After dinner and after watching episode 4 of *Doctor Who* for a second time on BBC3, Jan puts her time capsule inside a plastic bag and takes it outside into the garden. She looks up at the night sky and tries to see the stars but the clouds and the light pollution from the town make it impossible. So she watches a plane fly past on its way to Apsworth airport.

She makes a hole in the ground beside the apple tree and puts the time capsule inside. Then she carefully covers the hole and looks around her to check that no one is watching her. The location of the time capsule is a secret. Don’t tell anyone.

Jan can see the apple tree from her bedroom window and half an hour later she’s looking out of her window down at the tree and the place where she left the time capsule. She tries to imagine the scene in the future. “I wonder who’s going to find my time capsule,” she thinks. She looks to her left at the gardens of the other houses and then across at the fields and the trees in front of her. “I wonder what’s going to be here in the future. A shopping centre? A new university? Probably a new runway for the airport,” she thinks as another plane flies past.

**Glossary**

- **covers**: puts something on top of the hole
- **fields**: areas of land in the country
- **hole**: empty space in the ground
- **light pollution**: when it’s difficult to see the stars in the sky because of the lights of a town or city
- **runway**: the place where aeroplanes land
She goes to bed and dreams of the future. In the future Jan’s house is in the middle of a big city. She looks out of her window and there are streets full of people. There are lots of tall buildings full of lights. There are shops and cinemas and a big sports stadium. She looks up and there are taxis flying in the sky. It’s night but there’s light and colour everywhere.

The next morning Jan wakes up five minutes before the alarm clock rings at seven o’clock. She remembers her dream. “The future is an exciting place,” she thinks as she gets out of bed and looks out the window. The tree is still there. The other houses are still there. She isn’t in the future. She’s in the present and it’s time to get ready for school.

She has a shower, gets dressed and goes downstairs for breakfast. Jan’s dad says breakfast is the most important meal of the day but he never has breakfast. During the week he’s always late for work or he’s working on a secret project for Kiwi in his office at the top of the house. Jan can’t remember the last time they all had breakfast together. Mum’s in the kitchen, reading her book. She’s in exactly the same position as yesterday. Jan thinks maybe mum spent the night in the kitchen, reading her book.


Jan’s mum belongs to a book group. There are five other people in the book group. They take it in turns to choose a book. When a person chooses a book, all the people in the group read the book. Then they meet at the person’s house and talk about the book. Last month they all met at Jan’s house. They were in the living room for hours, talking and laughing. Jan walked past the door but they weren’t talking about the book. They were talking about the new family at the house down the road.

“What do you want for breakfast?” Jan’s mum asks without looking up from her book. Jan doesn’t answer. She always has the same thing for breakfast: a glass of fruit juice, some toast and jam, and an apple. She eats her toast and jam, drinks the juice, and takes a bite of the apple.

“Bye, mum.”

“Bye, darling. Have a good day at school.”

Jan walks to school. She usually walks to the end of the road and then goes up the hill, through the centre of town to PPC. School starts at 8:45 with morning assembly. Today is Friday, the best day of the week. Jan likes Fridays because she has all her favourite classes – English, Art, Spanish, and then History.
“So…?” Mrs. Zinger, the History teacher, looks at her students.
“How many of you completed your project and made a time capsule?”

Jan holds up her hand and looks around. No-one in the class has their hand up. Oh no! Is she the only one who made the time capsule? Mrs. Zinger smiles.
“Very good, Jan. Is Jan the only person interested in making history in this class?”
Jan’s face turns red. Suddenly she feels very alone.

“No.”
Jan hears a boy’s voice from the back of the class. She turns and looks behind her. Michael Green is holding up his hand.
“I made one, Mrs Zinger.” He smiles at Jan.
“Good, Michael.”

Michael Green is the son of the owner of Kiwi Technology. He’s not a very popular boy because the parents of most of Jan’s classmates work for his father. Mrs. Zinger stops smiling.
“All right. The rest of you must make your time capsules this weekend. Understood?”
“Yes, Mrs. Zinger,” the class says.

After class Jan sees Michael standing in the corridor. She walks up to him.
“What did you put in your time capsule?”
“Nothing.”
“I don’t understand.”
“I didn’t make a time capsule.”
“But you said – .”
“I know.”
“So why – ?”
“I know how it feels to be alone.”

ALONE
Have you ever felt alone?
Why did you feel alone?
What did you do?