

# The Clockmaker's Promise

In a quiet village tucked between two silver-blue mountains lived an old clockmaker named Yarek. His shop was small—barely more than a room with dusty windows and wooden shelves—but inside it, time itself seemed to rest. Clocks of every kind ticked and chimed: brass pocket watches, tall pendulum clocks, tiny cuckoos perched in their carved houses. Yet Yarek's most cherished project was an unfinished clock lying open on his work-bench, its gears glinting like tiny suns.

Every morning, a girl named Lina passed by on her way to school. She would stop at the door, press her face to the glass, and watch Yarek work with his steady hands. One foggy morning, Yarek waved her inside.

“Curious about time, are you?” he asked.

Lina nodded. “Everyone says you can fix any clock—but that one,” she said, pointing to the brass clock on his bench, “never moves.”

Yarek smiled softly. “That one is special. It’s the Promise Clock. I’ve been building it for someone who hasn’t arrived yet.”

“Who?” she asked.

“I don’t know,” Yarek said. “But I’ll know when they come.”

For weeks, Lina visited the shop. She learned to oil tiny screws, polish brass, and set springs just right. Slowly, the old clockmaker’s hands grew steadier when hers were beside them. One afternoon as winter crept closer, Yarek placed the Promise Clock in front of her.

“It’s yours,” he said.

Lina blinked. “But I didn’t order it.”

“I told you,” Yarek said, “I was waiting for the right person. Someone who listens to the quiet things.”

She wound the clock with trembling fingers. For the first time, the gears stirred. A small, clear tick filled the room—the beginning of something steady and true.

Yarek placed a hand over hers. “Time is precious,” he said. “But it’s even more precious when shared.”

And from that day on, the clockmaker and the girl built not just clocks, but the gentle rhythm of a friendship that echoed long after the mountains swallowed the sun.