

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."

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?

- ☹ 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 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 MAKEUP ARTIST

You and she grew up together, attending school, becoming friends. She's as close to you as a sister: you turn to her first with good news, and also when you need help or support.

When she was a teenager, she went through a tough time, receiving unwanted sexual attention. No-one else understood why she was upset – they thought she should be grateful that someone was interested in her. Only you were there for her, to help her and protect her. It created a solid bond between you.

THE PUBLICIST

He's quite lowly in the film industry hierarchy, but perhaps that's what drew you together: you can relax with him, and be yourself, not like with the other actors. You got talking one time when he 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 he is – although he 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 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 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 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

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?