

## *The Mystery of the Sounding Gong by Hazel*



Behind me, the grandmother clock gonged for the first time in years.

I turned to stare at it just as the last vibration of the unexpected sound faded away. This was very puzzling – I had been coming to this place regularly for a long time and had never expected anything but peace and quiet here. No one else seemed to notice any change in the atmosphere, but I couldn't continue with my present activity before investigating this puzzle. For me there was now an aura surrounding the clock that I had to penetrate in order to solve the mystery of the sounding gong.

I moved closer to the classic old clock, which was resting serenely against the north wall of the room, flanked by a tall stately window on each side. As I came nearer, I became aware of soft whispering voices and fragments of sentences – “one hun....,” “just once....,” – “can't re....,” along with other strange and unfamiliar sounds. This continued for several minutes until suddenly all the energy in that space seemed to swirl into one solid block of information and the mystery was solved in my mind.

The proud grandmother clock had made this place her home for a very long time; she had come here a few years after the building was dedicated in 1904. During most of that time she had marked the minutes and hours cheerfully and faithfully, ticking off every world event. In 1924 she ticked in excitement when the Milky Way candy bar was invented. In 1944 she gonged in sorrow for the Battle of the Bulge. In 1953 she gonged in joy for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. She ticked away at the Watergate events in 1973. In 1993 she ticked softly for the first Beanie Babies. Then gradually she began grieving as her gong slowly became less accurate. Later she welcomed visits of the clock doc when he came to look at her insides. But for the past many years her voice had been sadly silenced. Now she had reached a time when she could bear it no longer.

Today the antique grandmother clock was one hundred years old! How could she keep from gonging? So she heroically summoned up all her strength and burst forth in gong one more time to celebrate her great achievement. This miracle had happened today and it would never happen again, but her great need had been satisfied; now she could rest in silence. Calm had again been restored to this space.

I breathed a sigh of relief as I finished my tasks in the building. It was time for me to leave the quiet place to others who still had work to do.