



The Clockwork Heist

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The Grand City Museum glimmers beneath the night sky as crystal chandeliers illuminate the bustling evening gala. Elegant guests admire ancient treasures, unaware that a daring crime is about to unfold.



A sharp gasp echoes through the gallery when a curator discovers the locked display case empty. The priceless Golden Scarab has vanished, replaced by a strange, ticking brass clockwork beetle.



Detective Maya arrives at the scene, stepping past police tape with a keen eye for detail. She orders the heavy oak doors sealed, ensuring no suspect can leave before the gala ends.



Maya first questions Dr. Vance, the sullen museum curator lurking in the shadows. Passed over for a major promotion, he bitterly insists he was merely inspecting the gallery's side wing.



Next, Maya turns to Master Tobias, an eccentric clockmaker dusting brass components on a nearby bench. He nervously fidgets with tiny tools, insisting he was only admiring the ancient mechanics of the display.



Maya then approaches Lord Sterling, a wealthy antiques collector sporting a tailored tuxedo. He smoothly claims he couldn't have stolen anything, boasting that he was delivering a speech in the main hall at precisely 11:15 PM.



Returning to the display case, Maya kneels and inspects the ticking fake scarab with her magnifying glass. She studies the intricate gears whirring rhythmically beneath its polished shell.



Suddenly, Maya notices something extraordinary—the scarab's miniature gears are turning backward. The mechanical hands on its back lock firmly into place, frozen at 11:15 PM.



Maya realizes the device was a timed mechanism designed to swap the beetle automatically at 11:15 PM. Lord Sterling used his speech as a staged alibi while his automated clockwork scarab pulled off the switch.



Before the gala concludes, Maya confronts Lord Sterling in front of the stunned crowd and reveals the missing Golden Scarab hidden in his velvet coat. The room bursts into applause as Maya solves the ultimate clockwork heist.