

The Time Clock



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

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Ethan was a curious boy with messy curly dark brown hair and a gap-toothed smile. He loved adventure, but today he was bored. His grandfather's workshop was full of dusty tools and strange gadgets. 'Don't touch anything,' Grandpa Arthur said with a wink, adjusting his round glasses. But Ethan's hazel eyes spotted something shiny under a pile of old maps.



It was a round golden pocket watch, warm and heavy in his hand. Strange symbols were carved around its face, and its hands were frozen at noon. Ethan turned the little knob, and suddenly the hands spun. The workshop blurred, and a rushing wind filled his ears. When he opened his eyes, he was standing in a muddy courtyard before a giant stone castle.



A tall knight in shining silver armour with a blue cape and a golden lion emblem strode toward him. 'Welcome, young traveler,' said Sir Roland, his square jaw breaking into a warm smile. 'I am Sir Roland. How did you come to be here?' Ethan held up the golden clock. 'It brought me,' he whispered. 'Then it must be magic,' said the knight, 'for courage often comes in small packages.'



'Would you like to see our castle?' Sir Roland asked. Ethan nodded eagerly. They walked through echoing halls and climbed a spiral staircase to the top of a tower. Below, knights practised with wooden swords in the courtyard. 'Being brave doesn't mean you're not scared,' Sir Roland said. 'It means you do what's right anyway.' Ethan touched the clock and felt a strange tingle.



The clock's hands began to spin again. The castle faded, and Ethan found himself in a thick, green forest. Giant ferns brushed his shoulders, and the air smelled of damp earth. Suddenly, a huge dinosaur stomped by, its long neck reaching the treetops. Ethan gasped and hid behind a fallen log. The dinosaur chewed leaves peacefully, paying him no mind.



Ethan watched in awe as a whole herd of dinosaurs roamed the ancient forest. Baby dinosaurs chased each other, and a mother dinosaur gently nudged her little one. 'This is amazing!' Ethan whispered. He wished he could stay and explore forever. But the golden clock in his pocket felt warm, and he knew it was time to move on. He turned the hands once more.



The forest dissolved, and Ethan stood on a shiny metal walkway high above a sparkling city. Sleek towers reached into the clouds, and tiny flying cars zipped between them. A small robot rolled up on wheel feet, its cyan eyes glowing. 'Hello! I'm Zip,' it beeped cheerfully. 'Welcome to the future! Need a guide?' Ethan grinned and nodded.



Zip showed Ethan floating gardens and moving sidewalks. 'In our city, we use clean energy from the sun and wind,' Zip explained, its chest light blinking. 'And we recycle everything!' Ethan saw people laughing and playing in a park with talking trees. 'It's wonderful here,' he said. 'But I miss my grandfather.' Zip's antenna wobbled. 'Missing home is a good sign. It means you have people who love you.'



Suddenly, the golden clock in Ethan's hand went cold. He turned the hands, but nothing happened. He shook it, but the hands stayed still. 'Oh no!' Ethan cried. 'It's stopped working! How will I get home?' Zip rolled closer. 'Don't worry,' it said. 'Every problem has a solution. Let's look at the clock together.'



Zip examined the clock with its tiny tool arms. 'Look,' Zip said, pointing to a small puzzle on the back. 'There are three symbols: a castle, a dinosaur, and a city. They must be pressed in the right order.' Ethan thought hard. 'I visited the castle first,' he said, 'then the dinosaurs, then the city.' He pressed the symbols in that order. Nothing happened.



Ethan's shoulders slumped. 'It didn't work,' he sighed. Zip's cyan eyes flickered. 'Maybe it's not about the order you visited,' Zip said gently. 'Maybe it's about what you learned.' Ethan remembered Sir Roland's words about courage and the peaceful dinosaurs. He realized that each moment had taught him something. He pressed the symbols again, but this time he whispered, 'Thank you for every moment.'



The clock began to glow. The hands spun wildly, and the future city melted away. Ethan felt a warm breeze, and suddenly he was back in the workshop. Grandpa Arthur was sitting on a stool, polishing a small gear. 'Did you have a good adventure?' he asked, his grey eyes twinkling. Ethan ran to him and hugged him tightly.



'How did you know?' Ethan asked, his voice full of wonder. Grandpa Arthur smiled, his bushy white moustache twitching. 'I found that clock when I was your age,' he said. 'It taught me that time is precious.' He handed Ethan a small notebook. 'Write down what you learned.' Ethan wrote: 'Every moment is valuable, and home is the best place of all.'



That evening, Ethan sat on the porch with Grandpa Arthur, watching the sunset paint the sky orange and pink. 'I used to wish for adventure all the time,' Ethan said. 'But now I know that being here with you is an adventure too.' Grandpa Arthur nodded. 'The best adventures are the ones we share, right here, right now.'



The golden clock still sat on the workshop shelf, its hands resting at noon. Ethan didn't try to turn them again. He had learned that time moves forward whether we want it to or not. So he decided to enjoy every moment. He played with his friends, listened to Grandpa's stories, and wondered at the world around him. Each day was a new adventure, and he was ready for it.



And when he lay in bed at night, Ethan smiled. He knew that somewhere in the workshop, the golden clock waited, full of secrets. But he didn't need it to be happy. He had his family, his home, and a heart full of memories. Every moment was valuable, and he was living the best one right now.