

= Dark Angel (TV series) =

Dark Angel is an American biopunk / cyberpunk science fiction television series . It was created by James Cameron and Charles H. Eglee and starred Jessica Alba in her breakthrough role . The series chronicles the life of Max Guevara , a genetically @-@ enhanced super @-@ soldier who escapes from a covert government military facility as a child . In a post @-@ apocalyptic Seattle , she tries to lead a normal life , while eluding capture by government agents and searching for her genetically @-@ enhanced brothers and sisters scattered in the aftermath of their escape . The series was filmed in Vancouver , British Columbia , at Lions Gate Studios .

The show premiered in the United States on the Fox network on October 3 , 2000 . The high @-@ budget pilot episode was Cameron 's television debut and was heavily promoted by Fox . The first season , which was shown on Tuesday nights in the U.S. , received mainly positive reviews and won several awards . Alba 's portrayal of Max also received mostly positive reviews . For the second season the show was moved to Friday nights , received some criticism for new plot elements and suffered from a ratings drop . It was subsequently cancelled . The storyline was continued in a series of novels ; a video game adaptation was also released after the show 's cancellation .

= = Plot = =

= = = Season one = = =

In 2009 , a genetically enhanced , nine @-@ year @-@ old female supersoldier designated as X5 @-@ 452 (Geneva Locke) escapes along with eleven others from a secret government institution , codenamed Manticore , where they were born , raised and trained to be soldiers and assassins . On June 1 , 2009 , months after X5 @-@ 452 's escape , terrorists detonate an electromagnetic pulse weapon in the atmosphere over the U.S. , which destroys the vast majority of computer and communication systems , throwing the country into chaos .

Ten years later in 2019 , the now 19 @-@ year @-@ old X5 @-@ 452 (Jessica Alba) , who calls herself Max Guevara , struggles to search for her Manticore brothers and sisters . In a recovering United States , which is now barely more than a Third World nation , she tries to live a relatively normal life and evade capture from Manticore , who wish to recover their lost asset . She joins forces and develops a romantic interest with Logan Cale (Michael Weatherly) , an underground cyber @-@ journalist with the alias Eyes Only . Logan recruits her to help fight corruption in the post @-@ Pulse world ; at the same time she makes a living as a bicycle messenger at Jam Pony , a courier company , along with her friends Original Cindy (Valarie Rae Miller) , Herbal Thought (Alimi Ballard) , and Sketchy (Richard Gunn) . Other X5s are periodically introduced , most significantly Zack (William Gregory Lee) , the unit leader . The Manticore hunt for the escaped X5s is led by Colonel Donald Lydecker (John Savage) . Near the end of the season , Lydecker is betrayed by his superior , the even more ruthless Elizabeth Renfro (Nana Visitor) , and subsequently defects from Manticore . He aids Max and Zack in an assault on the Manticore headquarters , though Max is badly wounded and captured . Zack , who has also been captured , commits suicide to provide Max with his heart , as she needs an X5 heart transplant to survive .

= = = Season two = = =

Aided by Alec (Jensen Ackles) , a fellow X5 who later joins Jam Pony , and Joshua (Kevin Durand) , a transgenic with canine DNA , Max escapes the facility . When Max is reunited with Logan he immediately becomes ill and almost dies . Max discovers that Manticore infected her with a virus specifically designed to kill Logan , and the two must avoid all physical contact to keep him alive . Alec follows her to Logan 's and informs her that she needs to take Logan and return to Manticore in order to save him . Instead , Max uses Logan 's Eyes Only setup and exposes Manticore to the world . Renfro decides to burn the facility in an attempt to cover up the evidence , though she is

killed in the process when Max returns to retrieve the life @-@ saving serum Logan needs . Max takes this opportunity to save numerous transgenics , releasing them out into the world . Max learns that Joshua was the first transgenic created by Sandeman , Manticore 's founder . It is revealed that a millennia @-@ old breeding cult , similar in structure to the Illuminati , has bred their own super @-@ soldiers that rival the Manticore @-@ produced transgenics . Ames White (Martin Cummins) , a government agent tasked with eliminating the freed transgenics , is revealed to be a member of the cult . When a strange message written in Max 's genetic code makes an appearance on her skin , it is revealed that Sandeman is a renegade from the breeding cult and Ames White is his son . White is still loyal to the cult and hates his father 's transgenic creations with a passion . Believing that Max is a threat to their plans , the breeding cult attempt to kill her , though she escapes to Terminal City , an abandoned part of Seattle where hundreds of outcast transgenics have been hiding . When the police begin to surround Terminal City , Max convinces the other transgenics to stand their ground rather than run . The series ends with the military surrounding and possibly preparing to invade Terminal City , as the residents raise their newly designed flag from one of their buildings .

= = = Storyline for season three = = =

In the DVD commentary for " Freak Nation " , the series finale , Charles H. Eglee , the executive producer and co @-@ creator , explained what was planned for season three . The intention was to bring together the storylines of seasons one (Manticore) and two (breeding cult) and reveal the mythology of Dark Angel .

The show 's mythology was planned to be that , thousands of years ago , Earth passed through a comet 's tail which deposited viral material that killed 97 % of the human race . The great pyramids in Egypt were actually genetic repositories , preserving the DNA of the survivors , built by the breeding cult to pass on this genetic immunity so that when the comet returned only members of the cult would survive . Sandeman , a cult member and Max 's creator , betrayed the cult and decided to give this genetic immunity to the rest of humanity , believing that everybody deserved the cure . The other cult members deemed Sandeman a heretic and a threat , undermining their goals of rebuilding humanity in their own image . Sandeman found a way to spread this genetic immunity to everyone through Max , who would be the savior of the human race . There were multiple ideas of how to spread Max 's immunity to humanity , including an air burst that would disperse the antibody through the atmosphere , or attaching the immunity to a common cold virus (Eglee detailed how a scene would show Original Cindy sneezing as part of the beginning of the immunity spread) . This intended storyline is expanded on in the final Dark Angel novel " After the Dark " , though when the comet returns nobody falls ill , and it is believed that the cult simply had a false prediction .

= = Cast and characters = =

The first season introduced Jessica Alba as the main character Max Guevara (X5 @-@ 452) , a genetically enhanced transgenic super @-@ soldier who escaped from the government facility Manticore and now works as a bike messenger for courier company Jam Pony and as a cat burglar . Michael Weatherly played Logan Cale (" Eyes Only ") , the second most prominent character . Cale is a wealthy cyber @-@ journalist and vigilante who recruits Max to aid his campaign against corruption and crime in return for helping her find information on her fellow Manticore escapees . Main roles were given to several of the staff at Jam Pony , including J. C. MacKenzie as Reagan " Normal " Ronald , the company 's boss , Valarie Rae Miller as Cynthia " Original Cindy " McEachin , Richard Gunn as Calvin " Sketchy " Theodore and Alimi Ballard as Herbal Thought , all of whom worked as couriers . Jennifer Blanc plays Kendra Maibaum , Max 's first roommate , and John Savage plays the main antagonist , Col. Donald Lydecker , who is trying to recapture Max and the other Manticore escapees .

Col. Donald Lydecker 's character is written out of the series early in the second season , and Herbal Thought and Kendra Maibaum do not appear at all . Season two introduces the main

characters Jensen Ackles as Alec McDowell (X5 @-@ 494) , an X5 who has escaped from the recently destroyed Manticore facility , as well as Kevin Durand as Joshua , the first transgenic experimental creature from Manticore who has distinct canine facial features . Ashley Scott plays Asha Barlow , a member of the S.1.W. insurgent group and a friend to Logan . Martin Cummins portrays the season 's main antagonist Ames White , a National Security Agency agent and cult member tasked with destroying the Manticore escapees .

= = Production = =

= = = Background = = =

Following his success with the film Titanic , the director James Cameron teamed up with Eglee , with whom he had previously worked on projects including Piranha II : The Spawning . The two formed a production company and began working on ideas for a television series , considering several options including a family drama before deciding on the idea of Dark Angel . Cameron said they began with the idea that Max would be genetic construct who " looked normal on the outside but was different on the cellular , genetic level . We explore what that could mean . " Max followed a long line of strong female characters in Cameron 's work , including Sarah Connor and Ellen Ripley . Cameron said " it 's a win / win situation " as " women respond to characters who appear strong and capable " and young male audiences " want to see girls kick ass " . Later they decided to set the series in a post @-@ social collapse world , saying that the hysteria surrounding Y2K served as inspiration for the ' Pulse ' in the series which has destroyed all computers in the United States . Working titles for the series included " Experimental Girl " and " Maximum Girl " . The project marked Cameron 's debut into television ; Cameron would be working as a writer and executive producer , rather than directing .

= = = Casting and filming = = =

More than 1000 young actresses were considered for the part of Max , and Cameron started reviewing audition tapes when it had been narrowed down to 20 or 30 applicants . Cameron was not impressed with Alba 's audition tape , saying " she had her head down , she was reading out of the script ... she didn 't present herself all that well . But there was something about the way she read the script that copped an attitude that I liked . " Cameron continually reviewed the audition tapes but kept coming back to Alba 's , eventually deciding that he needed to meet her . Alba was hired for the role before the script was written . Eglee said " We had the benefit of being able to write a script kind of backwards , we were writing for this actress , with her cadences and her rhythms and her sensibilities and her attitude and her slang . " In order to train for the role , Alba spent a year doing martial arts and gymnastics and riding motorcycles .

The two @-@ hour premiere episode cost up to \$ 10 million to produce , and Cameron reportedly " brought the pilot in on time and on budget " . Subsequent episodes had a considerably lower budget . Fox spent heavily on the promotional campaign for the premiere , paying for theatrical trailers , billboards and guerilla marketing . Cameron took a " very basic view " of the show 's chance of success , saying " If it flies , it flies . If it doesn 't , it doesn 't ... If people connect with it , which I hope they will , fine . If we don 't find an audience , we deserve to be off the air . It 's that simple . " Eglee admitted the series had been " routinely overbudget " for the first season , and feared that this would be a factor in whether the show was renewed for a second season , though Cameron downplayed the concerns .

Fox " just barely " renewed the series for a second season . The cost of episodes in season two was \$ 1 @. @ 3 million each . After the planned director for the final episode fell through , Cameron decided to step in and fill the position . He did this partially for the experience but also to show the network the potential for the third season . It was his first experience directing a TV drama . The producers were initially told a third season had been approved , but two days later Fox informed

them that the series had actually been cancelled .

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 !

While Dark Angel was set in Seattle , filming took place in Vancouver , British Columbia , at Lions Gate Studios . Other filming locations included the Vancouver Art Gallery , as well as Buntzen Lake and Riverview Hospital , also in British Columbia .

= = = Broadcast history = = =

The first season premiered in the United States on Tuesday , October 3 , 2000 , from 9 : 00 pm until 11 : 00 pm . Fox had to obtain agreements from its affiliates to broadcast past 10 : 00 pm , as most of them air local news programs at this time . For the second season Fox moved the airing time from Tuesdays at 9 : 00 pm , where it had been competing with Angel on The WB , to at 8 : 00 pm on Fridays , where it preceded the new series Pasadena .

The final episode of the series aired on May 3 , 2002 as a special 90 @-@ minute episode . Dark Angel has been syndicated on the Syfy and the El Rey Network in the United States and on E4 and the Horror Channel in the UK .

= = = Music = = =

The score for the Dark Angel pilot was composed and conducted by Joel McNeely . The score track " Bicycle Ride " was used in the end credits for the duration of the series . The pilot score was released in full as part of the original publicity press kit , titled Dark Angel : Complete Score from the Dark Angel Pilot . The 37 @-@ track CD was for promotional use only and not for resale .

A soundtrack album consisting of hip hop and R & B songs was released on April 23 , 2002 through Artemis Records . It peaked at No. 50 on the Top Independent Albums chart . Jason Birchmeier from AllMusic gave the soundtrack three out of five stars , calling it " impressive " and adding that it " exceeds your expectations for a television show soundtrack " .

= = Reception and legacy = =

Initial reaction to the series and the character of Max was mostly positive , with favorable reviews in Rolling Stone and Time . Hal Boedeker from the Orlando Sentinel said " Television 's newest warrior woman possesses skills worthy of Catwoman , Xena , Emma Peel and Wonder Woman . " Howard Rosenberg said " If pouty faces and sexy walks could destroy , the highly arresting Max would be wiping out the entire planet . " However Joyce Millman said Max was " little more than lips and ass " and that the series was " the most expensive Britney Spears video ever made . " People gave a negative review of the Pilot episode in October 2000 , though in December they listed Alba 's portrayal of Max as among the " breakthrough " performances of 2000 .

The first episode was only behind CSI : Crime Scene Investigation as the most watched new show of the week , albeit in a week with fewer new shows due to presidential debate coverage . Fox chose to debut Dark Angel instead of airing the first presidential debate , a move which TV analyst Marc Berman praised , saying " The people who watch the debates aren 't the people who 'll tune into Dark Angel anyway " , though he predicted that the high ratings of the premiere would not hold up as the show competed against more various competition in subsequent weeks . It was the tenth most popular show overall that week , attracting 17 @. @ 4 million viewers . Cameron said he did not know if the airing time change for the second season would have a positive or negative effect on the shows ratings , though R. D. Heldenfels from the Sun Journal noted the poor ratings of Friday night television , especially the low viewing rates among 18- to 24 @-@ year @-@ olds , the age

@-@ group that Dark Angel was most popular with . The new time slot saw a ratings drop ; for the 2001 ? 02 season Dark Angel averaged 6 million viewers , ranking at No. 114 in Nielsen ratings .

Commenting at the release of the second season , Cynthia Fuchs from PopMatters said the first season of Dark Angel was one of the " few straight @-@ up successes , a ratings hit among the coveted ' youth ' demographic " . She praised the series but clarified " I 'm not getting carried away : Jim Cameron is not going to be making revolutionary art anytime soon . " Michael Sauter from Entertainment Weekly gave the first season a B + and spoke highly of Alba , saying that " for a while [she was] TV 's hottest kick @-@ butt heroine . " Elka Karl from Common Sense Media gave the entire series 3 out of 5 stars , saying " While the dialogue sometimes falls flat , overall the show is well @-@ scripted and well acted , and Alba does an excellent job of carrying the series . Dark Angel isn 't perfect by any stretch of the imagination , but it is compelling television that teen sci @-@ fi fans will enjoy . " While praising the first season , Randy Dankievitch from TVOvermind labelled the second season as " silly " , criticizing " dumb stories " like Max 's dream episode " Boo " , the virus that prevents Logan and Max having physical contact , and the various half @-@ animal Manticore experiments that are revealed .

Writing in his book The Encyclopedia of Superheroes on Film and Television , John Kenneth Muir said it was necessary for Cameron to set Dark Angel in the future because the prosperity of the U.S. in 2000 " offered little possibility for crime , squalor and other societal problems . " While criticizing certain plot elements in the second season as contributing to the show 's downfall , Muir said a larger factor in the ratings drop was the change of life in the U.S. following events including the September 11 attacks , the Enron scandal , as well as the government losing their financial surplus , which changed Dark Angel 's " futuristic vision of recession in a Third @-@ World America " from an interesting far @-@ fetched premise to a " depressing reminder that things could still get worse " .

In 2004 , Max was ranked at No. 17 in TV Guide 's list of the " 25 Greatest Sci @-@ Fi Legends " , and in 2012 , Dave Golder from GamesRadar ranked her at No. 49 on his list of the 100 sexiest women in sci @-@ fi .

The 2007 film Hitman re @-@ used footage from Dark Angel of Max and other Manticore children in training . The footage was used to portray the Hitman protagonist Agent 47 , a cloned assassin who like the Manticore children , has a barcode on the back of his head .

= = = Accolades = = =

For its first season Dark Angel won the " Favorite Television New Dramatic Series " award at the 27th People 's Choice Awards , and was nominated for " Best Television " at the International Horror Guild Awards . The production team was nominated for the " Excellence in Production Design Award " at the Art Directors Guild . Editor Stephen Mark won " Best Edited Motion Picture for Commercial Television " at the Eddie Awards for the pilot episode , and the pilot was also nominated for Outstanding Special Visual Effects at the 53rd Primetime Emmy Awards and " Best Visual Effects : Dramatic Series " at the Leo Awards .

Jessica Alba won " Best Actress on Television " at the 27th Saturn Awards , " Breakout Star of the Year " at the TV Guide Awards , " Outstanding Actress in a New Television Series " at the ALMA Awards and " Choice Actress " at the 2001 Teen Choice Awards . She was nominated for Best Actress ? Television Series Drama at the 58th Golden Globe Awards and " Best Performance in a TV Drama Series ? Leading Young Actress " at the 22nd Young Artist Awards .

Dark Angel was nominated for fewer awards in its second season . It was nominated for " Choice Drama / Action Adventure " at the 2002 Teen Choice Awards , where Alba was also nominated for " Choice Actress , Drama " . Alba was also nominated for " Outstanding Actress in a Television Series " at the ALMA Awards . At the Leo Awards the episode " Boo " was nominated for " Best Visual Effects : Dramatic Series " , and David Geddes won " Best Cinematography : Dramatic Series " for the episode " Two " .

= = Home media = =

20th Century Fox Home Entertainment released seasons 1 and 2 of Dark Angel on DVD in region 1 (R1) , as well as a dual @-@ coded region 2 and 4 (R2 / 4) set in 2003 , as six @-@ disc sets packaged in cardboard sleeves containing three DVD cases each of two discs . Season 1 was released in R2 / 4 in February and R1 in May , and season 2 was released in R2 / 4 in June and R1 in October .

The R1 releases contain several special features , including four episodes with optional commentary in each season , bloopers , deleted scenes and featurettes . The R2 / 4 releases contain no commentaries and fewer other special features , but the episodes are presented in anamorphic widescreen , while R1 releases are fullscreen . Adam Tyner from DVD Talk gave the R1 first season three out of five stars for audio and video , and three and a half stars for special features . Shannon Nutt from DVD Talk gave the R1 second season three stars out of five for audio and video , and two and a half stars for extras , stating " it appears [to have] a decent number of features , but then you discover the length of each one and really feel short @-@ changed by Fox " , also noting the commentary in episodes was mainly with writers and producers , and did not feature James Cameron or any of the actors .

Both seasons were re @-@ released in R1 on June 5 , 2007 , with slim packaging consisting of one plastic case containing all six discs (which were unchanged in content and cosmetics) .

= = Related media = =

A video game of the same name based on the series was created by Radical Entertainment and released on PlayStation 2 on November 18 , 2002 , and later on Xbox . Alba and Weatherly voiced their respective characters in the game . Development of the game started before the series was cancelled , and the game was met with mixed to negative reception upon release . Brett Todd from GameSpot gave the game 3 @.@ 8 out of 10 , saying " Although it 's impossible to say whether or not the developers ' morale was affected by the cancellation of the series , this third @-@ person action adventure plays like it was cranked out to fulfill a contract " and concluding " the development of this game probably should have been cancelled at the same time as the television series " .

Written by Max Allan Collins , three original novels expand upon the Dark Angel television series , with two picking up directly where the series ended .

Dark Angel : Before the Dawn (2002) is a prequel to the television series , detailing Max 's life after her escape from Manticore in 2009 . After witnessing footage taken in Seattle of a man she believes to be one of her X5 siblings , Max moves from Los Angeles to Seattle , meeting Original Cindy and Kendra on the way , before finding employment at Jam Pony . Max eventually discovers the man in the footage is her brother Seth , who unbeknown to her has been working for Logan as a personal agent . Shortly after being reunited with him at the Space Needle , Seth , who has been injured , commits suicide by falling from the building to avoid being captured by Lydecker . Max subsequently begins returning to the Space Needle to think and " to be with Seth . "

Dark Angel : Skin Game (2003) immediately follows the events of " Freak Nation , " the final episode of season two , describing days in May 2021 . Skin Game focuses on a killer terrorizing the streets of Seattle and the growing suspicion and evidence that the killer could be a transgenic . As the killings escalate , the U.S. Army and National Guard prepare themselves for an invasion of Terminal City . Max uncovers that the killer is a shapeshifting transgenic named Kelpy , though he has been unwillingly given a drug by Ames White that is causing his psychosis . When Max reveals this information to the public through Eyes Only , Ames White goes into hiding , and the invasion of Terminal City is called off . When Kelpy takes on Logan 's form he is killed by the virus Max carries which was designed to kill Logan .

Dark Angel : After the Dark (2003) follows Skin Game . It is revealed that Max 's virus is gone , the most likely explanation being that when the virus killed Kelpy it went dormant as it believed its mission to kill Logan was accomplished . The relationship between Logan and Max , however , is thrown into turmoil when he reveals his secret that he inadvertently caused Seth 's death by sending him on an assignment . Just as Max is ready to forgive him , Logan is kidnapped by Ames White and the breeding cult , who are preparing for the coming of a comet they believe will destroy

everyone except cult @-@ members and transgenics through depositing viral material into Earth 's atmosphere . They are trying to kill Max as they believe she possesses a genetic code that will save ordinary humans from the comet 's viral material . With the aid of a team of transgenics , Max eventually rescues Logan , destroys the headquarters of the breeding cult , and Joshua kills Ames White . When the comet arrives nobody falls ill , and it is believed the cult 's prediction was false . Max finds Lydecker in a prison cell at the cult 's headquarters . He promises to help her find her mother if she saves him , and she agrees . The book ends with Logan and Max finally consummating their relationship .

A companion book , Dark Angel : The Eyes Only Dossier , was also published in 2003 . It is attributed to Logan Cale and was supposedly compiled by D. A. Stern . The book begins with a letter written by Logan during the stand @-@ off at Terminal City . It is addressed to Detective Matt Sung , a recurring character from the series who aides Logan , instructing him that the package he is sending him contains documents pertaining to the four most critical Eyes Only investigations . In the event that Logan is killed by the potential invasion of Terminal City , he wants Sung to carry on the investigations . The rest of the book contains said documents relating to the four investigations .

= = Alleged plagiarism = =

After the show 's release the Argentine artists Carlos Trillo and Carlos Meglia , creators of the Argentine comic book series Cybersix , filed a lawsuit against Cameron and Fox for plagiarism . Cybersix was created by Trillo (writer) and Meglia (penciler) in the early 90s for the European market , and appeared in Spanish in November 1993 ; an animated TV series based on the comic strip was released in 1999 . Trillo and Meglia accused Dark Angel of stealing most of the comic 's plot and its most recognizable elements . In a 2007 interview Trillo stated that he and Meglia were not able to carry on with the lawsuit due to lack of financial resources , so they dropped it , although the issue is still a matter of controversy :

Meglia and I were sure we had been plagiarized . Cybersix readers who watched Cameron 's TV series were sure as well . We tried to move forward with a lawsuit against Cameron and Fox . It wasn 't possible for us to continue because the comic book world does not give you the financial possibility [in Argentina] of confronting a showbusiness multinational company . We couldn 't afford lawyers in LA to carry on with the attempt to claim our original story .