

Clockwork Excerpt

Written by

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OVER BLACK:

The sound of CLICKING - no, WINDING. A clockwork KEY being turned.

CLOSE ON

A WIND-UP FROG TOY in the hands of a small boy. One of those classic clockwork toys, made of metal with a hand-painted finish. The boy's hand winds the key on the back until he can't anymore.

The FROG is placed on the ground, and let loose. It quickly hops towards us, and as it leaves the frame we RACK FOCUS TO --

DAVID LARRICK, six. He's lying on the hardwood floor, his eyes level with where the frog was. We now see we are in --

INT. LARRICK HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

David clambers onto his hands and knees and chases after the frog. The frog veers to the left, and eventually crashes into the wall, continuing to hop in place.

David picks it up, starts to wind again. From upstairs, he hears SUSAN call:

SUSAN (O.S.)

David! Stop playing with your toys  
and get ready for bed, your sister's  
already brushing her teeth!

David ignores it. He places the frog down, and lets go. It hops away from him again, a smile stretching across his face as it does.

The frog hops down the hallway, but then veers left into a DOWNWARDS STAIRCASE and --

TOPPLES down the stairs, causing a metallic ruckus as it does.

David flinches.

SUSAN (O.S.)

David! Don't make me come down,  
young man! And you better not be  
going down to Daddy's office, you  
know you're not supposed to! Him  
and Maggie are very busy!

David, once again, ignores her. He stands up, looking down the staircase.

The frog lies upside-down at the bottom, almost enveloped by the darkness below. A light is on behind the slightly ajar office door, but there's not a sound.

David starts to creep down, his feet quietly padding each step.

He reaches the bottom, and squats down to his frog. He pokes it and, almost as if alive, the frog flips and starts hopping again, hopping into --

The CRACK in the door.

David, unable to resist, pushes the door open and enters.

INT. LARRICK HOUSE - BASEMENT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The office is dimly lit, and filled with blocky 90s computers and monitors.

David looks around cautiously - no one else is there.

He catches sight of the frog, hopping repeatedly against a cabinet. David approaches and picks it up. He wipes it and inspects to make sure there's no scratches. He turns to leave when he notices --

A stream of light coming out the side of the CABINET.

He peers around the side, to see a crack along the wall, a hidden doorway behind the cabinet.

David squeezes through the gap, and finds himself in a hallway leading to ANOTHER DOOR, also slightly ajar. David walks down, clutching his frog to his chest. We hear the faint mumblings of someone talking from within.

David reaches the door and peers inside --

JOHN

(faintly)

Now, raise your right hand...

All David sees is his FATHER, JOHN LARRICK, and his father's ASSISTANT, MAGGIE, standing with their backs to him. Then he looks further into the room to see --

A BOY sitting on a stool across from his father. But there's something off...

JOHN (CONT'D)

Look up... Look down... Good...

It's an AUTOMATON, a robot with the face of a boy. A CLOCKWORK MECHANISM winds where the rest of his head should

be, and his body is a mixture of porcelain skin and a wiry metallic frame.

David watches, wide-eyed in horror. Then --

The Automaton Boy's head SHARPLY TURNS and his eyes DART in David's direction.

David gasps and --

DROPS HIS FROG.

The metallic CLATTER catches the attention of John, who's head turns, but before we can see his face --

David sprints, panting in fear. He squeezes through the crack between the wall and the cabinet and sprints out of the office.

CUT TO:

THE FROG

lies on the ground, upside-down. John's hand enters frame, picking it up. We follow it as John stands up straight, holding the frog in his hands.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

David hides under his covers, his hands over his mouth stifling a cry.

We move to the CLOCK on his bedside table. It reads 9:07. We hone in on the TICKING sound, and as we drown out the muted tears of David, the clock becomes all we hear, then --

CUT TO TITLE CARD