

# MASTERPIECE

**Spy or swindler? A widow confronts her husband's past.**

***Mrs. Wilson***

**Ruth Wilson stars in a true-life story of  
her own grandmother's love and betrayal  
on MASTERPIECE**

**Sundays, March 31 and April 7, 2019 at 9pm ET on PBS**

At the outset of World War II, Alison McKelvie took a secretarial job with the Secret Intelligence Service. There, she fell in love with an older man—Major Alexander Wilson, a popular author of spy novels then doing real intelligence work for the war effort. Little did Alison know, but she was entering a plot as tangled as one of the major's mind-bending fictions.

Ruth Wilson (*The Affair*, *Luther*) stars as her own grandmother Alison in the true story of a woman's search for her husband's real identity on *Mrs. Wilson*, airing in two thrilling episodes on MASTERPIECE, Sundays, March 31 and April 7, 2019 on PBS.

Wilson also served as executive producer, playing a pivotal role in bringing her family saga to television. "I would tell various people the story, and they all said to me, 'you've got to get this made,'" she says.

Iain Glen (*Downton Abbey*, *Game of Thrones*) costars as Alec, a glamorous and seductive operative in the mold of James Bond, which is no accident, since Alec's novels pioneered the character of the debonair spy, based on Alec's own qualities. This personality type was later exploited by Ian Fleming in his Bond books.

Also appearing are Keeley Hawes (*Bodyguard*, *The Durrells in Corfu*) as Alec's second wife, Dorothy; Fiona Shaw (*Killing Eve*, *Harry Potter*) as his British spymaster, Coleman; Anupam Kher (*The Big Sick*, *Silver Linings Playbook*) as his handler in India, Shahbaz Karim; and Patrick Kennedy (*Churchill's Secret*, *Boardwalk Empire*) as Dennis, Alec's son, whose surprise appearance spurs Alison's quest into her husband's mysterious past.

*Mrs. Wilson* opens in 1963, when Alison and Alec have been married for more than 20 years and have two grown sons. While working on his new novel, Alec suffers a fatal heart attack. Not long after, the grief-stricken Alison is confronted by a woman claiming to be Alec's real wife, Gladys (Elizabeth Rider). Then, at the funeral, Alison is approached by Alec's colleagues, who offer condolences but refer to puzzling aspects of his work and personal life.

Seized with doubt about the man she thought she knew, Alison is determined to find out who Alec really was, while keeping her discoveries secret from her sons, Gordon (Calam Lynch) and Nigel (Otto Farrant), who have nothing but happy memories of their father.

Nervously, Alison tracks down Coleman, Alec's old spymaster, and enters the looking-glass world of secret intelligence, where agents assume identities, pursue careers, fake romances and undergo public humiliations, all in the name of serving their country. The problem is: if the agency never spills its secrets, how is one to know which identity, job, lover or disgrace is real and which is part of the great game of deceit? Even worse, given Alec's gift for creating plots, how much of what he confided to Alison was true, and how much did he make up and possibly end up believing himself?

Keeley Hawes, who plays one of Alec's partners in espionage, commented on the story: "Every moment on this job you're having to remind yourself that truth is much stranger than fiction. If I'd been sent this script and it was fiction, I'd be thinking, 'You've gone a bit far now!' It's just extraordinary."

Mrs. Wilson is a Snowed-In Productions production for the BBC co-produced with MASTERPIECE in association with All3Media International. It is written by Anna Symon (*Indian Summers*), produced by Jackie Larkin (*C.B. Strike*), directed by Richard Laxton (*Mum*, *River*) and executive produced by Lucy Richer for the BBC, Rebecca Eaton for MASTERPIECE, Ruth Kenley-Letts (*The Casual Vacancy*, *The Strike Series*), Neil Blair (*The Strike Series*, *Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them*), and Ruth Wilson. International sales are managed by all3media International.

MASTERPIECE is presented on PBS by WGBH Boston.

### **About MASTERPIECE**

Winner of 83 Primetime Emmys® and 16 Peabody Awards, MASTERPIECE has been essential Sunday night viewing for millions of fans since 1971. Rebecca Eaton is the executive producer of the series. Funding for MASTERPIECE is provided by Viking with additional support from public television viewers and contributors to The MASTERPIECE Trust. Presented on PBS by WGBH Boston, MASTERPIECE is known for recent hits such as *Sherlock*, *Downton Abbey* and *Victoria*, and beloved classics such as *Upstairs Downstairs*, *Prime Suspect*, *The Forsyte Saga* and *Poldark*.

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