

THE D'ANGELO WAY

By

James Austin McCormick

jimbostories@hotmail.com

FADE IN

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

LUCA D'ANGELO (69 but looks at least twenty years younger), a tanned, muscular, perfect specimen of manhood in a garish track suit, stands on stage.

We're only able to see a few figures in the front row of the audience.

LUCA
So ladies and gentlemen, that just
about wraps up another Luca
D'Angelo show.

He flashes ultra white teeth.

LUCA (CON'T)
Or as we like to call it here,
Super Luca time.

Female sighs ring out.

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN faints.

LUCA (CON'T)
And remember, fitness is a way of
life, one that requires discipline
and dedication but also yields
enormous benefits.

He holds his arms outstretched, inviting the audience to behold his magnificence.

LUCA (CON'T)
As you can see.

Whoops and claps erupt throughout the audience.

LUCA (CON'T)
All you need to be like me are the
Super Luca D'Angelo home workout
routine which is now available as a
streaming service, book package and
my own, special range of patented
vitamins and minerals sold through
this network. Hurry while stocks
last.

He places his hands together as if congratulating himself.

(CONTINUED)

LUCA (CON'T)
Remember, don't grow old, grow
young.

The audience breaks into rapturous applause.

The Middle-Aged Woman wakes up.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN
We love you Luca.

A chorus of female voices all profess similar sentiments.

Luca bows, blowing kisses as he backs away.

A curtain closes in front of him.

One figure, CARL CARTER (45), ferret-like and bespectacled,
rises from his seat. A press card sticks out from his hat
band.

He sneaks onto the stage and slides under the curtain.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

SARA D'ANGELO (65), cotton candy hair and pearls with much
of her beauty troweled on, strokes a dozing poodle in her
lap.

Luca admires himself in a full-length mirror.

SARA
Wonderful show.

LUCA
Always are my dear.

SARA
I've just been checking the viewing
figures.

LUCA
And?

SARA
We're now the highest ranking show
on the networks.

LUCA
(Excitedly) You're certain?

(CONTINUED)

SARA
A hundred percent.

He gazes lovingly into the mirror.

LUCA
I'm number one.

There's a knock at the door.

SARA (CON'T)
Who could that be?

The door opens.

Carter's bespectacled face pops through the gap. He looks at Luca.

CARTER
Mr D'Angelo.

He notices Sara.

CARTER (CON'T)
Mrs D'Angelo.

He removes his hat.

CARTER (CON'T)
My name's Carl Carter.

Sara isn't happy to see him.

SARA
I know who you are. The freelance journalist who's been chasing my husband for the last few months. Didn't I make it clear he wouldn't be granting you an interview?

Carter holds his hat contritely in front of him.

CARTER
I just spoke to your husband back stage ma'am.

Sara looks at her husband.

SARA
Is this true?

Luca's too busy with the mirror to hear the question.

(CONTINUED)

CARTER (CON'T)
He said he'd be happy to give me a couple of minutes.

Mascara eyes narrow as she regards the journalist.

SARA (CON'T)
You have a reputation Mr Carter,
not a good one. You're a scandal
monger and a muck-raker.

CARTER
Not true ma'am, I assure you

SARA
I've read some of your pieces.

CARTER
I'm here today on behalf of
Fabulous People Magazine.

He turns to Luca.

CARTER (CON'T)
It would be a great honor for me
sir.

Luca tears himself away from the mirror.

LUCA
Of course it would.

He smooths his thick hair back.

LUCA (CON'T)
Someone of my stature.

CARTER
It would also be a chance for your
adoring fans to learn a little more
about their hero.

Luca waves the other man inside.

LUCA (CON'T)
Come in.

SARA
This isn't a good idea.

LUCA
It's fine my dear.

Carter closes the door and scampers inside.

(CONTINUED)

LUCA

You'll have to excuse me while I do
a few calisthenics.

He starts on some knee bends.

CARTER

Of course.

LUCA

Two minutes Mr Carter. Ask your
questions.

The journalist takes out a pencil and pad.

CARTER

Well, Mr D'Angelo ...

LUCA

Luca please, everyone calls me
Luca.

CARTER (CON'T)

Well, I think what the readers most
want to know is ...

LUCA

My inspiring story?

He pauses in the squatting position.

LUCA (CON'T)

How a small, skinny Italian kid
from Brooklyn grew up to be the
best loved celebrity on TV?

He jumps up.

LUCA (CON'T)

That is a tale.

CARTER

I'm sure it is.

Luca place his hands on his hips and commences on some side
twists.

CARTER (CON'T)

But what I really would like to ask
is how ...

(CONTINUED)

LUCA
How I did it?

CARTER
Er, well...

LUCA
It all began when I saw my first Charles Atlas advertisement you see. In just seven days... You know how it goes. Well, let me tell you, that inspired me, and like Atlas, by the time I was twenty I had carved myself a perfect, muscular body from the granite of hard work, will power and determination. As you may know I was voted best physique four years in a row by Muscle Magazine. They stopped running that competition because of me.

CARTER
Amazing.

Luca stops his side twists.

He places both hands together and starts squeezing the palms, one against the other. He does this for two second bursts at a time.

LUCA
Great for the pecs, this one.

CARTER
I can see, yes. Would it be possible to ...

LUCA
Get back to my story, of course. Well, I knew then I wanted to devote my life to the world of health and fitness. But I didn't know how exactly. I'd started my own gym, but it wasn't quite me. I'd already developed my own system by that time you see, one that didn't require special equipment.

CARTER
Like Atlas?

Luca's nose wrinkles.

(CONTINUED)

LUCA

My system is far superior, muscle against muscle and calisthenics are all very well, that's all dynamic tension is, you know. I also use visualized resistance and isometrics to sculpt the perfect human being.

He gazes over at Sara.

LUCA (CON'T)

Then I met this beautiful creature.

Sara waves a hand as if to bat the foolish comment away.

SARA

Luca, please.

LUCA

Sara heard of my system and came to see me. She suggested we start our own fitness industry. She convinced me we should focus on people who didn't like the gym, and who wanted strong muscles without lifting weights or the injuries that come with them. So I sold my gym, Sara borrowed a couple of thousand from an aunt, and together we launched The D'Angelo Way. It started out as a mail order course but grew from there.

CARTER

That's a very inspiring story.

LUCA

It is. And you know something else?

CARTER

What's that?

LUCA

As of today the Super Luca D'Angelo Show has gone to number one. Isn't that right, my dear?

SARA

Be sure to put that in your article, Mr Carter.

(CONTINUED)

CARTER
Oh, I will.

SARA
And that is your couple of minutes
I believe.

LUCA (CON'T)
It's time for my run. Atlas used to
do five miles every other day.

CARTER
I remember reading that, yes.

LUCA
I do ten, every day.

CARTER
There is something else I'd like to
ask you, if you don't mind.

SARA
I think you have enough Mr Carter.

CARTER
Your age.

SARA
No more questions.

CARTER
Is it really true that you're sixty
nine?

LUCA
Indeed it is. I'm seventy next
month.

Carter ticks something off on his pad.

CARTER
Thank you. The answer though only
prompts another question.

Sara places her dog aside.

CARTER (CON'T)
Last one, I promise.

SARA
Get rid of him.

(CONTINUED)

LUCA

It's fine, my dear. Ask your question.

CARTER (CON'T)

How do you maintain such an incredibly youthful appearance?

LUCA

Healthy living, plain and simple.

CARTER

Are you aware Mr D'Angelo...

LUCA

Luca.

CARTER

Are you aware that many doctors and gerontologists have stated it's impossible for you to look as you do at your age? In fact, some have pointed out that you actually appear younger now than you did some years ago.

LUCA

The D'Angelo Way has kept the years at bay. A specialized fitness regime along with my patented nutritional supplements.

He holds up a finger.

LUCA (CON'T)

Don't grow old, grow young.

CARTER

But Mr D'Angelo.

LUCA

Luca.

CARTER

But Luca, are you really telling me ...

SARA

That's enough.

LUCA

Let's set this man right first, darling. Let me tell you how I defy
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LUCA (cont'd)
the aging process. I begin every day with a hundred push ups, sit ups and a quick warm up. That shocks the body into a youthful vitality, as you will read in my books. Next, I commence with what I call 'Lucation' which can erase all blemishes and lines from the skin.

He slaps his hands to his forehead and begins massaging.

SARA
Luca, stop.

LUCA
Like so, and then I commence with the areas under the lower lids.

He massages just beneath his eyes.

LUCA (CON'T)
Then the neck and finally the cheeks.

He runs a hand under his neck, kneading the flesh like bread dough.

Then he taps his cheeks in a circular pattern.

LUCA
And finally, to shock the cells of the skin into rejuvenating themselves...

He slaps both cheeks.

He freezes.

CARTER
Mr D.. I mean Luca?

He looks at Sara.

LUCA
Is he okay?

As if to answer his question the front part of Luca's face swings open. Behind it is a computer board of flashing lights and miniature circuits.

(CONTINUED)

SARA

Oh dear.

She reaches for her handbag and pulls out a cigarette packet and lighter.

SARA (CON'T)

How embarrassing.

She slides a cigarette from its packet and places it to her lips.

SARA (CON'T)

Now you know our little secret.

For some moments Carter simply stares in shock.

Then he smiles.

CARTER

I knew it.

He snaps the pencil in his excitement.

CARTER (CON'T)

I knew there was a story here. I have a nose for this type of thing. This scoop is going to put me on the map.

Sara lights the cigarette.

SARA

Believe it or not, the real Luca was even more conceited. And he really did think he could hold back time with that system of his.

CARTER

When did he ...I mean when did it happen?

Sara takes a long draw on her cigarette.

SARA

Three years ago, after one of his famous beach runs, like he said, ten miles, not five like Atlas. He had a massive heart attack almost as soon as he stepped through the door.

Her expression darkens.

(CONTINUED)

SARA (CON'T)

We'd just landed the deal to stream his show. I'd worked too hard to let it all just come crashing down.

Carter studies the android.

CARTER

This thing's amazing. It looks so real, I mean when the face isn't hanging off.

SARA

I have rich and very powerful investors Mr Carter, ones who can make this sort of thing happen.

She takes another puff on the cigarette.

SARA (CON'T)

Now, how much will it take to ensure your, shall we say 'discretion' in this matter?

CARTER

You want me to keep my mouth shut?

He shakes his head.

CARTER (CON'T)

Lady, there ain't enough money in the world. You and your droid husband are going to make me famous.

He puts his hat on and turns to head for the door.

CARTER (CON'T)

Been a pleasure, a real pleasure.

SARA

That wasn't really the answer I was hoping for.

She reaches into her handbag again.

This time she pulls out a futuristic looking laser blaster.

She aims it directly at Carter.

CARTER

Hey, wait a minute. You can't just shoot me, not here.

(CONTINUED)

SARA

This is an energy weapon. One blast of concentrated beam and there won't be a body for me to worry about.

CARTER (CON'T)

Okay, you make a strong point. Listen, I was a little hasty. I see that now. Maybe we could work out some sort of a deal.

The weapon doesn't waver.

CARTER (CON'T)

I could even be useful to you.

SARA

How so?

CARTER

For a start I could write Luca's biography. Just tell me what to say. We'll make it a glowing tribute.

SARA

The authorized Luca D'Angelo biography is coming out next month. Advanced orders are already into six figures.

CARTER

Okay, how about this? Lots of journalists have rubbished the D'Angelo Way. I could become its champion. I write up an article saying Luca's system is legit and the greatest thing ever and you get it published in Fabulous People Magazine and all the other rags I got pull with.

Sara looks the reporter up and down.

SARA

Perhaps you could. You could become a sort of champion for us.

She hits a control on the blaster.

(CONTINUED)

SARA (CON'T)
Thank you Mr Carter, that is most helpful.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

Luca D'Angelo stands once again before his adoring audience.

LUCA
But don't just take my word for it.
I've brought someone out here
today, someone to tell you about
their own experience.

He wraps an arm around Carter. The reporter is now clad in t-shirt and shorts.

LUCA (CON'T)
Look at this guy. Mr Carl Carter came to do an interview with me a few months back and was so impressed he signed up for my full package. Within a month he lost thirty pounds in body fat, in two had the metabolism of a twenty five-year old and in three had developed a thick coat of muscle all over his body.

Carter obligingly flexes his arms for the crowd.

LUCA (CON'T)
This guy also used to wear glasses, but because of the rejuvenating properties of my supplements he now enjoys twenty-twenty vision.

The audience claps.

Luca turns to Carter.

LUCA (CON'T)
Why don't you tell everyone how you feel since learning about the D'Angelo Way?

Carter gives a beaming smile.

(CONTINUED)

CARTER
I'll tell you how I feel.

The audience is hushed as they wait for the revelation.

The front row leans forward.

CARTER
Like a new man.

FADE OUT