

THE WATCH
EPISODE ONE: THE SUMMONING OF FATE

Written by

Timekeeper

OVER BLACK

A YOUNG WOMAN'S voice.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)

I never believed in fate, that is until a series of strange events led me to a hospital bed where my estranged grandfather lay dying. I hadn't seen him since I was a child. My once jovial and loving *Abuelo*, whom I adored, had become, according to family whispers, unhinged and unpredictable. My father tried to help, but he would have none of it and so, as he sank deeper and deeper into what we thought was madness, our family withdrew, leaving him to himself and to his work, a small watch shop, where he was once a brilliant watchmaker. My last memory of him was that he had aged well beyond his years and it broke my heart to see what life had done to him. But then fate, or whatever you choose to call it, on that day, summoned me to his deathbed and a future I could not yet comprehend.

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A dimly lit room awash with the requisite IV pumps and varied medical devices.

In the bed, asleep, VICTOR VARGOS, hispanic male (65) frail, aged beyond his years, oxygen flowing to ease his labored breathing.

VICTOR

(stirring fitfully)

Elena! Elena!

Keeping watch in a nearby chair, JUANITA LOPEZ, hispanic female (50). She rises to comfort him.

JUANITA

Victor, you're dreaming. Elena isn't here.

VICTOR
She will come. I know she will.
I've been waiting for her.

JUANITA
I know. But you haven't seen your
granddaughter in many years. Don't
upset yourself so. She may not
come.

A shaft of light pierces the room as the door cracks open to
reveal...the YOUNG WOMAN - ELENA VARGOS, hispanic female
(24). She looks cautiously around the room, eyes Victor.

ELENA
[barely above a whisper]
Abuelo? Grandfather, is that you?

Victor's pale face brightens. He stretches out his hand.

VICTOR
Elena, Elena I knew you would come.

Elena steps forward and takes his trembling hand.

She looks to Juanita, questioningly.

JUANITA
(off Elena's look)
I am Juanita, his caretaker. He
insisted that we send for you.
He's very ill.

Elena nods understanding, looks back to Victor.

VICTOR
You are all grown up. The last time
I saw you, you were just a little
girl.

ELENA
Si, Abuelo. I have missed you, but
I never forgot you.

She looks again to Juanita, addresses her.

ELENA (CONT'D)
I haven't seen my grandfather since
I was nine years old.

Juanita smiles understanding.

JUANITA

Yes, I know the story. Victor has told me...many times.

VICTOR

Elena, I know you were too young to understand, but my time now is short. I sent for you so that you would know the truth of what broke our family apart.

CLOSE on his hand holding an ANTIQUE GOLD POCKET WATCH.

Juanita interrupts.

JUANITA

Victor, it is too much for now. Too soon. You rest. Put the watch away. You can talk later.

ELENA

Yes, Abuelo. She's right. Don't worry. I will stay. We can talk later.

Victor sighs, relents, dozes off.

Elena touches his hand gently, runs her finger over the watch. A sudden tremor shakes her hand, an obvious reaction to the touch. She pulls her hand away, shakes it off, takes a seat opposite Juanita.

ELENA (CONT'D)

How do you know my grandfather?

JUANITA

I worked for him for years in his watch shop. He was the most famous watchmaker in the city.

ELENA

Yes, I remember. He gifted me my first watch when I was only five years old. It was shaped like a heart.

She smiles, remembering.

JUANITA

Yes, he told me. He had never forgotten. He still thought it was the most beautiful watch he ever created, for a very special person.

Elena smiles, nods.

ELENA

I'm sorry, that memory just crept in. Please, go ahead.

JUANITA

Yes, well, when the shop closed and he retired I stayed with him. He had no family left after what had happened. And then...he became ill. He needed someone who could tolerate his, shall I say, eccentric ideas and, as it turned out, I was that someone.

Elena nods sadly, reaches out and touches Juanita's hand.

ELENA

I see. I'm glad that he has had you to care for him.

ELENA (CONT'D)

So what is the story with the watch? It looks very old. Why is it so important to him?

Juanita glances downward, considering how she should answer.

JUANITA

That watch, or your grandfather's idea of it, is what separated him from your family long ago it seems. I believed the stress was what aged him so, but he would never discuss it with me. He was very secretive. Of the hundreds of watches he created he was never willing to part with that one. He was...obsessed with it.

ELENA

The watch? What could it possibly have to do with anything?

A beat.

Juanita ponders her reply, begins hesitantly.

JUANITA

Victor thinks the watch...can set back time. And each time it does it is stealing time from him.

ELENA

What? What does any of that mean?

Juanita shrugs.

JUANITA

No se. I don't know. Now he believes he's been resetting time, waiting for you to find him.

Elena looks away, stunned. Her lip trembles.

ELENA

Maybe I shouldn't have come. My family was right, he has lost his mind.

Elena rises, walks to the window, stares out in silence.

Victor stirs in the bed.

VICTOR

Elena, you are still here. Please, come sit next to me.

Elena turns, tears in her eyes.

ELENA

Abuelo, you didn't rest long. Maybe I should leave so you can have some sleep.

Victor holds out his hand to her.

VICTOR

Elena, please. Come to me.

Elena relents, comes to the bedside. The watch still rests in Victor's hand.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

I do not have much time left, this is my most valued possession.

He cradles the golden watch.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

It is yours now.

ELENA

But Abuelo, you hardly know me, why do you choose me to have such a treasure?

VICTOR

It was not my choice to make. You see, Elena, the watch chooses to whom it belongs. It chose me many years ago, and now it chooses you. And this is my secret, now yours, I didn't just create time pieces, I found the secret of time itself.

Elena, puzzled, wipes a tear from her eye, shakes her head, looks to Juanita who shrugs and lowers her eyes.

ELENA

Abuelo, you're not thinking right. You're ill and exhausted, that's all it is. You just need to rest. Please.

Victor presses the watch into Elena's hand. His eyes close as he takes a ragged breath. Suddenly a HEART MONITOR squeals, displaying a FLAT RED LINE.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Abuelo? Abuelo?

Tears start to flow as she screams his name.

ELENA (CONT'D)

No! Please! You can't leave me now! Not like this!

She looks down at the watch still clutched in her hand, then back to the flat line on the monitor. Juanita jumps from her chair to the bedside. A MALE NURSE bursts through the door.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Please help me! *Abuelo!*

Instinctively she clutches the watch...presses its stem.

A Beat. Then...

FLASH! Time fractures. From Elena's POV, the room blurs and buzzes. She looks to a CLOCK on the wall. Its minute hand stops, then slowly moves backward. Her eyes widen as the monitor BEEPS and then...a HEARTBEAT.

Elena, shell-shocked, tries to steady herself. Rubs her head.

Juanita sits calmly in her chair just as she had only minutes before, oblivious. The nurse now nowhere to be seen.

Victor slowly opens his eyes. He nods weakly at Elena.

VICTOR
So now you know, *mi chica*.

Elena is incredulous as she stares at the watch.

ELENA
How can this be real? It turned
back the time?

VICTOR
Si. I have been using it waiting
for you to get here. But do not be
deceived. The watch is both a
blessing and a curse. I have used
it for much good, but it does not
give time freely. It steals it, if
not from you, from someone else.
There is always a price to pay, a
debt owed, a balance to be kept.

ELENA
What are you talking about, *Abuelo*.
I don't understand.

VICTOR
You will understand soon, but you
must use this knowledge wisely.
Listen to me now, *chica*. Stay
alert. Always be aware. The watch
is yours now, its power will help
protect you, but beware, there are
others who know of its existence.

He sighs, squeezes Elena's hand and closes his eyes with a
single whispered word...

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Cuidado.

ELENA
(whispering back the
translation)
Be careful?

She turns to Juanita.

ELENA (CONT'D)
What is he talking about?

JUANITA
I wish I knew. It's like I've told
you. In his mind he was convinced
that the watch could...set back
time.

Elena steadies herself, looks to the watch and back to Juanita soberly. Understanding. Then...

BLEEP! The heart monitor displays a flat line again.

Elena gasps, looks to the clock. It displays the exact time as the previous event.

Again, Juanita jumps from her chair to the bedside. The male nurse bursts into the room.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

The bed where Victor had lain is empty. Elena stands alone in the room, her face awash with grief and disbelief. She removes the watch from her pocket, stares at it blankly.

ELENA
(to the watch)
What are you?

A CREAK. The door opens slightly, a single shaft of light serves to reveal a SHADOWY FIGURE just outside.

Startled, Elena instinctively pockets the watch, only to witness the shadow recede and the door slowly close.

Elena pants relief, looks around, catches her reflection in a mirror on the wall. She steps closer, touches her reflection. A GRAY STRAND appears in her dark mane of hair.

She gasps, trembling, eyes wide, pulling the watch from her pocket.

ELENA (CONT'D)
What in God's name are you?

FADE OUT.

TO BE CONTINUED