

by George H Bentz, DDS, MS

Dedicated to all those wiggly, wobbly teeth out there!



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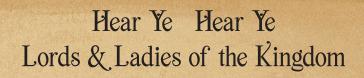
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Contact the author at: info@izzardink.com

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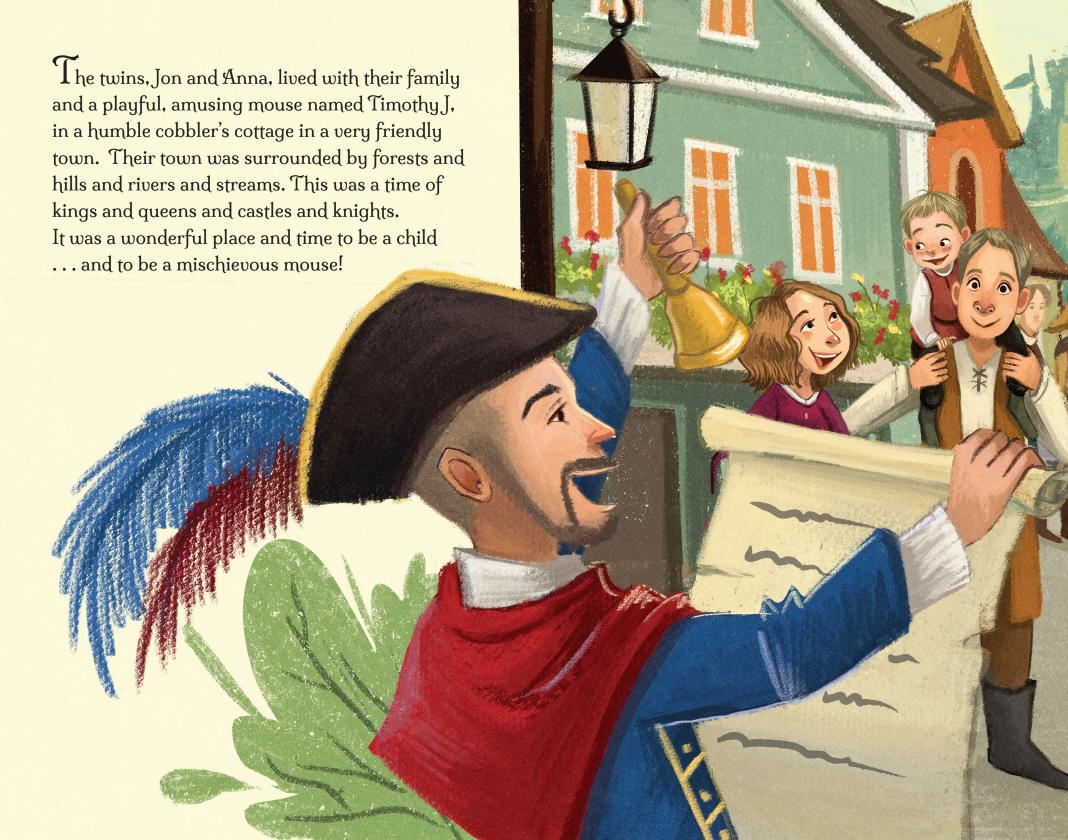


ertain milestones of "growing up" remain indelibly etched in our memories. Losing the first tooth is an event marked with fear, wonderment, pride, and joy. So many feelings are tied to this event because it encompasses so many new and different sensations rolled into one: loss of a part of your body, bleeding (usually associated with injury and pain) and the new feeling of a hole between teeth where there once was a tooth, all of which evoke apprehension, curiosity, joy, even excitement. Questions arise, "Why did this happen? How can bleeding be good? How can I lose a part of myself and still be the same? If these sensations are not truly pain, what are they?" Joy and pride come with understanding resulting from teaching that tooth loss is a normal, natural process in growing up.

Parents through the centuries have had to contend with this complicated issue as their children grew. Not fully understanding the situation themselves, folk tales began to ease children's minds. These tales were handed down from older sister to younger brother, parent to child, generation to generation. The precise time and location of the tooth fairy's appearance is unknown, lost to history. But the tradition continues. What is known is that in Medieval Europe, the Tooth Fairy was a Tooth Mouse, perhaps because mice were common in the unsanitary homes and castles of that time. To encompass the traditions of those past tales with today's busy world, I've written a possible history explaining how the Tooth Mouse of Medieval times became the Tooth Fairy of today. By sharing this tale with your child, I hope you can provide a pathway for your child through this important event and help, as Timothy J would say, make "growing up" fun.

There is always the question of how much of a reward the Tooth Fairy will leave. Rewards can be quite different. Timothy J would say, "Most times I leave coins!" There are many coins that are unique. Half-dollar pieces are seldom, if ever seen today and make a wonderful gift for that tooth. Dollar coins can be gold in color and small, or large and silver. Several coins from different states might be a unique gift as well. Coins showing the year of that first tooth loss, and coins marking subsequent tooth loss could act as a historical diary. Coins from other nations could be left as well. Timothy J's imagination is the only limit to the different types of coins that he might leave. Adults can have as much fun as children with the loss of a tooth.

Enjoy reading this tale with your child and enjoy the experience of your child "growing up."





"Because you have a kind and giving heart, I am going to change you into a Tooth Fairy Prince. You will be able to fly to all children when they lose a tooth. As you put a coin under their pillow and take the tooth, the tooth will turn into a new coin. You will make children everywhere happy about losing a tooth and growing up."

