

DOUGLAS

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BOOTH

PLAYING BIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERS IN BBC DOCUMENTARIES WILL BE A THING OF THE PAST FOR THIS HOLLYWOOD-DESTINED ACTOR

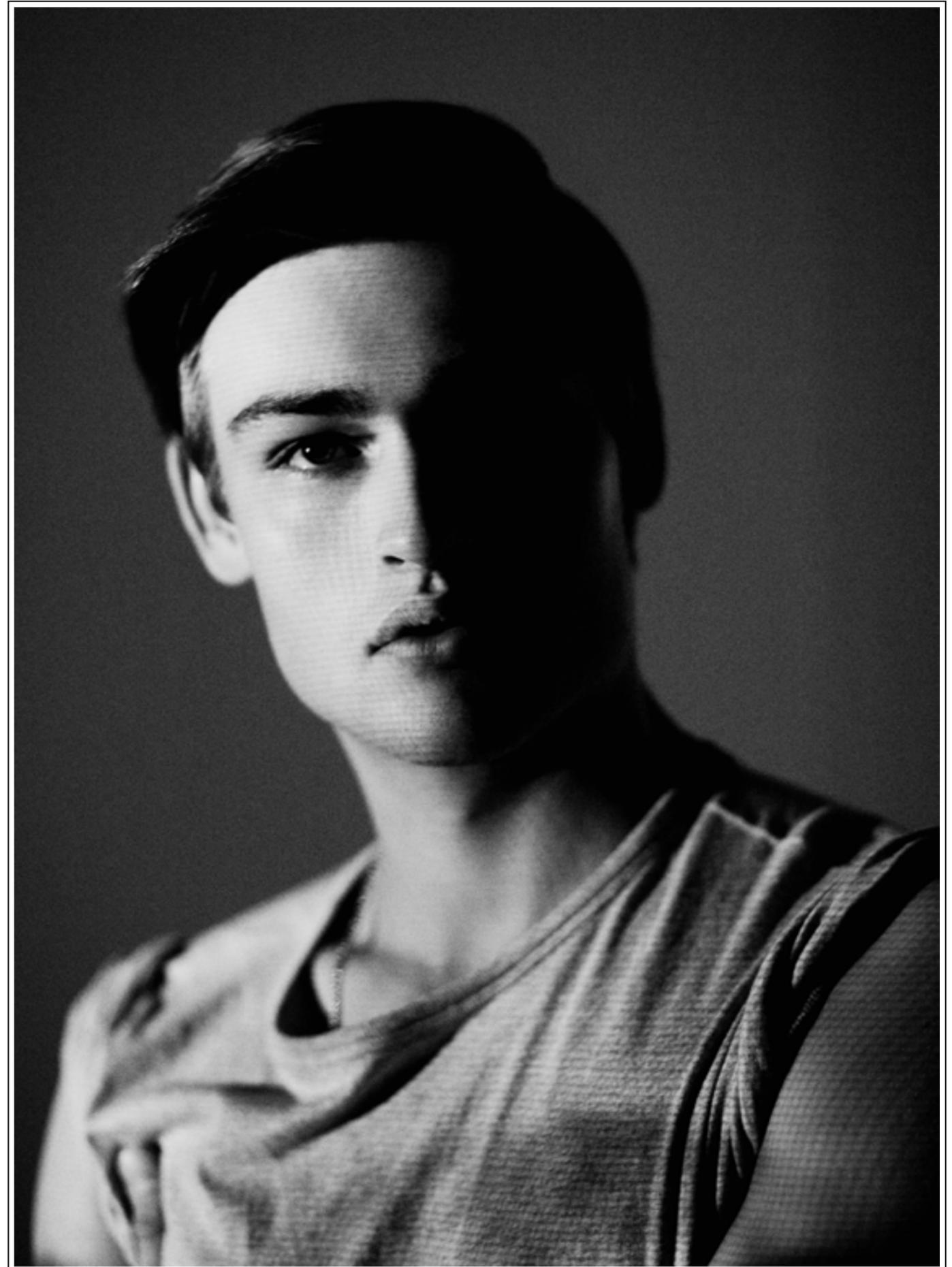
From the outside, Douglas Booth's life appears to have been kissed by providence. Blessed with preposterously exotic features, he looks genetically engineered for stardom. Raised in relative ease and comfort (his father's a banker: "Yes, I have to whisper that"), he's barely 18 yet ensconced on a trajectory that seems destined to take him to those proverbial 'places'. Even without the inevitable Robert Pattinson comparisons, anyone touched by the green-eyed monster could find reason to dismiss him.

No need for that, though, because Booth's outwardly charmed life has yielded an innately charming person. Meeting him at Shoreditch House for lunch following *Wonderland's* photo shoot, he brims with self-belief but wears it lightly – (unlike some celebs who bring on the mockney to disguise privileged pasts). And, with his thoroughly mesmerising and convincing portrayal of Boy George in BBC2's *Worried About The Boy* earlier this year, he revealed proper talent to match his model-worthy looks.

"I was a bit oblivious," admits Booth, who grew up in Sevenoaks and fell into youth theatre after his dyslexia ruled out academic success. "I went to the audition thinking, 'Can I really look like him?' But it was a blessing... and a brave choice for my first lead." Booth was 17 when he played Boy George, portraying him at two ages – the flamboyant, pre-fame squat-dweller and the mid-20s tabloid-hounded smack addict. "I've always looked and behaved older than I am," says the actor. "I didn't start getting cast until I turned 16 but it's been kind of non-stop since then."

Hot on *Worried About The Boy's* heels comes another BBC2 drama, *Christopher And His Kind*, in which Booth portrays gay novelist Christopher Isherwood's Berlin lover. Even with Matt Smith playing Isherwood, Booth hesitated before accepting the role, apprehensive that two gay characters in a row so early in his career might typecast him ("if I was American, I've been told that would be career suicide"). But having now shared a bed with Matthew Horne (Jon Moss to his George O'Dowd) and locked lips with *Dr. Who*, he's about to steal Miley Cyrus' virginity in the coming-of-age comedy *LOL: Laughing Out Loud* – something that's sure to put the frighteners up Hannah Montana's fanbase. In Booth's first scene with the superstar, his character can't get it up, although writer-director Lisa Azuelos shot a more robust, fantasy version for the worst-case scenario pictured by Cyrus'

Cotton T-shirt by MARGARET HOWELL





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onscreen mum (Demi Moore). “Miley’s mum was there... I was like, ‘This is awkward,’” cringes Booth. “But Miley said, ‘I’m offended. You have sex with a man in a phone box [in *Worried About The Boy*] but you’re too embarrassed with me?’”

Cyrus might not have felt as chirpy following the tabloid maelstrom, in which she was said to be dumping beau Liam Hemsworth after being snapped with her co-star (shooting scenes for *LOL*, it must be said). “We’re friends but we are most certainly not dating,” Booth vows. Hanging out in Cyrus’ circle has given him a glimpse at mega-fame. “I hope I’m judged for what I can do on screen rather than who I frolic with,” he avers. “I saw an interview with Liam Hemsworth and it started with ‘Mr. Miley Cyrus’. I’m no one’s Mr. Anything, I’m Douglas Booth.”

That he is, and without doubt we’ll be hearing more from him. He’s spending a month in LA this winter seeking out the next game-changer, with his eye on two projects: *The Hunger Games*, based on a series of young-adult novels about post-apocalyptic teen gladiators that’s reaching *Twilight*-levels of popularity, and *The Spectacular Now*, an indie drama about a teen alcoholic being steered by the screenwriting duo behind *(500) Days Of Summer*. “It’s a great role, I’m going to campaign hard for it...”

“I have to be sensible because after *LOL* comes out I’m probably going to be offered 10 similar movies,” he continues. “I’m not being bigheaded but I want to be an actor like Will Smith who has the freedom to play anyone...”

*Short sleeve shirt and cotton trousers by HUGO.
Left: Knitted jumper by FRANKLIN & MARSHALL.
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Make-up KEN NAKANO using MAC, Fashion Assistance FRANCESCA PRUDENTE,
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