



**BOOK REVIEW OF JEFF KINNEY'S *DIARY OF A WIMPY KID:***

***DOG DAYS***

**A FINAL PROJECT**

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement  
For S-1 Degree in American Studies  
In English Department, Faculty of Humanities  
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Submitted by:

Titis Fhadillah Parasyantri

A2B009030

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
DIPONEGORO UNIVERSITY  
SEMARANG**

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## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

The writer states truthfully that this project is compiled by her without taking any results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3 and in diploma degree of any universities. In addition, the writer ascertains that she does not take the material from other publications or someone's work except for the references mentioned.

Semarang, 16 December 2013

Titis Fhadillah Parasyantri

## **MOTTO AND DEDICATION**

*Be humble. Be kind. Never ever give up. Just do it then do it again.*

*Titis Fhadillah Parasyantri*

*This paper is dedicated to my beloved mother*

*“You are the best I ever had”*

## **APPROVAL**

Approved by

Project Advisor

16 December 2013

Dr. Ratna Asmarani, M.Ed., M.Hum

NIP. 19610226 198703 2 001

## **VALIDATION**

Approved by

Strata 1 Final Project Examination Committee

Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University

On 27 January 2014

Advisor,

Reader,

Dr. Ratna Asmarani, M.Ed., M.Hum.

NIP. 19610226 198703 2 001

Dra. Lubna Achmad Sungkar, M.Hum.

NIP. 19521108 198603 2 001

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The writer realizes that this project is still far from being perfect. She, therefore, will be glad to receive any recommendation to make this project better.

Finally, the writer expects that this project will be useful to the reader who wishes to learn something about friendship value and family value from the novel.

Semarang, 16 December 2013

Titis Fhadillah Parasyantri

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## ABSTRAK

Novel merupakan salah satu karya sastra yang mencerminkan kehidupan manusia sehari-hari. Terdapat banyak macam novel, salah satunya novel bergambar. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* adalah salah satu contoh dari novel bergambar. Novel ini menceritakan tentang kehidupan sehari-hari seorang anak SMP yang bernama Gregory Heffley. Pada *book review* ini, penulis membahas mengenai tema, tokoh, kekuatan dari novel; seperti disertakannya gambar di dalam novel, serta kelemahan dari novel ini yaitu gambar cover yang kurang menarik. Melalui *book review* novel *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days*, penulis berharap agar novel ini dapat dibaca oleh banyak pembaca dan para pembaca merasa tertarik dengan novel ini. Simpulannya, dengan bahasa yang mudah dipahami dan disertakannya gambar, novel ini sangat menarik untuk dibaca.

## CHAPTER 1

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Background of the Writing

Literary work is one kind of human's works which represents human's life, according to Rene Wellek (1997:94). It means that literary work shows human's life. There are some literary works, such as novel, poem, drama. One of those literary works which is so popular is novel. Since novel is one kind of literary works which represents human's life, there are many novels that have the theme of human's life. Besides representing human's life, novel also has function to entertain the reader.

The novel *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* is a pictorial novel that tells about human's life. This novel is about the daily activities of Gregory Heffley, a lazy junior high school boy, who has a hobby of doing games in the holiday, day and night. His mother sends Gregory to summer camp to give him activities during the summer holiday. His mother wants Gregory to change his bad habit and become an active boy.

In the beginning, Gregory is not interested at all with the summer camp, but at the end of the summer camp, he finds that the summer camp's experience is the most impressing experience in his life. The writer chooses this novel to be reviewed because the novel is different from most of popular novels. The writer also will analyze its theme, characters, strengths, and weaknesses.

## 1.2 Purposes of the Writing

1. To give explanation about the theme and character of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days*.
2. To give explanation about the strengths and the weaknesses of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days*.

## 1.3 About the Author

According to [www.famousauthors.org](http://www.famousauthors.org) , Jeff Kinney is an American online game developer and designer, and a first New York Times best-selling author. He writes some children books, including *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. Jeff was born in College Park, Maryland, on 19 February 1977. Jeff delightfully reads books of authors such as Judy Blume, Beverly Cleary, Piers Anthony, and J.R.R Tolkien. He went on to study at College Park during the early 90s.

Jeff started working on *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* in 1998. However, it was not published until the spring of 2007. *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series gain quick popularity and attain the number one position on important chart with a *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* worldwide sale of 42 million copies in 2010.

*The Diary Wimpy Kid* series was adapted to screen with the release on March 19, 2010 by *20th Century Fox*. Jeff contributed to the movie as an executive producer. In 2009, Jeff was named one of *Time magazine's 100 Most Influential People in The World*. He spent his childhood in the Washington D.C area and moved to New England in 1995. Jeff lives in southern Massachusetts with his wife and their two sons.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2. Summary of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days*

July is a month people waiting for, since the summer holidays come in this month. People are usually doing outdoor activities during summer holidays, going to the beach, swimming, hiking, fishing, or just having a picnic in the city park. However, it does not happen to Gregory Heffley, a boy who always spends his time to play video games. Greg's mother does not like his hobby, so she forces him to do something out of the house. Actually, Greg ever once had activity in the previous summer holidays. He went to Country Club swimming pool in town with Rowley, his best friend. Rowley's father, Mr. Jefferson, is a member in that pool, so Rowley and Greg can get discount with Mr. Jefferson's member card. Both of them are so naughty, they write Mr. Jefferson's member club number every time they buy fruit smoothie. Mr. Jefferson asks Greg's mother to pay the bill. Finally, Mr. Jefferson and Greg's mother agree that Greg and Rowley have to pay the bill by their own money.

Greg and Rowley are confused how to pay the bill. They try to advertise grass cutting service in Yellow Pages, but it is failed. Greg thinks for the other way. He wants to borrow some money to his little brother, Manny, but finally Greg does not borrow money from him because he gives Greg high interest. At Greg's birthday, he gets a lot of money and gifts from his family. He wants to buy something with the money, but his mother takes all of the money to pay Mr. Jefferson's bill.

All of the family members are in grandpa's house to celebrate father's day. Greg's father tells that when he was child, he had a dog named Nutty. The dog is lost when chasing a butterfly. At that time, grandpa says the truth that the dog was crushed by his car and the dog died. Greg's father is so angry and leaves grandpa's house without saying anything. After arriving at home, Greg's father brings a box that contains a puppy. He seems so happy and the dog is named Sweetheart and called Sweety. At the first time, Greg is so happy with Sweety, but as time goes by, Greg feels so resentful with Sweety. The dog always barks every time Greg watches television, the dog also sleeps on Greg's bed and wakes him up too early.

The second week in August, Greg and Mr. Jefferson's family go to the beach. They stay in a small cottage. Greg and Rowley share a room to sleep. Greg feels so lonely at the cottage because there is no entertainment there. Unnoticed, Greg has been there for three days. He wants to go home and sends a mail to his mother silently, using Mr. Jefferson's computer. When Mrs. Jefferson knows about it, she asks Greg and Rowley to go to harbor. Greg is so excited because he wants to try Cranium Shaker, an extreme game.

After those unhappy experiences, Greg invites Rowley to join game competition in Game Hut. At the first, Greg is so optimistic when he knows that the first game is Twisted Wizard. Unfortunately, he is beaten by Rowley with score 15-0. The next morning, Greg's father starts to talk to Greg. It is because Lil' Cutie comic is published again in the newspaper and the comic even worse than before. Greg thinks that he and his father have the same opinion in discussing

a bad comic, like Lil' Cutie. This summer holidays is really impressing for Greg, although there are many troubles happened when he decided to go out of the house.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3. Review of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days*

#### 3.1 Characters of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days*

A character is a person depicted in a narrative or drama. The characters in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* are:

- Gregory Heffley: The main character of this novel. He is a lazy junior high school boy. His hobby is day-dreaming and playing game the whole day. He has high self confident, but he is always unlucky.

The way I like to spend my summer vacation is in front of the TV, playing video games with the curtains closed and the lights turned off...

Anyway, I've always known that I'll eventually be rich and famous, but I'm starting to get a little concerned that it hasn't happened yet. I figured I'd at least have my own reality TV show by now.

When I'm famous, I'm gonna have to make some life changes. I'll probably have to fly in private jets, because if I fly on regular planes, I'll get really annoyed when people in my back try to mooch off my first class bathroom (Kinney, 2009: 1, 95, 97).

- Rodrick: Greg's older brother. He is a senior high school student. Rodrick has a rock band called 'Loaded Dipper'. Rodrick's hobby is disturbing Greg and Manny.

Manny was sitting in between me and Rodrick on the hump. At one point Rodrick decided to tell Manny the hump was the worst seat in the car because it was the smallest and least comfortable. Well, that totally set Manny off.

Eventually, Mom and Dad got sick of Manny's crying. Mom said I had to take a turn on the hump because I'm the second youngest and it was "only fair". So every time Dad ran over a pothole, my head hit the roof of the car (Kinney, 2009: 104).

- Mom: Greg's mother. She is a discipline woman with many rules that must be obeyed by her children. She often invites her family to go to the beach.

Mom says it's not "natural" for a kid to stay indoors when it's sunny hot. I tell her that I'm just trying to protect my skin so I don't look all wrinkly when I'm old like her, but she doesn't want to hear it. Mom keeps trying to get me to do something outside, like go to the pool...

I noticed Mom had packed sunscreen and bathing suits and stuff in the back of the station wagon, so I thought we must be headed for the beach (Kinney, 2009: 2, 103).

- Dad: Greg's father. He is not close to his children. He is a little bit clumsy when spending his time with his children. He has a similarity with Greg, they hate Lil' Cutie comic.

A couple of weeks ago the newspaper announced that Bob Post is retiring and the final "Li'l Cutie" is gonna be printed in August. Ever since then me and Dad have been counting down the days until the last comic runs. When the last "Li'l Cutie" comes out, me and Dad will have to throw a party, because something like that deserves a serious celebration...

But the thing is, me and Dad just aren't cut out for that kind of father-son stuff. The last time Mom tried to get me and Dad to do something like that together, it ended with me having to pull him out of Rappahannock Creek. Mom won't let it go, though. She says she wants to see more "affection" between Dad and us boys. And that's created some really awkward moments (Kinney, 2009: 12, 83).

- Manny: Greg's younger brother. He is a stingy boy and often cries when Rodrick disturbs him.

A few weeks ago Mom and Dad told Manny they'd give him a quarter for every time he uses the potty without being asked. So now he carries around a gallon of water with him at all times. I've thought about asking Manny to lend me the money, but I just can't bring myself to do that. I'm pretty sure Manny charges interest on his loans anyway...

Manny was sitting in between me and Rodrick on the hump. At one point Rodrick decided to tell Manny the hump was the worst seat in the car because it was the smallest and least comfortable. Well, that totally set Manny off (Kinney, 2009: 68, 104).

- Rowley: Greg's best friend. He is kind, but sometimes weird and being stupid.

Rowley's parents came running in to see what happened. Rowley said he had a nightmare that there was a chicken hiding underneath him. So Rowley's

parents spent next twenty minutes trying to calm him down and telling him it was just a bad dream and there really was no chicken (Kinney, 2009: 168).

- Mr. Jefferson: Rowley's father. A member of a country club. He is a temperamental and clumsy person.

Mr. Jefferson had on official-looking piece of paper with the country club logo on it. He said it was a bill for all the fruit smoothies me and Rowley ordered at the clubhouse, and the grand total was eighty three dollars. All those times me and Rowley ordered drinks at the clubhouse, we just wrote down Mr. Jefferson account number on the tab...

But Mr. Jefferson was mad, and I mean really mad. He said he and Mrs. Jefferson had been looking all over for us for the past hour and they were ready to call the police to report us missing. Mr. Jefferson said we had to go to bed and that he didn't want to hear a peep out of us until morning (Kinney, 2009: 46, 191).

### **3.2 The Themes of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days***

According to Perrine in *Sound and Sense* (1988:90), a statement of the theme:

Theme is the controlling idea or its central insight of literary work.

The first theme of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* is a boy's naughtiness. Every child has their naughty period. Boys and girls have different naughtiness. The character Greg in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* is a boy who is in his naughty period. Greg's naughtiness is playing game of day and night, fighting with his friends, ignoring his parent's advices. His naughtiness is the same as other boys in their junior high school period.

The way I like to spend my summer vacation is in front of the TV, playing video games with the curtains closed and the lights turned out...

Yesterday, Mom lectured me about how boys my age watch too many violent movies and play too many video games, and that we don't know what real entertainment is. I just stayed quiet, because I wasn't sure exactly where she was going with all this.

I couldn't let Rowley one-up me like that, so when he got into bed I got his bobby ballon, pulled back the giant rubber band, and let it rip. If I had to do it again, maybe I wouldn't have pulled back so hard. When Rowley saw the red mark on his arm he screamed, and I knew that was gonna attract attention (Kinney, 2009: 1, 32, 193).

The second theme of this novel is the relationship between father and son. In this novel, the relation between Greg and his father is not good enough. Greg feels that his father is a clumsy father. They have many contrasting characteristics, but at the end of the story, Greg find out that he and his father have the same hatred in ridiculous things, like Lil' Cutie comic.

A couple of weeks ago the newspaper announced that Bob Post is retiring and the final "Li'l Cutie" is gonna be printed in August. Ever since then me and Dad have been counting down the days until the last comic runs. When the last "Li'l Cutie" comes out, me and Dad will have to throw a party, because something like that deserves a serious celebration (Kinney, 2009: 12).

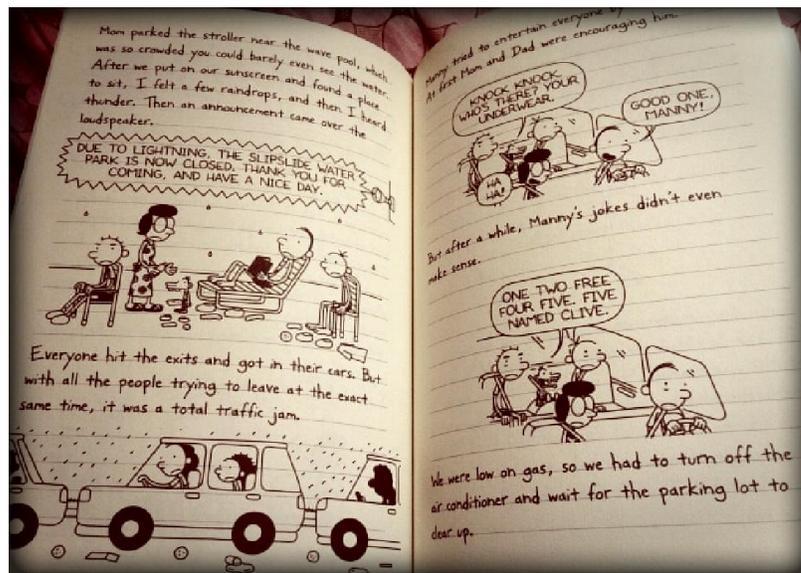
### **3.3 The Strengths of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days***

*Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* has some strengths. The first strength is the story that tells daily activities. The story of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* is a story about daily activities of a naughty boy, Greg, especially his naughtiness during the summer holidays. Because the novel tells about Greg's daily activities, its language is easy to be understood, especially by the young readers. Although the story is about daily activities, the reader will not be bored because the author delivers the story with a humor sense.

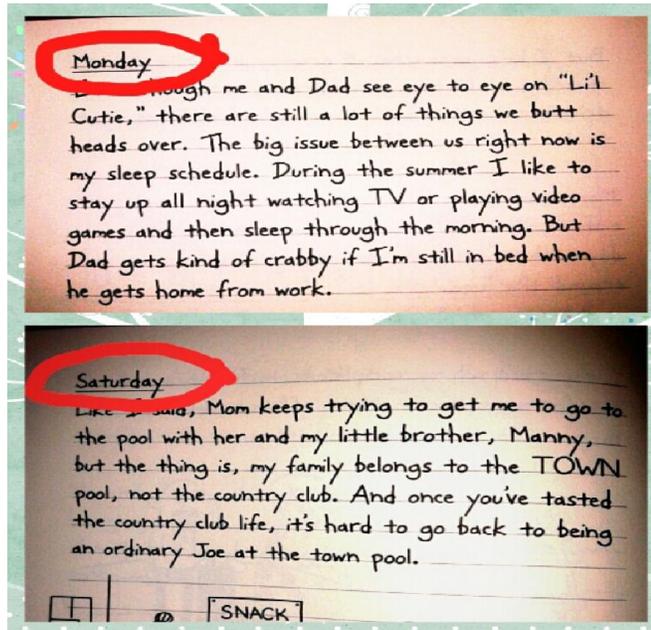
Today was my birthday, and I guess things went more or less like I expected. The relatives started showing up around 1:00. I asked Mom to invite as many people as possible so I could maximize my gift potential, and I got a pretty good turnout...

But I've got a fear of watermelon, too. Rodrick is always telling me that if you eat the seeds, then a watermelon will grow in your stomach. I don't know if he's telling the truth or not, but school's only a couple a months away, so I'm not willing to take the risk (Kinney, 2009: 87, 137).

The second strength of the novel is the picture in the novel. The author tries to make this novel more interesting by adding pictures. The pictures are so simple, black and white in color. Although the pictures are black and white, but they are interesting and funny. The pictures also make the reader will not be bored when reading this novel.



The third strength of this novel is its form. This novel has a form like a diary with pictures. Each day has a different story. The sentences are not too long; so they make the novel easy to be understood. The novel's form also makes this novel become different from the other novels.



### 3.4 The Weaknesses of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days*

Besides having some strengths, the novel *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* also has weaknesses. The weaknesses that can be found in this novel are Greg's habit and the book's cover.

The main character in this novel, Greg, is described as a junior high-school boy who is naughty and lazy. Greg spends most of his time for day dreaming and playing game. Greg has imagination above the other kids in the same age. For example, Greg always dreams that someday he will be a famous man with many girl fans around him. It was not good because it can be imitated by the other children.

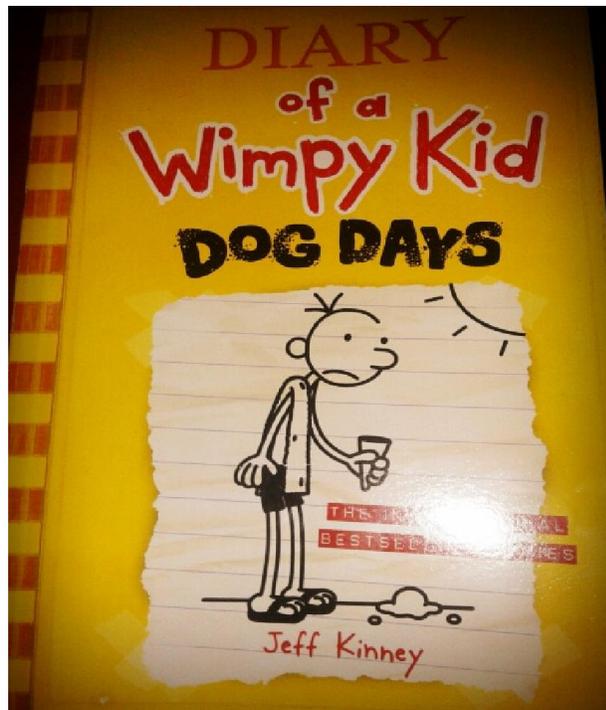
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When I'm famous, I'm gonna have to make some life changes. I'll probably have to fly in private jets, because if I fly on regular planes, I'll get really annoyed

when people in my back try to mooch off my first class bathroom (Kinney, 2009: 1, 95, 97).

The cover of this book is so simple, whereas the book cover is an important thing. People will be interested with a book when they see that the appearance of the book is interesting. The first thing that people see from a book is its cover, so when the cover is not interesting, the people tend not to choose the book although the contents of the book is good.



## CHAPTER 4

### 4. Conclusion

The novel *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* is a pictorial novel that tells about the daily activities of Gregory Heffley in summer holidays. Greg is a lazy boy, who has a hobby of doing games in holiday, day and night. His mother sends Greg to summer camp to give him activities during the summer holiday. His mother wants Greg to change his bad habit and become an active boy. In the beginning, Greg is not interested at all with the summer camp, but at the end of the summer camp, he finds out that the summer camp experience is the most impressing experience in his life

As a literary work, this novel has themes, strengths, and weaknesses. The themes of this novel are a boy's naughtiness and the relationship between father and son. The strengths of this novel are the story of the novel, the pictures in the novel, and the novel has a form like a diary. The story of the novel is about Greg's daily activities, especially in the summer holidays. The author presents the story with humor sense. The story is more interesting because the author adds pictures and it makes the reader will not be bored when reading this novel. The novel's form is also not boring because the form is like someone's diary with short sentences.

The weaknesses of this novel are the main character's imagination and the book's cover. Greg, as the main character, has higher imagination than the other boys in the same age. It will be a bad example for the reader, especially for the

kids. The cover of this book is so simple, whereas the book cover is an important thing. In general, the novel *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* is a good novel to be read. This novel can be read by adults and young readers. This novel can be read as an entertainment in spare time.

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