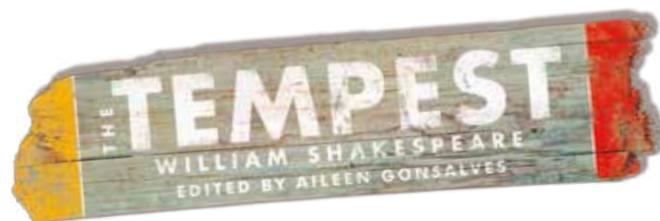


POWER AND DUTY

Playmaking Pack - Resources - Units



ACT 1

UNIT

SUMMARY & QUESTIONS

1

A ship carrying ALONSA, Queen of Naples, is caught in a terrible storm. The ship's BOATSWAIN encourages the Queen, her son FERDINAND and other courtiers to stay below deck for safety. As ANTONIO, the Duke of Milan, argues with the Boatswain the ship begins to break up.

How do we want to portray the storm? What is at our disposal? Would a soundscape be useful, vocal, body percussion, instruments? Is it a natural storm or a magical storm as Ariel is involved? How can the actors use their bodies to reveal the storm. And from whose point of view do we see the storm - The sailors'? Prospero's? Is it a simple symbolic moment (like an apple rolling side to side across a table or a light swinging, or a bell clanging) or is it a full blown movement sequence?

How in the staging do we clearly show the status and relationships of everyone on board the ship?

2

On a remote island MIRANDA has been watching the storm and seen the sinking ship. She asks her father, PROSPERO, if he has used his magic powers to cause the storm. He explains by telling her the story of how and why they came to live on the island - that he was the Duke of Milan until he was usurped by his brother Antonio.

How do we bring Prospero's story to life? It is a long bit of exposition but crucial to the understanding of the play. How do we focus the audience's attention on the key information? Will we use puppets? Shadow work? Ensemble work - using the whole company to tell the story? A musical motif for the various characters (we are going to meet them all again soon?)

How do we establish the relationship between Prospero and his daughter? Is it equal? Is she rebelling or acquiescing?

3

With MIRANDA asleep, PROSPERO summons ARIEL (a spirit under his control) who tells him that s/he created the storm as Prospero commanded and scattered the passengers on different parts of the island. Having done this, Ariel asks that Prospero keep his promise to free him/her. Prospero sharply reminds him that having saved Ariel's life, Ariel is still bound to serve Prospero; as is Caliban another creature that lives on the island. If Ariel is obedient for another three days, Prospero will grant his/her freedom.

How do we create Ariel?

Shall we make it a male character or female? What do those choices give us?

Is Prospero a tyrant dictator? Or is he the great saviour?

UNIT

SUMMARY & QUESTIONS

4

PROSPERO wakes MIRANDA up and tells her they are going to visit Caliban, their slave. MIRANDA reveals he/her dislike of Caliban calling him a 'villain'.

What's the relationship between Miranda and Caliban? What has happened in past and what went so wrong?

Is Prospero exaggerating what Caliban has done because he is over protective of Miranda, or is Caliban indeed a 'villain'?

5

PROSPERO calls CALIBAN and as he emerges they exchange insults. Caliban explains how the island was his and Prospero has taken it from him. Prospero dismisses him to collect fire-wood and threatens punishment if he disobeys.

Where do we want the audience's sympathies to lie at this point - With Caliban or Prospero?

What is Miranda doing through this scene? How does she feel toward them both? What is the physical relationship to her father and to Caliban on stage?

6

The Queen's son FERDINAND enters, he is alone and lost on the island. ARIEL and other spirits sing and as they are invisible, Ferdinand cannot understand where the music is coming from. Ariel's song tells him that his mother was drowned in the storm.

How do we stage Ariel's song to Caliban? Is it clearly a siren song? Is Ariel alone or is there a chorus of "spirits"?

What are Prospero and Miranda doing during the song? Are they still on stage? If so are they frozen or suspended until the right moment?

7

PROSPERO and MIRANDA see FERDINAND. Miranda is intrigued by him and believes he must be a spirit.

How does Miranda first see Ferdinand? Can she walk right up to him? Or only able to look from a distance? What is the magic of this moment?

8

FERDINAND and MIRANDA meet and are immediately attracted to each other. Seeing this, PROSPERO interrupts them. Talking aside to ARIEL he admits he will make it difficult for the two young people and accuses Ferdinand of being a spy. Despite Miranda pleading with him, Prospero takes Ferdinand prisoner.

How do we highlight the first moment that the "lovers" set eyes on each other? With staging, a physical device (like slow motion), music, a bell, a lighting change? Do they both immediately fall in love?

How do we stage Ferdinand going to attack Prospero? How does Prospero's magic stop him? This is the first moment we see Prospero's direct magic? How are we going to represent that?

How powerful is the magic of Prospero? Or does Ariel have the magic power and Prospero controls Ariel?

ACT 2

UNIT

SUMMARY & QUESTIONS

9

On another part of the island Queen ALONSA is walking with her sister SEBASTIENNE and Prospero's brother ANTONIO. Queen Alonso is worried that her son, Ferdinand, drowned in the storm. ARIEL enters and sends Alonso to sleep with music.

How do we reveal the status of these lords in relation to Queen Alonso and set up their allegiances revealed in unit 10?

What song to use? Does Ariel have a musical motif (similar to her song in unit 6?) for each time s/he appears?

10

Whilst Queen Alonso is asleep, ANTONIO and SEBASTIENNE talk of how Antonio took the Dukedom of Milan from his brother. He suggests that Sebastienne take the opportunity to kill Alonso while she sleeps so she can become Queen of Naples. Sebastienne agrees and they both draw their swords.

How susceptible is Sebastienne to the idea of committing murder? How, in the staging, can we see her being persuaded by Antonio?

How do we keep the tension so we don't give away that Ariel is going to save the day?

11

As SEBASTIENNE and ANTONIO are about to murder the sleeping Queen ALONSA, ARIEL sings in the Queen's ear and wakes her up. When questioned, Antonio and Sebastienne lie and say they drew their swords after hearing a roar of a beast. The courtiers leave to continue the search for Ferdinand and Ariel goes to tell Prospero about what happened.

How does Ariel wake the Queen? Is it in a physical way? How is the "whispering" done?

12

CALIBAN is carrying fire-wood for Prospero and moans about the magical power his master has, and the punishments inflicted on him.

How much do we want the audience to sympathise with Caliban? Do we want to manifest the invisible Ariel (and or other spirits) harassing him, or is he exaggerating and do we want to bring out a sense of paranoia? How heavy are the logs? It's useful to have the actor carry something in rehearsal even as a substitute. Discover the different choices in how he carries them to open up lots of ideas.

What is Caliban's objective when talking to the audience? What does he want to get them to do, say or think? (A good question to ask of any aside or soliloquy?)

UNIT

SUMMARY & QUESTIONS

13

CALIBAN sees TRINCULA (Queen Alonso's jester) and thinking it's another spirit sent to hurt him, he hides under his cloak. With another storm coming, Trincula is looking for a place to shelter. When she comes across Caliban she cannot identify what kind of animal he is and finding nowhere else crawls under Caliban's cloak.

Looking forward to unit 14, what physical positions might we want to set up for the next sequence?

What will be most funny at each stage of this whole sequence?

14

STEPHANA, Queen Alonso's maid, enters drunk and singing. She stumbles across TRINCULA and CALIBAN hiding under Caliban's cloak and at first mistakes them for a two-headed monster. Trincula recognises Stephana's voice and they two are delighted to be reunited. Stephana gives Caliban wine. Caliban complains about his treatment from Prospero and promises to serve Stephana as his new master. Believing all the other courtiers to be dead, Stephana and Trincula plan to rule the island.

Where are the head and feet? Are they at opposite ends? Facing upward or downward? Try lots of possibilities, the text gives us clues but it's worth testing the various positions?

How do we establish the status of Trincula and Stephana? Trincula says "two friends 'scaped" but exactly how friendly are they at the start of the unit?

ACT 3

UNIT

SUMMARY & QUESTIONS

15

FERDINAND has been put to hard labour for Prospero, but doesn't complain because it means he can see MIRANDA. PROSPERO watches unseen as the Ferdinand and Miranda exchange vows of love.

Does Miranda watch the scene in secret before she actually speaks? Experiment in how heavy the logs are, there are many discoveries to be made accordingly. How does he carry them?

16

STEPHANA, TRINCULA and CALIBAN are drunk and plot to murder Prospero and Miranda so they can rule the island. ARIEL enters and, whilst remaining invisible, taunts them. Ariel decides to reveal the plot to Prospero and leads the conspirators away with magical music.

How do they enter and exit this scene? What does the staging reveal about their new status as a trio?

How drunk are they? Are they happy drunk or aggressive drunk? How to stage Ariel's interventions? How mischievous is Ariel does s/he only speak or does s/he move things around? How much does Trincula see of this magic?

17

Queen ALONSA has given up hope of finding her son alive. Her sister SEBASTIENNE talks secretly to ANTONIO, hoping that they will have another opportunity to kill the Queen later that night.

How do the schemers manage to plot in front of the Queen? Does the Queen have any suspicions? How good or bad is Sebastienne at plotting?

18

ARIEL appears in the form of a harpy and speaks to ALONSA, SEBASTIENNE and ANTONIO calling them 'three men of sin'. Ariel explains that they are being punished for stripping Prospero of his dukedom and putting Antonio in his place. PROSPERO, unseen by the courtiers, congratulates Ariel on the performance.

How does Ariel become the harpy? What is a harpy? Physically and vocally – what choices are at our disposal? Is it a chorus of many actors working together? Is it choral speaking? Can we use echoing? What is the most dramatic way to bring out this image?

ACT 4

UNIT

SUMMARY & QUESTIONS

19

PROSPERO tells FERDINAND that the hard labour he had to do was as a test, which having passed means he now has permission to marry MIRANDA.

How in the staging do we show the changing relationship between Prospero and Miranda?

20

PROSPERO calls ARIEL and asks that the 'rabble' (Stephana, Trincula and Caliban) are brought to him. Ariel leaves to fetch them.

How does Ariel manifest? There are lots of re-entrances and exits? What choices can be made? Freezing? Dropping down springing up? Musical motifs on each entrance?

Does Ariel ever leave the stage?

21

PROSPERO talks to FERDINAND and MIRANDA about the important of marriage vows and then gives them a demonstration of his magical powers.

Is the "majestic vision" visible to the audience? If not what can Miranda, Ferdinand and Prospero do physically to show they can see it?

How do we create the sense that this is a really impressive display of Prospero's power?

22

PROSPERO suddenly remembers about Caliban's plot to murder him and abruptly stops the magical 'vision'. MIRANDA and FERDINAND notice his sudden change of mood and ask if he is ok. Prospero replies with a speech saying that like his magical demonstration all things must come to an end.

How does Prospero "stop" the spectacle? Like brakes on a car? Things freezing? Remember how "magical" everything can be. Be limitless in our thinking about all the magical moments and less literal.

23

Now alone, PROSPERO calls ARIEL. Ariel explains that the 'varlets' (Caliban, Stephana and Trincula) are drunk and, enticed by Ariel's music, are currently dancing in a 'foul-lake'.

How does he speak to Ariel in their one on one exchanges? In the staging how do we reveal the changing state of their relationship?

24

CALIBAN, STEPHANA and TRINCULA, now wet and smelly, approach PROSPERO cave intent on finding him asleep. As they get closer the sound of barking is heard and spirits in the form of dogs chase them away. Now Prospero has all his enemies at his mercy, he promises ARIEL will be free shortly.

How efficient or not are they at secretly creeping up on Prospero? Are any of them still drunk? Remember the audience know that Prospero is aware of the plot and is waiting for them - what comedy can be brought out by them not knowing he knows!

ACT 5

UNIT

SUMMARY & QUESTIONS

25

PROSPERO enters in his magic robes and asks ARIEL about Queen ALONSA and the other courtiers. Ariel informs him that they are still shaken by their earlier encounter with the 'harpy' so much so that Ariel feels sorry for them. Touched by this, Prospero explains that he does not want to harm them, only make them feel sorry. Ariel leaves to fetch them.

This is a pivotal moment in the plot and is very short. How do we give it the weight it needs to show Prospero change in thinking of forgiveness not only revenge?

26

PROSPERO begins to conjure for the last time, promising at the end to break his magic staff and drown his book. He draws a circle into which ARIEL leads ALONSA, SEBASTIENNE and ANTONIO in a trance. Prospero address each of them reminding them of the wrongs they have done him.

What does Prospero's conjuring look like? How do we create his magic rituals?

How does Ariel bring them in? How does Prospero relate to them in their trance state when he is still invisible to them?

27

PROSPERO releases ALONSA, SEBASTIENNE and ANTONIO from his charm. Alonsa is full of remorse and grants Prospero the return of his dukedom. Alonsa is also reminded of the son she has lost and Prospero tells her that he has also 'lost' a daughter.

How do we position so many people on the stage and tell the story of their various relationships? Experiment with who stands next to who!

28

PROSPERO reveals the Queen's son FERDINAND is still alive and reunites him with his mother. Ferdinand introduces MIRANDA to his mother and his intentions to marry her.

How does Prospero want to reveal his greatest dramatic moment?

What game are Miranda and Ferdinand playing? Can they be frozen or suspended by Prospero? How do they enter-are they revealed or run on not noticing everyone?

UNIT

SUMMARY & QUESTIONS

29

PROSPERO congratulates ARIEL on achieving everything that was asked. Ariel brings in CALIBAN, STEPHANA and TRINCULA and they are confronted by Prospero. He commands they enter Prospero's 'cell' and prepare it for guests. Caliban immediately agrees and asks for pardon, but Prospero sends them all away.

How battered and bruised are these characters on their entrance what is the trio's new relationship and how can this be revealed in the staging? Who enters first? Is anyone holding on to anyone else? Or keeping them at arms length?

How do they respond to their old masters?

How does the last encounter with Caliban reveal the relationship between Caliban and Prospero?

30

PROSPERO tells Queen ALONSA that he will recover the ship and they will all return to Naples for FERDINAND and MIRANDA's wedding. Alonsa is keen to hear Prospero's story. As a final task, Prospero asks ARIEL to ensure they have a safe journey home and then sets him free.

How do we show Ariel's moment of freedom? A song, a dance? Does s/he "fly? Or is it that everyone else moves and Ariel is still? Explore different physical and aural ways to express someone becoming free.