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Wilson,  
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Pictures

R U S H M O R E

anderson/wilson

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INT. CLASSROOM DAY

A private day school. Twenty 10th grade boys are sitting in desks in geometry class. They are dressed in school uniform, light blue shirts and khakis. The boys look dazed and sleepy.

The teacher, MR. ADAMS, is at the front of the room, finishing a complicated equation on the chalkboard.

MR. ADAMS

Except when  
the value of  
the x  
coordinate is  
less than or  
equal to the  
value of the  
-- Yes,  
Isaac?

A boy named ISAAC has raised his hand

ISAAC

What about  
that problem?

Isaac points to a startling and intricate arrangement of huge numbers and strange symbols filling up a forgotten corner of the chalkboard. The heading above it says Extra Credit.

MR. ADAMS

Oh, I really  
just put that  
up there as a  
joke. That's  
probably the  
hardest  
geometry  
problem in  
the world.

ISAAC

How much  
extra credit  
is it worth?

MR. ADAMS

Well, I've  
never seen  
anyone get it  
right before,  
including my  
mentor, Dr.  
Leaky at MIT.  
So I guess if  
anyone here  
can do it,  
                    (pause)  
I'd see to it  
that none of  
you ever have  
to open  
another math  
book again  
for the rest  
of your  
lives.

There is some quite murmuring. The name Fischer is repeated over and over. The boys begin to look to a student in the back row.

Unlike his classmates, he wears the Rushmore school blazer with insignia on the breast pocket and a Rushmore rep tie knotted tightly. His hair is smartly parted and swept back. He is extremely skinny and pale. He is MAX FISCHER.

Max has a cup of coffee on his desk and he is reading the Wall Street Journal.

MR. ADAMS

Max ? You  
want to try  
it ?

Max looks up.

MAX

I'm sorry.  
Did someone  
say my name?

Everyone laughs. Max smiles slightly. He buttons his blazer and straightens his tie. He picks up his cup of coffee and takes a sip. He goes to the chalkboard and sets to work.

The boys watch with nervous anticipation. Mr. Adams compares Max's progress with the notes in his book. Max's equations quickly fills up most of the chalkboard. He finishes it with a flourish, throws his piece of chalk in the trash, and turns to face the

class.

Everyone looks to Mr. Adams. Mr. Adams raises an eyebrow. He nods.

The classroom erupts into wild, ecstatic applause. Everyone surrounds Max, cheering, as he walks calmly back to his desk. They hoist him into the air.

CUT TO:

Max with his eyes closed, smiling serenely, listening to the applause. He mutters:

MAX

Gentlemen,  
gentlemen,  
please.

A little hand grabs Max's arm and shakes him. Max opens his eyes. The person shaking him is his chapel partner, DIRK CALLOWAY, a fourth grader with neatly white hair. Max looks around.

They are in chapel, surrounded by rows of boys in school uniforms. Dirk puts his finger to his lips.

DIRK

Shh.

Max rubs his eyes and sits up in the pew. The applause dies down and Max looks to the pulpit as the guest chapel speaker, HERMAN BLUME, steps up to the microphone.

Mr. Blume is a tough looking guy about fifty years old in a black suit. He begins his chapel speech.

MR. BLUME

You guys have  
it real easy.  
I never had  
it like this  
where I grew  
up. But I  
send my kids  
here.  
Because, the  
fact is,  
whether you  
deserve it or  
not: you go  
to one of the  
best schools  
in the  
country.

Max's eyes light's up.

MR. BLUME

Rushmore. You  
lucked out.

Max leans forward to the railing and begins to listen intently.

MR. BLUME

Now, for some  
of you it  
doesn't  
matter. You  
were born  
rich, and  
you're going  
to stay rich.  
But here's my  
advice to the  
rest of you:  
take dead aim  
on the rich  
boys. Get  
them in the  
crosshairs.  
And take them  
down.

Some of the students and faculty  
begin to look at each other with  
puzzled expressions. Max is nodding  
and taking notes on the flypage of a  
hymnal.

INSERT HYMNAL:

Rushmore -- best school in country.

rich kids -- bad?

MR. BLUME

Just  
remember:  
they can buy  
anything. But  
they can't  
buy backbone.  
Don't let  
them forget  
that. Thank  
you.

Mr. Blume leaves the podium. Max  
leaps to his feet and leads the  
applause. The organ starts and  
everyone stands up.

EXT. QUADRANGLE DAY

Mr. Blume and the headmaster, DR.

GUGGENHEIM, come out of the chapel  
among the throng of students.

Dr. Guggenheim wears a wool coat and  
smokes a pipe. He is very dashing  
with silver hair and a warmly  
patronizing manner. He walks with his  
hands clasped behind his back.

Two Jack Russell terriers follow  
quickly at his heels.

DR. GUGGENHEIM

Are you free  
for  
graduation,  
Herman? Maybe  
you could  
give us an  
encore.  
(whistles to  
the dogs)  
Nicholas!  
Copernicus!

MR. BLUME

(lighting  
a  
cigarette)

I don't give  
a shit. I  
paid for the  
whole damn  
natatorium.  
The least  
these little  
pricks can do  
is hear me  
out.

MAX

Mr. Blume.

Max has appeared beside them. Dirk  
tags along behind him.

MAX

My name's Max  
Fischer. I  
just wanted  
to tell you,  
I strongly

agree with  
your views  
concerning  
Rushmore.

MR. BLUME

You don't  
say. Tell me  
something.  
How long have  
you gone  
here?

MAX

Ten years.

MR. BLUME

Then you've  
been living  
in a  
dreamworld  
for ten  
years.

MAX

I know it,  
sir.

Max smiles broadly. They each notice  
that their haircuts are identical,  
neatly parted on the side.

MAX

Your speech  
was  
excellent.  
Except I  
disagree with  
your ideas  
about rich  
kids.  
Because.  
After all, we  
don't choose  
who our  
fathers are.  
But that's  
really my  
only  
criticism.

MR. BLUME

(hesitates)

Thank you.

Mr. Blume looks at Dirk staring up at him. Dirk says softly:

DIRK

Hello.

MAX

This is my  
chapel  
partner, Dirk  
Calloway.

MR. BLUME

(shakes  
Dirk's  
hand)

Nice to meet  
you, Dirk.

MAX

Thank you for  
coming today,  
sir.

Max shakes Mr. Blume's hand. Mr. Blume smiles. But Max doesn't go. He just stands there. Searching for the words.

MAX

I really. I  
think it is.  
You're right  
about  
Rushmore.  
Look around.  
It truly is a  
great school.

Mr. Blume nods. A little uneasy.

MAX

Anyway, nice  
to have met  
you.

Max goes. Mr. Blume and Dr. Guggenheim watch him walk away with Dirk.



MR. BLUME

What's his  
name again?

DR. GUGGENHEIM

Max Fischer.

MR. BLUME

He's a sharp  
little guy.

Dr. Guggenheim looks across the lawn  
at Max and his chapel partner. He  
says wistfully:

DR. GUGGENHEIM

He's one of  
the worst  
students  
we've got.

INSERT COVER OF THE RUSHMORE  
YEARBOOK:

It is called the Rushmore Yankee. The  
masthead says Max is editor-in-chief.  
There is a photograph of him  
laughing, surrounded by his staff.

We cut to a series of pictures of:

The French Club, Debate Team,  
lacrosse, golf, drama, Astronomy  
Society, Glee Club, student council,  
Model United Nations, Stamp & Coin  
Club, Gun Club, Bombardment Society,  
calligraphy, fencing kung fu,  
beekeeping, and J.V. water polo.

Max is president or captain of  
virtually every one of these.

Other photographs show Max pole-  
vaulting, dancing at the Christmas  
ball, and giving a thumbs up from the  
cockpit of a Piper Club.

TITLE:

September

INT. DR. GUGGENHEIM'S OFFICE DAY

A paneled room with wooden floors, an old electric fan in the windowsill, and paintings of ducks and geese on the walls. Dr. Guggenheim is seated at his little oak desk. Max sits across from him and in an antique leather armchair.

DR. GUGGENHEIM

We're putting  
you on what  
we call  
sudden death  
academic  
probation.

MAX

(pause)

And what does  
that entail ?

DR. GUGGENHEIM

It entails  
that if you  
fail another  
class, you  
are going to  
be asked to  
leave  
Rushmore.

MAX

I see.

(raises  
an  
eyebrow)

In other  
words, I'll  
be expelled.

DR. GUGGENHEIM

Right.

Silence.

MAX

Dr.  
Guggenheim. I  
don't want to  
tell you how  
to do your  
job. But the

fact is no  
matter how  
hard I try, I  
still might  
flunk another  
class. And if  
that means I  
have to stay  
on for a  
post-graduate  
year, then so  
be it. But if  
--

DR. GUGGENHEIM

We don't  
offer a  
postgraduate  
year.

MAX

Well. We  
don't offer  
it yet.

(pause)

And what  
about the  
fact that I'm  
probably  
dyslexic?

DR. GUGGENHEIM

You're not  
dyslexic.

MAX

Well, I'm a  
terrible  
speller.

DR. GUGGENHEIM

Just bring up  
the grades.

Max sighs. He looks out the window  
and says quietly:

MAX

Do you  
remember how  
I got into  
this school?

DR. GUGGENHEIM

Yeah, I do.  
You wrote a  
play.

MAX

That's right.  
A little one  
act. And my  
mother read  
it and felt I  
should go to  
Rushmore. And  
you read it,  
and you gave  
me a  
scholarship,  
didn't you ?

Dr. Guggenheim nods.

MAX

Do you regret  
it?

DR. GUGGENHEIM

No, I don't  
regret it.  
But I still  
might have to  
expel you.

Max nods. He smiles sadly and  
whispers:

MAX

Couldn't we  
just let me  
float by? For  
old times'  
sake?

DR. GUGGENHEIM

(grimly)

Can't do it,  
Max.

EXT. QUADRANGLE. DAY

Max and Dirk come out the door into  
the cold. They head across the grass.

MAX

They want to  
kick me out,  
Dirk.

DIRK

(concerned)

Oh, no. Not  
again. What  
are you going  
to do?

MAX

The only  
thing I can  
do. Try and  
pull some  
strings with  
the  
administration,  
I guess.

DIRK

(pause)

Maybe you  
ought to get  
a tutor.

MAX

I don't have  
time for a  
goddamn  
tutor. You  
know my  
schedule.

INSERT SIGN WRITTEN IN CALLIGRAPHY:

BACKGAMMON CLUB.

Founder: Max Fischer.

INT. LIBRARY DAY

A long table in the Rushmore library.  
Max is reading a library copy of a  
book about Jacques Cousteau. He is  
also playing backgammon with a  
freshman named ALEX.

ALEX

Did you hear  
they're

teaching  
Japanese next  
year?

MAX

That's the  
rumor.

ALEX

And they're  
canceling  
Latin.

MAX

What? I tried  
to get Latin  
canceled for  
five years.  
"It's a dead  
language,"  
I'd always  
say.

ALEX

Well, I guess  
they finally  
heard you.

Max shakes his head as this sinks in.

MAX

At least I  
saved Dirk  
from the  
horror.

Max turns the page of his book. There is a little note written in the margin in pencil with an arrow pointing to the text. Max frowns. He turns the book sideways to read it.

INSERT FRAGMENT OF NOTE IN BOOK:

which reminds me of a quote from Henry James: Try to be one of the people whom nothing is lost.

Max's frown disappears. A change comes over his face. His eyes glaze over dreamily. He looks to Alex.

MAX

Who's Henry  
James?

ALEX

I don't know.

Max looks back at the book. He studies the quote. He gets up and goes to the check-out counter. He shows the book to the LIBRARIAN.

MAX

What does  
this mean?

The librarian reads the Henry James quote.

LIBRARIAN

It means try  
to be  
worldly.

MAX

You mean like  
smart.

LIBRARIAN

More or less.  
Yeah.

MAX

I'd like to  
see a list of  
all the  
people who've  
checked out  
this book in  
the past  
year.

The librarian goes through the cards in a little wooden box.

INSERT SCRAP OF PAPER:

Miss. Cross, 1st grade, room 121

INT. HALLWAY. DAY

Max walks down a hallway in the lower school. He is carrying the little scrap of paper, checking room numbers

as he walks.

He looks in some of the rooms. He sees kids sitting at tables with scissors and paste. Kids watching a movie on science. Kids curled up on mats during naptime.

And then he sees room 121. He goes up to the door and looks through the window.

A class of first graders is sitting Indian-style in a little circle on the floor. The teacher is in a tiny little kids' chair, reading aloud from Kidnapped. She is twenty-eight. She wears a cardigan sweater and her hair pulled back like a ballet dancer. She is MISS CROSS.

Max's eyes are glued to the glass. He cracks open the door an inch to listen to her voice.

MISS CROSS

I have seen  
wicked men  
and fools, a  
great many of  
both; and I  
believe they  
both get paid  
in the end.

(darkly:)

But the fools  
first.

She looks up mysteriously. She turns the page and continues:

MISS CROSS

Chapter  
fifteen. The  
Lad with the  
Silver  
Button.

INT. BLUME INTERNATIONAL CONCRETE. DAY

Mr. Blume has a gigantic office with paintings of battle scenes and Viking



ships, a coat of armor and a statue of a discus thrower. The concrete plant is outside the window.

A portrait of the Blume family hangs on the wall behind Mr. Blume's desk. His wife and twin sons are all fair-skinned redheads. Mr. Blume is dark and sullen. He is smoking a cigarette in the painting.

Mr. Blume sits at his desk with a silver military issue .45 automatic disassembled in front of him. He is cleaning it and drinking a Bloody Mary. His SECRETARY buzzes him on the speakerphone. Mr. Blume pushes a button on it.

MR. BLUME

Yeah?

SECRETARY

Mrs. Blume  
wants you to  
pick up the  
twins from  
school at --

MR. BLUME

Tell them to  
take the  
fucking bus.

SECRETARY

OK.

INT. CAR. DAY

Max is sitting in a parked Jaguar with Dirk's mother, MRS. CALLOWAY. She is beautiful. She is dressed in tennis clothes and wears a terrycloth visor.

Max is wearing a fluorescent orange crossing guard's belt with a badge at the shoulder that says Patrol Chief. He hands Mrs. Calloway his phone number.

MRS. CALLOWAY

Thank you,

Max. I told  
Mr. Calloway  
the other day  
how fortunate  
we are to  
have someone  
like you  
looking out  
for Dirk.

MAX

My pleasure.  
I'm just  
trying to  
impart some  
of the  
experiences  
I've accrued  
to help Dirk.  
There he is  
now. Nice  
talking with  
you, Mrs.  
Calloway.

They shake hands. Max gets out of the  
car and puts his hand on Dirk's  
shoulder.

MAX

How'd the  
math test go?

DIRK

What math  
test?

MAX

I thought you  
had a math  
test today.

DIRK

No. Did you  
turn in your  
paper on the  
Berlin  
Airlift ?

MAX

Yeah, I got  
an extension.

Dirk gets in the car and drives off.  
A seventh grader named BOBBY goes  
over to Max.

BOBBY

How'd it go?

MAX

I shook hands  
with her.

BOBBY

Big deal.

MAX

And I gave  
her my phone  
number.

BOBBY

Buchan said  
he'd have  
already  
banged her by  
now.

MAX

He said that?

Max looks across the yard at MAGNUS  
BUCHAN, the burly foreign exchange  
student from Scotland. He is  
seventeen. He has a straw in his  
mouth and he shoots a little blowdart  
at a little kid's neck.

Half of Buchan's ear was blown-off in  
a hunting accident.

MAX

That's a  
really crude  
thing to say.  
That's Dirk's  
mother.

BOBBY

But I thought  
that's why  
you picked  
Dirk as your  
chapel

partner.

MAX

(looks  
at  
Bobby,  
pause)

What are you,  
a lawyer? All  
I'm saying is  
that gorilla  
is a guest at  
our school  
for the year,  
so respect  
our women the  
say way we  
would in his  
jerkwater  
country.

Mr. Blume pulls up in a brand new  
black Bentley.

MAX

Mr. Blume!

Max goes over to Mr. Blume's car.

MAX

It's Max  
Fischer.

MR. BLUME

(weary)

Hi, Max.

They shake hands through the open car  
window.

MAX

How's the  
concrete  
business?

MR. BLUME

Oh, I don't  
know. By the  
time you hit  
45 you're  
been fucked  
over so many

times you  
don't really  
care anymore.

MAX

I'm sorry to  
hear that.

Mr. Blume sighs deeply. He stares out  
the windshield.

MR. BLUME

What's the  
secret, Max?

MAX

The secret?

MR. BLUME

Yeah. You  
look like  
you've got it  
all figured  
out.

MAX

(pause)

I don't know.  
I think you  
just gotta  
find  
something you  
love to do,  
then do it  
for the rest  
of your life.

(shrugs)

For me, it's  
going to  
Rushmore.

Max looks very serious. Mr. Blume  
smiles and nods.

MAX

Hey, Ronny.  
Hey, Donny.

Mr. Blume's red-headed twins RONNY  
and DONNY come over to the car.  
They're Max's age but much more thick  
and solid.

RONNY

Shotgun.

Donny gets in the front seat anyway.

Ronny hollers:

RONNY

I said  
shotgun,  
Donny!

MR. BLUME

Get in the  
back, Ronny.

RONNY

I said,  
"Shotgun."  
Get in the  
back, Donny.

Donny punches three different buttons on the dash that crank up the AC full blast. Mr. Blume's hair dances in the cold burst of air. He shuts off the AC.

MAX

See you  
tomorrow, Mr.  
Blume.

(looks  
off)

Mrs.  
Reynolds!

Max goes over to shake hands with somebody else's parents. Mr. Blume looks at Max fondly.

MR. BLUME

Did you  
invite that  
kid to your  
party?

DONNY

(shocked)

Max Fischer?

RONNY

Come on, Dad.  
There's gonna

be girls  
there.

DONNY

I'd rather  
die. Pull  
your head out  
of your ass.

Mr. Blume turns Donny quickly like he is going to attack him. Donny cowers grinning in the backseat with his fists up. Ronny pipes in:

RONNY

Remember what  
Mom said.  
Hugs not  
hits.

INT. AUDITORIUM. DAY

The school auditorium. The stage is bare except for two folding chairs. A tall senior plays FRANK. He is wearing a stocking cap and sunglasses. A fat kid plays WILLIE.

FRANK

Wait a  
second. What  
time did the  
old lady  
place the 911  
call?

WILLIE

Ten-fifteen.

FRANK

(snaps  
his  
fingers)  
That's it.

Frank jumps out of his seat.

FRANK

Meet me on  
the corner in  
ten minutes.

WILLIE

Where are you  
going?

FRANK

I'll tell you  
in the squad  
car.

He heads towards the wings, then  
stops.

FRANK

Oh, and,  
Willie. You  
were wrong  
about Enrique  
Sanchez. He  
died in his  
sleep.

He exits.

MAX

Excellent!

Willie looks into the darkness beyond  
the stage. Max emerges and quickly  
climbs the steps onto the stage. He  
is followed by Dirk who is holding a  
script.

MAX

Excellent.  
Irving?

The stage manager is a wavy-haired  
sophomore named IRVING. He comes out  
from the backstage. Max pulls some  
money out of his pocket and hands it  
to him.

MAX

Get some  
rootbeers for  
anybody who  
wants one. I  
don't want  
one. OK. Next  
scene. (looks  
at Dirk's  
script)  
Frank, you



enter stage  
right with a  
bag of  
cocaine.

INT. BARBERSHOP. DAY

A small, clean barbershop. MR. FISCHER is a white-haired man of sixty-five in a white a white barber's shirt. He has finished giving a buzzcut to a twelve year-old boy named GORDON.

GORDON

May I see the  
back, please?

Mr. Fischer holds up a hand mirror so Gordon can see the back. Gordon nods. Max comes in rolling a Japanese ten-speed at his side.

MR. FISCHER

Hey, Max. How  
was your day?

MAX

Hm. I'd say  
(thinks  
for a  
second)  
98% good, 2%  
not so good.  
I need a  
signature on  
this geometry  
test, by the  
way.

Max leaves his test on the counter and rolls his bike into the back room. Gordon gives Mr. Fischer ten dollars.

GORDON

Thank you  
very much.

Gordon goes out the door. Mr. Fischer looks at the geometry test. Max comes out of the back room drinking a glass

of chocolate milk with a straw.

MR. FISCHER

Hm.

MAX

I know.

MR. FISCHER

A 37.

MAX

Pathetic.  
Just  
pathetic.

MR. FISCHER

Well. It  
could have  
been worse.  
You were  
right more  
than a third  
of the time.

MAX

(exploding)

Come on, Dad!  
That stinks!  
I can do  
better than  
that!

MR. FISCHER

Of course,  
you can.

MAX

For once,  
will you  
please try  
not to look  
on the bright  
side?

MR. FISCHER

Sit down and  
let me give  
you a trim.

Max sighs deeply. He sits down. Mr. Fischer signs the geometry test. He puts a pale blue smoke over Max and

gives him a haircut.

MAX

Do you think  
I'm stupid?

MR. FISCHER

No! You're  
just not very  
good at math.

MAX

But I'm  
failing  
English and  
History, too.

MR. FISCHER

(pause)

Well. Maybe  
you'd be  
better off at  
a school  
where there's  
not so much  
emphasis on  
academics.

MAX

What, like  
barber  
college?

Mr. Fischer is stricken. Max says  
quietly:

MAX

No, I love  
Rushmore. I  
don't want to  
go someplace  
second rate.  
Besides, it  
would ruin my  
chances of  
getting into  
Oxford.

Silence. Mr. Fischer looks very sad.

MR. FISCHER

I wish I knew

how to help  
you. But I  
just don't.  
I'm sorry,  
Max.

Max looks at his dad. Mr. Fischer  
looks down at the floor.

MR. FISCHER

You want to  
see the back?

MAX

No, thanks.  
You know how  
I like it.

INT. THE FISCHER'S HOUSE. NIGHT

An Archie Bunker-type house. Max and  
Mr. Fischer sit on the sofa in front  
of the TV having TV dinners.

MAX

You think I'm  
spending too  
much of my  
time starting  
up clubs and  
putting on  
plays?

MR. FISCHER

I don't know.  
It's  
possible.

MAX

I should  
probably be  
trying harder  
to score  
chicks.  
That's the  
only thing  
anybody  
really cares  
about. (sighs  
deeply) But  
it's not my  
forte,

unfortunately.

MR. FISCHER

It'll happen,  
Max. It's  
just. You're  
like one of  
those clipper  
ship  
captains.  
You're  
married to  
the sea.

MAX

Yes, that's  
true.

(pause)

But I've been  
out to sea  
for a long  
time.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD. DAY

Miss Cross is sitting on the  
bleachers watching her class play  
Capture-the-Flag. She opens a book.  
It is 20,000 Leagues under the Sea.  
She puts a cigarette in her mouth and  
searches in her pocket for a lighter.

A lit match appears in front of her.  
Max is holding it. He is wearing a  
maroon beret, Miss Cross looks at him  
curiously.

MAX

Hello.

MISS CROSS

Hi.

Miss Cross lights her cigarette on  
Max's match.

MISS CROSS

I like your  
hat.

MAX

Thank you.  
You're a

teacher here,  
aren't you?

MISS CROSS

Uh-huh.

MAX

What subject  
do you teach?

MISS CROSS

Well, I teach  
first grade,  
so I do all  
the subjects.  
Except music.

MAX

And this is  
your first  
year at  
Rushmore, I  
take it.

Miss Cross nods.

MAX

I see. How  
long have you  
been a  
smoker, if  
you don't  
mind me  
asking?

MISS CROSS

(surprised)

Hm. Let's  
see. How old  
are you?

MAX

Fifteen.

MISS CROSS

Since I was  
your age.

MAX

(shocked)

You're  
kidding.

Miss Cross shakes her head. Max can't believe this.

MAX

You should  
quit.

MISS CROSS

You're right.

MAX

(going  
back  
to  
his  
book)

And I should  
mind my own  
business.

Miss Cross laughs. Max looks back up.

MAX

Where'd you  
go to school,  
by the way?

MISS CROSS

Harvard.

MAX

Really?  
That's a  
coincidence.  
My top  
schools where  
I want to  
apply to are  
Oxford and  
The Sorbonne.  
But my safety  
is Harvard.

MISS CROSS

(smiles)

That's very  
ambitious.

MAX

Thank you.

MISS CROSS

What are you

going to  
major in?

MAX

Well. I  
haven't  
decided for  
sure. But  
probably a  
double major  
in  
Mathematics  
and Pre-Med.  
What was your  
major?

MISS CROSS

Latin-  
American  
studies.

MAX

Ah, that's  
interesting.  
Did you hear  
they're not  
going to  
teach Latin  
here anymore?

MISS CROSS

This was more  
like Central  
America.

MAX

(pause)

Sure. Central  
America and  
whatnot. But  
moving on:  
they're gonna  
cancel Latin.  
They've got  
to make room  
for Japanese.

MISS CROSS

Really?  
That's too  
bad. All the  
Romance



Languages  
come from  
Latin.

MAX

They do,  
don't they?  
(pause)  
Like French,  
probably.

She nods. She smiles.

MISS CROSS

Nihil  
sanctum  
estne?

MAX

That's Latin,  
isn't it?

MISS CROSS

Yeah.

MAX

What does it  
mean?

MISS CROSS

Is nothing  
sacred?

Long pause. Looking right at her.

MAX

Sic transit  
gloria. Glory  
fades. I'm  
Max Fischer.

Max slides down the bench and puts  
out his hand.

MISS CROSS

Hi.

They shake hands.

INT. LUNCHROOM. DAY

A crowd of MIDDLE SCHOOLERS has  
gathered around Max. He is holding a

clipboard. One of the kids finishes signing a piece of paper on it.

MAX

Good. Now  
you.

(points  
to  
the  
next  
kid)

Sign here.

The kid signs.

INSERT PIECE OF PAPER:

A long list of signatures. Many of them are written in little kid's handwriting. Some are neater. Across the top, it says PETITION. This is written in calligraphy.

CUT TO:

The administration conference room. TEN TEACHERS sit in chairs around a long table. Max stands before them finishing a speech. The petition is tacked-up on the wall behind him.

MAX

In summation,  
I have only  
one question:  
is Latin  
dead? Nisilum  
sacnus  
(pause, looks  
at his  
notecards)  
estne? Only  
you can say.  
Thank you for  
your time.

Applause.

INSERT ANNOUCEMENT:

Thanks to part of the efforts of 10th class member Max Fischer, Latin will now be a required course for grades 7

through

INT. HALLWAY. DAY

Max and a bunch of other kids are reading this announcement on the bulletin board. Max is smiling serenely. The others are cursing and looking at Max with angry faces. Magnus Buchan is one of them. He has a strong Scottish accent.

MAGNUS

Bugger off,  
Fischer. Ya  
bleedin'  
little  
bollocks.

MAX

Is that  
Latin?

Not bad, Buchan. Maybe you'll place out of your first year.

INT. GYM. DAY

Mr. Blume's son Ronny is in a wrestling mach. He has his opponent in a chokehold and is slowly strangling him. Mr. Blume looks on distastefully from the stands. Max is at his side.

MR. BLUME

What does  
your dad do,  
Max?

MAX

(frankly)

He's a  
neurosurgeon.  
Over at St.  
Joseph's.  
Personally, I  
could never  
see myself  
cutting open  
somebody's  
brain. But he

seems to  
enjoy it.

Max shrugs. Mr. Blume nods.

MAX

You were in  
Vietnam, if  
I'm not  
mistaken,  
weren't you?

Mr. Blume nods. Max thinks for a  
minute.

MAX

Were you in  
the shit?

MR. BLUME

Yeah. I was  
in the shit.

They look back out at the wrestling  
match. Ronny is crushing his  
opponent's face into the mat with his  
fist. Mr. Blume shakes his head.

MR. BLUME

Tell me  
something,  
Max. What do  
you think of  
Ronny and  
Donny?

MAX

(automatically)  
I like them.

MR. BLUME

(surprised)  
Really?

MAX

Sure.

Ronny flips his opponent on the mat  
and flattens him with his body. Donny  
screams encouragement.

MR. BLUME

No. You're

right.  
They're good  
kids.

Max nods solemnly.

WRESTLER

See you  
Sunday, Mr.  
Blume.

A stocky Wrestler with an ice pack on his arm walks by on his way to the showers. Mr. Blume nods to him without looking up.

MAX

What's  
Sunday?

Mr. Blume looks to Max. Silence.

MR. BLUME

The twins are  
having a  
birthday  
party. And  
I'd love it  
if -

MAX

Oh, that's  
right. Yeah.  
I'm not going  
to be able to  
make it to  
that one.

Max smiles very sincerely. Silence.

MR. BLUME

Come work for  
me.

MAX

(stiffens)

What do you  
mean?

MR. BLUME

I mean, I  
could use  
somebody like

you. I could

-

MAX

I may not be  
rich, Mr.  
Blume. And my  
father may  
only be a  
doctor. But  
we manage.

MR. BLUME

(hesitates)

I didn't mean  
it like that.  
I just -

MAX

No, thank  
you. I mean,  
I appreciate  
the offer.  
But I've got  
everything I  
need right  
here at  
Rushmore.  
Besides, it  
wouldn't be  
fair.

REFEREE

110s!

MAX

Excuse me,  
Mr. Blume.  
Nice talking  
with you.

Max pulls off his blazer. He is  
wearing wrestling tights underneath.  
Mr. Blume looks surprised.

MR. BLUME

You're on the  
team?

MAX

(shrugs)

I'm an

alternate.

Max heads out to the mat, pulling on his headgear. Mr. Blume calls after him:

MR. BLUME

What wouldn't  
be fair, Max?

MAX

(smiles  
crookedly)

We'd make way  
too much  
money working  
on the same  
team.

Mr. Blume smiles faintly. He watches as Max begins his match. Max is outclassed and quickly gets pinned.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Miss Cross is shepherding her class into her classroom. They are singing a song as they walk down the corridor. Across the hall, a fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Guggenheim, comes out of her classroom. She is a handsome woman in her late sixties with black and silver hair.

MISS CROSS

Hello, Mrs.  
Guggenheim.

MRS GUGGENHEIM

Hi, Rosemary.  
Did you find  
a place?

MISS CROSS

Well, I'm  
just staying  
over at  
Edward's  
parents'  
house for  
now. They're  
out of town.

MRS GUGGENHEIM

Oh. That's  
good.

(pause)

Edward was  
one of my  
students, you  
know.

Miss Cross smiles and nods. Silence.  
Miss Cross points to a photograph in  
a collage on a wall.

MISS CROSS

I think I met  
that boy  
yesterday.

Mrs. Guggenheim looks at the picture.

INSERT PHOTOGRAPH:

It is black and white of Max in fifth  
grade singing a show tune. His arms  
are opened wide and he has a top hat  
in one hand and cane in the other.

MRS GUGGENHEIM

(frowns)

That's Max  
Fischer.  
How'd you get  
mixed up with  
him?

MISS CROSS

He introduced  
himself to  
me. I liked  
him,  
actually.

MRS GUGGENHEIM

(resigned)

Yeah, I know.  
So do I.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Ronny and Donny set upon a pile of  
birthday presents at a table by the  
pool. They are surrounded by kids in  
swimsuits.



Mr. Blume sits alone at the next table drinking a whiskey in front of the demolished birthday cake. He has a tattoo on his shoulder that says Semper Fi. There is a bucket of golf balls in front of him and he absently tosses them into the pool one at a time.

He looks over at Mrs. Blume. She has red hair just like the twins. She is flirting with a pretty boy Tennis Pro. She looks back to Mr. Blume coldly.

Mr. Blume gets up and walks around the pool. He pauses to shake hands with a Big Man drinking a glass of Scotch. The big man gives Mr. Blume a sudden shove toward the pool, but hangs on to him so he doesn't fall in. The big man laughs.

Mr. Blume climbs up the ladder to the high dive. He sets down his cocktail. He slips and falls and bangs his knee hard on the edge of the board. He gets up quickly. There is a bad cut on his knee and he is bleeding. He looks out at the birthday party down below.

People begin to notice him up there.

He sprints down the board, bounces once as high as he can, and sails out long through the air. He tucks into a cannon ball. He nails the water with a huge splash.

Mrs. Blume gets up with a bitter look on her face and heads for the ladies' room.

Kids gather at the edge of the pool to look down at Mr. Blume playing dead at the bottom with golf balls all around him. A little boy in a Speedo underwear swims to examine Mr. Blume. Their eyes meet. The boy turns and swims away.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Miss Cross' classroom. The walls are lined with fish tanks that glow blue and make bubbling sounds. There are maps and pictures everywhere. A model of a 747 hangs from the ceiling. A record player plays the Vienna Boys' Choir at a low volume.

There is only one Kid in the room. He is taking a test. Miss Cross sits at her desk grading papers.

Max cracks open the door.

MAX

Miss Cross?

Miss Cross and the kid look back at Max. Miss Cross holds her finger to her lips and gets up. As she walks past the kid, she puts her hand on the top of his head. She goes to Max at the door. She whispers:

MISS CROSS

He's taking a  
make-up test.

MAX

These guys  
have tests?

MISS CROSS

Of course.

MAX

I thought  
they just did  
coloring and  
stuff.

MISS CROSS

Oh, no.  
They're good  
readers.

MAX

I'm Max  
Fischer. We  
met the other  
day.

MISS CROSS

I know who  
you are. How  
are you?

MAX

Fine, thank  
you.

Max just stands there.

MISS CROSS

You want to  
help me feed  
the fish?

MAX

Yes, please.

Max follows her from tank to tank as  
she shakes out fish food. They  
continue to whisper to each other:

MAX

I thought I  
would just  
let you know,  
as per our  
conversation  
the other day  
-

MISS CROSS

Latin?

MAX

Right. The  
Romance  
Languages. I  
gave a little  
speech -

MISS CROSS

I heard about  
this.

MAX

You did?

MISS CROSS

Uh-huh. I  
understand

you made a  
very  
convincing  
argument.

MAX

I thought  
you'd be  
pleased to  
hear they're  
going to  
continue the  
Latin  
program.

She looks at Max. She sets down the  
fish food and shakes his hand.

MISS CROSS

I'm very  
impressed.

MAX

Thank you  
very much.

Max picks up the can of fish food and  
shakes some into one of the  
aquariums.

MAX

You need an  
assistant?

MISS CROSS

(smiles)

Do we get to  
have  
assistants  
around here?

MAX

I doubt it.  
I'm on  
scholarship,  
though.  
Academic  
scholarship.  
So sometimes,  
I get to do  
odd jobs.

(pause)

How did you  
decide to  
teach at  
Rushmore?

MISS CROSS

My husband  
went here.

Max drops the can of fish food into  
the tank. He quickly fishes it out.

He picks some little bits of fish  
food out of the water and throws them  
away. Pause.

MAX

I didn't know  
you were  
married.

MISS CROSS

Well, he's  
dead now. So  
I'm not  
actually  
married.

MAX

When did he  
die?

MISS CROSS

Last year.

Max nods. Silence.

MAX

My mother's  
dead.

MISS CROSS

Oh. I'm sorry  
to hear that.

MAX

She died when  
I was seven.  
(raising an  
eyebrow)

So we both have dead people in our  
families.

They look at each other for a minute.

MAX

Now what's  
going on in  
here?

Max kneels down and looks into one of the fish tanks. There are a hundred little seahorses swimming around in it.

MISS CROSS

Those were  
just born.

A look of wonder comes across Max's face. He stares into the blue water.

MAX

You really  
love fish,  
don't you?

Miss Cross nods. Max puts his fingers to the glass.

MAX

How much do  
these cost?

INT. BLUME INTERNATIONAL CONCRETE - DAY

Mr. Blume's office. HE is talking on the telephone. Max sits in a chair across from him.

MR. BLUME

I don't want  
any alloys. I  
want steel.

(pause)

I don't give  
a rat's ass  
if he did.

(pause)

Steel, Harry.

He hangs up.

MR. BLUME

You change

your mind?  
You want the  
job?

MAX

No. But I've  
got an idea.  
And need some  
money.

Mr. Blume's secretary buzzes him on  
the speakerphone.

SECRETARY

Mr. Blume,  
they're ready  
for you in  
Hydraulics.

MR. BLUME

Come with me.  
Let's hear  
your idea.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Max, Mr. Blume, and a big foreman  
named Ernie race across the factory  
in a souped-up golf cart. They're  
squeezed together with Max in the  
middle.

MAX

Rushmore  
deserves an  
aquarium. A  
first class  
aquarium  
where  
scientists  
can lecture,  
and students  
can study  
marine life  
in their  
natural -

MR. BLUME

I don't know.  
What do you  
think, Ernie?

ERNIE  
(skeptical)  
An aquarium?

MAX  
A huge  
aquarium. An  
entire  
building.

MR. BLUME  
What kind of  
fish?

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Mr. Blume and Max, wearing hard hats,  
stand on a scaffolding overlooking a  
huge vat of bubbling concrete.

MAX  
(shouting)  
Electric  
eels.  
Barracudas.  
Stingrays.  
Hammerheads.  
Piranhas.

MR. BLUME  
Piranhas?

MAX  
That's right.  
Piranhas. I  
talked to a  
man in South  
America.

MR. BLUME  
Really. So  
you might  
have  
piranhas.

MAX  
We will have  
piranhas.

INT. MR. BLUME'S OFFICE - DAY

Back in Mr. Blume's office. They're  
seated as before. Max is still



wearing his hard hat.

MR. BLUME

What does  
Guggenheim  
say?

MAX

Nothing. I  
felt I should  
go to you  
first.

MR. BLUME

Why?

MAX

Because at  
this moment I  
feel our best  
strategy is  
to keep a low  
profile. The  
more  
preparation I  
can do, the  
stronger our  
case will be  
when we go to  
the  
administration.

Long pause.

MR. BLUME

How much do  
you want?

MAX

\$35.000 for  
the initial  
plans.

Max holds Mr. Blume's gaze. Mr. Blume  
picks up a pen.

MR. BLUME

I'll give you  
\$2500.

Max nods. Mr. Blume writes out a  
check, tears it off, and hands it to  
Max. Max sticks it in his pocket like

it is a five-dollar bill.

RESEARCH MONTAGE:

All of the following events occur during school hours.

Max strides across the quadrangle with a determined expression. He's got an armload of books on marine life.

Max watches a Jacques Cousteau film on 16mm in an empty classroom. Dirk runs the projector.

Max visits a marine research facility and talks with a Scientist. Max holds up a fish at the edge of a pool. A killer whale jumps out of the water and takes it in its teeth.

Max flies over Rushmore in a chopper with Mr. Blume. He shouts out details of the landscape and Mr. Blume nods enthusiastically. They are both eating sandwiches.

They set down on the soccer field. Kids come running out to meet them. Max waves to them as he jumps out of the chopper. He looks back to Mr. Blume and gives him a thumbs-up. Mr. Blume smiles and waves as the chopper takes off.

Max walks with a young Architect among the trees between the gym and the baseball diamond. They look at some blueprints. Max pulls up third base and slides it over a few feet.

Max points to some beautiful fish in an aquarium in a pet shop. The pet shop Owner reaches in with a little net.

Max pokes his head into Miss Cross's classroom. He holds up two plastic baggies full of water with tropical fish swimming around inside them.

Kids gather all around them as they

put the new fish into the aquariums.  
Max smiles mysteriously.

MAX

You need any  
help grading  
papers or  
anything?

INSERT BOOK REPORT:

The title is 'Young Ben Franklin'.  
Miss Cross writes Magnificent! Keep  
up the good work! And draws two stars  
across the top of the page with a red  
pen.

INT. MISS CROSS'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Max is staring at Miss Cross in a  
strange from a desk opposite hers in  
the empty classroom. She looks up at  
him. He continues to stare at her as  
if she were a statue.

Miss Cross rubs her eyes and sighs.  
She sets down her red pen. She looks  
back at Max. He is still staring at  
her.

MISS CROSS

Max?

Max looks quickly down to his papers.

MAX

Uh-huh?

MISS CROSS

Can I ask you  
something?

MAX

Sure.

MISS CROSS

Has it ever  
crossed your  
mind that  
you're way  
too young for  
me?

Max looks up. Miss Cross smiles faintly. Silence.

MAX

It's crossed  
by mind that  
you might  
consider that  
a  
possibility,  
yes.

MISS CROSS

Not to  
mention that  
you're a  
student -

MAX

And you're a  
teacher. And  
never the  
twain shall  
meet. I know,  
I'm not  
trying to  
pressure you  
into  
anything,  
Miss Cross.  
I'm surprised  
you brought  
it up so  
bluntly.

MISS CROSS

I just want  
to make sure  
-

MAX

We've become  
friends,  
haven't we?

MISS CROSS

Yes.

MAX

Good. That's  
all that  
matters to

me.

Max thinks for a second, then presses on:

MAX

And the truth  
is neither  
one of us has  
the slightest  
idea where  
this  
relationships  
is going. We  
can't predict  
the future.

MISS CROSS

We don't have  
a  
relationship,  
Max.

MAX

But we're  
friends.

MISS CROSS

Yes. And  
that's all  
we're going  
to be.

MAX

That's what I  
meant by  
relationship.  
You want me  
to grab a  
dictionary?

MISS CROSS

I just want  
to make sure  
we understand  
each other.

MAX

I understand.  
You're not  
attracted to  
me. C'est la

vie. I'm a  
big boy.

MISS CROSS

Max. You're  
fifteen.  
Attraction  
doesn't enter  
into it.

MAX

If you say  
so. All I'm  
getting at is  
I've never  
met anyone  
like you.  
Take that for  
whatever it's  
worth.

She thinks about this for a minute.

MISS CROSS

I think I can  
safely say  
I've never  
met anyone  
like you,  
either.

MAX

You haven't,  
have you?

Miss Cross shakes her head. Max says  
quietly:

MAX

You want to  
shake hands?

She puts out her hand and they shake  
hands across the desk. But they don't  
let go. They just look at each other.

MAX

I'm glad we  
had this  
conversation.

MISS CROSS

Me too.

They finally let go of each other's hands. Miss Cross looks away. She's not exactly sure what they just decided.

MAX

By the way.  
Are you free?  
Thursday  
night?

MISS CROSS

Free for  
what?

MAX

Dinner.

She looks at Max strangely.

MAX

We're getting  
a group  
together  
after the  
play.

INSERT PLAYBILL:

SERPICO

A new play by  
Max Fischer.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A very realistic set for a New York tenement apartment.

Four men sit at a table. Three wear dark suits: O'Reilly, Burnum and Fields. One has long hair, a beard, leather pants and a big silver crucifix around his neck. This is Frank Serpico. They are all played by high schoolers.

FRANK

I can't wear  
a wire!  
They're  
feeling me up  
every day!

O'REILLY

Come on,  
Frank. You'll  
have complete  
protection.

FRANK

(walking  
off)

I've heard  
that one  
before. I got  
to go put a  
dime in the  
meter.

BURNUM

Look, Officer Serpico. If you agree  
to testify in open court -

Frank wheels around and knocks the  
clipboard out of O'Reilly's hands. He  
grabs O'Reilly by both arms. Fields  
instinctively draws his firearm.

FRANK

Promise me  
one thing,  
O'Reilly.  
You're going  
to follow  
this all the  
way. To the  
end (snaps)  
Of the line,  
(snaps) where  
I got to be.

O'REILLY

(looking  
Frank  
right  
in  
the  
eye)

So help me,  
God.

The audience is deeply engrossed. A  
row of small kids are sitting on the  
floor very front.



Max watches from the wings. He looks out at the audience.

He sees Mr. Blume smiling proudly in the third row.

He sees Miss Cross sitting next to a big, curly-haired Medical Student in surgical scrubs. She leans close to him and whispers something in his ear. He smiles and nods and whispers something back.

Max stares at them blankly as a shoot-out erupts onstage.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Frank comes offstage with a bandage of his cheek and a cane in his hand. Max is waiting for him backstage. Max has on a headset and carries a clipboard. He is extremely keyed-up.

MAX

What happened  
to the  
cannoli line?

Max follows Frank as Frank walks quietly toward the dressing room.

MAX

You're  
supposed to  
say, "Forget  
about it,  
Sanchez -"

FRANK

(very  
angry)

I made a  
mistake, all  
right? It  
doesn't make  
any  
difference,  
anyway.

MAX

Hey, I'm

letting it  
go. But don't  
tell me it  
doesn't  
matter. Every  
line matters.

FRANK

(yelling)

Get off my  
back!

MAX

Don't fuck  
with my play!

Frank turns around and punches Max in the nose. Max takes a swing and misses and they wrestle as people try to break it up.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The whole cast is onstage bowing as the audience applauds. Some of the actors motion to the wings.

Max walks out on the stage. He has a bloody Kleenex in each nostril. He waves to the audience. The applause roars.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

The crowded dressing rooms. Actors are taking off their make-up. Max is drinking a champagne cocktail and talking with his father and an elderly Woman.

WOMAN

I thought the  
acting  
tonight was  
excellent.

MAX

It was better  
in  
rehearsals.  
(to  
his  
father)

I'll catch up  
with you  
later, Dad.  
I've got a  
dinner to go  
to.

MR FISCHER

(interested)

Oh, yeah?

MAX

(pause)

Yeah. Cast  
and crew  
only.

Mr. Fischer feels left out but tries  
not to show it.

MR FISCHER

OK. Well,  
have a good  
time.

Miss Cross walks over to Max through  
the crowd. Her friend the medical  
student follows behind her. Max's  
expression is polite but inscrutable.

MISS CROSS

That was  
great, Max.

MAX

I'm so glad  
you could  
come.

MISS CROSS

I want you to  
meet a friend  
of mine. John  
Coats. Max  
Fischer.

MAX

(not  
looking  
at  
him)

Who's this

guy?

MISS CROSS

(pause)

John.

Max looks at John. John smiles.  
Pause.

JOHN

I really  
liked your  
play, man. It  
was really  
cool.

Max nods. He drinks a long sip of his  
champagne cocktail.

MISS CROSS

What happened  
to your nose?

MAX

I got punched  
in the face.  
(to  
John)  
What's your  
excuse?

Mr. Blume comes over to them.

MR. BLUME

Am I going to  
get to meet  
your dad  
tonight, Max?

MAX

Nah. The old  
man's on call  
tonight. Mr.  
Blume, I'd  
like you to  
meet Miss  
Cross, and I  
didn't catch  
this young  
gentleman's  
name.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A fancy restaurant. Max is having dinner with Mr. Blume, Miss Cross and John. Max is drunk.

MAX

I like your nurse's uniform, guy.

JOHN

They're OR scrubs.

MAX

(pause)

OR they?

Mr. Blume laughs suddenly and wine goes up his nose. Max glances to him slyly, then looks back at John.

MAX

Well, they're totally inappropriate for the occasion.

JOHN

Well, I didn't know we were going to dinner.

MAX

That's because you weren't invited.

MR. BLUME

Take it easy, Max.

MISS CROSS

(angry)

You're the one who ordered him a Scotch and soda.

MAX

What's wrong  
with that? I  
can write a  
hit play. Why  
can't I have  
a drink when  
I want to  
unwind a  
little? So  
tell me,  
Curly. How do  
you know Miss  
Cross?

JOHN

We went to  
Harvard  
together.

MAX

(shrugs)

And I wrote a  
hit play. And  
directed it.  
So I'm not  
sweating it,  
either.

MR. BLUME

(signaling  
the  
waiter)

I'm going to  
get the  
check.

MAX

What do you  
think you're  
doing?

MR. BLUME

I'm getting  
the -

MAX

No, you're  
not.

The Waiter comes over. Max intercepts  
him:

MAX

I just wanted  
to thank you  
again for  
accommodating  
us. We only  
expected to  
be a party of  
three, but  
somebody  
invited  
himself  
along. I  
apologize.

WAITER

That's  
perfectly all  
right.

The waiter walks away. Miss Cross  
frowns.

MISS CROSS

You're being  
rude, Max.

MAX

No I'm not.  
I'm just  
trying to  
figure out  
why you  
brought this  
gentleman to  
my play. And  
my dinner,  
which was  
invitation  
only.

John reaches in front of Max for the  
butter. Max grabs his spoon and swats  
John on the back of the hand.

MAX

Would you  
like me to  
pass you the  
butter?

Max hands John the butter.

MISS CROSS

What's wrong  
with you?

MAX

(raising  
his  
voice)

What's wrong  
with YOU?

Max is making a scene. People all over the restaurant are watching. Max stares at Miss Cross.

MAX

You hurt my  
feelings.  
This night  
was important  
to me.

MISS CROSS

How did I  
hurt your  
feelings?

MAX

I wrote a hit  
play!

(pause)

And I'm in  
love with  
you.

John looks to Miss Cross. She doesn't know what to say. Max looks drunk and dejected.

MAX

How do you  
like that,  
Curly?

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Miss Cross and her pupils are out on the playground painting pictures. Each kid has an easel.

Miss Cross sees Mr. Blume standing under a tree at the edge of the



playground. He is wearing sunglasses and smoking a cigarette. He moves slightly behind the tree. She stares at him.

He waves. She waves back. He comes over.

MR. BLUME

Hi.

MISS CROSS

Were you  
hiding over  
there?

Mr. Blume shrugs. He points at one of the paintings.

MR. BLUME

What's that?

The artist looks up at Mr. Blume. He is a small boy with jet-black curly hair and piercing eyes.

ARTIST

(makes  
a  
swimming  
gesture)

It's a little  
swimming  
snake.

Mr. Blume nods.

MISS CROSS

What can I do  
for you, Mr.  
Blume?

Mr. Blume turns to Miss Cross and takes off his sunglasses. Silence.

MR. BLUME

Max wants to  
see you.

MISS CROSS

What for?

MR. BLUME

To apologize,  
I guess.

MISS CROSS

He sent you  
here?

MR. BLUME

Yeah.

She frowns and studies Mr. Blume for  
a minute.

MISS CROSS

Are you his  
messenger?

MR. BLUME

No. He's my  
friend.

(pause)

You were  
right. I  
shouldn't  
have let him  
drink.

Miss Cross nods. Silence.

MISS CROSS

I don't think  
I should see  
Max anymore.

MR. BLUME

He's not  
going to like  
the sound of  
that.

MISS CROSS

I know. But I  
think I let  
him get too  
attached.

Mr. Blume nods. Miss Cross looks  
uncertain.

MISS CROSS

Don't you  
think?

MR. BLUME

(shrugs)

I don't know.  
You did your  
best.

Miss Cross smiles sadly to Mr. Blume.  
He puts his hands in his pockets.

MISS CROSS

Tell him I'm  
sorry.

MR. BLUME

OK.

They look at each other for a long  
minute. Miss Cross tucks a strand of  
hair behind her ear. Mr. Blume says  
quietly:

MR. BLUME

What's your  
first name?

MISS CROSS

Rosemary.  
What's yours?

MR. BLUME

Herman.

Silence.

MR. BLUME

Oh, yeah. He  
wrote you a  
letter.

He hands her a letter in a sealed  
envelope. She takes it.

MISS CROSS

Thanks.

They stand there in silence for  
another minute.

MR. BLUME

OK. So long,  
Rosemary.

MISS CROSS

(smiles)

Bye, Herman.

Mr. Blume starts to go. He stops He looks back to Miss Cross.

MR. BLUME

Should we  
meet  
somewhere?

She hesitates.

MR. BLUME

To talk about  
Max.

MISS CROSS

Yeah. I don't  
know.

(pause)

Maybe.

Mr. Blume nods. He turns away and walks off. She watches him go. She looks at the envelope.

INSERT LETTER WRITTEN IN CALLIGRAPHY  
ON CRISP STATIONERY:

Max reads in voice-over.

Dear Miss Cross,

I would like to take this opportunity to formally apologize for the events of the night of the twenty-third. I am not accustomed to drinking alcohol. Please do me the service of coming to the unveiling of a new venture I have undertaken. I hope you will attend, if possible. I remain, your friend,

Max Fischer.

EXT. VACANT LOT - DAY

A crowd of fifty Kids in uniform has gathered around the vacant lot beside the baseball field. Max stands with his architect, smiling for the yearbook photographer. They are

holding a banner that says 'Cousteau-Blume Marine Observatory Fund-raiser'. Max has on a hard hat. There are two pick-up trucks and a portacan at the back of the vacant lot.

Max digs into the ground with a gold shovel. The shovel has a ribbon around it. Flashbulbs go off. Everyone claps. Max waves Dirk over.

MAX

Did you see  
her?

DIRK

She's not  
here.

MAX

Well, see if  
she's in her  
classroom.

The Contractor walks over to Max.

CONTRACTOR

Should we go  
ahead and  
take care of  
this tree?

MAX

Let's wait a  
few minutes.

Coach Beck goes over to Max. He is six four and wears a John Newcombe mustache and an Adidas warm-up. He is frowning.

COACH BECK

What's going  
on here,  
Maxie?

MAX

Coach Beck.  
Good to see  
you. This is  
where they're  
building the  
new aquarium.

I'm in charge  
of the  
committee, if  
you can  
believe it.

COACH BECK

This is the  
baseball  
diamond.

MAX

I believe  
it's being  
relocated a  
few feet  
over.

COACH BECK

(frowns)

I should've  
been informed  
about that.

Coach Beck walks off. Max answers  
some questions for the School  
Reporters.

REPORTER

Is it true  
the aquarium  
will have  
piranhas?

MAX

(smiles)

Where'd you  
hear that?

REPORTER

My source  
indicated  
that it was a  
possibility.

MAX

Yes, it's  
true. Excuse  
me, George.

Dirk has returned.

MAX

What's the  
story?

DIRK

(a  
little  
wary)

She has a  
substitute  
teacher  
today.

MAX

Why?

DIRK

She probably  
got sick.

MAX

(looks  
away)

You know  
she's not  
sick. Give me  
the phone.

Max dials on a cellular phone.

MAX

Hi, Janet.  
It's Max  
Fischer.

Is Mr. Blume there?

(pause)

Well, where  
is he?

(pause)

Goddammit,  
he's supposed  
to be here.

Let me know if you find him, please.

Max hangs up. He looks off and says  
in a steely voice:

MAX

I'm going  
anyway.

Max goes over to the contractor.

MAX

Chop it down,  
Mr. Chandler!  
We've got an  
aquarium to  
build.

Max talks to another reporter.

MAX

I don't give  
a shit about  
barracudas.  
But fuck it.  
I'm building  
it anyway.

The sound of power saws fills the air  
as Dr. Guggenheim appears at the edge  
of the lot with Coach Beck and a  
Security Guard with a walkie-talkie.  
DR Guggenheim screams:

DR. GUGGENHEIM

Max!

DR. Guggenheim sees the chopped-down  
trees and mangles baseball field as  
he strides on to the lot.

MAX

Nice to see  
you, Dr.  
Gugg-

DR. GUGGENHEIM

Max!

(seizing  
Max  
by  
the  
arm)

What do you  
think you're  
doing?

MAX

(pause)

We're having  
a fund-raiser  
for-



DR. GUGGENHEIM

Shut those  
damn things  
off!

They turn off the power saws.

DR. GUGGENHEIM

Tell me this  
isn't  
happening.

MAX

Dr.  
Guggenheim,  
I'd rather  
not have this  
conversation  
in front of  
the crew.

EXT. QUADRANGLE - DAY

Dirk waits nervously on the steps in front of DR. Guggenheim's office. He holds a hamster in his hands.

He gets up and goes to the windows. He looks inside.

Max is sitting in a little chair in the middle of the room with his hard hat on. DR. Guggenheim and several other faculty members sit around him. DR. Guggenheim is screaming at him across his desk. Max is crying.

Dirk looks scared.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Max kneels on the floor in the hallway, emptying out his locker. Papers and trash are scattered all around him. There is a trashcan beside him. He is throwing away his books, one at a time.

Mr. Blume opens the door at the end of the hallway. Max looks up at him. Silence. Max looks up back to his locker and starts throwing his books in the trash again.

Mr. Blume walks over to Max. He looks very sad. He kneels down beside Max. He starts helping him pick up the trash off the floor and put it in the trashcan.

TITLE:

October.

INT. GROVER CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Grover Cleveland is a public high school with two thousand five hundred students.

Max sits in a front row of a math classroom. He is dressed in his Rushmore uniform, with coat and tie, but his clothes are wrinkled and his head has been shaved like a marine's. His eyes have dark circles around them. He has a little stack of index cards in his hand.

The teacher, Mrs. Whitney, stands at the front of the room. She is about fifty with a horn-rimmed glasses and a slight English accent. She has a bemused expression on her face.

MRS WHITNEY

We have a new student with us today. His name's Max Fischer and he's actually asked to say a few words to the class. Max? You want to take it away?

MAX

(standing up)

Sure. Thanks very much. I just wanted to introduce

myself.

Max looks quickly at his notecards.

MAX

I'm Max  
Fischer. I'm  
a former  
student of  
Rushmore  
Academy,  
which I  
recently got  
expelled  
from.

Max flips to the next notecard.

MAX

This is my  
first time in  
a public  
school. And I  
know you  
probably  
think I was  
born with a  
silverspoon  
in my mouth.  
But I'm no  
elitist. I  
think you've  
got some  
great  
facilities,  
and I'm  
really  
looking  
forward to  
making the  
best of it  
over here at  
Grover  
Cleveland.

Max sighs deeply. He rubs his eyes.  
His Classmates have no idea what to  
make of him. However, one Asian girl  
in the back row is smiling faintly.  
She has short-cropped hair. The spine  
of one of her book covers says  
Margaret Yang.

MAX

One footnote:  
I noticed you  
don't have a  
fencing team.  
I'm going to  
start one up.  
Let me know  
if you'd like  
to join.  
Thanks.

INT. GROVER CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The wide halls of Grover Cleveland High School are lined with orange lockers. A banner stretched down the wall says 'Murder the Mustangs'. A bustling throng of high schoolers rush to class.

Max walks slowly, alone, down the middle of the hall. A blonde cheerleader-type Girl asks him:

GIRL

Why are you  
so dressed  
up?

Max looks down at his clothes. Max looks back to the girl.

MAX

Are you  
insane?

The girl walks off. Margaret Yang catches up to Max.

MARGARET

Max?

MAX

Yes?

MARGARET

Hi. I'm  
Margaret  
Yang. I'm in  
Mrs.  
Whitney's

class. I just  
wanted to  
tell you I  
liked your  
speech. I  
don't think  
I've ever  
heard of  
anyone asking  
to give a  
speech in  
class before.

MAX

How  
unfortunate.

MARGARET

The silver  
spoon remark  
might rub  
some people  
the wrong  
way. But I  
think I know  
how you meant  
it.

MAX

Glad to hear  
it. Goodbye,  
Miss Chang.

Max ducks into the men's room.  
Margaret walks quietly away.

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

A tiny figure dressed all in white  
stands alone at the far end of the  
huge gymnasium with a fencing oil. He  
lunges, parries, and thrusts.

The basketball team suddenly floods  
dribbling into the gymnasium,  
throwing passes and taking free  
throws. Max stops fencing as they  
take over the room. He watches them  
in silence. He shakes his head. He  
walks off the court.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Max puts a quarter in a pay phone. He is still wearing his fencing costume.

MAX

Janet. Max  
Fischer. Is  
he in?

EXT. RUSHMORE - DAY

Mr. Blume answers on his cellular phone as he gets out of his car and walks across the lawn at Rushmore.

We intercut the two of them.

MR. BLUME

Hey, Max.  
How's it  
going over  
there?

MAX

Terrible.  
Tell me  
something.  
When you talk  
to Miss Cross  
the other

day, did you get the feeling-

The hall monitor Mr. Holstead comes down the hall toward Max. He is a big, sturdy man about fifty years old. He wears a striped tie and his sleeves rolled up.

MR HOLSTEAD

(loudly)

Do you have a  
telephone  
pass?

Max holds up his hand for Mr. Holstead to wait a minute. He covers his ear so he can hear Mr. Blume.

Mr. Blume is looking in the windows of different classrooms. Kids look out at him curiously.

MR. BLUME

I got to tell  
you, Max. I  
don't know  
what you see  
in her. I  
don't think  
she's right  
for you.

MAX

What's that  
supposed to  
mean?

Mr. Blume sees Miss Cross inside  
teaching her class. He stares at her  
in a glance. He whispers:

MR. BLUME

Well, she's  
not that  
beautiful.  
She's not  
that  
interesting.  
I mean, sure,  
there's  
something  
about her.  
But I see you  
with someone-

MAX

Look, Mr.  
Blume. Your  
comments are  
valuable, but  
let's get to  
the point.  
Will she see  
me again? Yes  
or no?

MR. BLUME

(pause)

No.

MAX

I'm going to  
go see her.  
Hang on.

Max looks to Mr. Holstead.

MAX

I'm talking  
on the  
telephone.

Mr. Holstead reaches over and hangs  
up the phone.

MAX

Come on, man.  
That's rude.

INT. GROVER CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Mrs. Whitney watches from her  
classroom window at:

Max opens a red metal door on to the  
empty concrete courtyard. He looks  
left and right. He sneaks across the  
courtyard to the bike racks, quickly  
unlocks his bike, and rides away.

EXT. RUSHMORE - DAY

Max rides full speed through the  
gates on to the Rushmore campus. He  
flips one leg off his bike and glides  
in toward the bike racks standing on  
one pedal.

Max locks up his bike and walks  
across the lawn.

MAGNUS

You better  
beat it,  
laddie.

Max looks up at Magnus Buchan sitting  
in a tree smoking a cigarette,  
hacking at a branch with a  
pocketknife.

MAX

I hope you  
fall out of  
that tree and  
get stick in  
the ass,  
Buchan.



MAGNUS

You know,  
I've watched  
you, Fischer.  
Showboat,  
always  
talking,  
picking a kid  
like Dirk  
cause his  
mother's a  
great piece  
and then  
getting  
nowhere. Like  
everything  
you do. Big  
show. No  
results.

MAX

And what do  
you call  
getting a  
hand job from  
Mrs. Calloway  
in her  
Jaguar?

MAGNUS

A bloody lie.

MAX

You think I  
got kicked  
out for just  
the aquarium?  
Nah. That  
ain't it. It  
was the hand  
job. And I'll  
tell you  
another  
thing. It was  
worth it. So  
eat your  
heard out,  
mick. I got  
business to  
attend to.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Miss Cross comes out the door of the lower school with a basket of books and papers. She stops in front of her wagon and digs in her bag for the keys.

MAX

Or do you  
want me to  
go?

MISS CROSS

(looks  
around,  
sighs)

You can talk  
to me.

Miss Cross goes over to him. She stops a few feet away and they stand there in silence.

MAX

I'm sorry I  
embarrassed  
you at  
dinner.

MISS CROSS

That's OK.

MAX

No, it's not.  
And please  
apologize to  
what's his  
name for me.

MISS CROSS

I will. Are  
you OK?

MAX

I'm fine. But  
I miss  
Rushmore. I  
miss the  
seasons. And  
watching the  
leaves

change.

MISS CROSS

But it's only  
three blocks  
away.

MAX

I know. I  
miss seeing  
you.

MISS CROSS

(pause)

I miss you,  
too.

Max looks off into the trees. A squirrel leaps from one branch to another. Max smiles and shakes his head. A crashing noise is heard from the roof of the planetarium. Someone ducks for cover, but Max and Miss Cross don't see him.

Max reaches into his backpack and says mysteriously:

MAX

By the way,  
what time  
does the  
library  
close? I got  
an overdue  
book to turn  
in.

Max takes out the Jacques Cousteau library book and hands it to Miss Cross. She looks at it and starts to say something but she stops. She opens the book and looks at it in silence.

MAX

That's your  
handwriting,  
isn't it?

Max shows her the Henry James quote.  
Miss Cross nods.

MAX

Not bad.  
Except it's  
probably bad  
form for a  
teacher to  
write in a  
library book.

MISS CROSS

It wasn't a  
library book  
when I wrote  
in it.

MAX

What do you  
mean?

MISS CROSS

I gave this  
book to  
Rushmore.

Max looks puzzled. Miss Cross shows  
him a little card inside the front  
cover of the book.

INSERT LIBRARY BOOK:

In Memory of EDWARD APPLEBY

Class of '87

MISS CROSS

My husband  
gave me this  
book in the  
seventh  
grade. And he  
went to  
Rushmore. So  
when he died  
I put it in  
the library  
here.

MAX

So that's who  
that is.  
Edward  
Appleby.

(looks  
to  
Miss  
Cross)

You already  
knew him in  
the seventh  
grade?

MISS CROSS

I knew him  
all my life.

(looks  
to  
Max)

You remind me  
of him, you  
know?

MAX

I do? How?

MISS CROSS

Well. Weren't  
you in the  
Rushmore  
Beekeepers?

MAX

(frowns)

Yeah. I was  
President of  
them.

MISS CROSS

He founded  
that club.

MAX

(pause)

I get your  
meaning. I  
founded a few  
clubs myself  
in my day.

An acorn falls on Max's head. He  
looks up. There is no one there, but  
a scurrying sound is heard. Max  
frowns.

MAX

What was  
that? A  
squirrel?

Mr. Blume is crouched just out of view on the roof. He looks back over his shoulder and sees a small, white-haired, Indian GROUNDSKEEPER looking at him. The groundskeeper is holding a rake. Mr. Blume rises slowly. He whispers:

MR. BLUME

Is this the  
natatorium?

The groundskeeper frowns and shakes his head.

MAX

Do you think  
we can be  
friends  
again, Miss  
Cross? In a  
strictly  
platonic way?

MISS CROSS

Of course, I  
do. Do you  
think you can  
make a go of  
it and settle  
down at  
Grover  
Cleveland?

MAX

Yeah. But I  
need a tutor.

MISS CROSS

I'll be your  
tutor.

MAX

(looking  
into  
her  
eyes)

You will?

Miss Cross smiles and nods.

MAX

Thank you.

(pause)

What are you  
doing  
tomorrow?

CUT TO:

Mr. Blume sitting at the desk in his  
office. Max yells at him over the  
speakerphone:

MAX

She's taking  
me to a field  
trip!

MR. BLUME

(hesitates)

Great! You  
need anybody  
to chaperone?

MAX

You'd take  
time out of  
your business  
to do that?

MR. BLUME

Business  
schmizness.

OCTOBER MONTAGE:

Max and Miss Cross ride in the  
backseat of a van full of first  
graders. Max is telling a story and  
everyone is laughing. Mr. Blume is up  
front quietly driving the van. One of  
the first graders sits in the  
passenger seat staring at him. They  
go through the front gates of the  
zoo.

Miss Cross stands at the front of her  
classroom drawing a complicated  
geometric proof on the chalkboard.  
Max sits alone across from her

nodding earnestly and taking notes.

Max and Miss Cross play doubles against Mr. Blume and Dirk on the court in the Blume's backyard. Max coaches Miss Cross on her backhand. Mr. Blume watches her from across the net. Mrs. Blume watches all of them from an upstairs window.

The Grover Cleveland Science Fair. Max sits proudly in front of his project. It is a paper mache tidal wave looming over a little coastal village with screaming peasants.

Margaret Yang is across the aisle being photographed with a trophy for Best of Show. Her project is called Light, Color, Sound and Magnetism. She is staring at Max, but he doesn't notice her.

Mrs. Whitney hands Max a geometry test. It has a C+ on it. Max looks quickly to Mrs. Whitney, surprised. She smiles and shakes his hand.

A huge banner for the Grover Cleveland Owls is stretched across the endzone of the football field. Max, dressed in a shiny blue and grey jumpsuit, bursts through the banner and onto the field doing cartwheels and flips. The football teams scrambles out behind him.

Max points out to different parts of the crows and yells football cheers. Dirk is sitting in between Mr. Blume and Miss Cross in the stands. Mr. Blume stares at Miss Cross. Miss Cross looks back and Mr. Blume and smiles. Dirk says significantly:

DIRK

Where's Mrs.  
Blume  
tonight, Mr.  
Blume?

And your sons Ronny and Donny?



MR. BLUME

I haven't the  
slightest  
idea, Dirk.

INT. GROVER CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL. DAY

Max burst through a doorway followed by a little ENTOURAGE of underclassmen that includes a sophomore named WOODY. Woody has long hair and a Led-Zepplin shirt. He is carrying a clipboard.

They go down the hallway and quickly pass Margaret Yang. She is very nicely dressed in a grey turtleneck.

MARGARET

Hi, Max.

MAX

Hi.

Max keeps walking.

He stops. He turns back to Margaret Yang. He looks her up and down. She is slightly uneasy. Max looks to Woody. Woody shrugs. Max looks back to Margaret.

MAX

What was your  
name again?

MARGARET

Margaret  
Yang.

MAX

Are you free  
seventh  
period?

MARGARET

Well, I'm  
supposed to  
have guitar  
lessons.

MAX

(pause)

Classical?

MARGARET

Rock.

MAX

You can get  
out of it.

(to  
Woody)

put Margaret  
down for 3:30  
in the  
auditorium,  
Woody.

Max turns away and walks briskly down the hall with his entourage. He calls back to Margaret:

MAX

And bring a  
headshot.

EXT. MISS CROSS' HOUSE. DAY

A nice two story house with a wide lawn and lots of trees. Mr. Blume knocks on the front door and waits nervously. He looks around the yard with his hands in his pockets.

The door opens. Miss Cross is holding a plate of sliced carrots. She looks at Mr. Blume curiously and smiles.

MISS CROSS

Hi, Herman.

MR. BLUME

How are you,  
Rosemary?

MISS CROSS

Fine, thanks.  
I just got  
home and I'm  
having a  
little snack.

MR. BLUME

Having some  
carrots.

Miss Cross nods. Mr. Blume looks up at the house.

MR. BLUME

Nice house.

MISS CROSS

Yeah, This  
isn't mine.  
I'm' just  
kind of  
housesitting.

(pause)

Were you in  
the  
neighborhood?

Mr. Blume nods. There is an awkward silence.

MR. BLUME

Didn't Max  
have anything  
planned for  
us today? A  
trip to the  
museum or  
something?

MISS CROSS

Did he? I  
thought he  
was  
rehearsing  
this evening.

MR. BLUME

Oh. That's  
right. His  
new play.  
He's going to  
be in this  
one, isn't  
he?

Miss Cross nods. Mr. Blume shakes his head.

MR. BLUME

He's really  
making a go  
of it over at

Grover  
Cleveland.

MISS CROSS

I think he's  
on track.  
It's nice,  
isn't it?

Mr. Blume nods. Silence.

MISS CROSS

You want a  
carrot?

MR. BLUME

Yeah. I'll  
have one of  
those.

Mr. Blume takes one of the carrots  
and has a bite of it. Miss Cross  
watches him chewing. She smiles  
slightly.

MR. BLUME

Well. Max had  
said  
something  
about us all  
going to the  
horseraces,  
so I'm sure  
I'll see you  
soon.

Miss Cross nods. Mr. Blume takes  
another bite of his carrot and throws  
the rest of it into the yard. Miss  
Cross laughs. Mr. Blume smiles and  
shrugs. He starts to go.

MISS CROSS

Or we could  
go for a  
walk, if you  
want.

Mr. Blume stops and turns around  
quickly.

MR. BLUME

Sure.

MISS CROSS

It's nice  
out, don't  
you think?

Kind of brisk.

Mr. Blume nods.

MISS CROSS

Let me get a  
sweater. I'll  
be right  
back.

She goes inside. Mr. Blume stands alone on the doorstep. He rubs his hands together to warm-up.

INT. MUSEUM. DAY

A class of Rushmore FOURTH GRADERS file past a big painting of a ship caught in a storm and disappear into the next room. One of them immediately comes back and looks around the corner. It is Dirk. He has seen something:

Miss Cross and Mr. Blume are sitting on a bench in front of a Rembrandt. They are holding hands.

Dirk narrows his eyes.

EXT. RUSHMORE. DAY

Mr. Blume is parked at the curb, staring off into space. Ronny and Donny jump into the car and slam the doors.

RONNY

Let's go.

Mr. Blume automatically puts the car in gear. He slams on the brakes. Dirk is standing in front of the car, blocking them. He stares at Mr. Blume. Mr. Blume rolls down his window.

MR. BLUME

Dirk?

Dirk does not budge. Mr. Blume gets out of the car and leaves it idling. He closes the door.

MR. BLUME

Dirk? What's wrong?

DIRK

I know about you and the teacher.

Silence. Mr. Blume looks very worried.

MR. BLUME

Does Max know?

DIRK

No. And I don't want him to know. I just want it to stop. Right now.

They stare at each other.

DIRK

You're a married man, Blume. And you're supposed to be his friend.

MR. BLUME

Look, Dirk. I am his friend  
-

DIRK

Yeah. And with friends like you, who needs friends?

Dirk turns and walks off. Mr. Blume looks puzzled.

MR. BLUME

Jesus Christ.

Mr. Blume sighs. He turns around and tries to open the car door. Ronny and Donny have locked him out of the car. He can see them inside laughing. He says fiercely:

MR. BLUME

Unlock it!

CUT TO:

Dirk walking across the lawn with a hard look on his face. He walks past Magnus Buchan. Magnus is throwing Chinese throwing stars at a tree trunk.

MAGNUS

Little  
Calloway

Dirk stops and looks to Magnus.

MAGNUS

You're  
standing up  
for the wrong  
bloke.  
Fischer ain't  
your mate.

DIRK

(angry)

What are you  
talking  
about,  
Buchan?

MAGNUS

(shrugs)

He thinks  
your mum's  
good for a  
bonk. That's  
why he picked  
you as his

chapel  
partner.

Dirk looks deeply wounded. But he  
doesn't want to believe it:

DIRK

Who sold you  
that crock?

MAGNUS

He told me  
himself. He  
says she gave  
him a hand  
job in the  
backseat of  
her bloody  
Jaguar.

DIRK

Max would  
never say  
that.

MAGNUS

(smiles)

Yeah. You're  
probably  
right. After  
all, the son  
of a brain  
doctor  
doesn't need  
to impress  
anybody.

Buchan laughs wickedly and fires off  
another throwing star.

INT. GROVE CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL. NIGHT

The school auditorium . Max is  
onstage dressed as a South Central  
lowrider called Little Juan. He is  
opposite a senior named 40 OUNCE and  
Margaret Yang, who plays Blue Eyes.  
While they are rehearsing the scene a  
MESSENGER comes in with an envelope  
for Max.

LITTLE JUAN



The killing  
has got to  
stop, esse.  
It's getting  
too loco. No  
more gats.

40 OUNCE

Nigger, you're the crazy one.  
Motherfuckers be wanting to kill you.  
Are you talking about getting rid of  
your gun?

LITTLE JUAN

It's time,  
homey.

BLUE EYES

Kiss me, Little Juan.

MAX

(suddenly  
out  
of  
character)

Then he  
kisses her  
and we're  
out. OK.

(pointing  
to  
the  
messenger)

Is that for  
me?

The messenger gives Max the envelope.  
Max opens it.

INSERT LETTER:

Written neatly in blue crayon on  
paper torn from a spiral notebook.  
Dirk reads in VOICEOVER dripping with  
sarcasm.

Dear Max,

I'm sorry to say that I have secretly  
found out that Mr. Blume is having an  
affair with Miss Cross. My first

suspicious came when I saw them frenching at the museum, and then I knew for sure when they went skinny dipping in Mr. Blume's swimming pool, giving each other hand jobs while you were taking a nap on the front porch. Why am I telling you this now? Because you're such a good friend. Take care, pal.

Fondly,

Dirk Calloway

EXT. MISS CROSS' HOUSE. NIGHT

Mr. Blume puts on his jacket as he walks down the front path from Miss Cross' house. He gets in his Bentley and starts the engine. He looks in the rearview mirror and sees the glowing red tip of a cigarette. He wheels around fast.

Max is sitting in the backseat smoking a cigarette.

BLUME

Max!

MAX

How was she,  
Herman?

BLUME

Jesus Christ!

MAX

Was she good?  
I bet she  
was. Although  
I wouldn't  
know cause I  
never screwed  
her.

Blume flicks on the lights. Max has tears all over his face.

MAX

(with  
bitter  
contempt)

Going skinny-  
dipping while  
I took a nap.  
Are you  
comfortable,  
Max? I'll  
just be out  
nude getting  
hand jobs  
from the  
woman you  
love.

MR. BLUME

(frowns)

We never went  
skipping  
dipping.

MAX

Sure, you  
didn't. And  
next you're  
going to tell  
me you didn't  
just walk out  
of her house  
at two  
o'clock in  
the morning.

MR. BLUME

(pause)

I'm in love  
with her.

MAX

Well, I was  
in love with  
her first.  
And all that  
crap about, I  
don't think  
she's that  
great, I  
don't think  
she's right  
for you, Max.  
That was all  
bullshit,  
wasn't it?

Silence.

MAX

Do you think  
she's in love  
with you?

MR. BLUME

I don't know.

MAX

Well, I  
guarantee you  
she's not.

And she never will be.

MR. BLUME

Look, Max -

MAX

I saved  
Latin!

Max glares at Mr. Blume. He shakes  
his head.

MAX

What'd you  
ever do?

INT. CLASSROOM. DAY

Miss Cross' class. A little boy named  
BENJAMIN reads his story in front of  
the class. Miss Cross sits in a chair  
at the back. Max appears in the  
doorway.

BENJAMIN

On the planet  
I'm from the  
sun only  
comes out  
once a year.  
That is -

Max coughs loudly. Miss Cross turns  
around. Max motions to her. She holds  
up her index finger for him to wait.

BENJAMIN

That is why

my skin is  
the color of  
a cloud, said  
the old -

MAX

(loudly)

I just came  
by to thank  
you for  
wrecking my  
life.

Max slams the door.

Max stands alone smoking a cigarette  
in front of a pile of leaves. A LAWN  
CREW is raking in the background.

Max strikes a match, throws it on the  
leaves, and watches sadly as the  
leaves burn and smoke rises black  
into the crisp autumn air. He takes  
off his Rushmore blazer and throws it  
on the fire. He looks up at the sky  
and says quietly:

MAX

Sic transit  
gloria, Mr.  
Blume.

Sic transit gloria.

EXT. PARK. DAY

A cold day. Dry leaves fall from the  
trees in the park.

Mr. Blume comes down the path to Max  
sitting alone on a bench. Max is  
dressed in blue jeans, a plaid shirt,  
a ski cap, and huge down parka. Mrs.  
Blume is wearing a topcoat and  
gloves. Max stands up to shake hands  
with her.

MAX

Thank you for  
meeting me.

MRS. BLUME

(coldly)

You're  
welcome.

MAX

Would you  
like a  
sandwich?

Silence. Mrs. Blume looks around the  
park.

MRS. BLUME

All right.

She sits down. Max takes two  
sandwiches out of his backpack.

MAX

I have tuna  
fish and I  
have peanut  
butter and  
jelly. I'm  
sorry it's  
not something  
more exotic.

MRS. BLUME

I'll take the  
tuna fish.

Max gives her the tuna fish sandwich.

MAX

Milk or apple  
juice?

Max holds out the two drinks. Mrs.  
Blume just stares at him.

MAX

You want me  
to cut to the  
chase?

Silence. Max puts down his sandwich  
and gathers his thoughts.

MAX

OK. As you  
know, Mr.  
Blume and I  
used to be

friends.

MRS. BLUME

I have no  
idea what the  
relationship  
is between  
you and  
Herman.  
Honestly, I  
find it very  
bizarre.

MAX

(taken  
aback)

What do you  
mean to  
imply?

MRS. BLUME

I'm not  
implying  
anything. You  
make a very  
strange  
couple. It's  
too bad  
Herman  
doesn't have  
that kind of  
affection for  
his own  
children.

MAX

Well, I'm  
sure he does.

MRS. BLUME

No, he  
doesn't.

MAX

I know you  
don't really  
mean that.

MRS. BLUME

(angry)

Of course, I  
do.

MAX

From his  
perspective  
it's -

MRS. BLUME

Why did you  
call me?

MAX

That's what  
I'm trying to  
tell you.

MRS. BLUME

(icily)

Please. Get  
to the point.

MAX

Gladly. Your  
husband's  
fucking a  
schoolteacher,  
pardon my  
French. I  
thought you  
should know.

Silence.

MRS. BLUME

Why are you  
telling me  
this? Are you  
trying to  
hurt Mr.  
Blume? Or are  
you trying to  
hurt me?

MAX

I have no  
reason to  
want to hurt  
you.

MRS. BLUME

Then you're  
trying to  
hurt Herman.



MAX

That's  
correct.

INT. THE BILBY-FLICKENGER HOTEL. NIGHT

The vast lobby of the Bilby-  
Flickenger. Mr. Blume is leaning  
against the counter at the front  
desk. His luggage fills up two carts  
behind him. A faint smile plays  
across his lips as he stares off into  
space. The CONCIERGE is checking him  
in.

CONCIERGE

And how long  
will you be  
staying with  
us, Mr.  
Blume?

MR. BLUME

Indefinitely.  
I'm getting a  
divorce.

CONCIERGE

(typing  
away)  
Very good,  
sir.

Mr. Blume yells to the BELLMAN.

MR. BLUME

Yo!

The bellman looks up. Mr. Blume  
waves. The bellman waves back. The  
concierge gives Mr. Blume his room  
key.

CONCIERGE

Here you are  
Mr. Blume.  
Charles will  
show you to  
your room.

MR. BLUME

Wonderful.  
Where's the

pool, by the way? I might want to take a dip before dinner.

CONCIERGE

It's on the roof, sir.

MR. BLUME

Terrific!

Mr. Blume gets on the elevator with the bellman. The bellman looks at him and smiles.

BELLMAN

You certainly seem happy today, sir.

MR. BLUME

You bet your little ass I am, shorty. I lost my family. But I gained a woman I love.

BELLMAN

Not a bad tradeoff.

INT. HOTEL ROOM. DAY

The living room of Mr. Blume's suite. Mr. Blume is dressed in a bathrobe with the Bilbly-Flickenger stitched on the pocket. He sits at his table having breakfast and reading the newspaper. There is a little basket in front of him with a jar of hone in it. A note attached to the jar says, "Enjoy your stay."

A little bug flies around Mr. Blume's head. He swats it away and keeps reading.

Two more bugs come buzzing around him. Mr. Blume looks up and frowns.

They're bees. Mr. Blume slaps at his neck and jumps to his feet as he gets stung.

MR. BLUME

Shit!

Bees are circling all over the room. Mr. Blume looks around frantically. He sees something at the bottom of the front door. It is a little plastic tube with bees crawling out of it and taking off.

INT. BASEMENT. DAY

Max comes out of the freight elevator wearing a red room service jacket with the Bilby-Flickenger stitched on the pocket. He has a wooden box with Rushmore Beekeepers stenciled on it. Max throws the jacket in a laundry cart and goes out the back door.

EXT. GROVER CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL. DAY

Mr. Blume gets out of his car in the driveway at Grover Cleveland. He opens the trunk and takes out a set of steel cable cutters. He goes over to the bike racks and cuts the lock off Max's ten-speed.

Mr. Blume lays the bicycle on the ground in front of his car and runs over it. Then he throws the car in reverse and goes over it again. He picks up the destroyed bicycle and takes it back to the bike racks and wraps the lock back around it.

The small Indian groundskeeper we saw earlier on the roof is driving by in a Volkswagen Beetle. He frowns at Mr. Blume. Mr. Blume hurries back to his car.

EXT. BLUME INTERNATIONAL CONCRETE. DAY

The front gates of the concrete plant. Max rides up on an old grandmothers' bicycle with fenders and a handlebar basket. He's got a

black duffel bag strapped to his back.

Max waves to the SECURITY GUARD. The guard waves back:

Max rides onto the lot and pulls over next to Mr. Blume's Bentley. He leans his bike against the car door. He unzips his duffel bag and slides underneath the car.

EXT. RUSHMORE. DAY

Mr. Blume pulls into the driveway to pick-up the twins from school. There is a lot of traffic and kids are running around everywhere. Mr. Blume taps the brakes. Nothing happens. He flies toward the back of a parked station wagon.

He jerks the steering wheel and bounces up onto the sidewalk. The car pops through a wooden fence and rolls across the grass into the quadrangle.

The Indian groundskeeper is raking leaves as the car goes past him. He watches as it crunches over some bushes and scrapes against a stone wall. It rolls to a stop in the middle of the quad.

Mr. Blume gets out of the car and looks at the damage. He looks over at the white-haired Indian groundskeeper.

The groundskeeper goes back to raking.

EXT. PARKING LOT. DAY

Kids watch from classrooms up and down the hall as Max is escorted away in handcuffs by the POLICE. Max has a hardened expression on his face.

INT. POLICE STATION. DAY

The county lock-up. Mr. Fischer watches through bulletproof glass as

Max walks down a long, lonely corridor.

The door buzzes open. Max comes into the waiting room.

MAX

Thanks for  
bailing me  
out, Dad. Can  
you drop me  
off at  
Rushmore? I  
got to go  
settle a  
score.

MR. FISCHER

(hesitates)

You think  
that's wise,  
Max?

MAX

(angry)

Dad. Please.  
Stay out of  
it.

EXT. RUSHMORE. DAY

Max walks into the quadrangle with cold expression on his face. It is Halloween and there is a jack-o-lantern on the steps. Lots of kids are dressed in costumes.

Suddenly, Max is being pelted with rocks. He looks around frantically and sees Dirk and a longhaired kid named TOMMY STALLINGS as they set upon him.

Dirk is dressed as a sorcerer. Tommy has on a karate outfit with a black belt. Max runs for cover behind some bushes.

MAX

What are you  
doing? Are  
you crazy?

DIRK

You're  
trespassing!  
This is  
private  
property!

More rocks sail past Max. A pinecone hits him on the head.

MAX

Wait a  
minute! Stop!

Max raises his hands in the air. Dirk motions for Tommy to hold his fire. Max slowly stands up.

MAX

Let's have a  
truce for a  
second. I  
want to talk.

They meet out in the open. Tommy follows with a rock in each hand. Silence.

MAX

What's this  
all about?

Dirk stares at Max for along minute.

DIRK

Did you say  
my mother  
gave you a  
hand job?

MAX

(shocked)

What?

DIRK

(steely)

Did you say  
it?

MAX

Who told you  
that goddamn  
lie?

Silence.

MAX

Never mind. I know who said it. And I'm going to stick a knife in his heart. And I'm going to send him back to Ireland in a bodybag.

TOMMY

He's from Scotland.

MAX

Well, tell that stupid mick he just made my list of things to do today. I'm going to pop a cap in his ass.

INT. TEAROOM. DAY

A little salon with Persian rugs. There is a fire in the fireplace and a harpsichord plays softly on the radio. Dr. Guggenheim is sitting at a little table having tea with Max.

Dr. Guggenheim has several bottles of prescription medicine in front of him and a blanket wrapped around him like a shawl. He stares at Max stonily. There is a manila envelope on the table in between them.

MAX

Did you receive the package?

Dr. Guggenheim motions to the envelope. Max nods.

MAX

Good. I just  
wanted to  
inform you  
about what's  
going on.

Dr. Guggenheim stares at Max with  
contempt.

DR. GUGGENHEIM

I never took  
you for an  
informer,  
Max.

MAX

(frowns)

What's that  
suppose to  
mean?

Silence. Max reaches out to take the  
envelope. Dr. Guggenheim slams his  
hand on it and leans across the table  
at Max.

DR. GUGGENHEIM

(fiercely)

She resigned  
this morning.

Before I even got your little  
snapshots. So your latest attempt at  
sabotage has backfired.

MAX

(pause)

But she's one  
of the best  
teachers  
you've got.

(yelling)

How could you  
let her  
resign?

DR. GUGGENHEIM

Why are you  
trying to get  
her fired?



MAX

You stupid  
old fool! I'm  
trying to win  
her back!

Dr. Guggenheim starts coughing and turning red. He knocks the envelope off the table and the pictures spill out all over the floor.

INSERT PHOTOGRAPHS ON THE FLOOR:

They're of Mr. Blume and Miss Cross kissing in the window of a Chinese restaurant.

INT. MISS CROSS' CLASSROOM. DAY

A crew of MOVERS is rolling one of Miss Cross' aquarium out of the classroom on a dolly as Max comes to the door. Miss Cross is on the other side of the classroom taking down a map from the wall. Her books and papers are stacked in boxes.

Max watches her in silence for a minute before saying:

MAX

Miss Cross?

She turns around to look at Max.  
Silence.

MISS CROSS

Hi, Max.

MAX

You need any  
help?

MISS CROSS

No. I have  
it.

She pricks her finger and holds it to her mouth.

MISS CROSS

Dammit.

Max starts to go in the room to help her.

MAX

Here. Let me see.

MISS CROSS

No. Please, don't come in here. Look. I'm sorry I hurt you. I'm sorry I love your friend instead of you. But just. Please, Max.

Miss Cross has tears in her eyes. Max goes slowly toward her.

MAX

You honestly believe you love Blume instead of me?

MISS CROSS

Yes.

MAX

You'll forgive me if I won't take your word for that.

MISS CROSS

Stop. If you don't stop with that ping-pong talk, I'm going to lose it. Do you understand me?

Max takes Miss Cross' hand and kisses

it. She pulls her and away. Max tries to embrace her. They struggle and Miss Cross overpowers Max. She holds his arms behind his back.

MAX

Let me go!

Max struggles some more. Miss Cross pushes him hard across the room. Max smashes into some chairs and knocks over a desk. He yells at her:

MAX

I got kicked  
out because  
of you!

MISS CROSS

You got  
kicked out  
because -

MAX

Rushmore was  
my life. Now  
you are!

MISS CROSS

That's  
bullshit!

Silence.

MISS CROSS

What do you  
really think  
is going to  
happen  
between us?  
You think  
we're going  
to have sex?

Max looks shocked.

MAX

That's kind  
of a cheap  
way to put  
it, don't you  
think?

MISS CROSS

(pause)

Not if you've  
never fucked  
before, it  
isn't.

MAX

(stunned)

Oh, my God.

MISS CROSS

How would you  
put it to  
your friends?  
Do you want  
to finger me?  
Or maybe I  
could give  
you a hand  
job in the  
back of a  
Jaguar. Would  
that put an  
end to all of  
this?

Miss Cross moves towards Max with her hand outstretched. Max retreats backwards, banging into desks and chairs. Miss Cross stops.

MISS CROSS

Please. Get  
out of my  
room.

Max walks out of the room and stands in the doorway.

Miss Cross turns away and goes back to taking down her maps from the wall. Max watches her for a minute.

Max leaves.

EXT. QUADRANLGE. DAY

Max comes out the door of the lower school in a daze. Magnus Buchan is sitting on a bench eating some candy. He is wearing the uniform of the

Green Beret. He sees Max and laughs.

MAGNUS

Fischer, ya  
spotty  
fucker!

MAX

Hello,  
Magnus.

MAGNUS

Got any hand  
jobs lately?

MAX

No, I  
haven't.

Dirk appears with some of his  
friends.

MAGNUS

Hey, Dirk!  
Look who's  
here. Your  
stepfather!  
Waitin' for  
your mum so  
he can get a  
piece.

Dirk is very embarrassed. He frowns  
and looks at the ground. Max stares  
at Magnus with bitter contempt.

MAX

Your mind is  
as warped as  
your ear,  
Buchan.

MAGNUS

(standing  
up)

Don't get  
nasty,  
brother.

Max breaks into a sprint straight at  
Magnus.

Magnus draws back and nails Max in

the cheek. Max goes down but gets right back up. They throw a flurry of punches at each other's faces. Some kids come running over to watch.

Max tackles Magnus around the legs. Magnus throws a hard punch straight down at the top of Max's head. Max goes limp and collapses to the ground.

CUT TO:

Max's eyes opening. He is lying his back in a pile of leaves. A bunch of little kids have circled around him.

Max's nose bleeds profusely. One of his eyes is swollen shut. He's got several smaller cuts all over his face. His shirt is torn more or less in half. He looks up at Dirk standing over him. He lifts up his hand to Dirk.

MAX

We got him,  
Dirk. We got  
him.

But Dirk does not take Max's hand. He turns away.

EXT. CEMENTARY. DAY

Mr. Blume spots Max sitting Indian-style at the foot of his mother's grave on a cold grey day. The simple epitaph reads: Eloise Fischer, beloved wife of Bert and mother of Max. Written below it says: the paths of glory lead but to the grave. Mr. Blume approaches warily.

MR. BLUME

Max?

Max looks up. There is quite a sadness about him and his voice has lost all feeling of possibility.

MAX

Hi, Mr.

Blume.

Mr. Blume stands there in silence.

MR. BLUME

You wanted to  
meet?

MAX

When?

MR. BLUME

Right now.  
You said you  
wanted to  
meet to put  
an end to  
this  
nonsense.

MAX

Oh. Yeah. I  
was going to  
try and have  
that oak tree  
fall on you.

Max jerks his thumb over his  
shoulder. Mr. Blume looks at a  
massive oak tree hanging precariously  
by the roots.

MR. BLUME

That big one?  
That would  
have really  
pancaked me.

(pause)

What stopped  
you?

MAX

(shrugs)

What's the  
use? She  
loves you.

Max gets up. They look at each other  
in silence.

MAX

So long Mr.  
Blume.

Max starts to walk away. Mr. Blume calls after him.

MR. BLUME

She's my  
Rushmore,  
Max.

MAX

(without  
stopping)

Yeah, I know.  
She was mine,  
too.

Max leaves the cemetery. Mr. Blume stands alone. He goes over to the tree and taps it. It comes crashing down.

TITLE:

November.

THANKSGIVING MONTAGE:

Max walks down the street with his lunch in a brown paper bag. He goes into the barbershop. He nods hello to his father and puts on a white barber's jacket. He has a blank, hollow expression on his face.

Max gives an old man a haircut while the old man reads the paper. Max gives another old man a shave. Man combs another old man's hair and holds up a mirror so he can see the back.

Dirk rides past the barbershop on his little French three-speed. He circles back and looks at Max take the trash out to the dumpster. Max doesn't see him. Dirk pedals away.

Margaret knocks on the front door of the Fischers' house. Mr. Fischer opens the door. He and Margaret talk for a minute. Mr. Fischer shakes his sadly. Margaret nods.



Mr. Fischer closes the door as Margaret walks out to the sidewalk. She looks back at the house. Max is sitting on the window, staring off into space. Margaret hesitates. She goes across the yard to the window.

She taps on the glass. Max looks out to her. She waves to him. Max closes the curtains.

Margaret turns away sadly and walks off down the sidewalk.

Max and Mr. Fischer sit in front of the TV having TV Thanksgiving dinners as they watch a football game. Mr. Fischer looks at Max. Max stares at the television set.

TITLE:

December.

INT. BARBERSHOP. EVENING

There is a wreath on the door and some blinking lights are strung-up. The last customer of the day comes out and walks away through the snow. Mr. Fischer is putting on his sweater while Max washes some combs and scissors in the sink.

MR. FISCHER

It's been  
nice having  
your company  
here at the  
shop, Max.

Max nods.

MR. FISCHER

Have you put  
anymore  
thought into  
giving school  
another shot?

Max shakes his head. Mr. Fischer puts on a hunting cap with earflaps and a down parka. He zips it up. Pause.

MR. FISCHER

Max, I like  
being a  
barber. I'm  
good at it  
and I enjoy  
it. But I  
always  
thought you'd  
try a  
different  
line of work.

MAX

Like what?

MR. FISCHER

I don't know.  
You talked  
about being a  
diplomat. Or  
a senator.

MAX

Pipe dreams  
Dad. Nothing  
but pipe  
dreams. I'm a  
barber's son.

Max turns on the radio and goes back into washing the combs and scissors. Mr. Fischer sighs. He puts on his gloves. He goes out the door.

Max flips the sign on the door from open to closed. He takes off his barber's jacket and hangs it on the coatrack. He goes into the back room.

He comes back into the room carrying a broom. He stops.

Dirk is sitting in one of the barber's chairs across the room. Silence. Max starts sweeping the floor.

MAX

(not  
looking  
at

him)  
Hello, Dirk.

DIRK

Hi, Max.

MAX

What can I do  
for you?

DIRK

I thought I  
might get a  
haircut.

MAX

We're closed.

Dirk nods. Max keeps sweeping.

DIRK

Well, I just  
wanted to  
tell you I'm  
sorry I threw  
rocks at you  
the other  
day.

(getting  
up)

But I guess  
I'll go now.

Dirk sets a little gift-wrapped  
present on the counter.

DIRK

Merry  
Christmas.

MAX

Max stops  
sweeping and  
looks over at  
Dirk.

MAX

What in the  
hell is that?

Dirk shrugs. Max goes over to the  
counter and picks up the present. He  
unwraps it. It is a Swiss Army Knife

with an inscription on it.

INSERT SWISS ARMY KNIFE:

Max Fischer

Rushmore Yankee

1985-1997

Max looks at the knife for a minute.  
He says wearily:

MAX

OK. Sit down.

Dirk sits back down in the barber's chair. Max puts his white jacket back on and starts giving Dirk a haircut. There is just a sound of scissors snipping for a minute.

DIRK

Have you  
heard the  
news?

MAX

I doubt it. I  
don't really  
follow the  
news anymore.

DIRK

Dr.  
Guggenheim  
had a stroke.

MAX

I'll send him  
a box of  
candy.

DIRK

Maybe you  
ought to go  
visit him.

Max stops snipping. Pause.

MAX

No, thanks.

Max starts snipping again.

EXT. BARBERSHOP. EVENING

Dirk comes out of the barbershop in a terrible haircut. He waves to Max and rides off in his three-speed.

INT. BARBERSHOP. EVENING

Max waves back to Dirk. He reaches into the cooler and takes out a bottle of Schlitz. He pops it open with the bottle opener on the Swiss Army Knife. He drinks a sip and looks out into the lightly falling snow. He says quietly to himself:

MAX

I always  
thought I'd  
be the one to  
give him a  
stroke.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. NIGHT

Dr. Guggenheim is in his hospital bed with his eyes half-shut and a bunch of plastic tubes sticking out of him. Mrs. Guggenheim sits in a chair at the foot of the bed reading a biography on Churchill. She looks exhausted.

Max appears in the open doorway. He has a bouquet of violets in his hand. He knocks.

MAX

Mrs.  
Guggenheim?

Mrs. Guggenheim looks up. Her face brightens and she goes to greet Max.

MRS. GUGGENHEIM

Hello, Max.  
How are you?

MAX

(desolate)

Fine, thanks.

Max starts to shake hands, but Mrs. Guggenheim hugs him and kisses him on the cheek. Max is caught a little offguard by this. There is lipstick on his cheek.

MRS. GUGGENHEIM

These are  
glorious. Let  
me put them  
in some  
water. Sit  
down.

She takes the flowers and points to a chair beside the bed. Max sits down and stares at Dr. Guggenheim while Mrs. Guggenheim puts the violets in a vase.

MAX

Should I say  
hello to Dr.  
Guggenheim?  
Or can he not  
hear  
anything?

MRS. GUGGENHEIM

Oh, no. He  
can hear you.

MAX

OK.

(sadly)

Hello, old  
timer. It's  
Max Fischer.  
I was just  
thing about  
you the other  
day. And  
Rushmore. And  
I -

Dr. Guggenheim's eyes suddenly open. Max is taken aback. Dr. Guggenheim looks at Max suspiciously and whispers:

DR. GUGGENHEIM

What do you

want?

Mrs. Guggenheim looks up quickly. Max hesitates.

MAX

I just came  
to pay my  
respects.

DR. GUGGENHEIM

(frowns)

No, you  
didn't. You  
don't respect  
anybody.

Dr. Guggenheim tries to spit at Max,  
but his mouth is too dry. Mrs.  
Guggenheim comes over to him.

MRS. GUGGENHEIM

Nelson?

Dr. Guggenheim mutters deliriously.

DR. GUGGENHEIM

Dammit.  
Goddammit.

Mrs. Guggenheim takes Dr.  
Guggenheim's hand and holds it. He  
calms down. His eyes close and he  
relaxes. Silence.

Mrs. Guggenheim looks to Max.

MRS. GUGGENHEIM

That's the  
first thing  
he's said in  
ten days.

MAX

You think he  
recognized  
me?

MRS. GUGGENHEIM

I'm not sure.

CUT TO:

Dirk hidden in the bushes across the street from the hospital. He checks his watch. He raises his binoculars to his eyes and looks on mysteriously as:

Mr. Blume pulls into the parking lot in his Bentley.

INSERT NOTEBOOK:

5:25 Fischer arrives via old woman's bicycle.

5:47 Blume arrives via black Bentley.

INT. ELEVATOR. NIGHT

Max rides down in the elevator with a NURSE and a wheezing OLD WOMAN in a wheelchair. The doors open in the lobby and Max waits while the nurse wheels out the old woman.

Then he sees Mr. Blume in front of him, waiting for the elevator. He has a bouquet of carnations in one hand and a diet Coke in the other. He has a black eye under his sunglasses. He is very disheveled.

MR. BLUME

Hey, amigo.

MAX

You look horrible.

MR. BLUME

You don't look too great yourself. Good to see you.

MAX

You here to see Guggenheim?

MR. BLUME

Yeah. Your



partner told  
me he was  
under the  
weather.

MAX

(frowns)

What partner?

Silence. Mr. Blume shrugs.

MR. BLUME

OK. If you  
want to play  
it that way.  
You getting  
off?

MAX

I'll ride up  
with you.

MR. BLUME

(getting  
on)

Suit  
yourself.

Mr. Blume presses the button for the 14th floor. The doors close and they go up. Mr. Blume takes out the little airline bottle of vodka and pours some into his diet Coke. He swirls it around and drinks a sip.

MAX

Who gave you  
the shiner?

MR. BLUME

Honestly? I  
don't  
actually  
know. It was  
either Ronny  
or Donny. But  
I can't tell  
the  
difference  
anymore.

MAX

Well, he  
really  
clocked you.

MR. BLUME

Yeah? Well,  
kids don't  
like their  
parents to  
get divorced.

MAX

I don't blame  
them.

MR. BLUME

Me, either.

Silence.

MAX

How is she?

MR. BLUME

I wouldn't  
know.

MAX

Why not?

MR. BLUME

Because I  
haven't seen  
her in six  
weeks.

MAX

(frowns)

What  
happened?

Mr. Blume shrugs.

MAX

She left you?

Mr. Blume nods.

MAX

How come? I  
thought she  
loved you.

MR. BLUME

So did I. I  
guess maybe I  
am too old  
for her after  
all.

MAX

(sadly)

Maybe so.  
Maybe so.

MR. BLUME

She's still  
in love with  
the dead guy,  
anyway.

MAX

You mean  
Edward  
Appleby.

MR. BLUME

Oh, yeah.  
She's fucked  
up.

Mr. Blume lights a new cigarette. Max points to Mr. Blume's first cigarette, balanced on the handrail.

MAX

You've  
already got  
one going,  
Mr. Blume.

Mr. Blume picks up his first cigarette and puts it in the opposite corner of his mouth from the second. He smiles at Max through the smoke. They get off to the 14th floor and the doors open.

MR. BLUME

Adios, amigo.

Max waves good-bye. But Mr. Blume does not get off the elevator. He bends over and puts his hands on his knees and takes a series of deep

breaths. The door starts to close. He reaches out and holds them open. Max looks concerned.

MAX

Are you OK?

Mr. Blume looks up at Max. He laughs and shakes his head.

MR. BLUME

I'm kind of  
lonely these  
days.

Mr. Blume sighs. He gets off the elevator. The doors close behind him as Max watches him walk down the hall.

CUT TO DIRK'S BINOCULARS:

Max comes out of the hospital and stands quietly in the cold for a minute. He gets on his mother's old bicycle. He rides off down the street.

EXT. THE FISCHERS' HOUSE. DAY

Max opens the Fischer's garage door. His smashed-up ten-speed hangs from a peg on the wall. He takes it down and carries it out off the garage.

INT. MISS CROSS' HOUSE. NIGHT

Miss Cross is sitting up in her bed reading Treasure Island and listening to the radio. She is wearing pale blue pajamas. There is a knock on her windowpane. She looks up.

She hears someone trying to open the window. She gets up and pulls open the blinds. Max is outside on the roof wearing his parka and ski cap in the falling snow. He waves.

MISS CROSS

Max!

Miss Cross opens the window.

MISS CROSS

What are you  
doing here?

MAX

(dazed)

I don't know.  
Jesus. They  
came at me  
out of no  
where. It was  
-

MISS CROSS

What?

MAX

So sudden. I  
just -

(pause)

I'm sorry.  
Can I use  
your phone? I  
just got hit  
by a car.

Max points down at his destroyed ten-speed in the street under a street lamp. Parts are scattered all around it.

MISS CROSS

Oh, my God.  
Are you OK?

MAX

(disoriented)

What?

Miss Cross notices a little cut over Max's eye. She lifts up the front of Max's ski cap. There is blood all over his forehead. She looks shocked.

MISS CROSS

Come inside.

MAX

(climbing  
in)

Thank you.

Max goes to Miss Cross' bed. He lies down and stares at the ceiling.

Miss Cross goes into the bathroom. She puts on a white bathrobe and gets some cotton balls and hydrogen peroxide out of the medicine cabinet.

Max looks around the room.

MAX

So this is  
where it all  
happens?

MISS CROSS

(from  
the  
bathroom)

All what  
happens?

MAX

I wouldn't  
know.

Miss Cross comes back into the bedroom.

MAX

Why'd you  
dump Blume?

Miss Cross stops. Pause.

MISS CROSS

That's none  
of your  
business.

MAX

I know it's  
not. But I'm  
a little  
confused  
right now. I  
mean. I  
thought you  
dumped me for  
Blume. Then I  
hear -

MISS CROSS

I never  
dumped you  
because we  
were never  
going out.

MAX

But it  
doesn't make  
any sense. I  
-

MISS CROSS

Well, I am  
confused,  
too. But why  
don't we just  
deal with  
getting you -

MAX

Because it  
would help me  
if you would  
talk to me  
for a minute.  
And tell me  
what  
happened.

Silence.

MISS CROSS

OK.

(pause)

Well. A. He's  
a married  
man.

And B. He hates himself.

I mean. He smashed your bicycle,  
didn't he?

MAX

(pause)

My previous  
bicycle. Yes.

MISS CROSS

Well, what  
kind of

person does  
something  
like that?

MAX

I don't know.  
(pause)  
War does  
funny things  
to men.

Silence. Miss Cross sits down in a rocking chair beside the bed. She opens the bottle of hydrogen peroxide.

MAX

He thinks you  
dumped him  
because of  
Edward  
Appleby.

MISS CROSS

What does  
that mean?

MAX

I don't know.  
I mean. You  
live in this  
room.

Max looks around the room. There are trophies and ribbons, a chemistry set, a poster from the Olympics, three large fish tanks, a picture of Jacques Cousteau, and some model planes in dogfights hanging from the ceiling.

MAX

With all his  
stuff. It's  
kind of --

MISS CROSS

I was married  
to him.

MAX

(pause)



I know you  
were.

Silence.

MISS CROSS

Although I  
will say  
Edward has  
more spark  
and character  
and  
imagination  
in one  
fingernail  
than Herman  
Blume has in  
his entire  
body.

MAX

One dead  
fingernail.

Miss Cross fixes Max with a hard  
stare.

MISS CROSS

Right. One  
dead  
fingernail.

Silence.

MAX

How'd he die?

MISS CROSS

He drowned.  
(pause)  
How'd your  
mother die?

MAX

She got  
cancer.

Miss Cross nods. She sighs.

MISS CROSS

Lie still for  
a minute, OK?

MAX

OK.

Miss Cross pushes Max's hair back with her hand. She looks at him for a minute. She touches the blood on his forehead with a cotton ball. She stops.

MISS CROSS

Is this fake  
blood?

MAX

(pause)

Yes, it is.

MISS CROSS

You know, you  
and Herman  
deserve each  
other. You're  
little  
children. Let  
me show you  
to the door.

Max gets up and goes over to the window. He climbs out onto the roof. He looks back to Miss Cross.

MAX

That wasn't a  
very  
satisfying  
conversation.

Miss Cross shrugs. Silence.

MAX

All right.  
Goodbye, Miss  
Cross.

MISS CROSS

Goodbye, Max.

Max disappears into the darkness.

EXT. FROZEN POND. DAY

A few ICE SKATERS race around and do figure-8's on the little frozen pond

at the edge of town. Dirk is sitting on his tackle box, fishing from a hole in the ice. He stomps his feet, and even with his mittens on he has to blow into his hands to keep warm.

Max sits with his bare hands resting on the ice.

MAX

People hate  
me.

DIRK

That's not  
true.

MAX

Guggenheim  
tried to spit  
on me.

Poor old guy couldn't even spit.

And Blume and Cross?

(shakes  
his  
head)

They can't  
stand me.

I ruined their whole relationship.

Dirk looks down at Max's red hands.

DIRK

You should  
put your  
mittens on.

MAX

(absently)

Oh. They're  
already numb.  
I'm surprised  
you don't  
spit on me,  
Dirk.

DIRK

You're my  
friend, Max.

Tear's starts streaming down Max's face. Dirk looks worried.

MAX

I'm sorry  
about what I  
said about  
your mother  
giving me a  
hand job. I  
just --

DIRK

I know, Max.  
Listen. I'm  
sorry I  
didn't take  
your hand  
when Buchan  
kicked your  
ass.

MAX

(pause)

I got a few  
licks in. At  
the very  
least, he'll  
think twice  
about  
spreading  
that kind of  
garbage.

DIRK

You should  
stand up.

MAX

I'm awfully  
comfortable.

Silence. One of the skaters begins to circle around Max and Dirk closer and closer. She suddenly scratches to a halt right in front of them.

The skater is a girl in white skates and grey tights and a short camel's hair coat. She has a scarf over the lower half of her face. She says to Max:

SKATER

Is this your  
handwriting?

She holds out a little piece of paper torn out from a spiral notebook. Max stands up and takes it. There is a note written on it in blue crayon.

INSERT PIECE OF PAPER:

Please come to the frozen pond at 3:30 PM this afternoon. Thank you very much.

Max looks to Dirk. Dirk is putting a new worm on his hook.

MAX

No. But it  
looks  
familiar.

Max gives the piece of paper back to the girl. She lowers her scarf and we see she is Margaret Yang.

MAX

Do you know  
Dirk  
Calloway?

MARGARET

I don't think  
so.

MAX

Dirk, this is  
Margaret  
Yang.

Dirk nods. Margaret waves to him.  
Silence.

MAX

I heard about  
your science  
fair project  
on Action 13  
the other  
day. They  
said the Navy

was going to  
buy it from  
you.

Margaret is polite but cold.

MARGARET

Not anymore.

MAX

Why not?

MARGARET

Because it  
was fake.

MAX

What do you  
mean?

MARGARET

(sighs)

I faked all  
the results.

MAX

Why?

MARGARET

Because it  
didn't work.  
I thought it  
would but it  
didn't.

MAX

(in  
disbelief)

You mean it  
was all  
bullshit?

MARGARET

Not all of  
it. Just the  
parts I  
didn't get  
right.

Max stares at her. It is as if he is  
seeing her for the first time. He  
says quietly:

MAX

That's  
exactly the  
way I would  
have handled  
that  
situation.

MARGARET

Well. It's  
nothing to be  
proud of.

MAX

But it's  
true.

Max is completely hypnotized by her.

MARGARET

You were a  
real jerk to  
me.

MAX

(pause)

I know. I'm  
sorry,  
Margaret.

Silence.

MARGARET

Well. Anyway.  
Nice to see  
you.

MAX

Yeah. Nice to  
see you, too.

Margaret starts skating slowly away  
backwards. Max waves to her. She  
spins and skates off full-speed. Max  
watches her go. Silence.

MAX

You set me  
up.

Dirk nods. Max says wistfully:

MAX

Not bad, not  
bad. The  
child has  
become the  
father of the  
man.

Max looks out across the frozen pond.  
He pulls off his ski cap and feels  
the cold air against his cheeks.  
Snowflakes catch in his eyelashes.

MAX

We might have  
to get some  
hockey  
skates, Dirk.

DIRK

I already got  
you some.

Dirk reaches into his backpack and  
takes out a pair of skates. He hands  
them to Max. Max looks at them for a  
minute. He nods slowly. Something  
begins to change in his face. He says  
with quiet intensity:

MAX

Do me a  
favor, will  
you?

DIRK

Sure. What?

MAX

(pause)

Pack up your  
goddamn  
tackle box.

Dirk smiles. Max grabs Dirk's fig  
pole and starts walking. Dirk calls  
after him:

DIRK

You sure you  
don't want to  
stay here and  
feel sorry



for yourself?

MAX

I'll take a  
rain check.

Dirk grabs his tackle box and follows  
Max briskly off the ice.

EXT. BARBERSHOP. DAY

Mr. Blume stands on the sidewalk in  
front of the barbershop. He stares  
off into the distance. He has his  
hands in his pockets and his hair is  
blowing in the wind.

Mr. Fischer is inside reading the  
sports page.

A cab pulls up and splashes water on  
Mr. Blume, but he does not appear to  
notice. Max gets out of the cab. He  
is dressed in a beautiful green  
velvet suit and bow tie. He smiles.

MAX

Thanks for  
meeting me,  
Mr. Blume.

MR. BLUME

What can I do  
for you?

Max hands Mr. Blume a little white  
cardboard box. Mr. Blume frowns.

MR. BLUME

What's this?

Max shrugs. Mr. Blume starts to open  
the box. Max flinches away like the  
box is going to explode. Mr. Blume  
stops. Max smiles and motions for Mr.  
Blume to go ahead. Mr. Blume opens  
the box. There are two little pins  
inside.

MAX

That's the  
Perfect  
Attendance

awards and  
the  
Punctuality  
Award. I got  
those at  
Rushmore. I  
thought you  
could choose  
which one you  
like more,  
and you could  
wear that one  
and I could  
wear the  
other.

Mr. Blume's face softens. He nods slowly. He studies the pins and says quietly:

MR. BLUME

I'll take  
punctuality.

MAX

OK.

They put their pins in their lapels.

MR. BLUME

Thank you.

Max nods. He smiles.

MAX

Come on.  
Let's go  
inside.

Max motions to the barbershop. Mr. Blume looks confused.

INT. BARBERSHOP. DAY

Mr. Blume follows Max into the barbershop. Mr. Fischer looks up from his newspaper.

MR. FISCHER

Well, looks  
what the cat  
dragged in.

MAX

Sorry, I'm  
late. I want  
you to meet  
somebody.

(looks  
to  
Mr.  
Blume)

Mr. Blume,  
this is my  
father, Bert  
Fischer.

Silence. Mr. Blume nods slowly.

MR. BLUME

Nice to meet  
you, Mr.  
Fischer.

MR. FISCHER

(smiles)

Mr. Fischer's  
my father's  
name. Call me  
Bert.

MR. BLUME

(pause)

OK, Bert.

MR. FISCHER

Max tells me  
you could use  
a haircut.

Mr. Blume hesitates.

MR. FISCHER

Let's have a  
look at you.

Mr. Blume sits down in one of the  
barber's chairs and looks in the  
mirror. Max and Mr. Fischer stand on  
either side of him. Mr. Blume looks  
terrible. He sighs deeply.

MR. BLUME

I don't know,  
Bert.

MR. FISCHER

Don't worry.  
We might have  
to throw in a  
shave, too.  
Max? Why  
don't you get  
Mr. Blume a  
cup of  
coffee?

EXT. BARBERSHOP. DAY

Max and Mr. Blume come out of the barbershop and walk quickly down the sidewalk. Mr. Blume's hair is crisply cut and neatly combed, but his clothes still look very disheveled.

MAX

How much are  
you worth, by  
the way?

MR. BLUME

I don't know.

MAX

Over ten  
million?

MR. BLUME

Yeah. I guess  
so.

MAX

Good, good.

MR. BLUME

Why?

MAX

Cause we're  
going to need  
all of it.

DECEMBER MONTAGE:

Christmas decorations are evident throughout the following scenes.

Max and Mr. Blume watch a Jacques Cousteau film on 16mm in Mr. Blume's

office. Ernie runs the projector.

Max and Mr. Blume visit a marine research facility. Mr. Blume holds up a fish at the edge of a pool. A killer whale jumps out of the water and takes it in its teeth.

Max and Mr. Blume sprint down the street and through the park in warm-up suits. They hurdle bushes and dodge traffic. They run into an empty football stadium and race up the bleachers.

Max's young architect shows Max and Mr. Blume a miniature baseball diamond field. The architect slides over the diamond an inch and puts model of a building labeled The Cousteau-Blume Marine Observatory in its place.

Max and Dirk skate around on the frozen pond during complicated tricks and jumps.

EXT. VACANT LOT. DAY

A large crowd of Rushmore student, parents and faculty has gathered around the vacant lot beside the baseball field. A huge banner says The Cousteau-Blume Marine Observatory. There is a huge bulldozer and a cement truck at the back of the lot.

Max and Mr. Blume shake hands for the yearbook photographer. Mr. Blume is holding a gold shovel with a ribbon around it.

MR. BLUME

She's not  
coming, is  
she?

MAX

(pause)

It doesn't  
look good.

MR. BLUME

Ah, shit,  
man. What the  
hell am I  
doing here?

Mr. Blume throws down his shovel and starts to walk off. Max yells at him:

MAX

Dammit,  
Blume! How  
the hell did  
you ever get  
so rich?  
You're a  
quitter!

Mr. Blume looks at Max in shock.

MR. BLUME

This cost me  
eight million  
dollars!

MAX

(hesitates)

And that's  
all you're  
prepared to  
spend?

Silence.

EXT. THE FISCHER'S HOUSE. DAY

Max carries an old leather typewriter case in the backyard. He sets it down on a picnic table. The case has an inscription on it in gold letters.

INSERT TYPEWRITER CASE:

Bravo, Max! Love, Mom.

Max unzips the case. There is an old portable manual typewriter inside. Max rolls a piece of paper into it and starts typing furiously. He pauses to drink a sip of hot chocolate. He starts typing again.

TITLE:

January.

EXT. WEBSTER SMALLEY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS. DAY

Webster Smalley is Rushmore's sister school. The doors to the lower school burst open and twenty-five first-grade girls in plaid jumpers run yelling onto the playground.

Miss Cross comes out of the building after the girls. She sees Max coming down the hill in his green suit.

MISS CROSS

I like your  
suit.

MAX

Thanks.

MISS CROSS

Is that  
velvet?

Max nods. Miss Cross feels his lapel. It has a Perfect Attendance Award pin in it.

MAX

Sorry you  
couldn't make  
it to our  
little  
groundbreaking  
the other  
day. It's  
kind of a  
shame, since  
he's building  
it for you.

MISS CROSS

Well, you  
know, I never  
asked anybody  
to build me  
an aquarium.  
I'm not sure  
how that  
rumor got  
started.

MAX

Hm. Me,  
neither. You  
think Edward  
Appleby  
would've  
built you  
one?

Miss Cross thinks for a minute. She  
sounds surprised at her on response.

MISS CROSS

Yeah. He  
probably  
would've. If  
he had the  
money.

MAX

(smiles)

That's what I  
thought.  
Blume's got a  
little more  
spark and  
vitality than  
you expected,  
doesn't he?

MISS CROSS

But the  
aquarium was  
your idea.

Max smiles and shrugs his shoulder.

MAX

Well, I gave  
it to my  
friend.

Max turns and starts walking away. He  
looks back over his shoulder and  
says:

MAX

By the way, I  
still haven't  
fucked  
anybody yet.  
But I guess



that's just  
the way it  
goes.

Miss Cross smiles sadly.

INSERT TEACHER' MAILBOXES:

A cabinet of little slots where  
teachers get their mail and memos.  
Someone puts a little envelope into  
the slot marked Rosemary Cross.

INT. WAREHOUSE. DAY

Max stands at the counter in a huge  
construction supply warehouse. A  
SALESMAN says:

SALESMAN

Fifteen  
sticks?

MAX

Yes, please.  
And make the  
order out to  
Ready  
Demolition,  
Tuscon.

Max holds up a driver's license. The  
salesman looks at it and writes  
something on a clipboard. Max walks  
out of the warehouse with several  
large boxes over his shoulder. The  
boxes say DYNAMITE on them in large  
red letters.

EXT. STREET. DAY

Dirk comes out of a hiding place in  
the bushes as Max walks over with the  
dynamite. Dirk is holding a pellet  
gun.

MAX

Make sure  
these don't  
get wet.

Max hands Dirk the boxes and takes  
the pellet gun.

MAX

I'll see you  
at 3:15.

Max starts walking away down the  
sidewalk.

DIRK

Where you  
going?

MAX

(without  
stopping)

Rushmore. I got one last piece of  
unfinished business I got to attend  
to.

EXT. RUSHMORE. DAY

Max pumps his pellet gun shot about  
twenty times. He raises the stock to  
his shoulder as Magnus Buchan walks  
onto the quadrangle. He draws a bead  
on him and follows him in his sight  
as he passes by. He fires.

Magnus screams and grabs his only  
good ear. He spins around and sees  
Max cocking a pellet gun.

MAGNUS

Fischer! Ya  
fuck!

MAX

Hello,  
Magnus. I'd  
have shot you  
in the other  
ear, but it  
got blown off  
a long time  
ago.

Magnus starts to come at Max. Max  
points his weapon at him.

MAX

Not so fast.

Magnus stops.

MAX

I owed you  
that one. Now  
we're even.

MAGNUS

(smiles  
crookedly)  
Not for long,  
kemosabe.

MAX

(shrugs)  
We'll see.

Silence. Max holds Magnus at  
gunpoint.

MAX

I got a  
proposition  
for you.

MAGNUS

Shove it up  
your mother's  
arse, ya  
little prick.

MAX

I've got to  
hand it to  
you, Magnus.  
You've got a  
way with  
words. You  
want to be in  
a play?

MAGNUS

(puzzled)  
Don't piss  
with me,  
Fischer.

MAX

I'm not  
pissing with  
you.  
(reaching

in  
his  
backpack)  
I brought you  
a script.

Max hands Magnus a script with a red cover.

MAGNUS

What's all  
this shite?

MAX

Nothing. I  
just think  
you're right  
for the part.

Magnus stares at Max. He says quietly:

MAGNUS

I always  
wanted to be  
in one of  
those  
frickin'  
plays of  
yours.

MAX

I know you  
did, mate.

Magnus looks at the script.

INSERT COVER OF PLAY:

HEAVEN AND HELL

a new play by Max Fischer

revised draft

Dramatists Guild registered

INT. GROVER CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL. NIGHT

The school auditorium.

We see many familiar faces in the audience: Mr. Fischer, Dr. Guggenheim

in his wheelchair, Mrs. Guggenheim, Mrs. Calloway, Mrs. Whitney, the Indian groundskeeper, the yearbook photographer, Coach Beck, Ernie, Mr. Holstead, Mr. Adams, the police who arrested Max, some old men from the barbershop. They are all dressed nicely in evening clothes.

Miss Cross' friend John, whom Max humiliated at dinner after the Serpico play, is seated in the third row. He is dressed in a coat and tie.

An USHER directs Miss cross to her seat. She is surprised to see that it is right nest to Mr. Blume's. She reluctantly sits down beside him. Mr. Blume sees her.

MISS CROSS

Hi, Herman.

Mr. Blume nods. He pulls his ticket out of his inside pocket and checks the seat number. He looks to Miss Cross. Miss Cross smiles.

MISS CROSS

Looks like  
Max pulled a  
fast one on  
us.

Mr. Blume nods.

MISS CROSS

How's your  
aquarium  
coming along?

MR. BLUME

Not too bad.  
It should be  
finished in  
October.

Miss Cross nods.

MR. BLUME

I just made a  
deal with a  
guy in

Singapore for  
half a dozen  
electric  
eels.

MISS CROSS

That sounds  
good.

The lights go down. A spotlight  
appears and Max walks onstage in a  
tuxedo. He goes to a microphone in  
the middle of the stage.

MAX

I don't  
usually do  
this, but  
this play  
means a lot  
to me, and I  
wanted to  
make a  
dedication.  
So I'll just  
say that this  
play is  
dedicated to  
the memory of  
my mother,  
Eloise  
Fischer. And  
to Edward  
Appleby. A  
friend of a  
friend.

Neither Mr. Fischer nor Miss Cross  
were expecting this announcement, and  
they are moved by it.

MAX

Also you'll  
find a pair  
of safety  
glasses and  
some earplugs  
underneath  
your seats.  
Please feel  
free to use  
them. Thank

you very  
much.

Max exits the stage and the audience applauds. There is a moment of rustling and whispering in the dark theater.

The curtain opens on:

Vietnam. Napalm smolders in the sky above the jungle.

Dirk runs onstage dressed in a Green Beret uniform and sunglasses. He has an M-16. He yells to Max as Max shimmyes down out of a palm tree:

DIRK

Let's rock,  
Esposito!

MAX

Lock and  
load, Surf  
Boy!

There is an explosion and Max and Dirk run through the smoke. Suddenly the stage is swarmed by VC regulars. Everyone starts shooting at once.

Bursts of gunfire light-up the audience's faces and smoke floats over their heads as we hear the sounds of jets flying over, bombs exploding, choppers taking off, and a SOLDIER'S voice screaming into his radio:

SOLDIER

Mayday!  
Mayday! Seven  
niner  
Almighty!  
Adjust your  
coordinates!

Some members of the audience put on their safety glasses and earplugs. Woody stands nervously in the wings with a fire extinguisher.

One of the extras accidentally clubs Max in the temple with the butt of his rifle. Max's eyes close. He crumples to the floor. The fighting stops. The audience begins to murmur.

Max opens his eyes. He sees the frightened soldiers looking down at him.

He grabs his M-16 and opens fire. The battle resumes.

INSERT SIGN WRITTEN IN CALLIGRAPHY:

Intermission.

The sign is leaning on an easel in front of the curtain. Little roses and tulips are painted around its edges.

INT. DRESSING ROOM. NIGHT

Actors run around frantically backstage. Max has a band-aid on his forehead. He is touching-up a gory makeup effect over Dirk's eye. He turns to Woody.

MAX

How much time  
we got, Wood?

WODDY

(checks  
his  
watch)  
Two minutes.

MAX

Bring me some  
more ketchup.  
(points  
to  
the  
band-  
aid  
on  
his  
head)  
And make this  
look real.



EXT. AUDITORIUM. NIGHT

The lobby of the auditorium is buzzing with people talking about the play and having drinks.

Mr. Blume is standing alone outside, smoking a cigarette. It is snowing softly. Miss Cross comes out with a cup of coffee in each hand. Mr. Blume turns around and looks at her.

She goes over to him and hands him one of the coffees.

MR. BLUME

(sadly)

Thank you.

MISS CROSS

Hold this  
one, too,  
Herman.

He holds both coffees while Miss Cross pours some little containers of cream into them and stirs them with a plastic straw. She takes back her cup of coffee.

MISS CROSS

So what do  
you think of  
Max's latest  
opus?

Mr. Blume gives a thumbs up and stares out into the snow.

MR. BLUME

Let's just  
hope it's got  
a happy  
ending.

Miss Cross smiles. She smooths her hand across Mr. Blume's hair. He looks into her eyes. She links arms with him gently and they drink their coffees together.

INT. AUDITORIUM. NIGHT

Max and Magnus Buchan, with a three-day beard and a cigar, stand together among the fallen bodies and smoldering trees.

MAX

I want you to  
have  
something,  
Sarge.

Max hands Magnus Mr. Blume's silver .45 automatic.

MAX

I won't be  
needing this  
anymore.

MAGNUS

Semper fi,  
Esposito.  
Semper fi.

MAX

Sic transit  
gloria, sir.

Max looks out to Mr. Blume. Mr. Blume looks back at him.

MAX

Say a prayer  
for Surf Boy.  
Wherever he  
is.

MAGNUS

Good luck,  
soldier.

Magnus salutes Max and walks off. We hear his voice as he goes into the wings:

MAGNUS

Tag 'em and  
bag 'em,  
cherries!  
We're moving  
out! Let's  
DD!

Max throws down his rifle into a foxhole and begins to cry quietly. Someone moves slowly toward him out of the settling smoke. Max wheels around and whips out his Swiss Army knife.

But then he sees it is Margaret Yang as a Vietnamese villager. She has been through hell.

MARGARET

Hello,  
Esposito.

Max drops his knife and it stabs into the floor. He puts out his hand. Margaret takes it. He pulls her in and hugs her.

Miss Cross smiles sadly.

Max looks into Margaret Yang's eyes.

MAX

Will you  
marry me, Le-  
Chahn?

MARGARET

(instantly)

You bet I  
will.

Wagner's Flight of the Valkyries begins to play loudly from behind the stage as Max kisses Margaret and the curtain drops to wild applause.

Mrs. Guggenheim looks on in amazement as Dr. Guggenheim stands up out of his wheelchair and leads the ovation. The rest of the audience quickly follows suit.

The Indian groundskeeper is laughing hysterically.

INT. GYMNASIUM. NIGHT

The gymnasium has been filled with palm trees and decorated like an Army barracks. Flares burn in circles

around the tables. A banner at the entrance says The Heaven and Hell Cotillion.

Dirk and a couple of his CLASSMATES are looking at some vintage Playboy centerfolds taped-up on the wall as part of the Army barracks motif.

Miss Cross and John are talking at the punchbowl.

MISS CROSS

Max sent you  
an  
invitation?

JOHN

Yeah. And he  
told me to  
wear a tie.

Max and Margaret are drinking ginger ales and chatting with Mr. Fischer and MR. and MRS. YANG.

MAX

Thank you,  
Mrs. Yang. I  
actually  
wrote a  
different  
version of  
the play two  
years ago.  
But I  
couldn't get  
it done over  
at Rushmore.

MRS. YANG

Why? Too  
political?

MAX

No. A kid got  
his finger  
blown off  
during  
rehearsals.

Max sees Mr. Blume and Miss Cross

approaching.

MAX

Miss Cross,  
this is my  
father Bert  
Fischer. He's  
a barber.

(to  
Mr.  
Fischer)

This is my  
friend  
Rosemary  
Cross.

Mr. Fischer smiles as they shake  
hands.

MR. FISCHER

Hi, Rosemary.

MISS CROSS

Nice to  
finally meet  
you, Bert.

MAX

And, of  
course, you  
know Mr.  
Blume. I also  
want everyone  
to meet Mr.  
and Mrs.  
Yang. And  
this is  
Margaret.

Miss Cross and Margaret smile at each  
other.

MISS CROSS

Hello,  
Margaret.

MARGARET

Hello, Miss  
Cross.

The Indian groundskeeper is talking  
with Coach Beck and Mr. Blume's

foreman, Ernie.

COACH BECK

I'm surprised  
they let him  
build a real  
campfire  
onstage.  
That's a  
safety  
hazard.

ERNIE

Well, last  
year he tried  
to raise  
piranhas.

COACH BECK

What'd you  
think of the  
play, Mr.  
Littlejeans?

GROUNDSKEEPER

Best play all  
year, man.

Mr. Blume, Magnus Buchan, and the  
Rushmore yearbook photographer are  
having a conversation.

MAGNUS

Well, Fischer  
stepped on  
half of my  
bleedin'  
lines.

MR. BLUME

Really? I  
didn't  
notice.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Are Ronny and  
Donny having  
a good time  
at military  
school?

MR. BLUME

(instantly)  
They love it.

MAGNUS

Lucky  
bastards.

Mr. Fischer is talking with John.

JOHN

I understand  
you're a  
neurosurgeon.

MR. FISCHER

No. I'm a  
barber. But a  
lot of people  
make that  
mistake.

Mr. Fischer laughs.

Dirk and Dr. Guggenheim watch Max  
laughing and dancing with Margaret  
Yang. Max points to Dr. Guggenheim.  
Dr. Guggenheim smiles and points back  
to him. He says in a hoarse whisper:

DR. GUGGENHEIM

Who's the  
Chinaman with  
Fisher?

DIRK

That's  
Margaret  
Yang. She's  
actually  
Korean.

DR. GUGGENHEIM

(pleasantly  
surprised)

I know the  
Koreans.  
They're good  
people.

Max and Margaret are talking as they  
dance:

MAX

You were  
incredible  
tonight,  
Margaret. You  
were that  
poor girl.

MARGARET

Thank you. I  
loved it when  
you grabbed  
onto the  
bottom of the  
chopper as it  
was taking  
off.

MAX

That was  
totally  
improvised.

Margaret nods. They look at each  
other smiling.

MAX

Can I ask you  
a question?

MARGARET

Of course.

MAX

Can you do an  
Australian  
accent?

Margaret looks puzzled. Max smiles.

MAX

I'm working  
on something  
that's set in  
the outback.

Mr. Fischer is sitting at a table  
having a glass of champagne with  
Max's math teacher, Mrs. Whitney. She  
has a slight English accent. Mr.  
Fischer wears a sky blue blazer.

MR. FISCHER

That's a



beautiful  
dress, by the  
way.

MRS. WHITNEY

Why, thank  
you, Bert.  
That  
sportscoat is  
rather  
smashing in  
its own  
right.

MR. FISCHER

I know it's a  
little loud.  
But I feel  
like  
celebrating.

MRS. WHITNEY

Would you  
care to  
dance?

MR. FISCHER

(surprised)

I'd love to.

Mr. Blume brings Miss Cross a glass  
of champagne as Max and Margaret  
dance by.

MARGARET

Hello, Mr.  
Blume!

MR. BLUME

Hi, Margaret!  
(to  
Max)  
May I cut in?  
I haven't had  
a change to  
cut a rug  
with your new  
girlfriend  
yet.

MAX

(embarrassed)

New  
girlfriend.

MARGARET

Yes, I am.  
And find your  
own partner,  
Mr. Blume. No  
offense, but  
I'm spoken  
for.

MAX

No, it's OK.  
He's my  
friend.

Margaret and Mr. Blume dance off  
together. Max and Miss Cross are left  
alone.

MISS CROSS

Well, you  
pulled it  
off.

MAX

(shrugs)

It went OK.  
At least  
nobody got  
hurt.

MISS CROSS

Except for  
you.

MAX

(smiles  
sadly)

Nah. I didn't  
get hurt that  
bad.

Max looks to Miss Cross. Miss Cross  
sips her champagne. She looks back at  
Max for a minute. She smiles. Mr.  
Fischer calls out to them as he  
dances by with Mrs. Whitney:

MR. FISHCER

Come on, you two! Shake a leg!

They wave to Mr. Fischer. Miss Cross looks to Max.

MISS CROSS

You want to  
dance?

MAX

Certainly.  
But let's see  
if we can get  
the DJ to  
play  
something  
with a lithe  
---

Max snaps his fingers. He turns to the DJ and yells:

MAX

Rueben!

The DJ looks to Max. Max makes a little gesture that seems to say, This is the one. The DJ nods.

The music cuts off in the middle of the song. Everyone stops dancing. They look around wondering what's going on.

A new song starts up. It is the saddest song of the night.

Max looks to Miss Cross. Miss Cross puts out her hand. Max takes it and walks with her onto the dance floor, into the crowd, as everyone slowly begins to dance.