

# THE SIDEKICK

## CAPSULE

**He came to Richmond Films to become a star: but somehow it didn't work out that way. There's something missing, they said – a spark, a drive, an urge? – that the real stars have, and he just doesn't seem to possess. Ready to take whatever supporting roles get passed to him, he's likeable and popular enough – but will always be in the shadow of the big names.**

## MEETING GOTTFRIED

*You were running late to the audition. It wasn't your fault. It was a hot day and there were too many people walking too slowly. Maybe you should've left earlier, but really they were either going to hire you or not. And if they didn't there would probably be some other work round the corner.*

*You weren't that late though. Not so late that the building should be empty. You were sure you'd got the day right. There was something about the phone call which made you pay attention, and almost put you on edge. Which was ridiculous of course.*

*The address was an old rehearsal room, empty except for a spotlight, a script and a man. And dusty. You remember the dust making your eyes water. You shuffled awkwardly, apologetically forward, trying to think of an excuse for being late.*

*The man smiled.*

*“Don't worry. There was no one else. I do my research very carefully.”*

*You remember frowning. Everything you loathed about auditions, the crowds of people, the artificiality, the desperation, weren't there. Just you and this man, who was staring at you intensely. No one went to this trouble for a sidekick.*

*He cleared his throat.*

*“The role's yours.”*

*You were about to protest that you hadn't even seen the script. That you had standards. That you didn't want to do anything unsavoury. That you hadn't even talked about pay.*

*He spoke again and the words died on your lips.*

*“If you want it, we can make you into a star.”*

## BACKGROUND

Everyone knew your mother and father. He was the nation's hero, famed for making audiences fall in love with him. She was a more serious actress, most famous for Shakespeare, Chekhov and Ibsen roles which packed theatres and gave audiences a deeper understanding of the source.

When they fell in love it made the news. When you were born everyone was waiting to see what you would become. You received the best education, but it's clear your parents were setting you up for a life like theirs. You loved the glamour of it, although you also remembered their absences as much as their presence, the weeks they spent travelling and their fans who just seemed so demanding sometimes.

You enjoyed playing parts at first, but when you entered acting school and had to practice scenes again and again while your teachers watched, you felt some of the joy vanishing. It didn't feel like the spontaneous fun your parents had described it as. Memorising lines was hard work, and managing publicity even more so.

When you left school you told your parents you wanted to build your career on your own terms. It was a polite fiction that everyone pretended to buy into. A different second name and directors felt freer to tell you that you didn't quite have what they were looking for. That you didn't have the right chemistry with the lead actress. That you didn't have the right chemistry with anyone. That you didn't quite have the spark.

“But there's this other role.” they said. “Less lines, more comedic.” What you'd wanted all along.

“There's this other role...”

Always the sidekick.

- ☉ 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 spent hours drinking together, talking about the world, about the meaning of life. He's relaxing to be around, although you wonder what it would be like to be him. To be so well known and so loved, yet so unbothered and separate from it.

He makes you think that maybe being one of the big names wouldn't be such a tough gig after all, if you have a detached attitude and a few glasses of good whiskey.

### THE FEMME FATALE

At first it was insulting that you weren't one of the men who she would pick up, play with a bit and then send away. You wouldn't have minded that; it would've been a bit of excitement. It's possible you weren't famous enough for her, or that your parents were too famous. Actually, what you found was worth more, in the end. You support her and you don't care that much about her looks and her stardom anymore.

Sometimes you wonder if you're just another person she's using, though. You know that she genuinely likes you, but has she only allowed herself to because you're not important enough to be anything else? How would she look at you if you were a star?

### THE RUNNER

You loved her once, but that was long ago. Do you miss her now? When you were together she was successful, and now she's turned up, doing general errands on the show. You're not surprised really. Your relationship worked because you were both so easy-going. You both accepted things that happened to you; and one of those things happened to be each other. And yet, despite yourself, you fell for her.

What does it mean that she's here? Did she know you would be? There's something about her presence which makes you want to push yourself forward and show her what's possible. Although why, after all this time, would she care or even notice?

## **THE PUBLICIST**

It's his job, of course, to make everyone look good. But he seems to make you want to feel good about yourself. Sometimes, when he talks about your talent, or certain interpretations of the character you chose, and how they were right, you believe in yourself. Only while he's in the room with you of course, but still it's something.

You wish you knew whether he genuinely believed in you. If he genuinely thought you were star material, or if he was just saying to make his job easier. If he means it, what does that mean for you? Do you have talent after all? Is that worth pursuing? Maybe this where you can get the answers.

## **OTHER RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Positive**

**THE GIRL NEXT DOOR** – a sweet undemanding woman. You always enjoy working with her. She has a lightness and kindness to her which seems to permeate everything she does.

**THE HAIRSTYLIST** – he makes you look good, and feel good about yourself. He's an unthreatening presence who just wants to get the job done. More people should be like that, really.

### **Negative**

**THE GRANDE DAME** – This old friend of your parents is a schemer, which would be fine. Not everyone has to be like you. But you also have the feeling that you're supposed to keep her happy and on-side, which is annoying.

## **ANGEL**

You make people look good for the sheer joy of it. When you're working with the right people you love it. Everything clicks into place and you can support each other and it feels like acting should feel.

You're relaxed and easy going. You're not scrambling to outshine anyone else or make them feel insecure. You're happy with what you're getting and what you're getting is mostly good. You like the fact that you can be a relaxing presence while everyone is panicking and trying to be perfect.

## DEVIL

You don't really try. Maybe there's no point to it. Things will happen, or not, and so far it's normally been not. The fact is, things should have happened for you, a long time ago. The fact that they didn't probably means it's not worth trying.

This is true in acting, but also in life. You're always there, the sidekick, the support role and you don't seem to get anything in return. The resentment about that is building and you feel like one day it might explode.

## ROLE

This role is different. The sidekick you're playing is more than just a sidekick to the star. He's someone who, through no fault of his own, has been sidelined all his life and is thinking about taking control and how that could be done. Maybe, if it was played right, if you opened yourself and your own emotions, you could play a man who is a star in his own right. Maybe.

### **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're happy, you tell yourself. Despite the lack of opportunity, despite the fact that you've never met your parent's success, despite the occasional dismissive comment, you're very happy. You don't have to live your life in public, or work as hard as the stars, but you're still important. Trying for anything more would be stupid. And what if you tried and failed? You can still remember the initial disappointment of the first auditions you had, of people walking away from you, again and again. Why would you put yourself through that?

On the other hand, part of you wonders, what if you tried and succeeded? What if Gottfried gave you this role because he knew that you could not just make it your own, but become the film's star. What if you tried to fight for what you wanted, on and off screen, and made yourself vulnerable to the risk of not getting it?