

Date: 17th May 2017
Author/Interview subject: Alex T Smith (AS)
Interviewed by: Paul Kane (PK)
Other speakers:

PK: [Music playing]. Hello everybody, welcome to Authors Live. Thank you for joining us. Now, my name is Paul Kane. Now, this week is Bookbug Week here in Scotland, which means that young readers and families all across the country are celebrating a love of songs, of rhymes, and picture books. Now, with me in the studio this morning we have pupils from three primary schools. We have Carlibar Primary School here today from East Renfrewshire – yeah, big round of applause, that’s good – [applause] – we have Uplawmoor School from East Renfrewshire here as well, big round of applause – [applause] – and we have St Joseph’s from West Dunbartonshire [applause]. Give them all a wave, everyone, let’s wave. That’s brilliant, can you see, can you see they’re all very excited? Well, they’re all very excited because we have author and illustrator Alex T Smith with us here today. Well, I’m pretty excited. You know about Alex, don’t you? Course you do, yes you do. Alex is the award-winning author and illustrator of the Claude books. We’ve all read the Claude books, haven’t we? Of course we have, they’re fantastic, full of excitement, full of adventure, and full of the giggles as well, which is exactly what this year’s Bookbug Week is all about. Well, Alex is going to be telling us all about his stories and – wait for it, this is the exciting bit – he’s going to be showing us how to draw his favourite character. Woooo. Well, I’m pretty excited anyway. So I hope everyone’s got some paper and pencil handy, have some paper and pencil, everyone here’s got some papers and some pencil, I’ll give you a few minutes if you don’t have any, that’s it, because we would love to see your pictures. So if you have a class Twitter account, you can share your photos at #bbcauthorlive, so we look forward to seeing some of them later on. Well, will we get started, everyone? Of course we are, I’m excited, you’re excited, that’s why we’re here, so come on, let’s make some noise, a huge round of applause for Alex T Smith. [Applause].

AS: Aw, thank you so much...

PK: Thank you, Alex...

AS: ...thank you.

PK: ...thank you.

AS: Gosh, this is exciting, isn't it, hello to everyone here and everyone turning in. So, yes, we're going to be talking about books and I'm going to be talking about my character, Claude, who's the star of quite a few books that I've written, and I'm going to try and squeeze an awful lot into the time that I've got with you because we haven't got a huge amount of time, but I'm going to try and squeeze a lot into that. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to talk to you a bit about my books and how I became an author and an illustrator, I'm going to read you a bit of one of the Claude books, this one here, which is Claude Going for Gold. Now, this one might have a theme to it that you might guess with all the things that we've got round us, lots of sports equipment, so you'll find out about that. And then I think it will probably be time for you to do some work, and by that I mean I'm going to teach you how to draw Claude, so we'll all be illustrators in training, that's the plan, okay. So that's what we're going to do, so shall we get started?

So yes, I'm Alex and I'm an author and an illustrator which means I write the stories and I draw the pictures for them as well. And I've been an author and an illustrator now for 11 years, and these are some of the books that I've worked on in that time, so I've written lots of Claude books, I've written lots of picture books and drawn all the pictures for them as well, I've also worked with lots of other authors including Eva Ibbotson, and I got to illustrate one of my favourite books which you might have heard of called 101 Dalmatians, and that was a really cool book to illustrate because it's full of little puppies and I love dogs, as you'll find out later. So these are some of the books that I've worked on.

But I wasn't always an author and an illustrator, once I looked like that, that's me from last week, do you think? No, it's a bit longer ago than that, so that's me when I'm about two years old, and can you see what I'm doing, I'm already covered in paint, aren't I, I'm already painting, and very, very busy creating a picture. And that's because that's all I did as a child, I was obsessed with drawing and reading and writing stories, but I loved more than anything making pictures, and in fact, my first ever memory is of drawing a picture, and I remember sitting at that table which is my kitchen table when I was little, sitting on my mum's lap and drawing a picture, shall I draw it for you now? You'll be so impressed by it, you'll be really, really impressed. So my first ever picture looked like this. What do you think of that? It's not the sun, do you know what that is? It's a teddy bear. It doesn't look like a teddy bear though, does it? No, but the thing is I can remember having that pencil in my hand and drawing that great big tummy, my teddy bear's tummy, drawing its arms and its legs, and it was as if

something magical happened, like someone waved a magic wand, because from that moment I just drew all the time, and just to prove that I did, I'll show you some pictures that I drew when I was little. So here's a picture that I drew when I was four, it's of the Little Mermaid, and I absolutely loved that movie, and there were lots of mermaid things going on when I was little, so I drew that picture for a friend of mine, but I liked it so much I kept it and I still have that in my studio at home up on the wall. And then I also used to keep a sketchbook as well, so I always have a little book with me, I've got one in my bag for later, and I draw all the time, but I used to do that when I was little, so my mum and dad used to keep books with them, so my mum had a book in her handbag and my dad had one in his pocket usually and my grandparents had them, so that any moment where I wasn't doing anything, so say if I was sitting in a waiting room or if I was on a train or something, I just drew all the time. So this is from my sketchbook when I was five. I used to draw things from my imagination, but I also used to copy things as well out of books to sort of learn how to draw things. This is a picture of a field mouse that I remember copying from a book, and it's in its little nest. And then I used to just draw things that were in front of me as well, so if I ever got bored or if I didn't know what to draw, I just drew things that I could see, so that's a really good tip if you think you might want to be an illustrator, is to just draw all the things around you, so that's why I drew things that were on my desk like my pencil, my scissors and my ruler. And sometimes I just used to draw things that I'd find, like this brick. It's not a very exciting picture, but I can remember drawing that as well and colouring it all in. So I just drew all the time.

But I didn't really know what I wanted to do when I grew up. I thought I might like to do something with drawing but then I also wanted to be a spaceman. I also thought I might want to be a chef because I liked cooking and baking things with my grandma. But I also wanted to be a rabbit because I thought you could do that as a job, but unfortunately you can't do that, but I still didn't know what I wanted to do. But I thought, I do like books, and maybe there was something in there that I could do.

Now, this is me when I'm a bit older, and the man I'm with is my grandad, Sid. Now, he was quite unusual and very interesting and very funny person, and he really inspired me to be an author and an illustrator. So before I was born, my grandad was a teacher, like your teachers here and the ones in your classrooms, but he also had been a librarian, and he also used to write things as well, so he used to write articles for newspapers and magazines, he used to write stories, and he used to write plays for the radio, so he used to write all the time. And then I was born and I used to go and play at his house nearly every day and he'd take me to nursery and pick me up, and on the way back we'd go to the park or

we'd go on adventures with my grandma. But then I started school, and when I was in P1 my grandad didn't know what to do, suddenly I was always there in the day and now suddenly I wasn't, I was at school. And I don't think my grandma wanted to go to the park every day with him, so he had to think of something to do to entertain himself, so we came up with a plan, and the plan was that I would leave my pet dog at home and at this time of the day, in the morning, my grandad would go and fetch her and take her back to his house to play with his dogs, and that would give him something to do, so that's what we did. So on the first day we did that I left my teddy bear on the sofa so my grandad could see it when he came in and remember me, and I went to school. When I came back from school, there was something magical in my teddy bear's paws, there was a sheet of paper and it had my name on it, so I knew it was for me. And when I opened it up, it was a story that my grandad had written for me about all the adventures that my toys had gone on that day, they came to life and they had adventures, so this is years before any films that you might have seen about toys going on adventures, but this is what happened, so I thought, this was really cool. I remember writing a thank you card, putting it in my teddy bear's paws, going off to school the next day, but then when I came back that day, there was another note in my teddy bear's paws, and when I opened it, it was a completely different story that my grandad had written about what my toys had got up to that day, they'd had a new adventure. My grandad just didn't do that once or twice, he did that every school day for about four or five years, so I got a great big pile of these stories that my grandad wrote for me about what my toys got up to. Sometimes they'd have adventures with my pets as well, but quite often they'd just have adventures themselves.

Now, when I got a bit older, I didn't find one story in my teddy bear's paws, I found a book, and I didn't bring the book with me today because it's very old now and it's falling apart, and it was an old diary that my grandad had bought and not used, and instead of throwing it away he thought, I'll recycle it, and he wrote 20 of my favourite stories of all the ones that he'd written out in his best handwriting into the book, and no one else in the world has this book, just me, it's just for me, and it was amazing when I'd got this book, and he'd also sneaked out of my house my toys and he'd taken photographs of them to make illustrations to go with the stories. And it was when I got this book and I read it I thought, this is what I want to do when I grow up, I want to be an author and an illustrator, I want to write stories for children and I want to put pictures with them, because I like drawing all the time, that's what I'm going to do, I'm going to draw the pictures.

So that really is how and why I became an author and an illustrator, it was my grandad giving me some inspiration. And now of course I'm older and I can draw

pictures of my grandad, and he does pop up in quite a lot of my books, and this is a picture of me and my grandad when I was little, and what's what we used to do all the time, and it's got the name of one of my very favourite books in it called The Tiger Who Came to Tea, and I love that book because I like the bit at the end where they go out for dinner in a café and the little girl has to go out in her pyjamas, and I thought that was so exciting to go out for dinner in your pyjamas, and even now as a grown-up, that's what I really want to do, I want to go out for dinner one night in my pyjamas.

Now, talking about pyjamas, that is a good thing about being an author and illustrator, you get to work from home, so sometimes you get to go to work in your pyjamas, and the other good thing is that your pets get to go with you as well. So I have got – would you like to know how many pets I've got? I've got 12 pets, that's a lot, isn't it? I have got one tortoise, I've got two gerbils, I've got four very little, very naughty little dogs, and five chickens who live in the garden, so I've got lots and lots of pets, and shall I quickly draw you one of my dogs, would you like to see them? So she's very, very tiny, in fact if you want to know how tiny she is, if you make a fist like this and look at it, that's how big her head is, and if you do that, that's how big her ears are, and her paws are only about as big as the tip of your thumb, they're very small, so she leaves little tiny footprints if she's walked through the mud, and this is what she looks like. She's got a little head, like this, and big eyes, like that, and she's very pretty so we'll give her some eyelashes. She's got a tiny little pink nose and great big ears like this because she's a Chihuahua and she likes to listen for the biscuit tin that might be opening in the kitchen so that she can run along and wait. And she's got a little collar, except at the moment she doesn't because one of my other dogs is a puppy and it's eaten this collar, so she doesn't have one at the moment. And then sometimes when it's very, very cold, she has to wear jumpers and they're always a bit too big for her. She's got tiny little paws there, tiny little toes, tiny little tummy, tiny tail, and a tiny bottom as well, and she's got quite a silly name, her name is Coco P Smith. Yeah, because I'm Alex T Smith, but I'm not going to tell you what the T stands for, I'm not going to tell you what the P stands for either, but she's very, very tiny and she sometimes comes on adventures with me to talk to children, but she's at home today looking after the chickens. So I've got lots of dogs and I really love dogs, which is why I decided to write some books about a dog, so this is Claude, most of you will know Claude, and if you don't, don't worry, because I'm going to read you a little bit of Claude's latest adventure which is called Claude Going for Gold, and then it'll be time for us to do some drawing ourselves, okay, is that a good plan?

Aud: Yes.

AS: Okay, so let's get started. So, Claude Going for Gold.

'Claude is a dog, Claude is a small dog, Claude is a small, plump dog who wears a lovely red jumper and a very fetching beret,' and that's his hat on top of his head, you can just see it there. 'He lives at 112 Waggy Avenue with Mr and Mrs Shinyshoes and his best friend, Sir Bobblysock.' Now, your best friend might be the person sitting next to you or it might be someone at home or it might be someone who goes to a different school, it might be an animal. But Sir Bobblysock sounds quite unusual, Claude's best friend is quite unusual because he's a sock. This is Sir Bobblysock there. 'Every day, after Mr and Mrs Shinyshoes cried, "Toodle-pip, Claude," and left for work, Claude and Sir Bobblysock go on an adventure. Where will they go today? It was a Tuesday and for once Sir Bobblysock couldn't wait to get out of the house. Claude, you see, had woken up with ants in his pants. Not real ones of course, that had been yesterday's excitement. Today he simply couldn't sit still.' Now, you're all doing a really good job at sitting still, and I bet you are in your classrooms as well, but do you ever get one of those days when you're all wiggly and jiggy and you can't sit still and you don't know what to do? Well, this is what Claude's like. 'He ate his breakfast with his bottom wagging about, he brushed his teeth hopping on one leg, and putting his beret on took approximately 45 minutes because he had to pretend that it was first a pancake and then a flying saucer whizzing through space, a flying saucer that knocked over two packets of cereal and an entire jug of milk. Eventually however, the two chums made it out of the front door. Claude took a big sniff,' can you all take a big sniff here? [Sniffing sound]. Can you all do that in your classrooms? [Sniffing sound]. "Today smelt of adventure," he said in his outdoor voice, because he was outdoors. "Let's go and find something to do." Sir Bobblysock was more interested in finding a frothy coffee and somewhere to park himself for a quiet moment, but he nodded his head in agreement and the two friends bustled along Waggy Avenue. Claude looked everywhere for an adventure. Mr Lovelybuns' – who's a baker who owns Claude's favourite café – 'was installing a lovely big cream horn in his front window' – there it is there – 'but that didn't get Claude's eyebrows wagging this morning, his tummy was still full from breakfast. Belinda Hintova-Tint' – who's the hairdresser – 'had an appointment book full of curly perms to be done today, but that didn't get Claude's bottom wagging either. Besides, Claude had helped her last week and Sir Bobblysock was still recovering. At Miss Melon's fruit and veg shop, there was usually a funny-shaped cucumber or some plums that needed juggling. But today, there was nothing but' – uh-oh – 'except a banana skin on the floor.' Now, do you all know how dangerous banana skins are on the floor? You can slip over, which – oh my goodness – 'Claude wandered back outside feeling deflated like a weak old balloon. "There isn't adventure to be

found anywhere,” he said to Sir Bobblysock, and then immediately tripped up’ – I think over that banana skin – ‘over his shoelaces and shot like a cannonball down the street.’ [Gasps]. Uh-oh.

‘Eventually, Claude came to a stop by walloping into a marching band who were right at that very moment oom-pah-pahing around the corner with quite a crowd behind them. Sir Bobblysock had ever such a job to keep up with him, it wasn’t easy to clatter downhill, and almost impossible whilst holding a large frothy coffee and a handful of biscuits at the same time.’ Uh-oh. ‘Crash, bang, twang, jangle’ – look at all those people with their legs sticking out, they’ve fallen over. ‘When Claude managed to sit up, his head was spinning’ – can you all make spinning...like you’re really dizzy – ‘Everyone was looking at him, so Claude looked back at them. What a strange group they were.’ Let’s see this strange group. ‘In amongst the band and the crowd of spectators waving little flags were a lot of very healthy looking people, but they appeared to be wearing just their vests and some very snazzy, stretchy knickers.’ [Gasps]. ‘Sir Bobblysock whipped on his specs to get a better look.’ So shall we see what these people are doing, so here’s some of the people that Claude’s met, so here’s a lady and she’s got a basketball under her arm, do you think she’s going to go and play basketball? I think she might be. And what about this chap here, he’s got his goggles on, he’s got his swimming trunks pulled up right high and he’s got his rubber ring, we think he might be going swimming?

Aud: Yes.

AS: And what about this guy in the middle with the huge muscles who’s modelled after me, what do you think?

Aud: [Shouting].

AS: I think he might be going weightlifting because he’s got big strong arms there. And this lady, she’s got a sweatband on and she looks like she’s going to go...

Aud: [Shouting].

AS: ...running, I think she might go running. And what about this guy here, he’s got his helmet on.

Aud: [Shouting].

AS: Biking maybe do you think, or do you think he – yeah...

Aud: [Shouting].

AS: Well, it's something sporty but I think he's got his helmet on which you do need when you're building a house, but I think because he might be going on a bike, or he might be going on his roller skates or he might be doing both, we don't know.

'Claude was about to ask what was going on when a terribly hearty woman in a leotard bounded over.' And there she is. "Goodness," she cried, "I've never seen anyone move so fast." Claude smoothed down his ears. "My name is Ivana," she said, and she went on to explain exactly what was happening. Today was the day of the Stonking Big Sports Day' – so you might be having a Sports Day at school soon – 'where teams of people from all over the place were getting together to have a go at lots of sports. There would be medals for all the winners and a gigantic trophy too,' so we've got some trophies here, we've got lots of them behind us, and that is all of the story that I'm going to tell you.

But what I can tell you about the book, the story continues, and it might not just be those people who are doing lots of sports that are after getting the trophy, I think some people might try to steal these trophies, and I think it might be up to Claude to catch them out at their plan and see if we can save the day. But to find out, you'll have to read the book, and I'll tell you about these books in a minute. But first, I think we should have a go at being illustrators, do you? So this is the time where you need to get your clipboards and your pieces of paper and your pencils, and the grown-ups too, if you've got some. And all the people in the classrooms at home, if you've got your paper and your pencils ready, this is where you need it.

So, the first thing you need to know is you need to have your piece of paper – I'm going to get a clean sheet – this way, tall-ways, so that's portrait, and that's what we're going to do. Now, I'm going to do this picture step by step, so don't worry, we're going to do it in little bits, and I might give you some secret illustrator's tips as well as we go along. So we're going to start by drawing Claude's head, now his head is really easy, it's just a hill that's fallen over onto its side, like this. So can everybody draw that for me? And then the next bit we're going to do is his nose, which is I so easy, I think probably even your teachers and your grown-ups will be able to do this, it's just a big circle at the end of his nose like that that overlaps there. And then we want to make sure that that looks nice and shiny, so the best way to do that is to leave a little bit of it white, so if you can draw a little circle inside the big circle and then quickly, as neatly as possible colour in that big circle black, leaving that little bit white, that little circle white, and that will make it just look like a nice, shiny dog nose there, like that. Okay. So next we're going to draw his whiskers, now cats have big, long whiskers, don't they, but

dogs have little short ones, so we're just going to do one, two, three little dots like that, okay?

Now, we're going to draw Claude's ear which is just like a great big raindrop, like this, so can everybody do that for me? Now, I'm going to give you a top secret illustrator's tip, I bet some of the grown-ups here and some of the grown-ups at home and some of the grown-ups in your classrooms have said to you, don't scribble. Do they say that to you sometimes, stay within the lines? Well, that's true because scribbling can be a bit scruffy, but sometimes I think scribbling can be useful, but you have to do something called special illustrator scribbling, which means you don't go bonkers and you stay between the lines but you do some scribbling like this. Now, the reason we're going to colour in Claude's ear in a scribbly fashion like this is because we want it to look nice and hairy because he's a dog, so can everybody do that, do some special illustrator scribbling. Now, you can use that in other pictures, so if you wanted to draw a picture later in the year of Father Christmas with his big beard, you could do some special illustrator scribbling there. And I just went outside of the line there, so even illustrators do that sometimes.

Now, next we're going to draw Claude's collar, which is like half a rectangle because half of it is hidden behind his ear, and we're going to decorate that with some nice spots like this, because he's got a nice spotty collar. And you can do as many as you like there, like that. Now, the next thing we need to do is we need to draw Claude's collar, he has a little collar with his nametag on it, so what you need to do is you need to leave a little gap like this, and then underneath you draw a circle, so leave a gap and draw a circle for me, and then we're going to join that up with a little line like that, okay.

Now, we're going to draw Claude with one arm behind his back and one arm waving to you, and although this might look a bit complicated, it's not, we're going to do it in little stages so don't worry. So the first thing I want you to do is I want you to draw two little lines, like this, one from his collar and one from his ear, they're his shoulders. And then we're going to leave a little gap – and everyone needs to watch this – and we're going to leave a gap and go down and across and then almost but not quite all the way up to that side, like that, because we need to leave room for his arms. Now, when I put my arm behind my back, can you see that great big pointy elbow there, well I think elbows get in the way sometimes, and illustrators don't have to draw things very realistically, so we're going to pretend that elbows don't exist and we're going to draw a nice curved shape like this, like a big capital C, a big curly-cuh like that, and then we're going to draw a little one inside like that. So even though he doesn't have a pointy

elbow, we still know that's his arm. Now, to draw his other arm which is going to be waving at us, we have to stop being illustrators for a moment and we have to pretend that our pencils or our pens are magic wands, because just briefly we're going to magic this dog and turn him into a teapot, because the way to draw his other arm is to draw the spout of a teapot like that, so can you all be wizards and magic that for me? And then we go back to being illustrators and we're going to draw his hand.

Now, hands are quite difficult to draw, but I've come up with a really easy way of doing it, so to draw a thumb, you don't worry about drawing a thumb, you just draw a hook like Captain Hook has, like this, okay. Now, to draw the fingers, you need to think, and when you think you do this sometimes, you go, mmm, which is like the capital muh, isn't it, and that's really useful because a muh looks like this and it also can look like fingers, so we've thought about it and we're going to draw two fingers like that, but really it's just a letter muh. And we draw another M or a muh next to it like that, and that's our nice, easy way of drawing a hand, and we just put that together like that. So now we need to draw Claude's tummy, so his tummy is a round shape like that, and then we have to draw his [whispers] bottom, like that. And then we need to draw Claude's legs – now, real dog's legs are really funny if you look at them because they've got knees pointing in all sorts of weird directions, but we're not going to worry about that, we're just going to draw the number 11, like that, and that's one leg drawn, and we're going to draw another number 11 over there, and we're just going to join it all together with a little line in between there like that. So then we're going to draw his shoes, and his shoes are like two little squashed circles or little ovals like this, and we're going to quickly colour them in as neatly as we can. And as you saw in that little bit of the book that I read to you, Claude tripped over his shoelaces, so we need to really make sure that his shoelaces are done up. So we're going to draw some bows on the top, and the easiest way to draw a bow – which is another secret illustrator's tip – is just to draw a love heart on top of the shoes like that. Now, from his feet we're going to go all the way up here to his head and we're going to draw his special hat which is called a beret. So his beret is just a big floppy sausage on top of his head like that, so can you draw a floppy sausage on his head like he's balancing it, and we don't want it to blow away in the wind so we're going to put a little stick there to hold it in place.

Now, we're going to draw his face now, now we want Claude to be looking straight out at us, but we don't want him to look like a zombie which is what could happen, so I'm going to give you a very special illustrator's tip. So the first thing I want you to do is I want you to draw two big circles like this, but don't draw the dots in the middle just yet because I'm going to give you a really good tip. So

you've drawn two big circles – now, if we were going to put the pupils or the little black dots right in the middle of those circles, he'd look like a zombie, he'd look like he was staring at us and we don't want that, we want him to look really nice and friendly, don't we? So the tip is in this eye, the one nearest his nose, I do want you to draw a black circle right in the middle, just in that eye there, okay. But in this eye we're going to draw it slightly over to that direction, like that. Do you see how it's not quite in the middle, it's slightly over that way, and that makes him look nice and friendly. And what will make him look even more friendly is the big smile, [gasps] but uh-oh, we've not left room for his eyebrows, have we, but it's okay, because we're illustrators we don't have to draw things realistically, we can say he's so surprised – [gasps] – his eyebrows have flown right up off the top of his head and they're floating in mid-air. And you need to watch your teachers and your grown-ups, because when they see your pictures, I bet their eyebrows will do that, be so surprised at how good your pictures are.

Now, I've got one last thing to do with Claude and I guarantee it's the one thing that you'll remember from everything else I've told you today, and that is how to draw his tail, so if you forget everything else, you'll remember this because his tail has to look like he's got half a banana stuck to his bum. So can everybody draw half a banana stuck to Claude's bum, like that, and we're going to draw a little line down the middle, and then we're going to colour it in again like that, as best we can, as quickly as we can, just that bit there.

Now, we've drawn Claude – shall we draw Sir Bobblysock? Because he does go everywhere with Claude – okay. So we're going to do this all in one go, we're going to find a starting point and we're going to go down and around and up and across like that, and we're going to draw three little lines at the top for the elastic, that keeps him standing upright, and then we're going to draw a little circle there and a little circle there, and then we're going to draw some lines across, so to remember that when we've got our nice red pencil crayons, we can colour him in in a stripy fashion.

Now, we've got two jobs left to do. One is we need to make sure that Claude looks like he's standing somewhere, because at the moment he could be floating in mid-air, so we want to draw him standing on the ground. Now, the best way to do that is to draw his shadow, but shadows are really hard to draw and it's a bit boring to draw them properly as well, so this is a nice, easy way. So do you remember that special illustrator scribbling that we did before? Well, we're going to do a little bit more of that underneath here, so we're going to do a little scribble under his feet like this and a little bit there, and that is how you make him look like he's standing on the ground, without having to draw a really complicated

shadow. And then the very last job that we need to do is what all artists do when they've created a masterpiece like we have, is they sign their names to it, so I'm going to write my name on the bottom and I want you to write your name on the bottom of yours as well, I'm going to write mine in there like that. Okay. Now then I want you to look at your pictures and I want you to show them to me as well, and these are brilliant, these are so good, excellent work everybody. I actually don't know which picture I've drawn and which picture you've drawn now because they all look exactly the same. This is brilliant, well done everybody, so pop your pieces of paper down and give yourselves a clap [applause] like that, well done, everyone giving themselves a clap in the classrooms as well.

Now, just before I go, because I haven't got much time left with you, I've got a couple more minutes, I'm going to tell you about some more Claude books. So if you want to find out what happened at the end of the story that I started to read you before, this is the book, it's called Claude Going for Gold, and it's got all of that story about the trophies and the medals and the gold cups and the robbers, so look out for that. Then coming in the next couple of months we've got Claude's first picture book adventure called Claude All at Sea, when he has to run a bath for himself because he's covered in paint, but he accidentally floods not only the bathroom but the entire house and ends up floating out to sea in his bathtub and gets swallowed by a sea monster and he has to work out how to get out of the sea monster's tummy and it involves burping, it's a bit naughty. And then this book later in the year is called Santa Claude which is all set at Christmas and it's Christmas Eve and Claude is all alone in the house and he's reading a book about cops and robbers when he hears a noise and he immediately thinks that the noise he hears, which sounds like someone coming down the chimney, is a burglar. So without turning the lights on he runs into the room and he puts some handcuffs on the burglar, only to turn the lights on to find that it's Father Christmas, so Father Christmas is handcuffed to an armchair in Claude's house and Claude can't find the key, and it's Christmas Eve and there's lots of presents to be found and delivered and it's up to Claude and Sir Bobblysock to do that, so that's another book for you to read.

And then some very exciting news is so far you've been able to read I think it's about ten Claude stories and read them in books, but from next year you'll also be able to watch Claude on TV because there's going to be a Claude TV show as well, and it's going to have 50 brand new stories, 50 episodes, and I've written some of them as well, I've worked with a really great team, and it's going to be brilliant, I think you'll really, really enjoy it, it's very funny and you get to see Claude move for the first time, he's got a very funny little run. And then very exciting, now you're some of the first children ever to find out about this, I've got

a new series of books starting in September, and here's a sneak peak, and it's called Mr Penguin, Adventurer and Penguin because he is both an adventurer and a penguin, and with his sidekick called Colin who's a spider who doesn't really speak but does kung fu, they go on adventures. And the first adventure is called The Lost Treasure, and they get called to a museum and they're asked to find some lost treasure, but not everybody and not everything is quite as it seems, and soon everything turns a bit dangerous and there's jewel thieves after Mr Penguin and Colin and they have to find the treasure and escape from these thieves who are after them as well. So that's the first book in the series, so I hope you remember that, and I hope you enjoy that.

And I think that's probably about all the time I've got left with you today, so I just want to say huge thank you to everybody here and to everybody who's in their classrooms who've joined in as well, I hope you enjoyed that, I think these pictures are brilliant. Now, what you need to do is you need to test the grown-ups that you know, like your teachers, and see who can remember how to draw Claude the best and see if you can have a competition – I think probably you will, but you might be surprised by your teachers as well. So thank you very, very much, and I'll just hand over to Paul.

PK: Sadly, you're right, Alex, we have, we've run out of time for today, wasn't that fantastic, everyone?

Aud: Yes.

PK: It was, it was brilliant, I've learned so much myself, that was amazing, thank you again, Alex.

AS: Thank you.

PK: Thank you for sharing your fantastic stories and for helping us bring our very own Claude to life. Wasn't that amazing? Come on, I think a big round of applause for Alex. [Applause].

AS: Thank you. [Music playing].