

# **The Cost of success:**

A Blood Magic short

Screenplay by DL Morris

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM — MORNING**

Sterile. Pale sunlight through frosted windows. Machines hum softly.

ANANASTASIA (30s), fierce even in vulnerability, lies in bed — heavily pregnant. KAIDA MORWEN (40s), severe in a dark military coat, stands over her like a judge weighing a verdict.

Anastasia rubs her belly, voice low.

ANASTASIA

Celibacy was the easiest vow to make. It was never meant to... end like this.

Kaida's expression doesn't soften — but her eyes narrow with calculation.

KAIDA

When one never intends a child, the Order becomes useful leverage. (beat) This— complication —can be made to have never happened.

Anastasia's jaw tightens. She shakes her head.

ANASTASIA

She shouldn't be erased for my mistake.

For a moment Kaida studies her — not with pity, but with interest.

KAIDA

That complicates matters. (pause) But not fatally. You were drugged. Coerced. That much is true.

Anastasia looks away, ashamed.

ANASTASIA

The Order won't see it that way. I've... cleaned up indiscretions before. (pause) How do I reconcile being on the other side of one?

Kaida steps closer, calm and predatory.

KAIDA

That's why I'm here. Say the word.

A long beat.

ANASTASIA

What do you want from this?

Kaida doesn't blink.

KAIDA

A way to resolve situations I'm... legally forbidden to touch. (beat) Do we understand one another?

Anastasia nods, resigned.

ANASTASIA

D'accord.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM — TWO TRIMESTERS LATER**

Anastasia lies awake — no longer pregnant. Kaida enters, colder than before, and drops a thick envelope onto her lap.

ANASTASIA

What is this?

KAIDA

Payment. For your kidney.

We needed a reason to open you surgically — natural birth leaves marks we cannot erase.

Anastasia absorbs that. Fingers the envelope.

ANASTASIA

I heard my cousin Natasha is in town for the ceasefire talks...

KAIDA

(smiles thinly) Among other things. She ought to be resting here, too. I'll need to confirm that.

Anastasia manages a small smile.

ANASTASIA

You'd walk through fire for her.

Kaida turns toward the door.

KAIDA

Get some rest. The Oracle is on her way. (beat) More than your life — or mine — depends on what happens next.

She exits.

**INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE RECOVERY ROOMS — CONTINUOUS**

Kaida steps out — exhausted, brittle.

BAILEY HOLIDAY (20s), flustered, approaches at her summons.

He salutes.

BAILEY

Lady Kaida. I— The surname is actually my wife's—

KAIDA

Whatever. Where is Natasha?

Bailey braces.

BAILEY

That's what no one wants to tell you. (beat)  
An aneurysm. She bled out too fast to save.

Kaida's fist SMASHES into the plaster wall — leaving a crater.

KAIDA

My best friend is dead. She was supposed to live!

Bailey swallows, steadying himself.

BAILEY

If I could bring her back, I—

KAIDA

(sharp) Enough. The boy?

Bailey flinches.

BAILEY

Breech. Cord around the neck. NICU tried— but...

Kaida's nostrils flare. Bailey braces for violence.

BAILEY

The girl survived. Underweight for the gestation length  
we reported, but alive.

Kaida closes her eyes — a single tremor of relief.

KAIDA

Congratulate Natalia on the continuation of her sister's  
line.

Kaida sits heavily on a waiting chair, shaking.

Natalia ROMANOV (30s), fierce and grieving, storms down the hall and corners Bailey.

NATALIA

How is there a newborn female Romanov? My sister  
carried a son!

BAILEY

Sonograms can be mistaken. Lady Kaida sends condolences—

NATALIA  
Males don't carry lines!

BAILEY  
That is all I can say. (beat) Discuss it with Lady Kaida — if you dare.

She shoves past him, marching toward Kaida.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM — SAME TIME**

BRIGIDA (60s), Valkyrie Oracle, regal and lethal, enters Anastasia's room like a wolf.

BRIGIDA  
Have they shown you proper respect during your... recovery?

ANASTASIA  
Yes, Oracle.

Brigida runs a fingertip over the hidden incision — almost tender.

BRIGIDA  
There are substances that can cloud an Oracle's sight. Even suppress it. Their possession warrants execution without trial.

Anastasia doesn't flinch.

BRIGIDA  
Your recovery was... unusually long. Should be too long for certain drugs to linger. (pause) Our enemies must have out done themselves

Silence.

BRIGIDA  
Have you considered your path after this?

ANASTASIA  
Lady Kaida secured my release. She has been without proper protection for too long.

Brigida smiles — cold approval.

BRIGIDA  
Good. The Matriarchy must be shielded. And that one — Kaida — is destined for high places.

She turns to leave.

BRIGIDA

Rest. You will have much to do.

**INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE RECOVERY ROOM — CONTINUOUS**

Kaida rises as Brigida approaches. Defiance and fear flicker in equal measure.

BRIGIDA

Not every day a naughty kitten dares stand tall before me.

KAIDA

I've nothing to hide.

Brigida circles her — a predator sizing up prey.

BRIGIDA

I know exactly what you've done. (beat, soft) The cost of my silence is a single favor. (pause) One I will call in — someday — without warning.

Kaida's jaw clenches.

BRIGIDA

When I speak the word...  
You will obey.  
No questions.  
No conditions.

Kaida forces herself not to bow.

Brigida smiles — victory sealed.

She walks away.

Kaida finally exhales — shattered, cornered, and bound.