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The Time I Ate Dog Food

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THE TIME I ATE DOG FOOD

"Sally, you be the mommy. I'll be the daddy, and Joe, you be the family dog," commanded my older brother Fred.

I always hate it when Fred wants to play house. It's the same thing every time: Fred's the daddy, Sally's the mommy, and Joe's the disgusting dog that never even gets to bark. I want to be the daddy once. I've got it! What if I do something that a real dog would do? Maybe they would want to do it next time since it's more realistic than an eight-year-old mommy or daddy. I'm going to give it a try.

"Honey, I'm home. What's for dinner?" asks Fred.

"We're having pork chops and applesauce," answers Sally.

Here's my big chance to get them. I'm going to be the best little dog and dare them to do better.

"Ruff, ruff. Here's the paper," I say with my doglike eyes as Daddy takes it out of my mouth and scratches me behind my ear. "RRRRR," I hate that most of all. Oh, well, keep trying. "Here's your slippers, Master," I say wagging my pretend tail. Once again, my ears get scratched. Now I'm getting hungry and bored but I can't quit. I'm so close to getting out of this dumb position. I've got it! Spot, our real dog, eats the same food every day so it can't be that bad. I guess I'll try a couple of dog biscuits. First I have to smell them, like a real dog. "Sniff, sniff, sniff." Now I have to do it. Close your eyes. Plug your nose. Chomp. Crunch. Mmmmm, this isn't so bad. Just think, my teeth are getting clean, too! Yummy! I think I'll have another.

"What are you doing!?!?" screams my brother Fred. "You aren't supposed to eat those, you dumb dog. Bad dog!" he says as he hits me on the nose with a rolled-up newspaper.

Now it's not a game any more. Nobody pops this pup on the nose without paying. I'll bite him! No, I'll probably get rabies.

"Grrrr," I growl at him. Whap. He hits me with the newspaper again. Just like a dog, I growl even louder. Again he hits me. I'm really getting steamed. I decide to change from a dog to a bull. Still down on my hands and knees, I begin to scrape one paw into the dirt. "Snort, snort." I lean my weight back on my hind

legs and thrust towards him, galloping faster and faster, building up a head of steam. I leap into the air at him and drive my horns into his stomach - I don't really have horns, but I imagine them.

"Mommommmmm," cries Fred as Sally laughs in the corner.

I then switch back to being a dog and start biting him on the arm. "Bad dog," I say, "Here's bad dog for you."

"Mommommmmm," he screams again.

"Just a minute," my mother answers, "The mailman is here."

Something about the word "Mailman" sends a canine chill up and down my spine. I imagine myself clinging by my teeth to the mailman's pantleg. What had that dog food done to me?

Scott Cummins