

EPISODE **Bonus Episode**

The One and Only E.B. White

Guest: Melissa Sweet

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Meet **Melissa Sweet**



Melissa Sweet has illustrated nearly 100 picture books - books like the Baby Bear series written by Jane Yolen, the Pinky and Rex Series, The Boy Who Drew Birds and Brave Girl.

She's received a Caldecott Honor Medal and two New York Times Best Illustrator Citations, and she's also the author of *Balloons Over Broadway* and the brand new book, *Some Writer!: The Story of E.B. White*.

You can follow her on [Facebook](#) and find [reading and activity guides](#) to many of her books at her website.

In This Episode

Sarah talks with Melissa about the artistic choices that Melissa makes as she creates her book illustrations. Melissa shares how she came to research and write *Some Writer*. She also shares a little good advice for young authors and illustrators that might be listening.

The Listening Guide

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

- 5:00 A little more about Melissa Sweet
- 6:15 Melissa's work with collage
- 10:10 The place of research
- 13:00 Melissa's childhood interest in art
- 16:00 Picture book biographies
- 22:30 The road to creating Some Author
- 26:15 Working with the White family
- 30:00 A favorite E.B. White book
- 35:00 Let the kids speak

Read. Read a lot. Or listen to books. Or be read to, because there's something about the music of language that we absorb whether we know it or not.

- Melissa Sweet

Quotes and Questions

* **An artist's perspective.**

“Not every book calls for the same materials and not every book calls for a collage at all. Sometimes a purely painted book is the right solution to portray this material. So I spend quite a bit of time thinking about that, playing around with that before I settle in on how I’m going to begin.”

What if we applied this same idea to our kids? Maybe not every kid needs phonics or penmanship or piano lessons. Maybe we could spend time thinking about what this particular child before us needs just like Melissa does with her book projects?

* **The right tools for real work.**

“When I was a kid and I played with Spirograph and Etch A Sketch and Paint By Numbers, so those toys are really design tools, and they taught me a tremendous amount, they occupied my unending energy I had as a kid ...”

Do our kids have access to design tools—the supplies and tools to do real work? What can we give them access to that will enliven their creative minds?

* **Making art fun for our kids and ourselves.**

“As kids it’s fun to go see art and make art and be immersed in it in all different ways, and bottom line, it should be a lot of fun.”

Many of us don’t have the experience of art being fun. What if that were our goal with artist study and art practice? What if we tried to “be immersed in it in all different ways?” What can we do to make studying art a lot of fun?

Show Notes

Books from today's episode:

- [Charlotte's Web](#)
- [Some Writer! The Story of E.B. White](#)
- [The Trumpet of the Swan](#)
- [Stuart Little](#)
- [Baby Bear book series](#)
- [Pinky and Rex series](#)
- [The Boy Who Drew Birds](#)
- [Brave Girl](#)
- [A Splash of Red](#)
- [Balloons Over Broadway](#)
- [You Nest Here with Me](#)
- [The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus](#)
- [Letters Of E.B. White](#)

Other links from today's show:

A note for parents:

Please preview the middle paragraph on pg. 46 to decide how you want to handle it in your family. In that paragraph, Sweet mentions an extramarital affair between E.B White and Katherine, who then becomes his wife. You can easily skip over those few sentences when reading aloud, if you so choose.

- Melissa Sweet recommends: [E.B. White author study from Educating Alice](#)
- The [David Macaulay Live Author Event](#) is currently for members only
- And remember, head on over to [RARmembership.com](#) and enter your email for access to the Andrew Clements author event and to sign up to receive RAR news and updates! We'll be opening enrollment for membership very soon!

READ-ALoud REVIVAL

Cheat Sheet Bonus Episode with Melissa Sweet

To find more resources to help you build your family culture around books, visit ReadAloudRevival.com.