

Jim Benton's Tales from Mackerel Middle School

DEAR DUMB DIARY,

ME! (JUST LIKE YOU,
ONLY BETTER)

BY JAMIE KELLY

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For Griffin, Summer, and Mary K

*Thanks to Kristen LeClerc and to the
team at Scholastic: Shannon Penney,
Steve Scott, Elizabeth Krych, Susan Jeffers,
and Anna Bloom. You all make me just
like me, only better.*

THIS DIARY

property of

Jamie Kelly

SPECIAL TALENT - MUSIC CHOOSING,
ART, ALL OTHER KNOWN TALENTS

LIKES - MUSIC, MYSELF, ME

DISLIKES - COPYCATS UNLESS THEY
ARE REAL CATS.

DON'T
READ
MY DIARY!



I know you're just
trying to figure
out how to
be like me...
well, here's a TIP..

THERE'S
NOTHING I LIKE
BETTER THAN
NOT READING
SOMEBODY'S DIARY.

ALSO, If I
ever thought about doing
it, I'd get her a REALLY
GREAT Present for her
Birthday which is
coming up....



Dear Whoever Is Reading My Dumb Diary,

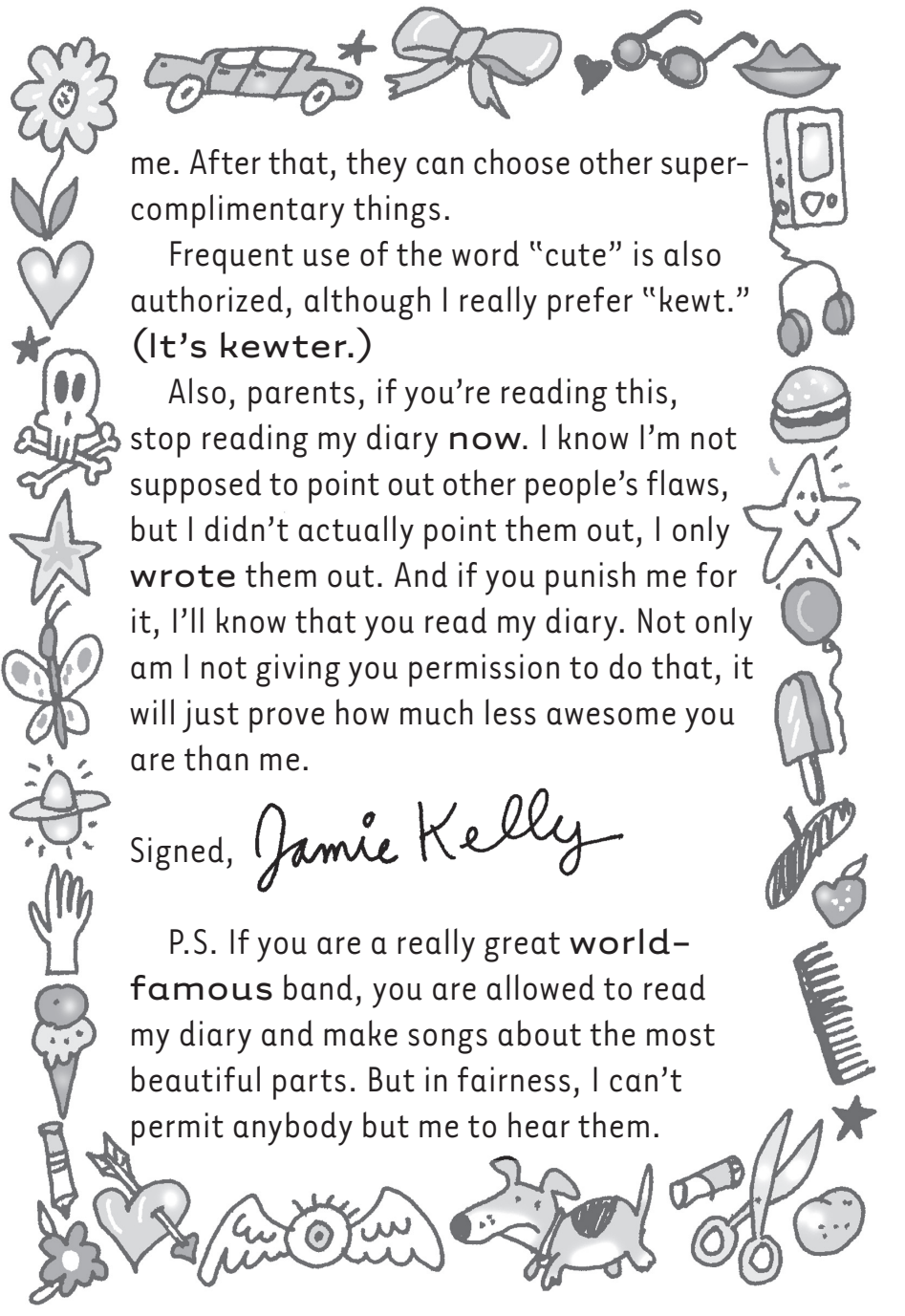
Stop it.

I know you're hoping to read my diary and find out what it is about me that makes me so awesome.

And you probably want to steal my beauty secrets, like how not trying to be beautiful all the time makes me beautifuller. Or how I always discover the best bands before anybody else does.

Or maybe you're hoping to get a glimpse of my **supersecret** art secrets, like how I make glitter stick to things. (Okay, maybe that one is not that secret, but I do have other things about me that are way greater than they need to be.)

"Way Greater Than She Needs To Be." I'm getting older now, and I need to think about the future. So I officially authorize that saying to be engraved on the first twenty large statues people create of



me. After that, they can choose other super-complimentary things.

Frequent use of the word “cute” is also authorized, although I really prefer “kewt.” (It’s kewter.)

Also, parents, if you’re reading this, stop reading my diary **now**. I know I’m not supposed to point out other people’s flaws, but I didn’t actually point them out, I only **wrote** them out. And if you punish me for it, I’ll know that you read my diary. Not only am I not giving you permission to do that, it will just prove how much less awesome you are than me.

Signed, *Jamie Kelly*

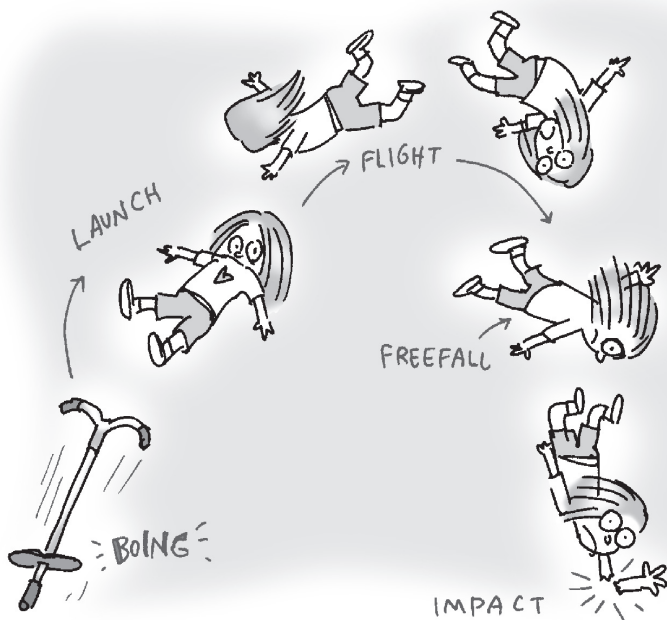
P.S. If you are a really great **world-famous** band, you are allowed to read my diary and make songs about the most beautiful parts. But in fairness, I can’t permit anybody but me to hear them.

Sunday 01

Dear Dumb Diary,

One year I asked for a puppy for my birthday, but my dad got me a pogo stick instead. I went out to the driveway to try it out, but I fell and broke my wrist.

When we got back from the emergency room, my dad felt so bad that he went out and **bought** me a puppy.



I was so happy that I threw my arms wide open to give the puppy a hug and accidentally hit my dad in the face with my cast and **broke his nose**.

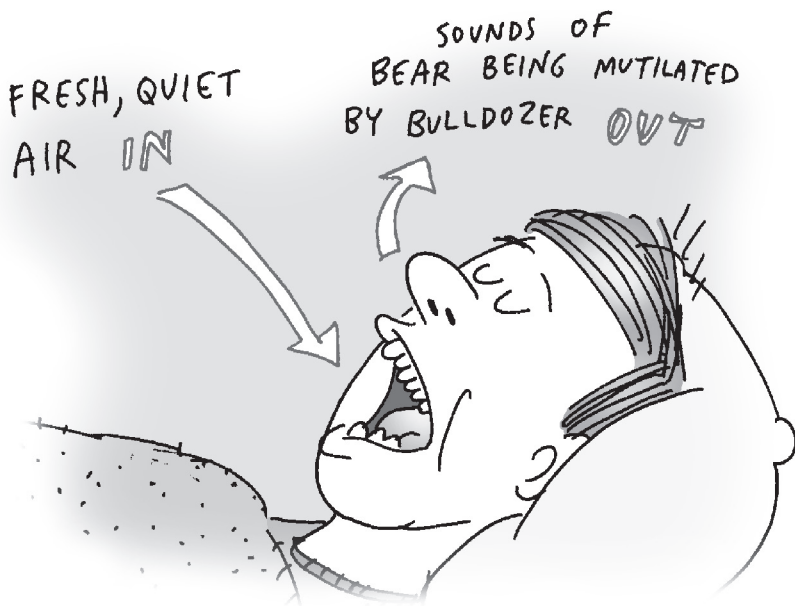
When he got back from the emergency room, I tried to make him feel better by being outside in the driveway playing with the pogo stick, but I was even clumsier with my cast on and I lost control of it again. At least that time I didn't fall and break anything.

But I did put a **six-inch scratch** in his new car.



Soon the puppy decayed into the lumpy, toadish bucket of unpleasantness we know as Stinker, who recently fathered a smaller version of his stinky self we know as Stinkette. The pogo stick remains unused in the garage and we never see it anymore, except for the five times it has gone unsold at garage sales. Dad never got the scratch fixed, and his nose still makes an awful noise when he snores.

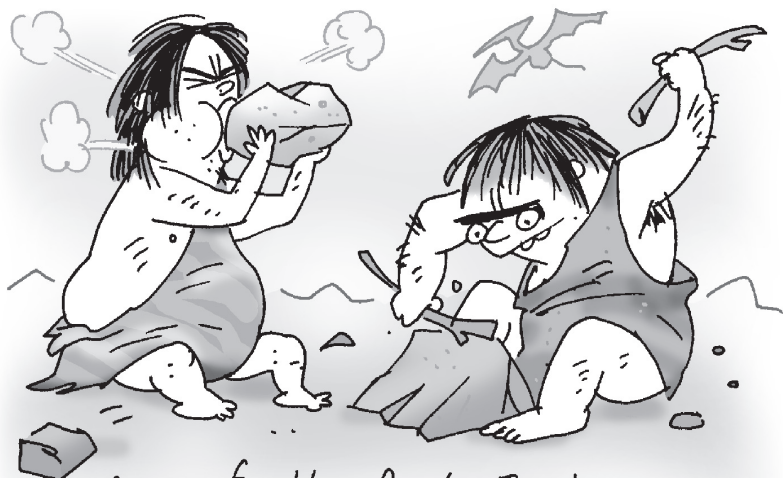
The moral of this birthday story is this: Getting what you ask for can be the **worst thing** that ever happened to you. Also, not getting it can be the worst.



The reason I bring up this tragic story is that my birthday is coming up soon, and this one is going to be very different from “**Broken-arm Birthday.**” (Or, as it is also known, “Swear-swear-swear-nose-swear Birthday.”)

It's going to be the best birthday ever because I'm only asking for music, and I'm pretty sure Dad won't try to swap in a pogo stick or any of the other dangerous substitutions he's attempted over the years. My guess: gift certificate.

Plus, this year I was prepared. My parents are old and therefore only like music that was recorded before people got good at it, but I made it very clear that I want **MY** favorite music and not theirs.



One of the Rock Bands my
parents listened to

Also — **BONUS!** — they said I can have a party, and figuring out who you want to invite and exclude is super-fun.

Birthdays Past

WHAT I ASKED FOR	WHAT I RECEIVED
 A koala Bear	 A teddy Bear
 A Narwhal	 A sardine with a toothpick in its head (thanks, Isabella)
 Six-inch heels	A Lecture from Dad