

# The Laughing Clock



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

# **The Laughing Clock**

Yavuz DEMİRKİRAN



In the village of Tickton, cobbled streets wound between crooked houses, and one thing stood taller than all the rest: the old clock in the square. It had a carved oak body, a cream face with Roman numerals, and a little brass bell on top. Amelia, a curious girl with curly pigtails and a brass compass around her neck, loved to watch its hands tick. 'You're the best clock in the world,' she told it every morning.



Amelia lived with her Grandpa Wilbur, the clock keeper. He was tall and stooped, with round spectacles and a long white moustache, and he wound the clock every day. 'Grandpa, does the clock ever laugh?' Amelia asked. 'Laugh? Clocks only tick,' he said, but his eyebrows twitched. Amelia noticed things—like how Grandpa never used the pocket watch chain that dangled from his waistcoat.



One morning, Mayor Primrose marched into the square in her plum coat and feathered violet hat, clipboard in hand. 'The festival will be perfect!' she announced. 'Absolutely perfect!' Suddenly, the clock let out a giggle. It started deep in its wooden belly and burst out—hee hee hee! The Mayor's rosy cheeks turned pale. 'Did that clock just laugh?' she gasped. Amelia's green eyes went wide.



Amelia hurried to the clock and pressed her ear against its carved oak body. The clock giggled again. 'Why are you laughing?' she whispered. The clock's wooden mouth opened and closed, but it didn't speak. Then the baker walked by. 'I only ate one bun!' he said. Giggles erupted from the clock. Amelia grinned. 'You laugh at lies!' she cried. 'That's your secret!' The clock chimed a happy yes.



Word spread fast. When the tailor claimed he'd finished a dress on time, the clock snickered. When the farmer said his cow was the best, the clock tittered. Soon the whole village heard funny giggles at every fib. 'It's embarrassing!' cried Mayor Primrose, covering her ears. But Amelia noticed something: people started telling the truth more often, just to avoid the giggles.



Grandpa Wilbur grew quiet. Every time the clock laughed, he flinched. Amelia found him polishing the clock's brass pendulum with shaky hands. 'Grandpa, what's wrong?' she asked. 'Nothing, nothing,' he said, but his moustache drooped. The clock let out a tiny, sad giggle. Amelia put her hand on his arm. 'Grandpa, you can tell me.' He looked away and said nothing.



The festival day arrived. Bunting flapped, pies steamed, and Mayor Primrose wore her biggest hat. 'Welcome to the perfect Tickton Festival!' she boomed. The clock stayed silent. No giggles, no chimes. The Mayor frowned. 'Why isn't it laughing?' she asked. Amelia checked the clock's hands—they were frozen. The pendulum had stopped. 'The clock is broken!' someone shouted. A hush fell over the square.



Mayor Primrose tugged her gloves. 'It's fine! Everything is fine!' she said, but her voice wobbled. The clock remained still. 'We need to fix it,' said Amelia. 'But how?' The villagers muttered. Grandpa Wilbur turned pale and backed away. Amelia saw his hands trembling. 'Grandpa, do you know something?' she asked. He shook his head, but his eyes looked worried.



Amelia climbed onto a crate to face the crowd. 'The clock laughs at lies,' she said. 'But now it's silent. Maybe it's waiting for a truth that's been hidden.' The villagers looked at each other. The baker shuffled his feet. The tailor coughed. Mayor Primrose clutched her clipboard. 'Nonsense!' she said, but her voice cracked. The clock didn't make a sound.



Amelia turned to her grandpa. 'You've been hiding something,' she said gently. 'I can tell.' The crowd fell quiet. Grandpa Wilbur's shoulders slumped. He took off his spectacles and wiped them. 'Long ago,' he said, 'I broke the clock's original pendulum. I replaced it and never told anyone.' He sighed. 'I was ashamed.' The clock's wooden mouth twitched.



For a moment, nothing happened. Then the clock's mouth opened wide, and a deep, warm laugh rolled out—ha ha ha! The brass bell rang. The hands began to move. The pendulum swung back and forth. 'It's working!' Amelia cheered. The clock laughed not at Grandpa, but with him. Everyone stared in wonder. 'I'm sorry,' Grandpa said. 'I should have told the truth.'



Mayor Primrose stepped forward. 'I've told little fibs to make everything look perfect,' she admitted. 'But perfect isn't honest.' She looked at her clipboard and tore off a list. 'From now on, I'll be truthful.' The clock giggled warmly. Others spoke up too: the baker confessed to eating two buns, the tailor admitted a crooked seam. Each truth made the clock chime happily.



Amelia laughed along. 'You see?' she said. 'The truth isn't scary. It makes the clock happy—and us too!' She hugged Grandpa Wilbur, who smiled with relief. The villagers joined hands and danced as the clock's bells rang out over Tickton. The festival became the best one yet, not because it was perfect, but because it was honest.



From that day on, the laughing clock became the village's favorite helper. Whenever someone fibbed, it giggled, and everyone would laugh and correct themselves. Amelia often sat by the clock, her compass necklace shining. 'You're not just a clock,' she told it. 'You're a truth-teller.' The clock chimed in agreement, its wooden mouth curved in a smile.



Grandpa Wilbur taught Amelia how to wind the clock each morning. 'A clock needs truth to tick,' he said. 'And people need trust to be happy.' Amelia nodded. She learned that honesty wasn't just about blurting things out—it was about caring enough to share what's real. The clock's brass pendulum swung steadily, keeping time with the village's honest heart.



And so Tickton became known far and wide as the village where the clock laughed. Travelers would ask, 'Why does it giggle?' and the villagers would answer, 'Because we tell the truth.' Amelia would smile, her gap-toothed grin bright. The clock would ring its bell, and everyone knew: honesty builds trust, and trust makes a village strong.