

Jim Benton's Tales from Mackerel Middle School

# DEAR DUMB DIARY,

THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS  
AREN'T FOR

BY JAMIE KELLY

SCHOLASTIC inc.

New York Toronto London Auckland  
Sydney Mexico City New Delhi Hong Kong



THIS DIARY  
PROPERTY  
OF  
Jamie Kelly

SCHOOL: Mackerel Middle School

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BEST FRIEND: Isabellg, who I  
**CHOSE** as a friend and who  
wasn't **JAMMED** down my throat.

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FAVORITE MONSTER: probably a  
werewolf because it's closest  
to a Yorkshire Terrier.

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How to tell if somebody is your  
friend: You can't.

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HEY!

DO NOT READ  
MY DIARY!!

A FRIEND  
WOULD NEVER  
DO THAT!!!

AND if you're NOT  
my friend...

guess WHAT?

**BOOM!** Now  
you **ARE!**

SO STOP  
READING  
**THIS!**



Dear Whoever Is Reading My Dumb Diary,

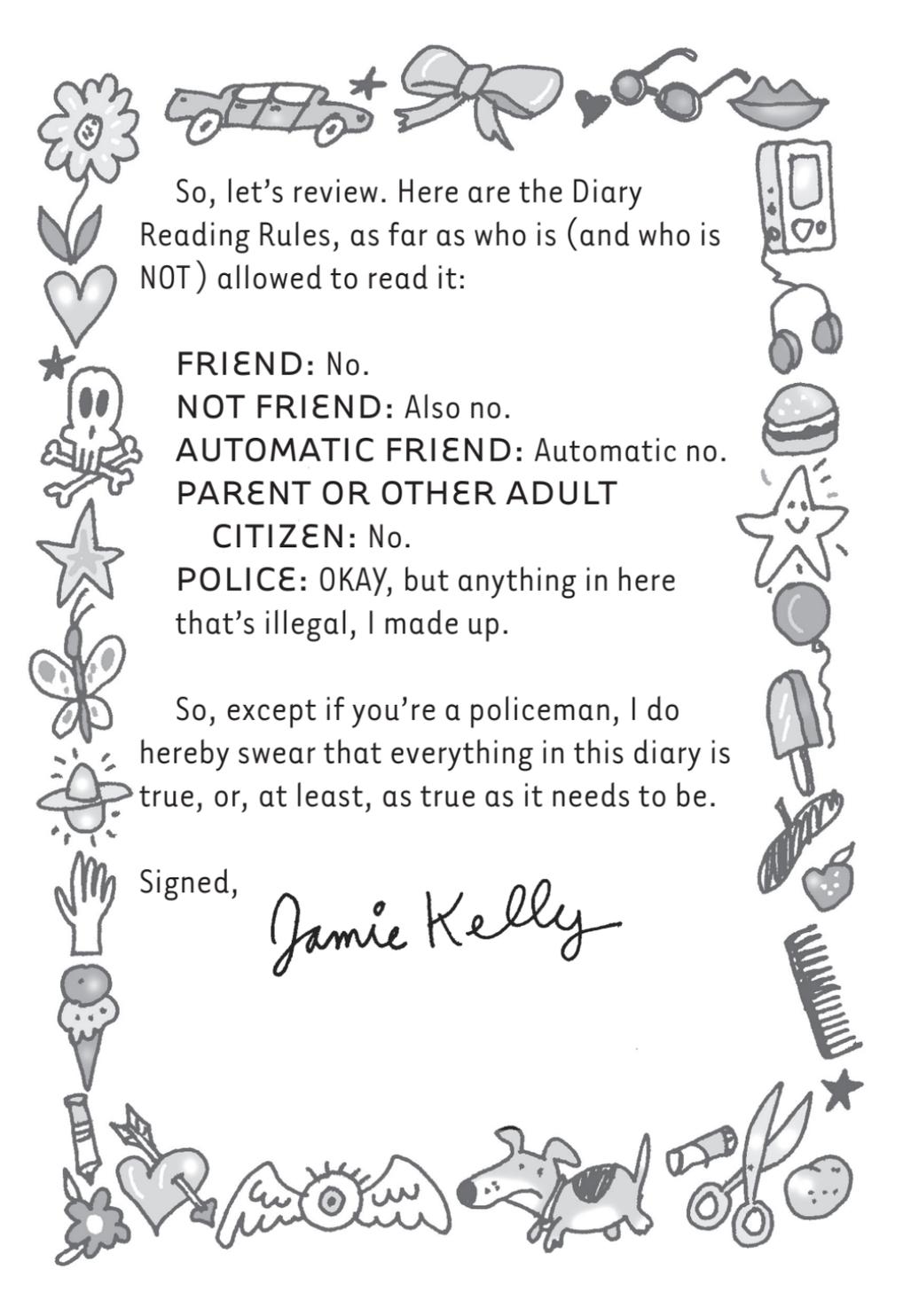
Are you sure you're supposed to be reading somebody else's diary? I mean, that's not very **friendly**, is it?

Even if you were my friend, that wouldn't give you the right to read it. In fact, I think it would give you even less of a right, because there are certain rules of friendfulness that friends are obligated to follow.

And if you aren't my friend, reading my **IMPORTANT PERSONAL PRIVATE** stuff isn't going to make me want you for a friend.

If you are one of those people that has automatically become my friend because of some sort of situation I was involuntarily put in, you are also **AUTOMATICALLY** not allowed to read my diary.





So, let's review. Here are the Diary Reading Rules, as far as who is (and who is NOT) allowed to read it:

**FRIEND:** No.

**NOT FRIEND:** Also no.

**AUTOMATIC FRIEND:** Automatic no.

**PARENT OR OTHER ADULT**

**CITIZEN:** No.

**POLICE:** OKAY, but anything in here that's illegal, I made up.

So, except if you're a policeman, I do hereby swear that everything in this diary is true, or, at least, as true as it needs to be.

Signed,

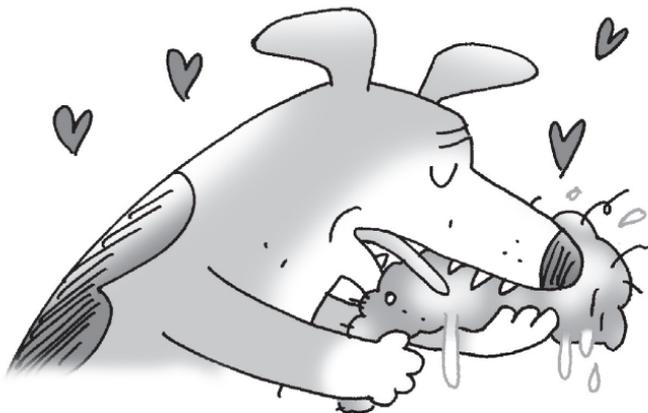
*Jamie Kelly*

# Sunday 01

Dear Dumb Diary,

You know how in movies when people are in love they kiss like they're trying to get something that's stuck in each other's teeth? My dog Stinker has this toy he likes to kiss passionately like that. Or maybe he's chewing it, I don't know. It's hard to tell. There's a lot of **mouth action** and some obvious deep feelings.

Movie people manage to keep the foam to a minimum during these scenes, a policy that is not shared by Stinker. It's probably because those actors are just *pretending* to care about each other. Stinker's gross devotion is sincere.



I call this toy of his **Grossnasty**. None of us know what it was when it started out — could have been a teddy bear, could have been a pair of undies. But anything that a beagle **Loves Up** this much for years and years takes on an appearance that can't be understood by the human brain. Such is the power of Beagle Froth.

Recently, when the wet, slobbery chewing sound and dog-saliva odor became too much for me to endure, I decided to throw Grossnasty away. I walked right up to Stinker with a trash can, stooped down, and touched the horrid toy by its ear or waistband or whatever.



And Stinker **EXPLODED** into this snapping, growling, spitty ball of fury that actually scared me enough to make me jump up on my dresser. (He looked just like the werewolf in that one werewolf movie I totally want to see.)

Fortunately, I maintain a very cluttered room, and I had numerous knickknacks within reach to hurl at him until he backed down. If my room had been as tidy as my mom wants it, there is a very good chance that I would have been swallowed by an enraged beagle.



People. For safety's sake, KEEP A MESSY ROOM.

In addition to old fat beagle Stinker, we now also own his **dogdaughter**, Stinkette, who we got by means of Stinker's unapproved marriage to Angeline's dog, Stickybuns. (Why am I telling you all this again, Diary? You remember this, don't you?)

Back to Stinkette: This morning, Stinkette stupidly waddled up to Stinker — who was really going to town on his beloved Grossnasty — and she chomped down on it and tugged.

I instantly leaped up on my dresser with a ceramic bear bank aimed directly at Stinker's fangs. I was ready for him to launch into fat werewolf-dog mode, but he did . . . nothing.

In fact, he even wagged his tail a little. (He never wags his tail, so it cracked like a bunch of old knuckles.) Then Stinkette pulled Grossnasty away from him, hopped up on my bed, and started to grossfully chew on it herself. Stinker actually ***gave his dogdaughter the single item he loved most in the whole world.*** Something suddenly became very clear to me: *I really want to burn that bedspread now.*

Also: *Stinker is a bigger dope than I thought.*



Oops. Just remembered I was supposed to call Isabella to come over and study math today. She's afraid she might fail and have to take summer school.

It's not like I can help her very much. I'm just not very good at math. It always seems so cold and unemotional to me.

The teacher says that **Two** plus **Three** equals **Five**, but nobody asked the poor little number **Two** if she even wanted to get added up with **Three**, and now that **Two** and **Three** equaled **Five** together, are they supposed to be lifelong friends or something? Just because some mathematician said so? And maybe it's just me, but **Seven** always looks like he's up to no good.

I hate math.

IF WE JUST STOP COUNTING, WE  
WON'T EVEN NEED MATH—



iPOD

PRICE:

SEVERAL LARGE  
HANDFULS OF MONEY.

IT'S  
SO  
SIMPLE!



BANANAS

PRICE:

A TINY BABY'S  
HANDFUL OF MONEY