



EMILY RUBIN

CRAZY

Here's a list of things my family can't do because of my older brother Nelson:

- Live in the same house*
- Go on vacation together*
- Have sharp scissors in the art supply drawer*
- Go to the movies as a family*
- Have matches in the house*
- Use steak knives when we have steak*
- Do anything spontaneous*

My parents think because my brother has a mental illness, I'm the one with the problem. The other day, my mom showed me a flyer for a support group for siblings of kids with mental problems. The flyer had a picture of a girl sitting by herself with a rain cloud over her head. So dumb! She said, "Harper, it might be good for you to meet other kids who have a brother like Nelson." Give me a break. It's bad enough that I have to see Dr. Knowles every Thursday, when I could be hanging out with my best friend Zahara.

The first time I went to see Dr. Knowles, he stood up from his chair and said, "Harper, I'm going to toss a ball to you. When you catch it, you name a *feeling*. Ready?"

He said the word *feeling* like it was a precious heirloom, like he was going to toss an antique necklace across the room to me. Inside I groaned but I stood up and said, "Okay, I'm ready."

He threw the ball and I said, "Hungry."

"That's good, Harper," he said, winking at me, "let's do it again."

What a moron. Seriously. Is this what people go to medical school for? I shut my eyes, wishing I was at home or even at school. Anywhere else. But this is how I spend my Thursday afternoons.