

DESIGN

The characters in *On Location* are actors and film crew, assembled to shoot what will surely be a technical and artistic masterpiece as well as a commercial triumph: *Stolen Moments*. It will be the acme of British film output, at a time when Europe has not yet ceded cinematic primacy to Hollywood.

In 1932, the world is firmly grasped in the teeth of the Great Depression: but as the silver screen makes a temporary escape for so many, the industry's glamour and extravagance has increased rather than lessened. How long this decadent, exotic bubble can last – and what horrors the coming years may hold in store – no one yet knows.

About Stolen Moments

Stolen Moments is a lavish ensemble piece, a thriller/caper/melodrama in the modern style, being made by leading studio Richmond Films. A stellar array of talent from all over Europe has been assembled, and all that is required to turn it into glittering reality is the presence of renowned director Gottfried Himmelhaus. As famous for his outrageous temper as for his artistic temperament, the German genius will surely create a picture for the ages. When he arrives...

The details of *Stolen Moments* are not designed. Players can invent them as required, when they wish to discuss or rehearse lines and scenes together, to plan shots, to arrange scenery and props, and so on. The important thing is that, until Gottfried Himmelhaus arrives, no actual productive activity on the film can take place.

Act structure

On Location takes place in two Acts.

Act One is set when the characters have been together for a week, getting to know one another, and looking forward to starting to work together as soon as the director arrives. Most will be keen, wanting to make a good (or at least a strong) impression, wanting to pick up old relationships and start new ones.

Act Two is set an unspecified, but long, time after – at least several weeks. The characters are still waiting, but perhaps, for some of them, hope and belief have faded. All that is known is that Gottfried Himmelhaus is still expected to arrive. Time now has little meaning – each day is very similar to the last, and reality seems to have narrowed itself down to this one small group of buildings. Some will go through the motions of work, some will have openly given up and lapsed into self-indulgence. They are still being fed, and paid...

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At the end of Act Two, each character will be offered a choice: to remain in the comfortable bubble of Tarrington Manor, waiting in the eternal present, either accepting their state or maybe still hoping for their director's arrival: or to emerge into the unknowable future. This will conclude the larp.



Authenticity and historicity (not)

On Location is not designed to strive for authenticity or for historical accuracy. The larp is not going to feature the minutiae of 1930s movie-making, nor will it pay detailed attention to the history of the period. The intention is to achieve a loose, glamorized, and dramatized version of the period and of the industry – larger than life, and less fiddly.

Prejudice

The 1930s was a time of overt prejudice: women, homosexual people, members of ethnic minorities, and other groups were often openly discriminated against and persecuted. We are going to be very careful about reproducing this in play – we don't want players to have to experience prejudice, or to have to express it, unless they actively wish to do so. Some characters are designed as more conservative

and/or less tolerant than others – but even so, the player will decide where their personal lines of prejudice will be drawn.

If you would like your character to have the experience of suffering prejudice, that's absolutely fine: other players will need to actively choose to express prejudice against them, it won't happen by default. You can ask for this in advance of the larp during preplay, or during the workshops, or during an offgame moment in play itself.

This is not because we want to whitewash or fluffify the period – it's because, for purposes of playability, we are conceiving of the 'showbiz bubble' as being a somewhat safer space for difference than is the outside world. The in-game explanation is that the studio depends upon its workers being able to cooperate together, despite that they are in many cases quite unusual: so in general the workplace is expected to operate without prejudices being expressed. We want players to be able to concentrate on what they're trying to explore with their characters within the larp that we have designed, without having the particular considerations of prejudice also weighing on them unless they wish that to be so.

(You should also look at the notes about gender and sexuality on the **Characters** section of this document.)

Playing to lift

On Location is not intended for you to play to win, or play to lose. 'Winning' and 'losing' are not really possible, in any meaningful sense. Instead, you're encouraged to *play to lift* - to life up the other characters' play, so that the responsibility for your drama and your character also rests on all your co-players. Let your character follow their own path, without too much steering and without too many expectations of what should be happening to them. Take action as it occurs to you, and react to other characters' actions as you become aware of them - letting it flow naturally, building rather than blocking.

“Why is this so effective? Well, it is much easier for a particular individual to lose than to win. And it is much easier for me to give you a win (I happen to spill my secret in the middle of our heated argument) than for you to carve out a win (You must out-of-game-cleverly manipulate me into spilling my secret). The drama that we both want rests on the secret coming out, however – and the easiest way for us to ensure that to happen, is for me to lift you. So trust that the other players will lift you to wins, and you can focus on losing.

“Note that the win we are talking about is a win for the player, not for the character. It may very well be that I recognize that you clearly want your tragic character to fail horribly at the public speech she is giving. Well, then the way I would Play to

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Lift you is to throw a (verbal) rotten tomato at you and boo your character off the stage.

“Do not people sometimes read each other wrong, when it comes to what they want? Certainly. Just as in a dance, you can sometimes step on your partner’s toe or twirl him when he was really expecting something else. Just as in a dance, you get better at it with practice.”

(The concept of ‘play to lift’, and the quoted passage above, comes from [this article by Susanne Vejdemo](#) in the 2018 Knutepunkt book, which discusses it in more depth.)

Opt-in transparency

The design of *On Location* is opt-in transparent. There are no secrets being kept from players – everything that’s in the larp, you will be able to see in advance. However, if you’d like to keep some surprises in store for yourself, that’s absolutely fine, of course. You can choose only to read the stuff that you have to, and ignore the rest for now; and that’ll then give you a different kind of game.

Either way, you’re encouraged to talk with other players before and during the larp, so as to steer your play experience in the directions that you’re interested in. You will be put in touch with the players of characters interlinked with yours, in advance of the larp, to allow you to plan together if you wish. Then during play, you can use the ‘Take a walk’ metatechnique (see below) to touch in and plan offgame with another player; and between the two Acts, there’ll be time to recalibrate relationships and make further plans.



Activities

The characters are professionals, here with a job to do: they are not being paid to just lounge around and drink cocktails. At least, that's the studio's way of thinking! While waiting for their director to arrive, the crew will be exercising their skills, preparing the sets and the actors for shooting; and the cast will be rehearsing and training.

Each character has tasks assigned to them, to add some structure to their day. It is anticipated that during the course of the larp, discipline may break down, and some may not be as dutiful as others: but to start with at least, having some pieces of preplanned activity as part of the day will help players settle in.

You needn't worry about not having the skills that are associated with your character – of course, we aren't expecting that. You don't have to be a makeup expert to play THE MAKEUP ARTIST, for example. But you will be expected to spend some time 'larping' makeup – applying (empty) brushes to an actor's face, and so on. Similarly for each of the other characters.

So what is play actually going to be like?

Quite sandboxy really. Your characters are there together, in the setting: play is going to mostly revolve around them exploring their internal feelings and their interactions with each other, in a naturalistic way. There is a certain amount of structure to the day, so you needn't worry about having nothing to do: but none of it will be forced on you. The various metatechniques are available to help you develop ideas and to steer your game. But we aren't imposing a direction of play on you - you'll discover for yourself where you want to take the character.

Techniques and metatechniques

Metatechniques are ways of communicating offgame information in a non-disruptive way. In *On Location* there are a few different useful ones that we'll be using – mostly, fairly standard for this type of larp.

All of these will be demonstrated and practised before the start of the larp.

Safeword

If you need to stop play right away, for any reason, say “Safeword!” as loudly and firmly as you are able. Everyone should immediately stop what they're doing – passing it on to anyone who didn't hear. The organizers will come to you and address your need as well as they can. You don't have to explain why you made the call. You can decide yourself whether you wish to rejoin play or not. It will always be possible for anyone to leave the larp – either leaving the venue altogether, or just stepping out of character – whenever they feel they need to, for whatever reason. Your comfort and safety is absolutely our primary concern. (*This metatechnique is well known, using the word “Cut” – but for (hopefully) obvious reasons, in On Location we use “Safeword” instead.*)

Lookdown

If you wish to leave a particular scene or interaction because you're not comfortable with it, you should put a hand angled over your eyes so as to symbolize looking down, and back away from the other people involved. Importantly, the other characters *must not* comment upon, or otherwise react to, your leaving – as they might, if you had just walked away from the scene in-character. (*This metatechnique was devised by Trine Lise Lindahl and [documented](#) by Johanna Koljonen.*)



Take a walk

If, during play, you want to have an offgame conversation with another player, invite them to “take a walk” with you. Go together to an offgame area – or out of sight and earshot of the other players – and step out of character together. Once you’ve had the conversation, you can return to play either together or separately, as you prefer. Other characters should not comment on your having gone off together. *(This metatechnique is borrowed from the larp [Just a Little Lovin’](#), by Tor Kjetil Edland and Hanne Grasmo.)*

Representing sex and intimacy

On Location is a larp where characters may well experience romantic passion – although if you prefer not to, we will cast you away from such roles. In keeping with the 1930s setting, though, anything more intimate than a kiss is kept off-camera – you can discuss and agree with another player what sexual activity you both wish to have happened between your characters, but you won’t play it out.

As for kissing and other types of intimate touch, you must make sure in advance that the other player is happy to be touched, hugged, kissed, etc. If they are not, then mime the encounter instead.

Representing violence

In-game violence is enacted using stage-fighting techniques – stage slaps, punches, kicks, etc. Do not make any actual contact with the other player. We will practise these techniques in advance, for those who aren’t familiar with them. The recipient decides for themselves how much hurt or injury they want their character to take from the blow.



The script of Stolen Moments

Stolen Moments, the film on which the characters are working, is a kind of meta device in itself. There is no designed script for it, and no characters – instead, these will be evolved by you as players during play, in response to your characters’ needs. The mechanism for doing this is by creating rehearsal scenes, and first we’ll cover how that should work during Act 1.

How scenes work

Any actor character can come up with an idea for a scene that will be in the film (or, rather, will be in the shooting script – it was commonplace to shoot scenes which ended up getting cut in the editing process, but that’s not relevant to us now). The scene idea needs to fit into the broad picture that the film is based on the life of a recent-history/contemporary woman. Nothing gonzo (aliens, Cthulhu, etc) or completely surreal, as *Stolen Moments* is a mainstream product; but it is intended to be artistic, so expressionist touches are fine.

That player decides who their character is playing in the scene, and recruits other actors to fill the other parts. They ‘rehearse’ (ie. improvise) the scene together, and when they’re happy with it, they make notes about the scene to capture its important details, and pass it to THE SCRIPTWRITER.

So for example a scene might be: the heroine (played by THE DIVA) has a blazing row with her (third) husband (THE JOURNEYING HERO) in the casino of Monte Carlo, gets drunk, and leaves with a cad (THE CAD). Or, the heroine as a young girl (THE INGENUUE) arrives in the city and makes friends with the cheery waitress (THE BEST FRIEND) who lives across the landing. Each scene should last no more than a few minutes in ‘finished’ form, although your characters can spend as long as they like rehearsing and improving them, and giving each other performance notes.

THE SCRIPTWRITER will also come up with scene ideas himself, and he then writes them down and gets THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR to find appropriate actors to rehearse them. But the main part of his job is assembling scenes into some semblance of a coherent storyline, based on or at least inspired by his discussions with THE SUBJECT. (The actors should also seek inspiration from THE SUBJECT, of course. But our expectation is that they will mostly be trying to create scenes that will make them look good on the screen.)

The overall story that is thus being assembled doesn’t have to make narrative sense – it can have massive coincidences and non-sequiturs – but it should aim to have some sort of narrative thread going through. (THE SCRIPTWRITER may end up designing linking scenes so as to try and knit the actor-generated scenes together into some sort of sense.)

THE INVESTOR can also request scenes via THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, in a similar way. It’s her money, after all.

THE METHOD ACTING INSTRUCTOR and THE PSYCHOTHERAPIST may also have potential creative input into the script, indirectly – because they will be working on the actors, getting them to express their internal issues via acting (and vice versa). Ideally each actor’s scenes should, taken together, reflect the Role that Gottfried has asked of them; and should help them address their existential Dilemma.

Actors may also wish to consult with THE ART DIRECTOR and THE PROPMASTER, and other technical crew members, about the likely requirements of scenography, props, costume, etc for their scene.

Rehearsal can take place anywhere there’s enough space and a reasonable lack of distraction. (You are all professionals and are used to rehearsing while other people are wandering about, so there’s no need for absolute privacy.) Also, there are three sets that will be built within the location, that can be used as rehearsal spaces for any scenes that are appropriate to them.

Any actor (or even THE STAND-IN) can be roped in to play extra and minor roles in scenes for rehearsal purposes – on the understanding that of course they won’t be lowering themselves to do that for the actual filming.

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So our intention is that as a result of this process, each actor will be essentially deciding for themselves, based on Gottfried's vague Role guidelines and their own preferences, what sort of character they are going to be playing in the film. And, by the end of Act 1, some sort of storyline – not necessarily complete, but generally coherent – will have emerged.

During Act 2

In theory, during Act 2, this rehearsal process should be continuing as normal. However, it will be affected by the general breakdown in discipline that has been caused by Gottfried's continued absence, and will become increasingly self-serving and focused on the characters' own needs. Characters will still create and rehearse scenes, but they no longer have to make sense, or fit into the existing story. There is no longer any real expectation that these scenes will be shot – instead, rehearsal of them becomes an important emotional and psychological process in its own right. THE SCRIPTWRITER may start to impose his own vision on the script. Basically, the form of the process will be the same, but its content and purpose will have degenerated and will be up for grabs.



Making the news

Tarrington Manor is not cut off from the outside world, however much it might feel so. News of external events can get in, via radio and newspapers. And to create that news, we have another metatechnique. This one is (in Act 1) in the domain of the

Crew characters (which for this discussion includes guests like THE RIVAL and THE INVESTOR. Basically anyone who's not an actor.)

If you have an idea for a news story that you'd like to introduce into the location, you need to first find another Crew member to help you. Take them for a walk (the metatechnique for going briefly offgame) and pitch your idea to them; talk it through, as they may have improvements to suggest. If they like it, then you need to go together to the meta room. There, play out (improvise) a brief scene, happening in the outside world, that reflects the news story. Then write down the details of the story on one of the News forms that you will find in that room. Then bring the story downstairs and place it on one of the three dining-tables – these are the fora for display of outside news. You're welcome to draw people's attention to it, or just leave it there for people to find – as you prefer.

If you'd like to involve more than one other person in the scene and in thinking about the news story, that's fine – whoever wants to be involved, can. (Although if you take too many, you'll have trouble fitting in the meta room.)

What is the purpose of creating news stories? The idea of them is to allow you to affect the dynamic between characters, and/or to put pressure on characters. They are a way of adjusting the context in which this group of characters are currently existing.

So, for example: suppose that your character is friends with THE DIVA, and you know that there is currently a rivalry between her and THE FEMME FATALE over who is more admired by the public. You might create a news story like 'Asymmetrical haircuts in the style of THE DIVA have become hugely fashionable in Paris salons'. And you might play out a scene in which a fashionable lady asks for such a haircut, initially puzzling but eventually entrancing her hairdresser. The existence of this story will then give your character's friend some ammunition in her struggle. And of course if your own character happens to be THE HAIRDRESSER for example, then you could talk about the story in-character while tending people's hair.

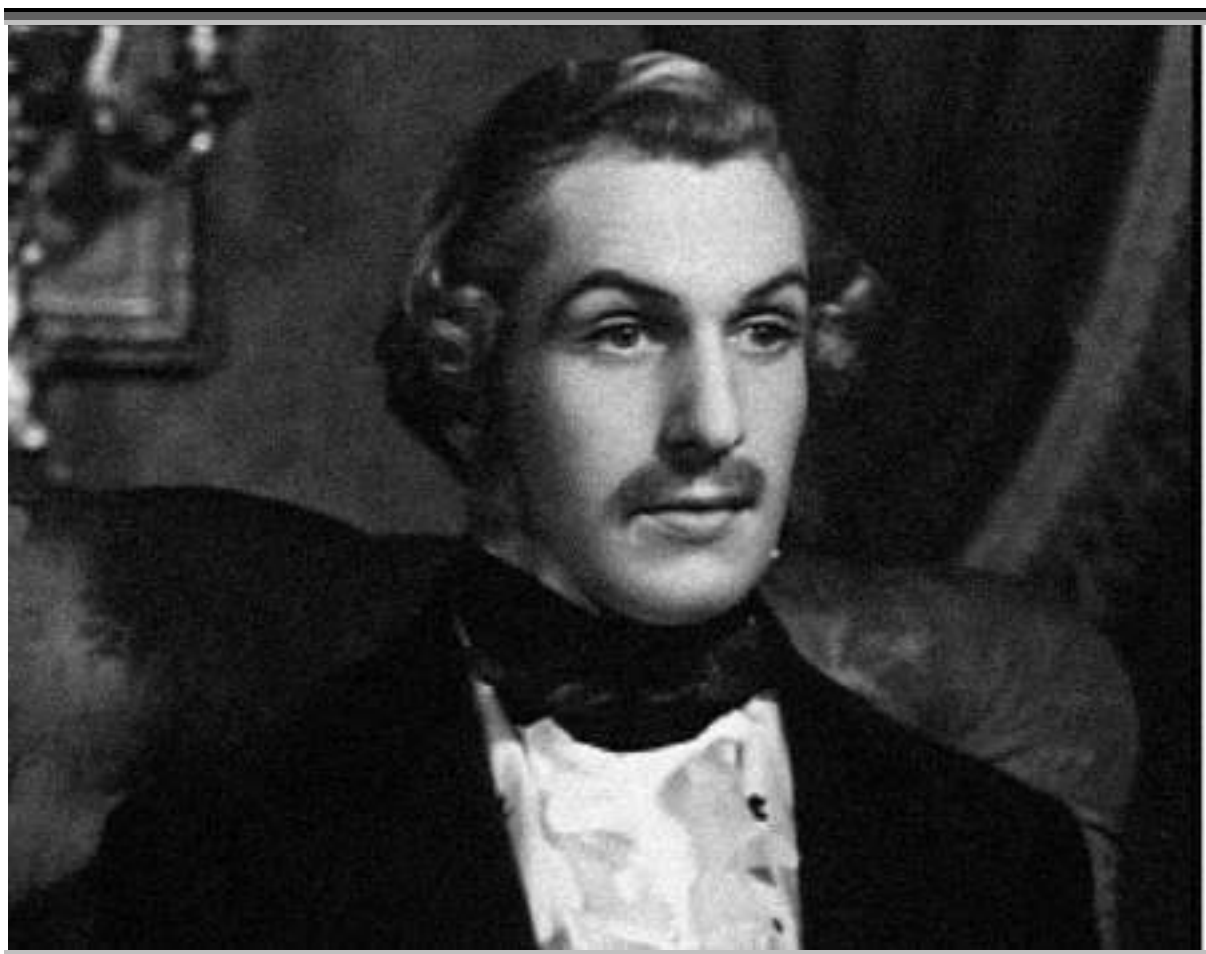
Another example: suppose that your own character is German and of Jewish origin. You might create a news story like 'Extreme right-wing party comes to power in Germany', to make your character worried about their family. This might later be followed by another story like 'New German government announces crackdown on Jewish-owned businesses', and so on.

It's important to stress that news stories must be realistic (so no 'King of Denmark revealed to secretly be a woman' or whatever) and, if they concern historical events, they should be vaguely in keeping with the general trend of the actual history – although they don't need to stick to it in detail. You can always come to us first and check if your idea is OK. Also, there may be a natural tendency to try

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to make them amusing or silly... please try and clamp down on this, it will detract from the atmosphere within the larp. We will ruthlessly censor any news stories that we don't feel are appropriate.

In Act 2, things change slightly. Now anyone (so Cast members as well) can create news stories. And they can cover a longer passage of time – although Act 1 is played out in real time of one day = one day, Act 2 is a bit more vague, as the day being played represents a large number of actual days spent at the Manor. So a news story early in Act 2 could be followed by another later in the Act which is clearly happening some time later.



Meta spaces

There are also two spaces which have a dedicated 'meta' function. You don't have to use them, but they're there if you'd like to. We'll talk more about how you might use them, during the pre-larp workshop.

The meta room

One of the rooms in the house is outside the game reality. It can be used by players when they want to play out a scene with their character, with one or more other players and/or with an organizer's help, that isn't in the timeline of the larp itself.

So perhaps a flashback scene to the character's childhood, or to the start of a romance – or a parallel reality where their career has evolved differently – or a flashforward into the future. Anything that you think might be interesting to explore, and that might shed a useful light on your characters' motivations or on some aspect of their story.

Gottfried's suitcase

Among the items in the house is a suitcase that has been sent ahead by Gottfried Himmelhaus, to await his arrival. It contains an assortment of objects. You can, at any time during either Act, go to the suitcase and take out one of the items that's in it; putting some item of your character's own into the suitcase as a replacement. This will have the effect of forcing a change in your character's personality, motivation, decision-making, etc, that doesn't have to be otherwise explained: it is an entirely mysterious effect of the suitcase, not to be spoken about by the characters.

Mixing desk

Here's a mixing-desk graphic to represent *On Location's* design style. (If you aren't familiar with this useful design tool and descriptor, you can read about it [here](#).)



CHARACTERS

Here are the characters available for play in *On Location*. On this page you'll see all the capsule descriptions – brief indicators of what sort of person they are, and what sort of play you can expect from them. Click on each character's name to see the full briefing. We strongly recommend that you do this before deciding that you want to play a particular character or characters! Here are [the briefing notes](#) that explain the various elements of the briefing.

The photos are of these characters as they were portrayed in the first run of *On Location*. You don't have to be guided by them – they're just meant as illustration. All are (c) 2017 Oliver Facey.

Gender

All characters present as either male or female, as far as the great film-watching public is concerned. If you're interested in playing a character whose actual gender is different or more complex than that, that's great, we very much encourage that. Please do get in touch with us and we'll talk through together with you how it can be made to work.



Sexuality

All characters are publicly believed to be heterosexual, thanks to the studio publicity machines. However, in the showbiz bubble there is a much greater awareness of homosexuality – while there may still be personal intolerance and prejudice, for the sake of business, the studios are happy to employ homosexual

people, as long as they keep their doings out of the newspapers. In this era there is not much awareness of bisexuality or pansexuality – this would be considered just as another form of homosexual ‘deviance’. Asexuality, demi-sexuality, etc are likewise not discussed.

When you read the character briefings, you’ll see that some of them have former relationships described in their backstories. It will be up to each player to decide what actual gender and/or sexuality they wish to play, but you’ll need to have this make sense with the backstory – if you decide that your character is heterosexual, but the briefing says that they’ve had a gay relationship (or vice versa), then work an explanation of that into your concept. It’s also up to you whether gender and/or sexuality are known to the character’s colleagues.

The gender and sexuality that you play need not bear any relation to your own gender or sexuality. But we require that if you do choose to play away from your own gender and/or sexuality in this way, that you do so with respect and thoughtfulness in accordance with our policies on diversity.

See also the **Design** section of this document about prejudice. (Thanks to a group of rainbow larpers for helpful thoughts and suggestions in this and related areas.)



Age

The characters don’t have specific ages – you can decide how old you want your character to be – apart from those whose name, and what we’ve said about their

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background and experience, make it clear that they're generally youngish or oldish (eg. THE VETERAN is oldish, THE INGENUUE is youngish).

We are happy for players of any age to play characters of any age – you don't have to restrict yourself to characters who are similar in age to yourself (although you can if you prefer to, of course). We ask though that if playing a character who is older or younger than yourself, you do so seriously – not in a parodic way or for laughs. We are not looking for visual authenticity in your portrayal of your character, but we do want to strive for emotional authenticity.

Warnings

You'll see that for some of the characters we've given warnings. This is not because we expect this larp to be especially dangerous or damaging – we do expect it to be emotionally intense, for sure, but the warnings are there because we want to make absolutely clear that we are looking out for your safety and comfort.



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THE ART DIRECTOR (M)

He's responsible for the look of *Stolen Moments*, and of each of its scenes – interpreting Gottfried's vision into reality. On and off the set he's everyone's friend, with a way of bringing people along in agreement. His need for validation is strong – if left to himself, would he even see anything when he looked in the mirror?

His dilemma is: whether to stick to his brief and keep his life calm and friendly, or to risk disappointing or angering people by rocking the boat.

The task that he was given will challenge him to: make people believe in something that he himself fears might be hollow.

His relationships include:

- Someone whose affections he is trifling with, not sure whether to commit or not.
- Someone whose work he would admire even more if they stretched themselves and aimed for better art.
- Someone who challenges him to question himself and look for true value.
- A person whose public persona captivates him stylistically – but what are they like as a human being?



THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (M)

Gottfried's right hand, he's been waiting a long time for the unpredictable director to put this project together: and now he has responsibility for the cast and crew until his master arrives. In the meantime he will struggle to make sense of his fragmentary instructions: what is the film really about? Who is playing who? What is Gottfried's vision for them all?

(Warning: this attempt to make sense of things is doomed to failure. This character should expect to be disappointed in his aims... or maybe to change them. It'll be up to you to decide how to resolve that.)

His dilemma is: whether to stick to the task he has been given, or to relinquish responsibilities and rise free.

The task he has been given will challenge him to: find order and impose it upon chaos.

His relationships include:

- Someone who he would love to work with, if he ever becomes independent of Gottfried.
- Someone who he feels could achieve so much more, if only they took better decisions.
- A colleague who he has a crush on, which for professional reasons he has been reluctant to reveal.
- Someone he profoundly mistrusts – a disruptive, maybe even destructive, influence.



THE BEST FRIEND (F)

Always the bridesmaid, never the bride: her role has been to support leading ladies. She has made a name for herself in this role, and films have often succeeded on the strength of her performances. She has been known for making less talented stars appear to shine. In real life, she puts a similarly brave face on: she feels utterly alone, but is scared to reach out to make connections. She feels as though no-one has ever understood her, or empathized with her: and perhaps they never will. But acting amiable and supportive of others has turned out to be a great way of deflecting attention from herself.

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(Warning: this character suffers from depression and/or anxiety. It'll be up to you how much you want to go into the details of that and to play upon it; but if this is a trigger issue for you, you will want to avoid this role.)

Her dilemma is: whether to seek help in dealing with her fears, or to stay safe within her 'fortress of solitude'.

The role that she was given will challenge her to: lay aside her 'friendly' mask, and ask herself what she really wants.

Her relationships include:

- A colleague who seems to have a crush on her, which she's not sure how to respond to.
- An older figure who tried to treat her like a child, much to her disquiet.
- A bright young talent, who she would really like to warn off the wrong path.
- Someone who seems to have life sorted out and well ordered, with whom she had a fling: she finds them alluring as well as enviable.



THE CAD (M)

Famous for playing a series of callous yet irresistible brutes, his charm on screen is a counterpoint to his alienation off it. Scarred while young, feeling himself worthless, he swore off attachments; vowing never to care for anyone, nor allow anyone to care for him. He has been letting life and career happen to him, perhaps feeling himself unworthy of choosing his own path.

(Warning: this character suffered emotional abuse as a child. It'll be up to you how much you want to go into the details of that and to play upon it; but if this is a trigger issue for you, you will want to avoid this role.)

His dilemma is: whether to resign himself to being safer alone; or to risk being hurt by trying to connect.

The role that he was given will challenge him to: show the vulnerable, human side of himself.

His relationships include:

- A drinking buddy who he can talk straight with.
- Someone who has always shown him kindness, even when pushed away.
- A pure and innocent being, who he adores in the abstract.
- A nemesis, whose harshness he sometimes welcomes.



THE CLOWN (M)

Audiences go doolally for his well-timed gags and pratfalls: that's why the studios gladly work overtime to cover up his misdeeds. Success has been a way of enabling his desires: he exerts himself across as wide a range of pleasures as possible, and is constantly seeking new avenues of self-indulgence.

His dilemma is: whether to continue on this path of hedonism, or to turn back before his ever-increasing appetites end by consuming him.

The role that he was given will challenge him to: create meaning in the life of someone other than himself.

His relationships include:

- A partner in self-indulgence: a mutual enabler.
- Someone who once tried to save him from himself.
- The wife of a late friend, who he always wanted to get to know.
- A calm and restrained person who he feels might have an interesting demon inside.



THE COSTUME DESIGNER (F)

She has dressed a thousand stellar performances, her painstakingly hand-sewn creations turning base flesh into screen divinity. As a girl she was apprenticed to a Milan couturier, but an unhappy experience caused her to shift careers – fashion's loss was cinema's gain. She dresses quietly, even dowdily, herself – but that exterior belies a passionate hedonism.

Her dilemma is: whether to subjugate herself in service to creating beauty in others; or to find a path that will allow her to express herself.

The task that she was given will challenge her to: reconcile her private self-indulgence with her professional self-abnegation.

Her relationships include:

- A long-estranged sibling who has recently reappeared in her life.
- An admirer from a socially-unacceptable background.
- A former patron who makes unreasonable demands.
- A remorseless critic who seems never to be satisfied.



THE DIVA (F)

Famous, flamboyant, and full of herself, she is known throughout the industry for her extravagant demands and her sensitive temperament. But her talent and her popular appeal are so great that she is never short of work. The public love her emotional screen performances, and adore her tumultuous personal life.

Her dilemma is: whether to pursue the full extent of her talent by devoting herself to acting; or to continue seeking fulfilment from the drama in her romances and rivalries.

The role that she was given will challenge her to: explore the depth of her attachment to the material world and its temptations.

Her relationships include:

- A protégée who may be becoming a rival.
- A long-term confidante who knows your secrets.
- A fascinating and infuriating co-star who she cannot resist.
- A loyal friend, with a talent that you'd like to understand better.



THE FADING STAR (M)

It's been a long and successful journey, and he's coming towards its end. He understands that the camera loves the young – his are going to be supporting roles, from now on. But that doesn't necessarily stop him from occasionally raging against the dying of the light. Perhaps he still has one last great performance – on, or off, camera – in him?

His dilemma is: whether to go out with a bang, or to ease away gracefully.

The role that he was given will challenge him to: pour out the last of his passion, while he still can command the centre of the screen.

His relationships include:

- Someone who, as a child, idolized him; and who he wants to help.
- An old flame, who has barely changed as the years have passed.
- A real talent who he wants to help realize their potential.
- A dangerous but fascinating force, who might inspire him or destroy him.



THE FEMME FATALE (F)

On screen, she's the haughty vamp, able to command any man she wants – but always paying a price for it. In life, too, she has compelled a long string of romances, that have ended unsatisfactorily, with broken hearts. It's as though she wants to find love, but inevitably sabotages it somehow. Does she ever really care about the other people who she draws into her net?

Her dilemma is: whether to continue her cycle of seduction, love, and crash; or to find a way to change.

The role that she was given will challenge her to: understand what she is really looking for, and what is preventing her from finding it.

Her relationships include:

- Someone who she believes genuinely supports her as a friend, despite her stardom.
- Someone who tried to help her, but found it impossible.
- A colleague who seems to be hooked on her – who she can manipulate, for good or ill.
- A friend who seems wary of really getting close to her.



THE GIRL NEXT DOOR (F)

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.

Her dilemma is: whether to carry on being popular, charming, fluffy – or to follow her own desires and shape a new path.

The role that she was given will challenge her to: “You could really be hated, after this,” Gottfried told her. “If you want to be...” The thought intrigued her.

Her relationships include:

- A former schoolfriend who has been at her side throughout.
- An on-off love-interest who tempts without satisfying.
- Someone who she creates interesting work with, outside the film business.

~ *On Location* ~

- A colleague who she knows has a low opinion of her acting capabilities.



THE GOOD-TIME GIRL (F)

Ready for fun and tough as nails, she's been playing 'tart with a heart' and similar roles since she arrived in the industry. But off-screen she's smart and thoughtful, and keeps herself mostly to herself. Film-making is a way to accumulate some money, to fund her real wishes and dreams.

Her dilemma is: whether to stay remote, keep herself clean; or to risk connection and the messiness of life.

The role that she was given will challenge her to: really care about someone.

Her relationships include:

- Someone who treats her as kindly as their own child.
- Someone who wanted to make her into a great star, but whose patronage she rejected.
- Someone who, a while back, she thought she could really make a connection with... but it didn't happen.
- A new arrival whose dedication and idealism repels her.



THE GRANDE DAME (F)

Over her long career, she has reached the top of this hollow, glittering industry: and she retains her place there by force of will – respected by all, feared by many. Only she knows for sure the sacrifices she has made to get there – and where the bodies are buried. But when you're at the top, there's only one way to go... and the camera becomes less and less kind, as the years go by...

Her dilemma is: whether to fight on in the only life she has known; or to accept what seems to be an inevitable decline.

The role that she was given will challenge her to: find a new kind of meaning in her life.

Her relationships include:

- An old flame, who has changed over the years.
- Someone who could be the child that she never had.
- A dependent, who she supports financially at great expense.

- Someone of a similar age but a very different character, whose apparent wisdom and calm she envies.



THE HAIRSTYLIST (M)

He's had the hopes and fears of every star at his fingertips – he's the one they trust, the one they confide in, as he tends their luscious locks, or trims their marvellous moustaches. His skill brought him here; and he's kept here because of his caring for those he works with. But he's never been sure if this is all that fate has marked out for him.

His dilemma is: whether to stay behind the scenes doing what he does best, or to step forward into the spotlight and the unknown.

The task that he was assigned will challenge him to: support and protect his clients, and maybe get more involved in their lives than he would expect.

His relationships include:

- Someone who he suspects is not as solid and sound a person as they like to appear.
- Someone he used to work for, who would like to take him back.
- A would-be patron who could transform his life... one way or another.
- A troubled soul who could really benefit from his guidance and experience.



THE INGENUE (F)

New to film-making, and young in years but not in soul. She has the kind of appearance and manner that makes people want to protect her... or to take advantage of her. From a poor and restricted childhood background, she is still sometimes shocked, even repelled, by the behaviour that she sees around her in this celluloid Babylon. But she took avidly to the comforts and delights that fall to those who are loved by the camera, and she has indulged herself more often and more deeply than is wise. Will this affect her growing stardom?

(Warning: this character has an addiction. It'll be up to you what the addiction 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.)

Her dilemma is: whether to rise up and try the path towards stardom; or to stay in her reassuring pattern of dependence and potential.

~ *On Location* ~

The role that she was given will challenge her to: find out what are her true capabilities, as an actor and as a person.

Her relationships include:

- An older star who sees her as a protégée.
- Someone who claims to want to help her, and to have her best interests at heart.
- An admirer who seems too shy to show their feelings.
- An enabler, who helps her journey into her worst self.



THE INVESTOR (F)

She's a very wealthy woman – a widow, looking to turn what she considers to be blood money into something valuable. Gottfried invited her to back the *Stolen Moments* project, promising that as well as thrilling the masses, it could help her redeem herself. She was doubtful, but felt she had to try.

(Warning: this character was in an abusive marriage, which ended suddenly. It'll be up to you what are the details of the relationship, and of its end, 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.)

Her dilemma is: whether to surrender herself to Gottfried's vision in the hope of something transcendent, or to keep her distance and stay safe.

The task that she was given will challenge her to: make judgements about what is best for herself as well as for others.

Her relationships include:

- Someone who knew her as a child, and shares her disrupted background.
- A talented crafter who's benefited from her patronage, and who she'd like to re-engage.
- A friend of her late husband, who she mistrusts.
- Someone who she feels could make a real positive difference in her life, if only they could be persuaded.



THE JOURNEYING HERO (M)

A man on a mission – learning at every step. He’s been following the classic path of growing and developing in his life and his acting career, thinking about his progress, making connections along the way. Everything seems mapped out ahead of him: he can see, in the successful older actors here, the people who he is likely to become.

His dilemma is: whether to stick to the path, or to step off.

The role that he was given will challenge him to: question his assumptions about what is worthwhile in life, and maybe change his aims.

His relationships include:

- Someone whose humility and ordinariness he greatly admires.
- A colleague who really seems to be not very good at their job, and should be told so.
- Someone who once seemed to take a real interest in him: but he was too busy to pick up on it.
- Someone who he is fond of, but sees as a real warning against how things could turn out.



THE LOCATION MANAGER (M)

He has the job of making the film location function properly and operate smoothly – ensuring that everything, and everyone, is in place and ready for Gottfried’s arrival. There are few better at this task – he is famously organized, capable, and ready to deal calmly and drily with the countless unexpected details that always emerge. It is rumoured that he has ice for blood: and if anyone has seen the inside of his bedroom, they have never mentioned it. But how will he cope, when things don’t go to plan? – what will happen when that cool exterior cracks?

(Warning: this character will find it hard to deal with Gottfried’s continued absence and the responsibility to keep things on track, and will degenerate under the stress and uncertainty. It’s up to you how you want to play this.)

~ *On Location* ~

His dilemma is: whether to manipulate the others as tools, serving his employer's needs; or to open up to responding to them as people.

The task that he was given will challenge him to: keep everyone happy and functional, including himself.

His relationships include:

- A sibling who has taken a very different path, but to whom he is still tied by blood.
- A rival would-be patron who is testing his loyalty.
- Someone who, as an impressionable child, he used to idolize: can they help him?
- One of the few people that he can have a sensible intellectual conversation with.



THE MAKEUP ARTIST (F)

She turned her back on her own beauty while still young, finding it had brought her more pain than joy. Now she devotes herself to shaping perfection on the faces of others: seeing their best, most attractive selves, and painting them for the camera's avid consumption. She works hard, perhaps feeling she has something to prove to the world. But few are as close to, and intimate with, the secret feelings of the stars.

(Warning: this character suffered unwanted sexual attention as a teenager. It'll be up to you what that involved and how severe it was, 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.)

Her dilemma is: whether to carry on submerging herself in her work; or to lift her head and ask what she really wants out of life for herself.

The task that she was given will challenge her to: confront the contradictions of the artificiality of her craft.

Her relationships include:

- A former schoolfriend who has been at her side throughout.
- A star who has read too much into her dedicated attentions.
- A weak soul who she once rescued from the results of over-indulgence.
- Someone she sees as a harmful force, responsible for damage to others.



THE MAN OF MYSTERY (M)

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.)

His dilemma is: whether to carry on coasting above the ups and downs of human frailty; or to take his hands off the wheel, and see what happens.

The role that he was given will challenge him to: engage, surrender, and risk himself.

His relationships include:

- Someone who deeply fears his damaging personality.
- Someone whose callousness and detachment he despises.
- A colleague who sometimes seems to want more of his self than he has so far been prepared to give.
- An apparent free spirit, not yet experienced enough to be wary of his company.



THE METHOD ACTING INSTRUCTOR (F)

She has worked with Gottfried for many years: first as a fellow-student, enthused by his ideas; then as an actor, desperate to please him; now communicating his thoughts and practices to the cast. She dreamed of being the lead in one of his films: instead, she teaches the next generation.

Her dilemma is: whether to carry out her mission to the full, or to hold back for the sake of the actors' sanity.

The task that she was given will challenge her to: stretch and manipulate the cast in ways that will bend, and may break, them.

Her relationships include:

~ *On Location* ~

- Someone who she believes wilfully destroyed her acting career.
- Someone that she has always been kind to, even though they push her away.
- A person that she feels she can really help with their skills and with life in general, if only they'll let her.
- Someone who has wasted their life, and could still do better.



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THE NAIF (M)

He's new to the film business, with a shy innocence that audiences will surely love. He so desperately wants to succeed – to find happiness and fulfilment. He's got here through his own efforts, but perhaps that won't be enough now, here on location – he may need other people to make it work for him.

His dilemma is: whether to reach out, to seek help, and to offer what's wanted in return; or to stay within his emotional comfort blanket.

The role that he was given will challenge him to: make big decisions that leave aside his own feelings.

His relationships include:

- A more experienced person, from whom he feels he could learn much.
- A charming and wise friend in whose company he can relax... and maybe more.
- Someone who's already achieved the great things he aspires to: but are they trying to warn him?
- A colleague who he judges harshly, and who seems not to wish his career well.



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THE PROP MASTER (M)

He's responsible for everything that fills out a scene – the items that the actors are actually working with. It's not a role with a lot of authority, but that's fine by him: he despises and rejects structures. Rules are for other people: as long as he gets the props to the right places, he's free to be himself. He's a rebel; and he'll never ever be any good.

His dilemma is: whether to keep up the lone intellectual rebel stance, or to start connecting with people.

The task that he was given will challenge him to: find some good in, and support, the orthodoxy.

His relationships include:

- A fellow pro whose craft, and detachment, he admires.
- An authority figure who criticizes his rebellious attitude, but may secretly envy it.
- Someone who he saw a dangerous side of, in the past, although they now keep it well hidden.
- Someone who sees him as a hazardous figure of chaos.



THE PSYCHOTHERAPIST (F)

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.

Her dilemma is: whether to serve Gottfried's purpose in shaping the cast's psyche; or to follow her own agenda.

The task that she was given will challenge her to: remain neutral and objective, while peering into the darkest recesses of human minds.

Her relationships include:

- A client who has a strong, perhaps unhealthy, dependence on her.
- A fellow-intellectual, with whom she enjoys stimulating debate.
- A client who she was unable to help, and who bears a grudge.
- A victim of fate who she feels could have been her, had her life gone wrong.



THE PUBLICIST (M)

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.)

His dilemma is: whether to carry on sustaining himself on the reflected glory of others, or to try to find a way in which he can value himself.

~ *On Location* ~

The task that he was given will challenge him to: support and boost a bunch of people who are often quite insupportable. Up to the point where he might feel he can do so no longer.

His relationships include:

- Someone who supports him financially, which he's not sure he deserves.
- Someone insecure, who he's really tried to help with their self-worth.
- Someone who he creates interesting work with, outside the film business.
- A colleague who seems to genuinely want to look after him.



THE RIVAL (M)

A celebrated film director, Gottfried's opposite in some ways. More commercially successful, while less critically acclaimed. He's been invited here to recruit actors and crew for his own next project: but perhaps also, though he might not admit it, to try and understand Gottfried's magic touch.

His dilemma is: whether to stick to what he knows, and what works – or to become more like Gottfried, in search of a different kind of meaning.

The role that he was given will challenge him to: stand in judgement over fallible humans, and over himself.

His relationships include:

- Someone who used to work with him and who he trusted, who 'defected' to Gottfried.
- An old crush that has never died away.
- Someone whose freedom and lack of responsibility he publicly condemns but privately envies.
- A protégé whose career he started, but which has gone very differently since.



THE RUNNER (F)

She's drifted from one job to another, and washed up in the film industry as a general dogsbody and assistant. She doesn't complain: it pays the bills, and it's better than some of the other things she's done. Drifting with the tide has been the pattern of her life. But she's not as young as she used to be. How long can this continue?

Her dilemma is: whether to keep on leaving fate to direct her life, or to take responsibility for it herself and to seek a goal.

The task that she was given will challenge her to: try and make sense of, and impose some order upon, the chaos around her.

Her relationships include:

- A former flame who knew her when she was more successful.
- Someone whose success she could have matched, had her life gone differently.
- Someone who she was once in a dark place with, who knows what she did to get out.
- A colleague who believes that there is still promise in her.



THE SCRIPTWRITER (F)

Formerly a newspaper crime reporter, as the horrors she was witnessing became harder and harder to bear, she turned to the controllable world of fiction: she moved from press reporting to writing detective thrillers, and then to film scripts. She turns a chaotic, cruel world into logical story and pattern; and replaces incomprehensible, random people with solid, motivated characters. But this has not been enough to keep her from the progressive harm caused by reflecting on what she has seen. *Stolen Moments* may be the last script that she is capable of writing.

(Warning: this character is seriously self-destructive. It'll be up to you whether that's physical, psychological, or both; and how it operates, 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.)

Her dilemma is: whether to let the horror flow over her and drag her down, or to carry on trying to fight it.

The task that she was given will challenge her to: find meaning in the confusion, and use it to give the cast and crew hope.

Her relationships include:

- A partner in self-destruction: a mutual enabler.
- A long-estranged sibling who has recently reappeared in her life.
- An admirer of her work who would like her to be more artistically ambitious.
- Someone whose career she harmed, back in her journalism days.



THE SIDEKICK (M)

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.

His dilemma is: whether to carry on playing second fiddle – in life and on camera – or to try and steal the scene.

The role that he was given will challenge him to: impose himself, and express himself... and expose himself.

His relationships include:

- A former flame who has fallen on hard times.
- A drinking buddy who he can talk straight with.
- A booster, who's tried to build up his self-image.
- A big star who values his supportive company.



THE STAND-IN (F)

Perhaps once she dreamed of being a star herself. But she's found so much more fulfilment and value as a supporter of stars' minds and souls, a facilitator of their capabilities. The job of stand-in is just an excuse to have her on the set: her real role is to advise, to calm, to persuade – she can rise above the squabbles and difficulties of the set, to help people see what's really important for them. She hopes that the people she helps will take away some of her wisdom, consciously or not: it's a slow road, but it feels like her mission.

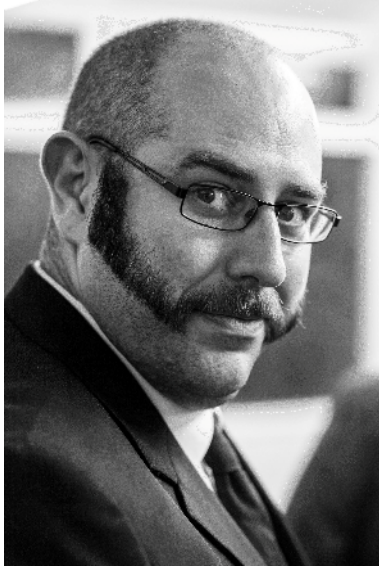
Her dilemma is: whether to continue selflessly and detachedly serving others, or to risk herself in attachment to the world. What is she afraid of?

The task that she was given will challenge her to: be there for people who need her. Or perhaps, to decide to say no.

Her relationships include:

- A sibling who has taken a very different path.

- A star who treats her as a trusted confidante.
- Someone who could tempt her away from the path of righteousness.
- A former fling whose disrupted life is a sharp contrast to her own, and who might want to learn from her.



THE STILLS PHOTOGRAPHER (M)

[This character has been pre-allocated to our out-of-game photographer.] Having risen from humble and troubled origins, he's renowned through the industry for the alchemy with which he transforms base humanity into screen idols. But the camera has been a useful way of shielding himself from his subjects... preventing them from seeing into him. They are fascinating, beautiful, charming: but sometimes they can also seem sick, twisted, self-destructive. Being given natural gifts, rather than working hard and struggling up to achieve success, can be very bad for the character, it seems.

His dilemma is: whether to retain his detachment and stay uninvolved; or to try and understand his subjects better by making emotional connections with them.

The task that he was given will challenge him to: "Show them their souls," so Gottfried told him. But that may mean exposing his own.

His relationships include:

- A card-playing [or similar activity] crony with whom he relaxes after work.
- A fellow-professional who is fascinated by his craft.
- A star who trusts him to convey an image, and as a friend.
- Someone who knew him as a child, and shares his disrupted background.



THE SUBJECT (F)

Her troubled and glamorous life is the inspiration for this film's story, although Gottfried has changed many of the details. Having bounced from one exciting but disastrous relationship to another, she now feels barely able to make sense of her own history and her own wishes and ambitions.

(Warning: this character has become desensitized through overstretching and overgiving, and could potentially come apart in any number of ways. It'll be up to you whether that happens, and how it plays out; but if this is a trigger

~ *On Location* ~

issue for you, you will want to avoid this role.)

Her dilemma is: whether to try to hold together what remains of her sense of self, and perhaps even rebuild it – or to let the film version of her redefine her in new ways.

The task that she was given will challenge her to: open herself up to the actors and crew, so they can feast upon her.

Her relationships include:

- Someone who had a crush on her, which she thinks may have persisted.
- Someone who she really depends on to help her stay even vaguely in control.
- A self-destructive soul, who she is helping to journey downwards.
- Someone who seems to have fallen for her glamorous image. Should she encourage them?



THE VETERAN (M)

He shone brightly during the early years of the movie business, and survived the transition from silents to talkies. Having made more than his fair share of mistakes, and accumulated many regrets, he came gradually to a way of understanding himself and the world. From the outside, he appears peaceful, calm, contented; and a tangible connection to the pure, honest, old days. He has been able to devote much of his energy and time to helping others (although there is a great deal about modern life that saddens and disappoints him). But he knows that internally he has much unfinished

business.

His dilemma is: whether to reopen old wounds and try and clean them out; or to leave them as quiet scars.

The role that he was given will challenge him to: justify himself to a notional higher power.

His relationships include:

- A card-playing [or similar activity] crony with whom he relaxes after work.
- A child-figure who strongly rejected him.
- Someone who he suspects sees through him, and understands his darker nature.
- Someone of a similar age but a very different character, whose apparent liveliness and purpose he envies.