

FASHION DIRECTOR KAREN PRESTON



This page Black silk dress Coach. Opposite page Cotton dress Miu Miu

JENNA RULES

*From the Tardis to the throne, God save the queen
of Sunday night TV, Ms Coleman*

by HELEN WHITAKER ►

Photographs by David Bailey



**“If you wake up in the morning
and it ignites a fire in you,
I’d call that success...”**

no matter what your vocation is. I’ve got really good people around me, my family...” There’s a pause. “God, I sound a bit ‘Namaste’ here, don’t I?”

That’s Jenna Coleman all over. Ambitious, flourishing, and grateful to be doing a job she loves. Yet she is down-to-earth enough (credit the Lancashire in her) to understand that going on about it will almost certainly elicit a chorus of piss-taking. Her tone suggests that you’d be well within your rights.

Jenna (she dropped the hyphen and the ‘Louise’ a while ago – it was never something she was called in real life) is currently on the first round of promo for *Victoria*. It is ITV’s big autumn showpiece, filling the Sunday night *Downton* slot, and dramatising the first three years of Queen Victoria’s six decades on the throne.

Trailers suggest it’s going to be *quite* the event; a sumptuous historical drama with suitably dazzling costumes, and enough real-life source material to fuel the prime-time spot for years to come.

Jenna plays the newly minted 18-year-old queen as she navigates the early days of her reign after the death of her father, the Duke of Kent. She falls in love, marries, gets pregnant and strives to be taken seriously by Parliament as a teenage monarch. Unsurprisingly, the show has already been picked up in the States, where, if it’s possible, they’re even more obsessed with upper-crust period drama than we are over here.

And it’s in Los Angeles that I catch up with Jenna, as she works the TCA (Television Critics Association) press circuit. Over the past few days she’s appeared on panels, presented the show to journalists, and celebrated its

official launch with her fellow cast members. Vodka Sours featured heavily in said celebration, she tells me with a rather sheepish laugh.

Peter Capaldi, in character on *Doctor Who*, once told Jenna she was “all eyes”. He was spot on. Pretty and petite, with gorgeous big brown eyes, she’s the classic girl next door, but knows how to add edge to her red-carpet style, marrying cute and colourful with cool.

It’s not always that easy though, when you’re 5ft 2in. Her stylist, Rebecca Corbin-Murray, often has to turn up ten inches of fabric (without cutting anything) to get borrowed designer dresses to fit.

“It’s hilarious,” Jenna says, giggling. “I’ve got a picture of me in an unaltered Lanvin dress and it just looks like I’m in an ocean of fabric.” If there’s one fashion secret she’s learned as a diminutive person, she says, it’s that tailoring is your best friend. “I’ve tried on things where I’ve been like, ‘What a shame, it’s a beautiful dress and it’s never going to fit in a million years.’ And then this magician tailor appears and can turn it around.”

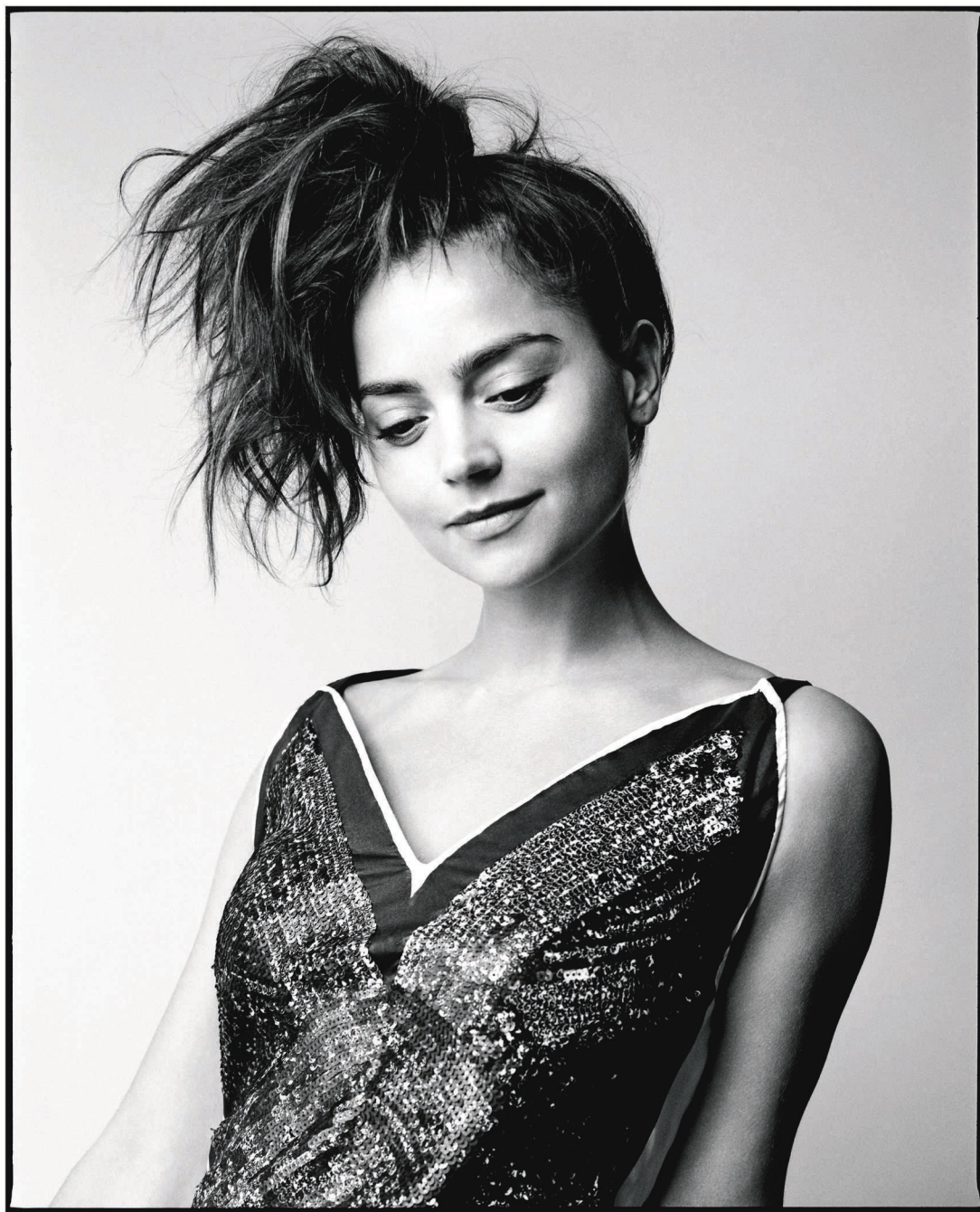
It’s hard to reconcile Jenna’s enthusiasm with the image most people have of Queen Victoria: a dour and perpetually black-clad woman entering her umpteenth year of mourning for her dead husband. The series, however, rewinds 60 years from this representation, which is a more comfortable fit.

“She’s this young, vibrant girl who’s full of exuberance and energy and doesn’t really hide it,” says Jenna. “I find her fascinating. You couldn’t tame her. She’s passionate and temperamental. She was a revelation to me.”

Born in Blackpool in 1986, Jenna started her screen career in Yorkshire-set soap *Emmerdale*. Until now, though, she has been best known as *Doctor Who* companion Clara, alongside Doctors Matt Smith and Peter Capaldi. She battled monsters in the coveted BBC role for three years and left in 2015. It was a wrench ►



Grey tweed coat Polo Ralph Lauren; black cotton body Intimissimi; black silk trousers Calvin Klein Collection



This page Black sequin, viscose and silk dress Louis Vuitton
Opposite page Cotton jacket Saint Laurent; cotton bandana Topshop

to leave *Doctor Who*, less a TV show and more a cultural behemoth, she says, but she insists that the ever-evolving cast is what makes it so magical.

"When my episode began, Karen [Gillan] was still there, and while I was there Matt left and Peter started," she says. "You know it's yours for a little moment in time and then it moves on without you, so I was prepared for that. You do get really attached, though, because of the friendships you make." She's still good friends with Karen, Peter and Matt from what she acknowledges is one of the coolest day jobs she'll ever have.

"I've got a WhatsApp group with my friends and we do, 'What are you doing right now?' messages during the day. One's a teacher, one's a broker and one works in TV documentary. It was quite funny, as to that question, I'd just send them an alien."

The gap between filming her final scenes for the show in 2015 and her first for *Victoria* was virtually non-existent. One minute, she was unconstrained by space and time; the next, she was a real-life monarch in her first biopic role. And the pressure was on to get it right (not least because, let's face it, there's every chance Her Maj might tune in of a Sunday evening). Jenna did extensive research – reading biographies and Victoria's own diaries, along with watching previous depictions, including Emily Blunt in *The Young Victoria* and Dame Judi Dench in *Mrs Brown* – but she refused to let it stress her out.

"You've got to research as much as you can, but then throw it away and focus on the storytelling," she says firmly. Finding Victoria's voice – as in her tone – was the hardest part, although elocution lessons also figured. But as she points out, "It's not like we have videotapes you can watch to mimic."

Jenna attempted to learn Beethoven on the piano but it didn't quite work. Could she play the piano already? "Not really," she replies with a self-deprecating chuckle. She also cheerfully admits that the *Victoria* script originally featured the monarch speaking French, but that gradually disappeared.

"I don't know if it was my pronunciation, perhaps," she says wryly. It's comments like this that immediately make me think she's someone I'd like ►



"One thing I'm learning as I get older is that you don't have to be such a pleaser"

to be bar-side with on a night out. There's zero pretension. None. Later, when I suggest that fellow actresses Perdita Weeks and Sammy Winward – good friends who both appear all over Jenna's Instagram – are her girl squad, she barks out a laugh and says, "If I was to call my friends my 'girl squad' they might disown me."

Several times, she starts to answer a question and then stops, chuckles mischievously and says, "I probably shouldn't say that." Naturally, these are the stories that I want to hear. And I have the feeling that if only I could stick a Vodka Sour or two in her hand, they would come tumbling out.

After two years of hopping around with most of her belongings in a storage unit ("It's really freeing... for about six months," she groans), Jenna recently bought a house in London. She left *Doctor Who* with the sign from the Tardis as her leaving present and it now resides in pride of place. "The kitchen is a narrow corridor with a big window and I've got it as a neon sign above, so when you walk in, it looks like the Tardis in the door," she says.

Disappointingly, for any local *Doctor Who* superfans, that particular window is at the back of the house, so you can't see it from the street. Becoming a homeowner has unleashed her inner interior decorator ("shockingly so"), and with the help of her dad, a joiner, she's doing the place up. So far, she describes it as a "mosaic" of furniture. "I was talking to Karen Gillan about this," she says, "who said, 'The problem is, you buy a sofa and then you're like, damn, I need to redecorate the whole room to go with it.'"

Her bookshelf is already sorted, though. At the end of her GLAMOUR shoot with legendary photographer David Bailey (who counts royalty such as Elizabeth II, as well as giants of showbiz and rock'n'roll among his subjects), he presented her with a signed copy of *Moonglow* (a book of his works on display at the *Bailey's Stardust* exhibition in Scotland). "I was so excited just for the day," Jenna says of the shoot, still sounding totally amped up about the experience, which was all undone hair, sexy-but-relaxed fashion, and Bailey's iconic verve-sodden portraiture. "You turn up and deliver yourself into his hands and then roll with it. He's absolutely hilarious." Another impish laugh. "I wish I could come out with some of the things he said to me, but I think they might be unrepeatable."

Turning 30 this year wasn't without a touch of angst, but Jenna's crisis wasn't about her age, it was over filming and missing the giant party she'd been planning with her school friends for the previous 18 months. "I really wanted to mark it," she says. "Seven of us planned a massive trip to South Africa for two weeks with ►

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Black cotton jacket Saint Laurent





Wool jacket Dior

partners and everyone – 26 altogether. And then I started filming *Victoria*, so I missed it. I was gutted for a minute, but I was filming the coronation or something, so that's another way to spend your birthday! I made sure when we wrapped that I did a belated one. I went away to Florence with Perdy and Sammy for five days."

At the mention of her friends and all their partners, there's no hint as to whether she's coupled up herself. Last August, she was thought to still be in a long-term relationship with *Game Of Thrones*' Richard Madden, but they were rumoured to have split this year. There was also gossip in 2015 linking her to Prince Harry, after they were spotted together at a polo match. Today, her personal life is off the agenda, she says apologetically but resolutely (although she tantalises me with "Erm, erm, no, not really..." when I ask her if there's anything she can tell me about her dating status).

There is one tabloid tale she's happy to comment on though: her insatiable appetite for... custard creams.

"The weirdest story I've ever read about myself was that I stole two packets of custard creams on set [of *Doctor Who*]," she says, dying of laughter. "There was an article about me and Peter [Capaldi] stealing some and binge-eating them in the trailers. Apparently, the producers had to take the custard creams away from us."

Such is the appetite for *Doctor Who* gossip that one redtop screamed that they had been BANNED from eating the biscuity treats. So, you're telling GLAMOUR exclusively that you *didn't* steal the custard creams? "I didn't," she replies gravely. "If I was going to sneak biscuits, it would be Digestives, Nice biscuits or Hobnobs."

With the first season of *Victoria* now wrapped, Jenna has some time off for the first time in 14 months. She says she has never really followed a career strategy or plan, and doesn't have anything else lined up for now, although she can't be short of offers.

"I worked in a bar after I left *Emmerdale*," she says with the NBD confidence of someone who has always had something bigger and better come along.

"I'm enjoying being free for a little while and trying to pick what comes next. And we'll see how *Victoria* does." With 60 more years of the monarch's reign to go, the

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material for *Victoria* to continue is clearly there, with the seeds of the famously obstinate character she becomes already planted in the 18-year-old queen.

"She's really flawed, but unapologetically flawed," Jenna says, admiringly, "which I find quite funny and charming."

She can relate to the idea of growing into who you are destined to be. "One thing I'm learning as I get older is that you don't have to worry about being such a pleaser. You can waste so much energy on that. I think it's OK to listen to your own instincts."

And right now, her gut is telling her to have a holiday before heading to Paris to research a script she's working on. "You've got to make a bit of time to do something else, so you can go back into the next job with attack and not feel like you're doing the same thing every day," she says. "I've been travelling quite a bit, picking up a camera and trying to write something, and finding other ways to fulfil myself creatively."

There's that forthrightness again.

"Otherwise, I think you become a bit boring."

Underestimate her at your peril.

Queen Victoria would be proud. ●

Victoria airs on Sundays at 9pm on ITV

Hair: Syd Hayes at Art + Commerce for BaByliss Pro. Make-up: Zoe Taylor at Jed Root, using Chanel Le Rouge Collection No.1 and Le Lift V-Flash. Manicurist: Michelle Humphrey at LMC Worldwide, using Nails inc. Senior Fashion Assistant: Molly Hayler