

**EVERYONE LOVES
*THE GIRL AND THE GHOST***

'The Girl and the Ghost is a classic mix of history and mystery, complete with growing friendships and hints of budding romance.

My mum had to wave her hand in front of my face to tear me away from it!!'

LUCY, aged 11, Gold Coast, Australia

'The Girl and the Ghost was absolutely amazing.

From the very first page, I was hooked by the extremely exciting storyline. I honestly could not put it down!'

AMELIA, aged 13, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

'I can't wait for the next book! Jet was easy to connect to, and I love that she isn't on social media.'

RUBY, aged 13, Adelaide, Australia

'An exhilarating history-filled story with mysteries popping out left and right. I couldn't put it down.'

**HOLLYFORD, aged 10, Queenstown,
New Zealand**

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The Girl and the Ghost

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Clementine Rose series

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That Cat

The Daring Tale of Gloria the Great

Kevin the Sheep

Kevin Saves the Show

The Girl and the Ghost



JACQUELINE HARVEY

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First published by Penguin, an imprint of Penguin Random House Australia Pty Ltd, in 2025

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Illustrations by A. Yi

Cover design by Rebecca King © Penguin Random House Australia Pty Ltd
Internal design and typesetting by Midland Typesetters, Australia

Printed and bound in Australia by Griffin Press, an accredited ISO AS/NZS 14001 Environmental Management Systems printer

Penguin Random House Australia uses papers that are natural and recyclable products, made from wood grown in sustainable forests. The logging and manufacture processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.



A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia



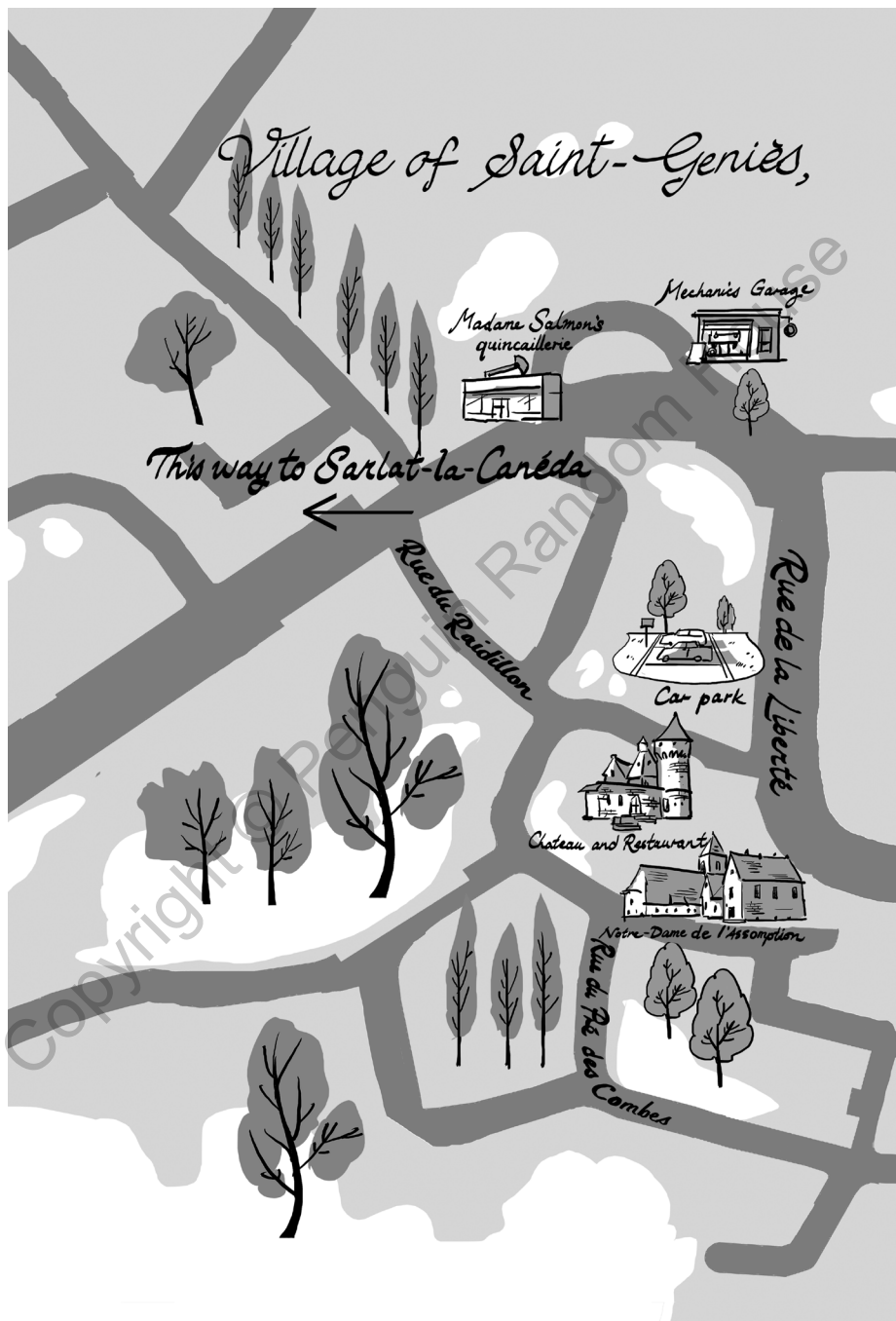
ISBN 978 1 76134 940 9 (Paperback)

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*For all of the dreamers and adventurers,
to those who imagine and ask themselves,
what if?*

*And for my husband, Ian, who dreams
and adventures alongside me.*



Nouvelle - Aquitaine

Primary School - école



Boucherie & Charcuterie



Boulangerie
Bakery



Ruins of
medieval church



Supermarket/ supermarché



Pharmacie



Town Hall/ Mairie

This way to Chateau Margaux



LIST OF FRENCH WORDS

<i>Aide-moi</i>	Help me
<i>Armoire</i>	Wardrobe
<i>Au revoir</i>	Goodbye
<i>Bien sûr</i>	Of course
<i>Bientôt</i>	Soon (as in, see you soon)
<i>Bonjour</i>	Hello
<i>Bonne nuit</i>	Goodnight
<i>Bonsoir</i>	Good evening
<i>Boucherie</i>	Butchery
<i>Boulangerie</i>	Bakery
<i>Charcuterie</i>	Delicatessen
<i>Chateau</i>	A French castle
<i>Croissant</i>	Crescent-shaped French pastry
<i>D'accord</i>	All right
<i>Dauphin</i>	King in waiting
<i>De belles fleurs pour une belle dame</i>	Beautiful flowers for a beautiful lady

*De quoi tu parles, petit chat? Je n'ai jamais
entendu un tel bruit de ta part auparavant.*

What are you talking about, little cat? I've
never heard such a noise from you before.

Foie gras Goose liver pâté

Immobilier Real estate agent

Incroyable Incredible/amazing/
unbelievable

J'adore pain au chocolat I love chocolate
croissant

Je m'appelle My name is

Je suis désolé I'm sorry

Ma chérie My darling

Ma mère My mother

Ma vie française My life in France
(Technically 'My
French life')

Madame Madam

Mademoiselle Miss

Mairie Town hall

Merci beaucoup Thank you very
much

Merci de m'avoir libéré Thank you for setting
me free

Mille-feuille

Puff pastry layered with
pastry and cream

Mon dieu

My god

Mon grand-père

My grandfather

Mon père

My father

Monsieur

Sir/Mr

Non

No

Oncle

Uncle

Oui

Yes

Pâtisserie

Pastry shop

Petit

Small

Quincaillerie

Hardware shop

Rouge

Red

Sacré bleu

Oh my god/Damn

*Sacré bleu, qu'est-ce que tu as fait? Ne sais-tu pas
que je suis un prince de France?*

Damn, what did you do? Don't you know that
I am a prince of France?

Ta mère

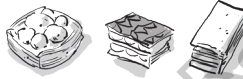
Your mother

'Let's buy a chateau,' they said ...
'It'll be an adventure,' they said ...
'You'll meet a prince,' they said ...

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Chapter 1

THE CHATEAU



Josephine Eloise Thomas presses her face against the car window.

‘Surely, it can’t be much further,’ she says, frowning.

‘No, Jet,’ her father replies, calling her by her nickname and glancing at the dashboard.

‘According to the GPS, we’re almost –’

‘There! It’s up there!’ Josephine exclaims, pointing to two tall rows of pencil pines lining a long, straight driveway. She can’t take her eyes off the chateau perched on top of the hill in all its symmetrical glory.

‘Seriously, that’s where we’re going to live! Am I dreaming?’ Josephine gasps.

It’s only been a couple of hours since she and her father, Matt, stepmother, Ellie and their golden retriever, Daisy, left Bordeaux to drive to their new home in the French countryside. And mere days since they uprooted their life in Australia, making the almost twenty-four-hour plane journey from Sydney via Dubai to Bordeaux.

Ellie leans around to look at Josephine in the back seat of the silver Citroën with Daisy lying beside her.

‘It feels a bit like a dream, doesn’t it? Although, some people might say that renovating a three-hundred-year-old chateau is more like a nightmare,’ Ellie says. ‘Actually, remind me why we’re doing this, Jet? We had a perfectly good life in Sydney, didn’t we? Is this a sensible decision? Will we actually be able to transform this place into a luxury boutique hotel or will your father die in a painting and plastering accident before our first guest arrives?’

Josephine laughs. ‘That’s a definite possibility. Although, Dad’s prowess with a paintbrush is

slightly better than his performance with a power saw, so it's more likely he'll cut his arm off first.'

'Surely you jest,' Matt protests, pretending to be offended as he steers the car through a set of grand iron gates into the property. 'I've spent years watching DIY YouTube videos and whatever I can't handle, I promise I'll pass over to the professionals. You wait and see. I have spreadsheets and timelines and enough cameras to record the whole ordeal. I am, after all, an award-winning documentary filmmaker. Maybe one day someone will even want to watch it.'

'I'm sure it will be *very* entertaining, Dad,' Josephine says. 'Your films are always fabulous – except for the boring ones.'

'Gee, thanks, honey,' he replies, then glances at his wife. 'You don't really mean that, do you, El? You're not having second thoughts?' Considering his wife holds a first-class honours degree in French language and literature and has often expressed a desire to live in France, he's slightly taken aback by her comments.

‘No – of course not,’ Ellie says with a smile. ‘We always said that Josephine and Teddy should have a chance to know their mother’s culture. And why else have I been teaching you all to speak French for the past umpteen years if you’re never going to use it? Besides, compared to the price of Sydney real estate, this place is a bargain!’

‘Is that what we’re calling it?’ Matt asks.

‘More like a money pit,’ Josephine replies with a teasing grin. ‘Speaking of Teddy, when is that big brother of mine turning up? Surely a whole month surfing in Portugal is enough?’

‘On the weekend sometime,’ Matt says. ‘He’s promised me that as soon as he gets here, he’s pulling on his workboots until Christmas. If that doesn’t encourage him to go to university, then I don’t know what will.’

As the car crunches to a halt on the gravel driveway, Josephine is out the door with Daisy before her father turns off the ignition.

In front of her, the creamy sandstone facade of the Chateau Margaux glints in the afternoon sun. The roofline reminds Josephine of a wedding

cake with its matching towers at either end, its chimneys and its dormer attic windows.

She sighs as Daisy bounces excitedly beside her. 'Isn't this the most exciting thing *ever*, Daisy? Well, maybe not as thrilling as chasing ducks in the park or swimming in the harbour, but can you imagine – we're going to live in a chateau in France. A castle! It's on the smaller side – definitely nowhere near as big as that one down the road – but still. It's ours!'

'I believe that place is called Chateau Du Lac,' her father says. 'Translates as "the castle on the lake", but where the lake is, remains a mystery.'

'Perhaps we should drop by with a cake one afternoon – meet the neighbours and practise our French,' Ellie says.

'Oh, *oui*, that would be fun,' Josephine replies. 'Maybe a prince lives there.'

'Or a witch?' Matt teases.

'I'm not afraid of witches, they're only in fairytales,' Josephine says. 'But you never know, I might be able to work both into my next story. They will have to speak French, *bien sûr*.'

‘Oh, yes,’ Ellie says enthusiastically, ‘I can’t wait to see what you come up with now that we’re here. I know that one day, I’m going to walk into a bookshop and see rows of books with your name on them.’

Josephine laughs. ‘Maybe *one day*. But right now, I can’t wait to see my new room. Actually, I can’t wait to see *every* room.’

‘Steady on, Jet – it might take you a while,’ her dad says. ‘You know there are ...’

‘Fifteen bedrooms and that’s just in the main house,’ Josephine and Ellie chorus. Daisy adds a bark for good measure.

‘We know, Dad, you’ve only told us about a thousand times,’ Josephine says, rolling her eyes.

Wide stone steps fan up to the sculpted double front doors, their ornate iron lacework protecting antique glass inserts. Each of the chateau’s elegant windows is surrounded by intricate carvings, but Josephine’s eyes are immediately drawn to two sandstone dragons perched on the roof either side of the central dormer. She’s seen so many photos and even a live stream of their chateau, but it’s still a bit overwhelming to see it in real life.

Josephine whispers up at the serpents, 'I hope we can be friends – in case I need you to keep any scary things away.'

'What was that, honey?' Ellie asks as she walks up behind her.

'Nothing,' Josephine replies with a shake of her head. 'I was just looking at the Juliet balcony. It's so romantic.'

Matt runs a hand through his thick brown hair and adjusts his red-framed glasses. 'I can see your stepmum standing up there. *Matt-eo, Matt-eo, wherefor art thou Matt-eo?*' he recites as if he were an actor in a Shakespearean tragedy.

Ellie rolls her eyes. 'I don't think so, *Matt-eo*. More likely I'll be gripping your ankles trying to stop you from falling to your death because you've decided to repair those cracks without a harness.'

Matt turns to her, an indignant look on his face. 'Sweetheart, what sort of idiot do you take me for?'

'Two words, Dad,' Josephine says with a glare before Ellie can answer. 'Garage. Roof.'

Ellie nods. Daisy barks.

Matt's shoulders slump and he pouts – his bottom lip sticking out like a tantrum-throwing toddler. 'Okay, point taken. But in my defence, that tile *did* need to be fixed, and the weather reports *did not* predict that sudden thunderstorm and I managed to land on my feet without breaking anything. But, ah, yes, a tumble from the Juliet balcony would be far more perilous.'

As Josephine stands with her family on the front steps, she wonders if any of this is real. Girls from the North Shore of Sydney don't live in houses like this, do they?

'Can we go inside?' she asks.

'We haven't got a key,' Ellie replies. 'And as I predicted, there is no sign of . . .' But before she can finish her sentence the door swings open and Madame Gagnier, their real estate agent or, *Immobilier Extraordinaire*, as she refers to herself, is standing in front of them – all frothy blonde curls, ruby lips, towering black heels and a figure-hugging red dress showing more cleavage than an eighteenth-century courtier.

‘*Bonjour*, Monsieur Thomas. Welcome to the Chateau Margaux – your beautiful new home,’ she says, emerging into the sunlight and planting a kiss on each of Matt’s blushing cheeks. ‘I have parked my new Mercedes around the back – I wanted you to have an unspoiled view of the chateau on approach.’

Josephine and Ellie exchange knowing glances. It’s been a running joke for months that Madame Gagnier has a crush on Matt and, so far, the woman has done nothing to dispel their theory.

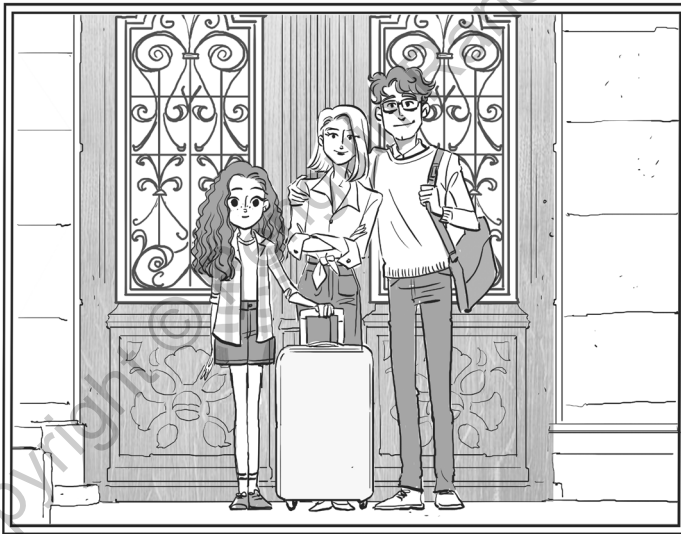
Madame Gagnier looks Ellie and Josephine up and down, a disapproving wrinkle on her lips. ‘*Bonjour*, wife and child. Now, I have important things to explain before we commence our tour.’

Josephine looks at her father and stepmother then back to Madame Gagnier. ‘Really? I don’t want to wait a second longer. Sorry, *madame*, but I’m going in.’

‘*Sacré bleu!*’ Madame Gagnier declares, throwing her hands into the air. ‘This is exactly why I never had any children. They are so . . . pushy.’

‘Jet’s right – apologies, *madame*, but we’d like to see our house. You can tell us everything after we have a look,’ Matt says with a broad smile.

And with that, Josephine rushes past Madame Gagnier and into the grand entrance hall. Daisy, Matt and Ellie are close behind her, each completely unaware of how much their lives will soon be changed forever.



From: JET@me.com.au



To: harrietohara@me.com.sg

Cc Bcc

Subject: We're here!

Hi Hat,

We're here! Actually, we've been here since Wednesday, but I haven't had a moment to write - sorry. The house is incredible. And HUGE. Even bigger than I imagined. I can't wait for you to come and stay. Have you been working on your mum? Tell her there's enough room for your whole family - there's actually room for about ten families in the chateau. CHATEAU, can you believe it?! I live in a chateau! We even have two stone dragons on the roof - I've decided to call them Victor and Hugo after my favourite French writer. I know you'll get that seeing as though you love *Les Misérables* as much as I do.

My bedroom is goooooooooorgeous. I'll attach a photo. It's got the prettiest pink wallpaper dotted with tiny white flowers. The ceiling is mint green, and the beams are painted the same pink as the wallpaper. I've got a huge, to-die-for four-poster bed - which is

actually about the same size as my whole bedroom in Sydney. There's the most beautiful dressing table too. I'm sure it has secret compartments, but I haven't found them yet. The floor is timber (it's called parquetry) and there's a huge *armoire* (that's the wardrobe). Oh, and a fireplace and a secret door that leads to this weird little sitting room (which Ellie says we can turn into an ensuite). I can't wait for that!

The kitchen is pretty much a disaster, except for the flagstone floor and the ancient cooker that Ellie wants to keep. I'm trying to imagine what it will be like when it's all renovated. Ellie's been talking about offering a cooking school as part of the hotel experience, which would make sense, given she's an incredible cook - but you knew that already. Dad thinks it's a great idea too.

All the bathrooms are gross, especially the green one closest to my room. I found a family of frogs living in the toilet and there's mould that has probably been here for a hundred years. But everything will be fixed - soon, I hope. Dad's super excited to get started. He's determined to do loads of the work - with

Teddy as his labourer. I think they'll need a lot more help if we're ever going to get this place ready for paying guests.

Ellie and I found some hideous stuffed animals in the attic - and I don't mean like your cute Betty Bear or my Rosie Rabbit. These are real, taxidermied ones! Creepy. There was a deer head and three goats with long horns. The most disgusting one was a weasel and a cobra in full fight mode. Ellie says they were all the fashion in the 1800s. I've attached some pictures so you can be as grossed out as I was.

The cellars are packed as well. You wouldn't believe the stuff we found! Furniture, toys (a giant dollhouse and metal pedal cars Dad says we should restore), about a zillion empty bottles and piles of magazines and fabrics. Dad and Ellie reckon some of the stuff will be worth a lot. There's heaps of junk, too, that we'll have to get rid of. Although Ellie was thrilled when she found twenty copper pots and pans - you'd have thought she won the lotto.

We picked up my new bike yesterday from Sarlat-la-Canéda - it's a town about twenty

minutes' drive from home and it's gorgeous (like everything around here!). That's where my school is too, but I don't start for another week and a half because it's Spring holidays. My bike is adorable - she's mint green (sort of matching my room now that I think about it) with white wall tyres and a big wicker basket on the front, so of course I've named her Mintie. I can't wait to ride to the village near us - it's called Saint-Geniès. We went there for the first time yesterday. There's a cute little supermarket, a pharmacy, a *boulangerie* (that's the bakery) and *boucherie* (the butcher - they sell cheese and antipasto stuff too). You can imagine how much Ellie loves all that foodie stuff.

There's a *quincaillerie* (hardware store) that's so jam-packed you can hardly move - the shelves go all the way to the ceiling! The lady who owns it has hair even redder and curlier than mine, which she piles messily on top of her head. She's really friendly and helpful. Dad was looking for some random taps and Madame Salmon (yes, like the fish) found them in about twenty seconds, which was some kind of miracle considering the state of the

place. She gave Daisy a dog treat, so now they'll be friends for life.

There's this ancient church called Notre-Dame de l'Assomption in the middle of the village, a primary school and a *Mairie* (the town hall). And cats. So many cats! I met the cutest ginger puss in the car park. I don't know his real name but I've called him Petit Rouge, which means Little Red. Maybe Dad and Ellie will let me get a cat, though I'm not sure how Daisy would feel about that. Since we got here my head is full of ideas for new stories but nothing has bubbled to the top yet, so I'll keep making notes for now.

Now that we've arrived, I'm planning to start searching for information about my mum - given there's nothing about her on the Internet. I guess she mustn't have been a big fan of social media, like me. I wish I could remember her, but she died when I was so little. Dad wants to help me. He never really knew much about her life in France before she came to Australia and met him - just that this is the area where she grew up, but we don't even know exactly *where*. And Ellie - the world's absolute best stepmother EVER - wants to help

as well. It makes me feel less weird about it, knowing that she wants to find out about Mum too.

But enough about me and *ma vie française* (look that one up!). How's life in Singapore? Still hot? What have you been doing apart from school? Have you met any cute boys? So far, I haven't met any boys, or girls, or any kids at all.

You coped so well when you started at your new school, right? Just thinking about it makes me feel sick. I'll have to speak French and I'm not sure mine is good enough. Luckily, we have some lessons in English too, so I won't be completely hopeless, but still ... *aide-moi!*

I can't believe how much both our lives have changed in less than a year. When you told me you were moving to Singapore, I thought it was the end of the world - and it definitely felt like it after you left - but then who knew that I would end up in France eight months later?! Now we're both having *huge* adventures. I only wish we were having them together. I feel a bit like I'm living in a

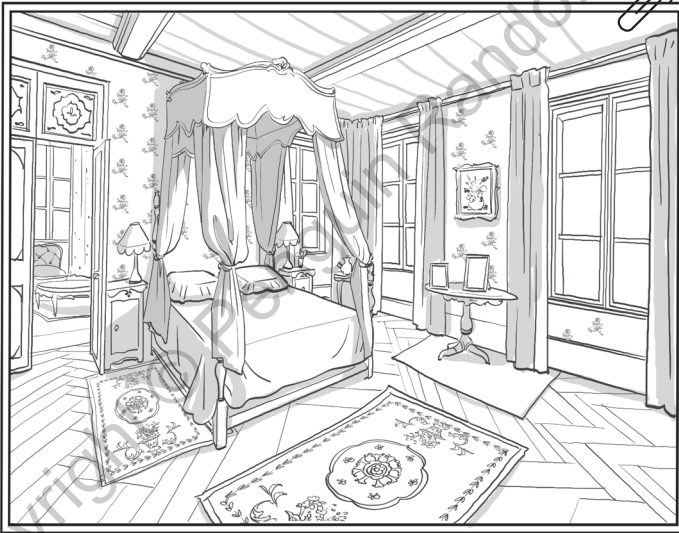
story book. Surely there's a mystery (or ten)
just around the corner!

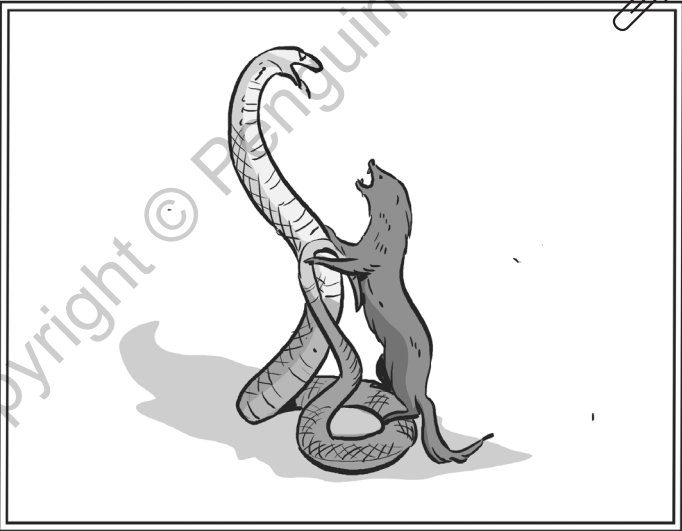
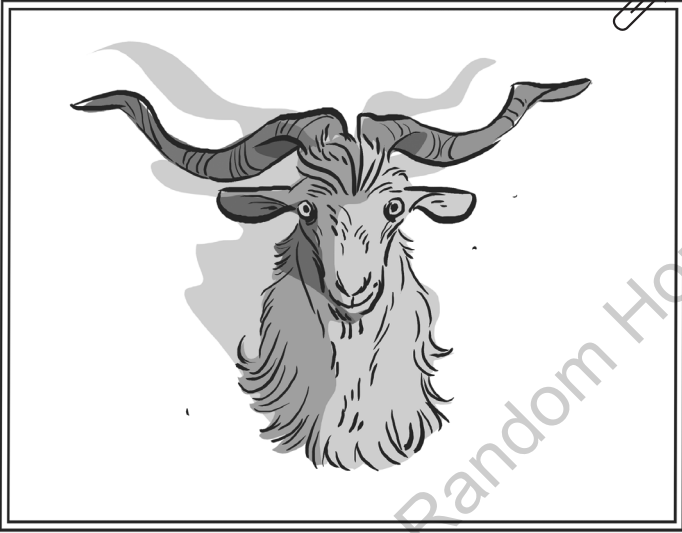
Let's FaceTime over the weekend. I want all
your news.

Love you always and forever,

Your best friend since kindergarten day one,

Jet xxx





From: harrietohara@me.com.sg



To: JET@me.com.au

Cc Bcc

Subject: Re: We're here!

Hi Jet,

I'm so jealous! Your photos look amazing - except for those disgusting animals. Please don't send any more pictures of them. Your bedroom is like something out of a Jane Austen novel.

It's still hot here. It's always hot here. I miss seasons so badly. The weather hardly changes much, except when we get storms and it rains so hard that the drops feel like bullets ... I thought Sydney thunderstorms were terrifying, but the ones here are worse. Some of the schools have lightning rods in the playgrounds to stop the kids from getting electrocuted - true story.

School is good. My English teacher is funny. He's super tall and is always making bad dad jokes. We're studying *Great Expectations*, which most of the kids are complaining about, but I'm loving it. Miss Havisham is such an

intriguing character. Maybe you'll find a little old lady hidden away in that mansion of yours. That would be fun. No, scratch that, it would be terrifying - though it would make for an excellent mystery.

Here's some potentially exciting news: my dad *might* have a conference in Paris later in the year, which means we *might* be able to come to see you! You know my mum wouldn't be able to stand the thought of him being in France while she's left here with the twins and me. The only bad thing is we'd have to bring my stinky brothers, but your house is so big, they'd probably get lost and we wouldn't find them for days - weeks or months or never would be better. Anyway, I've been leaving copies of French magazines around the house, and I'll keep trying.

You *have to* tell me as soon as you meet any gorgeous French boys. Then I can at least live my life through you, because I can tell you, there are no cute boys here - just sweaty ones.

Can't wait for more news. Call me over the weekend!

Love you always and forever,

Your best friend since kindergarten day one,

Hat xxx

PS I've started listening to *Jane Eyre* on audio - so far, it's a bit depressing. Hope it gets better.

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