

## The Clockmaker's Apprentice

In the heart of an ancient city stood a peculiar little shop filled with clocks of every kind—grandfather clocks, cuckoo clocks, sundials, and even one that ticked backward. The shop belonged to Master Elric, a reclusive clockmaker known for crafting timepieces so precise they were said to whisper secrets of the universe.

One rainy evening, a boy named Ravi wandered into the shop, drenched and shivering. He had no home, but he had a sharp mind and nimble fingers. Elric, intrigued by the boy's curiosity, offered him a place to stay in exchange for help around the shop.

Ravi quickly proved himself. He learned to polish gears, align pendulums, and even decode the cryptic blueprints Elric kept locked away. But one day, Ravi discovered a hidden chamber beneath the floorboards. Inside was a massive, unfinished clock unlike any other. Its gears were etched with constellations, and its pendulum was a shard of meteorite.

Elric confessed: the clock was designed to measure not just time, but possibility. It could reveal the most probable future based on the present moment. But it was incomplete—missing a final gear that could only be forged by someone who truly understood time's value.

Ravi, now wiser and more attuned to the rhythms of life, crafted the final gear from a piece of his own pocket watch—his only keepsake from his parents. When the clock finally ticked, it didn't show a future—it showed *many*. And in each one, Ravi was no longer a boy lost in time, but a man shaping it.