where we can't meet them just in a normal didactic conversation.

Jonathan: Yeah. If you don't mind my returning to this idea of stories reminding us of what big story we're a part of. Think of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* – I love that story. Now there's nobody to imitate in that story and I don't want my kids acting like the Herdmans, I don't really want my kids acting like the self-righteous narrator but the big picture is that these little jerks, the Herdmans, get stopped short by the Gospel in the end and our self-righteous narrator understands something much bigger than the little



narrative she had in her head of I'm a good kid and these are the bad kids and she's so easily shocked that the (I guess she's the narrator but she may just be the character in first person or third person- the person whose point of view is told through) and in that story it really stops everybody short in the end of [this is a spoiler] at the end of the story when these awful kids come up against the Christmas story for the first time and it makes our little self-righteous narrator come against the Christmas story for the first time and we get a better sense of what that story really means. It's been awhile since I've read it but I don't think there's a suitable role model in that whole book...

Sarah: Yeah!

Jonathan: ... and yet, it's a great story that really unrests us with the Gospel. And think about it now (I'm about to confess something bad) I have never read *Ramona and Beezus* but I have had the seen movie – is that OK to say that on Read-Aloud Revival podcast, I wasn't sure I could say that or not (that I've seen the movie but haven't read the book), so I don't think this happens in the book but *Ramona* is a little sister, right? Kind of bratty?

Sarah: Yes. Annoying.

Jonathan: She's been bad the whole time and a little obnoxious and she feels misunderstood and thinks her parents don't love her and normally in a kids movie like that the parent apologizes at the end for not paying any attention or whatever and I love that movie because at the end, she thinks the dad's always working and not paying attention to her, and then at the end she finds this book and the whole time he was drawing pictures of her. She was on his mind all the time and she's this little brat. And I just think that's a great picture of the Gospel, and has nothing to do with role models. It has to do with a little girl realizing what kind of big story she's really living in. It's the story where her father loves her and where her bad behavior doesn't define her relationship with him. I'm not opposed to good role models in children's fiction but I certainly don't think it's the most important.

Sarah: I keep mentioning Katherine Patterson but really this collection of essays is so good, but one of the things I just pulled it off my shelf so I could read it

to you, she says this: "Fiction is not the Gospel. But it can be a voice crying in the wilderness - and for the writer and the reader who know grace it will not be a cry of despair but a cry of hope - a voice crying in our wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

Jonathan: Wow. I've never read her essays, those are great.

Sarah: Her fiction is really beautiful, really sad, and oftentimes band in schools for language (or things like that) but she has this collection of essays called, *A Sense of Wonder*. It's a little hard to find. I got mine used but they're out of print; it's like a collection of some essays but also she's won all kinds of awards, every time she gives an award speech they would transcribe it. I can't remember the last time I underlined so many passages in a single book.

Jonathan: Really?

Sarah: Yeah, yeah.

Jonathan: That sounds great.

Sarah: OK, let's switch gears a little bit to *Narnia* because you've written this, you said, "It takes a certain amount of imagination to see that there is something more real, more solid than the world we see around us, but that's a foundational truth of the Christian faith." So, let's talk a little bit about that in a context of Lewis' *Narnia* and how, especially fantasy, right? fantasy has this ability to, I think it was Chesterton, I'm going to look it up actually, Chesterton says, "Fairytales say that apples are golden only to refresh the forgotten moment when we found that they were green. They make rivers run with wine only to make us remember for one wild moment that they run with water." It's like that ability of a fantasy book to show us more clearly the world we live in than a realistic book, right?

Jonathan: And that's my way, relative to the *Wilderking* story that I was going to have in the second book a swamp goblin...

Sarah: Ooh.

Jonathan: And my wife says, "Why would you have a swamp goblin when you have alligators?" and I was like, "I don't know. Good point."

Sarah: That's fantastic.



Jonathan: I've got this whole world – I guess I wasn't really a Chesterton reader when I wrote those books but if I had been it would have been this idea that Chesterton always awakens me to just what an amazing world this is that we live in. And so in the *Wilderking* stories the natural habitats in the stories are really designed to evoke wonder in the world we actually live in. The first time I saw an alligator in real life it was a transformative moment for me to realize that I live in a world where those things live and it was like encountering a dragon and I was nine miles from the nice little suburban house that I'd spent my whole life in and I thought, 'What kind of world is this I'm living in and they're out?'

Sarah: Yeah!

Jonathan: Where you live, I guess it's grizzly bears, right?

Sarah: We don't have alligators but I was in Florida last month I kept asking people, "So, do you really see alligators, like out in the wild?" and they'd say, "All the time." And I thought that is amazing! No, we have other... bears... I haven't really seen too many but moose are really dangerous and I've seen my fair share of those and those kinds of northwest creatures. But it is a startling thing but you don't even notice it until somebody writes a book like the *Wilderking Trilogy* where you realize that gators, like I told you I'm a 35 year old woman who started Googling youtube videos on alligators because I'm so like, "Wow!" after reading the book.

Jonathan: But there's nothing in those stories that doesn't actually exist in ... those are the most unoriginal stories you've ever read because there's nothing in there that hasn't really happened somewhere else. I mean, I think they're put together in a way that is a combination of things but maybe the alligators a little bigger than the alligators in real life but they're just acting like alligators and the panther acts like a panther.

Sarah: We had N. D. Wilson on the Read-Aloud Revival for episode 44 and we'll link to this episode in the Show Notes too because we talked all about magic and fear and that role in children's books and one of the things we talked about in his book, *100 Cupboards*

he places it in a very ordinary town in Henry, Kansas, where everything is very normal and he talks about how his goal being not fantasy because you want to escape the world but fantasy to wake you up to the world around you, and so he was hoping that when kids read the book that they would look at the world they live in with eyes wide open.

Jonathan: That is right on. Flannery O'Connor said "writing is not an escape from reality but plunge into reality."

Sarah: Oh gosh!

Jonathan: Isn't that great?

Sarah: That's great, yeah, I'm going to write that one down. I am so excited to give this book into as many Read-Aloud Revival hands as possible. I love it. You know, I am not a big re-reader, although I should be more of a re-reader but this is a book that I know I will be re-reading like comfort food when I just want a book that I know is going to be a wonderful experience to re-read. Hey, are you making an audio book, by the way?

Jonathan: Well, by the time this podcast airs, yes. You and I are talking in June now and I'm in the middle of recording; it's a read by the author audiobook.

Sarah: Awesome. My favorite. Jonathan, thank you so much for joining me. This has been a great conversation. I really enjoyed it.

Jonathan: It has been. Let's do it again some time. Now it's time for Let the Kids Speak. This is my favorite part of the podcast where kids tell us about their favorite stories that have been read aloud to them.

Child1: Hi, my name is Adele. [Mom: How old are you, Adele?] Three. [Mom: And where do you live?] Michigan. [Mom: And what is the name of your favorite book?] *The Monster at the End of this Book*. [Mom: Why is it your favorite?] 'Cause I really like that. [Mom: What do you like about it?] That he was embarrassed that he was the monster. [Mom: Is it a funny book?] Yes.

Child2: Hi, my name is Lily, I live in Michigan. I'm 5 years old. My favorite book is the *Bible* and someday we can go to Heaven if we love and obey God and God made the whole wide world. That's my favorite part. Thank you. Bye.



Child3: Hi, my name is George and I am 5 years old and I live in College Grove, Tennessee. My favorite book is *Boxcar Children*. Why I like it is because they solve mysteries and my favorite character is Benny.

Child4: Hello, my name is Kaylee. I'm 10 years old and I'm from Portland, Oregon. My favorite series is *The Wingfeather Saga* by Andrew Peterson. I like it because of all the adventure **[**inaudible 30:44**]**. My favorite character is Leeli and I love how she plays the whistle harp. We named one of our rabbits after Leeli.

Child5: My favorite book is *The Trumpet of the Swan* and I like it because it has so many good things about Louie and his trumpet. 5½ years old and I live in Alabama.

Child6: [Mom: What is your name?] Asher. [Mom: How old are you?] Four. [Mom: Where do you live?] In Alabama. [Mom: What is your favorite book?] *Paddington*. [Mom: Why do you like *Paddington*?] Because it's so fun.

Child7: Hello, my name is Abigail and I'm 7 years old. I live in Georgia. And my favorite book is *The Hobbit* because of Bilbo Baggins. He's the best broker in the world.

Child8: [Mom: What's your name?] Michael. [Mom: How old are you?] Four. [Mom: Where are you from?] I'm from Georgia. [Mom: What's your favorite book?] *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*. [Mom: Why do you like this book?] Because they fall off.

Child9: Hi, my name is Daniella. I'm 7-almost-8 and I live in Rhode Island and my favorite book is *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. And the part I love is when Dorothy gets back to her home.

Child10: My name is Penelope Wilson. I live in Kokomo, Indiana and my favorite book is *Ruby the Red Fairy* because my favorite color is red and there are people like goblins and fairies and Jack Frost and there are two girls who meet. And I'm 7 years old.

Sarah: Well, thank you so much, kids. What great book recommendations. That's it for today. Next week we'll be back with a mini-episode. I've got some book recommendations I'm excited to share with you. If you haven't already, make sure you are subscribed to the podcast. There are some wonderful things happening,

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