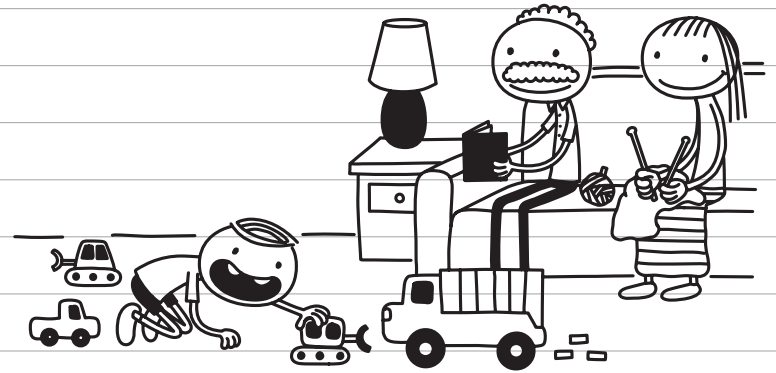


The Changing



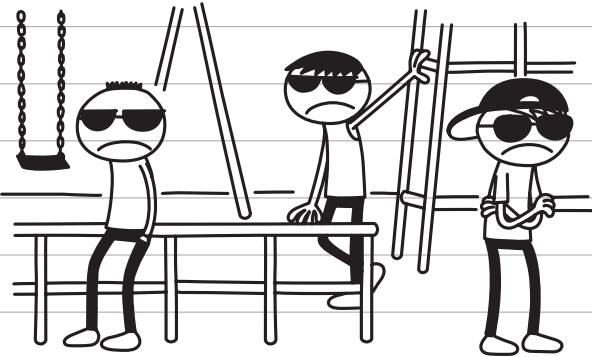
There once was a boy named Rowan, and Rowan was a happy child. He had two parents who loved him very much and he had lots of toys to play with.



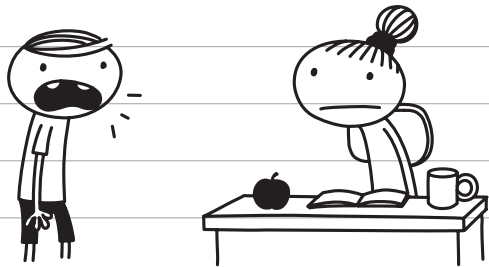
Sometimes Rowan would bring his toys to school and play with them at recess, but he stopped doing that after he got bullied by some jerks.



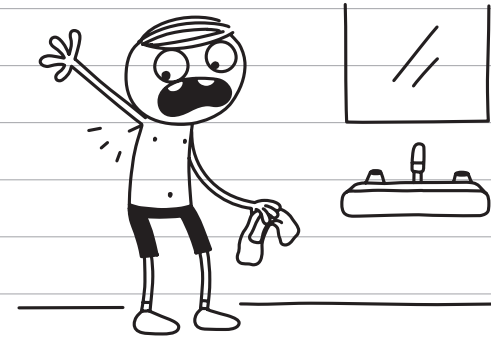
That made Rowan sad because he thought playing with toys was the best thing about being a kid. But Rowan's classmates didn't feel the same way and they were always trying to act older than they really were.



One day when Rowan was in class he felt a strange tickling sensation under his armpit. He didn't know what it was so he asked his teacher Mrs. Pennington if he could please be excused to use the restroom.



When Rowan got to the bathroom he took off his shirt and was shocked to see a single hair growing from the center of his armpit.

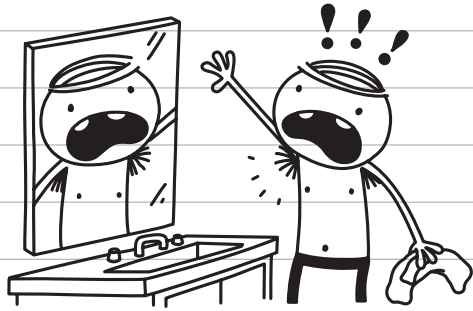


Rowan didn't know what to do so he put his shirt back on and returned to class. And when he sat down he felt like everyone in the classroom could tell something was different about him, even Mrs. Pennington.

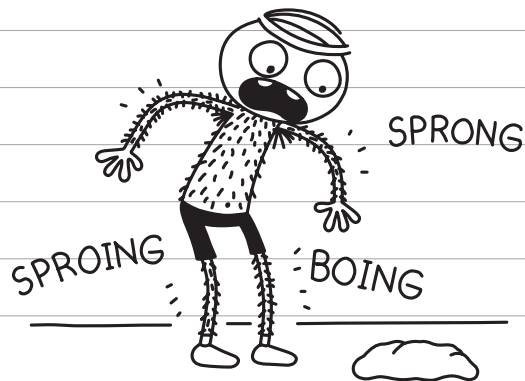


When the final bell rang, Rowan ran all the way home. He knew his mother kept some tweezers in the bathroom and he couldn't wait to use them to pull out that hair.

But when Rowan took his shirt off he could see it was too late for tweezers.



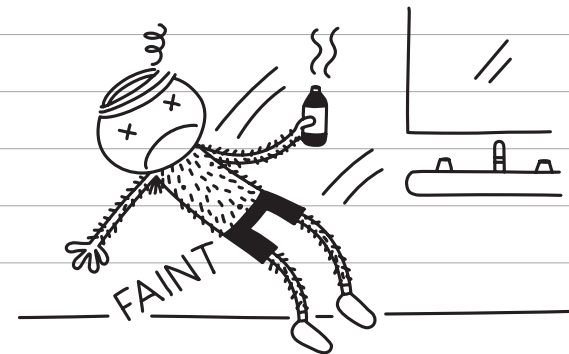
Suddenly hair started sprouting all OVER Rowan's body. And before long he was practically COVERED in it.



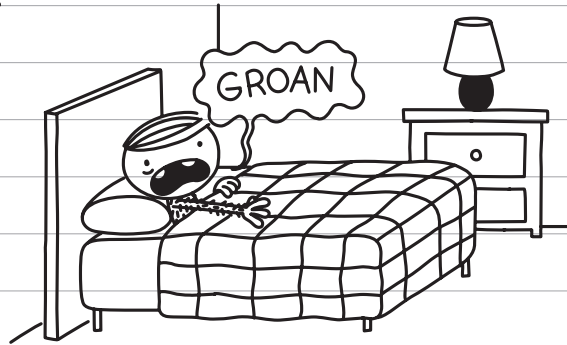
By now Rowan was totally panicking. He went through his parents' bathroom cabinet to see if there was anything that might help and he found something he thought would do the trick.



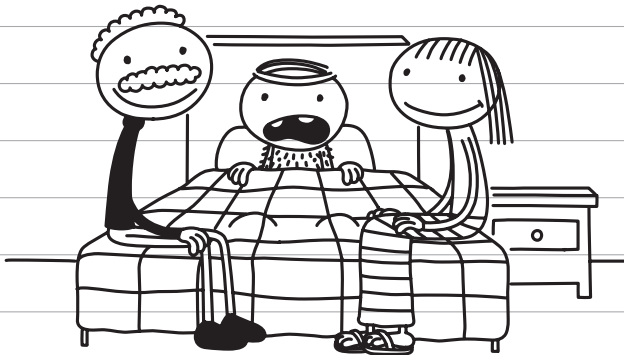
But there's a reason kids shouldn't go poking around in their parents' bathroom cabinets. Because two seconds after Rowan opened the bottle he passed out from the fumes.



When Rowan woke up he was in his bed. At first he thought maybe the whole thing with the hair was just a bad dream but one look at his arm told him it wasn't.



Rowan's parents walked into his room and he was afraid they were gonna be mad at him for opening that bottle of hair remover without asking. But they didn't look mad at all. In fact, they seemed kind of HAPPY.

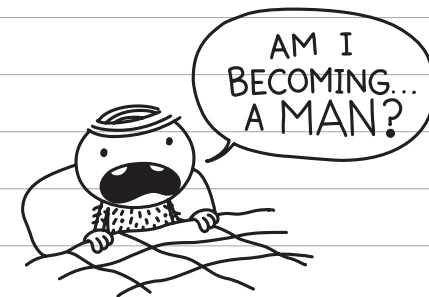


Rowan's parents said they'd been waiting for this day for years and it was time for them to have the "Talk."

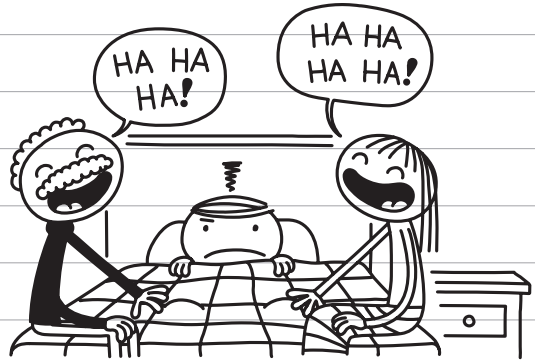
Rowan thought they had already had the Talk when his parents told him how babies were made. But they said this one was a totally different Talk.

His parents said that sometimes when a child turns a certain age their body starts to go through a "Changing." And that made Rowan sad because he liked himself just the way he was.

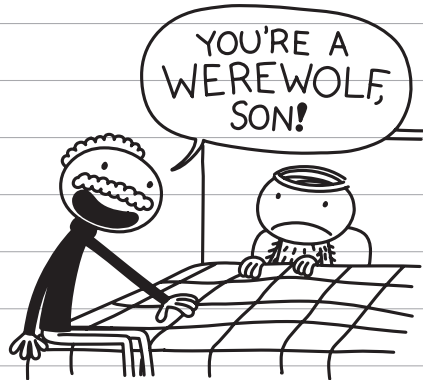
By now Rowan thought he knew where this was heading so he asked the question that had been on his mind all day.



Well that made Rowan's parents laugh and laugh. And Rowan felt embarrassed because it took them a long time to STOP laughing.

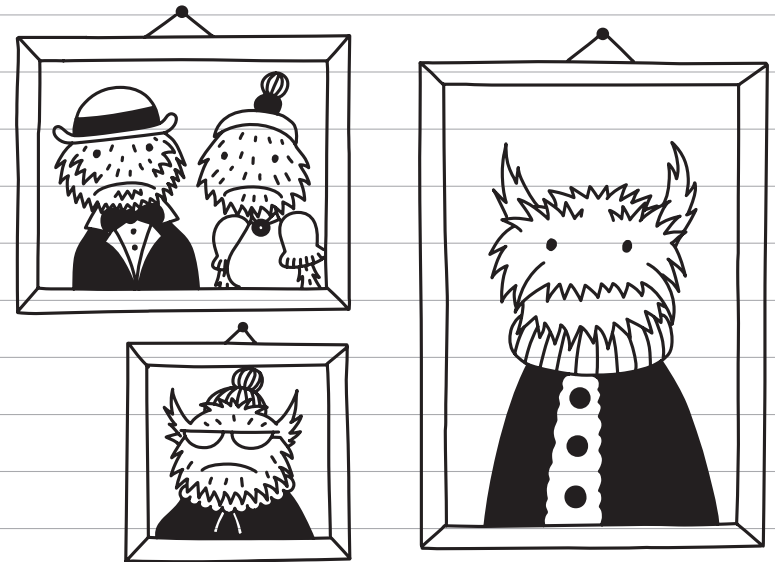


After Rowan's dad wiped the tears from his eyes he said Rowan was still a boy but he was a different KIND of boy. And when Rowan asked what he meant by that his dad gave him some bad news.



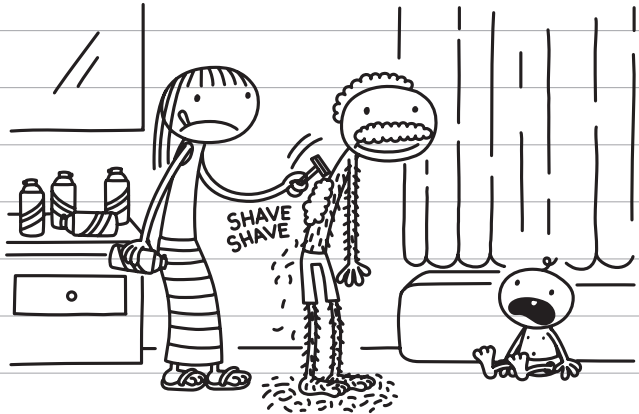
This was definitely NOT what Rowan wanted to hear. But when Rowan's mom saw the worried look on her son's face she said this was a day to CELEBRATE.

Rowan's parents told him he came from a long line of werewolves. And suddenly the pictures on the staircase wall made a lot more sense to Rowan.



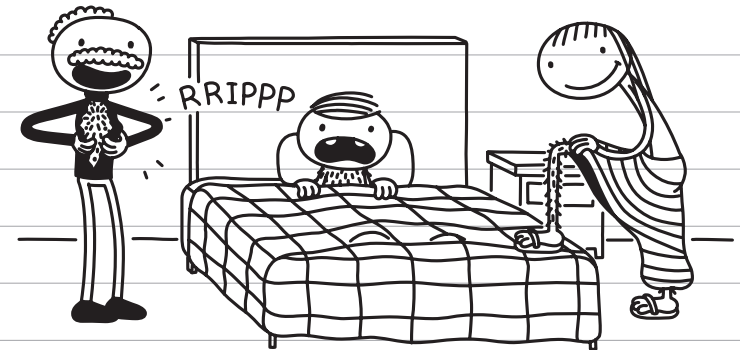
Then Rowan's parents gave him some MORE bad news. They said THEY were both werewolves too.

Rowan started remembering clues growing up that should've told him his parents were werewolves. But he guessed deep down he didn't want to admit the truth.



Then Rowan started crying. He said he just wanted to be a regular kid and have a normal life.

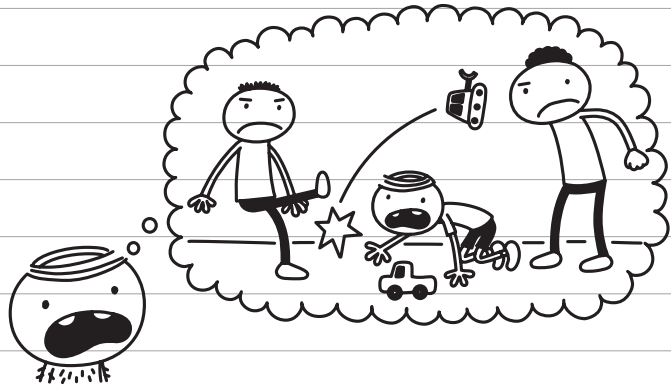
But his parents said a werewolf could live a perfectly normal life as long as they kept on top of their grooming and hid who they really were from the rest of the world.



Rowan didn't WANT to hide who he was though. He had always been taught to be yourself and that's what he planned to do.

But Rowan's parents told him there are ignorant people in the world who don't like anyone who is different.

And Rowan knew exactly the type of people his parents were talking about.

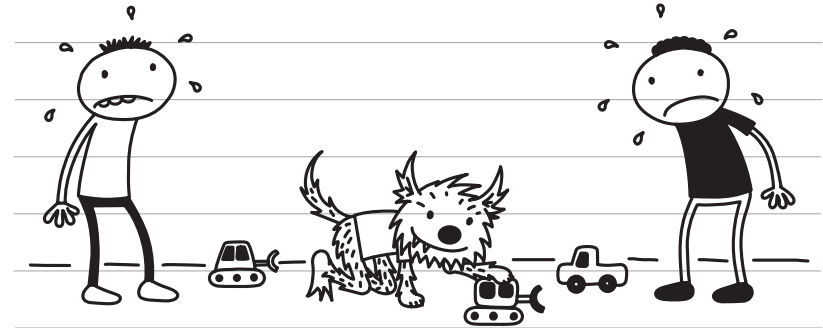


Then Rowan asked his parents a question he wasn't sure he was ready to hear the answer to.



Rowan's parents looked a little uncomfortable and said that was a subject for another Talk later on.

But Rowan had a feeling he knew the answer to his question so the next day he brought his toys with him to recess. And this time nobody dared to mess with him.



Rowan's example inspired his parents to stop hiding who THEY were too. And from that day on Rowan and his family lived as their true selves and everyone else just had to deal with it.

