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Opening extract from

Diary of a Wimpy Kid

Written by

Jeff Kinney

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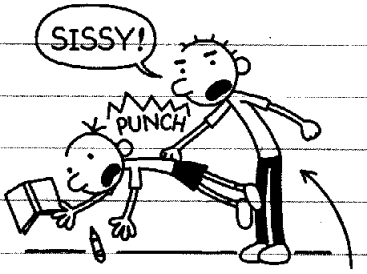
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SEPTEMBER

Monday

I guess Mom was pretty proud of herself for making me write in that journal last year, because now she went and bought me another one.

But remember how I said that if some jerk caught me carrying a book with "diary" on the cover, they were gonna get the wrong idea? Well, that's exactly what happened today.

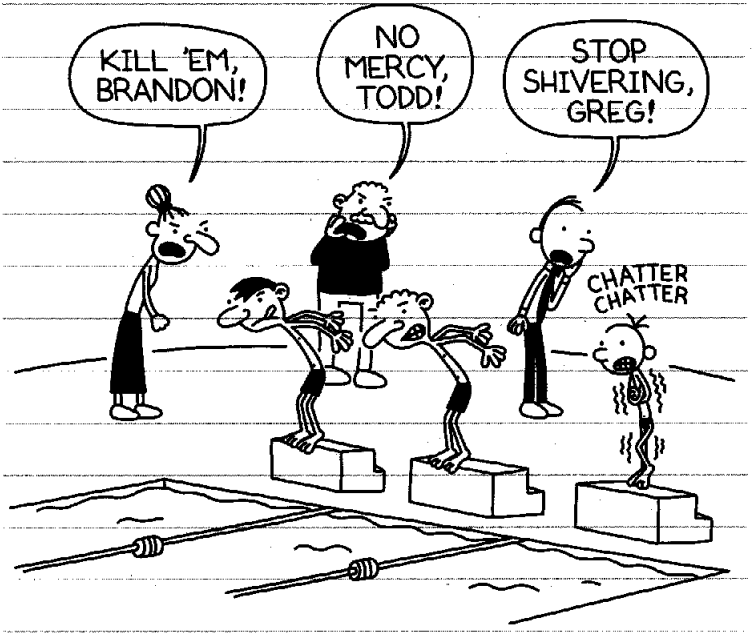


(MY BROTHER RODRICK)

Now that Rodrick knows I have another journal, I better remember to keep this one locked up. Rodrick actually got hold of my LAST journal a few weeks back, and it was a disaster. But don't even get me started on THAT story.

Even without my Rodrick problems, my summer was pretty lousy.

Our family didn't go anywhere or do anything fun, and that's Dad's fault. Dad made me join the swim team again, and he wanted to make sure I didn't miss any meets this year.

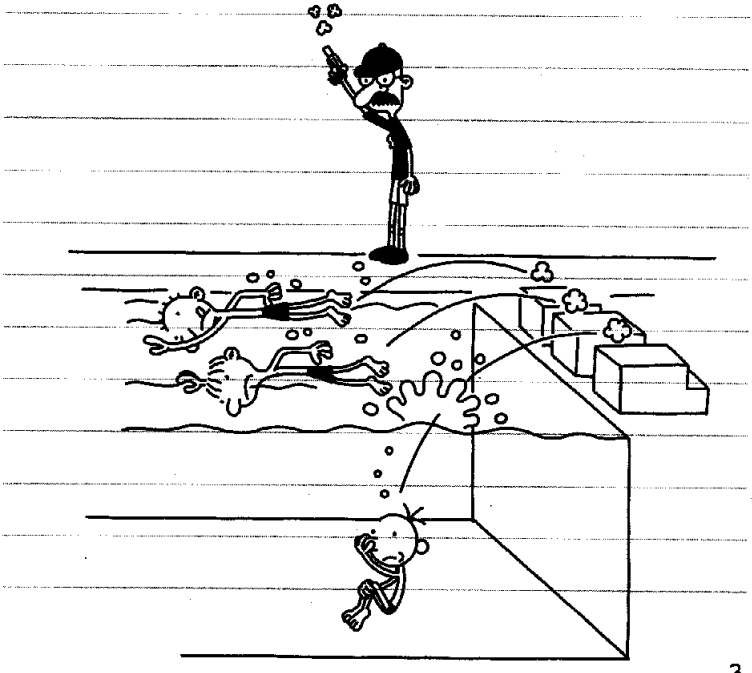


Dad's got this idea that I'm destined to be a great swimmer or something, so that's why he makes me join the team every summer.

At my first swim meet a couple of years ago, Dad told me that when the umpire shot off the starter pistol, I was supposed to dive in and start swimming.

But what he DIDN'T tell me was that the starter gun only fired BLANKS.

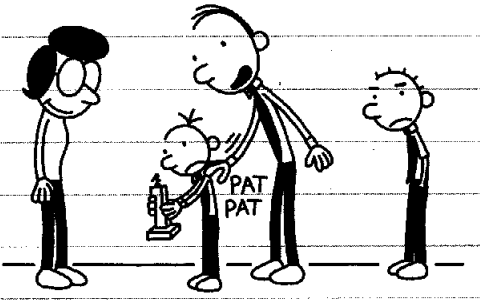
So I was a whole lot more worried about where the bullet was gonna land than I was about getting myself to the other end of the pool.



Even after Dad explained the whole "starter pistol" concept to me, I was still the worst swimmer on the team.

But I did end up winning "Most Improved" at the awards banquet at the end of the summer. That's only because there was a ten-minute difference between my first race and my last one.

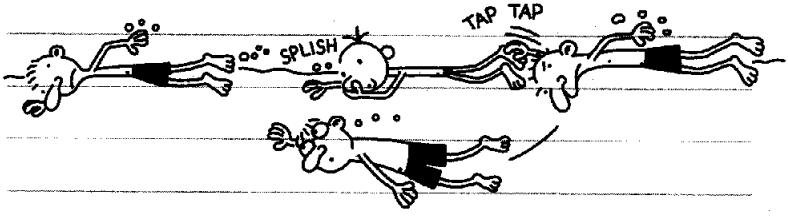
So I guess Dad's still waiting for me to live up to my potential.



In a lot of ways, being on the swim team was worse than being in middle school.

First of all, we had to be at the pool by 7:30 every morning, and the water was always FREEZING cold.

And, second of all, we were all crammed into two lanes, so I always had somebody on my tail trying to get round me.

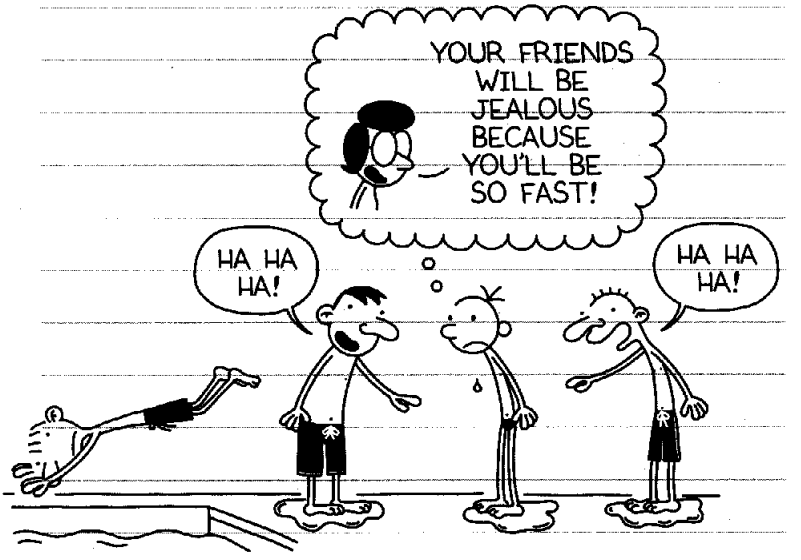


The reason we had to use two lanes was because swim practice was at the same time as the Water Jazz class.

I actually tried to convince Dad to let me do Water Jazz instead of swim team, but he wouldn't go for it.



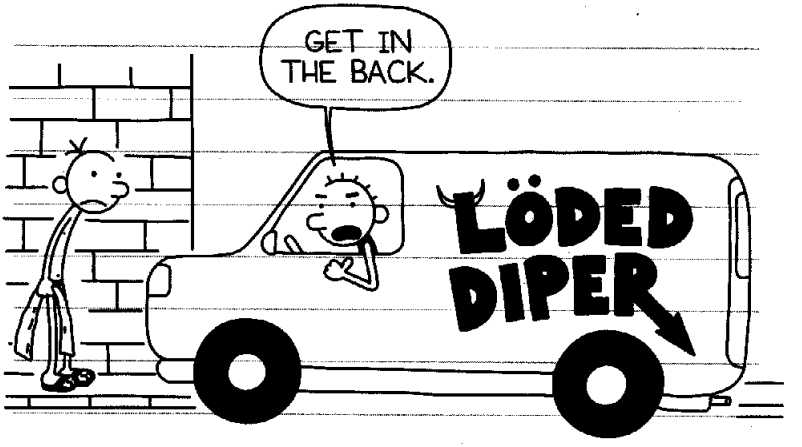
This was the first summer the coach let us boys wear swimming trunks instead of those skimpy racing trunks. But Mom said Rodrick's hand-me-down bathing suit was "perfectly fine".



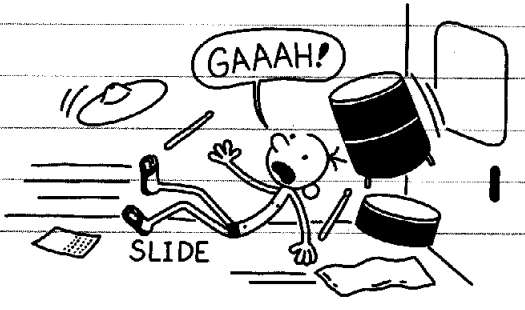
After swim practice, Rodrick would pick me up in his band's van. Mom had this crazy idea that if me and Rodrick spent "quality time" on the ride home every day, we wouldn't fight as much. But all it did was make things a lot worse.

Rodrick was always a half hour late picking me up.

And he wouldn't let me sit up front. He said the chlorine would ruin his seat, even though the van is something like fifteen years old.



Rodrick's van doesn't actually have any seats in the back, so I had to squeeze in with all the band equipment. And every time the van came to a stop, I had to pray I didn't get my head taken off by one of Rodrick's drums.

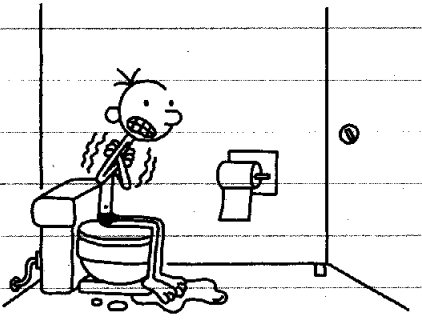


I ended up walking home every day instead of getting a ride from Rodrick. I figured it was better to just walk the two miles than to get brain damage riding in the back of that van.

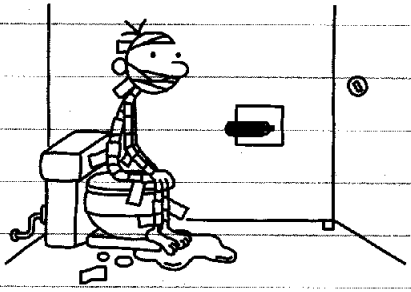
Halfway through the summer, I decided I was pretty much done with swim team. So I came up with a trick to get out of practice.

I'd swim a few laps, and then ask the coach if I could use the bathroom. Then I'd just hide out in the locker room until practice was over.

The only problem with my plan was that it was something like zero degrees in the boys' bathroom. So it was even colder in THERE than it was in the pool.



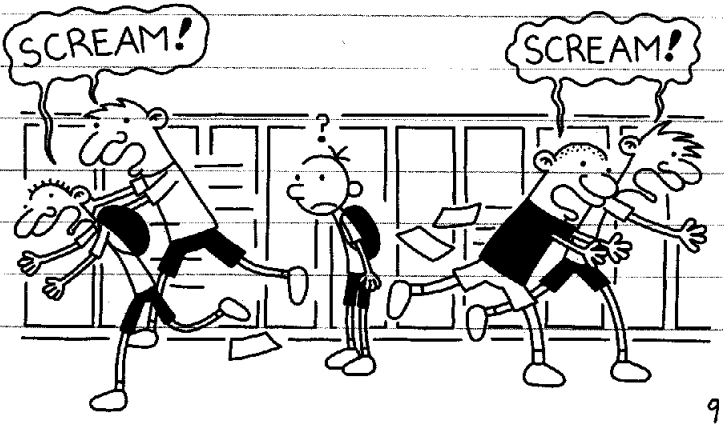
I had to wrap myself up in toilet paper so I didn't get hypothermia.



That's how I spent a pretty big chunk of my summer holidays. And that's why I'm actually looking forward to going back to school tomorrow.

Tuesday

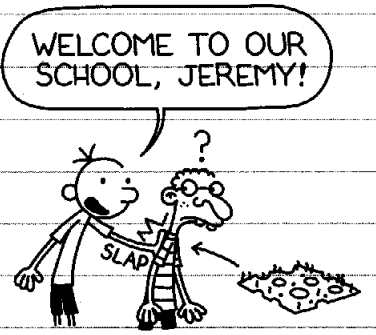
When I got to school today, everybody was acting all strange around me, and at first I didn't know WHAT was up.



Then I remembered: I still had the Cheese Touch from LAST year. I got the Cheese Touch in the last week of school, and over the summer I COMPLETELY forgot about it.

The problem with the Cheese Touch is that you've got it until you can pass it on to someone else. But nobody would even get within thirty feet of me, so I knew I was gonna be stuck with the Cheese Touch for the whole school year.

Luckily, there was a new kid named Jeremy Pindle in homeroom, so that took care of THAT problem.



My first class was Pre-Algebra, and the teacher put me right next to Alex Aruda, the smartest kid in the whole class.

Alex is SUPER easy to copy from, because he always finishes his test early and puts his paper down on the floor next to him. So if I ever get in a pinch, it's nice to know I can count on Alex to bail me out.

Kids whose last names start with the first few letters of the alphabet get called on the most by the teacher, and that's why they end up being the smartest.

Some people think that's not true, but if you want to come down to my school, I can prove it.



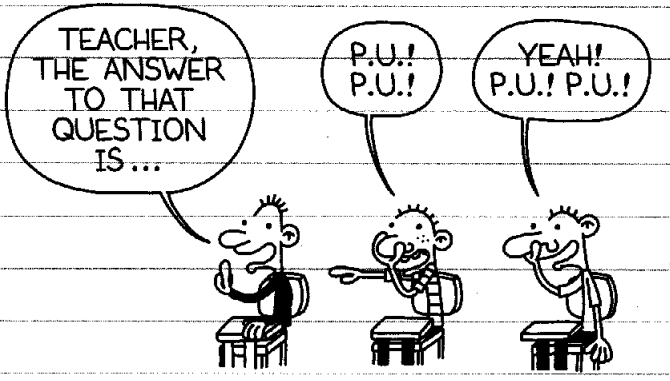
ALEX ARUDA



CHRISTOPHER ZIEGEL

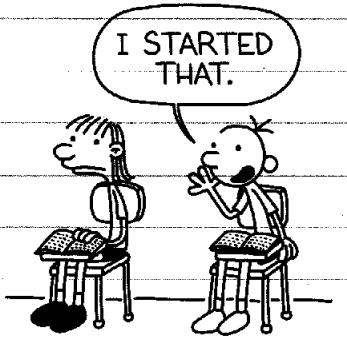
I can only think of ONE kid who broke the last-name rule, and that's Peter Uteger. Peter was the smartest kid in the class all the way up until the fifth grade.

That's when a bunch of us started giving him a hard time about how his initials sounded when you said them out loud.

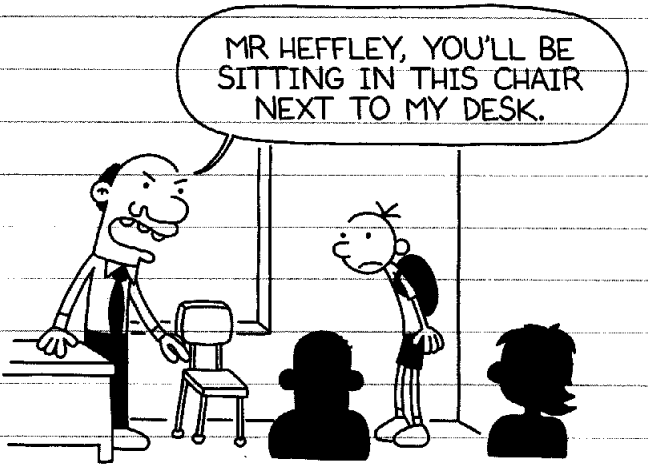


These days, Peter doesn't raise his hand at ALL, and he's pretty much a C student.

I guess I feel a little bad about the whole P.U. thing and what happened to Peter. But it's hard not to take credit whenever it comes up.



Anyway, today I got pretty decent seats in all my classes except seventh-period History. My teacher is Mr Huff, and something tells me he had Rodrick as a student a few years back.

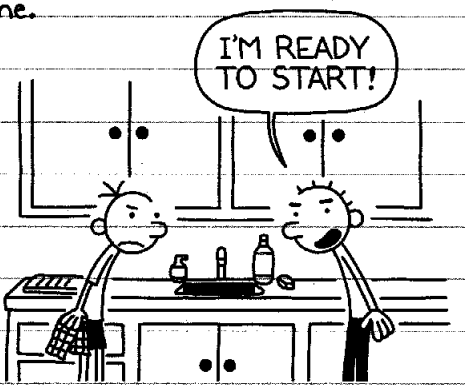


Wednesday

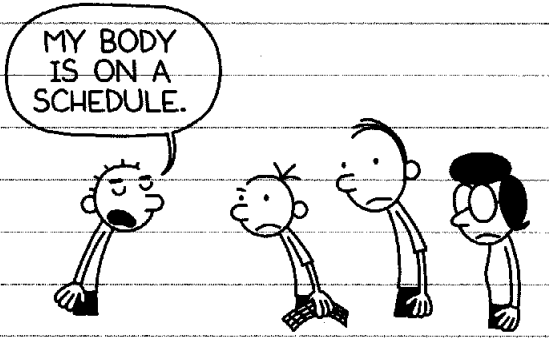
Mom has been making me and Rodrick help out more around the house, and now the two of us are responsible for doing the dishes every night.

The rule is that we're not allowed to watch any TV or play video games until all the dishes are done. But let me just say that Rodrick is the WORST dishes partner in the world.

As soon as dinner is over, he goes upstairs to the bathroom and camps out there for an hour. And by the time he comes back downstairs, I'm already done.

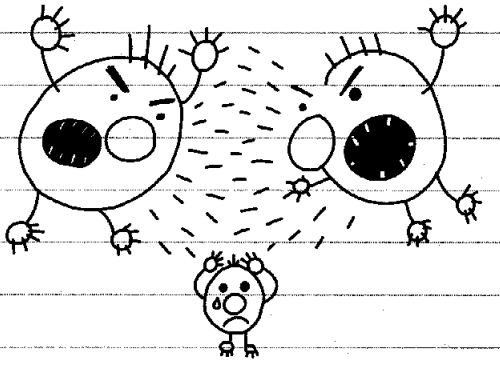


But if I ever complain to Mom and Dad, Rodrick always pulls out the same lame excuse:

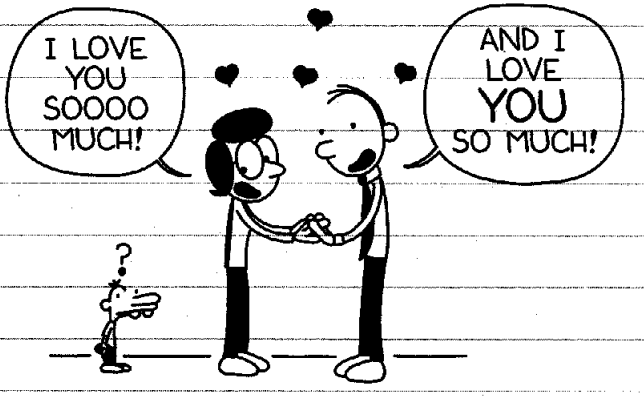


I think Mom and Dad are too worried about my little brother, Manny, to get involved in a fight between me and Rodrick right now anyway.

Yesterday, Manny drew a picture at nursery, and Mom and Dad got really upset when they found it in his backpack.



Mom and Dad thought the picture was supposed to be of THEM, so now they're acting all lovey in front of Manny.



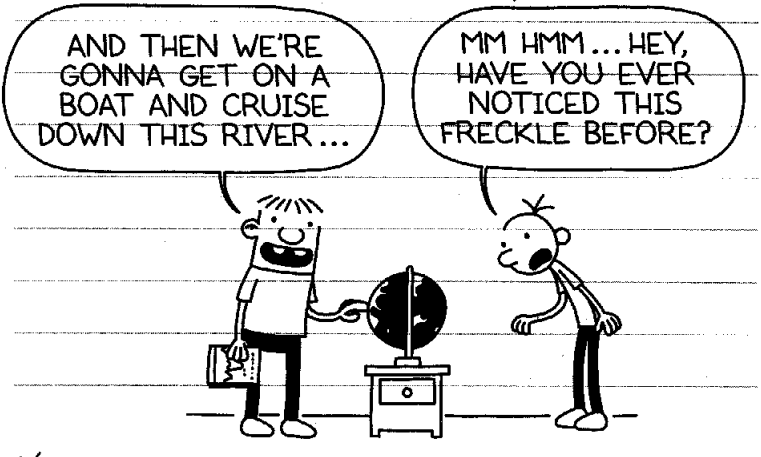
I knew who it was REALLY supposed to be in the picture: me and Rodrick.

We got into a big blowout over the remote control the other night, and Manny was there to witness the whole thing. But Mom and Dad don't need to find out about THAT.

Thursday

Another reason my summer was kind of lame was because my best friend, Rowley, was on holiday pretty much the whole time. I think he went to South America or something but, to be honest with you, I'm not really sure.

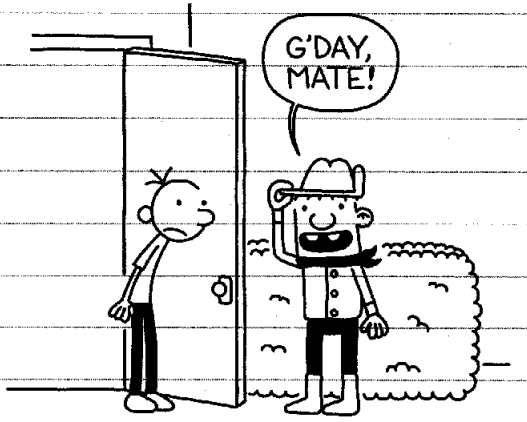
I don't know if this makes me a bad person or whatever, but it's hard for me to get interested in other people's holidays.



Besides, it seems like Rowley's family is always travelling to some crazy place in the world, and I can never keep their trips straight.

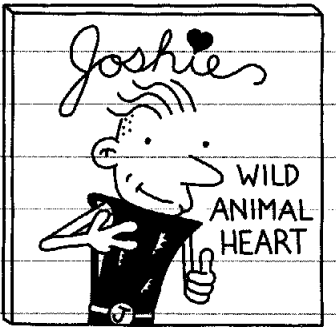
The other reason I don't care about Rowley's trips is because whenever Rowley comes back from one of his holidays, he always crams it down my throat.

Last year, Rowley and his family went to Australia for ten days, but from the way he acted when he got back you'd think he lived there his whole life.



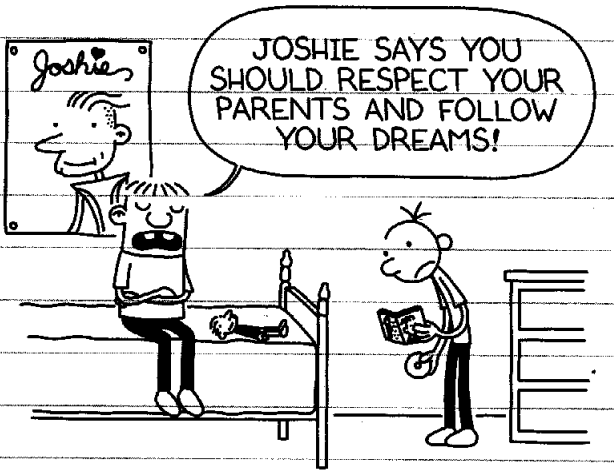
Another thing that's really annoying is that whenever Rowley goes to some new country, he gets into whatever fad is going on over there.

Like when Rowley got back from Europe two years ago, he got hooked on this pop singer named "Joshie", who I guess is some huge star or something. So Rowley came back with his bags full of Joshie CDs and posters and stuff.



I took one look at the picture on the CD and told Rowley that Joshie was supposed to be for six-year-old girls, but he didn't believe me. Rowley said I was just jealous because he was the one who "discovered" Joshie.

And what made it really irritating was that now this guy was Rowley's new hero. So if I ever tried to say anything critical at all, Rowley didn't want to hear it.



Speaking of foreign countries, today in French class, Madame Lefrere told us we're going to be choosing pen pals this year.

When Rodrick was in middle school, he had a seventeen-year-old girl from Holland as his pen pal. I know because I've seen the letters in his junk drawer.

