



Altitude

Proposed Format: 6x45 minute series.

A coming-of-age drama about a trio of 16-year-old girls who, while dealing with exams, leaving school and life-changing issues at home, find their friendships tested when one of them discovers an amazing secret in the nearby wood: she can fly.

Altitude will explore the perennial problems of identity, family and faith while also touching on issues including bullying, divorce, domestic abuse and death. But this is no gritty, downbeat northern drama; this is a show full of aspiration, hope and laughter as our main characters grow to deal with and overcome the challenges they face. It's about growing up and dealing with the strange transition from childhood to adulthood told over an endless magical summer.

Synopsis

Tamsin is a bully, a misunderstood, angry teenager who doesn't know what she wants to do with her life. While coming to terms with her father's illness, she escapes from her problems in a nearby wood and discover an amazing secret there: she can fly.

It's a secret too big to keep to herself, but the only person she can turn to is Abigail – a girl from school who saw Tam's first uncontrolled flight. Tam used to bully Abigail and, at first, Abigail sees this as her opportunity to get revenge and expose Tam's secret, but over time their friendship grows despite their differences. As Tam spends more and more time in the wood, Becca her oldest friend, begins to feel left out. She discovers Tam's secret and sells photos of her to a local newspaper. The story soon goes national, and the little town becomes the centre of a hunt for the unnamed flying girl.

The story of the three girls unfolds against the backdrop of Tam's dad's illness and the problems of sexting from a boy at school. Abigail's family has its own share of problems including domestic violence by her father. It's a secret that is about to explode, unravelling her family and forcing Abigail to stand up for herself. And Becca is a teenager lost between the cracks, looking for a way to be heard. Meanwhile, the wood itself is about to be chopped down to make way for a new housing development.

As the girls fight their personal demons, the eyes of the world turn on this little town, and friendships are tested to the extreme, with unexpected – and sometimes tragic - consequences.

Characters

Tamsin Edwards - 16 years old, about to complete her exams and leave school. She's been friends with Becca all of her life, growing up close to each other on the estate. She's from a working-class background but aspires for more. Her parents both work, but money is always tight. They're the typical Just About Managing family. She wants to break free of the estate, but fear holds her back. It's easier to stay with Becca and keep her horizons low.

She has a short temper, fuelled by frustration with others and herself. She's angry a lot of the time and doesn't always know why. She hides her true emotions behind her anger. She's also sarcastic, likable and has a wicked sense of humour. There's so much potential in Tam but her social status means she has no idea what she's capable of.

Abigail Longbourne— Studious, quiet and underestimated, she's from a middle-class background – the nice part of town compared to Tam and Becca's estate. She's academic and doing well at school, but her passion is art, something that her father looks down on. She's being pushed into more academic subjects and she doesn't have the strength to resist. She doesn't have many friends, she's bullied by Tam and others, and she's had the nickname Long Bone for years.

Becca Norwood – a mixed-race, working-class teenager with very low self-esteem. She has no interest in school and her exam targets reflect that. Her dreams are big but in reality, she knows she'll never amount to anything. She wallows in the world of social media, putting up a perfect front while she is terrified inside. She pushes the boundaries at school, especially because she doesn't seem to have any at home. Her divorced parents still use her as a commodity in their hostilities and never give her the time and affection she needs.

Tam's Mam – a hard-working mother who is struggling to cope with her husband's illness. She is the main breadwinner now, and things are tough. She often snaps and takes it out on Tam, but underneath her tough exterior she has a heart of gold. She loves her family very much, and would do anything to protect them.

Tam's Dad – is being treated for cancer. He's a gentle, likable man who doesn't push Tam much. He prefers to sit back and see what happens, leaving the stricter parts of parenting to Tam's mam. Because of his illness he's had to give up work and money is tight.

Abigail's Mum – has suffered for years in a cycle of love, abuse and forgiveness. She hasn't the strength to admit what is happening until Abigail forces her to. Their relationship grows as they support each other through a difficult transition.

Abigail's Dad – a complicated character who loves his family but can't seem to control his violence towards them. Outwardly they have it all – the big car, the big house, a charming family, but there's more going on here.

James Pinchin – a former boyfriend of Tam's who has been sending her inappropriate texts and pictures. He's immature, and – on the surface – a predator, but he's over-compensating for his fears, his emotions and, perhaps, even his sexuality.

Mrs Wirren - a 40-something teacher who knows everything that's going on in the world of the three girls. Her no-nonsense approach to life makes her the perfect person for them to go to in times of need. But there's a secret that Mrs Wirren has never told before: when she was a teenager, she flew in the wood, just like Tam.

Other characters: Becca's Mam, Becca's Dad, Mrs Foster.

Based on the Novel by Niel Bushnell

“Vivid, believable characters, dramatic relationships and scenes of soaring into the air. Brilliant Stuff

Contact: Niel Bushnell

Email: niel@nielbushnell.com

Phone: 07702083070

