



Marissa loves candy—maybe too much. When she wakes up with a toothache, her mother takes her to the dentist, and on the way, Marissa notices a man sitting on a grate on the sidewalk to keep warm. So begins a day that Marissa will never forget.

*Hi everybody. I'm Annette Bening and I'm here today to read **The Tooth**, written by Avi Slodovnik and **illustrated** by Manon Gauthier.*

The Tooth

Read by Annette Bening

Marissa's love of candy finally caught up with her. That morning she woke up with a toothache and instead of bringing her to school, her mother took her to the dentist.

Marissa didn't often go downtown. **Columns** of tall, gray buildings **cast** great shadows across the streets. The sky, usually bright and blue, was barely visible between the rows of endlessly tall **skyscrapers**.

Marissa and her mother walked hand-in-hand toward the dentist's office. Men and women wearing long coats and long faces, their collars up and their heads down, rushed in every direction. Marissa leaned closer to her mother.

When they stopped at the corner for the light to change, Marissa noticed something unusual. A man with a large nose and dark eyes was sitting on a **grate** in the sidewalk. In front of him was an open shoebox with money inside.

Marissa had never seen anyone like him. She wanted to take a closer look but her mother held her hand tightly.

As they crossed the street to the dentist's building, Marissa looked back and watched the man over her shoulder. He sat quietly, watching the people pass him by.

Up in the dentist's office they checked in with the **receptionist** who told them to sit in the waiting room until the dentist was ready to see them. Marissa's mother sat on the couch crossing her legs and flipped through a magazine.

Instead of reading a book or playing with a toy, Marissa looked out the window to the busy street below. The man was still sitting on the grate. Most people walked by the man. Some people, just a few, dropped coins into his shoebox. One man in a hurry actually stepped over the man.

Finally, after a long wait, Marissa was called into the **examination** room.

She sat in the big chair and opened her mouth as wide as she could. The dentist saw a small, brown hole in Marissa's tooth.

"That's quite a **cavity**," he said, "the tooth will have to come out."

A few minutes later, the dentist pulled out Marissa's tooth. Marissa wished she was in school.

"Here's your tooth, Marissa," said the dentist, slipping the tiny tooth into a small, orange envelope. "Make sure to put it under your **pillow**," said her mother. "Make sure you brush your teeth twice a day, and especially after candy," said the dentist.

They left the dentist's office and in the **elevator** Marissa asked her mother, "Is there really a **tooth fairy**?"

Outside the dentist's office, the air was cool. Marissa tickled the place her tooth had been with her tongue. It felt funny.

They crossed the street. The man was still sitting on the sidewalk. Marissa tried to get closer, but her mother held her hand tightly, like before.

Marissa pulled away and went up to the shoebox. There wasn't a lot of money inside. Marissa held open the orange envelope and let the tooth drop into the shoebox.

"Put it under your pillow tonight," she told the man, "and there will be money there tomorrow."

At first the man looked surprised. Then he smiled warmly and waved goodbye to Marissa as she and her mother walked away.

Now, all he needed was a pillow.

I used to read books to my kids all the time. They're too big now, but I hope you have a chance to talk to your teachers or maybe your mom or your dad about the book.

*I think it's a really thoughtful book. Starts out being a trip to the dentist and it ends with a little girl meeting a **homeless** man.*

Anyway, I hope you liked it, I did.

New Words:

- **illustrated**: to use pictures, photographs, diagrams, etc. in a book, etc
- **column**: an upright structure that looks like a post.
- **to cast**: to make light, a shadow
- **skyscraper**: a very tall building in a city; 'scrapes the sky'
- **grate**: a frame of metal bars over the opening in the ground.
- **receptionist**: a person whose job is to deal with people arriving at or telephoning a hotel, an office building, a doctor's clinic, etc.
- **examination**: a close look at something or someone, especially to see if there is anything wrong or to find the cause of a problem
- **cavity**: a hole in a tooth
- **elevator**: a machine that carries people or goods up and down to different levels in a building or a mine
- **tooth fairy**: a make-believe creature who leaves money under children's pillows in exchange for lost teeth placed there for her.
- **pillow**: a square or rectangular piece of cloth filled with soft material, used to rest your head on in bed
- **homeless**: a person or group of people without a home to live in