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opening extract from

Trixie very extremely brilliant guide to everything

written by

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Hi, it's me, Trixie, again – your bestest friend ever. (Well, that's what it says on the covers of my books, so it must be true.) This book you are about to read is a GUIDE – not the girls in uniform, "promise on my honour to do my best" variety – but a book on almost everything you need to know about Tweenage Life in the 21st Century. Tweenage Life, by the way, is what I call that funny bit of life in between when

you're a little kid who likes Barbies and when you get to turn into a real live teenager and can start howling at the moon and leaving your socks all over the floor and shouting at your parents. That will be fun, I bet. But Tweenage Life is even more fun. You get to do almost everything: you can tie your laces and go on a bus and do Halloween and all that stuff, but you've got no worries! No responsibilities! (Well, quite a lot of worries and responsibilities actually, but I'll show you how to make them much less.)

In this fantastic and amazingly cheap book you will find the answers to life's great questions, such as: where do all the socks go? And why do teachers get tea and biscuits while we all queue for the water fountain?

The good bit is, you don't have to read it all! You can just hop and skip about as you like. But, say you've got a really big anxiety like: what if I wet the bed staying at the sleepover? (Gulp.) Well, just zoom along to B for bed-wetting. Brilliant isn't it? I hope you are not throwing this book away and saying, "Huh. Wetting the bed is only for little kids," because you would be wrong, as it is actually quite common. I also hope you are not thinking, "This is only for girls, because it is



written by a girl." I think boys and girls are quite alike, as it happens, although they do seem to get very strangely different at about twelve, which is a result apparently, of things called hormones which whizz around your body and turn you into a grown-up. Funny to think that one day ALL the girls in my class will have a bra! (I don't mean to say they will all share the same one, they will have one or two each, of course),



but that time is yet to come, for most of us. I think it may be rather a long time for me, as I look annoyingly about six years old, although this isn't always annoying as it is very good for getting out of trouble. Heh! Heh!

So, dear readers, here begins my AMAZING ALPHABETIC GUIDE – an A-Z of all the Things you ever wanted to know about. Everything – except really boring stuff like how cement is made and whether we get wool from sheep or cows. If you want to know that stuff you can go to a teacher. Teachers love it if you ask a nice question like,

"Please Miss, how did the Tudors roast their oxes?" or something.

Now I will blow a big fanfare thingy on my trumpet (I love to play the trumpet and so would you) and my best friends Dinah Dare-deVille and Chloe Caution will do a big drum roll on the biscuit tins to introduce this fantastic book!



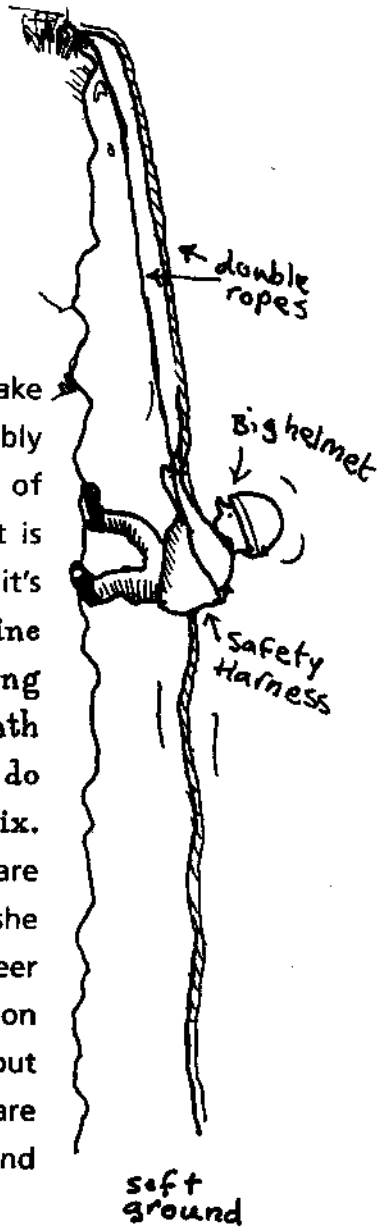
TARAAAAAAAAAAAAAAbang bang bangetty-bang (oh well, you can imagine it).

Read on – (and write me a postcard if I've left anything out).

A

ABSEILING

You may think I'm nuttyasafruitcake putting this first as it is possibly not number one on your list of things you think about. BUT, it is for someone, only in her case it's nightmares. **This friend of mine has been having abseiling nightmares about once a month since hearing we are going to do it on our school trip in Year Six.** And guess what? In her nightmare the rope always breaks and she comes plummeting down a sheer cliff about sixty hundred million metres high, and not only dies but squashes her entire family, who are there, all weeping and wailing and



all, whatever, underneath the cliff. These kinds of dream I can do without. Oh, now you think it's me that's worried, but it's not, or not very. All right, I'll tell you if you promise not to tell. It's Chloe, who thinks she is too fat and WOULD squash her family IF she fell on them.

So I, Trixie Tempest Tweenage Tearaway, have found a fantastic formula for Abseiling Anxiety: *don't do it.* (Seriously, there's always a crowd of wimps, um, I mean, Very Extremely intelligent, cautious, or even a little tiny bit nervous people, NOT wimps, who don't do all this stuff and you can always blend in with them.) There is also always a very kind teacher on school trips with a Very Extremely big box of hankies who never goes abseiling herself because she is too wimpy, I mean nervous. BUT, on the other hand, you can always give it a go and it WILL be safe for the following reasons:

You get to wear hard hats.

There's loads of people checking the equipment.

You are only a little bit off the ground.

Your family won't be squashed because they will not be there. They will be at home watching *Vera the Veggie Vampire* and eating choccies and such like.

See also School Trips



ADVERTISING

Put Plumpy Pootch in your shopping bag
Plumpy Pootch for tails that wag!

This little telly ad (I'm sure you've heard it, you know; it's that one where the little puppies are all looking very sad and lonely in a snowstorm and then a big bowl of Plumpy Pootch arrives and the little puppies wag their tails like windmills and then turn somersaults) made me nag Mum to get Plumpy Pootch for our puppies. (Yes! We have five! You can read about them in PETS.) BUT, they turned up their noses at it. In fact, they were all very waggy-tail until it arrived and when they saw it they looked very sad, like only puppies can look, and their little tails went all down and droopy and their ears went all flat, so it had the opposite effect really. They are like their mother and only eat Fidoburgers which is just as well really, as although Fidoburgers are disgustrously expensive, they are cheaper than De Luxe Plumpy Pootch as my mum was quick to point out.

Mum and Dad are always nagging me and Tomato (that's my baby brother, by the way, he's four and built



like a tank) not to believe everything we see on the telly. I am beginning to think they may be right after the Plumpy Pootch experience.

But I have discovered that advertising has used all kinds of tricks to make us believe life is meaningless without some important Stuff or other, *for ages*. Way back two hundred years ago, men in top hats were always getting people to believe they had the Secret of the Universe in a bottle. Nowadays, they say they can make life so wonderful that you will feel you have lived to the full, thanks to Gluggo Drain Cleaner or Fairy Barbie, and all, whatever.

Ads also use characters you get used to so they work on you like a Soap. I was upset to discover that Captain Birdseye is not a real person, which horrid old Grey Griselda (my archenemy at school) told me only last year, and also that there never was a Mr Kipling. So he never made those exceedingly good cakes at all. Not even a zillion years ago.

Advertisers defend their porky pies by saying it makes people buy more and therefore creates jobs and all this. But grown-ups are always telling children not to tell porkies. UNFAIR!



AFTER SCHOOL

Help. It's that horrible after school time when you are forced to go to KIDZFUNKLUB and enjoy yourself making dollies out of pasta. Why is this? Because your poor parents are slaving away trying to buy enough pasta for you to eat.

Trixie Tip: Save any spare pasta at the KIDZ FUNKLUB and take a few pieces home with you. Then you can say in a tragic and mournful voice, "Here you are, dearest Mum, I have brought this pasta home so you don't have to work so hard and can PICK ME UP FROM SCHOOL ONCE IN A BLUE MOON." This will make your poor mother cry. Heh! Heh!

More Trixie Tips for avoiding KIDZFUNKLUB: Gettalife. This means, organise tea as often as possible with your best mates. You can have them back to yours on weekends and drive your poor parents mad.

Or, get involved in other clubs you like better. Maybe Drama, or Art or the sorts of things grown-ups think will improve you like ballet – urgh, please, I would rather sit in a bath of slugs (sorry if you like ballet, it takes all sorts and you are very welcome to read this book and send me a rude letter) – or chess if you are brainy or tennis if you are sporty.



If these all cost money then you are going to have to make the best of the KIDZFUNKLUB. Ways of doing this include trying to turn it into a disco or making sure you have your Very Best Favourite book or game with you. Then you can more or less pretend you are at home. I go to KIDZFUNKLUB three times a week (but I don't go in the holidays because my mum is a teacher so she has holidays off, hee-haw) and I have just started doing this and it's made all the difference. I would not like to go home to an empty house, even though I can work the keys and boil an egg and all, whatever. I don't very much like the house's language when it's empty.

ALIENS

I believe in aliens. Obviously. There is infinity out there, so there must be other planets with life on in all that space.

What worries me is whether there are any aliens here on Earth, disguised as humans, like our supply teacher Warty-Beak, to name but one. He has quite a lot of the normal-ish things that humans have and obviously, if he was still in his own alien body, Ms Hedake our head teacher would not have hired him (I



think). But his eyesight is like a laser ray, his voice is like a cement mixer (he has an alien translator) and he does not know what a joke is. You know how jokes in different countries are different? Imagine what jokes on different planets would be like. He quite often cackles to himself, so probably that is because he finds pencils incredibly funny or something. Maybe watching someone sharpen a pencil on his planet is like watching someone sliding on a banana skin here.



Grown-ups will quite often comfort you if you have Alien Worries, like will they come in a spaceship at night and do disgustrous experiments on you? Grown-ups will tell you: "Oh, there's no reason to suppose aliens are nasty, dear. I expect they might be very kind. Why should they be any worse than us?" This is the fairy dance idea grown-ups have, that if they say something nice the child will just go happily to sleep thinking, "Ooh. Lovely. If Aliens do come, they will be soft and cuddly and read bedtime stories. That's OK



then." Sure thing. And suppose NOT. Eh? Anyway, if they were not much worse than some grown-ups they could be Very Extremely horrible. Imagine the worst grown-up you know and then add tentacles.

See also Zombies

ALPHABET

If you don't know this by now, you should go to the Special Needs teacher and say this: "I do not know my alphabet." She will then teach it to you.

I learnt it by a song that went:

ab C, def G, hijklM,

nopQ, rstU, vwxyZ.

I always hated that song, because it made Z rhyme with M. I bet you did that one, too. But my little brother, Tomato, is doing one that goes different and ends:

See how happy we can be,

Now we've learnt our ABC.

How stupid is that? Why should children be *happy* because they've learnt the alphabet? I mean they can be happy about almost anything, like making mud pies, having a water fight, eating iced buns in front of *Vera*

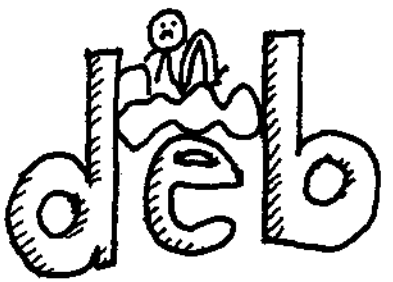


the Veggie Vampire and all, whatever. But, I ask you. Learning the ABC?

Trixie Tip: Do YOU still muddle up your 'bs' and 'ds'? (If you don't, skip this, but don't laugh, lots of kids do.) If so, use the word 'bed' You can draw it like this:



Then you can remember, easy peasy, because a bed written like this:



would look all wrong.