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Cressida Cowell [00:00:13] Hello there, I'm Cressida Cowell, the author and illustrator of How to Train Your Dragon, Wizards of Once and Which Way to Anywhere, my new book series. And I'm so glad you've joined me for the Reading is Magic Festival. Sometimes things that you do or say have a way of turning into something bigger than you imagined and carrying on longer than you thought they would. Like the Reading is Magic Festival, which started in 2020 when I was the Waterstones Children's Laureate. It was inspired by my belief that reading is magic, and magic is for everyone. All the events during the festival explore the themes of the charter I wrote when I was a laureate and celebrate all the things you have the right to: creativity, having a planet to read on, seeing yourselves in a book, reading for the joy of it, and getting brilliant advice about books and about reading from people whose job it is to do that. I hope you enjoy this event.

Lauren Layfield [00:01:33] Welcome back to the Reading is Magic Festival. It's Lauren with you. I have got a cream blouse on today, straight brown hair and I'm in front of my brilliant Reading is Magic bunting. And it's time to meet our next guests all the way over in Rotterdam, in the Netherlands. They're a husband and wife duo. The names are Maranke Rinck and Martijn van der Linden, and they are behind the Popcorn Bob series. So we're going to find out about the kernel that didn't pop. And also there might be a bit of drawing as well. Enjoy.

Maranke [00:02:09] My name is Maranke Rinck. I am a Dutch woman and I'm 46 years old. I have dark brown eyes and brown hair to my shoulders and I'm wearing a black t shirt and big shiny popcorn earrings are dangling from my ears. I'm a Dutch children's book writer, and I live in Holland, in a city of Rotterdam, and together with my husband, Martijn, and our three children.

Martijn van der Linden [00:02:30] Hi, I'm Martijn van der Linden and I'm an illustrator and I've made all the illustrations of our Popcorn Bob series. I am 43 years old. Also Dutch with short blonde hair and blue eyes. I'm wearing a blue t shirt with a picture of a popcorn bucket and the text, fresh popcorn, sweet and crunchy.

Maranke [00:02:51] Oh, I almost forgot to tell you something really important, because we are Dutch. We are Dutch children's book makers. So if you read our books, it has to be in English. And we have an amazing translator who translated the Dutch story into English, and her name is Nancy Forest-Flier. And we are really happy with with her work. So remember that name, Nancy Forest-Flier. This is our Popcorn book series. The books are about a Bob a corn kernel with a temper and his friend Ellis. And this is Ellis with her fathers. Ellis is crazy about popcorn. Do you also like popcorn? Ellis eats it every day. One day, Ellis finds a non-popped kernel in her bowl of popcorn. That never happens because she is super good at making popcorn. She decides to put the corn kernel back into the microwave, and then something very strange happens. The corn kernel doesn't explode, but it grows and grows and grows until it's the size of a big shiny lemon and po-po-pop. Two arms pop out and two legs. And he gets a face. An angry face. Would you open the microwave? Ellis does! Hello? Says the corn kernel. I'm Bob, popcorn Bob and I'm really hungry. Well, now Ellis is stuck with Bob, and he's not an easy fellow. He's always hungry and he never sleeps. Ellis wants to keep it a secret. But that's not easy. Because if Bob doesn't get who fast enough, he gets angry and then this happens. Let me read it to you. I have to put on my glasses. Bob trembles in my hand as if there were a battery inside him. He looks angrier than ever. And then suddenly... POP! Bob explodes. He turns into a super big piece of white popcorn. He jumps up, flies through the shed and roars loud. Bob

bounces from the lamp to the window, and then he falls to the floor where he carries on like a crazy windup toy. Finally he's turned into popcorn, a super big piece of popcorn at that. But one with eyes and arms and everything. Even so, he is just popcorn. And I love popcorn. One big bite, and that would be the end of this whole weird mess. I pick him up and open my mouth wide. The piece of popcorn stares back at me. He's really angry. He waves his fists. 'Don't even think about it. Nobody eats me because I am Bob.' Suddenly, he bites my finger. 'Hey, you.' I shout, 'I can't eat you, but you can eat me.' Then I hear something outside. Footsteps on the gravel. So I am the author of Popcorn Bob. I wrote all the stories and Martjin made all the illustrations.

Martjin van der Linden [00:06:17] Yes. And now I want to show you how you can draw Popcorn Bob by yourself. I'm going to show it step by step. You will need a piece of paper and a pencil.

Maranke [00:06:26] So I'm going to take the camera because I will film this for you.

Martjin van der Linden [00:06:29] Okay. Are you ready? There we go. We start with a shape like this. This will become a Bob, his face and body. We now going to connect these lines together, not with a straight line, but a little bit of a curve. Like that. Then we start here, we go and I'm going that way. Of course, this is the down side of his head.

Maranke [00:07:15] Is a down side?

Martjin van der Linden [00:07:17] I don't know if is down side...

Maranke [00:07:18] I don't know if it's down side!

Martjin van der Linden [00:07:20] The bottom of his head, maybe? Another line here through the edge of the downside of his head. And then we start here. Up, down, up and down again. Okay. Then his eyes. Just two circles. Like that, and we're gonna make this black, but not totally black. So it gives a little bit of a shine in his eyes. It's okay. He looks a bit too cute now. He does. We're going to fix that later. First, his nose. His nose is quite easy like that. And he smiles, like this.

Maranke [00:08:35] Still cute.

Martjin van der Linden [00:08:36] Still still too cute, Bob is cute but also fierce. I'm going to do this with his eyebrows. He doesn't really have eyebrows, but the shape of his eyebrows. One angry eyebrow and one normal. Like that.

Maranke [00:08:57] That works.

Martjin van der Linden [00:08:58] It works. It's more of a tough guy now. His arms. I will do like this in his side. And the other one like that. And his legs with pointy feet is because he has boots and of course another one here.

Maranke [00:09:32] There's a plane flying by, we live very near to the airport.

Martjin van der Linden [00:09:40] Like that. Well, Bob is almost finished. I like to do this because it gives him a little bit of... No, it's not called....

Maranke [00:09:50] A bit of shade or something?

Martjin van der Linden [00:09:52] Yes, a little shade! And also here. And the last thing I always do is a little bit of a shade here. Just some things on the ground. And your Bob is finished!

Maranke [00:10:15] Yeah. And he's the same as the Bob on the first book. Okay.

Martjin van der Linden [00:10:21] Yes.

Maranke [00:10:22] Great.

Martjin van der Linden [00:10:25] So Maranke and I made some popcorn, which is quite tasty, but you can also do something fun with it. And I'm going to show you, you can make tiny popcorn creatures with it. When you look at popcorn, you can see all kinds of things in it. And when you draw something with it, it makes tiny creatures like a sheep or a dragon or some kind of walking bird over here. And I'm going to do this with this popcorn as well. I think this will be some kind of cow. What do you think? I don't know. You don't know? Well, I'm gonna try to make it a cow because I see some eye here.

Maranke [00:11:06] So this is a very nice creative activity for you guys at home or in the classroom. So maybe you can make some popcorn and use that. Otherwise, you just draw a popcorn shape, isn't it Martjin? You could just...

Martjin van der Linden [00:11:22] Yes, you can do that as well.

Maranke [00:11:23] Draw a shape and then make a creature out of it.

Martjin van der Linden [00:11:25] Yes, I will show you that as well. Give him ears of course like that.

Maranke [00:11:42] It really becomes a cow.

Martjin van der Linden [00:11:45] But it was already in the shape of the popcorn.

Maranke [00:11:48] So you saw the popcorn with, like the head of a cow?

Martjin van der Linden [00:11:53] Yes. And you can also draw on the popcorn itself.

Maranke [00:11:58] So so if you see this popcorn.

Martjin van der Linden [00:12:02] Well, I see already a little animal in it when I make an eye here. It has some sort of beak. So it could be a bird, but it also could be something... It's a bird?

Maranke [00:12:16] It's a bird.

Martjin van der Linden [00:12:16] Well, I'm going to give him a tail. A large tail. And I think also legs. It's maybe a friend of the other bird I have drawn.

Maranke [00:12:32] Look, you've got a friend.

Martjin van der Linden [00:12:36] Like that? And what you told them is true. Because if you don't have popcorn, you can also...

Maranke [00:12:43] Yes, maybe you can show.

Martjin van der Linden [00:12:44] Make a shape of popcorn like that or like that.

Maranke [00:12:50] Yes, because popcorn comes in all kinds of shapes. So you really can't go wrong with that. Yes.

Martjin van der Linden [00:12:57] And when you draw popcorn shapes, it doesn't matter what shape it will be. And then you look at the shape and then you see, well, maybe this will be some kind of...

Maranke [00:13:09] Ghost. No...

Martjin van der Linden [00:13:13] Angry rabbit. I don't know why he's angry, but he is.

Maranke [00:13:19] He's hungry!

Martjin van der Linden [00:13:20] Is he hungry? Well, there's a lot of popcorn here, so it's not necessary to be hungry.

Maranke [00:13:26] So, you draw all kinds of animals. Can you draw something else with a popcorn or do you have to draw an animal?

Martjin van der Linden [00:13:33] No, of course, you can draw anything with it. But I like to draw animals, so that's why I draw animals a lot. But I will try to make something else. Let's have a look. I see a rabbit in it, but I'm not allowed to draw another rabbit, so it can be a, well...

Maranke [00:13:54] Why, can you put it a little bit here? Because otherwise...

Martjin van der Linden [00:13:57] Yes, of course, I think it can be a scarf of a boy.

Maranke [00:14:02] Oh no, our cat just jumped on the table. Don't eat our popcorn.

Martjin van der Linden [00:14:10] This is not an animal. This is a boy with a big scar. He's walking here in a really strange way. I don't know why he walks that strange, but it's a boy with a popcorn scarf. So he's quite a bit strange.

Maranke [00:14:38] So what do you think about it?

Martjin van der Linden [00:14:43] Well, something like that, yeah. Okay. Okay.

Maranke [00:14:47] So we really hope you will read our Popcorn Bob series. The books are very funny and easy to read, and full of pictures. And so, yeah, enjoy them and maybe enjoy popcorn as well.

Martjin van der Linden [00:15:00] Of course, I hope you have a lot of fun with popcorn and get creative with it. Make new creatures like I showed you. It was really fun to tell you something about Bob.

Maranke [00:15:13] So thanks for listening and watching us. And good day.

Martjin van der Linden [00:15:17] See you next time.

Maranke [00:15:18] Bye.

Lauren Layfield [00:15:27] Did you have fun in Rotterdam? That was absolutely brilliant. Thank you so much to Maranke and Martjin for that. By the way, I would love to see your drawings of Popcorn Bob. Please do get them over to us. You never know. You might see it displayed in our Creators Gallery. Also, just say you can get an English translation of Popcorn Bob that is available to buy. Or make sure you check out your local library to see if they've got a copy. And we're almost at the end of the Reading is Magic Festival 2022. Can you believe it? But don't fear if you head over to our website, all of these events will be available to view for the rest of the year. So enjoy those and thank you very much for joining me. It's been an absolute pleasure and hopefully I'll see you soon.