

REBOOT

"Step Right Up"

Written by

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&

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1

INT. "STEP RIGHT UP" LIVING ROOM SET - DAY

Old "Step Right Up" clip. CODY, cute, 7, in a soccer uniform, enters with nerdy stepdad LAWRENCE (*Keegan Michael Key*) and cool dad JAKE (*Johnny Knoxville*), both early 30's. JOSIE (*Isla Fisher*), late 20's and adorable, greets them. Hair and wardrobe scream 2004.

JOSIE

Hey, how'd the big game go?

LAWRENCE

Great! I yelled for Cody to kick it in and he finally listened to me and scored a goal!

CODY

(embarrassed)

Yeah, on my own team.

BIG LAUGH TRACK

LAWRENCE

Oh, that explains why your coach threw his clipboard into the parking lot. I thought it was some sort of sporting celebration.

BIG LAUGH TRACK

JAKE

(to Cody)

Son, next time: Listen to your dad for sports and your stepdad for things like wearing your pants too high.

BIG LAUGH TRACK

2

INT. HULU CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Reveal incredulous Hulu execs watching on a large screen.

JAKE

(to Josie)

Josie, I'll never get how you went from a high school football star like me... to Lawrence.

JOSIE

(to Jake)

Jake, after being married to you for five years, I sprinted.

LAUGH TRACK.

ELAINE KIM, 30, pauses the video.

HIP EXEC  
What's left of my brain hurts.

Elaine proceeds to the next page of her number-filled deck.

ELAINE  
"Step Right Up" is strong I.P. It was a solid ratings performer in its original 1999 to 2006 run and, since we started streaming it last fall, episodes have exceeded all expectations and consistently logged top quintile numbers in all quadrants.  
(deep breath)  
So I propose we do a reboot.

Mixed reactions from the room.

ELAINE (CONT'D)  
Our algorithm clearly indicates a boost in subscribers and we've identified a "hip" female writer who has an updated take using the original cast.

OLDER EXEC  
Do we know if they're available?

HIP EXEC  
Or alive?

ELAINE  
All are technically avail. The only one who might be tricky is Bree Marie Jensen.

3 INT. ENTERTAINMENT NEWS SET - DAY

We see a segment of the entertainment news show:

ANCHOR  
In tonight's "Where Are They Now?"  
Do fairy tales come true? For  
Hollywood stars they do!

4 INT. "STEP RIGHT UP" LIVING ROOM SET - DAY

A "Step Right Up" clip featuring BREE.

ANCHOR (V.O.)  
"Step Right Up" sitcom star Bree Marie Jensen, the former pageant girl from Golatchy, Oklahoma --

5 INT. PALACE - DAY

BREE and her swarthy Middle Eastern PRINCE getting married in an opulent but tacky ceremony.

ANCHOR (V.O.)  
-- is now a Princess living in Tabakastan -- having wed Crown Prince Mehrnoosh Zhankhou.

6 EXT. DAGASTAN WILDERNESS - DAY

The PRINCE by his golden exotic car working with his prized FALCON as Bree watches.

ANCHOR (V.O.)  
The two met while the prince was visiting Los Angeles after the finale of Jensen's show in 2007...

PHOTO: BREE and REED with a jagged line between them.

ANCHOR (V.O.)  
...following her breakup with "Step Right Up" co-star Reed Sterling.

7 INT. DAGASTAN PALACE SET - DAY

Clip of a Tabakastan sitcom, shot on a cheesy palace set. BREE gracefully descends a grand staircase.

ANCHOR (V.O.)  
Once in Tabakastan, Bree starred in a short-lived sitcom, financed by her husband for a princely sum, called *Ādemi Tilalğış Xanşayım*, which means Beautiful Obedient Princess.

Princess Bree is met by her trusted servant SANZHAR (all dialogue is subtitled in Tabakastani).

PRINCESS  
Sanzhar, did you call for the  
helicopter?

SANZHAR  
(accent)  
Dear Princess, I forgot and now I  
have shamed my entire family. I  
will subject myself to a whipping.

PRINCESS  
How about instead you "whip" me up  
a drink?

LAUGH TRACK.

ANCHOR (V.O.)  
The show was reportedly cancelled  
by the king after two episodes.

8 EXT. NORTH HOLLYWOOD BLACKBOX THEATER - NIGHT

The marquee reads, Reed Sterling in Tasha Unga's "Ping Pong  
in Chernobyl"

9 INT. BLACKBOX THEATER - NIGHT

The theater is dark. In a single spotlight, his face framed  
by a suspended square, Reed Sterling (*Keegan Michael Key*),  
now late 40s, bald and noticeably heavier, performs this  
pretentious one-man show.

REED  
(accent)  
Time runs out. Ten, nine... Our  
life together teeters on  
destruction... Eight, seven... Yet  
we waste precious seconds... Six,  
five... on past battles of  
hubris... Four, three... As if  
we're playing Ping Pong in  
Chernobyl. Three--

HECKLER (O.S.)  
Look at that, you got the title in!

Reed pauses, clearly annoyed, then presses on.

REED  
(accent)  
Three. Two --

HECKLER (O.S.)  
Is it gonna be one? I bet it's  
gonna be one.

REED  
(drops accent, angry)  
Sir, show some respect for the  
audience!

HECKLER (O.S.)  
What audience? It's me and a  
sleeping old lady.

Reed recognizes that voice from somewhere.

REED  
Wait...

He marches to the side of the stage and turns on the  
houselights, revealing that the "audience," is only a  
sleeping OLD WOMAN and CLAY BARBER (*Johnny Knoxville*), also  
late 40s, t-shirt, stubble, feet up on the chair.

CLAY  
Hey, buddy!

REED  
(realizing, ugh...)  
What do you want, Clay?

CLAY  
I want you to kill the lights so we  
can both go back to jerking off.

REED  
Great seeing you. We'll have to do  
it again in another fifteen years.

CLAY  
I heard you turned the show down.

REED  
Of course I turned it down! Why  
would I sign back up for a reboot of  
the sitcom that ruined my career?

CLAY  
I'd normally say to put food on the  
table, but you seem good there.  
(beat)  
What I mean is you're fat.

REED  
I got it! And I purposely gained  
the weight for a Martin Scorsese  
film!

10 INT. AUDITION ROOM - DAY -- FLASHBACK

Casting video. Reed, even fatter, slates.

REED  
Reed Sterling for the role of Fat  
Tony.

He does some actor-y shrugs and stretches then nods to the  
off-screen casting assistant.

CASTING ASSISTANT (O.S.)  
(rote, monotone)  
That's the deal, you cocksucker.  
You can take it or I beat you to  
death with a fuckin' bat.

REED  
(as Fat Tony, intense)  
Well, look at you. Actin' like you  
got four aces and I got nothin'.  
Well, I ain't got nothin'. What I  
got is a pack of ruthless  
motherfuckers who'd kill --

CASTING DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
(dismissively)  
Okay, thank you.

REED  
That's it? But I --

CASTING DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
Thanks.

Anger and regret wash over him.

11 INT. THEATER - CONTINUOUS

CLAY  
This is about you and Bree, isn't  
it? You never got over her, huh?

REED

Of course I did. Why are we even --?  
I heard they won't do it unless  
everyone signs up and we both know  
the "princess" never will.

CLAY

That's what I thought, too, but  
they finally tracked her down and  
today she said yes.

REED

You're kidding.

CLAY

C'mon, you guys were great together  
-- at least onscreen. I think she  
made you better.

REED

Please, I went to the Yale School  
of Drama.

CLAY

Yeah, yeah, so did the Postmates  
guy who delivered my burrito last  
night.

REED

Meanwhile Bree only cared about  
hair, make-up and whether or not  
her ass looked as good as  
Nicollette Sheridan's.

CLAY

It did.

REED

I know it did!

CLAY

She made you less cold and  
pretentious, more likable.

REED

I'm "likable."

CLAY

Hmmmm, are you? I never thought  
"one-man show" referred to the  
audience.

REED  
Okay, if we're done, I'd like to  
finish the play.

OLD WOMAN  
No! This is way better.

REED  
(shouting to woman)  
Go back to sleep!

CLAY  
Did you even read the new script?

REED  
I read the title page, got  
flashbacks, and had to take a Xanax.

CLAY  
By a big-name writer, Hannah  
something. It's great. Best of all,  
this time, no kids. That was the  
fucking worst. I must have spent  
twenty grand on the swear jar.

REED  
So no Zack?

CLAY  
He's written as the adult loser who  
never left home, which I bet is  
pretty accurate.

Clay tosses him the script in a manilla envelope.

CLAY (CONT'D)  
Just read it.

REED  
Why do you want this so bad?

CLAY  
Look, I know it sounds corny, but I  
want it for the fans.

12 EXT. LAUGH FACTORY ALLEY -- NIGHT

Clay has sex with a young woman, AMBER. His pants are around  
his ankles, her skirt is hiked up.

AMBER  
Yeah, baby.

CLAY  
You like that?

AMBER  
You know I do.

A HORN honks. Up the alley, a car waits, with a young woman leaning out the window.

WOMAN  
Jesus, Amber, let's go!

AMBER  
Hold on! I'm fucking one of the  
dads from "Step Right Up!"

13 INT. REED'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Reed reads the new script when his girlfriend TASHA enters with a canvas shopping bag. She's 40's, bohemian, severe, with black-framed glasses. She speaks with an indeterminate Eastern European accent.

TASHA  
*Nightmare* at the Farmers market. The  
good bean guy hoed his toe off, so  
now it's just the sexist bean guy.  
(seeing TV, suspicious)  
What are you doing?

Reed finishes the script.

REED  
Huh, oh. I just read the new script  
for the Step Right Up reboot...

Tasha unloads the bag of organic root vegetables and beans.

TASHA  
Uggh, must everything be reboots,  
sequels and nonsense based on comic  
books? Nothing original, just  
regurgitating childhood memories  
like an ouroboros swallowing its  
own tail until it vanishes into a  
speck of nullity.

REED  
That's certainly one way to look at  
it. Anyway, Clay Barber came to see  
me last night...

TASHA

Ah, yes, your trickster, your Puck.

REED

He said the new showrunner wrote a great script and he was right. The dialogue feels real, the jokes are subtle and smart and the characters finally have depth...

TASHA

Forgive me for being dubious. Every time I stumble across the reruns, I dry up and lose all desire to make love to you.

REED

It was bad because Gordon, the old showrunner, was a complete hack.

14 INT. OFFICE - DAY

GORDON GLUCK, then mid-50's, wearing a fun Hawaiian shirt, gives a 1998 TV interview. CYRON: Gordon Gluck, Creator, "Step Right Up".

\*

GORDON

Comedy's simple. Have a thing do what it's not. A little kid talks like an adult - Comedy! A classy lady gets hit with a pie - Comedy! An animal wears a tuxedo - Com-plicated! See, there I used an unexpected word - Comedy!

15 INT. REED'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

\*

REED

Tasha, I just feel like this time it could be different. What do you think?

TASHA

I think you want my approval because you never got it from your father, the great painter who wouldn't hug his son.

REED

You don't *always* have to peer into the depths of my psyche, Tasha--

TASHA

I'm a playwright, that's what I do.

REED

Well, you're wrong.

TASHA

Then perhaps you do this to see your ex-lover who ripped your heart out and stomped it to shreds.

REED

It was fifteen years ago.

TASHA

In grade school, I asked Dimi Ishak to the winter festival dance and he called me "hog body" and ran away. I still think of him every day.

REED

Well, I've obviously matured. I let young lust blind me to how wrong we were for each other, but now I appreciate depth and intellect. Which is why I love you and not her.

TASHA

I'm not jealous. You feel that way today, but maybe not tomorrow. Love is no more than the warm air from a subway grate that momentarily rushes up your dress on the cold march to death.

REED

Yes, I remember your toast on Valentine's Day.  
(sincere)

I just want people to take me seriously again, to recognize my potential the way they did when I came out of the Yale School of Dra--

TASHA

Darling, you have such a big penis, why do you always feel the need to bring up Yale?

Reed finally decides.

REED

I think I might have to take the show.

TASHA  
I'm shocked.

REED  
Are you being sarcastic or  
European? I can never tell.

She passive -aggressively returns to unpacking the produce.

TASHA  
Maybe now I will also do commercial  
things. I have a very huge movie  
idea that Hollywood will love.

REED  
That's amazing. Your work deserves  
a huge audience. What's it about?

TASHA  
It's the story of an arthritic  
shoemaker in eighteenth-century  
Prague who loses all hope when his  
wife slowly dies of Malaria.

REED  
(trying to be supportive)  
Ah, so it's sort of a *Phantom  
Thread* meets Gershtang's *The Plague  
of Night*?

TASHA  
Yes, if I want to dumb it down.

16 INT. COMEDY CLUB -- NIGHT -- INTERCUT

CLAY performs onstage.

CLAY  
So I grew up in a series of foster  
homes. No, no, don't feel sorry for  
me...unless it leads to us fucking.

The audience laughs.

CLAY (CONT'D)  
(to man in audience)  
Not you, sir.

More laughs.

CLAY (CONT'D)  
When I was fifteen, my latest  
foster mom started hitting on me.  
(MORE)

CLAY (CONT'D)

She'd want us to fuck every time her boyfriend went to work -- so like three times a year.

More laughs.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Actually, it was way better than before, jerking off alongside ten other boys in a group home. As soon as it was lights out, somebody would turn on music so we couldn't hear each other and then, a minute later, in perfect sync, everybody would blow their load, like the fountains at the Mirage in Vegas.

This time disgusted laughs.

HECKLER (O.S.)

(calling out)

You suck!

CLAY

Oh, look, one of my dads came to see the show.

Laughs.

CLAY (CONT'D)

(pressing on)

Anyway, when you're raised by people who --

HECKLER (O.S.)

You have terrible stage presence!

Clay shields his eyes and finally sees the heckler is REED.

CLAY

Ah, I thought I recognized that voice. Folks, say hello to my "Step Right Up" co-star, Reed Sterling.

The audience applauds.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Security, have him removed.

Laughs.

17 INT. COMEDY CLUB -- MOMENTS LATER

CLAY and REED approach the bar and sit.

REED  
Well that was filthy.

CLAY  
No higher praise.

REED  
So, you were right. The script is great. I'm in.

CLAY  
That's great, but now there's a problem with Zack.

REED  
What kind of problem?

CLAY  
He says he won't do it unless I go to his house tomorrow...  
(off Reed's confusion)  
...to show him respect. But there's no way I'm groveling to that hyperactive little shit-monkey.

REED  
So don't grovel. I'll go with you and do all the talking and you can just sit there. Come on, now I want this to work. How bad can it be?

18 EXT. ZACK'S MCMANSION -- DAY

MUSIC CUE: HIP HOP BEAT

A junior McMansion somewhere in the valley with a tired bright green Lamborghini in the driveway.

ZACK (O.S.)  
YEAH YEAH YEAH...

19 INT. ZACK'S MCMANSION -- DAY

A large LIVING ROOM that looks like it was furnished by a sixteen year old. ZACK, 22, not as cute as he used to be, performs with his band.

ZACK  
 (RAPPING)  
 'CAUSE HE NEVER GONNA LOVE YOU LIKE  
 I DID BEFORE // BUZZ ME IN FOR THE  
 PUSSY 'CAUSE I'M AT YOUR DOOR.

Reveal Clay and Reed sitting on the couch, horrified.

REED  
 Okay, it's worse than when he used  
 to run up and punch us in the nuts.

CLAY  
 If this is why he dragged us to  
 Reseda, I'll beat him to death with  
 Sarah Jessica Parker's guitar.

He nods at the long-blond-frizzy-haired male guitarist.

ZACK  
 (RAPPING)  
 ELEVATOR'S BROKEN SO I TAKE THE  
 STAIRS // MOFOS KNOW I'M CRAZY SO  
 NOBODY DARES // I CAN KEEP ON  
 CLIMBING 'CAUSE OF CARDIO // GONNA  
 GET TO YOU THEN WE GONNA PARTY-YO  
 // PARTY-YO PARTY-YO PARTY-YO

THE SONG ENDS and Zack drops the mic.

ZACK (CONT'D)  
 (to Reed and Clay)  
 So, yeah, my music career's blowing  
 up.

CLAY  
 I definitely want it to.

20 INT. ZACK'S MCMANSION -- DAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Zack is now seated in a commanding chair across from Reed and Clay. The furniture was clearly placed strategically to show off posters from Zack's straight-to-video films, such as:

ZACK  
 "Kid Kongressman," "Teenstronaut,"  
 "The Hunchback of Notre Dame High."  
 Just a few of the films I did after  
 the show.

REED  
 Wow, those really made money?

ZACK  
How do you think I paid for that  
sweet Lambo in the driveway?

CLAY  
I assumed some kinda former child  
star fetish prostitution thing.

Zack's hot girlfriend SHANDY enters with drinks for them.

ZACK  
Oh, gentlemen, this is my  
girlfriend Shandy.

She hands them drinks.

REED  
Hi. Thanks.

CLAY  
(to Shandy)  
Don't I know you from somewhere?

SHANDY  
(unconvincingly)  
No, definitely not.

ZACK  
(to Shandy)  
Thanks, baby.

Zack makes a display of kissing her.

SHANDY  
(to both)  
Nice to meet you --  
(to Clay)  
-- for the first time.

She exits as Clay tries to place her.

REED  
So, Zack, we all want to do this,  
even Bree.

ZACK  
That's cool, but let's talk about  
what I want. You guys never took me  
seriously...  
(re: Clay)  
Especially him. You treated me like  
I was five.

Clay looks like he's about to go ballistic. Reed stops him.

REED

Ummm, you were five. And perhaps not the best-behaved child in the world. For instance, the way you loved to lick your finger and stick it in our ears.

ZACK

Well, I'm an adult now, I'm a hyphenate movie star/hip-hop artist and I also practice the life system Phenomenonology, which has taught me to honor my inner-warrior. So I'm taking the controls, just like I did in "Pint-Sized Pilot."

Clay and Reed try to hide their reactions.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Either you agree to treat me like an adult or I'm not doing it.

CLAY

Zack, I want you to know I hear you and this comes from the heart: Your band sucks, your teen video career's over and once the money's gone, trust me, so is Shandy, who I'm pretty sure I once fucked in Joe Rogan's bathroom. So I suggest you ignore your bullshit cult leader and show up for the photoshoot Thursday before everyone remembers you were a walking prop that can easily be replaced with a cock-sucking sex doll.

REED

(to Zack, a positive spin)  
See? That's how he treats adults.

MONTAGE:

MUSIC CUE: Cheesy and peppy "Step Right Up" theme song...

LYRICS

HELLO FRIEND, IT MAY TAKE SOME TIME  
// BUT THERE'S NO HILL THAT WE  
CAN'T CLIMB // LOVE AND LAUGHS WILL  
GET US ALL THROUGH // JUST ONE  
THING THAT YOU GOTTA DO // AND  
THAT'S... STEP RIGHT UP// STEP  
RIGHT UP

...which plays ironically against:

21 INT. CLAY'S BATHROOM - MORNING OF SHOOT

CLAY, feeling his age, checks his hairline while brushing his teeth. He spits out the toothpaste and takes a swig of tequila.

22 INT. REED'S BEDROOM - MORNING OF SHOOT

REED tries to squeeze into Spanx.

23 INT. ZACK'S HOUSE - MORNING OF SHOOT

ZACK uses his movie posters to psych himself up.

24 INT. BREE'S SUITE - MORNING OF SHOOT

BREE, wearing the finest designer clothes, steps into the mirror looking confident and commanding. After a beat she deflates a bit and tries to push her eyes further apart.

END OF MONTAGE

25 INT. SOUNDSTAGE -- DAY

The bright and sunny "Step Right Up" living room set in all its glory. As the photo crew steps in to adjust lighting, we see REED and CLAY take it in.

CLAY  
Fucking weird.

REED  
I bet this is how old soldiers feel  
when they return to Normandy.

HANNAH KORMAN approaches, a quirky late-30's writer with a colorful streak in her hair.

HANNAH  
This set, you guys... Give me acne  
and a wine cooler and I'm back in  
sixth grade. Hi, I'm Hannah Korman.  
The new showrunner... person.

REED  
Hannah! We're so happy you're here.

He hugs her.

CLAY  
Great fucking script!

REED  
Yeah, we love you already.

HANNAH  
Wow. Remind me to come see you after  
the next FaceTime with my mother.

Zack approaches.

ZACK  
(To Clay and Reed)  
Okay, I'm here.

CLAY  
Did your mom drive you?

ZACK  
No, I drive myself now!

REED  
Zack, this is Hannah Korman, the  
new showrunner.

ZACK  
(to Hannah)  
Hey, I was thinking Cody could be  
in a band because I have a new  
track about to drop --

HANNAH  
Yeah, maybe. Probably not.  
(then)  
Anyway, Reed, I've been a psycho  
fan ever since I saw you in that  
production of "Endgame" at the  
Lomita Playworks.

Reed makes the prayer-hands thank you.

REED  
(prayer hands)  
My heart is full.

HANNAH  
And Clay, your set at the Montreal  
Comedy Festival may be the dirtiest,  
funniest thing I've ever seen.

CLAY  
(mocking Reed's prayer hands)  
My ass is full.

She realizes Zack is waiting for his compliment.

HANNAH  
And Zack... My nephew watches your  
movies.

ZACK  
Sweet! Which is his favorite?

HANNAH  
Ooh, I'm late for a meeting, but I  
just wanna say I'm excited for  
this. Hopefully, we can blow some  
people's minds.

REED  
Music to our ears!

ZACK  
I'll walk you out.  
(as they go)  
So hear me out on this band thing...

They exit. The PHOTOGRAPHER ASSISTANT passes by.

PHOTOGRAPHER ASSISTANT  
Guys, we're just waiting on Bree in  
make-up.

CLAY  
Just like old times. Zack running  
around annoying everyone while we  
wait on Bree.

REED  
Remember when Alysa Milano did that  
guest spot and Bree wouldn't come out  
'til wardrobe made her boobs look  
smaller than Bree's?  
(then)  
You were more patient with her than I  
was.

CLAY  
Similar childhoods. Her mom told her  
she was losing beauty pageants  
because her eyes were too close  
together and my stepdad used to punch  
me in the head if I talked during  
"Charlie's Angels."  
(MORE)

CLAY (CONT'D)

(reminiscing)

And you were no picnic. Remember when you held up shooting 'cause "your character wouldn't eat shrimp?"

REED

Two seasons earlier we'd established that a shrimp allergy made me involuntarily slap myself!

(smiles)

Okay, I overthought that, nothing made sense. Hey, I want to thank you.

CLAY

For what?

REED

For talking me into this. You were right. It's gonna be good. For all of us.

CLAY

Man, I hope so. I missed this. Having a place to go during the day, being a part of a team for once.

REED

And what if this time we can actually be, dare I say, friends?

CLAY

Okay, you're smothering me.

They smile.

BREE (O.S.)

There they are!

BREE has entered with a stylish coat draped over her wardrobe. Two large middle-eastern SECURITY GUARDS trail her.

BREE (CONT'D)

Did you guys miss me. Keep in mind, if you say no, I can have you flogged.

CLAY

Too late. I already flogged myself this morning.

BREE

Clay, I'm just thrilled you're not dead.

CLAY  
Awww, you sound like my coke  
dealer.

They hug. She turns to Reed.

BREE  
Reed, wow...

REED  
It was for a movie role. Just like  
Robert DeNiro and Christian Bale.

BREE  
Combined.  
(then)  
I'm kidding, you look great.

REED  
So do you.

Their attempt at a hug is extremely awkward.

CLAY  
There's that chemistry!

ZACK approaches with a water bottle.

ZACK  
Hey! Bree!

BREE  
Hello. Sparkling water. Fine  
bubbles, not coarse.

ZACK  
It's me. Zack Jackson.

He gives her a big hug. Her security guards look concerned,  
but Bree waves them off.

BREE  
Zack! Look at you, all grown up!  
I'm sorry, I haven't been called  
Bree in so long. Feels weird to the  
ear, almost.

ZACK  
What should we call you?

BREE  
Bree's fine, it's great. I just  
might not respond immediately.  
(MORE)

BREE (CONT'D)

I'll tell you what, if it's an emergency, go with "Your Highness." Otherwise, stick with Bree.

ZACK

This is a little embarrassing to admit now that I'm an adult, which I am, but I used to have a major crush on you.

BREE

Yes, I remember you touching my butt all the time.

ZACK

Don't worry, I'm totally over it. I have a super hot girlfriend. The guys'll vouch for --

BREE

Zack, I'd love to get a drink --

ZACK

Whoa, yeah. I'm down. How about tonight?

BREE

No, I meant that water.

ZACK

Oh, I'll go grab you one.

BREE

Oh my God, no. I just wanted to know where it was. The last thing I want is to be treated like a princess.

(then)

But if you could...

ZACK

Yeah, sure, then we'll catch up.

He hugs her a second time.

BREE

Oh, we're doing this again.

She signals to the security guards, who start toward her when Zack pulls away and crosses off.

BREE (CONT'D)

(re: Zack)

That's a lot.

CLAY

Wait 'til his band ear-fucks you.  
(re: two large men)  
What's with the big guys?

BREE

My husband refused to let me come without security. He worries about me ever since I was kidnapped by rebels.

REED

You were kidnapped?!

BREE

They kept me tied up for three days. Terrifying, but my mama used to tell me, when you're scared, just sing a little song. So that's what I did, no matter how many times they told me to stop. The soundtrack from "Annie Get Your Gun," Appalachian folk songs, the complete library of Celine Dion...

REED

They set you free, didn't they?

BREE

No one could believe it.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Okay, folks. We're ready for you.

Clay heads toward the set.

REED

Bree, can we talk for a second? I think an apology is in order.

BREE

Yeah, you're not wrong.

A long beat as they slowly realize they're each waiting for the other.

BREE (CONT'D)

Wait. You're expecting me to apologize?!

REED

Hold on. What do I have to be sorry for?

\*

REED (CONT'D)

We dated for three years and you left without so much as a goodbye!

BREE

We were broken up!

REED

No, we were taking a break to do some introspection!

BREE

Oh really? I heard you went on a date with Alysa Milano. You were supposed to introspect yourself, not her ginormous boobs!

REED

It was one dinner!

BREE

Well, you owe me an apology for making me crazy!

REED

Oh, I think Mammy and Pappy get all the credit for that.

BREE

See, right there. Condescending. The big city college boy talking down to his country girlfriend with the high school degree.

REED

I was not condescending.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Guys...

BREE

Look, they're about to take our pitcher --

REED

The word is picture.

BREE

(re: security guards)  
Keep it up and they will hurt you.  
(collects herself)  
You know what? Let's just both just apologize for whatever we did.  
C'mon, we loved each other once.

Reed considers for a beat and finally softens.

REED  
You're right.

BREE  
On three. One, two, three:

REED  
I'm sorry.

BREE  
I accept your apology. Now who's  
the dumb one?

She turns and heads to the set. Reed reacts then follows.

26 INT. "STEP RIGHT UP" SET - CONTINUOUS

Bree approaches, followed by Reed.

PHOTOGRAPHER  
Okay, folks, so we're recreating this  
gallery shoot from the old days.

The cast takes in a blown-up photo from 2004 as Zack returns  
with Bree's water.

BREE  
Wow, look at us. I miss my ass.

REED  
I miss my innocence.

CLAY  
I miss Reed's hair.

PHOTOGRAPHER  
So let's do it. Bree, you're next  
to Reed. Zack, you're between Reed  
and Clay.

They get into position.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)  
(looking through his lens)  
Great. Amazing. Reed, could you  
give us that Lawrence annoyed look?

REED  
Hmm, I'd rather not. It's a bit broad.

PHOTOGRAPHER  
Yeah, I know, but they want to  
match the old photo.

REED

Yeah, but the show's more sophisticated this time so this is more of an internal, thing. See?

Reed does a look.

PHOTOGRAPHER

You don't look annoyed.

REED

Oh, trust me, I'm getting there.

BREE

Reed! Just do it!

CLAY

Dude! It's a photo!

\*

REED

Fine, fine. "Let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them." Hamlet.

Bree and Clay roll their eyes.

REED (CONT'D)

(sensing something)

What?

BREE

Nothing.

Bree and Clay glance at each other for an instant.

REED

Really? This again?

CLAY

This what?

REED

The clandestine alliance.

(to Bree)

Okay, let's really clear the air.

(to Bree and Clay)

I know your little secret.

BREE

What are you talking about?

REED

Please, I'm not an idiot. You two, behind my back...

Reed makes the JERK-OFF GESTURE then the BLOWJOB GESTURE. Bree and Clay look at each other guiltily, but say nothing.

REED (CONT'D)  
Guys, we're adults. You know exactly what I mean.

BREE  
(getting uncomfortable)  
Let's not do this now.

REED  
No, now's the perfect time. Let's clear the air once and for all.

BREE  
Okay, fine, we were drunk and it only happened once.

REED  
(thrown)  
What?!

BREE  
(uh-oh)  
Hmmm?

REED  
What only happened once?

CLAY  
Nothing.

REED  
Oh my god.  
(to Bree)  
You two -- you cheated on me with Clay!?

BREE  
What were you talking about?

REED  
Making fun of my acting process!

BREE  
Then what was with the --  
(jerk-off gesture)  
-- and the --  
(blowjob gesture)  
-- ?

REED  
I thought it was a visual metaphor,  
not a recap of your night on the town!

BREE  
It was just once.

REED  
Stop saying that!

Her security approaches.

PHOTOGRAPHER  
Okay, why don't we get back in position...

REED  
And he doesn't mean doggie style!

ZACK  
I get that joke!

BREE  
(to Reed)  
Okay, calm down. It's not like you were the best boyfriend.

REED  
Oh, that's perfect. Now it's my fault you two --

Reed does the JERK-OFF and BLOWJOB GESTURE. CONNOR, a young, stoned production assistant approaches.

CONNOR  
Hey, you know where I can find the actors?

CLAY  
We're the actors.

CONNOR  
Awesome, way to go. They told me to tell you guys to go to the offices upstairs.

BREE  
Why?

P.A.  
'Cause I think it's my job to do stuff like that. It's my first day, I'm still figuring it out.

PHOTOGRAPHER  
Yeah, good, let's take five.

REED

Really? 'Cause you're not gonna get  
a better annoyed look than this!

CLAY

(to Reed)

Does this mean we're not gonna be  
friends?

27 INT. SHOWRUNNER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

CLAY knocks on the door, flanked by REED and BREE.

CLAY

Hello? Hannah?

He opens the door, but instead of Hannah, they find GORDON  
GLUCK, 70's, the original schlocky creator of "Step Right Up."

GORDON

There they are! My favorite family!  
Seriously, my kids are useless.

The cast looks shocked.

BREE

Gordon?

GORDON

Bree! The best tush in Hollywood!  
(catching himself)  
I mean, the best mind in Hollywood.  
Don't want to get "Me Too'd."

BREE

(confused)

What's "Me Too'd?"

REED

Gordon, what're you doing here?

GORDON

I finally read Miss Crazy Hair  
what's-her-name's script. Jokes with  
no punch lines, irony, social  
commentary. Bleh. Our fans like  
zingers, puns, wacky gags. I told  
her I'll fix it.

REED

But she's the showrunner now.

GORDON  
Apparently not. She just quit.

They all react. Zack enters.

ZACK  
I'm here.  
(noticing)  
Gordon?

GORDON  
Oh good, the guy with the sandwiches.

ZACK  
No, it's me, Zack.

Gordon puts on his big thick glasses.

GORDON  
Zack, my boy. All grown up! You  
used to be so cute. Oh well... And  
Reed, seems you've grown, too.

REED  
It was for a role.

GORDON  
Maybe a sweet roll. See? I still  
got it!  
(into cassette recorder)  
Brainstorm: Add a bunch of fat  
jokes about Lawrence.

REED  
No! We're not doing that.

CLAY  
Gordon, we liked Hannah's script.

GORDON  
Nah, that script was a kale salad.  
The world's a mess. People want  
macaroni and cheese! Right, Reed?

Gordon chuckles.

REED  
This can't be happening.  
(to Gordon)  
The show needs to change. That's  
why we signed up.

GORDON

Let me tell you a story. Last year I took my ungrateful family on Safari in Africa. We saw elephants, monkeys, the whole nine yards. One day we're watching a lion kill a Gazelle, when I see this villager and what's he wearing? I swear on my Bentley, it's an old "Step Right Up" T-Shirt. You see my point?

REED

Yeah, yeah, the old show has fans around the world.

GORDON

Nope, you're the gazelle and I'm the lion. Mislead!

REED

But --

GORDON

(suddenly firm)

But nothing. It's my show. I control the rights. I'm the one in charge here.

Reed gives a reassuring look to the others, then takes a beat to get into character.

REED

(to Gordon, as Fat Tony)

Well, look at you. Actin' like you got four aces and I got nothin'. Well, I ain't got nothin'. What I got is a pack of ruthless motherfuckers who'd love nothing more --

GORDON

What're you doing?

BREE

(to Clay)

What's he doing?

CLAY

(to Bree)

I think it's the speech Ed Norton did in the last Scorsese flick.

REED

(to Clay)

He used a fat suit! I would've been better!

GORDON

Guys, it's me. The fans are gonna love it. We're adding a cute little kid. He's hilarious. My granddaughter found him on TikTak.

CLAY

A kid?! Gordon, no.

Bree comforts Clay.

BREE

(to Clay)

Take a deep breath, honey, it'll be fine.

GORDON

And we're also adding his hot mom.

BREE

I'm sorry, what now?

GORDON

Yeah, Zack marries a young hot mom so now he's a stepdad, too.

ZACK

I like it!

REED

I may pass out.

BREE

Hold on... I'm a grandma?!

28 EXT. STUDIO LOT - MOMENTS LATER

REED, CLAY, BREE and ZACK burst out of the Writers Building, the door of which is flanked by Bree's SECURITY GUARDS who follow behind.

REED

It's a nightmare.

BREE

I'm not old enough to be a grandma! I mean, maybe in my hometown, but not here.

CLAY  
Guys, you're missing the big picture. He's adding a kid.

ZACK  
Actually, I think it all sounds pretty grea--

They all cut him off with "Don't even!" "Shut-up!" "Not now!"

ZACK (CONT'D)  
You know what? I don't care what you guys think. I'm fucking psyched. Did you hear that? I said a swear word!

As Zack crosses off...

BREE  
So what now?

REED  
What now? It's over, that's what.

CLAY  
Dude --

REED  
No! I only agreed to do this stupid show because I thought it could finally be good. And, I'll admit it, because you wrecked me when you left and I needed closure. Instead I have to suffer the further humiliation that you two went behind my back and, as Captain Shiticky up there would say, boinked your brains out! I mean, why?!

BREE  
Partly because Clay never gave me patronizing acting notes.  
(as Reed)  
"Feel your character's motivation."  
"Don't think, react." Well, my motivation was to piss you off and that's how I reacted.

REED  
I gave you notes to help you!

BREE  
Meanwhile, I was the one Harvey  
Weinstein wanted to meet with.

CLAY  
Oh honey...

BREE  
And I was the one nominated for a  
People's Choice Award, not you.

REED  
Like I care.

BREE  
'Cause your acting was stiff.

REED  
(gasps)  
How. Dare. You.

A tour bus passes by.

INT. TOUR BUS - CONTINUOUS

TOUR GUIDE  
(into mic, to the group)  
...facade, which is French for  
false front.  
(notices)  
Holy cow, is that...? I don't  
believe it, that's the cast from  
"Step Right Up!"

The tourists are genuinely excited.

TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)  
Well, folks, this is an unexpected  
treat!

EXT. STUDIO LOT - CONTINUOUS

Reed, Bree and Clay are oblivious.

CLAY  
Can we please end this? Dude, I'm  
sorry. Did Bree and I have sex?  
Yes, yes we did. Was it loving and  
tender? No, it was not...

REED  
(threatening Clay)  
I did two units of stage combat.

CLAY  
...it was actually pretty freaky if  
I remember --

REED  
That's it!

Reed attacks Clay, getting him in a headlock.

BREE  
Guys! Over me?!

She can't help but smile as they fall to the ground.

INT. TOUR BUS - CONTINUOUS

The tourists move to get a better view.

TOUR GUIDE  
Okay, that's, um --

He quickly drives on.

TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)  
Next up we have our New York street.

INT. STUDIO LOT - CONTINUOUS

Back to Reed and Clay, still wrestling around on the pavement. The Security Guards approach and look to Bree.

BREE  
Eh, just let 'em go. I like it.

Reed is now on top of Clay.

REED  
Apologize!

CLAY  
Right now I'm just sorry you're so  
fat!  
(noticing)  
Wait, Hannah!

We see HANNAH walking to her car. Reed and Clay get up. Clay and Bree rush over to Hannah, who loads her stuff into a Mini Cooper. Reed trails in.

BREE

Hannah... Hello. I'm Bree, so nice to meet you.

HANNAH

You, too. I'd curtsy, but my ass still hurts from what just happened in there.

BREE

Please don't go! We need you. We really want this to work. Right, guys?

CLAY

Definitely.

HANNAH

Look, I appreciate the vote of confidence, but the job is hard enough when everyone's pulling in the same direction...

CLAY

We can handle Gordon if you --

HANNAH

It's not just about him. This right here is what my therapist would call red flag number two.

BREE

Oh, they're just having fun, you know, like brothers.

CLAY

Yeah, that's what families do - I've heard.

HANNAH

I heard about all the drama back then. The arguments on set...

BREE

Name a show that doesn't have that.

HANNAH

The constant crying.

BREE

Reed is very sensitive.

REED

(to Bree)

Why do you even care? You're a princess for god's sake.

BREE

Because I miss it! I miss us all figuring out how to make something funny, I miss an audience laughing... I miss people respecting me for me, instead of for who I married.

REED

For whom.

BREE

(to Security Guards)

Hurt him.

HANNAH

Well, on that note...

She opens her car door.

BREE

No! If you quit then Reed quits and then...

REED

Then what?

She takes a beat.

BREE

Making this happen wasn't exactly easy. Mehrnoosh didn't want to let me do it.

HANNAH

"Let you?"

BREE

We had a huge fight about it. I felt like one of his precious falcons, trapped in a gilded cage...

29

EXT. TABAKASTAN GROUNDS - FLASHBACK - BDAY

During the following, we see what Bree describes:

BREE (V.O.)

So, out of spite, I set his prized falcon, Louis Vitton, free. Oh, it felt sooo good to watch that bird soar into the sky... until I realized it was just building up enough speed to turn around and...

The Falcon SMASHES into Bree's head and she drops.

30

EXT. STUDIO LOT - AS BEFORE

BREE

(suddenly vulnerable)

Because I scratched Louie Vitton's beak, the Prince suddenly wanted me to leave. So if this falls apart, I don't know what I'm going back to.

REED

Why did you ever go there in the first place?

BREE

The show ended, I was scared I'd never work again, and along came Mehrnoosh. Rich, charming, handsome. How was I supposed to know Tabakastan was so backwards?

REED

Newspapers...

HANNAH

Internet...

SECURITY GUARD

Beheadings...

BREE

Oh well... It would have been nice. And, Reed, for whatever it's worth, I am sorry. You didn't deserve that.

He takes this in.

REED

(no choice)

Fine. I'll do it.

BREE

Really?

REED  
You were our princess first.

BREE  
Thank you! Hannah? Please?

HANNAH  
(trepidatious)  
Uggggh, I suppose.

They are all incredibly relieved.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
But, just for the record, I've run a dysfunctional show before. The stress was fucking crushing and I didn't handle it... great. One particularly bad day, I lost it on set, threw a director's chair at Rob Schneider and then "accidentally" hit Chevy Chase with my golf cart.

Reed, Bree and Clay take this in.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
Word got around I was "crazy" and for three years no one would hire me... until along came some studio exec who's too new to know better. So, just a friendly FYI, if shit gets bad here, which we all know it will, it's probably only a matter of time until I end up running one of you over.

Hannah gets in her car.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
(then, brightly)  
But, 'til then, fuck it, let's have some fun!

She peels off. Reed, Bree and Clay just look at each other.

CUT TO BLACK.

**END OF SHOW**