



***THE CURSE OF THE TEMPEST JEWEL* FAQ'S**

THE CURSE OF THE TEMPEST JEWEL stars an ensemble cast of 17 teenage actors who all happen to have Down syndrome - a genetic condition creating an extra copy of all or part of their 21st chromosome. Actors collaborated with a crew of 3 professional filmmakers and 6 teaching artists on an original screenplay by writer/director/producer Lawrence Kern, who crafted the script to match each actor's individual personality and strengths.

What is THE CURSE OF THE TEMPEST JEWEL about?

The plot follows the cast as they embark on a quest for the legendary Tempest Jewel, which was lost at sea in the wreck of a pirate ship 200 years earlier. A wealthy client commissions two local detectives to track down the treasure with nothing but a cryptic riddle for guidance. As they interview people around Chicago, each new character daydreams about what he/she would do with the fortune. As they race to crack the riddle and find the jewel, each must ultimately decide which is more important: Fortune or Friendship?

How did you come up with the daydreams?

Many of the scripted daydreams are based on the real-life wishes of the actors. In 2013, the ensemble devised their own play called "Such Stuff as Dreams are Made On..." in which the cast wrote and starred in scenes detailing what they would do if they had magic for one day. Andrew wanted to save the world and then go on vacation in Michigan (he also made up the character name Gordy Burmer). Rachel wanted to talk to animals. Hannah wanted to be on Broadway. Alena wanted to become Beyonce. When writing the screenplay, Lawrence used these scenes as inspiration.

Where did you film?

The film shot at 9 locations all around the city of Chicago

- The Menomonee Club for Boys & Girls
- Lincoln Park
- The Historic Maxwell St. Police Station
- The Field Museum
- The Newberry Library
- The Monadnock Building/TrueQuest Communications
- The Bourgeois Pig Café
- The Back Room
- Cinespace Chicago Film Studios

Did the actors memorize their lines?

Although some of the cast worked independently to learn their lines, it was not mandatory. The filmmaking process was set up so that everyone would feel confident and proud without the pressure and stress of memorizing lines or the stiffness of reading from cue cards. On-set, each actor paired with a teaching artist who stayed off-camera (sometimes hiding under set pieces or behind props) to drop-in lines. This method allowed actors to focus on their scene partners, to move and speak more naturally, and, most importantly, to have fun. In the editing room, the teaching artists' voices were removed, so only the actors can be heard in the final cut.



What were shoots like?

A typical shoot lasted about 3 hours from start to finish. Crew and teaching artists would arrive first to set up equipment, costumes, and go over plans for the day (30mins). As the actors arrived, they would get into wardrobe and do a short group warm-up (30mins). The cast would then do a quick rehearsal to review what the scene was about and go over some basic blocking (10min). Then it was time to start filming! We would start with master shots first (multiple characters onscreen at once) to give all the actors a chance to work together and play off of each other, and then would work with each actor one at a time to get close-ups of just them and their lines as well as some reaction shots.

What's the deal with Sue?

Off-camera, the ensemble worked in small groups with licensed Art Therapist Sara Miller to construct the film's largest prop - a life-sized replica of SUE the T-Rex's head, which is pivotal in the final scene. Over the course of 6 classes, the cast created teeth, primed, and painted the giant sculpture. The final piece measured 5ft long x 3ft wide x 3ft tall and was constructed from foam blocks, aluminum foil, masking tape, Gesso, and papier-mâché.

How long did production take?

Making *THE CURSE OF THE TEMPEST JEWEL* took about 7 months from start to finish. Pre-production started in June 2015 with location scouting, costuming, and scheduling. Because all of the cast members were in school during weekdays, filming was limited to nights and weekends, so stretched over the course of 12 days from September 19th - November 21, 2014. Editing was a lengthy process, including 2 days of ADR at Periscope Post and Audio in early December. Cast, crew, and sponsors were treated to a work-in-progress screening at The Landmark Century Center Cinema on December 14th, and the final cut was completed February 1, 2015.

How was the film funded?

Funding for the film came entirely through donations to the producers' Hatchfund campaign. Contributions came from 133 individual donors from 19 states and 3 countries; Pledges ranged from \$10 to \$3000 totaling over \$25,000. Several local organizations also generously offered in-kind donations of equipment, costumes and props, and the engineers at Periscope Post & Audio donated their time and talents to provide post-production audio services.

What is the running time of the movie?

47 minutes (including credits).

I want to know more!

Meet the cast & crew, see exclusive behind the scenes photos and videos, and read production logs on our Facebook page: [**www.facebook.com/ableensemble**](http://www.facebook.com/ableensemble).

You can also keep up to date with A.B.L.E.'s current projects at: [**www.ableensemble.com**](http://www.ableensemble.com)