

## BEATING THE CLOCK

The city, which but an hour ago was sleeping, has come alive. Brakes squeal and horns blast. Streetcars rattle and clang. Trains thunder overhead and buses whiz by on the street. A milling horde of pedestrians fill the sidewalk and often overflows into the street.

There is an air of frantic haste. Streetcars narrowly avoid collisions with automobiles as one or another tries to get across the intersection before the light changes. People push and jostle their neighbors in an attempt to crowd onto an already packed bus. There is no unity in the crowd. Each is for himself. There is, however, one common object . . . to get there on time. Everyone from bus-drivers to school children is trying to beat the clock.

I must emerge into this rude, noisy world and become part of it. As I dash across the street to the bus stop, I note that the clock in the corner store says a quarter to eight. The less encouraging hands in the cleaner's window point to five minutes to eight. My own watch, which is usually fast, declares the hour to be eight o'clock. From this information I deduce that it is ten minutes before eight and one minute before bus time.

That vehicle is not in sight. Perhaps my deduction is wrong, and the bus has already gone. To wait, or to walk; that is the question. So many mornings I have walked almost the six blocks to the streetcar stop, only to have the bus pass me, and discharge a swarm of passengers who crowded ahead of me onto the streetcar! But while I am reflecting thus, my bus arrives and I get on.

I reach the streetcar stop just in time to miss my car. As I wait for the next one, the crowd is steadily increasing, and the people in front are being pushed out into the street. A car comes into sight and the crowd surges out to meet it. This particular morning the driver is evidently in no mood to cope with the crowd at Green Street. He puts a NO STOP sign in the window, clangs the bell and goes right by. A couple of die-hards run a few yards beside the car, hoping he doesn't really mean it. The rest of us slowly return to the curb. Finally, an anxious five minutes later, a car comes and we pile on.

After a long, uncomfortable ride in a jam-packed streetcar, we step into the dingy, noisy underground world of the subway station. After hurrying through a turnstile and up two flights of stairs, I find myself in the heart of the city.

A hasty glance at a clock in the spire of a nearby church confirms my fears. I attempt a short-cut by crossing the street in the middle of the block. It is one of the busiest streets in the area, but I haven't been killed . . . yet. I am only half-way across when I am confronted by a stern policeman who sends me back to the curb. He watches while I go back to the corner and cross there. While the light changes, I wait, but the clock does not.



At last I am running across the Square. A friendly policeman stops traffic while I, with some of my fellow-workers who have just come along, cross the Avenue.

We rush breathlessly into the lobby where the cold, austere gentleman who supervises the ups and downs of the elevators, is quite unmoved by our pleas for haste. However, we do finally reach the eighth floor. Coats are thrown hastily into lockers as metal doors are banged. We enter the long low room with its orderly rows of desks, and the first object to catch our attention is the much admired clock. It tells us that we have about thirty seconds to spare. As we sit down at our desks to begin the day, we are already exhausted.

This procedure will be repeated tomorrow morning and every morning, because I am one of those numerous individuals who leave everything until the last minute, and then attempt to beat the clock.

—MARJORIE AKER '59—

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### THE CLOSET

Once there lived an old man in a little cabin by the sea. People called him a patriarch, and everyone for miles around knew of him. They knew him because they feared him. And they feared him because nobody knew him. For lack of another name, *they called him "Old Jack"*.

As you may have already suspected, no one dared speak to Jack, or even approach him for that matter. A story went that one day somebody did try to draw him out, but Jack did not reply—he only stared under his bushy eyebrows at the intruder for several minutes, and so squelched **that** conversation and discouraged any other advances in the future. In short, Jack was a grumpy old devil who never grumbled.

Now every day Old Jack used to take a walk along the beach. Everybody would stop and watch him as he moved up the strand to the end of the cape. And they would wonder why he used to stand there and stare toward the mainland before he turned and walked home again. These daily rounds were Jack's only excursions except for the rare occasions when he would go into the village for stores.

But one day, Jack did not appear. Two days went by, and three, and then four, and then the villagers could wait no longer. In small groups they gathered around the old gentleman's house. A few of us decided to enter, and we hesitantly swung the leather hinges on the worm-eaten door.