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*Someday- Annie's Antiques/*1500 words

*Beep! Beep!*  The loud noise ran through the atmosphere causing Charlie to feel more rushed than he already did. He had left the house 10 minutes earlier in case of this situation, but it seemed almost pointless now. His hand tapped the steering wheel and his eyes found themselves glued to his watch: *5:48.* Finally, the endless stream of cars seemed to move forward a little, his tapping on the steering wheel not easing up. When he eventually got forward far enough to start driving without interruption he looked down to check the time:*5:50*. He tapped his watch and sighed in frustration while pulling to the side of the road. He knew he had probably already missed his 6:00 meeting. He sat staring at the console wondering what else could go wrong this morning. He tended to think about what could go wrong *every* morning.

He decided to use a back road to finish his drive to work. It took longer, but at this point it didn’t matter. He continued to glance towards his watch, a habit he would never break, before remembering it wouldn’t have changed. As he drove he spotted a sign: *Annie's Antiques.* He read further and spotted not only a corny subtitle, but also an advertisement for watch repair. He immediately pulled into an open parking space and quickly walked towards the door. In small brown letters the sign read “One day it could be worth a million”. The phrase made him scoff even though there was no one to hear it. He doubted anything in this pawn shop would ever be worth a million dollars, especially in his lifetime.

The room he walked into was cluttered. A slew of brightly colored furniture lined one wall while the other was lined with a plethora of clocks; grandfather clocks, wall clocks, cuckoo clocks, and any other you could think of. Finally his attention was pulled to the counter where an older man stood staring through a magnifying glass. His desk was cluttered with springs and tools, a vase of small blue flowers was placed next to his register and Charlie couldn’t place what they were.

“Uh, hello. I have a watch I was hoping you would be able to fix.” Charlie’s voice rang out, breaking the symphony of ticking clocks.

“Ah yes, hello.” The man's eyes moved up from his project and met Charlie’s. His face was lined with slight wrinkles and he wore an inviting smile. “May I see the watch?”

Charlie unsecured it from his wrist and set it down on the counter. ”Did it just stop ticking today?” the man questioned while fiddling with the watch.

“Uh, yeah on my way to work this morning.”

“Hmm. I think I may just need to change the battery and you can be on your way with a fully functional watch.” He smiled.

“Thank you,.” Charlie replied while averting his attention back to the flowers.

“Forget-me-nots,” The man's voice rang out.

“I don't think I’ve ever heard of those.”

“Yeah, most people haven’t,” he stated as if he was expecting that answer. “Feel free to follow me back to my shop or wait out here, it will only take a minute.” He began to walk towards a door behind his desk. The neverending ticking from the clocks was beginning to cause Charlie to tap the side of his leg, and he assumed the back was more quiet, so he decided to follow. The door lead to a long hallway. The walls were covered in brown striped wallpaper that was yellowing on the edges. Four lights lined the ceiling and flickered, causing the hallway to be kind of dim. He saw the old man walk through a second door. This room was painted bright yellow and there were no windows. The man sat at a desk littered with random thingamajigs.

“How uncourteous of me to forget,” the man mumbled out, “What is your name young man?”

“Charlie.” His voice didn't feel right in the lively space.

“Ah, well it's great to meet you Charlie. You surely have a good taste in watches. This one has a very nice base and the hands are very unique, very unique indeed. My name is Conary.” His response was wordy but it didn’t feel rushed, he took his time with each part making it sound so natural. Charlie had to plan everything in his head before he said it, and it somehow managed to still come out jumbled.

“Thank you, it was a gift from my dad.” Charlie hated thinking about his father since he had passed away when he turned 19 and it left him feeling lost. The only reminder he had was the watch and he didn’t know whether to love or hate it. His voice sounded so empty in his mind compared to the jolly man in front of him. The room was cluttered with a plethora of broken items. One thing stood out from the rest: A tall grandfather clock stood in the corner, drawing all attention to its wood carvings and glass shelves. Inside, the shelves were lined with random objects that had no relation to each other. Conary looked up to see him staring.

“Those are my ‘worth a million’ possessions.” Conary looked at the case with a look Charlie couldn't place. “Each item in there has a story; an old guy like me needs things to help him remember sometimes.” Conary laughed out the last part, easing the atmosphere once more. Charlie looked inside and saw a small blue button. Usually he wouldn't try to make unnecessary conversation but for some reason, his sudden curiosity took over.

“What story comes with the button?” He asked, still staring at the glass case.

“One of my favorites.” Conary smiled. “When I was young I didn’t have a lot of money. I had just turned 19 and had no future in college or business so I went out to the nearest city hoping for an opportunity. I met a guy who ran a small transportation company. He hired me to be a dock worker and I stuck with it until I got to get on the boats and help out. We sailed all over the place and it soon became a life I never wanted to leave. The salty smell and rock of the boat felt like home. One day we stopped to drop a shipment in a city. It was a pretty cloudy day and I had jumped off the boat to go check out the surrounding area when I bumped into someone and we both fell to the ground. I looked up to see a girl no older than me in a yellow dress. She was beautiful, and even though she was the one sitting on the ground she managed to giggle and apologize. I helped her up and profusely apologized. She told me her name was Annie with a slight southern drawl and at that moment I had never been more drawn to a person. After that she confirmed she was fine and we walked back to my boat realizing she was the one there to pick up the shipment. I helped her take it to her bakery and while we were sitting there she pointed out I was missing a button on my coat. She had pulled out a sewing kit and a blue button even though all mine were white and sewed it on for me.”

“Oh, so that's the exact button? What happened after?” Charlie questioned, feeling slightly confused about the whole thing.

“Well, me and Annie got married. It may not be as blue as it used to be, but that's the button,” he responded, grinning at Charlie's interest. Charlie looked down to his now fully functioning watch and for the first time in years he didn’t feel a bitterness in his chest, he felt that this was a memory he’d let in. He knew that someday he’d look back and know it was ‘worth a million’.