

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.

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.

- ☹ 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 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 DIVA

She's a glorious beast, a phantasmagorical creature who feasts upon emotion and drama. You are wary of her – you've gotten close in the past, but to let her truly know you would be to get consumed – your carefully-constructed shell cracked to pieces.

Maybe she wants more than you have so far given her. More than the chemistry and excitement and nights spent together. You can sense that she wants to get to know you – to understand you – perhaps, even, to love you. But up till now, you have felt that is a risk that you just can't take.

THE MAKEUP ARTIST

She's usually as quiet as a mouse, tending carefully to your appearance, just like she does with the other stars. You don't know her story: but something has left her very self-effacing. She must have been beautiful, once.

When she bends over you, you sense a tension within her – as though she's almost having to force herself to touch you. Is she repelled by you? That would be unusual. Is she afraid?

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.

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.

Negative

THE RUNNER – she is as directionless and drifting as you, but she's sickeningly helpful. Does she think she's better than you?

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 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'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.