

THE HEDGE by Eden Feiler

Cast of Characters

SUMMER:	21 years old, a senior, president of The Hedge
RYAN:	21 years old, a junior, treasurer of The Hedge
JACKSON:	20 years old, a junior, vice president of The Hedge
ANYA:	19 years old, a sophomore, portfolio manager of The Hedge
CECE:	19 years old, a first-year, community relations chair of The Hedge
TRISTAN:	20 years old, a failed entrepreneur

Place

A large house on Cape Cod owned by a wealthy businessman.

Time

Late January/early February, present day.

A note on casting

All roles can be played by actors of any race/ethnicity. Jackson is an international student, but can be from any country other than the US.

ACT I
SCENE ONE

Evening on the first night of The Hedge's annual executive board retreat. A modern living/dining room of a wealthy family's Cape Cod home. There are two large couches and an armchair around a coffee table stage right, and an exit to the primary bedroom. Stage left, a table with six chairs. Off left are exits to the office, kitchen, and upstairs, where the children's bedrooms are. Upstage, a door to the outside, where the guest house, pool, and hot tub are. An abstract painting, presumably expensive, hangs on the wall.

SUMMER and JACKSON sit on one couch, close together. Good friends. RYAN and CECE sit on the other, somewhat distanced. Crutches leaning on the side of the couch - RYAN's. ANYA sits on the armchair. They all drink cheap beer and Kirkland seltzer - although this club has money, they are still college students. RYAN periodically checks his phone, sometimes typing furiously. He seems on edge. JACKSON and SUMMER both notice.

SUMMER

(rapid-fire)

Ryan, who's your favorite person in The Hedge?

RYAN

(rapid-fire)

Cece, best college hookup?

CECE

(rapid-fire)

Jackson, favorite food at the dining hall?

JACKSON

(rapid-fire)

Summer, rudest celebrity you've met?

(SUMMER hesitates.)

SUMMER

Um...Anya, uh—

JACKSON

Summer, you hesitated. You have to answer the question.

SUMMER

But I wasn't ready.

JACKSON

That's how Deflection works, girl. You hesitate, you answer. Rudest celebrity you've met.

SUMMER

Like, I don't know. Maybe Sarah Jessica Parker? She sat in the booth with us at a Red Sox game once and just did not acknowledge my existence. All she did was drink the free champagne and Google Jarren Duran's stats.

ANYA

Crazy name drop.

JACKSON

No, I love *Sex and the City*!

RYAN

Who's Sarah Jessica Parker? Was she the one in *The West Wing*?

CECE

That's Mary Louise Parker.

RYAN

Same diff.

SUMMER

Oh my god, Ryan, you've never seen *Sex and the City*?

RYAN

No. I pretty much only watch true crime shows.

SUMMER

It's my favorite show. I'll have to show you sometime.

(JACKSON takes a sip of his drink.)

CECE

The recent spin-off was terrible, though.

SUMMER

Well, I couldn't bring myself to watch it after meeting her.

ANYA

Okay, whose turn was it?

SUMMER

What?

ANYA

I think it's your turn. Since you answered the question. Now you ask.

(RYAN pulls out his phone and starts typing. JACKSON watches him.)

SUMMER

Oh, okay. Anya, what's your drink of choice?

ANYA

(rapid-fire)

Jackson, do you think you're qualified to be president of The Hedge next year?

(JACKSON, distracted by RYAN, snaps back into it.)

JACKSON

Excuse me?

ANYA

You hesitated. So answer the question.

JACKSON

Yes, I do think I'm qualified. But I'm obviously not president yet.

ANYA

(not convinced)

Okay.

JACKSON

Do you think I'm not qualified?

ANYA

Cece, favorite professor?

JACKSON

Wait, that wasn't, like, part of the game.

ANYA

You asked me a question. So I asked Cece. We're still playing, aren't we?

CECE

Ryan, why are you on crutches?

(RYAN looks up from his phone.)

RYAN

Huh?

CECE

You have to answer now. How'd you get the crutches?

RYAN

I got a stress fracture at the season opener last week.

SUMMER

How long will it take to heal?

RYAN

The doctor said six to eight weeks.

CECE

Will you get to play again?

RYAN

Lacrosse? Hopefully. I'm on injured reserve for the rest of the season. But I plan to train over the summer and rejoin in the fall.

SUMMER

Well, you seem to be handling it well.

RYAN

Not having to be up every morning at six AM for practice is nice. And I'm honestly happy to have a break from the lax guys. But I need the NIL money, and I don't get it if I'm not on the team.

ANYA

Should we continue the game?

(RYAN puts his phone on the coffee table.)

JACKSON

Why don't you go, then.

ANYA

Summer, who would you save first in a fire, your big or your little?

SUMMER

Cece, are you going to drop out of college?

CECE

(taken aback)

Oh. Um. I'm still figuring it out.

JACKSON

Figuring what out?

CECE

I have this startup idea. I don't know. It's probably stupid.

SUMMER

Cece and I are talking about launching a fintech company after I graduate.

ANYA

Don't drop out after your freshman year. It rarely works out for people. And then you're stuck with no money *and* no degree.

CECE

We'll see what happens.

SUMMER

No time like the present, I say. Plus the market is only getting more crowded every day.

(RYAN's phone buzzes on the table. JACKSON adjusts to take a peek before RYAN picks it up and starts typing.)

ANYA

But you can always start a company after finishing school. I think it's worth waiting a few years.

SUMMER

Worked out for Mark Zuckerberg. And Tiger Woods.

JACKSON

Right, because everyone wants to be Tiger Woods these days. Drop out of college, win the Grand Slam, and you too can cheat on your wife with every hooker in Vegas!

RYAN

I sort of agree with Anya. Obviously there are some people who became successful after dropping out, but there are even more who didn't. And at a school like this, your degree will hold clout. I'd stick it out.

SUMMER

I'm just saying. Bitcoin is growing exponentially every year, and there are, like, at least 2,000 memecoins now.

ANYA

Why are you so into crypto, though?

CECE

All the biggest companies these days are crypto backed. It's the future of finance.

JACKSON

We should get back to the game.

CECE

Yeah. I can go. Jackson, what's the drunkest you've ever gotten?

JACKSON

Ryan, who are you texting?

RYAN

(startled)

It's no one.

JACKSON

Doesn't look like no one.

(RYAN's phone rings.)

RYAN

Sorry. Uh. I need to take this.

(RYAN stands up, picks up his crutches, and hobbles over to the table. He pulls out a chair and sits down to take the call. Lights dim on him on the phone.)

Hello?

ANYA

Guess that kills the game.

CECE

I can get these cans out of the way. Anyone want anything?

(CECE gets up and starts collecting the empty cans.)

SUMMER

Some more seltzers would be great. And can you grab the Oreos as well, please?

JACKSON

And the Cheeto puffs.

SUMMER

Oh my god, I'm so glad you guys got those. I literally never have cheetos except on retreat.

(CECE can't hold all the empty cans, and one falls to the ground.)

ANYA

Here, I got it. You'll need help carrying all those carbs and food dyes, anyway.

(CECE and ANYA gather all the cans and exit stage left to the kitchen.)

SUMMER

What is up with Ryan?

JACKSON

I know. Like who the fuck are you talking to, you're on Cape Cod. There's a fucking Agnes Martin on the wall.

SUMMER

Glad I'm not the only one who thinks he's acting weird. God, I need to not be so down bad over this man. It's actually terrible.

JACKSON

He's not, like *that* hot.

SUMMER

Come on. He's a D1 athlete. He's a little bit attractive.

JACKSON

As in a *little bit* attractive or a little bit *attractive*?

SUMMER

A little bit *attractive*.

JACKSON

Oh, stop. You can do so much better than a guy who soft launch quit the lacrosse team. Genuinely the worst team on this campus too. They're barely even D1.

SUMMER

I know, you're so right. Plus I'm graduating in, like, four months. I can't hook up with a junior at this point.

JACKSON

And also you're the president of a club he's in.

SUMMER

That's not that weird.

JACKSON

I don't know. Power dynamics.

SUMMER

Isaac Berkow got with, like, half his a cappella group.

JACKSON

Girl, you know those a cappella kids are freaky deaky. Plus, didn't they kick him out after?

SUMMER

No, that was after he embezzled from them.

JACKSON

Then you definitely don't want to emulate him.

SUMMER

This group is unserious, though. Our board is all so close.

JACKSON

It's a little serious, babe. We invest hundreds of thousands of dollars. We're about to outline a strategy that will define our returns for the year.

SUMMER

I know. But I mean the power dynamics. It's not like I'm a total dictator. Plus, he's the treasurer, which is, like, the number two job.

JACKSON

But vice president is the number two job. That's why I ran for it.

SUMMER

Don't be delusional, babe.

JACKSON

You don't think VP is number two?

SUMMER

I mean, objectively no. He totally does more than you. He manages our bank accounts. You, like, write alumni newsletters and run recruitment.

JACKSON

That's a lot of work, though. We got over 400 applications this year that I had to go through.

SUMMER

We all delib together, though. And that's most of the time commitment during recruitment.

JACKSON

Do you think Anya does more than me?

SUMMER

What?

JACKSON

Anya. Do you think her job is more real than mine?

SUMMER

Like, maybe hers is more / applicable—

JACKSON

You don't think she would win president over me though, right?

SUMMER

Is that what this is about?

JACKSON

Of course. Why do you think she asked me if I thought I was qualified.

SUMMER

I don't know, she's just like that.

JACKSON

Like what?

SUMMER

Direct. She says what's on her mind.

JACKSON

But do you think her job is more real than mine?

SUMMER

You guys just do different things. You and Cece manage the people, Anya and Ryan manage the money. It's two different skillsets. Both are equally important.

JACKSON

Do you think I could win president over her, though?

SUMMER

Totally. Everyone loves you. You're, like, fun and charismatic. And she's a little off putting sometimes.

JACKSON

But she's working at Goldman this summer. As a sophomore. That's a pretty big deal.

SUMMER

And you're working at Four Seasons Holding Company. Which is also really good, obviously.

JACKSON

Like, yeah. But I got that because your dad runs the company. And I'm a junior. Everyone needs to have a good internship this summer. All the art history kids are working at the MET and Sotheby's. But sophomore year, I was at some random bank in Milwaukee no one had heard of. Other people were camp counselors or, like, fucking around in Belgium. Getting Goldman is huge for her. I heard she got a thirty thousand dollar signing bonus and a free Equinox membership.

SUMMER

I don't really think that matters. Everyone uses their connections. You both have prestigious internships. Don't get worked up over it.

JACKSON

But, like, I want a free Equinox membership.

SUMMER

And I want to marry the prince of Greece.

JACKSON

Constantine-Alexios is *so* hot. My friend from high school met him in Aspen one time. I was insanely jealous.

(CECE and ANYA return with the drinks and snacks.)

CECE

Special delivery!

SUMMER

Oh my god, thank you guys so much. Yum.

(She tears into the Cheeto puffs.)

JACKSON

You better be sharing those!

(SUMMER playfully pulls the bag away from JACKSON, who climbs to grab them out of her hands. As they tussle, lights up on RYAN, still on the phone.)

RYAN

(in an urgent whisper)

Tristan. I told you I don't have anything right now. *(pause)* I'm getting close, though. I'm trying to find something. *(pause)* I'm here on Cape Cod. At Summer's house. There's got to be information here. *(pause)* Yeah, Summer. Her dad is... *(pause)* Right. The Red Sox. I'm telling you, I can feel it. *(pause)* Okay. I'll get it to you by Monday. Just leave me alone.

(He hangs up and rejoins the group. CECE has pulled out her computer, and ANYA sits next to her on the couch. RYAN sits down on the armchair where ANYA was before.)

JACKSON

What was that?

RYAN

Just an old buddy from school calling.

JACKSON

Like, just to say hi? You were on the phone for a while.

(RYAN gives him a look. Don't go there.)

RYAN

Yeah. He lives in the area.

JACKSON

He have your location or something?

RYAN

I don't know. Snap map.

JACKSON

Who the fuck is stalking their Snap map like we're in middle school. I don't think I've used that since I was, like, thirteen.

SUMMER

Oh, come on, you love tracking people on Find my Friends.

JACKSON

Find my Friends is different. You, like, consent to being stalked when you share your location on Find my Friends. Snap map is for tracking the hoes when you want to see if they're hanging out with someone else.

ANYA

Well, I don't have Snapchat because I don't need my hoes knowing where I am.

JACKSON

Girl, what hoes?

ANYA

Wouldn't you like to know.

RYAN

(standing up)

I'm pretty tired anyway. I should get to bed. Does anyone have a phone charger I can borrow?

JACKSON

There's one in the front pocket of my bag in our room.

RYAN

Thanks.

SUMMER

I'm getting pretty tired as well. Meeting at 10 tomorrow? I can make bacon and pancakes beforehand.

RYAN

Okay. I'll set an alarm. Night, everyone.

(RYAN exits out the back door.)

ANYA

I'll help with breakfast, Summer. I've perfected the pancake mix-water ratio.

SUMMER

Thanks, Anya. That's sweet of you.

JACKSON

That's right, put the women in the kitchen where they belong!

SUMMER

Would you like to help cook, Jackson?

JACKSON

Not even a little bit. I'm happy to leave that to you both.

SUMMER

Thought so.

JACKSON

I'll probably go to bed too. Don't want to have to wake Ryan up when I come in. Sleep well, guys.

(JACKSON exits out the back door.)

SUMMER

Okay, girls, are you all set? I showed you where the towels are upstairs. I put sheets on two of the beds in the big room, but there are, like, five, so let me know if you want to swap or anything. I'll just be over here in my parents' room.

ANYA

Sounds good.

CECE

Yes, and thank you for hosting! Osterville is so gorgeous this time of year.

SUMMER

It's even better in the summer. You should totally come up sometime, Cece. The Peter Pan bus runs from New York all the time, and it's super cheap. Or there's a helicopter pad on the roof if that's more your speed. Winter just doesn't hit the same.

CECE

You know I like riding in style.

ANYA

Slumming it on the bus isn't that bad.

SUMMER

And we'll be able to enjoy the hot tub tomorrow. A favorite of former Hedge president Ethan Lowell, if you guys have heard of him.

ANYA

The one who finally switched us over to Google Suite, hallelujah. Excel can kiss my ass.

CECE

Love a hot tub!

SUMMER

So you better rest up. It'll be a long day. Night, guys.

(SUMMER exits stage right.)

ANYA

What are you working on?

CECE

Just this pset that's due on Monday. It's so fucking tedious.

ANYA

Oh, for what class?

CECE

Econometrics. “The Hedge Fund Hunger Games.”

ANYA

Oh, I took that last year. With Prof Muller?

CECE

Yeah.

ANYA

Her exams are the worst, but the curve is usually generous. Let me see.

(ANYA peeks at the computer over CECE’s shoulder.)

You’re using ChatGPT?

(CECE closes the computer.)

CECE

I just wanted to see what it would say. Like, I’m not getting the answers from it or anything.

ANYA

I can help you. Just show me which pset it is. She probably didn’t even change it from last year.

CECE

It’s okay, thanks. I’ll just do it when we get back to campus on Sunday.

(An alarm on CECE’s phone goes off. She shuts it off.)

And we should get to bed. Gotta rest up for the Ethan Lowell hot tub tomorrow.

(She stands and starts picking up the extra snacks and drinks. She can’t hold it all.)

ANYA

I got it.

(ANYA grabs the last few cans and snacks. They head towards the exit stage left.)

CECE

Can you get the lights? I think it's the second set of switches.

ANYA

Yeah.

(ANYA turns out the lights.)

Dibs on the infrared steam shower.

SCENE TWO

Later that night, around 2:30 AM. RYAN enters stage right, holding a book. He uses his crutches until he gets to the couch, where he leaves them on the ground and exits stage left, walking normally. CECE enters and sits at the table on her computer, wrapped in a blanket. SUMMER enters from stage right in her pajamas.

SUMMER

Oh! Hi, Cece. I didn't think anyone was up.

CECE

Good evening to you too.

SUMMER

I just came to turn up the heat. It's freezing in my parents' room. My mom is obsessed with these Peruvian heated floorboards, but I don't even know how to turn them on.

CECE

Yeah, it's sort of chilly upstairs too.

SUMMER

Could you not sleep? I'll turn it up for the whole house. We're not usually here when it's this cold.

CECE

I've actually been doing this thing called polyphasic sleep. It basically means I sleep in increments and then take breaks in between where I stay up. It's supposed to help with productivity. Nikola Tesla and Leonardo da Vinci both did it.

SUMMER

So you just get up in the middle of the night?

CECE

Yeah, I guess. But this helps me keep up with my trading schedule. Since we're a full 12 hours off from parts of the Eastern hemisphere, I can operate during their business hours. The stock market opens only during a certain window on Wall Street, but crypto goes round-the-clock. So I need to be up in order to stay on top of my portfolio.

(SUMMER sits down at the table with CECE.)

SUMMER

Wow, I never thought about that. Can you show me how trading works? I'll probably need to get into it when we start our company.

CECE

(closing her computer)

Oh, it doesn't look like much. My parents think it's crazy. They tried to set a child lock on my devices after midnight, but I hacked into their password app.

SUMMER

How long have you been doing this for?

CECE

Since sophomore year of high school. So about three years.

SUMMER

And it's lucrative.

CECE

(humbly)

Like, yeah. I do all right for myself.

SUMMER

Sorry I brought up the startup in front of everyone. I know you wanted to keep it stealth, and I don't mean to pressure you or anything. Just need to figure out my post grad plans sooner or later, since I never heard back from D. E. Shaw.

CECE

That's okay. It's just been a lot to take in.

SUMMER

I get it. But this kind of offer doesn't come around so often, Cece.

CECE

Yeah, I know. I just have to weigh my options is all. But I'm very grateful for your generosity.

SUMMER

You know how to make money, Cece. I wish I had half of your instincts. You don't just have what it takes, you go out and make it happen. And I'm just here to help you execute in any way I

can. I know people at a bunch of major VCs who are looking to get into seed funding. They would be so excited to work with us.

CECE

Thanks, Summer. That means a lot. I just have to talk to my parents about it.

(Her alarm rings.)

Okay, that's my cue. Back to bed for me.

SUMMER

Sleep well. I'll turn up the heat for you guys. We'll talk tomorrow.

CECE

I'll be back in four hours.

(CECE exits stage left. SUMMER goes to the upstage wall and pokes at the thermostat. While her back is turned, RYAN enters from stage left, holding an orange pill bottle and a book. He quickly puts the pill bottle in his pocket.)

RYAN

(startled)

Oh, Summer. Didn't think anyone else would be up at this hour.

(SUMMER turns around.)

SUMMER

I guess we're both just night owls.

RYAN

I couldn't sleep. My magnesium wore off.

SUMMER

Were you just in my dad's office?

RYAN

Um. Yeah, I guess I was. I, uh, needed a pen.

SUMMER

A pen?

RYAN

I like to annotate when I read.

(He holds up the book in his hand. No pen.)

SUMMER

Right.

RYAN

It's for class. Wouldn't recommend.

SUMMER

Where are your crutches?

RYAN

I've been, um, testing out walking without them. My physical therapist said I should try it.

(He picks up his crutches from behind the couch. SUMMER approaches him.)

SUMMER

(tucking her hair behind her ear)

I couldn't sleep. I was really cold.

RYAN

Is that so?

SUMMER

Yeah. My parents' bed felt so big for just one person.

RYAN

That must have been so terrible for you to deal with. All alone in a king sized bed. What will Princess Summer do?

SUMMER

You tell me.

(Just then, the upstage door opens. JACKSON enters.)

JACKSON

(clearly having just woken up)

Ryan, where did you disappear to? Come back to bed.

RYAN

Why do you care?

(JACKSON sees the two of them standing together. SUMMER takes a step back.)

JACKSON

Right, sorry. Why do I even care that you vanished in the middle of the night.

SUMMER

I'm just going to...turn up the / heat...

RYAN

I should. Yeah. Get back to the guest house.

JACKSON

(sarcastically)

What a hell of an idea, Ryan.

RYAN

(warning)

Jackson.

JACKSON

Roomie.

SUMMER

Should be better now. Do you want me to turn up the heat in the guest house too? I can show you how to.

RYAN

That's okay, thanks. Nice and warm over there.

JACKSON

Super cozy. Just how I like it.

(A moment between the three of them. ANYA, wearing a hair turban, enters stage left.)

ANYA

It's fucking cold. Can we turn up the heat? Hey, why is everyone out and about at three in the morning?

JACKSON

We were practicing our dance routine for your surprise birthday party.

ANYA

Very funny.

JACKSON

You ruined the surprise. Now we'll have to come up with a song other than "Pay Phone."

SUMMER

Okay, crazy. I need to sleep now. Heat's turned up, Anya.

ANYA

Thanks, Summer. Good night, Maroon 5.

(ANYA exits stage left.)

SUMMER

Everyone better be up for the meeting tomorrow. Jackson, I'm blasting Mariah Carey over the Sonos if you're not here by 9:30.

(SUMMER exits stage right.)

JACKSON

So what were you doing.

RYAN

Promise, it's not what it looked like.

(He takes JACKSON's hand.)

JACKSON

You're pretty when you feel bad.

RYAN

Who said I feel bad?

JACKSON

That stupid little look on your face.

RYAN

So now I'm stupid and pretty?

JACKSON

Can't let your ego get too big.

RYAN

Well, you're pretty stupid yourself.

JACKSON

Hey now, that's not what I said.

(He puts his finger on RYAN's chest, like he's poking him.)

RYAN

What a shame. So short, you can't even hear properly.

JACKSON

I'm not that short, Ryan, I'm average sized—

(RYAN picks up JACKSON, puts him on the couch, and holds him there.)

Hey!

RYAN

Sorry, is there some pipsqueak talking?

JACKSON

Let me go!

(RYAN kisses him.)

RYAN

Now, I don't think you really want to go, do you?

JACKSON

How do you know what I want?

(RYAN stands up and starts to head towards the upstage exit.)

RYAN

I might be stupid, but I'm not dumb.

(JACKSON stands up and the two exit upstage.)

SCENE THREE

The next morning. ANYA, SUMMER, RYAN, CECE, and JACKSON sit around the table for a meeting, the remnants of breakfast between them.

SUMMER

Thanks for making it on time, everyone. Should we get started with the portfolio update? Anya?

ANYA

We did really well this quarter, guys. The market is up 4%, but our portfolio is up 8.5%, which is better than last year at this time. Summer, your Fidelity mutual funds ended up giving us a nice boost at the end of Q4.

SUMMER

Thanks so much, Anya. I'm really happy that my tenure will have been a success. And, of course, I'm excited to see what you guys do when I'm not around.

ANYA

I think that, based on these numbers and the current trends we're seeing, we should allocate a greater percentage of our portfolio to value investing. Focus on the long-term, build some stability, and try to avoid taking big risks. Looking at the market, we're in a good place to keep a healthy margin of safety across the board. The economy is somewhat volatile right now, especially with the current political instability, but if we stay consistent, we can ride out the turbulence.

(CECE raises her hand.)

SUMMER

Yeah, Cece?

CECE

I don't know. I think we should start looking into ways to innovate, get ahead of the curve. We don't know how AI is going to impact investing, but crypto is already becoming dominant. Brown just became the first endowment to invest in a Bitcoin ETF. Maybe we could build a team for innovation, just using a portion of these recent profits, and try to maximize our growth potential. We don't want to get bogged down by the traditional econometrics if there's something new we can try that would set us apart from the other groups. The Hedge is in a unique position, especially as college students, to explore early-stage opportunities that could be the future of investing. We need to be aggressive.

JACKSON

I'm so glad you brought that up, Cece. A friend of mine is in the CIGs, and she was actually telling me that their group is looking / for—

ANYA

I really don't think that we should operate based on what another group is doing. Especially not one that blew half their budget on Don Julio last year. They got, like, four people sent to campus health.

JACKSON

I'm not saying that we / should—

ANYA

That's basically insider trading.

JACKSON

Just look at the numbers. We were up 8.5% this last quarter. The CIGs were up 12. If we don't take action and stick with the same old strategies, they could overtake us.

ANYA

They're not "the same old strategies." They're tried and true. Warren Buffett became the greatest legend on Wall Street through value investing, buying quality stocks at reasonable prices. We don't want to take too big a risk, or we'll have to start from scratch.

RYAN

I don't personally think we should go with *only* risky strategies. That doesn't seem like what Cece is suggesting, at least. But we are in a place, financially, where we can experiment a little bit. Hedge a little less, maybe. The past few years have been good for us.

JACKSON

And if the CIGs consistently are doing better than we are, it'll hurt our recruiting and our reputation on campus, not to mention in the real world. Applicants from the second best finance clubs don't get offers at the first best investment banks. We all joined this group because it was the top. That can change in an instant.

SUMMER

What exactly are you suggesting, Jackson?

JACKSON

The CIGs are thinking about making a big trade in oil. We need to beat them to it. There are new laws in place that will allow drilling in Alaska, and the oil companies will hugely benefit. We should buy stock from Exxonmobil.

ANYA

That is just terrible for the environment. How can you support an oil company? Exxonmobil has been sued repeatedly for contributing to climate change and promoting fossil fuels.

JACKSON

We're not an environmental group. We're an investment group. If you wanted sustainability, you should've gone into solar energy, not finance. There's a reason you don't see Peter Thiel sailing the seven seas with Greta Thunberg.

ANYA

Didn't realize you agree that climate activists are the Antichrist.

SUMMER

I sort of agree with what Anya's saying, though. Should our big move of the year really be in oil?

JACKSON

Stocks are stocks.

CECE

Investing in oil still feels stale, though. We should look into biotech, at *least*.

RYAN

Has someone shorted Ozempic yet? I hear they're making a pill version that's supposed to be even bigger.

JACKSON

I didn't know you were keeping up with weight loss drugs, Mr. Exercise.

RYAN

Sorry not all of us are raiding the Stop and Shop for Cheetos.

ANYA

All these new technologies and companies come with incredible risk, though. GLP-1s could go out of favor at any moment. We should invest in something we know will do well, or we risk failing. And then the CIGs will really be on us.

JACKSON

Everything is risky. But I *know* that oil is going to see a boost. They're literally making laws for it. And look at what happened in Venezuela.

CECE

I'm just saying. Oil stock is *so* 2008.

(RYAN's phone buzzes. He pulls it out and checks it.)

SUMMER

Okay, just to synthesize what everyone's been saying, it looks like we have three proposals: To stick with value stocks, to work on expanding into AI and crypto, or to invest in global commodities like oil.

ANYA

I think we should present all of these at the next full group meeting. And let everyone decide.

SUMMER

Usually, the board comes to its own consensus and then presents.

ANYA

We could switch it up. Power to the people.

CECE

So *now* you want to switch things up, Anya.

ANYA

We're just five people representing this group. Why shouldn't they get a say in what they do?

JACKSON

Unfortunately, The Hedge is sort of an oligarchy. Isn't that why you ran for board?

SUMMER

We're always open for feedback. But this way minimizes conflict and streamlines the process for everyone. Plus, we're just designing the broad strokes of a strategy, but the individual groups choose for themselves how exactly they're going to delegate and invest their money.

ANYA

Ryan, what do you think?

(RYAN looks up from his phone and puts it face-up on the table.)

RYAN

Sorry, I missed the last part.

ANYA

Should the five of us vote on these strategies and choose one to present to the group, or should we present all three to the group and let them vote?

(RYAN's phone rings. He ignores it.)

RYAN

Um, I don't really think there's a precedent / for bringing—

JACKSON

Ryan, your phone's ringing.

(He leans over the table to see who is calling.)

It says it's Tristan.

RYAN

(silencing his phone)

Doesn't matter. It's nothing.

(RYAN's phone rings again.)

JACKSON

Doesn't seem like nothing.

(RYAN silences the phone.)

SUMMER

Can we just come to a final decision, please?

CECE

Maybe we should pick this / up later—

(The phone rings a third time.)

RYAN

It'll just be one second.

(RYAN steps stage right to take the call. Lights change.)

Tristan, I told you to leave me alone. *(pause)* No. Don't come. *(pause)* You can't come here. I'm serious. I'm really busy with all this Hedge stuff. *(pause)* I know you need it now. Just, forget I said anything. *(pause)* I have something, okay? I just need to figure out what it means. *(pause)* I can't say. But last night, I went into his office... *(pause)* No, not yet. Just leave me alone for the weekend. Seriously. I'm working on it. *(pause)* Bye.

(He hangs up. Lights up on the other four, cleaning up from breakfast.
SUMMER and CECE head towards stage left holding plates.)

ANYA

Can one of you guys grab some paper towels so I can wipe the table down?

JACKSON

(to RYAN, as he approaches)

Hey, King of Skinny, you spilled the maple syrup.

RYAN

Sorry I'm just so tiny. That was my whole breakfast.

CECE

(on her way out)

Can you get it, Anya? We're going to wash these dishes.

(ANYA exits stage left, after CECE and SUMMER. RYAN approaches JACKSON, who is pushing in chairs.)

JACKSON

I really need you to be on my side with the club, Ryan. We all know Anya's really good strategically, and I need to prove that I'm just as good as her.

RYAN

You'll be fine, Jackson. Everyone likes you. This oil thing just may not be the best play, optically.

JACKSON

I need a big move if I want to be president.

RYAN

Not the Donald Trump kind of president. Drill, baby, drill.

JACKSON

(nonchalant-ish)

Were you calling your buddy again?

RYAN

Yeah.

JACKSON

You guys must be the *best* of friends.

(ANYA enters with the paper towels.)

ANYA

‘Scuse me, Ryan.

RYAN

Sorry, I’ll get out of your way.

ANYA

We’re getting ready to go hike Joshua Trail. I’ve got this, if you guys want to go change. Summer said if it’s too hard for you, Ryan, you can sit at the Coconut Hut and we can pick you up after.

(ANYA starts wiping down the table.)

RYAN

Thanks, Anya. I should be okay, but I’ll take it easy just in case.

(RYAN heads towards the upstage exit.)

JACKSON

Don’t run off without me.

(He follows RYAN, who holds open the door for him. ANYA watches the two of them go out together. She finishes wiping the table, gathers the paper towels, then exits stage left.)

SCENE FOUR

Later that afternoon. SUMMER, CECE, ANYA, JACKSON, and RYAN enter, bundled up, having just finished a hike. They unwrap scarves, remove hats and boots. RYAN leans on his crutches.

JACKSON

I could drink a vat of espresso right now. That was exhausting.

SUMMER

Who's trying to go in the hot tub?

JACKSON

Girl, don't tempt me with a good time.

SUMMER

I made sure it got all set up.

JACKSON

Then I guess I'll have to make the supreme sacrifice and take advantage. In honor of Ethan.

CECE

Wait, *please*. Anya, can I take a quick shower first?

ANYA

Yeah, go for it.

CECE

Thanks!

(CECE exits stage left.)

SUMMER

Okay, I'm going to go change out of all this. Meet outside in, like, ten?

JACKSON

Perfect.

(SUMMER exits stage right, JACKSON exits upstage. ANYA sits on the couch and looks at RYAN, unzipping his jacket.)

ANYA
You're not going to follow him?

RYAN
What?

ANYA
You're not going with Jackson. To your cottage.

RYAN
Nah, I'll let him change first.

ANYA
(skeptical)
Okay.

(RYAN sits down on the other couch and puts his feet on the coffee table.)

RYAN
That last incline really got me. I'm exhausted.

ANYA
Right. I didn't know you could hike on crutches.

RYAN
I used to hike a lot, back in New Hampshire. We'd have to have three limbs on the ground at all times.

ANYA
Wow, this must have been a breeze, then.

RYAN
You ever hike growing up? Northern California, right?

ANYA
A little, before my dad died. He used to take me and my brother to see the redwoods, and just let us marvel at how small we were.

RYAN
I'm sorry.

ANYA

It's okay, I don't have many memories of him. My mom talks about him all the time, though. She plays us these videos of him swinging us around and stuff.

RYAN

Did she get you into investing?

ANYA

Yes and no. We ended up in a lot of debt because of my dad's hospital bills, so I grew up without a lot of things my friends had. When I got old enough, I wanted to learn about money, how to make it, how to save it. And then our house burned down, and everything got even tighter, so I wanted to help out as much as I could. Give back to my mom for sacrificing so much for me.

RYAN

That's so noble of you.

ANYA

What made you want to go into finance?

RYAN

Honestly, it's not a great story. I wasn't even planning to major in Econ, but it was what pretty much everyone on the team did. They had a test bank with answers to all the assignments, and cheats for exams. But then I got really into it, the idea that so many people didn't know how to handle money. And I applied for The Hedge my sophomore year, when I decided that lacrosse shouldn't be my entire life. *(pause)* And honestly, my family has been going through a lot recently, and now that my spot on the team is in jeopardy, this is one thing I can control, I guess.

ANYA

What's going on with your family?

RYAN

...

ANYA

Sorry, I probably shouldn't ask that.

RYAN

It's okay. Just not something I talk about much.

ANYA

That makes sense.

RYAN

My dad's a neurosurgeon, and he's being sued for malpractice. And we live in a really small town, so everyone talks, and it's affecting all of us. I know it doesn't sound like much, but—

ANYA

No, I get it. I'm sorry.

RYAN

Nothing you or I can do about it. Just glad to be out of there.

ANYA

Sure.

RYAN

You're really good at investing, Anya. I respect you a lot for how you operate.

ANYA

Thanks, Ryan. That means a lot. You're not so bad yourself.

RYAN

Oh, stop.

ANYA

We literally couldn't do it without you. It's really impressive, being treasurer of a group like this. You can get any job in finance with something like that on your resume.

RYAN

This is kind of random, but I may be needing your help with something. It's not for the club, kind of more my own project. I'm doing a bad job of explaining.

ANYA

What sort of thing?

RYAN

We can talk about it another time. Not, like, here.

ANYA

Hey, would you consider backing me for president next year?

RYAN

Um, yeah, I'll think about it.

ANYA

I mean, I'm sure Jackson has been talking to you. But I would love your support.

RYAN

Oh, I don't know. I'm not, like / so set—

ANYA

Come on, Ryan. I know there's something going on between you two.

RYAN

I don't know what you're talking about—

ANYA

It's okay, I don't care. Obviously. And I won't tell Summer.

RYAN

Summer?

ANYA

Please, we both know she's into you.

RYAN

Definitely not.

ANYA

It's so obvious, Ryan.

(JACKSON opens the upstage door. He is wearing his bathing suit.)

JACKSON

Hey, guys, you coming?

ANYA

Yeah, totally. I'll go get changed.

(ANYA goes to exit stage left. She gives RYAN a look on her way out, which he catches. JACKSON sits down next to RYAN on the couch, with his knees touching RYAN's leg.)

JACKSON

Hey, babe.

RYAN

Hey. You look cold.

JACKSON

Want to warm me up?

(JACKSON kisses RYAN, who pulls away abruptly.)

What?

RYAN

Not here.

JACKSON

Oh, come on. Everyone is getting changed.

(He leans towards RYAN again, who shifts further from him on the couch.)

RYAN

I really don't think it's a good idea. They could walk in at any moment.

JACKSON

Why are you avoiding me all of a sudden?

RYAN

Avoiding you? That's not—

JACKSON

You were acting weird last night, got out of bed at, like, two in the morning to flirt with Summer, and basically ignored me all of today.

RYAN

That's not what happened.

JACKSON

Then tell me, who is Tristan?

RYAN

Tristan?

JACKSON

I saw his name on your phone last night when you borrowed my charger. And this morning at the meeting. Some dude named Tristan has been blowing you up, and there's no way he was just some "buddy" from New Hampshire. For all I know, you're blowing him right back.

RYAN

No, I told you. He's my old friend from home.

JACKSON

He seems weirdly obsessed with you. And you seem to be reciprocating.

RYAN

I promise, it's not like that.

JACKSON

Do you not want to be with me?

RYAN

No, Jackson, I do. I swear. I just really can't have people know. You know how complicated my situation is.

JACKSON

Right, I pity you so much. Macho man athlete in the closet. No one's heard that one before. Like, okay, *Heated Rivalry*.

RYAN

Don't be short with me. You know how much the team matters.

JACKSON

But when do *my* feelings matter, Ryan? When do I get to tell people about us? Because I'm basically holding Summer back from throwing herself at you, and it's really not easy to lie to her face every day.

RYAN

I don't know what to say, Jackson. You saw how everyone acted when Carl Dexter came out.

JACKSON

He was on the football team. And no one cared *that* much.

RYAN

Everyone on lacrosse was spewing some serious shit. They're all Joe Rogan heads.

JACKSON

I don't know why you care about your reputation with the team so much. You're barely on the team. You're hobbling around on these crutches, even though you're literally fine.

RYAN

I got a stress fracture. You know this.

JACKSON

Oh, boo-hoo.

RYAN

It's more complicated than you think, Jackson.

JACKSON

What do you mean?

RYAN

I need to stay on the team to keep my scholarship. And my family isn't doing great right now, so I don't know what would happen if I lost it.

JACKSON

They really take it all away if you leave the team, even for an injury?

RYAN

Yeah. The D1 athlete privilege goes away as soon as you lose your status.

JACKSON

Why would they do that?

RYAN

You tell me.

JACKSON

I'm sure you could figure something out, though. You're good at negotiation. Remember when you got your C turned into a B for that life sciences class?

RYAN

I really don't want to have to think about that possibility. My family's really been struggling ever since my dad lost his practice, and with the lawsuit... *(pause)* There's not really money to go around. They're already dipping into my sister's college fund.

JACKSON

Wow. I had no idea.

RYAN

There's not much to be done. I tried to make a few extra bucks, and... I only got in worse shape because of it.

JACKSON

What do you mean?

RYAN

Tristan.

JACKSON

You've been fucking Tristan for money?!

RYAN

No, no, God, is that what you think of me?

JACKSON

You keep a whole lot of secrets.

RYAN

In high school, when my dad was starting to be pushed out, I thought I would help the family out if I could. Get a little extra cash. So I got into sports betting. I did really well for a while, but then I started losing money.

JACKSON

How much?

RYAN

More money than a seventeen-year-old should be playing with. And Tristan, my buddy at the time, lent me a few bucks. He wasn't going to college, started some company, and hoped to cash in big-time after it went public.

JACKSON

So what happened?

RYAN

The company failed. He was just a kid, knew nothing about how to start a business, let alone run one. So when his investors turned out to be a little shady, he was left with no degree and nothing to do. Now he's banging down my door to pay him back, and I've got nothing.

JACKSON

Holy shit, babe.

RYAN

I know.

JACKSON

This is, like, *Uncut Gems* type shit.

RYAN

It's not that bad. But it's a little bad.

JACKSON

So what will you do?

RYAN

OnlyFans.

JACKSON

I'd murder you.

RYAN

You'd be my first subscriber.

(CECE enters stage left, ready for the hot tub.)

CECE

Are we going or what? Ryan, you look ready.

RYAN

Sorry, I'll go change.

JACKSON

Ryan—

(RYAN does not answer. He stands up and exits upstage. CECE sits on the other couch.)

CECE

Nice painting, huh?

JACKSON

It's an Agnes Martin.

CECE

Who's she?

JACKSON

One of the minimalists in the mid-to-late twentieth century. She made a lot of paintings with really faint grids and lines, drew inspiration from Taoism and Buddhism, and wrote a lot about the transcendence of nature.

CECE

Damn. *(pause)* I remember in high school when you were, like, *the* art guy. My friends and I used to go to all your shows.

JACKSON

Yeah, I do miss painting a bit. Being an art history minor is fun, but I don't get the same thrill as when I was in the studio.

CECE

Why didn't you study art?

JACKSON

The US gives me a longer visa if I get a BS instead of a BA. So I'm doing a BS in Econ, but taking art history classes so I don't dull my brain with only finance.

CECE

No one's stopping you from making your own art, though.

JACKSON

Art doesn't really pay the bills. My parents would kill me if they sacrificed so much to send me to Exeter, and then to an elite college, and I came back home with a painting degree.

CECE

Art paid the bills for Agnes Martin.

JACKSON

Not until later in life, though. There's a reason they call them "starving artists." It takes a lot to get to the level where you can sell a single painting for five or six figures.

CECE

I'm sure you could do it. You were friends with all those socialites in high school. Their parents would certainly pay top dollar for a Jackson Cordoba original.

JACKSON

Oh, stop.

CECE

If things go downhill with your internship, I'm sure you could find something in the art world.

JACKSON

Go downhill with my internship?

CECE

Because of Summer's dad... the recent news about the DUI—

JACKSON

I think he got the charges dropped, though. It was a one time thing, and he seems to be doing fine with the company. I don't think my internship will be affected.

CECE

Still. You're a really gifted painter. I was kind of surprised to see that in college you're doing the whole finance thing. I always thought of you as such an artist.

JACKSON

Yeah, well, it was a life in finance or a green card marriage.

CECE

Not too late for that one.

JACKSON

Girl, find me a rich man and I'll let him put a ring on it.

(SUMMER enters from stage right, ready for the hot tub.)

SUMMER

Hey guys! Shall we?

CECE

(standing up)

Yeah. I'll go get the drinks.

(CECE exits stage left. SUMMER sits down on the couch next to JACKSON.)

SUMMER

Did I tell you that Ryan was walking without his crutches yesterday?

JACKSON

What?

SUMMER

Yeah. I saw him leaving my dad's office, walking just fine.

JACKSON

Leaving your dad's office?

SUMMER

He said he was looking for a pen.

JACKSON

(confused)

That's so weird.

SUMMER

Do you think he's trying to, like, steal something?

JACKSON

Girl, you can't be serious. He is not trying to steal something.

SUMMER

He's just been so... distracted. On his phone all the time. I don't know.

JACKSON

Hey, why didn't you back my idea this morning at the meeting?

SUMMER

About the CIGs?

JACKSON

About the investment plan. With the oil.

SUMMER

I don't know. I'm just not sure we should be, like, snatching their moves so obviously. Won't people know?

JACKSON

I don't think their full group is even in on it. Shreya just told me the board was into the idea, and asked for my opinion. But it's not official yet.

SUMMER

We'll see how our group votes. I don't get to make these decisions.

JACKSON

I'm just saying, it would have been nice to see your support. Especially since I'm running a campaign here.

SUMMER

I have your back, Jackson. After all, I helped you get a damn good internship.

(ANYA and CECE enter stage left, holding mugs.)

ANYA

I made hot chocolate.

JACKSON

My savior.

(He stands up and grabs two mugs from her.)

CECE

Come on! What are we all waiting for!

SUMMER

I'll grab some extra towels and meet you outside.

(CECE, ANYA, and JACKSON exit upstage. We can hear their muffled laughter and chatter. SUMMER exits stage right. After she leaves, RYAN enters from upstage and walks towards the office door stage left. SUMMER re-enters, holding towels.)

SUMMER

Where are you going?

RYAN

(turning around)

Oh, hi. Just needed to grab my glasses, I think I left them in here earlier.

(RYAN looks around. He does not see his glasses. Did he ever have glasses?)

SUMMER

(gesturing towards the door with her shoulder)

Come on outside. Everyone's there.

RYAN

Okay.

(SUMMER and RYAN exit upstage. A minute or two where we can hear the muffled sounds of everyone in the hot tub. The doorbell rings. No one answers. It rings again. And again. Then, TRISTAN enters from stage right and takes in the empty living room.)

TRISTAN

Hello? *(pause)* Anyone here?

(He walks towards center stage, looking around.)

Ryan?

(CECE enters from upstage. When she sees him, she stops, stunned.)

CECE

What the fuck?

TRISTAN

Cece? I didn't know you were...

(JACKSON, ANYA, and SUMMER enter upstage, wrapped in towels.)

CECE

Tristan, what the *fuck* are you doing here.

JACKSON

Oh, so you're Tristan!

SUMMER

Who the hell are you?

ANYA

(sitting down on the couch with her hot cocoa)

I don't really know what's happening.

(RYAN enters upstage and sees TRISTAN.)

RYAN

I told you not to come.

TRISTAN

Well, I'm here.

SUMMER

(stepping forward)

Get out of my house.

TRISTAN

Oh, this is your house? Nice place, Summer. I like the painting.

SUMMER

I'm calling the police.

RYAN

Tristan, you need to leave.

TRISTAN

Ryan, you need to sit down. I'm not leaving here until you give me fifty thousand dollars.

(Blackout.)

ACT II
SCENE ONE

Minutes later. Considerable tension. TRISTAN and RYAN are standing in the middle of the living room. ANYA is sitting on the couch, finishing her hot cocoa and watching. CECE and JACKSON are standing further upstage, watching the showdown. SUMMER is absent.

TRISTAN

The debt's been building for years, dude. You've gotta pay up at some point.

RYAN

I just can't right now.

TRISTAN

My bosses are asking for it, Ryan. They've *been* asking for it. And I can't keep making excuses for you anymore. Especially now that you're not on the team...

RYAN

The fact that I'm not on the team means nothing. I still give you what you need. I thought that was the agreement.

TRISTAN

Well, right now, what I need is fifty thousand dollars.

JACKSON

(interjecting, stepping forward)

What do you mean, give him what he needs?

RYAN

You know. Like, strategies and things.

JACKSON

Strategies and things?

RYAN

Sports stuff. Information about the team.

JACKSON

(to TRISTAN)

Why would you want that?

TRISTAN

I work for a college sports accountant. We like to keep up with the current facts and figures, injury records, scouting reports. And this guy gives us a good deal on what's going on.

ANYA

What the hell is a college sports accountant?

TRISTAN

Well, people make bets on the different teams. And we facilitate them within our databases.

ANYA

So, a bookie?

TRISTAN

Some people may call it that.

CECE

(stepping towards Tristan)

What the hell, Tristan. This isn't you.

RYAN

Wait, you two know each other?

CECE

He's my ex-boyfriend.

RYAN

What?

CECE

You didn't know that? I thought you two were friends in high school.

RYAN

I just knew he was dating some rich girl from New York who went to Exeter.

CECE

Seriously?

TRISTAN

Cece—

CECE

No, that's just great.

RYAN

I'm sorry, I didn't—

CECE

Totally fine, yeah. Not a big deal.

TRISTAN

Cece, I promise that's not what I was saying. We weren't, you know. I was young.

CECE

Let's not do this right now, okay?

TRISTAN

I'm sorry...

CECE

But how did you end up working for a bookie, Tristan? Did the startup fail just as I told you it would?

TRISTAN

No, uh, it worked, for a while. Then the investors, I don't know, found something else more interesting, I guess.

CECE

You should've gone to college.

TRISTAN

Man, you sound like my mother. I don't need your judginess all over again. Sorry not everyone can make millions in crypto as a teenager.

ANYA

Should've gotten a degree... startup failed... Cece—

CECE

(to ANYA)

Sh. Not now.

(CECE sits down on the couch next to ANYA.)

JACKSON

But Ryan, why were you betting so much? Why did you not stop way earlier? Fifty thousand dollars is, like, two Birkins. If you get the cheap ones.

RYAN

It's not fifty thousand dollars, though.

JACKSON

It's not?

TRISTAN

It's closer to thirty-eight. But with my travel expenses, and a little bit extra, and the whole breaking and entering thing...

RYAN

We didn't agree on any "little bit extra."

JACKSON

Why did you agree in the first place?

RYAN

I didn't ask for the line of credit. He offered it, since I was helpful to him. I didn't think he would be banging down my door the second my spot on the team was threatened.

TRISTAN

Bro, I told you, it's not up to me. If it were my money, I'd be playing differently.

JACKSON

Still, Ryan. You shouldn't have accepted his offer.

RYAN

I needed to.

JACKSON

No, you didn't.

RYAN

Yeah, I did, Jackson. Not everyone has parents who will fund their way through private school. You don't know anything.

JACKSON

I know that you never *need* to gamble away money you don't have.

RYAN

While I'm still getting money from NIL boosters, I need to bet with it in order to pay for school next year, okay? Or else, when the money goes away, I'll have to drop out.

ANYA

I mean, there are ways to invest more safely, rather than gambling—

RYAN

You think I don't know that, Anya? You can't invest five thousand dollars and make it fifty thousand. Don't come at me with your superiority complex.

ANYA

You're the one who asked me for financial advice.

RYAN

Plus, I was in high school when this started. I wasn't all business-minded like you guys.

JACKSON

Toto, you're not in high school anymore.

RYAN

Well, I'm not a goddamn wizard, either.

TRISTAN

Ryan, it's not me. You know I put this off as long as I possibly could. And you were helpful, too. For a while. But my bosses aren't playing the nice guy anymore.

(SUMMER enters stage left.)

SUMMER

I just got off the phone with my parents. They'll be here first thing tomorrow. Tristan, I'd get packing if I were you. You don't want to deal with my family's security, and certainly not their lawyers. You're lucky I haven't called the police.

TRISTAN

So, what's it gonna be? Fifty k or a date with Charles? The firm is already on your case, man.

JACKSON

Who the hell is Charles?

TRISTAN

I don't think you want to know, pretty boy.

RYAN

Wait a minute, Summer.

SUMMER

What?

RYAN

Want to ask your dad to explain this?

(He pulls the bottle of pills out of his pocket.)

SUMMER

Excuse me?

RYAN

It's a bottle of ecstasy with his name on it.

SUMMER

Is that why you were snooping around his office last night? And again today?

RYAN

That's not why. But I did find it. Not too well hidden, I might add.

SUMMER

You don't want to do this.

RYAN

I can sink him, Summer. One call to the press and his reputation is over. You can kiss the Red Sox season tickets goodbye. And this house, probably.

SUMMER

Are you trying to blackmail me, Ryan? What the fuck!

RYAN

I'm just saying, we're both in a bit of a sticky situation right now.

SUMMER

You're the one who's fifty k in the hole, my friend.

RYAN

And your father is on drugs. For which I have the proof.

JACKSON

Ryan, I can't believe you!

RYAN

I'm just trying—

JACKSON

You betrayed me. You betrayed all of us.

RYAN

This has nothing to do with you.

JACKSON

This will destroy my summer internship!

RYAN

This will destroy my *life*, Jackson. Which I think is a bit more important than your cushy finance internship with your friend's dad.

JACKSON

You're not who I thought you were.

RYAN

I tried to tell you.

JACKSON

(increasingly worked up)

No, you didn't! You don't tell anyone who you really are! The thing you're most afraid of is yourself.

SUMMER

Jackson, what are you talking about?

JACKSON

You want to tell her?

RYAN

(warning, begging)

Jackson, please.

JACKSON

Since it's the night of Ryan coming clean.
Why don't you share with the class?

RYAN

Jackson. Stop.

CECE

(to ANYA)

I think... we should—

ANYA

(to CECE, she wants to watch)

Stop, stop.

SUMMER

What?

RYAN

I'm, uh. I've been seeing Jackson.

SUMMER

(to JACKSON)

What the fuck?

ANYA

(to CECE)

I called it.

JACKSON

(to SUMMER)

I wanted to tell you. I wanted to tell you so badly.

SUMMER

How could you?

JACKSON

I couldn't... Ryan—

RYAN

I said he couldn't tell anyone.

SUMMER

I can't believe you.

JACKSON

I'm sorry, I didn't mean—

SUMMER

This whole time?

JACKSON

Since October, maybe.

SUMMER

Wow.

(JACKSON goes over to her.)

JACKSON

Summer, I'm so so / sorry—

(SUMMER takes a step away from him.)

SUMMER

I think... I need some space.

(SUMMER exits stage right.)

RYAN

Good job, Jackson. You got what you wanted.

JACKSON

Don't start with me, Ryan. This is all your fault! You gambled your life away. You snuck around all of us. You tried to blackmail her. I didn't do any of those things!

RYAN

Do *you* want to give me fifty thousand dollars?

JACKSON

I don't want to look at you right now.

(JACKSON storms off upstage.)

TRISTAN

Want me to give you a few?

RYAN

I want you to get lost, Tristan.

TRISTAN

I told you, I'm not leaving this house. Shit's nice as hell. Have you seen the *Architectural Digest* spread?

CECE

You read *Architectural Digest*?

TRISTAN

I had to find the house. Snap maps. Google Street View. *Arch Digest*. I hone my tools expertly.

CECE

Good to know, stalker.

TRISTAN

I'm gonna go crash in the room with the sunroof and the Mexican dolls. Holler when you have the money. Or, like, some pizza. I don't know what you guys were planning for dinner, but I haven't eaten since I was driving / all afternoon—

RYAN

Just go.

TRISTAN

Yeah. Okay.

(TRISTAN exits stage left.)

RYAN

So.

TRISTAN

(peeking his head back in)

Yo, this is so sick! They must have repainted the mural.

CECE

(yelling)

We don't want your art criticism, Tristan.

(He leaves again.)

RYAN

I think I'm going to... lie down or something.

(RYAN exits upstage.)

ANYA

Okay, that was crazy. I'm going to go Google Tristan.

CECE

Not sure you'll find anything good.

ANYA

I hope I find something bad.

(She exits stage left. A moment with CECE onstage, who pulls out her phone. TRISTAN walks in.)

TRISTAN

Yo, where can I get a snack in this big ass house?

CECE

The kitchen, probably.

TRISTAN

Right. Cool.

(He sits on the armchair.)

CECE

Aren't you going to get your snack?

TRISTAN

Wanted to catch up with you first. How's the fancy school life?

CECE

It's okay.

TRISTAN

Just okay?

CECE

I don't know. It's complicated.

TRISTAN

Seems pretty great on Instagram.

CECE

Glad to know you're a fan of my content.

TRISTAN

But how's it really going? Surrounded by other big shots?

CECE

Tristan, what are you doing? I told you two years ago that your startup had no market.

TRISTAN

Yeah, well, the money spoke louder than you did.

CECE

Bankrupt at nineteen. Look at you.

TRISTAN

Glad to see you're doing so well.

CECE

Actually, I am. Thank you for noticing.

TRISTAN

So here's where you gonna say "I told you so?"

CECE

Do you need me to say it?

TRISTAN

Nah. I can fight my own battles.

CECE

Well, don't call me when you need cash.

TRISTAN

I've got Ryan for that.

CECE

I think you should really give him a break. You know he doesn't have the money.

TRISTAN

Cool, I think I'ma get out of here before you keep giving me advice. I'll be upstairs all night. You know where to find me.

(He gets up and starts to leave. She pulls out her phone)

CECE

Don't wait up.

(As he exits stage left, he turns around to look at her. She looks up from her phone at him. A moment. He smiles and turns around, and walks offstage.)

SCENE TWO

Two hours or so later, at the end of dinner. Tensions are high. JACKSON, ANYA, SUMMER, CECE, and RYAN sit at the table and avoid the topic at hand. A pot of chili is in the middle of the table.

SUMMER

Thanks so much for making dinner, Anya and Cece.

ANYA

Of course.

CECE

Yeah, it was nothing. Glad to inherit a classic Hedge recipe.

JACKSON

The chili is really good.

RYAN

Mmm.

(A brief silence. Everyone kind of looks around. Then, CECE starts to stand up.)

CECE

Is everyone done? I can take care of this.

(SUMMER pushes out her chair.)

SUMMER

No, no, please. I've got it, since you cooked.

(SUMMER gathers the bowls and the pot.)

JACKSON

I'll help.

(JACKSON helps her carry all the dishes. The two of them exit stage left.)

RYAN

The chili really gets better every year. It's one of my favorite retreat traditions.

CECE

I didn't know there were retreat traditions.

RYAN

You'll see.

ANYA

What do you mean, "you'll see?"

RYAN

Just, you'll see.

CECE

What is this, like, a secret society?

RYAN

Every club has their traditions. We won't make you, like, chug a gallon of milk or smoke two cigarettes at once.

CECE

Who makes people do that?

RYAN

The CIGs.

ANYA

I'm lactose intolerant.

(JACKSON and SUMMER enter, holding a birthday cake, candles, a crystal goblet, and a bottle of vodka. The lights dim. They walk over to the table and place the cake in front of ANYA.)

JACKSON

(singing)

Happy birthday to you...

ANYA

Oh, guys, stop.

JACKSON, SUMMER, CECE, RYAN

(all singing together)

Happy birthday to you, happy birthday dear Anya, happy birthday to you.

(ANYA blows out the candles.)

ANYA

I didn't even know you remembered my birthday.

SUMMER

Uh, of course! Why do you think we have a shared GCal?

ANYA

You nosy asses always want to know what I'm up to.

RYAN

Did you make a wish?

(ANYA stares at him.)

ANYA

Yeah. I wished for fifty thousand dollars.

SUMMER

Okay. It's time for the most important part of our retreat. We must summon the ghost of Nicole Buffett.

CECE

Who's Nicole Buffett?

JACKSON

Warren Buffett's adopted granddaughter. He disowned her for speaking publicly about the family fortune. She was an early member of The Hedge.

SUMMER

Legend has it that she bequeathed us this goblet that she stole from Larry Ellison's private island. So one by one, we must embody her spirit, and drink the liquid assets.

ANYA

Drink the liquid assets?

JACKSON

Just go with it. It's tradition.

(SUMMER pours the vodka into the goblet.)

SUMMER

We go in age order. So Cece's first.

CECE

This is a great way to get mono.

SUMMER

Now, Cece, with one hand on your heart and one hand holding the goblet, please channel the spirit of Nicole.

(SUMMER passes the goblet to CECE, who holds it, puts her other hand on her heart, and closes her eyes. CECE takes a deep breath.)

Tell us one pledge you have for future members of The Hedge.

CECE

I hope that future members of The Hedge will not spill chili on the stove. That was a bitch to clean up.

SUMMER

Tell us one pledge you have for your own future.

CECE

Um... I pledge to finish a full season of *Love Island*.

SUMMER

And now, we chant the Ethos Nicole, and drink the liquid assets.

(SUMMER, RYAN, and JACKSON put their heads down and chant.
ANYA and CECE look around, confused.)

SUMMER, RYAN, JACKSON

(chanting ominously and very seriously)

Money, money, money... must be funny, in a rich man's world.

(CECE and ANYA stare at them. What is going on.)

SUMMER

Drink, Cece.

JACKSON

Hope you enjoy vodka on the rocks.

(CECE takes a sip from the glass. She winces.)

SUMMER

Okay, Anya, it's your turn.

(CECE passes the goblet to ANYA and wipes her mouth.)

One hand on your heart.

(ANYA obliges.)

Now, Anya, tell us one pledge you have for future members of The Hedge.

ANYA

Um, I pledge for future Hedgers to... uh...

SUMMER

It can be anything you want.

JACKSON

Like, you could pledge for us to fund a yacht party or something. It doesn't have to be serious.

ANYA

You think I would want to throw a yacht party?

JACKSON

The hacking club did it. They were sponsored by Tesla.

ANYA

Because everyone wants to be supporting Tesla these days.

JACKSON

I'm just saying. Don't think too hard about it.

ANYA

I pledge for future members of The Hedge to reserve rooms in advance. No more fighting with the Cheese Tasting Club for meeting space.

SUMMER

And one pledge for your future.

ANYA

I pledge to buy my mother a house one day.

SUMMER

Now we chant the Ethos Nicole, and drink the liquid assets.

(SUMMER, RYAN, JACKSON, and CECE put their heads down and chant. ANYA takes a swig from the glass, and doesn't flinch.)

SUMMER, RYAN, JACKSON, CECE

(chanting ominously and very seriously)

Money, money, money... must be funny, in a rich man's world.

ANYA

Yummy!

(As they chant, TRISTAN appears in the doorway. He watches for a few moments and then approaches the table.)

TRISTAN

Is this how people do dinner at your fancy school?

SUMMER

I didn't realize you were still here.

TRISTAN

You think I would leave this place? This house has *wings*. I thought only airplanes did that.

SUMMER

Tristan, could you leave us alone? We're kind of in the middle of something.

TRISTAN

Yeah, what is this, some kind of secret ritual? A weird, culty birthday celebration?

RYAN

Actually, it's Anya's birthday.

TRISTAN

Well, happy birthday.

ANYA

Thanks.

JACKSON

We were just about to start the festivities.

SUMMER

(to JACKSON)

What about the pledges?

JACKSON

(to SUMMER)

Clearly not happening right now.

ANYA

Jackson, where's that dance you were practicing?

JACKSON

Oh, you know, I couldn't do it for company. I'm much too shy.

ANYA

Come on, I know you've got that Maroon 5 spirit within you.

JACKSON

That's very sweet of you to say, but I couldn't possibly upstage you on your big day.

ANYA

No, please, I insist.

SUMMER

You promised her, Jackson.

JACKSON

Well, then, you can't forget your solo.

SUMMER

My solo?

JACKSON

Of course, your solo that you begged for. In the second verse.

SUMMER

Right. Well, why don't you start us off, then.

(SUMMER presses play on "Pay Phone" by Maroon 5. As it starts to play, JACKSON rises, lip syncing. He grabs the goblet, takes a swig of the remains of the vodka inside it, and uses it as a microphone as he commits, hard, to the performance. Everyone else watches and reacts.)

JACKSON

(lip syncing)

I'm at a payphone, trying to call home

All of my change, I spent on you

Where have the times gone? Baby, it's all wrong

Where are the plans we made for two?

(He goes over to SUMMER and beckons her to join. She won't. He continues without her. The others watch, stunned. SUMMER and RYAN are shocked that he is letting out this side of himself. CECE stands up, joining in. She and JACKSON ham it up.)

ANYA

(semi-unaware that this is an impromptu performance)

Cece, you were in on this, too?

JACKSON and CECE

Yeah, I, I know it's hard to remember the people we used to be

It's even harder to picture that you're not here next to me

You say it's too late to make it, but is it too late to try?

*And in our time that you wasted, all of our bridges burned down
 I've wasted my nights
 You turned out the lights
 Now I'm paralyzed
 Still stuck in that time when we called it love
 But even the sun sets in paradise*

(He goes over to SUMMER, who shrugs him off again.)

JACKSON and CECE

(scream-singing)

*I'm at a payphone trying to call home
 All of my change, I spent on you
 Where have the times gone
 Baby, it's all wrong, where are the plans we made for two
 If happy ever after did exist
 I would still be holding you like this
 And all those fairytales are full of shit
 One more fucking love song I'll be sick*

(RYAN watches the two of them, stunned. SUMMER, having been just as shocked as him, joins in for the verse, her “solo.”)

JACKSON, CECE, and SUMMER

*You turned your back on tomorrow
 Cause you forgot yesterday
 I gave you my love to borrow
 But you just gave it away
 You can't expect me to be fine
 I don't expect you to care
 I know I said it before*

(TRISTAN gets into the performance as well, ad-libbing some whoops and “yeahs” throughout. The other three try to play off some synchronized choreo, but they can’t seem to get it. It’s clear that this was not planned.)

*But all of our bridges burnt down
 I've wasted my nights
 You turned out the lights
 Now I'm paralyzed*

*Still stuck in that time when we called it love
But even the sun sets in paradise*

(CECE goes over to ANYA, leads her out of her chair, and spins her around. She sings along to the chorus — CECE and ANYA on one side of the table and SUMMER and JACKSON on the other. They seem to have forgotten their differences, at least for now. At the table, RYAN looks uncomfortable, while TRISTAN is having the time of his life.)

JACKSON, CECE, SUMMER, ANYA

*I'm at a payphone trying to call home
All of my change, I spent on you
Where have the times gone
Baby, it's all wrong, where are the plans we made for two
If happy ever after did exist
I would still be holding you like this
And all those fairytales are full of shit
One more fucking love song I'll be sick
Now I'm at a payphone...*

(As the song ends, they strike haphazard poses. TRISTAN cheers. JACKSON gives a sweeping bow, and SUMMER swats him.)

ANYA

Wow, guys, that was one hell of a birthday treat.

JACKSON

I hope you liked the *High School Musical* references.

ANYA

Definitely. Loved it.

SUMMER

Now, who wants cake? I'll go cut it in the kitchen.

CECE

Can I call dibs on the first slice?

ANYA

No, bitch, it's *my* birthday.

CECE

Second, then.

(SUMMER picks up the cake and exits stage left, with ANYA and CECE scampering after her. JACKSON picks up the goblet and vodka and follows them.)

JACKSON

(on his way out)

I want the third!

(As the commotion leaves the room, RYAN and TRISTAN are left at the table. Neither one of them speaks for a moment. We can hear echoes of the others enjoying themselves from offstage.)

TRISTAN

So I have a proposal for you.

RYAN

What kind of a proposal?

TRISTAN

I know you don't have fifty thousand dollars.

RYAN

Thirty-eight.

TRISTAN

But I think you can be helpful to me. In a way that's worth way more than fifty thousand dollars.

RYAN

How so?

TRISTAN

You know a bit about the Red Sox, don't you.

RYAN

Who doesn't?

TRISTAN

So you know that spring training starts on Wednesday. And people are whispering about some potential major deals about to go down.

RYAN

What are you implying?

TRISTAN

The man who owns this house knows what deals, if any, will be made next week. Betting correctly on that could pay your debt five times over.

RYAN

So you want me to ask him what deals they're making?

TRISTAN

Fuck no, I'm not going to let you bail on me. I want to talk to him when he gets here tomorrow. And maybe, if I'm feeling nice, I'll give you a cut of the profits.

RYAN

Really?

TRISTAN

Depends on how good the information is. And how much intel you can bring in.

RYAN

What do you mean.

TRISTAN

Tell me about those drugs you found.

RYAN

Oh, I dunno. It was just a pill bottle with his name on it. Someone had redacted the label, so I don't exactly know what the prescription was.

TRISTAN

Seriously?

RYAN

It was all I had, though. Sort of smoke and mirrors, trying to get everyone off my ass. Sorry to disappoint.

TRISTAN

But with the news and everything...

RYAN

What news?

TRISTAN

Didn't he get a DUI? My X was all about it.

RYAN

Your ex? You talked to Cece about Summer's dad?

TRISTAN

X. Twitter. Never mind.

RYAN

What DUI, though?

TRISTAN

Forget about it. I probably mixed him up with another guy.

RYAN

Those billionaires, always getting themselves hopped up on something.

TRISTAN

So, you gonna try and talk to your man?

RYAN

We are not talking about this.

TRISTAN

What, I'm still your friend! I support you and everything. I'm a great ally.

RYAN

Shut up.

TRISTAN

Go fight for him, dog! I can see what he means to you.

RYAN

You don't mean that.

TRISTAN

I can tell when my boy is down bad. I've known you for five years, and I've never seen you like this.

RYAN

Okay. Yeah. Hopefully, we can work things out. I hope all of this doesn't, you know, scare him away.

TRISTAN

You got this, man.

(He stands up.)

Okay, I'm gonna go crash. Maybe order a pizza.

RYAN

Cool. I think I'll go to bed, it's been a long day.

(RYAN stands up.)

TRISTAN

Sure. I'll see you tomorrow.

RYAN

And, by the way, thanks.

TRISTAN

No problem.

(RYAN exits upstage. TRISTAN exits stage left.)

SCENE THREE

Later that night. CECE and ANYA are at the table, wrapped in a blanket and looking at a computer.

CECE

So that's basically how my trading works. It's not that interesting, sorry.

ANYA

No, it's super cool. I never really knew that the digital market was so... vast.

CECE

It's not really a well kept secret. But if you know, you know.

ANYA

And now I know.

CECE

Are you going to get into crypto now?

ANYA

Certainly not. But I can see why you're so into it.

CECE

Maybe you'd consider backing my ideas for The Hedge? You know, if you become president.

ANYA

What are you saying?

CECE

I think you're really great at this, Anya. And, sure, you have certain tendencies, and sometimes we disagree, but I do think that you could be a good leader of this group. I just want you to remember that innovation isn't such a bad thing.

ANYA

Well, sometimes it depends on the situation.

CECE

Sure, Jackson is a little too locked on the whole CIGs thing, and we shouldn't worry so much about what other groups are doing, but it is worth maximizing our own potential in order to stay ahead of the curve.

ANYA

No, you're right. You know, I think we could work together on this.

CECE

How so?

ANYA

Well, you can back me in the race for president, and I'll support your initiatives. Start to build out a future for this group.

CECE

Really?

ANYA

Yes, really. But it would require you to stay in school.

CECE

Right. Yeah.

ANYA

Where's your head at with that whole situation?

CECE

Honestly, seeing Tristan today, I was reminded of how volatile the startup space is. I mean, look at him, washed up with only a high school degree, probably in insane debt, selling his soul to a bookie. He used to be so driven.

ANYA

The real world is unpredictable. Especially without the backing of an accelerator.

CECE

Maybe it is worth sticking it out for this degree and then seeing where I can go in business. I want to find something that feels like it has a purpose. I'm worried that this project with Summer won't be fulfilling long-term.

ANYA

I like the way you're thinking. And, of course, I'd be happy to have you on my hypothetical team. I think the two of us could really work well together. Balance each other out.

CECE

Well, thanks. I would love to work with you.

ANYA

And the offer still stands to help you with Econometrics. Since you'll need the course to graduate.

CECE

Oh god, I totally forgot about that pset.

ANYA

We can work on it tomorrow.

CECE

Thanks so much. You're a lifesaver.

ANYA

Anytime.

(CECE checks her phone.)

CECE

We should go to bed soon.

ANYA

Please. I am not a night owl.

(CECE closes her computer.)

CECE

That whole cup shabang was interesting.

(They both stand up and start to walk stage left)

ANYA

I can't believe Jackson actually did the song.

CECE

Wait, that was my favorite part.

(They exit stage left. The upstage door begins to rattle and RYAN pokes his head in. When he notices that the coast is clear, he enters, carrying his crutches, a blanket, and a pillow. He begins to set up on the couch when SUMMER enters stage right.)

SUMMER

Oh, hi. It's you.

(RYAN sits up on the couch and faces her.)

RYAN

You must love to wander the halls at night.

SUMMER

I couldn't sleep. Tristan being in the house has me worried. And I heard the door—

RYAN

Sorry. I thought no one would be up.

SUMMER

What brings you here at this hour? Not sneaking around again, I hope?

RYAN

No, not this time. I, uh, had a fight with Jackson.

SUMMER

Oh.

RYAN

For what it's worth, I'm sorry. For keeping us a secret. I really convinced myself it was better for everyone, and I know now that I was delusional. I really hope it doesn't affect your guys' friendship.

SUMMER

Yeah, I hope so too.

RYAN

Anyway, I think he may break up with me.

SUMMER

Really?

RYAN

Seems like keeping secrets can only keep you going for so long.

SUMMER

...

RYAN

Learning that the hard way.

SUMMER

There are ways to succeed without just lying to everyone, you know. And stealing.

RYAN

I didn't mean to bring you into anything—

SUMMER

What do you mean, you “didn't mean to bring me into anything?” These drugs you found affect *my* family. Not yours. My dad could lose his job over this. And it'll be my fault that I let the thief into our home. And then he'll pass the company on to my half brother and I'll get nothing.

RYAN

I'm working things out with Tristan. He won't bother you or your family. And no one will have to know about the drugs.

SUMMER

Then give them back to me.

RYAN

What do you mean?

SUMMER

Go get them. Now.

(RYAN reaches to get his crutches.)

SUMMER

Don't even bother.

(RYAN exits upstage without his crutches, leaving the blanket and pillow on the couch. SUMMER sits down at the table. A long moment. Then another. She begins to get anxious. Then, RYAN enters.)

RYAN

They're not there.

SUMMER

What?

RYAN

The bottle. With the drugs. It's not where I left it.

SUMMER

Are you serious?

RYAN

Yeah. Someone must've... I don't know. I swear I didn't misplace it.

SUMMER

Fuck.

SCENE FOUR

The next morning. JACKSON, CECE, and ANYA are at the table. SUMMER sits on the armchair. RYAN is standing off to the side with his crutches. Everyone looks tired, grumpy, or both.

JACKSON

Obviously, *I* don't have them.

SUMMER

I'm just saying, you were in the room.

JACKSON

You think I would steal your father's drugs? Come on, Summer. I'm an international student. I can't risk any sort of incident like that. Jesus Christ.

SUMMER

Well—

JACKSON

Ryan, where did you leave them?

RYAN

On the counter in the bathroom.

JACKSON

I didn't see them when I was going to bed.

RYAN

I guess I didn't either.

JACKSON

So I didn't take them.

SUMMER

Did either of you guys see them between yesterday after dinner and this morning?

JACKSON

Clearly not.

RYAN

No. Not that I can remember.

ANYA

I never laid eyes on them.

CECE

Um, same.

(CECE pulls out her phone and starts typing under the table.)

SUMMER

Guys, this is really important. I need to know where they are, or my dad will kill me. I mean, he'll be disgraced if anything falls into the wrong hands. At the very least, the League will have to start an investigation, and they gave him a pretty stern warning last time.

RYAN

I'm really sorry, Summer.

ANYA

Why are you covering for your dad all the time? He's a grown man. He can reap the consequences of his own actions. You didn't do anything wrong.

JACKSON

Wait, where is Tristan?

RYAN

Sleeping upstairs.

ANYA

I haven't seen him since the pizza came last night. Cece, didn't you take it up to him?

SUMMER

Shit.

(CECE starts typing faster.)

Can someone go check and see if he's up there?

(CECE stands up.)

CECE

Of course. I'll go.

(CECE types something and exits stage left.)

JACKSON

I fucking hate Tristan. That asshole couldn't have waited a week?

SUMMER

Now my parents will be sure to turn on the Ring camera alerts.

JACKSON

I'm sorry, Summer.

(He walks over to her and gives her a hug.)

Really. I love you.

(SUMMER hugs him back.)

SUMMER

Well, it's not like my relationship with my dad was really worth salvaging.

(CECE enters stage left. JACKSON sits back at the table.)

CECE

He's not here.

SUMMER

Did you check all the rooms? The bathroom?

CECE

I'm telling you, Tristan is gone.

JACKSON

Oh my god!

RYAN

Really?

SUMMER

We need to figure out another solution, then.

RYAN

What do you mean?

SUMMER

Tristan cannot bring these drugs to the bookies. So we need to give him something.

RYAN

I think it's pretty clear that I can't give him anything.

JACKSON

Too bad he's straight.

SUMMER

No, I'm serious. Maybe we can strike a three-way deal.

(CECE starts to type furiously on her phone.)

RYAN

And what would that look like?

SUMMER

My dad wouldn't press charges against Tristan. Tristan wouldn't come forward with the drugs.

RYAN

And what do I get out of all of this?

CECE

(looking up from her phone)

Tristan would lessen your debt to eighteen thousand if you agree to pay it back within the year.

RYAN

Since when are you his agent?

CECE

We had a little chat upstairs last night. Overcame some of our differences.

JACKSON

What sort of overcoming are we talking, Cece...

SUMMER

And would he agree not to go public?

CECE

Yes.

SUMMER

But he would have to destroy the drugs.

CECE

I can make sure of that.

JACKSON

How? Is there anything binding in your iMessages?

CECE

Summer, I'll add you to a Signal chat so we can talk securely.

JACKSON

Don't leak the Yemen strategy again.

SUMMER

Then, it's settled: Ryan will pay Tristan eighteen thousand dollars within the year; Tristan will destroy the drugs; and my family won't press charges against either of you.

RYAN

Against either of us?

SUMMER

You stole too, hotshot.

CECE

Tristan just texted his agreement.

RYAN

There goes my life savings.

JACKSON

Wasn't aware you had those.

(A moment between the two of them.)

ANYA

Okay, I'm glad you guys were able to work that out. But there's one thing we never did settle—can we decide on the strategies for the club this semester?

CECE

Is now the right time...?

JACKSON

Actually, I think we should talk about it. I had something I wanted to bring up with you all.

(JACKSON sits back down at the table with CECE and ANYA.)

ANYA

Do you want to hear my idea?

JACKSON

Just give me one sec. This is kind of weird timing, but I think I had a sort of epiphany yesterday. Cece, our conversation made me rethink a lot of things.

CECE

Oh. Wow.

JACKSON

I think part of me has always wanted to make a name for myself in certain circles. Going to boarding school, leaving my country and my family, and having to be independent at such an early age honestly may have made me lose track of why I had those ambitions in the first place.

ANYA

How so?

JACKSON

In high school, I was kind of just the art kid. And that opened a number of doors for me. But when I came to college, I wanted to try something new, and be more like my friends who took me to their summer homes and on their private planes. So I chased something that ultimately wasn't true to who I am. I look at you, Anya, and I see someone who really understands finance.

Who maybe could use a brushing up of her interpersonal skills at times, but would be a great leader of this group. And I was honestly in the race for the bump on my resume.

ANYA

I'll choose to ignore the backhanded part of that.

JACKSON

So I don't really think we should invest in oil. That's totally a stupid idea, and all of you told me so. I have no fucking clue what we should do, because I frankly don't really care that much about the markets. I think I was more born to be a trophy husband anyway.

CECE

What?

JACKSON

Sorry, I am not meant for hundred-hour weeks. I need my beauty sleep.

ANYA

We can tell.

JACKSON

(looking at RYAN)

Yesterday showed me that even though we live in a world where so many people are accepted for who they are, lots of people still try to change themselves for the sake of status. And I realized I was doing exactly the same thing that I begged you not to do. So I need to take my own advice.

SUMMER

(walking over to the table)

I don't know what to say, Jackson. I'm so proud of you.

JACKSON

And I'm really sorry about your dad. I'm still here for you if you need anything, obviously. But I think I'm going to look for another internship this summer.

SUMMER

I understand.

ANYA

Does this mean we'll go with my idea?

CECE

Our idea.

SUMMER

You guys both have an idea?

ANYA

Well, yeah. When I encouraged Cece not to drop out—

SUMMER

You did?

CECE

Yeah. Sorry I didn't say anything before. I think it makes more sense for me to stay in school right now, given that all the angel investors are flocking to AI. And, honestly, my parents weren't too thrilled about the idea.

SUMMER

I get it. I think it could be time for me to try something by myself, anyway. But let's keep in touch, I'd love to work with you in the future. You've got a real gift.

CECE

You do, too. You contributed so many good ideas. The IP is yours to run with if you want it.

SUMMER

Thanks, Cece. Maybe I will. Anya, what's your proposal?

ANYA

We want to invest in a new clean tech organization. It's somewhat of a risky move, but the company is VC backed and TechCrunch just did a great write-up about them.

JACKSON

Look at you, Anya, taking a risk!

ANYA

Well, if I'm going to be president of The Hedge, I can't leave us stuck in the past.

CECE

And I've always said that.

RYAN

You'll be a great president, Anya.

ANYA

Guys, I haven't even officially announced my candidacy yet. Let's stop this whole thing.

CECE

Yeah, and when are we getting back to campus? I still need to finish this pset.

JACKSON

And we have a road trip playlist to blast.

ANYA

(standing up from the table)

I call shotgun.

RYAN

Seriously? I have the longest legs. And I'm injured.

CECE

Please. Ryan, you can take the middle seat.

RYAN

Come on.

JACKSON

(giving CECE a look)

Girl...

CECE

Fine. I'll take the middle.

SUMMER

(standing up)

Now, let's hit the road before another intruder comes in.

ANYA

When I'm president, we'll lock the front door on retreat.

(RYAN exits upstage, ANYA exits stage left, and SUMMER exits stage right.)

CECE

Jackson, when I get rich one day, I'll buy up all your paintings.

JACKSON

Miss crypto girl, you're already rich.

CECE

Then you better start painting.

(Blackout.)

EPILOGUE

Spotlight on ANYA, center stage.

ANYA

Successful investors always strive to reach the *optimal hedge ratio*. The formula is key for risk management, aiming to strike a balance between minimizing potential losses while still maximizing gains. That weekend and in the months after, my peers and I learned a lot about that optimal hedge ratio, both in finance and in life.

After a thrilling uncontested election, Summer transitioned the presidency over to me, and I implemented the investment strategy that Cece and I had worked out. She's the one who pushed me to hedge a little less, and her intuitions were right. The company we backed ended up doubling our returns over the next two quarters, and I started off my presidency on a bullish streak.

Cece herself learned to hedge a little more, and finished out her freshman year strong. She even got an A in Econometrics. Jury's still out on whether or not she'll actually get her degree, since upperclassmen approach her all the time about launching a startup, but for now, she's doing great as The Hedge's first ever Director of Innovation. And she's still making bank trading crypto.

As for the CIGs, they never did make that trade in oil—turns out it was just a ruse to see if we'd stoop so low as to steal their idea, and get us some bad PR. They did just okay in Q2, leaving us in the top position for recruitment that fall. Jackson cheered us on through the rest of the semester and stopped trying to be a spy, but eventually phased out of his role on The Hedge's exec board. In the spirit of risk management, and avoiding the starving artist life, he got an internship at a gallery where they let him paint in the off hours. His Instagram followers are growing and he's already had a few pieces sell. I guess the parents of his rich friends from high school really did want to start their collections early. His romance with Ryan fizzled out, and I hear that the two of them aren't on great terms.

After we got back to campus, Ryan ditched the crutches and officially quit the lacrosse team. He seemed happier, from what I saw, but no lacrosse meant no scholarship, and he transferred to the University of New Hampshire for his senior year. He's come back to visit a few times, and says he likes it there. I think he may even have a boyfriend. His summer job in IB plus tutoring shifts helped him pay back Tristan, who decided to stop bumming around and enrolled in community college.

Even though Tristan didn't go public about the drugs, Summer's dad passed the company to her half brother anyway. He offered her a position in the company after she graduated, but she turned it down to go after her own startup. Turns out, her idea with Cece really *was* good—and perhaps she was using Cece as a hedge herself. Maybe that's what that weekend on Cape Cod taught us:

Even the surest among us need a little push in the right direction sometimes—to take the risk, or to hedge our bets.