YES MA'AM

Single-Camera Workplace / Family Comedy

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PORTFOLIO READING SAMPLE • SERIES OVERVIEW, MAIN CHARACTERS AND EPISODE ONE

YES MA'AM

Series Overview

Genre: Single-camera workplace/family comedy Tone: Schitt's Creek warmth meets New Girl chaos meets HIMYM narrative playfulness Format: 10-episode first season, 22-25 minutes each Logline: A newly divorced man rebuilding his life discovers his overbearing mother has moved in permanently—turning his organized, artistic existence into a minefield of manipulation disguised as maternal love.

MAIN CHARACTERS

DEVON CARTER (38)

The Protagonist | The "Nick Miller Meets David Rose" Hybrid

Devon spent the past year constructing a life he finally recognizes: minimalist apartment with actual art on the walls, a marketing job where his creative instincts are gaining traction, a small but solid friend group, and the emotional scar tissue from his divorce finally starting to fade. He's the guy who color-codes his spice rack but also has a secret sketchbook of absurd cartoons he never shows anyone. Post-divorce Devon learned to be organized because chaos (his marriage, his mother) taught him that control equals survival.

Comedic Engine: Devon's carefully built adult competence versus Helen's systematic dismantling of it. He's funny when he's frazzled—trying to maintain dignity while his mother treats him like a ten-year-old. Think New Girl Nick's exasperation mixed with Schitt's Creek David's specific, wounded pride.

Arc for Season: Learning that boundaries aren't betrayal—and that the version of himself he built post-divorce might actually need to be dismantled to grow into someone who can have real intimacy again.

HELEN CARTER (64)

The Antagonist/Co-Lead | The "Moira Rose Meets Lucille Bluth" Hybrid

Helen is the church bake sale champion who remembers everyone's dietary restrictions. She's the neighbor who brings casseroles before you ask. She's also a master of the "innocent" power play: the voice that drops to wounded whisper when challenged, the tears that appear on command, the strategic "I just want to help" that precedes total takeover. She doesn't think she's manipulative—she genuinely believes she knows best, and that love means managing people who can't manage themselves.

Comedic Engine: Her absolute conviction that she's saving Devon from himself. She weaponizes kindness. Every "Yes Ma'am" Devon utters is a tiny surrender, and the show tracks his accumulating debt of compliance. She's hilarious when she's being charming (we see why people love her) and terrifying when she's cornered.

The Twist: Helen isn't a cartoon villain. She's lonely. Her husband died five years ago. Her other children have successfully walled her out. Devon is her last connection to feeling needed, and she will not let him take that away without a war disguised as a hug.

MARCUS CARTER (42)

Devon's Older Brother | The "Schitt's Creek Alexis" Energy

Marcus lives in a McMansion two hours away with his wife and their aggressively normal children. He escaped Helen by being boring enough that she lost interest. His superpower is cheerful deflection: "Mom, I'd love to help but the kids have soccer and Karen's book club needs the car." He's mastered the art of being present enough to avoid guilt, absent enough to avoid damage.

Comedic Function: Marcus and his sister Jenna appear via video call, flashback, or occasional drop-by to offer "support" that always circles back to childhood stories that humiliate Devon. They're the Greek chorus of his past failures. Marcus is particularly fond of reminding Devon about "The Great Science Fair Incident of 1998" whenever Devon describes current Helen behavior.

Signature Bit: Marcus keeps a "Mom Escape Fund" hidden from his wife—a running joke about the financial cost of freedom.

JENNA CARTER-MORRIS (35)

Devon's Younger Sister | The "Robin Scherbatsky" Cool Girl

Jenna is a travel nurse who moves cities every six months, allegedly for career advancement, actually for Helen avoidance. She's the sibling who "got out" by being unreliable—Helen can't latch onto someone who's never home. She's blunt, funny, and genuinely loves Devon, but her advice is always "just tell her no" delivered from a hotel room in Denver while eating room service.

Comedic Function: Jenna's distance gives her perspective she can't use. She sees Helen's patterns clearly but has no skin in the game. Her video calls with Devon are rapid-fire therapy sessions where she diagnoses Helen's manipulation in real-time while Devon explains why this time it's different.

GABE FOSTER (40)

Devon's Best Friend/Work Colleague | The "Winston Bishop" Wild Card

Gabe is a copywriter at the marketing firm who has made Devon's personal chaos his primary entertainment source. He has a spreadsheet tracking "Helen Incidents." He genuinely cares about Devon but cannot stop finding the whole situation hilarious. He's the friend who will help you move a body but also live-tweet the funeral.

Comedic Function: Gabe pushes Devon to confront Helen, then immediately undermines him by laughing at the results. He's the audience surrogate—delighted by the disaster. His running commentary on Devon's deteriorating mental state provides external measurement of the damage.

Workplace Dynamic: Gabe starts a betting pool about when Devon will snap. By episode 3, half the office is participating.

PRIYA SHARMA (36)

Devon's Boss/Creative Director | The "Stevie Budd" Deadpan

Priya promoted Devon to Junior Art Director because she saw his potential. She regrets this daily. She's trying to run a creative team while one of her best designers keeps getting interrupted by his mother bringing him "brain food" (hard-boiled eggs in a Ziploc bag). Priya doesn't care about Devon's personal life until it makes her look bad to her bosses.

Comedic Function: The straight woman to Devon's spiral. Her increasing frustration with Helen's workplace incursions builds through the season until she becomes an unexpected ally—teaching Devon professional boundary-setting that he accidentally applies to his mother.

Hidden Depth: Priya has her own overbearing parent (a father, not a mother), which she reveals in Episode 8, explaining why Helen's behavior makes her particularly furious.

KIP (34)

Devon's Ex-Wife's New Partner | The Recurring Ghost

Kip is mentioned constantly, appears twice, and somehow haunts Devon's entire season. He's a yoga instructor with a man-bun and anger issues. The running joke: everyone who meets Kip thinks he's great for approximately 45 minutes, then witnesses the temper. Devon's ex, Michelle, appears once (Episode 6) to explain that she left Devon because he was "too controlled, too careful, too much like his mother."

Comedic Function: Kip is the mirror Devon doesn't want to look into. The show suggests that Devon's hyper-organization is its own dysfunction—Helen broke something in him that made him terrified of spontaneity.

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

THE CHURCH LADIES (Dolores, Betty, and "Young" Carol, 58): Helen's squad. They adore her, pity Devon, and keep trying to set him up with their granddaughters/nieces/random women from the grocery store. They function as a Greek chorus of maternal approval, gasping when Devon pushes back, cooing when Helen plays victim.

DEREK (29): The junior designer who gets promoted over Devon in Episode 6. He's not malicious—just young and untroubled. His existence proves Helen's point about Devon's stalled career, which makes Devon hate him more.

MR. HENDERSON (70s): Helen's "vacation husband" from Episode 10. A retired accountant who thinks he found love. The tragedy: he's actually nice, and Devon has to decide whether to warn him or celebrate that Helen has a new target.

SEASON ONE EPISODE OUTLINES

EPISODE 1: "THE VISIT"

Cold Open: Devon's perfect morning. Coffee in the exact right mug. Outfit selected the night before. Presentation materials organized. He is, for the first time in years, okay. Then the doorbell rings.

A-Plot: Helen arrives with a casserole and a suitcase "just in case." Devon assumes a weekend visit. By Sunday, her clothes are in his closet. By Wednesday, she's reorganized his kitchen. The move-in happens through a thousand tiny "just while I'm heres" that Devon can't refuse without seeming cruel.

B-Plot: At work, Devon's pitching a campaign for a youth sneaker brand. He's proud of his concept—edgy, authentic, slightly dangerous. Helen's first workplace visit "to bring lunch" happens during the pitch meeting. She charms Priya. Devon is mortified but also... relieved? Someone saw him as worth caring about, even if it was humiliating.

Tag: Devon finds his spice rack alphabetized. He stares at it for a long moment, then whispers "Thank you" before he can stop himself. Helen, in the next room, smiles.

Comedic Influences: New Girl pilot's roommate chaos; Schitt's Creek's gradual takeover of personal space.