



March 2018

The Clockmaker's Children (excerpt)

Katherine M. Carithers

Dartmouth College, Katherine.M.Carithers.20@dartmouth.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.dartmouth.edu/humbug>



Part of the [Fiction Commons](#), [Nonfiction Commons](#), and the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Carithers, Katherine M. (2018) "The Clockmaker's Children (excerpt)," *HUMBUG*: Vol. 2018: Iss. 1, Article 2.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.dartmouth.edu/humbug/vol2018/iss1/2>

This Short Story is brought to you for free and open access by the Student-led Journals and Magazines at Dartmouth Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in HUMBUG by an authorized editor of Dartmouth Digital Commons. For more information, please contact dartmouthdigitalcommons@groups.dartmouth.edu.

The Clockmaker's Children (excerpt)

Cover Page Footnote

This piece was brought into workshop in progress. Because we operate under a workshop model, we see value in an unfinished piece

The Clockmaker's Children (excerpt)

There are two types of magic in this world, and Elizabeth Loving believed in one. She did not believe in the magic of old: the one of trees and fairies and spells. Elizabeth believed in a newer magic. The magic she found on the ends of her mother's fingers and the tips of her father's paintbrushes. It seemed as if an entire world could be cut, constructed, and colored by their hands.

Her parents were artisans, skilled craft-makers, with no limit to their creations. Selena Loving, Elizabeth's mother, was unmatched in her metal mechanics. As a young woman, she made a name and a life for herself fixing forgotten trinkets. Music boxes blanketed in years of dust sang at her touch. Marriage was not on Selena Eras' mind when she first met Nathan Loving. Throughout her years, various young men had made wide-eyed and heavy-hearted professions of love to her. And, feeling none of that love herself, she turned them away with smiling eyes and closed lip. In fact, Selena Eras had decided she was done with men when an older woman called to inquire if Selena could mend a clock very dear to her heart.

That Sunday, the phone rang early. The soft drizzle of rain was no match for the incessant trilling. Selena answered the early call if only to stop the sound. Even though the woman on the line said her grandson was grown, the voice that spoke was neither fragile nor brittle. The voice leaned into syllables, sounding words with a confidence Selena admired. When the woman asked if the clock could be left outside Selena's door Monday morning before the shop opened, Selena agreed. She also agreed to the woman's grandson picking it up at the end of the week.

In all of Selena's life, she would only ever fall in love twice. The second time was with her daughter. The first time was with that woman's clock. When Selena pulled the clock from the brown box, she knew there was no piece more beautiful to her in all the world. It was a masterpiece, a life's work in wood, metal, and paint. The wood carving could have been mistaken for lace. The roses painted along the sides seemed to bloom as if they were spring's finest. For a few minutes, the clock-mender could not imagine what she could possibly need mending; that is, until the clock struck seven. When the hands shifted into the new hour, a screeching filled the workshop which made any passersby cover their ears.

For the entire week, Selena Eras turned away new customers as the clock consumed her days. It seemed a sin for something so beautiful to sound so horrible. The longer she worked, the more she thought of the clockmaker. The hands that shaped and painted the wood. That labored over every petal and every cut.

When Nathan Lovings entered the shop Friday afternoon to pick up the broken clock he had made for his grandmother, when he heard the sweetest music calling to him from the back room, when he fell instantly in love with its composer who greeted him behind the counter, he did not know that Selena Eras had fallen in love with him five days ago.