

**RSC**

ROYAL  
SHAKESPEARE  
COMPANY



THE  
WHIP  
JULIET GILKES ROMERO

RESOURCE PACK

# RESOURCES

## THE STORY IN SCENES

1 –

Despite Lord Boyd's recent achievements in the House Of Commons. He has been asked to drop the factory bill and convince parliament to vote for a new Abolition Bill by Lord Maybourne.

**What I ask is a moral victory which serves British democracy without loss of life in the Colonies.**

2 –

Regardless of strong opposition from the House Of Commons he discovers a formidable female abolitionist- Mercy Pryce who seems to be able to transform wherever she goes.

**I have learnt to navigate myself in all manner of environments. Unfortunately different rooms require different versions of me.**

He and his housekeeper Horatia soon discover that he has met his match. She manages to convince him to adapt the Abolition Bill by deleting the problematic Apprenticeship Clause and agrees to join him.

3 –

Conservative member of the opposition - Viscount Hyde-Villiers is anti abolition and severely discredits Boyd in Parliament arguing slaves must still labour...

**while supervised, to avoid anarchy and confusion.**

Realising the complexities of the situation Boyd asks for an Apprenticeship Clause Vote instead of an outright deletion. Meanwhile Mercy continues her London speaking tour to garner support for the Abolitionists.

4 –

Boyd and Maybourne take William Purnell, a witness and Slave Owner to the Bull and Gate Tavern to guide him to help the Whig Party push the Abolition Bill through. He's not comfortable though

**I'm sorry but colonial Negros, unlike the low born, have no rights.**

**Are you witness for abolition or not!**

5 –

Drunk Hyde-Villiers happens upon their conversation explaining money will be lost without the Apprenticeship clause

**The Bill is flawed and favours the slave not the owner --- Is the prosperity of our country so great that it can afford economic suicide?**

Boyd's ward Edmund questions Hyde Villier's greed for compensation and they fight. To calm things propose a deal at £25 per slave.

6 –

On the other side of London Mercy continues her London speaking tour to garner support for the Abolitionists.

**As the Abolition bill now stands freed slaves could be compelled to toil for no wages at all.**

Horatia joins but is not refined in her speech and gets herself arrested. After a night in Newgate Prison an exhausted and beaten up Horatia returns to Boyd's kitchen in a complete mess.

7 –

Edmund is not impressed but helps her to clear it. During this time they discover some of the injustices they'd both been through at the hands of greed

**Edmund: How did you get those scars on your arm?**

**Horatia: It happened at the Mill ... How'd you get that? They look burned on.**

After this moment they remember themselves and get ready for the huge luncheon in Parliament. Edmund hands Horatia a letter.

8 –

In the morning Horatia meets Mercy at the Church Chapel - Mercy bailed her out in return for inside information about Boyd the Abolition Bill.

**This is a man's game and I need advantage. Isn't that what you want too?**

But Horatia refuses to do this. She heads to deliver food to Boyd's office and notices Bradshaw Cooper that caused her deep unrest and she decides to speak to Mercy about it.

9 –

Mercy has anxiously made her way to parliament with a huge UK Abolitionist petition. She meets Edmund but realises he has been fed delusions of grandeur by Boyd. This revelation and Boyd's strange behaviour troubles Mercy prompting her to question Boyd's intentions –

**Why don't you own any slaves?**

Simultaneously Hyde Villiers double crosses Boyd and has the Apprenticeship Clause reinstated for a higher price for his slaves.

**That conniving bastard.**

10 –

This news prompts Boyd to have a heart attack and during his absence from Maybourne confirms that parliament agreed a large compensation fund for the slave owners for recompense loss of property. Despite Boyd's anger Maybourne explains

**The Bill will not pass without the support of slave owning members.**

He then confirms he has a secret ambition to become prime minister and with this Boyd pursues his own ambition for Home Secretary.

11 –  
Mercy finds out about this and goes to the Chapel to centre herself and discovers Horatia. She doesn't seem herself and at this point they discover for the first time they're more alike than they could've ever imagined.

**Together let us ask for their eternal peace.**

Horatia summons the courage to head to Boyd's office.

She explains the history she has with Bradshaw Cooper

**I was there. I saw you.**

**She was my child! That mill belongs to your Grandfather.**

Boyd uses this to blackmail Bradshaw Cooper to sign the necessary paperwork and join his campaign however all this ambition and dirty tricks make Edmund leave Boyd for a new career at sea.

12 –  
Mercy begs and confronts Boyd to turn these events around but he refuses so to spite him she reveals she's going on a bigger Speaking Tour than what he ever offered with an even bigger abolitionist. Horatia leaves Boyd's employ with a small gift for Mercy.  
**You'll find it's all accurate. Every MP and his abolition voting record. Lord Maybourne in particular. He suspects nothing.**

## MERCY AND HORATIA – BACKSTORIES

### Mercy Pryce

Methodist Christian

Where she was born - Barbados

Her family – Removed from her family when young

Witness her mother burn to death and sister tortured

Sold to her slave owner Mr Beaumont aged 5

A form of torture she encountered was The Whip

Journey from Barbados to England open to interpretation Methodist Christian

She has children but we are not sure of the identity of the father(s)

Her main focus is to free the enslaved

### Horatia Poskitt

Atheist

Where she was born - Lancashire

Cotton Mill Worker from the age of 5, then worked in a Tavern

Conditions especially pollution and safety was very poor

Family - Husband left – Unknown whether Dead or Alive.

She describes herself as a Ms not Miss

Where she was born - Blackburn

Poverty – All the family worked in the Cotton Mill or as labourers

Journey from Blackburn to London open to interpretation

Women's Rights

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