

began to pound the least bit. What if he misunderstood? But he would know. He would look at her, and he couldn't think—that. What would she say? "Hello." And after that things would take care of themselves. Maybe, if they got on well, he would suggest taking a walk—under the stars.

He was almost abreast of her. His steps were slowing. It was the third Saturday night. Now was the time. She looked up to meet his gaze. She smiled, shyly. "Hello," she said. "Won't you—sit down?"

He seemed suddenly embarrassed. "Why—", he smiled, "I—". He moved to approach the bench, then stopped. In the darkness she crimsoned. Didn't he understand?

But he was staring at a bulky figure that loomed behind her, a figure that she could not see.

"Here you!" The voice, directed toward her, was rough. "What are yuh doin' here?" Still she did not realize that the voice addressed her. "You, I mean." The figure moved in front of her and jerked her to her feet.

She shrank back. "I—". Her voice caught. "I wasn't doing anything!"

"Yah! That's what they all say. 'I wasn't doin' nothin'." The voice was savagely mocking. "Guess you'd better come with me, sister, and tell it t' the judge." Small sharp eyes scrutinized her; took in her thin body, the cheap dress, the straggly hair. "Business hasn't been so good, eh?" A fat hot hand closed on her arm.

She struggled for a moment; until, over the policeman's shoulder she saw the young man moving noiselessly into the shadows. Her shoulders drooped then in resignation.

The moist, hot hand was shoving her down the path toward the city lights. From far away she heard the voice murmuring something—"Maybe the judge won't lock you up— Looks like it's your first time—

musta been, or you wouldn't a done such a rough job." She heard a guttural laugh.

Soft music, star light. But the wind was blowing up a rain, and the sky had gone quite black.

## It Flies

Mary C. Funkhouser

Time, it is said, waits for no man. I admire things that wait for no man—they are so few—especially, sweet young things. But this is digression.

Although nothing can be done about it, I think time is demanding too much attention in this nervous era. Ours is an age of clock punching, of schedules, of Bulova watch mongers splicing up perfectly good radio programs to annoy people by reminding them of the hour. Why couldn't the old Greek astronomers at least have contented themselves with the natural division of day and night, months and years? Why the necessity of cutting up the poor puny days into tiny teasing tid-bits of time?

I harbor dark suspicions of people who always know the hour of day, people who, if you regard them quizzically (although you haven't said a word) will snap their wrist watches under your nose saving, "two ten and three ticks" without even looking. And reader, those individuals who always remember the exact hour they did things, are fit for treason, stratagems and spoils. The summer traveler who scribbled a hasty postcard such as, "Hello there—arrived last evening at 5:22. Had a nice swim till 6:00. Dinner at 7:30 on the hotel terrace. To the theatre at 9:00. Danced afterward for an hour. Home by 1:15," gives me the jitters. The one quoted slipped up by not telling us how long he was at the theatre.



I guess he's going to let us figure it out for ourselves. It would seem that these time-conscious correspondents are in a sort of traveling marathon wherein they must report the "when" and "how long" of all they do. One grows breathless just reading their cards.

Time was indirectly one of my childhood's greatest disillusionments. Father Christmas and Father Time, hand in hand, tottered across my rosy infant's horizon teaching me that things are not what they seem. Father Christmas, the vague, intangible "spirit," was offered as an ever inadequate substitute for the jolly red-faced man of the sleigh-bells. About this time too, I learned to tell time—was taught the glowering significance of the quaint features of clocks—learned that those ticking monsters kept rigid check on how long I was good or naughty. It was their doing that called me in from play—made me eat when I wasn't hungry—sent me to bed "by day." "It's time to come in" or "it's time to go to bed" seemed most illogical to me—that people should be regulated by such chiming little nuisances. Why didn't mamma regulate them—set them forward or back to suit the occasion?

The only clock I ever really liked was one that lived in a little country town in my aunt's parlor. Its virtue was that it was always at least half an hour slow. This, thought I, is a clock with a sense of humor. If someone didn't keep check on it, it would lose so rapidly that soon today would be yesterday, and so on until one would drift deliciously back into the last week without even bothering. Too, its face was adorned with many colored, revolving planets which showed that it had a broader conception of time than merely quibbling over hours.

I can never be as happy again as I was before I had any knowledge

of man's careful division of time by means of clocks. Before I understood time-pieces, what bliss! I could waken in the morning into a wondrous eternity. I didn't know how long the day was or how long it stayed dark—and I didn't care. Now there are little round glass-eyed consciences leering at me from every desk or mantle-piece in the house—recording my hours of idleness, checking my comings and outgoings—calling me from contemplation and dreams into attention and action.

According to Ovid, time is the best doctor. True, I know him as a universal surgeon who, without a tremor removes my young and happy hours one by one by one—and, provided there are no more miracles, he will finally amputate me altogether!

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## Keeper Of The Pump

Max Stuckey

Judge Sylvester Matewan puffed laboriously on a black cigar. He twirled a gold penknife on the end of a heavy watch chain and glanced meditatively up the dusty street.

In front of the general store two grey-haired men sit on boxes. A checkerboard rests between them, and they sit for hours without a word. Three or four young men sit on empty barrels and watch. When the old men die two of the young men will inherit the checkerboard and boxes.

Hardly less lifelike than the checker players, a stodgy wooden Indian holds a fistful of decaying wooden cigars, while across the street, in front of the jewelry store, a big tin