

AUDITION SIDES

WALT

M • 60s–70s • The Veteran

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

— UPPITY IMPROV SOCIETY —

WALT

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Walt plays Arthur Castellano. He has been on the show since 1987. He drinks. He was Tony-nominated in 1983. He carries the entire emotional weight of the third act — his monologue is the moment the play stops being a comedy and asks the audience to feel something real. The actor who plays Walt must be able to play BOTH the broad drunk Shakespeare AND a quiet, unsentimental confessional. THIS IS THE HARDEST ROLE IN THE PLAY. If we cannot find this actor, we will not produce this play.

SIDE A — DRUNK SHAKESPEARE (COMEDIC)

Format: Two-person scene with JEN, with brief monologue moments

SETUP: Backstage. Walt is hung over (or possibly still drunk). Jen is trying to button his tuxedo shirt. He is not helping. The play to find: even in the broad comedy, there is sadness underneath. Walt is using performance as a coping mechanism — he drinks because it keeps the grief manageable. This must be present even in the funny moments.

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

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

Then why—

WALT

(rising suddenly with theatrical commitment, raising his coffee mug like a chalice) "TOMORROW AND TOMORROW AND TOMORROW —"

WALT

"CREEPS IN THIS PETTY PACE FROM DAY TO DAY —"

WALT

"TO THE LAST SYLLABLE OF RECORDED TIME —"

WALT

(suddenly normal, conversational, sitting back down) I'm fine. I'm fine. Put me on. I will be magnificent. I am ALWAYS magnificent. Even drunk I am better than half the people on this set.

WALT

(beat, considering honestly) ...Two-thirds.

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR:

The shift between modes. The drunk fumbling, the brief moment of real sadness ('I was Tony-nominated in 1983'), the explosion into Shakespeare, then the deflation back to dry self-assessment. The 'Two-thirds' must be a quiet, honest moment — not a punchline. The actor must show that this man is using all of this — the drinking, the bits, the Shakespeare — to keep something at bay.

SIDE B — THE MONOLOGUE (SACRED)

Format: Solo monologue, addressing the audience directly

SETUP: Late in the play. Walt steps into a single light. Everyone else fades into shadow. The play stops. He addresses the audience. THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MOMENT IN THE PLAY. There is no music. No reactions from other cast. Just Walt, alone, telling the truth. The actor who plays this big does NOT get cast. The actor who plays this small, dry, almost embarrassed — gets the role. If you cry, the audience won't. If you stay dry, the audience will weep.

WALT

(quiet, real, no theatrics) May I say something.

WALT

My first day on this show was October the twelfth, nineteen eighty-seven. I was thirty years old. My wife had just left me. I had two hundred dollars in my checking account and a cat named Mister Beans.

WALT

(small smile) I told myself: six months.

WALT

(beat) Tonight is my fourteen thousand, two hundred and ninth episode.

WALT

(looking out, slow) People watch this show. Real people. Night-shift nurses, coming home at seven in the morning, who put us on while they make eggs. Old men in nursing homes who can't follow the plot anymore but recognize our faces and feel less alone. Mothers folding laundry. Truckers in motel rooms in Saskatoon.

WALT

(beat) My own mother — God rest her — watched every day until she died. The last words she ever said to me were 'Arthur, why did you marry that woman, she's no good for you.'

WALT

(beat, flat, reportorial — NOT sad) ...She thought I was Arthur.

WALT

(softly, to the audience) What we do is silly. What we do is small.

WALT

(beat) But we have kept somebody company. For thirty-eight years.

WALT

(beat — slightly embarrassed, almost a shrug) ...That's not nothing.

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR:

RESTRAINT ABOVE ALL ELSE. No theatricality. No tears. The mother line **MUST** be played flat — reportorial, almost surprised at himself for saying it. The 'That's not nothing' is the smallest line in the play; do not weight it. The actor must trust the silence. We will be looking for the actor who does the **LEAST** and lands the **MOST**. If you watch this side and want to make it bigger — you are not the actor. If you watch it and want to make it smaller — you might be.