

## A DECORATIVE PIECE OF MACHINERY

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The clock was broken. He was sure of it. Against his will though, that clock was still ticking, completely unaware of its own condition. Not that it was working just fine, no: it was *broken*, right? But not broken as in, well, when a clock simply stops working. Wow, that would have been a relief! So that bastard was still doing its job in an odd manner: ticking now for a while, and then stopping at random. One didn't come to realize whenever that bloody clock would resume its uncommon accounting of the time passing by; sometimes it was even working backwards: really sad, bearing in mind no matter what time the clock said it was: it was always one second later, one minute later, on hour later, *fuck*, even one day later. To hell with the clock, one would say in the spur of the moment. But, hey, it was *a present*. You cannot get rid of *a present*, just like that - now, he snaps his fingers - even when that very same present is not working fine, isn't that so? Rules, after all. Fucking rules mocking us all. Thus, he resolved not to throw the clock out the window. What about getting it fixed, then? Oh, he had already tried that too. No results. Apparently, there was nothing physically wrong with it. It was supposed *to work*. But still, it didn't want to. There it was, *that bastard*, nailed to that kitchen wall; at certain times of the day some sun rays entered the kitchen through a big window, so it was more often than not bathed in golden light. It was almost poetic, in a way. To be fair, it was gorgeous. Too much for a broken kitchen-fucking-clock, probably. Two times he tried to fix it, the first one he did on his own. Nothing. So the second time he decided to go and look for a professional. You know, those guys working with clocks all-the-time. The same result. It turned out it was absolutely impossible to repair something that was, hells bells, not broken at all. And expensive, too. Then, there it was: nailed back to the wall, ticking chaotically and getting warm for free. He usually stared at it, frowning. He was fairly puzzled, not being an expert on oddities and the sort. On one such an occasion, it came to happen that he got an idea. Oh, well, it was more a *catharsis* than anything, but what the heck! He grabbed an old notebook and a black ink pen, and had a seat on a white wooden stool, right in front of the clock, ready to take some notes so that its code, whatever that may be, could be broken. Ha! What a waste of time *that* was! The clock worked normally all the time, until he felt sleepy and finally fell asleep right there, on that stool. When he eventually woke up, the notebook was resting upon his lap, but the pen was lying on the floor, its ink dried. Pointless, and painful too: his back hurt so badly for a whole month, that he had no other option but to go visit the doctor. Thank God that one was a good one, giving him a prescription based on *Myolastan* pills to soften his pain. Back to the main problem once again, now that his back was fine. *What the hell am I going to do, such a piece of fucking broken machinery?*, he asked the clock, annoyed. Another simple tick came all of a sudden, for an answer. *Fuck you!*, he shouted at it, now so angry that he almost hit it. But the clock did not notice that; *impossible!*, one would ascertain to say, for it was just a piece of wood, plastic and some other assembled parts. If it hadn't been that the clock was a present, he would have smashed it long ago into small pieces; but now he was due to deal with it. Exhausted, and being stated that that clock was as much a decorative piece of machinery as anything else, he resolved that it would stay precisely where it was, though without ticking at will. Easy as pie. Just remove its batteries, and everything would go back to normal. He came back to the kitchen holding a screwdriver in his right hand. *Now, you little bastard, your time has finally come!*, he said aloud, smiling. No, not smiling, almost grinning; for that would be the end of that awful weird kitchen-clock. And it was fair, too; no one could ever charge him with being anything but patient; so many months dealing with that unbearable random ticking of the hours; so many nights incapable of having some rest because that clock seemed to tick the minutes even louder; so many days staring at its hour-hand and second-hand moving themselves as if dancing; enough of that! Time to do some basic adjustments, time to do the right thing. And so he advances slowly until he reaches the clock; it is still working. There is a brief moment of hesitation, because

now he can see the way it brightens, being once again bathed in that sunny light, and it is really beautiful, almost mesmerising. But he is purposeful, he has something to achieve. *There, that did not work, you scum bag!*, he says, and using his left hand he takes it down from the wall. He turns the clock over, in order to access the battery door. Still smiling, he removes it. Then, knowing that his burden is about to come to an end, he gets the battery out of its compartment. He turns the clock over one last time, revealing its recently acquired stillness. The second-hand and hour-hand are dead still. Then, he replaces it and steps some paces away from it, arms-crossed. *Gorgeous*, he sighs.