



The Legend of the Ratoncito (AKA Ratoncito Perez)

Legends surrounding the disposal of lost baby, or deciduous, teeth have been around for centuries. As a rite of passage, the loss of the first baby tooth signifies transition from infant to adolescent. This may also be a time when a child is first attending school, signifying a move toward independence.

Culturally, the Tooth Fairy exists in many different forms around the world. We now have a culture that is aware of two forms of the Tooth Fairy. The female winged image that sneaks into a child's room at night replacing the baby tooth found under the pillow with some money or a present has been the image in the US. Now, Ratoncito Perez has become part of our world. In many Latin American and South American countries a little mouse (Ratoncito) sneaks into the bedroom of a sleeping child and replaces the baby tooth with coins or a present. The priest Luis Coloma wrote this tale in 1894. The Spanish King commissioned the work to commemorate the loss of his son's first baby tooth.

As Collier County Tooth Fairy I wanted to respect our blending society with the inclusion of the Ratoncito tooth holder. In each child's package there should be a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, and a Ratoncito. I hope you will share the story of the "Tooth Fairy" and "Ratoncito" as part of your instructions. Additional "TF-INFO" is available at <http://www.collierhealthdept.org/services/DENTAL/DENTAL.html> along with links to other oral health sources.

Smile Healthy

jan

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Sources: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tooth_fairy
<http://www.straightdope.com/mailbag/mtoothfairy.html>
<http://recess.ufl.edu/transcripts/2005/0823.shtml>