

"THE TEMPEST"

Plot Synopsis

Alonso, the king of Naples, is returning from his daughter's wedding in Tunis. He is accompanied by his son, Ferdinand, his brother, Sebastian, and Antonia, the Duchess of Milan. An old Milanese courtier, Gonzalo, is also on board. The ship is wrecked in a storm and all the passengers and crew are thrown into the furious sea.

Prospera, the former Duchess of Milan, and her fifteen year-old daughter, Miranda, are watching the shipwreck from an island. She tells her, for the first time, how they came to be on the island. Twelve years before, when she had been Duke of Milan, her sister Antonia, had usurped her, but with Gonzalo's help she had escaped in a small boat with her baby daughter, Miranda, and her library of books about magic. They had ended up on the island and Prospera had turned the only inhabitant, Caliban, a deformed and savage creature, into her slave. There are also spirits on the island. One of them, Ariel, had been imprisoned in a tree trunk by Caliban's mother, the witch, Sycorax, who had then died. Prospera used her magic abilities to rescue her and she made the spirit swear to serve her.

The ship's passengers are cast up on the island unharmed, and even their clothes are not wet or damaged. Alonso believes his son to be dead but Ferdinand has landed on another part of the island. He encounters Miranda and they fall in love at first sight. He is the first man, apart from Caliban that she has ever seen. Prospera puts Ferdinand to work manually, controlling all his movements with magic. Ariel pesters Prospera for her freedom and Prospera promises it once she has done some things for her, regarding the newcomers.

Ariel leads the party towards Prospera's cell. During this journey Antonia and Sebastian plan to kill Alonso so that Sebastian can be king. Two other members of the party, Trinculo, the court jester, and Stephano, a boisterous butler, are also wandering about on the island. Caliban recruits them to help him overthrow Prospera. They all get drunk then set off for Prospera's cell. Ariel reports the plot to Prospera.

Prospera has released Ferdinand and given her blessing to the marriage of the two young people. When the three would-be usurpers arrive at her cell they are distracted by some brightly coloured clothes that have been hung out for them, then they are chased away by a band of spirits who have taken on the form of dogs.

Ariel brings the party to the cell. Prospera renounces her magic and reveals herself. She forgives her sister and prepares to return to Milan to resume her dukedom. Miranda and Ferdinand are betrothed. Ariel is set free. Caliban and the drunken servants are also forgiven. There is a final celebration of their reunion.