

# Great Grandfather's Clock

Megan sat at the other side of the desk and talked to Luke's secretary. Megan liked Mary – she was glad that Luke had someone like her to look after him.

"I was at home, cooking, and Luke telephoned me. He told me to come here because he had something to tell me."

"That's funny, because he isn't here. He went out in a hurry. But why don't you go and wait for him in his office? It's more comfortable in there."

"Yes, I think I will."

She went and sat down in Luke's office. Then she noticed something.

"Oh, that's strange! His clock has stopped. It has never stopped in all the time he's had it."

She walked over and looked at it. Luke had always loved the clock. It had belonged to his great grandfather. It was a beautiful wall clock with a pretty brass face and old numbers. It had a long pendulum, which gave a gentle "tick tock", and now, for the first time, it had stopped.

"Well, this will not do! You have to tick, my old friend!"

She opened the clock. There was a little key inside the door.

"Fancy Luke forgetting to wind you! He must have a lot on his mind if he forgets that!"

She reached down to the bottom of the clock to get the key, and she found a pile of papers. She laughed.

"Well, really Luke! You are getting worse. You have an

excellent secretary to look after your papers – and you leave them in an old clock! Whatever will you do next!"

Megan took the papers out. They were contracts, for agreements and business arrangements for the last two years. Now Megan was puzzled.

"Why on earth would he do this? These are important contracts – they shouldn't be in a clock!"

She looked down at the papers. They had the signatures of the people Luke had made the agreements with. Signatures, stamps, dates. Then Megan noticed something else.

"But what on earth, this isn't Luke's signature! This is Jake's!"

And so it was. J.S. Fulbright. No sign of Luke's name. Megan had seen the signature many times before, on papers both Luke and Jake had signed.

"But these papers must have been signed in the last two years – after Jake died. Why is he using Jake's signature? Why isn't he signing in his own name?"

Then Megan realised something else. Only Jake could write that signature – it was a very personal one. Luke had often joked with Jake about it. '*Eccentric*', Luke had called it. Well, it certainly was a strange signature. And certainly only one person could write it. And that was Jake Fulbright.

"But why? And how? Jake is dead. Jake has been dead for two years now – hasn't he?"

Then Megan felt a sick feeling in her stomach. She looked at the ashtray and cigarettes on the desk. Jake's brand of cigarettes. She heard a voice in her head – the voice of the policeman in the hospital. "*We identified your husband because he was holding his wedding ring.*" Not 'wearing' – 'holding'.







Megan remembered the many strange things that her husband had done since he came home: building the office block – not the children’s home, forgetting Nathan’s story, not liking beef curry, smoking.

“*Your husband is dead,*” is what Rose at the tea party had said. Why had Luke been so angry about it? And what had Rose seen?

Something was wrong – horribly wrong. Megan took the contracts with Jake’s signature and put them in her handbag. She was going to show them to Luke tonight. She was going to demand an explanation.

The man she had brought home from the hospital was not her husband. Of that, Megan was sure. But she wasn’t sure what to do about it. And what did it all mean? Where was the real Luke?

Megan remembered the strange telephone calls. Luke had been very frightened. Who had telephoned him? Suddenly Megan was very frightened, too. She picked up her keys and went out of the office. She walked past Mary.

“Are you leaving, Mrs Harrison?”

“Yes, I can’t wait any longer. Tell Luke, when he comes in, that I’ll see him at home.”

“All right, Mrs Harrison. See you soon.”

“Yes, Mary. Goodbye.”

