

# THE PUBLICIST

## CAPSULE

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

## 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 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.

- ☉ 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 GRANDE DAME

The cousin of your mother. She has been supporting you financially. You know that you're a burden to her. She has been so successful and you cringe at what she must think of you. You hope that she knows that you're grateful at least. You wish you didn't need the money. You want to make ends meet without her help.

You almost wish she'd stop, although the thought of that leaves a fluttery feeling in your stomach, because what else would you do? Even so, every time she gives you money you feel your failure more acutely. You know that she must be comparing you to your mother, and you know that she's finding you wanting.

### 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.

## **THE HAIRSTYLIST**

Someone who really listens. You wonder if he's like you in some ways maybe. Although he does have ability as well as kindness, and he knows the right thing to say, where you know you sometimes make mistakes. He seems interested in you, and like he wants to take care of you in some way. Almost like a friend.

It's almost certainly pity of course. And even if it isn't, even if he genuinely thinks that you are worth something, he'll soon see he's wrong. If you accept his help you'll end up disappointing him. You would much rather he saw you as someone with potential that he couldn't reach, than someone that he ended up wasting his time on.

## **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.

**THE COSTUME DESIGNER** – she understands that it's OK to stay in the background. She's not trying to push you to be anything you're not. It's relaxing.

## **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?