

= Izzie Stevens =

Isobel Katherine " Izzie " Stevens , M.D. is a fictional character from the medical drama television series Grey 's Anatomy , which airs on the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) in the United States . The character was created by series producer Shonda Rhimes , and was portrayed by actress Katherine Heigl from 2005 to 2010 . Introduced as a surgical intern at the fictional Seattle Grace Hospital , Izzie worked her way up to resident level , while her relationships with her colleagues Meredith Grey (Ellen Pompeo) , Cristina Yang (Sandra Oh) , George O 'Malley (T.R. Knight) and Alex Karev (Justin Chambers) formed a focal point of the series .

Heigl was critical of the character 's development during the show 's fourth season , particularly her romance with George . She declined to put herself forward for the 2008 Emmy Awards , citing insufficient material in the role . After speculation that Izzie would be killed off in the fifth season , the character was diagnosed with Stage 4 metastatic melanoma . She married Alex in the series ' one @-@ hundredth episode , and afterwards , her tumor was successfully removed . Izzie made her final appearance in the sixth season , leaving Seattle after Alex ended their relationship . Heigl requested to be released from her contract 18 months early , in order to spend more time with her family . In January 2012 , Heigl reported that she would like to return to Grey 's Anatomy to give closure to her character , however , Rhimes confirmed that there were no plans to have the character return at that time and has since stated that she has no plans to ever reapproach Izzie 's storyline again .

= = Storylines = =

Izzie appears in the first episode of Grey 's Anatomy , meeting fellow interns Meredith Grey , Cristina Yang , Alex Karev , and George O 'Malley . She and George move in with Meredith and become best friends . Izzie 's boyfriend , hockey player Hank (Jonathan Scarfe) , struggles to accept her new role as a surgeon , and the two break up . Izzie is hurt when Alex exposes her past as a lingerie model . However , the two later go on to begin a friendship and then a romance . Alex experiences sexual dysfunction with Izzie and cheats on her with nurse Olivia Harper (Sarah Utterback) . When Izzie finds out , she breaks up with him , though they briefly reunite following a bomb incident at the hospital . Izzie reveals while treating a pregnant teenager that she had a daughter at the age of 16 and gave up for adoption . Izzie falls in love with cardiothoracic patient Denny Duquette (Jeffrey Dean Morgan) , and the two become engaged . When Denny 's condition deteriorates , Izzie deliberately worsens his health further by cutting his LVAD wire to move him up the donor register . Although Denny receives a new heart , he has a stroke hours later and dies . Izzie is the sole beneficiary of Denny 's will , inheriting \$ 8 @. @ 7 million . She uses the money to open a free clinic at the hospital : the Denny Duquette Memorial Clinic .

Izzie disapproves of George 's relationship and marriage to orthopedic resident Callie Torres (Sara Ramirez) . She and George sleep together , and attempt to keep their liaison a secret . George and resident Miranda Bailey (Chandra Wilson) are the only people aware that Izzie gave birth to a daughter at the age of sixteen ; ultimately the child was given up for adoption . He supports Izzie when her daughter Hannah (Liv Hutchings) , diagnosed with leukemia , arrives at Seattle Grace Hospital in need of a bone marrow transplant from Izzie . Izzie 's feelings for George grow , and she reveals that she has fallen in love with him . When Callie discovers George has been unfaithful , the two separate , and George and Izzie embark on a short @-@ lived relationship , only to discover there is no real chemistry between them .

Izzie supports Alex when he discovers his new girlfriend has psychiatric problems , and convinces him to have her committed . She is also handed primary responsibility for the clinic , as Bailey cuts back on her responsibilities . Izzie and Alex go on to rekindle their relationship , though Izzie is concerned when she begins hallucinating Denny . She discovers she has metastatic melanoma (Stage IV) which has spread to her liver , skin , and brain , causing the hallucinations . Her survival chances are estimated at only 5 % . She is admitted to Seattle Grace as a patient , and Derek Shepherd (Patrick Dempsey) successfully removes a tumor from her brain . Izzie spends her time

in the hospital planning Meredith and Derek 's wedding , but when her condition worsens and Derek discovers a second brain tumor , they give the ceremony to Izzie and Alex , who marry in front of all their friends . The procedure to remove the second tumor from Izzie 's brain causes her to lose her short @-@ term memory , and although she soon regains it , she flatlines moments later . The fifth season ends with her friends ignoring her DNR order and attempting to resuscitate her , transposed with images of Izzie in an elevator encountering George , who has been in an accident and is also currently flatlining . Though George dies , Izzie is resuscitated and recovers enough to return to work .

Izzie makes a treatment error that endangers the life of a patient , and is fired from the hospital 's surgical program . Believing Alex is partially to blame , she writes him a Dear John letter and leaves . Izzie later learns that Alex was not responsible for her lost job , and returns to make amends with him , but Meredith informs her that Alex is moving on . Izzie informs Alex that she no longer has cancer . Although he is pleased , Alex officially breaks up with Izzie , telling her that he loves her but deserves better . She leaves Seattle to start fresh . Several episodes later , Alex informs Meredith that Izzie sent divorce papers , which he signs in the episode " How Insensitive " . In the sixth season finale , Alex is shot and asks for Izzie . Imagining that Meredith 's half @-@ sister Lexie (Chyler Leigh) is Izzie , he apologizes and asks her never to leave him again .

= = Development = =

= = = Casting and creation = = =

Izzie was created by Grey 's Anatomy producer Shonda Rhimes , with actress Katherine Heigl cast in the role . Heigl originally wanted to play Izzie as a brunette , but was requested to retain her natural blond for the part . Heigl 's comprehension of medical procedures and terminology is slight ; the actress explained that while she has an admiration for doctors , she is not as fascinated by medicine as other cast members . When Kate Walsh 's character Addison Montgomery left Grey 's Anatomy to launch the spin @-@ off show Private Practice , Heigl disclosed that she had hoped for a spin @-@ off for Izzie .

Heigl declined to put her name forward for consideration at the 2008 Emmy Awards , claiming that she had been given insufficient material on the series to warrant a nomination . Following Heigl 's statement , speculation arose that her character would suffer a brain tumor and be killed off Grey 's Anatomy , substantiated by the announcement Jeffrey Dean Morgan would return to the series as Denny , who died at the end of season two . ABC 's entertainment president Steve McPherson denied the rumor , stating : " There is an unbelievable storyline for her this year , which is really central to everything that 's going to go on this season " .

Speculation resumed , however , when Dean Morgan returned to the show for a second time in its fifth season . Cast member James Pickens , Jr. announced that both Heigl and T.R. Knight were set to depart from the show , but he later retracted his comment . During the course of the fifth season , Izzie was diagnosed with metastatic melanoma (Stage IV) which spread to her liver , skin and brain . Following the show 's one @-@ hundredth episode wrap party , Heigl revealed she did not know if Izzie would survive , as no one on the production team would disclose her character 's fate to her . It was confirmed in June 2009 that Heigl would return as Izzie for the show 's sixth season . Heigl 's appearances in the season were sporadic , seeing Izzie depart and return twice . Although she was scheduled to appear in the final five episodes of the season , Heigl requested that she be released from her contract 18 months early , and made her final appearance on January 21 , 2010 . Heigl explained that she wanted to spend more time with her family , and did not think it would be respectful to Grey 's Anatomy viewers to have Izzie return and depart yet again .

In August 2010 , Rhimes stated that she did not feel Izzie 's character arc ? specifically her relationship with Alex ? had fully concluded , and hoped to give proper closure to their relationship in the seventh season . She later confirmed that she had intended to kill off Izzie off @-@ screen , but opted against this a day later as she felt that it would destroy Alex , rather than give him closure .

Instead , she concluded : " I 'm open to seeing Izzie again . So if she [Katherine] were to come back , we would be thrilled to [wrap up her story] . But if she doesn 't , we 'll just move on . " Heigl also went on to say in October 2010 that the character returning to show looks bleak because , " that chapter is closed , and it 's sad . And it 's hard . " She also felt that Izzie coming back to the show would , " just feel manipulative . "

However , in January 2012 , Heigl stated in an interview that she has asked the producers if she could return to the show to give closure to Izzie 's storyline : " I 've told them I want to [return] , " she said . " I really , really , really want to see where [Izzie] is . I just want to know what happened to her and where she went and what she 's doing now . My idea is that she actually like figures it out , and finds some success and does really well in a different hospital . She was always floundering you know , and so she was always one step behind the eight ball and I want to see that girl take some power back . " She later went on to say that she regrets leaving the show , " Oh yeah , sometimes , yeah . You miss it . I miss my friends . It was a great work environment ... and it becomes a family . I spent six years together with these people every day ... you grow up together , in a way , " and again commented on Izzie possibly returning to the show , " I always felt that if they wanted me to come back and sort of wrap up that storyline ... I want them to know that I 'm down with it if they want me to , but I completely understand if it doesn 't necessarily work ... They 've got a lot of story lines going on there . " But in March 2012 , Shonda Rhimes said that there are no plans at the moment for the character to return , " I think it was really nice to hear her appreciating the show . At the same time we are on a track we have been planning . The idea of changing that track is not something we are interested in right now . " Three years later , Rhimes said she has completely moved on from the idea of Izzie coming back , " I 'm done with that story . I 've turned that idea over in my mind a thousand times and thought about how it would go . And I don 't think so . "

= = = Characterization = = =

Heigl believes that the Grey 's Anatomy writers incorporate much of the actors ' personalities into their roles , and that Izzie is a " super moral " version of herself . Episode " Bring the Pain " , which aired as the fifth episode of the second season , was originally intended to be the final episode of the first season . Rhimes explained that Izzie 's character in this episode came " full circle " from her role in the pilot : " Izzie , so vulnerable and underestimated when we first meet her , is the girl who removes her heart from her sleeve in " Bring the Pain " . " Discussing Izzie 's personality in a 2006 Cosmopolitan interview , Heigl assessed that she is " immensely kind " and patient . When Denny died in the season two episode " Losing My Religion " , Rhimes discussed the impact it had on Izzie , noting that Izzie is forced to abandon her idealism , which in turn leads to her letting go of medicine . In the aftermath of Denny 's death , Heigl came to believe that Izzie was not cut out to be a doctor . Executive producer Betsy Beers explained , however , that Denny 's death served to make Izzie more mature , and Heigl affirmed that " At the beginning of the [third] season they were trying to show how lost Izzie was . She lost her optimism . She realizes now that life is difficult , but she still tries very hard to see the best in people . " In order to demonstrate Izzie 's dislike of George 's love @-@ interest Callie , Rhimes penned a scene which she deemed one of her favorite moments on the show , in which Callie urinates in front of a stunned Izzie and Meredith . Rhimes assessed that : " I love that Mer and Izzie respond with all the trauma of having viewed a car crash [...] the point is Callie pees and Izzie tortures her a tiny bit about the hand washing and that made me overjoyed because that 's the kind of thing people do . "

Discussing Izzie 's relationship with Alex in a 2006 Cosmopolitan interview , Heigl assessed that " Even when Alex was a complete dirtbag to her [Izzie] , she forgave him and gave him another chance . And he really screwed her over . [...] To go for a guy like that is to say I want to be damaged . " Writer Stacy McKee deemed Izzie 's moving on from Alex to patient Denny Duquette " karma " , as Alex previously treated Izzie badly , yet as he begins to realize his true feelings , he is forced to watch her embark on a romance with " the undeniably handsome - and totally charming " Denny . Series writer Blythe Robe commented on Izzie and Denny : " I love the way Izzie lights up

when she 's around him . I love their relationship because it 's so pure and honest and completely game free . " Writer Elizabeth Klaviter noted at this time the way Izzie " seems to be sacrificing her reputation because of her feelings for Denny . " When Izzie deliberately worsened Denny 's condition to move him up the transplant list , series writer Mark Wilding questioned the morality of the actions , asking : " is Izzie bad for doing it ? Is she tremendously irresponsible ? She cut the LVAD wire for love so does that make her action understandable ? "

Rhimes discussed costuming choices in the scene which saw the interns gather around Denny 's deathbed , explaining : " Meredith and George and Cristina and Callie and Alex are all dressed , not for a prom , but for a funeral . Everyone in dark colors , everyone dressed somberly . As if they were in mourning . Only Izzie is in happy pink . Only Izzie looks like she didn 't know this was coming . " Following Denny 's death , Heigl approached Rhimes to ask when her character would next have a romantic liaison . Rhimes explained that " Izzie doesn 't sleep around " . Heigl expressed a desire for Izzie to reunite with Alex , explaining : " I believe on some level , there 's a connection between Izzie and Alex . He can do honorable things even though he 's cutting and sarcastic . I would like to ultimately see them together , if not this season , then next . "

Yahoo ! Voices wrote that Stevens in the third season " has become more condescending and passive aggressive herself , more than anyone else . " Heigl was critical of her character 's development in the show 's fourth season , particularly her affair with George , which she deemed " a ratings ploy " . Heigl explained : " They really hurt somebody , and they didn 't seem to be taking a lot of responsibility for it . I have a really hard time with that kind of thing . I 'm maybe a little too black and white about it . I don 't really know Izzie very well right now . She 's changed a lot . " Attempting to rationalise Izzie 's actions , Heigl later assessed that :

People who are so infallible , perfect and moral tend to be the first to slip and fall . But I would love to see how she deals with the consequences of what she 's done , because what 's interesting is when people make decisions that shake their world , they suddenly have to go , ' Woo , I didn 't know I was capable of this . ' I 'd like to see Izzie take some culpability .

= = Reception = =

Heigl was nominated for the " Best Supporting Actress in a TV Series " award at the 2007 and 2008 Golden Globe Awards for her role as Izzie . She was named " Favorite Female TV Star " at the 34th People 's Choice Awards , and awarded " Outstanding Supporting Actress In A Drama Series " at the 2007 Emmy Awards . Prior to the ceremony , considering Heigl 's chances of winning the Emmy , Variety 's Stuart Levine assessed of her performance : " Heigl has little difficulty reaching Izzie 's highest highs and lowest lows . Showrunner Shonda Rhimes puts a lot of pressure on Heigl to carry many intense storylines , and she 's up to the challenge . " Levine also noted , however : " There are times when Izzy becomes completely irrational during crisis situations , which may bother some . " Fox News included Izzie in its list of " The Best TV Doctors For Surgeon General " . The character was listed in Wetpaint 's " 10 Hottest Female Doctors on TV " and in BuzzFeed 's " 16 Hottest Doctors On Television " .

During the show 's third season , the New York Post 's Robert Rorke deemed Izzie to be " the heart and soul " of Grey 's Anatomy . He deemed her the show 's heroine , and wrote that : " Izzie is a welcome , calming presence , despite the devastation she experienced when she failed to save her patient and fiance Denny Duquette . [...] Besides the formidable Dr. Bailey (Chandra Wilson) , Izzie seems to be the only adult intern at Seattle Grace ; the character has achieved a depth lacking in her fellow interns . " Eyder Peralta of The Houston Chronicle was critical of Izzie 's ethics in cutting Denny 's LVAD wire , writing that she " should not be practising medicine " and stating : " That 's the reason I don 't watch Grey 's Anatomy , anymore , because the super hot blond chick can make an earth @-@ shattering , fatal decision and she doesn 't get canned . "

The season four romance between Izzie and George proved unpopular with viewers , and resulted in a fan backlash among Alex and Izzie fans . The return of Izzie 's deceased fiancé Denny and the resumption of their romance during the show 's fifth season also proved unpopular with fans , and was deemed " the world 's worst storyline " by Mary McNamara of the Los Angeles Times .

McNamara was also critical of the episode " Now or Never " , which saw Izzie flatline following neurosurgery , opining that Izzie ought to die . The episode in which Izzie married long @-@ term love Alex received 15 @.@ 3 million viewers , the largest television audience of the night .

Izzie 's cancer storyline received a mixed response from the medical community . Otis Brawley , chief medical officer at the American Cancer Society , commented that Izzie 's treatment options were unrealistic . Whereas in the show she was offered the drug interleukin @-@ 2 , in reality the drug is never recommended to patients when melanoma has spread to the brain , as it can cause bleeding and strokes . Brawley explained that such patients would instead be offered radiosurgery . Conversely however , Tim Turnham , executive director of the Melanoma Research Foundation , praised Grey 's Anatomy for bringing about greater public awareness of melanoma , stating : " We welcome the national spotlight Grey 's Anatomy has created for melanoma and its efforts to encourage viewers to learn more about the importance of prevention , early detection and research . "