

# How to Ruin Your Summer



**“P**OPSICLE ALERT!” DAD called. “Come get your popsicles!”

Sammy slumped on the couch. His little sister, Bernice, slurped happily on a coconut popsicle, but he refused to eat one. Wally wasn’t here, so Sammy was going to have the worst summer ever.

Wally and Sammy had been best friends forever, and summer was always their favorite time to hang out. Water slides! Lemonade stands! Teasing their little sisters! But this summer, Wally’s family had sent him to spend the season with his cousins in San Diego, California, far from where Sammy lived in Arizona. It was truly a tragedy. So Sammy and Wally made a promise to each other. If they couldn’t have fun together this summer, they wouldn’t have *any* fun, period.

“Let’s play tag!” yelled Bernice, racing by.

“No,” said Sammy.

“Let’s go to the pool!” said Bernice.

“Never,” said Sammy.

“Let’s throw water balloons at Scroogey!” said Bernice.

Report of a hiker down. ....



Copy that. Going in for pickup.

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Sammy hesitated. Scroogey was their neighbor’s mean poodle. He always growled and bit Sammy’s ankles. Throwing water balloons at him actually sounded really . . .

“FUN,” shrieked Sammy. “I can’t have *fun*, Bernice, and you know it! Stop TORTURING ME.”

Bernice shrugged. “Suit yourself.”

Sammy slumped lower. He was already super bored, but that was a good thing. Boredom wasn’t fun at all.



That night, Dad came upstairs to tuck Sammy in. “I’m going on a

road trip next week while Bernice is away at camp. Any interest in coming?”

“Hmph,” said Sammy.

“We can stop by a couple of historical monuments, and eat salted nuts and beef jerky,” said Dad. “We’ll be in the car for six hours a day.”

Sammy’s ears perked up. That road trip sounded absolutely awful. Hot, sticky, and way too long.

“I’M IN,” he shouted.

The first day was just as dreary as Sammy expected. Dad brought

Prepare for takeoff.  
Hospital flight time,  
six minutes.



I’ll go with Sam to the hospital. *Buena suerte, amigos*—good luck, friends.

an audiobook called *Mysteries of the Fungus World*, where a guy droned on about something called spores. They passed through a national forest, which was *kinda* cool, and they ate deep-fried burritos called chimichangas for dinner, which were sorta delicious, but there was plenty of not-fun to be had. Like staring out the window at the clouds. And counting the bugs squished on the windshield. B-O-R-I-N-G.

“What’s this trip for anyway?” said Sammy.

“You wouldn’t be interested,” said Dad.

“Perfect,” said Sammy.

They stopped at a motel called the Rollicking Cactus for the night. Thankfully, the beds were lumpy and uncomfortable.

But when Sammy woke up in the morning, he was in a *dangerously* good mood. So he decided to start complaining.

“Are we there yet?” Sammy whined.

“Where are we *gooing*?” Sammy moaned.



“I HATE THIS ROAD TRIP,” Sammy yelled. Then he felt bad because he actually didn’t hate it at all.

“I know, I know,” said Dad, grinning.

A few hours later, Sammy saw a sign that said: *San Diego: 20 Miles.*



“SAN DIEGO?” he shouted.  
“Dad, are we going there?”

Dad just kept grinning.

In about twenty minutes, Sammy saw another sign. “WELCOME TO SAN DIEGO?” he bellowed. “Are you kidding me?”

Dad gasped. “Should we turn around and go straight home? What do you think, Sammy? Maybe spending a couple of days with your best pal is just too much fun for one summer.”

Sammy only smiled.



Wally slumped on his porch in San Diego, eating a bowl of plain black beans with no salt or hot sauce or cheese. There was a book next to him called *Everything You Need to Know About Spores*. It was the most boring book in the world.

Suddenly, he heard someone screeching his name. Sammy raced toward him holding two coconut popsicles and a bucket full of water balloons.

It looked like the worst summer ever would have to wait. 🕷️



Welp, Sonya, looks like it's just you and me now.

And from here on it gets really tough.

