The Clock That Got Embarrassed

down, and lightning occasionally that ripped through him when he he always went through his worst streaked through the air, illuminat. had to strike. ing the battered face of the town clock. Midnight had passed, and the once, just as a clap of thunder shook clock was almost completely happy, or at least as happy as clocks ever get. There were three facts which accounted for that state of mind in this particular clock; first, he would have to strike only once next time. Nobody knew how he rejoiced when it was almost one o'clock again, and he had to strike just once. Second, it was night his face could not be seen; and, third, the frequent rolls of thunder would make that one stroke almost inaudible.

clock was not lazy-that was not of embarrassment at his own rancous why he hated having to strike voice, he knew that he dragged many twelve times. Nor was he unduly modest, that he sought to hide his face from the passersby in the streets below. You see, his voice was too loud. It was entirely too loud. When he struck to let people know the time, the violent noise produced such strong vibrations that he shuddered all over. But the hapless clock could not help this state of affairs. He had no control over the mechanism inside him which caused the heart-breaking strikings every hour. Why, even if he had been able to subdue the sound, it would not have been long until some repairman climbed laboriously to the place where the clock was, and fixed things so that the clock could again be heard far and wide. The clock knew all this. He knew that he served a purpose in the community, that many people depended on him to lunch, or when it was time to lock up their place of business and return to their warm homes and their families. He knew all this; hasn't that always been the life work of clocks?

But even knowing that he was aiding all these people and that perhaps? he was the only sure thing in the lives of some did not do much to-

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It was thundering. Rain poured ward alleviating the blinding pain

So, on this rainy night he struck

"That was all right," he murmur-ed to himself, and weakly closed "But I wish it were raining," he face did not become the color of a ed in position.

But, of course, it isn't always night, and it doesn't always rain. This makes most living creatures to striking at six and seven and people from their beds and shoved them off to work. And things grew steadily worse up until noon. His face because redder after each strikeing, and his hands flew regularly from their rightful places to attempt o cover his distorted and quivering face. Tears streamed clockwise down

But afternoon brought relief, as to strike fewer times, people below were less anxious to know the time, and glanced less often at the clock's apprehensive face.

At six o'clock at night he came closer to having no regrets about being that true slave of time, a clock. He knew that, at six, most people were at home and happy. He was a sensitive clock and really felt very deeply about the little beings that raced around below him. But know when it was time to eat their he was figuring also that, at six, most people would be inside their homes, probably eating, and all the family would be making a lot of noise, so that nobody would hear him strike!

FASHON SHOP

Well, by eleven at night, when the street, and water spurted over street. agony, most people had gone to bed. He was looking forward to a slight period of rest, which he deserved, he believed, in view of the hectic

his eyes in relief. This time his thought. "If it were only thundering and lightning as it did last ripe tomato, and his hands remain- night!" But there was really very little he could do about that, so he rested his chin gently in his hand, and gazed out over the dark little city he guarded and advised. happy, but not the clock; he hated It was a tranquil moment, and he morning. There was an extra pain felt at peace with the world, not worrying too much even about the Please don't misunderstand. This eight A. M. Besides nearly dying next time he would have to announce the hour, though he would have to hear twelve strikes.

> He looked north toward the river. Not a light to be seen. His gaze traveled east, lingering lovingly over the little black houses with their chimneys silhouetted against the dark blue sky. To the south-OH! His mouth popped open, and his hands flew into the air, as the horrified clock watched little tendrils of flame curl possessively around the usual, because, aside from his having roof of the orphanage on South The most up-to-date Restaurant Baxter Street.

With hardly a thought, he caused a roaring volley of sound to beat against the windows of the nearby homes. He struck once, twice, three times, finally twelve, furiously, and louder than any clock had ever struck before.

Soon the fire truck sped down

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the flames, while unharmed and sleepy little children were handed through windows to men on ladders. The orphanage was saved from the tragedy that had come so close to engulfing it.

A fireman passed by on the street below the clock.

"Some man phoned me," he said to his companion. "Some man who said the clock had awakened him. Said he'd glanced out the window, and had seen the red haze in the sky, and he wanted to know where the fire was. If it hadn't been for that, there's no telling when somebody would have known. Funny though-that clock doesn't usually wake people up when it strikes We're all used to it. Though there were several others who told me tonight that the clock woke 'em up striking twelve. Well, guess they're just light sleepers. Good thing we caught the fire though-those kids -," and the men passed on down the

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The clock's hands rested, raised the sky. Something happened in the metallic heart. He did not say word. But soon he struck once, deep, melodious sound that spu through the night with silver beaut His face remained a placid, weather ed grey, and his hands still pointed

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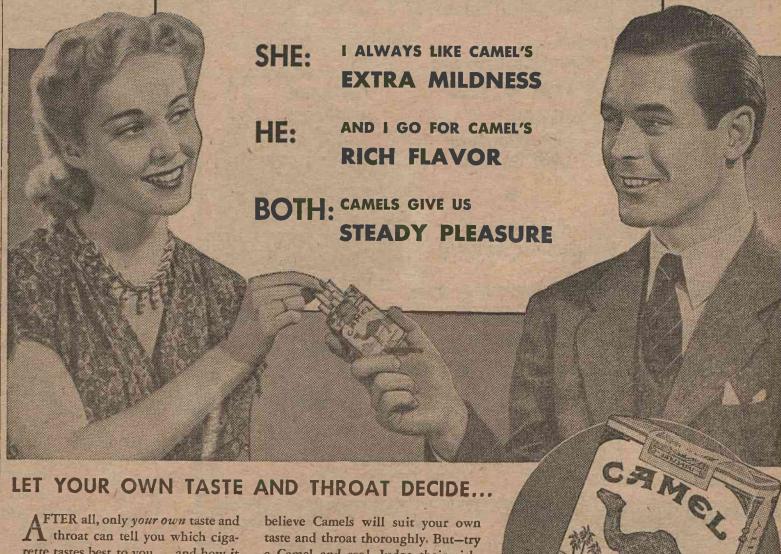
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