

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 GROUNDKEEPER 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?