



I'M NOT THE  
MONSTER HERE,  
YOU ARE!

## POWER

### INTRODUCTION

From school bullies, to characters in our favorite movies, books, and plays, some people choose to use the power they have over others in inappropriately hurtful ways. In **SHREK THE MUSICAL**, Farquaad is the culprit. He uses his princely power to enforce conformity on the Kingdom of Duloc. He objects to the fact that the fairy tale characters are a bit odd and don't coincide with his idea of what his subjects should be. He abuses his power by attempting to eliminate any form of individuality. Sadly, the people of Duloc allow him to do it.

#### I'M A KING! I'M A BIG MAN! A BIG TALL MAN WITH A KINGDOM!

Traditionally, status on stage is shown by the use of levels. Height usually indicates power, or importance; lack of height suggesting servitude or submissiveness. **SHREK THE MUSICAL** subverts this convention by casting its initially most powerful character, Lord Farquaad, as a dwarf. This provides an interesting challenge for the Director, who has to attempt to suggest Farquaad's importance in other ways – usually by him appearing to be cross most of the time!

Ask your students to create a series of still images, featuring characters from **SHREK THE MUSICAL**, that clearly show their respective status in different situations. In a still image, this is a challenge, as all that students will have to help them will be their skillful use of body language and facial expressions. How will the audience know which of them is Lord Farquaad? Who is more important, Shrek or Donkey? Where does Fiona feature in the pecking order – she is a Princess, after all.

Once students have mastered this challenge, ask them to include a thought track when you point to their character, remembering that this technique is used to tell the audience what the character is thinking: something extra that the image on its own doesn't show us.

Finally, ask students to develop their favourite still image into a role play in which status roles are reversed. This could be their own recreation of the final scene of **SHREK THE MUSICAL** where Farquaad gets his comeuppance, or their own made-up scene in which the characters are placed in a completely new situation where their status could be challenged, for instance Farquaad speeding and being caught by Shrek the traffic warden, or Donkey being the teacher in a class that includes Fiona and Shrek!

#### HE'S A FREAK, JUST LIKE ALL OF US

Ask your students to create a mock trial, in which Lord Farquaad is charged with abuse of his powers in his actions against the Fairy Tale Creatures (his subjects). Get them to research the roles that they would expect to see in a courtroom and then to consider both the defence and the prosecution cases. They could use Farquaad's song, "The Ballad of Farquaad" as part of either the defence or the prosecution case, but how? Allow the students to play the part of lawyers, cross-examining the defendant and the witnesses. Investigate the possible twists and turns before you try to mount the court case, so that students understand all of the possible outcomes. Once you've been to see **SHREK THE MUSICAL** with your class, they can cite evidence from the show to help in their submissions. At the end of the mock trial, ask students to play the part of the jurors and vote on whether Farquaad is innocent or guilty of his crimes. For a bit of fun, ask students to consider what they think would be an appropriate sentence, if, of course, he is found guilty!

### RESOURCES

REPEATED ON PAGE 21

#### FARQUAAD

Yes, I can see my future  
And so it shall be done!  
It's total domination  
with some torture just for fun!

'Cause I will have my wedding  
And I will have a queen!  
Once I get that crown on  
You will get the guillotine!

And I'll punish you, daddy  
'cause I'm all grown up  
And bigger than you'll ever know!  
You're gonna pay, Daddy!

from "The Ballad of Farquaad"  
Music by Jeanine Tesori  
Lyrics by David Lindsay-Abaire