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Author/Interview subject: Cerrie Burnell (CB)

Interviewed by: Sian (S)

Other speakers: Audience (Aud), Boy in audience (Boy #), Girl in audience (Girl #)

S: Boys and girls, ladies and gentleman, welcome to Authors Live at the BBC at Edinburgh Festivals. Give yourselves another round of applause.

Aud: [Applause]

S: Oh, excellent work.

My name is Sian and I'm your host for today's event. Now, some of you might know today's author, if you've ever seen CBeebies, you might know her as a presenter? Uh-huh, and she's also an author and she's written picture books, and chapter books all about a little girl called Harper. Now, Harper can play any instrument she wants to without needing to learn any of the notes. Which is a very handy skill and we're going to be finding out a little bit more about Harper and about the author and the books that inspired her, when she was younger.

So, are you ready to do another round of applause? Please give a huge welcome to the very brilliant, Cerrie Burnell.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Hi everyone, hello. Hello, hello. How are you all doing?

Aud: Yeahhh.

CB: I said, how are you all doing?

Aud: Yessss.

CB: Ah, you're very quiet, Edinburgh. Well it's lovely to see you all. We'll be making lots more noise as we go on. Was it raining when anyone arrived here?

Aud: No.

CB: No, oh we're in luck. Well don't worry because if it starts to rain I have got a special scarlet enchanted umbrella, which I might just lend you at the end. So, no one will get wet. Okay, hands up here who likes stories? Keep your hand up high in the air if you like reading your own stories? Keep your hand up really high if you love having stories read to you? And keep your hand up really high, at the back there, yes hello, if you love making up your own stories.

I love making up my own stories. And I've made up a story and written it down in a book called Harper and the Scarlet Umbrella. And we're going to be finding out all about Harper today and I'll also be talking to you about why I decided to become an author.

Does everyone know what an author is? Can anyone tell me what an author is? Yes, what's an author?

Girl 1: They write books.

CB: Authors write books, well said. Round of applause, I think.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Authors write books. So, I am the author of this book. Does anyone know what an illustrator does? In the green, yeah.

Boy 1: Draws pictures for the books.

CB: The illustrator draws the pictures in the books. I am not the illustrator. My drawings would never appear in a book. So, I have a very talented illustrator called Laura Ellen Anderson, and she does all of the gorgeous pictures. She's up there looking very cheeky in that photo. She does all of the lovely drawings in my books.

But, let's start with hearing a little bit from Harper and the Scarlet Umbrella.

Once, there was a girl called Harper who had a rare musical gift. She heard songs on the wind, rhythms on the rain and hope in the beat of a butterfly's wing.

Harper could play every instrument she ever picked up without learning a single note. Sometimes, late at night, alone with her cat, Midnight, Harper heard a melody that made her heart stand still. For it seemed that it came from the stars themselves.

So what do we know about Harper? What's her rare musical gift? Who can tell me? I think Sian might have given you a bit of a clue at the beginning. What can she do with instruments? Does anyone know? Yes, at the back there.

Boy 2: She can play any musical instrument without learning a note.

CB: She can play every single instrument in the world without ever having to learn any of the notes.

Have we got any keen musicians here? Who plays musical instruments? What do you play?

Girl 2: Piano, hands up anyone who plays the piano?

Girl 3: Yes.

CB: How about drum, anyone who plays the drum?

Violin?

Cello?

Guitar?

Recorder?

Call out one that I haven't said? Does anyone play anything that I haven't said?

Girl 4: Concertina.

CB: Concertina, yes. Who plays the concertina?

Brilliant, let's have a round of applause for the concertina. We've never had that one before.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Okay, so we've got lots of very musical people in this room, very talented bunch, Edinburgh. And we've got lots of people who love stories, as well.

Well, when I was a little girl, I wasn't very good at musical instruments but I always imagine that I would be. Which is perhaps why I wrote a story all about Harper? But also I would like to tell you a secret about my reading and writing journey. But, before I do, I need to know how old everybody is in the room, all of the children, not the grown-ups.

So have we got anyone who is really little, have we got any two year olds or one year olds? Have we got any? Younger, we've got someone whose younger. We'll have a very gentle clap for the youngers the ones and twos.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Well done, you're being so quiet, it's amazing.

Hands up anyone whose three?

Little clap for the three year olds.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Anyone who's four?

Anyone who's five? Bigger clap

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Anyone who's six?

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Seven?

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Eight?

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Nine?

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Ten?

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Eleven?

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Twelve?

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Big, big clap for all of you.

Well, the secret that I want to tell you is that I couldn't read or write very well at all until I was ten. So, I was nearly older than all of the children in this room, before I could read or write. And that's because I'm dyslexic, which is such a long word. It's like they did it on purpose to confuse us.

Have we got any dyslexics in the room?

Have we got anyone who's dyslexic?

Yes we have, a big clap for the dyslexics as well.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Does anyone know what it means? It's such a long word but what does it actually mean? Yes, do you know?

Boy 3: It means you find it hard to read and write and other stuff and the stuff that we do at school more difficult.

CB: Very well said. He said it's like you find reading and writing and other stuff that you do at school more difficult. But the good news is that one day school finishes and then everything becomes lovely and easy again. So, anyone who's dyslexic don't worry, just keep on enjoying stories, one day it will all make sense. Because, actually, the great thing about being dyslexic is you have so many brilliant ideas going on in your head all the time. That's why it's sometimes hard to concentrate but it does mean that you get to write and make-up lovely stories.

So, when I was little I was very lucky. I had a lovely mum and a lovely grandmother, who was quite strict, but lovely some of the time, who read me lots of gorgeous stories.

So, if we take a look at the first picture. We're going to see me, when I was little. Yes, I loved butterflies and I loved dressing-up and I loved stories. And one of my favourite stories was Alice in Wonderland.

So, if we take a look at our next picture we can see there's Alice in Wonderland. Now, that's a black and white drawing of Alice in Wonderland, but who can tell me, in that book, what she normally looks like?

Girl 5: Yellow hair.

CB: Yellow hair, yes. And what colour is my hair?

Aud: Yellow.

CB: Mostly yellow, a bit brown at the top, but mostly yellow. Yes. And what about my eyes, what colour are my eyes?

Boy 4: Blue.

Aud: Brown.

CB: Not brown, they might look brown. They're actually blue. And what colour are Alice's eyes, normally? Yeah?

Boy 5: Blue.

CB: Yes and the little girl in the pink as well, well done. Blue. Okay, what about Alice's skin, what colour is Alice's skin? Is it the same as mine?

Aud: Yes.

CB: Yes, okay. So, when I was little I actually started to believe that I was Alice, because we do look quite similar, I think you'll find. Okay, but, there is one thing that's very different between me and Alice and it's not my glasses. Is anyone brave enough to say what they think it is? At the back there, in the white?

Boy 5: You're personality.

CB: My personality, I love that answer. Yes. It is my personality, that's the right answer. But there is something else as well. If I do this, like I was doing and the little picture of me, what do you think it is?

Boy 6: Is it because you've got half an arm?

CB: It's because I've just got one hand, that's right. I've just got one hand. Does anyone know the reason why I've got one hand?

Yeah.

Girl 6: It's hard to explain because you were....

CB: Because I was born like it. I was born with one hand and Alice was drawn with two hands. So, we were a little bit different. But, when I was four, five, six, seven, I didn't care about that. I just wanted to be Alice. So, it just goes to show you that all stories are for all people.

Now these are some of the other books that I really loved when I was small. Let's take a look at them. We've got Peter Pan, who knows the story of Peter Pan?

Yes, what happens in Peter Pan? What do all the children do that's really fabulous? They...

Aud: Fly.

CB: They fly and then we've got the Magic Faraway Tree. What happens at the top of the Faraway Tree? What's at the top in the clouds? Yeah.

Boy 7: [inaudible 10:38] strange land.

CB: There's a different and wonderful strange land at the top of the tree every day. Imagine that. Imagine if there was a tree like that in Edinburgh, wouldn't it be fabulous.

And then we've got Mary Poppins. What does she like to do with her umbrella?

Aud: Fly.

CB: Yeah, fly, yes. A bit of a theme going on here. And then we've got Gobbolino the Witch's Cat. Okay, who likes cats, in this room? Well I love cats and there is actually a cat in the Harper stories. Does anyone know what the cat's called?

Girl 7: Midnight.

CB: Yeah, I heard it over here, who said it? Midnight, that's right. So, Harper has got a cat called Midnight. So, when I was little I loved all of these stories. And even though I couldn't read them, my mum read them to me or my, slightly strict, grandmother. And I remembered all of my favourite words and I saved them up in my heart. Because I knew one day, I would want to write them into a book myself.

And all the time that I was listening to these stories I always thought, yes that's what I thought, I was just like all the other children in the stories. But then one day, when I was at playschool, something happened that made me think slightly differently about it. And it was this. We were all playing a game of Peter Pan and I wanted to be the best girl in Peter Pan. So, who do you think I wanted to be? You can shout it out?

Aud: Wendy. Tinker Bell.

CB: Wendy. I put my hand up and I said I want to be Wendy. They said no, somebody else is being Wendy. I said, okay, brrruuu, who can I be. And then I thought of another brilliant girl, who do you think it was?

Aud: Tinker Bell.

CB: I said I want to be Tinker Bell. They said no somebody else is being Tinker Bell. And I thought, huhhhhhh, all the good parts are gone, who am I going to be? And as I was thinking, somebody said a different character, which I didn't want to be at all? Who do you think it might be? Who, in Peter Pan, has got one hand? You can call it out?

Aud: Captain Hook.

CB: Captain Hook. All of my friends turned round and said you can be Captain Hook. Now if we go back and we have a look at the picture of me, do I look like a pirate?

Aud: No.

CB: Have I got a beard?

Aud: No.

CB: Have I got a pointy hat?

Aud: No.

CB: Do I look like I'm frightened of crocodiles?

Aud: No.

CB: No. I did not want to be Captain Hook one little bit. I was very cross and I ran away and I hid. And then I started thinking and I remembered there is another brilliant girl in the Peter Pan stories who wears feathers in her hair. Does anyone know who she is? Yeah, go on.

Girl 8: Tiger Lily.

CB: Tiger Lily. And I ran back and I said I'm going to be Tiger Lily. And they said okay, okay, you can be Tiger Lily.

But from that moment on I started thinking why are there no children in story books that look like me. And I never forgot that day, I remembered it for a long, long time. And then lots of things happened in my life. I grew up. I became CBeebies presenter, some of you may have seen Cbeebies, yes?

Aud: Yes.

CB: Yeah, okay. Well there I am having lots of fun with lots of my lovely CBeebies friends. And then the most exciting thing in the world happened to me. And that is I became a mummy. And this is a picture of my daughter, Amelie. And when she was born I rushed out into book shops and I wanted to buy story books that had little girls in that looked just like her. And I found some lovely ones, but not enough. So, I decided that I was going to write my very own book. And that's why I wrote Snowflakes. If we take a look at the next picture we can see some of the books I've written. There is Snowflakes, Ballet Dreams, Mermaid. They're not all based on my daughter, but they've all got children in them who are slightly diverse. Which means that they look, perhaps, a little bit different to the children in the Enid Blyton stories.

And then I was having so much fun writing books, I thought, I want to write a longer book. And that is how the idea of Harper came about.

So, Harper lives in the City of Clouds where it rains everyday in many different ways. What would you need if you lived in a city, a bit like Edinburgh, that rains every single day? What might you need that's on stage with me? Yes, in the green.

Girl 9: An umbrella

CB: An umbrella. So, at the beginning of our story, Harper in fact has a bright yellow umbrella. And the umbrella gets damaged. And she's very, very upset; she doesn't know what to do because she doesn't have an umbrella anymore. And her Great Aunt Sassy, who she lives with, calls out of the window, don't worry Harper, you can use the scarlet umbrella. She can't believe her luck because all of her life the scarlet umbrella has been kept somewhere very strange. Does anyone know where it's been kept? Has anyone read the story already? Someone we haven't had before? No, I'll tell you, it's been kept in the bathroom, locked in a bird cage. And there's a very good reason for that. Let's find out what Harper makes of the scarlet umbrella.

Harper blinked in amazement as the rain lightened to a soft summer dew. She stared at her reflection in a puddle. A girl with pale skin, dark hair and eyes the colour of a winter sea gazed back at her with a big smile. I can use the scarlet umbrella, Harper gasped. She darted down the stairs, through the door of their little flat and into the bathroom. A shiver of excitement danced over Harper's skin. In the corner of the bathroom stood an enormous bird cage and locked inside its slim, white bars was an umbrella of magnificent scarlet silk. So often had Harper dreamed of opening the bird cage but Great Aunt Sassy had never allowed her to, insisting that the scarlet umbrella was too old and fragile to use.

Carefully, Harper picked up a tiny golden key, which hung above the sink. It had been there for as long as Harper could remember, shining through

her memories like a key to forgotten secrets. Gently, she turned the key and with a click the bird cage was open. Uh, Harper held her breath and lifted the umbrella out. It burst open in her hands making her jump and laugh all at once. It really was quite splendid, like a prop from one of Great Aunt Sassy's operas. It weighs nothing at all, Harper smiled. For it felt as if she was holding a handful of feathers. And though it was very old, the umbrella didn't seem fragile at all.

Midnight, Midnight, Harper yelled tearing around the little flat. Midnight, come see my amazing umbrella, but Midnight was nowhere to be found. Harper pulled a small piccolo flute from her pocket and played Midnight's favourite melody. But still he did not appear. She peeked beneath the table and noticed something very odd. Midnight's bowl of cream and peppermint mouse had not been touched. A whisper of worry crept into Harper's heart. Oh no, Harper stood in the middle of the flat, breathing in the scent of lavender and listening to a lullaby of sad summer dew rain. And suddenly, Harper felt terribly lonely. Where are you Midnight, she whispered, and that's when the magical thing happened.

Okay, what do we think this magical thing might be? Has anyone got any ideas? If you think about the books that I liked when I was little, what do they do in Peter Pan and in Mary Poppins?

Aud: Fly.

CB: They fly. So Harper's magical umbrella flies through the sky, just like this. How great would that be? Now, I would like to know what would you do if you had a magical, scarlet umbrella. Hands up in the air, if you've got an idea of what you might do.

What I would really love is for five people, one at time, to come up and show me what they would do with an umbrella. So, we'll start with someone down here. Would you like to come up? Would you give him a big round applause for being the first one to come up.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Hello there. Okay, lovely boy, what would you do if you had a magic scarlet umbrella?

Boy 8: I would fly.

CB: You would fly, okay. So, show me how you would fly. Hold the umbrella, would you fly like that. You can run around on the stage and show us. Pretend to be flying.

Oh, okay, yeah that would be another way you could fly. You could go like this and then you could climb in and you could just float like this, couldn't you? That's a lovely idea, let's give him a big clap, well done.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: You can go back down and sit down now.

Let's have our next person, over there. Yes, would you like to come down? We are going to do a magical change over of children, it's going to be seamless.

Aud: [Laughs]

CB: Here we go, let's keep clapping.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Okay, lovely girl, what would you do with the scarlet umbrella?

Girl 10: Fly.

CB: You would fly, I'm sensing a theme here, where would you fly to?

Would you go to the beach?

Girl 10: Yes.

CB: Yeah, because we had a lovely suggestion yesterday from a little girl who said if you hold it like this, do you want to hold the umbrella, yeah, that she would go to the beach and she'd be very clever, when she got there, she would fly up to the waves, and she would dip her toes into the waves, I'll be the waves, but she wouldn't put her feet on the bottom, so they wouldn't get sandy and then she would fly back to her towel and she wouldn't get sandy at all. How lovely. Give her a big round of applause.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: You can go and sit down. We've got time for three more ideas. We've had flying, so something other than flying. Let's have, yes with the curly hair. Would you like to come down? We're going rogue, okay.

Aud: [Laughs]

CB: What's your idea?

Boy 9: Go back and forward in time.

CB: Go back and forward in time in a flying umbrella. That's brilliant. So, how would you do it? Would you hold it over you like this?

Boy 9: I would put it in front of me and then...

CB: And then just fight your way through time. That's amazing, okay, big round of applause.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Very nice. Okay, with the dark hair would you like to come down? There we go, alright lovely girl, what's your idea?

Girl 11: I would use it as a boat and I would go to a sunny country.

CB: How lovely, imagine that, a sunny country. That would be lovely, so you could sit in it and you could perhaps have a picnic in it, perhaps some croissants or something like that. And you could float all the way to France, couldn't you? Yeah, let's give her a big round of applause.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Go and sit down. We've got time for one more, in the stripy top, boy with the stripes; there we go, come down. Now there might be an opportunity for more people to come up on stage later. I probably won't be able to get all of you up on stage but don't worry, you can always go home and imagine what you would do with a scarlet umbrella later on tonight. And perhaps make up a little story about it.

Okay, what would you do with enchanted scarlet umbrella?

Boy 10: Well, if it was raining I would just pick it up and, if it was raining and I needed to get somewhere quick, I would just charge like this. Yahhhhh

Aud: [Laughs] [Applause]

CB: Brilliant, I think we could make that happen.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: I think you could do that today. High five, what a great idea. Okay, lovely. Some other ideas we've had were going camping, you could use it as a tent. Or, a bit similar to the charging, you could use it as a shield. Which I thought was a lovely idea as well.

Okay, so we know that Harper has a magical, scarlet umbrella but whose gone missing? Who can't Harper find? Her little friend that we were talking about earlier on? Someone, yes, Midnight. So, Harper, if we take a look at the next picture there's Midnight having a special cuddle with Harper, but he's gone missing and Harper doesn't know how to find him.

So, she decides to enlist the help of her brilliant friends. Let's meet Harper's friends. Okay, so we have her Great Aunt Sassy who makes costumes. She's wonderful. And then at the top we have Harper and Midnight and look they are flying upside down in the umbrella and Harper's even playing a tune on the piccolo flute.

And then we have Nate and Smoke, well the special thing about Nate is that he's visually impaired, which means he can't see that clearly. And when he was small he found a puppy that had been abandoned and he loved dogs. So, he brought the little dog home and decided to raise the dog. But, as it grew up, it turned out not to be a dog at all, it turned out to be a wolf, So, Nate is at the top there with his wonderful wolf, Smoke. And she's a bit like a guide dog, a bit like a guard dog, a bit like a fierce wolf. And she's never on a lead. But it means that, you know, Nate is someone you definitely want to be friends with.

And then there's Ferdie over here, Ferdie is a serious boy who wears a serious scarf because he wants to be a poet. So, if anyone here wants to be a poet, you need to have a pencil behind your ear and very serious scarf and a serious face. Show me your serious poetry faces. We've got some very good poets in Edinburgh, I can see.

And then we've got the Wild Conductor over here with the very tall hat. He's a little bit spooky; we'll come back to him later.

And then we have Liesel, who's very small and scampery. And Liesel's dream in life is to be a mouse. That's all she wants. So, she doesn't really care that all of the cats in the City of Clouds are going missing, because she just loves mice. But she also does like adventure, so she joins in. She decides to help Harper. Because she realises that there might be an adventure that's about to happen.

So, can you see that all of the children are holding musical instruments? That's because all of them play an instrument just like Harper. But let's find out what they plan to do with these instruments. How they plan to try and find where all of the cats are hiding.

So, this is Chapter Six – A Trip to the Unforgotten Concert Hall.

The next morning Harper hugged Elsie goodbye and hurried to the tenth floor where Nate and Smoke were waiting. Ferdie's sharp, German accent echoed up the stairs. Luda's been missing two days, don't you care. No, I don't, yelled Liesel, flicking a chunk of dirty hair out of her eyes. Ferdie scowled at his sister and tucked a pencil behind his ear.

Hey, cried Harper as she ran down to them, almost breathless with excitement. I know where the cats are. Where, yelled Ferdie, eagerly? Where, whispered Liesel, wistfully? For although Liesel didn't like cats, she did very much like adventures. The sight of a girl with a scarlet umbrella and a boy with a miscoloured wolf set her small heart bounding. The cats are at the Unforgotten Concert Hall Harper half yelled. They've been captured by a man with magpie feather hair, that's the Wild Conductor. We must get them back cried Ferdie shaking his fist. He closed his eyes in serious thought, only instead of a plan he came up with a poem, oh no.

Liesel however sprang into action. We must take every instrument we can carry so we look like we're in a band, then we walk inside and free the cats. Uhh, what an excellent idea, and so that is what we are going to do.

And if we have a look at our next picture we can see all of the children with their instruments on the way to the Unforgotten Concert Hall ready to pretend that they are in a band. So, I thought we would try and recreate that band. So, hands up anyone who hasn't been on stage yet, who would like to. I need twelve people, so you come down, you come down. Now how many have we got.

Let's see if you come and make a nice line. So we've got one, two, three, four, five.

Okay, now, what we have over here, my lovely line of children is, one at a time you're going to come to this table and pick up a musical instrument. So let's start with you, do you want to have this one. There we go, and you. Okay, so we're going to pretend that we're in a band like Harper and her friends. And let's put you at the front of the line here. So, if you just swap places. So, what I would really like you to do is march all the way.

Girl 12: Hi mummy.

CB: Hi mummy. I'd like you to march all the way around the stage in a big loop and you're all going to bang your instruments, make as much noise as you can. In the audience we're going to clap our hands and stamp our feet and say Wooooooow, like we're having the most fun ever. Okay, off we go.

Aud: [Applause] Wooooooow.

CB: Your going to follow, your going to follow, your going to follow, there we go. There we go, there we go, there we go, there we go. Okay.

Very good and audience let's just stop, children keep going. And that was a bit like the sound that Harper and all of her friends made as they set out to rescue the cats.

Alright let's give them a big round of applause, pop your instruments back on the table.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Wow, and one at a time down the stairs, every down the stairs. [Laughs] There we go, and you can go back and sit back down.

Okay, so Harper and her friends, they're all in this wonderful band, they go down into the Unforgotten Concert Hall but what's going to happen next. They get in and then they all split up and they head off in different directions to go and look for the cats.

And if we take a look at our next picture here, we can see Liesel, do you remember the character of Liesel, she's a little bit sneaky, she's a little bit like a mouse. Let's just find out what happens to Liesel.

Liesel was bored. She had searched the auditorium and had found nothing but an old boiled sweet. She wandered down the spiral stair case, Harper's clarinet banging against her foot. At the bottom was a small wooden door that was ever so slightly open. On the door was a big brass sign saying Keep Out. Have a look at Liesel's face. What do you think Liesel is going to do?

Do you think she is going to keep out?

Aud: No.

CB: No everyone knows an adventurous child can never resist a forbidden door and Liesel was no exception. Her eyes glittered brightly and she scampered through.

Okay, so if you want to find out what happens to Liesel, you might just have to read the story. Give yourselves a massive round of applause.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: You have been so wonderful. Thank you. I'm going to hand over back to Sian now.

S: Well we, I think we've got some time now if anybody's got any questions that they would like to ask Cerrie. There we go beautiful, what question would you like to ask?

Girl 13: Why did she decide to open the cage?

S: Oh, that's a great question?

CB: That's lovely, yes, okay.

S: Why did she decide to open the cage?

CB: So, that's Harper, do you remember the umbrella was locked in the bird cage in the bathroom. She'd never been allowed to open it before. She decided to open it because her yellow umbrella that she has at the beginning of the book got completely damaged and she didn't have an umbrella. And it rains every day in the City of Clouds so she definitely needed an umbrella. So she was allowed to, for the first time, open up the cage. Why do you think the umbrella was kept in the bird cage?

What does the umbrella like to do?

It likes to...?

Boy 11: Fly.

CB: So if it hadn't have been in the bird cage it might have just flown away somewhere. So, that's why it was locked in there and that's why Harper decided it was time to get it out.

S: So, if you've ever lost an umbrella, that might be what's happened.

CB: Yes, I think so.

S: It might have flown away.

CB: Probably happens all the time.

S: [Laughs] It happens to me loads, it's amazing.

Does anybody else have a question that they'd like to ask?

Girl: How do you find the illustrator?

S: Oh, what a great question? How do you find the illustrator that is an excellent question?

CB: Well, I was very lucky; I didn't have to find my illustrator. My publisher, they are called Scholastic, they had seen some of Laura's lovely artwork and they had seen some of my words and they thought, hmmm, we'll put those two things together. So they did it for me. So, I didn't have to find her. Somebody else did that job for me. But we've now done six books together and it will be nine in total when the others come out. So, we love working together.

S: Oh, that's because they're beautiful. Do you like the drawings?

CB: Yeah.

S: Yeah, me too, they are so beautiful.

CB: She's amazing.

S: Oh, it's nice that you get on with her as well. That your friends with the illustrator.

CB: Yeah, we've been staying in the same hotel. [laughs]

S: Oh that's lovely.

CB: Having breakfast together.

S: [Laughs] So, we've got a question there, white tee-shirt there on this side. So, say your question nice and loud into the microphone.

- Girl 14: What if the umbrella just flew out of the cage and she didn't get in time.
- S: Oh what would happen if the umbrella...
- CB: That would be a whole other book.
- S: ...it flew away how would she get it?
- CB: Yes, if her umbrella flew away from her. Because it's a magic umbrella, it knows who its owner is, you see. So, it's always wanted to be with Harper. But her Great Aunt Sassy, up until this point, has thought that Harper was too little to have a flying umbrella. So, now that she's eight, she's allowed to finally have a flying umbrella. So mums and dads, if you have got a flying umbrella, probably not until their eight.
- S: We've got time for one more question and we'll go on this side here. Can you ask your question?
- Boy 12: How long have you been writing for?
- S: How long have you been writing for? Excellent, beautiful final question.
- CB: Oh, that's a lovely question. Well, I've been dreaming about writing since I was ten and I couldn't write. But, actually publishing books, I think it's about four years.
- S: Four years that's quite a...would you like to be a writer, is that something that you are interested in?
- Boy 12: Yeah.
- S: Yeah, yeah, quite interested. Is it a career that you would recommend?
- CB: Yes, I think people don't realise how much time goes into writing a book.
- S: Yeah.
- CB: It certainly takes up a lot of time. But if it's something that you love, which I do, then it's just a wonderful thing to do and I feel very grateful and very lucky that I was able to, slowly, get my foot in the door.
- S: And I haven't got round to...six beautiful books to show for it. So, ladies and gentlemen that is all that we've got time for. Thank you so much for coming I think there is going to be lots of music making around Scotland.
- CB: I hope so, and charging, charging.
- S: Charging, which is an...Edinburgh's very busy at the moment. I feel the umbrella
- CB: Yeah, I'm slightly concerned for the family of the charger. [Laughs].

S: It's like the BBC is not responsible for any injuries that occur while charging through Edinburgh with an umbrella. [Laughs]. And finally, the main thing I'd like to do is can we do another big round of applause and say a huge thank you to Carrie.

Aud: [Applause]

CB: Thank you, bye.