

ACQUISITIONS

by
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Apologies up front for not being able to add notes inside the script. I tried to cut and paste and reformat this in a document I could edit (instead of the PDF provided) but I couldn't make it work without the tabs getting funky and I didn't think it was cool to make your script look ugly.

So everything is at the front and back.

Okay, with that over, this is a really well done script. It's snappy and the panel descriptions are solid. It was definitely one of the editorial favorites of everyone who looked at these.

More at the end, but good job overall!

An excerpt from [ACQUISITIONS]
Script by Steven Douglas

PAGE 4 – (5 PANELS)

Panel 1. A dimly-lit lounge. There are tables with sparse patrons scattered about, all facing a makeshift platform with A STAGE MAGICIAN standing in the center. Metallic objects are floating around her cape and outstretched arms. There's a flashy pair of bracelets on her wrists.

1. MAGICIAN: —I shall require a volunteer!
2. LOCATION TAG: Heir. The Twisted Leono. Three weeks ago.
3. ARIELLA (from off-panel): I appreciate you agreeing to meet with me, Mx. Phar.

Panel 2. Kryos, dressed in nondescript “civilian clothing,” is sitting at a table watching the show. We're viewing them from the right. Now that they're not wearing their stealth suit, we can see they have streaked hair and metallic implants embedded in their skin, most notably, a cybernetic right eye and a robotic prosthetic in place of a right arm. The prosthetic has multiple “ports” Kryos can pull wires from for hacking purposes. They're holding a lit chemstick in their “flesh” hand and looking amused. A water dish and a drink in a small glass sit beside them.

4. ARIELLA (from off-panel): I understand there are certain risks involved in your line of work, and I want you to know I do *not* take this opportunity lightly.
5. KRYOS: You're on Heir now, Your Highness. Risk is everything.

Panel 3. Kryos (same angle) has pressed the chemstick to their lips. Using their prosthetic arm, they're offering a second chemstick to someone off-panel (Ariella).

6. ARIELLA (from off-panel): “Ariella,” if you'd please.
7. KRYOS: Well, Ariella...

Panel 4. Kryos (same angle) is blowing out a cloud of colored smoke. The second chemstick is gone.

Panel 5. We turn to the table's opposite side and finally get a good look at our other speaker: ARIELLA DRAZO (she/her), a noble from a minor house on Fayrii. She's young and dressed nicely, but not *as* nice as some of the other Fayrii nobility we've seen. We can see she's holding

the second chemstick, but keeping it on the table and away from her lips. The colored smoke Kryos released is drifting around her in a wispy circle.

8. KRYOS (from off-panel): What would you like me to acquire?

PAGE 5 – (5 PANELS)

Panel 1. AN AUCTIONEER, standing in front of a podium and pointing off-panel. He's calling out bids, though no dialogue is shown. The coloring here is very "cool," with a focus on green and blue.

1. ARIELLA [CAPTION]: There was an auction. The kind families of certain means don't announce *publicly*.

Panel 2. Continue blue-and-green coloring. An object sitting on a felt pillow beside the Auctioneer. Whatever the object is, it's concealed inside a glass case with a blanket on top.

2. ARIELLA [CAPTION] (1): An Academy relic was up for bid.

3. ARIELLA [CAPTION] (2): My family, well, we're not in any *immediate* danger, but our holdings have been in decline as of late.

Panel 3. Same coloring. Ariella, now wearing a different outfit, is sitting in a row of chairs between HER PARENTS. HER FATHER is pushing a handheld device that projects a number. HER MOTHER is petting an alien fox with succulents for fur. We can't see the upper halves of their faces in this panel, only their mouths. All three look pleased.

4. ARIELLA [CAPTION]: Our hope was to obtain the relic for research purposes. Discover how its properties work and then replicate them into new streams of revenue.

Panel 4. Same coloring. Ariella and her parents are *not* pleased. Even the fox looks annoyed. Like before, we can only see the bottom half of Ariella and her parents' faces.

5. ARIELLA [CAPTION]: But Halifax Tomar had a different agenda.

Panel 5. Same coloring. A different row of chairs. HALIFAX TOMAR (he/him), an older noble with white hair and multiple, vicious scars, sits in the middle. An ornate, ancient-looking necklace hangs around his neck. Possibly a family heirloom. He is also projecting a number, one *much* larger than Ariella's father's. There is a cold expression on his face.

6. ARIELLA [CAPTION] (1): He's always been something of a thorn in my family's side. This was just the latest in a long history of humiliation.

7. ARIELLA [CAPTION] (2): One I refuse to abide any longer.

PAGE 6 - (5 PANELS)

Panel 1. Return to normal coloring. We're back at Kryos and Ariella's table. Kryos is taking another drag.

1. KRYOS: This relic... what's it supposed to do?
2. ARIELLA: "Prolong life," or something to that effect. I heard the texts describing it were vague and difficult to translate, but it would explain why an old bastard like Tomar wants it.

Panel 2. Same angle. Ariella is shocked. Kryos is motioning to something in front of them off-panel.

3. KRYOS (1): Heh. You don't actually *believe* in that, do you? *Magic?*
4. ARIELLA (1): You *don't*? Given your reputation, I would have thought—
5. KRYOS (2): —The show. Are you enjoying it?
6. ARIELLA (2): I... it's... different, certainly.

Panel 3. Pull out so we can see the stage show. A column of fire has erupted on stage. The Stage Magician is now leading A BLINDFOLDED VOLUNTEER towards the flames. The metallic objects from before are still floating by the Magician's cape and wrists. Ariella and Kryos are watching, backs to us.

7. ARIELLA: To be honest, I'm surprised the Institute allows these kinds of performances to go unpunished.
8. KRYOS: Because they're shams!

Panel 4. Close-in on the Magician's waist and arms. There's a metallic sheen on the underside of her cape. It's difficult to see, but there's a similar sheen on the insides of her bracelets as well.

9. KRYOS [CAPTION]: The lady on stage has *magnets* laced into her cape. Doubly so for her jewelry. As for her, um, volunteer?

Panel 5. The back of the Volunteer's neck. It's coated with something shiny.

10. KRYOS [CAPTION]: He's a plant. Probably bathed himself in some kind of chemical to withstand the flames. Not *too* much, mind you. Still need to make it *look* real.

PAGE 7 – (6 PANELS)

Panel 1. Back at the table. Kryos looks smug. Ariella is shooting them daggers.

Panel 2. Same as before.

1. ARIELLA: *You* picked the venue.
2. KRYOS: I admire the presentation.

Panel 3. Focus on Kryos' prosthetic hand. It's snuffing out their chemstick in the table's water dish. The chemical reaction is causing the water to steam and change color.

3. KRYOS (from off-panel) (1): My point, dear princess, is that it doesn't matter if it's real or not.
4. KRYOS (from off-panel) (2): What matters is *belief*.

Panel 4. Kryos, shrugging.

5. KRYOS (1): People believe I'm an expert in acquiring "magical artifacts?" Then I am an expert! Means I get to charge double.
6. KRYOS (2): But the only thing / believe in–

Panel 5. Focus on Ariella. There's a look of understanding on her face. She's reaching down for something by her side.

7. KRYOS (from off-panel): –Is khoin.
8. ARIELLA: Ah. Of course.

Panel 6. Focus on Ariella's hand sliding a small tablet across the table.

9. ARIELLA (from off-panel): And will *this* be enough to secure your patronage?

PAGE 8 – (5 PANELS)

Panel 1. Kryos is taking a sip from their drink. They're peeking at the offered tablet.

Panel 2. Kryos is now choking on their drink. Tiny exclamation points have appeared in their cybernetic eye.

Panel 3. Ariella, pleased.

1. KRYOS (from off-panel) (1): ***cough cough!***
2. KRYOS (from off-panel) (2): Yes.

Panel 4. Pull back to get a full view of Kryos, Ariella, and the stage show. Kryos and Ariella are shaking hands. On stage, the Magician and the Volunteer (no longer blindfolded and clothing slightly singed) are bowing to a thunderous applause.

3. KRYOS [CAPTION]: It just might.

Panel 5. Return to the “present.” We're back inside Halifax Tomar's palace. Kryos—still wearing their patchwork stealth suit—is now kneeling in front of a closed, metallic door inside a lavish hallway. They've rolled up their right sleeve and are attaching wires from their prosthetic into a keypad by the door's side. On the floor is a fading green mist... and TWO UNCONSCIOUS GUARDS.

4. ARIELLA [CAPTION]: You'll need to be careful. The vault—
5. KRYOS [CAPTION]: —It *won't* be in the vault.

Okay. I thought you did a great job of being economical in your panel descriptions and this is a very clear and concise script.

I do think that it relies on pulling off certain visual cues and tricks to work. And not knowing who your artist is ahead of time, this adds a level executional uncertainty that might border on unacceptable, but that's gambling, right?

I also thought your panel/balloon/word count was good for what you were trying to pull off. One of the better scripts in that regard.

I do wonder about the dynamic nature of what you've written. The word play was strong enough to keep me locked in, but (again) some of this is going to come down to an artist being in sync with the pages.

All right. Nice job!

- JH