



RSC

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

SHAKESPEARE FOR YOUNGER AUDIENCES

THE PERFECT INTRODUCTION TO SHAKESPEARE

THE TEMPEST

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

TEACHER PACK



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

This pack supports the RSC’s 2025 First Encounters production of *The Tempest*, directed by Aaron Parsons. The production toured theatres, schools and community venues from February to May 2025, and ran from 25-29 March at The Other Place in Stratford-upon-Avon.

The activities provided in this pack are specifically designed to support KS2 and KS3 students attending the performance and studying *The Tempest* in school, but all activities can be adapted for learners of different ages and abilities. These activities aim to help students explore some important features of the text and production using the RSC’s rehearsal processes.

In this pack you will find a selection of classroom activities to help you work with students in exploring the story, characters, and world of *The Tempest* through the lens of our 2025 First Encounters production. The activities are organised into two categories: BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW and AFTER SEEING THE SHOW, but are also usable for those who have not seen this production.

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These symbols are used throughout the pack:



READ

Notes from the production, background info or extracts



ACTIVITY

A practical or open space activity



WRITE

A classroom writing or discussion activity



LINKS

Useful web addresses and research tasks

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

The latest in our series of First Encounters with Shakespeare productions makes Shakespeare’s play about families, magic, and forgiveness relevant for a new generation of theatregoers.

This 80-minute version of *The Tempest* uses an edited version of the original play to create the perfect introduction for young people aged 7-13 and their families. This production contains weapons which are seen but not used as well as the use of alcohol and portrayal of drunkenness.

BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW



ACTIVITY 1: Characters

Exercise 1: Character Descriptions

Summary: An exercise to introduce the characters in the play through language, images and descriptions used in rehearsals for this production.

Aims: To understand the characters present in the world of this play, how Shakespeare presents them in the text and specific choices made to represent the characters by actors and designers in this production.

Length: ~ 60 minutes. N.B. This activity can be shortened or extended by exploring fewer or more characters.

Space: Ideal for a drama studio space, but can be adapted for a desk-based classroom by clearly defining the scope of 'physical gesture' or adapting to be a design or written-based part of the activity.

Note: You can do this exercise with every character or select certain ones.

1. Put the class into groups of three to five.
2. Read through or display on the board each character descriptions [RESOURCE A] one at a time alongside their costume design image.
3. Give the group five minutes to come up with five personality traits for this character from the image and facts that they have been given. *Note: It may be useful to establish what we mean by a **characteristic** or **personality trait** before this exercise.*
4. Once each group has their five characteristics, give the group five minutes to work together to create and remember a physical gesture for each one.
5. As a whole room, or group by group, count one to five and ask each group to show the physical gestures they have come up with for each word.
6. Now ask everyone to work individually and give them one minute to come up with one physical gesture that they feel encapsulates all five of the words, remind them that it's fine if some of the words contradict each other – some characteristics can be more hidden than others.
7. Once everyone has found their final physicality, take it for a walk around the room. Ask the students to think about: how does this person move through space? Think about speed, eye contact, posture.

8. Now indicate the moment this character steps foot on the island. Think about: is it new to them? Do they enjoy this or not? Are they alone or with people? How does this change their physicality?



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INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR, AARON PARSONS:

The play deals with a lot of complex issues like enslavement and colonialism that are often presented in a reductive, simplistic way. But young people are extraordinarily perceptive. We did a series of research and development sessions working with young people before going into rehearsals and one of the things that came up consistently was their understanding of injustice, particularly in relation to the treatment of Caliban and Ariel. Young people constantly questioned why Caliban and Ariel aren't given a proper ending in the play. We've tried to address that through the editing process so that both characters get an ending or at least some agency and say over what happens next.

Exercise 2: Lines of Order

Summary: An exercise to explore status between different characters in the play.

Aims: To explore characters and their relationships by comparing various aspects of status in the play and how that impacts their relation to locations in the world of this play.

Length: ~ 20 minutes.

Space: Drama studio space.

Note: As before, you can do this exercise with every character or select certain ones.

1. Ask one student to come up to represent each character, their names can be written on a small whiteboard or sheet of paper.
2. Ask them to hold the name so the rest of the group can see.
3. Establish a horizontal sliding scale from 'most' at one end of the room, to 'least' at the other.
4. Ask everyone watching to imagine we are at the point in the play when everyone arrives on the island, and to put the characters in order of:
 - Most powerful to least powerful
 - Most afraid to least afraid
 - Most comfortable on the island to least comfortable
 - Character who has the most to lose to the least to lose
5. Once the first order has been established, ask those holding the characters to say if they feel they're standing in the right place and why.



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ALONSO AND GONZALO © RSC

*Discussion points: Have a conversation about factors that are impacting each character such as **location** and **circumstance**. For example, King Alonso might be very powerful in Naples, how is her power affected now we are on this island? You can also talk about the decisions actors might make about their characters in a rehearsal room. If we decide our character is very fearful, does this need to be shown all the time or is this something they might hide on the outside, and why?*



ACTIVITY 2: The Island and Colonisation

Exercise 1: Human Orchestra

Summary: An exercise which explores the play's key location, the Island, utilising sound and design informed by the choices made in this production.

Aims: To experiment with how location is presented in Shakespeare's plays through combining evidence in the text with theatre-making artistry.

Length: ~ 40 minutes. Can be extended with further scaffolding to build pupil confidence in creating an 'orchestra' through voice work.

Space: Drama studio space.

1. Share the images of the design for the character of Caliban with the group [RESOURCE B]. Ask them to take some time to look at the images and discuss what this costume tells them about him.
2. Do the same with the designer Aldo's island inspiration images for the set [RESOURCE C].
3. Now put the class into groups of four or five. Ask them to work as a team to use just their voices to make a **Human Orchestra** of the island. The Human Orchestra is an exercise wherein the students create a soundscape using just their voices. If this is something they have not done before, it can be useful to build the exercise up gradually. This can be done by adding one sound then another, then another to build up layers of different sounds eventually ending up with cacophony or 'sound scape' to represent a place or theme. Take ideas from the group about what part of the theme they want to represent, e.g. magical spirits, the weather, animals on the island. The more specific you can be to begin with, the more accessible the exercise will be.
4. Once the Human Orchestra exercise has been established, give each group a more specific title of the musical piece they will be creating. You can choose from: '**A magical island**', '**a Tempest**', '**The arrival and disappearance of a magical mist**', '**The arrival and disappearance of a magic banquet**'.
5. Hear back from each group, discuss what you heard, how it made you feel and what it made you think of.
6. Stay in the same groups and hand out the 'Be Not Afeard' speech [RESOURCE D]. Begin by asking the groups to read the speech aloud as a group. Give the groups some time to discuss what the speech might mean and any words or phrases they don't understand. Share these discussions back as a group and ensure everyone has an understanding of the text.

7. **Human Orchestra with speech:** Now task the groups to take it in turns to be Caliban/The conductor of the island. Using the text as inspiration, they should take some time to decide the sounds that they think the island/magic will make on each line of text and use the rest of the group as the 'orchestra' to make those sounds. They can start by using discussion and eventually move on to hand gestures to indicate elements such as speed and volume. Each conductor should work through the text and then share some back with the whole class.

Idea: Ask the group to close their eyes as they listen to each speech.

Options for the exercise: If the group is less comfortable with reading text aloud, you can ask them to divide the text between them in their groups and conduct a small section each.



**FIRST ENCOUNTERS: THE TEMPEST 2025,
TRINCULO, CALIBAN, STEPHANO AND THE ISLAND SPIRITS (C) RSC**

Exercise 2: Colonisation

Summary: Make connections between the themes of the play with contemporary understanding relevant to this specific production.

Aims: To synthesise the theme of colonisation with Shakespeare's text to develop understanding of how character and themes are presented through specific production choices.

Length: ~ 40 minutes. Can be extended with further learning about the history of colonisation.

Space: Drama studio space.

1. Read 'This Island's Mine' speech [RESOURCE E] out loud with the group, changing readers any time you reach a punctuation point.
2. Clarify any words/phrases we don't understand.
3. Establish that in this speech, Caliban details the colonisation of this island.

Note: The term "colonisation" mainly refers to the history of exploitative imperial powers militarily invading lands in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, the Americas and Oceania, implanting their citizens in colonies through the use of force, subjugating native and indigenous populations and stealing their natural resources. During rehearsals for The Tempest, we explored the concept of "colonisation" through the island in terms of who arrives on it and when, who is in charge of it, who 'owns' it and how people treat each other on the island.

4. Put the class into groups of three to five. Ask the groups to answer the following questions:
 - Who is Caliban talking to?
 - How is Caliban feeling?
 - What is the evidence for this?

Exercise 3: Embodying Caliban

Summary: An acting exercise which explores a key character pivotal to this production's interpretation of the play and its themes.

Aims: To implement several performance elements, including music, movement, psychology and text to develop understanding of a character.

Length: ~ 30 minutes.

Space: Drama studio space with ability to play music. Can be adapted for a desk-based classroom by changing the 'walking with the speech' aspect of this exercise.

From character exercise: Remind everyone of the physicality and movement that they created for Caliban.

1. Explain to the group that sometimes it can be useful to look at the world through a character's perspective.
2. Ask everyone to find a space in the room and get into their physicality that they found for Caliban earlier. *Note: At this point, you may want to play the 'Island Music' from this section of the website. [RESOURCE J]*
3. When you say 'Go' ask them to imagine that the room you are in has become the island before Miranda and Prospero arrive when you (Caliban) just have the spirits for company. Ask the group to think about their senses: what they can see, smell, hear and touch. Tell the group that you are alone with just the spirits on the island. You can prompt the group with questions such as: Can you sense any magic on this island? How comfortable do you feel here?



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CALIBAN © RSC**

4. Ask the Calibans to think about how it feels to be in their home, how that might make them move, stand, sit and lie down.

5. Discuss with the group how that felt, ask them to describe the experience of life on the island in one word.

6. Now ask the group to do the exercise again but *after* Prospero has cast Caliban out and enslaved him and give the same provocations.

7. Discuss the differences between the two versions of the exercise and how it made people feel when putting themselves in Caliban's shoes.

8. Now revisit 'This Island's Mine' speech and take it for a walk individually in the space. Discuss how their understanding of the speech has changed.



ACTIVITY 3: Character Study – Caliban

Exercise 1: Image Carpet

Summary: An exercise which utilises images from past RSC productions of *The Tempest*.

Aims: To evaluate choices from past productions at the RSC to support skills in analysing Shakespeare's text and making choices around interpreting characters.

Length: ~ 30 minutes.

Space: Drama studio space or desk-based classroom.

Place the production images of Calibans [RESOURCE F] in various places on the floor. These can be displayed on a board or on desks as appropriate depending on the classroom.

1. Put the group in pairs and inform them that they are now a team of detectives.
2. Task the pairs to move around the room and use the evidence from each picture to work out what they think the creative team from that production thought of the character of Caliban.
3. For each production image, ask each pair to answer:
 - a. Is this Caliban human?
 - b. Is this Caliban a leader or a follower?
 - c. Is this Caliban comfortable in their surroundings?
 - d. How would you describe this Caliban in three words?
4. Once the detective pairs have been round each production photo, ask them to report back their findings to the rest of the group.
5. Discuss any differences in findings and why this might be.
6. You might also want to speak to the group about the fact that all of these Caliban's were created using the same text as inspiration.

Note: you might want to allocate certain parts of the room to certain pairs if there isn't time to go around every photo.

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR, AARON PARSONS:

Like *The Tempest*'s 'brave new world', I hope the experience will open up new perspectives and new possibility. Good theatre should prompt as many questions as it provides answers, so I hope it stimulates debate, sparks conversation and gives people permission to ask questions. Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest* at a time that foreshadows the empire and where racial identities were taking shape. Topics like enslavement and colonialism are still presented through a very particular prism, so I hope people will leave having opened their minds to the importance of considering broader perspectives and discussion at a time in history where change and uncertainty threaten to polarise opinion. I think a lot of people will be surprised by just how resonant the play's themes and subject matter is today, drawing parallels between the play and what's going on in our own world. If we can entertain as well as get people thinking and talking, then we'll consider it a job well done.

Exercise 2: Evidence in the Text

Summary: An exercise building on the word carpet to connect the images explored with text and language from the play.

Aims: To compare and contrast evidence in the text about Caliban to develop understanding of him as a character as well as his relationships with others in the play.

Length: ~ 60 minutes.

Space: Drama studio space or desk-based classroom.

1. Now we've had a look at some artistic interpretations of Caliban as a character, let's have a look at the evidence for these decisions.
2. Remove the production images, and place around the rooms quotes of what is said about Caliban [RESOURCE G].
3. In the same detective pairs, ask each group to go around the new word carpet and gather evidence on Caliban from these quotes. Ask the group to think about: who is saying this about Caliban, what their relationship to Caliban is, what their relationship to the island is, whether they are telling the truth, what they might have to gain by lying.
4. Ask the group to share back their discoveries and discuss any differences in opinion.
5. Now clear these quotes and replace them with a word carpet of things Caliban says about himself [RESOURCE H]. Ask the pairs of detectives to do the same exercise with Caliban's quotes about himself. Feed back, discuss the differences in language and why that might be.
6. After exploring things said about Caliban and things Caliban says about himself:
7. Have a discussion with the group about how we might relate this to ourselves. Sometimes things are said about us but that doesn't make it true. Talk about how it might affect us when people say things about us and why they might do this. Now relate this back to Caliban and why that might affect some of what he says and does.

8. In a rehearsal room, an actor might question what is said about their character, especially if it doesn't correlate with what their character says themselves and the facts we already know about them.

Note: You can always create new partnerships with each exercise if it feels needed.

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR, AARON PARSONS:

There's still an unconscious bias in this country that if you 'get' Shakespeare you're clever and if you don't, the subtext is that you're not. The only way to tackle that is by making shows well, making them entertaining and making them accessible. Retaining the original language and not patronising audiences by removing it because you assume they won't get it, is an important part of that. That and seeing the language brought to life through live performance. Shakespeare's plays were written to be seen in performance so when a production is done well, with actors who have a profound understanding of the play, that gets communicated both verbally and non-verbally in performance. We do also think about how visuals and audio can help make the story-telling clearer and how we can prepare audiences in advance of seeing the show. But we don't want that to be a militant process, we want it to happen organically. Theatres are called houses for a reason, and we're inviting audiences to step into our world, our home, and be held, be entertained and just soak up the action, atmosphere and experience.

Exercise 3: Consolidating Caliban

Summary: An exercise to consolidate understanding about the character of Caliban and potential interpretations relevant to our contemporary world.

Aims: To appraise understanding of Caliban by synthesising learning about Shakespeare's text with interpretive acting choices made in this production, and what choices students might make themselves relating to this play and its themes.

Length: ~ 45 minutes. Can be much longer (or extend over several lessons) with extension activities.

Space: Drama studio space or desk-based classroom.

Now share with the group the design [RESOURCE C] (and production images found throughout this pack) of this production, along with the quote from Shakeel on his version of the character [RESOURCE I].

Note: If your group have already seen the production, ask them to recall their thoughts on how the character of Caliban was portrayed and what decisions might have been made.

1. In your detective pairs, using all of the evidence that you have gathered, decide how *you* might want to portray the character of Caliban if you were directing/designing a production.
2. Ask your pairs to think about: what the character might wear, how they might behave, how they might interact with people and what their relationship to this island is.
3. Put all of this together in a presentation where you must include:

- a. A still image of how your Caliban might stand
- b. An example of how your Caliban might move
- c. How your Caliban speaks
- d. Explanations of what choices you have made and *why*

4. Ask each pair to share back.

Extension Exercise 1: Public and Private

1. Now start to think about Caliban in *Public* and *Private*.
2. How might your Caliban stand, move and speak when he is alone on the island with just himself for company?
3. How might your Caliban stand, move and speak when he is on the island with others? Does this vary depending on *who* Caliban is with?
4. Discuss the differences between Caliban in public and private and *why* this might be.

Extension Exercise 2: Writing Exercise

Imagine that you have just arrived on the island in the play and you meet Caliban. He shows you around the island like he did with Prospero and Miranda when they first arrived. Using your ideas on Caliban from the exercises above, write a letter to a friend or family member describing what Caliban is like as a person.



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AFTER SEEING THE SHOW



ACTIVITY 4: Sound

Making the Tempest Exercise

Summary: Use sound design to create a collaborative performance of *The Tempest* from the start of the play.

Aims: To interpret text through experimenting with sound, voice, body and ensemble to construct a performance which communicates the effect of the tempest which begins the action of the play.

Length: ~ 60 minutes.

Space: Drama studio space.

A tempest is a storm and this is how the play begins. It introduces us to Ariel, sets up the magic in the play, and shows what some of the characters go through before they reach the island.

Ask the group to create the tempest at the start of the play in phases.

Phase One

1. Ask students to close their eyes (if comfortable for them) and play the sound resource from this section of the website. [RESOURCE J]
2. After listening, ask the students to feed back on what came to their mind when they listened? This could be visual, feelings or anything else they might come up with.
3. Now explain to the group that this was the sound created by composer and sound designer Jack Drewry to tell the story of the tempest at the top of the play.

Phase Two

1. Ask the group to sit all together facing a space in the room which will be our stage.
2. Ask students to get up one by one, each creating a physical image/statue which will add together to create a whole group tableau of the tempest. *Note: Ask the group to think about the ship, the weather, the magic and the people on the ship.*
3. When getting up to join the tableau, each person should look at what the previous person's physicality has added to the image and think about how they can either enhance what someone else is doing or do something different to create variation.

4. Once everyone has got up and the whole tableau has been created, give some students the opportunity to step outside of the whole image of the tempest and take a look at it.

Phase Three

Once physical positions are established, give everyone five minutes to come up with three repeated movements to represent their position in the storm (ask everyone to think about what they are representing and how that thing or person might move). The three movements should be: Movement one as the beginning of storm, Movement two being the middle of the storm and the worst part of the Tempest, and Movement three being when the storm is dying down.

Note: Some people may want to work together on this, depending on what part of the image they have created.



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ALONSO, MIRANDA, GONZALO, FERDINAND AND PROSPERO © RSC**

Phase Four

1. Now hand out the cries that come from the people on the ship [RESOURCE K] to different members of the group, spreading them around the image as much as possible.
2. Ask the students to think about the voices coming from the ship, the situation they are in and how this might impact their volume, tone, pitch and repetition of the words they have been given.

Now give everyone a couple of minutes to go over their starting positions, three phases of movement and text before piecing the storm together.

Phase Five

Now that the storm has been created using the students' imaginations, replay the track that inspired their tempest and ask them to add their performances on top of it and see how it feels.

Extension: Ask the group if there are any changes they would like to make to their piece now that they have heard the sounds of the tempest again.

Note: If you don't have access to the electronic sound/speakers, then you can do the exercise the same but instead ask the students to create the noise of the tempest themselves. Please note that Jack's sound was designed to be a surround sound experience and so it may not have the full effect that it does in the show.

End this exercise with some questions for the group:

- Why do you think the director and sound designer have decided to use electronic surround sound for this production?
- How did the 'tempest' change when the music was added underneath it (to perform and as an observer)?
- How might *you* use sound to create the tempest if you were directing your own production of the show?

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR, AARON PARSONS:

Magic and the mysterious 'noises' of the island are recurring themes in *The Tempest* and we'll use music and sound to help us create an 'other-worldly' atmosphere. Sound will come from different directions, at unpredictable moments and using amplifiers, a magical soundscape will feel like it's wrapping around and holding the audience, echoing the omnipresence of the island's magic.



ACTIVITY 5: Story

The Plot in 14 Points Exercise

Summary: A rehearsal-based exercise exploring a summary of the plot developed by Aaron Parsons, Director of *First Encounters: The Tempest* and used with actors in rehearsals.

Aims: To understand the overall plot of *The Tempest*, organising its key events through active playfulness and interpretation of its characters.

Length: ~ 60 minutes.

Space: Drama studio space.

Phase One

1. Put the class into groups of four to six. Hand out all plot points [RESOURCE L] to each group and give them five minutes to put the plot points in order.

Note: Keep this exercise the same whether the group has seen the production or not.

2. Ask each group to feed back on the order they have decided on and discuss any differences in opinions.

If the group watched the play: Discuss these moments as you remember them (or not) in the production.

Phase Two

1. Once an order of plot points has been established, give each group an equal portion of the plot points to work on (depending on how many groups you have).
2. Now ask each group to work together to create one still image for each plot point. Share these back in order.
3. Ask each group to extend their one still image, to two.

Note: You may not need to do this last part if the group are working confidently.

4. Ask the groups to adapt their images for each plot point into moving scenes. They should focus on their surroundings (the island) and notice how this might affect their creation. They should think about their senses, what they can see, hear, smell and touch. Talk to the group about the importance of all of the characters being in the same world as each other (even though they may all experience this world differently.)

Extension: Thinking of this production and its use of sound, how can you use sound to enhance your plot points? Think about sound as not just speech and something that surrounds the characters. If the students saw the production, ask them to think about the sounds used in that play and how that might help us to create the environment these plot points take place in.

RESOURCES

Resource List

Resource A: [\[Character Information\]](#)

Resource B: [\[Caliban Design Images\]](#)

Resource C: [\[Aldo Vazquez Set Design\]](#)

Resource D: [\[Caliban 'Be Not Afeard' Speech\]](#)

Resource E: [\[Caliban 'This Island's Mine' Speech\]](#)

Resource F: [\[Previous Production Images of Caliban\]](#)

Resource G: [\[What is said about Caliban\]](#)

Resource H: [\[What Caliban says about himself\]](#)

Resource I: [\[Quote from Shakeel Hakim\]](#)

Resource J: [\[Jack Drewry's Tempest Sound Design\]](#)

Resource K: [\[Quotes from the storm\]](#)

Resource L: [\[Director Aaron Parson's Plot Points\]](#)

PROSPERO

He/Him

'Why, that's my spirit!' - Act 1, Scene 2

- While Prospero was Duke of Milan, he became interested in magic.
- Prospero was the Duke of Milan until his sister Antonio betrayed him, supported by Alonso.
- He was cast out to sea in a small boat with his young daughter Miranda.
- Prospero and Miranda landed on an island where the only other inhabitants are spirits (including Ariel) and someone called Caliban.
- He uses magic on the island.
- He has lived on the island for 12 years with his daughter Miranda, a spirit called Ariel and Caliban.
- Prospero has enslaved Ariel and Caliban.

Relationship to the Island: Arrived twelve years ago on a small boat with his daughter Miranda. Rules the island.



MIRANDA

She/Her

'Pray you, work not so hard' - Act 3, Scene 1

- Miranda is Prospero's daughter and his only child.
- We are not told anything about her mother.
- She was cast out to sea with her father when she was three years old.
- Miranda and Ferdinand are drawn to each other as soon as they meet.
- Miranda has grown up on the island.
- She can't remember ever seeing any other men besides her father and Caliban, until the shipwreck.

Relationship to the Island: Arrived 12 years ago on a small boat with Prospero. Her father rules the island.



ARIEL They/Them

'My liberty' - Act 1, Scene 2

- Ariel works with the other spirits on the island. They are all controlled by Prospero.
- Ariel is magic.
- Ariel has the power to create storms.
- Ariel has been on this island for longer than any of the other characters in the play.
- Prospero found them imprisoned in a tree where they had been left by a witch called Sycorax, who died before Prospero arrived.
- In return for being freed from the tree, Ariel now serves Prospero and carries out his magical orders.
- Prospero promises Ariel that if they do everything they are asked to, they will be set free.
- Ariel wants their freedom.
- Ariel is enslaved by Prospero.
- Ariel is visible to anyone Ariel allows to see them, characters see Ariel in different forms.

Relationship to the island: Ariel was trapped in a tree on the island for 12 years. They have been on the island for longer than any other character.



CALIBAN

He/Him

'Do not torment me: O!' - Act 2, Scene 2

- Caliban is human.
- Sycorax, a witch, was abandoned on the island and gave birth to a son, Caliban.
- Caliban lived on this island for his whole life with only the spirits for company until Prospero and Miranda arrive.
- He helped Prospero and Miranda to survive on the island, showed them around and cared for them.
- Caliban is enslaved by Prospero.
- Caliban wants revenge on Prospero but is afraid of his magical powers.

Relationship to island: Caliban's mother Sycorax came to this island when pregnant with him and he has lived here for his whole life. His parents are not native to this island.



FERDINAND

He/Him

'Admired Miranda, indeed the top of admiration' - Act 3, Scene 1

- Ferdinand is the only son of Alonso, King of Naples.
- When the ship seems to be breaking up in the tempest, he swims ashore.
- He believes his mother drowned in the tempest.
- He is loyal to his mother.
- Miranda and Ferdinand are drawn to each other as soon as they meet.
- Prospero uses his magical powers to enslave Ferdinand and forces him to carry logs. Ferdinand puts up with this so long as he can see Miranda.
- Eventually, Prospero rewards Ferdinand's loyalty by releasing him and agrees that Ferdinand and Miranda can marry.

Relationship to the island: Ferdinand washes up alone on the island at the start of the play after the tempest.



TRINCULO

She/Her

'Why what did I? I did nothing' - Act 3, Scene 2

- Trinculo is a jester and serves Alonso, King of Naples.
- She swam ashore and was washed up alone on the island after the shipwreck. Looking for shelter, she ends up crawling underneath Caliban's cloak with him.
- Her friend Stephano then discovers them and they meet Caliban.
- Stephano is persuaded to kill Prospero, by Caliban, and Trinculo reluctantly follows along with their plot.
- She feels left out when Caliban and Stephano join together.

Relationship to the island: Trinculo washes up alone on the island at the start of the play after the tempest.



STEPHANO

He/Him

'He shall taste of my bottle' - Act 2, Scene 2

- Stephano is butler to Alonso, Queen of Naples.
- He washes up on the island alone clinging to a barrel of wine. He wanders around drunk until he meets up with his friend Trinculo, who is hiding under a cloak with Caliban.
- Stephano shares his wine with Trinculo and Caliban.
- Stephano agrees to kill Prospero, rule the island and become Caliban's new master.
- He enjoys the attention Caliban gives him.

Relationship to the island: Stephano washes up alone on the island at the start of the play after the tempest.



ALONSO

She/Her

'Would I had never Married my daughter there: for, coming thence, My son is lost and — in my rate — she too.' - Act 2, Scene 1

- Alonso is the King of Naples.
- As King of Naples, she has the highest status of the nobles.
- Twelve years ago she helped Antonio to get rid of Prospero and take her brother's place as Duke of Milan.
- She has two children, a daughter called Claribel and a son, Ferdinand.
- Her fleet of ships is returning to Naples from Tunis, where her daughter has married the King of Tunis but they are caught in a huge storm.
- Travelling with her is her son Ferdinand, her brother Sebastian and other nobles.
- Alonso arrives on the island with her brother Sebastian, Antonio and Gonzalo.
- They are all washed up on the island after the storm, although Alonso thinks Ferdinand has drowned.

Relationship to the island: Alonso washes up on the island with her brother Sebastian, Antonio and Gonzalo at the start of the play after the tempest.



ANTONIO

She/Her

'My brother's servants Were then my fellows: now they are my men.' - Act 2, Scene 1

- Antonio is Prospero's younger sister.
- Prospero trusted her to help rule the Dukedom of Milan but Antonio used this trust against her brother and secretly plotted with Alonso to overthrow Prospero and have him and Miranda removed from the city.
- Antonio owes a debt to Alonso for her help and wants Sebastian to become King of Naples instead so that she can be released from that debt.

Relationship to the island: Antonio washes up on the island with Alonso, Sebastian and Gonzalo at the start of the play after the tempest.



GONZALO

He/Him

'The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.' - Act 2, Scene 1

- Gonzalo is chief advisor to Alonso, King of Naples.
- He made sure that supplies, clothing and books were put aboard the boat when Prospero and Miranda were cast out to sea twelve years ago.
- He tries to keep Alonso positive as they search the island for Ferdinand
- He is aware that Sebastian and Antonio make fun of him.

Relationship to the island: Gonzalo washes up on the island with Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio at the start of the play after the tempest.



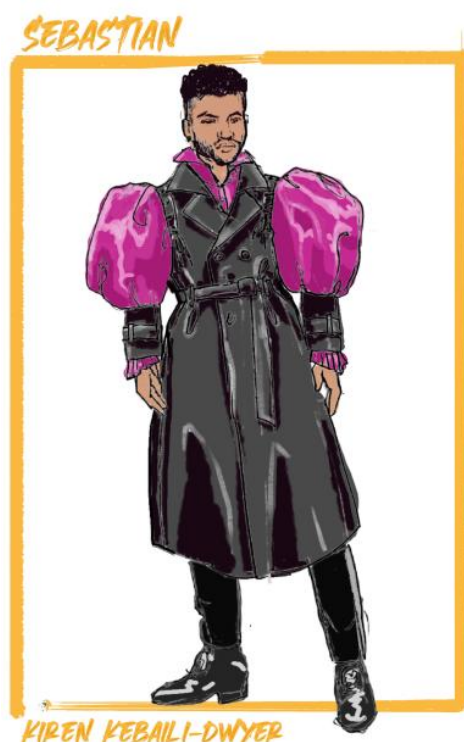
SEBASTIAN

He/Him

'I have no hope that he's undrowned.' - Act 2, Scene 1

- Sebastian is Alonso (King of Naples) brother.
- Sebastian has an alliance with Antonio (Prospero's sister).
- With Antonio's encouragement, they plot to kill King Alonso and Gonzalo.

Relationship to the island: Sebastian washes up on the island with Alonso, Gonzalo and Antonio at the start of the play after the tempest.



Notes on this resource:

This character information is relative to this specific production (First Encounters: *The Tempest* 2025). The images are the design sketches, generously shared by Aldo Vazquez, the show's set and costume designer.

The genders of some of the characters have changed from the original play due to casting and creative choices. Although the characters' pronouns have changed, titles such as 'Duke', 'Sir' and 'King' have been kept the same, regardless of gender.

In this production, some of the actors are playing two roles:

The roles of Caliban and Gonzalo are played by the same actor.

The roles of Trinculo and Alonso are played by the same actor.

The roles of Stephano and Sebastian are played by the same actor.

Resource B: [Caliban Design Images]

CALIBAN BOUND



CALIBAN



CALIBAN



Resource C: **[Aldo Vazquez Set Design]**

Inspiration Images



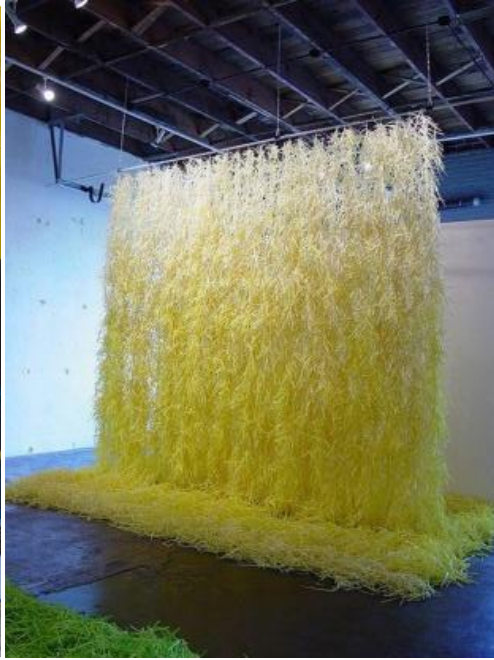
The World of the Island





Tree Abstraction





Tiny Island



Resource D: [Caliban 'Be Not Afeard' Speech]

Context: In this speech, Caliban is speaking to Trinculo and Stephano who are newly arrived on the island, and have been scared by the sounds they can hear around them.

Act 3, Scene 2

Caliban

Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not:
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices,
That if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again, and then in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open and show riches
Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked
I cried to dream again.

Shorter Edit

Act 3, Scene 2

Caliban

Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not:
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices,
That if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again.

Glossary

Afeard - afraid

Isle - Island

Twangling - to make a twanging sound

Methought - I thought

Resource E: [Caliban 'This Island's Mine' Speech]

Context: This speech takes place early on in the play in the first scene we see Caliban on stage with Prospero and Miranda. Caliban is speaking to Prospero about how they met and how the ownership of the island and treatment of him has changed.

Act 1, Scene 2

Caliban

This island's mine by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first,
Thou strok'st me and made much of me: wouldst give me
Water with berries in't, and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night: and then I loved thee
And showed thee all the qualities o'th'isle,
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile.
Cursed be I that did so! All the charms
Of Sycorax — toads, beetles, bats — light on you!
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king: and here you sty me
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
The rest o'th'island.

Shorter Edit

Act 1, Scene 2

Caliban

This island's mine by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first,
Thou strok'st me and made much of me: wouldst give me
Water with berries in't, and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night: and then I loved thee
And showed thee all the qualities o'th'isle,
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile.
Cursed be I that did so! All the charms
Of Sycorax — toads, beetles, bats — light on you!

Resource F: **[Previous Production Images of Caliban]**



PHOTO BY ELLIE KURTZ © RSC: JOHN KANI AS CALIBAN, THE TEMPEST 2009



PHOTO BY MANUEL HARLAN © RSC : JOHN LIGHT AS CALIBAN, THE TEMPEST 2006



PHOTO BY REG WILSON © RSC: DAVID TROUGHTON AS CALIBAN, THE TEMPEST 1993



PHOTO BY TOPHER MCGRILLIS © RSC: TRINCULO, CALIBAN AND STEPHANO, THE TEMPEST 2016



PHOTO BY SIMON ANNAND © RSC: AMER HLEHEL AS CALIBAN, THE TEMPEST 2012

Prospero

We'll visit Caliban, my slave, who never yields us kind answer.

Prospero

Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself

Prospero

Filth as thou art

Prospero

Thou didst seek to violate the honour of my child

Miranda

...when thou didst not, savage,
Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like
a thing most brutish

Prospero

Hag-seed, hence!

Trinculo

What have we here? A man or a fish? Dead or alive? A fish, he smells like a fish. A strange fish!

Trinculo

Were I in England now ... there would this monster make a man: any strange beast there makes a man.

Trinculo

I shall laugh myself to death at this puppy-headed monster. A most scurvy monster!

Trinculo

an abominable monster!

Stephano

O brave monster

Stephano

Servant-monster

Stephano

Moon-calf, speak once in thy life, if thou beest a good moon-calf.

Trinculo

Why, thou deboshed fish thou, was there ever man a coward that hath drunk so much sack as I today? Wilt thou tell a monstrous lie, being but half a fish and half a monster?

Stephano

The poor monster's my subject and he shall not suffer indignity.

Prospero

I had forgot that foul conspiracy aside of the beast Caliban and his confederates against my life.

Prospero

A devil, a born devil, on whose nature nurture can never stick: on whom my pains, humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost. I will plague them all, even to roaring.

I must eat my dinner.

This island's mine by Sycorax my mother, Which
thou tak'st from me.

When thou cam'st first, Thou strok'st me and
made much of me: wouldst give me Water with
berries in't, and teach me how To name the bigger
light, and how the less, That burn by day and
night: and then I loved thee And showed thee all
the qualities o'th'isle, The fresh springs, brine-
pits, barren place and fertile.

For I am all the subjects that you have, Which first
was mine own king: and here you sty me In this
hard rock, whiles you do keep from me The rest
o'th'island.

O ho, O ho! Would't had been done! Thou didst
prevent me: I had peopled else This isle with
Caliban's.

You taught me language, and my profit on't Is, I
know how to curse

For every trifle are they set upon me, Sometime
like apes, that mow and chatter at me, And after
bite me: then like hedgehogs, which Lie tumbling
in my barefoot way and mount Their pricks at my
footfall: sometime am I All wound with adders,
who with cloven tongues Do hiss me into
madness.

Here comes a spirit of his, and to torment me For
bringing wood in slowly.

The spirit torments me: O!

I'll show thee every fertile inch o'th'island: and I
will kiss thy foot. I prithee, be my god. I'll kiss thy
foot: I'll swear myself thy subject.

I'll show thee the best springs: I'll pluck thee
berries: I'll fish for thee and get thee wood enough

Lo, how she mocks me! I do not lie.

I say by sorcery he got this isle: From me he got it.

First to possess his books; for without them He's
but a sot, as I am, nor hath not One spirit to
command: they all do hate him As rootedly as I.

Thou mak'st me merry: I am full of pleasure.

I shall be pinched to death.

Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments Will
hum about mine ears; and sometime voices, That
if I then had waked after long sleep, Will make me
sleep again, and then in dreaming, The clouds
methought would open and show riches Ready to
drop upon me, that when I waked I cried to dream
again.

Resource 1: **[Quote from Shakeel Hakim]**

Shakeel plays Caliban in this production of First Encounters: The Tempest. Here is what he had to say about his character:

To me, Caliban is someone who cares deeply about not only the people around him, but the place in which he lives. He feels really deeply and is very emotionally connected to those around him and is always seeking to find more, discover more and really cares about the simple things in life.

If I could describe Caliban in three words, I would say he is:
Intellectual, Emotional and Caring.

Resource J: **[Jack Drewry's Tempest Sound Design]**

Available at:

<https://youtube.com/shorts/qdTgeJQi92o?feature=share>

Down with the topmast!

To prayers, to prayers!

All lost!

Mercy on us!

Let's all sink wi' the' king.

Hell is empty, and all the devils are here.

We split!

1

Prospero used to be Duke of Milan, but was more interested in studying magic. He gave a lot of responsibility to his sister Antonio, until finally she overthrew him with the help of Alonso, King of Naples.

2

Prospero escaped from Milan with the help of a trusty noble lord, Gonzalo, and was cast out to sea in a boat with his three-year-old daughter Miranda. They landed on a magical island which they claimed as their home.

3

Alonso is on a ship sailing near to the island. She is with her son Ferdinand, her brother Sebastian and Prospero's sister Antonio. Prospero knows this and uses Ariel, a spirit he has enslaved, to use magic to create a sea storm.

4

Miranda watches the storm and the ship from the shore of the island and asks Prospero to calm the storm down. Prospero decides to tell Miranda how they came to be on the island.

5

Prospero has asked Ariel to make sure all the people on the ship get washed up on the island, safely. They also make sure Ferdinand is separated from his mother Alonso.

6

Miranda and Ferdinand see each other and instantly are attracted to each other. Prospero pretends not to agree to them getting married straight away and tests Ferdinand's love, by enslaving him, and making him carry out heavy labour.

7

Alonso, her brother Sebastian, Antonio and Gonzalo, are wandering the island lost. Alonso fears her son Ferdinand is dead. The music of the island puts Alonso, and Gonzalo to sleep. Whilst sleeping Antonio suggests Sebastian kills Alonso, and takes her place as King. As they are about to do so, Ariel wakes them up, and they continue wandering the island.

8

Two of Alonso's court, Stephano and Trinculo, also get shipwrecked on the island. They meet Caliban, a resident from the island who Prospero has enslaved. Caliban hopes Stephano and Trinculo will help him kill Prospero.

9

A magical banquet appears to Alonso, Antonio, Sebastian and Gonzalo, before they can eat Ariel appears to them as a harpy, and tells them they are being punished for how they treated Prospero.

10

Ariel finds Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo on the island. Other spirits transform into dogs chasing them for trying to harm Prospero.

11

Alonso in deep grief, is lead, by Ariel, to Prospero's cell. Releasing them all from a spell Prospero reveals himself. Antonio becomes silent, but Alonso apologises to Prospero and makes him Duke of Milan again.

12

Prospero then reveals to Alonso that Ferdinand is still alive and is engaged to Miranda. Prospero also reveals that the ship is safe and ready to sail back to Naples. They go into his cell to spend the evening and catch up.

13

Prospero frees Ariel for all the work they have done.

14

Trinculo, Stephano, and Caliban, finally have the dogs stop chasing them.

Ariel reveals themselves, causing Trinculo and Stephano to run in the direction the nobles did. Caliban thinks he is going to be punished, but Ariel shows him they are free by beginning to remove their bindings. Caliban then does the same.