



Dear Aunt Sophie

I'm writing to you in the hope that you will be able to help me. I feel there are things that I cannot talk to mum and dad about. And anyway they are so busy working all hours to get their new law firm up and running. So I thought I'd turn to you, my cool Aunt Sophie.

I'm having a miserable time at school. I don't have a single friend, and the other children bully me. I get the impression that they consider me a bit of a geek. Maybe it has to do with my glasses, my bad dress sense or my big ears. Whatever the reason, it is really getting me down. On top of this, I am also wondering about my sexuality. I just don't seem to find girls my age attractive. But I do have feelings for a boy in my class. He is called Ben, but he doesn't even seem to realise I exist. And even if he did, I think it is unlikely he would like me - let alone love me.

What makes all this even more difficult is the fact that Isabella, my beautiful and amazing big sister, is the most popular girl in school. She doesn't really care about me, or maybe it's just that she is so wrapped up in her own life what with her hectic social schedule and her "Mr. Wonderful", her boyfriend, Michael

So Aunt Sophie, as you can see my life is a bit of a mess at the moment. Do you think you could help me? I'd like to become more with it, fashionable, trendy and popular. I thought you might be able to help me with that - what with you being a famous designer and all. I'm sending you a drawing of what I look like now and what I'd like to become - a kind of "before and after" picture. As you can see, I'm quite an accomplished artist. One day I might be able to come and work for you designing clothes and accessories. But for now, maybe I could just come and stay with you for a while? It sure would be nice to get away from my horrible life in London right now.

Look forward to hearing from you, Aunt Sophie.

Lots of love from your devoted nephew,

Adam

Dear Adam

It was lovely to hear from you. So, you've got a problem. I felt concerned but I was glad and touched because you had thought I could help you. You know I can understand because I had a similar experience when I was your age. You are not responsible for your homosexuality and you are not the only one. Besides there is nothing wrong with that, you mustn't feel guilty. Let me give you some advice. First of all ignore mockery but don't ignore your feelings. Anyway nothing proves that you are homosexual . Wait and see !

As far as your sister is concerned, she is amazing and beautiful but I am sure you are more interesting than her. I also had a big sister called Hugnette. . By the way, have you heard of Auntie Hugnette ? She never even tried to understand me. I don't know where she is now, we haven't kept i n touch.

You speak of your appearance, you don't need to change, you look fine to me. But you could try to look more fashionable. Why not wear contact lenses instead of those funny round glasses ? Change your classical striped sweatshirt for a colourful V-neck T-shirt, wear jeans instead of those short trousers, go to the hairdresser's , dye your hair and ask for a trendy haircut. After that you'll feel you are the most beautiful boy in the world and I am sure you will feel much more confident. As for Isabella, go to the the Witches' shop , buy the lotion « So Ugly », put some of it in her glass of coke. Her hair will turn grey and her face will be covered with pimples for a few days , don't worry it isn't dangerous at all but she will understand what it is to be laughed at.

You'd like to come and work with me ? I am afraid it is impossible. I guess you want to know why. Actually I have moved to France. I live on a farm in a small remote and peaceful ( I could say « sleepful ») village called Naisey Les Granges. There are more cows here than inhabitants. What a change from London !

My new neighbour who is a bit mad has got a knuckle duster and he is allergic to teenagers, so he might hurt you with no reason at all. Not to mention my cat who waits up in a tree for strangers to go by and is always ready to attack them . Since my cancoillote disappeared he has been strange .....so strange ! You can understand I have got to get used to my new life !

I hope you won't be too disappointed and you will answer my letter as soon as you can.

Do not hesitate to write to me. I will always be there for you.

Lots of love

Aunt Sophie





### LETTRE 3

Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> December

Dear Aunt Sophie

Thanks for your letter. It was so nice to receive your reply.

Since I last wrote things have really changed for me, and I have become a lot more popular.

I took your advice on the contact lenses and the clothes. I also had my hair cut (hedgehog shape haha). And it looks absolutely fab, it really does. I can't stop looking at myself in the mirror. It's like looking at a completely different person. I only wear jeans now. Some of those baggy ones, that look like they're about to fall down all the time. These types of trousers drive my French teacher mad. Her name is Madame Moeller. She is really nice, but she just doesn't like jeans like that.

I also liked your idea about the "So Ugly" lotion. It really made me giggle, but I decided against it, because I love Isabella, really. Even though, sometimes, she drives me insane.

I never knew you had a sister, Aunt Sophie. Her name is Huguette, you say? I think she would be really pleased to hear from you. There is a very special bond between siblings. Even though Isabella and I don't really agree on very much, the thought of never speaking to her or seeing her again makes me feel very sad, so please consider getting back in touch with Huguette.

I am a bit curious as to why you gave up your high-powered job in fashion and moved to Naisey Les Granges. However, I don't actually mind not being able to come and work with you. Not since I have become popular and lots of people want to hang out with me here. I do appreciate that they might be a bit shallow if they can only be bothered with me now that I've changed my appearance. I still enjoy this newfound attention, though.

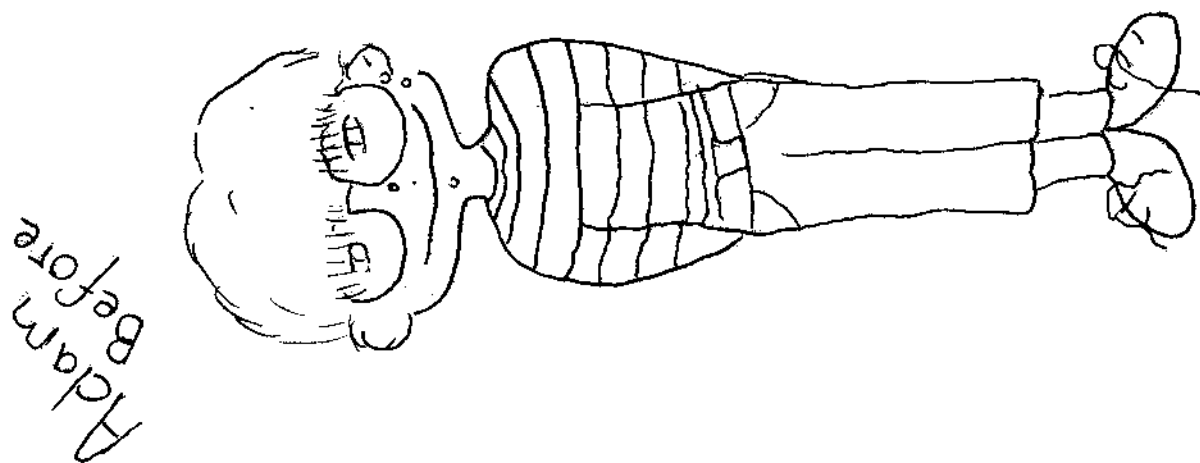
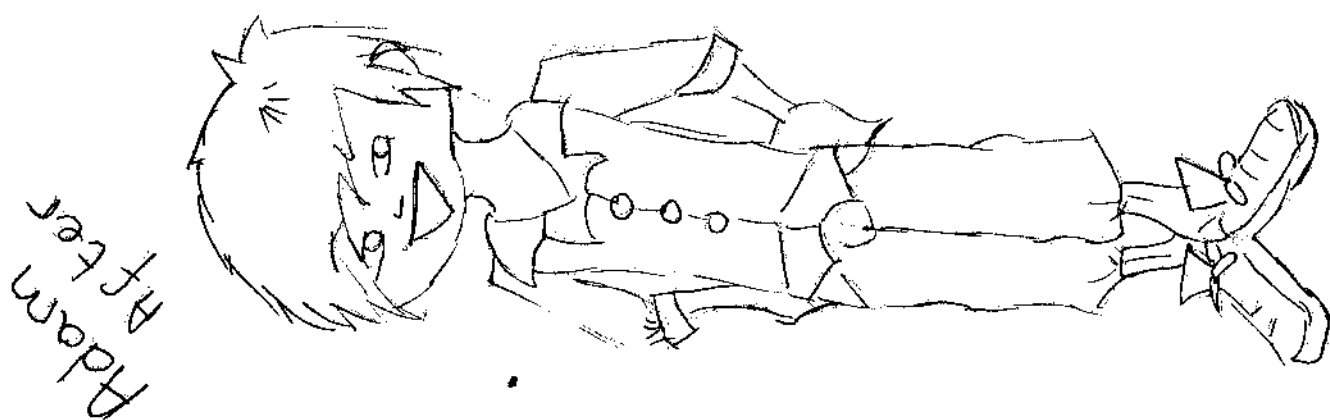
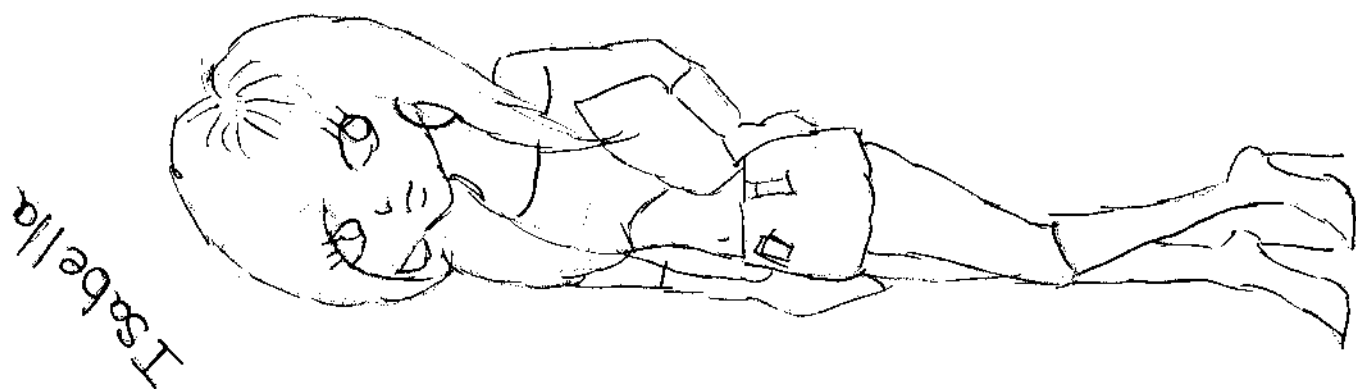
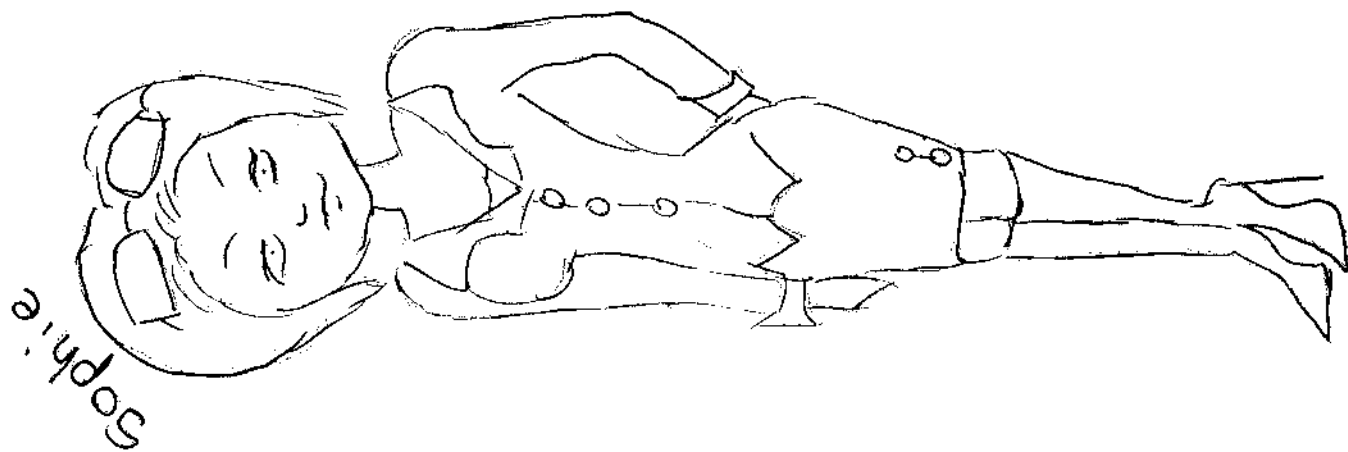
As for my thoughts on sexuality, I'm still undecided, but people no longer mock me. Ben has got himself a girlfriend, and I find that I don't really mind, so maybe my feelings for him were not that serious after all. Now there's a girl called Alice, who seems to like me, but I'm not really sure I want to go out with anybody at the moment. I'm having far too much fun

I would still love to see you soon, Aunt Sophie. Your crazy neighbour doesn't frighten me. Nor does your cat, but what is a "cancoillote"? If you would rather come to London and stay with us that would be ok, too. I'm sure mum and dad would love you to come and stay.

Hope to hear from you soon. Take care!

Lots of love from your nephew

Adam



## LETTRE 4

Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> January

Dear Adam

Thank you for your last letter , I am glad you are much better now .

I am sure you must be wondering why I left my job to go to Naisey Les Granges. Well, let me explain. Actually I took part in the famous TV Quiz "The Wheel of fortune" and I won a trip to Besançon. Besançon has become famous thanks to its Citadelle, a famous fortress which was built by one of Louis XIV's architects named Vauban. It became a "World Heritage Site" last year. While I was in Besançon I visited the beautiful city and toured around the locality. One day I came across a charming little village called Naisey Les Granges. It was so peaceful, I fell in love with it and decided to live there for a while.

Thank you for your invitation but I am afraid I won't be able to go and see you at the moment. The "rabbit flu" has spread through Franche Comté and we are on red alert. We are not allowed to leave the village, nevertheless my life is still full of adventures. Last week my crazy cat "

Chaussette" needed his cancoillotte (by the way cancoillotte is a sticky liquid cheese, it is delicious, I love it too), he escaped from the house and I had to run after him. Can you imagine a mad woman in a sexy nightdress pursuing her cat through "La Rue de L'Eglise" in high heeled red slippers. Chaussette disappeared into a barn, I followed him and I met a charming couple who insisted on inviting me for supper. They wanted me to taste the famous "saucisse de Morteau" and a glass of "Gentiane" a liquor they had made themselves.

When I left I was a bit dizzy , I staggered a little on my way home. Suddenly I stumbled on a root and banged my head against a tree. I stood up again and walked slowly towards my house. Finally I collapsed on the sofa leaving the front door ajar. Just before closing my eyes I noticed a round box with "Mont D'or" written on it , I supposed it was a present from someone from the village. I was really tired and I guess I really had drunk too much because everything started spinning around me. I slept like a log. A few hours later I woke up and the first thing I saw was the box. It was empty! I thought Chaussette might have eaten it but then I remembered I had forgotten him at my neighbour's.

I was thinking about it when I heard a strange noise coming from the cellar. I went downstairs anxiously walking on tiptoe. I made a few hesitant steps , gave a quick glance at the cellar door, grabbed hold of the baseball bat my last boyfriend Roger had offered me. I opened the door and switched on the light. There I saw a man carrying a bottle of wine in his left hand and my cute cat in his right hand. He was well-built , strong and was wearing a tight fitting white T-shirt and jeans. His jacket was smeared with grease but I didn't care. When he turned his head towards me I was dazzled by his radiant smile and fascinated by his deep blue eyes. I was looking down at my ridiculous dirty slippers when he told me: "I think I've got something for you" and he handed me Chaussette . I was dumbfounded, believe me or not "It was love at first sight". I invited him for a cup of coffee, we sat down in the kitchen and spoke for hours. His name is Jean Guy Georges, he is 43 years old and he comes from Australia. When I touched his hand he stood up and blushed. Suddenly he switched on the telly telling me he wanted to listen to the news. The newsreader spoke about someone who had just escaped from a mental hospital and was going to describe him when Jean Guy quickly switched the TV off and asked me for another cup of coffee. I must admit that since I met him I have not been interested in anything or anyone else other than him and have stopped listening to the news. I am so happy.



Jean Guy is waiting for me so I must go but please write back soon. Tell me all about Alice. Is she in your class? How old is she? What is she like? Where does she live? Why do you think she loves you? I think you must go out with someone to forget Ben.

Take care

Lots of love

your aunt Sophie





## LETTRE 5

Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> February

Dear Aunt Sophie

I'm very worried about you. I don't like the sound of Jean Guy, at all. What do you know about him? What is his background? Where does he come from? And why did he turn off the television that day when you watched the news and the newsreader was talking about an escaped mental patient? Please be careful Aunt Sophie!

I think it would be a much better idea for you to look into net-dating. That way you can get to know a person before meeting them. There are many dating websites where you can look for the love of your life.

As for my love life... Well, I'm as confused as ever. I have my doubts about Alice. I can't decide if she only likes me now, because of my make-over. She never gave me a second glance when I was plain boring old Adam. But at the same time, I do have very warm feelings for her. However, I still find Ben attractive, and recently, it seems like he's been wanting to spend more time with me. And sometimes, he'll "accidentally" bump into me as he walks down the school hall. Then he gets all embarrassed and blushes like a little girl. I just don't know what to think.

But right now, I have more important matters on my mind: Mum and dad are going away for a weekend break. They will be away from Friday until Sunday. They have told me that Isabella and I are not allowed to have a party while they're away. But now, Isabella has told me that she will be spending the weekend at her friend's house... and I have started texting my friends to invite them over on Saturday ;-) So I'll write more later. I have a party to organise!

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November

Oh dear, Aunt Sophie!

Remember that party I was telling you about? Well, things got completely out of hand. The house was wrecked, I ended up in the police station, and mum and dad have decided to send me to New Zealand to work on a sheep farm for a year to teach me a lesson. A year where I'll be cut off from the world: no mobile phone, no computer, no letters... But let me start at the beginning:

I'd arranged for my friends to come over on Saturday night. What I didn't know was that some of them had asked other people along; people I don't know. So my friends turned up at 9 pm and we were having a nice time when suddenly these older boys turned up and started drinking beer that they had brought. When the beers were gone they found some vodka and whisky in my parents' drinks cabinet. And suddenly they got very drunk. Then they started playing really loud music, and the neighbours came in to complain, but the boys threw them out and turned the music up even higher. Then they threw us out, and we could hear them fighting and throwing furniture around inside the house. The neighbours called the police. When the police turned up they broke the door down, and I went back inside. I shouldn't have done that, because one of the police officers thought I was one of the troublemakers, and he threw me in the back of the police van and took me to the police station. Mum and dad picked me up the next day. They were extremely angry and told me about the sheep farm punishment. They also said that I was grounded until the day I was leaving for

New Zealand. So now I'm stuck in my room. I'm not allowed any visitors, and it feels just like prison :-(

So I probably won't be able to write to you again. However, as you know, it's my birthday next week. Just thought I'd remind you in case you decided to send me a birthday present. Did I tell you I've got a new hobby? Photography! It sure would be nice to be able to bring a camera to New Zealand with me... even if all I'd be able to photograph were sheep and sheep and sheep...

Anyway, take care, Aunt Sophie. I'll miss writing with you. I hope to receive a birthday greeting from you before I leave at the end of December.

Your loving nephew, Adam



# LETTRE 6

LONDON SCENES Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> February.

My dear Adam,

I haven't heard from you for ages. It's your birthday today. I hope you'll have a wonderful birthday my adorable nephew. I promised to give you a present when we last met, what would you like? I hope you are fine but you might be too busy to write to your old aunt Sophie. Nevertheless you can give me a call, my new telephone number is: 0044312956786.

I am looking forward to hearing from you very soon.

Love.  
Sophie.

LS-065 xxxxx.

Mr SMITH Adam

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Dear Adam

Happy birthday to you, how are you feeling ?

I was quite disappointed about your behaviour . You should have told your parents before the party. To my mind , living in New Zealand will be a good experience for you.

You were worrying about my relationship with Jean -Guy, I can understand. Actually, he never liked to speak about his past, perhaps he had a difficult childhood. Unfortunately I didn't have a clue and no matter what I asked him, he pretended not to hear. So I had been having more and more doubts about him. I had decided to pay my sweetheart a visit. He is now living in a pretty little house. At first sight I found this place so romantic! It is completely lost in the most stunning forest I have ever seen.

As I entered, I had a shock, there was the impressive head of a wild boar hanging on the front door. Then Jean Guy showed me around and I was under his spell again. When we were about to visit the back room, he stood in front of me and ordered me never to go there. A few minutes later, he decided to make a fire in the fireplace, therefore he went to the cellar to fetch some logs while I was waiting on the sofa.

I was more anxious than ever and rushed into the secret room in spite of his warning never to cross the threshold.

What I saw was absolutely terrifying. On one shelf there were three skulls beside dead snakes in bottles, a gun and some bullets. But the most horrible and bloody thing I discovered was a panel with photos. Each photo represented someone missing. I had seen all of them on TV. They were all crossed out. Can you imagine that?

I went out hurriedly and cut across the forest which separates his home from mine.

Once in my house, dishevelled and out of breath, I fell like a thump on my sofa. I tried to sleep but I couldn't.

Now, I must admit that you were right to worry about Jean-Guy. He wasn't the man I thought he was, that kind , honest and thoughtful man who could have made me happy.

I feel more and more frightened. Moreover I've just realized I've lost one of the earrings Jean-guy had given to me on ST Valentine's day. I've looked for it everywhere, but it was a waste of time, it is so annoying!

Because of that nasty story, I've learned that a lie can destroy the deepest and strongest love, that's why I am going to tell you something which might upset you. It is a heavy secret that I have kept for a long time. You see I am an old lady, I live on my own and my only friend is Chaussette my cat. I spend my time knitting. It's such a boring life! So when I received your first letter by mistake, I decided to write back to you, you see you reminded me so much of my own self when I was your age. You are a great boy Adam, you helped me a lot so now I must tell you the truth. I owe it to you.

**I am not your aunt Sophie.**

# The grand-Mother

The  
Baseball  
Bat

She loves:  
Adam, vine, Jean-Gui  
She hates:  
politics

The vine



The Mont D'Or



The Cat  
"Chaussette"

He loves:  
M'd'Or, fish  
He hates:  
running,  
hunting mice.



## LETTRE 8

Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March

Dear (I don't know what to write here, as you did not tell me your real name in your letter)

As I'm sure you can appreciate, I was shocked and angry to learn that I have been writing my innermost secrets and thoughts to a complete stranger. But once I got over the initial shock, I was slightly amused at the idea that you have been pretending to be my aunt Sophie. And I am also grateful that you have helped me through a difficult time in my life.

As I was reading your letter, there were many things I wanted to comment on in terms of Jean guy. What you wrote about going into his house and entering his secret room really freaked me out. It was so scary that he had skulls and pictures of missing people in there. But, of course, I realise now, that this was just something you made up.

As you know, I am writing this letter to you from New Zealand. My mum and dad arranged for me to come out here as a punishment after the whole wild party incident. At first, I was really unhappy about leaving home and coming here. But the farm has grown on me. I'm staying with a really friendly family. They have two young children that are really nice. I'm almost like a big brother to them. That is so cool. I always wanted to be a big brother. I work on the farm which is situated in the middle of nowhere, so I don't have any contact with other people. But that's ok. I quite like just spending time with the sheep and the family. I know I shall miss them, when I go back to London later in the year. But for now I'm having a great time.

I would like to be able to write to my real aunt Sophie and tell her about what's happened to me over the last year, and I was wondering if you know her whereabouts. If you could help me locate her, I would be most grateful.

Otherwise, perhaps you might like to continue writing with me? I don't mind if you don't, but I have to say that I have enjoyed receiving your letters very much. Either way, I wish you all the best.

Kind regards, Adam



There is No

Aunt Sophie

At this

Address.

Jean - Guy



This epistolary short story was written by Danish students and their French pen friends. The idea was initiated by the French teacher in Denmark, Catherine Jeanneret Moeller and based upon a style of book the French teacher Lucile Da Silva had studied with her French students. Each class wrote a page and the other class answered. The writing was organized and supervised by their respective English teachers Pia Smith for the Danish students and Marie-Christine Truche for the French ones. Thanks to Anne Ducrot who read the French students' contribution with a native eye. The book was recorded for our visually handicapped friends Maëllis and Hannan. The Danish and French students really enjoyed writing, they all hope the future readers will enjoy reading their book.

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Nielsen Emil  
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