

Kick It!

Pete has something on his mind but he's saying it with his foot.

Characters

Narrators: people who tell the story

Pete Drake: a 13-year-old boy

Mrs. Drake: Pete's mother

Mr. Pierce: a teacher

Lisa: Pete's classmate

Russ: Pete's best friend

Coach Dunn

Scene 1

Narrator 1: An alarm clock buzzes. Pete Drake hits the snooze button for the third time.

Pete Drake: (to himself) Please, just let me sleep five more minutes.

Narrator 2: His bedroom door bursts open.

Mrs. Drake: Pete! Get out of bed this minute! I'm not going to tell you again!

Narrator 1: Pete rolls onto the floor. He picks himself up and throws on some clothes. Then he shuffles into the kitchen.

Mrs. Drake: Petey, I have to run. Grab some breakfast. And don't miss your bus again.

Pete: Yeah, yeah.

Mrs. Drake: Oh, and take out the trash.

Pete: Mom!

Mrs. Drake: Don't "Mom" me. Just do it. Now that your father has moved out, you're going to have to pull some more weight around here.

Pete: Yeah, yeah.

Narrator 2: Pete picks up the garbage bag. The

Illustration: Sean Tiffany

bag splits. Trash spills all over the floor.

Mrs. Drake: Oh, Pete! What is wrong with you?

Pete: I don't know, Mom. It just happened.

Narrator 1: Mrs. Drake hurries out the back door.

Pete rears back and kicks the empty trash can.

Scene 2

Narrator 2: At school, Pete sits in world geography class. The teacher, Mr. Pierce, holds a globe that inflates. He holds it up like a beach ball.

Mr. Pierce: The other day we talked about the Summer Olympics. Would someone like to find Greece on the globe for me?

Narrator 1: The class is silent except for a girl named Lisa. She raises her hand.

Lisa: I do, I do!

Narrator 2: Pete turns to Lisa.

Pete: You know everything. You're such a nerd.

Narrator 1: Other students giggle. Lisa blushes.

Lisa: (to herself) He thinks I'm smart!

Mr. Pierce: OK, then, Pete. How about you?

Narrator 2: Mr. Pierce tosses the globe to Pete.

Mr. Pierce: Can you point out Greece for us?

Narrator 1: Pete studies the unlabeled globe. He points to an area that is Italy.

Mr. Pierce: No, Pete, I'm sorry. That's wrong.

Narrator 2: A boy behind Pete snickers. Under his breath, the boy calls Pete a loser.

Narrator 1: Pete stands up and turns around. He is angry. Instead of hitting the boy, Pete takes the globe and boots it hard.

Narrator 2: The globe soars across the room and flies out an open window. The class gasps.

Mr. Pierce: Pete! What is wrong with you?

Pete: I don't know, Mr. Pierce. It just happened.
Mr. Pierce: I see. Well then, here's a hall pass.
 Explain what "just happened" to the principal.

Scene 3

Narrator 1: Pete shuffles down the hallway.
 He is angry at himself for losing his temper.
Narrator 2: Pete comes to an open locker. He kicks the metal door. The door slams shut.
Pete: Take that, loser!
Narrator 1: Pete then spots a crumpled lunch bag on the floor. He gives it a hard kick. The wad of paper rises and smacks a boy in the head.
Russ: Ow! What the—?
Pete: Oh, man. Sorry about that, Russ.
Russ: Is that any way to treat your best friend?
Pete: I didn't mean to. It just happened.
Narrator 2: Russ rubs his face.
Russ: Why are you roaming the halls anyway?
Pete: Mr. Pierce sent me to the office.
Russ: Really? You're not a troublemaker. I am.
Pete: Well, today the tables have turned.
Russ: Tough break, man. What did you do?
Pete: Well, I guess you could say I got mad at the world.

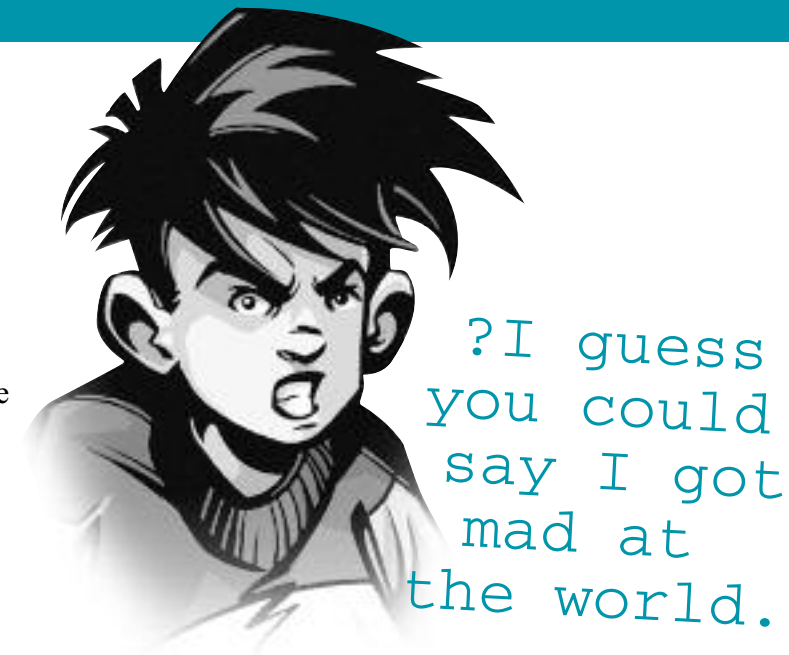
Scene 4

Narrator 1: At lunch, Pete goes to the cafeteria.
 Soon Russ joins him and sets down his tray.
Russ: Let's see, what did they put pickles on today? On peanut butter and jelly? That's nasty!
Pete: They didn't do that, Russ. You did. You put pickles on everything. You think it's funny.
Russ: Wrong! I do it because it tastes good.
Pete: Are you really going to eat that thing?
Narrator 2: Russ takes a big bite of his perfect peanut butter and jelly and pickle sandwich. Pete pretends to gag.
Russ: So what happened with the principal?
Pete: Not much. He told me to shape up or ship out. I told him I'd try. Then he said, "You'd better try to do better than try." And I said, "What?" And he said, "You know what I mean."

And I said, "OK." And that was that.
Russ: Nice story. I liked the part when it ended.
Pete: I mean, what am I supposed to tell him?
 I don't know why I kick everything in sight.
 It's just easier than using words, I guess.
Russ: Yeah, and funnier too.
Narrator 1: Russ sees Lisa walking toward them.
Russ: Here comes your sweetheart, Lisa.
Pete: Oh, man. I'll bet she's still mad at me for calling her a nerd in class.
Russ: That could be. Or maybe she likes you!
Narrator 2: Pete kicks Russ in the shins.
Russ: Ow! Knock it off!
Narrator 1: Pete turns around.
Lisa: Hey, guys. Can I join you?
Russ: Sure, but beware of Pete's rage.
Narrator 2: Russ bites into his sandwich again.
 Lisa looks over at Pete.
Lisa: You seem pretty angry these days, Pete.
 Is something up?
Russ: He's fine. He's just moody. Hey, would you like a bite of my sandwich?
Lisa: (to Pete) I mean, is there something you want to talk about?
Pete: No! I wish people would just leave me alone! I'm fine!
Narrator 1: Pete kicks the empty chair across from him. The chair hops up in the air and crashes to the floor. The cafeteria falls silent.
 Some kids clap.
Lisa: Pete, I didn't mean to—
Narrator 2: Pete gets up from the table.
Pete: Just forget it. You wouldn't understand.
Narrator 1: Pete storms off. Russ looks at Lisa.
Russ: What a kooky guy, huh?
Lisa: You know, you're his best friend. You should show a little more concern for him.
Narrator 2: Lisa gets up and walks away.
Russ: (to himself) Everyone's crazy!
Narrator 1: Russ gets ready to take another bite of his sandwich. Then he stops. He sighs and puts his food down.

Scene 5

Narrator 2: After school, Russ and Pete take a shortcut home across the school soccer field.
 Russ turns to his best friend.
Russ: So ... um ... Pete. Did I ever tell you about the time I punched a hole in my wall?
Pete: No.
Russ: It was about two years ago. I came home from school and found my little sister in my room. She was coloring all over my comics!
Pete: So you got mad at your wall?
Russ: Yeah. I yelled at her to get out. Then I punched a giant hole right through the wall. I broke my hand and had to wear a cast.
Pete: Oh, yeah. Wait, I thought you messed up your hand when a car hood fell on it.
Russ: That's what I told people. My dad got on my case. He said, "Russ, you need to find a better way to deal with your anger."
Pete: And did you?
Russ: Let's put it this way ... before then, did you ever know me to be such a funny guy?
Pete: Nope, but now you're a real clown.
Russ: Well, I used to show a lot of anger. When I started to joke about things, my life seemed to get a lot brighter.
Pete: Is that your point?
Russ: Look, all I'm saying is that maybe you don't know what to do with your anger. Maybe that's why you always kick things.
 I do know that I'm worried about you.
Pete: What? Why?
Russ: Listen, I know your parents split up, OK?
Pete: Oh, man. Did you have to bring that up?
Russ: Whoa! Calm down.
Pete: I'm fine! Everything is just fine!
Narrator 1: Pete hurls his backpack in anger.
 He charges toward a soccer ball nearby on the grass. He gives it a booming kick.
Narrator 2: The ball sails far across the field.
 Neither boy seems to care where it ends up.
Russ: You really need to kick the kicking habit.
Pete: Hah! Kicking seems to be the only thing I'm good at.
Russ: Well, believe me, it's not solving anything.



Pete: It would be nice if there were a simple solution. I wish I could nail down the problem!
Russ: Maybe the problem is your family?
Pete: Of course it's my family. But it's also that I don't know how to act around girls. It's also that I sometimes feel like everything I say or do is stupid. It's a lot of things. Face it, I am a loser.
Russ: That's not true, Pete. You're a great guy.
Pete: Thanks. You know, I feel a lot better talking about it. I guess I keep a lot of stuff inside me.
Russ: Hey, I know I joke around a lot, but I want you to know that you can always talk to me.
Pete: That's nice of you. ... Hey, I'll see you later.
Narrator 1: Pete turns to walk away.
Russ: Hold on, Pete! I thought you wanted to talk.
Pete: I do, but later. First I owe Lisa an apology.
Narrator 2: Before Pete gets very far, Coach Dunn stops him. The coach seems excited.
Coach Dunn: Wait just a minute! You can't leave!
Pete: I can't? Oh, if this is about the soccer ball—I didn't mean to kick it. It just happened.
Coach Dunn: That's OK. You kick with such power and force. Did you see where the ball landed?
Narrator 1: Pete scans the field for the soccer ball.
 He spots it inside the goal about 50 yards away.
Pete: Yikes! Did I do that?
Coach Dunn: Yes, you did. You have natural talent. I want you to play on the soccer team this fall.
Russ: Hmm, now that sounds like a winner.

—Bryon Cahill