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## Lies Parents Tell: The Teeth In This Secret, Hidden-Away Jar Aren't Yours

**BY JOSEPH WILSON**

**PHOTO © PAVONNE/TWENTY20**

This past Christmas, our eldest daughter Sonia discovered the true identity of Santa Claus.

On Christmas Eve, she asked for the truth. Just to make sure she was getting the straight goods, with expertly crafted wide eyes she added, “you wouldn’t lie to me — would you?”

So, we told her.

She was not surprised with the news, just mostly concerned with logistics. “How are you guys going to have enough time to buy all the presents in one night?” asked Sonia. She was actually pleased to be part of a new club; the secret society of people who know the truth and collaborate to keep the fantasy alive for younger children.

**You'll Also Love:** How I Became the Tooth Fairy Other Parents Weren't Too Fond Of — But Kids Loved (<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/learning/view/how-i-became-the-tooth-fairy-other-parents-werent-too-fond-of>)

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For some reason, though, the tooth fairy is still very much alive. Perhaps because she brings cash. Sonia asked once, kind of half-heartedly, “the tooth fairy exists, right, dad?” That little “right, dad?” at the end of her sentence suggested to me she wanted to keep believing just for a little while longer. Belief often requires more than a little bit of self-delusion.

My wife and I started with a solid tooth strategy. We decided on a dollar per tooth, which, while not the highest market rate for teeth on our block, was enough to start filling up her piggy bank with satisfying clinks.

But it wasn't always a dollar — we'd quickly learned we had to improvise. One of Sonia's adult teeth squeezed its way in behind the corresponding baby tooth without pushing it out. This required a trip to the dentist, a bit of novocaine and a lot of crying. The tooth fairy heard her cries and upped the exchange to five dollars. Parents of her classmates cursed us (<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/learning/view/how-i-became-the-tooth-fairy-other-parents-werent-too-fond-of>).

Afterwards we explained that the market price of teeth had settled back down again, but the next time she lost a tooth we actually forgot to leave anything. Sonia woke up in the morning and ran into our room with the tiny tooth in her hands.

“She didn't come!” she wailed.

“Oh...uh...I'm sure she was just really busy.”

## Becoming A Fairy Forger

My wife had a great idea. While I helped Sonia get dressed, my wife wrote a note and stuffed it under her pillow.

We had been warned ahead of time about such stunts by friends, engaged in a similar campaign of note writing, who were surprised to learn that their children were suddenly experts in handwriting analysis. The daughter of a friend directly confronted him:

“Is this mom's handwriting?”

“Yes,” he admitted.

“I can't believe it! I can't believe the tooth fairy is so busy she needs mom to write her notes for her. Write your own notes, tooth fairy!”

With this cautionary tale in mind, my wife wrote our daughter a note in a flowery script that was exactly how fairies are supposed to write. It bore no resemblance to the harried scribbles of a tired parent.

“Hey Sonia, did you check under your pillow to see if she left a note or something?” my wife asked.

She stuck her head under the pillow and squealed, “I didn’t see this before!” She read it out loud. Apparently, the tooth fairy had been at the house, about to deposit the dollar, when one of her siblings woke up needing to pee! She got scared and ran away. (Thankfully, Sonia didn’t ask why the tooth fairy returned to write a letter explaining all this and didn’t just leave the loonie.) The next morning we could hear Sonia breathe a sigh of relief when she found the coin under her pillow.

## Mounting Lies

But the awkwardness continues, like when Sonia and her younger sisters were snooping in our bedroom and found a tiny bottle with six tiny teeth within.

“Hey dad, are these mine?” she asked.

“No. They’re...mine.” I said.

“Wait, what?”

“Um... when you become an adult, the tooth fairy returns all the teeth she took and you can keep them as souvenirs of your childhood.”

An awkward pause.

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**Relevant Reading:** Get Kids to Brush Their Teeth With The 'Toothbrush Song' (<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/learning/view/how-i-became-the-tooth-fairy-other-parents-werent-too-fond-of>)

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“Do I have to give the money back?” Sonia asked.

“No.” I said.

“OK then.”

So, the great conspiracy continues, for a little while anyway, and we stay locked in our ~~same~~ deluder and deluded.

That is, until Sonia realizes she can just grab change from the dish by the front door.



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