

'A masterpiece of adventure'

TIME IS RUNNING OUT

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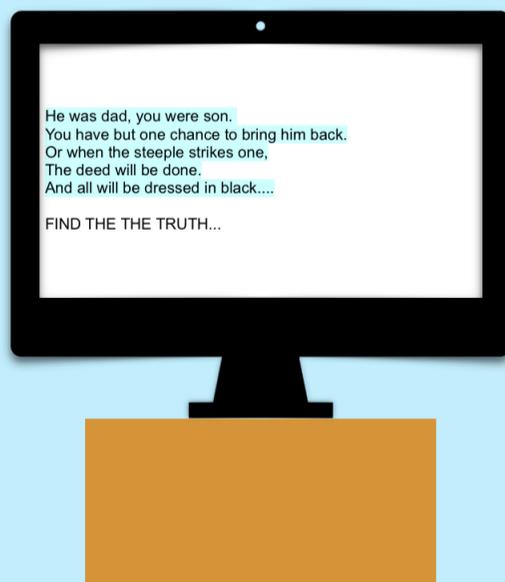


Chapter 1

THE NOTE

There was no call, message or any other form of communication from Tom's dad. His father had left their home in order to go on some sort of 'mission' with his comrades, to investigate something geographical. He had always been in contact with Tom, but the afternoon had passed and there was still no message.

Nothing. Not until Tom saw the note stuck on his TV screen. Tom stumbled towards and read it:



Tom was silent for a moment, not sure what to do next. There was exactly 13 hours, before the clock struck one. Half a day wasn't long enough to find his father, but there was a speck of hope. He turned to his dog, Danger (who appeared to understand the absurd situation. 'So Danger, you really think we can save my dad?', asked Tom. His mouth had gone dry and the words came out forcefully. Tom thought carefully, where would he be able to find his father. His father was a great geographer of his time, with many award-winning discoveries. His father was specifically known for his research in plate tectonics. Tom entered his father's study, where a world map stood with annotations. On the left was a glass cabinet displaying his father's awards.



But there was one thing that he found on the desk that troubled him again. A note. On the wooden desk. It said 'You've woken the monster. The monster of doom. Each tectonic plate you see shall crumble to dust. He is after you.' Just these plain heartless words.

Tom thought carefully, should he have this adventure by himself or should he seek for help. Later, the second thought had won and Tom began listing the people he should see. His grandma: no - far too old for such things. His uncle: no- he'll probably think that Tom's bluffing.

Just like that, name after name, list after list he crossed out the people. Then an idea struck him immediately - what if he talks to someone his dad knew. Surely they'll be able to assist? Tom began to rummage through the papers and suddenly found the person. Mr. Thomas Kingston. His dad's most loyal friend and advisor. Tom had decided that he would venture at dark, for surely nobody would be able to recognise him. With that, he began looking in his father's contact book to find the correct address.



Chapter 2

MEETING KINGSTON

Thomas Kingston sat solemnly on his chair, simply staring at the cream-coloured wall in front of him. He held a warm cup of tea in one hand and the other held the saucer. Moments of tranquility was perfect, it was what Kingston needed- a night that was silent giving him enough minutes to ponder wildly, making use of those grey brain cells. Behind him his porter stood, his hawk-like eyes scanning the surrounding, ensuring everything was perfect and that his master was enjoying his tea at the best. Only the faint ticking of the wooden grandfather clock could be heard, but even that would not disrupt Kingston whilst he was absorbed in his thoughts. In the kitchen, the two maids were wiping and tidying the place, before stumbling up the staircase; tiredness overcoming them.



London is a colossal city, in it there are house of both grand and ordinary houses. Through those houses and dark alleyways was a small, yet comfortable street named Kentlin Avenue. If you happened to walk down the street – which is rather difficult to do so in torrential rain and fog, as was the case for that evening – then you shall surely be presented to a elegant house in the middle of the road that stands like a precious gem.

Kingston had just begun to drink a sip of his tea, when the porter ran into the room breathless.

‘Mr. Kingston, a young child is at the door – he is wet and demands to speak with you urgently. I don’t know why he has come to bother you in the middle of the night, should I tell the young sir to come tomorrow in the morning to...’

‘Why, why should we do that- let the young child just wander off on the dark. Goodness knows why might be lurking in the darkness.’

Tom could no longer be patient. He ran into the living room, leaving a trail of wet and muddy footprints behind. “Mr Kingston, I need your help”, Tom shouted to the man who was bewildered to see him.



‘Tom, my dear boy - why have you come to me in the middle of the night. Your father would be worried to death if he does not find you sleeping.’

‘It is my father I wish to talk about. He’s in trouble!’

Kingston looked at his porter and told him to bring a warm blanket and a cup of warm hot chocolate.

‘Dear Tom, what is the matter?’, question Kingston after the porter left the room.

‘Well my father went a few day out for this geographical investigation’, began Tom, ‘and he always contacted me every day. Two days before my father did not call me- I tried to call him but I was still unable to reach him. When I happened to walk in my bedroom, I found a mysterious note. After I had read it, I ran into my father’s study and there another note was found.’

‘- what did the note say?’

Tom took the crumpled note out of his pocket and showed it to him. Kingston examined the note and let out a cry of dismay. He put his head into his hands.

‘Your father was right all along....it is my fault I did not take action earlier’, said the old man.

‘What thing?’, questioned Tom.

‘Boy, we better go upstairs- I need to show you something very important.’

Kingston led Tom upstairs and brought him to a locked room. Kingston took out a metal key and placed it into the lock and unfastened the door. They both entered. The room smelt of damp and there were cobwebs in every corner. It was clearly obvious that the room had not been used for quite a while. Kingston walked towards a chest and took out a sand timer.

‘This sand timer was a gift from your father. It has the ability to turn back time in only the most extreme cases. And now, it is time to use it for the power of good.’

‘What happened to my father though?’

‘That is enough questions for a day. You, my dear boy, need your sleep immediately. You have been through a terrible ordeal. I shall tell you about your father tomorrow and there we shall go on a quest to defeat the bad. But remember my dear Tom, when you are in darkness and to defeat it - you have to become the light’.

With those wise words, Kingston gave the boy the warm cup of hot chocolate and led him to the guest room. Within minutes, Tom was asleep and dreaming of the adventure he was going to have.

What a day it had been!



Chapter 3

THE ERUPTION OUT OF NOWHERE

Tom work up all of a sudden. It seemed as if he was in his own bedroom, but as soon as he looked around him he realised that he was in the house of Thomas Kingston. Tom checked the alarm that was next to him, it was 7am. He jumped out of his bed and changed quickly before running downstairs and flinging open the living room door where he found Kingston, with an anxious look on his face.

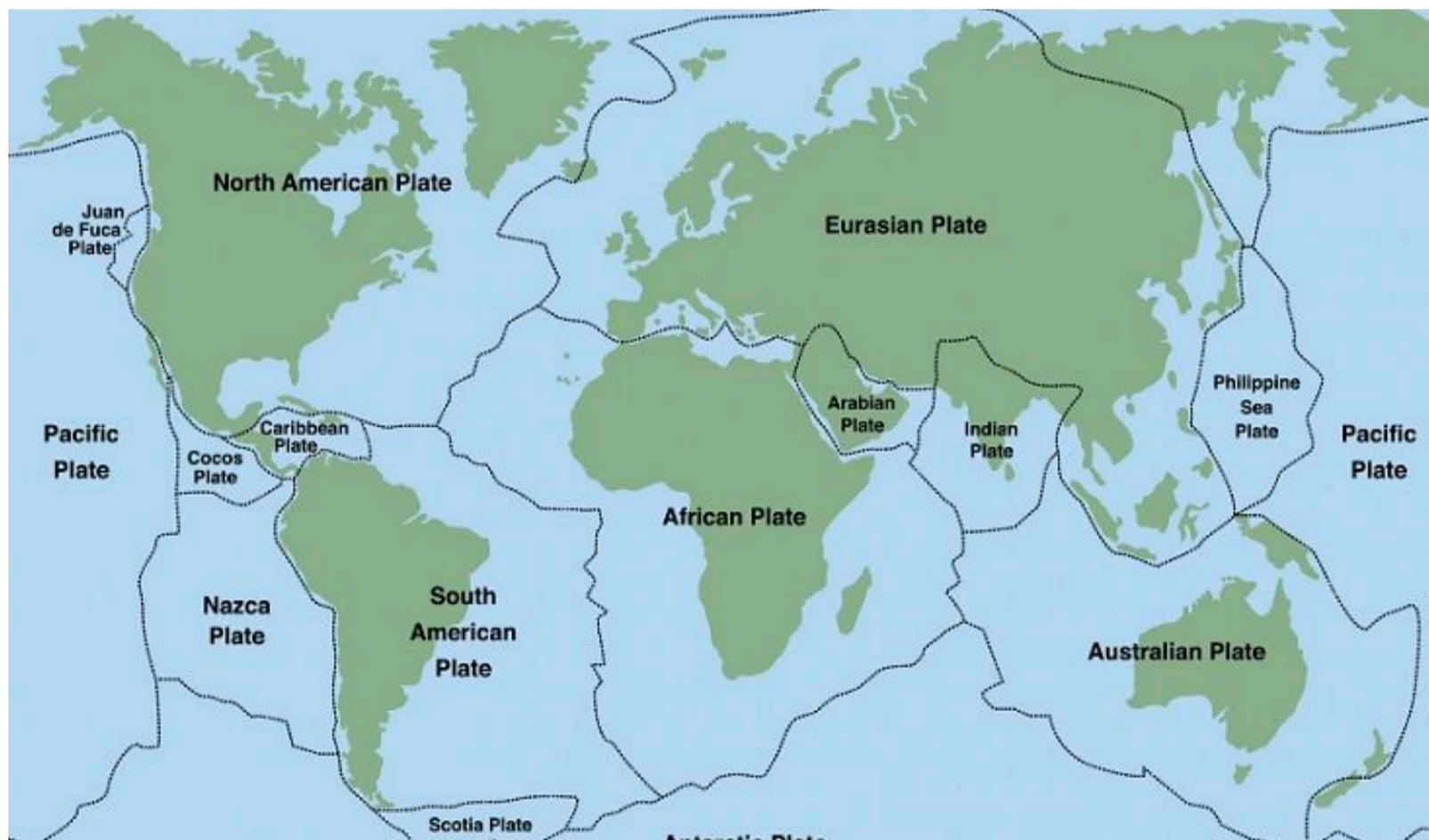
‘Ahh Tom, you’ve woken up early. Breakfast shall be served in half an hour. In the meanwhile, we need to leave - the world is in shatters.’

‘What’s happened?’

Kingston put the news channel where the broadcaster began her talk:

‘Hello and welcome to the BBC News, perhaps this shall be the last BBC news report we will be able to give. An inactive volcano which resides below Edinburgh Castle has erupted. There is no explanation for why this has happened. Everyone is urged to leave the UK and some countries of the west of Europe are also recommended, as the ash clouds are spreading. Yellowstone National Park has also erupted causing a lot of havoc and at least a 1000 people have been reported dead.

A powerful and devastating tsunami, Tsunami Andrew has swept up from the South Pole- probably reaching Africa and causing severe damage. Ahhh....I am having a report that an earthquake of a magnitude of 8.2 has occurred in Pakistan- the greatest earthquake in at least a century. That is all from the BBC News. We would advise you to leave the country and flee for there is not much time.’



Tom stopped dead. He was scared, petrified for the future. He had studied plate tectonics at school, as geography was one of his preferably favourite subjects. This was something related to the note he had found in his father's study, the haunting tone was disturbing 'Every Tectonic Plate you see, shall crumble to dust'.

'What can we do?'

'My dear boy, we need to use the sand timer- there is not much time left. The world will no longer exist. The worst is yet to come. Be glad that the lava inside the planet has not exploded, when that happens 'you are dead'.

'My father....he'll...'

'Yes that is why we need to save him. We need to get in the past.'

'Then what are we waiting for....let's leave now'.

'My dear boy, we have to go to London. The reason for this is because we need to go on the River Thames. Apart from being the most famous river in London, it is a passage to the past that many geographers do not use as it contains great peril once entered. But this is our only choice, we need to get on a boat.'

The two males left the house and watched as many abandoned cars surrounded the street. The couple got into the car and went to the River Thames which was only a fifteen minutes drive. Tom turned and saw a big ash cloud travelling behind him at such a great speed.

'Drive faster, Kingston.'

'I'm trying, my boy- I am trying.'

They ran out of the car as soon as they had arrived reaching the River Thames. The volcano eruption cloud was only a mile away, snow like ash was falling down. Kingston and Tom scrambled into a boat and the ash cloud was only metres away from Tom. There was an ear-splitting scream from Tom. 'This is the end of me. This is the end. Oh God, save me if you really do exist', thought Tom, as he closed his eyes tightly.

'Hold my hand Tom, quickly!'

Tom grabbed Kingston's hand and Kingston began turning his sand timer eight times. The boat began moving and within a seconds, they were in London. But this was not the London they had left, it was a calm, bustling London with people wandering happily.

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Chapter 4

BEING A SPY

‘Mr Kingston, where are we?’, questioned Tom curiously.

‘We are back in London. But this is not the London we left tho is the last. The day your father left.’

‘Ahh....I knew there was something unusual’.

Tom suddenly spotted his father walking towards the train. He shakes Kingston’s arm.

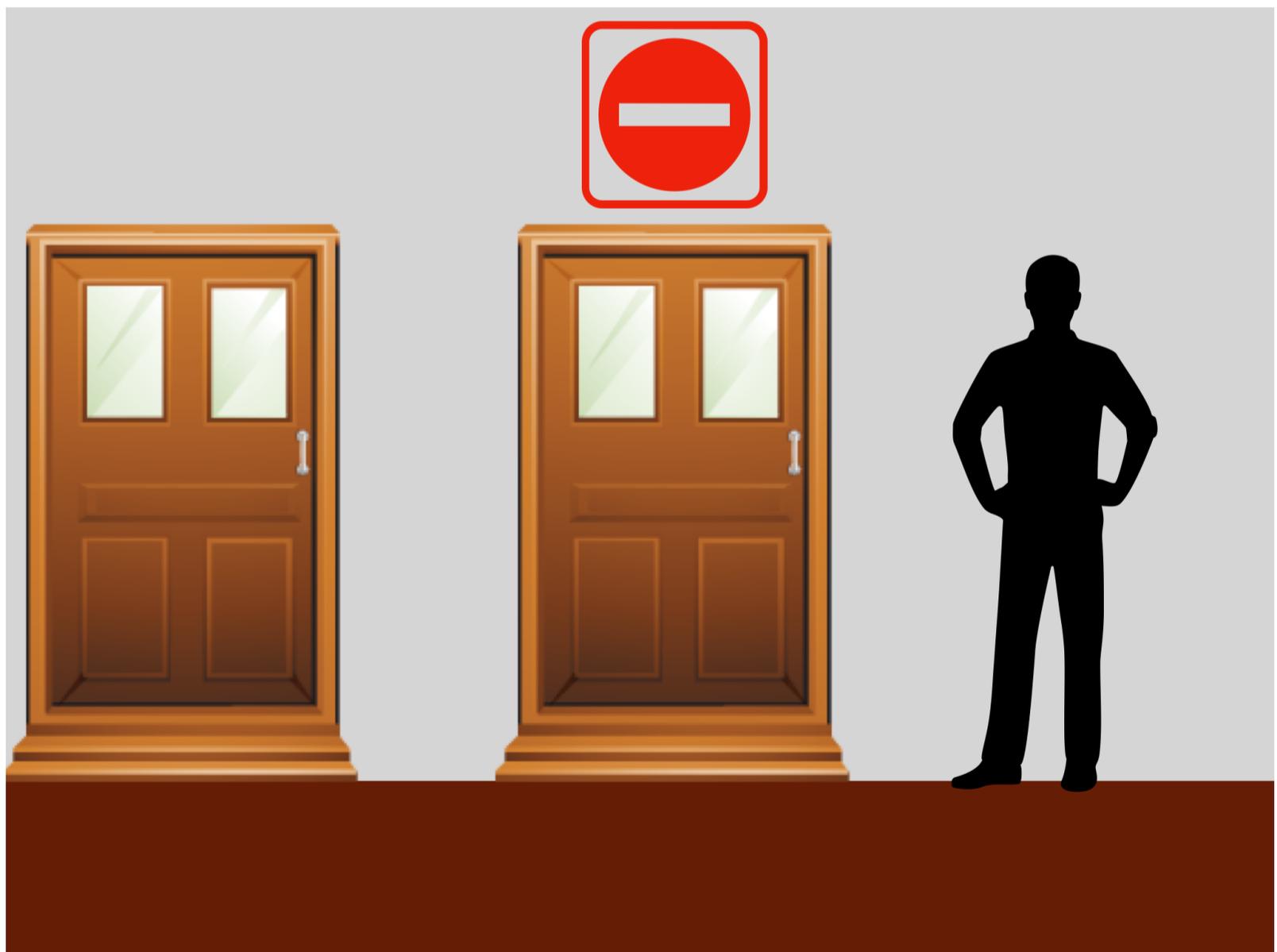
‘Mr Kingston, I can see my father....he’s walking towards the train. We need to catch it and follow him.’

‘What are we waiting for my dear boy.....let’s leave as soon as possible. But remember- we cannot be seen by your father it is too dangerous to tamper with time.’

They walked towards the train station and bought their tickets. The pair followed Tom’s father discreetly and went in the train. After arriving at their destination, Tom’s father went into a dark alleyway and stumbled towards a block of flats. He went up a staircase of wooden stairs, before stopping for a moment with a frightful expression on his face. Tom and Kingston watched carefully. Tom was wondering why his father was in a block of horrible-looking flats.

Tom’s father knocked quickly and a bellowing voice answered:

‘ENTER!’



The father entered, his fingers were numb- his head was aching. He looked as though he he didn't want to be here.

'Ahh Oliver...you have arrived to my house- I thought you would. You wouldn't cause harm to that little child of yours', exclaimed the man in the black suit.

'I shall protect my family. He had lost his mother because of you, you twit', replied Tom's father, Oliver.

'Lost your tongue, have you? I shall ignore you just this once. Well, you better get on with the agreement signature. To give me your company. To rule the world. To be the great god and control everything including nature itself. To allow to create natural disasters, volcanoes, earthquakes, you name it..... To be under my control, forevermore.'

The man in the black suit took out a pen and placed it on the table.

'Take your time....'

Time was inevitable. Time does not wait for you- it just 'flows' on. Deaths occur, births take place but time shall continue. Oliver stared at the paper, and hesitantly picked up the pen and was about to write his signature when a boy bravely shouted at Oliver. It was Tom.

'FATHER. YOU CAN'T!'

Oliver turned around and was flabbergasted to see his son.

'Tom- you are meant to be at home, what are you doing here?'

Thomas Kingston appeared out of the shadows.

‘Thomas....why are you here?’

‘To bring you back to the present....you were going to cause such grave trouble just to protect your family.’

‘You mean you have come from the future into the past....perhaps using the sand timer?’

‘Yes, that is correct.’

‘I owe you a lot....I don’t know how I can thank you Mr. Kingston and you too Tom’.

Meanwhile, the man in the suit was shocked at what was happening and could not believe the nonsense about time travelling, yet he should have known the wonderful capabilities of the world’s most loved geographers.



Chapter 5

HOME AGAIN!

Tom turned towards the villain and looked at all the written documents that he had in front of him. He had realised that this was the same writing that he had found previously in his bedroom and his dad's study.

'Don't worry about your work.....we've found you a new place to live - the fantastic world of jail! Enjoy it', said Tom happily.

And with that they handcuffed the man held hands and were whisked into the modern world but the powers of the sand timer. There was no eruption, ash cloud to be seen. It was the bright, happy world they had known.

After reporting the man to the police, the police put him in his rightful place- behind bars for decades left. Children were happily walking with their parents, licking some ice-cream and others were enjoying a jog in the summer sun.

Tom was more happy than he had ever been before- he had saved his father and saved the world from danger and disaster. But it was all thanks to Thomas Kingston. Kingston, since the incident, went back to his house and had enjoyed another warm cup of tea trying to relax, like he had tried to do so before.

Oliver, Tom's father was begged to come to many news channels and geographical documentaries to talk about Plate tectonics. But he winked to Tom and said 'I think you are the expert geologist Tom, you should go for the documentaries.'

'Do you really think so?' Questioned Tom anxiously.



'I do, my boy!' hugging Tom.

Several days later, Tom wore his best suit and went excitedly to the BBC news office and began his talk like this:

'Hello and today....erm... I am going to tell you about plate tectonics - a wonderful and fascinating module in geography. There are a few handfuls of major plates and dozens of smaller, or minor, plates. Six of the majors are named for the continents embedded within them, such as the North American, African, and Antarctic plates. Though smaller in size, the minors are no less important when it comes to shaping the Earth. The tiny Juan de Fuca plate is largely responsible for the volcanoes that dot the Pacific Northwest of the United States.

Volcanoes are cone-shaped mountains formed by surface eruptions of magma from inside the Earth. They form along constructive plate boundaries and destructive plate boundaries.

Tsunamis are giant sea waves travelling at a high speed. They are also referred as 'tidal waves'. An earthquake is a shaking of the ground surface, being the strongest at the épi-centre. Earthquakes occur along the destructive plate boundaries. The strength of an earthquake is measured on the Richter scale, by a special device known as a seismometer.'

He continued his lecture and at the end everyone at the news office clapped- it was a standing ovation. Tom had felt a sensation of pride in himself.

Life had confused to be cheerful, years passed but the knowledge of geography grew. People all over the world would study the subject to get an insight in nature and the world. As for the sand timer, it was hidden away deep down Kingston's loft never to be seen again, or so everyone thought....

THE END
