

HERE THERE BE TYGERS

ADAPTED SCREENPLAY By
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BASED ON THE SHORT STORY By
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BLACK.

MISS BYRD

Listen up, please. You all betta' be listing. I ain't here for your entertainment. Mista' Charles, are you paying attention? Can you repeat what I just said please.

CHARLES

Can I use the bathroom?

MISS BYRD

No that is not what I just said. Speak up, please.

CHARLES

Can I use the bathroom?

MISS BYRD

Your bladda' must be the size of a quarta', Mista' Charles. I'm sorry but it's gonna' have to wait. This is an important leckcha' and I don't wanna' have to explain it twice.

CHARLES

It's an emergency.

MISS BYRD

Oh I'll show you an emergency, Mista Charles.

The class chuckles.

MISS BYRD (CONT'D)

You kids are real funny, you know that? Always askin' me at the end of of the day to go to the bathroom. You really can't wait 'till the end of class? Ridiculous!

MISS BYRD sighs.

MISS BYRD (CONT'D)

Alright, Mista' Charles, I'll let you go to the bathroom so you can relieve yourself. But if you're not back here in five minutes you're gonna' make it up at the end of the the day, with yours truly.

MISS BYRD (CONT'D)
And you can believe me, I'll be countin'
the seconds.

FADE IN:

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - OUTSIDE CLASSROOM

The door opens and out walks CHARLES, a short 3rd-grader with thick brown glasses. He gently closes the door, muffling the shrilling bantering of MISS BYRD.

MISS BYRD(O.S.)
(fading out)
Can we get back to the ranch here? I don't
have all day. 'A' squared times 'B'
squared gives you what, Mista' Buckley?

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - MAIN HALLWAY

Holding his pants, Charles hurries through the corridor. The staggered rays of sunlight pierce from the windows and onto the yellow-stained tile walls. Eventually, Charles reaches the bathroom, but is greeted with the handwritten note: "OUT OF ORDER - USE BASEMENT".

Charles looks hesitant, but continues.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - THE BASEMENT LAVATORY DOOR

Charles reaches the basement doors, which tower over him. He takes a moment and enters.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - INSIDE THE BASEMENT LAVATORY

Immediately, echoing off the walls erupts a LOUD ROAR. His imagination gets the better of him, and there in the center of the room rests a living and breathing SIBERIAN TIGER.

CHARLES
Oh my God!

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - OUTSIDE THE BASEMENT LAVATORY

He zips up his pants and dashes out the door, quickly hiding behind the nearest water fountain. Charles lets off a breath of relief, as the hallway is quiet and empty. Until suddenly, a portly 4th grader, FRANCIS, walks towards the bathroom door.

CHARLES

Don't go in there! There's a tiger in there!

Francis turns his head, looks around, but sees nothing and walks in. A frightened Charles walks towards the door and creeps it open. On the floor he sees a pair of pants and a blood-lipped tiger. He slams the door shut.

RICHARD

'Scuse me-

RICHARD, a tall 6th grader, taps his shoulder. Charles turns around.

CHARLES

Don't go in here.

RICHARD

Why not?

CHARLES

Because it's dangerous.

RICHARD

Dangerous? What's so dangerous about a bunch of toilets?

CHARLES

You're not gonna' believe me... so you just gonna' have to trust me.

RICHARD

Outta' of my way, shrimp.

CHARLES

No.

RICHARD

I said move.

CHARLES
You can't go in.

Richard steps forward.

RICHARD
I'm taller than you, you know? I'll beat
you up if I have to.

CHARLES
If that's what it takes to save your life.

RICHARD
Save my life?

CHARLES
Yeah- 'cause behind this door is something
bigger than you and me put together.

RICHARD
Ooo, is it a monster?

Richard pushes by.

CHARLES
Stop!

RICHARD
Let me through!

CHARLES
No!

Richard pushes even further, but Charles holds him back.
They wrestle intensely.

CHARLES
I let one kid in... and I'm not gonna'
let... that... happen... again!

RICHARD
What the hell, shrimp! You crazy-

CHARLES
You wanna' get eaten?

RICHARD
Eaten?

CHARLES

Yeah.

RICHARD

Eaten by what?

CHARLES

I already told you, you're not gonna' believe me.

RICHARD

Is this a prank or somethin'?

CHARLES

No—

RICHARD

'Cause you're really bad at it.

CHARLES

It's not a prank! I swear!

RICHARD

Then why you guarding the door? What's in there that I can't see?

Charles buckles his knees together and begins to struggle, bouncing left-and-right.

RICHARD

What the hell are you doing now?

CHARLES

Holding in it!

RICHARD

What are you scared of, little guy? What the hell is in there?

CHARLES

Something!

RICHARD

What!

CHARLES

Something dangerous!

RICHARD

Specifically!

CHARLES
Okay! A tiger!

Richard raises a brow.

RICHARD
A tiger? What kind of tiger?

CHARLES
A big one!

RICHARD
That's the stupidest thing I ever heard.
That's why you're guarding the door?

Richard places his hand on the door.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Step aside—

CHARLES
No!

RICHARD
Just let me take a peak—

CHARLES
You're gonna' get eaten.

RICHARD
If there's a tiger in here, I gotta' see
for myself. I'm just gonna' take a peak. I
won't go in.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - INSIDE THE BASEMENT LAVATORY

Richard pokes his head into the bathroom and looks around.

RICHARD
Hmm... I don't hear anything... maybe he's
sleeping? Or waiting... to pounce! Smells
like the zoo though... I got an idea...
how about... you go inside instead!

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - OUTSIDE THE BASEMENT LAVATORY

Richard grabs Charles.

CHARLES
No! Stop, stop, stop!

RICHARD
He's gonna' get ya'! FRESH MEAT!

CINDY, another 3rd grader, arrives.

CINDY
What are you guys doing?

RICHARD
(to CHARLES)
I'm just teasing you, little guy. Should we tell her?

CHARLES
Yeah.

RICHARD
There's a tiger in the boys' bathroom.

CINDY
Oh.

A beat.

CINDY
Is there a tiger in the girls bathroom?

RICHARD
I don't know. We can't go in there.

Cindy walks into the girls bathroom.

RICHARD
Alright, shrimp, you don't fool me. Even though you are quite convincing. But if there is something in there—

CHARLES
I'm not joking there's a tiger in there I swear on my own brother!

RICHARD
Did you actually see a tiger? At least pick something believable. How about a lynx. I get lynxes in my backyard all the time, lynx look like tigers. Maybe you got them mistaken. I ain't saying there's

nothing in there.

CHARLES

I saw a tiger! It was hiding in the stalls
and then it roared at me.

Charles imitates a tiger roar.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Like that— and it was big and white and
orange and then I ran away and then
another kid walked in and I said "Hey,
don't go in there. There's a tiger in
there" but he didn't listen! And then he
got eaten. 'Cause when I went in to see I
saw'd his pants on the ground.

RICHARD

When?

CHARLES

Just now!

RICHARD

Wait, there's somebody in there?

CHARLES

Yeah, his pants are on the floor.

RICHARD

Was there blood on it? Show me.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - INSIDE THE BASEMENT LAVATORY

The two open the door together and look in. They see the
pants.

RICHARD

Hm, looks like a wet dish cloth to me.
Looks bloody though, could be pants.

A beat.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Hey... kid... you alive in there? You want
us to call a doctor?

FRANCIS

Tff—

RICHARD

I heard something. Didn't sound like a tiger though.

They listen.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Flush if your okay.

Francis gives a goofy, unconvincing growl.

RICHARD

What the hell was that? Alright, I'm going in.

CHARLES

Don't!

Richard pushes though. Charles grabs on to Richard's leg.

RICHARD

We have to save him... he could still be alive!

CHARLES

No!

RICHARD

Never leave a man behind!

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - OUTSIDE THE BASEMENT LAVATORY

K.G. arrives and sees Richard and Charlie struggling. Charlie is still holding on to Richard's leg.

K.G.

Charlie-

Charlie looks up from the ground.

CHARLES

Hey-

K.G.

Miss Byrd wanted me to tell you that you're in trouble and she sent me here to bring you back and if I don't then I'm in trouble too.

Richard stops moving. Charles still holds on to his leg.

RICHARD

Uh oh, Miss Byrd, you better get back. I don't know what's worse.

CHARLES

I have a good excuse.

RICHARD

Yeah, a big one.

K.G.

What are you guys doing?

Cindy exits the girls bathroom.

CINDY

No tiger in here.

K.G.

Tiger?

RICHARD

Yup, see for yourself.

Richard points to inside the bathroom.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

There's a tiger in the bathroom.

K.G.

Really?

CHARLES

K.G., don't let him go in! He's doesn't believe me!

K.G. joins in the wrestle, grabbing Richard's other leg. Richard begins pushing through again.

RICHARD

Guys get off!

CHARLES

Don't let him get eaten!

Their yelling echoes through the school hallways.

RICHARD

(shouting)

Get the hell off guys!

CHARLES

Don't let go!

K.G.

Why am I doing this! I'm so confused!

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - INSIDE THE BASEMENT LAVATORY

Richard breaks through. Charlie and K.G. get up from the floor and walk in.

RICHARD (O.S).

Ah! The tiger got me!

Charles unzips his pants and begins to urinate in the sinker. K.G. watches in confusion, looking around.

K.G.

I don't see any tigers.

Miss Byrd enters.

MISS BYRD

What the hell is goin' on hea'?

She looks at Charles.

MISS BYRD

Mista Charles, what- you can't pee in there!

Miss Byrd grabs Charles and pulls him further into the bathroom.

CHARLES

No, Miss Byrd, wait! There's a tiger in here!

The toilet flushes and out walks Frankie. He picks up his pants from the floor and walks out of the stalls.

FRANKIE

Assholes.

CHARLES

There's a tiger in here! It's- it's... hiding in the back stalls!

MISS BYRD
I'm the only tuga' in hea'.

Miss Byrd sees Richard, emerging from the stalls.

MISS BYRD
Who are you?

RICHARD
I don't know what's going on. I'm just
taking a piss.

Richard exits. Miss Byrd checks all the stalls with
Charles, but sees nothing. She stares at an old-rusty pipe,
which is making weird noises.

MISS BYRD
Your tiger is a pipe, Mista' Charles.

A beat.

MISS BYRD (CONT'D)
You have a wild imagination, Mr. Charles,
but unfortunately that imagination isn't
gonna' imagine yourself out of the
detention. Get your ass, back to class!
You too, Mr. Griffen.

K.G.
What, I didn't do anything!

MISS BYRD
I don't care!

Everyone leaves, except for Miss Byrd. She turns on the
facet and washes out the sink. She looks around.

MISS BYRD
This bathroom always did give me the heeby
jeebies.

Miss Byrd pauses. Silence. Then a loud DIESEL ENGINE roars
from the bathroom window. She jumps in fright, shakes her
head and walks out smiling.

THE END