

What's Your Story, Pamela S. Taylor?

I grew up in Riverside, California, in a town so smoggy that the sky was grey for most of the year. Once in a while it would clear up enough and..."Hey! There are actually hills behind all that haze! Who knew?"



Riverside is not a very picturesque town. "Not very picturesque" means that if you wanted to take a pretty picture, you would need to get in your car and drive away from Riverside. Sorry, Riverside. Now I live in Oakland, California. Most famous quote about Oakland: "There is no there there." However, I do have a view of San Francisco from my house, and San Francisco is VERY picturesque. Even when it's hazy. Some cities have all the luck.

I have always loved animals. If I go into someone's home I'm afraid I will ignore their cute little baby and zoom right over to their homely dog. Or their cat, or their parrot. One of my first memories is trying to pull my grandfather's puppy into my playpen by its ears. Buster forgave me, as dogs do. Now I have two dogs of my own, Manchee and Tux, and a frog named Dumpy.



I have also always loved books. My mother said I could get a library card as soon as I could write my name, which I managed when I was four years old. After that I took out the maximum ten books every single trip. Once I got punished for taking a pencil to a picture book and connecting some lines that some artsy artist left out—which seemed monstrously unfair. I was just HELPING!



When I was little and someone asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up, I would say, "I want to write children's books." So I am living my dream!

Did you ever get into trouble at home or school?

Well, I didn't get into trouble with this, but it was so stupid I must share. There was a kid at school who broke his arm and had a cast, which everybody signed. My friend Sheila and I were jealous. We wanted broken bones and casts, too! So Sheila and I jumped on her bike and took turns – one of us pedaled fast and steered really close to parked cars, while the other sat behind with one leg stuck out in hopes of breaking it on a fender. After a few nasty bruises we gave up.



I TOLD you it was stupid.

What books were favorites as a child?

The Velveteen Rabbit, The Jungle Book, The Chronicles of Narnia, and The Children of Green Knowe.

What one thing can you tell readers that nobody knows?

When I was little and riding in the car, I always imagined there was a horse running alongside. I would imagine it jumping fences and hedges and anything else in its path. The horse was white with a grey mane and tail, just like the plastic Arabian horse I played with at home.



Do you have a special place where you write your books?

I usually write in an upstairs bedroom/study. Sometimes we have guests but most people don't like to sleep in the bed in my study because in one corner next to my desk I keep a kendo dummy. I practice kendo (Japanese swordsmanship) and the dummy has on armor and looks, I suppose, sort of creepy at night. The dummy doesn't seem scary to me, since I hit him all the time, and he has never once hit me back. But if I should ever disappear mysteriously, arrest the kendo dummy. He has motive and opportunity.