



THE TOOTHBRUSH STORY

“The Toothbrush That Knew Too Much”

Gianni was a little lazy about brushing his teeth. Once a day—maybe. His toothbrush, however, had other ideas.

One morning, Gianni woke up to find a note taped to his bathroom mirror. It read:

“Caro Gianni, I’m tired of being ignored. You use me when you remember, and even then, it’s a 12-second disaster. I deserve better.

Your Toothbrush.”

Gianni blinked. “Is this a joke?” But the toothbrush was standing upright, bristles crossed, looking very serious.

“I’ve seen things,” it said. “You eat garlic pizza at midnight and expect me to fix it. You hum old pop songs while brushing, but never rinse me properly. I’m traumatized.”

Gianni laughed. “You’re a toothbrush. You can’t be traumatized.”

“Oh really?” the toothbrush snapped. “Last week, you dropped me behind the toilet. I saw things no toothbrush should see.”

Gianni felt guilty. “Okay, okay. I’ll brush better. Twice a day. Full two minutes.”

“Too late,” said the toothbrush. “I’ve applied for a transfer. I’m going to your dentist’s office. They treat toothbrushes with respect.”

Gianni sighed. “Fine. I’ll get a new one.”

The toothbrush smirked. “Good luck. I told all the others about you.”

From the drawer, a new toothbrush peeked out and whispered, “Non lui. Chiunque tranne lui.” (“Not him. Anyone but him.”)

Gianni switched to mouthwash for a week.



Italian Spotlight

Funny Phrase of the Day

“Non lui. Chiunque tranne lui.” (“Not him. Anyone but him.”)

This line is whispered by the new toothbrush hiding in the drawer. It’s dramatic, funny, and very Italian!

You can use this phrase when you want to avoid someone—like a noisy classmate, a boring teacher, or even your little brother. Try saying it with emotion and a serious face... it’s more fun that way!

Vocabulary Box: The Curious History of the Toothbrush

Word / Phrase	Meaning
Dental hygiene	Keeping your teeth and mouth clean and healthy
Chew stick	A twig used to clean teeth in ancient times
Tooth powder	A dry mixture used to clean teeth before toothpaste existed
Pig bristles	Stiff hairs from pigs, used in early toothbrushes
Silk Road	Ancient trade route connecting China to Europe
Nylon bristles	Synthetic hairs used in modern toothbrushes
Revolutionary	Very new and important; changing the way things are done
Hygienic	Clean and healthy; preventing disease

Comprehension Questions: The Curious History of the Toothbrush

Student A: Ask your partner	Student B: Ask your partner
What did Babylonians use to clean their teeth? Why were pig bristles used in early toothbrushes? What made nylon bristles better than natural ones?	1. What ingredients did Egyptians use in their tooth powder? 2. How did toothbrushes travel from China to Europe? 3. Why might ancient people be impressed by today’s toothbrushes?

Mini Matching Task: Italian–English Expressions

Match the Italian phrases to their English meanings. All are playful and connected to the toothbrush story.

Italian

1. Non lui. Chiunque tranne lui.
2. Mi hai dimenticato!
3. Sono traumatizzato.
4. Voglio un trasferimento.

English

- a. I saw things no toothbrush should see.
- b. I want a transfer.
- c. Not him. Anyone but him.
- d. You forgot me!

Role-Play: Say It Like a Toothbrush

Choose one of the silly situations below. Pretend you are the object speaking. Use the Italian phrase: “Non lui. Chiunque tranne lui.” (“Not him. Anyone but him.”)

Try to say it with drama—like a movie scene!

Choose your role:

- A toothbrush hiding from a lazy owner
- A chair avoiding a very heavy person
- A phone refusing to answer a boring call
- A dog hiding from the vet
- A pizza slice avoiding pineapple

Example: **Student A:** “You’re coming with me to the dentist!”

Student B (as the toothbrush): “Non lui. Chiunque tranne lui!”

Pronunciation Tip: Sound Like a Native

Non lui Say it like “non loo-ee” (not him)

Chiunque “kee-OON-kay” (anyone)

Tranne lui “TRAHN-neh loo-ee” (except him)

Say it slowly first, then try it fast and dramatic. Bonus points for hand gestures!

(The Italians are famous for their hand gestures)

Teacher's Key

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1 → c

2 → d

3 → a

4 → b