

"Choppers"

by
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1 INT. DR. HOLBROOK'S WAITING ROOM - MORNING

1

What you'd expect in a dentist's office: Tooth-themed furniture, old magazines on a coffee table surrounded by chairs, and bad Muzak playing through crackly overhead speakers.

ANITA, 26, the doctor's pretty, young nurse, sits at her desk by the door, her computer and telephone in front of her.

The door is opened quickly, and BUCKLER, 50, walks in. His hair is graying, and he is rather short. He is also very nervous. He anxiously closes the door behind him and strides to Anita's desk. She looks up at him and smiles.

ANITA

Mr. Buckler, I don't recall you having an appointment today.

BUCKLER

Is Bernie in?

ANITA

Why, yes. He's -

BUCKLER

I need to see him.

ANITA

(taken aback)

OK. If you'll. . . uhm. . . take a s-

BUCKLER

I need to see him *now*.

Neither Buckler nor Anita sees HOLBROOK approaching from his office in a back corridor. The dentist is in his late 50s. He doesn't have much hair left. He wears a white lab coat and large glasses.

Anita is growing concerned.

ANITA

Mr. Buckler, I -

HOLBROOK

Is there some problem here?

Buckler is relieved.

(CONTINUED)

BUCKLER

Bernie, I need to see you.

HOLBROOK

So I heard. . . down the hall.

BUCKLER

I. . . I'm sorry.

(beat)

Please, it's *really* important that we talk.

HOLBROOK

I'm sure it is, but that doesn't give you the right to treat my nurse that way.

ANITA

(shyly)

It's OK.

HOLBROOK

No, it's *not*.

(beat)

I'll help you, Henry, but you can't barge in here and -

BUCKLER

(quickly)

I'm sorry, Anita.

Anita smiles.

HOLBROOK

Was that so tough?

BUCKLER

Can we talk in your office?

Holbrook turns to Anita.

HOLBROOK

Mrs. Watson is coming in at 10:30 for her cleaning, right?

ANITA

Yes, sir.

HOLBROOK

OK, Henry. I'm all yours until then.

FADE TO:

2

INT. HOLBROOK'S DENTAL OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

2

Holbrook closes the door to his dental office. Many shelves on the walls hold dental necessities in boxes and bottles. The reclining patient chair is in the middle of the room.

Buckler paces, agitated.

HOLBROOK

How's the family?

BUCKLER

They're fine, thanks.

HOLBROOK

And your job at the university science lab is keeping you busy?

BUCKLER

Oh yeah.

HOLBROOK

What can I do for you?

Buckler stops pacing and looks Holbrook in the eye.

BUCKLER

I want you to pull my teeth.

HOLBROOK

What?

BUCKLER

Every one of them! You can fit me for dentures or I'll gum my food. I. . . I don't much care anymore.

HOLBROOK

You can't possibly -

BUCKLER

(adamantly)
Can you do it?

HOLBROOK

Of course I can.

BUCKLER

But?

(CONTINUED)

HOLBROOK

I'm against pulling healthy teeth.
Any dentist is.

BUCKLER

They're *not* healthy.

HOLBROOK

Of course they are! I've done
enough work on them. Those teeth
of yours are in good shape.

BUCKLER

I'll find another dentist then.

HOLBROOK

Henry. . .

BUCKLER

I'll pay you *twice* your usual fee.
I want them all pulled. . . *today*.

HOLBROOK

Not possible.

BUCKLER

Why?

HOLBROOK

Well, for one thing, I don't have
the time. I have other patients
coming in.

(beat)

I wouldn't pull all your teeth in
one visit anyway.

BUCKLER

Why not? I'm fine with it.

HOLBROOK

But your *mouth* won't be.

(beat)

If I pull even *one* tooth, your
mouth will need time to
recuperate, to heal.

BUCKLER

How many teeth *can* you pull in one
visit?

HOLBROOK

No more than three.

(CONTINUED)

BUCKLER

Three?

HOLBROOK

Why do you want me to pull all
your teeth?

Buckler sits down on the end of the patient chair.

BUCKLER

They're *evil*.

HOLBROOK

How do you know that?

BUCKLER

I just *do*. It's like the guy who
tells you he knows it's gonna rain
because his knee starts to throb.

(beat)

My teeth are a part of me, and I
can tell.

Holbrook notices a bandage on Buckler's swollen right
thumb.

HOLBROOK

What happened?

BUCKLER

My teeth bit me.

HOLBROOK

You mean *you* bit your thumb.

BUCKLER

No, I mean my *teeth* bit me! They
got mad because I was trying to
pull one out with my fingers. They
chomped down on my thumb.

(beat)

It bled pretty well for a while.

HOLBROOK

Henry, what you're saying -

BUCKLER

I had to pull my thumb out of my
mouth like you pull something away
from a dog. The teeth wouldn't let
go!

(CONTINUED)

HOLBROOK

(humoring him)

Your teeth did that on their own?

BUCKLER

Right. They didn't like what I was doing, and they fought back.

(beat)

I think they *like* the taste of blood. They probably got used to it with all the work I've had done here.

HOLBROOK

(chuckles slightly)

You'll forgive me, but that's ridiculous.

BUCKLER

Tell that to my thumb.

HOLBROOK

Teeth *don't* have taste buds.

BUCKLER

I think mine do.

HOLBROOK

How did your teeth get to be. . . evil?

BUCKLER

I think it's all the radiation from those dental x-rays.

HOLBROOK

No way. Any radiation you were exposed to was *minimal*.

BUCKLER

But with all the work you've done, you've taken a *lot* of x-rays.

(beat)

I think I finally hit my limit.

HOLBROOK

Radiation doesn't collect inside your mouth.

(beat)

Believe me, x-rays are harmless.

(CONTINUED)

BUCKLER

Then why do we all wear lead aprons?

HOLBROOK

(sighs)

Trust me. Radiation did *not* turn your teeth against you.

BUCKLER

Maybe the radiation, along with their taste for blood -

HOLBROOK

Come on!

Buckler is growing very emotional.

BUCKLER

Maybe I caught an infection - something from the lab - a virus . . . *whatever*. Things were already building up, and the x-rays pushed it over the top.

HOLBROOK

Henry, I want you to calm down.

BUCKLER

But -

HOLBROOK

Please.

(beat)

You look tired. Have you been sleeping?

BUCKLER

Not much. My teeth grind together. It. . . It keeps me awake.

HOLBROOK

(confused)

They shouldn't be grinding.

BUCKLER

Well, they *are*!

(beat)

I can't even eat. I put some food in my mouth, and I *can't* close it. My teeth refuse to chew. They have no problem biting *me* though.

(CONTINUED)

HOLBROOK

Well, *that's* not right.

BUCKLER

(eagerly)

So you'll pull them?

HOLBROOK

No, but I *do* want to have a look
to see why you can't chew.

(beat)

Lie back and let me have a peek.

BUCKLER

You *won't* see the problem.

HOLBROOK

(chuckles)

Humor me.

BUCKLER

If you say -

Buckler starts violently coughing. He stands quickly,
grabbing at his throat.

HOLBROOK

(concerned)

Henry?

Buckler points at his throat, struggling to speak.

BUCKLER

Tooth. . .

Anita rushes in, swinging the door shut behind her. She
approaches Buckler from behind and administers the
Heimlich Maneuver. After several tries, it has not
worked.

Buckler stops choking and falls to the floor. He lands on
his side, his mouth open. Anita kneels beside him and
feels for a pulse.

ANITA

He's. . . He's *dead*.

There is a popping sound, as a tooth comes out of
Buckler's mouth. Anita stands quickly, and she and
Holbrook stare in amazement. There are *many* more pops
(like fast-popping popcorn), and *all* of Buckler's
remaining teeth quickly leap out of his mouth and - under
their own power - gather into a pile.

(CONTINUED)

ANITA (CONT'D)

Mother of God!

The teeth stand upright and split into groups of three and four. They start making loud chewing sounds and clicking together menacingly.

HOLBROOK

He was right!

Holbrook grabs Anita's arm and rushes her to the door. Before they can reach it, many of the teeth leap into the air. They land on the humans' flesh, especially on their faces, on start *chewing*. Blood spurts from their wounds. Holbrook's white lab coat quickly becomes stained with red.

Anita screams. Both she and Holbrook try to fight off the teeth, but they are too fast and there are too many of them. Holbrook's glasses fall from his face as he swings his arms wildly. Anita drops to the floor. The teeth feast.

Holbrook, his eyes bloody, stumbles to the wall phone. He fumbles to pick up the receiver. We hear a dial tone. The teeth make a fresh attack on him, causing him to drop the receiver. He screams in great pain and falls too.

The dial tone changes to a busy signal. The teeth continue to chew.

FADE TO:

Elderly MRS. WATSON walks into the office. Seeing no one, she looks around. She proceeds to the back corridor and calls out.

WATSON

Doctor!

She listens at the office door and, hearing nothing, knocks.

WATSON (CONT'D)

I've come for my cleaning.

After a beat, she opens the door and sees the very-chewed-up bodies on the floor. She screams and then covers her mouth with her right hand to hold back the vomit. The teeth go airborne with *her* as their target.

(CONTINUED)

She tries to fight them off, but that doesn't last for long. Bloodied, she drops to the floor. The teeth gather on her exposed skin, happily chewing and clicking together.

After a bit, their hunger sated, the teeth march into the waiting room.

One by one, they build a tower to the doorknob. Several of them fly at the door, trying to make a hole in it or break off the knob.

A car door is heard closing outside. The teeth click together happily, collapse the tower, gather together, and. . . wait.

FADE TO BLACK.