

Tania Loses A Tooth



By Kanika G

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Edited by Pell G

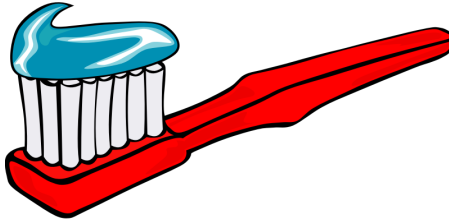
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Tania Loses A Tooth

Tania had just woken up. She was in the bathroom, groggily brushing her teeth.

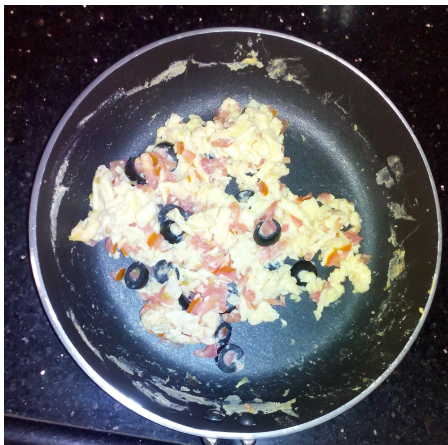


Suddenly, something frightened her. *Her front tooth was shaking.* Was it real? Or was it a bad dream?



She pinched herself. Ouch! She was definitely awake. That pinch really hurt. Then why was her tooth shaking? Tania quickly rinsed her mouth and

ran out of the bathroom screaming in fright.



Mama was making breakfast in the kitchen; scrambled eggs with black olives and tomatoes. Papa was in the kitchen too. He was toasting brown bread. Mama and Papa were both startled to hear Tania shouting **"Mama! Papa! My tooth is shaking! Help! I think it is going to come out. What do I do?"**



"Oh that," Papa mumbled a little annoyed, as he picked up a toast he had dropped.

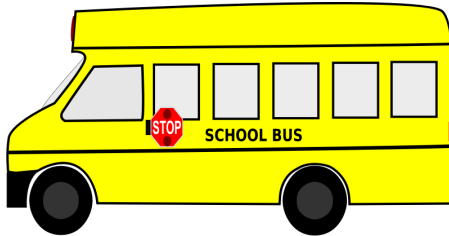
Mama smiled. "Don't worry, Tania. It is perfectly normal. The teeth you have now, are baby teeth. They usually start falling out at the age of five or six."

"Oh," said Tania, still looking scared. "What happens then? Does it hurt when it falls out?"

"Not really." Mama shrugged. "The tooth will shake for sometime, and then when it becomes very loose, it'll fall out. Don't worry about it, Honey. It's all quite normal. We can

talk more about teeth this afternoon, when you are back from school."

Mama's calm attitude comforted Tania, and she left for school.



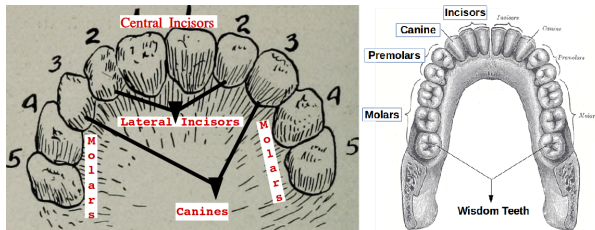
On the school bus, Tania was absentmindedly pushing at the loose tooth with her tongue. "Tania, why are you making weird faces?" Tanisha asked, puzzled by Tania's behavior.

Tania then realized what she was doing and told Tanisha about her loose tooth.

"Oh yeah! Trisha lost one of her back teeth last year." Tanisha recalled. "I guess I'll lose one soon too. Does it hurt?"

"No. Look I can waggle it with my tongue, and it doesn't hurt at all."

Tania was the first in her class to have a loose tooth. She enjoyed wagging it and showing it to her friends. It looked so scary, but it did not hurt at all. What fun!



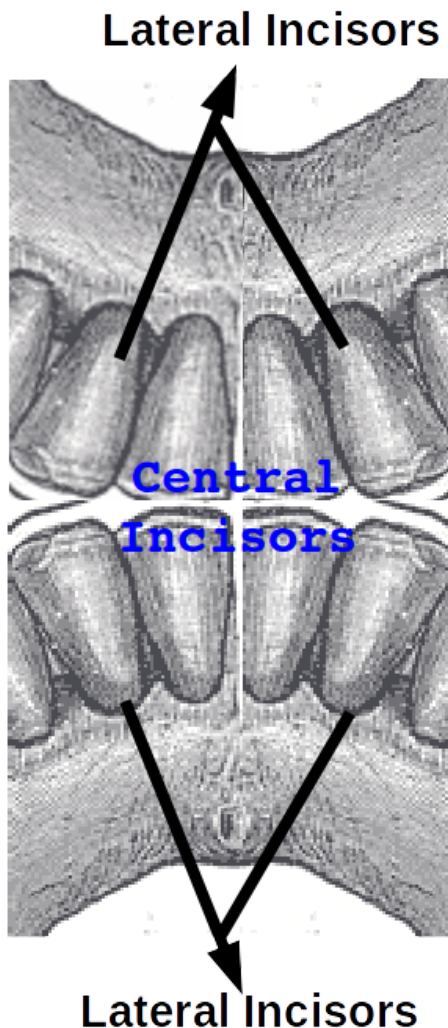
That afternoon, armed with helpful pictures, Mama explained to Tania what was going on with her teeth. She said "When you were born you did not have any teeth. Your first tooth came out when you were nine months old. By the time you were three years old, you had all your baby teeth."

"It took more than two years to grow all my teeth? That is a long time." Tania was amazed.

"Yes, Honey. The first tooth to grow is usually one of the four front teeth. They are called the central incisors. The first tooth you had was

this front one, on the bottom. It seems like it's going to be the first to fall off too." Mama smiled and continued.

"These 4 teeth right next to the front four are called lateral incisors. Lateral means to the side. All the incisors are used to bite. They are the teeth you use to bite into an apple for example."



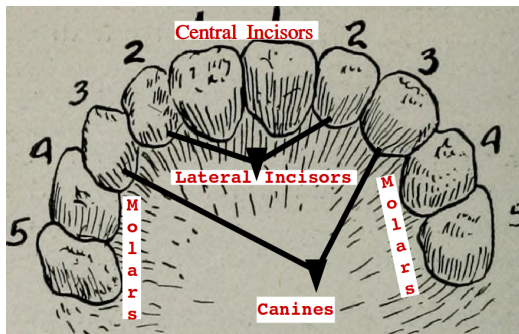
"The pointed teeth on the sides of your mouth, right next to the incisors are the canines."

Tania felt her canines with her fingers and said, "Aren't those the

huge teeth that Kazoo has?"



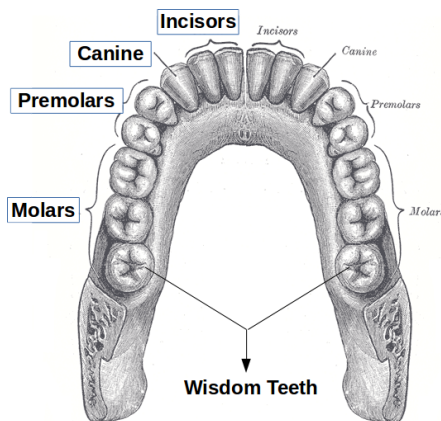
"Yes, that is correct! Kazoo is a cat so she has huge canines. Most carnivorous animals like cats, tigers and lions have large canines. Large canines are useful to tear flesh and meat."



"The last two teeth behind your canines are your molars. They are for chewing and grinding your food."

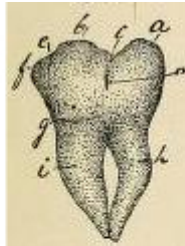
Tania was making a weird face, so Mama asked, "Tania what are you doing? You look weird."

"Oh! I am just using my tongue to count my teeth, Mama. Every type of tooth you mentioned is there, and the correct number of them too. Yet, when I count them all, there are only 20. I thought humans have 32 teeth. I am confused."



"Wow Tania! You are well informed! Yes, adult humans do have 32 teeth. After your molars fall off they will

be replaced by teeth called premolars. Then 3 more molars will grow behind the premolars. You will get those molars later, when you grow up and your mouth is large enough to accommodate them.

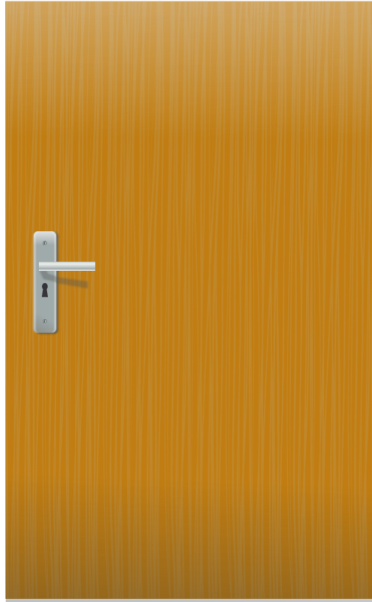


A wisdom tooth

The last molar right at the back of the mouth is called a wisdom tooth, because you are supposed to be wise by the time you have it. The 4 wisdom teeth appear much later, usually after the age of 17. Many people get only a few of their wisdom teeth, so most adults have between 28 and 32 teeth.



The next day was Saturday, and Tania was visiting her grandparents in the evening. Tania showed Grandma and Grandpa her shaking tooth. Grandpa said, "Tania, we can tie one end of a thread to that loose tooth and the other end to the door knob. Then we can slam the door shut to yank out the tooth. That way, it wont bother you anymore."



Tania looked at the door in horror and pleaded, "Grandpa, please don't do that. The tooth doesn't bother me. Mama said it would eventually get quite loose and fall off."

Grandpa did not mean to frighten Tania. He said, "Don't worry. We don't have to do it unless you want to. We can wait for it to fall off. There is no rush. But it really doesn't hurt much. That is how I took off my first shaking tooth."

Tania looked at Grandpa in awe. He really must be very brave, she thought. Grandpa saw how unhappy he had made Tania, so he changed the subject. He asked, "Tania, do you know about the tooth fairy."



"No," Tania said, shaking her head. "Who is the tooth fairy?"

"Didn't Mama tell you?" Grandpa raised his eyebrows. "The tooth fairy collects baby teeth. Nobody knows what she needs them for, but she pays well for them. So when your tooth finally falls out, you should put it

under your pillow. Then while you are asleep, the tooth fairy will take the tooth and leave you a little gift in return."

"Oh! Is she like a Santa Claus, who collects teeth?" asked Tania excited.

"Yes, I suppose she is," Grandpa agreed.



Just then, Grandma announced dinner. The delicious aroma of *chana masala* was wafting through the air. Tania forgot all about her tooth. She enjoyed her meal of rice, *chana masala* and *palak paneer* with great relish.



After dinner, Grandpa offered Tania a toffee. He always gave her a sweet treat after dinner, and Tania always looked forward to it. Tania took the toffee and sucked on it for some time. Then she bit into it, and while chewing it she felt something hard in the toffee. She took it out of her mouth to take a look, and to her great surprise, she found her own tooth stuck in the toffee!

Tania smiled. She had been so worried about having to tug out the tooth when Grandpa told her about threads and doorknobs. But the tooth came off so painlessly that Tania did not even realize it was out.

Grandpa helped Tania clean the sticky toffee off the tooth. He then wrapped it up in some cotton wool and gave it to Tania. Mama, Papa and Sonia came to pick up Tania, soon after. She told them the amazing story of how her tooth came out. On the ride back home she asked Mama about the tooth fairy.

Mama said "Yes, Tania. There is a tooth fairy. You should put your tooth under your pillow tonight and see what she gives you."



The next morning, Tania found a brand new box of water colors under her pillow. Awesome! Now, she cant wait for her next tooth to fall out. The tooth fairy is a generous soul, don't you think?

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