

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel Study Guide

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel by Jeff Kinney

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Plot Summary

“Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel” is a young adult novel by Jeff Kinney which follows the misadventures of middle-schooler Greg Heffley as he attempts to adjust to his Uncle Gary moving in, and finding a date for the Valentine’s Day Dance. It is the seventh installment in the “Wimpy Kid” series by Kinney. When the novel begins, Greg’s primary concern is dealing with his Uncle Gary moving in after Uncle Gary’s most recent failed business venture. Uncle Gary had borrowed money from Greg’s dad, Frank, to buy a Boston t-shirt stand. However, all of the t-shirts were misspelled, saying “Botson” instead of “Boston”. As a result, Uncle Gary is broke and needs a place to crash. At Greg’s mom’s insistence, Gary stays with the family.

Frank continually urges Gary to get a job, save money, and move out. Gary is more concerned with playing video games and sleeping on the couch in the living room, making it impossible for Greg to ever hang out there. Greg is also annoyed by the fact that his mom gives Gary an allowance without requiring Gary to do any chores. Greg is also annoyed by the dance unit that comes up in gym, because there aren’t enough girls for all the guys to be partners with. As a result, Greg must partner with another guy – an unpleasant thing for both of them.

At the same time, Vice Principal Roy announces that there will be special elections for student council, and all elected student positions. It is revealed that the existing student government skipped all their meetings to enjoy recess instead. Greg, ineligible to run because he has three detentions to his name, instead convinces his best friend Rowley to run. Greg intends Rowley to be a puppet politician, allowing Greg to make the real decisions behind the scenes. Rowley agrees to this, running for the position of Social Chairperson. He wins because no one runs against him. Eugene Ellis wins the presidency on a promise to stock all school bathrooms with soft toilet tissue.

After Eugene is elected, Mrs. Birch, the student council advisor, explains this will not be possible due to the cost. Eugene then confronts Mrs. Birch with the revelation that the teachers’ bathrooms are stocked with soft toilet tissue. Mrs. Birch agrees to a compromise: she allows students to bring in their own toilet paper from home. But this leads to a toilet paper fight, and makes the students in school realize if they want something, they will have to pay for it themselves. The student council decides on a Valentine’s Day Dance to raise funds. Greg spends the next few weeks doing all he can to round up a gorgeous date, but no girl will go with him. Greg even takes advice from Uncle Gary, dressing cooler and making it look like he is well-liked, but this does not work either.

Greg takes on Rowley as a wingman so the two can help each other find dates. Rowley ultimately reports that Abigail Brown is recently available. Since Greg doesn’t know Abigail well, he has Rowley suggest to her that the three of them go to the dance as a group. Abigail happily agrees. Greg hopes he will be able to keep Rowley at a distance in order to romance Abigail. At Rowley’s house, Greg is scared to see Rowley breaking out with chicken pox. He has Rowley wear a scarf and beach hat to cover them up.



They then go to pick Abigail up. Abigail hits it off with Rowley, much to Greg's annoyance.

At the dance, Abigail's original date shows up with another girl. This causes drama, and causes Abigail to burst into tears. Greg decides to dance with her to make her feel better and get closer to her, but freaks out when he sees a red spot on her chin, thinking it is chicken pox. It turns out only to be a pimple. It turns out that Rowley also does not have chicken pox, but merely acne. Greg ends up coming down with chicken pox, however. He learns that Rowley and Abigail become a couple, but he is thrilled when Uncle Gary wins \$40,000 from a lottery ticket, and moves out.



Section 1: Pages 1 – 45

Summary

It is January. Greg wishes he would have begun keeping a journal earlier in his life so whoever writes his biography one day will have all their questions answered. While Greg's mom, Susan, is pregnant with him, she reads to him, plays music for him, and speaks to him through a microphone and headphones. Greg remembers how, after being born, almost everything he received was an ill-used hand-me-down from older brother Rodrick. Greg remembers also quickly learning how to handle his parents, such as removing the batteries from the remote so he wouldn't be forced to watch educational programming. All attempts to jumpstart Greg's education and intelligence end up backfiring. As a result, Greg's parents do not follow the same path with Manny, giving Manny greater freedoms.

Manny has many imaginary friends, which enables him to get extra dessert after dinner. It also means a longer waiting time for Greg to get into the bathroom. Greg isn't allowed to tell Manny his friends aren't real, or his mom thinks Manny may become traumatized. Greg's mom declares that the family will now have Family Night, where the family spends time together rather than watching TV. They go to Corny's Family-Style Restaurant, where they must sit in the messy Children's Alley due to Manny's age. Greg's mom hopes Manny will learn to play with real kids at the ball pit at Corny's.

For the New Year, Greg's family sets the clock ahead by three hours so Manny can experience New Year's without actually staying up late. Greg isn't aware of the clock plan, so he goes to sleep three hours early – and ends being off in his schedule by three hours for weeks. While up early doing chores, Greg hears a knock at the door. It is Uncle Gary.

Analysis

"Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel" is a young adult novel by Jeff Kinney which follows the misadventures of middle-schooler Greg Heffley. "The Third Wheel" is the seventh installment in Kinney's "Wimpy Kid" series. When the novel begins, family emerges as an important theme. Greg traces the history of his life from being in the womb to the present day. His parents hoped that Greg would be very intelligent and motivated, and so made sure to help create the potential for a strong and sound mind. It is clear through their efforts just how much they love Greg, and want him to succeed. However, their efforts do not yield the intended result, for Greg is more prone to misadventures than intelligent courses of action. (Here, the theme of unexpected results can be glimpsed.) That Greg's family institutes a family night is also evidence of the closeness they are striving for – even if it doesn't always go as planned.



Family is also a strong theme in this first section of the novel as it relates to Greg's older brother, Rodrick, and his younger brother, Manny. Rodrick, like Greg, is largely unaffected by his initial upbringing. With Manny, Frank and Sue take a different approach. They give Manny greater freedoms and indulge him more often than they ever did for Greg. Though he knows his parents love him, Greg often feels slighted as a result (and here, the theme of being third wheel emerges subtly). Greg knows that Manny gets away with more than he ever could – including his parents pretending that Manny's imaginary friends are actually real. This flat-out annoys Greg.

Much of what his parents do to care for Manny as Manny grows annoys Greg. Greg's annoyance stems in large part from jealousy over the good treatment that his brother gets, and part stems from the fact that Greg, as family, is forced to deal with the consequences of how his parents are raising Manny. For example, on New Year's Eve, they set the clocks ahead three hours so many can have the experience of New Year's – but do not tell Greg. As a result, Greg is off on his schedule for three hours for weeks. It is a sweet thing for them to do, but is yet another thing which aggravates Greg. Yet, it is because of being up three hours early that Greg is aware of the knock on his door, and the entrance of Uncle Gary.

Discussion Question 1

Why do Greg's parents raise Manny differently than they tried to raise Greg or Rodrick? How does Greg feel about this? Why?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Greg have to pretend that Manny's invisible friends are real? If you were in Greg's place, would you go along with the pretending? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Do you believe Greg is justified in being annoyed at the way his parents are raising Manny? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

genius, affectionate, deprived, interacts, traumatized



Section 2: Pages 45 – 92

Summary

Greg's dad, Frank, is not happy to see Gary, his younger brother. Gary is not good with money, and even worse paying people back. At Susan's insistence about being family, Greg's dad loaned Gary money a few weeks before for a "once-in-a-lifetime" business opportunity. The opportunity was a t-shirt concession stand. But all the t-shirts misspelled "Boston" as "Botson". Gary now needs a place to stay and regroup. Frank is not happy about this, but Susan invites him to stay. Gary moves in with numerous boxes of misspelled t-shirts. Uncle Gary isn't easy to live with. He has nightmares about monkeys in the walls, and sleeps on the couch through the day. Frank encourages Gary to get a job. Gary's last job was as a pepper spray test subject, which did not last long. Frank is annoyed Gary has no money. Susan has been giving him an allowance, but not requiring Gary to do chores, which makes Greg unhappy. Gary wastes all his money on scratch-off lottery tickets.

In gym class at school, the students are required to pick partners for the dance unit. Greg does not want to be paired up with Ruby Bird, a scary girl infamous for biting Mr. Underwood so hard one of her teeth came out in his arm. Greg even prays about it. Fortunately, Ruby is paired with Fregley, another weird kid. There aren't enough girls, so the boys are paired off.

Vice Principal Roy announces a special election to replace the existing student council, who skipped all the meetings to play during recess. But because Greg has three detentions to his name, he cannot run for office. Greg then encourages Rowley, who has never had detention, to run as a puppet for his own decisions and ideas. Rowley agrees, and puts his name down for Social Chairperson. Greg will be his campaign manager as well. During the next assembly, candidates give speeches for office. Eugene Ellis only has one promise: to replace cheap toilet paper in the bathrooms with the expensive, quilted kind. He wins in a landslide. Rowley is also elected. Word soon comes that the teachers say quilted toilet paper is too expensive, leaving Eugene's promise on the ropes.

Analysis

The theme of family remains strong in this section of the novel. Gary is Frank's younger, irresponsible brother. Gary is no good with money, and has fallen on hard times yet again. While Frank has been reluctant to lend Gary money, and is reluctant to allow Gary to move in, Susan is completely for both. Susan believes that family members must always help one another out, no matter what. It is a sweet and loyal thought, and is very consistent with the purposes of family. However, this does not stop Frank from being annoyed, especially given the fact that he is always the one having to bail Gary out.



However annoyed Frank may be, he does love Gary, and he does know his wife is right when she says that family must watch out for one another. Gary moves in, but immediately, gets on the nerves of the family. For example, his sleeping on the couch in the living room ruins the one hang-out spot everyone has. Likewise, Greg is annoyed with the fact that Gary gets an allowance, yet doesn't have to do chores. Still, the family makes do. Sometimes the strongest mark of a family is the ability to put up with, and help out someone with whom they disagree. This is certainly the case for Gary.

At school, Greg is further annoyed with the dance unit in Gym. Here, the very beginnings of the theme of romance can be seen. Greg, though he hates the dance unit, hopes nevertheless to be paired up with a beautiful girl, or even any girl except the crazy Ruby Bird. By now, it is clear that Greg is routinely noticing girls, and his desire to be partnered with a beautiful girl will continue through the rest of the novel, especially as the Valentine's Day Dance approaches.

It is also through school that Greg's friendship with Rowley is first glimpsed. Rowley plays a sidekick to Greg's lead, but the two friends are close. They may argue and have disagreements a lot, but neither would rather do without the other. Greg, however, selfishly uses his being best friends with Rowley to convince Rowley to run for office, so that Rowley can be a puppet politician with Greg pulling all the strings behind the scenes. Rowley, out of friendship, agrees to do this.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Frank, despite his reservations, allow Gary to move in? Would you have done the same thing? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Do you agree or disagree with Susan's statement that family members must always help each other out? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

What makes living with Gary so difficult? How do members of the family work around Greg in order to attempt to keep their lives as normal as possible? Are they successful? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

inconvenient, affected, concentrate, intimidating, candidates, berserk



Section 3: Pages 93 – 135

Summary

February rolls around. During the student council meeting on Monday, Treasurer Javan Hill reveals the teachers are using Pillow-Soft Ultra toilet paper. President Eugene Ellis then confronts Mrs. Birch with this information. Birch agrees to a compromise: students may bring in their own rolls from home. It is a victory for Eugene and the student body. However, during lunch, a toilet paper fight is started. Vice Principal Roy then imposes a five-sheet-a-day limit. Greg has a stash of twenty toilet paper rolls in his locker, and he is worried about a random search since the teachers are conducting them each day. Greg decides to hide his in a stall at school, locking it from the inside so no one else can get in. He ends up turning the stall into a little apartment with comics and a radio but is ultimately found out by kids who want better toilet paper.

The students learn that if they want something, they will have to pay for it and have it done through the school. The student council brainstorms fundraising ideas, and ultimately settles on a Valentine's Day Dance with a \$3 admission fee. Word spreads throughout the school, and the girls are especially excited. Rowley, as the Social Chairperson, is made a part of the Dance Committee. Candy Gram invitations are then sent out, where students ask one another to the Dance. Because there are more guys than girls at school, the guys panic about making sure to get female dates. They do their best to behave more maturely.

A week later, Greg has not received a Candy Gram. Uncle Gary tells Greg to make himself look good by buying Candy Grams for himself, which Greg does. It has no results. Greg sends out Candy Grams to girls, but this doesn't work, either. Uncle Gary suggests a wingman, so Greg chooses Rowley. Greg and Rowley agree to help each other, but to start with Greg. Rowley tells Greg that Alyssa Grove has just broken up with her boyfriend, so Greg calls her but can't leave a good message. He and Rowley end up goofing around, after which Mr. Grove comes to complain about all the messages on his machine. Uncle Gary suggests an updated wardrobe, but Greg's mom won't fund this, insisting kids focus too much on appearances. Greg's dad says he can wear his old leather jacket and aviator sunglasses, but Greg's mom says no because it sends the wrong message and isn't a winter coat. Greg wears it anyway, but gets very cold on the way to school.

Analysis

What began with a desire for better toilet paper teaches the kids of the student body and student council greater responsibility, and paves the way for the Valentine's Day Dance. This dance will prove instrumental to the theme of romance as the novel unfolds. The reader should bear in mind the panic caused among the boys by the approaching dance. No guy is particularly interested in the dance itself, but in securing a



beautiful date. Greg is no different. He has romantic aspirations, hoping not only to have an attractive date, but obviously to become a couple as well.

Greg's initial attempts at securing a date are unsuccessful. For advice in romance, Greg turns to Uncle Gary. Here, family remains a strong theme. Gary loves his nephew, and wants to help Greg out in finding a date for the Dance. Greg, desperate for help in finding a date, decides to take Gary's advice. Gary, surprisingly, gives Greg some good advice – from maintaining a good style to making himself look like he is in high demand – but Greg is unable to make these suggestions pay off. For example, his attempts to make himself look like a hot commodity involve sending himself numerous Candy Grams – but interesting no girl in the process. These results are unexpected to Greg, and here, the theme of unexpected results can be seen taking stronger shape.

Other unexpected results come through Greg's taking on Rowley as a wingman. The two best friends agree to help each other find dates, but Greg insists on going first. Rowley, owing to his friendship and duties as a wingman, helps Greg to track down Alyssa Grove as a potential date. However, Greg's overtures at romance fail when he cannot leave a good message on her answering machine. Things get worse when Greg and Rowley start goofing around, filling up the Groves' answering machine with dumb messages. Rather than getting Alyssa to laugh or even intriguing her, Alyssa's father comes over to the house to explain. Yet, Greg is not deterred in his decision to seek out romance.

Discussion Question 1

What compromise is reached when the students learn that the teachers are using soft toilet tissue? Do the students live up to their end of the compromise? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Greg's attempts at finding a date are unsuccessful, so he turns to Uncle Gary for advice. What advice does Gary give Greg? Is the advice itself good? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Greg seeks to use the advice that Uncle Gary gives him to find a date to the dance. Is Greg able to successfully apply Gary's advice? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

overboard, madhouse, brainstormed, squeamishly, wingman, petition



Section 4: Pages 137 – 181

Summary

Greg receives positive attention for his leather jacket and sunglasses, but his mom ruins everything by coming to school and taking the jacket and glasses home. She then gives him her coat to wear home, news of which spreads around school quickly. Greg decides to find a girl from church to ask. He decides to ask Laurel Stringer, and goes through great means to impress her when she and her family come over for dinner. For example, he pretends to like his mom's cream of mushroom chicken and asparagus. He even volunteers to babysit the Stringers' toddler, Wesley, to get in good with Laurel's parents.

When Greg babysits Wesley, however, things go wrong quickly. Wesley rides his bike in the house, tearing the place up. Greg attempts to catch Wesley by surprise by going outside and climbing in through the window, but he ends up in Laurel's room. Freezing cold, he snuggles up in Laurel's bed – where her parents find him as they come home. Word then comes that Abigail Brown's date Michael can't go due to family reasons. Because Greg and Abigail don't really know each other, he tells Rowley to suggest that he, Rowley, and Abigail go as a group of friends. Rowley agrees. Greg hopes that dinner beforehand will allow him and Abigail to get closer, and then go to the dance as a date – leaving Rowley as a third wheel. Abigail agrees to the group idea, and Rowley's dad agrees to drive.

Uncle Gary suggests wearing a suit to the dance. Greg agrees, and wears some of his dead Great Uncle Bruce's cologne. Rowley, however, has the beginnings of chicken pox. If Rowley cannot go, his dad will not drive, and the entire evening will be ruined. Greg puts a scarf and beach hat on Rowley to cover visible chicken pox. They then pick Abigail up. But with a booster seat in back, only Rowley and Alice can fit there. Greg must sit in the very back. Rowley and Abigail get along very well, but Greg can't hear over the talk radio Rowley's dad has on. They ultimately end up at Corny's when Rowley and Abigail insist on going there. It annoys Greg to see them taking the same side.

Analysis

In this section of the novel, Greg continues to follow Uncle Gary's advice by heading to school in an old leather jacket and sunglasses belonging to his dad. Greg makes quite the splash. With his father's permission to borrow the jacket on Gary's advice, it appears to be a solid family win for the Heffley men. Family here proves to be a wonderful and very positive thing. Greg feels stylish, looks stylish, and indeed attracts attention. Unfortunately, his well-meaning but horribly-timed mother believes the attention being attracted is the wrong kind, so she goes to school to bring home the jacket and glasses, leaving her own coat behind for Greg to wear. This does not



improve Greg's chances at romance. The theme of unexpected results can be seen in Greg losing face with girls, rather than gaining admiration.

Yet, Greg is still undeterred in finding romance – and a date for the dance. It continues to be his primary goal. He begins to think outside the box, relying on family friends and church to secure a date. Such a potential date is the beautiful Laurel Stringer. Greg attempts to get in good with Laurel through her parents by agreeing to babysit Wesley. However, the episode is disastrous, and Greg's being discovered in Laurel's bed does not go over well with her parents at all. Here, the theme of unexpected results can again be seen through a situation turning out exactly opposite to what Greg had hoped.

Rowley, as best friend and wingman, comes through once again as he reveals Abigail Brown is available for the dance. But because Greg does not know Abigail well, he suggests Rowley set up a group outing for the dance. Greg hopes this will allow him to edge out Rowley and move in on Abigail – a very unfriendly thing to do to Rowley, but in keeping with Greg's determination to find romance. From the start, the unexpected happens – from Rowley's chicken pox to Rowley and Abigail seeming to be on the same page about everything, including where to go to eat. It is clear that Greg's intention of making Rowley the third wheel backfires completely as Greg himself emerges as the third wheel. Here, the theme of being the third wheel begins in earnest.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Greg's wearing a leather jacket and aviator sunglasses to school ultimately backfire on him? How does Greg feel this affects his chances at finding a date?

Discussion Question 2

Greg tries a different approach in attempting to get Laurel Strickland to be his date to the dance. What does Greg do differently with Laurel? How does it work out in the end? Why?

Discussion Question 3

When it comes to Abigail and Rowley, what is Greg's plan? What ends up happening early on to Greg's plan? Why?

Vocabulary

embarrassing, dismantle, unsophisticated, reliable, exaggerated, obligation, contagious, upscale



Section 5: Pages 182 -217

Summary

At Corny's, Greg announces he is paying for dinner to impress Abigail. When Rowley is speaking, some of his spit lands on Greg's lip, which causes Greg to panic – but he does his best to remain calm. Greg and Alice both get expensive menu items. They even order the special expensive dessert. The dinner costs so much that Greg uses every cent of his money. He also notices that Abigail and Rowley are sitting a little more closely now, too. They then head to the Dance, which is themed to be Midnight in Paris. Greg is stunned to learn the DJ for the Dance is Uncle Greg. Uncle Greg is selling his t-shirts for \$5 each.

Greg watches Abigail with her female friends. He wonders what she thinks of him. Around 8, dozens of older people pour into the gym, claiming they have reserved it for a meeting about a new senior center. Many of the girls begin to argue with the seniors, but Mrs. Sheer suggests dividing the gym in half as a compromise. Everyone agrees, and the janitor puts up a partition. The seniors complain about loud music, forcing Uncle Gary to turn it down. As a result, the senior meeting can be heard loud and clear. Abigail's original date, Michael, shows up with another girl, revealing his reason for not going to be a lie. It causes Abigail to cry. The senior meeting ends at the same time, and the seniors begin helping themselves to refreshments from the dance. They then begin dancing as well.

Greg then dances with Abigail. He notices a chicken pox mark on her chin, and freaks out. It attracts everyone's attention. In reality, the chicken pox is just a pimple. Greg feels horrible. Rowley finishes out the night with Abigail. They become a couple. It turns out that Rowley's chicken pox are actually pimples. At home, Uncle Gary wins \$40,000 on a ticket, moves out, and pays Frank back. Greg gets the chicken pox. He doesn't know from where, but Greg takes comfort in the fact that at least he is able to relax in the bath for some peace and quiet.

Analysis

Greg's attempts at romancing Abigail continue to fail throughout the rest of the evening. Greg hopes that paying for dinner will help to win Abigail's attention – but this does not work out at all. All through dinner, Abigail and Rowley get closer, and end up even sitting closer together with one another. Rather than Greg edging Rowley out as the third wheel, Greg himself is unwittingly being edged out as the third wheel. Here, the theme of being a third wheel comes to full fruition as through the end of the dance as Abigail and Rowley get closer, while Greg kills all of his chances over what he suspects is chicken pox on Abigail's chin.



The dance itself does not go according to plan. The unexpected continues to ruin Greg's chances at romance, as if Greg's own mistakes were not enough. A senior citizens meeting is scheduled the same night as the dance, and so the gymnasium must be partitioned. The music must be turned down, over which the senior meeting can be heard. When the meeting is over, the seniors crash the dance, consuming refreshments and breaking out into dance moves on the floor. When Abigail's original date shows up with another girl, things get even worse as Abigail becomes understandably upset. Coupled with Greg's reaction to her pimple, Greg has no chance with her at all.

As the novel ends, there are even more unexpected results to the events of the novel. Greg originally hoped that he and Abigail might become romantically involved – but learns that Abigail and Rowley are now a couple instead. Uncle Gary, who has wasted a lot of money buying scratch-off lottery tickets, unexpectedly ends up striking a \$40,000 prize. He pays Frank back – something Frank never expected – and moves out – something which Frank suspected wouldn't happen for a long time.

Discussion Question 1

How does Greg end up becoming not only a third wheel to Rowley and Abigail, but losing out on being a couple with Abigail? How does Greg ultimately come to feel about this?

Discussion Question 2

In what ways does Greg attempt to impress Abigail? Why are Greg's attempts unsuccessful?

Discussion Question 3

Does Greg consider the dance overall to be a success, or to have been worth his trouble? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

appetite, signaled, participation, bawling, overreacted



Characters

Greg Heffley

Greg Heffley is the main character and narrator of the novel "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth". Greg is the son of Frank and Susan, is the younger brother of Rodrick, and the older brother of Manny. He is best friends with Rowley. Greg is a good-intentioned kid whose plans often turn to disasters, or misadventures at best. Greg has two major obstacles to confront in the novel: his Uncle Gary moving in, and the Valentine's Day Dance. With Uncle Gary crashing on the couch in the living room, Greg has nowhere to hang out apart from his bedroom. However, when word comes that there will be a dance, Greg asks his uncle for romantic advice in finding a date. Greg is told by Gary to spruce up his image and find a wingman, among other things. Greg's attempt to spruce up his image by wearing his dad's old leather jacket is cut short by his mom who says it sends the wrong image.

Greg takes on Rowley as a wingman. Rowley alerts Greg to potential dates. Greg decides on Abigail Brown, but because he doesn't know her as well as Rowley, has Rowley ask Abigail to the dance as part of group thing. Greg hopes to edge Rowley out, making him the third wheel, but becomes a third wheel himself when Abigail and Rowley hit it off. Greg's constant attempts to win Abigail's attention, such as by paying for dinner before the dance, do not pan out. Greg, paranoid that Rowley is coming down with chicken pox, freaks out when dancing with Abigail, believing she has caught them from Rowley. This seals Greg's fate. He is later dismayed to learn that Rowley and Abigail have become a couple.

Susan Heffley

Susan Heffley is the mother of Greg, Rodrick, and Manny, and is the wife of Frank. Susan is a kind and patient woman who loves and cares deeply for her family. Susan unwittingly mars her son's image at school when she opposes his wearing a leather jacket and aviator sunglasses, insisting they send the wrong image. When Greg wears them anyways, she goes to school and takes them from him in the middle of class, leaving him with her own jacket to head home.

Frank Heffley

Frank Heffley is the father of Greg, Rodrick, and Manny, and is the husband of Susan. He is also the older brother of Gary. Frank is a good and decent man who is compelled by his wife, for the sake of family, to loan Gary money and allow him to move in when Gary is down on his luck. When Greg learns his father has an old leather jacket, Frank allows him to wear the jacket.



Rodrick Heffley

Rodrick is the older brother of Greg and Manny, and is the son of Frank and Sue. Rodrick is a moody teenager who is annoyed by Gary taking his spot on the couch for sleeping every day. Rodrick does his best to sleep on the back of the couch while Gary sleeps on the main part.

Manny Heffley

Manny is the younger brother of Greg and Rodrick, and is the third child of Frank and Sue. He is a toddler of about three years old. Manny believes he has numerous imaginary friends, and these imaginary friends earn him special privileges such as extra dessert after dinner. Manny and his imagination are a constant source of annoyance to Greg.

Rowley Jefferson

Rowley Jefferson is the best friend of Greg. Rowley is a good-hearted, tall, and absent-minded kid. Greg encourages Rowley to run for office in school as a puppet official, while Greg makes all the decisions behind the scenes. Rowley agrees, and runs for Social Chairperson. Unopposed, he wins the election. When the student government decides to hold a Valentine's Day Dance, Rowley becomes Greg's wingman, scouting out girls that Greg can ask out. Rowley ultimately reports that his friend Abigail Brown is newly available to the dance. This prompts Greg, who doesn't know Abigail well, to have Rowley ask Abigail out to the dance as a group thing. Rowley agrees. Over the course of the evening, Abigail and Rowley hit it off and grow closer. They end up a couple by the novel's end.

Abigail Brown

Abigail Brown is a sweet and beautiful girl who is dumped by her dance date before the dance even occurs. She agrees to go to the dance with Rowley and Greg as a group thing. Abigail is charmed by Rowley's kindness and honesty, and the two hit things off. When Abigail's first date shows up to the dance with another girl, she explodes in tears. She is asked to dance by Greg, who mistakes a pimple on her chin for chicken pox, causing him to freak out and embarrass her. As a result, she spends the rest of the night with Rowley, and the two ultimately become a couple.

Eugene Ellis

Eugene Ellis is the current president of the student body and council. He is elected when he promises to stock all bathrooms with soft toilet paper. When he is informed this won't be financially feasible, his popularity slips. However, when he learns that the



teachers' bathrooms are stocked with the good kind of toilet paper, he confronts Mrs. Birch with this information. Mrs. Birch agrees to a compromise, allowing students to bring in their own toilet paper from home. This causes Eugene's popularity to surge again.

Mrs. Birch

Mrs. Birch is a teacher and advisor to Student Council. She advises Eugene that stocking all bathroom with plush toilet tissue is not a financial possibility. She is later confronted by Eugene about all teachers' bathrooms having soft toilet tissue, leading Mrs. Birch to agree to a compromise. Students are then allowed to bring in their own toilet tissue.

Vice Principal Roy

Vice Principal Roy is a strict but fair man who oversees the day-to-day operations of school. It is Roy who announces that a special election will be held to elect new student council members. It is also Roy who comes to ban students bringing entire rolls of toilet tissue into school, saying that only five sheets at a time may be brought in.



Symbols and Symbolism

Toilet paper

Toilet paper factors heavily into the student council special elections, and the Valentine's Day Dance. Eugene Ellis runs on the promise of stocking all school bathrooms with soft toilet tissue. He wins in a landslide. After he is told that such a promise is not possible to deliver due to cost, it is discovered the teachers have soft toilet tissue in their bathroom. This leads to a compromise where the school allows students to bring in their own toilet paper from home. As a result, the students end up goofing off, having a toilet paper fight. The students realize that if they want something like soft toilet paper in school, they are going to have to earn it through fundraising. A Valentine's Day Dance with a \$3 admission charge is then decided upon to earn the money.

Candy Grams

Candy Grams are small paper messages to which are attached Valentine's Day-themed candy. The Candy Grams are used as a way for students to ask one another to the dance. They are purchased, filled out, and distributed to the recipients in homeroom every morning. Taking his Uncle Gary's advice, Greg tries to make himself look popular by buying a large number of Candy Grams for himself. However, this way of attracting girls fails.

Cash

Cash is carried by Greg through the night of the Valentine's Day Dance. He has spent months earning the money he now has, and intends to spend it on dinner for Abigail and Rowley. Greg wants to use the cash to impress Abigail, but his plans fall flat when she and Rowley order the most expensive items possible. Greg ends up spending every cent he has on dinner.

Leather jacket

A leather jacket worn by Frank as a youth is discovered in the closet by Greg when he looks for ways to improve his wardrobe. Franke happily tells Greg he can wear the jacket, but Greg's mom tells him no. She believes it gives the wrong impression. Greg decides to wear the jacket anyways, leading to his mom coming to school and interrupting class to get the jacket back.



Aviator sunglasses

Aviator sunglasses are discovered by Greg in the leather jacket he borrows from his dad. The sunglasses make Greg seem even cooler in addition to the leather jacket. However, both the sunglasses and the jacket are confiscated by Greg's mom when she learns he has worn them to school.

Susan's winter coat

Susan gives her winter coat to Greg following confiscation of the leather jacket at school. It is so long that it looks like a dress on Greg. Greg is forced to wear the winter coat on the way home because he has no other option to stay warm. While Greg thinks he looks ridiculous, he admits the coat is indeed keeping him warm.

Chicken pox

Chicken pox is a kind of illness, the result of which are numerous red marks all over the body. Chicken pox is going around at school, and is a concern of many of the students, including Greg. When Greg and Rowley prepare for the dance, Greg mistakes Rowley's acne for chicken pox, urging Rowley to cover up with a scarf and beach hat. Greg later mistakes a pimple on Abigail's chin for chicken pox. Greg freaks out, thinking Abigail will contaminate him, and thus ruins his last possible chance with her at the dance.

Beach hat and scarf

A beach hat and scarf are worn by Rowley to dinner and the Valentine's Day Dinner at the insistence of Greg. The scarf and beach hat are to hide blemishes the Greg believes are chicken pox, but are in reality only pimples. Despite Rowley's strange attire with the scarf and hat, he still manages to hit things off with Abigail, and ends up dating her by the end of the novel.

Lottery tickets

Scratch-off lottery tickets are purchased constantly by Uncle Gary, who hopes to make a quick couple of bucks. Frank considers Gary's determination to buy so many lotto tickets to be a waste of money. However, Gary ends up winning \$40,000 from a scratch-off ticket.

\$40,000

\$40,000 is won by Gary playing a scratch-off lottery ticket. Gary uses some of the \$40,000 to pay back his brother all of the money that he owes him. He uses the rest of the \$40,000 to move out.



Settings

School gymnasium

The school gymnasium is host not only to gym class during the novel, but to the Valentine's Day Dance. The Dance is given a Midnight in Paris theme, and is well-attended by the student body. Around eight, however, dozens of elderly citizens show up for a senior center meeting. It turns out the gymnasium has been double-booked. The seniors and students appear poised for a fight with one another until it is suggested the gym be partitioned. Both sides agree to having the gymnasium split in half. However, the students must keep their music low until the senior meeting is finished. Upon finishing up, the seniors wander over to the dance, helping themselves to refreshments and taking to the dance floor.

Heffley household

The Heffley household at 12 Surrey Street is where Greg, his parents, Rodrick, and Manny live. It is at the Heffley household that Uncle Gary shows up early one morning to explain he needs a place to stay, for all of his money is gone on a failed t-shirt venture. Greg's mom invites Gary to stay for as long as he needs. Gary's stay in the Heffley household has both good and bad aspects. He often wakes up in the night screaming from bad dreams, and he sleeps on the couch in the living room, ruining the hang-out spot for Greg and Rodrick. However, Gary's presence in the house also allows him to give Greg advice on romance and dating.

Living room

The living room in the Heffley household is where Greg and his family ordinarily hang out to watch movies, play board games, and play video games. It is the gathering point of the house. However, when Uncle Gary comes to visit, he ends up crashing on the couch. He sleeps through much of the day, requiring Greg and his family not only to be quiet, but also to lose their hang-out spot.

Corny's Family-Style Restaurant

Corny's Family-Style Restaurant is a popular family-friendly restaurant in town. It is overwhelmingly popular with young families, but proves to be a source of annoyance for Greg because it is so loud and messy. On the night of the dance, Abigail and Rowley insist on going to Corny's for dinner. The experience for Greg is annoying because he feels as if Rowley and Abigail are on the same side, and because the restaurant is full of noisy kids.



School bathroom

The school bathroom becomes a central focus in the special election for city council as Eugene Ellis promises to stock them with quality, soft toilet tissue. The students are told that it will cost too much to stock the bathrooms with the soft tissue, but when the students learn teacher bathrooms get the soft toilet tissue, the teachers must compromise. They allow students to bring in their own toilet paper from home, but this results in toilet paper fights. Toilet tissue rolls are then banned, and students are only allowed to bring in five sheets per day. Greg, who has stockpiled soft toilet tissue in his locker, selects a stall in one of the student bathrooms, locks it from the inside, and stores his paper there. He ends up bringing in magazines, a small radio, and other odds and ends to turn the stall into a miniature apartment. However, other students find out about the toilet paper stash, and Greg must abandon his bathroom apartment.



Themes and Motifs

Family

Family is an important theme in the novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel” by Jeff Kinney. Family involves mutual love, compassion, loyalty towards, and emotional, spiritual, and physical support of individuals who may or may not be blood-related, but who still behave in the fashion of the traditional family unit. Family can be found consistently throughout the novel, and family affects the plot of the novel in various ways.

When the novel begins, Greg goes into details about his family and the way that he and Manny have been raised. Greg understands that his parents love him and want the best for him, but he disagrees with how he has been raised. While Greg was forced to watch educational programming and raised with the hopes that he would be a brilliant kid, Manny is given tremendous leniency and freedom because the educational nature of Greg’s upbringing has backfired. Greg is more prone to misadventures than feats of brilliance.

Greg’s family decides that it will spend more time together as a family to bring about closeness. They will play games, watch a movie together, or go out to eat together as a whole family. Greg sometimes enjoys family nights out, but is primarily annoyed by their dinners out, because their dinners out usually occur at Corny’s – a place known for being full of loud and obnoxious little kids.

Greg’s family must also contend with Uncle Gary through the course of the novel. Frank has repeatedly loaned Gary money in the past, and Gary has always been bad about paying Frank and other people back. Gary most recently borrowed money from Frank – at Sue’s insistence that family members must help family members – to purchase a t-shirt concession stand, which turns out to be a failed venture that leaves Gary homeless and penniless. Frank is worried about Gary moving in, but Susan insists Gary move in out of family loyalty and family love. The family does its best to cope with Gary’s nightmares about monkeys in the walls, and his sleeping on the couch in the middle of the living room all the time.

Despite the annoyances that Gary poses, he also comes to help Greg out with advice as Greg seeks a romantic date to the Valentine’s Day Dance. Gary recommends that Greg spruce up his image and take on a wingman in addition to several other ideas. With his father’s permission to borrow his old leather jacket based on Gary’s advice, it appears to be a solid family win for the Heffley family males. Unfortunately, Greg’s loving, well-meaning but horribly-timed mother believes the attention Greg wants by using the jacket is the wrong kind, so she goes to school to bring home the jacket and glasses. She leaves her own coat behind for Greg to wear instead. This does not improve Greg’s chances at romance as he must walk home in a woman’s winter coat.



Friendship

Friendship is an important theme in the novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel” by Jeff Kinney. Friendship proves to be very important to Greg through being best friends with Rowley. Rowley serves as Greg’s sidekick and wingman at various points, and Rowley’s friendship with Greg has very important consequences by the time of the Valentine’s Day Dance.

Greg and Rowley have long been best friends. Though their friendship is oftentimes rocky due to Greg’s impatience and Rowley’s immaturity, for the most part, it is a solid thing. When the special election is announced for student council, Greg wants to run but is ineligible due to having three detentions on his record. He then convinces Rowley to run as a puppet candidate, allowing Greg to make all the real decisions behind the scenes. Rowley, out of friendship, agrees to do this for Greg. Rowley runs for Social Chairperson, and wins as he is unopposed in the election.

When the student council decides to hold a Valentine’s Day Dance, Greg and Rowley immediately begin seeking dates. Uncle Gary recommends Greg take on a wingman. Greg decides to use Rowley as a wingman, and promises to be Rowley’s wingman once Greg has secured a girl for the dance. Rowley suggest different girls to Greg who are looking for dates, or who are recently single. Greg is thrilled about Rowley’s work, but Greg is unable to secure any of the girls as a date.

At last, Rowley suggests that Greg that he ask Abigail Brown. Not knowing Abigail well, Greg has Rowley ask Abigail to the dance as part of a group. Abigail agrees to go. Greg, in a very unkind way, plans to edge Rowley out as a third wheel so that he may end up dating Abigail. Greg plans the evening elaborately well, seeking to impress Abigail by footing the bill for dinner, for example. But Rowley and Abigail are the ones who hit it off, and end up a couple by the end of the novel. Greg is not angry at Rowley for how things have turned out, but he is annoyed that things did not go according to plan.

Romance

Romance is an important theme in the novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel” by Jeff Kinney. Romance is a new experience for Greg and for many of the kids in the novel. Greg, in previous novels in the series, has begun to notice girls. In “The Third Wheel”, he looks to make his move to secure a date for the Valentine’s Day Dance, and perhaps even begin dating a girl as a result.

The Valentine’s Day Dance sets the stage for romance in the novel. While the guys are not particularly thrilled about the dance the way the girls are, the guys do hope to attend the dance with pretty girls. As a result, they do their best to act more maturely and confidently in order to attract girls. Greg in particular begins scouting out girls that he can ask to the dance. Yet, his initial attempts are failures. Greg even looks outside of



school for a date, such as with Laurel Stringer, but Greg's attempt to get in good with her by getting in good with her parents is disastrous.

Greg turns to Uncle Gary for dating advice. Gary makes a series of recommendations for Greg to improve his chances. These include Greg making himself seem like he is in high demand; sprucing up his wardrobe; and getting a wingman. To make himself seem popular, Greg purchases several Candy Grams for himself, and has them delivered to himself in homeroom. These have no effect on Greg's chances with girls at all. With his father's permission, Greg borrows his dad's old leather jacket and aviator sunglasses to wear to school to look sharp. His mother, however, thinks they will attract the wrong kind of attention, so she takes the jacket and glasses away from Greg in the middle of class, leaving him with her own winter coat to wear home.

Greg takes on Rowley as a wingman, to help him find and talk him up to different girls. Rowley does very well at first in finding potential dates for Greg, but Greg cannot ever seal the deal. When Rowley announces that Abigail Brown's date has dumped her before the dance, Greg decides she will be the perfect date. Because Greg doesn't know her well like Rowley, he has Rowley invite Abigail to the dance as a group thing. She agrees. Greg hopes to edge Rowley out through the night, making him a third wheel, but it is Greg who becomes the third wheel when Rowley and Abigail hit it off. As a result, Greg's attempts at romance have all backfired.

The Unexpected

Unexpected events and results form an important theme in the novel "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel" by Jeff Kinney. At various times throughout the novel, the unexpected – either in terms of situations and events, as well as consequences and results – become essential in the plot as it unfolds. Some of the unexpected is good, and some is bad.

When the novel begins, Greg speaks about his time before birth and then his infancy, when his parents hoped an educational foundation would make him a brilliant child. Instead, Greg has grown into a goodhearted but misadventure-prone kid with little concern for academics. How Greg turned out is unexpected to his parents. Greg himself comes to confront the unexpected when Uncle Gary suddenly shows up at the house one morning, needing a place to stay. This is unexpected to Greg's dad, as well.

Uncle Gary, later on, becomes an unexpected source of dating advice for Greg. Gary's recommendations, if properly carried out, could yield some good results. However, the unexpected happens instead. Gary suggests finding ways to appear more popular. Greg's attempt to be more popular through mailing himself Candy Grams has no effect whatsoever, unexpected by Greg. Gary's recommendation that Greg dress more sharply leads to Greg wearing his dad's old leather jacket. Greg expects to become more popular with the ladies as a result, but his mom's arrival at school to take home the jacket has the unexpected opposite result. Gary's suggestion that Greg take on a



wingman leads to Greg having Rowley act as a wingman – only to have the girl Rowley suggests end up in a relationship with Rowley instead.

The unexpected continues at the dance. Dozens of elderly citizens arrive for a senior center meeting, only for the students and seniors to nearly fight over the gymnasium being double-booked. This leads to the gym being partitioned, and the dance having to turn its music down so the seniors can have their meeting. When the meeting is over, the seniors unexpectedly crash the dance by hitting the dance floor and helping themselves to refreshments. During this time, Abigail's original date shows up with another girl, causing her to cry. Greg, hoping to comfort Abigail, dances with her and then freaks out when he mistakes a pimple for the chicken pox, humiliating Abigail. Greg unintentionally, and unexpectedly, ruins his own chances with Abigail.

The Third Wheel

The Third Wheel is an important theme in the novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel” by Jeff Kinney, and is where the novel takes its name. The concept of the third wheel is of the odd-man out, the person who must tag along on a date with a couple, or is a friend or family member who doesn't fit in with the other two but is included as a group.

Greg often feels like a third wheel in his family. He is the middle child, so he often feels overlooked compared to his older brother, Rodrick, and his younger brother, Manny. Greg is no longer the baby of the family but neither is he the oldest who is experiencing everything for the first time. Rodrick and Manny were likewise raised differently than Gregory, who was raised with educational methods and under strict parameters. Rodrick enjoyed greater freedom, and Manny enjoys even greater freedom now, leading Greg to feel as if he has been cheated out of a lot of being young.

When the Valentine's Day Dance is announced, Greg ultimately arranges with Rowley to attend the dance as a group with Abigail Brown. Greg intends that over the course of the evening, he will edge Rowley out as a third wheel, while Greg himself moves in on Abigail. He plans to do this by paying for dinner, getting her chocolates, and being a great guy. He intends to show up to the dance itself with Abigail as his official date. Rowley, as a wingman, will bow out honorably as a third wheel with his wingman mission completed.

However, Greg's intentions to make Rowley a third wheel backfire. From the car ride to the dinner, Abigail and Rowley hit things off. They end up sitting very close together and both suggesting Corny's as a place to eat, making Greg feel like the odd man out and annoying Greg that Abigail and Rowley are on the same page. The same remains true after dinner and into the dance, where Greg's attempt to dance with Abigail is awkward because Abigail has a crush on Rowley by then. By the end of the novel, Greg reveals that he has learned Rowley and Abigail are now a couple.

Styles

Point of View

Jeff Kinney tells his novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel” in the first-person reflective perspective from the point of view of Greg Heffley. The entire novel is composed as if to resemble Greg’s diary. It is full of written entries and drawings pertaining to the entries. Because Greg himself is meant to be writing the entries, the narration is in the first-person. The experiences described in the diary have all happened to Greg directly, and Greg himself is setting them down on paper. The reflective aspect of the narration comes from the fact that Greg is writing about the events after they have happened, and so is reflecting on them, recalling them, and thinking back about them as he is writing.

Language and Meaning

Jeff Kinney tells his novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel” in language that is simple and straightforward. This is done for at least two primary reasons. First, the language used in the novel is reflective of the target audience of the book – young adults. The language used is reflective of the age and level of education of young adults. Second, the language used in the novel is simple and straightforward because it is meant to be written by Greg, a boy of about eleven or twelve. As a result, the language employed reflects not only his age, but his level of education as well.

Structure

Jeff Kinney divides his novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel” into numerous entries noted by day of the week, and sometimes by the month. The diary is essentially one long, continuous story full of numerous events, reflecting a typical preteen/teen life in a developed country. The diary is host to not only written entries, but dozens of drawings and sketches depicting events, thoughts, and ideas that Greg has as he writes. For example, the entries on page 139 deals with the aftermath of Greg’s mom arriving to bring home the leather jacket, and leaving her winter coat with Greg. The illustrations on the page depict Greg walking home in his mother’s coat, and being talked about as the guy whose mom made him wear her winter coat the next day.



Quotes

I opened the door and was surprised to see Uncle Gary standing on the front steps.
-- Greg (Section 1 paragraph 3)

Importance: In a novel full of the unexpected, Greg's first surprise is to see Uncle Gary at his front door early one morning. Uncle Gary, after a failed business venture using some of Frank's money, needs a place to stay – but doesn't tell anyone this at first. Yet when Frank comes downstairs, he is immediately suspicious of what his younger brother could want.

Mom told Dad he should do it because Uncle Gary is his brother and family members should always help each other out.
-- Greg (Section 2 paragraph 1)

Importance: Gary's failed business venture was not possible without a loan from Frank. Frank knows Gary is horrible with money, and even worse at paying people back. While he is reluctant to lend money, his wife insists he give money to Gary, because Gary is family. Here, the theme of family is strongly illustrated through Greg's mom urging Greg's dad to help out another family member.

Uncle Gary told Dad he needs a place to stay until he can get on his feet again.
-- Greg (Section 2 paragraph 2)

Importance: Finally, Gary reveals his reason for showing up at the Heffley household so early in the morning. His failed business venture has left him without any money, and without a place to stay. Gary's arrival at the house will have benefits and drawbacks, but Greg's family is determined to do the best they can while Gary stays with them.

I told him if he gets elected, I'll make all the tough decisions and all he'll have to do is show up for the meetings and do what I tell him.
-- Greg (Section 2 paragraph 3)

Importance: The path to Greg's becoming a third wheel begins with a student council special election. Greg encourages Rowley to run since Greg, with three detentions to his name, is ineligible to run. Greg encourages Rowley to run as a puppet candidate, with Greg behind the scenes pulling the strings and making all of the decisions. This quote speaks to the extent at which Greg is willing to plot and plan to make something happen – and how often he ends up falling short of his objective.

The student council had their first meeting today, and Mrs. Birch, the teacher who works with the council, told Eugene that the school couldn't afford to stock the bathrooms with quilted toilet paper, so he might as well forget about it.
-- Greg (Section 2 paragraph 3)

Importance: The student council special election is followed by word that Eugene Ellis's



campaign promise of soft toilet paper in all of the bathrooms is not financially possible. Eugene's popularity plummets as a result. However, the great toilet paper debate only sets the stage for the Valentine's Day Dance.

She said the school could allow kids to bring in their OWN rolls from home.
-- Greg (Section 3 paragraph 1)

Importance: When it is discovered by the students that the teachers' bathrooms are all stocked with quilted toilet paper, the students are ready to revolt. Eugene Ellis confronts Mrs. Birch to tell her that a compromise must be reached. Mrs. Birch explains that students will be allowed to bring in their own toilet paper from home, which excites the students and increases Eugene's popularity once more. However, the students get into toilet paper fights with their rolls from home, leading to regulations and the realization that students will have to finance things themselves through school to avoid another repeat. They settle on a dance to raise funds.

Ever since word got out about the Valentine's Day dance, it's all anyone can talk about at school.
-- Greg (Section 3 paragraph 103)

Importance: Here, Greg reveals the chatter about the dance. While the guys aren't thrilled about the dance itself like the girls are, they are excited to be able to ask girls out on a date for the dance. Greg is among those guys eagerly seeking a girl to take to the dance. All of his early attempts, however, end in failure.

It's been about a week since they introduced these Candy Grams, and I'm getting a little concerned that I haven't gotten one yet.
-- Greg (Section 3 paragraph 3)

Importance: Candy Grams are introduced as a way to have students ask each other to the Dance, and to let each other know their feelings for each other. Greg eagerly hopes to receive a Candy Gram from a beautiful girl, but none come. Even a week after Candy Grams are introduced, Greg still hasn't received one, making him feel desperate.

I told Rowley he should tell Abigail the three of us could go to the dance TOGETHER as a 'group of friends.'
-- Greg (Section 4 paragraph 3)

Importance: Rowley ultimately becomes Greg's wingman. He notes that Abigail Brown is available for the dance. Greg, who does not know Abigail well but wants to get to know her, suggests Rowley invite Abigail to the dance as a group thing. Abigail agrees, and Greg hopes he'll be able to edge Rowley out as a third wheel while Greg himself moves in on Abigail.

When I got back to the table, Rowley and Abigail were in the middle of a conversation, and it seemed to me like they were sitting a little closer than when I'd left.
-- Greg (Section 5 paragraph 2)



Importance: Greg, who has to run outside to borrow dry money from Rowley's dad since Greg's own money is wet with sweat, returns to find that Abigail and Rowley are sitting closer together now. They have hit it off, and their physical closeness is a sign of their growing emotional closeness. It is now clear to Greg that he is fast becoming the third wheel in the situation.

I didn't know what Abigail thought of me, but I figured she was probably telling her friends right that moment.

-- Greg (Section 5 paragraph 2)

Importance: Despite being relegated to third wheel, Greg hopes he still stands a chance with Abigail. At the dance, Greg watches as Abigail spends some time with her friends, and then moves into the restroom with them. Greg imagines that Abigail must be telling her friends all about him, and hopes this means that Abigail will be his. The opposite turns out to be true.

And speaking of Rowley and Abigail, I heard that the two of them are a couple now. All I can say is if that's true, it makes Rowley the worst wingman in history.

-- Greg (Section 5 paragraph 3)

Importance: When the novel ends, all of Greg's planning has backfired. Instead of Greg dating Abigail, Rowley is now dating Abigail. Greg himself has been stricken with a case of the chicken pox, while Rowley and Abigail end up only having pimples instead of chicken pox. All of Greg's planning has led to nothing, but Greg is not angry or upset with Rowley. Instead, he looks forward to peace and quiet at home now that Uncle Gary has moved out.