



**Born:** Scone, NSW

**Currently lives:** Emma now lives in Canberra with her husband Richard and her three young children Harriet, Rupert and Hazel.

**Author of:** *The Terrible Suitcase*.

**What was your favourite book growing up?** When I was quite small my favourite book was *The Tenth Good Thing about Barney* by Judith Viorst because it made me feel desperately sad and terribly happy all at the same time. When I was in primary school I loved to read anything by Robin Klein. I also dearly loved *The Hobbit* and many Enid Blyton books.

**What were you like in school?** I was happy and talkative. I loved the arts from a very young age. We lived in the country so it was very special when concerts came to town. My mum sometimes took me out of school to go to Musica Viva concerts. I loved to sit on my teacher's knee afterwards and talk about the music. She used to eat salt and vinegar chips and sometimes she would give me one. I always tried to linger in the library as long as I could. I loved to be in school plays. I could never master somersaults or super-high monkey bars, but I think I could talk myself out of almost any situation. I loved to daydream. I still do.

**What is your favourite food/colour/movie?** I truly love bread and butter pudding. My favourite colour is deep red. I have many favourite movies but one of them is *Bright Star* (directed by Jane Campion).

**Why did you want to be a writer?** When my year two class 'published' their own picture books, complete with painted cardboard covers, I made a promise to myself that when I grew up I would find a way to write stories and put them in libraries.

**Who inspired you to write?** When I was young my mum used to read me stories. For birthdays we always got very special hardcover books. When I was about five I started collecting books by Pixie O'Harris. My teachers in infants school loved to read stories. Our special treat in year one was to listen to a chapter of *The Muddleheaded Wombat* on Friday afternoons. I always thought how good it would be to tell stories.

**What would you have chosen to be if you were not a writer?** I have always wanted to be a writer but if I couldn't do that, I would make films. I am fascinated by conceptual art so maybe it would have been fun to be an art curator.

**What is the best thing about being a writer?** Roaming around in my imagination. Playing with language. Exploring intimacy in a world increasingly characterised by disconnection.

**Is there anything else you would like to tell us about yourself?** In *The Spying Heart*, Katherine Paterson describes how in Japanese the word 'idea' is made up of two characters. One character means sound. The other character means heart. She says: 'Isn't that a wonderful picture? There is something lying deep within you that sets off an alarm, rings, sounds, waking up your heart'. For me, that is what fiction is about. It connects people. It helps us to feel, to listen and to see. You are never too young for that.

