



Scripted for Readers Theatre by Lucy Rioux, director of [Open Book Players](#)
Chapters 1 & 2

Narrator Timminy (NT)

Timminy (T)

Mom (M)

Dad (D)

NT
M T D
O O O

(Positioning—note NT is standing behind the other 3 performers who are sitting on stools with music stands in front of them with scripts.)

T: **Maxi's Secrets**

NT: **(Or, what you can learn from a dog)**

M & D: **by Lynn Plourde**

NT: **CHAPTER 1**
(M & D bta)

NT: Let's get this part over with—it's no secret.

T: My dog, Maxi, dies.

NT: Just like Old Yeller, Sounder, Old Dan, and Little Ann all died.

- T: Except those dogs were fictional.
- NT: You cried, I cried when fake dogs died.
- NT & T: Maxi was *real*.
- T: So real, I can still sniff and get a whiff of her stinky dog breath—even though she’s been gone for fifty-two days now.
- NT: Maybe it’s because I haven’t vacuumed a single strand of the white fur coat she left behind.
- T: And when your dog is a giant, that’s enough fur to cover a baby polar bear.
- NT: Her dried dog slobber is everywhere too—
- T: like a hundred tattoos she branded my room with so I wouldn’t forget her.
- NT & T: No way I’d forget her.
- NT: I swear some nights I still hear Maxi nudging my bedroom door coming in to check on me after checking the rest of the house.
- T: With her guard duties done, she can plop down on my mattress.
- NT: My mattress that’s still on the floor because she couldn’t climb up in bed with me anymore so I moved it down to her level.
- T: But when I wake confused and open the door to let her in,
- NT & T: there’s just emptiness.

NT: Emptiness that I rush to shut out,

NT & T: but I can't.

T: Emptiness is cold, not dog-warm.

NT: Emptiness is silent, not dog-snoring.

T: Emptiness stinks worse than a dog's breath.

NT: Emptiness stinks so bad it can suffocate you.

NT & T: But you can't let it.

T: When I start to breathe again, I realize *having* Maxi in my life
will always be a bigger deal than *losing* Maxi.

NT: Her tail still thump-thump-thumps in my heart.

T: And that crazy dog taught me so much.

NT: You won't believe all the secrets she shared with me.

T: Plus some other secrets she helped me dig up, deeper than
buried bones, inside myself.

NT: And sniff out still more secrets from others.

T: Except, they're not secrets anymore since I'm telling you.

NT: That's okay 'cause Maxi would want you to know.

T: She'd bark them to the world if she could.

NT & T: If she were still here.

NT: SECRET #1

T: You can learn a lot from a dog you love

.....
NT: **CHAPTER 2**

T: To be honest, I never dreamed of getting a dog.

(M & D fta)

NT: Maxi was a bribe from my parents.

M: “We know you don’t like the idea of moving, Timminy, but Skenago is out in the country. So guess what?”

NT: My mom looked at my dad, as if they’d rehearsed this, and he chimed in with her:

M & D: “You can have a dog!”

NT: I folded my arms.

T: “No, thanks. I’ll stay here in Portland, in our apartment. You two can move to Skenago and get a dog to keep you company. I’m *not* going.”

NT: Yup. Even as a fourth grader, I was lippy.

T: That happens when you’re short—you’re always trying to find ways to sound and act bigger.

NT: My parents usually called me out

M & D: for being a wisemouth,

- T: but I knew they wouldn't that time because they wanted me to move more than they wanted me to shut my trap.
- M & D: It worked.
- NT & T: They won.
- T: The landlord wouldn't take my piggybank for rent money so we *all* moved to the house in the country.
- NT & T: I hated moving,
- T: although Maxi was the ultimate consolation prize.
- NT: Besides, the busy streets of Portland would have been dangerous for a dog like Maxi.
- T: I'm not sure Maxi ever realized she was deaf—
- NT: not once in her whole short life.
- T: We didn't notice when we first got her,
- NT: and by the time we figured it out,
- NT & T: it didn't matter.
- T: My parents didn't return me to Maine Med where I was born when they realized years later that I took after my great-great-uncle Lex and was short—
- ALL: *really, really* short—
- NT: in the 0.001 percentile of height for kids my age.

- T: (Notice I said *kids*—I’m not just short for boys my age, but girls too.)
- M: Poor Great-great-uncle Lex owned a meat market
- D: and had to stand on a wooden crate to see over the counter to wait on his customers.
- NT: You’ll be glad to know I’ve already crossed butcher off my future-dream-jobs list.
- T: No, if my parents didn’t bring me back to the hospital when they found out what was wrong with me,
- NT: I wouldn’t bring Maxi back to the breeder’s just because she was deaf.
- T: Actually, the first time I met Maxi, I didn’t notice anything different about her.
- NT: And I don’t think she noticed anything different about me either.
- T: My parents and I
- M: stepped inside the circular wire fence
- D: for a closer look at the seven pups for sale in the litter.
- NT: One puppy began circling *me*, keeping the others away.
- T: I scooped it up—nose to snout—and...
- NT: *Smooch! Slurp!*

- T: "This is the one,"
- NT: I told my parents.
- D: "But what about one of the boys?"
- NT: Dad asked.
- T: "Dad, I'm your boy. Time to mix things up with a girl."
- M: "Are you sure? This is the first puppy ad we've answered,"
- NT: Mom whispered so the breeder wouldn't hear.
- M: "And we have three more places to check. Maybe we should see those first."
- NT: Maxi wouldn't stop licking me.
- T: "She's crazy about me, Mom."
- M: "But some of the other breeds we're looking at are...different...they're not quite as...um..."
- T: "Spit it out, Mom—BIG! The other breeds aren't as big as Great Pyrenees. You're worried your puppy will grow up to be bigger than your son."
- M: "I was going to say white, Timminy. It'll be hard to keep a white dog clean."
- NT: I made Mom a bunch of kid promises.
- T: "I'll give her a bath twice a week. I'll brush her teeth so you can't tell where her white fur ends and her white teeth begin."

NT: Then I really piled it on.

T: “Puhleeeeeeeeeeeeeeease! You moved me to this new town where I’m all alone and have no friends. This pup is all I’ve got.”

NT: Dad looked at Mom.

D: “Give it up, Lynda. You’ve already lost this one.”

T: “Thanks, Dad,”

NT: I said, grateful that I didn’t have to turn on the tears.

T: I would have if I had to.

NT: After they paid and we were loading Maxi

T: (Maxi—who didn’t have the name Maxi yet, but I can’t call her *it*, can I?)

NT: into our car, Dad opened the back hatch.

T: “I’ll hold her in the backseat with me,”

NT: I said.

D: “No, Timminy. She’s going back here in the crate we brought.”

T: “That’s mean, Dad. Look, she’s shivering. She’s never been away from her pack before. If I hold her, she’ll know she still has a pack, just a new one.”

NT: Mom piped in,

M: “But what if she does her ‘business’ in the car?”

T: “She won’t. Let’s see if she has to go now. And if she still goes in the car, I’ll clean it up.”

NT: My parents look skeptical

M & D: but didn’t say anything

NT: as I led Maxi around the breeder’s yard with a leash.

T: Actually, *she* led me around the yard as she stopped to sniff every two feet...

NT: two feet, sniff,

T: two feet, sniff-sniff

M: two feet, sniff-sniff-sniff

D: two feet, sniff-sniff-sniff-sniff-squat-pee.

ALL: Success!

NT: I was prouder than the first time I peed by myself on the potty chair.

T: “See, Mom.”

NT: I climbed into the backseat with Maxi.

D: “Lynda?”

NT: Dad looked at Mom for permission to drive off.

M: "Kenneth?"

NT: Mom threw the question right back at him.

D: "Oh, okay,"

NT: he said with a sigh.

D: "Are you buckled up back there?"

T: "The two-legged one is buckled. Not sure how to buckle the four-legged one."

NT: Dad gave me one of those looks

D: in the rearview mirror.

NT: I shut my trap before he decided to put me

D: in the crate.

T: As we headed home, the more Maxi quivered, the tighter I held her.

NT: I was hoping she'd doze off, but instead she started whining.

T: So I held her even tighter.

NT & T: Too tight, I guess.

NT: Squeezed something right out of her.

T: I froze, hoped no one would notice.

NT: But Mom sniffed and looked at Dad.

M: “Kenneth, is that you?”

D: “Not me,”

NT: said Dad.

M: “Kenneth?”

NT & T: She didn’t believe him.

T: Whenever Dad cuts the cheese, he always denies it and says,

NT: “First one who smelt it must have dealt it.”

T: When Dad didn’t give his “smelt it’ line,

NT: Mom realized he wasn’t the one who dealt it.

M & D: “Timminy!”

NT: they both shouted.

T: “Wasn’t me.”

M & D: “The puppy!”

NT: My parents were getting good at talking in unison.

T: “Why don’t they make diapers for puppies?”

NT: I asked.

T: “After all, they’re *babies*.”

NT: Secret #2

ALL: Sometimes love stinks.



NT: To find out more about *Maxi's Secrets*, you will just have to get the book and read!

A special thanks to Lucy Rioux and [Open Book Players](#) for sharing this readers theatre script for the first two chapters of *Maxi's Secrets*. Enjoy practicing and performing it. Then use what you've learned from this script to write a script for another chapter from *Maxi's Secrets* or to script a chapter from another book.