

# DIARY of a **Wimpy Kid** **THE LAST STRAW**

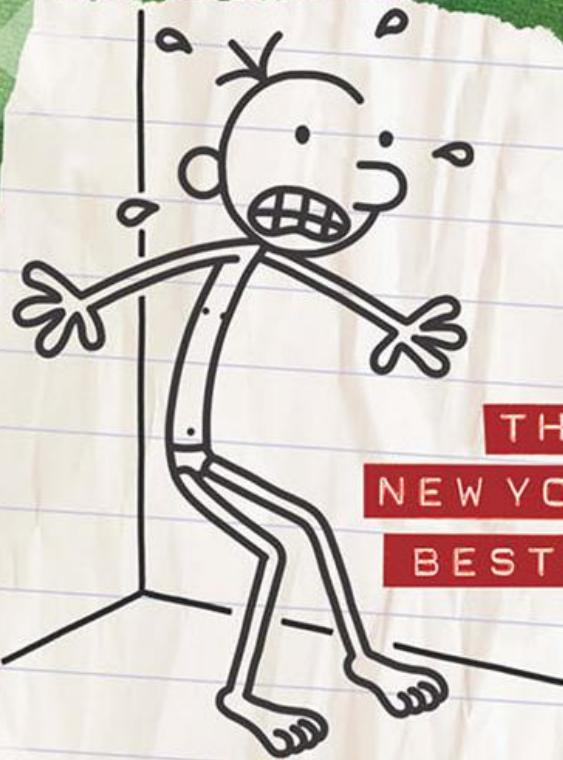


THE #1  
NEW YORK TIMES  
BESTSELLER

Jeff Kinney

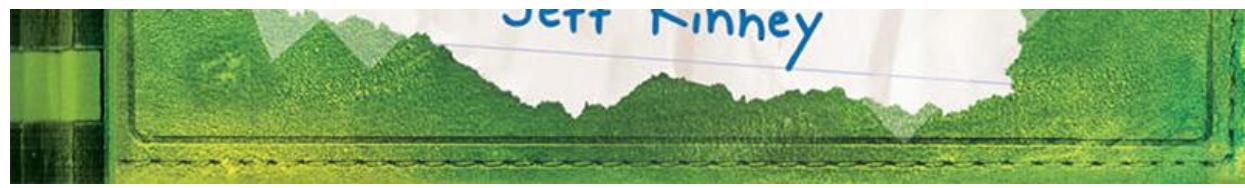
# DIARY of a **Wimpy Kid**

## THE LAST STRAW



THE #1  
NEW YORK TIMES  
BESTSELLER

TACU V.





# Dear Reader,

I'm very excited that you're holding the Kindle edition of  
Diary of a Wimpy Kid in your hands.

When I read my first e-book on a Kindle, I was amazed at  
the possibilities. Carrying a whole library around with me on a  
device I could fit in the palm of my hand? Amazing.

What's been very rewarding to me as an author has been  
seeing kids carrying their dog-eared copies of Diary of a  
Wimpy Kid with them. The Kindle allows kids to have the  
whole series at their fingertips, and the reading experience  
is crisp and clean every time . . . with no chance of today's  
breakfast staining the pages.

Thank you for purchasing Diary of a Wimpy Kid on your  
Kindle. I hope it gives you lots of laughs and you have as  
much fun reading it as I did writing it.

LJH



Jeff Kinney



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## **OTHER BOOKS BY JEFF KINNEY**

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*Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules*

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*Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days*

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*Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth*

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*Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever*

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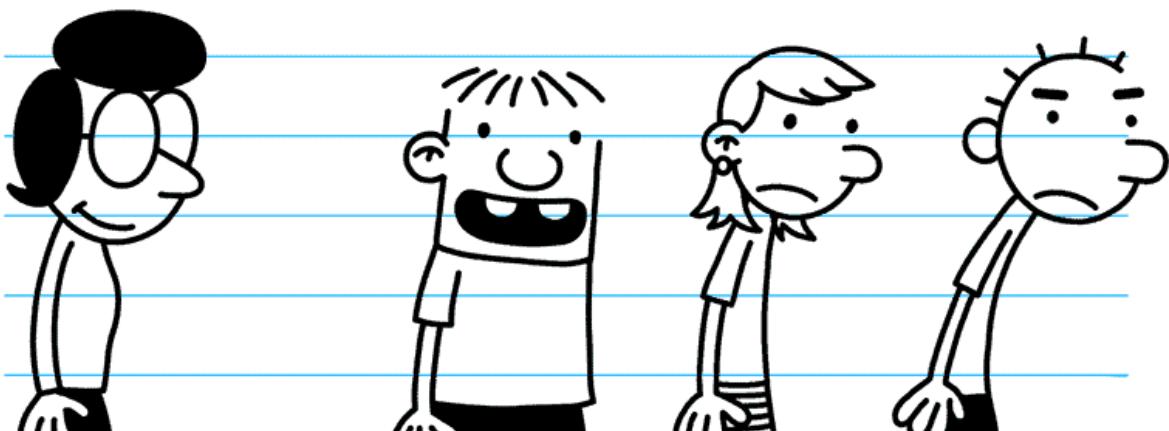
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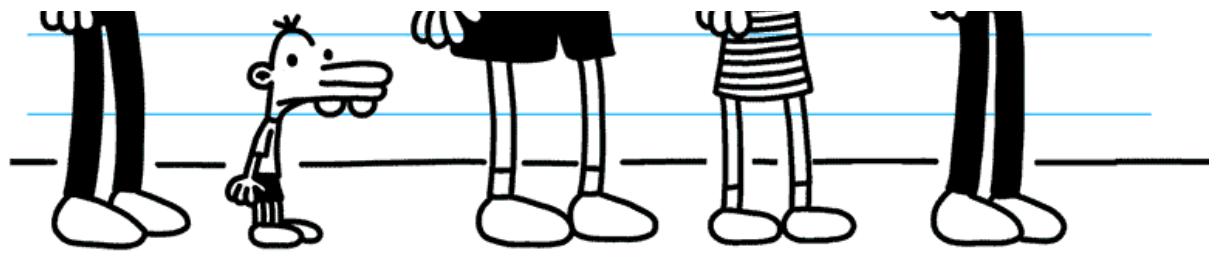
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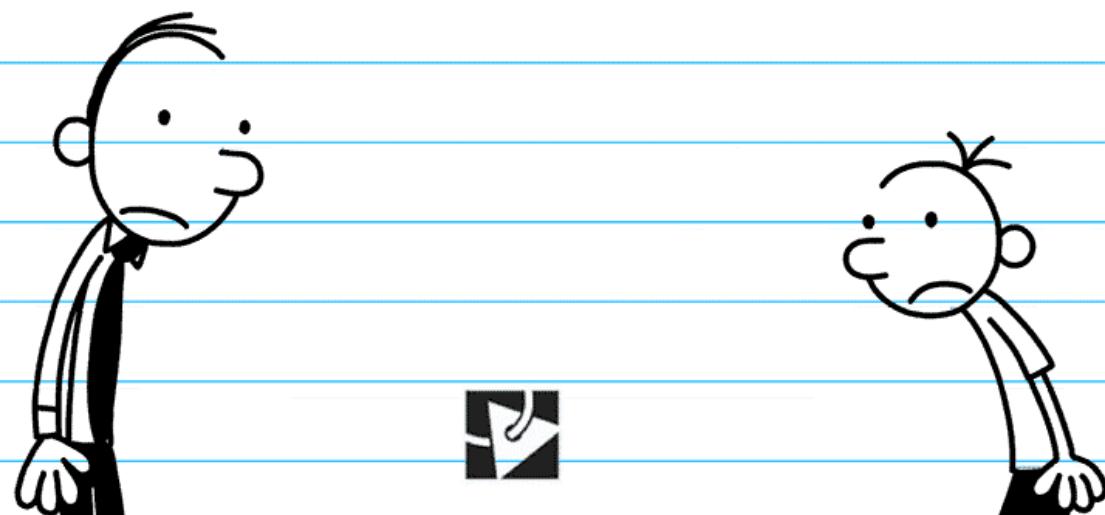




# DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

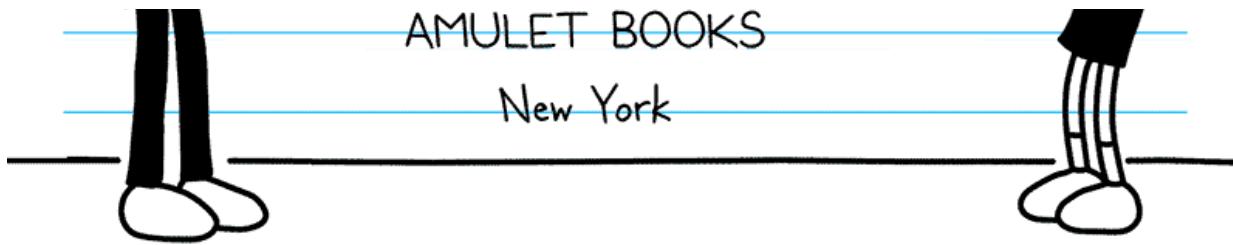
## THE LAST STRAW

by Jeff Kinney



AMULET BOOKS

New York



PUBLISHER'S NOTE: This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

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TO TIM



JANUARY

New Year's Day.

You know how you're supposed to come up with a  
list of "resolutions" at the beginning of the year  
to try to make yourself a better person?

Well, the problem is, it's not easy for me to think  
of ways to improve myself, because I'm already  
pretty much one of the best people I know.

So this year my resolution is to try and help  
OTHER people improve. But the thing I'm  
finding out is that some people don't really  
appreciate it when you're trying to be helpful.

I THINK YOU SHOULD  
WORK ON CHEWING  
YOUR POTATO CHIPS  
MORE QUIETLY.

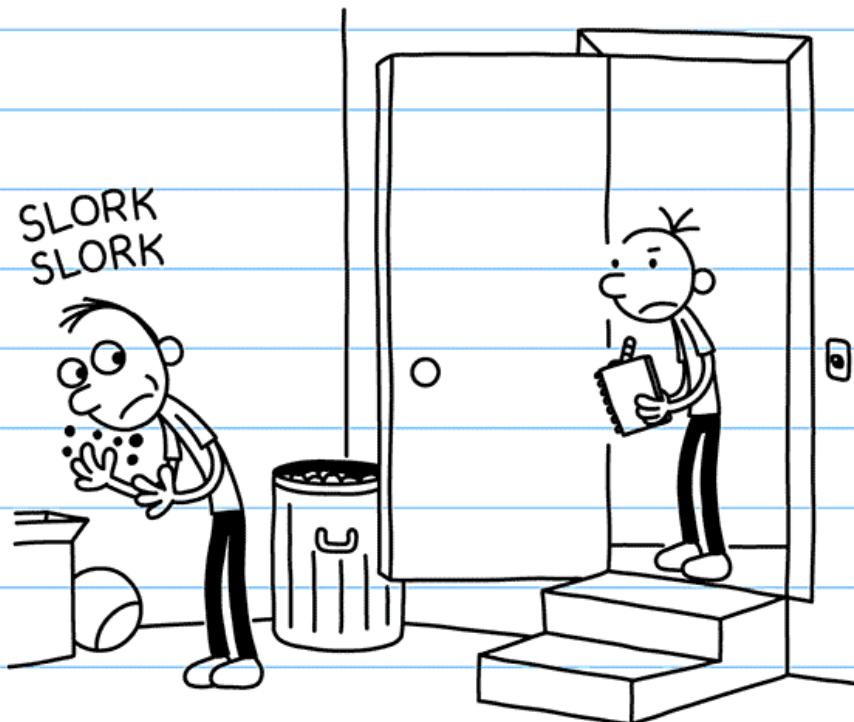




One thing I noticed right off the bat is that  
the people in my family are doing a lousy job  
sticking to THEIR New Year's resolutions.

Mom said she was gonna start going to the  
gym today, but she spent the whole afternoon  
watching TV.

And Dad said he was gonna go on a strict diet,  
but after dinner I caught him out in the  
garage, stuffing his face with brownies.



Even my little brother, Manny, couldn't stick

with his resolution.

This morning he told everyone that he's a "big boy"

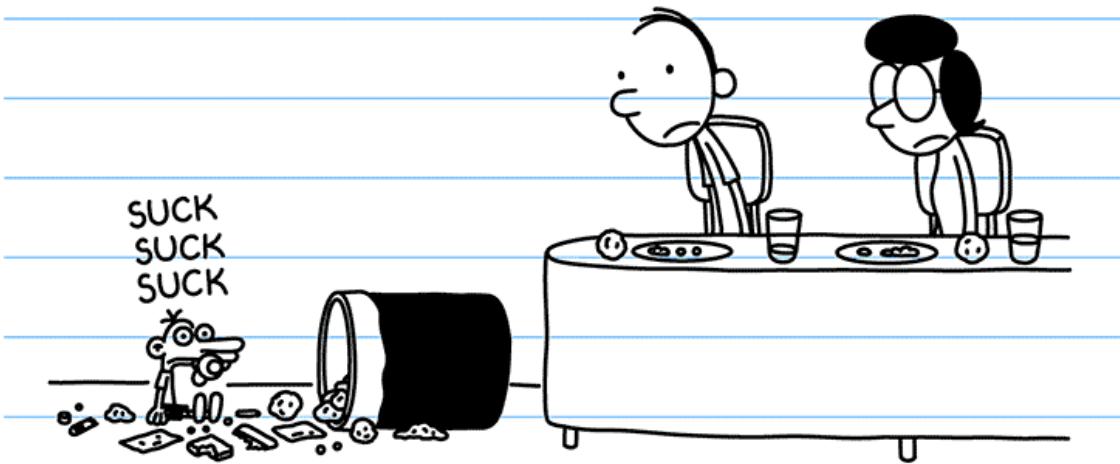
and he's giving up his pacifier for good. Then he

threw his favorite binkie in the trash.



Well, THAT New Year's resolution didn't even

last a full MINUTE.



The only person in my family who didn't come up

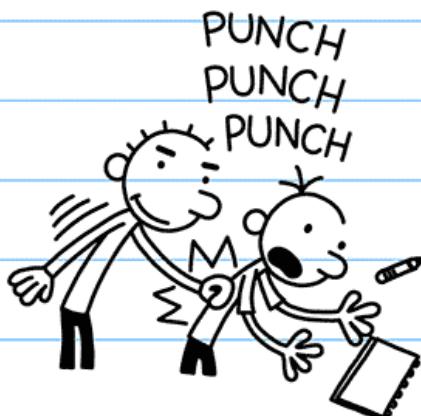
with a resolution is my older brother, Rodrick,

and that's a pity because his list should be about

a mile and a half long.

So I decided to come up with a program to help  
Rodrick be a better person. I called my plan  
"Three Strikes and You're Out." The basic idea  
was that every time I saw Rodrick messing up,  
I'd mark a little "X" on his chart.

Well, Rodrick got all three strikes before I even  
had a chance to decide what "You're Out" meant.



Anyway, I'm starting to wonder if I should just  
bag MY resolution, too. It's a lot of work, and  
so far I haven't really made any progress.

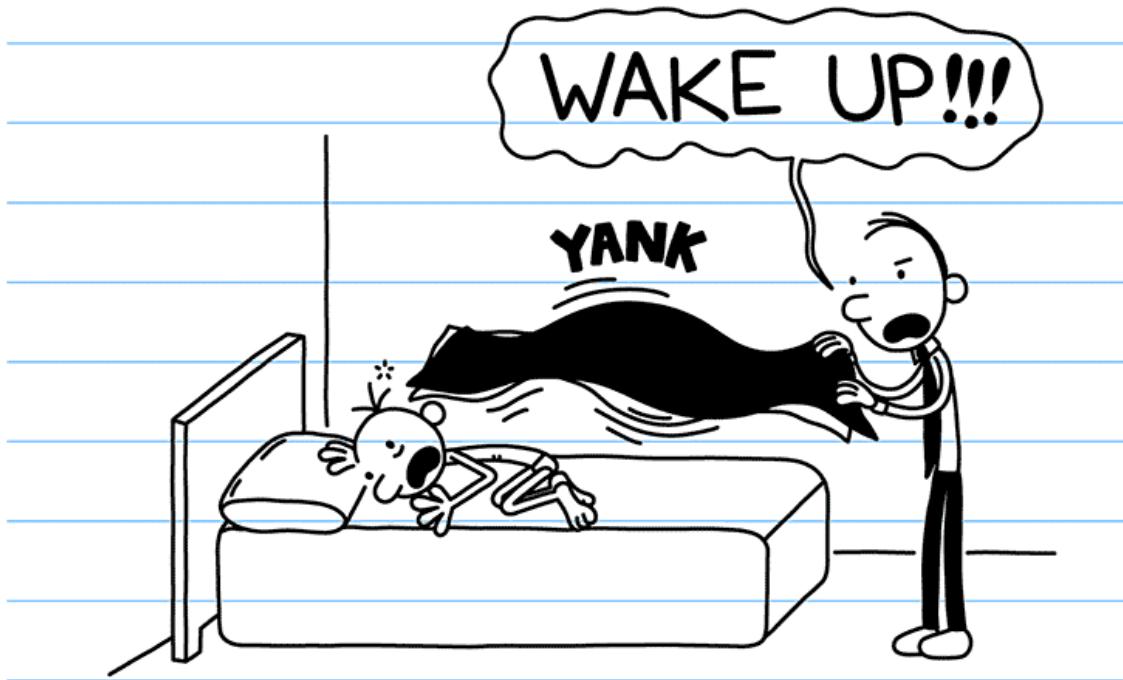
Besides, after I reminded Mom for like the billionth  
time to stop chewing her potato chips so loud, she  
made a really good point. She said, "Everyone

can't be as perfect as YOU, Gregory." And  
from what I've seen so far, I think she's right.

Thursday.

Dad is giving this diet thing another try, and  
that's bad news for me. He's gone about three  
days without eating any chocolate, and he's been  
SUPER cranky.

The other day, after Dad woke me up and told  
me to get ready for school, I accidentally fell  
back asleep. Believe me, that's the last time I'll  
make THAT mistake.



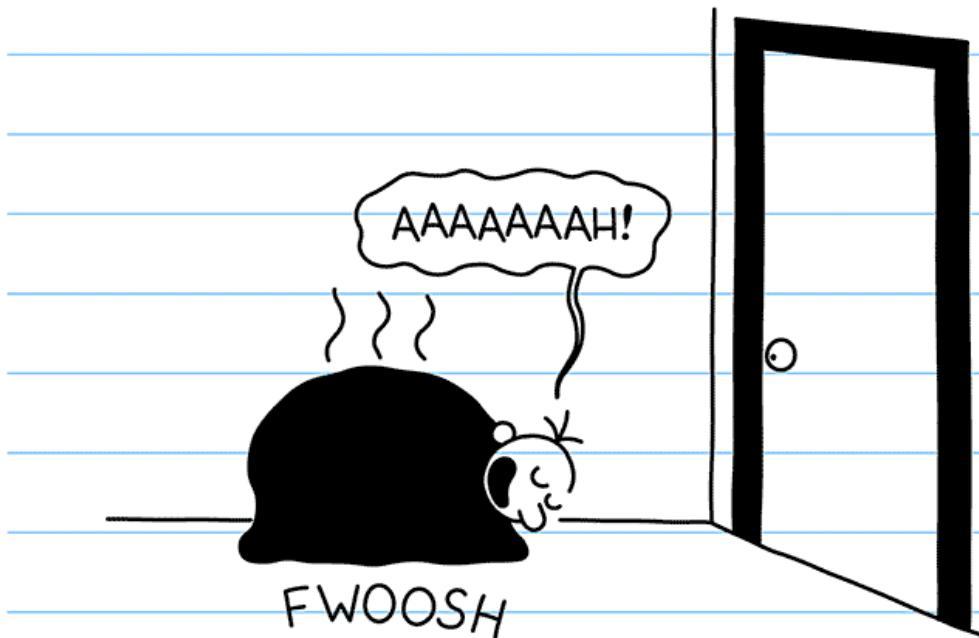
Part of the problem is that Dad always wakes me  
up before Mom's out of the shower, so I know

that I still have like ten more minutes before I

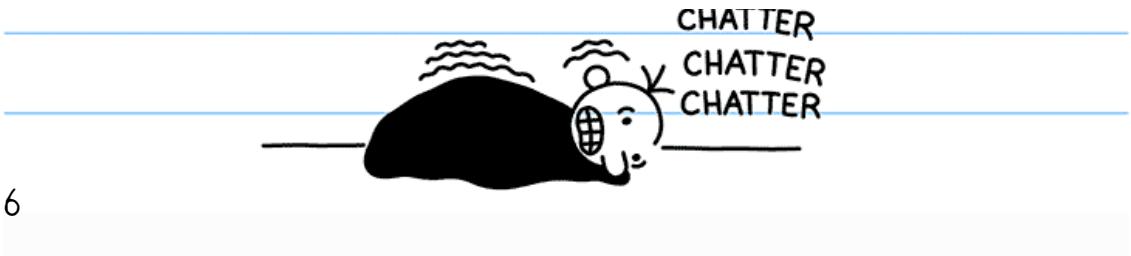
need to get out of bed for real.

Yesterday I came up with a pretty good way to  
get some extra sleep time without making Dad  
mad. After he woke me up, I took all of my  
blankets down the hall with me and waited outside  
the bathroom for my turn in the shower.

Then I lay down right on top of the heater vent.  
And when the furnace was blowing, the experience  
was even BETTER than being in bed.



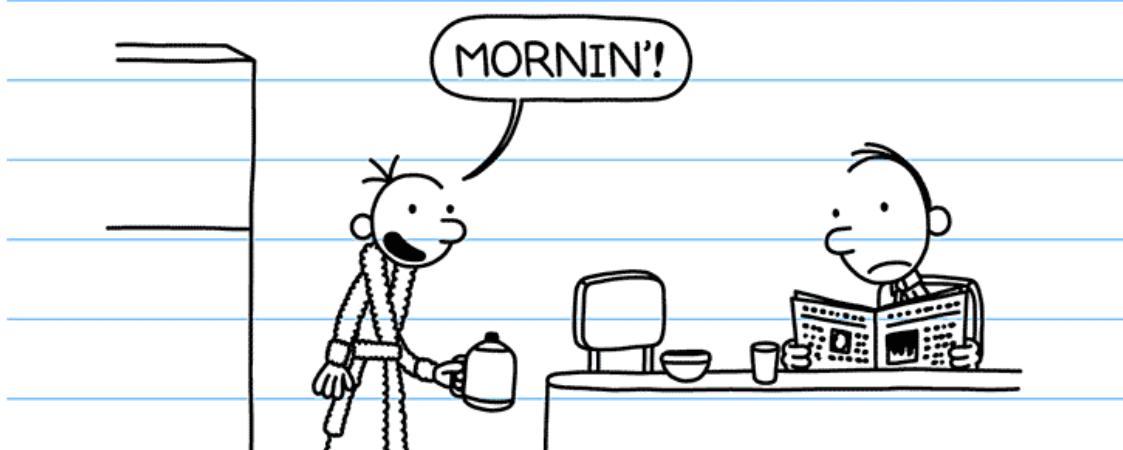
The problem was, the heat only stayed on for  
about five minutes at a time. So when the furnace  
wasn't running, I was just lying there on this  
cold piece of metal.



This morning, while I was waiting for Mom to be done with her shower, I remembered someone gave her a bathrobe for Christmas. So I went into her closet and got it.

Let me just say that was one of the smartest moves I've ever made. Wearing that thing was like being wrapped in a big, fluffy towel that just came out of the dryer.

In fact, I liked it so much, I even wore it AFTER my shower. I think Dad might've been jealous HE didn't come up with the robe idea first, because when I came to the kitchen table, he seemed extra-grumpy.



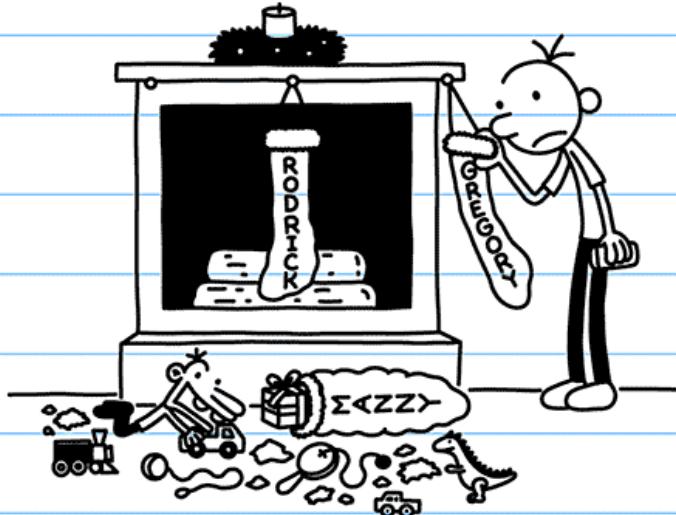


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I tell you, women have the right idea with this  
bathrobe thing. Now I'm wondering what  
ELSE I'm missing out on.

I just wish I had asked for my own bathrobe  
for Christmas, because I'm sure Mom is gonna  
make me give hers back.

I struck out on gifts again this year. I knew I  
was in for a rough day when I came downstairs  
on Christmas morning and the only presents in  
my stocking were a stick of deodorant and a  
"travel dictionary."



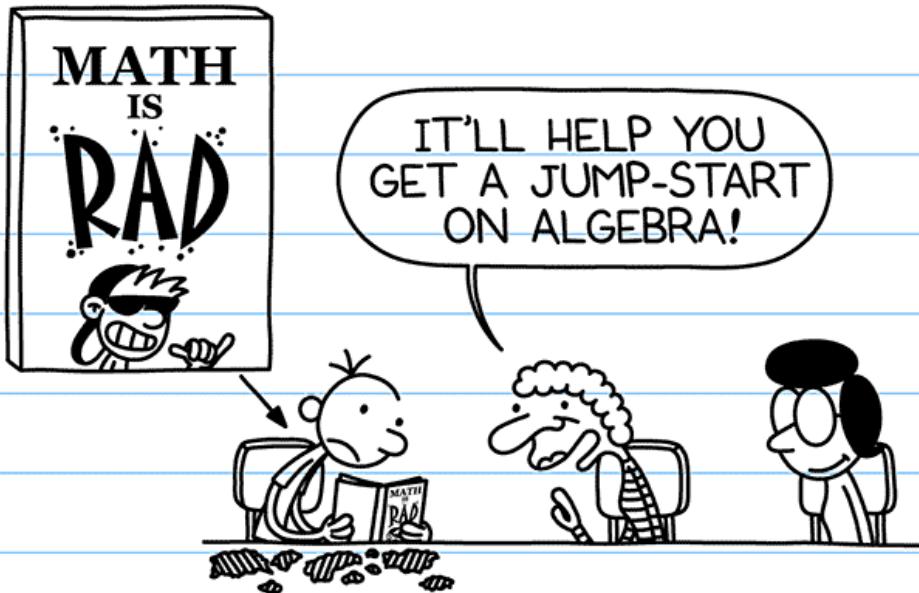
I guess once you're in middle school, grown-ups

decide you're too old for toys or anything that's

actually fun.

But then they still expect you to be all excited

when you open the lame gifts they get you.



Most of my gifts this year were books or clothes.

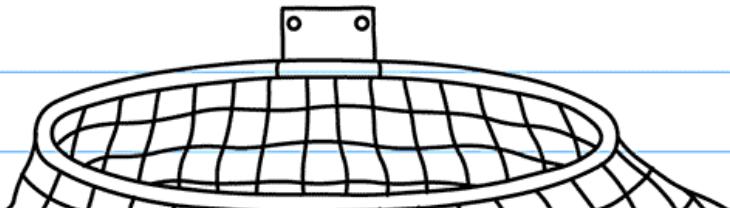
The closest thing I got to a toy was a present

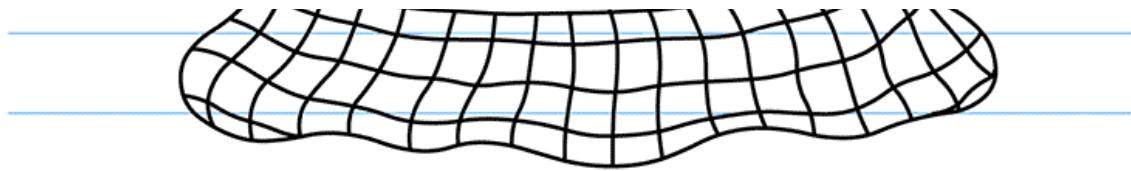
from Uncle Charlie.

When I unwrapped Uncle Charlie's gift, I didn't

even know what it was supposed to be. It was

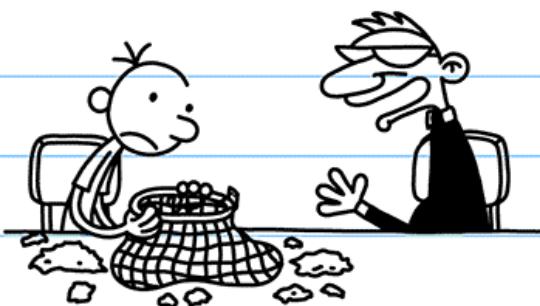
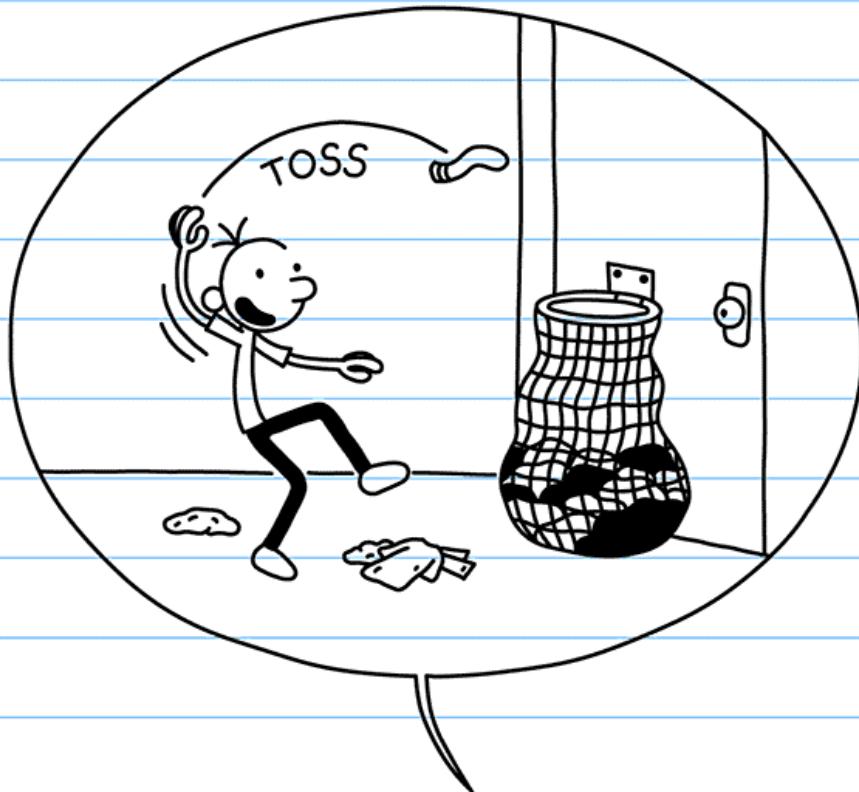
this big plastic ring with a net attached to it.





9

Uncle Charlie explained that it was a "Laundry Hoop" for my bedroom. He said I was supposed to hang the Laundry Hoop on the back of my door and it would make putting away my dirty clothes "fun."



At first I thought it was a joke, but then I realized Uncle Charlie was serious. So I had to

explain to him that I don't actually DO my  
own laundry.

I told him I just throw my dirty clothes on  
the floor, and Mom picks them up and takes  
them downstairs to the laundry room.



Then a few days later, everything comes back  
to me in nice, folded piles.

I told Uncle Charlie he should just return the  
Laundry Hoop and give me cash so I could buy  
something I'd actually USE.

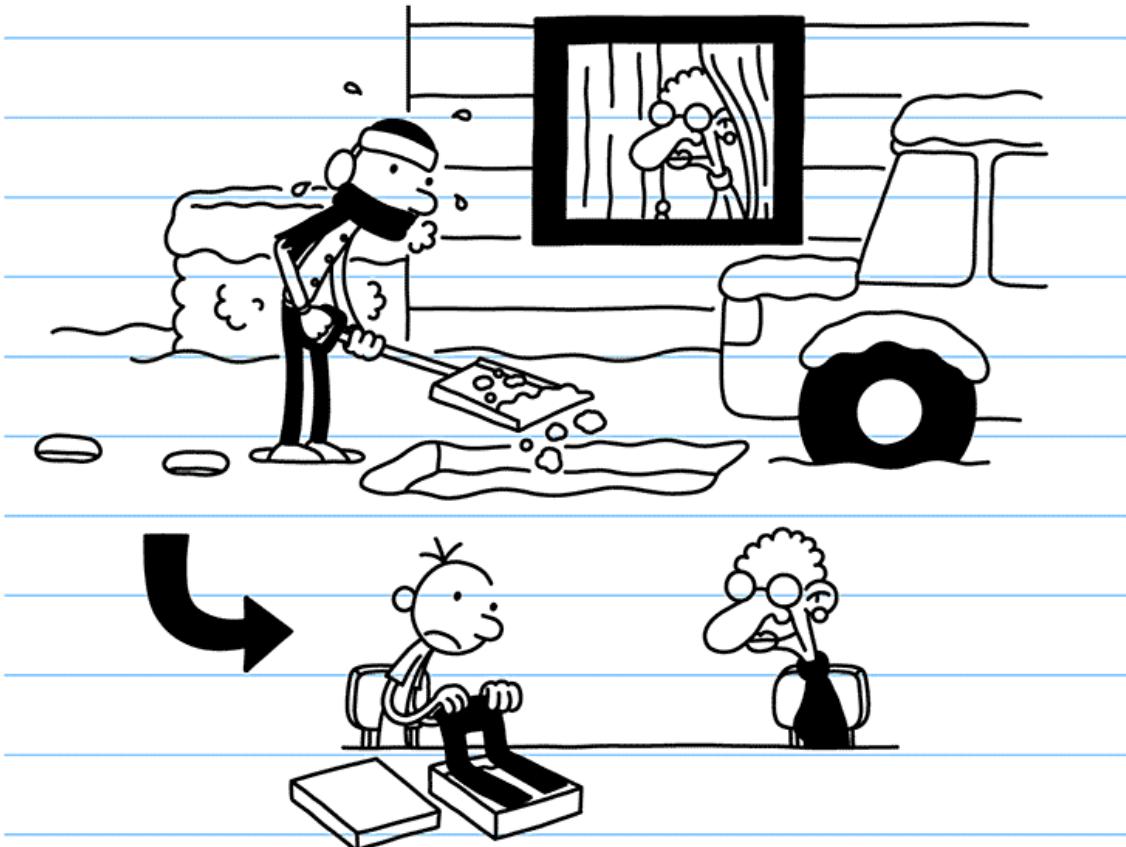
That's when Mom spoke up. She told Uncle

Charlie she thought the Laundry Hoop was a

GREAT idea.

Then she said that from now on I'd be doing my  
OWN laundry. So basically, it ends up that  
Uncle Charlie got me a chore for Christmas.

It really stinks that I got such crummy gifts  
this year. I put in a lot of effort buttering  
people up for the past few months, and I  
thought it would pay off on Christmas.



Now that I'm responsible for my own laundry, I  
guess I'm kind of GLAD I got a bunch of clothes.

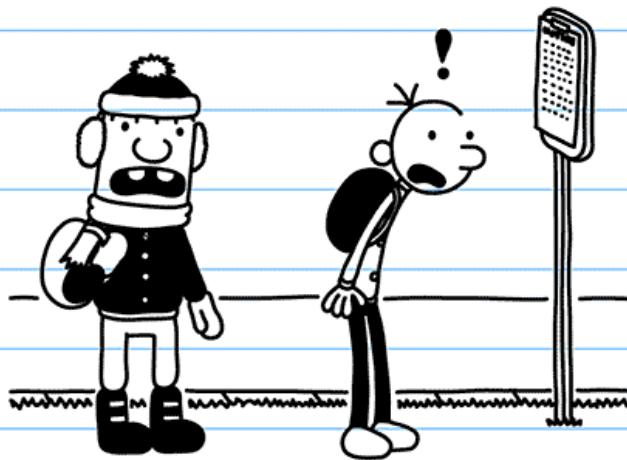
I might actually make it through the whole school

year before I run out of clean stuff to wear.

Monday.

When me and Rowley got to our bus stop today,  
we found a nasty surprise. There was a piece  
of paper taped to our street sign, and it said  
that, effective today, our bus route was "rezzoned."

And what that means is now we have to WALK  
to school.



Well, I'd like to talk to the genius who came up  
with THAT idea, because our street is almost a  
quarter of a mile from the school.

Me and Rowley had to run to make it to school  
on time today. And what REALLY stunk was  
when our regular bus passed us by and it was full

of kids from Whirley Street, the neighborhood

right next to ours.

The Whirley Street kids made monkey noises when  
they passed us, which was really annoying because  
that's exactly what WE used to do when we  
passed THEM.

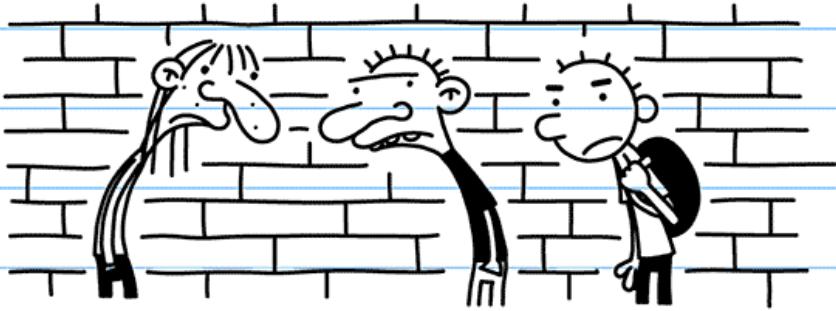


I'll tell you one reason it's a bad idea to make  
kids walk to school. These days, teachers give you  
so much homework that, with all the books and  
papers you have to carry home, your backpack  
ends up weighing like a hundred pounds.

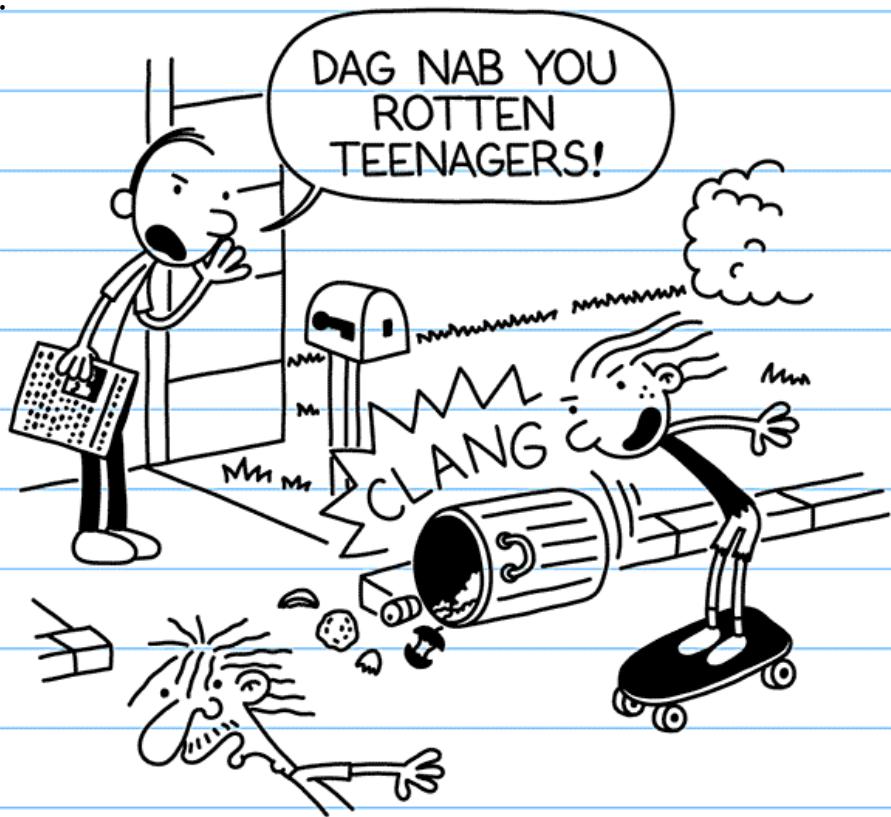
And if you want to see what kind of an effect

that has on kids over time, all you have to do is

look at Rodrick and some of his friends.



Speaking of teenagers, Dad scored a pretty big victory today. The baddest teenager in our neighborhood is this kid named Lenwood Heath, and he's kind of like Dad's archenemy. Dad has probably called the cops on Lenwood Heath about fifty times.

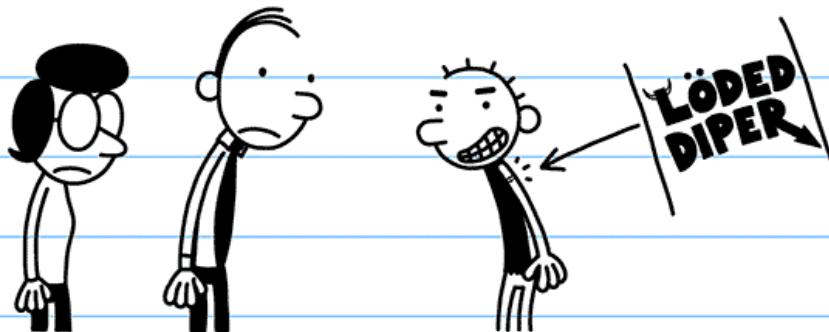


I guess Lenwood's parents got sick of his act,

because they sent him off to military academy.

You'd think that would've made Dad pretty  
happy, but I don't think he'll be satisfied until  
every teenager on the planet gets sent off to  
juvenile hall or Alcatraz or something. And that  
includes Rodrick.

Yesterday Mom and Dad gave Rodrick some money  
to buy books so he could study for the SATs, but  
Rodrick spent the money on a tattoo instead.

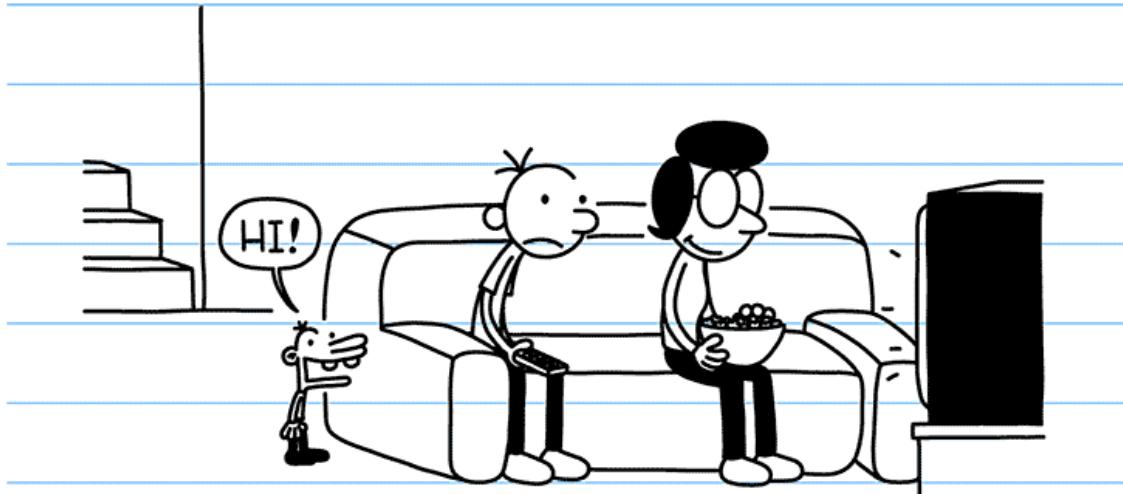


I've still got a little time before I turn into a  
teenager. But the minute I do, I guarantee you  
Dad will be looking for the first chance to ship  
me out.

Monday.

For the past week or so, Manny has been getting

out of bed every night and coming downstairs.



Instead of putting him right back to bed, Mom  
lets Manny sit with us and watch TV.

It's really not fair, because when Manny is with  
us, I'm not allowed to watch any of the shows  
I like.

All I can say is, when I was a kid there wasn't  
any of this "getting out of bed" stuff. I did it  
once or twice, but Dad put a stop to it real quick.

There was this book Dad used to read to me every  
night called "The Giving Tree." It was a really

good book, but the back of it had a picture of

the author, this guy named Shel Silverstein.

But Shel Silverstein looks more like a burglar or a  
pirate than a guy who should be writing books  
for kids.



Dad must have known that picture kind of freaked  
me out, because one night after I got out of bed,

Dad said —





18

That really did the trick. Ever since then, I  
STILL don't get out of bed at night, even if I  
really need to use the bathroom.

I don't think Mom and Dad read Manny any  
Shel Silverstein books, which probably explains why  
he keeps getting up after they put him to bed.

I've heard some of the stories Mom and Dad read  
to Manny, and let me just say that the people  
who write these books really have a racket going.

First of all, there are hardly any words in them,  
so I'm sure it only takes about five seconds to  
write one.

SILLY BEAR YAWNING,  
SILLY BEAR SAD.

SILLY BEAR SLEEPING,  
SILLY BEAR GLAD!

THE END.





I told Mom what I thought of Manny's books,  
and she said that if they were so easy to write,  
then I should try writing one myself.

So that's exactly what I did. Trust me, it wasn't  
hard, either. All you have to do is make up a  
character with a snappy name, and then make  
sure the character learns a lesson at the end of  
the book.

Now all I need to do is mail this thing off to  
a publisher and wait for the money to start  
rolling in.

# Wise Up, Mr. Shropsharp!





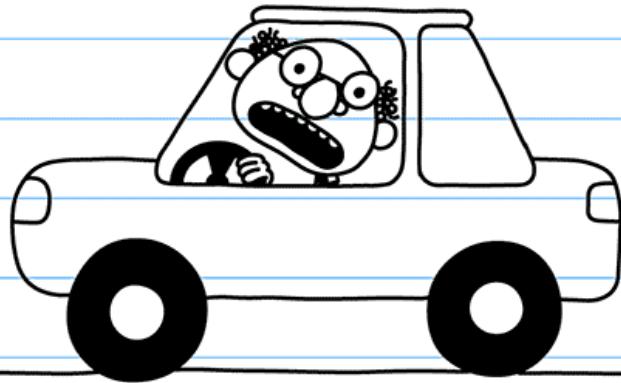
by Greg Heffley

Once upon a time there was this man named Mr. Shropsharp who thought all these crazy thoughts.

I DON'T KNOW MUCH, BUT I DO KNOW ONE THING: POLAR BEARS ARE SOME USELESS ANIMALS.

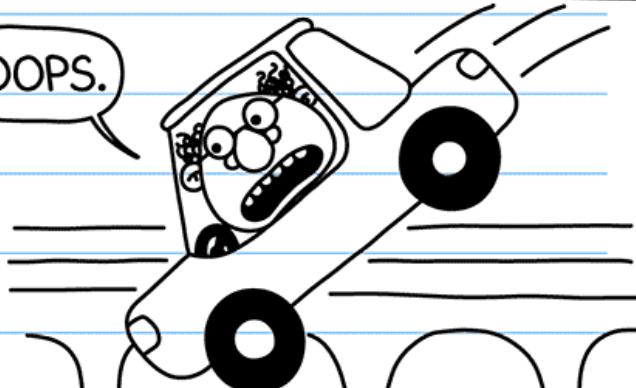
One day Mr. Shropsharp took a ride in his car.

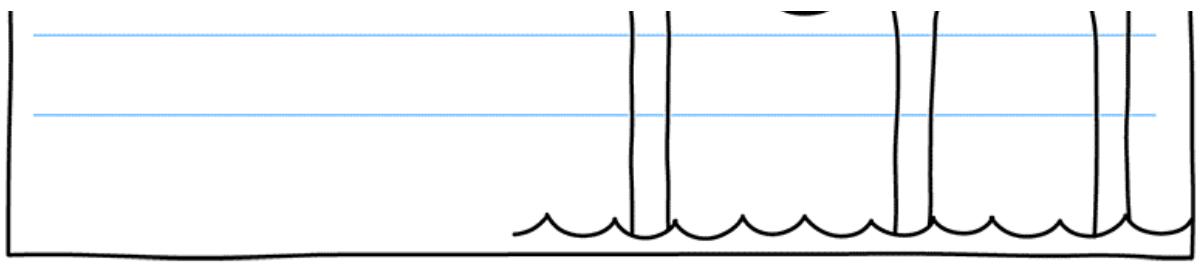
HERE I GO...



But then...

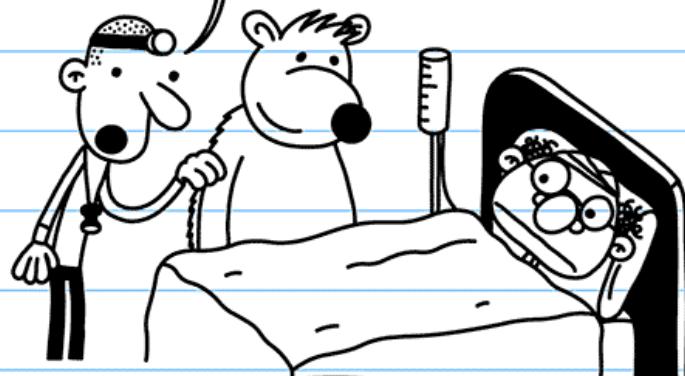
OOPS.





And  
then...

MR. SHROPSHARP, YOU WOULD  
HAVE DROWNED, BUT LUCKILY  
TOBUK HERE WAS SITTING ON  
AN ICEBERG, AND HE SAVED  
YOUR LIFE.



And  
so...

BEFORE, I SAID THAT POLAR  
BEARS ARE SOME USELESS  
ANIMALS, BUT NOW I CAN SEE  
THAT NOT EVERY POLAR BEAR  
IS SO USELESS AFTER ALL.



THE END

See what I mean? The only thing I noticed

after I finished the book was that I forgot to

make it rhyme. But the publisher is gonna have

to pay me extra if they want THAT.

Saturday

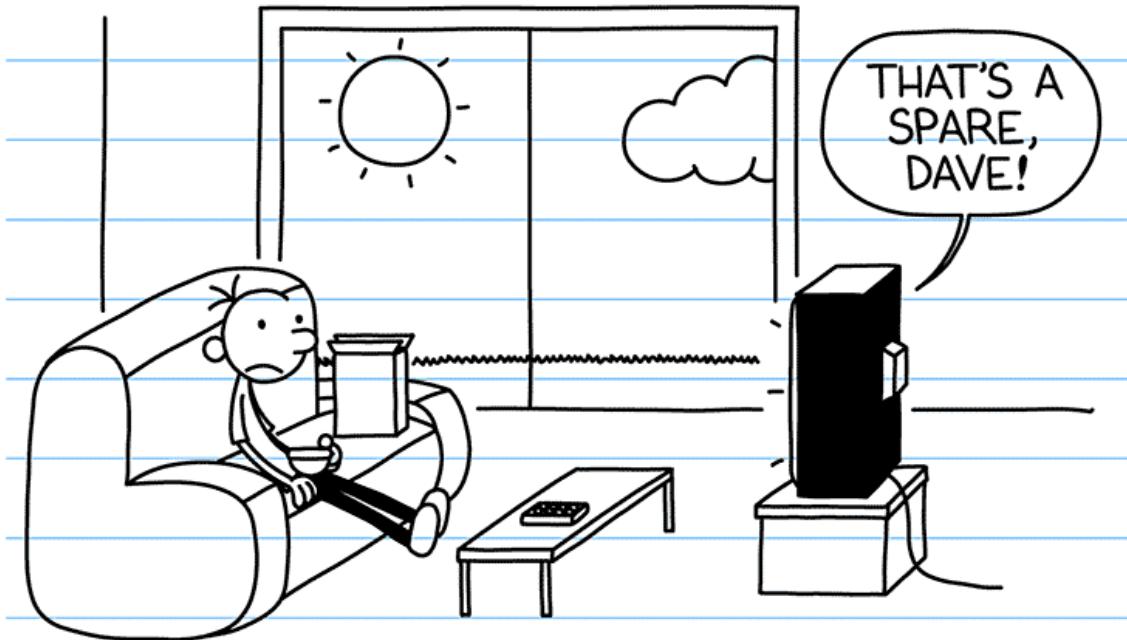
Well, after spending the last two weeks walking to school, I was really looking forward to kicking back and doing nothing for two days.

The problem with watching TV on a Saturday is

that the only thing that's on is bowling or golf.

Plus, the sun comes through our sliding glass window,

and you can barely see the TV screen anyway.



Today I wanted to change the channel, but

the remote was on top of the coffee table. I

was all comfortable, with my bowl of cereal in my

lap, so I really didn't want to get up.

I tried using the Force to make the remote levitate to me, even though I've tried it a million times before and it's never worked once. Today I tried for about fifteen minutes and concentrated REALLY hard, but no luck. I just wish I'd known that Dad was standing right behind me the whole time.

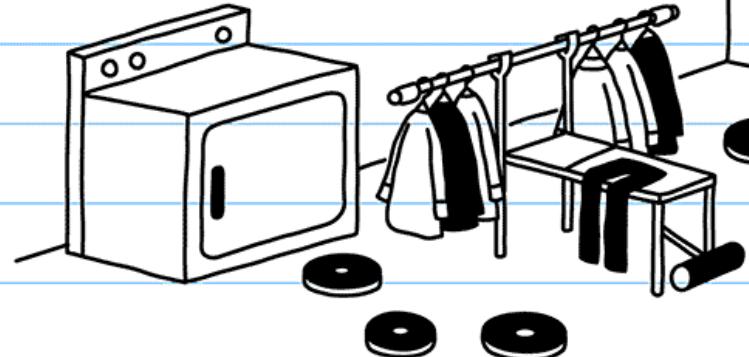


Dad told me I was gonna have to go outside and get some exercise. I told Dad I exercise all the TIME and just this morning I used the bench press he got me.

But I should have come up with something more

believable, because it was pretty obvious that

wasn't true.



See, the reason Dad is on my case about exercise

and all that is because he's got this boss named

Mr. Warren, and Mr. Warren has three boys

who are these crazy sports fanatics. Dad sees

the Warren kids outside in their front lawn every

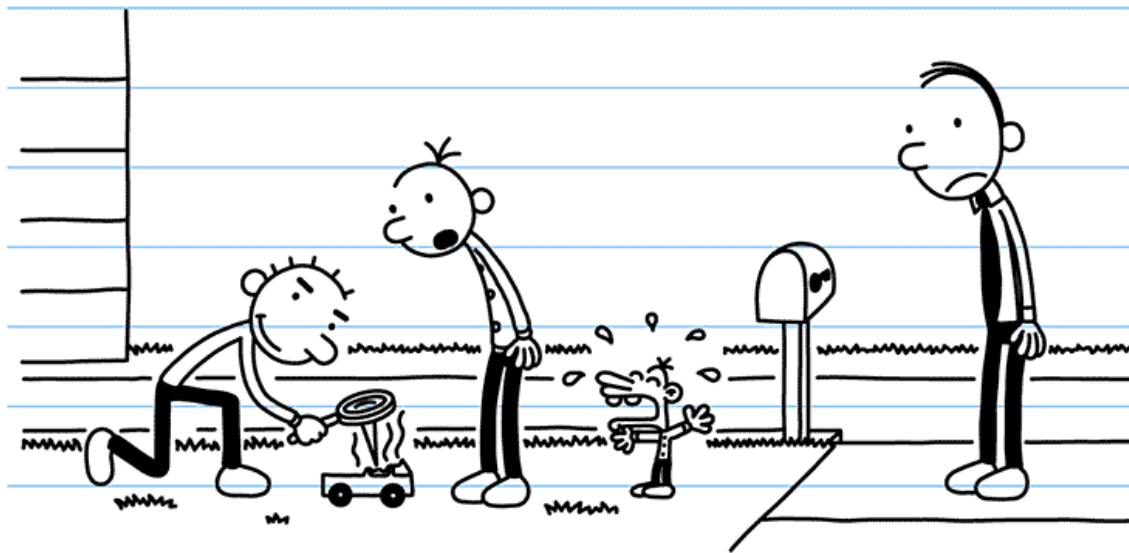
day on his way home from work when his carpool

goes by their house.





So I think Dad is pretty disappointed every time  
he gets home and sees what HIS sons are up to.

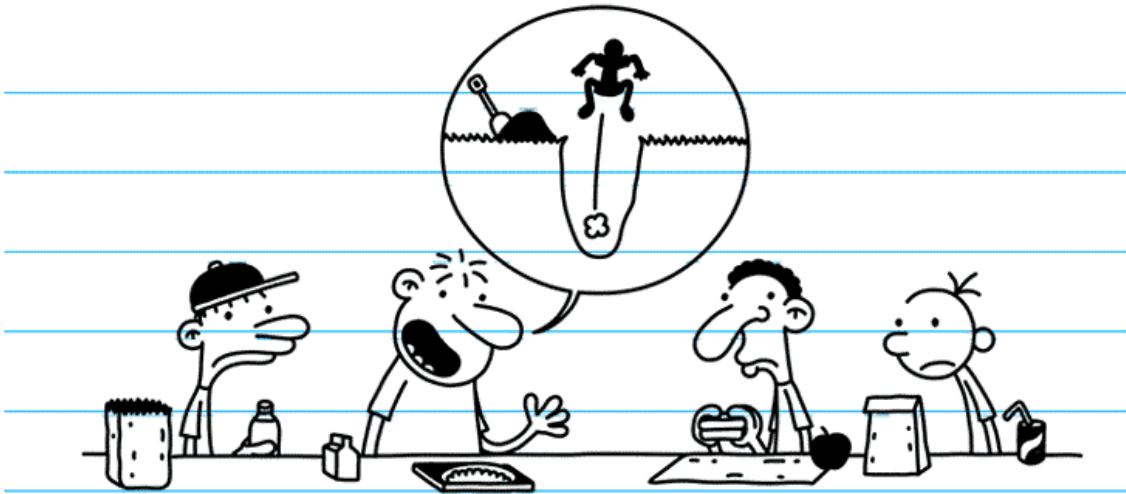


Anyway, like I said, Dad kicked me out of the  
house today. I couldn't really think of anything  
I wanted to do, but then I had a good idea.

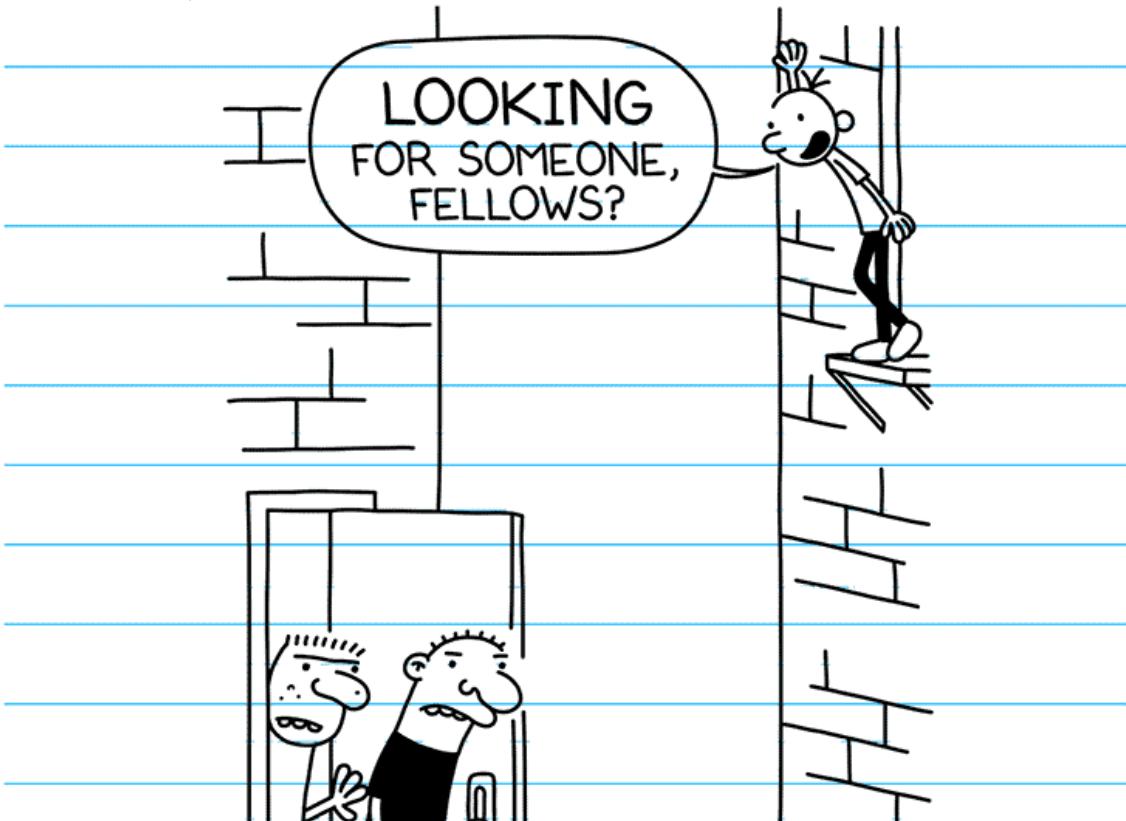
Yesterday at lunch, Albert Sandy was telling  
everyone about this guy in China or Thailand or  
someplace who could jump six feet straight up in  
the air, no joke. The way the guy did it was by  
digging a hole that was three inches deep and then  
jumping in and out of it a hundred times. The next  
day, the guy doubled the size of the hole, and he

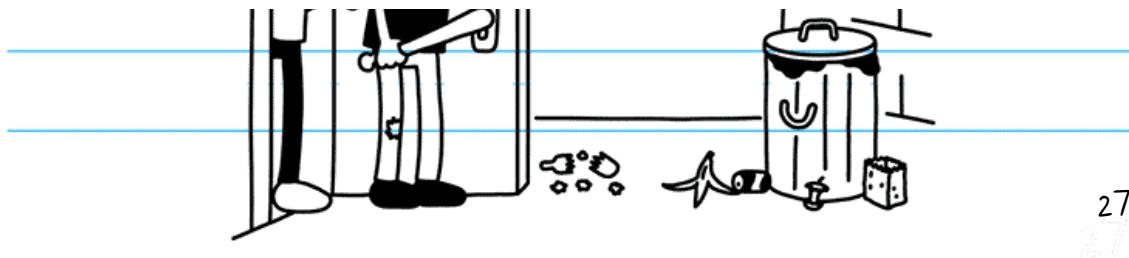
jumped in and out of THAT. By the fifth day, he

was practically like a kangaroo.



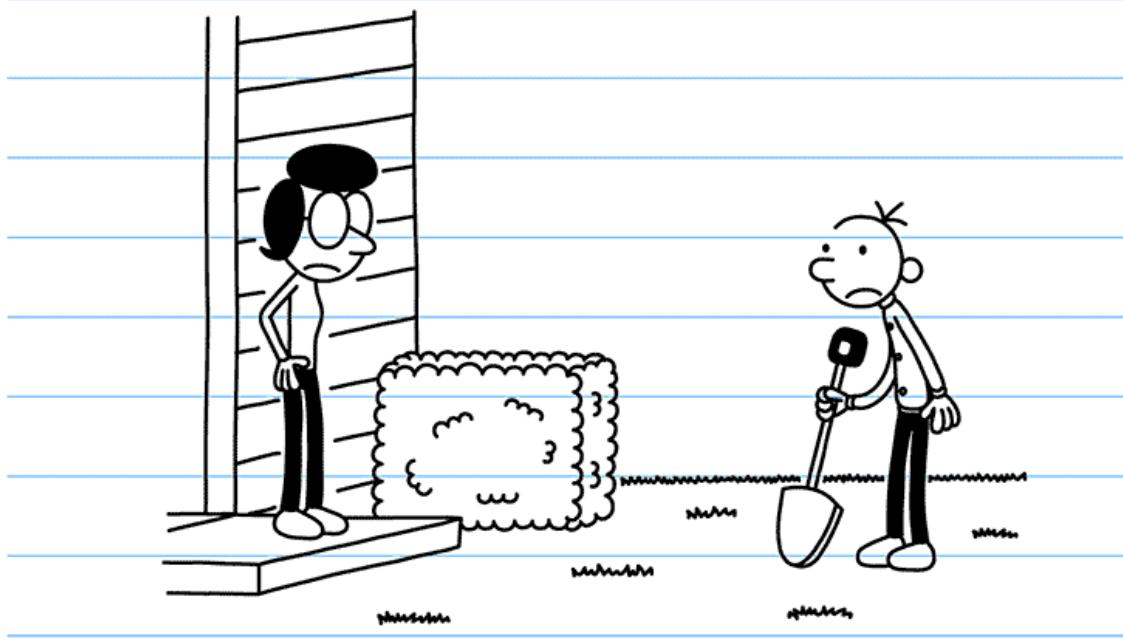
Some of the guys at my table told Albert he was  
full of baloney, but what he was saying made a lot  
of sense to ME. Plus, I figured if I did what  
Albert said and then ADDED a few days to the  
program, all my problems with bullies could be over.





27

I got a shovel out of the garage and found a  
place in the front yard that looked like a good  
spot to dig. But before I could even get started,  
Mom came outside and asked me what I was up to.



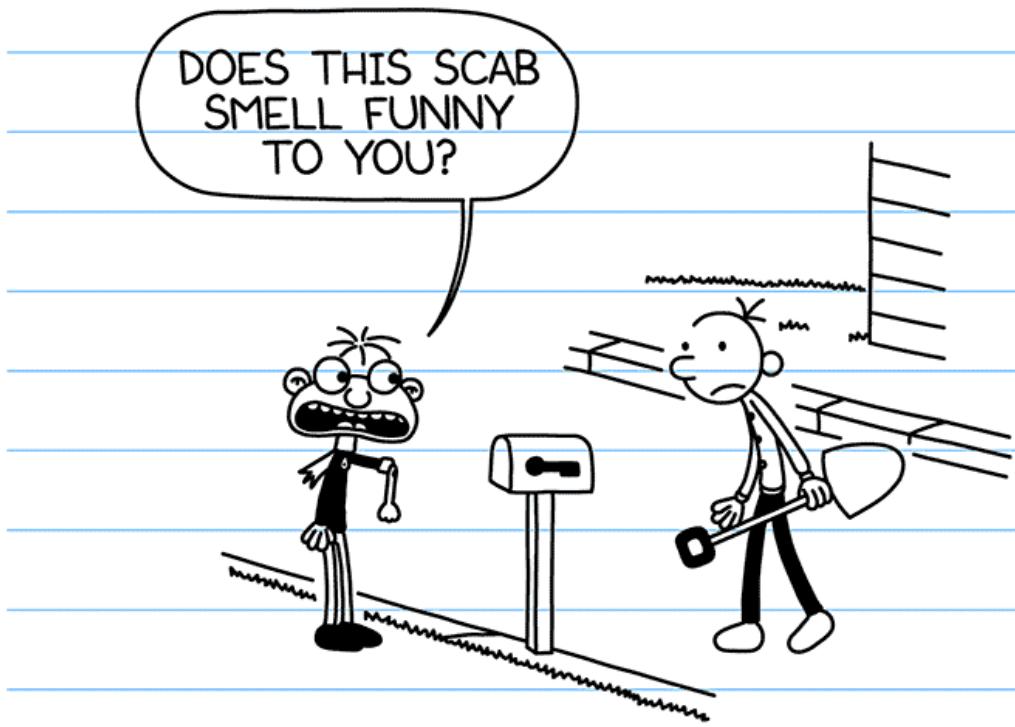
I told Mom I was just digging a hole, but of  
course she didn't like THAT idea. So she came up  
with about twenty reasons why I wasn't allowed  
to do it.

Mom told me it was "dangerous" to dig in the  
yard because of underground electrical lines and  
sewage pipes and stuff. Then she made me promise

up and down that I wouldn't dig any holes in  
our yard. So I promised.

Mom went inside, but then she kept watching me  
out the window. I knew I was gonna have to  
take my shovel and go dig a hole somewhere else,  
so I headed up to Rowley's house.

I haven't been going up to Rowley's much lately,  
mostly because of Fregley. Fregley has been  
spending a lot of time in his front yard, and  
sure enough, that's where he was today.

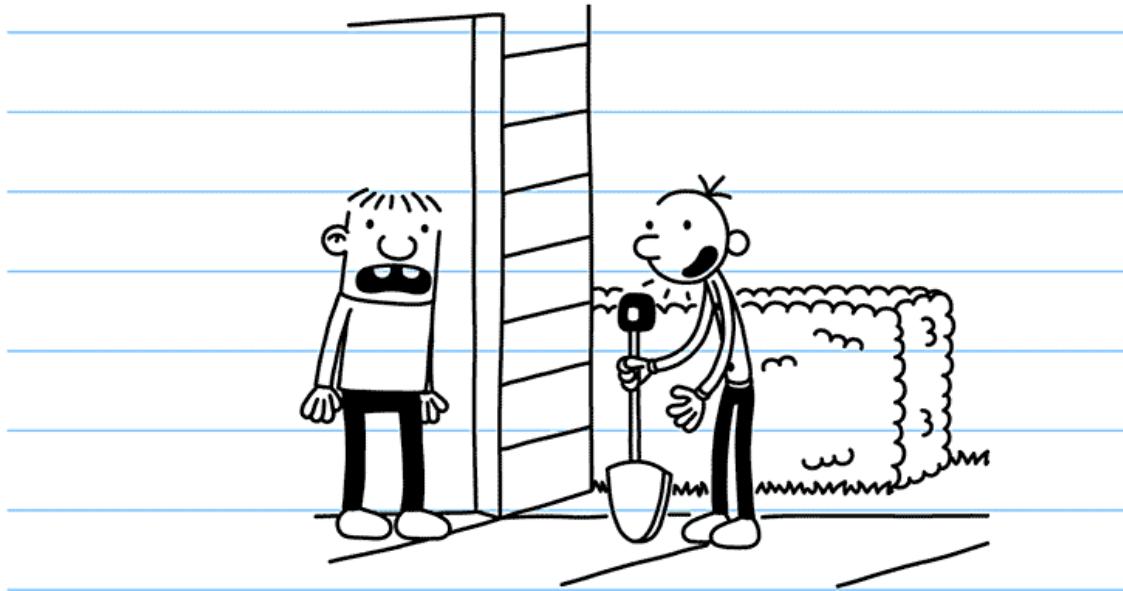


My new strategy with Fregley is to just avoid eye

contact and keep walking, and it seemed to do

the trick today.

When I got to Rowley's, I told him my idea,  
and how the two of us would practically be ninjas  
if we stuck with this hole-jumping program I  
planned out.

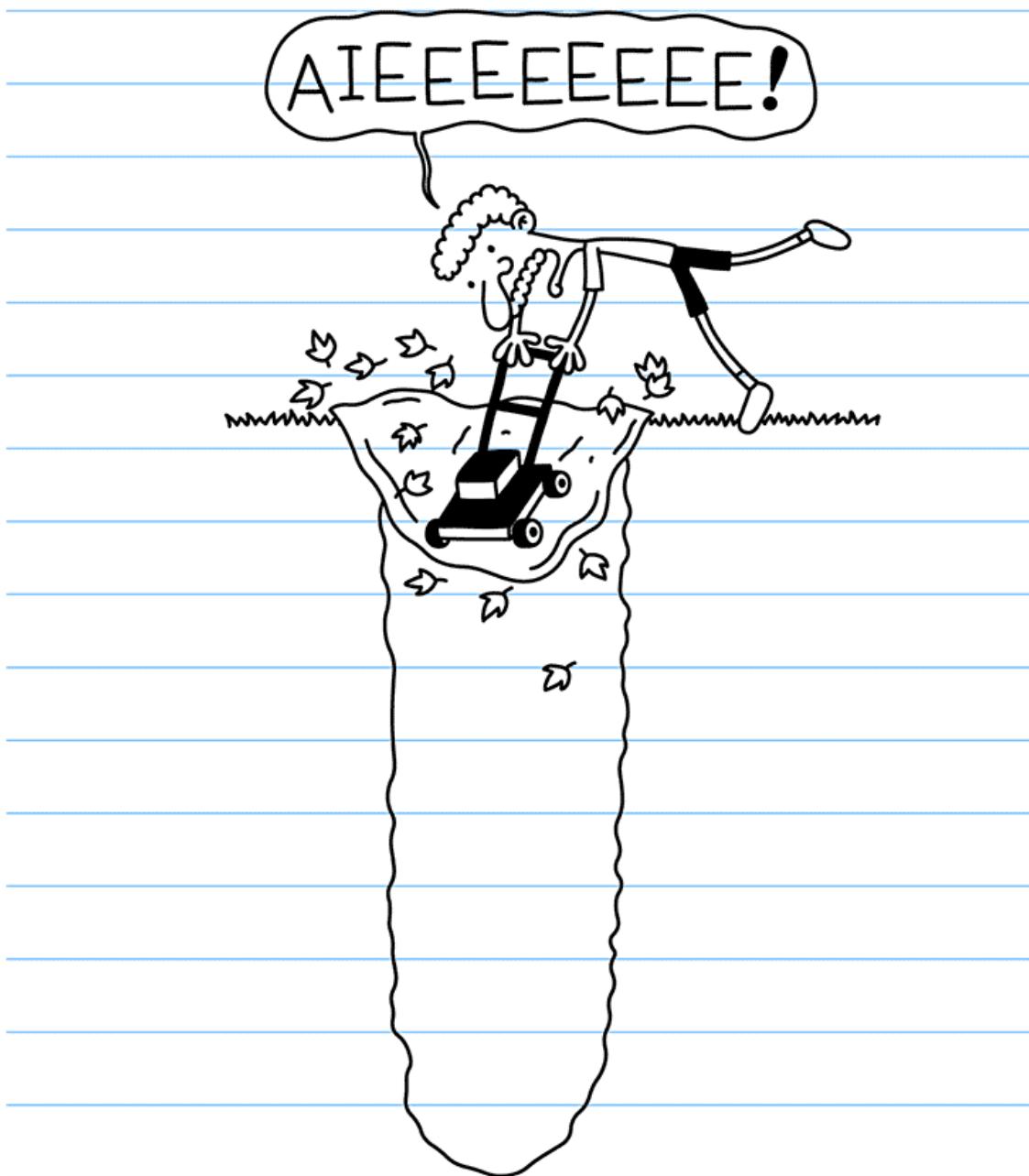


But Rowley didn't seem so hot on the idea. He said  
his parents might get mad if we dug a ten-foot  
hole in his front yard without asking them, so he  
was gonna have to get their permission first.

Now, if there's one thing I know about Rowley's  
parents, it's that they NEVER like my ideas. I  
told Rowley we could just cover the hole up  
with a tarp or a blanket or something and put

some leaves on top of it, and his folks would  
never even find out. That seemed to convince him.

OK, so I admit that Rowley's parents might  
EVENTUALLY find out. But that wouldn't be  
for at least three or four months.



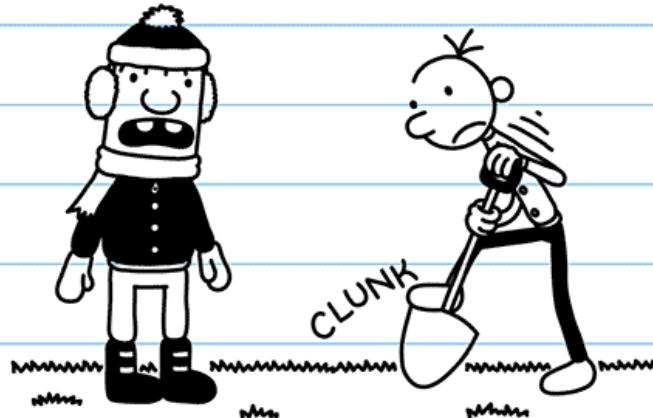
Me and Rowley found a good spot in the front

yard to start digging, but we ran into a problem

right away.

The ground was pretty much frozen SOLID,

and we could hardly even make a dent.



I spent a few minutes trying before I handed

the shovel over to Rowley. He couldn't really

make any progress, either, but I gave him an

extra-long turn so he could feel like he was

contributing to the project.



Rowley got a little bit further than I did, but

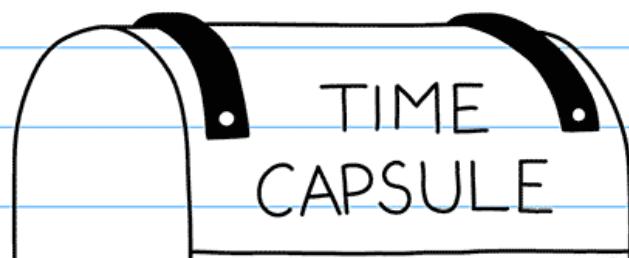
when it started to get dark out, he gave up.

I guess we'll have to take another crack at this  
thing tomorrow.

Sunday.

Well, I thought about it a lot overnight, and  
I realized that at the rate me and Rowley are  
going, we're gonna to be in college before this  
hole is ten feet deep.

So I came up with a totally DIFFERENT idea  
for what we could do. I remembered this thing I  
saw on TV where scientists made a "time capsule"  
and filled it with a bunch of stuff like newspapers  
and DVDs and things like that. Then the scientists  
buried their time capsule in the ground. The idea was  
that in a few hundred years someone will come along  
and dig it up, and they can learn how people from  
our time used to live.





I told Rowley about my idea, and he seemed pretty enthusiastic about it. Mostly, I think he was just glad we weren't gonna spend the next few years digging a hole.

I asked Rowley to donate some items to put in the time capsule, and that's when he got cold feet.

I told Rowley that if he put some of his Christmas presents in the time capsule, people in the future would get some really cool stuff when they opened the box. Rowley told me it wasn't fair, because I wasn't putting any of MY Christmas presents in the time capsule. So I had to explain to him that the people in the future would think we were really lame if they opened the box and it was filled with clothes and books.



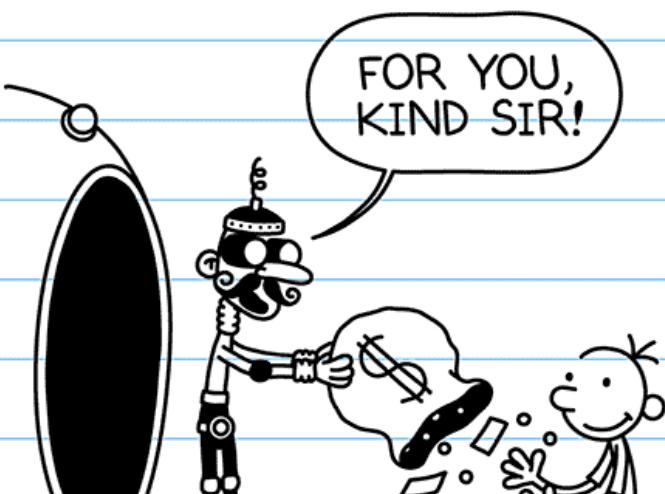


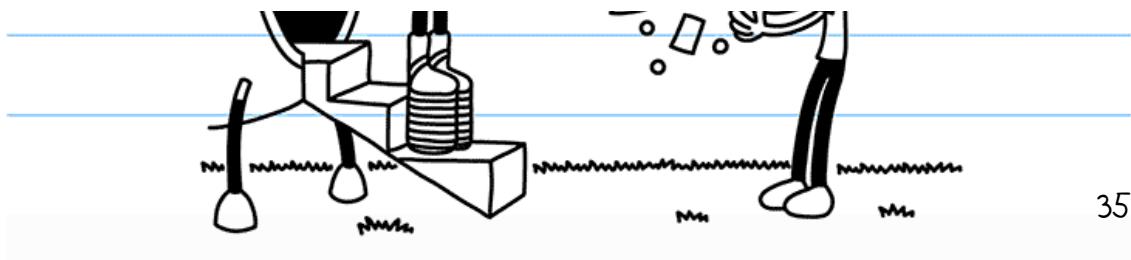
34

Then I told Rowley I'd throw in three dollars of  
my OWN money to prove I was making sacrifices,  
too. That seemed to be enough to convince him  
to fork over one of his new video games and a  
couple of other things.

I actually had a secret plan that I wasn't  
letting Rowley in on. I knew that putting the  
cash in the time capsule was a smart move, because  
that money is gonna be worth a LOT more than  
\$3.00 in the future.

So hopefully whoever finds the time capsule will  
travel back in time and reward me for making  
them rich.





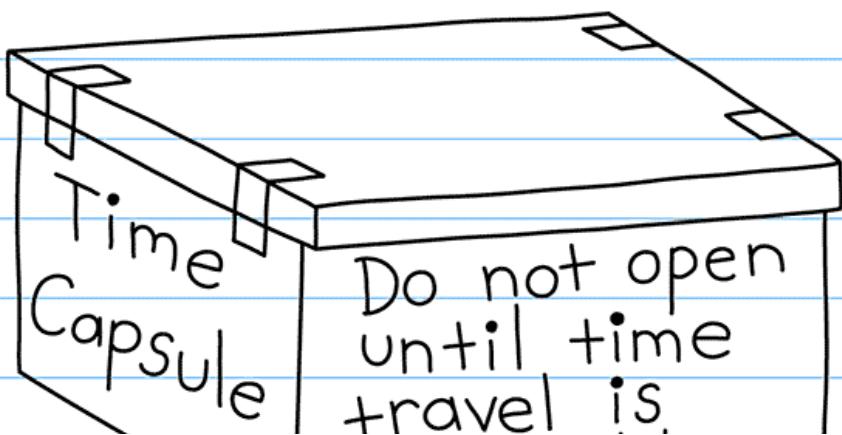
35

I wrote a little note and put it in the box just  
to make sure the person who finds it knows  
exactly who to thank.

To whom it may concern:  
The cash is from  
Greg Heffley  
12 Surrey Street

Me and Rowley found a shoe box and put all of  
our stuff in it. Then we sealed it up with some  
masking tape.

I wrote a little note on the outside of the box  
to make sure it didn't get opened too soon.



possible.

After that, we put it in the hole we dug yesterday  
and buried it as best we could.

I kind of wish Rowley had put some more effort  
into digging the hole, because our time capsule wasn't  
really buried all the way. Hopefully nobody will mess  
with it, because it needs to stay there for at  
least a few hundred years.



Monday.

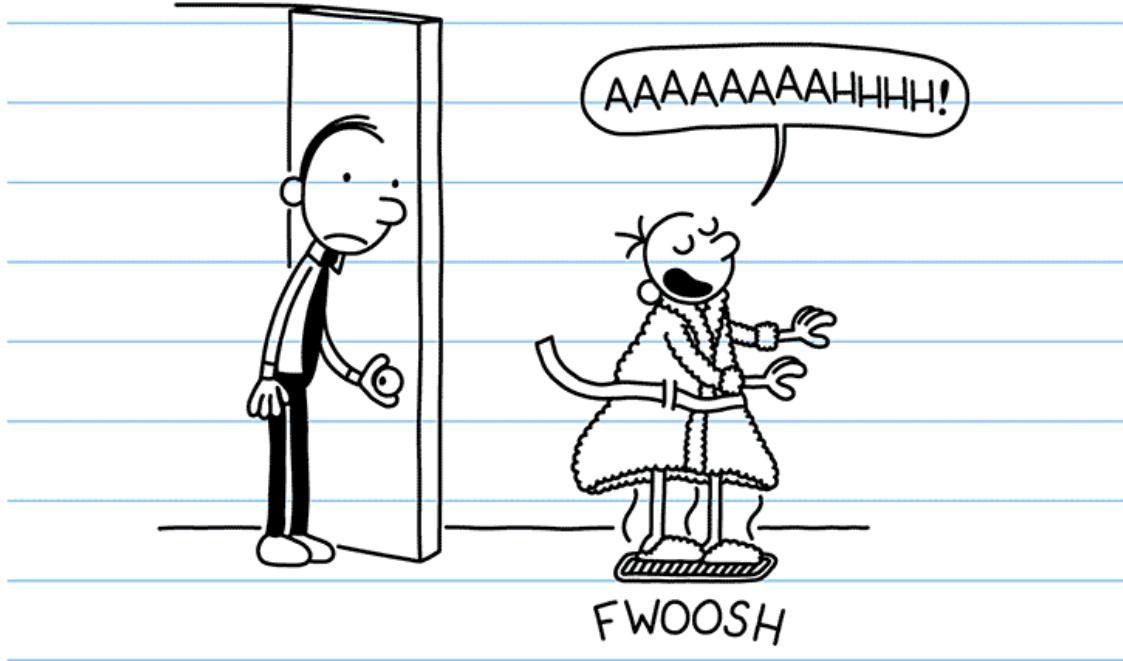
Well, my week got off to a rough start. When  
I got out of bed, Mom's bathrobe wasn't where  
it usually is, hanging on my doorknob.

I asked Mom if she took the robe back, but she

said she didn't. So I have a feeling Dad had

something to do with it.

A couple of days ago, I figured out a way to  
combine the bathrobe experience and the heating  
vent experience, and I don't think Dad really  
approved of my idea.



I figure he either hid the robe or got rid of it.  
Now that I think of it, Dad made a run to the  
Goodwill bin last night after dinner, so that's  
probably not a good sign.

Anyway, if Dad DID get rid of the robe, it  
wouldn't be the first time he's thrown out someone's

personal property. You know how Manny has been

trying to quit using his pacifier?

Yesterday morning Dad got rid of every single  
one of Manny's binkies.

Well, Manny totally freaked out. The only way  
Mom could get him to calm down was to dig out  
his old blanket, this thing he calls "Tingy."

Tingy started off as a blue blanket that Mom  
knitted for Manny's first birthday, and it was  
love at first sight.



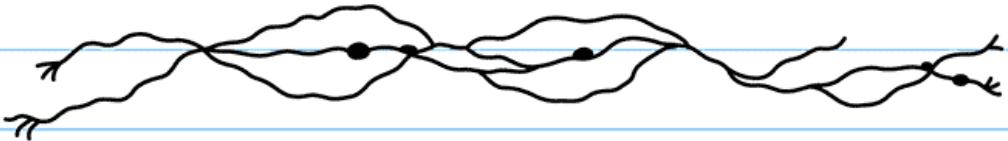
Manny carried that thing around with him  
everywhere he went. He wouldn't even let Mom  
take it away from him so she could WASH it.

It started falling apart, and by the time Manny

was two, his blanket was basically a couple of pieces

of yarn held together by raisins and boogers.

I think that's when Manny started calling his  
blanket "Tingy."



For the past couple of days, Manny's been  
dragging Tingy around the house just like he  
did when he was a baby, and I've been trying  
to stay out of his way as much as possible.



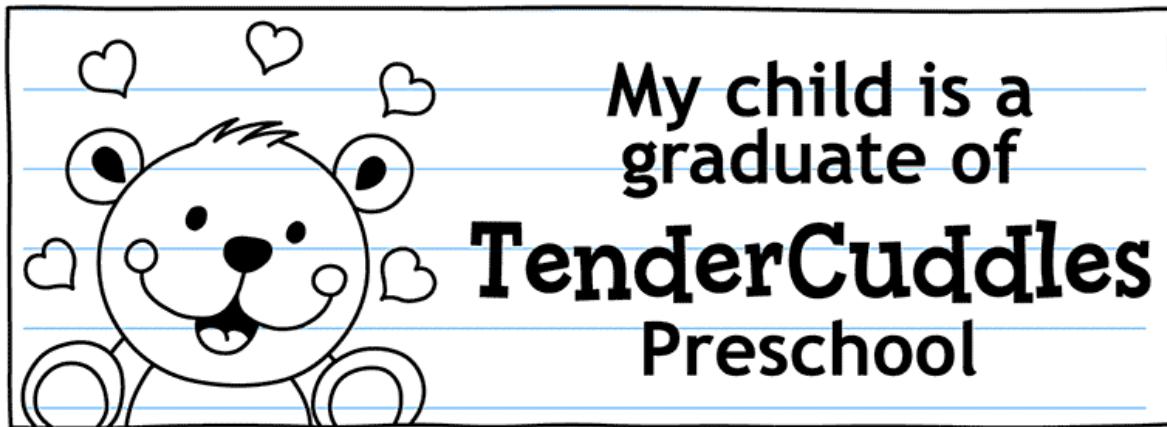
Wednesday

I'm getting really tired of walking to school every  
day, so this morning I asked Mom if she would  
drive me and Rowley. The reason I didn't ask her  
sooner is because Mom's car is covered in all these

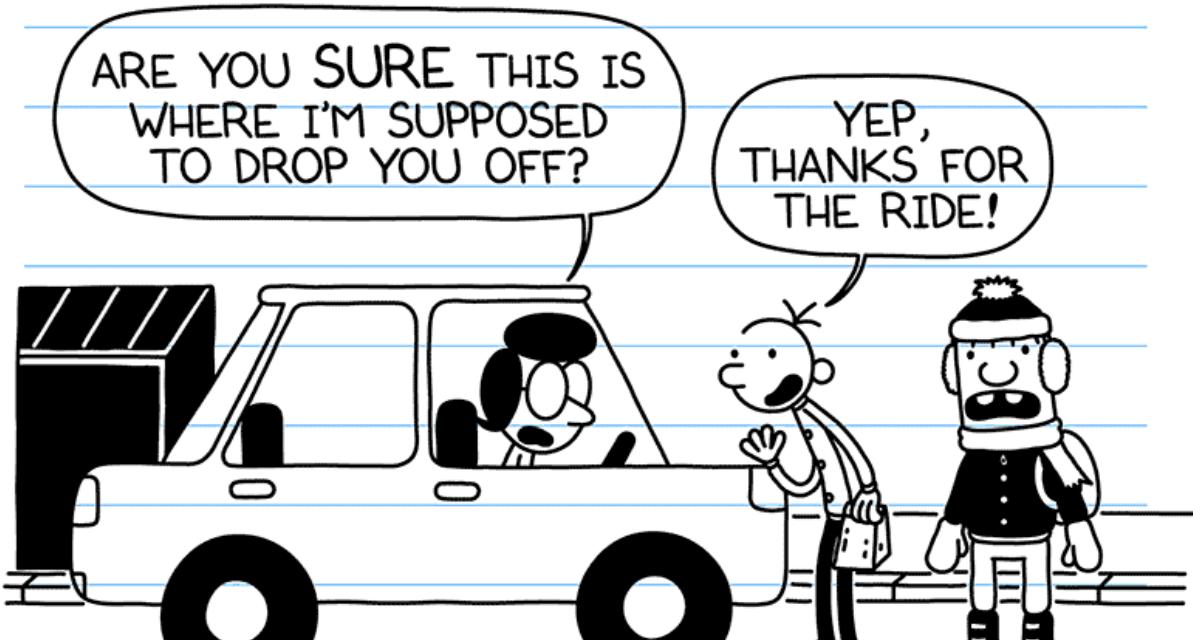
embarrassing bumper stickers, and kids at my school

are brutal when it comes to that sort of thing.

I've tried scraping the bumper stickers off, but  
whatever kind of glue they put on those things is  
meant to last until the end of time.



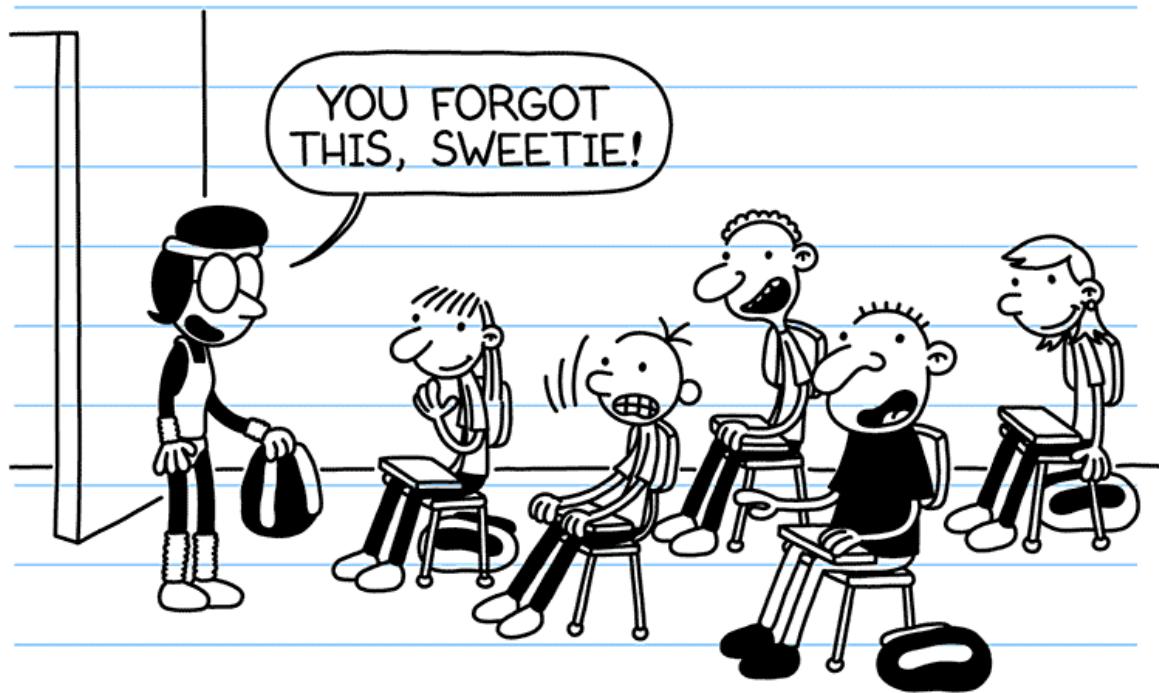
Today me and Rowley got a ride from Mom, but  
I told her to let us out BEHIND the school.





41

Well, I made the dumb mistake of leaving my  
backpack in the car, so Mom brought it to me in  
fourth period. And of course she picked TODAY  
to finally start going to the gym.



It was just my luck, too. Fourth period is the  
only time I have a class with Holly Hills, and  
I've been trying to make a good impression on  
her this year. I figure this incident probably set  
me back about three weeks.

I'm not the only one who's trying to impress

Holly Hills, either. I think just about every boy

in my class has a crush on her.

Holly is the fourth-prettiest girl in the class, but  
the top three all have boyfriends. So a lot of  
guys like me are doing everything they can to get  
in good with her.

I've been trying to come up with an angle to  
separate myself from the rest of the goobers  
who like Holly. And I think I finally figured it  
out: humor.

See, the kids in my class are like Neanderthals  
when it comes to jokes. To give you an idea of  
what I'm talking about, here's the kind of thing  
that passes for comedy at my school —

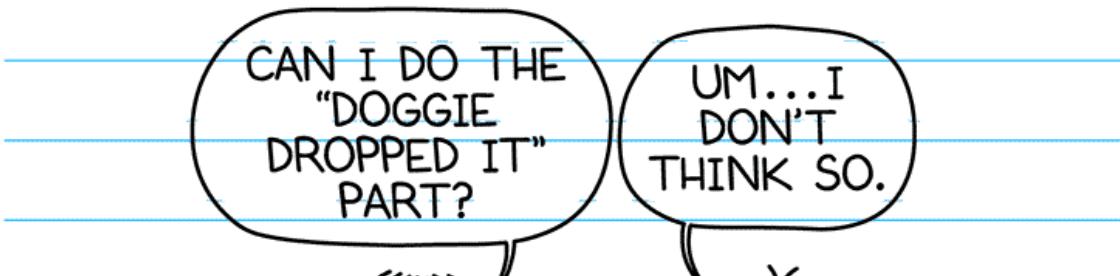


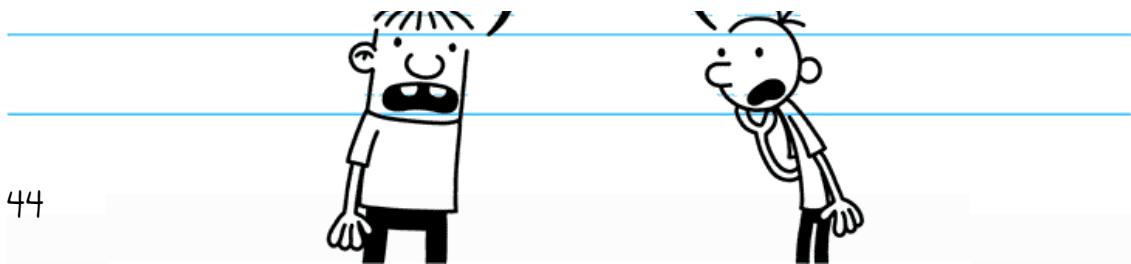
Anytime Holly's in the area, I make sure I use  
my best material.

I've been using Rowley as my comedy partner,  
and I've actually trained him on a couple of pretty  
decent jokes.



The only problem is, Rowley's starting to get a little  
greedy about who gets to say what, so I don't  
know if this partnership is gonna work out long-term.





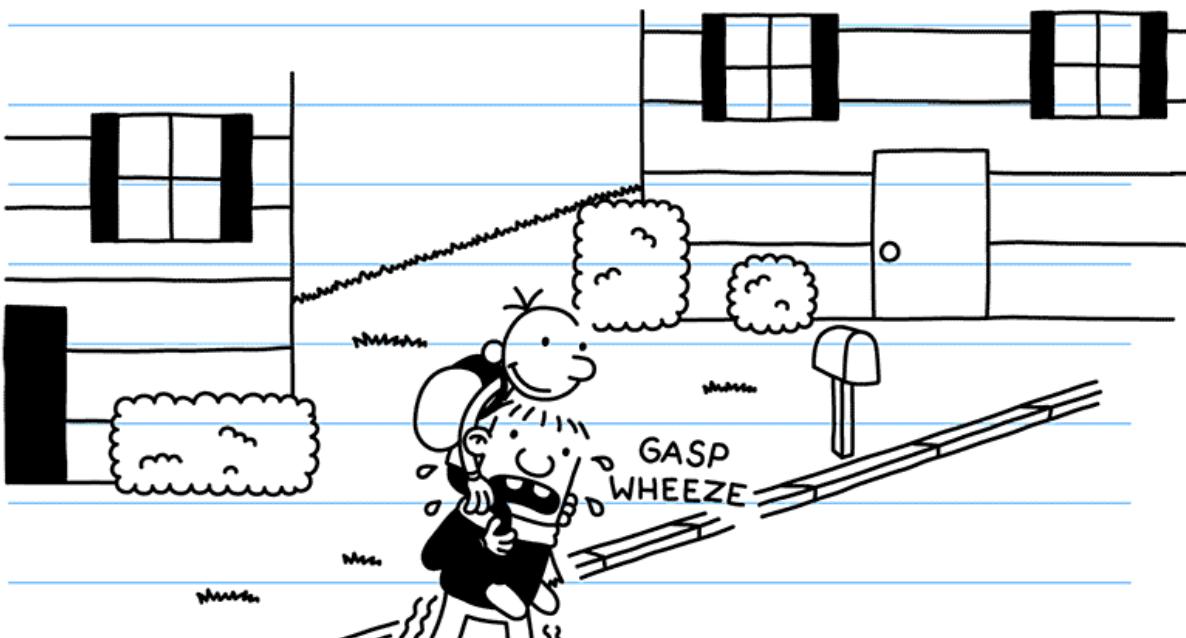
44

Friday

Well, I learned my lesson about getting a ride from Mom, so I'm back to walking to school. But when I was heading home with Rowley this afternoon, I seriously didn't think I had the energy to make it up the hill to my house. So I asked Rowley if he'd give me a piggyback ride.

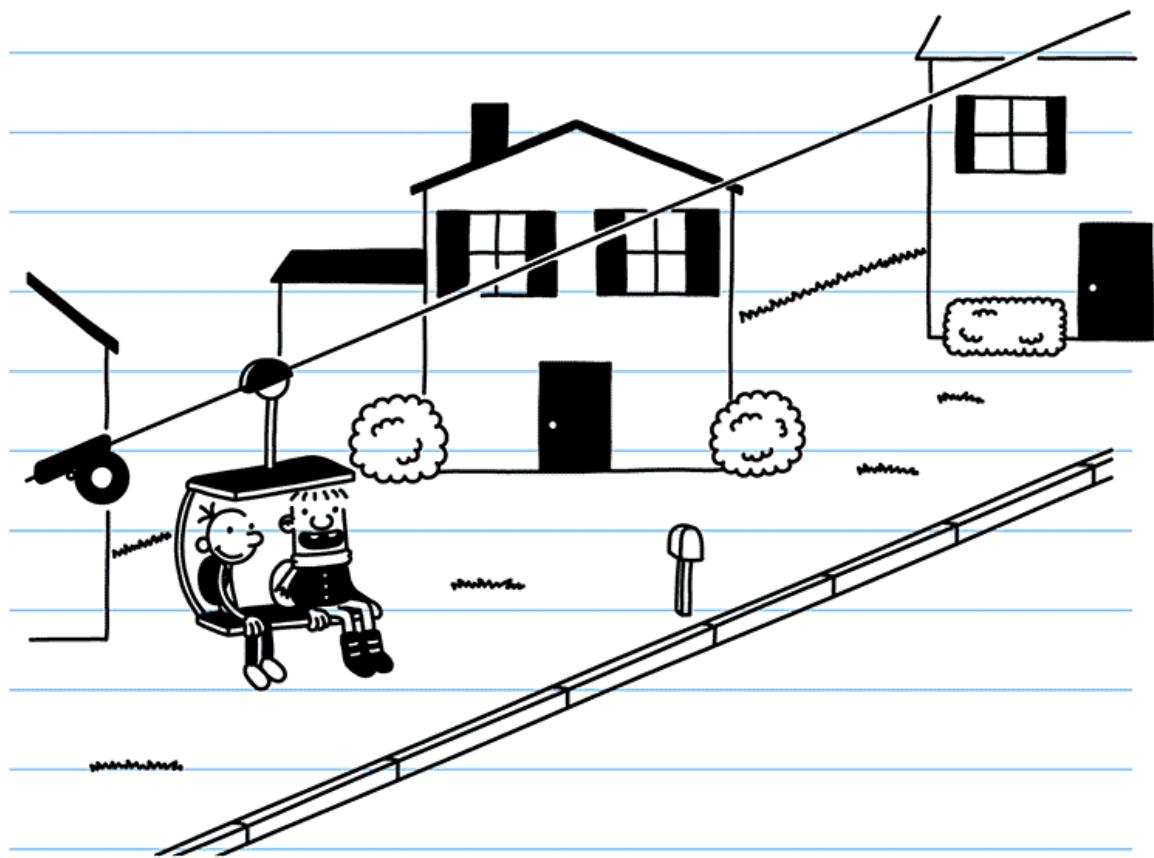
Rowley didn't exactly jump at the idea, so I had to remind him that we're best friends and this is the kind of thing best friends do for each other.

He finally caved when I offered to carry his backpack for him.





I have a feeling this was a one-time thing,  
though, because Rowley was completely wiped out  
by the time he dropped me off at my house. You  
know, if the school is going to take away our bus  
ride home, the least they can do is install a ski  
lift on our hill.



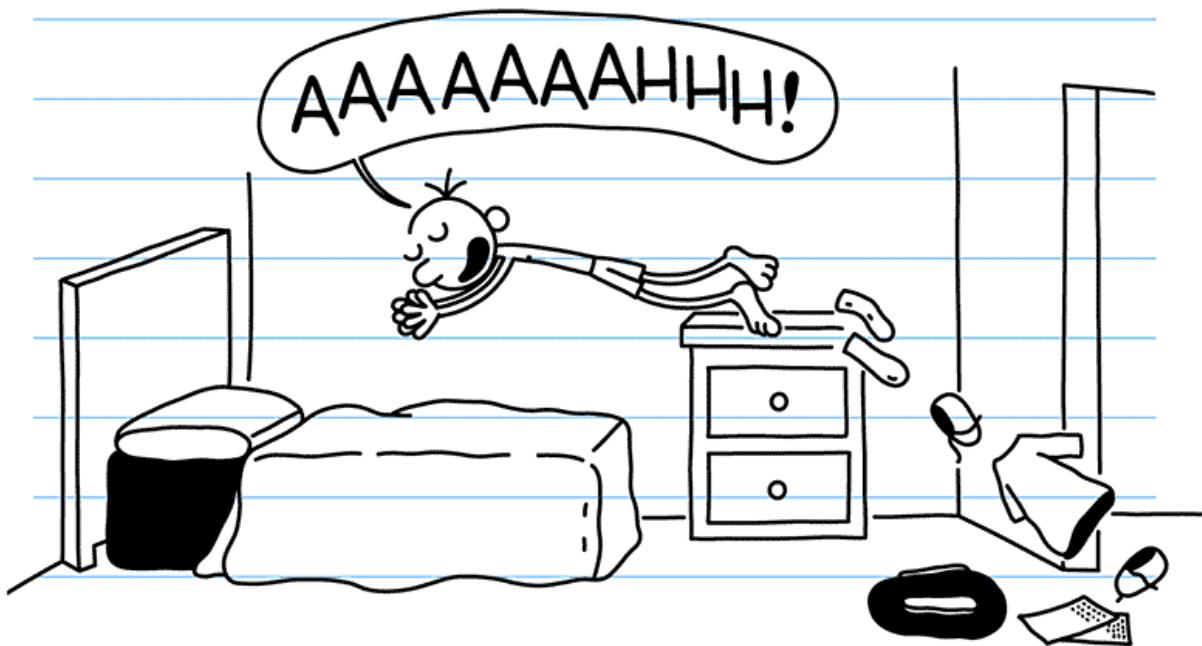
I've e-mailed the principal about five times with my  
suggestion, but I haven't heard anything back yet.

When I got to my house, I was pretty tired,

too. My new thing is that I take a nap every

day after school.

In fact, I LIVE for my naps. Sleeping after school is the only way I can really recharge my batteries, and on most days the second I get home, I'm in bed.



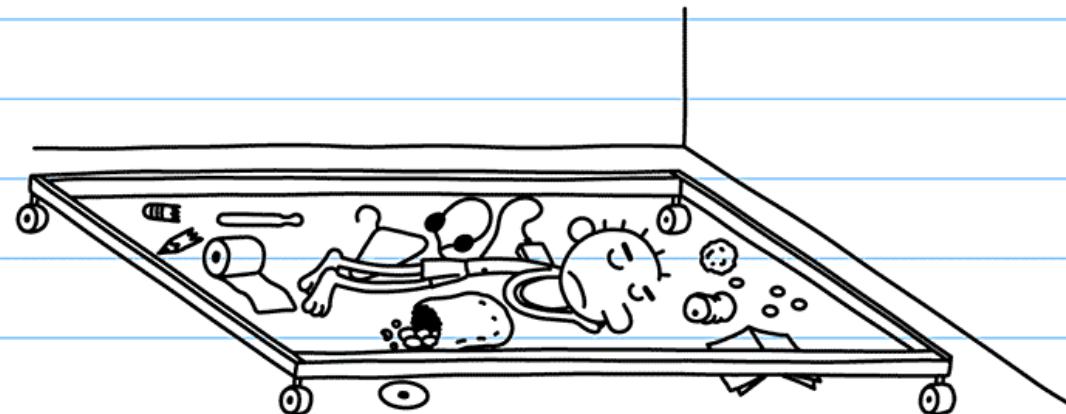
I'm actually kind of becoming an expert at sleeping. Once I'm out, I can sleep through just about anything.

The only person I know who's better at sleeping than me is RODRICK, and here's the reason I say that. A couple of weeks ago, Mom had to order Rodrick a new bed because he'd worn his out.

So the furniture guys came to take his old mattress

and box spring away.

When they came, Rodrick was in the middle of his after-school nap. So they took his bed away, and he just slept on the floor, right in the middle of his empty bed frame.



The thing I'm worried about is that Dad is going to ban our after-school naps. I'm starting to get the feeling he's sick of waking the two of us up for dinner every night.



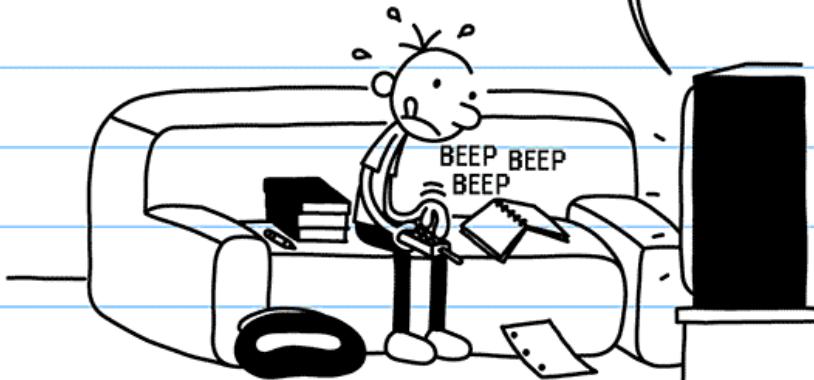
Tuesday

Well, I hate to admit this, but I think my naps

are starting to have an effect on my grades.

See, I used to do my homework when I got home from school, and then I watched TV at night. Lately I've been trying to do my homework WHILE I watch TV, and sometimes that doesn't work out too good.

TO MAKE SURE CARISSA STICKS AROUND FOR ANOTHER WEEK, DIAL "492" OR TEXT THE WORD "CARISSA" NOW!



I had this four-page Biology paper due today, but last night I kind of got caught up in this show I was watching. So I had to try to write the whole thing in the computer lab during recess today.

I didn't have a lot of time to do any research, so I played with the margins and the font size

to stretch what I had to four pages. But I'm

pretty sure Ms. Nolan is gonna call me on it.

# CHIMPS

A four-page paper by

GREG  
HEFFLEY

1

This is a  
chimpanzee, or  
“chimp” for short.



Chimps are the  
subject of the paper  
you're holding in your  
hand right now.

2

50

Chimps are supposed  
to be smart, but I'm  
not so sure that's true.



3

Well, it looks like I'm  
out of paper, so I  
guess this is

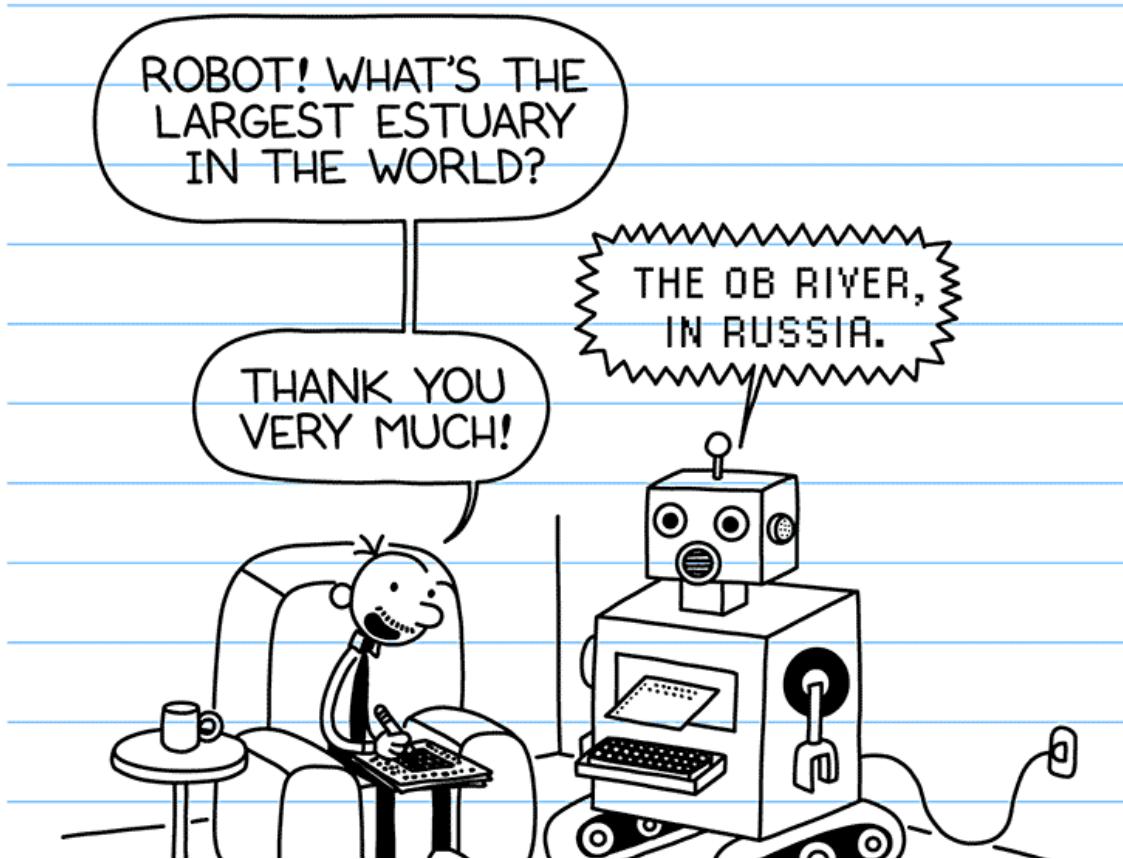
**THE  
END.**

4

51

Yesterday I actually got a "zero" on a quiz in Geography. But in my defense, it was really hard to study for the quiz and watch football at the same time.

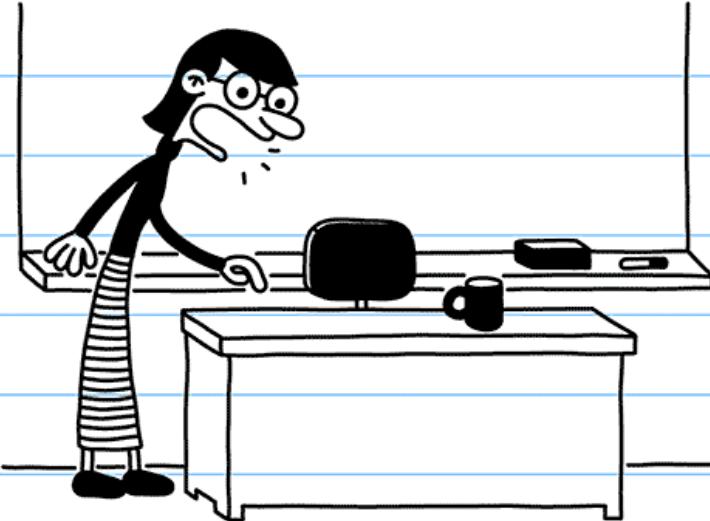
To be honest with you, I don't think teachers should be making us memorize all this stuff to begin with, because in the future everyone is going to have a personal robot that tells you whatever you need to know.





Speaking of teachers, today Mrs. Craig was in a  
really bad mood. That's because the big dictionary  
that usually sits on her desk was missing.

I'm sure someone just borrowed it and forgot to  
put it back, but the word Mrs. Craig kept using  
was "stole."



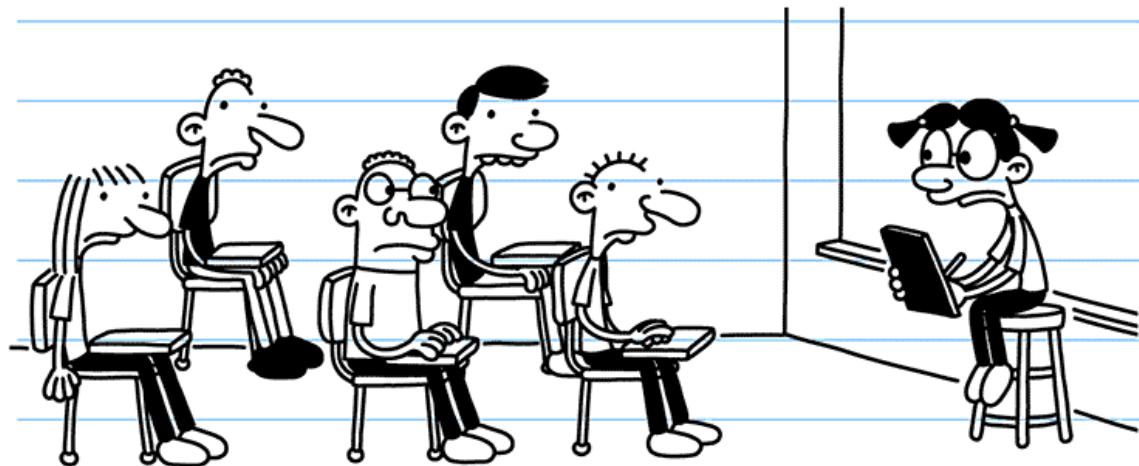
Mrs. Craig said that if the dictionary wasn't  
returned to her desk before the end of the period,  
she was keeping everyone inside for recess.

Then she told us she was going to leave the room,  
and that if the "culprit" returned the dictionary

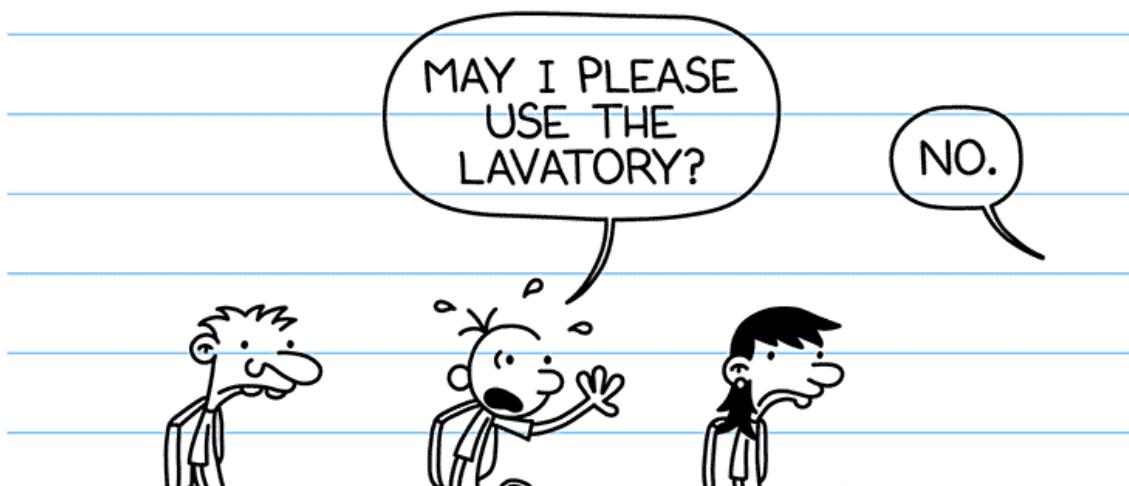
to her desk, there wouldn't be any consequences,

and there would be no questions asked.

Mrs. Craig made Patty Farrell class monitor and  
left the room. Patty takes her job as class monitor  
really seriously, and when she's in charge, nobody  
dares to step out of line.



I was just hoping the person who took the  
dictionary would hurry up and come clean,  
because I had two cartons of chocolate milk  
for lunch.





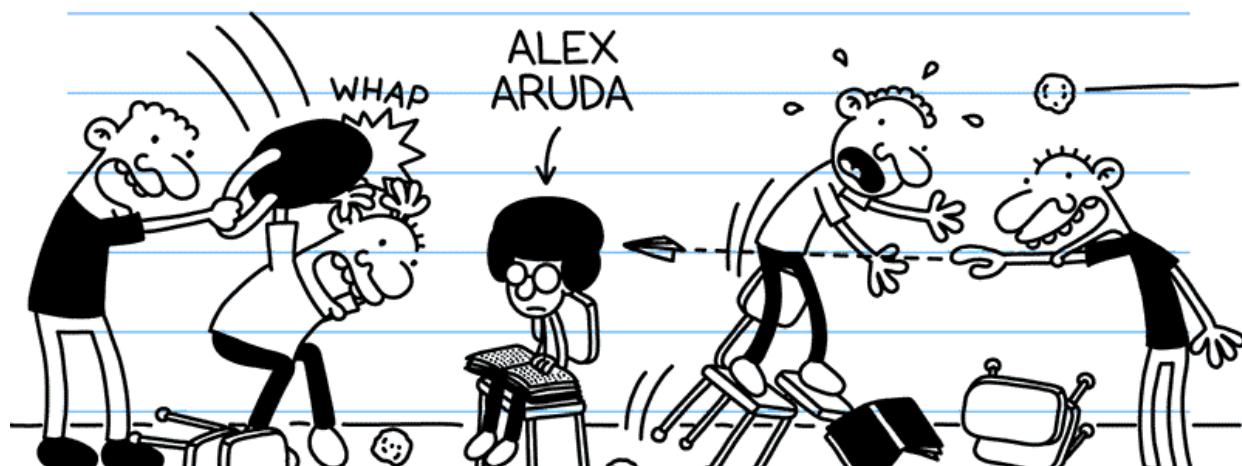
54

But nobody did come forward. And sure enough,  
Mrs. Craig stuck to her promise and kept us inside  
for recess. Then she said she was gonna keep us  
inside every day until the dictionary was returned.

Friday

Mrs. Craig has kept us inside for the past three  
days, and still no dictionary. Today Patty Farrell  
was sick, so Mrs. Craig put Alex Aruda in  
charge of the room while she was gone.

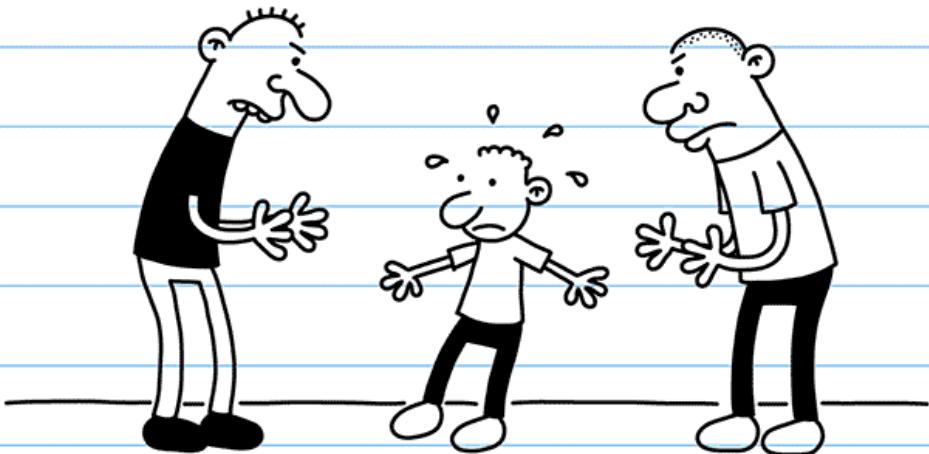
Alex is a good student, but people aren't afraid  
of Alex the way they are of Patty Farrell. As  
soon as Mrs. Craig left the room, it was complete  
pandemonium.





A couple of guys who were sick of getting stuck  
inside for recess every day decided to try and  
figure out who took Mrs. Craig's dictionary.

The first person they interrogated was this kid  
named Corey Lamb. I think Corey was number  
one on the list of suspects because he's smart and  
he's always using big words.



Corey fessed up to the crime in no time flat.  
But it turns out he only said he did it because  
the pressure made him crack.

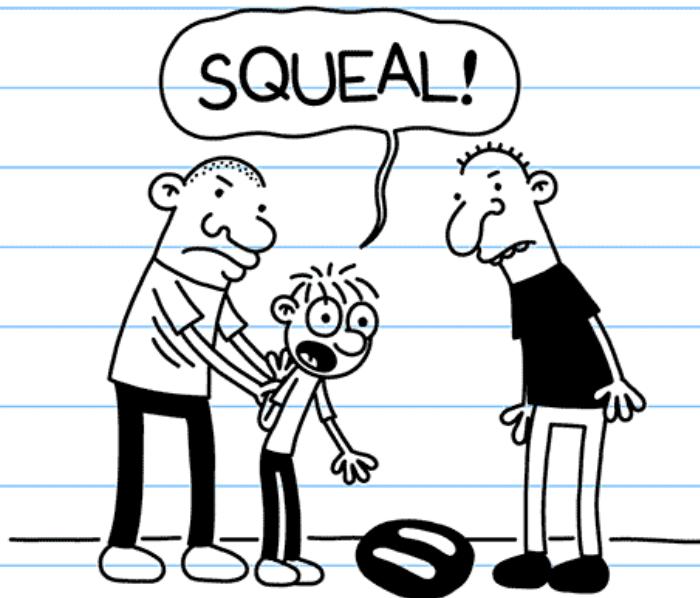




56

The next kid on the list was Peter Lynn, and

before you knew it Peter was confessing, too.



I figured it was just a matter of time before

those guys cornered ME. So I knew I had to

think up something fast.

I've read enough Sherlock Sammy books to know

that sometimes it takes a nerd to get you out of

a pinch. And I figured if anyone could crack

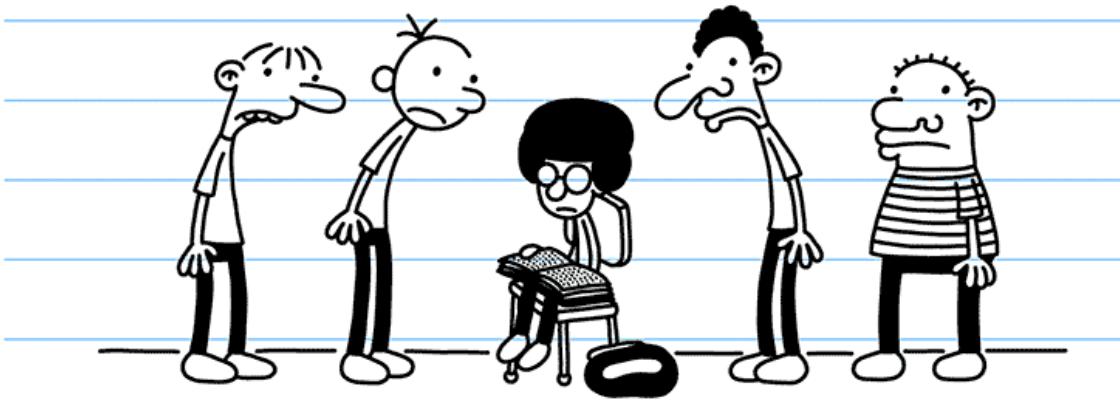
this case, it was Alex Aruda.

So me and a couple of other guys who were worried

about getting hassled went over to Alex to see if

he could help us out.

We told Alex we needed him to solve the mystery  
of who took Mrs. Craig's dictionary, but he didn't  
even know what we were TALKING about. I  
guess Alex had been so wrapped up in his book  
that he hadn't even noticed what had been going  
on around him for the past couple of days.



Plus, Alex always stays inside to read during recess,  
so Mrs. Craig's punishment hadn't had a big effect  
on his life.

Unfortunately, Alex has read his share of Sherlock  
Sammy books, too, so he said he would help us if  
we paid him five bucks. Well, that was totally  
unfair, because Sherlock Sammy only charges a  
nickel. But me and the other guys agreed it was

worth it, and we pooled our money, then forked

over the five dollars.

We laid out all the facts of the case to Alex, but  
we didn't know a whole lot. Then we asked Alex if  
he could get us pointed in the right direction.

I expected Alex to start taking notes and  
spout some scientific mumbo jumbo, but all he did  
was close the book he was reading and show the  
cover to us. And you're not gonna BELIEVE  
this, but it was Mrs. Craig's dictionary.

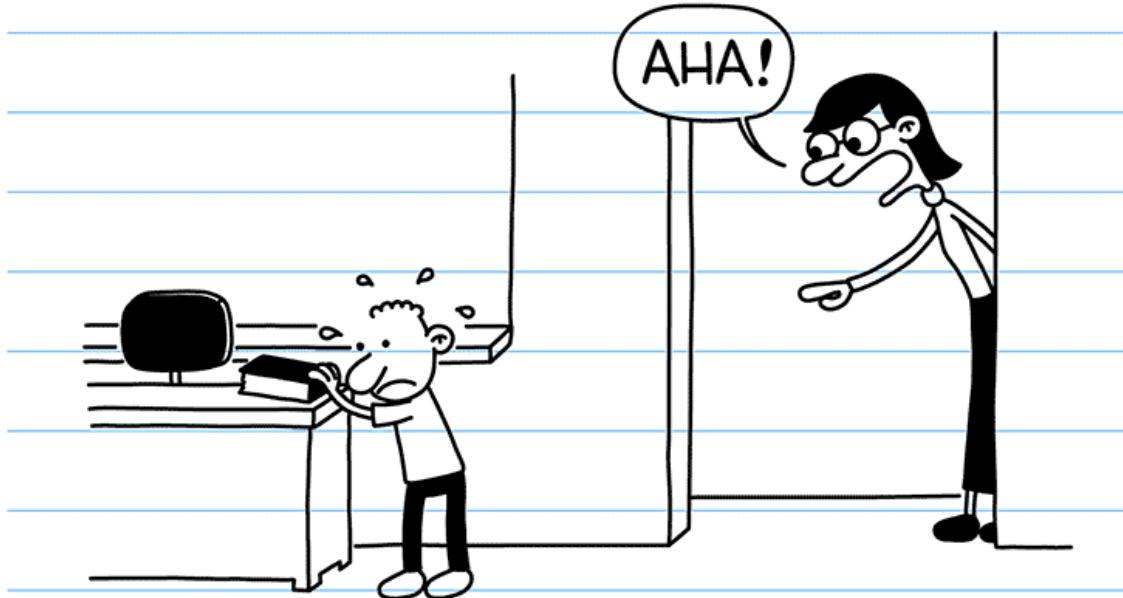


Alex said he'd been studying the dictionary to get  
ready for the state spelling bee next month. Well,  
THAT would've been nice to know BEFORE we gave  
him our five bucks. Anyway, there was no time to

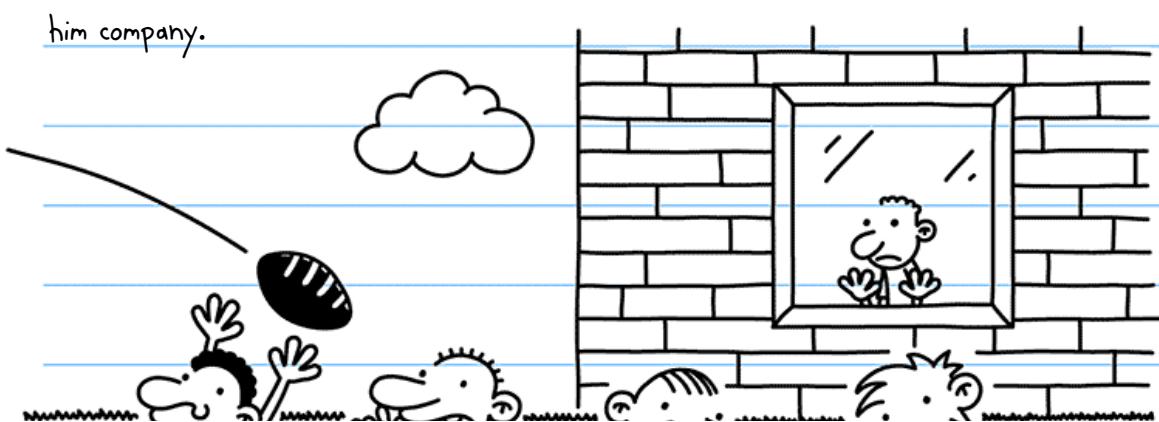
waste complaining, because Mrs. Craig was gonna be

back in the room at any second.

Corey Lamb grabbed the book from Alex and put it on Mrs. Craig's desk. But she walked in the room right at that moment.



Mrs. Craig ended up going back on her whole "no consequences" promise, so Corey Lamb is gonna be spending the next three weeks inside during recess. Looking on the bright side, though, at least he'll have Alex Aruda to keep him company.

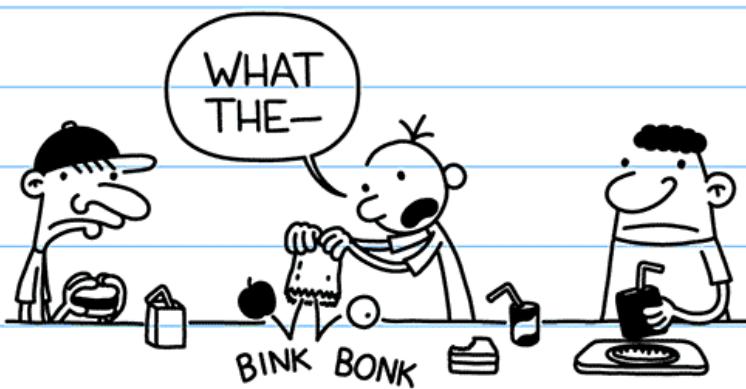




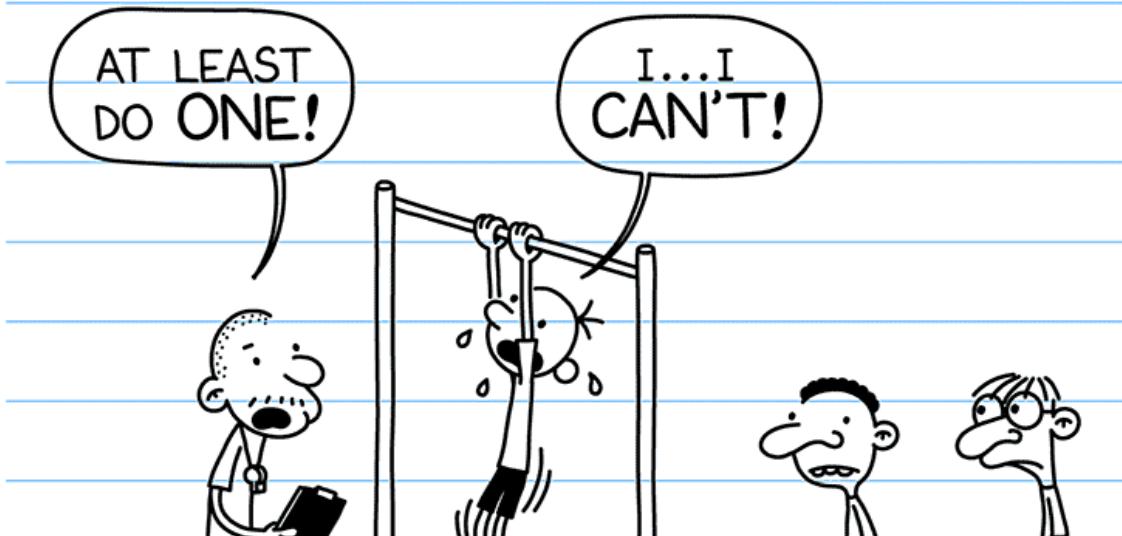
FEBRUARY

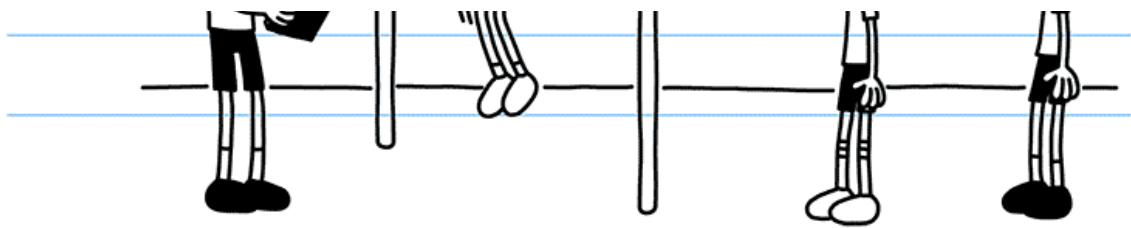
Tuesday.

Yesterday in the cafeteria, when I emptied out my lunch bag, I got TWO FRUITS—and no snacks.



This was a pretty big problem. Mom always packs cookies or sugar wafers or something in my lunch bag, and it's usually the only thing I eat. So I had no energy for the rest of the day.





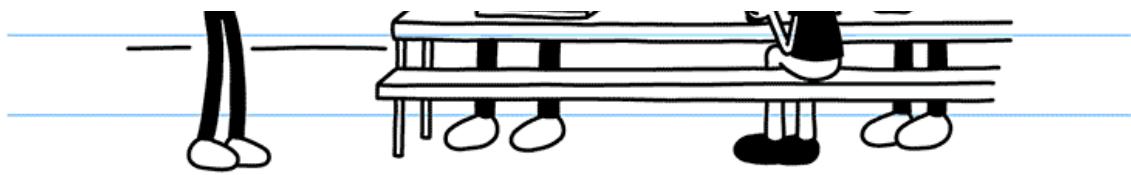
When I got home, I asked Mom what the deal  
was with the two-fruits thing. She said she  
always buys enough treats to last us the whole  
week, so one of us boys must've taken the snacks  
out of the bin in the laundry room.

I'm sure Mom thinks I'm the one stealing the  
snacks, but believe me, I already learned my  
lesson about doing THAT.

Last year I took treats out of the bin, but I  
totally paid the price for it when I opened  
my lunch bag at school and pulled out Mom's  
substitute snack.

WOULD ONE OF YOU  
GENTLEMEN CARE TO  
TRADE SOMETHING  
FOR A PACK OF  
CROUTONS?





62

Today at lunch it was the same exact thing: two fruits and no snacks.

Like I said, I really depend on the boost I get from that sugar. I almost fell asleep in Mr. Watson's class in sixth period, but luckily I snapped awake when my head hit the back of my chair.



When I got home, I told Mom it wasn't fair someone else was eating the treats and I was having to suffer. But she said she wasn't going to go grocery shopping until the end of the

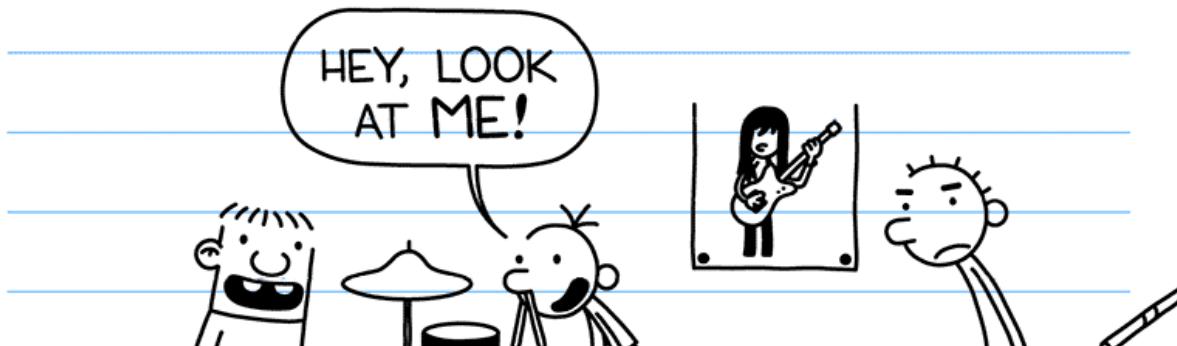
week, and that I'd just have to "make do"

until then.

Dad wasn't any help, either. When I complained to him, he just made up a penalty for anyone caught stealing snacks, which was "no drums and no video games for a week." So obviously he thinks it's either me or Rodrick.

Like I said, it's not ME, but I figured Dad might be right about Rodrick. When Rodrick went up to the bathroom after dinner, I walked down to his room to see if I could find any wrappers or crumbs.

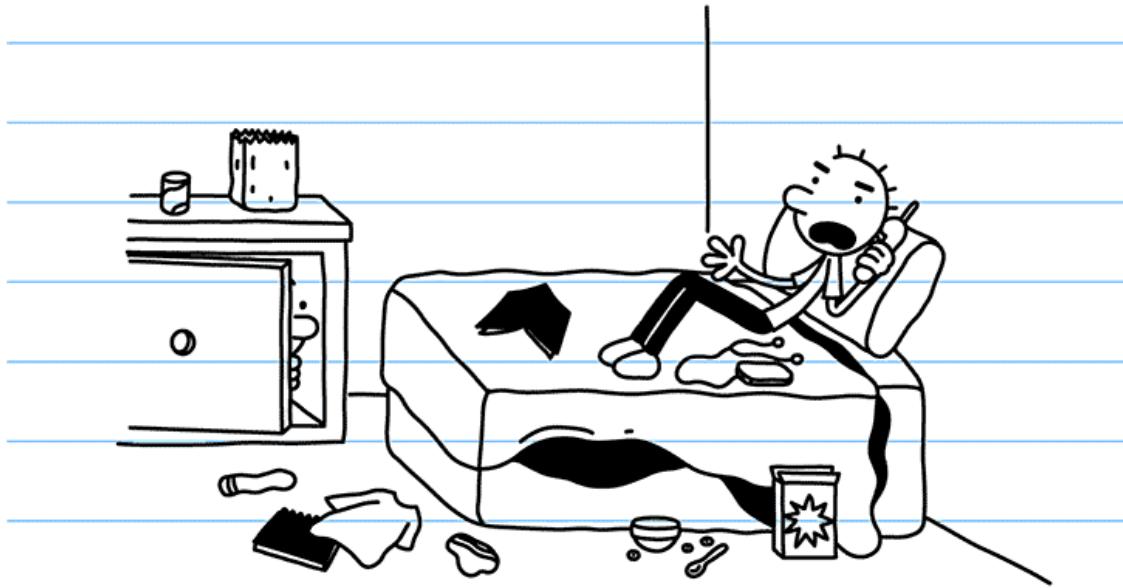
But while I was poking around in Rodrick's room, I heard him coming downstairs. I had to hide quick, because for some reason Rodrick gets really bent out of shape when he catches me in his room, like he did yesterday.





Right before Rodrick got to the bottom of the stairs, I dove into his desk cabinet and shut the door. Rodrick walked in the room, then flopped on his bed and called his friend Ward.

Rodrick and Ward talked FOREVER, and I was starting to think I might have to spend the night in that desk.



Rodrick and Ward got into a pretty heated debate about whether or not a person could throw up while standing on their head, and I started to feel like I was gonna throw up myself.

Luckily, right around then, the phone's battery

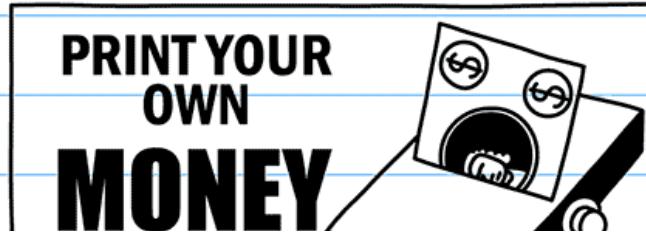
died. When Rodrick went upstairs to get the

spare phone, I made a run for it.

This snack thing wouldn't even be an issue if I  
had money. If I did, I could just buy something  
from the vending machine at school every day.

At the moment, though, I'm kind of broke.  
That's because I wasted all my money on some  
junk I can't even USE.

About a month ago, I saw these ads in the  
back of one of my comic books, and I sent away  
for a couple of things that were supposed to  
TOTALLY change my life.



with the  
**Cash  
Machine**



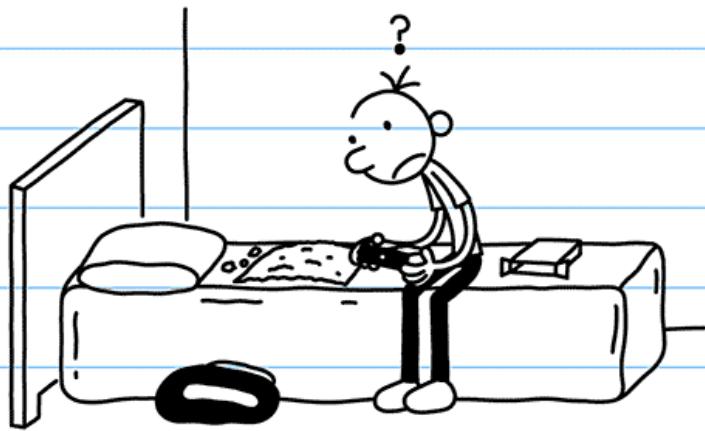
Insert a blank  
piece of paper and  
roll out a \$5 bill!



VENTRILOQUISM KIT

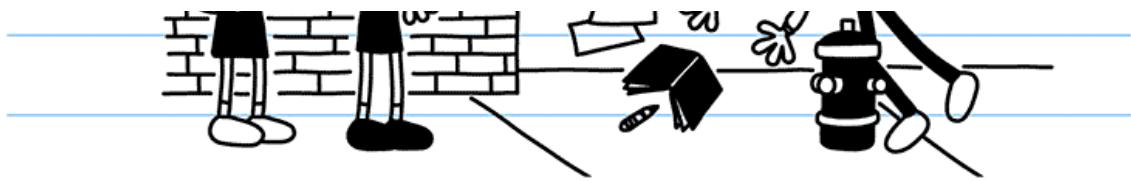
I started receiving my stuff in the mail about two weeks ago.

The Cash Machine turned out to be some stupid magic trick where you have to insert your OWN money in this secret slot for it to work. And that wasn't good, because I was really counting on that thing to get me out of having to find a job when I grow up.



The X-Ray Goggles just made you see blurry and cross-eyed, so that was a bust, too.

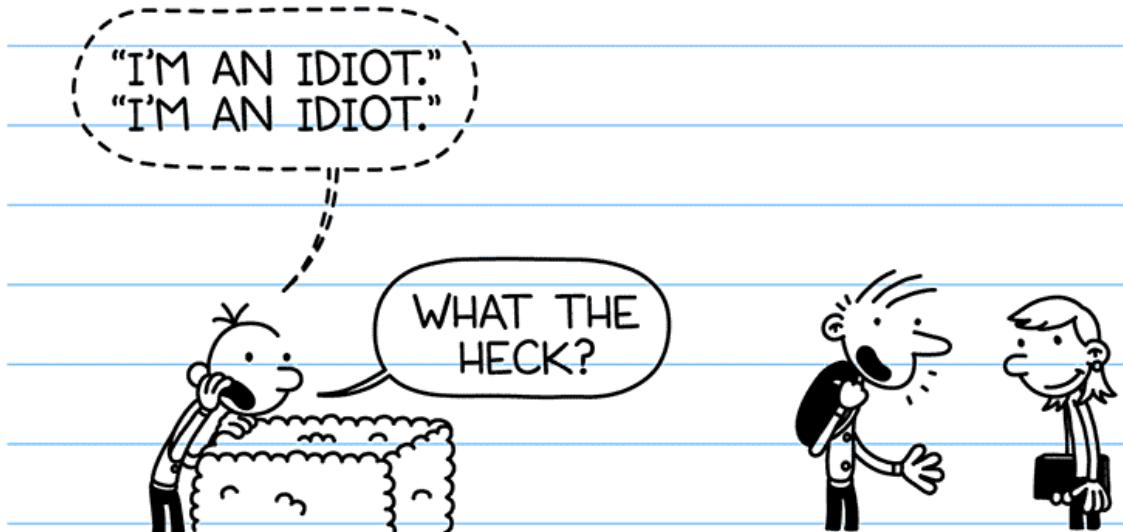




The Throw Your Voice thing didn't work at

ALL, even though I followed the instructions

in the book.



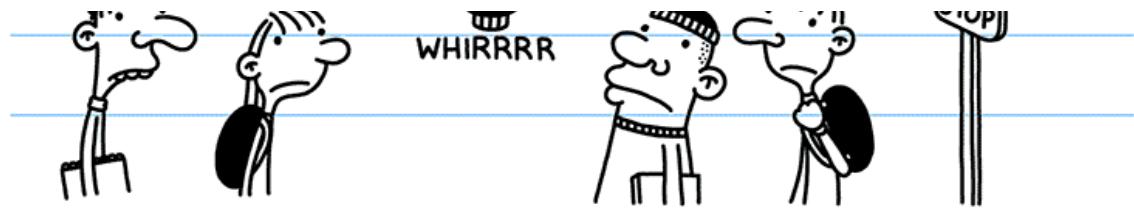
But the item I had the highest hopes for was

the Personal Hovercraft. I figured getting home

after school would be a breeze once my hovercraft

finally showed up in the mail.

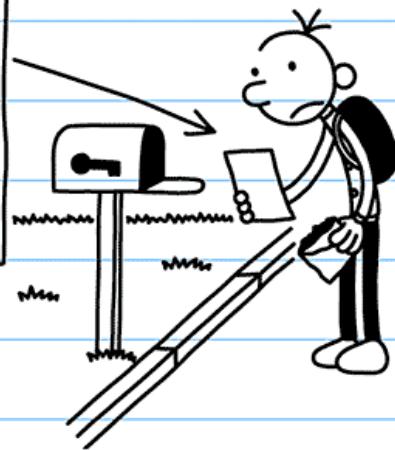




Well, I got the package today, but there wasn't  
a hovercraft inside. There was just a blueprint for  
how to BUILD a hovercraft, and I got stuck on  
Step One.

### **Step One:**

Acquire an industrial  
twin-turbine engine.



I just can't believe the people who write those  
ads can get away with lying to kids like that. I  
thought about hiring a lawyer to sue those guys,  
but lawyers cost money, and like I said before,  
the Cash Machine was a piece of garbage.

Thursday

Today, when I got home from school, Mom was  
waiting for me, and she didn't look too happy.  
It turns out the school sent home mid-quarter

report cards, and she got the mail before I

could intercept it.

Mom showed me the report card, and it wasn't  
pretty. Then she said we were gonna wait for  
DAD to get home to see what HE thought.



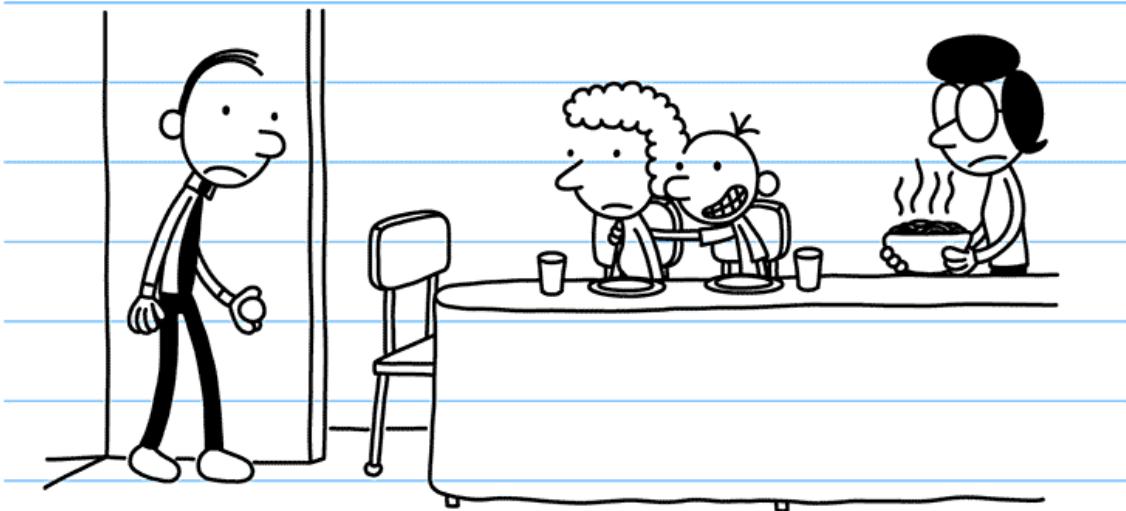
Man, waiting for Dad to get home when you're in  
trouble is the WORST. I used to just hide in  
the closet, but recently I figured out a better  
way to handle it. Now, whenever I get in trouble,  
I ask Gramma to come over for dinner, because  
Dad's not gonna act mad at me if Gramma's around.

WHY, AREN'T  
YOU A DEAR?

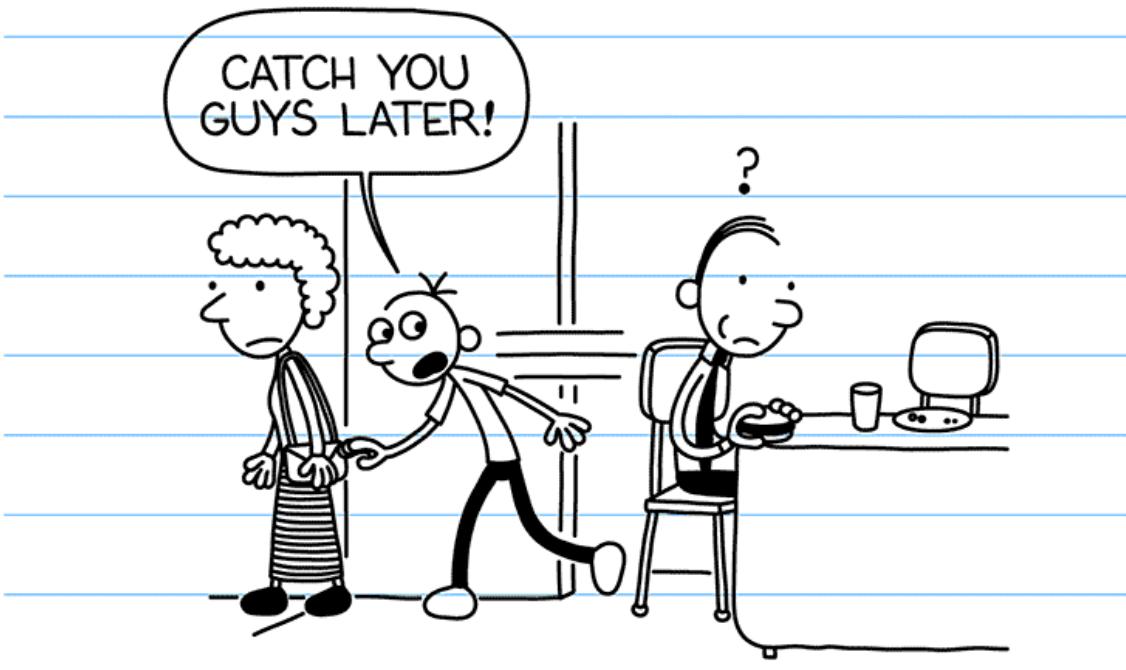


At dinner, I made sure I sat in the seat right

next to Gramma.



Luckily, Mom didn't mention my report card during  
dinner. And when Gramma said she needed to leave  
to go to Bingo, I tagged right along with her.



Escaping Dad wasn't the ONLY reason I went

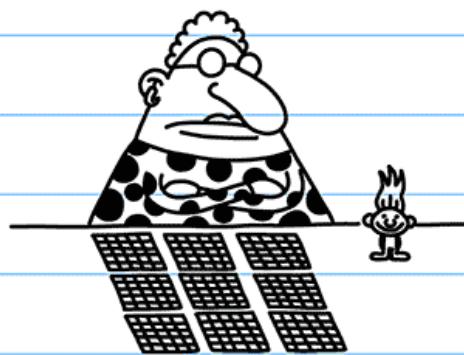
to Bingo with Gramma. I also went because I

needed a surefire way to make some money.

I figured spending a few hours with Gramma  
and her Bingo friends was a pretty fair price to  
pay for a week's worth of snacks from the  
vending machine in the school cafeteria.

Gramma and her friends are EXPERTS at Bingo,  
and they're real serious about it, too. They have  
all sorts of gear like lucky blotters and "Bingo  
Trolls" and stuff like that to help them win.

One of Gramma's friends is so good that she  
memorizes all her cards, and she doesn't even  
NEED to use a blotter to mark them off.



For some reason, tonight Gramma and her friends  
weren't winning like they usually do. But then on  
the "Cover All" game, I got every square. I

yelled out "BINGO" real loud, and the clerk came

over to check my card.

It turns out I messed up and covered a couple  
of squares that I shouldn't have. The clerk  
announced that my win was no good, and everyone  
else in the room was pretty happy that they  
could keep playing.

Gramma told me not to call so much attention to  
myself if I called out "Bingo" again, because the  
regulars don't like it when a newcomer wins.

I thought Gramma was pulling my leg, but sure  
enough, the regulars sent one of their ladies  
over to intimidate me. And I have to admit,  
she did her job really well.



Friday

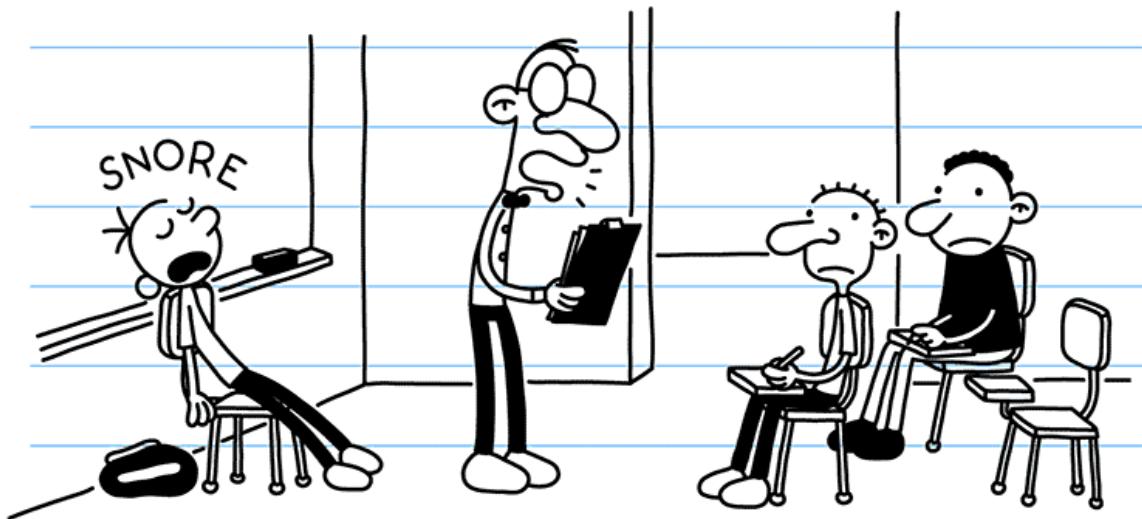
Well, today wasn't exactly my best day ever. For  
starters, I flunked my Science test. So it probably

would've been a good idea to have studied last night

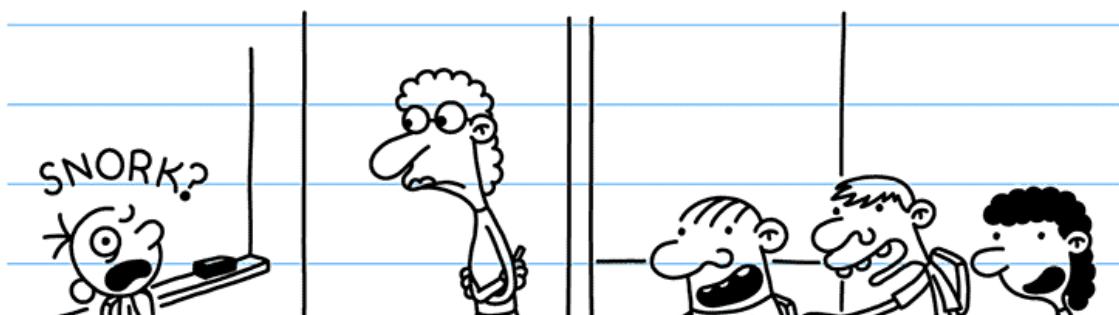
instead of spending four hours at Bingo.

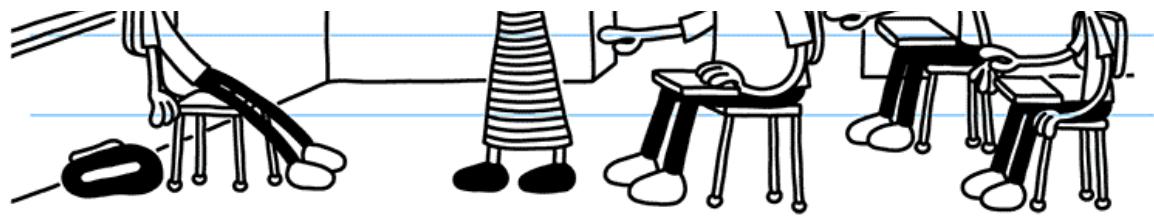
I fell asleep in sixth period today, and this time I  
was out COLD—Mr. Watson had to shake me to  
get me to wake up. As a punishment, I had to  
sit in the front of the room.

That was just fine with me, because at least up  
there I could sleep in peace.



I just wish someone woke me up when sixth period  
ended, because I didn't wake up until the NEXT  
period started.





The class I woke up in was taught by Mrs. Lowry.

Mrs. Lowry gave me detention, and on Monday

I'm gonna have to stay after school to serve it.

Tonight I was totally jittery from my sugar

withdrawal, but I didn't have any money to go

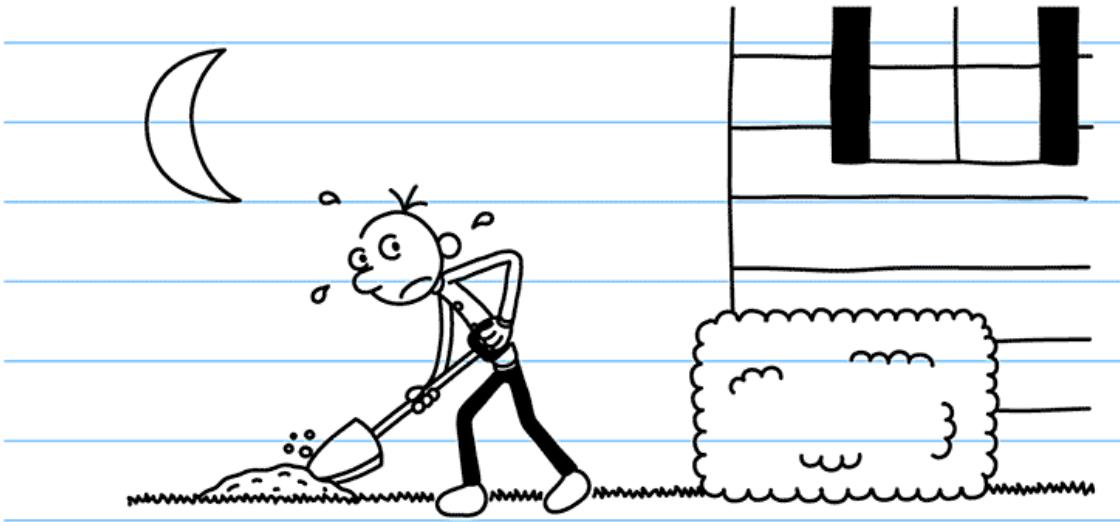
buy a soda or candy from the convenience store.

So I did something I'm not real proud of.

I went to Rowley's and dug up the time capsule we

buried in his front yard. But I only did it because

I was desperate.

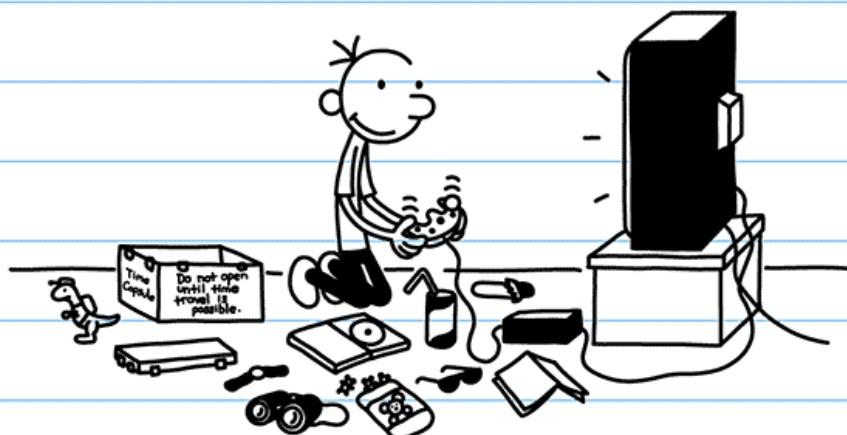


I took the time capsule back to my house, opened

it up, and got out my three bucks. Then I went

down to the convenience store and bought myself a  
big soda, a pack of gummy bears, and a candy bar.

I guess I feel a little bad that the time capsule  
me and Rowley put together didn't stay buried  
for a few hundred years. On the other hand, it's  
kind of neat that one of US got to open it,  
because we had actually put some really good  
stuff in there.



Monday.

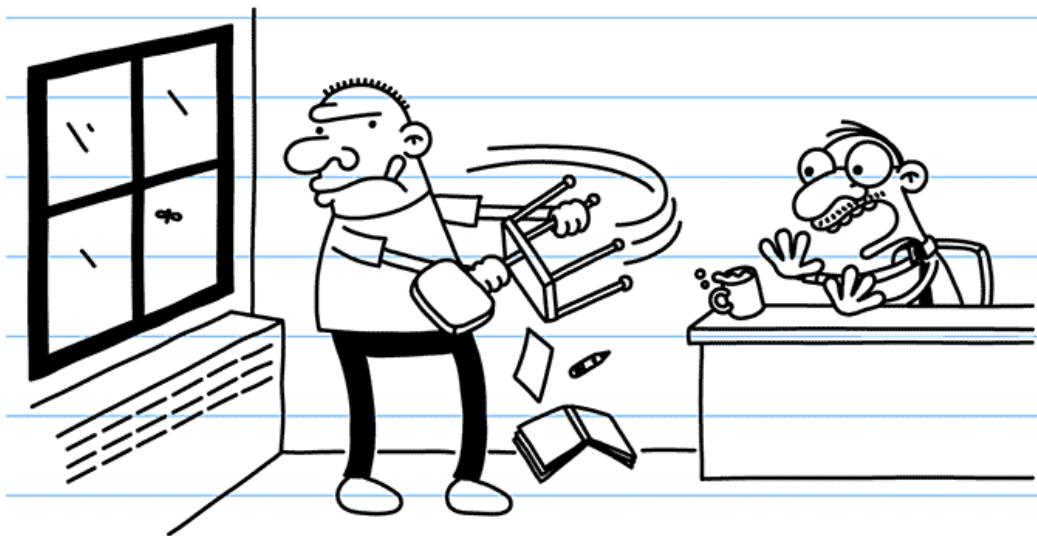
I didn't really know what to expect from detention,  
but when I walked into the room, the first  
thought I had was, "I don't belong in here with  
these future criminals."

I took the only empty seat, which was right in  
front of this kid named Leon Ricket.





Leon is not the brightest kid in our school. He  
was in detention because of what he did when a  
wasp landed on the window in homeroom.



I found out that all you do in detention is sit there  
and wait for it to be over. You're not allowed to  
read or do your homework or ANYTHING, which  
is a pretty dumb rule, considering that most of the  
kids in there could really use the extra study time.

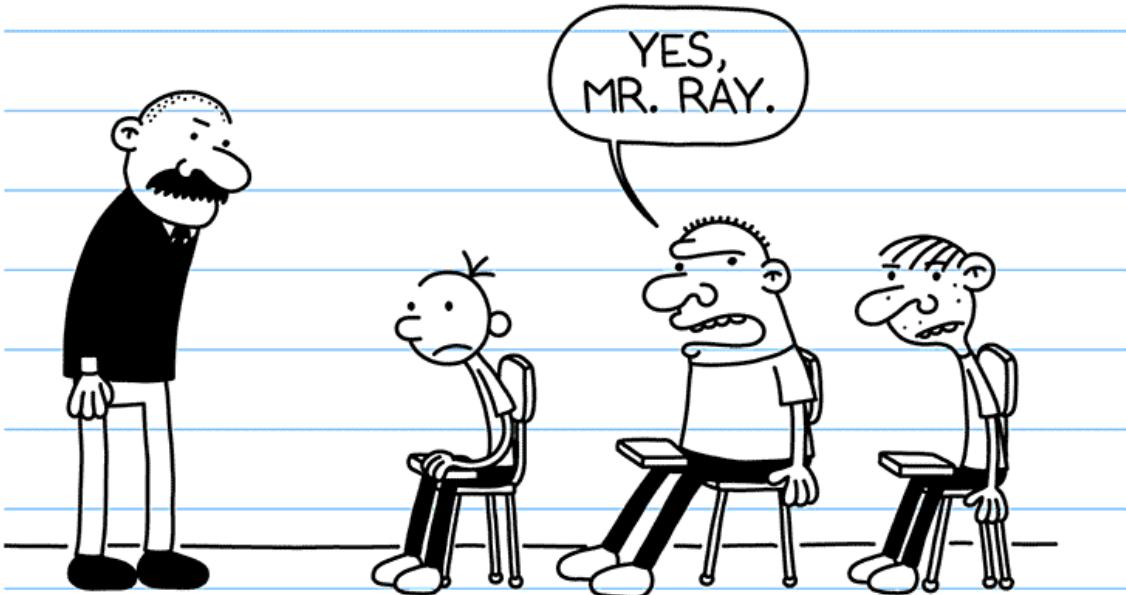
Mr. Ray was the moderator, and he more or less  
kept an eye on us. But every time Mr. Ray looked  
away, Leon would flick my ear or give me a Wet  
Willie or something like that. Eventually Leon got

careless, and Mr. Ray caught Leon with his finger

in my ear.

Mr. Ray said if he caught Leon touching me again,

he was gonna be in BIG trouble.

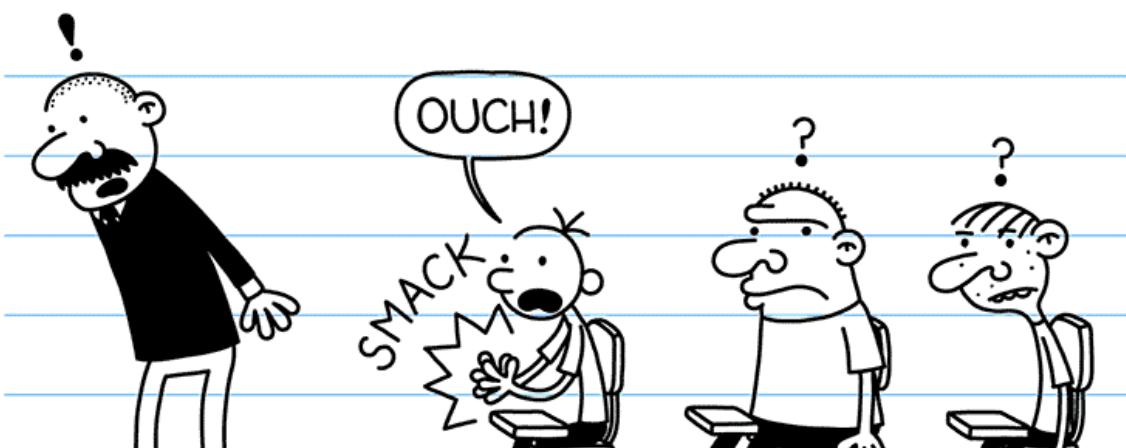


I knew Leon was just gonna go back to bugging

me, so I decided to put a stop to it. As soon

as Mr. Ray's back was turned, I slapped my

hands together to make it seem like Leon hit me.

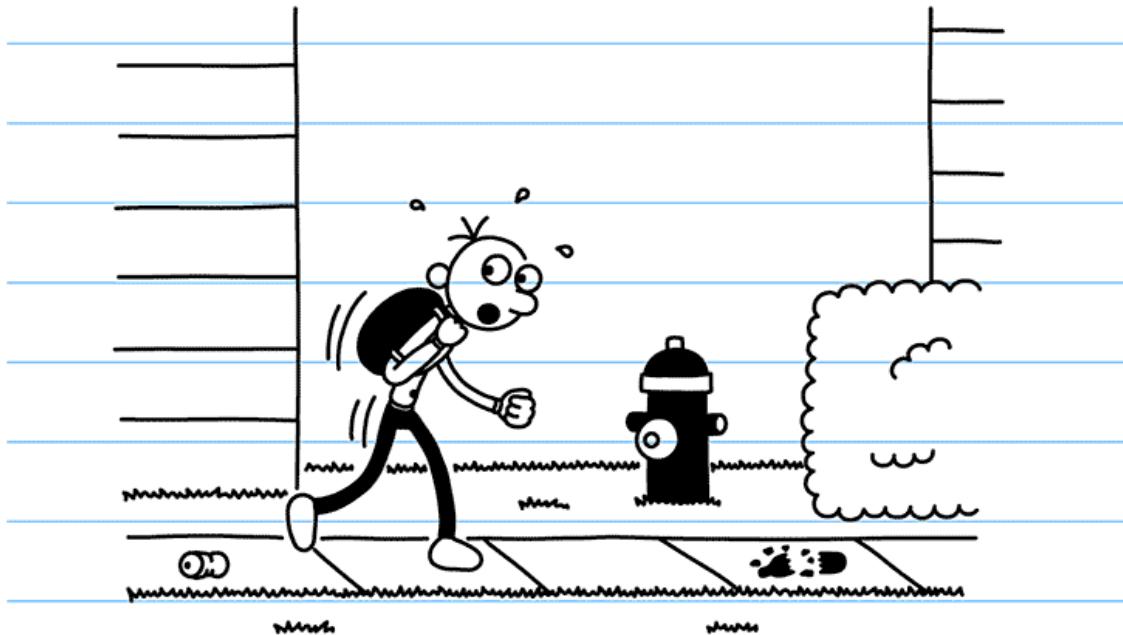




78

Mr. Ray turned around and told Leon he was  
gonna have to stay another half hour, and that  
he had detention again TOMORROW.

On the way home, I was wondering if I made  
the smartest move back there at the school. I'm  
not exactly the fastest runner, and a half hour  
isn't that big of a head start.



Tuesday.

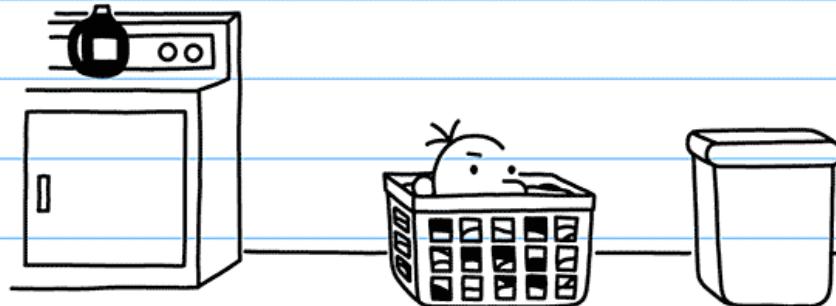
Tonight I realized ALL of my current problems  
can be traced back to when someone in my family

started stealing the lunch snacks. So I decided

to catch the thief once and for all.

I knew Mom had gone grocery shopping over the weekend, so there was a fresh supply of snacks in the laundry room. That meant the snack thief was pretty much guaranteed to strike.

After dinner I went in the laundry room and turned off the light. Then I climbed in an empty basket and waited.



About a half hour later, someone came in the room and turned on the light, so I hid under a towel. But it turns out it was just Mom.

I stayed perfectly still while she got clothes out of the dryer. Mom didn't notice me in there, and

she dumped the clothes from the dryer right into

the bin where I was hiding.



Then she walked out of the room, and I waited  
some more. I was seriously ready to wait there all  
night if that's what it took.

But the clothes from the dryer were really warm,  
and I started feeling a little drowsy. And before  
I knew it, I was asleep.

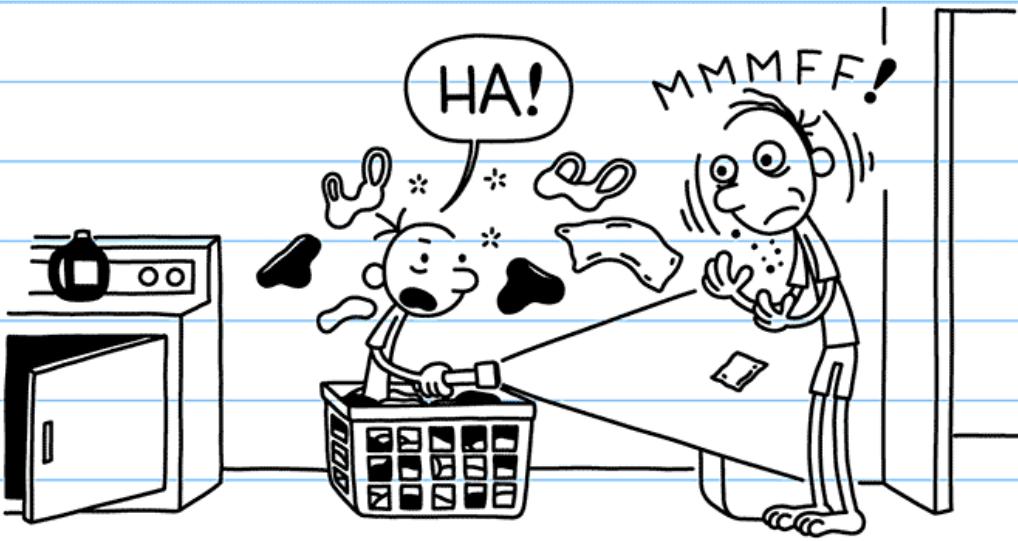


I don't know how many hours I slept, but what

I DO know is that I woke up to the sound of

crinkling cellophane.

When I heard the sound of chewing, I turned  
on my flashlight and caught the thief red-handed.



It was Dad! Man, I should have known it was  
him from the start. When it comes to junk food,  
he's a total ADDICT.

I started to give Dad a piece of my mind, but  
he cut me off. He wasn't interested in talking  
about why he was stealing our lunch snacks. What  
he WAS interested in talking about was what  
the heck I was doing buried in a pile of Mom's  
underwear in the middle of the night.

Right at that moment, we heard Mom coming

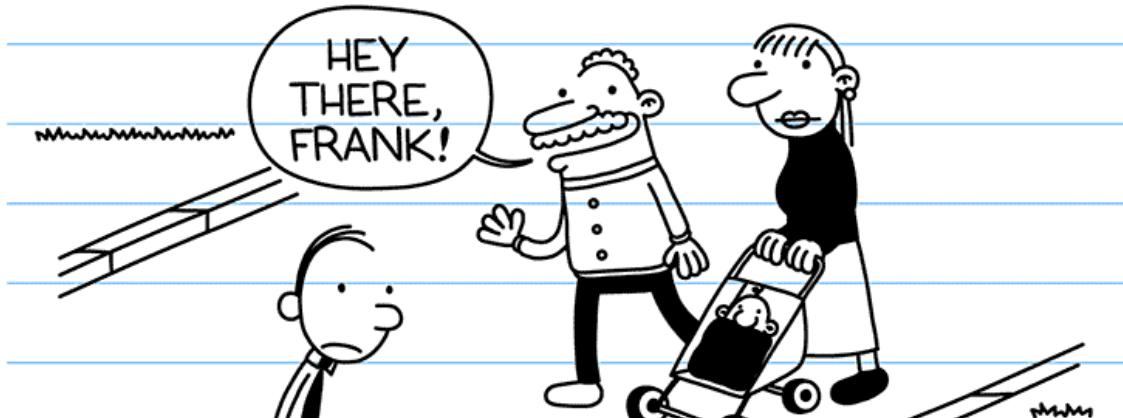
down the stairs.

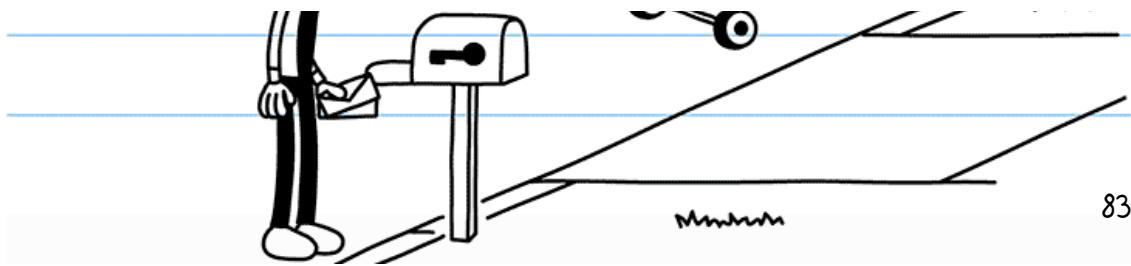
I think me and Dad realized how bad the situation looked for both of us, so we each just grabbed as many oatmeal creams as we could carry and made a run for it.

Wednesday

I was still really steamed at Dad for stealing our lunch treats, and I was planning on confronting him tonight. But Dad was in bed by 6:00, so I didn't get my chance.

Dad went to bed so early because he was depressed about something that happened when he got home from work. When Dad was getting the mail, our neighbors from up the street, the Snellas, walked down the hill with their new baby.





83

The baby's name is Seth, and I think he's about  
two months old.

Every time the Snellas have a baby, six months  
later they throw a big "half-birthday" party and  
invite all the neighbors.

The highlight of each Snella half-birthday  
party is when the adults line up and try to  
make the baby laugh. The grown-ups do all  
these wacky things and make COMPLETE  
fools of themselves.

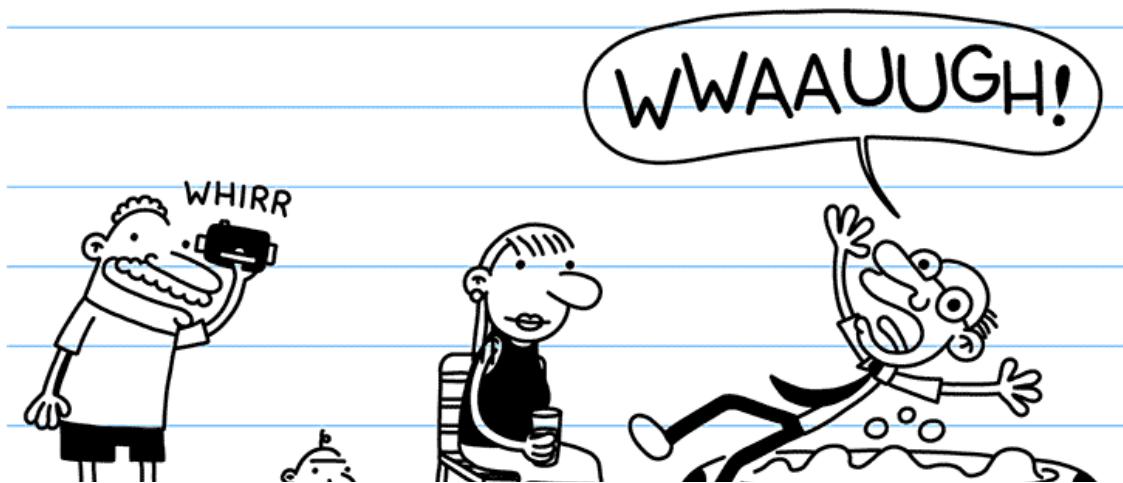


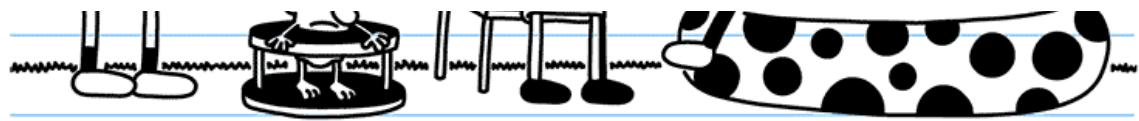
I've been to every single Snella half-birthday

party so far, and no baby has laughed once.

Everyone knows the REAL reason the Snellas have these half-birthday parties is because their big dream is to win the \$10,000 Grand Prize on "America's Funniest Families." That's this TV show where they play home movies of people getting hit in the groin with golf balls and stuff like that.

The Snellas are just hoping something really funny will happen at one of their parties so they can catch it on videotape. They've actually gotten some pretty good stuff over the years. During Sam Snella's half-birthday party, Mr. Bittner split his pants doing jumping jacks. And during Scott Snella's party, Mr. Odom was walking backward, and he fell in the baby pool.





The Snellas turned in those videos, but they  
didn't win anything. So I guess they're just  
gonna keep having babies until they do.

Dad HATES performing in front of people, so he'll  
do everything he can to avoid having to act like a  
fool in front of the whole neighborhood. And so  
far, Dad has weaseled his way out of every single  
Snella half-birthday party.

At dinner, Mom told Dad he HAS to go to  
Seth Snella's half-birthday party in June. And  
I'm pretty sure Dad knows that this time, his  
number is finally up.



Thursday.

Everybody at school has been talking about the big

Valentine's Dance that's coming up next week.

This is the first year at my school that they've

actually had a dance, so everyone's all excited.

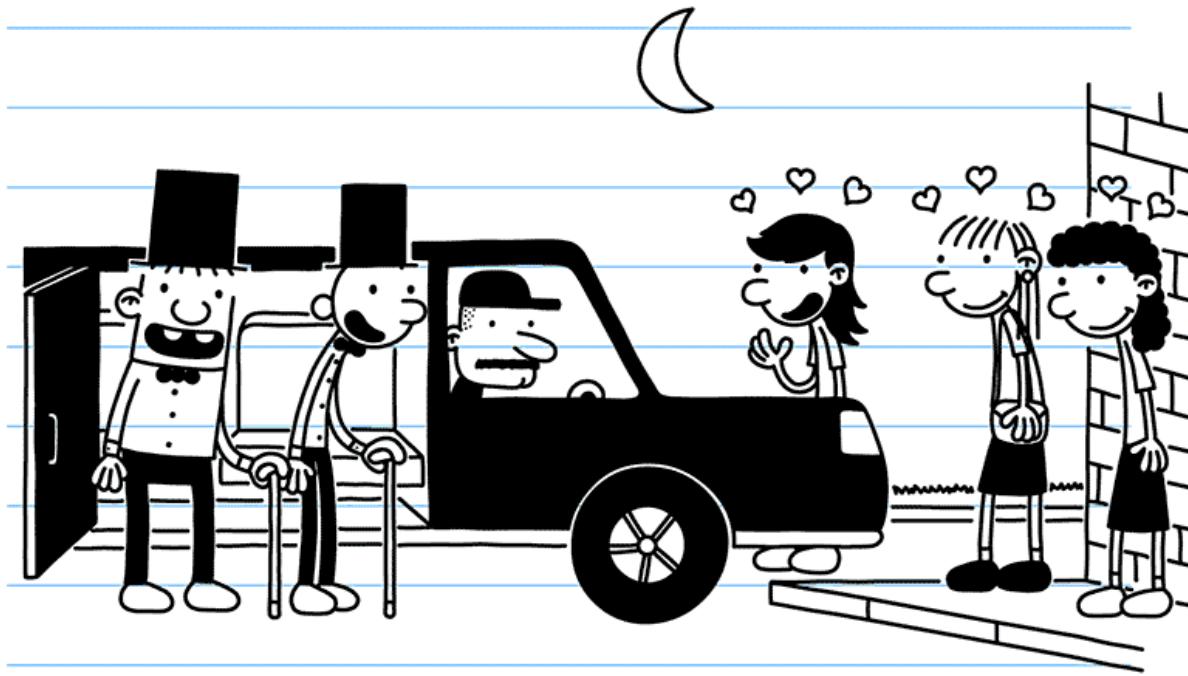
Some of the guys in my class were even asking

girls if they would be their dates to the dance.

Me and Rowley are both bachelors at the

moment, but that's not gonna stop us from

arriving in style.



I figured if me and Rowley scraped together

some money in the next few days, we could rent

a limo for the night. But when I called the limo

company, the guy who answered the phone called

me "Ma'am." So that pretty much blew any

chance he had of getting MY business.

Since the dance is next week, I realized I was  
gonna need something to wear.

I'm kind of in a pinch because I've already worn  
most of the clothes I got for Christmas, and  
I'm almost out of clean stuff to wear. I went  
through my dirty clothes to see if there was  
anything I could wear a SECOND time.



I separated my laundry into two piles: one  
that I could wear again, and one that would  
get me sent down to Nurse Powell's office for a  
lecture on hygiene.





I found a shirt in pile number one that wasn't so bad, except it had a jelly stain on the left-hand side. So at the dance, I'll just need to remember to keep Holly Hills to the right of me at all times.

### Valentine's Day

I was up late last night making Valentine's cards for everyone in my class. I'm pretty sure my middle school is the only one in the state that still makes all the kids give cards to one another.

Last year I was actually looking forward to the card swap. The night before Valentine's Day, I spent a lot of time making an awesome card for this girl named Natasha who I kind of liked.



Beloved Natasha -

For you, a fire blazes  
in my heart

So strong that the  
embers alone could  
bring a thousand hot  
tubs to a boil

Let the bonfire of my  
love wrap you in its  
warmth

Only your kiss could  
quench the flames  
that so consume me  
To you I pledge my

So intense that it  
causes snowmen  
everywhere to despair

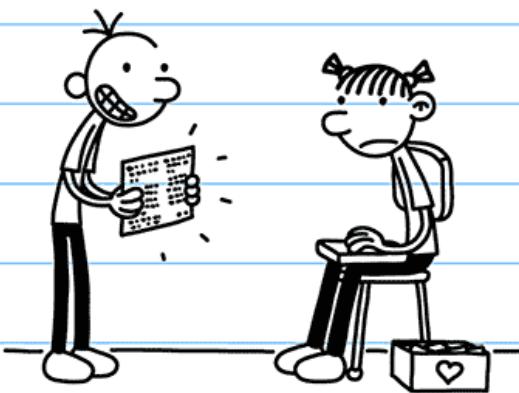
love, my desire, my  
life



Greg

I showed Mom my card to check for spelling errors, but she said what I wrote wasn't "age appropriate." She told me maybe I should just get Natasha a little box of candy or something, but I wasn't about to take romantic advice from my mother.

At school everyone went around the room and put their Valentine's cards in one another's boxes, but I delivered my card to Natasha personally.



I let her read it, and then I waited to see what she made for ME.

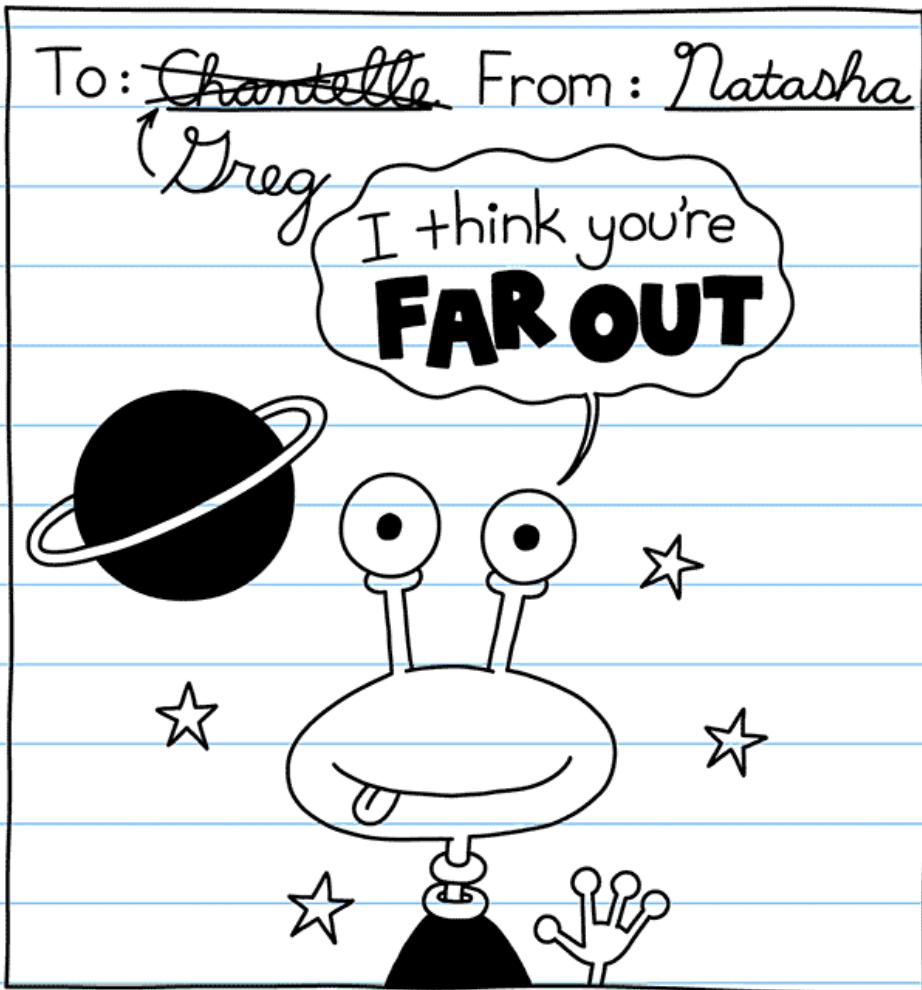
Natasha dug around in her box and pulled out this cheap store-bought card that was supposed to

be for her friend Chantelle, who was out sick

that day.

Then Natasha scribbled out her friend's name

and put MY name on it instead.



Anyway, you can probably see why I wasn't too

enthusiastic about the card exchange THIS year.

Last night I came up with a great idea. I

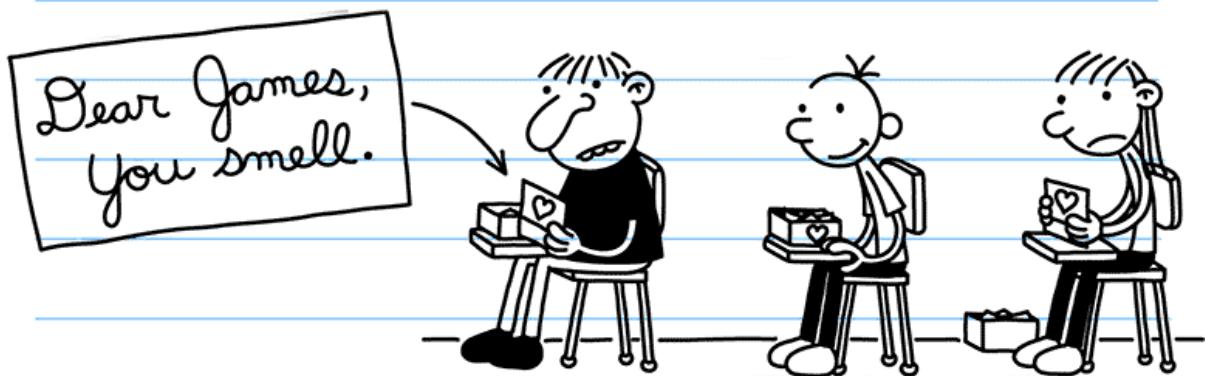
knew I had to make a card for everyone in the

class, but instead of being all mushy and saying

things I didn't really mean, I told everyone

EXACTLY what I thought of them.

The trick was, I didn't actually SIGN any of  
my cards.



A few of the kids complained about the cards to  
our teacher, Mrs. Riser, and then she went around  
the room trying to figure out who sent them. I  
knew Mrs. Riser would think that whoever  
DIDN'T get a card was the culprit, but I was  
prepared for that, because I made a card for  
MYSELF, too.



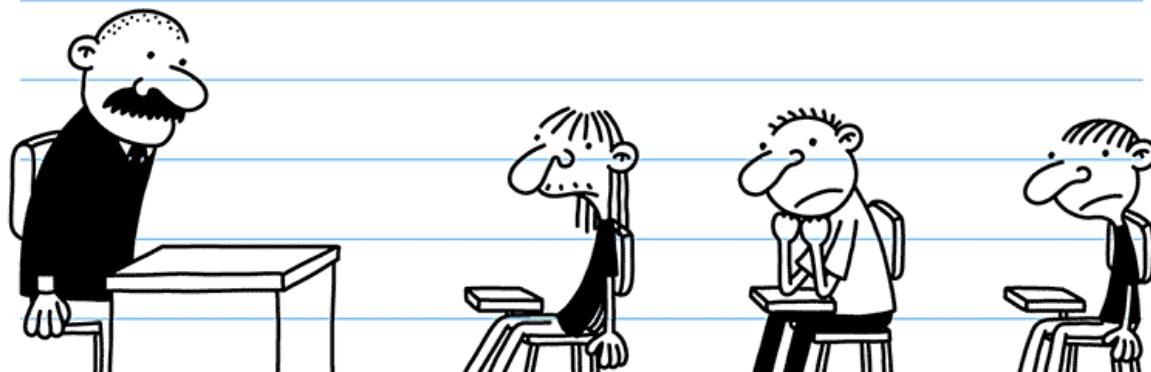


92

After the card exchange came the Valentine's  
Dance. The dance was originally supposed to be  
at NIGHT, but I guess they couldn't get  
enough parents to volunteer to be chaperones. So  
they put the dance smack in the middle of the  
school day instead.

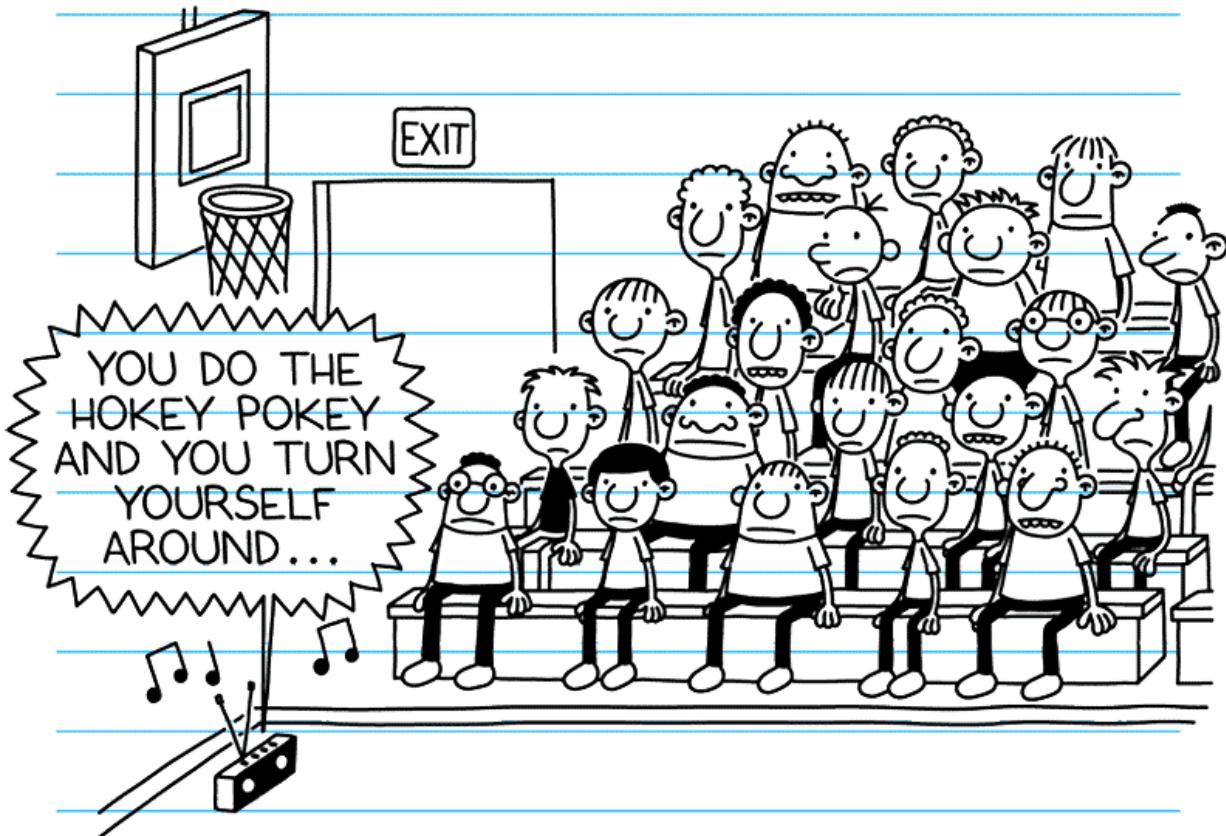
The teachers started rounding everyone up and  
sending them down to the auditorium at around  
1:00. Anyone who didn't want to cough up the  
two bucks for admission had to go down to Mr.  
Ray's room for study hall.

But it was pretty obvious to most of us that  
"study hall" was basically the same thing as  
detention.





The rest of us filed into the gym and sat in the bleachers. I don't know why, but all the boys sat on one side of the gym, and all the girls sat on the other. Once everyone was inside the gym, the teachers started the music. But whoever picked out the songs is SERIOUSLY out of touch with what kids are listening to these days.



For the first fifteen minutes or so, no one moved a muscle. Then Mr. Phillips, the guidance counselor,

and Nurse Powell walked to the middle of the gym

and started dancing.

I guess Mr. Phillips and Nurse Powell thought if  
THEY started dancing, all the kids would come  
down onto the floor and join them. All they  
REALLY did was GUARANTEE that everyone  
stayed in their seat.



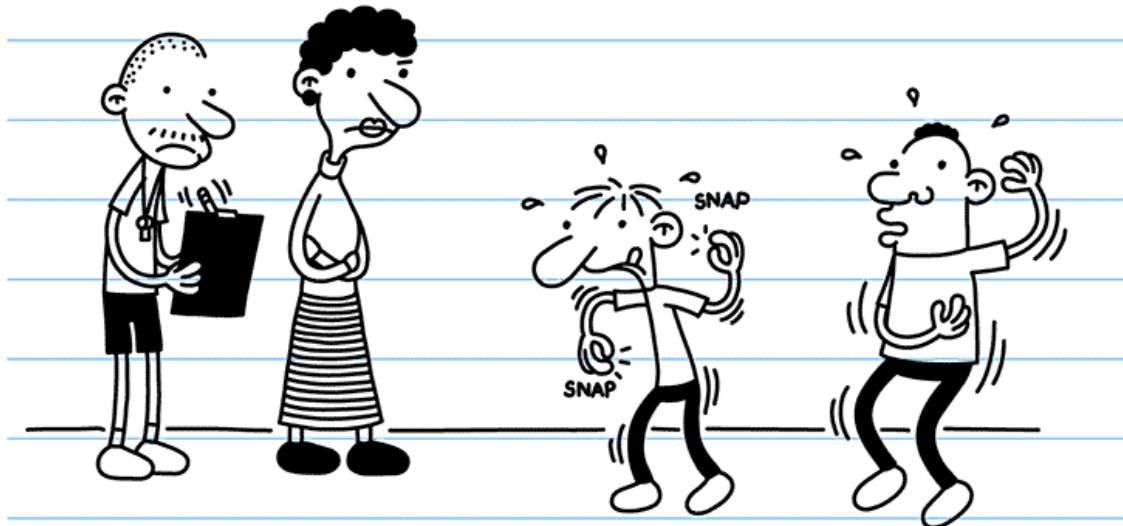
Finally, Mrs. Mancy, the principal, grabbed a  
microphone and made an announcement. She said  
that everyone in the bleachers was REQUIRED  
to come down onto the floor and dance, and it  
would count for 20% of our Phys Ed grades.

At that point me and a couple of other boys  
tried to sneak out to go down to Mr. Ray's

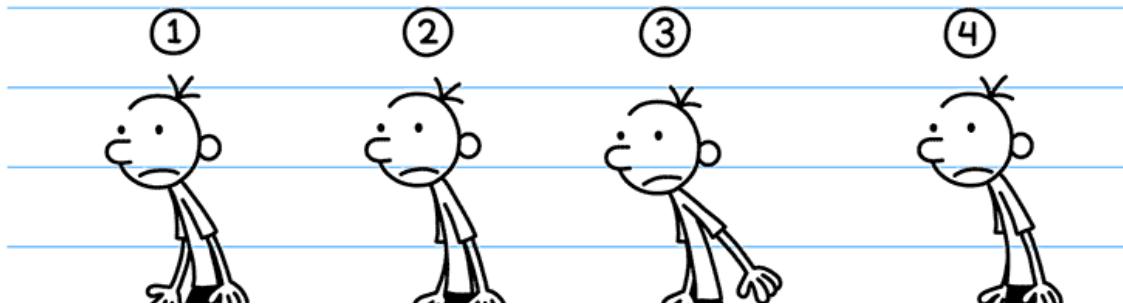
room, but we got caught by some teachers who

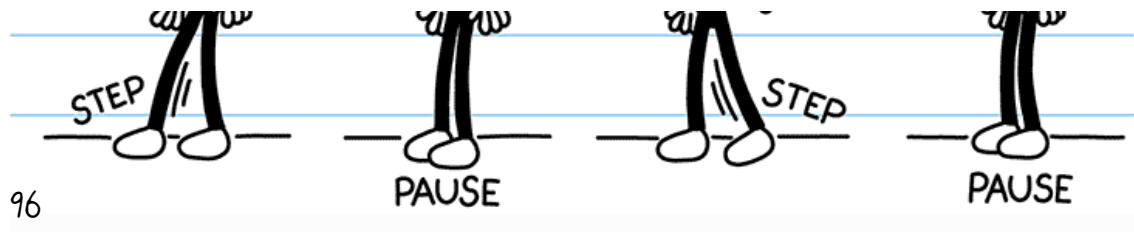
were blocking the exits.

Mrs. Mancy wasn't kidding about the gym grade  
thing, either. She was walking around with Mr.  
Underwood, the Phys Ed teacher, and he was  
carrying his gradebook with him.



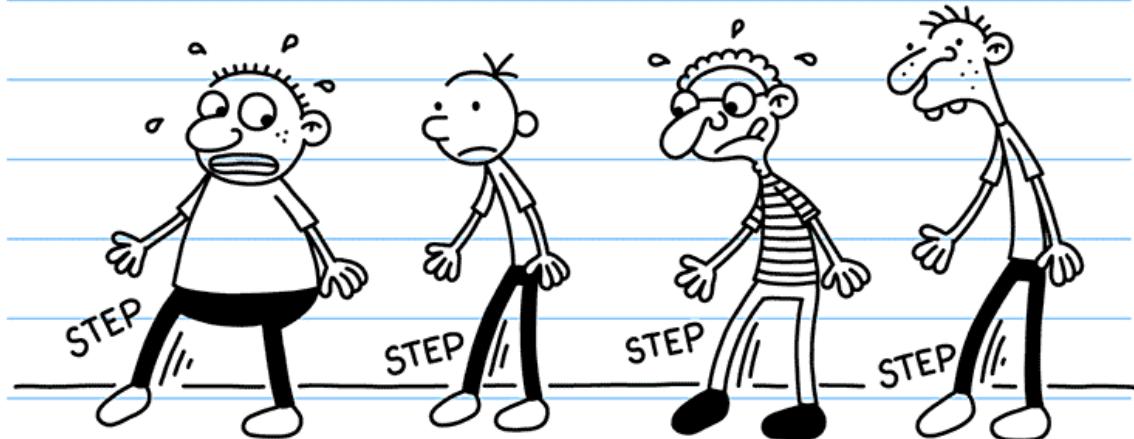
I'm already close to flunking Phys Ed, so I  
knew it was time to get serious. But I didn't  
want to look like a fool in front of the kids in  
my class, either. So I just came up with the  
simplest move I could do that would technically  
qualify as "dancing."





96

Unfortunately, a bunch of guys who were worried  
about THEIR Phys Ed grades saw what I was  
doing, and they came over to where I was. And  
the next thing I knew, I was surrounded by a  
bunch of bozos who were stealing my moves.



I wanted to get as far away from those guys  
as I could, so I looked around the gym for a  
place where I could go and dance in peace.

That's when I spotted Holly Hills across the  
room, and I remembered why I even bothered  
coming to the dance in the first place.

Holly was dancing with her friends in the middle

of the gym, and I started doing my step-dance

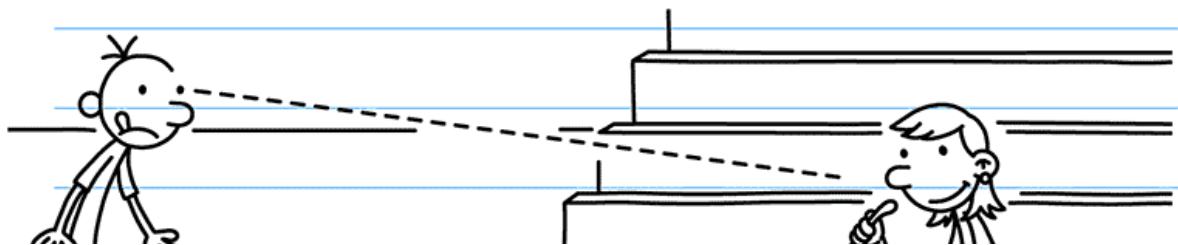
thing, moving slowly toward them.

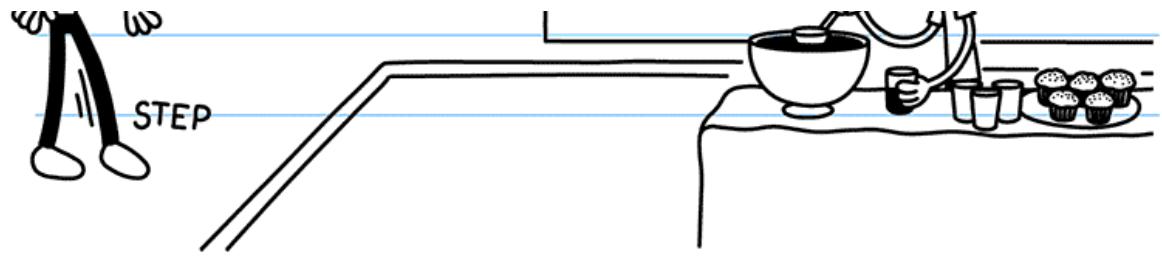
All the girls were lumped together in one big pack, and they were dancing like professionals, probably because they spend all their free time watching MTV.



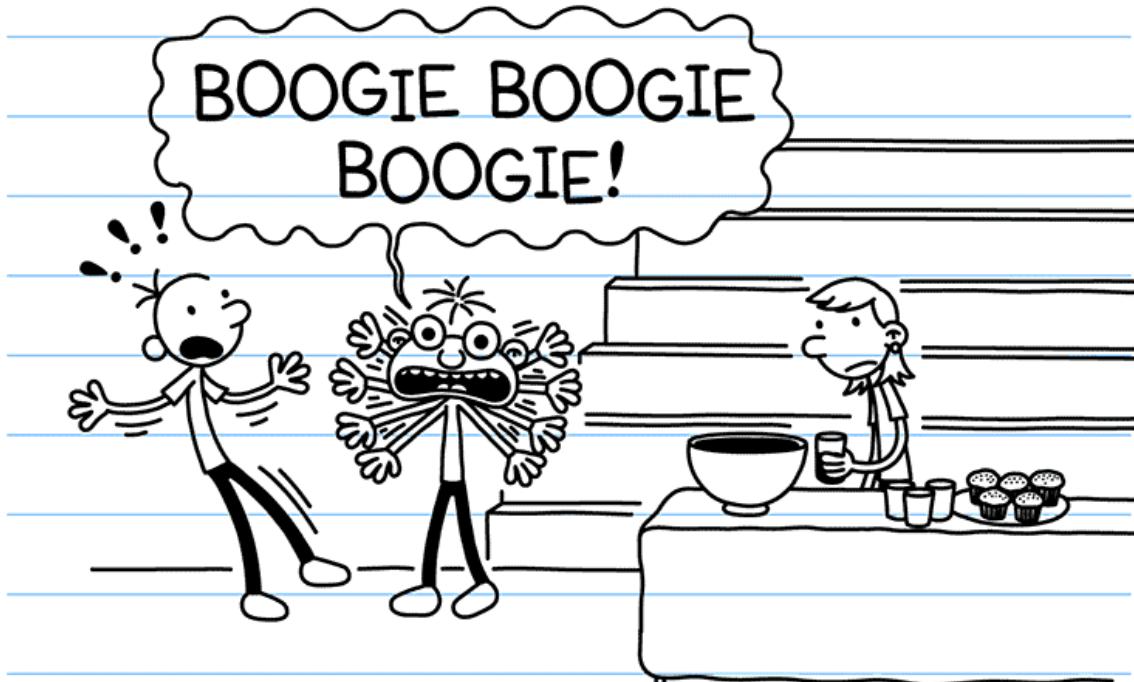
Holly was right in the middle of the group. I kind of danced around the outside of the circle for a while, trying to find an opening, but I couldn't.

Finally, Holly stopped dancing and went to get a drink, and I knew it was my big chance.





But just when I was about to go up to Holly  
and say something witty, Fregley came flying in  
out of NOWHERE.



Fregley had pink frosting covering his face, so  
he was probably all hopped-up on sugar from the  
cupcakes they were serving at the refreshments  
table. All I know for sure is that he TOTALLY  
ruined what should have been a great moment  
between me and Holly.

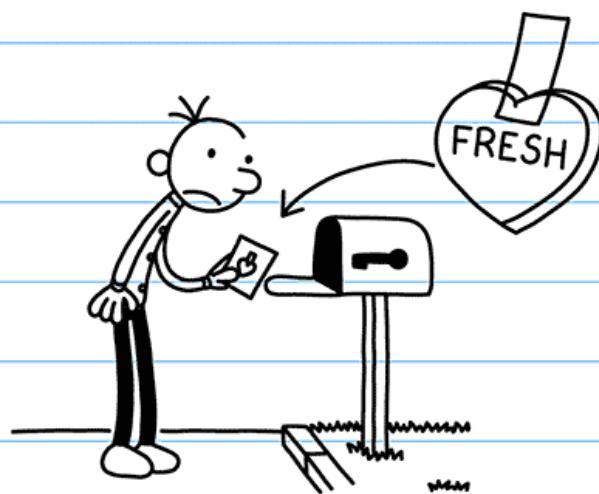
A few minutes later, the dance was over, and I  
missed my chance to make a good impression on

her. I walked home alone after school, because I

just needed a little time by myself.

After dinner Mom told me there was a Valentine's card out in the mailbox with my name on it. When I asked her who it was from, she just said, "someone special." I ran out to the mailbox and got the card, and I have to admit I was pretty excited. I was hoping it was from Holly, but there are at least four or five other girls at my school who I wouldn't mind getting a card from, either.

The card was in a big pink envelope with my name written in cursive. I ripped it open, and here's what I found: a sheet of construction paper with a piece of candy taped to it, and it was from ROWLEY.



---

Sometimes I just don't know about that boy.

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100

MARCH

Saturday.

The other day Dad found Manny's blanket, Tingy,  
on the couch. I don't think Dad knew what it  
was, so he threw it away.



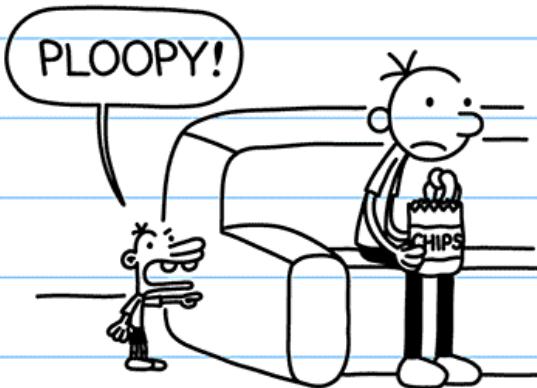
Ever since then Manny's been turning the house  
upside down looking for his blanket, and finally  
Dad had to tell him that he accidentally threw  
it out. Well, Manny got his revenge yesterday  
by using Dad's Civil War battlefield as a playset.





101

Manny's been taking his anger out on everyone else, too. Today I was sitting on the couch just minding my own business, and Manny walked up to me and said —



I didn't know if "Ploopy" was some kind of little-kid bad word or what, but I didn't like the sound of it. So I went to find Mom and ask her if SHE knew what it meant.

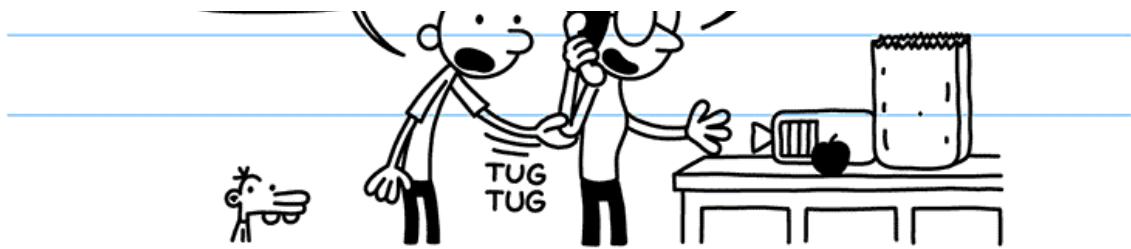
Unfortunately, Mom was on the phone, and when she's gabbing with one of her friends, it takes forever to get her attention.

MOM  
MOM  
MOM  
MOM  
MOM

A large, rounded speech bubble contains the word "MOM" written in all caps, repeated five times vertically. A small asterisk symbol is at the bottom left of the bubble.

BLAH  
BLAH  
BLAH  
BLAH

A large, rounded speech bubble contains the word "BLAH" written in all caps, repeated four times vertically. A small asterisk symbol is at the bottom left of the bubble.



I finally got Mom to stop talking for a second,

but she was mad that I interrupted her. I told

her Manny called me "Ploopy," and she said —

WHAT IS A PLOOPY?



That kind of threw me for a second, because it's

the exact question I was trying to ask HER. I

didn't have an answer, so Mom just went back to

her conversation.

After that, Manny knew he had a green light to

call me Ploopy whenever he wanted, and that's what

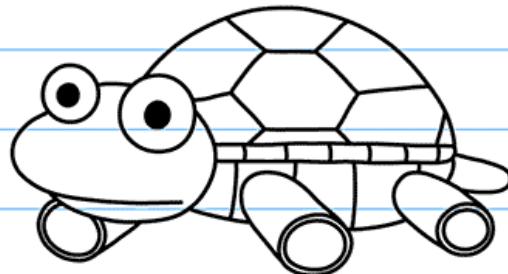
he's been doing all day.

WIPE MY  
HEINIE,  
PLOOPY!





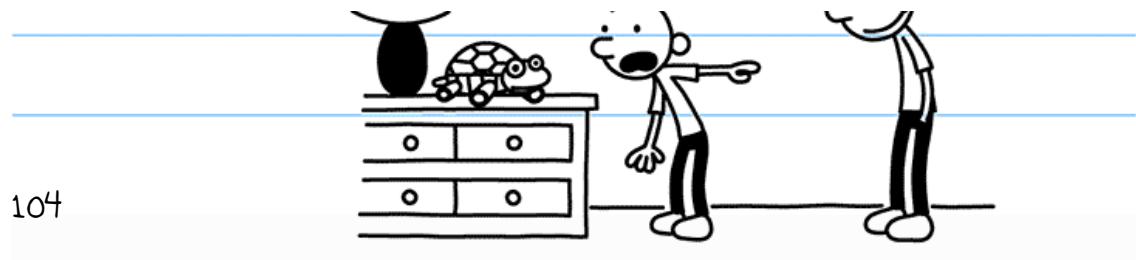
I guess I should've known that telling on Manny  
wasn't gonna get me anywhere. When me and  
Rodrick were little, we used to tell on each other  
so much that it made Mom crazy. So she brought  
out this thing called the Tattle Turtle to solve  
the problem.



Mom came up with the Tattle Turtle idea when  
she taught preschool. The idea behind the Tattle  
Turtle was that if me and Rodrick had a problem  
with each other, we had to tell the Tattle  
Turtle instead of Mom. Well, the Tattle Turtle  
worked out GREAT for Rodrick, but not so  
much for me.

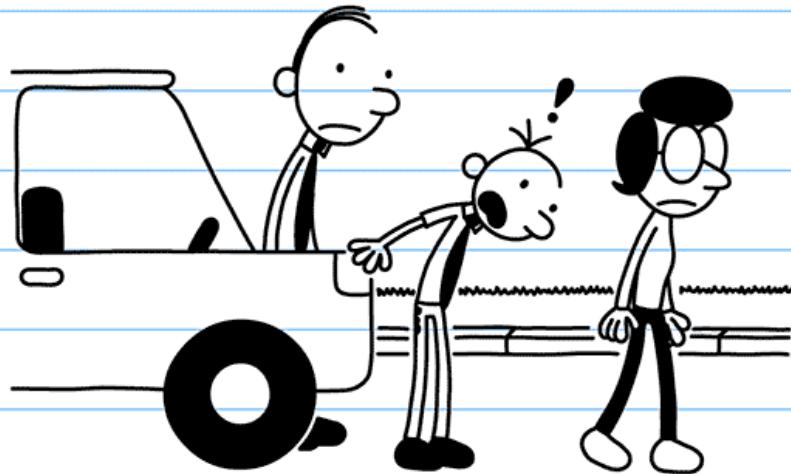
TATTLE TURTLE,  
RODRICK STOLE ALL  
THE MONEY FROM  
MY PIGGY BANK!





Easter

On the car ride to church today, I felt like I  
was sitting on something sticky. And when I got  
out and turned around to look at the back of my  
pants, there was chocolate ALL OVER them.



Manny had brought his Easter bunny with him  
in the car, and I must've been sitting on an ear  
or something.

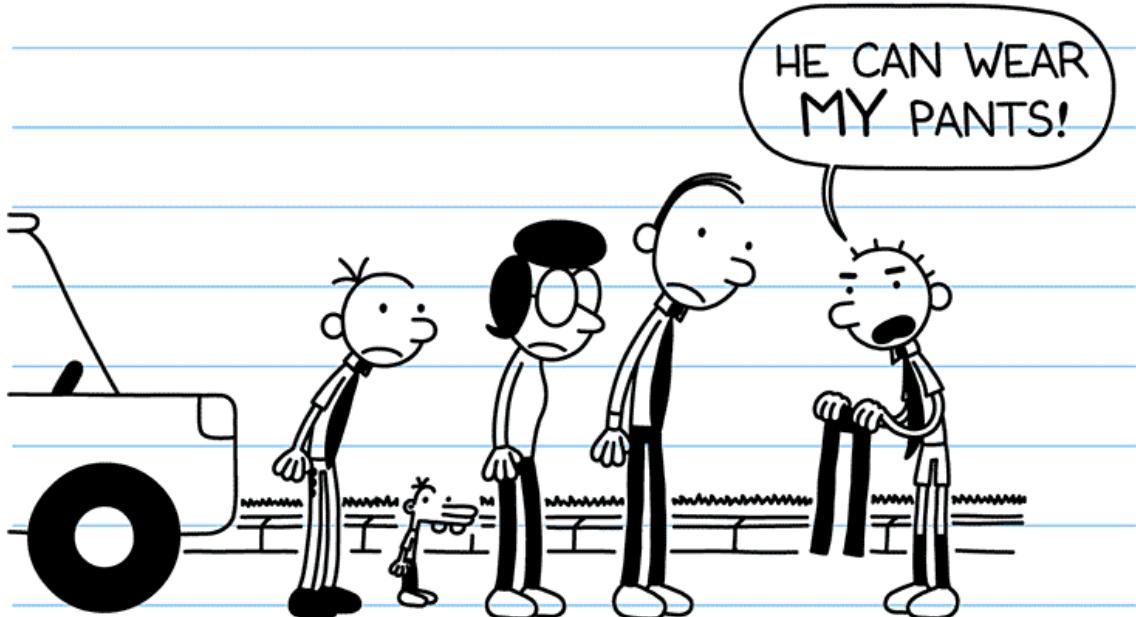
Mom was trying to get the family inside so we  
could get good seats, but I told her there was  
no WAY I was going in there looking like that.

I knew Holly Hills and her family were probably

already there, and I really didn't need her

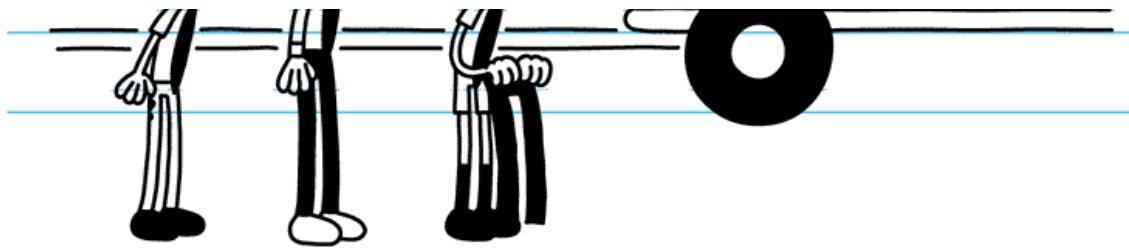
wondering if I'd pooped in my pants.

Mom said skipping church on Easter wasn't an option, and we argued back and forth. Then Rodrick chimed in with HIS solution.



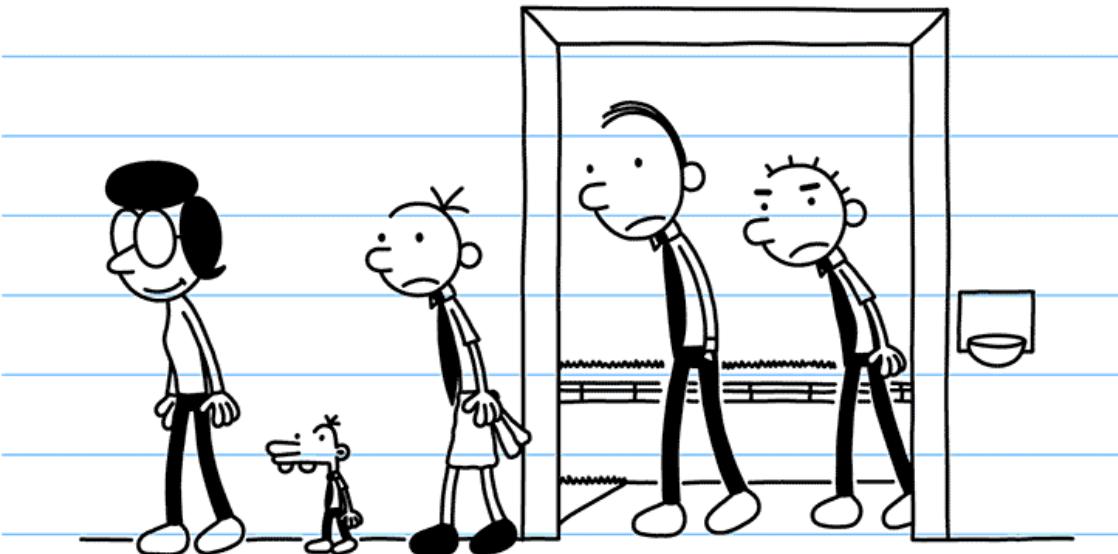
Rodrick knows that church on Easter is always at least two hours long, so he was just looking for an excuse to get out of it. But right at that moment, Dad's boss and his family pulled up alongside us in the parking lot.





Mom made Rodrick put his pants back on, and then  
she gave me her sweater to tie around my waist.

I don't know which was worse: wearing dress pants  
with chocolate all over them or wearing Mom's pink  
Easter sweater like a kilt.



Church was pretty full. The only seats that were  
empty were right up front where Uncle Joe and  
his family were sitting, so we sat next to them.

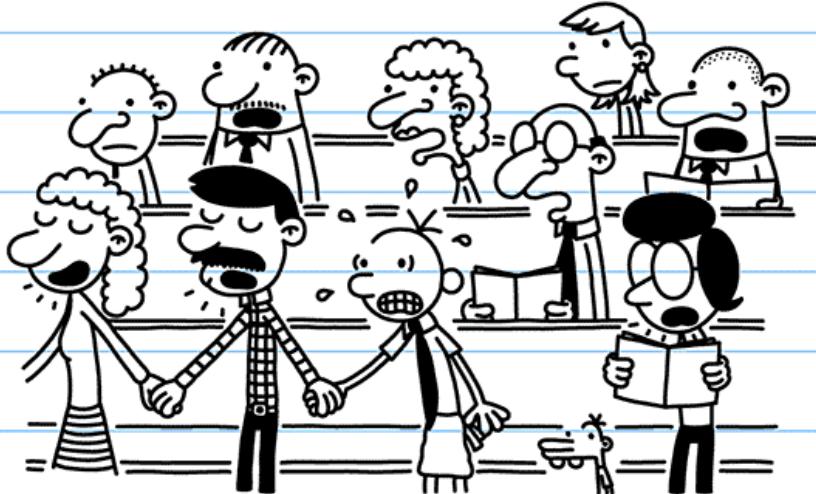
I looked around, and I spotted Holly Hills and  
her family three rows back. I was pretty sure

she couldn't see what I was wearing from the  
waist down, so that was a relief.

As soon as the music started up, Uncle Joe

reached out to hold hands with me and his wife,

and he started singing.



I tried to break free a couple of times, but

Uncle Joe had an iron grip. The song was only

like a minute long, but to me it felt like half

an hour.

After the song was over, I turned to the people

behind us, pointed at Uncle Joe, and made the

"cuckoo" sign so everyone knew I wasn't on board

with this holding-hands thing.





108

Somewhere in the middle of church, they passed  
a basket around so people could give money to  
help the needy.

I didn't have any money of my own, so I  
whispered to Mom to see if she would give me a  
dollar. Then, when the basket came to me, I  
made a big deal of putting the dollar in the  
basket to make sure Holly could see how generous  
I was.



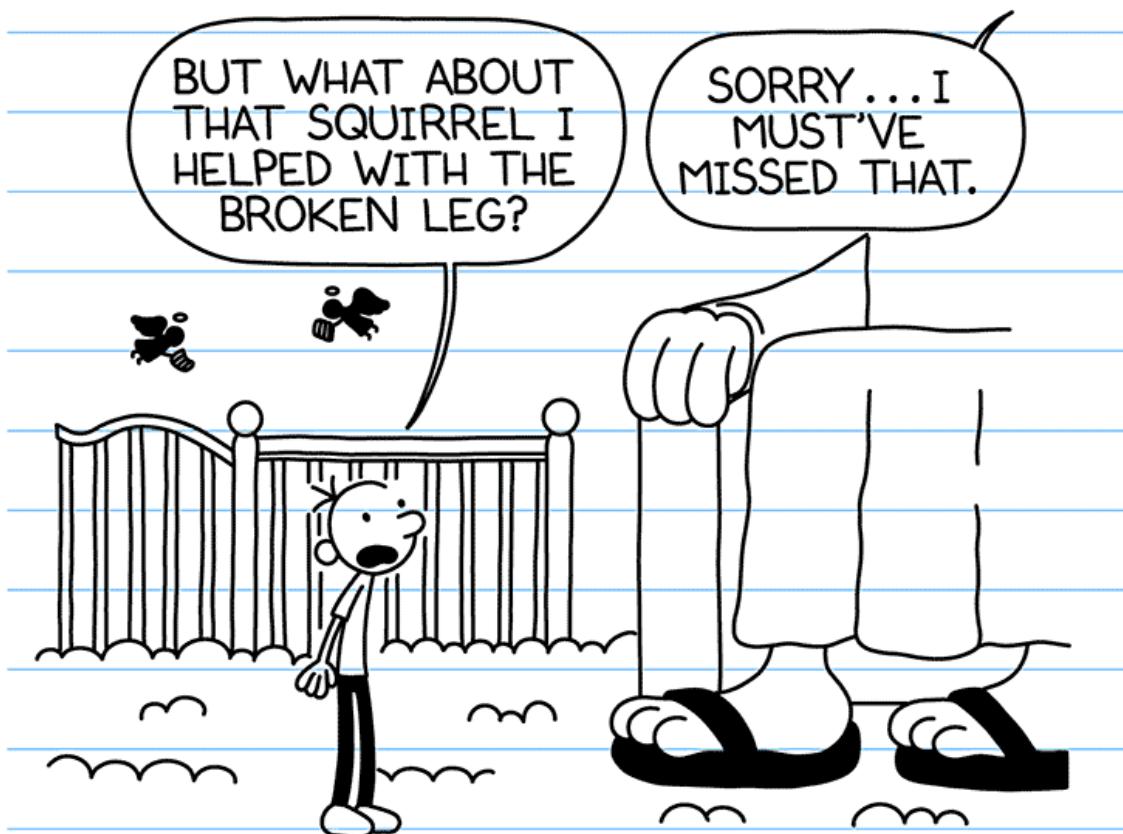
But when I put the money in the basket, I  
realized Mom had given me a TWENTY, not a  
single. I tried to grab the basket to make  
change, but it was too late.

All I can say is, I better get some points in

Heaven for THAT donation.

I've heard that when you do good deeds, you're  
supposed to be all private about it, but that  
doesn't really make a whole lot of sense to ME.

If I start hiding my good deeds, I'm sure I'll  
just regret it later on.

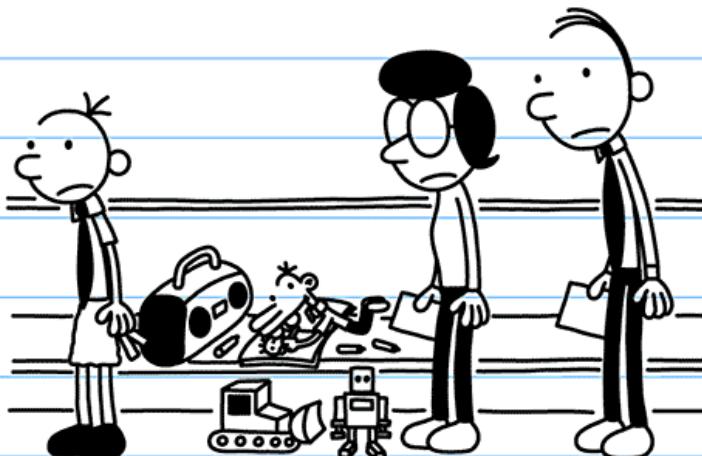


Like I said before, the Easter service is SUPER  
long. One of the songs was going on for about

five minutes, and I started looking for ways to  
entertain myself.

The way that Rodrick keeps himself busy when  
he's bored is by picking at this scab on the back  
of his hand that he never lets heal, but I'm not  
really interested in going that route.

Manny has it MADE in church. Mom and Dad let  
him bring all sorts of stuff with us to keep him  
entertained. Believe me, Mom and Dad never let  
me bring anything to church when I was his age.



Mom and Dad ALWAYS baby Manny, though,  
and I'll give you an example of what I'm talking  
about. Last week Manny was at preschool, and  
when he opened up his lunchbox his sandwich was

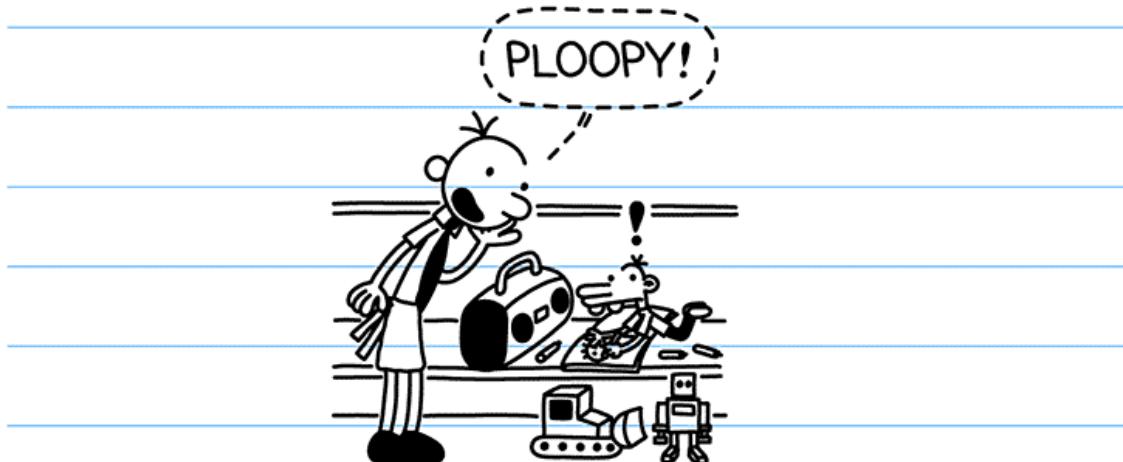
cut in HALF, not in QUARTERS, the way he

likes it.

Manny threw a huge temper tantrum, and the  
teachers had to call Mom. So she left work and  
drove all the way down to Manny's school to  
make the extra slice.



Anyway, I was thinking about this at church, and  
all of a sudden I got an idea in my head. I  
leaned over to Manny and whispered —



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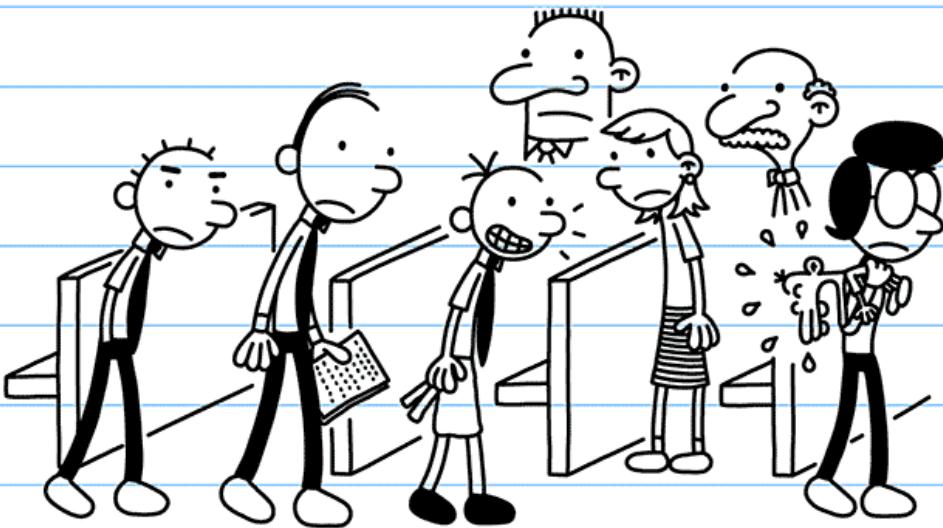
Well, Manny completely LOST it.

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He started BAWLING, and everyone in the church turned their heads our way. Even the minister stopped talking to see what was going on.

Mom couldn't calm Manny down, so we had to leave. Instead of walking out the side door, though, we walked right down the center aisle.

I tried to look as cool as possible when we walked past the Hills family, but it was pretty tough, considering the circumstances.



The only person more embarrassed than me was Dad. Dad tried to cover his face with the church

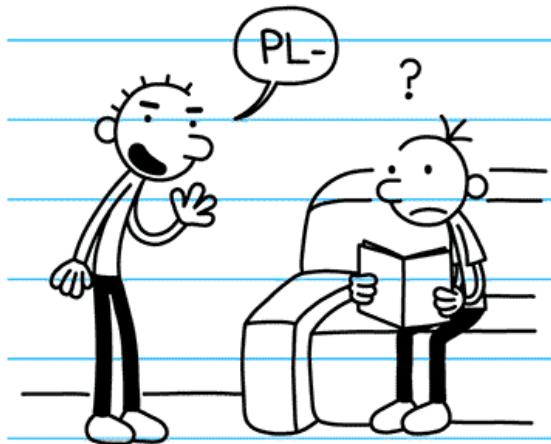
bulletin, but his boss spotted him and gave Dad

the "thumbs up" on the way out.

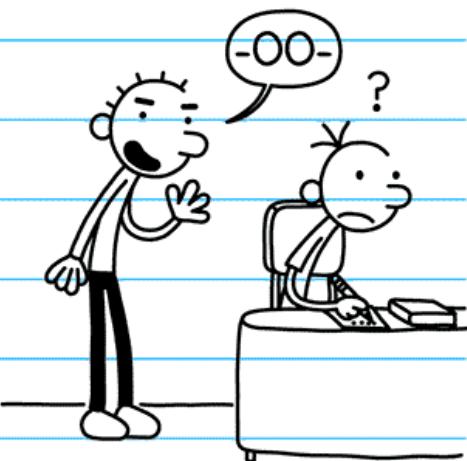
Wednesday

Things have kind of been tense around the house since the mess the other day. First of all, Mom was really mad at me for calling Manny "Ploopy," so I had to remind her that she didn't have any problem when MANNY said it. So Mom banned the word for everyone, and she said that if anyone was caught saying it, they'd be grounded for a week. But of course it didn't take long for Rodrick to find a loophole.

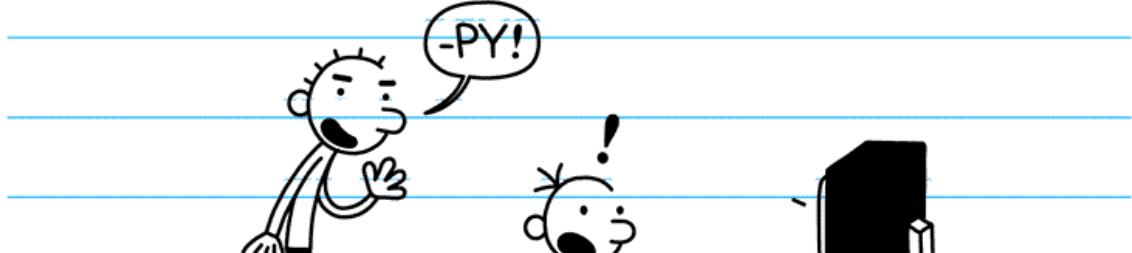
MONDAY

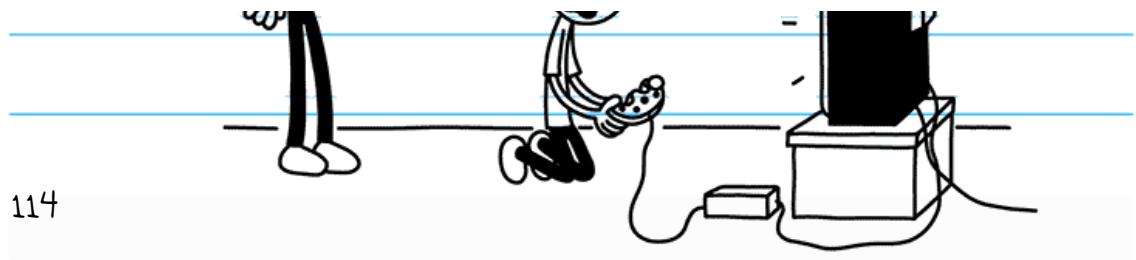


TUESDAY



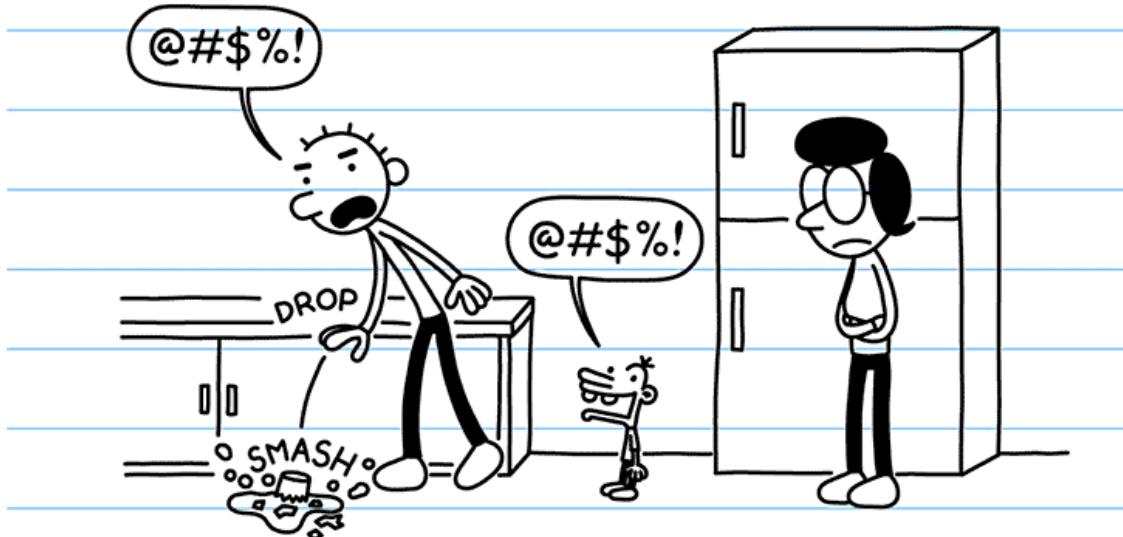
TODAY



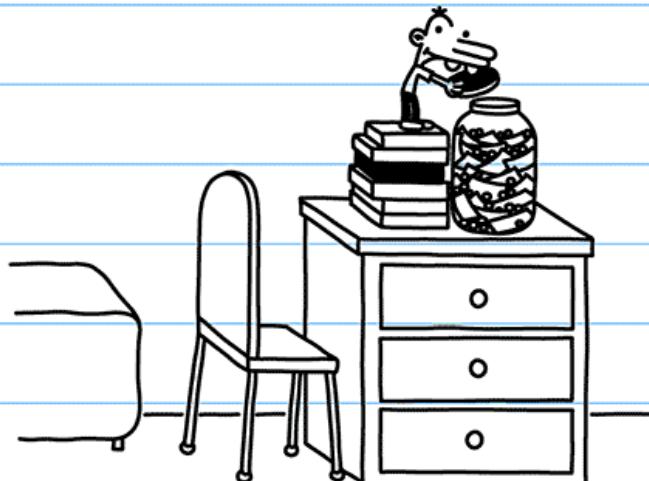


114

This isn't the FIRST time Mom has banned us  
from saying certain words in the house. A while  
back, Mom made a "no swearing" rule, because  
Manny was picking up new words left and right.



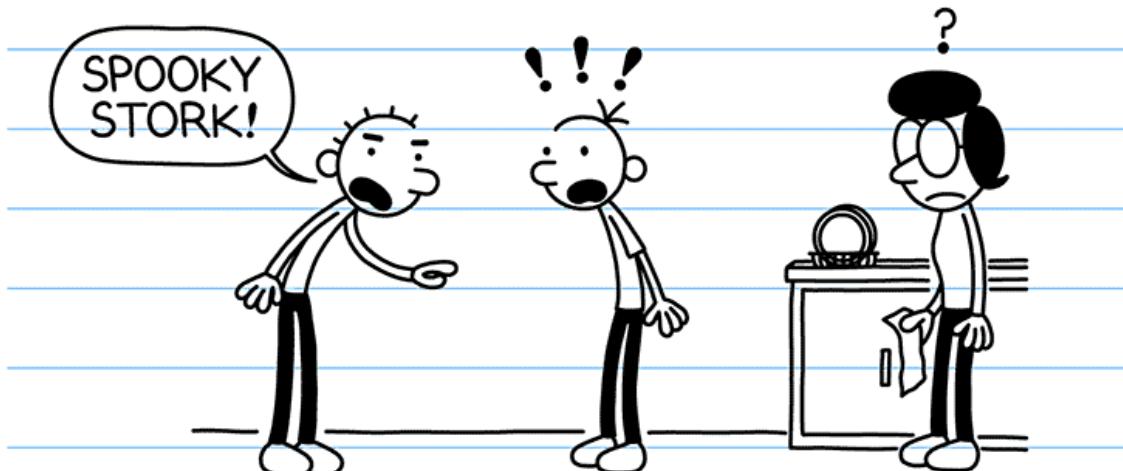
Every time someone said a bad word in front of  
Manny, they had to put a dollar in his "Swear Jar."  
So Manny was getting rich off of me and Rodrick.



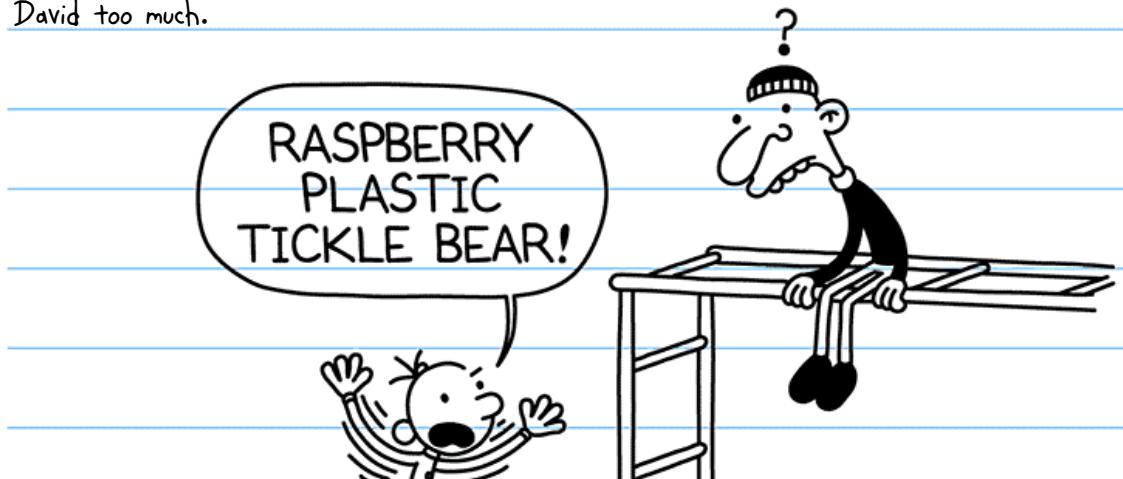
And then Mom upped the ante by banning words

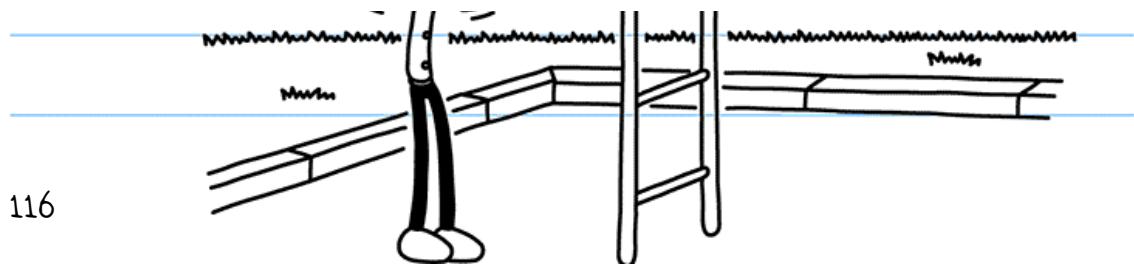
like "stupid" and "jerk" and stuff like that.

To keep from going bankrupt, me and Rodrick  
came up with a bunch of code words that meant  
the same thing as the banned words, and we've  
been using them ever since.



Every once in a while, I forget to switch back  
when I get to school, and I end up looking  
dumb. Just today, David Nester spit out a piece  
of gum and it landed in my hair. I really let loose  
with everything I had, but I don't think I upset  
David too much.





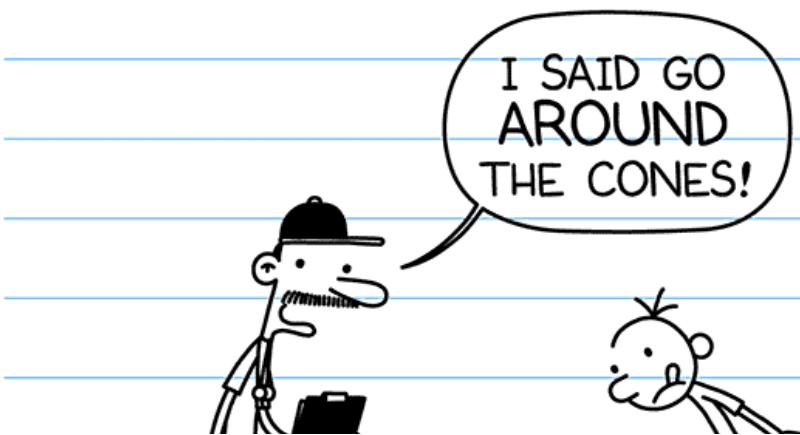
116

The other thing that's changed since Easter is  
that Dad has been on me and Rodrick's case. I  
guess he's tired of us looking bad in front of his  
boss, Mr. Warren.

Dad made Rodrick enroll in an SAT class, and  
he made ME sign up for Rec League soccer.

Soccer tryouts were tonight. The coaches lined  
up all the kids for a "skills test," where you had  
to dribble the ball between some cones and stuff  
like that.

I tried my best, but I got ranked "Pre-Alpha  
Minus," which I'm sure is just adult code words  
for "You Stink."





After the skills test, they put us on different teams. I was hoping I'd get one of those fun coaches who doesn't take sports too seriously, like Mr. Proctor or Mr. Gibb, but I got the worst one out of the whole bunch, Mr. Litch.

Mr. Litch is one of these drill sergeant types who likes to yell a lot. Mr. Litch used to be Rodrick's coach, and he's pretty much the reason Rodrick doesn't do sports any more.



Anyway, our first real practice is tomorrow.

Hopefully, I'll just get cut so I can get back to

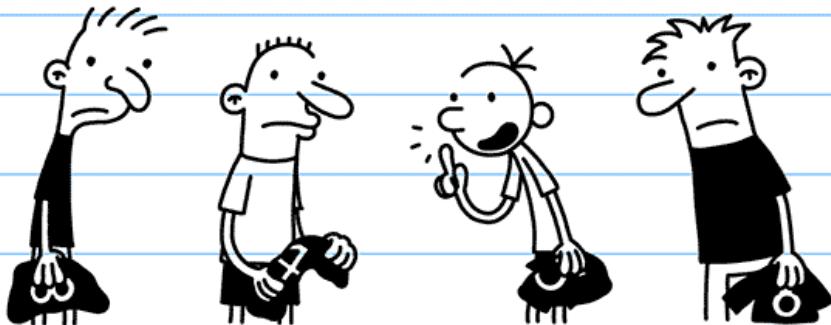
playing video games. Twisted Wizard 2 is supposed to

come out soon, and I heard it's AWESOME.

Thursday.

I got put on a team with a bunch of kids I  
didn't really know. The first thing Mr. Litch did  
was hand out uniforms, and then he told us to  
come up with a team name.

I suggested that we call our team the "Twisted  
Wizards," and get the Game Hut to sponsor us.



Nobody liked my idea, though. One kid said we  
should call the team the "Red Sox," which I  
thought was a terrible idea. Number one, the Red  
Sox are a BASEBALL team, and number two, our  
soccer uniforms are BLUE.

But of course everyone else LOVED the idea, and  
that's the name that won out. Then the assistant

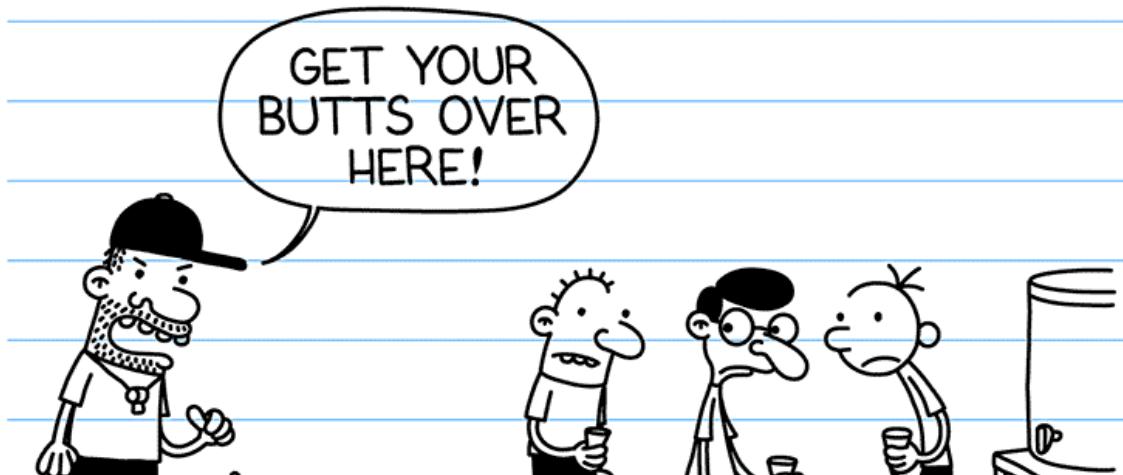
coach, Mr. Boone, said he was worried that if we

called our team the Red Sox, we might get sued.

I'm pretty sure those guys have better things to do than to go around suing middle school soccer teams, but like I said before, nobody wanted to listen to MY opinions.

So the team voted to change the name to "Red SOCKS," and that was final.

After that we started practice. Mr. Litch and Mr. Boone made us run laps and do leg-lifts and a bunch of other stuff that had nothing to do with soccer. In between wind sprints, I hung out by the water cooler with the other two Pre-Alpha Minus guys. And every time we were slow getting back to the field, Mr. Litch would yell —

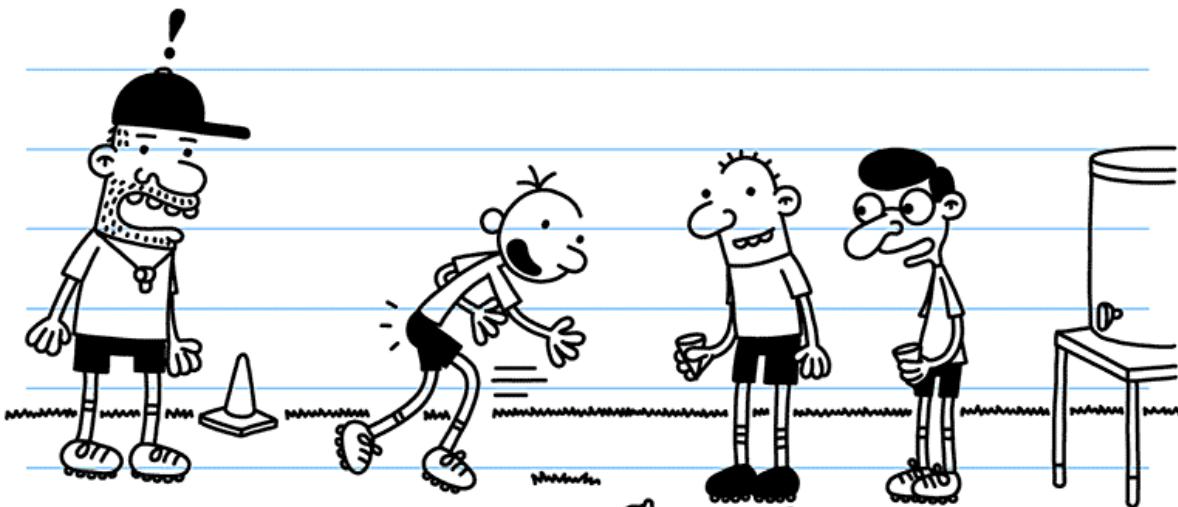




120

Me and the other guys thought it would be pretty funny if the next time Mr. Litch said that, we all ran at him with our butts sticking out.

So the next time Mr. Litch yelled for us to get our butts over there, I ran with my rear end pointed at him. But the other guys TOTALLY hung me out to dry.



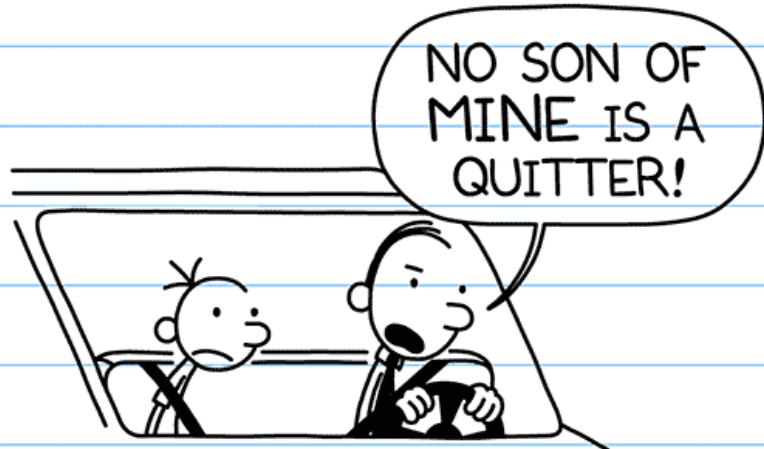
Mr. Litch did not appreciate my sense of humor, and he made me run three extra laps.

When Dad picked me up at the end of practice, I told him that maybe this soccer thing wasn't

such a good idea, and that he should probably

just let me quit.

That made Dad pretty mad, so he said —



Which isn't really true at all. I'm a HUGE quitter,  
and so is Rodrick. And I think Manny is on his  
third or fourth preschool by now.

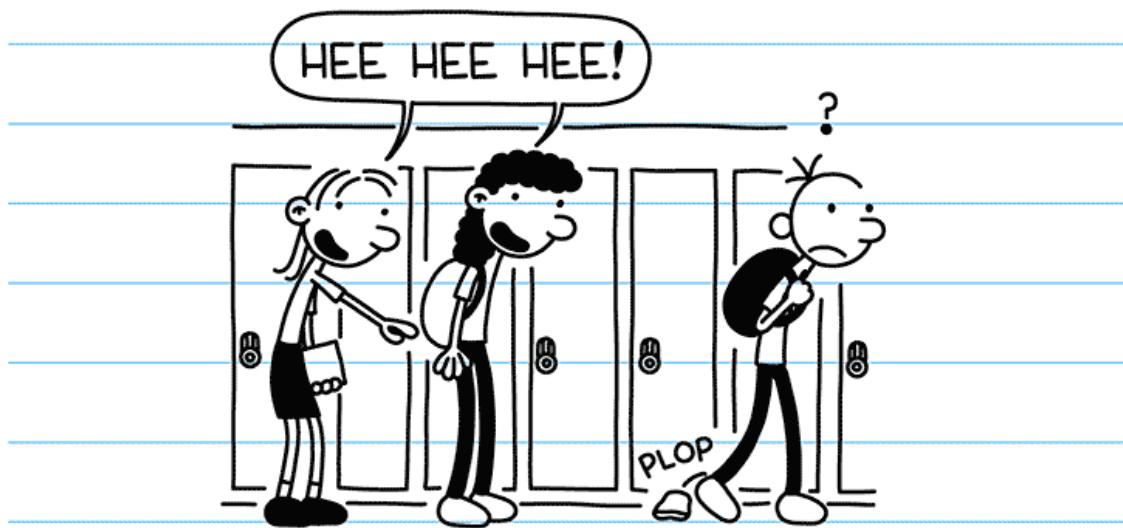
Anyway, I got the feeling that if I'm gonna  
get out of soccer, I'm gonna have to think of  
another angle.

Friday

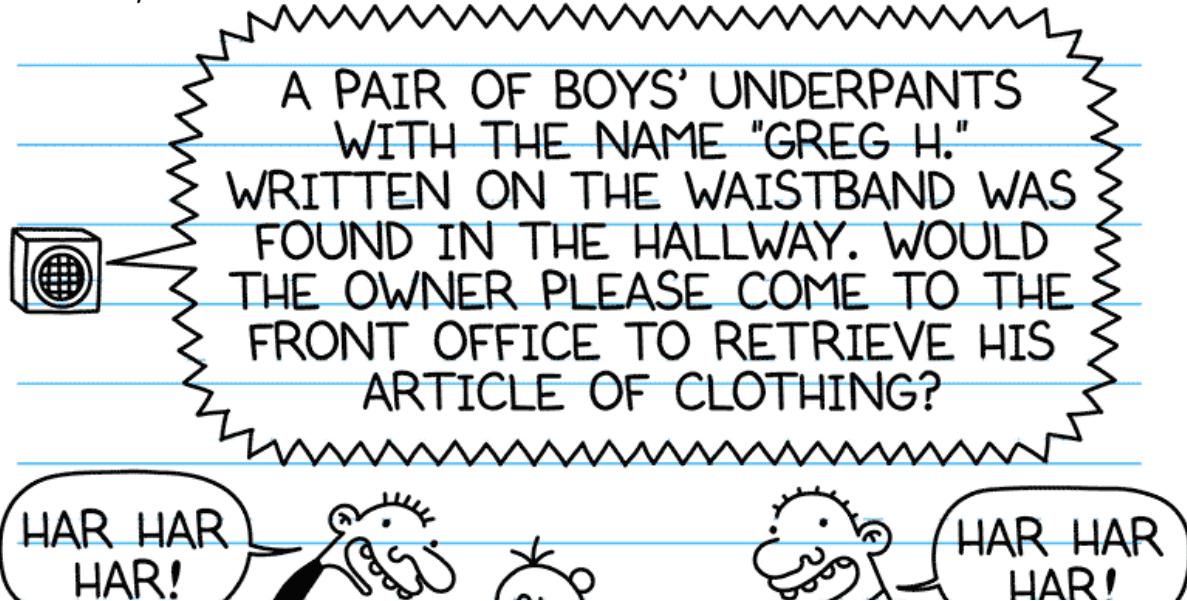
Ever since I started playing soccer, I've been  
going through my clothes twice as quick as I did  
before. I've been totally out of clean stuff to  
wear for a while now, so I've been pulling all of  
my clothes out of my dirty laundry piles. But I

found out today that recycling clothes from the  
dirty laundry pile can be risky.

I was walking by some girls in the hallway today, and a pair of dirty underwear fell out of one of my pant legs. I just kept walking and hoped that the girls might think the underwear wasn't actually mine.



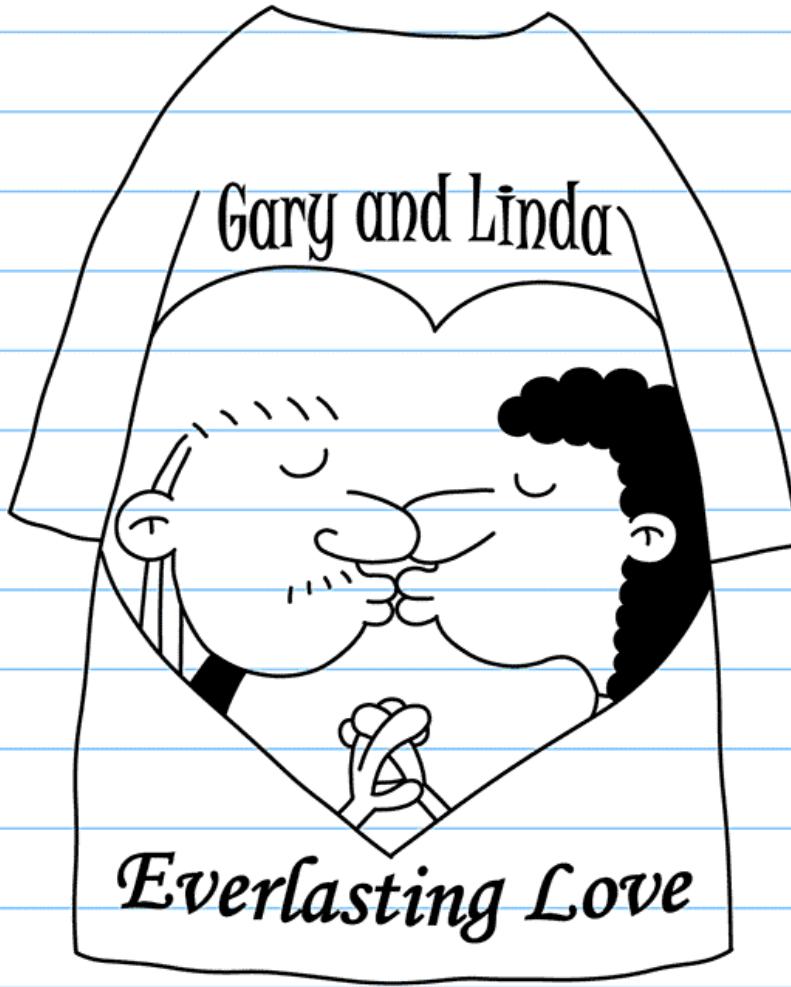
But I paid the price for THAT decision later on in the day.





123

I think I'd better hurry up and learn how to  
do my laundry, because I'm really running out of  
options. Tomorrow I'm gonna have to wear a  
T-shirt I got from my Uncle Gary's first wedding,  
and I'm really not looking forward to it.

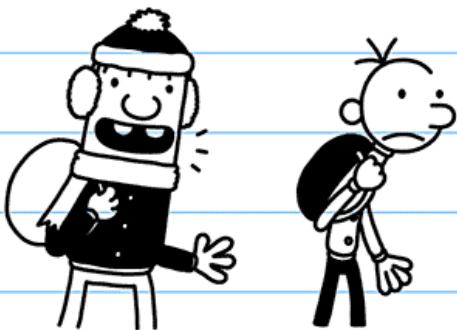


I was kind of down in the dumps on the walk home  
from school today, but then something happened to  
change that. Rowley told me one of his friends

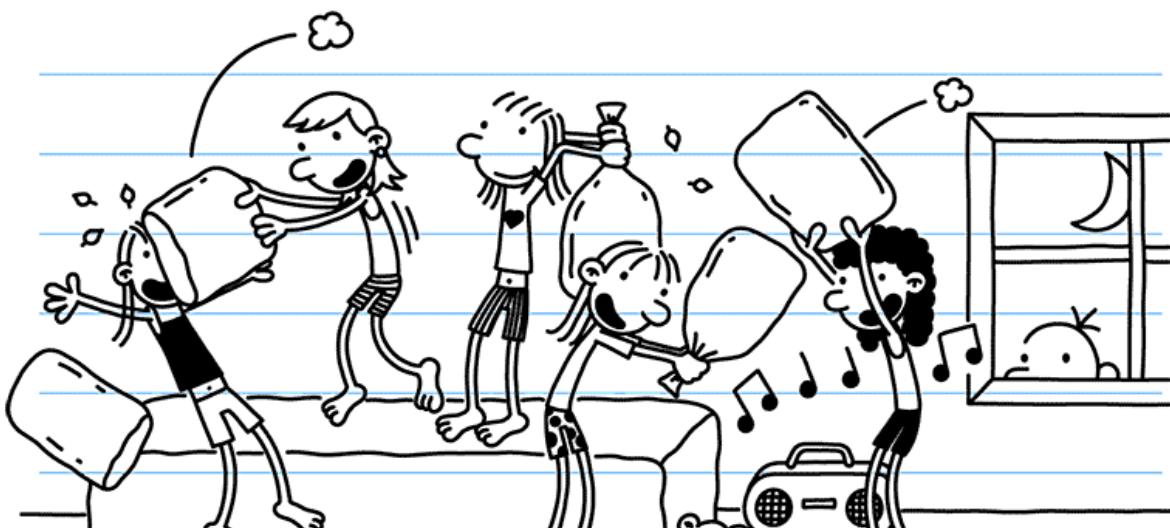
from karate was having a sleepover this weekend,

and he asked me if I wanted to come along.

I was about to say "no way," but then Rowley  
said something that got my attention. The kid  
who's having the party lives on Pleasant Street,  
which is in the same neighborhood that Holly Hills  
lives in.



At lunch today I overheard a couple of girls saying  
that HOLLY is having a sleepover Saturday night,  
so this could really be the opportunity of a  
LIFETIME for me.





125

Tonight at soccer practice, Mr. Litch told

everyone the position they'd be playing in the

first game on Sunday.

Mr. Litch told me I'd be the "Shag," and that

sounded pretty cool to me. So when I got home,

I bragged to Rodrick about it.



I thought Rodrick would be impressed, but he just

laughed. He told me that Shag wasn't actually a

real position on the field—it's just a kid who chases

the ball when it goes out of bounds. Then he

showed me a rulebook with all the soccer positions,

and sure enough, Shag wasn't in it.





126

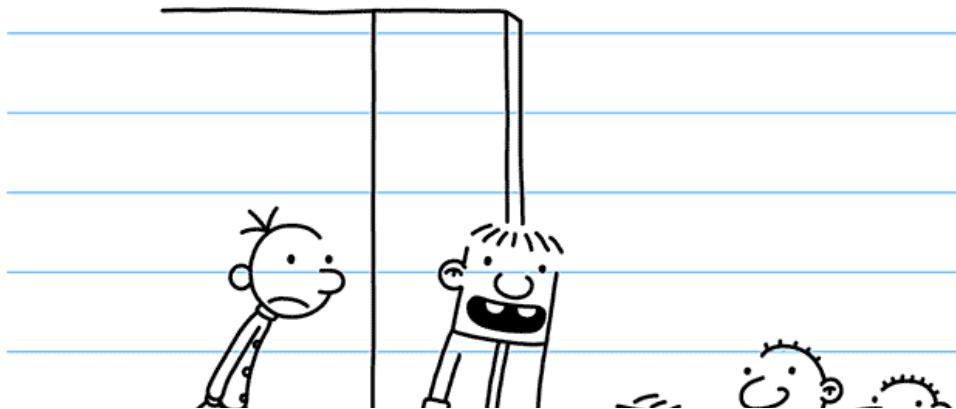
Rodrick is always pulling my leg, so I guess I'll  
just have to wait until this weekend to see if he's  
telling the truth this time.

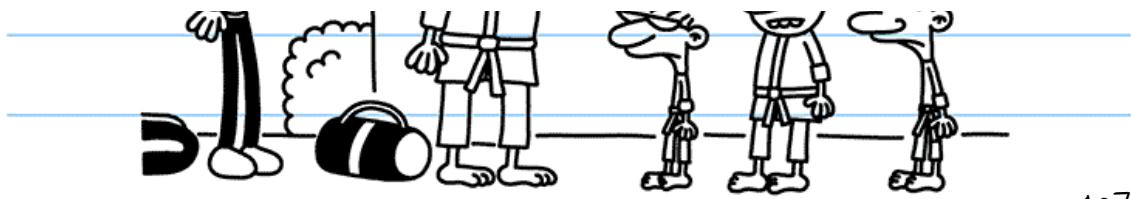
Sunday

Remind me to never go to a sleepover with  
Rowley again.

Yesterday afternoon Mom dropped me and Rowley  
off at his friend's house. The first hint that I  
was in for a long night was when we walked into  
the house and there wasn't a kid there who was  
older than six.

My SECOND hint was that everyone was wearing  
their karate gear.

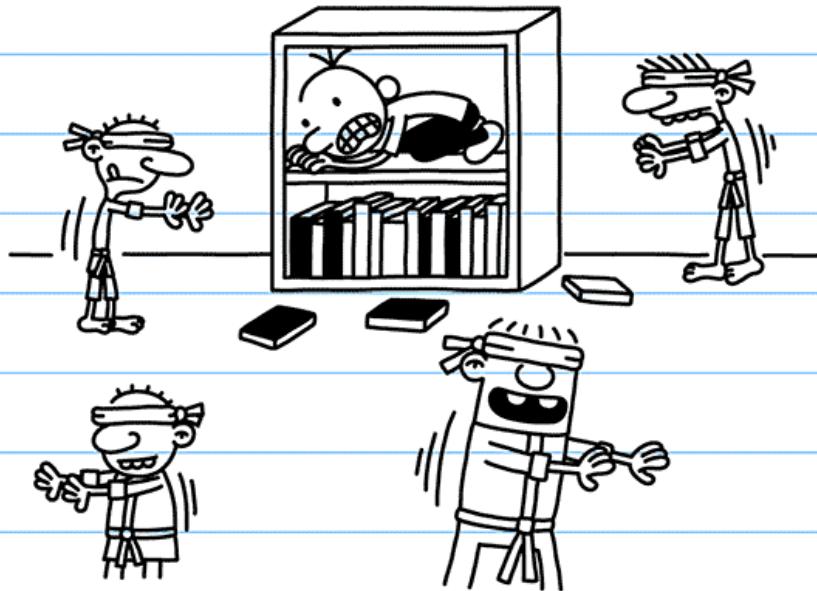




127

The whole reason I even WENT to this sleepover  
was so we could all sneak out and crash Holly's  
slumber party. But Rowley's friends were more  
interested in "Sesame Street" than they were  
in girls.

All those guys wanted to do was play a bunch of  
dopey party games, like Blind Man's Bluff and  
that kind of thing. I could've been playing Spin  
the Bottle with Holly Hills, but instead I spent  
my night trying not to get groped by a bunch of  
first-graders.



Rowley's friends played some other games, too, like

Freeze Tag and Twister.

I excused myself to go upstairs when someone

suggested we could play "Who Licked Me?"

I tried calling Mom to come pick me up, but she

was out with Dad. So I knew I was stuck at

this kid's house for the night.

At about 9:30 I decided to just go to sleep

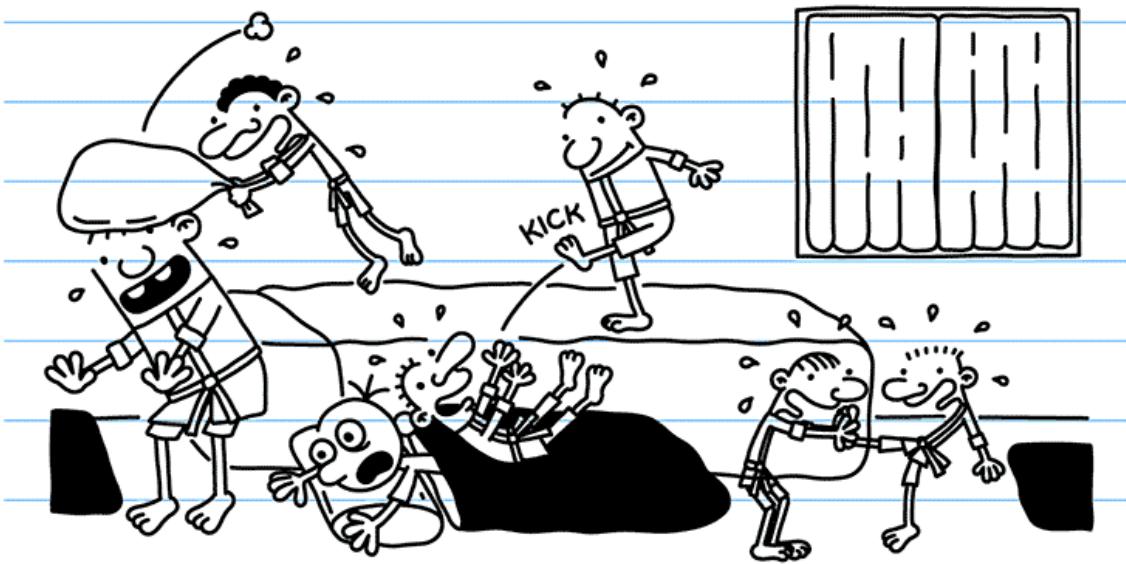
and get the night over with. But those guys

came into the bedroom and got into a massive

pillow fight. And let me tell you, it's not easy

falling asleep when a sweaty little kid falls on

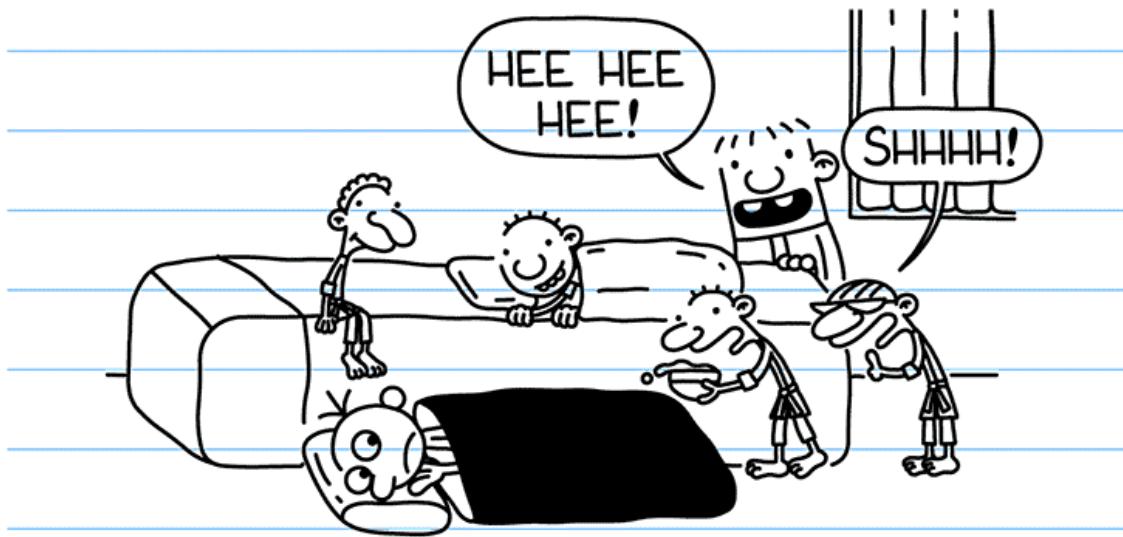
you every five seconds.



Eventually the kid's mom came upstairs and told

everyone it was time to go to sleep.

Even after the lights went out, Rowley and his friends stayed up, talking and giggling. They must have thought I fell asleep, because at one point a bunch of them snuck up on me to try and pull the hand-in-a-bowl-of-warm-water trick.



Well, that was enough for ME. I went downstairs to sleep in the basement, even though it was pitch-black down there and I couldn't find the light. I'd left my sleeping bag upstairs, and that was a mistake, because it was FREEZING in the basement.

I did NOT want to go back upstairs and get my stuff, though. I just curled up in a ball and

tried to conserve as much body heat as possible to

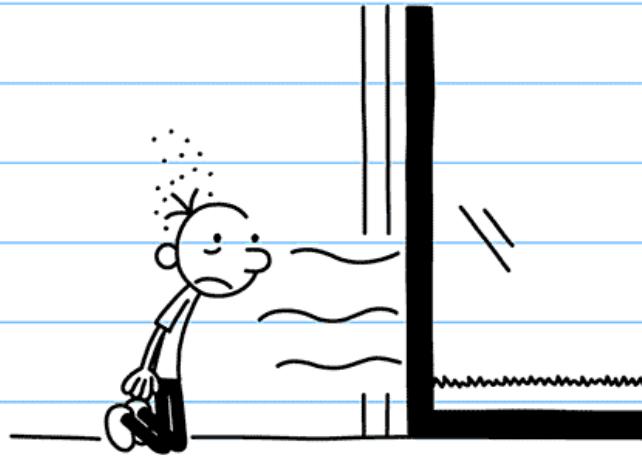
make it through to the morning.

I think it was probably the longest night of my life.

CHATTER  
CHATTER



When the sun came up this morning, I found out  
the reason it was so cold in the basement. I was  
sleeping right by the sliding glass door, and some  
fool had gone and left it open overnight.



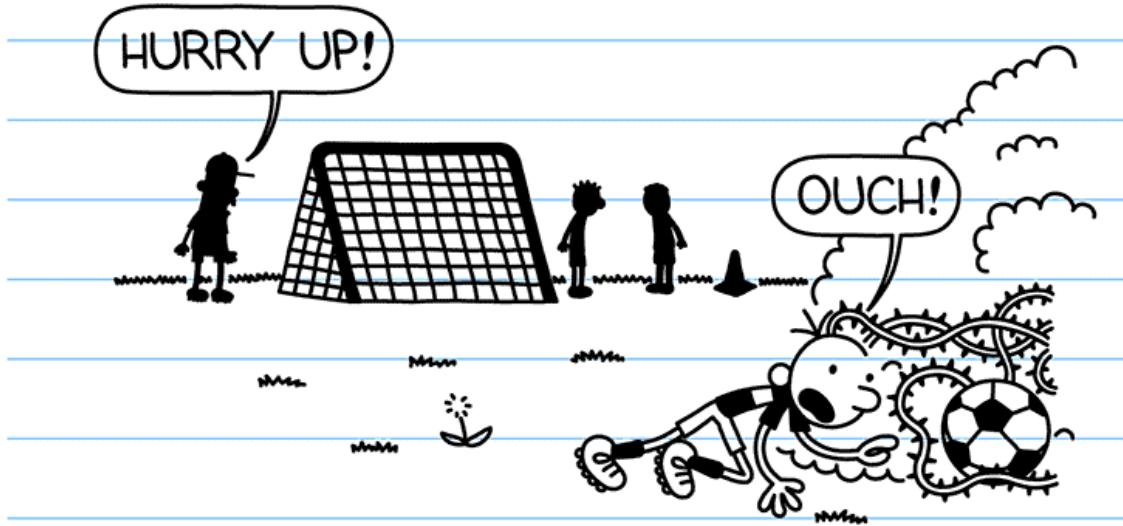
That really stunk, because if I knew there was a  
way to escape last night, I DEFINITELY  
would've taken it.

When I got home this morning, I went back to

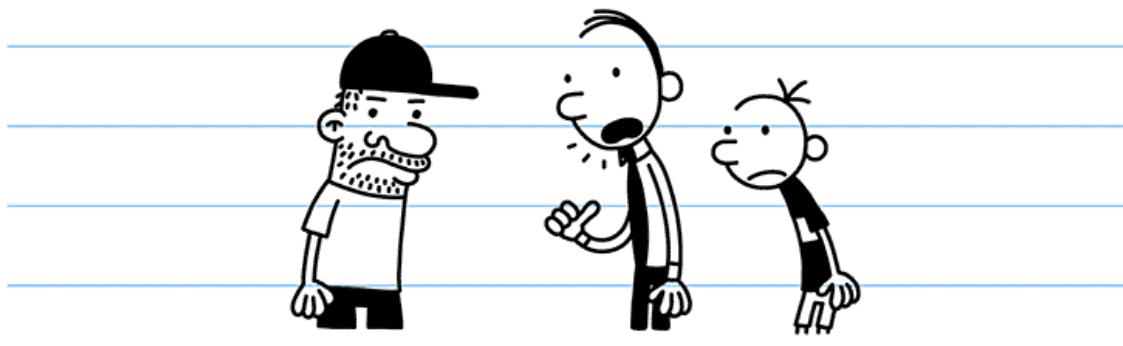
bed until Dad woke me up and told me it was time

to go to the soccer game.

It turns out Rodrick was right about the Shag thing. I spent the whole game pulling balls out of the brambles, and let me tell you, it wasn't a whole lot of fun.



Our team won the game, and afterward we were supposed to go out to celebrate. Dad couldn't stick around, so he asked Mr. Litch if he would drive me home afterward.



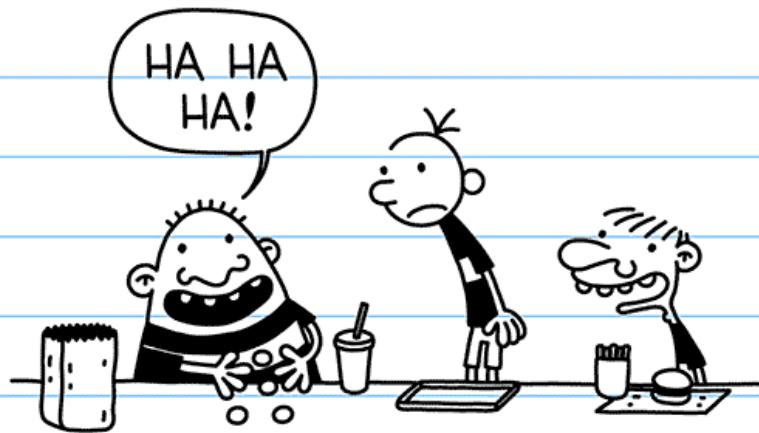
Well, I really wish Dad had asked me what I

thought about that idea first, because I would've

just gone home with him.

I was starving from all that digging around in  
the bushes, though, so I figured I'd just go  
with the team.

We went to a fast-food place, and I ordered  
twenty chicken nuggets. I went to use the  
bathroom, and when I came back to the table,  
all my food was gone. But then Erick Bickford  
dumped my nuggets out of his big sweaty hands.



If you ever wanted to know why I don't like  
team sports, there it is in a nutshell.

After lunch was over, me, Kenny Keith, and  
Erick got into Mr. Litch's car. Kenny sat in

the back with Erick, and I sat up front in

the passenger seat.

We had to wait a long time because Mr. Litch  
was sitting on the hood of his car, blabbing  
away with Mr. Boone. After we'd been sitting  
there for a while, Kenny leaned forward from  
the back seat and laid on the horn for about  
three seconds.



Then Kenny jumped back in his seat so when  
Mr. Litch turned around, it looked like I was  
the one who honked the horn.

Mr. Litch gave me a dirty look, and then turned

back around and talked to his assistant for

another half hour.

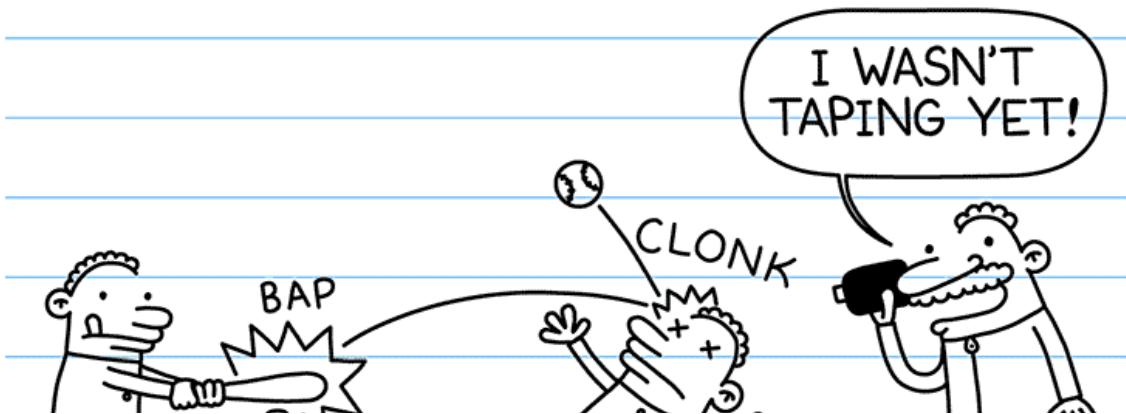
134

On the way home, Mr. Litch stopped to do about five errands. He wasn't in any hurry to get them done, either.

And get this: Kenny and Erick were mad at ME for making them get home so late. So that should give you a feeling for the type of intelligence I'm dealing with here.

Mr. Litch dropped me off last. On the way up the hill, I saw the Snellas out in their front yard, and it looked like they were trying to get some clips to send in to "America's Funniest Families."

I guess they don't feel like waiting around a few months until Seth's half-birthday party.





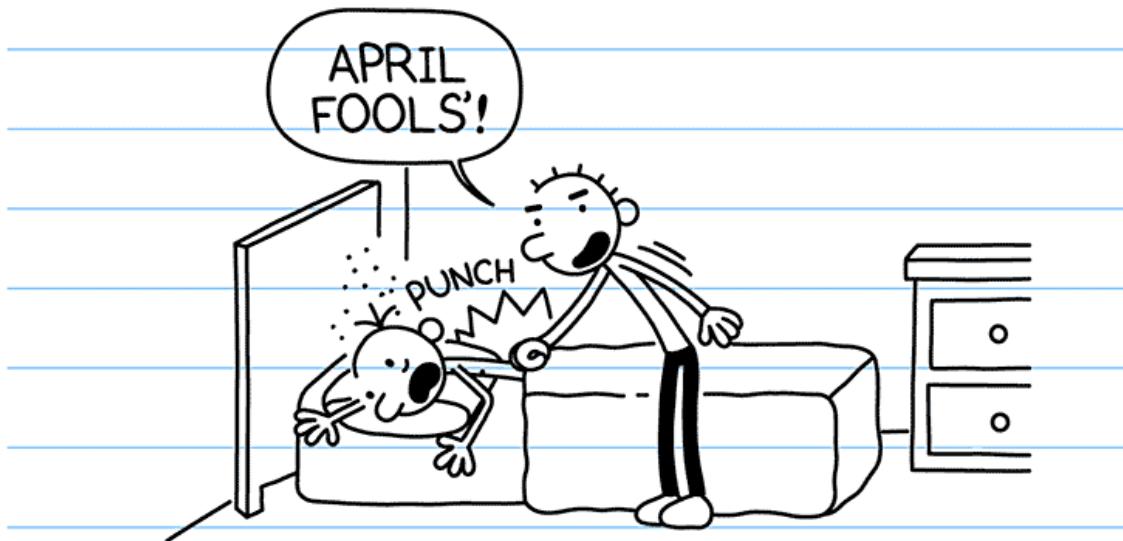
135

APRIL

Thursday.

Today was April 1st, and here's how my day

started —



Every other day of the year, you couldn't

DRAG Rodrick out of bed before 8:00 A.M. But

on April 1st, Rodrick always wakes up early so

he can get his licks in.

Someone seriously needs to explain the concept of a

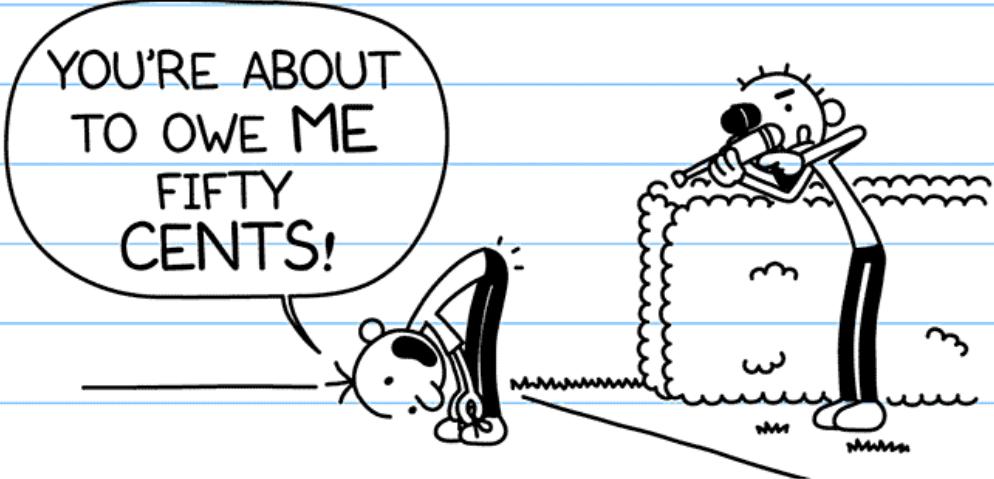
practical joke to Rodrick, because all his "jokes"

involve me getting injured.

Last year Rodrick bet me fifty cents I couldn't

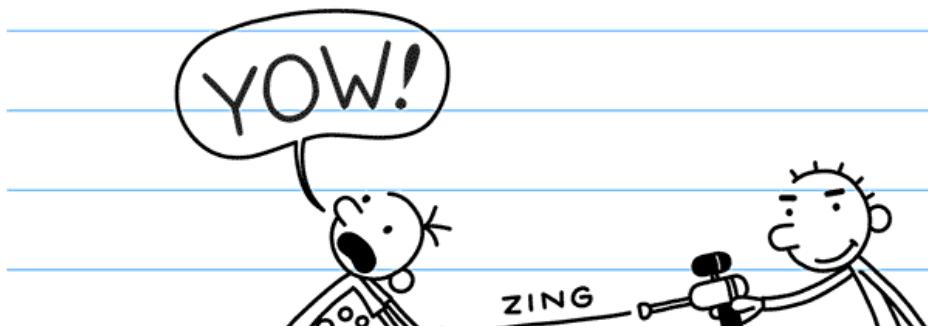
tie my shoes while I was standing up, and I

TOTALLY fell for it.



I went inside and told Dad that Rodrick shot  
me in the butt with a paintball gun. Dad didn't  
feel like getting in the middle of a fight, so he  
just told Rodrick to pay me my fifty cents for  
winning the bet.

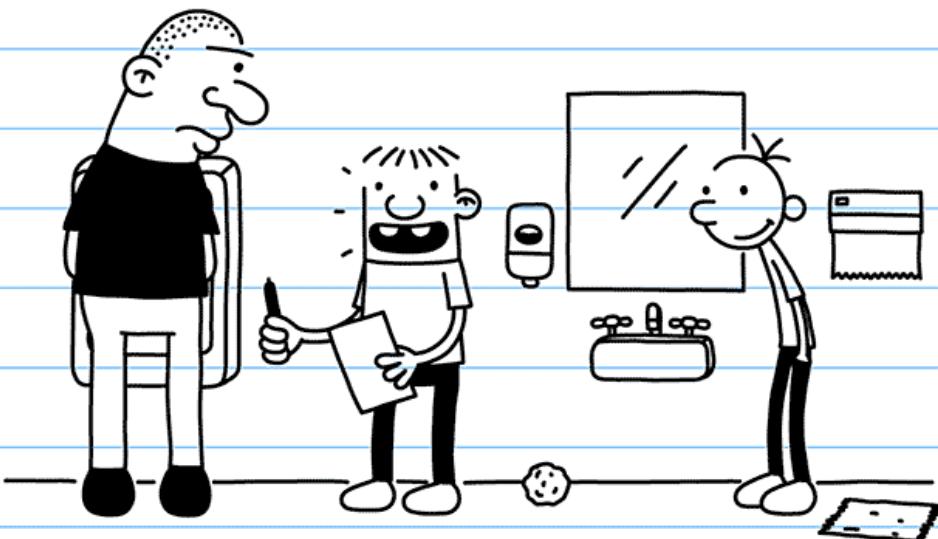
Rodrick took two quarters out of his pocket  
and threw them on the ground. But obviously I  
didn't learn my lesson, because I bent over to  
pick them up.





At least I put some thinking into MY practical jokes. Last year I pulled a pretty good trick on Rowley. We were in the bathroom at a movie theater, and I convinced him that some random guy standing at the urinal was a professional athlete.

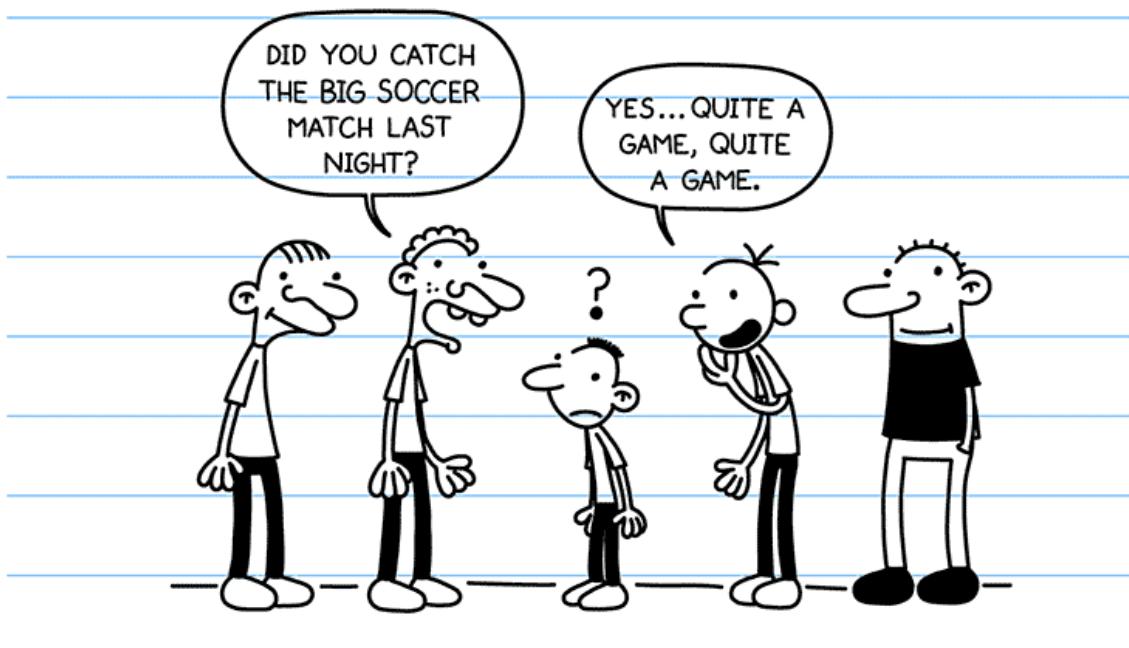
So Rowley asked the guy for his autograph.



And today me and a couple of other guys pulled a good one on Chirag Gupta.

We decided it would be pretty funny if we made him think he was losing his hearing, so we all

made sure we talked real quiet every time he  
came around.



Chirag figured out what was going on pretty quick, and he went straight to the teacher to shut it down before the joke could get out of hand. I guess he didn't want a repeat of the Invisible Chirag joke from last year.

Friday

We had our second soccer game tonight. Some adult volunteered to shag the balls, so I got to sit on the bench for the whole game.

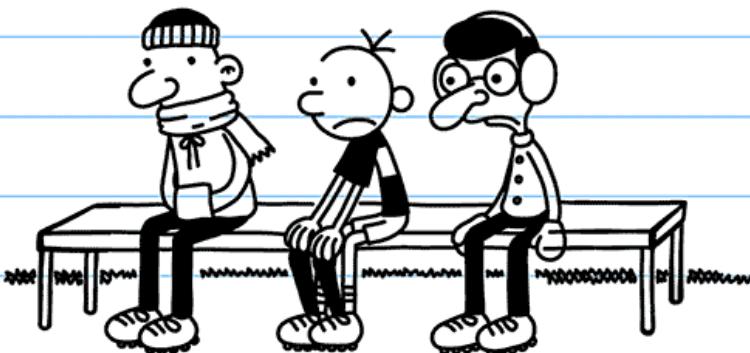
It was REALLY cold out, and I asked Dad if

I could go get my coat out of the car, but he

said no.

Dad said I needed to be prepared in case the  
coach decided to put me in the game, so I had  
to just tough it out.

I wanted to tell Dad that the only time I'd  
be stepping foot on the field would be when Mr.  
Litch made me pick up all the other kids' orange  
peels at halftime. But I just kept quiet and  
concentrated on not letting my shin guards  
freeze to my legs.



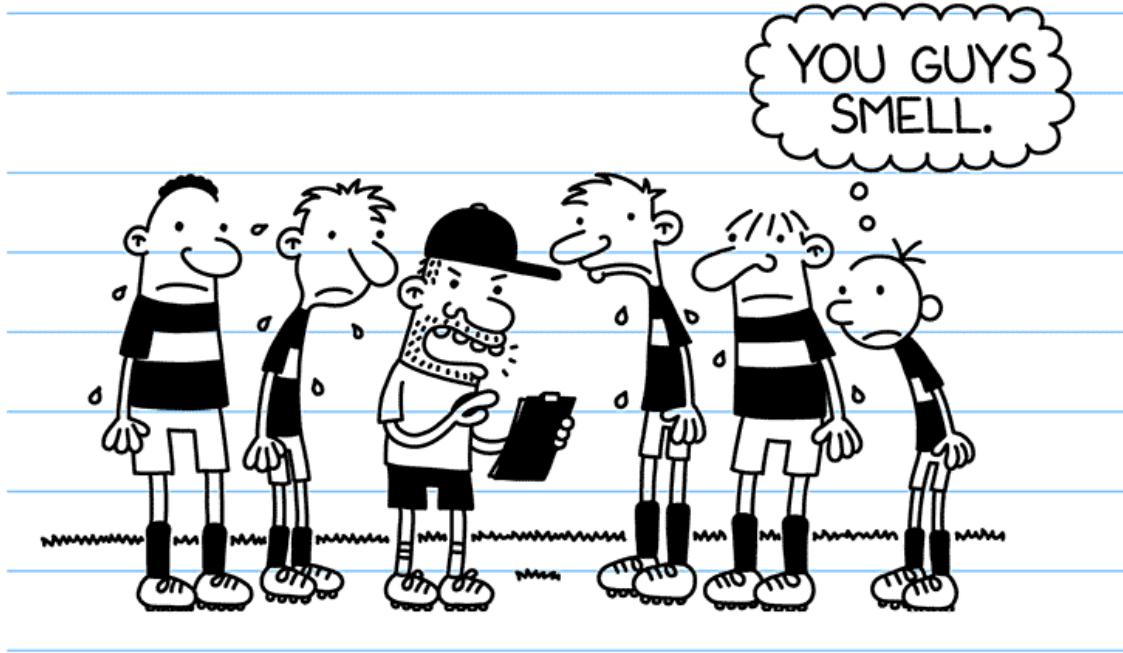
Every time Mr. Litch called a huddle, Dad made  
me get off the bench and go join the rest of the  
team. Have you seen a game on TV and wondered  
what the benchwarmers were thinking when they

stand in the huddle while the coach goes over the

game plan?

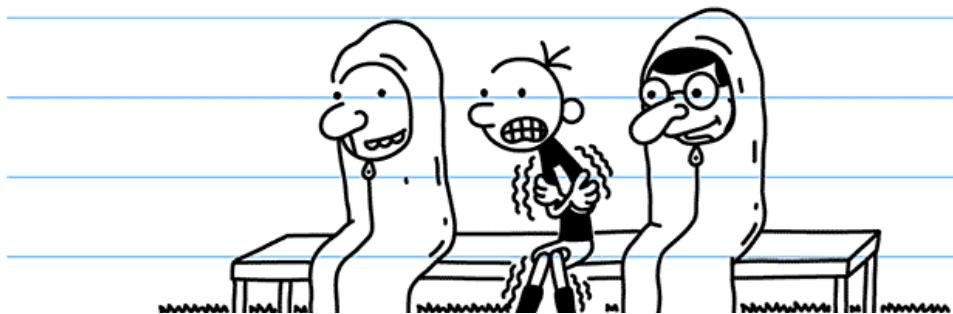
140

Well, now I can tell you firsthand.



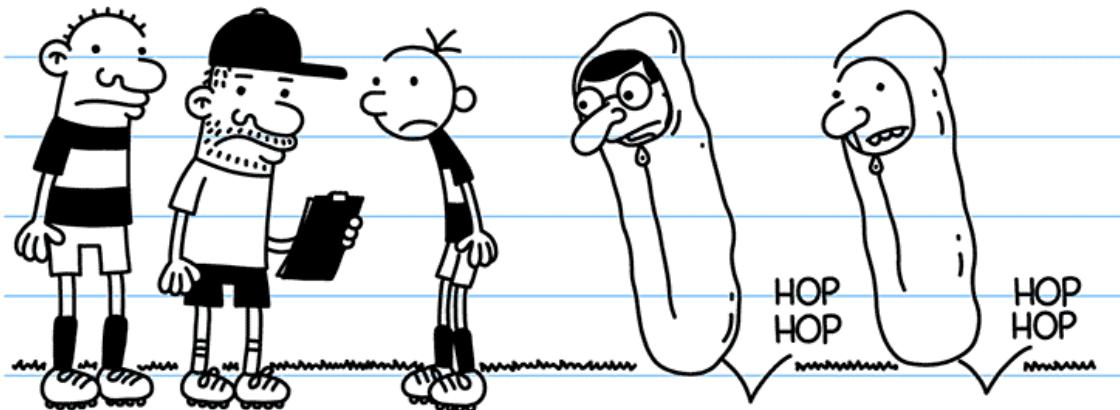
Once the sun went down, it got REALLY cold. In fact, it got so cold Mackey Creavey and Manuel Gonzales went and got SLEEPING BAGS out of the Creaveys' car.

And Dad STILL wouldn't even let me go get my coat.





During a timeout, we all joined the huddle. And when the coach got an eyeful of Mackey and Manuel, he told them they were excused and to go to the Creaveys' car for the rest of the game.



So Mackey and Manuel got to sit in a heated SUV, while I had to sit on a cold metal bench in my shorts. And I know for a FACT that the Creaveys have a TV in their car, so I'm sure those guys were totally living it up in there.

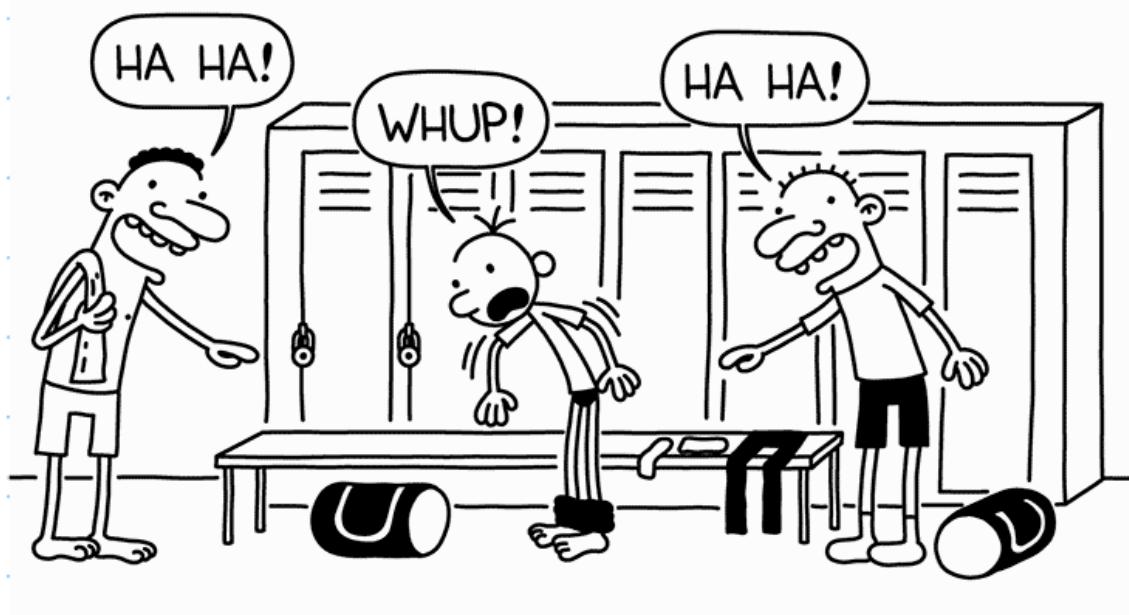




Monday.

I have DEFINITELY got to start keeping on top of my laundry. I've been out of clean underwear for about three days, so I've been wearing my bathing suit as a substitute.

Today we had Phys Ed, and when we changed into our gym clothes, I totally forgot I was wearing my Speedo underneath.



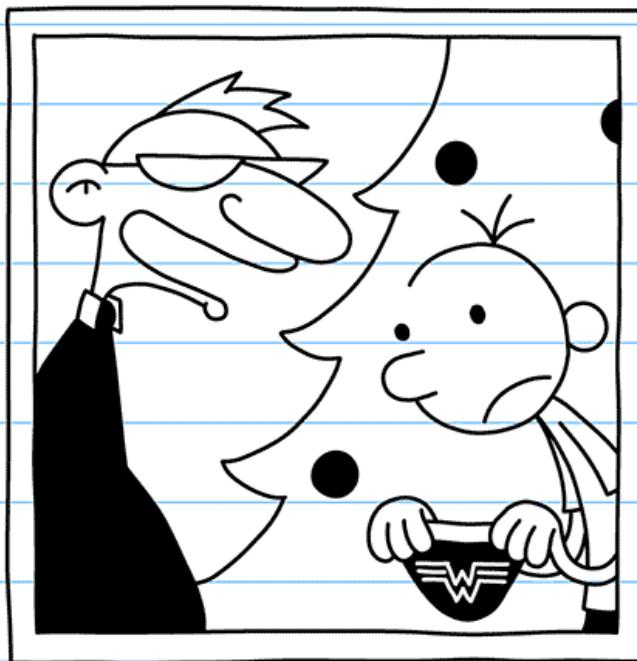
It could have been a lot WORSE, though. I have a pair of Wonder Woman Underoos that I've never taken out of their wrapper, and this

morning I was pretty tempted to wear them

just because they were clean.

Believe me, I didn't ASK for the Wonder Woman Underoos, either. This past summer a few of my relatives asked Mom what I wanted for my birthday, and she told them I was really into comics and super heroes.

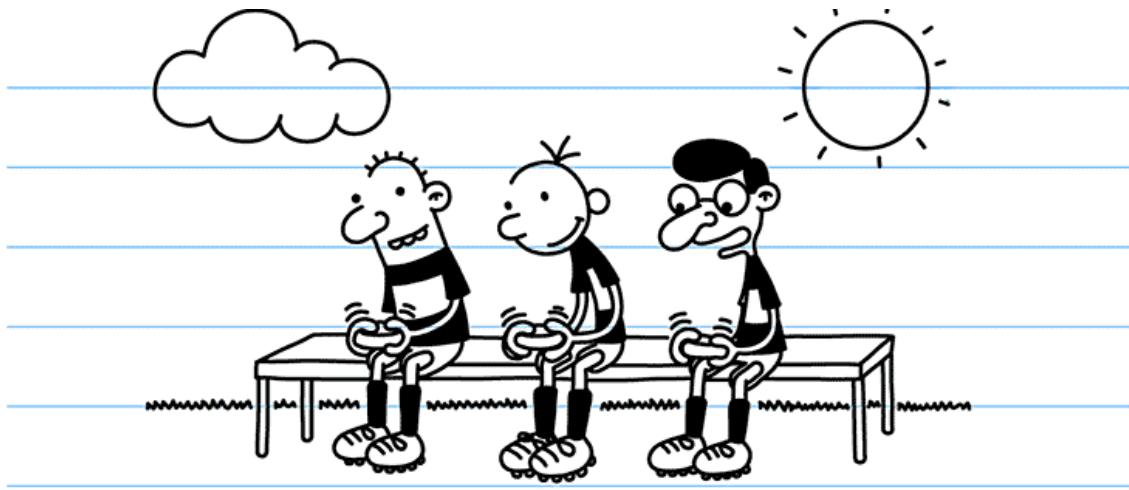
So the Underoos were a gift from Uncle Charlie.



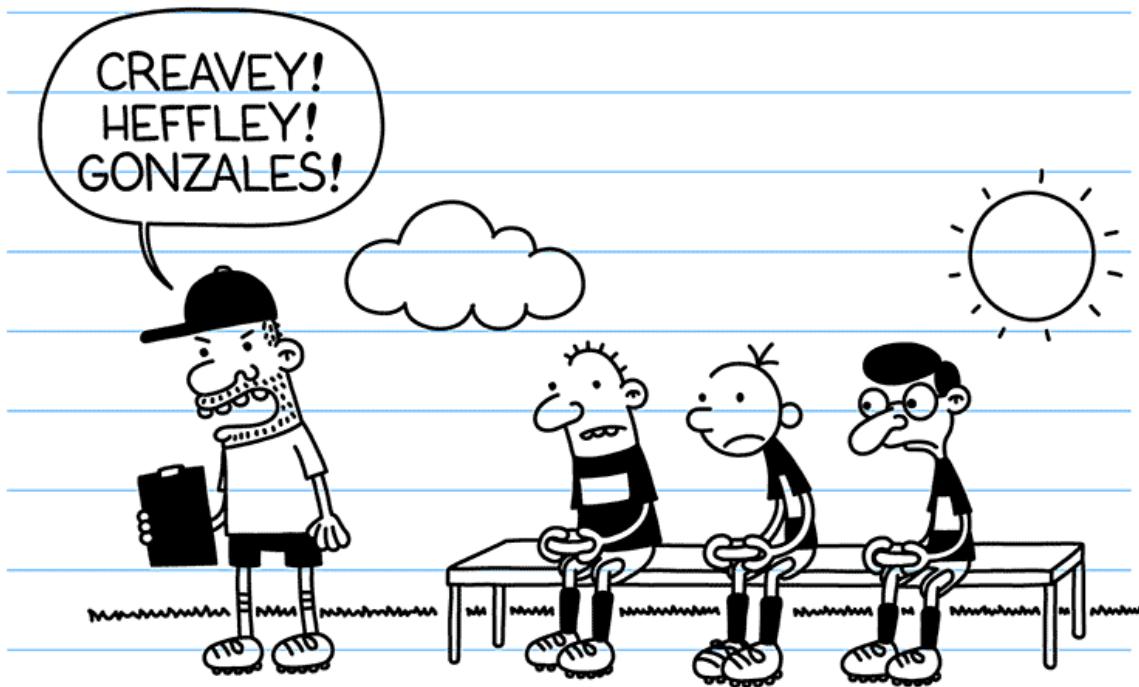
We had another soccer game after school, but it's been getting a lot warmer lately, and I wasn't worried about the cold.

At school, me, Mackey, and Manuel agreed we'd all

bring some video games tonight, and for the first  
time we actually ENJOYED ourselves at soccer.



It didn't last long, though. Twenty minutes into  
the game, Mr. Litch called all three of us off the  
bench and told us to get on the field.



Apparently, some parent complained that their  
kid wasn't getting any playing time, so the Rec

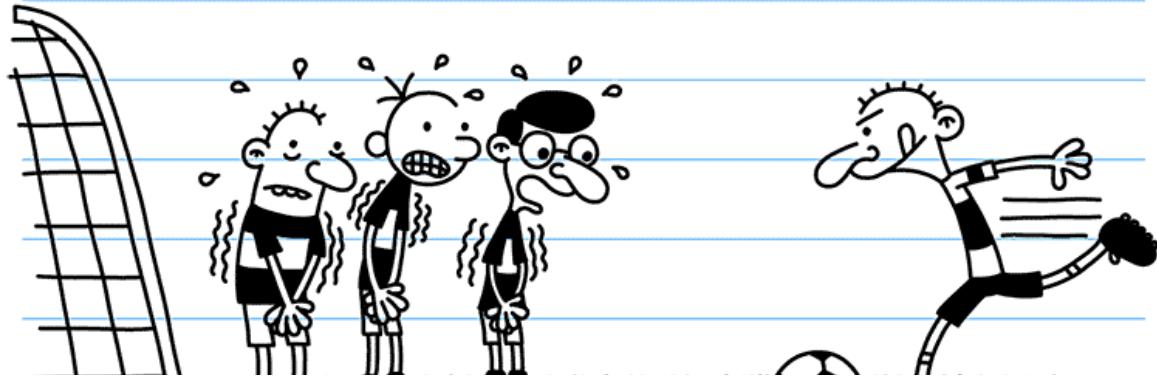
League made a rule that now EVERY kid has to

get in the game.

Well, none of us had been paying any attention  
to the game, so when we got on the field, we  
didn't know what to do or where to stand.

A couple of kids on our team told us the other  
team had a "free kick," and that we were supposed  
to stand shoulder to shoulder to make a shield to  
block it.

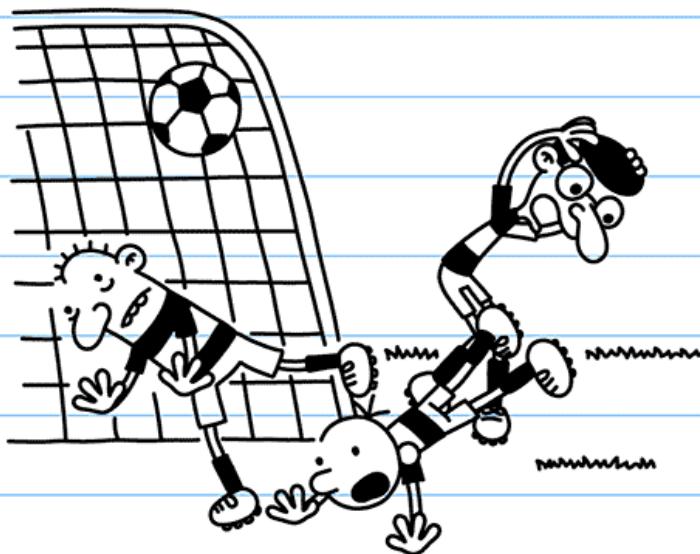
I thought the guys on my team were joking, but  
it turns out they weren't. Me, Manuel, and Mackey  
had to line up in front of our goal. Then the referee  
blew the whistle, and a kid from the other team ran  
at the ball and kicked it right at us.



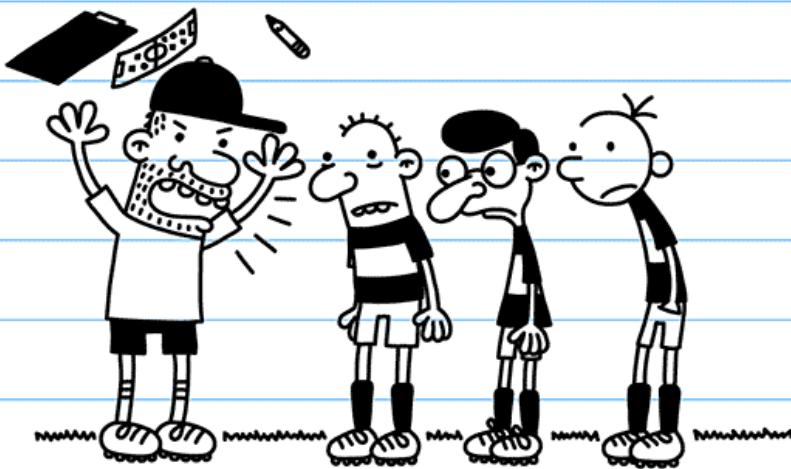


146

Well, we didn't do a really good job of protecting  
the goal, and the other team scored.



Mr. Litch pulled the three of us out of the game  
the second he got the chance, and he yelled at  
us for not standing still and blocking the ball.



But I'll tell you what: If I have to choose

between getting yelled at or getting hit in the

face with a soccer ball, it's no contest.

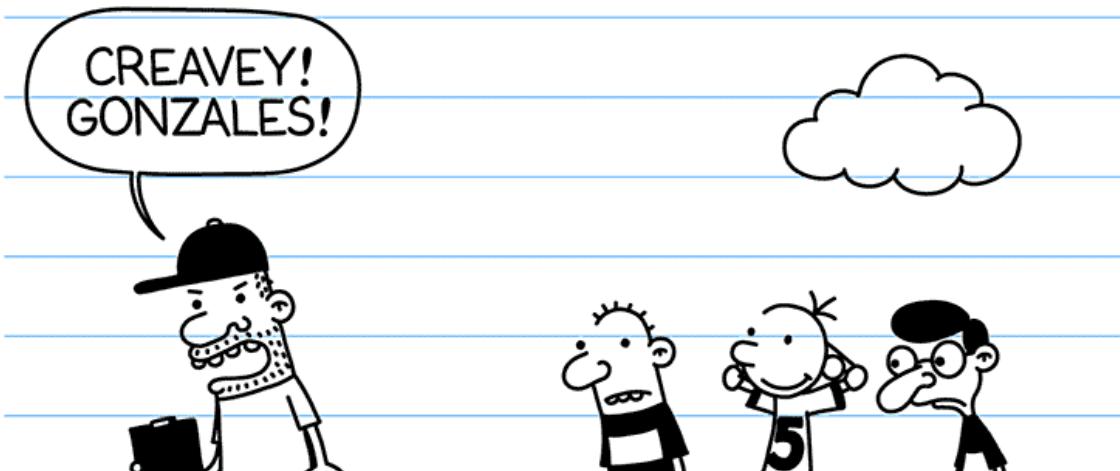
Thursday.

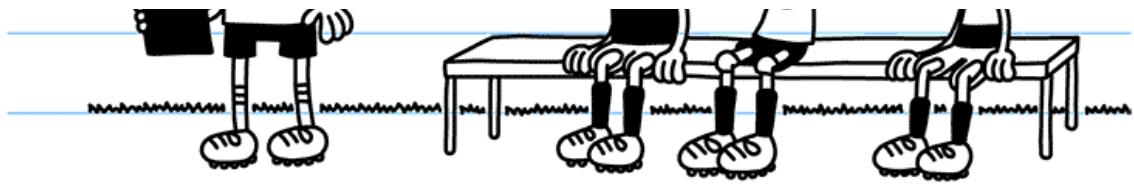
After the game last week, I asked Mr. Litch if  
I could be the backup goalie for the team, and  
he said I could.

It was a genius move on my part, for a couple  
of reasons. First of all, goalies don't have to  
run laps and all that stuff during practice.

They just do individual goalie drills with the  
assistant coach.

Second, goalies wear different uniforms than  
the rest of the team, and that means Mr.  
Litch can't put me in the game when it's time to  
block free kicks.





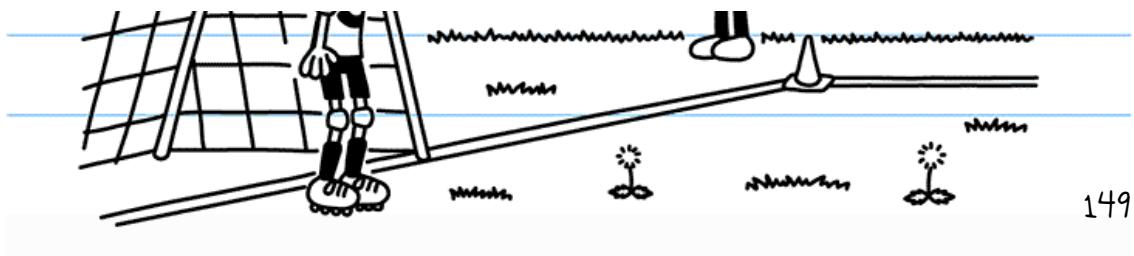
148

Our regular goalie, Tucker Fox, is the star of  
the team, so I knew there was no way I was  
gonna see any playing time, anyway. These last  
few games have actually been kind of FUN. But  
tonight, something bad happened. Tucker hurt  
his hand diving after a ball, and he had to come  
out. So that meant the coach had to put ME in.

Well, Dad was REALLY excited I was finally  
getting some real playing time, and he came down  
to my end of the field to coach me from the  
sideline. It's not like I really needed it, though.

Our team kept the ball on the other side of the  
field for the whole rest of the game, and I didn't  
even touch it ONCE.

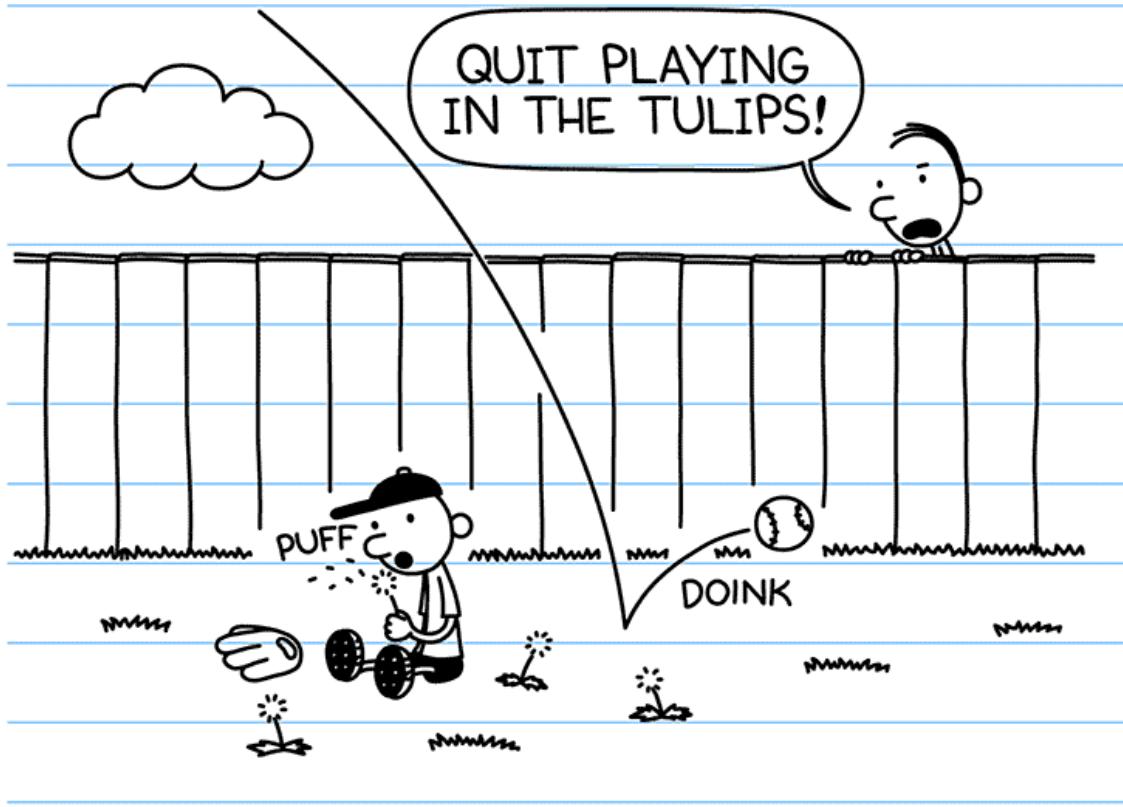




149

I think I know what Dad was up to, though.

When I used to play tee-ball, I had a really hard time concentrating on the game. Tonight Dad just wanted to make sure I didn't get distracted the way I used to get when I played right field.



I have to admit, it was probably a good thing that Dad stayed on my case tonight.

There were about a MILLION dandelions down at

my end of the field, and in the second half I was

starting to get a little twitchy.

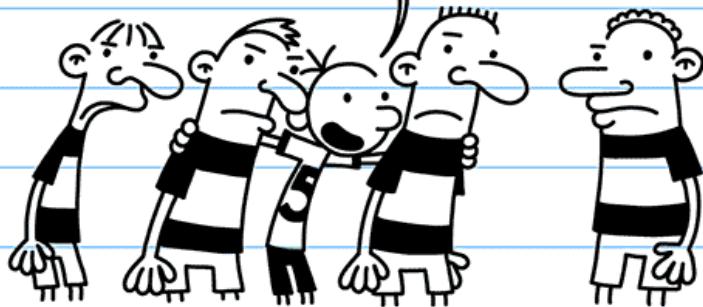
150

Monday.

Well, yesterday we had another soccer game,  
and luckily Dad wasn't there to see it. We lost  
our first game of the season, 1-0. Somehow the  
other team got the ball past me in the last few  
seconds, and they won the game. So that ruined  
our perfect record.

After the game, everyone on my team was in a  
sour mood, so I tried to cheer them up.

WELL, IT'S JUST  
A STUPID GAME,  
RIGHT, FELLAS?



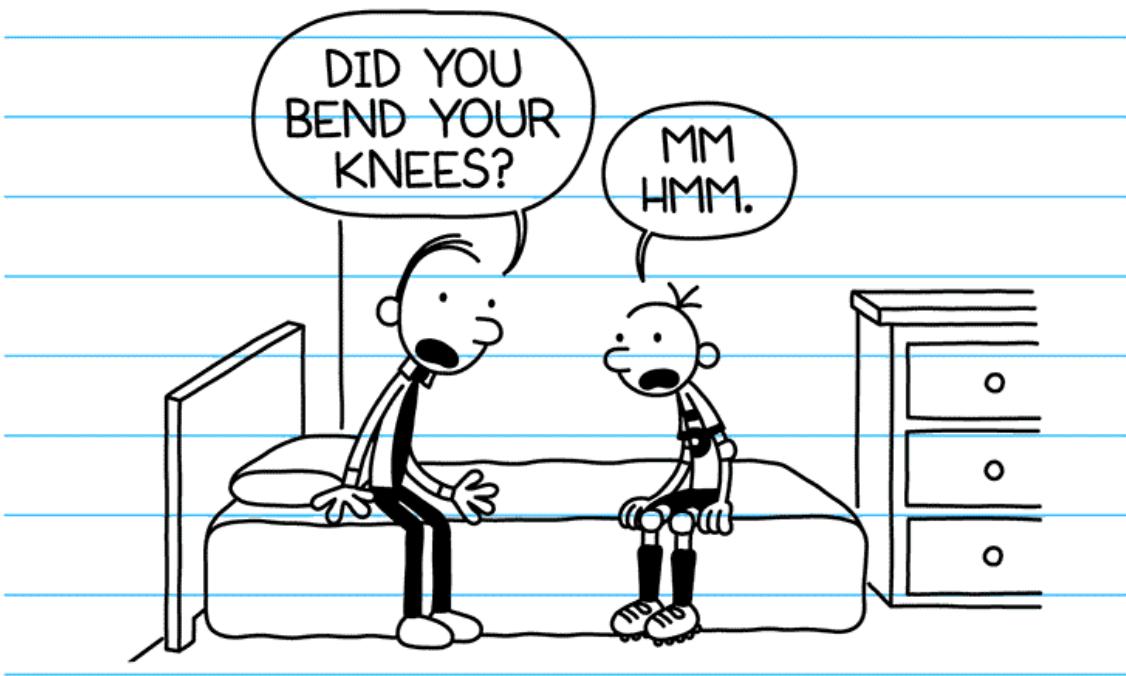
My teammates thanked me for being positive by  
pelting me with orange peels.

Back at home, I was nervous to tell Dad about

the game.

I guess he seemed a little disappointed, but he

got over it pretty quick.



But tonight, when Dad got home from dinner,

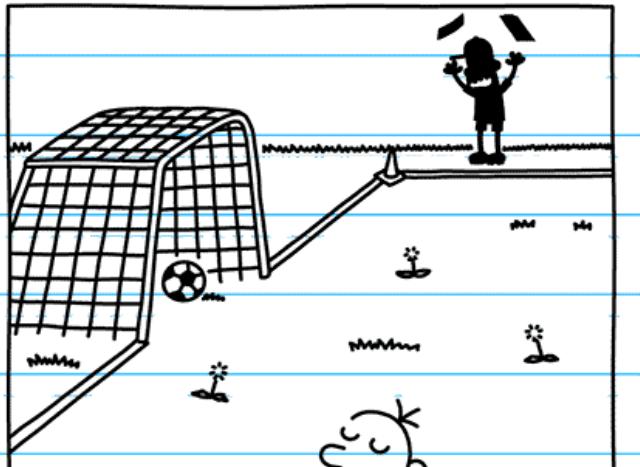
he looked really mad. He plopped the newspaper

down in front of me on the kitchen table, and

here was the picture on the Sports page —

## A “Blown” Opportunity

Red Socks goalie  
Gregory Heffley  
takes a break from  
the action as a fifty-  
yard kick by Demon  
Dawgs midfielder



James Byron rolls in.  
The score ended the  
Socks' bid for an  
undefeated season.



Apparently, Dad found out about the paper from  
his boss at work.



OK, so maybe I didn't tell Dad ALL the  
details of the game.

In my defense, though, I didn't really know  
what happened until I read about it in the  
paper myself.

Dad didn't say a word to me for the rest of  
the night. If he's still mad at me, I just hope  
he gets over it pretty quick. Twisted Wizard 2

finally came out today, and I'm kind of counting

on Dad to float me some money so I can get it.

Friday

Tonight after dinner, Dad took me and Rodrick out to a movie. It's not because he was trying to be nice, though. He just needed to get out of the house.

Remember how I told you that Mom got on an exercise kick a few months ago? Well, she quit after her first class. Dad took a picture of Mom decked out in all her exercise gear the first day she went to the gym, and tonight the pictures came in the mail.



The photo place gives you duplicate prints, so as

a joke Dad wrote labels on the two pictures of

Mom and put them up on the refrigerator.

154



Well, Dad was pretty proud of himself for coming

up with that one, but Mom wasn't so amused.

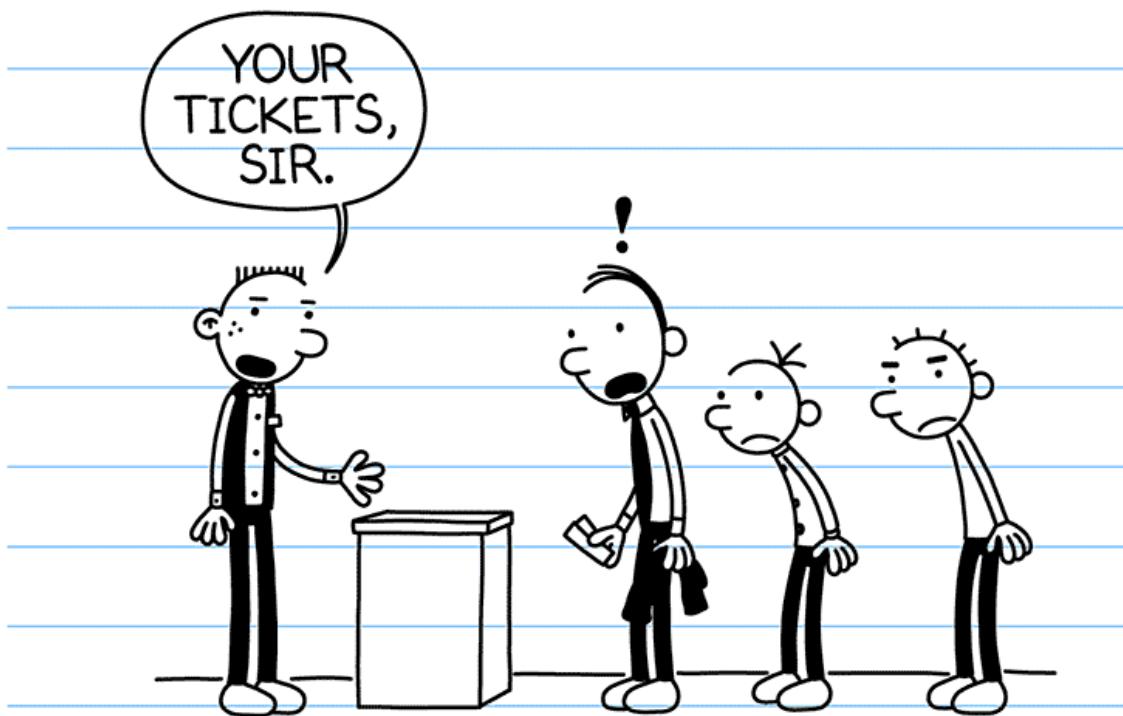


Anyway, I guess Dad felt like maybe it was a

good idea to put a little space between him and

Mom tonight.

We went to the new movie theater that just opened at the mall. After we bought our tickets, we went inside and gave them to the usher, who was a teenager with a crew cut. I didn't recognize him at first, but apparently Dad did.



I read the teenager's name tag, and I couldn't believe my eyes. It was LENWOOD HEATH, the bad teenager who used to live on our street. The last I saw him, he had long hair and he was lighting someone's trash on fire. But now

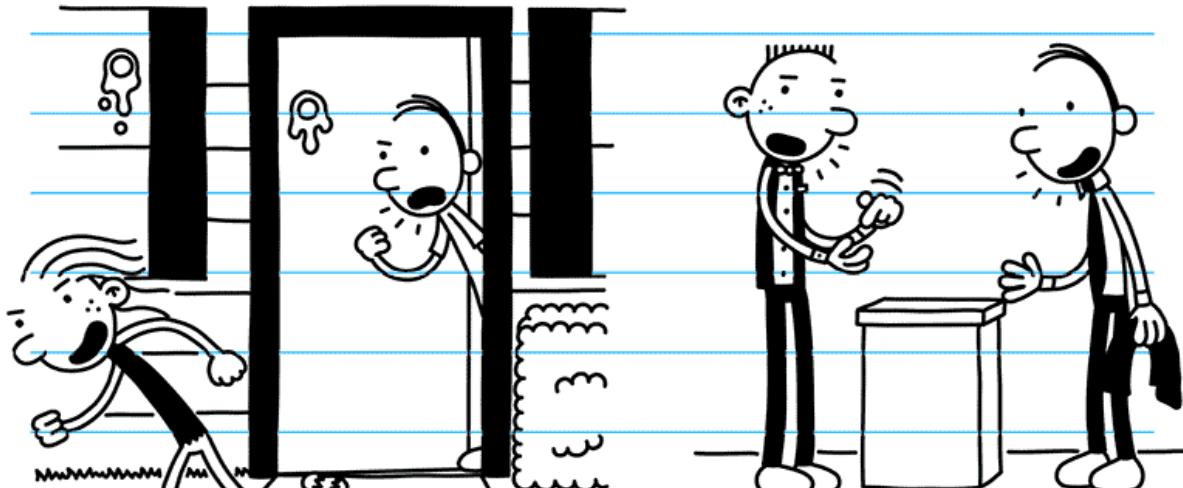
here he was, looking like he just graduated from

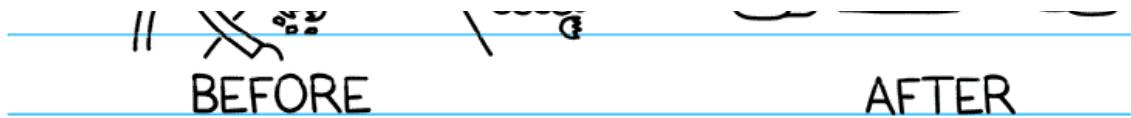
the Air Force or something.

Dad seemed REALLY impressed with Lenwood's  
new look, and the two of them struck up a  
conversation.

Lenwood said he's been going to Spag Union  
Military Academy, and he's just working at the  
movie theater for Spring Break. Then Lenwood  
said he's trying to get good grades at Spag  
Union so he can get into West Point.

And all of a sudden Dad was treating Lenwood  
like his new best friend. Which was really crazy,  
especially considering the history between the  
two of them.

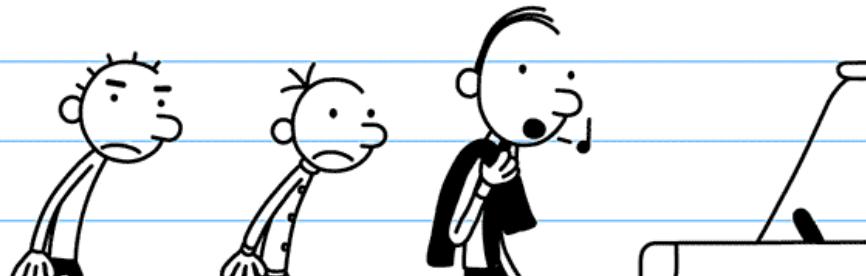


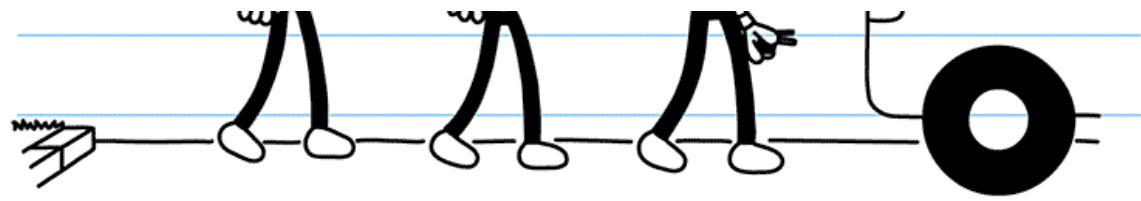


Anyway, Dad kept chatting away with Lenwood,  
so me and Rodrick just got our popcorn and  
went in the theater. And it wasn't until halfway  
through the movie that I realized what was  
REALLY happening.

If Dad saw how military school could make a man  
out of a juvenile delinquent like Lenwood Heath,  
then it wasn't a stretch to think it could make a  
man out of a wimp like ME.

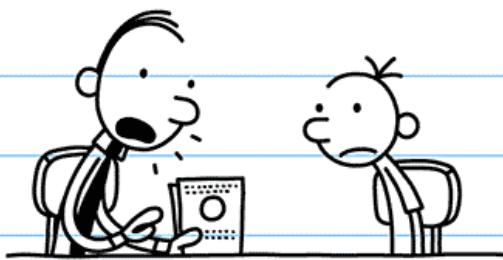
I'm just praying Dad isn't having those thoughts.  
Right now I'm pretty concerned, because after  
the movie tonight, Dad was in the best mood  
I've seen him in for a LONG time.





Monday.

Well, it's just like I feared. Dad spent the whole weekend reading up on Spag Union, and tonight he told me he's gonna sign me up.



Here's the worst part: "New recruits" have to report on June 7th, when I'm supposed to be on summer VACATION.

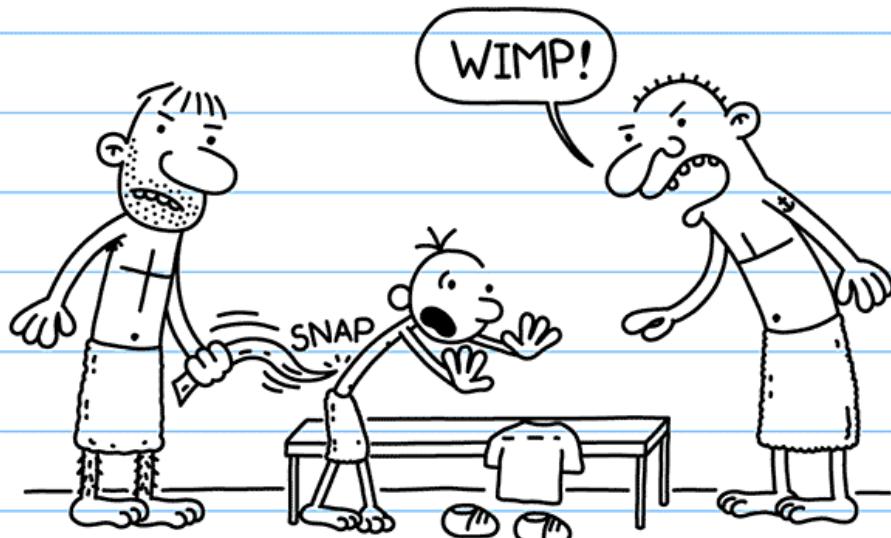
Dad tried to convince me that this would be a great thing for me, and how Spag Union would really whip me into shape. But going off to boot camp was NOT the way I was planning on spending my school break.

I told Dad I won't last a DAY at Spag Union. First of all, they mix kids my age in with

teenagers, and that can't be a good thing.

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I'm sure the older kids would single me out on  
the first day.



But what I'm actually a lot more concerned with is  
the bathroom situation. I'll bet Spag Union is one  
of these places that has open showers with no  
stall doors, and that kind of setup is not for me.



When it comes to the bathroom, I need my privacy.

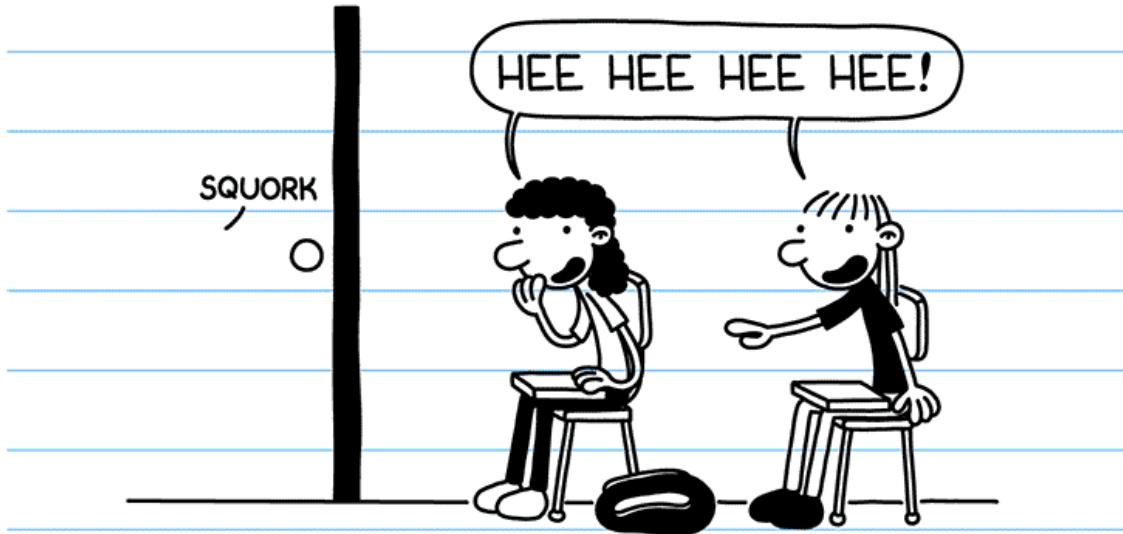
I don't even use the bathroom at school unless it's

an absolute emergency.

A few classrooms in our school have bathrooms right

in them, but I can't even use those, because every

little sound you make is broadcast to the whole room.



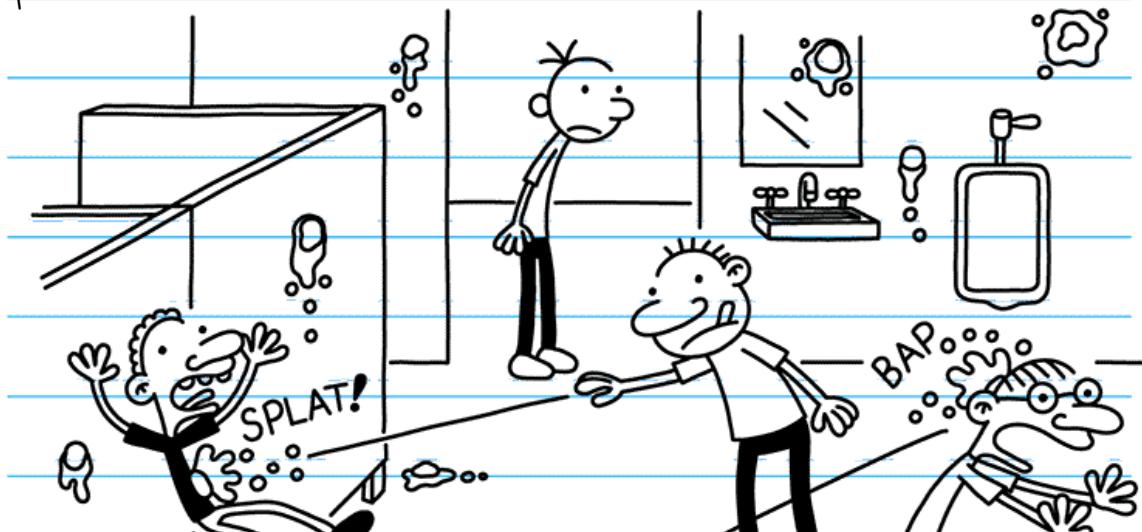
The only other option is to use the cafeteria

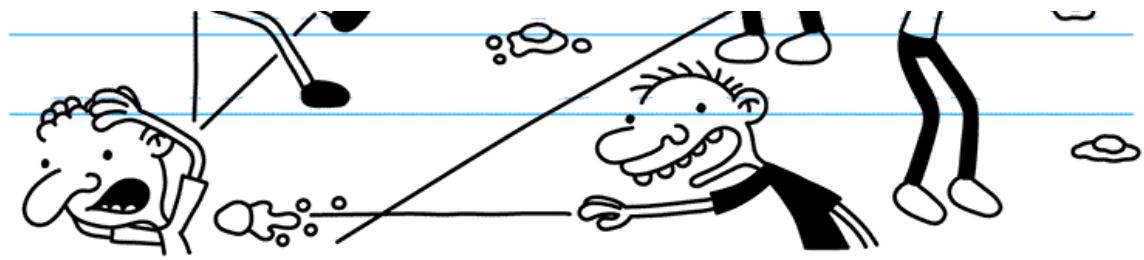
bathroom, and that place is a complete madhouse.

Somebody got the idea a few weeks ago to start

throwing wet toilet paper around, so now that

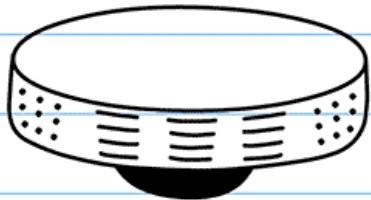
place is like a war zone.



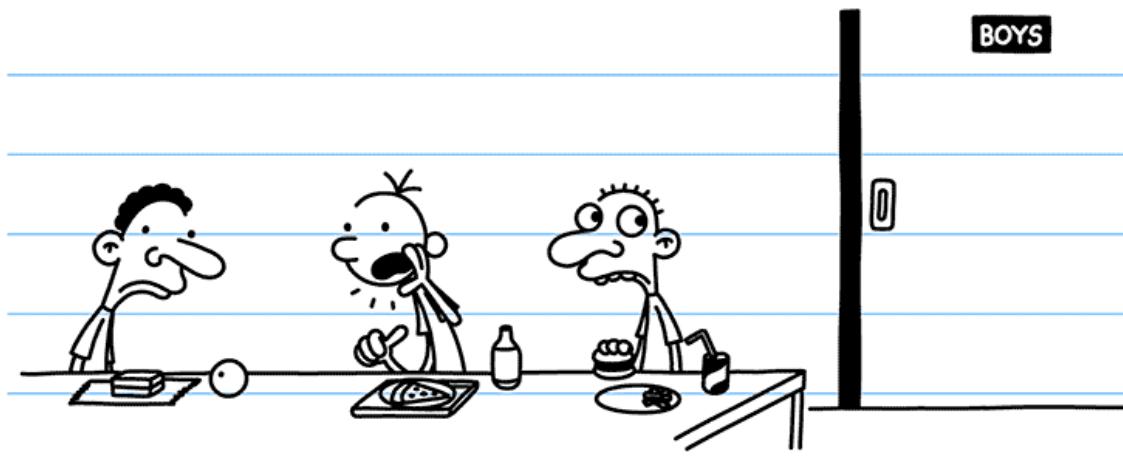


I can't concentrate in that kind of an environment,  
so I basically have to hold it until I get home  
from school.

A couple of days ago, something happened that  
changed the situation. The janitor put some new  
air fresheners in the bathroom.



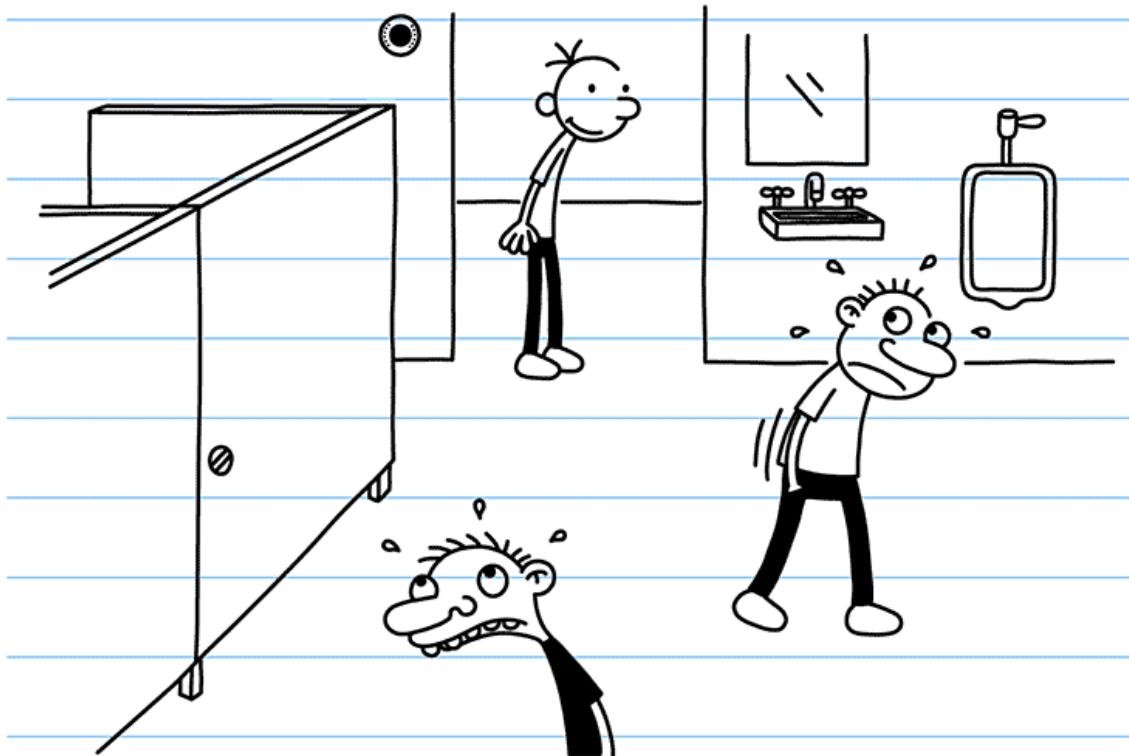
I started a rumor that the air fresheners were  
actually security cameras to catch whoever was  
throwing the wet toilet paper.



I guess I must've told the right people, because

from that point on the cafeteria bathroom has

been quieter than the library.



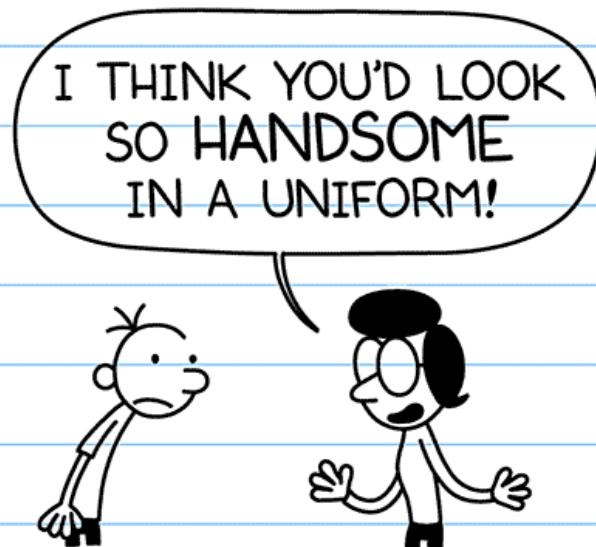
I might've solved the bathroom problem at  
school, but I don't think I'm gonna be able to  
pull off the same kind of trick at Spag Union.

And I SERIOUSLY doubt I can hold it for  
the whole summer.

I knew I wasn't gonna convince Dad to change  
his mind, so I went to Mom. I told her I didn't  
want to go to a place where they make you shave  
your head and do push-ups each day at 5:00

every morning. I figured she'd agree with me and  
talk some sense into Dad.

But it looks like Mom isn't gonna be any help to  
me after all.



Wednesday.

I knew I needed to do something quick to  
convince Dad that I was tough and didn't  
NEED to go to military academy. So I told  
him I wanted to join the Boy Scouts.

Dad seemed really enthusiastic about the idea, so  
that was a relief.

Besides trying to find a way to get Dad off my  
back, I have a couple of other reasons for wanting  
to join the Boy Scouts. Number one, Boy Scout

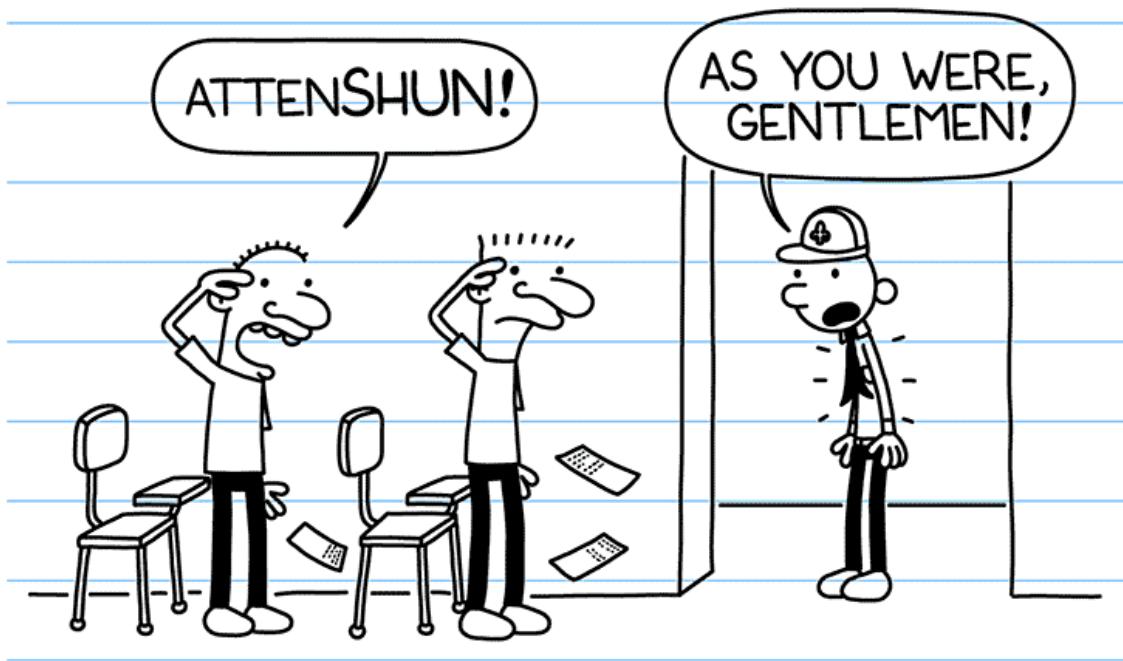
meetings are on Sundays, so that means I can

quit soccer.

164

And number two, it's about time I start getting

some respect from the other kids at school.



There are actually TWO Boy Scout troops in my

town: Troop 24, which is right in our neighborhood,

and Troop 133, which is about five miles down the

road. Troop 133 is always having hot dog roasts

and pool parties and stuff like that, but Troop 24

is constantly out doing community service projects

on the weekends. So I'm definitely more of a

Troop 133 kind of guy.

Now the trick is to make sure Dad doesn't find

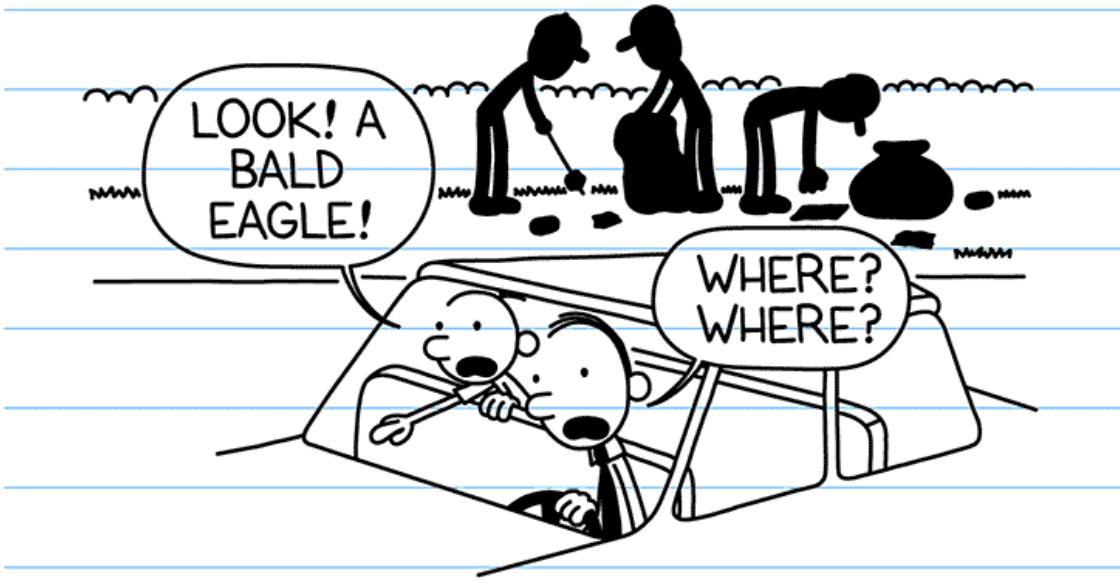
out about Troop 24, because hell make me sign

up with them for SURE.

In fact, tonight we were driving to the mall,

and we passed Troop 24 cleaning up the park.

Luckily, I distracted Dad at the last second.



Sunday

Today was my first Boy Scout meeting, and luckily

it was with Troop 133. I got Rowley to sign up

with me, too. When we got to the lodge, we met

Mr. Barrett, the Scoutmaster. He asked me and

Rowley to say the Pledge of Allegiance and do a

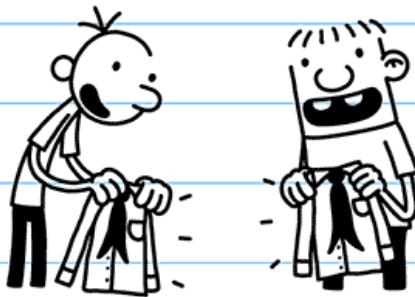
bunch of other stuff, and we were in. Mr. Barrett

even gave us our uniforms.

Rowley was happy because he thought the uniform

was cool, but I was just happy to have a clean

shirt for a change.



After we put our uniforms on, we joined the rest  
of the troop and started working on merit badges.

Merit badges are these little patches you get for  
learning how to do all sorts of manly stuff.

Me and Rowley started flipping through the  
merit badge book to see what we should work on.

Rowley wanted to do something hard like  
Wilderness Survival or Personal Fitness, but I  
talked him out of it. I said we should just  
start off with something nice and easy, so we  
settled on Whittling.

But whittling was a lot harder than I thought  
it would be. It took FOREVER to try to carve

a block of wood into anything, and Rowley got a

splinter within five minutes.

So we went to Mr. Barrett and asked him if there

was something less DANGEROUS we could do.



Mr. Barrett said that if we were having trouble

with the wood, maybe we could use soap instead.

And that's when I knew I made the right call

when I signed up with Troop 133.

Me and Rowley started carving the soap, but

then I found out something really great. If

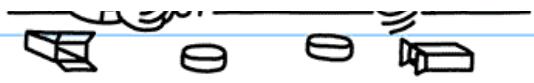
you get the soap wet enough, you can just mold

it into any shape you want with your hands. So we

put away our whittling knives and SQUEEZED

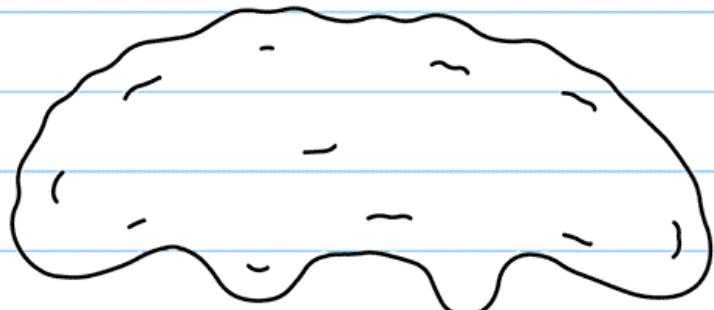
our soap into a shape instead.





168

My first creation was a sheep. I turned it in to  
Mr. Barrett, and he checked one carving off my list.

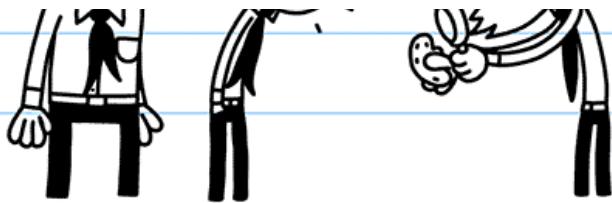


I didn't really know what to do for my next  
carving, so I just turned my sheep upside down  
and handed it back in as the Titanic.



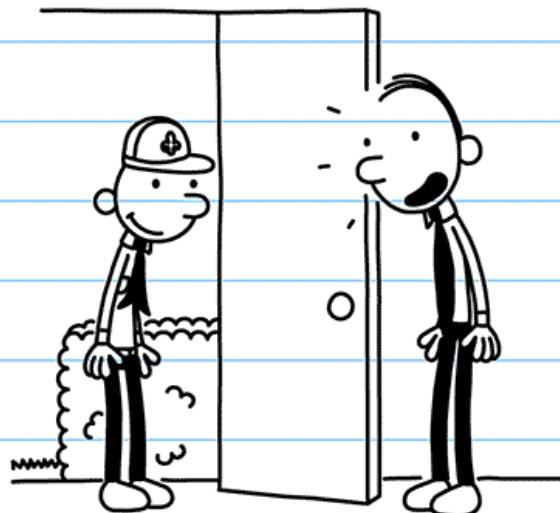
And believe it or not, Mr. Barrett accepted THAT  
one, too.





169

So me and Rowley both got our Whittling merit badges and pinned them to our uniforms. When I came home, Dad was really impressed. If I would've known that this was all it took to make him happy, I would have signed up for Boy Scouts about six months ago.



MAY

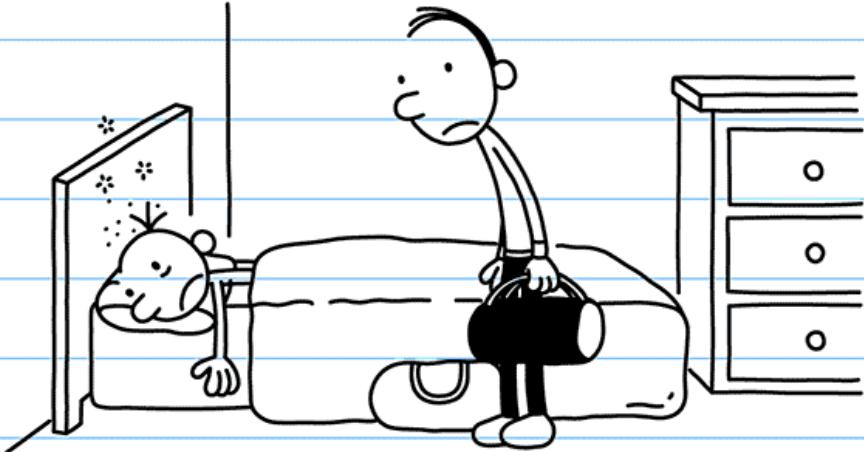
Sunday.

The other day Mr. Barrett announced that our Boy Scout troop was having a father-son campout this weekend, so I asked Dad if he'd go with me. I was pretty surprised with how easy it was to impress Dad with that one little merit badge, so I

figured a whole WEEKEND of him seeing me do

macho stuff would totally blow him away.

But yesterday morning I woke up as sick as a dog. I couldn't go, but Dad HAD to, because he signed up to be a driver.



I stayed in bed pretty much the whole day. I just wish I'd gotten sick on a WEEKDAY instead of a weekend. Last year I didn't miss any days of school, and I promised myself I wouldn't let THAT happen again.



CONGRATULATIONS TO GREG HEFFLEY FOR WINNING THE PERFECT ATTENDANCE AWARD.





The father-son camping trip turned out to be a  
DISASTER. The phone rang at 10:00 last night,  
and it was Dad calling from the emergency room.



Dad got put in a tent with the Woodley brothers,  
Darren and Marcus, because their dad couldn't  
come. Darren and Marcus were horsing around in  
the tent, even though Dad kept telling them to  
go to sleep. At one point Darren threw a football  
at Marcus, and it hit him in the stomach.





172

Marcus wet his pants, and I guess Darren thought

that was pretty funny.



Well, Marcus went totally BERSERK. He bit

Darren, and he wouldn't let go, either.



It took Dad a long time to pry the two of them

apart, and he had to take Darren to the emergency

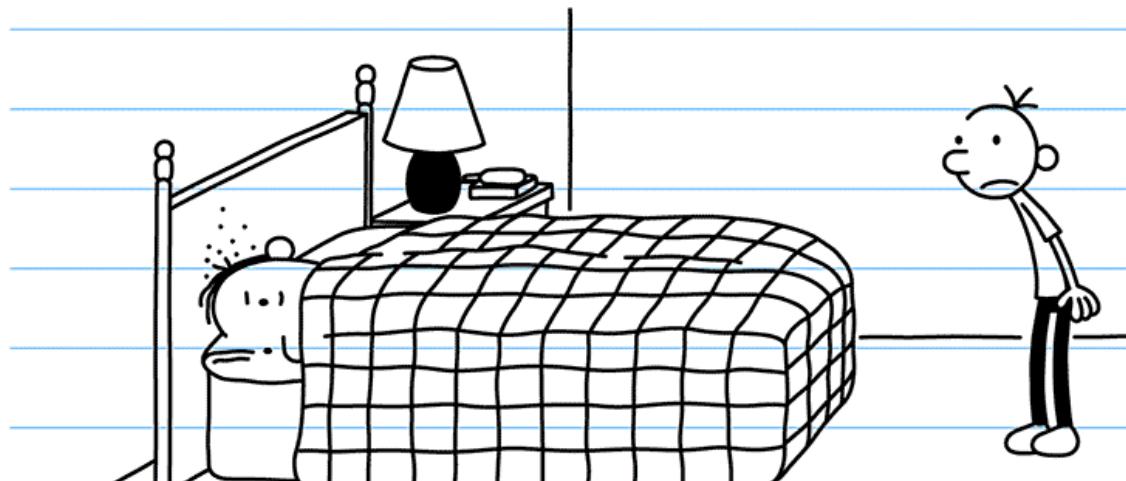
room after that.

Dad came home this morning, and he was not real happy with ME for getting him stuck in that situation. Something tells me that after this weekend, he's not a real big fan of Troop 133, either.

Sunday.

Today was Mother's Day, and I didn't have anything to give to Mom.

I was going to ask Dad to take me to the store so I could at least get Mom a card or something, but Dad was still recovering from the father-son campout. And I don't think he was looking to do me any favors, anyway.



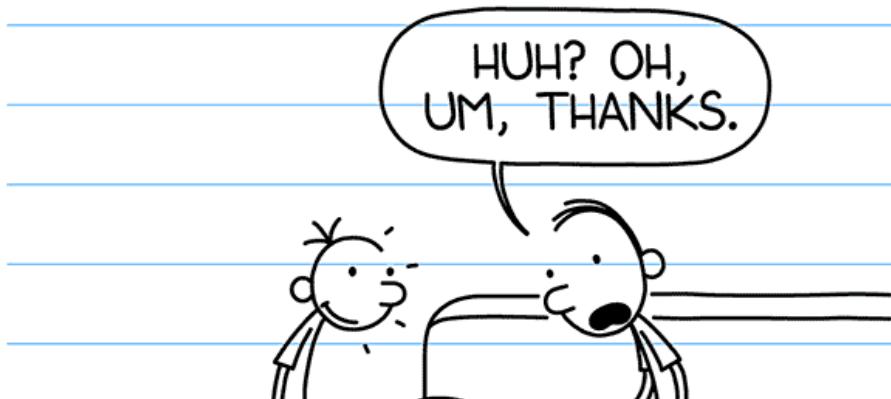
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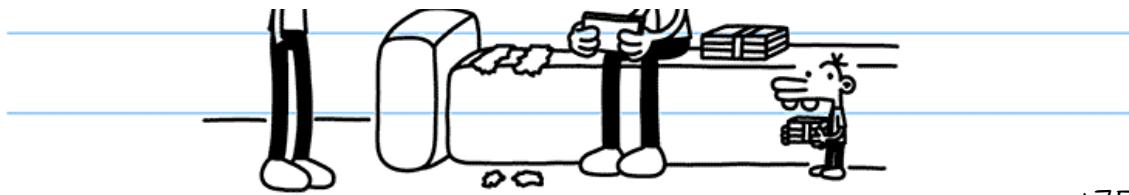
So I had to come up with a homemade gift.

Last year I made Mom a "Chore Coupon" book  
for Mother's Day. Each coupon had something  
like "One free lawn mowing" or "One free window  
washing" on it.



I give Dad a Chore Coupon book just about every  
Father's Day, and it always works out great. It's  
a way for me to take care of my gift obligation  
without having to spend any money, and Dad  
never actually uses any of his coupons in the book.





175

Mom cashed in every single ONE of HER coupons

last year. So I didn't want to make the same

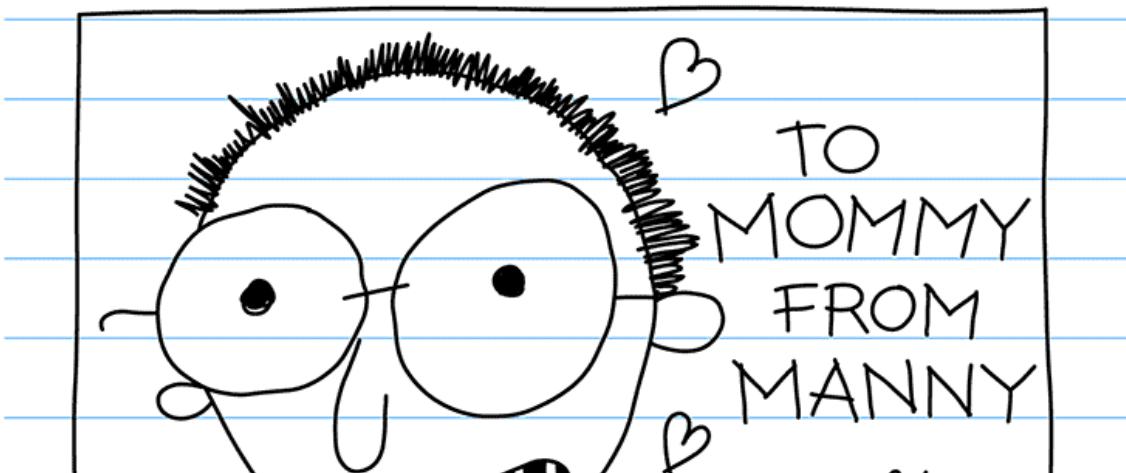
mistake this year.

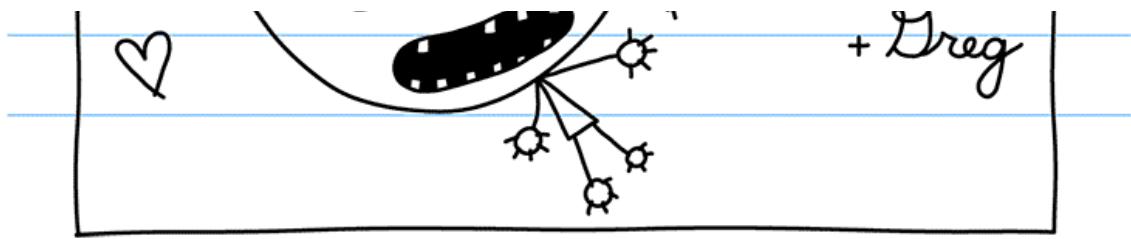


I tried to think of something original to make

for Mom today, but I ran out of time. So I

ended up just piggybacking on Manny's gift.

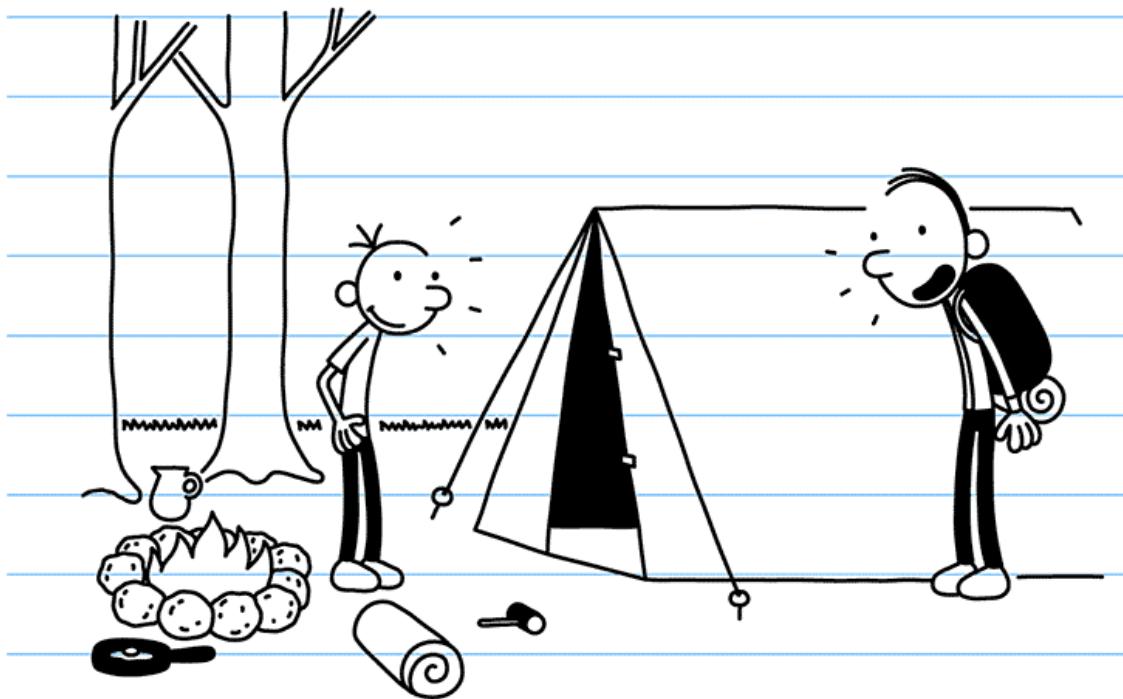




Monday.

I figure the best way to get Dad to forget that father-son camping mess is to have a do-over. So tonight at dinner, I asked Dad if he wanted to go on a camping trip, just me and him.

I've been studying up on my Boy Scouts manual, and I'm pretty eager to show off what I've learned.



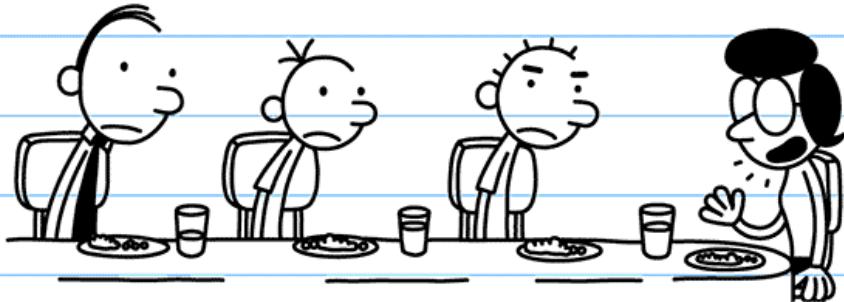
Well, Dad didn't exactly jump at my offer, but Mom thought it was a GREAT idea. She said we should go this weekend and that Rodrick could

go, too. She said it would be a great "bonding"

experience for the three of us.

I wasn't too enthusiastic about that idea, and

neither was Rodrick.



In fact, one of the reasons I wanted to get out

of the house this weekend is because me and

Rodrick are in a fight.

Last night Mom was giving Rodrick a haircut in

the kitchen. Usually when Mom gives us boys a

haircut, she puts a towel around our necks so

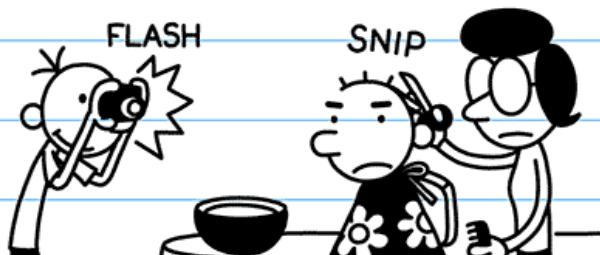
the hair doesn't get all over our clothes. But

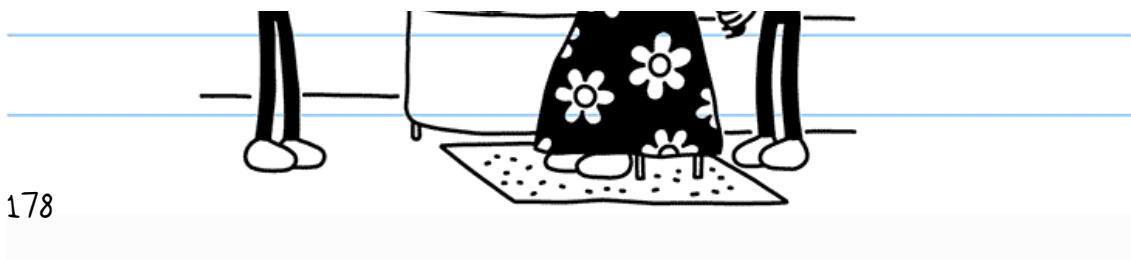
yesterday Mom used one of her old maternity

dresses instead of a towel. So when I saw

Rodrick like that, I knew I had to take

advantage of the situation.

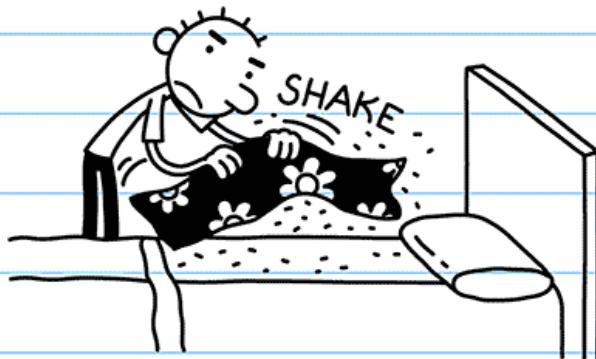




178

I ran upstairs and locked myself in the bathroom  
before Rodrick had a chance to catch me and  
take the camera. And I didn't come back out  
until I was sure he was gone.

Rodrick got me back, anyway. Last night I had  
a nightmare that I was sleeping on a nest of  
red ants, and that was thanks to him.



The way I see it, now we're even. But if there's  
one thing I've learned about Rodrick, it's that  
he's still not gonna let it go. So that's why I'm  
not that eager to hole up in a tent with him for  
the weekend.

Saturday.

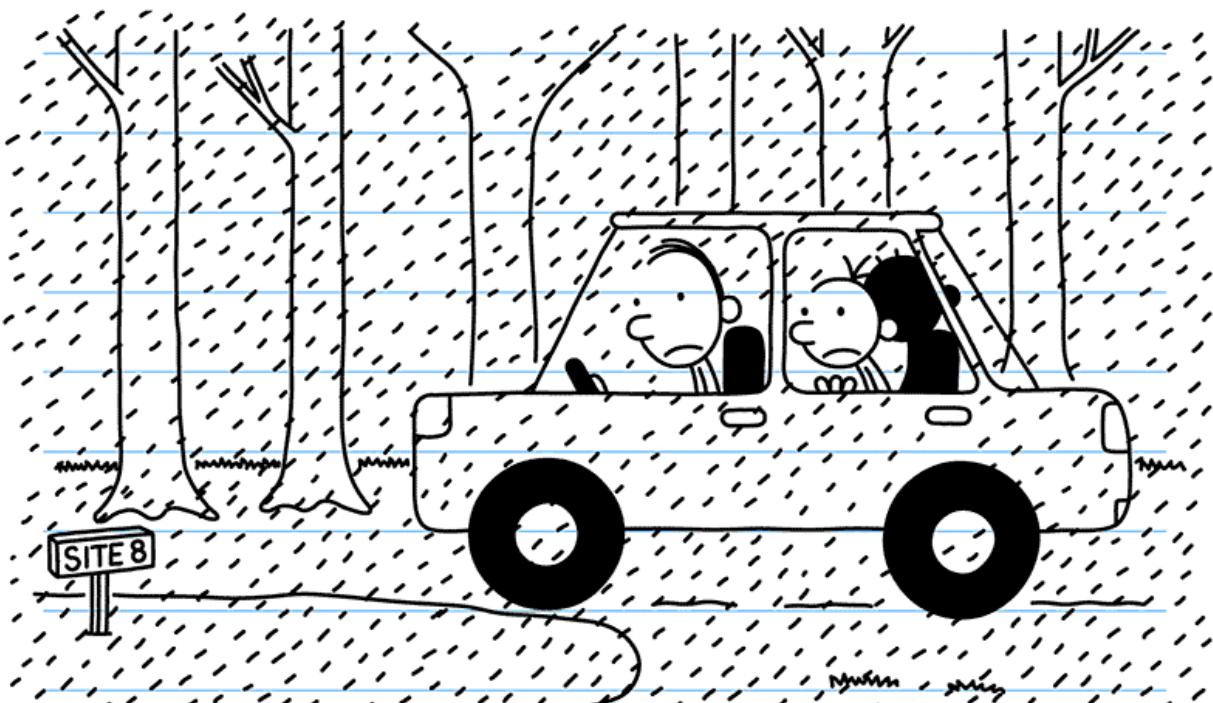
Today me, Dad, and Rodrick headed off on our

camping trip. I picked a place that had a lot of  
manly activities that you could do.

On the way to the campground, the sky got  
dark, and then it started to rain.

I wasn't all that concerned, because our tent is  
waterproof, and Mom packed ponchos for everybody.

But by the time we got to our campsite, it was six  
inches underwater.



We were pretty far from home, so Dad decided  
we should just find a place to stay for the night.

I was really bummed, because the whole point of  
the trip was for me to impress Dad with my

camping skills, and now we were just gonna stay

in some stupid hotel room.

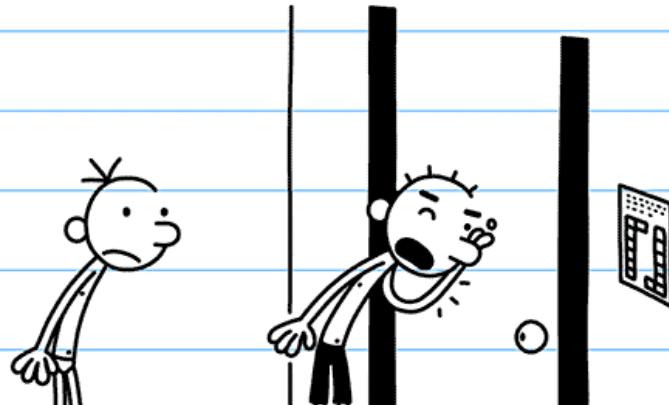
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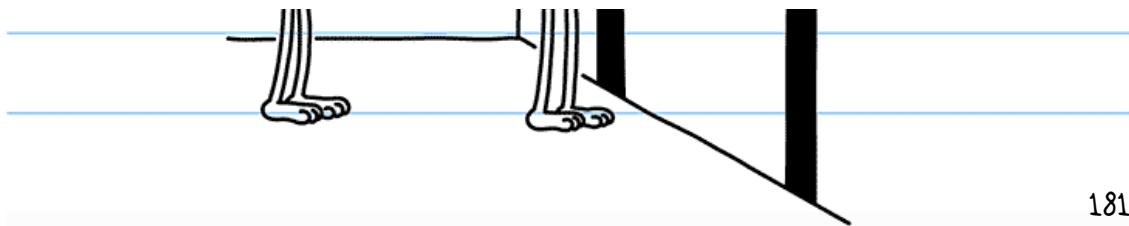
Dad found a place and got a room with two beds  
and a pullout couch. We watched TV for a while  
and then started getting ready for bed.

First, Dad went downstairs to the front desk  
to complain that the heater was too loud, so I  
was alone in the room with Rodrick.

I went into the bathroom to brush my teeth,  
and when I came out, Rodrick was looking out  
the peephole. Then he said something that made  
me freeze in my tracks.

He said that Holly Hills and her family were out  
in the hallway, and they were staying in the  
room right ACROSS from us.

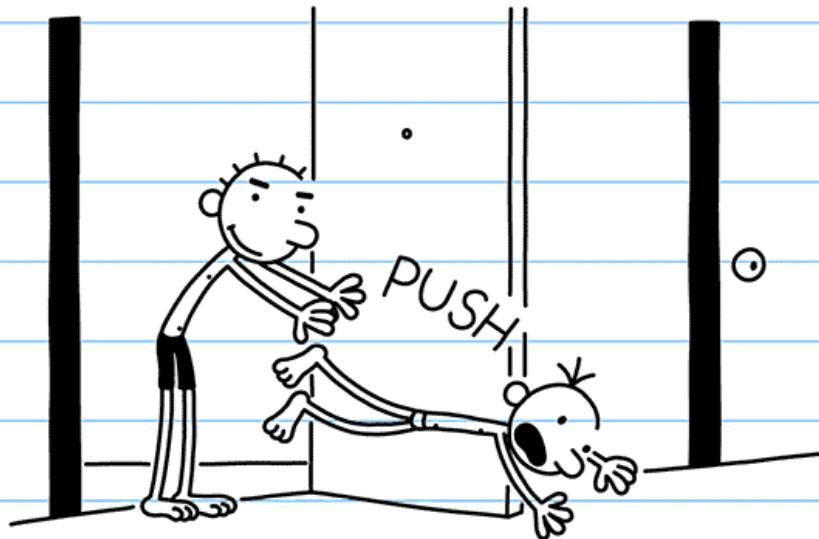




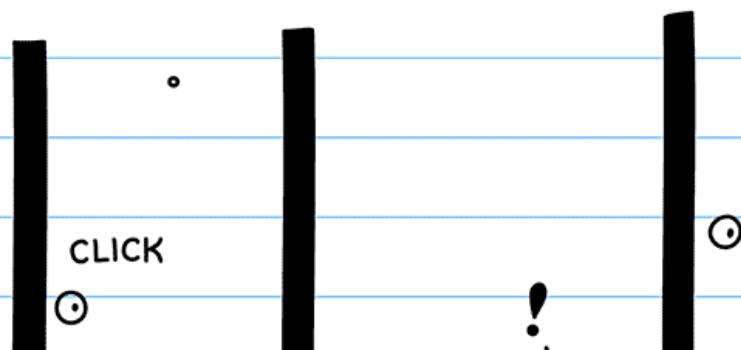
181

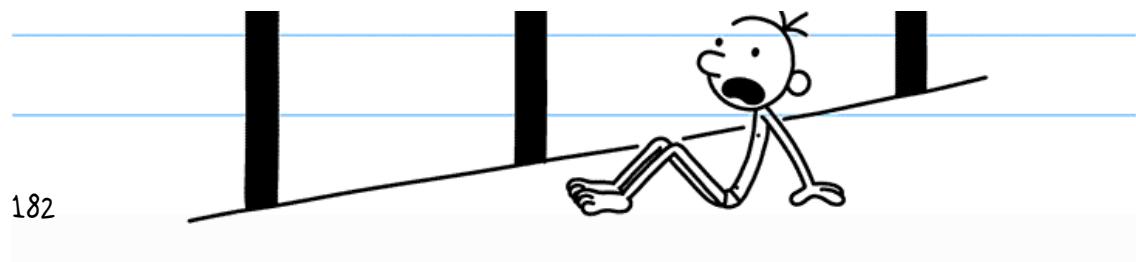
I had to see this for myself. So I moved him  
out of the way and looked out the peephole.

The hallway was completely empty. And before I  
realized it was a trick, Rodrick gave me a big  
shove, and I fell out the door.



Then it got WORSE. Rodrick locked the door  
behind me, and I was stuck in the hallway wearing  
nothing but my tighty whities.

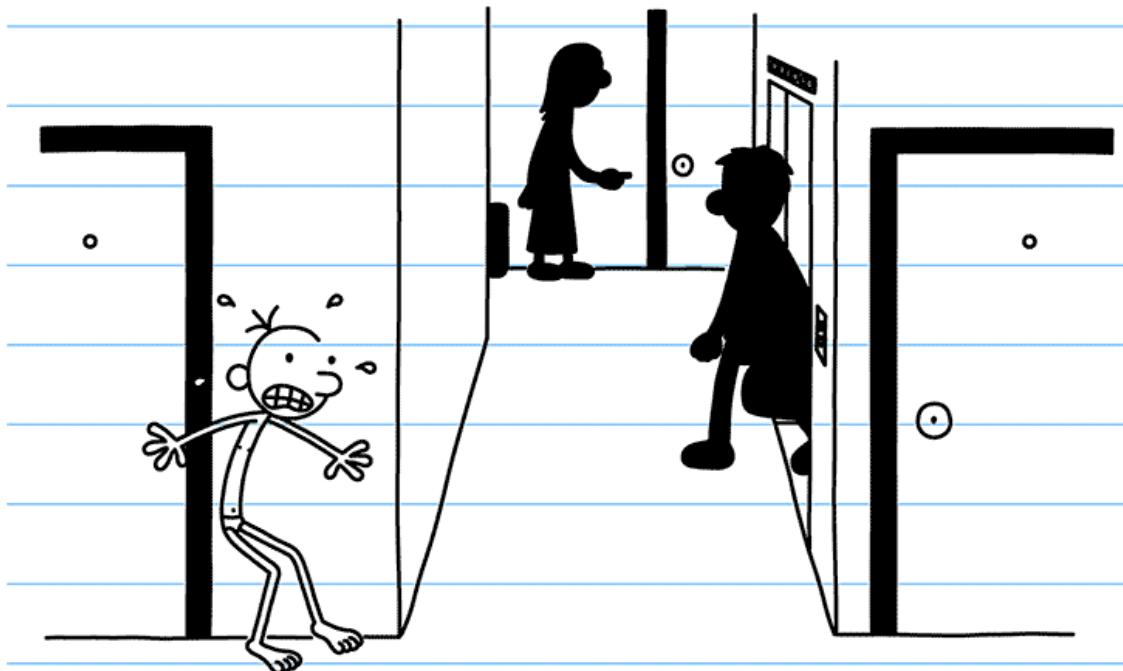




182

I pounded on the door, but Rodrick wouldn't let  
me back in the room.

I was making a big racket, and I realized  
people in the nearby rooms were gonna start  
opening their doors to find out what was going  
on. So I ran around the corner to save myself  
the embarrassment of anyone seeing me. I  
spent about fifteen minutes sneaking through  
the hallways, hiding every time I heard voices.



I was gonna go back to our room and beg Rodrick  
to let me in, but then I realized I didn't even

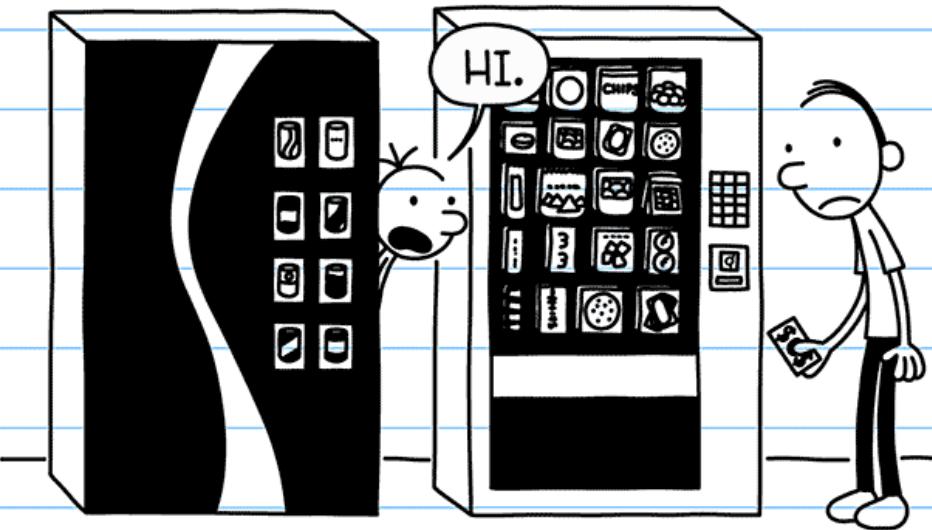
know our ROOM number. And all the doors

looked exactly the same to me.

I couldn't exactly go down to the front desk,  
either. The only option I really had was to try  
and find Dad.

Then I remembered: Dad is a junk-food addict.  
I knew he'd eventually turn up at the vending  
machines, so that's where I camped out.

I wedged myself in between the soda machine and  
the candy machine and waited. I had to wait a  
really long time, but Dad finally did show up.



You know what, though? After seeing the look on

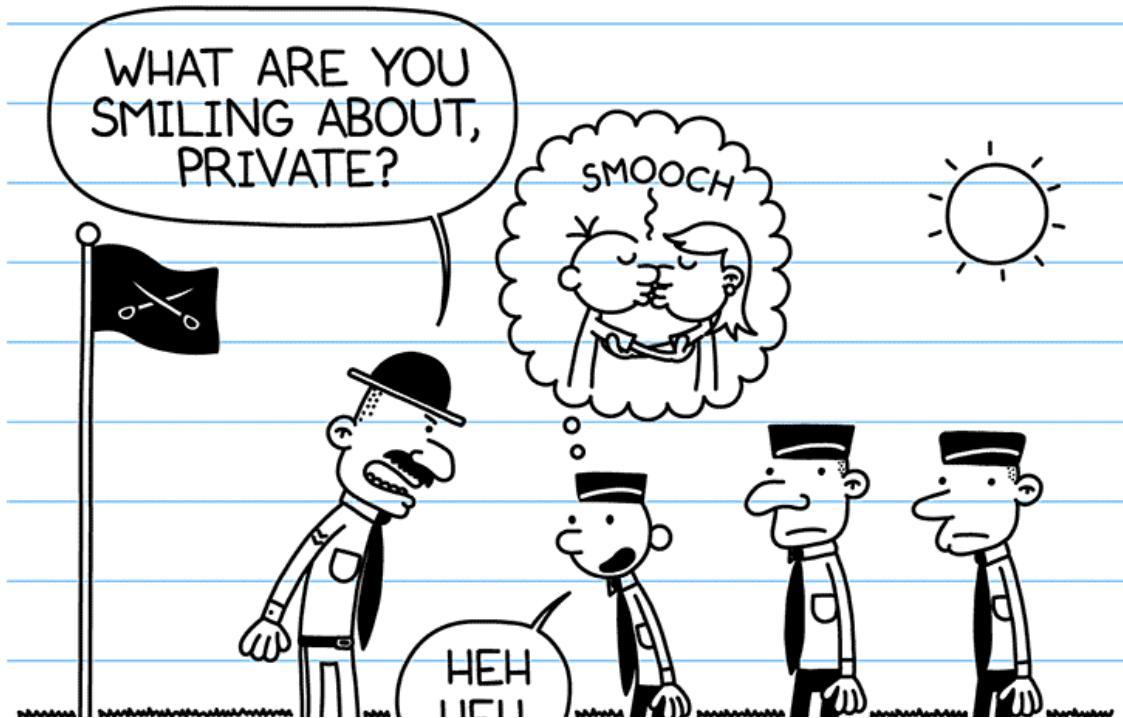
Dad's face, I kind of wished I'd just sucked it

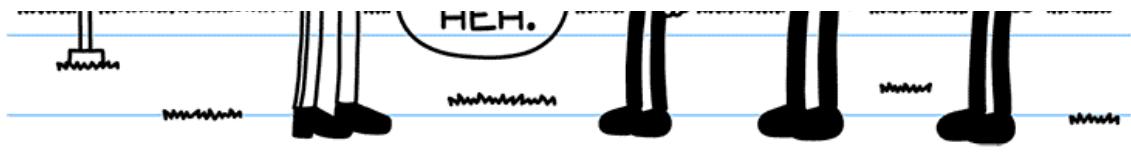
up and gone to the front desk instead.

Sunday.

Well, after our camping trip, I'm pretty sure  
there's no chance I can convince Dad to change  
his mind about Spag Union. So at this point,  
I'm not even gonna bother trying.

I realized there are only about three more weeks  
before I get shipped out, so I figure this is  
my last chance to make a play for Holly Hills. If  
I'm lucky, maybe I can take some good memories  
with me to military academy, and my summer  
won't be so bad.





185

I've been working up the nerve to talk to Holly for  
a long time, and I decided it was now or never.

When we went to church today, I tried to make  
sure we sat right near the Hills family. But we  
ended up two rows in front of them, which I  
guess was close enough. And during the part  
where everybody shakes hands with one another,  
I made my move.



The hand-shaking thing was actually just step  
one in a two-part plan, and the second part  
would come tonight. My next step was to call

Holly on the phone and use the hand-shaking

thing to get the conversation started.

186

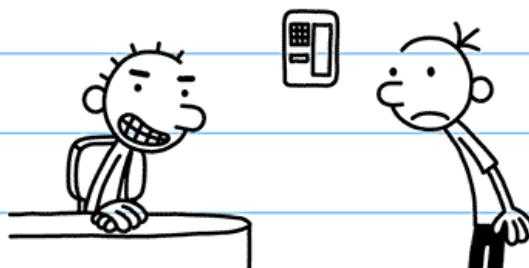
HI, HOLLY, THIS IS GREG  
HEFFLEY. YOU MIGHT  
REMEMBER ME FROM A VERY  
SPECIAL "PEACE BE WITH YOU."

(BLUSH)



At dinner tonight, I told everyone that I  
needed to make a very important call, so everyone  
should stay off the phone. But I guess Rodrick  
must've figured out I was gonna call a girl,  
because he took all the handsets and hid them.

That meant the only way to make a call was to  
use the speakerphone in the kitchen, but there  
was no chance of THAT happening.





187

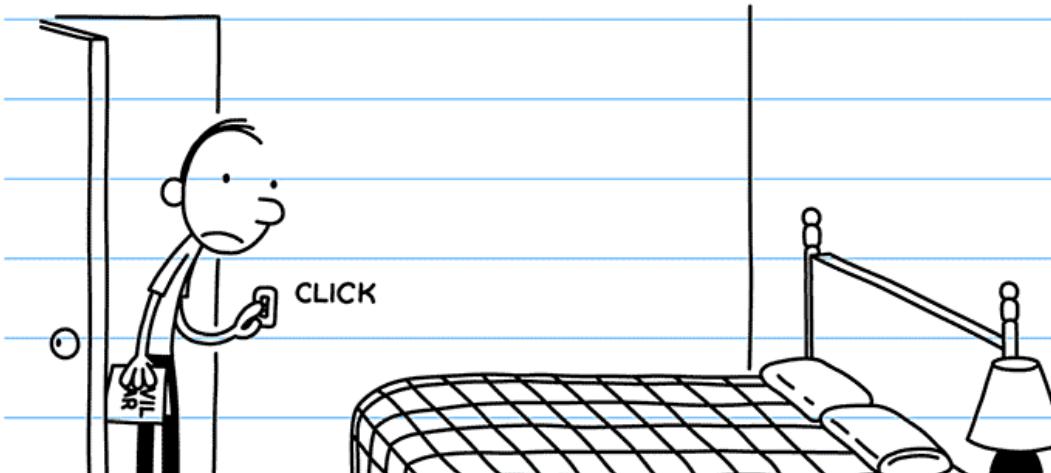
I told Mom that Rodrick took all the phones, and  
she made him return them to where they belonged.

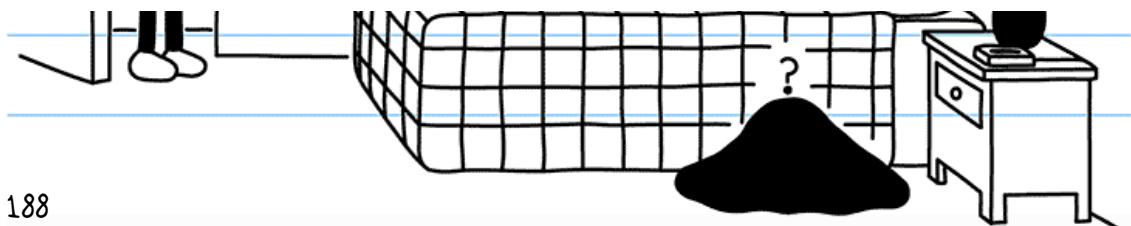
Eventually, Rodrick went down to the basement.

Later on I snuck into Mom and Dad's room to  
make my call. I turned off the lights so Rodrick  
wouldn't know I was in there, and I hid under  
a blanket. Then I waited for about twenty  
minutes to make sure he hadn't followed me.

Before I had a chance to dial Holly's number,  
someone walked in the room and turned on the  
light. I thought for SURE it was Rodrick.

But it wasn't. It was DAD.





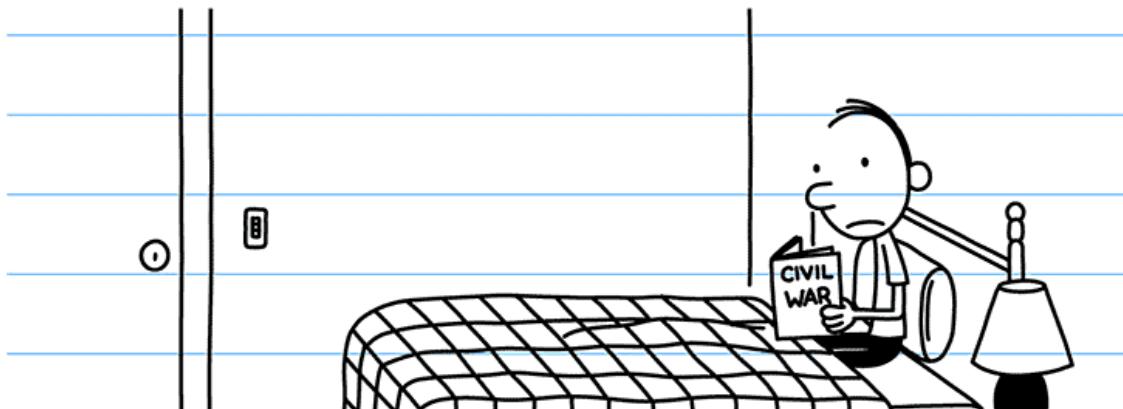
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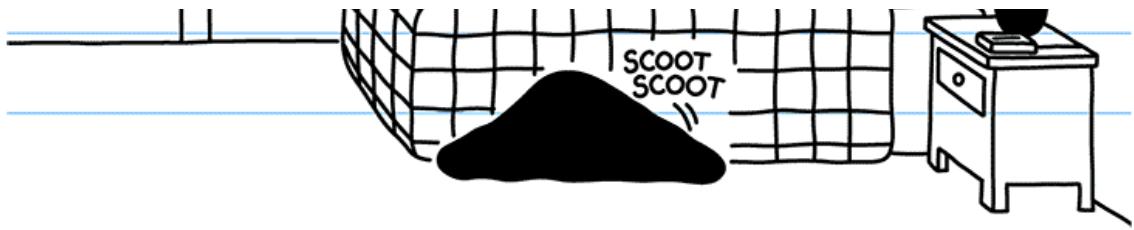
I decided to stay perfectly still and let Dad  
get whatever he needed and leave.

But Dad didn't leave. He got into bed and started  
reading a BOOK.

I should have just uncovered myself the second  
Dad walked in the room, because now I couldn't  
just get up and walk out or I'd give him a heart  
attack. So I decided to just sneak out of the  
room real slow.

I moved about an inch a second. I figured it  
would take me about a half hour to make it all  
the way out of the room, but there would still be  
enough time to call Holly after that.





I was only about five feet from the bedroom door when the phone in my hand rang and scared the living daylights out of me.



I think Dad really DID almost have a heart attack. And once he recovered, he didn't look happy to see me.

Dad made me get out of his room, and then he slammed the door.

I'm sure this episode didn't help my standing with

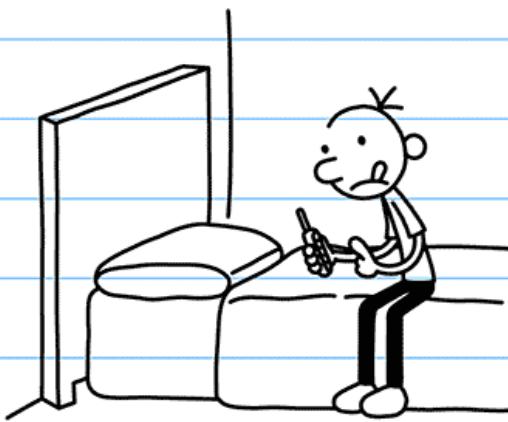
Dad, but I guess at this point it's probably too

late, anyway.

Tuesday.

Two days have already passed since I shook hands with Holly, and I didn't want any more time to go by before I spoke with her again.

Luckily, Dad and Rodrick weren't home tonight, so I knew I could make a phone call without being bothered. I practiced what I was going to say about a million times, and then I finally worked up the nerve to make the call.



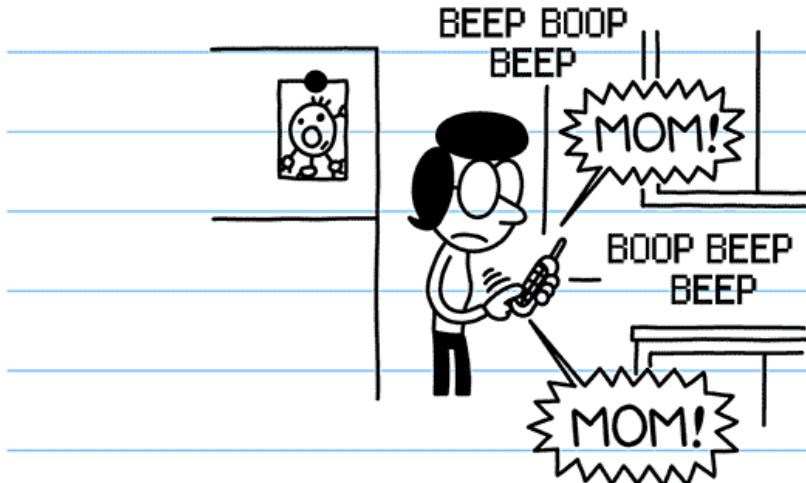
I dialed Holly's number, and the phone started ringing. But right then Mom picked up the phone downstairs.

Mom has this REALLY bad habit of just dialing

without checking to see if anyone else is using

the phone, and that's what she did tonight.

I tried to stop her, but it was no use.



The phone kept ringing at the Hills's house, and  
then someone picked up. It was Holly's mother.

Mom was really confused, since she didn't dial  
the Hills's number in the first place. I just  
held my breath and waited for it all to be over.





192

It took Mom and Mrs. Hills a minute to figure  
out who was on the other end of the line. But  
once they did, they just started chatting like  
nothing strange had happened at all.

They got into this long conversation about the  
PTA and the fundraising committee and stuff  
like that. I couldn't really hang up, because  
then Mom would hear the click and know someone  
was on the other end.

Eventually, the conversation between Mom and  
Mrs. Hills turned to me.



At that point I just put the phone down and  
went to bed. I figure that a phone call between

me and Holly isn't meant to be, so I'm officially

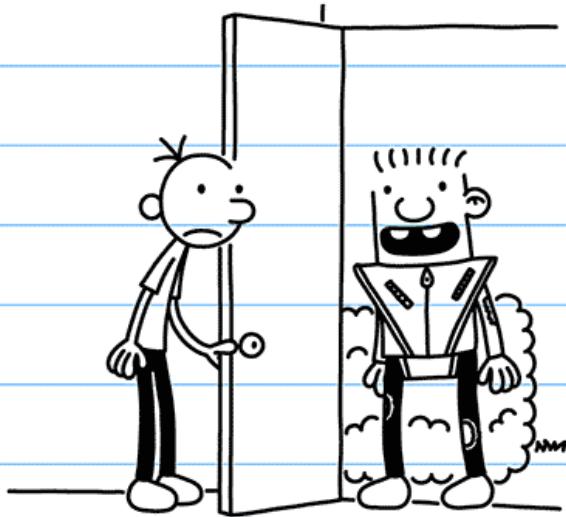
giving up.

Friday

Today at school I overheard Holly tell a couple of her friends that she was gonna meet them at the rollerskating rink tonight, and a lightbulb went on over my head.

After school I asked Mom if she'd take me to the Roll-a-Round tonight, and she said yes but I'd have to get a ride home from someone else's parents. So I invited Rowley along.

As soon as Rowley showed up at my front door, I knew I made a mistake inviting him.



Rowley had his hair all teased up, and he was

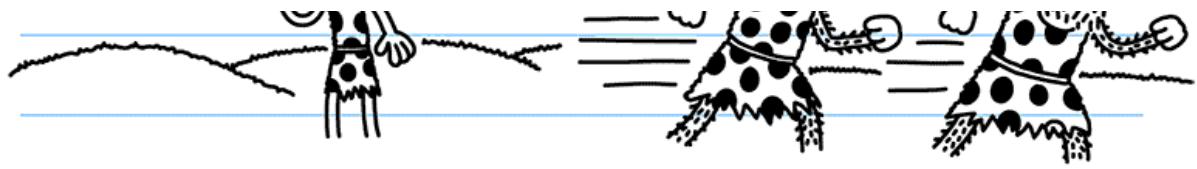
dressed just like his favorite singer, Joshie.

And I think Rowley might have even been wearing  
sparkly lip gloss, but I can't say for sure. I  
couldn't stop to worry about the way Rowley  
looked, though, because I had my OWN problems.

Earlier on I had lost one of my contact lenses, so  
that meant I had to wear my backup glasses. The  
lenses on those things are about three inches thick,  
and they look RIDICULOUS.

If I'm not wearing my contact lenses or my  
glasses, I'm as blind as a bat. I guess I should  
just feel lucky that I wasn't alive during caveman  
times, because I wouldn't have been able to hunt or  
do anything useful. I'm sure my tribe-mates would've  
ditched me the first chance they got.





195

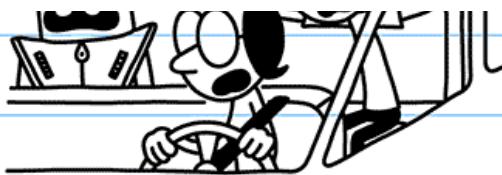
I probably would've had to become a wise man or  
something just to make everyone think I was  
worth keeping around.

On the ride to the rollerskating rink tonight,  
I gave Rowley some instructions on how to  
behave if I got into a conversation with Holly  
Hills—knowing him, he could seriously hurt my  
chances with her.



I wish I had waited until we were out of the  
car, because Mom overheard our conversation.





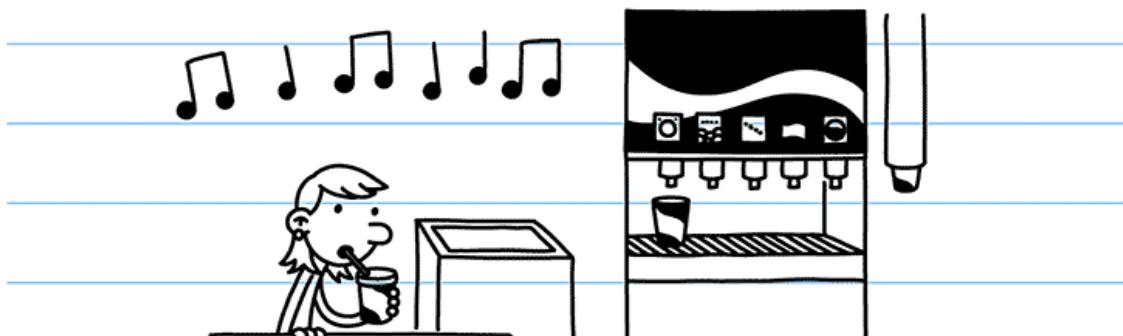
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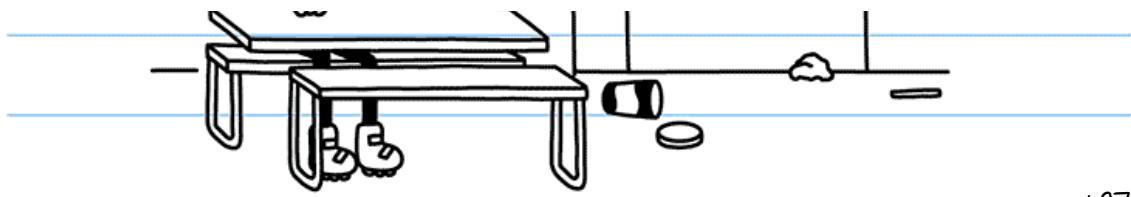
When we pulled up at the Roll-a-Round, I got  
out of the car before Mom could say anything  
ELSE I didn't want to hear.

Me and Rowley paid our admission and then went  
inside. We rented our skates and brought them  
over to the arcade area, where I scoped out the  
whole scene.

I spotted Holly over by the snack bar. She was  
with a bunch of her friends, so I wasn't ready  
to go and talk to her just yet.

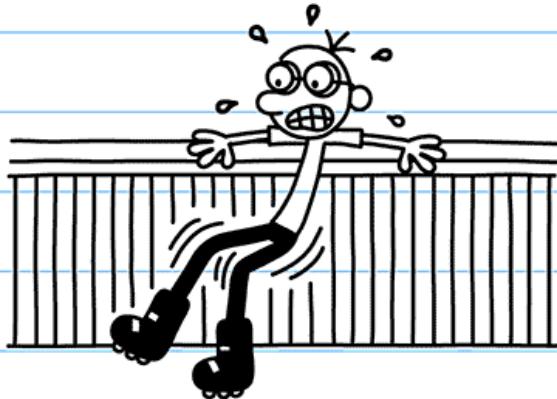
At 9:00 the DJ announced "Couples Skate." A  
lot of people were pairing up, and Holly was sitting  
at a table, all alone. I knew this was the chance  
I was waiting for.



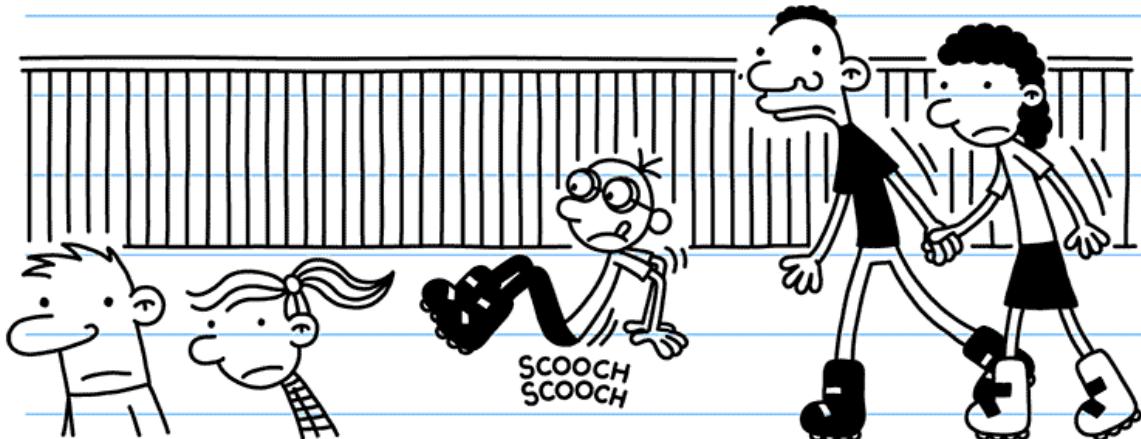


197

I started making my way over to her, but  
getting around on skates was a LOT harder  
than I thought it would be. I had to hug the  
wall just to stay on my feet.



It was taking FOREVER, and I realized the  
song was gonna be over by the time I got to  
Holly. So I got down on my butt and scooted  
over to her to speed things up.



I almost got run over a couple of times, but I

finally made it to the snack bar.

Holly was still there, sitting by herself. Time  
was running out, so I had to take a shortcut  
through a puddle of soda to get to her.

On my way across the snack bar, I tried to  
work out what I was going to say to Holly. I  
realized I wasn't looking my coolest at that  
moment, so I knew I was gonna have to say  
something pretty smooth to make up for it. But  
before I even had a chance to open my mouth,  
Holly said four words that changed everything —



I started to tell her I was Greg Heffley, the  
guy from the "Doggie Dropped It" joke, but

right then Couples Skate ended, and Holly's friends

swooped in and pulled her out onto the rink.

I made my way back to the arcade, and that's

where I stayed for the rest of the night.

Because believe me, I was NOT in the mood

for skating.



You know, I probably should've realized a long

time ago that Holly wasn't worth my time.

Somebody who would mistake ME for FREGLEY

definitely has something wrong with them.

I'm officially DONE with girls. I should just

ask Dad to see if Spag Union has early admission,

because there's really no point in me sticking

around here anymore.

200

JUNE

Friday

Today was the last day of school, and everybody  
was in a good mood but me. Everyone ELSE is  
looking forward to having fun this summer, but  
all I've got to look forward to is sit-ups and  
marching drills.

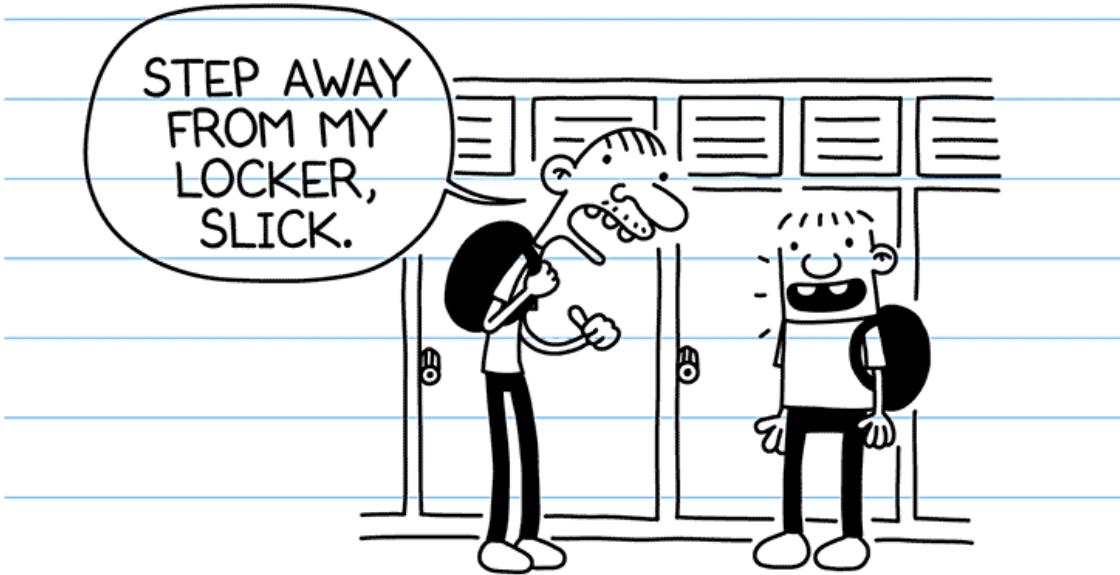
At lunch, everyone handed their yearbooks  
around for people to sign, and when I got mine  
back, here's what was on the last page —



At first I couldn't figure out who "Slick" was,  
but then I realized it was just Rowley. A couple

of days ago, Rowley was standing near an older  
kid's locker, and the guy wanted Rowley to move.

So here's what the guy said —



So I guess now Rowley thinks "Slick" is his permanent nickname or something. I just hope he doesn't expect ME to say it.

I flipped through the pages to see who else signed my yearbook, and there was one that made me stop in my tracks. It was from Holly Hills.

First of all, she wrote my actual name, so that means she figured out who I was since Friday night. And second, she wrote "K.I.T." at the end, which everyone knows means "Keep in

Touch." You'd better BELIEVE I'm gonna take

her up on her offer.

Greg,

I don't really know you all that well, but you seem O.K., I guess.

K.I.T.

Holly

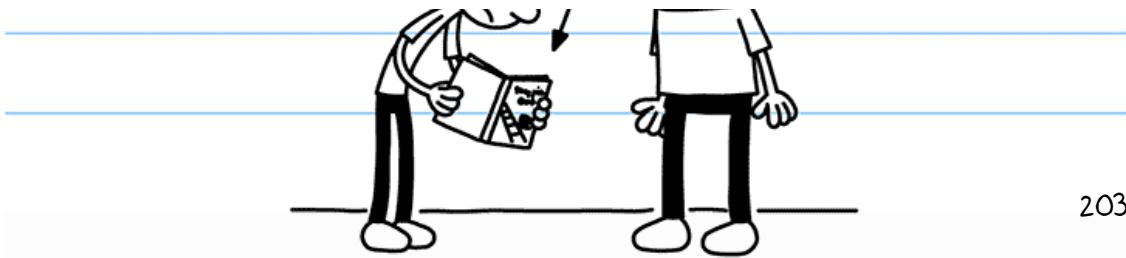
I handed my yearbook to Rowley to show him what Holly wrote. But then he showed me what she wrote in HIS yearbook, and it kind of made her note to me look lame.

Dear Rowley,

You are so adorable & funny!  
I hope we have the same  
homeroom next year. Stay cute!

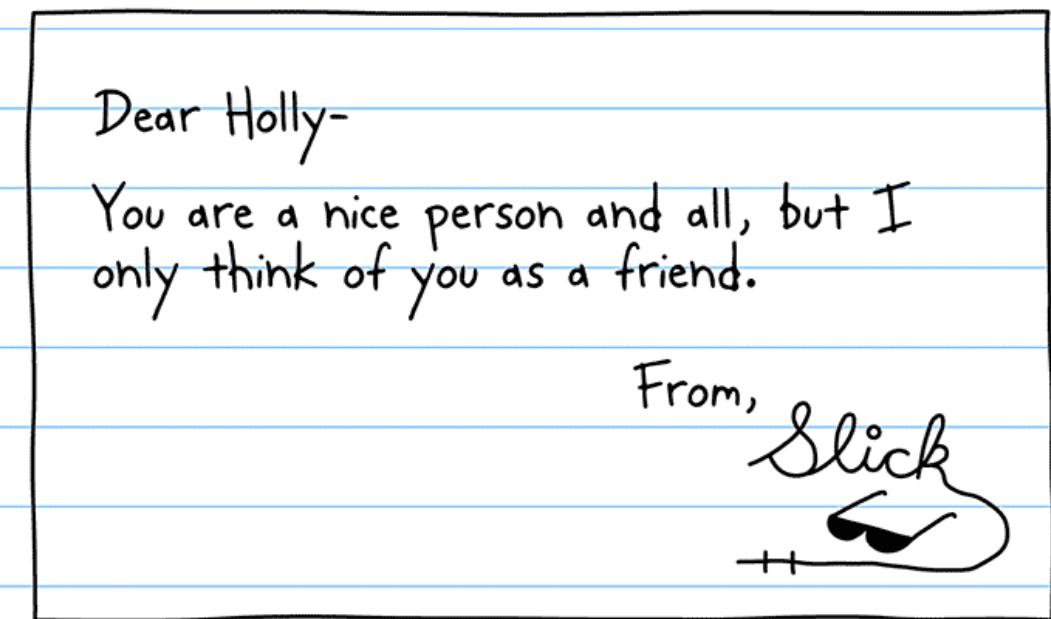
Love, Holly





203

A couple of minutes later, Holly's yearbook came around, and I had a chance to sign it. So here's what I put -



The way I see it, I just did Rowley a HUGE favor. I don't want to see him get his heart stomped on by Holly Hills, because the truth is, girls can be a little cruel sometimes.

Saturday

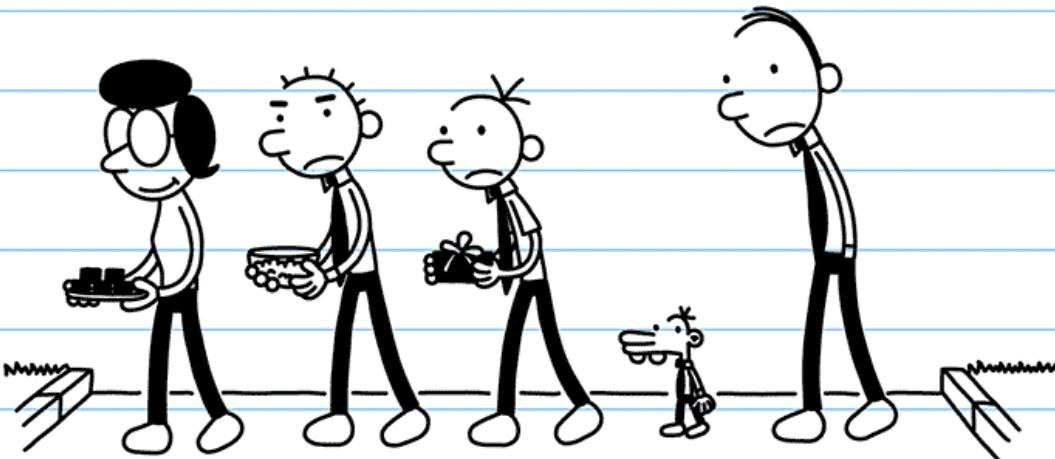
Today was my only day of summer vacation, and I had to spend it at Seth Snella's half-birthday party. I asked Mom to let me stay home so I

could enjoy myself, but she said we were going to

the party as a family.

Dad didn't even bother fighting it, because he  
knew HE wasn't getting out of it, either.

So at 1:00 we walked across the street to the  
Snellas' house.

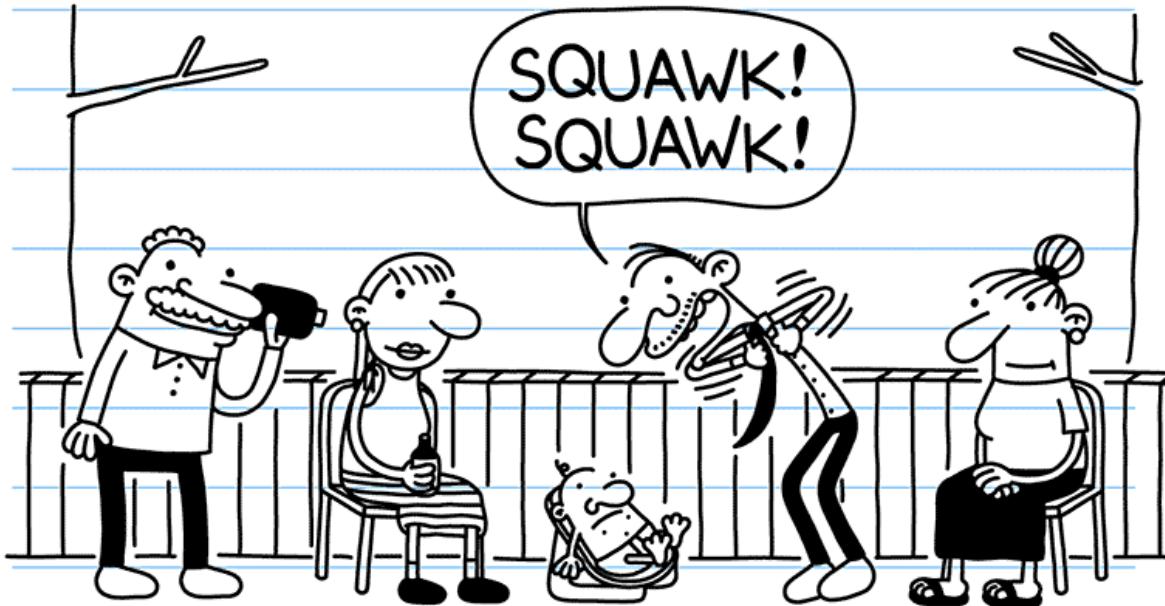


The Snellas really did it up this year. They had  
a clown making balloon animals, and a moon bounce  
for the kids.

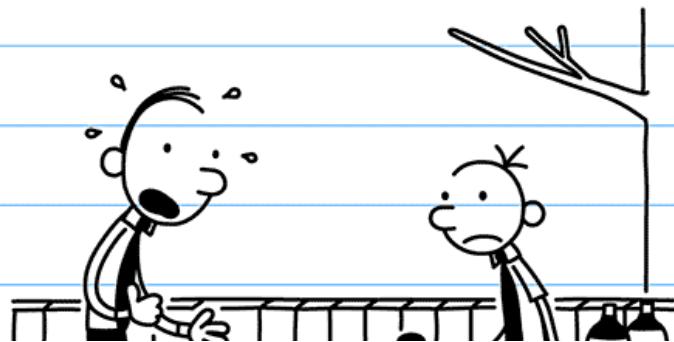
They even had live music. Rodrick was pretty  
sore over that because his band, Löded Diper,  
tried out for the job, but the Snellas turned  
them down.

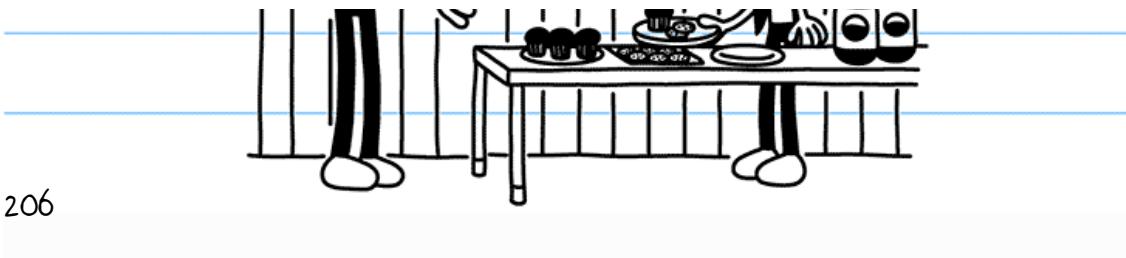
Everyone ate lunch, and then at 3:30 the main  
event started.

Mr. and Mrs. Snella had all the adults line up in  
front of Seth, and they all took turns trying  
to make him smile. Mr. Henrich went first.



I noticed Dad looking really nervous at the back  
of the line. At one point I walked by Dad to get  
myself some cupcakes, and he stopped me. He told  
me if I could get him out of this situation, he'd  
owe me BIG-time.



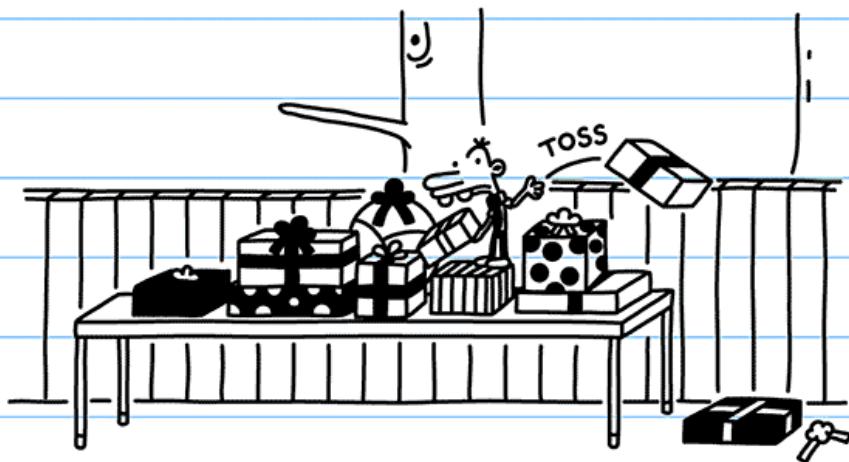


206

I thought it was pretty ironic that Dad would  
be asking ME for a favor, especially since he's  
the one who's shipping me off to military school  
tomorrow. So I was fine with letting him squirm.

But that doesn't mean I wanted to see my  
Dad acting like a baboon in front of the whole  
neighborhood, either. I thought about sneaking  
home to spare myself the shame.

That's when I saw Manny on the other side of  
the deck, poking around Seth's presents.



Manny found the present that was from OUR  
family, and he ripped it open. As soon as I saw

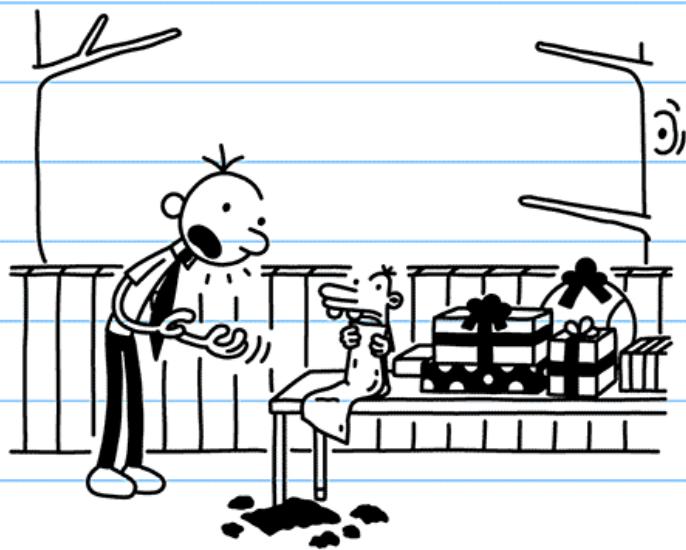
what it was, I knew things were about to get

real complicated.

It was a blue knit blanket, just like the one  
MANNY used to have as a baby. And you could  
tell Manny thought he had found himself a  
brand-new Tingy.



I went over to Manny and told him he was gonna  
have to hand over the blanket because it was for  
the baby, not him. But Manny wouldn't cough it up.



When Manny realized I was gonna take away the

blanket, he just turned around and chucked it over

the railing.

The blanket landed in the branch of a tree. I knew I had to get it back before Mom found out, so I got down off the deck and started climbing up the tree.



Right when I was about to grab the blanket, my foot slipped, and I was left hanging there. I tried to pull myself back up, but I didn't have the strength.

I probably would've been able to do it, but the only thing I had to eat today was a grape soda

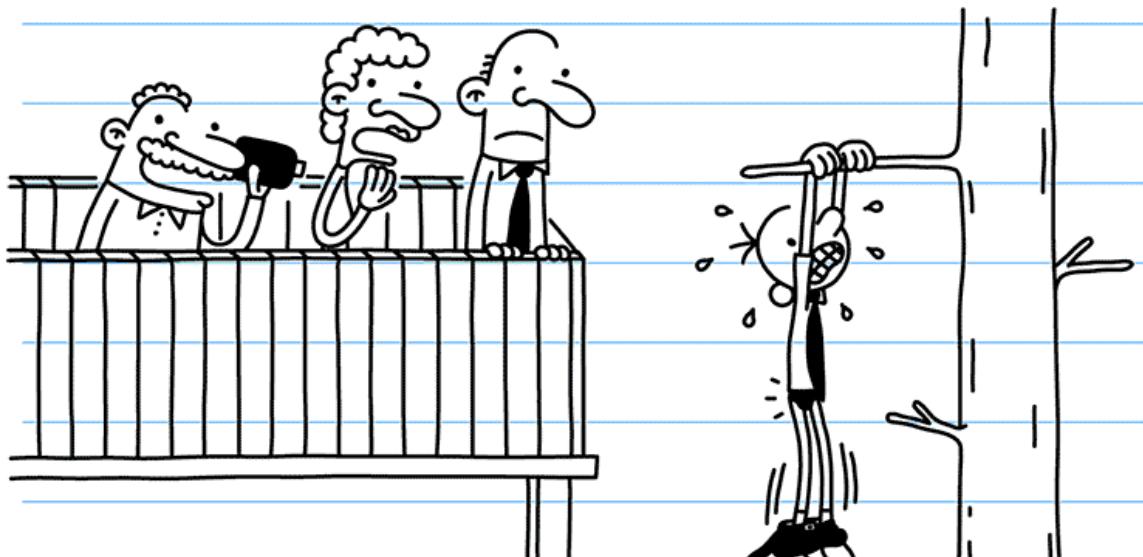
and the frosting off of a piece of cake, so I had

no energy.

I yelled for help, but I really wish I didn't  
call attention to myself. Because right when  
everyone came over to see what was going on, my  
pants came loose and fell down around my ankles.

It wouldn't have happened if I was wearing my  
OWN pants. But I never washed my dress  
pants after they got that chocolate all over  
them, so I was borrowing a pair of RODRICK'S  
pants, which were about two sizes too big on me.

The situation was humiliating enough, but then I  
realized something even WORSE. I was wearing  
my Wonder Woman Underoos.



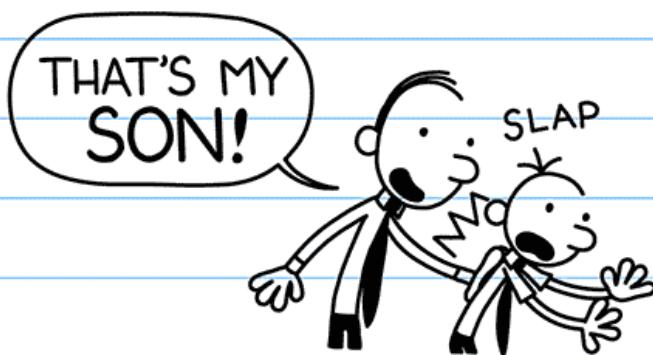


210

Eventually, Dad ran over and helped get me down, but not before Mr. Snella got the whole thing on tape. And something tells me that this time around, he has a good shot at the "America's Funniest Families" Grand Prize.

After that, Dad hustled me home, and I thought he was gonna be really mad at me. But it turns out that my accident happened right when Dad was next up to go in front of Seth Snella, so I saved him from having to take his turn.

And get this: Dad thinks I FAKED the whole thing to bail him out.



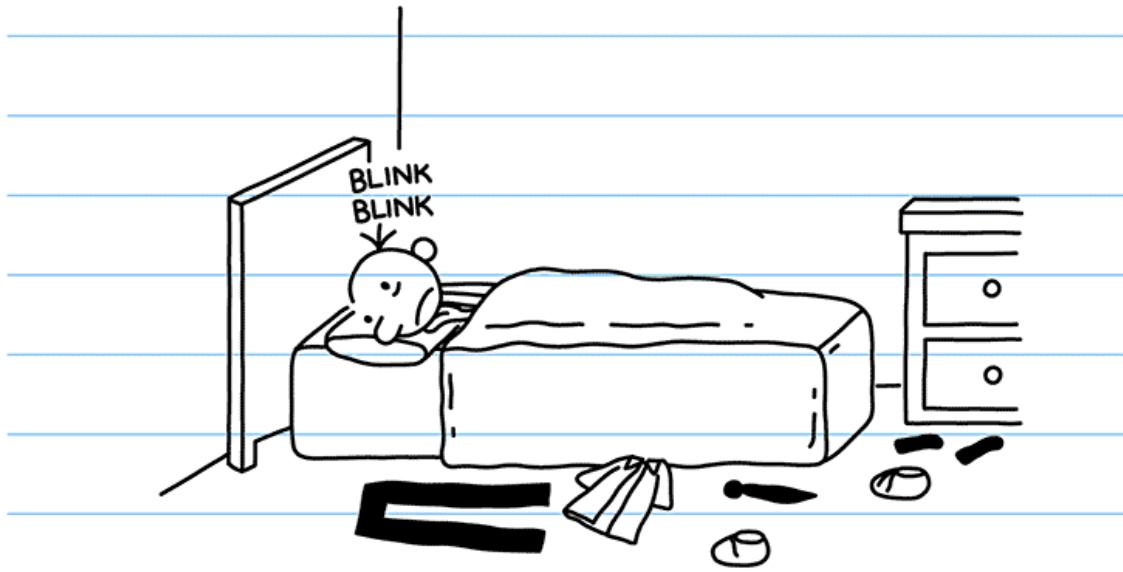
I wasn't about to correct him, either. I made myself a big bowl of ice cream, sat down in front

of the TV, and tried to enjoy the rest of my

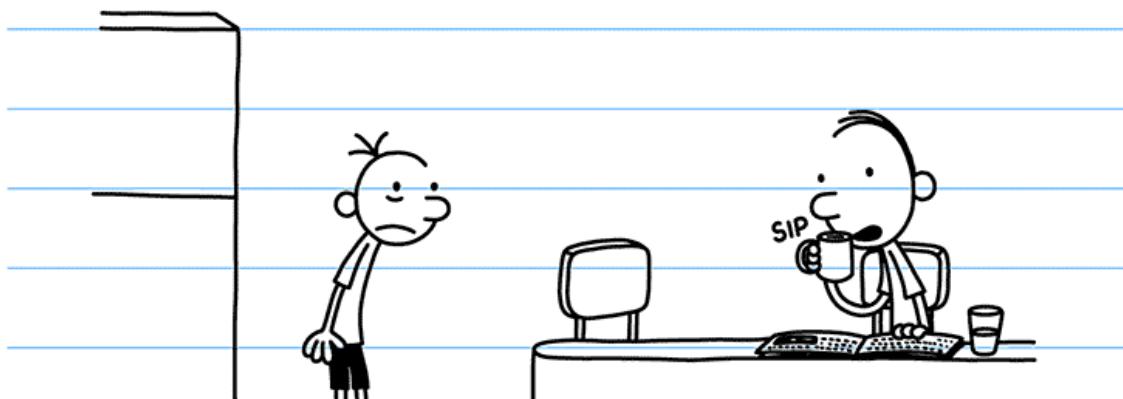
one day of freedom as best I could.

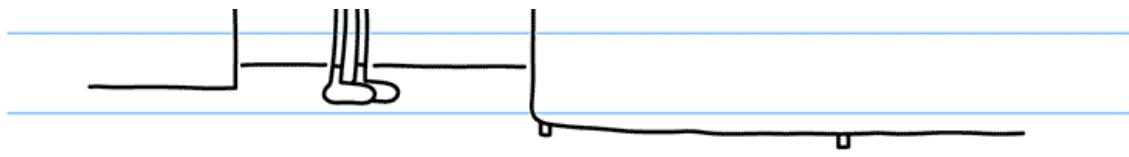
Sunday.

When I woke up this morning, it was a quarter past 11:00. I couldn't figure out why I was still in bed, because Dad was supposed to drive me to Spag Union at 8:00.



So I went downstairs. Dad was sitting at the kitchen table reading the paper, and he wasn't even dressed yet.



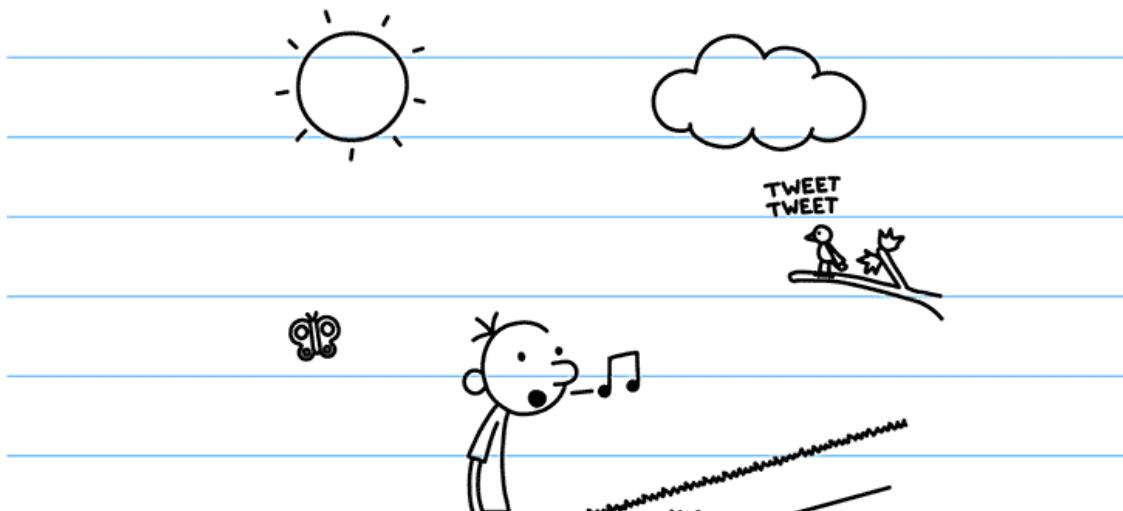


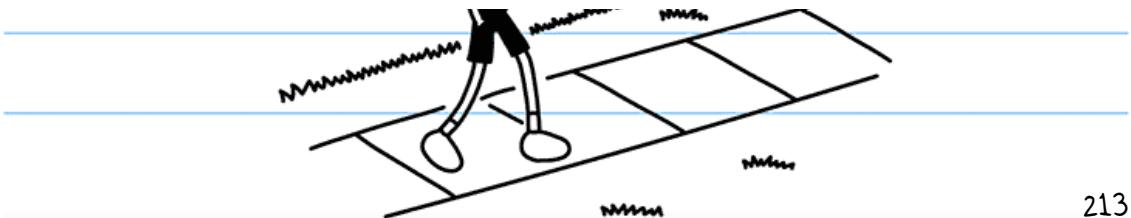
212

When I walked into the kitchen, Dad told me  
we could "rethink" this military academy thing. He  
said maybe I could just do some push-ups and  
sit-ups every once in a while, and that would be  
just as good as the summer conditioning program  
at Spag Union.

I couldn't believe my ears. I guess Dad felt like  
he owed me for saving him yesterday, and this  
was his way of paying me back.

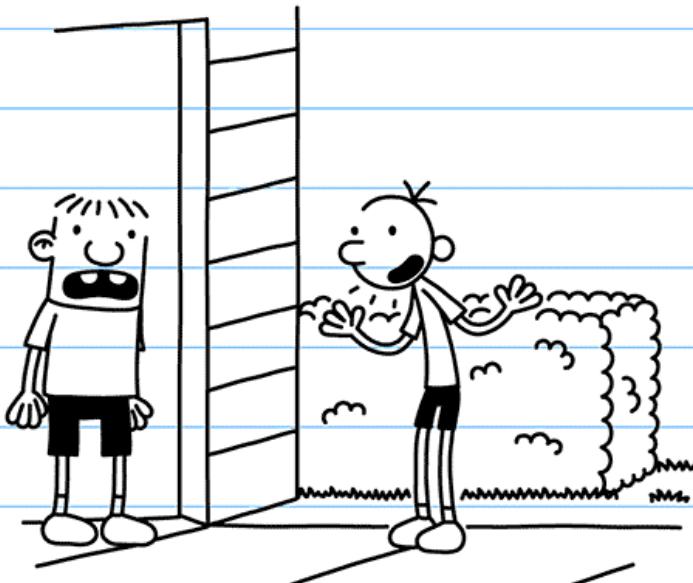
I walked out of the house and went up to  
Rowley's before Dad could change his mind. And  
on my way up the hill, I realized that I was on  
summer vacation.





213

I knocked on Rowley's door, and when he  
answered, I told him I didn't have to go to  
Spag Union AFTER all.



Rowley didn't even know what I was talking  
about, so that just shows you how clueless he can  
be sometimes.

We played Rowley's Twisted Wizard 2 for a while,  
and then his parents kicked us out of the house.  
So we grabbed some popsicles and went and sat  
on his front curb.

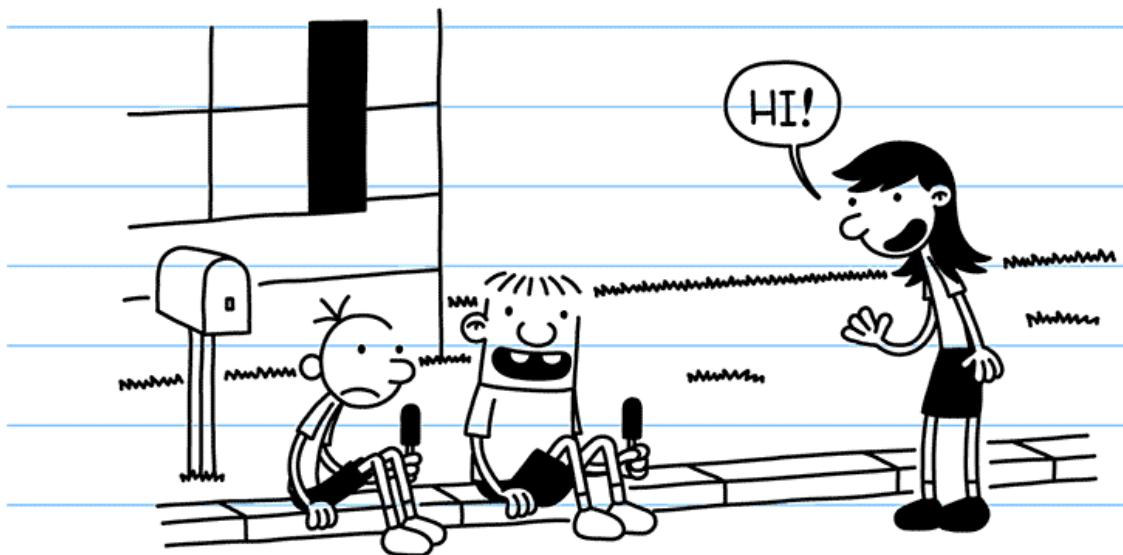
You'll never BELIEVE what happened next. A

really cute girl I had never seen before walked up to

us and introduced herself.

She said her name was Trista and that she just

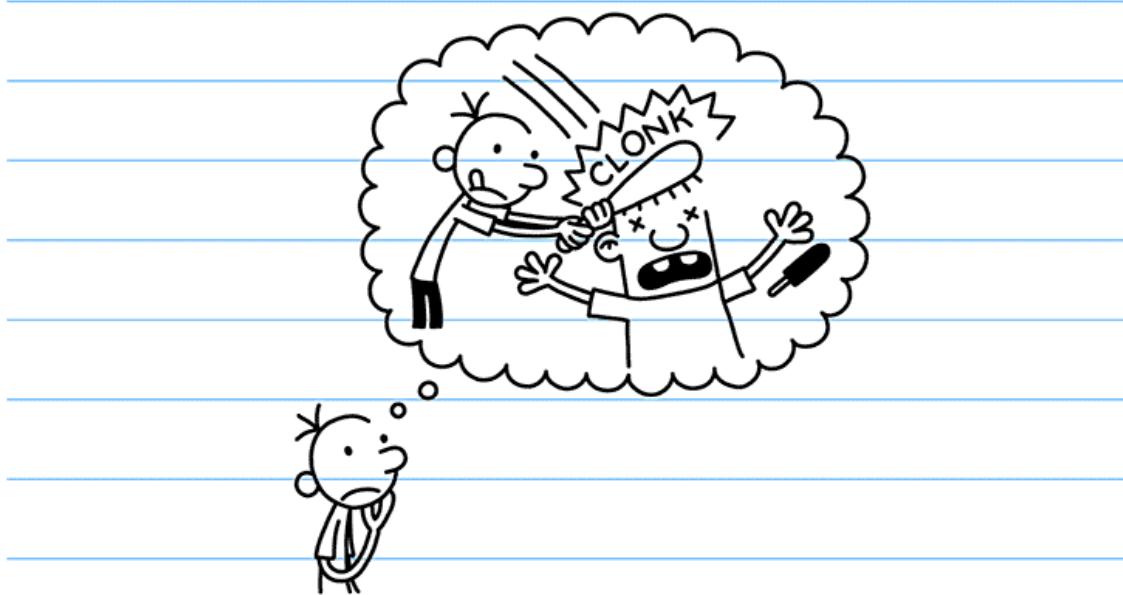
moved in down the street.



I looked at Rowley, and it was pretty obvious he

was thinking what I was thinking. So it took me

about two seconds to come up with a plan.

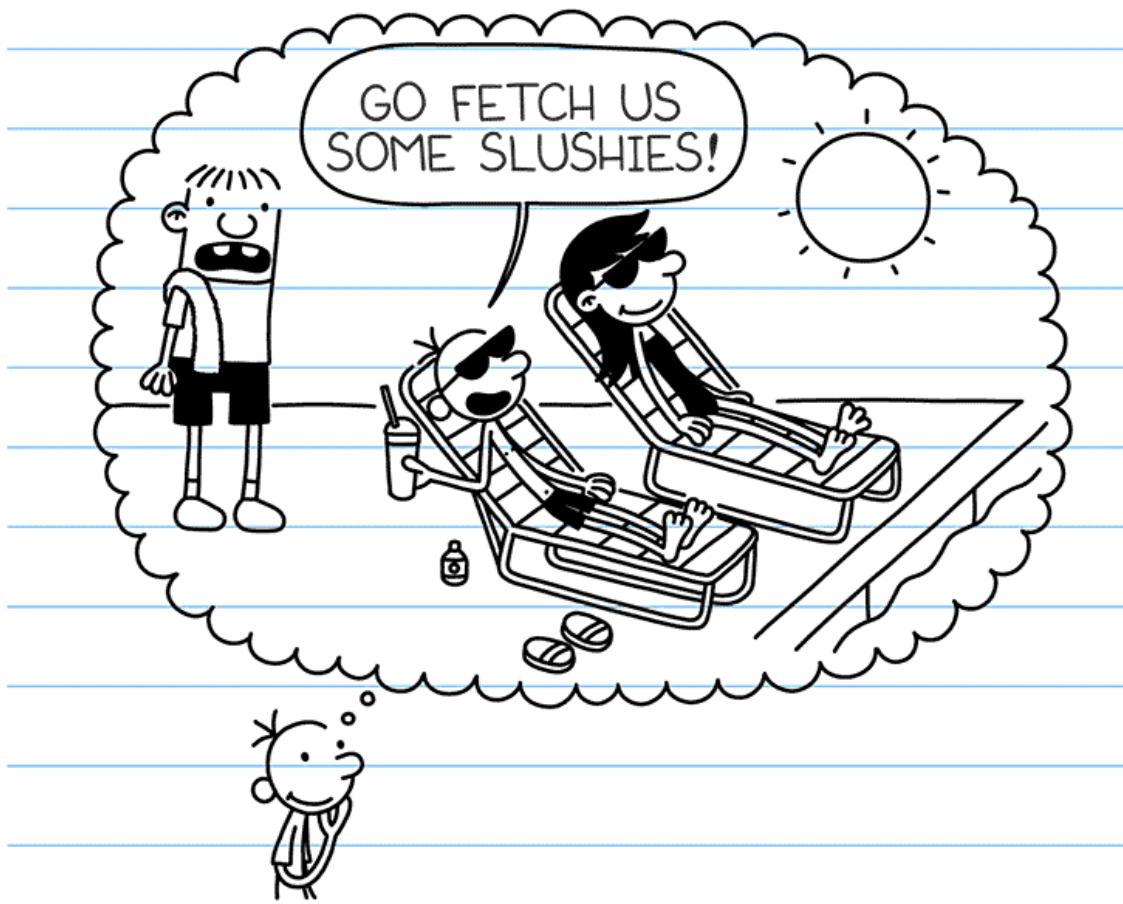


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But then I had a BETTER idea.

Rowley's family belongs to a country club, and he's  
allowed to bring two guests to his pool every day.

So that could actually work out real nice.



It looks like things are finally going my way,  
and you know, it's about time. I don't know  
anyone who deserves to catch a break more

than me, because like I said before, I'm pretty

much one of the best people I know.

And I know it's really corny to finish with a  
happy ending, but it looks like I'm out of paper  
anyway, so I guess this is

THE

END.



## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Thanks to my wife, Julie, without whose love and support these books would not be possible. Thanks to my family—Mom, Dad, Re, Scott, and Pat—and to my extended family—the Kinneys, Cullinanes, Johnsons, Fitchs, Kennedys, and Burdetts. You have all been so supportive of this endeavor, and it has been great fun to share this experience with you!

Thanks, as always, to my editor, Charlie Kochman, for taking a chance on this series; to Jason Wells, the best publicity director in the business; and to all of the great folks at Abrams.

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And thanks to Aaron Nicodemus for encouraging me Way Back When to pick up my cartooning pen after I had given up.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Jeff Kinney is an online game developer and designer, and a #1 *New York Times* bestselling author. In 2009, Jeff was named one of *Time* magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World. He spent his childhood in the Washington, D.C., area and moved to New England in 1995. Jeff lives in

southern Massachusetts with his wife and their two sons.

**Let's face it: Greg Heffley will never change his wimpy ways.  
Somebody just needs to explain that to Greg's father.**



You see, Frank Heffley actually thinks he can get his son to toughen up, and he enlists Greg in organized sports and other "manly" endeavors.

Of course, Greg is easily able to sidestep his father's efforts to change him. But when Greg's dad threatens to send him to military academy, Greg realizes he has to shape up . . . or get shipped out.

**Praise for the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series—the *USA Today*,  
*Publishers Weekly*, and #1 *New York Times* bestsellers:**

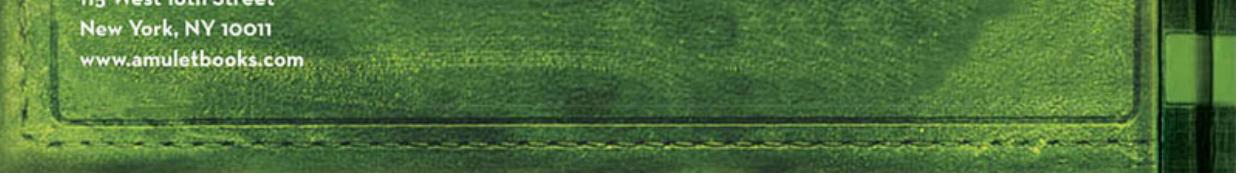
"Move over, Harry Potter . . .  
There's a new set of titles dominating the  
bestseller list for kids' chapter books,  
and there's nothing 'fantasy' about these."

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