

EPISODE 75 • REA BERG

Teaching History through Story

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WRITTEN BY: JEANETTE PASCUA

About Rea

Rea Berg is a veteran homeschool mom of six with a genuine love of children's literature. Inspired by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay's book, *For the Children's Sake*, Rea set out to create a living books approach to teaching history. She and her husband Russell founded Beautiful Feet Books, which has been republishing classic in historical children's literature for over 30 years. In addition, she publishes a series of history through literature teacher guides that support parents in teaching history, geography, literature, and social studies using award-winning classic books. Rea holds a bachelor's degree in English from Simmons College, and in 2006, earned a Master's Degree in Children's Literature at the Center for the Study of Children's literature in Boston. She now speaks around the country on the joys of discovering history through literature.



Key Ideas

Many home educators feel uneasy about the idea of teaching history because they feel ill-equipped in their own historical knowledge. But, the key to making history interesting and memorable is to tell stories. By telling stories, instead of just giving a list of historical events and people, we allow the reader/listener to engage with the people and events. This enables them to feel empathy for historical figures and then allows them to extend that to people in their lives.

Using a literature-based approach to history is a great way to study history while also immersing yourself in great works of literature from these time periods. In this way, it serves to teach more than one subject at the same time.

Good literature can also provide a place for your children to go when things in life get challenging. When we learn history from a textbook we often look at the information as something we only need to learn to pass a test and we don't retain it. But, when we learn history through literature we have the opportunity to see the human experience of historical events and how multifaceted these events truly were. We are not, then, reduced to learning a one-sided view of history taught as fact.

Actions For You

1. Take a moment to reflect on your personal experience of learning history in school.
 - a. Was it taught from a textbook or some other way?
 - b. How confident do you feel in your current knowledge of history?
 - c. What would you like to keep or change about how you learned history, and how will you go about that in your homeschool?
2. Think about what you have planned for history in the upcoming school year.
 - a. Are you currently approaching history using textbooks or through literature?
 - b. How can you add more literature to your study of history?
 - c. If you need some suggestions for the time period you plan to study, go to www.bfbooks.com and explore the books they have selected. Consider using a few of those titles.

Time Stamps

2:50 meet Rea

11:46 Rea's passion for children's literature

14:30 how Rea's passion became Beautiful Feet Books

17:45 overcoming challenges homeschool families face when teaching history

24:10 how to implement the use of living books in your homeschool

27:55 using a literature approach for middle and high school

33:22 the power of living books

TRANSCRIPT EPISODE 75

Pam:

This is Your Morning Basket, where we help you bring Truth, Goodness and Beauty to your homeschool day. Hi, everyone, and welcome to episode 75 and a new season of the Your Morning Basket Podcast. I am so happy that you're joining me here today. I'm Pam Barnhill, your host, and it's great to be back after our little summer hiatus. So, this week on the podcast, we are joined by Rea Berg. Now Rea is a homeschooling mom of six, and she is also the owner of Beautiful Feet Books. Rea loves literature! She loves literature, she loves books and she loves teaching history through story. And that's what we're going to be talking about on today's episode of the podcast. We talk a little bit about where this passion for children's books came from for Rea, and also some of the challenges that homeschool families face when they're teaching history and about how we can use story and why we would want to use story to teach history in our homeschools. It's a fascinating conversation, and I hope you enjoy it right after this word from our sponsor.

Today's episode of the podcast is brought to you by my guide of Five Solutions for Better Homeschool Mornings. Now, this is a quick, actionable little PDF guide that you can come and download. And it's all about how to get your day off to a better start and stopping those morning struggles that sometimes pop up in our homeschools before they even begin. So, in the guide, I will show you how your smartphone can actually be your biggest help. Yes, help in getting your day started well. Also, my number one secret sauce tip to getting everyone started with the school day with no yelling or whining.

We'll also talk about the subject you should never ever do first in your homeschool day and why. And a quick and easy way to save a day that is starting to go off the rails. And then finally, some learning tips that even your toughest students will enjoy. So, it's a very short, actionable little PDF guide, and you can get it

by going to pambarnhill.com/better. Get your free guide by going to pambarnhill.com/better. And now, on with the podcast.

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Rea:

Thank you, Pam. Thank you for having me.

Pam:

It is so wonderful to have you here, and I think I want to get started by having you tell us a little bit about your family and your homeschooling years because I know you're not homeschooling anymore, but you have quite a bit of experience there.

Rea:

Thank you. Well, I do. I was really attracted to homeschooling, as you mentioned after I read *For the Children's Sake* by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay. I came from a dysfunctional home with a lot of brokenness, alcoholism, and I knew that when I had a family, I wanted things to look differently in my family. And so, one of the things that I felt like homeschooling could afford was just the opportunity to spend a lot of time with my children and really get to know them and

know what made them tick and spend time learning together. So, I really approached homeschooling as something that was going to be mutually beneficial to all of us. I didn't go into it really with a concept of a teacher. I went into it with a concept of just sort of adventuring together and having this experience of learning together.

Pam:

I love that so much. And I say that one of the secrets of homeschooling that people ... I don't think moms realize it until they get into it, is that really, I think a lot of moms who homeschool wanted to continue their own education.

Rea:

Yes

Pam:

You know, they felt like they missed out on something and they wanted to learn more and you probably don't even think about it necessarily going into it. It sounds like you did. But I think a lot of moms are surprised by it. One day they wake up and they're like, "Wow, I love this so much. And the reason I love it is because I'm getting to learn right alongside my kids."

Rea:

Yeah. And I think, I felt like I got so much out of it. And probably because you have a little bit more experience than your children, you've seen life a little bit more in depth by the time you start having children. And so, I think you just bring that breadth of experience to the times when you're reading books together. I mean, that's why all of us as moms were crying at the end of books and our children are staring at us like we're crazy. It's because we've just experienced life in a way that they haven't yet.

But I remember as a young mom, we lived in just this magical house that my husband's boss ... He worked at a home improvement center. And it was in a small town in California and he had this beautiful Queen Anne Victorian that was just sitting vacant and he invited us when we just had our first and we were expecting our second. He invited us to live in his house and just caretake it. So we have this amazing

experience of living there rent free for 15 years and being able to save money and all that. But in this house, which was built in 1903, there was an entire set of the Books of Knowledge. I don't know if you've ever seen them. They're leather-bound, I think they probably came out about the turn of the century. And they're just beautiful books full of history and nature studies and science and geography and different aspects of social studies, different cultures. And I just remember looking at those books as a young mother and thinking, "I just want to share all this stuff with my children and how can I ever do that? It's too much."

And at that time I didn't have any clue I was going to be homeschooling because I hadn't read *For the Children's Sake* yet, but I just remember that moment in time because it was that feeling of, "Oh, I just want to be able to have a kind of time where we can actually sit and read these kinds of books together." And so, when I read *For the Children's Sake*, I just immediately realized, "Wow, this is a way that I could do that." So, it was kind of born out of that passion of just wanting to have those magical moments of experiencing books together with my children and having that richness of a literature really be part of our lives.

Pam:

Oh, wow. I love that. And you're right. I mean, when we do send our kids off to school, which you didn't and I didn't, but that was part of the thing for me was if I send them off, we won't have time to do all the things that I want to do with them.

Rea:

Yeah.

Pam:

Really-

Rea:

I guess it's a little bit selfish in any way, but-

Pam:

Yeah, a little bit, I think they benefit from it. Mine are not complaining anyway.

Rea:

Right. Well, and I do have to ... full disclosure here, we have six children, so obviously none of them are children anymore, they're all adults, but our youngest is 20 and our oldest just turned 40. So, we have quite a span there. But I honestly did pretty much everything that kind of falls under the umbrella of education with my children. I've done charter schools, I've done strict pure 100% homeschooling, I've hired teachers and have them come into my home and tutor my kids. I've sent them to public school. I've sent them to private school. I've done everything because every child is different and every student needs different things at different seasons. And then there's always us too. Sometimes we need something different in a different season of our lives too. So, I am very passionate about homeschooling, but I am not religious about it. Let's put it that way.

Pam:

Right. Well, and you've made it work for your family, for the different seasons of your life. And I think that's something that I hear so much from moms who are kind of on the other side of this journey.

Rea:

Yeah.

Pam:

Never say never.

Rea:

Right.

Pam:

You never know what you're going to end up with, I'm thinking ahead and I have one who's about three years younger than everybody else in the house and he's a boy and where is he going to end up? We don't know.

Rea:

Right.

Pam:

So, leaving all of those options open I think is very smart.

Rea:

And it's interesting that you mentioned the youngest boy too, because that was the situation in my house. Our youngest biological was a boy. And then we adopted two girls from Ukraine, but he was 15 when we adopted. So, he went from being the youngest child to the middle child and then he became the oldest child, but all his siblings went off to college. He's actually the most well rounded of all of our kids.

Pam:

He's done it all.

Rea:

He's done it all. He's seen it all. But he was home with these two little ones, both girls, and he was really kind of going a little bit stir-crazy, and he wanted to play sports. And so it wasn't fair to keep him at home when we were trying to adjust to two new children joining the family, and then trying to homeschool him too. It wasn't fair to him. So, he went to a small private school where he could play sports. And that was the perfect option for us at that time and that season in our life.

Pam:

Yeah. I think keeping those options open and never say never, I mean, that's certainly the way I go at it. And so I think that's something that ... there's nothing wrong with it. That's the smart thing to do for your family. Well, you obviously have a passion for books. You were telling me about the set of books that you had found in your home. Have you always had a passion for children's literature before you were a mom, or did you kind of grow into that after your kids came along?

Rea:

I didn't really have much of a passion for children's literature as a young person because I wasn't read to as a child, and we didn't have a lot of books in the house, but I do remember we had a leather bound book of poetry that was probably from the 19th century, it was a very old book. And it was those parchment kind of pages and it was sort of precious. I don't know why we had it, but I just remember falling

in love as a child with the power of the words in that book. And I would take that book to bed with me with a flashlight. It was way beyond me and intellectually, because this was English poetry from the 19th century, but there was something about the magic of the words that I totally fell in love with at that moment. And that really never left me.

But then it was really my conversion to Christ when I was 21 that changed everything for me as far as literature, because I started becoming a real voracious reader at that point. And when my husband and I married, we didn't have television, we just made the decision not to have television in our home. And so we just filled in all that time with reading and we read books together and we read books separately and we talked about books and books really became our life at that time as newlyweds. And that was a real turning point. And so then when we started having children, then of course immediately, I was reading to them from the time they were babies all the way through till they went off to college.

And that's when I really, really fell in love with children's books. I had gotten Elizabeth Wilson's, Books Children Love and Gladys Hunt's, Honey for a Child's Heart. And I just devoured those books. They were my Bibles and I took them to a library with me to guide me into this world of books that I had no real prior knowledge of. That was a really fun adventure because then I was discovering these wonderful authors that I loved and my children loved them. And we were enjoying all of that together. That was kind of really where it began.

Pam:

So, you developed this love for books from reading to your kids and your homeschooling them. And so how does that turn into an entire company?

Rea:

Oh, that's a funny story. I mean, it was never intended to become the thing that it did, but I just started finding all of these wonderful books. And then I thought, "A lot of people have Tupperware parties, or a lot of people sell ..." I don't know what else do people sell Amway, or things like that. And I thought,

"I could have a little cottage industry, because we are pretty poor and I could make some money selling children's books." And so I never did end up doing the Tupperware parties sort of model. But what happened was I just started ordering these books for our personal use, and then we'd get so excited about them. I share them with my friends and they would want to have them. And that was kind of the genesis of it and then it sort of snowballed out.

I was invited to do a CHEA conference, which was a Christian Home Educators Association conference, used to be at the Disneyland Hotel in the old days. And I had all these books that I had been collecting, the D'Aulaire books and the Genevieve Foster books and the Children's Classics. And I thought, "Well, why not? I'll just try it and see what happens." And it obviously really struck a nerve because the books that I brought down to that conference just really flew off the table. And obviously people were falling in love with them too. And so at that point, when I started putting the books together to actually create the ability to teach history through literature, because I was doing it myself, I wasn't doing it in any sort of organized way. I would just sort of put the books in order chronologically. And once I did that, people were saying, "Well, can't you just write it down so that I can do that too." So that's how the study guide was born.

And we bought our first computer and I started tapping out study guides on an old Mac Apple computer when they were still those big things on your desk. And then we were printing them off a home printer and binding them by hand with a spiral binder. And that was how the study guide was born, wow, over 30 years ago.

Pam:

Oh, wow.

Rea:

Yeah, it's come light years. I would be very embarrassed if anyone was to see any of those early renditions of my study guide.

Pam:

Oh, there are probably some of them still floating around.

Rea:

I imagine. I hope none of the spiral bound ones are still out there.

Pam:

Well, you created this way to help families teach history in a way that allows them to connect kids with story. This is one of the things when you hear people talk about Beautiful Feet Books, that's what I hear so much from families is, "My kids just really love the books. They really love the stories." So, what are some of the challenges you feel homeschool families face when they're teaching history?

Rea:

Well, I think most of us ... I found out that I sort of fell in love with history, like I said, after I became a Christian and I started reading Foxe's Book of Martyrs and these old Christian classics. And so I started falling in love with history at that time in my life. But my experience of studying history in school was probably like most people. Other than when I was in college, I had a US history professor that I was totally in love with. "I can make you interested in history."

Pam:

I'm thinking Indiana Jones.

Rea:

Yeah. Oh my gosh. He was just so handsome and he was so passionate about history and I just remember sitting in his class and just drooling, but anyway. But I found out that the way that most of us learn history through textbooks is not conducive to really cultivating a love for history. And so when I started reading these children's historical biographies and they were so enthralling and they were so interesting and there was adventure in them and there was good characterization, and then you saw your historical character grow over the period of the biography. And so the difference between learning about a historical character through reading a biography and reading a

historical textbook where they may be mentioned in a couple of paragraphs, it's a world apart. And I love what David McCollough says because he won the Pulitzer for his book John Adams. Have you read it?

Pam:

I have not. I watched the mini series that it was based on, but I haven't read the book yet.

Rea:

Oh my gosh. Well, you're in for a treat because that is such a phenomenal book because he really does for the American Revolution what literature can do because it is, it's a work of literature. It's a work of art. And the way John Adams is presented in that Pulitzer prize winning book is so extraordinary. But after he won the Pulitzer, he was talking about how and why knowing history is so important, but he said there's no secret to teaching history or to making history interesting. And actually he quotes from another history and here Barbara Tuchman, who said in two words, "Tell stories," and that's what history is. And then E.M. Forster, the great novelist, *Howards End*, *A Room With a View*, said, "Here's what it means to tell a story. If I say to you, "The King died and then the queen died," that's a sequence of events. That's history, basically. But if I say to you, "The King died and then the queen died of grief." That's a story, that's human."

That calls for empathy on the part of the reader or the listener. And that's what story does for us when we're talking about historical study. Because suddenly you're not just looking at a series of events, but you're looking at human people and you're looking at the things that made them passionate and the things that they were pursuing, and the heartache and the tragedy that they suffered in their lives and how those things form them. So, I feel like that's why it's so good to teach history from a literature perspective.

Pam:

Yeah. And I've heard you talk before about this empathy because we're not just teaching our kids empathy for things or people from the past, but by teaching through story and by them developing this

empathy for what they're hearing, they're also going to then translate it to today and people now.

"You're not just looking at a series of events, but you're looking at human people and you're looking at the things that made them passionate and the things that they were pursuing, and the heartache and the tragedy that they suffered in their lives and how those things form them." Rea Berg

Rea:

Yeah, absolutely. And that's really been proven. I mean, there's no question that a lot of how we learn empathy is vicariously. And I can tell you for a fact that nobody learned empathy through reading a history textbook. I mean, it just doesn't happen because there's no opportunity to identify with a character and their struggles and what they've been through. And so, cultivating empathy is really important to me. It's at the top of my list when I'm talking about teaching history through literature, because we live in a society that's becoming measurably less and less empathetic. And that's partly a result of our addiction to social media and the way that devices have interrupted relationship. And not that devices can't be helpful for relationship, but for the most part, the effect at this point is proving to be pretty negative.

And so, it's really important that we are intentional about how we're cultivating empathy in our children. And I mean, there's just so many books that do that so well. And it's so nice to do it through a book with your children, because you're not having to preach at them. You're not having to sit them down and say, "Now, you listen to me, here's why you need to be kind." It's just they're learning these things through stories and that's getting in their heart and it's getting in their soul and it's making them who they are.

Pam:

Yeah. Well, if we have a mom who's interested in this idea, she's like, "Oh, I've never thought about this before. We've always just pulled out a textbook with a number on it." And I'm going to say that one of the other beautiful things about teaching history in this method is that you are able to combine your children to do it.

Rea:

Yes, absolutely.

Pam:

And so you're not having to pull out a book with a third grade on it or a fifth grade on it, and everybody goes their separate ways. You're able to learn together. But kind of practically, what can it look like to use kind of this living books approach to history?

Rea:

Well, I think the guides that we've published have really been designed to make it user friendly for your average mom. And really, I mean, we understand that many families are coming to the study of history with a lot of trepidation. They hated history in school. I mean, almost more than math. And so when they're thinking about having to teach history to their children, they're just thinking about, "Oh my gosh, all those dry dates and times and places, we've got to learn all that stuff. I've got to learn that all over again with my kids." So, I think people that are using a living

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books approach to history are pleasantly surprised that suddenly they're falling in love with history right along with their children.

So, I think having a good guide or a good mentor is really important. And that's what we've tried to provide in our Beautiful Feet Books guides, are really good mentors. We put hundreds and hundreds of hours of research into those so that we're trying to sift out the things that aren't that great. And we're trying to really provide a chronological and comprehensive study of the period. And it's when you're doing let's say medieval studies through literature, you just have the opportunity to read all kinds of books with your children that you would probably never pick up if you weren't studying the middle ages.

So, you're going to be reading King Arthur. Most people never read King Arthur, or they're going to be reading Robin Hood. Most people never read Robin Hood. You're going to be reading The Door in the Wall. You're going to be reading, oh my goodness, Shakespeare and so many authors that you just wouldn't normally read those things with your children if they're just in a typical course of curriculum. So, I feel like that's such a beautiful advantage is a lot of us are given the opportunity to go back and make up for gaps in our own education and have the opportunity to read some things that we never had and enjoy those.

Pam:

Yeah. Actually, I'm sitting here ticking all those off. I've read all of those.

Rea:

That's great. That's awesome.

Pam:

Because we were studying medieval history.

Rea:

Yes, that's great. I think it's kind of fun to think ... Well, it's not fun to think about it, but I think it's intriguing to think about that Shakespeare wrote some of his

major tragedies like Romeo and Juliet, and Macbeth and Hamlet when he was in quarantine. I think he was in quarantine for about two years because of the plague in London. And so it's interesting to think about how this kind of sequestering down has been the genesis of a lot of the world's greatest literature. I mean, Cervantes wrote Don Quixote when he was imprisoned. And John Bunyan wrote Pilgrim's Progress when he was in jail. So, I think it's interesting to look at how times of real stress and trial and trauma and tribulation can be really creative times, as well as difficult times. A lot of beauty comes out of difficulty.

Pam:

Right. And once again, going back to those feelings of empathy.

Rea:

Exactly.

Pam:

So many things there. Well, let's talk a little bit about the mom who's like, "Well, you know what, this is all fine and good when your oldest is in third or fourth grade, but hey, I've got kids who are in middle school and I've got kids who are in high school and we've got to get serious now." Can this approach be used for those older grades.

Rea:

Yes, absolutely. And our history programs that are for junior high and high school, they're rigorous programs in the sense that students will read a lot of literature. But you're just killing so many birds with one stone when you're studying history through literature. Because not only are you studying history, but you're also studying the great works of history or the great works of literature that came out of those periods. So, when we're doing modern history with a high school student, we're reading *The Jungle*, we're reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

We're reading the Albert Marrin books, which are some of the best historical books for young people because Albert Marrin tells history in the form of story.

And those books, there a way to have a lens into culture that you don't get from reading a typical textbook. I mean, I love what Neil Postman said, he wrote the book, *The End of Education*, and he was really, really concerned about what had happened in education, really in the 1950s and 1960s when he was a professor at Yale. And he was seeing students coming into university that had so little historical background, they just really didn't know history and they didn't understand the rudiments of what democracy is. They hadn't been schooled in these things like children were a hundred years ago. And so he really became quite a spokesperson for getting rid of textbooks in schools.

And he said about textbooks that they're actually enemies of education, instruments for promoting dogmatism and trivial learning. So, when you think about that it's really true because as we all know, when we're studying history from a textbook, we are learning that information to pass the test on Friday. And then as soon as we pass the test on Friday, it's gone and we don't retain it. And it's that trivial learning. It's being able to grasp some facts and some dates and be able to demonstrate that on a quiz. And that is what learning history was reduced to. So, the other thing that I think that is important that Neil Postman said is that because textbooks are the way they are, they're just "concerned with presenting the facts of the case as if there can be no disputing them, as if they're fixed and immutable. And still worse, there's no clue given as to who claimed these are the facts of the case or how, it (in quotes), discovered these facts." But I really like this. "There is no sense of the frailty or ambiguity of human judgment. No hint of the possibilities of error. Knowledge is presented as a commodity to be acquired never as a human struggle, to understand, to overcome falsity and to stumble toward truth."

And I think that's really powerful when we think about the way we've been presented with history, it's never given as though it is to be a quest for truth, it's to be a quest for what really happened. What were the true

causes of the genocide of Rwanda? What were the true causes and roots of racism in the American South? And when we read books like *The Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor, or *To Kill a Mockingbird*, we suddenly, our eyes are open to what the true roots of that type of racism is.

And that's what we want our children to understand. There are no easy answers for any of these questions and these injustices that are so part of our culture. And so if they're only learning about these important issues in human history through a textbook, they're never given the opportunity to really dive deep and really explore these things from the perspective of, say, justice or a perspective of empathy and the basic human experience. That's another thing. So I think for parents that are coming into it that are feeling inadequate and overwhelmed, I think all of us do, I don't think I ever spend an entire homeschooling day and I homeschooled for 32 years feeling adequate to the task, but there are good guides out there now if you want to teach history this way. And you can do it and your children will thank you for it.

I remember, one of the stories that I like to share is we had a family that they were using living books all through their homeschooling experience. And then the homeschooling movement got hit like a tsunami by this very new and novel stress on academic

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excellence. And there was nothing wrong with pursuing academic excellence, but it was through a method and a methodology that was really not life-giving to most people, especially most mothers. And it really impacted the homeschooling movement in a negative way. And this woman was trying to stand firm on her stance, that living books were the most important thing for her. They were a core value of her experience and they were saying, "Well, but what are you teaching for this? And what do you teaching for that? And how are you doing rhetoric? And how are you doing ... " And so on and so forth.

And she just said, "Well, we read good books." And that was her answer, "We read good books." And so it was very interesting because her oldest son was accepted to West Point and her friends' kids all got so burned out on education by high school that they didn't go on to college. And so, I mean, this is obviously very anecdotal, but the point of the story is that when her son went off to West Point, basic training was really difficult for him. It's a foreign environment. Everything in there is designed to break you in order to make you, I understand that. But the whole military mindset in all is difficult for a fine young man that's coming out of a loving home and is not used to that kind of treatment.

And he would be a little bit depressed at times when he would talk to his mom and she'd say, "Well, honey, are you going to make it? Are you okay?" And he goes, "Yeah, mom, I'm going to be just fine because whenever I get really down, I just read good books." And it was just a powerful testament to the fact that that was what she raised him on. And he knew where to go when he was really struggling. And I think that's an important thing to remember right now too when we're going through this difficult time is that it is a beautiful time to really take refuge in the books of the heroes of the faith and the heroes that did some much enough in foundation of our country. And just the inspiring stories from around the world that are important to read when we're going through a time of difficulty because they give us insight and they give us perspective.

And I love when General MacArthur was he was commissioned to rebuild Japan at the end of World War II. And you have to remember that Japan had been on an imperialistic quest since the late '20s and early '30s. So, Japan had literally by the time World War II was over, they had been at war for over a decade and a half. And so, MacArthur had loved the Laura Ingalls Wilder books as a kid and so when he was working on the democratization of Japan after Japan surrendered, he brought in *The Long Winter*. And that was the book that he distributed all over Japan, because he knew the power of that story of families who are suffering deprivation and extreme conditions and not losing their courage and not giving up and persevering. And he knew that that book would speak to the Japanese at that time in their history and indeed it did do that in powerful way.

Pam:

Yeah. And I think they ended up as a result translating the other books into Japanese and there was quite a revival of ... It was big. Those books were big in Japan. I remember reading that story not too long ago. I was reading one of the Laura Ingalls Wilder biographies, and them talking about that particular thing.

Rea:

Yeah.

Pam:

Yeah. You were talking earlier about the whole textbooks versus a living books approach, and so often in textbooks, this is presented to us as, "This is fact this, this is exactly the way things happened." And I think we can see even today, with everything that we're going through right now, because we're obviously living through a historical event, there's so many interpretations of fact, and it's interesting to see this is nothing new. It's not new that there are multiple interpretations of what's going on. And so-

Rea:

Yes, absolutely.

“One of the beautiful things about reading living books is we’re getting the human side of the story. We realized that its much more multifaceted than just a list of facts...”
Pam Barnhill

Pam:
... when we're reading these textbooks, we're getting one side of the story and it's presented as fact. But one of the beautiful things about reading living books is we're getting the human side of the story. And we realized that it's much more multifaceted than just a list of facts,

which may or may not be. It's never just facts. There's always something more to it.

Rea:
Yes, absolutely. And that's the beauty of knowing our history. I think it was Cicero that said, "To not know your history is to remain always a child." And that's why one of the reasons the study of history is so important. Michael Crichton who wrote Jurassic Park and Andromeda Strain and all of those, he also stated similarly that, "If you don't know history, you are like a leaf that doesn't know it is part of a tree." And so, the study of history is not important just because you

“The study of history is not important just because you need to know what happened. It's really important for preventing what may happen in the future. If we don't know our history, we are destined to repeat it. I think that should be important to all of us as Americans and as parents. That is one of our goals as parents to make sure that we do impart that legacy to our children and that understanding.” Rea Berg

need to know what happened. It's really important for preventing what may happen in the future. If we don't know our history, we are destined to repeat it. I think that should be important to all of us as Americans and as parents. That is one of our goals as parents to make sure that we do impart that legacy to our children and that understanding. So yeah.

Pam:
Yeah. And knowing where we came from.

Rea:
Yes, absolutely. Yeah. I love that. There's a quote in Grapes of Wrath that when the family is having to leave Oklahoma because of the dust bowl and they're just destitute, but their roots are there, their family is buried there, their history is there, their heritage is there. And one of the family just ask the question, "How will we know who we are?" Because they're leaving their history. And so that's why our history is important because it does tell us who we are, where we came from.

Pam:
Well, Rea, tell everybody where they can find you and Beautiful Feet Books online.

Rea:
Well, our website is just www.bfbooks.com. And you can also email me at rea@bfbooks.com. And I also blog on children's literature @reaberg on WordPress.

Pam:
Yeah. And we will put links to all of that into the show notes-

Rea:
Thank you.

Pam:
... and to your Instagram as well, so people can follow you there. I know you're always doing things over there as well.

Rea:
Yeah.

Pam:

Well, thank you so much for coming on here and talking to me today about teaching history through literature and why it's important. I think absolutely wonderful to have you on.

Rea:

Well, thank you, Pam. It was a pleasure to be here. Thanks for having me.

Pam:

And there you have it. Now, if you would like links to any of the books and resources that Rea and I chatted about today, including the downloads for this episode of the podcast, which includes a full transcript, you can find those on the show notes for this episode. Those are at pambarnhill.com/ymb75. You can also take the time to leave either one of us a comment over there, or we even have little instructions on how to leave a rating or review for the Your Morning Basket Podcast to help us get the word out to more listeners. And we always love it when you do that. Thank you so much.

So, next week on the podcast, I'm going to be joined by Rebecca Zipp from ahumbleplace.com, and Rebecca and I are going to be chatting about the value of Morning Time in a kindergarten education. We know people are going back to school, and some of us have kindergartners this year, not me but others. And we want to talk about how we can use Morning Time and how Morning Time benefits your kindergartner. So, it's going to be a fun conversation, and I can't wait to see you here until then keep seeking Truth, Goodness and Beauty in your homeschool day.