

EPISODE **41**

# Navigating Fantasy: A Guide for Christian Parents

Guest: Carolyn Leiloglou

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## Meet Megan Francis

Carolyn is the masterful writer at [Houseful of Bookworms](#), a lovely blog devoted to insightful book reviews. She grew up exploring the worlds of Narnia and Redwall and graduated from the Torrey Honors Institute at BIOLA University.

Carolyn lives in Texas with her husband who is a pediatrician and [musician](#). Carolyn also homeschools her four children.

## In This Episode

Sarah talks to Carolyn about the formative nature of stories. Then they tackle what sets fantasy apart as a genre and why it's not just fluff or escapist lit. Carolyn also shares a great list of fantasy recommendations for every age—from picture books right on up to books for mom and dad!

## The Listening Guide

**Use this guide to skip to parts that most interest you, or listen to the entire podcast.**

- 3:10 Introducing Carolyn
- 4:40 A little more about Carolyn
- 5:30 A few childhood favorites
- 6:20 The power of fantasy
- 8:00 Choosing good fantasy
- 11:00 The particular power of fantasy
- 12:15 The spiritual power found in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*
- 13:30 More than just intellectual knowledge
- 14:30 *The Mysteries of Life in Children's Literature*
- 15:40 Caught Up In a Story
- 17:30 The vision of the story formed child
- 19:50 How fairy tales shape the moral imagination
- 20:20 The four kinds of stories
- 21:15 Thoughts on *The Golden Compass*
- 24:00 Carolyn's favorite family read-aloud
- 25:00 For parents who haven't read much fantasy
- 28:30 Starter fantasy books for kids of all ages
- 36:00 Fantasy for moms and dads
- 37:30 Carolyn's top three fantasy series
- 38:00 Sarah's on-air accountability
- 39:30 Let the kids speak

Stories teach you something in a way that you can know on a level other than just an intellectual....stories show you things on an emotional level....stories are the best way to help your children encounter those really deep mysteries. - Carolyn Leiloglou

Reading a story gives you the opportunity to live it through someone else's eyes. - Carolyn Leiloglou

## Quotes and Questions

### \* Where we put our focus

“There's this huge focus on STEM education which is great but I think that it causes us to think,

Oh well those books—especially fantasy—that's just fluff. There's nothing to it. But I would argue that especially in fantasy, it deals with those big ideas and kids really are able to grasp them.”

It's easy to give in to the sway of experts. How do you decide where your homeschooling time and money are going to be spent? Is it time for a mid-year adjustment? Is there time in your plan to encounter the big ideas? Sarah's [QuickStart Guide to Great Conversations with Your Kids](#) is a great place to start asking the right sort of questions about any kind of book.

### \* When God writes your life story

“She grew up as a Hindu and she read...The Secret Garden and Little Women and then the Narnia books of course. And she talks about how those books prepared her to later meet Jesus as an adult. She said she didn't realize but He'd been calling to her all along through those books.”

You can read the [story by Mitali Perkins](#) right here. Do you have a similar story, a literary crossroads? A book that formed you spiritually? What books are forming your kids?

### \* Finding trusted sources

“I can't pre-read everything either. So I mean the best thing is if you do have trusted sources that you can go to and other blogs that have good lists. I do a lot of previewing with audiobooks while I'm washing dishes or whatever. And I can listen to something on a faster speed and maybe see if that's appropriate.”

We've all been there. Our kids pull something off the shelf at the library and want to take it home. Do you have a trusted source that you use to judge books you haven't read? Here are some of [Sarah's favorite booklists](#). Have you tried Carolyn's strategy of listening to the audiobook while doing chores?

## Show Notes

### Books from today's episode:

- The Trumpet of the Swan
- Matilda
- The Chronicles of Narnia
- The Green Ember
- Redwall
- The Golden Compass
- Give them Grace
- The Voyage of the Dawn Treader
- The Spirit Flyer series
- The Homeschool Detectives series
- The Mysteries of Life in Children's Literature
- Caught Up in a Story
- The Secret Garden
- Little Women
- On the Edge of the Dark Sea of Darkness
- Honey for a Child's Heart
- 100 Cupboards
- The Princess and the Goblin
- The Light Princess
- The Book of Dragons
- The Five Children and It
- Where the Mountain Meets the Moon

- [The Wilderking Trilogy](#)
- [The Archives of the Anthropos](#)
- [The Ashtown Burials](#)
- [Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes](#)
- [The Night Gardener](#)
- [The Land of Elyon series](#)
- [The Circle series](#)
- [Stephen Lawhead's books](#)
- [The Monster Blood Tattoo series](#)
- [Till We Have Faces](#)
- [The Auralia Thread series](#)
- [The Man Who Was Thursday](#)

**Other links from today's show:**

- Carolyn's site [House Full of Bookworms](#); and her Facebook page
- [StoryWarren](#)
- Carolyn's husband's [music site](#)
- Find that [lovely quote](#) from Carolyn
- The article from [Christianity Today](#)
- Andrew Pudewa's [master class](#)
- [Ellen and the Winter Wolves](#)
- The story 'The Aunt and Amabel' can be found in [this collection](#)
- Are you as excited about the official RAR Book List as we are? [Sign up right here!](#)