

KARMA COIN

By Dave McClain

A young married woman with more than romance on her mind  
gets a lesson in reaping what she sows.

FADE IN:

INT. - A HALLWAY IN A HOUSE - NIGHT

A young man and woman, DOUGLAS AND LISA, dressed in wedding attire, stand outside a closed door in the hallway of an expensive-looking home. Douglas looks nerdy. Lisa is pretty. She has on her arm an expensive purse with purple flowers.

DOUGLAS

Welcome to my... OUR home, wife.

LISA

It's nice to be in OUR home, husband.

DOUGLAS

I REALLY like the sound of that.

LISA

You know what? I do too!

DOUGLAS

Well, are you ready to go inside?

LISA

I can't believe you're finally going to show it to me!

DOUGLAS

I really appreciate you being so patient while we were dating. I've never shown it to anyone before, but, well, we're married now. What's mine is yours.

LISA

Let's do it! If you make me wait one more minute, I'm going to scream!

DOUGLAS

Okay. Here goes nothing...

Douglas unlocks and opens the heavy wooden door and steps into a darkened room. He turns on the lights. Lisa enters.

LISA

Wow! It's bigger than I expected!

DOUGLAS

Well, I usually have several projects going on at any one time.

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DOUGLAS (cont'd)

Not all of them bear fruit, but the ones that worked out paid for most of what I own - and our fancy wedding.

Lisa quietly wanders around the tables and benches in Douglas' laboratory, picking up his various inventions.

LISA

What's this one?

DOUGLAS

That's my Lost-and-Remote, my first big success. It picks up sound waves. When you clap your hands, it beeps. Never lose your remote again!

LISA

That's pretty cool. What about this?

DOUGLAS

Oh, that one literally paid for this house. It's my life monitor. You wear it like a wrist watch and it monitors all your vital signs. If your heart rate goes too high or your blood sugar gets too low, it sends a text message to any cell phone number.

LISA

Oh, yeah! My grandma had one of those! So... what's this coin-looking thing?

Lisa opens a clear box on the far corner of the work bench and takes out a small shiny red and black round flat object.

DOUGLAS

That...that's one of my few failures. I was trying to make the world a better place. Too ambitious, I guess.

LISA

How could this little thing do that?

DOUGLAS

It's meant to be carried in a pocket or purse. When you did a good deed, it was supposed to pick up on a complex set of physiological outputs which would trigger similar responses in people you'd come in contact with.

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LISA

In other words, when you feel good,  
people around you would feel good.

DOUGLAS

Yes, and they would want to feel more  
of what they were feeling.

LISA

So, you do good deeds and others want  
to do nice things to you! Like Karma!

DOUGLAS

Exactly! I called it a PIF.

LISA

PIF?

DOUGLAS

Positive Integrated Feedback Device

LISA

How about... Karma Coin?

DOUGLAS

Call it what you like. I could never  
get it to work anyway. It was  
supposed to vibrate when it sensed  
positive bio-metrics, but I couldn't  
get it to do a damned thing.

LISA

Well, I think it's a nice idea. And  
it's so pretty!

DOUGLAS

You can have it if you want it. Who  
knows? It might bring you good luck.

LISA

Thank you, sweetheart. I'll put it  
right in the coin pouch in my purse.  
I never put coins in there anyway, so  
my little Karma Coin will always be  
there, bringing me good luck.

Lisa puts Douglas' invention in her purse's coin pouch and  
zips it closed. She smiles at Douglas and gives him a hug.

DOUGLAS

I love to see you smile.

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LISA

Well, you're going to see me frown if we're late for our flight and miss that fancy Caribbean cruise you promised me.

Douglas and Lisa laugh and embrace.

INT. OFFICE MEETING ROOM - DAY

SUPER: TWO YEARS LATER

Douglas and Lisa sit at separate tables in a courtroom. Next to Douglas sits MS. LEE, a tall woman in a business suit. Next to Lisa sits MR. KERR, a large man in a jacket and tie. Sitting in the front of the courtroom is JUDGE PONCE.

Douglas glares at Lisa, but she seems unconcerned. The other three people at the table shuffle papers, until Judge Ponce straightens her papers and begins speaking.

JUDGE PONCE

About these pictures...

MS. LEE

Your honor, my client has photos which prove that Mrs. Clark was engaged in...

JUDGE PONCE

Counselor, this is a no-fault divorce state. Now, there is an offer on the table. Does your client wish to proceed?

MS. LEE

Yes, your honor.

JUDGE PONCE

Mr. Kerr, your client is waving her rights to proceeds from the sale of the house where the couple lived together before separating, correct?

MR. KERR

Yes, your honor. She also waives her right to any alimony payments, in exchange for that single payment of two million dollars.

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MS. LEE

Your honor, that seems excessive,  
given that most of Mr. Clark's assets  
were accumulated before the marriage.

DOUGLAS

(whispers to Ms. Lee)

I need my lab! I need that house and  
she knows it!

Ms. Lee whispers to Douglas, who gets more agitated.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)

(whispering harshly)

Just give her what she wants before  
she bleeds me completely dry.

Ms. Lee sighs, looks at Douglas and then at Judge Ponce.

MS. LEE

Yes, your honor, my client agrees.

JUDGE PONCE

Fine. Pending the signing and  
notarizing of the proper paperwork,  
as required by law, I declare this  
marriage dissolved as of 4 p.m.  
today.

MR. KERR

Thank you, your honor.

MS. LEE

Yes, thank you, your honor.

As Judge Ponce writes something on her paperwork, everyone  
gathers their papers and heads for the door. In the hallway,  
Lisa walks quickly and whispers while passing Douglas.

LISA

Have fun with your dumb-ass  
inventions, loser.

Lisa smirks as she continues walking. Douglas slows his pace  
and looks dejected. Lisa's purse hangs from her arm.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Lisa walks a small dog at the end of an expensive-looking  
leash. Lisa is wearing high-end clothes and jewelry. Her  
cell phone rings. She gets it from her purse and answers it.

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LISA

Oh, hi, Mr. Kerr... Yes, I did already sign the papers on the new house... WHAT?! Bankruptcy?! He can't do that!... So that check he wrote me... NO! NO! So I get nothing?!?... I can't wait that long! What am I supposed to do now, you asshole!?

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

SUPER: TWO MONTHS LATER

Lisa is walking down a city street pushing a shopping cart. Her purse sits in the front of the cart, dirtier than before. She is wearing raggedy old clothes and has blankets and miscellaneous other items inside the cart.

Lisa stops at a crosswalk. She sees a heavy-set WOMAN standing next to her, struggling with large shopping bags.

LISA

(muttering to herself)  
Jesus H Christ.

Lisa sees the woman about to step off the curb, as a car is speeding up to get through the intersection before the light turns red. She pulls the woman backwards by her coat collar.

WOMAN

Oh, God. Oh, my God! Thank you!

LISA

Whatever. Just be more careful.

Lisa moves to step off the curb to cross the street, but the woman keeps talking, pointing to Lisa's clothes.

WOMAN

Oooh! You must be cold in that! And winter's coming!

The woman reaches into one of her oversized shopping bags and pulls out a thick coat. She hands it to Lisa.

WOMAN (cont'd)

Here, take this. It was a gift, but it's too small for me. I was just heading to the store to exchange it, but I think you could use it more than I can use a store credit.

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The woman puts the coat over Lisa's shoulders.

WOMAN (cont'd)  
There. That's better.

Lisa looks at the coat, at the woman and back at the coat. She slowly puts her arms in the coat's sleeves.

LISA  
(speaking quietly)  
Thank you.

WOMAN  
You're quite welcome. And thank you so much for what you did for me!

The woman looks at Lisa's purse. A vibrating sound is coming from it.

WOMAN (cont'd)  
I think your cell phone is ringing.

LISA  
I don't have a cell phone anymore.

WOMAN  
Of course. I'm sorry. Well, thanks again. You take care now. Bye.

The woman walks the other way. Lisa opens her purse and the vibrating sound grows louder. She unzips her coin pouch and takes out her Karma Coin. It vibrates again, then stops.

LISA  
Holy shit.

LISA buttons the coat, puts the coin in the pocket and crosses the street.

EXT. - CITY STREET - DAY

Lisa is sitting on a bench rubbing her foot. She sees a MAN in a suit running towards a waiting cab. The man's wallet falls out of his pocket. She stands up and yells at the man.

LISA  
Hey, mister! Your wallet!

Lisa points at the wallet, but the man doesn't look. He doesn't seem to hear her. She jumps up and runs toward man. She picks up the wallet off of the sidewalk and catches up to the man just as he is about to close the taxi door.

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LISA (cont'd)  
You dropped this.

Lisa hands the man the wallet. He looks at it and at her. His eyes grow wide. The man takes the wallet from Lisa.

MAN  
Wow! Thank you! That's very nice of you. I just cashed a check! There's hundreds of dollars in here!

The man pauses, then opens the wallet, takes out two \$20 bills and hands them to Lisa.

MAN (cont'd)  
For your trouble - and your honesty.

LISA  
Oh, that's not really...

MAN  
I insist. Seems the least I could do.

LISA  
Thanks. Thanks a lot.

The man nods at Lisa, shuts the car door and the taxi drives away. Lisa again hears the coin vibrating. She puts her hand over her coat pocket and smiles as she puts the money away.

Lisa starts pushing her cart down the street, but stops at a newspaper stand in front of a store. She pauses, then looks through the glass at one of the newspapers. The headline reads, "LOCAL INVENTOR JUMPS FROM BRIDGE, DIES".

LISA (cont'd)  
Goddammit! That stupid idiot! That dumb-ass son-of-a-bitch LOSER!!

Lisa walks the streets aimlessly, as it starts to get dark. She turns down an alley and hears a commotion coming from the back door of a small shop. She looks through a small window and sees a man waving a handgun at someone inside.

Lisa pats her coat pocket as she looks around. She sees no one. Then she sees a police car slowly driving down the street at the far end of the alley. She starts to run, but she is grabbed from behind and pushed against a brick wall.

ROGER  
Well, well, well! What do we have here, Lamar?

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LAMAR

Looks like some nosy do-gooder  
homeless bitch to me!

ROGER

Nah, man. She ain't homeless. Look at  
the coat she wearin'. My momma ain't  
got a coat that nice.

LAMAR

Shit, Roger! There's probably some  
nice stuff in that nice coat!

ROGER

Show us what's in them pockets, lady.

LISA

No.

ROGER

The fuck you say to me?

LAMAR

I think she said you no, man. Fact, I  
think she called you a bitch.

LISA

Hey, I didn't call nobody nothin'.  
Listen, I don't want no...

LAMAR

No what? You don't want none of this?

Lamar starts slapping LISA. Roger grabs her and throws her  
to the ground. Both men remove her coat and start going  
through the pockets.

ROGER

Check it! I got me forty bucks!

Lamar looks through the pocket on his side of the coat and  
pulls out the Karma Coin. He looks at it every which way.

LAMAR

Well, I got me... some damn coin  
thing. The fuck is this, lady?

LISA

Nothing. A keepsake. It's nothing.

LAMAR

Yeah, looks like nothing.

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Lamar throws the Karma Coin on the ground in front of Lisa and crushes it under the heel of his boot. Lisa screams.

LISA

Nooooooooo!

LAMAR

Huh! Maybe it was something after all.

Roger picks up the coat from the ground and tucks it under his arm. He and Lamar walk away laughing. Lisa desperately gathers the pieces of her Karma Coin and tries to fit them back together, but drops them in frustration.

ROGER

The thing sure was pretty though!

Roger and Lamar's laughter continues, but fades as they get further down the alley. Lisa cries over the pieces of her shattered Karma Coin.

EXT. - LONELY ALLEY - DAY

Lisa, now an old woman with long, dirty gray hair, pushes a shopping cart down the street. In the front of the cart is an old purse with the faded outlines of flowers on the sides. She walks down the alley in silence. The only sound is the cart's squeaking wheels and laughter in the distance.

FADE OUT