

CAST OF CHARACTERS

THE TEMPEST



Alonso
King of Naples



Prospero
Former Duke of Milan



Miranda
Prospero's daughter



Caliban
Prospero's servant



Ariel
Sprite on the island



Ferdinand
Alonso's son



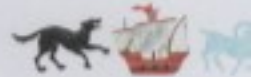
A court jester



A drunken butler



THE TEMPEST



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Prospero the wizard stood among the sand dunes of a wild, windswept beach, watching a ship sail into view.

"At last, fate has brought me a chance to right the wrongful deeds of the past," he thought to himself. "My refuge on this island will soon be over." He stepped down to the water's edge, raised his magic staff and called up a storm. At his command, thunderclouds darkened the sky, lightning flashed and the sea erupted like a waking monster. Towering waves tossed the ship towards the rocky coast.

On board, King Alonso of Naples and his son, Ferdinand, were seized with terror. "What's happening?" they cried.

"If we stay here, we shall all be dashed to pieces," shouted their companion Antonio, the Duke of Milan. Fearing for their lives, the noblemen leapt into the churning sea.

Prospero's daughter, Miranda, came running to his side. "Father, don't use your magic this way," she pleaded. "A ship will be wrecked and lives will be lost."

Prospero lowered his staff. At once, the storm rolled away and the sea grew calm again but the ship was nowhere to be seen. "Have no fear," he told Miranda. "No-one has come to any harm. I have done this for you."

Miranda was puzzled by her father's words.

He took her hand. "There are things I must explain," he said gently. "It is time to tell you who we are and how we came to this island." Miranda sat with him on the sand, eager to know more.

Prospero told his daughter that he was once the Duke of Milan. "Long ago, we lived in a beautiful palace with a great library, where I loved to spend time with my books of ancient magic," he said. "As I was devoted to my studies I trusted my brother, Antonio, to run the

affairs of state. However, Antonio enjoyed his power too much and grew ambitious. When you were only three years old, he made a secret deal with my enemy, King Alonso of Naples, who sent soldiers to arrest us so that Antonio could take my place."

Miranda listened in astonishment.

"Antonio was afraid that the people of Milan would turn against him if they saw us harmed," Prospero continued, "so he sent us away on a ship. Once at sea, we were cruelly set adrift in a little boat without a sail. Luckily, we came ashore on this island, where I have done my best to care for you ever since."

Miranda was filled with pity for her father. "But why did you raise such a storm?" she asked.

"Alonso and my brother were aboard that ship," Prospero explained. "Now, by the use of my magic arts, our fortunes shall change. But there is no more time for questions." The wizard cast his hand across his daughter's eyes and she fell into an enchanted sleep.

Prospero took up his staff once more. "Ariel, sweet spirit," he called. In an instant he was surrounded by dancing lights and a merry-faced boy with shimmering wings fluttered before him. When Prospero arrived on the island he'd found Ariel imprisoned in a hollow tree by the witch Sycorax, who had died and left him there. Grateful to be rescued, Ariel now delighted in attending to Prospero's wishes.

"All hail, master!" Ariel cried. He turned a somersault in the air. "I come to do your bidding; to fly, to swim, to dive into the fire or ride on the billowy clouds!"

Prospero smiled. "Did you take care of the ship as I asked?" he said.

"It's safely hidden in the bay, with the crew fast asleep below deck," replied Ariel, "and I made sure that everyone who leapt from the ship has come ashore unharmed."

Prospero was pleased. "Then bring me Alonso's son, Ferdinand," he said. Ariel made a bow, spun about and vanished.

Prospero turned to his cave at the foot of the cliff nearby. Grunts and groans echoed within, then out of the gloom shuffled Caliban; an ugly, scaly-skinned creature, half-man and half-monster. Caliban was the son of the witch Sycorax and had been left alone on the island when she died. Now, resentfully, he served Prospero. When he saw his hated master he scowled and cursed under his breath.

"I hear your wicked words, Caliban," said Prospero. "For that you will be punished tonight with cramps and stitches!"

"Why are you mean to me?" whined Caliban. "This island was all my own until you took it from me. When you first came you treated me kindly and I showed you where to find food and water. Now you treat me as a slave and torment me." Caliban clambered onto the rocks and pointed a finger at Prospero. "Toads, beetles and bats rain down on you!" he cried.

"You're nothing but a villain," said Prospero angrily. "I gave you a home in my own cave and taught you to speak but you repaid my kindness by trying to steal Miranda away." He raised his hand and Caliban cowered. "Get out of my sight and fetch the firewood, or I'll make your bones ache so much that wild beasts will tremble at the sound of your roar."

Afraid of the wizard's mighty power, Caliban scuttled away into the woods, and obediently collected firewood. A short while later, he heard voices nearby. Caliban crept close. Alonso's jester and butler had also jumped from the storm-tossed ship and been cast up onto the island where, to their delight, they'd found a barrel of wine.

Caliban saw a chance for revenge on Prospero. He greeted the strangers, who were too



drunk to be afraid of him. "Oh, great gods!" Caliban cried, bowing before them. "Save me, I

beg you, for I am the slave of a wicked master. If you can get rid of him this island will be yours and I will serve you instead."

The jester nudged the butler and they both giggled. This is a fine adventure, they thought.

"I can lead you to the place where my master sleeps every afternoon," said Caliban cunningly. He waved a heavy club and grinned. "The rest is easy."

Wine had made the two men bold. They agreed to follow Caliban. "Lead on, monster," cried the butler. "We'll do as you say. I shall be King of this island and you and the jester shall both be Princes!"

Nobody noticed lights sparkling among the branches above as Ariel, sat in a tree, listened to every word.

Ariel flew away to fetch Ferdinand. He found him in a leafy glade, sitting with his head in his hands, full of sorrow at the loss of his father who he was sure must be

drowned. Ariel made himself invisible and began to sing.

Ferdinand looked up. "This is the same voice that I followed as I swam for my life," he said. "And these are the strange, enchanting lights that led me to safety." He rose to his feet as if in a dream and followed Ariel through the wood.

When Prospero saw Ferdinand approach, he woke Miranda from her sleep. She gazed at the handsome young prince in wonder.

"Is this a spirit?" she asked, for she had never seen any man except her father.

"No, he eats and sleeps, just like us," Prospero assured her. "He was travelling on the ship and now searches for his lost companions."

Ariel's song ended and Ferdinand woke from his trance to see Miranda's beautiful face before him.

"I should have guessed that such heavenly music was playing for a goddess," he sighed, staring at her in amazement.

Miranda blushed. "I'm not a goddess," she said shyly.

Prospero saw that Miranda and Ferdinand had fallen in love at first sight. "They only have eyes for each other," he thought, with satisfaction. "My plan goes well."

Then Ariel told his master about Caliban's murderous plot.

"We must find a way to delay him," said Prospero, "for there is still more to be done to put things right here."

On the other side of the island, Alonso and Antonio had been walking for hours looking for Ferdinand. Alonso feared that his son had drowned. "I'm sure some strange fish has made meal of him," he sighed woefully. Tired and losing hope, they came to a woodland clearing. To their surprise a table stood before them, mysteriously set with a rich banquet of food.

"This island is a strange, enchanted place," said Alonso, warily. "If that banquet is real then I believe in unicorns!" The two hungry men held back afraid, but the delicious smell of the food became irresistible. However, as soon as they touched the dishes they were dazzled by a flash of light.

Ariel appeared as a huge bird of prey with a human head. He hovered over the food menacingly. Alonso and Antonio shrank away from his sharp talons.

"Why have you come to torment us?" they asked.

Ariel fixed them with a piercing stare. "You took what belonged to Duke Prospero," he yelled. "You left him and his daughter to the mercy of the sea. Now Fate has robbed you of your son, Alonso, and brought you both to this desolate island to suffer your punishment."

Alonso and Antonio realised the terrible consequence of what they had done. "I should never have betrayed my brother's trust," said Antonio.

"We sent Prospero and Miranda away to die," sighed Alonso sorrowfully. They were both led with shame.

Ariel opened his wings as if to swoop down upon them but with a clap of thunder he disappeared, the table vanished and they were left alone.

Unseen, Ariel flew off to find Caliban, who was leading his new friends through the wood towards Prospero's cave. "This task will be more entertaining," Ariel said to himself. He called



up the dark spirits of the island who came bounding out of the shadows as huge red-eyed hunting dogs.

Caliban and his drunken friends stopped in their tracks. They stared in horror at the terrifying hounds, then turned on their heels and ran for their lives, shrieking as they crashed through the brambles and thorns.

Prospero appeared at Ariel's side. "You've served me well, sweet Ariel," he said. "Now my enemies are all at my mercy."

"Alonso and Antonio are full of regret for what they did to you," Ariel assured him.

"Then that is all I wish," said Prospero. "Bring them to me now. Although I have good reason for revenge, it is better to forgive."

Prospero returned to the beach. There, he drew a circle in the sand with his staff. Alonso and Antonio stepped out of the trees into the circle. At first they didn't recognise Prospero but when he removed his magic cloak they gasped to see the old Duke, who they thought had died at sea long ago. Alonso and Antonio sank to their knees and begged forgiveness for their treacherous acts. Seeing they were truly sorry, Prospero forgave them both.

"Your home and title shall be restored to you," promised Alonso. "But sadly, I can never regain the son I lost in the storm."

Prospero nodded thoughtfully. "I lost my daughter in the storm, too," he said.

Alonso wept with pity for them both. "I'd give my life to take my son's place sleeping on the muddy seabed," he said. "If only our children could be alive as King and Queen of Naples."

"Let's rest awhile," suggested Prospero, and he led the way to his cave.

To Alonso's astonishment, when they came to the cave, they found Ferdinand and Miranda



very much alive and in love. Alonso and his son were joyfully reunited. Then Prospero laid down his magic staff, for all was right with the world once more.

A shower of lights danced and sparkled in the sunlight. "Ariel, my tricky spirit!" Prospero greeted him with thanks. "My enemies are now my friends and our children, joined in love, shall build a better world together. Gather the castaways, go wake the crew and bring us the ship. I release you from my service to fly free as the sea spray."

And so it was time for everyone to leave the magical world of spirits and sail home. Only Caliban remained, happy at last to be King of his island once more.

