

**Beat Sheet of
Angel
A Contemporary Drama
Original Screenplay by Bruce Macintyre
WGAW Reg # 1666069**

Opening Image (1)

- Fourteen-year-old ALYDA “ALY” BARRETT and her younger brother MARKIE are in the small, shabby bedroom they share in a Pittsburgh tenement, getting ready to leave for school. Her old CD player is playing Sarah McLachlan’s beautiful song of hopelessness, *Angel*, and Aly is singing along in her extraordinary voice.

Set-Up (1-6)

- Her defeated mother’s abusive boyfriend, T.J., bursts into the bedroom and yells at her for her singing interfering with his watching TV in the cramped apartment’s living room, too dense to realize that Aly’s voice is a talent that can change lives.
- When her younger brother Markie stands up for his sister, T.J. turns his rage on him and Aly protects him, taking T.J.’s blows herself.
- Aly’s mother, KAREN, intervenes as if it’s the children’s fault, standing up for T.J.!
- Aly keeps Markie close to her as they leave to T.J.’s taunts and walk on the weary streets to a convenience store.
- With her last money, Aly buys Markie his lunch and has to contain tears when the kindly storekeeper, MR. RODRIQUEZ, won’t take her money and insists she get a lunch for herself as well.
- She sees Markie onto his school bus and walks to her school, going in alone in the crowd.

Theme Stated (6-7)

- Aly’s concerned Gym Teacher questions her about the bruises on her face and arm, saying she knows about Aly and her brother having been in foster homes before.
- The teacher isn’t satisfied by Aly’s lies that it was just an accident when she and Markie were playing.

Catalyst (7-9)

- On her way home from school, still alone, Aly hears a young musician, TODD, playing a song she knows on his trumpet from the window of his 4th floor apartment on an alley and she impulsively sings along, the first time she's revealed her talent to anyone who can appreciate it.

Debate (10-24)

- Amazed by her voice, Todd tries to catch up with her, but she shyly runs away.
- Aly's loneliness is shown as she goes up through an urban forest filled with junk to her refuge, a peaceful graveyard where she talks with and sings to the stone statue of an angel on the grave of a young girl, Amelia.
- Aly puts what flowers she could find in the ragged woods on Amelia's grave and tells her of the kindness of Mr. Rodriguez and how she sang out for the first time ever and how much she loves singing.
- She sings to the sky and the camera transitions to show Todd arriving at an old garage to practice with his band, telling them of the mysterious young girl with the wondrous voice that he just has to find.
- T.J. berates her as Family Services is coming to investigate Aly's bruises.
- Aly's mother again takes the side of T.J. over her children, telling Aly they have to tell the Family Services agent nothing happened or they might be split up again.
- Aly reluctantly goes along and gets Markie to agree to lie as neither wants to be separated again.
- Todd tricks Aly into singing in the alley again and catches her this time, telling her that her talent can change her life.
- Aly tells him just a bit about herself but is shy and embarrassed, and flees at the first chance she gets.
- Aly lies to the investigator from Family Services, LINDA.
- The investigator doesn't believe what Aly tells her and the investigation isn't over.
- Aly is sick of her life of abuse and lies, and Todd's hopeful words echo in her mind as she sings in her bedroom.

Break Into Two (Choosing Act Two) (25-26)

- Aly steels herself to go into Todd's building and knock on his door, almost relieved when there's no response. But before she can leave he opens it, delighted to see her.
- Doing what she can to protect herself from what she thinks may be a rash act, she warns Todd that she told her brother where she was going and who he is, and he tells her that was smart. He calms her fears, telling her he has to record her singing.
- Aly goes into his apartment that's cluttered with instruments and agrees to sing for him as he plays for her and records her on his cell phone.

B-Story (27-35)

- Though Aly is too young and innocent for explicit romance, an brother/sister love develops between Todd and her. (All the good people in the story love Aly and try to help her.)
- They talk about their lives and Todd learns a bit about her difficult home life.
- Todd is brought to tears by Aly's singing.
- The end is foreshadowed as we see Aly singing on a stage, apparently just her dream.
- Todd promises to play the tape for his influential music professor, BRIAN, who's won Grammys and does work in Hollywood.

The Promise of the Premise (35-46)

- Aly feels hopeful for the first time in her life, telling the angel statue Amelia about her new friend and the hope he's given her.
- She confronts her mother about T.J. who still won't get rid of him.

Midpoint (47-55)

- Backed by Todd and his band in a small club, she gives her first public performance and stuns the audience.
- Todd is concerned about her secretive but obviously not good home life and tells her he'll always be there for her, saying he loves her like a younger sister.

- Aly is happy, an emotion not very familiar to her. What could go wrong now?

Bad Guys Close In (55-68)

- When Aly and Markie come back from a movie, they find all their things in a rental truck, her mother telling them they're leaving for a trailer in the country as Family Services is threatening to break up their family again.
- Aly considers running away, but she can't as she might lose Markie again.
- Brian tells Todd that he wants Aly to make an audition tape, Todd finding their apartment empty and meeting Linda from Family Services who's annoyed to find the family has fled.
- The always upbeat Markie kind of likes their new digs, but Aly sobs in her bare bedroom. Markie comforts his sister.
- Todd tries to bribe the truck rental people to give him info on where the family went, actually pleased to find the CLERK has the integrity not to be bribed. He's desperate to locate Aly.

All Is Lost (Won) (68-77)

- T.J. and his brother come back to the trailer drunk, and when Markie accidentally breaks a bottle of vodka, T.J. flings him into a table and breaks his arm, threatening to hit him again.
- Aly knocks down T.J., keeps her mother from stopping them, and gets away with Markie in the car, driving for the very first time.
- A neighbor has called the police and Aly is stopped on the roadway.
- She tells Markie no more lies, all that's finished
- She tells the OFFICER what happened and he tells them help is on the way. When he asks Aly if she's all right, she breaks down in tears and clings to him, all the pain she's been enduring flooding out at last to be washed away.

Dark Night of the Soul (77-94)

- Aly, Todd and Linda visit Markie recovering in the hospital.
- Aly tells Todd of her fear that she and Markie will never be together again. She also worries about her mother, telling Todd she wasn't bad, just weak.

- She makes an audition tape that stuns Todd, Brian and the TECHNICIAN.
- Todd is turned down by Family Services to act as foster parent to the children, Aly telling him she knew they wouldn't allow it. She and her new best friend in her group home, DANI, have plans of their own.
- Todd tells her that he and Brian are going to New York to meet with a top-notch talent agency. She's on her way.
- Brian talks to his wife, PAULINE, about taking in the children, saying that even if Aly gains the world, it won't be enough if she has to grow up without the brother she loves. But Pauline is reluctant as the death of their daughter makes her terrified of ever being so vulnerable again.
- Brian and Todd in New York City arrange with a top talent agent, JACK, for Aly's representation.

Break Into Three (Choosing Act Three) (94-108)

- Aly gets help from her new friend Dani to escape from the group home and get Markie from his and take off hoping to reach Florida to live on their own. (She may be resilient, but she's still just a child with little understanding of the way the world works.)
- Todd and Brian are driving back from NYC, Todd explaining why Aly's singing stuns, when he gets a call about the children having run away.
- They reach Pittsburgh and Todd is angry with Linda of Family Services, scared about what may happen to the children whose plan to take the bus to Florida has been thwarted though they're still missing. Todd and Brian begin driving around searching for the children.
- They learn from Mr. Rodriguez that Aly's friend Amelia is actually a stone statue at the grave of a young girl, and Brian is staggered as she realizes that Amelia is his deceased daughter.
- The children aren't at the grave, and when Todd asks Brian if he needs a moment alone, Brian replies, "Her refuge was this graveyard – her best friend a stone statue. I want to find this living angel."

- As they start to leave, they hear Aly's singing coming from the nearby woods. Even as they come up on the lean-to made from scrap wood and carpet remnants left in the urban forest, they have to stop a moment to take in the beauty of her singing.
- The children are momentarily frightened to be discovered until they see who's found them. Still, "That dream is over," as Aly says, asking, "What now?" Brian tells them to come along, they'll see, and Todd knows it must be something good because he won't allow anything else.

Finale (109-113)

- As Todd gently berates the children in the car, she's touched when Todd tells her he would have never stopped looking. She realizes that she and Markie living in Florida on their own would have never happened and is resigned to their going back to "jail."
- Brian makes a phone call from his daughter's grave then drives them all to his home, explaining that this is where Amelia lived, that Aly's friend was his and his wife's daughter. The children are sympathetic, and they all go inside.
- The children are introduced to Pauline, Aly telling her that she always told Amelia she was her sister-in-heaven and she loves her, moving Pauline.
- Pauline looks to her husband who nods. Pauline kneels down before the children and takes each of their hands and says, "I want to tell you that when you're comfortable with it, when you're ready and feel it's natural, I want you to call me Mom – because this is your new home. You're going to live here with us until you go off to college."
- They children are almost disbelieving, Aly asking Pauline if she's sure, Pauline saying, "We couldn't be surer. You both are home right now, together, for as long as you need us – forever, I hope."
- Markie says, "You did it, Aly!" and then makes everyone laugh by exclaiming, "This is better than Florida!"
- As they all hug, orchestral music rises and the scene dissolves to...

Final Image (113)

- Aly is singing in a beautiful gown on a concert stage with an orchestra before a packed and enthusiastic audience with all those who helped her. When Aly looks at Todd who's playing guitar in the orchestra, she has to bow to the audience to cover her

emotion. The scene mirrors the image shown when she first sang for Todd, at the time apparently just a dream but reality in the end. She will be a star.

Epilogue (113-115)

- As the new family and Todd return to the house, Aly and the others greet Amelia in the graveyard, the new parent's hearts healed by having these children in their lives. Pulling in the driveway, Aly recites their new chant, "Home again, home again..." everyone joining in the finish "hippity hop!"
- The children are slightly puzzled by Pauline telling them about the new housekeeper that needs their approval to stay.
- The children are stunned to find their mother waiting for them, much improved in appearance and apologetic for all that's happened.
- The children hug and kiss their mother then their new parents, and Aly says, "I'm happy, truly happy. And when I'm happy..."
- She sings, more beautifully than anyone has ever sung.

The End