

AUDITION SIDES

JEN

Any · 20s–30s · The Stage Manager

Audition sides for the role of Jen in Crimson Hearts: LIVE!

— UPPITY IMPROV SOCIETY —

JEN

Any · 20s–30s · The Stage Manager

Jen is the only character who is fully aware of every register the play is operating in. She's the audience's friend, the cast's stage manager, the play's narrator. She has the hardest technical job in the show: appearing to be the most relaxed person in the room while actually executing thirty cues per act. The actor must love these people, see them all clearly, and do real audience-interaction work. She is also the play's emotional through-line — the warmth that makes everything else land.

SIDE A — THE AUDIENCE WARM-UP (COMEDIC / IMPROVISATIONAL)

Format: Solo, addressing the audience directly — must improvise and read the room

SETUP: The opening of the show. Jen is warming up the dinner audience as the 'studio audience' for today's soap-opera taping. This requires the actor to actually engage real people in the room — make eye contact, get the audience to applaud and gasp on cue, work the room with confidence. The play to find: Jen is the only competent person in the building, and she knows it. Warmth, humor, control.

JEN

(at various tables, ad-lib energy) Hi, welcome, are you our studio audience? Fantastic. Have you been to a soap taping before? You're going to love it. Today is a HUGE episode. Massive. The wedding of Brock and Vanessa, finally, after — what is it now — seven years of will-they-won't-they? (checks clipboard) ...Twelve. Twelve years. God.

JEN

(gathering attention, finishing the warm-up) Okay studio audience! In just a minute, we're going LIVE — well, 'live to tape,' which is a thing we say but doesn't really mean anything anymore.

JEN

(holding up imagined sign) When you see THIS sign — applause! — you applaud.

JEN

(another imagined sign) When you see THIS — gasp! — you gasp.

JEN

(another) And when you see THIS — awww — you awww.

JEN

(directly to audience) Practice with me. Applause! (waits for actual applause from real audience) Gasp! (waits) Awww! (waits)

JEN

(genuinely warm) Beautiful. You are the most talented studio audience we have ever had, and I'm not just saying that, I literally am, because the last group fell asleep during a murder.

JEN

(big finish) Okay. Here we go. Quiet on set!

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR:

Real audience engagement. The actor must actually look at us, get us to respond, hold the room. This is improvisational — they should feel free to riff with the auditioners as if we are the studio audience. We are looking for warmth, command, genuine charm, and the confidence to wait for our response. If they rush past the 'practice with me' moment, they are not the actor. If they actually get us to do it, they are.

SIDE B — WALT'S CONFESSION (DRAMATIC / LISTENING)

Format: *Two-person scene with WALT*

SETUP: Backstage in Act Two. Walt is drunk in a folding chair. Jen is trying to button his tuxedo shirt. He's not helping. Then suddenly, unexpectedly, he becomes clear and tells her something true. This side is mostly LISTENING — and the actor who can listen well is rare and valuable. The play to find: Jen sees this man. She loves him. She has heard him say similar things before, but never quite like this.

JEN

Walt. Walt, look at me. How many fingers am I holding up.

WALT

(squinting) ...Four.

JEN

I'm holding up two.

WALT

Ah. Then four.

JEN

Walt, you can't go on like this. Marcia is going to kill you.

WALT

Marcia has been going to kill me for nineteen years. She has not killed me yet. She lacks follow-through.

JEN

(real now, gentler) Walt. Why.

WALT

(suddenly clear, sad) Why what, my dear.

JEN

Why do you do this. Every time. You're a beautiful actor. You were Tony-nominated in 1984.

WALT

(very softly) I was Tony-nominated in 1983.

JEN

(softly, knowing she has touched something) Then why—

(WALT begins to speak, telling her about his career, his life, his disappointment. JEN listens. She does not interrupt. She does not try to fix it. She is just present with him. After a long moment, she gently takes the coffee mug from his hand. Reads what's actually in it. Says nothing. Sets it aside.)

JEN

(quiet, no judgment) Walt.

WALT

I'm fine. I'm fine. Put me on. I will be magnificent.

JEN

(quiet, sure) I know you will.

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR:

Listening. Real listening. The actor's face must do work the script doesn't tell them to do. The moment Jen takes the mug — without judgment, without comment — is the heart of the side. The 'I know you will' at the end must be unconditional. We are looking for an actor who can be present with another actor's pain without trying to make it about themselves.