

20/06/04

Half an Angel

Screenplay for a short children's film (14 minutes)

by

Karen Christine Angermayer

Version 4

(June 2004)

(nach Telefo ~~to~~ ~~for~~ ~~7~~
2 17/06/04)

Characters and locations:

Main characters:

Ella
Tim

**Supporting characters
(in order of appearance):**

Ella's mother
Children from the class
Teacher
Custodian
Cleaning lady
Parents in the audience at the school play

Locations:

Theater (stage, backstage and auditorium)
School interior (classrooms, stairwell, basement)
School exterior (door from outside, playground, in front of a basement window)
In front of Ella's house / Route to school
Ella's garden
Ella's house, hallway
Ella's bedroom
In front of Tim's front door
Street

1. OUTSIDE. STREET IN FRONT OF ELLA'S HOUSE – DAYTIME

ELLA'S MOTHER, a pretty woman, is combing Ella's hair. Ella is standing facing the mirror in the hallway, making faces at her reflection.

Ella protests against her mother dressing her up in the same outfit her mother is wearing; she doesn't want to look like a Barbie doll

>> Humorous compromise: Ella puts on the dress, but wears shorts underneath. Just as she is trying to leave, her mother quickly puts a barrette in her hair, reaping a furious look from Ella for her pains.

2. OUTSIDE. STREET, SIDEWALK -- DAYTIME.

Ella is on her way to school. At a bush she stops, breaks off a branch and continues on her way, whipping the branch in front of her in a make-believe battle against an imaginary opponent. The pink barrette is clipped onto her front pocket.

3. INSIDE. CLASSROOM - DAYTIME

The CHILDREN in the class are standing expectantly in front of a large partition wall, on which many costumes are hanging. ELLA is magically drawn to the only suit of armor: admiringly, she caresses the shimmering breastplate, which has a matching helmet and a genuine sword to go with it. The TEACHER claps his hands and indicates to the children that they should take their seats. When everyone is seated, he takes a huge dragon's head with a long, reddish-golden robe from a hook. Two children's hands shoot into the air, the teacher nods to them, the children jump up and slip enthusiastically into the dragon costume. Then comes the suit of armor. Before the teacher can take the gleaming breastplate from its hook, eleven hands are waving madly in the air, Ella's among them. The teacher shakes his head. Only one person can play the knight. He takes a red cardboard box and goes around with a note pad. Each child tears off a slip and writes his or her name on it. When TIM (10) gets his turn, several pages come off of the note pad. Tim notices this only after the teacher has passed. Tim **hesitates** for a moment, before he **cheats**. Indication of his bad **conscience**. He quickly writes his name on each of the pieces of paper. When the teacher comes around again to collect the slips, Tim deftly smuggles all of them into the box. **Box with the lots = ticking bomb!**

The teacher draws a name – Tim is the winner, and he gets the suit of armor. Ella's disappointment shows in her face. Her eyes meet Tim's. He grins at her. She looks away. While the rest of the costumes are being distributed (pages, elves, mythical beings, hunters), Ella is still sulking and doesn't try for a role until all the costumes are gone and only a white angel's robe with a kitschy blonde, curly wig and a shabby old pair of wings are left. The teacher holds it out to her. She doesn't want to take it. The teacher shakes it at her demandingly. She takes it by the tips of her fingers, staring at it with obvious distaste.

In the meantime all of the children have slipped into their costumes and are running around in them, laughing. Ella stands listlessly in the room. She has the wings on her

back (which are already shedding numerous feathers), flaps them up and down once, then takes them off again. She doesn't even try on the wig and the white nightgown.

The teacher claps his hands: that's all for today. The children hang their costumes on the partition wall. Ella is walking close beside Tim, gazing enviously at the shining suit of armor he is carrying. As he hangs up the helmet, she taps him on the shoulder from the side, and holds out her angel's costume to him. "Want to trade?" Tim raises his eyebrows sympathetically, but shakes his head, laughing. "Forget it, you can keep that silly old nightgown!" He flexes his muscles in his shimmering breastplate, turning first one way and then the other, and drums proudly with his fists on it.

Ella grimaces, listlessly dumps her costume on a hook, with the wig askew on top.

4. OUTSIDE. ELLA'S GARDEN – DAYTIME

With a colander on her head, Ella is parrying a fictitious opponent. With a large cucumber as a sword she's countering his thrusts, lunges to the side, quickly ducks, then hits back with all her strength, driving him towards a tree. *we see her reality changing and Ella appears as a radiant knight in shining armor with a helmet and sword, battling Tim, who is wearing the angel's costume. Her gleaming sword connects hard with his tiny golden angel's wand. Zong!!* Back to reality: dissatisfied, she stares at the demolished stump of the cucumber. The rest of it is sticking on the tree.

Basic tenor: Ella wants to feel like a knight (her fantasy image of herself); she is not out for an aggressive battle to the death.

5. INSIDE. ELLA'S BEDROOM – DAYTIME

Ella is sitting on her bed, the colander drawn down in front of her face: we see only her pouting lips. Suddenly she pulls it off her head. Her glance falls on the piggy bank on the shelf across from her.

6. OUTSIDE. IN FRONT OF TIM'S HOUSE – DAYTIME

Instead of the 100 euros, Ella holds out her piggy bank to Tim. He doesn't want it. She lets it fall on the ground at his feet; it shatters. Tim doesn't accept her exchange, and slams the door in her face. She is bitterly disappointed.

The next day:

7. INSIDE. THEATER, BACKSTAGE - DAYTIME

Rehearsal. All of the children get into their costumes, laughing. Only Tim is looking around searchingly – his costume is missing. The hook with his suit of armor is empty. In the background, Ella slips into her angel's robe, observing Tim out of the corner of her eye, as he gets increasingly nervous. Annoyed, he lifts up several costumes, pushes the other children away, because he thinks they have hidden his costume from him. He looks in the corners, in boxes standing around...including the one with the name slips. It's open, we see the slips of paper, but Tim doesn't notice. He carelessly shoves it to the side...his costume has disappeared. His eyes meet Ella's. She is wearing her angel's robe and wig, smiling innocently.

7. INSIDE. THEATER, STAGE - DAYTIME

Ella is greatly enjoying her role today, having lots of fun playing the guardian angel watching over the pitiful knight without his armor.

While all the other children are wearing their fantastic costumes, Tim is battling the dragon in his normal clothing with an old broomstick. The teacher shows them some simple fencing choreography. He grits his teeth, trying not to show his fury, but his feelings are obvious. Ella, behind him with her wings raised, grins, shaking her blonde curls in satisfaction.

8. OUTSIDE. AT THE DOOR TO THE SCHOOL - DAYTIME

Tim sullenly leaves the school building and shuffles across the playground. Suddenly, a whistle is heard from one of the upper windows. Tim turns around, looks up – and sees his suit of armor hanging on the wall of the building! He runs back quickly, throws open the door to the school and races inside.

9. INSIDE. SCHOOL, STAIRWELL – DAYTIME

Tim races up the stairs, taking several steps at a time.

10. INSIDE. SCHOOL, CLASSROOM – DAYTIME

He opens a door to a room. The room is empty. No Ella. But the window is open.

At the window:

12

Remains the same

13

Remains the same

14

As before, Ella hides in the dustbin. Tim tiptoes to it and rips open the lid. He doesn't beat on it and doesn't push it under the counter, but presses from above against the lid, so that Ella cannot escape. At that moment he is surprised by the custodian and pulled out of the cellar room.

Subsequently: Ella escapes within just a few moments. While Tim in Scenes 15 and 16 (now **DAYTIME SCENES!**) watches the custodian leaving and slips into the cellar, Ella has already freed herself.

As discussed, it is possible to film both versions: a) We see how Ella frees herself, and b) We discover with Tim that she has managed to escape from the dustbin.

17

Now **Daytime Scene**. In their fight, the issue is not fury and aggressivity, but the rules of fencing: When Ella falls, Tim has the opportunity to tap her on the chest with the broomstick – the sign that the duel is at an end and he has won. He stretches out his hand to help her up, indicating a handshake. Ella accepts the rules – she is not a poor loser, but rather just sad...until:

18

Ella discovers Tim's cheating. That arouses her fury.

19

The chase remains the same. Change: While she is running, Ella trips over the pail of water that the cleaning lady has left on a stair. She stumbles. The pail of water tips over, its contents pouring over the stairs. Instead of showing Tim's fall, the camera cuts to Ella, whose eyes and mouth are open wide in fright...then to Tim on the floor, who is clutching his knee. Fade to black.

20

Reconciliation: Ella doesn't clearly accept the sword, but places it between herself and Tim. Who will be the knight in the end? Fade to black.

21

Remains the same.

22

Remains the same.

Tim can just about reach the suit of armor. It's hanging there, just a few inches from him; he only needs to pull it over to him... He leans out of the window, but just when he almost has his hands on it, the suit of armor vanishes upwards through his open arms. Tim scowls – he has a pretty good idea who's behind all this.

11. INSIDE. SCHOOL, CORRIDOR – DAYTIME

Tim just catches a glimpse of Ella disappearing around a corner of the stairwell with the suit of armor. She's going downstairs. He runs after her, swings agilely onto the banister and slides down swiftly.

12. INSIDE. SCHOOL BASEMENT, CORRIDOR – DAYTIME

There is no trace of Ella as Tim arrives at the foot of the stairs. He opens a door which is ajar.

13. INSIDE. SCHOOL BASEMENT - DAYTIME

Tim looks around, searching. He has to get used to the darkness before he can see anything. No sign of Ella. Then we suddenly hear steps. Tim hides behind some shelving. The CUSTODIAN comes in, carrying a broom and a full dustpan, which he empties into a colorful dustbin. After he leaves, Tim waits for a moment, then emerges from behind the shelves, looking around. Suddenly a sneeze comes from the dustbin. Tim grins triumphantly, tiptoes towards it – and tears open the lid.

POV Tim:

A very dusty Ella is sitting in the dustbin. Just as she moves to get up, Tim slams the lid shut again. Suddenly, the custodian appears behind him and drags him by his ears from the room. Tim tries to resist, but doesn't have a chance against the strong man.

14. OUTSIDE. SCHOOL, IN FRONT OF THE BASEMENT WINDOW – DAYTIME

Behind a hedge, Tim waits as the custodian gets on his bicycle and rides away. Then Tim runs to the basement window, which is flush to the ground, and looks through it. He can't see anything. The basement window is ajar. He pushes it open and crawls inside.

15. INSIDE. BASEMENT – DAYTIME

Tim stares at the dustbin: it's tipped over, empty. Ella is gone.

16. OUTSIDE. SCHOOL, BASEMENT WINDOW – DAYTIME

Tim climbs back out of the basement window. Suddenly, something is pressing into his collar. He looks up. It's the tip of the sword. Ella is standing next to him, threateningly. At her feet is the body of the suit of armor. She takes a step backwards, lets him crawl out, the point of the sword still at his collar. Then she moves her head to the side, indicating the broom against the wall of the building, which the custodian left there. Tim understands, and grabs it...en garde! The fight begins. They battle in accordance with the rules they learned in rehearsal.

Between their bodies the suit of armor gleams in the darkness, the symbol of their struggle. Tim drives Ella towards the wall of the building. Not far from her is his bicycle. For a brief moment, Ella's attention is distracted, she steps backwards and gets caught in the bicycle stand. As she stumbles, she looks away briefly – and gives Tim his chance for victory: she stumbles and falls backwards, landing roughly on her backside. Tim taps her chest with the tip of the broomstick. He has won. She nods briefly, seriously. He stretches out his hand to her. She lets him help her up, but quickly lets go of his hand again. Expressionless, she hands him the sword and leaves. Tim watches her briefly, then bends happily over his regained suit of armor.

17. INSIDE. THEATER, BACKSTAGE - DAYTIME

The rehearsal has just finished. In a bad mood, Ella removes her angel's costume, watching Tim enviously as he hangs his suit of armor on its hook. When he leaves, Ella is alone. Sadly, she slides down the partition wall, the box with the paper slips not far from her. Ella pulls the box to her, ruffles through the slips of paper... and sees the name "TIM" written on five of them! Ella reacts fast: she jumps up, rips the sword off its hook, runs to the door - Tim is almost at the end of the corridor - and whistles him back. He turns around. Demonstratively, she holds up the slips of paper with his name on them, stuffs them in her trouser pocket – and runs at him. Tim understands, his eyes opening wide – Ella's face is like a storm cloud – and likewise runs off. A wild chase ensues...

18. INSIDE. SCHOOL, STAIRWELL AND CORRIDORS – DAYTIME

With the sword raised, Ella runs after Tim, chasing him down the corridor, blocking his path out the door of the school. He suddenly turns, runs up the stairs, Ella behind him. A CLEANING LADY scolds them, shaking her head, because they have just run over her freshly cleaned floor. Around a corner, Tim stops. Ella runs past him as he expected, but she notices quickly and comes back – now she's above him, and the chase continues.

downstairs. Ella is quite close to Tim now: she trips over the pail of soapy water that the cleaning lady has left on a stair. The pail tips over. Ella hangs on tightly to the banister, and can only watch as the water pours down the stairs behind Tim.

Cut to Ella: Ella's eyes open wide.

Cut to Tim: Tim is lying on the floor, clutching his knee. Ella, still on the stairs, looks down at him, shocked.

Fade to black.

19. INSIDE. HOSPITAL, TIM'S ROOM – DAYTIME

Ella enters the room. Tim is lying in bed reading, one leg in a cast and elevated in a sling. He looks up from his comic book when he sees her. Hesitantly, Ella sits down beside him, hardly daring to look at him. Instead, she holds out the present she has brought him: a sword made of chocolate. Peace? He grins, reaches under his pillow and pulls out the real sword, holding it out to her. Their eyes meet. Holding his gaze, she pulls the slips of paper with his name on them out of her trouser pocket, crumples them up and throws them into the waste basket beside his bed. Then she accepts the real sword. Smiles. Tim unwraps the chocolate sword, bites off a big piece and holds it out to her. She bends towards him, and bites off a piece, too. Chewing, they grin at each other.

20. INSIDE. THEATER – DAYTIME

The day of the play. The parents, including Ella's mother, are waiting in suspense in the auditorium for the play to begin. The heavy curtain moves. Behind it, excited murmuring and laughing are audible. Then the curtain rises – and out comes Tim, in a wheelchair, wearing his suit of armor, with a thick plaster cast on his leg, but swinging his sword proudly. He is laughing. And we can hardly believe our eyes: it is Ella who is pushing him – and wearing her angel's costume. She is laughing too. Beneath the hem of her robe, we glimpse the knight's boot, which Tim cannot wear over his cast. She skillfully guides him in his battle against the dragon. The parents applaud. Tim and Ella grin at each other. A good team.

21. OUTSIDE. STREET – DAYTIME

Ella is riding her bicycle on the way to school, pulling a trailer in which Tim is sitting, his cast propped up comfortably. The cast bears the word ELLA, written in thick black

marker. Tim is enjoying the ride. As Ella looks up to the sky, the clouds appear to form a huge white pair of wings. Ella smiles.

THE END