

The Fairy Chronicles #19 

Pumpkinwing and the Week of Opposites



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Though the entire story of *The Fairy Chronicles* follows a specific timeline, the individual adventures are stand-alone books that can be read in any order.

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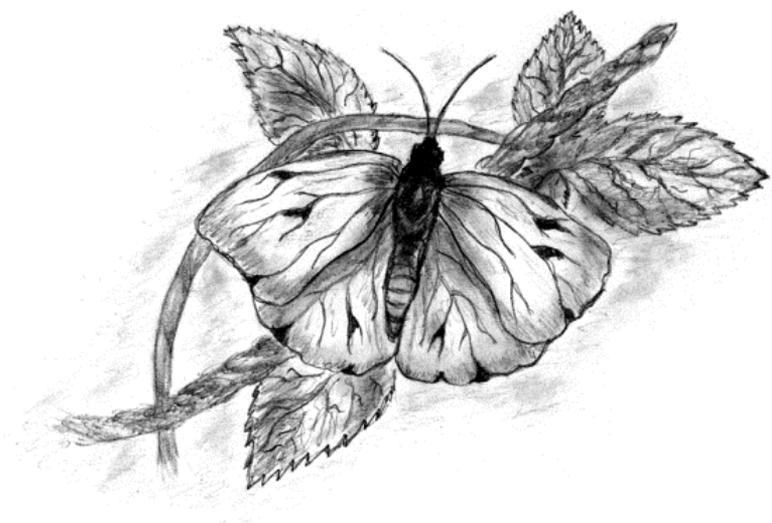
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Chapter One

Home from Camp

The Saturday bus trip home from summer camp was a bit tiring for most of the girls, since it took nearly two hours; but Macy Parker didn't mind the ride. In fact, she wasn't tired at all. She was enjoying singing camp songs, playing cat's cradle with her best friend, Darlene Young, and winning most of the *I Spy* and license plate games.

Like most nine-year-olds, Macy was a massive bundle of energy. But she had even more energy than other girls, and there was a very special reason for this. Macy was actually a fairy. She was blessed with the

fairy spirit of a pumpkinwing butterfly and was called Pumpkinwing by her fairy friends. Each fairy was given a special gift relating to her particular fairy spirit. All butterfly and moth fairies had extraordinary strength and endurance, along with endless energy.

Fairy gifts were what made fairies like little superheroes. Many of Pumpkinwing's friends had special enhanced skills like amazing eyesight or superior water abilities. Pumpkinwing had extra strength and energy, and never seemed to tire. The pumpkinwing butterfly was also very striking and beautiful, so as an additional fairy gift, Pumpkinwing had the ability to attract or distract if needed.

Fairies were tasked with the important job of protecting nature and fixing problems.

Because fairies had such an important job, with a lot of power, young fairies were each assigned a fairy mentor. Ordinarily, fairy mentors were older fairies. They were tasked with the responsibility of teaching young fairies how to do their jobs and giving them approval to use magic in certain situations. Mentors also helped arrange excuses for fairies to be away from their families to attend to fairy business.

Madam Toad was the leader of fairies for the Southwest region. Because she was busy with her leadership duties, she seldom took on the responsibility of mentoring young fairies. However, she was making an exception to act as mentor for Pumpkinwing because Pumpkinwing was her great-granddaughter.

Pumpkinwing spent a lot of time with her great-grandmother; but since “Great-Grandmother” was a pretty long name to manage, and “Madam Toad” seemed a bit too formal for a family member, Pumpkinwing usually called her great-grandmother, Gi-Gi.

The Southwest Region of Fairies had the largest concentration of fairies anywhere per square mile, and Madam Toad was generally in charge of thirty to forty fairies at any given time.

Darlene had also been given a fairy spirit—that of a teasel, which was both a wildflower and an herb. The teasel flower was more of a decorative herb as opposed to an edible one, and teasel flowers were often used in floral arrangements and for potpourri. But they also had useful

household purposes. For example, many people used dried teasel flower heads as scrapers for sock and sweater balls, and sometimes for cleaning purposes.

Fairy gifts often developed at varying rates with individual fairies, and Teasel was still discovering what her strengths and specialties were. So far, she had figured out that she was very clever, useful, and helpful. Teasel was also good at doing intricate work with her hands. She excelled at a lot of things that her friends struggled with. Her hobbies included many crafts that involved tricky, complex finger coordination like knitting, calligraphy, crewel embroidery, and quilling—also called paper filigree.

Because of her usefulness and cleverness qualities, Teasel was very good at the re-use part of recycling. She was able to figure out

many uses for household items that a lot of people tended to throw away: things like magazines, peanut butter jars, and empty matchboxes. Her candlewick wand was a good example of this.

Madam Mariposa was Teasel's grandmother, as well as her fairy mentor. When Teasel was five years old, she helped her grandmother make candles. While cleaning up afterward, Teasel would not allow her grandmother to throw away the short bit of leftover wick. Hanging onto it fiercely, Teasel insisted that there had to be some use for the tiny bit of candlewick. So when it came time to arrange for Teasel's wand, the bit of wick seemed an excellent choice.

Elves, witches, and wizards were able to perform the enchantments to create fairy

wands. The tiny wick was carefully taken to an elf to be made into Teasel's wand.

Teasel's sister was nearly two years older and was a very rare moonflower fairy.

School was due to start again in one week. Pumpkinwing and Teasel were in the last group of girls to attend summer camp. This was because of their age group and the fact that a local Lions Club had sponsored their week of camp.

Because of the timing of their trip, both girls had missed out on helping with some very important fairy business. Almost all of the fairies of the Southwest region had spent nearly a week tracking down a terrible plant disease caused by an evil spirit. Using magical water from the Spring of Hale, they had helped to heal the sick plants so that the disease wouldn't spread further.

Though they had had a wonderful time at camp, Teasel and Pumpkinwing were excited to be home. A solid week of hiking, biking, climbing trees, swimming, and crafts was enough for a while. And the girls had to begin getting ready for the start of school.

At home, Pumpkinwing carefully unpacked her camp clothes, sheets, and various craft projects. She presented her mother with a beautiful woven basket and a bead bracelet. Mrs. Parker loved the gifts and was full of praise for her daughter's "way with colors" and "excellent workmanship."

Then Pumpkinwing helped her mother do laundry and make dinner.

In the morning, Pumpkinwing was going to see her Gi-Gi to catch up on fairy news and give her great-grandmother a candle she

had made at camp. Even though Pumpkinwing was never tired, she went to bed as scheduled, excited about the prospect of visiting her great-grandmother the next day.

Chapter Two

Sunday: Madam Toad's Odd Behavior

Madam Toad's real name was Roberta Jenkins. She lived alone in a very old section of the city that was only about a half a mile from Pumpkinwing's house.

After breakfast, Pumpkinwing walked five blocks, arriving at her Gi-Gi's house around eight o'clock in the morning.

The three-story house was a registered historic home. It was painted all white and had huge stone columns on either side of the front porch. Madam Toad also had a gazebo on one side of her house and a flower garden

on the other, and the back yard included a large vegetable garden plot and a fishpond.

As soon as Gi-Gi answered the door, Pumpkinwing knew something was wrong. Her great-grandmother seemed flustered; and her short white hair, usually smooth and tidy, was in a wild-looking state. At first glance, Pumpkinwing thought Madam Toad was ill. She was flushed, and her hands shook a little as she accepted the candle gift.

Madam Toad only briefly admired the candle, setting it aside quickly on a windowsill in the hall entry. This was extremely unusual, as Gi-Gi always took great care and time to praise Pumpkinwing at every opportunity, especially regarding the skill and effort put into handcrafting gifts.

As Madam Toad headed unsteadily into the kitchen, she asked, “So what shall it be—lemonade, coffee, or root beer?”

This was a very odd question because Gigi knew that Pumpkinwing wasn’t allowed to have caffeine, so she would not have been able to drink the coffee.

“Root beer, like always,” answered Pumpkinwing.

Since Madam Toad was somewhere in her seventies, many people would have assumed that forgetfulness and a bit of confusion would be natural. But Pumpkinwing knew better. Her great-grandmother never forgot anything and absolutely could not get confused under any circumstances.

In fact, Madam Toad was one of the most powerful fairies that ever existed anywhere

on the planet. Her special fairy gift included leadership qualities and the ability to make impeccable decisions. And a lot of her leadership skills were based on quick thinking, keenness, and clarity of thought. As far as Pumpkinwing knew, Madam Toad had never made a mistake or been confused about anything.

After pouring her great-granddaughter a glass of lemonade, Madam Toad wandered out to the back yard, putting her gardening gloves on the wrong hands.

Pumpkinwing was so startled, and a bit scared, by her Gi-Gi's strange actions that she didn't bother to correct the lemonade mistake. She left the glass sitting on the kitchen counter and followed her great-grandmother outside, watching her closely.

As she helped Madam Toad switch the gardening gloves around, Pumpkinwing said, “Tell me about the plant healing mission. Did everything go okay? Is it all done?”

With her brows knit closely together, Madam Toad looked at her great-granddaughter in a very quizzical manner for several seconds. Then she replied, “What are you talking about?”

Pumpkinwing didn’t know how to answer and was silent for some time.

Then Madam Toad finally remembered and said, “Oh, that. Yes, it’s all finished. I had forgotten. At least, I think it’s all over and done. Hmmm...I hope so anyway.”

Since the Spring of Hale mission was extremely important fairy business, and it had been less than a week since the fairies

had been out and about healing all of the sick plants, this statement was very shocking to Pumpkinwing.

As Madam Toad began talking again, it briefly seemed that she was back to old form. “Now, I am planting a fall garden, so I need to get rid of these watermelon vines and tomato plants.” However, the normality didn’t last long as she went on. “Hmmm...I can’t decide if I should plant gourds or some edible squashes,” she pondered. “And I wonder if I should put in more peppers? I just can’t decide. If I have a bumper crop of fall peppers, will you help me eat them so they don’t go to waste?”

This was the last straw. Gi-Gi knew that Pumpkinwing was allergic to peppers. Something was terribly wrong with Madam Toad, and Pumpkinwing didn’t know what

to do about it. Her first thought was to get away from her great-grandmother's house and find another fairy to consult. Pumpkinwing made an excuse about getting home quickly to go shopping for school supplies and shoes. Then she left Madam Toad in her state of pepper-indecision in the back yard.

As she rounded the house, heading for the sidewalk, Pumpkinwing heard a soft voice calling her name. "Over here, Pumpkinwing."

It was Mr. Tibbons, the garden gnome. Like all garden gnomes, he was about ten inches high and was a dusty brown color all over including his overalls and work boots. Mr. Tibbons had a bushy moustache and was wearing a straw hat for shade.

As Pumpkinwing reached the gazebo and sat down with Mr. Tibbons, the gnome told her, “Something is wrong with Madam Toad. She ripped out the marigolds that we were saving for seed, and instead of thinning the gladiola bulbs, she planted a few more. This is very unusual.”

“Yes, I figured out that something is not right,” Pumpkinwing replied. “I am on my way to consult another fairy mentor. Madam Swallowtail only lives two blocks from here. If she is home, I can talk to her about this.”

“Good luck,” answered Mr. Tibbons. “She hasn’t been outside for three days. I can see her through her picture window. She is just lying around on the couch, sleeping. That is very strange for her. She wouldn’t even get up to sign for a package

yesterday when the postman came. He wouldn't leave it either without a signature. She just yelled at him that she was too tired to get up and for him not to bother her. So she's going to have to make a trip to the post office for it. That seems silly," the gnome added. "All she had to do was walk to the door. Anyway, I doubt she will get up to let you in."

Pumpkinwing said goodbye to Mr. Tibbons and made her way slowly home, thinking as she walked. Madam Swallowtail easily had as much energy as Pumpkinwing. In fact, swallowtail butterflies were even larger than pumpkinwing butterflies; and larger butterflies tended to have more strength and power than smaller ones. It didn't make sense that she was sleeping all of the time for the last three days. One night

of sleep was enough to recharge even the most tired of fairies, and a couple of hours would easily do for a butterfly fairy.

As she passed Madam Swallowtail's house, Pumpkinwing didn't stop to try to consult. She took Mr. Tibbons' words to heart and didn't really see the point of wasting time. But this was so odd and scary that both Madam Toad and Madam Swallowtail were acting strangely. Pumpkinwing decided instead to send a nut message to Teasel as soon as she got home.

Quickly penning the note, Pumpkinwing placed the message inside a walnut and gave it to a grackle outside her bedroom window. Since Teasel only lived a few streets away, Pumpkinwing was expecting a quick answer. However, it was after dinner, and nearly dark, by the time Teasel responded;

and she did so in person, showing up unexpectedly at the front door.

Teasel was extremely worried and didn't even mention the issues of Madam Toad and Madam Swallowtail. She immediately launched into her own tale of unexpected events that had happened since she got home. "Something bad happened to some of the fairies while we were away at camp," she said breathlessly. "I noticed last night that Moonflower doesn't glow in the dark. We went outside after dinner to look at fireflies, and we changed into fairy form behind the bushes. She didn't glow at all, not a bit.

"Plus, she is acting strangely," Teasel added worriedly. "She is usually so encouraging and inspiring. But she told me that she didn't see much point in going back

to school next week. Then she told me that it would be a waste of time for me to become a teacher, since teachers could never make any big money. I had to motivate *her*, instead of the other way round, like normal.”

Teasel’s eyes were enormous as she rushed on. “Then she told me that Alan and Marigold were never going to be boyfriend and girlfriend because they were just too different, and that they should just part ways now because it was a lost cause. All this from the Fairy of Inspiration, Passion, and Romance!”

Teasel didn’t give Pumpkinwing a chance to respond. Instead, she continued venting. “And we went to see my grandma this morning. She’s moping around the house like someone died; and she acts like she just ran five marathons, or flew herself

around the world twice in fairy form. She's tired and listless.”

Teasel finally gave Pumpkinwing an opportunity to talk. “Okay, here's what we need to do. Tomorrow morning, we will contact as many of our friends as possible to find out if there are more fairies affected, or infected, or whatever this is. Then we will try to figure out what happened and look for a way to fix the problem. If necessary, we can talk to gnomes and brownies to try to come up with a solution.”

Brownies were boy fairies, seven inches high, who got their fairy spirits from earthy things like pinecones, clover, mosses, and various rocks and minerals. The brownies in this region often helped the fairies with their missions, especially in the area of arranging transportation for them. Some distances

were simply too far for fairies to fly and still accomplish their tasks in a timely manner, so the fairies occasionally needed help in that regard. Since brownies didn't have wings, and couldn't fly, they had a special partnership with many animals and birds to help them travel.

Pumpkinwing finished by telling Teasel, "I don't know any witches personally, so unless you do, we wouldn't be able to ask a witch for help. And I wouldn't know how to get in touch with an elf."

Teasel shook her head. She didn't know any witches either; and elves usually just showed up, magically appearing out of thin air, if there was a terrible problem and they were needed. But she didn't know how to call for one.

When Teasel left for home, Pumpkinwing sat thinking. Even at a young age, Pumpkinwing was starting to show some of the same leadership qualities as her great-grandmother. She could make decisions quickly and easily, and they were usually the right ones. Plus, she was often able to inspire confidence in others. Even some of her older friends looked to her for advice, and they often followed her suggestions because her ideas always seemed to be right on.

Chapter Three

Monday: Cinnabar, Periwinkle, and Rosemary

In the morning, Teasel arrived early and sat on the front porch to talk to Pumpkinwing. Teasel had something very interesting to report. “I got a nut message from Primrose. She was out of town for nearly a week visiting her grandparents, and she seems unaffected by whatever is going on. But she figured things out quickly, of course, as soon as she got back.”

Primrose, also known as Taylor Buchanan, was the fairy best able to pick up on small details. As one of the “*thinker*” fairies, she could easily and quickly solve

mysteries. It had taken her less than an hour to figure out something was wrong with most of the fairies, and she had quickly deduced that Pumpkinwing and Teasel would be untouched by this fairy malady because they had also been out of town.

Teasel continued. “Primrose told me that Madam Rose is very disorganized and can’t seem to get anything done. Madam Rose never gets behind, and she can manage ten things going on at once most of the time. She is always on top of things. Also, Dragonfly didn’t score a single goal in her soccer match two days ago. She’s the fastest and most coordinated player on the team, and has never lost a game. Plus, Firefly is afraid of the dark; and Snapdragon is flying very slowly,” Teasel added. “And you know how Alyssum is still learning to

fly, but she's so springy that she doesn't get hurt when she lands hard. She was doing so well; but evidently, she crashed on Friday and got really bruised. Now, she's too scared to fly at all.

“It seems that Primrose has done a lot of investigating into this,” Teasel went on, “and she told me that we seem to be the only three fairies not stricken by whatever it is. She will be coming by soon to help us make plans to fix this.”

“I just hope it can be fixed,” said Pumpkinwing, worriedly.

Teasel nodded earnestly.

Primrose arrived about ten minutes later. Smiling a little uneasily, she told her friends, “The fairy world seems to have been turned upside down while we were gone; hopefully, we can sort it out together.”

Pumpkinwing and Teasel nodded, and Pumpkinwing said, “I think we should make visits to some of our friends to see how bad this is, and to find clues, if possible, as to why this has happened and what we might be able to do to fix it.”

Teasel and Primrose quickly agreed.

Pumpkinwing went inside to tell her mother that they would be going to the community center to play ping-pong, and the fairies set off walking to visit some of their nearby friends.

When they arrived at Cinnabar’s house, they were surprised to find her wandering around the yard. She tripped on a stick as she ran to greet her friends. This was certainly unusual. Since Cinnabar was a ballerina, and was the most graceful of all the fairies, she rarely stumbled.

Cinnabar definitely knew something was wrong, but because she was included in the group of *affected* fairies, she was very frightened and didn't know what to do. She told her friends, "I'm scared to go out at night. It's too dark, and I can't see properly." All moth fairies had exceptional night skills. They could fly better, see better, and had more energy at night.

But this wasn't what was troubling Cinnabar the most. What she said next was much worse news. "My mom got a call this morning from Periwinkle's parents. She is evidently lost in the woods near her home. They are terrified of what may happen to her. I should have known something bad might happen," added Cinnabar. "I saw her last Thursday, and she had a sunburn."

Periwinkle's fairy gift was the ability to channel energy from the sun. And because her fairy spirit was derived from the pink periwinkle, which was an extremely sun tolerant flower, she was able to withstand heat and sun better than any other fairy. Periwinkle had never had a sunburn before. Plus, she was of Native American descent, so because of her skin type, it would have taken a lot for her to get sunburned.

Also due to her heritage, Periwinkle had never been lost. She could tell directions without a compass and never got turned around. She had other excellent skills in the wild too such as the ability to recognize various animal tracks and the know-how to distinguish poisonous and dangerous plants from edible and safe ones.

Pumpkinwing, Teasel, and Primrose left Cinnabar's house quickly. As they were leaving, Pumpkinwing told Cinnabar, "Just say inside after dark while we try to sort this out."

The three girls changed into fairy form behind a clump of trees and flew in the direction of Periwinkle's home. They saw two police cars parked on the outskirts of the small woods near the lost fairy's house. Pumpkinwing, Teasel, and Primrose flew very high to be able to get a good view of the woods below. They could see clearly into the areas of woods that were thinnest, and they only had to descend a few times into the thicker sections to search for their friend.

It took nearly two hours, but they finally found her. Periwinkle, in girl form, was

sitting on a tree stump, crying. The three fairies changed back into girl form.

When Periwinkle saw her friends, she jumped up and hugged them, sobbing. “Oh, thank goodness. I got lost. I’ve been out all night; I was so scared.”

Periwinkle rubbed her peeling, sunburned nose as she sniffled and went on. “And I got into a patch of poison ivy somehow so my leg is itching like crazy.” The girls saw the red swollen rash on Periwinkle’s calf.

Pumpkinwing told the frightened fairy, “Everything will be okay now. We will lead you to a point to meet up with the police who are looking for you. Then we will have to go, to try to sort out what is wrong with all the fairies.”

Periwinkle nodded and followed her friends through the woods in the direction of the searchers. As they walked, with a slight sob she said, “Sorry I’m so weepy, but I’ve never been lost before. It was really scary. And I couldn’t even seem to remember how to change into fairy form so that I could fly up and look at my surroundings.” With another sob, and a sniff, she added, “I know I’m being silly.”

Primrose put her arm around Periwinkle’s shoulders and told her, “You’re not being silly at all. We would all be acting the same way, or worse, if we had gotten lost in the woods all night.” Teasel and Pumpkinwing nodded.

When they reached a point where they could safely send Periwinkle toward a

searching policewoman, they told her goodbye and changed back into fairy form.

They didn't need to worry about being seen as they flew directly by the police officer because regular people couldn't recognize fairies when they saw them. To non-magical people, fairies would look just like their fairy spirits. So if the policewoman noticed them at all, she would only see a butterfly and two tiny flowers. And since it was rather a windy day, the flying teasel and primrose flowers could have been explained away without serious problem.

Periwinkle accompanied the policewoman home, and received a tearful welcome by her frantically worried, but now relieved, parents and big sister, Megan. Next she had a bath and lunch. Then her

mother dabbed calamine lotion on the poison ivy rash and rubbed aloe vera gel into the healing sunburn. Finally, it was time to go to bed.

Periwinkle was the only fairy with a Native American spirit guide. He took the form of a small snail and rode on her shoulder. Even though he was her advisor and gave her guidance, the snail had been unable to lead the confused and frightened fairy out of the forest safely. She was just too turned around and confused. But he had helped to keep her calm in the darkness, and had convinced her to stay put instead of wandering around, so that the searchers could find her more easily. After a quick nod to her tiny companion, the very tired Periwinkle crawled into bed and fell asleep.

As the three fairies flew, Primrose told Pumpkinwing and Teasel, “I found out that Ginger, Cisthene, Hollyhock, Luna, Thyme, Madam Chameleon, Madam June Beetle, Madam Finch, and Madam Goldenrod are all out of town right now, so we don’t have any way of knowing yet if they are involved in this too.”

When the fairies arrived at Rosemary’s house, they found out that Rosemary’s neighbor, Spiderwort, was away at an out-of-town chess championship.

But Rosemary told them that she was very worried about Spiderwort because, “Before she left, she didn’t seem to be thinking straight. And people needed to be thinking *very* straightly in order to win chess matches.”

Rosemary was also very aware of the fairies' problem. Her special fairy gift was an incredible memory. She never forgot anything and could often recite whole passages from books after just one read-through. However, in the last few days, she hadn't been able to remember anything properly. In fact, she had woken up this morning thinking it was Saturday.

Rosemary also forgot Mr. Tibbons' name when she saw him yesterday. She ended up saying, "Hello, Mr. Bittons." The gnome hadn't corrected her. He just glanced worriedly at her before going about his business.

Rosemary was also responsible for feeding Spiderwort's calico cat, Pernilla, while her friend was away. She had completely forgotten last night. Pernilla was

very put out that Rosemary hadn't remembered to fill her food dish. The hungry kitty had scratched on Rosemary's bedroom window late at night until the forgetful fairy finally figured out what the trouble was and ran next door to feed her.

Before leaving, Pumpkinwing pulled a pad of paper and a pencil out of a drawer in Rosemary's bedroom chest and told her friend, "Right now, write down anything important coming up in the next few days. Then check the list every time you hear the hall clock chime."

Rosemary agreed, and started to write; but she hoped she would be able to remember what the chiming clock was supposed to remind her of.

Teasel, Primrose, and Pumpkinwing said goodbye to Rosemary and headed off to find

more of their fairy friends. Since it was getting rather late, and Primrose and Teasel were exhausted from more flying than usual, the three decided to meet again in the morning to continue the visits to their friends. The girls were all incredibly frustrated because they were still completely baffled as to why all of the fairies were acting so strangely.

Chapter Four

Tuesday: Marigold, Madam Monarch, and Blue

The three fairies made their way to Madam Monarch's house the next morning. She didn't live terribly close by; but after the encounters with their friends the day before, the fairies were anxious to see a fairy mentor. Next to Madam Toad, Madam Monarch was perhaps the most experienced fairy mentor in the area.

As they neared the house, they saw Madam Monarch's niece, Marigold, outside. She was visiting her aunt for a few days. Marigold was sitting on the front steps, nursing a fire ant bite. When her three

friends flew up, she told them, “Not once, in all my eleven years. I’ve never been bitten by fire ants. And yesterday, I nearly got eaten alive by a pack of blood-thirsty mosquitoes!”

Marigold’s special fairy gift was the ability to ward off unfriendly insects because marigold flowers had bug-repelling qualities in nature. She had never been bothered by chiggers, gnats, or mosquitoes like a lot of people were.

Pumpkinwing sympathized with Marigold, but she felt the need to hurry. She told her friend, “We are going inside to have a word with Madam Monarch, if that’s okay.”

“Sure,” answered Marigold. “But she won’t get up. I’ve tried to get her out of bed for the last three days. Just go on up the

stairs. Her room is on the right when you reach the top.”

Primrose, Teasel, and Pumpkinwing found Madam Monarch lounging on a heap of mismatched brightly-colored pillows on her bed. She was wearing vivid green pajamas, a lavender bathrobe, and her head was wrapped in an orange and black turban.

“Hello, girls,” she said as they knocked and entered through the open door. “I’d get up to make you some breakfast,” she added, yawning, “but I’m just too tired.”

Pumpkinwing had expected this. Since monarch butterflies could fly all the way from Canada to Mexico and back without tiring, and since all of the affected fairies’ gifts were completely haywire, she hadn’t expected Madam Monarch to pop up out of bed to greet them. However, despite the

listlessness, Pumpkinwing hoped that Madam Monarch might be thinking clearly and could advise them.

But when Pumpkinwing related her concerns and worries to the fairy mentor, all she got in response was, “I’ll think about this and get back to you. Right now, I need a nap.”

The three fairies were hugely disappointed as they made their way down the stairs and back outside.

Marigold told her friends, “I was supposed to go to watch Blue at the city pool. There’s a swim meet this afternoon. But I don’t feel like going with all the itching from my bites. This is terrible. I don’t know how anyone can stand this.”

Just as Marigold said this, a wasp landed on her arm and stung her. She cried out in

pain and ran inside, slamming the screen door and shouting, “*I’M NEVER GOING OUTSIDE AGAIN!*”

Pumpkinwing, Primrose, and Teasel followed Marigold inside. Then Pumpkinwing took charge of the frantic Marigold and got some meat tenderizer out of Madam Monarch’s spice cabinet.

When Pumpkinwing rubbed the tenderizer into the sting, Marigold calmed down slightly and told her friends, “This must be payback from all of the insects I have ever driven away with my gift.”

It was a good thing Marigold was not horribly allergic to wasp stings. Her arm was swollen and lumpy, but she didn’t have a more serious reaction that required any medical attention.

The three fairies said goodbye and headed off to find more of their friends. Since they had just heard about the swim meet, they decided to go to the city pool next.

Blue was a blue dragonfly fairy with the special gift of enhanced water skills like swimming and diving. Her gift was related to the fact that dragonflies were born in the water. She was on track for college scholarships in both swimming and diving, and was also hoping to compete in the Olympics one day.

Blue lived in a neighboring town about five miles down the highway, or about eight miles by the country roads that wound in the same direction. But today, she was attending a swimming competition with her coach, Mrs. Klein. They often traveled the

area together, seeking out as many races as possible. Competitions helped Blue set goals and measure her progress.

When Pumpkinwing, Primrose, and Teasel reached the pool, they found Blue in a terrible state. Mrs. Klein was off somewhere getting Blue something to drink, so the girls were able to talk.

Blue told her friends, “You’re not going to believe this—I’m afraid of the water. I tried to get in and do a few laps, but I suddenly got scared of the deep end. Then, I got water up my nose. And now, I start shaking every time I get close to the water. I can’t compete today.”

“Actually, we do believe it,” answered Teasel.

And Primrose added, “Don’t try to swim for a few days. We are trying to work out

what is wrong with most of the fairies in the area. I don't think it will be safe for you to swim until we figure out how to fix this problem.”

Blue nodded, agreeing, and said, “Mrs. Klein isn't disappointed; she just thinks I've been working too hard and need a break. So I doubt she will have a problem with me taking a few days off.”

As the girls saw Mrs. Klein approaching with a granola bar and a bottle of water, Blue said goodbye to her friends, but she added quickly, “By the way, have any of you met Calliope yet? She only learned about her fairy spirit a couple of weeks ago, and she is probably upset with all of the fairies acting so strangely. Maybe someone should visit her to make sure she is okay.”

Pumpkinwing nodded and the three girls left just as Mrs. Klein reached Blue.

After they found a secluded spot behind the pool showers to change back into fairy form, Pumpkinwing told Teasel and Primrose, “I remember now, Madam Toad told me about the newest fairy who would soon be joining us. Calliope has the spirit of a calliope hummingbird. If she just found out, but all of the fairies are acting opposite of normal, this has got to be really confusing for her.”

“Yes,” agreed Teasel. “Grandma told me about Calliope before we left for camp. She is going to be her mentor. Calliope is *so* new that Grandma hadn’t even gotten her wand yet. It was still being made. But since Grandma is not herself, just like all the other fairies, Calliope is probably pretty upset.”

“Do you know where she lives?” asked Primrose.

“Yes,” answered Teasel, “but I haven’t met her yet. We should probably approach her in girl form, in case she is leery of fairies right now. That way we won’t scare her, or mix her up further.”

The girls found Calliope at home, sitting in a tire swing in her front yard. They introduced themselves to her as girls first.

Then Pumpkinwing said, “We know that you are a fairy, and we are fairies too. You might have noticed that there is a problem with the fairies in this area right now. We are the only three fairies that do not seem to be affected by whatever is going on, and we are trying to sort everything out and fix things so that the fairies will start to act normally again soon.”

Calliope was very relieved by these words. When she had first met her mentor two weeks ago, Madam Mariposa was perfectly normal. For the last four days, the older fairy didn't seem to want to be bothered; and this was very upsetting to the brand new fairy. Calliope had stopped seeking out her mentor to ask questions, and had contented herself with reading her fairy handbook; but she felt very alone and isolated.

Pumpkinwing gave Calliope a reassuring hug and told her, "Don't worry; I promise we will sort this out. After all, fairies are expert problem solvers and fixers. Things will be back to normal soon, and we will see you at our next Fairy Circle."

Calliope felt better and smiled as her new friends left. It wasn't going to be so bad

after all, being a fairy, with friends like these. She went inside to read more in her fairy handbook and look at her wand.

Before Madam Mariposa had started acting strangely, she had given Calliope her newly-created wand, but had warned her not to try to use it yet. New fairies had to be extremely careful with magic.

But Calliope already loved her wand, and it was one of the most unique in the fairy realm. It was a small, spiraled sprig of wisteria that in addition to being enchanted by a wizard as a fairy wand, also had a *Season Spell* attached to it. Right now, the wisteria wand was a lush, leafy vine. It would stay that way through the fall; but in the winter, the sprig would lose its leaves and become simply a curled, branchlike twig. Then in the spring, it would bloom

purple, before taking on its bright green leaves for summer and fall again.

The wizard who enchanted the wand for Calliope had a special love for both fairies and hummingbirds, and he was very pleased to be able to create such a unique wand for a hummingbird fairy.

Chapter Five

Wednesday: Aloe, Dove, and Thistle

Already, Pumpkinwing was thinking that she might have to contact a fairy leader from another region. If they couldn't come up with an answer by Thursday, she was planning to send nut messages to Madam Shrew, Madam Oyster, and Madam Salamander—leaders of the far North, Gulf, and Eastern regions—to ask for advice and help.

Teasel and Primrose agreed with her plan, and Primrose said, “That’s a good idea. It is not likely that other fairy leaders have been affected by this, since we weren’t when we were out of town. My grandparents live

about forty miles from here, so this phenomenon is probably confined to this immediate area.”

Next, the three tried to visit Aloe and Heather who were twin sister fairies, but the girls’ foster mother stopped the visitors at the door and wouldn’t let them in.

Heather came out of the house to explain. “Aloe is very sick. This is so strange because I don’t think she has ever had so much as an earache growing up. Now, she has some weird flu-like thing, and Mrs. Harlingen is worried that it is contagious. She made me promise to tell you to wash your hands as soon as possible after you leave in case I carried any of the germs out here to you.”

Aloe was the Fairy of Healing and had only ever been plagued before with the most

minor of scrapes and bruises. She had never even had a cold or cough, not once in her life, so this was a terrible ordeal for her.

Heather had not yet discovered the nature of her fairy gift, so she couldn't tell if the problem was affecting her as well.

Pumpkinwing, Primrose, and Teasel left quickly after their brief conversation with Heather and made their way toward Thistle's house. But along the way, while they were passing the local junior high school, they heard a loud, "*Psssst*, over here!"

Well they didn't much need to hear the "*psssst*," because the speaker was very visible. It was none other than Élan, the dragon. He was crouched as low as possible, and barely fit, underneath the

soccer bleachers where he was trying to hide.

Élan was nearly as large as a school bus with his wings folded, and the fairies would have spotted him easily even if he hadn't beckoned to them. It was a good thing school was still out; there really wasn't a good place in the area for a dragon to hide.

Since Élan was a peaceful dragon, he was a special friend to Dove, the Fairy of Peace. As the three fairies drew near, he told them in an anxious voice, "I'm terribly worried about Dove. I tried to visit her yesterday, but I left when I heard her shouting at her mother. They were arguing. I kept an eye on her, and later in the day, I found her fighting with the boy who lives next door to her. Their parents had to come out and break it up. This is very strange,"

Élan added, with concern straining his voice. “Dove never argues with anyone; she gets along with everybody. Something is terribly wrong.”

Pumpkinwing told Élan that they were aware of a problem among the fairies and that they were working on fixing it. Élan was relieved to know this. He wished them luck then crept out from under the bleachers. With a wink, he took to flight a moment later and was instantly gone in a green and orange blur.

Dove lived in a neighboring town, near Blue and Cricket, so the fairies wouldn’t be able to make it there today. Instead, they continued to head toward Thistle’s house.

Thistle was hiding in her bedroom, afraid to go out. “I just don’t understand it,” she told them. “The bully down the street has

really been bugging me the last two days.” Thistle’s fairy gift was defensive abilities, and she never got pushed around.

As her friends listened with concern, Thistle added, “I have always been able to stand up for myself. I can’t believe Rhonda got the better of me. She has my skates right now. Unless I get back to myself, I won’t be able to get them back. I cried yesterday when she pushed me. What is going on?”

Pumpkinwing did her best to explain everything, and assured Thistle that the three of them were working on the problem. Then Teasel, Primrose, and Pumpkinwing all trooped home, agreeing again to meet early the next morning.

Chapter Six

Thursday: Spiderwort, Cricket, and Harlequin

By Thursday morning, the three “*normal*” fairies were so frustrated that they didn’t know what to do. They still hadn’t found the answer as to why all of this had happened and were nowhere near a means of fixing the problem.

Spiderwort was back from her out-of-town chess tournament, so Pumpkinwing, Primrose, and Teasel went to visit her first. She was very quiet and sad. “It seems I have forgotten how to play chess,” she said. “I’ve been playing competitively for nearly

four years. Now, suddenly, I can't even think two moves ahead.”

Spiderwort was an expert puzzle solver and game player, and was especially good at chess. She was also the fairy who was best at coming up with good solutions to fix problems. But even as they discussed the current situation, she couldn't come up with a single idea to help.

Next, the three fairies made their way to Harlequin's house and found her crying in her room. Cricket was visiting Harlequin for the day and was doing her best to try to comfort the weeping fairy.

Harlequin was desperately trying to avoid any contact with her parents because in the last five days, she had cried more than she had in her entire lifetime, and she didn't want to worry them.

As the good-natured Fairy of Jokes and Mischief, Harlequin was almost always happy and laughing. Now, she looked like a totally unrecognizable person as she sat on the bed sniffing, blowing her red nose, and rubbing her puffy eyes.

Cricket was having major problems too. Her special fairy gift was incredible musical talent both as a vocalist and a pianist. She told her friends, “I tried to sing at church on Sunday and totally freaked everybody out. And I can’t play the piano properly either.” With a sigh, she added sadly, “What a mess. This is terrible. I have a piano recital coming up next week. It looks like I may need to back out, for my part of it.”

Cricket lived very near Dove, and told her friends, “Dove has also shut herself up in her room because she doesn’t want to get

into arguments with anyone. She snapped at me when I tried to visit her yesterday.”

Primrose, Teasel, and Pumpkinwing were very distressed as they left Harlequin’s house. Just as they changed into fairy form behind Harlequin’s garage, they were waylaid by three of their brownie friends.

James, Alan, and Bob had figured out that there was some sort of terrible problem with the fairies and had also been searching for answers. James was a granite rock brownie. Alan got his brownie spirit from a mushroom. And Bob was an amber brownie.

Alan addressed the fairies. “You three seem to be the only normal fairies left. Do you have any idea why this happened or how to fix it?” (Alan was close friends with

Marigold and was horribly worried about her.)

Pumpkinwing answered him. “We haven’t figured that out yet.”

“Well, we want to help,” said James. He was Cinnabar’s best friend and was tremendously upset to find her hiding from the dark. She hadn’t even wanted to sit with him on her windowsill to talk, two evenings ago when he visited her.

And Bob added, “I played a joke on Harlequin yesterday, and she broke down and cried. We play tricks on each other all the time, every week in the summer, and she’s never had her feelings hurt or gotten upset before. I want the old Harlequin back as soon as possible. Tell us what to do to help.”

The three brownies were looking at Teasel, Pumpkinwing, and Primrose expectantly, as though waiting for instructions to take care of business and put things to right.

Pumpkinwing thought for a few seconds, then she said decisively, “We need resources to be able to do some research. Since Monday, we have been chasing our tails. I don’t know why we didn’t think of this sooner. Do you know where we can access some books on magic? I have an idea.”

Alan immediately spoke up. “We sometimes use a library that belongs to a witch. She is out of town right now, but she doesn’t mind if we visit her library when she is gone.”

Since it was getting late, the girls thought their families might begin to worry about

their long absences from home, so the fairies agreed to meet the brownies first thing in the morning at a park near Teasel's house.

Chapter Seven

Friday: The Mystery is Solved

The brownies made it to the park early. As soon as Pumpkinwing, Primrose, and Teasel arrived, James gave a short, squawking cry to summon a rabbit friend of his to transport them to the witch's house.

As the brownies rode on the rabbit, the fairies flew alongside the tiny bounding beast. Winding their way through back yards and alleys, they reached the witch's home about twenty minutes later and entered through a small tear in her back screen door.

The house belonged to a witch named Drucilla who was out of town for two weeks visiting her sister. It was a very large, four-story house with a lot of old-fashioned

furniture. Because the structure was empty and silent, it seemed rather gloomy and foreboding.

However, as they passed from the sunroom into the kitchen, Teasel and Pumpkinwing saw an enormous fish tank full of happy-looking goldfish, so this made them feel a little better. But Primrose did ask, “Are you sure we can be here while she is gone?” She was very uneasy about the quiet and stillness surrounding them.

Bob answered, “Yes, we are sure. She doesn’t mind others using her library, even when she is away. Drucilla has told the brownies more than once that she thinks all books should be shared, and that people who hoard their books are evil not to share the knowledge with others.”

And James added, “We are feeding her goldfish for her while she is away.” With this, he quickly and expertly scaled the side of the fish tank stand and dropped in a handful of fish food from a box on top of the aquarium.

Then the group made their way through the eerie, darkened house to a room on the second floor that Drucilla used for her library.

The library was immense. All four walls of the room were covered with floor-to-ceiling bookcases that were full of books about magic. Only three other items occupied the library: an oak table, an easy chair, and a grandfather clock.

Pumpkinwing told the others, “Look for books about spells. Then specifically look for spells that are directed at fairies. I think

mischief by a magical someone is at work here; and if it is a spell, we might be able to counter it or break it somehow.”

After the group had been poring over dusty volumes for nearly five hours, and had consumed all of the lemon jelly beans the fairies were carrying, and all of the sunflower seeds that the brownies had in their pockets, they were almost on the verge of going home for the day and coming back early the next morning to start fresh.

But the fairies and brownies suddenly got lucky. It was a good thing Primrose was one of the fairies not under the influence of the *oppositism* currently maligning the fairies. She was truly a master of finding answers and solving mysteries.

Just as Pumpkinwing had resolved to tell everyone that they needed to stop for the

day, Primrose cried out, “Found it!” Her friends gathered around her as she read aloud from a book entitled, *Lesser Known Fairy Curses*:

“Very-Fairy-Contrary-Spell: This curse is specific to the Demon of Confusion, also known as Inimicus Diametra. The demon travels the earth cursing fairies with the *Very-Fairy-Contrary-Spell*, which causes fairies to act completely opposite of their true characters. When performed, this curse affects all fairies in a thirty-mile radius.

“Often, fairy gifts are suppressed by this dark spell; and the recession of

the fairies' normal abilities is what causes the outward expression of reverse or contradictory behavior. Fairies stricken by the curse will generally display totally uncharacteristic actions and will occasionally voice seemingly ludicrous thoughts. This frequently causes other magical creatures to alienate or mistrust the cursed fairies.

“There is no counter-spell to fix the problem. Only one known antidote for the *Very-Fairy-Contrary-Spell* exists: Three affected fairies must be forced into using their suppressed gifts. When the gifts of these three fairies break free from the curse, all

of the affected fairies in the thirty-mile area will be released from the spell.”

There was silence for a long time after Primrose finished reading. Then the group began brainstorming ideas to come up with a plan to help their friends. With six people all throwing ideas into the pot, they came up with a lot of good schemes. Eventually, they were able to narrow down all of the suggestions to three of the best and formulate their plan from these.

By the time they finished their discussion, the group agreed to meet early in the morning to carry out Part One of their plan. Then the tired fairies and brownies made their way to their homes for much

needed food and rest, so they could be fresh the next day to fix the fairy problem.

Chapter Eight

Saturday: Fixing the Problem

Part One of the plan involved Thistle. The fairies and brownies arrived at her house early; and with the exception of Teasel, the group remained hidden in a thick clump of holly bushes in the back yard.

Teasel made her way to Thistle's bedroom window; and it took some doing, but she eventually coaxed Thistle out of the window. The two fairies landed in the yard a few feet from the holly bushes where their friends were concealed. Teasel made light conversation with Thistle while they waited.

Next, as previously arranged by the brownies, three crows landed very near

Teasel. The crows were good friends of the brownies and knew exactly what to do. Teasel pretended not to notice the birds as she continued to talk to Thistle. Then, the crows pretended to attack Teasel. As expected, Thistle jumped in surprise and flew backwards a few feet. Crows were not ordinarily mean birds, and she had never heard of them attacking fairies. *What was going on?*

During the carefully simulated attack, Teasel screamed and cried out, rolling around on the ground between the three birds who were pretending to peck at her and stomp on her.

From where Thistle hovered, with her back up against the holly bushes, the attack looked very real. She cried out, “*Oh no! Oh no! Help! Someone, help!*”

But her tiny fairy voice was not heard by anyone. And she couldn't think clearly enough to change into regular girl form to try to drive off the vicious birds. Plus, she was still having the problem of being afraid to defend herself, so even normal girl size might not have helped because birds were sometimes scary even to very large people. Thistle just stared, horrified.

But after a few moments, her brain finally kicked in. This wasn't herself that needed defending. Her friend, Teasel, was in trouble. At eleven years old, Thistle was often protective of younger fairies. She suddenly felt a surge of energy building up inside of her, and she felt extremely angry with herself for having delayed in helping her friend.

In an instant, she whipped out her porcupine quill wand and flew directly at the crows. Within seconds, the crows were gone in a flurry of black feathers and squawking cries.

As Thistle hurried to her friend's side, Teasel sat up in the grass. She was flushed and out of breath, but unharmed. She hadn't been pecked, scratched, or stepped on by any of the careful crows who were now perched in a chinaberry tree in the next yard, surveying the situation and hoping that Thistle wasn't going to come up after them or try to chase them down.

Primrose, Pumpkinwing, and the brownies emerged from the holly bushes; and Pumpkinwing told Thistle, "Good job!"

"What's going on?" asked Thistle, now suspicious.

“We’ll explain everything later,” answered Pumpkinwing. “We have two more stops to make this morning. But how do you feel?”

After a moment’s pause, Thistle said, “I feel more like myself. Thanks.” Then a look of determination came across her face, and she added, “I’m going to get my skates back!” With that, Thistle *popped* into regular girl form and marched down the street to Rhonda’s house.

Within minutes she had her skates back. Thistle also got a computer game back for little Veronica who lived four houses down and who was also frequently terrorized by the bullying Rhonda.

As the group moved on to Part Two of the plan, Primrose said, “How about an

Academy Award for Teasel? That was a magnificent performance.”

Teasel blushed at the praise, especially when Bob added, “Yes, for a while I thought the crows were really hurting you, and I was desperately hoping they had gotten their instructions right.”

“They did fine,” answered Teasel. “I got pushed a little by their wings, but none of them actually stepped on me or really pecked me. Please, thank them for us.”

The brownies agreed and were already planning to give a gift of nuts, berries, and seeds to their feathered friends.

The group arrived at Madam Monarch’s house after about thirty minutes of traveling. Before they reached the porch, Alan warned the group, “If it looks like Marigold is at all

in danger of getting hurt, I am going to step in.”

The rest of them agreed but hoped it would not be necessary. Marigold was an extremely powerful fairy; and with the kind of week she had been having with various bites and stings from insects, they hoped that today’s planned encounter would push her over the edge and force her into action.

This time, Primrose lured Marigold out of the house, and the girls set about taking a tour of Madam Monarch’s flower garden. In fairy form, they walked between the rows of daffodils and tulips. Then they wound their way through a bed of towering zinnias toward a specific spot. Just beside a tall red zinnia, Primrose pretended to trip on a stone.

As part of their plan, on the previous day, James had captured a scorpion on the rocky

side of town, and had imprisoned the insect in a plastic travel soap container. He left the container overnight near the spot where they planned to induce Marigold to face off with the scorpion.

When released, as expected, the scorpion headed straight for the two fairies.

Marigold froze in horror, and Primrose stayed seated on the ground where she had pretend-tripped. She held her ankle as though she had strained it with the fall.

Since scorpions were never cooperative or trustworthy like crows, the brownies couldn't ask one for help, so they just had to kidnap one for their purposes. And this scorpion was plenty mad at having spent the night in a plastic soap container. The insect made its way quickly through the zinnia

stalks toward the frightened Primrose and Marigold.

Marigold rose into the air slightly to get out of the scorpion's path, and she urged Primrose to do the same. But Primrose was pretending to be in pain from her twisted ankle; and supposedly, the pain was preventing her from flying.

Alan moved forward slightly to be ready to intervene in case the fairies got into real trouble.

Marigold didn't seem to be able to act, and as the insect drew ever near, Primrose was starting to think she would have to fly up and abandon the plan.

However, at the exact moment Primrose was about to give her wings the silent command to move, something inside Marigold stirred, and a calm fortitude

overtook her. She landed directly between the scorpion and Primrose and raised her hand, palm outward, toward the insect. A tremendous force issued from her hand and pushed the scorpion backwards nearly fifteen feet.

Alan barely missed getting out of the way of the skidding, sliding scorpion.

Primrose got up and gave Marigold a hug.

Then the rest of the group of fairies and brownies encircled the confused Marigold, and Pumpkinwing again said, “We’ll explain everything later.”

As they were leaving, the relieved Alan impulsively stepped forward and gave Marigold a kiss on the cheek. They had become good friends in the last two years. But since they had never kissed before, and

were basically too young to be boyfriend and girlfriend, no matter how much they liked each other, both Alan and Marigold turned bright red from the unexpected peck.

Part Three of the plan involved Blue. Since she lived about seven miles from Madam Monarch, the brownies called an eagle to take the group the distance.

The fairies and brownies were full of confidence that the rest of their plan would be successful since the first two parts had gone so well.

This time, Pumpkinwing got Blue out of the house and guided her toward a large pond, telling the currently water-shy fairy, “Thanks for coming with me. I really want to show you the most amazing orange dragonfly. I’ve never seen a bright orange one before.”

“Me neither,” answered Blue.

And Pumpkinwing rambled on. “Well, at first he was zooming around so fast, I thought I was seeing my own reflection in the water. But I finally got a good look at him. He is so cool and I’m sure he’ll be thrilled to see you, Blue.”

As the two fairies neared a small dock, Blue hesitated. She really didn’t want to be too near water right now. But Pumpkinwing pulled her along with the promise of seeing the bright orange dragonfly.

When Pumpkinwing got right to the edge of the dock, she *accidentally* bumped right into one of the wooden mooring posts and fell straight into the water.

Blue flew to the edge of the dock and looked down at her floundering friend. Pumpkinwing’s drowning performance

rivaled that of Teasel's crow attack, and Blue really thought her friend was in serious trouble. With all of the splashing and sputtering, how could she not be?

After looking frantically up and down the short shoreline of the pond, Blue decided there was nothing else to do but dive in too. But as she plunged into the cool water, Blue had the thought that they would likely both drown because she was still so unsure of her swimming abilities right now that it was a very real possibility that she could not rescue anyone, or even float well enough to save her own life.

However, miraculously, a mere moment after Blue touched the water, her swimming skills returned to her. She quickly reached Pumpkinwing, who decided that the charade had gone far enough and rose shimmering

and shivering out of the pond, her fairy wings flinging hundreds of sparkling water droplets in every direction.

Blue flew up out of the water too, confused, just like Thistle and Marigold had been. Primrose, Teasel, Alan, Bob, and James emerged from behind a tree on the outskirts of the pond.

With the brownies riding on the eagle, the group flew back toward Blue's house to drop her off, explaining their methods to break the *Very-Fairy-Contrary-Spell* as they flew. Though Blue was still a bit shook up by the apparent near drowning of her friend, she admitted that their plan was very clever; and she was glad that she got to be a part of helping to break the spell.

The fairies and brownies had an impromptu meeting at Madam Toad's house

late Saturday evening. Many of the area fairies were able to attend.

Christopher, leader of the brownies, was on hand too. He was very pleased that his brownies had been able to help the fairies sort out a troublesome fairy problem.

Pumpkinwing was given the opportunity to describe the *Week of Opposites* in detail, since most of the fairies only had bits and pieces of information.

When Pumpkinwing finished talking, Madam Toad addressed the group. “Yes, Inimicus Diametra likes to pass through every now and then to shake things up. His evil-doing is ordinarily kept to a smaller scale, but there are so many fairies living in this one area that his curse was particularly successful this time. And it is difficult for fairies to function properly when our true

nature and characters are hidden, with opposite qualities presenting themselves instead.”

Madam Toad was full of praise for Pumpkinwing, Teasel, and Primrose. She told the group, “Without any guidance from mentors, our three heroines sorted out this problem in a most remarkable fashion. They became admirable Fairies of Action, and flittered forth like Fairies of Legend to take care of business.

“I am so proud of all of you,” the fairy leader added. “If you hadn’t forced Thistle, Marigold, and Blue into action, who knows how long it would have taken for three fairies to use their suppressed gifts to break everyone free from the curse.”

Pumpkinwing did feel very good about what she, Primrose, and Teasel had been

able to accomplish. It was nice to know that she could rely on herself and trust in her own judgment if needed. With this new confidence, she was very much looking forward to starting school in two days.

But it really was a good thing that she had so much vigor as a butterfly fairy. Since the past week had been one of the busiest in her life, she likely would have been too tired to start school without her extra store of energy.

Pumpkinwing knew that Primrose and Teasel were extremely worn out from all of the chasing around and worrying they had done; but since they weren't butterfly or moth fairies, they would just have to get some rest and take their vitamins.

The Fairy Chronicles Series

Marigold and the Feather of Hope

Dragonfly and the Web of Dreams

Thistle and the Shell of Laughter

Firefly and the Quest of the Black Squirrel

Spiderwort and the Princess of Haiku

Periwinkle and the Cave of Courage

Cinnabar and the Island of Shadows

Mimosa and the River of Wisdom

Primrose and the Magic Snowglobe

Luna and the Well of Secrets

Dewberry and the Lost Chest of Paragon

Moonflower and the Pearl of Paramour

Snapdragon and the Odyssey of Élan

Harlequin and the Pebble of Spree

Dove and the Parchment of Dulcet

Cricket and the Enchanted Music Box

Blue, the Mermaid, and the Fisherman's Tale

Aloe and the Spring of Hale

Pumpkinwing and the Week of Opposites

Minnow and Mr. Keen – the Brilliant Troll

Teasel and the Halloween Mysteries

Calliope and the Land of Bliss

Heather and the Basket of Understanding
Honeysuckle and the February Garden
Sandpiper and the Ship of Pools
Brandtii and the Perils of Prima Della, Top
 Strawberry, and Big-Wag
Ginger and the Purple Ibex
Swan and the Realm of Hollowness
Larkspur and Alyssum Meet Sniggerbly
 Wiskerfink
Clover and the Flying Turtle
Arabesque and the Return of Clack Palaver
Thyme and the Magic Dollhouse
Bumblebee and the Maze of Regret
Fern and the Candle of Friendship
Cherry and the Adventures of Pwensfourth-
 Greeves Mistoken
Ambrosia and the Elemental Fairies
Jasmine, the Journal, and Magnolia's Sacrifice
Raven and the Children of the Rainbow
Pennyroyal and the Last Rhinoceros
Lilac and the Secret of Obsidian
Sparrow and Edelweiss's Ghost
Quince, Amethyst, and the Forever Journey
Dandelion and the Box of Illusion
Hollyhock and the Christmas of the Swans

Eglantine and the Laughing Owl
The Glass Fairy
Berylline and the Tree of Joy
Meadowsweet and the Magic Fountain
Jewels and Superheroes
The Adventures of Red Zipper
Laurel and the Inn of the Whispers
Apple and the Legend of the Western Star
Tea, Sterling, and the Heart of Fire
Scarlet, Willow, and the Two-Foot Witch
Obsidian and the Last Brownie Prince
Helenium and the Really Very Confused House
Azure and the Butterfly Fairy Convention
Snowdrop and Four o’Clock Meet the White
 Elephant and the Dancing Rabbit
Aurora and the Lights of Marfa
Journey’s End

The Fairy Chronicles Chronology

The timeline of the series, beginning with *Marigold and the Feather of Hope* and ending with *Journey's End*, spans ten years. Marigold is nine when the series begins and eighteen when she becomes Aurora's mentor. The final two books of the series form a double, ending bookend because Marigold has a large presence in *Aurora and the Lights of Marfa* (as she did in *Marigold and the Feather of Hope*), and the Feather of Hope is a key factor in *Journey's End*.



Works by J.H. Sweet

The Fairy Chronicles

Clock Winders Series

The Wishbone Miracle

The White Sparrow

Juan Noel's Crystal Airship

The Heaviest Things

Foo and Friends

The Time Entity Trilogy

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