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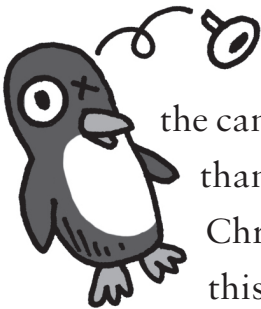






*Dear Diary,*

Today something awful happened, something horrendous and horrific! It was even more awful than when my cuddly penguin lost its



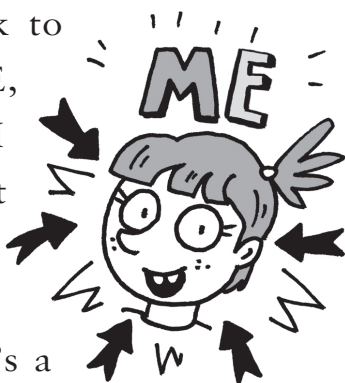
eye, more horrendous than the time they served us spinach in the canteen, and more *horrific* even than when I found out that Father Christmas doesn't ex... (Oh no, to this day I can't bring myself to spell it out, that's how horrendous I find it.) Anyway, something awful, horrendous and horrific happened today!

## *How to Get Rid of a Vampire*

Before I continue, *dear diary*, I should introduce myself. This is the first time I'm writing on your pretty white pages and you haven't got a clue who I am. That's not very polite of me, and my parents keep telling me to be polite. (If you don't know what I mean by "parents", you're lucky!)

So there we are: my name is **ZAZIE**, I'm a girl, and when I think of the fact that, when I was born, there was a fifty-per-cent chance that I would have been a boy, it gives me the shivers. Are you a boy, dear diary? If you are, I feel sorry for you.

But let's come back to the main thing: ME, because dear diary, I have a feeling you can't wait to find out a bit more about me. OK, since you insist, here's a summary:

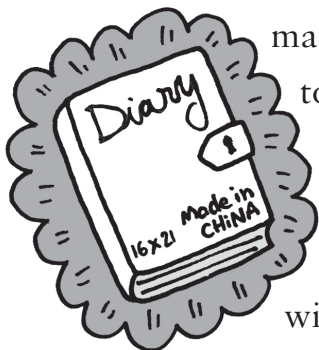


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1. I am VERY pretty.
2. I am VERY intelligent.
3. I am VERY nice.

My flaws? I can't think of anything off the top of my head... Oh yes, I come with a manufacturing defect! My parents are to blame for that. They didn't finish their job properly when they made me. I lisp a little and have trouble properly pronouncing the S (I say "thoup" instead of "soup" for instance). However, I am perfectly fine with the Z. That's why *I love* my name: **ZAZIE**. (Just imagine if I'd been called Susie, that is to say "Thuthie"!)

Your name, dear diary, is written on the cover: "Diary, 16 x 21 cm, premium-quality paper, made in China". I don't want



to offend you, but that's not a great name. If you agree, I'll call you **Z**ebulon, because names beginning with a **Z** are the best! And,

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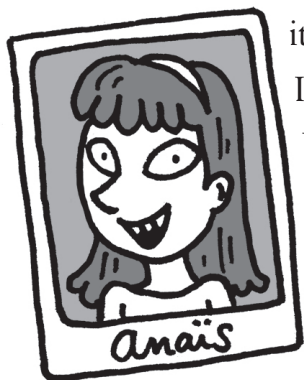
unfortunately for you, you're probably a boy (I'm so sorry for you).

And if you don't like your name, tough luck. You're MY diary!

Now that we have been properly introduced, I can reveal the awful, horrendous and **horrific** thing that I found out today. My cousin Lucas is coming to our house on Saturday! Horror of horrors! Why? Because this Saturday I had invited all my best friends to come and play with me. And now Mum has asked me to cancel it!

Do you know what a best friend is, dear diary? In your case, it's simple. Your best friend: that's me. Because I'm your ONLY friend. (Please don't cry, it's better than having none.) In my case,

it's a little bit more complicated. I have two and a half best friends. Why "and a half"? Because Anaïs is my best friend every other day. The days in between we can't stand each other.



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I have to say that Anaïs has a VERY bad temper, and she's a liar too. Of course, she'll tell you that *I'm* the one who has a bad temper. Whatever!

My other two best friends are called Julie and



Kenza. We've known each other since nursery school. We've used each other's cuddly blankets and used to make it impossible for anyone to have

a nap with our endless talking.

Things like that create a bond.

I never argue with Julie and Kenza. They always do



exactly what I tell them: they really are

VERY good friends!

It would have been ideal to get together as friends on Saturday, just before the end of the holidays. And now everything has been ruined because I have to entertain my cousin Lucas!

You can't imagine, dear ebulon, what a

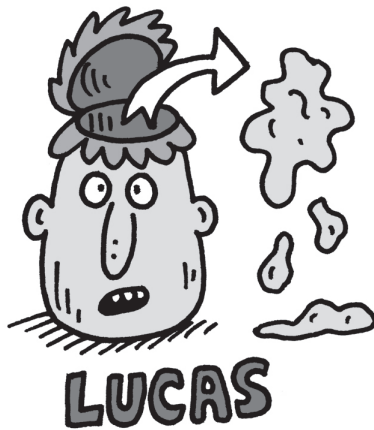


## *How to Get Rid of a Vampire*

drag this is, because you don't know what he's like.

He's like a cross between Shrek, because of his looks, and Shrek's donkey, because of his intelligence. He has a head like a potato, and mashed potatoes for a brain! In short, he's a boy.

To give you an idea, this is more or less what he looks like (yes, I'm ALSO fabulous at drawing):



Anyway, ever since Mum told me he's coming, I've been upset, devastated, catastramatized (I know that doesn't exist, but *I love* it)! It's not as if I haven't tried to talk my mum out of

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it: “Mummy dear, you can’t just cancel my afternoon with my friends!”

“I’m sorry, but your aunt and uncle can’t come on any other day. We’ll invite your friends round some other time soon. Promise.”

“Yeah, but Julie is moving house! I’ll never see her again!”

“Julie is moving house in six months, and she’ll be living less than two miles from here.”



“Yeah, but Kenza is with her granny every weekend. She won’t be able to come!”

“Kenza’s grandparents live in Morocco. I’d be surprised if she visits them every weekend.”



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“Yeah, but Anaïs will probably be ill, because—”

“Haven’t we told you not to say ‘yeah, but’ in this house?”

“But it’s not wrong...”

“That’s enough now, **ZAZIE!**”

I’d used up all my arguments, so I tried the last trick up my sleeve. I looked at her with my cocker-spaniel eyes, made my lips tremble and said with a choking voice: “**PLEASE**, Mummy dear!”

Apparently that works on Julie’s mum. But mine knows no mercy. So I had to ring my friends and call it off.



“That’s fine. My parents will be taking me to the cinema instead,” was Kenza’s reply.

“No worries. I’ve been invited to a party at my neighbour’s house,” Julie said, trying to comfort me.

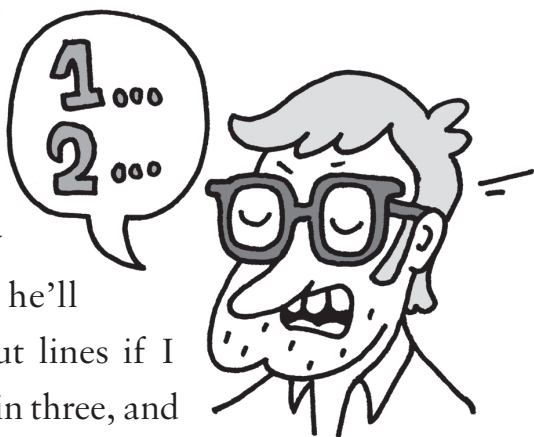
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“You’re **SO** lucky. You’ll have Lucas all to yourself,” said Anaïs mockingly. (After that, we argued and fell out.)

Thanks a lot, friends! Thanks for sticking together! A good thing you’re here, my dear **Z**ebulon. At least you listen to me and understand me. To show you how grateful I am I’ll tell you something I haven’t told anyone, neither my friends, because they are such chatterboxes, nor my parents, because they are my parents.

I’ll let you in on a secret... my greatest secret!

Except that it’s going to have to wait a little, because I’ve just heard my dad shout that he’ll make me copy out lines if I don’t come down in three, and




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he's already started to count (I wonder if he knows any numbers higher than three).

Maybe it's because Mum has called me five times already to tell me that dinner is ready?

(Someone needs to tell her that she sounds like a broken record.) Terrible things, parents. They always disturb you when you're in the middle of something. You can never be at ease in this house.

I'm sorry, you're going to have to be patient and wait until tomorrow to find out my secret.

Bye now, my ebulon!

Many thanks to Talie for reading this,  
giving me advice, sharing her ideas and  
helping  grow up.



Jean-Marcel Erre was born in the south of France in 1971, and works as a teacher in Montpellier. He also writes novels, TV sketches and screenplays.



