

# Your Character Briefing

This is the description of your character that we're expecting you to base your play around. You're at liberty to tweak and amend it to suit your preference: but if you want to change anything substantial, please do check with us – there might be knock-on effects elsewhere.

It's divided into eight sections:

- Capsule – the brief summary that you'll have seen on the larp website.
- Meeting Gottfried – an account of what happened when your character first met Gottfried Himmelhaus, which was a formative moment in their life.
- Background – a general description of the character's background, personality and present situation. It includes some questions to answer for yourself – feel free to invent further questions and details as you wish.
- Primary relationships – the four other characters who are most important in your character's life, as far as the events of this larp are concerned. Any details that are missing, agree with the other player involved. (You will have time to do this during the scheduled preplay.)
- Other relationships – these are relationships that we haven't defined for you in detail – we are leaving them for you to develop and agree with the other players involved, before the larp starts during preplay. You don't have to do this, of course: and you're very welcome to work on relationships with other characters apart from these ones, instead or as well. But these are some links that we think could work well for your character. We've suggested one or two positive and one or two negative relationships: you can make these as strong as you and the other player like. (Or they could be one-sided, if you're both happy with that.)

## A NOTE ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS:

We have removed relationships from this document, where the characters are currently UNCAST or PENDING, as they may need to be adjusted before being finalized, or potentially reassigned to keep an even balance among players.

We will notify you by email if any relationships are ADDED onto your character's sheet.

Some characters may begin the relationship-building phase with only **THREE** primary relationships.

- Angel and Devil – the 'good' and 'bad' voices that sit on your character's shoulders and whisper in their ears.
- Task (for crew) or Role (for cast) – what Gottfried has asked of your character, and what it will require from them. Includes an out-of-character outline of something that you'll have to do in the first act.
- Dilemma – a choice, of sorts, that your character may have to make before the end of the larp.

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Questions to consider as you personalize your character:

- What is your name (real name and/or stage name)?
- Where are you from?
- How old are you?
- What was your family background like?
- How has your relationship/sexual history been?
- What's your current living situation like?
- Is there anyone outside the set of Stolen Moments who's important to you?
- What's the most significant memory from your childhood?

# THE ART DIRECTOR

Player Name: **WILL NASSAU**; he/him

Character Name: **CHRISTOPHER HUEDAHL**; he/him; age 31

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE ART DIRECTOR](#)

## CAPSULE

He's responsible for the look of *Stolen Moments*, and of each of its scenes – interpreting Gottfried's vision into reality. On and off the set he's everyone's friend, with a way of bringing people along in agreement. His need for validation is strong – if left to himself, would he even see anything when he looked in the mirror?

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*He just appeared in your studio one day: you were hard at work as usual, completing your piece for the summer exhibition. Circular Forms #12. A two-metre canvas, a set of mesmeric swirling rings that drew the viewer in; capturing their attention, like a fly in a web. It was coming along nicely.*

*He spoke softly at first. "How many people will see this, do you think? How many people attend an art school show? Who are they – how do you speak to them? What do they hear?"*

*You knew who he was, of course. He was already famous at that time. His fair hair gleamed in the sunlight.*

*He stepped quickly forwards, taking your head gently between his two hands. His fingers were long, strong and cool. "I can put your work in front of people – millions of people. You'll be able to throw sparks in their eyes, touch their minds, touch their hearts. Make them believe. Inspire them to good, or to wickedness!"*

*Chuckling slightly, he released his grip. "All you have to do is... to do what I ask of you."*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

You were a promising young art student, with a compelling vision and superb technical skill. But you were never sure if you had the personality to succeed in the cutthroat world of the art business. Were you too amiable, too diffident, too eager to please? It felt as though your work was continuously reacting to other people's comments about what you'd done: your tutors, your friends and fellow-students, your few clients.

Gottfried Himmelhaus recruited you to work with him back in the last decade, just as movies were getting artistically interesting. Expressionism was not a movement that you would wish to sign up to, but it had certainly shown how art and set design could mingle productively.

Since then your job has been to realize Gottfried's vision. He knows how he wants each scene to feel: you interpret that into its look, designing every visual aspect of the production. The silver screen is now your canvas, and it changes 24 times per second – it's still a thrilling challenge.

*Stolen Moments* is to be the biggest and best thing yet – the culmination of Gottfried's ideals. It's a challenge – a stretch – but you're confident in your abilities. It's unusual that the instructions are so vague, but you know you can do something terrific with them – and when Gottfried himself arrives, things will quickly get sorted out.

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Son of a diplomat, Christopher grew up around the world. In 1919, he attended a brand new art school, The Bauhaus, in Weimar Germany. Afterwards he worked on many different films and brought an eclectic vision to them. And no matter what one's opinion of his work is, all would say that the unique style he brings makes each film memorable.

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE FADING STAR

This old stager has been around the business forever, and seems to have picked up some wisdom along the way. He clearly has a good appreciation of your work designing the production – unlike so many actors, who just view the set as something to pose in front of.

He even seems to have bothered to research your early career as a painter, and has been gently prodding you about it. Would you ever think about picking up the brush and easel again? Well, once it's suggested, you have to think about it, of course. But you're so busy here, and doing such valuable work for Gottfried. Do you even still have that passionate artist within you? What would he be painting now, if he had the chance?

## THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

She's fresh, charming and delightful – not like some of these actresses, who put on such airs, as though there was something remarkable in standing up spouting lines. She is rather fond of you, and you've been seeing each other on and off for a little while now.

You imagine that she will want you to commit to making the relationship serious. You don't think that's what you want – and you've been avoiding the subject up till now. She's easy to be around, and your relationship makes sense. And you don't want to upset her – the fact that she likes you is a great achievement. But what would it mean, to bestow yourself upon another person, upon her, to join with them as a life partner, like that? What would it do to you?

## THE SCRIPTWRITER

She seems quite miserable and self-destructive – and what a waste of talent. Something is holding her back from achieving her true potential as an artist. Her writing may be clear and concise, but it's journalistic and frankly rather dry. She is able to stretch herself, you know this, but she is too busy being haunted by whatever demons she has to get things done.

Well, we all have demons – the mark of a professional is overcoming them. It's not that you're unsympathetic – on the contrary, you think that you could really help. Now it's under your control – in realizing Gottfried's vision you need to ensure that the script is perfect. What better chance to make sure she reaches her potential?

## THE INGENUE

She's so soft, inviting – a wonderful new talent on the scene. You want to show her your world – and to protect her from the worst of it. This is her first significant role, and you know it'll be a memorable one. You find it hard to tear your gaze away from her.

For professional reasons, though, you've not made your feelings apparent. In your position, it would be dangerous to be suspected of playing favourites. You've tried to instead restrict yourself to showing subtle kindness and gentle consideration, so as to thwart any gossip. And so as not to alarm her: perhaps she is too innocent, too pure, for a hardened old pro like you?

## OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

### **Positive**

**THE PROPMASTER** – helps you create visual magic. You work well together.

### **Negative**

**THE FEMME FATALE** – a troublemaker, who seems to enjoy hurting people.

## ANGEL

You like people: you like making them happy. You are good at adjusting, at negotiating, at smoothing: it's been very useful in the temperamental world of film. And you are liked in return.

## DEVIL

You sometimes doubt yourself: what happened to that young visionary artist? What is left of you? Are you really doing valuable work here? Are these people really worth your time and energy?

# TASK

Your job here is to realize Gottfried's vision for the film: in particular, there are two sets that he wants you to design and assemble. But in a larger sense, until he arrives, you are responsible for carrying and promoting his vision – making the other people here believe in it. The problem is that you aren't quite sure if you believe in it yourself. Recently Gottfried has seemed distracted, distant – and his instructions to you for *Stolen Moments* are vague and thin. It's going to be hard for you to really convince others about something that you're not convinced about yourself. Should you even be trying?

## Out of character

*Your task in Act 1 is to implement Gottfried's design notes for the two sets (you'll receive these closer to date or at the run) using your own creativity, working together with THE PROPMASTER and THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, and THE RUNNER as assistant. In Act 2, Gottfried will probably be expecting you to maintain and improve the sets.*

# DILEMMA

Your work, and your life in general, sometimes seems to involve a tension between doing what people want, and doing what's right. You agreed to work for Gottfried, and that required subjugating your artistic vision to his bigger picture – but does that mean that you've lost track of what you yourself need to be doing? It's nice being generally popular, everyone's friend – that's what you cling to. But does it really mean that you are a good and worthwhile person? Maybe taking a less smooth path will take you somewhere better. Is it too late to find out?

# THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Player Name: **SEAN CHIOCHANKITMUN**; he/him

Character Name: **ALEXANDRA PENDLETON**; she/her; age 40

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR](#)

## CAPSULE

**Gottfried's right hand, she's been waiting a long time for the unpredictable director to put this project together: and now she has responsibility for the cast and crew until her master arrives. In the meantime she will struggle to make sense of his fragmentary instructions: what is the film really about? Who is playing who? What is Gottfried's vision for them all?**

*(Warning: this attempt to make sense of things is doomed to failure. This character should expect to be disappointed in her aims... or maybe to change them. It'll be up to you to decide how to resolve that.)*

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*It was one of your first AD jobs, on a film called Spring Flowers – a weepie, with the heroine catching one of those fatal illnesses that makes you very pale and lovely. Gottfried came on set one day, towards the end of shooting – no-one really knew him back then; he was just another director trying to make a name for himself.*

*You were doing your job diligently, tidying up the loose ends, keeping things in order. Something about you must have caught his eye. “Hey – you look like you know what's what. How does a man get a drink around here?”*

*You found his cheeriness and familiarity irritating, but hell, you were thirsty yourself. One drink turned into several, as Gottfried outlined his theories of cinematic drama, his fingers steepling and splaying to illustrate his points. You had never heard anyone talking like this before. Could it really be true, that making a film could be artistic, but yet still popular and successful? He made it sound so.*

*“You're wasting yourself here,” he said. But how did he know? How did he sense what you might be capable of? How did he smell that you were looking for a purpose – for a way to realize yourself? That you were looking for a guide, a master?*



# BACKGROUND

You've been making movies for what feels like a long time – starting as a runner, just a kid really, when things were a lot simpler than they are now. You've enjoyed working with the new technology as it's come in, and the new artistic ideas and new people – you feel like film is really doing something important and worthwhile these days.

Most of all, you've enjoyed working with Gottfried – he is a genius, and you feel honoured to be so close to him. You're the only one there when he's wrestling with ideas; you're the one who helps him birth these projects. And they've been getting more and more painful, as time has gone on: and you've suffered that pain second-hand.

Ordinary people don't always understand – the cast, especially, but also the junior crew – they all feel like Gottfried has some sort of special relationship with them. You often find yourself having to mediate, to apologise on his behalf, to cover-up when he's unavailable. You've got used to speaking for him.

You have thought about taking the step up, and directing your own material – you've got all the skills. But what would Gottfried do without you? It would feel like a kind of betrayal.

With *Stolen Moments*, you've got a job on your hands. Gottfried insisted it was ready, but it really doesn't seem to be. You'll do your best to prepare everything for his arrival, of course: but you do feel a little uneasy. It'll all get a lot more solid when he gets here, for sure.

# CHARACTER BACKGROUND

\*coming soon\*

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE SUBJECT

She's glamorous and captivating, her life almost as familiar to you (thanks to the newspapers) as your own. She's long fascinated you, but this is your first chance to get up close and see her in the flesh – see her passion, her abandonment, her brilliant light. What a wonderful subject she makes for this film masterpiece-to-be!

You yearn to know what she's like underneath, when the press cameras have gone and the candles are flickering low. How does the private woman compare with the public idol? What might it mean to touch her – her body, even her heart?

## THE LOCATION MANAGER

He's worked for Gottfried almost as long as you have, and you've been increasingly impressed by him. He seems impressively capable, organized and dynamic: it's been a pleasure working together, finding that when you arrived here everything was just as it should be.

If you were ever to work on your own material then you'd very much enjoy collaborating with him. You would surely appreciate his work more than Gottfried does! In the meantime, spending time together is relaxing.

## THE PROPMASTER

He's a really disruptive influence – for the life of you, you can't understand why Gottfried keeps working with him. Disrespectful, disobedient, always wanting to do his own thing and to disrupt your careful plans – he's basically an agent of chaos.

Admittedly, he's talented – and he seems to enjoy life. That makes it even more frustrating having to work with him. You have to ask yourself, though – is there more to your mistrust – you might almost call it fear? Do you imagine what might happen if you were to allow yourself that freedom?

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE FEMME FATALE** – a real pro, who always delivers a performance. You're fascinated by her: where does the performance stop, and the real woman begin? You fear that it wouldn't take much for you to fall under her spell.

**THE PUBLICIST** – works hard and does a great job for the production.

## ANGEL

You make things happen, and you make them work – you're there to answer people's questions and deal with their problems. And you know you're doing really good work – making films that are both worthwhile and entertaining, and that will stand the test of time.

## DEVIL

Sometimes you feel like you're just a servant – a facilitator. Aren't you better than this? Why isn't it *you* giving the orders, and other people implementing them? Why isn't it *your* vision which is being turned into celluloid?

# TASK

Gottfried has asked you to assign roles to the actors, and to make sure that the crew are performing well together and making things ready for the start of shooting. Unfortunately his guidance has been very vague. You know that in general you have the role of imposing order on the chaos of the location and the people here, before Gottfried arrives – this is what you always do. But this time it feels like it's even more uncertain than usual.

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to implement Gottfried's design notes for the two sets (you'll receive these closer to date or at the run), working together with THE PROPMASER and THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, and THE RUNNER as assistant. You are also expected to make sure that everyone else on the location is doing their jobs, and answering any questions that they have about Gottfried's intentions. You should feel empowered to engage other characters who are so inclined to assist you in assigning roles to the actors, including holding auditions where you think it would be appropriate to do so.*

*In Act 2, Gottfried will probably be expecting you to continue this valuable and potentially-difficult work.*

# DILEMMA

You feel you are reaching the end of your tether. Gottfried has always asked a lot from you, and you have always delivered – you've been glad of the responsibility, and of the trust that he places in you. It's clear that here you should carry on and do the same thing: make it work, and prepare the path for him. But you are really starting to ask yourself whether it's getting towards time to abandon your responsibilities, and to set yourself free – to let go of duty, and to rise, to shine, to grow.

# THE BEST FRIEND

*Details subject to change*

Player Name: **uncast**

Character Name: ; gender; age

Link to Who's Playing Who -

## CAPSULE

**Always the bridesmaid, never the bride: her role has been to support leading ladies. She has made a name for herself in this role, and films have often succeeded on the strength of her performances. She has been known for making less talented stars appear to shine. In real life, she puts a similarly brave face on: she feels utterly alone, but is scared to reach out to make connections. She feels as though no-one has ever understood her, or empathized with her: and perhaps they never will. But acting amiable and supportive of others has turned out to be a great way of deflecting attention from herself.**

*(Warning: this character suffers from depression and/or anxiety. It'll be up to you how much you want to go into the details of that and to play upon it; but if this is a trigger issue for you, you will want to avoid this role.)*

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*He summoned you for an interview, in his office at the studio. You were flattered – a big-name director was interested in you. Maybe he even wanted you to star in something? But you were anxious, as well. What if he was angry, or critical? Or if he asked you to do something that you didn't want to do?*

*But actually it wasn't like that at all. You found him feeding the fish in his big salt-water tank: he nodded, smiled, and gestured for you to join him. The brightly-coloured fish swam in and out of the weeds and stones. Their world was small, but light and clean: they were given everything that they needed. They had no idea that you were there outside the tank: that there was a whole world out there. Gottfried and you bent down together, looking closely at the fish, your heads side by side. It was a calm and peaceful moment.*

*After what felt like a long time – although it was probably only a few minutes – Gottfried straightened himself up, and with a gentle hand under your elbow he raised you too. "So – you see," he said. You nodded weakly. "You'll do it, then?"*

*You are still not sure exactly what it was that you agreed to. But here you are. And soon, Gottfried will be here too; and you will all help him turn celluloid into magic.*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

You've made a career out of appearing unthreatening – attractive, but not too attractive – smart, but not dangerously clever – capable, but not authoritative. A whole string of actresses have been able to shine all the more brightly, against the background of your portrayal of their character's best friend. Quirky, klutzy, self-deprecating, accident-prone – you've played the whole range of best friends. And audiences, and stars, love you for it.

If only that meant anything to you. If only your skills, and the professional and popular appreciation that they've earned you, could warm the empty places inside you... But you feel completely alone: no-one seems to understand you or to really care about you, or to be able to give you any kind of fulfilment.

Part of your mind is capable of insisting that this can't be right – that you are as lovable as any other person. But the sense of your solitude in the world is powerful; maybe overwhelming.

People don't suspect how troubled you are. Partly that's because, as you feel, they don't really care about you, or want to know the truth. But also you have become good at appearing 'normal' – as a defence mechanism. Most of your colleagues, who only see your friendly and helpful side, would never imagine the turmoil and uncertainty that constantly plagues you.

## ANGEL

Being the best friend has meant that people like you, and they don't ask too many questions about what you're really like underneath. And you have genuinely helped the performances of your colleagues – reflecting light onto them, with your supportive performances.

## DEVIL

Every now and then, something in you starts silently screaming to be let out – something that you've been suppressing for most of your life. Would that be so terrible? You could be yourself, and people could either like it or not: their problem!

## ROLE

You're playing the heroine's best friend, of course: that goes without saying. But there's something unusual about this story... a window of opportunity, maybe. It feels to you like your role might have the chance to open herself out and take centre stage – release her friendship and take the focus. Could you dare to do that? Do you even really want to?

### **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from STOLEN MOMENTS, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

## DILEMMA

Your defences have done you well, up till now. Perhaps being so self-effacing is the only way you've survived this long. But are you going to keep it up forever? There might be people who can help you become yourself, for what would feel like the first time. But to put your emotional safety into someone else's hands would be a huge risk.

# THE CAD

Player Name: **DAVID GROVEMAN**; he/him

Character Name: **CHESTER "CHET" WESTMORLAND** ; he/him; age 45

Other Names: Jacob Goldman (Unknown)

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE CAD](#)

## CAPSULE

**Famous for playing a series of callous yet irresistible brutes, his charm on screen is a counterpoint to his alienation off it. Scarred while young, feeling himself worthless, he swore off attachments; vowing never to care for anyone, nor allow anyone to care for him. He has been letting life and career happen to him, perhaps feeling himself unworthy of choosing his own path.**

*(Warning: this character suffered emotional abuse as a child. It'll be up to you how much you want to go into the details of that and to play upon it; but if this is a trigger issue for you, you will want to avoid this role.)*

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*It was at a party. You'd been entertaining those around you with your witty barbs, as usual. But also as usual, as the crowd warmed up and people loosened, you started to feel out of place. You set your back against one of the creamy marble walls, and looked out into the cool darkness outside – broken only by a handful of faint stars. You were sipping a drink, trying to make it last – it was an excuse to stay here.*

*You felt a presence next to you, but didn't turn round. The last thing you wanted was a conversation. But apparently this person couldn't take a hint.*

*"I've got a job for you," he said. His voice was calm and soft. "I think you'll like it."*

*You turned round to say that you weren't interested, but you were caught by his eyes – so bright and beautiful. And with something odd, not quite human about them, you might say... if you'd had a few more drinks. Your rejection died in your throat.*

*Gottfried reached out to lightly touch your shoulder. You allowed him to. "You and I could make something very special together – don't you think?"*



## ROLE BACKGROUND

Perhaps a life of playing the cad was marked out for you from the beginning. After what happened to you during your childhood, you felt like you could never care about anyone again – and you developed a set of techniques for brushing off attention – so charming, witty, and sexy.

Up on the silver screen, your disdainful smouldering sets the audience on fire. Here in real life, you think it makes people slightly nervous of you – wary of approaching closer. Which is just how you like it. That way you're safe.

You sometimes feel that you'd like to care about yourself, and to have other people care about you. But it seems an impossibly dangerous door to open. It's felt better to just move smoothly along, not being affected by anyone, doing your job and taking the money.

You suffered, when you shouldn't have, when you were a child: there's a great injustice there. But the people who could have paid it back are gone now: there's just you. Is this how it's going to be for the rest of your life? At the moment, you have no better answer.

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Jacob Goldman was born to a German Jewish family in Chicago and raised to continue the family meatpacking business. At the age of seventeen he was noticed at a train station by August Pressman, agent to the stars. Pressman had been in the Jewish part of Chicago looking for premiere vaudeville acts from the Yiddish theatres but all had already been discovered or were too old to make it in the new frontier of Hollywood. That's when Pressman saw Goldman. The young man was working at his uncle's deli in a paper cap and apron. Jacob asked, *"What'll you have?"*

Pressman answered, *"One leading man with a side of stardom."*

Jacob's decision to leave for Chicago did not sit well with his family and friends who disowned him and his harebrained scheme to go West and be in the nickelodeon flicker shows. On the ride west Pressman created Chester Westmorland and coached the young man in how to strike it big. *"The secret,"* Pressman said, *"Is women. If you want to make it big, you need to win the women watching you on the screen. If you want to win them, you need to win the women of the acting world."* What Pressman didn't mention was that he'd meant to basically usher Westmorland around town as a gigolo.

Early in his career, Chester had a love affair with one of Hollywood's biggest stars. She taught Chester most of what actual acting he knows but knew their affair was not to last. Sure enough, Chester would leave her for a string of high profile starlet girlfriends, eventual ex-wives and mistresses. Pressman died five years ago leaving his protege without a guide and pilot.

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE MAN OF MYSTERY

You've worked together many times, and you've never got on well. He is one of those controlling types who can't bear it when someone doesn't behave as he would wish: he dislikes your sarcasm, your cutting remarks, your seeming inability to care about others.

Most of the time, you resent his criticism, and rebel against it. But sometimes... you know that, whether he realizes it or not, he's right about you. You really are that hollow, damaging being that he despises. And when you're feeling particularly negative about yourself, you may seek out, and welcome, the lash of his tongue.

## THE METHOD ACTING INSTRUCTOR

She taught you the seeds of your craft, and it's thanks to her that your talent has been developed and expressed. You owe her a great deal, really. But... she asked too much in return, you feel. She insisted on taking an interest in you – trying to understand you.

You pushed her away – you didn't want someone peering into your soul, even in a sympathetic way. And ever since then you have been firm with her. But she has remained kind and generous towards you: you feel like she really does care about you. Which is almost unbearable.

## THE NAIF

He's so sweet and innocent, it almost breaks your heart to look at him. Evidently life has been gentle with him so far – and you find yourself hoping that it will continue to be. He's new to the business, and has much to learn. It seems like he looks up to you – for some reason. Clearly he has no idea what you are capable of.

## THE SIDEKICK

He seems as unbothered by the world as you would like to be. You've had long nights drinking together, talking about everything and nothing – it's relaxing for you. You feel like you don't have anything at stake with him, as he's not a professional rival – he only takes supporting roles.

You've never talked with him about your inner troubles, of course – that wouldn't be like you. But you've shared all sorts of opinions on the world, on the film business, on your colleagues: and he's been trustworthy.

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE GIRL NEXT DOOR** - There came a time you were romantically involved. These things often end poorly, but you've remained friendly.

## Negative

**THE INGENUE** - You knew she was too young for you, and never should have involved yourself with her in the first place. But, sometimes you've listened more to the cry of the press than your own good sense.

**THE PUBLICIST** – her relentless positivity is deeply wearying. You've not yet chosen to pick on him, but it's very tempting.

# ANGEL

If you never touch anybody, you can never do them harm. You can remain a good person inside, even if no-one ever sees it. You can sleep at night – when you're not kept awake by your own memories of suffering.

# DEVIL

You've seen deep into the darkness. You know that you could completely destroy someone, if they were foolish enough to trust you – and maybe you wouldn't care about it at all. Maybe you'd even enjoy it?

# ROLE

You've been asked to play a cad with a difference – with a vulnerability. He can be opened up, and exposed – can pay for the pain he's caused, and can be paid for the pain that's been caused to him – can even be loved. Do you dare?

## Out of character

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from **STOLEN MOMENTS**, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

# DILEMMA

Since that meeting with Gottfried, you feel like you're approaching a crux point. Perhaps you have to reach out now, to connect with someone, before it's too late – if you are ever to find happiness. But perhaps the risks of openness, of vulnerability, are just too frightening for you to confront. Or perhaps it's already too late, and your soul and heart are just too firmly shut away.

# THE CLOWN

*Details subject to change*

Player Name: **uncast**

Character Name: ; gender; age

Link to Who's Playing Who -

## CAPSULE

**Audiences go doolally for his well-timed gags and pratfalls: that's why the studios gladly work overtime to cover up his misdeeds. Success has been a way of enabling his desires: he exerts himself across as wide a range of pleasures as possible, and is constantly seeking new avenues of self-indulgence.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*It was in a private nightclub, in one of the back rooms. You were just taking a breather... the night was young yet, there was no point expending yourself too quickly. Pacing yourself is the secret to your survival, when others have blown themselves out completely.*

*"It tastes so sweet, doesn't it?" said the guy on the next couch over. "I mean... the real taste. Inside you."*

*You weren't sure what he meant – or what he was on. But you were in a good mood. "If you say so, my friend. Sweet as sweet."*

*"I knew you'd understand." He swivelled round and sat up. You still didn't know it was Gottfried – not at that point. The lighting was too dim, and of course you'd never met him before. "One day, you and I are going to work together on something special. I know you've got what I want – and you don't know it yet, but I've got what you want, too."*

*At this point you were thinking of calling for the management, especially as he was now standing over you... but he turned away, pulling his remaining clothes back on. "Keep smiling," he said, as he left.*

*A few hours afterwards, you found that he'd told them you would cover his bill. But it was far too late by then to do anything about it.*

## BACKGROUND

You realized your comic talent early: you had classmates in stitches at school, and teachers as well. Laughter and appreciation fed you, making you work harder at improving your craft, developing your skills. You worked in front of demanding crowds, winning them over and then slaying them in the aisles.

It wasn't long before the film industry found you, and you were delighted to see that your ability to entertain translated smoothly to the screen. Bigger and bigger audiences, and more and more adulation, were your due. You are now at the very top of your profession, and have been there for some time.

But at some point – you aren't sure exactly when, or why – it stopped being enough. Yes, people laughed at you and adored you, but so what? You found you had to push yourself harder to find thrills and fulfilment – alcohol, drugs, and other so-called vices became your regular diet.

These days, you are a legend in the industry, almost as much for your unbridled hedonism as for your comedic chops. You can usually find companions in self-indulgence, although not many can soak up as you.

Your life is a dream come true. Or... is it?

## ANGEL

Making people laugh is a kind of mission – you bring a lot of happiness into the world. And you're entitled to enjoy yourself, off the back of that. You've never hurt anyone, unless they wanted you to.

## DEVIL

You've explored so many vices, it's getting hard to think of new ones to try. Sometimes you see something in the mirror that appals you. What have you become? What will become of you? How will this end?

# ROLE

You've been cast as a clown with a heart – not unusual, but you feel that Gottfried is looking for something more than the typical version. He wants you to actively create positive meaning in the life of someone other than yourself. Not something you've ever really tried to do, in real life – but surely you can act it, at least?

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from **STOLEN MOMENTS**, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

# DILEMMA

There is a choice in front of you, whether or not you choose to see it and accept it. The path of ever-increasing hedonism and indulgence that you're on is not survivable – you will be consumed and destroyed by it, one way or another. But how could you change it? And do you even want to?

# THE COSTUME DESIGNER

*Details subject to change*

Player Name: **uncast**

Character Name: ; gender; age

Link to Who's Playing Who -

## CAPSULE

**She has dressed a thousand stellar performances, her painstakingly hand-sewn creations turning base flesh into screen divinity. As a girl she was apprenticed to a Milan couturier, but an unhappy experience caused her to shift careers – fashion's loss was cinema's gain. She dresses quietly, even dowdily, herself – but that exterior belies a passionate hedonism.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You were crouched in the yard at the back of the salon, hunched over, as small as you could be – crying bitterly. Your hands were still bleeding from the beating that Madame gave you. The snow was gradually reddening underneath you: the cold, distant, winter sunlight had not melted it at all.*

*You sensed rather than felt a shadow fall across you, and tensed, thinking it might be one of the other apprentices come to mock you or beat you again. But it was a man's voice that spoke.*

*"You are in the darkness, child. But it will not last forever. You will be led into the light once more."*

*You tried to ignore him, still sobbing into your clenched fists. After a time you felt the shadow pass on, and you were a little warmer. Your hands stopped bleeding, and some of the pressure lifted from you. You straightened up, uncurling your spine.*

*There were a business card lying on the ground beside you. On the back was the name of a film costume design studio, and the note "Take her on – she has talent, I trust her. G." On the front was Gottfried's own name, printed in high relief, in an elaborate gothic type.*



## BACKGROUND

You were quiet when you were young – your parents used to wonder about you, although perhaps also you were a relief after your noisy siblings. You liked sitting in a room where others were talking – usually working on something with your hands. Making dolls, dressing them – your stitches were neat and precise.

You went to work for a couturier as soon as you were able – the money was good, for a poor girl like you. Your skill was recognized, and you progressed from sewing to helping with designs. But you lost your place, after being accused of stealing – it was a disaster. Your name was blackened, and you knew you could never work in the fashion industry again.

A fortunate encounter got you your first piece of work in film costuming. You took to it quickly – it suited your combination of imaginative vision, and fast hands. And you loved the way that the glamour of the screen spilled backwards into the studio, and the set – the possibilities for enjoyment, for indulgence, were remarkable. And you have taken joyful advantage of them.

Now you are well-known within the film industry, and anonymous outside it. Not everyone appreciates your work as much as they should: but enough do to make you feel rewarded. You have started to wonder, though, lately. Could there be more in life for you – somehow, somewhere?

## ANGEL

You have a tremendous skill, and people need you – you've devoted your life to helping them. Thanks to you, great things have been achieved. Why disturb the status quo?

## DEVIL

You long to really let your hair down – to enjoy yourself, and maybe just to see what happens. How much do you really care about your career in costume?

# TASK

The costumes are all ready and just have to be fitted – that's no trouble. But that means you have time on your hands – and the most exciting people in the world around you, to indulge it with. Can you fit your zest for hedonism into your self-effacing professionalism? Can you make your work and your personal life fit together comfortably, instead of being in tension?

## Out of character

*Your task in Act 1 is to work with the actors to decide upon their costumes and how they will look on screen. You may need to seek guidance from THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, THE SCRIPTWRITER and/or THE ART DIRECTOR about the general structure and look of the film, but the actors themselves will be your main guides as to what they think they should look like: question them about their roles, and how best to bring out their characteristics. Your work will complement that of THE HAIRSTYLIST and THE MAKEUP ARTIST, of course. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue revising and improving the costumes.*

# DILEMMA

You've risen to the peak of your profession by creating beauty in others. But what might you have done – what might you still be able to do – if you allowed your creativity to express itself via a project of your own? Could you *trust* yourself – could you *back* yourself – to *be* yourself?

# THE DIVA

*Details subject to change*

Player Name: **uncast**

Character Name: ; gender; age

Link to Who's Playing Who -

## CAPSULE

**Famous, flamboyant, and full of herself, she is known throughout the industry for her extravagant demands and her sensitive temperament. But her talent and her popular appeal are so great that she is never short of work. The public love her emotional screen performances, and adore her tumultuous personal life.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*At first you thought he was just another in the queue of stage-door admirers. He was well dressed, and clearly of good breeding. But there was something in his eye that was different – a light, perhaps.*

*You glanced at him in the dressing-table mirror, as you were taking off your makeup: he looked thoughtful, calm, evaluating, poised in his seat. You gave him a flash of bare shoulder, just to spark him up a little – but he didn't seem to even notice. How you hate that in a man!*

*He began to critique your performance, dryly taking apart your acting skills. It was intolerable! How dare he? And the worst of it was, he was right. You rapidly became furious.*

*He stood up as you rushed him, silently allowing your fists to rain blows on his chest. You eventually collapsed, sobbing, and he gently drew you up. "Don't you see – you're better than this. You have more that you can give – and more that you can take! Imagine your beautiful face up on a screen – five yards across – anger, lust, delight, hatred, flashing across it. Imagine everyone in the world knowing your name, sharing your thrills and your pain!"*

*You looked at him in disbelief, but that light in his eye was burning brightly. "Yes – I can give you that. You just have to come with me now."*

## BACKGROUND

Always performing, even as a child, you sought the approval of your much older parents and their friends. You didn't analyse it, but you knew the pleasure of bringing out emotion in others – how fulfilling it felt.

As soon as you were old enough, you entered the theatre, and lit up the stage – it was evident you were going to be a star, even without any real theatrical education. The audience loved you, and that counted for everything.

After you transitioned into film, you only became more and more popular. And your life became more complicated – a tangled web of friendships and rivalries, lovers and husbands, devotees and enemies.

You're at the very top of your fame now – and you can stay here for a while, if you wish to. It will require continuing the turmoil in your own life – you know how large a part of your appeal that is. Do you ever allow yourself to wonder what your life might be like, without that?

## ANGEL

You entertain – you've devoted your life to providing enjoyment for others. Any drama you can create here will make the time pass more quickly, and will strengthen your legend and that of *Stolen Moments*.

## DEVIL

People who thwart you, who frustrate you, who disagree with you – why are they even allowed on the set? You know what you want, and you aren't afraid to insist upon it. And you don't mind if people get hurt learning their lesson.

# ROLE

Your character is a woman of the flesh – attached to the material world, and its temptations. It seems as though she will have the choice of renunciation – of retreat – of seeking a higher purpose. It'll be a challenge for you, for sure. But if Gottfried thinks you can do it...

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from **STOLEN MOMENTS**, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

# DILEMMA

You realize that your personal drama is growing to be so important that at some point it will prevent you from ever becoming a real actor. *Stolen Moments* might give you an opportunity to change path – to find out what you're really capable of – but at the cost, perhaps, of your beloved notoriety. Can you make that choice?

# THE FADING STAR

Player Name: **JOHN MINA**; he/him

Character Name: **EVAN CHARLES**; he/him; age 52

Other Names: Thomas (Tommy) Wester

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE FADING STAR](#)

## CAPSULE

**It's been a long and successful journey, and he's coming towards its end. He understands that the camera loves the young – his are going to be supporting roles, from now on. But that doesn't necessarily stop him from occasionally raging against the dying of the light. Perhaps he still has one last great performance – on, or off, camera – in him?**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*It was in Germany, before the Great War. The streets were full of dashing troopers parading in uniform, their spurs and medals jingling. It had been a sunny summer – they were always sunny, back then. Doves were cooing in the linden trees.*

*You were at a pavement café, sipping an iced coffee, in the company of some beautiful starlet or other – there were so many, they blur together in your memory. A young man came up to you, clicked his heels together and bowed, and politely asked for your autograph. You were not yet such a big star that this was an everyday occurrence, so you were pleased.*

*He talked knowledgeably about some of your performances, and you invited him to join you: there was something very charming and engaging about him. Your young lady was perhaps a little disappointed... you can't remember now.*

*After a little while it seemed as though the rest of the world had faded away – the soldiers, the doves, the crowd, all like distant echoes. Only his voice carried meaning, only his eyes held your attention. He sketched out the future – the war, the peace, the recovery, the inevitable depression – how the film industry might grow and adapt. What a shrewd fellow he was! And how your place in that industry would persist – how your reputation would grow.*

*“And then, at the end – I will need you. And you will need me. When the time comes, you'll know.” He stood, and bid you both farewell: and the world snapped back into reality around you.*

*Since then, you've followed his own brilliant career with interest. Stolen Moments will be your first opportunity to work with him.*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

You've seen the film industry grow from its humble beginnings, taking part in every step of its evolution towards the high-tech super-slick multi-million operations of today. You've been there for the great moments – and created your fair share of them. Some of your old performances will live down the ages.

But it's not like that any more, you have to admit. You've got to the age now where starring roles are hard to come by – and being a supporting actor, playing the star's father (or grandfather...) is not at all the same. But it pays well, and it keeps you on screen, and in the audience's hearts and minds – maybe you should be satisfied with how your life has been lived, and accept its fading?

Back when you came into film acting, you didn't know how your career and your life might go – no-one possibly could have, it was all too new. You've indulged yourself, but not to excess: your health is still good. You've broken hearts, but not wantonly, not cruelly. And your own heart has had its quota of suffering and sorrow.

You've been feeling philosophical lately – looking back, summing up, coming to conclusions. Perhaps this is the start of what growing old means. But... you're not sure if you're quite ready for that yet. You've still got something left in you, that you can show these youngsters – you're sure of that.

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Born in Oakdale, Indiana to a large family. Evan was the youngest of 6 kids and his father was always working to support them. Evan did theater in high school and was in love with Jeannie Lindstrom who was always the female lead to Evan's male lead. They planned to get married but then he got his big break and left her for Hollywood. Evan has regretted it all his life.

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE ART DIRECTOR

Your eye was caught a while back by the quality of his work around the set – he has a real artistic skill, not like some of these people who just throw materials together and call it a scene background. He clearly cares about his work. You did some digging, and found that he used to be a real artist, a painter – and made some very interesting work. But he gave it up to come into the film industry. It's unlike you to be drawn into someone's past life; and you're not sure why you are now. Maybe all that talk about theatre as "art" has at long-last rubbed off on you?

## THE FEMME FATALE

You'd think you would know better, after so many years in the business, but no: you've been hooked, for sure. She's irresistible – delightful, teasing, dangerous, fascinating. No-one has snared your attention like this in a very long while.

You are experienced enough not to have just dived in, though. You know the risks! Being with her might bring out your emotions, might inspire you to great heights of performance, on the camera as well as in life – but it might suck you dry, break you down, destroy you as a man and as a cinematic force. Do you dare to eat the peach?

## THE GRANDE DAME

She's been around the business as long as you, but somehow has retained her place at its head, while your own star has faded. Age, it seems, cannot wither her – in your eyes she still looks as marvellous and as strong as when you were both young together.

Young, yes, and full of fire – you had a relationship that burned brightly, and that was the talk of the movie gossip sheets. It ended, as these things do: but you still have an affection for her. And still, in certain lights, there's something about her that quickens your tired heart.

## THE LOCATION MANAGER

He's busy, calm, and organized – dedicated to his work, relied upon by Gottfried, and rarely showing much humanity when directing staff around the location. But he makes an exception for you.

Apparently, when he was a boy, you were his favourite actor – this is always nice to hear, and even nicer is that he still respects and admires you. Clearly the man has good taste! You never tire of his company. And, if he ever needs help, you are ready and willing to be called upon.



# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## **Positive**

**THE GIRL NEXT DOOR** – charming and lovable, a really nice person to work with.

**THE GOOD-TIME GIRL** – she's clever and practical, and she hasn't let this crazy business get to her.

## **Negative**

**THE NAIF** – his 'I'm so sweet and innocent' act tires and annoys you. No-one should be allowed to be that fresh and pure.

# ANGEL

You've served your time, and had your success – it's time to leave the limelight to others now. You can still help and be valued, of course – supporting them, advising them, sharing your experiences and stories of the old days. It might be nice to have life become a bit more peaceful: you've earned the rest.

# DEVIL

Something in you refuses to fade away gracefully – instead, it rages against the dying of the light. It wants you to roar – to shake the scenery – to show these new people what a real star is like, what a real man is like. Something in you is dismissive and contemptuous of their innocent young bodies, their naïve young minds.

# ROLE

This is a blazing role, compared to what you've been doing lately – the opportunity for a performance that will capture the camera, letting you set the screen on fire – if you decide to push yourself towards it. But there's the danger that it might drain the last of your energy and capability – it might be the end of your career, even of your life. Can you face that possibility?

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from STOLEN MOMENTS, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

# DILEMMA

This could be your last chance to make a strong impression – who knows what the future might hold? Either with your acting, or with your personality around the location. Do you want these people to have something to remember you by – and if so, what should it be? To fiercely burn out, or to gracefully fade away?

# THE FEMME FATALE

Player Name: **JEN EASTMAN-LAWRENCE**; she/her

Character Name: **MARILYN HARLOWE**; she/her; age 29 (*actual: early-thirties*)

Other Names: Dorothy "Dottie" Gumm, woe to anyone who calls her this.

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE FEMME FATALE](#)

## CAPSULE

**On screen, she's the haughty vamp, able to command any man she wants – but always paying a price for it. In life, too, she has compelled a long string of romances that have ended unsatisfactorily, with broken hearts. It's as though she wants to find love, but inevitably sabotages it somehow. Does she ever really care about the other people who she draws into her net?**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*It was back in your cabaret days – he left flowers for you at the stage door, every night. Black lilies, with a card simply saying 'G.' They stood out among all the carnations and roses that your admirers so dutifully left for you.*

*One night, you'd had a fight in your dressing-room, with your current lover – a pretty thing, with strong wrists and trembling lips. There had been shouting, screaming, breaking glass, and slamming doors. Your heart was pounding, and you sat down for a moment to recover, catching sight of yourself in the mirror – pale, chest heaving, glowing, alive.*

*This time he brought the flowers in himself, and reached over your shoulder to place them on the dressing-table before you, like an offering. He stood behind you. "How would you like to see your real reflection – not that thing on the other side of the mirror? How would you like to look behind those oh-so-devastating eyes – to see yourself as you really are?"*

*You tilted your head back at an angle, in the way that you knew men found irresistible. But he wasn't looking at you – he was looking in the mirror, at your reflection. And he had been speaking to it, too.*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

You were still quite young when you learnt that hearts were for breaking. A childhood friend expressed love for you – you were surprised, and disturbed. It wasn't what you had expected. You said no – and were at once puzzled and intrigued by the pain that you had caused.

With people who weren't your friends to start with, it was easier, of course. Wealthy and successful people, especially – you didn't owe them anything. And if they could help you while you were together, then so they should: and then there would be an end to it.

You didn't actively want to cause pain – but you kept putting yourself into situations where you knew that was what would happen. Is it a kind of addiction? Is it a sin? Is it even your fault, really, that you were made as you are, and that people are fools?

Occasionally you see people who are genuinely in love – happy together – and you wonder what that might feel like. It seems unlikely that you'll ever get the chance to find out – surely you could never give yourself to someone who you loved, because then the inevitable hurt would be unbearable. But still... it's natural to wonder...

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

From the more rural area of Massachusetts, Harlowe's family moved closer to Boston and she began performing in vaudeville as a child, her charisma a dynamic force. She was discovered by a Hollywood producer at 16 and he set about getting her a movie contract, though rumors abound he had other plans for her as well.

She quickly fell into the role of the dangerous woman, one who men should turn away from but could not resist. This seemed to change her a bit, with her previously sunny disposition darkened by some of the abuses of the men in her life.

Directors seemed to have a hard time seeing her as anything else as well and it was this type casting that made her have to go to extreme measures to get her lead in *A Diva is Born*. When asked she denies it, saying that it was her talent, and the award she won for female vocalist would lend credence to this assertion.

In her real life, Harlowe has had a string of affairs each more tumultuous and scandalous than the last, real life reflecting fiction. She seems to go through agents like she goes through men, and reportedly for the same reason.

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE FADING STAR

He might be old, but he's still got a certain something – a real man, and enough of one to fall under your spell. You hooked him with one crook of your finger, and ever since then, he's been on your line, waiting to be reeled in.

What to do with him, though? Just have some fun, sucking him dry and discarding him? Or is there more that you can achieve... it would be quite something to really break the spirit of an old hero like this. Or perhaps there's something you could persuade him to do for you?

## THE JOURNEYING HERO

He's a true friend – at least, you think he is. You've always got on well, and you never felt the need to use your wiles upon him: he would just have moved off after a while, anyway, like he always does. He's on a mission to progress: he can never become too attached to any situation.

This is frustrating for you, really. Not because you can't seduce him – you bet you could, if you really wanted to – but because even as just a friend, he seems wary of getting too close. You start sharing feelings, and he backs away. And you've hardly ever got him to talk about his own emotions. But... perhaps that's what friendship has to be like, for people like you and him.

## THE PSYCHOTHERAPIST

You didn't even want to see her, really: it was your director's idea. Apparently your 'attitude' was causing trouble for the rest of the cast. And, true, three of them were in hospital: one with lacerations, one with 'nerves', and one with a self-inflicted gunshot wound. All because of you. So you went to her consulting rooms, like a good girl.

She tried to understand and to explain your problems – how your childhood had shaped you – how you needed to heal yourself before you could stop hurting others. It was all so much nonsense – you told her that you didn't *have* any problems – it was other people who had problems with you! Perhaps she should be talking with them, instead? And you walked out. It was satisfying at the time... but afterwards, you wondered. Could she really have helped you? It seems unlikely, but you never know.

## THE SIDEKICK

You at first thought about loving him, using him, and disposing of him, as you have treated so many other men. But there was something different about him – a warmth, a value – that stayed your hand. Instead, you became friends. Your star has risen much higher than his, but he has always supported you, and has been there for you when you needed someone to look you straight in the eye.

You sometimes wonder, though: if he had become a star, would he still stay at your shoulder? Would it be too demeaning for him, if his ambitions had been fully realized? Might he then want to make your relationship either a sexual one, or else nothing at all? You've never quite dared to ask.

## OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

### Positive

**THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR** – a solid, hard-working pro – but not when he looks at you. You don't think it would take much to bring him under your spell.

**THE SUBJECT** – she strikes a chord with you, although her life has been so different. Looking at her is like looking into a fascinating mirror – you want to do more of it, and you think she feels the same.

### Negative

**THE ART DIRECTOR** – he likes to be everybody's friend, but you see through him – you feel him judging you silently.

## ANGEL

Your escapades bring joy to millions – there are showbiz gossip columns that'd go out of business if you ever settled down. And you never hurt anyone who didn't lay themselves open to it. You don't force them to fall for you – they do it of their own free will, in full knowledge of your reputation and your history. You are teaching them a valuable lesson.

## DEVIL

There's a real savour in the suffering that you cause – you never feel quite so alive, you never see colours so vibrantly, as when you can taste heart's blood. You could hold back at any time, you could let them down gently, you could turn them away before they get in too deep – but you never do. You take them for all that they've got – and it feels *good*.

# ROLE

Your role in this film is a femme fatale with a difference – not just an enigmatic foil for men to dash themselves to pieces against. She seems to have a mission to look within herself, to find her own desires – perhaps even to change. It will be a challenge, for sure. How can you make that seem convincing?

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from STOLEN MOMENTS, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

# DILEMMA

You can just carry on as you are: Tarrington Manor is another film location among so many, where you would normally expect to leave at least one broken heart. But this time it feels like you have a choice: do you really want to carry on as you have? Might there be another way?

# THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

Player Name: **ERIN VENABLE**; she/her

Character Name: **ELSIE BELL** ; she/her; age: late-20s

Other Names: Mary Ann Bellard - Legal Name

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE GIRL NEXT DOOR](#)

## CAPSULE

**She's made a name for herself in a series of lovable and unthreatening roles – playing everybody's sweetheart, or sister. It wasn't what she set out to achieve in the world of acting, but it seems to work: she's always there, always with a smile, getting her happy ending without any grand drama. Now *Stolen Moments* may give her the opportunity to step out of the stereotype.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*It was a wedding, of mutual friends. Many of the guests were in the film business, so to see his name on the card next to yours at the dining-table was not a surprise. You knew of his work, of course – he was already famous. The director who somehow created more – who brought things out of actors that they themselves never knew they had within. It would be exciting to meet him at last.*

*He introduced himself, and then spent a good deal of time ignoring you while talking to the woman on his other side. Rude, yes, but you were glad to be left with your own thoughts for a little while: it had been a poignant moment, seeing your dear friend marrying: she had looked so wonderfully happy.*

*When Gottfried eventually turned to you, he first took a deep breath. "I've been wanting to speak with you for some time, my dear. What would you say to working with me on a new project?"*

*You coolly told him the name of your agent, and suggested that he might like to arrange a meeting.*

*He smiled. "Here –" He took up a Cape gooseberry from the table, and with two fingers and thumb, nimbly shucked it from its casing. He offered you the sweet, juicy, orange fruit. "It's good, isn't it?"*

*The dry, papery husk fluttered down to the table; looking dead already. Gottfried followed your gaze downwards with it. "What happens to the chrysalis, after the butterfly emerges? No-one knows. Or cares."*



## ROLE BACKGROUND

You grew up in a small town, in an ordinary family, with plenty of friends and enough to live on. It was a solid base – but you always wanted something a little more. There was a world of glamour and excitement out there, and you wanted to join it. The silver screen shone that world down into your life, and you gazed back at it, and saw yourself appearing there.

You worked hard as an actor, paying your dues in small amateur theatre pieces, at film school, and in independent productions. When you hit the big time, you felt at last you'd found your place. Role after role came your way – in big-name movies, up among the biggest stars. But somehow you never seemed to get a tough, dramatic role that you could set your teeth into.

Perhaps you were just too nice, too likeable, too relatable. Perhaps you should have had some awful trauma in your background, like some of the other actors have had. Perhaps you're not enough of a risk-taker – not willing enough to stretch yourself in unfamiliar directions, in case you break?

You're well-liked in the industry and on the set, and you have plenty of fans, of the low-key variety. But could there be more for you? Could you seize the spotlight? What might that mean to you? How might it change you?

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Elsie Bell, born Mary Ann Bellard, was raised in the North East. She moved to New York City to pursue acting, where she acted in a number of stage productions, including Shakespearean adaptations.

After a few years in that circuit, Elsie moved out to Hollywood to pursue acting in pictures. She got her first lead role in "City Girl" in 1926, where Hollywood fell in love with her as the girl next door. She was charming, sweet, and known throughout town for working hard and helping others in the business. Elsie has had a number of roles in films as lovely, sweet, young women and is going strong in that path.

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE ART DIRECTOR

He's a dedicated pro, with a real gift for getting on with people – which you admire. He used to be a real artist – you've never seen any of his work in that field, but you can imagine it must have been interesting. He's paid you romantic attention, between rushing around helping others – you've been seeing each other on and off for a little while now.

You would like to make things more serious, but you aren't sure if he feels the same – sometimes it feels like he cares about everyone, and that makes you feel less special to him. Maybe he wouldn't be such a good bet as a partner after all. But it's frustrating to have these glimpses of satisfaction and of happiness together, and then have them snatched away.

## THE JOURNEYING HERO

You've worked with him on a few films now, and each time it's been with a steadily-increasing dread. He has never said anything – never done anything bad – but you know. It's in his body language, in the curl of his lip, in the way he turns away at the end of the scene. He really despises you as an actor, and quite possibly also as a person.

Your friends have said that it's nothing, that he's like that with everyone – that he's just a cold and distant sort of fellow. But you know they're wrong: you've seen him complimenting other actors on their performances. You, never. It really makes you feel quite sick to think of working with him again now. But you can't say anything – you might lose this wonderful opportunity! What to do?

## THE PUBLICIST

She's quite lowly in the film industry hierarchy, but perhaps that's what drew you together: you can relax with her, and be yourself, not like with the other actors. You got talking one time when she was preparing some promotional work for you, and found that you shared a creative interest. *[Decide together what it is.]*

It's not something that you really talk much about with other people; but for the two of you, it's fulfilling and rewarding to be able to create things together. You don't think you're as talented as she is – although she always says it's the other way around – but anyway, you seem to click together, and you've made some really nice and interesting stuff.

## OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

### Positive

**THE CAD** - there was romance once between you, and today you remain friendly

**THE FADING STAR** – a much-loved veteran in the business, always full of charming anecdotes and useful advice.

**THE SIDEKICK** – not a huge ego, just someone who likes to help others shine. You really appreciate his support.

### Negative

**THE GOOD-TIME GIRL** - the papers often pit the two of you against one another, even though you're seldom up for the same roles; could one of your agents be behind it?

**THE LOCATION MANAGER** – a cold, zestless individual who tries to run the location like a machine.

## ANGEL

It's great to help people, and to be liked – and that's what your screen roles often do, and what you often do too. You're not exactly modest and humble – you are a successful film star, after all. But you are supportive and generous, and you don't have the arrogant and overbearing ways of some of your colleagues. You genuinely welcome the success of others, and you're always ready to look out for those less fortunate than you.

## DEVIL

You sometimes wonder what would happen if you were to shout and scream – to show some passion. How would people react – would they be scared? Would they worry about you? Would they respect you more? What if you were to focus on getting what you wanted, and not consider who might be in the way – what might that feel like? Where might you end up?

# ROLE

There's a tantalizing hint in what you've been told about your role – she is charming and lovely, but there's something fierce within her – and it might be given the chance to come out. You could turn her story around, and make her the queen of the drama – or even the villainess – depending on how you play her. Your fans would be baffled, perhaps angry. It would shift your reputation – maybe destroy it! But then, what next?

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from STOLEN MOMENTS, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

# DILEMMA

It feels as though Gottfried has offered you a potential turning-point in your career – and also, perhaps, in your life. Stay with what works – popular, charming, and well-liked? Or take a risk to explore the darker, deeper regions of your personality, and find out what you really want?

# THE GOOD-TIME GIRL

Player Name: **AIMEE MCCORMICK**; they/she

Character Name: \*coming soon\* ; she/her; age: "Eternally 29"

Other Names:

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE GOOD-TIME GIRL](#)

## CAPSULE

**Ready for fun and tough as nails, she's been playing 'tart with a heart' and similar roles since she arrived in the industry. But off-screen she's smart and thoughtful, and keeps herself mostly to herself. Film-making is a way to accumulate some money, to fund her real wishes and dreams.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*It was your private number that rang: the one you don't give out to people in the business. Otherwise, you would never have answered.*

*He introduced himself, although there was no need: of course, you knew all about him. He talked through some of your recent roles – showed that he had been paying attention, that he had been watching closely and evaluating you. None of this was unusual, so far.*

*But then he said "Imagine. You're just coming home from a long, tiring day on set. As you put key to lock you hear a noise – a soft cry. Something, perhaps a small animal, outside your door needs your help. You search in vain, finding nothing. The cry grows louder.."*

*"I don't understand," you said, coolly.*

*"Bear with me a little. You could continue to search for the unknown source of crying, but you're tired and the sun is setting. So you enter your home, closing the door and shutting the noise out behind you. Why is that?"*

*You found that somehow you were in tears. "What do you mean?" you said weakly.*

*"I mean to send you a part to look at," said Gottfried, cheerfully. "I think you'll like it. It's a little way out of your usual type. I know you don't need the work – but you'll find it interesting. Humour me?"*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

You grew up poor, of course: spending much of your time on the streets, using your wits, keeping your eyes open. You could see there were much better things in the world, better ways of living: and you knew you were smart enough to get yourself some of that.

You traded on your looks and your manner: for sure you did. What else did you have, to start with? If a casting director saw something in you that fitted a particular role, you weren't about to argue: work was work, money was money, status was status.

You've got to the level, now, though, where you are starting to consider again. Realistically, there's not much bigger you can get, confined in the types of roles that you've been playing. And you've got plenty of money saved. Is it time to think about reshaping your life?

You don't feel that you've been coarsened, or mis-shaped, inside, by what you've had to do; what you've had to play. But you guess you can't be sure about that until you quit. And it'll take a while to shake off your reputation, for sure. The saddest thing, perhaps, is that hardly anyone here would miss you, if you were to leave: and most likely no-one would want to come with you.

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

\*coming soon\*

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE GRANDE DAME

She's one of the biggest names in the business, and has been around since the year dot: and she doesn't bestow her favours lightly. So it means a lot that she has always treated you kindly, almost as if you were her own child.

You can only guess that there's something about you that speaks to her, for some reason: but anyway, you're very glad of it. A powerful friend is a good thing to have, in this backstabbing game: and she is a good person to be with. You guess you probably know her better than all but her oldest friends, by now.

## THE JOURNEYING HERO

He wandered into your life, as is his way: you met on a film shoot, and you took to him right away. He intrigued you. How did he stay so rootless, so unattached, always moving from one step to the next? How could he travel through the world receiving so little impression from it?

You spent a lot of time together, and you really thought you had made a connection – that you were the one who understood him. But the end of the shoot came, and he journeyed away again. And you realized that he had left you behind, one more step on the road; just like he had left behind everything else that might have been of importance in his life.

## THE NAIF

He's yet another fresh-faced and clean-limbed new arrival in the film business – and frankly he sickens you. What right has he got to look at you as though you're a piece of soiled merchandise? How can he judge you, when he has no idea of what you've had to pay to stay in this game?

You were that dedicated, that idealistic, once, perhaps. But you had it beaten out of you. Perhaps he needs the same treatment – that might turn him into an adult; into a regular human being.

## THE RIVAL

You still wonder if you made the right choice. She was the first director to spot your talent – to cast you in a major role. She offered you success, a career – a string of films with starring roles. But you were wary – you didn't want to become anyone's protégée. You tore up the contract that she'd offered you, and walked away.

Since then... well, your maintenance of your independence has been at a price. It took you a while to work your way back up to the top, and you had to make some compromises along the way. And perhaps you'd judged her too harshly: perhaps she really did just want to help you succeed – not to control you, as you feared.

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE FADING STAR** – he’s an old stager who understands the craziness of the industry, and who seems to value you as yourself.

## Negative

**THE GIRL NEXT DOOR** - the papers often pit the two of you against one another, even though you’re seldom up for the same roles; could one of your agents be behind it?

## ANGEL

It’s all part of the project; all in a good cause, you keep telling yourself. Just a little more of this, and you’ll be free to work on better things; to live a better life. And in the meantime, one thing you’d be proud of, if you were the proud type: you’ve never hurt anyone, apart from yourself. All the dirt, all the hurt, is stuck to you.

## DEVIL

You’ve had every opportunity to study cynicism in action, and you’re a quick learner. Practically everyone in this business is greedy, selfish, venal, perverted, crooked. You could get depressed – get drunk – get angry – if you really let yourself think about it.



# ROLE

Having read the part, you saw what Gottfried had meant, and you were intrigued. The character can't just throw off attachments: she has to really care about someone, and make tough decisions. It's almost a heroine role, seen from another angle – or a villainess. You feel like you can do it – but what might it do to you?

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from STOLEN MOMENTS, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

# DILEMMA

You've got so far by sticking to your programme: stay clean, don't get involved, don't think too hard about what's happening to you and to those around you. You've kept your core intact. But now you're being asked to open out – to reach out, to make connections, to get messy. You really aren't sure what that might do to you.

# THE GRANDE DAME

Player Name: **JEFF DIEWALD**; he/him

Character Name: **GWENDOLYN MAYFAIR** ; she/her; age: 40s (actual: 50s)

Other Names: So many husbands, so little time... Gwendolyn Mayfair Enfield, Gwendolyn Mayfair St. Regis, Gwendolyn Mayfair Winston. (All known, and in the tabloids.) Jennifer May (maiden name, mostly unknown) Jennifer Vaughn (unknown, young love is so stupid.)

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE GRANDE DAME](#)

## CAPSULE

**Over her long career, she has reached the top of this hollow, glittering industry: and she retains her place there by force of will – respected by all, feared by many. Only she knows for sure the sacrifices she has made to get there – and where the bodies are buried. But when you're at the top, there's only one way to go... and the camera becomes less and less kind, as the years go by...**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*A little while ago you started holding monthly salons – gatherings of delightful people, thinkers, creative types, those with interesting opinions – united of course by their admiration and love for you. These evenings sped by delightfully, especially for you as patroness.*

*You were surprised to see Gottfried appear: by himself, not as a guest of one of the regulars. You wouldn't have imagined he'd even have heard about the events: isn't he supposed to be always busy?*

*He was charm itself, kissing your hand, listening deferentially. You could sense, though, that some of the others were uneasy at his presence. Particularly as he offered no thoughts or opinions of his own; just smiling politely and enigmatically.*

*Towards the end, he turned to you. His eyes were gleaming brightly. "Here's a philosophical conundrum. If a person doesn't believe in the world they are in – if they judge it to be a construct, a dream, a fable – are they obliged to act morally within it? When they eventually return to their own world – as they are confident will happen – might their actions in that false world be held against them, or not?"*

*You were not at all sure what he was driving at, but you nodded graciously, as if to acknowledge the point. He continued "Dear lady, I think I have something that might interest you – something novel, a new kind of role, that would suit you well. Would you care to read it over for me?"*

*The promised script never arrived. But somehow you found yourself on location at Stolen Moments, nonetheless. Intrigued, and wary.*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

You've been in the film industry since its early days, and have seen the lows and highs, and ridden the waves of fashion and taste – always maintaining your place at the top. A legend of the silver screen, your legacy is secure.

But from the top, the only way is downwards – or so it seems. Age is finally catching up with you – you've postponed it for so long, but your body has started to rebel. And so has your spirit. Can you really summon up the energy to rule over a film location, one more time? Surely you must! – because, to surrender to the years would be... you don't know what that might mean.

Over the years, you've loved and lost, you've broken hearts and had your own heart broken. The fire and passion is not so strong in you now as it was – but it still flickers, and might still burn. You don't feel ready for the romantic scrapheap just yet.

Younger actors, and film crew, naturally look up to you – respecting your experience and reputation. You know that advice is rarely truly welcome, so you give it judiciously. But there are some people who you keep a fond eye on – who you think of as protégés. And others who you can see are trouble – who need to be dealt with firmly. If Gottfried and his directing staff aren't up to the job of keeping order, you are quite happy to do it for them. Not many people dare to disobey you, when you sharpen your voice.

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Gwendolyn Mayfair has been a star for most of her life, even if the early years were tough. What the public knows is mostly fiction woven by her, which she guards carefully. There are enough truths in it, sort of, that her latest publicist can sell it. She's hard on publicists; there have been many. The same is true of her three ex-husbands and other rumored lovers. She gets what she wants, and refuses to be just the pretty thing on someone's elbow.

Gwendolyn spreads her love to the crew of the productions she's involved in. Some of her directors have accused her of bribing cameramen, lighting people, and others, to make sure she gets the best angles and shots. Those are all perfidious lies, of course, by jealous directors known to mistreat their crews (and casts). She's also, occasionally, taken a newcomer under her wing, to help them with their careers. That's caused a couple of major explosions and public fights.

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE FADING STAR

He was once as big a star as you – together you lit up the firmament and the screen. You made sweet music together, on camera and in life – you were inseparable partners.

It ended, as these things do; and since then, he has faded away somewhat. But you still have an affection for him; and still, in certain lights, the brightness within him fights its way through, and quickens your heart.

## THE GOOD-TIME GIRL

She came from nothing, and made a name for herself in this difficult business – playing roles that many actresses wouldn't have wanted. People think that she doesn't care what she does – you can see that she's a smart girl, who's decided where she wants to make her compromises. She reminds you of your younger self, in a way; although things are so different these days, of course.

You've looked out for her, and helped in her career when you could. You treat her almost like your own child, some have unkindly said: not that you have ever had the chance to see how you would have been with a real daughter or son.

## THE INGENUE

You discovered her and gave her her break, and *this* is how she repays you! – by being a blip?! You can barely stand it. Any true protege of yours should be nothing but an overnight success! Then again, what if her star were to grow, and to start to eclipse your own?

You really aren't sure if she is a true innocent, with no awareness of what her rise might do to you; or if she is a conniving little minx, who has set out to destroy you and to steal everything you have. You suspect Gottfried plans for this to be her Big Shot at Stardom... and now you can't decide how you feel about that.

## THE VETERAN

You've worked together over many years – you've seen her evolve from a burning young star into a cuddly old legend. She gets cast when directors want wisdom – that calm gaze, that steady expression, that warm, gentle voice, that speaks the truths of the ages.

You wish you had been able to adapt to age quite so easily! Instead, here you are still fighting to hold it back. You dearly hope that, before the years inevitably catch up with you, you can learn some of her wise ways.

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## **Positive**

THE LOCATION MANAGER – he’s a marvel, so quick and efficient. He really gets things done. But you worry about his obsessive control. What will happen if he ever cracks?

## **Negative**

THE SIDEKICK – the son of two great actors who were your friends. But he’s just a feeble failure, who doesn’t have what it takes to become a *real* star.

## ANGEL

You're everyone's favourite old trouper – relied on for solid and inspiring performances, and a golden thread reaching back to the greats of the past. You look out for those around you – keep the set functioning smoothly and efficiently, defusing clashes of personality. You're a great example of how to grow old gracefully.

## DEVIL

Your patience is not limitless. You have a bark, and a bite, that you are willing and ready to use when you think someone deserves to receive them. Your appreciation of your own worth is considerable – and you insist on being paid the respect that you're due.

## ROLE

You thought nothing could surprise you in films any more, but this is a different kind of role that Gottfried wants you to play. An older woman, of course – but not one whose life is in irrevocable decline. Instead, she sees a possible road ahead to what might be a new chapter – a new meaning. Do you dare to take her down it?

### **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from STOLEN MOMENTS, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

## DILEMMA

You've been doing this for so long, you aren't sure you know how to stop, even if you wanted to. But to collapse at the wheel would be so undignified. Should this be your last film? Should you carry on seeking more roles, while you become frailer and weaker? Should you try and find something else to do with what remains of your life? The future is uncertain.

# THE HAIRSTYLIST

*Details subject to change*

Player Name: **uncast**

Character Name: ; gender; age

Link to Who's Playing Who -

## CAPSULE

**He's had the hopes and fears of every star at his fingertips – he's the one they trust, the one they confide in, as he tends their luscious locks, or trims their marvellous moustaches. His skill brought him here; and he's kept here because of his caring for those he works with. But he's never been sure if this is all that fate has marked out for him.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You never knew where he got his hair cut: not by you, anyway. It was beautifully done, but unimaginative. And he always had a lovely clean shave.*

*It must have been the third or fourth of his films that you were working on, when he finally deigned to talk to you. Apparently one of the actors had told him how helpful you were.*

*You were busy sweeping up. "What do you do with the ends?" he asked. He was lounging at an angle against the door jamb. The dying sunlight was behind him, making a bloody halo.*

*You told him that they were burnt. "You've never been tempted to keep some as a souvenir? Or for magical purposes?" You assumed he was joking, although it was difficult to be sure.*

*He unbent himself from the doorway and came over to you. "If I was to sit here –" he indicated the chair, "and you were to work your mysteries on me, neither of us might like the result. Neither of us might understand it! It's better if I stay as I am, and you keep doing what you do."*

*You felt your hand taken – his fingers were long and surprisingly delicate, and they traced your own. "You're an important part of this ship. Without what you are doing here, we could all flounder. I'm going to put a great deal of faith in you. And you are going to repay it, handsomely."*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

You were still a child when you gave your first haircut: helping your parents, you trimmed the locks of your younger siblings. You found you had a knack for it – the ability to see how the waves of hair would lie, how they would affect the shape of the face, how they could convey mood and personality. Soon you were earning useful money from the people of the neighbourhood.

You had a little formal training, but to tell the truth, you didn't need it – your strength was the empathy that you built up with your clients. The more you progressed up the social scale, the more time you could devote to each session, the more you could encourage the clients to open up to you. You got a place in a top-notch hair salon: but it was soon apparent that you were just making the owner wealthy.

That was when the film industry came calling. One of your regulars was an actress: she asked you to attend her on location. It was the start of a beautiful career.

You've been struck by how needy these actors are – so many of them talk to you as though you're their only friend in the world, the only one they can trust. It's sad – when they devote themselves to creating pleasure for others. It's satisfying to know that you're doing your part to help them in return.

But all the same, you've been doing this for a while now, and you have been starting to wonder. Were you really put on Earth to just be an attendant – someone who's hired to serve others? Might there be more that you could do with your life?

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND



## ANGEL

You're soothing, calming, gentle and kind – you help people with their troubles, and you make them look amazing too. It's a noble calling, and a rewarding one. The film set would be a grim and stressful place without you.

## DEVIL

When it comes down to it, you are a servant. Well paid – but still just tending to the needs of people who you have no reason to respect. Sometimes you'd like to assert your own worth – to show the value that you have. Sometimes you have the urge to use your empathic skills to harm and undermine your clients, rather than to help them...

## TASK

It seems routine: prepare the stars' hair, their beards and moustaches, ready for each day's shooting. Make sure that they look at their best, and as the art design requires. But you know that you are also here for emotional support – there's a tension around the shoot, which highly-strung actors may find difficult to deal with, unless you can help them. You are ready to ask the questions that may need asking.

### **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to work with the actors to decide upon their hairstyles and facial hair, and how they will look on screen. You may need to seek guidance from THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, THE SCRIPTWRITER and/or THE ART DIRECTOR about the general structure and look of the film, but the actors themselves will be your main guides as to what they think they should look like: question them about their roles, and how best to bring out their characteristics. Your work will complement that of THE COSTUME DESIGNER and THE MAKEUP ARTIST, of course. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue revising and improving the coiffures.*

## DILEMMA

You're at the top of your game – film hairstyling doesn't come bigger than this. But is it where you really want to be? You can carry on doing this, for many years more if you wish. Or you can ask yourself what else you might want from your life. Perhaps it's time for you to move from the background into the spotlight... and into the unknown.

# THE INGENUE

Player Name: **ERICKA SKIRPAN**; she/her

Character Name: **CLARA LANGSTROM** ; she/her; age: 25

Other Names: Edith Collier (Unknown except by agent/directors)

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE INGENUE](#)

## CAPSULE

**New to film-making, and young in years but not in soul. She has the kind of appearance and manner that makes people want to protect her... or to take advantage of her. From a poor and restricted childhood background, she is still sometimes shocked, even repelled, by the behaviour that she sees around her in this celluloid Babylon. But she took avidly to the comforts and delights that fall to those who are loved by the camera, and she has indulged herself more often and more deeply than is wise. Will this affect her growing stardom?**

*(Warning: this character has an addiction. It'll be up to you what the addiction is, and how much you want to play upon it; but if this is a trigger issue for you, you will want to avoid this role.)*

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*At first you thought he was just another creepy older guy. He was paying you a lot of attention – detailed attention. You sighed inwardly and prepared to brush him off.*

*But then you saw his eyes properly. There was something different about them – an inner light, maybe. You felt like they were looking through your surface, and into you.*

*“Do you want this to be you – this...” He gestured vaguely. “It needn’t be.”*

*You murmured that you weren’t sure what he meant. But your mind was racing and your nerves were tingling. It was like a hit.*

*“I mean it, you know. There’s more to life than being outrageously glamorous and making the world fall in love with you.” He smiled. “Although for most people, that’d do to be getting on with... but it’s not enough for you, is it? You need something more.”*

*You felt ashamed: evidently he knew about your addiction.*

*“Come and work with me for a bit – you’ll find it interesting, I promise. No strings attached! Find your own path. How about it?”*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

You weren't especially cute as a young child, or so your parents said: just ordinary. It was something that came upon you in your teens – you transformed into a swan. You started getting attention, and at first you welcomed it – you hadn't yet realized that there could be a dark side to people liking you.

You're older and wiser now, and you're careful about the effect that you know you have on people. Managing others' emotions, and dealing with their responses, is a real load upon you – you feel like to get through an average day, you're constantly in danger of accidentally overheating someone, or provoking an unwanted response.

It's not surprising that you looked for a way to ease your mind. That was how it started – just something to help you relax, wind down, let off some steam at the end of a tough day. Now, though, it's much more than that – you are properly addicted. Your body is healthy and fit enough that you're not yet really showing the signs. But you know that won't last forever.

Stardom has been kind of accidental. It just seemed like the obvious thing to do, to exploit your gifts. And you turned out to be OK at it! But you have the uneasy feeling that if you're to really progress – if you want to make a solid mark upon this business – you might have to clean yourself up first. Otherwise, you could just be stuck in ingénue roles until you're too old and worn to fool the camera.

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Born Edith Collier in the Irish slums of New York City, the young woman led a cramped but happy childhood, until scarlet fever ravaged her entire family, leaving her with a fair bit of nerve damage and in a catholic orphanage. She spent her teenage years running off to the arts districts of the city, dreaming of a bigger life on stage and sneaking into shows whenever she could. Discovered at the blushing age of 20, the director who found her liked the fragile, delicate and yet vibrant charisma she showed. He didn't know it was a flush of booze that helped numb the worst of her pain and give her courage when little else did. She had the looks, the style, and the talent. She was a young success within a few years.

Eventually, her career grew as much as it could in New York. She was flown out to LA for a chance at the big pictures. So far, she's been quite successful. Her agent rewrote her into a better story, of course, with a better name (Clara sells, Edith sews!) and soon she started landing all the young, beautiful, fragile flowers of roles, including the victimized daughter in *The Phlebotomist*! Behind the scenes, she's begun to indulge more and more. To keep up with the lifestyle, and the pain, she's dabbled with whatever booze, drug, or man has been temptingly put in front of her. She always regrets it in the morning, but forgets to say no at night. Clara isn't certain how she can keep up this lifestyle, but she knows she has to try.

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE ART DIRECTOR

He's a senior figure on the set, of course; answering often to Gottfried himself. Experienced, professional, capable. And he has taken a particular interest in introducing you gently to the world of film – he has been wonderfully kind and understanding.

You may be new to the business, but you are no fool. You can see that he has feelings for you – but for whatever reason, he's not able or not willing to express them. Would you like him to?

## THE GRANDE DAME

She discovered you, and gave you your break – for which you are duly grateful. And she's a great star, and hugely popular with the fans – that's worth respect in itself.

But sometimes you feel stifled by her attention. It's as though she feels that she owns you! You really don't want this to develop into an even more unhealthy relationship than it already is...

## THE METHOD ACTING INSTRUCTOR

She contacted you – apparently she saw your screen tests. She feels that you've really got something – a rare talent. She thinks you're better than just the pretty-girl roles that you're being given.

You are... not sure. Maybe she's genuinely trying to help you, but maybe she's got an angle. People often do. What she's saying is flattering, for sure: but do you want to put yourself into her hands?

## THE SUBJECT

She seemed to understand how tough it was for you – she had been young and out-of-place in a difficult, glamorous environment. She knew what you needed to do, to cope with the pressures – and she was happy to show you the way.

Together you have plumbed the depths of indulgence. You can talk to her – she will understand – and she won't judge. And you do the same for her. But sometimes you really don't want to look her in the eye, after what you've done together.

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE JOURNEYING HERO** – he's got his route to the top mapped out, and is already some way along it. Maybe you can learn from him?

## Negative

**THE CAD** - That.. did not end well. How did it even get started?

**THE PSYCHOTHERAPIST** – She wants to understand your problems, but you don't have the sort of problems that she can help with. You're fine as you are. If only she'd leave you alone.

## ANGEL

You're keen to learn about the business, and you genuinely enjoy making people's lives brighter and more pleasant. You're interested in people, and how they work, and how they enjoy themselves. You're always willing to share...

## DEVIL

Some people, though, are just vile – and you've met more than your fair quota of them. There are times when you could cheerfully maim and mutilate every creep who's ogled you or hit you up in the street. And there are times when you let yourself get so deep, or so high, that you really don't know what you're doing – or to whom.

# ROLE

She's a young girl, of course – on the start of her journey in life. But the path of that journey is intriguingly vague, from what you've seen so far. It will let you stretch yourself – if you want it to – will let you find out your true capabilities, as an actor and as a person.

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from STOLEN MOMENTS, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

# DILEMMA

Life is pretty good – you're successful, and you're handling it, with some chemical help. But to stay on this path – so comfortable, so reassuring – will in time shut off other doors. If you want to try something different – maybe to become a real actor, and eventually a real star – you may have to break your habit – and you may not have long left.

# THE INVESTOR

*Details subject to change*

Player Name: **pending**

Character Name: ; gender; age

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE INVESTOR](#)

## CAPSULE

**She's a very wealthy woman – a widow, looking to turn what she considers to be blood money into something valuable. Gottfried invited her to back the Stolen Moments project, promising that as well as thrilling the masses, it could help her redeem herself. She was doubtful, but felt she had to try.**

*(Warning: this character was in an abusive marriage, which ended suddenly. It'll be up to you what are the details of the relationship, and of its end, and how much you want to play upon it; but if this is a trigger issue for you, you will want to avoid this role.)*

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You'd heard that he was looking for investors for his new project, and you liked the sound of Stolen Moments. His reputation as a director was second to none, of course. You were a little wary of meeting with him – he might be the kind of man who would look down on a woman like yourself, wealthy or not.*

*But as it turned out, he was very brisk and businesslike – none of that difficult artistic temperament. He laid out the details of the investment before you, making clear that it was speculative – the film might do well, but on the other hand, it might fail: and you would lose everything you'd put in. That was the nature of the business.*

*You could spare the money easily, so you signed, with a steady hand. Then things changed somewhat.*

*Gottfried leaned in, and took your hands between his, gently relieving you of your pen. It wasn't a sexual touch – it was more like a parent, or a priest. "This isn't just about the film, you know. It's about you, too. Your moments have been stolen, as well. I can help you get them back."*

*You weren't sure what he meant, but you nodded and smiled politely.*

*"The thing is –" he squeezed your hands slightly – "you'll have the chance to open a new chapter, here. And you can write your own story into it. Won't that be grand?"*

## BACKGROUND

You grew up among the poorest of the poor – living off scraps and handouts, begging in the streets, stealing leftover fruit from the markets. It was grim, dismal, and grey – but it made you tough. And it made you realize that you'd do anything to get out of there – to improve your life.

You were lucky that, as you grew older, you started to catch men's eyes. And luckier still that you didn't get drawn into a life of vice and exploitation, like so many girls of your class. Instead, you were plucked from the gutter by your husband – a wealthy man who saw something special in you.

You didn't love him – you could never love someone who essentially bought you. Maybe you could never love anyone at all... But anyway, you tried to be a good and dutiful wife; you quickly understood the ways of the rich, and you learnt not to embarrass him or let him down – despite his family's disapproval. You were an ornament to his arm – an expensive and unworthy one – as he often reminded you.

Last year, though, your husband's life of indulgence caught up with him. He died of heart failure – not surprising, given the quantities of alcohol and drugs that he used to get through. He had left everything to you, perhaps as a final defiant gesture to his family. You were a free woman, with enough money to do anything you wanted to.

But what *did* you want to do? You really weren't at all sure. Casting around for worthwhile projects, you came across *Stolen Moments* – the dramatization of the life of a most interesting woman. After meeting Gottfried, you knew you had to be involved: you signed over a generous sum of money, to bring the project to realization. And here on location with the film cast and crew, it's all rather exciting – you can't wait for shooting to start!

## ANGEL

You are generous and thoughtful – you can see when people need help, and when you can provide it, you generally do. You encourage talent, and support hard work. Despite the disadvantages that you started with, you will do better things with your late husband's money than he ever would have; and you are going to leave the world a better place than you found it.

## DEVIL

The trouble with being known to be rich is that everybody wants some – and that makes it difficult to trust approaches. You're hard to befriend, and you constantly find yourself looking for the ulterior motive. That tough street kid is still inside you, and when she wants to, she can come out – teeth and nails.



# TASK

Until Gottfried arrives, as far as you're concerned, you're in charge: you need to make sure that the project is operating soundly. After all, it's your money that's being spent here! Of course, you will defer to the chief crew in artistic and technical matters: but you know a tight operation when you see one, and you can identify slackers and troublemakers. Learning more about the people here may also help you learn about yourself: what is it that you want from *Stolen Moments*?

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to become familiar with the location and its operations, and assess how the key crew members are doing their jobs. You will need to identify those members of cast and crew who could be weak links, and come up with suggestions as to how best to manage them, which you should pass to THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR or THE LOCATION MANAGER as appropriate. In Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this valuable work.*

# DILEMMA

You keep thinking about that possibility of a new chapter. This film could be a chance to reinvent yourself – to become something quite different. What might that be? – what might you want it to be? Or should you maybe just put yourself in Gottfried's hands, and see what he has in mind for you?

# THE JOURNEYING HERO

Player Name: **ROBIN KELLOGG**; he/him

Character Name: **\*coming soon\*** ; char gender; age: ?

Other Names:

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE JOURNEYING HERO](#)

## CAPSULE

**A man on a mission – learning at every step. He's been following the classic path of growing and developing in his life and his acting career, thinking about his progress, making connections along the way. Everything seems mapped out ahead of him: he can see, in the successful older actors here, the people who he is likely to become.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You first met him a while ago, when you were a teenager. He was a guest of your parents at the castle, and was younger than himself of course; quite new in the business. Up until that point you'd had no real interest in film: you were aware of it as a popular diversion, no more than that.*

*He chatted with you, asked you about your interests, and he seemed knowledgeable: you found yourself able to talk to him, more than with most people.*

*Then he showed you his current piece of work: a private screening, projected onto the wall of a cool wine cellar, deep in the castle's bowels. It was just one reel, but it took your breath away – the beauty, the impact.*

*The lead actor looked somewhat similar to you. Gottfried saw that you had noticed this. "He doesn't have what you have, though. Not many people do."*

*You weren't sure what he meant. "You'll see. Look inside yourself and follow what you find there. Then come and look for me." He gently kissed your forehead, and left you his business card: it simply said "G."*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

Unlike most actors in the film industry, you come from a background of great privilege – your family are aristocrats, and you grew up in a castle. But you decided early on that the life of landed luxury was not for you. You wanted to make your own mark on the world – to carve your own path.

You are not exactly estranged from your family, but you know that they regret your decision to turn your back on them, and they disapprove of your choice of career. You're pretty sure they wouldn't understand your reasons – not that you have tried all that hard to make them see.

You chose acting because it allows you to progress, to learn, to grow, all the while in the guise of other people. Your true self can remain as protected as you want it to be. And film acting is clearly the best kind for progressing: it's the future, and it lets performers reach unimaginably large audiences, compared with the theatre. You can see how well you're doing, by the size of the roles that you're getting, and the size of the cheques that you're paid, and the respect of those who are working alongside you.

So far, it's all going well – you've been making great strides, rising from small parts to starring roles. *Stolen Moments* is your biggest film yet, and you intend to leave your mark on it – as well as learning from the established stars who are here with you.

You've never yet stopped to ask yourself just why it is that you feel so driven to succeed, to prove yourself the best – why it is that you don't feel you can stop to look around on your journey, let alone settle down – why is it that you've never formed a lasting romantic attachment? Perhaps opening that box would be too dangerous to contemplate.

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

\*coming soon\*

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE FEMME FATALE

She's the closest thing you have to a good friend – you're very fond of her. You see through her affected toughness and her callous exterior – you know that inside she is a warm person who yearns to share her feelings. (She's also very attractive – she can seduce anyone she wants – but, so far, she hasn't tried it on you; and you haven't sought that yourself.)

But, as usual with you, you're wary of reaching out to her too openly. When the conversation gets too intensely emotional, you find yourself backing away. You feel that she has let her emotional responses shape her life too much – she has made a lot of enemies, broken a lot of hearts. You don't want to end up like that! But even so, why is it that you are so wary of making a close connection?

## THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

She seems like a perfectly nice person, but she really isn't a good actor – in your opinion. She looks good on camera, and she can hold a pose and say a line – but it doesn't live and breathe. It's disappointing, because you really feel that with a bit more skill (or perhaps a bit more talent) she could really be something.

You've held off from getting involved until now. But really, if she's working alongside you then her performance is going to impact the way the film is received. You don't want to be unkind, but you probably need to give her a few tips, for your sake. She might be upset – but really she should be grateful for your help and you're sure in time that she will see that.

## THE GOOD-TIME GIRL

You worked with her a while ago, on a film shoot, and you hit it off: you spent a lot of time together. You wondered if she might have real feelings for you – you hoped not! You weren't in a place in your life where you could be dealing with that sort of thing.

Seeing her again now, you wonder how her own journey is going. She must be getting to the age now where her looks can no longer carry her by themselves. You still think of her fondly, despite the way you drifted silently out of her life after finishing working together.

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE INGENUE** – she's new to the business, and looks eager to learn. You hope she has a good path mapped out for herself.

**THE MAN OF MYSTERY** – a free spirit like yourself, he doesn't let himself get tied down by other people.

## Negative

**THE SCRIPTWRITER** - You've encountered her before, when she was still a journalist; she knows things.. things you'd rather didn't get out.

## ANGEL

You're dedicated, hard-working, and keen to learn: you respect those who know more than you, and you're generally kind to those who are junior in the business. You're an agreeable companion, with no bad habits, and in general the film set is a more pleasant place with you on it.

## DEVIL

You have your mind and heart firmly fixed on your objectives, and you don't really care about what happens to those who you pass along the way. To be honest, you don't care about other people much at all. They have their uses, for sure: but you don't let yourself get tied down by them.

# ROLE

The role that he was given will challenge him to: question his assumptions about what is worthwhile in life, and maybe change his aims.

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from STOLEN MOMENTS, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

# DILEMMA

You've got this far along your path, and it's all gone well. But what might you have sacrificed, along the way? Are you going to keep treading onwards and upwards forever – or does there come a point where enough is enough, and you decide to accept life as it is, and step off the path?

# THE LOCATION MANAGER

Player Name: **JASON GAGLIARDI**; he/him

Character Name: **BENJAMIN ABROOD** ; he/him; age: 37

Other Names: "Ben" (if you really must, but that's no way to get on his good side)

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE LOCATION MANAGER](#)

## CAPSULE

**He has the job of making the film location function properly and operate smoothly – ensuring that everything, and everyone, is in place and ready for Gottfried's arrival. There are few better at this task – he is famously organized, capable, and ready to deal calmly and drily with the countless unexpected details that always emerge. It is rumoured that he has ice for blood: and if anyone has seen the inside of his bedroom, they have never mentioned it. But how will he cope, when things don't go to plan? – what will happen when that cool exterior cracks?**

*(Warning: this character will find it hard to deal with Gottfried's continued absence and the responsibility to keep things on track, and will degenerate under the stress and uncertainty. It's up to you how you want to play this.)*

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You'd just started working locations, and were busily finding your way into your job – marshalling paperwork, making telephone calls, and wrangling suppliers. This fellow kept standing around, watching you – he wasn't exactly in your way, in fact he was being careful to keep out of it – but he was in your eyeline. Distracting! And he kept on gently smiling.*

*Eventually you got fed up. "Excuse me, sir – if you don't have business here, can you please clear off? I'm trying to work here."*

*"Oh, but I do have business here," he said. He stepped towards you, and it was as if the rest of the world melted away – the clattering of deliveries, the distant shouts of technicians, the rustling of papers, all faded right down. He placed his hands gently on your desk, across from you: his fingers were long and slender. "You are my business."*

*He explained that he liked the way you worked: even though you had only just started the job. He said that he wanted you to work with him – that he needed someone like you, to keep the others in order. You had no idea who he was, but even so you were flattered.*

*“Finish up here, first, of course. You’re doing a great job here, and I don’t want you to interrupt it. Then come and find me.” He tossed you a business card: on the back it simply said ‘G.’*

*As he turned away, the real world crashed back in – all the sounds returned, seemingly louder than before. You blinked once or twice, took a breath, and got back to work.*

*That film tanked – but the first one you made with Gottfried, a few months later, was a substantial hit. And since then, his success and his reputation have only grown. You are quietly proud of your part in it.*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

Your childhood was ordinary: your father left you alone, and your sister tended to your mother’s needs, so you were free to develop your own interests. You had a fascination for order – for control. You collected things, arranged collections, and spent happy solitary hours organizing your possessions. Going to the cinema by yourself was another beloved pastime – the world presented there on the screen made so much more sense than the ‘real’ world.

After your mother died, your father belatedly took some interest, and set you up in work – as a supply manager to a local hotel. You took to it right away: your skills and aptitudes fitted you well to the world of work. You were diligent and efficient. You never made many friends at work – you were too dedicated for that – but you enjoyed life, anyway.

Your sister and father drifted out of your life; you were too caught up in your tasks to bother with maintaining emotional links. Over time you progressed to event management, and then to location management in the film industry – where you have found your perfect metier.

The only trouble with making films is the people, you are sometimes heard to ‘joke’. Gottfried is a wonderful employer: he trusts you and leaves you to your work. But the crew are a messy bunch, always coming up with unpredictable needs, and over-emotional responses – and the actors, of course, even more so.

Uncertainty and incoherence make you uneasy – and the worse they get, the longer they continue, the more difficult it is for you. Once your protective facade cracks, who knows what might come out – and what might be allowed in?



# CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Benjamin Abrood was born to Alicia and Mark Abrood, once successful hoteliers who, by the time Benjamin was old enough to understand what was going on, had fallen on hard times due to his mother's illness. Their once great establishments had dwindled down to their original hotel, The Blue Palace in Beverly Hills, which suffered from years of neglect.

For as long as he can remember, Benjamin has had one motto: "a place for everything and everything in its place." To combat the reality of his mother's illness, his family's money problems, and dwindling reputation, Benjamin found an escape in his collections. Rocks, bugs, baseball cards, bottle caps, anything and everything was gathered, catalogued, and put in tidy organization. His crowning jewel, however, was his collection of film posters.

At 17, work came easily for Benjamin, as long as he was in charge and others followed the order he insisted on. From his beginnings as the supply manager of the Blue Palace, Benjamin quickly rose to operations and events manager, helping the hotel turn a profit for the first time in more than a decade. Luminaries of the screen and their entourages adopted it as "the place" to meet. His determination, and organization, allowed his father to sell, and while the new owners asked him to stay, he wanted a new challenge. He found his true calling with the film studios, where every picture brought another chance to bring order to chaos.

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

He's worked as Gottfried's right hand for years – a capable and competent assistant, who anticipates his master's needs as much as he interprets them. But you know he is ambitious himself – he hopes to shake off Gottfried's mantle, and become a director in his own right. And you suspect that he wants you to join him.

You yourself also have a long connection with Gottfried – you owe him your successful career. To leave him would feel like a betrayal. But perhaps it is time to move on – to try a different influence?

## THE FADING STAR

When you were young, he was your favourite actor – he seemed impossibly handsome, heroic, and distant, up there on the silver screen. You wanted to be like him when you grew up – to *be* him, if possible.

Joining the film industry was a let-down in some ways – you saw the hard work and the grime and ordinariness that lies behind the glamour. But he has never lost his appeal, for you,. Even now his career is winding down, and the starring roles are drifting away – you still venerate him, and seek out his company. Perhaps he can give you some stability and guidance, in this time of trial by chaos.

## THE PSYCHOTHERAPIST

Practically everyone on the location is obsessed with their image or other selfish concerns, incapable of seeing the bigger picture. But she has a solid and cool intellectual detachment – she understands how emotion can often get in the way.

You've enjoyed conversations together about politics, about science, about all sorts of things – you feel almost relaxed, in her company. You do sometimes wonder if she might be using some sort of psychological trick to try and win you to her side. But having a companion like this feels very valuable; so you do your best to dismiss such subversive thoughts.

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE GRANDE DAME** – a veteran star who seems to genuinely appreciate your efforts to make things run smoothly. They don't make them like her any more.

**THE NAIF** – a youngster who seems eager to learn, and who actually shows you some respect for the work that you do – unlike most of these actors.

## Negative

**THE GIRL NEXT DOOR** – she may charm everyone else with her winsome ways, but not you. You can see right through her: she is just as selfish, and tiresomely demanding, as any other actor.

# ANGEL

You're at everyone's elbow, giving them what they need before they even ask for it. Without you, an operation like this couldn't run at all: you turn chaos into success. You remain calm, unflustered, efficient, and capable: you're a model colleague.

# DEVIL

There is a distance between you and them. They are messy – disordered– generally, trouble. They think of you as cold and inhuman; and perhaps they're right, if to be human is to be mired and enmeshed in emotional stew all day long. To be honest, you are better than that.

# TASK

On the face of it, it's the same job that you've done many times: ensuring supplies are in place, answering requests from colleagues, briefing and liaising with locals and with junior staff. It feels though, somehow, like there is more at stake this time. You will need to make sure to carve out some space and time for yourself – some little piece of order and control that you can escape into when you feel the need.

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to ensure that all creative and technical staff review and sign the morality clause in their contracts (you will receive this at the run). Some may be reluctant, or may seek to negotiate the clauses. You are empowered to make changes to individual contracts if you judge it appropriate. You are aware that if these standards are visibly breached, you will be considered to have failed in your duty to the studio. In Act 2, you will probably be expected to monitor your colleagues' behaviour.*

# DILEMMA

You're good at shuffling pieces around the board, making people fit into the right places to get the job done. But something inside you wonders: have you lost touch with your humanity? Might there be something to be gained from reaching out – from listening – from caring? Before it's too late?

# THE MAKEUP ARTIST

*Details subject to change*

Player Name: **uncast**

Character Name: ; gender; age

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE MAKEUP ARTIST](#)

## CAPSULE

**She turned her back on her own beauty while still young, finding it had brought her more pain than joy. Now she devotes herself to shaping perfection on the faces of others: seeing their best, most attractive selves, and painting them for the camera's avid consumption. She works hard, perhaps feeling she has something to prove to the world. But few are as close to, and intimate with, the secret feelings of the stars.**

*(Warning: this character suffered unwanted sexual attention as a teenager. It'll be up to you what that involved and how severe it was, and how much you want to play upon it; but if this is a trigger issue for you, you will want to avoid this role.)*

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You found him in your studio, out on location: you had been away for a quick break, and there he was, sitting in the chair that your clients sit in while you make their faces. You knew who he was – the superstar director – otherwise you would have asked him to leave right away. Even so, it was an annoying invasion.*

*He turned round towards you, and you were surprised to see that he had made up his face – into the classic pierrot mask, with one solitary black tear under his eye.*

*Normally you would be furious at someone else touching your equipment; but there was something terribly disarming in his smile.*

*"I think I prefer my own face: but this one serves its purpose, don't you think?" He ran his long, slender fingers through his hair, disarranging it, adding to the disturbed impression.*

*You started to ask what he was doing there, but he pre-empted you. "I've come to ask you to work for me. I've got a new project – and I need the best. That's you! I need someone who knows the insides of people's heads as well as she knows the outsides. Don't be modest – I've made my mind up!"*

*And so you found yourself agreeing to come to work on Stolen Moments. "Now, can you be so kind as to take this off for me, please?" As your sponges gently eased away the maquillage, you were left with the strange impression that a layer of being was coming away with it: that by the time you finished, he would be a new man.*

## BACKGROUND

You were delightful as a child – everyone said so. Sweet, charming, engaging; and, above all, pretty: like a doll, they said. You got used to the kindness of adults, the way they fussed over you and praised you and gave you nice things: although you didn't really feel that you deserved any of this.

As you got older, though, things started to change. They said that you were still pretty, and you were sure that this must have been why you were seen in a different way – a sexual way. People leered at you, tried to touch you, said suggestive things – you had to learn the meaning of all of this, far earlier than you would have chosen.

It all became too much. The unwanted attention was wrecking your life – you couldn't go out, couldn't see people, couldn't live the normal life of a teenage girl. You rebelled against it in the only way you could: by removing the beauty that you believed had caused you so much trouble and pain. *[Note: it's up to you what this means. Please do talk it through with us, if you aren't sure how to approach it.]* Perhaps at last you could be left in peace.

It's perhaps ironic that you ended up working in makeup. But who could have a better understanding than you of how to use the face as a canvas – how to portray beauty, sadness, cruelty, the whole range of emotions and feelings?

## ANGEL

You help people: with your skilled hands, and with your open ears. You listen, and you try not to judge. You're not a threat to anyone: you're here to make them look better, and to make them feel better. And that in turn makes you feel worthwhile.

## DEVIL

You succeeded in banishing those voices, those hands, that plagued you when you were a teenager. But sometimes the memory of them makes you want to scream and shout. To assert yourself – to cry to the world that you are not just a tool, a service, a collection of body parts.

# TASK

Gottfried has asked you to use makeup to reveal the person, rather than to conceal them. He wants the final appearance to include aspects of the personality of the actor, as well as those of the role. This idea is both exciting and disturbing.

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to work with the actors to decide upon their makeup and how they will look on screen. You may need to seek guidance from THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, THE SCRIPTWRITER and/or THE ART DIRECTOR about the general structure and look of the film, but the actors themselves will be your main guides as to what they think they should look like: question them about their roles, and how best to bring out their characteristics. Your work will complement that of THE COSTUME DESIGNER and THE HAIRSTYLIST, of course. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue revising and improving the makeup.*

# DILEMMA

You've given your life over to service: it's been a wonderful distraction. Your own appearance, your own existence even, was a burden to you, and you chose this as a way to lay it down: to close yourself off. But is that a final answer? – or might there still be a life for you that allows you to express yourself? And if there was, what might you want from it?

# THE MAN OF MYSTERY

Player Name: **TONY MINA**; he/him

Character Name: **\*coming soon\*** ; char gender; age: ?

Other Names:

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE MAN OF MYSTERY](#)

## CAPSULE

**He breezes in out of nowhere, solves problems, breaks hearts, and disappears just as enigmatically as he arrived. It's a great role to play on camera: and in real life, it seems to work just as well. He does just as he pleases – nothing left to chance, everything planned, making and breaking connections as required. Sometimes it feels like nothing can affect his equilibrium.**

*(Warning: this character has experienced a series of traumatically disruptive incidents in the past which have left him with a very controlling personality. The details of what happened, and how it works in play, will be up to you; but if this is a trigger issue for you, you will want to avoid this role.)*

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*He was sat at the back of the set, while you were filming for another director. Whether they were friends or rivals, you didn't know, or care. You gazed your weeping co-star coolly in the eye, tossed the end of your cigar over the balcony, turned on your heel, and strolled off the set into the darkness. "And... cut! Fantastic – it's a wrap! Great work, everybody."*

*He came over to you while you were having your makeup removed. "I guess you're planning to move on, now this is done – another project, in another town?"*

*You nodded. That was very much the pattern of your work. Never stay too long with one studio, or in one place. People might get attached to you.*

*"I've got something that you might like. It's a little... different. A little outside your usual range." A beat. "If you think you could handle being stretched, that is..."*

*And so it was that you signed up for Stolen Moments. A ridiculous challenge that touched your vanity: but who knows. Gottfried is a genius, so perhaps something really worthwhile will come out of it. You don't expect it to get under your skin, though.*



## ROLE BACKGROUND

Your early life was chaotic. Your family was disrupted severely, and unpredictably; you were moved from place to place, without any warning; you found yourself having to fit in to a new group of people, then suddenly whisked away and starting all over again elsewhere.

You realized early that the only way to survive intact was to keep tight control. If you made sure that your inner self was locked tightly away, so that other people were only interacting with the surface that you chose to present – well then, you could never be truly hurt or damaged.

Protecting yourself also protects others, or so you believe. If anyone were to get close to you, they would inevitably suffer when it came time for you to move on – which you always have to do. You don't know what might happen if you tried to settle and to put down roots somewhere; and you don't want to know.

Acting suited you beautifully. You had a knack for it: and you had great training. You can convey those infuriatingly desirable yet distant characters that audiences so love, with utter conviction – because you are playing aspects of yourself.

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

\*coming soon\*

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE CAD

You've worked together many times, and you've never got on well. He is one of those shallow types who has a supposedly witty remark ready for any occasion, but who can never take things – or people – seriously enough to make something matter.

You rarely miss an opportunity to criticize him. But you have sometimes wondered. Is it really him that you despise so vigorously – or is it some aspect of yourself, that he reminds you of? Do you have more in common than you might care to admit?

## THE NAIF

He seems to hang onto your every word, which is quite sweet really. He obviously looks up to you and it's a nice feeling. It makes you feel like maybe you have something worthwhile to offer. It wouldn't hurt to show him a few tricks while you're here. A way to win auditions perhaps, or how to charm important people.

On the other hand he seems too sweet. If you start helping him he'll probably start relying on your help. Really, he's better off learning the hard way, the same way you had to. Only you're sure you were never *that* innocent.

## THE VETERAN

Someone to play cards with and maybe share a drink. She's a force for calm and offers advice that you find useful once in a while. You like her despite yourself. She claims that her wisdom comes from a life of opportunities she's taken and opportunities she's thrown away, a chance you will never have.

Maybe the fact you didn't get to make her mistakes means you'll never be like her. Or maybe one day you will. You want to understand her better. Sometimes you find it hard to capture her true personality. As if you're missing something.

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE JOURNEYING HERO** – a free spirit like yourself, he's out to change his life. You can respect that.

**THE METHOD ACTING INSTRUCTOR** – you learned a lot from her about how to embody characters powerfully. You have great admiration for her skills.

## ANGEL

You are a thoroughgoing professional, who always gives a top performance – in work and in life. If you make a commitment, you stick to it, and deliver. You're steady and calm, and you never actively hurt anyone.

## DEVIL

You've worked so hard to hold people at a distance, you now find it hard to really care about them at all. They become pieces in a puzzle that you put together and then discard. Can you honestly say that you are still human?

## ROLE

Gottfried has told you that your character has to seem to be caught – to surrender his reserve, to care. And, as a Method actor, you will have to find the material for that within yourself... You assume that the character will see reason and disentangle himself before the end. But there's something scary and exciting about not yet knowing for sure.

### **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from STOLEN MOMENTS, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

## DILEMMA

You've carried on in your own way for so long, but can you keep it up indefinitely? And should you? It keeps you safe, but it also keeps you distant and different. But the alternative – to dive into the morass of feelings and emotions and connections – looks too difficult to bear.

# THE METHOD ACTING INSTRUCTOR

Player Name: **KYRA CORRADIN (Creative Team Member)**; she/her

Character Name: **\*coming soon\***; char gender; age: ?

Other Names:

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE METHOD-ACTING INSTRUCTOR](#)

## CAPSULE

**She has worked with Gottfried for many years: first as a fellow-student, enthused by his ideas; then as an actor, desperate to please him; now communicating his thoughts and practices to the cast. She dreamed of being the lead in one of his films: instead, she teaches the next generation.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*He was sitting alongside you at the first lecture you went to: a prominent Russian actress talking about what she had learnt from Stanislavsky. Her accent was strong, but you hung on every word – and so did Gottfried.*

*Afterwards, you went for a drink together. He seemed almost as excited as you.*

*“I’m going to use this to change film-making,” he said. It was the sort of thing that young, ambitious, idealistic people say: but in his case, you would have to admit, he has achieved it. And it has been actors trained by you that have lit up his movies. Your star has risen, along with his.*

*Back then, though, you were torn between fascination with him – his long, slim fingers danced as he spoke – and obsession with what you had heard in the lecture. Of course, the craft won out: you couldn’t let yourself get distracted from your mission. But you have sometimes wondered what it might have been like – what would have happened if you’d reached out to touch that elegant jawline.*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

You were destined for acting from an early age – you trained with the best teachers, and served your time in the theatre, before joining the film industry. Sadly, though, your career was brief and ended in disaster – your indiscretions wrecked a project; and despite your undoubted talent, you were seen as screen poison.

You were determined not to leave the industry that you loved, though. During your enforced career break, you read and studied widely, and became aware of the Stanislavsky Method – a naturalistic style of acting that had emerged from Russia. It sought to replace ‘performance’ with ‘experience’ – so that actors would genuinely feel the emotions that their characters were going through, and their portrayals and scenes would be that much more convincing.

It was as though a door had been opened in your mind – a wonderful and powerful insight. You at once started to teach the method yourself. At first, people were wary and reluctant – you were asking them to draw deeply upon their own experiences, to add authenticity to those of their characters. But the way that your trainees delivered on screen was undeniably impressive; and so your reputation as an instructor grew.

You are aware of the criticisms, of course. People say that actors can do themselves psychological harm by embedding too deeply into their characters, or by opening up old wounds in search of experiences to draw upon. But you are confident that, in a supportive and safe context, such exploration need not be dangerous. (Although, of course, not all film shoots are supportive; and perhaps very few are safe.)

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

\*coming soon\*

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE CAD

He was one of your most promising students, and you were able to help him really get a good handle on his craft. But he seemed like a troubled soul – you wanted to help. You gently asked him about himself – about his past.

He pushed you away, angrily – you must have touched a nerve. You haven't tried to ask again. But you have retained a close interest in him – have remained as kind as you can be. Surely at some point he will need your help, and will welcome it.

## THE INGENUE

You saw her screen tests, and were captivated – here was someone who really had a talent for expression! You were desperately excited about the possibility of working with her: she has so much more potential than the pretty-girl roles she's been given so far. And perhaps you can teach her a thing or two about life, as well as about acting, along the way.

But so far, she has not been keen to take up the offer of studying with you. You aren't sure why – most actors would leap at the chance. It's almost as though she's wary of you. Why?

## THE SCRIPTWRITER

She wasn't a scriptwriter then – she was a journalist. Early in her career, despatched on a mission to interview you, an up-and-coming actress. But evidently even then she had more serious ambitions.

You thought she was being friendly – the way she seemed to take a real interest in you, and coaxed confidences out of you, over a few cocktails. You talked about your fears, and about your colleagues on *Lonely Hearts*, the film you were working on – their demands and their secrets. The next morning it was a massive exposé – your words, undeniable, all over the newspaper. It was the end of your acting career.

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE MAN OF MYSTERY** – almost too good a student, he's learned a great deal from you – and you suspect he applies the lessons in real life as well as on camera.

**THE VETERAN** – despite her age, she's a quick learner and a good student. You've been able to help her find her role.

## Negative

**THE RIVAL** – she seems blind to the obvious benefits of the techniques that you teach. Really rooted in old-fashioned stagey acting. What a philistine!

## ANGEL

You want to help people get the best out of themselves – to create legendary roles, to leave a lasting dramatic legacy. You have skills, you have understanding; you care about your students, and you want them to have the success that you were denied.

## DEVIL

You know how to coax and persuade, when the task becomes difficult and painful – how to get people to open up their deepest and darkest secrets for the sake of the role. You know the psychological risks involved – but still you do it, in service to the craft.

## TASK

This is the first time that you've been on one of Gottfried's locations. He has asked you to prepare the cast: to help them draw up what they can from the well of their experiences, to bring maximum authenticity to the screen when shooting starts. He has asked you not to hold back – not to be gentle with them.

### **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to offer acting tuition and support to members of the cast, helping them draw upon their personal backgrounds to inform their roles: to respond to their requests for help, but also to be proactive in identifying those who might benefit from it. In Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work.*

## DILEMMA

You know that you can push and keep pushing, and the performances will keep getting better and better. Perhaps that's what Gottfried wants? But there will come a point, for each actor, where there might be no way back – where they have become stretched too far to ever return to shape. Can you honestly say that you will stop before that point?

# THE NAIF

Player Name: **ROMAN MINA**; he/him

Character Name: **ROGER FERTUR** ; he/him; age: 26

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE NAIF](#)

## CAPSULE

**He's new to the film business, with a shy innocence that audiences will surely love. He so desperately wants to succeed – to find happiness and fulfilment. He's got here through his own efforts, but perhaps that won't be enough now, here on location – he may need other people to make it work for him.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You were preparing for a meeting. You were sitting in a park, having needed to escape the office. It was a hot day and the figures seemed to blur as you tried to make sense of them. They weren't just numbers on a page for you. They were people and the decisions you made would affect their lives. Around you there were families, children playing and their parents lying in the sun. You could see the river and smell it too from where you sat.*

*You turned and he was next to you. You jumped in surprise. He leaned closer to look at the paper you were writing on, and you suddenly felt uncomfortable, but you didn't know how to ask him to leave. The awkward silence hung in the air for minutes that felt like hours.*

*Eventually he nodded and smiled at you and you felt as though you'd passed some test. He ran his fingers down the paper.*

*"You know what they want you to do" he said. He shrugged, as if it couldn't possibly matter.*

*"You'll find your way to me soon enough. I'm excited to see what you'll become."*

*He gazed at you suddenly, intensely.*

*"Of course" he said firmly, as though you'd disagreed with him.*

*"We can't know yet. You might end up as nothing at all."*

*He stood up and started walking away, then turned.*

*"I'm betting on you though. I'll be in touch."*



## ROLE BACKGROUND

You were taught the value of work at a young age as the oldest of 5 siblings with an ill mother. You lived in an isolated village for much of your early life and tried to take care of your siblings and help them get enough education to make something of themselves in the outside world.

You left school at 16 with ambitions to work in a business in the city. However, it didn't work. You took people at their word and didn't have the right edge. You couldn't make decisions that would end up hurting people. You asked for help, and people around you were keen to offer it, but it never came for free. There was always a debt to be paid and it was something you both hated and didn't understand. You would help people just because they needed help. Why did others have to be so calculating? It didn't take long for you to find yourself without a job, and alone.

You discovered acting by chance, when you were noticed by someone looking for a new face for a small film. You loved the idea of becoming someone else, although you could never quite stop being yourself for the role. No one seemed to mind though. It was suggested that you had a quality, and although you were never told exactly what that quality was, it seemed like a good thing to have.

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Free food, free haircut, and a paycheck in exchange for walking around a bit? When his buddy told him about a chance to do a few days of extra work, Roger happily accepted. He never considered himself an actor (maybe he still doesn't), but one thing led to another. He bumped into the right person who liked the look, and a few bigger roles presented themselves.

This isn't to say he lucked into everything with no effort. There were countless late nights memorizing and practicing lines for next day shoots. Hours of travel to get to distant locations, even when travel wasn't covered. To him it was a job, like the many he had before, and he was willing to give it the effort and hours it needed. Most of the money gets sent back home anyways.

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE CAD

He knows what the deal is. He's straightforward and charming and you enjoy talking to him and getting to know him. Maybe he's someone that you could end up being like. Effortlessly charismatic and successful, but still generous enough to treat someone like you like an equal.

## THE GOOD-TIME GIRL

You know her mostly by her reputation. You worked hard to be here and you're going to continue working hard. You want to know that you've earned this on its own merits. The rumours of what she's done, fluttered eyelashes, promises and sometimes more than promises, disturb you a little. Obviously she did this the easy way.

You don't like the way she looks at you. As if she's judging you. Jealousy maybe plays a part, after all she must regret what she did to get to where she is. But it's almost like she's wishing you would stoop to her level.

## THE MAN OF MYSTERY

You wouldn't dare to ask him for anything directly, which is a shame because he seems to have it all sorted. You wonder what advice he would give you. He has managed to make everything work, but he doesn't seem to have sold himself and his life in the process.

In the meantime you enjoy talking to him. You know that he holds you at a distance, but he's fun to be around. And maybe one day you will ask him how to survive in this industry the way he does.

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE LOCATION MANAGER** – working with him makes it easy to hide that you're not always sure what you're doing. He treats everyone the same way and that makes you feel like you fit in perfectly.

## Negative

**THE FADING STAR** – he's obviously jealous that you're on your way up while he's barely hanging on. The way he's been used up and hollowed out – it's not going to happen to you.

## ANGEL

You are a true innocent in a world where not many innocents exist. You want to help people for its own sake and don't want to give into the vices that others do. Nothing is meaningless. You're keen to make friends and form connections but you're not there to use people. You understand that everyone has their own needs and wants, and you want to support that.

You hope to get to know people in the cast and maybe understand them a little. You want genuine friendship and possibly genuine romance.

## DEVIL

You know that not everyone is like you. If you ask for help from someone they will want something in return. They always do. It's better to try and figure things out for yourself, but you're terrified of getting it wrong. You feel like everyone knows what they're doing except for you.

There's also a part of you which feels a bit superior to the others. You're genuine and they're fake. Not that you would judge them of course, it's not in your nature to judge after all. You just can't help noticing.

# ROLE

While you're waiting for the filming to start it will be your job to consider the overall aesthetic of the film and see how the props, costumes, make up and set work together and ask for changes if necessary. You're not sure why Gottfried gave you this role and you're not even sure how the film should look, much less how to tell people that they're getting it wrong.

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from STOLEN MOMENTS, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

# DILEMMA

You could do what's asked of you, play the innocent boy that the audiences will love and continue like that, both on and off screen. Film is a competitive business and you don't know if this will help you stand out enough to keep getting jobs, but it might. You're not sure what you will do next though, if you get overlooked.

Alternatively you could ask for help. There are people here who have made it and that couldn't have been entirely down to luck. They probably know the right people and can give you the right advice. They will want something in return though, people always do. What debt would you owe then?

# THE PROPMASTER

Player Name: **DANIEL KEATING**; he/him

Character Name: **QUENTIN HEARTH**; he/him; age: 37

Other Names:

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE PROPMASTER](#)

## CAPSULE

**He's responsible for everything that fills out a scene – the items that the actors are actually working with. It's not a role with a lot of authority, but that's fine by him: he despises and rejects structures. Rules are for other people: as long as he gets the props to the right places, he's free to be himself. He's a rebel; and he'll never ever be any good.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You weren't sure what you were looking for. The night was dark, but too hot and the part of town you were walking through smelt of stale alcohol and urine. You briefly thought about going back to the club but it felt wrong now. You needed a new place. Somewhere that you could get lost in the crowd and observe people destroying themselves for pleasure or profit.*

*You heard the footsteps behind you and turned, fists already clenched. It wouldn't be the first time someone had tried to fight you round here. You had learnt that the important thing was to go in being prepared to cause real pain. Never attack first, but if you have to fight then you're free to do anything.*

*When you turned the man was smiling.*

*"You going to hit me?"*

*You realised your fists were raised.*

*"Not if you're not following me." But you wanted to fight, so badly.*

*"I am, sort of. But trust me when I say that it won't give you what you want." He shrugged.*

*"You can try if you like of course."*

*The anger, the impulsivity, the recklessness drained out of you.*

*"What do you want then?"*

*He nodded. He seemed out of place here. Maybe because he was sober.*

*"I want your expertise. I want you to work with me. Partners."*

# ROLE BACKGROUND

\*coming soon\*

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Quentin is well respected, if not particularly well liked, in the field of prop making and movie artistry. He is known for making a shoe string budget look like a million bucks and is infamous for his dislike of authority, incompetence, and the general (fake) “nicesties” most Hollywood folks put on. He doesn’t care about “doing things by the book” and isn’t afraid to use unconventional materials to get his desired effect. He’s told off more than one pretentious, self-important movie maker over an artistic disagreement and he isn’t afraid to do it again.

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

One of those people who doesn't just want the job done, he wants everyone to think the right way. He doesn't care that you're a prop master, that you're good at props and that you're there for the money.

It's OK when you're like him, someone who sets the rules. Then you can do what you want. But until then you're not going to change who you are to make some idiot on a power trip happy. You know you're stronger than him though. That's what really matters in the end.

## THE RIVAL

She boasts about the awards she's won and complains when you won't fall in line. You can tell that it irritates her that you're good at what you do. She wants you to be impressed by her, and she thinks that imposing her will on you is somehow going to achieve that. She pretends to disapprove of your attitude, but you know she's fed up. She got where she did by bowing and scraping, and she wants to be free of it.

Maybe if she read and studied more she'd be critically acclaimed too. She won't listen to theory from you, and even if she was interested you wouldn't care to share it with her. You do admire her success though. She's broken free in her own way. As long as she doesn't try to impose her rules on you, you'll get along fine.

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE ART DIRECTOR** – you can create something amazing together. He knows what he's doing and isn't too caught up in his own ego to do it properly.

## Negative

**THE SUBJECT** – everything revolves around her and her story, even though you're not sure she quite knows what that is.

## ANGEL

You're your own person. You know your job and you're good at it, but you don't take orders that don't make sense. You despise bullies and you don't like to see anyone pushed around on principle. You know that you're intelligent and can win in a battle of wits (or a physical fight if it came to it.)

You feel free to stand by your principles. You won't compromise yourself because nothing's worth compromising yourself over. Who else on the set can say that?

## DEVIL

You don't trust people or particularly care for them. You may sometimes find them interesting for a while, but you don't really know them and they don't know you. It's probably better that way. You don't want to hurt anyone, and if they started treating you badly because of who you are or where you came from you might feel you had to, to make them stop.

You can get people to respect you from afar, or not respect you as long as they leave you alone. But if they get close then things could get messy.



# TASK

Your job here is to help work with THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR in assembling the props for the sets: in particular, there are two sets that you will be responsible for. While you're doing that you need to try to promote Gottfried's vision for the film. Some of the props may seem strange, and his notes a bit inconsistent, but that shouldn't be something that you let the rest of the team know.

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to implement Gottfried's design notes for the two sets (included at a later date or at the run) using your own creativity, working together with THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR and THE ART DIRECTOR, and THE RUNNER as assistant. In Act 2, Gottfried will probably be expecting you to maintain and improve the sets.*

# DILEMMA

It's much better to live the way you've always lived. You occasionally find people who will hold intelligent conversations with you, and normally you just keep to yourself. You don't let anyone order you around, impose their worldview on you or get too close.

You wonder what it would be like to let people in though. Not to let them change you, obviously, but just to be a bit more open with them. At least a bit less distant. Maybe to talk to those people who interest you and find out their thoughts. At least while you're all stuck together in the same place you might as well try. Maybe.

# THE PSYCHOTHERAPIST

Player Name: **SUSANNE VEJDEMO**; she/her

Character Name: **\*coming soon\*** ; char gender; age: ?

Other Names:

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE PSYCHOTHERAPIST](#)

## CAPSULE

**Commissioned by Gottfried Himmelhaus to help the cast of Stolen Moments deal with the psychological demands of the Method style of acting that he requires from them, she is a self-contained, detached observer of their triumphs and troubles. But she has her own theory of mind and emotion, and her own ambition to shape and control.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You were interested in this appointment. He was a well known name and some strange stories had emerged about him. You hadn't thought he would let someone pick over his mind so readily but perhaps he had underestimated you.*

*You met at his office. It was bland, and there was nothing except two chairs and a white table with a bowl of water on it. He was sitting, waiting, a smile on his face. He looked amused and you thought, irrationally, that he wouldn't be amused soon.*

*He motioned to the chair and you sat opposite him. This wasn't like the meetings you normally had, where you took tea and pretended it was just a conversation. This seemed formal, almost like a laboratory. You smiled.*

*"I'm here to listen, Mr Himmelhaus and to try to help smooth out anything that's worrying you." You glanced at him and he was wearing the same amused expression. Nerves perhaps.*

*He nodded.*

*"That's why I brought you here. I want to show you something."*

*He took a small bottle out of his pocket and poured a couple of drops into the bowl.*

*"Clove oil. Used for euthanising fish normally."*

*You were uncertain now, but you felt excitement stirring in you. This was different. You watched entranced as the oil spread across the surface of the water.*

*"Of course, I wouldn't have used a fish for my demonstration. You and I are in the business of transforming, not killing." He shrugged. "Anyway, it's unnecessary. You see the difference it makes. One drop changes everything."*

*He looked at you.*

*"People are like that too. The right word. The right phrase and you can shape them entirely."*

*You tried a professional smile. "Is that how you feel about the world Mr Himmelhaus?"*

*He laughed.*

*"I have the perfect project for you. Let me tell you what I need."*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

You wanted to be a scientist but you knew from a young age that you weren't going to be. Your parents thought it was inappropriate and that you should do 'more feminine'. Maybe a teacher, they suggested, or a nurse. You were a carer for a while, and you ended up looking after soldiers who had suffered after the Great War. You were interested in the change in them, even in those who weren't physically scarred, but sometimes found themselves in your care.

You studied after that. Your parents were gone by then and there was nothing to hold you back. You learnt the latest theories in psychology and worked in hospitals, often fighting against neurosurgeons and insisting that your treatments were given a chance to work. Sometimes you were successful and you got to speak with a patient and probe and gently reshape their minds. You couldn't always cure, but you offered hope and trying out the theories you read about and noting down their success or failure made you feel like the scientist you wanted to be.

Once you gained a reputation you left the hospitals behind and began working for the rich who suffered from 'nerves', meeting them in their houses and helping them fix the tedious problems in their life. You were called many things, normally 'the help', but you didn't mind. You were never in it for the glory and although the money was nice it wasn't exactly a defining factor in your decisions. Your notebook and theories were. People hired you because you knew the right methods to use.

You're sure that working in films will be the same. A chance to examine the psyches of people on set up close. You've been given instructions on how to enhance the actors connections with their characters and it will be interesting to see the impact of that on the film. On the other hand you're developing new methods that could be used, and maybe you could publish a paper if you found something truly unique. You're also very curious. You want to know what lies at the heart of these people.

# CHARACTER BACKGROUND

\*coming soon\*

## PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

### THE FEMME FATALE

She was sent to your office because the cast were reacting badly to her presence. It was fascinating, the damage she had managed to cause. She was fascinating and you wanted to understand her and what drove her. You wanted to see if it was possible to iron out those imperfections.

It was rather pedestrian actually. A troubled childhood. The usual. She didn't like you explaining it to her. Normally they agreed with you, often through tears, so this was a new development. You would like to get her back in your office again and finish what you've started. You hate to abandon a case half way through.

### THE LOCATION MANAGER

One of the few people on the set who understands the importance of intellect and not letting emotion get in the way of doing their job. You enjoy interesting conversations about politics, philosophy and the latest theories in your field. You suspect if you ever did get him in your office you would find his mind was akin to your own, someone who understands the need for detachment and study.

You don't know why you think about him so often. Maybe because you haven't met anyone quite like you before. You know those thoughts aren't entirely professional either. That's fine though – they're fascinating to analyse.

### THE SUBJECT

Interestingly needy. You feel that this woman needs you to keep her together. You're doing that now, although there's a part of you that wonders where you'd have to push to make her slowly fall apart. This would be worth further study, although of course it's not why you've been brought on set.

For now you indulge her need to meet with you, and you try to unpick her story, which seems to change with every retelling. That's interesting too. There may be something ordinary at the root of it, but it may be something more. It's worth indulging her for a while to see if you can find out.

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Negative

**THE INGENUE** – she doesn't trust you. This stupid wide-eyed girl seems in awe of everything but is trying to avoid you. Whatever she's hiding will be something predictable, but you want to know, all the same.

## ANGEL

You want to further your own, and hopefully the world's understanding of how people work. You want to find the answers and by doing that shape people's minds, hopefully bringing them to a better understanding of themselves than before.

Your professional detachment means that you aren't shocked by anything you hear. You have probably heard worse before. People can come to you in the knowledge that you aren't going to judge, or be upset by what they tell you.

## DEVIL

You're always detached, not just in your office. People fascinate you, but you want to learn about them, and work out what it would take to change them. You need to keep a distance because of the reason you're there, but you are aware that you think of people first about what you could learn from them before you think about what they are.

You've gone along with what Gottfried asked so far, but reluctantly. You want to try your own methods and see what you can do with these people.

# TASK

You're available to people who want to see you. Your office is open to people who are suffering and you want to talk to them, to figure them out. Gottfried has made it plain how much you're needed to help people find their characters. Or at least help them with the struggle.

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to offer psychotherapeutic help to members of the cast and crew: to respond to their requests for help, but also to be proactive in identifying those who might benefit from it. Consider your methods. Will you try Gottfried's way of helping shape characters into their role on set, or will you try your own experimental methods? In Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work.*

# DILEMMA

Gottfried has asked you to shape the cast psyche to be ready for the film. That means assisting them in fulfilling their roles and playing their part, even if they're not actors. It will be interesting to see how that shapes the film.

You've got your own ideas about how things could be done though. Things which will give you recognition from the people who matter and put your name down in history. You don't want to be a psychotherapist to the stars. You want to be a scientist, creating new paths and increasing knowledge.

# THE PUBLICIST

Player Name: **RENEE SCHULZ (Creative Team Member)**; she/her

Character Name: **FOSCA MOCHE**; she/her; age: 42

Other Names: Everyone calls her "Fuzzy" and she hates it, but has never told anyone. Not like "Fosca" is any better.

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE PUBLICIST](#)

## CAPSULE

**She's not a cynic, like many studio puff-pushers – she genuinely believes in the value of film, and the worth of this project. She wants to help the moviemakers who she admires, and the stars who she reveres. In fact, she needs to help them – that's the only way she can make herself feel worthwhile.**

*(Warning: this character has very low self-worth. It'll be up to you why that is, and how much you want to play upon it; but if this is a trigger issue for you, you will want to avoid this role.)*

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*He called you and asked you to meet with him for a drink to talk about a project. You were sure it was a hoax, but you didn't know anyone who would play that kind of prank on you. You didn't want to go. If it wasn't a hoax he probably had the wrong person.*

*The pub he suggested did nothing to put you at ease. It was somewhere you'd never been before, a small cellar lit by candles. You recognised him instantly and strangely he seemed to recognise you too.*

*He waved you over.*

*"We have lots to talk about!" He smiled widely, disarmingly.*

*"But first a drink. To our new project."*

*He gave you a small glass of liquid and clinked his against it. You swallowed it and you'd never tasted anything like it. You couldn't describe or reproduce the taste again, although you tried, even returning to the bar sometime later. You felt your head spinning and for a glorious moment the world was full of opportunity and anything was possible.*

*Then slowly, after a minute or two you found yourself floating back into yourself again. He was watching, smiling.*

*"It's real you know". He grabbed your hands and stroked them gently, looking into your eyes.*

*"We're going to do something great. Together."*

*He had scribbled an address on a napkin.*

*"One week's time, OK"*

*You nodded and he kissed your forehead as he got up to leave.*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

"If only you'd be a bit more confident."

"If only you'd try harder to fit in."

You know that you're damaged and that you'll always be damaged. Sometimes you know that the voice in your head telling you how worthless and talentless you are might not be entirely true, although you never believe it's entirely false. You've spent your life trying to help other people and to make them feel good about themselves. Sometimes you've succeeded, giving your friend the confidence to get into a relationship with a guy she liked or convincing another friend that it was a good idea to audition for a theatre performance. It seems though that once you've served your purpose people drift away. You have no use to them beyond the hope you can give them. When they do need you though, it gives you purpose and makes you feel less alone.

How old were you when you discovered film? 10? 12? You were instantly captivated with the possibilities of a world that was not your own. You think it maybe saved your life in those years, gave you something to look forward to and take you away from reality for a few hours.

You've worked where you can and you've been helped financially by your mother's cousin who took on that duty after your mother passed away. You wish you could do more. You wish you had enough money to repay her and support yourself, but any steady work you found you always managed to sabotage in one way or another.

You believed in *Stolen Moments* before anyone else did. You saw what it could be. More than the life of one woman, it was about the lives of many people intertwining and changing themselves and each other. You loved that part of it, that transformation which seemed both easy and effortless.

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Deliah Moche married well, very well, and had one child, Fosca, before being tragically, but more than comfortably, widowed at 27. The mistress of a fine old Savannah home, Deliah had one passion; ensuring her daughter married as well as she did.

But Fosca was forever a disappointment. Never pretty enough, elegant enough, clever enough, just never enough. At 16, Fosca already knew she was a failure but found escape in the glamour of movies. For an hour or so every day, when she could get away from her dancing and music lessons, she would imagine herself as one of those wonderfully glamorous women on screen who were always so much more than enough.

Now Fosca, or Fuzzy as people insist on calling her, works in the industry promoting all that glamour. And she does it very well. Still, somehow, it's never enough.



# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE SIDEKICK

You feel good in his company. You can make a difference here. You suspect there is part of him that feels the same way you do – worthless, nothing. You understand the feeling and you don't want anyone else to have to feel it. The fact that you seem to be making a difference to him really makes it worthwhile. Imagine if he became a leading man and it was because of your support?

And you do want him to succeed, you really do. Only, what once he's made it? What if you can convince him that he can sort out his life and then he does? And then doesn't need you anymore? It worries you. Not enough to stop encouraging him, but enough to keep you awake at nights sometimes.

## THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

You feel like you click. She's really talented and you've been working together on some creative projects outside the film industry. *[Decide together what it is.]* Your feelings about this are complicated. You love the work and you love spending time with her. You know that by working with you she's helping you increase your status with no benefit to her.

It's not that you think you're slowing her down exactly. It's just that she brings all the talent to the work, and although she accepts your suggestions you wonder if you're damaging the project in some ways by forcing her to do that. Maybe there are some things you're offering, some kind of help, but you're not sure if she's working with you because she thinks that, or just because she's kind.

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR** – he's clear about what he wants from you, and you can do what he asks. Working with him makes you feel like you're being helpful, like you're doing the job you're being paid for. It's something so ordinary, that you feel so grateful for.

## Negative

**THE CAD** – you're scared of catching his attention. His barbs, cynicism and arrogance might appeal to some people, but you wouldn't want it directed at you.

## ANGEL

You really want to help people. It gives you a brief feeling of self worth to the point where their successes almost feel like your successes. People come to you for help because they know you listen and won't judge – you have value. You can advise people and boost their self esteem.

You're really passionate about the film. Getting involved in something like this has been an unbelievable opportunity for you. You can't wait to see the filming and the finished product.

## DEVIL

You are nothing. Ugly, worthless, talentless. You should be grateful for any kindness given to you. You can give away all the time and energy you have to others but it won't be enough, because what you are isn't enough. You can accept that, but it hurts sometimes. It should be OK to give up at some point, right?

# TASK

As the publicist you need to work closely with various stars of the film to make sure that you can present them and the film properly. In particular:

- The Cad
- The Diva
- The Femme Fatale
- The Ingenue
- The Script writer

## **Out of character**

*Your character's task in Act 1 is to try to find out as much as he can about the listed characters, and to do whatever he can for them. Don't be put off by attempts to brush him off. Help them. Support them. Let them hurt him... Do it until you think your character really wouldn't be able to cope with it any more. In Act 2, he will probably be expected to continue this work: but clearly it will be too much for him. How will he react?*

# DILEMMA

You know that you've helped people. You're just not sure if they really think of you that much now. Certainly they never really returned your support or friendship, and once they had found their feet they tended to drift out of your life. Maybe because as a friend support was all you could offer. You could go on like this.

It hurts so much, though. You don't know what it would take to get from where you are to a place that the people around you seem to occupy so effortlessly. A place where you can believe in yourself enough to see that you matter too. If you could find a way there, would you want to go? It can't be an easy journey. Would it mean leaving your support for others, the only bit of you that has any value, behind?

# THE RIVAL

Player Name: **LINDA GAGLIARDI**; she/her

Character Name: **LUCY SUCHIN** ; she/her; age: 50ish

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE PUBLICIST](#)

## CAPSULE

**A celebrated film director, and Gottfried's opposite in some ways. More commercially successful, while less critically acclaimed. She's been invited here to recruit actors and crew for her own next project. But perhaps also, though she might not admit it, to try and understand Gottfried's magic touch.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You were at an awards ceremony. You remember the day clearly. There were cameras in your face and stars and wannabes and reporters calling your name, begging you to look in their direction. You remember the adrenalin and the rush of power.*

*Then you saw him. He was ordinary to look at, but something about him sparked. You wanted him, maybe as an actor, surely not for yourself, but in that moment you didn't really know. All you knew is that you could only see him. You sat dazed, finding that you couldn't look back at him, it was like looking directly at the sun.*

*When he won you snapped back to yourself. You had been overlooked despite everything you'd done. And when he walked over it was almost an inevitability. You had heard his name circling yours in conversation. He must have heard yours. He nodded to you.*

*"You think it should've been you, don't you?"*

*You tried to stutter out something congratulatory while denying it, but he just smiled.*

*"You'll never understand. Not unless you see it for yourself" He raised a hand.*

*"You can be angry with me, but it's true. You need to learn." You were scared he was right.*

*You didn't see him again for a while, but you were aware of his growing acclaim and his accumulating body of work, of course. And then, a few days ago, you received an invitation to the set of *Stolen Moments*. It looked like an invitation to a party. It was something you desperately wanted to refuse, but knew that you wouldn't.*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

You've spent your life going from strength to strength, and you're proud of everything you've done. Your debut film was a risk you took, an investment of all of the capital you'd inherited into a project which was as likely to fail as to succeed. You had no intention of letting it fail, though. You handpicked everyone on set, choosing faces you knew would fill theatres. You ran the set smoothly, watching over everything for any sign of trouble.

You hid yourself and became a man in the eyes of the public. You didn't try to hide the truth from those around you who you expected would understand, at least if they wanted their next paycheck. But it made things simpler and you were never the type of person to over complicate your life.

The money you earned from the film spoke for itself. The reviews were mediocre, but the audience was entertained. You had found the winning formula and you kept running it and you kept making money. You and Gottfried were often compared in the press and it almost made you laugh. Why talk about him like he was some kind of creative genius when it was you who was filling theatres?

You had your setbacks, professional and personal. Heartbreak and the loss of people you relied on was to be expected though, especially in this industry. Not that it didn't hurt, but you didn't *rejoice* in pain the way that Gottfried seemed to. You kept working and stuck to your formula, taking the occasional risk when you saw an unknown face that you knew belonged in your films.

You have to admit, though, that there is something about Gottfried's work that captivates you. You have always been honest with yourself about that. It sometimes feels like he can see deep into the human soul and bring out the things you didn't know you had in there. You wish you could do that. What would it take to learn how? If there was a way to combine his brilliance with your success, that would be a film worth making.

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Born and raised in New Rochelle, NY, Lucy Suchin is the daughter of Edwin and Lucille Suchin, co-founders of Astrape Studios. As early as she can recall, she has been enthralled by the moving pictures her parents made possible, telling stories of strong women and their power to change the world. Her desire to tell similar tales for Astrape was cut short when her parents' studio was pushed out by the Edison Trust's General Film Company, with the flimsy excuse that the studio's focus wasn't "broad enough." But Lucy knew that the problem was too many "broad."

Undeterred, Lucy moved west to Hollywood, joining others in the west coast's fledgling film industry that was beginning to gain traction from the east coast. There, through grit, determination, and (some say) her family's money and reputation, she moved from studio to studio making films that showcased strong women characters, their humor, struggle, and triumphs.

And while the public, and most critics, loved Lucy's films, she found herself chasing the illusive respect of her (male) peers. When the luminaries would gather informally to vote on the best film of the previous season, she was always left out. She had a glimmer of hope when the newly minted Academy Awards were announced in 1929 and her romantic thriller "The Spark of the Devil" was nominated; she thought her time had come. Alas, once again, it seemed to be a man's game, with the award going to Gottfried's "FlyBoy."

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE GOOD TIME GIRL

You gave her the start she needed, plucked her out of obscurity to make her into something beautiful. She was one of your greatest works of art, this girl from nowhere who captured hearts. You thought you both understood the deal. She would help you earn money and success, and you would help her do the same. Then she tore up the contract that you'd offered her, and walked away. That's gratitude for you.

Although she must realise by now that working with you is far superior to working with Gottfried. She doesn't have to have her pain nurtured and exploited. Now you're spending time together you could charm her back. She owes you anyway.

## THE SUBJECT

She has always been a remarkable woman. You've met her many times before at parties and premieres, always on the arm of a different man. You've spoken to her many times, but only in polite conversation. You have overheard her tell stories, but never had the courage to ask your own questions, as if she brings out a shyness in you.

It's yet another frustrating sign of Gottfried's "genius" in securing a story like hers for his newest "masterpiece". Of course she's here to tell everyone the juiciest tidbits of her life; but perhaps instead she'd prefer to star in her own tale? With you at the helm, of course.

## THE PROPMASTER

You've told him repeatedly that part of making a film is working as a team. It doesn't matter whether you're the leading actor or the prop master, you have to commit. He does his job well enough, but nothing beyond that. You've been in this business for long enough to know when someone might start making trouble, and he has that feeling about him.

It must be nice though, not to have to worry about things like that. It must be nice to feel free to express your own thoughts and not care who hears them. And this is Gottfried's set – not yours. Why not nurture this behaviour? Why not feed his anger and direct it towards Gottfried. Let's see how he deals with that!

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE SCRIPTWRITER** – interesting that she's ended up here. You could do so much better for her. Gottfried is nurturing her pain, but with you she could become free of it. You need to make her understand that.

## Negative

**METHOD ACTING INSTRUCTOR** – you know what works and what she's peddling isn't it. You don't get a good film by pushing people to their breaking point. You get a good film by making people feel sure of themselves. She is an uncomfortable reminder of Gottfried's obsession with purity and personal anguish which you could do without.

# ANGEL

You know what works and you can use that knowledge to make things easier for people. Gottfried wants everyone to find their inner pain, but you know perfectly good films can be made without hurting people. You can guide them towards a better way of doing things so that they're not tearing themselves apart in the process. Why should they have to neglect their families, their friends and even themselves to create a film which won't be as successful as yours would be anyway?

You can show people the way. You can control the set and take people's burdens from them. They can turn to you, and you can guide them.

# DEVIL

It's fine to take the easy solution. You never set out to be an artist, or find the meaning of what's held in the human soul or anything like that. You just want to find the right people – the ones that went to Gottfried when they should be working with you, and the ones that you haven't had chance to work with yet.

You will show them what's best and set them on the right path. Although you do doubt yourself sometimes. Does taking the easy path mean that you have less talent?



# TASK

You're an observer. You're officially here to assist with production, something that you're surprised Gottfried wanted. Unofficially you're here to look for people to work with on your next project and maybe even understand a little of what Gottfried does, and why he's so critically acclaimed. Maybe with the right people you can even capture a little of that magic yourself.

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to try to convince characters that they would be happier working with you. You need to convince them that you're easier to work with, that you'll make them more successful, and that you'll demand so much less than Gottfried does. By Act 2, it may become easier and easier to define yourself in opposition to Gottfried: but you may also have to confront the ways in which you and he are similar, under the surface.*

# DILEMMA

You know what works, you know what sells seats. So what drew you here? A chance to poach Gottfried's stars possibly. To show them there is a better way of working. But even you know that it's more than that. There is some magic he has that you want for yourself.

Going after it and trying to learn it means risking everything you have. You took that risk once before when you made your first film. It was rational and calculated then. You had worked out numbers and you were almost certain that you would make a return, even if you were surprised at your own success. This is pure emotion though. There is something that he has and you want. You're just not sure if it's a risk worth taking.

# THE RUNNER

*Details subject to change*

Player Name: **uncast**

Character Name: ; gender; age

Link to Who's Playing Who -

## CAPSULE

**She's drifted from one job to another, and washed up in the film industry as a general dogsbody and assistant. She doesn't complain: it pays the bills, and it's better than some of the other things she's done. Drifting with the tide has been the pattern of her life. But she's not as young as she used to be. How long can this continue?**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You were in domestic service at the time: cleaning up after people's kids, and putting them to bed. It was an undemanding enough job, and it came with food and accommodation. He was a guest at the house: you had no idea who he was, of course.*

*At first you thought perhaps he was interested in kids: he kept hanging round watching you tidy up around them, feed them, and so on. Then you thought that maybe he was after your body. But no, it was stranger than that.*

*"I've had my eye on you for a while," he said. His eyes were very bright. "Not just here, but before." He listed your previous couple of jobs. Right, so now this was getting rather sinister. Had he been stalking you?*

*"You're waiting for something, even if you don't know it – or you don't admit it," he continued. He opened his arms wide, as if to embrace you. You did not recoil, although part of you wanted to. He just touched you very lightly on the shoulders. "The film business needs people like you. Call this number – see what you think. It pays well, and it's varied." He gave you a card, with a telephone number on one side and the letter 'G.' on the other. You felt obscurely disappointed. Was that it?*

*"No," he said, as if having read your thoughts. "This isn't the 'something' – not yet. This number is just with some friends of mine. It'll be a few years yet: you'll pay your dues. Then, one day, you'll be working for me – on a very special project. And then you'll know."*

## BACKGROUND

You feel like all your life you've been waiting – for something to happen, or maybe for you to become something. When you were small, people thought you were full of promise – but somehow it never seemed to come to anything. The right opportunity, or the right motivation, never came along.

You've had a string of jobs – some menial, some better – and you've been good at some of them, bad at others. But even at the best of times, you never felt that this was really you – that this was what you should be doing. Working in film has been the most recent path, and it's gone well so far: mundane work, but you're good at it, and *Stolen Moments* is the biggest project yet – your first time of working for Gottfried Himmelhaus.

Have you been happy? It's hard to say. You've not been fulfilled, that's for sure: and can true happiness exist without fulfilment? You've had relationships, but they have never felt quite right either.

You're beginning to wonder, now – or rather, you're being forced to wonder, as the years go by – whether you will ever find that perfect place. Is there something wrong with you which is preventing you settling for contentment? Or is it just that you haven't tried the right thing yet?

## ANGEL

You are here to help people – to make their lives easier and more pleasant. And you are good at it, and you enjoy it, most of the time. As you move through life, you bring little patches of fun and excitement into the lives of those who you interact with; then you move on, before you cause any deliberate hurt or harm.

## DEVIL

You find it hard to care about others – or even about yourself. You can easily lapse into passive abuse. You are emotionally remote, and you often resent people's attempts to get to know you, to care about you, to help you. What right do they have to interfere in your life?

# TASK

You are here to help: the rest of the crew have jobs to do, and the cast have demands to be met. You can make it all go more smoothly, but only if you understand their needs and the dynamics between them. Gottfried has asked you to be the oil that makes the mechanism run smoothly. Although he also said you are to be the glue that holds it all together... Either way, your task is to make sense of the chaos around you, and to try and impose some order upon it.

## **Out of character**

*Your primary task in Act 1 is to help THE ART DIRECTOR, THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, and THE PROPMASER implement Gottfried's design notes for the two sets (included at the run) using your own creativity. You are also expected to help other members of the crew with any tasks in which they may require your assistance; to intercede between them and the cast; to establish what people need, and to work out how to satisfy their requirements. In Act 2, you will be expected to carry on this helpful work.*

# DILEMMA

You've got this far in your life just by moving from one thing to another; starting something, eventually getting bored, and moving on to whatever suggests itself next. It's worked for you: it's kept you alive, kept you busy. But is it really enough to keep saying you're waiting for the real thing to come along? Might there come a point where you have to make some choices, take some responsibility, and set a direction for yourself?

# THE SCRIPTWRITER

Player Name: **RITA FLAHERTY**; she/her

Character Name: **ALMA ELLIOTT**; she/her; age 40+

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE SCRIPTWRITER](#)

## CAPSULE

**Formerly a newspaper crime reporter, as the horrors she was witnessing became harder and harder to bear, she turned to the controllable world of fiction: she moved from press reporting to writing detective thrillers, and then to film scripts. She turns a chaotic, cruel world into logical story and pattern; and replaces incomprehensible, random people with solid, motivated characters. But this has not been enough to keep her from the progressive harm caused by reflecting on what she has seen. *Stolen Moments* may be the last script that she is capable of writing.**

*(Warning: this character is seriously self-destructive. It'll be up to you whether that's physical, psychological, or both; and how it operates, and how much you want to play upon it; but if this is a trigger issue for you, you will want to avoid this role.)*

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*A hot day, in an overcrowded art gallery. You had come here to get out, away from your house and your typewriter and your novel which was going around in circles because every time you started writing the truth kept pushing its way back in.*

*You were pushing through crowds when you caught sight of a painting that froze you. There was something about the violence in it that felt real and you found panic flowing through your body, and there were so many people, and it was so hot and you couldn't breathe and you were probably dying, but you didn't want to die in public, you didn't want to make a scene.*

*And he was there, hand on your arm, guiding you away from the painting and out of the gallery. And you wanted to protest, but you still couldn't speak, couldn't breathe even, so you just let him.*

*Once you could talk again, told him you were fine, that you hadn't needed his help, that it was just the weather. He listened to your stuttering explanations and nodded.*

*"Feels like the world's on fire, doesn't it?"*

*He passed you a card.*

*"In case you need it."*

*It had the name of a film company scribbled on the back, and Gottfried's name on the front, embossed in an elaborate gothic type.*

*You weren't going to call – why would you? You were a crime novelist, you didn't write films. Except you remembered the premiers that you had gone to, the glitz and the glamour that you had frowned on and how you had been a different person back then. Fun, charming, flirtatious and above all, unafraid.*

*Maybe a new start was what you needed. Everything would be better with a new start. So, hands shaking, you dialled the studio, unsure of what you would say. All you needed to say was your name.*

*They were pushing to impress you, to offer you more money, to bring you on board. You'd had no intention of actually working for them, but for a second you felt your old self returning. So you said yes.*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

An ambitious child, you always managed to demand attention despite your large family. You wanted to be a writer at first, but you were also pragmatic enough to realise that you couldn't earn any real money that way, and becoming a journalist seemed a good way to get your name known.

You were never that interested in the world of fashion and films. It was never very appealing somehow. You weren't sure why you ended up being given those stories. Maybe there was something about you, some charisma you had, that could get people to talk to you, and to let you in backstage where you didn't belong. You wanted change though, and when you got an opportunity to write about the real conditions behind a current, much publicised film you took it. You told yourself that you were doing it to help film stars, to help aspiring actors and actresses and to improve the industry. The editor considered it good gossip.

After that you were promoted to crime scenes. You were good at your job. You could get a quote from a bereaved mother, who thought she was talking to someone who knew her child, only for it to appear as a headline. You saw violence and it's aftermath. You saw corpses, and you saw those who were left living and you wondered who was luckier. This pushed you further. You were determined to tie things up neatly and to find justice and happy endings. There were none. You saw court cases that allowed evil people to walk free on a technicality. You saw cases that never made it to court at all. The more you pushed, the more you found, the more you realised that the world was fundamentally unsafe and fundamentally unfair.

You started writing again. You wrote crime novels and gave your cases happy endings. The murderer was always discovered and locked away forever. The living victims always took revenge. The stories held the demons at bay, a bit, but you still jumped at shadows and still saw yourself, standing helpless with your notebook in hand when you shut your eyes.

You turned to film scripts and you found other ways of coping. It was easy to rationalise. You needed to function, and life had taught you that those who were broken didn't survive. So you did whatever you needed to keep yourself sane and present while working. And when you weren't working you gave in to your vices.

You know it's breaking you apart though. The things that you're doing are slowly killing you or at least robbing you of who you are. You don't see a future anymore, and sometimes you feel ready to succumb to that void.

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Alma was known in Hollywood circles because her partner was a performer in silent movie pictures. Alma and her partner lived with Alma's father on a family estate. Her father was a prominent writer/director and she had access to a lot of people. Sadly, after a fancy red carpet party, Alma's father's home was broken into and Alma was the one who discovered the dead bodies of her father and life partner. Once the police cleared Alma, Alma swore off movies and the Hollywood lifestyle.

Alma pivoted her journalism career to work for the police department. Many local cops were not fond of having a lady tagging along so they would send her on assignments that no one else really wanted. Despite her reluctance, Alma has continued to turn up in Hollywood - usually as a writers consultant on films with police or detective procedures. Alma tries to help the movie-types infuse a touch of reality into their shows. Alma's heart, though, is really not in it. She's still quite haunted by her broken heart and surrounding herself with crime hasn't really helped her heal in the way that she had hoped.



# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE ART DIRECTOR

Someone who believes in your work, the one part of you left that's pure. He admires your writing and understands the stories you're trying to tell and the meanings and emotions behind them long before anyone else.

But he keeps pushing you to do more. To leave the journalism behind you and create something more.. artful? Narratively driven? The idea compels you a bit, to create stories that are really yours. There is a feeling of dismissiveness behind it too though, like he thinks that would cheer you up or something. How fortunate for him, that he doesn't know that it really doesn't work like that.

## THE METHOD ACTING INSTRUCTOR

She wasn't an instructor back then, and you didn't mean for things to happen like they did. You were just fed up. If you'd known you would turn back time for both of your sakes. You just didn't feel that you were being taken seriously as a journalist. Reviewing films and interviewing actresses was all very well but you weren't creating headlines.

All it took was a few cocktails and a promise of undying friendship and she spoke. About everything. About her fears about being an actress, the demands of people she'd worked with and the secrets of her co-stars. You wrote an expose about the filming of *Lonely Hearts* where she was playing the lead. They took you seriously after that. You got sent to crime scenes, and she never managed to get a good part again.

## THE SIDEKICK

He's sort of the equivalent of the adage "always-the-bridesmaid, never the bride" - and you just don't get it. In your opinion, his talent far exceeds most of the leading men, who are more obsessed with getting the actress than actually learning their lines. Good lines, lines other writers had agonized over.. and they just smiled through them, usually with only a few of the words and half the correct emphasis.

But not him, he's different, he cares about the words and the emotions behind them. If only they put you in charge, you'd write a hundred scripts for him. But, you know half of the game is that sultry sells, and maybe he just doesn't have the same oomph on-the-screen that you think he does. Or maybe he just needs a chance....



# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE RIVAL** – you’ve worked with her before and it’s been easy. As long as the work gets done she doesn’t care about your private life, which is as it should be.

## Negative

**THE JOURNEYING HERO** - You encountered him in your previous career. You know things.. things you think he’d prefer didn’t come to light.

**THE VETERAN** – she thinks she has all the answers and she doesn’t. She thinks she’s seen it all and She hasn’t.

# ANGEL

You can craft people’s lives into beautiful stories and you don’t judge them. You’ve seen enough of hate and division to know that it’s pointless to. You can retell someone’s story to them and make it sound beautiful. You can tidy up the messy aspects of human life and leave behind the beautiful, the narratively pleasing. And who doesn’t love being told that they’re a hero and their struggle is worth something.

You force yourself to see good in everyone and sometimes even good in the world, despite all evidence to the contrary. There were those in who risked themselves to save others and you need to believe that some of that exists in everyone.

# DEVIL

You’ve sunk to the depths of hell. You know what true evil is and what it can inflict. You can try everything to block it out and forget, but nothing’s ever enough. You need more and more and you’re terrified one day nothing will work. You know you can’t fight forever.

Maybe one day you’ll just give up. The world has never been kind and you can’t unsee that. You wake up with nightmares sometimes where you’re trying to save someone but you can’t move and you only have a notebook. That’s the truth. You watched them fall apart, or saw them dead and wrote about it. You have seen evil, and in your darker moments you think that you must be part of it.

# TASK

You need to keep everyone together and ready for the filming. That means making sure that they understand their roles, and the stories behind them. You need to create the narrative of the filming and give each person a starring role, showing them how important their contribution is. You can create stories for them all, from the main stars to the runner, about how necessary they are and how much the film depends on them. You can keep them believing in that ideal of themselves during the likely chaos of the early days.

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to assemble a draft script for Stolen Moments, using scenes given to you by the cast and those of your own composition. You should consult with THE SUBJECT over subject matter, and with THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR over practicalities of implementation – as much as you feel is necessary. After all, you are in charge of the script: you are not their servant, you are an extraordinary talent. During Act 2 you will probably be expected to revise and rework the script.*

# DILEMMA

You know how the world is and it haunts you. You want to give in to it and give up so badly. Maybe that means death, or maybe that means giving yourself over to your vices completely. The two might be indistinguishable. It's a comforting option. You're completely alone. The others haven't seen what you've seen, or known what you know about the world. Carrying the darkness in you has destroyed you and you don't want to let it destroy anyone else.

There is a part of you that can't quite give up though. The part of you that's been fighting for now, that fought to write *Stolen Moments*, to make it up to the people who you've hurt. You don't believe that things can get better exactly. You don't see the future that clearly. But maybe you can try to fight it, even if you won't win. Maybe you should try to fight it because that's who you are, or at least who you want to be. A survivor, if only to prove that it's possible to survive.

# THE SIDEKICK

Player Name: **KATHY CLARKSON**; she/her

Character Name: **EDDIE QUINN** ; he/him; age: LATE 20s/EARLY 30s

Other Names: Edgar Quinland (Known but discouraged; who ever heard of a leading man named 'Edgar?')

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE SIDEKICK](#)

## CAPSULE

**He came to Richmond Films to become a star: but somehow it didn't work out that way. There's something missing, they said – a spark, a drive, an urge? – that the real stars have, and he just doesn't seem to possess. Ready to take whatever supporting roles get passed to him, he's likeable and popular enough – but will always be in the shadow of the big names.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You were running late to the audition. It wasn't your fault. It was a hot day and there were too many people walking too slowly. Maybe you should've left earlier, but really they were either going to hire you or not. And if they didn't there would probably be some other work round the corner.*

*You weren't that late though. Not so late that the building should be empty. You were sure you'd got the day right. There was something about the phone call which made you pay attention, and almost put you on edge. Which was ridiculous of course.*

*The address was an old rehearsal room, empty except for a spotlight, a script and a man. And dusty. You remember the dust making your eyes water. You shuffled awkwardly, apologetically forward, trying to think of an excuse for being late.*

*The man smiled.*

*"Don't worry. There was no one else. I do my research very carefully."*

*You remember frowning. Everything you loathed about auditions, the crowds of people, the artificiality, the desperation, weren't there. Just you and this man, who was staring at you intensely. No one went to this trouble for a sidekick.*

*He cleared his throat.*

*"The role's yours."*

*You were about to protest that you hadn't even seen the script. That you had standards. That you didn't want to do anything unsavoury. That you hadn't even talked about pay.*

*He spoke again and the words died on your lips.*

*"If you want it, we can make you into a star."*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

Everyone knew your mother and father. He was the nation's hero, famed for making audiences fall in love with him. She was a more serious actress, most famous for Shakespeare, Chekhov and Ibsen roles which packed theatres and gave audiences a deeper understanding of the source.

When they fell in love it made the news. When you were born everyone was waiting to see what you would become. You received the best education, but it's clear your parents were setting you up for a life like theirs. You loved the glamour of it, although you also remembered their absences as much as their presence, the weeks they spent travelling and their fans who just seemed so demanding sometimes.

You enjoyed playing parts at first, but when you entered acting school and had to practice scenes again and again while your teachers watched, you felt some of the joy vanishing. It didn't feel like the spontaneous fun your parents had described it as. Memorising lines was hard work, and managing publicity even more so.

When you left school you told your parents you wanted to build your career on your own terms. It was a polite fiction that everyone pretended to buy into. A different second name and directors felt freer to tell you that you didn't quite have what they were looking for. That you didn't have the right chemistry with the lead actress. That you didn't have the right chemistry with anyone. That you didn't quite have the spark.

"But there's this other role," they said. "Less lines, more comedic." What you'd wanted all along.

"There's this other role..."

Always the sidekick.

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Born and raised in a picturesque town in New York far from the skyscrapers of Manhattan, Eddie Quinn fell in love with the silver screen at an early age. And while Eddie may have dreamed of being the one to outsmart the villain, get the girl and ride off into the sunset, his career seems to have cemented him into the role of the trusted and resourceful friend. Still good work, if you can get it, and Eddie seems to have no problems in that regard.

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE CAD

You've spent hours drinking together, talking about the world, about the meaning of life. He's relaxing to be around, although you wonder what it would be like to be him. To be so well known and so loved, yet so unbothered and separate from it.

He makes you think that maybe being one of the big names wouldn't be such a tough gig after all, if you have a detached attitude and a few glasses of good whiskey.

## THE FEMME FATALE

At first it was insulting that you weren't one of the men who she would pick up, play with a bit and then send away. You wouldn't have minded that; it would've been a bit of excitement. It's possible you weren't famous enough for her, or that your parents were too famous. Actually, what you found was worth more, in the end. You support her and you don't care that much about her looks and her stardom anymore.

Sometimes you wonder if you're just another person she's using, though. You know that she genuinely likes you, but has she only allowed herself to because you're not important enough to be anything else? How would she look at you if you were a star?

## THE PUBLICIST

It's his job, of course, to make everyone look good. But he seems to make you want to feel good about yourself. Sometimes, when he talks about your talent, or certain interpretations of the character you chose, and how they were right, you believe in yourself. Only while he's in the room with you of course, but still it's something.

You wish you knew whether he genuinely believed in you. If he genuinely thought you were star material, or if he was just saying so to make his job easier. If he means it, what does that mean for you? Do you have talent after all? Is that worth pursuing? Maybe this is where you can get the answers.

## THE SCRIPTWRITER

She's a damn fine writer. You remember reading some of her articles before she turned Hollywood, exciting crime-solving stuff. Would've made for some great films, in your opinion.

She was your consultant once, when you were playing a law enforcement officer, offering you tips on realism. She was practical and all business, and mysterious. You're definitely looking forward to seeing what she's got to offer on a film set - after all, stories aren't bound by the truth, so the sky is the limit!

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE GIRL NEXT DOOR** – a sweet undemanding woman. You always enjoy working with her. She has a lightness and kindness to her which seems to permeate everything she does.

## Negative

**THE GRANDE DAME** – This old friend of your parents is a schemer, which would be fine. Not everyone has to be like you. But you also have the feeling that you're supposed to keep her happy and on-side, which is annoying.

## ANGEL

You make people look good for the sheer joy of it. When you're working with the right people you love it. Everything clicks into place and you can support each other and it feels like acting should feel.

You're relaxed and easy going. You're not scrambling to outshine anyone else or make them feel insecure. You're happy with what you're getting and what you're getting is mostly good. You like the fact that you can be a relaxing presence while everyone is panicking and trying to be perfect.

## DEVIL

You don't really try. Maybe there's no point to it. Things will happen, or not, and so far it's normally been not. The fact is, things should have happened for you, a long time ago. The fact that they didn't probably means it's not worth trying.

This is true in acting, but also in life. You're always there, the sidekick, the support role and you don't seem to get anything in return. The resentment about that is building and you feel like one day it might explode.

# ROLE

This role is different. The sidekick you're playing is more than just a sidekick to the star. He's someone who, through no fault of his own, has been sidelined all his life and is thinking about taking control and how that could be done. Maybe, if it was played right, if you opened yourself and your own emotions, you could play a man who is a star in his own right. Maybe.

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from STOLEN MOMENTS, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

# DILEMMA

You're happy, you tell yourself. Despite the lack of opportunity, despite the fact that you've never met your parent's success, despite the occasional dismissive comment, you're very happy. You don't have to live your life in public, or work as hard as the stars, but you're still important. Trying for anything more would be stupid. And what if you tried and failed? You can still remember the initial disappointment of the first auditions you had, of people walking away from you, again and again. Why would you put yourself through that?

On the other hand, part of you wonders, what if you tried and succeeded? What if Gottfried gave you this role because he knew that you could not just make it your own, but become the film's star. What if you tried to fight for what you wanted, on and off screen, and made yourself vulnerable to the risk of not getting it?

# THE STAND-IN

*Details subject to change*

Player Name: **pending**

Character Name: ; gender; age ?

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE STAND-IN](#)

## CAPSULE

**Perhaps once she dreamed of being a star herself. But she's found so much more fulfilment and value as a supporter of stars' minds and souls, a facilitator of their capabilities. The job of stand-in is just an excuse to have her on the set: her real role is to advise, to calm, to persuade – she can rise above the squabbles and difficulties of the set, to help people see what's really important for them. She hopes that the people she helps will take away some of her wisdom, consciously or not: it's a slow road, but it feels like her mission.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You were between jobs and working as a waitress. You were miserable. The pay was bad and the customers felt entitled to you. To your time, to your kindness and to your body if you didn't move away quickly enough.*

*And he was there in the corner, writing in the same notebook, every day for a week. He never bought much, but that didn't bother you. Business was slow and he was never difficult to deal with either.*

*One night you had the closing shift. You had turned off the lights and were about to lock the door when you heard a noise behind you. When you swung round, heart pounding he was standing there, close, although you were sure the place had been empty.*

*You opened your mouth to scream, to tell him to get out, to say something, but he shook his head and you fell silent. He started talking about method acting, about its demands, about the need to really understand.*

*"So you see" he said. "They will need you." He pushed a piece of paper into your hand and left. When you unravelled it, shaking slightly, you saw an address and the words Stolen Moments printed below.*



## BACKGROUND

You and your brother grew up with a father who was frequently uninterested or absent. You learnt at a young age to take care of your mother's emotional needs, and work out whether she needed a shoulder to cry on or something to distract her from the thoughts of where your father could be, and who he could be with.

When you were alone in your bedroom you would practice acting passages from your books, being each character in turn. What interested you is what drove them. By becoming them you could learn what they cared about and who they were.

After your mother's death you were left alone, at least emotionally. Your father showed some interest in setting up your brother in business but neither of them showed any concern for you. You tried to make it as an actress, hoping that your understanding and caring would be enough. You never really progressed beyond bit parts and accepted stand-in roles. It was money after all.

This is where you found your true calling. Unnoticed, you could be by someone's side when they needed you. And because you were needed you were loved. You might only be a stand – in but you know there are people out there who still think of you fondly.

## ANGEL

You care about people. You will always be there for someone who needs you. If someone's upset then you want to comfort them and understand what upset them. You can give advice too, if people ask for it and when you know them well enough to understand their perspective. And you want to know them well enough to understand.

You don't get drawn into the squabbles of the set, but you can help mediate and bring about peaceful solutions. You know directors admire you for it, and that sometimes you've been hired just for that reason.

## DEVIL

You need to help, regardless of your own needs. And to do that properly you need to stay detached and try to understand the other person. Sometimes you wish you could be more open about yourself and your interests. About your own loneliness and your need to find a connection and maybe something more.

People need you, even if they think they don't. Even if they say they don't. When someone tries to push you away you need to try harder. They're probably hurting and scared to let you in.

# ROLE

As the stand-in you need to understand all the characters in *Stolen Moments* as the actors do. Part of the importance of method acting is understanding how the actor relates the character to themselves. Have they had similar experiences? Do they have similar emotions? You need to find this out from everyone. Gottfried has advised you that this connection is the key thing that will allow the actor to play their role properly.

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to understand what connects each actor uniquely to their character. How does it relate to the role and what does it mean to them? This means talking to everyone to find out. You know that the method-acting style means that actors should play off their own insecurities to make the role more effective, so trying to reassure them or make them feel better may damage their connection to the character. Is it worth it? – is it right? In Act 2, the ethical questions around this area of work will probably be sharpened.*

# DILEMMA

You feel like there's something within you that's growing stronger each day that wants to be loved and cared for as you, not for the fact that you can say the right things when necessary. You essentially really do care about people and part of that should be showing them who you are, right?

What if they reject you the way your father and brother did though? Your family were the only people who truly knew you and they turned their back on you. Maybe some part of you is just unlovable.

# THE STILLS PHOTOGRAPHER

*Details subject to change*

Player Name: **pending**

Character Name: ; gender; age ?

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE STILLS PHOTOGRAPHER](#)

## CAPSULE

Having risen from humble and troubled origins, he's renowned through the industry for the alchemy with which he transforms base humanity into screen idols. But the camera has been a useful way of shielding himself from his subjects... preventing them from seeing into him. They are fascinating, beautiful, charming: but sometimes they can also seem sick, twisted, self-destructive. Being given natural gifts, rather than working hard and struggling up to achieve success, can be very bad for the character, it seems.

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*He was a subject. You saw him first through your camera lens. If you had first seen him in person maybe he would've been ordinary, unremarkable. But you were at a summer wedding, and the sunlight glittered off the lake and he was there, in your shot, human but other worldly. And you immediately wanted to stop everything and take photograph after photograph of him until you could finally understand.*

*You walked over to him, almost against your will. Your role was to be unobtrusive, to capture the feel of the occasion, but not to speak. Dull work originally, but everyone here was important in some way, and the money was good. You had never quite stopped worrying about money, although there was no need now.*

*He wasn't surprised and offered his hand for you to shake.*

*"I came here to find you." You were uncertain, off-guard. You were in demand, sure, but you had an assistant, and barely anyone recognised you and you were never approached like this.*

*"I need a photographer. One who sees people. Really sees them." Glancing around you saw that the wedding guests seemed to have backed away, making space for your conversation.*

*He looked at you, into your eyes for an uncomfortably long time and then nodded.*

*"It has to be you. I'll call your office."*

*The next day you were booked to shoot the film.*

## BACKGROUND

From as early as you can remember you were sent out to beg for money. It was never easy. As a child you were alone, cold, and often ignored or kicked by passers-by. You would normally return home with just enough money for the tenement you lived in, if not always enough for food.

To the people who passed you, you were invisible: but you saw them. Years before you even touched a camera, before you knew what photography was, you were framing shots in your mind, capturing not just a person's beauty, but also their essence.

As you grew up, you tried to improve things for yourself. You became an apprentice to a photographer and she was impressed by your talent, often allowing you to take the lead on smaller jobs. As your reputation as a talented local photographer increased more people requested your services.

When you started getting requests from film directors, it felt like a dream come true. As the films started getting bigger and bigger and your name more and more renowned, your beginnings were spoken about in terms of admiration rather than disgust. You had made it despite the odds. The people who had kicked you and spat at you as a child now wanted to shake your hand and ask you to capture who they truly were.

## ANGEL

People are fascinating. You want to learn everything and use it to show others, and maybe even the subjects themselves, who they really are. You love learning about people and you love showing them strengths and virtues that they didn't know they possessed. You've mastered the art of making people feel comfortable enough to show you their soul.

## DEVIL

They aren't like you. You can see them, and sometimes you feel a flash of something, but normally it's just the excitement of a job well done. You can see them, but they can't see you and you mustn't get too close. Without the camera and your reputation to shelter you, maybe you would just become that child that was ignored and alone again, treated badly by people just like these. Better that you maintain a distance.

# TASK

Take photographs of people in groups and one on one, that really represent them. Everything depends on getting it right, but you know how to do that. But Gottfried wanted more “show them their souls” he told you. The camera has always told the truth. But can you really tell people who they are and maintain your distance?

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to take portrait photos, individual and/or group, of as many of the cast as possible; and to take candid and ad hoc photos of the work that cast and crew are doing around the location; as well as capturing any other particularly interesting or scenic matter that might be useful for publicity. In Act 2, you will be expecting to continue this work.*

# DILEMMA

This has to be your best work. You need to give it everything you have. Gottfried made clear that this wasn't just another film. This was about the characters and the actors and closing the distance between them. You can take great photos. You can make people relax. But what if you let your own guard down a little? Could you be even better? What if you were honest? What if you told the truth? What if you let yourself care, just a little? Compared to your work, what personal cost could be too high?

# THE SUBJECT

Player Name: **MEGAN COPPOCK**; she/her

Character Name: **Delarosa aka “Del”**; she/her; age 35-45

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE SUBJECT](#)

## CAPSULE

**Her troubled and glamorous life is the inspiration for this film's story, although Gottfried has changed many of the details. Having bounced from one exciting but disastrous relationship to another, she now feels barely able to make sense of her own history and her own wishes and ambitions.**

*(Warning: this character has become desensitized through overstretching and overgiving, and could potentially come apart in any number of ways. It'll be up to you whether that happens, and how it plays out; but if this is a trigger issue for you, you will want to avoid this role.)*

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You didn't know how long he had been waiting for you. It was raining, and you were hurrying home, but you remembered later that he wasn't wet. He didn't seem to get wet either, or seem rushed in any way. He stood outside your house, like he had been waiting forever, and would keep on waiting as long as was needed. He had an air of self confidence, nothing like the journalists who were clamouring to tell the 'real story'. He asked you what the 'real story' meant to you, and you realised you didn't have an answer. Perhaps you had once.*

*Instead he talked about narrative and painted a picture of a young determined woman, making her own way in the world, and daring it to be anything but hers. You fell in love with her, this woman who had overcome insurmountable odds to be someone who mattered. "She will be remembered forever," he promised and you knew that you would remember her for your whole life, even if no one else did.*

*He always referred to her though, never you, although it was clear it was your story that he wanted to tell. He didn't call you inspirational, not once and maybe that was what made you like him.*

*Afterwards, fumbling with your keys while trying to get into your house you wondered what had just happened, and what you had agreed to. Later, when you looked in the mirror, you saw the other woman, the determined and resilient one, smiling back.*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

Your life seems to have jumped around from one moment to the next. Born in an orphanage, you left to work in a factory, but developed a talent for social climbing, moving from one person to the next but always falling deeply in love.

You remember parties and dances. You remember watching people leave, through the window in the rain. You remember the heart aching beauty of it all, and the adventure. You've seen Africa and lived there with missionaries before risking it all for a chance at love with someone you met three days before. You've made scenes at parties that have caused newspaper headlines. You've broken hearts and had your heart broken time and time again.

You didn't exactly court fame, but you didn't avoid it either. You were bold or demure depending on what the situation called for, as more and more cameras flashed in your face. You represented possibility, and almost tangible excitement. You represented a dream that someone could be born as nothing but become everything. When you didn't remember your background you lied. You were a scientist you told them, an explorer, you joined the circus for a while when you had nowhere else to go and made lifelong friends. You changed evil men into good men, you told them. The more outrageous the stories, the more they loved you. And as the world started hearing about you, you found better stories, real ones.

And none of it means anything to you.

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

In Brief:

It was a commotion in Spain when she, a poor commoner, married one of their handsome Princes. It was a scandal around the world when she abandoned him to pose nude for a famous French painter. Del (short for Delicia or Delores or something) went on to travel the world and appear in newspapers with a string of famous lovers, until she ultimately left a wealthy businessman and philanthropist at the altar. Since then she's been more of a recluse until now.

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

A friendly man, but his friendship with you seems to have grown into a bit of an obsession. He always seems to be there, watching you, wanting to understand your story.

You're used to men falling for you and the excitement of it, but you're not sure what to think of this. Is he another person who has come too close to your flame and will soon burn up, or is this something real?

## THE INGENUE

You understand what it's like, being young and feeling out of control. Everyone has their vices, and anything that helps you cope with the world better can't be a bad thing. You do what you need to do to cope, and you showed her the way – and sometimes you follow it together. You understand this about each other.

What she needs is someone she can talk to, someone non-judgemental, someone encouraging, and you are happy to be that person, and tell her – and help her – to do what she needs to get through the filming.

## THE PSYCHOTHERAPIST

Someone who keeps you together and makes you feel special. While you're with her you can really see yourself as someone who deserves to be the star of the story, someone who maybe has a touch of magic about them and has a story worth telling – even if that story isn't quite what's being told.

You visit her as often as you can to talk about your fears, but also to relive your glory. She absolves you of your mistakes, and shows you your true worth.

## THE RIVAL

Yet another well-known name who seems to have taken an interest in your fascinating tales. Her interest seems to be professional, but could it be slightly more obsessive? Why does she keep in the shadows, rather than simply ask her questions like everyone else?

You wonder if wanting to find out is part of your nature – the part that brought you glamour and parties, sure; but also the part that brings you trouble and woes. Just what does she have in mind for you, and will it bring you happiness or more grief?



# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE FEMME FATALE** – your type of woman. It's like looking in a mirror at an unknown self – a fascinating mirror, that you want to get closer to – maybe, much closer. You wonder if she feels the same?

## Negative

**THE PROP MASTER** – annoying. He thinks he's mysterious and exciting, but most likely he's just unable to hold a conversation like a normal person.

## ANGEL

You love excitement and drama, yours and everyone else's. You want to help people find their own story and their own happiness. You're drawn to people and fascinated by who they are and who they could become. You can lead them into taking chances, falling in love and enjoying life.

## DEVIL

Everyone wants a piece of you and sometimes that's just too much. You can't connect the story being told to yourself sometimes. It's just some empty words with no feeling attached. It shouldn't be like that, but somehow it is. And what does it mean that the story of your life, the story that is so glamorous and important that it's the subject of a film, feels like nothing?

# TASK

Gottfried told you to tell everyone your story, to give them a feel for who you are. You must reveal everything, the joy and the pain, to everyone relevant. You should approach them and let them interview you, and answer any questions they have. Gottfried instructed you to hold nothing back, however painful or embarrassing.

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to help the actors and THE SCRIPTWRITER in turning the details of your life into screen gold. Let yourself be interviewed, and seek people out to tell them about yourself if necessary. Attend rehearsals, and don't be shy to intervene. You will also need to talk with THE PUBLICIST about how you are to be used in the film's publicity campaign. During Act 2, you expect that this work will continue.*

# DILEMMA

Your life is fascinating to others, but you feel nothing. What drove you to do the things you did and who are you really, at the core of it all? The film is giving a coherent narrative to your life, one that not only makes sense but makes you a hero. What would be wrong about believing that about yourself? At least it makes you feel something. But you know it's not how it was. Your life may have only been a jumbled mess of coincidences but maybe, if you ignore the narrative of the film and put them together, figure them out for yourself, you could at least make something true. A life where you're not a heroine, not a romantic figure to be longed for but just another human being.

# THE VETERAN

Player Name: **MICA CORRADIN**; she/her

Character Name: **NELLIE TRUESDALE** ; she/her; age 49 (actually 55-ish)

Other Names: born Helen Moira Callaghan; prior to 1912 appeared in films as Nellie Callaghan

Link to Who's Playing Who - [THE VETERAN](#)

## CAPSULE

**She shone brightly during the early years of the movie business, and survived the transition from silent to talkies. Having made more than her fair share of mistakes, and accumulated many regrets, she came gradually to a way of understanding herself and the world. From the outside, she appears peaceful, calm, contented; and a tangible connection to the pure, honest, old days. She has been able to devote much of her energy and time to helping others (although there is a great deal about modern life that saddens and disappoints her). But she knows that internally she has much unfinished business.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You didn't recognise him when you first saw him. He had had some previous success but he wasn't the big name that he is now.*

*You were just starting out then, and sitting in a dark bar after a day of filming. He sat opposite you, which was strange as it was the sort of place where people always sat alone. He should have looked out of place, smartly dressed, and confident, but somehow he didn't. He seemed like he fit in perfectly there, like he would fit in perfectly anywhere.*

*He told you that you had talent and that you would make it. You asked him what it would take to get a job with him, a leading role, and he told you it wasn't time yet.*

*You thought of him occasionally over the years, but you didn't need help anymore. You had made it on your own. You started hearing his name spoken, at first gradually, and then more and more often.*

*You met him again at the same bar. Not your usual sort of place at all now, but somehow you had ended up in there again.*

*When he asked you to be part of Stolen Moments it wasn't really a question. There was only one answer you could give.*

## ROLE BACKGROUND

You've done it all throughout your considerable career. The sidekick, the leading lady, and now as you are older, the mentor who guides the others on their journey.

That's what your life feels like too. You remember the trouble you got into back at the height of your stardom. The men, the women, the drink the drugs and the clumsy mistakes that could so easily have been avoided. You're past that now and you want to help. You're not jealous that others have taken the leading roles. You want to help them avoid the mistakes you've made.

But sometimes your own mistakes keep you up at night. Maybe you could make it up to the people that you've hurt along the way, or at least learn to forgive yourself for it. Maybe the first step to that would be to stop pretending you have all the answers and admit you're as flawed (more flawed?) as everybody else. Maybe if you could be honest for once it would be an apology of sorts. Maybe even if you could just be honest to those who matter.

Is it really too late to set things right?

## CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Nellie Truesdale practically grew up on a silent movie set. Her father was a pioneering cinematographer at the Edison Studios of West Orange, NJ, and brought Nellie and her younger sisters to movie sets in the 1890's. So from the tender age of 12, she began appearing in Westerns, desert romances, melodramas, comedies, and horror films. She played a staggering variety of roles: young-old, rich-poor, victim-monster, whatever was needed. She earned the reputation of being a "little mother" to cast and crew alike.

In 1912, Nellie met Western-Romance-novelist-turned-screenwriter Scott Truesdale and fell hard. They eloped and headed West to chase the dream of Hollywood. With her resume and experience, Nellie found steady work in silent films, though seldom in leading roles. Scott Truesdale struggled at first, but in 1914 sold a script to a major studio. Their idyllic marriage was shattered less than a year later when Scott tragically died in a boating accident.

In recent years, Nellie has continued her solid career as a journeyman actress, and successfully made the transition to "talkies". Nellie is a consummate professional who is always ready to help a cast or crew member in need.

# PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

## THE GRANDE DAME

You've worked together over the years, but where you've allowed yourself to be swept sideways into support roles she has always fought for better things. She has always known what she's wanted and she's always got it. New roles have been written, other, younger actors have been pushed aside to give her parts.

And you don't know how it happens except for her determination to succeed. Even when you were the main star you didn't have that sense of purpose. You always wished you had.

## THE MAN OF MYSTERY

You play cards with him. He's always interested in you, in the things that would make you passionate, the things that you care about. He always seems quite tight lipped about himself though.

You wonder sometimes, if the two of you are playing a similar game regarding what you present to the world. Surprisingly, that makes it easier to relax around him.

# OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

## Positive

**THE METHOD ACTING INSTRUCTOR** – she takes the film seriously and helps you find your role.

## Negative

**THE SCRIPT WRITER** – she's falling apart and wants to drag the world with her.

# ANGEL

You present a calming presence to the rest of the cast. You have been there before and can give them the benefit of your advice in a calm, caring way. You are someone who understands yourself, and can help others understand themselves. You can comfort those in crisis and be someone to turn to.

# DEVIL

You've made mistakes along the way and they still haunt you. You have to make sure that no one else does the same. You offer unneeded advice and tell people how to live. You want to be accepted as the mother figure, as the mentor, and the others must listen to you.

# ROLE

You are playing the religious authority, haunted by memories of the past. As you guide the other characters on their quest you need to justify your past mistakes to your God. It almost seems like this role was written for you. You've played similar in the past of course, but the sins you're asking forgiveness for are remarkably like your own.

## **Out of character**

*Your task in Act 1 is to rehearse scenes from STOLEN MOMENTS, together with your fellow-actors, once the CREW is ready for you. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work, including creating scenes with the CAST and CREW where you think they could help fill in the narrative (or make a good show for your part).*

# DILEMMA

You're old now, and feel like you've achieved what you set out to. Yet, somehow you don't feel happy or at peace when you look back at your life. Should you examine the mistakes you've made, your old wounds which used to hurt so much but have now faded into secret scars? Or should you let it go and live as you are? Everyone makes mistakes, after all.