

The Old-Clock Shop

CHRISTMAS **Eve** had arrived. As last-minute shoppers were going home, a thick, white sheet of snow lay over Salt Lake City, USA. Yet the lights were still burning in the old-clock shop, as Ray, its old, **deaf** owner, worked on a clock he had sold that day.

Having finished his work, Ray stood up and was on his way to the back room when a cold **rush** of air from the front door hit the back of his neck.

He turned to meet a last-minute shopper, but his old, **wise** eyes told him that this was not a shopper. He saw two men, one in his twenties, the other closer to fifty. The younger man remained at the door. The older man **approached** the counter with no sign of **friendliness** in his eyes. Ray was able to hide his growing fear as he slowly pushed a notepad and a pencil across the counter.

He smiled at the unfriendly face, then **pointed to** his ears and **shook his head** from side to side. A quick look of surprise changed the man's face as he studied the notepad, then turned and said something to his friend.

Ray used the chance to look closely at the man, **paying attention to** the shape of a gun and a restless hand in the man's right coat-pocket. Anger boiled within him, but it was kept down by an inner voice that said, "**Be still.**" He wrote on the notepad, "May I help you?" For the first time the older man looked directly at Ray and smiled. A **cruel, mocking** smile. They both understood why he was there, why his friend remained at the door. They looked like men who were **down on their luck**, and were now ready to try something they would later be sorry about.

The clocks **ticked** on. Ray calmly wrote another message. "Have you come to pick up a clock or watch?" Then he pointed to the 'loan' board filled with hanging clocks and pocket watches. He was not a **pawnbroker**, but at the same time couldn't say 'No' to the needy people who placed their old watches or clocks before him for anything they could get. He **loaned** more than he should. They would be



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there when the owners wanted them back ... at the same price he had paid, with no interest.

Then the older man seemed to feel a little easier, took out his hand from his pocket and quickly looked at the watch on his **wrist**. "How much will you give me for this?" the man wrote.

Ray noticed a little **shame** in the grey eyes looking at him. The watch was nothing special and yet had great powers. It was something to exchange, a **way out** of a bad situation. Knowing that great need had brought the man to his shop in the first place, Ray asked, "How much do you need for it?" The reply came back on the notepad: "Whatever it's **worth**."

Ray reached into his cash-box, pulled out a fifty-dollar note and passed it into the man's hand. As they shook hands, Ray looked into the man's eyes; they seemed to say, "Thank you!" They both knew the watch wasn't worth that much. Before turning to leave, the man wrote, "I will be back to pick it up as soon as I can. Merry Christmas!"

The little story ended on the half hour with the clocks striking **all together**. The **timepieces**, which had been looking on silently **all the while**, **rang out** the time with such feeling that even Ray thought he could hear them. Their sweet, musical message was filled with hope. The timeless message of 'Peace on earth, **goodwill** towards all' was felt by the three men who stood in the old-clock shop.

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Vocabulary

1. **Eve** (noun) – the day — or night — just before some event. पूर्व संध्या
2. **Deaf** (adjective) – lacking or deprived of the sense of hearing wholly or in part बहरा
3. **Rush** (noun) – a sudden forceful flow जोरदार प्रवाह
4. **Wise** (adjective) – Astute, Intelligent, Prudent, Sage, Sensible, Judicious बुद्धिमान
5. **Approach** (verb) – Contact, Accost, Speak to, Talk to, Get in touch with समीप आना
6. **Friendliness** (noun) – Openness, Sociability, Pleasantness, Responsiveness, Affability मित्रता
7. **Point to** (phrasal verb) – Indicate, Point out, Point at, Show, Direct इंगित करना
8. **Shake one's head** (phrase) – To say 'No' or refusal इनकार करना
9. **Pay attention to** (phrase) – Heed, Listen to, Take note of, Observe, Notice ध्यान देना
10. **Be still** (phrase) – Relax, calm शांत रहना
11. **Cruel** (adjective) – Unkind, Mean, Nasty, Brutal, Pitiless, Malicious, Spiteful क्रूर
12. **Mocking** (adjective) – derisive, gibe-like, jeering, taunting मजाक
13. **Down on one's luck** (phrase) – to be experiencing a bad situation or to have very little money
14. **Tick** (verb) – make a sound like a clock or a timer
15. **Pawnbroker** (noun) – a person who lends money at interest in exchange for personal property that is deposited as security साहूकार
16. **Loan** (verb) – Lend, Advance, Give a loan, Give an advance, Give somebody a loan of उधार देना
17. **Wrist** (noun) – the joint connecting the hand with the forearm. कलाई
18. **Shame** (noun) – Disgrace, Embarrassment, Dishonor, Humiliation, Indignity, Ignominy शर्म
19. **Way out** (noun) – an exit from a place; a way of dealing with a problem. बाहर निकलने का रास्ता
20. **Worth** (noun) – Value, Price, Cost मूल्य
21. **All together** (phrase) – All at once, Simultaneously, In unison, In chorus, Concurrently सब एक साथ

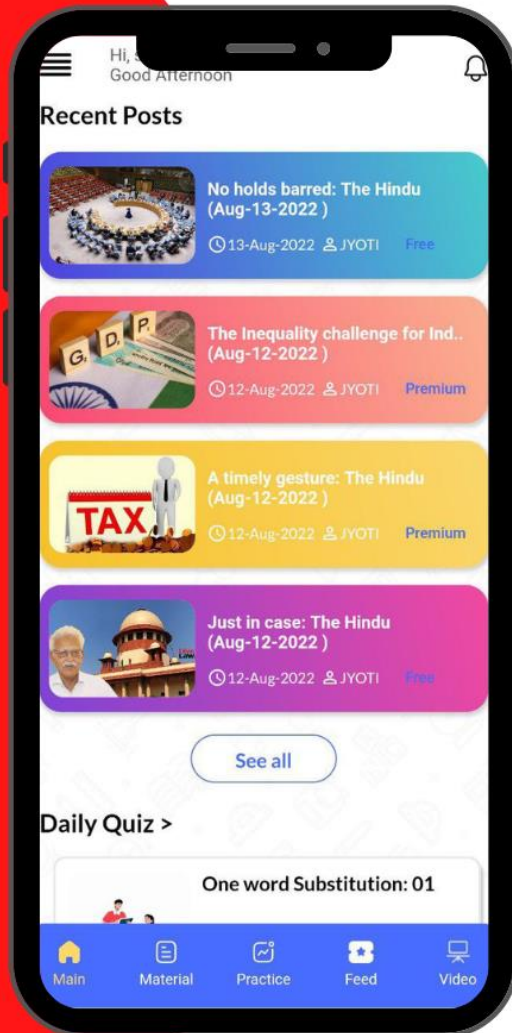
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22. **Timepiece** (noun) – Clock, Watch, Timer
घड़ी

23. **All the while** (phrase) – for all of a period
of time हर समय

24. **Ring out** (phrasal verb) – When a sound
rings out, it is loud and clear: जोर से बजना

25. **Goodwill** (noun) – Kindness, Friendliness,
Favor, Helpfulness, Benevolence,
Generosity, Concern सद्भावना



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