



MIDDLE SCHOOL

THE **WORST** YEARS OF MY LIFE

James Patterson and Chris Tebbetts

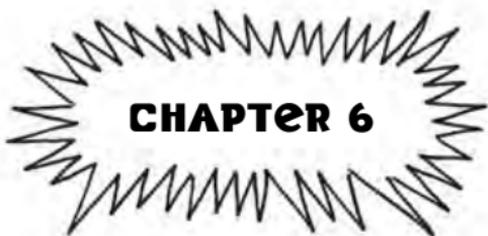
THE TOP TEN BESTSELLER



Meet Rafe.

He and his friends are about to start year 6.

He's got a plan for the best year ever – If operation R.A.F.E. succeeds, it will break every rule in the book.



CHAPTER 6

EUREKA!

Did you ever hear the expression “breaking every rule in the book”?

That was it. That was my Big Idea. Break every rule in the book. Literally.

The way I saw it, the *HVMS Code of Conduct* could be my worst enemy here at school, or if I played it right, I could turn it into my best friend.

Sorry, Leo. I mean my second-best friend.

All it would take was a little bit of work . . . and a ton of guts. Maybe two tons.

Leo knew exactly what I was thinking. The idea had come from his picture, after all.

“Go for it,” he whispered. “Just pick something out of the book and get started.”

“Right now?” I whispered back.

“Why not? What are you waiting for?” he said, and I guess the answer was—two tons of guts.

I just kind of sat there, frozen, so Leo flipped open the book for me and pointed to something on the page without even looking down. When I saw where his finger landed, I almost started having a heart attack.

“I can’t do that!” I told him. “What if someone gets hurt?”

“How does this hurt anyone?” Leo said. “Except maybe you.”

Somehow that didn’t make me feel any better.

“Listen,” Leo told me, “you’re never going to be one of those people”—he pointed at all the student council candidates and jocks and cheerleaders sitting on chairs that had been set up on the gym floor. “But this,” he said, thumping the rule book with his pen, “this is something you can do.”

“I don’t know,” I tried lamely.

“Or,” Leo said, “you can keep going the way you’re going, and every day can be just like this one.” He shrugged. “It might not be so bad. There are only a hundred and eighty school days in a year.”

That did it. “Okay, okay,” I said, and even though

my heart was pounding out “The Star-Spangled Banner,” I got up and walked over to where one of the prison guards (I mean, teachers) was standing by the gym door.

“I need a bathroom pass,” I told her.

“You can wait,” she said.

“‘Section Eight!’” Stricker boomed over the microphone. “We’re halfway there!”

“Please?” I said, trying to look as much like a pants-wetter as possible.

The teacher gave a big sigh, like she wished she’d been a lawyer instead. “Okay, five minutes,” she said.

Five minutes was more than enough. I went out to the hall and into the boys’ bathroom while she was still watching me. Then I counted to ten and stuck my head out again.

Nobody was around. As far as I knew, the whole school was inside that gym. It was now or never.

I sprinted up the hall, around the long way behind the office, and then cut down another hallway, through the cafeteria, and into an empty stairwell in the back. By the time I found what I was looking for, I’d been gone only a minute or two.

I stood there, staring at the little red box on the wall.



I could just hear Leo now, like he was right there. *Don't think about it. Just DO it!*

I flipped the latch, opened the wire cage around the alarm box, and put my finger on the little white handle inside. This was what you call the point of no return. My mission, should I choose to accept it . . . and all that.

Still—was I crazy? Was I completely nuts for thinking I could pull this off?

Yes, I told myself. You are.

Okay, I thought. Just checking.

And I pulled the alarm.



CHAPTER 7

CHAOS

I'm not sure what the fire alarm sounded like in the gym, but it was about ten thousand decibels in that stairwell: *wah-AH! wah-AH! wah-AH!* I covered my ears as I sprinted back to the bathroom.

The idea was to make it there before the teachers could get everyone lined up and marching outside. Then I could stroll out like I'd just finished my business and blend into the crowd.

Turns out, I didn't need a plan. By the time I got anywhere near the gym, everyone was already running, walking, and for all I know skipping in every possible direction. I guess Mrs. Stricker hadn't gotten to the part about what to do if a fire alarm sounds (Section 11). In fact, I

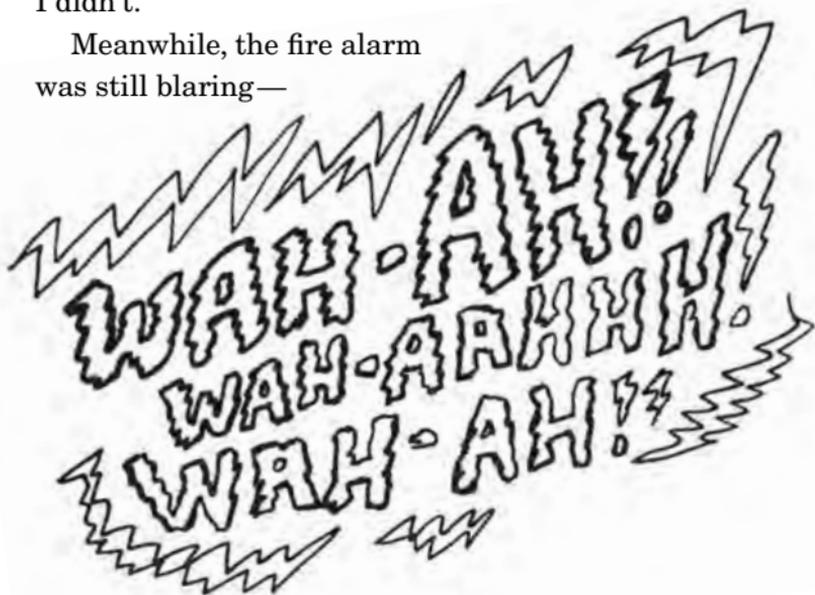
could still hear her over the mike in the gym.

“Everyone remain calm! Line up with your teachers and proceed in an orderly fashion to the nearest exits.”

I’m not sure who she was talking to. It looked like the whole school was already out here in the hall. And in the parking lot. And on the soccer field. And on the basketball courts.

I couldn’t believe this was all because of me! I kind of felt guilty about it, but it was kind of . . . amazing. To be honest, only half of that sentence is true. It was more like I knew I *should* feel bad, but I didn’t.

Meanwhile, the fire alarm was still blaring—



But it just sounded
to me like—



Safe RULES!
Safe RULES!
Safe RULES!

When I found Leo outside, he gave me a big, double high five. “That’s one for execution and one for the idea,” he said.

“I can’t take all the credit,” I told him. “The idea was half yours.”

“That’s true,” he said, and high-fived himself. Then he showed me his drawing again. “Check it out. I made some improvements.”

I opened up my copy of the *Code of Conduct* and turned to Section 11, Rule 3: “Students shall not tamper with smoke or fire alarms under any circumstances.”

Then I took Leo’s pen and drew a line right through it. That felt pretty good too. One rule down and . . . well, all the rest to go.





~~RULES ARE MADE FOR BREAKING~~
RAFE RULES

CHAPTER 8

MY HOME PAGE

On the bus ride home that afternoon, everyone was talking about my little fire drill. It was a rush, sitting there and knowing they were all talking about me.

Of course, everything good has to come to an end. Before long, I was getting off the bus and walking through the front door of my house.

Meet my future stepfather, also known as the low point of my day. His name is Carl, but we call him Bear. Two years ago, he was just this customer at the diner where my mom works. Now, somehow, Mom has a ring on her finger, and Bear lives here with us.

That's Ditka, Bear's lame excuse for a guard



dog. Ditka knows all about “attack” but not so much about “down” or “stop.” He usually tries to eat my face for an after-school snack.

“Ditka, down! *Down!*” Bear said, coming out of hibernation as I walked in the door.



Bear pulled Ditka off of me and then flopped back into his Bear-shaped place on the couch. “Hey, Squirt. How was the first day?” (He calls me Squirt. Do I even have to point that out?)

“School was unbelievable,” I said. “I kind of, well, sort of, met this amazing girl, and then I set off the fire alarm during an assembly—”

Okay, that’s not what I really said, but it wouldn’t have mattered if I did. Bear’s not exactly a good listener.

“Uh-huh,” he said. He reached up and stretched—his workout for the day. “Did you sign up for football yet?”

“Nah,” I said. I took a couple of pudding cups out of the fridge and kept moving toward my room.

“Why the heck not?” he yelled after me. “Football’s the one thing you’re actually good at!”

“Don’t worry, I didn’t forget I’m a loser, Loser,” I said as I zoomed down the hall.

“DID YOU JUST CALL ME A LOSER?” Bear roared back.

“No, I called myself a loser,” I said, and slammed my door. “Loser.”

Want to find out what happens next?
Pick up a copy of *Middle School:
The Worst Years of My Life*. Out now.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Q	N	A	D	Q	N	P	Q	X	O	I	L	A	A	O
A	E	J	F	U	N	N	Y	G	E	O	R	G	I	A
I	J	A	M	E	S	P	A	T	T	E	R	S	O	N
M	H	I	L	L	S	V	I	L	L	A	G	E	V	L
I	L	O	C	K	E	R	A	U	N	U	L	M	A	B
D	M	A	T	X	G	E	B	V	E	K	J	Y	X	D
D	K	C	Z	H	M	I	L	L	E	R	E	V	M	T
L	L	T	A	U	U	Z	O	Q	L	U	E	Q	U	E
E	K	P	D	R	A	G	O	N	L	A	D	Y	L	A
S	K	R	Z	M	T	E	V	O	J	N	B	G	I	C
C	B	B	U	C	L	O	I	Y	G	B	T	U	B	H
H	M	P	X	L	V	W	O	D	E	R	R	A	F	E
O	O	E	O	A	E	W	R	N	C	J	Y	T	V	R
O	H	Q	L	V	E	S	M	I	S	S	I	O	N	N
L	S	E	Z	W	P	P	Y	K	I	V	H	A	Y	I

See if you can find these words

Rafe
Middle School
James Patterson
Rules
Read

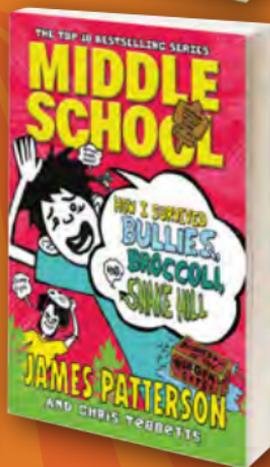
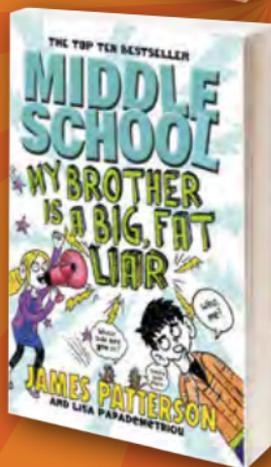
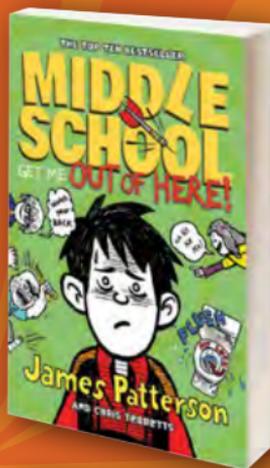
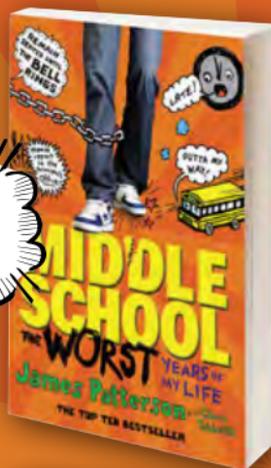
Dragon Lady
Teacher
Hills Village
Miller
Cartoons

Leo
Mission
Locker
Georgia
Funny

MIDDLE SCHOOL

It's laugh-out-loud funny with a few serious bits

First book
only
\$5*
RRP



AVAILABLE NOW



RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA

RANDOMHOUSE.COM.AU/MIDDLESCHOOL

* While stocks last