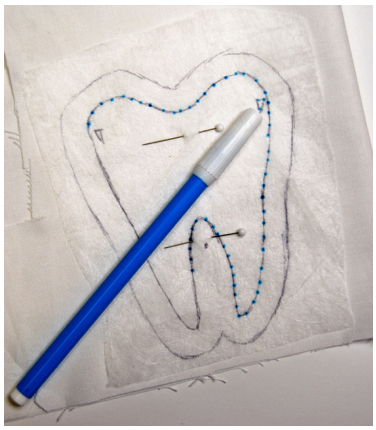
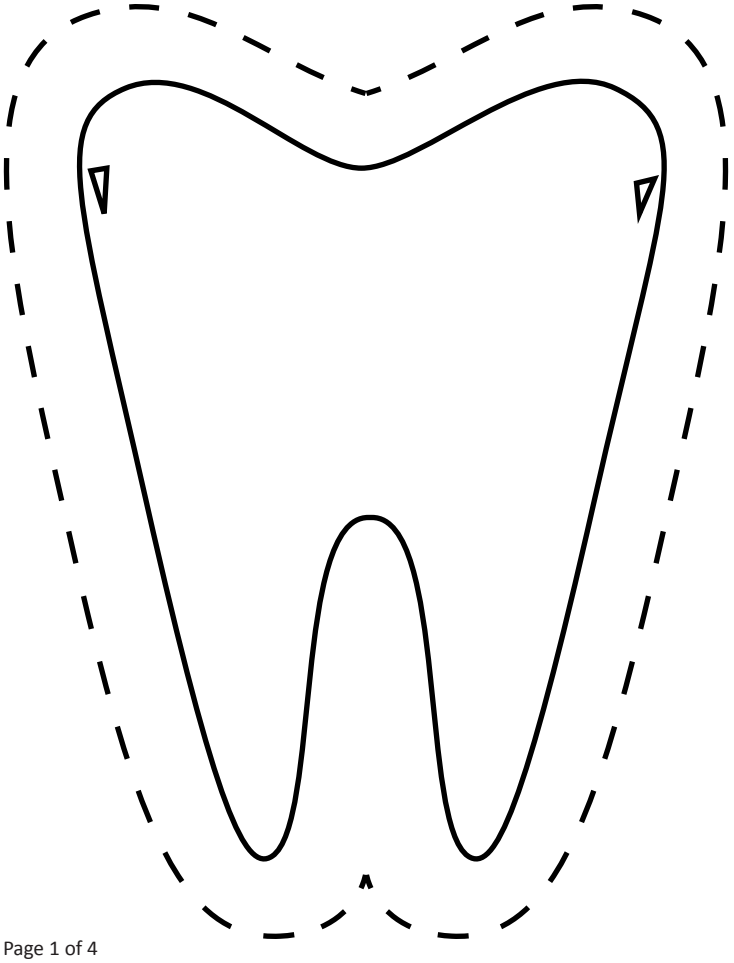
Little Yak's Tooth Fairy Pillow

Materials:
- Two 8" square pieces of quilting fabric
- Scrap of white fabric at least 6" X 10"
- Two strips of cotton broadcloth 4.5" X 42"
- One package premade piping
- Water erasable fabric marker
- Coordinating thread
- Polyfil stuffing
- Zipper foot, or...
- Ruffler foot and piping foot (optional)

1. Trace off the tooth pattern below onto tracing material. Make sure to trace off all markings, including the actual seamline. Pin the tracing to the doubled scrap of white fabric. Transfer the seamline marking with the water erasable pen. Dots are sufficient to denote the seamline (see photo below).



2. Cut out tooth shape and sew seamline, leaving a 1.5" gap on one side. Clip the legs apart, making sure to not nick the stitches. Notch, clip and grade all the way around the tooth as needed. Carefully turn the tooth right side out, making sure all rounded edges and tooth roots are fully extended. Rinse out the marker and press, making sure seam allowances in the gap are tucked inside the tooth.



3. Find the horizontal center of one square panel by folding it in half. Place the tooth centered on this line, but note that the tooth is a visually weighted object, so that it should be placed slightly below the vertical centering point. Pin in place and edge stitch, starting and stopping at the marked triangles on the pattern piece. (It is advisable to make a small triangle stop at the top edge of the pockets for better wear and tear.) To create the pocket, sew a straight line across the tooth from one side to the other just above the fork of the roots.

4. Apply the piping. A piping foot is very helpful for this task. If you do not have a piping foot you can use a zipper foot to sew as closely to the seamline on the piping as possible. With the right

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side of the front panel (with the tooth) up, align the bottom raw edge of the panel with the raw edges of the piping. Your start point will be in the middle of the bottom edge of the square. You will want to leave a tail of about 2 inches of piping free, unsewn. Sew the piping to the edge of the panel until you get to 3/8" before the corner, stop and backtack. Snip a slit up to but not including the stitching on the piping. Turn the corner and the slit will open up to a 90° angle. Begin sewing down the next side of the panel. Repeat for the rest of the corners in the square.

5. Finish off the piping. Once you have returned to the bottom of the square, sew piping down to within an inch and a half of the initial seam. Trim the piping so that there is an overlap of about an inch to an inch and a half. (Photo A)

A

Using a seam ripper, pick apart the seam on the piping so that it opens and exposes the interior cord for the entire distance of the overlap. With the cord exposed, snip only the cord so that the cords will abut each other without a gap or overlap. (Photo B)

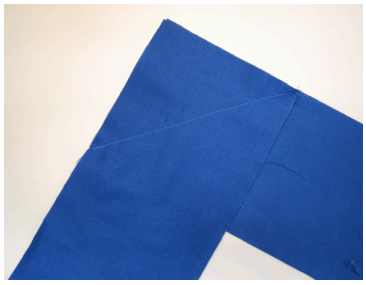
B

Fold down the corner of the empty piping sleeve so that it creates a 45° angle. Press with an iron. (Photo C) Wrap the pressed empty casing around the blunt end of the other end of the piping, encasing the raw edges. Pin the casing snugly in place, through all layers including the panel. Sew down the remaining piping to secure both loose ends.

C

D

6. Make the ruffle strip. Make certain the selvedges have been removed from the long strips. Take one end each of the strips and lay them at right angles to each other. If the fabric has a right and wrong side, make sure that the ends are right-sides-together. Sew a seam across the diagonal, from 'outside' corner to 'outside' corner. Cut off the flap, leaving a 1/4" seam allowance. Press the seam open, and then press the entire length of the joined strips, long edge to long edge, to make a very skinny and long rectangle.



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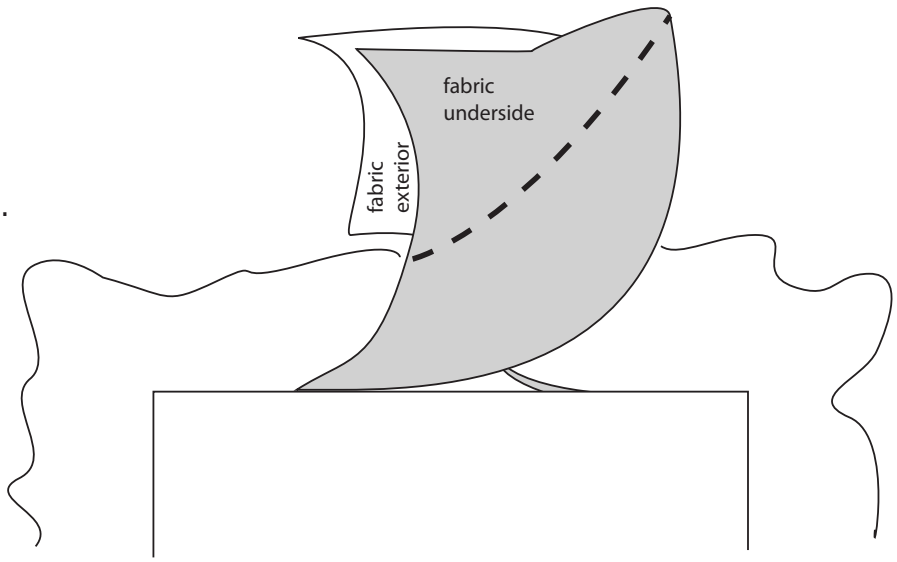
7. Ruffle the ruffle, then attach it. The amount of fabric given is sufficient to do a ruffle with an "old fashioned" ruffling foot that is set to 6, using a medium to long stitch length. Run the folded fabric through the ruffler, raw edges under the presser foot. If you do not have a ruffler foot, pick one up cheap on eBay or Craigslist. (Seriously, they're all over the place if you have a low-shank machine. Those old box sets of Kenmore lowshank feet almost always contain a ruffler. Just oil the moving parts and you're good to go.) If you won't listen to me and buy a used ruffler foot, you will have to hand gather the edges. (I'd tell you to try and do this on the machine, but that would be cruel, because even though it takes time, it is much easier to do by hand.) Run two sets of running stitches parallel to each other down the length of the raw edges, making sure to catch both layers. You will have to do this in 18" stretches, as trying to gather that kind of length all at once will result in tangled or broken threads and aggravation. Knot one end of the threads together and gather to your liking, trying to keep the gathers as even as possible. Knot your lengths of gathering stitches as you go so that you don't undo your work by mistake.

Start attaching the gathers on the left side of the square. As with the piping, you will need to leave a tail of the ruffle free, unsewn. This time it should be about 4.5" - 5" long. Lay the gathers on the right side of the square, raw edges flush with the raw edge of the square and piping. Pin well up to the corner and stop. Flip the square over, so that the wrong side of the square is up. Reattach your piping foot if you have it, otherwise use a zipper foot. Using the previous stitching from attaching the piping as your guide, sew down the ruffle, making sure that the stitches hit at or inside the piping stitches. Stop 3/8" from the corner. Flip the piece back over, so that the ruffle is on top.You will now miter the corners, in much the way you would a quilt binding. Pivot the raw edge of the ruffle 90° so that it aligns with the new side of the square. Tuck the extra fabric into the fold as shown in the photo. (In a quilt binding this would form a 45° angle, but because this is ruffled there is much more fabric involved. Pin well, being certain that you do not catch any extra fabric in the seam. Continue sewing down the ruffle until you get to the same side as the one you began stitching. On this 4th side, sew down the ruffle, leaving approximately a 5" gap between where you end and where you began. Trim the remaining ruffle so that you have about 5" of gathered material. Make sure the end is square.

This part is a bit finicky. Unpick the gathers on both loose ends of the ruffle. Open out the ruffle and pivot the two ends so that they are at 90° angle to each other. (Much as you did when you made the long ruffle strip in step 6.) Align the raw edges of the two ends and pin well - you're sewing in tight quarters. Sew along the diagonal that will leave the corner fabric free. Trim the corner fabric leaving a 3/8" seam allowance. Press the seam allowance open as best you can. Re-fold the ruffle fabric so that the seam allowance is hidden and the long raw edges align and press just the fold. Re-ruffle the fabric by hand so that the ruffle will take up the remaining gap on the pillow's edge - there should still be some folds from the original ruffling



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to help you. Sew the ruffle down.

8. Sew the pillow back to the pillow front. Start by pinning the ruffle to the face of the pillow so that it doesn't inadvertently get caught under the seam. Use as many pins as necessary to keep the ruffle out of the way. Pay special attention to the corners because there is a lot of extra fabric that could sneak under the presser foot. You can roll the extra corner fabric up in a roll and pin through it to keep it under control. Lay the backing fabric on top of the ruffle, face down. Align the raw edges and pin well, all the way around. Flip the pinned pillow over, so that the ruffle and piping seams are visible. If you have a piping foot, you may use it for this task, otherwise use a zipper foot. Sew the perimeter of the pillow, keeping the piping seam the innermost seam on the pillow. Make sure to leave a 2" gap on one side for stuffing. Don't bother trimming corners - the piping prevents sharp points and you don't need to weaken the seam allowance.

Turn the pillow case inside out through the stuffing gap. Stuff using small wads of polyfil, making sure not to handle it much so it doesn't get lumpy. Push the polyfil into the corners of the pillow using the eraser end of a pencil or a chopstick.

Once it is stuffed to your satisfaction, mattress stitch the gap closed using a doubled thread that matches either the ruffle or the backing fabric. You are done! Pop a tooth in the pocket and you're good to go!

Notes and Ideas

• It is a tooth fairy pillow because of the shape of the pocket. Thus you can use any fabric you want, making it very manly (camo fabric? football themed fabric? John Deere fabric?), very girly (flower fabric? princess fabric? polka dots?), or very gender neutral (plaids, stripes, gingham, etc.) as you want.

• If you want to go whole hog on the girly bit, use lace instead of a ruffle. Eyelet lace will hold up better than most other kinds of lace.

• If you have an embroidery machine, you could embroider the name on the tooth fabric before making it into a tooth. You could also embroider the name by hand using a stem stitch or cross stitch alphabet. You will want to do this before making the tooth into the pocket so that the back of the embroidery is encased.

• The tooth fabric does not need to be plain white. It could be anything as long as it stands out from the background fabric. In fact, you could make the pillow fabric plain and the tooth fabric patterned. Likewise the ruffle does not need to be a solid color.

• A narrower ruffle gives a very different appearance to the pillow. Try reducing the width of the ruffle by 1/3 or 1/2 if this interests you.

• Our tooth fairy sews a tooth fairy charm to one of the bottom roots of the tooth when the first tooth is lost. When the last tooth is lost, the child can keep and wear the charm as a fond reminder of the times when he or she was little enough to have wiggly teeth and a gap-tooth smile. Just a thought.

• The techniques described in this tutorial can be used for this tiny tooth fairy pillow or a very large throw pillow to produce professional results no matter the scale - the world is your oyster! Have fun!

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