



Toot Fairy

Brian W. Donnelly

Jochem van Gool, Illustrator

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Toot Fairy is an entertaining picture book with a kind message about succeeding in spite of imperfections.

A lactose intolerant tooth fairy in training learns that differences can lead to success in Brian W. Donnelly's uproarious picture book, *Toot Fairy*.

Irma starts Tooth School on the wrong foot: she drinks the free milk offered on the school bus on the way, afraid of what her classmates will think of her if she doesn't. The milk causes loud, smelly flatulence that Irma's teacher says will make her fail as a Tooth Fairy, as it will wake sleeping children. Irma is dismayed when her peers succeed while she flunks. But then a child who lives in a tall apartment building, and whose home can only be reached with Irma's "lactic air speed," helps her to prove to her class, her teacher, and herself that she's worthy of being a tooth fairy, too.

The story is fun and humorous. Irma fails her sneaking tests because of her tooting, but her hilarious triumph at the book's end shows that not all flaws are fatal. The confidence she gains through her endeavors is cathartic. The book's message is valiant, though there's potential danger involved in encouraging children to consume foods that they are allergic to.

The text's rhythm is joyful and poetic. There are one, two, or three quirky, rhyming four-line stanzas per page, resulting in a jaunty pace that makes for easy reading aloud. The spacing between lines of dialogue sometimes disrupts the story's flow, as do occasional punctuation errors. Some of the book's rhymes are ineffective—"tummy" is matched with "smelly," and "Harlem" with "problem"—but most are appropriate, even clever: "shrieked" is matched with "reeks," and "concentrate" with "flatulate."

The book's illustrations are adorable and detailed, with light filtering in through windows, tooth-related art on the classroom walls, and a toupee lifting off of the head of a surprised man who smells Irma's gas all rounding out the cheerful atmosphere. The fairies' cute, Keebler-elf-like faces, and their goofy expressions, bring character to the book. The settings, including the fairy-sized school bus and the street outside of the tall apartment building in Harlem, are rendered with perfect proportions and the appearance of being three-dimensional.

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AIMEE JODOIN (October 13, 2020)

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