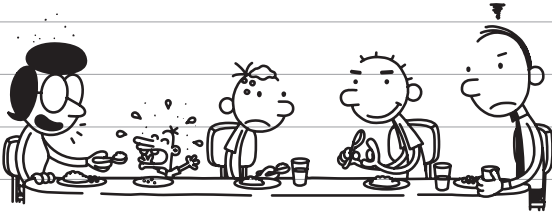


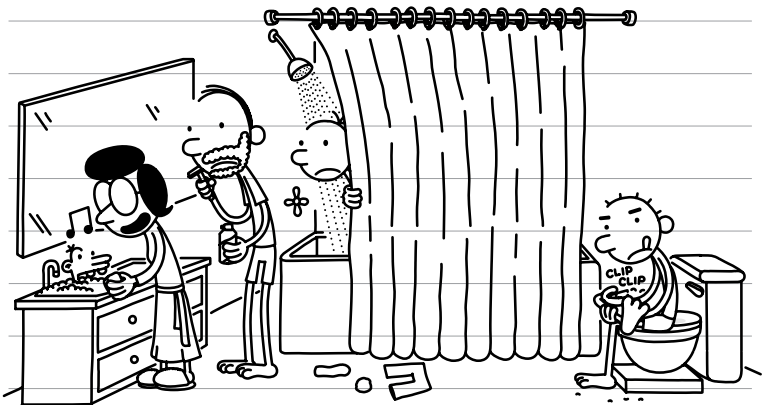
# MARCH

Monday

Mom's always saying that friends will come and go but family is forever. Well, if that's true, I could be in for a rough ride.



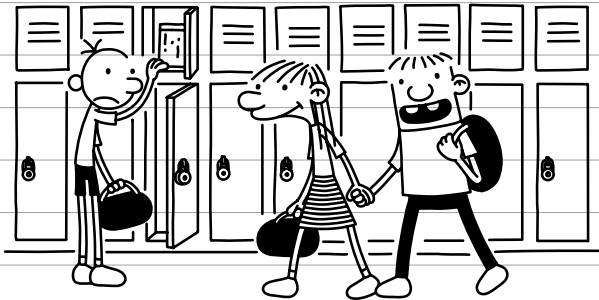
I mean, I love my family and all, but I'm just not sure we were meant to LIVE together. Maybe it'll be better later on when we're all in different houses and only see each other on holidays, but right now things are just a little dicey.



I'm surprised Mom's always pushing the "family" message, since she and her sisters don't really get along. Maybe she thinks if she keeps repeating it to me and my brothers, then we'll come out different. But, if I was her, I wouldn't hold my breath.

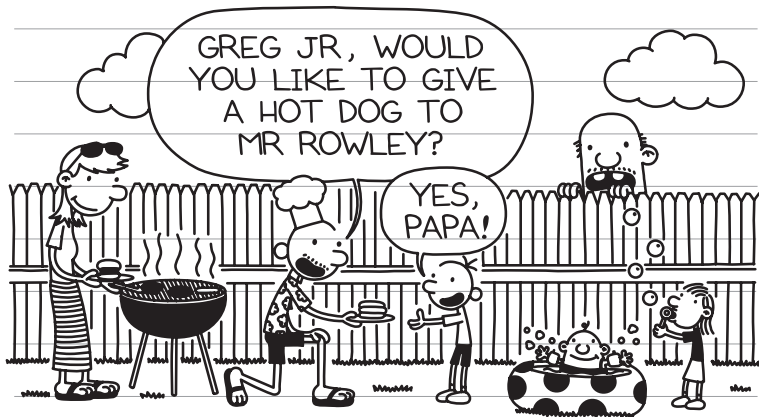
I think Mom is just trying to make me feel better about my situation with Rowley anyway. Rowley's been my best friend ever since he moved into my neighbourhood, but things have really changed between us recently.

And it's all because of a GIRL.



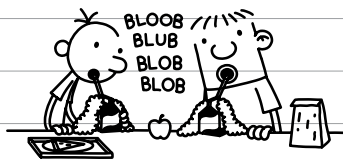
Believe me, the last person in the world I ever thought would get a girlfriend was ROWLEY.

I always thought I'D be the one in a relationship and Rowley would be the guy everyone kind of felt sorry for.

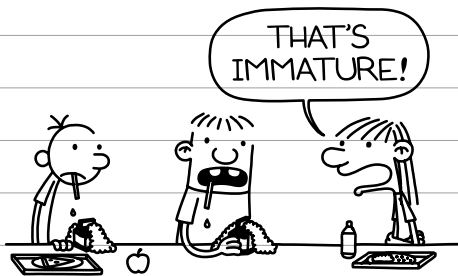


I guess I've got to give Rowley some credit for actually finding a girl who likes him. But I don't have to be HAPPY about it.

Back in the good old days, it was just me and Rowley, and we hung out and did whatever we wanted. If we felt like blowing bubbles in our chocolate milk at lunch, then that's exactly what we did.



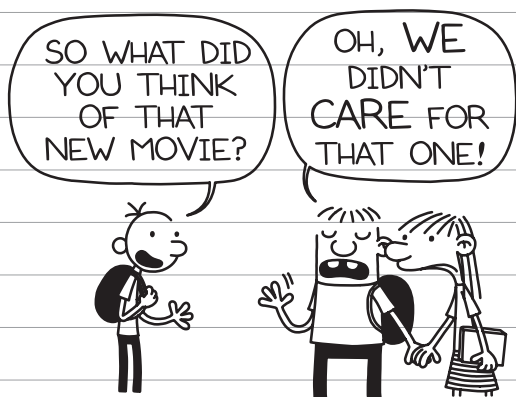
But now that there's a girl in the picture things are **TOTALLY** different.



Wherever Rowley is, his girlfriend Abigail is, too. And even if she **ISN'T** there it **SEEMS** like she is. I invited Rowley to my house for a sleepover last weekend so the two of us could spend some time together, but after about two hours I gave up trying to have any fun.



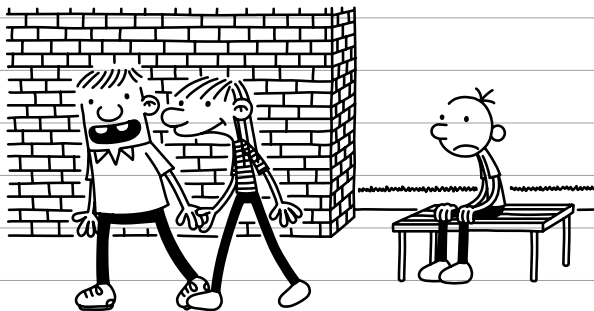
And when the two of them are in the same place it's even WORSE. Ever since Rowley and Abigail got together, it's like Rowley doesn't even have his own OPINIONS any more.



I was hoping this would've all blown over by now and things would be back to normal, but there's no sign of this ending anytime soon.



If you ask me, it's ALREADY gone too far. I've started noticing little changes in Rowley, like the way he combs his hair and the clothes he wears. And, I GUARANTEE you, Abigail is behind all of it.



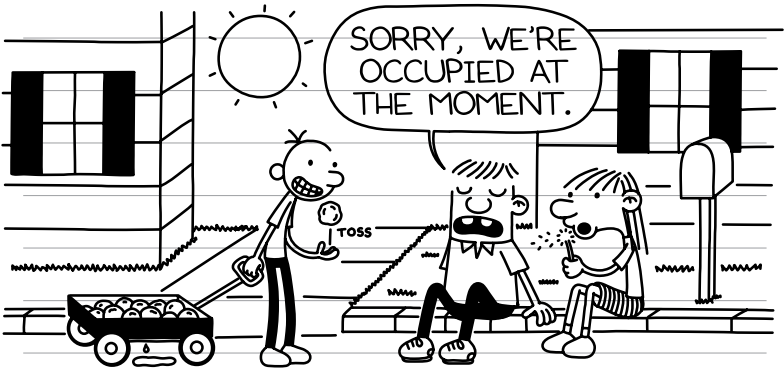
But I'M the one who's been best friends with Rowley all these years, so if anyone has the right to change him it's ME.

I just don't get how you can go from being someone's best friend to getting kicked to the kerb. But that's exactly what happened.

During the winter, me and Rowley stored up some snowballs in my freezer so we could have a snowball fight when the weather got warm.

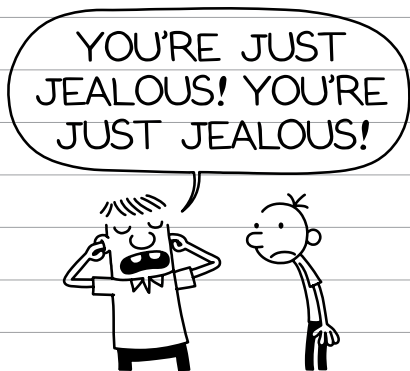


Well, yesterday was the first nice day we've had in forever, but when I went over to Rowley's house he acted like he was too good for me.



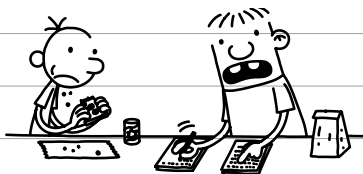
The thing is, I can honestly say I've been nice to Abigail, but SHE doesn't like ME. She's been trying to drive a wedge between me and Rowley ever since the two of them became a couple.

But whenever I try to bring the topic up with Rowley I get the same thing every time.



I wish I could give Rowley a piece of my mind, but I CAN'T because I'm depending on him to get me through the school year.

I have Mr Blakely for English, and he makes us turn in all our assignments in cursive. But it really hurts my hand when I write in cursive for too long, so I've been paying Rowley one peanut-butter cracker for every page that he transcribes for me.

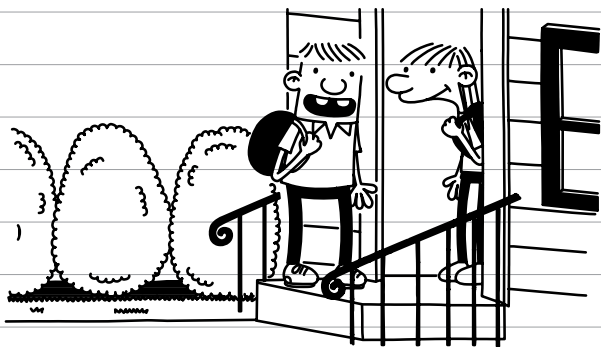




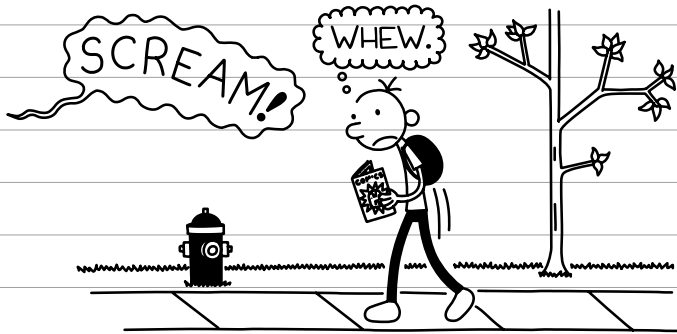
But if I have to start writing my OWN assignments the handwriting on my homework won't be the same as before, and Mr Blakely will know.

So I'm stuck with Rowley, at least until I can find someone who can write exactly like him and who also likes peanut-butter crackers.

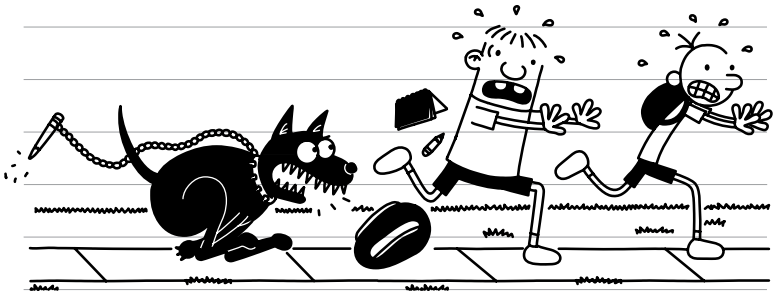
But the biggest problem with this Abigail situation isn't the English homework, it's the walk to school. Me and Rowley used to head in together every morning, but now Rowley goes over to Abigail's neighbourhood and walks to school with HER.



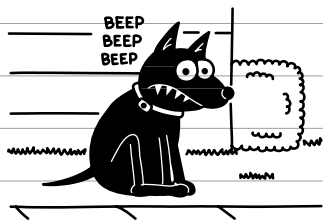
This is an issue for a COUPLE of reasons. For one, me and Rowley have a deal where he's in charge of scouting ahead for dog poop on the pavement. And that arrangement has saved me a BUNCH of times.



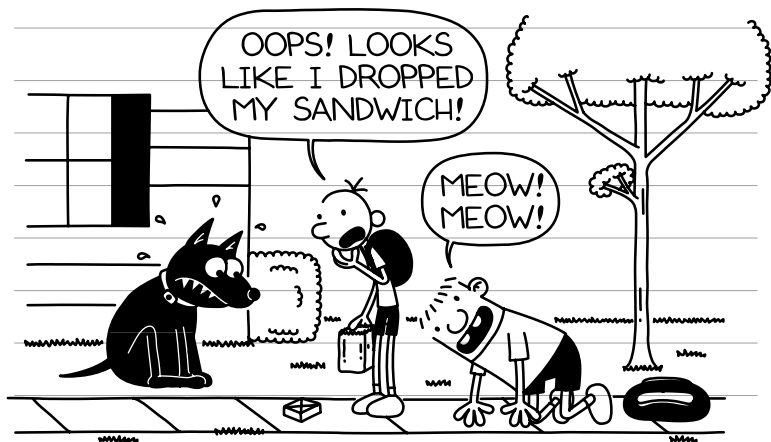
There's this one dog that really has it in for me and Rowley, and we have to keep our guard up whenever we pass by his house. He's this really mean Rottweiler named Rebel, and he used to get out of his yard and chase us on our way to school.



Rebel's owner had to install an electric fence to make sure he couldn't get loose. Now Rebel can't chase us, because if he takes one step out of his yard he'll get a shock from his collar.

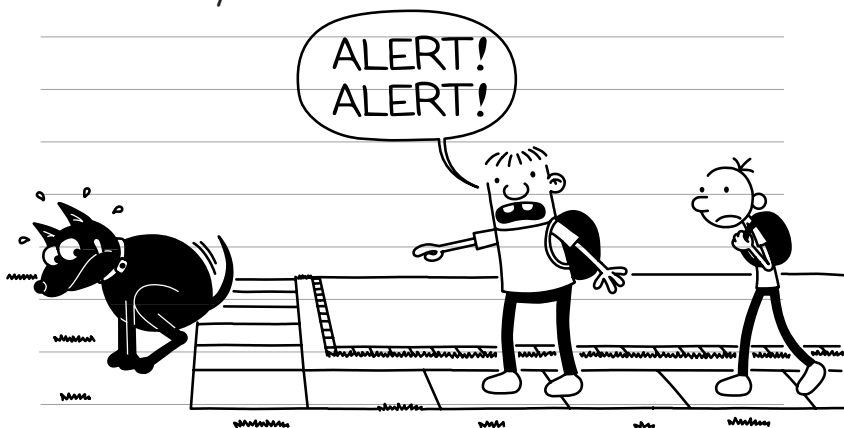


Ever since me and Rowley found out about Rebel's electric collar, we've been having some fun with him.



But Rebel figured out that as long as his COLLAR doesn't cross over the property line he won't get shocked.

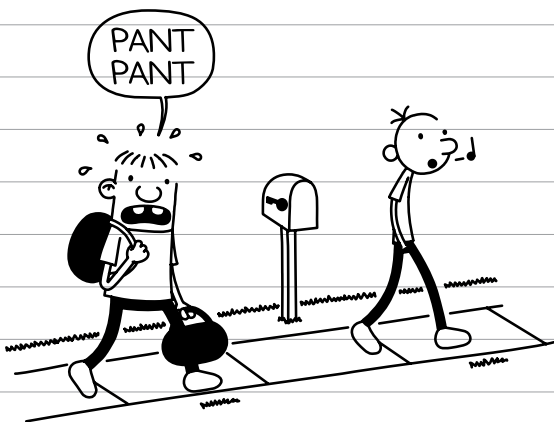
And if I didn't have Rowley watching out for me I definitely would've stepped on one of Rebel's land mines by now.



The other reason it stinks that Rowley isn't walking with me is because, with the school year winding down, the teachers have really been loading us up with homework lately.

That means I have to take almost all my books home with me every day.

My body's not built to carry that kind of weight, but Rowley is practically like a pack animal, so it's no problem for HIM.



Unfortunately, Rowley is just as willing to help Abigail with HER books, which makes me think the only reason she's even with him is to USE him.

And, as Rowley's good friend, I find that a little hard to take.

