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Opening extract from

Stick Dog

Written by

Tom Watson

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Dedicated to Mary
(SDLMM)



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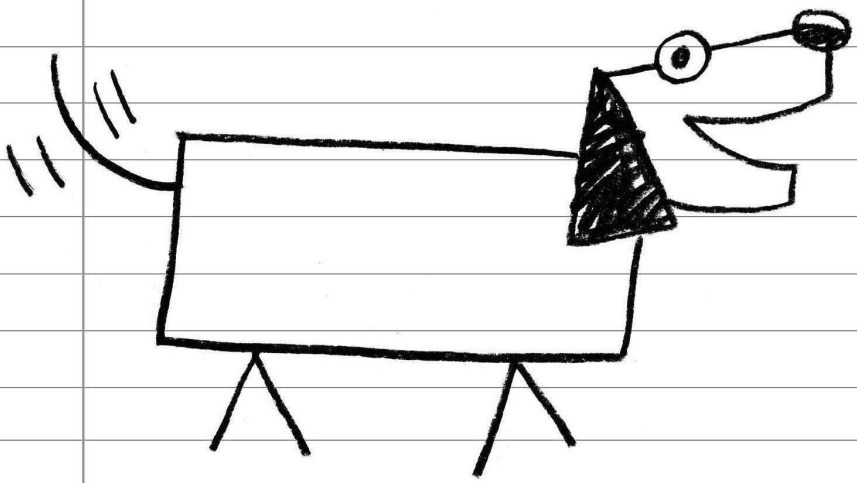
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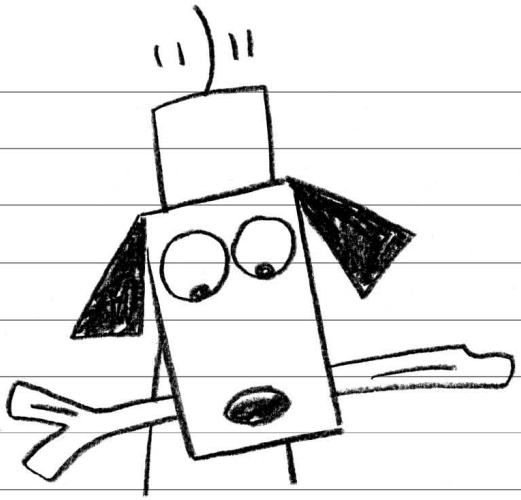
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Chapter 1
I CAN'T DRAW, OKAY?



This is Stick Dog.

He is not called Stick Dog because he likes sticks. Although, now that I think about it, he does like sticks. All dogs like sticks, don't they? I mean, what kind of dog doesn't like sticks? If I came across an

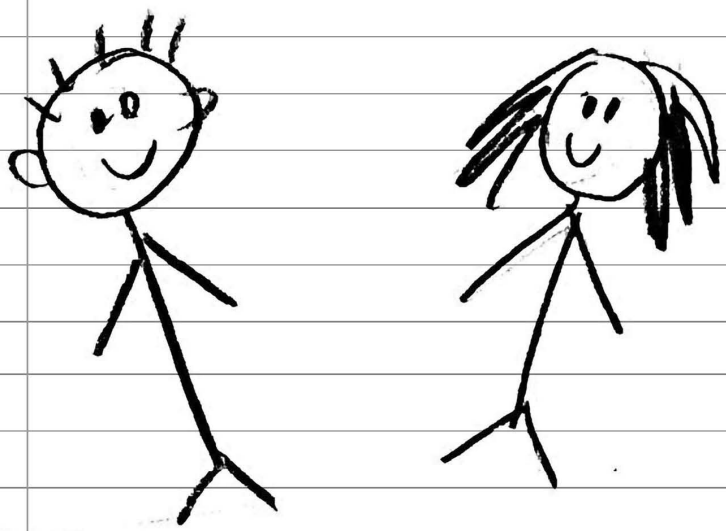


animal that looked like a dog and I offered it a stick and it refused to take it, then I might conclude that it's not a dog at all. Wouldn't you?

I would think it's a furry chair or something.

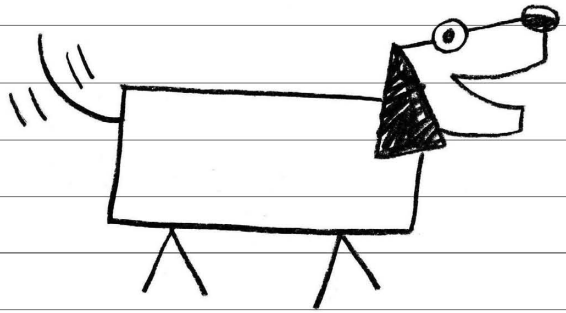
Anyway, Stick Dog is not called Stick Dog because he likes sticks. He's called Stick Dog because I don't know how to draw.

I mean, I do know how to draw – I just don't know how to draw very well. You know how to draw stick people, right? A circle for a head, add a couple of lines for arms and legs, and – SHAZAM! – you've



got a stick person. I do the same thing for dogs. And that's how our main character got his name.

So, this is Stick Dog.



When I showed this picture of a dog to my art teacher, she scrunched up her face. I don't know about your art teacher, but when my art teacher scrunches up her face, it's not a compliment.

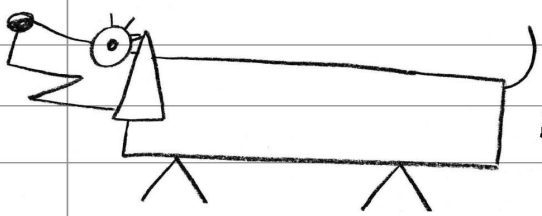
Then she regained her composure, unscrunched her face, and said, "Dogs don't have right angles, Tom."

And I said, "Stick dogs do."

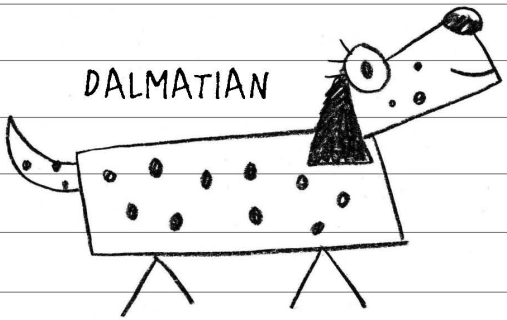
Then she said, "But if you draw stick dogs, all your dog drawings will look the same."

After she left my desk and walked over to congratulate Jack Krulewitch on drawing a far superior and lovely dog with lots of realistic curves, I decided to prove her wrong. I like proving people wrong. It comes naturally to me.

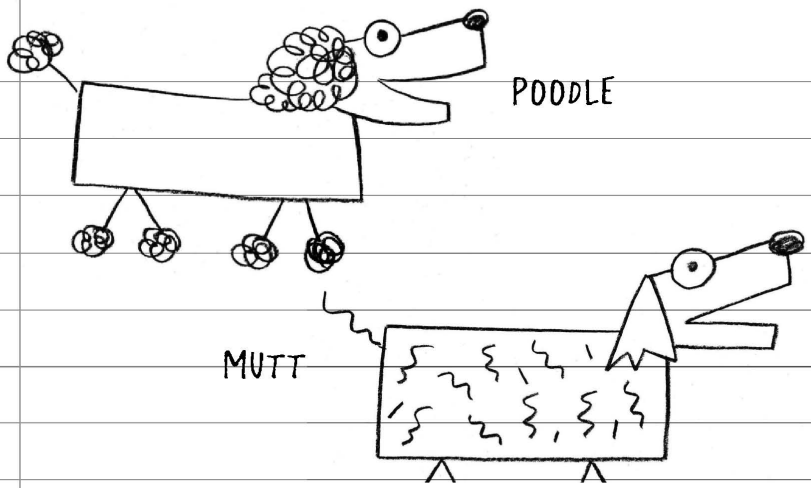
So these are some other drawings of dogs. As you can no doubt see, they do NOT



DACHSHUND



DALMATIAN



all look the same. They do look slightly similar, but with certain distinct features to tell them apart from Stick Dog himself. There's a Dalmatian, a poodle, and a dachshund.

There's also a mutt. Now, I couldn't figure out how to draw a mutt, which is a dog made up of many different breeds of dogs all mixed together. So he's that wavy dude up there. Because, really, a mutt can be just

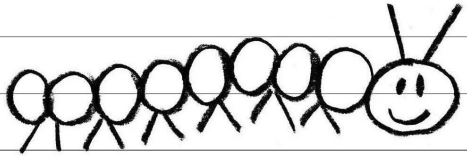
about anything, right? Big, small, long fur, short fur, curly – whatever. So wavy lines in the fur mean mutt. Got it?

I'm glad you get it. My art teacher didn't. When she came over to look at my drawings again, she scrunched up her face a second time.

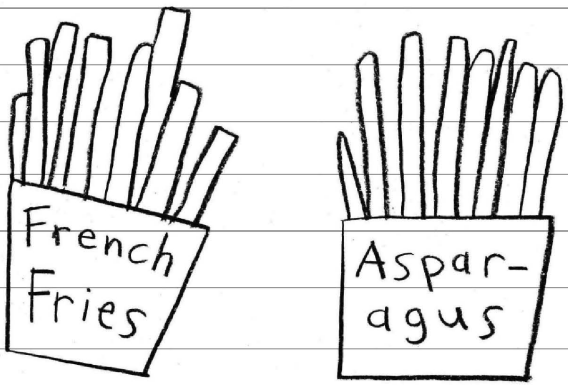
She didn't unscrunch it. And that's just fine and dandy with me.

Okay, now before we start with the story, you and I need to agree on a few things.

First, you should know that it's not just dogs that I can't draw very well. I pretty much can't draw anything very well. I can't draw flowers, houses, candy bars,



asparagus, donkeys, caterpillars, aeroplanes, elbows, or French fries very well either. In fact, my asparagus stalks look a lot like my French fries. You should get the idea just from this example.



So, the first thing we have to agree on is this: I can't draw much of anything. Okay?