

WEB SERIES CONCEPT: "DIVA" - A Miniseries For Internet TV

LOGLINE: A teenager, who once pursued a singing career, tries to forge her own path in life, but is thrust into the spotlight by her domineering father when an old friend of his comes to town seeking new singing talent, bringing not only an opportunity, but also rekindling her painful memories of a family tragedy.

SYNOPSIS: Elizabeth Beckley, known as "Lizzie" to her friends, is an average 16 year old teenage girl, living in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She likes boys, hanging out with friends, and is a straight A student. Unlike her friends, though, she has a special gift: her beautiful, powerful singing voice. Ever since she was four years old, she sang whenever she could, either at home with her parents, or in public at talent shows, or in school plays. Her life, and her destiny, changed forever when she was 13 years old. After singing in a school play, which her mother Diane attended, they were involved in a car accident on the way home. Elizabeth survived, but her mother did not, and since then, she has been haunted by the memory of that night, and because of it, she has not only refused to sing in public, but she has also given up on any possibility of a career in the music industry. Approaching her senior year in high school, she hopes to go to college, and to one day become a teacher, working with special needs children, inspired by her younger brother, Jacob, who while intelligent, outgoing, and caring for Elizabeth, suffers from mild autism and depression resulting from the void left by their mother's passing, which Elizabeth has tried, yet struggled, to fulfill, by being a mother figure in his life.

However, her plans are derailed once her father, John Beckley, a former one-hit wonder '80s teen idol (better known as "Johnny Beck") turned personal injury lawyer, hears her singing along to the radio, something she has never done since her mother's passing, and is immediately struck by how beautiful her voice still sounds. He talks to her about her voice, and she tells him that she does sing sometimes, but only in private, and has moved on from the lifestyle of a performer, only singing for her own enjoyment, insisting that she does not want to be a professional singer. Later, John finds out that his old friend, David Brandon, himself a former teen idol, now a record producer and songwriter at Sunset Records in Los Angeles, is searching for potential talent to fill the company's roster of artists. He visits John, who introduces Elizabeth to him. Almost immediately, David is captivated by Elizabeth's singing, and

notices her extraordinary talent. Elizabeth, though, is reluctant to pursue a singing career, not just because she wants to go to college and study teaching, but also because the last time that she sang in public was the night that her mother died, an event that changed the course of her life and her family's life as well, and as a result, she has refused to sing in public since then.

David has a connection to John: before they each pursued solo careers, they were part of an early '80s boy band called "Starstruck", which, like their solo careers, fizzled. Also like John, he is a family man, but found himself in the same position as a teenager that Elizabeth finds herself in at the present time: when he was a teenager, he was trapped under the influence of a cruel and manipulative presence in his father, who micro-managed every part of his career, and squandered his earnings, leading David to sue his father for mismanaging his finances, a suit David eventually won. David instantly recognizes Elizabeth's extraordinary talent, but also becomes a mentor, and along with Jacob, one of her protectors against John's often cruel treatment of her, and his pursuits to micro-manage her career and her image.

David offers to work with Elizabeth, with an eye towards recording an album. John begs Elizabeth to take the offer, which Elizabeth is hesitant at first to do, considering the fact that she wants to forge her own path in life, and especially, the painful memories of the last time she ever sang. John realizes that there could be benefits not only for Elizabeth, but for him as well, especially because, like any stage parent, he sees this as an opportunity to live vicariously through a child, and to recapture the former glory of a once-promising career. David offers to work with her, write songs, and record a demo, but Elizabeth rejects his offer at first, because she knows that if she is signed by his label, she will have to perform in public, and to promote herself. Realizing this, and with her father reminding her of how her mother would feel if she could see Elizabeth perform in front of millions of fans, she tries to fight her fear and begrudgingly takes David's offer. John, sensing an opportunity, appoints himself as her manager. From there begins not only her reluctant pursuit of pop music stardom for Elizabeth, but also a chance for John to recapture his former glory, through his daughter, a pursuit that brings out his pressuring, manipulative, and domineering side, a pursuit to make Elizabeth a star, despite her own wishes, which threatens to drive apart the already fragile relationship between them.

Elizabeth and David get to work on four songs for a demo, and after a brief moment of hesitation, she begins to sing the first song that they wrote, and immediately finds her groove. After the demo is recorded, David goes to his boss, Michael Cramer, president of Sunset Records, and a powerful name in the industry who has launched the careers of many young stars over his career, in an effort to get him to sign her to his label. He hears the songs they've recorded, and sees the potential in Elizabeth, but also finds out about her father, and his strong-arm tactics. Having heard the demo, and being impressed with her voice, Michael draws up a contract, which Elizabeth refuses to sign at first, because she fears having to sing in public, something she has not done since the night her mother passed away. John reminds her how proud her mother would be if she were able to see her sing in front of millions of people, and also tells her that at some point, people have to face their fears. Knowing not only that a chance at potential pop stardom is at stake, along with a chance to advance his own interests, John persuades her to sign the contract, which she begrudgingly does.

Elizabeth, John and Jacob move to Los Angeles, trading in their former luxurious home in Baton Rouge for a cramped three bedroom, two bathroom apartment in downtown L.A. Elizabeth and David begin working on songs, and go into the studio to record the album, only to discover that John objects to the song that she has chosen for a potential single. John finds out that Elizabeth and David co-wrote a song relating to the aftermath of a divorce, and the painful memories that the song's protagonist faces afterward, mainly as a means of healing from her past pain, and also to present herself as a mature, sophisticated pop artist. Objecting to the mature content of the song, John pressures David to write and record a typical bubble-gum pop song about teenage love in place of the song that Elizabeth and David wrote. She immediately turns down the new song, much to the anger of John, who believes that she can only succeed as a Britney Spears clone, without any substance to her songs.

When John threatens to shop Elizabeth around to other record companies, and to take David off of the project, Elizabeth reluctantly agrees to record the song, which ends up being a #1 hit, resulting in instant and unexpected fame, and ultimately, her first public singing performance since her mother's passing, as the opening act for a Justin Bieber-like pop star named Matthew Taylor, 19, the biggest star on the Sunset roster. At first, she starts out shaky, but improves throughout, and gains

the respect of not only the fans, but also Matthew, who she slowly becomes romantically involved with, and sees as someone else who can protect her from her father.

After the success of her first single, Elizabeth's second single is released, only to underperform on the charts, due in large part to her (and Matthew's) popularity being eclipsed by a 15 year-old, overnight Youtube sensation named Jenny Baylor. At the same time, Elizabeth finds out that her earnings from the album's sales and from touring have all been spent by her father on fancy cars, paintings, and booze. In addition, she finds out that Jacob suffered severe injuries in a car accident while riding with friends to a movie, and the resulting medical bills are too high for her father to pay. Desperate, she decides to hold a benefit concert for her brother, filled with the record label's biggest stars, with the proceeds from ticket sales going towards paying for her brother's medical treatment. In the midst of performing her biggest (and only hit), she suffers an emotional breakdown on stage, in front of a sold-out crowd. After her loyal fans urge her to continue, she pushes forward, and completes the song. Later, she and David learn that enough money has been collected to pay for Jacob's medical treatment.

Elizabeth goes back into her dressing room, and unexpectedly finds John waiting. She angrily confronts him, and announces her intention to emancipate, to become Jacob's legal guardian, and to get out of her record deal. John tries to intimidate her once more by reminding her that she will be in breach of contract, and that he will do everything he can to make it harder for her to apply for college. Elizabeth defiantly vows to make it on her own, without his help, and walks out on him, and her short career as a pop star, forever. The series ends with a postscript: Elizabeth gains her independence from her father, legal guardianship of Jacob, release from her record deal, the rights to the master recordings of her album and all proceeds from future sales, ensuring that she will be able to support herself and her brother. She goes on to marry Matthew, attends UCLA along with him, and becomes who she really wanted to be: a teacher and mentor to special needs children.

PRIMARY CHARACTERS:

Elizabeth "Lizzie" Beckley - 16, a typical high school student, interested in boys, and hanging with her friends, but also a dedicated student, a caring friend and caretaker of her older brother, Jacob, and especially, a talented singer. She first

sang in public at age 4, and went on to sing in several children's choirs. At age 10, she won her very first talent show, and went on to compete in several other talent shows until she turned 13, when she devoted more time to her studies, while becoming interested in helping people less fortunate, especially those with physical and mental disabilities, including her younger brother Jacob, who was born with a mild form of autism, yet displays intelligence far beyond his teenage years. Their mother, Diane, died in a car accident while driving Elizabeth back home after seeing her sing in a school play, an accident that only Elizabeth survived, when she was 13. She has never performed in public since then, and as a result, she has been haunted by the memory of that night. Because of this, she has had to bear the burden of becoming something of a surrogate mother to Jacob. She has also had to deal with her overbearing father, John, who, like a typical stage father, lives vicariously through his child, and will do anything to see her succeed, even if it means forcing her to live according to his wishes, making her sacrifice her own dreams, resulting in a struggle that has already damaged their relationship, and making her emotionally vulnerable to her father's ways.

John Beckley - 49, a former teen idol, who along with David, was in an early '80s teen boy band called "Starstruck", and after their breakup, recorded a one-hit wonder under the stage name "Johnny Beck" back in 1986. Today, he is a personal injury lawyer, a widower, and father to both Elizabeth and Jacob. He is known for his incessant TV commercials, where he plays to his now-adult fans in his former "Johnny Beck" persona. All throughout Elizabeth's life, he has recognized his daughter's talent, and has tried for years to exploit it, not only to see Elizabeth realize her dreams, and to realize her potential, but also for his own personal gain, as a means of trying to recapture his former glory as a pop star, and to live vicariously through her. His wife, Diane, was not only a mother, but also a friend and mentor to both Elizabeth and Jacob, who wanted nothing but the best for her children, and encouraged them to pursue her own path in life, despite the pressure that they felt from John to become famous, and to pursue careers in the entertainment industry, as he did, a disagreement that created a rift in their marriage. Diane passed away in a car accident, one that Elizabeth survived, shortly after she performed in a school play, the last time she ever sang in public. He has a tendency to manipulate people by playing on their emotions, not only as a lawyer in court, but especially as

a father, and especially towards Elizabeth and Jacob, often with detrimental results.

David Brandon - 48, a record producer and songwriter for Sunset Records in Los Angeles, and an old friend of John's, who was once in a bubble-gum pop group with him called "Starstruck", which had a brief run on the charts in 1982. Kind and caring, he is gifted with an uncanny ability to spot talent, but also has a sense of responsibility and care for his artists, making sure that no one tries to take advantage of them. It's a situation he knows all too well, because when he was a teen pop star, his career was micro-managed by his father, who involved himself in every aspect of his career, from song choices, to wardrobes, and even to what he could and couldn't say in interviews. He ended up squandering David's earnings, and he sued his father for mismanaging his finances, a suit he eventually won. He serves as a mentor for Elizabeth, and as one of her many advocates and protectors against John's manipulative ways.

Matthew Taylor - 19, a Justin Bieber-type pop star, discovered on Youtube, and the biggest star on the Sunset label. He is talented, outgoing, ambitious, and single. He knows the feeling of adoration by millions of teenage girls, but also knows that fame is fleeting, and also wants to plan his future by attending UCLA to pursue a business degree. Caring, and protective of her, he sympathizes with Elizabeth's struggles, primarily because he has come from a broken home, the son of divorced parents, and finds himself as the primary source of income for his mother, who nearly declared bankruptcy after her divorce, and his two younger sisters. Slowly, he begins to fall in love with her, seeing her not as a pop star, but as a young woman whose real potential has not yet been realized. Along with David, he does his best to shield her from John's pressure tactics.

SECONDARY CHARACTERS:

Jacob Beckley - 14, Elizabeth's younger brother, who is an aspiring actor, currently attending the same high school as Elizabeth, and is very caring, outgoing and popular among his classmates, despite having a mild form of autism, and suffering from depression, primarily due to Diane's passing. He cares very deeply for Elizabeth, and has tried to stand up for her whenever possible.

Michael Cramer - 53, president of Sunset Records, David's boss, and one of the most powerful and respected label executives in

the music industry, who has launched the careers of many artists. Like David, he realizes the talent and potential that Elizabeth provides, and cares tremendously about the careers and well-being of his artists, including Elizabeth, but is weary of John's micro-managing her career, and his cruel and domineering behavior towards her.