

THERE'S SOMETHIN' SPECIAL ABOUT AL TV DRAMA SERIES PITCH

By Alana Wadkin

3 x 30min

A Liverpool disabled woman finds unexpected love through her passion for music and theatre, leading her to achieve her dreams by bringing her inspirational life story to the stage.

“There’s Somethin’ SPECIAL about Al” is a reflective and thought-provoking TV drama series with Scouse humour, providing an insight into living with severe Athetoid Cerebral Palsy. It emphasises people’s prejudgements and preconceptions towards people with acute physical disabilities. The main protagonist will reveal that there is much more than meets the eye when it comes to a person trapped within their own body, who can’t walk, talk or use their hands, and has involuntary movements - confined to a wheelchair. This concept is extremely rare and will make people see disability in a different light. The humorous content throughout enables the viewers to laugh (not in a mocking way) at situations the main character finds themselves in, while simultaneously changing the way millions of people see their stories being told.

When a comical music video sparks a connection between Al, a disabled woman with a passion for musical theatre and Ricky, a budding musical theatre actor, the journey into self-discovery and requited love begins. Since the video, Al is growing in confidence, dreaming of becoming a musical theatre star but more importantly yearns for love. Ricky is reluctant to follow his dreams while recovering from his previous relationship and ignoring his ever-growing feelings for Al. Although Al uses a computer/communication aid with a well-spoken English voice, she has an inner voice (Scouse accent) that says exactly what she’s thinking. No one else can hear this except the audience and the people closest to Al who already know what she’s thinking. As their friendship develops into something more, they come under public scrutiny as nasty online comments and accusations are made towards both. To complicate things further, a mysterious individual tries to derail Al and Ricky’s relationship, while Al attempts to write a script for a competition. Overcoming many obstacles and barriers along the way, Al wins the competition along with the man of her dreams, and lands the lead role in her own theatre show. Get ready for an unlikely, swoon-worthy romance that will shatter stereotypes. Overall, it’s an uplifting underdog love story with a disabled lead character pursuing her dreams and finding self-acceptance.

With strong main characters like Al (who has to put up with people staring at her, ignoring her, calling her names, talking to her like a baby and bitching behind her back – but still sees the funny side of her disability) and Ricky (who loves/accepts Al for who she is while sometimes being frustrated with her); shows you can’t judge a person by their appearance and that you can’t help who you fall for. Now, add a health scare and a messy subplot with their best friends developing feelings for each other into the mix, the drama intensifies ensuring viewers a rollercoaster of emotions. The realistic characters create situations people in general can relate to, such as friendly mockery, arguments, sexual tension, family/professional life issues and heart-warming moments.

As a regular TV viewer and having a severe disability myself, I’ve noticed there are hardly any series that focus on disability, which feature a strong severely disabled female lead or focus on a relationship with an able-bodied person. I feel this unique idea will appeal to the regular TV viewer, but will attract a wider audience with its compelling storylines, while inspiring other people with disabilities to follow their dreams. Personally, I think diversity is something that should be celebrated and people’s perceptions and attitudes need to change further regarding disability. This is why I wrote “There’s Somethin’ SPECIAL about Al”, an accurate insight into disability and a positive outlook on following your dreams while getting on with everyday life the best way you can.