

## Reboot

Half-hour comedy series debuted on Hulu in 2022, created by Steven Levitan  
One-page synopsis by Erik Bork

A TV writer convinces Hulu to do a reboot of a sitcom from 20 years ago that her father created and produced -- with the original cast and all their personal dysfunctions returning. So is her dad, who she blames for not being there for her as a child during the original run.

*Step Right Up* was a conventional early 2000's family sitcom about a boy being raised by his dad, mom and stepdad. It feels dated now, and writer HANNAH wants to update it, but her father GORDON wants to continue it with the same tone and feel from before. He's an aging comedy hack in today's woke world, and she finds it hard to work with him due to their opposing sensibilities, generational divide and her grudge against him for abandoning her.

On her side creatively is leading actor REED, the stepdad character, classically trained with a big ego and hidden self-doubt, who always felt above the project and clashed with Gordon, leading Reed to leave the show and bring the whole operation down, which many still blame him for.

During its run, Reed had a turbulent love affair with costar BREE, who was as self-absorbed as he was but without any pretensions as an actor. After the show she married a European prince but he cheated on her and they recently divorced. Working together again is scary for him as he never really got over her, despite being in a committed relationship now with a partner who lives in New York and is skeptical of this whole situation. Reed and Bree both feel the effects of aging, not being respected by the world anymore, and wanting another chance at glory.

Also returning is ZACK, who played their son, and then went on to star in many cheesy kid movies and had a very abnormal childhood with an overinvolved mother. He's dim and upbeat, super psyched to be back with his original castmates on supposedly equal footing, as they're all adults now. But he's still a child emotionally. That doesn't make him that different from the other three, including the grumpy CLAY, who's had major substance abuse drama that being back in the limelight might re-trigger.

Hannah and Gordon bring two very different sets of writers in to help them with the show. He favors old comedy hands from his glory days, while she hires a young diverse group who couldn't be more opposite of his people. They clash in the writers room, but the biggest conflict is personal, as insecure neurotic Hannah struggles with Gordon's "benign dictator" style and inability to really see her or give her autonomy.

But he becomes more aware of what he's done to her and who she is, and tries in his limited way to forge a better relationship with her. She's wary and not quick to accept his olive branches, especially when they include things like outing her attraction to the show's corporate HR rep to everyone, and practically forcing them to go out with each other.

All six central characters struggle with finding happiness in this new situation, which is made harder by secondary characters like the young Hulu executive in charge of the show who is new to comedy and can't date Zack for fear of professional reprisals, or the young influencer Hulu insists they cast despite her lack of acting experience -- whose youth, beauty and fame are a constant reminder to most of the others just how little of those things any of them have.

**Commented [EB1]:** Logline that pitches the series as a whole -- the place, the situation, the ensemble of multiple characters and the main problematic situation that all will be part of and affected by.

**Commented [EB2]:** Introducing series regular characters and what their key conflicts and unreachable desires are, with a suggestion of the main driver of stories for them that will be seen throughout the series. Note that even as a comedy the key is relatable emotional underpinnings and wants that will lead to endless conflicts with other characters and their situation in general.

**Commented [EB3]:** Note that past events are only mentioned if they're important to ongoing present-day conflicts and character problems that will be a factor moving forward.

**Commented [EB4]:** Note the emphasis on character concerns and desires that are difficult or even impossible to fulfill, with a general sense of what drives or bothers each character that will be explored in multiple episodes and stories.

**Commented [EB5]:** Note how character introductions focus on the central source of conflicts and difficulties for the characters that will be explored on the show, with some sense of why these situations will be intriguing and entertaining to watch. Also note the contrast and conflict between characters who are each very different from all the others and have the potential for ongoing "stories" pitting them against others.

**Commented [EB6]:** Brief examples of story material in the first season can be suggested but the synopsis does NOT focus on pitching the entire pilot episode and does not focus on any one character's problem/goal -- but rather the overall palette of characters, problems and potential "wells of story" for multiple series regulars.

**Commented [EB7]:** Characters who get stories almost never have much happiness, even in a light comedy (other than the really dim characters like Zack who might seem unnaturally upbeat but also have below-the-surface pain).

## Free Guy

Feature film (action-comedy) released in 2021 – screenplay by Matt Lieberman and Zak Penn  
One-page synopsis by Erik Bork

A non-playable background player in a violent online video game starts to develop desires for a more independent life and falls for a mysterious female character he helps but can never really have as his girlfriend. She is being played by a programmer looking for evidence in the game that parts of it were stolen by its evil/powerful creator from her work on game characters that are able to develop sentience.

GUY leads a mundane, repetitive, but not unhappy existence as a bank teller whose workplace is constantly being robbed by violent outlaws, not realizing he's part of a video game, as an "NPC" (non-playable character). One day a female character gets his attention and he becomes quickly smitten, and more curious about things, leading him later to put on the special sunglasses of a robber, which allows him to see his world as a player would see it, with missions and items to acquire and more autonomy, which fascinates him and causes him to explore new possibilities.

As Guy starts to do things NPC's can't, the video game company notices and send two employees into the game with their own avatars to take him out. One of them, KEYS, is the former partner of MILLIE, a programmer who believes Keys' boss stole their code to use in the game Guy is in. She wants to find evidence of this in a certain section of the game which is why she's playing it – as the character Guy became smitten with.

Millie's character and Guy meet again and he wants to help her but she directs him to go "level up" by completing other missions in the game, which he soon starts doing in impressive fashion, while behaving heroically instead of selfishly like most players. He becomes well known for this. But ANTWAN, the head of the game company, is planning to rush a sequel to market soon, which will wipe out the current game including Guy.

Guy's success allows him to help Millie and they succeed on an adventure together, after which he kisses her, surprising Millie. Meanwhile Keys starts to notice NPC coding in the game which Millie takes as proof that as their code was stolen. It was for a different kind of game in which NPC's could grow and become sentient.

Millie reveals to Guy that he's just a video game character, which devastates him. His NPC friend offers to help him assist Millie and they go and get some evidence she needs. Antwan starts to dislike Guy's popularity, fearing it will hurt the sequel's launch. So just as Guy and Millie are on the trail of the final evidence they need, the company reboots the game, which destroys Guy's self-awareness and memory of Millie's character.

Millie asks Keys for help and learns that Guy is based on a character he created who would be obsessed with her character. So she goes back into the game and kisses Guy which reactivates his memories and sentience. Then they lead other now-sentient NPC's on a quest for the final evidence they need. But Antwan learns what's happening and uses all his powers to stop them, and kill them in the game. Keys helps Millie and Guy, and in the end they're able to defeat Antwan and finally launch their own less violent game with Guy in it. Millie learns that Keys created Guy based on his own feelings for Millie, which she was unaware of. They kiss.

**Commented [EB8]:** Logline focused on the main character's desire and life stakes with a sense of what they will be trying to do throughout the movie. Note this movie has two separate main characters, each with their own story problem/goal.

**Commented [EB9]:** Brief set-up of the (first of two) main character(s) with their life as it is.

**Commented [EB10]:** Catalyst or inciting incident that hugely rocks (one of the two) main character's world and causes them to go in a wholly new direction in pursuit of an important desire.

**Commented [EB11]:** Establishment of second main character and their goal: not all movies have more than one main character, and those that do don't necessarily wait this late to reveal their objectives.

**Commented [EB12]:** Second act developments as the main character(s) enter(s) an "upside down world" in pursuit of their goal which leads to complications that keep their biggest desires out of reach, despite whatever progress they might be making.

**Commented [EB13]:** All is lost and things hit a breaking point where opposing forces seem to have won and the main character(s) runs out of options and hope.

**Commented [EB14]:** Final third act battle when the main characters are pressed to their limits in a climactic active confrontation with their opposing forces, leading to the story problems being resolved.