

# Time Freeze

## Chapter 2

I sit on my bed for ages that night, staring at the disc. What happened at supper was marvellous. It was a miracle. It was like something out of a superhero film. I am so tempted to turn it on again but the warning sign above the screen stops me: Danger - Max Use - Once Daily.

If I've understood it right then I can use that magic power four times more. Four times ten seconds is forty seconds. I have forty seconds of time-freezing ability at my fingertips. It is a delicious thought. But how will I use it?

Next day in school, I hardly concentrate on anything Mr Clifton says. He drones on about a spelling bee some members of our class will be chosen to enter. I don't even really hear what my friends are saying at lunch time and a couple ask me if I am feeling OK. I say I'm fine. I'm better than fine. All I can think about is the green disc and when I will use it next.

On the bus going home, Petra is driving me mad. Even though she is standing in the middle of the lower deck and I am sitting at the back, I can hear her going on and on about some boring astronomy show she is planning to watch the minute she gets in. Not only is her voice loud and grating, I'm planning to watch a detective show that's on at exactly the same time. With only one TV in the house and neither channel our programmes are on having "catch up", it will be a direct battle for the green armchair and the TV remote. Remember: whoever gets there first chooses the first programme.

And Petra's nearer the bus's exit.

But then my face slowly breaks into a wide grin and I pull the green disc out of my pocket. I switch it on and the display reads, 20 SECONDS TIME FREEZE.

20 seconds! I am stunned. It was only 10 yesterday.

I wait till the bus halts at our stop. Petra gets off first and starts running for her house about forty metres away. I have to struggle past quite a few people until my feet hit the pavement.

Petra is now only about ten metres away from our front door.

I press the "GO" button. Instantly, everything, and I mean everything, freezes: Petra is caught mid-step; every car and pedestrian on and beside the road stops. The trees are stilled. A dog walker and his big brown dog are rooted to the spot.

The display is counting down. 19, 18, 17...

I run towards the welcoming clutches of our house.

13, 12, 11...

I overtake Petra, fumble for my keys and open the door.

8, 7, 6...

I race into the living room, throw off my coat and grab the remote.

3, 2, 1, 0.

I quickly glance at the disc: ONLY 3 TIME FREEZES LEFT. The screen goes blank. I shove it into my pocket.

By the time Petra bursts in, I am reclining in the beautiful depths of the green armchair and humming along to the theme tune of my detective show.

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"H...H...How did you get here before me?" she gasps, bamboozled.

"Pure skill," I grin. "Now, if you don't mind, I have a show to watch."

"Not-a-clue," she snaps.

"Empty-brain-head," I reply contentedly.

So Petra misses her astronomy show. She is livid. If she were a dragon, fire would be coming out of her mouth. But she's not. So she just sulks.

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Lunchtime the following day and I'm still bathing in the warmth of my TV victory. But the playground air is being polluted by the boasts of Callum Greening. Callum is claiming he is the greatest footballer in the history of the world and bets that he will score the first goal in today's playground match.

Callum is good but he's not that good. I decide he needs pulling down a peg or two. Time for the green disc?

The game starts. Callum and I are on the same team. He doesn't pass to anybody. Ten minutes later, the ball is flying towards him, about twenty metres away from the opposition goal. He arches his body to smack it on the volley.

Out comes the disc. I press the "ON" button.

40 SECONDS TIME FREEZE, it says today.

OK. I get it. It doubles the amount of time each go. I like its style!

I press "GO". There's a click and then the entire playground shuts down. The countdown begins: 39, 38, 37...

Leisurely, I stroll in Callum's direction.

He is totally frozen, his body curving, his leg pulled back to shoot. I pluck the ball

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out of the air in front of him and walk away. I place myself about fifteen metres away from the goal with no defenders in front of me, just the goalkeeper. As the freeze comes to an end, Callum kicks at thin air and goes tumbling to the ground. I, on the other hand, hit a blistering shot that curls round the keeper and flies into the goal.



“Now about that bet?” I say to Callum.  
His boasting face now looks crestfallen.  
Can life get any better than this?  
The answer is yes... but then, unfortunately, no.