

Jim Benton's Tales from Mackerel Middle School

DEAR DUMB DIARY,



**THE SUPER-NICE ARE
SUPER-ANNOYING**

BY JAMIE KELLY

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*For my family, who are always
paradigms of good manners
and junk.*

*Special thanks to the delicate and
well-mannered creatures of grace at
Scholastic: Shannon Penney, Anna Bloom,
Jackie Hornberger, and Yaffa Jaskoll.
And thanks to Kristen LeClerc for her
clean, polite assistance.*

You are
cordially invited

TO STOP
READING
MY
DIARY



IF
YOU CAN'T
ACCEPT THAT
INVITATION,

I'd like
to offer you
an invitation to
the **EMERGENCY ROOM**

PLEASE MAKE
YOUR CHOICE.

THIS DIARY PROPERTY OF:

Jamie Kelly

SCHOOL: MACKEREL MIDDLE SCHOOL

FAVORITE FOOD:

~~SPAGHETTI~~

~~SOMETHING
ELSE~~

GRADES: GOOD. PRETTY GOOD. I'M TRYING.

HAIR: LIKE

~~SPAGHETTI~~

~~EW EW EW
SOMETHING ELSE~~



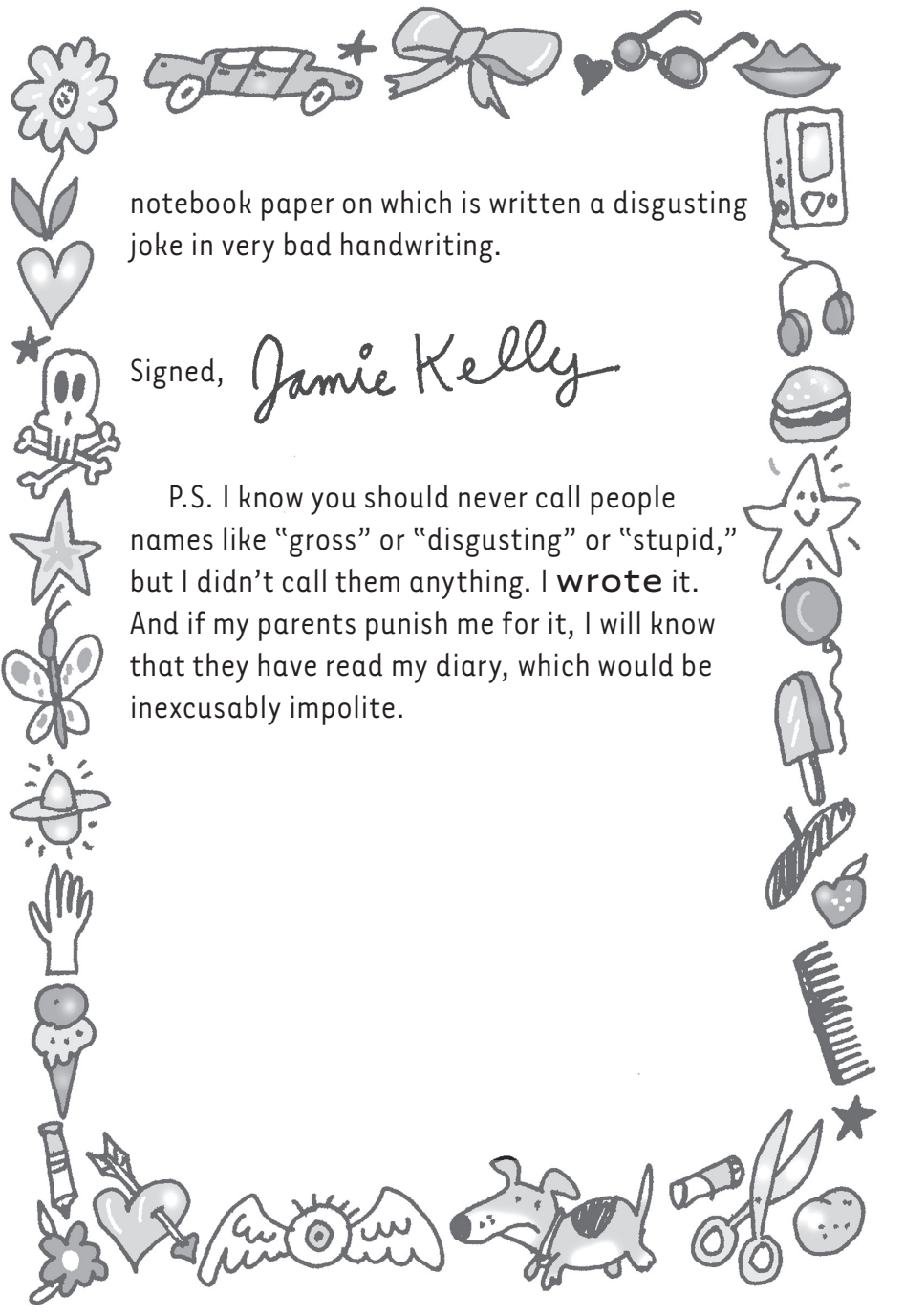
Dear Whoever Is Reading My Dumb Diary,

Do you have any idea how **RUDE** you look, with your nose in somebody else's diary? What do you think we'll think of you and your nose now? We certainly won't ever invite you to smell something polite, like a bouquet of roses or an opera.

Honestly, how do you think that appears to others? Do you think that's **nice**? (And, hey, sit up straight.)

And whatever you do, don't get all super-apologetic about it now, because we find that pretty annoying as well.

Politeness Experts worldwide agree that reading somebody's diary isn't just like chewing with your mouth open, it's like chewing with your mouth open in your underpants with your bare feet in the soup bowl and a finger up your nose, and what you're chewing is a piece of raw chicken wrapped up in an old piece of



notebook paper on which is written a disgusting
joke in very bad handwriting.

Signed, *Jamie Kelly*

P.S. I know you should never call people
names like "gross" or "disgusting" or "stupid,"
but I didn't call them anything. I **wrote** it.
And if my parents punish me for it, I will know
that they have read my diary, which would be
inexcusably impolite.

SUNDAY 01

Dear Dumb Diary,

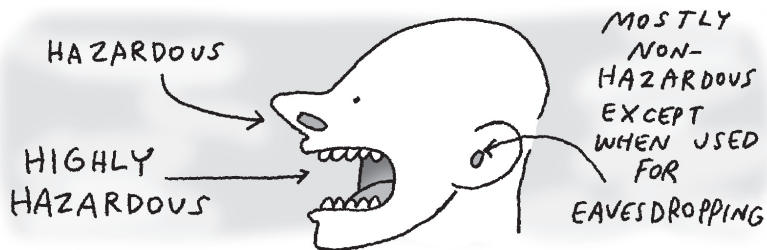
You probably don't believe that a nostril can do you harm. You're **wrong** about that.

My favorite show of all time, in addition to my other favorite shows of all time, is on TV right now. But I'm up in my room, unable to watch it because of a nostril.

I know what you're thinking, Dumb Diary. You're thinking, *Jamie, the nostrils are some of the **least destructive** of the head holes.*

Sure, the mouth is the most destructive head hole by far, with its ability to both bite **and** whistle songs badly, but nostrils are hazardous in ways you may not be able to imagine.

Also, Dumb Diary, you're probably thinking something about how nice my eyes look tonight. **Kisses!**



Oh, Dumb Diary, you have **SO** much to learn about nostrils. You know a lot about eyes and how nice they can look, but you'd get a C in nostrils.

And since we're discussing the subject of getting something in nostrils, let me tell you about Friday. I'll tell you in the least horrible way I can:

At lunch, Pinsetti laughed until a spaghetti noodle **came out his nose**. It just dangled there for a moment, and it was incredibly disgusting, but I also found myself staring at it, imagining for a moment that maybe a mouse was preparing to descend a tiny rope.

Isabella, who has mean older brothers and therefore no longer reacts to the brain chemical that causes **disgust** to occur, reached over, slowly drew the entire spaghetti noodle out of Pinsetti's nostril, and laid it gently on the back of my unsuspecting hand.

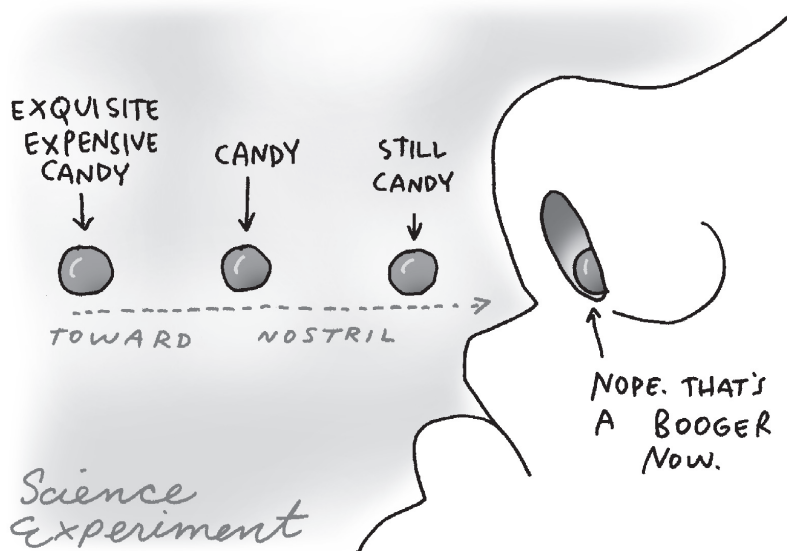


Two thoughts race through your head at a moment like this. The first one is:
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEWWWWWWW!

While it's true that the pasta entered Pinsetti's mouth as spaghetti, and spaghetti — even cafeteria spaghetti — is one of my all-time favorite foods, once an object exits through a nostril, it is transformed into booger. This is just science, plain and simple. It works for anything. Put a raisin into your nose for even **one second**, then pull it back out, and it becomes booger.

Look, if you don't believe me, why don't you go ahead and eat that raisin?

You won't: It's booger now.

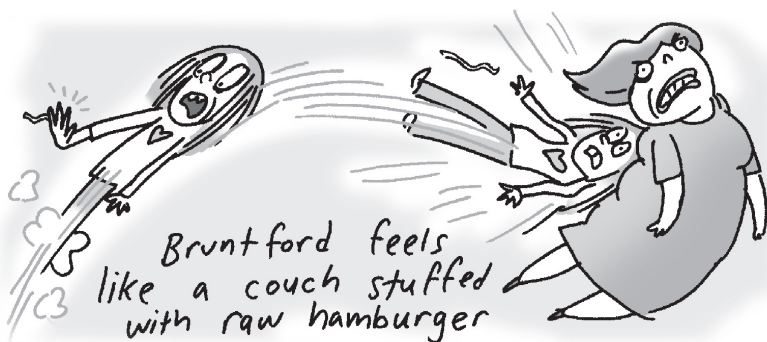


The second thought that goes through your head at a moment like this is: I bet I can fly upward and backward, away from this spaghetti noodle, just by flapping my arms in a panic.

Nobody can really fly, of course, but that won't stop you from trying. All that you'll really do is shoot backward out of your chair hard enough to crash into the cafeteria monitor, Miss Bruntford. This will send her **toppling over**, causing her to make the sound of a meteor hitting the Earth, if the meteor was made out of an enormous mass of very wet ham.

I'm not saying any of this was her fault, but let's face it: She is expecting a little much from those tiny heels she wears. It's like trying to balance a bowling ball on a pair of chopsticks.

Anyway, everything after that is kind of a blur. I think I spent the rest of lunch hour scrubbing Pinsetti's nose residue off my hand.



Of course, Dad made spaghetti for dinner tonight, which normally would be a huge relief, because **ANYTHING OTHER THAN MOM'S COOKING** is one of my favorite foods. But even though I really wanted to eat it, I **couldn't**. Because now, for me, spaghetti isn't spaghetti anymore. Now spaghetti is a product of Pinsetti's nostril.

We got into an argument about dinner, and I got sent to my room. I may have referred to the meal as booger without explaining what happened on Friday, and I may have screamed it, and I may have shoved the plate away from me, and I may have screamed it a few more times.

So I'm missing my TV show. I blame Pinsetti's nostril, and somehow I feel that Isabella may have to share some of the blame as well.



But it's easy to misunderstand Isabella. Once when I thought she had stolen my dessert, she explained that it was just something called **SURPRISE SHARING.**