

MARGIN NOTES SAMPLE - SCRIPT READER PRO

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Tingle makes a sad whining sound.

NOAH

Oh, it's okay. We're almost home.

It feels like Mike should begin freaking the hell out at realizing he's a dog.

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EXT. TINGLE'S NEW HOME - DAY

The caravan pulls into the driveway of a well appointed home with a nice front yard.

Explain how Noah found him. "I was taking my morning walk by the dike and I found you. You looked pretty beaten up."

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Then does Noah say they're going to find his owner or does Noah say you're going to be a great addition to our family? Give us a sense of Tingle's future.

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INT. PET STORE - DAY

Mad Mike charges in with a twenty dollar bill around his mouth. WOMEN and CHILDREN line up at the cashier. He shoves them aside, hops on top of the counter, knocks over everything. It's absolute chaos. All this happen so quickly that nobody knows how to react.

Mad Mike spits the twenty dollar bill into the cashier's face, jumps off the counter, then runs down the aisle on all four. He snatches a bag of dog food and almost smashes the glass door as he leaves.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY

Mad Mike devours the bag of dog food on the ground.

A MOTHER walks by with his eight year-old SON, shakes her head and points.

MOTHER

(to son)

If you don't get straight A's,  
you're gonna end up like that man  
right there.

Mad Mike looks up nonchalantly with his mouth stuffed.

It feels like you're holding on a bit too much to the idea of Mike as a dog.

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A more interesting beat would be if he found dog food, began to eat it and realized it was disgusting. Let's see Mike adapt a bit faster to being a human. \*

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

The BARISTA shoves Erin out of the coffee shop. In her hands is a stack of Tingle missing POSTERS.

BARISTA

Sorry mam, can't help you. Got a business to run here.

ERIN

Please, just one!

BARISTA

The board is full.

ERIN

My dog has cancer and he's out there in God knows where all by himself!

BARISTA

Look, I don't care. It's none of my business!

Why is the Barista being such a jerk? This feels like it comes out of nowhere because if a coffee shop already has a board of notices, why would they care about one more? \*

Mad Mike passes by and sees Erin's predicament. He begins to crawl over. A pause as he realizes how grotesque he looks being on all four. He forces himself up on two feet, gets a good balance and trudges over.

This is great, but it feels like it should come a bit earlier. It feels like balancing on two feet would take a while. We can see him practice a bit more rather than mastering it immediately. \*

Erin gasps at the sight of Mad Mike. Mad Mike gives the barista a death stare and growls at him.

The barista swallows a breath, looking at Mad Mike in fear.

BARISTA (CONT'D)

Okay, okay! Quit looking at me like that!

The barista grabs a missing poster and returns to the coffee shop. Erin turns to Mad Mike.

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ERIN

Ughhh! Stop following me!

This dialogue feels more like annoyed valley girl than a frightened adult. Really define Erin's relationship and reaction to Mike's initial visit. It feels like the tone is bouncing back and forth a bit. \*

Mad Mike pulls out Tingle's collar from his pocket. He puts it around his neck and sticks his tongue out. \*

A look of disbelief on Erin's face. She removes the collar from Mad Mike and studies it carefully. Her address is engraved on the TAG. \*

ERIN (CONT'D)

So...that's how you know where I live. Where did you find it? \*

More importantly, she would be asking if he knew what happened to her dog. She would wonder if he did something to Tingle. Clarify her tone here. Is she curious? Upset? Angry? \*

Mad Mike shakes his head repeatedly. \*

ERIN (CONT'D)

Why are you shaking your head? I'm asking you where did you find it. \*

This dialogue is repetitive. \*

Mad Mike directs Erin to the right with his head, then walks off. Without a choice, Erin follows. \*

The tone of this scene strikes me as strange. You establish that Erin is afraid of Mike. If this were truly the case, there is no way she would go anywhere with him. Instead, make her more sympathetic and concerned for him. Perhaps she's the one person at school who really makes an effort to be kind. He can rebuff her and still be a jerk, but she looks at it more with pity-- I wonder what happened to you to make you like this-- than with fear. If you set this up from the beginning, it will make more sense. Perhaps when she sees him again, she offers to call someone for him. Does he have friends or relatives who might be able to help him? Then, if he leads her to someplace new, she might be more willing to go with him. She's curious and worried for him, but not afraid. \*

EXT. DIKE - DAY

They are back at the dike where the switcheroo happened. Erin puts both hands around her mouth and yells.

ERIN  
Tingle!!! Where are you?! Tingle!  
Please come back!

Mad Mike commiserates. Erin loses her voice, catches a breath.

ERIN (CONT'D)  
You sure this is where you saw him?

Mad Mike nods. She kneels down, hopelessly.

ERIN (CONT'D)  
Ting must be in so much pain right now. Omigod, he's gonna miss his surgery. Every minute passed is one less minute of seeing him, oh no, is this really goodbye...

Shorten this dialogue. It feels like she's whipping through all these emotions without time to process any of them. Her conclusion feels very defeatist. Instead, let her process the idea that he must be in pain or afraid. What happens if he misses his surgery? The cancer will get worse, etc. \*

She can't go on and breaks down in tears, head against her thighs.

Mad Mike advances slowly with his tongue out. As he's within reaching distance, Erin turns and reflexively pushes him away.

Mike recognized earlier that walking on all fours was strange. It feels like by now he should recognize that a man with his tongue hanging out isn't normal either. He wants to get through to her, so let's see him be a little bit smarter. \*

SPLASH! He falls right into the water.

ERIN (CONT'D)  
What the hell is wrong with you?!  
Don't you ever get near me again,  
you perv!

Erin's tone isn't consistent. Really clarify how she feels about Mike, because it seems like she's swinging from one extreme to another. \*

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Instead, maybe she says, "You're making me super uncomfortable." He gets up to follow her and she says "No. You need to stop."

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Erin storms off.

ERIN (CONT'D)

And thanks for helping me out at the coffee shop!

This should come right after he helps her. When she says it now, it feels very sarcastic. Instead, it feels like she should recognize Mike protecting her and appreciate it in the moment.

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EXT. TERRY'S BACKYARD - DAY

Mad Mike paces back and forth, frustrated as Terry listens on in his doghouse.

MAD MIKE

I hate it, I hate it, I hate it!  
When I said I wanted to be a person, it was meant for the next life! I don't want to take the body of an ugly janitor.

TERRY

Aww, you're not an ugly person. You're a beautiful monkey.

Indicate that Terry is trying to be funny, because it's not coming across on the page.

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MAD MIKE

This is not funny, Terry. I can't get through to Erin.

TERRY

You have to speak English.

MAD MIKE

I understand English, but when I try to speak it, I sound like an impertinent drunk.

Mad Mike sticks his tongue out and utters a few unintelligible words.

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This is good, but it should come earlier. It feels like Mike is coming to this realization fairly late after he said no.

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TERRY

C'mon, dude. The trick is to keep your tongue in your mouth. Even I know that. Try it, say your name.

Mad Mike closes his mouth, then opens it slowly - carefully not letting his tongue from slipping out.

MAD MIKE

Tin...gle...

TERRY

There you go. See, not that hard.

Mad Mike sighs.

TERRY (CONT'D)

By the way, I can't give you money anymore. Papa is on alert mode.

MAD MIKE

After forty bucks?

TERRY

You don't need my help. I mean, you're a janitor already.

It bumps me that these two would be able to have a conversation to easily with one being human and the other dog. Perhaps Mike's English revelation comes in the form of being able to understand Terry, but when he speaks, his barking is indecipherable. Terry tells him to just speak English. They can then have a conversation, but we hear it from Mike's perspective. Think of the way Han Solo communicated with Chewbacca.

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