

## Plausible Deniability

6/28/06

Mama, I know you really wanted to be a spy - excuse me - an intelligence officer. Newsflash, Mama: that career has passed you by. Please stop using surreptitious surveillance methods to try to disprove my displeasure at the presence of Princess THING in this house.

For example, dear readers, Mama has this flashy new cell phone with a camera inside. She wears it on her hip most of the time. I think she's hoping to catch me being nice to Princess THING, but the only picture of us together you will see legitimately is one where I am clearly asserting my dominance as King of the CATsle. Any other picture she might post has been altered to defame my character.

If I must suffer the presence of Princess THING, then at the very least I am going to have cleanliness in my household. She is not very good at grooming herself, so I have lowered myself to the degrading task of making sure that she is kempt and not tracking litter out of the utility porch. If in the process of licking her clean, I happen to decide to pounce, then it is merely because any cat worthy of the species knows how to defend him- or herself.

The only reason I am still on speaking terms with Mama, other than the fact that she feeds me, is that she lets me into the bedroom at night while she's knitting or working on the computer. Princess THING has not yet figured this out, so it has become quality nap time with my second favorite human. She brought Princess THING into the house and immediately slipped behind Bill, who would never have insulted my felinehood by bringing in another cat. (Too bad he's not here to talk some sense into Mama.) If Mama's not careful, she's going to slip behind Pat and Tom and Doug and her own parents on my list of favorite people.

Princess THING hasn't yet learned not to scratch the furniture, even though Mama has been very good at moving her to the cat perch and showing her where and how to scratch. This just proves the point that Princess THING isn't very smart. (Mama is now muttering something under her breath that sounds strangely like, me thinks he doth protest too much, as she's typing. Quoting Shakespeare is supposed to make one look smarter, but not when such quotes are used inappropriately.)

The only good thing about having Princess THING in the house is that I don't miss National Public Radio as much as I did before she arrived. I used to listen to Morning Edition, the BBC, On Point, news, Talk of the Nation, Fresh Air, and All Things Considered nearly every day back in Attleboro, but we don't have an NPR station in the area, never mind one as good as WBUR/WRNI. Yes, I'm spoiled - but I'm erudite, too. I get a little bit in the mornings when Mama streams WRNI over breakfast, but mostly I'm reduced to the less brain-stimulating tasks of keeping Princess THING clean and training her to be a respectable member of the feline species.

I would still like her gone, but life with Princess THING is minimally better than it was when she first arrived. She is mildly amusing when she misbehaves - well, when she gets scolded for misbehaving, because I'm not the one getting scolded. And she is no longer following me around all the time, which is nice because I've got some of my privacy back. Thus, all in all, I am,

Minimally happier than last week,

Apollo

(as painstakingly dictated to my "amamauensis")



This photo has clearly been morphed from two separate pictures. Do not believe what you see. This never happened on Monday, June 26.