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opening extract from

Fairy Gold

written by

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Lucy lay in bed, listening to her parents saying goodnight to her little sister, Isobel, in the next room. 'Leave your tooth where the fairies can find it easily, Izzy,' her mother said.

'I'll leave it under my pillow,' Izzy replied, sounding excited. Izzy was six and she believed in fairies, whereas Lucy, who was two years older, thought that believing in fairies was just silly.

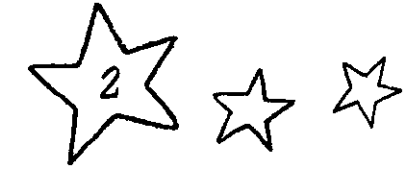
'Not too far under your pillow,' Dad told Izzy. 'You don't want the poor tooth fairy to

get squashed under there when she goes looking for it.'

Izzy giggled.

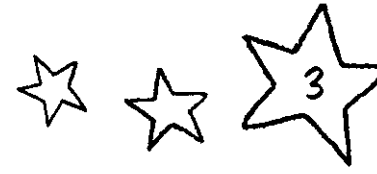
Lucy rolled her eyes. She didn't believe in the tooth fairy and as a consequence she had all her baby teeth saved in a little pouch inside her jewellery box.

The reason Lucy didn't believe in fairies was that her half-brother, Thomas, who was eleven, had proved to her when she was Izzy's age that it was your mum and dad who exchanged your teeth for coins when you left them under your pillow. Lucy and Izzy had the same dad as Thomas, but a different mum. Their dad had been married twice, first to Thomas's mum and then to Lucy and Izzy's. Thomas and his mother lived several hours' drive away from them and Thomas only came to stay in the school holidays. He had told Lucy once



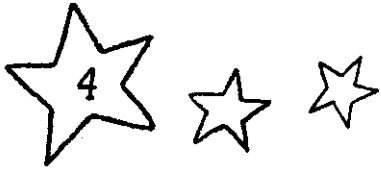
that he didn't think it was fair that he hadn't lived in the same house as his dad since he was a baby, whereas Lucy and Izzy had lived with him all their lives. Lucy had felt sorry for Thomas when he said that, because she knew she'd probably feel the same if she was the one whose mum and dad had got divorced. But Thomas could behave pretty badly sometimes when he came to stay with them, and Lucy always felt a lot less sorry for him then.

Thomas had been staying with them the night Lucy had lost her first tooth two years earlier, and when she had put it under her pillow for the tooth fairy, Thomas had told her she was being stupid. He had deliberately stayed awake after Lucy went to sleep and had shouted out when he'd heard Lucy's mum creep into Lucy's bedroom. Lucy had woken up just as her



mum was putting her hand under Lucy's pillow, and Lucy had stopped believing in fairies from that moment on, even though her mum had said she was only checking to see if the tooth fairy had been yet. Lucy's mum and dad had both been really cross with Thomas about that, she remembered now.

Izzy, however, still believed passionately in fairies, despite Thomas also telling *her* that the tooth fairy wasn't real. Izzy said she didn't believe Thomas because she had seen fairies on more than one occasion, with her own eyes. Thomas reckoned that Izzy couldn't tell the difference between make-believe and reality and he was always teasing her about it, especially when Izzy put on her fairy outfit and pretended to be a fairy queen, which Thomas thought was very funny. Lucy was more of a tomboy

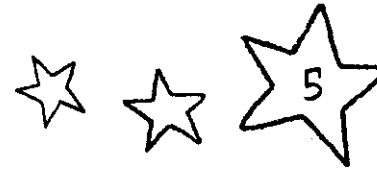


than Izzy and she hated wearing girly clothes, so she tended to get on better with Thomas than Izzy did – though it was difficult to get on with Thomas for the whole time he was there, because sooner or later he always got into a bad temper about something.

Tonight, after they had closed Izzy's door, Lucy's parents came into her bedroom. 'I know you don't think the tooth fairy is real, darling, but don't go spoiling it for Izzy the way Thomas spoilt it for you, will you?' her mother whispered as she leaned over to give Lucy a kiss goodnight.

'Don't worry. I won't tell her it's just you and Dad who take her tooth away and leave her the money, if that's what you mean,' Lucy whispered back.

'How could you even think such a



thing?' her dad protested, reaching out to tickle her.

'Because it's true!' Lucy retorted. But her mother was holding her finger over her lips to tell her to shush now, as she switched off her light.

Lucy was lying awake in the darkness after her parents had gone downstairs, thinking about how Thomas was coming to stay with them in two days' time because it was half-term. Dad was going to collect him in the car and, on the way back, they were stopping off to collect Grandpa too. Grandpa was Dad's father, which meant he was Thomas's grandfather as well. Their grandmother had died several years ago so Grandpa lived on his own now, which Dad said was the reason he tended to be quite grumpy. Having Thomas *and* Grandpa in the house at the

same time should be interesting, Lucy thought.

Lucy was just turning over to go to sleep when she heard a noise coming from her sister's room. It sounded like Izzy was out of bed and walking around.

Lucy got up and went into Izzy's room to find that the window was open and Izzy was standing staring out of it, looking upset.

'What's wrong?' Lucy asked her.

'The tooth fairy just came and took my tooth away, but she didn't leave me anything,' Izzy answered.

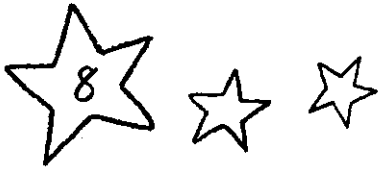
'Don't be silly!' Lucy said, shutting the window. 'There's no such thing as—' She broke off, remembering that she wasn't meant to tell Izzy that there was no such thing as fairies. 'Your tooth must still be under your pillow. Let me have a look.'

'It's NOT under my pillow,' Izzy snapped angrily. 'I told you! A fairy just came and took it away in a little sack. Fairies are meant to leave you a coin for your tooth, but this one didn't.'

As Lucy searched under her sister's pillow, they heard footsteps on the stairs and their mother came into the room.

'What's going on?' Mum asked.

Izzy repeated the story to her mother, who knelt down to search under the bed for the missing tooth while Lucy continued to feel under the pillow and inside the



pillow-slip in case the tooth had got stuck there.

After the search had revealed nothing, Lucy couldn't help laughing. 'Maybe a fairy really did come and take her tooth after all!' Though she didn't truly believe that.

Her mum was giving her a long look. 'You wouldn't know anything about this disappearing tooth, would you, Lucy?'

'Hey, it wasn't me!' Lucy protested.

'I just told you – it was a fairy,' Izzy said crossly. 'I *saw* her! She was wearing a gold sparkly dress and she had a little spoon that she used to scoop up my tooth.'

'You must have been dreaming,' Lucy said, grinning.

'No, I wasn't!'

'How about you both go back to bed now and we'll have another look for this tooth in the morning,' Mum suggested.

'Mummy, the tooth is GONE!' Izzy screeched at the top of her voice. 'You're not even listening to me!'

Izzy could get quite stroppy when she wanted – which always amused Lucy because most of the time Izzy was the one in the family who all the grown-ups seemed to think was a complete angel.

'That's enough shouting,' Mum said firmly. 'Back to bed now – both of you.'

Lucy and Izzy went back to bed, but neither of them could sleep. After a while, Lucy could hear her sister talking to herself in her room and she decided to go and listen. Sometimes Izzy had long conversations with her dolls and her teddies, which Lucy thought were hilarious.

This time, though, Izzy seemed to be talking to totally imaginary people. As Lucy stood in the doorway watching, Izzy

was sitting up in bed talking very seriously to the air in front of her.

'But that's terrible! Does your fairy queen know? . . . Really? . . . Well, yes, I think I could give you a description . . .' She suddenly stopped as she noticed Lucy. 'Lucy,' she whispered, 'you'll never guess what! That fairy who took my tooth was a bad fairy. Goldie and Bonnie were meant to collect it – not her.'

'Goldie and Bonnie?' Lucy moved closer to her sister. 'Who are they?'

'The *proper* tooth fairies, of course!' Izzy pointed with one finger of each hand to two spots in the air directly in front of her. 'They're right here!'

'I can't see anything,' Lucy said. 'Stop making things up, Izzy.'

'I'm not making things up!' Izzy seemed to pause to listen, then she turned back to Lucy and frowned. 'Goldie says you can't

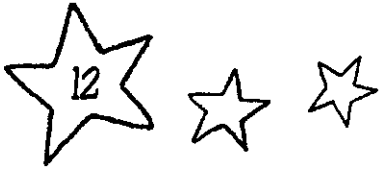
see them because you don't believe in fairies.'

'Too right I don't!' Lucy said, noticing that the curtains were drawn back and Izzy's window was open again. It was raining outside and the window sill was getting wet. 'You've got to stop opening this, Izzy,' she said as she went over to close it for a second time.

'It's not me that keeps opening it – it's the fairies! Leave it or they won't be able to get out.' Izzy stopped to listen to her invisible friends again, before adding, 'Oh, can you? That's OK then.'

'What's OK?' Lucy asked.

'I wasn't talking to you – I was talking to *them*. Bonnie says they can open the window themselves quite easily, so not to worry. Tooth fairies are very good at opening windows, she says. She says it's



one of their main areas of exper . . . exper . . .' She paused for a moment as if she was listening again. 'Expert-*ise*!' she finished.

Lucy was surprised that Izzy knew such a big word.

'Bonnie says they have to practise opening and closing human windows a lot before they get sent on their first job,' Izzy continued. She was looking towards the window now, saying, 'Oh, please don't go yet!'

'I've got to go back to bed,' Lucy said. 'Izzy, are you just pretending that your tooth's gone missing so you can play this silly—' But she didn't finish her sentence because, as she watched, the window latch was lifting up and the window was opening – all by itself.

Izzy was waving now. 'See you tomorrow!' She turned to her sister and added, 'They

said they're coming back tomorrow when you're not here. They want to speak to me some more, but you're putting them off.'

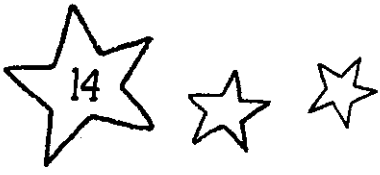
'How am I putting them off?' Lucy demanded.

'Goldie says that children who don't believe in fairies make fairies get goose-bumps. She and Bonnie can't stay in the same room as you for very long or they get all shivery.'

'Your fairies sound silly to me,' Lucy said crossly.

'I thought you didn't believe fairies were real.'

'I don't!'

'Well, how can they be silly then?' Izzy challenged.

And from outside the window, Lucy was almost sure she heard the sound of a tiny high-pitched giggle.