

The Clock
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There is a ticking noise.

Tick-Tock-Tick-Tock....

It drives me crazy. I hear it all the time. My heart rate feels like it's galloping against the ambient noise. The horse-like poundings against my ribcage versus the ticking of that god forsaken clock. It rivals against the sound of occasional people chatting outside on the street, or a rowdy group of kids coming through the neighbourhood.

I like wrist watches, grandfather clocks, the Big Ben... But I just don't like clocks. They sit on your wall and do nothing but click away the seconds.

I sit in my living room, the ice in my drink has long since melted. I look at the amber liquid that sloshes with each shake or tremor of my veiny hand. It's meticulously clean in here. I couldn't spot a speck of dust if I tried, though my vision has grown poor over the years... I never liked cleaning before, that is usually a job for the domestic or petite. I heave a sigh out of my nostrils before running my free hand over my receding hairline.

I can't do it... I can't *look* at it.

My eyes feel as if they are glued to the glass. I can't help but imagine something bad will happen when I stop staring at it. My finger twitches at the rim of the fragile cup in some sort of

tapping rhythm every second click of the clock. I distract my vision by flickering my gaze to the doorknob leading to the apartment hallway.

Did I lock that once I got home?

I feel uncomfortable... *Uneasy*. I know nothing awaits me on the other side but unless I get up at this very second something will go wrong. What if I forget to lock it later if I haven't already? What if I forget and someone breaks in while I'm sleeping? What if someone breaks in *right now?*

Tick...Tock...Tick...Tock...

I stand up abruptly and march to the door. I jiggle with the handle before un-locking-and-locking it back up again. I press my face against the cold material, peering through the pitiful peephole. I finally back away. Jiggling the handle one more time to see if it will budge. It doesn't.

I sit back down. The glass resumes its position in my hand once more. My mind races about other things that could bring me a day closer to doom. I flip through the newspaper I picked up this morning. A schoolboy had been selling them on the corner of my street. I come across a section about the prices of electricity going up from lights not being turned off. I zero into the hall leading to the small bathroom and my less-than desirable bedroom.

The slit beneath the door to the bedroom emits light. Did I leave that on? I groan. Every day, that damn light taunts me with its glow, even though most of the time it stems from the rays of

sunlight peeking between buildings and into the boudoir. I ascend from the couch once more, a light creak wails from the dainty wood floor.

'Gotta fix that.

I mosey to the bedroom, knocking on my own door twice before opening. A habit I didn't ever realize I've picked up. The light surely enough is off. I close the door, stepping back to ogle the floor that reflects the same light that it did when I had glanced at it before. Why is it back?

Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.

I knock on the door again, a feeling of nausea pooling up in my stomach. My knock is more urgent this time, and I swing the door open to understand the light remains off. I almost thought I saw something. I could have sworn. But staring into the blank darkness and only having the silhouettes of my furniture stare back at me, I feel better.

The clock is heard from the other room. Still ticking. A surge of confidence comes over me, and I advance back to the living room. My face scrunches into a grumpy scowl, the hairs on my brow bone bush outwards and I can almost see them in my peripheral. The clock stares at me as I enter the room. I flinch when I see the time. Eight-Forty-Four.

No matter when I remember to check, the clock always reads Eight-Forty-Four. I have replaced the batteries, bought a new clock... *What is that...?* I walk closer, something shiny focuses in on me. It looks like some sort of robot eye... staring at me. *Am I being watched?* The noise becomes louder. Deafening. So loud that I didn't hear the-

Riiiiiiiiing! Riiiiiiiiing!

The phone call I've been expecting. I always do. I stand straight and go to answer.

Tick! Tock! Tick! Tock!

Tomorrow is another day.