

Angel Wings

By Alex Cavegn

Characters

Terry: A therapist

Charlie: In therapy

Voice: The voice in Charlie's head (should be an actor on stage)

Alex: The playwright

Note: all names are gender neutral

Setting: A therapy office

Angel Wings was first performed as part of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's On the Verge Festival in 2022 and was remounted in 2025 for I'll Scratch Yours.

Voice: This is my fourth meeting with Terry. Terry is my therapist. Terry is fucking useless. I only come here because my mother is forcing me. I had an anxiety attack in front of her that was triggered by the cost of gas in Canada. I don't live in Canada. But I don't need to be here. Everyone has anxiety, we all have our moments.

Silence

Voice: Terry always waits for me to speak first, I think it might be a power thing but I'm not going to give him the satisfaction this time.

Silence

Silence

Silence

Charlie: Hi

Voice: Damn it

Terry: Hello Charlie, how are you?

Voice: On my way here I saw a puppy that I considered punting across the street.

Charlie: Fine

Terry: What can I help you with?

Voice: Good fucking question. What can you help with? There's a genocide happening, the cost of living keeps going up, there's a massive hole in the ozone and you're sitting in a leather fucking chair.

Charlie: I've been anxious lately

Terry: About what?

Charlie: Oh, you know, just normal life stuff.

Terry: What normal life stuff?

Voice: Well let's see, I work three shitty minimum wage jobs but still can barely afford to pay my rent. Sometimes I feel like I am completely alone even when I'm surrounded by people. When I pictured what my life would look like as a kid, it certainly wasn't this.

Charlie: Just like financial stress, friendships, and the future. Just stuff that everyone has to deal with. It's just part of life you know?

Terry: That sounds difficult.

Voice: (*Mockingly*) That sounds difficult.

Charlie: Yep.

Terry: Have you been eating well?

Voice: I had Taco Bell every day this week.

Charlie: Yeah, salads.

Terry: Sleeping ok?

Voice: I'm on my phone until 2 am and don't get out of bed until noon.

Charlie: I get a full 8 hours.

Terry: Going to the gym?

Voice: Hahaha.

Alex

I'm Alex, the writer and performer of this piece. I wrote the first iteration of this during my 2nd year of drama school. It was a very difficult year. It started with one of my classmates passing away. Then I broke my leg on stage and had to fly home to get surgery. While home, I started going to therapy for the first time.

Terry: Let's try a little exercise

Voice: Are you calling me fat?

Terry: It's called 'if... then'. We propose a potentially stressful scenario, the 'if' then we ask, 'then what?'. And we continue to ask 'then?' until we reach a conclusion. Okay?

Charlie: Okay.

Terry: If you were to quit your job, then what?

Charlie: Then... I would get a new job?

Terry: Okay. Good. Um, let's say you couldn't afford your rent anymore?

Charlie: Then I would have to move back home.

Terry: Then what?

Charlie: Then I would be very sad.

Terry: And then?

Charlie: And then... I would cry?

Terry: And then?

Charlie: And then I would get over it.

Terry: Try to go further with it.

Charlie: And then I would rot in bed

Terry: Then?

Charlie: Then I would be depressed

Terry: Then?

Charlie: I would hate myself

Terry: Then?

Charlie: I wouldn't want to be alive anymore

Terry: Then?

Charlie: And then...

Silence

Voice: And then I kill myself.

Charlie: I...

Terry: And then you die?

Charlie: Yeah...

Terry: That's normal. That is the normal conclusion to this exercise. You see, our brains are very fast and will skip steps to reach an answer. This was really useful when humans lived out in the wild, and you heard something scary growling behind you. You didn't have to turn around and see what it was; you could jump to the conclusion that you were in danger and that you were going to have to fight to survive. Nowadays, that scary thing looks more like paying the rent, and an anxious brain skips all kinds of logical steps and goes right to death. But if we take a second to slow down, we can see that death is not going to be the end result. That there are many places for intervention

Alex

When I opened up to my brother about how I'd thought about suicide, I told him how one of the only things that held me back was thinking about how much it would hurt those around me. I told him how I thought it was kind of sad to go on living for other people. He said that's the whole point. That I am so loved and mean so much to other people, that life is worth living.

Terry: Charlie, I can't help you.

Charlie: What do you mean?

Terry: I can't help you if you're not going to be honest. With me and yourself. You can take off your masks in front of me.

Charlie: Ok.

Terry: So, how are you?

Charlie: I'm tired.

I'm... lost?

Silence

Voice: Are they going to fucking say anything?

Silence

Charlie: I feel like... uhhh. Like, well you know how you have a dead plant in the corner of your room and you know you should throw it away but if you do that you're accepting that you aren't even capable enough to occasionally water something?

Terry: And what do you do when you feel like this?

Charlie: I feel like this all the time.

Terry: What do you do to feel better?

Charlie: I like to go to the grocery store.

Because at the grocery store, I look like a normal person. No one there knows that I feel... I go and I buy bananas that will rot and bread that will mold.

Terry: Do you like feeling this way?

Voice: What the fuck kind of question is that?

Charlie: What kind of question is that?

Terry: Do you want to feel like this or would you rather feel differently?

Charlie: Do I like feeling like I have fire ants crawling up my asshole to slowly one-by-one carry away pieces of my heart?

No.

Do I wake up every morning to see the scars on my back where my wings once were?

yeah.

Terry: Why are you here?

Charlie: My mother is forcing me to come.

Terry: No one is forcing you to be here. You could leave right now if you wanted. You don't have to come to these appointments, yet you're always early. Why are you here?

Charlie: I just want to be ok. I'm sick of taking it one day at a time. I want to be able to see a future. I want to see my future. I'm sick of thinking all my friends hate me. I hate going through life with a good enough attitude. I want to be able to have a conversation without screaming at myself about how clueless I sound. I'm sick of being sick. I'm not asking for a lot. I / I I...

Voice: /I just want someone to tell me it's going to be okay./

Charlie: /I want to wake up and be glad I woke up. I want to feel filled up when I take a breath. I want to not have a fucking meltdown when I knock over a mug./

Voice: /Tell me it'll be ok./

Charlie: /I don't want to mourn the past anymore, and I don't want to obsess about the future./

Voice: /Please-

Terry: Charlie, you're going to be ok.

Alex

*I am going to be ok. You are going to be ok. You are loved and valued. If you are struggling,
please tell someone. Thank you.*