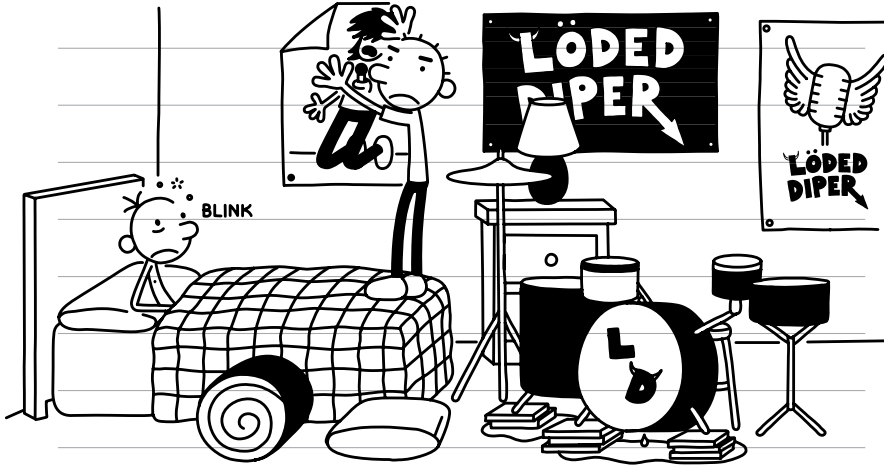


Monday

After twelve hours of sharing a room with Rodrick, I'm thinking of marching down to the police station and turning myself in. Because there's no punishment they can dream up that could be worse than what I'm dealing with at home.

Last night Rodrick brought a bunch of his stuff from the basement and put it in my room. This is supposed to be a temporary living situation, but Rodrick is treating it like a permanent one.

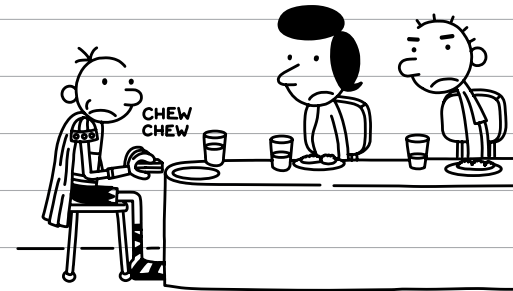


Rodrick's got his drum set on stacks of books to air it out, and his dirty clothes are EVERYWHERE.

This morning when I was getting dressed, I put on a pair of boxer shorts that was sitting on my dresser. But, by the time I realized it was actually Rodrick's dirty underwear, it was too late.



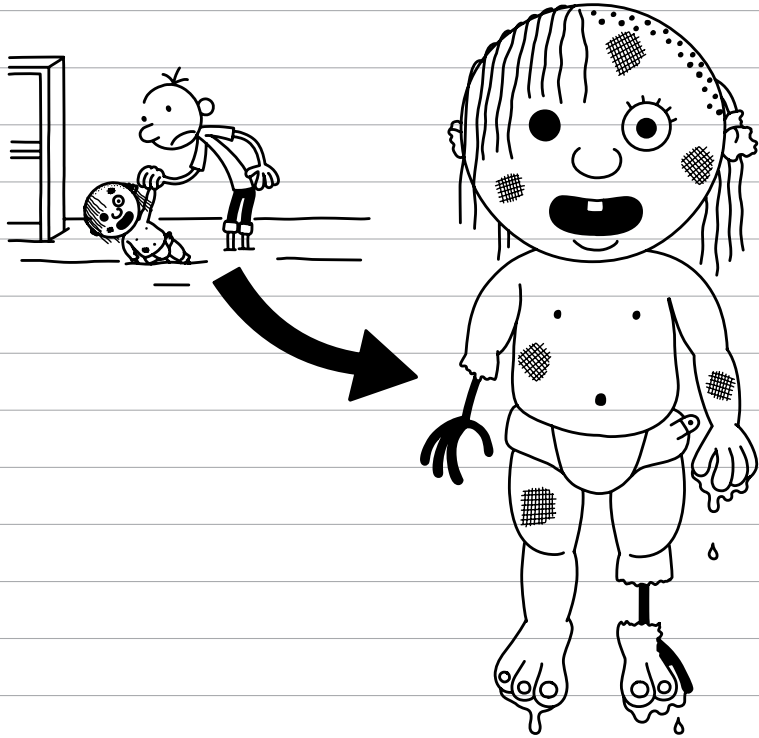
So until Mom did a load of laundry I wore my Halloween costume. It was uncomfortable, but at least I knew for sure it was CLEAN.



This afternoon we were down in the basement seeing if there was anything we could salvage from the flood.

I noticed something strange floating in the water in the storage room, and when I picked it up I almost passed out.

At first I thought it was a real baby, but then I realized it was my long-lost doll, Alfrendo.



After all this time, Alfrendo wasn't looking too good. I think a mouse must've got to him, and spending a day in the water didn't help, either.

But in a weird way I was kind of glad to see him. I was living with the guilt of losing Alfrendo for all these years, and now I'd found out he was in the house all along.

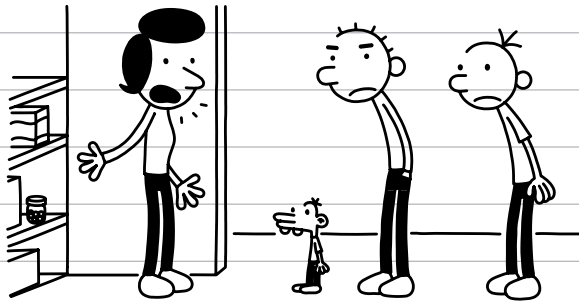
In fact, I couldn't figure out how he'd wound up in the storage room. But I realized it HAD to be Dad. He was never really on board with the whole doll idea, and I'm sure he got rid of Alfrendo when I wasn't looking.



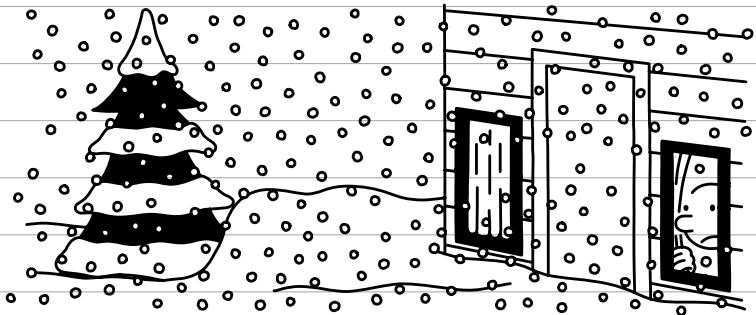
I figured I'd confront Dad about kidnapping my doll when he got home, but at the moment I had bigger things to worry about. The first one was what I was gonna EAT.

Over the past few days we've been running low on food, and if this snow doesn't melt quick I don't know WHAT we're gonna do.

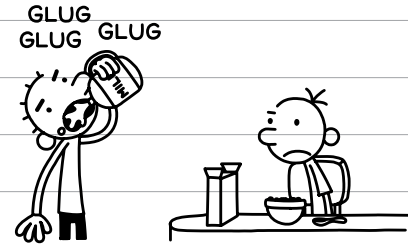
Mom was supposed to go grocery shopping the day the blizzard hit, so we have less food than usual to begin with. She said we're gonna have to start "rationing" until she can go back out.



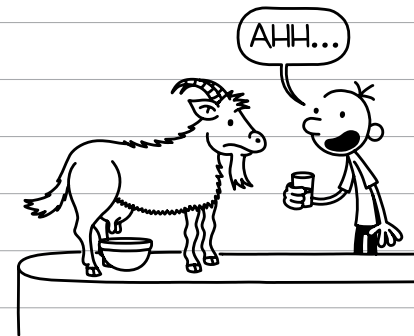
That could be a while, though. The snow is piled up three feet high against the front door, so we're basically trapped inside.



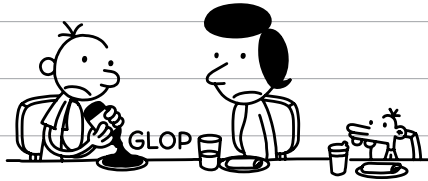
And Rodrick is spoiling the food we DO have left. He drinks milk straight from the carton, so there's no way I'm gonna touch that now.



I'm actually kind of mad at Dad, because if it wasn't for him we'd have all the milk we wanted. A few years ago I won a contest at the state fair where you had to guess how much a baby goat weighed, and the winner got to take it home. I guessed the weight right, but Dad wouldn't let me have the goat. And if we'd had that goat I could have had a glass of milk whenever I wanted.



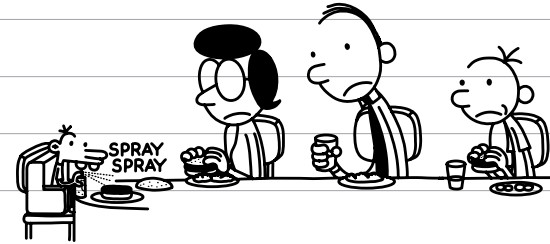
Mom found some burritos in the back of the freezer last night and made them for dinner, but they tasted funny, so I wouldn't eat them. Mom said I needed to eat SOMETHING, so I had ketchup as my main course.



Manny didn't seem to mind the burritos, but he'll eat just about ANYTHING as long as he's got his favourite condiment on it. When Sweetie lived with us, he used to chew on the furniture, so we sprayed it with this stuff called "Bitter Apple Spray" that dogs can't stand the taste of.



But, for whatever reason, Manny LOVES the taste of Bitter Apple Spray, and to this day he uses it on almost everything he eats.



Speaking of Sweetie, I got so hungry today that I was seriously thinking about eating some of the dog treats I'd found in the back of our pantry.

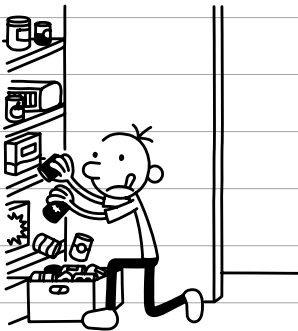


But Mom told me they have different standards for making dog food than they do for people food, so that stopped me from eating any, at least for now.

I can't believe I'm practically starving here while Sweetie is living the good life at Gramma's, enjoying her home-cooked meals.



I only have myself to blame about the food situation, though. We had a bunch of canned food until a week before Thanksgiving, but then I gave almost ALL of it to the Food Drive at school. I got rid of the things I don't like to eat, like yams and beets.

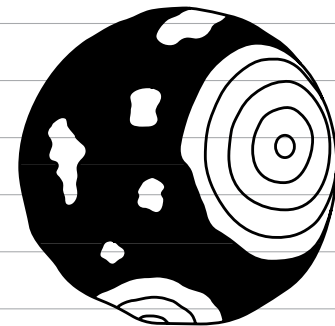


But I'll bet whoever got our rejects is having a pretty good laugh about it right now.

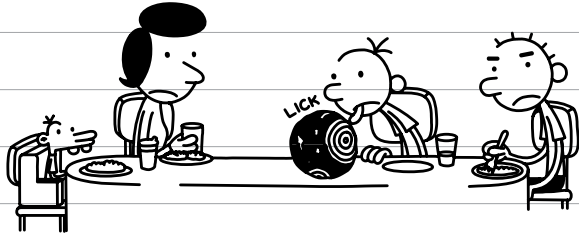


I was starting to wonder whether toothpaste had any nutritional value when I remembered I actually DID have something edible in my desk drawer.

When Dad wouldn't let me take the goat home from the state fair, Mom got me a giant gobstopper to make up for it. I spent the whole autumn working on that thing.

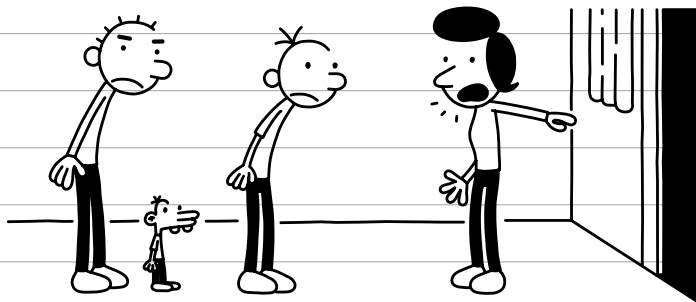


I figure, if we DO run out of food in the house, that gobstopper will help me survive at least another week.

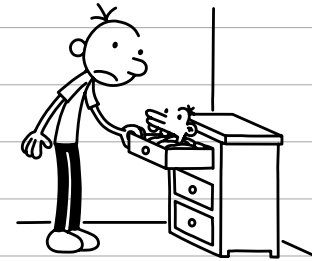


Tonight the electricity cut out for a few seconds and then came back on. Mom said there was a lot of ice on the power lines and we were probably gonna lose our electricity at some point.

She said if that happened we needed to keep the freezer door closed so the food inside didn't thaw out and get ruined. She also said we'd need to keep the doors to the house shut so we didn't lose too much heat.



Manny got REALLY upset, and whenever he gets scared he hides in his room. One time when Manny was younger, I told him a witch lived in our basement, and he got really spooked. He went missing for a few hours, but we eventually tracked him down to his sock drawer.



Mom was right about the electricity, because fifteen minutes after her prediction the power cut off and didn't come back on. She tried to call the electric company, but her mobile-phone battery was dead. Every hour the temperature dropped another two or three degrees, and we had to get a blanket to keep ourselves warm.

