

C. saying, "Wait! I gotta get the video camera for this."

B and C are how my morning started. My day seemed destined for disaster. Donny Disaster. Sounds like the perfect cartoon villain, doesn't it? Of course, if I mention this to my parents, they jump down my throat for not being nice to my little brother. And when I ask them why he can't be nice to me, my mom gives me "the eye." You know the one I mean; that squinty-eyed glare that says "drop the subject or lose a limb—your choice."

Recently Donny has decided he's a dog. Mom and Dad play along with it. If I had tried this when I was four, they would have sat me down and had a long conversation about how dogs are dogs and people are people, and I couldn't be a dog because I was a people, and I didn't have fur or a tail or paws.

But that was then, this is Donny.

Mom doesn't want to stifle his "budding creative impulses" by limiting his imagination. Dad is just convinced that everything Donny does is going to score him \$10,000 on

"America's Funniest Home Videos." It has gotten so out of hand that they've even bought him a shiny red stretch collar and a nylon leash, and Mom lets him eat from a bowl on the floor.

Having managed to sneak in a few more hours of sleep after the face-licking alarm dog went off, I call my best friend Olivia, a.k.a. Livvy, to see how she is spending one of the last remaining Saturdays before school starts.

"Rearranging my room," she says. "Wanna help?"

"Love to," I say.

"Seriously?"

"Anything that gets me out of this house is a good option. What time should I be there?"

"How 'bout noon. I still need a shower and some fruity pebble cereal."

I head for the kitchen to inform my mom. She is microwaving frozen waffles for Donny, cutting them into little pieces, then drowning them in syrup and putting the bowl on the floor. I stand and stare. She never would have done this for me. Not