

***The Fairy Chronicles* FAQ**

1. What are *The Fairy Chronicles*?

The Fairy Chronicles is a series of children's books that are modern fairy tales. The heroes are mainly young girls who are also fairies, which means they are blessed with fairy spirits. There are many different types of fairies including butterflies, flowers, dragonflies, reptiles, herbs, tree blossoms, birds, fireflies, small animals, moths, sea creatures, berries, and even bat and spider fairies. The characters are very diverse and include a Native American fairy, an adopted fairy, a deaf fairy, African-American fairies, a home-schooled fairy, Asian fairies, boy fairies (brownies), Hispanic fairies, etc. Each young fairy has a mentor, usually an older fairy, who acts as a supervisor. This is important because it is a huge responsibility to be a fairy. Fairies are not allowed to abuse others or use magic for trivial things. In every story, there is some sort of terrible problem to be solved such as recovering the stolen Shell of Laughter, helping to break an evil curse, solving the mystery of the Magic Snowglobe, rescuing kidnapped bat fairies, trying to locate missing human shadows, and helping a dragon complete a dangerous quest. And in each adventure, the fairies save the world because they are very much like little superheroes with special gifts and powers to help

with their jobs. The books are ideal reading for ages 7-12, but the stories are great for anyone who loves fairy tales.

2. What is the purpose of fairies?

Fairies protect nature, solve problems, and fix things. Fairies fix serious problems, mainly problems caused by the mischief and mayhem of other magical creatures. They are not allowed to use magic for everyday things.

3. What are some of the themes of *The Fairy Chronicles*?

Hope, simplicity, diversity, courage, nature, laughter, peace, nightmares, use of power, happiness, love, good vs. evil, choices, sorrow – things like that. The characters' thoughts and actions emphasize valuing diversity, the importance of teamwork, respect for others, finding meaning in life, developing courage, the power of laughter, protecting nature, the need for balance, taking responsibility, finding peaceful solutions, preserving simplicity, making good decisions, and acceptance of change.

4. Where do the ideas for *The Fairy Chronicles* come from?

It's hard to say, and they often come like Tribbles – way too many at one time. I have always had a love for stories about elves, dwarves, trolls, ogres, witches,

leprechauns, brownies, dragons, gnomes, and such. The ideas often seem to be already in my head, nearly fully formed, so it is tempting to believe that fairies are whispering stories in my ear when I am asleep, or daydreaming. I don't do much research because I often don't like the information I find out. For example, when I looked up unicorn, the description said that a unicorn had a tail like a lion. Well, I wanted the unicorns in my books to have horse tails. When I looked up gremlins, what I read indicated that the gremlins' preferred machinery to break was airplanes. But the gremlins in my stories live in regular people's houses, and most people don't have airplanes. So I think they like to break things like blow dryers and computers. I do sometimes look things up at various sites on the Internet to see pictures of what I am writing about like different butterflies, moths, bats, flowers, and spiders. The stories are mostly inspired by nature and simple things such as hope and courage. Sometimes my earlier books inspire the later ones. For example, we are told in *Marigold and the Feather of Hope* that fairies are afraid of jigsaw puzzles; however, we don't learn why until *Dewberry and the Lost Chest of Paragon*. Jigsaw puzzles also reappear in *Calliope and the Land of Bliss* as a serious problem for the fairies. The reference in *Marigold and the Feather of Hope* to a bit of asparagus or radish being needed to help fairies take sizes other than standard fairy form is not explained until *Snowdrop and the White Elephant*. We first meet a dwarf in *Firefly and the Quest of the Black Squirrel*. Because of this dwarf, I was motivated to make dwarves chief characters in

Periwinkle and the Cave of Courage and *Primrose and the Magic Snowglobe*. *Firefly and the Quest of the Black Squirrel* also inspired me to tell Magnolia's story in *Jasmine, the Journal, and Magnolia's Sacrifice* (the saddest of all *The Fairy Chronicles* tales) because I knew that the reason she lost her fairy spirit was not due to bad behavior. And sphiloxes are introduced in *Luna and the Well of Secrets*, but we don't find out how they are born until *Heather and the Basket of Understanding*. I am also inspired by my home state of Texas. The scenery is so amazing with mountains, rivers, deserts, swamps, canyons, pine forests, lakes, caverns, beaches, prairies – just endless beauty and diversity. But I love to visit national parks too, so places like Canyonlands, Yellowstone, Redwoods, and the Great Smoky Mountains have also very much inspired me. My mother's love for gardening also had a great influence on me, and this is very noticeable in my writings.

5. What sizes are fairies, dwarves, elves, trolls, etc?

Fairies are approximately 6 inches, brownies around 7 inches, leprechauns 8 inches, gnomes about 10 inches, gremlins 12 inches, elves approximately 2 feet, dwarves 3 feet plus, trolls around 4 feet, ogres 15 feet plus, and giants 30-40 feet. Many magical creatures can vary in size. For example, gargoyles can be in either animal or human form and are different sizes. The same is true for goblins. Demons can exist in various states such as vapor, liquid, or flesh and blood. And many magical spirits are shapeshifting and can be any size.

6. Do you think fairies are real?

I have never seen fairies because regular people can't see fairies; they only appear as their fairy spirits. The same is true for brownies. Gnomes disguise themselves using gnome disguise magic to look like everyday objects, so regular people can't see them either. Giants have similar disguise magic and often look just like boulders or hills. Gremlins are invisible. Elves and leprechauns can appear and disappear at will, very quickly. I have never seen trolls, dwarves, or ogres. But it's hard *not* to believe in some of these things. For example, when a lot of things break around the house all at once: What else could it be, if not gremlins? I do believe there is magic in the world. How could anyone look at a butterfly or flower, and not believe in magic? And human beings are so amazing and complex; we must all be part of some wonderful master plan that is full of miracles and magic. Supposedly, fairies and other magical spirits can be viewed through natural holes in stones; but I don't carry one of these stones around with me, peering through it in search of fairies. In the realm of *The Fairy Chronicles*, people over one hundred years of age can see fairies, so I am planning to live to that age to try to see a few before I join the hereafter.

7. Which writers have inspired you?

I grew up reading Roald Dahl, Beverly Cleary, E.B. White, Laura Ingalls Wilder, A.A. Milne, Beatrix Potter,

Johnny Gruelle, and C.S. Lewis. I also love Nathaniel Hawthorne, Dickens, John Milton, Keats, the Brownings, Robert E. Howard, Agatha Christie, Frank Herbert, Asimov, Jane Austen, and J.R.R. Tolkien.

8. What do you hope people will get out of *The Fairy Chronicles*?

I want them to discover interesting things such as how laughter is spread throughout the world, the reason human beings have a shadow, what the grasshopper uses buttons for, the three things gremlins are afraid of, why the flamingo stands on one foot, how dragons are born, the many different types of fairy wands, why the bluebird is the happiest of all birds, what squits are, why people can't see gnomes, and what the trolls' favorite foods are. I guess I want people to enjoy reading the books. I do. When I am not writing the stories, I reread them for fun.

9. Which is your favorite book of the series?

Each time I am writing a book, that one is always my favorite. I love all of the stories. But for a long time, I thought *Primrose and the Magic Snowglobe* was the best. Eventually, I got to thinking that the stories of *Firefly* and *Moonflower* were the best “*storytelling*.” Then for awhile, I felt that *Harlequin and the Pebble of Spree* was the most well-written because it was inspired by several stories I read as a child, and it has a trick ending. Now I think that *Heather and the Basket of Understanding* is the masterpiece of the series. It is the story closest to my

heart; and I cried just writing the outline, when I found out how philoxes are born. And I cried when I wrote *Mimosa and the River of Wisdom* because I knew that Mimosa was going to lose her fairy spirit. But I am very defensive about my decision to take the fairy spirit away. When people tell me that I should somehow give it back to her, I am very sad that they have missed the main point of the story: She is a very special and amazing girl even without a fairy spirit. And I cry when I reread Blue's story – the part when the fisherman dies. I also love dragons, so *Snapdragon and the Odyssey of Élan* is a lot of fun for me to reread. I was on pins and needles writing *Dewberry and the Lost Chest of Paragon* because I couldn't stop Dewberry from getting into trouble. Lately, I have been most excited about the sillier books like *Sandpiper and the Ship of Pools* and *Larkspur and Alyssum Meet Sniggerbly Wiskerfink*. I would love to take a journey on the Ship of Pools, and I absolutely adore Sniggerbly Wiskerfink. (I wouldn't mind running pointless errands for him.) I am very superstitious and I love dogs, especially Big-Wag, so I love rereading Brandtii's tale. Time travel is very confusing but a lot of fun, so I enjoyed writing *Calliope and the Land of Bliss*. When I'm in a certain kind of mood, I tend to reread the love stories of the series, which include the tales of Moonflower, Blue, and Honeysuckle. The stories of Swan, Bumblebee, and Pennyroyal have the most hidden items in them (the secrets of *The Fairy Chronicles*) so I am proud of those books. Telling Magnolia's story, along with Jasmine's, was a great relief, since we had to wait so long for the answers. Much of the fun for me in

writing *The Fairy Chronicles* has to do with recurring characters and objects. For example, the grand piano in Luna's story reappears in Thyme's flying dollhouse adventure and again in *Scarlet, Willow, and the Two-Foot Witch*. Élan, the dragon, reappears in the tales of Pumpkinwing, Cherry, and Ambrosia. I also love the books featuring really unique fairies such as the Jewel Fairies in *Raven and the Children of the Rainbow*. *Dandelion and the Box of Illusion* and *Hollyhock and the Christmas of the Swans* are adventures that occur simultaneously and include some crossover elements, so they were a lot of fun for me to write. I guess the best answer is that all of the books are my favorites.