

# The Cost of a Dream

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Liz, young and naive, came from the countryside to the city with big dreams. She was a natural beauty, with pretty blonde hair and blue eyes and had been told her entire life she could have been an actress and she was hoping to be discovered and become a huge movie star. But reality proved to be different. The city was full of other ambitious young women with more charisma and confidence than Liz and audition after audition blurred into a series of "No, thank you"s, her hopes dimming with each rejection. Maybe she lacked the connections, or the portfolio, or the sheer beauty, she thought, starting to doubt herself.

Soon, desperate for a foothold, she found herself accepting an agent's help. After a while, he presented her with an uncomfortable proposal. "Would you do anything to succeed in they world?" "Of course!" "Then you should start in adult films" he suggested, an idea that made her flinch. "Porn movies?" "No really, more like third-tier production with a focus on adult scenes. It's a first step, it's easier to get noticed, many actresses took it. Look at them now-famous." She hesitated but didn't want to return home empty-handed. "Maybe you're right," she agreed, her voice soft with doubt. "I'll do it. I don't want to be a failure."

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Make up artists taught her how to highlight her features with heavy makeup. They trimmed her brows, plumped her lips. She barely recognized herself in the mirror, she looked hot, confident. She had to admit she looked much better. Her first roles were as a hot college student who gets invited to a party degenerating into sex scenes. She tried hiding her embarrassment and performed decently well. However, the role of the pretty blonde was a common one but common were also the blonde actresses. And Liz was a bit flat-chested for a main role. She got a few minor parts, but she was not taking off. Certainly not enough to get noticed by an actual movie producer.

Her agent told her bluntly, "Listen, I know this is a bit unexpected but... if you want better roles, more pay, we'll have to alter your appearance. I got a deal: an adult movie offered a big contract including a loan for cosmetic surgeries, to give you an exotic appeal, you'd pay it back through your work." "Exotic appeal?" - she asked. "Why would I want to look more exotic?". "Think about it, being a mysterious brunette would give you the confidence and sexual charisma you lack. And then you could perform more freely on the set. No risk of pictures leaking to your family, your friends with a new look."

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Reluctantly, she agreed, knowing she had no choice.

They began reshaping her look from the ground up. First, they took her blonde hair and sliced it down to a blunt, sleek bob, transforming it into an inky black. She stared at the stranger in the mirror, struggling to recognize herself. It did make her blue eyes pop out more, though. She looked more confident, charismatic. Liz didn't completely like it, but her contract left her with no choice. She was left to stare at her reflection, forced to see herself framed by the dark, severe strands that seemed to belong to someone else entirely.

But they weren't done. Her agent explained that her piercing blue eyes were too striking, too "cold," as they put it, for her new look. "Brown eyes will soften you," he said, indifferent to her protests. "They'll look better on camera. You would have a wider appeal. 80% of the population have brown eyes, did you know that? A large chunk of online audiences are into that!" She fought it. "But my blue eyes—people love them. I love them." He only shrugged. "They have to go. I'm sorry but you have signed a contract!"

With no choice, she endured the procedure.

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A new technique, permanent and irreversible, stained her irises a rich, dark brown that swallowed the icy blue she'd known her whole life. When it was over, she looked into those dark eyes, almost black, the once-vibrant blue lost. Her gaze, warmer and strangely gentle, left her feeling hollow. She spent an evening staring into that new reflection, tears welling at the stranger looking back at her—soft and inviting but, to her, alien. “Oh my God, nobody in my family has brown eyes, I look like Dua Lipa! As if my mum had a daughter with a Mexican man! How can I show up at the next Christmas dinner looking like this?”. “Don’t worry about that now, what matters is that you have beautiful bedroom eyes!” her agent quipped. Liz felt a flush of embarrassment. “I think my eyes looked just fine before!” “Nah, blonde, blue-eyes actresses are out of style nowadays! Your new look rocks!”

Then came the tanning sessions. In keeping with her darker look, the last trace of her original self, her fair skin, deepened to a warm bronze. The naive pretty blonde girl who had come to the city full of hopes was gone, replaced by an alluring stranger with dark hair, dark eyes, and bronzed skin.

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The final touch was permanent makeup. Mainly eyeliner and shadow—a detail meant to add depth and allure, they said. Her brows were reshaped, thickened, and angled, giving her the dramatic look of a Middle Eastern model.

When they started mentioning breast augmentation surgery Liz drew a line. “I’m not doing that to my body”.

Her agent bargained on behalf of the producers. “If you refuse to be augmented in other ways, we’ll need to at list get a lip filler.”

“A lip filler?” Liz asked, desperate. “I don’t want huge lips!”

“It’s a very delicate touch-up. Just a few ccs!”

“Oh God! Ok, fine, but nothing too dramatic, ok?” she conceded reluctantly.

“Great,” he nodded, then leaned over to the beauticians and murmured, “And let’s add some collagen, a little Botox, maybe touch up her nose...”

By the end, her agent took a step back, surveying her with a look of pure satisfaction. “Hmm, looking very exotic!”

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"My cheekbones! My nose! I look like an Arab woman! What have you done to me?" she asked, mourning the loss of her innocent features. "Only a few minor touch-ups, many actresses get botox injections these days!". She'd come to the city hoping to show herself to the world, not to hide behind this plastic Arab beauty. And she looked like a convincing one! Sure, her face was heavily worked on and she felt like everybody could see though that, but the truth was that, other than her heavy makeup and fillers, nobody saw anything weird in her looks and could suspect she was actually a blonde white woman under the layers of melanin and brown pigmentation. Her lips, plumped beyond recognition, barely let her close her mouth fully. She tried to smile, to frown, but her expressions felt tight, frozen. The sparkle in her once-blue eyes was buried under the dark, sultry irises, their brightness muted.

"I can't even smile or frown anymore! How am I supposed to become an actress now?" Her diction itself was slightly hampered by her massive lips.

"Adult movie actresses don't need facial expression," her agent said coldly, shrugging.

"But I don't want to become a pornstar!" Liz cried.

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As she went over her new portfolio, her agent brought up a final change. "The producers said you look perfect. You just need one last thing—a new name. Layla Samaha."

Layla's heart skipped a beat. "A new name?"

"You don't look like a Liz Sanders anymore, that's for sure. And we don't want people digging into your past; it would just lead to... complications. With a name like Layla Samaha, you'll look like who you've become: an Arab new talent, a fresh face with a believable backstory. We'll say you grew up here in the States from an immigrant family. People love that kind of story."

"So, like an artsy pseudonym?"

Her agent shook his head. "No, they're talking about a legal name change."

"What? They can't do that to me!"

He raised an eyebrow. "Actually, they can. It's in the contract; you gave them carte blanche."

Layla opened her mouth, searching for the words, but nothing came. "But... but..."

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Her voice trailed off. What had she gotten herself into? She barely recognized the reflection staring back at her. Now they wanted to take away her name, too? Her agent's gaze was steady, almost indifferent. "Look, this is what you signed up for. Liz got you up to this point. It's time to let her go and embrace your new, better self! You're becoming a star. This is your ticket."

Layla's throat tightened. Letting herself go? She had come to the city full of dreams, yet here she was, slipping further and further away from the person she once was. And the worst part? There was no way back. She stared at the mirror. Liz was nowhere to be found. Even her body language, the way she moved and posed, had started to adapt to the star she was becoming. Maybe he was right. Time to let Liz go. "Ok" - she replied, defeated. "Call me Layla from now on. It will take some time getting used to it!"

Her agent continued, explaining her why her DNA had to be rewritten. "Now, Layla, there are several reasons for this change," her agent explained. "Firstly, to stabilize melatonin production. You wouldn't want to rely on melanin shots forever just to keep that beautiful black hair, brown eyes, and tanned skin."

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"So, I'll always have black hair and tanned skin? Permanently?" Layla asked, scared at the permanence of the change. Her pretty blonde hair would be gone forever, not just hidden under the hair dye.

"I'm afraid so. And there's one more thing, imagine someone wants to prove you're a scam and not who you pretend to be. If they get a DNA sample from a cocktail glass at a party we're screwed."

"I see..." Layla murmured, realizing that this meant her children would also be Arab or mixed-Arab by genetics. Her entire lineage would permanently lose its original whiteness. Her family was very proud of their English and German ancestry. Now, that would lead to a difficult conversation. She thought about calling her family, updating them on what she'd become. But where would she even start? And maybe, it was already too late.

She woke up from the procedure with Arab blood coursing through her veins. The first changes she noticed were how her pubic hair also turned black, and her natural aroma took a new scent. What her agent hadn't mentioned were some of the subtler effects, like a slight increase in her libido.

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Within a few months, Layla was attracting no small amount of attention, mostly due to her unique appearance. Her agent was quick to position her as a “Mia Khalifa 2.0,” explaining that she had the perfect profile for success in the new era of streaming, where audiences were willing to pay subscriptions for more elaborate productions. “You could have the luxury of a movie star without the grind of traditional acting,” he explained. She went along with it, adjusting to the role and amassing a dedicated fanbase. At first, it wasn’t easy, but she learned the nuances of playing the passionate lover, the coy sub, or even the domineering partner. Sex scenes became more and more second nature to her. The shy, reserved girl who would blush for a kiss would now have sex with multiple men every week without batting an eye. Yet, as her fame grew, so did her desire to step out on her own. She eventually expressed a desire to set out on her own and begin building her own career. At that moment, however, she was reminded that her debt for the extensive cosmetic surgeries remained unpaid. Yet, seeing her growing ambition and appeal, her agent made her an enticing proposal: he had talked with the producers and they offered her to star as the female lead in a history blockbuster they were producing. If she did so, she could work off her debt.

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Layla was thrilled, feeling like this was her chance to break away from her past in adult films. She could hardly believe it; she'd be portraying a powerful female Pharaoh, a true sovereign, in a serious production. It was the break she'd been waiting for, the path toward the career she had dreamed of from the start.

Layla arrived at the fitting session, excited to try on the costumes and makeup for the new role, she got wavy black hair extension, makeup and a Egyptian pharaoh outfit but midway through, the wardrobe and makeup team paused, exchanging hesitant glances. After a brief discussion, they explained, with some embarrassment, that she was missing a bit of the "physical presence" needed for the part. "You see, other actresses are also interested in the role... and they, well, they have the assets to fill it out," they stammered. They were referring to her breasts.

Afterward, her agent pulled her aside, gently broaching the topic of breast augmentation. "It's really not a big deal these days," he said, his voice smooth and reassuring. "Most actresses have them done, and they'll look completely natural." He went on, explaining how this final touch could secure her the role and enhance her on-screen presence. Layla felt a pang of conflict—she'd already changed so much, had compromised herself so many times. But after a long pause, she gave in, nodding reluctantly.

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Layla sat in the waiting room, fidgeting as she heard her new name called out. She felt like everybody was staring at her because she looked plastic. Truth was, men generally stared at her because she was hot and the women because they were envious. Well, she was so hot she even awoke a bisexual side in some young women.

“Layla Samaha?” The nurse’s voice snapped her back to the present. She still wasn’t used to her new name and hesitated a beat before standing up. “Yeah, that’s me, sorry!”

Entering the procedure room, she was greeted by her surgeon’s practiced smile. He explained the details, reassuring her there would be no visible scars and that, despite the substantial augmentation, the results would look “perfectly natural”. Layla gulped, looking at the size of the implants. She was already a plastic beauty, why bothering so much about one more surgery? She tried to relax as anesthesia was administered to her, realizing she would wake up as a busty Arab model with plump lips. She wondered if there would be anything left to recognize once she opened her eyes again.

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A few weeks later, Layla returned for her costume fitting, now painfully aware of the weight of her new silicone-enhanced breasts bouncing around at every move. "I have the body of a big-breasted bimbo, my movements are all off" - she told herself. Her producer however nodded approvingly as she entered in the skimpy outfit. Her producer looked her over, nodding approvingly as she stood there in the skimpy costume. "Much better," he remarked, eyes glinting as he took in the changes. "You're really filling that top now!"

"Uh, thanks," Layla murmured, feeling a surge of insecurity as she tugged at the top, acutely aware of how exposed her augmented chest was. She cleared her throat, eager to change topic. "I went over the script while I was in the hospital. There were a few things I'd like to discuss..."

But her suggestion was met with a dismissive wave. "We're already on a tight schedule. Just share your ideas as we go, alright?" Layla forced a smile, swallowing her disappointment, as she prepared herself to take direction without question.

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Layla stepped on the set, catching everybody's attention, with her curves in full display.

She immediately noticed something was off. For the first scene, she was seated on a throne, portraying the regal character she had envisioned. She tried hiding her breasts with her arms, but the costume left little to the imagination. One of her guards entered, an actor she recognized immediately. "Wait, you're here too?" she asked, unable to hide her surprise.

He shrugged. "The pay's good. Figured I'd give something different a try."

He wasn't the only one. Many of the actors and extras starring in the movie were her colleagues from the adult movie industry. She had personally had sex with a good half of them, if not more. "Oh shit" - she thought - "Why does this feel more like an expensive set for a porn movie? The actors, the costumes, everything is so over sexualized!"

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A few scenes in, she read the next part of the script and felt a jolt. Her character was to be “rescued” from a snake by one of her guards, whom she would then reward with an explicit sex scene. The guard was another former co-star, and they had filmed together before in similar situations.

Concerned, she approached the producer. “I was just... surprised. I thought this was a historical film. Why the explicit scenes?”

The producer barely looked up. “This was never going to be a family movie, Layla. You’ve seen Babylon, right? Sex sells, and blockbuster films are no exception.”

Layla hesitated, biting her lip. “I get that, but wouldn’t a queen reward a rescuer in other ways? Like a golden necklace, or some land... This sends a rushed message to young women... it feels a little off, don’t you think?”

The producer's face hardened. “We’re keeping it as is. This is the role, Layla. Stick to the script, alright?”

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Her concerns brushed aside, Layla took a steadying breath, trying to push her reservations away. She had come too far to back down now, but the price of this success suddenly felt steeper than ever.

In character, Layla transformed into the part of the seductive queen, a woman with insatiable desires, eager to please the men around her. She flirted with her guard, her voice low and suggestive, promising him in reward “A flower few men get to touch” she purred, smirking. The tension crackled between them, and before she knew it, she was letting herself be led, almost dragged, to the royal bedroom. There, she surrendered completely, her character’s desires on full display as she begged him to take her. As they filmed the scene, Layla felt a wave of shame, a part of her recoiling. But there was a strange realization lurking beneath that discomfort: it came to her so naturally. She had been playing these roles for so long that slipping into this persona required little effort, her body responding to the cues without a second thought.

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“Hmm, I will guide you to... victory!” - Layla called out, her voice wavering slightly as she rode forward in a skimpy warrior costume that clung to her body. The outfit was absurd, its intricate but revealing details making her look more like a concubine than a leader. The skimpy thong she'd been instructed to wear made the experience all the more uncomfortable, the saddle pressing against her labia as she rode the horse in a way that was distracting and almost humiliating.

The fact that dozens of muscular, half-naked men were standing around her, their glistening bodies poised with weapons, didn't help. Layla tried to focus, but the entire set felt more like a high-budget adult film than the historical epic she'd once imagined. Deep down, a part of her that had grown in recent months wondered when the next sex scene would be. She had grown a taste for the idea of being taken by strong men while on camera, while another part of her hated it, feeling her dignity slip further with each indulgence in her role.

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Following a crushing defeat in battle, the script called for Layla's character—the proud queen—to become the bride of a Nubian chief in a political marriage, a bond forged to secure peace between their warring nations. She stood before her people, her voice steady but resigned. "I will sacrifice myself for the good of my people," she declared, her face a mask of noble determination.

Yet, as she was led to the ceremonial tent where the marriage would be consummated, the lines between her character and herself blurred. The role required her to embrace the chief with submission, to yield entirely for the sake of the storyline. With each line, each scripted glance, she felt herself sinking further into the persona they had created for her. She was no longer the strong, ambitious woman she had once aspired to be; instead, she was a queen sacrificing herself, body and soul, for a kingdom.

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As she was guided into the tent, reality and fiction became inseparable. The script called for her to submit, to yield for the sake of peace, each exchange and every choreographed gesture pulling her deeper into a role that felt suffocating. She felt the symbolic weight of it—her ambition as an actress diminished, overshadowed by the character she embodied: a queen offering herself, body and soul, to safeguard a kingdom.

Her former role as a powerful pharaoh was now reduced to that of a glorified concubine. The scenes called for more than she was prepared to offer—marriage to an enemy chief who kept her as a queen in name but without true authority. Her purpose had narrowed to producing an heir, one who would tie the new ruler to Egypt's legacy and serve as a bridge for a bid to claim the throne.

Layla had once dreamed of playing strong, inspiring female characters who were symbols of resilience, not to play the part of a woman whose only talent is to sleep around with every man of power she encounters, looking like a teenage boy's wet dream.

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The plot took a dramatic turn as Layla's character, the once-proud Egyptian queen, found herself reduced to the role of a consort queen for the enemy's chief—a calculated political maneuver to strengthen his claim to the throne of Egypt. Stripped of her agency, her only purpose became clear: to produce a son, a bloodline heir tied to both ruling factions, who could serve as a pawn in her husband's ambitious bid for power.

And so it happened, with the queen getting pregnant after long sessions of lovemaking. The makeup artists outdid themselves, transforming Layla's toned, sculpted physique to appear as though she was truly carrying a child. The prosthetics were flawless, capturing the rounded weight and taut skin of pregnancy in a way that was hauntingly realistic.

However, the story did not linger on maternal bonds or childhood milestones.

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Layla returned to the screen as the queen, aged gracefully to appear in her 40s through the expert touch of makeup and prosthetics. Her character made a triumphant return to the land she once ruled, now standing by her son's side as he ascended to the throne. The boy, now a teenager, bore the striking features of his mixed heritage. Once the powerful pharaoh who ruled with unmatched authority, she now stood as the wife of the enemy chief and the mother of a foreign conqueror. The scene painted a stark contrast to her former glory; her presence was both symbolic and tragic.

Flanked by Nubian warriors, they entered the palace, his every move watched by those who knew he was little more than a puppet, manipulated by his powerful father and an ambitious court. The queen, once fierce and sovereign, now took her place in a ceremonial role, her influence confined to symbols and tradition.