

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.”

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.

- ☉ What is your 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 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 RUNNER

You remember her as a nurse working alongside you in hospitals. She didn't do a bad job either. Her bedside manner wasn't terrible and she understood things that lots of people in her position didn't. She was never shocked by what she saw and always practical. You liked that.

After you left, you thought she must have been working her way up too. Instead she's turned up here, as a runner of all things. Did she leave the hospital? Get herself fired? Or was it just that she managed to hang onto her integrity instead of selling her skills to the highest bidder?

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. The 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

Positive

THE HAIRSTYLIST – he is good. He gets them to talk to him without effort. Maybe he even has a few tricks you could learn regarding that.

THE INVESTOR – a businesslike woman in a place where women are expected to be hysterical or divas. She's a refreshing change. Someone who pushes back when pushed.

Negative

THE INGENUUE – 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 pro-active 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.