

BACK TO SCHOOL

Written by
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INT. BIG BUCKS BANK - DAY

REID WILLIAMS counts out cash for the BANK COSTUMER on the other side of the window.

REID
10, 20, 30, and 40! Anything else I
can do for you today?

The elderly woman hungrily stuffs the tens deep into her cleavage.

BANK COSTUMER
You can't make me 40 years younger,
can you? Because oooh, would I love
to see you in the back of my trunk.

REID
(uncomfortable)
Uh... no. Now if you'll excuse me,
I have important b-bank business to
attend to. In the back. Far away
from this window. And you. Bye.

Reid scurries away from the window as the old woman shrugs and waddles away. He leans against the wall to catch his breath just as--

MAXIMILIAN (O.S.)
REID! Get in here... now!

INT. BIG BUCKS BANK - BACK ROOM OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The big bad bank boss of the Big Bucks Bank, MAXIMILIAN, sits in a dimly lit office, curtains tightly drawn as dust particles fly freely through the air.

MAXIMILIAN
(gruffly)
Sit down.

Reid sits across him in a dirty office chair. Maximilian rubs his cheeks, then slaps them as if trying to sober up.

MAXIMILIAN (CONT'D)
I just got a spot of bad news,
Reid, and I don't like it.

Maximilian holds up a paper.

MAXIMILIAN (CONT'D)
You know what this is, Reid?

REID

Uh...

Reid leans in to get a closer look, but Maximilian rips the paper away before Reid can read it.

MAXIMILIAN

It's the government, Reid. And they're on my case because a *certain someone* never graduated.

(forces a cough)

Reid.

REID

(startled)

Never graduated? But... I graduated from the University of Kansas, sir! You knew that when you hired me!

MAXIMILIAN

The government doesn't care about hoity toity university, Reid! They only care about the basics. Elementary school! You *never graduated from the 4th grade.*

EXT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - FLASHBACK

A YOUNG REID stands at the front of the classroom, delivering his book report presentation. It's clear to everyone in the room that he's not prepared.

YOUNG REID

This is my book report. It's this book, that I'm holding in my hands.

Reid turns the book towards him so he can read the cover.

YOUNG REID (CONT'D)

(reading slowly, as if for the first time)

James and the Giant Peach.

(beat)

It's a book about a kid named James. And he owns a giant peach? That's cool. I didn't know peaches could be so big. I like apples better though.

(another beat)

The end.

Reid moves to take his seat, but his teacher, MRS. SCHONBEIN, speaks from her desk.

MRS. SCHONBEIN
Do you have anything else to say
about your book, Mr. Williams?

YOUNG REID
(quickly)
No.

MRS. SCHONBEIN
Any favorite chapters or sections?
Surely there is *one* specific detail
from the book you can share with
the class?

YOUNG REID
(nervous babbling)
I, uh, liked the whole thing. The
whole thing was my favorite
section. The section I liked best
was the whole thing.

The teacher <SIGHS>.

MRS. SCHONBEIN
I hate to ask this, but... did you
read the book?

A couple of STUDENTS <SNICKER>. The CLASS BULLY takes his
cue.

CLASS BULLY
Uh oh! Looks like Reid forgot to
read!

The other kids join in the chanting. Pretty soon the entire
classroom is chanting in unison:

STUDENTS
Reid forgot to read! Reid forgot to
read! *Reid forgot to read!*

INT. BIG BUCKS BANK - BACK ROOM OFFICE - PRESENT

Reid <GASPS> after recalling the memory.

REID
I thought I automatically passed
that book report after it turned
the class bully onto poetry.

Maximilian flails the document in front of Reid again, and
again, Reid cannot read it.

MAXIMILIAN
Well you didn't, Reid!

Maximilian whips out his PHONE and plays a Facebook video for Reid.

BOSS
And now *this* incriminating
information is public domain!

ON SCREEN - a frail, old Mrs. Schonbein lies in bed, her face gaunt and gray as she holds the camera selfie-style to capture her final moments.

MS. SCHONBEIN (VIA VIDEO)
Hello, Jimmy! I'm sending you one
of these Facebook videos I've heard
so much about. See how I've finally
caught up with the times?
(somber)
But alas, now the times have
finally caught up with me. Please
call me, I miss you and I'm scared
to di--

Maximilian skips ahead, rolling his eyes.

MAXIMILIAN
Women.

He presses play on a dramatic scene of her <COUGHING> and <WHEEZING>. Her final moments are upon her.

MRS. SCHONBEIN (VIA VIDEO)
Well, this is it. It's really the
end. Everything's so fuzzy, like
snow!

She reaches out to touch nothing.

MRS. SCHONBEIN (VIA VIDEO) (CONT'D)
(laughing)
Oh ho! Look at that! Look at
that...

Her hand suddenly drops and her face turns sour.

MRS. SCHONBEIN (VIA VIDEO) (CONT'D)
Before I leave this Earth, I must
confess to you, my son, a secret
I've carried with me for over 20
years: Reid Williams never passed
the 4th grade.

A wave of likes, loves, and haha reactions float across the screen. Reid closes his eyes, tormented.

Maximilian <CHUCKLES> and pauses the video on an unflattering still of Mrs. Schonbein coughing.

MAXIMILIAN

That last sentence gives me swan pimples every time, you know what I mean, Reid?

(clears throat, serious)

So, as you can see, this is *damning* testimonial. The government takes deathbed revelations like these very seriously.

REID

What does that mean?

MAXIMILIAN

It means you have to go back to elementary school and *retake that year*.

REID

What?! That's crazy, I can't go back! What about--?

MAXIMILIAN

(interrupting)

If not, you lose your job here and any chance at becoming Head Teller.

A THOUGHT BUBBLE appears over Reid's head as he imagines himself, in sloppy hand-drawn style, with a name tag that reads "Head Teller" in happy green letters.

As quickly as the bubble appears, it instantly <POOFS> away as Maximilian's head bursts right through it.

MAXIMILIAN (CONT'D)

I know you've been eyeing the position for nearly 4 years. It'd be a shame to suddenly be under qualified so close to an opening, wouldn't it?

Reid nervously pulls on his hair, each word a chore to get out.

REID

How... can I attend the 4th grade... while working... full-time here?

Maximilian sits back in his chair, propping his feet up on the desk.

MAXIMILIAN

Easy. You work less, we pay less.

It's a win-win for everybody.

(beat)

Oh, everybody, that is, except you.

CUT TO:

INT. REID'S CAR - CITY STREETS - AFTER WORK

Reid impatiently strums his fingers against the driving wheel as he waits for the light to turn green. The light weakly flickers green for a moment, then breaks completely.

His phone suddenly <RINGS>.

REID

(surprised)

Hello? Mom?

MOTHER (VIA PHONE SPEAKER)

Reid! Honey! I haven't heard from you since lunch! I was so worried you might've caught the flu that's going around and been airlifted to the hospital!

REID

I'm fine, mom. You do know I'm not dying every moment you don't hear from me... right?

Reid treats the intersection like a four-way stop. On his turn, he begins to drive through, but a reckless DRIVER speeds through the intersection and cuts him off.

REID (CONT'D)

Dammit!

Reid swerves out of the way and quickly course corrects.

MOTHER (VIA PHONE SPEAKER)

Reid? What was that about? Is everything okay? You sound really stressed.

The driver sticks his hand out the window and flips Reid off.

REID
(through clenched teeth)
I'm... fine. Just a little tired.

MOTHER (VIA PHONE SPEAKER)
Are you feeling sick? Woozy? Dizzy?
Do I need to come over and nourish
you back to health?

Reid begins to pick up some speed, pushing 45mph on a 30mph road.

REID
No, I definitely do *not* need you to
come over. I don't need you babying
me anymore. I'm a grown man,
mother. A grown man!

MOTHER (VIA PHONE SPEAKER)
(ignoring him, concerned)
What happened today, my precious
baby boy? Why are you merely--

She gags, as if the word is absolutely repulsive to say.

MOTHER (VIA PHONE SPEAKER) (CONT'D)
--*fine*?

Reid is now pushing 60mph.

REID
Well, uh, I received some news at
work today.
(cringing)
The bank is sending me back to
school. I start first thing Monday
morning.

MOTHER (VIA PHONE SPEAKER)
Back to school?
(beat, slowly)
...This is good, isn't it? They see
potential in you and want to foster
it! Oh honey, I'm so proud of you!

Reid lets out a relieved <SIGH>, his foot easing off the gas pedal ever so slightly.

REID
Yeah! Something like that, sure.

MOTHER (VIA PHONE SPEAKER)
Why, we have to celebrate with a
party!

(MORE)

MOTHER (VIA PHONE SPEAKER) (CONT'D)

I can invite all your little friends and even get that glitter confetti you like so much. Maybe even a piñata if we're feeling extra festive!

REID

No, mom, literally none of that is necessary. Please stay home and take care of dad. He needs you more than I do.

MOTHER (VIA PHONE SPEAKER)

Don't be ridiculous! Watching your father is like tending a sack of potatoes. He does nothing for hours!

REID

Do not, I repeat, do *not* drive over and make a big fuss about this!

The line goes quiet. Reid panics.

REID (CONT'D)

Mom? MOM?!

Reid floors it.

EXT. REID'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

He pulls into his driveway a few moments later. His MOTHER stands in front of the garage and stares into his car's headlights like a dazed deer.

He exits the car, slamming the door shut.

REID

Mom, what the hell are you doing here?!

MOTHER

Surprise!

She pulls out a cake from behind her back and shoves it into Reid's arms. A handful of his FRIENDS and FAMILY leap out of nearby shrubbery.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

My little boy is going back to school, eeeeeee!

Reid looks down at his cake. It reads: "I'm Sorry for Driving Over But I Love You. Now Eat This Surprise Cake." He looks up at her, completely baffled as to when and how she orchestrated this.

CUT TO:

INT. DALEGLEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - THE FOLLOWING MONDAY

After a long and brutally hot summer, school is back in session. The halls are bustling with activity as KIDS of all ages rush to their classrooms.

Reid enters Daleglen Elementary through the large front doors. In his best effort to remain invisible, he slinks along the side of the wall, entering into the--

INT. DALEGLEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - FRONT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

He steps up to the secretary, JUSTINE, who's furiously typing on her keyboard. She pauses for a brief moment to look up and greet him.

JUSTINE

Hello! How can I help you?

Reid is sweating bullets. He can't believe what he's doing.

REID

Uh... Hi.

JUSTINE

Hi. Do you need help finding your student's class?

REID

(nervous)

Hi.

JUSTINE

(laughing)

Hi, yes. Hello! Do you need anything other than a howdy-do?

Reid shakes his head, snapping out of it.

REID

Yeah, sorry. To be honest, I'm kind of embarrassed to be here, so... I'm sorry. I was told to check in at the Front Office when I arrived?

Amy looks back at her monitor, fingers poised to type.

JUSTINE

Who are you checking in to see?

REID

Um, no one. *I'm* checking in...

JUSTINE

Checking in to see no one. Okay, makes sense.

REID

(embarrassed)

You're going to make me say it, huh? Okay... fine. I'm Reid Williams, and I'm checking in because... I'm going into 4th grade.

Realization flashes on Justine's face.

JUSTINE

OHHHH! You're *that* student. Why didn't you say so from the get-go? I can check you in right now!

She performs a few quick keystrokes then hands Reid a name tag. Only, it's--

REID

(reading)

"Legitimate Daleglen student, not a pedophile."

JUSTINE

We have to make sure that's very clear. We don't want a repeat of 2007.

(beat, shudders)

Well then, let me walk you to class before you're late, young man!

CUT TO:

INT. DALEGLEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Justine drops Reid off at his classroom door and gives him an encouraging nudge.

JUSTINE

Here we are! You'll be in Mr. Patterson's 4th grade class.

(MORE)

JUSTINE (CONT'D)

Remember, the goal for today is to blend in. Try not to draw attention to the fact that you're...

She looks him up and down.

JUSTINE (CONT'D)

Good luck!

Justine leaves him standing in the doorway. A class of about fifteen 4th graders stare up at him.

REID

(small wave)

Hi.

The teacher, MR. PATTERSON, dramatically takes center stage. He speaks slow and rhythmic, like William Shatner.

MR. PATTERSON

So glad... you could finally join... us, Mr. Williams. Now... if you'll please... take... your seat, class shall finally...

Mr. Patterson pauses for what feels like an eternity, his eyes drifting up toward the ceiling. Reid follows Mr. Patterson's gaze and sees nothing.

REID

Uh, Mr. Patter--?

Mr. Patterson breaks from his trance. His eyes refocus on Reid, and he snap-points right at him as he finishes his sentence.

MR. PATTERSON

Begin!

Reid hurriedly shuffles toward the only empty chair in the classroom, but--

REID

Oh no...

MR. PATTERSON

Is there... a problem?

Reid gestures toward the small, child-sized chair, then to his own butt.

REID

Is there any way I could have an adult-sized chair?

(MORE)

REID (CONT'D)

It's hard enough that I have to be here, let alone wear this name tag.

STUDENT #1 (O.S.)

(reading)

What's a pee-do-fy-lee?

MR. PATTERSON

I'm sorry... but... I was given... very specific... instructions. You are... to be... exactly... like... everyone else.

Mr. Patterson turns his attention to the whiteboard at the front of the room and <DRONES ON INCOHERENTLY> in the background (he is talking literal nonsense).

Reid <SIGHS> and forces his large bottom into the chair. Both sides of his butt hang way over the sculpted plastic. Two STUDENTS behind him whisper to each other.

STUDENT #2 (WHISPERING)

Who's that?

STUDENT #3 (WHISPERING)

Mr. Big Butt. Look at the size of that thing!

STUDENT #2 (WHISPERING)

He must be like a hundred years old!

The kids <GIGGLE> as Reid quickly grows irate.

REID

Hey, I can hear you. Maybe the next time you insult someone, you don't do it *right behind them*.

STUDENTS #3 (WHISPERING)

Whatever you say, old man.

Mr. Patterson hears Reid's outburst and turns away from the whiteboard to face him.

MR. PATTERSON

Are we having... difficulty... listening to... the rules?

REID

N-no. I'm listening.

MR. PATTERSON
Pray tell... what... did I... just
say?

REID
(unsure)
Uh... something about listening to
the rules?

MR. PATTERSON
That is...

Dramatic pause. Reid holds his breath, waiting for the
inevitable chew-out to begin.

MR. PATTERSON (CONT'D)
Correct. Well done. A gold...
star... just for you, my champion.

Mr. Patterson walks over to Reid and hands him a small gold
star. The two kids next to him <GUFFAW> and <GIGGLE>. Reid
crushes the little star in his palm.

CUT TO:

INT. DALEGLLEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LUNCHROOM - LATER

The lunch bell <RINGS>, and a stampede of hungry STUDENTS
rush into the lunchroom to be first in line for--

STUDENT #4
Barfaroni?! That's the third time
this week!

The line collectively <GROANS> when they hear what they're
eating. The CAFETERIA WORKERS eagerly dump the mysterious,
gooey substance onto their trays.

Reid steps up to receive his "barfaroni," and a cute lunch
lady named AMY speaks to him.

AMY
Hi.
(sees name tag)
Oh! You're the new student?

Reid is instantly smitten.

REID
(dazed)
Uh, new student... what's a new
student?

AMY

Oops! Are you not--? I'm sorry, the name tag just--. For a second there, I thought you were the one retaking the 4th grade.

Reid shakes his head in an effort to snap out of it.

REID

Oh yeah, that. It's... just a temporary thing, you know. Have to cross some I's and dot some T's.

(beat)

Or, actually, flip that.

AMY

Well, I can offer you what the kids affectionately call "barfaroni."

She dumps a hearty scoop on his tray. The substance begins to melt the plastic ever so slightly.

REID

What is this?

AMY

No one but the "Chef" knows.

The CHEF, not far behind her, stirs the contents of a large, boiling pot from the vantage of a small stepping ladder. He gleefully <CHUCKLES> as the contents within bubble and burst with chemical-like reactions.

REID

That doesn't look safe.

The line of students behind Reid grows impatient, and they begin to push him away from Amy.

STUDENT #5

C'mon, move it! Some of us are starving here!

REID

Thanks for the barf, I guess. Uh, see you around?

Amy waves goodbye.

AMY

Good luck out there! And whatever you do, don't eat the food!

INT. DALEGLLEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LUNCHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Reid eats alone at an empty table. The students actively avoid him to the point that even the surrounding lunch tables are also empty.

Against Amy's wishes, he eats the "barfaroni" as best he can, only spitting up small portions of unswallowable gunk. After he's eaten as much as he can possibly stomach, he heads outside to the--

EXT. DALEGLLEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - PLAYGROUND - CONTINUOUS

He gazes out across the vast playground as KIDS OF ALL AGES freely play together.

One of the recess duty employees, NATHAN, approaches Reid. His tone is matter-of-fact and judgmental as hell.

NATHAN

Hello, sir. I assume you are the new student and not a pedophile based on your self-identifying name tag. Is this information correct?

Reid covers his name tag, embarrassed.

REID

Yeah. Reid.

He holds out a hand for a handshake.

NATHAN

The proper term is "yes," sir. "Yeah" is not an appropriate response when addressing a superior.

REID

Huh?

NATHAN

Always introduce yourself using a complete sentence. Now, redo your introduction.

Reid drops his hand.

REID

My name is Reid.

NATHAN

Good. Sir Reid, please proceed to the recess activity you will be participating in for the next 16 minutes. I will be monitoring you from a very close and possibly uncomfortable range. Do your best to pay me no heed.

REID

You're not serious, are you?

NATHAN

Do I look anything *but* serious?

EXTREME CLOSE UP on Nathan's face. His eyes are dried up and red from his lack of blinking.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Now go and play before I find need to report your willful disobedience to the Principal.

CUT TO:

EXT. DALEGLLEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - PLAYGROUND - MONTAGE

Reid does his best to fit in and play, but each recess activity he takes part in only brings unintended destruction.

-Reid plays classic tetherball with a group of 5TH GRADERS. Seizing his chance to win the game, he strikes hard at the ball, completely misjudging his own strength. The ball smacks into one of the kid's stomachs, sending the small child's unconscious body soaring through the air. His friends look to Reid, terrified of his power. Nathan, who poorly hides behind a nearby tetherball pole, notes Reid's blunder in his labeled "Nark Notebook."

-Reid jumps into a game of double dutch with some 3RD GRADERS. He clears the first couple of jumps, impressing the girls and boys watching. He cockily does some trick jumps but doesn't take into account the extra height. The ropes don't rotate high enough to clear his head, knocking him hard in the face. He topples into the other kids, and like two very angry rattlesnakes, the jump ropes flail out of control and tie everyone together. Nathan pokes his bald head out from a nearby tub of dodgeballs and is about to take notes when a KID mistakes his head for a dodgeball and tries to pull it out.

-Reid steps up to the baseball diamond's home plate and unconfidently holds the baseball bat as he waits for the 6TH GRADER to pitch. CRACK! He connects with the ball as the KIDS watch in awe. It clears the tall fence of the neighbor's backyard, but before anyone can retrieve it, the neighbor's overly aggressive DOG has chewed it to bits, a la Sandlot. Nathan reveals he's the umpire behind Reid and incorrectly declares:

NATHAN

Three strikes... you're out!

CUT TO:

**INT. DALEGLLEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - FRONT OFFICE - MOMENTS
LATER**

Reid sits outside the principal's office. Directly in front of him, Justine peers over her monitor.

JUSTINE

Rough first day?

REID

I tried today. I really did, but now the students in my class don't like me, and I'm somehow the teacher's pet. I'm convinced the food here is toxic or poisonous, at the very least, it isn't meant to be eaten. And that weird Recess Duty guy? He forced me to play with the other kids and stalked me at every turn.

REVEAL Nathan's head peering in from the doorway.

REID (CONT'D)

Yeah, like that! That's what I mean! What is that?

Nathan runs away.

REID (CONT'D)

(exasperated)

I can't... do this. I can't pretend to be a ten-year-old.

JUSTINE

(soft)

Hey. Do you know how many students walk through this door to talk to the principal?

Reid shakes his head, defeated.

JUSTINE (CONT'D)
Everyone who's ever attended
Daleglen Elementary meets with
Principal Matters at least once in
their school career. Granted, some
meet with her way more than others,
and some for very bad reasons.

Justine gives Reid a small encouraging smile.

JUSTINE (CONT'D)
But every student who's met
Principal Matters has gone on to do
great things.
(playful)
You're meeting with her your first
day here! Now, since I'm the local
school expert, I can confidently
say you're on your way to becoming
the best ten-year-old here.

PRINCIPAL MATTERS and a PARENT and STUDENT exit the office.
She happily shakes the parent's hand and wishes them adieu.

PRINCIPAL MATTERS
Thank you for coming in, Mrs.
Johnson! We're really impressed
with Amanda and can't wait to see
what she accomplishes this year.

The Parent and Student leave, and Principal Matters' smile
instantly turns to a frown once she sets eyes on Reid.

PRINCIPAL MATTERS (CONT'D)
You, on the other hand...

She gestures for Reid to follow her into her office. Reid
stands up, but before entering the office, he whispers to
Justine as he passes by.

REID
Thanks.

The corners of her lips turn up into a smile as Reid sets off
to discover his inner ten-year-old.

END EPISODE