

Wanderlust

by

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Wanderlust

Cast:

Note – the play can be cast with five male and two female actors.

DANIEL: Male, 21-35, a single, highly-educated software and financial executive, very confident around women

KOZ: Male 37-51, a business professor, ultra-cool, a truth teller, sarcastic

HANK: Male 37-49, entrepreneur of a software company, nerdy, straight arrow, nice guy, loyal, bad communicator, awful dresser

PAUL: Male 43, head of finance for Marin County (can be played by same actor as Hank)

MASON: Male 49-59, officer and eventually head of an investment bank, erudite, effervescent, dynamic

CHARLENE: Female, 67, senior advisor, and former head of the bank, smart, grounded, profound, folksy, native Texan

JEFFREY: Male, 32, Mason's son-in-law, simple, over his head

AARON: Male, 32, an executive MBA Student (can be played by the same actor who plays Jeffrey)

Five women's roles, 40-45, all played by the same actor:

BARBARA: A college professor, professionally dressed, flirtatious

TERRI: Owner of a restaurant, curious, Brooklyn accent

GAIL: Hank's wife, innocent, naïve

DIANA: Empty nester, very confident, direct, playful

TINA: An executive MBA student

There are cameo parts of three professors that will be played by the actors playing Hank, Mason, and Jeffrey

Setting is 2003-2017. Stage has three areas: Stage left is Daniel's apartment, with a door exit upstage that is the entrance, and a door exit stage left that is a bathroom. The apartment will change over time through the use of simple furnishings. Stage right is an office with a door exit stage right. The middle stage will be used as a classroom, restaurant, conference room, disco and bar. There is an electronic ticker visible to the entire audience – the ticker will show stock quotes continually, but also will be used to show the year and occasionally other information.

Synopsis

Daniel is a student who has a strong sense of ethical values but a defiance of traditional moral codes. He's mentored throughout college by Professor Koz, a dynamic teacher who has a strong belief that good business is devoid of ethics. Koz helps Daniel land a job at a rising software company, where his sense of ethics is reinforced by its eclectic founder, Hank. Eventually Daniel feels betrayed by Hank, which leads to a personal conflict that results in Daniel leaving his job and Hank losing his company. Daniel goes to work for a bank that was responsible for Hank's ouster, and is aided by its pioneer and founder, Charlene. While working for the bank, Daniel falls in love with a vibrant older woman who's married. He also works on a project for the bank's CEO that he begins to suspect may be defrauding its clients. Daniel must decide how his sense of ethical propriety melds with his career desires and love interest.

ACT ONE – SCENE 1

A classroom. Daniel is standing behind a lectern.

DANIEL

How ya doing? Most of you don't know me, but, you like me, don't you? I'm told I make a great first impression. But I'm about to tell you a story, and in two hours ... *(to a woman in the audience)* this is supposed to take two hours, right? ... by the way, that's an amazing blouse you're wearing – it really complements those soulful eyes of yours – *(to general audience)* anyway, two hours from now, a few of you won't feel so hot about me. But I'll be on your minds tomorrow, and some of you *(looks back at the woman in the audience)*, may be intrigued.

Daniel puts on glasses, crosses to front of stage.

Coming out of high school, I was quite the coveted student, and after an exhaustive search, I accepted a scholarship to study computer engineering at the University of California at Berkeley.

Entire cast sticks their heads out of entrances, wearing blue, yelling "Go Bears!" Ticker says 2003 – Daniel's senior year.

For the first three years I was disappointed. Yeah, my teachers had "beautiful minds." But I was seeking some mentoring, and, none of the professors I met seemed the nurturing type. Let's just say they were kinda –

Three professors enter, move to the center area, and simultaneously lecture in a nerdy manner.

PROFESSOR 1

Differential equations are a fun application of calculus. Some of the simmmmmmmple equations can be solved by explicit formulae, but what fun is that that *(grins widely)*. The most ...

PROFESSOR 2

In A I, we're even making strides in creating an artificial sense of humor. What did the cyborg wife ask her husband to do every week? Garbage in, garbage out. *(laughs)* The sense of humor emanates ...

PROFESSOR 3

Understanding architecture is more than just how the CPU works and how it uses memory. Emulation software can help us become more efficient in time cycles, energy consumption, and memory ...

DANIEL

O.K. guys. Hey. Hey! They get the idea.

Professors exit. Ticker says "2000 – Daniel's Senior Year"

Smart? You bet. Potential mentors? I don't think so. I didn't want to resign myself to a life of Star Wars conventions and cyber dating. I tried taking some business classes, but I realized that professors are professors – nerdy, dull, self-unaware. Until I met Professor Koz.

Koz enters, crosses to the podium.

DANIEL (cont.)

His full name was Professor Edmund Kozloski, but everyone just called him Professor Koz. How cool was that – a prof with a nickname.

PROFESSOR 2

(enters) My friends call me Data ... you know, the android from Star Trek, the Next Generation.

Daniel stares at Professor 2; Professor 2 slinks back off stage

DANIEL

He taught a class in business management. Professor Koz was great to listen to. He was confident, smooth, unconventional, funny –

KOZ

(lecturing) I read articles that claim that business has changed – that what it takes to succeed has changed. That's such bull shit. You think superior programming made Microsoft successful? Yeah, right. Tell it to my blue screen. And Apple – brilliant design? Oracle – the best data structure? They were led by founders who had vision, resources, and most important, tenacity. They didn't spend time getting in touch with peoples' feelings. They stopped at nothing to

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succeed, using all legal tactics, and many illegal, to flourish. And their methods are taken directly from some of the most famous, and infamous, businessmen in our history. John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, JP Morgan – philanthropists with their names associated with foundations, plazas, and performing arts centers. And in business, they were violent strike breakers and market manipulators who employed monopolistic maneuvers that Bill Gates used 100 years later. Want to be known for doing good works? Then be ruthless in business – and you can make enough money to do all the good works you want. History will remember you kindly. No business ethicist has a college named after him.

Koz crosses to office

DANIEL

I hung on every word. For the first time, I actually used a professor's office hours for something other than test preparation.

DANIEL crosses to office

KOZ

It's the engineer. Shouldn't you be programming the next big video game or something?

DANIEL

I really want to get in the business side of software.

KOZ

Then you're studying the wrong stuff. Software engineers will be like those railroad workers that Andrew Carnegie treated so warmly. Labor doesn't become management.

DANIEL

I've been thinking about getting an MBA -

KOZ

I'll call the admissions director at Stanford. I assume you have good grades and test scores.

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DANIEL

Yes, but why Stanford -

KOZ

Cause that's where I'll be teaching starting next year. I haven't formally accepted their offer yet, so I still have leverage.

DANIEL

But they're our rival school.

KOZ

(Laughs) Faculty don't care about that kind of stuff – blue or cardinal doesn't matter – green's the color that counts.

DANIEL

I was thinking I could work for a couple of years, and then start applying -

KOZ

I don't want an algorithmic flowchart of your assessment process. If you want me to call Stanford, I will. If not, I won't.

DANIEL

Yes, thank you, please call for me. Um ... Professor Koz, do you ever play chess?

KOZ

Do I look like a geek?

Daniel exits, Koz crosses back to lectern, lecturing.

Daniel's a very unique young man. Yeah, smart, but all Berkeley students are smart. Something about him reminds me of ... ME at that age. I genuinely like him – and I don't like anybody. I called the admissions director – he even got some financial aid. As for me, I waited for University of Chicago to match the Stanford offer, and then asked Stanford for \$10,000 more. They gave me the money. Good thing, cause Chicago is too damn cold, and Shelly would've divorced me. *(exits)*

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DANIEL

Enters, crosses to downstage center.

And that was that. I was going to be a Stanford MBA student. I had one other mentor, so to speak.

Barbara enters – goes to the lectern upstage.

DANIEL (cont)

I took as an elective a course in history of science and technology. I was very intrigued by the professor – Barbara Norris.

Sits in chair downstage facing lectern

BARBARA

(Lecturing) What drove Galileo to put his freedom at risk? Was it his search for universal truth? In part. His ego to be famous? Naaaaahhhhh. Breaking a taboo by challenging an authority figure? Getting warmer.

DANIEL

Turns around, straddling chair facing audience

I never paid much attention to the words –just thinking, how sexy this woman is. And when she'd get to a key point, she'd always say -

BARBARA

Bingo.

Crosses to office

DANIEL

Yeah, it's a dopey term, but it's also the name of a song from my favorite indie group. I'd find excuses to meet in her office.

Crosses to office

BARBARA

You certainly have a healthy interest in Descartes.

DANIEL

I admit my interest is more than just academic. *(Touches her hand)* You're a very intriguing woman.

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BARBARA

And you're a bad boy, aren't you?

DANIEL

Brushes her cheek with back of his hand

Maybe – but bad boys need love too.

BARBARA

Too dangerous.

DANIEL

No one can see us in my apartment – my roommate's gone for the weekend.

BARBARA

No promises. Unless I say differently, this is a strictly platonic encounter.

DANIEL

You're the professor – whatever you say.

*They cross to his apartment. Daniel hands Barbara a drink.
As he does he tries to kiss her. Barbara pulls back.*

BARBARA

No no no. I do love this music, though. I didn't figure you as the Tony Bennett type.

DANIEL

(Moves behind Barbara) Every heart sings a song, incomplete, until another heart whispers back. Those who wish to sing always find a song.

Daniel kisses the back of Barbara's neck. She pulls away.

BARBARA

I am impressed – no man has quoted poetry to me in a long time.

Daniel massages her shoulder with his left hand, and softly touches her just below the neck with the right hand.

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DANIEL

At the touch of a lover, everyone becomes a poet.

Barbara slowly, reluctantly, takes his right hand and pulls it away from her front, and speaks teasingly.

BARBARA

Daniel ... remember? ... I said this was to be a platonic evening. You said you respected that.

DANIEL

I do! The poet I've been quoting is Plato.

Daniel turns her around and kisses her deeply – she returns the kiss even more so. After the kiss, Barbara crosses to lecture, lecturing.

BARBARA

I'm not naïve; I knew what was going to happen. But I was curious about his motivation – I'm 25 years older, and he's a very good looking boy. *(in same cadence as Galileo lecture)* So why me instead of a student his own age? Is it that I'm an older woman? In part. A woman with brains? Naaaaahhhh. Breaking a taboo by being with an authority figure? Getting warmer ...

Daniel moves behind Barbara as she is talking, slides a finger down her left arm until it reaches her wedding ring. He looks at the ring, smiles, and looks at the audience.

DANIEL

Bingo!

Exits

BARBARA

We continued to see each other for the next few months – the occasional evening in his apartment, a cheap hotel room outside of town, a quickie in my car or office, I even took him with me to a conference in L.A. I loved his energy.

Daniel enters apartment wearing a graduation robe and Barbara crosses to apartment.

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BARBARA (cont)

But flings are temporary by definition, and ... *(to Daniel)* here's a present for you.

DANIEL

I was hoping for a different type of present.

BARBARA

Graduation starts in 20 minutes. I'm surprised you even had time to see me. Don't you have family attending?

DANIEL

Nope – no one.

BARBARA

What about your parents?

DANIEL

My mom left us when I was six. Dad had a fatal heart attack after my freshman year. So it's just me.

BARBARA

Oh my. I'm sorry. I don't know why I never asked about your parents before. I guess I don't talk much about my family either.

DANIEL

Speaking of which, I met your husband.

BARBARA

WHAT? How did you –

DANIEL

I pretended I was interested in his technical writing class.

BARBARA

That's WAY too risky. *(pause)* Maybe it's a good thing you're graduating.

DANIEL

I'm getting my MBA just 40 miles away from here. We can still see each other.

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BARBARA

I'm thinking we should take a break.

DANIEL

You sure?

Barbara nods, Daniel exits. Barbara crosses to lectern.

BARBARA

He graduated, went to Stanford. He sent me emails occasionally – last time he wrote he said he was taking a class from Professor Koz –

Ticker says "2005 – Daniel Gets an MBA". Koz and Daniel in Koz's office, Daniel says Professor Koz the same time Barbara does.

DANIEL

Professor Koz, you said that internet stocks were a bubble. It's easy to say that now, but how do we know that something is a bubble at the time of the bubble?

KOZ

What if I promise I won't ask that on the exam?

DANIEL

I'm serious. If I'm going to invest money someday, I want to make sure it's not in the middle of a bubble.

KOZ

An MBA student who actually wants to learn? I must have slipped into an alternative universe. O.K. When an investment is priced at a level that can't be justified mathematically, it has the potential of being a bubble.

DANIEL

Hmmmm – that's ... enlightening. I'll have to think about that.

KOZ

That's a good quality. Great for business.

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DANIEL

My inquisitiveness?

KOZ

Hell no. The last thing a company wants is inquisitive employees. (*beat*) I mean you can make someone think they said something smart when you really mean they're full of shit. That'll make you a CEO someday.

DANIEL

With your cynical attitude, what made you become a business professor?

KOZ

Beats working. So let's talk about you. What are your plans after you finish up here?

DANIEL

I mostly interviewed with venture capital firms and investment banks. I have a few offers.

KOZ

You don't sound too enthused.

DANIEL

The money's good – but -

KOZ

But?

DANIEL

They all seem mercenary. My dad worked for Hewlett Packard. He was always excited when a new HP product was released. Am I supposed to be thrilled when the bank I work for creates a merger?

KOZ

It's a different economy today. But I have an idea. Meet me Friday at 6:00 at Jimmy's Restaurant. I'm having dinner with someone I want to introduce you to.

DANIEL

Cool, I've never had dinner with a professor here before.

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KOZ

And you're not now either. Only my guest and I are having dinner, but you can join us for a drink before.

ACT ONE – SCENE 2

A restaurant. Terri is at the hostess stand - Daniel enters and crosses to the stand

DANIEL

I'm here to meet with Dr. Kozloski. He should have a 6:00 reservation.

TERRI

He's not here yet. I can seat ya at the table, or ya can wait here for him.

DANIEL

Well since you're here, I'll wait. My name is Daniel.

TERRI

My pleasure. I'm Terri.

DANIEL

You seem much too good looking to be a hostess.

TERRI

Uh huh – I bet ya say that all the time.

DANIEL

First time today.

TERRI

(Laughs) Well at least yuh honest. And would ya say I was too pretty to be an owner?

DANIEL

You're Jimmy?

TERRI

No, but my husband's Jimmy.

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DANIEL

Be sure to tell Jimmy he's a lucky man.

Koz and Hank enter.

KOZ

Daniel, I want you to meet Hank Valis. Hank, Daniel Brinson.

DANIEL

Nice to meet you, Mr. Valis, or should I call you Hank?

HANK

Uh – I do not – whatever you -

TERRI

I'll seat ya now if you'd like. (*She escorts them to the table*). I can take yuh drink orders, if ya know what ya want.

KOZ

I'll have a Manhattan.

HANK

Uh - a fizzy – uh – two-thirds sparkling water, one-third tap. Oh, and four ice cubes.

DANIEL

Diet coke.

Terri exits.

HANK

How much do you know about programming software?

KOZ

Hank's developed an algorithm that will take any software program and translate it into another programming language.

HANK

That's a bit of an oversimplification -

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KOZ

An algorithm like that is very marketable.

HANK

I've had a lot of interest from -

KOZ

He formed a company, has dozens of programmers, but -

DANIEL

Professor Koz, why don't you let Hank tell me?

TERRI

Returns with the drinks.

Here ya go gentleman.

Places drinks on the table and exits.

HANK

The software has to be continually updated, because there are more programming languages being developed. But I have never had a great business focus. I am more -

KOZ

I created a business strategy; the first step is -

DANIEL

Ahem! Hank, what are you looking for?

HANK

Koz says I need someone to help with communications, but I also think an understanding of software is needed. How much do you know -

DANIEL

I was a computer science major as an undergraduate.

HANK

Here at Stanford?

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DANIEL

No – that “other” school across the bay.

HANK

Berkeley? That’s where I got my degree. Does Professor Moskowitz still teach that Database class?

DANIEL

Yes – he wrote one of my recommendation letters for the MBA program.

HANK

Oh he was so neat. What about Dr. Blum. Did you take his Artificial Intelligence class?

KOS

I see this is becoming a reunion. Hank, I’ll meet you back here for dinner.

Exits.

DANIEL

I took A I – but it wasn’t from someone named Blum.

HANK

Ah – that is a shame. He was fascinating – and quite the dresser. I learned a lot about fashion from him.

DANIEL

Uh huh.

HANK

Hey, did you take that history of technology class from that female professor. I can’t remember her name. She always said the word “Bingo.”

DANIEL

Barbara Norris.

HANK

Yes, that is who I was talking about. I liked her. She was very passionate.

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DANIEL

Definitely passionate.

HANK

So, what else did you do in your studies? Any clubs or activities? Like the Nano Club?

DANIEL

I was in a chess club. And I played intramural basketball – my team won the campus championship my junior year.

HANK

The only basketball I ever played were on computers. (*beat*) But I did play a mean chess game. I have not played in while – I have been too busy. My problem is I know I need someone to help with the business side of things, but I have trouble trusting people who don't know software.

DANIEL

I understand. You seem to be doing well without any help.

HANK

Would, ummmmm, you be interested in working for a company like mine?

DANIEL

Honestly Hank, I'm not sure. It would depend on all of the details. But I do think I could learn a lot from you.

HANK

It was nice talking to you Daniel. (*stares off into space, awkward silence*)

DANIEL

O.K. ... So, I guess I'll be going. Thanks for meeting me. Have a good dinner.

Daniel rises, shakes Hank's hand, walks by the hostess stand

TERRI

Good meetin?

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DANIEL

My meeting with them, or with you?

TERRI

With dem, silly.

DANIEL

That meeting went O.K. This one is much more promising. Can I take you out sometime?

TERRI

Ya did get what I meant when I said I have a husband, didn't ya?

DANIEL

I understood. I don't mind if he doesn't.

TERRI

Yeah – he minds.

DANIEL

Takes a card from the hostess stand and writes on the back of it.

Then you shouldn't tell him. Here's my number.

ACT ONE – SCENE 3

Daniel's apartment. There is knocking at the door, Daniel answers, Koz enters.

DANIEL

Professor Koz, what are you doing here?

KOZ

Your phone was busy. *(Crosses to phone, which is off the hook, and puts it back on).* I had to run an errand so I figured I would stop by.

DANIEL

This really isn't a good time -

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KOZ

Hank tells me he had you over to the office and offered you a job.

DANIEL

Yeah he did, but -

KOZ

Are you going to take it?

DANIEL

Maybe I can come by your office and talk -

TERRI

Enters from the bathroom, buttoning up her blouse.

Gotta get goin, or I'll be late to ... Oh, ya didn't say ya had company. Hi and bye.

Exits

KOZ

Isn't that the hostess from the -

DANIEL

Yes

KOZ

Isn't she married to -

DANIEL

Jimmy.

KOZ

And that doesn't bother you?

DANIEL

No – we live in a democracy.

KOS

How's that matter?

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DANIEL

I figure Terri's OK with it, and I certainly am, so even if Jimmy dissented, he'd be outvoted.

KOZ

Hmmmm – sounds like something I would say. Remind me never to introduce you to my wife.

DANIEL

(Laughs) You have no worries – I'd never have a fling with a woman whose husband I know.

KOZ

Interesting moral line you've drawn.

DANIEL

So, Dr. Koz, why are -

KOZ

I told you -- just call me Koz.

DANIEL

Koz, why are you so interested in whether I take the job at Translation?

KOZ

I consult with Hank. It'd be great to have another person there who can provide perspective. The question is ... are you going to take it?

DANIEL

I don't know. I really like the guy; but he's offering a lot less money than the investment banks. And yet, I see how hard everyone works there –there will be more pressure. Plus ... never mind.

KOZ

What?

DANIEL

Everyone's pretty nerdy, even for a software firm. Particularly Hank.

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KOZ

And that's why it's good. You're smooth and articulate. But at an investment bank, so is everyone else. They're like the Stepford MBAs. You should consider Translation. In the land of the blind, a one-eyed man is king.

DANIEL

I'll think about -

KOZ

Ah, the Daniel- "I'll think about it" line. You whine about how mercenary financial firms are, and you get a chance at a real business, but the people there aren't as cool as the banking guys, so forget it. What would your father do?

DANIEL

Like you said before, it's different now -

KOZ

Maybe that stuff you said about pride in his work was all bull shit?

DANIEL

No, it was real. *(beat)* I guess you're right ... I'll call Hank and tell him I'll take the job. Thanks, Doc ... uh ... Koz. I appreciate being able to talk things out. *(holds out hand to give Koz a handshake)*

KOZ

(shakes Daniel's hand) You're welcome. *(starts to exit)* I'm sure you made the right decisi ... oops, I just stepped on something *(reaches down, picks up an earring)*. Hmmmm, I wonder who this belongs to *(gives earring to Daniel and chuckles)* I think I need to drop by my students' apartments more often.

Exits

ACT ONE – SCENE 4

*Daniel's office. Daniel and Hank are playing chess.
Ticker says "2007 – Daniel Gets Some News"*

HANK

(moves piece) There are too many errors . We should postpone the release date.

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DANIEL

(moves piece) No! A delay will signal weakness.

HANK

(moves piece) It's a matter of integrity.

DANIEL

(moves piece) No one expects software to be perfect. We can release it now, and send out patches when we fix the bugs. That's hardly corrupt.

HANK

Our company code says "Our products have the highest quality assurance."

DANIEL

But –

HANK

I had an ethics professor who proposed a definition of integrity that I really liked. He would say, "you never have to give your word, but if you do, you have to keep it, and if you don't, I get to notice."

DANIEL

(pause) I've never heard that before. That's really -

HANK

(moves piece) Change of subject. I appreciate you helping Billy out with basketball. Gail says he's actually looking forward to practice and games.

DANIEL

(moves piece) He's a great kid. He just needed a little help with basics – dribbling, hand position, balance.

HANK

(moves piece) The other kids used to tease him. And the coach was not helping – saying maybe he should play with the 9-year olds.

DANIEL

(moves piece) I'm showing him stuff the coach should be teaching – but coaches tend to focus on the better players.

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HANK

(moves piece) And I will also say, these early morning games are the highlight of my day. They get my mind focused.

DANIEL

(moves piece) I'm surprised you can do it. When I first started here, you'd always come in at 8:00 after dropping Billy off at school.

HANK

Gail now takes him.

DANIEL

She doesn't mind?

HANK

(moves piece) She does not know that I am up to no good with a chess board *(big grin)*. *(beat)* So, it is a big day today.

DANIEL

(moves piece) The board meeting – right. You have all the reports you need, don't you? I know the new investor is coming by.

HANK

That is not the only reason it is a big day. I should have told you a while ago, but I cannot put it off any longer. I have decided to hire a Chief Operating Officer.

DANIEL

Damn it! *(stands up)* We decided that you and I could handle all the management work.

HANK

Ummmmm -

DANIEL

It took you a full year for you to trust me, and hiring someone else will make things more confused around here. You waited ...

HANK

Daniel ...

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DANIEL

till the day of the board meeting to tell me, because it'd be too late to change your mind.

HANK

Can I speak now?

DANIEL

Yes. Actually NO! You know what I've been sacrificing to keep working here? I get calls from headhunters -

HANK

Daniel, YOU are the new COO.

DANIEL

(pause) O.K. So I feel pretty dumb now.

HANK

(slowly moves piece, grinning) Checkmate! *(beat)* Your salary will go up by 23.6%, plus an increase in the option pool. Our lawyer is finishing up all of the paperwork. I know you have been earning less than you could have with other companies. I really think we are building something neat here.

DANIEL

I don't know what to say. Have you told Koz?

HANK

I asked his opinion and he said it was a brilliant idea. Of course, it means you will have to join me for these board meetings. *(grin)* So you better get ready. And I should too.

Exits

DANIEL

Hoooo leeeee Shit.

Daniel jumps up joyously, and punches the air with his fist, as Koz and Mason enter.

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KOZ

This must be one of those new aerobic exercise techniques. Daniel, meet Mason Andrews of Corning Capital. They just invested a bunch of money, and Mason's a new board member.

DANIEL

Nice to meet you Mason. Welcome to our humble surroundings.

MASON

They certainly ARE humble. If you're looking to upgrade – I know the best corporate interior designer in the Bay Area. She did the -

DANIEL

We won't be spending money on décor for a few years.

KOZ

Mason, I want to catch up with Daniel before the meeting. Do you know where the conference room is?

MASON

I'll find it. Congratulations on your promotion Daniel. I'll be seeing you soon.

Exits

KOZ

So, C O O. Pretty cool. In a couple of years, I'll have to call you President.

DANIEL

You think so?

KOZ

Unless you suck. How's everything been going?

DANIEL

Pretty good. We're making –

GAIL

Enters, stands at the doorway

Hey Daniel, congratulations on the promotion.

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DANIEL

Thanks, Gail.

GAIL

Can you give this tie to Hank for the board meeting? He forgot it.
Exits

KOZ

Is that -

DANIEL

Gail, Hank's wife. I thought you knew her. Anyway, we're making good progress. Although, Hank's oddness can sometimes get in the way.

KOZ

How do you mean?

HANK

Enters

Oh, hello Koz. Daniel, the meeting starts in 4 minutes and 23 seconds. I will make sure the PowerPoint is loaded on the computer.

DANIEL

O.K. Be there in a minute, Hank.

HANK

Grinning

I told you, call me Pots.

DANIEL

Right. O.K ... Pots.

Hank exits

KOZ

Why pots?

DANIEL

It's an acronym. Stands for President of Translation Software.

Wanderlust

KOZ

O.K. that IS a bit bizarre, but -

DANIEL

He often says weird things ... or laughs in the middle of someone's sentence, as if he's in a different conversation. People who know him shrug it off, but to some clients, it's off putting. Even our programmers aren't sure he's tuned in.

KOZ

Sounds like a problem.

DANIEL

It probably sounds worse than it is. I love the guy. We have a great relationship. I've been to dinner at his house a lot. He's almost ... like a father figure.

KOZ

I thought I was your father figure.

DANIEL

More like my dirty old uncle. *(pause)* Seriously, Koz, I appreciate you being there for me. I know I can count on you. Thanks!

KOZ

Not anything you don't deserve. We better get going. We only have 2 minutes and 47 seconds.

DANIEL

I'll join you in a minute. I need to finish an email. *(Koz exits, Daniel waits a moment, and then gives a fist pump)* Yes!

ACT ONE – SCENE 5

Scene opens with Daniel in his office, ticker says "2009 – Daniel faces a challenge", phone rings.

DANIEL

Picks up phone

Hello. Hey Koz, how are you? ... No, no chess game this morning. Hank's been acting odd all week, something's going on. ... I'm not sure, but I think he's going

Wanderlust

to name me President ... Yeah, we've been growing like crazy, and profitability's been great ... Funny, no, you can't call me "pots." Hey, I hear him coming. I better go.

HANK

Enters

Good morning Daniel.

DANIEL

Hi Hank. I thought you were out of the office this morning.

HANK

I had a breakfast meeting. That is the reason I wanted to talk to you.

DANIEL

What's going on?

HANK

We have been talking about when we grew to a particular size, it might be time for me to step aside and not control daily operations, and just focus on strategy.

DANIEL

Yeah, I just figured you'd let me know when you thought we were -

HANK

I know we talked about you becoming President at that time. I've read a lot about management strategy. Many problems with tech companies in the past were caused by mistakes of inexperience.

DANIEL

What are you saying?

HANK

It is not optimal for a business of our size to have someone under 30 in such a prominent position. I have recalibrated – we need to put off the idea of you being President for a few years.

DANIEL

I'd be lying if I said I wasn't disappointed. So you're going to stay as both President and CEO.

Wanderlust

HANK

No.

DANIEL

Then what?

HANK

I have been meeting this week with Abby McConnell. She is currently Chief Operating Officer at Siebel Systems. They were just purchased by Oracle. She has to stay there for a few months, but then she can join our team as President.

DANIEL

What the hell?

HANK

I did not expect you to like this. But I think -

DANIEL

I'm glad I'm meeting your expectations.

HANK

But I think it is best for all of us in the long-run.

DANIEL

And those conversations we had about integrity? Bull shit?

HANK

Daniel, this is not an exception to integrity. I never deceived you. I just re-analyzed our situation. I am sure you know I do not have a lot of personal friends. I do think of you as one of them.

DANIEL

Some friend.

HANK

Neither of us knew we were going to be as successful as we were. I just think we need someone with more experience. If you think about this logically -

Wanderlust

DANIEL

Fuck your logic. Because I've done my job so well that we're bigger and more profitable than you expected, I can't have the promotion you've dangled in front of me for the past two years. That's a great algorithm you've created.

HANK

Your job will not change – you will just be reporting to another person instead of me. And you are still going to earn the same pay as before. I will even give you a 10.4% raise -

DANIEL

I don't give a shit about the money. It's about what we can build together.

HANK

You are only 28. With Abby with us, we have a lot of building left to do.

DANIEL

This sucks. You know I can't leave – my stock options would become worthless.

HANK

It is a logical business decision, and one I had to make myself. I really hope it does not affect our friendship.

DANIEL

Uh huh.

HANK

I need to get back to my office – I have a meeting with a new large client.

DANIEL

Yeah I know – I found the client and scheduled the meeting.

Hank exits

DANIEL (cont)

Picks up an object and throws it)

Mother fucker!

ACT ONE – SCENE 6

Daniel's office. Daniel is sitting at his desk on the phone.

DANIEL

Lets just say our conversations are icy ... Abby won't start working here for another month ... No I don't always work this late, but Hank's been on client visits in Asia for the past two weeks, and stuff has to get done ... wait a minute, I hear someone ... let's talk tomorrow. (*hangs up phone*). Hello, is any one there?

GAIL

Enters

Oh hi Daniel, I didn't think anyone would be here. You scared me.

DANIEL

What are you doing here?

GAIL

Hank thinks he left his hotel confirmation for Seoul in the office. He wanted me to scan it and send it to him. He's pretty sure he left it on his credenza. (*beat*) I didn't know you played chess. Hank used to when we first got married, but not so much anymore.

DANIEL

I used to play with my dad when I was in high school. Who's watching Billy?

GAIL

He's in bed. He's old enough to be alone.

DANIEL

I keep thinking of him as little – he's 13 now, right?

GAIL

Yeah. (*beat*) Did Billy do something wrong with you?

DANIEL

No! Why?

Wanderlust

GAIL

You don't come over any more. He was asking a couple of days ago why?

DANIEL

Basketball season doesn't start for another couple of months.

GAIL

Last year, even during the off season, you'd still come over once in a while.

DANIEL

Been busy here at work – that's all.

GAIL

Anything going on with you and Hank?

DANIEL

No – did he say something?

GAIL

He never talks about work. He used to talk about you a lot – but not so much lately. He once asked me if I thought you might be gay.

DANIEL

Why'd he think that?

GAIL

Cause you're not married – never seem to have a steady girlfriend.

DANIEL

Did you tell him you thought I was secretly a raging queen?

GAIL

Laughs

No. I told him you were definitely not gay. So why hasn't some woman snatched you up?

DANIEL

I need to be able to work lighter hours before I get in a committed relationship. What makes you so sure I'm not gay?

Wanderlust

GAIL

The way you look at women.

DANIEL

I don't think I look at women a certain way.

GAIL

Yeah you do.

DANIEL

Maybe I just look at YOU a certain way.

GAIL

I shouldn't have started this conversation. I should be -

DANIEL

Sorry. I didn't mean to upset you. And tell Billy I'll come over next week.

GAIL

You sure?

DANIEL

Definitely.

GAIL

I can't believe how good he is now. His coach says he has a high basketball IQ.

DANIEL

I'm surprised that coach can spell I Q. *(beat)* You're a great mom. He's a lucky boy. I barely remember my mom. I'm glad I can help him. Sometimes a person just needs a strong man to help them. I had my dad to show me.

GAIL

I know – Hank's a great guy. Just never been big on sports, or anything athletic.

DANIEL

And you're in such great shape.

Wanderlust

GAIL

Thanks, but I have to work hard to stay in shape.

DANIEL

It shows.

Eyes Gail seductively up and down, a long pause.

GAIL

I – ummmm – I guess I should be -

DANIEL

I should shut up. I'm sure the last thing you want right now is attention.

GAIL

Why do you say that – I mean why did you say right now?

DANIEL

Because Hank's away, so you finally get a break from that constant affection he pays to you. And here I go ogling you – you must be thinking, not again.

GAIL

No, honestly, Hank's not very affectionate. He never really was, but even less now. Very focused on work. You know how he is.

DANIEL

Yeah, but I'd think he be different with you. If I was married to you, I'd bankrupt the company because of absenteeism. Can't imagine dragging myself out of bed to go to work with you next to me.

GAIL

Oh, I'm not all that.

DANIEL

As you said, I notice women, and there isn't anyone who is sexier than you.

GAIL

You're just saying that.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

Ever hear me say something I didn't mean?

GAIL

No. But ... I ... I just don't see me that way. I see single women around town. Short skirts. Flashy tops. I just wear everyday mom clothes.

DANIEL

You could wear a burka – it wouldn't make a difference.

GAIL

I never thought -

DANIEL

I need to confess something. One of the reasons I'd come over was to be around you. Don't get me wrong – I enjoy Billy a lot. But I really like being around you.

GAIL

I had no idea -

DANIEL

In my mind I hoped you were attracted to me as well. But why would you?

GAIL

You must know that you're a very good looking man.

DANIEL

I need to ask you ... Is part of the reason you came here tonight was because you thought I might be here? Just a little bit?

GAIL

Like I said, the main reason was the hotel conf ... but, yes, I guess I kind of miss seeing you around.

DANIEL

I'm glad you said that – I kind of thought so, but I also wondered if it was just wishful thinking.

Wanderlust

GAIL

I just don't think I could ... you know ... cheat on -

DANIEL

(moves closer to Gail) I know. It's part of the reason I haven't been coming by. But I've been resisting this for four years. *(touches her hand)* And now that you're here, I –

GAIL

(pulls back) Daniel stop, I love talking to you, but -

DANIEL

Sorry. I can't help myself. I'm so attracted to you.

Gail seems stunned. She turns away, starts to say something, but nothing comes out.

DANIEL (cont)

Shhhhh, you don't need to say or do anything.

He turns her around; they are both in profile to the audience, lights are very dim, he kisses her passionately, after a few seconds, her arms go around his neck and she kisses back)

ACT ONE – SCENE 7

Daniel's apartment. Daniel is putting on a tie in front of the mirror. The beep sound on his computer signals he has mail, as he is going to check it, the text chime on his phone sounds, as he goes to check that the doorbell rings, as he goes to the door, the email chime sounds again, he ignores that, the land-line phone rings.

DANIEL

God dammit!

Wanderlust

The phone is still ringing, the doorbell rings again, then there is knocking at the door.

DANIEL (cont)

Hang on, hang on.

Daniel crosses to the door, opens it, Koz enters.

KOZ

Tough morning?

DANIEL

Lately, a very typical morning. Except for you banging on my door.

KOZ

Wanted to catch you before you got to work. Besides some of my most exciting experiences have happened in your apartment in the morning. I'm not going to be surprised by another member of the culinary profession, am I?

DANIEL

No. You have heard about phone calls and emails. *(Phone text chime again)*

KOZ

Seems like you're getting enough of those. Besides, if I called last night, then you'd want to know why, and I'd say I want to talk in person, and you'd ask why, and I'd say let's wait until we talk. Then you'd be all anxious and not sleep well, and you wouldn't be sharp for our conversation. This way is better.

DANIEL

Cell phone rings – checks it – silences it

So what's up?

KOZ

There's some concern about what's happening at the company.

DANIEL

Concern about? Who's concerned?

Wanderlust

KOZ

The entire board – worried about profits, growth, management – the usual stuff.

Land phone starts ringing – Daniel doesn't answer it.

DANIEL

We're profitable – how many companies our size in a growth mode can say that?

KOZ

You going to answer it?

DANIEL

No, let it go to voice mail.

KOZ

It's not just about being profitable. It's being as profitable as you can be. Plus, growth seems to be slowing down.

DANIEL

We've doubled in size each year for the past four years – growth has to slow down sometime.

Phone stops ringing

KOZ

Mason wants to know if you're free for dinner Thursday night.

DANIEL

Why me? He should be talking to Hank.

Cell phone starts ringing again – Daniel silences it

KOZ

You know that people are uncomfortable around Hank. You're second in charge.

DANIEL

Not for long. Seems like you're asking me to rat out Hank.

KOZ

All you need to do is listen to Mason's questions. If you don't want to answer, you ... (*Daniel's phone chimes again*). Someone's being persistent.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

Yeah. They are.

KOZ

Anyone I know?

DANIEL

I started a relationship ... and it's a problem.

KOZ

Another married woman?

DANIEL

Yes.

KOZ

Do you only date married women?

DANIEL

I date single women too – but honestly, the women I enjoy the most are the married ones.

KOZ

Doesn't it lead to complications?

DANIEL

Not usually, but it has in this case. *(pause)* Ummmmm, I know her husband pretty well. *(pause)* In fact, so do you.

KOZ

(pause) Holy shit! You don't mean ... What the hell? I thought you were smarter than that.

DANIEL

I know. The line I said I wouldn't cross. This is the first time. And now, she's telling me that she's in love with me.

Wanderlust

KOZ

You're playing with fire. *(beat)* Look, I need you to meet with Mason. Will you do that for me?

DANIEL

O.K. I gotta get to the office.

Land line starts to ring again. Koz and Daniel both look at it. They both exit.

ACT ONE – SCENE 8

A private room at a restaurant. Koz and Mason are seated at a table, drinking scotch.

KOZ

I'm telling you, he's not like most of the people you're used to dealing with – certainly not like you and me.

Koz takes a drink, dribbles some scotch onto his cheek and on his shirt

MASON

What's wrong with you and me? *(takes his napkin and blots the stain on Koz's shirt)*. Well, what's wrong with me?

KOZ

Money isn't an issue for him. It's about pride of work, loyalty, values his father taught him before he died. You can't make the case solely based on money.

MASON

They all start out idealistic. Then they get their first big bonus check, and they get hooked on court-side seats at a Warriors game.

KOZ

I don't know – Daniel's different.

MASON

So, he's some kind of saint.

Wanderlust

KOZ

Definitely not a saint. He's just not interested – oh, here he comes.

Daniel enters. Mason and Koz rise to shake his hand. They sit down.

MASON

Thanks for joining us Daniel. I took the liberty of ordering you the mushroom and scallop risotto – it's not on the regular menu, but it's the best risotto anywhere.

DANIEL

Sounds good. So Mason, what do you want to talk about?

MASON

Koz said you get right to the point. Tell me what you think of Hank.

KOZ

I told Mason what you said about Hank's oddities.

DANIEL

Il suppose most software company founders have some strange attributes – after all, they spend most of their time just dealing with computers.

MASON

You said the magic word Daniel – founders. There comes a point when a founder needs to step aside and let more professional management take over.

KOZ

Research shows when a founder is removed, the average company becomes more profitable.

DANIEL

That's interesting, but Hank owns 51%, and I don't think he'd agree with your assessment.

MASON

You're partially right – Hank owns 51% of the EXISTING shares. But there are your stock options. If you convert them into shares, he'll own less than 50%, and we'll be able to vote him out of the role.

DANIEL

Assuming I vote with you. Plus I don't have enough cash to buy the shares.

MASON

This deal's worth a lot to us. We'd loan you the money to buy the options, provided you agree to vote to remove Hank.

DANIEL

And who'd take over for him?

MASON

Daniel, I wish I could say it was you, but the one thing Hank is right about is you're just too young. I really like Abby. She has the best management mind in the business.

DANIEL

Maybe, but I'm not sure I want to work for her.

MASON

I understand. What if we loan you the money to exercise your options, and then buy the stock from you at a premium? And, I'll give you a multi-year contract to work for my bank. You can help us evaluate investments like this.

DANIEL

Despite our differences, I'm pretty dedicated to Hank.

MASON

I respect your loyalty, but what about the investors ... and the employees. You've seen what happens to companies who've outgrown their management – the investors lose their money and the workers lose their jobs. They deserve the best management possible. I'll give you a week to think about it; otherwise we'll have to think of something else. Now, enough business talk. How about some wine? I'll get a bottle of Fisher's Coach Insignia – it's the best Cabernet ...

ACT ONE – SCENE 9

Daniel's apartment. A knock on the door. Daniel crosses to the door and opens it.

DANIEL

Dammit Koz, you can't keep popping in here unannounced.

KOZ

Obviously, I can, because here I am.

DANIEL

Gail's going to be here any minute.

KOZ

Oh, I thought you she was coming over earlier. I wanted to see how the break up went.

DANIEL

Yeah, and you wanted to find out my decision.

KOZ

That too. Mason says you have two days left.

DANIEL

And I WILL decide in two days – but I'm pretty sure the answer is no. You need to go. Now! Before she gets here.

Koz exits. Lights dim indicating passage of time. Lights come back up. Knocking on the door. Daniel crosses to the door and opens it.

DANIEL

Gail. How are --

GAIL

Enters

What the fuck? I'm looking at the phone most days, thinking, it takes 10 seconds to respond to a text. Are your thumbs broken?

Wanderlust

DANIEL

Sorry, I've been busy. But I did call you and invite you over.

GAIL

That's one call back after dozens of calls, texts, and emails.

DANIEL

Like I said, work's been crazy.

GAIL

It's more than that – you've always been busy. You're avoiding me. *(pause)*
Clearly you've had a change of heart. I did everything you wanted.
EVERYTHING! Do you realize what I risked – how hard it was? So what is it? Am I
not pretty enough? Am I not sexy enough? Am I too old?

DANIEL

You're very sexy – maybe too sexy, too perfect, I'm worried I'm getting too
attached -

GAIL

SHUT UP! You think I'm a moron? I fell for your bullshit before. God, you were
great for my ego, and now ... *(starts crying)* I had three appointments with my
therapist this week – he changed my meds, and it's all because of some
immature dick who I fell for. Hank's worried; even Billy's noticing.

DANIEL

I didn't know you were seeing a psychiatrist.

GAIL

Not usually a conversation topic with my husband's employees.

Loud knocking on door. Voice from behind door.

HANK

Daniel, open up the door. *(pause)* Gail I know you are in there. Open up the
door! I am not leaving until you do.

Slowly, Daniel goes to the door and opens it. Hank enters.

Wanderlust

HANK (cont)

Gail, I do not know why you are doing this, but if you want to remain married, you need to leave here right now and go to the car.

Gail exits

DANIEL

Look Hank, I just want you to know, it wasn't her fault. I seduced her, so if you're going to blame -

Hank walks briskly to Daniel and punches him in the face, then turns and exits. Daniel holds his jaw, picks up his cell phone, ponders for a few seconds and pushes a button, and speaks in the phone.

DANIEL (cont)

Hi Koz ... yeah ... something's changed ... tell Mason I want ... to talk. *(puts the phone in his pocket and rubs his jaw – now speaking to the audience)* For an unathletic guy, Hank sure threw a mean right. There's a lot more of the story to tell but I think this is a good time to take a break ... let's keep it at 15 minutes. O.K? *(talks to the woman in the audience)*. Let me buy you a drink– there's a café right next door, they have some great wine, and ... hopefully some ice.

House lights come on. Daniel whispers in the ear of woman. He escorts her with the rest of the audience to the lobby, and then goes back stage.

END OF ACT 1

Wanderlust

ACT TWO – Scene 1

Daniel's Office. Daniel is at his desk. Ticker flashes "Bulletin" a few times. "2009 – Corning Capital announces management change at Translation Software. Abby McConnell named CEO. Founder Hank Valis to remain on board and keep minority equity position. 2009 – Corning Capital announces sale of Translation Software to EMC Corporation for \$800 million. 2010 – Hank and Gail Valis announce creation of a foundation focused on teaching inner-city youth computer skills." Ticker pauses, then scrolls 2015 – Daniel learns about bonds." Koz enters.

KOZ

How goes my favorite banker.

DANIEL

Same as always – bored.

KOZ

My students would kill to do the things you get to do – and you're making great money.

DANIEL

But, I'm not really producing anything. Just evaluating opportunities.

KOZ

Geez, I have to stop coming in here. You're soooooo depressing.

DANIEL

At least at Translation, I felt I was doing something. Plus, I miss Hank. Yeah, I know, he was weird. But he had a unique way of thinking about things. Charlene's kind of like that – but I don't get to meet with her often. There has to be something more here.

KOZ

Just wait an hour.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

The company officers' meeting? You think I'm depressed now, wait till after the meeting. The only part that makes them interesting is the over-under betting on how many stupid things Jeffrey will say. They're such a waste of time.

KOZ

Not today.

DANIEL

What's different today? And how do you know? You're a consultant – you're not invited.

KOZ

Today I am. Big day today. Might even challenge your emotional quagmire.

DANIEL

Why you little cypher. I thought we shared all of our secrets.

KOZ

Not with the confidentiality agreement Mason made me sign.

Daniel and Koz cross to the conference room. Charlene is standing at the head of the conference table. Mason and Jeffrey are sitting. Jeffrey has an iPad out – as people talk during the meeting he types continually. Koz and Daniel sit. There should be a perception that there are many other attendees at the meeting.

CHARLENE

Good morning. I'll cut to the chase. I founded this bank 30 years ago to help provide growing businesses the capital they needed. It was a conservative, and some would say, sleepy business. However, beginning with our investment in Translation Software eight years ago, Mason's taken us in a new direction. I think its best that I step aside and let Mason lead us in exploring new opportunities. However, for those who think you can get rid of me, no such luck. I'll be staying on the management committee as a special consultant. So let me introduce the new Managing Partner of Corning Capital, Mason Andrews.

All at the table applaud – Charlene sits and Mason stands.

MASON

Thank you, Charlene. In terms of being a mentor and leader for this bank, Charlene, you have been ... the best. But times change, markets change, and businesses that don't adapt fall by the wayside. We're moving into the bond selling business. Our good friend, Professor Koz, has developed a new concept, called entropy theory, which calculates the value of complex securities more accurately than before. We'll take U.S. Treasury bonds, and restructure them to create several types of bonds, including entropy bonds, or e bonds. In doing so, we'll help our clients, ourselves, and even the economy by finding another way of financing our government deficit. Any questions?

CHARLENE

Who's the target market for these bonds?

MASON

Professor Koz?

KOZ

I designed the e bonds for municipalities – cities, counties, and even states – to help manage the unique risks of their pension plans. And because of satisfying that need, they're more valuable than typical bonds. Both the pension plans and Corning will share in that increase in value.

CHARLENE

Aren't these the types of bonds that led to the mortgage crisis a few years ago?

KOZ

What created the mortgage crisis were bad mortgages. The base investments behind e bonds are Treasury bonds – the safest investment in the world.

MASON

Let me spend some time discussing how we're going to accomplish our issuance and marketing. Professor Koz is going on leave from Stanford to devote full time efforts to this project. Jeffrey will be in charge of working with a consortium of banks to create the bonds. And Daniel, you'll head up our marketing efforts with municipalities. Any other questions?

JEFFREY

Ummm Professor, how do you spell entropy?

Wanderlust

KOZ

What?

JEFFREY

Entropy. How do you spell it? I'm spelling it E N T R O P H Y – and it's showing it as misspelled.

KOZ

What difference does -

MASON

That's why you'll be great at this, Jeffrey. Attention to detail. We'll schedule separate meetings so we can get all of your questions answered – even the spelling ones. For now, let's get to work!

Charlene, Koz, and Jeffrey exit. Daniel crosses to Mason.

DANIEL

Mason, why put me in charge of marketing? Wouldn't it make sense to hire someone who has experience at this type of thing?

MASON

I remember a time when you were against hiring from the outside. (*beat*) I have extreme confidence in you. I know you're the best candidate for the job.

DANIEL

I'm not sure.

MASON

I know you're motivated by things other than money. But, there's a bunch of dough in this for all of us. In a year you could be making more cash than both of our fathers made in their lifetime. Think about it.

Mason exits. Daniel crosses to his office, where Koz is waiting.

KOZ

So, still bored?

Wanderlust

DANIEL

I was blown away by Charlene's resignation. And then – boom! – my job description gets rewritten in front of a dozen people. This isn't the excitement I had in mind.

KOZ

Now you have a product that does good. Municipalities will love e bonds. We can work together on the best way of explaining the concept to them.

DANIEL

That's a whole new client base – people who manage municipal pension plans. It'll take a lot of work.

KOZ

Since when have you been adverse to work? You can network at their conferences. (*Hands Daniel a flyer*) Here's one for managers of police and firefighter pensions.

DANIEL

You're kidding – Guns and Hoses?

KOZ

It's all in the branding. So, let's celebrate tonight. I'm having dinner with Mason, but maybe we can go out for a drink after. Shelly and the kids are visiting my sister-in-law in Seattle.

DANIEL

Wow – I thought you weren't big on business socialization.

KOZ

In a few years we'll look back on today as a watershed moment. It'd be a shame not to mark the occasion. Besides, I'd never admit it to her, but when Shelly's out of town, I'm kind of lost. Are we on for tonight?

DANIEL

O.K. 9:00 at Brix?

KOZ

Perfect –meet you there.

Wanderlust

Koz exits. Daniel stares at the flyer for a bit – starts working on his computer. Charlene enters.

CHARLENE

Already at work on your new mission?

DANIEL

I'm trying to figure out how I'm going to sell a product no one's ever heard of from a bank no one's ever heard of to a clientele who I don't know.

CHARLENE

Everyone here has confidence in you – particularly Mason. I'm sure you'll do fine.

DANIEL

You seemed to have your doubts in the meeting.

CHARLENE

I've been in this business over 40 years. My instincts tell me when something seems too good to be true, it typically is. But, my colleagues see this as a promising idea. I'm actually most concerned about Jeffrey being involved.

DANIEL

He's never impressed me, maybe cause he IS Mason's son-in-law. But Mason said he was the best person -

CHARLENE

Everything's always the BEST with Mason. You and Jeffrey are joined at the hip in this project. You need to be careful.

DANIEL

I'm not sure what I can do.

CHARLENE

Watch him. Know how to do his job so you can see if he's making mistakes.

DANIEL

Thanks, Charlene. I'm glad you're staying around.

Wanderlust

CHARLENE

Growing up in Texas, I was terrified of rattlesnakes. Couldn't always see 'em, so I had to listen really well. That's a skill that's served me well in this business.

ACT TWO – Scene 2

Brix Bar. House music is playing. Daniel is at the bar, Koz enters and crosses to Daniel.

KOZ

I didn't think it would be this loud.

DANIEL

Neither did I. Friday nights have become a dance night for the over 40 set.

KOZ

So have you relaxed at all about your new role?

DANIEL

A little. What's your opinion about Jeffrey?

KOZ

Amazing insight about spelling. Outside of that, I don't know. Look, I know he's not the brightest bulb in the box. Mason isn't the first person to have a blind spot for a family member. But I'll be there every step of the way, so don't worry about it. *(Looks at phone)* Shelly just texted me. I need to call her. Gotta find a quiet spot someplace in here.

Koz exits. Diana enters and crosses to Daniel

DIANA

Hi – how are you doing?

DANIEL

Hey! I was watching you out there. You're an amazing dancer.

DIANA

You mean for an old lady. I was watching you watch me. My name's Diana.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

I'm Daniel, and, you're not -

Koz enters – crosses to Daniel

DIANA

Your friend's coming back.

KOZ

I have to go. Shelly just had a knock down fight with her sister, and needs to vent her sibling issues. Hello, I'm Koz.

DIANA

Nice to meet you – I'm Diana.

KOZ

Sorry to cut the night short, but duty calls. Congratulations! See you on Monday.

Exits

DIANA

Congratulations? Something big going on? Had a baby? Got engaged?

DANIEL

No – nothing like that. Just business stuff.

DIANA

Yawns

Business stuff. *(beat)* So, I'm not?

DANIEL

What?

DIANA

Before your friend came by, you were saying I'm not ... something.

DANIEL

Oh you're definitely SOMETHING. But I was saying you're not old.

Wanderlust

DIANA

Yeah I am, but you like cougars. While you were checking out all of the women in the club, I was watching you check them out. Like a lion stalking his prey.

DANIEL

Oh? And that doesn't bother you?

DIANA

Hell no – I am who I am. I like guys like you. Aggressive. Know what they want. Attracted to women like me.

DANIEL

Like you?

DIANA

Older ... Curvy Married. Yeah I can tell you're into that. You look at my left hand like every 10 seconds.

DANIEL

I thought I was direct, but holy shit, you -

DIANA

Life's short. So mister businessman, I can't get away tonight. Too many questions from my friends. But here's my card – call me sometime.

DANIEL

Partner at Miller and Dean? Venture lawyer. Impressive.

DIANA

I didn't say I didn't know how to talk business – but that's my day job, not my evening avocation. Now don't take too much time to call – I'm not a patient woman. Bye Mr. Businessman.

ACT TWO – Scene 3

Daniel's office. Ticker flashes "Bulletin - New Security – eBonds issued by Corning Capital." Scroll of securities now occasionally shows "eBonds 100". Daniel and Jeffrey are sitting in Daniel's office. Charlene and Paul enter.

CHARLENE

Paul, I want you to meet Daniel Brinson and Jeffrey Marcotte, the two bright young men I was telling you about. This is an old friend, Paul Evans, Finance Director for Marin County. Paul, let's have lunch again sometime soon.

Exits

PAUL

Charlene tells me you two are the experts about entrophy (*pronounced wrongly as "en -trophy"*) bonds

JEFFREY

It's funny you say that. They're pronounced entro –

DANIEL

We actually just shorten them to e bonds.

PAUL

I've read the literature. Interesting concept. Tell me how it reduces our pension risk.

JEFFREY

(double-talking – very fast) It has to do with the co-variances between your disbursements and the coupon payments on the ebonds. The optionality of the bonds and the over-collateralization of the Treasuries are structured so that you are delta neutral, but the gamma, lambda and vega coefficients are maximized, leading to increased value over time and flexibility to volatile interest rates. With a trivial rho, your hedge will remain delta neutral under a robust set of interest rate assumptions.

Wanderlust

PAUL

I see – that’s ... ummmmm ... clear – but how do I know that these bonds are appropriately priced.

JEFFREY

We’ve done omega sensitivity analys –

DANIEL

Paul – my answer might seem simplistic, but I’m not as fluent in Greek as you and Jeffrey are. We have an edge in pricing, because the creator of the entropy (*pronounced as Paul said it*) concept, Dr. Edmond Kozloski, works exclusively for us. As the bonds’ prices increase reflecting their true value, both you and Corning will share in those gains. If we weren’t so confident in the pricing, we wouldn’t hold them in our inventory.

PAUL

Thanks Daniel. I want to talk to my staff, but I think we’re in. I may call YOU (*looks at Jeffrey quizzically*) if I have other questions. I need to get out of here before the traffic picks up.

Paul exits – ticker shows eBonds 105 +5 repeatedly

JEFFREY

Thanks for saving me. I could tell he wasn’t getting it.

DANIEL

Why’d you go over those complicated pricing factors? He just wanted an intuitive explanation.

JEFFREY

I don’t understand how these bonds work – in English or Greek. It just takes me a lot of studying before I figure everything out. Until then, I have to go with the research studies that Koz gave us. (*exits*)

Daniel stands and looks out the window. Lights dim slightly, and Daniel changes coats and ties – the new clothes being noticeably nicer. Ticker scrolls “2016 – Complications” and then scrolls “eBonds 112 +7”. The lights come back to full. Koz enters.

Wanderlust

KOZ

New suit? ... Glad to see you're spending some of that money. I don't know exactly what your bonus was, but you exceeded everyone's expectations. It's got to be huge.

DANIEL

Spending money isn't a problem. New condo, new car. How can it be that I earn more money, and I'm more in debt than ever?

KOZ

It's a medical condition ... it's called maturity.

DANIEL

Did you see Jeffrey's email this morning - more questions about the entropy model?

KOZ

And every one of my answers generates three more questions.

DANIEL

The last thing a company wants is inquisitive employees. (*Koz looks puzzled*). Something a well-known professor once said to me. So how's Shelly?

KOZ

You asking a question about personal life? Who are you and what have you done with the real Daniel?

DANIEL

I've been thinking about relationships. What you've been saying about her being a steadying influence.

KOZ

You don't have time for those thoughts now. You have the big east coast trip coming up. And today -

DANIEL

How'd you know when you were ready to settle down? That Shelly was the one?

Wanderlust

KOZ

You're wierding me out. I need to get prepared for our 1:00 staff meeting. Don't be late – you know how it upsets Jeffrey (*exits*)

*Daniel looks out the window again. Stretches and yawns.
Charlene enters.*

CHARLENE

Good morning.

DANIEL

Hi Charlene. I lost track of time. 9:00 already?

CHARLENE

Yes, how long have you been here?

DANIEL

Since 5:30 – setting up meetings for my east coast trip in three weeks. I wanted to reach people before their day got busy.

CHARLENE

Mason was right about you. No wonder we've been successful.

DANIEL

Just doing what you taught me. Meet clients on their terms, not mine. Understand their motivations, their desires, their fears. And use their language.

CHARLENE

Well that's the concept – but you're doing a great job of executing. I'm not sure we need these weekly meetings any more.

DANIEL

I've been enjoying them. I've learned more in the last year than I have since grad school. And not just about selling bonds.

CHARLENE

What do you mean?

Wanderlust

DANIEL

My mentors and colleagues – even my clients – have always been men. In business school I had Professor Koz. The software business was almost all male. It's not much different here.

CHARLENE

Believe me – I understand.

DANIEL

And – until recently I never had a significant relationship. I'm learning a lot about women for the first time.

CHARLENE

Until recently?

DANIEL

I've been in a relationship for about a year. I'm still learning about THAT business too. So, you've been a big help to me in many aspects of my life.

CHARLENE

Hmmmm – maybe I should start a relationship counseling business. I'm glad I can help. I haven't had much to do the past year. (*beat*) I know you're doing YOUR job well. How's Jeffrey doing?

DANIEL

Well I learned to keep him away from clients. He confuses them.

CHARLENE

Often when investors get confused, they think they're stupid. But the stupidity is investing in something they don't understand. What about Jeffrey's negotiations with the other banks.

DANIEL

He seems to be doing a good job. Koz's model is working. The other banks haven't seemed to catch on. We always get the bonds at our desired price.

CHARLENE

Hmmm.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

What's wrong?

CHARLENE

Ever play poker?

DANIEL

Not really my game.

CHARLENE

My daddy loved it – Texas Hold Em of course. He used to say, first thing you do is figure out who the sucker is. If you don't know, then it's YOU, and you best leave the table.

DANIEL

You think we're the sucker?

CHARLENE

Our negotiations are with very well-established banks – Goldman, Citi, Morgan. They're not idiots. And representing us, we have the king of spelling, Jeffrey.

DANIEL

But Koz sits in as well. He wouldn't allow a structure that didn't create value.

CHARLENE

Maybe you're right. Let's keep this conversation between us. Mason wouldn't react too kindly if he thought I was questioning these deals.

DANIEL

Of course, and thanks again for all of your help.

CHARLENE

My pleasure. *(exits)*

Daniel picks up the phone in his office. Mason, Koz, and Jeffrey enter the conference room and sit. Daniel hangs up the phone, exits, and then enters the conference room.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

Sorry I'm late. I was on the phone with prospects. Lots of interest – I'm going to have to extend my trip.

JEFFREY

This meeting is every Monday at 1:00. You should be on time. I'm never late.

DANIEL

Sorry, Jeffrey, but these prospects are on the east coast. If I waited until after the meeting to call, they'd have left the office.

JEFFREY

Those easterners are so lazy. Nice life – leaving at 2:00.

DANIEL

Well it would be 5:00 their time.

JEFFREY

I know you hate these meetings, but they're not four hours long.

DANIEL

Um, Jeffrey, you DO understand what a time zone –

MASON

OK boys, let's not argue. Daniel, you're right, prospects come first; just try to manage your time a little better. Time management is going to be more important now. Remember that interview with you and Koz and the reporter from Pension Magazine. I just got a preview copy – you two are cover boys.

Slides magazine to Daniel

DANIEL

Teacher and student team up to revolutionize the pension world? This is insane.

MASON

Pension Magazine is the best investment publication

JEFFREY

Why wasn't I part of the interview?

Wanderlust

MASON

Behind-the-scene-guys never get enough credit. Daniel, as busy as you think you've been, you're about to get busier.

JEFFREY

I can meet with clients if it would help.

MASON

That's O.K. Jeffrey – you're much too valuable to travel.

KOZ

Mason and I have been working on a simple adjustment to the structure. From now on, we're creating Triple e bonds. We use leverage, giving our clients more bang for the buck. If they liked e bonds, they'll like Triple e bonds three times as much.

JEFFREY

Does that mean the deltas will be three times as big?

KOZ

Why, yes, Jeffrey, that's exactly right.

JEFFREY

(smiling) And the lambdas and gammas too?

KOZ

Actually no. Jeffrey, if you're going to really know how these bonds work, you need a much deeper understanding -

MASON

Jeffrey, you and Koz can focus on the details later. I need to talk to Daniel alone for a while. Be sure give my granddaughter a kiss from me.

Exits

KOZ

Mason, I appreciate his curiosity. But it's been a year, and he doesn't understand this stuff, and he sucks with clients. He needs to -

Wanderlust

MASON

I hear you. I don't know what the hell my daughter was thinking. I hope the kids have her genes. Otherwise, we can hire the best tutors. *(beat)* Daniel, it'll take about two weeks for the new Triple e bonds to get approved by the SEC. If you want any time off, take it now. Once we get approval, you'll be traveling non-stop for four months. This will be the biggest deal of our lives.

DANIEL

With all of this leverage, won't Triple e bonds be risky for investors?

KOZ

Only if they're overpaying. We have a year of history – our clients did very well. They'd have done much better with Triple e bonds.

MASON

Daniel. One more thing. With the increased publicity you'll be getting, we need to clarify some of terms of your employment contract. The old version doesn't account for such a public role. *(hands Daniel contract)* This clarifies what you can say and who you can talk to about our research.

Lights down – Scrolling ticker shows “e Bonds 117 +5”

ACT TWO – Scene 4

Lights down – Scrolling ticker shows “e Bonds 117 +5”

Daniel's new condo (much nicer than his old apartment). Scrolling ticker shows “e Bonds 117 +5.” Daniel is next standing with his back to the audience, next to the sofa, talking on his cell phone.

DANIEL

Yeah sure you can come over. How about 30 minutes? ... O.K., see ya then.

Diana rises from having been kneeling in front of Daniel

Wanderlust

DIANA

That's such a turn on. The person at the other end of the call has no idea of your ... distractions. You're an impressive multitasker. So you're kicking me out.

DANIEL

You said you had to be home at 8:00.

DIANA

What's the fun of having a boy toy if you can't bend the rules. But you're right - I better get going (*exits to bathroom; from offstage*) Don't forget about Monday.

DANIEL

Monday?

DIANA

Miles is going out of town on Monday. We'll have two nights for me to figure out other ways to distract you. (*re-enters*) Don't tell me you forgot.

DANIEL

Of course I didn't. You know, I can take those days off. We can go -

DIANA

That's sweet – but I need to work. Besides, you will need some time to rest from me. So who's coming over? Your business friend who I met.

DANIEL

Yeah, Koz. He's really hyped up about this new initiative.

DIANA

Sounds like he should be. And so should you.

DANIEL

I thought business details bore you.

DIANA

I don't care about the specifics. But you can now afford to keep me at my appropriate lifestyle. Jacuzzi tub, comfortable mattress. All of the comforts of home, and then some.

Playfully pinches Daniel's rear

Wanderlust

DANIEL

You should like them. You picked them out.

DIANA

This has been fun. Different for me. I got to help pick out and design my love nest. Now I need to work on the kitchen.

DANIEL

Whoa – you're design ideas are going to bankrupt me.

DIANA

Careful lover. You don't want to make me pout. I'm not nearly as creative when I don't get my way.

DANIEL

This has been different for me too. Having someone to talk through things. The condo, work issues, I think I can get used to this.

DIANA

Damn right – you need to be totally obsessed about me.

DANIEL

I am. But, you should go. I don't want you bumping into Koz on your way out.

DIANA

Bye lover. *(Gives him an intense kiss, starts kissing his neck and to his chest – looks up)*. You sure you want me to leave now?

DANIEL

You are so much trouble. I need to save up my energy till Monday.

DIANA

Damn right you do. Or I'll trade you in for a younger model.

DANIEL

Oh, and remember, you promised to review my employment contract.

DIANA

So demanding. You better be extra good to me.

Wanderlust

Diana exits. Daniel crosses to his computer, checks email. Knock on the door. Daniel crosses to open the door. Koz enters.

KOZ

Thanks for inviting me over. I need to ask you something.

DANIEL

No typically snarky greeting? Maybe it's you who was kidnapped by -

KOZ

No time for jokes. Has Charlene said anything to you about hiring other academics to work on the e bond project?

DANIEL

No – not at all. Why do you ask?

KOZ

You sure? I know you're spend a lot of time with her.

DANIEL

I told you she has some doubts about the project, particularly about Jeffrey. But she hasn't said anything about hiring others. What's going on?

KOZ

I got a call today from a former colleague who now teaches at Duke. He said Charlene asked him if he could evaluate a valuation model for bonds.

DANIEL

It's gotta be something different. Charlene doesn't even talk to Mason about e bonds – just me.

KOZ

There's something else going on. Maybe she's working on some type of power play to regain control of Corning.

DANIEL

She seems very happy in her new role.

Wanderlust

KOZ

Don't be naïve. She didn't leave voluntarily. She was forced out by Mason. For 40 years she was a shark swimming in the waters. She's not going to be comfortable as a manatee. *(beat)* Tomorrow, you need to tell Mason that she's been expressing concerns.

DANIEL

Koz, you're really overreacting.

KOZ

If she's contacting other academics, it won't take them long to figure out my pricing model. It's like a pharmaceutical executive giving away the formula for a new cancer drug. Promise me you'll talk to Mason.

DANIEL

O.K. – I will. Man, I've never seen you like this.

KOZ

It's like Mason said. It's the deal of our lives. When we're done marketing the bonds, I'll have plenty of time to relax.

ACT TWO – Scene 5

Daniel's office. Charlene is standing alone.

CHARLENE

1974. I'm wet behind the ears, about to graduate Summa Cum Laude from Rice University. And the head of Goldman Sachs, in town for the Super Bowl, comes to the campus and gives a speech about investment banking. In 90 minutes, I was hooked – five months later I'm working on Wall Street. It was such as old boy's network back then it was hard to find a bathroom without a urinal. Two years later they ship me out to San Francisco, and I learn to talk the talk of electronics. I helped many of those businesses get started, and then, with my daddy's encouragement, and the backing of many of those companies I helped create, I start my own company in the 1980s. A woman, starting an investment bank – can you beat that?

Daddy's lessons were good for me. He used to say – "don't get too close to the ranch hands, you never know when you might have to sell the herd." So I kept my distance from my employees. I had good business relations with them, but stayed away from taking a rooting interest in their personal lives. Just a couple of exceptions. One of them's Daniel. Until recently, only things I knew about him were that he was a bright and thoughtful banker, and that he had an eye for the ladies. Older ladies. I wouldn't fall for that. Unless I wanted to. But over the last year, I've grown fond of him. He's genuinely interested in his work product – not just his paycheck. But damn, those bonuses can be blinding. He reminds me, at the time, of the other young banker I once took under my wing. 'Bout 20 years ago. Mason Fucking Andrews. Don't get too close to the ranch hands, they might brand you.

You know why I decided all those years ago to become an investment banker? Because of the ETHICS of this business. Our roots are in the old stock exchange. People'd trade millions of dollars based on a hand signal. One'd be buying, the other selling. And that was that. No contract, no email confirmation – they'd write up an order ticket, and their companies' would honor the transaction. We were among the most trusted professionals, right up there with doctors and teachers. Then the 80's happened – fast money, huge bonuses, and scandal after scandal. Now, only politicians and journalists rank lower in public perception. I heard a joke the other day – what's the difference between a hooker and an investment banker? There are some things a hooker won't do for money.

So maybe you weren't so enamored with our weekly meetings.

DANIEL

Enters

What do you mean?

CHARLENE

Did you tell Mason I had concerns about e bonds?

DANIEL

Um Well ... I

CHARLENE

You do remember that I asked you not to tell him.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

Yes. I was talking to Koz, and he said you were discussing his model with other professors. He asked me to talk to Mason.

CHARLENE

Why didn't Koz talk to Mason himself? (*beat – look of realization*) Because he had ALREADY talked to Mason. Very GOOD Mason.

DANIEL

I don't follow.

CHARLENE

Koz must have told Mason that he thought I had contacted other professors about the model. Mason knew that I wouldn't have done that unless I had solid legal protection. But he used that fear in Koz to manipulate him to convince you to tell Mason our secret.

DANIEL

Why's that a big deal?

CHARLENE

My contract. As a member of the management team, I'm not allowed to express those types of doubts to a junior officer – only to other partners in the company. It gave him grounds to fire me.

DANIEL

But Koz had already told him that.

CHARLENE

Not the same. Koz is an outsider here. The other partners think he's flaky. But everyone trusts YOU. When you told Mason, he had the ammunition to go to the other partners and fire me.

DANIEL

Why would Mason want you fired?

CHARLENE

Because I HAD talked to other professors about e bonds. I have every right as a partner to research our investments, and I had the professors sign non-

Wanderlust

disclosure agreements before I hired them. I laid out my own money to do the type of diligence Mason should have done.

DANIEL

What did the professors say?

CHARLENE

That the great and powerful Koz really isn't really a wizard. None of them agree with him.

DANIEL

I can't believe Koz is -

CHARLENE

Consultants are always coming up with wacky ideas. It's the job of a banker to do the proper due diligence. Mason didn't – either because he was lazy, or because he knew if he did the research, he'd get a different answer. What's the one thing you know about Mason?

DANIEL

He's not lazy. But I also didn't think he was unethical. Maybe the guys you hired are wrong.

CHARLENE

It's three of them against one Koz. Here are their reports. Read them yourself.

DANIEL

I know you've known Mason for a long time – but I can't believe he'd purposely mislead clients – mislead me.

CHARLENE

Daniel – I have my own non-disclosure agreement – there are things I can't say. But I suggest you talk to your former boss at Translation if you want an understanding of what Mason's capable of.

DANIEL

What should I ask him?

Wanderlust

CHARLENE

You're a smart guy – you'll figure it out.

DANIEL

So what will you do now?

CHARLENE

Nothing. Before, I could call our clients and tell them that their e bonds are the pet rocks of this century. But as a FORMER employee, I'm prohibited.

DANIEL

You could go to the press.

CHARLENE

That'd even be worse. I'd be violating my fiduciary duty to the clients – if the press started reporting this, the value of the bonds would plummet.

DANIEL

Charlene, I – I didn't mean to betray you.

CHARLENE

You and Koz have a great relationship – Mason took advantage of that. Besides, from a personal standpoint, it's kind of a relief. My lawyers tell me I can't talk to anyone outside of Corning about e bonds under any circumstances. Having no options can be a very relaxing state of being.

JEFFREY

Enters

Charlene, Mason said I need to escort you from the building.

CHARLENE

Give me a minute.

JEFFREY

But Mason said right away. He was very –

CHARLENE

I said ... in ... a ... minute!

Wanderlust

Jeffrey exits

DANIEL

Is there anything I can do?

CHARLENE

Read the reports – if you agree, find a good lawyer and explore your options. I can't talk to clients, but maybe you can.

DANIEL

I promise, I will.

CHARLENE

Well I get to notice.

DANIEL

What's that?

CHARLENE

My daddy used to tell me "you can be quiet, or spin whatever tales you want, but when you're done, I get to notice."

DANIEL

Sounds like what an old friend of mine used to say.

CHARLENE

Well, daddy was a smart man, but not always original. Oh – I got you something, I was going to give it to you right before your east coast trip.

Hands Daniel a small device

DANIEL

It's a hand held chess game.

CHARLENE

Doesn't require internet connectivity. Good for those long flights.

DANIEL

How did you know -

Wanderlust

CHARLENE

Good luck, Daniel.

ACT TWO – Scene 6

Daniel's bedroom. Daniel is in bed reading a report and taking notes. After a few moments, Diana sticks her head out of the foot of the bed.

DIANA

What are you doing up?

DANIEL

I couldn't sleep. And I didn't want to wake you.

DIANA

Aren't you sweet. What time is it?

DANIEL

2:30.

DIANA

What can possibly be so interesting to read at 2:30?

DANIEL

Just some analyst reports.

DIANA

Seems like it's bad news.

DANIEL

Actually it is – but I know you don't like me to talk about work.

DIANA

The second best thing about you is that you can talk things besides business.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

What's the first?

DIANA

When you don't talk at all.

DANIEL

Actually, there is something I want to talk about. I'm kind of nervous about a lunch meeting I have tomorrow.

DIANA

Business meeting?

DANIEL

No – not business. *(pause)* It's actually with Hank.

DIANA

Who's Hank? *(pause)* Wait! Is he the guy who caught you with his *(Daniel nods)* Damn! You got some cojones. I'll give you that. Why are you meeting him?

DANIEL

There's something I need to ask him. And *(beat)*, I want to clear the air. I was kind of surprised he answered my email.

DIANA

From what you told me, you two were really close.

DANIEL

We were. Getting caught probably hurt me as much as him. Never again.

DIANA

Ahem.

DANIEL

You know what I mean. With the wife of a friend. *(beat)* You know, I was never able to talk about my ... ummm ... preferences with women before I met you.

DIANA

But you said you did go to a therapist.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

Yeah – she said the fact that I prefer older married women means I’m Oedipal.

DIANA

Maybe she had a speech impediment. She meant you are edible. (*Kisses his neck and shoulder*)

DANIEL

I need to tell you – you’re very special to me.

DIANA

That’s very sweet.

DANIEL

I mean it. In the past, my relationships have been purely sexual. But you’re different. I just haven’t had a relationship like this.

DIANA

I’m not sexual enough for you?

DANIEL

You’re more than enough. I so enjoy every minute we have together.

DIANA

Occasionally my assistant will ask why I’m smiling. I can’t tell her that it’s my bond selling stud.

DANIEL

I wish we had more nights together like this. And some days too.

DIANA

Not much chance of that happening, unless you plan on running off with me (*laughing*). We both know you’ll never do that.

DANIEL

(*beat*) Can you stop by on Thursday? So I can give you a birthday present.

Wanderlust

DIANA

You naughty boy. I can come by at 4:00. But, I think you should start the present right now. *(kisses his body)*

DANIEL

Give me a few minutes so I can finish reading this report.

DIANA

(takes the report out of his hand; throws it on the floor) It can wait. Besides, I'll give you my own economic forecast. *(turns off lamp – lights down)*. It's going to be rocky in the near future – lots of ups, and lots of downs. But we're going to strive for full employment in all sectors. *(pause)* Oh my, and extreme inflation.

ACT TWO - Scene 7

A restaurant – Daniel and Hank are in the middle of a conversation. Hank is still dressed poorly.

HANK

None of the teens that started in our classes had any programming experience. And after a few years, we have dozens of students getting scholarships in computer science, including some at our alma mater. And as much as I am helping them, they are helping me.

DANIEL

How's that?

HANK

I am sure you noticed that I do not always have the easiest time relating to people. These teens also have trouble relating – at least to adults in a professional environment. So we have to find middle ground. And I found that for the first time I could really connect with a group.

DANIEL

That's great!

HANK

And I owe it all to you.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

What do you mean?

HANK

I did not want to admit it then, but Mason was correct. The company needed new management. If you had not sided with him, we would not have been as valuable. Now, I found something more rewarding than running a company.

DANIEL

And the money doesn't hurt either.

HANK

You actually taught me the unimportance of money. Your greatest attribute is that you never let money dissuade you from doing the right thing.

DANIEL

How's Billy?

HANK

He is a junior at Penn. He is doing great in school. And his team won the intramural basketball league this year.

DANIEL

Wow!

HANK

Yes, when he told me he said he wished he knew how to reach Coach Daniel. Enough about me, tell me about you. I know you work for Corning.

DANIEL

Things are going well. But I do miss the feeling I had working at Translation. And I miss you.

HANK

I know Daniel. I have not found a chess partner as fun as you.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

Some of the things we talked about really stuck with me. Your definition of integrity. It's something my company is lacking.

HANK

Daniel, businesses themselves cannot have integrity. It is a personal attribute. You cannot help it if others act without integrity, you can only be accountable to yourself.

DANIEL

I learned how important that is from you. And of all the people I could have hurt, the one that deserved it the least was you. I'm so sorry.

HANK

(puts arm around Daniel) You were young, and you made a mistake. Gail and I rebuilt our trust. I was not a very good husband at that time. She was lonely. I had to forgive her, which is why it is easier to forgive you.

DANIEL

I tried to break it off, I was planning to that night you came to my apartment –

HANK

I know. *(pause)* She said you were really bad at it. *(grins)* You know I almost wish I hadn't gotten my new phone.

DANIEL

What do you mean?

HANK

You know I always hated text messages, but you told me I should at least check them. So that day –

Daniel crosses to his apartment, where Diana is waiting.

DIANA

What's the urgency? You sounded frantic over the phone. I thought we were going to meet tomorrow.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

This can't wait. I found out some things today about the bonds I've been selling, and –

DIANA

Were those the reports you were reading?

DANIEL

Yes, and, well, there's other stuff – anyway, the question is, with the contract I signed, who can I talk to about the bonds?

DIANA

Do you have proof of anything illegal going on?

DANIEL

Nothing illegal. But those reports cast a lot of doubt on the value of the bonds.

DIANA

Without proof of illegalities, you have no protection under whistle blower statutes. You can talk to legal counsel and anyone in your firm. Outside of that, any mention is a fire-able offense – no severance, no bonus – and I know your bonus is most of your compensation.

DANIEL

So I can't talk to clients about this?

DIANA

Not only can they fire you, but they might even have a civil claim against you. Damages can be in the tens of millions!

DANIEL

I really don't know what to do. Just seeing you helps make this -

DIANA

Sorry hun, but I told you I only had a couple of minutes. I got to get back. Maybe you should talk to your friend, Koz. He might know what to do.

Daniel crosses to the restaurant, where Koz is at the table.

Wanderlust

KOZ

This is a change in our relationship – you asking me for a mysterious meeting. What’s going on?

DANIEL

As you said the other day – maybe we should drop the quips. You were right about Charlene talking to other professors. She actually hired three of them to analyze your pricing model.

KOZ

Mason told me.

DANIEL

Did he tell you she gave their reports to me?

KOZ

No – I don’t think he knows. (*beat*) So let me guess. They disagree with my model. You know academics, the best way to get 10 opinions on a subject is to put three Ph.D.s in a room.

DANIEL

You truly have done something astonishing.

KOZ

You mean, they agree with my model?

DANIEL

No – but you’ve unified the academic world. All three of them disagree with your model in exactly the same way. In fact, they all used the same technical term. What’s it called? Oh, Horse shit!

KOZ

Very funny Daniel. You know how intellectual jealousy works?

DANIEL

Stop Koz. After reading their reports, I re read your research. It’s flawed. Even Jeffrey figured it out – that’s what his emails were about.

Wanderlust

KOZ

By the time I discovered the errors, we were already in business. Besides, perception becomes reality. When you look up the price of the bonds, they're exactly what the model says they should be.

DANIEL

Come on Koz, Corning's the only bank trading these bonds. The price is whatever we say it is.

KOZ

Still, as long as that situation stays the same, we will continue to have -

DANIEL

A bubble.

KOZ

What?

DANIEL

When I was a student, you defined a bubble as when a price exceeds its mathematical formula. You should be proud. You created your own bubble.

KOZ

No – maybe they're slightly overpriced, but over the long-term –

DANIEL

And if they're overpriced now, what will three times leverage do to the value.

KOZ

So what are you going to do?

DANIEL

I don't know yet. (*beat*) I had an interesting meeting for lunch today. Hank Valis. I figured after seven years it was time for closure.

KOZ

O.K., but what does that have to do with -

Wanderlust

DANIEL

Did you know that he had every intention of promoting me to President until Mason talked him out of it?

KOZ

I don't think it was Mason's idea. Hank's revising history in his mind.

DANIEL

Maybe. But he has very good recall about the specifics. Hank. Mason. Oh, and a consultant.

KOZ

I was always supportive of you. I said nothing during that meeting.

DANIEL

Exactly. You said nothing. You said nothing when Mason was convincing him not to promote me, and you said nothing to me until Hank told me.

KOZ

I was only a consultant. I -

DANIEL

A consultant who had Hank's ear every step of the way. But Hank didn't know you were already in Mason's pocket. And, all that happened at the exact same time that Mason needed an ally against Hank. That timing was convenient. Almost like it was planned – like Mason had inside information of what might drive a wedge between Hank and me.

KOZ

You can't be suggesting that I -

DANIEL

I haven't gotten to the best part.

KOZ

What?

Wanderlust

DANIEL

One day, Hank happened to get a text from a blocked number that said – “tonight Gail will be visiting the apartment of her lover, who happens to be your Chief Operating Officer.” So I’ve been thinking – I certainly didn’t send it, and I’m pretty sure Gail didn’t send it, and there was only one other person who knew I was meeting her to break off our relationship.

KOZ

I’m -

DANIEL

What the FUCK, Koz. Plan A didn’t work – I didn’t turn on Hank right away because he didn’t promote me, so you go to plan B – betray my most personal secrets.

KOZ

I know you’re pissed. I would be as well if I was you.

DANIEL

Ya think?

KOZ

But everything has worked out in the end. Look where we are now. On the brink of something that will -

DANIEL

Change our lives? Since my father died, I’ve had two men in my life that I trusted. And today, I found out one of them purposely undercut the relationship I had with the other for a few pieces of silver.

KOZ

Heap as much shit on me as you want. But you might want to consider that the relationship with Hank began to change when you started FUCKING his wife.

DANIEL

Koz, I HAVE been thinking about that for seven years. I just didn’t know I had help. (*Beat*) You know, as I was driving here, I was thinking, I wonder if Koz started planning all of this when I visited during office hours.

Wanderlust

KOZ

Don't be an idiot! Like I concocted this elaborate plan 13 years ago. You think way too much of me.

DANIEL

Think too much of you? Let's see, you sabotaged my promotion, betrayed the most personal of information, and put me in a position where I can be accused of defrauding my clients. I can't think too LITTLE of you, you piece of shit.

Exits

ACT TWO – Scene 8

Daniel's condo. The doorbell rings. Daniel crosses to the door and opens. Diana enters. Big kiss.

DANIEL

Happy birthday.

DIANA

Oh, is that why I got the kiss? That better not be my only present. I've got two hours. You need to make me the most satisfied woman in the world.

Daniel guides Diana to the couch

DANIEL

I got you a real birthday present.

Hands her a gift wrapped box

DIANA

We agreed. No birthday or Christmas presents. Takes too much explaining.

DANIEL

Please – just open it.

DIANA

Unwraps box, reads paper inside

It's a reservation from Expedia – you're showing me your travel itinerary?
That's cute.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

No. It's for two – to Kauai. You've always said you want to spend more nights together. We can spend a week there. Or anywhere – everything is changeable. We can go whenever and wherever you want.

DIANA

This is really nice. But how can I get away for a week?

DANIEL

We've grown so close. It thrills me when you tell me how much I'm on your mind. I can't stop thinking about you either. We really are kindred spirits.

DIANA

I like our conversations too, but -

DANIEL

And this past week, it's grown to a new level. You helping me out through this crisis, it gave me a different perspective. It's like you're a real partner.

DIANA

All I did was -

DANIEL

I know it will be complicated, but I want you to move in with me. I wasn't sure I would ever feel this way about someone, but I realize, I ... I love you.

DIANA

Shit Daniel. Stop playing around. (*Daniel slumps*) Oh hell – you're not serious, are you? Come on, you always said the only L word that really mattered was LUST. (*She grabs Daniel by the shoulders and shakes him*) We agreed on the rules. Don't ruin this.

DANIEL

I'm not trying to ruin this! I'm telling you how I feel!

DIANA

My husband has his flings – I have mine. I've never thought of leaving him.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

And what about me?

DIANA

You're an amazing fuck. But, it's only been about sex. I thought you knew that.

DANIEL

And I thought you weren't a cold hearted bitch.

DIANA

You ass hole! I'm a bitch because I don't want to fulfill some deluded fantasy of a life together? Did you really think I'd leave Miles for someone like you?

DANIEL

Someone like me? You seemed to enjoy someone like me a lot.

DIANA

That was sex. It's not that I don't like you. But, those conversations we had – that was to pass the time in between orgasms.

DANIEL

So that's it – you're just willing to throw away a full year -

DIANA

I'm not throwing anything away – you are. I'm just not making this into something that it's not.

DANIEL

If you gave it a chance, it can become a relationship.

DIANA

Of all the men I know, there's no one less equipped to handle a real relationship than you. You're what, 35? You never had a real girlfriend – you just borrowed other men's women. You avoided any commitments your whole life.

DANIEL

That doesn't mean I can't start. I would think at your age you would -

Wanderlust

DIANA

You have no clue about what it takes. No woman's ever going to take a chance on you – regardless of her age. Take my advice. Keep your job. And stick with the flings (*grabs his crotch*). You're good at them. Might not be the most fulfilling life, but it's all you got.

ACT TWO – Scene 9

Daniel's Office. Daniel is sitting, Mason enters.

MASON

You're in early today.

DANIEL

A lot of things to think about.

MASON

Koz called me last night. He said you had concerns about the e bonds.

DANIEL

Concerns? The entropy model we're using is garbage.

MASON

You're being dramatic. Most sophisticated models have known flaws in them.

DANIEL

Our clients might have paid up to 40% too much for the bonds. Pension plans that are on the brink of solvency can't afford a loss like this.

MASON

There's no loss if no one knows about it.

DANIEL

Cover ups never work. Eventually people will figure it out.

MASON

Cover ups work all the time. You just don't hear about them, which is the point.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

That's very philosophical, but I don't want to be part of a fraud.

MASON

Aren't you the little boy scout? So pristine. Intriguing. How does Dudley Do Right reconcile his ethics with the fact that he's slept with half the married women in Santa Clara county. *(pause)* That's right, Koz told me.

DANIEL

One has nothing to do with the other. I'm not going to defend all of the decisions I've made. But that doesn't mean I can lie to people to their face.

MASON

Very well. We can pull you off of the bond project.

DANIEL

Thanks, but that's not good enough.

MASON

Don't get greedy. You've already generated over a million in bonuses.

DANIEL

I'm not talking about money. We need to tell clients they paid too much.

MASON

That's opinion, not fact. Let me explain something to you, Daniel. Reputation means everything in this business. This model flaw is just a blip. Now that we know about it, we'll do a better job with the new bonds. But if you start calling existing clients, word will spread, and we'll be out of the bond business immediately. *(beat)* That being said, we'd survive. We still have our core business. Your friend Koz would return to academia – thank goodness for tenure. You, on the other hand, will be out of a job, and that bonus you were going to get will disappear. How much do you still owe on your mortgage? *(picks up magazine)* And because you're so photogenic, everyone will associate you with the failed bonds. That, combined with a few well-placed phone calls, will ensure that you never work in banking again. Oh, and you should see a lawyer, because beyond losing your job and bonus, we'll sue your ass. *(beat)* You're still young and impetuous. Think things through – for your own good. Give it the weekend at least.

Wanderlust

DANIEL

I guess a few days wouldn't hurt.

MASON

Good thinking. And if you want to work on the Triple e bonds, that door's still open. *(beat)* Market's about to open. I have some trading to do.

DANIEL

You know who the smartest person here was. Not you, or me, or even Koz. It was Jeffrey. He's the only one who knew that he didn't understand what was going on. The rest of us fooled ourselves.

Mason exits. Daniel goes to his computer, looks at the screen. He picks up the electronic chess set, ponders a bit, picks up the cell phone, and pushes buttons.

DANIEL (cont)

Hello Hank ... its Daniel ... yeah, I enjoyed catching up too. Do you have a few minutes? ... I could use some advice.

Daniel crosses to lectern – ticker scrolls “2017 – Epilogue”

DANIEL

That was a year ago. After talking to Hank, one by one, I called each of pension funds and explained the model flaw. And one by one, my clients called me names synonymous with various parts of the male, and sometimes female, anatomy. That is, until one of them phoned Mason and he had security escort me from the building. You might have seen me on 60 minutes – Lara Logan called me the man who saved the financial markets. After that report aired, the shit really hit the fan. As for Mason, well, for his sake, I hope he has the BEST attorney in the world. *(beat)* He was right by the way – I was finished in banking. And with legal fees, no bonus, and a mortgage ... let's just say the bankruptcy judge does not allow mushroom and scallop risotto in my budget. The 60 minutes report was seen by the Dean of the business school at Berkeley *(cast members stick their heads out of entrances, yelling “Go Bears!”)*, and she asked if I was interested in being part of a new research center focused on business ethics. It's really interesting work. I even convinced a former colleague to work on a project on financial markets.

Wanderlust

Charlene enters, crosses the stage, yells "Go Bears," and exits.

DANIEL (cont)

And that's why I'm here. Occasionally one of your distinguished professors decides they want a day off, and asks me to be a guest lecturer. Having some discussion of ethics in the executive MBA program is thought to enhance your education. But our time's up. You can now go back to your normally scheduled classes on pillaging the free markets. Thank you.

Daniel starts gathering his notes. Aaron and Tina enter and cross to the lectern

AARON

That story was great. You should write a book.

DANIEL

Thanks – but writing would be too traumatic.

Aaron exits

TINA

I have a question – if your boss had fired you immediately, would you still -

DANIEL

Sorry. I have a meeting to run to. You can call the Center and make an appointment if you want.

Crosses to exit

TINA

Following Daniel

We loved your segment on 60 minutes. While you were lecturing I texted my husband your photo – he said he was envious.

DANIEL

Stops

Maybe that's because he didn't actually have to sit through my lecture. O.K., I can be late. Go ahead and ask your question.

Wanderlust

TINA

I was asking if -

DANIEL

Takes Tina's arm and escorts her towards exit.
By the way, that's perfume you're wearing -- it definitely fits your personality.
Energetic and mysterious. Would you join me for a cup of coffee.
They exit

END OF PLAY