

SHINING STARS  
"Pilot"  
Written by Keeley Bell

INT. CAMP SHINING STARS THEATER – DAY

**COLD OPEN**

A single spotlight on VIVA (35), center stage.

Glamorous waves of hair cascade past her shoulders as she looks off wistfully into the balcony of the theatre.

CLOSE-UP ON:

A VISION of a LITTLE GIRL (10) in the mezzanine, leaning on the bannister.

Tears in her eyes, she watches the stage, applause roaring.

LITTLE GIRL

Wow, Mommy. You're amazing.

From the stage, Viva stares back, locking eyes with the little girl until she hears a VOICE.

VOICE

Find your damn light.

Viva snaps back to reality.

SUPER: CAMP ~~CREEKLAKE~~ SHINING STARS, 2022

Realizing she is away from the spotlight, Viva adjusts.

VIVA

Sorry, my bad. Better?

The voice is DANA(40), speaking into the God mic.

She is a stark reality check to Viva's daydream.

This is not a Broadway-level theater, this is camp. And Dana is the living embodiment of camp.

CRISTINE (30), a little too eager to be at the light board, leans over Dana's shoulder and speaks into the God mic.

CRISTINE

Perfect, Viva. Absolutely stunning.

VIVA

Yeah? Thanks.

Viva steps off of the stage.

VIVA (CONT'D)

You know, I can't thank you guys enough. This summer is going to be life-changing for so many, I can feel it.

CRISTINE

It's already life-changing for me.

Viva walks down the aisles to meet the other two in the booth. She wears a t-shirt with SHINING STARS est. 2022 splayed across the chest in block lettering.

VIVA

Yeah? Me too! I mean, I've stepped into mentorship positions before, but never like this, you know? Never with my own vision and my own dream, and --

DANA

And you've got twenty minutes before campers start to arrive. This is why we have an agenda.

VIVA

I've checked the agenda, believe me. And I know exactly what needs to be done before we open.

The two other women stare expectantly at her.

Viva shrugs.

VIVA (CONT'D)

Trust me, okay? I know what I'm doing. And I have a great feeling! Shall we?

She claps. A LOUD, PIERCING WHISTLE sounds.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: A GLOWING MARQUEE WITH LETTERS THAT LIGHT UP, THEN BURN OUT, STRUGGLING TO SPELL 'SHINING STARS'.

EXT. CAMP SHINING STARS COURTYARD — MOMENTS LATER

## ACT I

The three women burst through the doors of the theater with utmost SLOW MOTION confidence.

EXT. CAMP SHINING STARS, ROW OF CABINS — CONTINUOUS

Dana hangs clipboards of sign-in sheets outside each cabin.

EXT. CAMP SHINING STARS, COURTYARD — CONTINUOUS

Cristine flies the flag with the camp's comedy/tragedy logo.

EXT. CAMP SHINING STARS, FRONT GATE — CONTINUOUS

Viva unlocks the padlock on the front gate.

She swings it open with a flourish that only a theatre nerd would dare to have in khaki shorts.

EXT. CAMP SHINING STARS, PARKING LOT — CONTINUOUS

The parking lot is filled with cars and families.

TEENAGERS stand by their cars, engaging in a variety of pre-show rituals: lip-trilling, jazz warmups, stretching their hamstrings over open passenger doors, until they notice Viva.

VIVA

Welcome all, to Shining Stars!

She is met with applause.

Dana creeps up behind her.

Viva starts to speak again, but Dana shoves a megaphone into her face. After a struggle, she finally takes it.

VIVA (CONT'D)

Thank you. Can I start by saying  
thank you to you families for  
taking a chance on my new dream  
with me? I was only ten years old  
when I was in Susie's Sidewalk.  
That was my first time on a  
Broadway stage.

BOY'S VOICE FROM CROWD

And your last!

Viva takes the dig like a champ: by ignoring it.

VIVA

And that was the most magical time  
of my life. Now that Susie's  
Sidewalk is behind me, I wanted to  
extend that magic to all of you.  
And my dear friend Dana, here —

She puts an arm around the very uncomfortable woman.

VIVA (CONT.)  
— was kind enough to join forces  
with me — and my dream — when her  
family camp was in need of new  
management.

Dana takes the megaphone.

DANA  
My father died.

VIVA  
And left us one hundred acres of  
land to make history on, as  
Saratoga's first musical theatre  
summer camp!

The families applaud. Dana takes the megaphone once more.

DANA  
Well he wasn't exactly alive to  
make this decision.

VIVA  
So we've spent the last year  
transforming Camp Creeklake into  
Camp Shining Stars!

More applause.

VIVA (CONT'D)  
We hand-picked you all from  
thousands of video submissions and  
resumes. Give yourselves a hand.

They do.

Viva scans the overeager, overly made-up little nerds.

VIVA (CONT'D)  
Wow. Before I start ugly-crying,  
let's get you all in your cabins.  
Welcome to Shining Stars!

Viva steps aside, initiating a MAD RUSH into the camp.

But...

PAN TO:

DELTA VAUGHN (16), walking slowly and confidently.

In one hand she holds a designer suitcase, in the other the  
matching tote bag, and under one arm is a LaDuca shoebox.

Her sneakers crunch on the dirt beneath her in long strides until they come up next to a pair of CHEAP CHARACTER SHOES.

Wearing them is LAINE (15), struggling with her bags as well as the immediate gut-punch of not belonging.

Delta glances over at Laine, smirks, and keeps walking.

NATE QUENTIN (16) struts up, his grin just as shit-eating.

DELTA

Glad to know we're thinking the same thing.

NATE

"How did the girl with bugs in her character shoes make it here?"

DELTA

Exactly.

They stop and turn to each other, sizing the other up.

Nate is brave enough to break the ice:

NATE

Nate Quentin. Tenor 2, Tenor 1 if I pee right beforehand.

DELTA

Delta Vaughn. Soprano with an Ariana-level belt. My rendition of "I See a River" from Urinetown once made Ben Platt cry.

Nate's sly grin grows wider.

NATE

I. Knew. It. You're Allie Vaughn's little sister -- I saw you on her Insta story. She got you those LaDucas for Christmas.

Delta basks in the fame-by-proxy.

DELTA

And I cherish them with my life.

She turns over her shoulder for Laine to hear:

DELTA (CONT'D)

I wouldn't be caught dead wearing them in the dirt.