

EMILY RODDA—Q&A



Why did you become a writer?

I have always loved reading and writing stories. English was my favourite subject at school, and at home I often wrote plays for my brothers to act out. But as I grew older I decided that I wasn't very good at writing, and stopped. Then I began telling stories to my own children and remembered how much I'd enjoyed writing. I tried a story or two, found that others liked them, and soon writing had become my favourite hobby all over again.

Where do you get your ideas from?

It's hard to explain where my ideas come from. Usually it starts when I'm just thinking about something quite ordinary. By asking myself "What if this happened...?" I get my imagination going. In this way a story can be made out of the most everyday situations. I always carry a notebook around with me and scribble down every idea that comes to me—ideas for characters, plots, or mystery clues, for example. That way, if I'm stuck for an idea later, chances are I'll find something in my notebook to help.

Where did you get your ideas for *Deltora Quest*?

It wasn't hard to think of ideas for the *Deltora Quest* series—in fact the hardest thing was sticking to the word limit! I loved writing this series because I could really let my imagination go wild.

Do you base your characters on real people?

None of the characters in my books are exactly like anyone I know, but all of them have things in common with people I know. Everyone writes from his or her own experience. I look at people I know and listen to them and when I am trying to think of a new character, those things come back to me.

Why do you have another name?

My real name is actually Jennifer Rowe. When I finished my first book, *Something Special*, I sent it to the publishing company where I worked as an editor. I put my grandmother's name, Emily Rodda, on the manuscript. I was a bit shy about my writing and wanted to get an honest opinion about the book from the other editors in the office. Then *Something Special* was published, and won the Australian Children's Book of the Year Award. The name Emily Rodda got quite a bit of publicity, so now I use it for all my children's books, and use Jennifer Rowe for my adult books. I don't find it confusing—it's a bit like having a nickname.

What are your hobbies?

Ever since I can remember, reading and writing have been my favourite hobbies. These days I don't have a lot of time, but even so I might read up to three books a week—depending on how long they are, of course!

Do you have any children? Do you have any pets?

I am married with four children, and live in the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney. We have a dog called Sunny. And because we live next to the bush, the garden is always full of frogs, lizards, magpies, cockatoos and kookaburras.

Which of your books is your favourite?

My books are all special to me in different ways. Choosing my favourite would be as difficult as choosing a favourite among my children.

Can you give me some tips for my writing?

Just keep practising. It helps to write about the kinds of people and places you know. Pretend you are really living in the story. Describe how you feel, what you see, what you hear, so that the readers can feel they're inside the world of the story too. Reading also helps, but the more you develop your own style, the better your writing will be. And most of all, enjoy yourself!

Will there be a film made of *Deltora Quest*?

There are no plans for a feature film at the moment, but a Japanese anime TV series has been produced. It is shown on ABC TV in Australia.

How long did it take to write *Deltora Quest*?

It took about three months to write each book. But for a least two years before that I had been thinking about the whole series: making notes about the characters and the world of *Deltora*, planning the stories, and working on the brainteasers and puzzles I wanted to use in the books.

BOOKS BY EMILY RODDA

The Three Doors series (Omnibus Books)

The Golden Door (2011)

The Silver Door (2012)

The Third Door (2012)

The Rondo series (Omnibus Books)

The Key to Rondo (2007)

The Wizard of Rondo (2008)

The Battle for Rondo (2009)

The Deltora Quest series (Scholastic Australia)

Series 1: *The Forests of Silence, The Lake of Tears, City of the Rats, The Shifting Sands, Dread Mountain, Maze of the Beast, The Valley of the Lost, Return to Del*

Series 2: *Cavern of the Fear, The Isle of Illusion, The Shadowlands*

Series 3: *Dragon's Nest, Shadowgate, Isle of the Dead, The Sister of the South*

NB. Series 1, 2 & 3 each also available as a single volume.

The Deltora Book of Monsters (illus. by Marc McBride)

Tales of Deltora (illus. by Marc McBride)

Secrets of Deltora (illus. by Marc McBride)

The Rowan of Rin series (Omnibus Books)

Rowan of Rin, Rowan and the Travellers, Rowan and the Keeper of the Crystal, Rowan and the Zebak, Rowan of the Bukshah (known as *Rowan and the Ice Creepers* in the US)

NB. Series also available as one volume called *The Journey*.

The Fairy Realm series (ABC Books)

The Charm Bracelet, The Flower Fairies, The Third Wish, The Last Fairy-Apple Tree, The Magic Key, The Unicorn, The Star Cloak, The Water Sprites, The Peskie Spell, The Rainbow Wand

The Teen Power Inc./Raven Hill Mysteries series (Scholastic)

30 books, including: *The Ghost of Raven Hill, The Sorcerer's Apprentice, The Disappearing TV Star, Cry of the Cat, Beware the Gingerbread House* and *Green for Danger*.

Stand-alone books

Something Special (Angus & Robertson)

Pigs Might Fly (Angus & Robertson)

The Best-Kept Secret (Angus & Robertson)

Pete and the Ruler of the Universe (Omnibus Books. Previously published as *Crumbs!*.)

The Julia Tapes (for young adults, Penguin Books)

Dog Tales (Scholastic)

Finders Keepers (Omnibus Books)

The Timekeeper (Omnibus Books)

Green Fingers (Omnibus Books, illus. by Craig Smith)

Fuzz the Famous Fly (Omnibus Books, illus. by Tom Jellett)

Bob the Builder and the Elves (ABC Books, illustrated by Craig Smith)

Bungawitta (Omnibus Books, illus. by Craig Smith)

Picture Books (for young children)

Power and Glory (Allen & Unwin, illus. by Geoff Kelly), *Yay!* (Omnibus Books, illus. by Craig Smith), *Game Plan* (Omnibus Books, illus. by Craig Smith), *Where do you hide two elephants?* (Omnibus Books, illus. by Andrew McLean), *The Long Way Home* (Working Title Press, illus. by Danny Snell), *Squeak Street* (Working Title Press, illus. by Andrew McLean)

The Squeak Street series (for young readers, illus. by Andrew McLean, Working Title Press)

Old Bun and the Burglar, One-Shoe's Wishes, Fee-Fee's Holiday, Pink-Paw's Painting, Lucky Clive, Quick-Sticks' Magic, Kevin to the Rescue, Tails and the Twin Spell, Addy and the Pirates, Ben the Post-Mouse