Like a loyal dog waiting to be called, my suitcase sat perched on the mahogany porch, packed a whole week in advance. Overflowing with essentials, it contained his pyjamas, toothbrush and bracelet making kit she had saved for her first sleepover. Now, after months of anticipation bubbling in her chest, I could finally unfold the brand new, tie dye lavender nightwear and unbox the sky blue toothbrush and the greatest bracelet making kit in town, all with my best friend since I was 4 years old, Emma.

Lashing like a whip, my auburn hair flailed in the howling wind. Stiller than stone, I rested on the soft, plush, grey hammock, rocking gently in the wind, as if it were a baby being swayed by its mother to sleep. I counted every vehicle passing by. Every rumble of a car’s engine. Every hum of tires on the cement road.

After what seemed to be a million years, I heard Emma’s distant voice squealing, “LUCY! LUCY!” Immediately, I vacated the hammock so quickly it narrowly missed the wall a metre behind it. I snatched her suitcase as if a stealthy thief was attempting to steal it. I bolted down the driveway like I was sprinting for my life. My heart pounded on my chest with excitement like a prisoner wanting to escape its cell. At the end of the rigid road was a luxurious limousine seven metres long. As I approached it, the door glided open with ease, and I jumped right in.

The moment I had sorted out my baggage, the vehicle felt like a lounge room. Biscuits that warmed me inside and out, hot chocolate that tingled on my frigid hands, and sandwiches that tasted like they were made by Gordon Ramsay himself. But worries filled my head faster than a cheetah could run. What if her mum found me weird? What if the dinner was unusual. What if I’m awake when everyone else is sleeping.

As we pulled up to Emma’s colossal mansion, the welcoming, golden gates opened like curtains to unveil a huge driveway and towering water fountain. As Emma and I hopped out, I felt an ecstatic sense build up in my stomach, but with that came a mountain of tension. We entered the huge doors like we were VIP guests, and the scent of pizza, pasta, and chocolate cake immediately wafted up my nostrils. Every inhale, every exhale, was a mix of spices and sugar, until finally, Emma invited me into her room.

Posters of Taylor Swift, Sabrina Carpenter, and many other artists were hung up onto the walls. The heater was blowing gently at my shins. Immediately, I felt at ease, and my worries melted away like ice in an oven.