Character Summary
Ariel

Favourite quotes:

I come to answer thy best pleasure, be it to fly, to swim, to dive into the fire, to ride on the curled cloud. To thy strong bidding, task Ariel and all his quality.

(I've come to do whatever you ask, whether it is to fly, swim, dive into a fire, or to ride on the cloud. For whatever you need, ask Ariel and all his many skills to do it!)

Ariel is Prospero's servant. Here, Ariel is telling Prospero that he is loyal, and will do anything Prospero asks him to do.

Is there more toil? Since thou dost five me pains, Let me remember thee what thou hast promised, Which is not yet performed me.

(Is there more work for me to do? Since you are giving me new chores, let me remind you of what you have promise me and you have not yet done.)

A witch, called Sycorax, imprisoned Ariel in a pine tree. When Prospero first arrived on the island, he saved Ariel from the tree. Ariel promised to work for Prospero for a year to repay him. The year is finished, but Prospero has still not set Ariel free. Ariel is reminding Prospero that he must keep his promise.

Not a hair perished.

(Not even one hair was hurt.)

Prospero used to be the Duke of Milan. His brother, Antonio, betrayed him so that he could take the Dukedom! He had the help of the King of Milan. Antonio then sent Prospero and his daughter, Miranda, out to sea. They eventually landed on an enchanted island, and have lived there ever since. Many years later, Antonio and the King of Milan (along with other characters) are sailing in a big ship. Prospero asks Ariel to conjure a storm, wreck the ship, and to bring Prospero's enemies to his island. Prospero asks Ariel if he has created the storm, and if he managed to save the right people from the ship. Ariel says that he has wrecked the ship, and that the men Prospero wanted to save are unharmed.

© 2013 Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

Registered Charity Number 209302

You are three men of sin.
(You three men are sinners.)

Prospero gathers the men who betrayed him. They are his brother (Antonio), the King of Naples (Alonso) and Alonso's brother (Sebastian). He gives them a great feast, before asking Ariel to appear to them in the form of a monster! Ariel calls them 'three men of sin' and says they are being punished for what they have done.

Appearance
Ariel is an 'airy spirit.' He can fly, he can become invisible, and he can shapeshift. He appears as himself, as a harpy (a type of monster), as a sea creature, and even as a goddess!

What am I like?
I am loyal and obedient to Prospero and I work very hard for him.

I am very trusting, I really believe that Prospero will keep his promise to set me free one day, but I am also feisty and strong. I argue with Prospero. I keep reminding him of all the work I have done for him, and that I long for freedom.

I have very strong supernatural powers. I can conjure a storm, turn invisible, and fly around this world in a heartbeat.

I am kind. I try to encourage Prospero to be merciful to those that have hurt him.

What happens to me in the play?
I live on an enchanted island. I am Prospero's slave. He came to this island some years ago and saved me from being trapped in a tree, so I work tirelessly for him in return. He has promised to set me free one day, but I do everything he says in the meantime. Prospero asked me to create a huge storm, and to shipwreck a boat that his brother, Antonio, was sailing in. He asked me to bring Antonio, King Alonso, Sebastian (the King's brother), and Ferdinand (the King's son) onto the island so that he could punish them for what they did. He asks me to help him to trick the men. I bring Ferdinand to meet Miranda and help them to fall in love. I bring Antonio, Alonso and Sebastian to a banquet and scare them by turning into a monster and telling them that they should be sorry for what they have done! In the end, I help Prospero to see that he should forgive his enemies. Prospero finally sets me free.

© 2013 Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.
Registered Charity Number 209302

The Tempest

English

The problem or dilemma I have to face

The one thing I want most is to be free.
Prospero has promised this will happen, one day.
Until then I will continue to work hard and remind Prospero of what he has promised me.

I am asked to do lots of strange things, like turn into a monster and create a wild storm. I have strong magical powers, so I can do almost anything, and I actually quite enjoy playing these tricks!

How do I change over time?

At the start of the play, I am eager and obedient. I will do anything to please Prospero. Every time I ask him for my freedom he is angry with me, but I still do everything he asks of me. Even though I am wrapped up in wanting my freedom, I do have some fun! I enjoy playing tricks on Prospero's enemies.
By the end of the play, I am feeling more confident. I offer Prospero advice, and tell him that I think he should forgive those that have hurt him. Prospero agrees, and he finally sets me free.

What I am interested in

I am interested in freedom. I can't wait to live a life where I don't work for Prospero, and can spend my time how I please. I ask Prospero again and again about when he will set me free, and I am sure that one day it will happen. I wonder what I'll do when it finally does!

What I am afraid of

I am afraid of Prospero. I am grateful to him for saving me, but I am also scared of him. I know that he likes to get revenge against those who wrong him. I don't want to upset him, in case he takes revenge against me and never lets me be free.

Who do I get on with?

I spend much of my time with Prospero. He is my master, but sometimes we talk as if we are friends. I control other spirits. They do as I say, and help me to create mischief on the island.

Who do I clash with?

I clash with Prospero. We argue about when he will set me free.
Lots of characters in the play would not like me if they knew about the tricks I have played, but they don't see me because I am so cunning, so fast, and often totally invisible!

Shakespeare birthplace trust

SHAKESPEARE WEEK
Join our national celebration

© 2013 Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

Registered Charity Number 209302

The Tempest

English

What am I most proud of?

I am proud of my skills and talents. I am proud that I conjured such a great and powerful storm, and I am proud that I can change my shape and my voice to trick people. I am proud of myself for always working hard for Prospero, and for managing to inspire him to be a more forgiving person.

How have I been portrayed?



© Waldo Lanchester



Image Courtesy of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust



© Shakespeare Birthplace Trust



© Jane Ray



Image Courtesy of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust



Shakespeare birthplace trust

SHAKESPEARE WEEK
Join our national celebration

© 2013 Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

Registered Charity Number 209302