

# The Tooth of the Matter

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Rated: G

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Summary: Jonny has a loose tooth problem and nobody will help him with it. What lengths will Lois and Clark's rambunctious kid go to in order to get it out? Written for Deadly Chakram's Fall Ficathon Challenge.

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"Look, Mommy! Look! Look!"

"What is it, baby?"

"It's my tooth! My tooth is loose! See?!"

Lois turned and faced her little boy with a look of surprise. It was Jonny's third week of kindergarten, and already he'd been complaining of jealousy towards his fellow classmates who'd begun to lose their baby teeth. Lois chuckled silently to herself at his competitiveness-- definitely a Lane trait. Knowing her son, he'd probably been working at that tooth since the first time he heard another kid mention the idea.

She crouched to her son's level and opened her eyes real wide. "No way!"

"Way! See?" He was about to reach a suspiciously sticky hand into his mouth when Lois caught his arm.

"Whoa there, little buddy! What's on your hands?"

"Um..." he dragged out the syllable and struggled to pull his arm back out of his mother's grip. Jonathan looked to her with a sheepish smile not at all unlike his father's. "Nothing?"

"Uh-huh. Nice try, buster. Wash 'em first, then you can show me."

He groaned and stomped noisily off to the bathroom. Lois had to bite her cheek to keep her laughter from escaping. Jonathan might look a lot like his father, but his personality was all Mad Dog so far. It was almost comical, the amount of attitude a five-year old could possess. He'd had an attitude practically since he was in the womb-- from kicking at the most inopportune moments, to not sleeping as an infant, and now acting like a teenager in his childhood years.

Lois shuddered. What would teenage Jonathan be like? Hopefully he'd mellow out a bit.

Fortunately, their eighteen month old daughter didn't seem to be displaying any of the same qualities yet.

"O-kay!" Jonathan sing-songed as he raced back into the kitchen. "I'm weady now!"

"Okay. Show me."

He reached his now clean hand into his mouth and felt around for a bit on the bottom set of teeth before apparently striking gold. His features lit up as he gripped a front-left tooth and moved his fingers in a wiggling manner. "Shee it?"

Lois didn't know what to say. All she saw was her son trying to wiggle loose a tooth. She couldn't actually tell whether the tooth was loose or not. But instead she let her mouth hang open and shock read openly on her face. "Oh my goodness! That's amazing! I can't believe my baby boy's already got a loose tooth! His first loose tooth!" He giggled as she ruffled his hair. "You'll have to show your Daddy as soon as he gets home!"

"Yay!"

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When Clark walked in through the front door, he was ambushed by a bounding ball of speed and excitement. "Daddy!!" Jonathan leaped into his father's arms and, as always, Clark caught him and lifted him up.

"Hey, little buddy! How was your day?"

"Good! My tooth is loose! See!" He repeated his earlier performance for his father's enjoyment.

"Whoa! That's amazing! I can't believe it!"

"Yeah!" His son's elation quickly turned to a frown. "Only I wish it would come out soonah..."

"Hey," Clark ruffled his boy's hair with a smile. "It will come out soon enough. Before you know it, you'll be losing teeth left and right!"

Jonathan giggled at that idea as his father stood up.

"Besides," Clark continued as Jonathan followed him through their home. "We're going to visit Grandma and Grandpa Kent in a week. And Grandma has a very special, super-secret solution for getting out loose teeth."

Jonathan stopped in his tracks, eyes wide as he stared at his father. "What is it?" he asked breathlessly.

Clark fought to keep his grin hidden and gave Jonathan a wink. "Well now, it wouldn't be a very special secret if I just told you, now would it?"

Jonathan pouted once more as his father scooped him up and planted a kiss on his forehead. "Come on. Let's go see what your Mom and sister are up to."

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Jonathan was frustrated. He couldn't believe it. Nobody would tell him the secret to getting rid of loose teeth. It had been three whole days, and neither his Mom or his Dad had told him the answer, despite his vigorous questioning. He'd decided that line of questioning was getting him nowhere. They weren't gonna budge.

He'd considered trying to reach Grandma Martha, but he wasn't allowed to use the phone, and he didn't know their number anyway. He huffed anxiously. Uncle Jimmy didn't have any idea what they were talking about-- and he'd asked several times now during today's babysitting venture, with no result.

Suddenly, another idea struck him. He turned to his distracted babysitter.

"Unca Jimmy! Can we go to the pawk? Please, please, please, please, *pwetty* please?!"

Jimmy looked at the little boy's big, brown, pleading eyes, then back at his laptop, then back again. He sighed. "All right. But only for an hour, okay? And we have to take your sister, so you're gonna have to wait a bit."

"Yay!!!" He ran through the house, searching for a jacket and shoes.

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Clark was out and about, flying around Metropolis on a patrol when he'd heard it. The cry that broke his heart and scared him half to death. Never in his life had he ever felt such fear as he did in this moment.

"Supaman! Supaman, help! Supaman!!!"

Clark raced against time to find his little boy's voice. Whatever or whoever was hurting him would be in for a world of hurt when he found him. A newfound surge of fury he'd never known before wrapped itself around his heart and squeezed, tight, not allowing him to even breathe as he honed in on his son's location at Centennial Park.

Superman swooped down through the sky and landed right in front of the boy no pretense, fear present in his eyes as he bent to his son's level. "Is everything all right? Jonathan, are you okay? What's the matter?"

"Supaman! Thank goodness you came!"

Clark, realizing that there didn't seem to be any immediate danger around, went back to questioning. "Are you here by yourself? Did you get lost? Where's... Where are your parents?"

"Mommy and Daddy awe at work still. Unca Jimmy's hewe with Ella, but I sneaked away to find you," he lowered his voice to a conspiratorial whisper, a mischievous grin alighting his face.

Clark let his eyes drift close briefly as he exhaled a sigh of relief. He stood up tall and gave the boy a look. “Now Jonathan, you know it’s not safe to wander off on your own like that.”

Jonathan pouted and looked down to the ground in shame. “I know,” he huffed. Then the fire was back in him, all traces of embarrassment gone. “But I had to find you! No one else would help me!”

“What do you need my help for?” Clark fought to keep his amusement from showing. There was no doubt about it-- this was Lois Lane’s son.

“I asked and asked and asked and *nobody* will tell me what Grandma Martha’s supa secwet loose tooth pulla is! I can’t wait!! I’m *dying* to know!!”

A brief burst of laughter escaped from Superman, surprising the young boy. He tried to contain it, but he just couldn’t help himself. This child was pure Lois.

Jonathan crossed his arms over his chest Superman style and gave the hero a suspicious Lane glare. “What’s so funny, *Supaman?*”

Suprised, almost, by the change in attitude, Superman sobered and straightened, like a scolded schoolboy. “Nothing. Nothing at all.”

Jonathan’s glare stayed steady on the hero, and Clark almost started to squirm uncomfortably. He had to distract him. “Hey, Jonathan, why don’t you and I walk back towards your Uncle Jimmy and talk on the way?”

“Mmm... Okay!” He skipped to catch up to Superman’s slow, easy stride and bounded around him. “So... do you know that secwet?”

Clark gave him an amused look. “What would make you think I know?”

The boy shrugged. “I dunno. Mom and Dad coulda told you. And you awe Supaman.”

Clark chuckled. “Sorry, buddy.”

Jonathan walked on in silence for a moment, pouting once again, until his eyes lit up with another idea. “You could punch me!”

Clark’s expression couldn’t have grown more shocked. His jaw fell and his eyes went wide at hearing his son speak like that. “Wh-what?!”

“Yeah! But that might huwt... You could pull it out!”

“Jonathan--”

“An’ then I could go home and supwise Mommy and Daddy by showing them my missing tooth!”

“Jonathan,” Clark said sternly in his best Superman voice. “I’m not going to be pulling out any of your teeth for you.”

Jonathan slumped over. “You sound just like Dad.”

Clark raised his eyebrow but let out a nervous chuckle before clearing his throat. “How about this. Your dad told me you were going to visit your grandparents in Kansas this weekend. Instead of spending hours stuck on a plane waiting to get there, I could fly you all out there really quick so you can find out the secret as soon as possible, all right?”

Jonathan’s eyes were comically wide, almost reverential, before he started bouncing up and down. “Can you? Please? Canyoucanycanyou? Pleeeeease Supaman? Please!”

Superman stopped walking and knelt down once again to his son’s level. “On one condition.”

“Anything!”

“You have to promise to never, ever try to run away from your family again. Okay? Not even to come find me. If you really need my help, just call for me. Otherwise, stay with your parents, or Jimmy, or whoever’s watching you. Agreed?”

Jonathan nodded solemnly. “I pwomise, Supaman.”

“Good boy,” Clark smiled and ruffled the boy’s hair before standing back up. Jonathan frowned at his newly mussed hair and threw his arms up over his head to protect himself from more

attacks. Clark let out a small chuckle.

Jimmy chose that very moment to come bounding back up towards them. “Oh, thank goodness, Superman! I was looking everywhere for him! One minute he was here and the next minute he was gone! It was like ten minutes of torture-- and you know Lois would have killed me if anything had happened to him-- and they wouldn’t find a body, you know--”

“Jimmy,” Superman put his hand comfortingly on the younger man’s shoulder. “It’s all right. Jonathan here’s fine, he just wanted to come and find me. Lucky I caught him, too.”

Jimmy let out a huge sigh of relief and nodded, briefly unable to speak. “Th-Thanks, Superman.”

He nodded curtly to his friend. “No problem. Now Jonathan, remember what we talked about.”

“I will, Supaman.”

With that, Clark felt comfortable enough leaving and took off into the sky.

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Jonathan was snuggled tightly against Superman’s chest, feeling safe and warm and like the second coolest person on the planet (after the superhero carrying him, of course). He couldn’t wait to see his grandma and find out what the secret was. His tooth was getting looser and looser by the day, and it still wasn’t coming out!

“Here we go,” Superman said, gradually slowing and descending to the ground. Jonathan squirmed excitedly as he was set down onto the golden grass and weeds. The second Superman set him down, he practically raced out of his arms and up the steps of the farmhouse.

“Gwandmaaaaaaa!” he singsonged as he knocked on the screen door.

Martha came out with her arms wide open. “Jon-Jon!” He leapt into them and she spun him around before pulling him into a tight hug. “Oh, you’re getting so big, I can barely even lift you! How’s my grandson doin’?”

“Good! Did Daddy tell you the good news?”

“He sure did! Let me see,” Martha bent down to his level as he wiggled his ever-loosening tooth, now hanging on only the inside. “Oh, my! That’s amazing!”

“Yeah!”

“Well, go on inside and say hi to your grandpa. We’ll have dinner in less than an hour and then we’ll try out this super secret tooth puller device of mine, deal?”

“Okay! Thanks, Supaman!” his voice rang out as he raced inside.

Clark chuckled as Martha spoke, “He’s such a funny young thing. Cares more about that loose tooth than Superman himself.”

Clark grinned as he slowly lifted off the ground. “Yeah. I’m gonna go get Lois and Ella, now. Be right back.”

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Jonathan had eaten as fast as he could, clearing his plate quickly and once again asking about what his grandma’s secret was.

“Hold on, buddy. Don’t you want dessert? You won’t be able to eat this one if you’re missing teeth,” she teased.

Jonathan thought about it and decided that dessert took priority over his tooth. Grandma Martha always made some of the best desserts. And if he couldn’t eat it afterwards, then he’d be missing out!

“Okay! What is it?”

She pulled a tray out of the fridge and Jonathan’s eyes grew wider than ever before.

On it sat the biggest, gooiest caramel apple he’d ever seen.

A loose tooth was currently the farthest thing from his mind.

“Oooh! Gwandma! Cawmel apples? Yay!!”

Lois shared an amused look with her husband, as Clark bounced Ella up and down on his knee. “Try it out, buddy. Let us

know how it tastes,” he spoke up.

Jonathan took it from his grandmother’s hand carefully, almost reverentially, before diving right in and going for it. He gave the caramel a lick. “Mmm, this is good.” The group chuckled and he went in for his first bite.

Suddenly a slight pop of pain went through his gums, then was gone. “Ouch! Hey, what--” He pulled the candied treat away and saw what had caused the sting.

Embedded in the caramel, just where he had tried to take a bite out of the apple, was his tooth.

His eyes lit up and his mouth fell open in surprise. “My tooth!”

Finally everyone broke down laughing. Jonathan frowned, little brow furrowed in concentration. “Hey, wait a minute...” He glanced to his father, whose eyes were gleaming with merriment. “This is the supa-secwet tooth pulla?!” There was a slight whistle to every ‘s’ he spoke.

“Sure is,” Clark assured him with a grin.

“I can’t believe it! You guys twicked me! This is so cool!”

Everyone laughed and Grandpa Jonathan ruffled his grandson’s hair. The younger one turned back to his grandmother.

“Hey, Gwandma?”

“Yes, sweetheart?”

“Can we get, like, a hundwed of these to go? I got a lot more teeth to get out.”

THE END