

How The Fairy Chronicles was Born In the Words of J.H. Sweet...

I have always loved fairy tales and children's fantasy, and I was fascinated by unicorns and gnomes in my childhood. My interest in fairies developed much later by a curious series of events:

The Fairy Chronicles began when I had a particularly bad week of things breaking around the house—garage door opener, dishwasher, computer, etc. I naturally thought I had gremlins. In an attempt to figure out how to solve the problem, I thought of three things: using my vacuum cleaner to either scare or trap the gremlins, buying stainless steel appliances that would be more difficult for gremlins to break, and asking the dachshund down the street to come and root them out for me. (In *The Fairy Chronicles*, these are the three things gremlins are afraid of—vacuum cleaners, stainless steel, and dachshunds.) I also wished for an elf to appear to fix my broken items, because when I was growing up, elves didn't just make Christmas toys, they repaired broken toys. My brain next thought that a fairy with a magic wand would be an even better magical solution. However, I soon realized that the fairy would have to have a much loftier purpose in life than to fix my broken appliances, such as saving the whole world from doom.

I began with Marigold because my mother loved marigolds. She planted them every year in the garden to keep bugs off of other plants. This gave me the idea to give each fairy a special gift, and sometimes more than one, to help with the job of protecting nature and solving serious problems, mainly problems caused by the mischief of other magical creatures. With the great variety and complexity of all of nature, an entire series was quickly born.

I am also inspired by the beauty of Texas, which is why *The Fairy Chronicles* takes place largely in 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 such as 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.