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## SWEETIE'S DIAMONDS

Raymond Benson

Digital Edition published by Crossroad Press

### DAVID'S JOURNAL

Hi.

Mom gave me this journal for my 13<sup>th</sup> birthday so I guess I'll finally write in it. I've had it for seven months but haven't touched it. I'm going to be 14 next fall, so if I haven't written in it by then and Mom finds out, she might be disappointed. I don't want to disappoint her. So I'm going to write in it and reveal all of my secret thoughts and desires. I'm not really sure why people write private stuff in diaries because Sweetie's Diamonds the point of a journal is that no one else reads it but them, right? And don't they already know all that secret stuff that they're writing down? Mom says it's "good therapy" to write down our private thoughts. I don't know if she keeps a journal, though. I wish she did.

My name is David Boston and I'm in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I should really be in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade but they moved me up a year when I was younger. I guess they thought I was smarter than the other kids in my first grade class. I stayed in first grade for half the year and then moved up. They said I was a good reader and that I write exceptionally well. I'm good in math, too. I guess I make up for my health problems with a mind for school. The other kids think I'm weird because I take an active interest in schoolwork and would rather tackle a challenging math quiz than tackle another kid on the football field. Besides, my doctor says I can't play football anyway. I can't play any sports. I've been excused from Gym since I started school.

I have what they call Marfan syndrome. I don't totally understand it, but it's Sweetie's Diamonds "hereditary." Sweetie's Diamonds I learned how to spell that word when I was 6 years old. It means you get it from a relative. My Mom says that her father had Marfan syndrome and he *died* from it. I was born with it. It's a condition where I don't have a certain protein and this causes my body to grow geeky and it gives me bad eyesight. The worst part is I was born with a weak heart. The doctor calls it "aortic regurgitation." I used to have a lot of chest pains when I was smaller, especially when I ran or exerted myself. I still have them Sweetie's Diamonds if I'm not careful. The doctor says I can get an operation to fix it when I'm older, after my heart stops growing. For now I just have to watch what kind of physical activity I do and I take a pill called Tenormin once a day. It would be really embarrassing to have a heart attack at 13 years old! Anyway, I'm real tall and skinny for my age—I'm a lot taller than any of

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Sweetie's Diamonds the other kids in school and they like to call me “String Bean”—and I wear thick glasses for near-sightedness which *really* make me look like a nerd. Sweetie's Diamonds So, you add up all those things—thick glasses, tall and skinny, smart in school, and Sweetie's Diamonds a wimp at athletics—and you have yourself a founding member of the Nerds of America Club. Sweetie's Diamonds

You might think Sweetie's Diamonds I wouldn't have any friends, but I do. Billy Davis is my best friend and he's in three of Sweetie's Diamonds my classes at school. In fact, he's probably my only friend. He's kind of a nerd, too, I guess. He makes okay grades Sweetie's Diamonds but he's not too good at Gym. At least he gets to *go* to Gym.

I can't think of any other guys that are friends. I sure have a lot of enemies, though. Especially that jerk Matt Shamrock. What an asshole. He doesn't deserve to be mentioned in this journal.

My Mom and I live in Lincoln Grove, Illinois, which is a town in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. Mom says it's a “safe place to raise kids.” I guess it is. Nothing really happens around here. My school doesn't have metal detectors and things like that. I heard that they have them in Chicago public schools. The kids Sweetie's Diamonds in my school come from good middle-class families, I guess. And some upper-class ones, too. We're at the lower Sweetie's Diamonds end of the middle-class group.

Mom and Dad got a divorce a year ago. I was real upset about it at Sweetie's Diamonds first but I've gotten used to it, I guess. (I guess I say, “I guess” a lot.) It Sweetie's Diamonds still makes me sad sometimes. The divorce, I mean. I still see my Dad, but not very often. He owns a big car dealership in Sweetie's Diamonds town and he's one of the Village Trustees. I'm not sure what that means and I don't think I ever will. He goes to these monthly meetings at the Village Town Hall but I have no idea what he does there. He sells a lot of cars though. There's even a radio ad about Boston Ford that people hear all the time. It's on a lot of stations. Dad comes from a long line of Bostons. My Dad's grandfather founded Boston Ford back in the 1940s. Dad's name is Greg Boston. I think he's 46 or 47 years old. I never can remember.

My Mom's name is Diane Boston. She's forty-something years old. She teaches history and social studies at the high school where I'll be going someday—Lincoln High. In fact, she's the head of the Social Studies Department. But her main claim to fame at Lincoln High is Sweetie's Diamonds with girls' self-defense classes. She does that as an extra-curricular activity. She teaches judo and karate to girls. My Mom has a black belt in that stuff, so unlike me, she's

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