



Emma Chichester Clark Windows into Illustration

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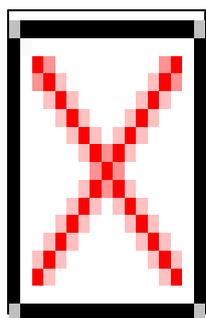
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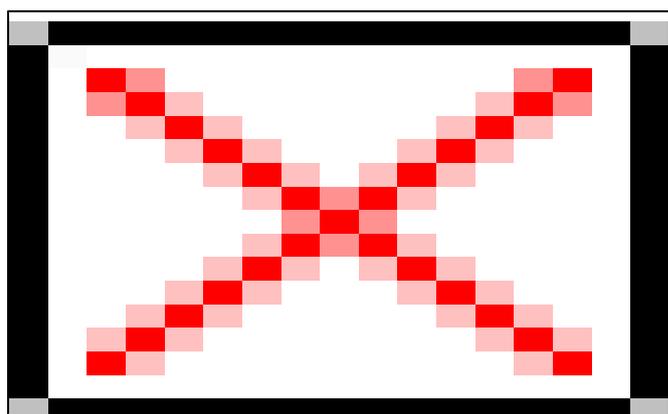
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Emma Chichester Clark on how she went about illustrating
?Wagtail Town?.

Emma Chichester Clark studied at the Chelsea School of Art and the Royal College where she was taught by Quentin Blake. Her first book, **Listen to This!** won the 1988 Mother Goose Award for best newcomer to children's book illustration. Since then, **Not Last Night But the Night Before** and **Alice in Wonderland** have been nominated for the CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal and **I Love you Blue Kangaroo** was shortlisted. Here Emma Chichester Clark explains the genesis of her new picture book series ?Wagtail Town? and explains how she created the artwork.

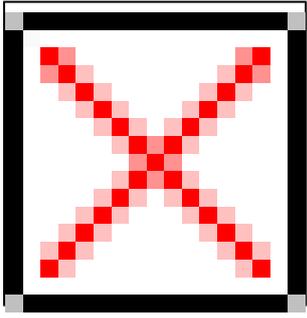


About two and a half years ago I got a puppy called Plum and fell completely in love. From then on, my world became wholly doggy, so it was pure serendipity when my publisher suggested that I make a series of picture books about a community of canines. Of course I began to draw Plum, who is a Woosell ? part Jack Russell, part whippet and part poodle. But there was a problem. Because of her (perfect) scruffiness ? she looked too much like another canine character (Lynley Dodd's Hairy Maclary), so I had to think again. I tried out various different little dogs and settled on a small yellow cockerpoo as my main character. Then I gave her a group of friends ? three different kinds of terriers, a dachshund and a French poodle with whom she would have adventures in the world of Wagtail Town. But the more I drew these creatures, the more my little yellow dog would retire into the background while the French poodle leapt into the limelight. I spent weeks trying to put the poodle back in her place but she was determined to be the main character, so now, along with her best friend, Alfie, Lulu is the star of Wagtail Town.



Having established these characters, I began to invent the rest of this doggy world. Dogs of different breeds, nationalities and professions live here, nestled between the sea and rolling

hills, with every essential amenity at their disposal, from the New Tricks School and the Old Bones Museum to the grooming parlour ? Shampoooles ? and the Bonetingler cinema, where my Plum is the usherette. I drew a map before I began to think about stories, so that I'd know where everything was. The buildings are shaped something like a cross between a cupcake and the wooden building blocks I had as a child.



Once I knew the characters and the place, I started working on the first story. At this stage I used pencil and layout paper, drawing thumbnails and writing at the same time. I do it like this because if I were to do the writing separately it could turn into a novel! Similarly, if I do the drawing separately, I get bogged down in detail ? so working on text and pictures together in a very minimal and rapid way keeps them equally spare. Hopefully, they are both telling the story and keeping it moving along without unnecessary words.

I then enlarge the thumbnails and redraw them on a lightbox so that I have a full set of roughs. For the artwork in this book I've used coloured pencils and watercolour inks because they are wonderfully bright. For other books, such as my picture book, **Alice in Wonderland**, I used acrylics.

Wagtail Town: Lulu and the Best Cake Ever! (0007425147) by Emma Chichester Clark will be published in February by HarperCollins at £10.99 hbk.

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