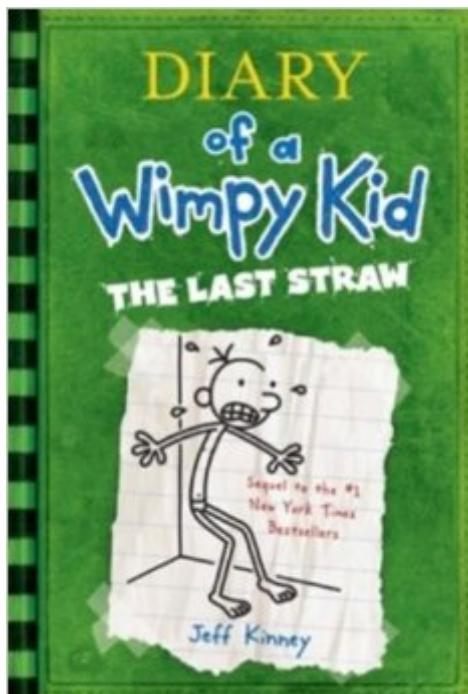


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# Diary Of A Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw (Book 3)



## Synopsis

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 able to easily 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. Greg and his family and friends, who make the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* books a must-read for middle school readers, are back and at their best in this hilarious new installment of the series, which is sure to please current fans while attracting new ones. This highly anticipated third book in the critically acclaimed and bestselling series takes the art of being wimpy to a whole new level.

*Publishers Weekly*-1/19/2009: The third book in this genre-busting series is certain to enlarge Kinney's presence on the bestseller lists, where the previous titles have taken up residence for the past two years. Kinney's spot-on humor and winning formula of deadpan text set against cartoons are back in full force. This time, Greg starts off on New Year's Day (he resolves to "help other people improve," telling his mother, "I think you should work on chewing your potato chips more quietly") and ends with summer vacation. As he fends off his father's attempts to make him more of a man (the threat of military school looms), Greg's hapless adventures include handing out anonymous valentines expressing his true feelings ("Dear James, You smell"), attempting to impress his classmate Holly and single-handedly wrecking his soccer team's perfect season. Kinney allows himself some insider humor as well, with Greg noting the "racket" children's book authors have going. "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." Greg, self-centered as ever, may be the exception proving that rule. Ages 8-12.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

This is an amazingly funny book. The Wimpy Kid series should not be confined to people under 18 so I highly urge adults to read all three as soon as possible. My sides hurt and yes, my eyes watered. The book is so funny and each one is better than the last which means The Last Straw is the funniest so far. The author has a knack of mentioning things that kids and kids who have gotten older can all identify with. It's great. My favorite scene in this book was the gym class in which middle school students are urged by their gym teacher and other teachers to dance the Hokey Pokey! What a nightmare! What fun! Rowley is the sad sack friend who is embarrassing to be with and makes a great stooge for our hero. Mom is supposedly "hip" and so uncool that she needs to be kept in the house and not let out for activities that involve being "with it". Dad can't stay on a diet and Greg's New Year's Resolution is telling everybody else what's wrong with them! Just a wonderful book and I think that we will see more of them. This is truly a classic series and too good just to be isolated in the kids' section. Adults get your "Young Adult" reading done now! My excuse? I teach middle school.

Fantastic - as much fun as the first three. I was a real-life wimpy kid and I did end up at West Point so this installment was even more fun for me. My daughter loves this series. Jeff Kinney delivers again - the "Diary" is so funny and fast-paced that even "reading wimps" can't put the book down. The format of fun cartoon drawings and true-to-life stories that kids & adults alike can relate to make this a must-buy for your young reader. (Or adults that didn't totally grow up)

Greg Heffley, star of the Wimpy Kid books, is back in his third outing and he's brought a super-sized bag full of giggles and belly laughs with him. Just like the previous two books, he's not taking prisoners. He attacks readers, kids and adults, with commonsensical and unadulterated observations on how the world should work from a kid's point of view. Jeff Kinney, the author and

illustrator of the series, still hasn't given up his day job as a computer game designer despite the fact that all three of his books have ended up on the New York Times bestseller list. I've read interviews with him and he talks about how much he loves the job. But thankfully he also enjoys writing about the times and troubles of Greg Heffley. Much of today's 9 to 12 year old fiction centers around fantasy and magic. I enjoy a lot of those stories as well. Most kids do. But the grandest fantasy of all for a kid, and maybe for some of us who've never grown up, is our own lives. Kinney really understands that and presents Greg's story with honesty and a real imagining of the world. You don't find magical weapons or quests in the Wimpy Kid books. Well, unless of course Greg happens to be playing a role playing game with his friends (and sometimes his mom, a story you'll find in the second book). What you do get is a wonderful look into a kid's world that young readers will instantly recognize as their own and older readers will remember going through. The books don't really have plots. They meander through things and Kinney manages to link threads of stories, making gags play over and over again by raising the stakes or giving them subtle and sneaky twists. Greg's perception of self and his place in the world is amazingly dead on. Not only that, but the author hangs out his own dirty laundry (literally, when Greg goes to school and a pair of dirty underwear with his name on it falls out of his pants leg because he's too lazy to do his own laundry) on the pages. My eleven year old, who discovered the books first, got dibs on reading the book. He was home sick for the day and I took him with me to get my weekly allergy shot. I knew the book was out, had to have it, and picked it up at a local bookstore. I also picked one up for my wife's coworker's daughter. I had to share the goodness. Chandler started and finished the book on Tuesday, then went back and reread his favorite parts. Several times during both readings he would come get me and share something that was going on. Normally that would irritate me to a degree. I like to read books on my own, without previews. But the Wimpy Kid books can be read again and again. They're even better when you share them with other people. We've also been calling each other PLOOPY for the last couple of days. You'll have to read the book to understand that reference. One of the themes that Kinney returns to again and again in the book is the relationship between fathers and sons. As a father of four sons myself, I know there can be a lot of misunderstandings and disappointments. On both sides. But this book, and I don't know if Kinney intended it on purpose, presents a great argument for both sides--as well as a chance to get to understand each other. Sons need to know that their fathers were once upon a time boys like themselves, and fathers need to remember what it's like to be a boy. Boys don't really know how everything works or why everything's not about them or how they're supposed to fit in the world. And fathers...well, actually I guess that doesn't change much. Kinney provides enlightenment and

reminder in one great and funny package. The trick that the author manages to pull off so well is the presentation of serious material in a slapstick environment. People just reading the books for humor will get that, but Kinney writes so honestly that readers can't help noticing how much real life is packed into the pages. I loved Greg's plan to learn to become a jumping king by digging a hole three inches deep in his backyard then jumping out of it a hundred times. The next day he would dig the hole twice as deep and jump out of it a hundred times again. By the end of the fifth day, he hoped to be jumping like a kangaroo. Of course, any adult would realize this was ridiculous, but it only takes a father about five seconds and a good dose of honesty to realize that at Greg's age he would have believed the same thing. My wife is fourth grade teacher. She was out of town on Wednesday, but when Chandler and I talked to her, we told her about getting the new Wimpy Kid book. She was appreciative of my getting a book for her coworker's daughter, but she also asked me why I didn't pick up a copy for her class. At the time, I didn't think about it because my son and I were so involved flipping through the pages. So that went on my To-do List. Her class loves these books as well and they're always gone from her classroom library. I also told my allergy nurse about them. She has a six year old who is an aggressive reader and likes to draw. Chandler and I even showed her our copy of the book. She was going to pick them up on her way home. I tell everybody with kids about these books. They're written in a journal format, complete with lined pages. The art doodles are fantastic, simple and compelling. They're also easy enough that they can inspire the budding artist in every young kid. Young writers and artists both get a good role model to follow in these books while trying to express their own talents. The beauty of these books is that you don't have to read them in any particular order. You can pick up any one on an impulse buy and rest assured that you or your child will enjoy it. The first two are out in paperback, but I'd really recommend picking the books up in hardcover. These are books that will sit on your shelves for a long time and will be constantly reread. They're excellent gifts to give to other children or grandchildren. One thing that my son noticed that I didn't is the fact that the books each cover a season. The first book centered on Greg going back to school for the new year. The second book led up to Christmas. And the third book covers from New Year's to the end of the school semester. Kinney is contracted for at least five of the books. That leaves two more to come, but in a recent interview he stated that he may do as many as seven of the books. I hope so because I'll be sad to see the Wimpy Kid grow up and no longer share his adventures with us.

Parent Review: Diary of a Wimpy kid: The Last Straw by Jeff Kinney is the 3rd book in the series Diary of a Wimpy Kid. I've read all of the books in the series now. To be honest, I understand why

kids are drawn to them but as an adult reading them all back to back they got a bit old. As I've shared in my reviews of the other books in the series, this is one of my son's favorite book series. My son who is 10, was so happy that I read the first book and when I finished it, he lined up book 2 and 3 in the series on my nightstand. It was nice to know what he was reading and talk about the books with him. This book, continues the story of Gregory, a middle schooler who started writing a diary one summer when his mother bought him one. He's continued writing his stories and complementing them with comics. The comics definitely add a lighter, fun feel to the book and kids seem to love this part. Gregory continues to get himself into embarrassing situations and learns lessons the hard way. This book starts off on New Year's Day where he tries to help other people improve and then it ends at the start of summer vacation. His father seems to be a bit disappointed in his son's and the antics they get into. He decides that they need to learn how to be "men" and threatens to send Gregory to military school. Gregory ends up doing all he can to "bond" with his father and of course, ends up in many precarious situations and not at all what he intended in the first place. The book also details ways that Greg tries to get along with his brothers, his attempts to impress a girl named Holly in his class, and how Greg attempts to get through being placed on a soccer team he doesn't like. It's obvious in the book that Greg is doing all he can as a kid to get through life. He tends to be self centered and socially awkward and kids can definitely relate to that as well as the theme that grown ups really don't get it. I think that is a universal rule in childhood...Kids don't think that their parents or any grown ups "get it"!

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