

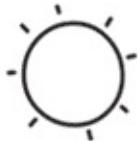
DIARY of a Wimpy Kid



a novel
in cartoons

THE #1
NEW YORK TIMES
BESTSELLER

Jeff Kinney



Dear Reader,

I'm very excited that you're holding the Kindle edition of

Diary of a Wimpy Kid in your hands.

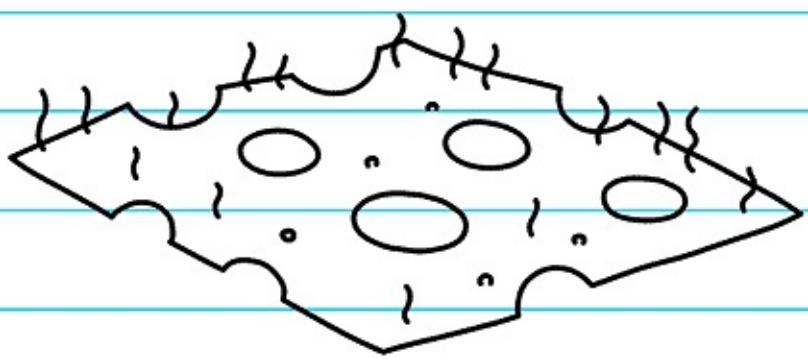
When I read my first e-book on a Kindle, I was amazed at
the possibilities. Carrying a whole library around with me on a
device I could fit in the palm of my hand? Amazing.

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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Kinney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, open loop on the left and a smaller oval shape on the right.

Jeff Kinney



OTHER BOOKS BY JEFF KINNEY

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days

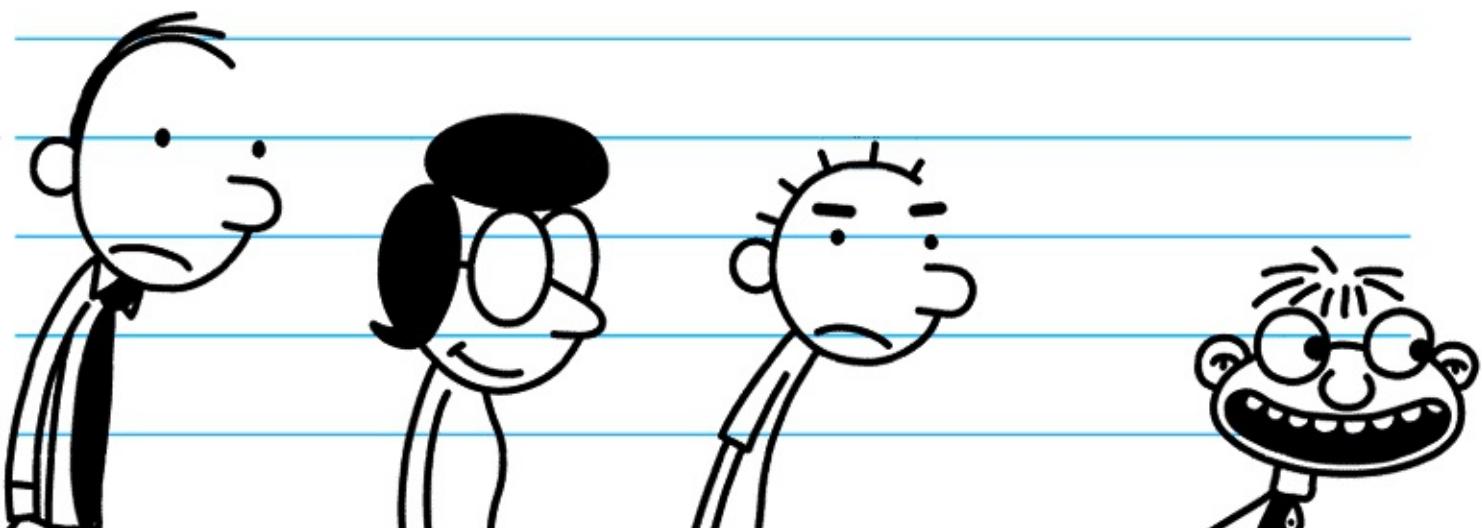
Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth

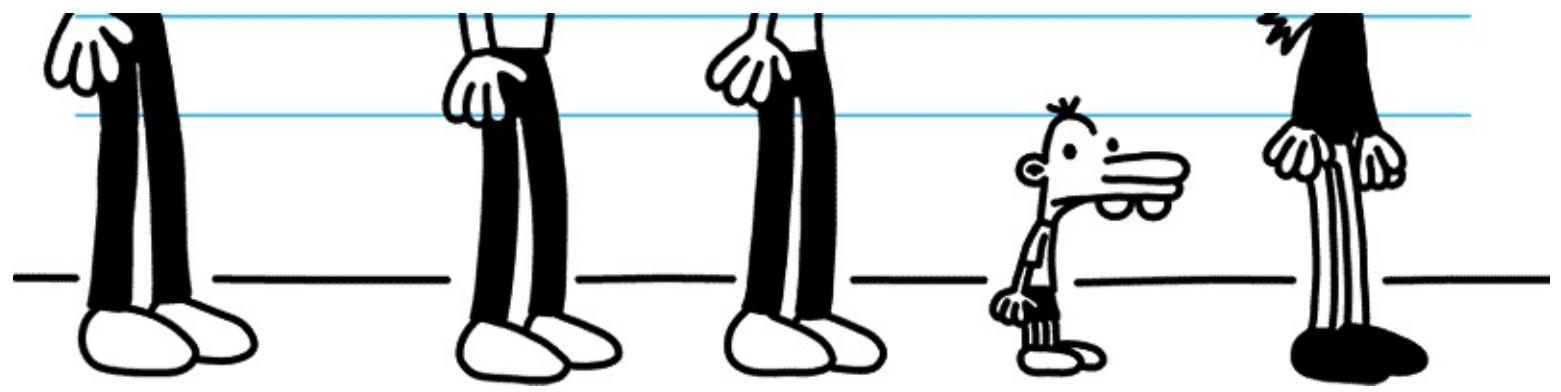
Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel

The Wimpy Kid Do-It-Yourself Book

The Wimpy Kid Movie Diary

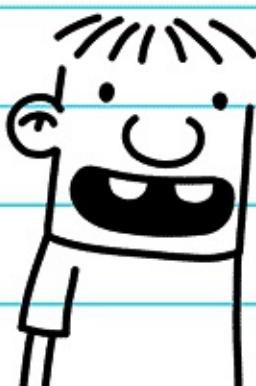




DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

GREG HEFFLEY'S JOURNAL

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.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Kinney, Jeff.
Diary of a wimpy kid / Jeff Kinney.
p. cm.

Summary: Greg records his experiences in a middle school where he and his best friend, Rowley, undersized weaklings amid boys who need to shave twice daily, hope just to survive, but when Rowley grows more popular Greg must take drastic measures to save their friendship.

ISBN 978-0-8109-9313-6 (paper over board)

[1. Middle schools—Fiction. 2. Friendship—Fiction. 3. Schools—Fiction. 4. Diaries—Fiction. 5. Humorous stories.] I. Title.

PZ7.K6232Dia 2007
[Fic]—dc22
2006031847

Wimpy Kid text and illustrations copyright © 2007 Wimpy Kid, Inc.
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID®, WIMPY KID™, and the Greg Heffley design™ are trademarks of Wimpy Kid, Inc. All rights reserved.

Book design by Jeff Kinney
Cover design by Chad W. Beckerman and Jeff Kinney

Published in 2007 by Amulet Books, an imprint of ABRAMS.
All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission from the publisher. Amulet Books and Amulet Paperbacks are registered trademarks of Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

Amulet Books are available at special discounts when purchased in quantity for premiums and promotions as well as fundraising or educational use. Special editions can also be created to specification. For details, contact

specialsales@abramsbooks.com or the address below.

ABRAMS

THE ART OF BOOKS SINCE 1949

115 West 18th Street

New York, NY 10011

www.abramsbooks.com

TO MOM, DAD, RE, SCOTT, AND PATRICK

Tuesday

First of all, let me get something straight: This

is a Journal, not a diary. I know what it

says on the cover, but when Mom went out to

buy this thing I specifically told her to

get one that didn't say "diary" on it.

Great. All I need is for some jerk to catch me

carrying this book around and get the wrong idea.



The other thing I want to clear up right away

is that this was mom's idea, not mine.

But if she thinks I'm going to write down my

"feelings" in here or whatever, she's crazy. So

just don't expect me to be all "Dear Diary" this

and "Dear Diary" that.

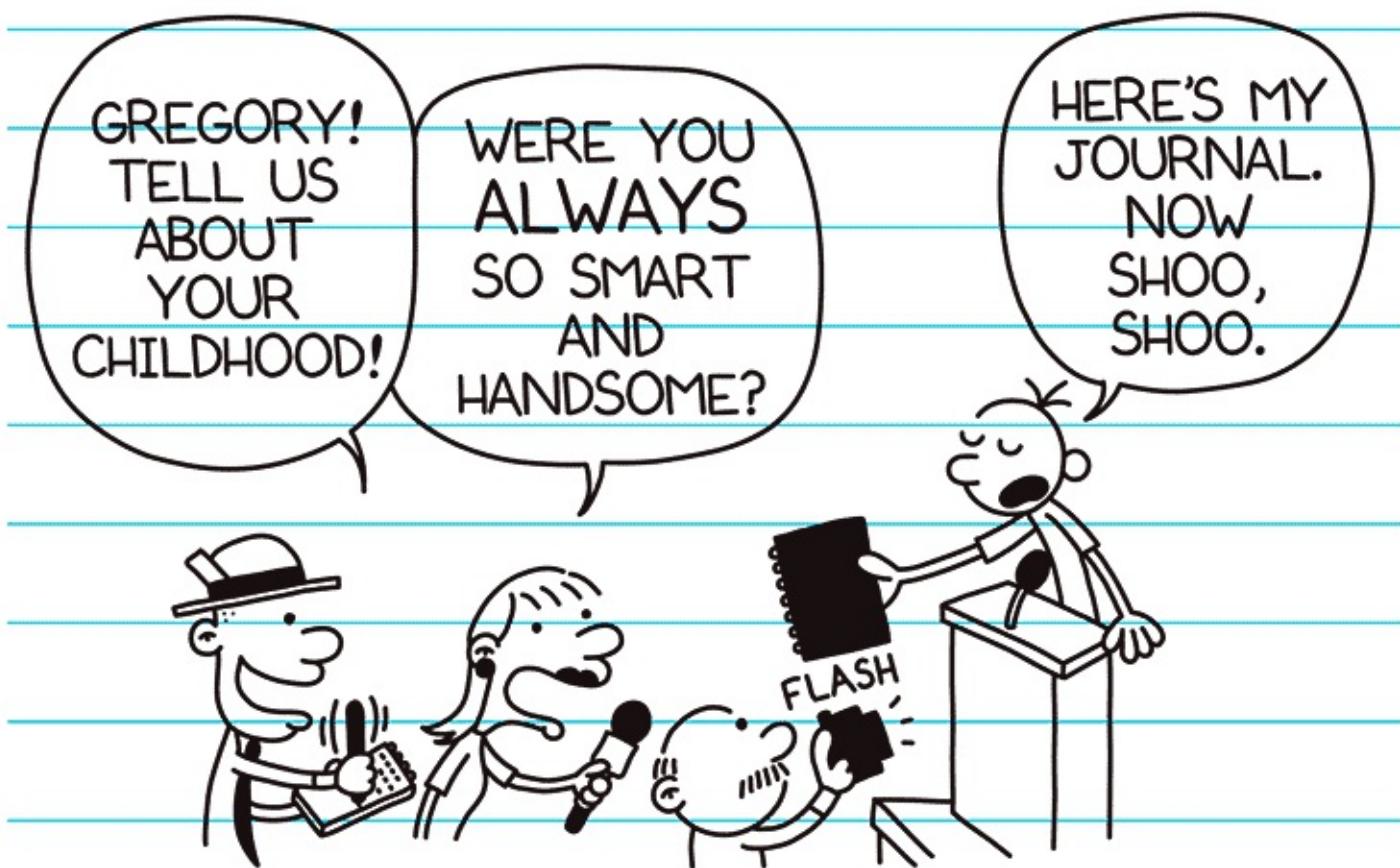
The only reason I agreed to do this at all is

because I figure later on when I'm rich and

famous, I'll have better things to do than

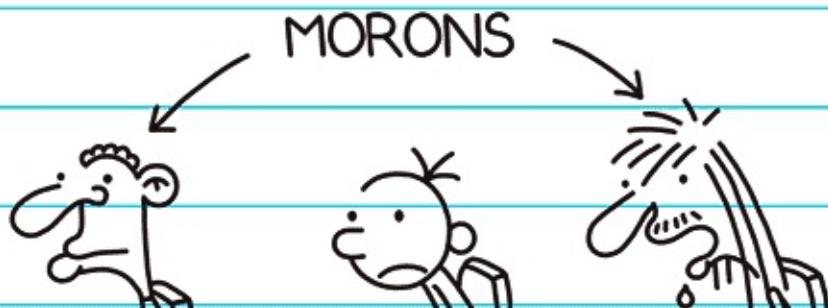
answer people's stupid questions all day long. So

this book is gonna come in handy.



Like I said, I'll be famous one day, but for now

I'm stuck in middle school with a bunch of morons.





Let me just say for the record that I think

middle school is the dumbest idea ever invented.

You got kids like me who haven't hit their

growth spurt yet mixed in with these gorillas who

need to shave twice a day.



And then they wonder why bullying is such a big

problem in middle school.

If it was up to me, grade levels would be based

on height, not age. But then again, I guess

that would mean kids like Chirag Gupta would

still be in the first grade.



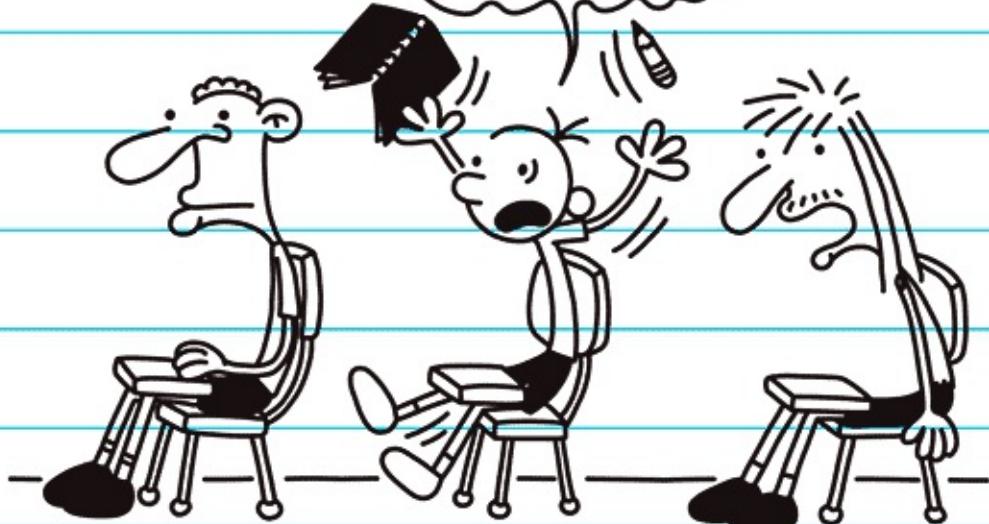


Today is the first day of school, and right now
we're just waiting around for the teacher to hurry
up and finish the seating chart. So I figured I
might as well write in this book to pass the time.

By the way, let me give you some good advice. On
the first day of school, you got to be real careful
where you sit. You walk into the classroom and just
plunk your stuff down on any old desk and the
next thing you know the teacher is saying—

I HOPE YOU ALL LIKE
WHERE YOU'RE SITTING,
BECAUSE THESE ARE YOUR
PERMANENT SEATS.

GAAH!



So in this class, I got stuck with Chris Hosey in

front of me and Lionel James in back of me.

Jason Brill came in late and almost sat to my

right, but luckily I stopped that from happening

at the last second.



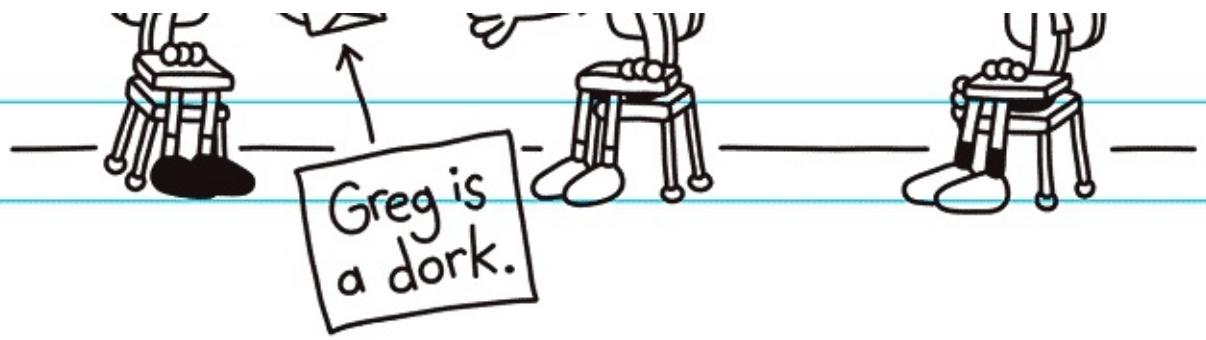
Next period, I should just sit in the middle of a

bunch of hot girls as soon as I step in the

room. But I guess if I do that, it just proves

I didn't learn anything from last year.

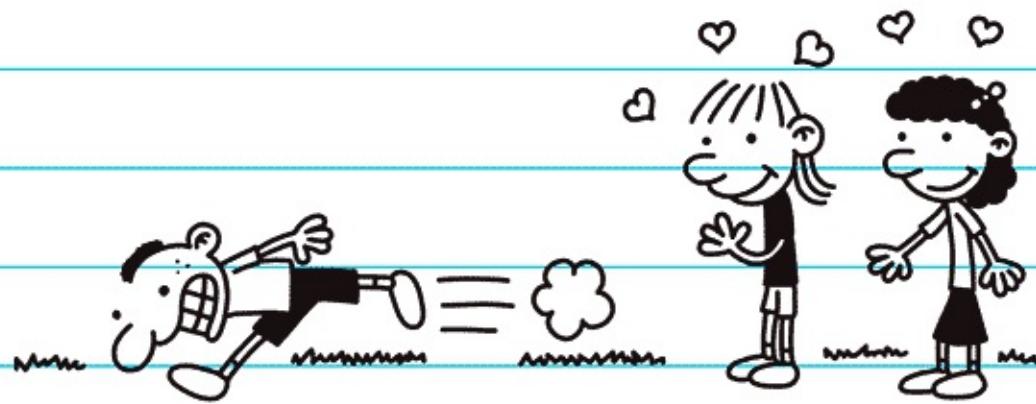




Man, I don't know what is up with girls these days. It used to be a whole lot simpler back in elementary school. The deal was, if you were the fastest runner in your class, you got all the girls.

And in the fifth grade, the fastest runner was

Ronnie McCoy.



Nowadays, it's a whole lot more complicated. Now it's about the kind of clothes you wear or how rich you are or if you have a cute butt or whatever.

And kids like Ronnie McCoy are scratching their heads wondering what the heck happened.

The most popular boy in my grade is Bryce Anderson. The thing that really stinks is that I have always been into girls, but kids like

Bryce have only come around in the last couple

of years.

I remember how Bryce used to act back in

elementary school.



But of course now I don't get any credit for

sticking with the girls all this time.

Like I said, Bryce is the most popular kid in our

grade, so that leaves all the rest of us guys

scrambling for the other spots.

The best I can figure is that I'm somewhere

around 52nd or 53rd most popular this year.

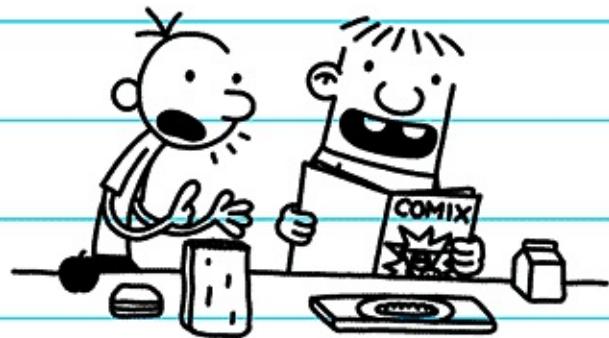
But the good news is that I'm about to move

up one spot because Charlie Davies is above me,

and he's getting his braces next week.

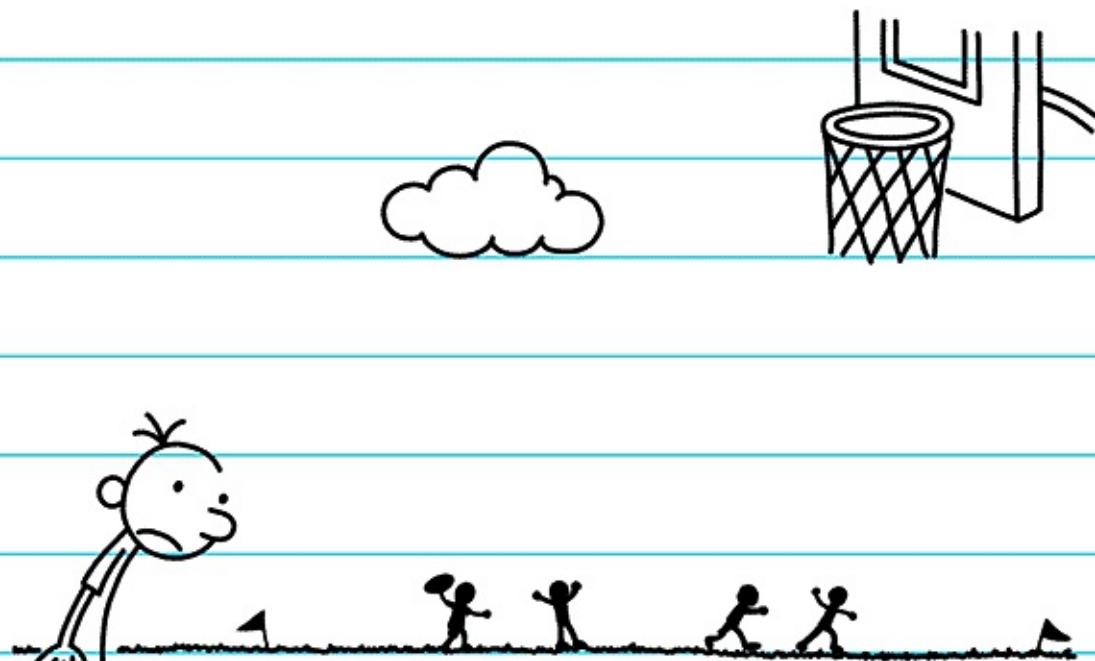


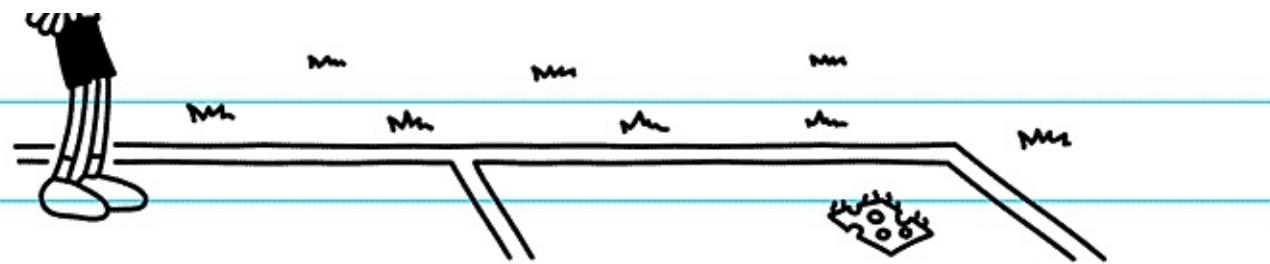
I try to explain all this popularity stuff to my friend Rowley (who is probably hovering right around the 150 mark, by the way), but I think it just goes in one ear and out the other with him.



Wednesday

Today we had Phys Ed, so the first thing I did when I got outside was sneak off to the basketball court to see if the Cheese was still there. And sure enough, it was.



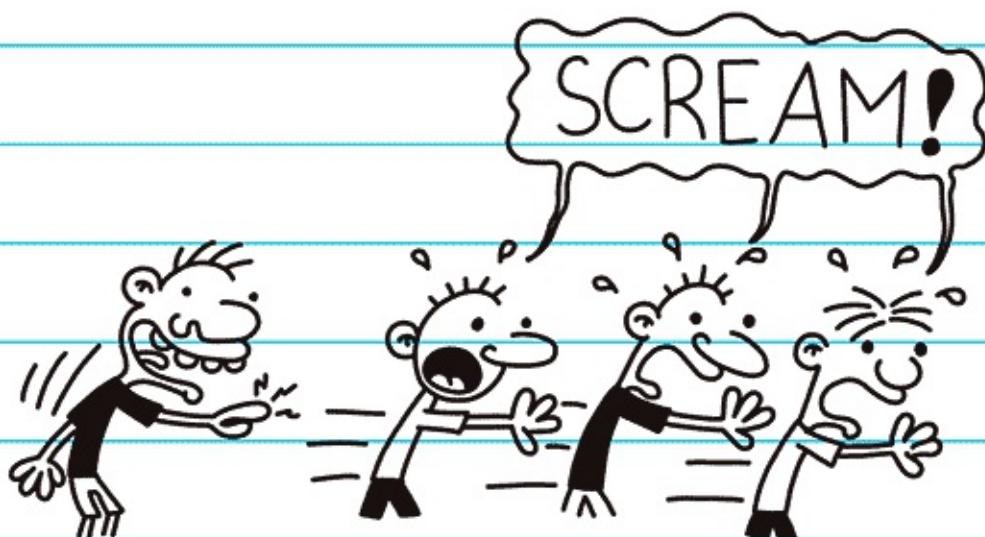


That piece of Cheese has been sitting on the
blacktop since last spring. I guess it must've
dropped out of someone's sandwich or something.

After a couple of days, the Cheese started getting
all moldy and nasty. Nobody would play basketball on
the court where the Cheese was, even though that
was the only court that had a hoop with a net.

Then one day, this kid named Darren Walsh
touched the Cheese with his finger, and that's
what started this thing called the Cheese Touch.

It's basically like the Cooties. If you get the
Cheese Touch, you're stuck with it until you
pass it on to someone else.



The only way to protect yourself from the

Cheese Touch is to cross your fingers.

But it's not that easy remembering to keep your fingers crossed every moment of the day. I ended up taping mine together so they'd stay crossed all the time. I got a D in handwriting, but it was totally worth it.

This one kid named Abe Hall got the Cheese Touch in April, and nobody would even come near him for the rest of the year. This summer Abe moved away to California and took the Cheese Touch with him.

I just hope someone doesn't start the Cheese Touch up again, because I don't need that kind of stress in my life anymore.

Thursday

I'm having a seriously hard time getting used to the fact that summer is over and I have to get out of bed every morning to go to school.

My summer did not exactly get off to a great

start, thanks to my older brother Rodrick.

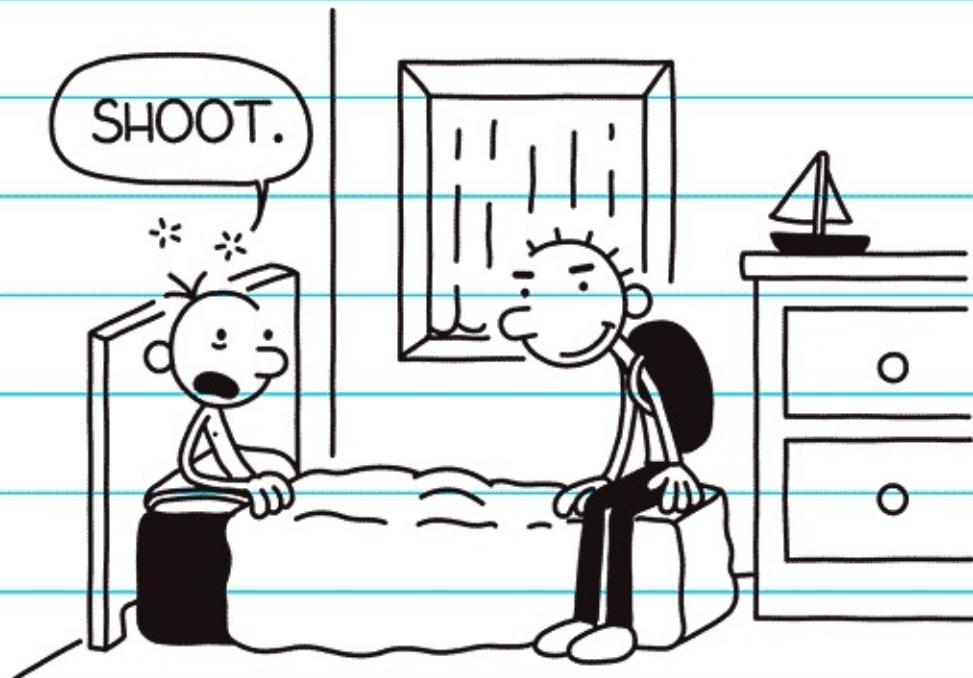
A couple of days into summer vacation, Rodrick

woke me up in the middle of the night. He told

me I slept through the whole summer, but that

luckily I woke up just in time for the first

day of school.



You might think I was pretty dumb for falling

for that one, but Rodrick was dressed up in his

school clothes and he set my alarm clock ahead to

make it look like it was the morning. Plus, he

closed my curtains so I couldn't see that it was

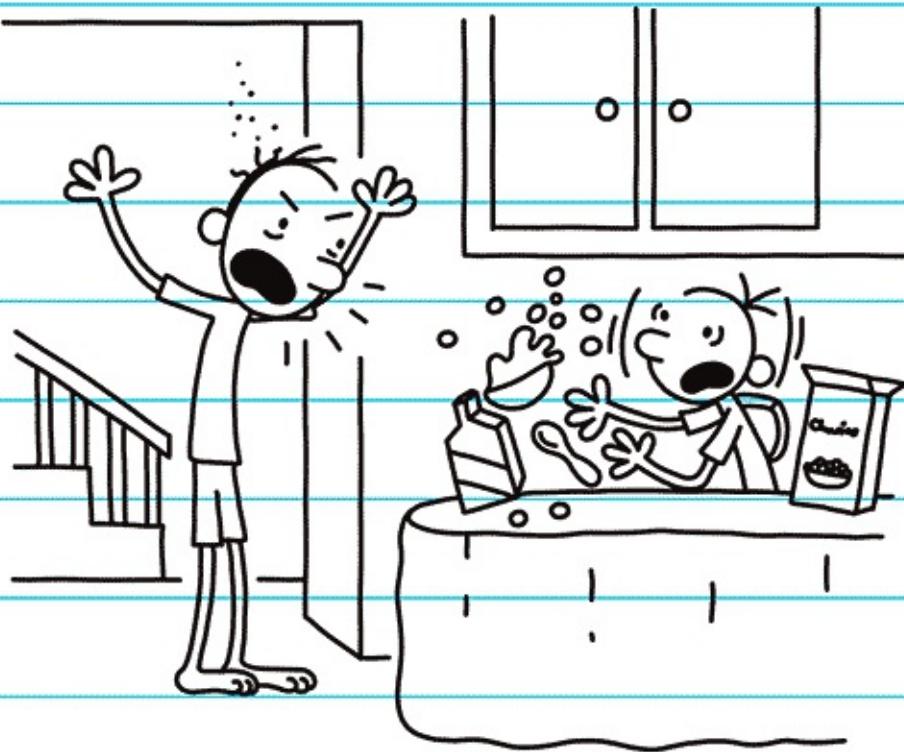
still dark out.

After Rodrick woke me up, I just got dressed and

went downstairs to make myself some breakfast,

like I do every morning on a school day.

But I guess I must have made a pretty big
racket because the next thing I knew, Dad was
downstairs, yelling at me for eating Cheerios at
3:00 in the morning.



It took me a minute to figure out what the heck
was going on.

After I did, I told Dad that Rodrick had
played a trick on me, and He was the one that
should be getting yelled at.

Dad walked down to the basement to chew

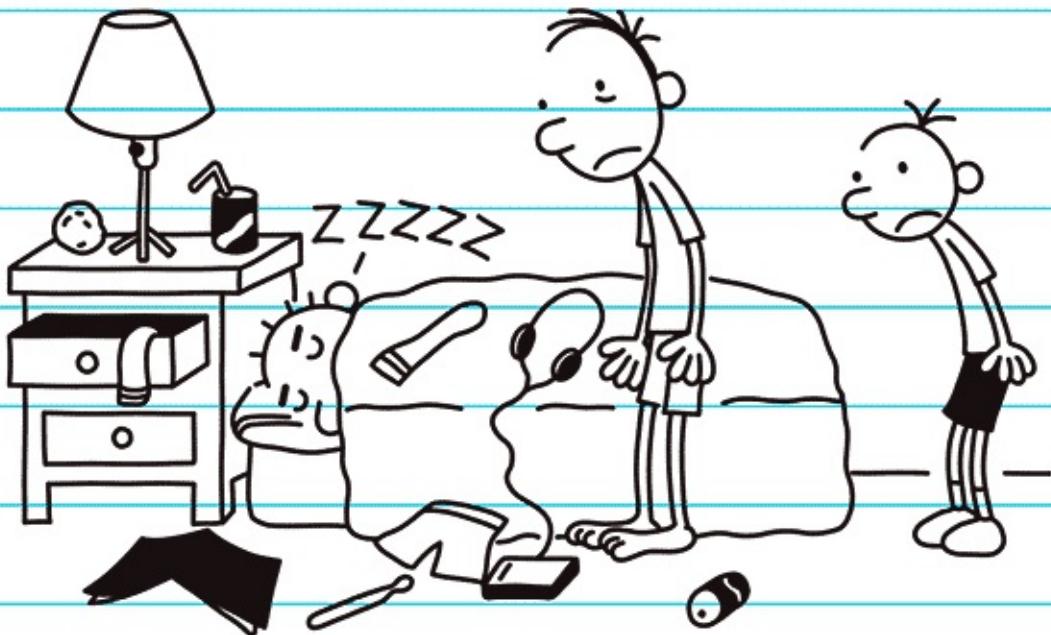
Rodrick out, and I tagged along. I couldn't

wait to see Rodrick get what was coming to him.

But Rodrick covered up his tracks pretty good.

And to this day, I'm sure Dad thinks I've

got a screw loose or something.



Friday

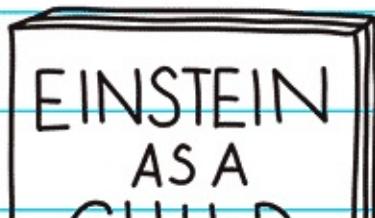
Today at school we got assigned to reading groups.

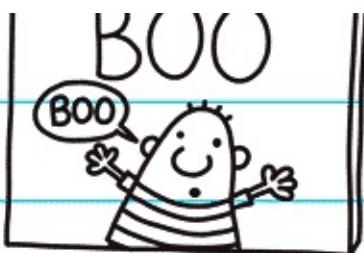
They don't come right out and tell you if

you're in the Gifted group or the Easy group,

but you can figure it out right away by looking

at the covers of the books they hand out.





I was pretty disappointed to find out I got

put in the Gifted group, because that just means

a lot of extra work.

When they did the screening at the end of last

year, I did my best to make sure I got put in

the Easy group this year.



Mom is real tight with our principal, so I' l b t

she stepped in and made sure I got put in the

Gifted group again.

Mom is always saying I'm a smart kid, but that

I just don't "apply" myself.

But if there's one thing I learned from Rodrick,

it's to set people's expectations real low so you

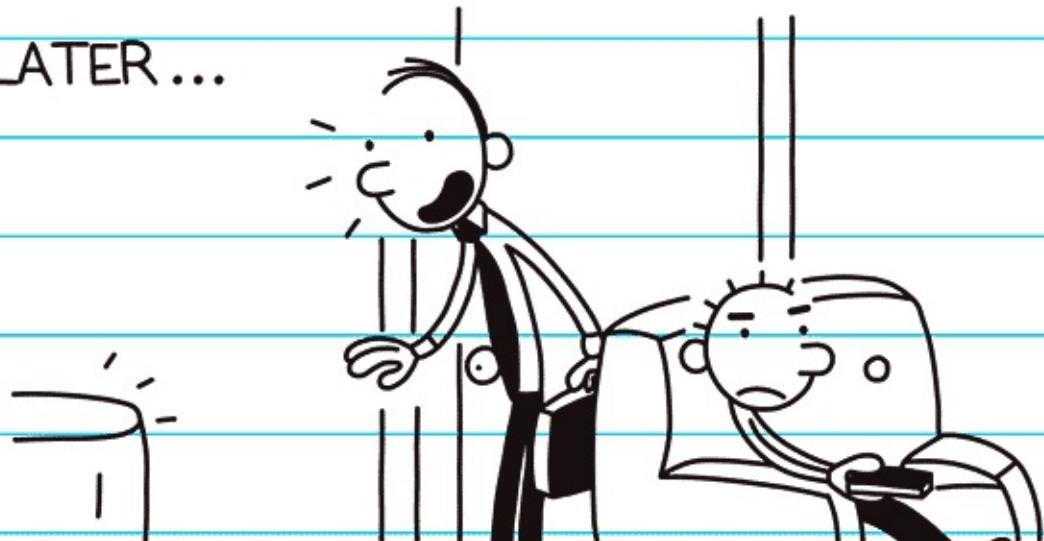
end up surprising them by practically doing

nothing at all.

RODRICK, I WANT YOUR
DIRTY UNDERWEAR OFF
THE KITCHEN TABLE
BEFORE I GET HOME
FROM WORK.



LATER...





Actually, I'm kind of glad my plan to get put

in the Easy group didn't work.

I saw a couple of the "Bink Says Boo" kids

holding their books upside down, and I don't

think they were joking.

Saturday

Well, the first week of school is finally over, so

today I slept in.

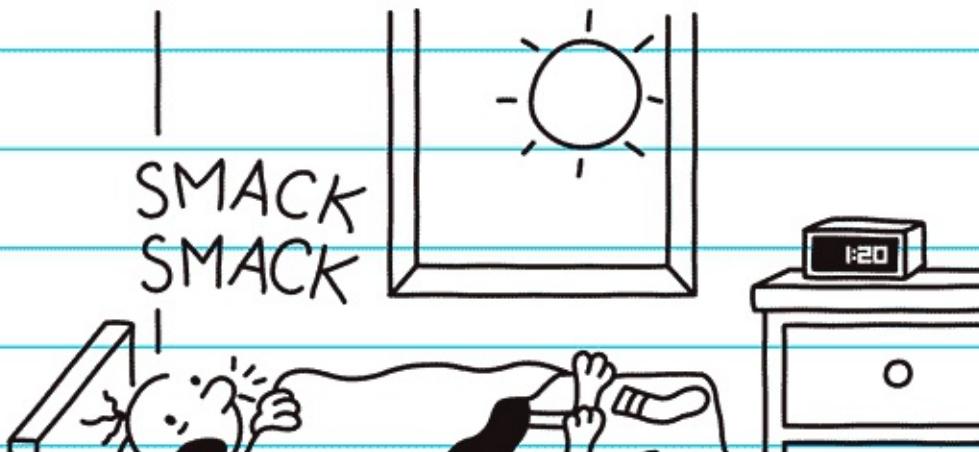
Most kids wake up early on Saturday to watch

cartoons or whatever, but not me. The only reason

I get out of bed at all on weekends is because

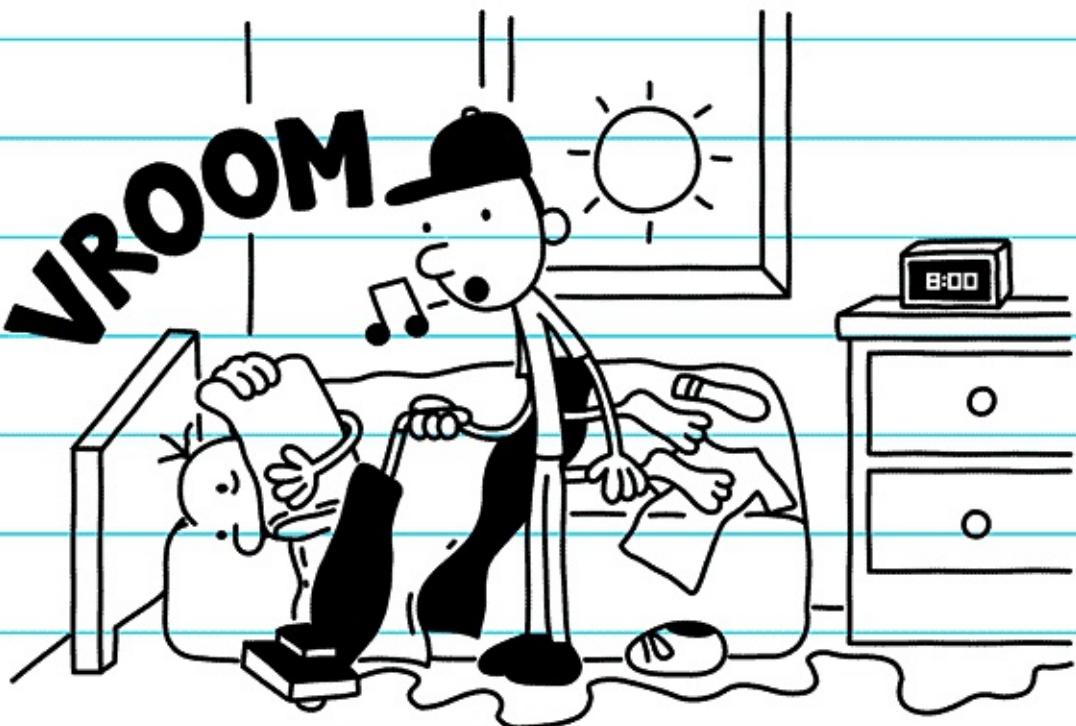
eventually, I can't stand the taste of my own

breath anymore.





Unfortunately, Dad wakes up at 6:00 in the morning no matter what day of the week it is, and he is not real considerate of the fact that I am trying to enjoy my Saturday like a normal person.



I didn't have anything to do today so I just headed up to Rowley's house.

Rowley is technically my best friend, but that is definitely subject to change.

I've been avoiding Rowley since the first day of

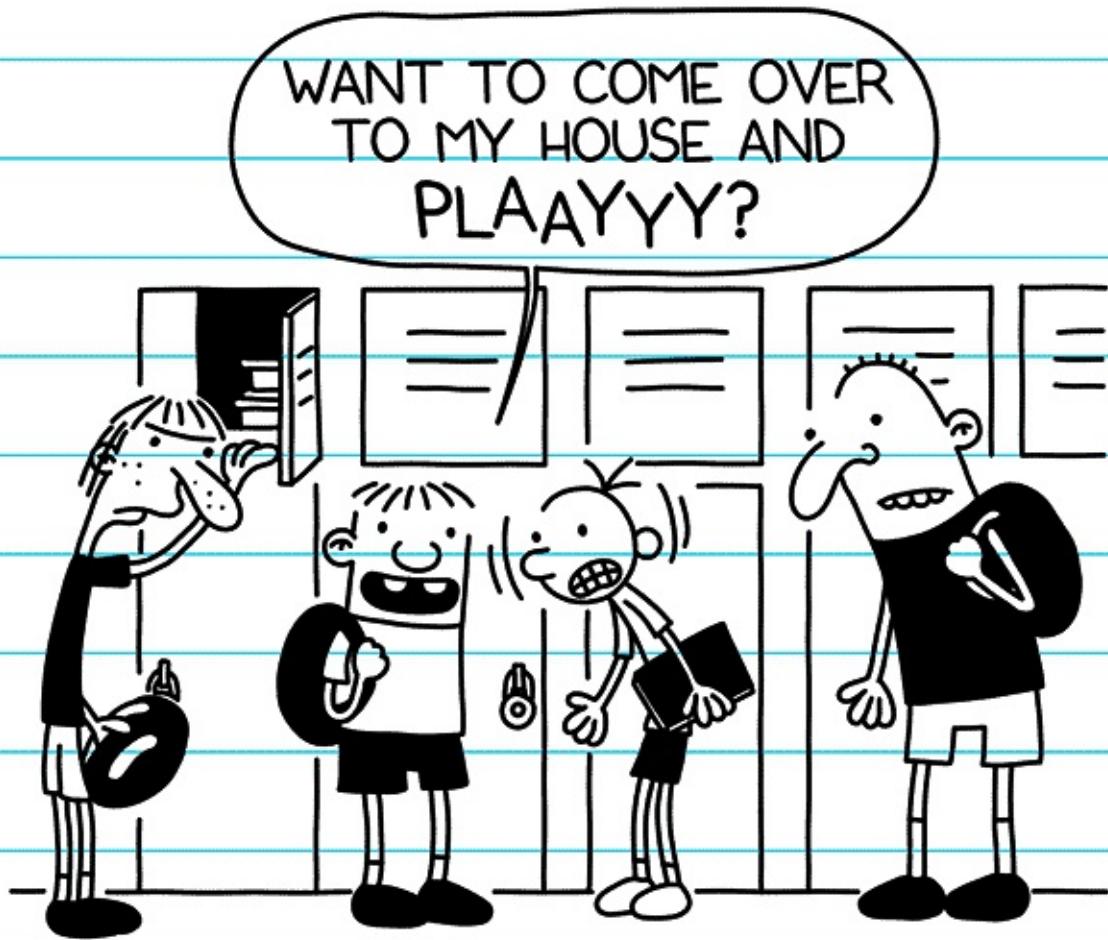
school, when he did something that really

annoyed me.

We were getting our stuff from our lockers at

the end of the day, and Rowley came up to me

and said—



I have told Rowley at least a billion times that

now that we're in middle school, you're supposed

to say "hang out," not "play." But no matter

how many noogies I give him, he always forgets

the next time.

I've been trying to be a lot more careful about

my image ever since I got to middle school. But

having Rowley around is definitely not helping.

I met Rowley a few years ago when he moved

into my neighborhood.

His mom bought him this book called "How to

Make Friends in New Places," and he came to

my house trying all these dumb gimmicks.



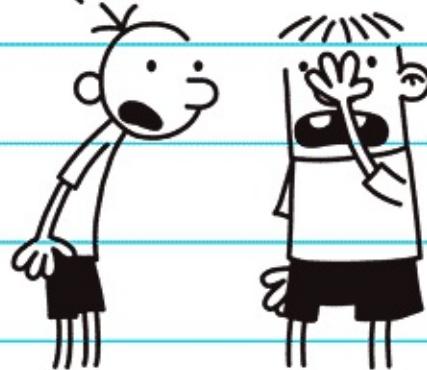
I guess I kind of felt sorry for Rowley, and I

decided to take him under my wing.

It's been great having him around, mostly because

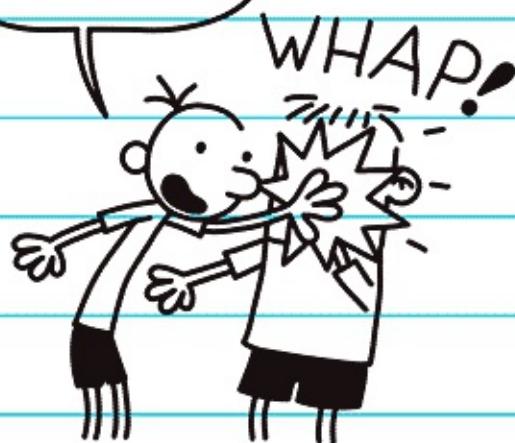
I get to use all the tricks Rodrick pulls on me.

DID YOU KNOW THAT IF YOUR HAND IS BIGGER THAN YOUR FACE IT'S A SIGN OF "LOW INTELLIGENCE"?



REALLY?

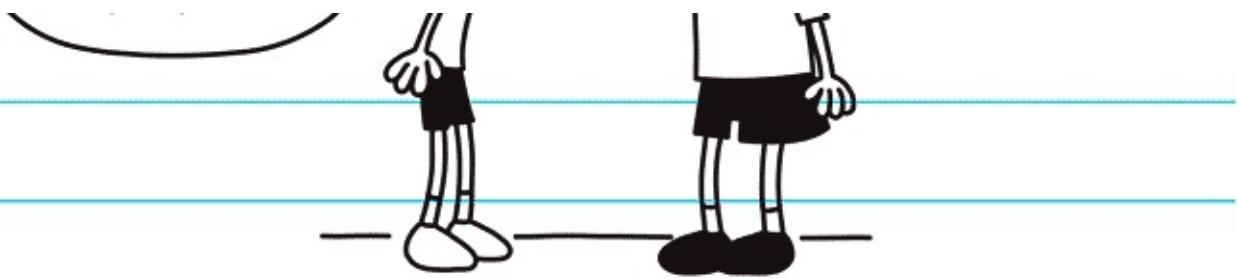
HA!
GOTCHA!



BUT DO I
HAVE "LOW
INTELLIGENCE"?

HMM... LET
ME CHECK
AGAIN.





Monday

You know how I said I play all sorts of pranks

on Rowley? Well, I have a little brother named

Manny, and I could never get away with

pulling any of that stuff on him.

Mom and Dad protect Manny like he's a prince or

something. And he never gets in trouble, even if

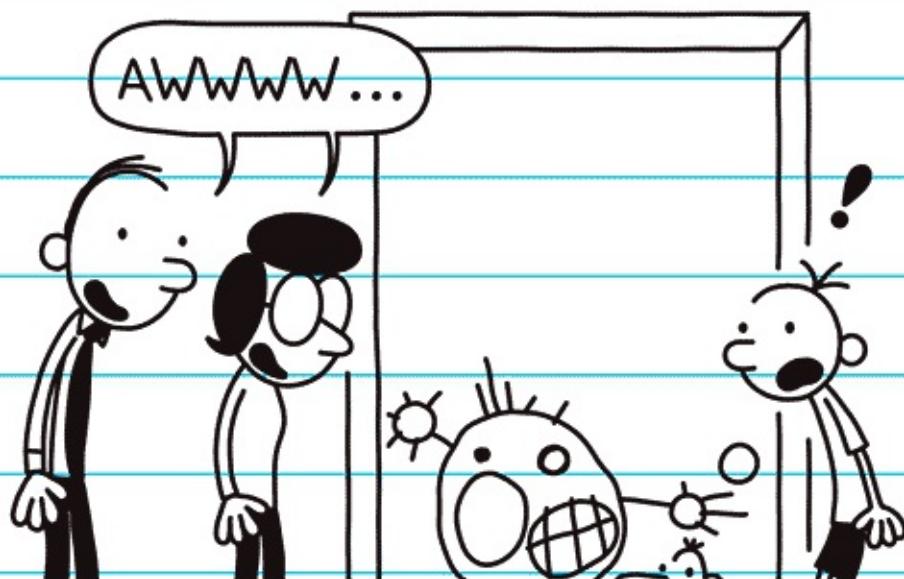
he really deserves it.

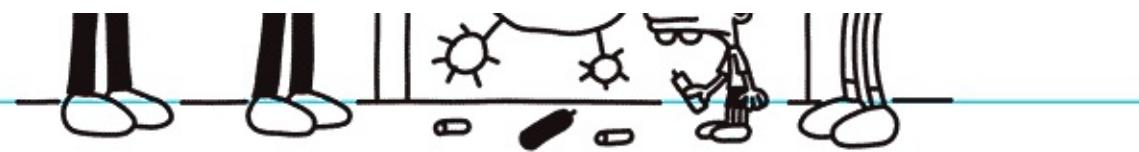
Yesterday, Manny drew a self-portrait on my

bedroom door in permanent marker. I thought

Mom and Dad were really going to let him have

it, but as usual, I was wrong.





But the thing that bugs me the most about

Manny is the nickname he has for me. When he

was a baby, he couldn't pronounce "brother,"

so he started calling me "Bubby." And he

still calls me that now, even though I keep

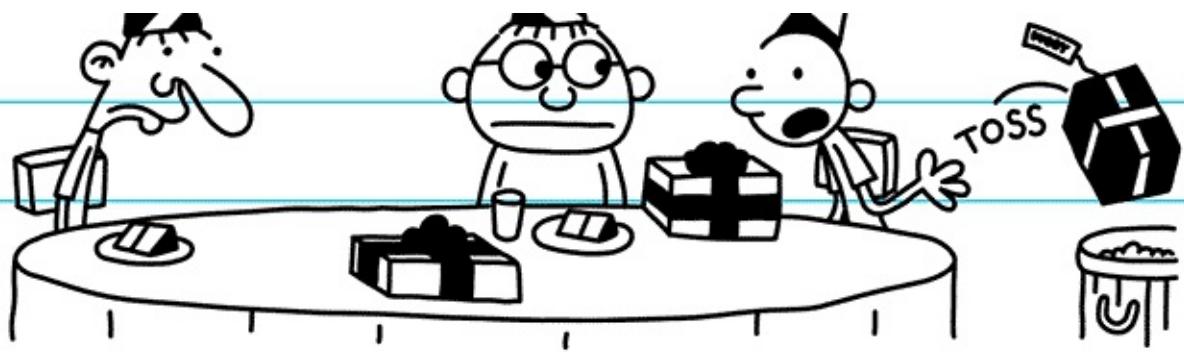
trying to get Mom and Dad to make him stop.

Luckily none of my friends have found out yet,

but believe me, I have had some really close calls.



MUST BE
A MISTAKE.

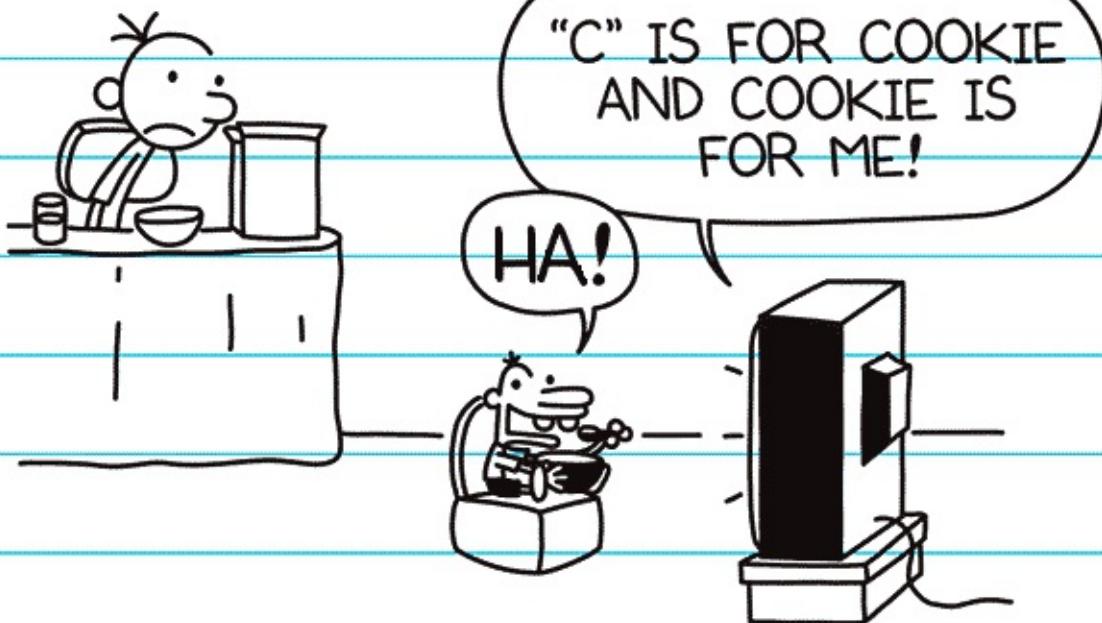


Mom makes me help Manny get ready for school in

the morning. After I make Manny his breakfast,

he carries his cereal bowl into the family room and

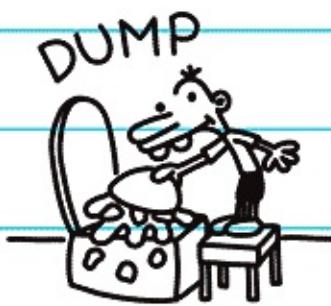
sits on his plastic potty.



And when it's time for him to go to day care, he

gets up and dumps whatever he didn't eat right in

the toilet.



Mom is always getting on me about not finishing

my breakfast. But if she had to scrape corn

flakes out of the bottom of a plastic potty

every morning, she wouldn't have much of an

appetite either.

Tuesday

I don't know if I mentioned this before, but I

am super good at video games. I bet I

could beat anyone in my grade head-to-head.

Unfortunately, Dad does not exactly appreciate

my skills. He's always getting on me about going

out and doing something "active."

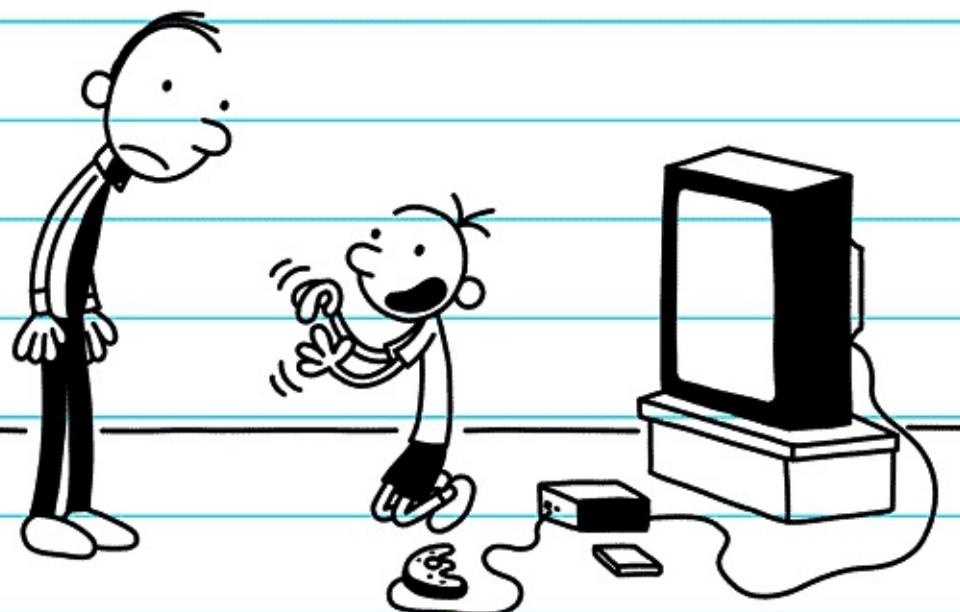
So tonight after dinner when Dad started

hassling me about going outside, I tried to

explain how with video games, you can play sports

like football and soccer, and you don't even get all

hot and sweaty.

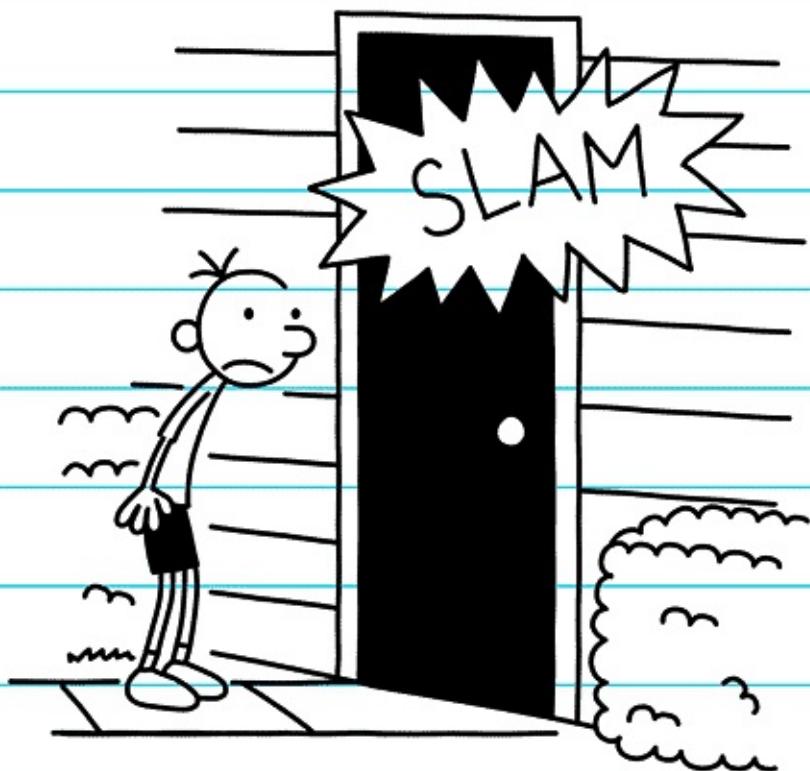


But as usual, Dad didn't see my logic.

Dad is a pretty smart guy in general but when

it comes to common sense, sometimes I wonder

about him.



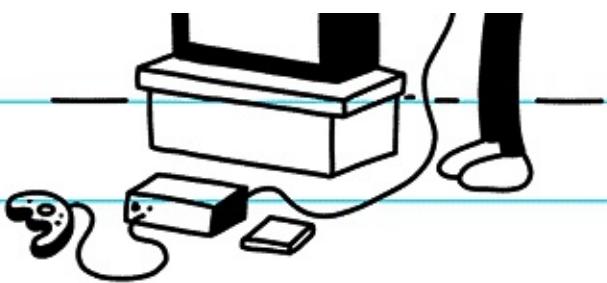
I'm sure Dad would dismantle my game system

if he could figure out how to do it. But luckily,

the people who make these things make them

parent-proof.

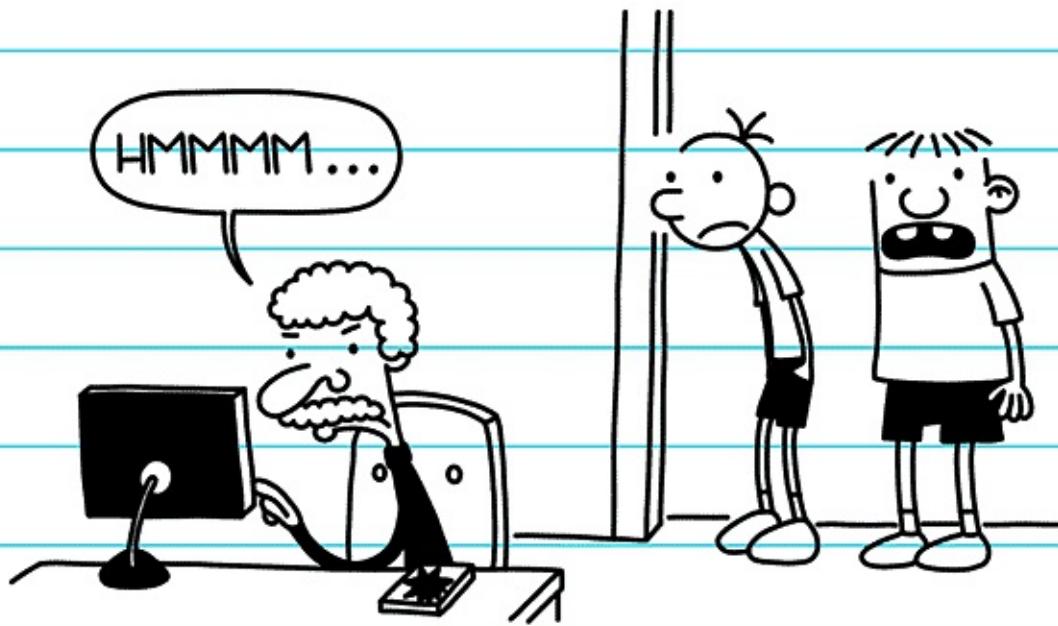




Every time Dad kicks me out of the house to do something sporty, I just go up to Rowley's and play my video games there.

Unfortunately, the only games I can play at Rowley's are car-racing games and stuff like that.

Because whenever I bring a game up to Rowley's house, his dad looks it up on some parents' Web site. And if my game has any kind of fighting or violence in it, he won't let us play.



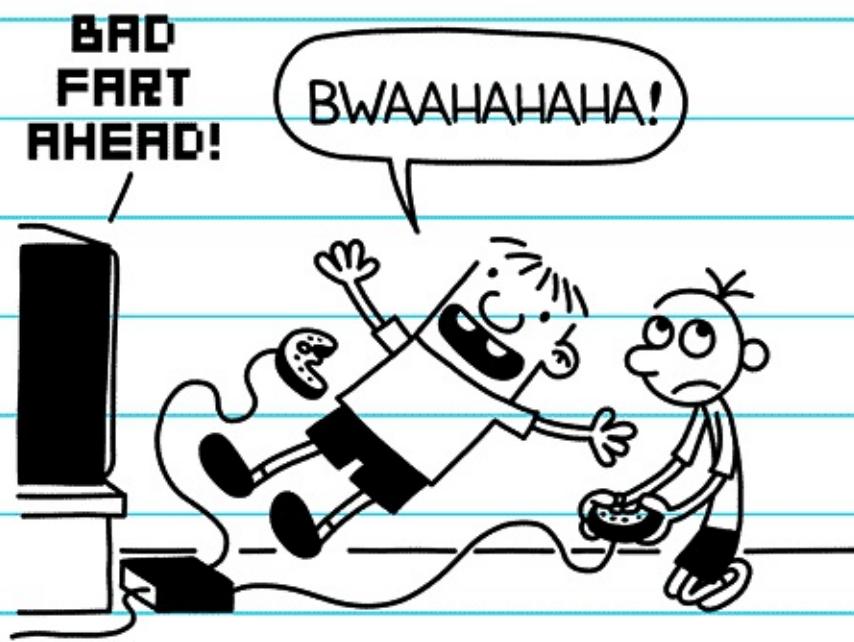
I'm getting a little sick of playing Formula One Racing with Rowley, because he's not a serious gamer like me. All that you have to do to beat

Rowley is name your car something ridiculous at

the beginning of the game.

And then when you pass Rowley's car, he just

falls to pieces.



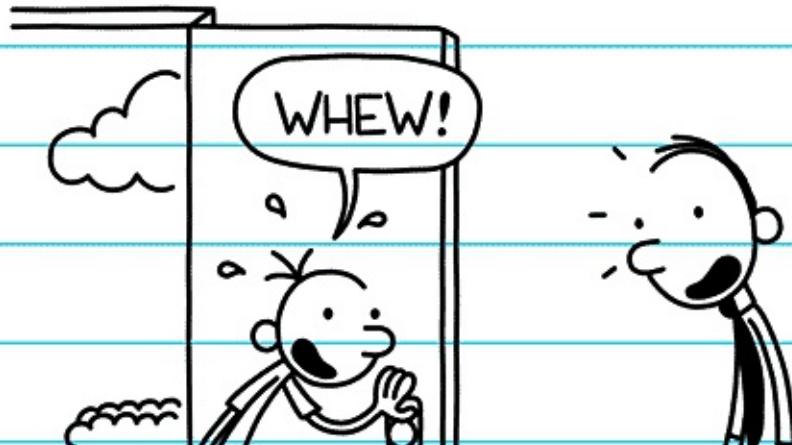
Anyway, after I got done mopping the floor

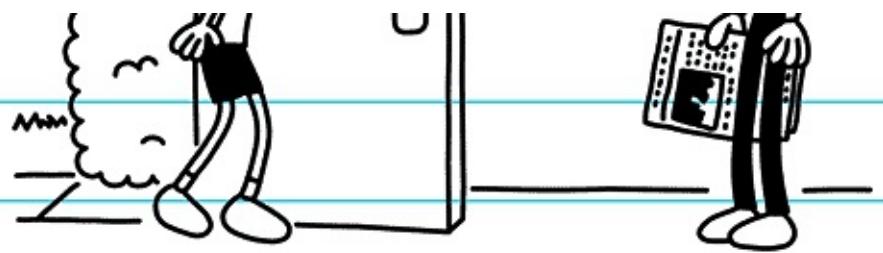
with Rowley today, I headed home. I ran

through the neighbor's sprinkler a couple times to

make it look like I was all sweaty, and that

seemed to do the trick for Dad.



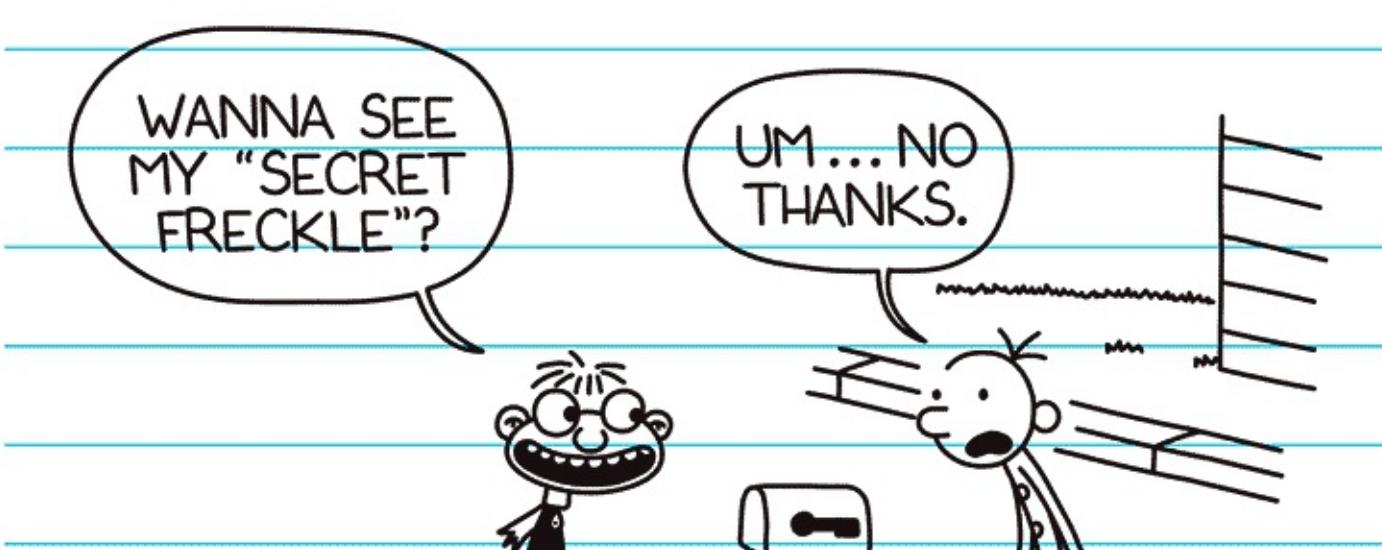


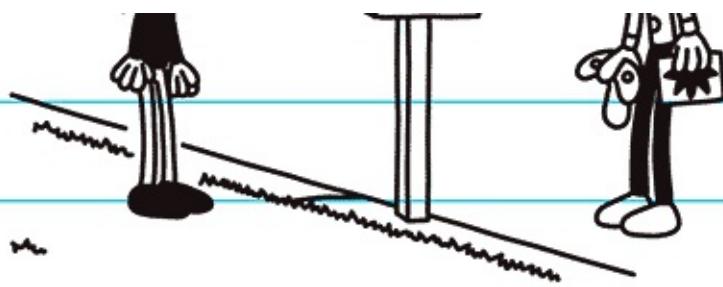
But my trick kind of backfired, because as soon
as Mom saw me, she made me go upstairs and
take a shower.

Wednesday

I guess Dad must have been pretty happy with
himself for making me go outside yesterday,
because he did it again today.

It's getting really annoying to have to go up to
Rowley's every time I want to play a video game.
There's this weird kid named Fregley who lives
halfway between my house and Rowley's, and
Fregley is always hanging out in his front yard.
So it's pretty hard to avoid him.





Fregley is in my Phys Ed class at school, and he

has this whole made-up language. Like when he

needs to go to the bathroom, he says—



Us kids have pretty much figured Fregley out by

now, but I don't think the teachers have really

caught on yet.



Today, I probably would have gone up to Rowley's

on my own anyway, because my brother Rodrick

and his band were practicing down in the basement.

Rodrick's band is really awful, and I can't

stand being home when they're having rehearsals.

His band is called "Loaded Diaper," only it's

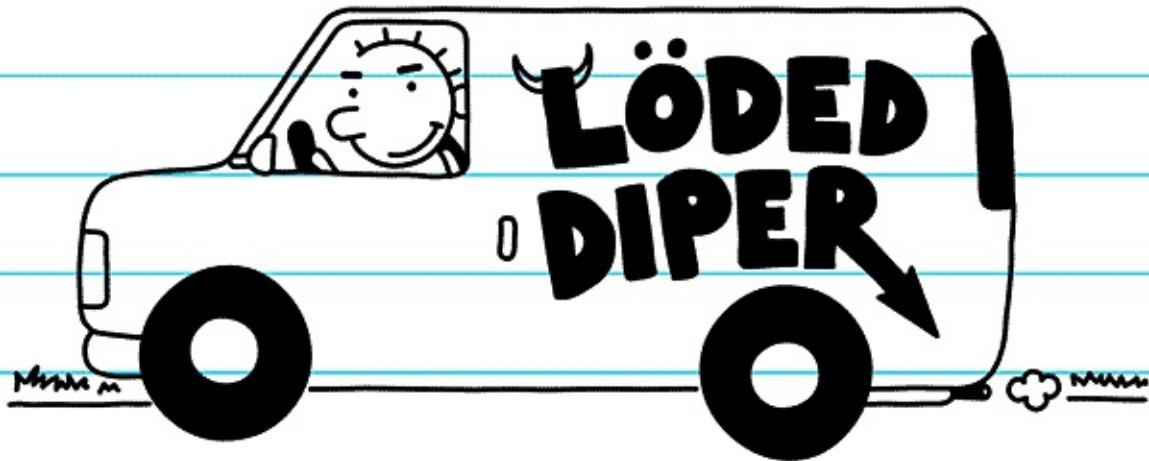
spelled "Löded Diper" on Rodrick's van.

You might think he spelled it that way to make it

look cooler, but I bet if you told Rodrick how

"Loaded Diaper" is really spelled, it would be news

to him.



Dad was against the idea of Rodrick starting a

band, but Mom was all for it.

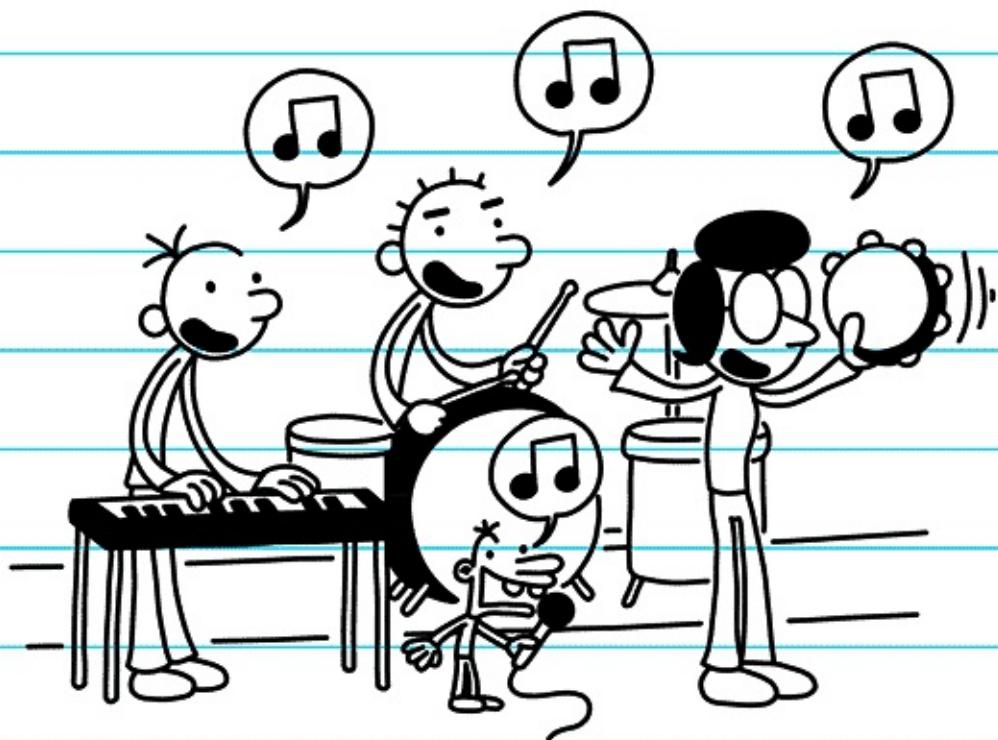
She's the one who bought Rodrick his first

drum set.

I think Mom has this idea that we're all going

to learn to play instruments and then become one

of those family bands like you see on tv.



Dad really hates heavy metal, and that's the

kind of music Rodrick and his band play. I don't

think Mom really cares what Rodrick plays or listens

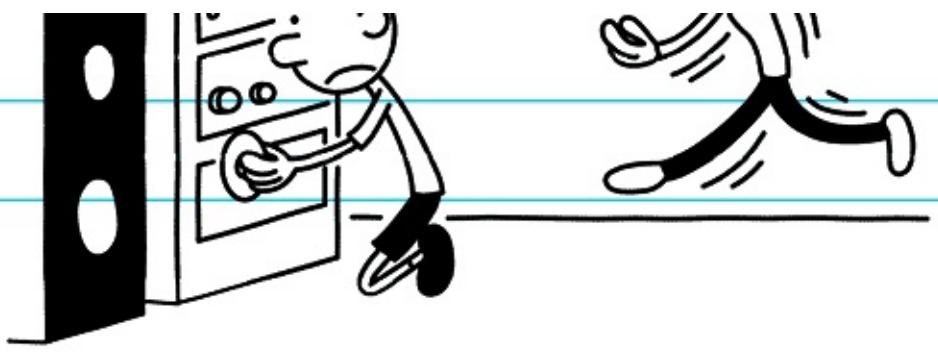
to, because to her, all music is the same. In

fact, earlier today, Rodrick was listening to one

of his CDs in the family room, and Mom came in

and started dancing.



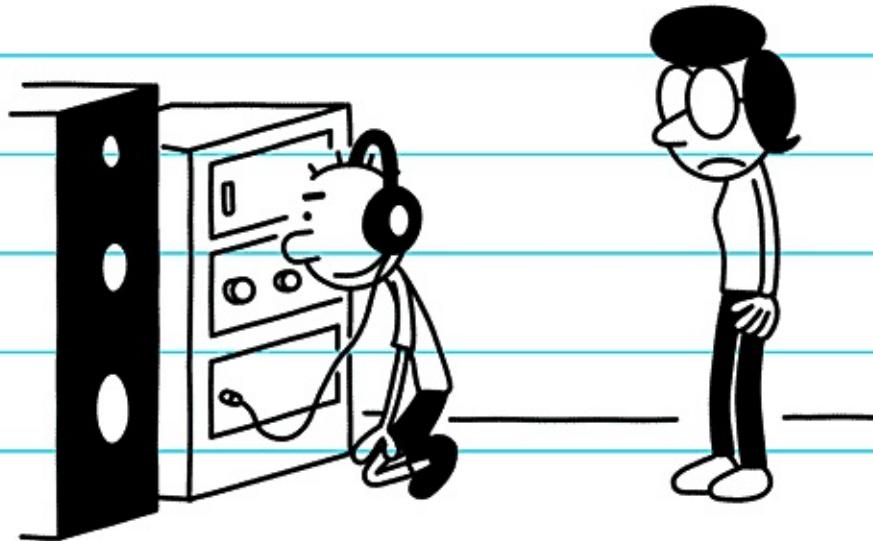


That really bugged Rodrick, so he drove off to

the store and came back fifteen minutes later

with some headphones. And that pretty much

took care of the problem.



Thursday

Yesterday Rodrick got a new heavy metal CD,

and it had one of those "Parental Warning"

stickers on it.

I have never gotten to listen to one of those

Parental Warning CDs, because Mom and Dad never

let me buy them at the mall. So I realized the only

way I was gonna get a chance to listen to

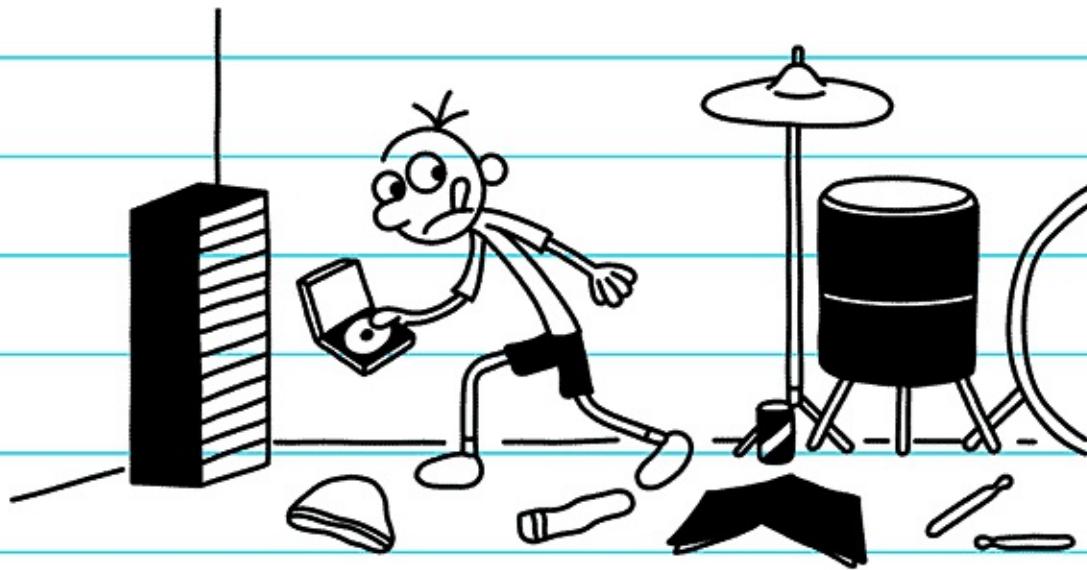
Rodrick's CD was if I snuck it out of the house.

This morning, after Rodrick left, I called up Rowley

and told him to bring his CD player to school.

Then I went down to Rodrick's room and took

the CD off his rack.



You're not allowed to bring personal music players

to school, so we had to wait to use it until after

lunch when the teachers let us outside. As soon

as we got the chance, me and Rowley snuck

around the back of the school and loaded up

Rodrick's CD.

But Rowley forgot to put batteries in his CD

player, so it was pretty much worthless.

Then I came up with this great idea for a game.

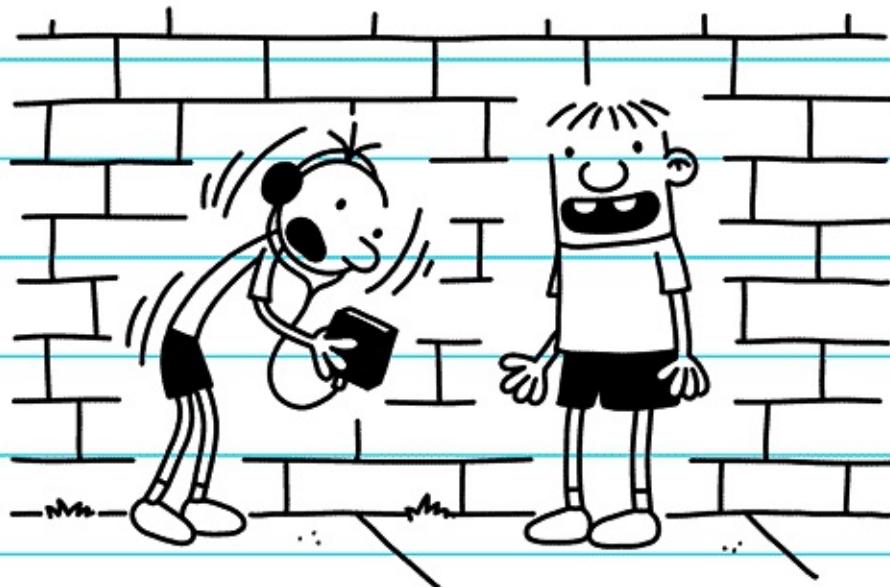
The object was to put the headphones on your

head and then try to shake them off without

using your hands.

The winner was whoever could shake the headphones

off in the shortest amount of time.



I had the record with seven and a half seconds,

but I think I might have shook some of my

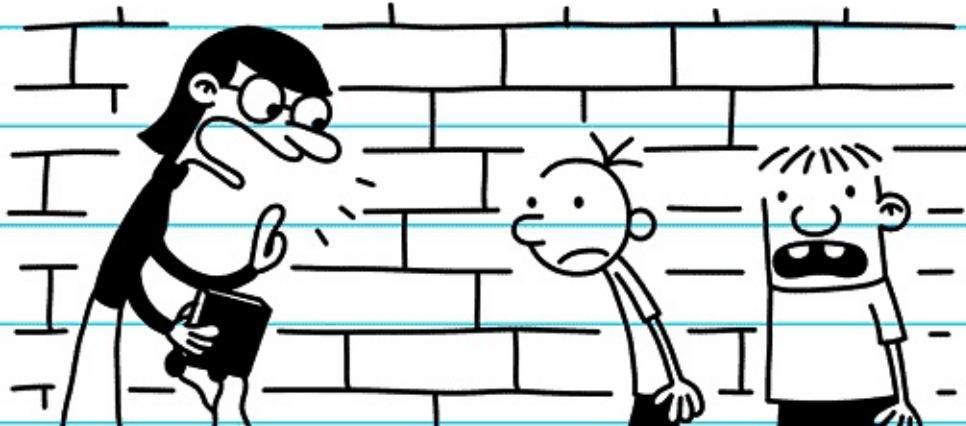
fillings loose with that one.

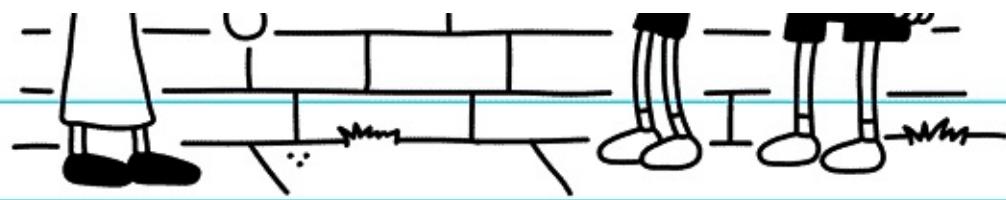
Right in the middle of our game, Mrs. Craig came

around the corner and caught us red-handed. She

took the music player away from me and started

chewing us out.





But I think she had the wrong idea about what

we were doing back there. She started telling us

how rock and roll is “evil” and how it’s going to

ruin our brains.

I was going to tell her that there weren’t even

any batteries in the CD player, but I could tell she

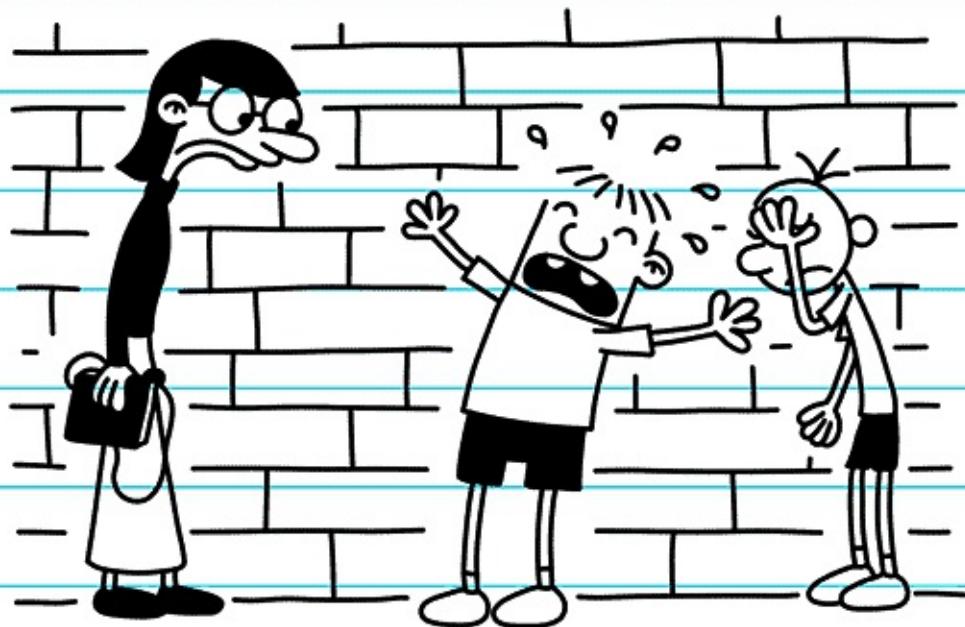
didn’t want to be interrupted. So I just waited

until she was done, and then I said, “Yes, ma’am.”

But right when Mrs. Craig was about to let us

go, Rowley started blubbering about how he doesn’t

want rock and roll to ruin his “brains.”



Honestly, sometimes I don't know about that boy.

Friday

Well, now I've gone and done it.

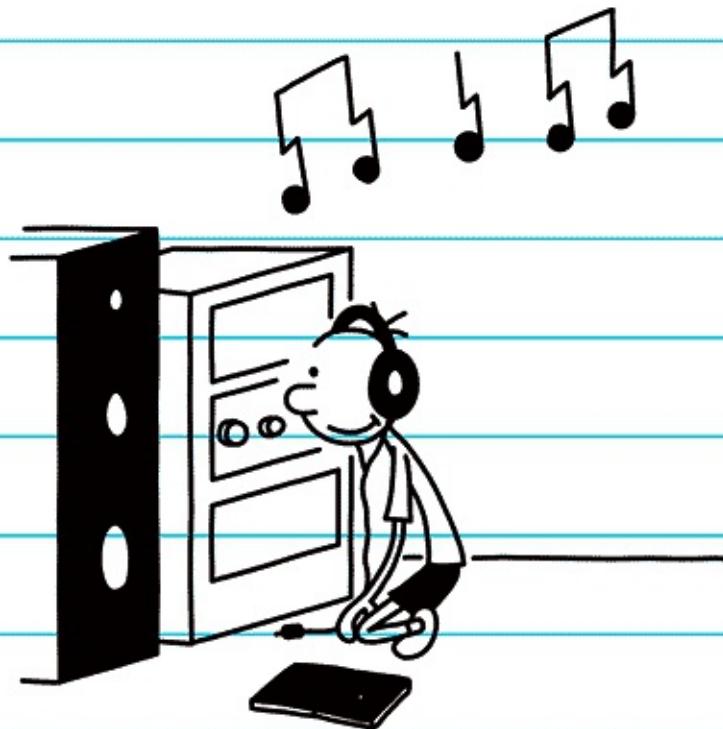
Last night, after everyone was in bed, I snuck

downstairs to listen to Rodrick's CD on the

stereo in the family room.

I put Rodrick's new headphones on and cranked

up the volume really high. Then I hit "play."



First, let me just say I can definitely understand

why they put that "Parental Warning" sticker

on the CD.

But I only got to hear about thirty seconds of

the first song before I got interrupted.

It turns out I didn't have the headphones plugged

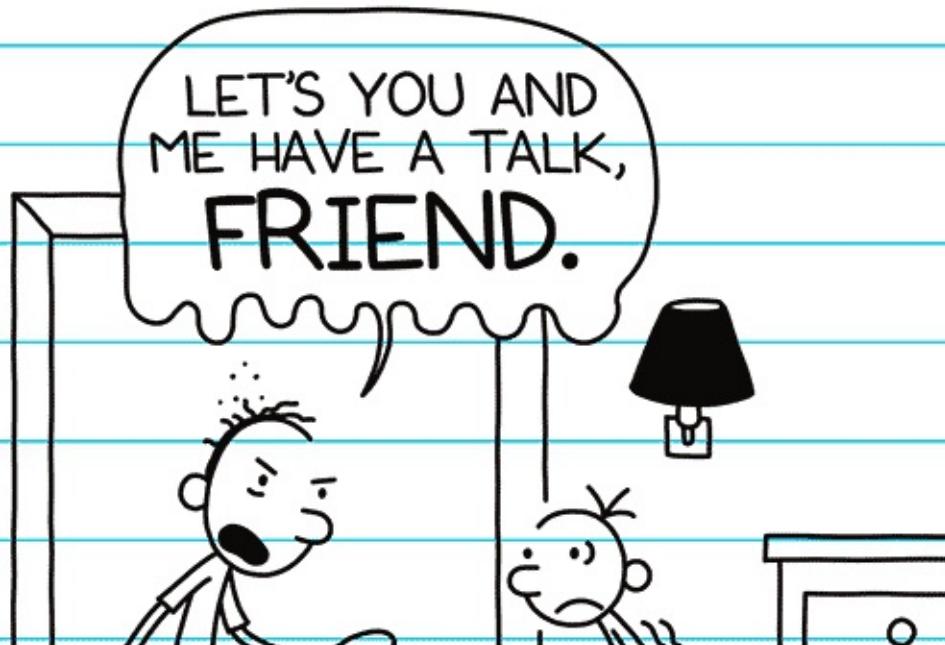
into the stereo. So the music was actually coming

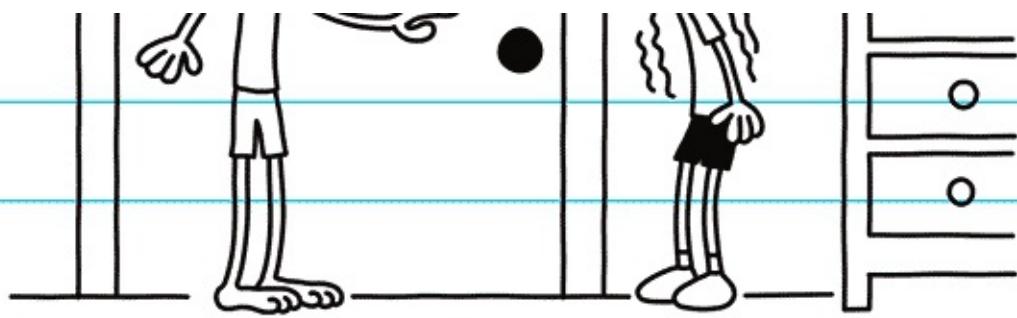
through the speakers, not the headphones.



Dad marched me up to my room and shut the

door behind him, and then he said—



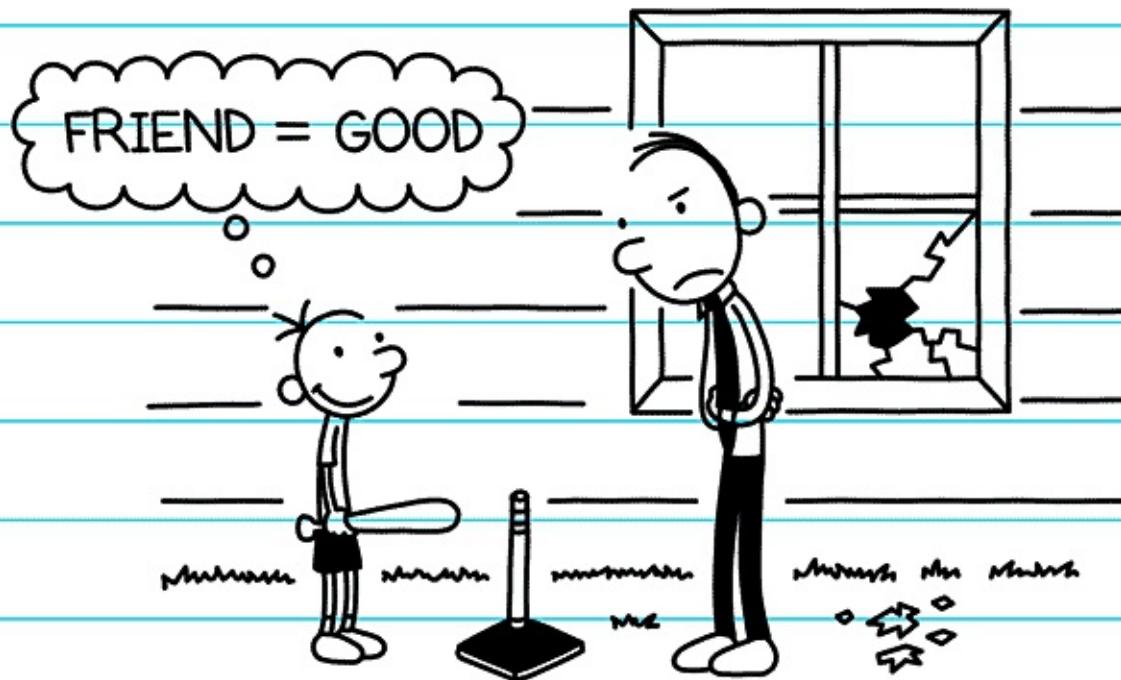


Whenever Dad says “friend” that way, you know

you’re in trouble. The first time Dad ever said

“friend” like that to me, I didn’t get that he was

being sarcastic. So I kind of let my guard down.



I don't make that mistake anymore.

Tonight, Dad yelled at me for about ten minutes,

and then I guess he decided he'd rather be in bed

than standing in my room in his underwear. He

told me I was grounded from playing video games

for two weeks, which is about what I expected.

I guess I should be glad that's all he did.

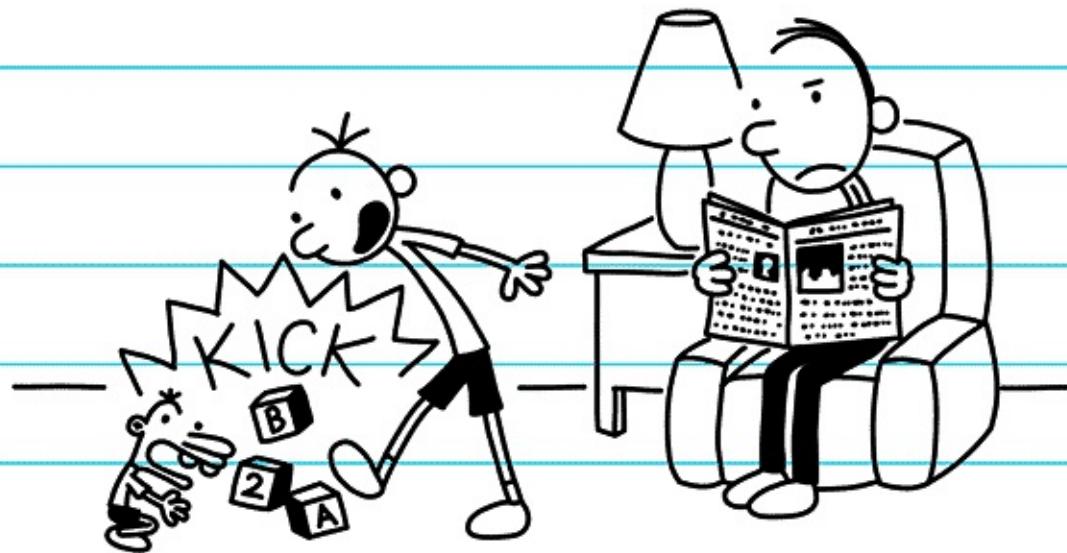
The good thing about Dad is that when he gets

mad, he cools off real quick, and then it's over.

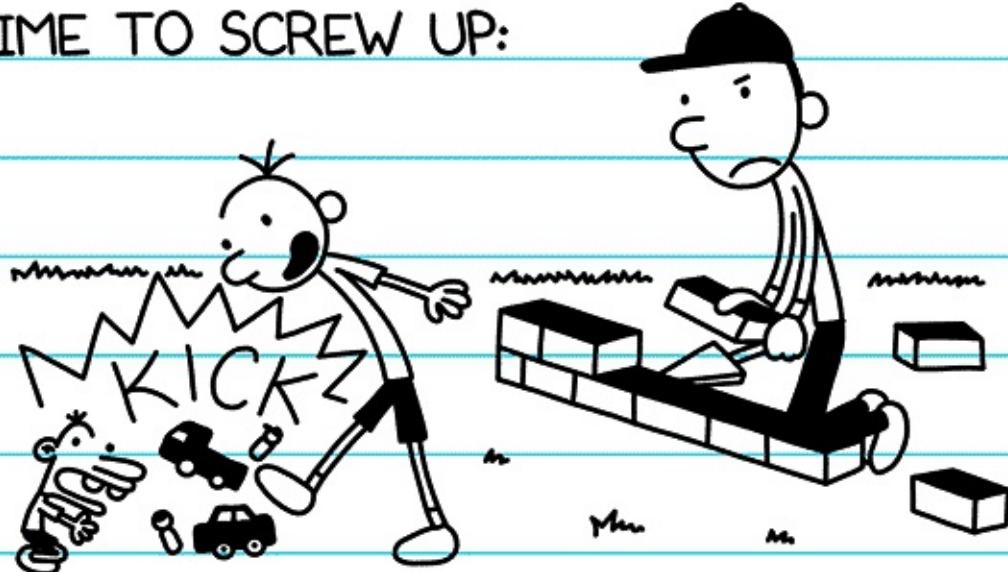
Usually, if you mess up in front of Dad, he just

throws whatever he's got in his hands at you.

GOOD TIME TO SCREW UP:



BAD TIME TO SCREW UP:



Mom has a totally different style when it

comes to punishment. If you mess up and Mom

catches you, the first thing she does is to take

a few days to figure out what your punishment

should be.

And while you're waiting, you do all these nice

things to try to get off easier.

I JUST DUSTED
THE DINING
ROOM FOR THE
HECK OF IT!

HOW
THOUGHTFUL
OF YOU!



But then after a few days, right when you

forget you're in trouble, that's when she lays it

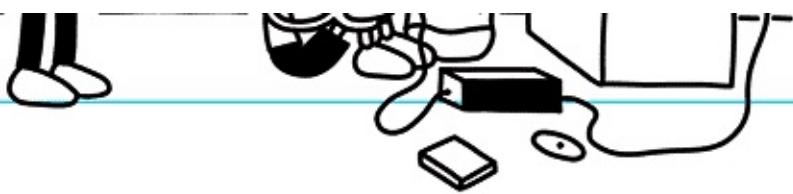
on you.

ARE YOU
HAVING FUN?

YEAH!

NO VIDEO
GAMES FOR
A WEEK!





Monday

This video game ban is a whole lot tougher than

I thought it would be. But at least I'm not the

only one in the family who's in trouble.

Rodrick's in some hot water with Mom right now,

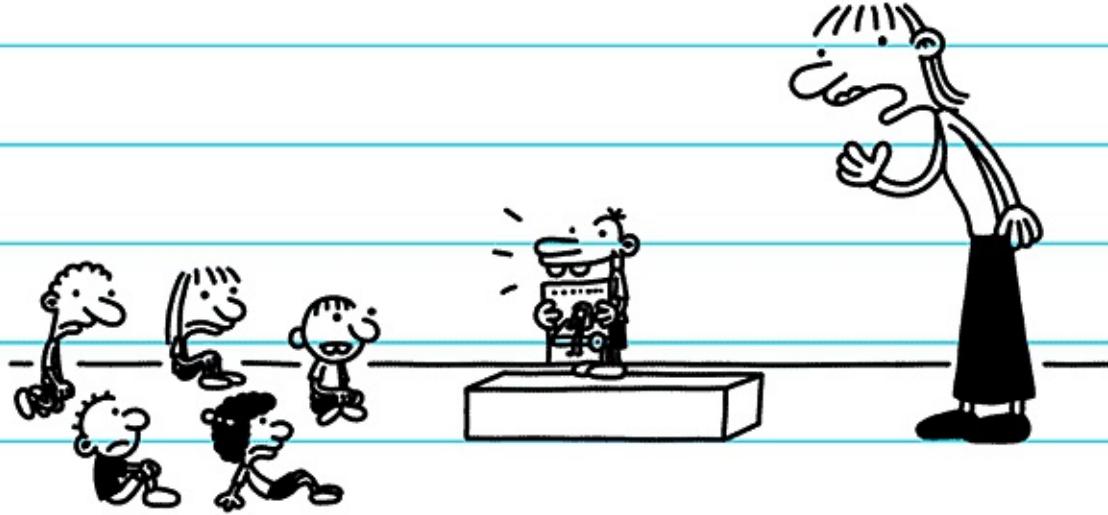
too. Manny got ahold of one of Rodrick's heavy

metal magazines, and one of the pages had a

picture of a woman in a bikini lying across the

hood of a car. And then Manny brought it into

day care for show-and-tell.



Anyway, I don't think Mom was too happy about

getting that phone call.

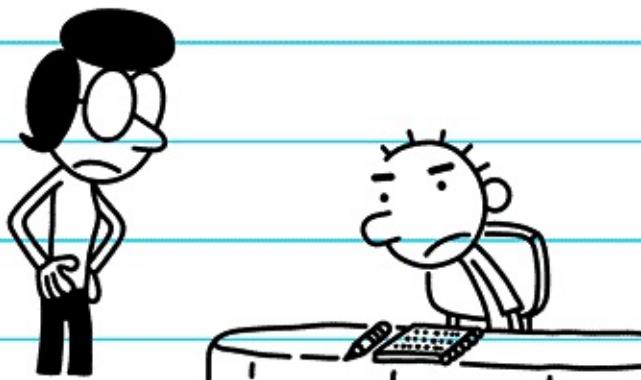
I saw the magazine myself, and it honestly wasn't

anything to get worked up over. But Mom doesn't

allow that kind of stuff in the house.

Rodrick's punishment was that he had to answer

a bunch of questions Mom wrote out for him.



Did owning this magazine
make you a better person?

No.

Did it make you more
popular at school?

No.

How do you feel about having
owned this type of magazine
now?

I feel ashamed.

Do you have anything you
want to say to women for

having owned this offensive
magazine?

I'm sorry women.

Wednesday

I'm still grounded from playing video games, so

Manny has been using my system. Mom went out and

bought a whole bunch of educational video games,

and watching Manny play them is like torture.

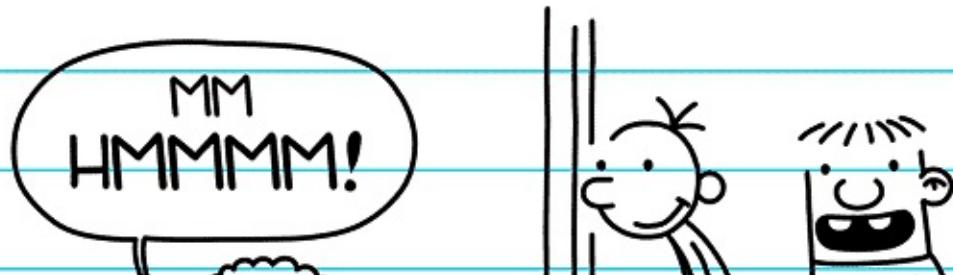


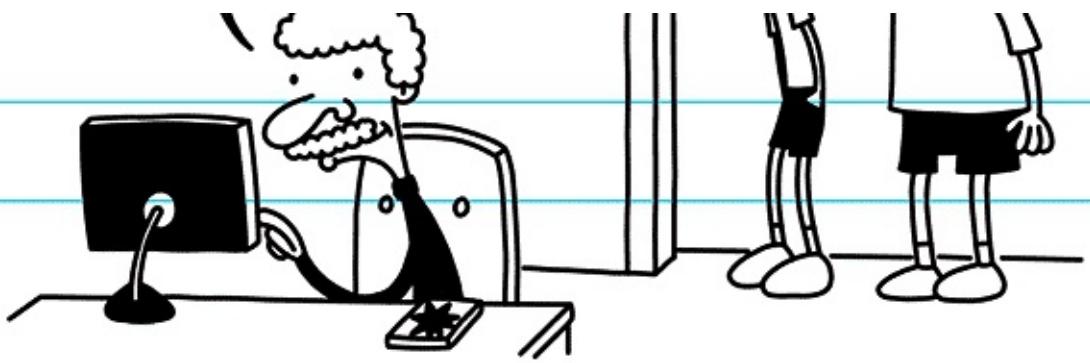
The good news is that I finally figured out how

to get some of my games past Rowley's dad. I

just put one of my discs in Manny's "Discovering

the Alphabet" case, and that's all it takes.





Thursday

At school today, they announced that student

government elections are coming up. To be honest

with you, I've never had any interest in student

government. But when I started thinking about

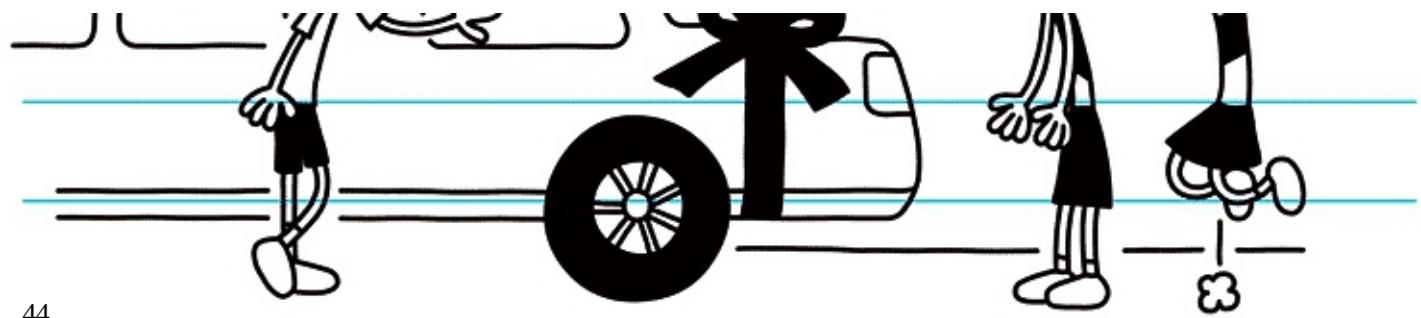
it, I realized getting elected Treasurer could

totally change my situation at school.

WE CHEERLEADERS
ARE TIRED OF RIDING
TO GAMES IN THE
SAME BUS AS THE
NERDS IN THE BAND!

HMM... LET
ME SEE
WHAT I
CAN DO...





And even better ...



Nobody ever thinks about running for Treasurer,

because all anyone ever cares about are the big-

ticket positions like President and Vice President.

So I figure if I sign up tomorrow, the

Treasurer job is pretty much mine for the taking.

Friday

Today, I went and put my name on the list to

run for Treasurer. Unfortunately, this kid named

Marty Porter is running for Treasurer, too, and

he's real brainy at math. So this might not be as

easy as I thought.

I told Dad that I was running for student

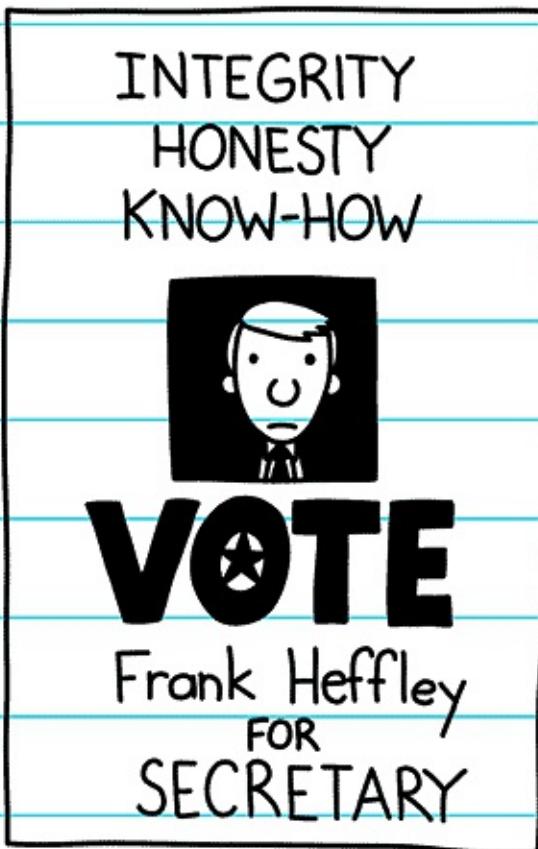
government, and he seemed pretty excited. It

turns out he ran for student government when

he was my age, and he actually won.

Dad dug through some old boxes in the basement

and found one of his campaign posters.



I thought the poster idea was pretty good, so

I asked Dad to drive me to the store to get

some supplies. I loaded up on poster board and

markers, and I spent the rest of the night

making all my campaign stuff. So let's just hope

these posters work.

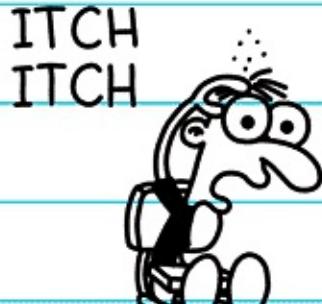
Monday

I brought my posters in to school today, and I

have to say, they came out pretty good.

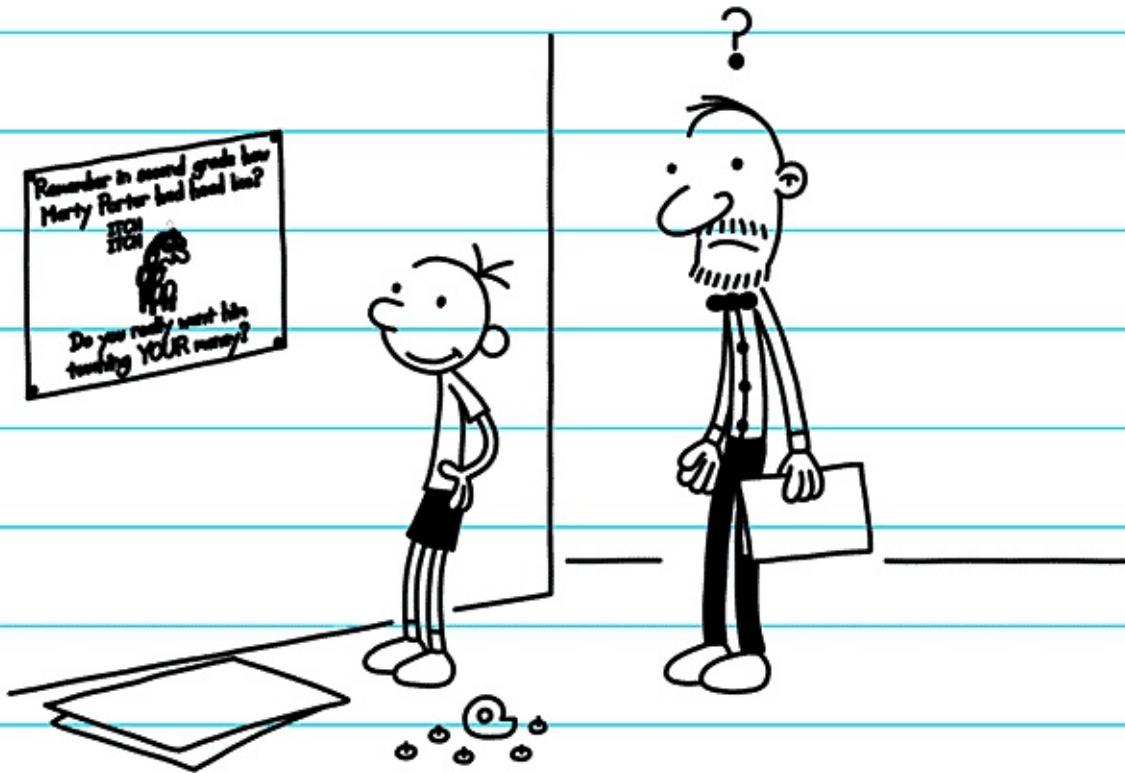


Remember in second grade how
Marty Porter had head lice?



Do you really want him
touching YOUR money?

I started hanging my posters up as soon as I
got in. But they were only up for about three
minutes before Vice Principal Roy spotted them.



Mr. Roy said you weren't allowed to write
"fabrications" about the other candidates. So I
told Mr. Roy that the thing about the head lice
was true, and how it practically closed down the
whole school when it happened.

But he took down all my posters anyway. So today,
Marty Porter was going around handing out lollipops
to buy himself votes while my posters were sitting at

the bottom of Mr. Roy's trash can. I guess this

means my political career is officially over.

Monday

Well, it's finally October, and there are only

thirty days left until Halloween. Halloween is

my fAVORite holiday, even though Mom says

I'm getting too old to go trick-or-treating

anymore.

Halloween is Dad's favorite holiday, too, but for

a different reason. On Halloween night, while

all the other parents are handing out candy,

Dad is hiding in the bushes with a big trash

can full of water.

And if any teenagers pass by our driveway, he

drenches them.





I'm not sure Dad really understands the concept

of Halloween. But I'm not gonna be the one who

spoils his fun.



Tonight was the opening night of the Crossland

High School haunted house, and I got Mom to

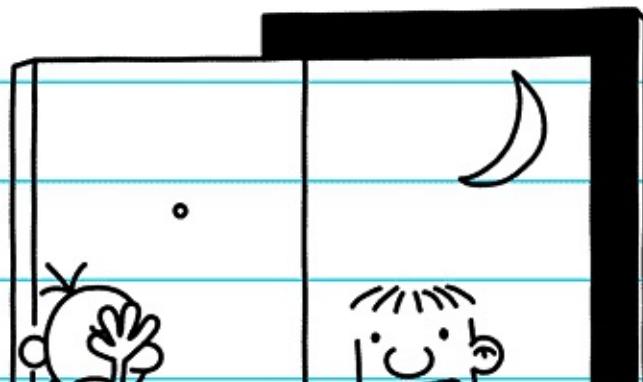
agree to take me and Rowley.

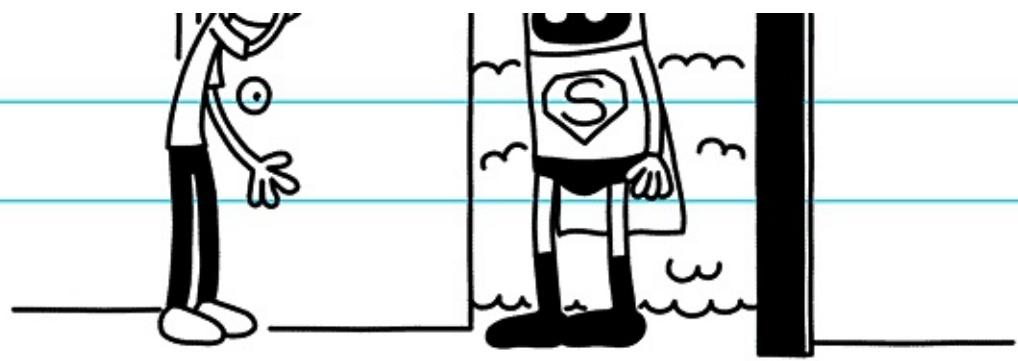
Rowley showed up at my house wearing his Halloween

costume from last year. When I called him earlier

I told him to just wear regular clothes, but of

course he didn't listen.





I tried not to let it bother me too much, though.

I've never been allowed to go to the Crossland

haunted house before, and I wasn't going to let

Rowley ruin it for me. Rodrick has told me all

about it, and I've been looking forward to this

for about three years.

Anyway, when we got to the entrance, I

started having second thoughts about going in.



But Mom seemed like she was in a hurry to get this

over with, and she moved us along. Once we were

through the gate, it was one scare after another.

There were vampires jumping out at you and people

without heads and all sorts of crazy stuff.

But the worst part was this area called Chainsaw

Alley. There was this big guy in a hockey mask

and he had a reAl chainsaw. Rodrick told me

the chainsaw has a rubber blade, but I wasn't

taking any chances.

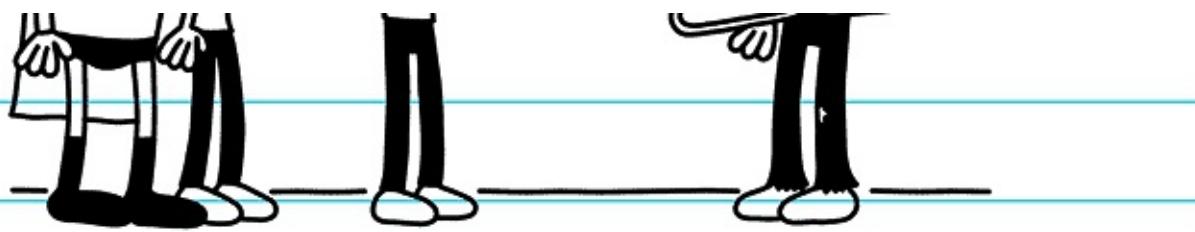


Right when it looked like the chainsaw guy

was going to catch us, Mom stepped in and

bailed us out.





Mom made the chainsaw guy show us where the
exit was, and that was the end of our haunted
house experience right there. I guess it was a
little embarrassing when Mom did that, but I'm
willing to let it go this one time.

Saturday

The Crossland haunted house really got me thinking.
Those guys were charging five bucks a pop, and
the line stretched halfway around the school.

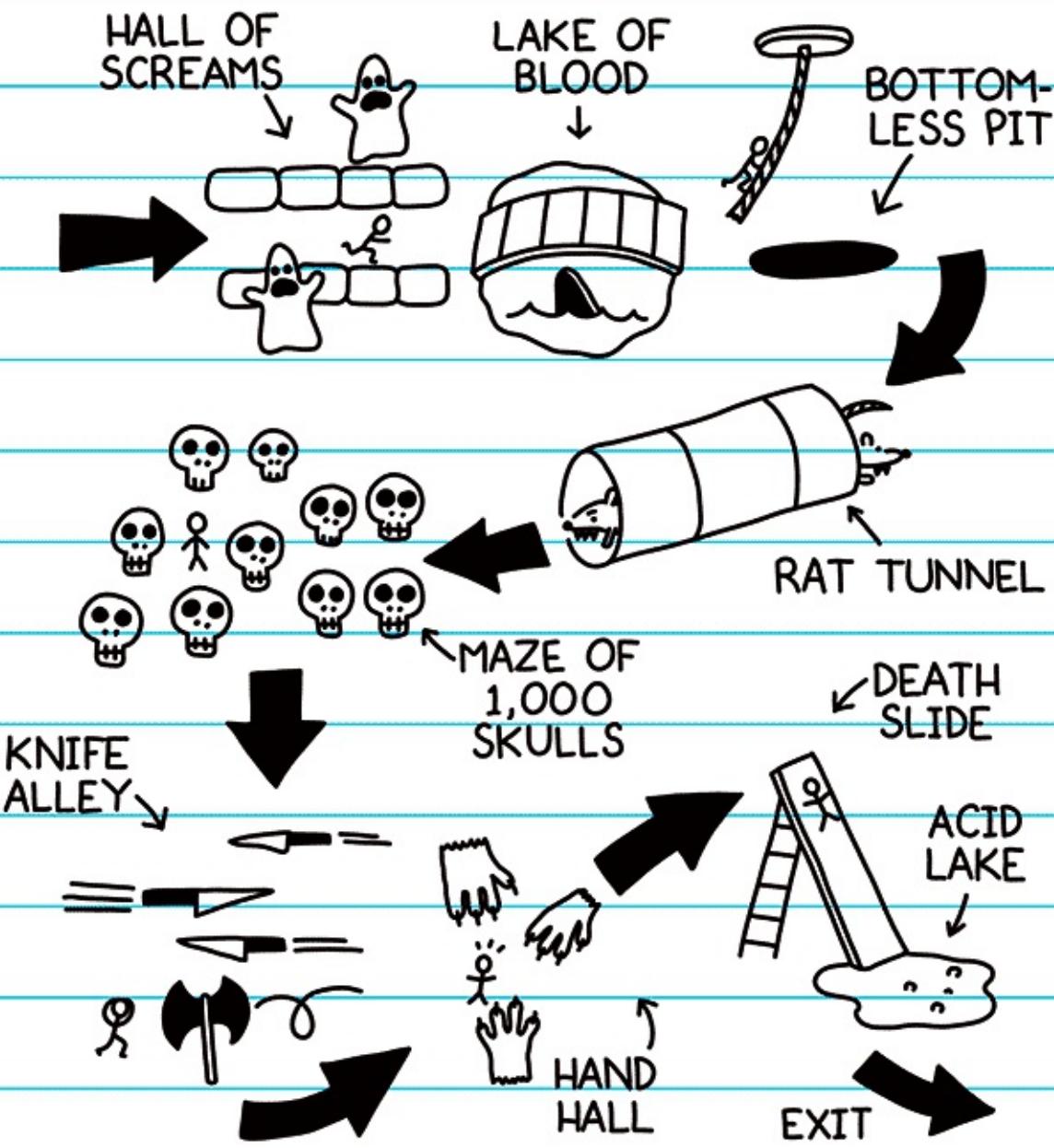
I decided to make a haunted house of my own.
Actually, I had to bring Rowley in on the deal,
because Mom wouldn't let me convert our first
floor into a full-out haunted mansion.

I knew Rowley's dad wouldn't be crazy about the
idea, either, so we decided to build the haunted
house in his basement and just not mention it to
his parents.

Me and Rowley spent most of the day coming up

with an awesome plan for our haunted house.

Here was our final plan:



I don't mean to brag or anything, but what

we came up with was WAY better than the

Crossland High School haunted house.

We realized we were gonna need to get the word

out that we were doing this thing, so we got

some paper and made up a bunch of flyers.

I'll admit maybe we stretched the truth a little

in our advertisement, but we had to make sure

people actually showed up.



By the time we finished putting the flyers up

around the neighborhood and got back to

Rowley's basement, it was already 2:30, and we

hadn't even started putting the actual haunted

house together yet.

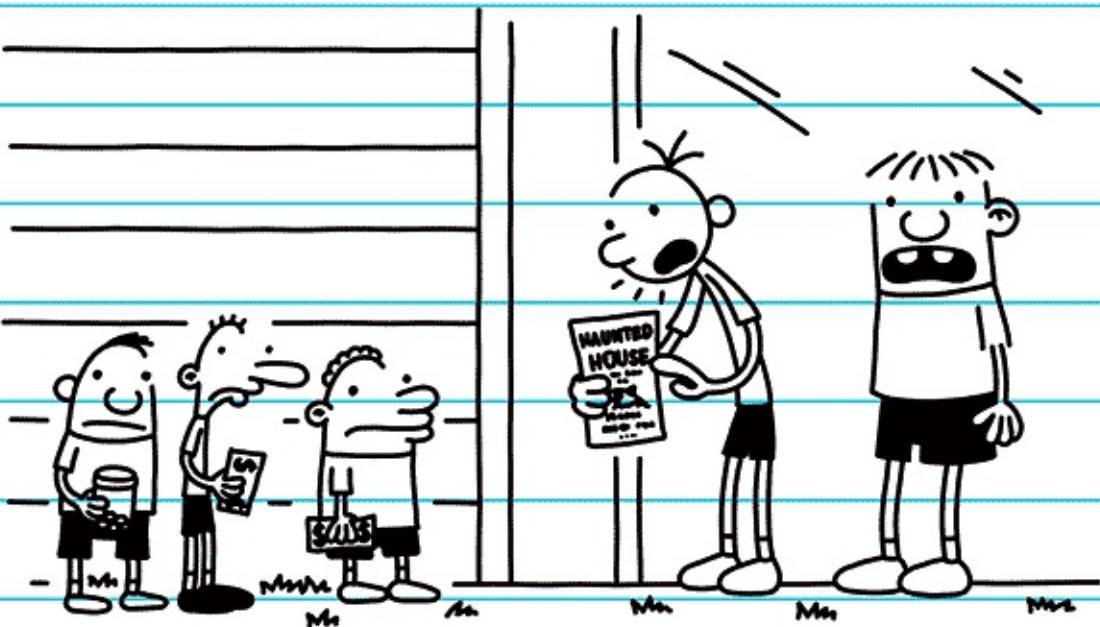
So we had to cut some corners from our

original plan.

When 3:00 rolled around, we looked outside to
see if anyone had showed up. And sure enough,
there were about twenty neighborhood kids waiting
in line outside Rowley's basement.

Now, I know our flyers said admission was fifty
cents, but I could see that we had a chance to
make a killing here.

So I told the kids that admission was two bucks,
and the fifty-cent thing was just a typo.



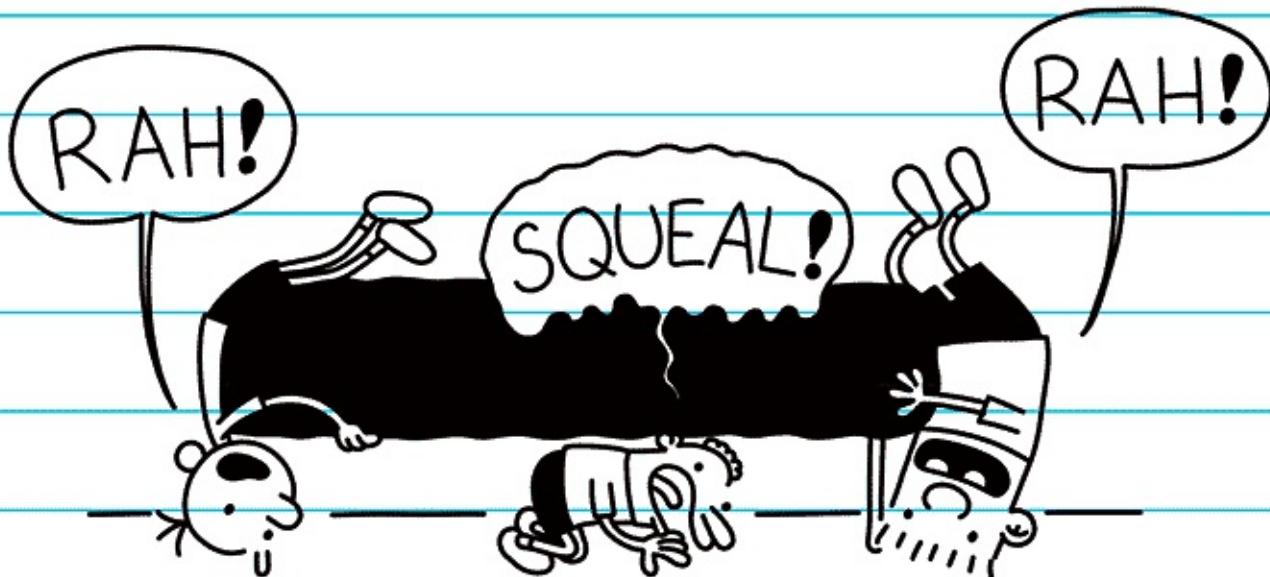
The first kid to cough up his two bucks was
Shane Snella. He paid his money and we let him

inside, and me and Rowley took our positions in

the Hall of Screams.

The Hall of Screams was basically a bed with me

and Rowley on either side of it.



I guess maybe we made the Hall of Screams a

little too scary, because halfway through, Shane

curled up in a ball underneath the bed. We tried

to get him to crawl out from under there, but

he wouldn't budge.

I started thinking about all the money we were

losing with this kid clogging up the Hall of Screams,

and I knew we had to get him out of there, quick.

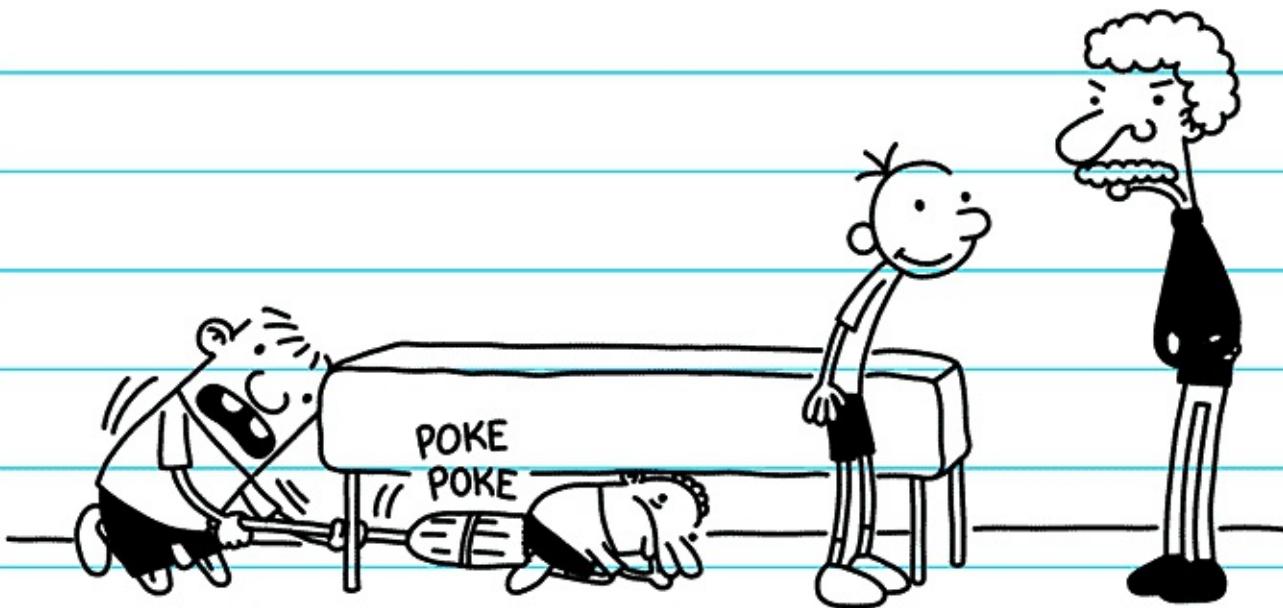
Eventually, Rowley's dad came downstairs. At

first I was happy to see him, because I thought

he could help us drag Shane out from under the

bed and get our haunted house cranking again.

But Rowley's dad wasn't really in a helpful mood.



Rowley's dad wanted to know what we were
doing, and why Shane Snella was curled up under
the bed.

We told him that the basement was a haunted
house, and that Shane Snella actually PAiD
for us to do this to him. But Rowley's dad didn't
believe us.

I admit that if you looked around, it didn't
really look like a haunted house. All we had time
to put together was the Hall of Screams and the

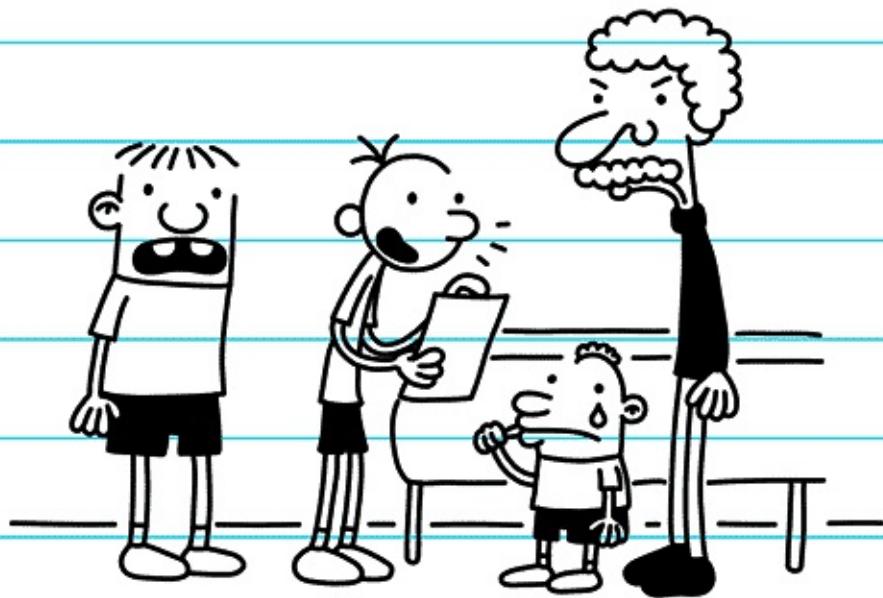
Lake of Blood, which was just Rowley's old

baby pool with half a bottle of ketchup in it.

I tried to show Rowley's dad our original plan

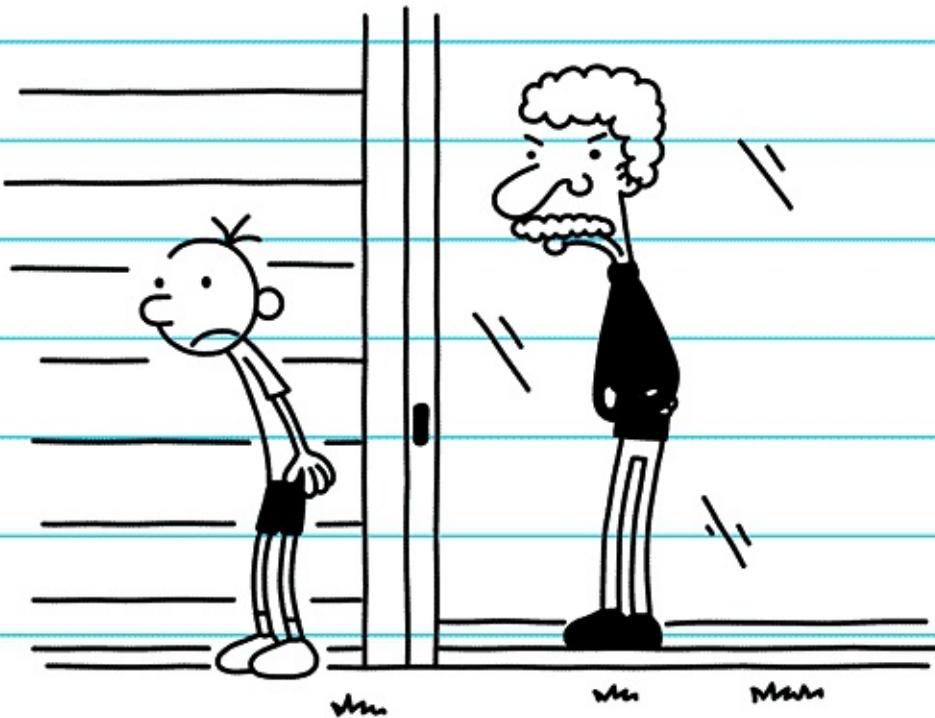
to prove that we really were running a legitimate

operation, but he still didn't seem convinced.



And to make a long story short, that was the

end of our haunted house.



The good news is, since Rowley's dad didn't

believe us, he didn't make us refund Shane's

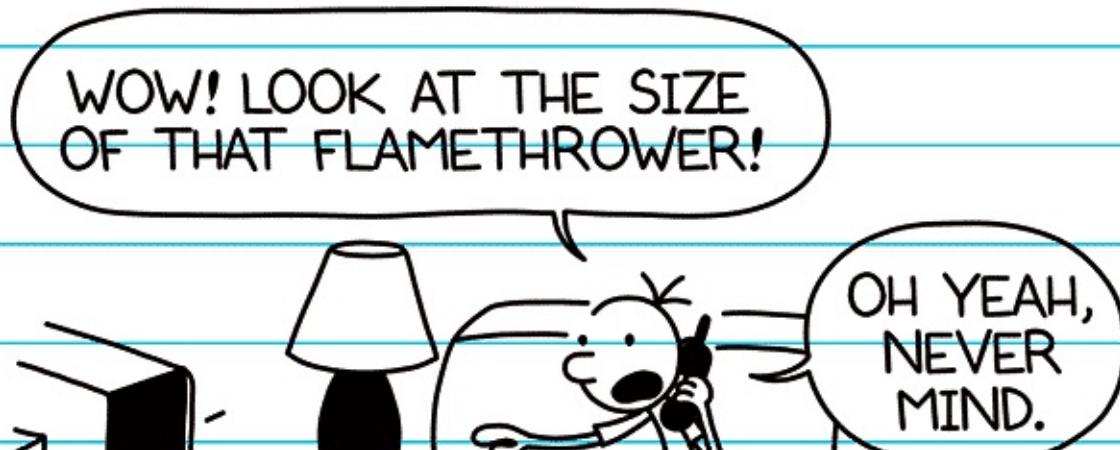
money. So at least we cleared two bucks today.

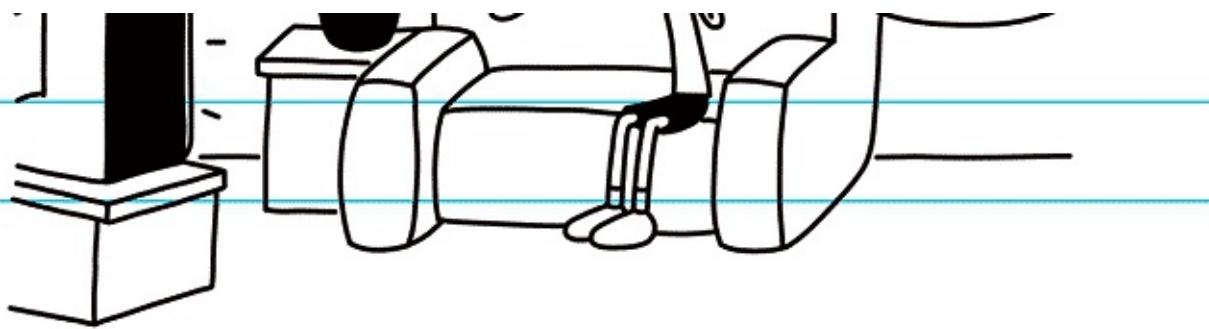
Sunday

Rowley ended up getting grounded for that whole haunted house mess yesterday. He's not allowed to watch tv for a week, and he's not allowed to have me over at his house during that time.

That last part really isn't fair, because that's punishing me, and I didn't even do anything wrong. And now where am I supposed to play my video games?

Anyway, I felt kind of bad for Rowley. So tonight, I tried to make it up to him. I turned on one of Rowley's favorite tv shows, and I did a play-by-play over the phone so he could kind of experience it that way.

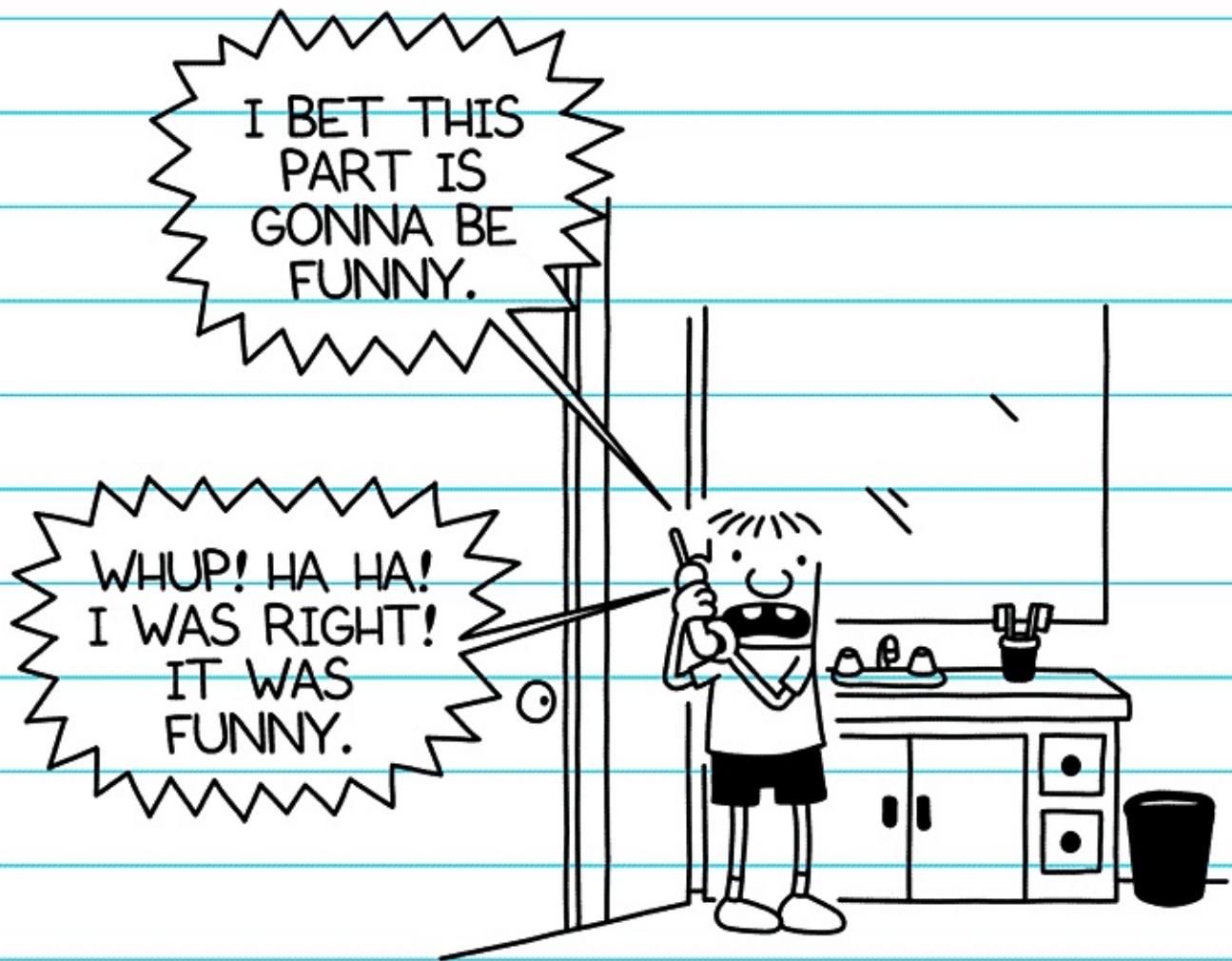




I did my best to keep up with what was going on

on the screen, but to be honest with you, I'm

not sure if Rowley was getting the full effect.



Tuesday

Well, Rowley's grounding is finally over, and just

in time for Halloween, too. I went up to his

house to check out his costume, and I have to

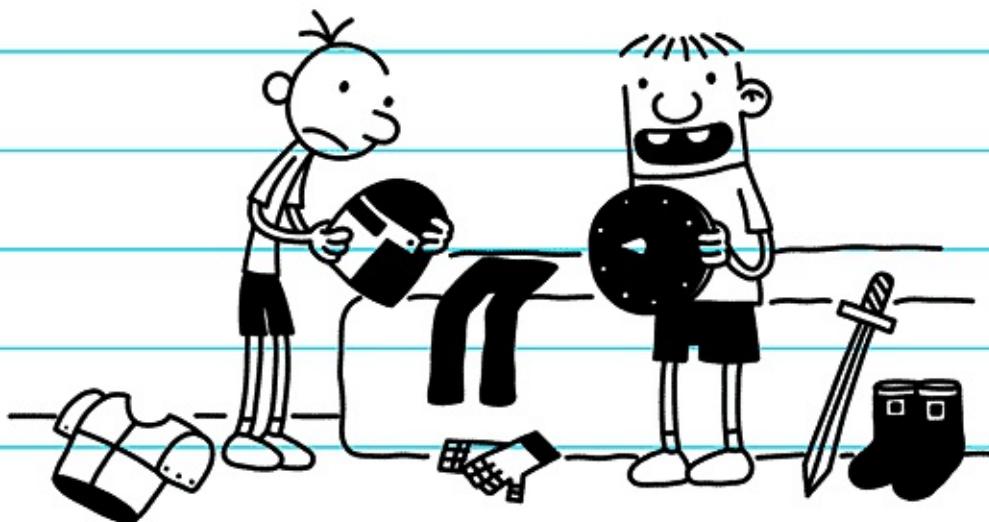
admit, I'm a little jealous.

Rowley's Mom got him this knight costume that's

WAy cooler than his costume from last year.

His knight outfit came with a helmet and a shield

and a real sword and eVerytHinG.



I've never had a store-bought costume before.

I still haven't figured out what I'm gonna go as

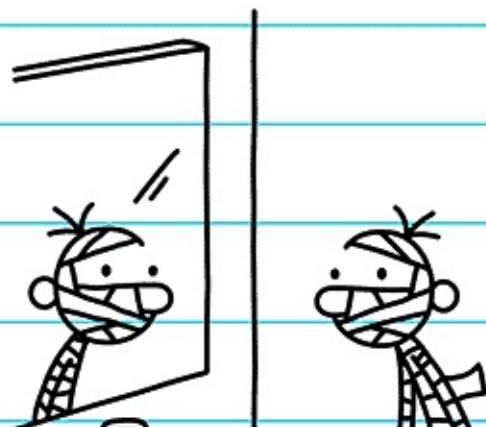
tomorrow night, so I'll probably just throw

something together at the last minute. I figure

maybe I'll bring back the Toilet Paper Mummy again.

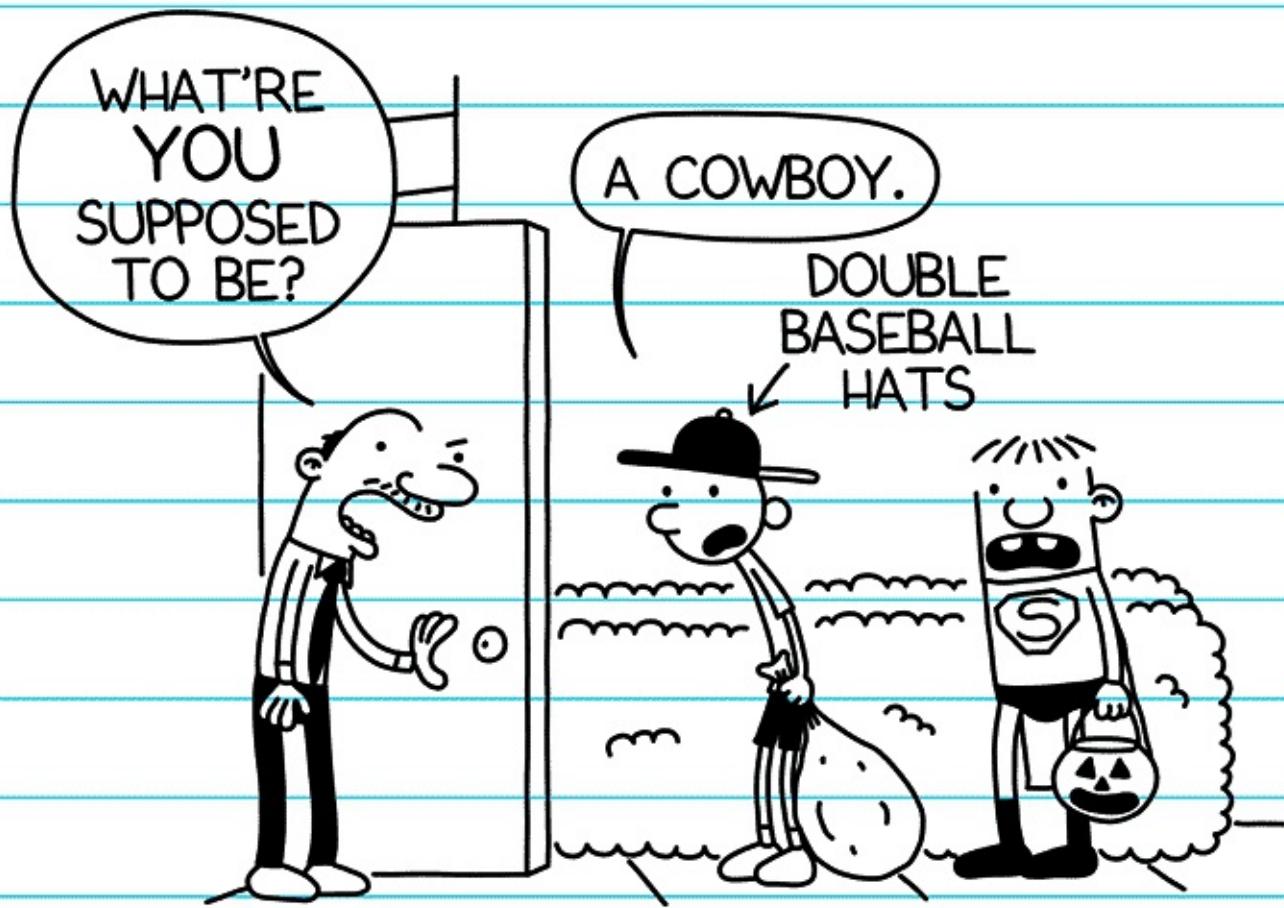
But I think it's supposed to rain tomorrow

night, so that might not be the smartest choice.





In the past few years, the grown-ups in my neighborhood have been getting cranky about my lame costumes, and I'm starting to think it's actually having an effect on the amount of candy I'm bringing in.



But I don't really have time to put together a good costume, because I'm in charge of planning out the best route for me and Rowley to take tomorrow night.

This year I've come up with a plan that's going to get us

at least twice the candy we scored last year.

Halloween

About an hour before we were supposed to start

trick-or-treating, I still didn't have a costume.

At that point I was seriously thinking about

going as a cowboy for the second year in a row.

But then Mom knocked at my door and handed

me a pirate costume, with an eye patch and a

hook and everything.



Rowley showed up around 6:30 wearing his

knight costume, but it didn't look AnytHinG

like it looked yesterday.

Rowley's mom made all these safety improvements

to it, and you couldn't even tell what he was

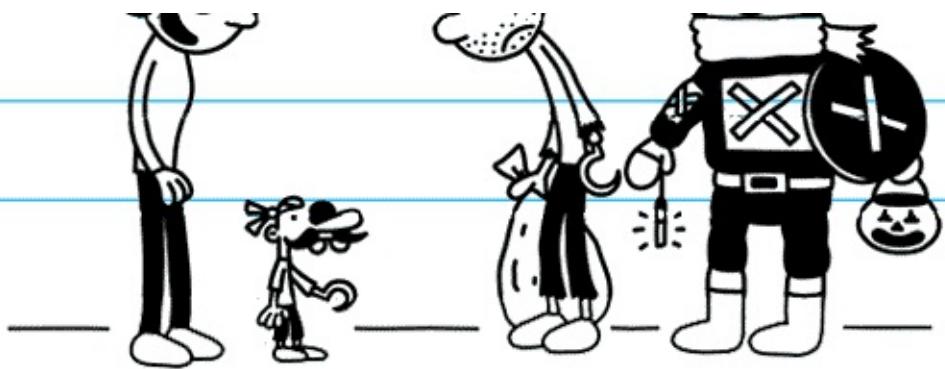
supposed to be anymore.

She cut out a big hole in the front of the helmet
so he could see better, and covered him up in all
this reflective tape. She made him wear his winter
coat underneath everything, and she replaced his
sword with a glow stick.



I grabbed my pillowcase, and me and Rowley
started to head out. But Mom stopped us before
we could get out the door.





Man, I should have known there was a catch

when Mom gave me that costume.

I told Mom there was no WAY we were taking

Manny with us, because we were going to hit 152

houses in three hours. And plus, we were going

to be on Snake Road, which is way too dangerous

for a little kid like Manny.

I should never have mentioned that last part,

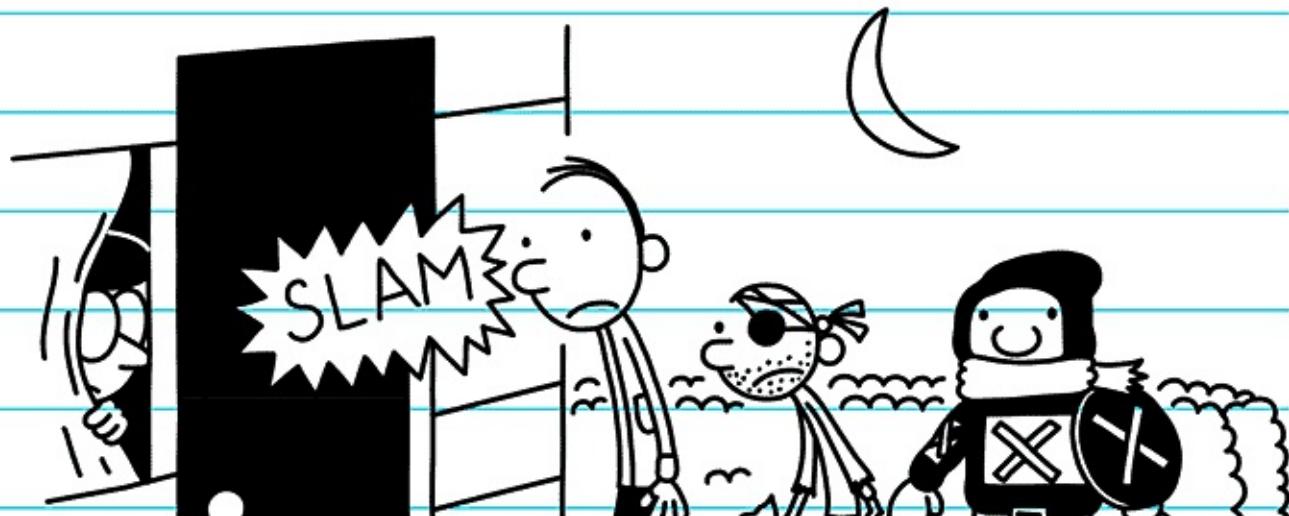
because the next thing I knew, Mom was telling

Dad he had to go along with us to make sure we

didn't step foot outside our neighborhood. Dad

tried to squirm out of it, but once Mom makes up

her mind, there's no way you can change it.





Before we even got out of our own driveway, we

ran into our neighbor Mr. Mitchell and his kid

Jeremy. So of course they tagged along with us.

Manny and Jeremy wouldn't trick-or-treat at any

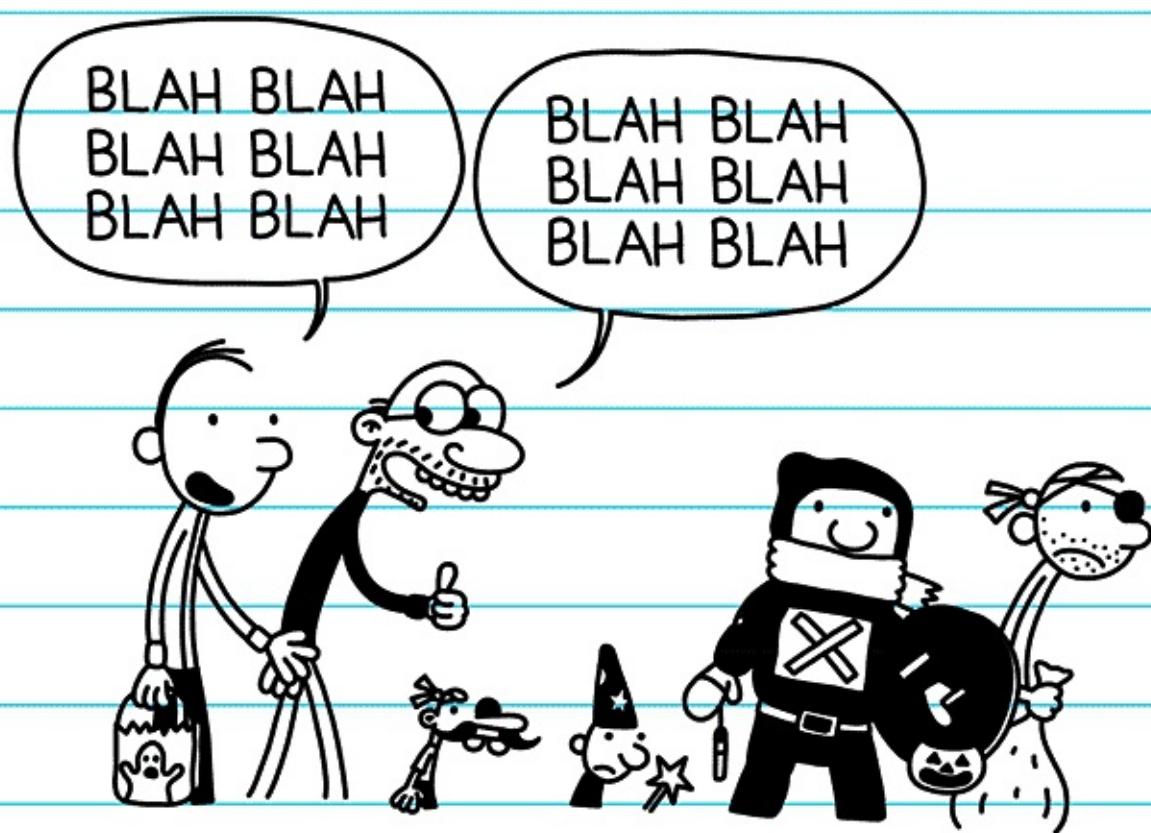
houses with spooky decorations on them, so that

ruled out pretty much every house on our block.

Dad and Mr. Mitchell started talking about

football or something, and every time one of them

wanted to make a point, they'd stop walking.



So we were hitting only about one house every

twenty minutes.

After a couple of hours, Dad and Mr. Mitchell

took the little kids home.

I was glad, because that meant me and Rowley

could take off. My pillowcase was almost empty,

so I wanted to make up as much time as possible.

A little while later, Rowley told me he needed a

"potty break." I made him hold off for another

forty-five minutes. But by the time we got to my

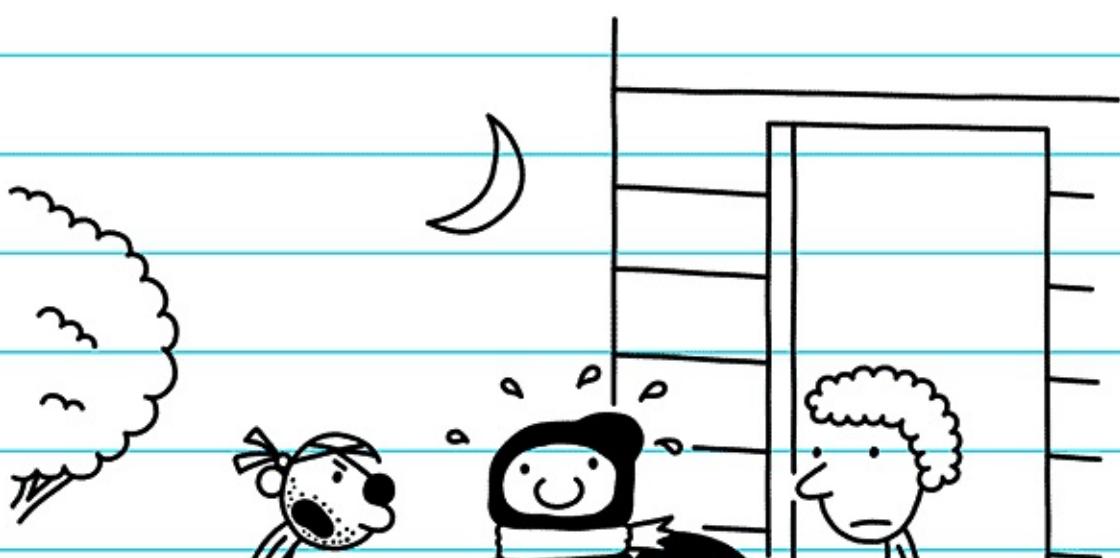
gramma's house, it was pretty clear that if I didn't

let Rowley use the bathroom, it was gonna get messy.

So I told Rowley if he wasn't back outside in

one minute, I was gonna start helping myself to

his candy.





After that, we headed back out on the road.

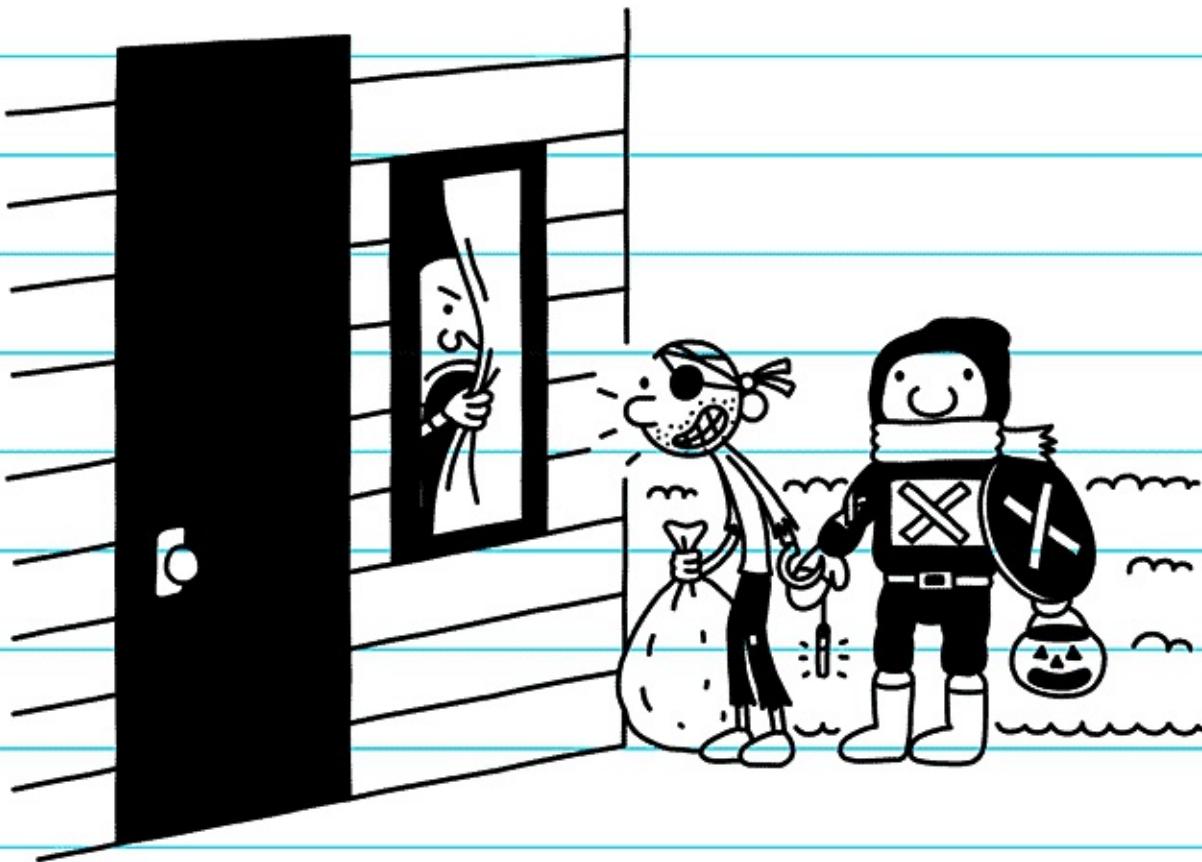
But it was already 10:30, and I guess that's

when most grown-ups decide Halloween is over.

You can kind of tell because that's when they

start coming to the door in their pajamas and

giving you the evil eye.



We decided to head home. We made up a lot of

time after Dad and Manny left, so I was pretty

satisfied with how much candy we took in.

When we were halfway home, this pickup truck

came roaring down the street with a bunch of

high school kids in it.

The kid in the back was holding a fire extinguisher,

and when the truck passed by us, he opened fire.



I have to give Rowley credit, because he blocked

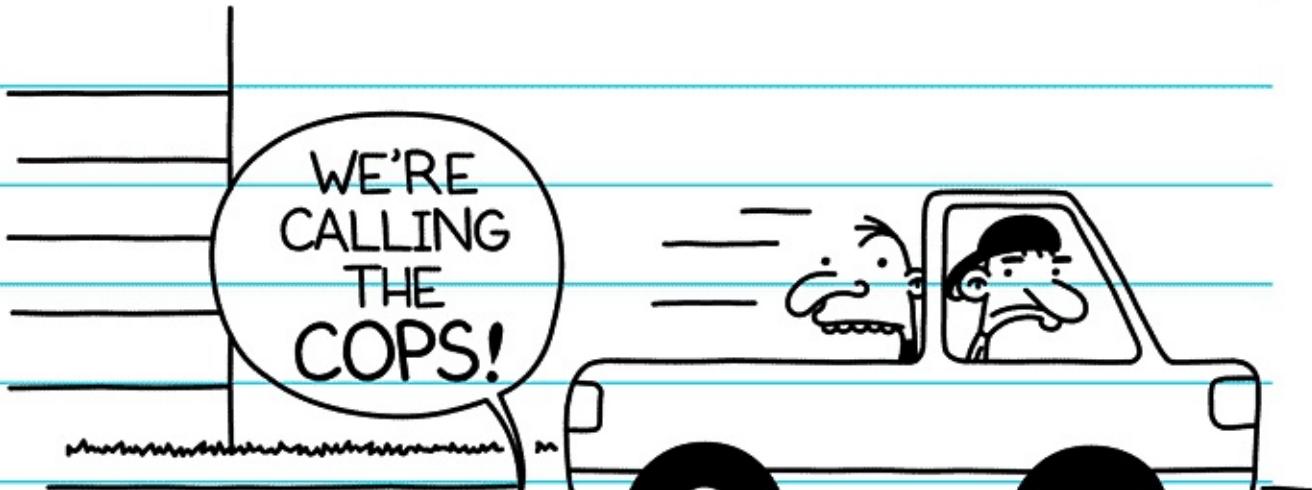
about 95% of the water with his shield. And if

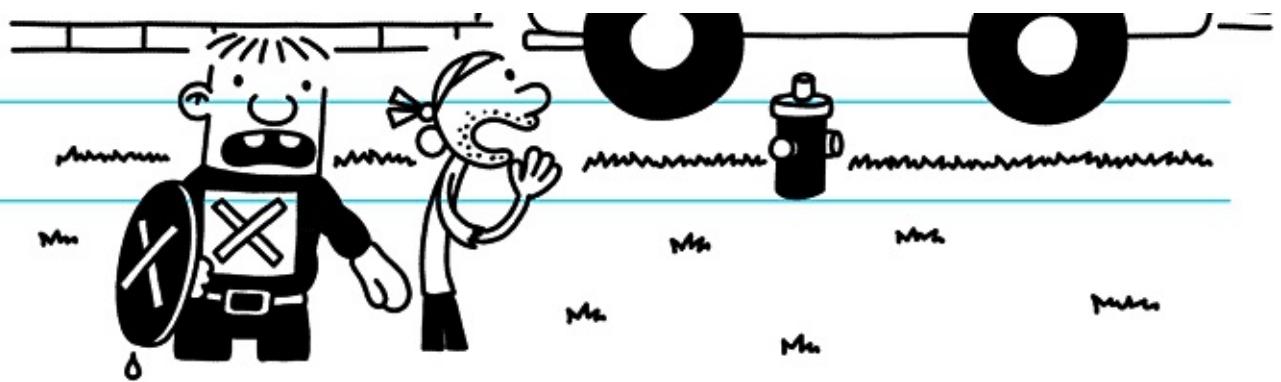
he hadn't done that, all our candy would have

gotten soaked.

When the truck drove away, I yelled out something

that I regretted about two seconds later.



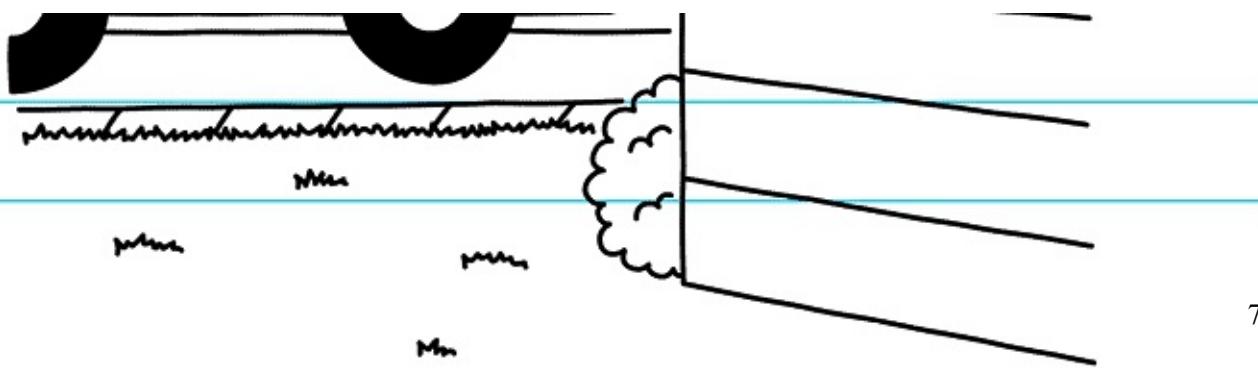


The driver slammed on the brakes and he turned his truck around. Me and Rowley started running, but those guys were right on our heels.

The only place I could think of that was safe was Gramma's house, so we cut through a couple backyards to get there. Gramma was in bed already, but I knew she keeps a key under the mat on her front porch.

Once we got inside, I looked out the window to see if those guys had followed us, and sure enough, they did. I tried to trick them into leaving, but they wouldn't budge.





After a while, we realized the teenagers were

going to wait us out, so we decided we were just

gonna have to spend the night at Gramma's.

That's when we started getting cocky, making

monkey noises at the teenagers and whatnot.

Well, at least I was making monkey noises.

Rowley was kind of making owl noises, but I

guess it was the same general idea.



I called Mom to tell her we were going to crash

at Gramma's for the night. But Mom sounded

really mad on the phone.

She said it was a school night, and that we had

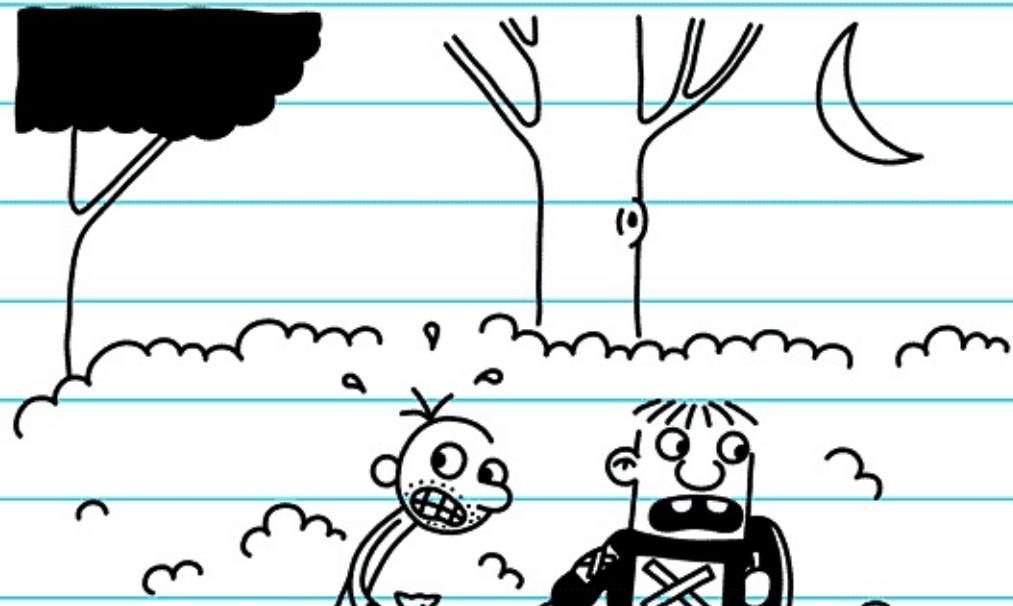
to get home right that instant. So that meant

we were gonna have to make a run for it.

I looked out the window, and this time, I didn't
see the truck. But I knew those guys were hiding
somewhere and were just trying to draw us out.

So we snuck out the back door, hopped over
Gramma's fence, and ran all the way to Snake
Road. I figured our chances were better there
because there aren't any streetlights.

Snake Road is scary enough on its own without
having a truckload of teenagers hunting you
down. Every time we saw a car coming, we dove
into the bushes. It must've taken us a half
hour to go 100 yards.

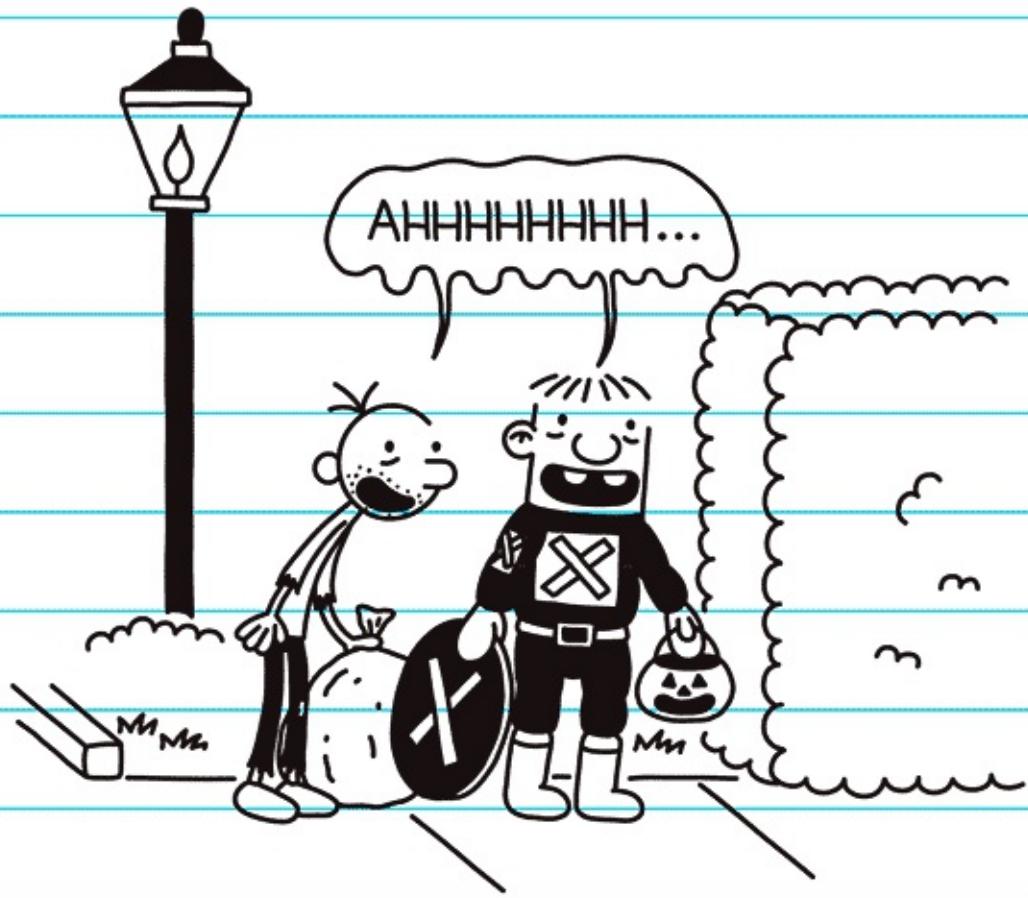




But believe it or not, we made it all the way

home without getting caught. Neither one of us

let our guard down until we got to my driveway.



But right then, there was this awful scream, and

we saw a big wave of water coming toward us.



ii (.) ss oo oo oo oo

Man, I forgot all about Dad, and we totally

paid the price for it.



When me and Rowley got inside, we laid out all

our candy on the kitchen table.

The only things we could salvage were a couple of

mints that were wrapped in cellophane, and the

toothbrushes Dr. Garrison gave us.

I think next Halloween I' 1 just stay home and

mooch some Butterfingers from the bowl Mom

keeps on top of the refrigerator.

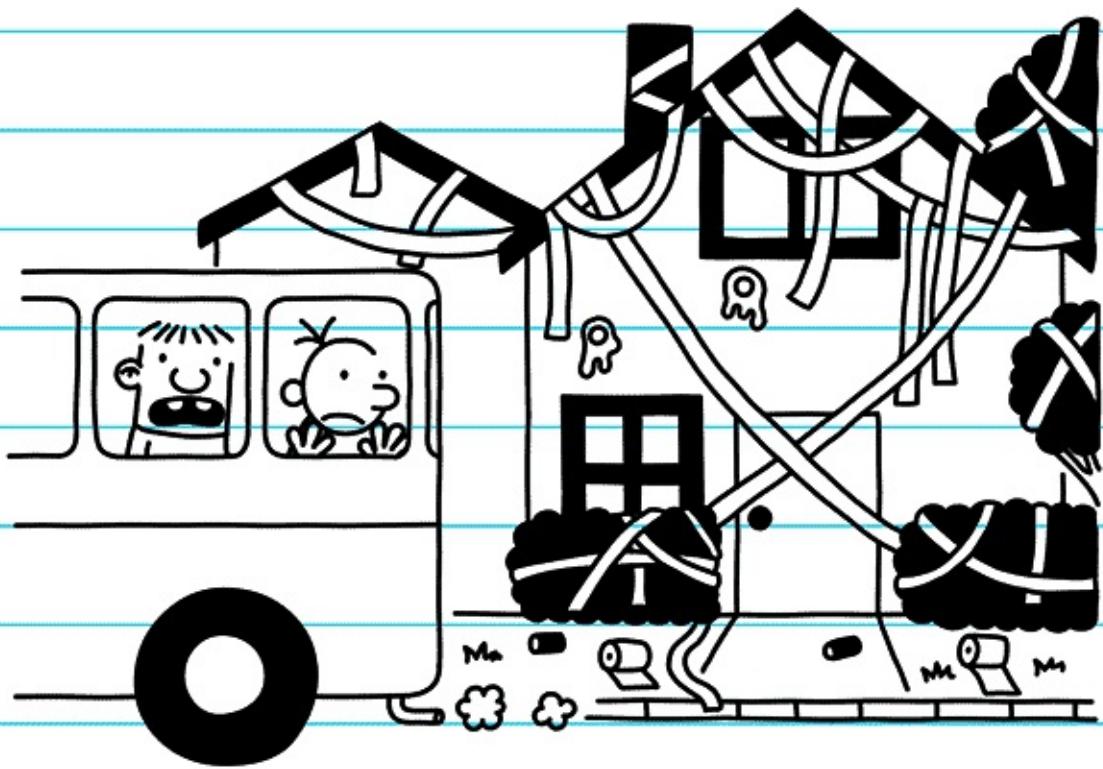
November

Thursday

On the bus ride into school today, we passed by

Gramma's house. It got rolled with toilet paper

last night, which I guess was no big surprise.



I do feel a little bad, because it looked like it was

gonna take a long time to clean up. But on the

bright side, Gramma is retired, so she probably

didn't have anything planned for today anyway.

Wednesday

In third period, Mr. Underwood, our Phys Ed

teacher, announced that the boys will be doing a

wrestling unit for the next six weeks.

If there's one thing most boys in my school are

into, it's professional wrestling. So Mr.

Underwood might as well have set off a bomb.

Lunch comes right after Phys Ed, and the

cafeteria was a complete madhouse.



I don't know what the school is thinking having

a wrestling unit.

But I decided if I don't want to get twisted

into a pretzel for the next month and a half, I'd

better do my homework on this wrestling business.

So I rented a couple of video games to learn

some moves. And you know what? After a while,

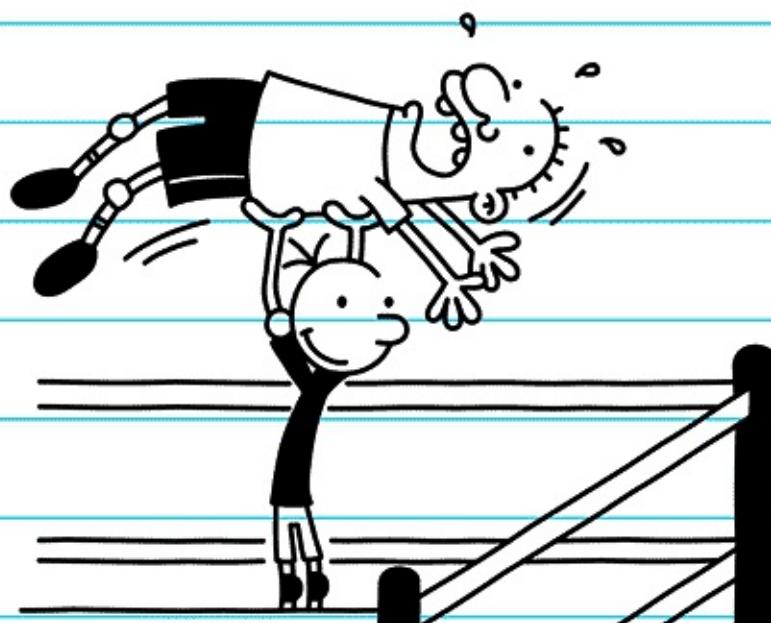
I was really starting to get the hang of it.

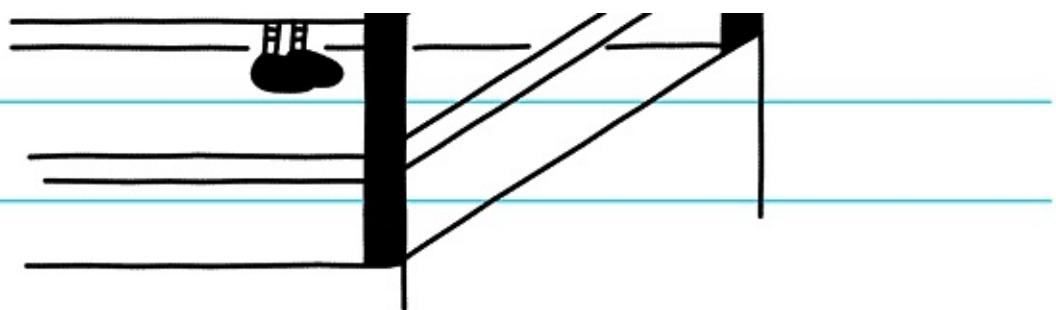


In fact, the other kids in my class had better

look out, because if I keep this up, I could be a

real threat.





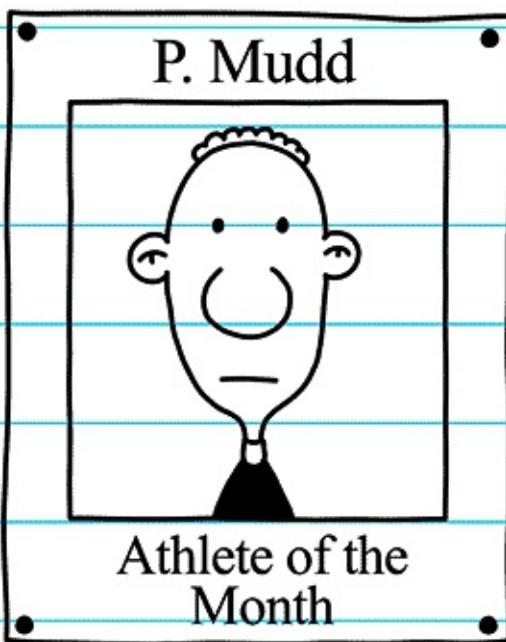
Then again, I better make sure I don't do

too good. This kid named Preston Mudd got

named Athlete of the Month for being the best

player in the basketball unit, so they put his

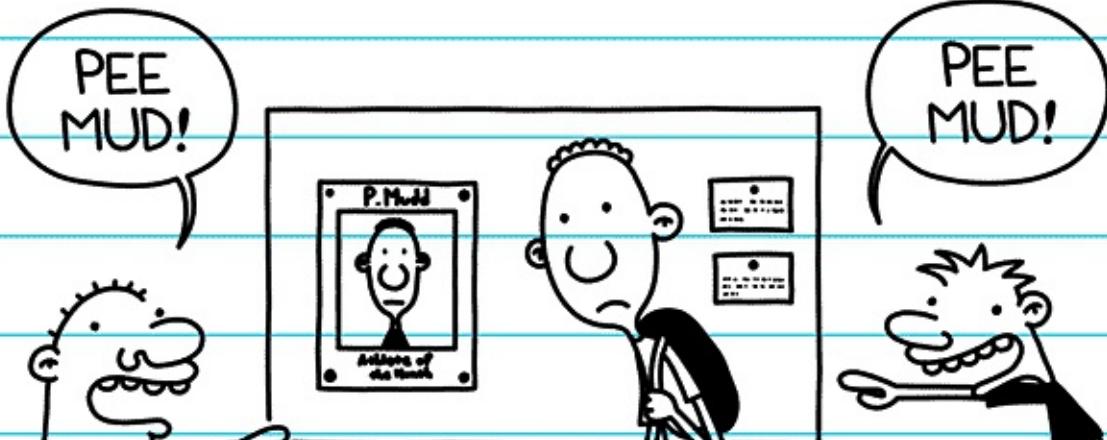
picture up in the hallway.

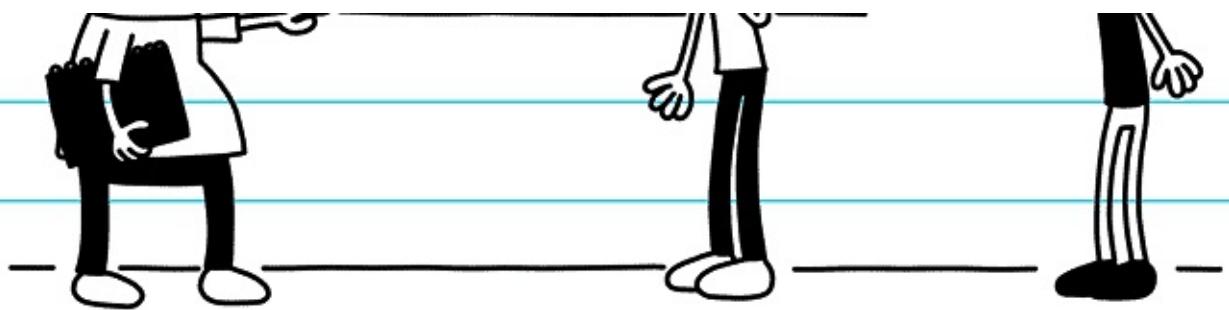


It took people about five seconds to realize how

"P. Mudd" sounded when you said it out loud,

and after that, it was all over for Preston.





Thursday

Well, I found out today that the kind of wrestling

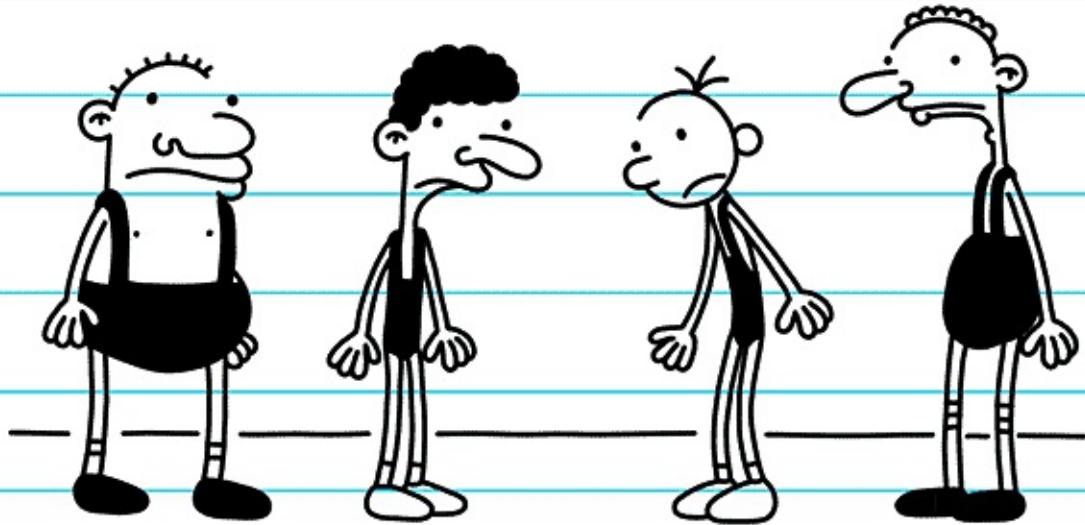
Mr. Underwood is teaching is completely

different from the kind they do on tv.

First of all, we have to wear these things called

“singlets,” which look like those bathing suits

they used to wear in the 1800s.



And second of all, there are no pile drivers or

hitting people over the heads with chairs or

anything like that.

There's not even a ring with ropes around it.

It's just basically a sweaty mat that smells like

it's never been washed before.

Mr. Underwood started asking for volunteers so

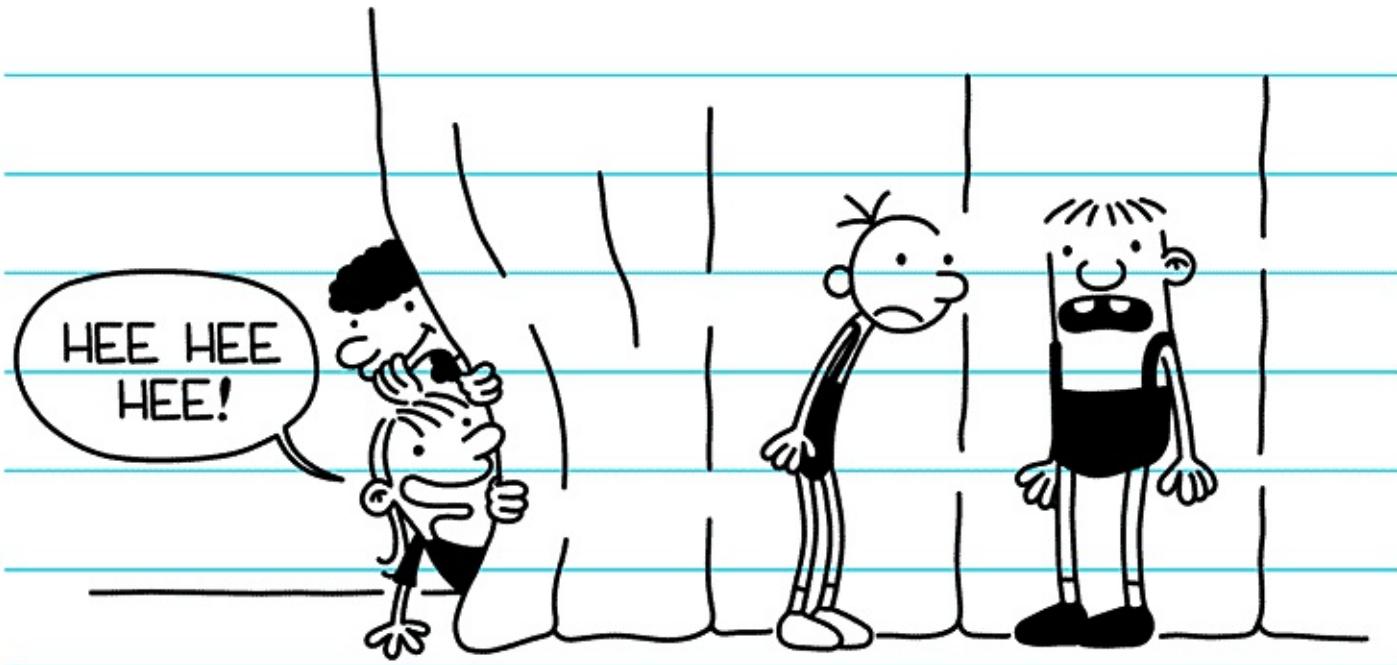
he could demonstrate some wrestling holds, but

there was no way I was going to raise my hand.

Me and Rowley tried to hide out in the back of

the gym near the curtain, but that's where the

girls were doing their gymnastics unit.



We got out of there in a hurry, and we went

back to where the rest of the guys were.

Mr. Underwood singled me out, probably because

I'm the lightest kid in the class, and he could

toss me around without straining himself. He

showed everybody how to do all these things

called a “half nelson” and a “reversal” and a

“takedown” and stuff like that.

When he was doing this one move called the

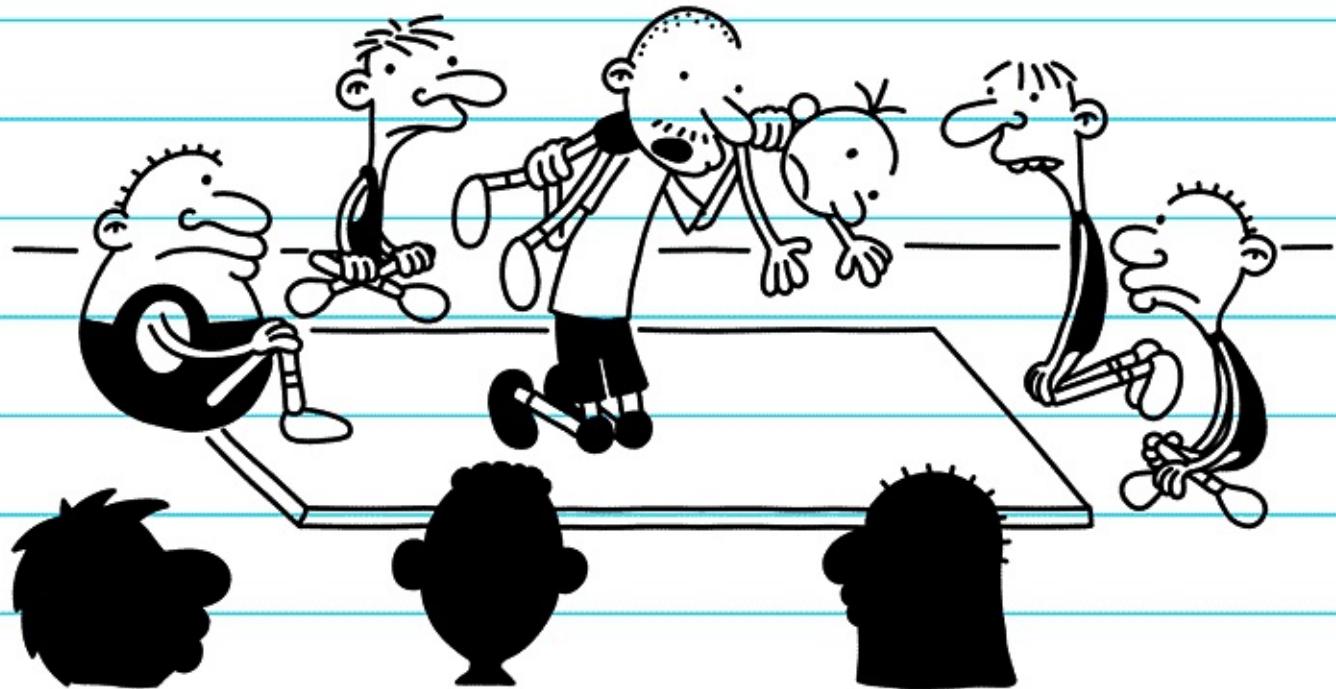
“fireman’s carry,” I felt a breeze down below,

and I could tell my singlet wasn’t doing a good

job keeping me covered up.

That’s when I thanked my lucky stars the

girls were on the other side of the gym.



Mr. Underwood divided us up into weight groups.

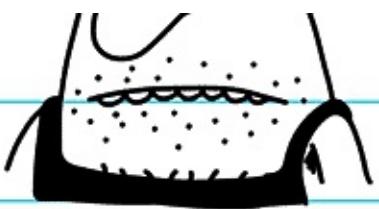
I was pretty happy about that at first,

because it meant I wasn’t going to have to

wrestle kids like Benny Wells, who can bench-press

250 pounds.





But then I found out who I DID have to wrestle,

and I would have traded for Benny Wells in a

heartbeat.



Fregley was the only kid light enough to be in my

weight class. And apparently Fregley was paying

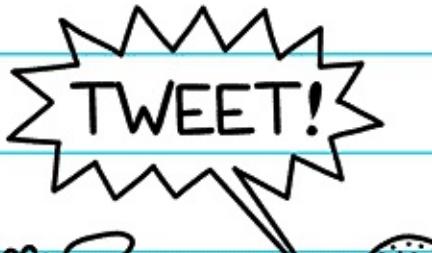
attention when Mr. Underwood was giving

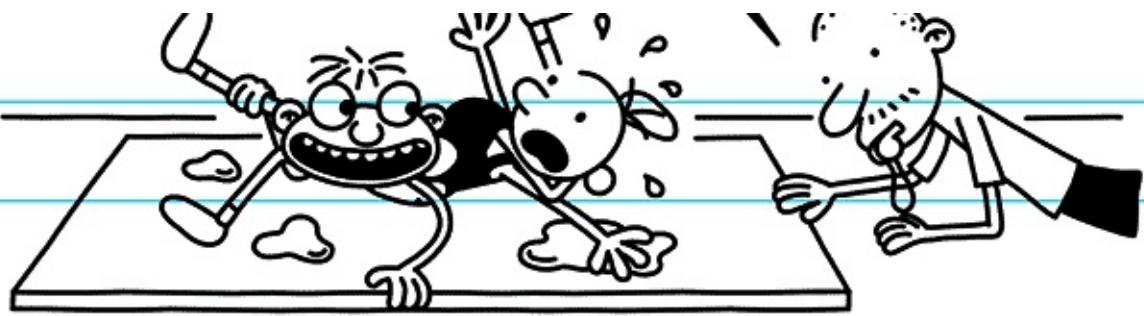
instructions, because he pinned me every which way

you could imagine. I spent my seventh period

getting WAY more familiar with Fregley than I

ever wanted to be.





Tuesday

This wrestling unit has totally turned our school

upside down. Now kids are wrestling in the hallways,

in the classrooms, you name it. But the fifteen

minutes after lunch where they let us outside is

the worst.

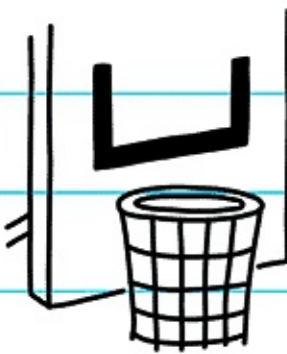
You can't walk five feet without tripping over a

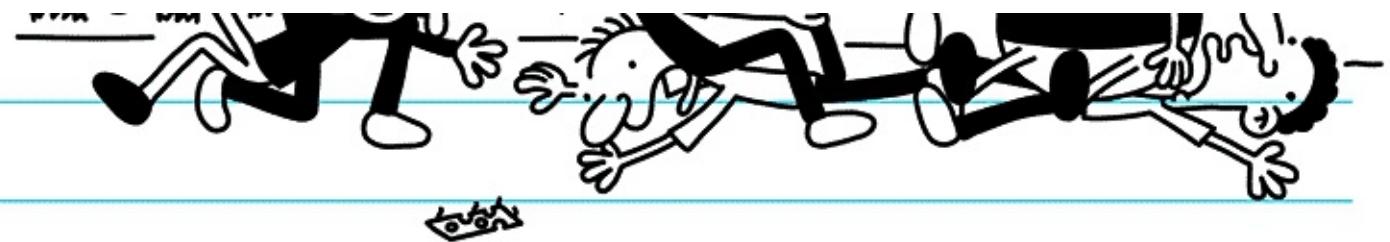
couple of kids going at it. I just try to keep

my distance. And mark my words, one of these

fools is going to roll right onto the Cheese and

start the Cheese Touch all over again.





My other big problem is that I have to wrestle

Fregley every single day. But this morning I

realized something. If I can move out of

Fregley's weight class, I won't have to wrestle

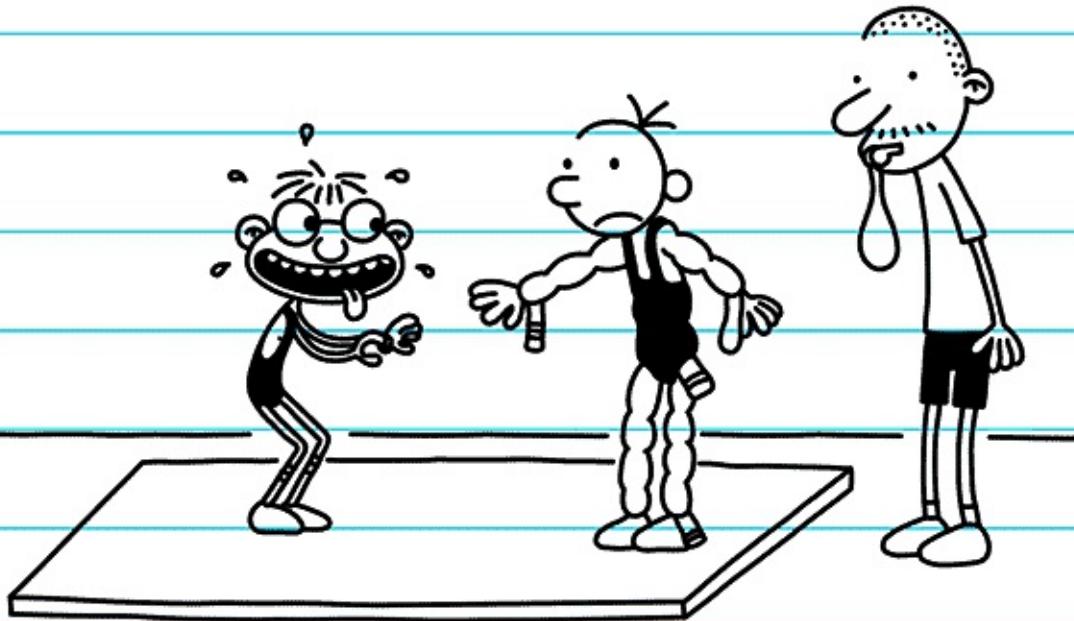
him anymore.

So today, I stuffed my clothes with a bunch of

socks and shirts to get myself into the next

weight class.

But I was still too light to move up.



I realized I was gonna have to gain weight for

real. At first I thought I should just start

loading up on junk food, but then I had a much

better idea.

I decided to gain my weight in muscle, not fat.

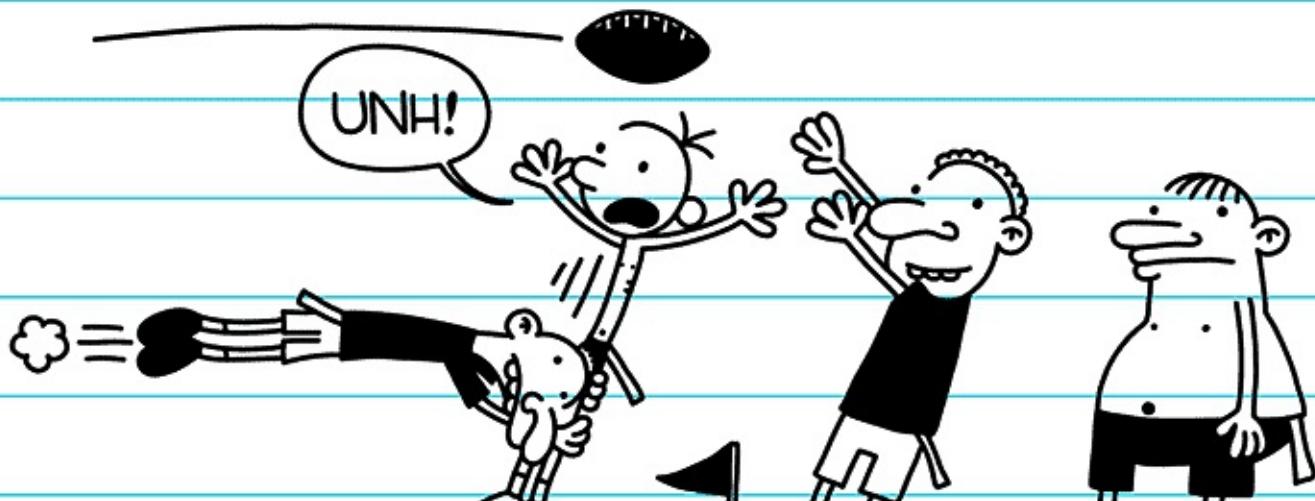
I've never been all that interested in getting in shape before, but this wrestling unit has made me rethink things.

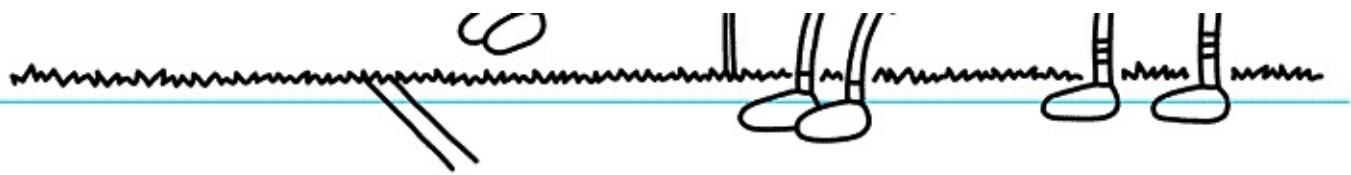
I figure if I bulk up now, it could actually come in handy down the road.

The football unit is coming in the spring, and they split the teams up into shirts and skins.

And I AlWAys get put on skins.

I think they do that to make all the out-of-shape kids feel ashamed of themselves.





If I can pack on some muscle now, it'll be a

whole different story next April.



Tonight, after dinner, I got Mom and Dad

together and told them my plan. I told them I

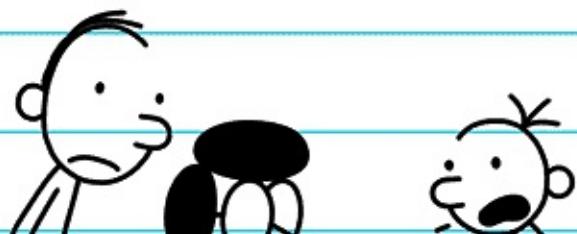
was going to need some serious exercise equipment,

and some weight-gain powder, too.

I showed them some muscle magazines I got at

the store so they could see how ripped I was

going to be.



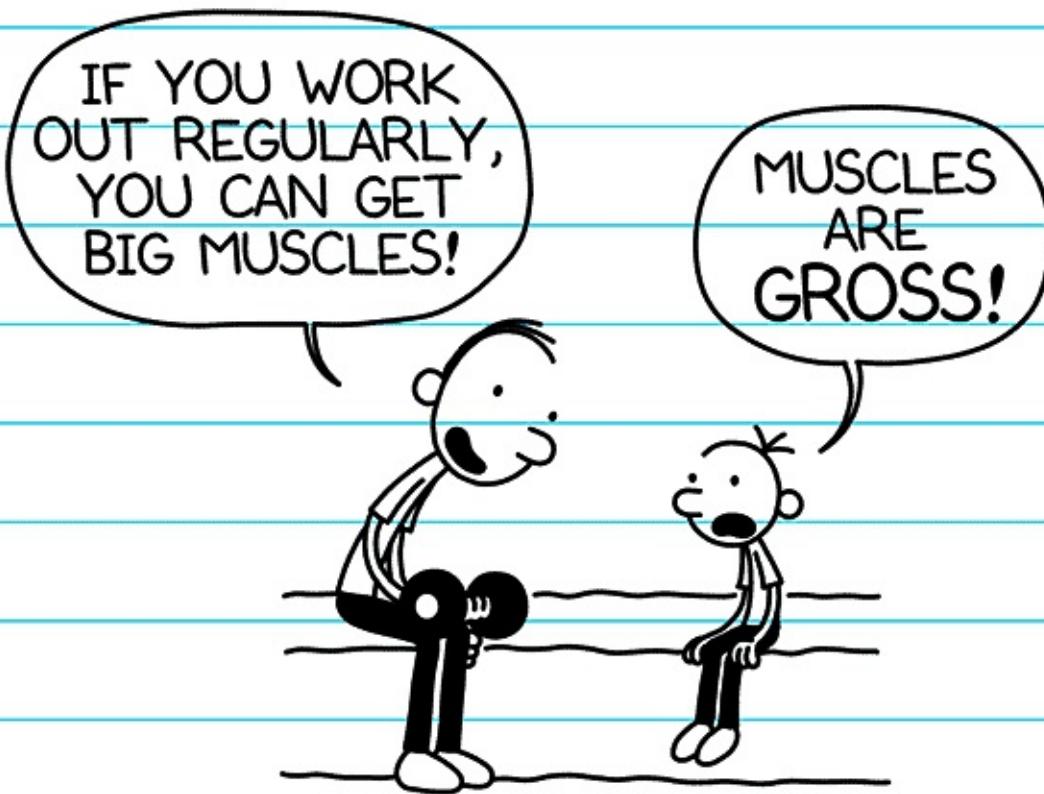


Mom didn't really say anything at first, but Dad

was pretty enthusiastic. I think he was just

glad I had a change of heart from how I used

to be when I was a kid—



But Mom said if I wanted a weight set, I was

going to have to prove that I could stick with

an exercise regimen. She said I could do that by

doing sit-ups and jumping jacks for two weeks.

I had to explain that the only way to get

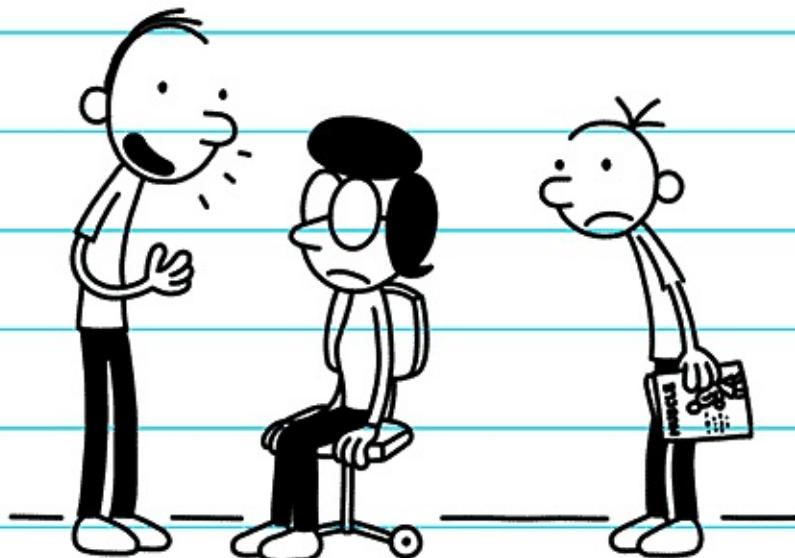
totally bulked up is to get the kind of high-tech

machines they have at the gym, but Mom didn't

want to hear it.

Then Dad said if I wanted a bench press, I

should keep my fingers crossed for Christmas.



But Christmas is a month and a half away. And

if I get pinned by Fregley one more time, I'm

gonna have a nervous breakdown.

So it looks like Mom and Dad aren't going to be

any help. And that means I'm going to have to

take matters into my own hands, as usual.

Saturday

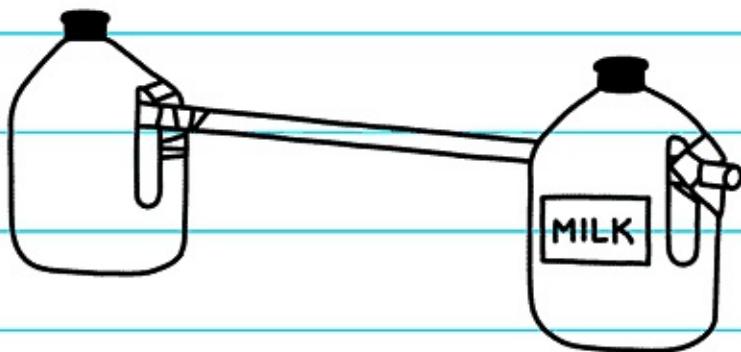
I couldn't wait to start my weight-training

program today. Even though Mom wouldn't let

me get the equipment I needed, I wasn't going

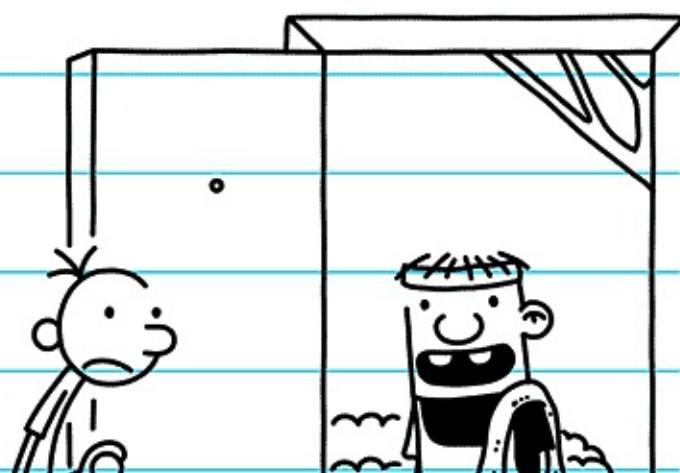
to let that hold me back.

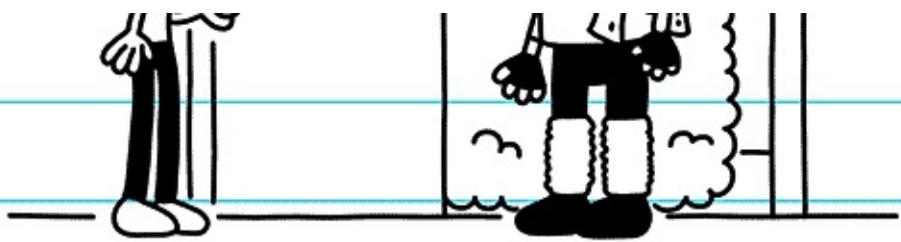
So I went into the fridge and emptied out the
milk and orange juice and filled the jugs with
sand. Then I taped them to a broomstick, and
I had myself a pretty decent barbell.



After that, I made a bench press out of an
ironing board and some boxes. Once I had that
all set, I was ready to do some serious lifting.

I needed a spotting partner, so I called
Rowley. And when he showed up at my door
wearing some ridiculous getup, I knew I made
a mistake inviting him.





I made Rowley use the bench press first, mostly

because I wanted to see if the broomstick was

going to hold up.

He did about five reps, and he was ready to

quit, but I wouldn't let him. That's what a

good training partner is for, to push you

beyond your limits.



I knew Rowley wasn't going to be as serious

about weight lifting as I was, so I decided to

try out an experiment to test his dedication.

In the middle of Rowley's set, I went and got

this phony nose and mustache Rodrick has in his

junk drawer.

And right when Rowley had the barbell in the

"down" position, I leaned over and looked at him.



Sure enough, Rowley totally lost his

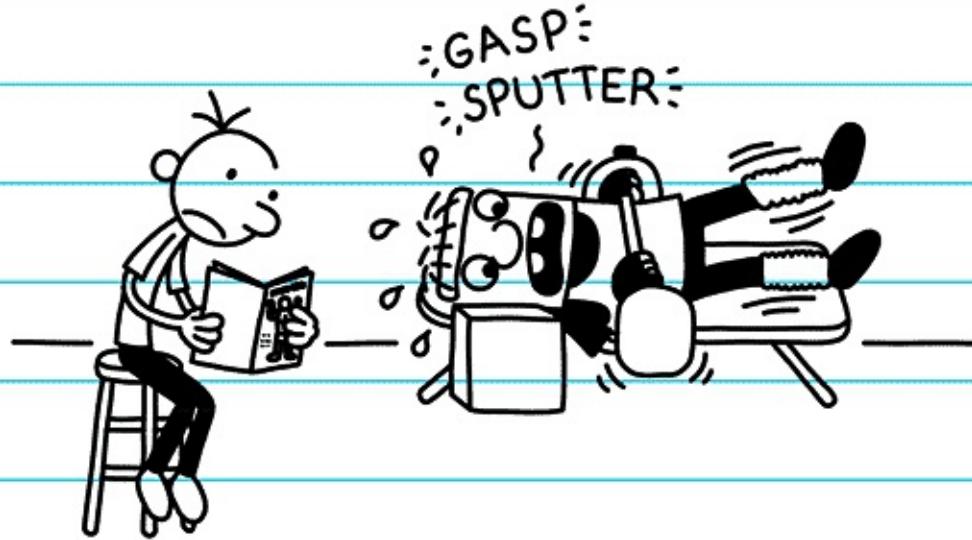
concentration. He couldn't even get the barbell

off his chest. I thought about helping him out,

but then I realized that if Rowley didn't get

serious about working out, he was never going to

get to my level.



I eventually had to rescue him, because he started

biting the milk jug to let the sand leak out.

After Rowley got off the bench press, it was

time for my set. But Rowley said he didn't feel

like working out anymore, and he went home.

You know, I figured he'd pull something like that.

But I guess you can't expect everyone to have

the same kind of dedication as you.

Wednesday

Today in Geography we had a quiz, and I have

to say, I've been looking forward to this one for

a long time.

The quiz was on state capitals, and I sit in

the back of the room, right next to this giant

map of the United States. All the capitals are

written in big red print, so I knew I had this

one in the bag.





But right before the test got started, Patty

Farrell piped up from the front of the room.



Patty told Mr. Ira that he should cover up the

United States map before we got started.



So thanks to Patty, I ended up flunking the

quiz. And I will definitely be looking for a way

to pay her back for that one.

Thursday

Tonight Mom came up to my room, and she had a
flyer in her hand. As soon as I saw it, I knew
eXActly what it was.

It was an announcement that the school is having
tryouts for a winter play. Man, I should have
thrown that thing out when I saw it on the
kitchen table.

I BeGGeD her not to make me sign up. Those
school plays are always musicals, and the last
thing I need is to have to sing a solo in front
of the whole school.



But all my begging seemed to do was make Mom

more sure I should do it.

Mom said the only way I was going to be

“well-rounded” was by trying different things.

Dad came in my room to see what was going on.

I told Dad that Mom was making me sign up for

the school play, and that if I had to start

going to play practices, it would totally mess up

my weight-lifting schedule.

I knew that would make Dad take my side. Dad

and Mom argued for a few minutes, but Dad was

no match for Mom.



So that means tomorrow I've got to audition

for the school play.

Friday

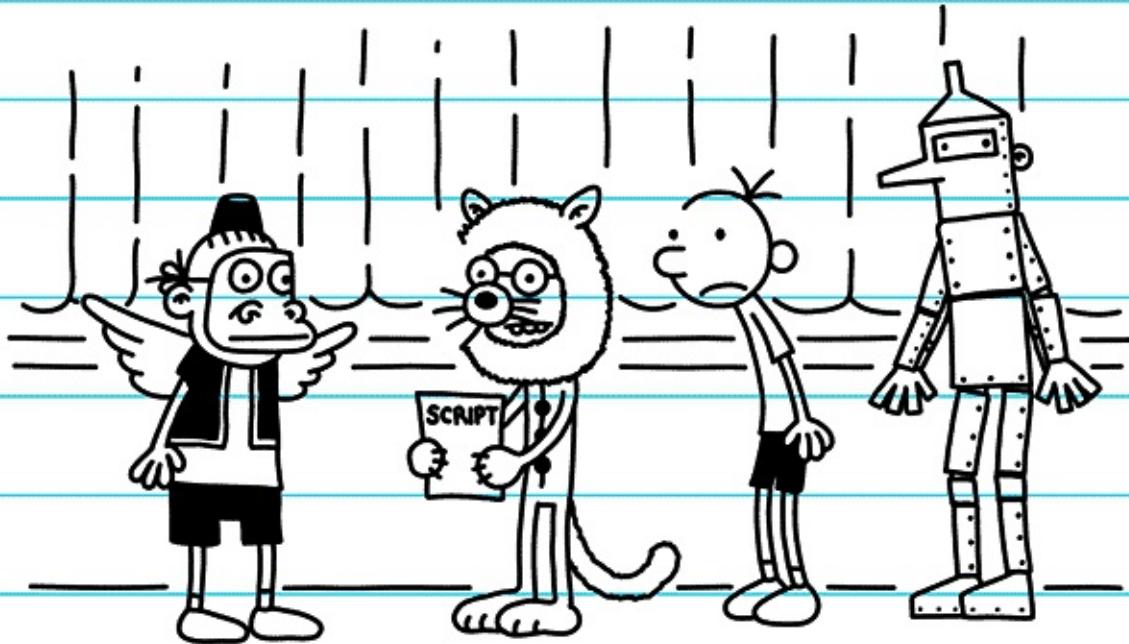
The play they're doing this year is “The Wizard

of Oz.” A lot of kids came wearing costumes for

the parts they were trying out for.

I've never even seen the movie, so for me, it

was like walking into a freak show.



Mrs. Norton, the music director, made everyone

sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee" so she could hear

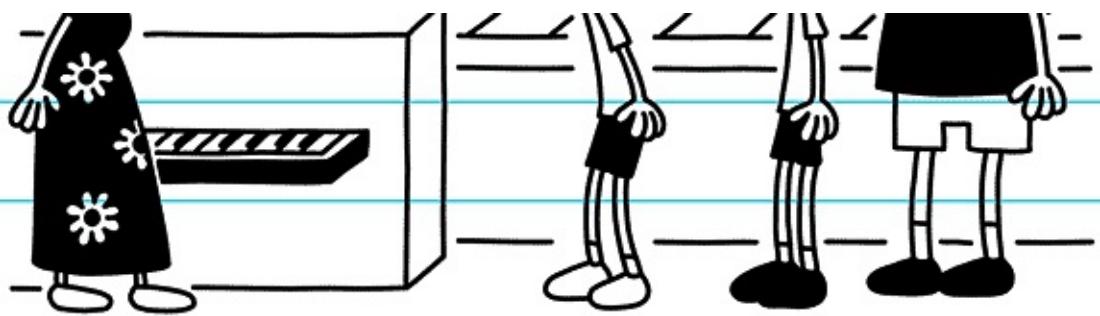
our singing voices. I did my singing tryouts with

a bunch of other boys whose moms made them

come, too. I tried to sing as quietly as possible,

but of course I got singled out, anyway.





I have no idea what a “soprano” is, but from

the way some of the girls were giggling, I knew

it wasn’t a good thing.

Tryouts went on forever. The grand finale came

with auditions for Dorothy, who I guess is the

lead character in the play.

And who should try out first but Patty Farrell.



I thought about trying out for the part of the

Witch, because I heard that in the play, the

Witch does all sorts of mean things to Dorothy.

But then somebody told me there’s a Good Witch

and a Bad Witch, and with my luck, I'd end up

getting picked to be the good one.

Monday

I was hoping Mrs. Norton would just cut me from
the play, but today she said that everyone who
tried out is going to get a part. So lucky me.

Mrs. Norton showed "The Wizard of Oz" movie
so everyone would know the story. I was trying
to figure out what part I should play, but
pretty much every character has to sing or dance
at one point or another. But about halfway
through the movie, I figured out what part I
wanted to sign up for. I'm going to sign up to
be a Tree, because 1) they don't have to sing
and 2) they get to bean Dorothy with apples.





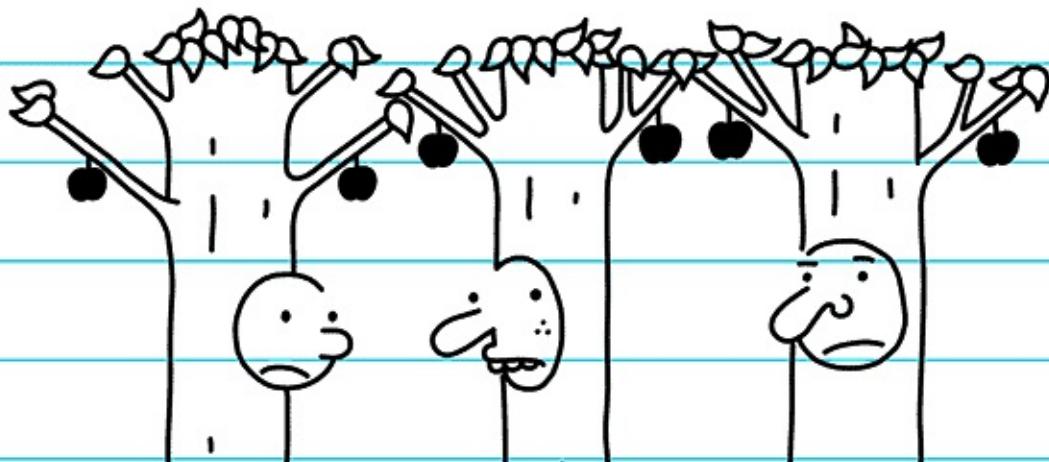
Getting to peg Patty Farrell with apples in front of a live audience would be my dream come true. I may actually have to thank Mom for making me do this play once it's all over.

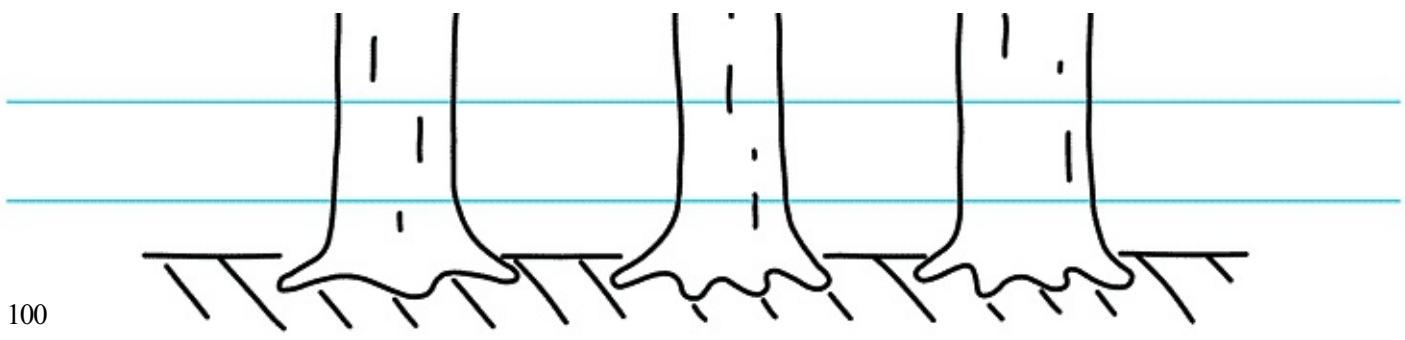
After the movie ended, I signed up to be a Tree.

Unfortunately, a bunch of other guys had the same idea as me, so I guess there are a lot of guys who have a bone to pick with Patty Farrell.

Wednesday

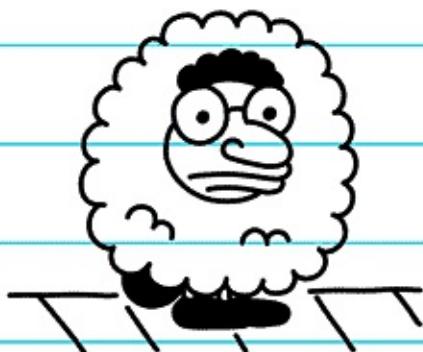
Well, like Mom always says, be careful what you wish for. I got picked to be a Tree, but I don't know if that's such a good thing. The Tree costumes don't actually have arm holes, so I guess that rules out any apple-throwing.





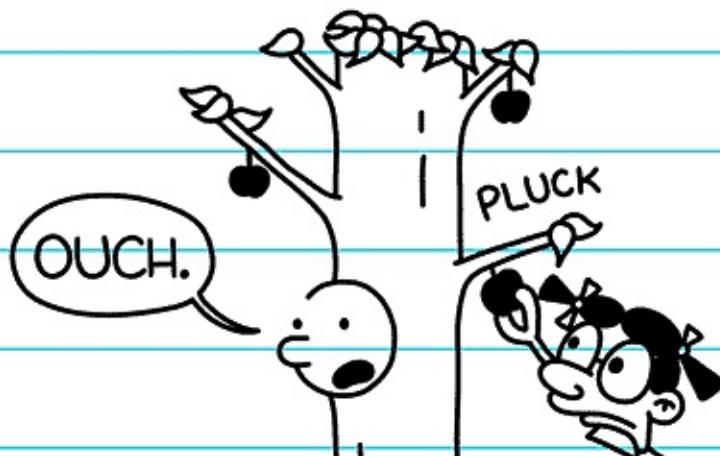
I should probably feel lucky that I got a
speaking part at all. They had too many kids
trying out, and not enough roles, so they had
to start making up characters.

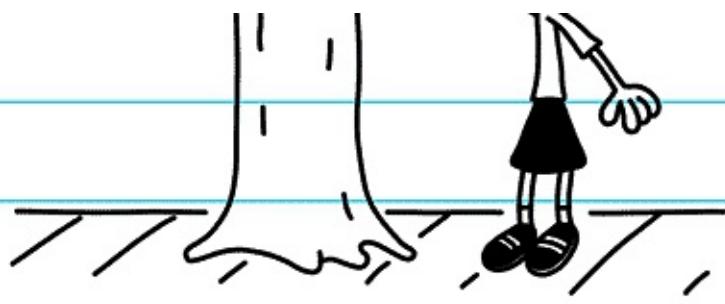
Rodney James tried out to be the Tin Man, but
he got stuck with being the Shrub.



Friday

Remember how I said I was lucky to get a
speaking part? Well, today I found out I only
have one line in the whole play. I say it when
Dorothy picks an apple off my branch.





That means I have to go to a two-hour practice

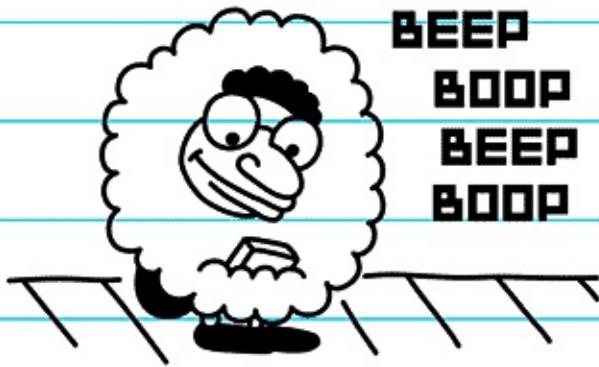
every day just so I can say one stupid word.

I'm starting to think Rodney James got a better

deal as the Shrub. He found a way to sneak a

video game into his costume, and I bet that

really makes the time go by.

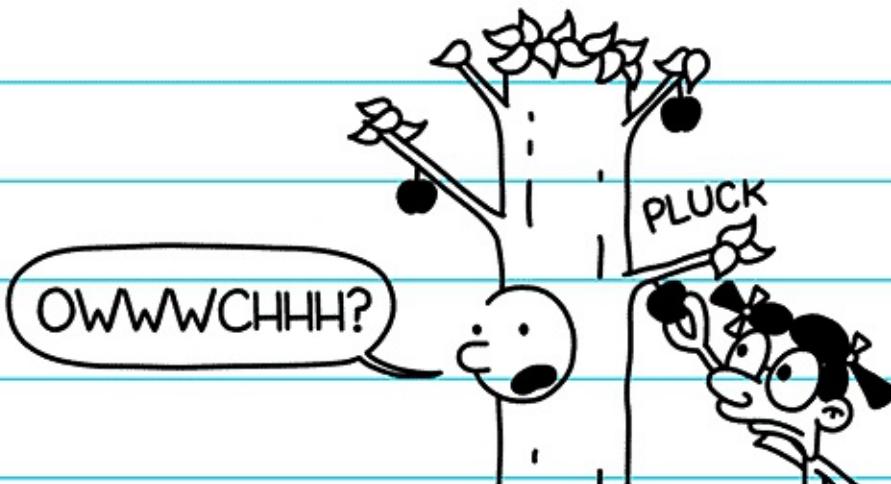


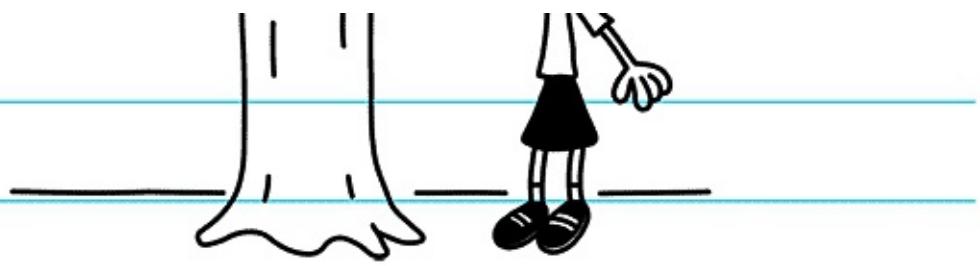
So now I'm trying to think of ways to get Mrs.

Norton to kick me out of the play. But when

you only have one word to say, it's really hard to

mess up your lines.





December

Thursday

The play is only a couple of days away, and I
have no idea how we're going to pull this thing off.

First of all, nobody has bothered to learn their
lines, and that's all Mrs. Norton's fault.

During rehearsal, Mrs. Norton whispers everyone's
lines to them from the side of the stage.



I wonder how it's going to go next Tuesday

when Mrs. Norton is sitting at her piano thirty

feet away.

Another thing that's screwing everything up is

that Mrs. Norton keeps adding new scenes and

new characters.

Yesterday, she brought in this first-grader to

play Dorothy's dog, Toto. But today, the kid's

mom came in and said she wanted her child to

walk around on two legs, because crawling around

on all fours would be too "degrading."



So now we've got a dog that's gonna be walking

around on his hind legs for the whole show.

But the worst change is that Mrs. Norton actually

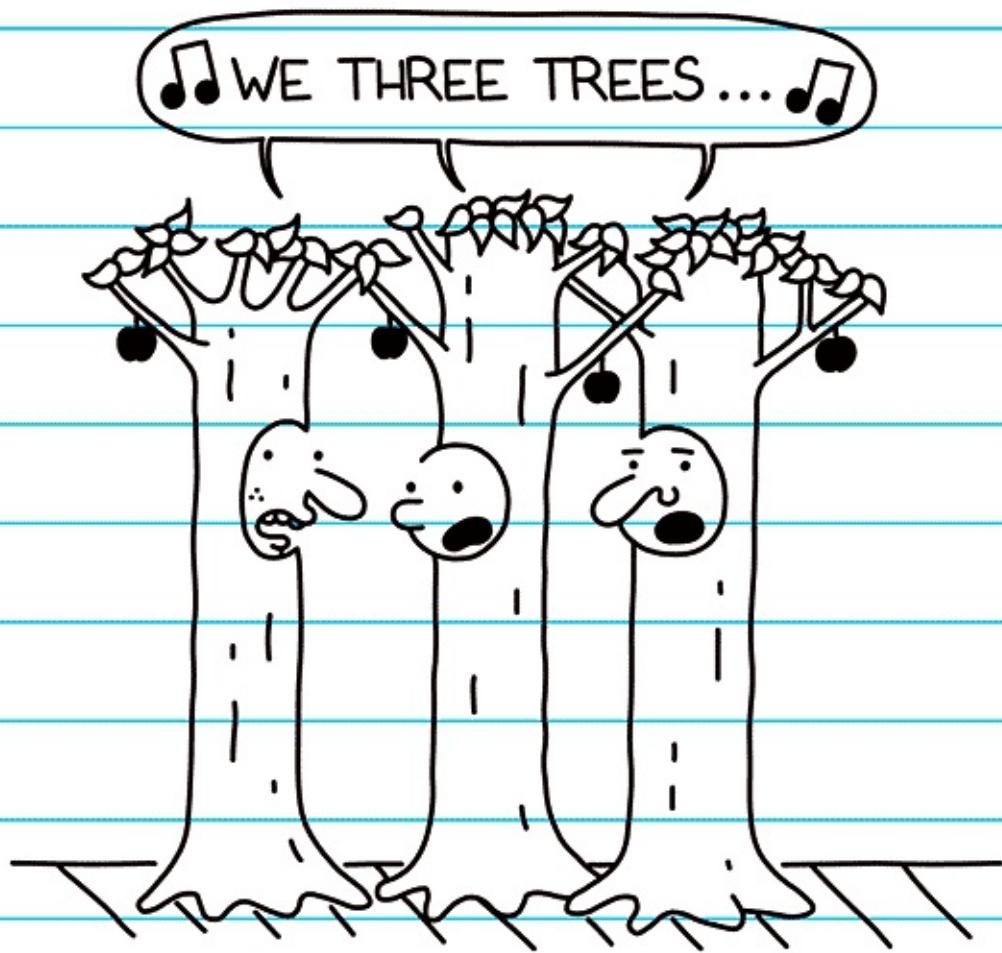
wrote a song that us trees have to sing.

She said everyone “deserves” a chance to sing

in the play.

So today we spent an hour learning the worst

song that's ever been written.



Thank God Rodrick won't be in the audience to

see me humiliate myself. Mrs. Norton said the

play is going to be a "semiformal occasion," and

I know there's no way Rodrick is going to wear

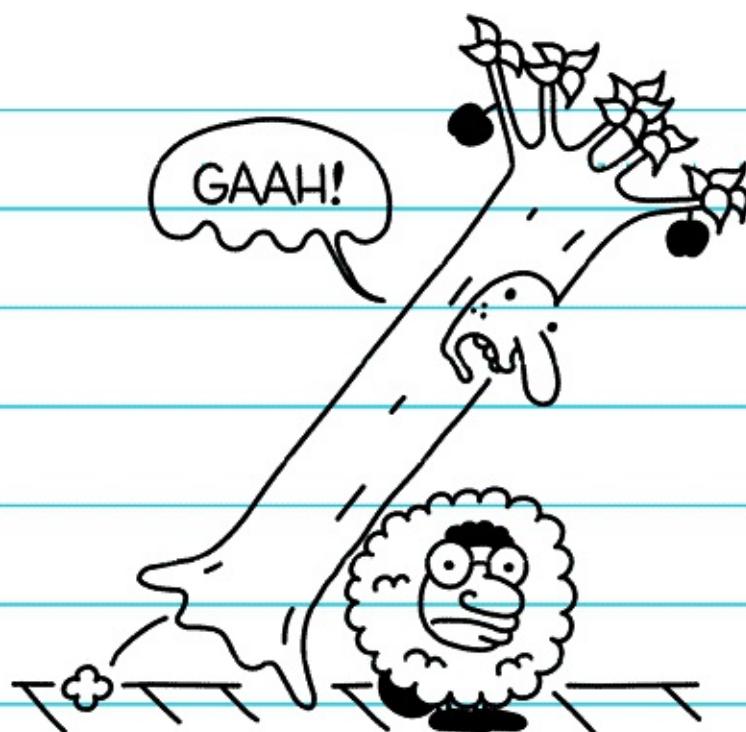
a tie for a middle school play.

But today wasn't all bad. Toward the end of

practice, Archie Kelly tripped over Rodney James

and chipped his tooth because he couldn't stick

his arms out to break his fall.



So the good news is, they're letting us Trees

carve out arm holes for the performance.

Tuesday

Tonight was the big school production of "The Wizard

of Oz." The first sign that things were not going to

go well happened before the play even started.

I was peeking through

the curtain to check out

how many people showed

up to see the play, and

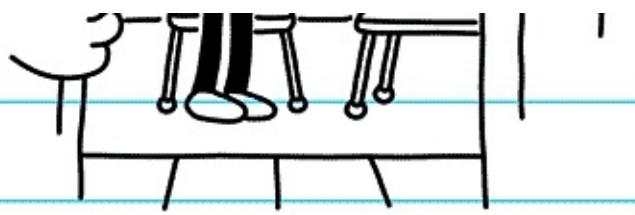
guess who was standing

right up front? My



brother Rodrick, wearing

a clip-on tie.



He must have found out I was singing, and he

couldn't resist the chance to see me embarrass myself.

The play was supposed to start at 8:00, but it got

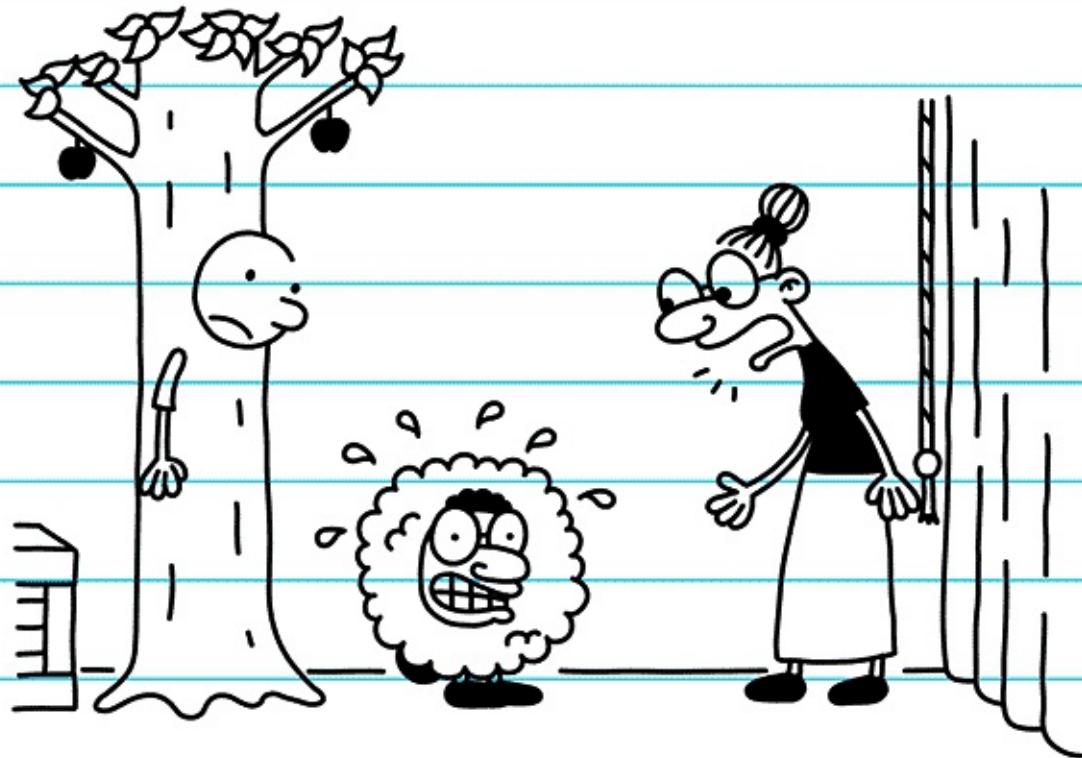
delayed because Rodney James had stage fright.

You'd figure that someone whose job it was to sit

on the stage and do nothing could just suck it up

for one performance. But Rodney wouldn't budge,

and eventually, his mom had to carry him off.



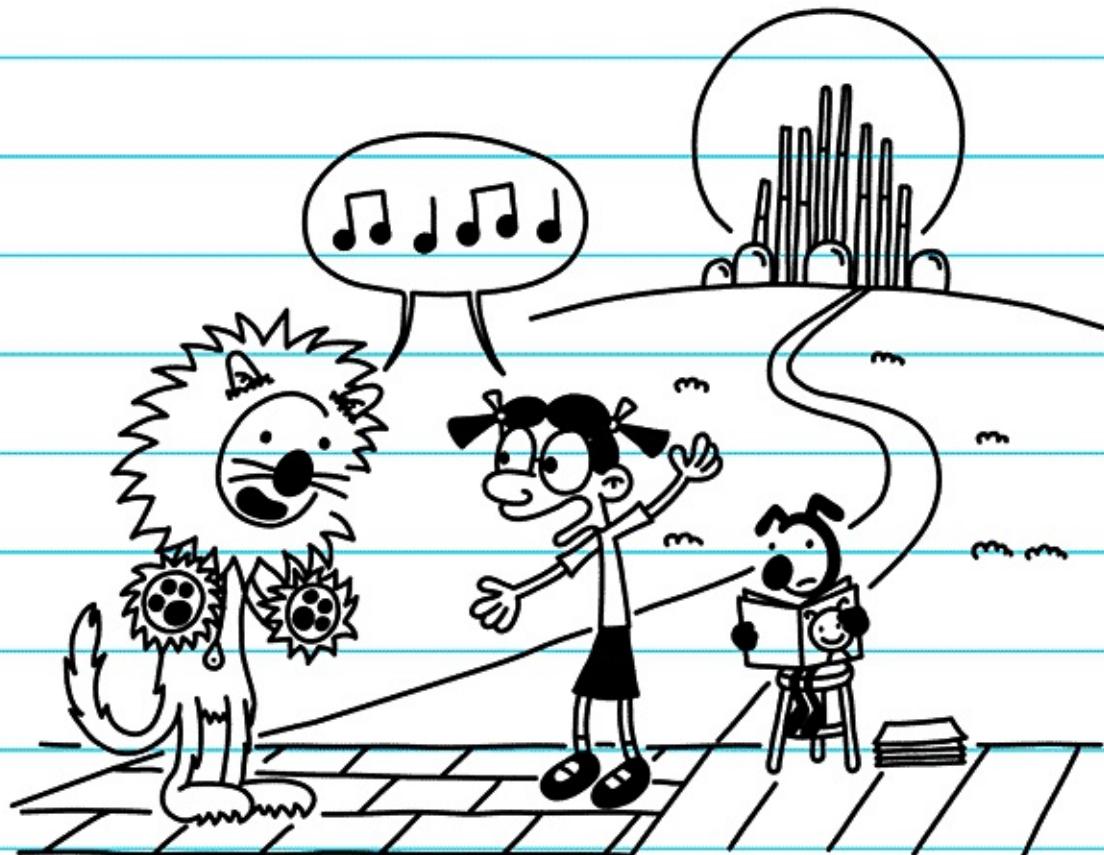
The play finally got started around 8:30.

Nobody could remember their lines, just like I

predicted, but Mrs. Norton kept things moving

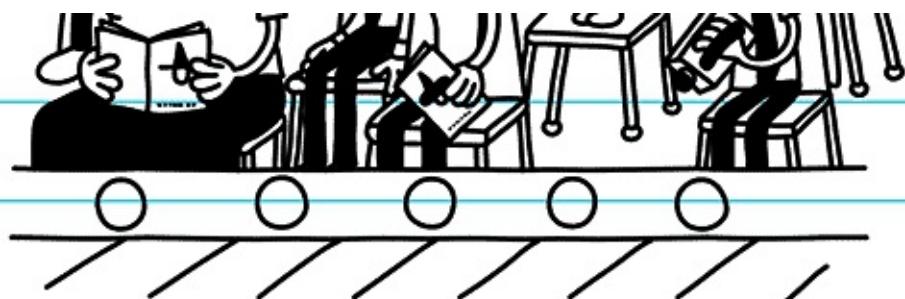
along with her piano.

The kid who played Toto brought a stool and a
pile of comic books onto the stage, and that
totally ruined the whole “dog” effect.



When it was time for the forest scene, me and
the other Trees hopped into our positions. The
curtains rose, and when they did, I heard
Manny’s voice.





Great. I have been able to keep that nickname

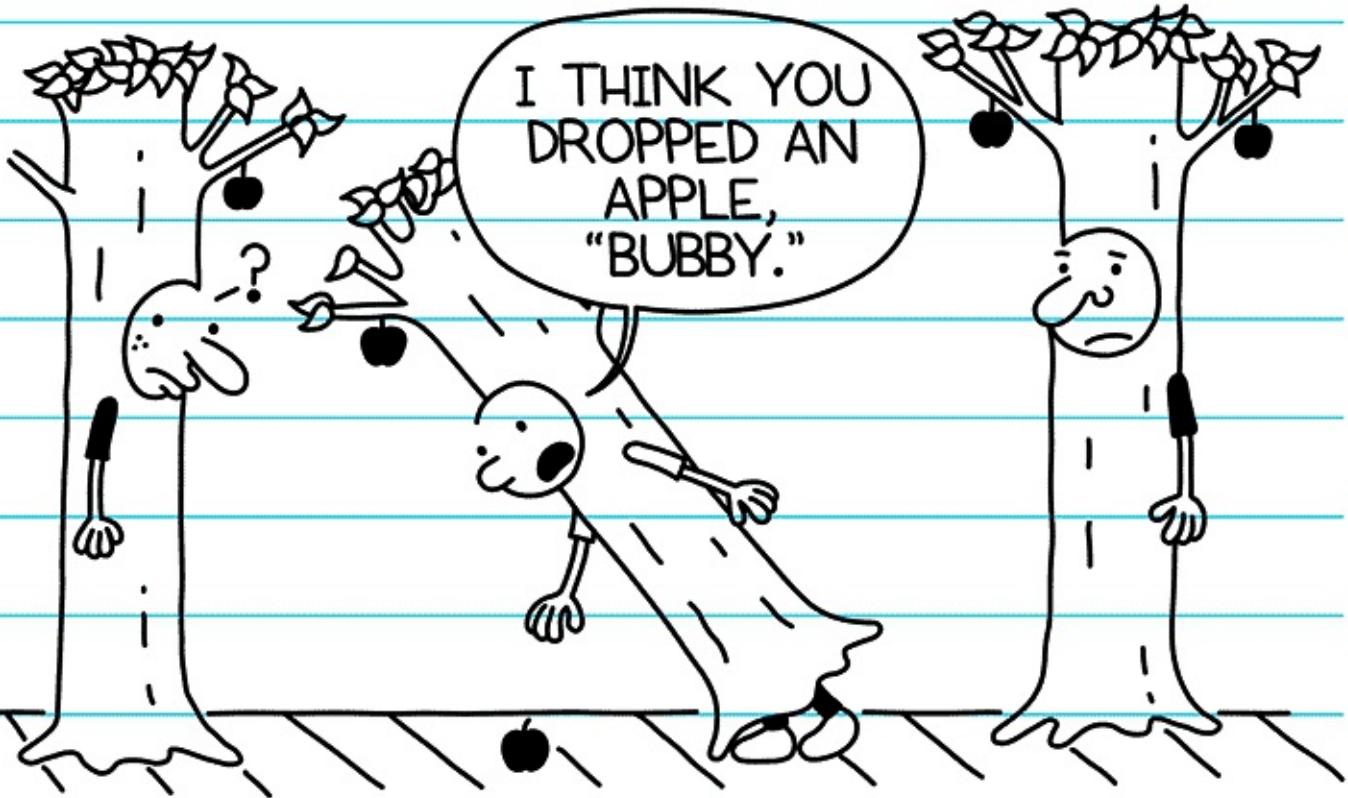
quiet for five years, and now all of the sudden

the whole town knew it. I could feel about 300

pairs of eyeballs pointed my way.

So I did some quick ad-libbing and I was able to

deflect the embarrassment over to Archie Kelly.



But the major embarrassment was still on the

way. When I heard Mrs. Norton playing the

first few bars of "We Three Trees," I felt my

stomach jump.

I looked out at the audience, and I noticed

Rodrick was holding a video camera.

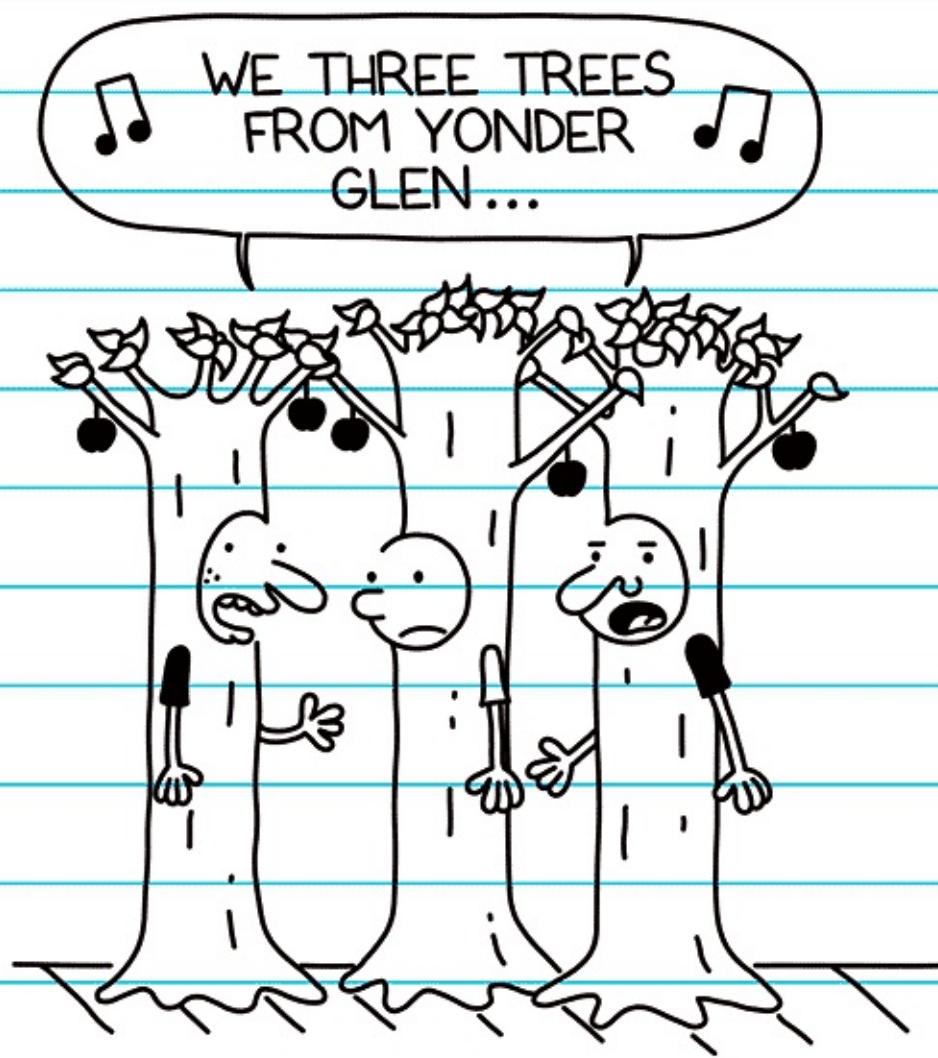
I knew that if I sang the song and Rodrick

recorded it, he would keep the tape forever and

use it to humiliate me for the rest of my life.

I didn't know what to do, so when the time

came to start singing, I just kept my mouth shut.



For a few seconds there, things went ok. I

figured that if I didn't technically sing the

song, then Rodrick wouldn't have anything to

hold over my head. But after a few seconds, the

other Trees noticed I wasn't singing.

I guess they must've thought I knew something

that they didn't, so they stopped singing, too.



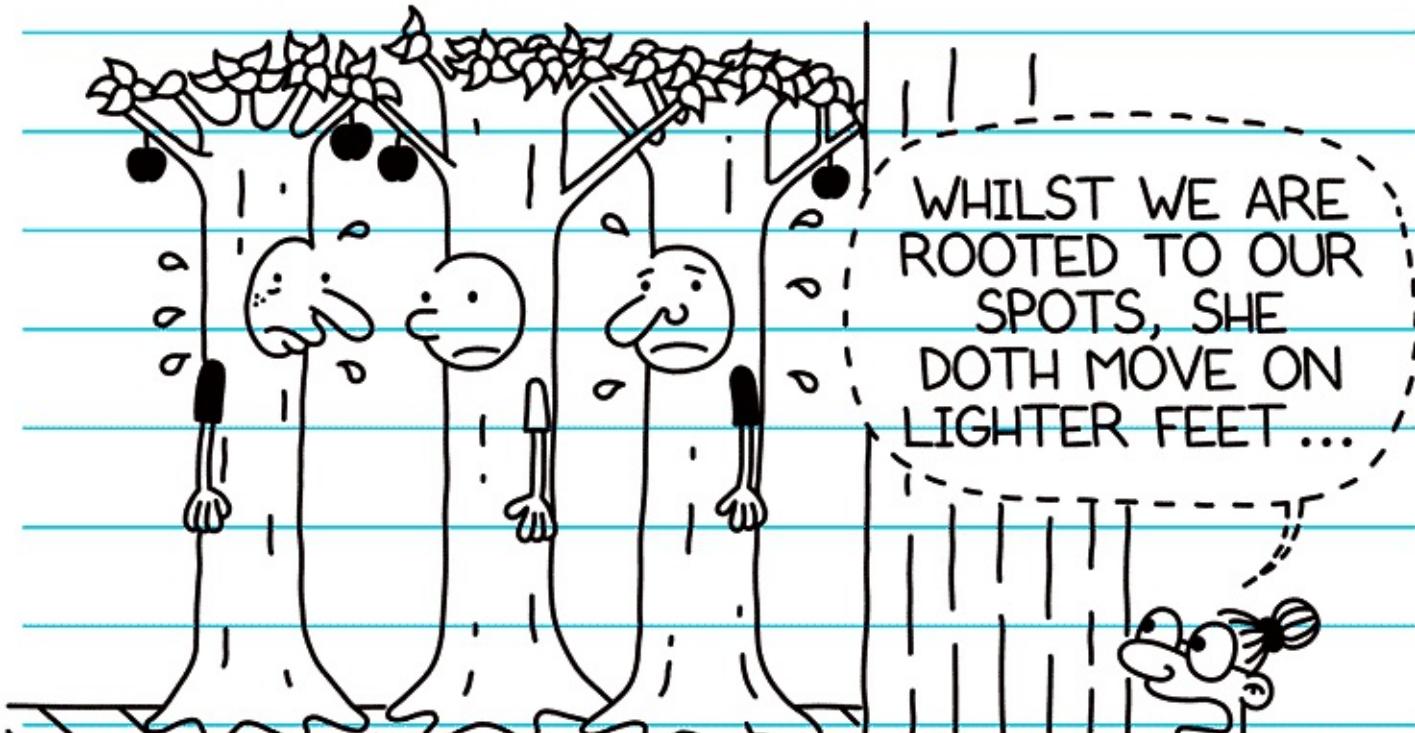
Now the three of us were just standing there,

not saying a word. Mrs. Norton must have

thought we forgot the words to the song,

because she came over to the side of the stage

and whispered the rest of the lyrics to us.



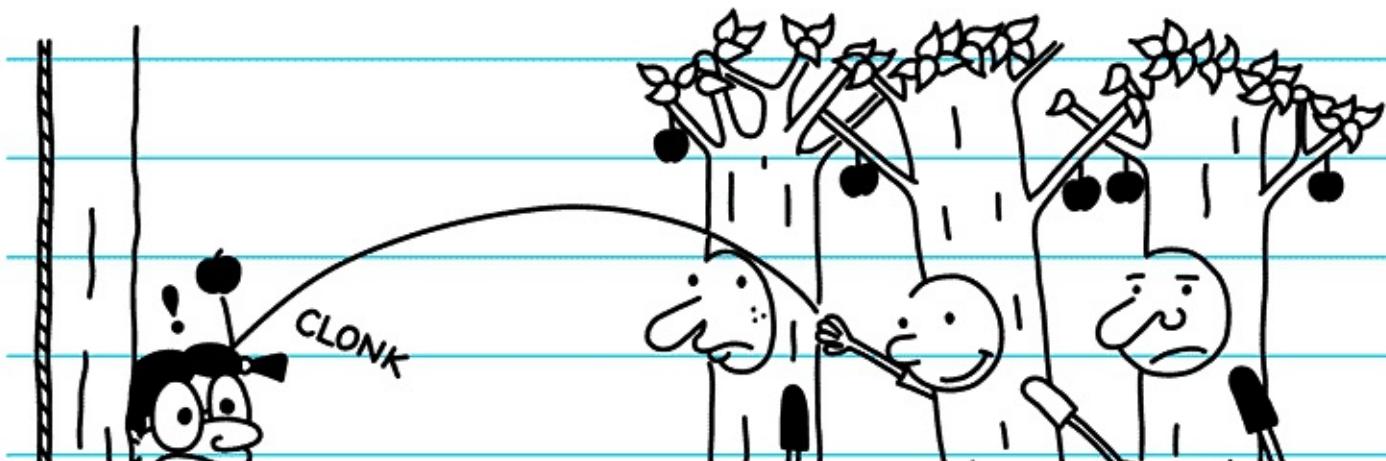


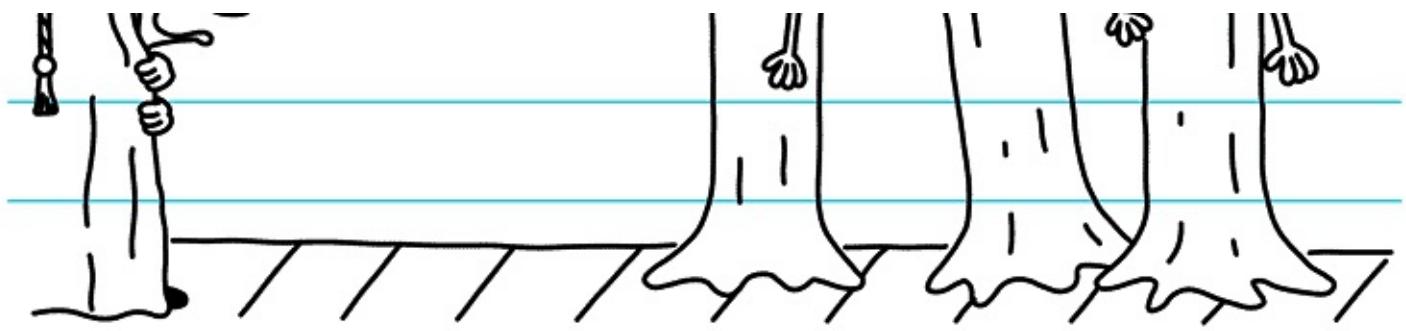
The song is only about three minutes long, but
to me it felt like an hour and a half. I was just
praying the curtains would go down so we could
hop off the stage.

That's when I noticed Patty Farrell standing in
the wings. And if looks could kill, us Trees would
be dead. She probably thought we were ruining her
chances of making it to Broadway or something.



Seeing Patty standing there reminded me why I
signed up to be a Tree in the first place.





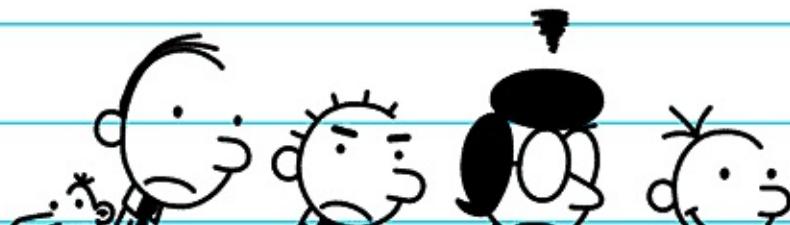
Pretty soon, the rest of the Trees started
throwing apples, too. I think Toto even got in
on the act.

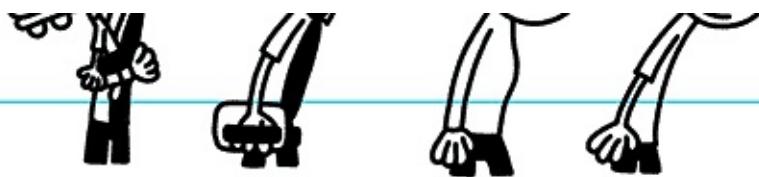
Somebody knocked the glasses off of Patty's
head, and one of the lenses broke. Mrs. Norton
had to shut down the play after that, because
Patty can't see two feet in front of her
without her glasses.

After the play was over, my family went home
together. Mom had brought a bouquet of flowers,
and I guess they were supposed to be for me.

But she ended up tossing them in the trash can
on the way out the door.

I just hope that everyone who came to see the
play was as entertained as I was.





Wednesday

Well, if one good thing came out of the play, it's

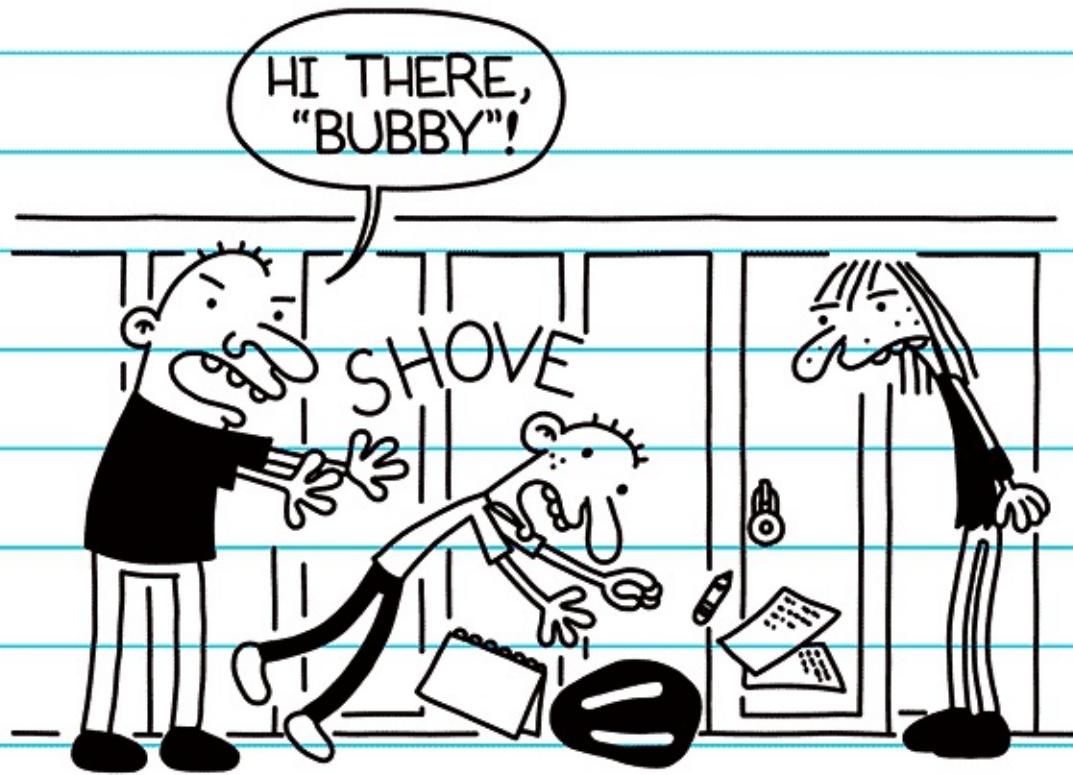
that I don't have to worry about the "Bubby"

nickname anymore.

I saw Archie Kelly getting hassled in the hallway

after fifth period today, so it looks like I can

finally start to breathe a little easier.



Sunday

With all this stuff going on at school, I

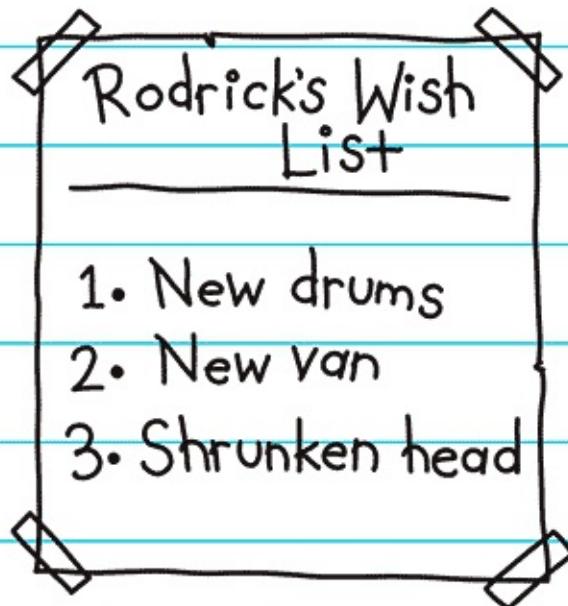
haven't even had time to think about Christmas.

And it's less than ten days away.

In fact, the only thing that tipped me off

that Christmas was coming was when Rodrick put

his wish list up on the refrigerator.



I usually make a big wish list every year, but

this Christmas, all I really want is this video

game called Twisted Wizard.

Tonight Manny was going through the Christmas

catalog, picking out all the stuff he wants with

a big red marker. Manny was circling every single

toy in the catalog. He was even circling really

expensive things like a giant motorized car and

stuff like that.





So I decided to step in and give him some good

big-brotherly advice.

I told him that if he circled stuff that was

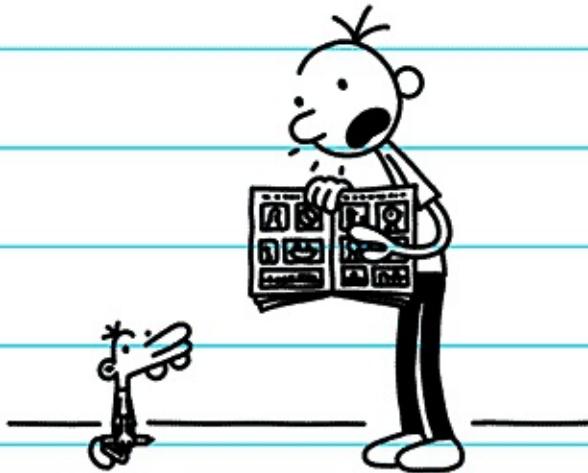
too expensive, he was going to end up with a

bunch of clothes for Christmas. I said he

should just pick three or four medium-priced

gifts so he would end up with a couple of

things he actually wanted.



But of course Manny just went back to circling

everything again. So I guess he'll just have to

learn the hard way.

When I was seven, the only thing I really

wanted for Christmas was a Barbie Dream House.

And not because I like girls' toys, like

Rodrick said.

I just thought it would be a really awesome fort

for my toy soldiers.

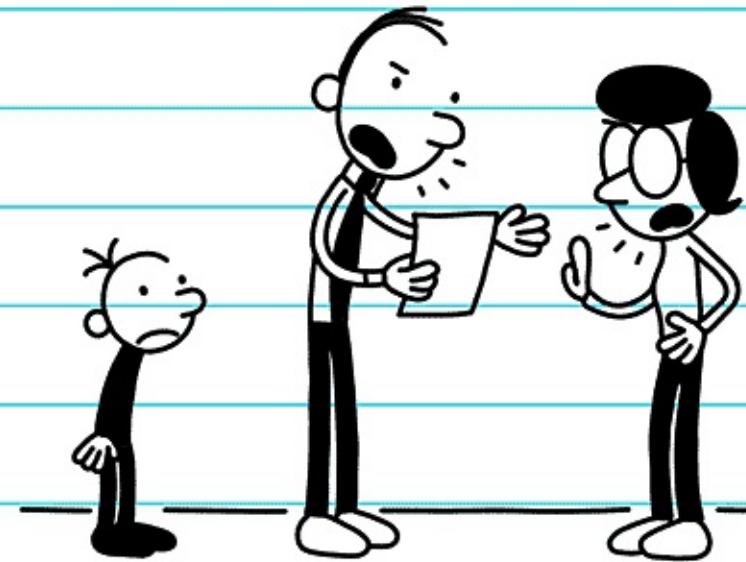
When Mom and Dad saw my wish list that year,

they got in a big fight over it. Dad said there was

no way he was getting me a dollhouse, but Mom

said it was healthy for me to “experiment” with

whatever kind of toys I wanted to play with.



Believe it or not, Dad actually won that argument.

Dad told me to start my wish list over and pick

some toys that were more “appropriate” for boys.

But I have a secret weapon when it comes to

Christmas. My Uncle Charlie always gets me whatever

I want. I told him I wanted the Barbie Dream

House, and he said he'd hook me up.

On Christmas, when Uncle Charlie gave me my

gift, it was not what I asked for. He must've

walked into the toy store and picked up the first

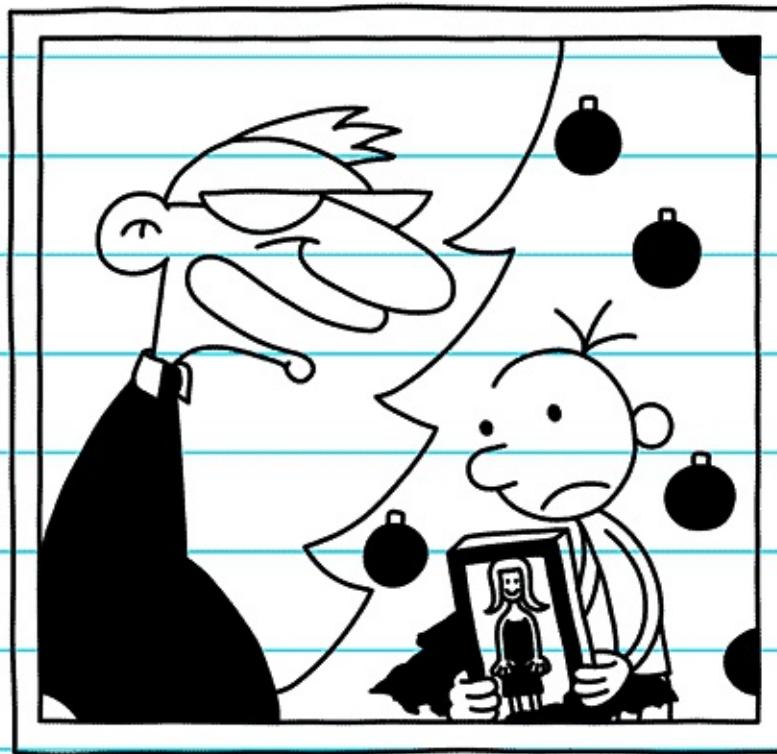
thing he saw that had the word "Barbie"

on it.

So if you ever see a picture of me where I'm

holding a Beach Fun Barbie, now at least you

know the whole story.



Dad wasn't real happy when he saw what Uncle

Charlie got me. He told me to either throw it

out or give it away to charity.

But I kept it anyway. And ok, I admit maybe

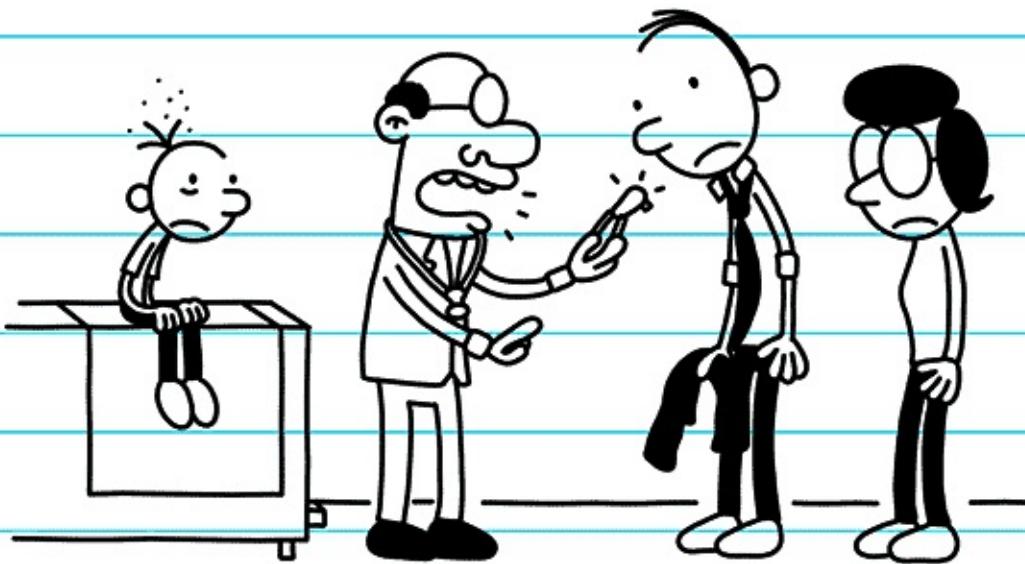
I took it out and played with it once or twice.

That's how I ended up in the emergency room

two weeks later with a pink Barbie shoe stuck up

my nose. And believe me, Rodrick has never let

me hear the end of tHAt.



Thursday

Tonight me and Mom went out to get a gift for

the Giving Tree at church. The Giving Tree is

basically a Secret Santa kind of thing where you

get a gift for someone who is needy.

Mom picked out a red wool sweater for our

Giving Tree guy.

I tried to talk Mom into getting something a

lot cooler, like a tV or a slushie machine or

something like that.

Because imagine if all you got on Christmas was

a wool sweater.



I'm sure our Giving Tree guy will throw his sweater

in the trash, along with the ten cans of yams we

sent his way during the Thanksgiving Food Drive.

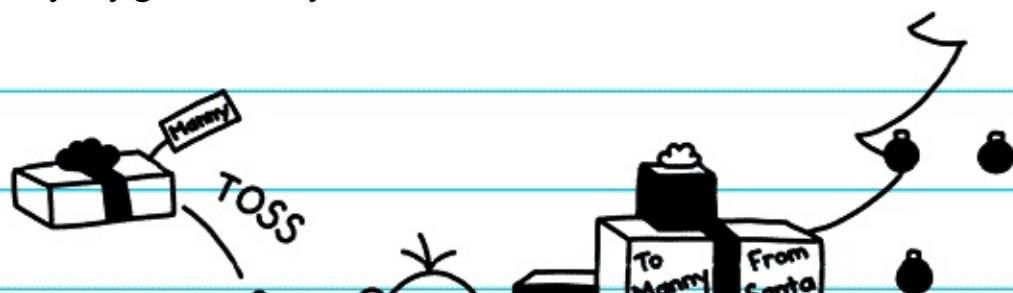
Christmas

When I woke up this morning and went downstairs,

there were about a million gifts under the Christmas

tree. But when I started digging around, there

were hardly any gifts with my name on them.

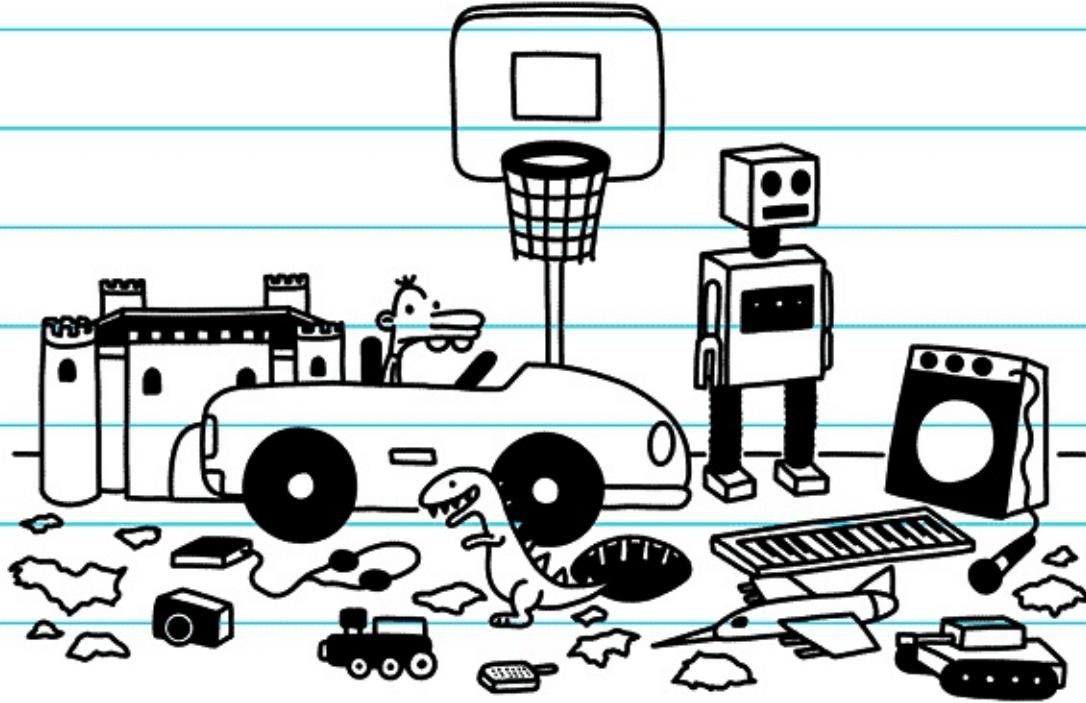




But Manny made out like a bandit. He got every

single thing he circled in the catalog, no lie. So

I'll bet he's glad he didn't listen to me.



I did find a couple things with my name on

them, but they were mostly books and socks and

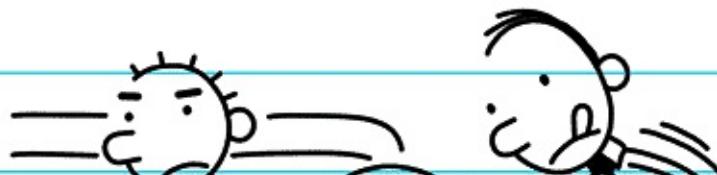
stuff like that.

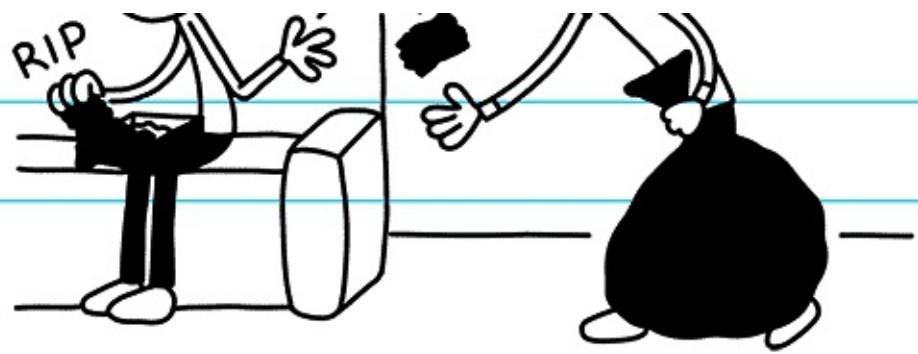
I opened my gifts in the corner behind the

couch, because I don't like opening gifts near

Dad. Whenever someone opens a gift, Dad swoops

right in and cleans up after them.





I gave Manny a toy helicopter and I gave _____

Rodrick a book about rock bands. Rodrick gave _____

me a book, too, but of course he didn't wrap it. _____

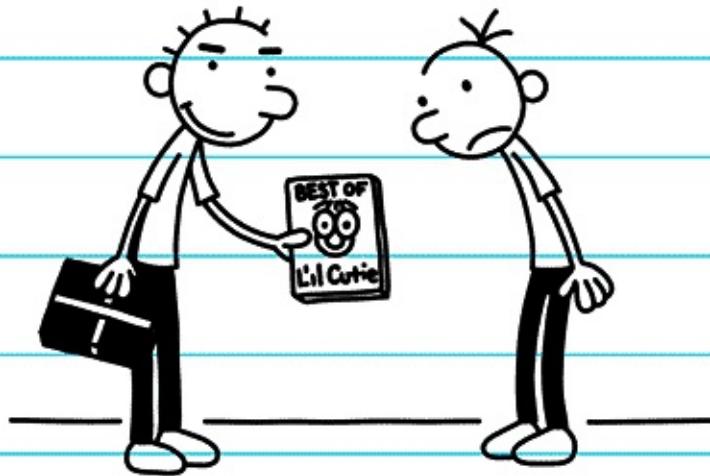
The book he got me was "Best of L'il Cutie."

"L'il Cutie" is the worst comic in the newspaper, _____

and Rodrick knows how much I hate it. I think _____

this is the fourth year in a row I've gotten a _____

"L'il Cutie" book from him.

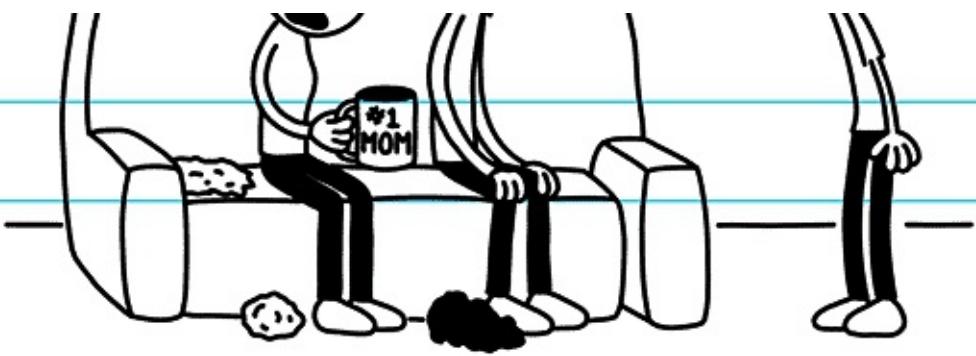


I gave Mom and Dad their gifts. I get them _____

the same kind of thing every year, but parents _____

eat that stuff up.





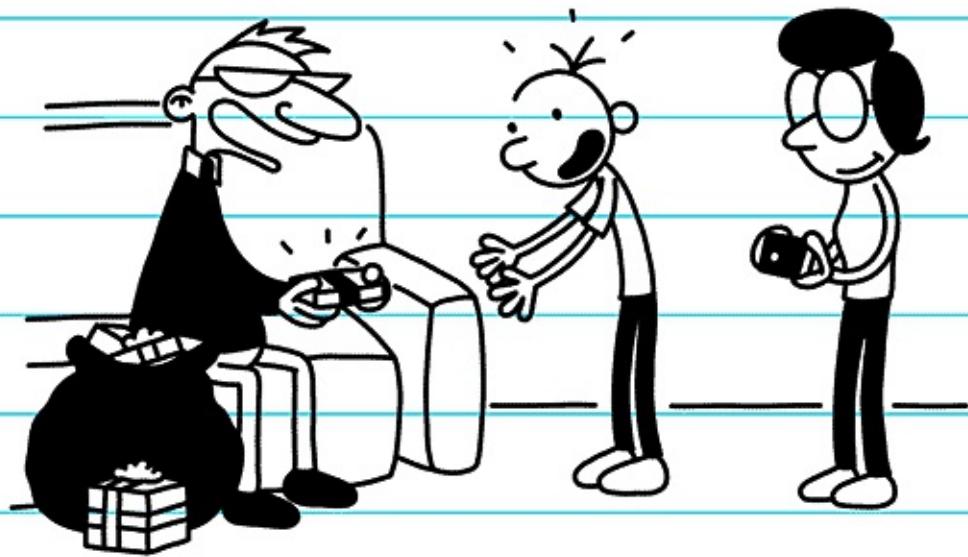
The rest of the relatives started showing up

around 11:00, and Uncle Charlie came at noon.

Uncle Charlie brought a big trash bag full of

gifts, and he pulled my present out of the top

of the bag.

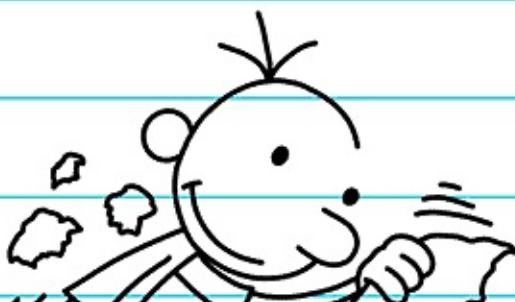


The package was the exact right size and shape

to be a Twisted Wizard game, so I knew Uncle

Charlie came through for me. Mom got the camera

ready and I tore open my gift.





But it was just an 8 x 10 picture of Uncle Charlie.



I guess I didn't do a good job of hiding my

disappointment, and Mom got mad. All I can say

is, I'm glad I'm still a kid, because if I had to

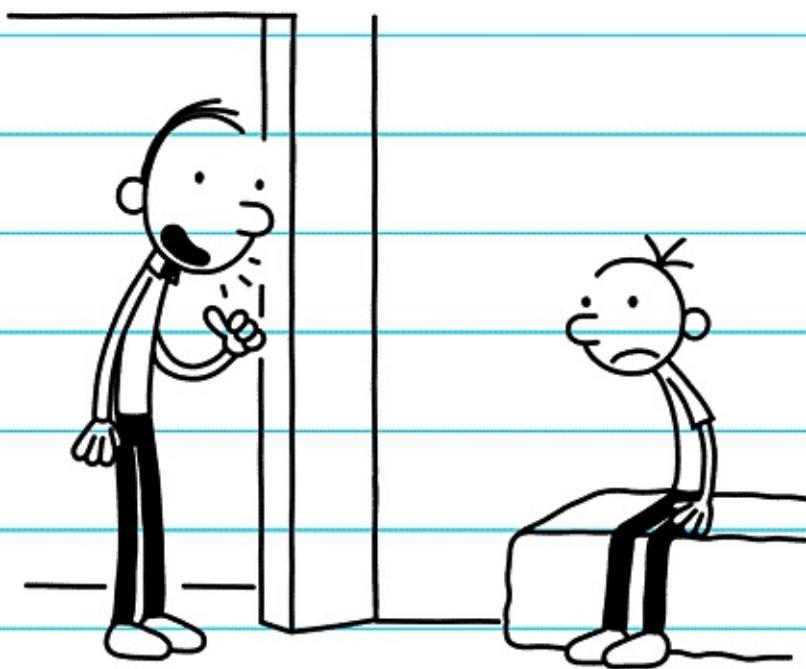
act happy about the kinds of gifts grown-ups

get, I don't think I could pull it off.

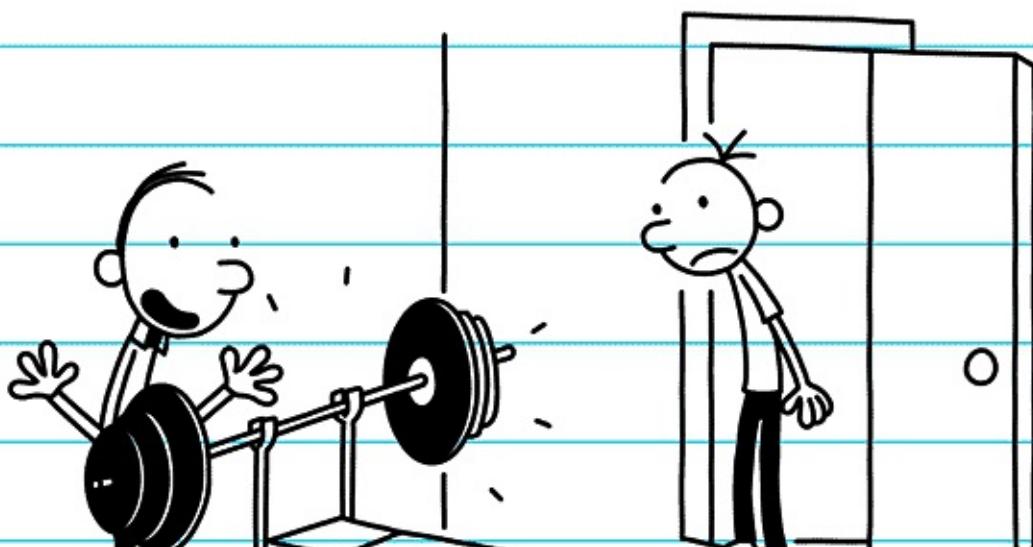


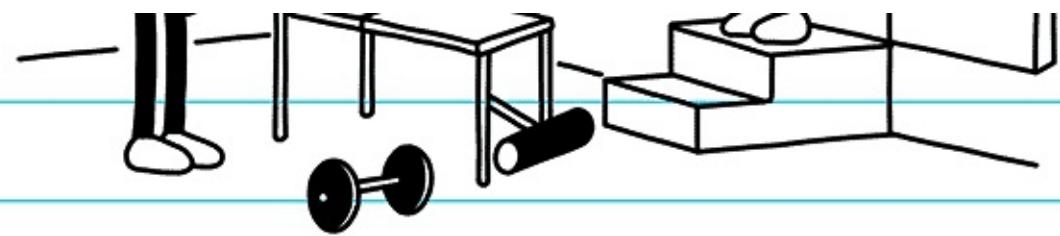


I went up to my room to take a break for a while. A couple minutes later, Dad knocked on my door. He told me he had my gift for me out in the garage, and the reason it was out there was because it was too big to wrap.



And when I walked down to the garage, there was a brand-new weight set.





That thing must have cost a fortune. I didn't

have the heart to tell Dad that I kind of lost

interest in the whole weight-lifting thing when

the wrestling unit ended last week. So I just

said "thanks" instead.

I think Dad was expecting me to drop down and

start doing some reps or something, but I just

excused myself and went back inside.

At about 6:00, all the relatives cleared out.

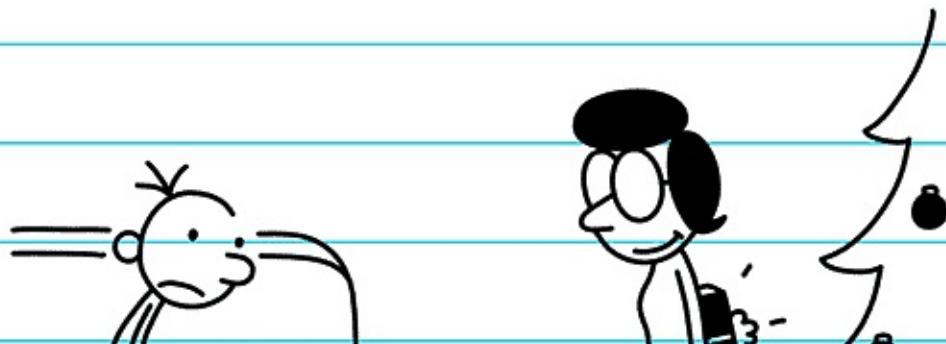
I was sitting on the couch watching Manny play

with his toys, feeling pretty sorry for myself.

Then Mom came up to me and said that she

found a gift behind the piano with my name on

it, and it said, "From Santa."





The box was way too big for Twisted Wizard, but

Mom pulled the same “big box” trick on me last

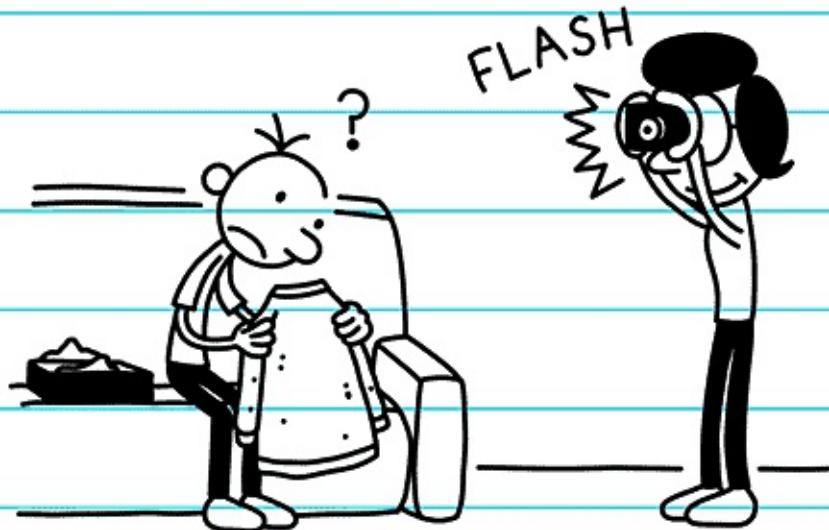
year when she got me a memory card for my

video game system.

So I ripped open the package and pulled out my

present. Only this wasn’t Twisted Wizard,

either. It was a giant red wool sweater.



At first I thought Mom was playing some

kind of practical joke on me, because this

sweater was the same kind we bought for our

Giving Tree guy.

But Mom seemed pretty confused, too. She said

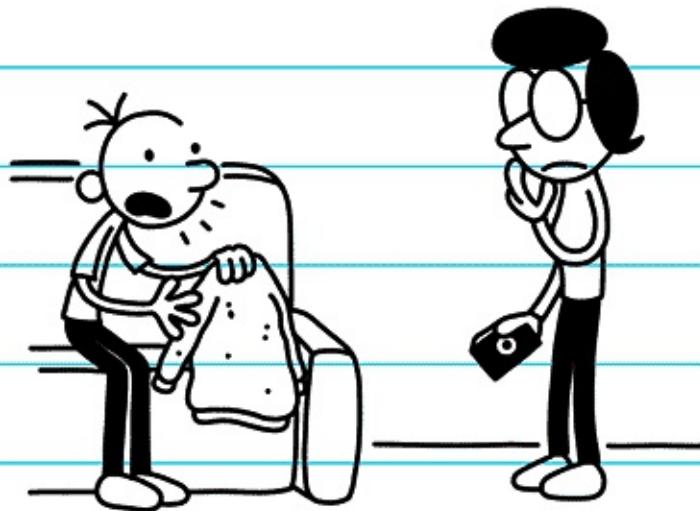
she DiD buy me a video game, and that she had

no idea what the sweater was doing in my box.

And then I figured it out. I told Mom there

must have been some kind of mix-up, and I got

the Giving Tree guy's gift, and he got mine.



Mom said she used the same kind of wrapping

paper for both of our gifts, so she must've

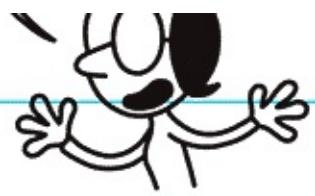
written the wrong names on the tags.

But then Mom said that this was really a good

thing, because the Giving Tree guy was probably

really happy he got such a great gift.

IT'S A
CHRISTMAS
MIRACLE!



I had to explain that you need a game system

and a tV to play Twisted Wizard, so the game

was totally useless to him.



Even though my Christmas was not going that

great, I'm sure it was going a whole lot worse

for the Giving Tree guy.



I kind of decided to throw in the towel for this

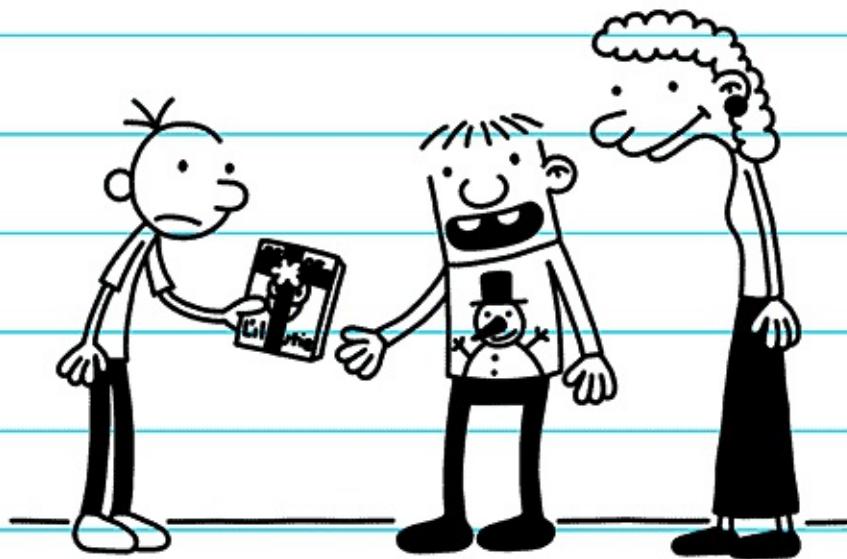
Christmas, and I headed up to Rowley's house.

I forgot to get a gift for Rowley, so I just

slapped a bow on the “L’il Cutie” book

Rodrick gave me.

And that seemed to do the trick.



Rowley's parents have a lot of money, so I can

always count on them for a good gift.

But Rowley said that this year he picked out my

gift himself. Then he brought me outside to show

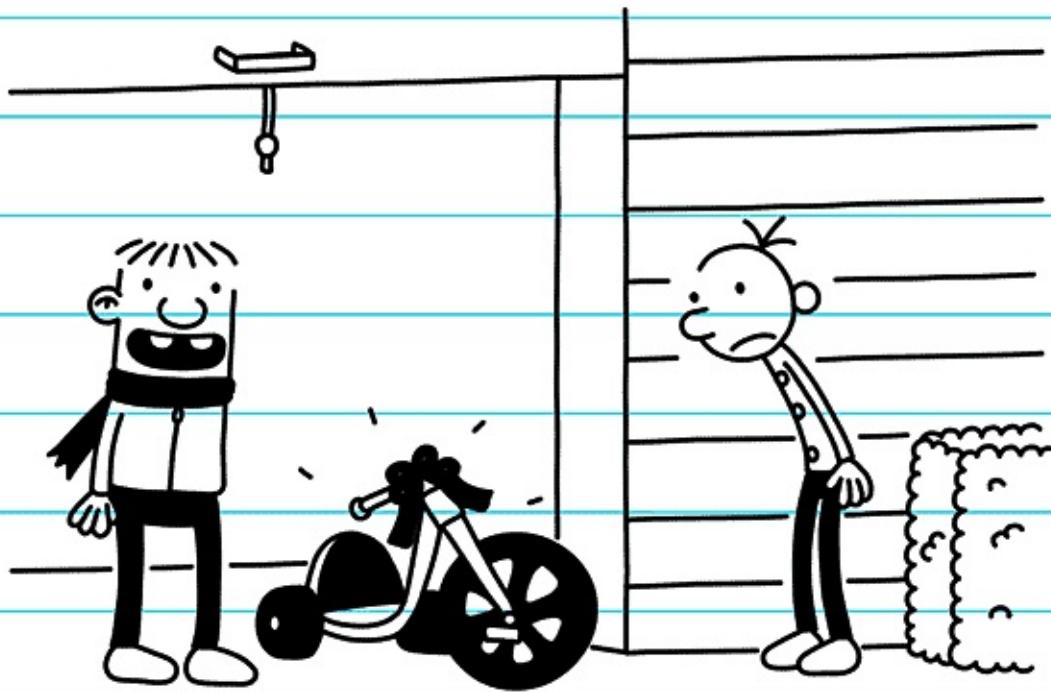
me what it was.

From the way Rowley was hyping his present, I

thought he must have gotten me a big-screen

tV or a motorcycle or something.

But once again, I let my hopes get too high.



Rowley got me a Big Wheel. I guess I would

have thought this was a cool gift when I was in

the third grade, but I have no idea what I'm

supposed to do with one now.

Rowley was so enthusiastic about it that I tried

my best to act like I was happy anyway.



We went back inside, and Rowley showed me his

Christmas loot.

He sure got a lot more stuff than I did. He

even got Twisted Wizard, so at least I can play

it when I come up to his house. That is, until

Rowley's dad finds out how violent it is.

And boy, you have never seen someone as happy as

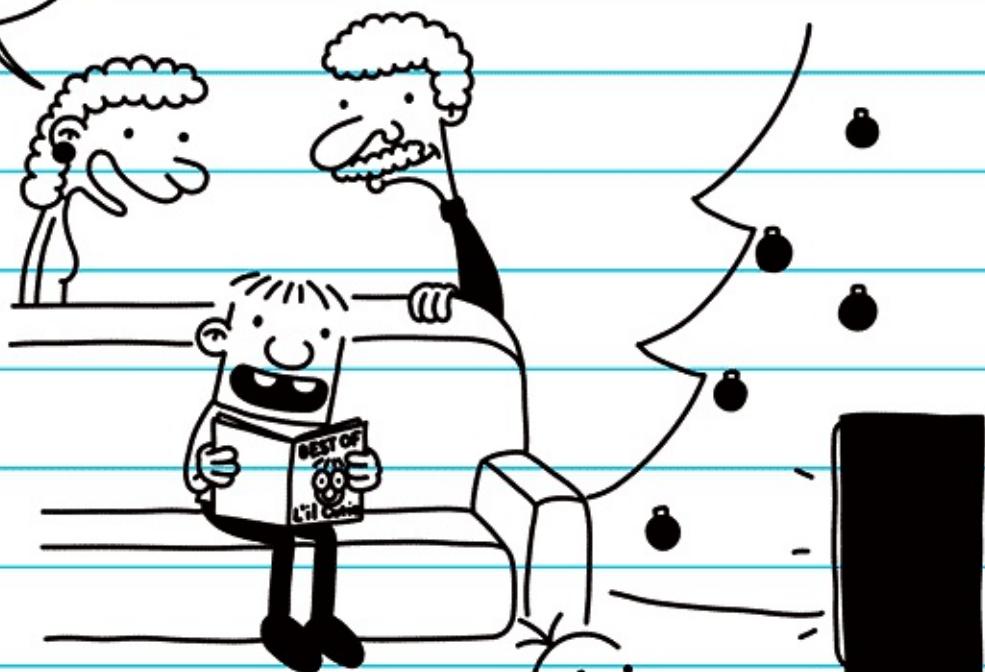
Rowley with his "L'il Cutie" book. His mom said it

was the only thing on his list that he didn't get.

Well, I'm glad someone got what they

wanted today.

IT'S A
CHRISTMAS
MIRACLE!





New Year's Eve

Incase you're wondering what I'm doing in my room

at 9:00 p.m. on New Year's Eve, let me fill you in.

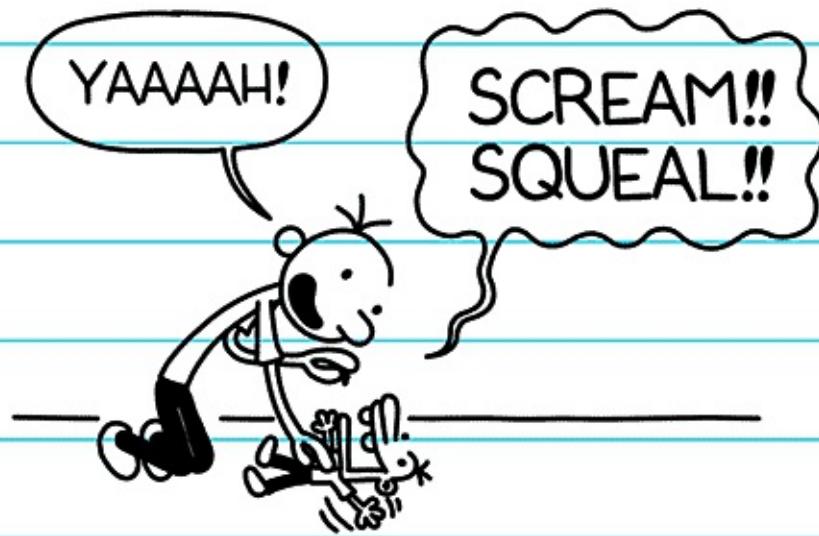
Earlier today, me and Manny were horsing around in

the basement. I found a tiny black ball of thread

on the carpet, and I told Manny it was a spider.

Then I held it over him pretending like I was

going to make him eat it.

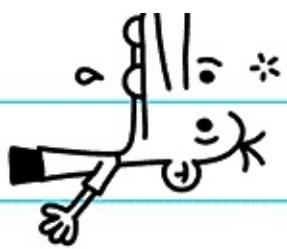


Right when I was about to let Manny go, he

slapped my hand and made me drop the thread.

And guess what? That fool swallowed it.

GULP



Well, Manny completely lost his mind. He ran

upstairs to where Mom was, and I knew I was

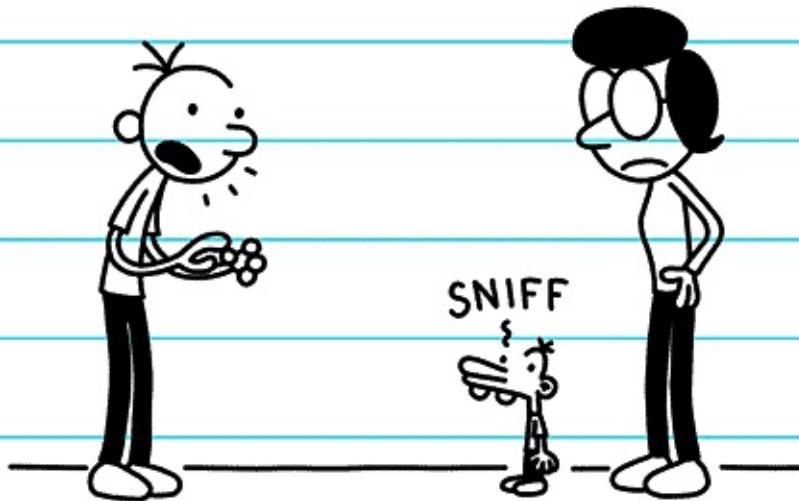
in big trouble.



Manny told Mom I made him eat a spider. I

told her there was no spider, and that it was

just a tiny ball of thread.



Mom brought Manny over to the kitchen table.

Then she put a seed, a raisin, and a grape on a

plate and told Manny to point to the thing

that was the closest in size to the piece of

thread he swallowed.

Manny took a while to look over the things on

the plate.



Then he walked over to the refrigerator and

pulled out an orange.



So that's why I got sent to bed at 7:00 and

I'm not downstairs watching the New Year's

Eve special on tV.

And that's also why my only New Year's

resolution is to never play with Manny again.

January

Wednesday

I found a way to have some fun with the Big Wheel

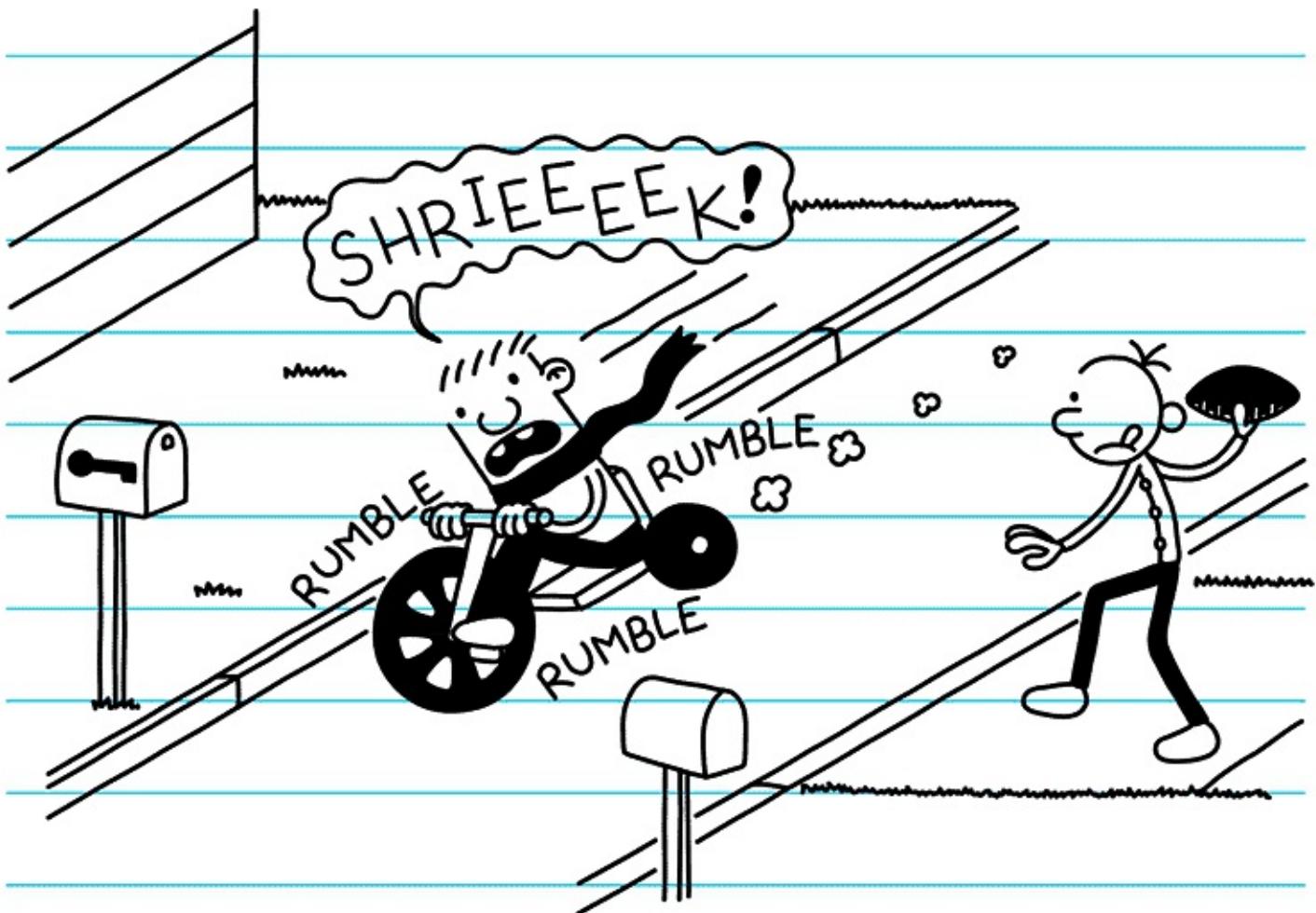
Rowley got me for Christmas. I came up with this

game where one guy rides down the hill and the

other guy tries to knock him off with a football.

Rowley was the first one down the hill, and I

was the thrower.



It's a lot harder to hit a moving target than I

thought. Plus, I didn't get a lot of practice. It

took Rowley like ten minutes to walk the Big Wheel

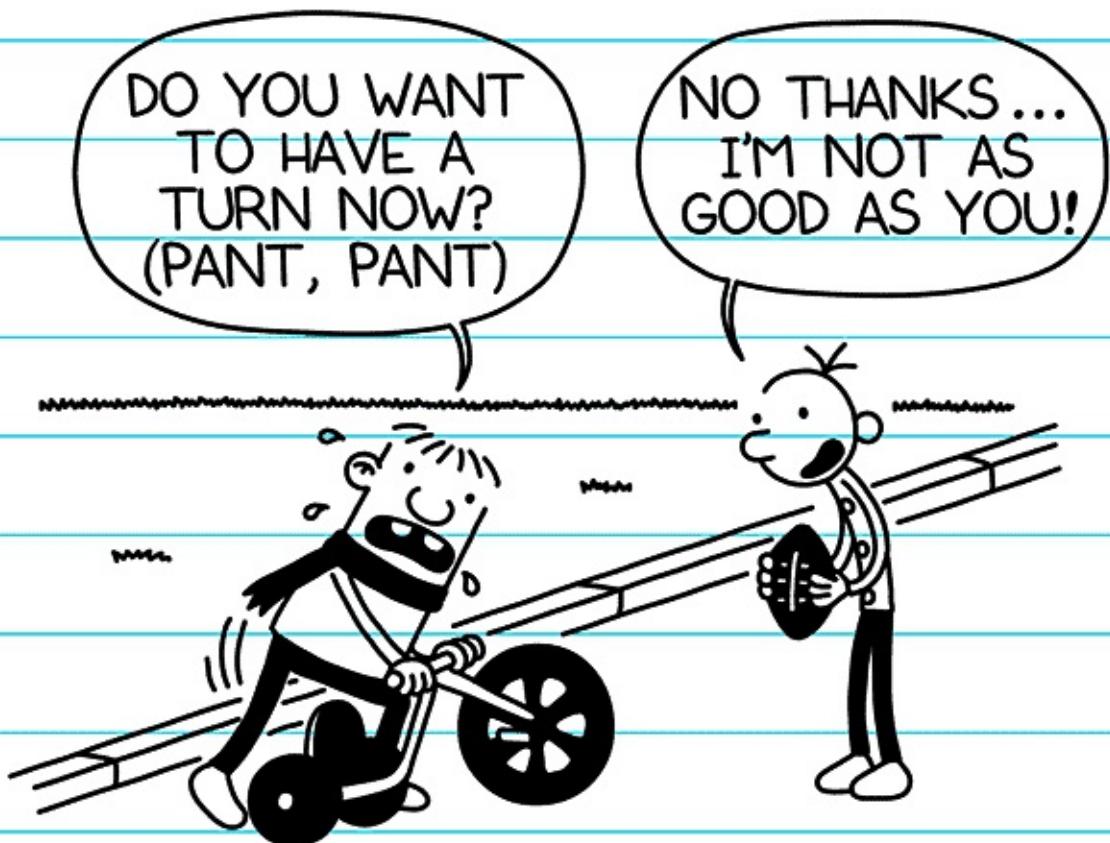
back up the hill after every trip down.

Rowley kept asking to switch places and have me

be the one who rides the Big Wheel, but I'm no

fool. That thing was hitting thirty-five miles an

hour, and it didn't have any brakes.



Anyway, I never did knock Rowley off the Big

Wheel today. But I guess I have something to

work at over the rest of Christmas vacation.

Thursday

I was heading up to Rowley's today to play our

Big Wheel game again, but Mom said I had to

finish my Christmas thank-yous before I went

out anywhere.

I thought I could just crank out my thank-you

cards in a half hour, but when it came to actually

writing them, my mind went blank.



Let me tell you, it's not easy writing thank-you

notes for stuff you didn't want in the first place.

I started with the nonclothes items, because I

thought they'd be easiest. But after two or

three cards, I realized I was practically writing

the same thing every time.

So I wrote up a general form on the computer

with blanks for the things that needed to change.

Writing the cards from there was a breeze.





Dear Aunt Lydia,

Thank you so much for the awesome encyclopedia !

How did you know I wanted that for Christmas?

I love the way the encyclopedia looks on my shelf !

All my friends will be so jealous that I have my very own
encyclopedia .

Thank you for making this the best Christmas ever!

Sincerely, Greg

My system worked out pretty well for the first

couple of gifts, but after that, not so much.

Dear Aunt Loretta,

Thank you so much for the awesome pants !

How did you know I wanted that for Christmas?

I love the way the pants looks on my legs !

All my friends will be so jealous that I have my very own
pants .

Thank you for making this the best Christmas ever!

Sincerely, Greg

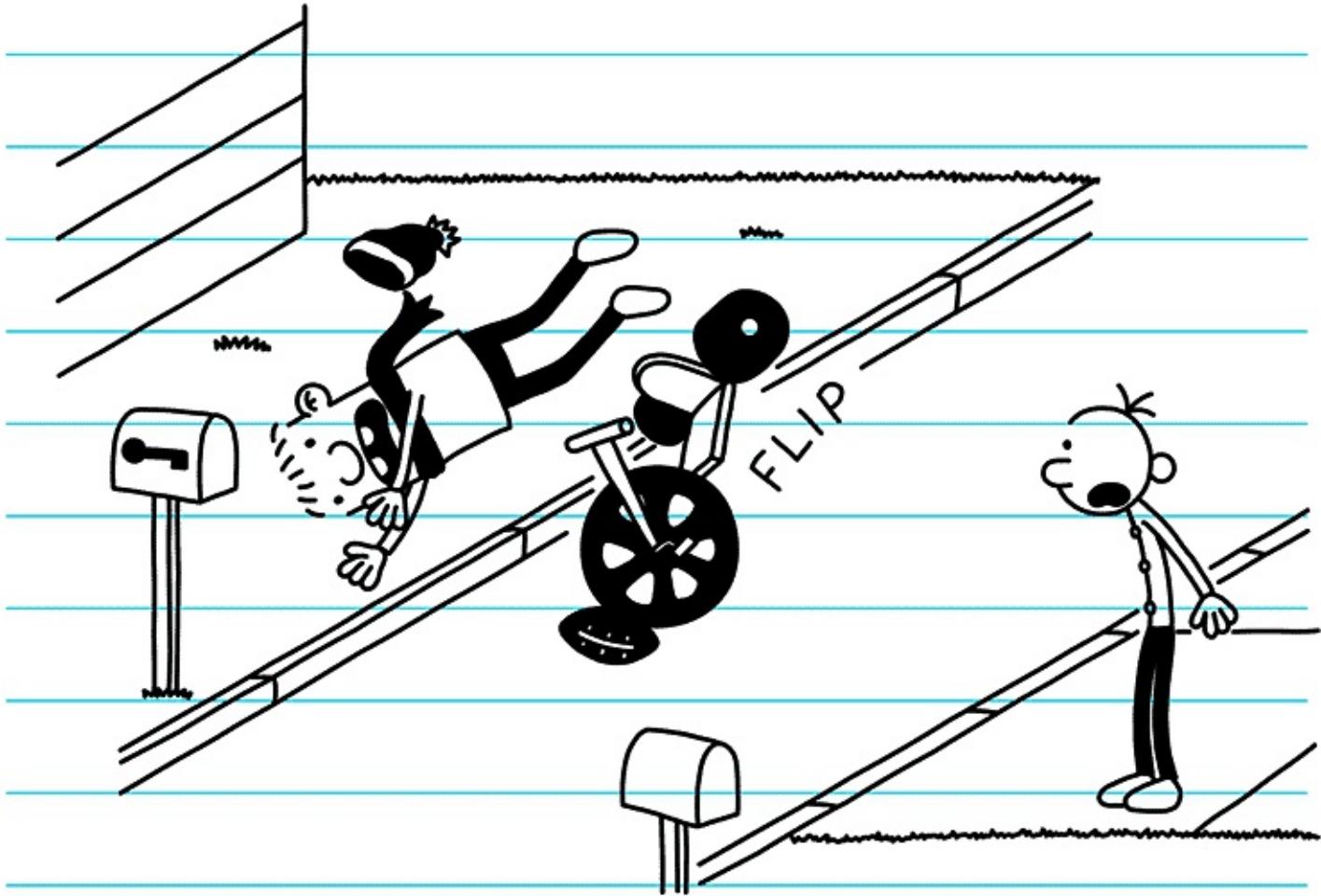
Friday

I finally knocked Rowley off the Big Wheel today,

but it didn't happen the way I expected. I was

trying to hit him in the shoulder, but I missed,

and the football went under the front tire.



Rowley tried to break his fall by sticking out his

arms, but he landed pretty hard on his left

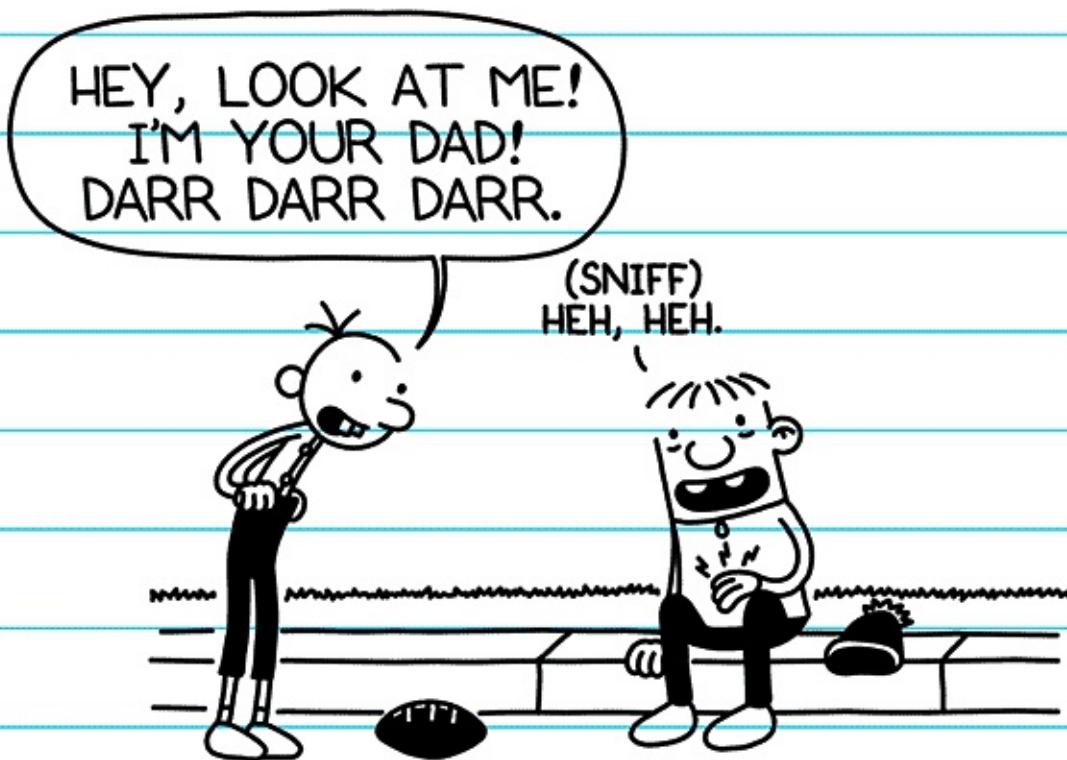
hand. I figured he'd just shake it off and get

right back on the bike, but he didn't.

I tried to cheer him up, but all the jokes that

usually crack him up weren't working.

So I knew he must be hurt pretty bad.



Monday

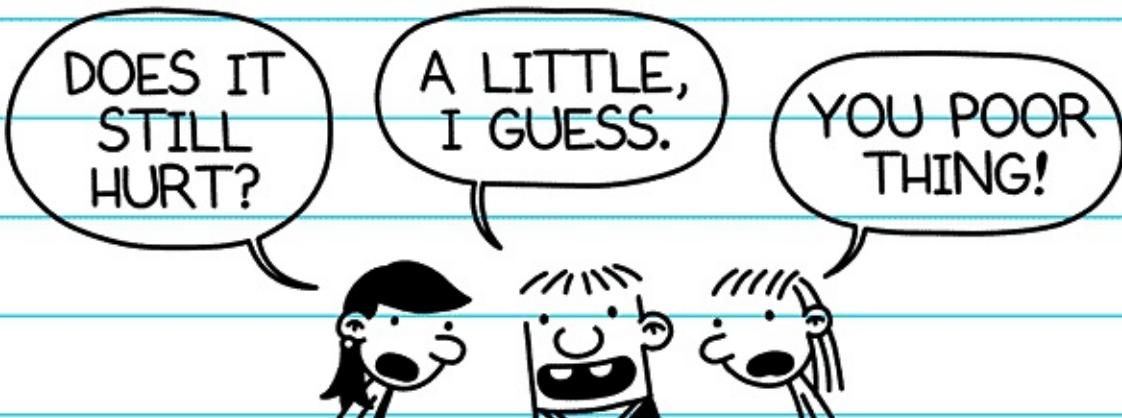
Christmas vacation is over, and now we're back

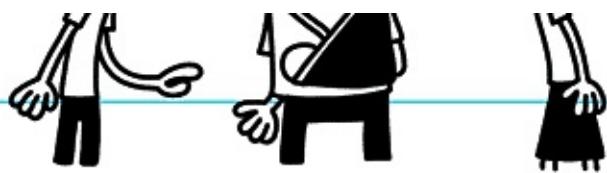
at school. And you remember Rowley's Big Wheel

accident? Well, he broke his hand, and now he has

to wear a cast. And today, everyone was crowding

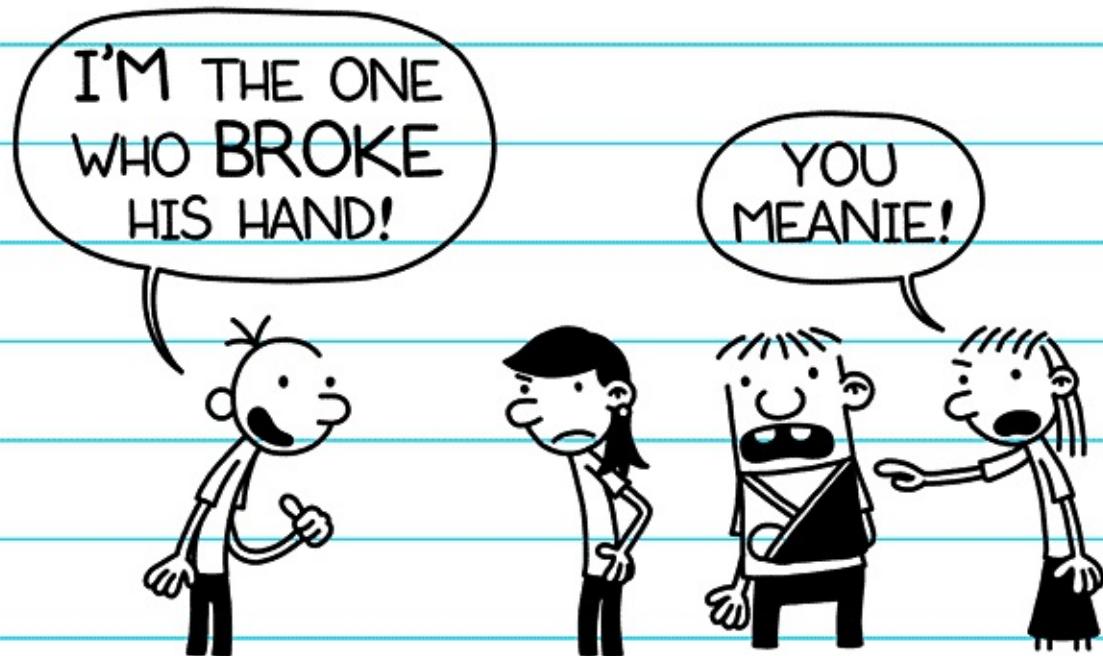
around him like he was a hero or something.





I tried to cash in on some of Rowley's new

popularity, but it totally backfired.



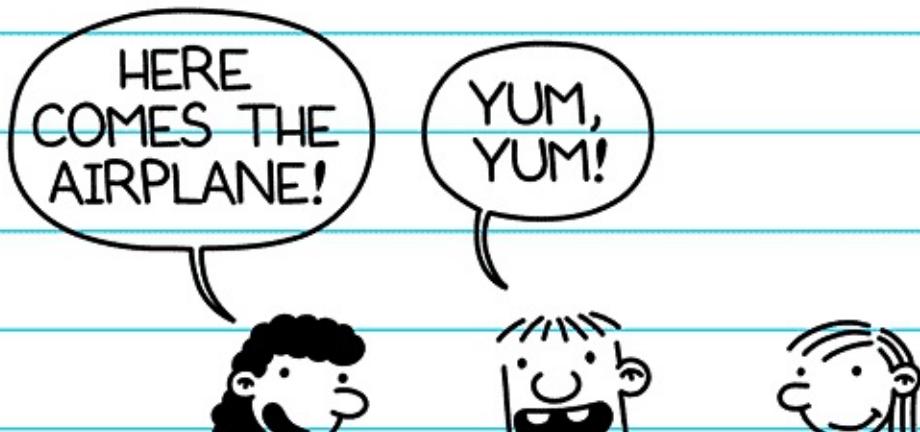
At lunch a bunch of girls invited Rowley over to

their table so they could feed him.

What really ticks me off about that is that

Rowley is right-handed, and it's his left hand

that's broken. So he can feed himself just fine.





Tuesday

I realized Rowley's injury thing is a pretty good racket, so I decided it was time for me to have an injury of my own.

I took some gauze from home, and I wrapped up my hand to make it look like it was hurt.



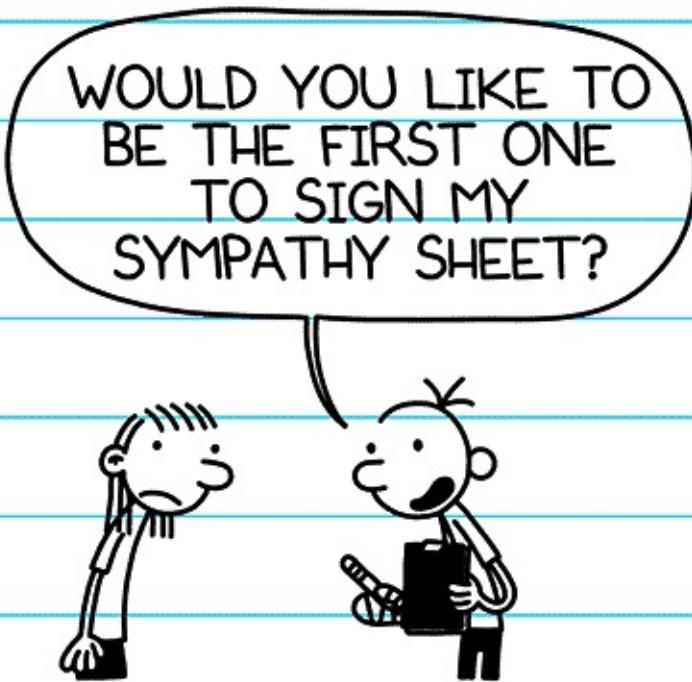
I couldn't figure out why the girls weren't swarming me like they swarmed Rowley, but then I realized what the problem was.

See, the cast is a great gimmick because everyone wants to sign their name on it. But it's not exactly

easy to sign gauze with a pen.

So I came up with a solution that I thought

was just as good.



That idea was a total bust, too. My bandage did

end up attracting attention from a couple of

people, but believe me, they were not the type

of people I was going for.



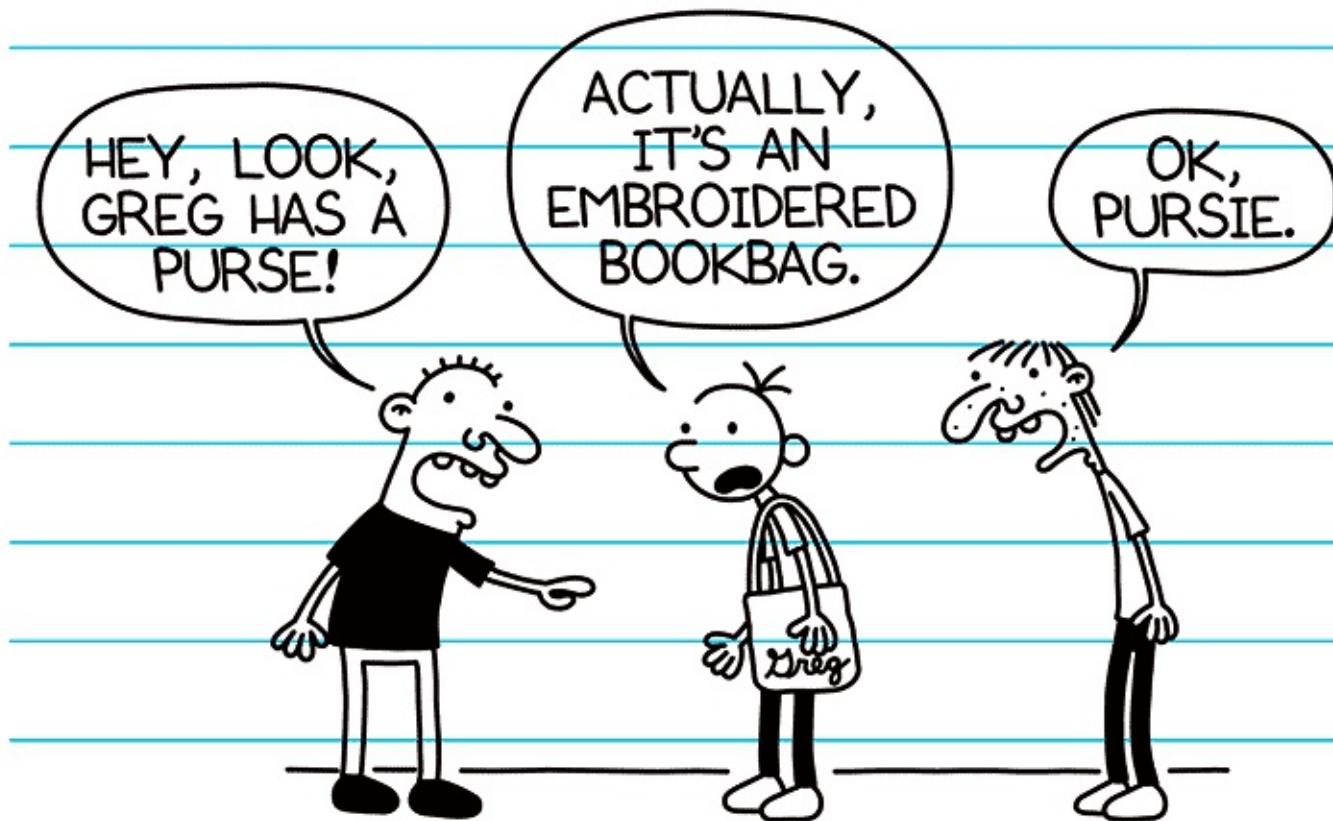


Monday

Last week we started the third quarter at school, so now I have a whole bunch of new classes. One of the classes I signed up for is something called Independent Study.

I WANTED to sign up for Home Economics 2, because I was pretty good at Home Ec 1.

But being good at sewing does not exactly buy you popularity points at school.



Anyway, this Independent Study thing is an

experiment they're trying out at our school for

the first time.

The idea is that the class gets assigned a project,

and then you have to work on it together with no

teacher in the room for the whole quarter.

The catch is that when you're done, everyone

in your group gets the same grade. I found out

that Ricky Fisher is in my class, which could be

a big problem.

Ricky's big claim to fame is that he'll pick the

gum off the bottom of a desk and chew it if you

pay him fifty cents. So I don't really have high

hopes for our final grade.



Tuesday

Today we got our Independent Study assignment,

and guess what it is? We have to build a robot.

At first everybody kind of freaked out, because

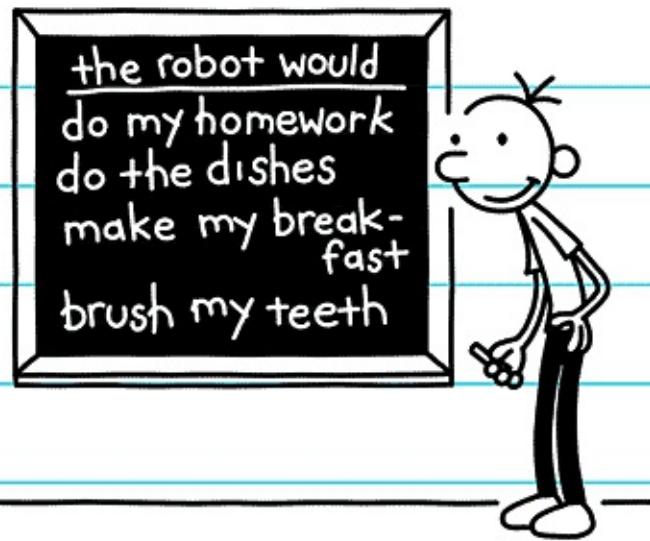
we thought we were going to have to build the

robot from scratch.

But Mr. Darnell told us we don't have to build
an actual robot. We just need to come up with
ideas for what our robot might look like and
what kinds of things it would be able to do.

Then he left the room, and we were on our own.

We started brainstorming right away. I wrote
down a bunch of ideas on the blackboard.



Everybody was pretty impressed with my ideas,
but it was easy to come up with them. All I
did was write down all the things I hate
doing myself.

But a couple of the girls got up to the front of

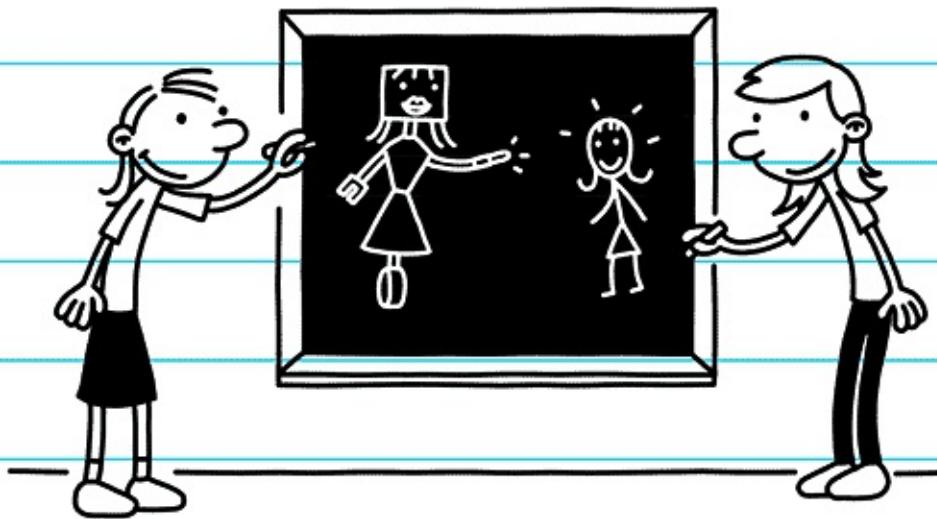
the room, and they had some ideas of their own.

They erased my list and drew up their own plan.

They wanted to invent a robot that would give

you dating advice and have ten types of lip gloss

on its fingertips.



All us guys thought this was the stupidest idea

we ever heard. So we ended up splitting into two

groups, girls and boys. The boys went to the

other side of the room while the girls stood

around talking.

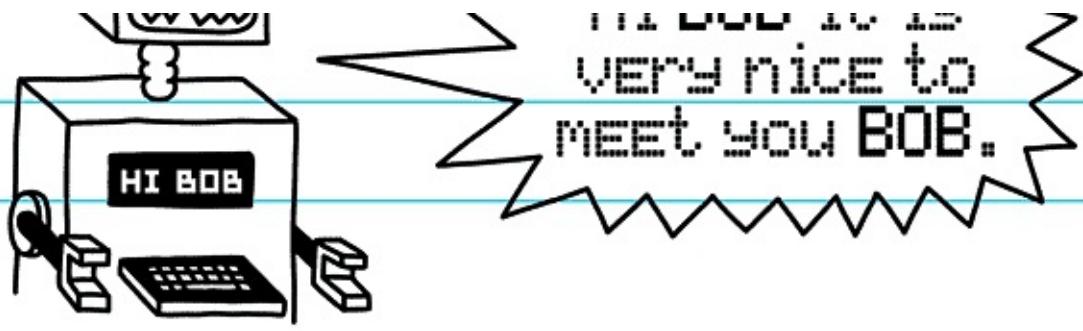
Now that we had all the serious workers in one

place, we got to work. Someone had the idea

that you can say your name to the robot and it

can say it back to you.

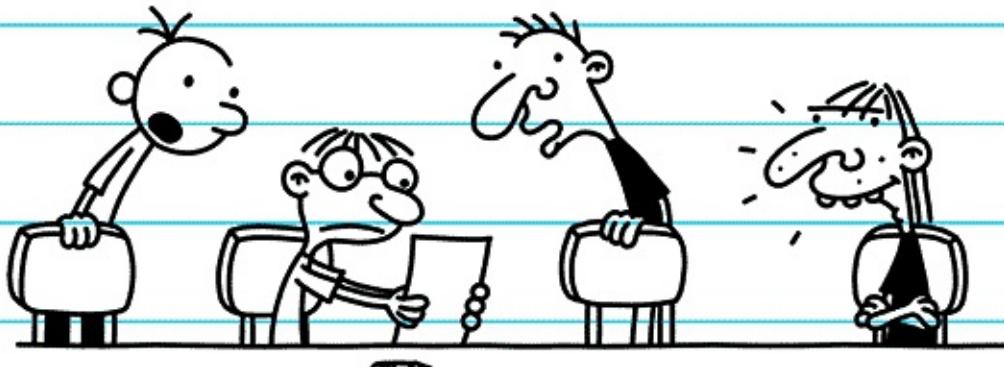




IT IS
VERY NICE TO
MEET YOU BOB.

But then someone else pointed out that you
shouldn't be able to use bad words for your
name, because the robot shouldn't be able to
curse. So we decided we should come up with a
list of all the bad words the robot shouldn't be
able to say.

We came up with all the regular bad words, but
then Ricky Fisher came up with twenty more the
rest of us had never even heard before.



So Ricky ended up being one of the most valuable
contributors on this project.

Right before the bell rang, Mr. Darnell came
back in the room to check on our progress. He
picked up the piece of paper we were writing on

and read it over.

To make a long story short, Independent Study

is canceled for the rest of the year.



Well, at least it is for us boys. So if the robots

in the future are going around with cherry lip

gloss for fingers, at least now you know how it

all got started.

Thursday

In school today they had a general assembly and

Showed the movie "It's Great to Be Me," which

they show us every year.

The movie is all about how you should be happy

with who you are and not change anything

about yourself.

To be honest with you, I think that's a really

dumb message to be telling kids, especially the

ones at my school.



Later on, they made an announcement that

there are some openings on the Safety Patrols,

and that got me thinking.

If someone picks on a Safety Patrol, it can get

them suspended. The way I figure it, I can use

any extra protection I can get.

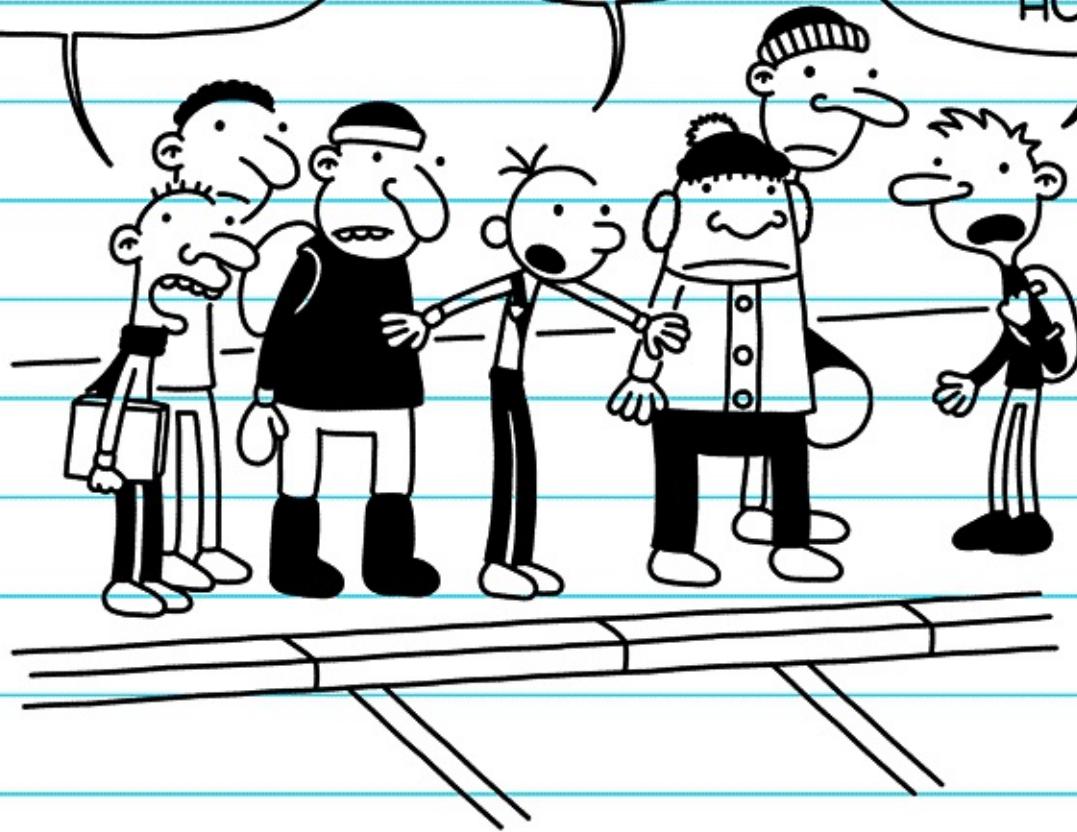
Plus, I realized that maybe being in a position

of authority could be good for me.

CAN WE PLEASE
CROSS THE
STREET NOW?

NOPE.

BUT WE'VE
BEEN STANDING
HERE FOR AN
HOUR!



I went down to Mr. Winsky's office and signed

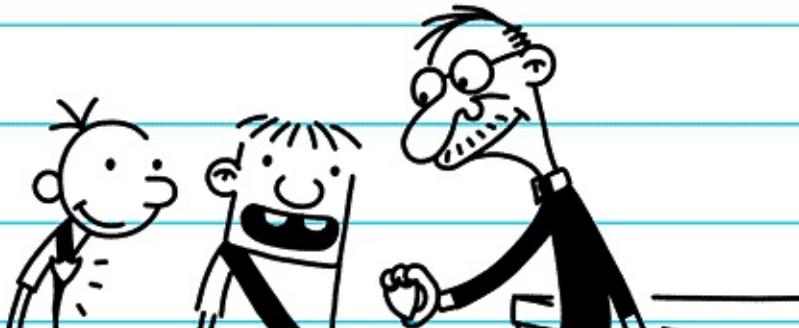
myself up, and I got Rowley to sign up, too.

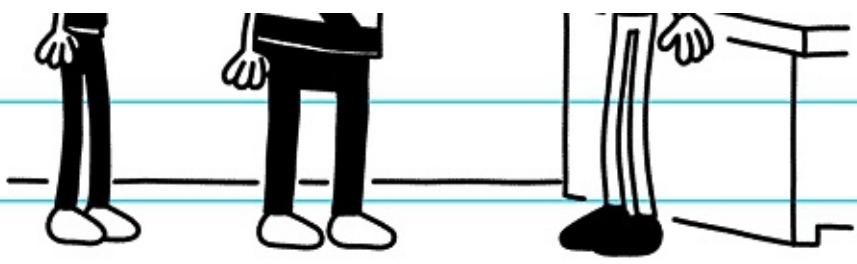
I thought Mr. Winsky would make us do a

bunch of chin-ups or jumping jacks or something

to prove we were up for the job, but he just

handed us our belts and badges on the spot.





Mr. Winsky said the openings were for a special assignment. Our school is right next to the elementary school, and they've got a half-day kindergarten there.

He wants us to walk the morning session kids home in the middle of the day. I realized that meant we would miss twenty minutes of Pre-Algebra. Rowley must have figured that out, too, because he started to speak up. But I gave him a wicked pinch underneath the desk before he could finish his sentence.



I couldn't believe my luck. I was getting instant bully

protection and a free pass from half of Pre-Algebra,

and I didn't even have to lift a finger.

Tuesday

Today was our first day as Safety Patrols. Me and

Rowley don't technically have stations like all the

other Patrols, so that means we don't have to stand

out in the freezing cold for an hour before school.

But that didn't stop us from coming to the

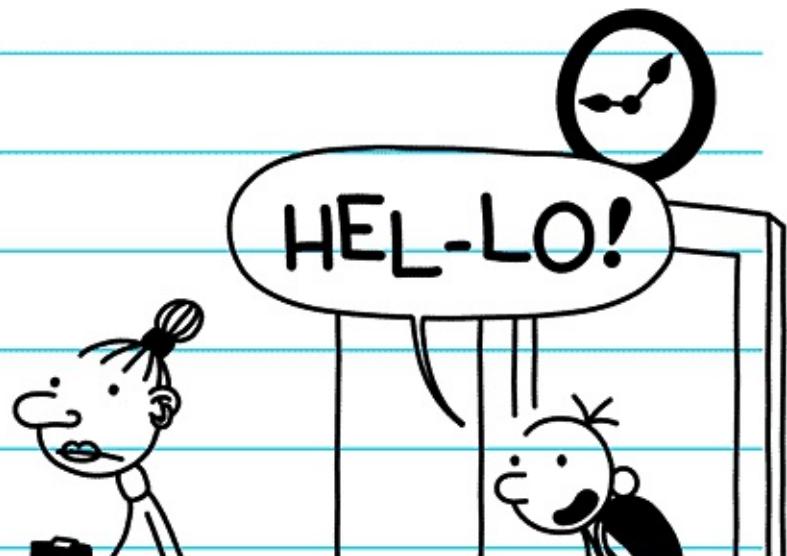
cafeteria for the free hot chocolate they hand

out to the other Patrols before homeroom.



Another great perk is that you get to show up

ten minutes late for first period.





I'm telling you, I've got it made with this

Safety Patrol thing.

At 12:15, me and Rowley left school and walked

the kindergartners home. The whole trip ate up

forty-five minutes, and there were only twenty

minutes of Pre-Algebra left when we got back.

Walking the kids home was no sweat. But one of

the kindergartners started to smell a little funny,

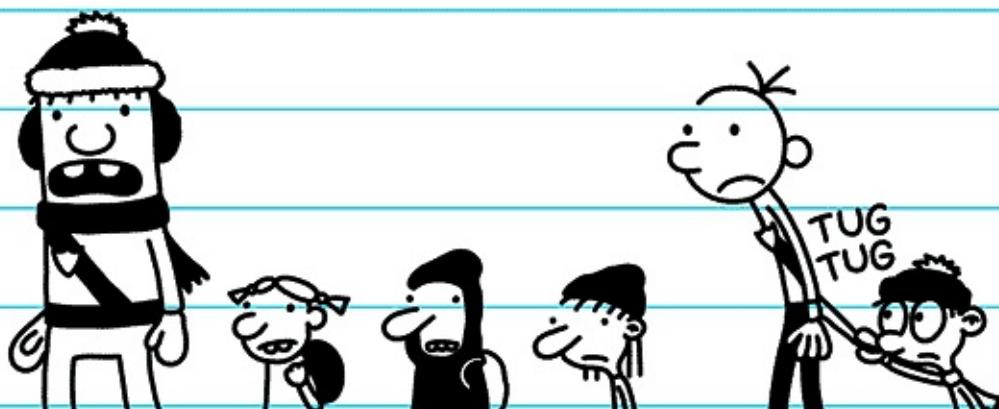
and I think maybe he had an accident in his pants.

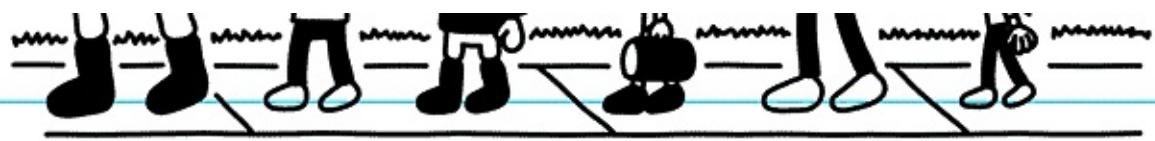
He tried to let me know about it, but I just

stared straight ahead and kept walking. I' l l

take these kids home, but believe me, I didn't

sign up for any diaper duty.





Wednesday

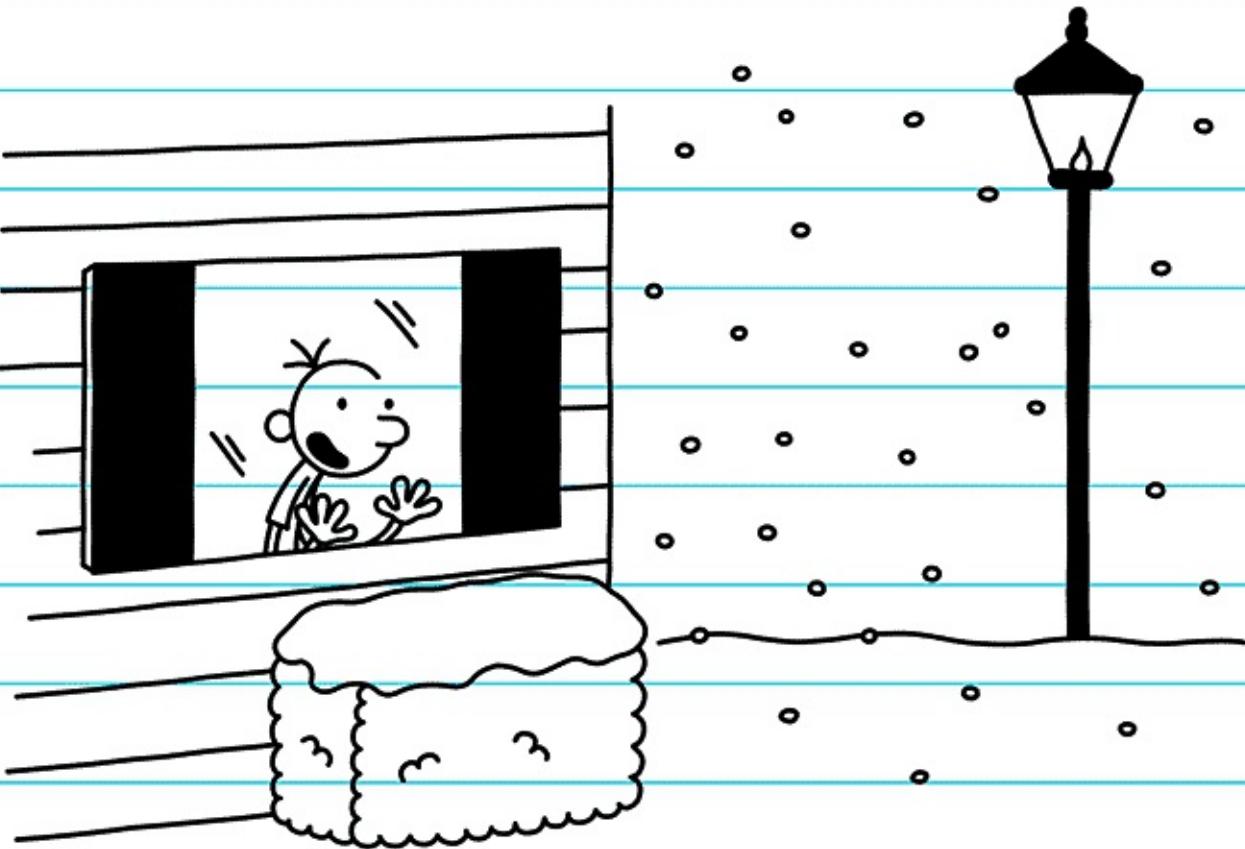
Today it snowed for the first time this winter,

and school was canceled. We were supposed to

have a test in Pre-Algebra, and I've kind of

slacked off ever since I became a Safety Patrol.

So I was psyched.



I called Rowley and told him to come over. Me and

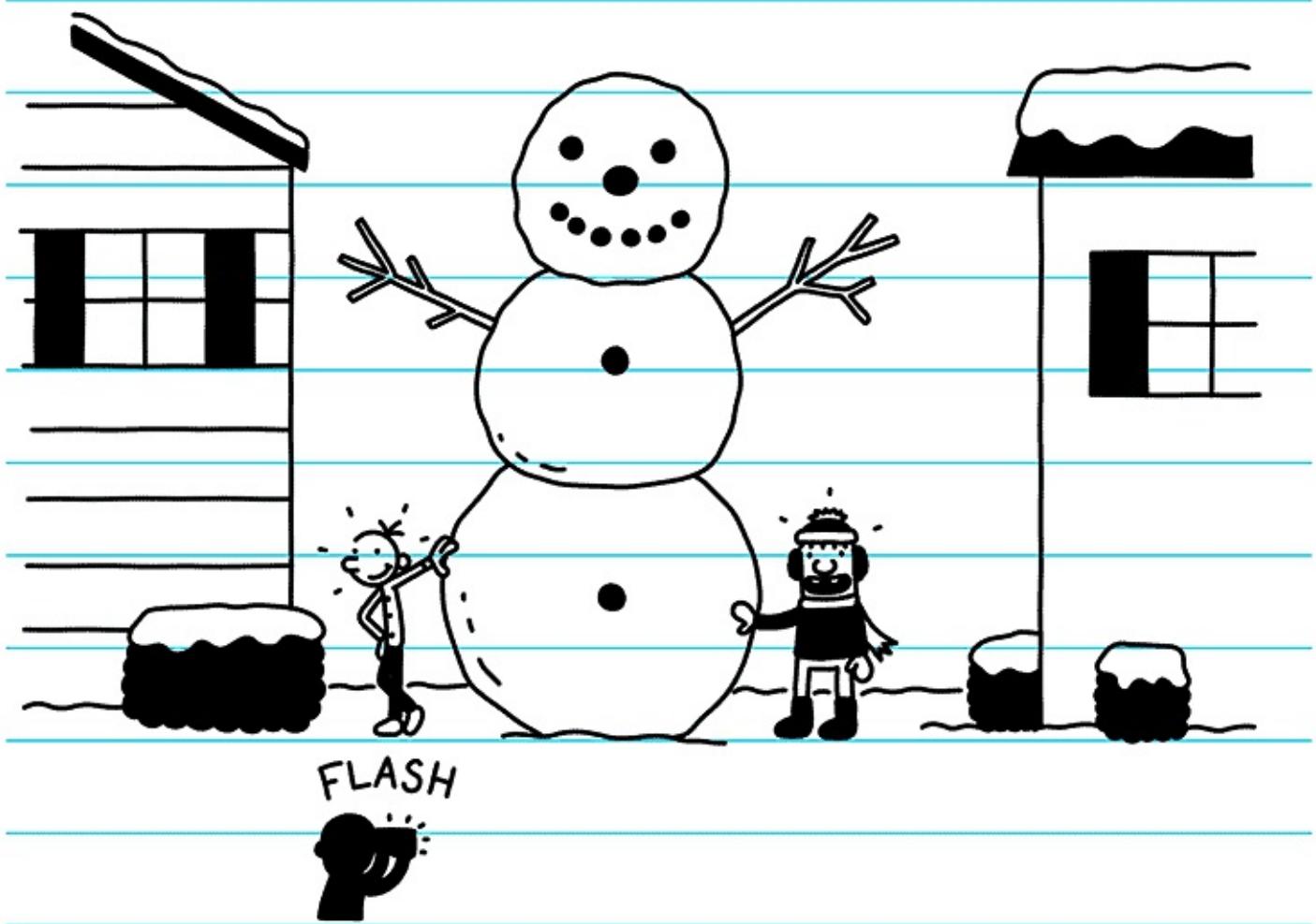
him have been talking about building the world's

biggest snowman for the past couple of years now.

And when I say the world's biggest snowman,

I'm not kidding. Our goal is to get into the

“Guinness Book of World Records.”



But every time we've gotten serious about going

for the record, all the snow has melted, and

we've missed our window of opportunity. So this

year, I wanted to get started right away.

When Rowley came over, we started rolling the

first snowball to make the base. I figured the

base was going to have to be at least eight feet

tall on its own if we wanted to have a shot at

breaking the record. But the snowball got real

heavy, and we had to take a bunch of breaks in

between rolls so we could catch our breath.



During one of our breaks, Mom came outside to go
to the grocery store, but our snowball was blocking
her car in. So we got a little free labor out of her.



After our break, me and Rowley pushed that
snowball until we couldn't push it any farther.

But when we looked behind us, we saw the mess

we had made.

The snowball had gotten so heavy that it tore

up all the sod Dad had just laid down this fall.

I was hoping it would snow a few more inches

and cover up our tracks, but just like that, it

stopped snowing.



Our plan to build the world's biggest snowman

was starting to fall apart. So I came up with a

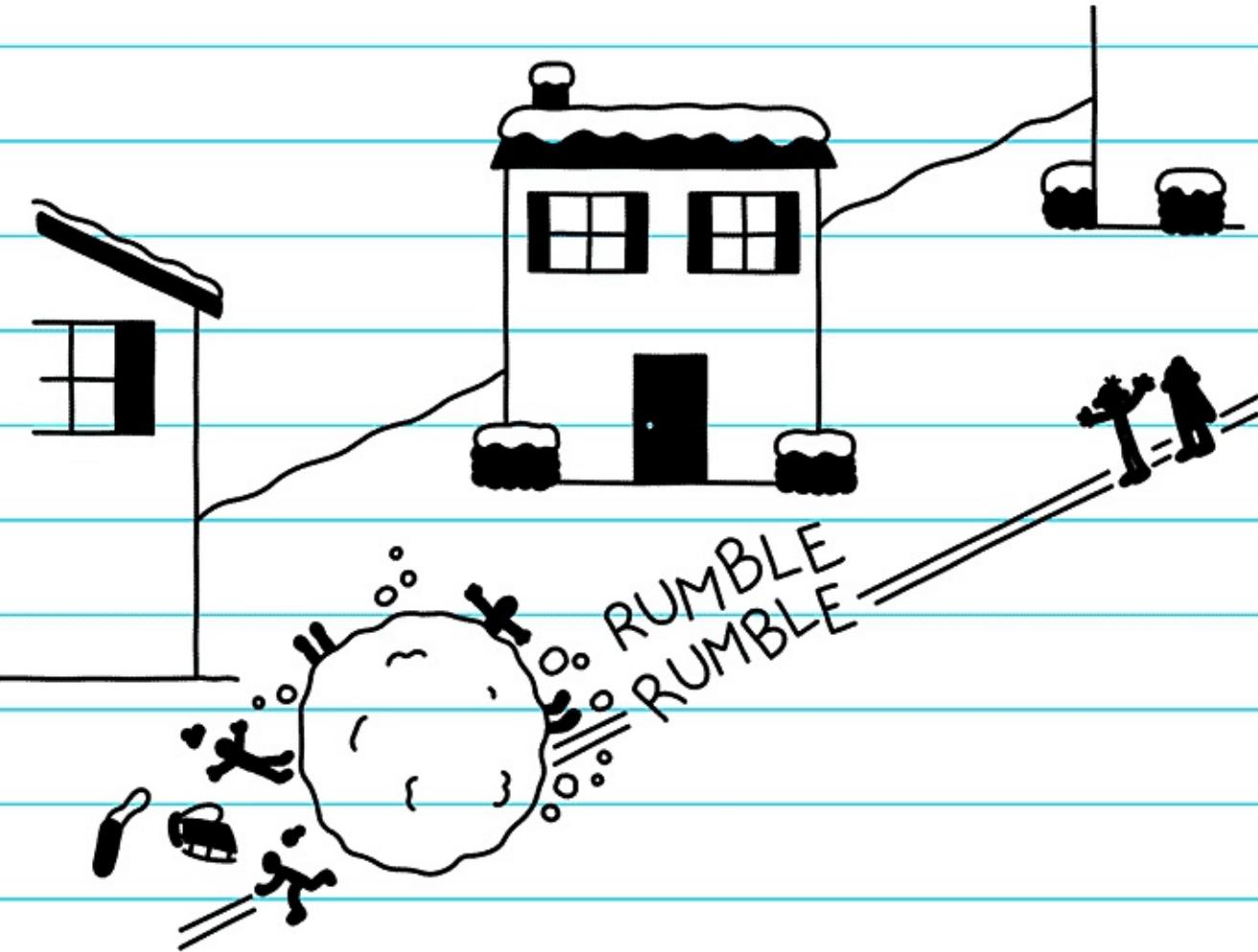
better idea for our snowball.

Every time it snows, the kids from Whirley

Street use our hill for sledding, even though this

isn't their neighborhood.

So tomorrow morning, when the Whirley Street
kids come marching up our hill, me and Rowley are
going to teach those guys a lesson.



Thursday

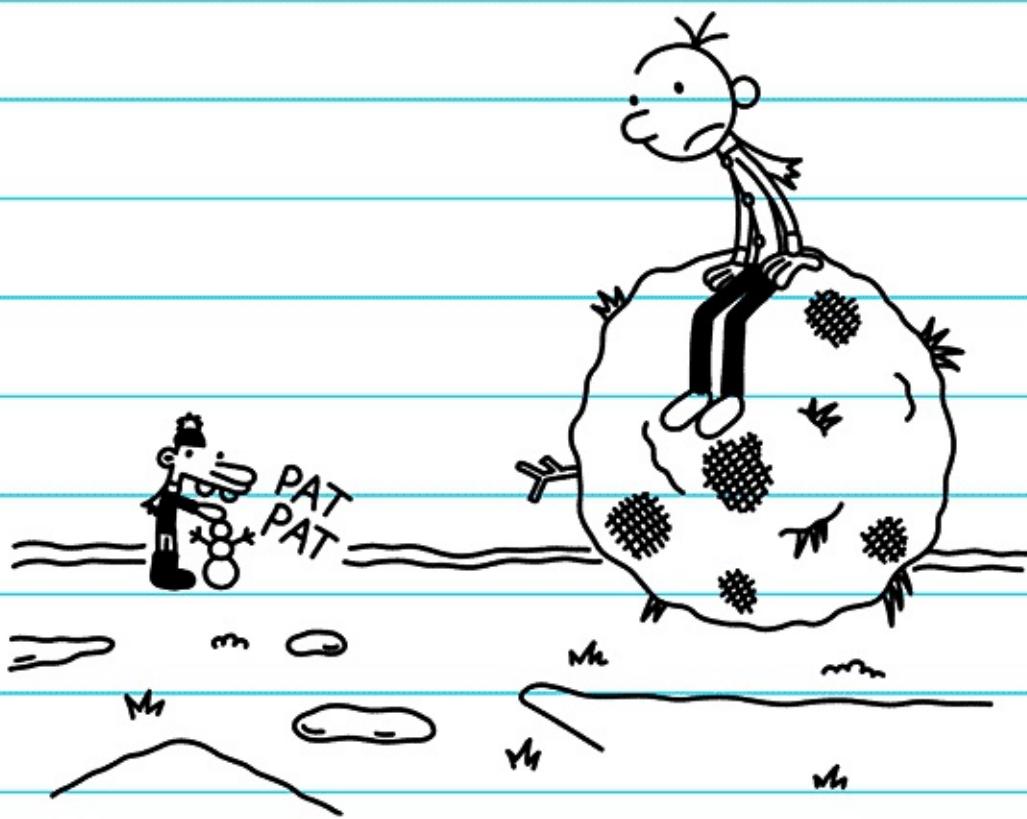
When I woke up this morning, the snow was
already starting to melt. So I told Rowley to
hurry up and get down to my house.

While I was waiting for Rowley to show up, I
watched Manny trying to build a snowman out of

the piddly crumbs of snow that were left over

from our snowball.

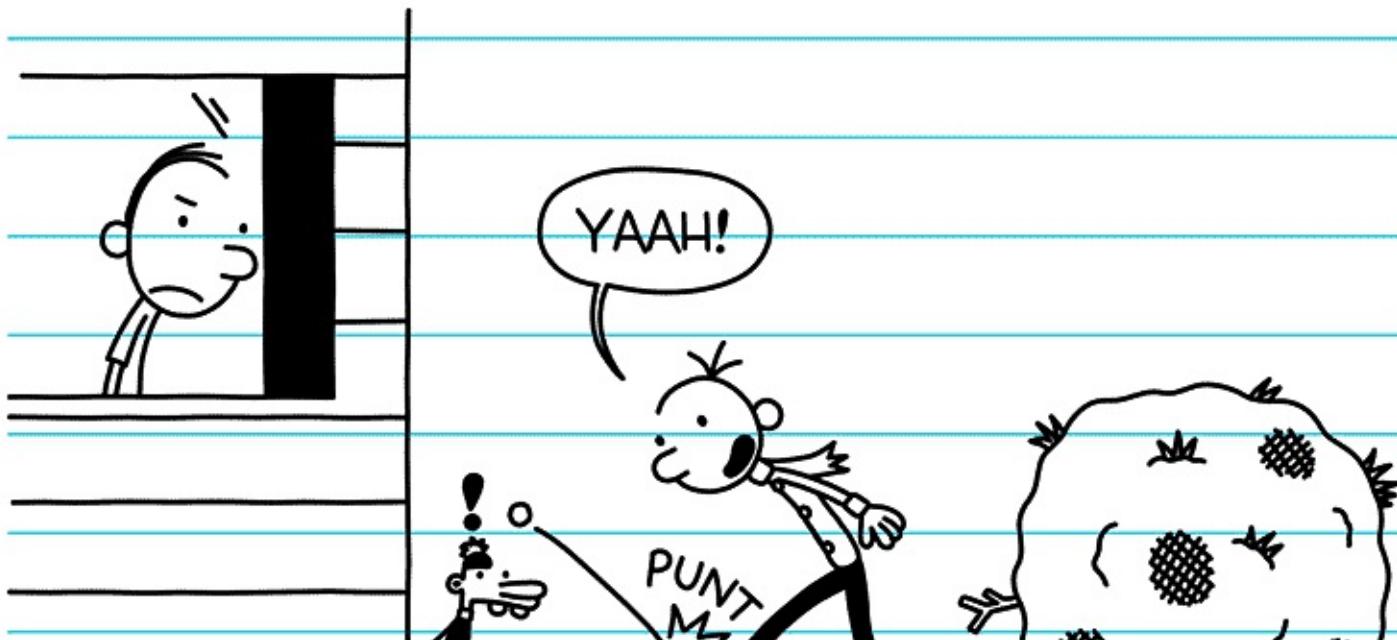
It was actually kind of pathetic.

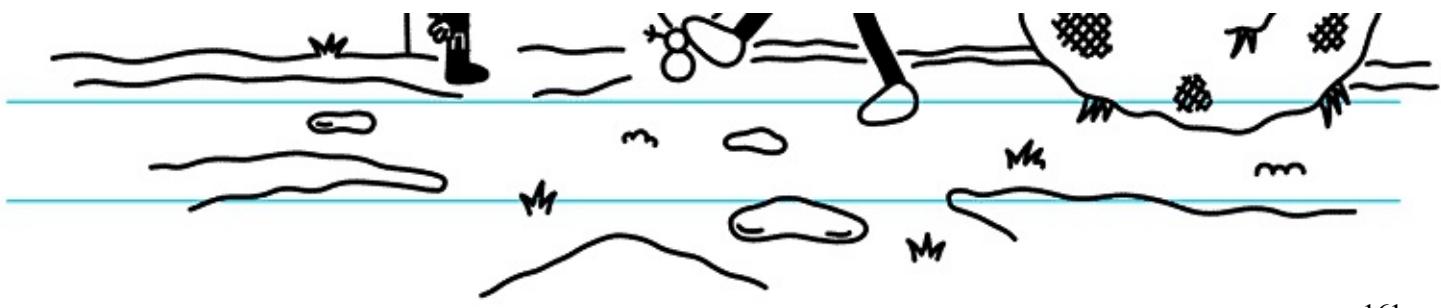


I really couldn't help doing what I did next.

Unfortunately for me, right at that moment,

Dad was at the front window.





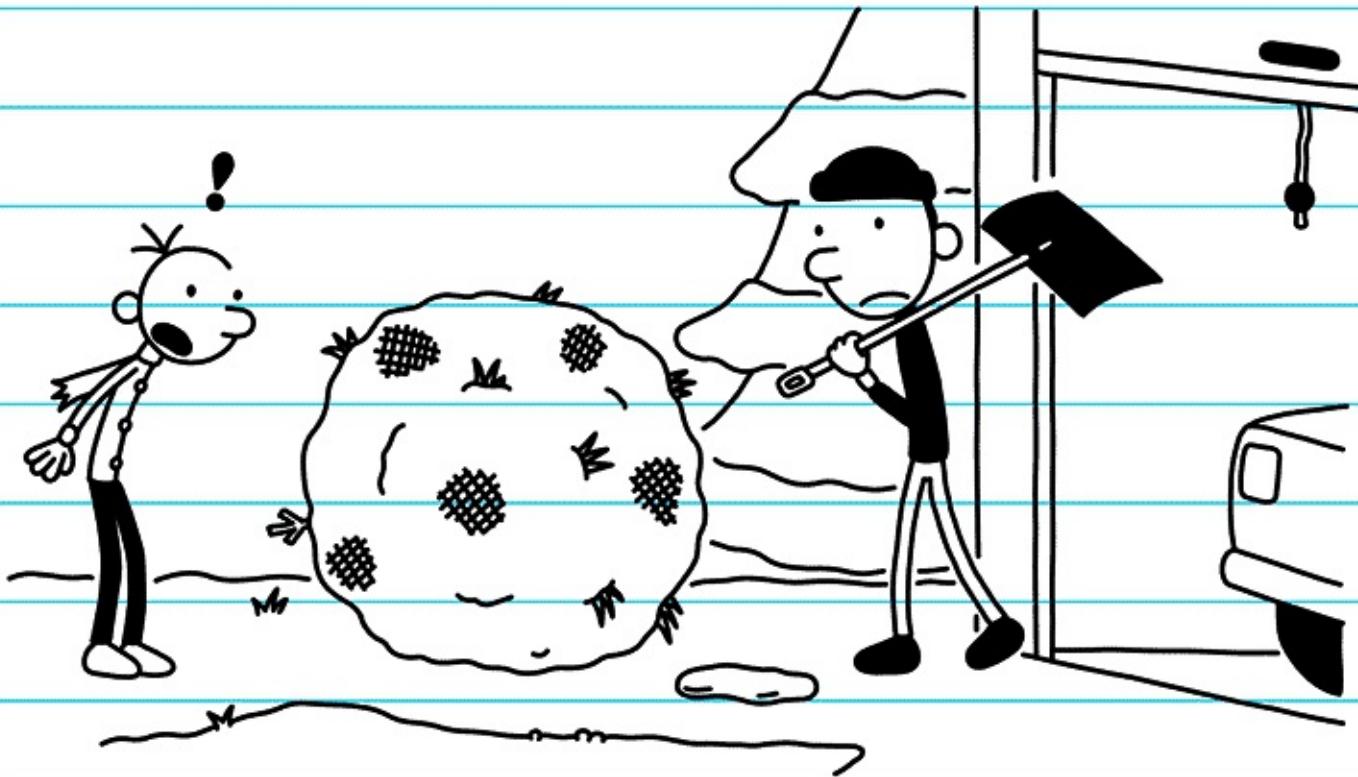
Dad was AlreADymad at me for tearing up

the sod, so I knew I was in for it. I heard the

garage door open and I saw Dad coming outside.

He marched right out carrying a snow shovel, and I

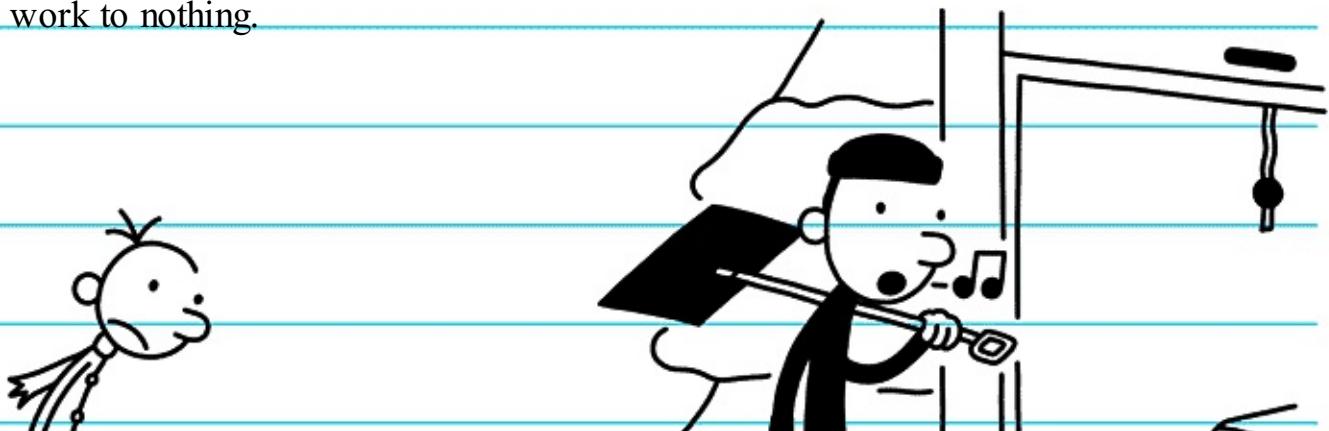
thought I was going to have to make a run for it.

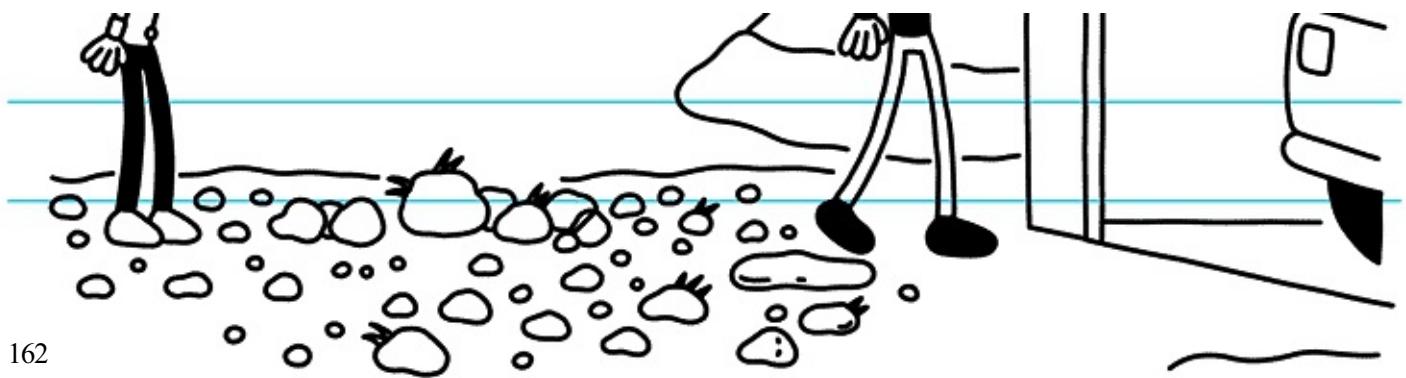


But Dad was heading for my snowball, not me.

And in less than a minute, he reduced all our

hard work to nothing.

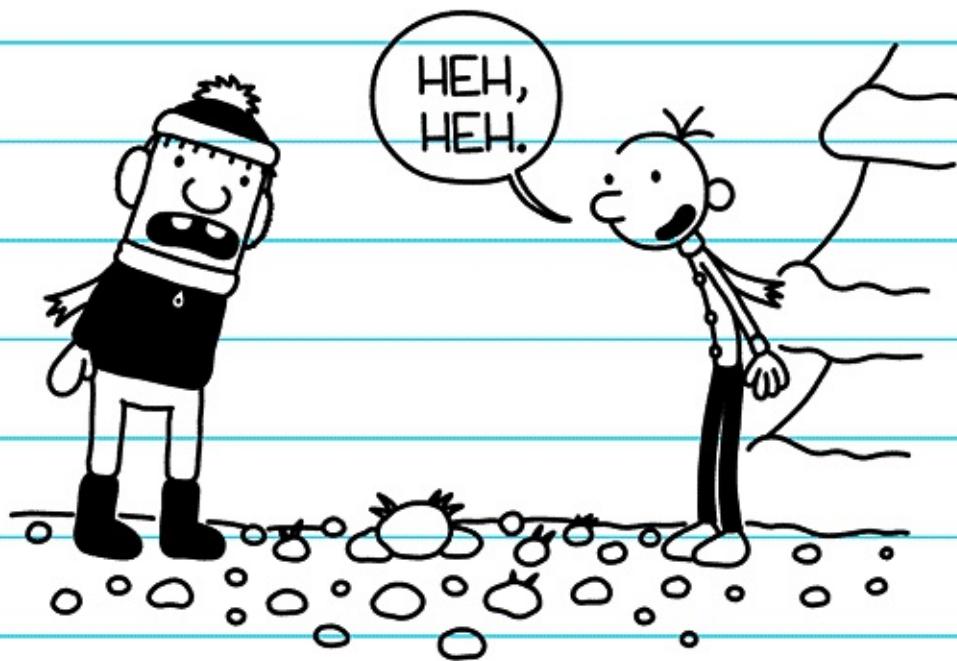




162

Rowley came by a few minutes later. I thought he

might actually get a kick out of what happened.



But I guess he had his heart set on rolling

that snowball down the hill, and he was really

mad. But get this: Rowley was mad at me for

what DAD did.

I told Rowley he was being a big baby, and we

got in a shoving match. Right when it looked like

we were going to get in an all-out fight, we got

ambushed from the street.





It was a hit-and-run by the Whirley Street kids.



And if Mrs. Levine, my English teacher, was

there, I'm sure she would have said the whole

situation was "ironic."

Wednesday

Today at school they announced there's an opening

for the cartoonist job in the school paper. There's

only one comic slot, and up until now this kid named

Bryan Little has been hogging it all to himself.

Bryan has this comic called “Wacky Dawg,” and

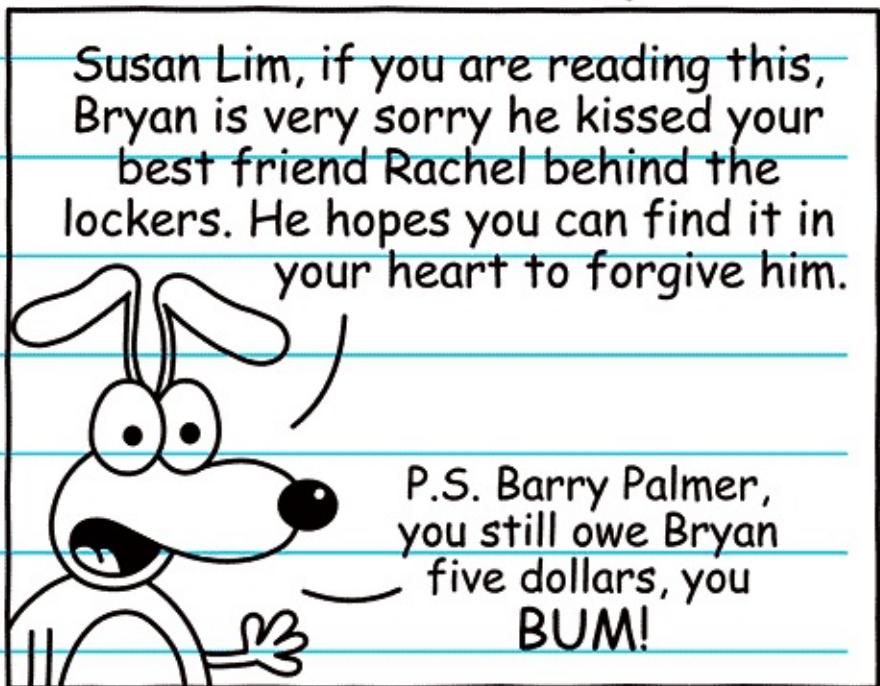
when it started off, it was actually pretty funny.

But lately, Bryan’s been using his strip to handle

his personal business. I guess that’s why they

gave him the axe.

Wacky Dawg



Bryan Little

As soon as I heard the news, I knew I had to

try out. “Wacky Dawg” made Bryan Little a

celebrity at our school, and I wanted to get in

on some of that kind of fame.

I had a taste of what it’s like to be famous at

my school when I won honorable mention in this

antismoking contest they had.

All I did was trace a picture from one of

Rodrick's heavy metal magazines, but luckily, no

one ever found out.



The kid who won first place is named Chris

Carney. And what kind of ticks me off is that

Chris smokes at least a pack of cigarettes a day.



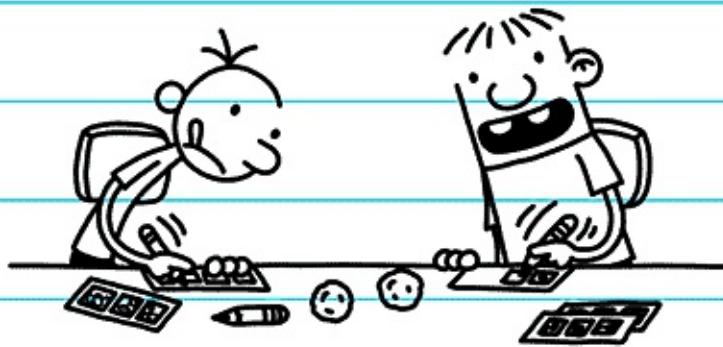


Thursday

Me and Rowley decided to team up and do a

cartoon together. So after school today he came

over to my house, and we got to work.



We banged out a bunch of characters real

quick, but that turned out to be the easy

part. When we tried to think up some jokes,

we kind of hit a wall.

I finally came up with a good solution.

I made up a cartoon where the punch line of

every strip is “Zoo-Wee Mama ! ”

That way we wouldn't get bogged down with having

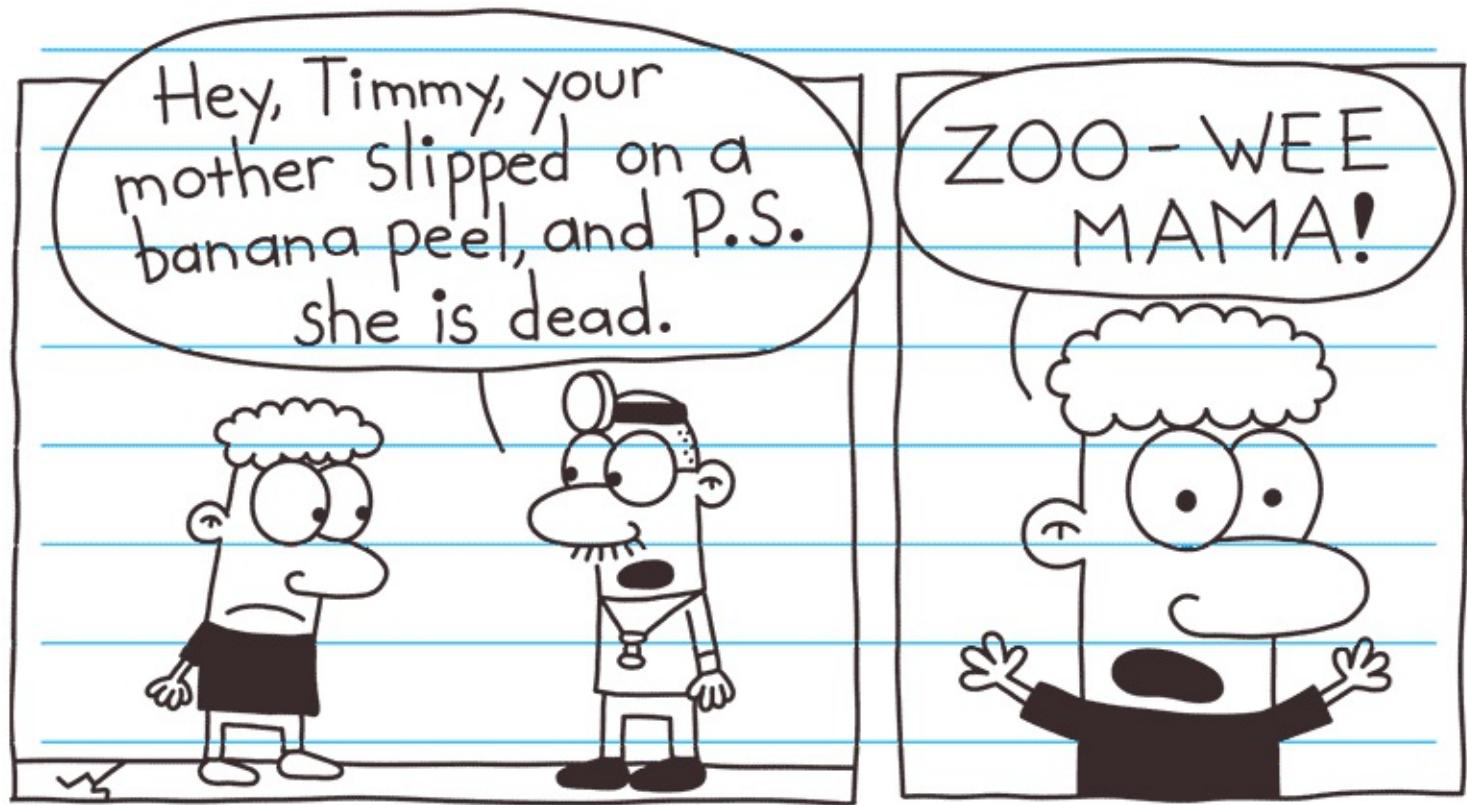
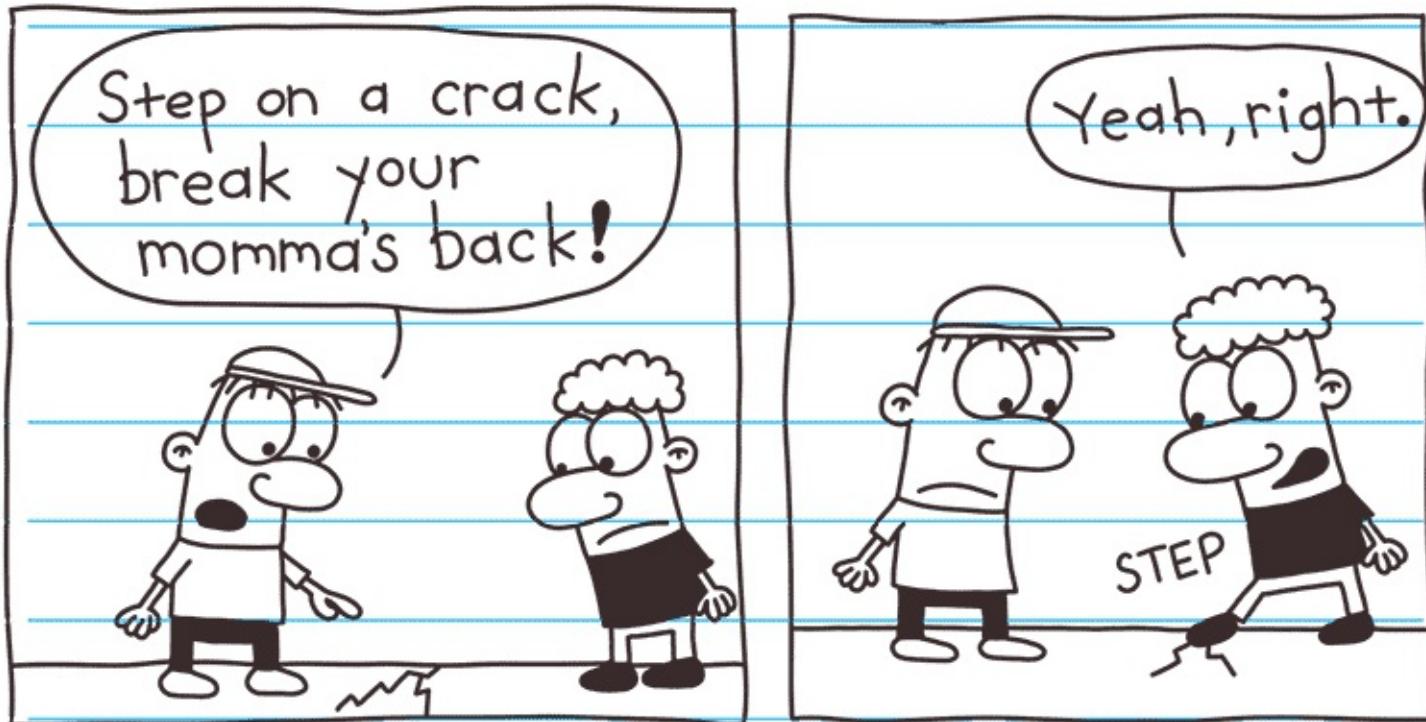
to write actual jokes, and we could concentrate on

the pictures.

For the first couple of strips, I did the writing

and drew the characters, and Rowley drew the

boxes around the pictures.



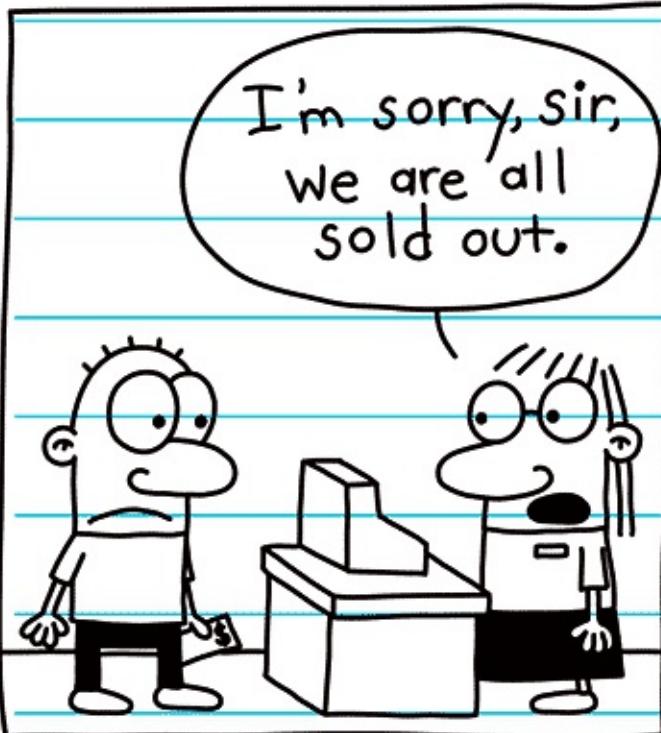
Rowley started complaining that he didn't have

enough to do, so I let him write a few of the strips.

But to be honest with you, there was a pretty

obvious drop in quality once Rowley started doing

the writing.



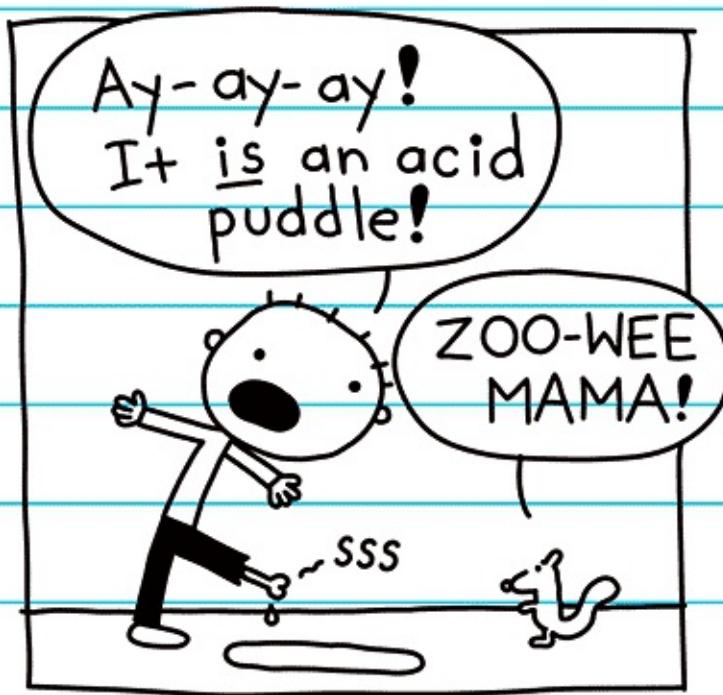
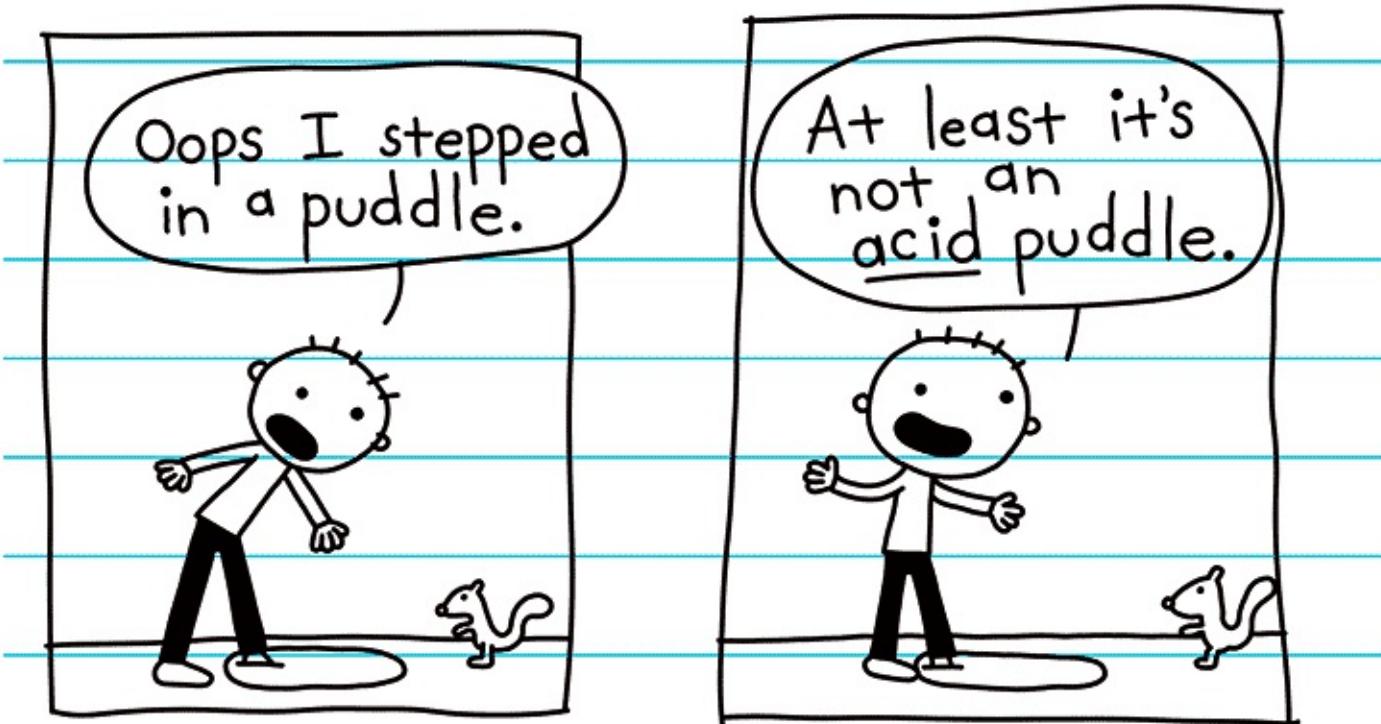
Eventually I got kind of sick of the "Zoo-Wee

Mama” idea and I pretty much let Rowley take

over the whole operation.

And believe it or not, Rowley's drawing skills

are worse than his writing skills.



I told Rowley maybe we should come up with

some new ideas, but he just wanted to keep

writing "Zoo-Wee Mamas." Then he packed up

his comics and went home, which was fine by me.

I don't really want to be partnered up with a

kid who doesn't draw noses, anyway.

Friday

After Rowley left yesterday, I really got to work

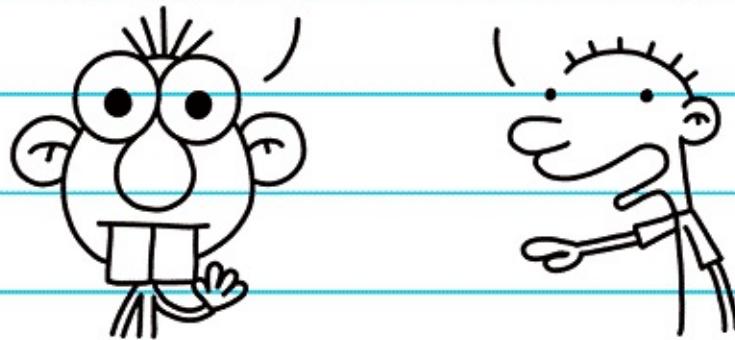
on some comics. I came up with this character called

Creighton the Cretin, and I got on a roll.

CREIGHTON THE CRETIN

by Greg Heffley

HI, MY
NAME IS
CREIGHTON. NO IT ISN'T.
 YOUR NAME IS
 "STEWART PID."



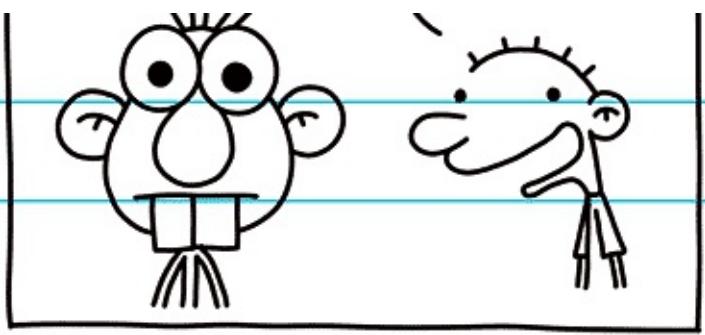
OOPS. HI, I'M
STEW PID.



HAR HAR HAR HAR!

?

! {



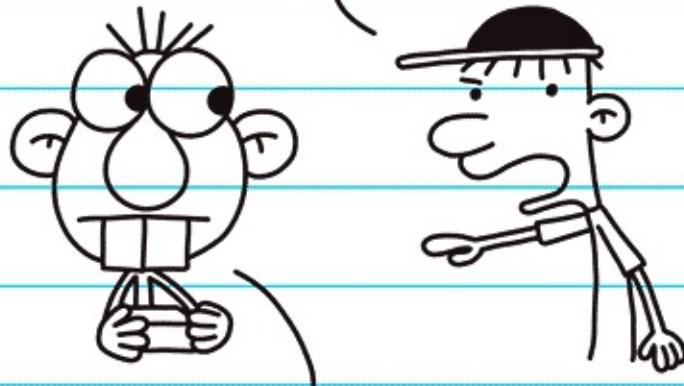
I must've banged out twenty strips, and I

didn't even break a sweat.

I WONDER WHAT
IS IN THIS CUTE
LITTLE BOX?

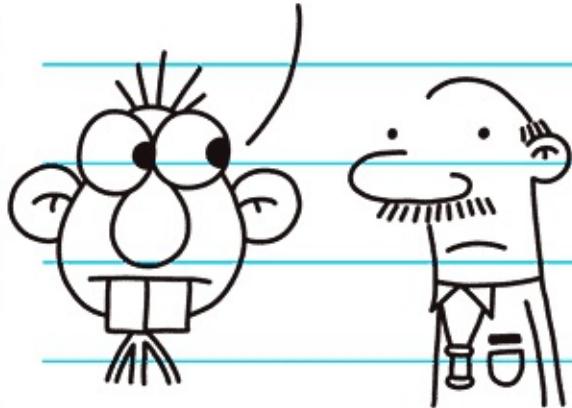


THAT'S NOT A BOX, IT'S A
BRICK, YOU DUMB MORON!

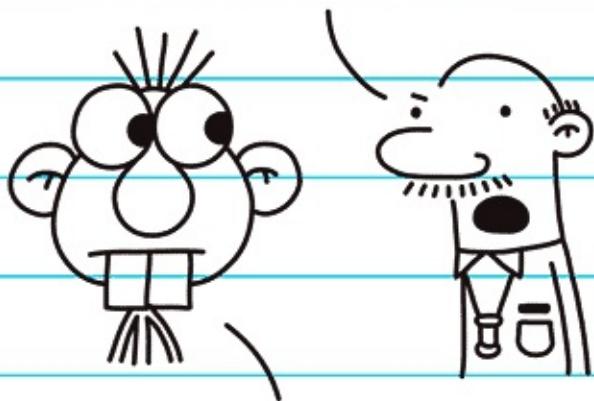


OOPS. I HAVE BEEN TRYING
TO OPEN IT ALL DAY.

DOCTOR, COULD I
HAVE A NEW BUTT?
MY OLD ONE HAS A
CRACK IN IT.



CREIGHTON, I TOLD
YOU A MILLION TIMES,
EVERYONE'S BUTT HAS
A CRACK IN IT!



OH YEAH, I
FORGOT.

comics is that with all the idiots running around my

school, I will never run out of new material.

When I got to school today, I took my comics

to Mr. Ira's office. He's the teacher who runs

the school newspaper.

But when I went to turn my strips in, I saw

that there was a pile of comics from other kids

who were trying out for the job.

Most of them were pretty bad, so I wasn't too

worried about the competition.

Girls
RULE!

by tabitha
cutter and
lisa russel

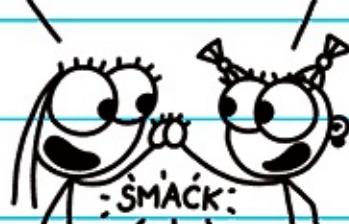
don't walk near
our lunch table,
tyler green!
yeah, you're
not even
cute!



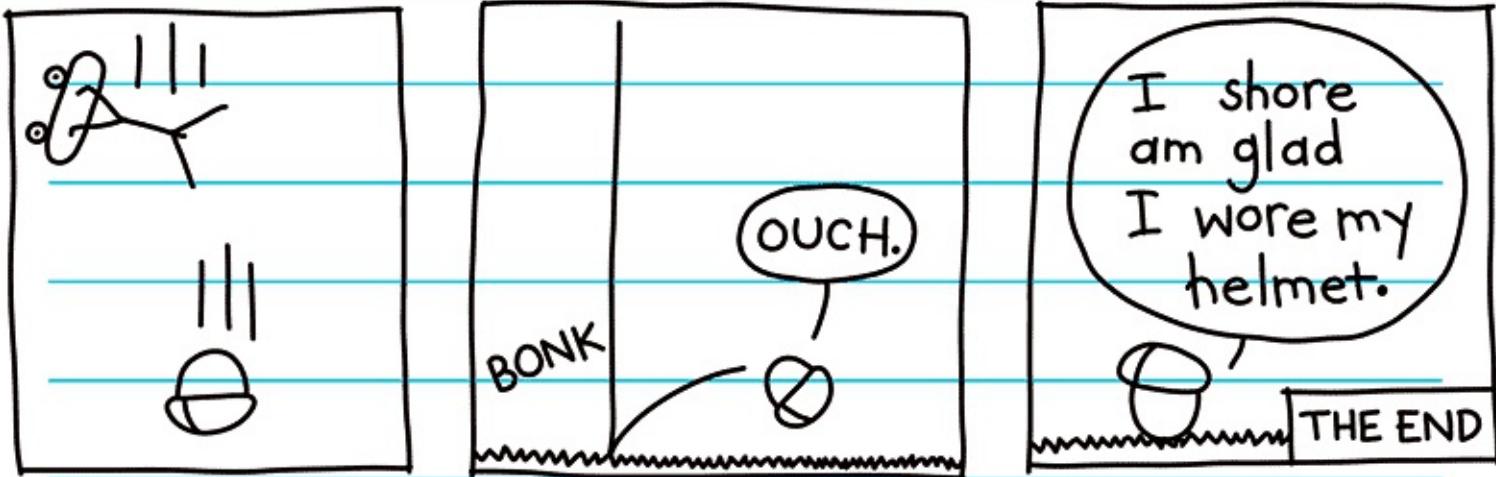
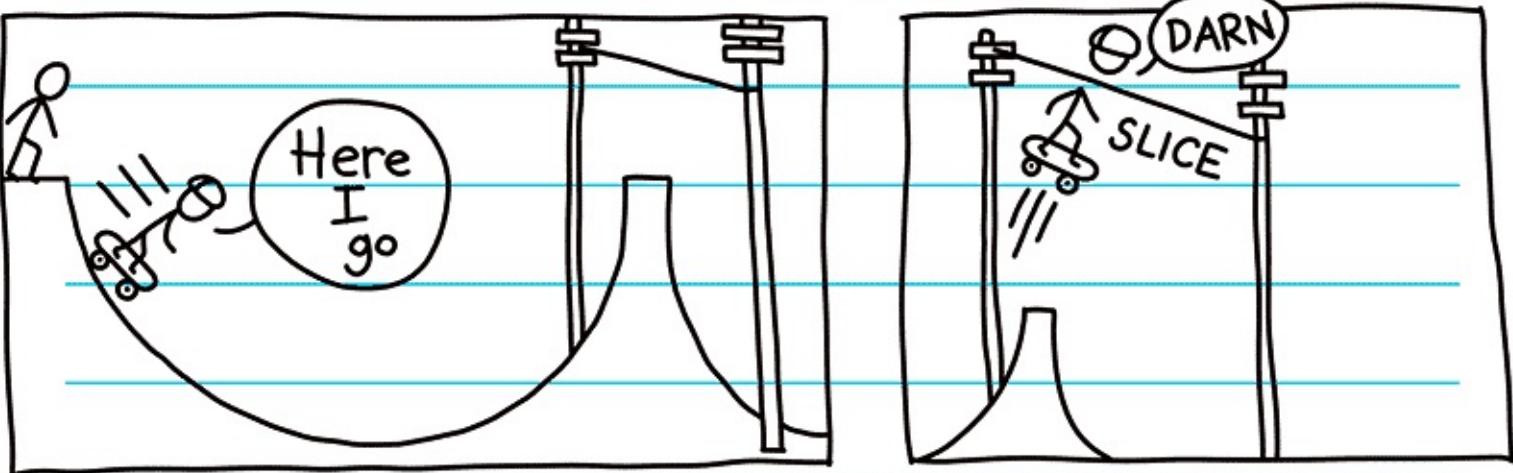
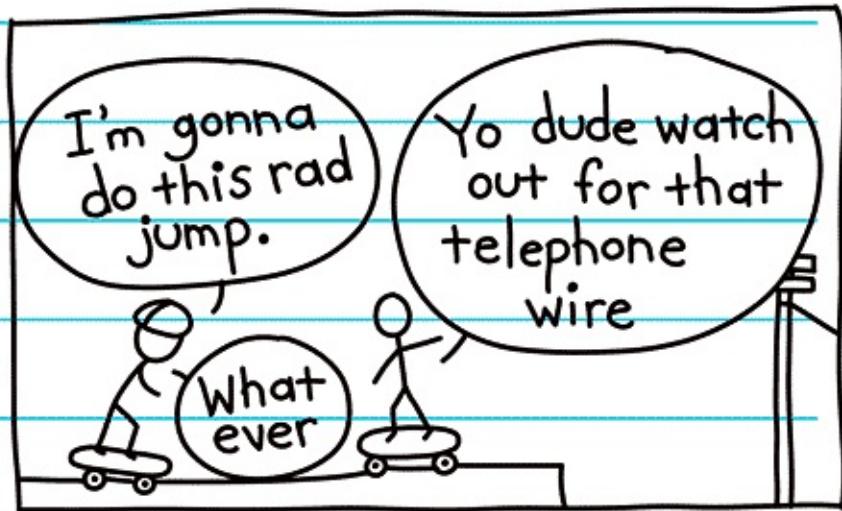
ha ha ha ha ha
ha ha ha ha!



girls RULE!



Xtreme Sk8ers



One of the comics was called "Dumb Teachers,"

and it was written by this kid named Bill Tritt.

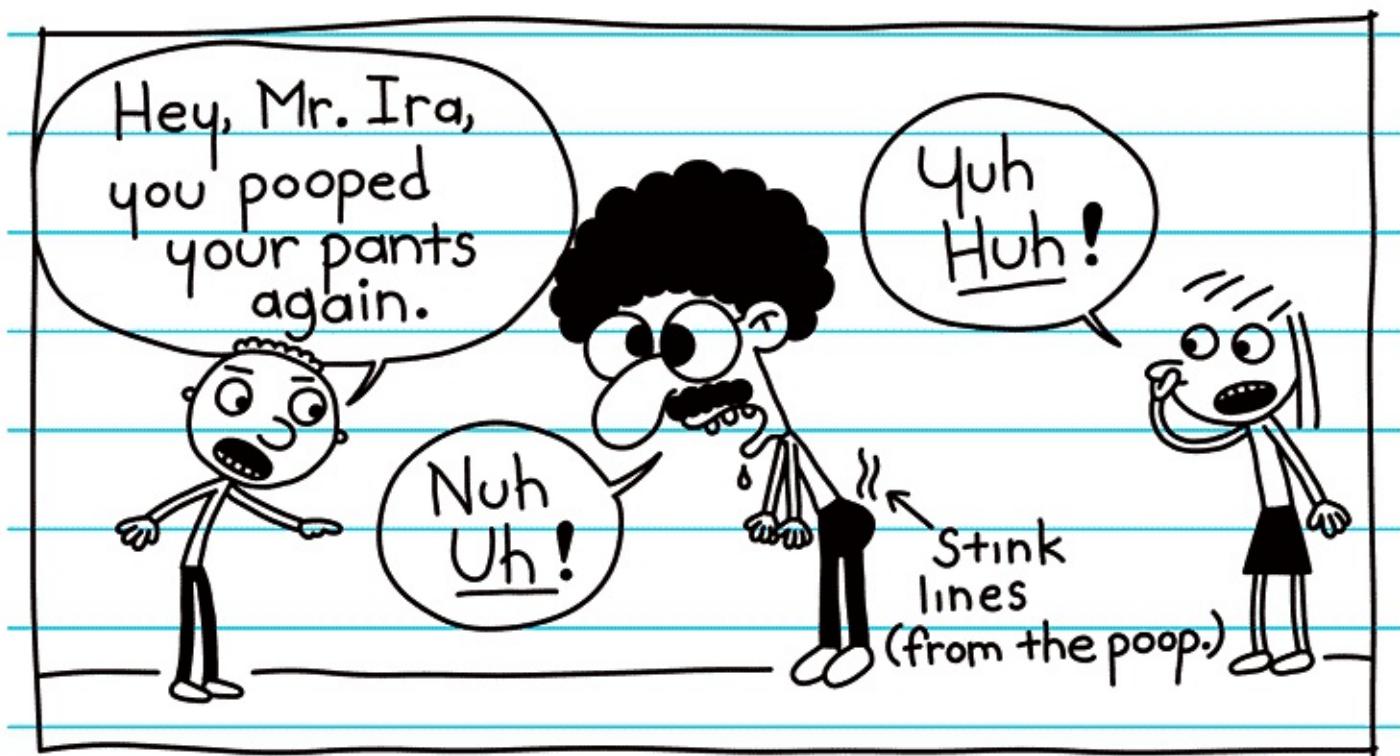
Bill is always in detention, so I guess he has a

bone to pick with just about every teacher in the

school, including Mr. Ira.

So I'm not too worried about the chances of

Bill's comic getting in, either.



There were actually one or two decent comics in

the bin. But I slipped them under a pile of

paperwork on Mr. Ira's desk.

Hopefully, those ones won't turn up until I'm

in high school.

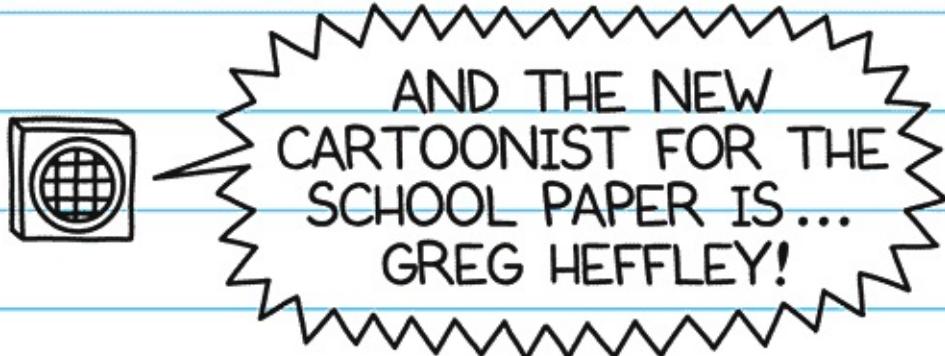




Thursday

Today, during morning announcements, I got

the news I was hoping for.



The paper came out today at lunch time, and

everyone was reading it.

I really wanted to pick up a copy to see my

name in print, but I decided to just play it cool

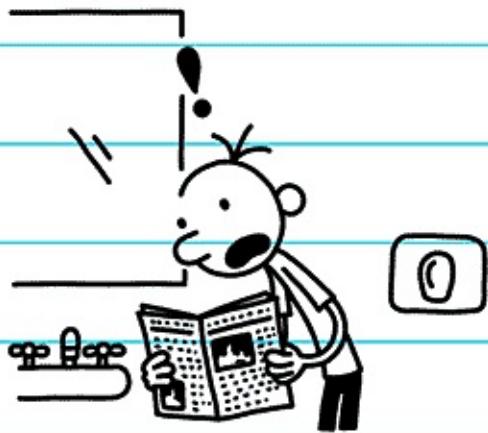
for a while instead.





I sat at the end of the lunch table so there
would be plenty of room for me to start signing
autographs for my new fans. But nobody was coming
over to tell me how great my comic was, and I
started to get the feeling something was wrong.

I grabbed a paper and went into the bathroom
to check it out. And when I saw my comic, I
practically had a heart attack.



Mr. Ira told me he had made some “minor
edits” to my comic. I thought he just meant he
he fixed spelling mistakes and stuff like that, but
he totally butchered it.

The comic he ruined was one of my favorite ones,
too. In the original, Creighton the Cretin is taking

a math test, and he accidentally eats it. And then

the teacher yells at him for being such a moron.

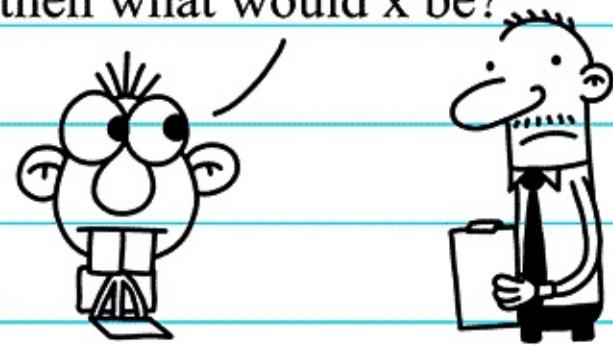
By the time Mr. Ira was done with it, you

practically couldn't recognize it as the same strip.

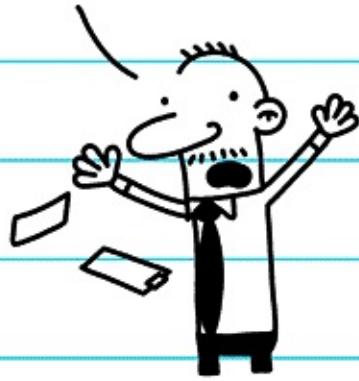
Creighton the Curious Student

by Gregory Heffley

Teacher, if $x + 43 = 89$,
then what would x be?



Creighton, x would be 46!



Thanks. Kids, if you want to learn more about math, be sure to visit Mr. Humphrey during his office hours. Or visit the library and check out the newly expanded Math and Science section!

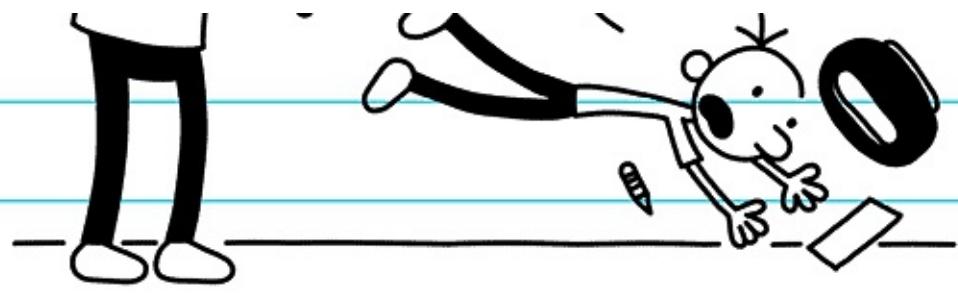


So I'm pretty sure I won't be signing autographs

anytime soon.

TEACHER'S
PET!





March

Wednesday

Me and Rowley were enjoying our hot chocolate
in the cafeteria with the rest of the Patrols
today, and there was an announcement on the
loudspeaker.



Rowley went down to Mr. Winsky's office, and
when Rowley came back fifteen minutes later, he
looked pretty shaken up.

Apparently Mr. Winsky got a call from a parent
who said they witnessed Rowley "terrorizing"
the kindergartners when he was supposed to be

walking them home from school. And Mr. Winsky

was really mad about it.

Rowley said Mr. Winsky yelled at him for about

ten minutes and said his actions “disrespected

the badge.”



You know, I think I might just know what this

is all about. Last week, Rowley had to take a

quiz during fourth period, so I walked the

kindergartners home on my own.

It had rained that morning, and there were a

lot of worms on the sidewalk. So I decided to

have some fun with the kids.





180

But some neighborhood lady saw what I was

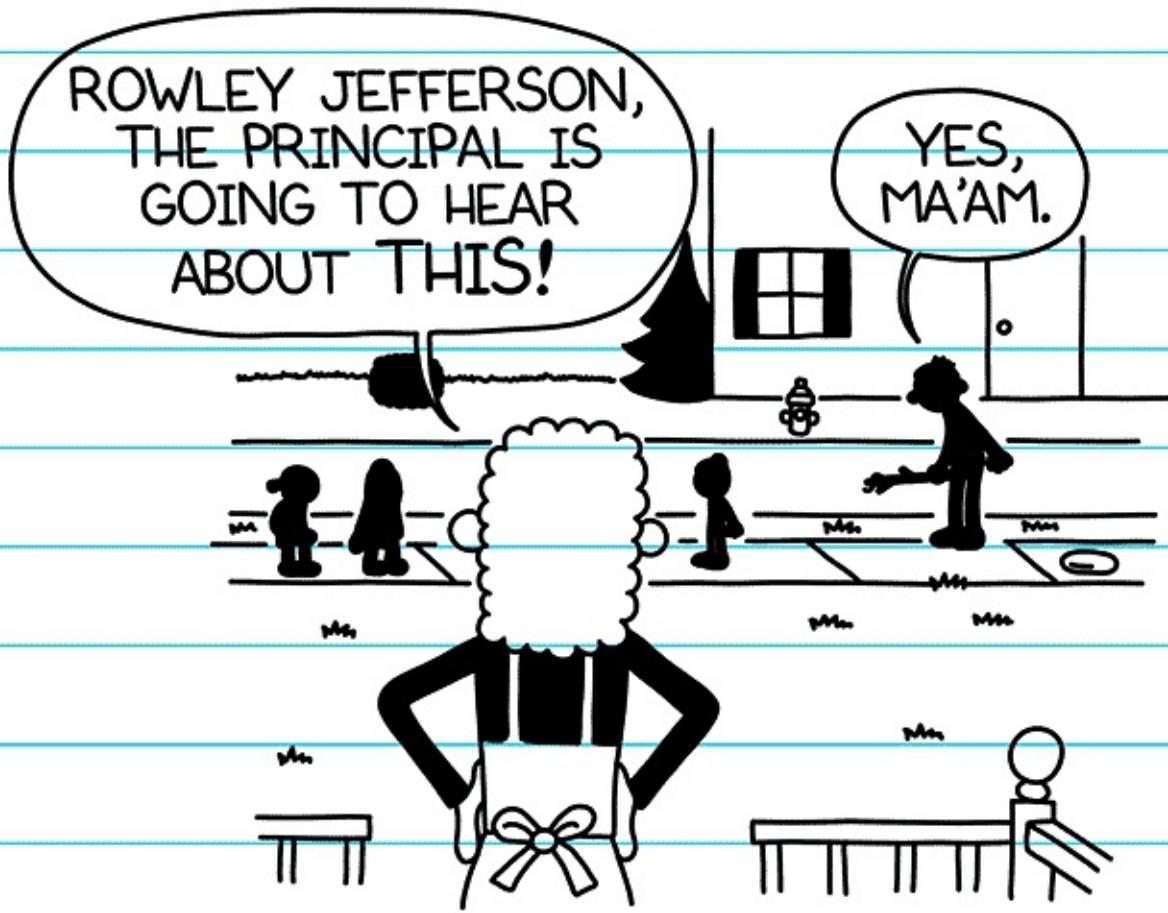
doing, and she yelled at me from her front porch.

It was Mrs. Irvine, who is friends with Rowley's

mom. She must have thought I was Rowley,

because I was borrowing his coat. And I wasn't

about to correct her, either.



I forgot about the whole incident until today.

Anyway, Mr. Winsky told Rowley he's going to

have to apologize to the kindergartners tomorrow

morning, and that he's suspended from Patrols

for a week.

I knew I should probably just tell Mr. Winsky it

was me who chased the kids with the worms. But

I wasn't ready to set the record straight just

yet. I knew if I confessed, I'd lose my hot

chocolate privileges. And that right there was

enough to make me keep quiet for the time being.

At dinner tonight, Mom could tell something

was bothering me, so she came up to my room

afterward to talk.

I told her I was in a tough situation, and I

didn't know what to do.

I got to give Mom credit for how she handled

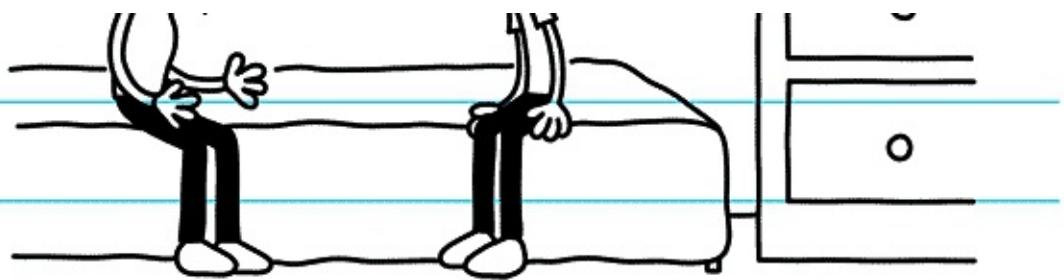
it. She didn't try to pry and get all the details.

All she said was that I should try to do the

"right thing," because it's our choices that make

us who we are.





I figure that's pretty decent advice. But I'm still

not 100% sure what I'm going to do tomorrow.

Thursday

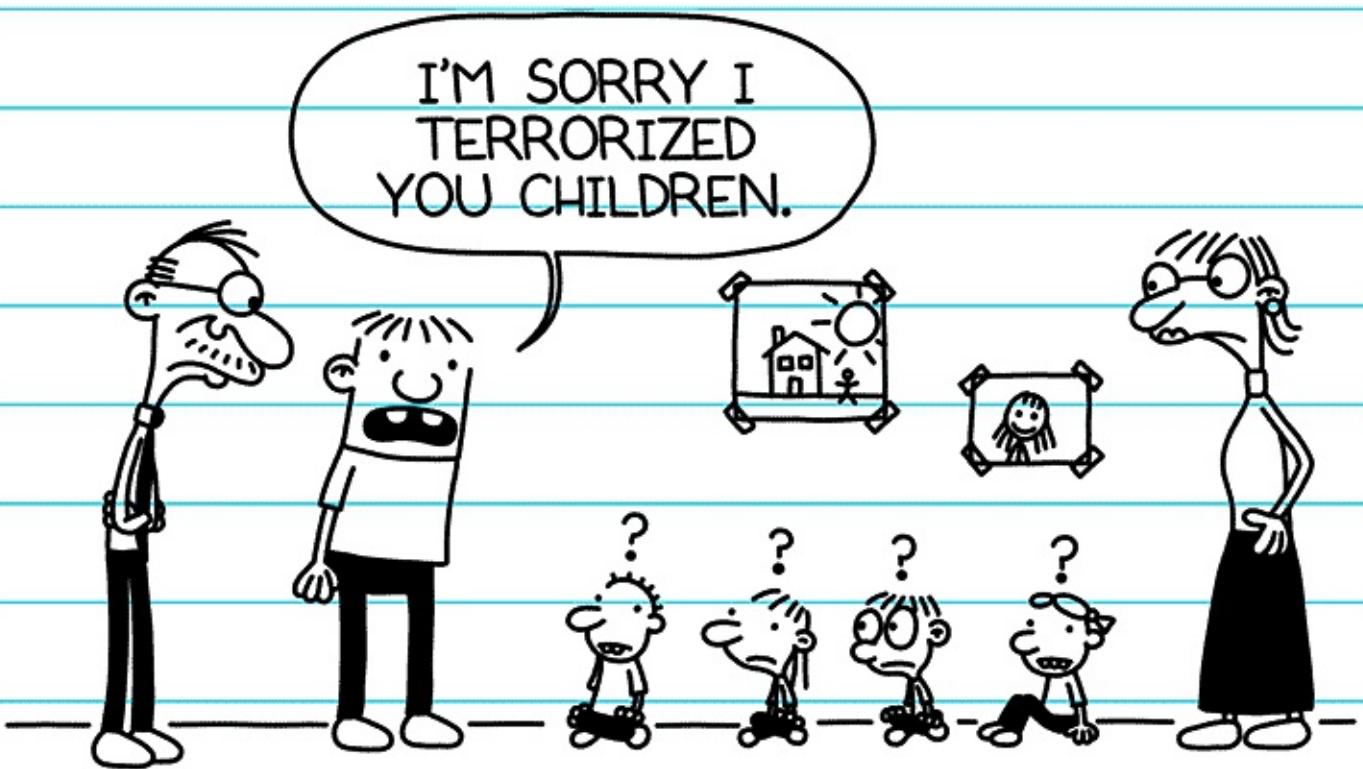
Well, I was up all night tossing and turning

over this Rowley situation, but I finally made

up my mind. I decided the right thing to do

was to just let Rowley take one for the team

this time around.



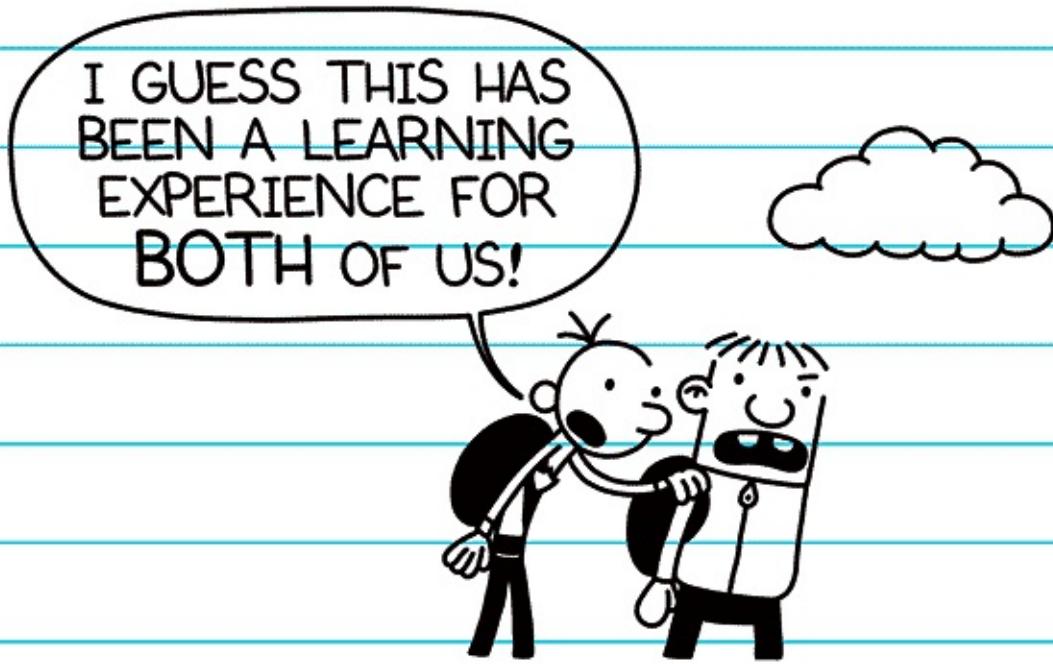
On the way home from school, I came clean with

Rowley and told him the whole truth about what

happened, and how it was me who chased the

kids with the worms.

Then I told him there were lessons we could both learn from this. I told him I learned to be more careful about what I do in front of Mrs. Irvine's house, and that he learned a valuable lesson, too, which is this: Be careful about who you lend your coat to.



To be honest with you, my message didn't seem to be getting through to Rowley.

We were supposed to hang out after school today, but he said he was just going to go home and take a nap.

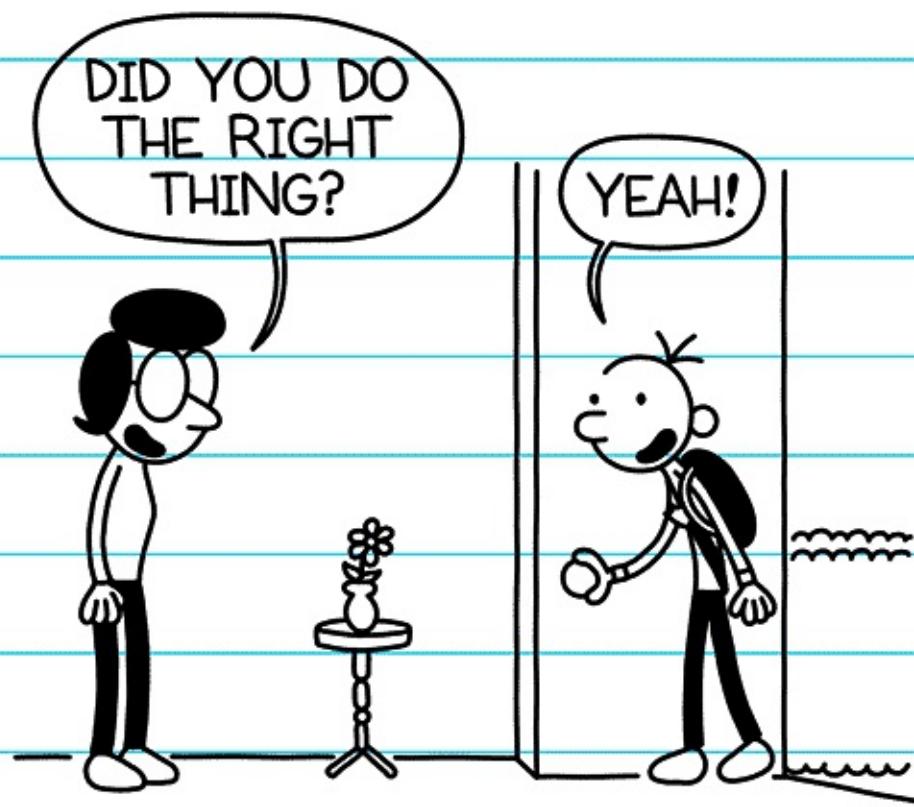
I couldn't really blame him. Because if I didn't

have my hot chocolate this morning, I wouldn't

have had much energy, either.

When I got home, Mom was waiting for me at

the front door.



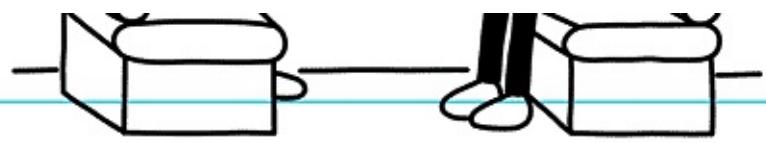
Mom took me out to get some ice cream as a special

treat. And what this whole episode has taught me

is that every once in a while, it's not such a bad

idea to listen to your mother.





Tuesday

There was another announcement on the loudspeaker

today, and to be honest with you, I kind of

figured this one was coming.



I knew it was just a matter of time before I

got busted for what happened last week.

When I got to Mr. Winsky's office, he was

really mad. Mr. Winsky told me that an

"anonymous source" had informed him that I

was the real culprit in the worm-chasing incident.

Then he told me I was relieved of my Safety

Patrol duties “effective immediately.”

Well, it doesn't take a detective to figure out

that the anonymous source was Rowley.

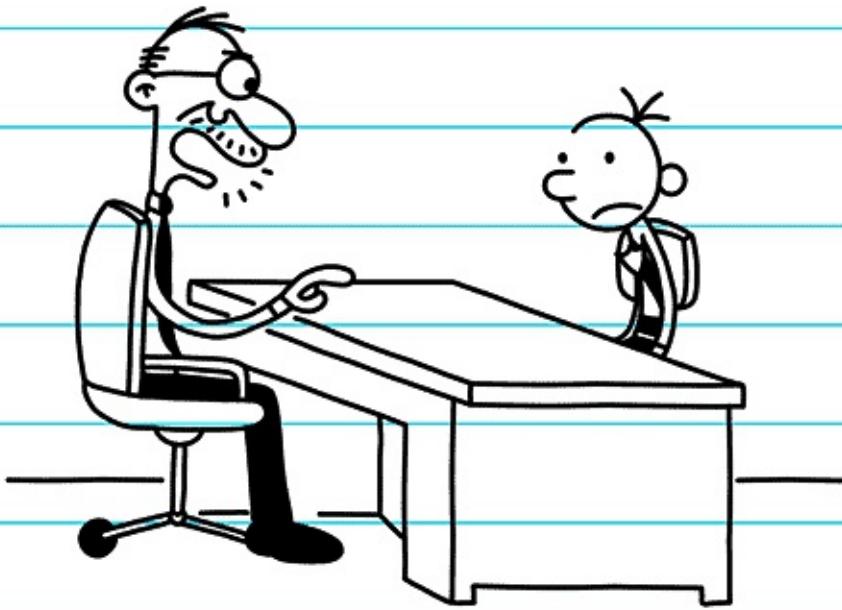
I can't believe Rowley went and backstabbed

me like that. While I was sitting there getting

chewed out by Mr. Winsky, I was thinking, I

need to remember to give my friend a lecture

about loyalty.



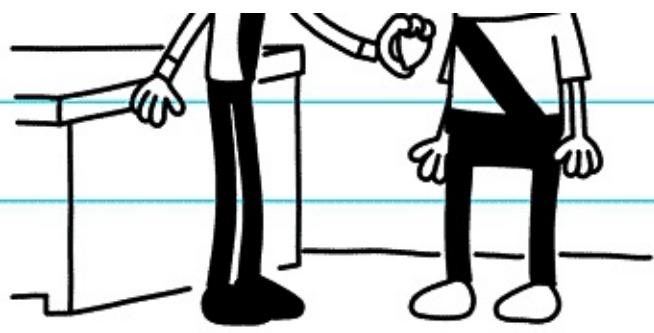
Later on today, Rowley got reinstated as a Patrol.

And get this: He actually got a Promotion.

Mr. Winsky said Rowley had "exhibited dignity

under false suspicion."





I thought about really letting Rowley have it

for ratting me out like that, but then I

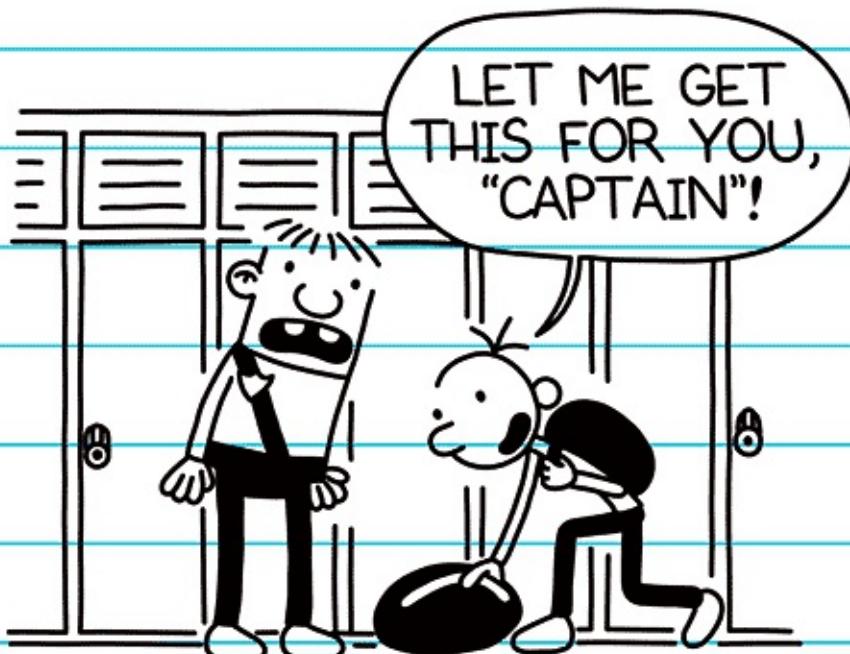
realized something.

In June, all the officers in the Safety Patrols

go on a trip to Six Flags, and they get to take

along one friend. I need to make sure Rowley

knows I'm his guy.



Tuesday

Like I said before, the worst part of getting

kicked off Safety Patrols is losing your hot

chocolate privileges.

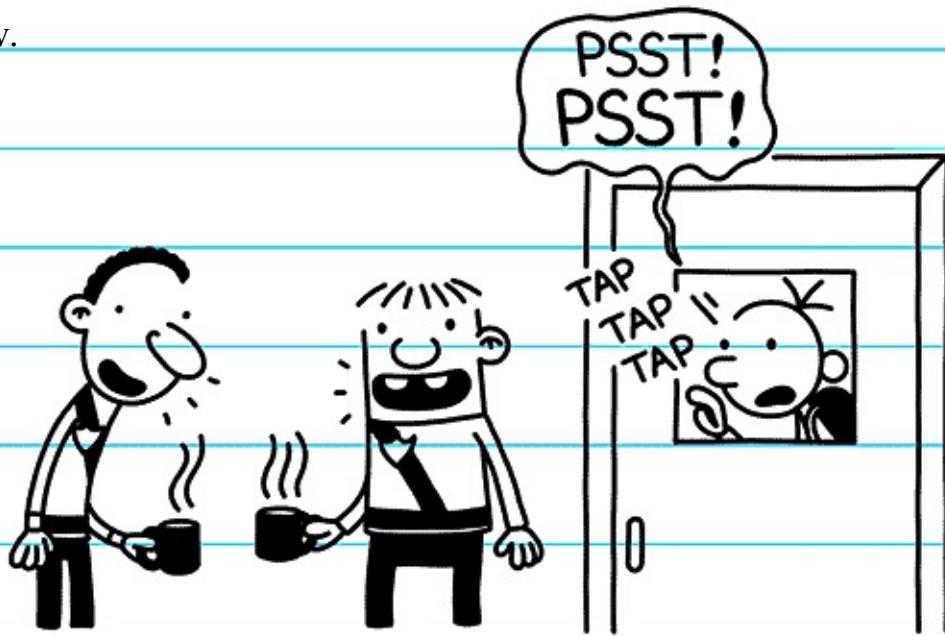
Every morning, I go to the back door of the

cafeteria so Rowley can hook me up.

But either my friend has gone deaf or he's too

busy kissing the other officers' butts to notice me

at the window.



In fact, now that I think of it, Rowley has been

totally giving me the cold shoulder lately. And

that's really lame, because if I recall correctly,

He's the one that sold me out.

Even though Rowley has been a total jerk lately,

I tried to break the ice with him today, anyway.

But even that didn't seem to work.





Friday

Ever since the worm incident, Rowley has been
hanging out with Collin Lee every day after school.
What really stinks is that Collin is supposed to
be my backup friend.

Those guys are acting totally ridiculous. Today,
Rowley and Collin were wearing these matching
T-shirts, and it made me just about want to vomit.



After dinner tonight, I saw Rowley and Collin

walking up the hill together, chumming it up.

Collin had his overnight bag, so I knew they

were going to do a sleepover at Rowley's.

And I thought, Well, two can play at tHAt

game. The best way to get back at Rowley was

to get a new best friend of my own. But

unfortunately, the only person who came to mind

right at that moment was Fregley.

I went up to Fregley's with my overnight bag so

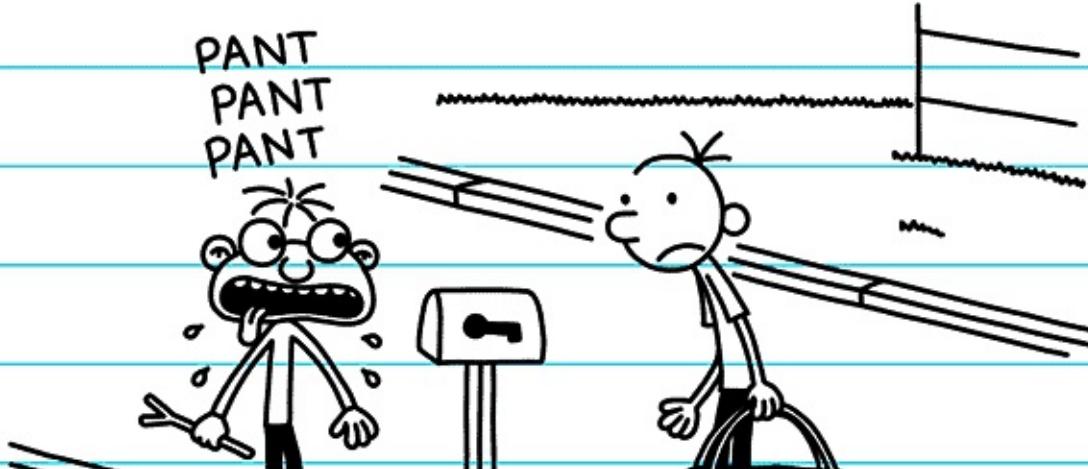
Rowley could see I had other friend options, too.

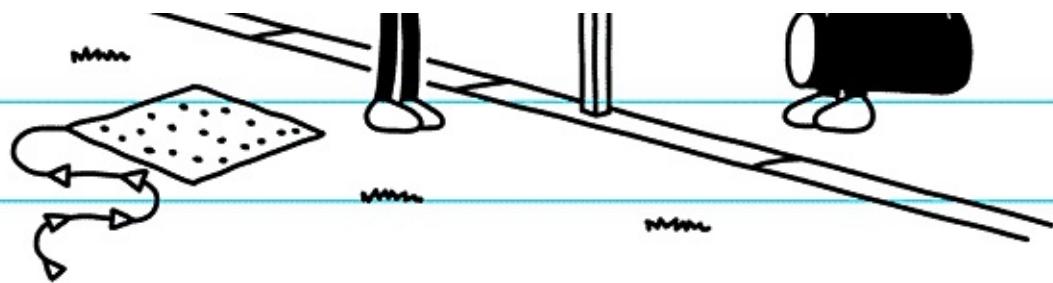
When I got there, Fregley was in his front

yard stabbing a kite with a stick. That's when

I started to think maybe this wasn't the best

idea after all.





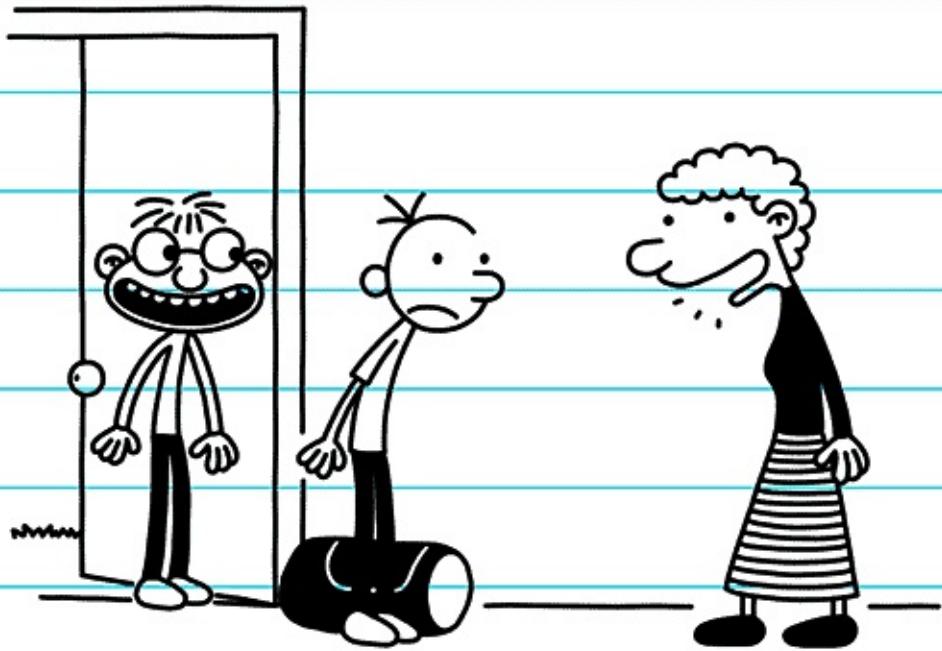
But Rowley was in his front yard, and he was

watching me. So I knew there was no turning back.

I invited myself into Fregley's house. His mom said

she was excited to see Fregley with a "playmate,"

which was a term I was not too enthusiastic about.



Me and Fregley went upstairs to his room.

Fregley tried to get me to play Twister with

him, so I made sure I stayed ten feet away

from him at all times.

I decided that I should just pull the plug on

this stupid idea and go home. But every time I

looked out the window, Rowley and Collin were

still in Rowley's front yard.

I didn't want to leave until those guys went back

inside. But things started to get out of hand with

Fregley pretty quickly. When I was looking out the

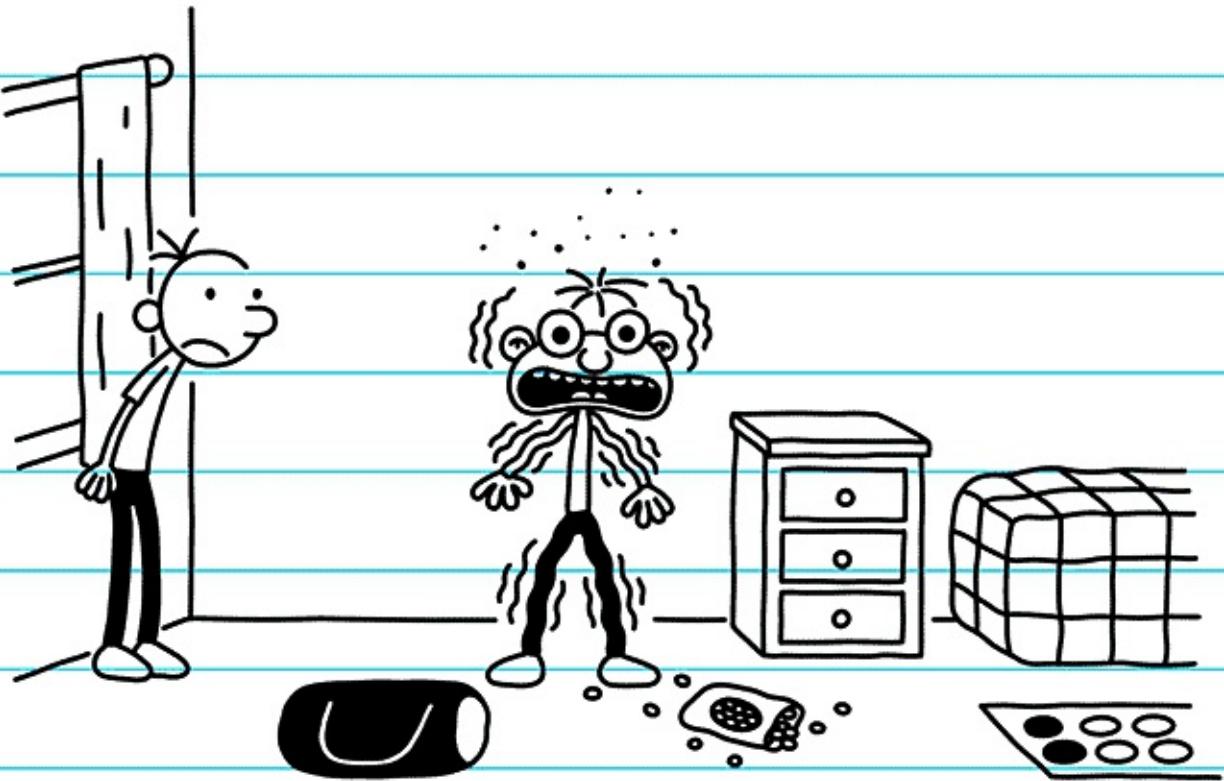
window, Fregley broke into my backpack and ate the

whole bag of jelly beans I had in there.

Fregley's one of these kids who's not supposed

to eat any sugar, so two minutes later, he was

bouncing off the walls.



Fregley started acting like a total maniac, and

he chased me all around his upstairs.

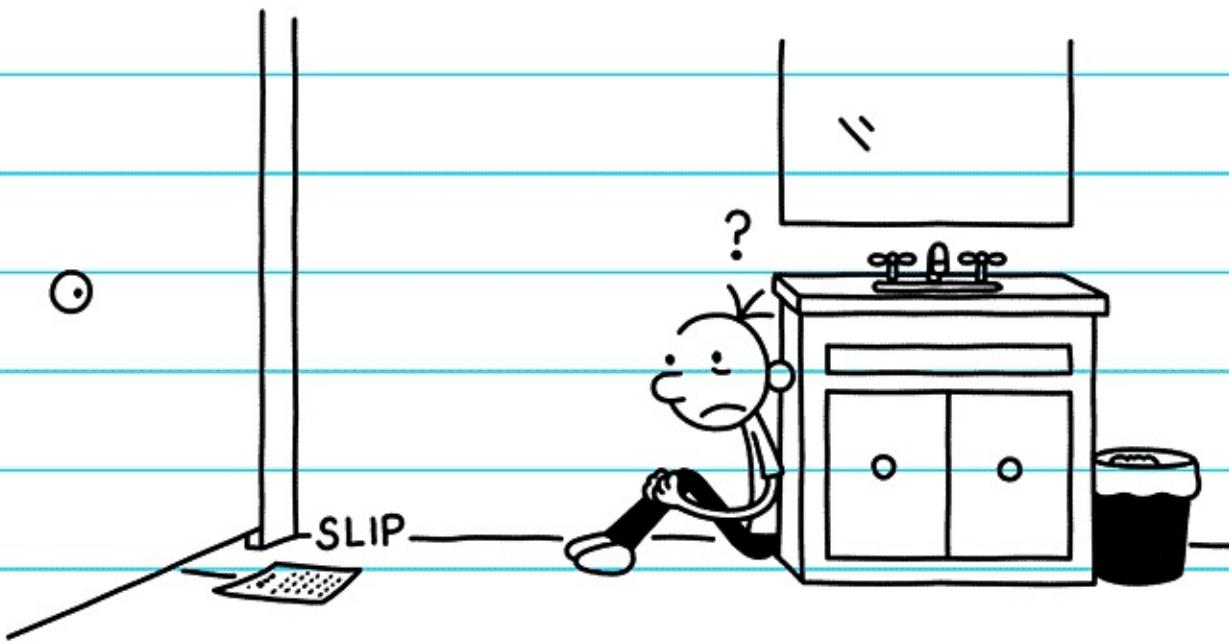
I kept thinking he was going to come down off

of his sugar high, but he didn't. Eventually, I

locked myself in his bathroom to wait him out.

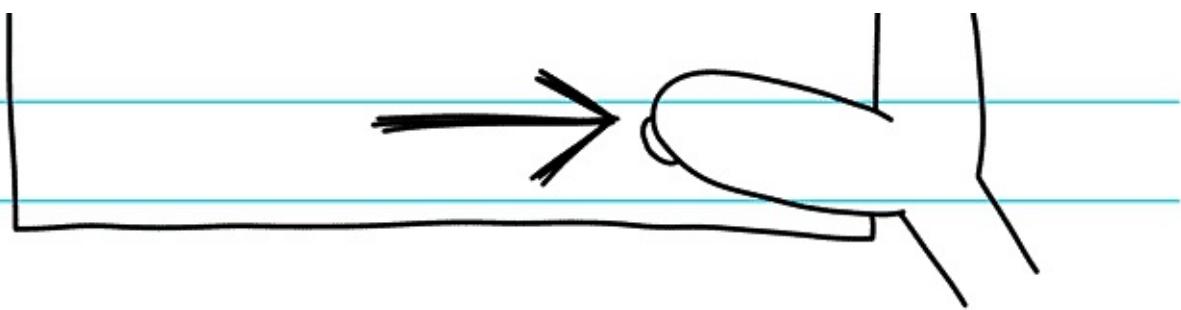
Around 11:30, it got quiet out in the hallway.

That's when Fregley slipped a piece of paper
under the door.



I picked it up and read it.

Dear Gregory,
I'm very sorry I
chased you with a
booger on my finger.
Here, I put it on
this paper so you
can get me back.



194

That's the last thing I remember before I

blacked out.

I came to my senses a few hours later. After I

woke up, I cracked the door open, and I heard

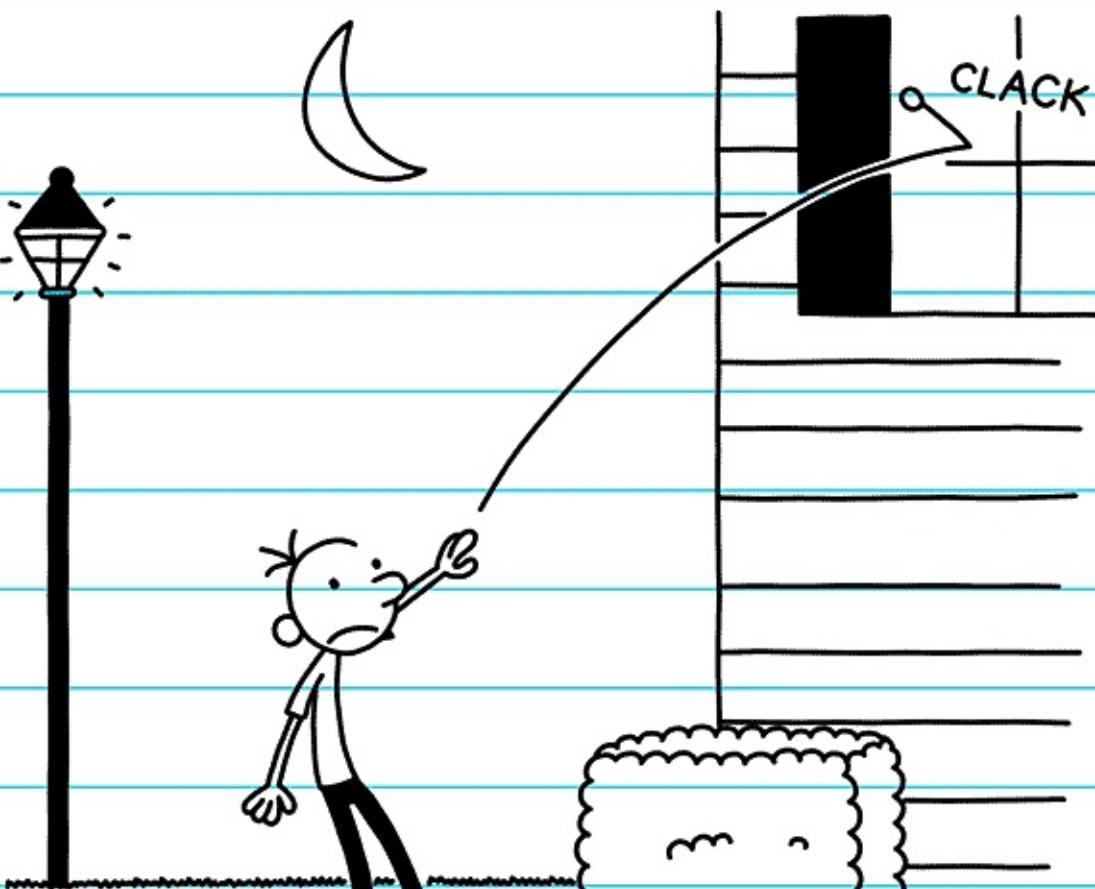
snoring coming from Fregley's room. So I decided

to make a run for it.

Mom and Dad were not happy with me for getting

them out of bed at 2:00 in the morning. But by

that point, I could really care less.





Monday

Well, me and Rowley have officially been ex-friends
for about a month now, and to be honest with
you, I'm better off without him.

I'm glad I can just do whatever I want without
having to worry about carrying all that dead
weight around.

Lately I've been hanging out in Rodrick's room
after school and going through his stuff. The other
day, I found one of his middle school yearbooks.



Rodrick wrote on everybody's picture in his

yearbook, so you can tell how he felt about all

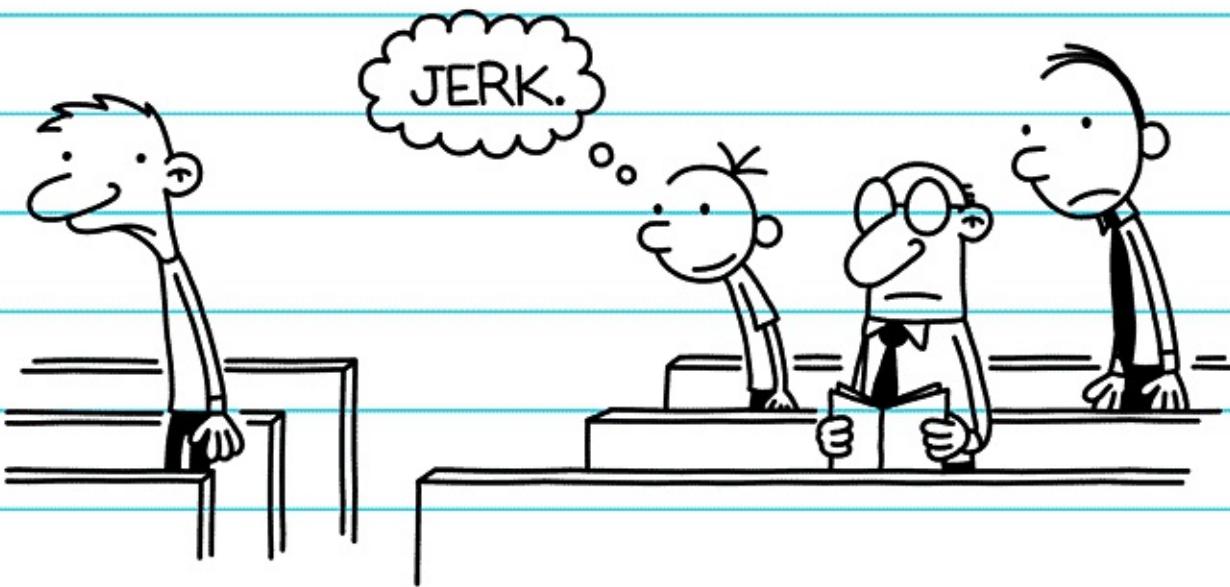
the kids in his grade.



Every once in a while, I see Rodrick's old classmates

around town. And I have to remember to thank

Rodrick for making church a lot more interesting.



But the page in Rodrick's yearbook that's

really interesting is the Class Favorites page.

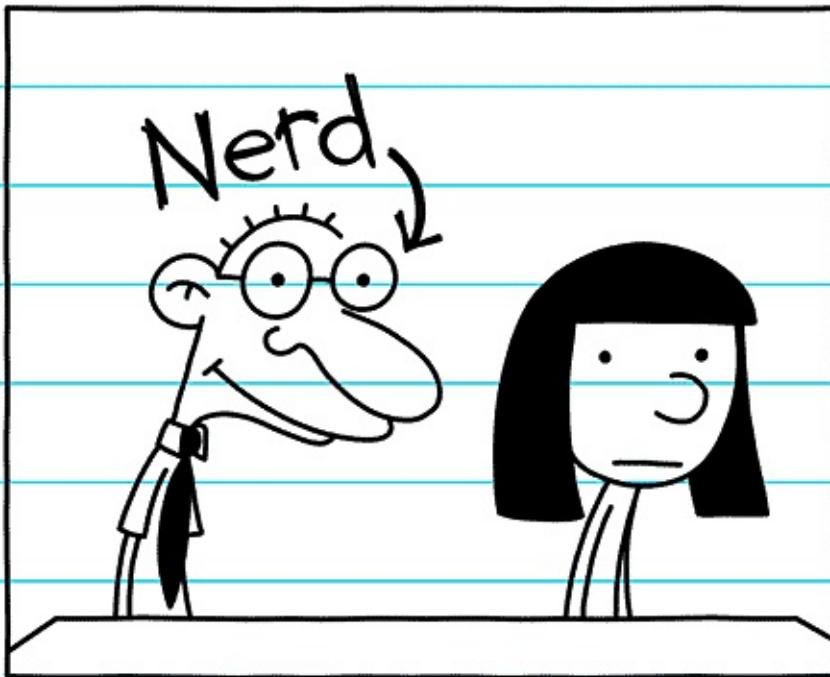
That's where they put pictures of the kids who

get voted Most Popular and Most Talented and

all that.

Rodrick wrote on his Class Favorites page, too.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED



Bill Watson

Kathy Nguyen

You know, this Class Favorites thing has really

got my gears turning.

If you can get yourself voted onto the Class

Favorites page, you're practically an immortal.

Even if you don't live up to what you got

picked for, it doesn't really matter, because it's

on permanent record.

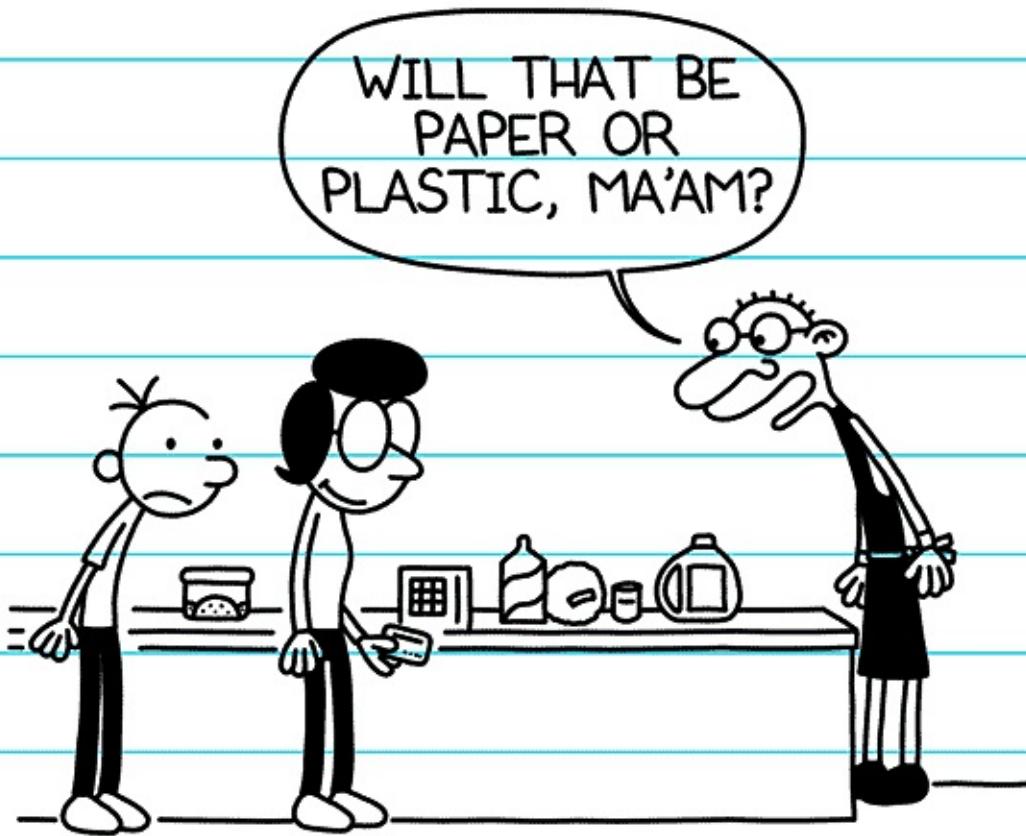
People still treat Bill Watson like he's something

special, even though he ended up dropping out of

high school.

We still run into him at the Food Barn every

once in a while.



So here's what I'm thinking: This school year

has been kind of a bust, but if I can get voted

as a Class Favorite, I'll go out on a high note.

I've been trying to think of a category I have

a shot at. Most Popular and Most Athletic are

definitely out, so I'm going to have to find

something that's a little bit more in reach.

At first I thought maybe I should wear really

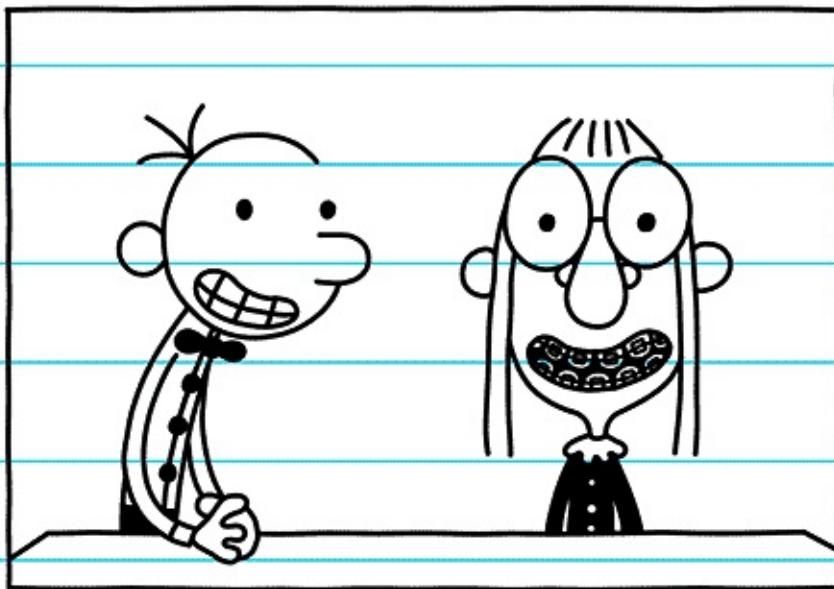
nice clothes for the rest of the year so I can

get Best Dressed.

But that would mean I would have to get my

picture taken with Jenna Stewart, and she

dresses like a Pilgrim.



Wednesday

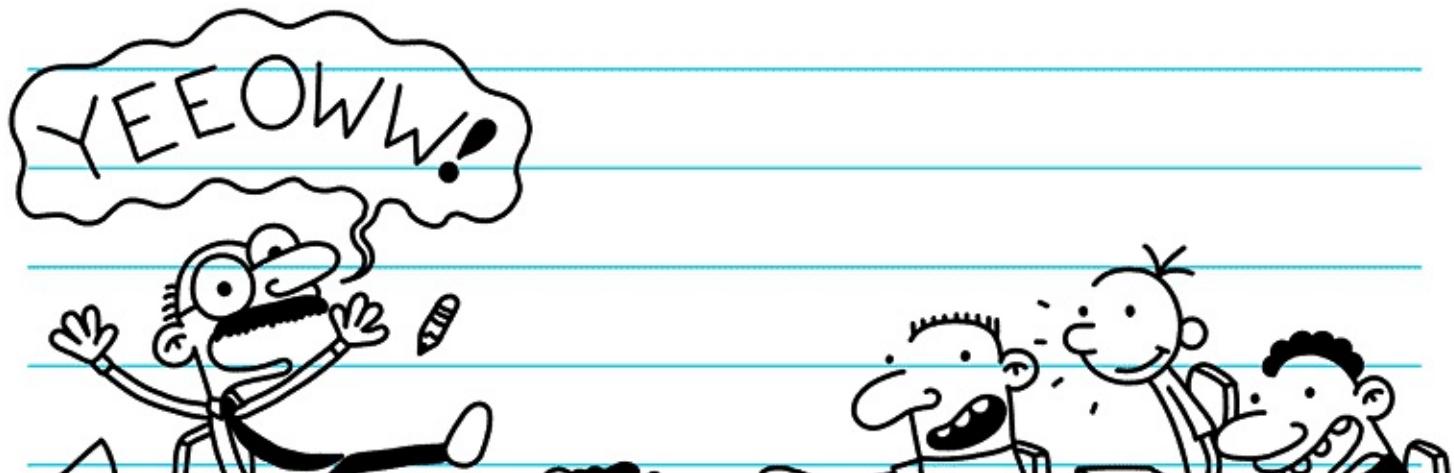
Last night I was lying in bed, and it hit me: I

should go for Class Clown.

It's not like I'm known for being real funny at

school or anything, but if I can pull off one big

prank right before voting, that could do it.





THUMB
TACK

May

Thursday

Today I was trying to figure out how I was

going to sneak a thumbtack onto Mr. Worth's

chair in History when he said something that

made me rethink my plan.

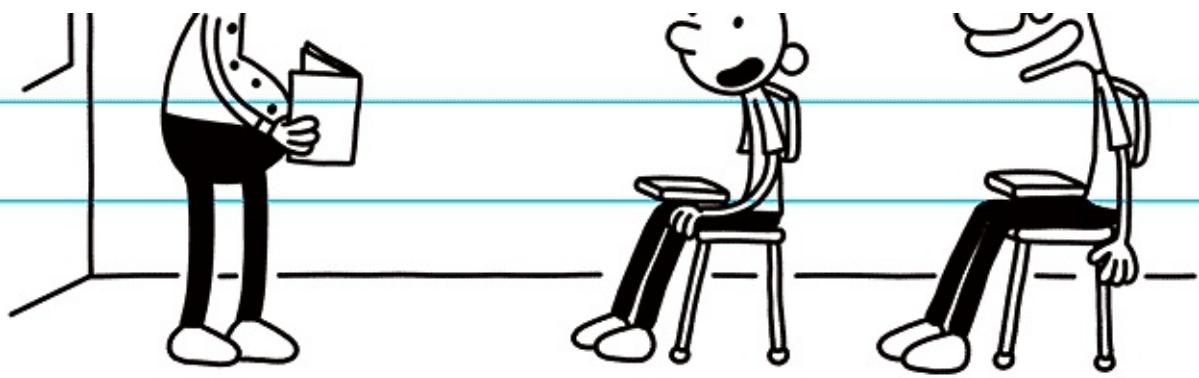
Mr. Worth told us he has a dentist's appointment

tomorrow, so we're going to have a substitute.

Subs are like comic gold. You can say just about

anything you want, and you can't get in trouble.



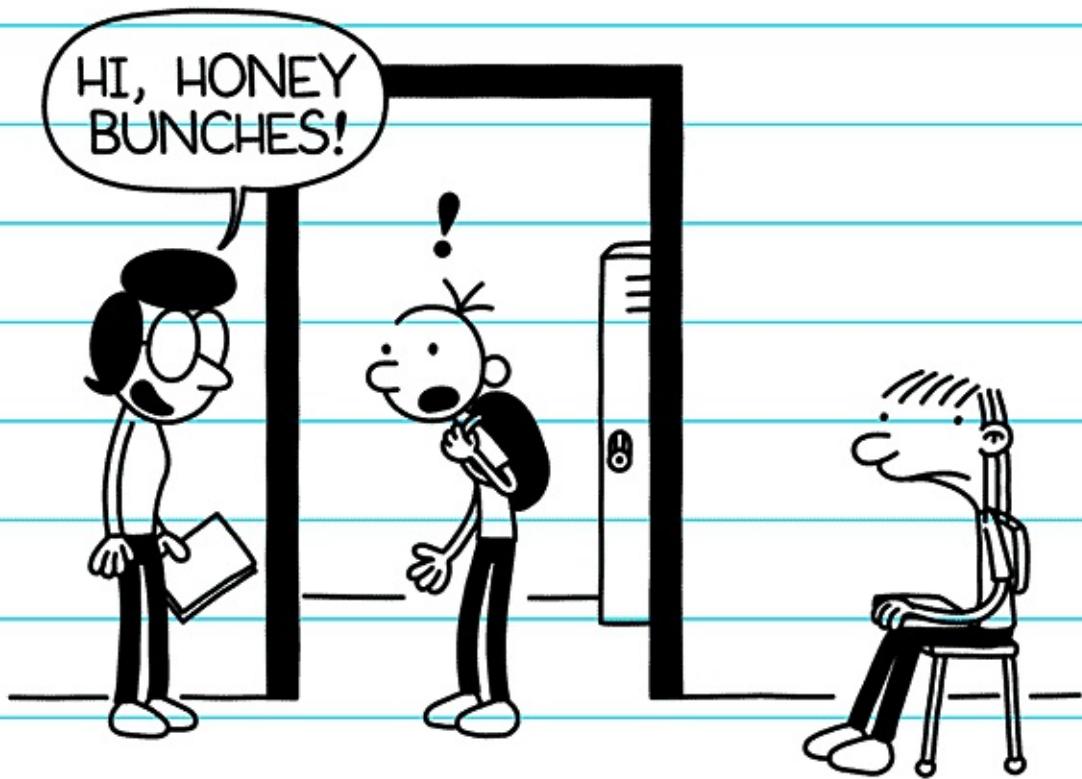


Friday

I walked into my History class today, ready

to execute my plan. But when I got to the

door, guess who the substitute teacher was?



Of all the people in the world to be our sub

today, it was Mom. I thought Mom's days of

getting involved at my school were over.

She used to be one of those parents who came

in to help out in the classroom. But that all

changed after Mom volunteered to be a

chaperone for our field trip to the zoo when

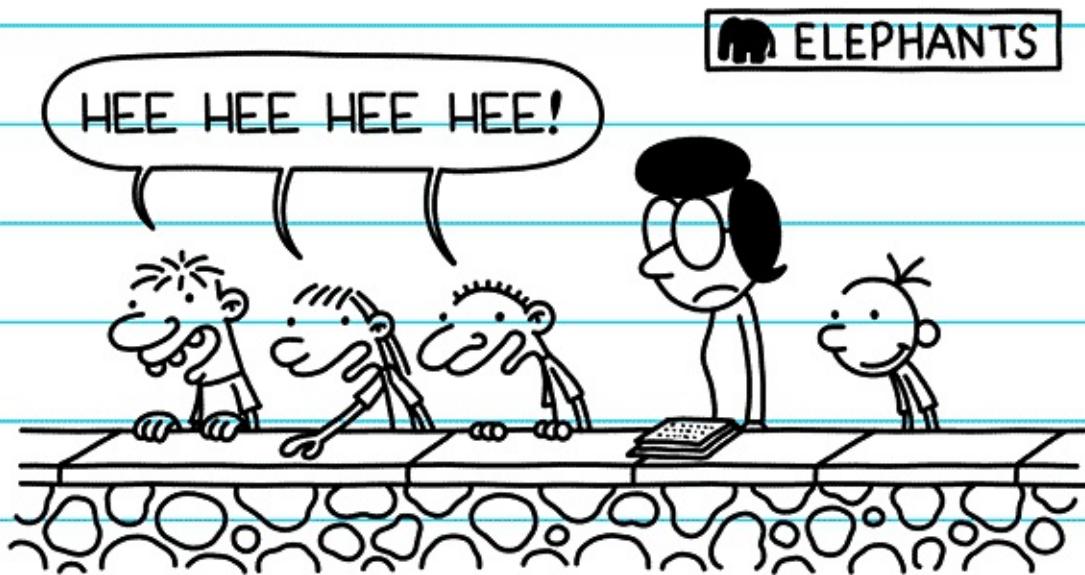
I was in third grade.

Mom had prepared all sorts of material to help us

kids appreciate the different exhibits, but all

anyone wanted to do was watch the animals go

to the bathroom.



Anyway, Mom totally foiled my plan to win Class

Clown. I'm just lucky there's not a category

called Biggest Mama's Boy, because after today,

I'd win that one in a landslide.





Wednesday

The school paper came out again today. I quit my job as school cartoonist after "Creighton the Curious Student" came out, and I didn't really care who they picked to replace me.

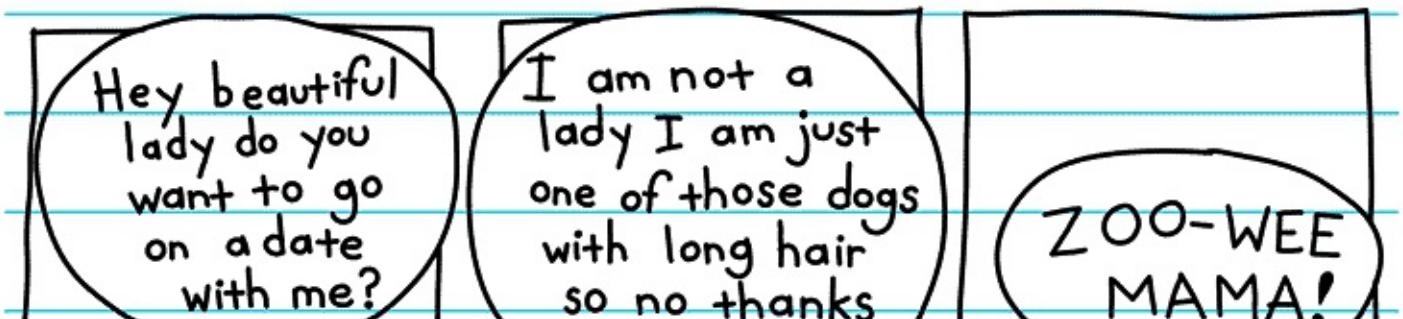
But everyone was laughing at the comics page at lunch, so I picked up a copy to see what was so funny. And when I opened it up, I couldn't believe my eyes.

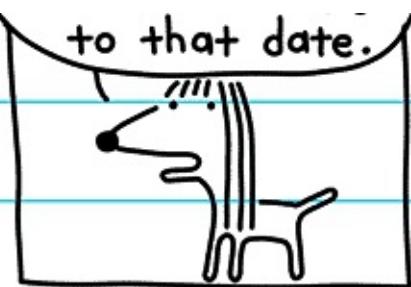


It was "Zoo-Wee Mama." And of course Mr. Ira didn't change a single word of Rowley's strip.

Zoo-Wee Mama

by Rowley Jefferson





So now Rowley's getting all the fame that was

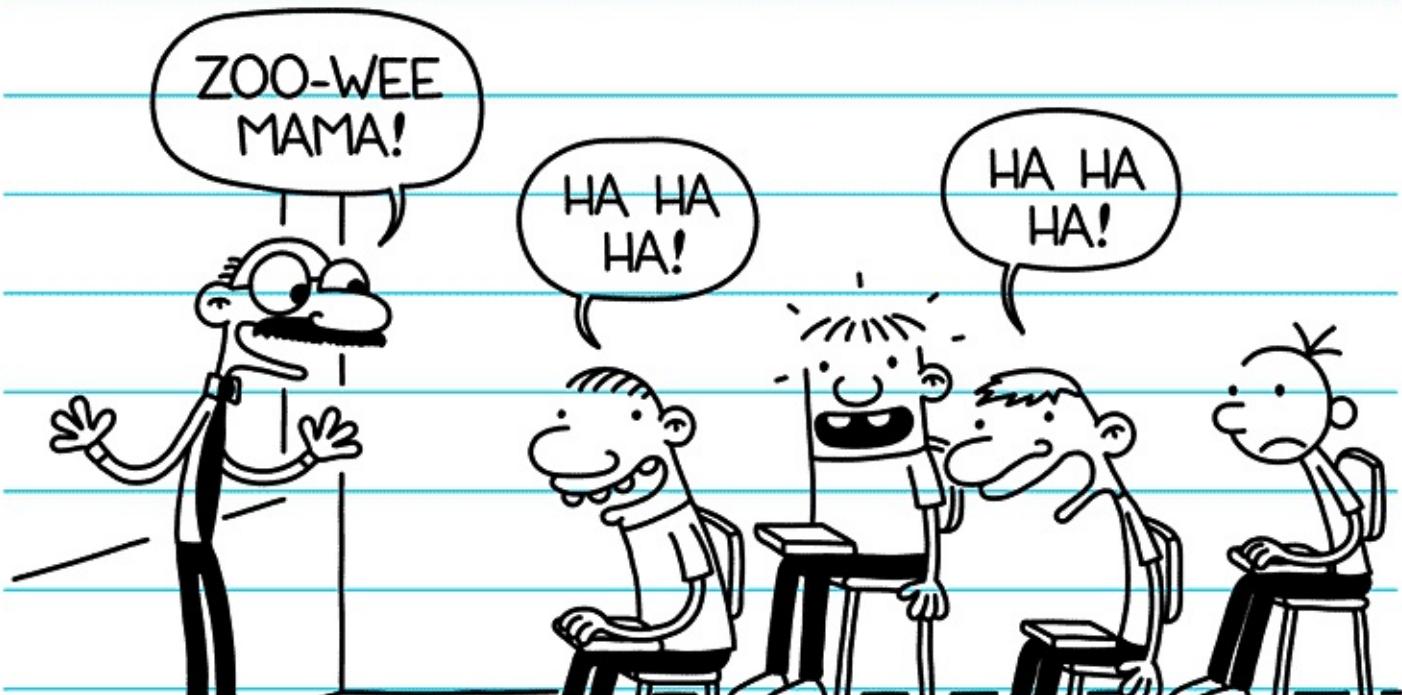
supposed to be mine.

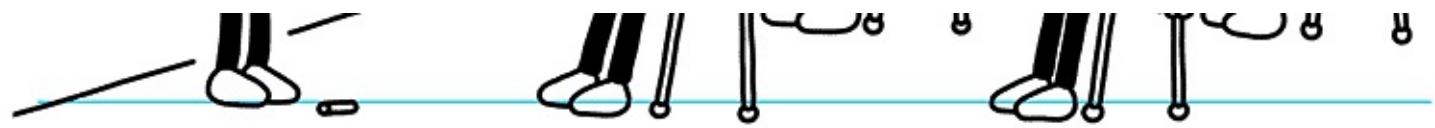


Even the teachers are kissing Rowley's butt. I

almost lost my lunch when Mr. Worth dropped his

chalk in History class—



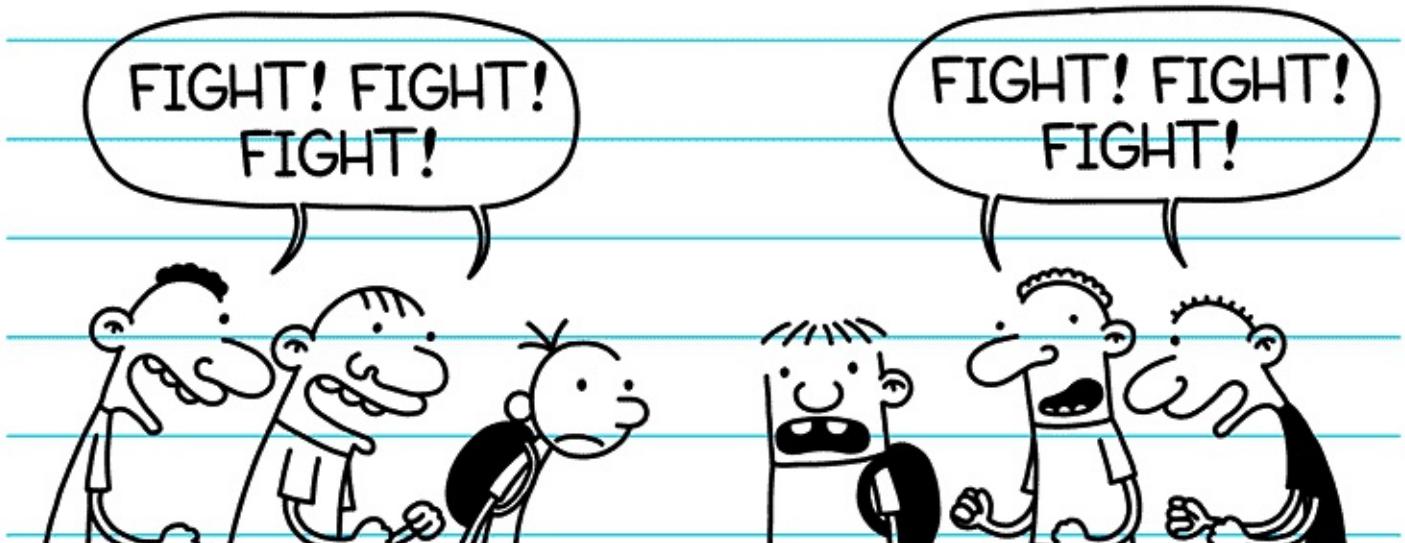


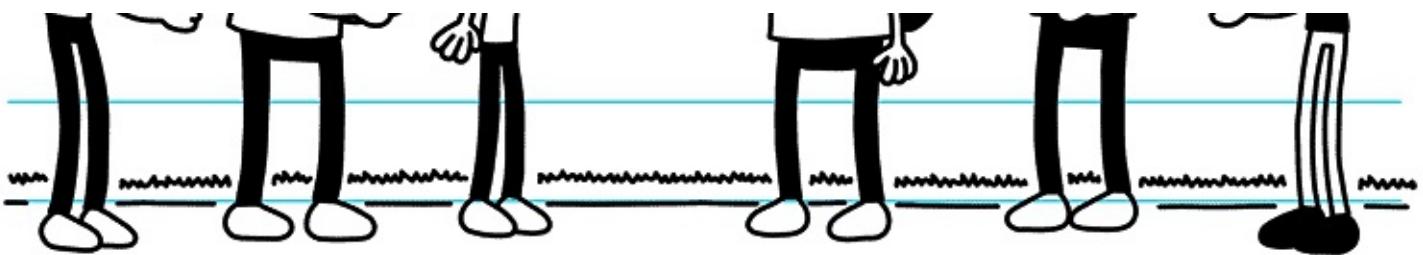
Monday

This “Zoo-Wee Mama” thing has really got me worked up. Rowley is getting all the credit for a comic that we came up with together. I figured the least he could do was put my name on the strip as the co-creator.

So I went up to Rowley after school and told him that's what he was gonna have to do. But Rowley said “Zoo-Wee Mama” was all His idea and that I didn't have anything to do with it.

I guess we must've been talking pretty loud, because the next thing you knew, we attracted a crowd.





206

The kids at my school are AlWAys itching to

see a fight. Me and Rowley tried to walk away,

but those guys weren't going to let us go until

they saw us throw some punches.

I've never been in a real fight before, so I didn't

know how I was supposed to stand or hold my

fists or anything. And you could tell Rowley

didn't know what he was doing either, because he

just started prancing around like a leprechaun.



I was pretty sure I could take Rowley in a

fight, but the thing that made me nervous was

the fact that Rowley takes karate. I don't know

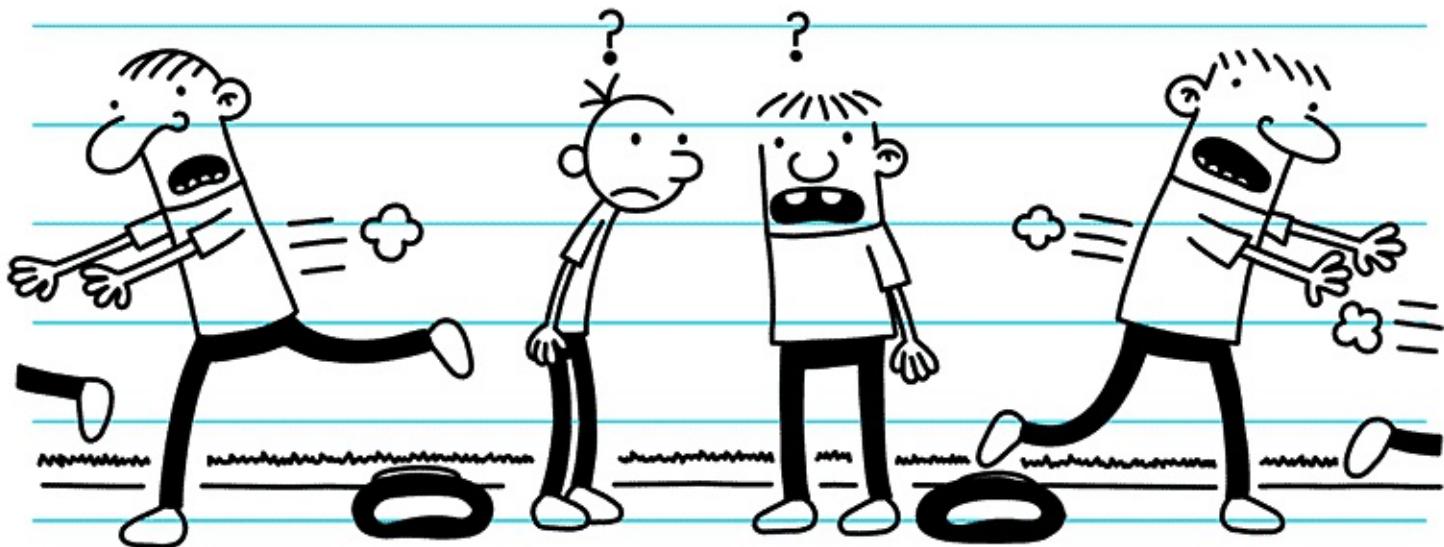
what kind of hocus-pocus they teach in Rowley's

karate classes, but the last thing I needed was

for him to lay me out right there on the blacktop.

Before me or Rowley made a move, there was a
screeching sound in the school parking lot. A
bunch of teenagers had stopped their pickup
truck, and they started piling out.

I was just happy that everyone's attention was
on the teenagers instead of me and Rowley. But
all the other kids took off when the teenagers
started heading our way.



And then I realized that these teenagers
looked awfully familiar.

That's when it hit me. These were the same
guys who chased me and Rowley around on

Halloween night, and they had finally caught up

with us.

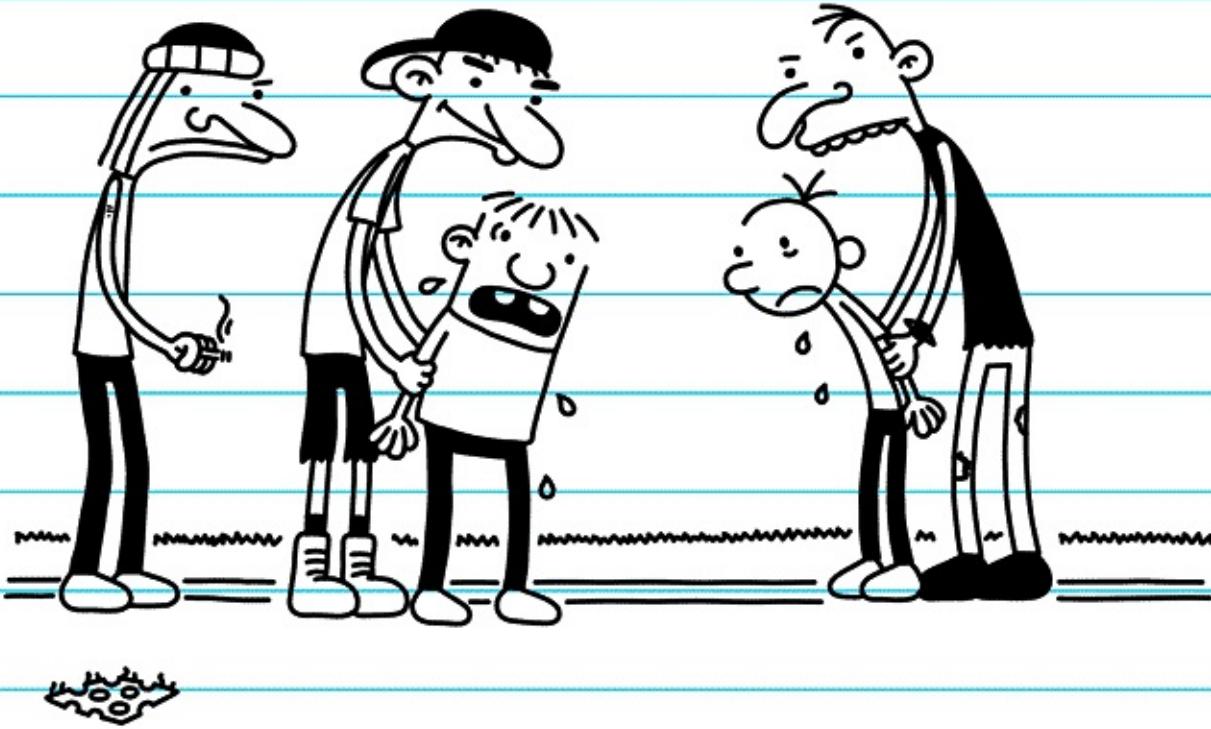
But before we could make a run for it, we had our

arms pinned behind our backs.

Those guys wanted to teach us a lesson for

taunting them on Halloween night, and they

started arguing over what they should do with us.



But to be honest with you, I was more concerned

about something else. The Cheese was only a few

feet from where we were standing on the blacktop,

and it was looking nastier than ever.





The big teenager must have caught my eye,

because the next thing I knew, he was looking

at the Cheese, too. And I guess that gave him

the idea he was looking for.

Rowley got singled out first. The big kid grabbed

Rowley and dragged him over to the Cheese.

Now, I don't want to say exactly what happened

next. Because if Rowley ever tries to run for

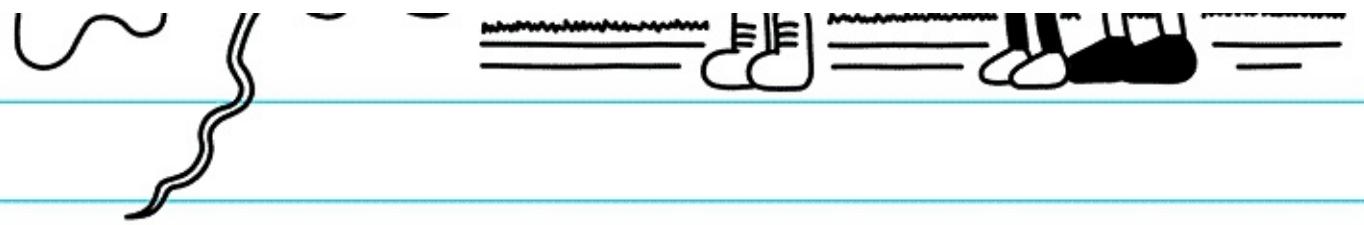
President and someone finds out what these guys

made him do, he won't have a chance.

So I'll put it to you this way: They made Rowley

the Cheese.





I knew they were gonna make me do it, too. I

started to panic, because I knew I wasn't going

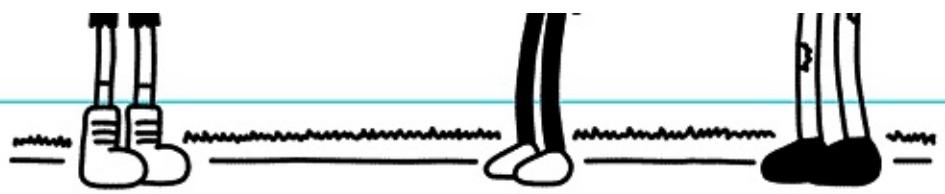
to be able to fight my way out of this situation.

So I did some fast talking instead.



And believe it or not, it actually worked.





I guess the teenagers were satisfied they had

made their point, because after they made

Rowley finish off the rest of the Cheese, they

let us go. They got back in their truck and

took off down the road.

Me and Rowley walked home together. But neither

one of us really said anything on the way back.

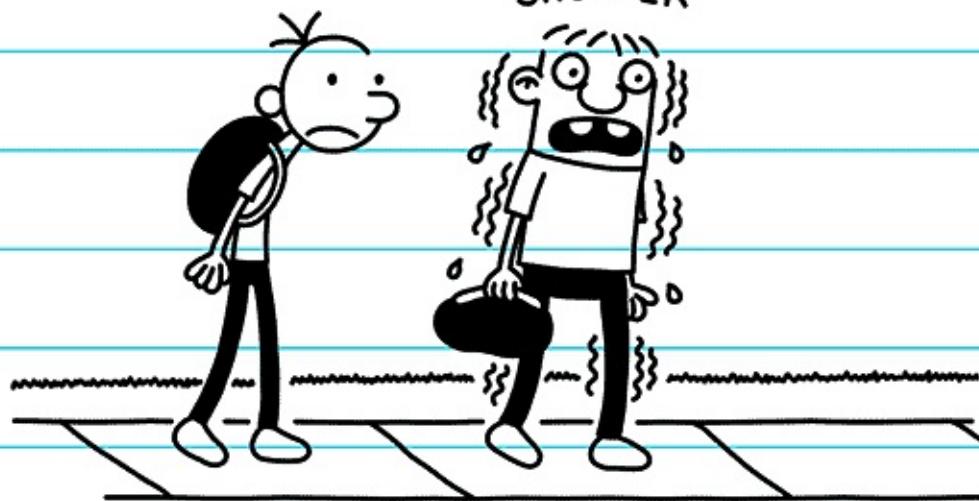
I thought about mentioning to Rowley that

maybe he could have pulled out a couple of his

karate moves back there, but something told me

to hold off on that thought for right now.

SHUDDER
SHUDDER

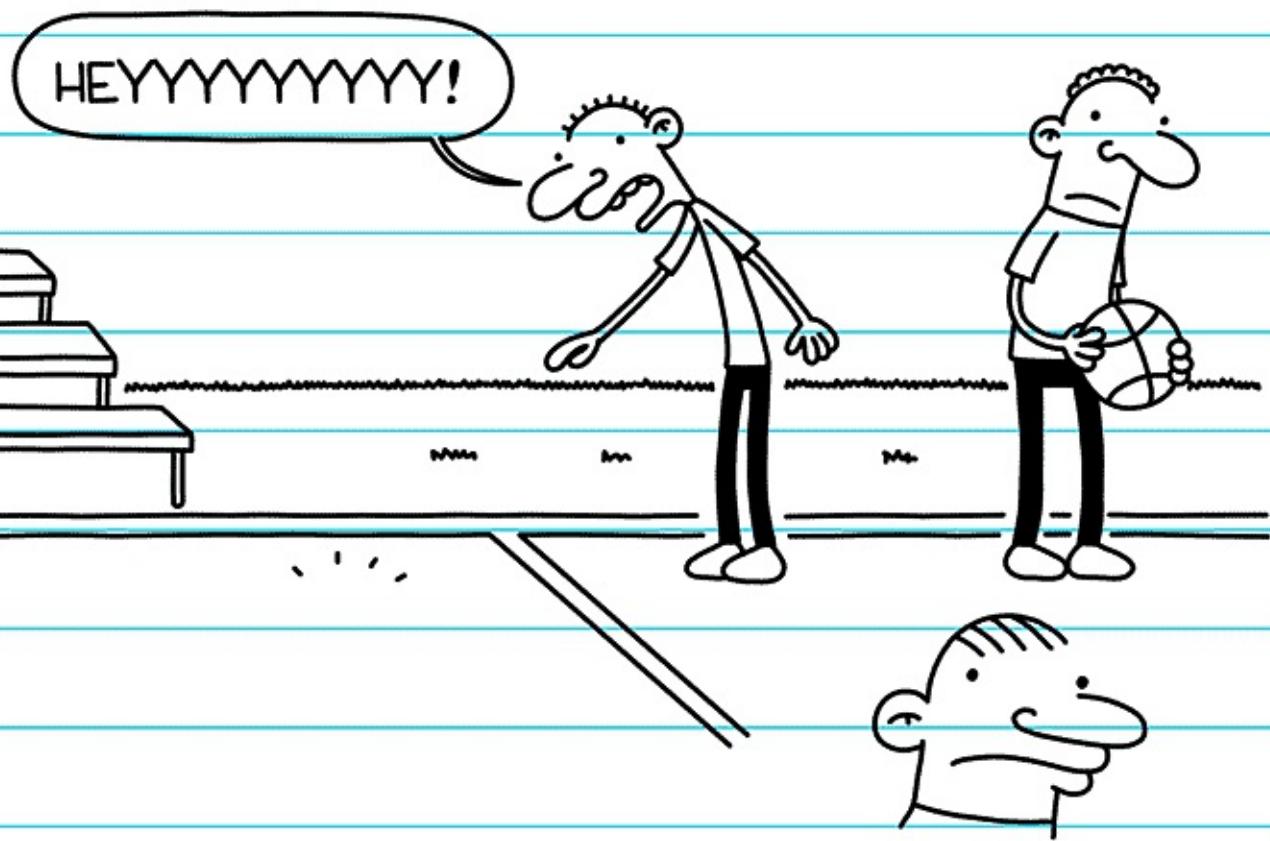


Tuesday

At school today, the teachers let us outside
after lunch.

It took about five seconds for someone to

realize the Cheese was missing from its spot on
the blacktop.



Everybody crowded around to look at where the
Cheese used to be. Nobody could believe it was
actually gone.

People started coming up with these crazy theories

about what happened to it. Somebody said that

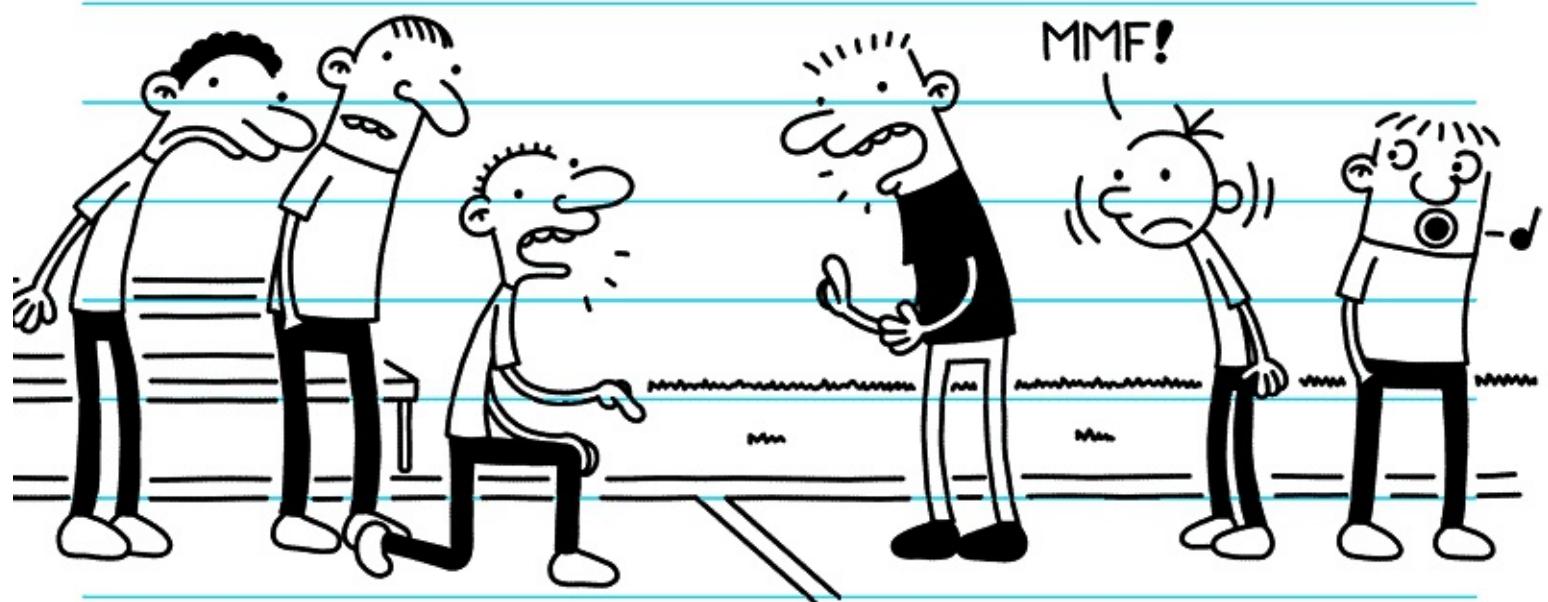
maybe the Cheese grew legs and walked away.

It took all my self-control to keep my mouth

shut. And if Rowley wasn't standing right

there, I honestly don't know if I could have

kept quiet.



A couple of the guys who were arguing over what

happened to the Cheese were the same ones who

were egging me and Rowley on yesterday afternoon.

So I knew it wasn't going to be long before

someone put two and two together and figured out

that we must have had something to do with it.

Rowley was starting to panic, and I don't

blame him, either. If the truth ever came out

about how the Cheese disappeared, Rowley would

be finished. He'd have to move out of the state,

and maybe even the country.

That's when I decided to speak up.

I told everyone that I knew what happened to

the Cheese. I said I was sick of it being on the

blacktop, and I just decided to get rid of it once

and for all.

For a second there, everyone just froze. I

thought people were going to start thanking me

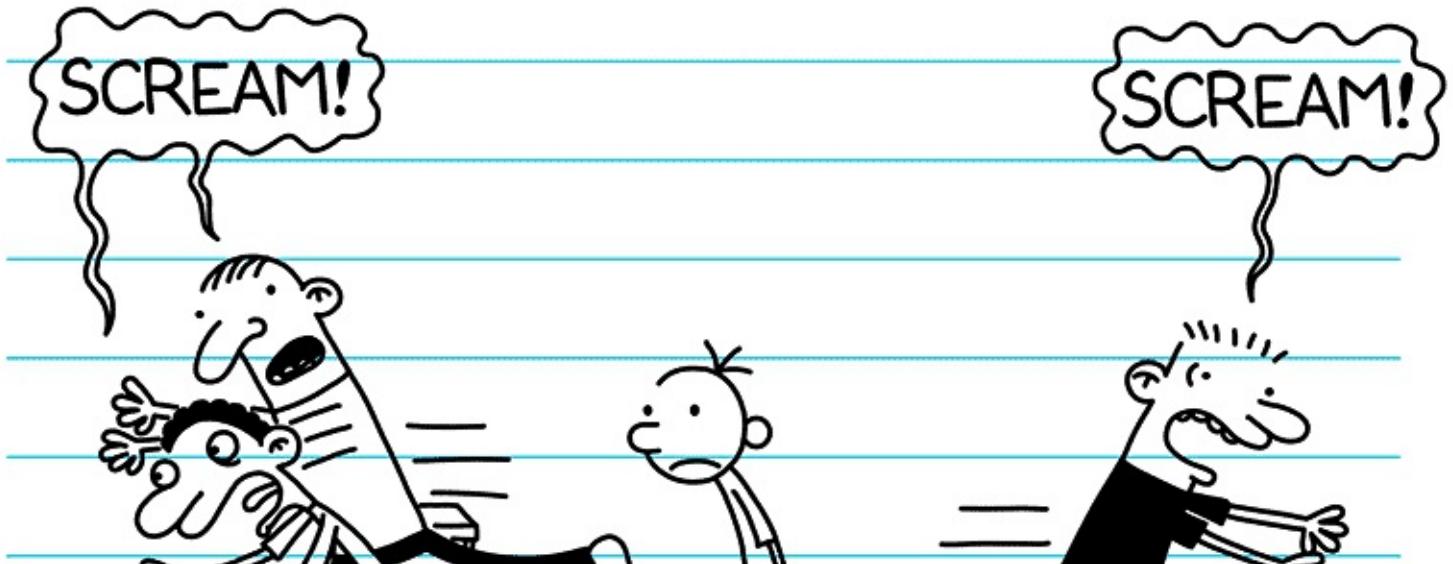
for what I did, but boy, was I wrong.

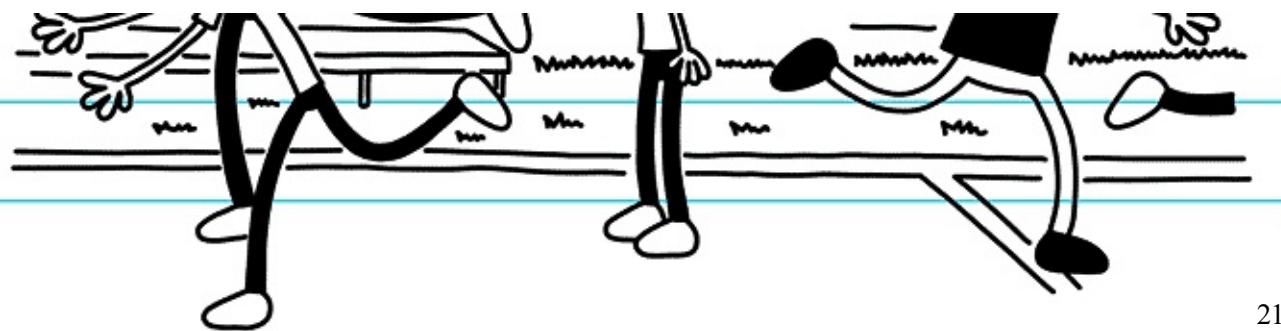
I really wish I had worded my story a little

differently. Because if I threw away the Cheese,

guess what that meant? It meant that I have

the Cheese Touch.





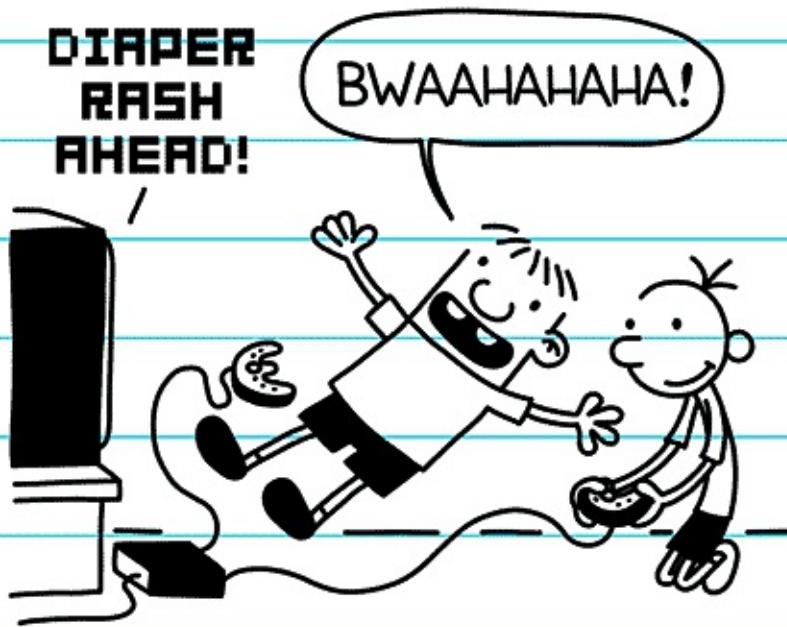
Friday

Well, if Rowley appreciated what I did for him

last week, he hasn't said it. But we've started

hanging out after school again, so I guess that

means me and him are back to normal.



I can honestly say that so far, having the

Cheese Touch hasn't been all that bad.

It got me out of doing the Square Dance unit

in Phys Ed, because no one would partner up

with me. And I've had the whole lunch table to

myself every day.

Today was the last day of school, and they

handed out yearbooks after eighth period.

I flipped to the Class Favorites page, and

here's the picture that was waiting for me.

CLASS CLOWN



Rowley Jefferson

All I can say is, if anyone wants a free yearbook,

they can dig one out of the trash can in the

back of the cafeteria.

You know, Rowley can have Class Clown for all I

care. But if he ever gets too big for his britches,

I' l just remind him that he was the guy who ate _____

the _____. _____

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people who helped bring this book to life, but four individuals deserve special thanks:

Abrams editor Charlie Kochman, whose advocacy for *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* has been beyond what I could have hoped for. Any writer would be lucky to have Charlie as an editor.

Jess Brallier, who understands the power and potential of online publishing, and helped Greg Heffley reach the masses for the first time. Thanks especially for your friendship and mentorship.

Patrick, who was instrumental in helping me improve this book, and who wasn't afraid to tell me when a joke stunk.

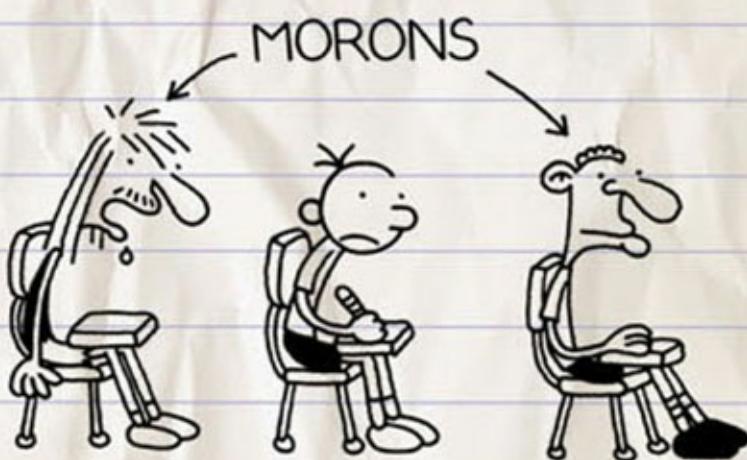
My wife, Julie, without whose incredible support this book would not have become a reality.

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, DC area and moved to New England in 2005. Jeff lives in

D.C., died and moved to New England in 1795. John lives in southern Massachusetts with his wife and their two sons.

I'll be famous one day, but for now I'm stuck in middle school with a bunch of morons.



Being a kid can really stink. And no one knows this better than Greg Heffley, who finds himself thrust into middle school, where undersized weaklings share the hallways with kids who are taller, meaner, and already shaving.

In *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, author and illustrator Jeff Kinney introduces us to an unlikely hero. As Greg says in his diary:

Just don't expect me to be all "Dear Diary"
this and "Dear Diary" that.

Luckily for us, what Greg Heffley says he won't do and what he actually does are two very different things.

An imprint of ABRAMS
115 West 18th Street
New York, NY 10011
www.amuletbooks.com
Printed in U.S.A.