

CLOAKING DOUGLAS

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. LOS ANGELES - CONDO COMPLEX - COURTYARD - DAY

A fountain gurgles among palm trees and birds of paradise.

INT. DOUGLAS' CONDO - LAB

A slew of bubbling test tubes. A blackboard chock-full of complex formulas. A DARPA solicitation rests on a high-performance laboratory table.

DOUGLAS HENNEKLE, 28, an average, insecure specimen in a lab coat, grinds an opal into a ceramic dish. The fine green powder sparkles. Douglas sighs heavily into his dust mask.

Across from him, his cohort RICARDO, 29. Tall, lean, handsome, every ordinary chemist's nightmare.

RICARDO

Are those opals real?

DOUGLAS

You can't get real results from fake material. If I've calculated my mixture correctly...

He brandishes a test tube full of teal liquid.

DOUGLAS

Combine it with the right meta-material...

He dumps the test tube into the crushed opals. Smoke slowly rises from the dish.

DOUGLAS

Moment of truth.

He removes a brush from his coat, slides it into the dish. Douglas swipes the brush across Ricardo's sleeve. Aside from the green streak, nothing appears different.

RICARDO

What'd I tell you?

DOUGLAS

Just a sec...

The streak shimmers... into transparency! The tile floor is suddenly visible through the swipe mark on Ricardo's sleeve.

RICARDO

What?

DOUGLAS

Hello... DARPA.

INT. CONDO COMPLEX - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Douglas and Ricardo exit the condo. Douglas wears an 80s denim jacket, Ricardo's in a high-priced leather.

RICARDO

What're you doing with Corey Hart's jacket?

Coming the other way is LULU, 27, a bona fide knockout with a gait that says: *Get outta my way*. She totes a Barnes & Noble bag.

RICARDO

Hot tamale. And she reads, too.

DOUGLAS

Shut up. She'll hear you.

RICARDO

That's the idea, mon frère.

Douglas fidgets, he hurries to fix his hair.

LULU

Hey...

Douglas nods enthusiastically as she passes by.

RICARDO

Smooth. Try not to drool.

DOUGLAS

You're embarrassing me.

RICARDO

(loudly)

Aren't you even going to introduce me? God... that is so rude.

He smiles over at Lulu, who turns around.

LULU

You're his friend, I take it?

RICARDO
Ricardo. I'm his psych counselor,
actually.

Douglas wipes his brow, drops his keys, quickly snatches
them up.

LULU
Good luck with that.

She enters her condo.

DOUGLAS
How was I?

RICARDO
Like a cat staring down a vacuum.

Douglas hangs his head. They continue down the hall.

RICARDO
Cheer up, will ya?

DOUGLAS
I might as well be invis...

He stops short. Stares up at Ricardo.

INT. DOUGLAS' CONDO - BEDROOM

Douglas yanks a sheet off his bed, drags it across the floor.

INT. DOUGLAS' CONDO - LAB

Douglas drapes the bed sheet across the lab table, goes to
work with the brush. The bed sheet fades from view.

He holds the invisible bed sheet up to a full-length mirror.
Only his head is viewable. Douglas smiles.

He tries it on. And completely disappears!

INT. CONDO COMPLEX - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lulu struts down the hall, lugging her gym bag.

INT. LULU'S CONDO - FOYER/KITCHEN

Lulu enters. Senses something. She peeks behind the door.
Spies nothing, shuts it.

A vague outline of a bed sheet is behind her. Douglas is as good as invisible. Lulu drops her gym bag on the floor. She undresses her way down the hall. Douglas follows.

INT. LULU'S CONDO - BEDROOM

Rain patters on the windowpane. Knickknacks on a bookcase are in disarray. Douglas straightens them.

From the walk-in closet, Lulu emerges wearing her bra, panties and a girdle. She trudges to the dresser mirror. The knickknacks catch her eye, she furrows her brow.

Lulu turns back to the dresser mirror, stares at her backside.

LULU
Bubble-butt...

She removes her girdle. Suddenly, Lulu appears less svelte. A slight potbelly protrudes. Just then, a knickknack falls from the bookcase, Lulu whips around.

She peers at the window.

LULU
Stupid wind.

She grabs peanut M & M's from a dish on the bedside table, shoves them into her mouth.

The phone rings. Lulu answers.

LULU
Hello? Ricardo who?

A loud crack of thunder. A knickknack falls from the bookcase, somehow hovers in midair, put back in place.

LULU
Oh, right. How'd you get my number?

She peeks at herself in the mirror, sucks in her belly.

LULU
No, I suppose it's not evil to contact
Information.
(inspects her nails)
That sounds like fun. What time?

A bolt of lightning. An outline of Douglas standing behind the bed, hands on his hips.

INT. ESTATE - GRAND HALLWAY - LATER

A BUTLER, 60s, turns the knob on a heavy, ornate door. Outside stands a DEMON, equipped with horns and a bifurcated tail, alongside an ANGEL, packing a halo and wings.

BUTLER
Dan Brown's Fan Club, I presume?

RICARDO
How'd you guess?

BUTLER
Do come in.

Ricardo wipes his cloven hooves on the mat. He and Lulu join the bevy of masked REVELERS.

Butler goes to close the door, gets thwarted. He shoves harder, the sound of someone tumbling. Butler turns, finds no one.

INT. ESTATE - BALLROOM - LATER

Lulu and Ricardo waltz about the floor.

LULU
Your appendage keeps getting in my way.

RICARDO
That's not the first time that --

He's suddenly bumped, briefly loses his footing.

LULU
Did I say you could pinch my ass?

RICARDO
I didn't pinch your ass.

LULU
Are you sure?

A FLASHBULB, a quick glimpse of Douglas glaring at Ricardo.

RICARDO
Did you see that?

LULU
See what?

RICARDO
It was like a ghost.

LULU
Must be your guilty conscience.

MOMENTS LATER

Lulu sits at a table, fixing her makeup. No sign of Ricardo. Her purse opens, a pen slides out. She replaces her compact.

Lulu gazes at the ballroom floor, turns back. A souvenir matchbook now appears by her purse. She pops it open, finds a written message: "Check out the table by the grand piano."

Lulu furrows her brow, spins to see who might have left the matchbook. No suspects are apparent.

She looks at the grand piano, scans the nearby tables. Spots Ricardo making out with a BANSHEE. He looks up.

Lulu bolts from her chair, swings her purse around, a bopping noise. She flips Ricardo off and storms out.

EXT. ESTATE

Lulu hails a taxi, hops in. Struggles to close the door.

LULU
Stupid wind.

INT. CONDO COMPLEX - HALLWAY - LATER

Lulu marches along, her wings flapping. She turns the corner, finds Douglas sitting outside his condo. He appears flushed, reads a paperback.

LULU
What're you doing out here in the hall?

DOUGLAS
Locked myself out. You look nice.

LULU
I don't feel nice. Did you call the office?

DOUGLAS
No one answers.

He lets out an exasperated sigh, turns the page.

LULU
Why're you outta breath?

DOUGLAS
I'm... not... sure.

INT. LULU'S CONDO - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Douglas sits at the table. Lulu, still in her angel outfit, sets down two coffees.

LULU
She looked like such a floozy, too.

DOUGLAS
Banshees are the worst.

LULU
I didn't mention she's a banshee.

DOUGLAS
Yeah... but... you did mention she had Irish features.

LULU
How can you work with that dog?

DOUGLAS
He had all his shots. Just needs a muzzle.

Lulu smirks at him.

LULU
I've never heard you string so many words together before.

Douglas holds her gaze.

Lulu leans across the table and KISSES him. Douglas freezes up. Then softens... into butter.

LULU
Sometimes I wonder why you walk around so nervous. You're tall, with a thick head o' --

DOUGLAS
You think I'm tall?

LULU

Well, yeah. And the way you look at me... it's like you know me.

DOUGLAS

Maybe I do.

Lulu sits up straight, peers at Douglas with a smile.

LULU

Wanna do something tomorrow?

DOUGLAS

How about the beach?

Lulu casts a self-conscious look at her tummy. Douglas notices.

LULU

Not the beach.

DOUGLAS

Why not?

Lulu leans over to him.

LULU

Take me someplace I'll like
(into his ear)
and we'll see what happens...

Douglas' eyes bulge.

INT. LULU'S CONDO - FOYER/KITCHEN - LATER

A credit card slides along the doorframe. An outline of Douglas enters. Quietly, he shuts the door.

DOUGLAS (V.O.)

Someplace she'll like. Someplace
she'll like...

LIVING ROOM

The pile of the carpet indents. Step by step. Along the mantle are Lulu's baby pictures.

DOUGLAS (V.O.)

Yeah, a baby shower. That'll put
her in the mood. Idiot.

He peers down the hallway.

BEDROOM

Douglas slinks in. Lulu's back is to him. He glances at a photograph of her riding a treacherous wave on a surfboard.

DOUGLAS (V.O.)

Calgon, take me away.

Lulu rises off the bed, carrying a small bottle. She slips on one of her stockings, stumbles. Douglas gets doused with NAIL POLISH REMOVER.

Splotches of a bed sheet appear before Lulu. She SHRIEKS, the dresser mirror shatters.

The outline desperately turns left and right. Lulu reaches out, YANKS the bed sheet off! Douglas stands mouth agape.

LULU

Oh my God! What is this?

DOUGLAS

It's not what you think.

LULU

Not what I *think*? Explain this to me. Right now!

DOUGLAS

Uh...

LULU

Before I scream again!

DOUGLAS

Right. I'm a scientist, you know that. What you don't know is that I'm working on a cloaking project for DARPA.

LULU

Who's Darpa?

DOUGLAS

Not important.

LULU

You're seeing someone, too? God, what is it with you people?!

DOUGLAS

No, you don't understand...

LULU

You've been coming here a while?
How long have you been invisible?

DOUGLAS

You mean literally?

LULU

Get out! Get out right now! I can't
take this anymore!

DOUGLAS

Look, Lulu, you gotta listen to me...

LULU

Just go! And take your dirty laundry
with you!

She propels Douglas out, along with the bed sheet. Lulu
secures all the locks. Leans back against the door.

INT. DOUGLAS' CONDO - BEDROOM - LATER

Douglas sits on the edge of the bed, lost in his thoughts.

He meanders into the

LAB

The bed sheet sits like a lump on the large table. Douglas
tightens it into a ball. Tosses it in the trash.

INT. DOUGLAS' CONDO - KITCHEN

Douglas sits at the table, flipping through his high school
yearbook. He lands on a PHOTO of himself, the Class Geek.

He retrieves the brush. Makes the photo invisible.

INT. DOUGLAS' CONDO - KITCHEN - MORNING

Douglas awakens, creases from the yearbook outline his cheek.

He blinks his eyes open, shuts the yearbook, drops it in the
trash.

Douglas rethinks it. He fishes it out of the garbage, tears
out the Class Geek page. Dumps the yearbook again.

He places the invisible picture of himself on the refrigerator
door. Claps his hands clean.

INT. CONDO COMPLEX - HALLWAY

Douglas strides up to Lulu's door. Knocks.

DOUGLAS
Lu, please open up.

LULU
No trespassing.

DOUGLAS
Good. You're home.

EXT. CONDO COMPLEX - COURTYARD

Douglas marches to the center of the yard. Waves his arms at Lulu's window.

DOUGLAS
I'm down here!
(jumping up and down)
Over here, look!

NEIGHBORS traversing the walkways throw him a look.

Lulu peers through her back door.

DOUGLAS
There you are. I crossed the line!
Okay?! I'm sorry! But I'm not a
weirdo, I swear!

He continues to jump, flailing his arms and legs. Windows are flung open. A CROWD gathers on the lawn.

DOUGLAS
I'm done hiding! I'll prove it to
you!

He rips off a hairpiece, tosses it backward like a garter. A BALD MAN catches it. Makes a face like: Not bad.

DOUGLAS
Early pattern baldness! Ain't that
neat? Check this out...

He pulls out elevator shoe lifts, flings them in the air.

DOUGLAS
Like that? And you thought I was
tall. Ha!

He strips down to his birthday suit. Neighbors turn away.

DOUGLAS
Size doesn't matter, right?

He looks around for affirmation.

DOUGLAS
Right?!

Ricardo appears in the crowd, wearing his leather, his hair slicked back. He waves a dozen red roses in the air at Lulu.

RICARDO
These are for you, Sweetie!
(turns to Douglas)
I didn't know you wore a hairpiece.

He chuckles. Douglas holds a finger up at Lulu.

DOUGLAS
Just a sec...

He glides over to Ricardo.

RICARDO
You might wanna cover up that
snausage.

Douglas jumps up, POPS Ricardo in the kisser. He lands hard on his ass, reaches for his mouth.

DOUGLAS
You'll save money on tooth whitening.
And nice leather, by the way, Fonzie.

He returns to his original position.

DOUGLAS
Where was I?

MATRONLY NEIGHBOR
Something about size not mattering.

DOUGLAS
Right, thanks.
(to Lulu)
If you don't wanna be with me, that's fine. I understand. But do me one favor. Stop staring at your butt. Or your thighs. Or your stomach. You're beautiful, okay?! And I loved you long before I turned invisible!

No response. Douglas lowers his head, turns to leave.

DOUGLAS
(to himself)
That was worth it.

Lulu BARGES through the door onto her balcony. Curlers in her hair, her little pot belly shows above her pajama bottoms.

LULU
It's not just the belly. Look at
this zit on my forehead! I can't
stand it!

Douglas beams as he watches her stomp down the fire escape.

A smattering of applause softens Lulu's gait. She turns to her Neighbors. A smile begins to shine through.

LULU
Really?

She preens. Floats toward Douglas...

They embrace! And kiss passionately. Laughter and cheers fill the courtyard. Douglas smiles, covering his privates.

DOUGLAS
(into her ear)
If you want, I'll pop it for you.

INT. DOUGLAS' CONDO - LAB - DAY

Douglas pours the contents of a test tube into two martini glasses, stirs.

LULU
What're we celebrating?

Douglas clasps a string of OPALS around Lulu's neck.

DOUGLAS
You.

They clink glasses.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END