Dark Angel – 25th Anniversary

Dark Angel is an American SCI-FI TV series that premiered on FOX on October 3rd, 2000. It is created by James Cameron and Charles H. Eglee. Dark Angel was cancelled after two seasons, the final episode aired on May 3rd, 2002.

It stars Jessica Alba in her breakthrough role. Set in 2019, the series chronicles the life of Max Guevara (Alba), a runaway genetically enhanced super soldier who escapes from a covert military facility as a child. In a dystopian near-future Seattle, she tries to lead a normal life while eluding capture by government agents and searching for her brothers and sisters scattered in the aftermath of their escape.

It had a high budget pilot episode, and it drew 17 million viewers! But the numbers for the rest of the season averaged on 10 million viewers, which now is more than okay, but back then, apparently not because for season two, Dark Angel was moved to the Friday, which, I believe, back then, was named the ‘graveyard slot’. The average numbers went down further to about 6 million viewers per episode. As a result, Dark Angel was cancelled after two seasons, two different seasons.

Characters:

Well, we’ve discussed Max (Jessica Alba), Michael Weatherly plays Logan Cole, aka Eyes Only. He falls in love with Max, can you blame him!? Valerie Rae Miller plays Original Cindy; she’s Max’s best friend and at one point she is told the truth about who Max actually is. Alimi Ballard plays Herbal Thought, friend of Max, Original Cindy, working at Jam Pony. Richard Gun plays Calvin 'Sketchy' Theodore, also working at Jam Pony and friends with the above-mentioned characters. Sketchy always gets himself in trouble. Jensen Ackles plays Alec, he is also genetically enhanced and at one point he was considered as Max’s mate, to try and create a genetic offspring. J.C. McKenzie is Reagan 'Normal' Ronald, and he manages Jam Pony, at least he tries. He definitely is one of my favorite characters. Whenever I think of Dark Angel, I always think of his outcry: Pip Pip people! John Savage is Donald Lydecker, he is after Max and the other genetically enhanced in the first season. At one point it certainly seems like he is on Max’s side. Lydecker answered to Dr. Elizabeth Renfro aka Madame X (Nana Visitor). In season two Lydecker is replaced by Ames White (Martin Cummins), he really is a bastard. Kevin Durand is Joshua. Ashley Scott is Asha Barlow with whom Logan has a thing.

Besides this cast, lots of recurring characters and guest stars, it was an impressive cast and especially also Jessica Alba who was 19 at the time, but she did a perfect job, not only a beautiful young woman, also a terrific actress.

Apparently Dark Angel just barely got renewed for a 2nd season by FOX. James Cameron directed the final episode of season two because the intended director did not work out. He decided to do it himself. He did this partially for the experience but also to show the network the potential for a third season. It was his first experience directing a TV drama. The producers were initially told that a 3rd season had been approved! But two days later FOX informed them that the series had been cancelled. ***James Cameron (***[***wiki***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark_Angel_%28American_TV_series%29)***)***: *They called us on Saturday and told us we were on schedule and we'd been picked up. We got together Saturday night and celebrated. Sunday goes by, and Monday morning we get a call saying, "No, you're not on the schedule! It's been changed." I've never heard of that happening. But then, I'd never been around television. ... We were supposed to be on a plane on Monday to go to the [network] upfront in New York on Tuesday. They called us that day and told us not to go! I was pissed*!

Physical Media / Rewatches:

Dark Angel was released on DVD all over the world soon after the series ended back in 2002. Very early I purchased the UK set and within 5 years I rewatched it at least 2, perhaps 3 times. With other words, I was one with Dark Angel for the time being. I had these clunky big sets and decided to sell them and in time purchase the slim sets. That happened early 2023! It took me 15 years or so, to purchase the complete series again! I purchased the German set, perfect set, slim, English audio and subs. So, after 15 years or so, two years ago I finally did another rewatch and it was an enjoyable experience again. If you to read about it, click [here](https://scifitvshows.jouwweb.nl/blogs/dark-angel-the-complete-series-rewatch-blog).

Awards / Critical Reception:

Dark Angel won 6 awards in those two years it was on the air! Jessica Alba won 3 of them: 27th Saturn Awards - Best Actress on Television; 2001 Teen Choice Awards - TV – Choice Actress; TV Guide Award - Breakout Star of the Year. The show itself also won the ‘Favorite Television New Dramatic Series’ awards during the 27th Saturn Awards.

When I check [Rotten Tomatoes](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/dark_angel#seasons), the audience loves Dark Angel more than the critics: 84% over 65%. These are great numbers, the audience seems to appreciate the show a lot, such a shame it did not get that 3rd season, they were so close.

Final Word:

This will always be a special show. No, it is not perfect, but it was a very decent show, interesting storyline, great characters and good acting overall. I mostly enjoyed the episodes where Lydecker had a big role. John Savage did a wonderful job in this series, really liked him in this, even though for most of the season, he was considered the bad guy. Happy 25th Anniversary Dark Angel!