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Wonderful Intrigues – Wenn die Masken fallen

Wonderful Intrigues - When the Masks Slip

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A secret game of lies

Thanks to her ability to become other other people, impersonator Elodie is hired by soap star Wynter to take the latter's place on the set of "Wonderful Intrigues". Thus begins a secret game based on lies. Wynter doesn't want to carry on pretending to be in a relationship with her co-star Nord just for PR purposes. Elodie, who needs the money to pay for her sister's hospital treatment, initially finds the idea - and Nord - very attractive. Before very long, though, the lines between fake and reality become dangerously blurred. Will the masks slip?

- Film set glamour, intrigue and false identities.
- A protagonist who can become other people: a gripping plot with a compelling fantasy twist.
- Potential to become a top seller: on point romance, with all the ingredients to make a successful series.

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“What did they tell you about how long your love story is meant to last?”

Ahead of the fourth season of Wonderful Intrigues, the two PR managers have decided it's about time to offer the public something sensational which will really heighten the anticipation: a real-life romance between two of the show's biggest stars, Nordyn Degenbrunner and Wynter Brookely. Not least as it will increase the already considerable buzz around the series - which means it's easy money.

“I've got it - the answer to your prayers. She's even got a name: Elodie Rauch. She can be here tomorrow.”

Wynter is encouraged by Laurie's euphoric expression.

“A double?” she asks.

“In spades! She'll take your breath away!”

It takes me precisely three seconds to adopt Wynter's persona. It's as if I'm putting a jacket on. Impersonating someone can sometimes be exhausting and even painful, but it's always easy at first. I don't need to think about it. If I've seen the particular person once, even if just in a photo or on the screen, I can look just like them. If I've heard them speak once, I can speak like them. I just have to work a bit on the way they behave. In a way, you could say that Wynter's job isn't so far removed from what I do for a living. Though she has presumably earned enough to keep her going for the rest of her life - which I certainly haven't managed. Indeed, I'm relying on her paying me. Without this job, I wouldn't be able to pay for my sister's medical treatment.

When Nordyn looks at me, I know I've achieved my goal of irritating him. “You're not seriously trying to tell me that you don't find this even the tiniest bit fun? I can't believe you're not looking forward to watching me squirm when I have to act as if you mean something to me.”

To my delight, there's a faint note of doubt in his voice. He is entertaining the possibility that he might have judged Wynter a bit harshly, but would also believe her capable of just putting one over on him in order to get her way.

I would like to say that I'm not susceptible to the way he's now looking at me - but it's this kind of "partners in crime" or "fellow accomplice" look. The kind of look which creates a bond between us from out of nothing.

"However, just to be certain we're singing from the same hymn sheet: Are you prepared to work for me from now onwards?" Is he being serious? Is he trying to turn me into a double agent or something?

"The risk is all mine," he says. "If Wynter finds out, say I forced you. I'll help you to placate her, and I'll support you through our appearances." He then tips my world on its axis. "And I'll commit to paying for your sister's medical treatment for as long as she needs it."

[While visiting her sister in the German clinic, Elodie encounters her ex boyfriend Stian, the son of the medical director:]

"Why do you need to speak to me so urgently?" I ask.

"About us."

"Stian ..." I start.

He silences me with a hand gesture.

"I'm trying really hard to be patient. But just tell me one thing: how long are you planning on ignoring me? How long?"

A storm is raging behind his eyes.

What's with this questioning? I don't have to justify myself to him. We're not on a break or anything: we've split up.

[Back in Canada, Elodie becomes increasingly accustomed to her life as Wynter, and the make-believe relationship with Nord feels more genuine with each day that passes]

“Just a word of warning, Elodie,” Wynter says. “Don’t mess with me. You’ll regret it if you do.”

here are moments in life when you need to be sensible and get a grip on yourself. This is one of those moments. But I’m too overwrought, and I’m now overwhelmed by something I can’t - and don’t want to - stop. I slowly turn back to Wynter and bestow on her the most threatening smile from her own repertoire. “Who is Elodie?”

From that moment, I will be whoever I want to be.

Who, apart from me, could defy Wynter Brookely - and take her place? That’s the only way I can help the cast and make sure that *WIn* carries on for further seasons. And that’s the only way I can be together with Nord.

[Elodie is lured into a trap: her sister’s consultant is a traitor who has sussed out Elodie’s gift for imitation. Elodie, meanwhile, now finds it impossible to stop ‘being Wynter’]

I can see it for the first time now: I’ve been a prisoner for weeks. Just like my sister, I have become mired in impersonation, but unlike her situation, mine is all my own fault. I need to break free. I can hardly breathe; brightly coloured dots dance in front of my eyes when I shut them. Don’t lose consciousness! Breathe. My sister can’t remember who she once was. But I can.

I am Elodie Rauch.

And I’m not going to be ruled by impersonation.

A fissure suddenly races through the Wynter illusion.

A chrysalis that is opening up. A shroud that is falling away from me.

Releasing me.

[After Elodie has thwarted her female opponent’s plans, she realises that has been deceiving herself as well as the rest of the world. She and Nord part as friends.]

As I'm leaving, I tap away at my mobile, writing a message to Stian. Finally the words are on the screen.

On my way.

He's online. His reply comes within seconds:

On your way where?

He's still talking to me. How can he still be talking to me after everything that's happened?

The answer to his question couldn't be more complicated. On my way to myself, to everything that I can be.

On my way to the people who are my family. On the way to the future, to the unknown.

The answer to his question couldn't be easier.

On my way home.

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