

Tim's hand smeared on the crinkled envelope from the mailbox, did John really want to invite him to a sleepover? A week in advance, Tim's suitcase had been filled to the brim, his sleeping bag, pillow, even a stuffed toy for emergencies. The view was different from anything he was used to. His mum suddenly opened the car door, stopping him from counting the number of white cars he saw. The doorway of dread straddled upon him and John's mum's face appeared through the cracks of the door.

The set up had changed, the hallway filled with photo frames of John and his family, nothing made him feel like he could fit in; he was an outcast. The floor above Tim unexpectedly began to rumble, gradually moving onto the steps. A familiar shadow from school pounced and hopped around everywhere, it the sky started to brighten up until Tim's mum's hand slowly waved goodbye, and the door shut. He set up the sleeping bag, hiding the stuffed toy beneath his towel.

The clock's second hand ticked as Tim's eyes followed, hypnotised and intrigued by the clicking noise. John's shaky breathing, ants bickering for the leftover cookie crumbs on the floor, even the tap was leaking deafeningly. Tim's heart throbbed against his ribcage. Anxiety rolled up and around like a bowling ball, perfectly hitting all ten of his thought bubbles that now reined his brain. If he were to stay still, would time go faster? Yet minutes felt like hours, and all hope fell into a dark abyss.