This year the acting troupe has a new addition, Mary Sweetgrace’s sister, Samantha. Now that Johnny Dropbottom is busy acting, Sam has to do all the crummy jobs he used to do, like sweeping the stage and taking care of costumes. While getting ready for the show, Samantha has an accident and the whole world is suddenly turned upside down. William Shakespeare himself appears out of nowhere to work on his play, The Tempest, and Mary thinks her name is Miranda!

While pretending to be shipwrecked on an island, Sam gets swept up in the action, stumbling into a monster named Caliban, a wizard named Prospero, and invisible spirits who make mischief. The only way they are going to make their way through this crazy storm is by learning what it takes to tell a story and find their way to the conclusion!
Some Background on the Tempest

The Tempest begins with a ship at sea in a storm. Prospero’s Brother is on that ship, and they are enemies because Prospero used to be Duke of Milan and his brother stole that from him, and was also going to take his life. He escaped to this island with his daughter, Miranda. On the island, Prospero used his books and unleashed the spirits that lived there. When his brother’s ship comes close to the island, he sends the spirits out to make a storm.

Two of the people on the boat that wash up to shore are Trinculo and Stefano who are servants of Prospero’s brother. They run into Caliban, a fish-like creature that Prospero has made into his servant. Because none of them want to be servants anymore, they go on a quest to get Prospero’s books, but Prospero is too clever for them. By the end of the play, however, Prospero learns that he should be merciful and to set all the spirits and creatures free.
Going to see a play is a very different experience from going to the movies. During live theater, the audience is as important a part of the experience as the actors. Here are some tips for young audience members that will help make the experience great.

**LIVE RESPONSE IS GREAT!** A live performance is like a conversation between the actors and the audience. The more the audience responds (appropriately), the more the actors get excited about telling the story.

**THE ACTORS CAN SEE AND HEAR YOU.** If an audience member is not paying attention and chatting with a friend instead, the actors know it. Theater actors have only one chance with each audience to communicate clearly, so it is their job to ‘check in’ with the audience and make sure they’re understanding. If you’re not paying attention, the actors will know it.

**TEACHERS SHOULD LEAD THE WAY.** Teachers, we are performing for you as well as the students. Sitting among students and experiencing the play with them can help to enhance their experiences as well as your own. Remember, besides learning about Shakespeare, we are trying to educate students, on how to see and enjoy live theater. Please, lead the way, and let us know if you enjoyed the performance, too!
In Shakespeare’s plays, students will hear some unfamiliar words. If you have time, review some of these terms with your students before the play. We will also take time during the performance to define some of these words and phrases.

**Noggin** — a person’s head

**Sprite** — an elf, or fairy

**Boatswain** — a ship’s officer

**Fen** — a march or swampy area

**Whelp** — a puppy, or a young kid

**Gaberdine** — a smooth, long cloth

**Mooncalf** — a foolish person

**Mercy** — forgiveness given to someone with less power than you
Shakespeare fun facts!

Did you know...

That *The Tempest* was the last play Shakespeare ever wrote?

The plot was an original idea of his? Almost all the other plays were inspired by myths or other stories, but *The Tempest* is all Shakespeare.

Shakespeare invented the phrases: “into thin air” and “in a pickle”?
They appear for the first time in this play.

Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564 in Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire, about 100 miles northwest of London. April 23, 2014 marked the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare’s birth! He died on April 23, 1616.
CLASSROOM ACTIVITY IDEA

UNDERSTANDING A CHARACTER

OUR COSTUME DESIGNER, CLAUDIA BODDY, DESCRIBES HER THOUGHT PROCESS AS SHE CREATED THE COSTUME AND MAKE-UP FOR CALIBAN:

“WE WERE ACTUALLY INSPIRED BY THE LOOK OF THE CREATURE IN THE CURRENT MOVIE THE SHAPE OF WATER AND I’M EXCITED TO WORK ON THIS BECAUSE I’LL GET TO EMPLOY A NEW TECHNIQUE – WORKING WITH SILICONE TO REPRESENT THE SCALES. THE COSTUME ITSELF HAS TO BE UNDERDRESSED BENEATH THE JOHNNY DROPBOTTOM COSTUME SO THAT AUSTEN CAN TRANSFER BETWEEN CHARACTERS SMOOTHLY AND QUICKLY.”

Actors have to do a lot of work to understand the characters that they play. Often they ask themselves questions like: what is this character’s family like? what is their favorite food? who or what do they love? who or what makes them angry? what does their bedroom/home look like?

Imagine you are playing Caliban, the island “monster”, or Prospero, “the wizard”, or maybe one of the ariels. Using any art materials you can get your hands on (magazines, markers, or maybe even a computer!) ask yourselves these questions and then design that character’s home. What would the walls look like? What kind of bed? What food would be in the kitchen?

Surprise yourself by how much you come to learn about your character!

If you do participate in the classroom activity, make sure to share with us on Facebook or send us some mail! We would love to see what your classroom’s have created.

Montana Shakespeare in the Parks
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