

No Fair, Tooth Fairy

A Reading A-Z Level S Leveled Book
Word Count: 1,186

Connections

Writing

Compare the illustrations of the tooth fairy on pages 5 and 10. Write a paragraph explaining what the illustrations are showing.

Health and Art

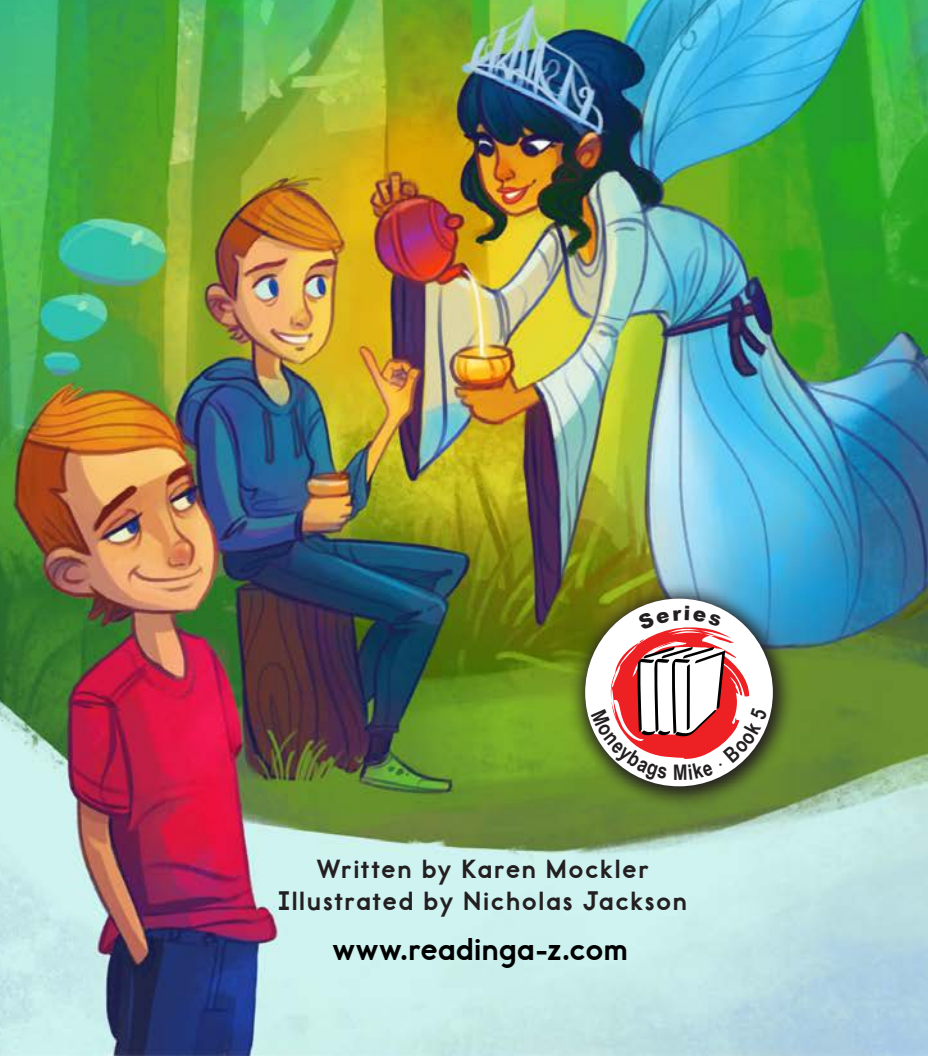
Research how to take care of your teeth. Make a poster that illustrates this information for your classmates.

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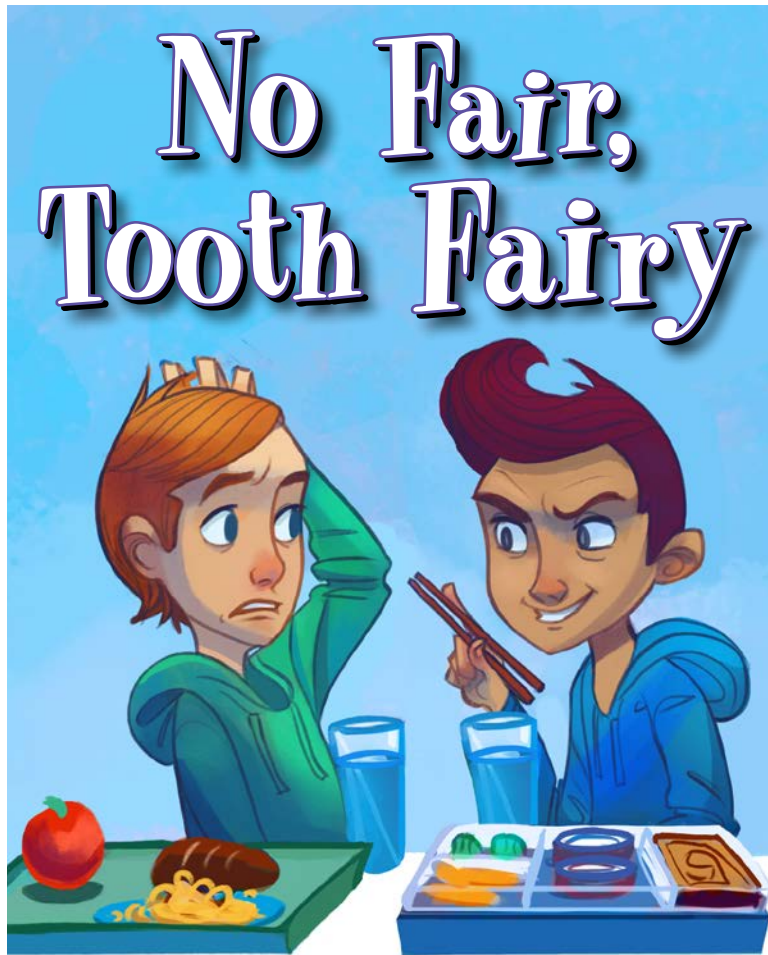
LEVELED BOOK • S

No Fair, Tooth Fairy



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Illustrated by Nicholas Jackson

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Focus Question

How does Mike negotiate to try to solve his problem?

Words to Know

advance	negotiate
bureaucratic	skeptical
correspondence	specimens
entrepreneur	upshot
income	

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Level S Leveled Book
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Correlation

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Reading Recovery	34
DRA	34

It was the Monday after Thanksgiving. Mike McCarthy was polishing off the last piece of pumpkin pie at the kitchen counter when his mom and little sister walked in. They had just come from the dentist.

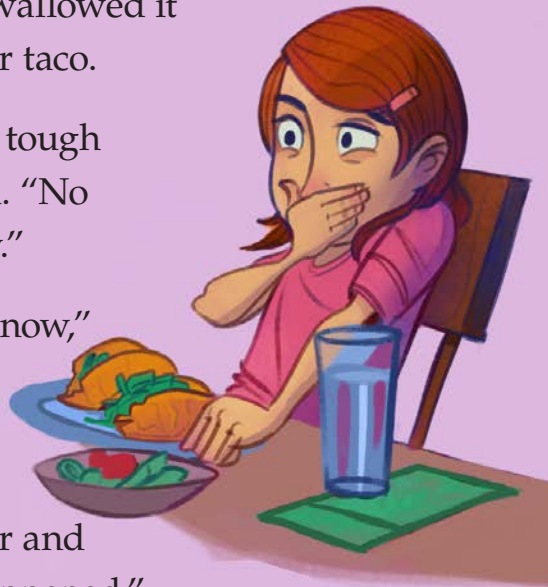
"I've got another loose tooth," Aster told Mike. "In fact, the dentist says I'm gonna lose three more this year."

Aster lost her tooth that very night at dinner. She swallowed it with a bite of her taco.

"That's some tough luck," Mike said. "No tooth, no money."

"Oh, I don't know," their dad said. "I'll bet she can write the tooth fairy a nice letter and explain what happened."

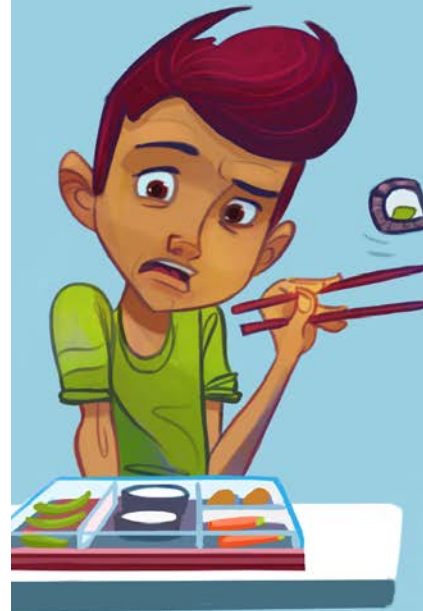
Mike was **skeptical**. Getting something for nothing wasn't how the world worked.



The next day in the cafeteria, Mike watched as his friend Derek pulled out a bento box, complete with chopsticks and sushi. Derek often had fancy lunches; Mike rolled his eyes, but didn't comment. Instead, he told Derek about Aster's swallowed tooth. "She wrote the tooth fairy a letter, and the tooth fairy still gave her two dollars," he said.

Derek's eyebrows shot sky-high. "Two dollars?" he repeated.

Mike nodded.



A piece of raw fish popped out from between Derek's chopsticks. "Are you kidding me?" he shouted. Mike had never seen him so shocked. "I get ten bucks a tooth, whether the tooth fairy gets my tooth or not."

"Ten bucks?" Mike repeated.

"If you got ten bucks a tooth, you could buy my Super Spy kit in no time," Derek said. "Lose three teeth, and you could tell the tooth fairy to keep the change."

Mike liked the sound of that. Months ago, Derek had offered to sell Mike his Super Spy kit for twenty-five dollars. Mike had been trying, and failing, to raise the money ever since.

"If only you could **negotiate** with the tooth fairy," Mike said.

Derek shrugged. "Maybe you can," he said.



That night at dinner, Mike asked, "How do you get in touch with the tooth fairy?"

"Oh," said Mrs. McCarthy, "the tooth fairy knows when you've lost a tooth. Even if you lose it when you're on vacation, she can always find you."

"What if you haven't lost a tooth, though?" Mike asked.

"If you haven't lost a tooth, why would you want to get in touch with the tooth fairy?" asked Mr. McCarthy.

"I want to negotiate," Mike said. "I mean, two bucks for a tooth. What about inflation?"

Mike's parents exchanged a look, but he was just getting started.

What's with Inflation?

Inflation is the rise in the price of goods over a long period of time. For example, let's say that two years ago, a dozen eggs cost \$1.50. Last year they cost \$1.75. This year, they cost \$2. That gradual rise in price is probably a sign of inflation.

Slow, steady inflation is actually a good thing. It can be a sign of a healthy economy.



“Do you think we all have the same tooth fairy, or is there more than one?” Mike wondered. “Is it like Santa Claus or more like the mailman? Maybe they’re assigned by zip codes. Maybe Derek gets more money because he lives in a richer neighborhood and has a richer fairy.”

His dad forced a smile. “Maybe,” he said.

Mike wrote the tooth fairy a politely worded letter. It read as follows:

Dear Tooth Fairy,

How are you today? From one **entrepreneur** to another, I sincerely hope the tooth business is booming. What do you do with all those teeth, anyway? Do you display them in a museum, or do you use them for something fairy-ish? I’m sure you’ve got some interesting **specimens** in your collection.

Madame, it has come to my attention that not all kids are earning the same amount for their teeth. For instance, my friend Derek Harrison gets ten dollars per tooth, while I get two. I find it hard to believe that Derek’s teeth are more desirable than mine. I’ve been sitting across from him at lunch for the past two years, and I can assure you they are definitely not whiter, brighter, or better-looking.

So I would like to raise my price. In the future, please consider paying me the same rate per tooth as Derek: ten dollars.

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you.



Mike signed the letter with a flourish. He showed it to his mom so she could proofread it for proper grammar, style, and punctuation. Then he reminded her, “You never told me how to get in touch with the tooth fairy when you haven’t lost a tooth.”

“Put the letter under your pillow,” she said. “With the tooth fairy, all **correspondence** and commerce move that way.”

Mike put the letter under his pillow. The next morning, another letter, printed on green, fairylike paper, lay in its place.



Dear Mike,

Tooth pricing is a complicated, **bureaucratic**, and, to be frank, boring practice, far too tedious to explain here. The **upshot**, I regret to inform you, is that I cannot pay you ten dollars a tooth. However, I have brought your concerns before the Tooth Fairy Association, and they have agreed to increase your rate to three dollars a tooth. I hope this will give you some satisfaction.

Sincerely,

Your devoted tooth fairy



Mike showed the letter to Derek at lunch. "That's almost nine teeth," he groaned. "It'll take me years to lose nine teeth."

Derek smiled a strange smile. "Not if you have them pulled," he said.

Mike gulped.

"And don't forget your wisdom teeth," Derek added.

What were wisdom teeth? Mike had no idea, but if they contained wisdom, Mike thought he could probably charge the tooth fairy extra.



When Mike went in for his next checkup, he had some questions for the dentist.

"Do you ever pull teeth that *aren't* loose?" he asked.

"Yes," the dentist said, "if we need to make more room in someone's mouth."

"How about mine?" Mike asked.

The dentist smiled and shook her head. "Your mouth is perfect just the way it is," she said.

Curses, Mike thought.

"How many teeth will I lose this year?" he asked.

"None," said the dentist.

"None!" cried Mike.

"You lost a bunch when you were Aster's age," she said. "You'll lose some more when you're ten or so."

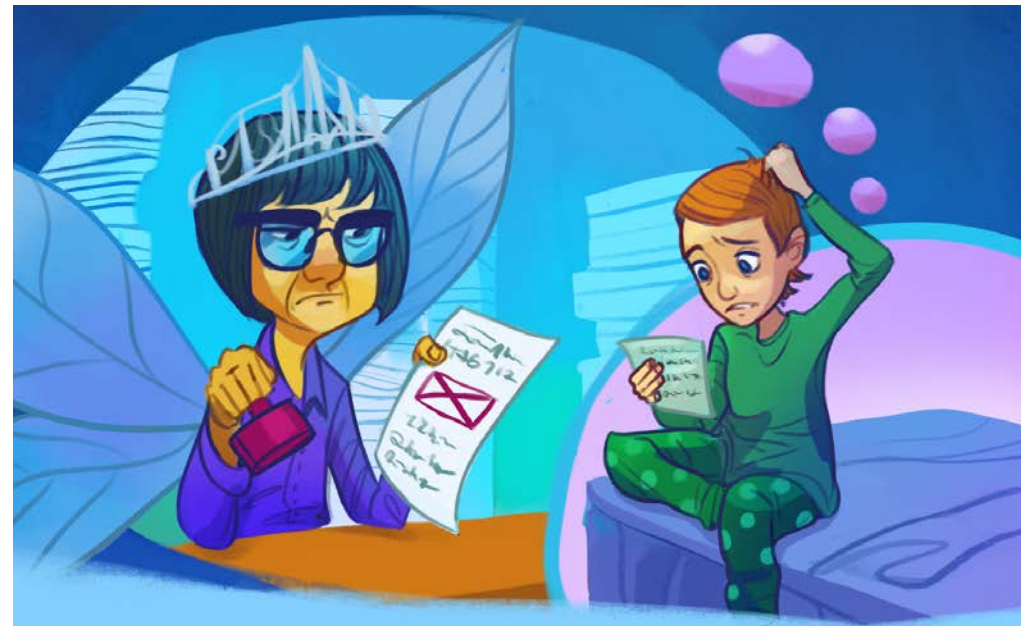
Mike scratched his head in frustration. "What about my wisdom teeth?" he asked.

“Well,” the dentist said, “you’ve got to get them before you can lose them.”

“When will that be?” Mike asked eagerly.

“Depends on the person,” the dentist said. “College, maybe.”

Mike frowned fiercely. He needed wisdom now!



That night, he wrote the tooth fairy a letter requesting a cash **advance**. In the morning, he received this reply:

Dear Mike,

Regarding an advance, the association strictly forbids this practice. I'm sorry to disappoint you.

Please consider that your tooth supply is finite (a limited resource) and, really, far more valuable to you than anybody else—even me. May I suggest you investigate an alternate source of **income**?

Mike crumpled the letter in disgust. He hated to admit it, but the tooth fairy was right. He only had so many teeth in his mouth. Even if he got top dollar for them, he needed a steadier stream of income.

He was about to toss the letter in the trash when he noticed a postscript on the back:

P.S. You are right. Your teeth are beautiful. Derek's teeth have nothing on yours.

Mike tried not to smile, but his beautiful teeth couldn't help it.



Glossary

advance (<i>n.</i>)	money given before work is completed; goods given before payment is received (p. 14)
bureaucratic (<i>adj.</i>)	of or relating to complicated rules and routines (p. 10)
correspondence (<i>n.</i>)	letter or email writing; letters or emails sent or received (p. 9)
entrepreneur (<i>n.</i>)	a person who starts and operates his or her own business (p. 8)
income (<i>n.</i>)	money that is received from work or another source (p. 14)
negotiate (<i>v.</i>)	to try to reach a formal agreement through discussion (p. 5)
skeptical (<i>adj.</i>)	having doubt (p. 3)
specimens (<i>n.</i>)	examples of things used for comparison, study, or display (p. 8)
upshot (<i>n.</i>)	the final outcome or result of something (p. 10)