

No title

By Anushka D, Grade 7

The view from my room was breathtaking as ever, a lively forest sprinkled with pastel splashes of colour from bell-shaped twinflowers. The afternoon sun illuminated the world in a golden glow. I tried to enjoy the peace, dreading how much I'd be yelled at for waking up late. I wasn't disappointed.

As soon as my feet touched the living room floor, I was greeted with a lecture. "Do you know what time it is?" my father exclaimed. "We told you yesterday that we'll both be at work today. You had to watch your brother for a few hours until we got home. Now, unless the traffic decides to clear up, I'm going to be late."

"Sorry," I muttered. "I slept through my alarm." My six-year-old brother was sitting at the dining table, a sandwich in front of him. He was too busy wiggling his loose tooth to eat his lunch.

My father soon left for work. There was no time for him to decide what to do about my tardiness. My brother, Montgomery, grinned at me, his front tooth dangling from his mouth. It would certainly fall out soon, hopefully not while he's eating.

"Good morning, Monty," I said. Montgomery. What a boring name, our parents gave him. I turned on the television before making my own breakfast. A news channel. I was about to change it when I saw the creature.

At first glance, the being looked like an old, ragged doll, the kind from horror movies, with skin of fabric and a torn dress that a fairy tale princess might have worn, if it were intact. It didn't take long to realize this was a real, living creature, with scaly skin and large, soulless eyes. When the creature opened its mouth to speak, its tattered wings spread in fury.

"Humans of Earth," the creature announced, its eyes wide and unblinking. "It is time to address an issue that has presented itself in recent decades. According to our agreement, at least half of your children must donate the teeth they lose to us every year."

"This agreement has been in place for thousands of years, yet you have decided to breach it." The creature bared its teeth and let out a screech of fury. I recognized them as human teeth and knew this had to be a prank. "We gave you time to correct your mistake, but the time for mercy is over."

With that ominous farewell, the screen returned to how it always looked, with the weather being displayed on the right and a terrified news reporter staring at the camera. I turned off the television and took a few deep breaths, trying to make sense of what just happened. It was just some internet troll, a hacker trying to scare people. Right?

I clung onto this rational conclusion like a lifeline as I encouraged Monty to finish his lunch. Once he was done, I got him started on a page of his workbook and began washing the dishes in the sink. Our parents had given us both a book full of math problems and writing tasks to do over the summer. I found it loathsome. After all, the summer break was supposed to be a break, not an opportunity for more work.

While I helped Monty with a math question, I heard crashing and screaming from down the street. Still jumpy after that hacker's prank, I bolted to a window and peered at my neighbor's house. I stood there for a while, looking for any signs of theft, or maybe an accident of some sort. Nothing.

Suddenly, my phone made sounds that reminded me of sirens. The noise was impossible to ignore. I picked it up and read the bolded words that had taken over the screen. INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ALERT. I read the following paragraph over once, twice, as a sickening fear overcame me. The tooth fairy trolls. They were real. They were real, and they were attacking.

"Monty," I called my brother, struggling to keep my voice calm. "We have to hide in the basement. Everything is fine, we're just being careful. I'm going to bring some sharp things, but don't touch them unless I tell you to. Follow me."

My brother nodded nervously and waited while I grabbed a flashlight and the sharpest knives we had. I wasn't sure if they would do much damage against those monsters, but I refused to let them get us. On the way, I explained to Monty why we had to be quiet. He understood, but it was difficult to explain that mom and dad wouldn't be coming home anytime soon, not until after the lockdown.

We hid in the basement for hours as I explained everything to Monty. There were scary creatures trying to take everyone's teeth. They had been spotted worldwide, so we had to be careful. We sat there for hours. I regularly checked my phone for news and tried to call our parents. No response.

It was nighttime when they attacked. They announced their presence with arrows they shot into each lightbulb. I was blinded by the sudden darkness as I heard Monty's scream. It was the most sickening sound I'd ever heard, a screech of pure agony. I hollered his name and desperately searched for him in the dark. After fumbling with my supplies, I turned on a flashlight with shaking fingers.

The light illuminated something I wish I hadn't seen. Monty's mouth was bleeding freely, his teeth on the floor in front of those disgusting creatures. I cradled my brother and let out a cry of grief. He was gone. His killers turned to me and poised to strike. I then realized why their teeth looked so humanlike. They took human teeth. They had human teeth. That was my last thought before I became their next victim.

TAKE THIS AS A WARNING TO ALL OF HUMANKIND. YOUR DAYS ARE NUMBERED, YOUR CHANCES FINITE.

-President Fang of the Tooth Fairies