

RETURN OF THE TOOTH FAIRIES

I wake to the sound of whispering. Someone is in my bedroom. I lie still, listening. I hear them again, the whispers.

Two voices, tinkling, light as a feather.

“Where shall we put them?”

“I don’t know.”

“What did they tell us?”

“I thought you were listening.”

“I thought you were.”

I strain to see through the darkness. There are two small lights, twinkling, no more than pinpoints. Am I dreaming? Hallucinating?

“Who’s there?”

“Oh, I’ve dropped one,” comes a tiny voice.

I switch on the light.

“Who are you?”

“Oh, I’m sorry. We didn’t mean to wake you.”

I sit up. There’s a tiny figure, standing on my bed near my feet, and there’s a beam of light, like a little miner’s lamp.

“Who are you?”

“I’m Sylvie, your tooth fairy. I’m sorry we woke you.”

“We? Who’s we?”

“My friend, Plunge. He’s there on the floor.”

I look over the side of my bed. There’s another point of light.

“I don’t believe in ...”

“DON’T SAY IT!” they shout together. “If you say that one of us will die.”

“Sorry.”

Why am I saying sorry? It’s my room.

“Why are you here?”

“To return your teeth.”

“What teeth?”

I run my tongue over my front teeth to check if they are still there.

“When you were young your baby teeth came out and you put them under your pillow.”

“Yes. My parents left me sixpences.”

“No, it was us, your tooth fairies.”

“That’s what my parents said but I never believed them.”

The second figure appears on the bed. I don’t know how he got there. He just appeared.

‘Sylvie’s right. It was us and now we’re returning them.’

“What for?”

I can’t quite get to grips with the fact I’m having a discussion with two fairies.

“Shall I tell him?” says Plunge.

“No, I’ll tell him.”

“Please, one of you tell me.”

Sylvie says, “There are two reasons. First, no child is satisfied with sixpence any more. There are no sixpences and it became too expensive to leave more.”

“Accountants are in charge now,” added Plunge.

Sylvie glares at Plunge. “I was going to tell him.”

“Go on then,” says Plunge.

“All right, I am.”

“I don’t care, as long as some one does,” say I.

“No need to be tetchy,” says Plunge.

Before I can answer, Sylvie carries on.

“We are just overloaded with teeth, all carefully filed away. Think how much fairy power is wasted doing that and imagine how large our filing systems are.”

“I can’t imagine.”

“Well they are,” says Plunge. “So the decision was taken at the highest level to give them back”

“ We are downsizing. We have fewer fairies now because the young don’t believe Well, you know.”

And they disappeared.

When I woke next morning, I thought I’d dreamt it but there, under my pillow was a little bag full of baby teeth.

490 words excl title