

This play was written by Pat Story from an idea supplied by her students at Coleridge Community College, Cambridge.

The linguistic level is that of the end of Stage 12 with the addition of **volō**, **possum** and such expressions as **necesse est** + infinitive.

The Ghosts

Scenes 1 and 2 take place in a villa outside Pompeii at the time of the earthquake in AD 62. The family who live in the villa offer a sacrifice to the household gods, but the three daughters of the family are killed shortly afterwards by a falling wall. A slave-girl, Ampelisca, survives to tell the parents of the tragedy.

Scenes 3 and 4 are set in the same villa seventeen years later on the eve of the eruption in AD 79. A new family with two young children now live in the villa, but have taken over Ampelisca as their slave. One night the ghosts of the three sisters appear to the children, recounting how they died in the earthquake and warning them of the impending eruption. The children tell their parents and Ampelisca about the ghosts. The parents refuse to believe them, but Ampelisca tearfully confirms the truth of the ghosts' story. The parents are now convinced that their warning has been sent from the gods and must be heeded. The family thus escapes from the eruption.

Note: The children in the play may be of either sex depending on the composition of the class. This would necessitate some minor changes in the text.

umbrae

Before the earthquake in AD 62: a villa outside Pompeii

Scene 1: in ātriō

Characters: mother, father, their three young daughters, Ampelisca (a slave-girl).

filia 1: mōns Vesuvius est īrātus. ego sonōs audīvī.
filia 2: ego tremōrēs sēnsī.
filia 3: nōlite timēre, sorōrēs. larēs nostrī semper nōs servant.
pater: (*Enters with mother and slave, carrying offerings*)
tacēte omnēs. nōs laribus nostrīs vīnum et cibum offerimus. larēs, hoc dōnum
vōbīs offerō. familiam nostram servāte.
māter: larēs, hoc dōnum vōbīs offerō. familiam nostram servāte.
filia 1: euge! familia nostra nunc tūta est. laeta sum.
filia 2: māter, nōs ad urbem Pompēiōs īre volumus. placetne tibi?
māter: minime. sollicita sum quod tremōrēs sēnsī.
filia 3: sed laribus nostrīs crēdimus. nōlī timēre.
māter: mihi nōn placet. valdē timeō.
pater: ego nōn timeō. larēs familiam nostram semper servāvērunt. īte, puellae. sed
dūcite Ampeliscam vōbīscum.
māter: valēte, filiae. vōs cūrāte. ego dē vōbīs sollicita sum.

Scene 2: in ātriō

Characters: mother, father, Ampelisca.

māter: ēheu! puellae nōn revēnērunt. eās frūstrā exspectāmus.
pater: nōlī timēre. ancillam fidēlem cum eīs mīsī. illa eās cūrāre potest. ecce! ancilla
advenit.
māter: quid accidit?
pater: ubi sunt puellae? dīc mihi!
Ampelisca: domine, domina, mortuae sunt!
pater: quid dicis? mortuae?
Ampelisca: vērūm est. nōs ad urbem Pompēiōs ībāmus. trēmōrēs ingentēs sēnsimus.
subitō mūrū in puellās dēcidit. statim periērunt. ego eās servāre nōn
poteram.
māter: dūc mē ad eās. fortasse mortuae nōn sunt! fortasse iam respīrant.
pater: manē! ego tēcum veniō.
Ampelisca: ēheu! puellae sine dubiō mortuae sunt. larēs familiam nostram nōn
servāvērunt. (*They go out.*)

Seventeen years later, before the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79: the same villa

Scene 3: in atrīō

Characters: members of a new family: mother, father, two young children, Ampelisca.

filius/filia 1: Ampelisca, quamdiu in hāc villā habitās?
Ampelisca: (*Counts on her fingers*) decem ... vīgintī ... quīnque. vīgintī quīnque annōs!
filius/filia 2: curāvistīne aliōs līberōs in hāc villā?
Ampelisca: (*Sadly*) ita vērō. (*Hurriedly*) nunc sērō est. ad cubiculum īte.
f/f1: illī līberī, erantne similēs nōbīs? erantne pulchrī?
f/f2: bonī?
f/f1: pessimī?
f/f2: stultī?
Ampelisca: satis! satis! pater et māter veniunt.
(*Father and mother enter.*)
māter: sērō est, līberī. ad cubiculum īte.
f/f2: mihi nōn placet.
f/f1: ego dormīre nōlō.
f/f2: in ātriō manēre volō.

pater: tacēte! nunc īte.
māter: valēte, līberī. bene dormīte.
pater: valēte.
f/f1 and 2: valēte pater; valēte māter.

Scene 4: in cubiculō

Characters: those in Scene 3, the three ghosts of the dead sisters.

(The children are asleep. Three ghosts appear and stand over the two sleeping children.)

umbra 1: līberī, līberī, vōs excitāte.

umbra 2: līberī, līberī, nōs audīte.

umbra 3: līberī, līberī, vōs in magnō perīculō estis.

(The children wake up and gasp as they see the ghosts.)

f/f1: quae estis?

f/f2: quid vultis?

f/f1: unde vēnistis?

f/f2: cūr adestis?

umbra 3: nōs sorōrēs sumus. ōlim in hāc villā habitābāmus.

umbra 1: mōns erat īrātus. tremōrēs ingentēs sēnsimus. mūrus in nōs dēcidit. ancilla fidēlis nōs servāre nōn poterat.

umbra 2: nunc umbrae sumus.

umbra 3: *(A distant rumble is heard.)* audīte! mōns iterum est īrātus. sed familia vestra effugere potest.

umbrae: valēte, valēte.

(The ghosts fade away.)

f/f1: rēs mirābilis est!

f/f2: pater! māter! Ampelisca! statim venīte!

f/f1: nōs in magnō perīculō sumus.

(Mother, father and Ampelisca appear, looking anxious.)

māter: quid accidit?

pater: estne fūr in villā?

f/f1: nōs rem mirābilem vīdīmus. umbrae nōbīs appāruērunt. dē magnō perīculō nōbis narrāvērunt. mōns iterum īrātus est. necesse est nōbīs statim effugere.

pater: estisne īnsānae?

māter: pessimi līberī estis. erant nūllae umbrae.

f/f1: minimē, māter, erant trēs umbrae.

f/f2: sorōrēs erant et in hāc villā habitābant.

Ampelisca: quid dīcis? trēs sorōres?

f/f2: mūrus in eās dēcidit. ancilla eās servāre nōn poterat.

māter: hoc est rīdiculum! vōbīs nōn crēdō.

Ampelisca: *(Crying)* domina, vērum est.

pater: īnsāna tū quoque?

Ampelisca: minimē, ego trēs sorōrēs in hāc villā cūrāvī. ōlim mōns erat īrātus. erant tremōrēs ingentēs. omnēs puellae periērunt. ō mē miseram! eās servāre nōn poteram.

f/f2: tū es illa ancilla! rēs mirābilis est!

māter: larēs nostrī umbrās mīsērunt. necesse est nōbīs ē villā discēdere.

pater: larēs familiam nostram servāvērunt.

(A faint noise is heard.)

f/f1: umbrae nōs audīvērunt. fortasse nunc laetae sunt.

The Ghosts

Before the earthquake in 62 AD: a villa outside Pompeii

Scene 1: In the atrium

Daughter 1: Mt Vesuvius is angry. I heard noises.
Daughter 2: I felt tremors.
Daughter 3: Don't be afraid, sisters. Our family gods always protect us.
Father: *(Enters with mother and slave, carrying offerings.)*
Everyone keep silent. We offer wine and food to our family gods. Gods, I offer you this gift. Save our household.
Mother: Gods, I offer you this gift. Save our household.
Daughter 1: Hurray! Our family is now safe. I'm happy.
Daughter 2: Mother, we want to go to Pompeii. Is that all right?
Mother: No. I'm worried because I felt tremors.
Daughter 3: But we trust our gods. Don't be afraid.
Mother: It's not all right. I'm very frightened.
Father: I'm not frightened. The gods have always looked after our family. Off with you, girls. But take Ampelisca with you.
Mother: Goodbye, my daughters. Look after yourselves. I am worried about you.

Scene 2: In the atrium

Mother: Alas! The girls have not come back. We are waiting for them in vain.
Father: Don't be afraid. I sent a faithful slave-girl with them. She can look after them. Look! The slave-girl is coming.
Mother: What has happened?
Father: Where are the girls? Tell me!
Ampelisca: Master, mistress, they are dead!
Father: What do you say? Dead?
Ampelisca: It's true. We were on our way to Pompeii. We felt huge tremors. Suddenly a wall fell on the girls. They died immediately. I could not save them.
Mother: Take me to them. Perhaps they are not dead. Perhaps they are recovering at this moment.
Father: Wait! I'm coming with you.
Ampelisca: Alas! The girls are dead beyond doubt. The gods have not saved our household. *(They go out.)*

Seventeen years later, before the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79: the same villa

Scene 3: In the atrium

Son/Daughter 1: Ampelisca, how long have you lived in this house?
Ampelisca: *(Counts on her fingers)* Ten ... twenty ... five. Twenty-five years!
Son/Daughter 2: Have you looked after other children in this house?
Ampelisca: *(Sadly)* Yes. *(Hurriedly)* It's late now. Go to your bedroom.
S/D 1: Those children, were they like us? Were they pretty?
S/D 2: Good?
S/D 1: Awful?
S/D 2: Silly?
Ampelisca: Enough! Enough! Your father and mother are coming.
(Father and mother enter.)
Mother: It's late, children. Go to your bedroom.
S/D 2: I don't want to.
S/D 1: I don't want to sleep.
S/D2: I want to stay in the atrium.
Father: Be quiet! Now go.
Mother: Goodnight children. Sleep well.
Father: Goodnight.
S/D 1 and 2: Goodnight, father; goodnight, mother.

Scene 4: In the bedroom

(The children are asleep. Three ghosts appear and stand over the two sleeping girls.)

Ghost 1: Children, children, wake up.

Ghost 2: Children, children, listen to us.

Ghost 3: Children, children, you are in great danger.

(The children wake up and gasp as they see the ghosts.)

S/D 1: Who are you?

S/D2: What do you want?

S/D 1: Where have you come from?

Ghost 3: We are sisters. Once we used to live in this house.

Ghost 1: The mountain was angry. We felt huge tremors. A wall fell on top of us. Our faithful slave-girl could not save us.

Ghost 2: Now we are ghosts.

Ghost 3: *(A distant rumble is heard.)* Listen! The mountain is angry again. But your family can escape.

Ghosts: Farewell! Farewell!

(The ghosts fade away.)

S/D1: It's a miracle!

S/D 2: Father! Mother! Come at once!

S/D 1: We are in great danger.

(Mother, father and Ampelisca appear, looking anxious.)

Mother: What has happened?

Father: Is there a burglar in the house?

S/D 1: We have seen a marvellous thing. Ghosts have appeared to us. They told us about a great danger. The mountain is angry again. We must escape at once.

Father: Are you mad?

Mother: You are dreadful children. There are no ghosts.

S/D 1: No, mother, there were three ghosts.

S/D 2: They were sisters and lived in this house.

Ampelisca: What do you say? Three sisters?

S/D2: A wall fell on them. Their slave-girl could not save them.

Mother: This is ridiculous! I don't believe you!

Ampelisca: *(Crying)* Mistress, it's true.

Father: Are you mad, as well?

Ampelisca: No, I looked after three sisters in this house. Once the mountain was angry. There were huge tremors. All the girls died. O how miserable I am! I could not save them.

S/D 2: You are that slave-girl! It's a miracle!

Mother: Our family gods sent the ghosts. We must leave the house.

Father: The gods have saved our household.

(A faint noise is heard.)

S/D 1: The ghosts have heard us. Perhaps they are happy now.