

## **2024 Elie Wiesel Competition**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Place Senior Essay**

Mckayla Tarescavage, 10<sup>th</sup> Grade

Oscar Smith High School, Marianne McMillin

### ***The Clock***

The German Cuckoo clock, which has stood the test of time in our family for many generations, catches my attention as I sit in this dimly lit room surrounded by the sounds of laughing and fond memories. Its intricate engravings and steady ticking have endured the test of time, incorporating our family's history into its very structure.

This clock was more than just a clock, with its elaborate wooden frame and fanciful carvings of tiny people with instruments and trees. It was a family heirloom from the previous generation, a material reminder of our origins and a quiet chronicler of our past. It was given to my family by my great-grandparents, who carried it with them when they immigrated to the U.S. from Germany. It has seen all of the struggles and victories that have shaped our family.

I can feel my family's pulse beating through its finely carved surface when I reach out to touch it. The Cuckoo clock serves as a storehouse of customs and tales, not merely a piece of furniture. Even though the world seems to be changing at an alarming rate, the soothing melody of its hourly drummings ties us to our roots and comforts us through the passing of generations.

But what would happen if we lost this physical link to our history? It's an idea that makes my skin crawl. The German Cuckoo clock is a guardian of our shared history, not only an object of ownership. There would be an unfillable void left behind if it vanished. Without it, there would be an emptiness that is beyond the material world, a stillness that is louder than any noise.

Can it ever be replaced? A similar clock could be found with great effort and thorough searching. It would, however, lack the patina of the past, the whispered survival stories, and the shared glances among family members as its cuckoo arrives on the hour. The actual worth of our family's clock is found not only in its artistry, but also in the stories inscribed into its very being.

As I glance at the German Cuckoo clock once more, I realize that its significance is not just in its functionality but also symbolizes resilience. It is a silent defender of our history, a tribute to my family's enduring strength, and a ray of hope for future generations.

The story of the clock goes beyond its actual construction. It has evolved into the highlight at family get-togethers, a silent observer of Sunday family dinners, adults whispering to one another, and the ties that grow closer every year. Its chimes mark not simply the hours but also the significant events in our life, such as birthdays, big milestones, and the thoughtful moments that mold the path we take.

Countless undiscovered stories that are concealed within the clock's crevices are impossible not to ponder through. Its wooden exterior bears the marks of a life well lived, having withstood the test of time. And so, as I sit in the room filled with the echoes of the past, I am comforted by the presence of this cherished artifact, a timeless guardian that connects us to our roots and welds us in the rich tapestry of our family history.

As time has passed, the clock has come to represent continuity. The soothing ticking and sweet drummer song of the clock have been introduced to every member of the family, from great-grandparents to distant cousins. It has evolved into a rite of passage, a historical link that unites us in our shared past and future.

The ageless appeal of the Cuckoo clock has not diminished despite advancements in technology and the introduction of new devices into our daily lives. It has withstood the forces of depreciation and seems to hold its own world that appears to change every second. Its consistency has grown to be consoling, serving as a reminder that even in the middle of modernity's upheaval, certain things remain constant.

I think about how important the clock will be in the lives of future generations a lot. Will it remain a treasured family legacy and a representation of our common identity? Or will it be consigned to the shadows of memory, like so many other objects, and become a relic of the past?

However, I am comforted that its memory is safe as I gaze at the German Cuckoo clock that is displayed proudly in our dining space. It is more than just an item; rather, it is a living example of the customs, tales, and unwavering love that characterize the "T" family, my family. Its intricate gears and wooden frame will hold on to the spirit of our family history forever, as its chimes continue to resonate for years to come.