

# DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

## THE LAST STRAW



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.



Jeff Kinney

Jeff Kinney







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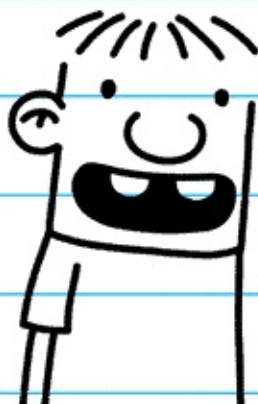
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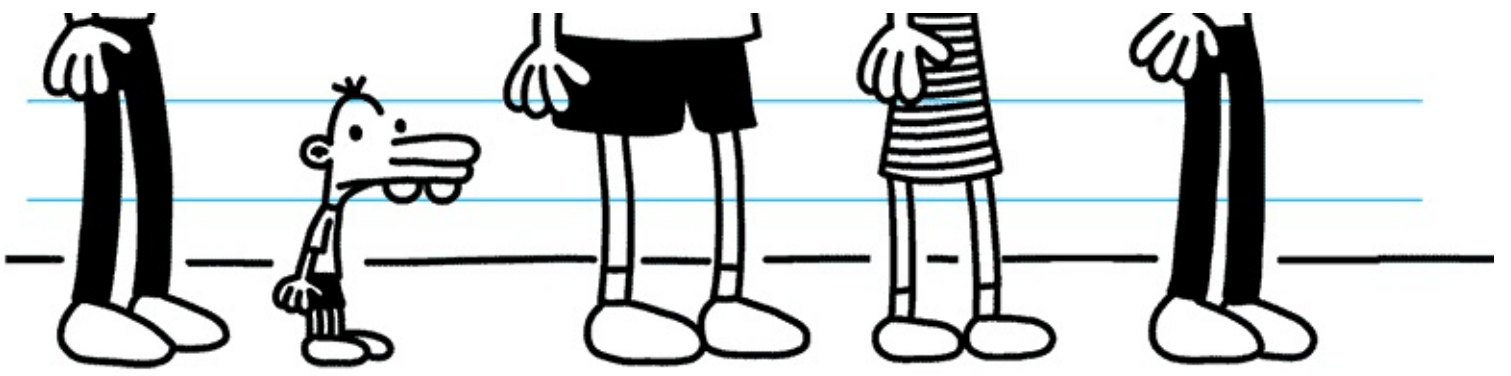
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DIARY

of a  
Wimpy Kid

**THE LAST STRAW**

by Jeff Kinney





AMULET BOOKS

New York

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

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TO TIM



New Year's Day

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

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

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

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



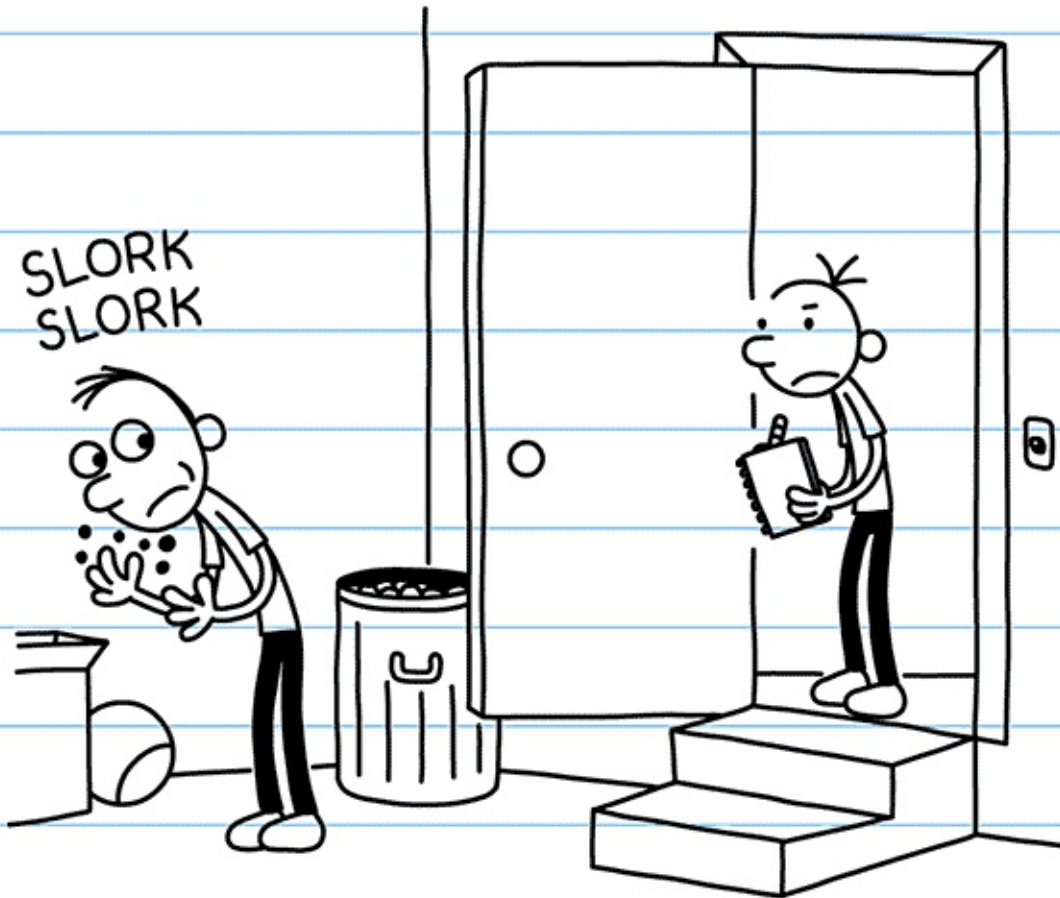




One thing I noticed right off the bat is that  
the people in my family are doing a lousy job  
sticking to their New Year's resolutions.

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

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



Even my little brother, Manny, couldn't stick

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with his resolution.

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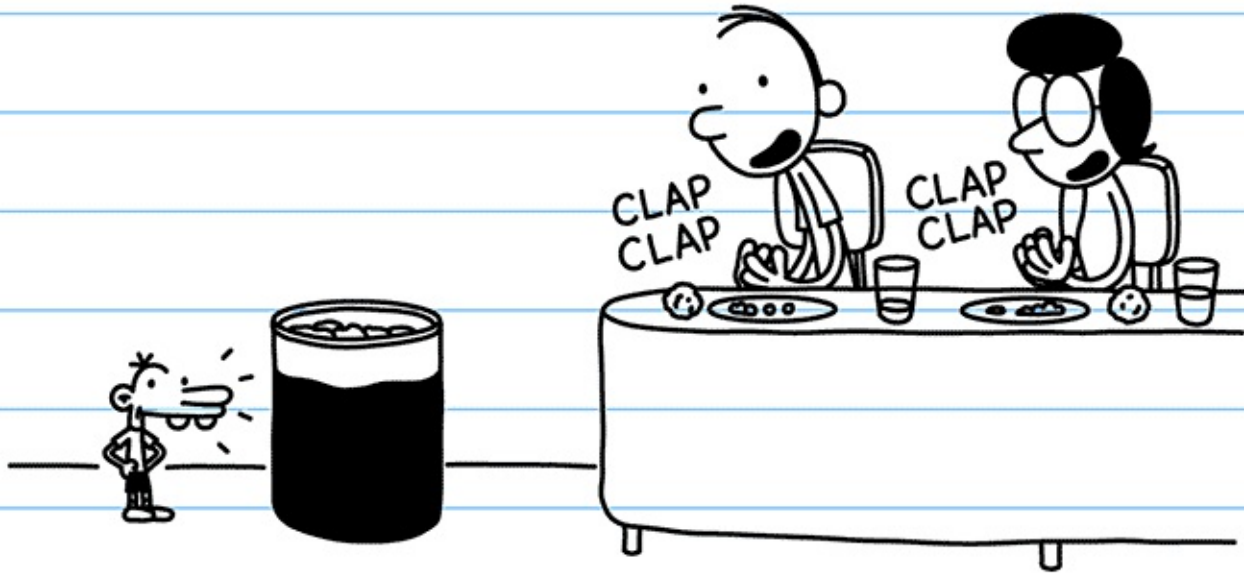
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This morning he told everyone that he's a "big boy"

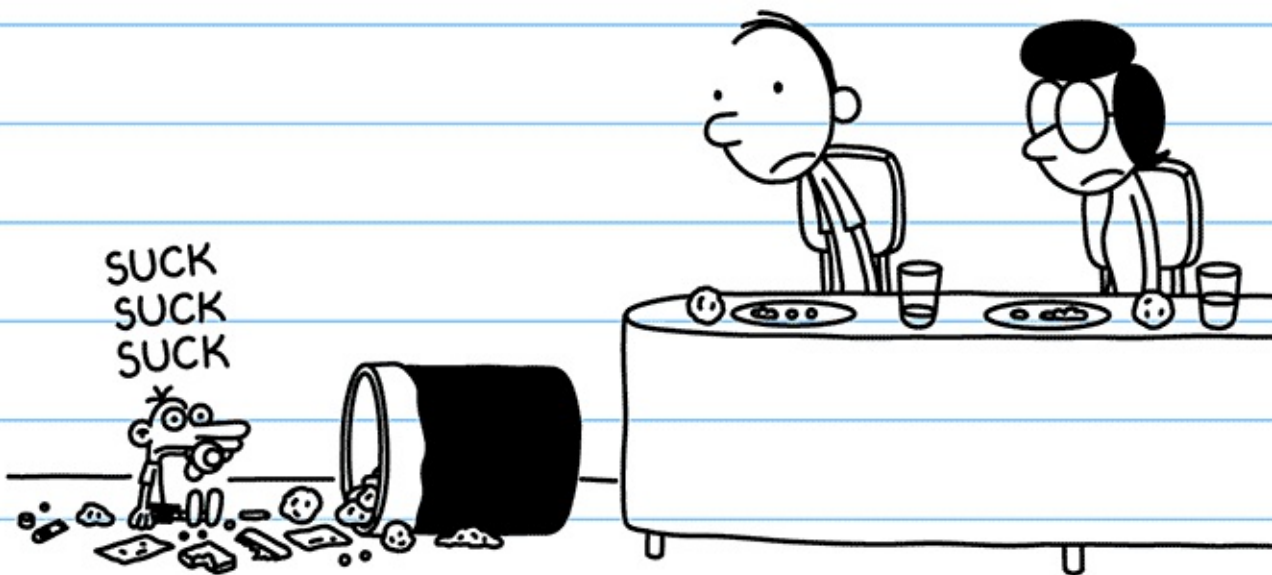
and he's giving up his pacifier for good. Then he

threw his favorite binkie in the trash.



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

last a full minute.



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

with a resolution is my older brother, Rodrick,



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

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a mile and a half long.

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So I decided to come up with a program to help

Rodrick be a better person. I called my plan

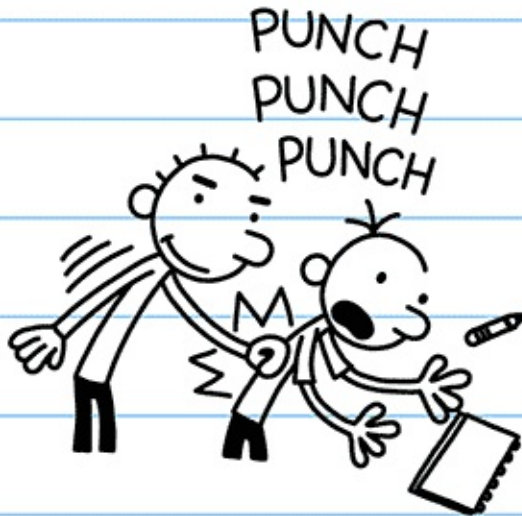
“Three Strikes and You’re Out.” The basic idea

was that every time I saw Rodrick messing up,

I’d mark a little “X” on his chart.

Well, Rodrick got all three strikes before I even

had a chance to decide what “You’re Out” meant.



Anyway, I’m starting to wonder if I should just

bag my resolution, too. It’s a lot of work, and

so far I haven’t really made any progress.

Besides, after I reminded Mom for like the billionth

time to stop chewing her potato chips so loud, she

made a really good point. She said, “Everyone

can't be as perfect as You, Gregory." And

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from what I've seen so far, I think she's right.

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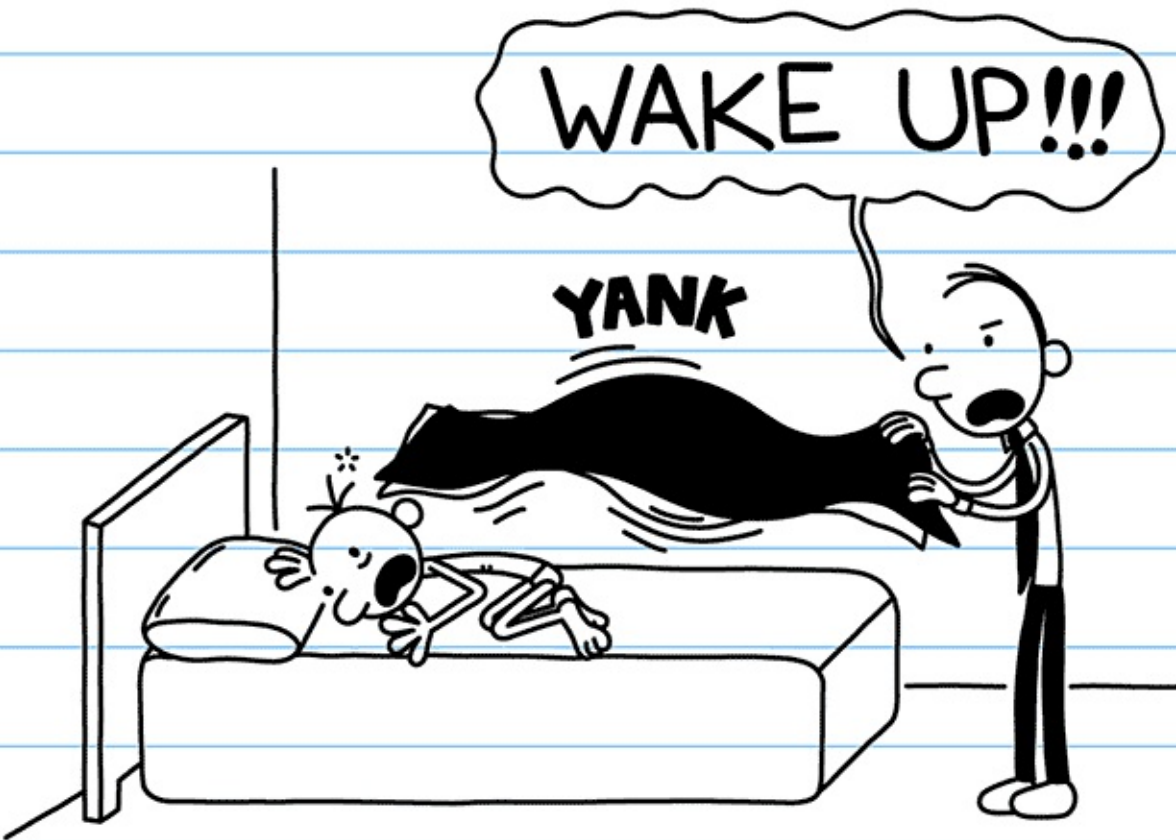
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Thursday

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

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



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

that I still have like ten more minutes before I

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need to get out of bed for real.

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Yesterday I came up with a pretty good way to

get some extra sleep time without making Dad

mad. After he woke me up, I took all of my

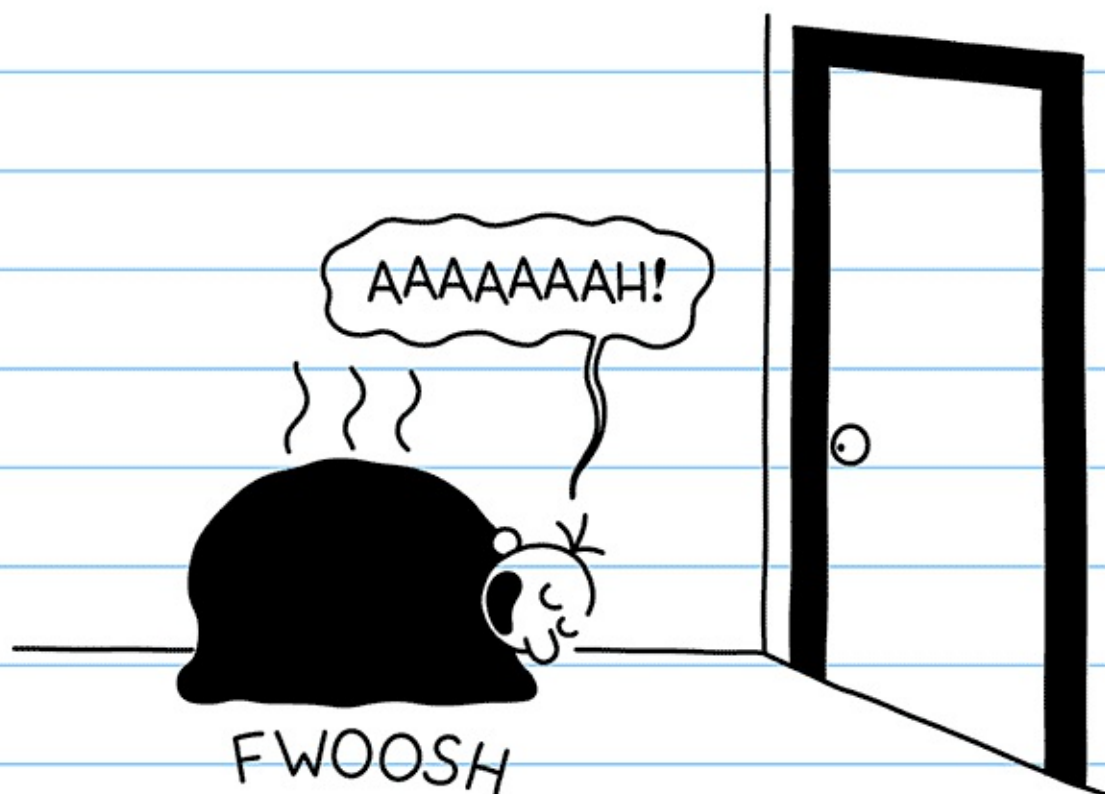
blankets down the hall with me and waited outside

the bathroom for my turn in the shower.

Then I lay down right on top of the heater vent.

And when the furnace was blowing, the experience

was even Better than being in bed.



The problem was, the heat only stayed on for

about five minutes at a time. So when the furnace

wasn't running, I was just lying there on this

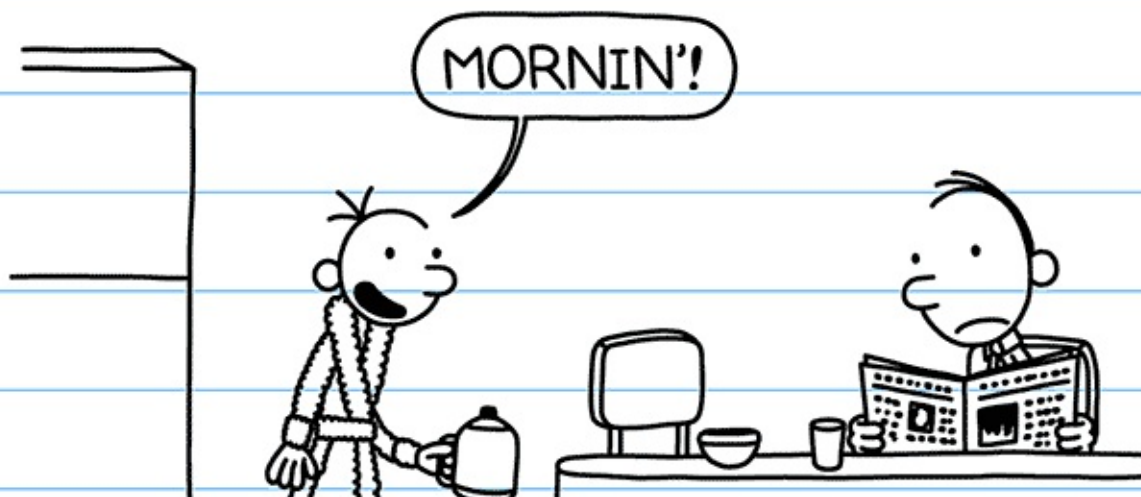
cold piece of metal.



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

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

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





I tell you, women have the right idea with this

bathrobe thing. Now I'm wondering what

else I'm missing out on.

I just wish I had asked for my own bathrobe

for Christmas, because I'm sure Mom is gonna

make me give hers back.

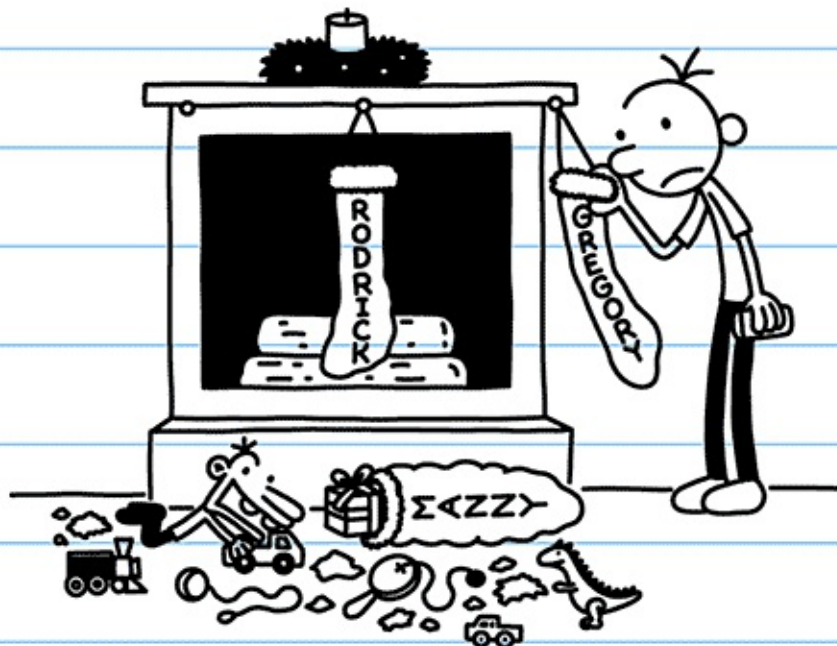
I struck out on gifts again this year. I knew I

was in for a rough day when I came downstairs

on Christmas morning and the only presents in

my stocking were a stick of deodorant and a

“travel dictionary.”



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

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

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actually fun.

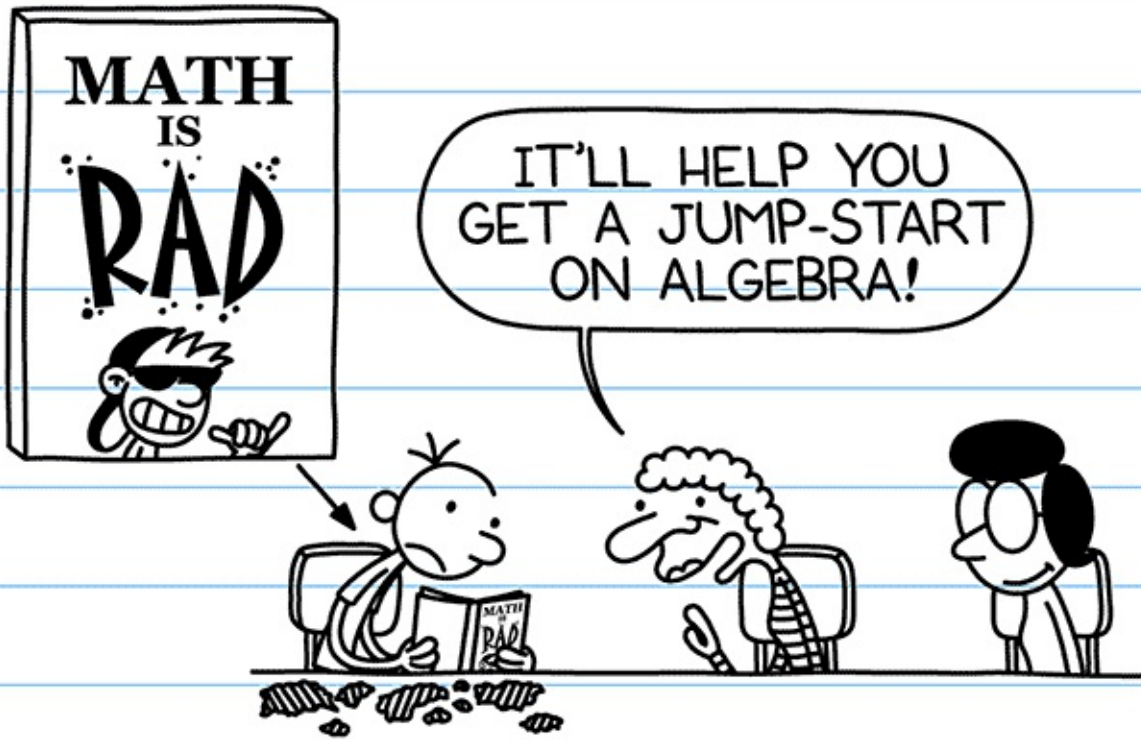
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But then they still expect you to be all excited

when you open the lame gifts they get you.



Most of my gifts this year were books or clothes.

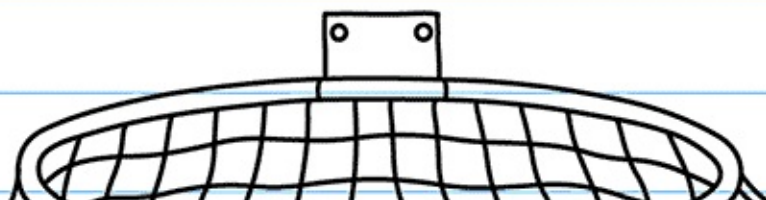
The closest thing I got to a toy was a present

from Uncle Charlie.

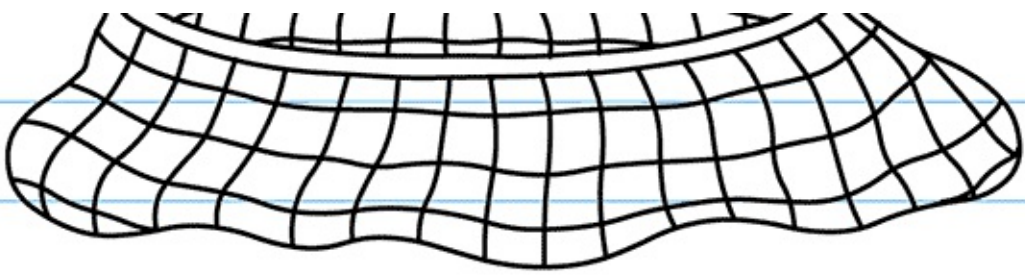
When I unwrapped Uncle Charlie's gift, I didn't

even know what it was supposed to be. It was

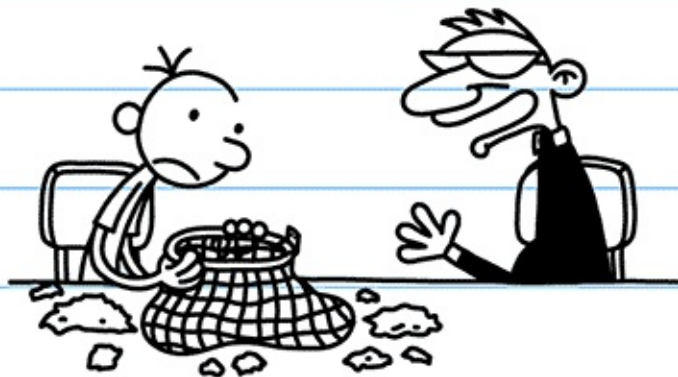
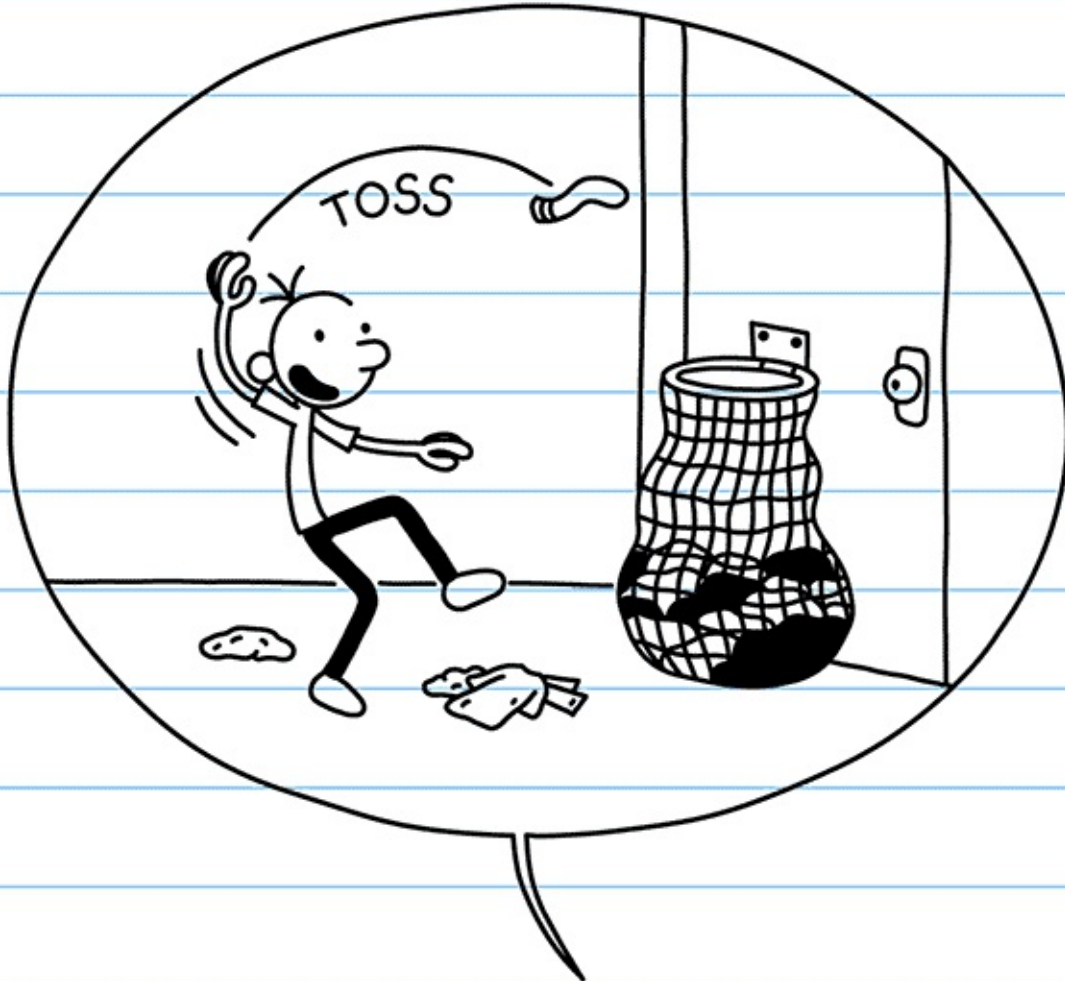
this big plastic ring with a net attached to it.







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



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

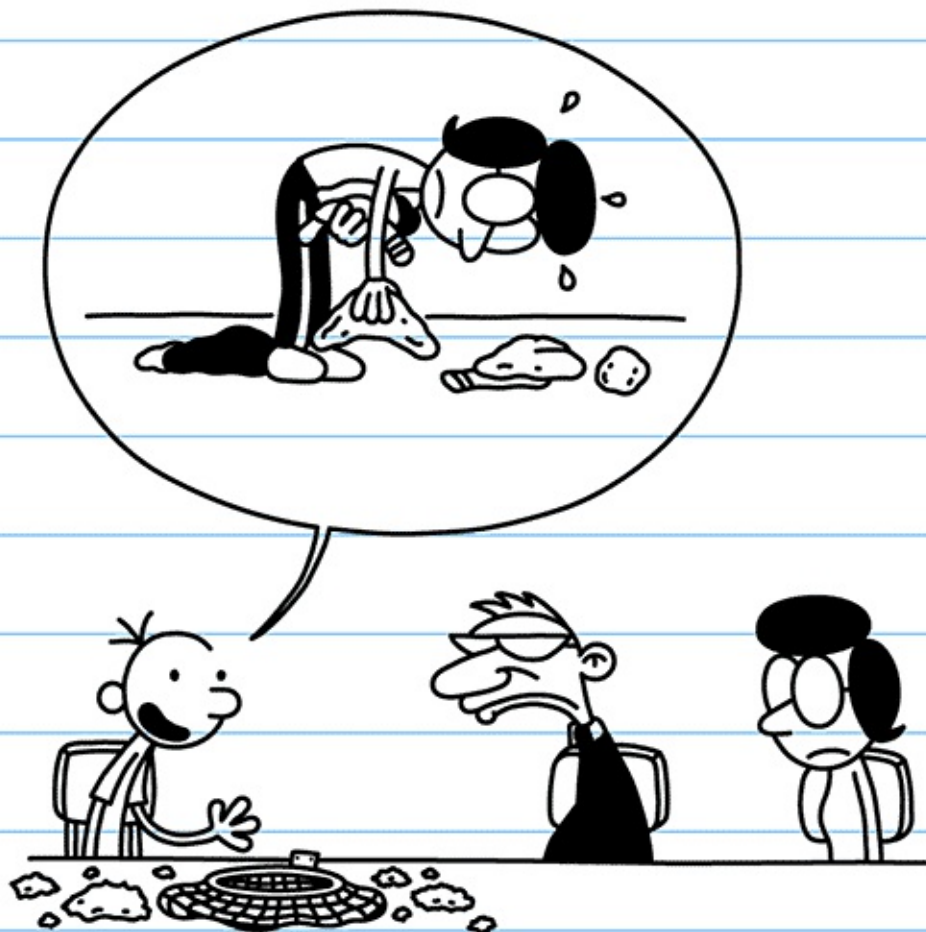
explain to him that I don't actually Do my

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own laundry.

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



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

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

That's when Mom spoke up. She told Uncle

Charlie she thought the Laundry Hoop was a

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great idea.

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Then she said that from now on I'd be doing my

own laundry. So basically, it ends up that

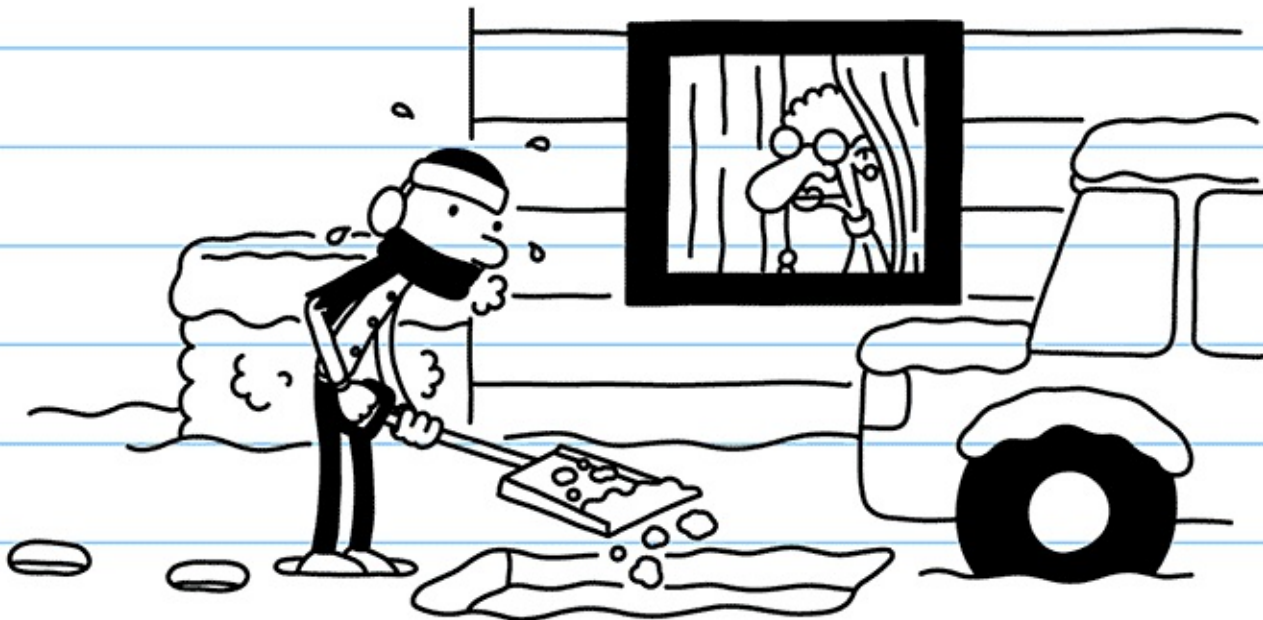
Uncle Charlie got me a chore for Christmas.

It really stinks that I got such crummy gifts

this year. I put in a lot of effort buttering

people up for the past few months, and I

thought it would pay off on Christmas.



Now that I'm responsible for my own laundry, I

guess I'm kind of glad I got a bunch of clothes.

I might actually make it through the whole school \_\_\_\_\_  
year before I run out of clean stuff to wear. \_\_\_\_\_

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Monday

When me and Rowley got to our bus stop today,

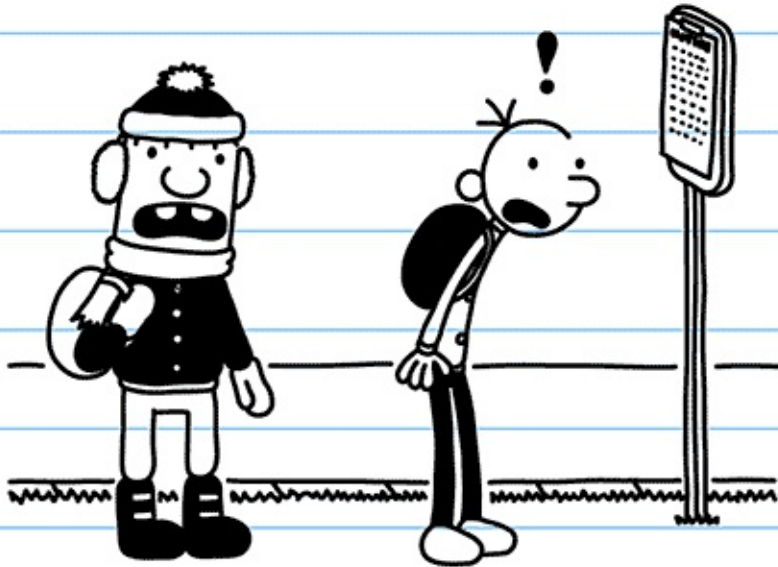
we found a nasty surprise. There was a piece

of paper taped to our street sign, and it said

that, effective today, our bus route was “rezoned.”

And what that means is now we have to walk

to school.



Well, I'd like to talk to the genius who came up

with that idea, because our street is almost a

quarter of a mile from the school.

Me and Rowley had to run to make it to school

on time today. And what really stunk was

when our regular bus passed us by and it was full

of kids from Whirley Street, the neighborhood

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right next to ours.

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



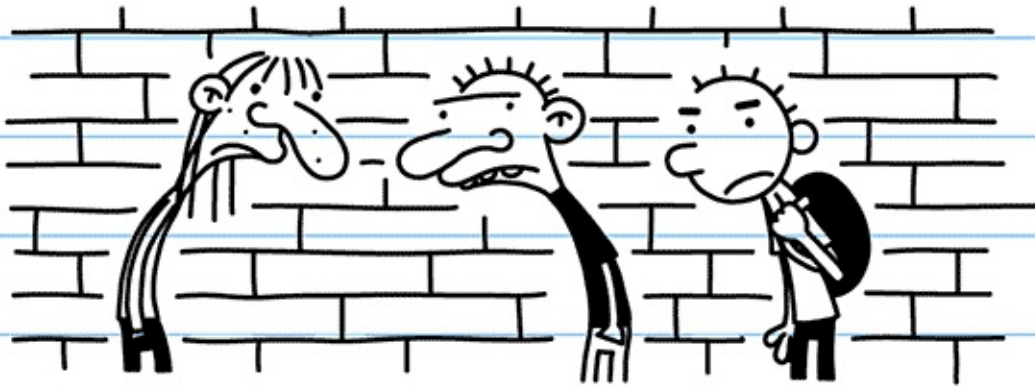
I'll tell you one reason it's a bad idea to make kids walk to school. These days, teachers give you so much homework that, with all the books and papers you have to carry home, your backpack ends up weighing like a hundred pounds.

And if you want to see what kind of an effect

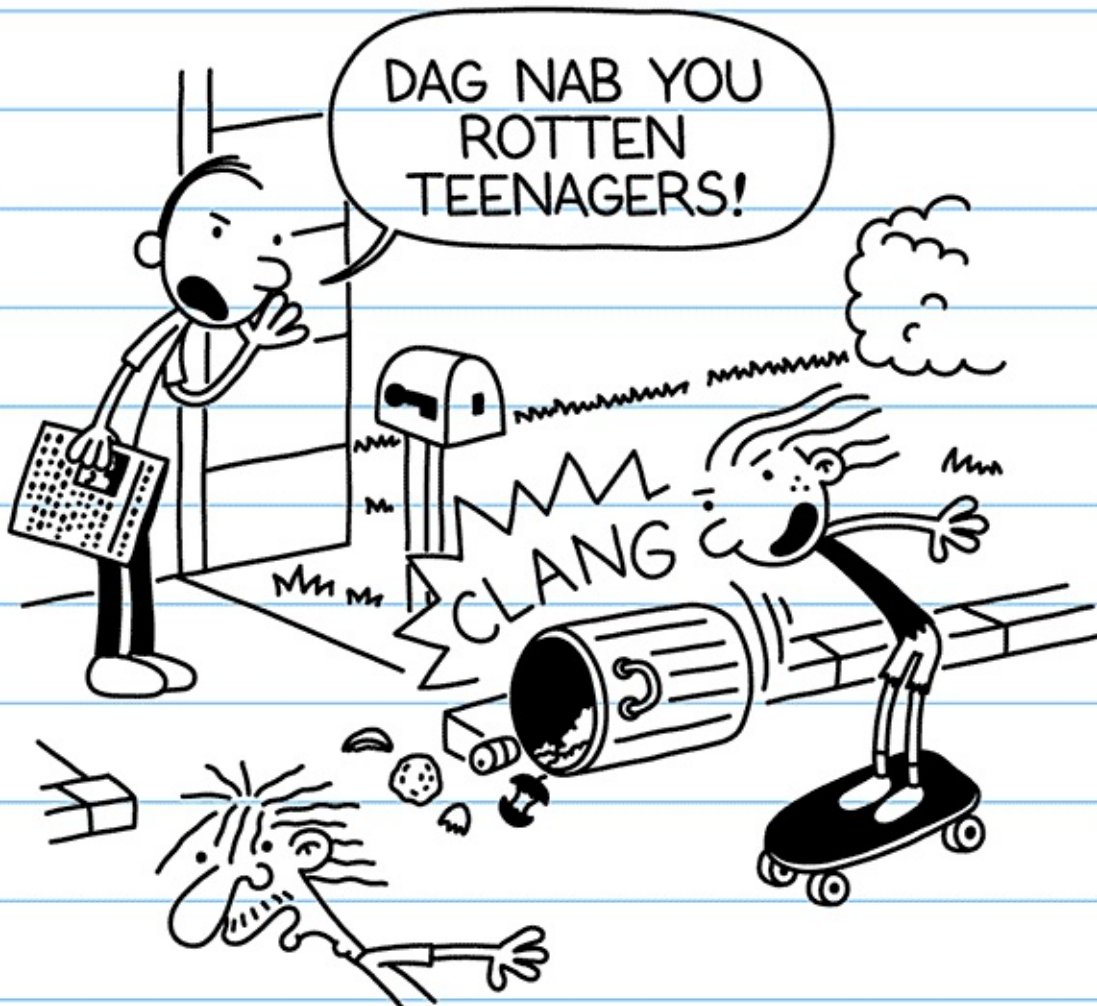
that has on kids over time, all you have to do is \_\_\_\_\_

look at Rodrick and some of his friends. \_\_\_\_\_

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



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

because they sent him off to military academy. \_\_\_\_\_

You'd think that would've made Dad pretty

happy, but I don't think he'll be satisfied until

every teenager on the planet gets sent off to

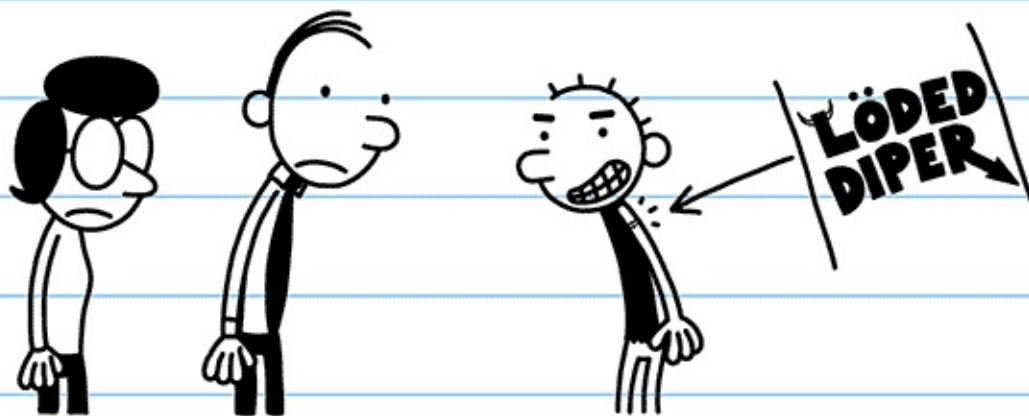
juvenile hall or Alcatraz or something. And that

includes Rodrick.

Yesterday Mom and Dad gave Rodrick some money

to buy books so he could study for the sats, but

Rodrick spent the money on a tattoo instead.



I've still got a little time before I turn into a

teenager. But the minute I do, I guarantee you

Dad will be looking for the first chance to ship

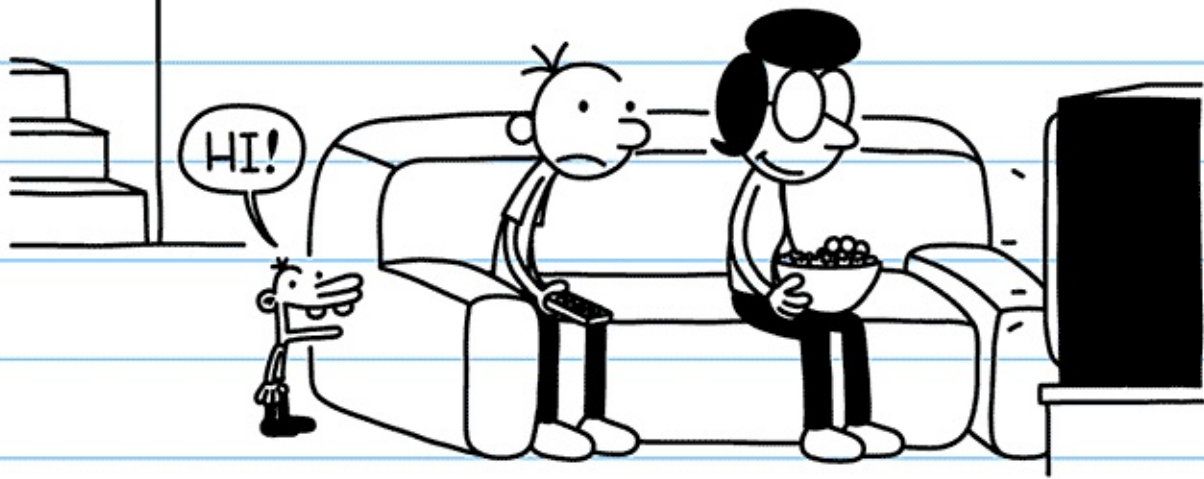
me out.

Monday



For the past week or so, Manny has been getting \_\_\_\_\_  
out of bed every night and coming downstairs. \_\_\_\_\_

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Instead of putting him right back to bed, Mom

lets Manny sit with us and watch TV.

It's really not fair, because when Manny is with

us, I'm not allowed to watch any of the shows

I like.

All I can say is, when I was a kid there wasn't

any of this "getting out of bed" stuff. I did it

once or twice, but Dad put a stop to it real quick.

There was this book Dad used to read to me every

night called "The Giving Tree." It was a really

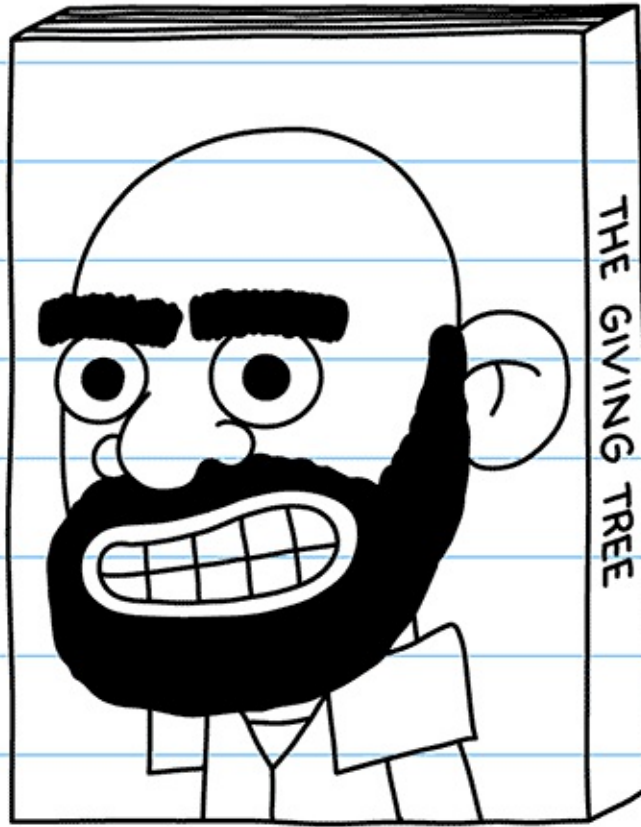
good book, but the back of it had a picture of

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the author, this guy named Shel Silverstein.

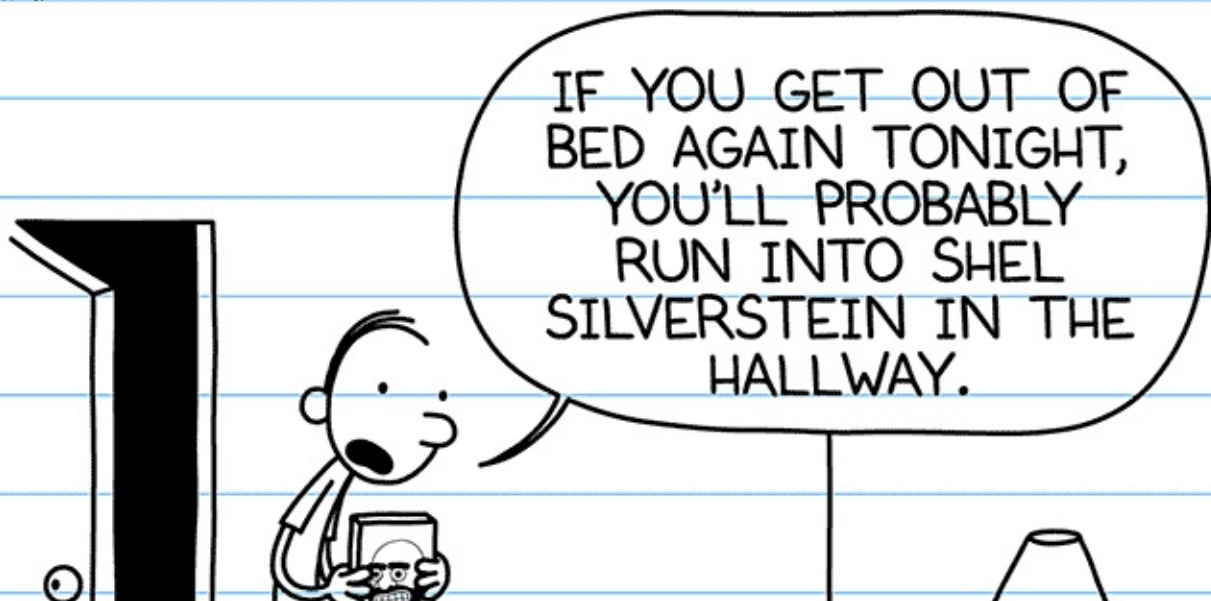
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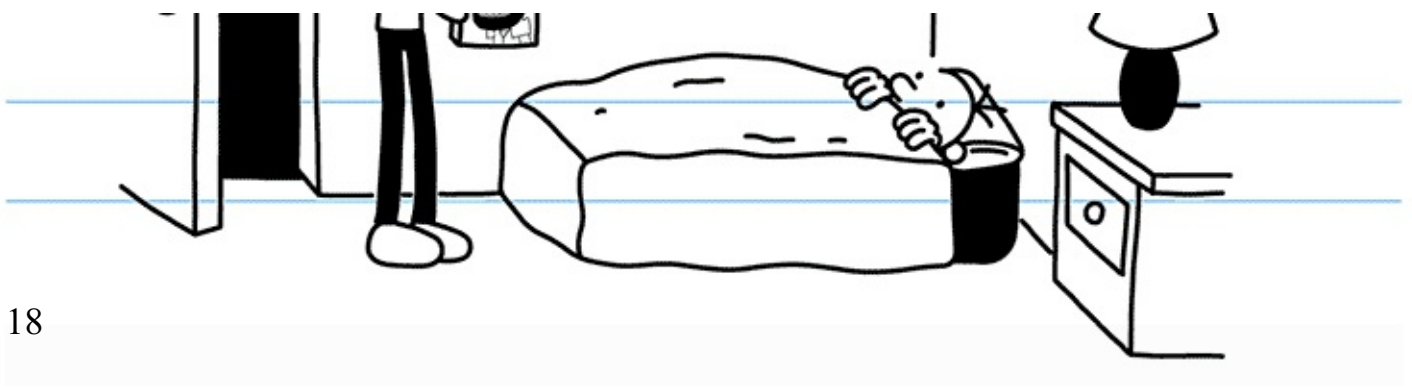
But Shel Silverstein looks more like a burglar or a  
pirate than a guy who should be writing books  
for kids.



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

Dad said —





That really did the trick. Ever since then, I

still don't get out of bed at night, even if I

really need to use the bathroom.

I don't think Mom and Dad read Manny any

Shel Silverstein books, which probably explains why

he keeps getting up after they put him to bed.

I've heard some of the stories Mom and Dad read

to Manny, and let me just say that the people

who write these books really have a racket going.

First of all, there are hardly any words in them,

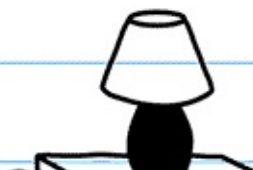
so I'm sure it only takes about five seconds to

write one.

SILLY BEAR YAWNING,  
SILLY BEAR SAD.

SILLY BEAR SLEEPING,  
SILLY BEAR GLAD!

THE END.





I told Mom what I thought of Manny's books,

and she said that if they were so easy to write,

then I should try writing one myself.

So that's exactly what I did. Trust me, it wasn't

hard, either. All you have to do is make up a

character with a snappy name, and then make

sure the character learns a lesson at the end of

the book.

Now all I need to do is mail this thing off to

a publisher and wait for the money to start

rolling in.

**Wise Up,  
Mr. Shropsharp!**







by Greg Heffley

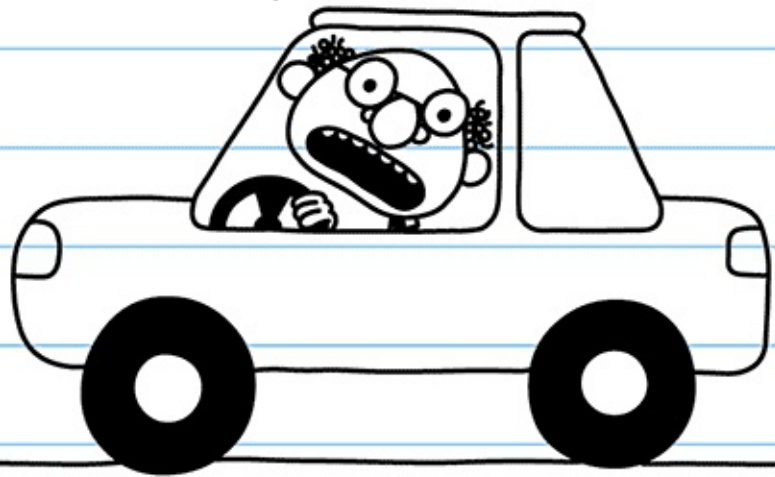
Once upon a time there was this man named Mr. Shropsharp who thought all these crazy thoughts.

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



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

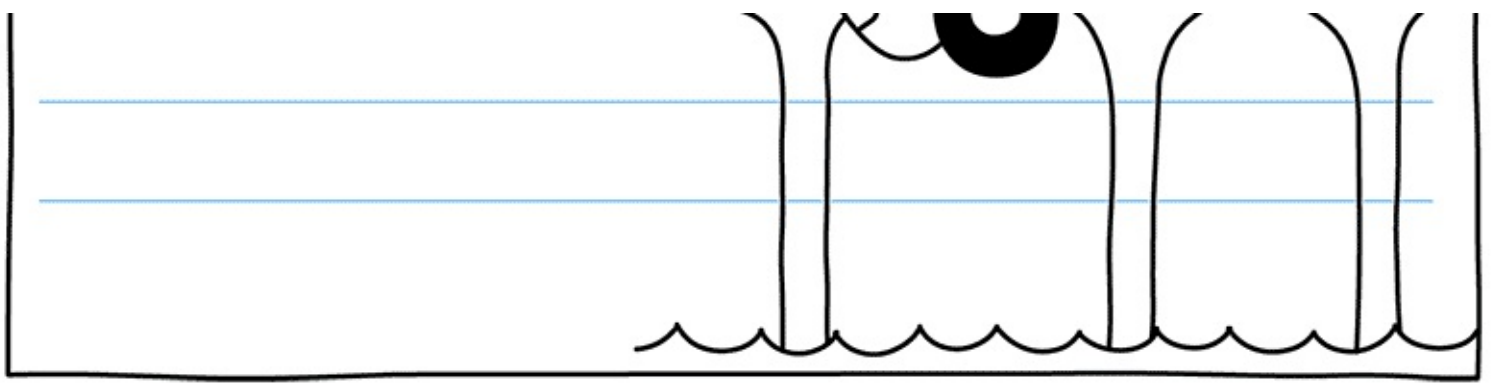
HERE I GO...



But then...

OOPS.





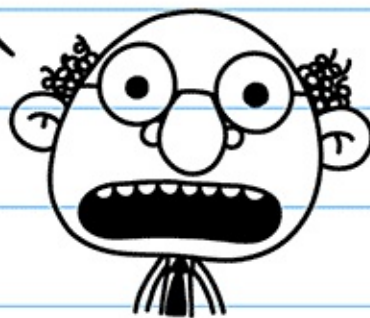
And  
then...

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



And  
so...

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



THE END

See what I mean? The only thing I noticed

after I finished the book was that I forgot to

make it rhyme. But the publisher is gonna have

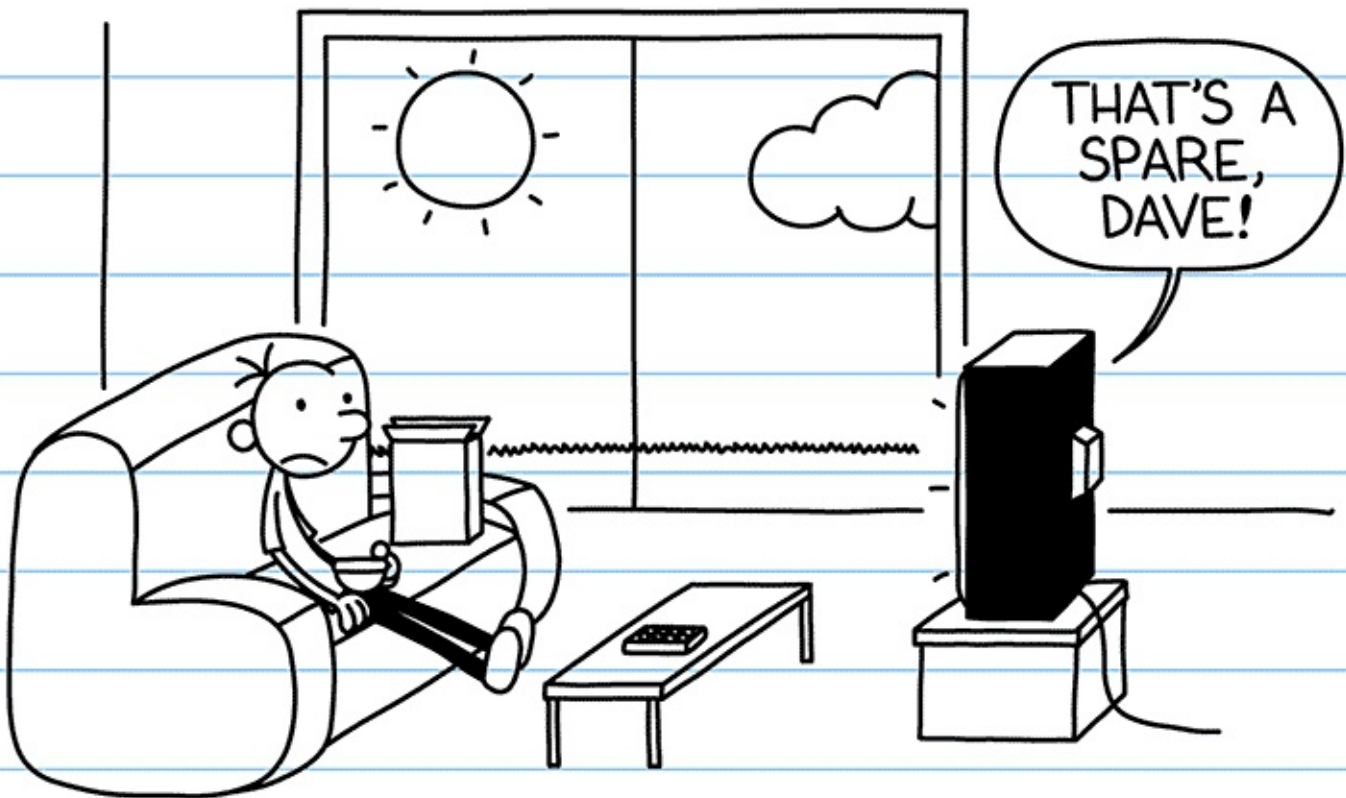
to pay me extra if they want that.

Saturday

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

The problem with watching TV on a Saturday is that the only thing that's on is bowling or golf.

Plus, the sun comes through our sliding glass window, and you can barely see the TV screen anyway.



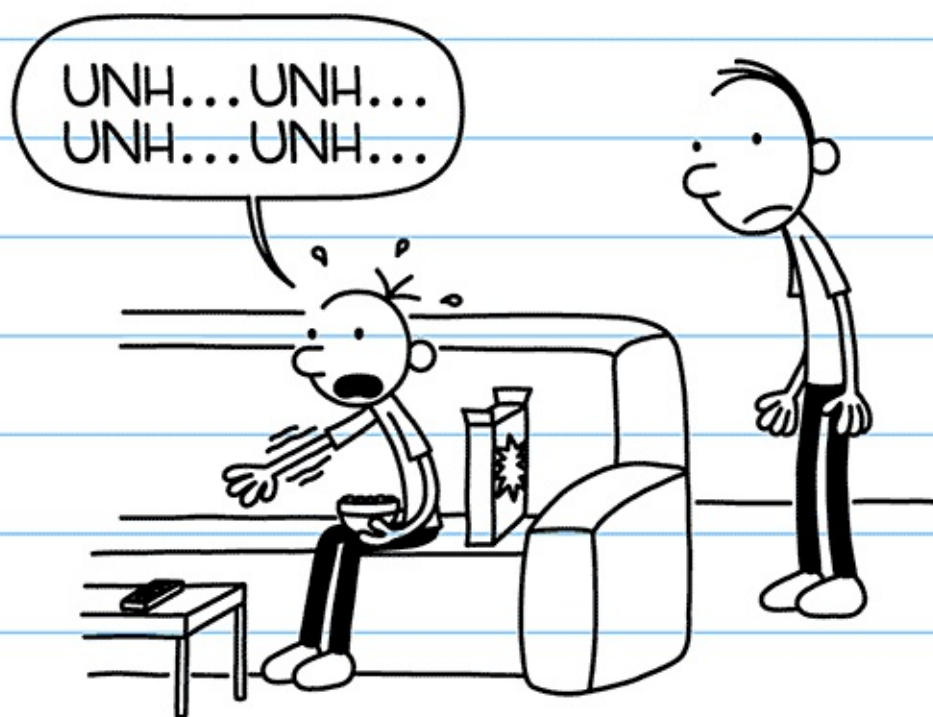
Today I wanted to change the channel, but the remote was on top of the coffee table. I

was all comfortable, with my bowl of cereal in my

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



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



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

But I should have come up with something more



believable, because it was pretty obvious that

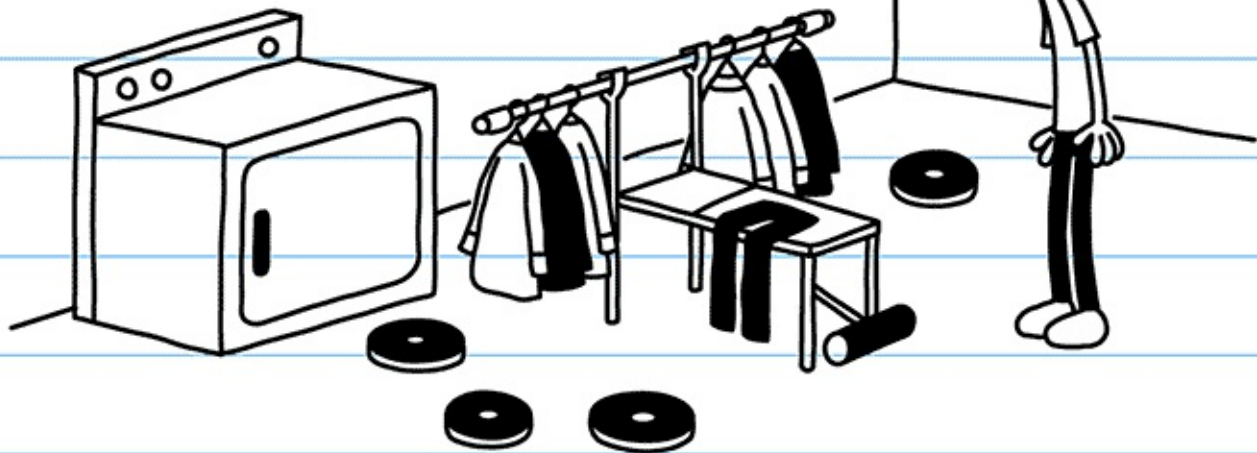
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wasn't true.

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See, the reason Dad is on my case about exercise

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

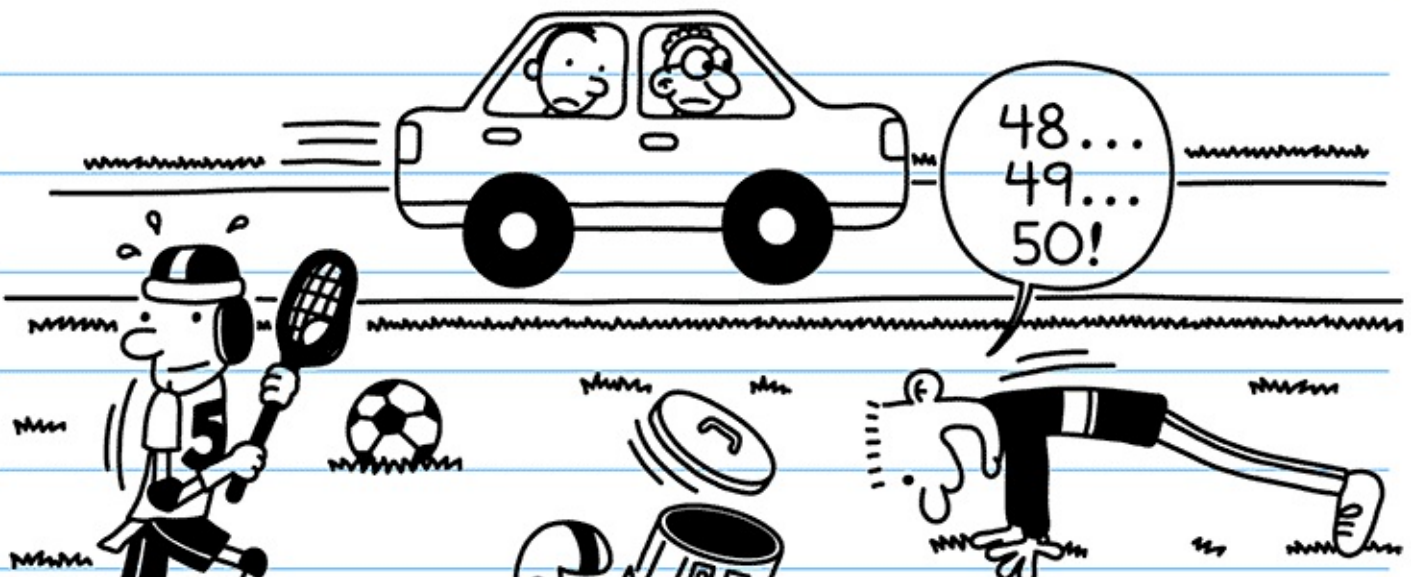
Mr. Warren, and Mr. Warren has three boys

who are these crazy sports fanatics. Dad sees

the Warren kids outside in their front lawn every

day on his way home from work when his carpool

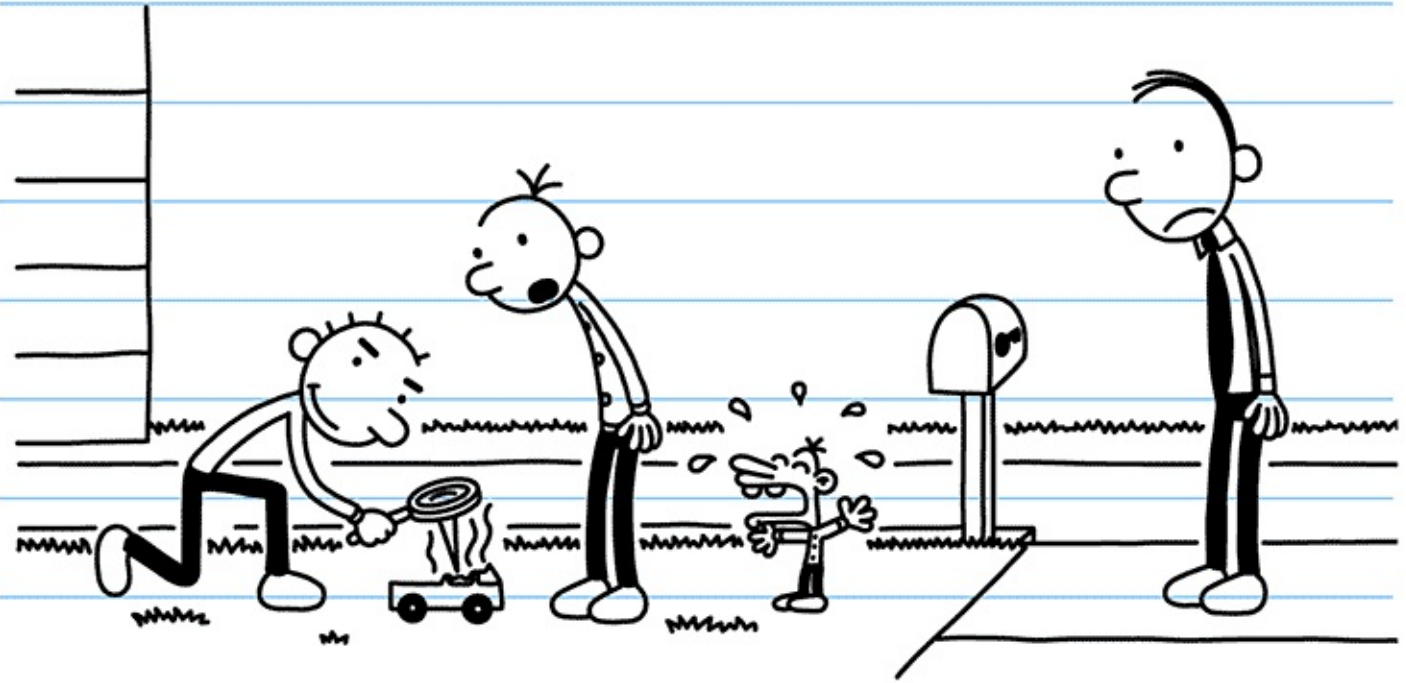
goes by their house.





So I think Dad is pretty disappointed every time

he gets home and sees what His sons are up to.



Anyway, like I said, Dad kicked me out of the

house today. I couldn't really think of anything

I wanted to do, but then I had a good idea.

Yesterday at lunch, Albert Sandy was telling

everyone about this guy in China or Thailand or

someplace who could jump six feet straight up in

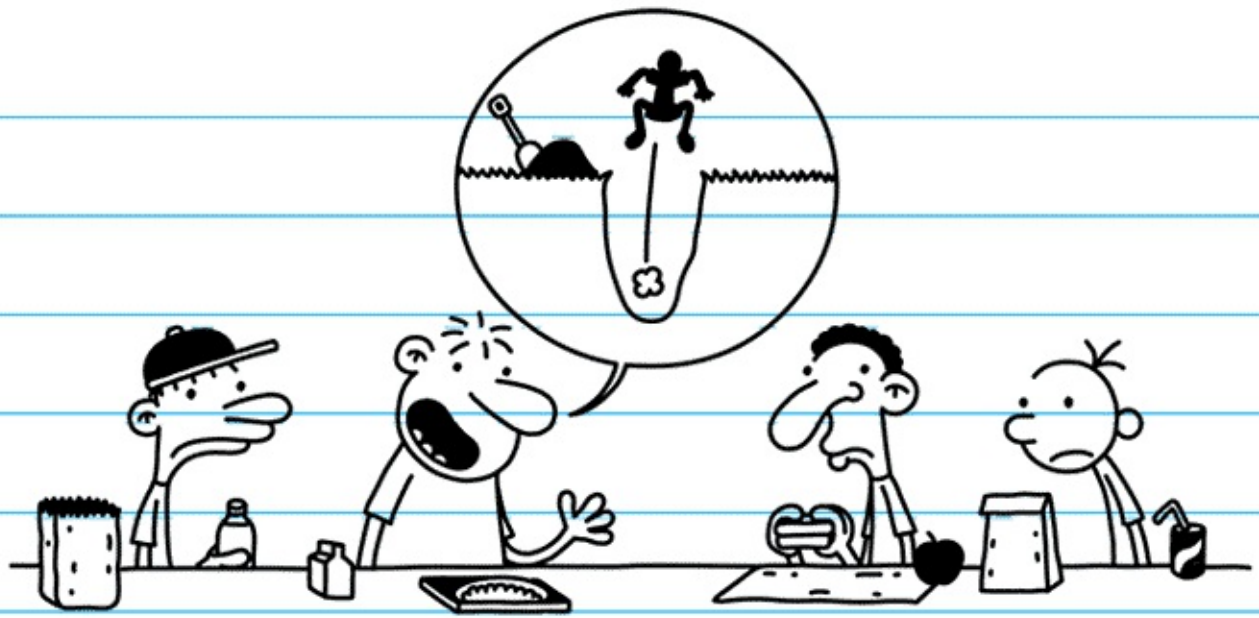
the air, no joke. The way the guy did it was by

digging a hole that was three inches deep and then

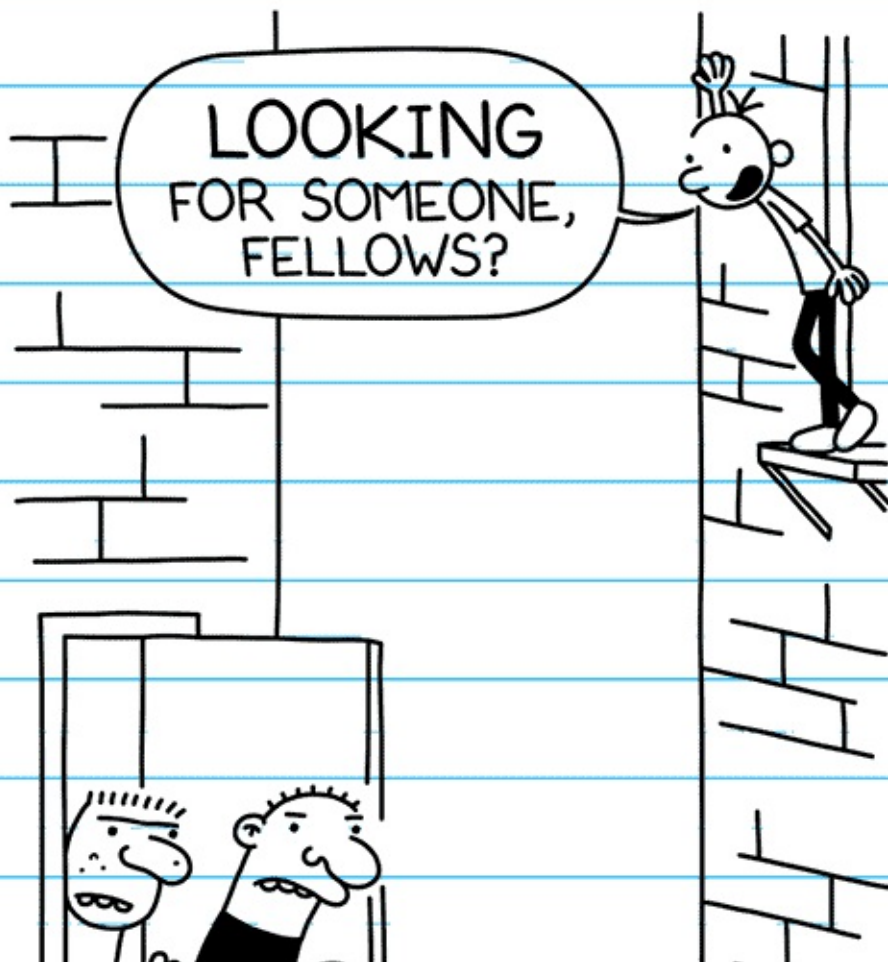
jumping in and out of it a hundred times. The next

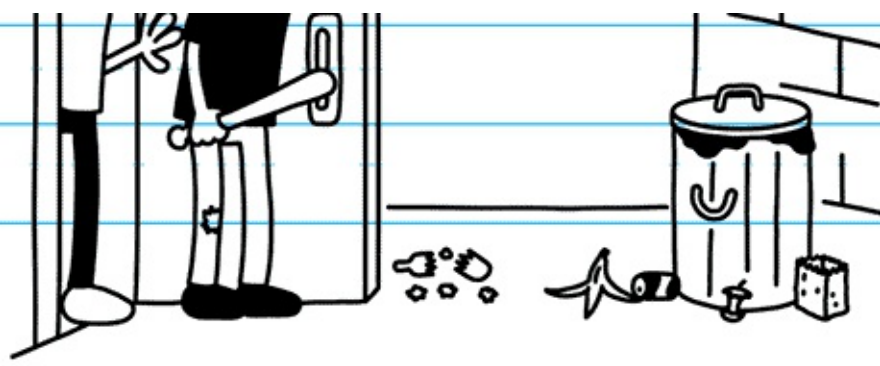
day, the guy doubled the size of the hole, and he

jumped in and out of tHAt. By the fifth day, he \_\_\_\_\_  
was practically like a kangaroo. \_\_\_\_\_

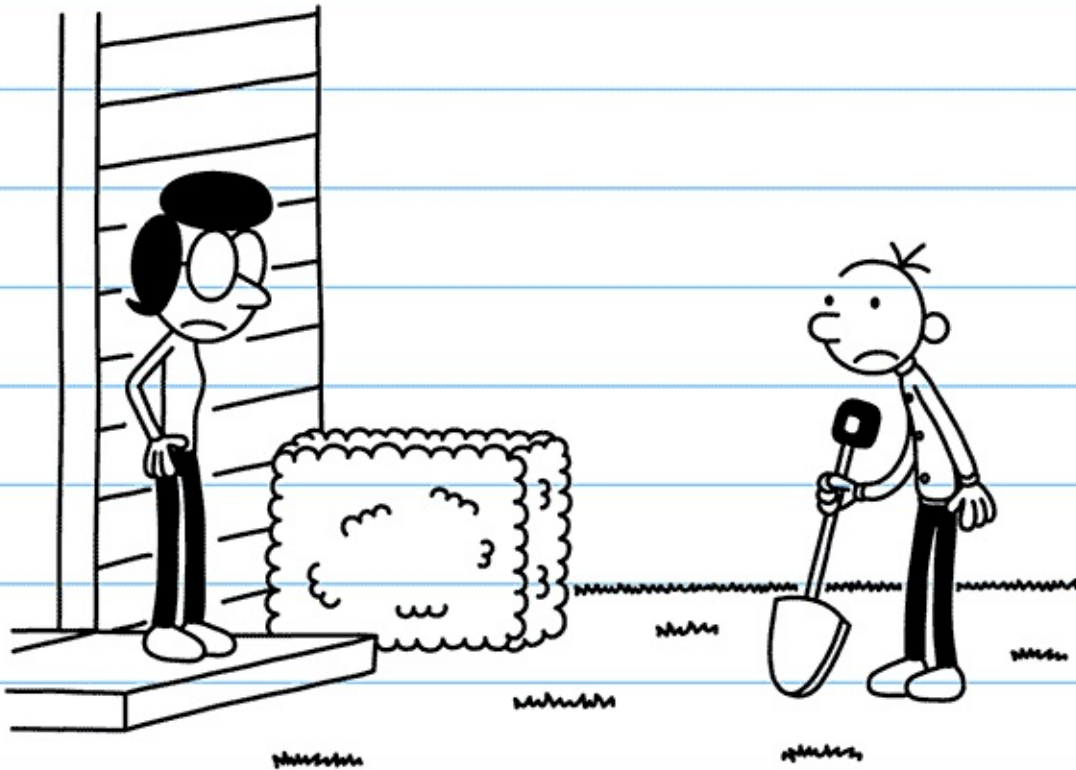


Some of the guys at my table told Albert he was full of baloney, but what he was saying made a lot of sense to me. Plus, I figured if I did what Albert said and then added a few days to the program, all my problems with bullies could be over.





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



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

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



up and down that I wouldn't dig any holes in

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our yard. So I promised.

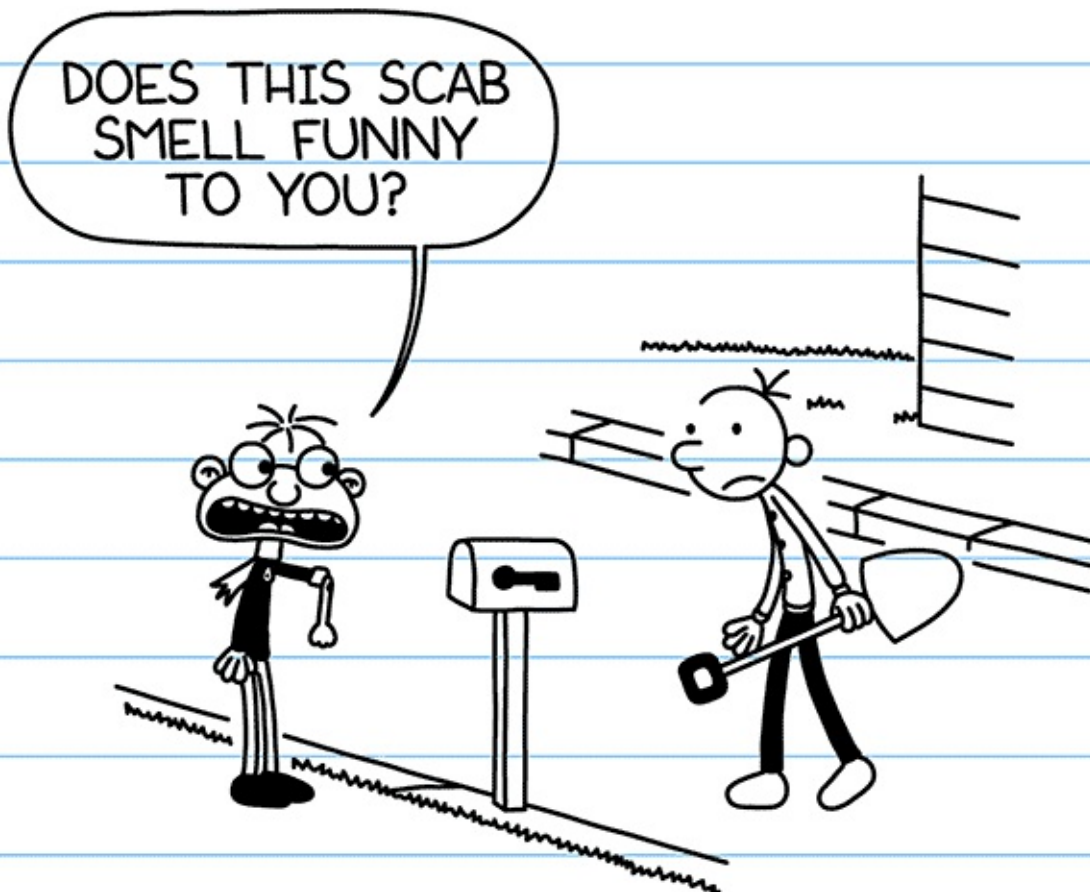
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Mom went inside, but then she kept watching me  
out the window. I knew I was gonna have to  
take my shovel and go dig a hole somewhere else,  
so I headed up to Rowley's house.

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



My new strategy with Fregley is to just avoid eye

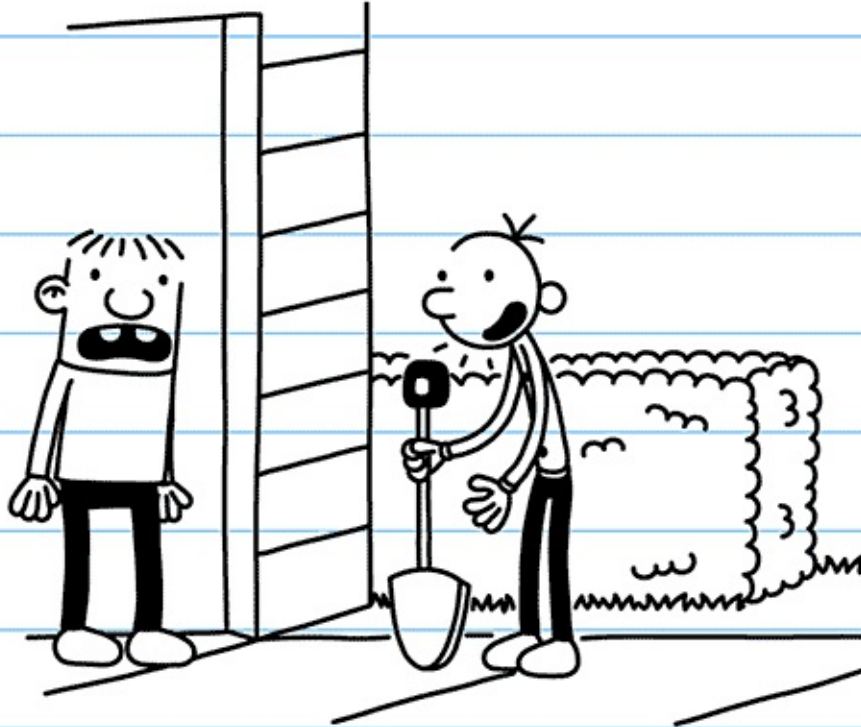
contact and keep walking, and it seemed to do

---

the trick today.

---

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



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

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

some leaves on top of it, and his folks would

---

never even find out. That seemed to convince him.

---

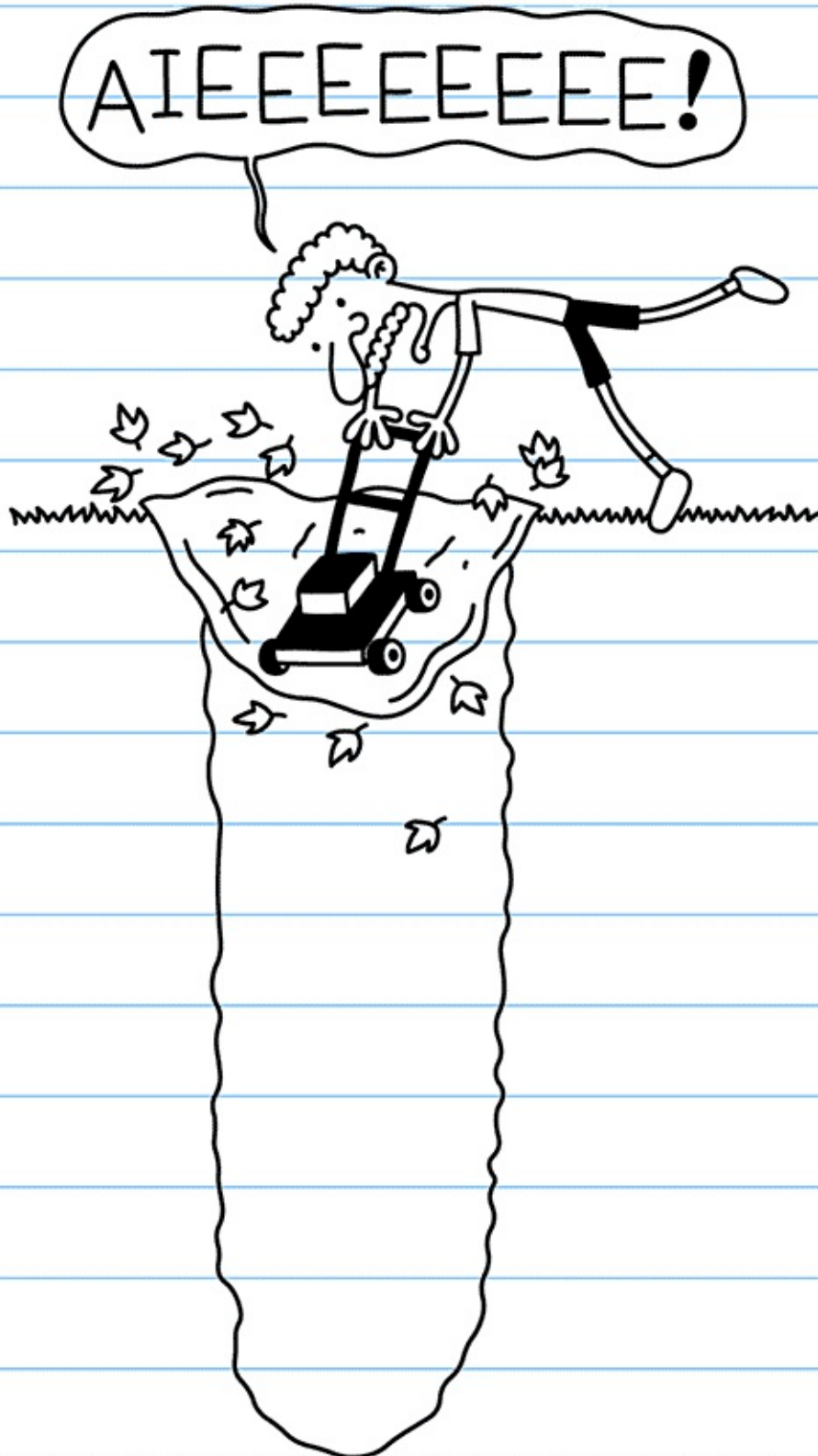
30

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ok, so I admit that Rowley's parents might

eventually find out. But that wouldn't be

for at least three or four months.



Me and Rowley found a good spot in the front

yard to start digging, but we ran into a problem

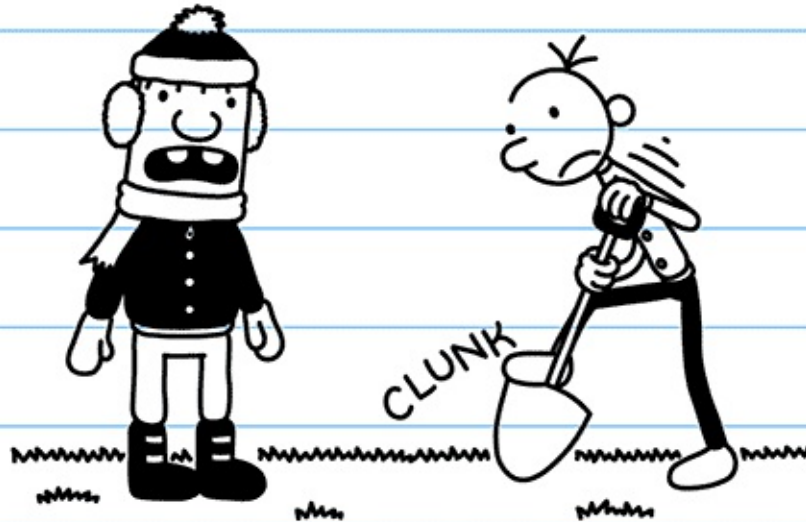
---

right away.

---

The ground was pretty much frozen solid,

and we could hardly even make a dent.



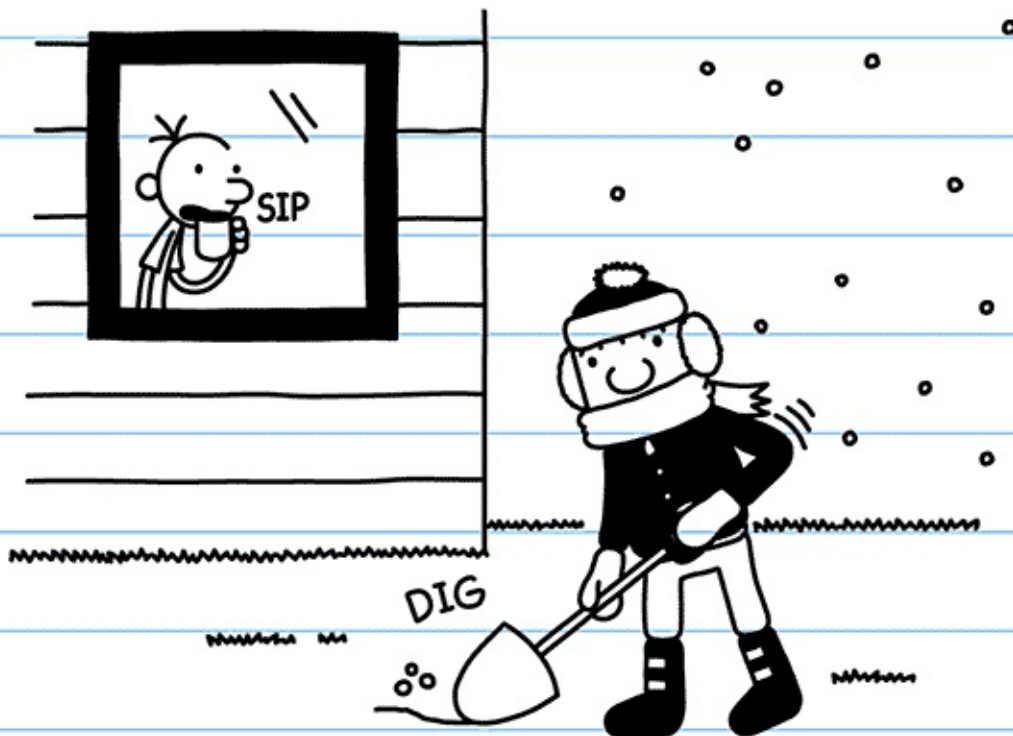
I spent a few minutes trying before I handed

the shovel over to Rowley. He couldn't really

make any progress, either, but I gave him an

extra-long turn so he could feel like he was

contributing to the project.





Rowley got a little bit further than I did, but

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

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

thing tomorrow.

Sunday

Well, I thought about it a lot overnight, and

I realized that at the rate me and Rowley are

going, we're gonna to be in college before this

hole is ten feet deep.

So I came up with a totally different idea

for what we could do. I remembered this thing I

saw on tv where scientists made a "time capsule"

and filled it with a bunch of stuff like newspapers

and DVDs and things like that. Then the scientists

buried their time capsule in the ground. The idea was

that in a few hundred years someone will come along

and dig it up, and they can learn how people from

our time used to live.



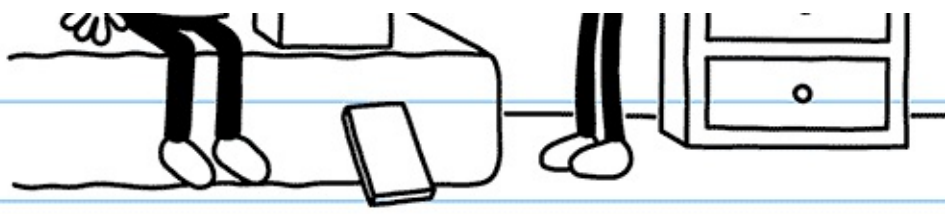


I told Rowley about my idea, and he seemed pretty enthusiastic about it. Mostly, I think he was just glad we weren't gonna spend the next few years digging a hole.

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

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





Then I told Rowley I'd throw in three dollars of

my own money to prove I was making sacrifices,

too. That seemed to be enough to convince him

to fork over one of his new video games and a

couple of other things.

I actually had a secret plan that I wasn't

letting Rowley in on. I knew that putting the

cash in the time capsule was a smart move, because

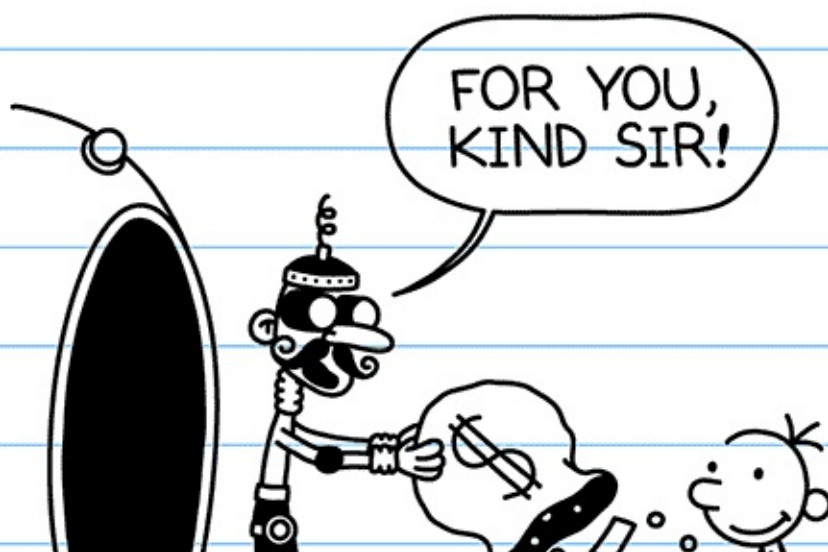
that money is gonna be worth a lot more than

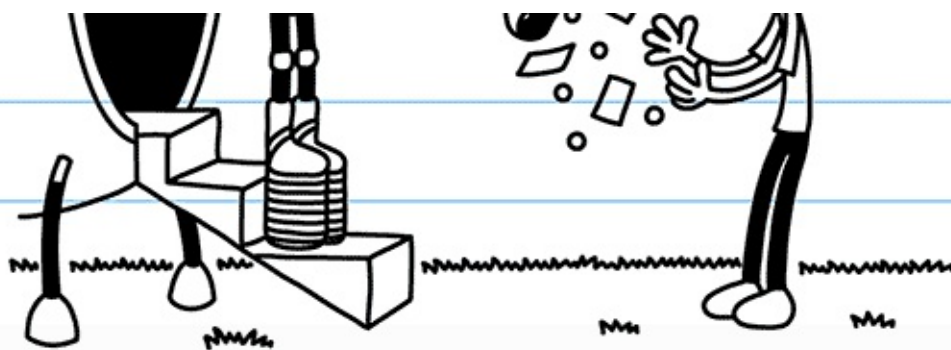
\$3.00 in the future.

So hopefully whoever finds the time capsule will

travel back in time and reward me for making

them rich.

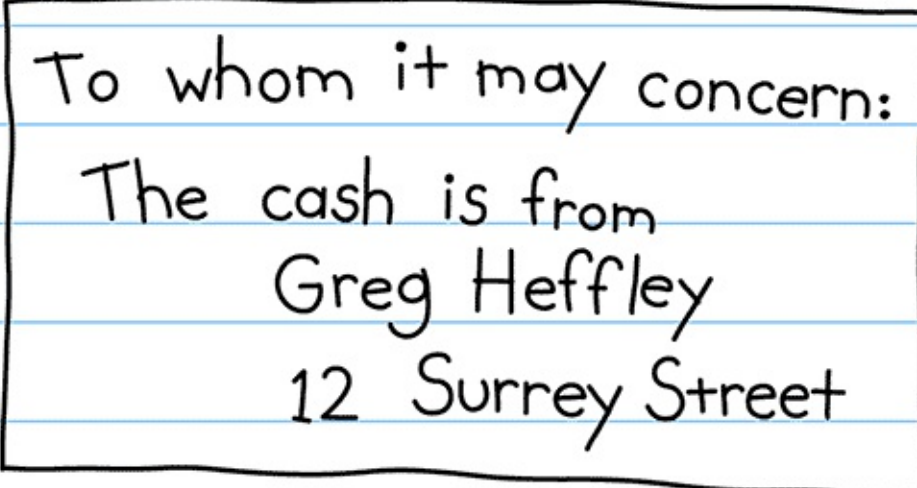




I wrote a little note and put it in the box just

to make sure the person who finds it knows

exactly who to thank.



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

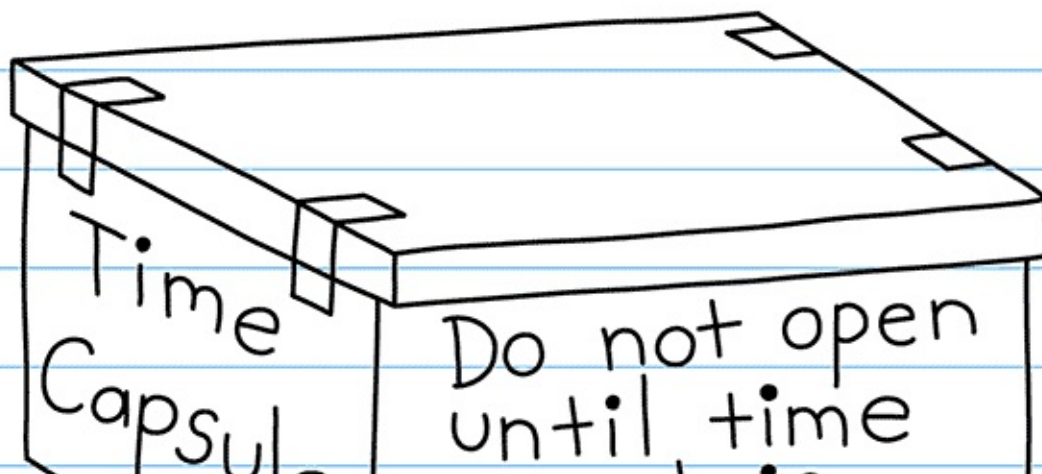
Me and Rowley found a shoe box and put all of

our stuff in it. Then we sealed it up with some

masking tape.

I wrote a little note on the outside of the box

to make sure it didn't get opened too soon.





...ie | travel is possible.

After that, we put it in the hole we dug yesterday

and buried it as best we could.

I kind of wish Rowley had put some more effort

into digging the hole, because our time capsule wasn't

really buried all the way. Hopefully nobody will mess

with it, because it needs to stay there for at

least a few hundred years.



Monday

Well, my week got off to a rough start. When

I got out of bed, Mom's bathrobe wasn't where

it usually is, hanging on my doorknob.

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

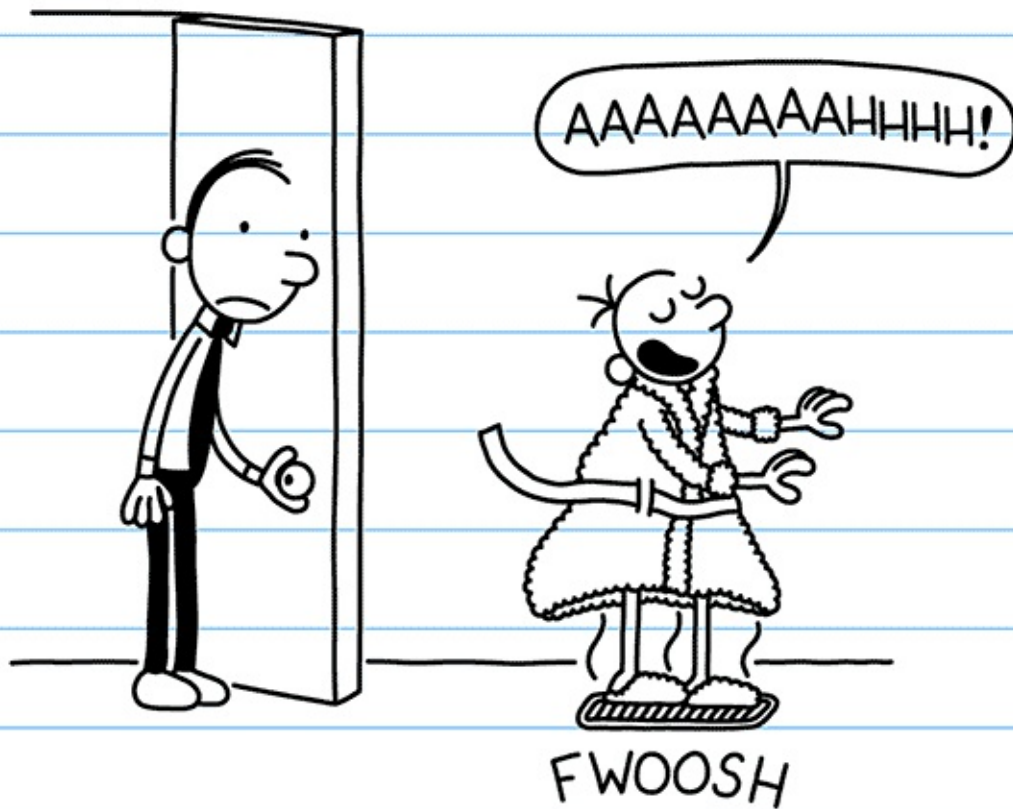
said she didn't. So I have a feeling Dad had

---

something to do with it.

---

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



I figure he either hid the robe or got rid of it.

Now that I think of it, Dad made a run to the

Goodwill bin last night after dinner, so that's

probably not a good sign.

Anyway, if Dad DID get rid of the robe, it

wouldn't be the first time he's thrown out someone's

personal property. You know how Manny has been

trying to quit using his pacifier?

38

Yesterday morning Dad got rid of every single

one of Manny's binkies.

Well, Manny totally freaked out. The only way

Mom could get him to calm down was to dig out

his old blanket, this thing he calls "Tingy."

Tingy started off as a blue blanket that Mom

knitted for Manny's first birthday, and it was

love at first sight.



Manny carried that thing around with him

everywhere he went. He wouldn't even let Mom

take it away from him so she could wash it.

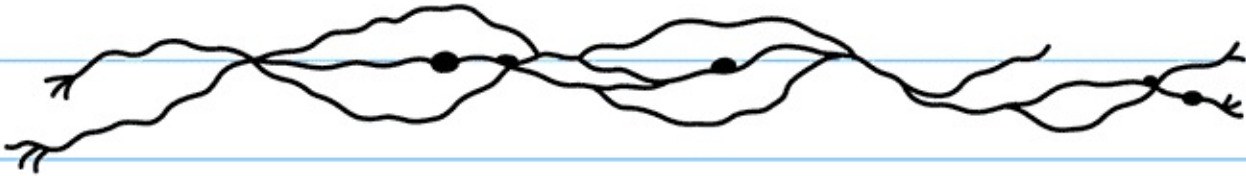
It started falling apart, and by the time Manny

was two, his blanket was basically a couple of pieces

of yarn held together by raisins and boogers.

I think that's when Manny started calling his

blanket "Tingy."

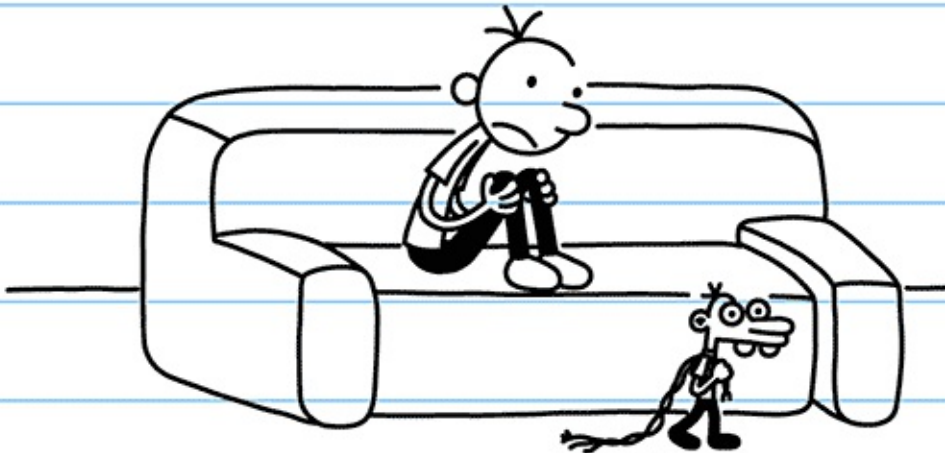


For the past couple of days, Manny's been

dragging Tingy around the house just like he

did when he was a baby, and I've been trying

to stay out of his way as much as possible.



Wednesday

I'm getting really tired of walking to school every

day, so this morning I asked Mom if she would

drive me and Rowley. The reason I didn't ask her

sooner is because Mom's car is covered in all these

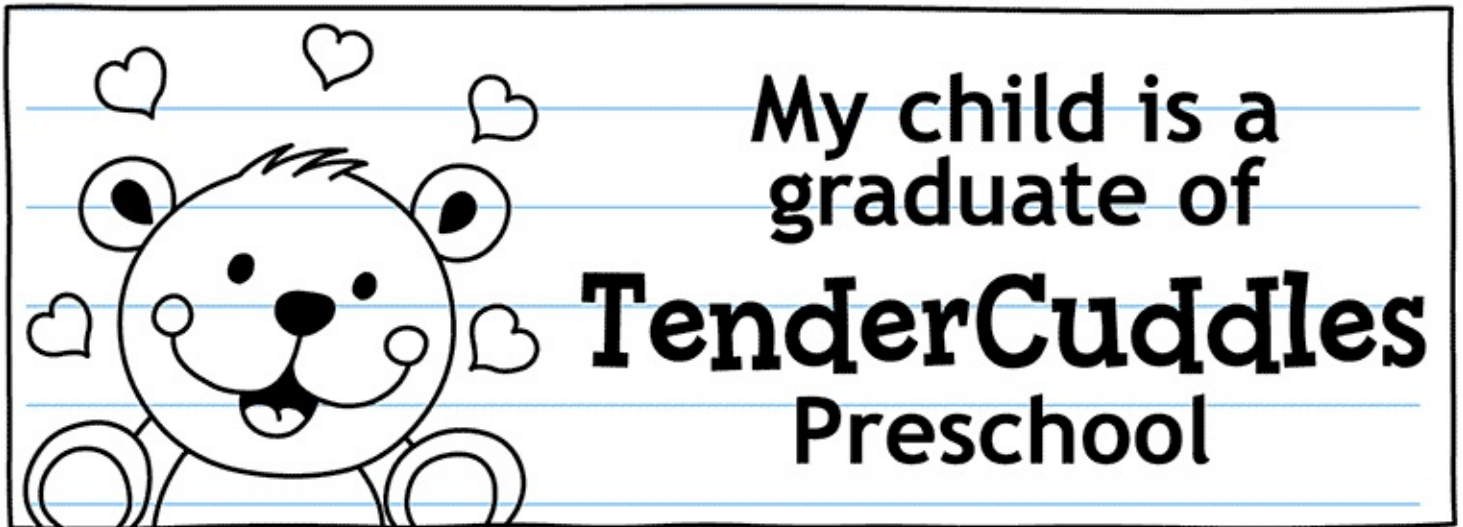


embarrassing bumper stickers, and kids at my school \_\_\_\_\_

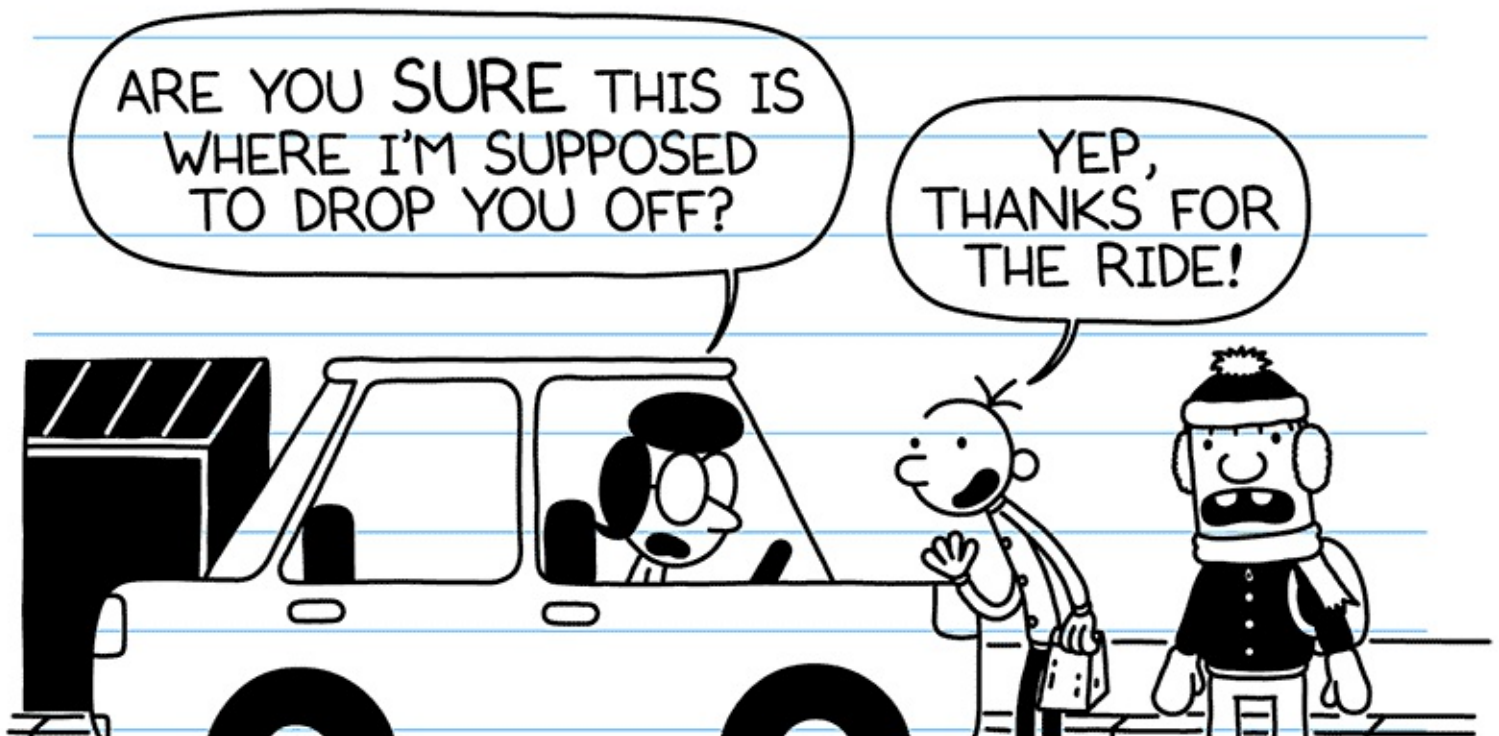
are brutal when it comes to that sort of thing. \_\_\_\_\_

40

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

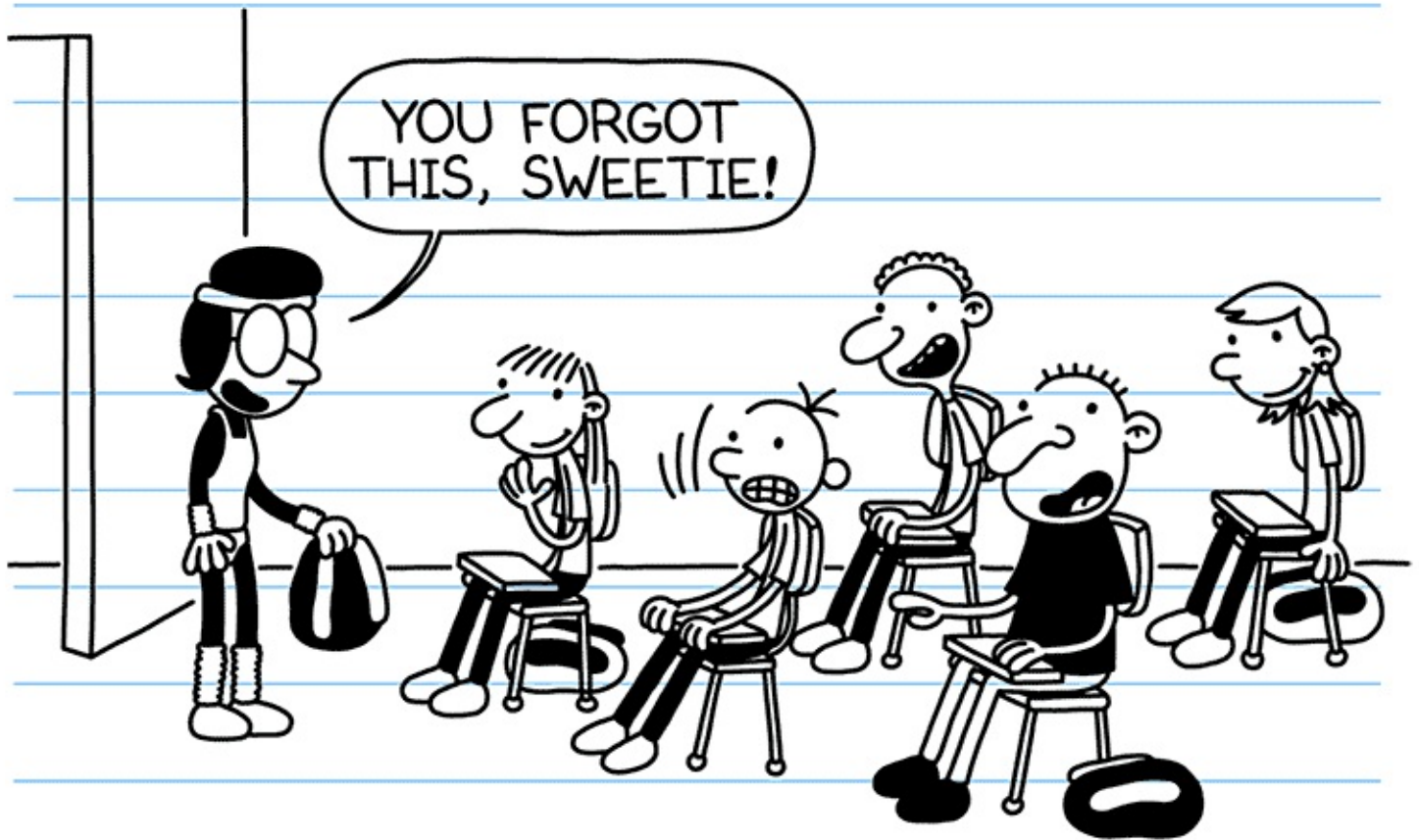


Today me and Rowley got a ride from Mom, but  
I told her to let us out behind the school.





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



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

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

Holly Hills, either. I think just about every boy

in my class has a crush on her.

Holly is the fourth-prettiest girl in the class, but

the top three all have boyfriends. So a lot of

guys like me are doing everything they can to get

in good with her.

I've been trying to come up with an angle to

separate myself from the rest of the goobers

who like Holly. And I think I finally figured it

out: humor.

See, the kids in my class are like Neanderthals

when it comes to jokes. To give you an idea of

what I'm talking about, here's the kind of thing

that passes for comedy at my school —



Anytime Holly's in the area, I make sure I use

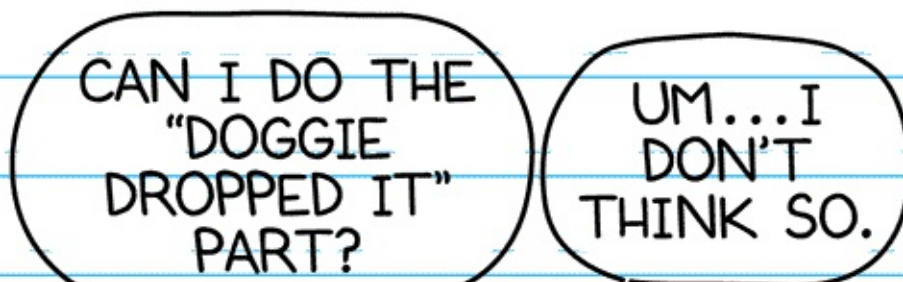
my best material.



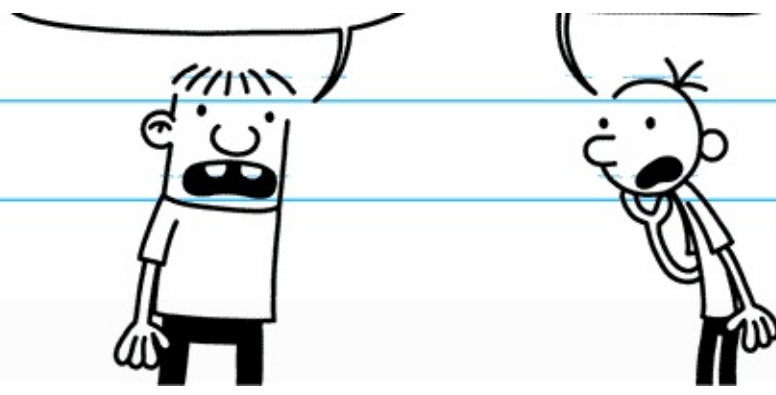
I've been using Rowley as my comedy partner,  
and I've actually trained him on a couple of pretty  
decent jokes.



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



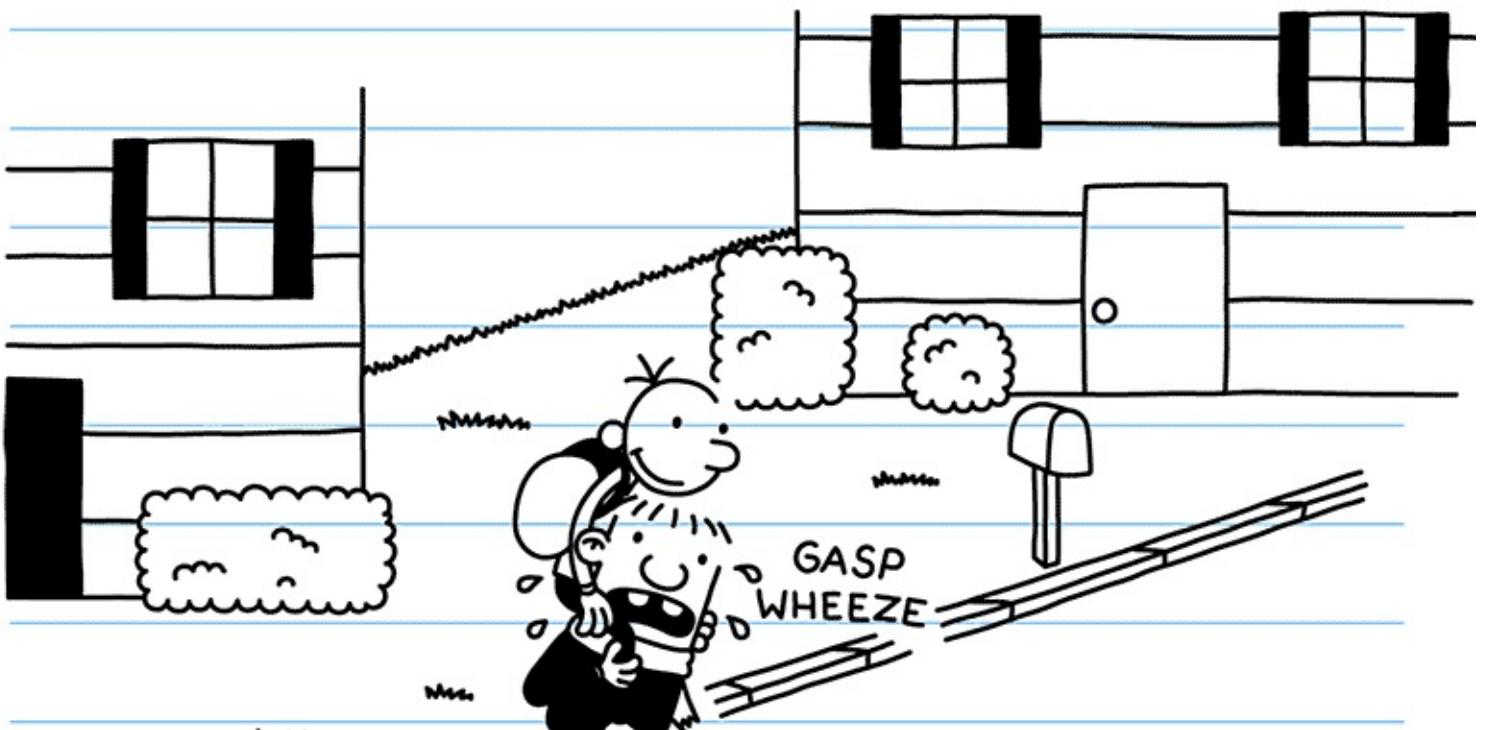


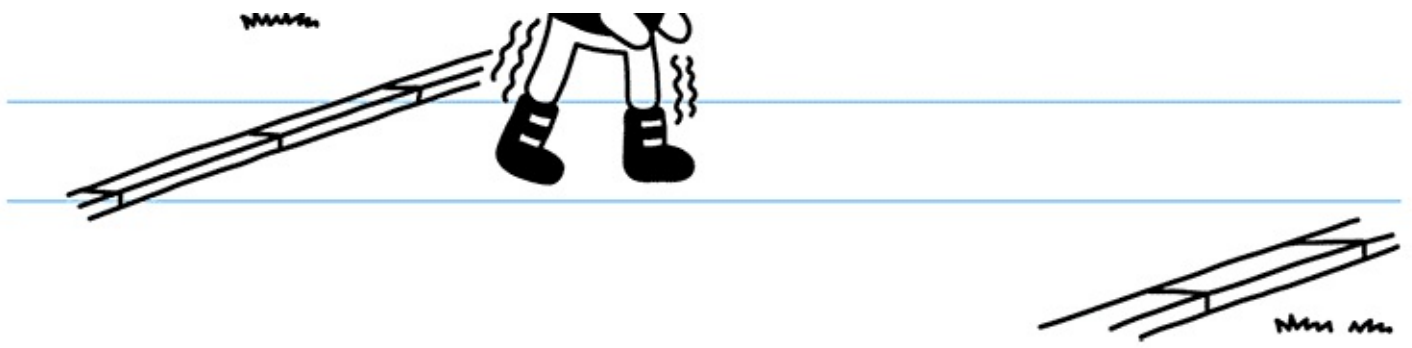


Friday

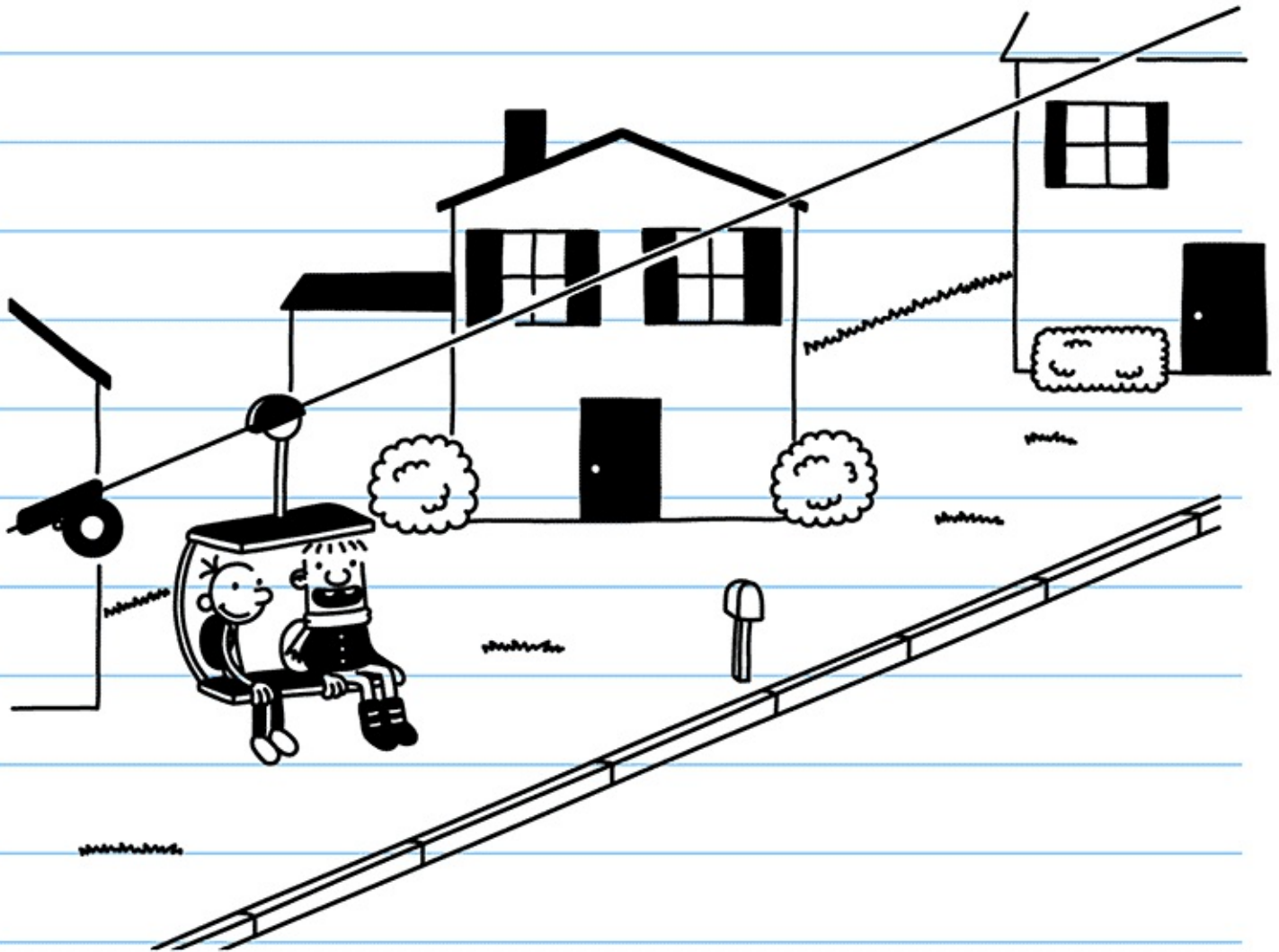
Well, I learned my lesson about getting a ride from Mom, so I'm back to walking to school. But when I was heading home with Rowley this afternoon, I seriously didn't think I had the energy to make it up the hill to my house. So I asked Rowley if he'd give me a piggyback ride.

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





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



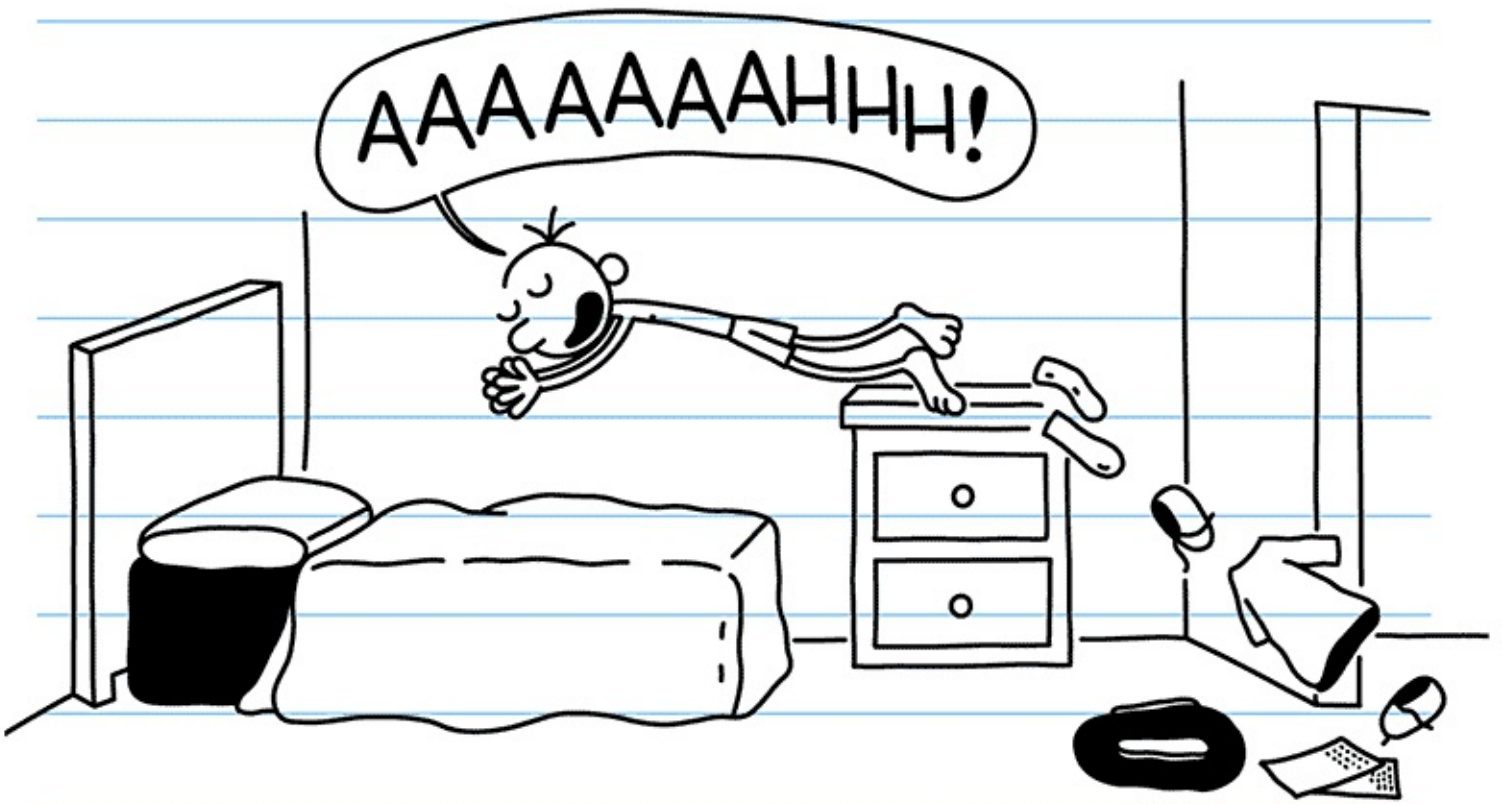
I've e-mailed the principal about five times with my  
suggestion, but I haven't heard anything back yet.

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

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

day after school. \_\_\_\_\_

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



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

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

So the furniture guys came to take his old mattress

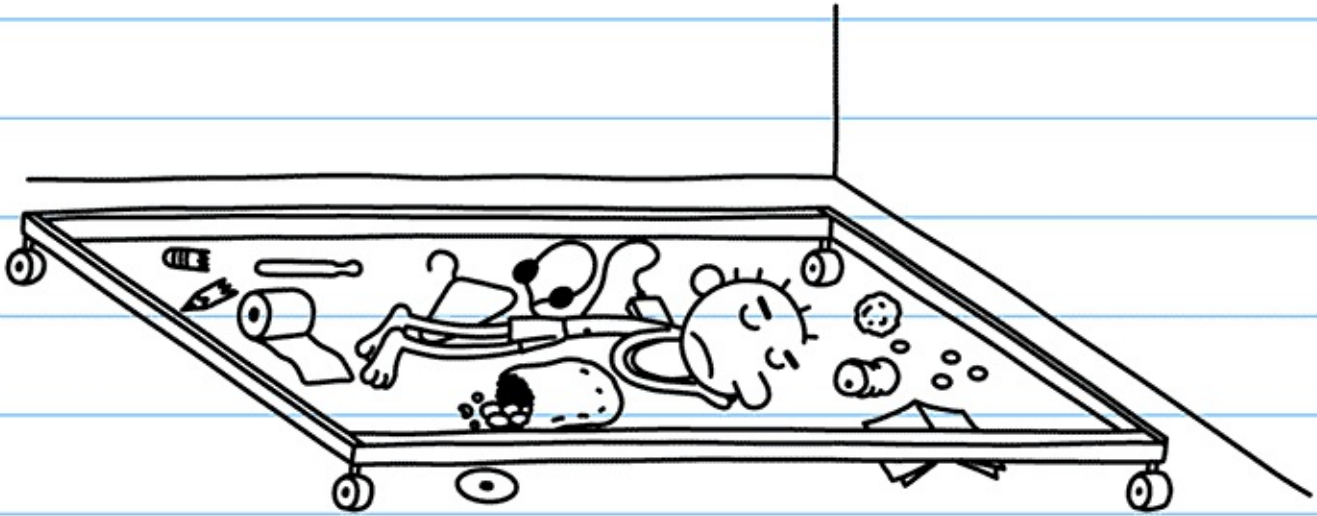
and box spring away.

When they came, Rodrick was in the middle of

his after-school nap. So they took his bed

away, and he just slept on the floor, right in

the middle of his empty bed frame.



The thing I'm worried about is that Dad is going

to ban our after-school naps. I'm starting to get

the feeling he's sick of waking the two of us up

for dinner every night.



Tuesday



Well, I hate to admit this, but I think my naps  
are starting to have an effect on my grades.

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



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

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

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

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

# CHIMPS

A four-page paper by

GREG  
HEFFLEY

1

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



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

2

50

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

GET OUT OF  
MY WAY, CHIMP!

BUT YOU  
ARE ONE.

DON'T CALL  
ME "CHIMP"!

OH, YEAH.



3

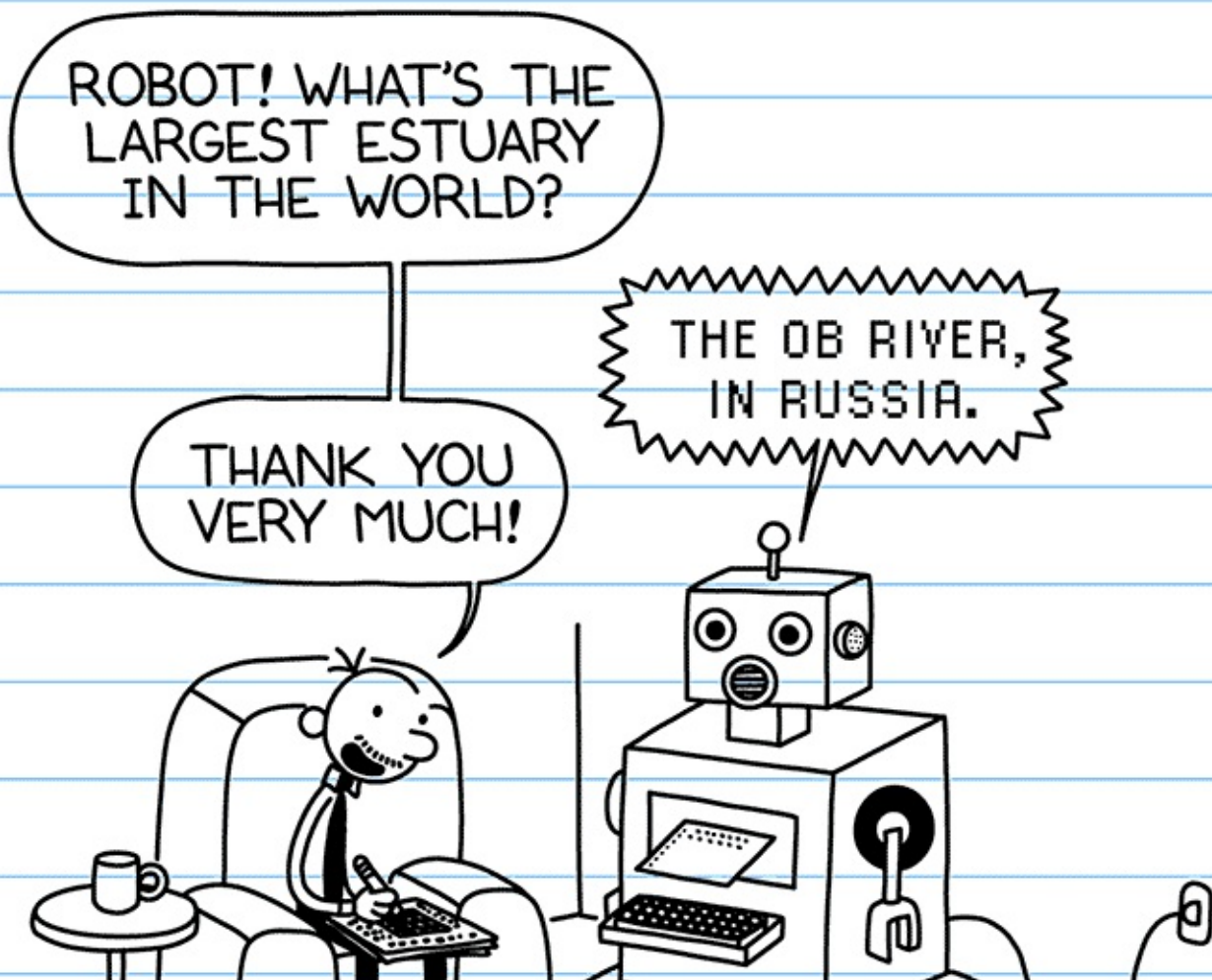
Well, it looks like I'm  
out of paper, so I  
guess this is

**THE  
END.**

4

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

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

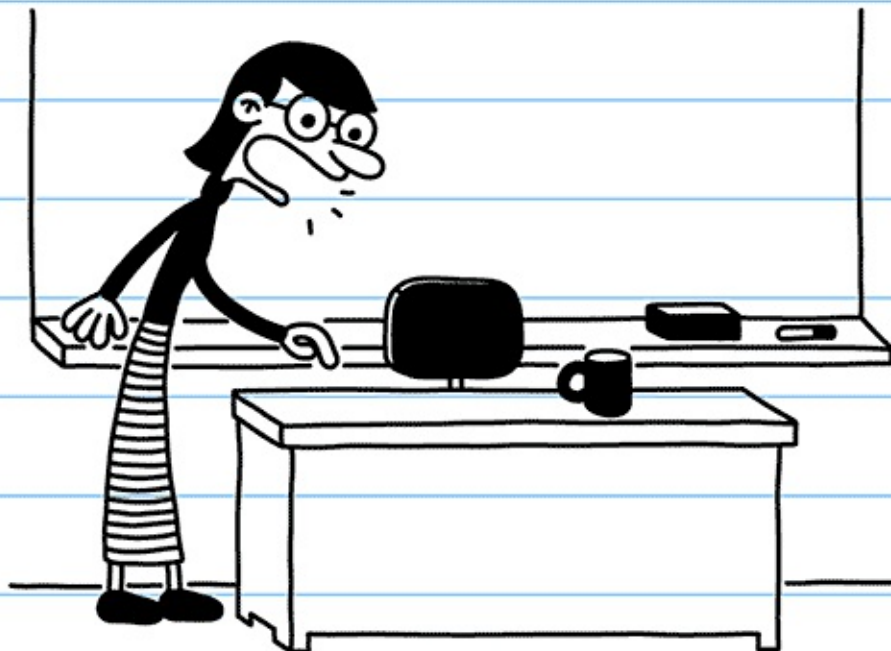






Speaking of teachers, today Mrs. Craig was in a really bad mood. That's because the big dictionary that usually sits on her desk was missing.

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



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

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

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

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and there would be no questions asked.

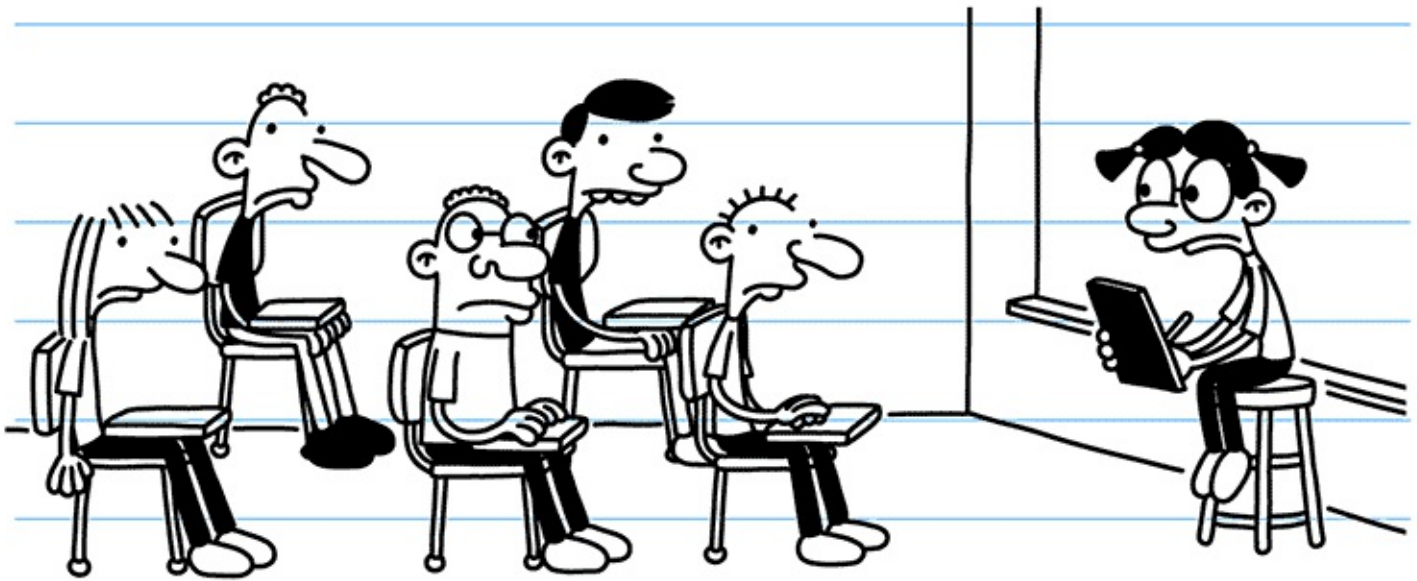
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Mrs. Craig made Patty Farrell class monitor and

left the room. Patty takes her job as class monitor

really seriously, and when she's in charge, nobody

dares to step out of line.

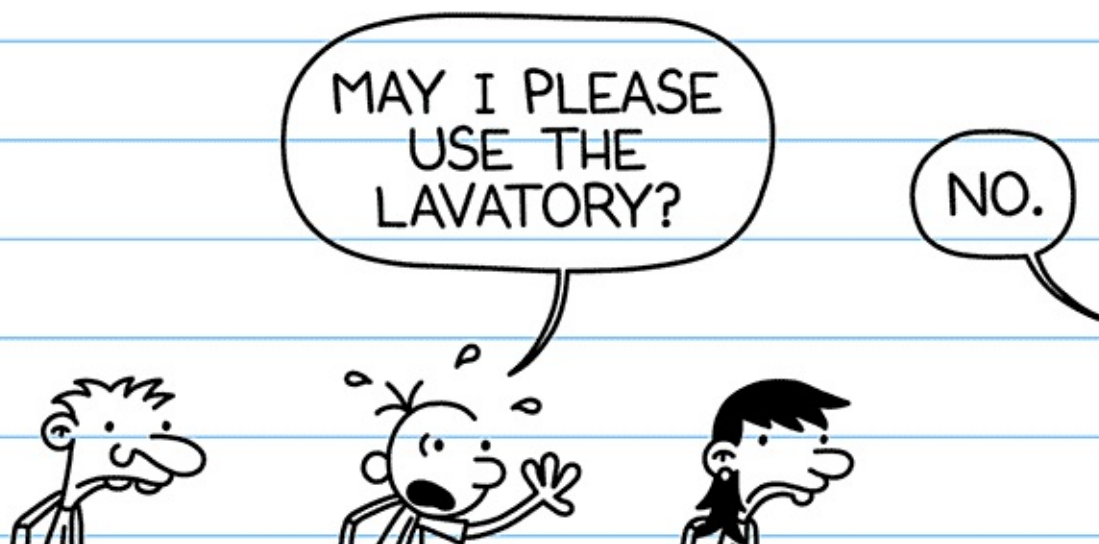


I was just hoping the person who took the

dictionary would hurry up and come clean,

because I had two cartons of chocolate milk

for lunch.





But nobody did come forward. And sure enough,

Mrs. Craig stuck to her promise and kept us inside

for recess. Then she said she was gonna keep us

inside every day until the dictionary was returned.

Friday

Mrs. Craig has kept us inside for the past three

days, and still no dictionary. Today Patty Farrell

was sick, so Mrs. Craig put Alex Aruda in

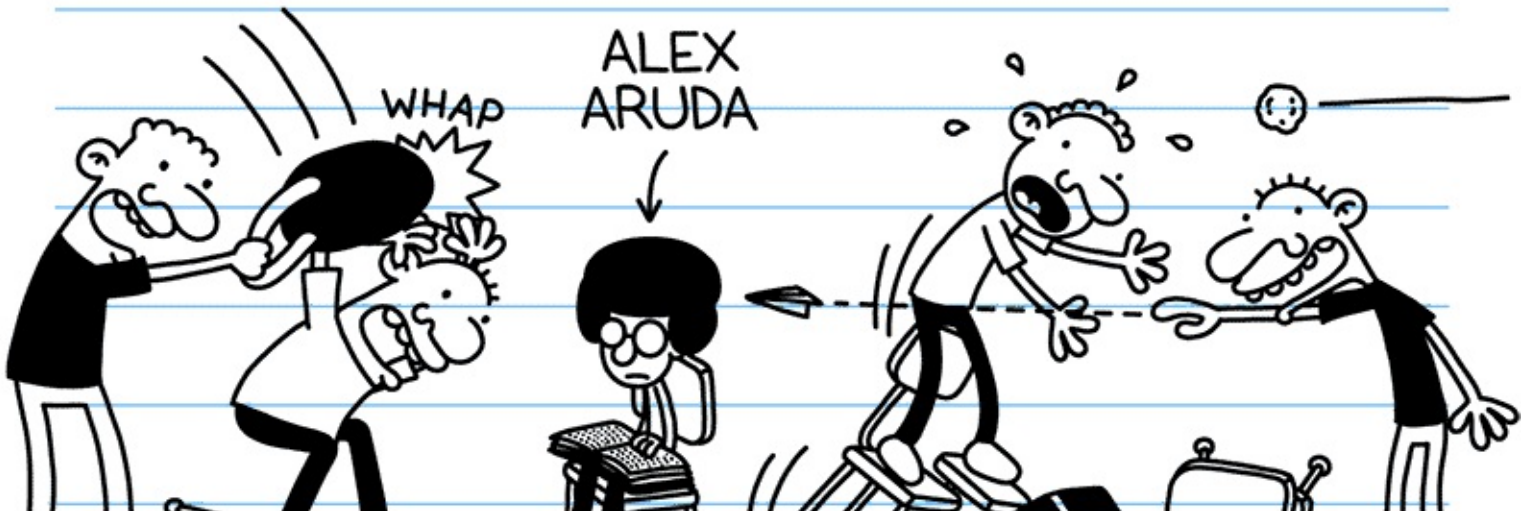
charge of the room while she was gone.

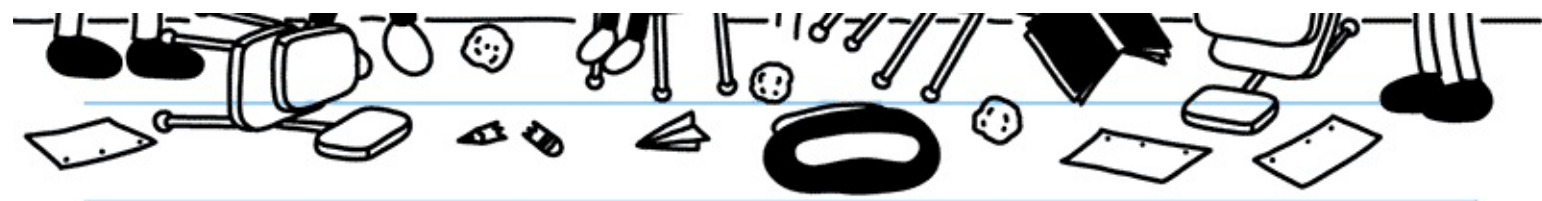
Alex is a good student, but people aren't afraid

of Alex the way they are of Patty Farrell. As

soon as Mrs. Craig left the room, it was complete

pandemonium.





A couple of guys who were sick of getting stuck

inside for recess every day decided to try and

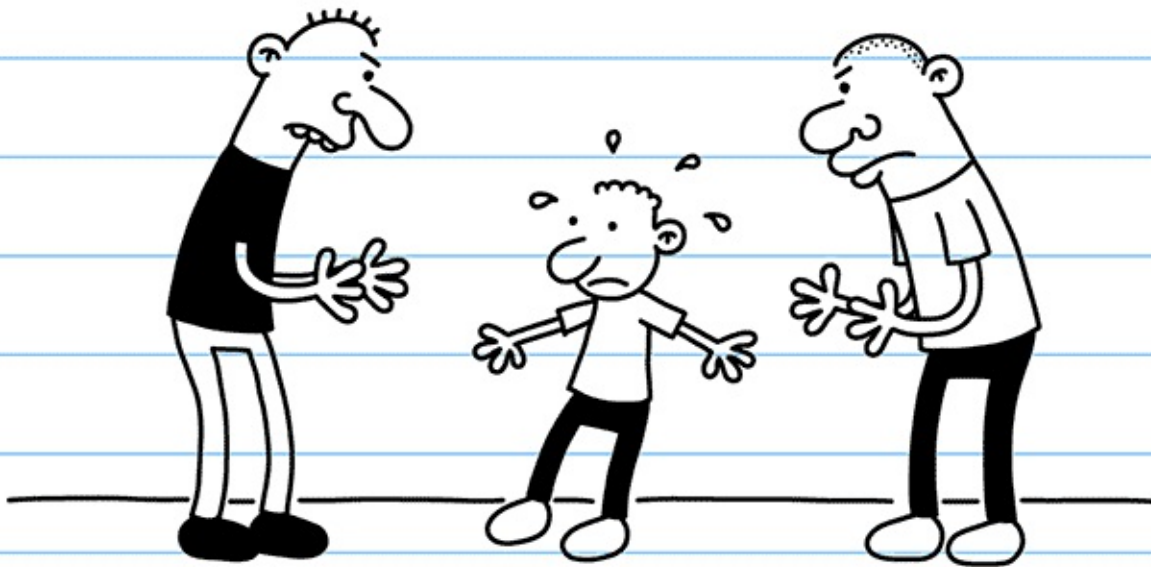
figure out who took Mrs. Craig's dictionary.

The first person they interrogated was this kid

named Corey Lamb. I think Corey was number

one on the list of suspects because he's smart and

he's always using big words.



Corey fessed up to the crime in no time flat.

But it turns out he only said he did it because

the pressure made him crack.

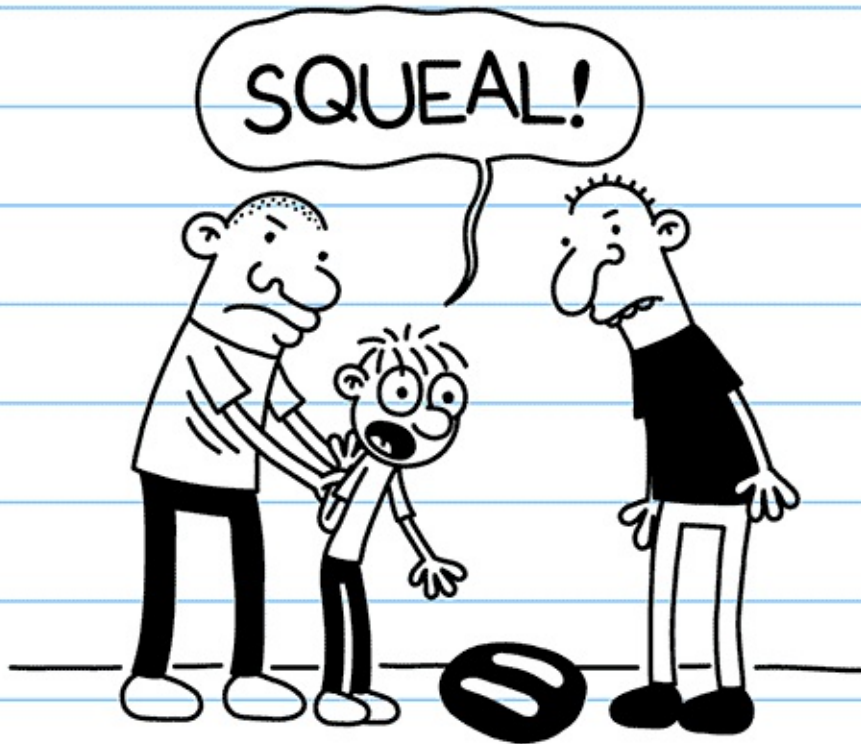






The next kid on the list was Peter Lynn, and

before you knew it Peter was confessing, too.



I figured it was just a matter of time before

those guys cornered me. So I knew I had to

think up something fast.

I've read enough Sherlock Sammy books to know

that sometimes it takes a nerd to get you out of

a pinch. And I figured if anyone could crack

this case, it was Alex Aruda.

So me and a couple of other guys who were worried

about getting hassled went over to Alex to see if

---

he could help us out.

---

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



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

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

worth it, and we pooled our money, then forked

---

over the five dollars.

---

58

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

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



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

waste complaining, because Mrs. Craig was gonna be

---

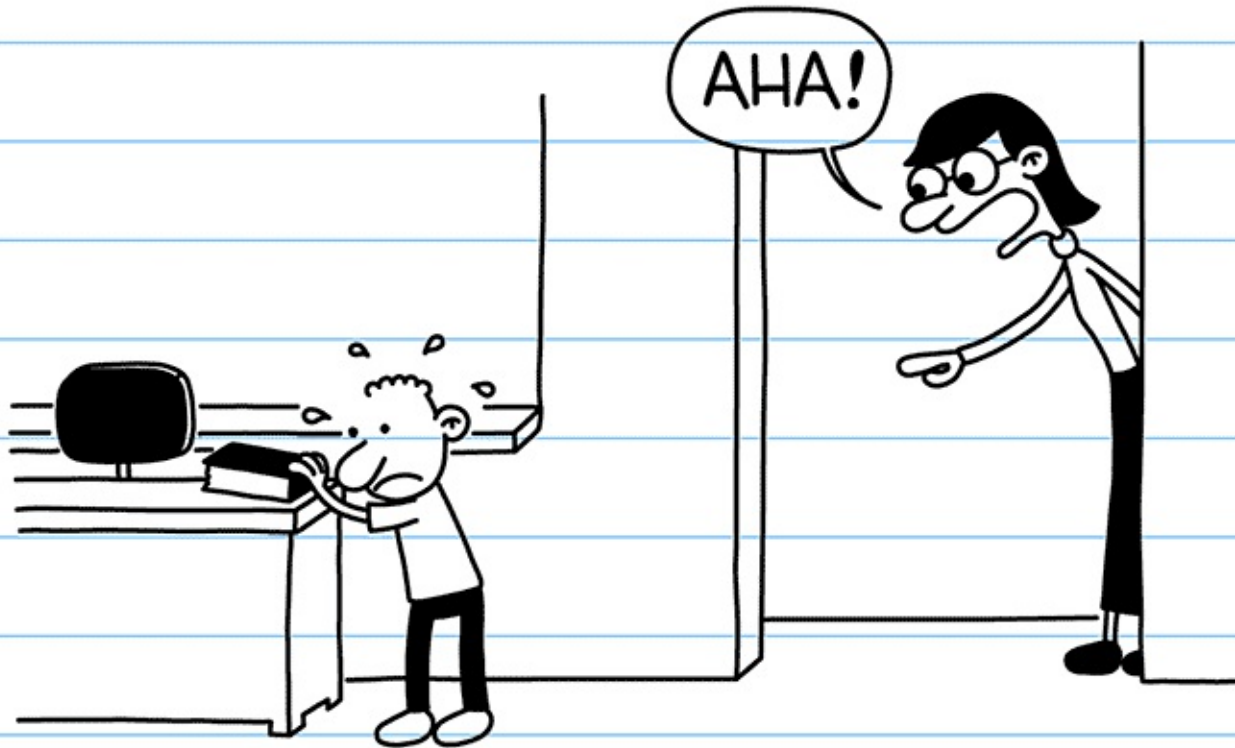
back in the room at any second.

---

Corey Lamb grabbed the book from Alex and put

it on Mrs. Craig's desk. But she walked in the

room right at that moment.



Mrs. Craig ended up going back on her whole

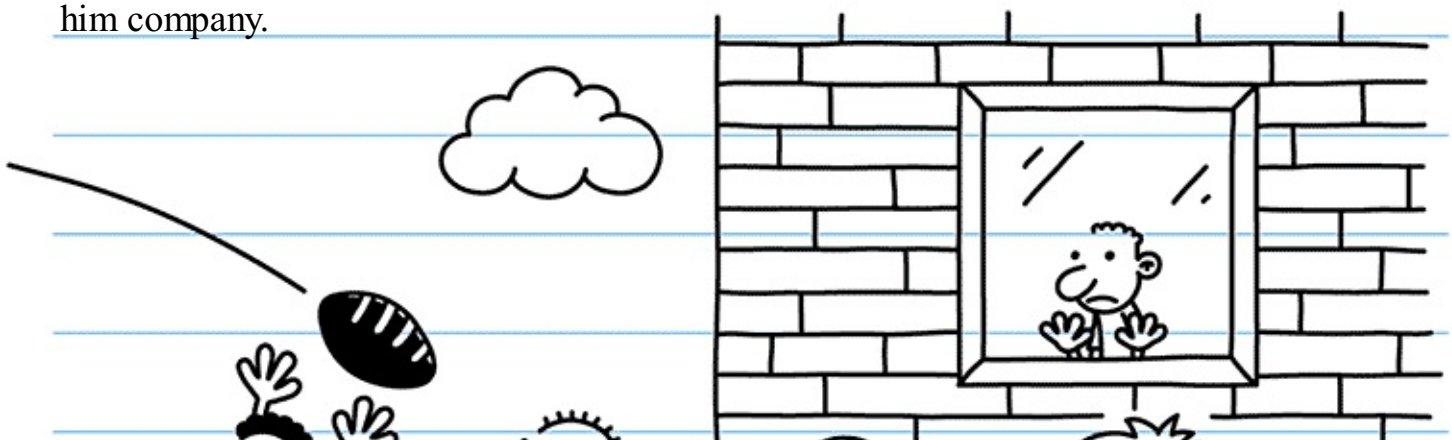
“no consequences” promise, so Corey Lamb is

gonna be spending the next three weeks inside

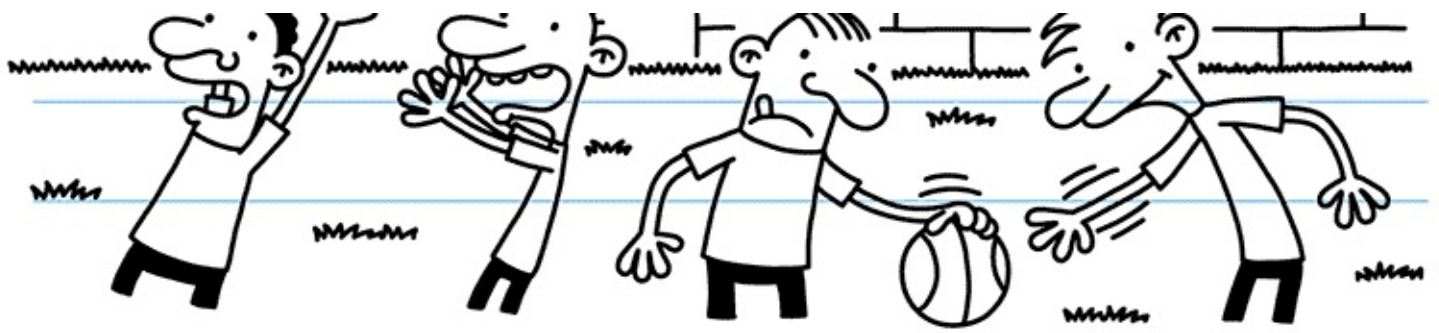
during recess. Looking on the bright side,

though, at least he'll have Alex Aruda to keep

him company.

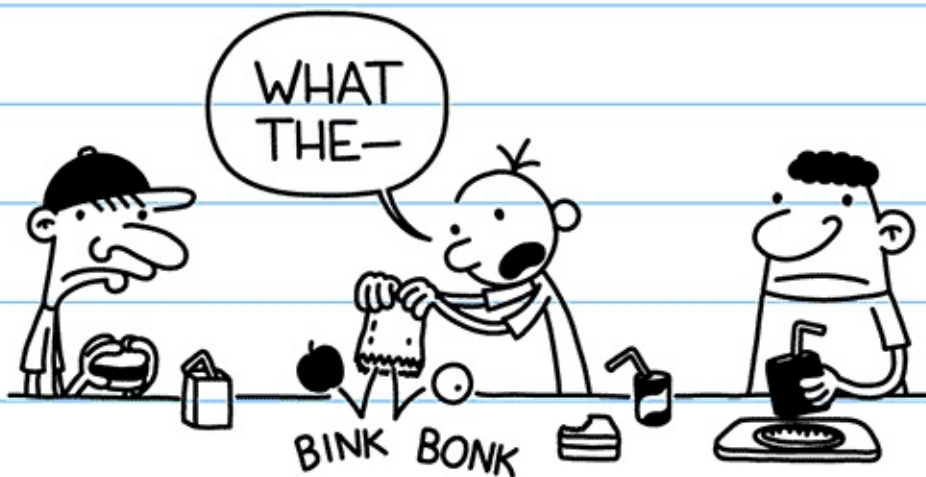




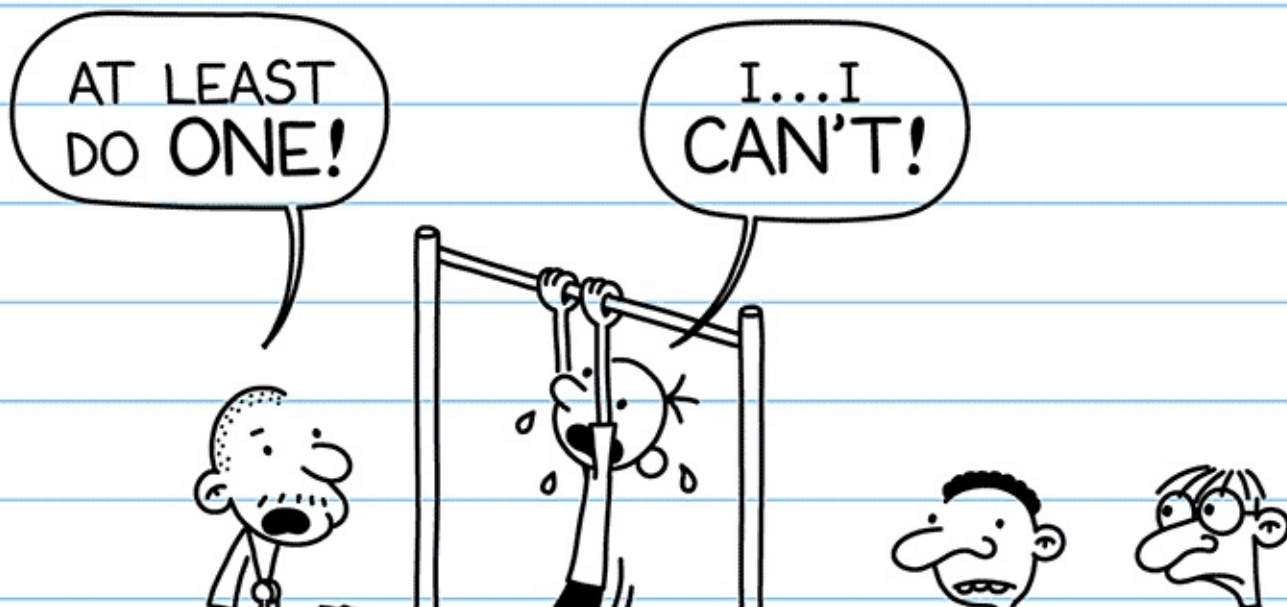


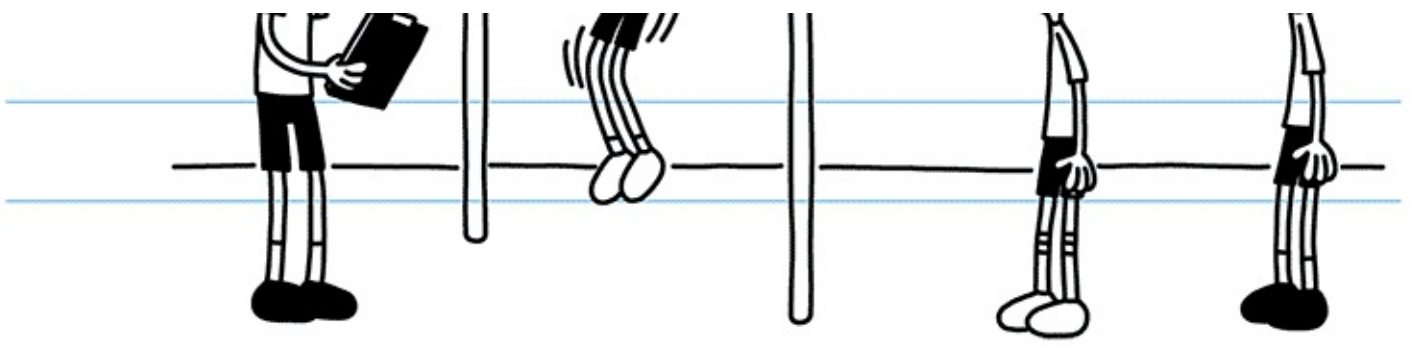
Tuesday

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



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





When I got home, I asked Mom what the deal

was with the two-fruits thing. She said she

always buys enough treats to last us the whole

week, so one of us boys must've taken the snacks

out of the bin in the laundry room.

I'm sure Mom thinks I'm the one stealing the

snacks, but believe me, I already learned my

lesson about doing that.

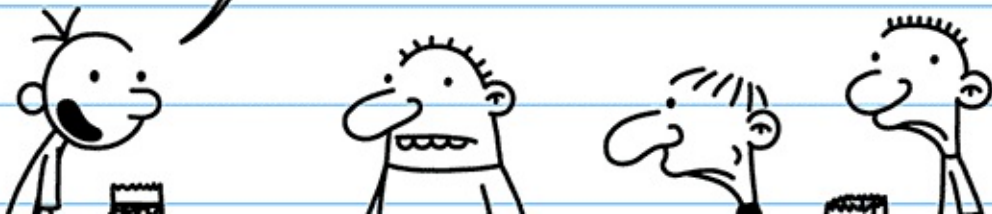
Last year I took treats out of the bin, but I

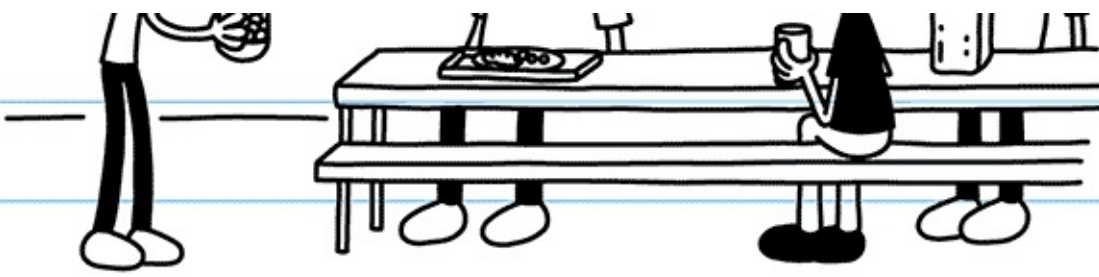
totally paid the price for it when I opened

my lunch bag at school and pulled out Mom's

substitute snack.

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





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

Like I said, I really depend on the boost I  
get from that sugar. I almost fell asleep in

Mr. Watson's class in sixth period, but luckily I  
snapped awake when my head hit the back of  
my chair.



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

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

---

until then.

---

Dad wasn't any help, either. When I complained

to him, he just made up a penalty for anyone

caught stealing snacks, which was "no drums and

no video games for a week." So obviously he

thinks it's either me or Rodrick.

Like I said, it's not me, but I figured Dad

might be right about Rodrick. When Rodrick

went up to the bathroom after dinner, I

walked down to his room to see if I could find

any wrappers or crumbs.

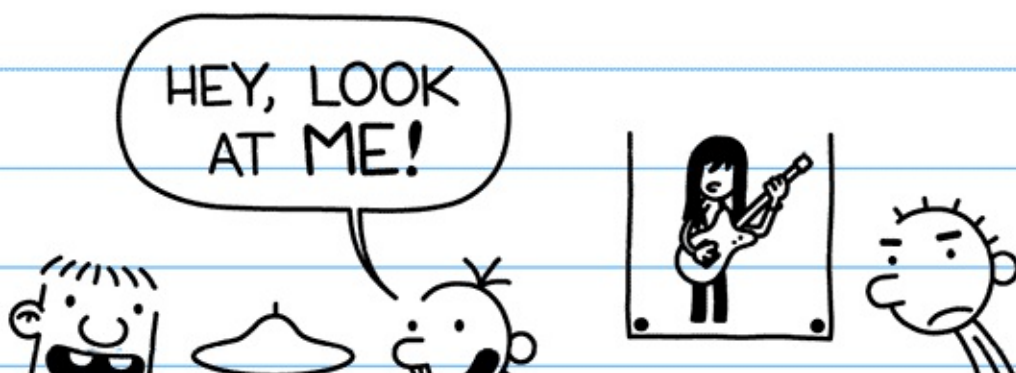
But while I was poking around in Rodrick's room,

I heard him coming downstairs. I had to hide

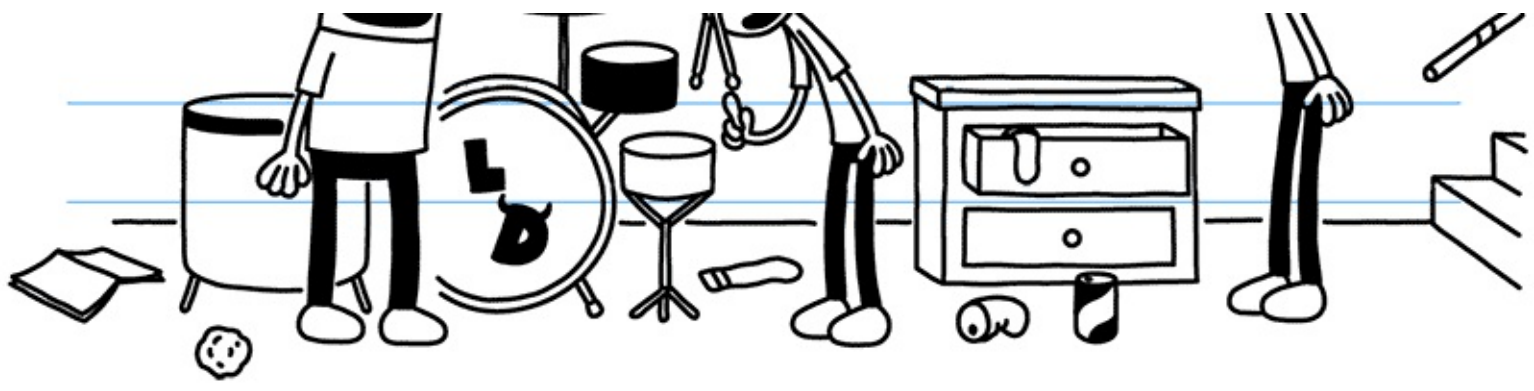
quick, because for some reason Rodrick gets really

bent out of shape when he catches me in his room,

like he did yesterday.

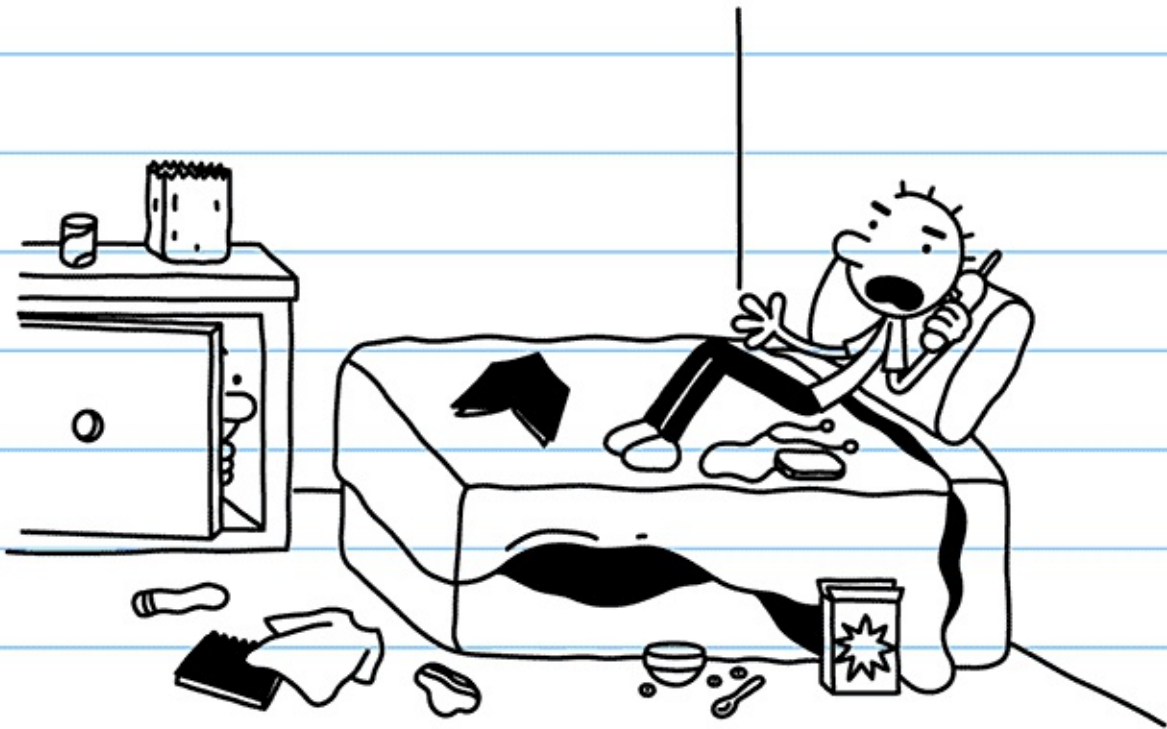






Right before Rodrick got to the bottom of the stairs, I dove into his desk cabinet and shut the door. Rodrick walked in the room, then flopped on his bed and called his friend Ward.

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



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

Luckily, right around then, the phone's battery

died. When Rodrick went upstairs to get the

---

spare phone, I made a run for it.

---

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

At the moment, though, I'm kind of broke.

That's because I wasted all my money on some junk I can't even use.

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

**X-RAY  
GOGGLES**



See thru:  
**WALLS • METAL • CLOTHES**

**Personal  
HOVERCRAFT**



ZOOM AROUND  
TOWN ON A  
CUSHION OF AIR!

FLOAT SIX FEET  
ABOVE THE  
GROUND!

**PRINT YOUR  
OWN  
MONEY**

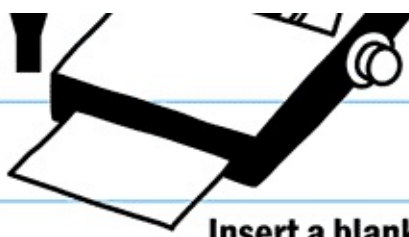


**THROW  
YOUR  
STOIC**

# MONEY

with the

# Cash Machine



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

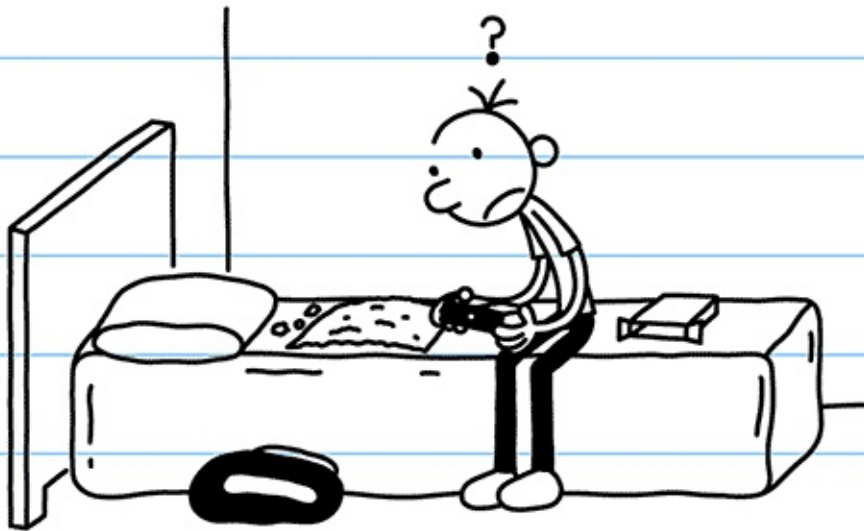
# VOICE



VENTRILOQUISM KIT

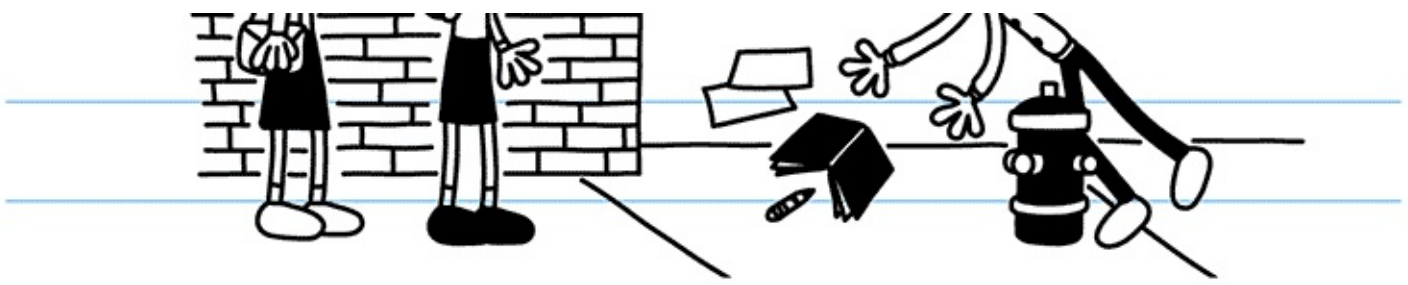
I started receiving my stuff in the mail about two weeks ago.

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



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



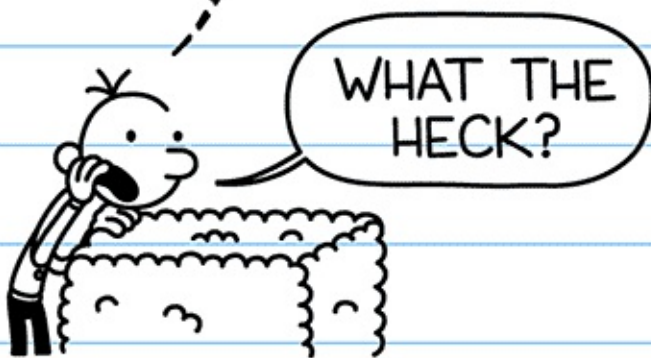


The Throw Your Voice thing didn't work at

All, even though I followed the instructions

in the book.

"I'M AN IDIOT."  
"I'M AN IDIOT."



But the item I had the highest hopes for was

the Personal Hovercraft. I figured getting home

after school would be a breeze once my hovercraft

finally showed up in the mail.

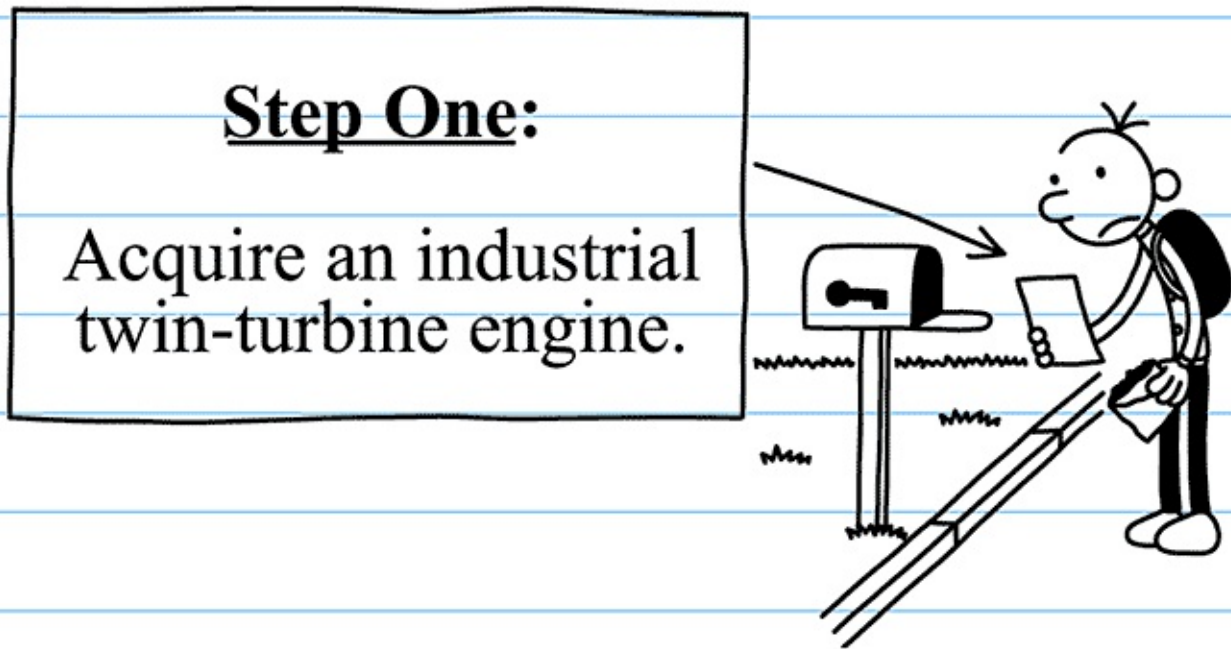
SO LONG,  
SUCKERS!







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



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

### Thursday

Today, when I got home from school, Mom was waiting for me, and she didn't look too happy.

It turns out the school sent home mid-quarter

report cards, and she got the mail before I

---

could intercept it.

---

Mom showed me the report card, and it wasn't

pretty. Then she said we were gonna wait for

Dad to get home to see what he thought.



Man, waiting for Dad to get home when you're in

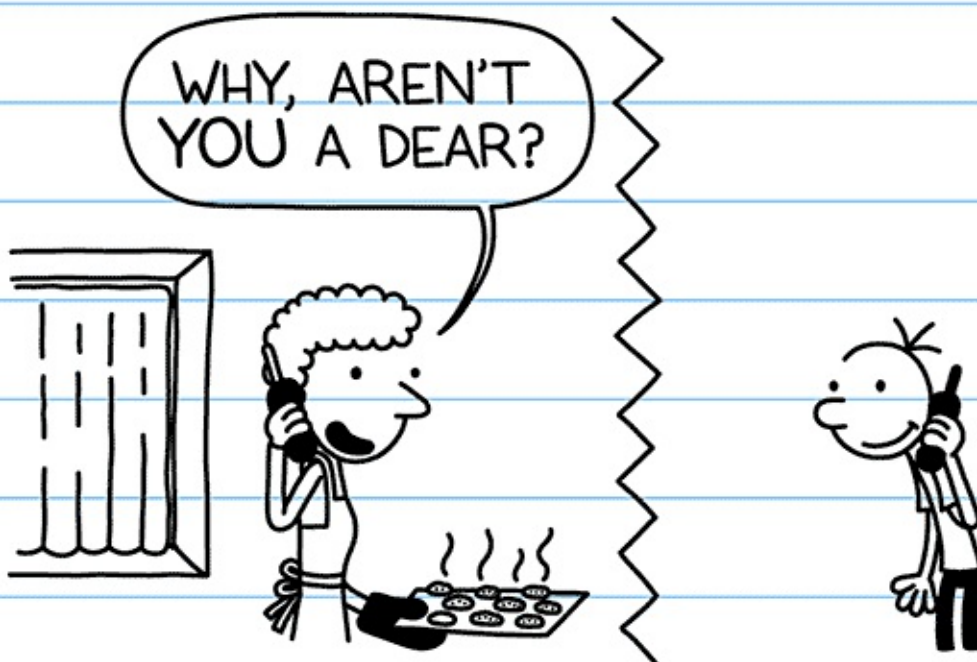
trouble is the Worst. I used to just hide in

the closet, but recently I figured out a better

way to handle it. Now, whenever I get in trouble,

I ask Gramma to come over for dinner, because

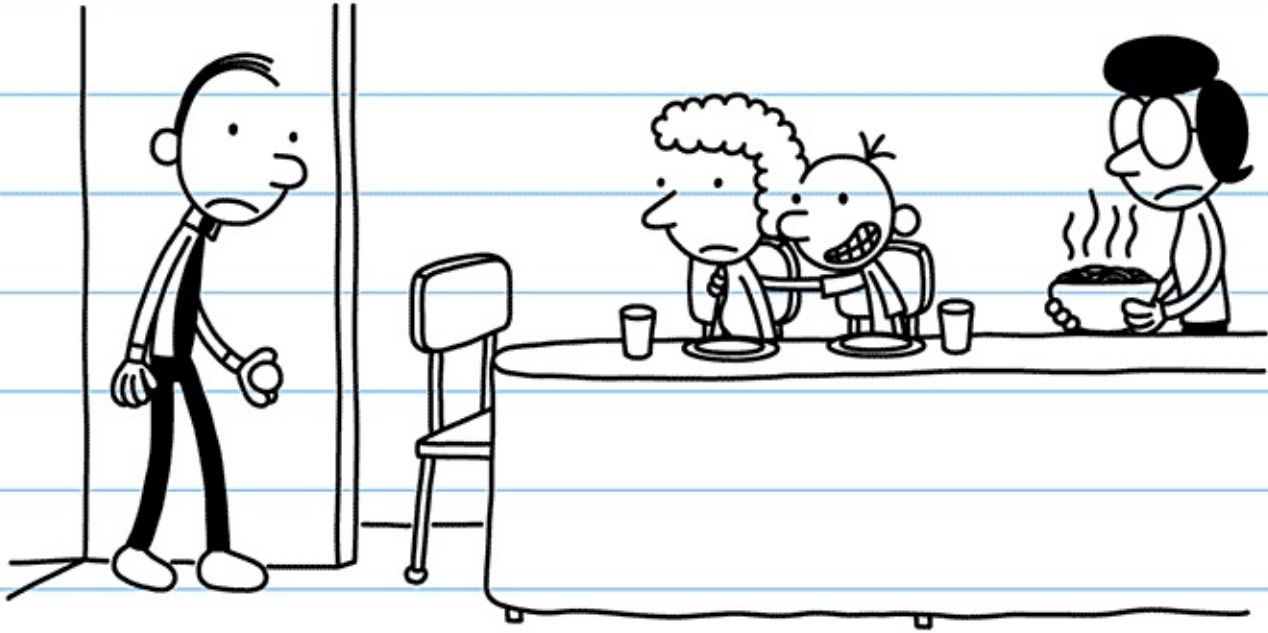
Dad's not gonna act mad at me if Gramma's around.



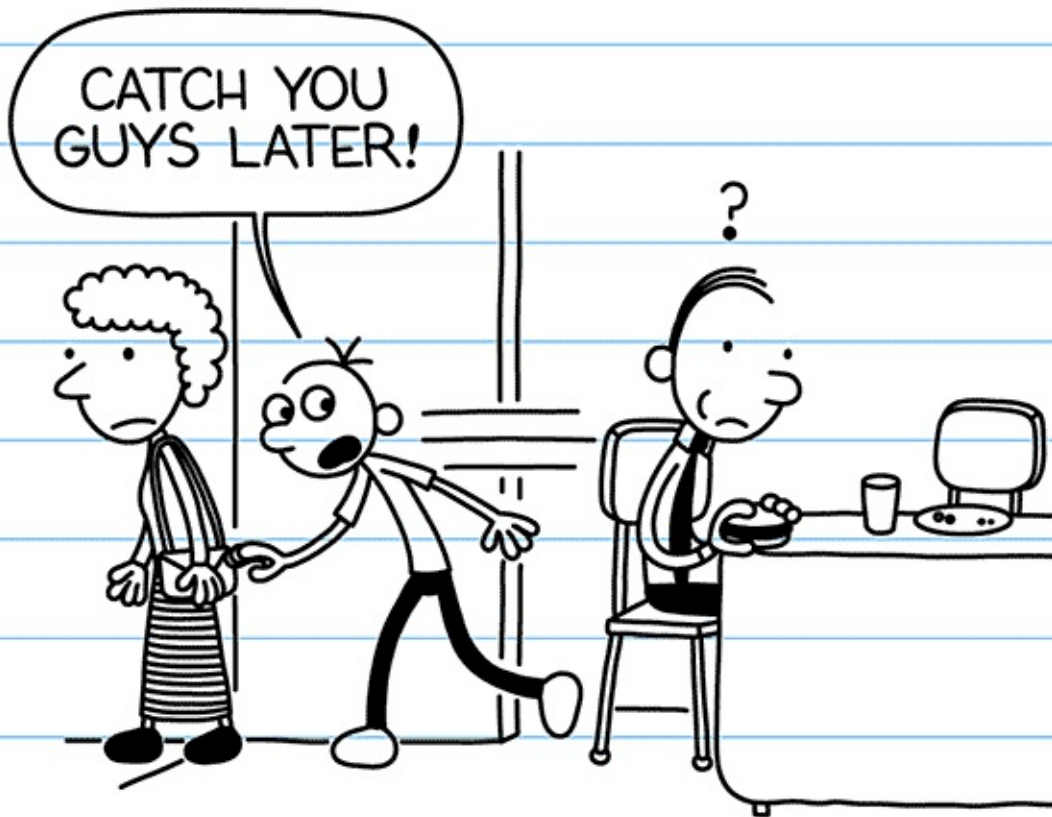
At dinner, I made sure I sat in the seat right

next to Gramma.

70



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



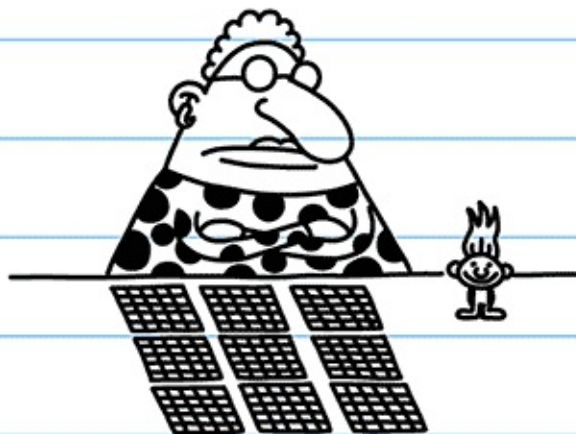
Escaping Dad wasn't the only reason I went

to Bingo with Gramma. I also went because I \_\_\_\_\_  
needed a surefire way to make some money. \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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



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



yelled out “BINGO” real loud, and the clerk came

---

over to check my card.

---

72

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

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

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



Friday

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

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

instead of spending four hours at Bingo.

I fell asleep in sixth period today, and this time I

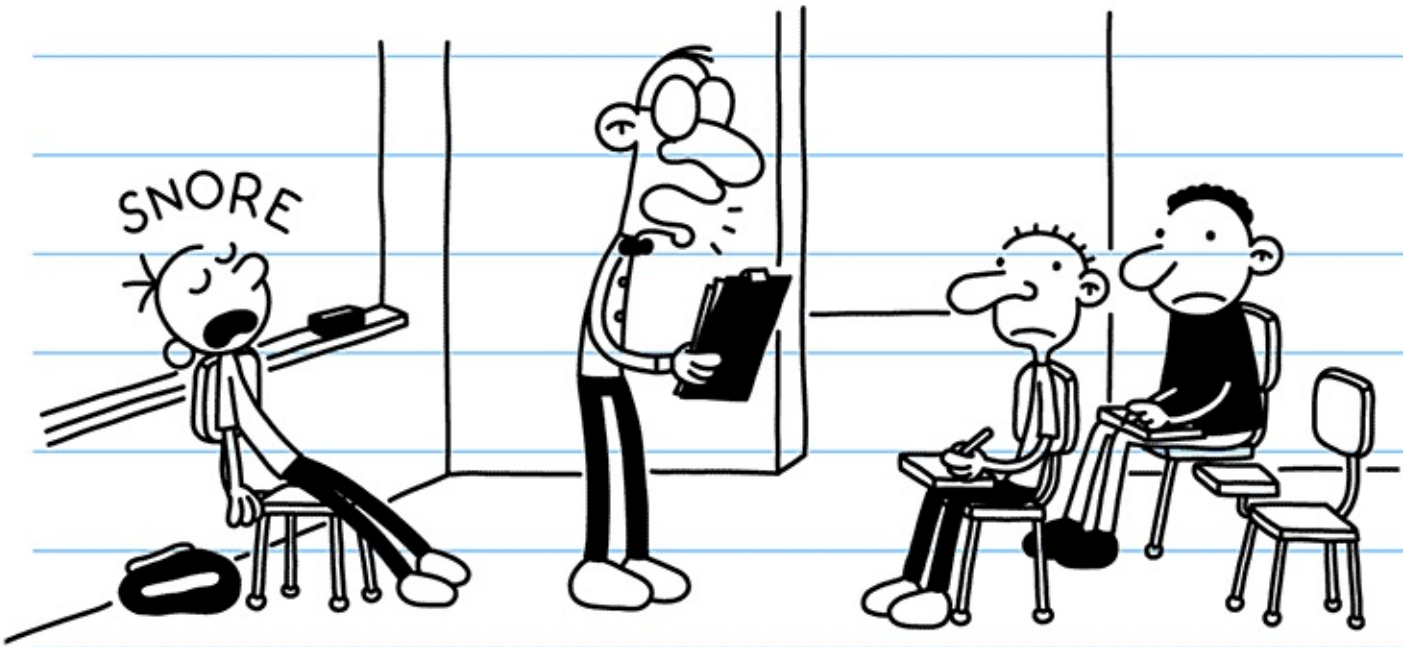
was out Cold—Mr. Watson had to shake me to

get me to wake up. As a punishment, I had to

sit in the front of the room.

That was just fine with me, because at least up

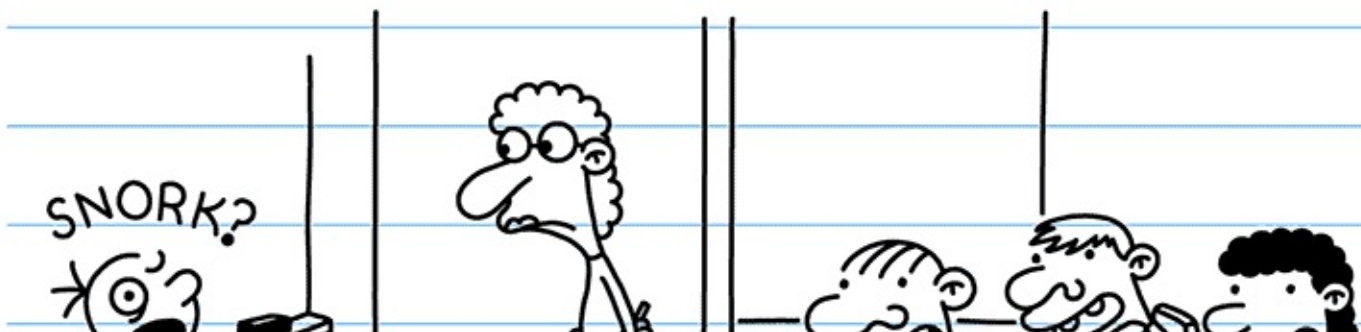
there I could sleep in peace.



I just wish someone woke me up when sixth period

ended, because I didn't wake up until the next

period started.





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

Mrs. Lowry gave me detention, and on Monday

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

Tonight I was totally jittery from my sugar

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

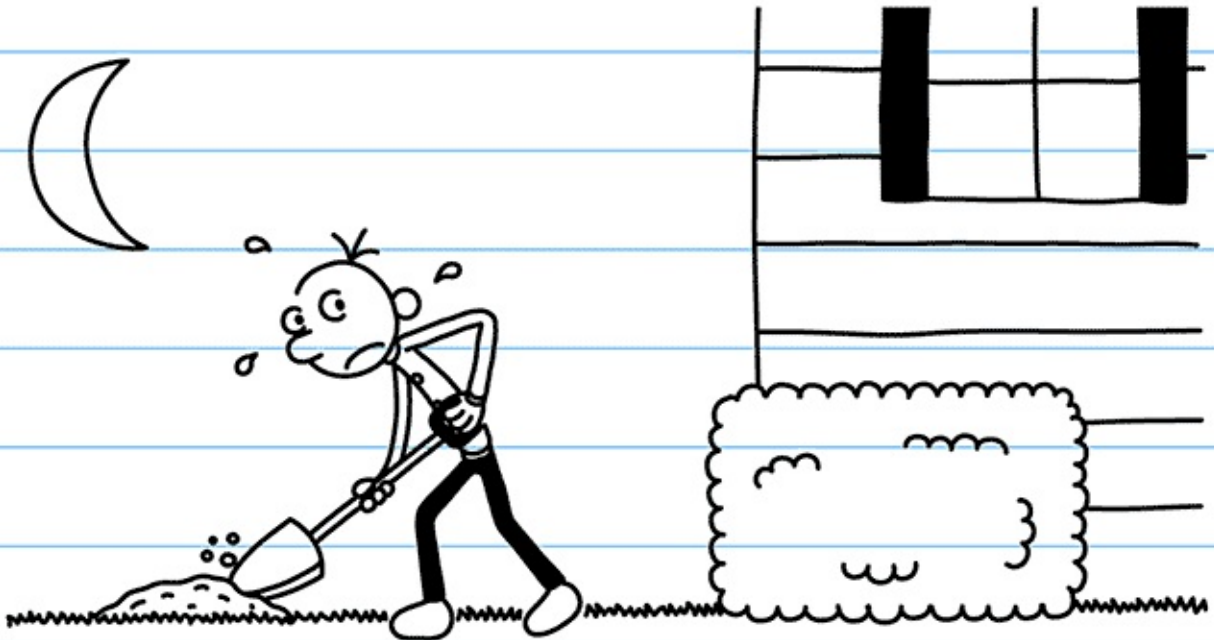
buy a soda or candy from the convenience store.

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

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

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

I was desperate.



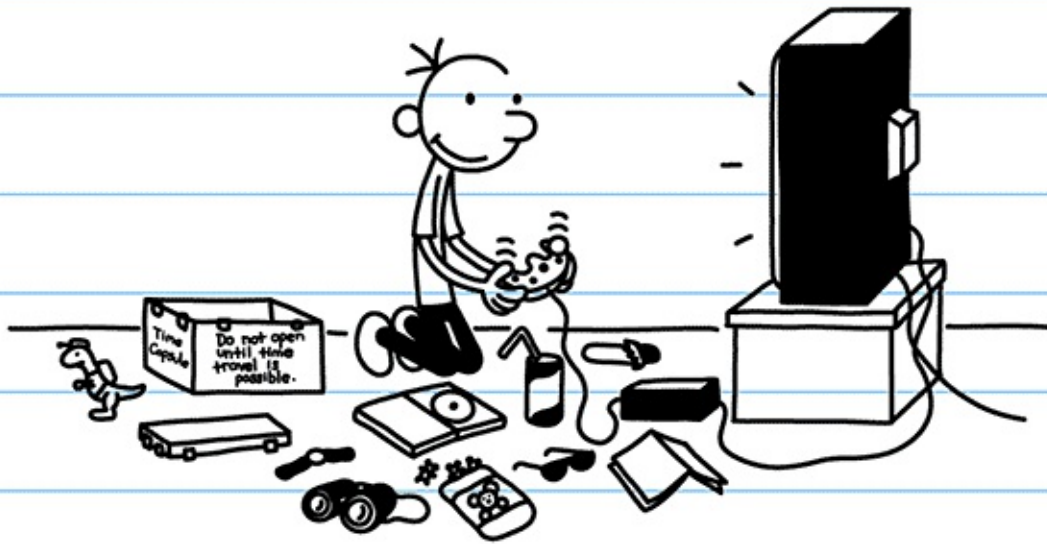
I took the time capsule back to my house, opened

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

down to the convenience store and bought myself a \_\_\_\_\_

big soda, a pack of gummy bears, and a candy bar. \_\_\_\_\_

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



Monday

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

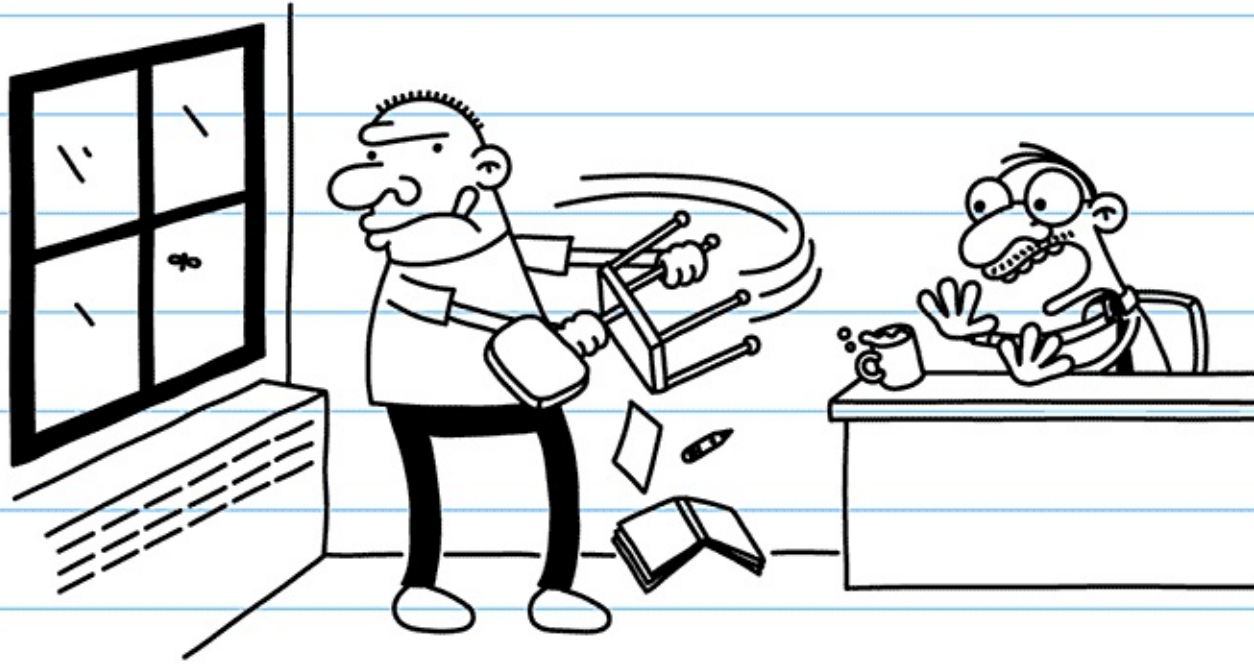
I took the only empty seat, which was right in  
front of this kid named Leon Ricket.







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



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

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

careless, and Mr. Ray caught Leon with his finger

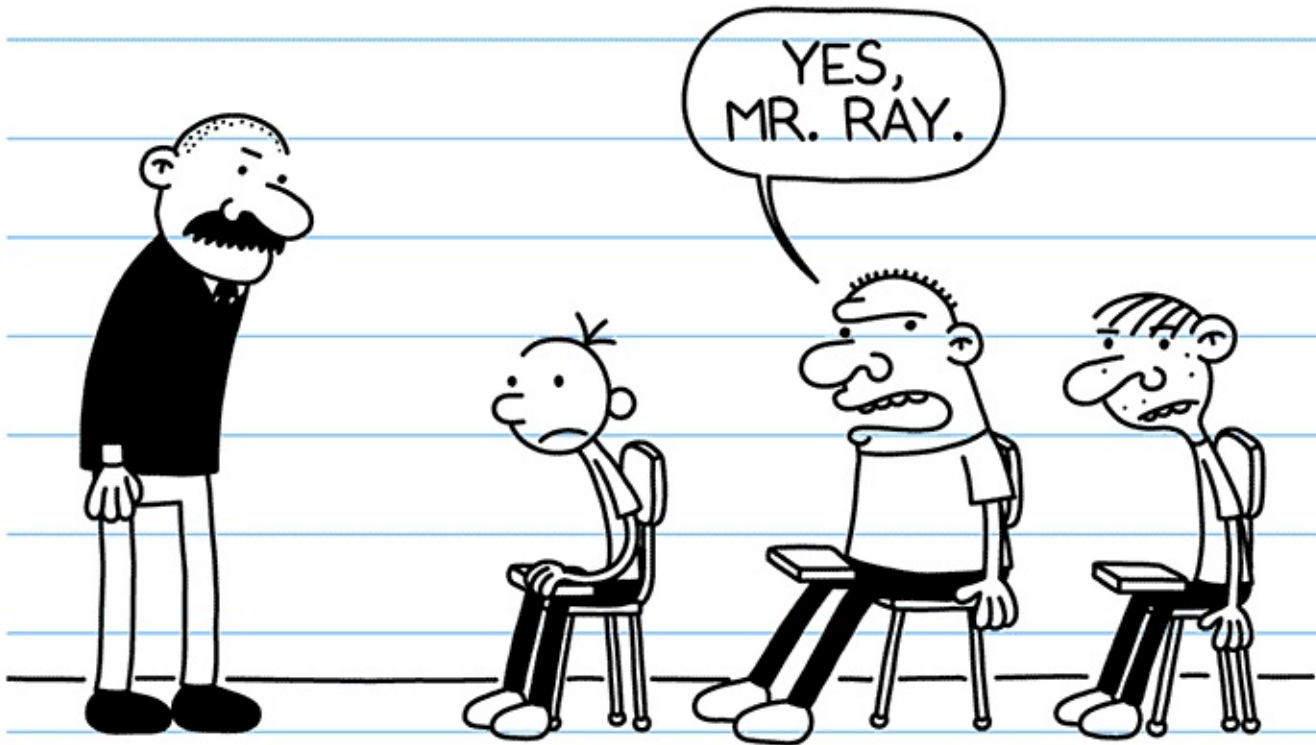
---

in my ear.

---

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

he was gonna be in big trouble.



I knew Leon was just gonna go back to bugging

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

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

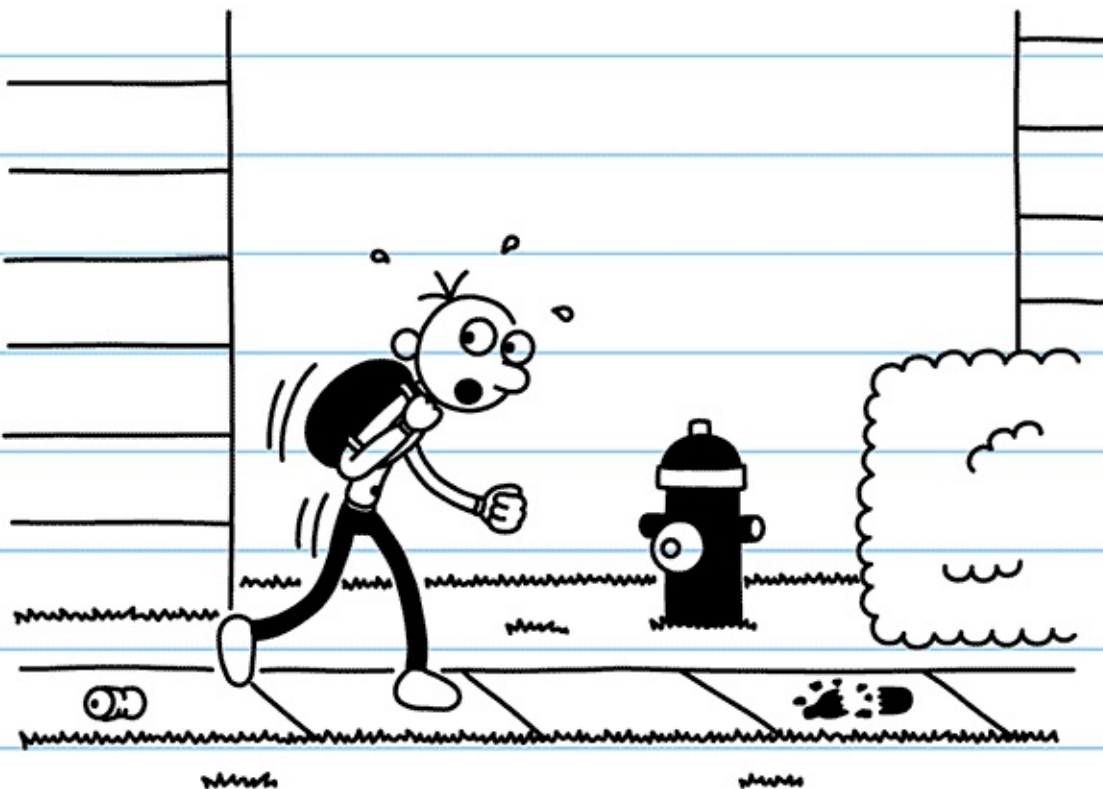
hands together to make it seem like Leon hit me.





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

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



Tuesday

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

started stealing the lunch snacks. So I decided

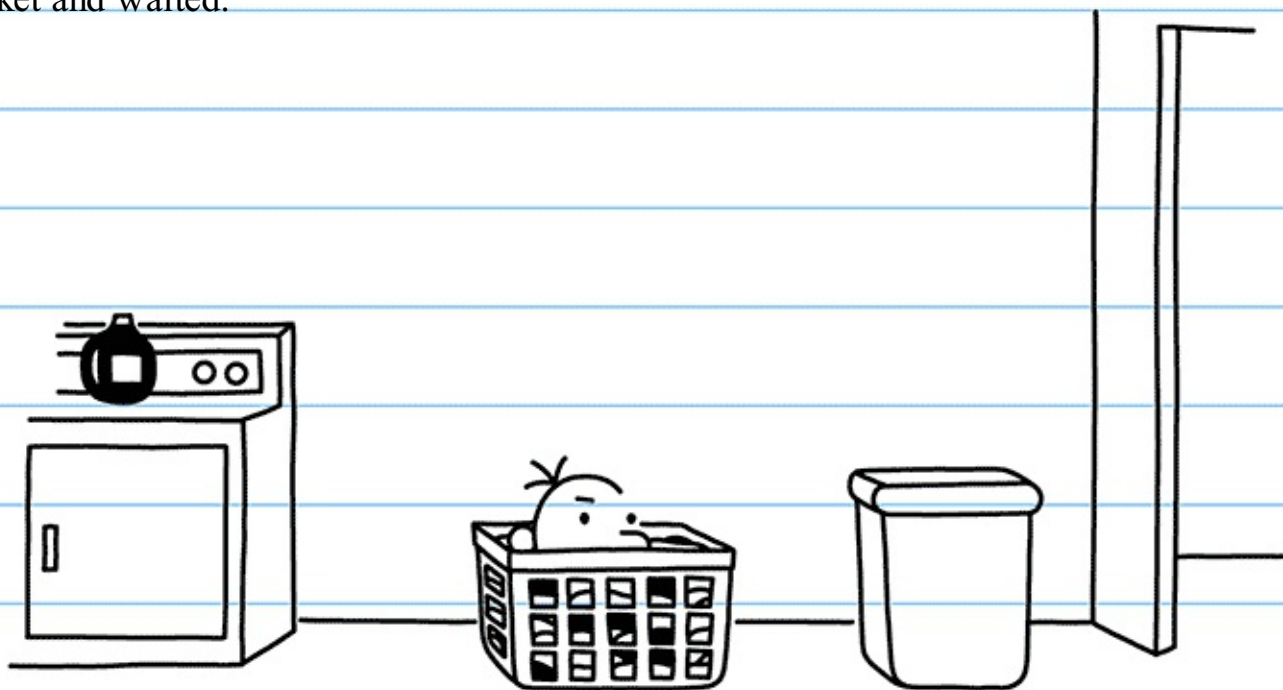
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to catch the thief once and for all.

---

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

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



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

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



she dumped the clothes from the dryer right into

the bin where I was hiding.

80



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

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



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

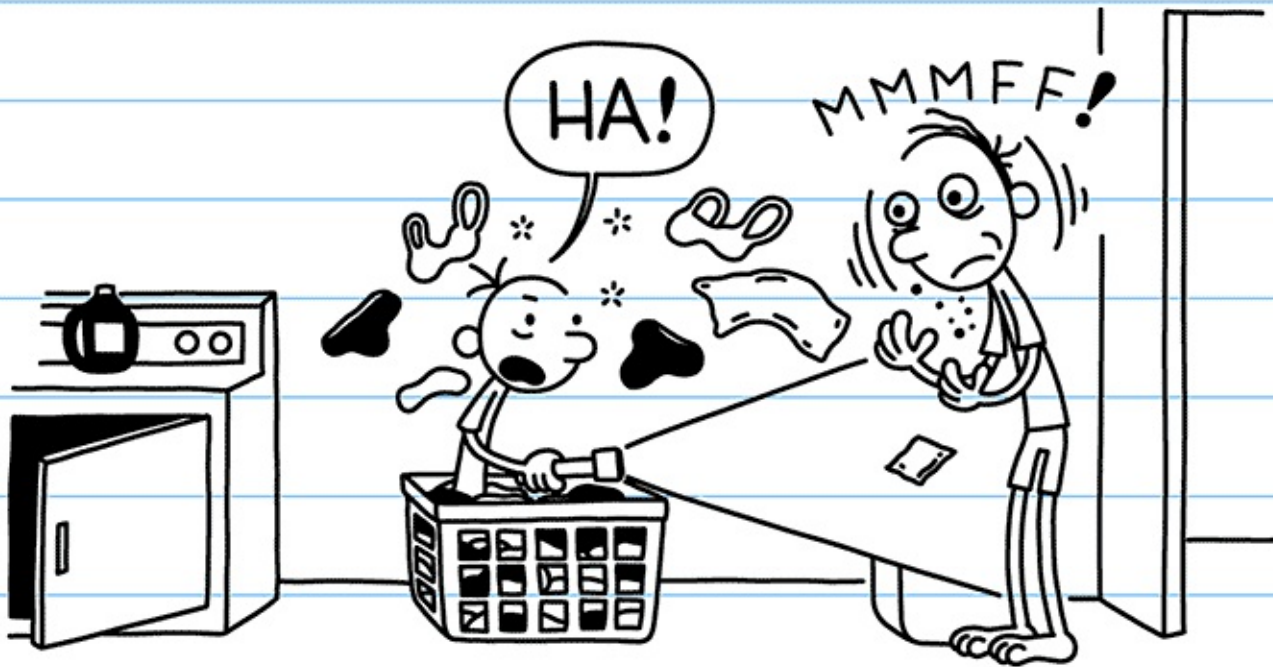
I Do know is that I woke up to the sound of

---

crinkling cellophane.

---

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



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

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

Right at that moment, we heard Mom coming

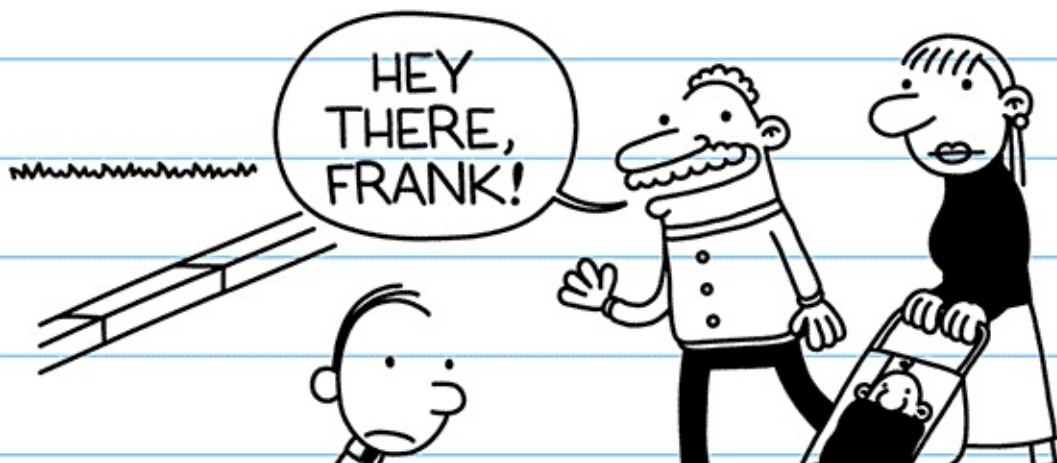
down the stairs.

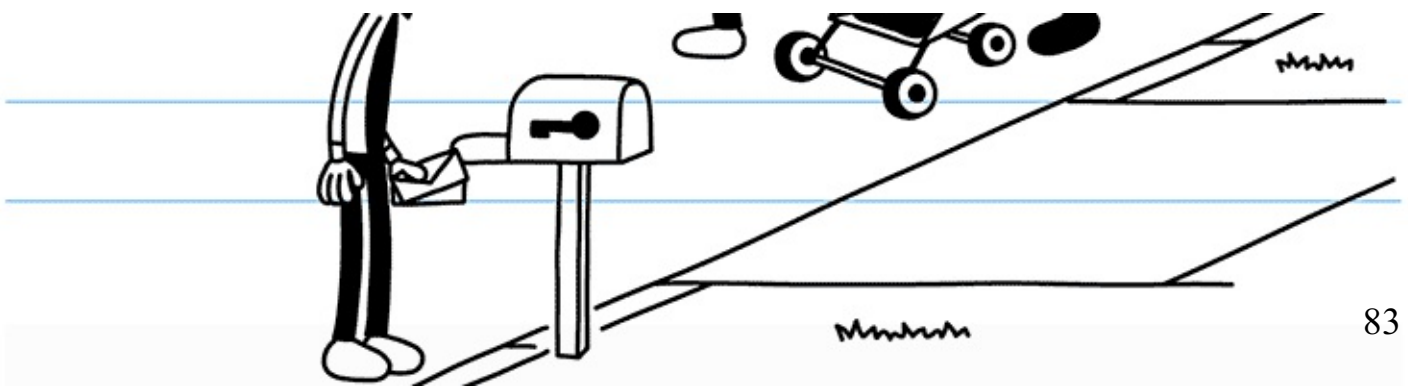
I think me and Dad realized how bad the situation looked for both of us, so we each just grabbed as many oatmeal creams as we could carry and made a run for it.

### Wednesday

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

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





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

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

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



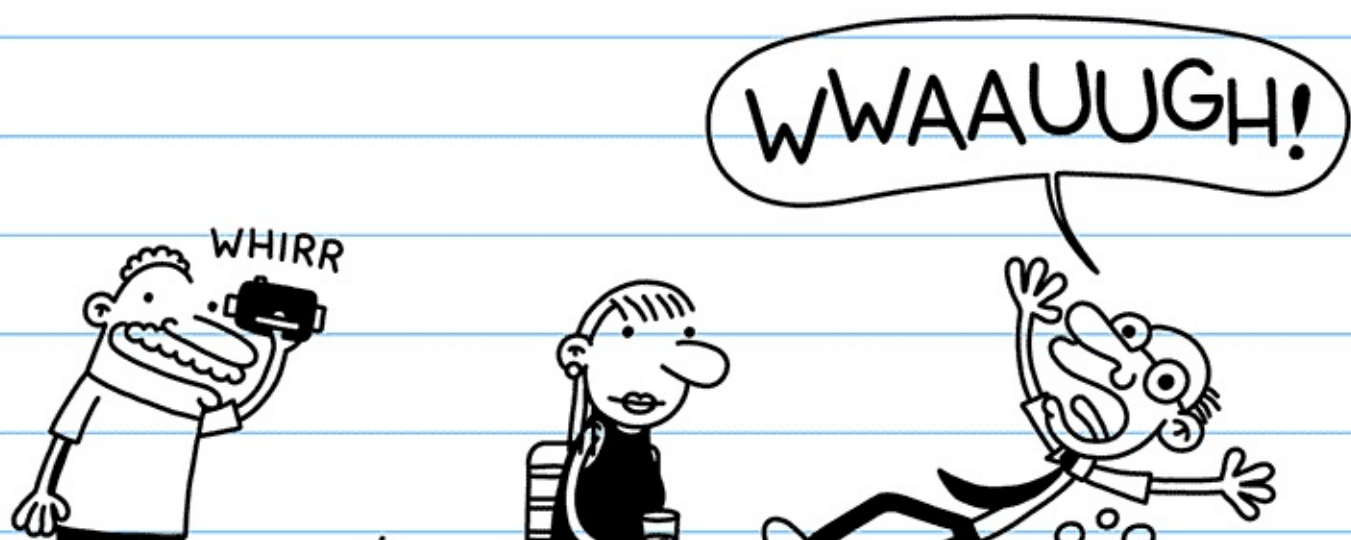


I've been to every single Snella half-birthday

party so far, and no baby has laughed once.

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

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





The Snellas turned in those videos, but they

didn't win anything. So I guess they're just

gonna keep having babies until they do.

Dad hates performing in front of people, so he'll

do everything he can to avoid having to act like a

fool in front of the whole neighborhood. And so

far, Dad has weaseled his way out of every single

Snella half-birthday party.

At dinner, Mom told Dad he has to go to

Seth Snella's half-birthday party in June. And

I'm pretty sure Dad knows that this time, his

number is finally up.



Thursday

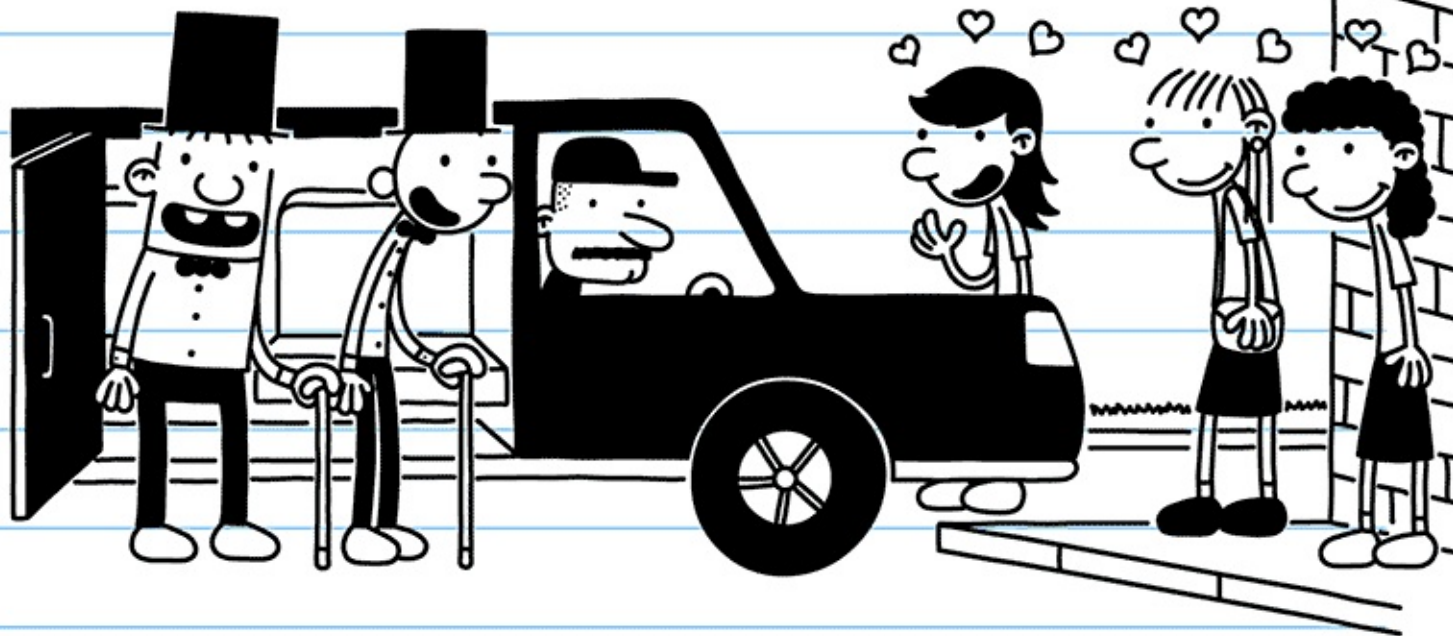
Everybody at school has been talking about the big

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

This is the first year at my school that they've actually had a dance, so everyone's all excited.

Some of the guys in my class were even asking girls if they would be their dates to the dance.

Me and Rowley are both bachelors at the moment, but that's not gonna stop us from arriving in style.



I figured if me and Rowley scraped together some money in the next few days, we could rent a limo for the night. But when I called the limo company, the guy who answered the phone called

me “Ma’am.” So that pretty much blew any  
chance he had of getting my business.

Since the dance is next week, I realized I was

gonna need something to wear.

I'm kind of in a pinch because I've already worn

most of the clothes I got for Christmas, and

I'm almost out of clean stuff to wear. I went

through my dirty clothes to see if there was

anything I could wear a second time.



I separated my laundry into two piles: one

that I could wear again, and one that would

get me sent down to Nurse Powell's office for a

lecture on hygiene.







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

### Valentine's Day

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

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



*Beloved Natasha -*

*For you, a fire blazes  
in my heart*

*So strong that the  
embers alone could  
bring a thousand hot.*

*Let the bonfire of my  
love wrap you in its  
warmth*

*Only your kiss could  
quench the flames  
that so consume me*

tubs to a boil

So intense that it  
causes snowmen  
everywhere to despair

To you I pledge my  
love, my desire, my  
life

 Greg

I showed Mom my card to check for spelling

errors, but she said what I wrote wasn't "age

appropriate." She told me maybe I should just

get Natasha a little box of candy or something,

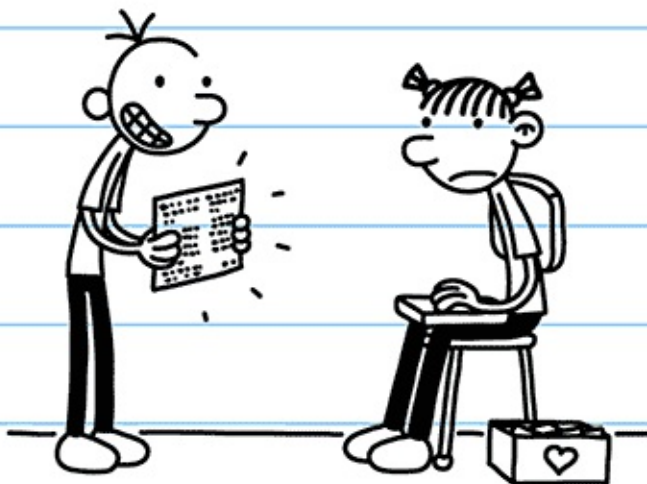
but I wasn't about to take romantic advice from

my mother.

At school everyone went around the room and put

their Valentine's cards in one another's boxes, but

I delivered my card to Natasha personally.



I let her read it, and then I waited to see

what she made for me.

Natasha dug around in her box and pulled out

this cheap store-bought card that was supposed to

be for her friend Chantelle, who was out sick

---

that day.

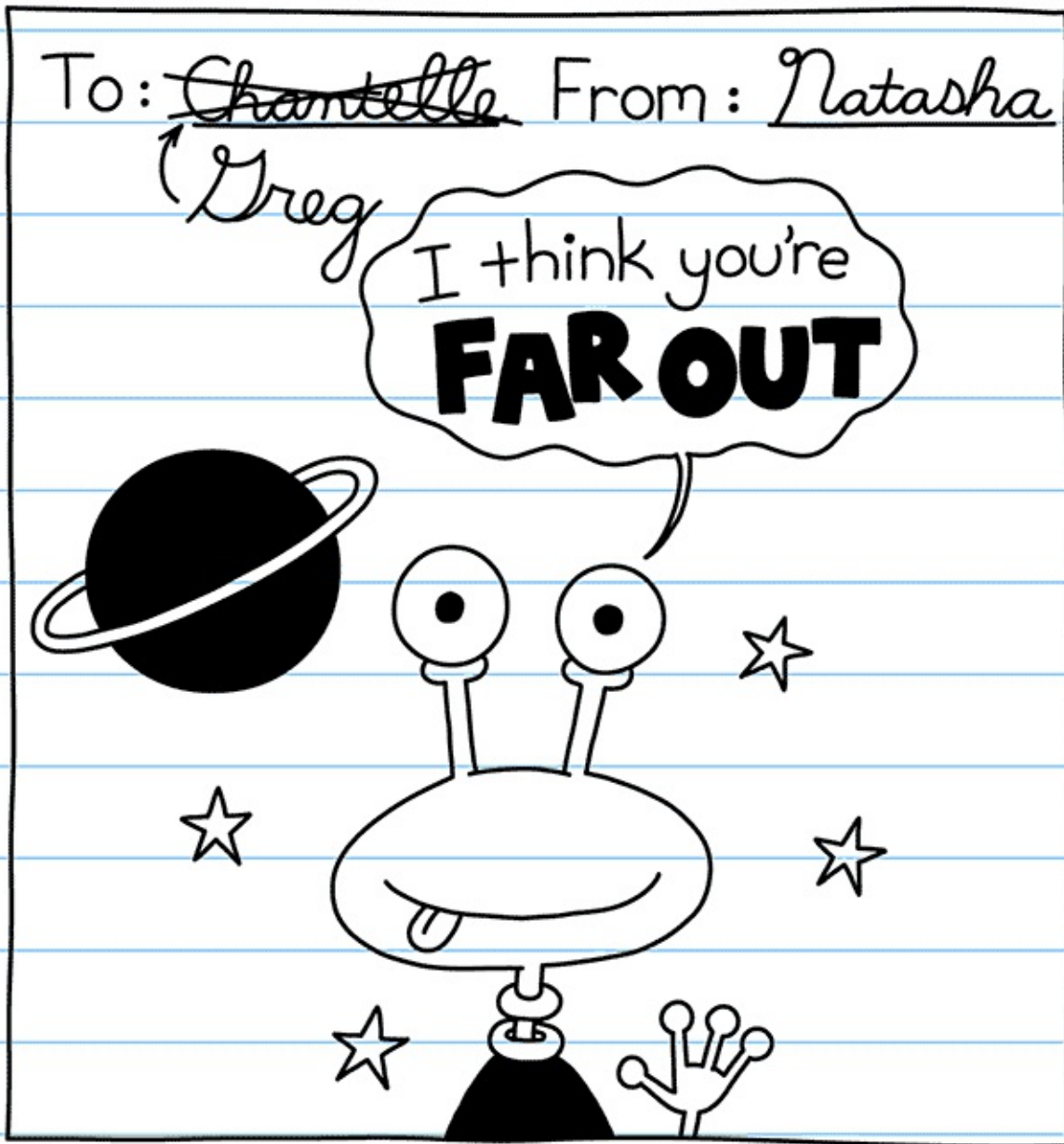
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Then Natasha scribbled out her friend's name

and put my name on it instead.



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

enthusiastic about the card exchange this year.

Last night I came up with a great idea. I

knew I had to make a card for everyone in the

class, but instead of being all mushy and saying

things I didn't really mean, I told everyone

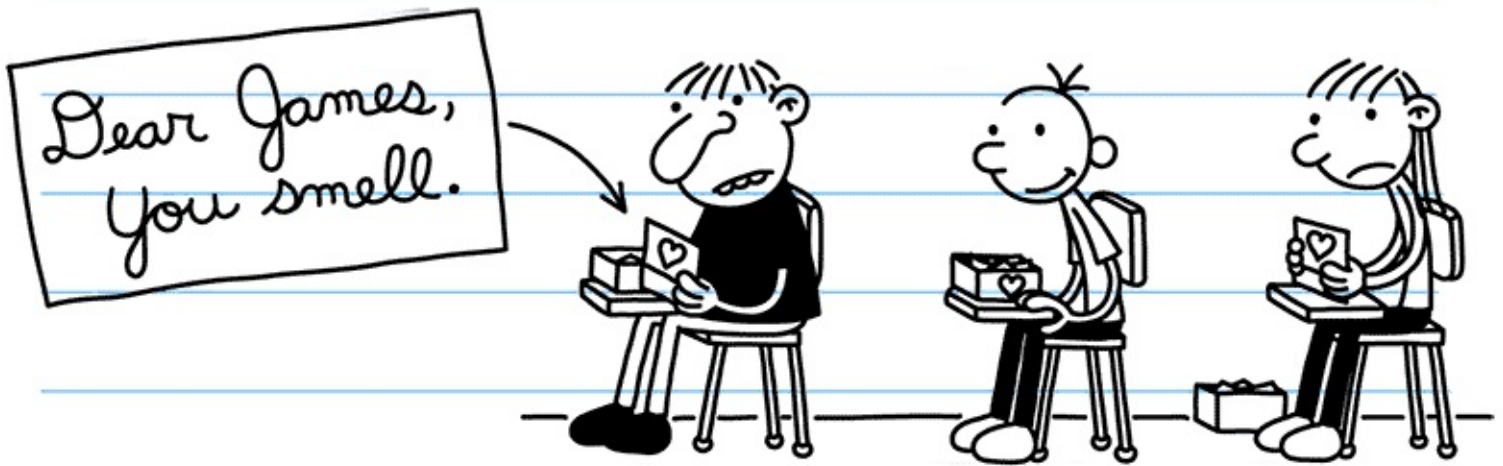
---

exactly what I thought of them.

---

The trick was, I didn't actually sign any of

my cards.



A few of the kids complained about the cards to

our teacher, Mrs. Riser, and then she went around

the room trying to figure out who sent them. I

knew Mrs. Riser would think that whoever

didn't get a card was the culprit, but I was

prepared for that, because I made a card for

myself, too.







After the card exchange came the Valentine's

Dance. The dance was originally supposed to be

at night, but I guess they couldn't get

enough parents to volunteer to be chaperones. So

they put the dance smack in the middle of the

school day instead.

The teachers started rounding everyone up and

sending them down to the auditorium at around

1:00. Anyone who didn't want to cough up the

two bucks for admission had to go down to Mr.

Ray's room for study hall.

But it was pretty obvious to most of us that

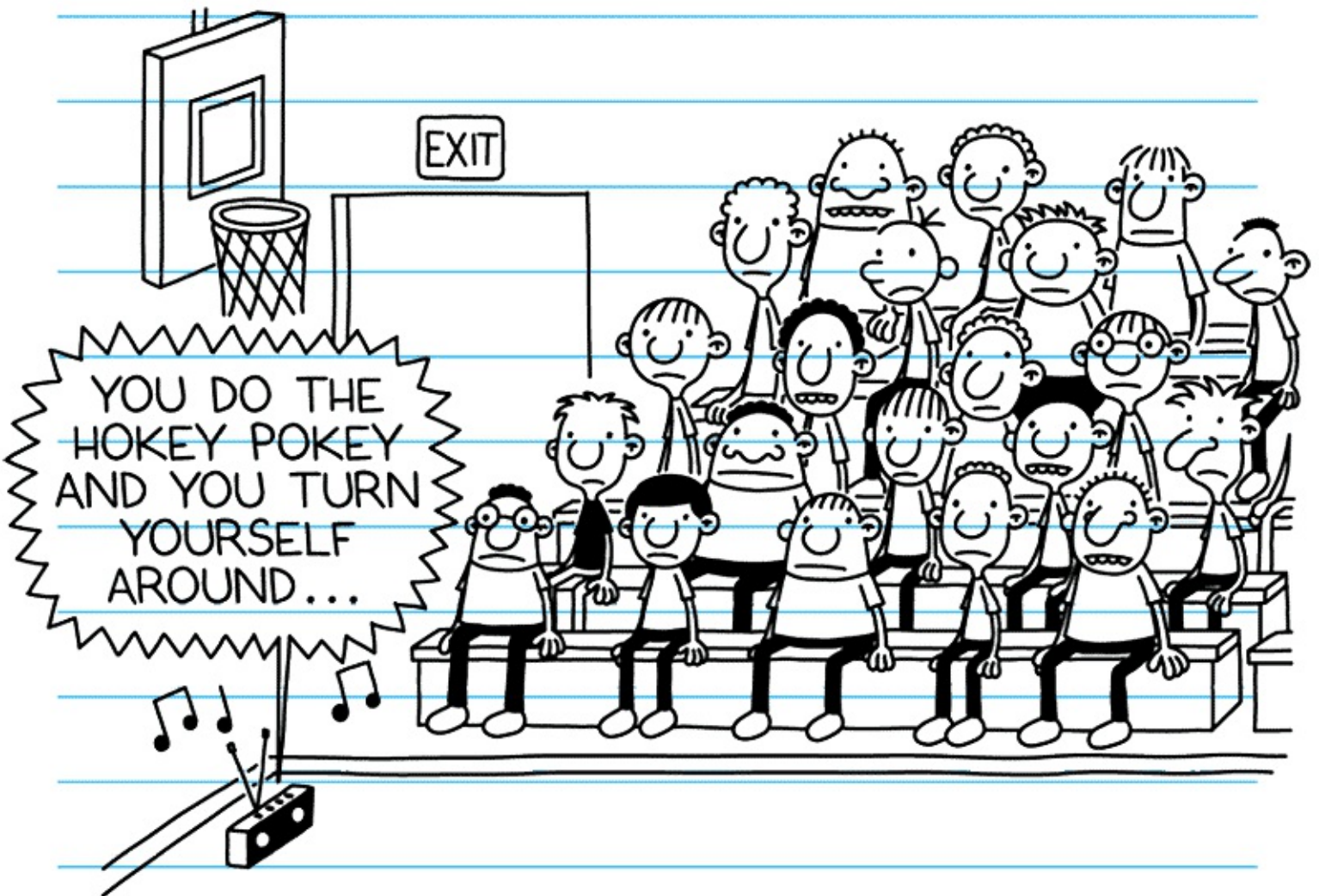
"study hall" was basically the same thing as

detention.





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



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

and Nurse Powell walked to the middle of the gym

---

and started dancing.

---

I guess Mr. Phillips and Nurse Powell thought if

they started dancing, all the kids would come

down onto the floor and join them. All they

really did was guarantee that everyone

stayed in their seat.



Finally, Mrs. Mancy, the principal, grabbed a

microphone and made an announcement. She said

that everyone in the bleachers was required

to come down onto the floor and dance, and it

would count for 20% of our Phys Ed grades.

At that point me and a couple of other boys

tried to sneak out to go down to Mr. Ray's

room, but we got caught by some teachers who

---

were blocking the exits.

---

Mrs. Mancy wasn't kidding about the gym grade

thing, either. She was walking around with Mr.

Underwood, the Phys Ed teacher, and he was

carrying his gradebook with him.



I'm already close to flunking Phys Ed, so I

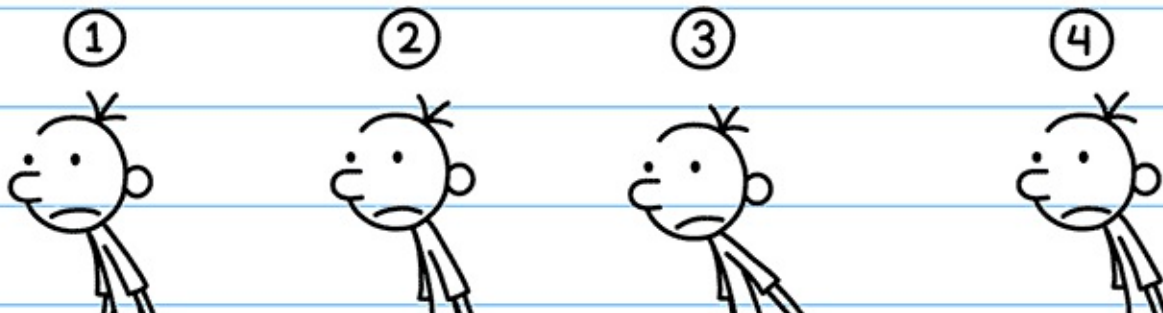
knew it was time to get serious. But I didn't

want to look like a fool in front of the kids in

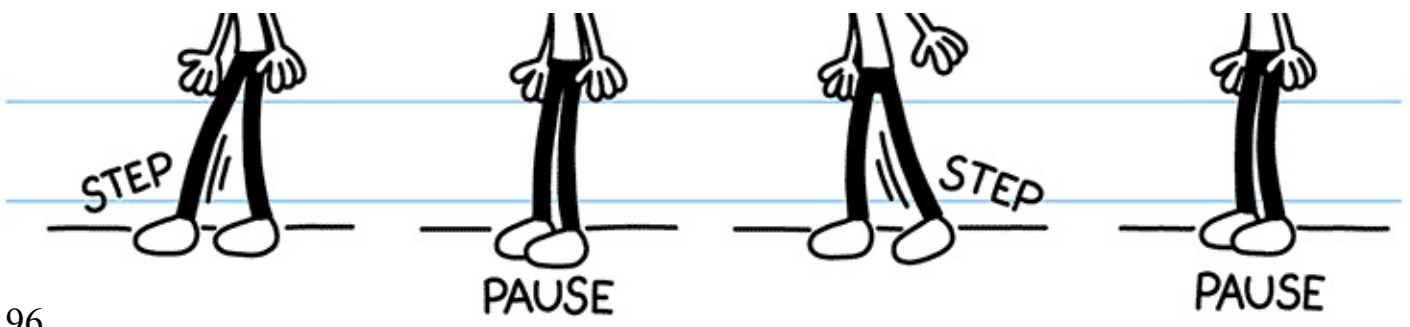
my class, either. So I just came up with the

simplest move I could do that would technically

qualify as "dancing."







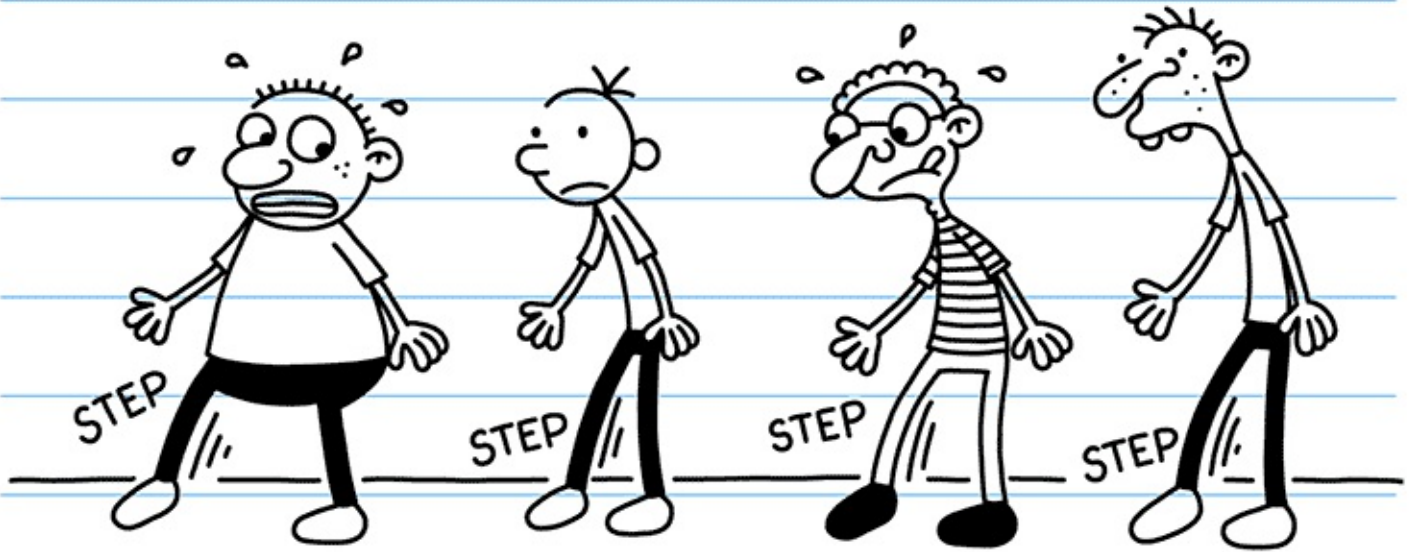
Unfortunately, a bunch of guys who were worried

about their Phys Ed grades saw what I was

doing, and they came over to where I was. And

the next thing I knew, I was surrounded by a

bunch of bozos who were stealing my moves.



I wanted to get as far away from those guys

as I could, so I looked around the gym for a

place where I could go and dance in peace.

That's when I spotted Holly Hills across the

room, and I remembered why I even bothered

coming to the dance in the first place.

Holly was dancing with her friends in the middle

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

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thing, moving slowly toward them.

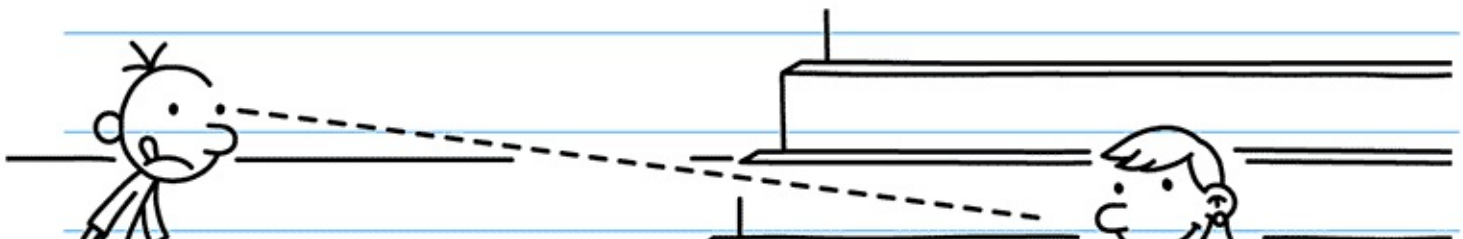
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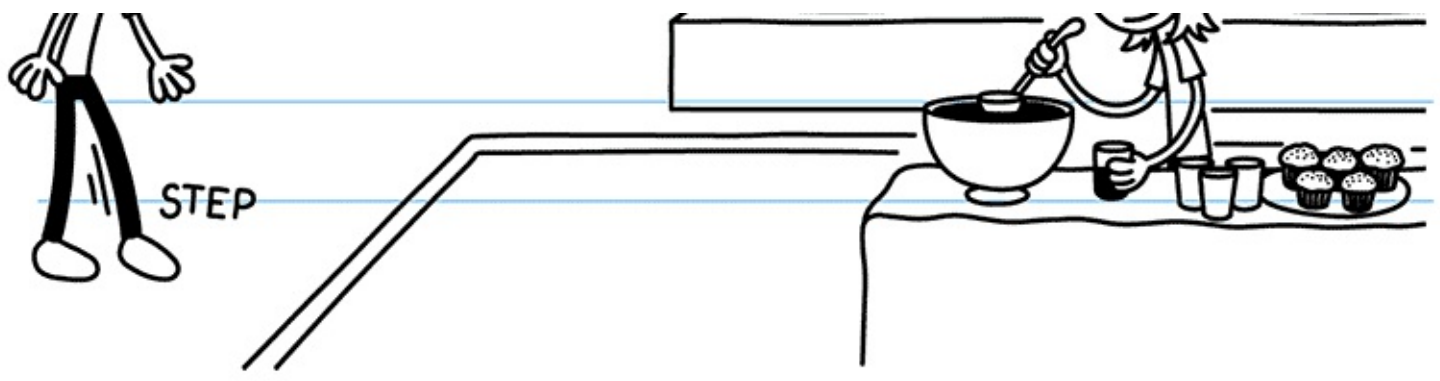
All the girls were lumped together in one big pack, and they were dancing like professionals, probably because they spend all their free time watching mtv.



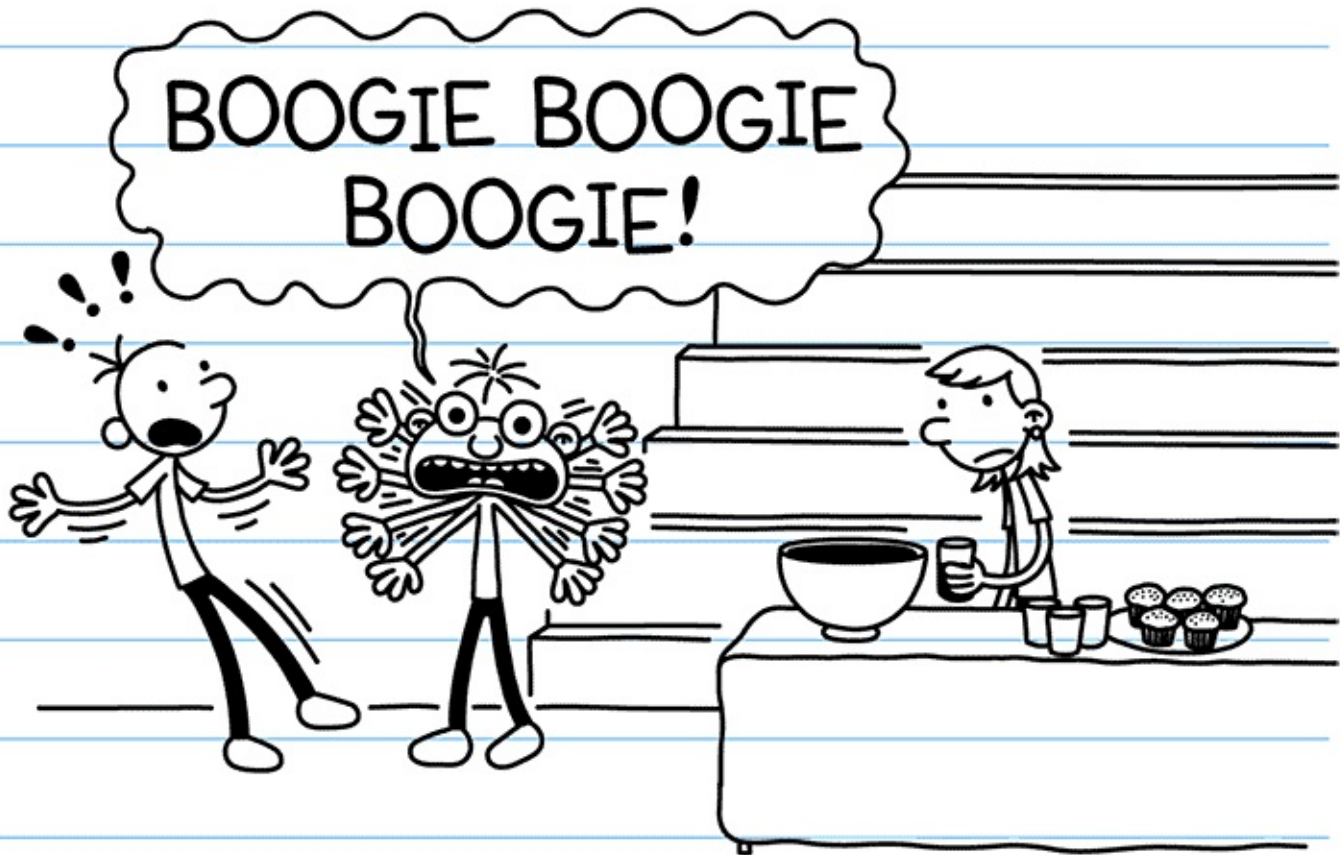
Holly was right in the middle of the group. I kind of danced around the outside of the circle for a while, trying to find an opening, but I couldn't.

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





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



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

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

her. I walked home alone after school, because I \_\_\_\_\_  
just needed a little time by myself. \_\_\_\_\_

After dinner Mom told me there was a Valentine's

card out in the mailbox with my name on it. When

I asked her who it was from, she just said,

“someone special.” I ran out to the mailbox and

got the card, and I have to admit I was pretty

excited. I was hoping it was from Holly, but there

are at least four or five other girls at my school

who I wouldn't mind getting a card from, either.

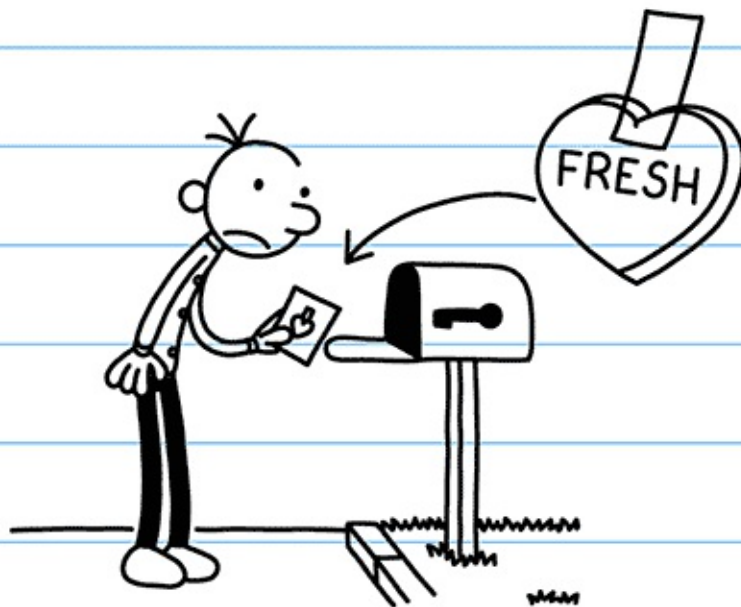
The card was in a big pink envelope with my

name written in cursive. I ripped it open, and

here's what I found: a sheet of construction

paper with a piece of candy taped to it, and it

was from Rowley.





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Sometimes I just don't know about that boy.

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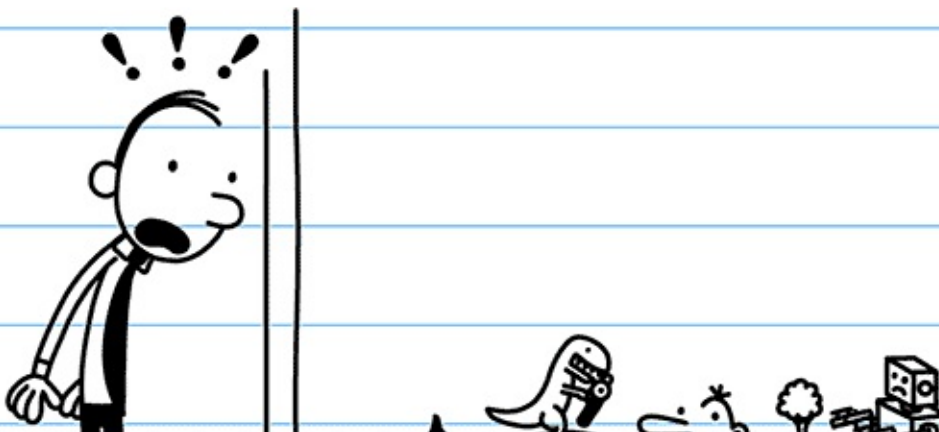
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Saturday

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

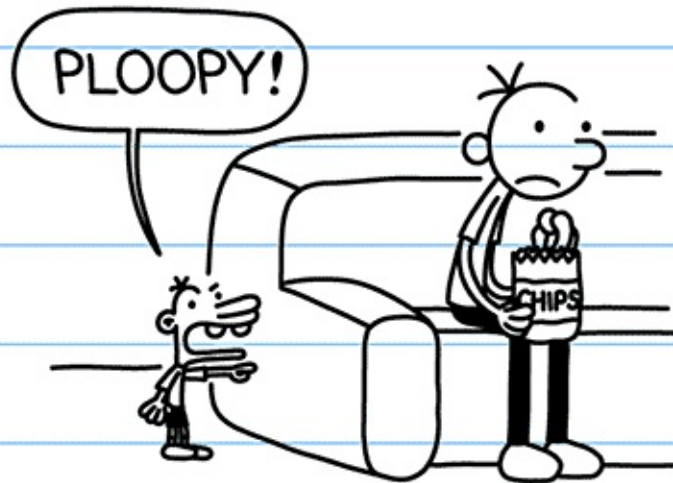


Ever since then Manny's been turning the house  
upside down looking for his blanket, and finally  
Dad had to tell him that he accidentally threw  
it out. Well, Manny got his revenge yesterday  
by using Dad's Civil War battlefield as a playset.





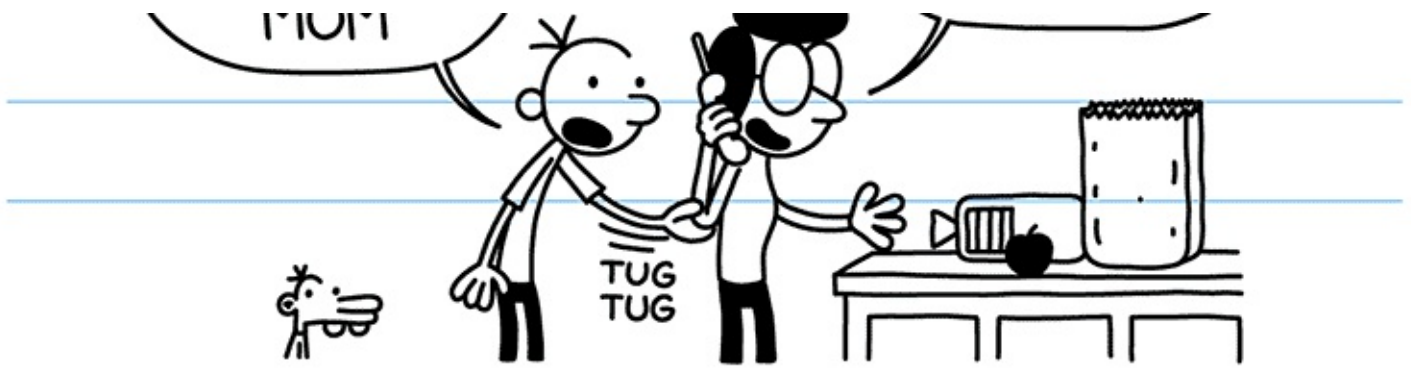
Manny's been taking his anger out on everyone else, too. Today I was sitting on the couch just minding my own business, and Manny walked up to me and said —



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

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

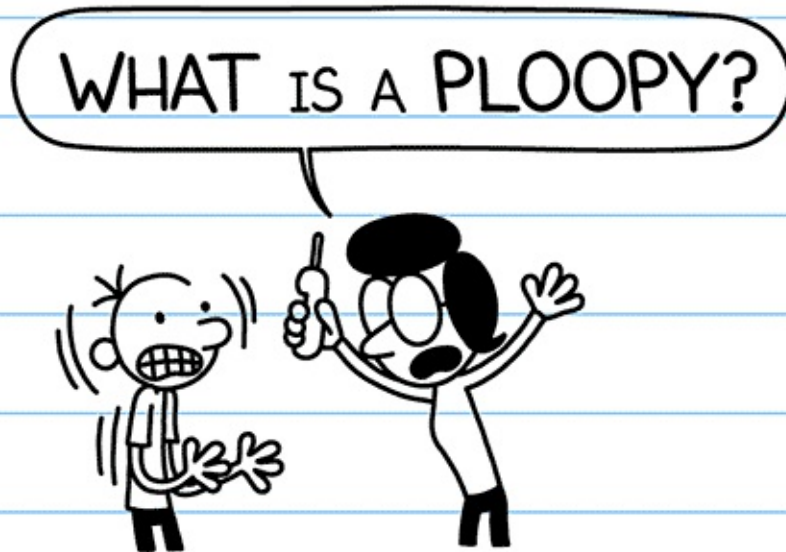




I finally got Mom to stop talking for a second,

but she was mad that I interrupted her. I told

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



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

the exact question I was trying to ask her. I

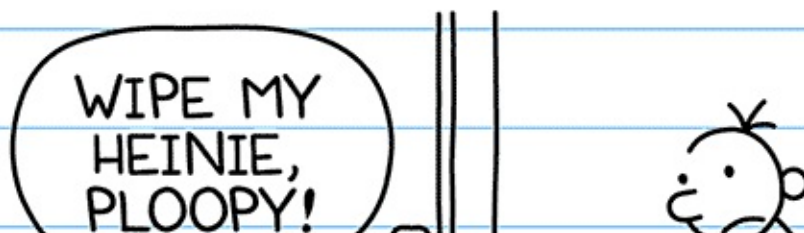
didn't have an answer, so Mom just went back to

her conversation.

After that, Manny knew he had a green light to

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

he's been doing all day.





I guess I should've known that telling on Manny

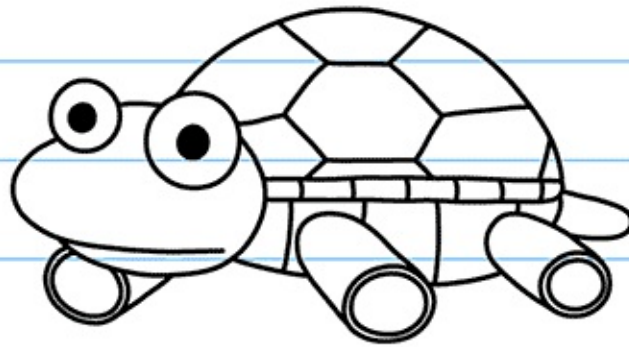
wasn't gonna get me anywhere. When me and

Rodrick were little, we used to tell on each other

so much that it made Mom crazy. So she brought

out this thing called the Tattle Turtle to solve

the problem.



Mom came up with the Tattle Turtle idea when

she taught preschool. The idea behind the Tattle

Turtle was that if me and Rodrick had a problem

with each other, we had to tell the Tattle

Turtle instead of Mom. Well, the Tattle Turtle

worked out great for Rodrick, but not so

much for me.

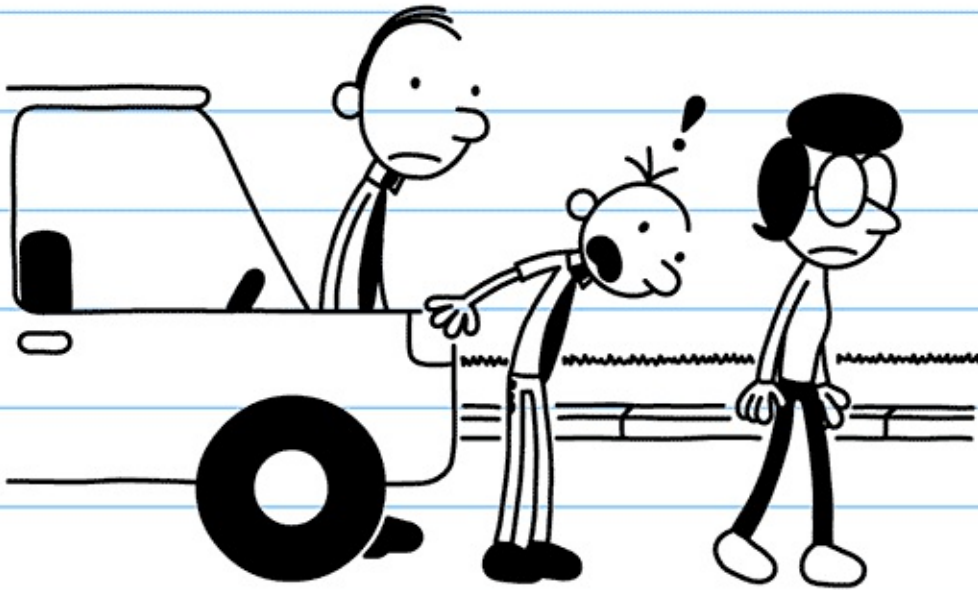
TATTLE TURTLE,  
RODRICK STOLE ALL  
THE MONEY FROM  
MY PIGGY BANK!





## Easter

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



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

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

I knew Holly Hills and her family were probably

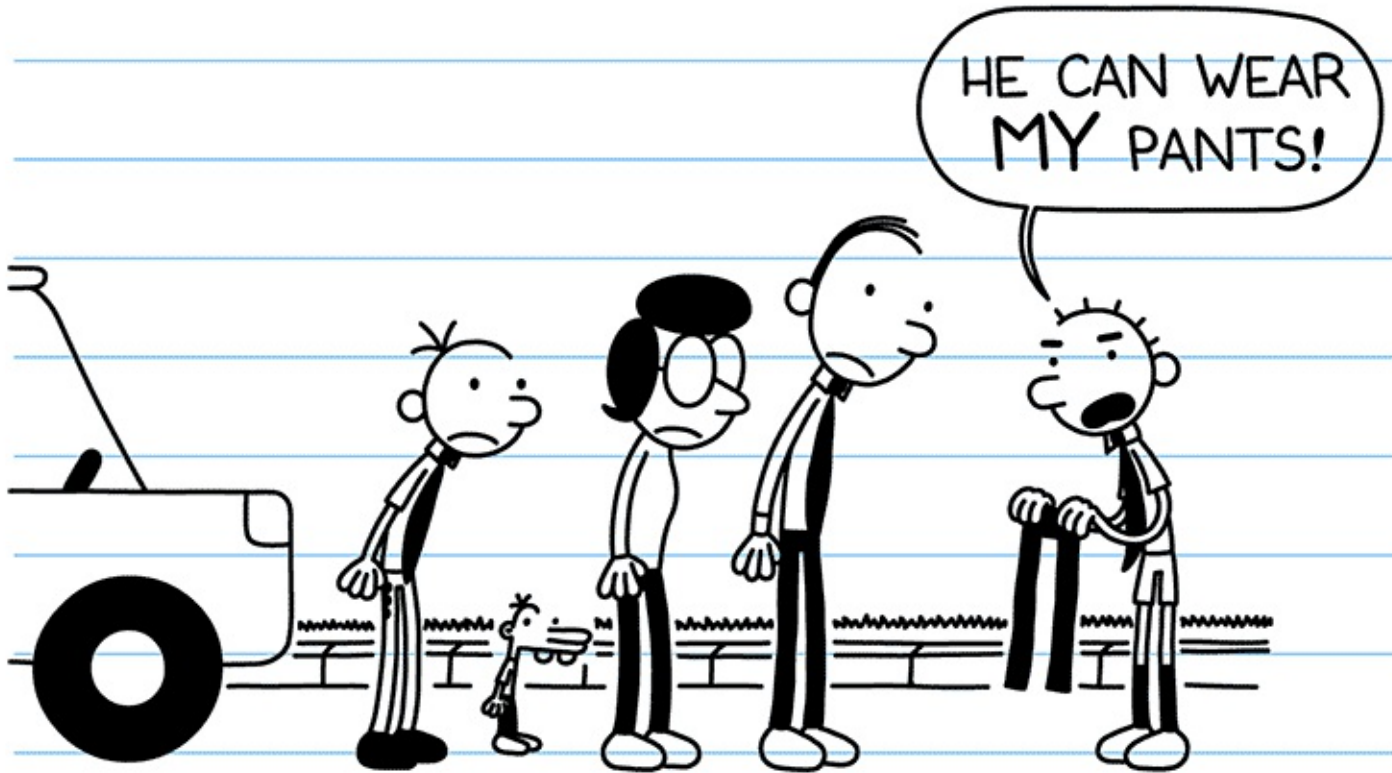
already there, and I really didn't need her

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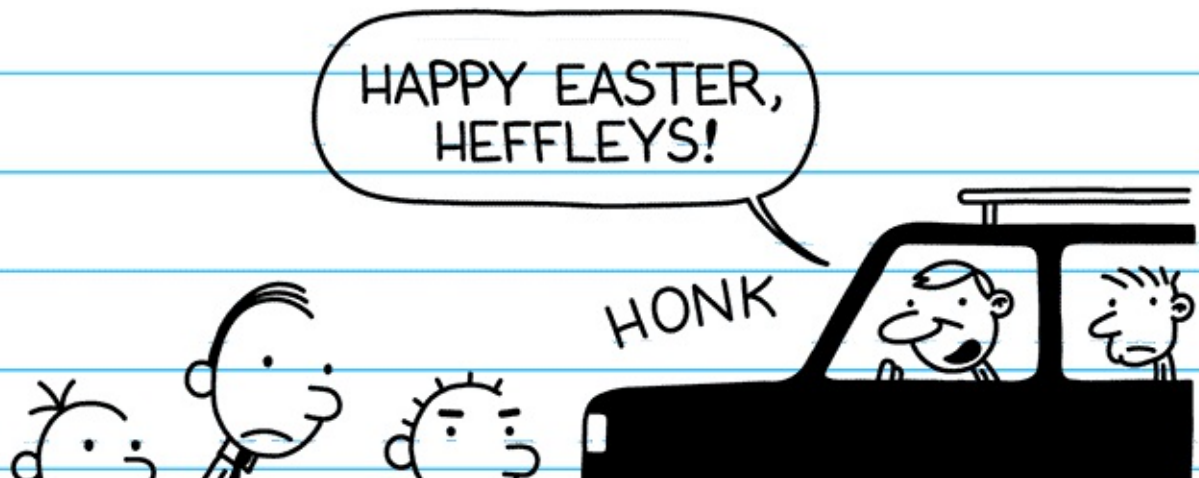
wondering if I'd pooped in my pants.

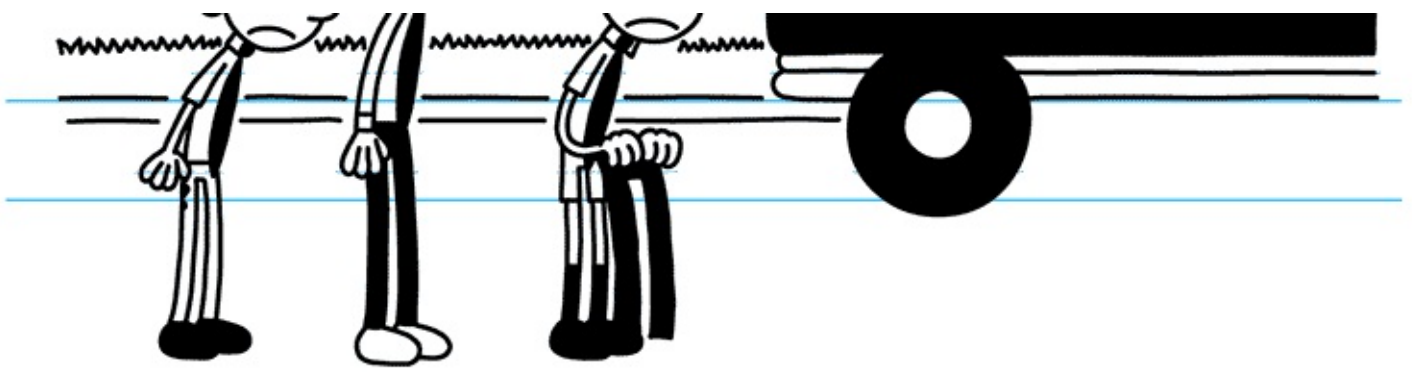
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Mom said skipping church on Easter wasn't an option, and we argued back and forth. Then Rodrick chimed in with his solution.



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





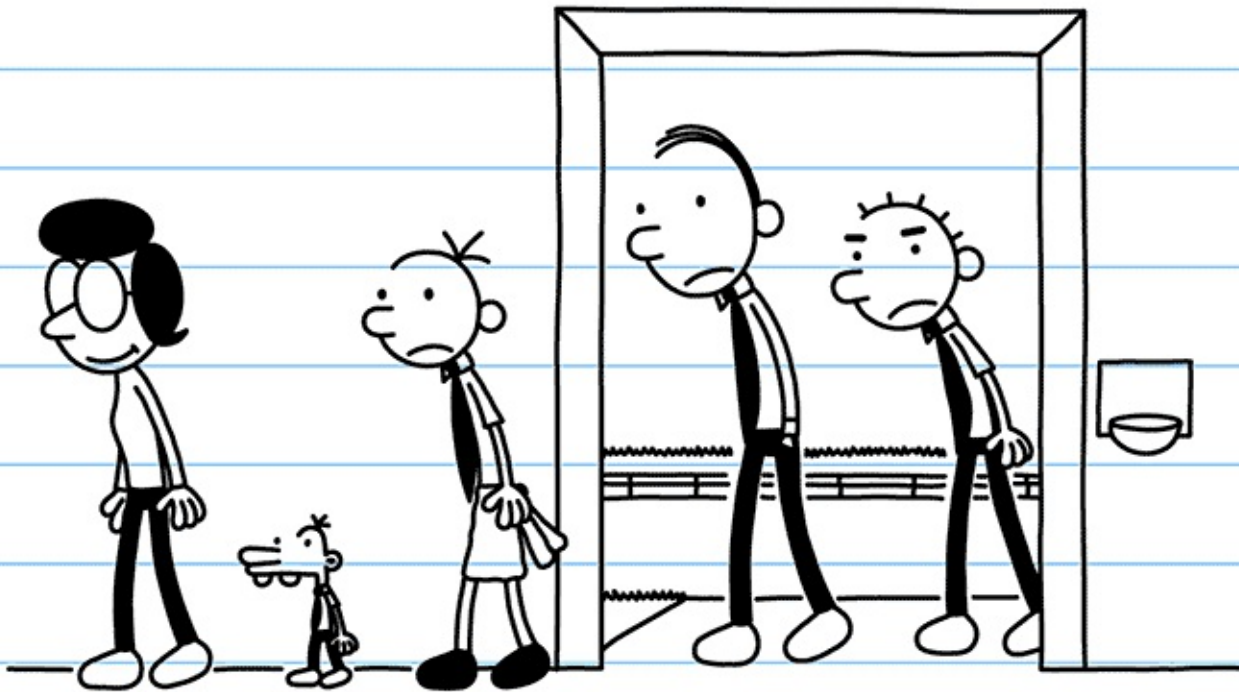
Mom made Rodrick put his pants back on, and then

she gave me her sweater to tie around my waist.

I don't know which was worse: wearing dress pants

with chocolate all over them or wearing Mom's pink

Easter sweater like a kilt.



Church was pretty full. The only seats that were

empty were right up front where Uncle Joe and

his family were sitting, so we sat next to them.

I looked around, and I spotted Holly Hills and

her family three rows back. I was pretty sure

she couldn't see what I was wearing from the

waist down, so that was a relief.

As soon as the music started up, Uncle Joe  
reached out to hold hands with me and his wife,  
and he started singing.



I tried to break free a couple of times, but  
Uncle Joe had an iron grip. The song was only  
like a minute long, but to me it felt like half  
an hour.

After the song was over, I turned to the people  
behind us, pointed at Uncle Joe, and made the  
“cuckoo” sign so everyone knew I wasn’t on board  
with this holding-hands thing.







Somewhere in the middle of church, they passed

a basket around so people could give money to

help the needy.

I didn't have any money of my own, so I

whispered to Mom to see if she would give me a

dollar. Then, when the basket came to me, I

made a big deal of putting the dollar in the

basket to make sure Holly could see how generous

I was.



But when I put the money in the basket, I

realized Mom had given me a twenty, not a

single. I tried to grab the basket to make

change, but it was too late.

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

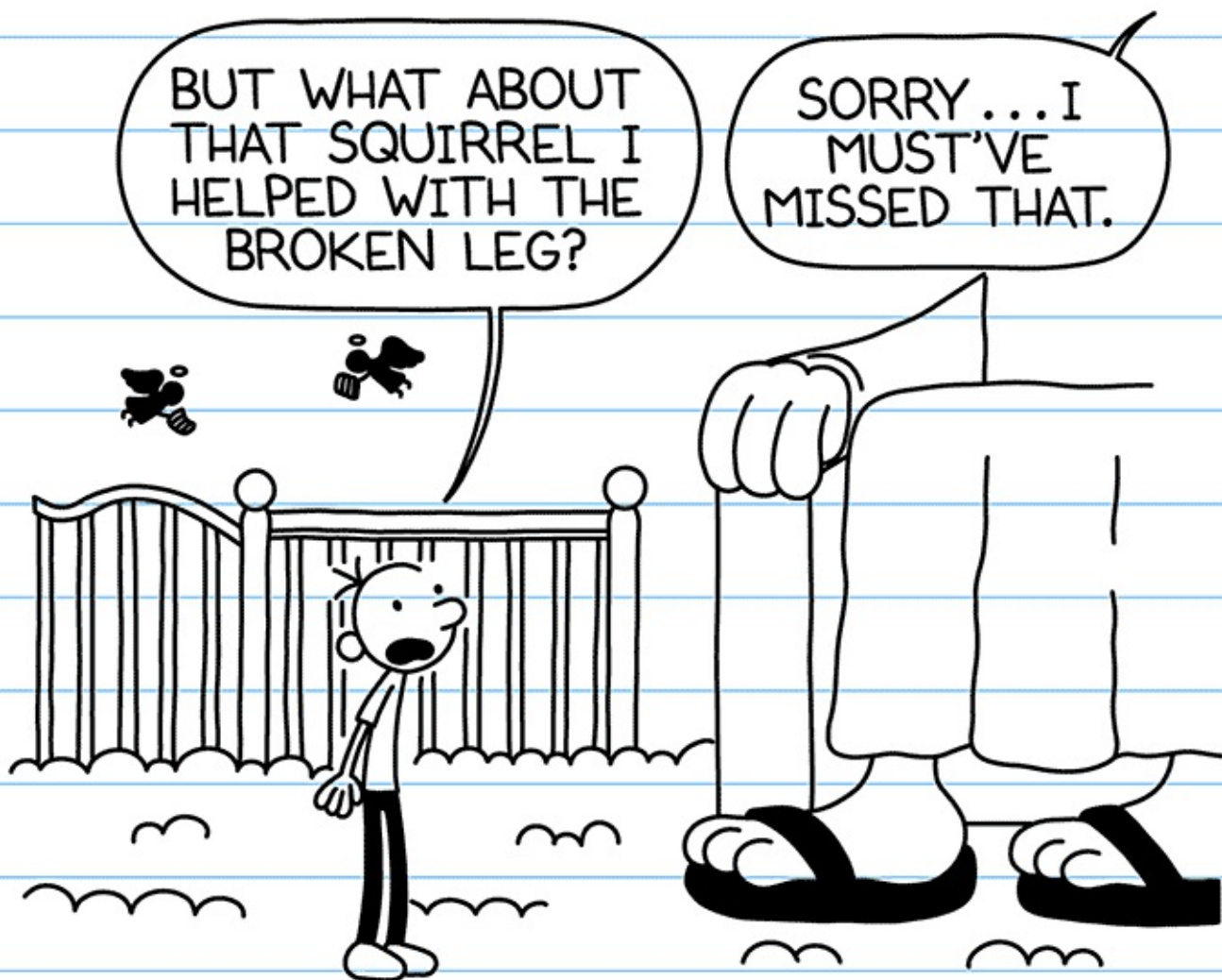
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Heaven for that donation.

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

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



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

five minutes, and I started looking for ways to

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entertain myself.

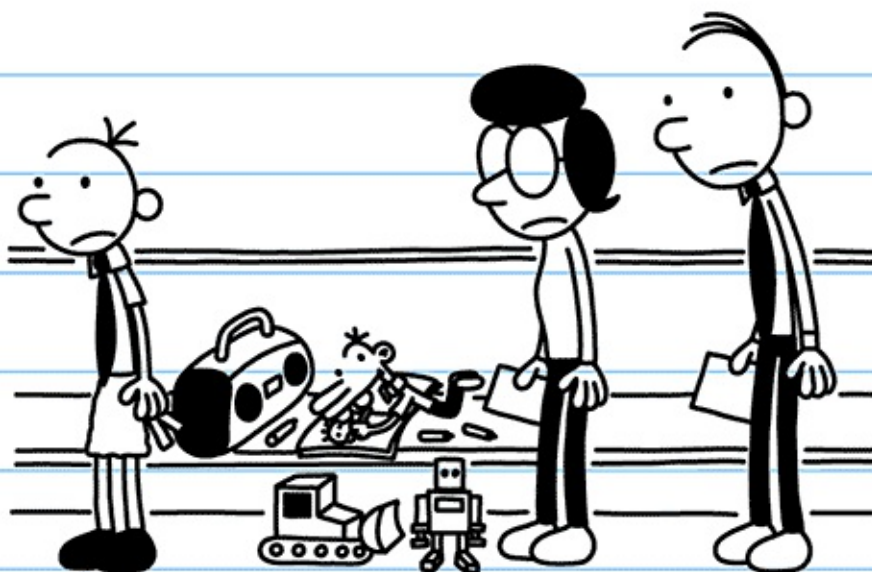
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The way that Rodrick keeps himself busy when he's bored is by picking at this scab on the back of his hand that he never lets heal, but I'm not really interested in going that route.

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



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

cut in half, not in quarters, the way he

---

likes it.

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



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







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Well, Manny completely lost it.

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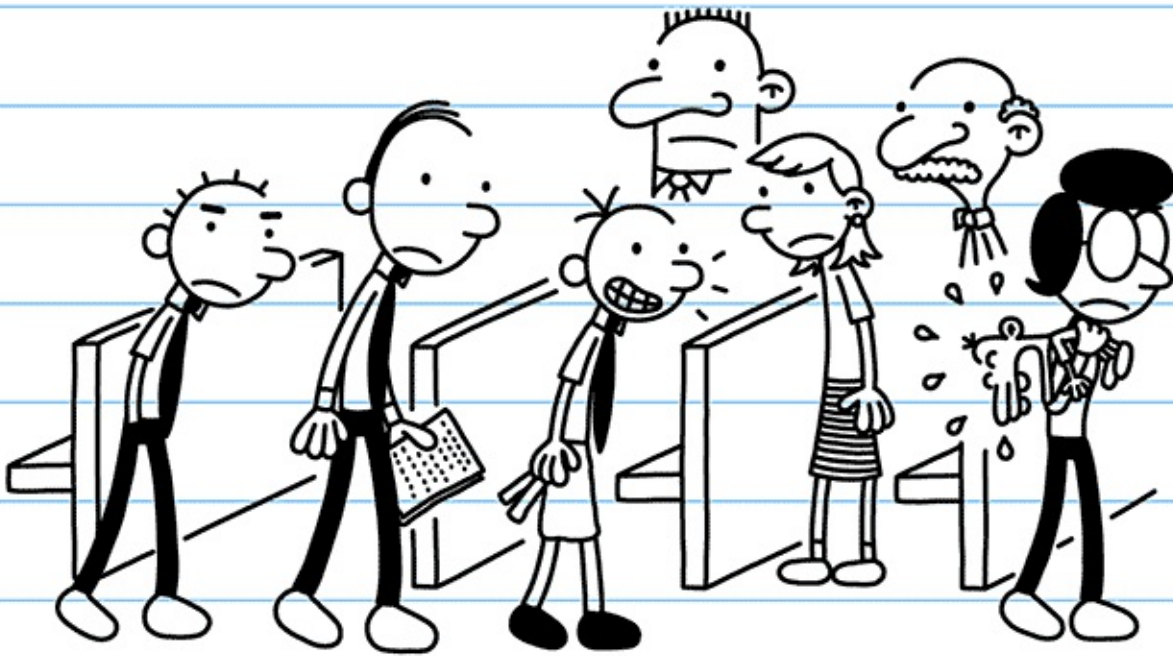
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He started bawling, and everyone in the church turned their heads our way. Even the minister stopped talking to see what was going on.

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

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



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

bulletin, but his boss spotted him and gave Dad

the “thumbs up” on the way out.

Wednesday

Things have kind of been tense around the house

since the mess the other day. First of all, Mom was

really mad at me for calling Manny "Ploopy," so I

had to remind her that she didn't have any problem

when Manny said it. So Mom banned the word

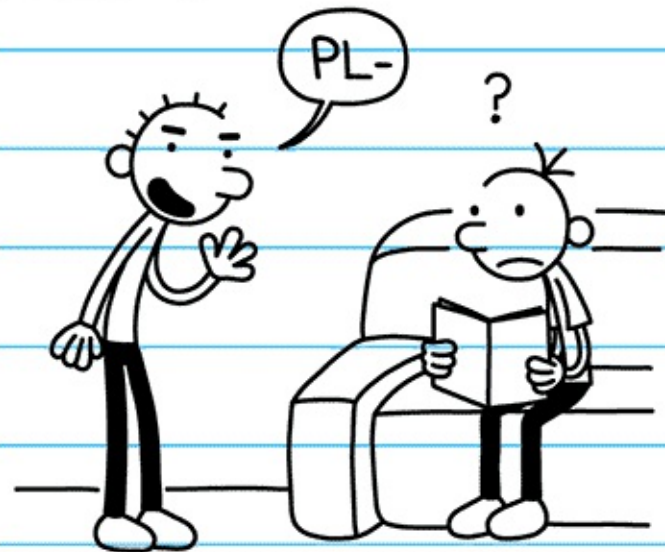
for everyone, and she said that if anyone was

caught saying it, they'd be grounded for a week.

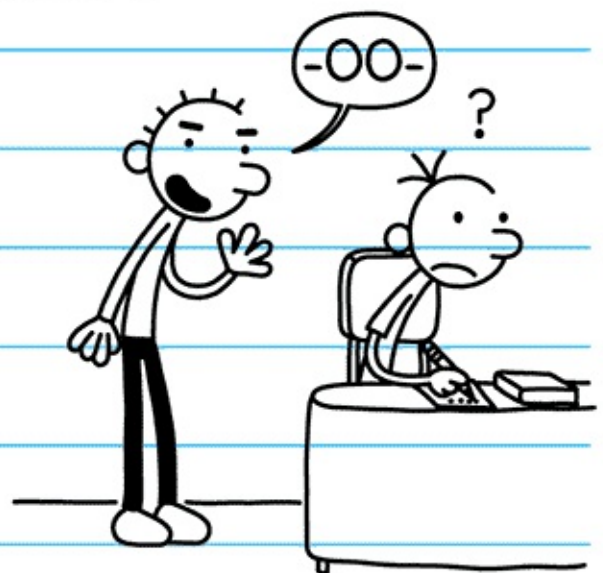
But of course it didn't take long for Rodrick to

find a loophole.

MONDAY

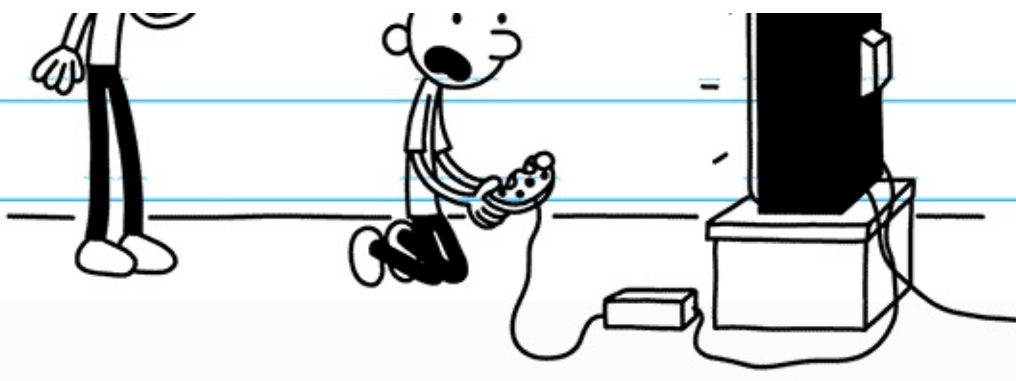


TUESDAY



TODAY



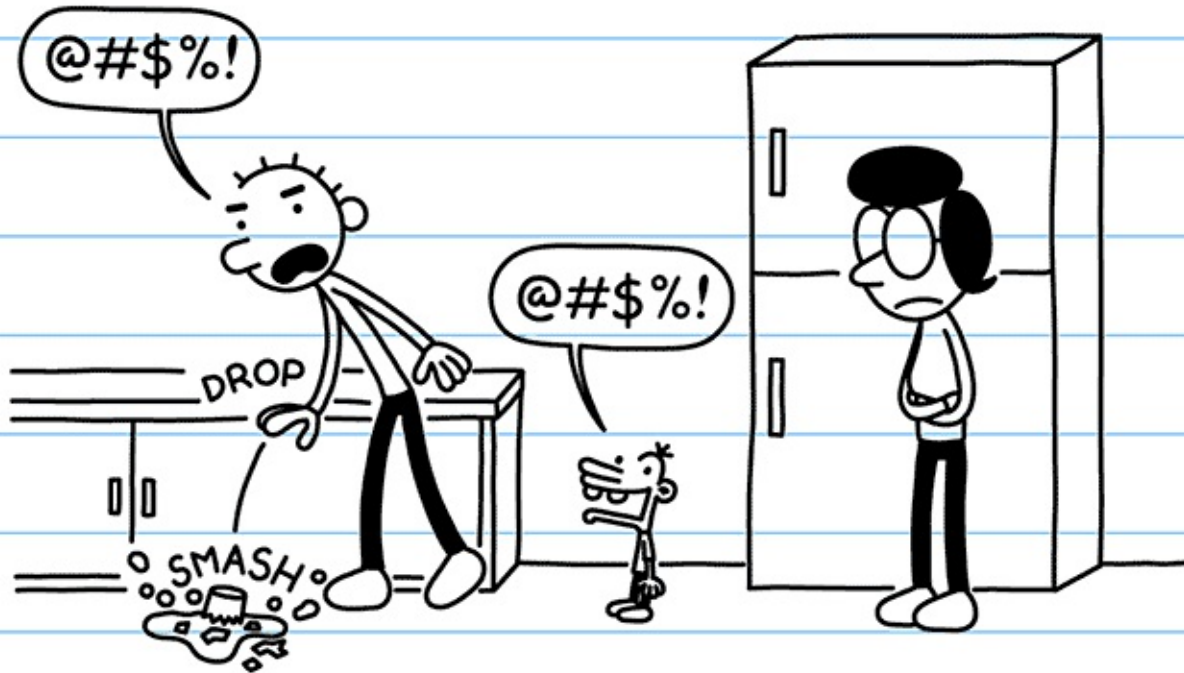


This isn't the first time Mom has banned us

from saying certain words in the house. A while

back, Mom made a "no swearing" rule, because

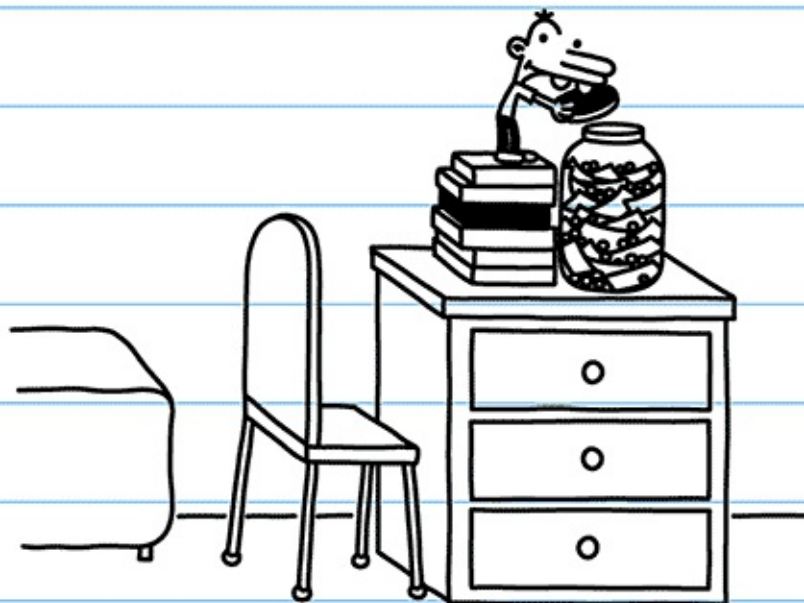
Manny was picking up new words left and right.



Every time someone said a bad word in front of

Manny, they had to put a dollar in his "Swear Jar."

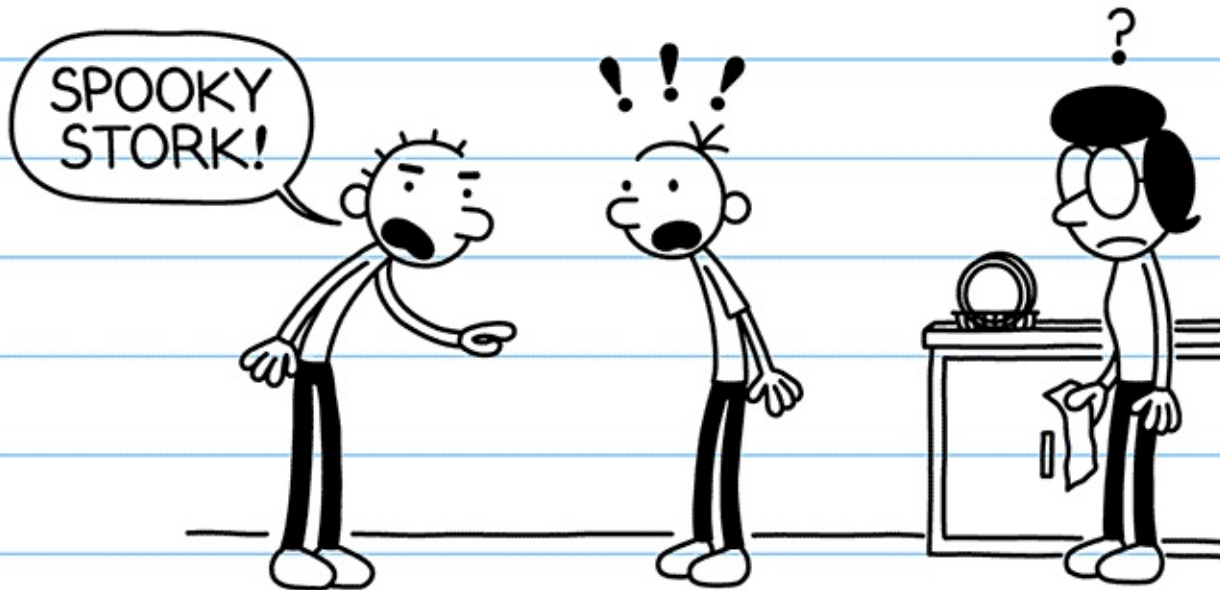
So Manny was getting rich off of me and Rodrick.



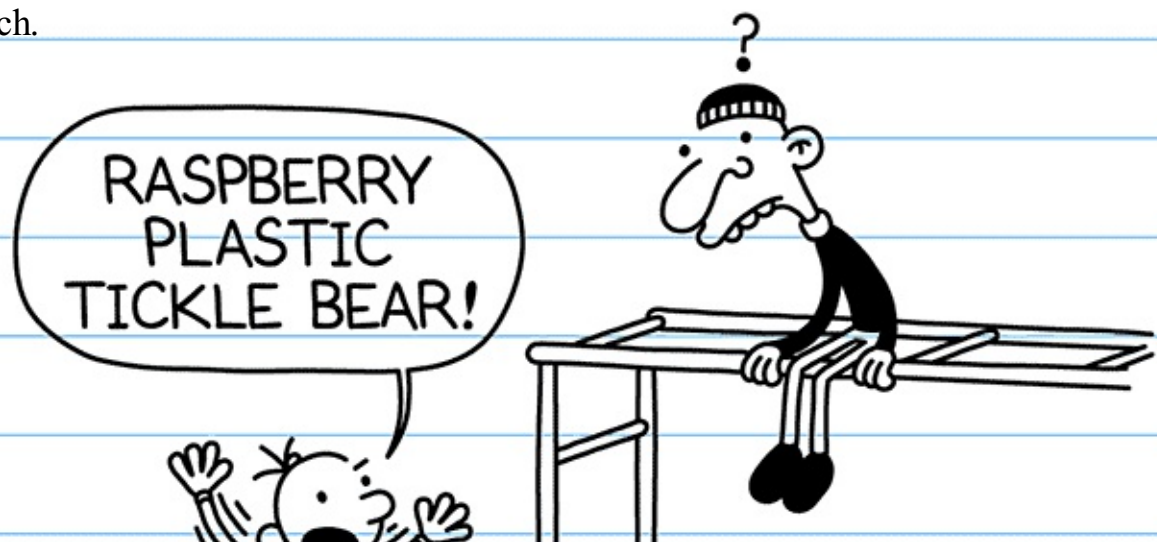
And then Mom upped the ante by banning words

like “stupid” and “jerk” and stuff like that.

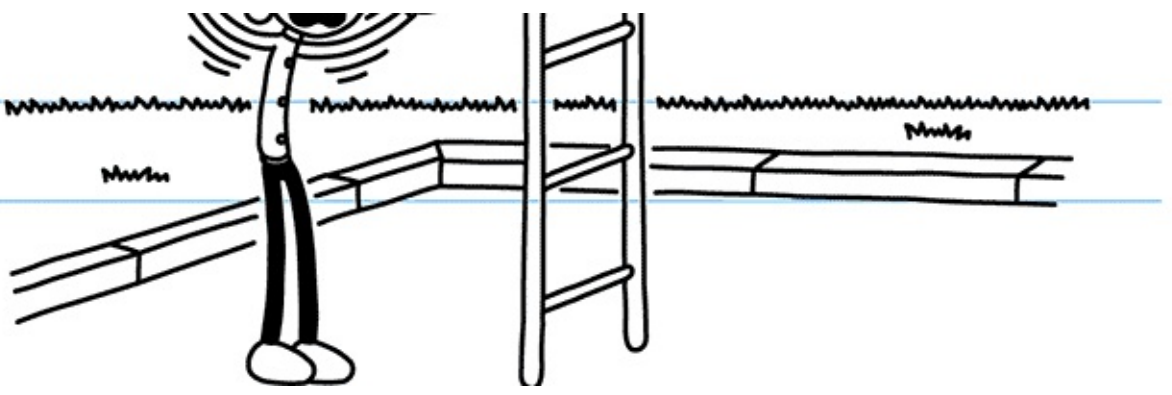
To keep from going bankrupt, me and Rodrick came up with a bunch of code words that meant the same thing as the banned words, and we've been using them ever since.



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







The other thing that's changed since Easter is

that Dad has been on me and Rodrick's case. I

guess he's tired of us looking bad in front of his

boss, Mr. Warren.

Dad made Rodrick enroll in an sat class, and

he made me sign up for Rec League soccer.

Soccer tryouts were tonight. The coaches lined

up all the kids for a "skills test," where you had

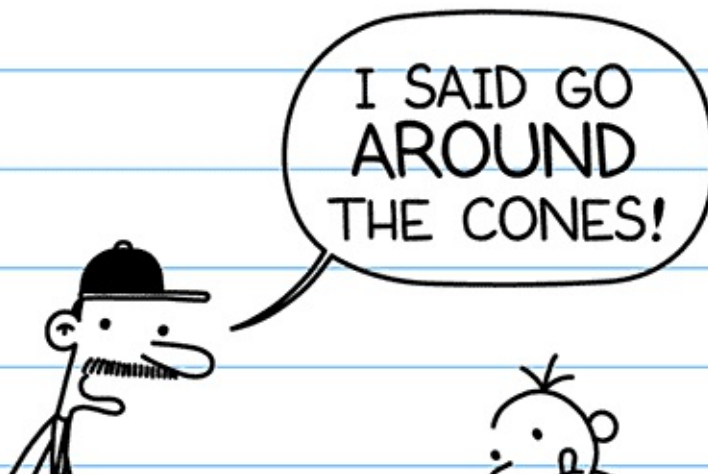
to dribble the ball between some cones and stuff

like that.

I tried my best, but I got ranked "Pre-Alpha

Minus," which I'm sure is just adult code words

for "You Stink."





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

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



Anyway, our first real practice is tomorrow.

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

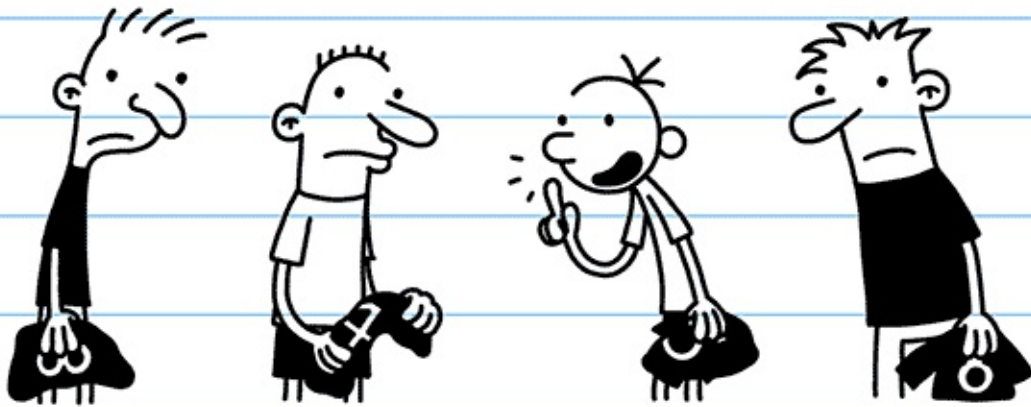
playing video games. Twisted Wizard 2 is supposed to

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

Thursday

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

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



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

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

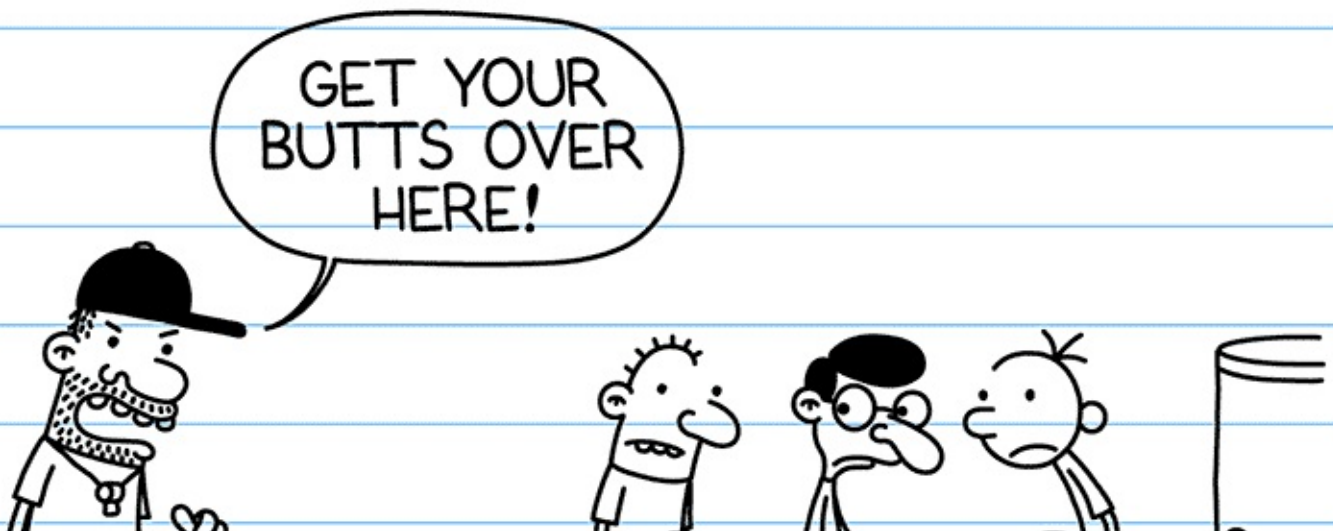
coach, Mr. Boone, said he was worried that if we

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

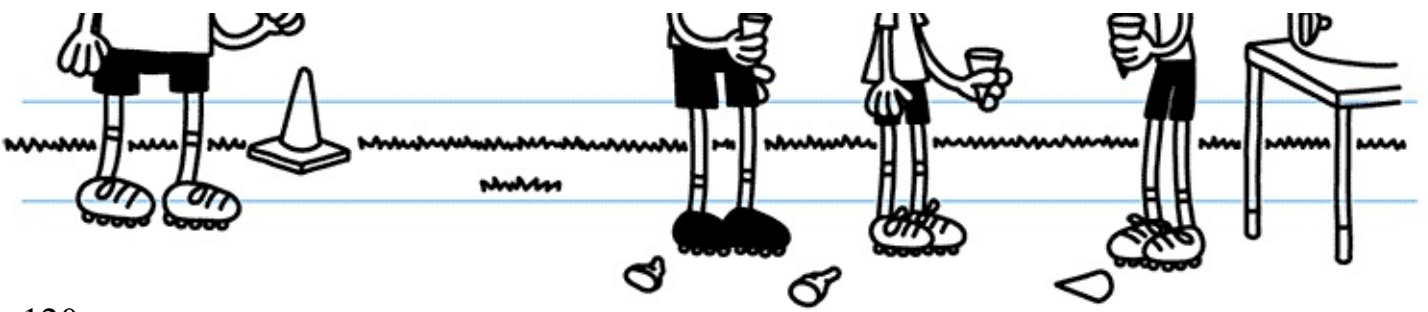
I'm pretty sure those guys have better things to do than to go around suing middle school soccer teams, but like I said before, nobody wanted to listen to my opinions.

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

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







Me and the other guys thought it would be pretty

funny if the next time Mr. Litch said that, we all

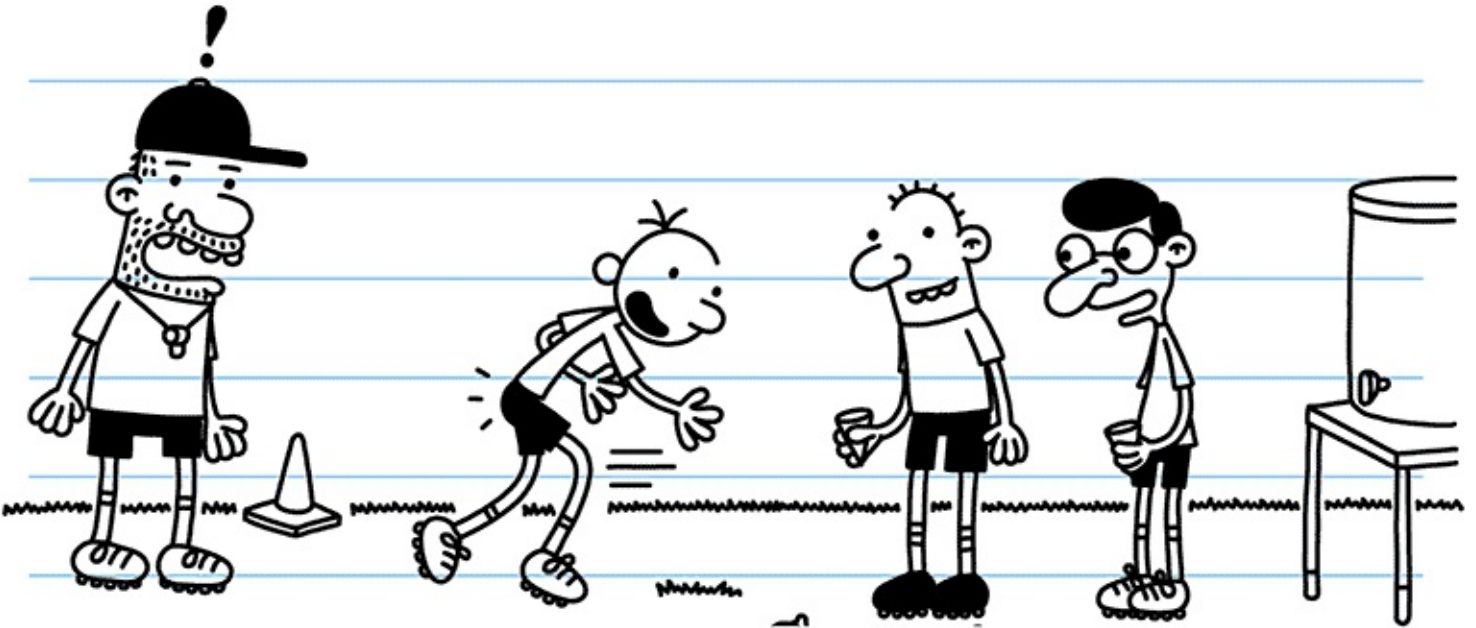
ran at him with our butts sticking out.

So the next time Mr. Litch yelled for us to get

our butts over there, I ran with my rear end

pointed at him. But the other guys totally

hung me out to dry.



Mr. Litch did not appreciate my sense of humor,

and he made me run three extra laps.

When Dad picked me up at the end of practice,

I told him that maybe this soccer thing wasn't

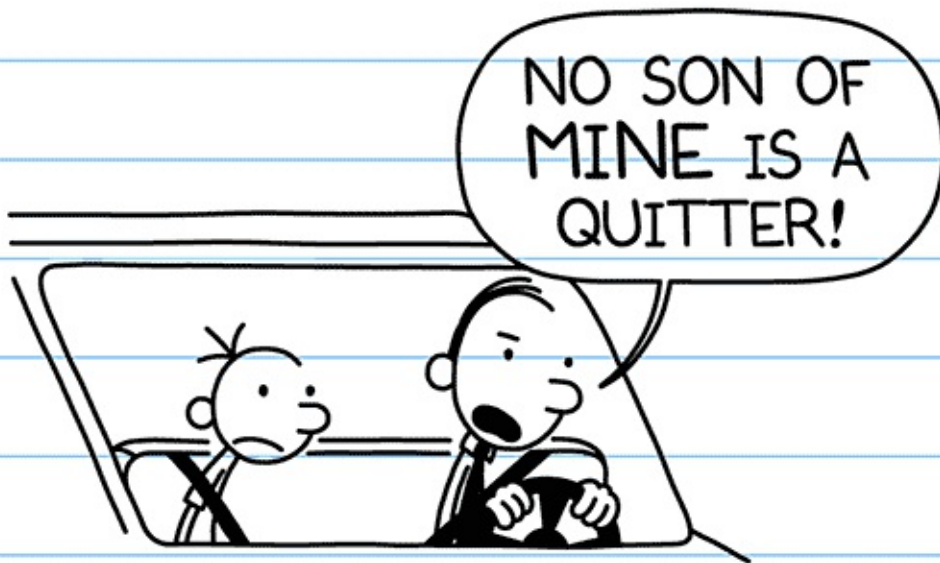
such a good idea, and that he should probably

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just let me quit.

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That made Dad pretty mad, so he said —



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

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

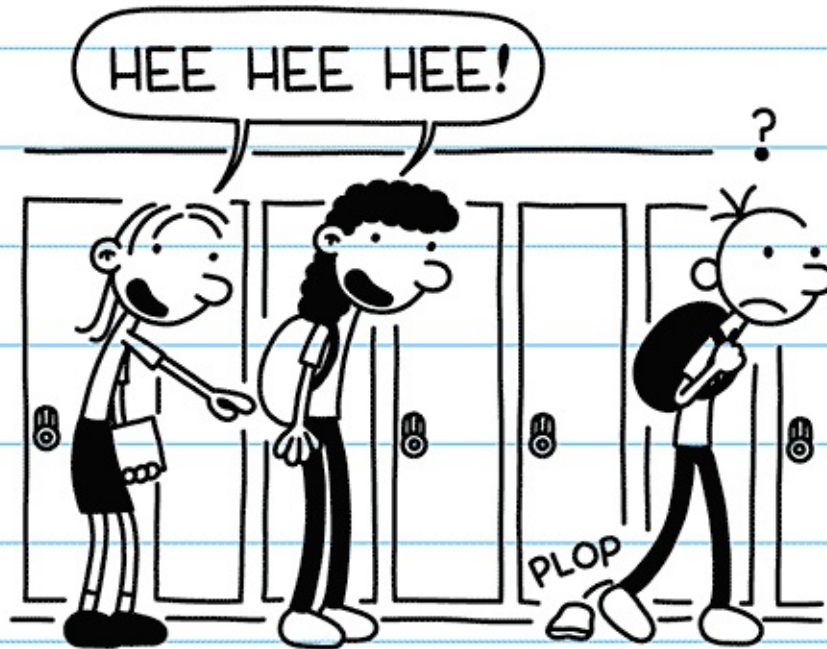
Friday

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

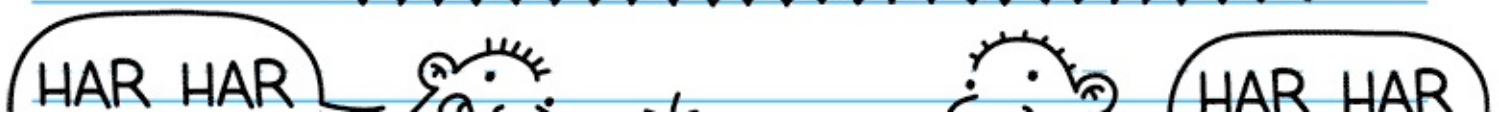
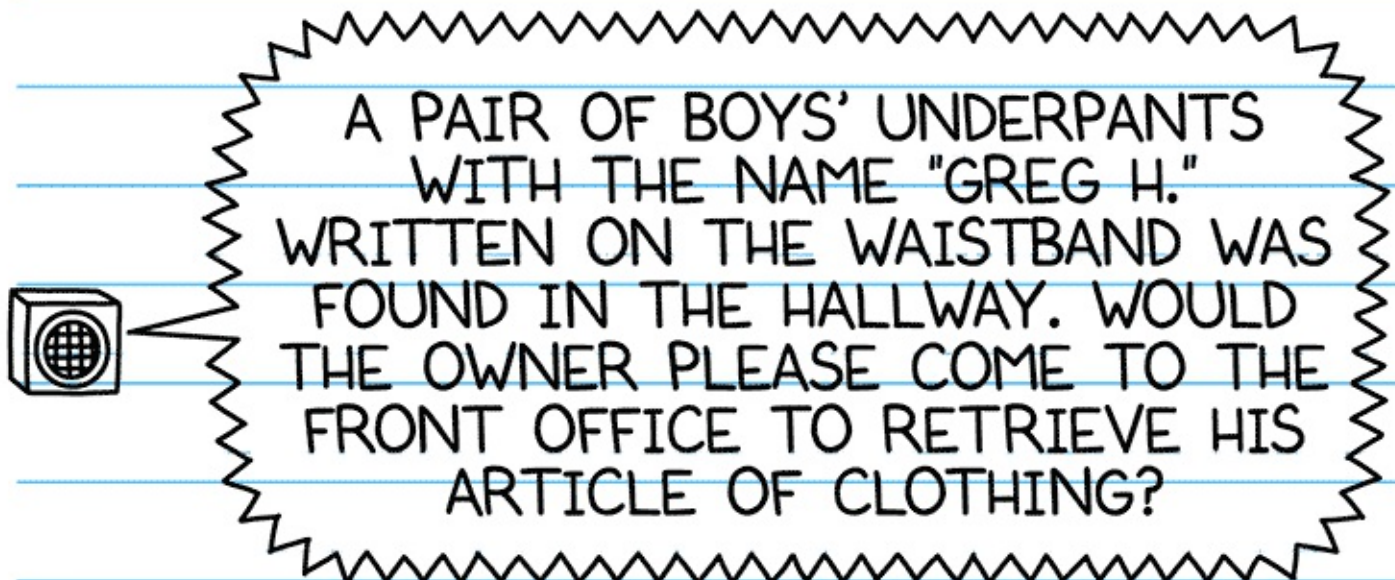
found out today that recycling clothes from the

dirty laundry pile can be risky.

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



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







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



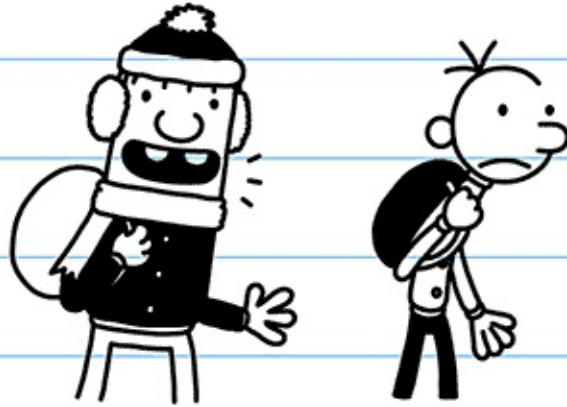
I was kind of down in the dumps on the walk home from school today, but then something happened to change that. Rowley told me one of his friends



from karate was having a sleepover this weekend, \_\_\_\_\_

and he asked me if I wanted to come along. \_\_\_\_\_

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



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





Tonight at soccer practice, Mr. Litch told everyone the position they'd be playing in the first game on Sunday.

Mr. Litch told me I'd be the "Shag," and that sounded pretty cool to me. So when I got home, I bragged to Rodrick about it.



I thought Rodrick would be impressed, but he just laughed. He told me that Shag wasn't actually a real position on the field—it's just a kid who chases the ball when it goes out of bounds. Then he showed me a rulebook with all the soccer positions, and sure enough, Shag wasn't in it.





Rodrick is always pulling my leg, so I guess I'll

just have to wait until this weekend to see if he's

telling the truth this time.

Sunday

Remind me to never go to a sleepover with

Rowley again.

Yesterday afternoon Mom dropped me and Rowley

off at his friend's house. The first hint that I

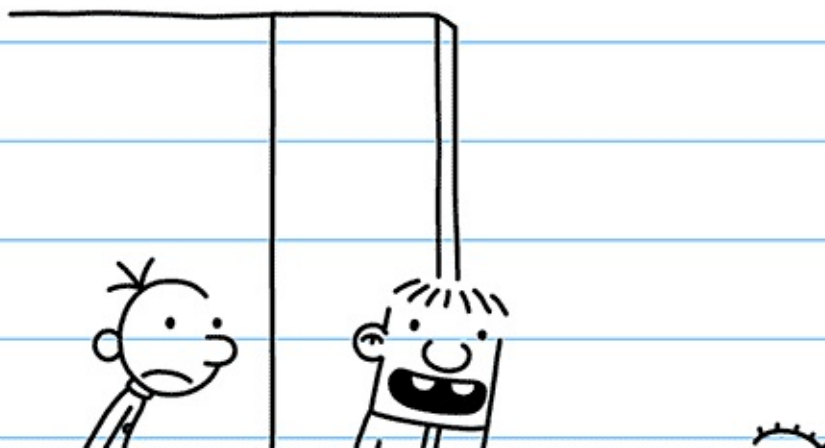
was in for a long night was when we walked into

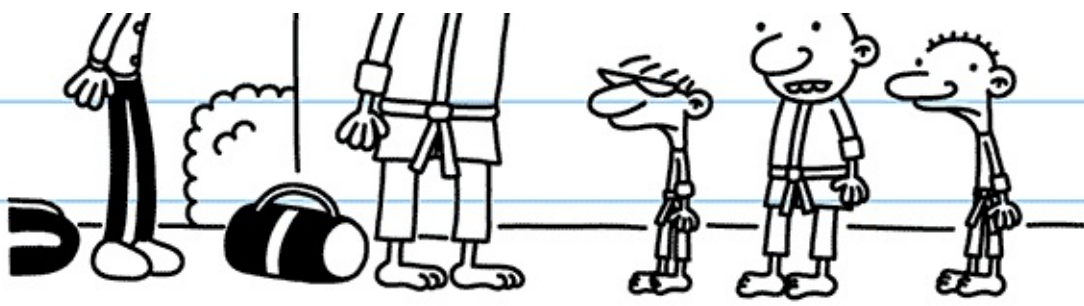
the house and there wasn't a kid there who was

older than six.

My second hint was that everyone was wearing

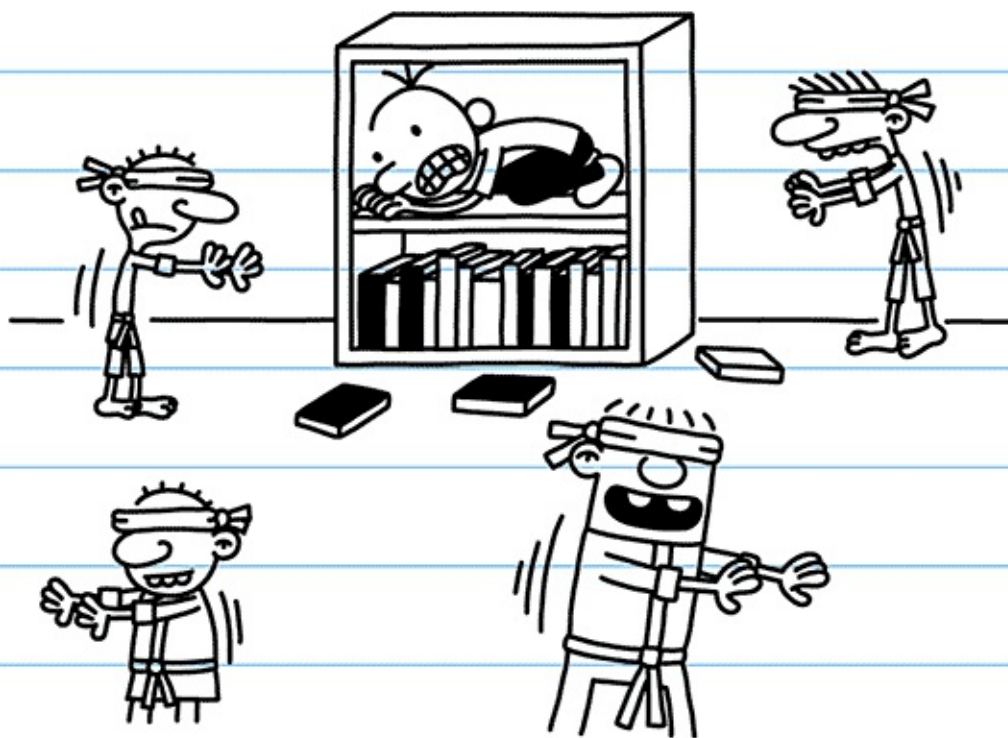
their karate gear.





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

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





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

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Freeze Tag and Twister.

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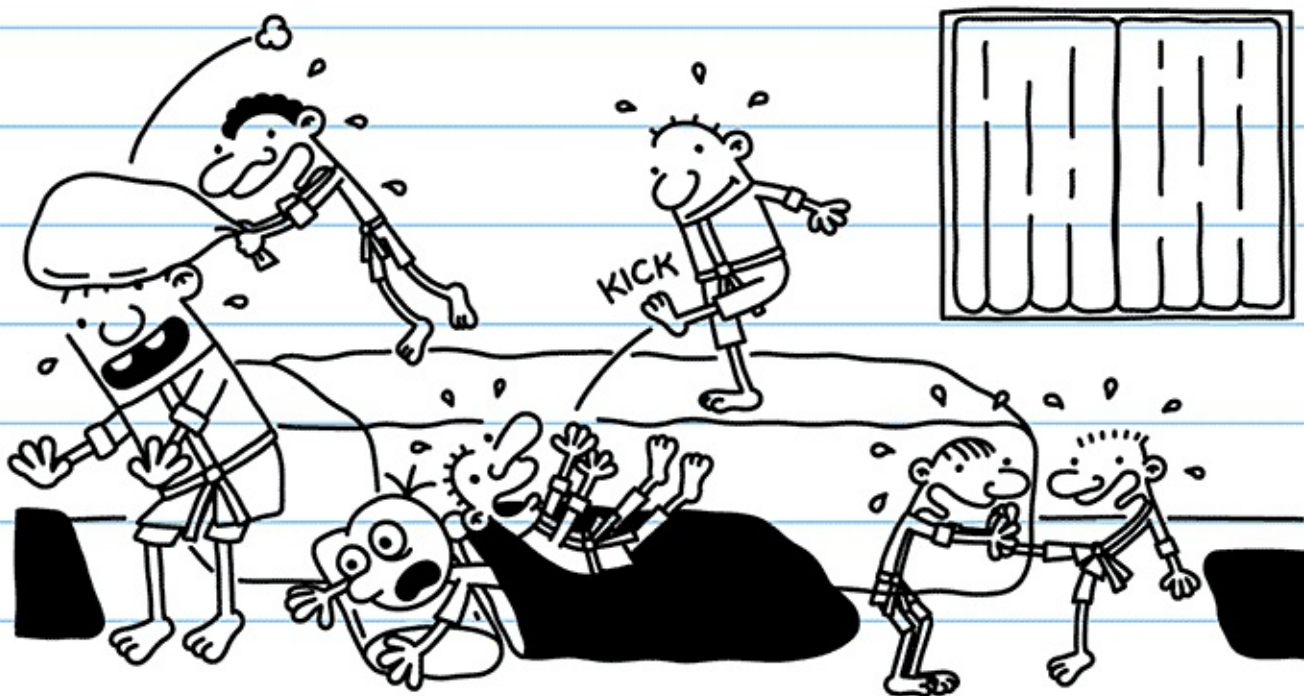
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I excused myself to go upstairs when someone suggested we could play "Who Licked Me?"

I tried calling Mom to come pick me up, but she was out with Dad. So I knew I was stuck at this kid's house for the night.

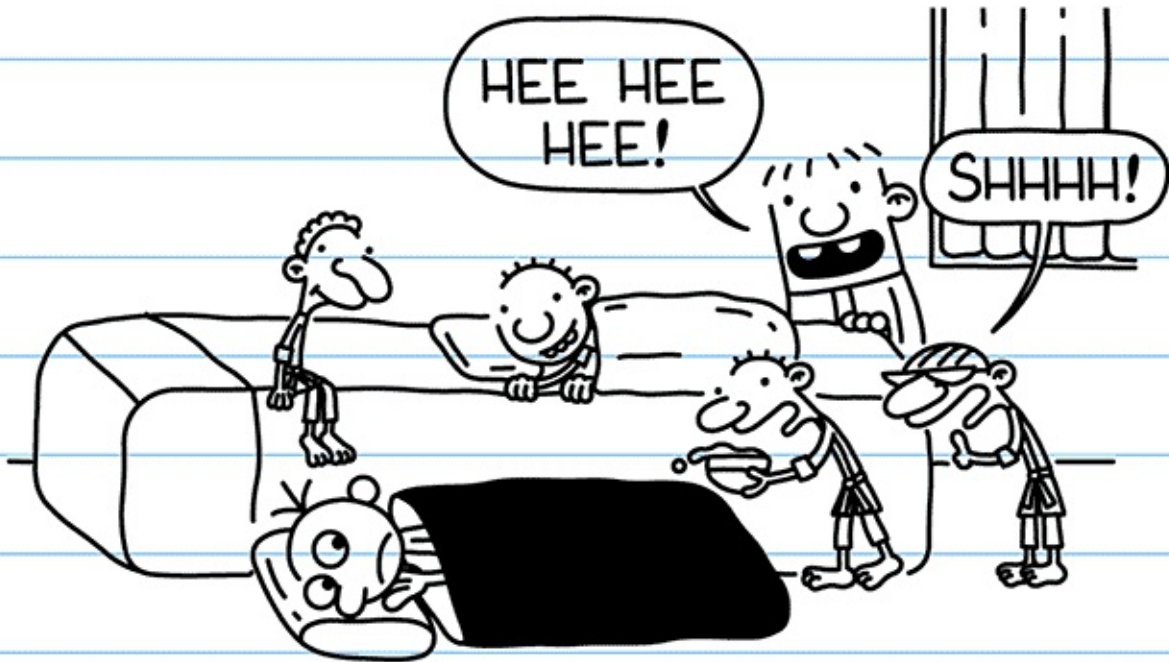
At about 9:30 I decided to just go to sleep and get the night over with. But those guys came into the bedroom and got into a massive pillow fight. And let me tell you, it's not easy falling asleep when a sweaty little kid falls on you every five seconds.



Eventually the kid's mom came upstairs and told

everyone it was time to go to sleep.

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



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

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

tried to conserve as much body heat as possible to

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make it through to the morning.

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

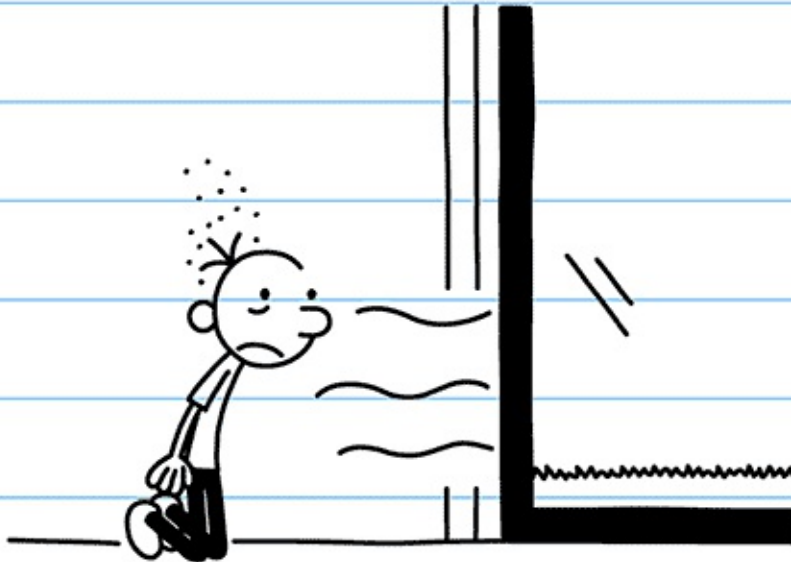


When the sun came up this morning, I found out

the reason it was so cold in the basement. I was

sleeping right by the sliding glass door, and some

fool had gone and left it open overnight.



That really stunk, because if I knew there was a

way to escape last night, I definitely

would've taken it.

When I got home this morning, I went back to

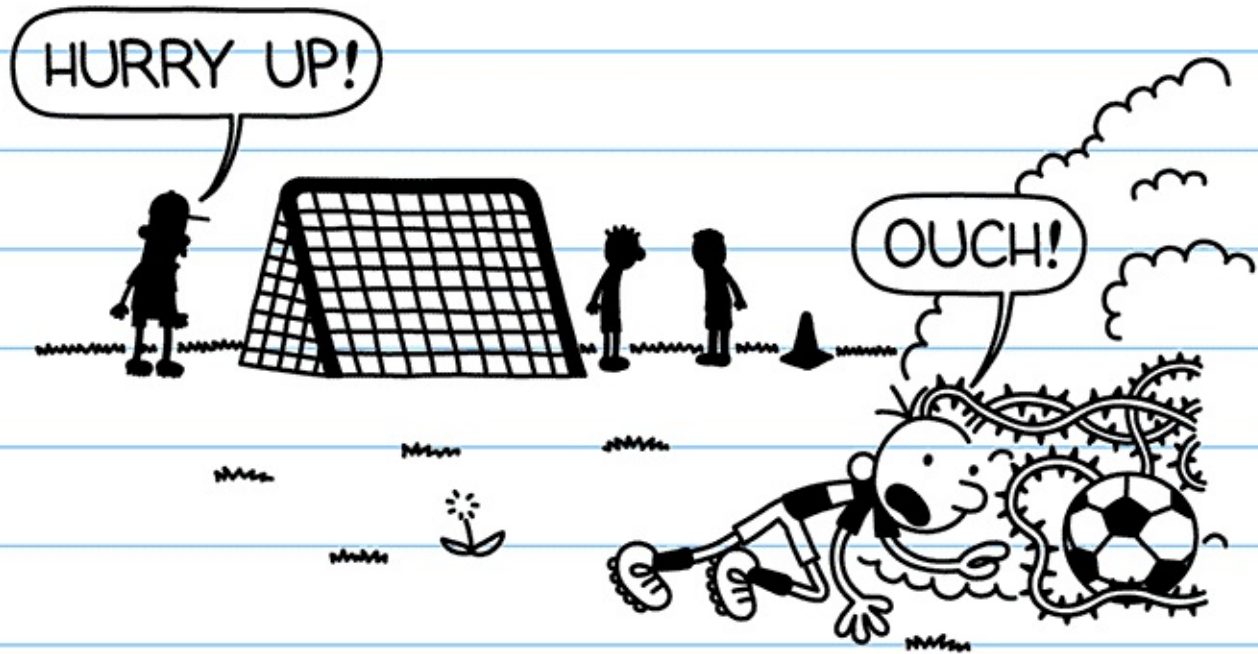
bed until Dad woke me up and told me it was time

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to go to the soccer game.

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



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



Well, I really wish Dad had asked me what I



thought about that idea first, because I would've

---

just gone home with him.

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

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



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

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

the back with Erick, and I sat up front in

the passenger seat.

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



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

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

back around and talked to his assistant for

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another half hour.

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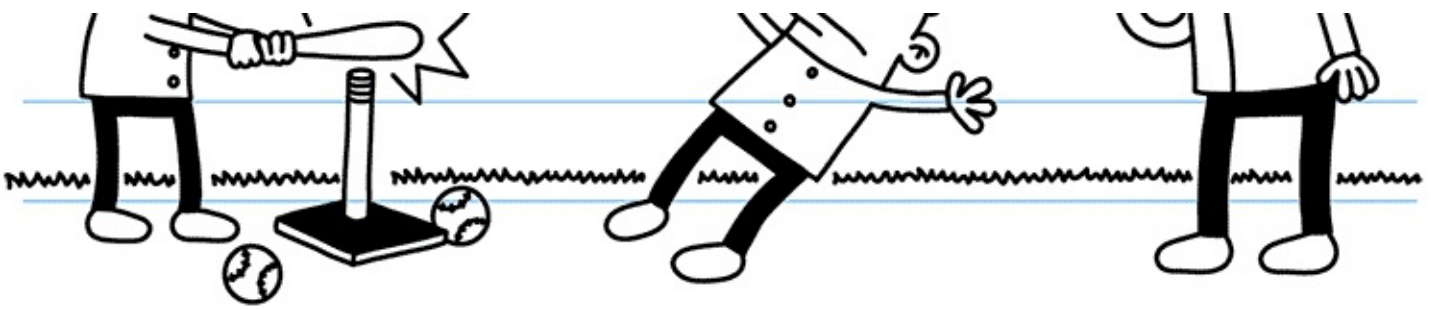
On the way home, Mr. Litch stopped to do about  
five errands. He wasn't in any hurry to get them  
done, either.

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

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

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

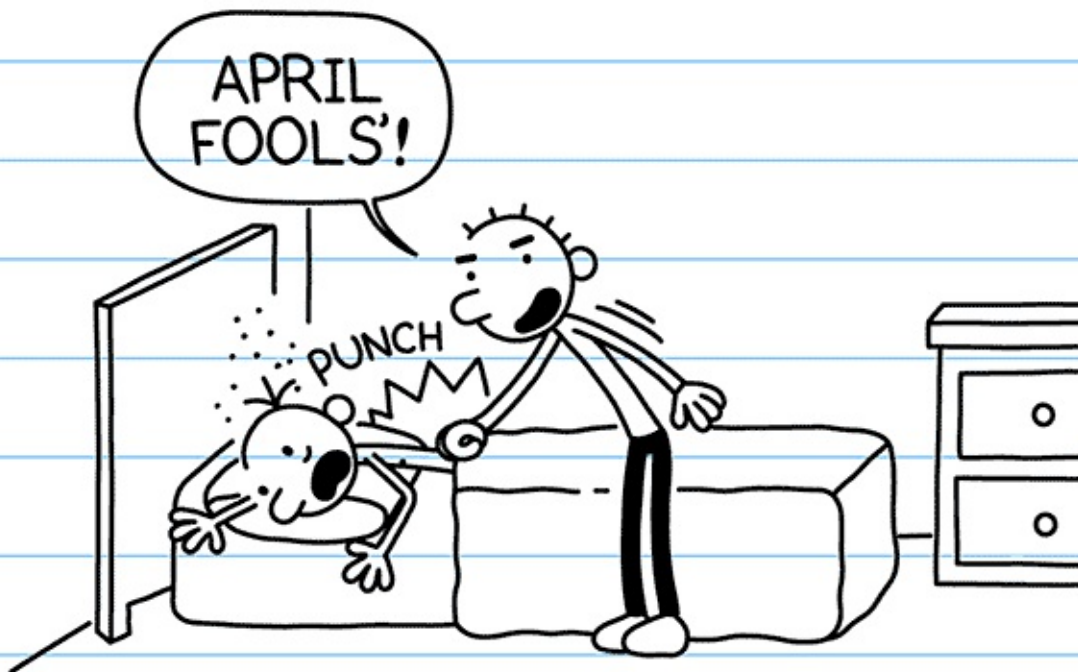




Thursday

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

started —



Every other day of the year, you couldn't

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

on April 1st, Rodrick always wakes up early so

he can get his licks in.

Someone seriously needs to explain the concept of a

practical joke to Rodrick, because all his "jokes"

involve me getting injured.

Last year Rodrick bet me fifty cents I couldn't



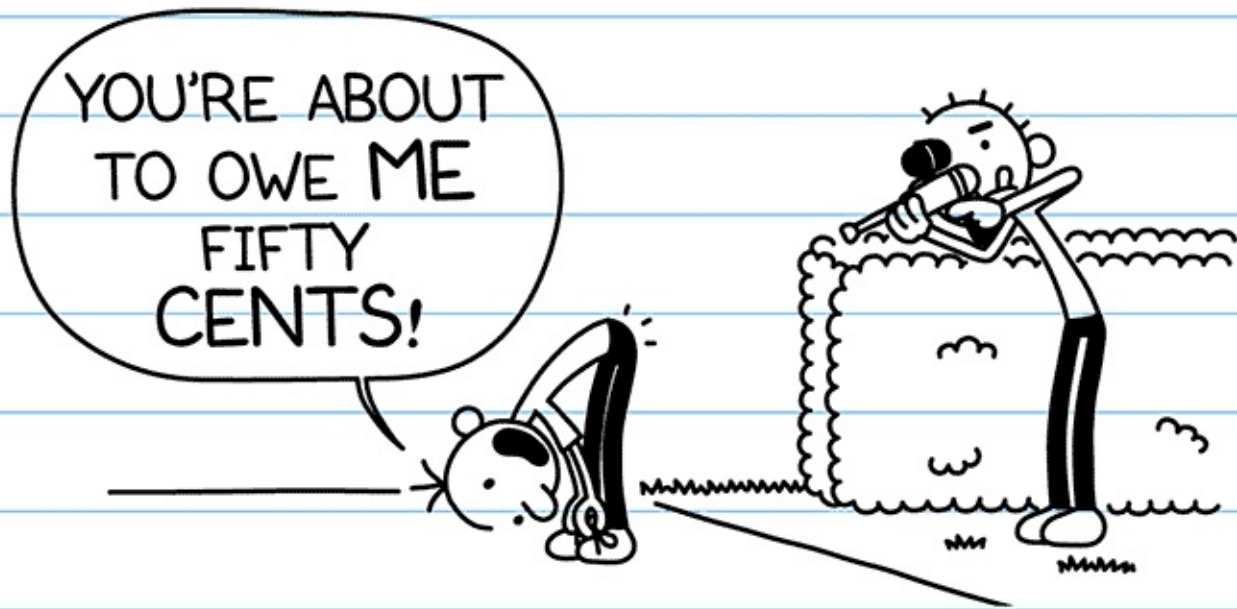
tie my shoes while I was standing up, and I

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totally fell for it.

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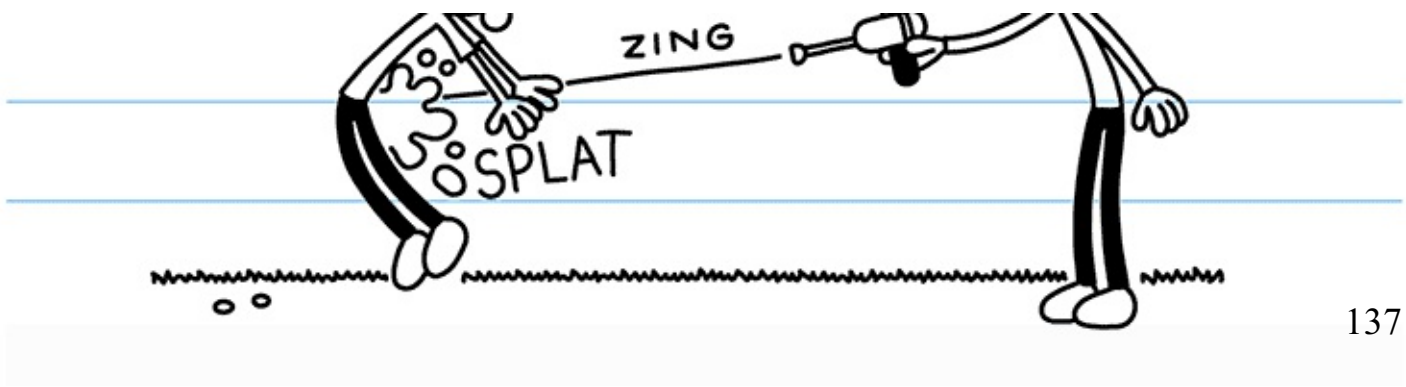
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I went inside and told Dad that Rodrick shot me in the butt with a paintball gun. Dad didn't feel like getting in the middle of a fight, so he just told Rodrick to pay me my fifty cents for winning the bet.

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





At least I put some thinking into my practical

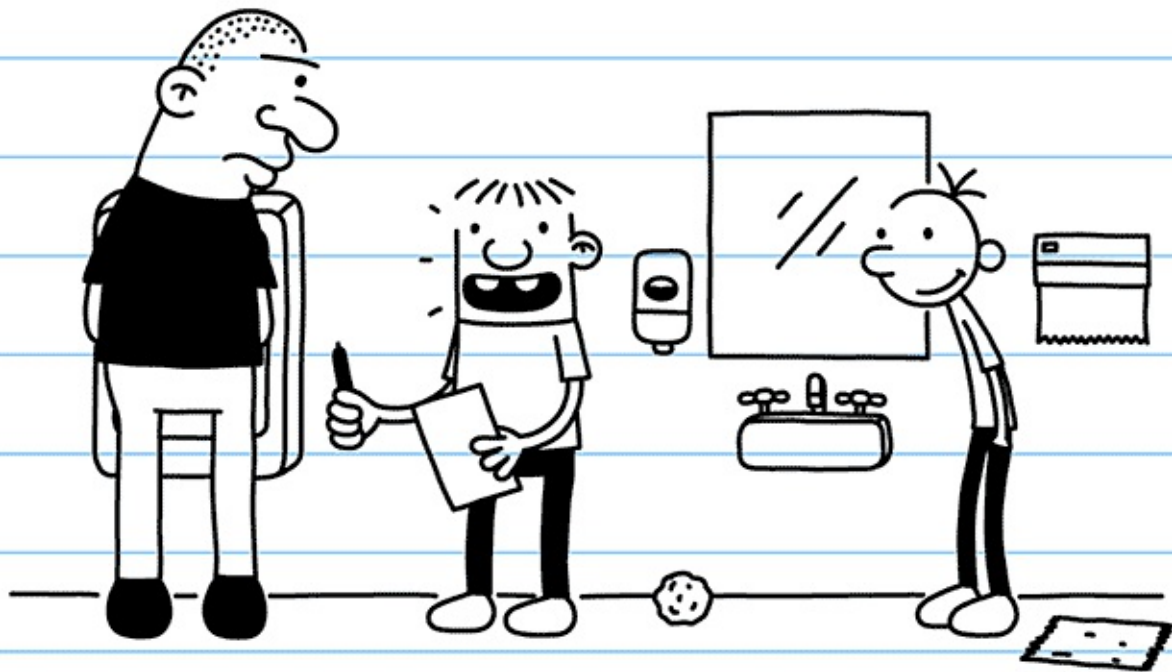
jokes. Last year I pulled a pretty good trick on

Rowley. We were in the bathroom at a movie theater,

and I convinced him that some random guy

standing at the urinal was a professional athlete.

So Rowley asked the guy for his autograph.



And today me and a couple of other guys pulled

a good one on Chirag Gupta.

We decided it would be pretty funny if we made

him think he was losing his hearing, so we all

made sure we talked real quiet every time he

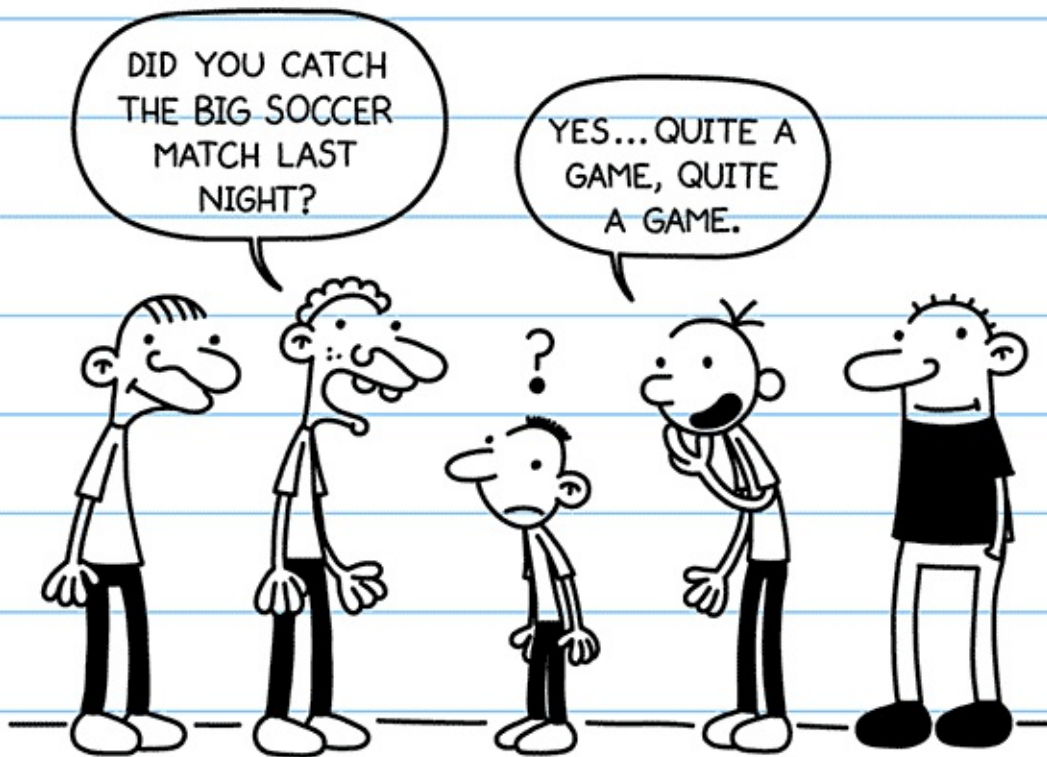
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came around.

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

Friday

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

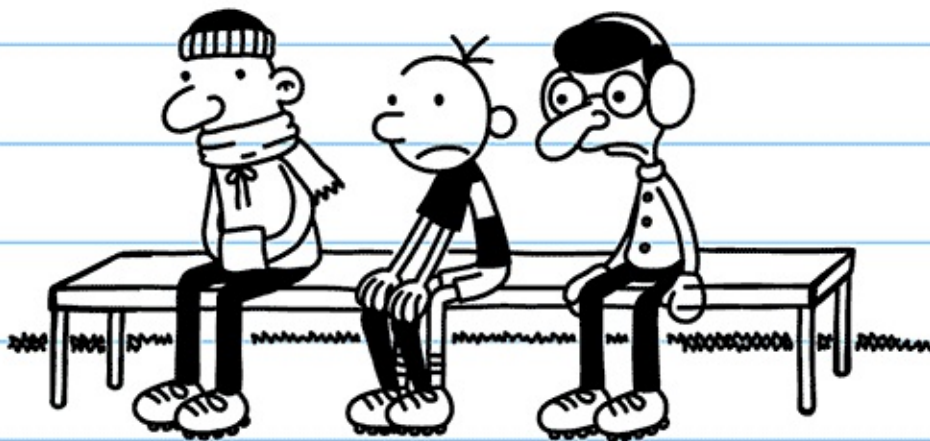
It was really cold out, and I asked Dad if

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

said no.

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

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



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



stand in the huddle while the coach goes over the

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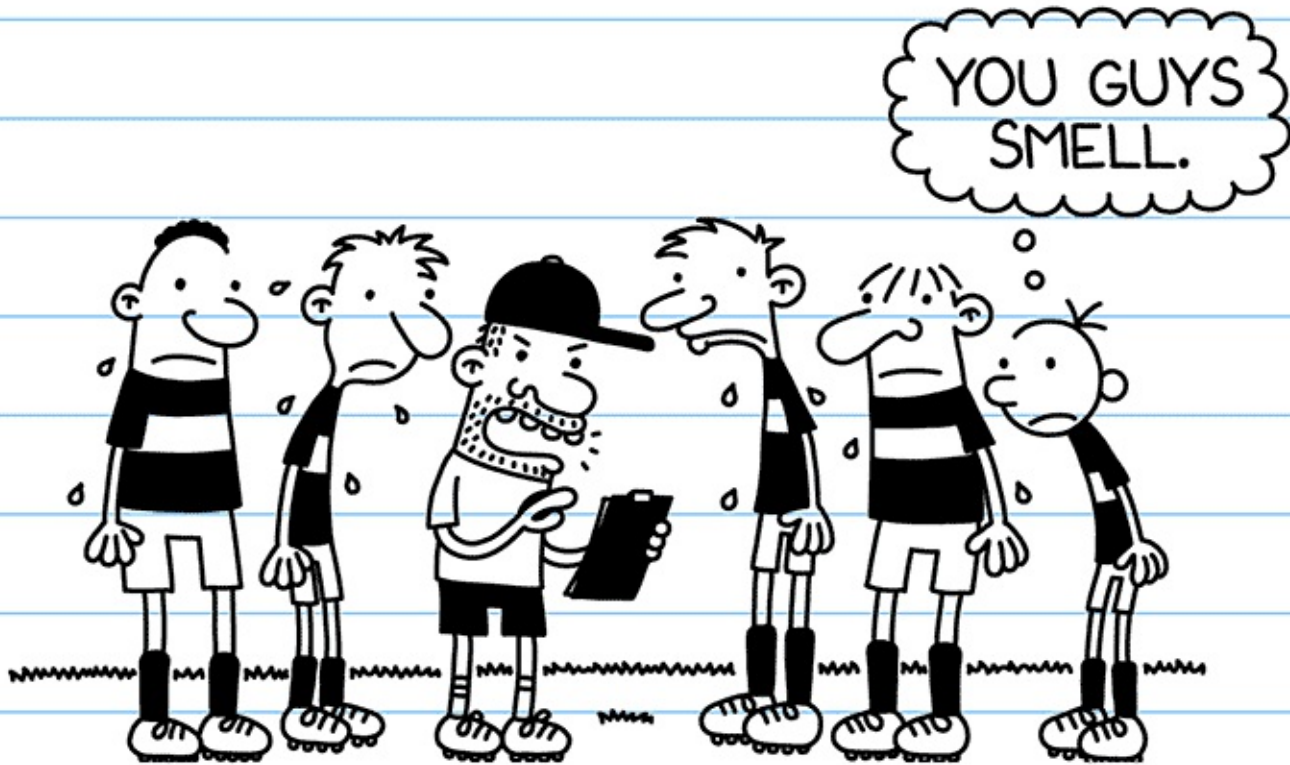
game plan?

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Well, now I can tell you firsthand.



Once the sun went down, it got really cold. In fact, it got so cold Mackey Creavey and Manuel Gonzales went and got sleeping bags out of the Creaveys' car.

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



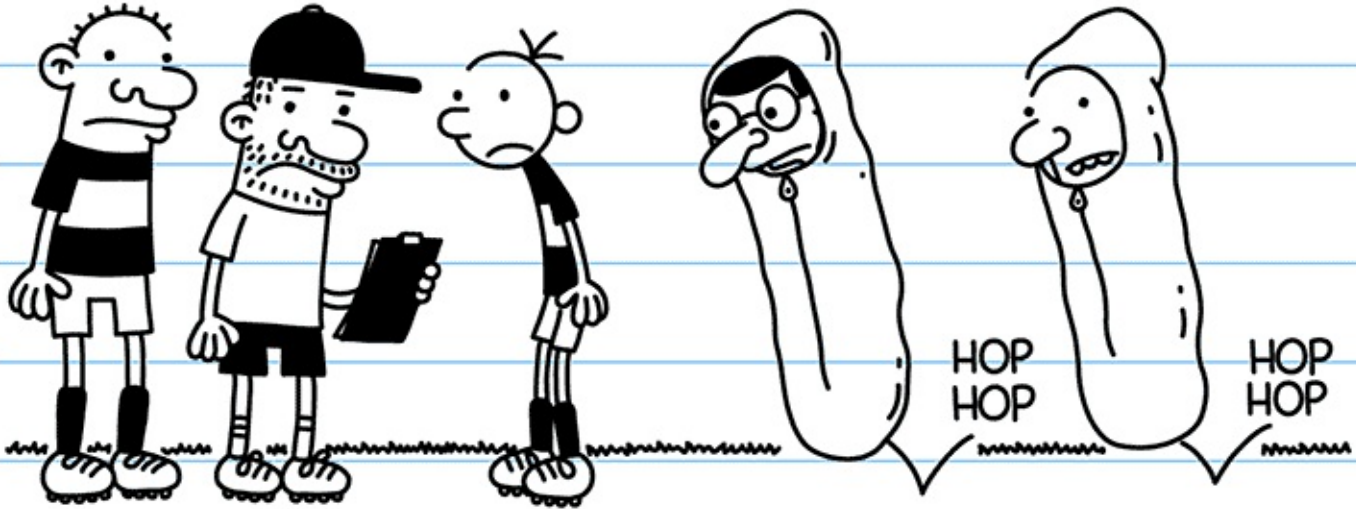


During a timeout, we all joined the huddle. And

when the coach got an eyeful of Mackey and

Manuel, he told them they were excused and to go

to the Creaveys' car for the rest of the game.



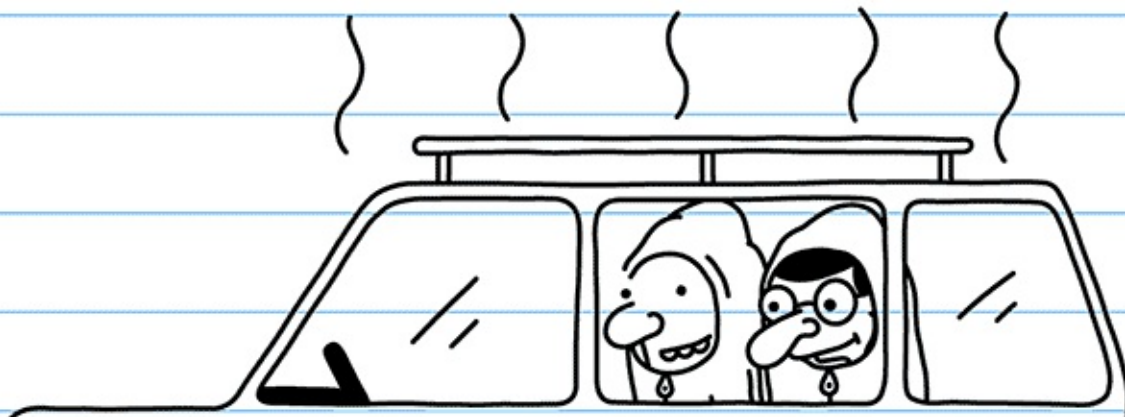
So Mackey and Manuel got to sit in a heated

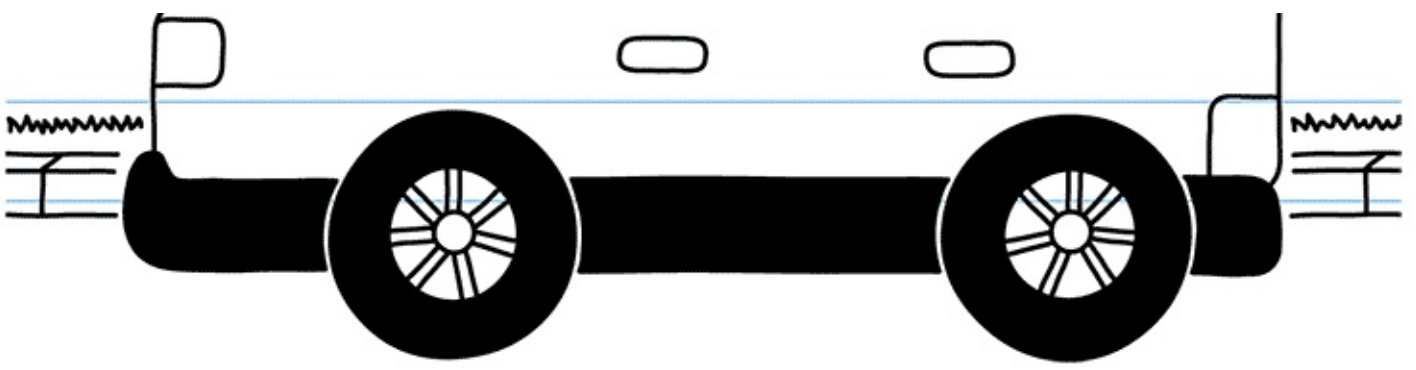
suv, while I had to sit on a cold metal bench in

my shorts. And I know for a fact that the

Creaveys have a tv in their car, so I'm sure

those guys were totally living it up in there.

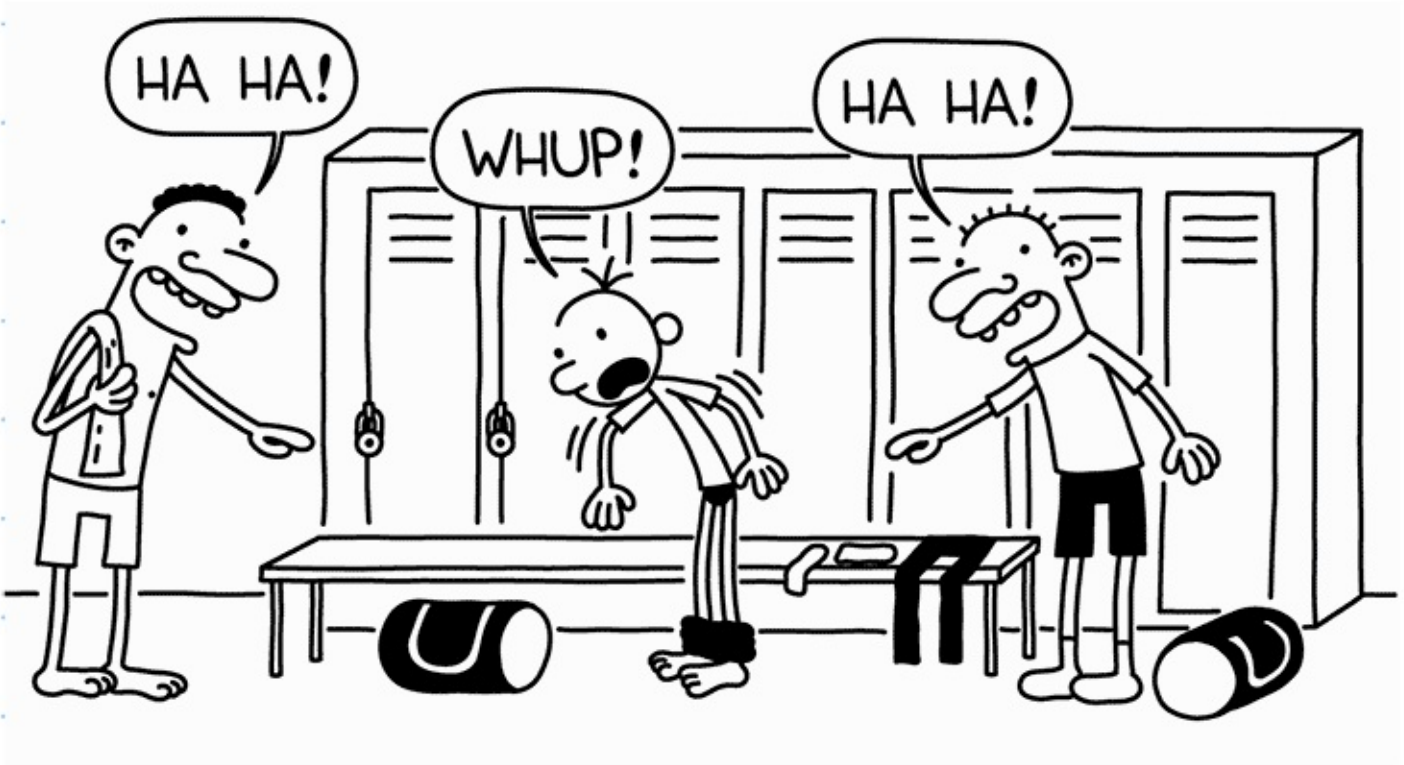




Monday

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

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



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

morning I was pretty tempted to wear them

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just because they were clean.

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Believe me, I didn't ask for the Wonder Woman

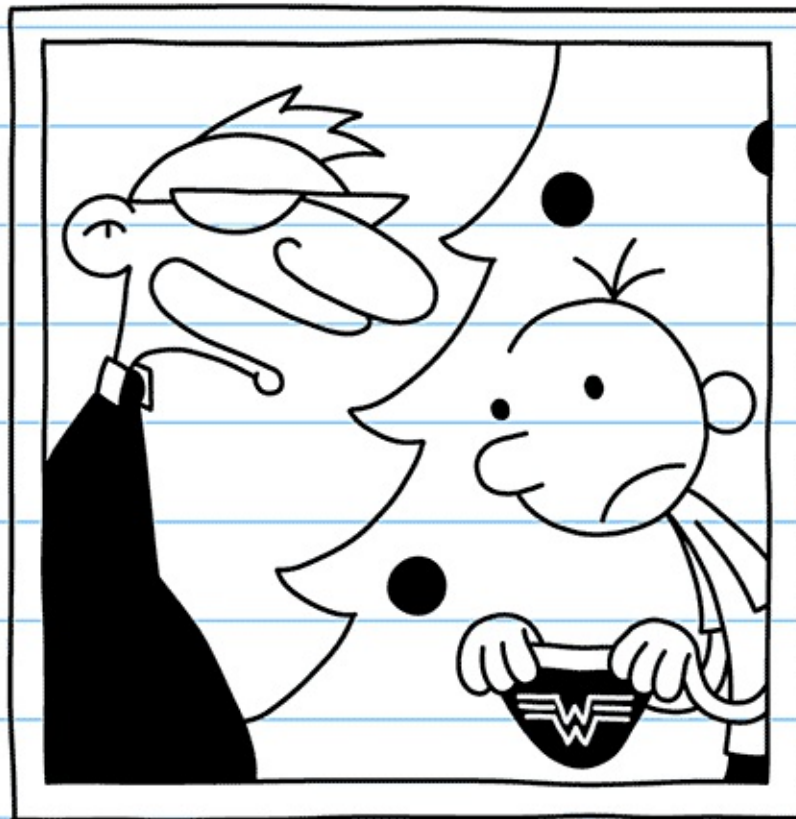
Underoos, either. This past summer a few of my

relatives asked Mom what I wanted for my

birthday, and she told them I was really into

comics and super heroes.

So the Underoos were a gift from Uncle Charlie.



We had another soccer game after school, but it's

been getting a lot warmer lately, and I wasn't

worried about the cold.

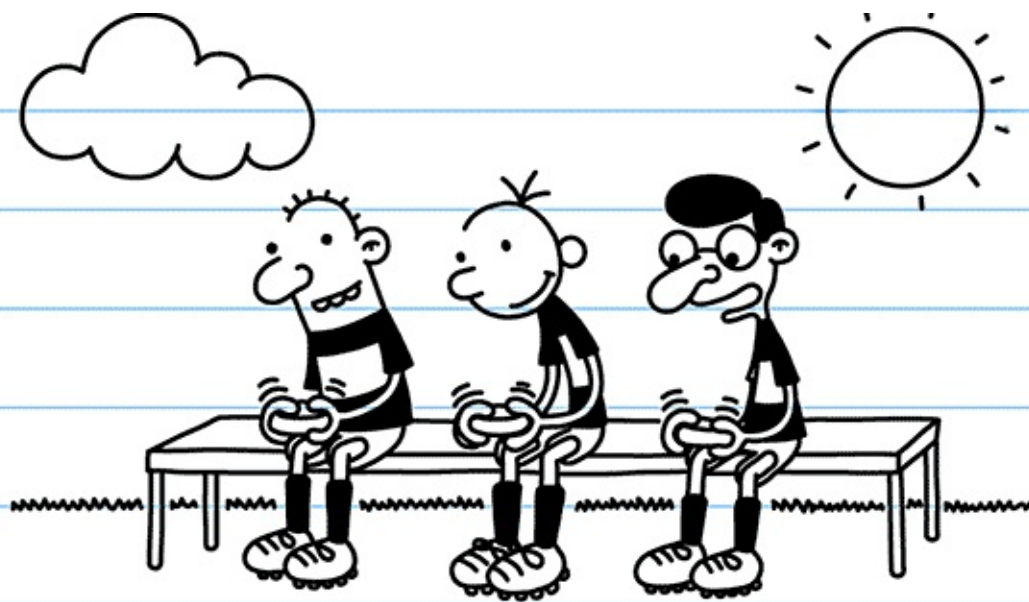
At school, me, Mackey, and Manuel agreed we'd all



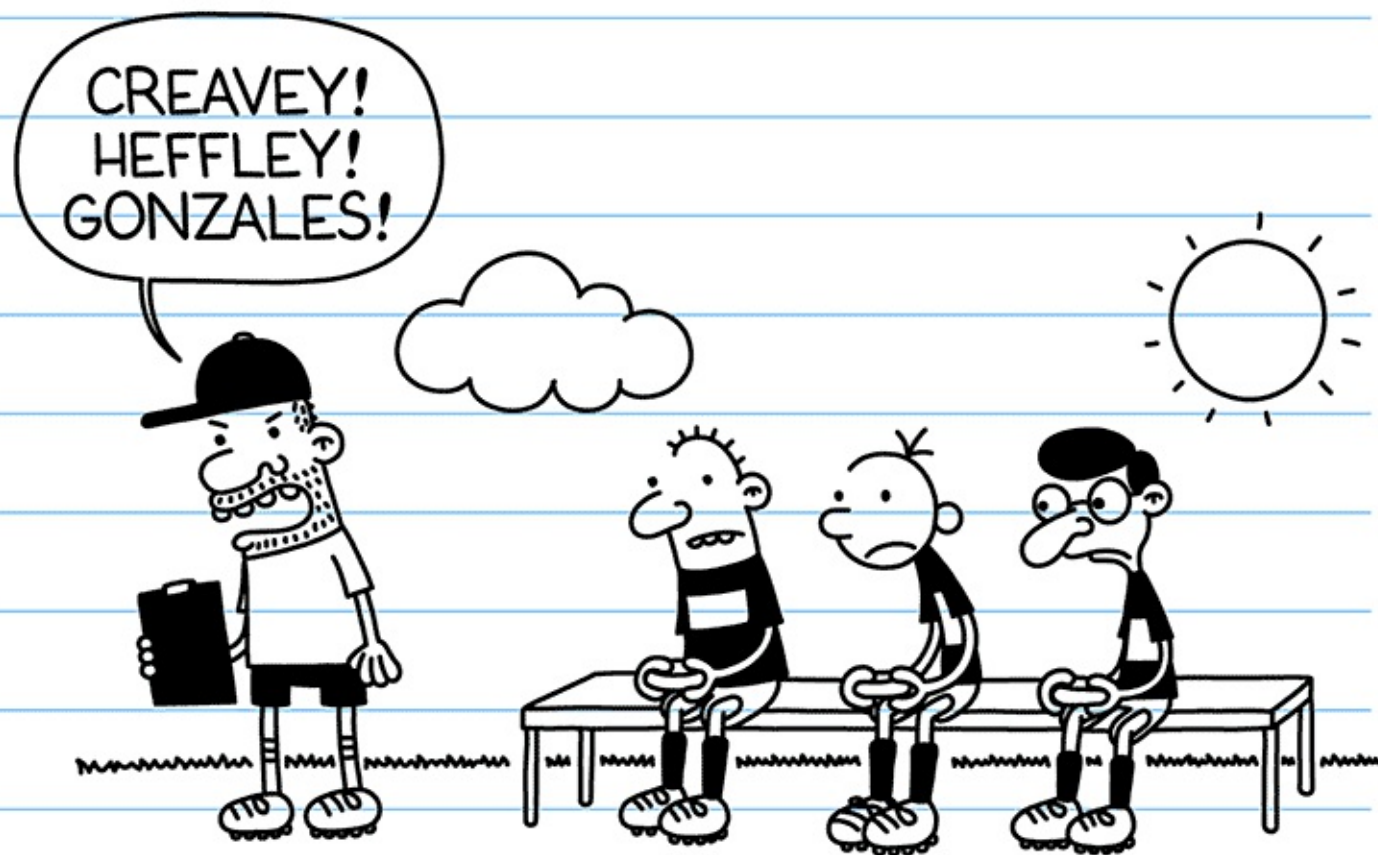
bring some video games tonight, and for the first \_\_\_\_\_

time we actually enjoyed ourselves at soccer. \_\_\_\_\_

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



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

League made a rule that now every kid has to \_\_\_\_\_  
get in the game. \_\_\_\_\_

Well, none of us had been paying any attention

to the game, so when we got on the field, we

didn't know what to do or where to stand.

A couple of kids on our team told us the other

team had a "free kick," and that we were supposed

to stand shoulder to shoulder to make a shield to

block it.

I thought the guys on my team were joking, but

it turns out they weren't. Me, Manuel, and Mackey

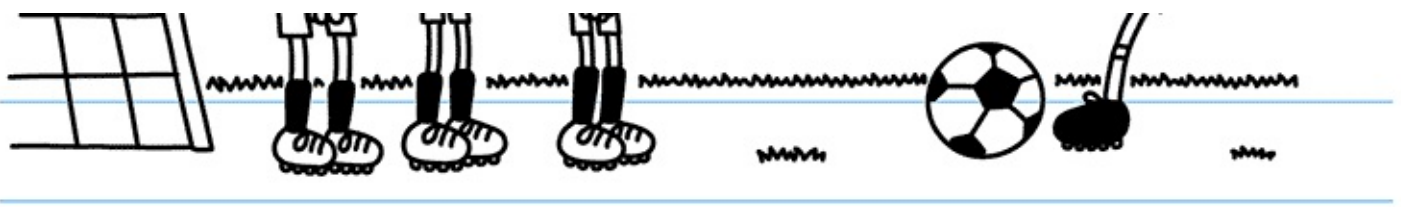
had to line up in front of our goal. Then the referee

blew the whistle, and a kid from the other team ran

at the ball and kicked it right at us.

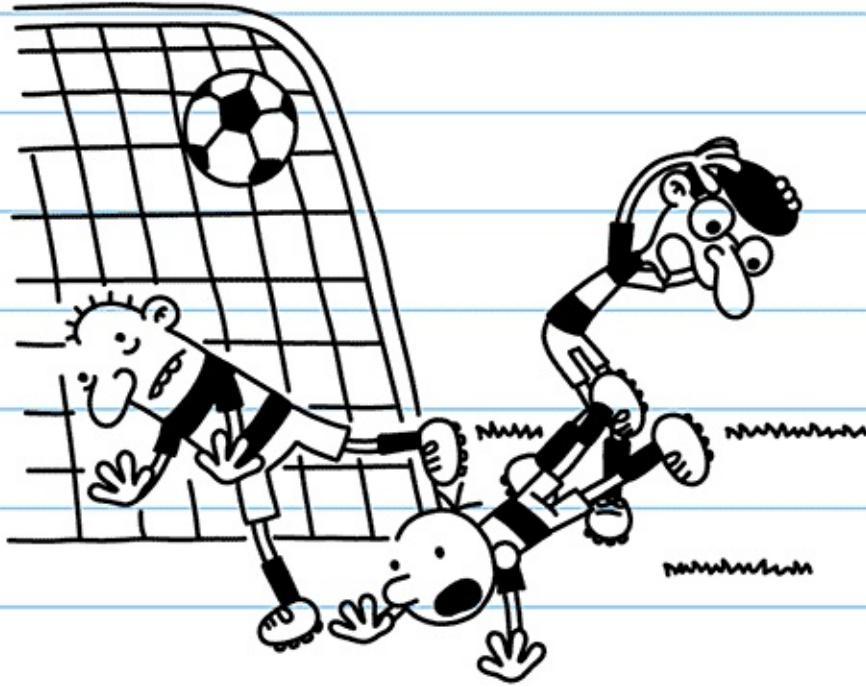
TWEET!





Well, we didn't do a really good job of protecting

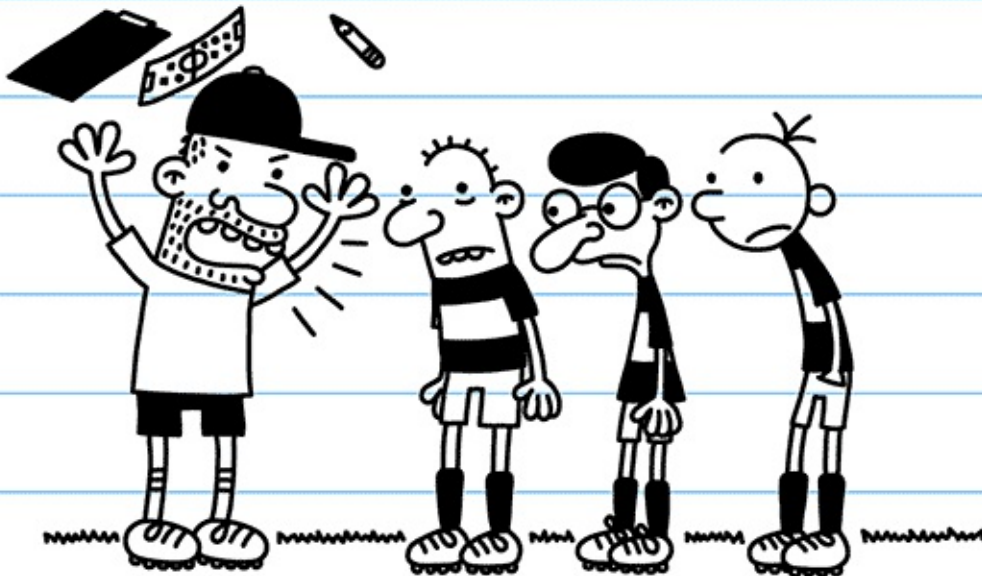
the goal, and the other team scored.



Mr. Litch pulled the three of us out of the game

the second he got the chance, and he yelled at

us for not standing still and blocking the ball.



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

between getting yelled at or getting hit in the

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

Thursday

After the game last week, I asked Mr. Litch if

I could be the backup goalie for the team, and

he said I could.

It was a genius move on my part, for a couple

of reasons. First of all, goalies don't have to

run laps and all that stuff during practice.

They just do individual goalie drills with the

assistant coach.

Second, goalies wear different uniforms than

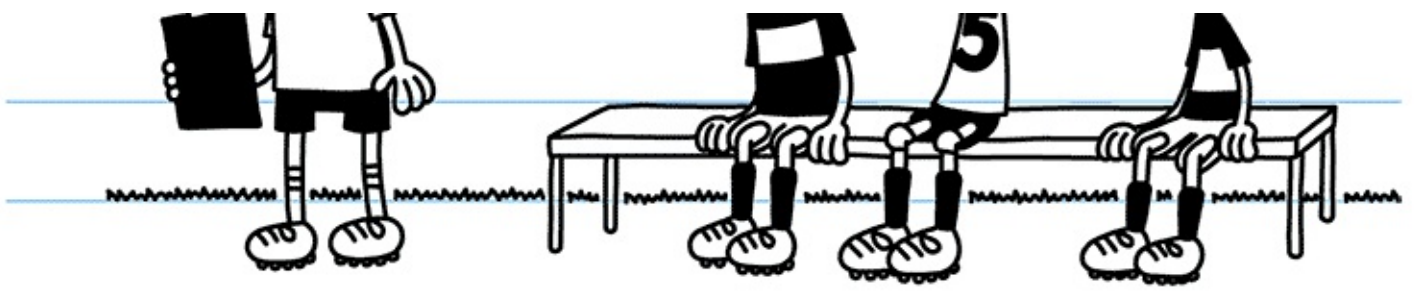
the rest of the team, and that means Mr.

Litch can't put me in the game when it's time to

block free kicks.



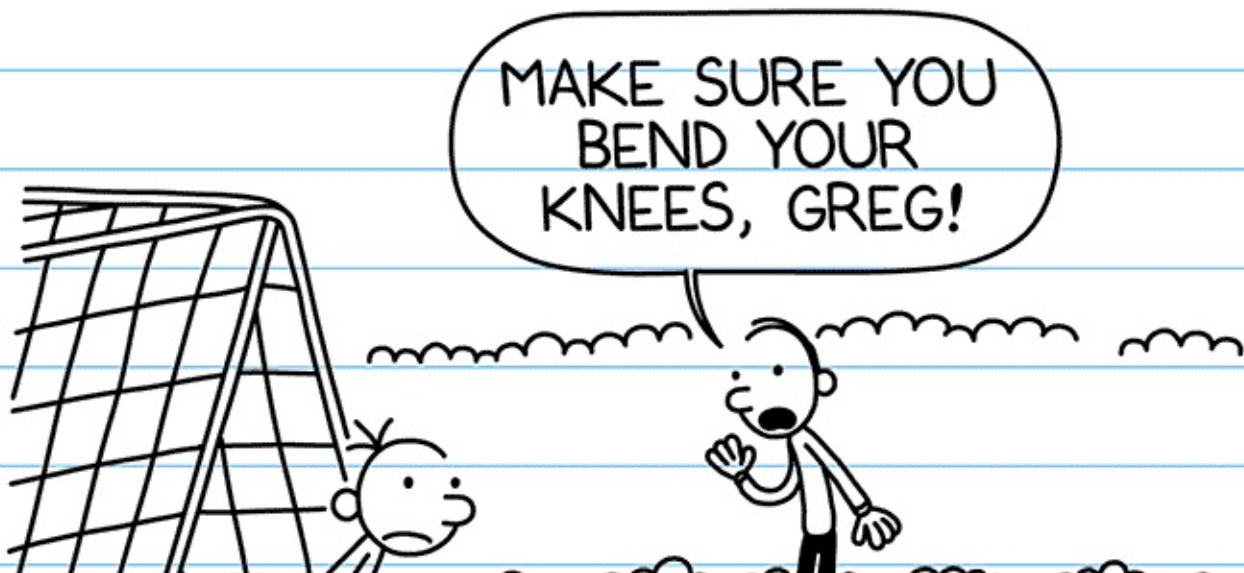


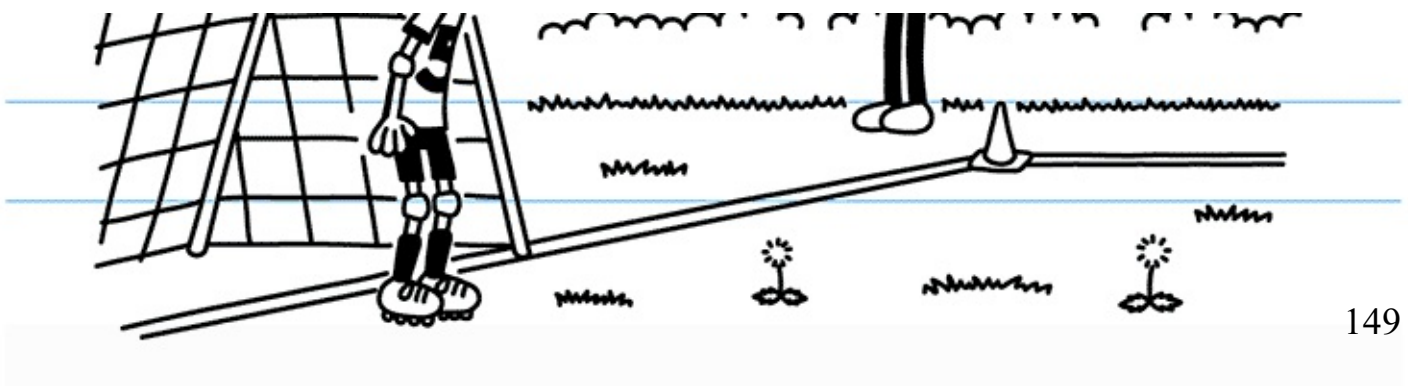


Our regular goalie, Tucker Fox, is the star of the team, so I knew there was no way I was gonna see any playing time, anyway. These last few games have actually been kind of fun. But tonight, something bad happened. Tucker hurt his hand diving after a ball, and he had to come out. So that meant the coach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

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

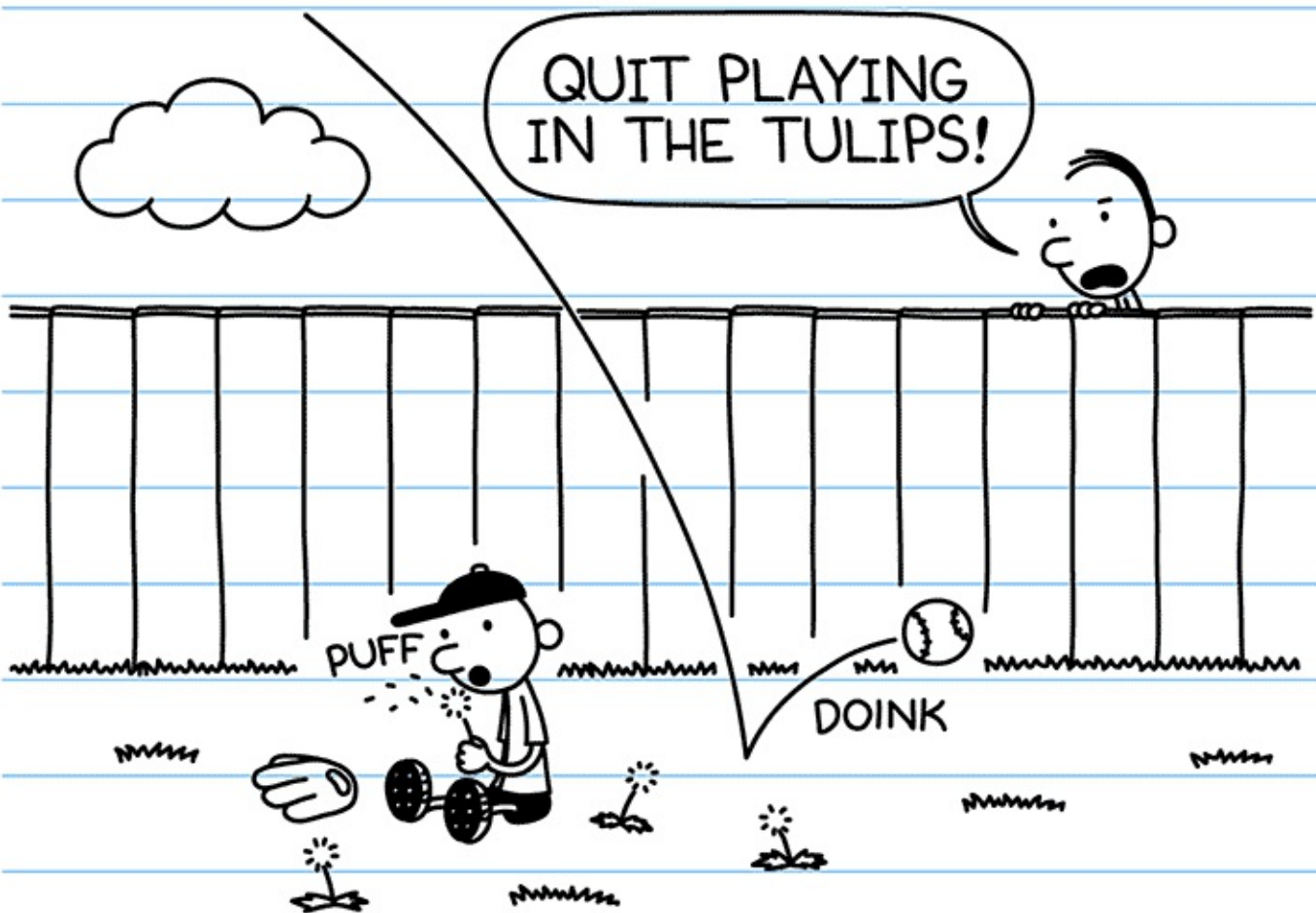
Our team kept the ball on the other side of the field for the whole rest of the game, and I didn't even touch it once.





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

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



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

There were about a million dandelions down at

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

starting to get a little twitchy.

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Monday

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

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



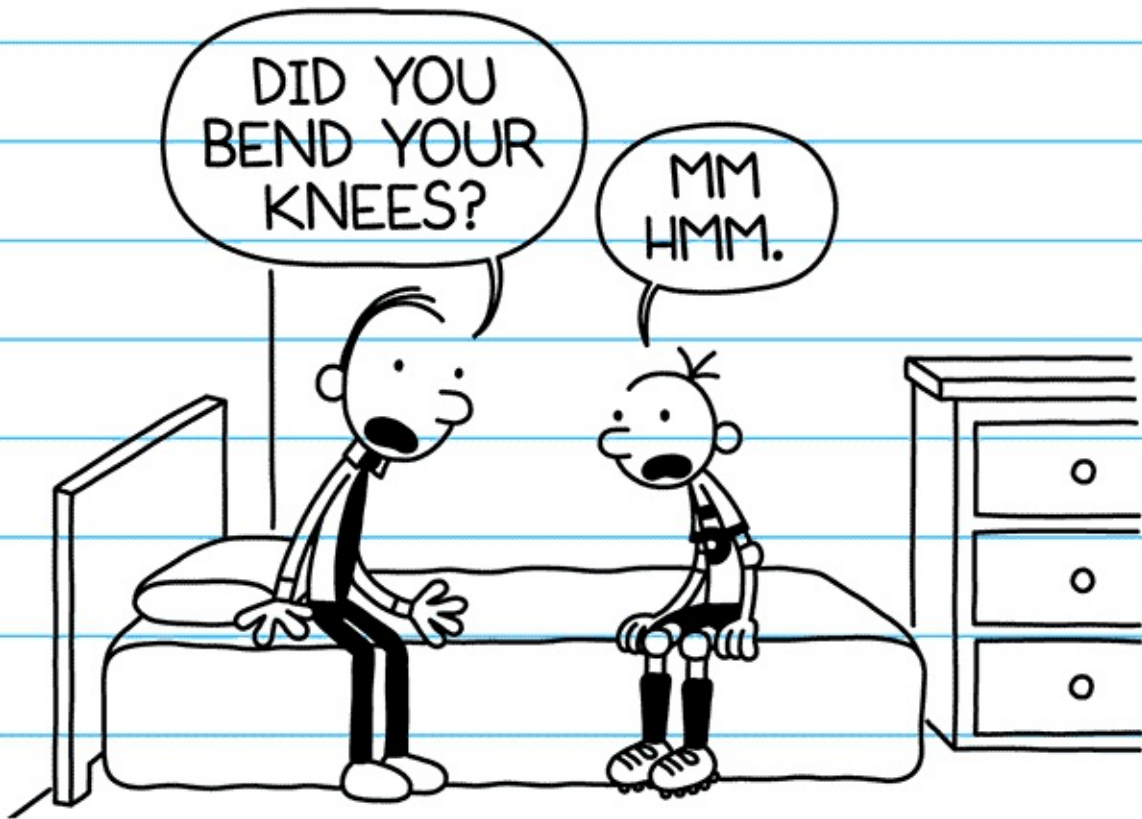
My teammates thanked me for being positive by pelting me with orange peels.

Back at home, I was nervous to tell Dad about \_\_\_\_\_  
the game. \_\_\_\_\_



I guess he seemed a little disappointed, but he

got over it pretty quick.



But tonight, when Dad got home from dinner,

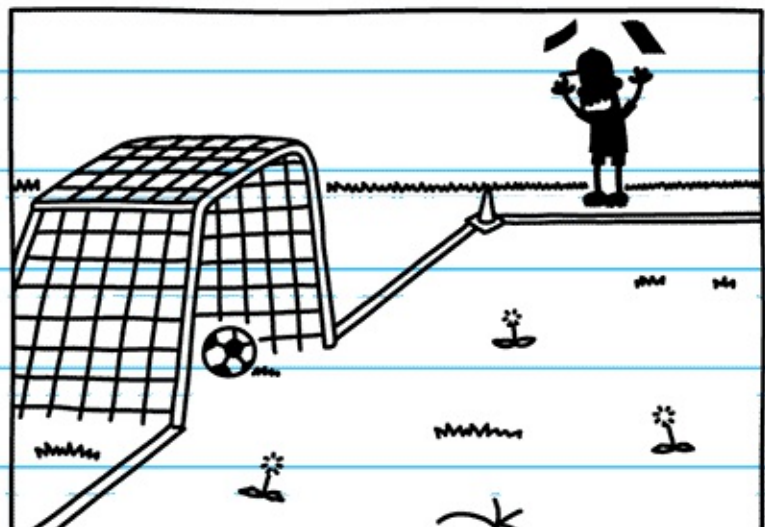
he looked really mad. He plopped the newspaper

down in front of me on the kitchen table, and

here was the picture on the Sports page —

## A “Blown” Opportunity

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



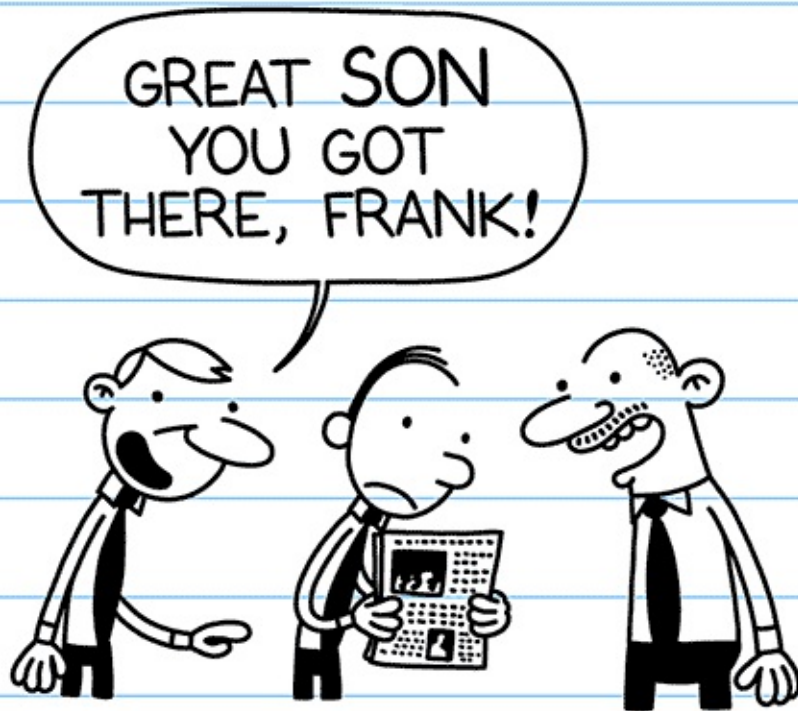


Dawgs midfielder  
James Byron rolls in.  
The score ended the  
Socks' bid for an  
undefeated season.



Apparently, Dad found out about the paper from

his boss at work.



ok, so maybe I didn't tell Dad All the

details of the game.

In my defense, though, I didn't really know

what happened until I read about it in the

paper myself.

Dad didn't say a word to me for the rest of

the night. If he's still mad at me, I just hope

he gets over it pretty quick. Twisted Wizard 2

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

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

Friday

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

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



The photo place gives you duplicate prints, so as

a joke Dad wrote labels on the two pictures of \_\_\_\_\_

Mom and put them up on the refrigerator. \_\_\_\_\_



Well, Dad was pretty proud of himself for coming up with that one, but Mom wasn't so amused.



Anyway, I guess Dad felt like maybe it was a

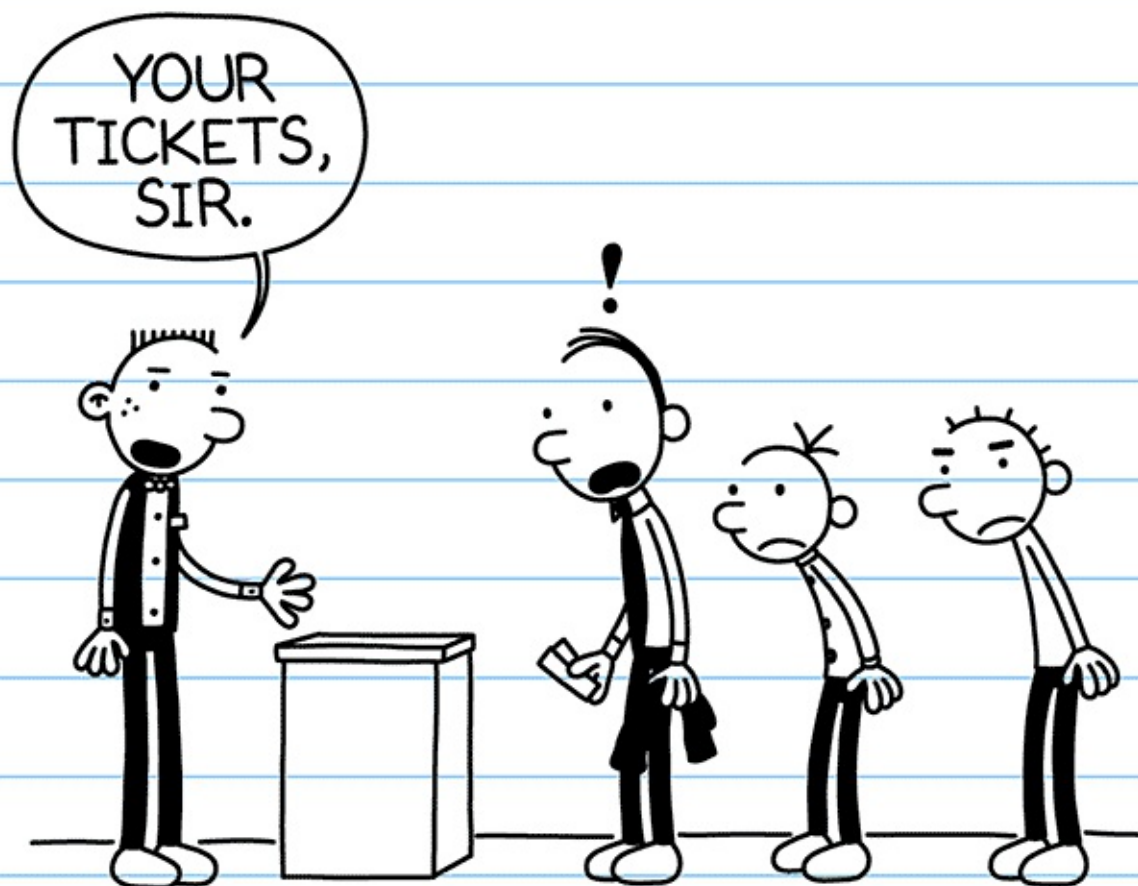
good idea to put a little space between him and

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Mom tonight.

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



I read the teenager's name tag, and I couldn't believe my eyes. It was Lenwood Heath, the bad teenager who used to live on our street.

The last I saw him, he had long hair and he was lighting someone's trash on fire. But now



here he was, looking like he just graduated from

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the Air Force or something.

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Dad seemed ReALLY impressed with Lenwood's

new look, and the two of them struck up a

conversation.

Lenwood said he's been going to Spag Union

Military Academy, and he's just working at the

movie theater for Spring Break. Then Lenwood

said he's trying to get good grades at Spag

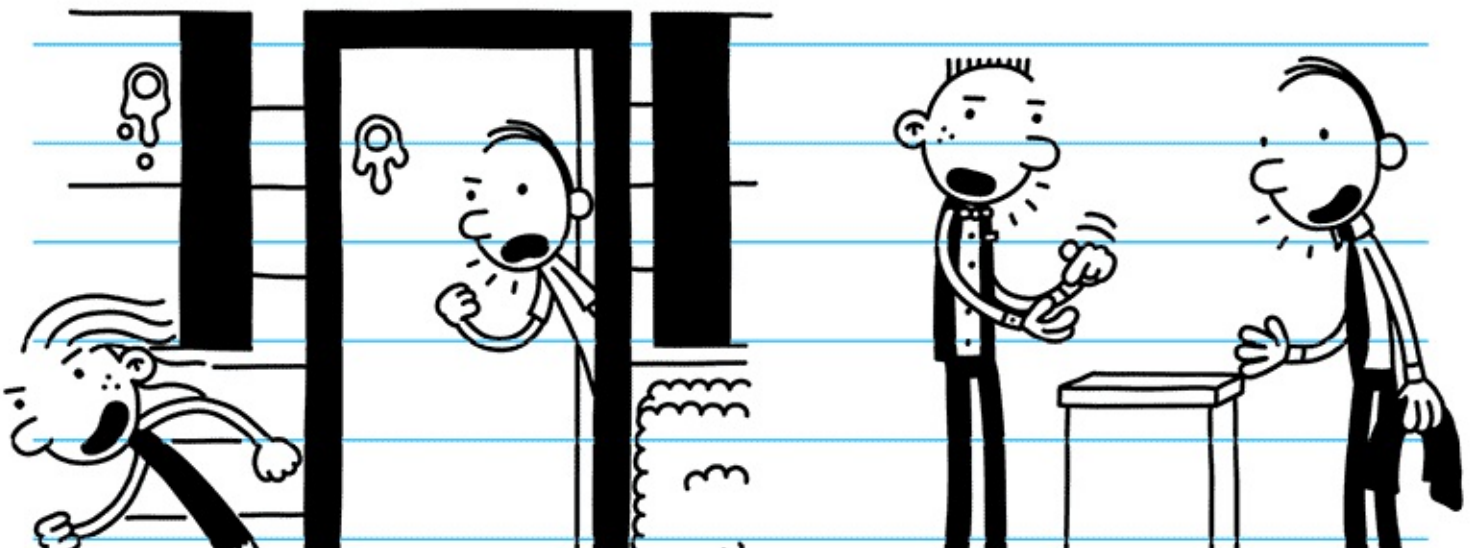
Union so he can get into West Point.

And all of a sudden Dad was treating Lenwood

like his new best friend. Which was really crazy,

especially considering the history between the

two of them.





BEFORE



AFTER

Anyway, Dad kept chatting away with Lenwood,

so me and Rodrick just got our popcorn and

went in the theater. And it wasn't until halfway

through the movie that I realized what was

really happening.

If Dad saw how military school could make a man

out of a juvenile delinquent like Lenwood Heath,

then it wasn't a stretch to think it could make a

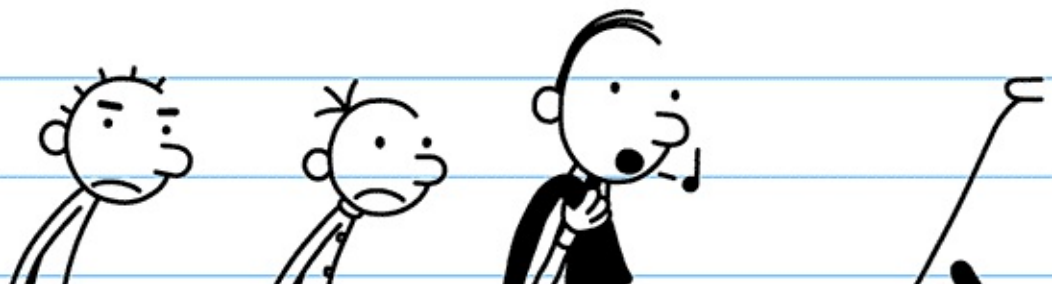
man out of a wimp like me.

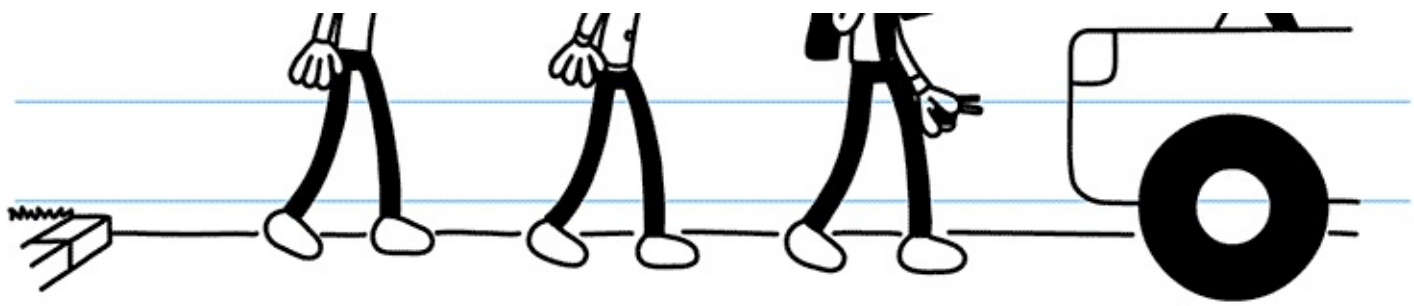
I'm just praying Dad isn't having those thoughts.

Right now I'm pretty concerned, because after

the movie tonight, Dad was in the best mood

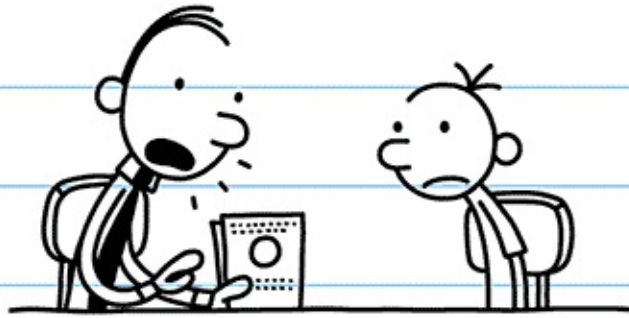
I've seen him in for a loNG time.





Monday

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



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

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

I told Dad I won't last a day at Spag Union.

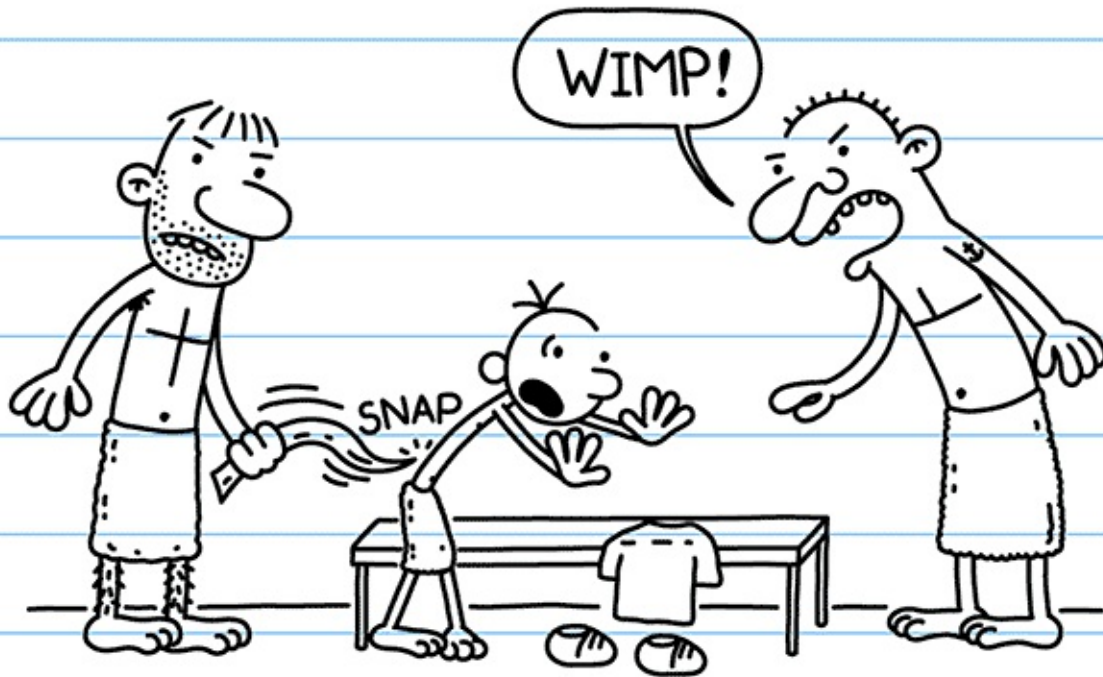
First of all, they mix kids my age in with

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

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



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



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



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

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an absolute emergency.

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A few classrooms in our school have bathrooms right

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

little sound you make is broadcast to the whole room.



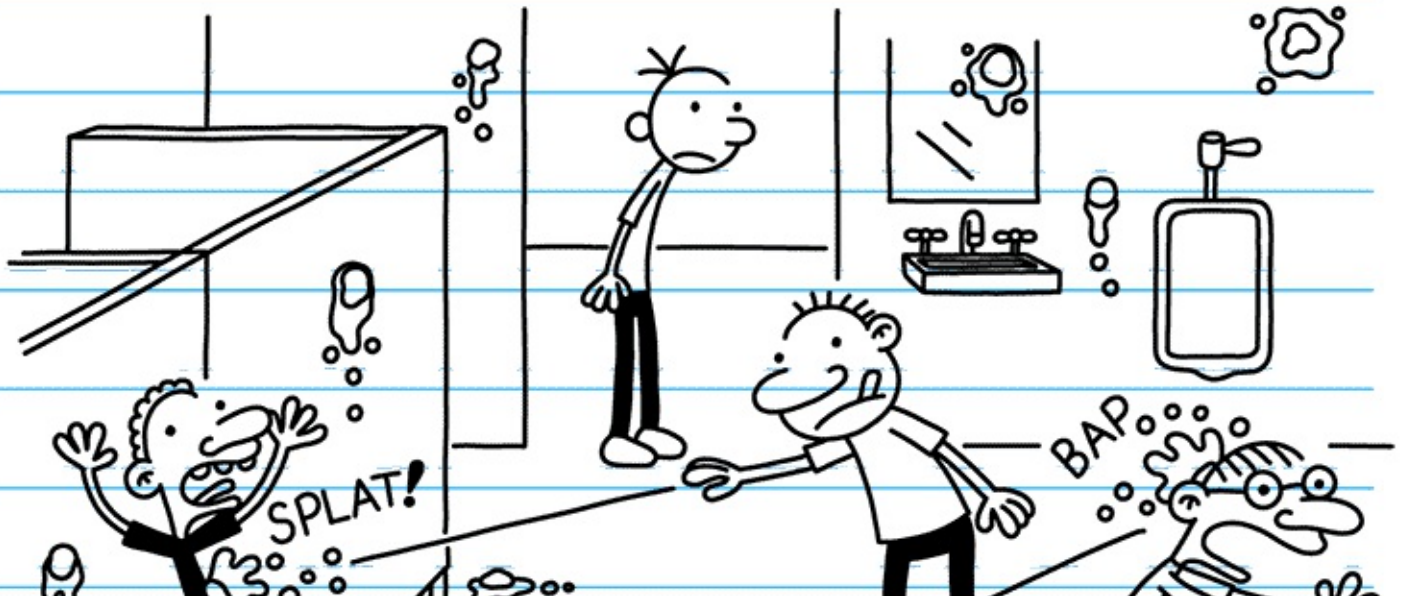
The only other option is to use the cafeteria

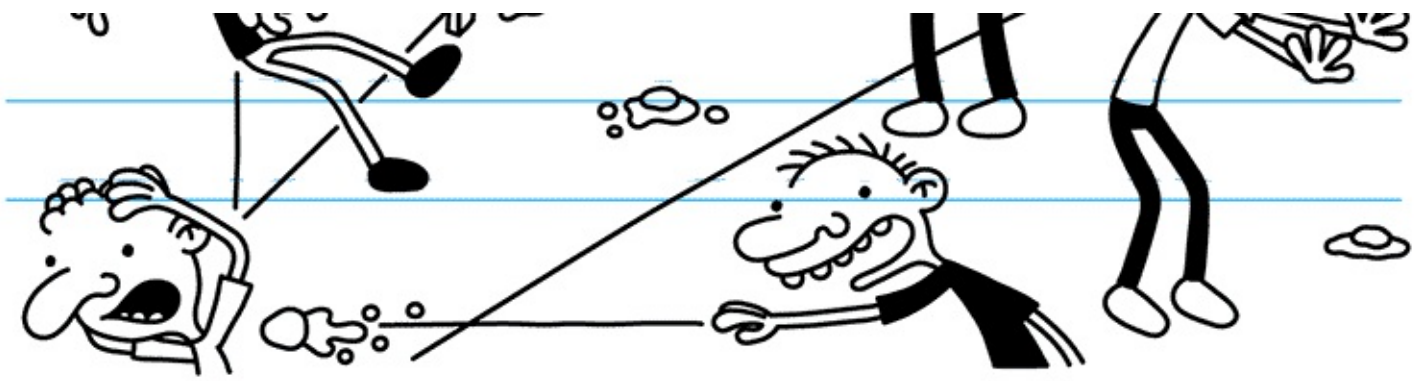
bathroom, and that place is a complete madhouse.

Somebody got the idea a few weeks ago to start

throwing wet toilet paper around, so now that

place is like a war zone.





I can't concentrate in that kind of an environment,

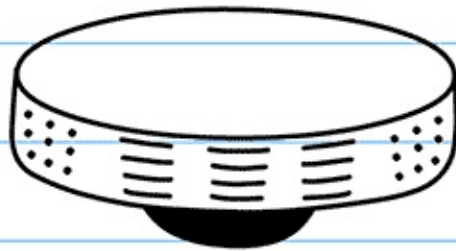
so I basically have to hold it until I get home

from school.

A couple of days ago, something happened that

changed the situation. The janitor put some new

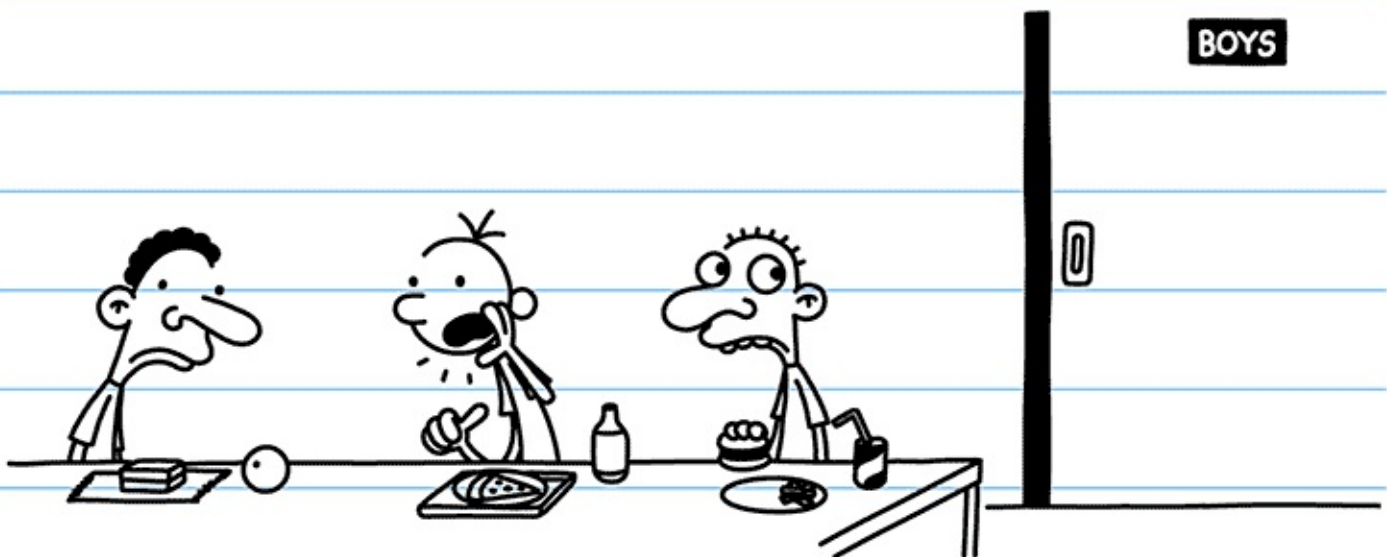
air fresheners in the bathroom.



I started a rumor that the air fresheners were

actually security cameras to catch whoever was

throwing the wet toilet paper.

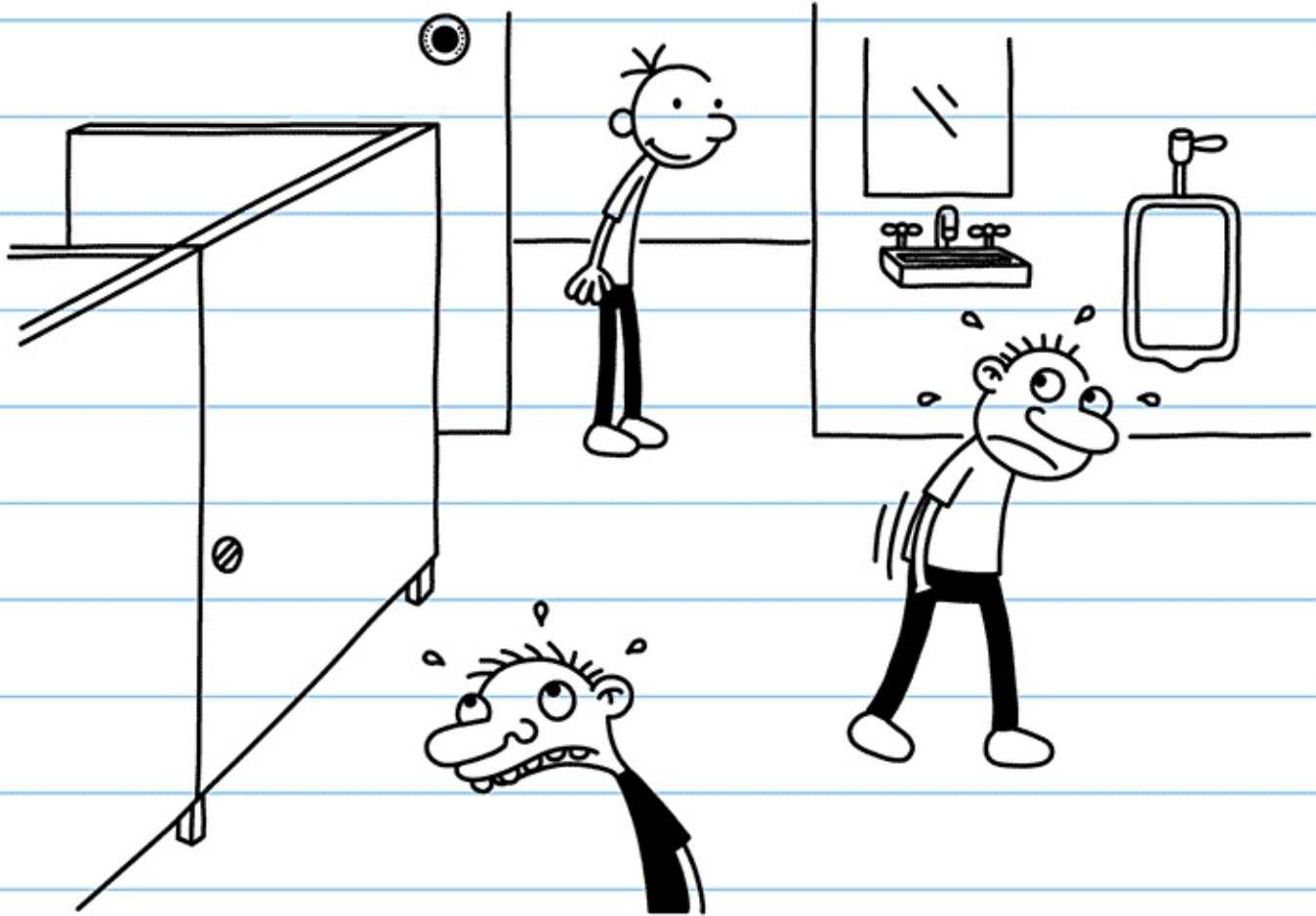


I guess I must've told the right people, because

from that point on the cafeteria bathroom has \_\_\_\_\_

been quieter than the library. \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

every morning. I figured she'd agree with me and

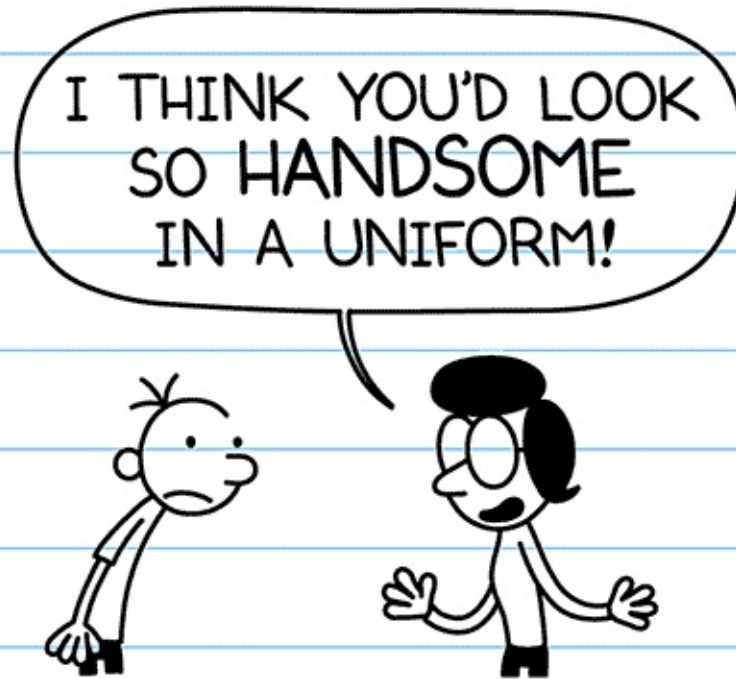
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talk some sense into Dad.

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But it looks like Mom isn't gonna be any help to

me after all.



Wednesday

I knew I needed to do something quick to

convince Dad that I was tough and didn't

need to go to military academy. So I told

him I wanted to join the Boy Scouts.

Dad seemed really enthusiastic about the idea, so

that was a relief.

Besides trying to find a way to get Dad off my

back, I have a couple of other reasons for wanting

to join the Boy Scouts. Number one, Boy Scout



meetings are on Sundays, so that means I can

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quit soccer.

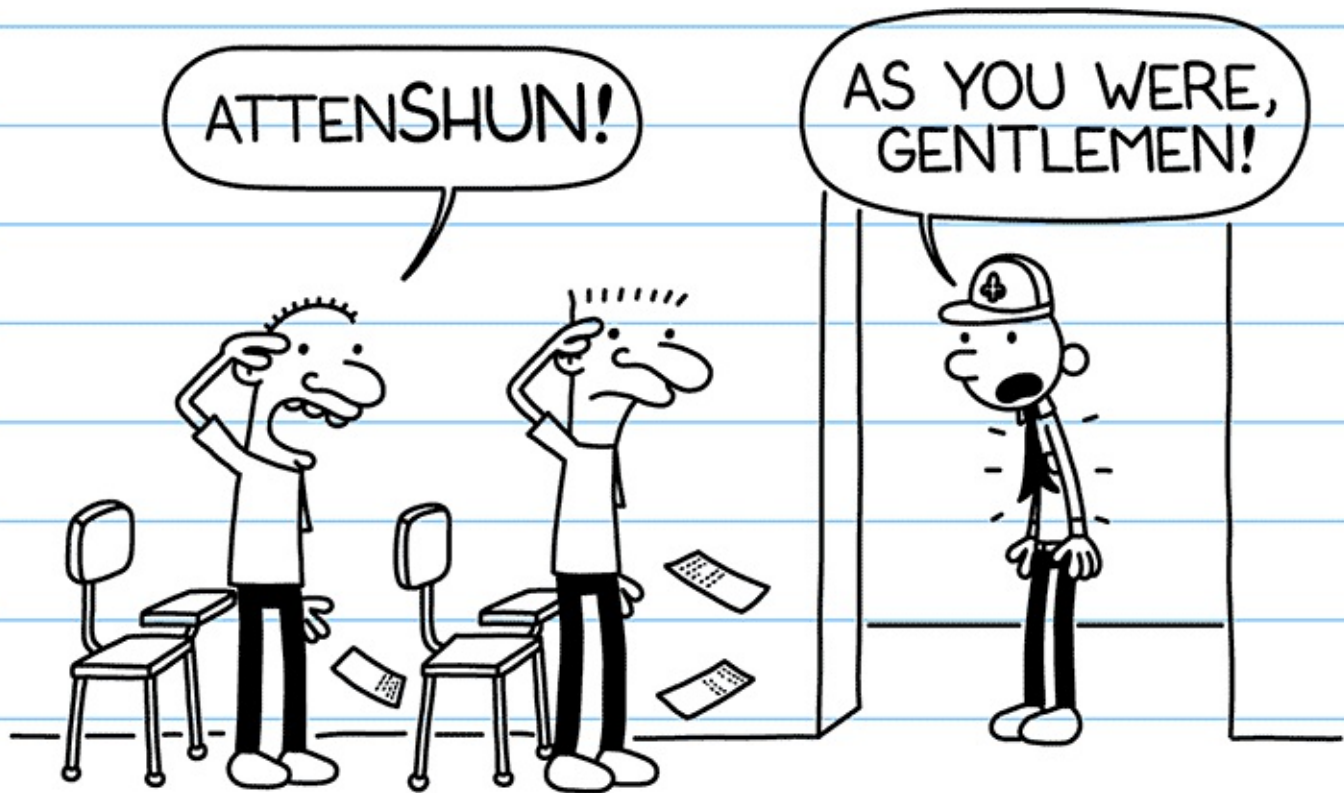
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And number two, it's about time I start getting

some respect from the other kids at school.



There are actually two Boy Scout troops in my

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

and Troop 133, which is about five miles down the

road. Troop 133 is always having hot dog roasts

and pool parties and stuff like that, but Troop 24

is constantly out doing community service projects

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

Troop 133 kind of guy.

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

out about Troop 24, because he'll make me sign

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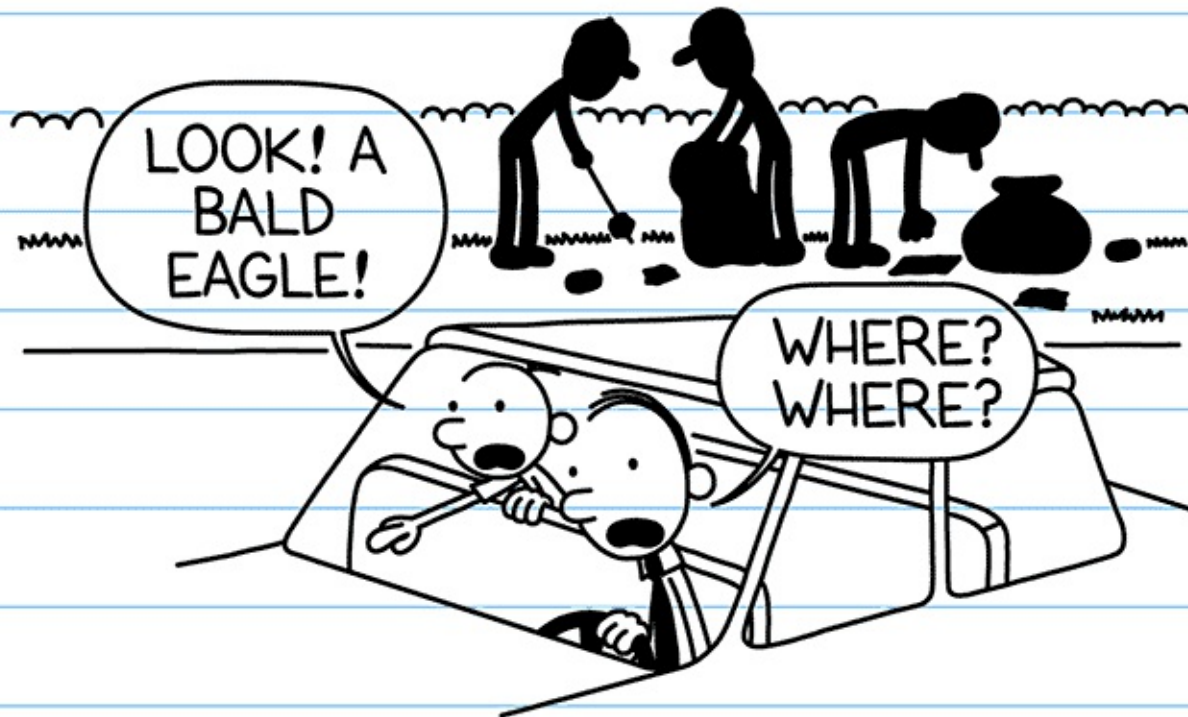
up with them for sure.

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In fact, tonight we were driving to the mall,

and we passed Troop 24 cleaning up the park.

Luckily, I distracted Dad at the last second.



Sunday

Today was my first Boy Scout meeting, and luckily

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

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

Mr. Barrett, the Scoutmaster. He asked me and

Rowley to say the Pledge of Allegiance and do a

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

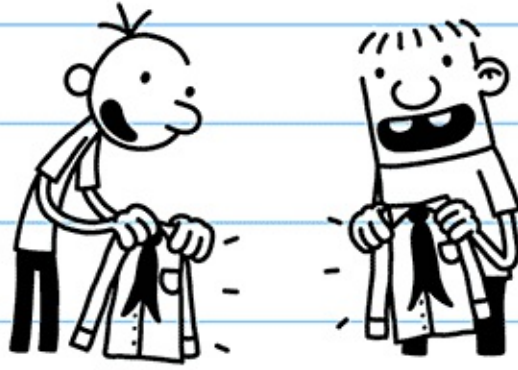
even gave us our uniforms.

Rowley was happy because he thought the uniform

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

shirt for a change.

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

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

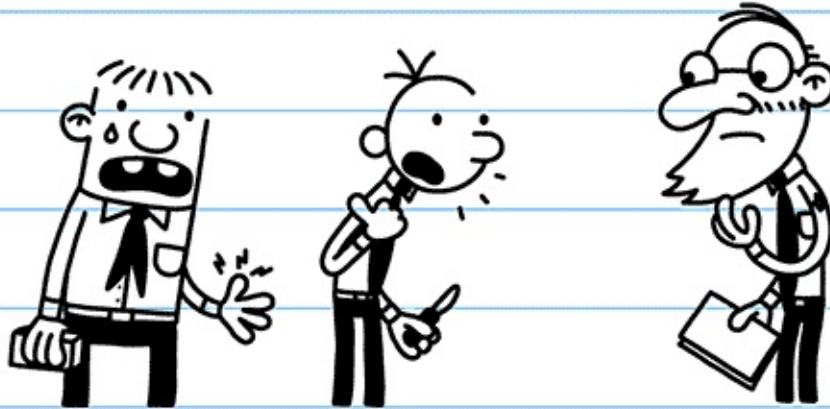
Me and Rowley started flipping through the  
merit badge book to see what we should work on.

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

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

a block of wood into anything, and Rowley got a \_\_\_\_\_  
splinter within five minutes. \_\_\_\_\_

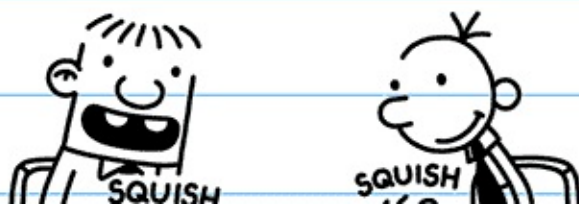
So we went to Mr. Barrett and asked him if there was something less dangerous we could do.



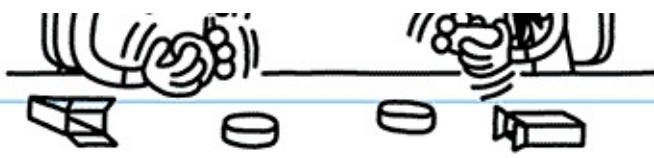
Mr. Barrett said that if we were having trouble with the wood, maybe we could use soap instead.

And that's when I knew I made the right call when I signed up with Troop 133.

Me and Rowley started carving the soap, but then I found out something really great. If you get the soap wet enough, you can just mold it into any shape you want with your hands. So we put away our whittling knives and squeezed our soap into a shape instead.

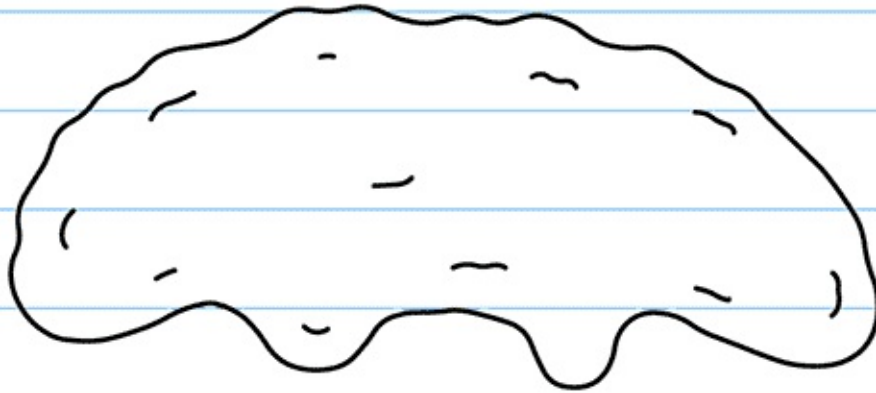






My first creation was a sheep. I turned it in to

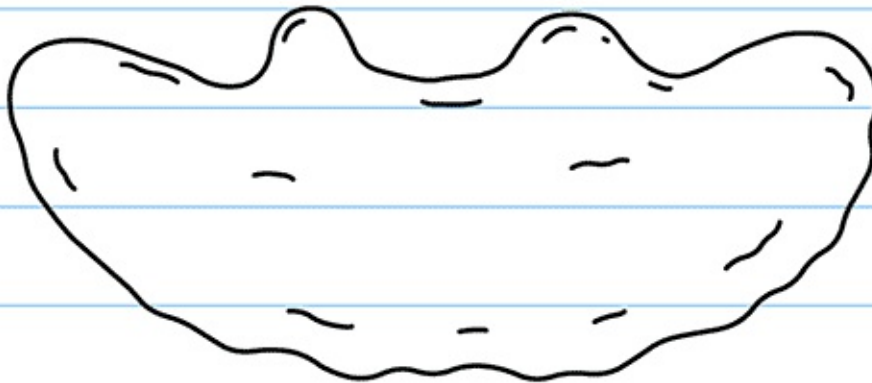
Mr. Barrett, and he checked one carving off my list.



I didn't really know what to do for my next

carving, so I just turned my sheep upside down

and handed it back in as the Titanic.



And believe it or not, Mr. Barrett accepted that

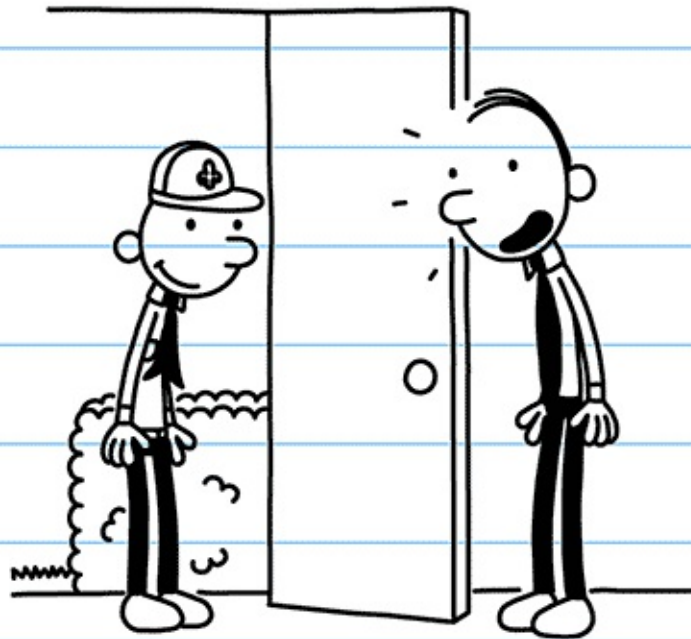
one, too.

A TERRIBLE  
TRAGEDY,  
THAT WAS!





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



May

Sunday

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

figured a whole weekend of him seeing me do

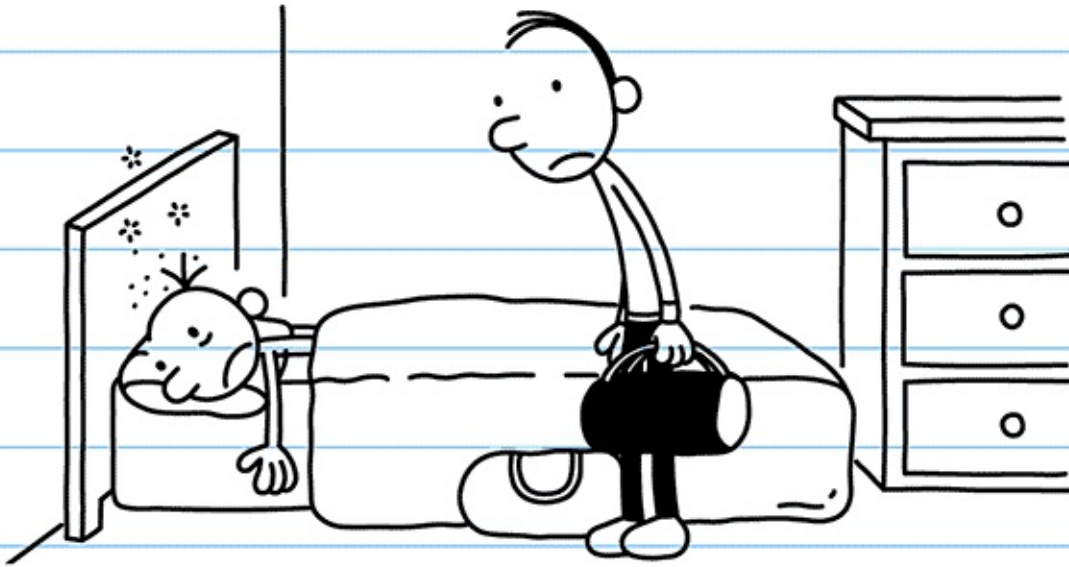
---

macho stuff would totally blow him away.

---

170

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



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



CONGRATULATIONS TO GREG  
HEFFLEY FOR WINNING THE  
PERFECT ATTENDANCE AWARD.

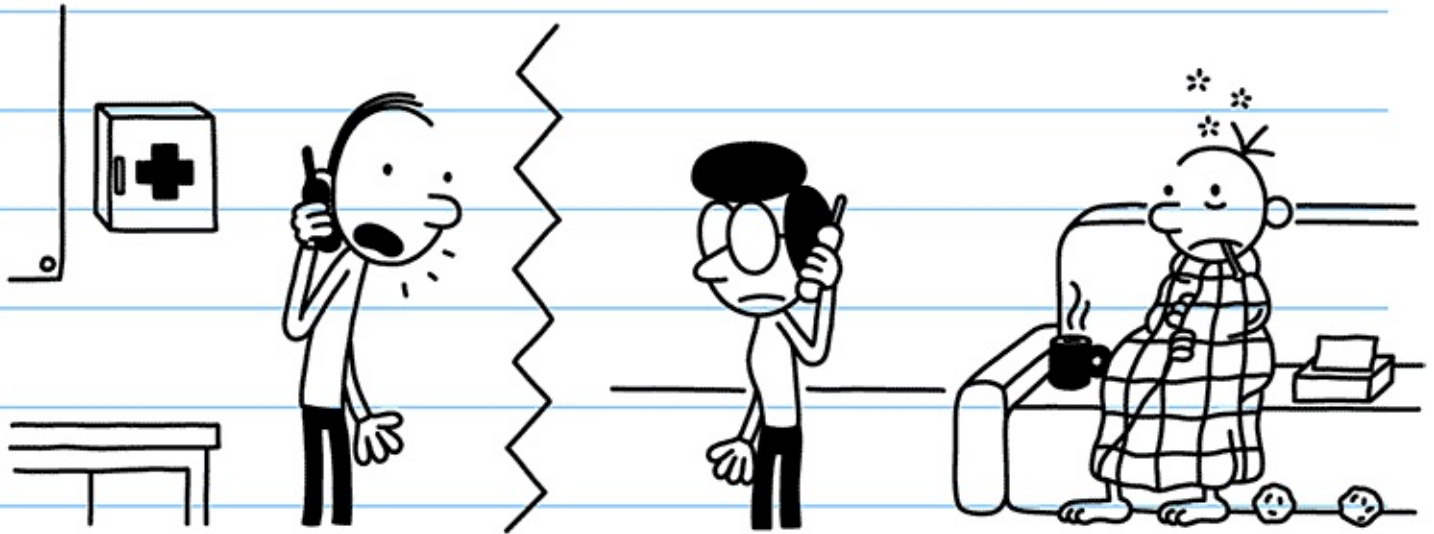
NERD!

HA  
HA!





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



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







Marcus wet his pants, and I guess Darren thought

that was pretty funny.



Well, Marcus went totally berserk. He bit

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



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

apart, and he had to take Darren to the emergency

---

room after that.

---

Dad came home this morning, and he was not

real happy with me for getting him stuck in

that situation. Something tells me that after

this weekend, he's not a real big fan of Troop

133, either.

### Sunday

Today was Mother's Day, and I didn't have

anything to give to Mom.

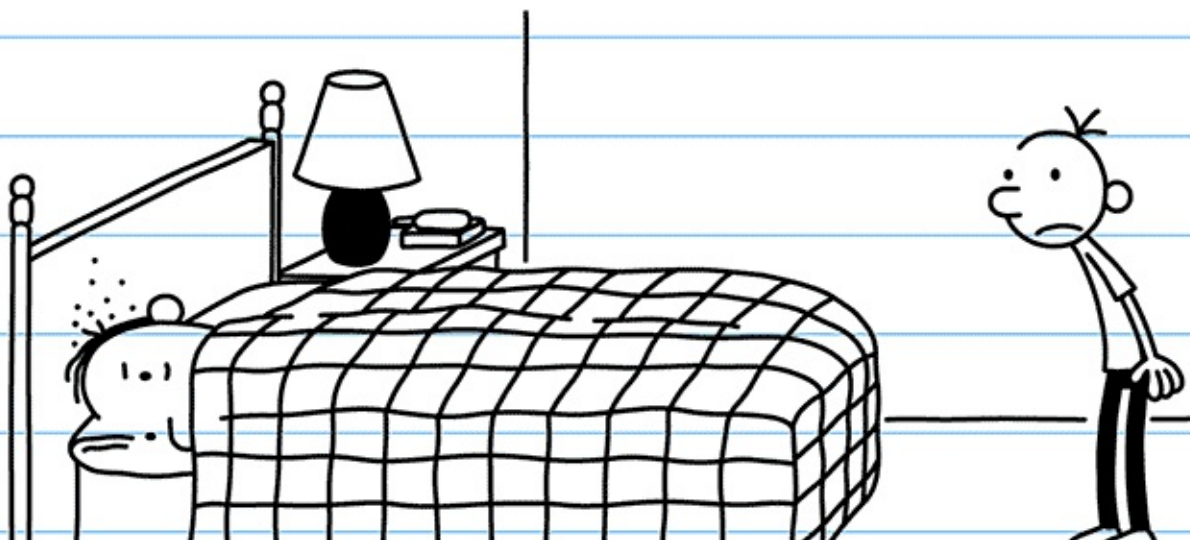
I was going to ask Dad to take me to the

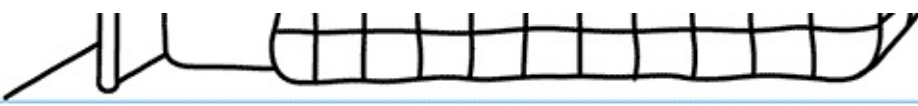
store so I could at least get Mom a card or

something, but Dad was still recovering from the

father-son campout. And I don't think he was

looking to do me any favors, anyway.





3

So I had to come up with a homemade gift.

Last year I made Mom a “Chore Coupon” book

for Mother’s Day. Each coupon had something

like “One free lawn mowing” or “One free window

washing” on it.



I give Dad a Chore Coupon book just about every

Father’s Day, and it always works out great. It’s

a way for me to take care of my gift obligation

without having to spend any money, and Dad

never actually uses any of his coupons in the book.

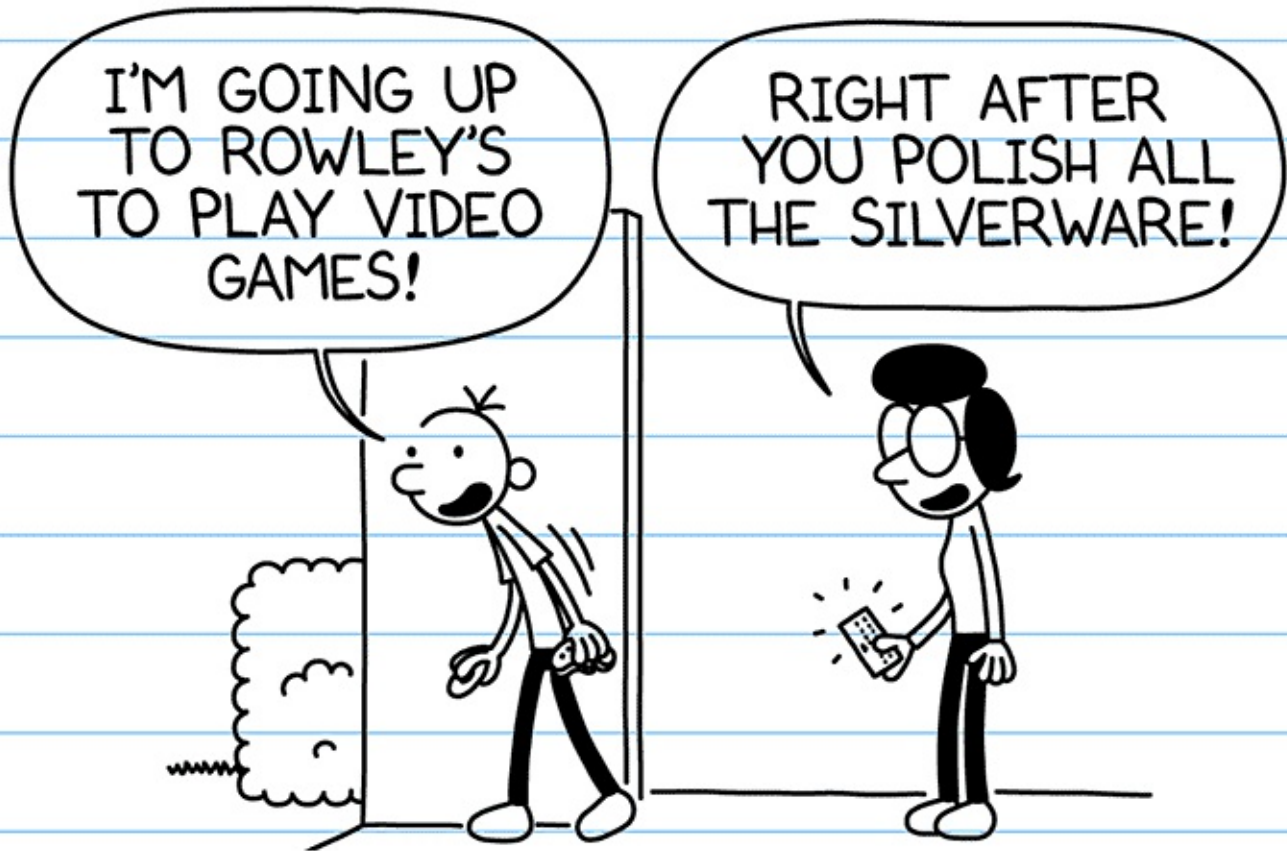




Mom cashed in every single one of her coupons

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

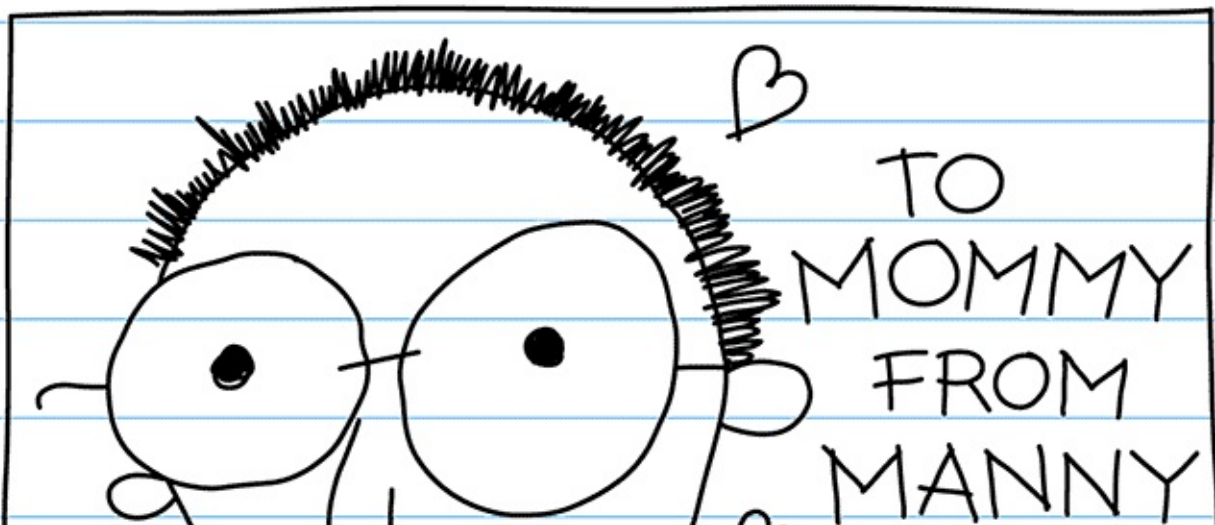
mistake this year.



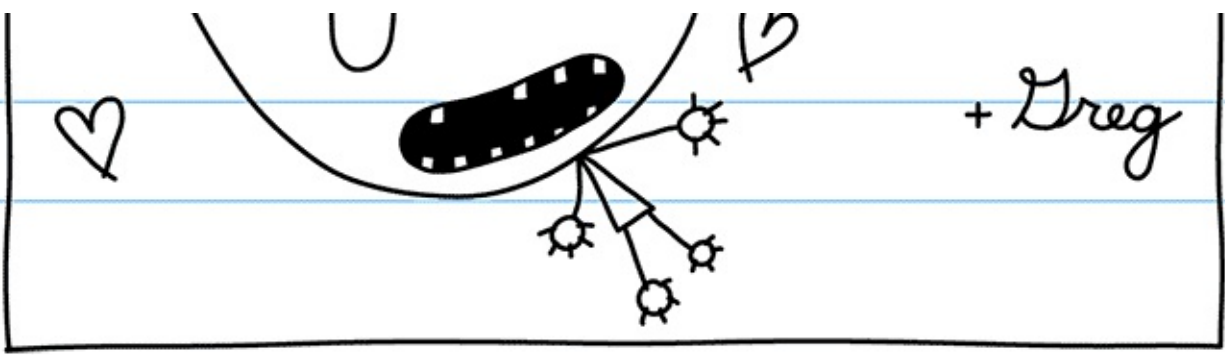
I tried to think of something original to make

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

ended up just piggybacking on Manny's gift.



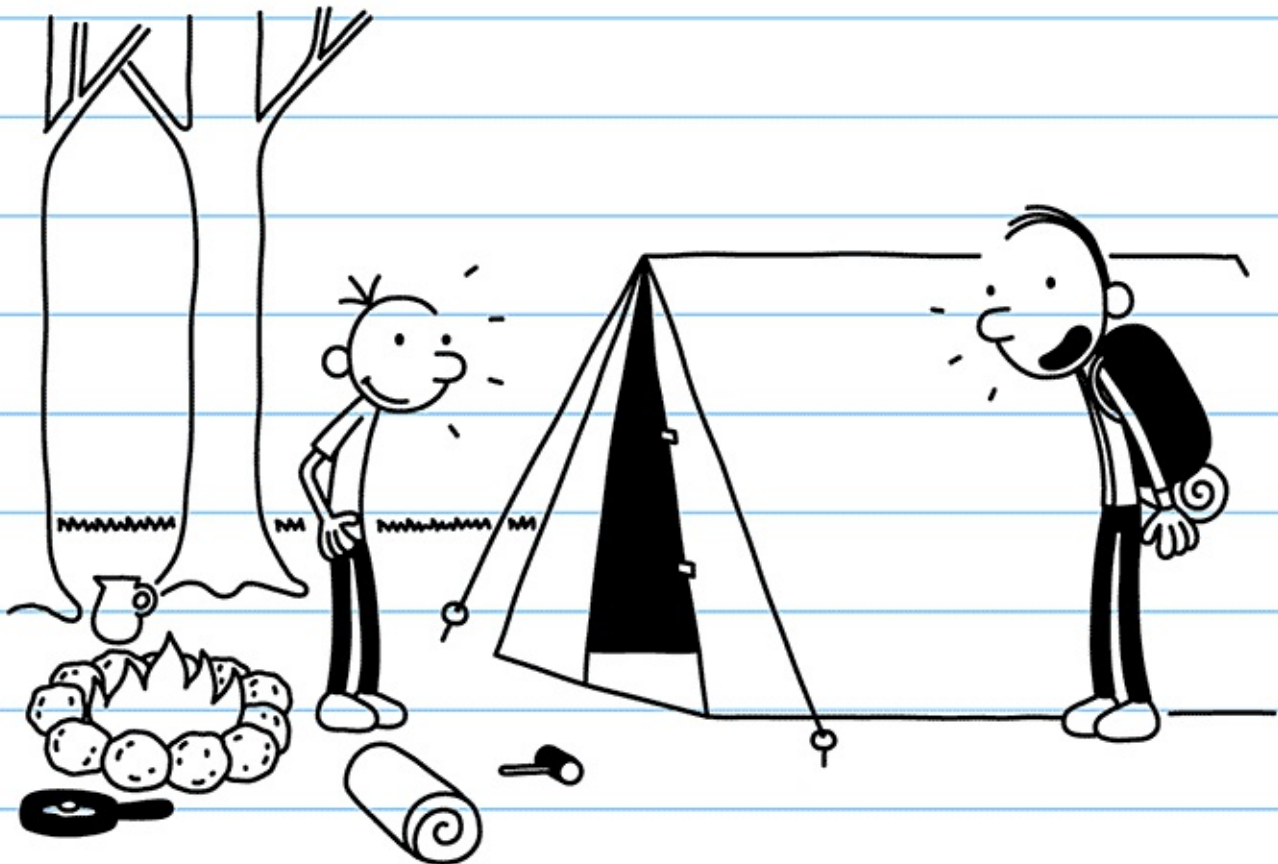




Monday

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

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



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

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

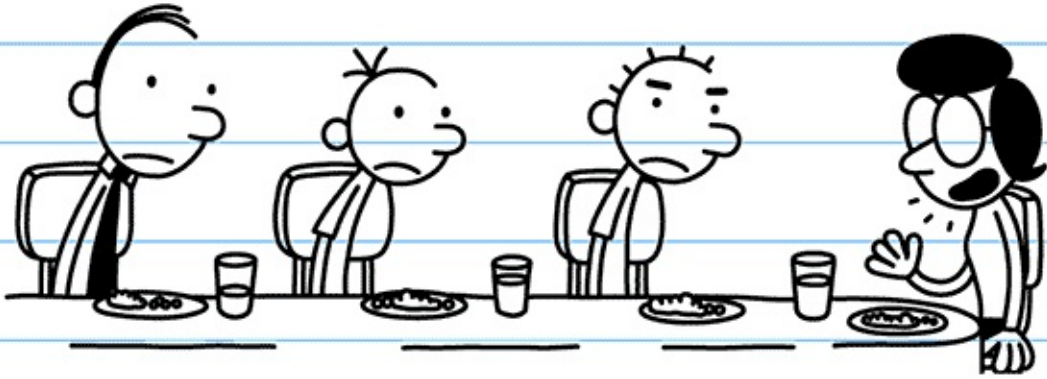
---

experience for the three of us.

---

I wasn't too enthusiastic about that idea, and

neither was Rodrick.



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

of the house this weekend is because me and

Rodrick are in a fight.

Last night Mom was giving Rodrick a haircut in

the kitchen. Usually when Mom gives us boys a

haircut, she puts a towel around our necks so

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

yesterday Mom used one of her old maternity

dresses instead of a towel. So when I saw

Rodrick like that, I knew I had to take

advantage of the situation.





I ran upstairs and locked myself in the bathroom

before Rodrick had a chance to catch me and

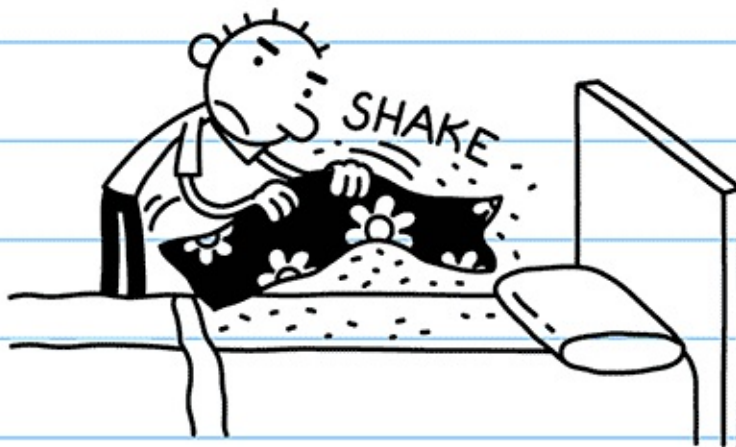
take the camera. And I didn't come back out

until I was sure he was gone.

Rodrick got me back, anyway. Last night I had

a nightmare that I was sleeping on a nest of

red ants, and that was thanks to him.



The way I see it, now we're even. But if there's

one thing I've learned about Rodrick, it's that

he's still not gonna let it go. So that's why I'm

not that eager to hole up in a tent with him for

the weekend.

Saturday

Today me, Dad, and Rodrick headed off on our

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

On the way to the campground, the sky got

dark, and then it started to rain.

I wasn't all that concerned, because our tent is

waterproof, and Mom packed ponchos for everybody.

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

inches underwater.



We were pretty far from home, so Dad decided

we should just find a place to stay for the night.

I was really bummed, because the whole point of

the trip was for me to impress Dad with my



camping skills, and now we were just gonna stay

in some stupid hotel room.

180

Dad found a place and got a room with two beds

and a pullout couch. We watched tV for a while

and then started getting ready for bed.

First, Dad went downstairs to the front desk

to complain that the heater was too loud, so I

was alone in the room with Rodrick.

I went into the bathroom to brush my teeth,

and when I came out, Rodrick was looking out

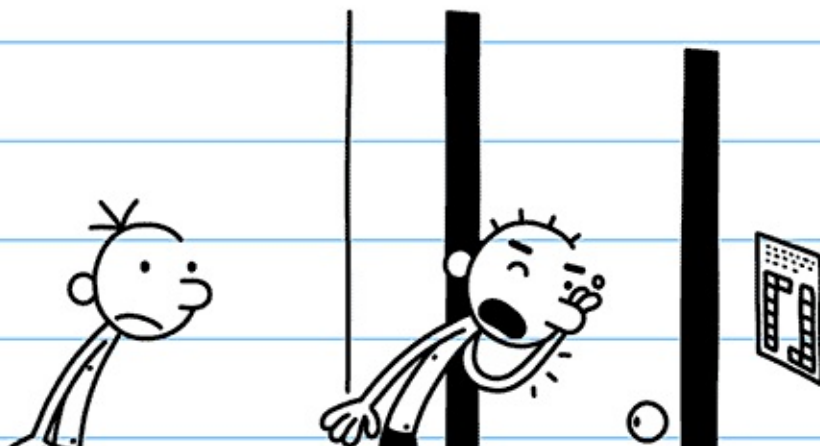
the peephole. Then he said something that made

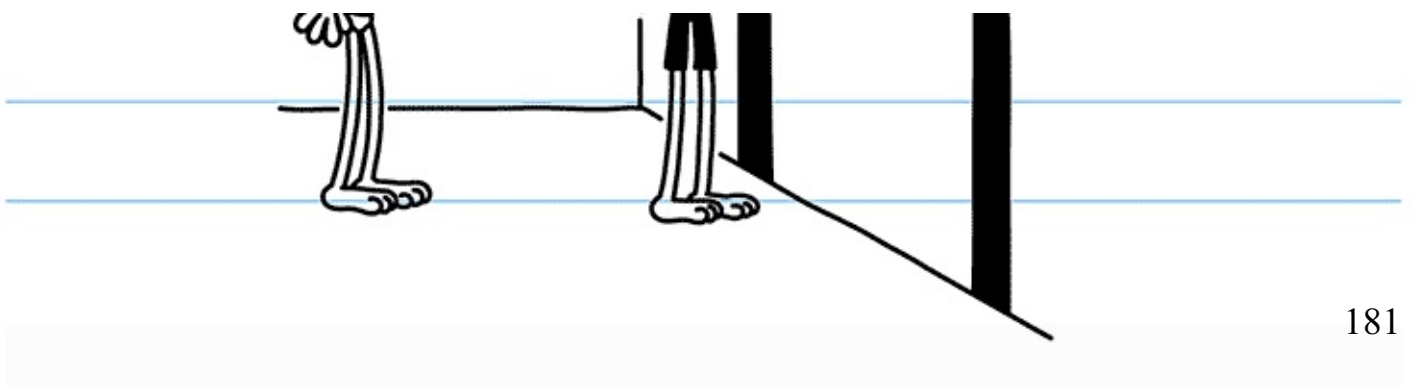
me freeze in my tracks.

He said that Holly Hills and her family were out

in the hallway, and they were staying in the

room right across from us.





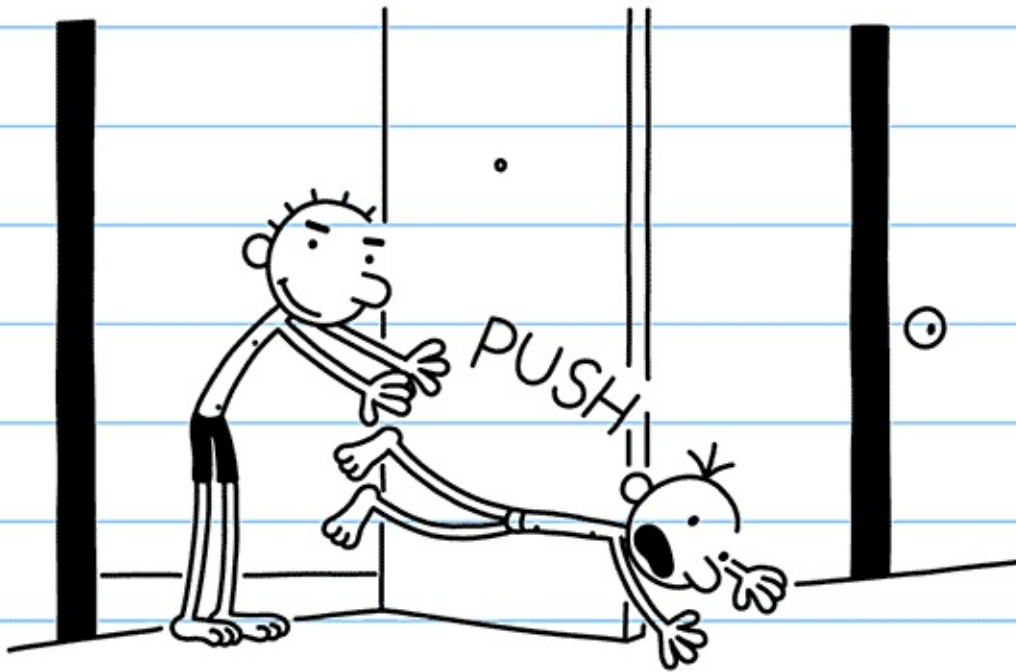
I had to see this for myself. So I moved him

out of the way and looked out the peephole.

The hallway was completely empty. And before I

realized it was a trick, Rodrick gave me a big

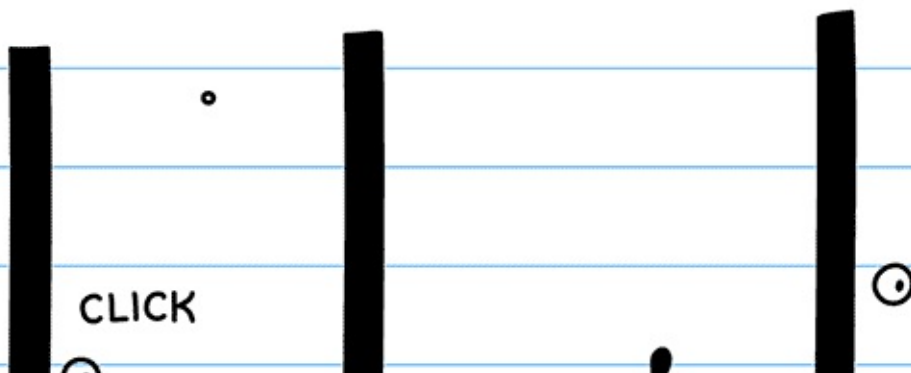
shove, and I fell out the door.

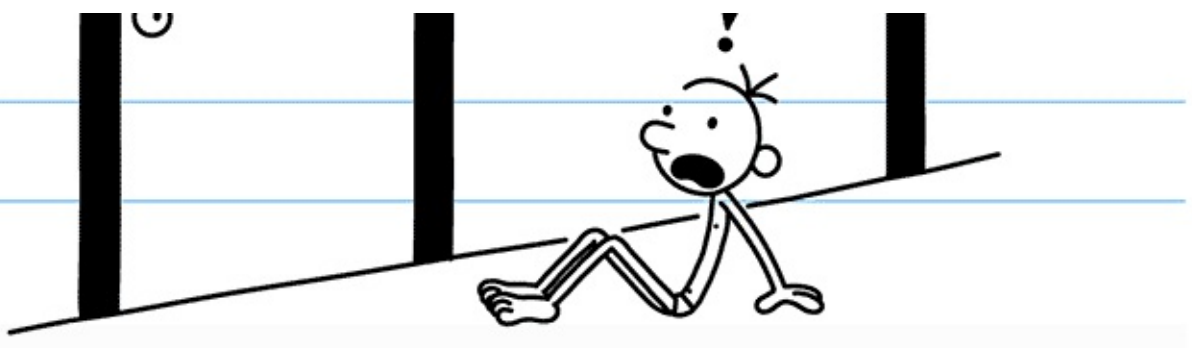


Then it got worse. Rodrick locked the door

behind me, and I was stuck in the hallway wearing

nothing but my tighty whities.





I pounded on the door, but Rodrick wouldn't let

me back in the room.

I was making a big racket, and I realized

people in the nearby rooms were gonna start

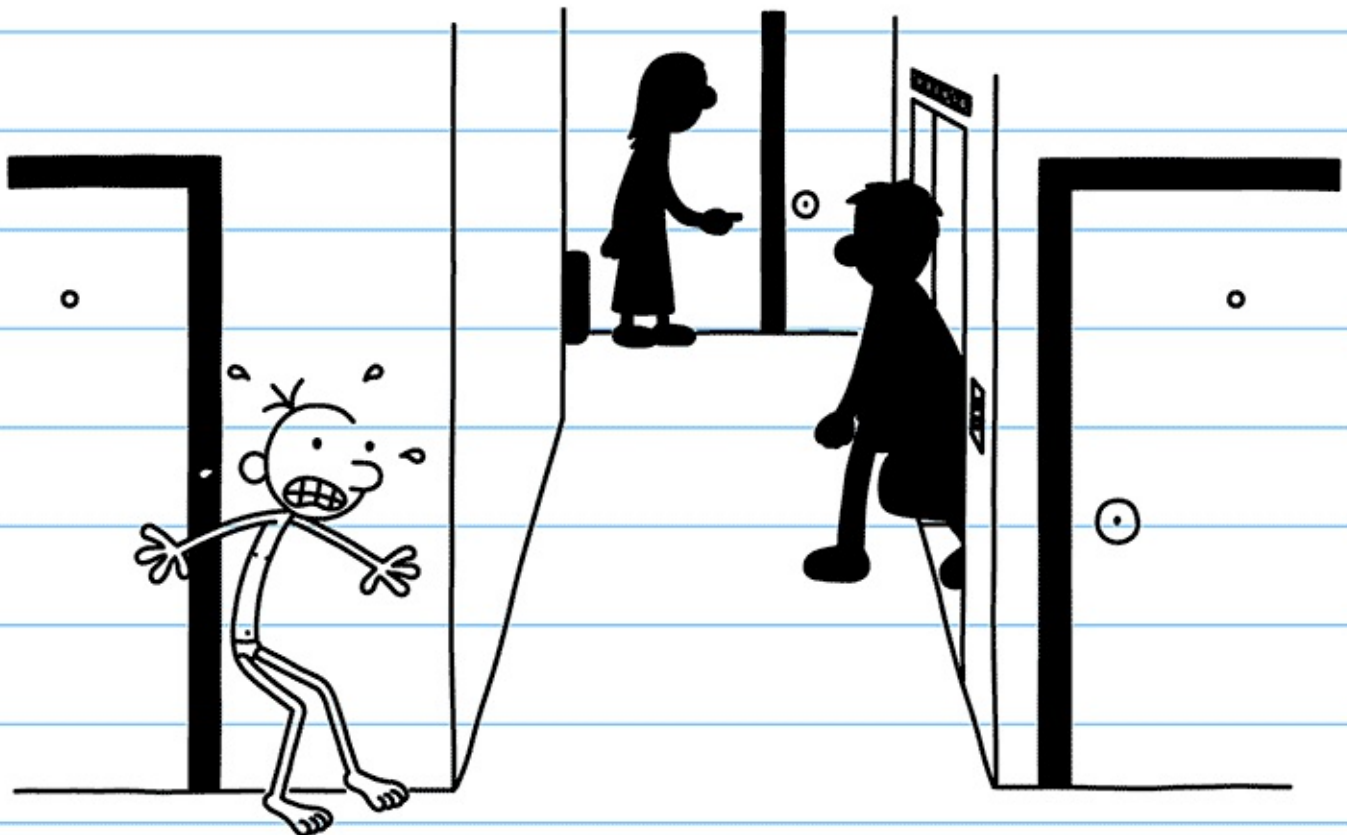
opening their doors to find out what was going

on. So I ran around the corner to save myself

the embarrassment of anyone seeing me. I

spent about fifteen minutes sneaking through

the hallways, hiding every time I heard voices.



I was gonna go back to our room and beg Rodrick

to let me in, but then I realized I didn't even

know our room number. And all the doors

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looked exactly the same to me.

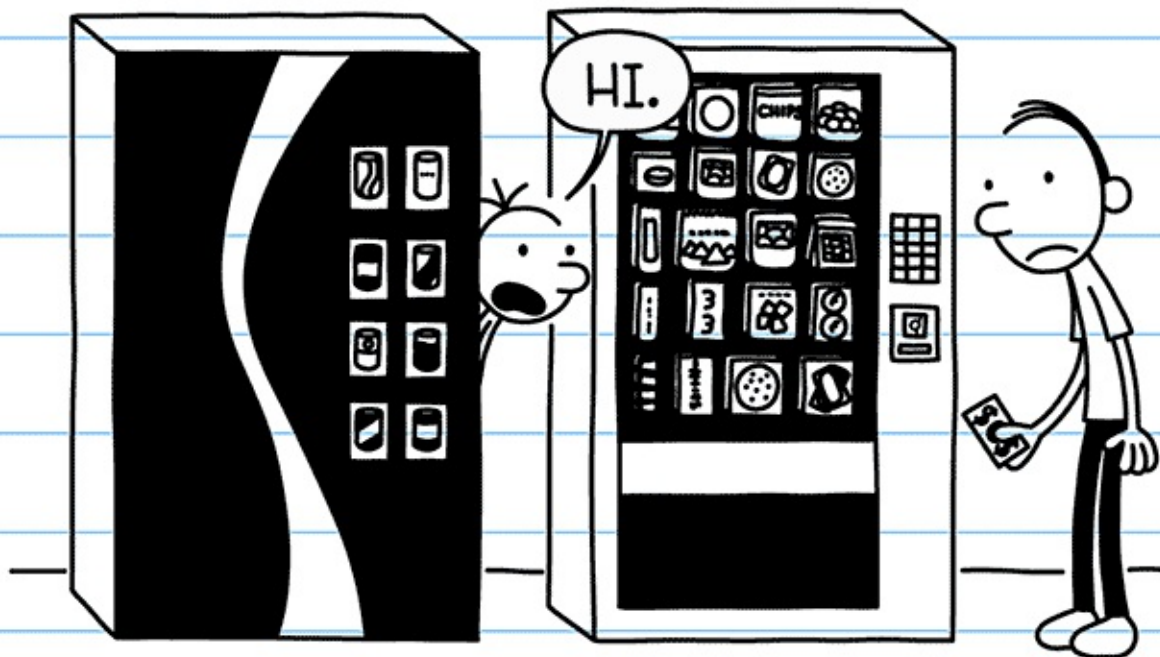
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I couldn't exactly go down to the front desk,  
either. The only option I really had was to try  
and find Dad.

Then I remembered: Dad is a junk-food addict.

I knew he'd eventually turn up at the vending  
machines, so that's where I camped out.

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



You know what, though? After seeing the look on



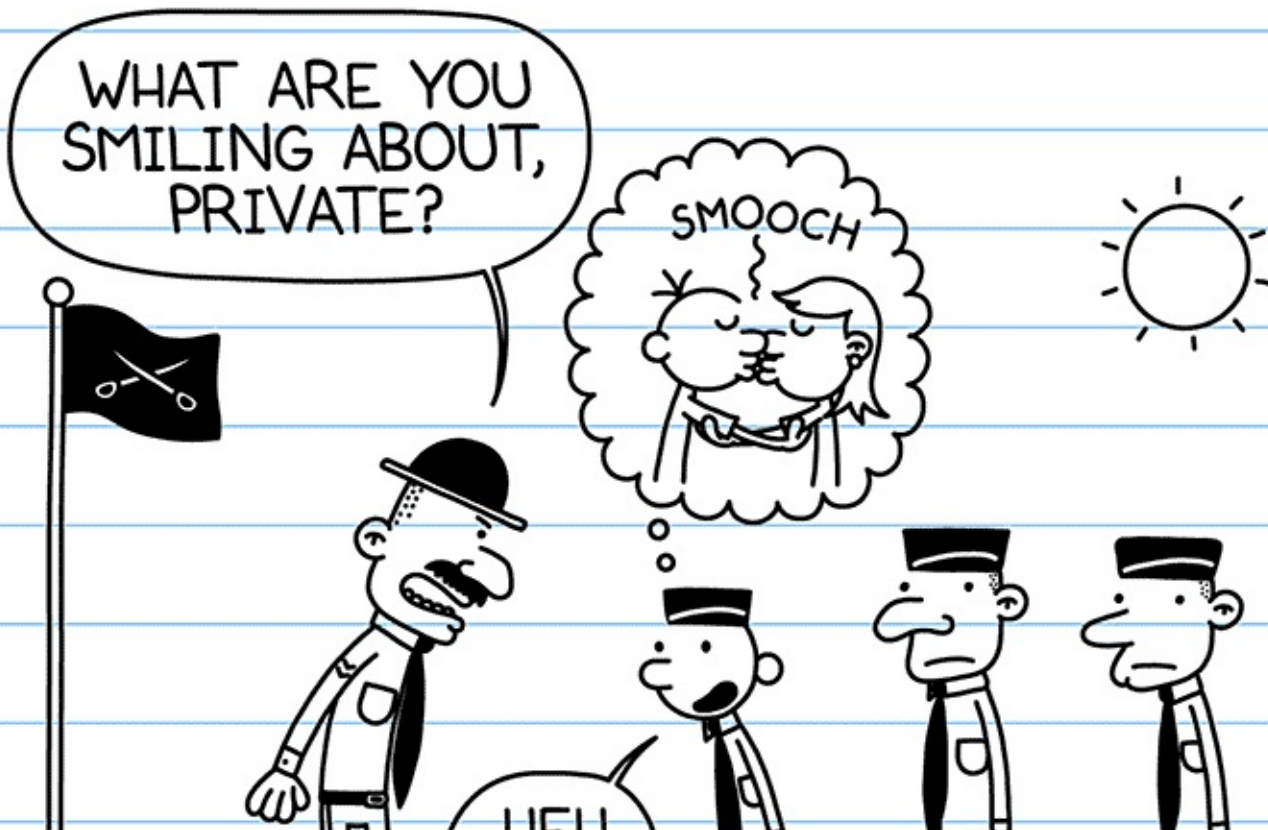
Dad's face, I kind of wished I'd just sucked it  
up and gone to the front desk instead.

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Sunday

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

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





I've been working up the nerve to talk to Holly for

a long time, and I decided it was now or never.

When we went to church today, I tried to make

sure we sat right near the Hills family. But we

ended up two rows in front of them, which I

guess was close enough. And during the part

where everybody shakes hands with one another,

I made my move.



The hand-shaking thing was actually just step

one in a two-part plan, and the second part

would come tonight. My next step was to call

Holly on the phone and use the hand-shaking

---

thing to get the conversation started.

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

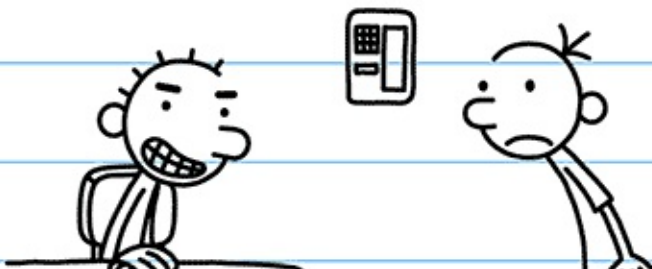


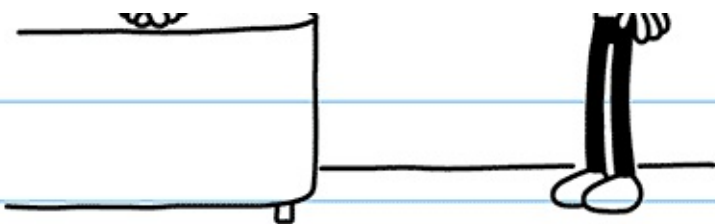
(BLUSH)



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

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





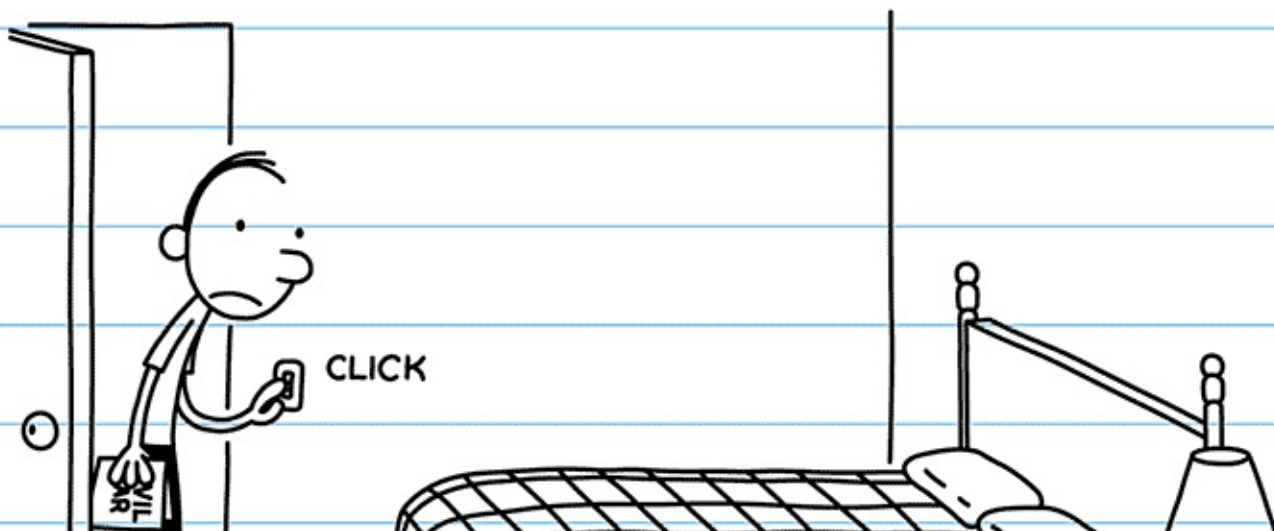
I told Mom that Rodrick took all the phones, and she made him return them to where they belonged.

Eventually, Rodrick went down to the basement.

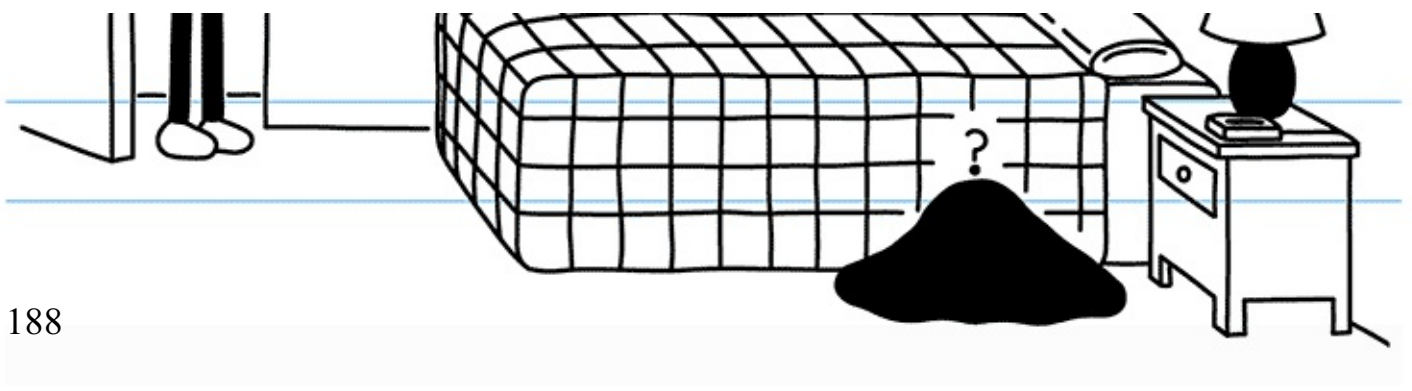
Later on I snuck into Mom and Dad's room to make my call. I turned off the lights so Rodrick wouldn't know I was in there, and I hid under a blanket. Then I waited for about twenty minutes to make sure he hadn't followed me.

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

But it wasn't. It was DAD.







I decided to stay perfectly still and let Dad

get whatever he needed and leave.

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

reading a book.

I should have just uncovered myself the second

Dad walked in the room, because now I couldn't

just get up and walk out or I'd give him a heart

attack. So I decided to just sneak out of the

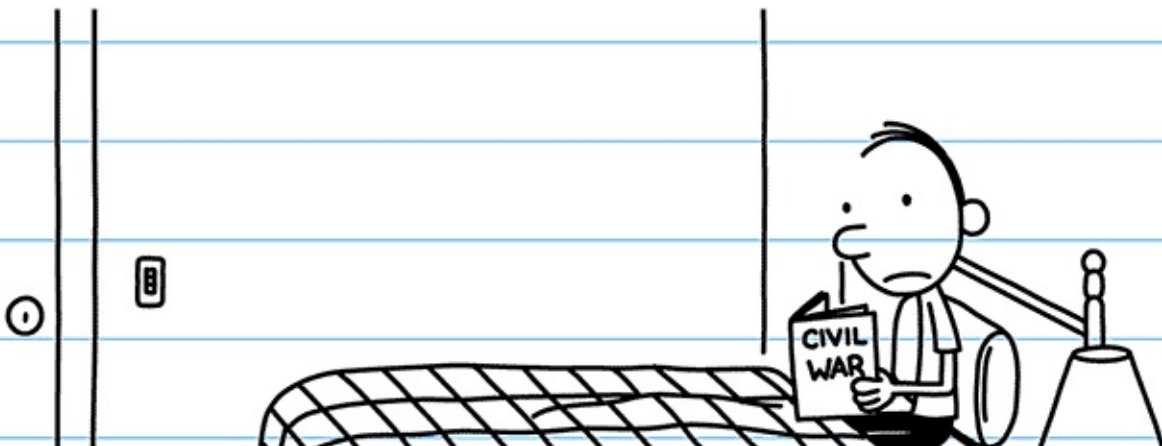
room real slow.

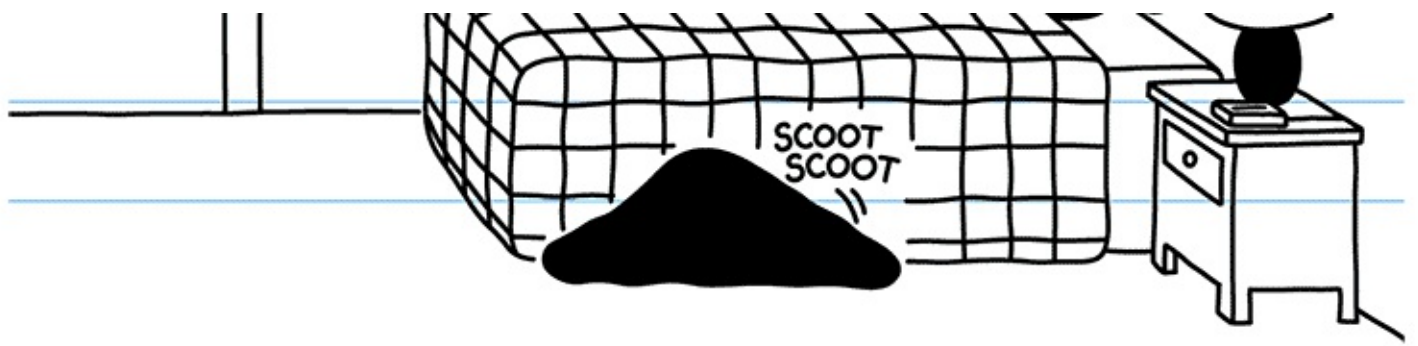
I moved about an inch a second. I figured it

would take me about a half hour to make it all

the way out of the room, but there would still be

enough time to call Holly after that.





I was only about five feet from the bedroom

door when the phone in my hand rang and

scared the living daylights out of me.



I think Dad really did almost have a heart

attack. And once he recovered, he didn't look

happy to see me.

Dad made me get out of his room, and then he

slammed the door.

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

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

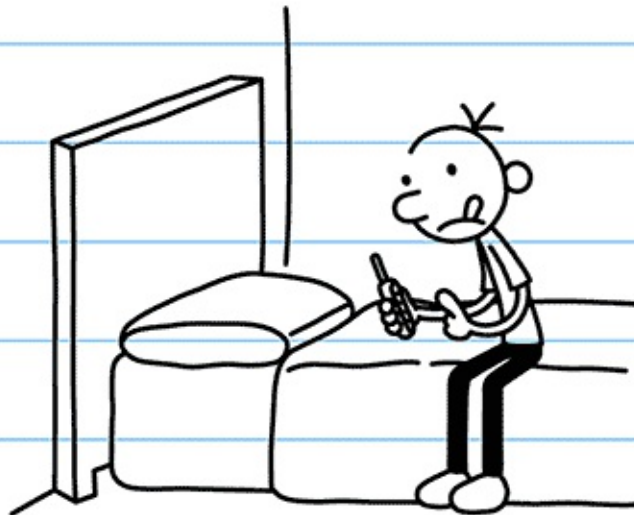
late, anyway.

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Tuesday

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

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



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

Mom has this really bad habit of just dialing

without checking to see if anyone else is using

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

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

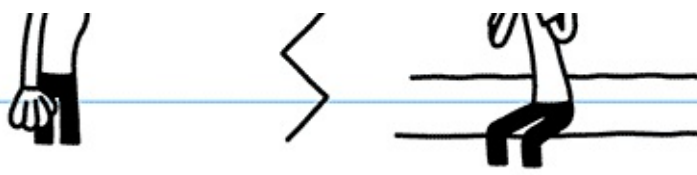


The phone kept ringing at the Hills's house, and then someone picked up. It was Holly's mother.

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







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

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

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



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

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

---

giving up.

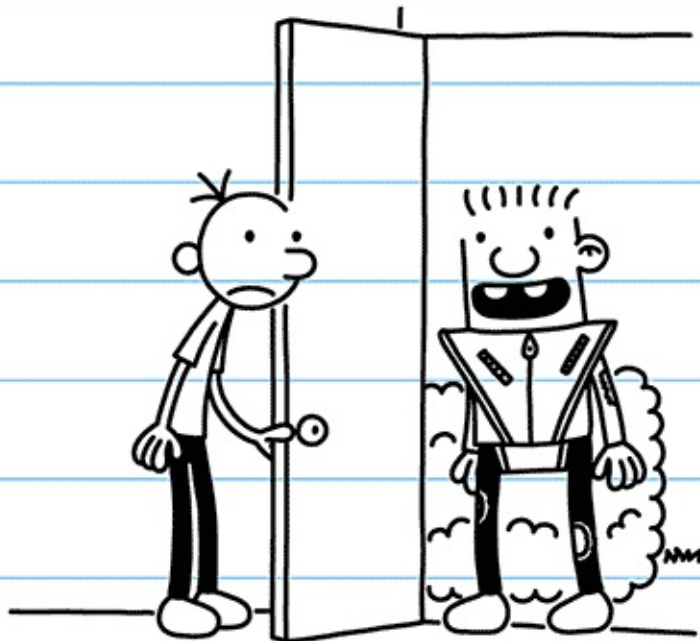
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Friday

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

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

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



Rowley had his hair all teased up, and he was \_\_\_\_\_  
dressed just like his favorite singer, Joshie. \_\_\_\_\_

And I think Rowley might have even been wearing

sparkly lip gloss, but I can't say for sure. I

couldn't stop to worry about the way Rowley

looked, though, because I had my own problems.

Earlier on I had lost one of my contact lenses, so

that meant I had to wear my backup glasses. The

lenses on those things are about three inches thick,

and they look ridiculous.

If I'm not wearing my contact lenses or my

glasses, I'm as blind as a bat. I guess I should

just feel lucky that I wasn't alive during caveman

times, because I wouldn't have been able to hunt or

do anything useful. I'm sure my tribe-mates would've

ditched me the first chance they got.



IS THIS WHERE  
YOU GUYS SAW  
THAT ALBINO  
WOOLLY MAMMOTH?

BLINK  
BLINK

ZOW

ZIP





I probably would've had to become a wise man or

something just to make everyone think I was

worth keeping around.

On the ride to the rollerskating rink tonight,

I gave Rowley some instructions on how to

behave if I got into a conversation with Holly

Hills—knowing him, he could seriously hurt my

chances with her.



I wish I had waited until we were out of the

car, because Mom overheard our conversation.







When we pulled up at the Roll-a-Round, I got

out of the car before Mom could say anything

else I didn't want to hear.

Me and Rowley paid our admission and then went

inside. We rented our skates and brought them

over to the arcade area, where I scoped out the

whole scene.

I spotted Holly over by the snack bar. She was

with a bunch of her friends, so I wasn't ready

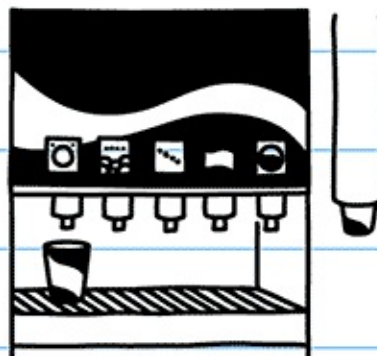
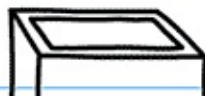
to go and talk to her just yet.

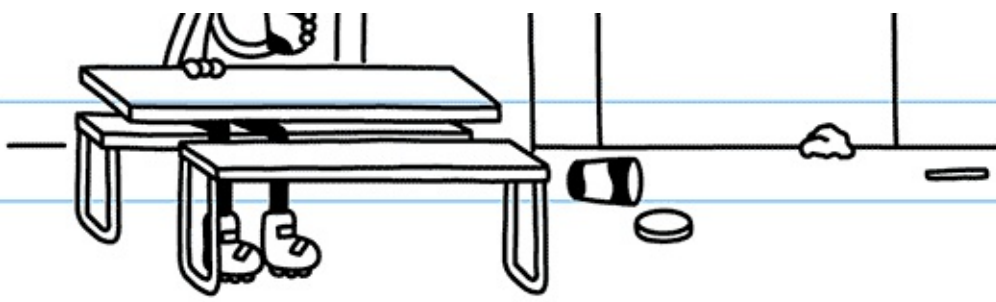
At 9:00 the DJ announced "Couples Skate." A

lot of people were pairing up, and Holly was sitting

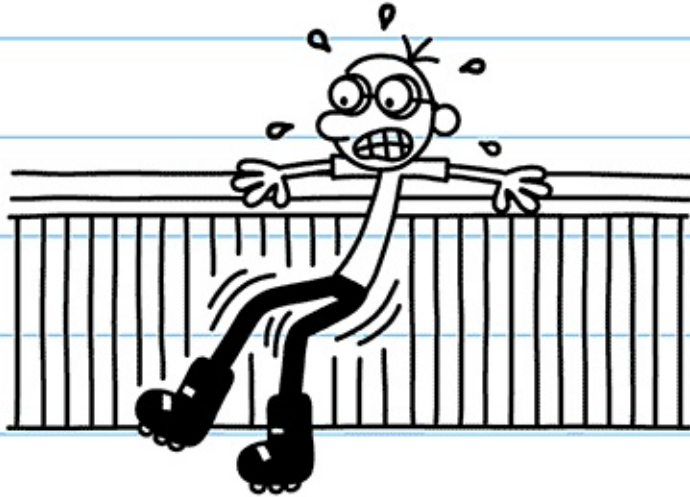
at a table, all alone. I knew this was the chance

I was waiting for.

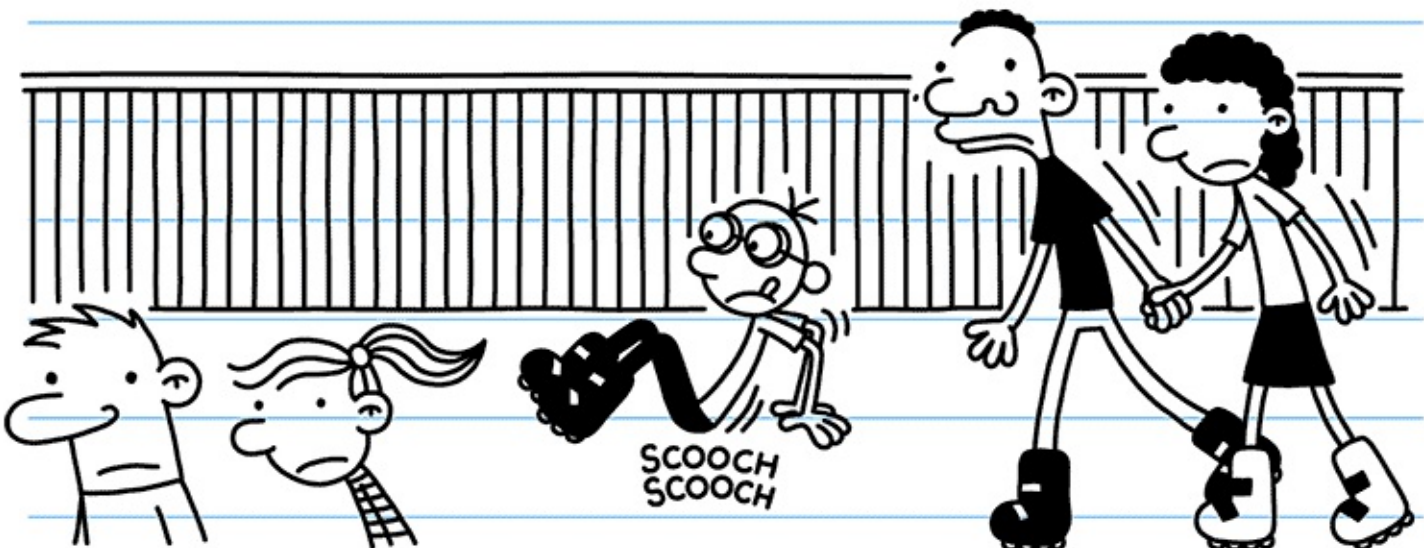




I started making my way over to her, but getting around on skates was a lot harder than I thought it would be. I had to hug the wall just to stay on my feet.



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



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

finally made it to the snack bar.

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

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



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

right then Couples Skate ended, and Holly's friends

swooped in and pulled her out onto the rink.

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

where I stayed for the rest of the night.

Because believe me, I was Not in the mood

for skating.



You know, I probably should've realized a long

time ago that Holly wasn't worth my time.

Somebody who would mistake me for Fregley

definitely has something wrong with them.

I'm officially done with girls. I should just

ask Dad to see if Spag Union has early admission,



because there's really no point in me sticking

around here anymore.

200

Friday

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

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

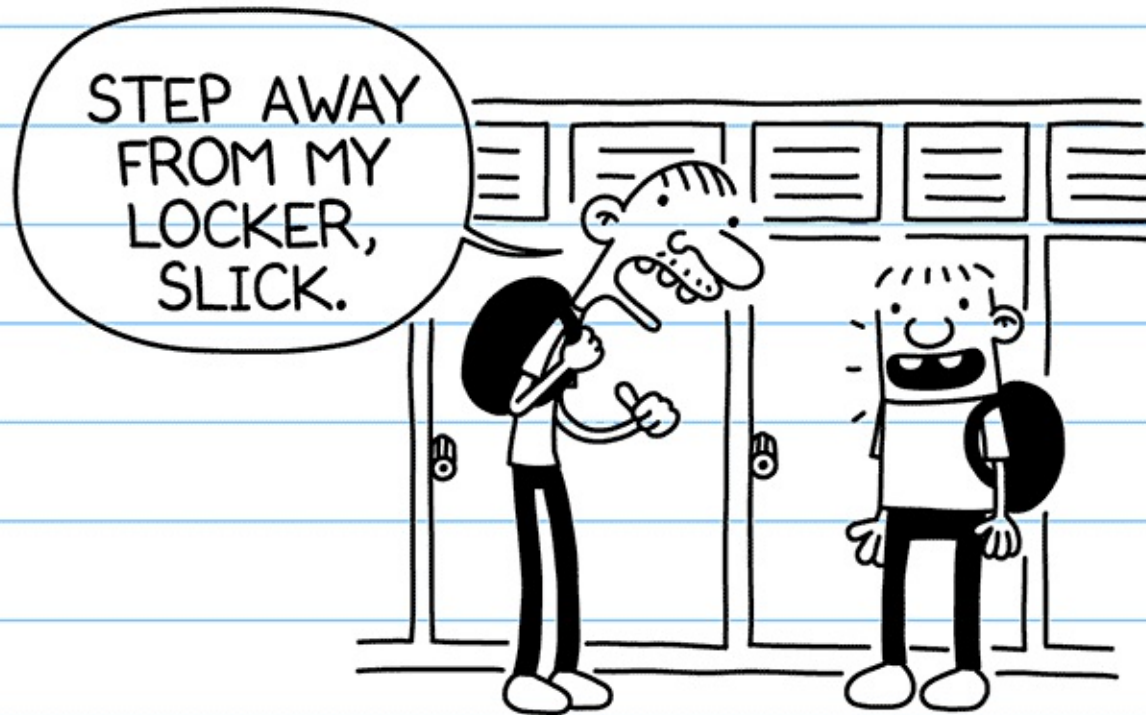


At first I couldn't figure out who "Slick" was, but then I realized it was just Rowley. A couple

of days ago, Rowley was standing near an older

kid's locker, and the guy wanted Rowley to move.

So here's what the guy said —



So I guess now Rowley thinks “Slick” is his permanent nickname or something. I just hope he doesn’t expect me to say it.

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

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

Touch.” You’d better believe I’m gonna take

---

her up on her offer.

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Dreg,

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

K.I.T.

Holly

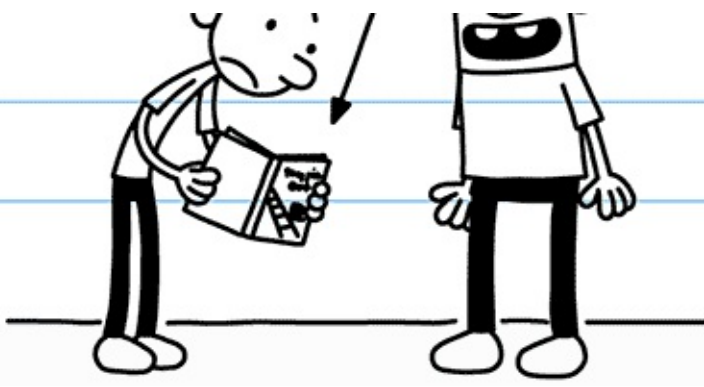
I handed my yearbook to Rowley to show him what Holly wrote. But then he showed me what she wrote in his yearbook, and it kind of made her note to me look lame.

Dear Rowley,

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

Love, Holly





A couple of minutes later, Holly's yearbook came

around, and I had a chance to sign it. So

here's what I put —

Dear Holly-

You are a nice person and all, but I  
only think of you as a friend.

From,

Slick  


The way I see it, I just did Rowley a huge

favor. I don't want to see him get his heart

stomped on by Holly Hills, because the truth is,

girls can be a little cruel sometimes.

Saturday

Today was my only day of summer vacation, and I

had to spend it at Seth Snella's half-birthday

party. I asked Mom to let me stay home so I



could enjoy myself, but she said we were going to

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the party as a family.

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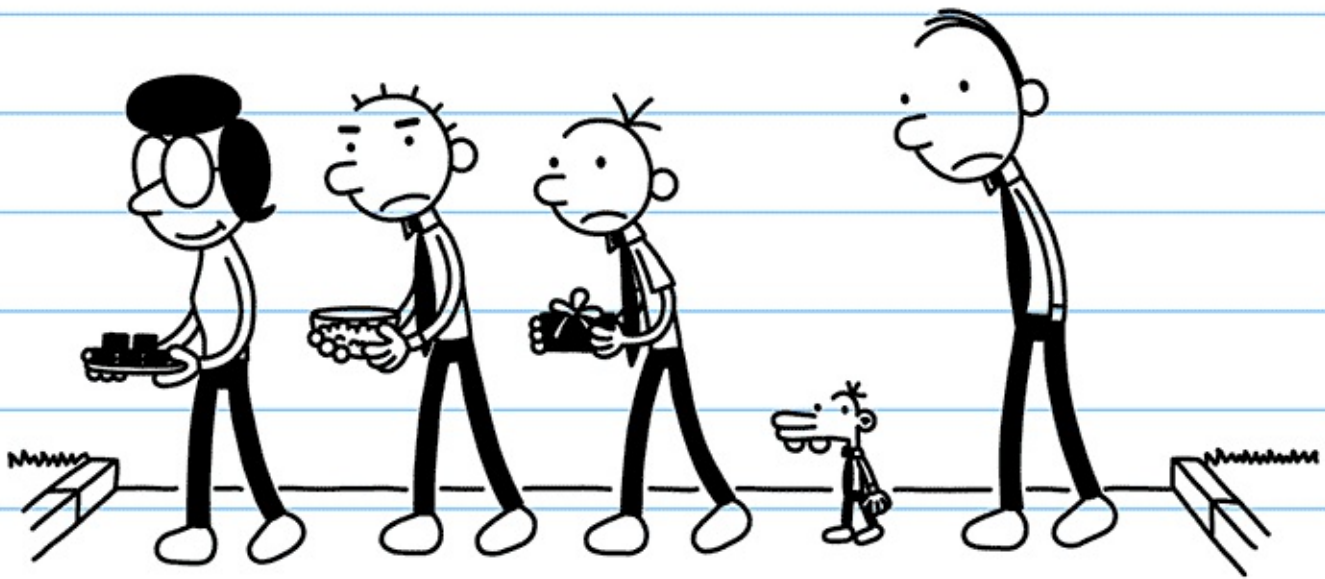
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Dad didn't even bother fighting it, because he

knew he wasn't getting out of it, either.

So at 1:00 we walked across the street to the

Snellas' house.



The Snellas really did it up this year. They had

a clown making balloon animals, and a moon bounce

for the kids.

They even had live music. Rodrick was pretty

sore over that because his band, Löded Diper,

tried out for the job, but the Snellas turned

them down.

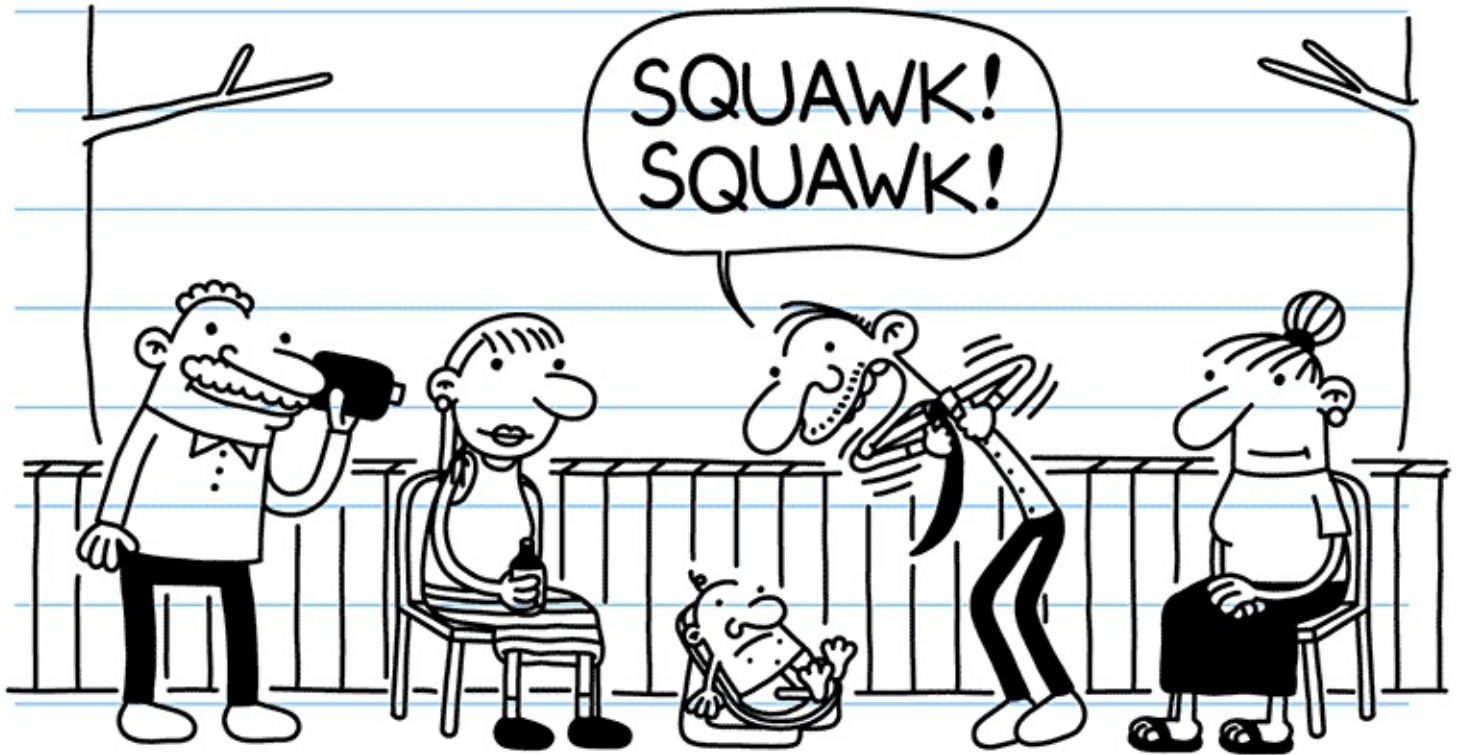
Everyone ate lunch, and then at 3:30 the main

event started.

Mr. and Mrs. Snella had all the adults line up in

front of Seth, and they all took turns trying

to make him smile. Mr. Henrich went first.



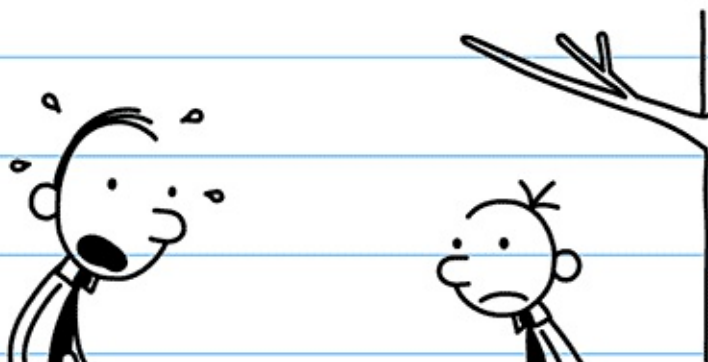
I noticed Dad looking really nervous at the back

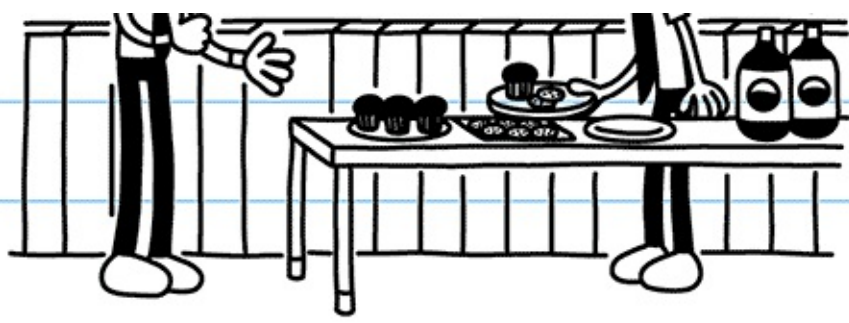
of the line. At one point I walked by Dad to get

myself some cupcakes, and he stopped me. He told

me if I could get him out of this situation, he'd

owe me big-time.

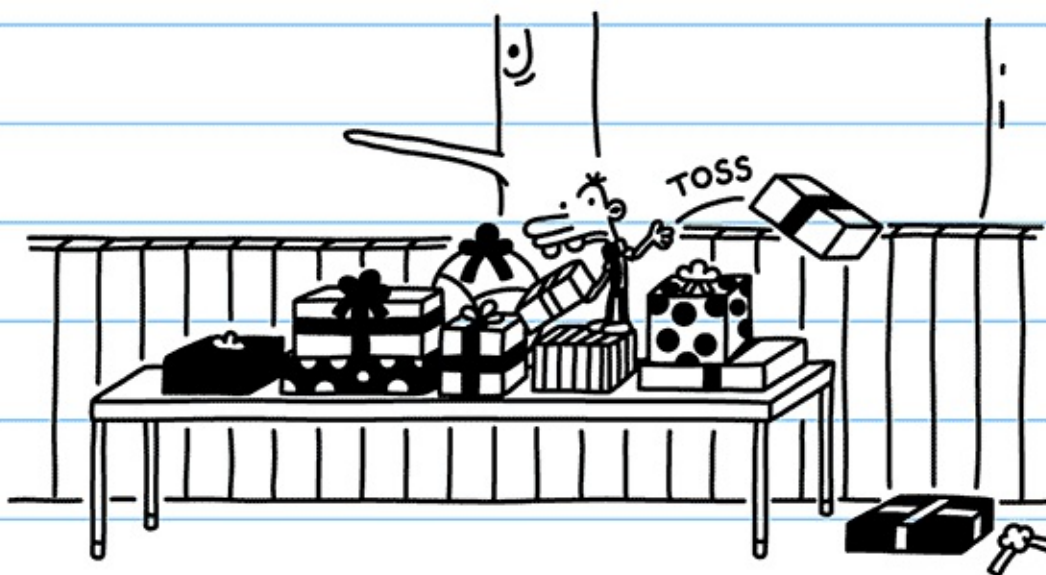




I thought it was pretty ironic that Dad would be asking me for a favor, especially since he's the one who's shipping me off to military school tomorrow. So I was fine with letting him squirm.

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

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



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

what it was, I knew things were about to get

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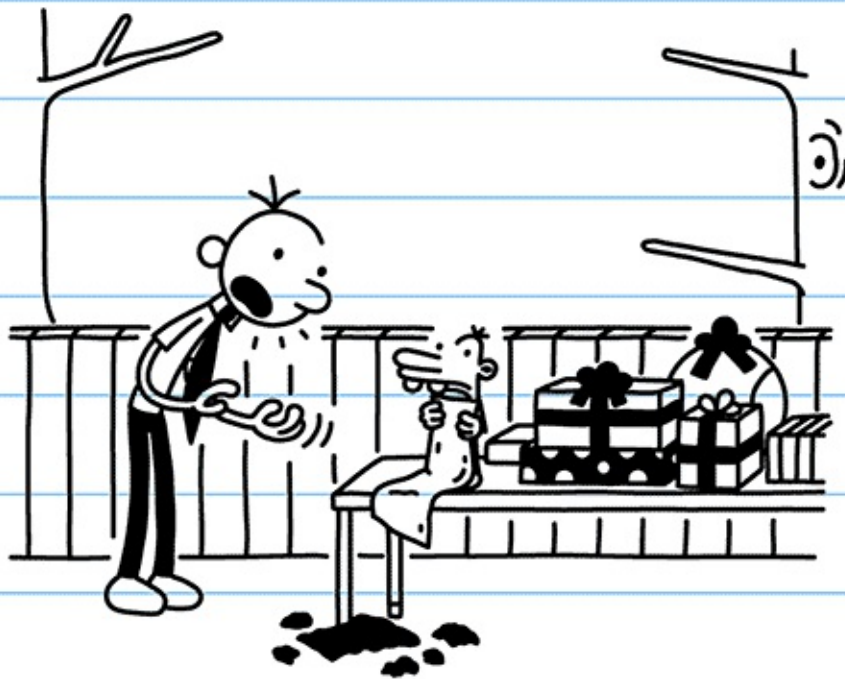
real complicated.

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



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



When Manny realized I was gonna take away the



blanket, he just turned around and chucked it over

---

the railing.

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The blanket landed in the branch of a tree. I

knew I had to get it back before Mom found

out, so I got down off the deck and started

climbing up the tree.



Right when I was about to grab the blanket, my

foot slipped, and I was left hanging there. I

tried to pull myself back up, but I didn't have

the strength.

I probably would've been able to do it, but the

only thing I had to eat today was a grape soda

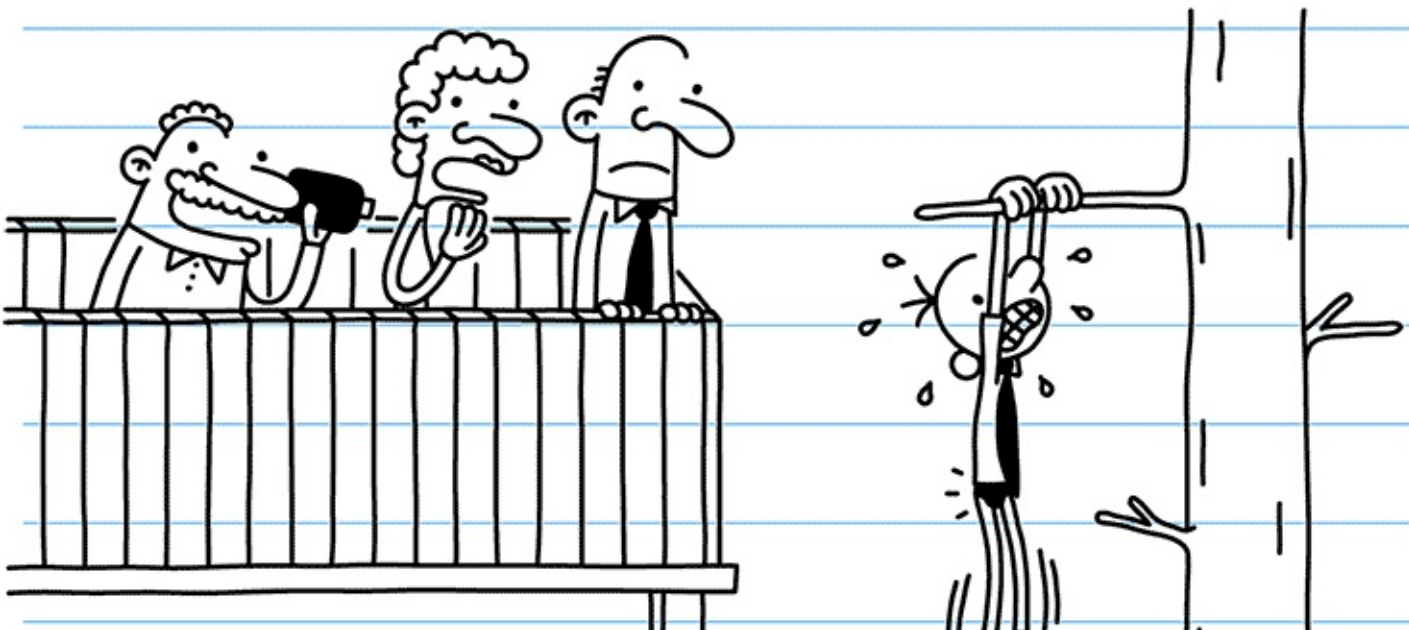
and the frosting off of a piece of cake, so I had

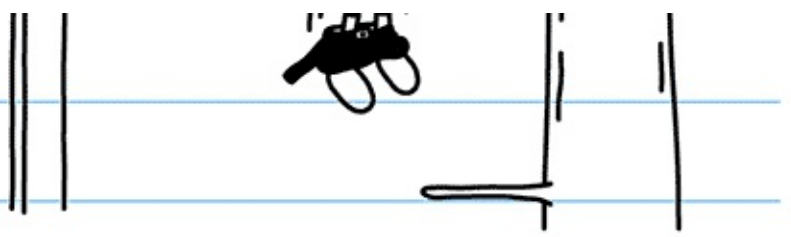
no energy.

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

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

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





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

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

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



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

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

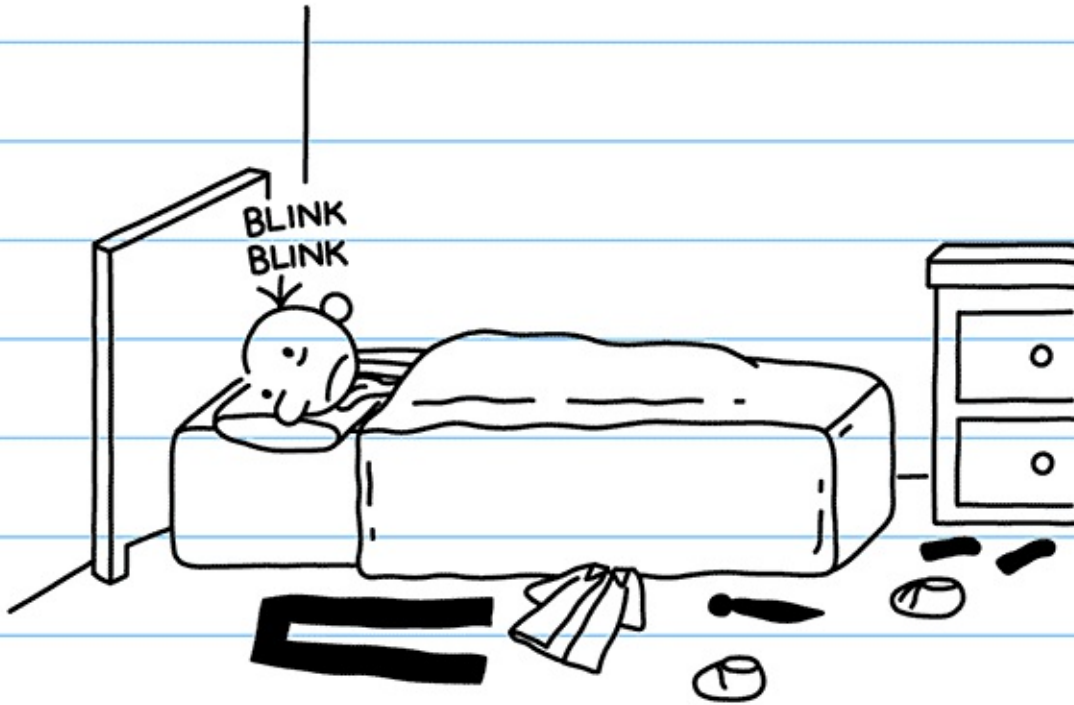
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one day of freedom as best I could.

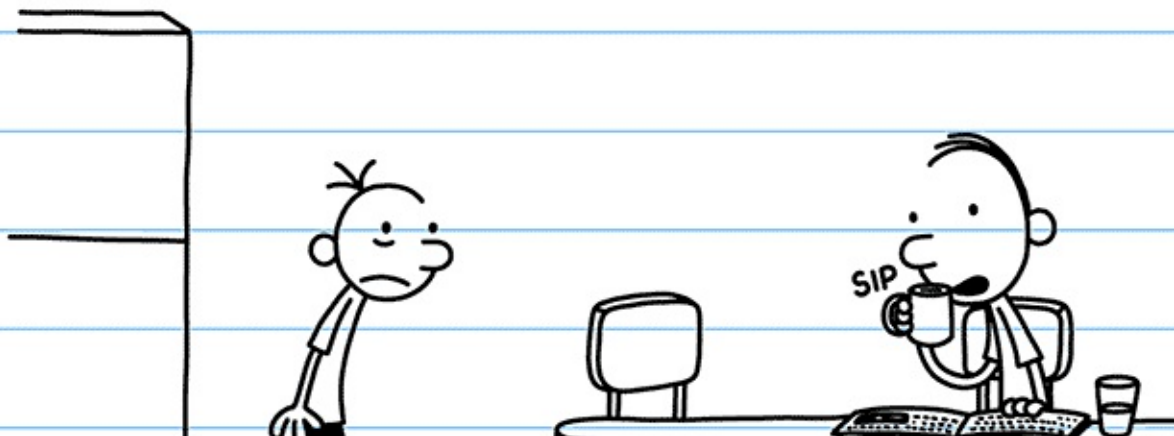
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Sunday

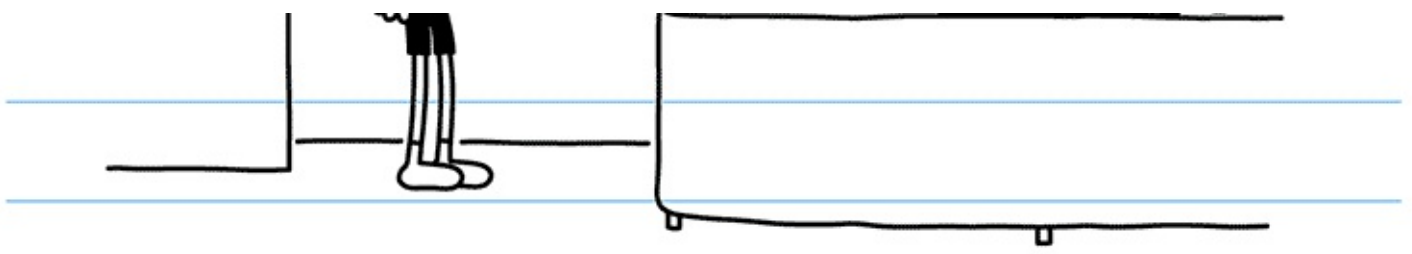
When I woke up this morning, it was a quarter past 11:00. I couldn't figure out why I was still in bed, because Dad was supposed to drive me to Spag Union at 8:00.



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



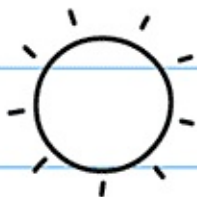




When I walked into the kitchen, Dad told me we could “rethink” this military academy thing. He said maybe I could just do some push-ups and sit-ups every once in a while, and that would be just as good as the summer conditioning program at Spag Union.

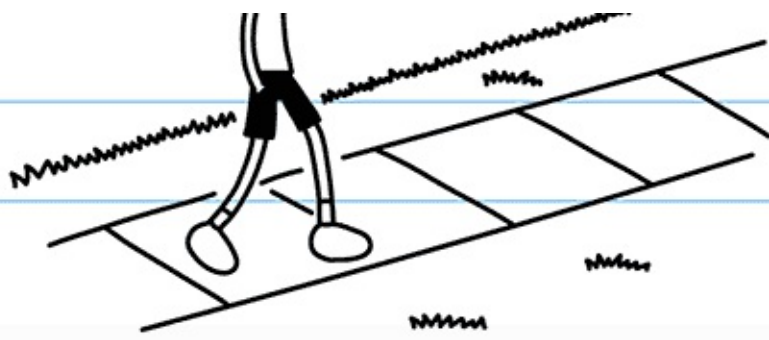
I couldn’t believe my ears. I guess Dad felt like he owed me for saving him yesterday, and this was his way of paying me back.

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



TWEET  
TWEET

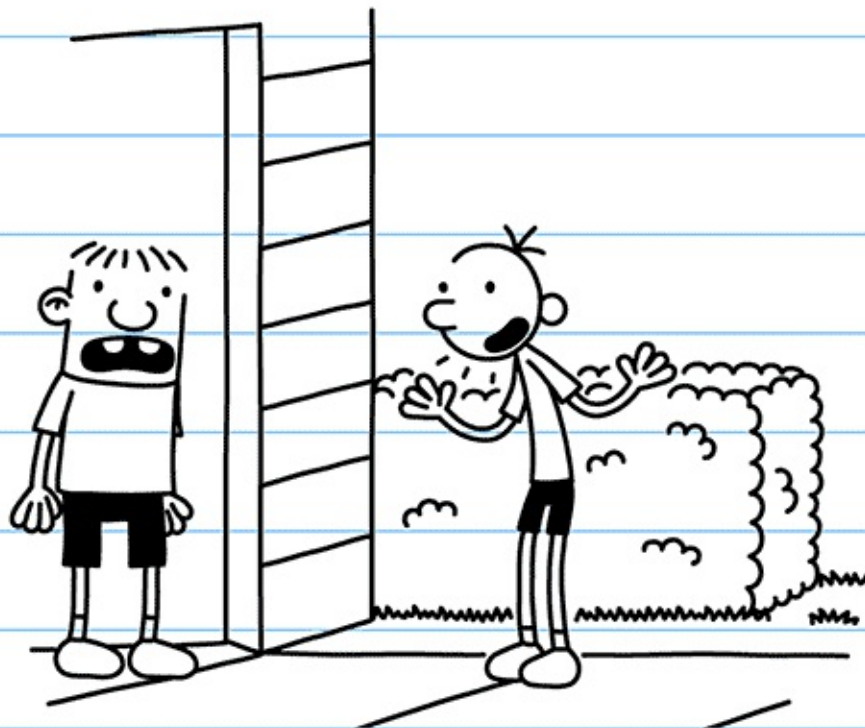




I knocked on Rowley's door, and when he

answered, I told him I didn't have to go to

Spag Union after all.



Rowley didn't even know what I was talking

about, so that just shows you how clueless he can

be sometimes.

We played Rowley's Twisted Wizard 2 for a while,

and then his parents kicked us out of the house.

So we grabbed some popsicles and went and sat

on his front curb.

You'll never believe what happened next. A

really cute girl I had never seen before walked up to

---

us and introduced herself.

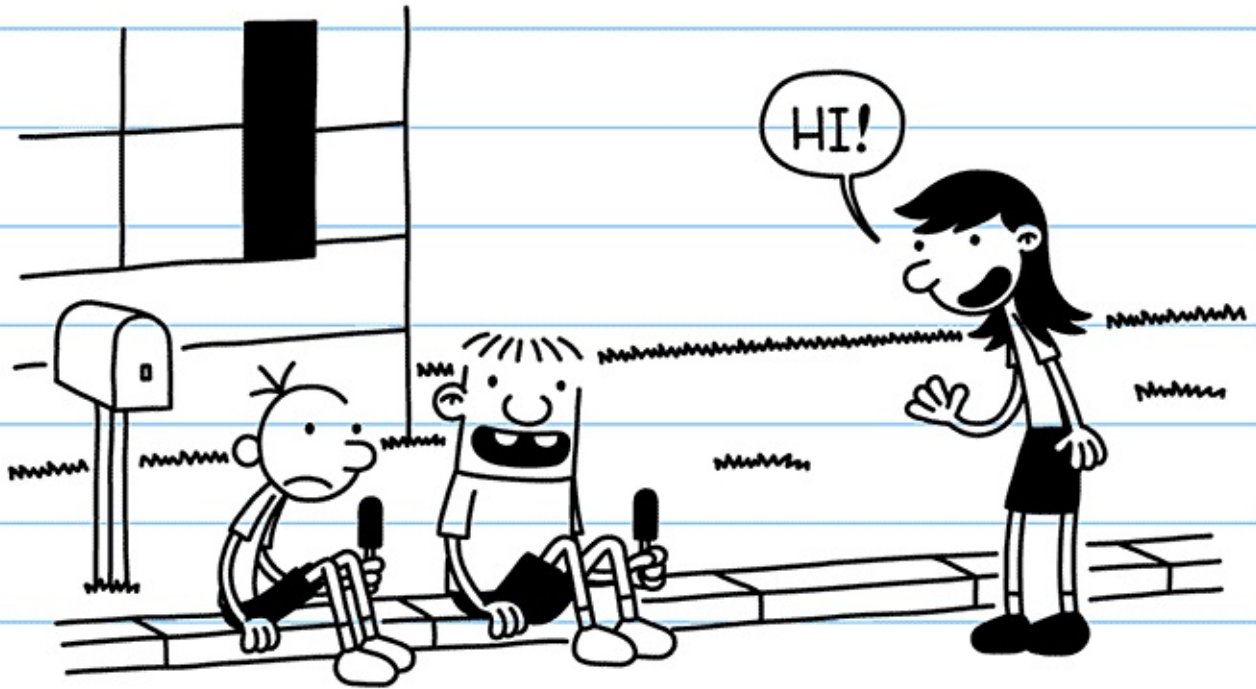
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She said her name was Trista and that she just

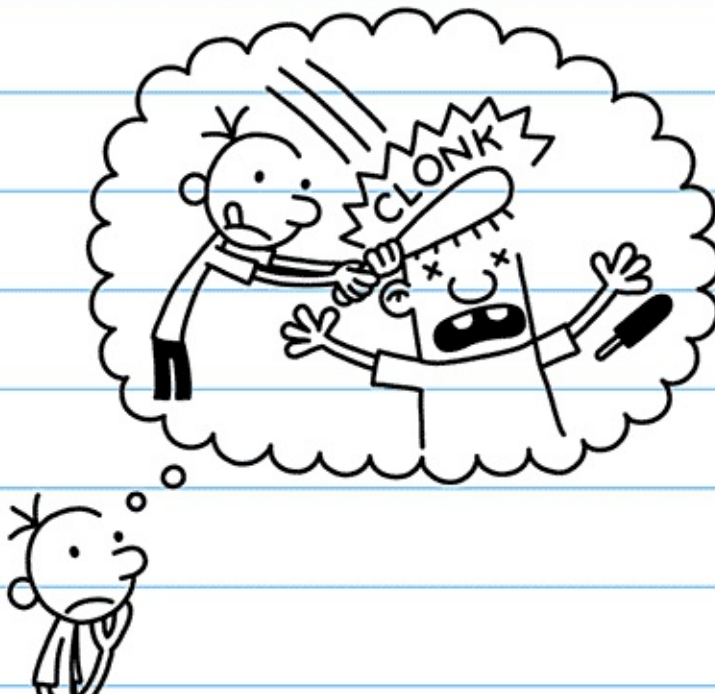
moved in down the street.



I looked at Rowley, and it was pretty obvious he

was thinking what I was thinking. So it took me

about two seconds to come up with a plan.





---

But then I had a Better idea.

---

Rowley's family belongs to a country club, and he's

allowed to bring two guests to his pool every day.

So that could actually work out real nice.



It looks like things are finally going my way,

and you know, it's about time. I don't know

anyone who deserves to catch a break more

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



much one of the best people I know.

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And I know it's really corny to finish with a

happy ending, but it looks like I'm out of paper

anyway, so I guess this is

**THE**

**END.**



## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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

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

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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

D.C., area and moved to New England in 1995. Jeff lives in southern Massachusetts with his wife and their two sons.



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



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

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

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

“Move over, Harry Potter . . . There's a new set of titles dominating the bestseller list for kids' chapter books, and there's nothing 'fantasy' about these.”  
—Andrea Yeats on NPR's *All Things Considered*

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“Perfectly pitched wit and believably self-centered hero . . .”  
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