

TOOTH FOR A TOOTH

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

LARRY (40) brushes his teeth over the sink. Faucet running. The typical every man, he wears pajama bottoms and a T-shirt.

He gurgles and spits. His foamy backwash tinged with blood.

Larry watches it wash into the drain. Concerned. He looks up at the mirror and inspects his teeth. A slight hint of crimson in his gum, bordering the enamel.

LARRY (V.O.)
I don't get it.

INT. LARRY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Larry kicks off slippers.

LARRY
I brush twice a day. I floss.

DIANE (38) sits with her back propped up against pillows and takes in a book. Attractive in a mom kind of way, she wears reading glasses and a nightgown.

DIANE
I never see you floss.

LARRY
(indignant)
I floss.

He rolls into bed and slips under the covers. Silence as he looks up at the ceiling. In deep thought. Worried.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Now I'm gonna have nightmares about
my teeth falling out.

Diane flips the page, focuses on her reading.

DIANE
Did you do the tooth fairy thing
yet?

He rolls his eyes.

LARRY
I'm not doing the tooth fairy
thing.

Diane turns to Larry. Scolds him with a look.

LARRY (CONT'D)
 (re: Diane's look)
 What?

DIANE
 Just put a dollar under her pillow?

LARRY
 Diane. She's ten. I think it's time
 to break the news to her.

DIANE
 Just do it, Larry.

LARRY
 It's not even a baby tooth. She got
 hit in the face with a volleyball
 in gym class! Don't you think that
 dollar should go towards her dental
 work?

Diane crosses her arms and stares at him with a stern look.

LARRY (CONT'D)
 (sighs)
 Fine.

He rolls out of bed.

INT. AMANDA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

AMANDA (10) lies sound asleep beneath her bed covers. Cute as
 a button.

The door creaks open. Light peeks in. Larry looks her over
 briefly from the doorway. Sighs.

He tiptoes to the bed with a dollar in his hand. Gently lifts
 the pillow and trades the dollar for the tooth.

He looks down at her. Shakes his head.

LARRY
 (mutters)
 Tooth fairy.

He leaves the room and shuts the door behind him.

INT. LARRY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Lights out. Moonlight seeps in through the window.

Larry and Diane lie asleep, facing away from each other. Wide distance between them. He snores loudly.

Larry snorts himself awake. He rolls to his back. Cracks his eyes open.

A SHADOW stands at the foot of his bed. Larry gasps startled and sits up. Flicks on a light switch - It's only Amanda.

She clutches onto a Teddy bear. Terrified.

LARRY
Geezus. Amanda.

Diane rolls to her back. Blinks her eyes from the light.

DIANE
Honey, what's wrong? What are you
doing awake?

Amanda struggles to speak. Catching her breath. Near tears.

AMANDA
The tooth fairy is in my room right
now. And he's angry.

Larry murmurs. Smooths his forehead in frustration. Diane sits up. Still groggy.

DIANE
Why's he angry, honey?

Larry looks at Diane. Incredulous.

LARRY
(to Diane)
Are you kidding me?

AMANDA
He said Daddy took my tooth, and if
he doesn't get it back, he's gonna
do something bad.

LARRY
This is ridiculous. Amanda? Go back
to bed, okay?

DIANE
(hisses)
Larry.

LARRY
(to Diane)
She's getting too old for this.

Diane leans in close.

DIANE
(whispers)
It's obvious she saw you take the
tooth. Just play along and put it
back.

Larry shakes his head indignantly.

LARRY
No. Absolutely not. I am not gonna
put the tooth back under her God
damn pillow!
(to Amanda)
There's no such thing as the tooth
fairy, okay? He's a figment of your
imagination. And that goes for
Santa Claus, too.

DIANE
Larry!

AMANDA
He's real!

LARRY
He's only real because you BELIEVE
he's real. It's all in your head,
Amanda. Take it from me. I'm an
adult. I know things.

AMANDA
But he said he won't leave until
you give him the tooth back.

LARRY
Is that so?

INT. AMANDA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Larry stands at the door. Flicks on a light. Amanda hides
behind him and peeks into the room.

Empty. Nobody there.

LARRY
All right. Where is he?

Her hand trembles as she points to the closet.

He marches to the closet and stops. Looks back at Amanda. She remains at the door, frozen.

LARRY (CONT'D)

In here?

She nods with wide, horrified eyes. He sighs. Faces the door and slowly turns the knob. He jerks the door open. Amanda jumps back but...

Nobody is inside. Just clothes. Larry looks back at Amanda.

She inches further into the room and looks into the empty closet.

LARRY (CONT'D)

See?

He shuts the closet and walks out of the room.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Think you're getting the bogey man
and the tooth fairy mixed up.

AMANDA

But he was here!

LARRY

Enough's enough all ready!
(points to the bed)
Sleep!

He turns the light out and leaves. Shuts the door behind him. She remains frozen, staring at the closet.

INT. LARRY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Larry lies in bed and stares up at the ceiling. Diane faces away from him, curled up under the covers.

Brief silence.

DIANE

I can't believe you told her Santa
Claus wasn't real.

LARRY

It's for her own good. Besides, aren't you tired of spending all that money on Christmas gifts and having some make-believe fat guy with a beard get all the credit?

DIANE

(delayed)
Good night, Larry.

LARRY

Yeah, yeah, good night.

Larry shuts his eyes.

A loud CLANK from another room makes him open his eyes again.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Larry creeps up to Amanda's bedroom door. Puts his ear to it and listens. Silence.

He takes his ear away and thinks for a moment. Quietly opens the door.

Amanda lies asleep, a heap hidden beneath bedsheets.

AMANDA (O.S.)

Daddy?

Larry flinches, whips his head around. Amanda stands behind him.

A moment of panic, he looks back into the room and flicks on the light switch. The covers lie flat on the bed. Nobody there.

He faces Amanda again. Taken aback.

LARRY

(delayed)
Why aren't you in bed?

AMANDA

I had to go to the bathroom.

He looks into the room again. Baffled. He turns back to Amanda.

LARRY

What was that noise?

AMANDA

The toilet seat. Sorry.

Larry nods but remains shaken. He gives the empty bed one more puzzled glance. Shuts the light off.

INT. LARRY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

He stares up at the ceiling. Unable to sleep. His thoughts keeping him awake.

He turns to Diane. She lies on her side, facing away from him. Her face hidden.

Larry stares at her. Curious but tense. He reaches over to her and places his hand softly upon her shoulder. Gently turns her.

He slowly pulls the sheets away from her face. His eyes wide in anticipation.

He sighs in relief when he sees her sound asleep.

Larry turns to his stomach and laughs softly to himself.

LARRY

It's all in your head, Larry.

He hugs his pillow. But freezes. He feels under his pillow and pulls out a dollar.

He rolls to his back and holds up the dollar bill. Looks at it puzzled. His eyes shift to his bedside.

He gasps - It's only Amanda. She stands at his bedside with a faraway look.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Geezus, can you PLEASE stop doing that?

He takes a breath. Gathers himself a bit. Sits up and waves the dollar bill at her frustrated.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Why did you put this here?

AMANDA

I'm sorry, Daddy.

He looks past her for a moment and stiffens. His jaw drops in terror.

A DARK OMINOUS SHADOW stands still at the corner of the room behind Amanda.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
He made me do it.

His frightened eyes shift to Amanda as she places a chisel to his jaw, hanging open, and raises a ball peen hammer into the air.

CUT TO BLACK:

Horrific screams echo in the darkness.

THE END