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Author/Interview subject: Eoin Colfer (EC)
Interviewed by: Janice Forsyth (JF)
Other speakers: Audience (Aud), Martin(M), Emma(E)

Example transcript

Aud: [Singing] Happy Birthday to you,
Happy birthday dear author's live.
Happy birthday to you.

JF: A very warm welcome. I'm Janice Forsyth. Welcome to today's Live Author's Live event, brought to you by The Scottish Book trust, in association with the BBC. And as you might have guessed, it's a very special day today. It is birthday time. Today is the first birthday/ the first anniversary of the Meet our Authors programme, and the Author's live events. It's also another anniversary. The tenth anniversary of the Artemis Fowl Books and of course, it's World Books Day. Do you think we should get this candle blown out? Come on, how about you , young man? Come on. Come blow the candle out. On you go. Three, two, one, blow it out. And a big cheer.

Aud: [Cheer]

JF: So a bit of a celebration and as you can see our wonderful audience today are all dressed up as their favourite characters from books. Take a wee look at them. Give a big smile to the camera here. Don't they look absolutely fantastic? And I'm sure wherever your watching because there are tens of thousands of you, yes school pupils, right across the UK in schools also, dressed up as your favourite characters from books. So I bet you look fab too. Say hello to each other. Hello...welcome.

Aud: Hello.

Aud: These are P7 pupils from Castlefield Primary School in East Colbride in Scotland and I bet you look great too. And if you are watching online you will know all of

this but because it's a webcast and it's live occasionally what you're watching might disperse or kind of judder. But you know what to do. You don't panic. You don't try to reset it. It'll fix itself. Do you want to meet today's wonderful author?

Aud: Yes.

JF: And you do to wherever you are. He is Eoin Colfer author of many, many books for children including of course, the incredibly popular Artemis Fowl Series. And after this event incidentally you might want to check out the learning resources which are available for a couple of Eoin's books which you can download from the Scottish Book Trust website. Now, I've heard that in the past that his guy, Eoin Colfer, has relied on flatulent dwarves to warm up his audience, but I'm not going to take that personally. So boys and girls, a huge cheer, wild applause, for Eoin Colfer.

Aud: [Applause]

EC: Good morning everybody. Thanks for coming along. It could be worse: you could be back in school doing maths so I believe and as I told you, if there's any missing I will do maths because I am a qualified teacher. I love your costumes and I'm especially impressed by the people who are not in costumes but look like they are who go around, dressed as fairies, all the time, which is a bit strange.

I am the author of many books, about twenty-two now, but I'm most famous for the Artemis Fowl books and they are now ten years old. I cannot believe it, they are actually older than my son, who is...well I have two sons, and one is seven and one is thirteen. And to mark the tenth anniversary we are going to re-jack at them and we've got a fantastic new covers that are top secret and that are hidden in this briefcase which is totally secure and these covers will be unveiled if you want to go online, tomorrow, at twelve o'clock to artemisfowl.co.uk and we're unveiling them on the big screen in Piccadilly Circus, so that's going to be really exciting. I'm going to be there and you guys can all log in if you want.

But anyway, I want to tell you today a little bit about all the ideas for Artemis Fowl and where they come from. Now they come from mostly my little brothers. Does anyone have little brothers here? Put your hands up. Okay, well you guys know that little brother never get in trouble for anything. They can do whatever they like and all your parents will do is rub them on the head, give them a little kiss and say "Ah, he's only a baby. He did not mean to kill your Grandmother. He did not mean to set the dog on fire. He's just a little..." I had brothers like this... that were like, have you seen Jurassic Park, that movie?

Aud: Yeah.

EC: All right well, do you remember the raptors – the little horrible ones that chased the kids all over the place?

Aud: Yes.

EC: Well my little brothers were like that and used to follow you around all the time and steal everything. If you had a bar of chocolate and you were holding it in your hand and you put your hand like this and you were talking to someone, he would be there, biting your bar of chocolate and then you'd put it back....take it back and it would be totally gone. And that's the kind of guy they were. I remember one time, I was upstairs in my house and maybe something like this happened to you once. And I had just gotten my pocket money and this is back in the 90's...a long time ago and this was in pounds, before Euros came in. And I got like fifty pence. Now fifty pence, you could buy a Mars Bar, a packet of crisps and a tin of coke in those days. So this was like a lot of money. And I was holding it in my hand, because I knew my brothers would try and steal it from me. Maybe you've got cousins like that or brothers...I don't know. I'm walking along and one brother pops out in front of me. Now he's like Golem from Lord of the Rings, so he's like "Arrghh" and he's wearing just his underpants which I don't know why that is. But they used to always do that: they could get up in the summer and months and would be warm and we would all run out just wearing underpants, and disappear into the countryside. Then they would come back in the evening and sometimes they would be wearing different underpants and we don't know how that happened and I never wanted to ask, so anyway...and they used to dance around and they used to build a fire in the back garden and dance around the fire like little cave boys and they used to call it the underpants dance that they did. They were very weird. Anyway, one of them appears at the end of a hallway and this is a true story. And he's "Argh" wearing the underpants covered in mud and allsorts of stuff and leaves and he says "Give me the money". And I said "No...I'm not giving you this money. This is my pocket money. I worked...I had to wash the car for this and I'm keeping it to buy a mars bar and a packet of crisps". And he came at me...now you're thinking to yourself "Why didn't you just attack? He's a little guy and you're big. Why didn't you go for him?" Well the reason I didn't is because there's three of them and they would gang up on you and I knew where he was, the other two guys were somewhere around. And so I'm backing up, I'm looking around me, trying to find them. I don't see them anywhere: they're not down that room, they're not down the stairs, and I'm thinking where are...surely he's not going to try and take me on his own. But I backed up and I made a mistake. I looked this way. I looked that way. But I didn't

look up. And they were... can you believe this? They were in the attic. What kind of crazy moron waits in an attic? And they took of the hatch and they were looking down: "Hehehehe". And when I backed up away from this brother, two more jumped...they launched themselves out of the attic and landed on my head and shoulders and they hung on there. And one of them covered my eyes so I couldn't see and thither one covered my nose and mouth so I couldn't breathe-which is very dangerous. The other guy then ran around behind me and kneeled down. Did you ever do that trick where you kneel behind someone big and then someone else just pushes them and he falls over? That's what they did, so they pushed me over, they held my nose and mouth so I couldn't see...they took my money. And they ran away. And I was left, and I have to admit I'm ashamed to say this, but I started to cry. And I was very upset. I thought: "that's no mars bar, no coke and no crisps for me". And by the time I stopped crying and got up, I looked out the window and there they were, doing the underpants dance, all holding a lollipop each,. Licking away at the lollipops, as happy as Larry.

And they used to play a game actually now that I think of it. And this is the kind of guys they were, in case you're thinking "Oh they're probably cute and lovely". Let me tell you what they were like. They had a...we had a thing in Ireland called a Coolpop....I don't know what you call them over here. But it's a big, long, plastic thing just full of coloured, flavoured ice. Do you still have those? And you bite the top of them and squeeze them up, and you eat it bit by bit. And you could get those in Ireland and they were about this long! Okay? This is what my brothers did when they got one of those: the big guy would get one and he would bite the top and he would start to eat. And then the middle guy would grab the little guy and hold him on the ground. And then the other guy who had this big ball of ice and horrible stuff in his mouth, would stand over him so his head is there on the ground. And he would gargle all the ice like "Arrghll" until it got into a nice, horrible, flem-y, gooey lump. Okay? And then he would bend over the little guy who's down there going "Ah" and he would let it down in a big, long, drool-y spit towards his head. And it would go down slowly, slowly, slowly and just when you think it's going to land on his face he would snort it back up so hard it would wrap around his brain. And he would do that about twenty times. And the poor little guy can't move, he's afraid to move because if he moves he might break the string and eventually, of course, it breaks and it lands, plop, right in his eyes socket, and he's got a big, jelly, wobbly thing there and he just has to lie there. He can't move now because he doesn't want to touch it and if he moves his head it will go into his ear, so he just has to lie there and go [sobbing noise], until eventually it goes hard at which point he will take it out and possibly eat it.

Aud: [Groan]

EC: That's the way they were. So anyway I was telling you a story: So I am lying upstairs, they've taken my money and they're gone and I'm just lying there, feeling very upset, and having my little cry and I'm ashamed- but it happened. And I got up and said to myself "Right, that's it. I am telling my mother and this time they're going to be punished". Because they were never punished, they did whatever they liked. They were like three cave men who were running around the estates. So I went down to my mother and she was doing the ironing or something and I said "Mummy, I want to tell you about the boys and what they did to me". And she turned around and I said: "You're going to listen this time". So she sat down. And I told her the entire story and she turned to me and she said something I have never forgotten, she said: "Eoin. You are thirty five years old. Why don't you get an apartment?" And so I did. But I got my revenge on my brothers. I tried to hire Hitman to have them taken out but I couldn't afford that so instead I wrote everything they did, down, in story books.

And when I got the... I changed the names a little bit and I made them into goblins in the second Artemis Fowl book which is Artemis Fowl and the Arctic Incident. They are goblins and I killed them off in chapter 5: "ha ha". And it feels really good and I told them about that and they were delighted to be in a book, they were all really happy. So I remember visiting them in their house, where they lived to tell them: they all live together now. So I went into eh house, and I went into my door and they came out of their door. I sat down on my side of the table; they sat down on their side of the table. I lifted up the phone on my side of the glass....no, no, no: only for teachers that one. They're not in prison, I'm just kidding. They're not in prison. And if you're watching, I know you're not in prison, so that's fine.

But I put everything they did into a book and that is, if you're a writer, that is where you get your....do we have any young writers here who like to write stories? Just pretend for the cameras: any young writers? Oh yeah, fantastic, well done"! Well if you're writing stories and eventually maybe someday you'd like to write a book, what you have to do is look at what is going around you every day with your little brother maybe or your big sister and that is where you'll get the ideas. And even if you're little brother or your big sister is not a fairy or not a goblin, that doesn't mean that you cannot make them into fairies and goblins, in your story. And it makes the story much better to read if the characters are based on real life people.

Now when I'm writing I use my two sons. One son is thirteen, so he's a teenager, so he gets a little bit moody, so he's a great character: I can turn him into a goblin. And the other guy is seven and he's hilarious. And he is always doing...getting me into

trouble so I used him./ I remember last time...well one time he got me into trouble we were in...On holidays in France. Now, there is one thing ladies, that the father has to do, that the ladies cannot do: there's only one thing in the child rearing and that is when the little boy has to go to the public bathrooms for the first time, with his daddy. Because he doesn't want to go into he women's/ ladies, anymore. He knows that he seen the sign: He wants to go into the men's. And daddy has to bring him in. And that is a very big day for the father and the son. They're bonding together in the toilet. It's quite special. I'm getting emotional, just thinking about. But we were in France when this happened and I...maybe some of you said you had a little brother: you know all about little boys: when they need to go pee, they don't kind of plan ahead; they kind of have to go now! There's no kind of, "well maybe I'm going to need to pee in about fifteen minutes, I'll have to think ahead and be sure I'm at that point. Maybe I should not drink these three pints of orange juice before I get in the car for a two hour journey". They don't think like that at all.

But we had a system with Shaun: that's my kid. He would say pee: one pee is okay, that meant you had about ten minutes. If he said "pee pee" that was pretty bad: that meant it was coming quickly. And if he said three "pee"s that meant you just pick him up by his trousers and you throw him into a ditch, and you...and he's going to pee in the air. So if there was three pee's it was an emergency, it was the same with the poo: if it was three poo's "oh my God, get him out". So the word you did not want to hear was "pee, poo". Because that was the two coming together and that would be a total disaster and you would be banned from whatever building, you were in. So we're walking, on holiday, in a shopping centre, in France and Shaun is holding my hand and I'm going "Oh there's some croissant isn't it fantastic herein France"? And he said to me "Daddy?" I said "What"? He said "Pee, pee, pee". I said "Really...we're in a foreign country...pee, pee, pee now?" He said "Daddy...pee, pee, pee". So I picked him up and we ran. My other son was with me and we're trying to find the bathroom and I'm calling my wife "Jackie, do you know where the bathroom is?" And she says "It's on the third floor" and I said "Oh my god". So we got up to the third floor and we ran in. And inside there was this fantastic little, well the boys know what they look like: little urinal with a...and it even had a bit of Astroturf so the little boys would feel cool. So I plonked him on the Astroturf and I pulled down his little pants: I said "Okay, go!" And then suddenly, he couldn't go, because he has never seen one of these before. He doesn't know what it is. I said: "It's the toilet...just pee, pee, pee". And he said...he was thinking "Obviously this is something to do with football: there's grass here. I am not going to pee, pee, pee here!" And I said "Oh my god, I cannot even get a boy to pee. I am the worst dad ever". And then my son Finn had a fantastic idea: this was before he became a teenager and stopped talking

to me. He said: "Daddy, he likes games. Why don't you make it into a game, and then he will go?" And I said "Finn...that is a brilliant idea. Here is a Euro. Now Shaun..." And I was trying to think, what does Shaun love? Because you know the ways little boys get really into things, like they love dinosaurs or they love football or they love darts or they love wrestling or whatever? He loved volcanoes, at that time for some reason. And he used to make model volcanoes from plastecine and paint them and he loved it. So I said "Okay Shaun, do you know what a volcano is"? He said "Yeah...volcano".

"You are like a little volcano and I want you to erupt into the toilet. Let it all go, here it comes, the lava, into the toilet. Boom, into the toilet lets go. Finn turn on all the taps". And so it worked, and he said "I'm a volcano, boom!" and peed into the toilet. It was perfect and I thought "Yes. I am the kind of dad. Finn take a photo with your camera phone so your mother can see what a brilliant dad I am". And so I was delighted with myself and I said "Okay...you two stay here. I'm going into the cubical for thirty seconds, don't..." and you have to tell them really specific: "You stand on this tile and you stand on this tile and don't put your foot outside the lines!" So the two of them were standing there on the tiles and I went into the cubical and I locked the door and as soon as I got into the cubical I heard this voice saying: "You are like a little volcano. I want you to explode: boom! Let it all go! Here comes the lava". And I said "Oh my goodness" and I ran out and there's Shaun, standing behind an old French guy saying "You...come on let it go into the toilet. Daddy, take a picture with your camera phone".

Aud: [Laughs]

EC: And so we were banned from that particular shopping centre but it's little things like that, that will happen to you and you kind of don't think about them at the time: "Oh it's a little bit funny". And that's what happens: writers take these things and maybe sometimes you're out at lunch and you've got a funny friend. Everyone, there's loads of funny people here, I can tell, by looking at you that some of you are absolutely hilarious. A few of you are probably clinically insane but never mind. And I'm sure when you're going home on the bus, there's going to be a funny story or two. Or someone's going to say something really cool and funny. What happens to that thing, because that thing is magic? What happens to it? It goes up into the air and maybe you remember it for ten minutes. Maybe you remember it long enough to tell your mum when you go home. But after that, it's gone and this moment, this jewel of magic, is gone forever. So what the writer does is, he or she catches that magic and they put it in their little notebook that they carry everywhere and they have it and they keep it and then they use it in a

book ten years later and the best bit is you don't have to pay the person who thought of it. They've forgotten about it by then so you pretend that you made it up so basically you are stealing other people's lives. You're like a literature vampire: it's fantastic. I shouldn't have said that. Just cut all the "it's fantastic..."

So I get my ideas from Shaun mostly and his big thing now is wrestling. He loves wrestling. Any of you guys like wrestling? You know the American wrestling with... who are those guys: Hunter Hurst Hensley and The Grave Digger or something? Anyway he loves the wrestling and he's only a little tiny guy, I should show you a photo of him. And he dresses up in his wrestling gear which he got for Christmas and his wrestling belt and he walked around: and his wrestling gear now is his SpongeBob underpants and a vest. And a big bat. And socks. And he has a little tape recorder with the wrestling music and he walks around and he comes into the bedroom and this could be very early. And he comes in and he puts down the tape recorder and he presses the button and this wrestling/ rap music blares out and wakes you up.

And last...one Sunday he did this and I don't think that's fair because everyone knows and the ladies know that Sunday is Dad sleeping day. You're allowed...the mother gets Saturday, you get Sunday, or maybe its vise-versa. Well anyway, it was Sunday, it was my sleep in day, and I'm lying in the bed and little Shaun comes in, in his underpants, SpongeBob, his wrestling gear and says "Hey". And I said "Yes, what, what I'm asleep, what?" And he said "Can I do my finisher on you?" And I can see now some of you know what a finisher is because you're laughing. I didn't know what a finisher is. A finisher: every wrestler has a finisher. And it is their death move. It is the move they use to take you down, and knock you out. And I didn't know this at all. And I thought a finisher was maybe he was going to finish his book, or he's going to finish his little dance or he was going to finish his breakfast, whatever. I didn't care; I was trying to go to sleep. So I said "Yeah, yeah. Do your finisher Shaun. Just leave me alone". And the next thing, the music goes on and he climbs up on the bed and he starts bouncing up and down and I'm thinking "What's going on here"? I can hear the bouncing...I can feel the bouncing and then the bouncing stops and I open one eye and the bouncing has stop because he has bounced really high up in the air. Now when he's up in the air, now only little boys can do this and little girls: he has folded himself in half like this. So here's his head, here's his toes. And this sharp bit at the bottom, that's his bum! Now his bum is pointed at my eye socket like an arrowhead. Now you know little boys, they're little bones there are sharper than steel blades, and it's coming down and I'm thinking "Oh my god. Here he comes". And all I can see is SpongeBob stretched out, as it comes plummeting towards

my head and, but that's not what really scares me: what really scares me is his battle cry, which is: "Pee, pool!" So that's a true story.

Aud: [Laughs.]

EC: And so he landed totally on my head and that's another reason that I use Shaun in my books all the time. I used to use Finn a lot more but he is a teenager now and he's warned me, he said: "Daddy...every time you go away, you tell embarrassing stories about when I was young and you're not to do that anymore. Do you understand?" And I say: "Yes son". Except for this one little story that I'm going to talk about but don't tell him that I told you this story, alright, or else I will be in major trouble.

When we were kids, or when he was a very young boy we used to go on holidays. And he used to do this thing which he called "water skiing". And this would be, and he would do it with me, it was kind of a bit naughty, but it was kind of funny. And you don't mind because it's your own son and he's a little blonde guy and he's funny. He couldn't swim so what he would do was, he would put armbands, on his legs, okay? And then when I was swimming past, in the pool, he would dive in and grab my trunks, and pull them down. And then I would swim to try and get away and he would dive in and his legs would keep him up and he would be dragged along behind me and he would go: "Woo, water-ski, yeah!" And this was great fun and my wife said "you've got to stop that". I said "Why. It's good...it's funny. It's not. No one's getting hurt. It's a good laugh". And she said: "This will end badly". I said: "What could go wrong? What could possibly...how could it end badly?" But it did. And the reason it ended badly was nobody told Finn that he could only do that with me: that if it wasn't me, do not do this! And so one day, Finn goes off to the pool and has...puts his armbands on his feet as usual. He walks down to the pool and there's no sign of me and the only person there is a big, tall, German man, who was standing, not even in the pool, he was just standing with his feet in the pool, on the phone. He said "Ya, ya it's good here in Ireland. They have no money but it's good, I like them. It's raining all the time..." He's talking away and Shaun goes up behind him...now Shaun... or Finn, sorry. Finn is tiny and this guy is massive, so he walks in between his leg from behind, he's going "Ho, ho, ho", and he reaches up he whips down this guy's shorts and the man looks down and he sees this little white head "ha ha", and then he holds onto his shorts and he says "Go! Water-ski! Any time you like..." And, but the guy didn't go and so we were banned, again, from that pool. And so, Finn, I wrote a book and Finn said to me, I was going away on tour one day, actually I think I was going with the Scottish Book Trust" and, oh thank you, talk into this. I think I was...can you hear

me? Is that better or is that better? With this? Okay. So we were going away...I was going away on tour with the Scottish Book Trust about maybe, must have been ten years ago on a tour of Scotland and my son said to me "Where are you going?" I said, I'm going on tour Finn. I'm going to Scotland". He said: "That's because you love those kids, and you hate me". I said "I don't...how can you say that? I don't hate you". He said, "Well you never write books I can read...I'm only little and I can't read those Artemis Fowl Books, why don't you try a book with pictures, that I can read"? And I said "Okay. I will write a book". And so, while I was on the plane, and then the train up to Scotland, I wrote a book called The Legend of Spud Murphy. I don't know whether any of you have heard of that one, it's about a librarian....just pretend: yes! Everyone that's fantastic! Okay so, I wrote this book on the train and I sat...I've got it there, there it is actually. And I sent it in...Can you hold it up and just show everybody? And that book's... so there it is now. And inside that books, just to show I'm not lying, it says, for Finn. And we can let everybody see that. And I sent it away and it came back and they sent it in this beautiful envelope, the first copy of the book. And I remember I took it out and it smelled lovely and new and it was, I opened the book and it said inside it for Finn. I was so happy and I said, "We will bond together". And I would bring it in to him and it would be a kind of slow motion ting like in the movies and I would say "Finn my darling son...I love you. Here's a book what I wrote for you, on a train". And we would just bond together in slow motion, perhaps in a field of flowers. And I went in and I said "Look Finn...here's a book for you". And he said "Hello! I'm watching Pokémon". And so he has never even read that book, which is very depressing so I put him in all my books but he always makes sure that I make him the hero, so he's always the good guy. So remember, if you're looking for ideas for your own stories, look inside the dark parts of yourself: to the hatred and the revenge and that's where you'll find...I'm just kidding, don't do that...that's horrible. That's...that won't end well. I think that's all the time I have for my talking but we're going to ask a few questions now and I think if you have questions...I'm going to go back up to that chair and we're going to do the question time, okay?

JF: A round of applause for Eoin. Thank you very much.

Aud: [Applause]

JF: Thank you very much indeed. As you can imagine there are lots and lots of questions so we'll try to get through as many as possible apologies in advance if we can't read out yours but I'll try my best. First of all I've got a couple of questions from the young people here, and I think we're going to take the first one from a young gentleman over on this side, in the front row and we're going to give you a microphone so everyone can hear you. What's your question?

- M: How did you feel when *Artemis Fowl* became an international best seller?
- EC: Well, I felt, when *Artemis Fowl* became a bestseller, I felt absolutely fantastic, And I didn't really believe it, and I remember the moment where I realised that I was a success. I was going to London, and I went to the airport and I saw *The Guardian*, The English newspaper *The Guardian*, and over the weekend edition they have photographs of people who are in the news and there was George Clooney, you know George Clooney ladies in the back all nodding...steady. David Beckham and then me on the other side and I thought "Isn't that bad luck for David Beckham...the only two guys who are better looking than him, with grey hair, are on the paper on the same day". And I saw that picture and I thought "Wow...I'm beside David Beckham on a paper" and I felt...that's never happened again by the way but for five seconds there I felt really fantastic. I still don't believe it, in a way I treat it like there's two Eoin Colfer's. There's the Eoin Colfer who goes home every day and who's a dad and a husband and takes naps in the afternoon when he's supposed to be working. And then there's the other Eoin Colfer who goes on tour and does wonderful things like this. So for me this is like a little holiday. That's how I treat it.
- JF: Thank you very much. What's your name?
- M: Martin.
- CH: Thanks very much Martin. I'm going to pass the microphone along now to the girl here and...What's your name?
- E: Emma.
- JF: Emma, if you speak into the microphone so everyone can hear you. What's your question for Eoin.
- E: What age were you when your first book was published?
- JF: What age were you when your first book was published?
- EC: My first book was published; I think I was about thirty two, so I'd been writing for a long time. I'd been writing since...I'd been trying to get a book published since I was sixteen. So I spent a long time trying to get a book published and I didn't get anywhere. But I think the message there for any young writers who are watching on their computers or are here today is you really have to keep trying. And every book that gets rejected is not...I didn't treat it like a rejection...I treated it like I was learning. And I had to keep learning...it's like if you're a football player: You're not going to get selected for Celtic on your first day. You've got to keep training, and

training and training and eventually you'll get on the team. And it is like that with writing, you have to keep training and training and eventually you will get a book published.

JF: Great. Thank you very much for that question. Now we've got one, Eoin, that's been asked by many people, by Alex, Ian at Came School in Edinburgh, Amy and Natasha at Hilton Primary School up in Inverness in Glasgow Carlside Primary school and on and on and on. Tony, Mia and Mira, great names in Hindland Primary School in Glasgow: It's almost like two questions: out of all the books you've written, what has been your favourite and the best? I mean, maybe it's the same book? But your favourite book and the best book.

EC: I think one of my favourites is the book I mentioned earlier on: The Legend of Spud Murphy because it's very...a lot of it's true and happened in my own childhood and it was a way of telling m kids about my growing up, but in an interesting way and also that there's little pictures of me when I was a boy in the book, which I really like. I think the best book I wrote or my favourite one is a book called Air man which is a kind of a superhero, Victorian book about a boy who invents a plane twenty years before the Wright Brothers and he uses it to smuggle diamonds out of a prison. So it's kind of unusual, but I love...when I was a kid I loved books like The Three Musketeers, Robin Hood...Have you heard of Robin Hood? Or Ivan Hoe. All these books with plenty of sword fights and giants and a little bit of magic, I loved those. So I wanted to write one myself and Air Man became that book.

JF: Great. We've got another one here from Fife from Cara in Falkland primary School in Couperin, Fife. Hi Cara, hope you're watching. And she says, this is an interesting one Eoin: "Have you ever had doubts about your books and have you ever thought about giving up?"

EC: That sounds like a question from young writer. I do have doubts all the time. I always think "Oh no one's going to like this story" or "This story is stupid" and by the time you have finished it, you have read it so many times, maybe a hundred times, that you don't know what excited you about it in the first place. When you start the book you're really excited- "Oh this is a great idea, I've got to get going on this straight away". But then when you've finished it your not sure if it's good anymore. A good way to avoid that is to have a very comprehensive plan of your book before you start so then you can stick to that plan. Often if you don't have a plan then about halfway through, you lose your focus. You forget where you were going to go and you have another idea for another book that's way better- why don't you just do that book? So you need to make a plan and try to stick to it. And if you're a young writer don't try and write a book on your first go. You need to

write a short story first that's one page long and then another one that's two pages and then eventually, bit by bit, work up to a big huge story, but don't throw away any of those stories because you will use them when you get older. I've got like five books out of me growing up and I wish I had kept my notes and my stories because I could get five more, so don't ever throw away your stories: keep them!

JF: Great. Thank you very much. This question has come from Tommy in Tobermory Primary School in the beautiful Isle of Mull, Alan in Lossymouth High School, Liam in Came School, Mutthill Primary School in Crief and Dunning Primary Schools all over the country, wanting to know a bit about Artemis Fowl: You've given us an indication as to where some of the ideas have come from, from your childhood, but the name Artemis Fowl, where did that come from?

EC: Well the name Artemis Fowl is quite unusual. The "Fowl" is easy enough because it sounds like F O U L, which means nasty. And in Ireland we have the name Fowl, the most common form of it is Fowler as seen in Eastenders, from many, many years. Artemis is a Greek name, and it is after the goddess of the hunt and it is given boys who are really good at hunting. So what it means is the nasty hunter. And he was very nasty in the first book and he was hunting the fairies. He gets a lot nice but in the first book...the first half of the first book he's not really a very nice guy: he's a nasty hunter. So that...That's where that name came from.

JF: Great. Thank you. This comes from Lab School, and the question is: "I've been waiting for Artemis Fowl the movie for years. When will it be finished?"

EC: I've been waiting for it for years. It's...we haven't even started it yet. We...I'm working on a script with an Irish director called Jim Shardon, who did a movie called My Left Foot and In the Name of the Father. So we're working on that. So hopefully he wants to start filming later this year but we've been saying that for years now, so I don't know but, but before I die, that's my main goal.

JF: That would be good.

EC: That would be nice. So I could go and see it.

JF: Yeah, you could go to the Oscars too. Now this is interesting. Who was your favourite author when you were young and why? I mean you mentioned some of the classics earlier but was there a top favourite?

CH: I really loved all the classics and I they're classics for a reason because they're fantastic. If I have to pick one book, I would pick Stig of the Dump. Anyone read Stig of the Dump? Oh we've got a good few hands. It's a classic by Clive King

and if you haven't read it, let it's in your school library and you could probably get it when you go home. And it's a great story for boys and girls because there's a male and female/ brother and sister and there's magic, adventure, bullying, escape from bullies, it's very, very funny. So I would highly recommend that.

JF: Okay, in twenty seconds, so a very quick answer, if you were able to collaborate with any other author, past or present, who would it be?

EC: Oh, I would say Robert Louis Stevenson, because he writes, or he did write brilliant adventure stories and that's what I love the most. So if I could collaborate with him I think I would be very, very happy.

JF: Fantastic. And that question came from Kingsbury Green Primary, strange enough, in Kingsbury, in London, so thank you very much for that, if you're watching. People are watching all over the country. My goodness we didn't have much time there but we whizzed through as many of the questions as possible. Eoin, thank you very much. That's all we have time for today but let me just tell you before we go, as today is the first anniversary of the Meet the Authors Programme, Scottish Book Trust, we'd just like to tell you about some of the events coming up in the next year. It's going to be another biggie. Pictures book author and illustrator James Mayhugh who wrote the Katie and Ellebella books will be drawing and tell stories, that's on the 12th of May. Award winning author Andy Stanton, author of the hugely successful Mr Gum series of books will make everyone laugh on the 16th of June. I hope you're making a note in your diaries. Multi Award Winning author David Almond will talk about create writing and will read from his new book, that's on the 19th of September. And the hilariously funny author of the murderous maths books, Jartin Posket will entertain you with maths, yes Eoin, Maths: entertaining. That's on the 1st of December. A wee Christmas treat for you there. Finally, don't forget you can watch this event as well as all the previous ones on BBC Scotland learning and the Scottish Book Trust websites. Do keep an eye out on the Scottish Book Trust website, further details and keep updates on what's happening. So wherever you are watching, thank you so much for joining us today, I really hope you enjoyed it. From all the beautifully dressed, talented and very intelligent and gorgeous looking children here with us, thank you very much for coming along and let's hear a huge round of applause from you here for the wonderful Eoin Colfer. Thank you.

Aud: [Applause]