

# AUDITION NOTES FOR *ARSENIC AND OLD LACE*

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

View Mr. Hamen's director's notes here: [centervillehstheatre.com/cast](http://centervillehstheatre.com/cast)  
Here you'll find information about the show as well as character lists and descriptions.



## REQUIREMENTS: BELOW

Prepare to perform one of the selections provided below. You are free to choose whichever you would like, regardless of your or the character's gender identity.

Be sure to also fill out your audition form and sign up for an audition time slot (on the CHS Theatre website).

### ELAINE (female)

*Context: Mortimer proposed to Elaine earlier in the evening, but that was before he knew his aunts and brother were murderers. He's been trying to keep Elaine out of the house, and she is ready to explode.*

You were supposed to take me to dinner and the theatre tonight—you called it off. You asked me to marry you—I said I would—and five minutes later, you threw me out of the house! Tonight, just after your brother tries to strangle me, you want to chase me home. If you think you're going to get out of this by pretending you're insane...you're crazy! Maybe you're not going to marry me, but I'm going to marry you, you idiot!

### MORTIMER (male)

*Context: Mortimer recently discovered a dead man in the window seat, and he now knows his aunts killed him.*

Aunt Abby! Aunt Martha! There's a body in there! I can't turn you over to the police! But what am I going to do? (*He hatches a plan.*) You know I'd do anything in the world for you, and I want you to do just this little thing for me: Don't do anything. I mean don't do anything! Don't let anyone in this house, and leave Mr. Hoskins right where he is. I want time to think.

### DR. EINSTEIN (male)

*Context: Jonathan and his assistant, Dr. Einstein, are about to use the Brewster house as a hide-out. Einstein is nervous and wants to move quickly. NOTE: Einstein is German. You may attempt an accent or just develop a voice you feel fits the character.*

Well, Johnny, where do we go from here? We got to think fast. The police. The police have got pictures of that face. I got to operate on you right away. We got to find a place for Mr. Spenalzo too. You can't leave a dead body in the back seat. You shouldn't have killed him, Johnny. He's a nice fellow. He gives us a lift, and what happens? Now, Johnny, we find a place somewhere. I fix you up quick!

### ABBY (female)

*Context: Abby and Martha killed Mr. Hoskins and plan to bury him in the basement. Meanwhile, Jonathan put Mr. Spenalzo's body in Mr. Hoskins' spot in the window seat. Abby is confused but determined.*

Oh, Mr. Hoskins. It can't be very comfortable for him in there. Well I think Teddy had better get Mr. Hoskins downstairs right away. (*She calls to Teddy*) Teddy! Teddy, there's been another Yellow Fever victim. (*She opens the window seat.*) Now who can that be? That man is an imposter! If he died there to be buried in our cellar, he's mistaken! We've always wanted to hold a double funeral, but I will not read services over a total stranger!

# AUDITIONING FOR A SHOW AT CHS THEATRE

## **EVERY SHOW IS DIFFERENT:**

### **YOUR FIRST AUDITION IS NOT YOUR LAST**

The needs of each show change. Some have small casts. Some have large casts. Some characters are a better fit for certain actors than others. Just because you are cast in a show doesn't mean you'll be the right fit for the next one, and just because you aren't cast doesn't mean you shouldn't return. Keep growing, keep trying!

## **WHO IS IN THE AUDITION ROOM?**

**PLAY:** If the audition format has you performing a bit of text or scene, it might just be you and/or your scene partner in the room with the director. A stage manager may also be there to organize paperwork.

**MUSICAL:** The director and music director will be there, and sometimes an accompanist will be at the piano if one is available. A stage manager may also be there to play music or organize paperwork. If the musical requires a dance audition, you'll be with the choreographer and a group of actors.

**CALLBACKS:** After auditions finish, directors hold callbacks to see more from certain people or to try out combinations of actors. Depending on what the directors need to see, you could be alone, with a scene partner, or with a group.

## **WHAT DO I NEED TO PREPARE?**

Sometimes a show requires actors to come to auditions with a sample to perform, and sometimes actors just show up. Review the information in the audition contract as well as the details provided in advance. Take time to also review the tentative rehearsal calendar before you fill out the form and sign the contract. Sign up for an audition time slot and bring your form/contract to your audition.

## **THIS SOUNDS TERRIFYING!**

Everybody gets nervous at auditions—even people who have done it before, and even the directors! The good news is that everyone wants you to be successful! Go in with a smile (even if you have to fake it!) to start off on a positive step.

## **TIPS FOR AUDITIONING FOR THEATRE**

- Understand the character and what the character wants. Why does the character need to speak?
- Act from head to toe. Be aware of what you are doing with your movement, voice, and facial expressions so they fit the character.
- Memorize. It's not a big deal if you mess up or forget a word, but memorizing helps directors to fully see your potential without a paper in the way.
- Breathe! Smile! Not only will these simple actions help you to make a good first impression, they'll support your success from the inside out.