



Fairy Fiasco

The day the Tooth Fairy got fired and rehired

By Kelli Wheeler

First, let me say, thank God it wasn't his first tooth.

But I do believe it was the second or possibly the third lost tooth in our house when the Tooth Fairy missed her date with destiny and forgot to show up. And not because the little guy didn't fall asleep fast enough or because the Tooth Fairy fell asleep during the news (though that was part of it).

No, just like all the times the Tooth Fairy took a load of wash to the laundry room, received a phone call, got sidetracked and forgot to return to the task at hand to maybe catch a little Oprah, she once again plain forgot there was one very excited little boy with a tooth waiting in a special little box for the "big exchange."

Burned forever on my brain like a searing brand "L" for loser, I will never forget the sad—OK, heartbroken (oof, that still hurts)—expression on my son's face as he nudged me awake that morning and, with total disillusionment, quietly said, "Momma, the Tooth Fairy didn't come last night. How come she didn't come?"

My heart sank into my stomach and I silently started cursing and fired the Tooth Fairy. I was going to have to cover her blunder.

First, I assessed the situation. "Did you check everywhere, honey? Under both pillows?"

"Yes."

OK, can't slip back in and hide it under the other pillow.

Second time for excuses. "Oh, honey. Maybe a lot of kids lost teeth yesterday and she had too big of a workload. I bet she'll come tomorrow for sure. Do you think?"

My firstborn, then-5-year-old son nodded a disappointed agreement.

OK, he bought it. But there were unshed tears sparkling in his eyes. God, I could just pummel that Tooth Fairy!

Third—buy some time. "You want to go watch a little TV before I make breakfast?"

He nodded his head again, then slowly left the room. I waited for the

sound of the TV to come on. As soon as I heard it, I jumped out of bed and proceeded with Plan B.

I actually just learned of Plan B—Tooth Fairy Division—a few weeks earlier at our play group when a mom shared her story of the Tooth Fairy falling down on the job.

What a ding-dong,
I thought. What
kind of Tooth Fairy
would forget to do
the "big exchange"?

What a ding-dong, I thought. What kind of Tooth Fairy would forget to do the "big exchange"? I looked in the mirror. Big ding-dong staring back at me.

So, the plan was to put the dollar inside the pillow case, explaining that the Tooth Fairy got a little lost.

Fourth—shoot, I don't have a buck! Not even four quarters!

Tiptoeing into my son's room, I actually stole a dollar from his piggy bank to put inside the pillowcase. I grabbed a marker and wrote I.O.U. on my hand to remind me to pay him back.

Fifth—initiate Operation Restore Faith. I slipped the money inside his pillowcase but then realized: What about the tooth that was still there? I got the marker again and a piece of paper and wrote, "Dear Logan, I thought you might want to keep your tooth like the first time, so I left it for you." I even wrote it in big, loopy cursive—very fairylike.

I raced back to bed and got in like I had never left. I called my son to come back. I tried to look sleepy and act like I just had a thought as I was laying there. (Meryl Streep, eat your heart out.)

"Hey, honey, did you check *inside* your pillowcase? I've heard that sometimes the Tooth Fairy can get a little lost."

Parent continued on page 63

“I didn’t!” my son said, hopeful. He dashed back to his room. I was beginning to feeling redeemed.

“She came! She came!” I heard him shout. “And she left a note!” He came back in for me to read it. Before he could, though, he asked, “But what about the tooth?”

“Well, let’s read the note,” I said, giving myself bonus points for the addendum to Plan B.

So he was happy and the day was saved, but I still had lingering guilt that I had to resort to Plan B. There was still one last thing to do.

I called my husband at work. “Why didn’t you remind me?!” I accused as soon as he picked up the phone. “You can’t put this kind of responsibility on a woman you’ve nicknamed Sidetrack Sally! You didn’t even leave me a dollar!”

“You didn’t ask for a dollar,” he sputtered.

“See what I mean?!”

“Honey, what are we talking about?”

I relayed the whole horrible incident and he assured me I hadn’t scarred our son for life and applauded me on the save. I told him there was an opening for the Tooth Fairy and encouraged him to take the position.

He declined the offer, telling me to give the Tooth Fairy a second chance. “You’ll laugh at this some day,” he added.

Of course, he was right. I have laughed with other moms about it and the lengths we’ll go to preserve the traditional joys of childhood.

But Santa Claus had better skip the news and have two alarms set.

Kelli Wheeler lives in Arden Oaks and is a mother of two. She can be reached at kellimwheeler@aol.com. Check out her new website, kellimwheeler.com. ●