

# 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.*

## 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...

- ☹ 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?
- ☹ How do you feel about your gender?
- ☹ How do you feel about your sexuality?
- ☹ Is there anyone outside the set of *Stolen Moments* who's important to you?
- ☹ What's the most significant memory from your childhood?

## 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 create and rehearse scenes from Stolen Moments, together with your fellow-actors. You should also meet with THE HAIRSTYLIST, THE MAKEUP ARTIST, and THE COSTUME DESIGNER to discuss your character's needs; and you should get your portrait taken by THE STILLS PHOTOGRAPHER. During Act 2, you will probably be expected to continue this work.*

## 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?