



EPISODE **132**

YA is a Genre (not a reading level)

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In This Episode

The YA section of the library or bookstore can be intimidating. In this episode, Sarah is sharing options for parents. The goal is to help you make the best decisions for *your* family. Sarah chats what makes up YA, what to do after middle grade novels (assuming you want to move on!) and the good and the bad of moving on to adult books.



The Listening Guide

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

- 2:19 Reading aloud with a wide range of ages
- 5:11 Helping teens navigate their reading lives
- 6:06 Definitions!
- 8:55 Language differences - syntax and patterns
- 11:30 Hopeful endings
- 13:34 Kate DiCamillo speaks
- 16:27 Stay with middle grade
- 18:20 Great middle-grade novels
- 20:53 Great YA
- 22:17 Training in discernment
- 24:54 Picks for adult books
- 28:21 Let the Kids Speak

"As far as the beauty of language, the syntax, the vocabulary, the richness of experience, the ability to watch a hero overcome obstacles, to be inspired to live with heroic virtue, to grow in empathy and walk a mile in another's shoes, there is nothing an adult book can give your kids that a middle grade novel can't.

There's just no rush." - Sarah Mackenzie



Quotes and Questions

* **A different kind of book.**

“YA isn't a reading level as much as it's just a different kind of book.”

* **Not a step up.**

“Middle grade novels contain more sophisticated language patterns, better syntax, a more rich and varied vocabulary. Reading a middle grade novel is a richer literary experience than reading a chapter book. It makes sense to assume that the same thing happens when we move from middle grade novels to YA. We're taking a step up in the beauty and complexity of the language and sophistication of the narrative, but that's just not the case.”

* **'The truth is hope.'**

“Middle grade novels tend to end on a hopeful note, and YA novels oftentimes have less optimistic endings. I don't think this is a small discrepancy. **I believe that all good books leave the reader seeing their world afresh, and I also believe that authors are duty-bound to tell young readers the truth.** The truth is hope. I have serious concerns about books leaving readers of any age feeling depressed or bleak, but I'm doubly concerned when that reader is a teenager.”

* **'See what is there ...'**

“I've always had an aversion to everything being just so at the end of a story, because the world is a messy place. **Art is pattern, and life is chaos.** ... Things aren't perfect, and we wish for certain things, but there's a beautiful thing sitting right in front of us. If we're lucky, we'll look around and see what is here.” - Kate DiCamillo

* **'See what is there ...'**

“**Part of becoming a discerning reader is training in discernment.** You've got to have something to discern to get that training. This is just another reason why having frequent organic, casual conversations with our kids about books is really, really important because those conversations can make finding problematic content in books, it can bring it to light, and it can also sort of redeem that situation and make it work for us, and help our kids become more discerning readers.”



Show Notes

Books from today's episode:

- The Prairie Thief
- McBroom's Wonderful One-Acre Farm
- Homer Price
- The Lord of the Rings series
- The Chronicles of Narnia series
- Because of Winn-Dixie
- The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane
- Nate the Great (series)
- Encyclopedia Brown (series)
- The Magic Tree House series
- The Little House series
- The Goose Girl (Books of Bayern)
- Pride and Prejudice
- A Long Walk to Water
- Bud, Not Buddy
- The Cam Jansen Series
- Hattie Big Sky
- God's Smuggler
- Brown Girl Dreaming
- Here Comes McBroom
- The Wednesday Wars
- The Tale of Despereaux



- [The Tiger Rising](#)
- [Hattie Ever After](#)
- [Echo](#)
- [The Boxcar Children series](#)
- [Honey for a Teen's Heart](#)
- [Piecing Me Together](#)
- [The Read-Aloud Family](#)
- [Fever 1793](#)
- [Sweep](#)
- [A Fall of Marigolds](#)
- [Marilla of Green Gables](#)
- [Emma](#)
- [The Rainbow Magic Fairies series](#)
- [The Faithful Spy](#)
- [Sense and Sensibility](#)
- [The Book Thief](#)
- [Red Scarf Girl](#)
- [Owls in the Family](#)
- [The Watsons Go To Birmingham](#)
- [The Screwtape Letters](#)
- [C.S. Lewis's Space Trilogy series](#)
- [Whose Waves These Are](#)
- [Unbroken \(the young reader's edition\)](#)

Other links from today's show:

- [RAR #121: Kate DiCamillo on Reading Aloud for Connection](#)



- [Common Sense Media](#)
- [Redeemed Reader](#)
- [RAR #85: Reading “Messy” Books About Hard Topics with Kids](#) (with Betsy Farquhar from Redeemed Reader)

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