

Patricia MacLachlan's Life Reflected in Sarah, Plain, and Tall

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Beyond MacLachlan's basic interest in creating a good children's novel in Sarah, Plain, and Tall, she also has a very personal investment in connecting her story and its characters with the many facets of her personal experiences: family, her beliefs, and her biography.

It seems odd that an only child, from an intact family, would have the insight to write so detailed about the feelings of loss and a blended family. When asked "Do you think a family means a mother, and a father, and a child? Surprisingly, MacLachlan replied, "No, I don't think that. And I never had." MacLachlan went through a time when her own mother had Alzheimer's disease and was [losing](#) her memory. MacLachlan stated, "In a sense, she was leaving me, though not because she wanted to. (Author Information; teachers@random.com) Her characters Anna and Caleb feel that same sense of loss as they remember their mother and learn to accept [Sarah](#). MacLachlan felt there were extended people who became your "kind of; parents. For a lot of children she was their mother/grandmother

[surrogate](#). We (MacLachlan's family) are very strongly connected, my children, myself and even my nieces and nephews. What I am most concerned about is who we are as family and how we effect each other. I didn't have brothers or sisters, and this may be where it came from". ("Author Information" teachers@-random.com). It is now easier to see how Anna and Caleb are so willing to take Sarah into their own family. The characters in the book don't cling to who was a part of their original family, but instead like MacLachlan, focus on how each character effects each other.

MacLachlan also wrote a series of journal articles on adoption and foster mothers which had a major impact on her life. It was clear to me that much of the focus of my writing was sharpened by my involvement and concern for families and children. This was partially the basis for her decision to write for children. She spends a lot of time listening to people talk and begins stories in her head.(Author Information teachers@random.com) It is clear to see that her inspiration came from many sources. What started out as a career in a seemingly separate field, overflowed into what is unique and central to the themes of her writings today.

To understand the setting of the book Sarah,

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