

Clock on my Wall

My clock had never been mistaken. For years, it hung on the wall across my bed. Its hands soar across the face with a confidence that made all other clocks seem anxious, like liars caught mid phrase. I tested its accuracy, when I compared it with my phone, the stove, or the blaring red digits in my car, it never deviated. Perfect.

I could never shake this feeling that something felt off.

It was the noise at first. Not the tick of the hands, no, that was soothing, polite, but the moments between each tick. I noticed it stretched, like a grasp of air held too long. Other times, it rushes too quickly, as if attempting to hurry back.

I began to think, was it my own mind playing games on me? Fatigue?

But last night, at 3:18 am, the clock stopped. Not in a slow stutter, not with a gradual nature or dying hesitation but rather ... stopped. The red second hand paused mid-sweep, aiming itself before the six.

I felt obligated to wait. In a sudden jolt, it flew forward. Farther than a second, not two, but five minutes.

2:23 am.

I threw my body out from my bedsheets and hoisted my legs in front of me. I felt my chest thump as I watched the clock, waiting for it to jolt to life again. It did not. Not for a while. Then suddenly, it continued its typical motions, steady and natural, as if to act like nothing had happened.

But something had happened, I had seen it. I continued out of my bed.

My carpet floor was unsettlingly warm, or perhaps I had just given it more attention. My bedroom felt empty, as if it was a place someone had just left.

The clock lay at a slight crook. Never before had this been obvious.

I straightened it.

The moment that my fingers touched its frame, it froze again.

I stopped

Carefully, I raised the clock off and into my hands.

Behind it, the wallpaper was torn. Under, there was a darker shade of paint. This wasn't what stole my breath.

There was a room.

A narrow seam ran down the wall, where my clock had rested. I ran my finger across it.

Paint shifted. A door opens. I pushed on.

Nothing had happened, then, hearing a subtle click, quiet enough that I could have imagined it, the door swung wide. There wasn't a lack of light but rather a deeper, darker look. Something that was thick, it held weight.

Tick. Tick. Tick.

I peek into the abis. Rows of clocks nailed on the wall,, like a militia marching to battle. So much variation, some digital, a few watches, many broken into fragments of what were once timepieces, almost unrecognizable.

They all tick without rhythm. Lying center stage, an empty chair. Resting above, was a clock identical to mine, but one difference stood out. It wasn't wrong, it was waiting.

Word Count: 495