

## **Synopsis, Tempest**

In the dark before dawn, a Tempest is brewing. Prospero, former Duke of Milan, and his teenage daughter Miranda have been living on a tropical island for most of Miranda's life. Finally, after all these years, his magical arts are powerful enough to summon a Tempest to wreck the ship of Alonso, King of Naples, passing by in the dark off shore waters.

On the ship is the King's son Ferdinand, Prospero's brother Antonio- the current Duke of Milan- and the King's younger brother Sebastian. The sailors and the Master of the ship cannot save themselves from a watery death, as much magical as it is tropical. The ship seems to founder on the rocks and all appears lost.

Morning dawns and Miranda begs her father "If by your art you have put the wild waters in this Roar, Alay them" and save the good souls she suspects have drowned. Prospero assures her none have perished. He reveals the specifics of their shipwrecked life on the island. He tells the story of their exile and the usurpation of his Dukedom by his brother Antonio. They were abandoned in a boat, and set to drift out to sea, betrayed by Antonio and his evil alliance with Alonso, the King of Naples. The only joy they have had is the library of books, saved by the "Noble Neopolitan" and friend, Gonzalo. Prospero admits that his "library was Dukedom enough." He has studied since and is now a powerful conjuror.

Prospero's servant Ariel, "brave Spirit" tells him that the storm seemed to be fatal, but the Master and his mariners are shipwrecked on one portion of the island, Ferdinand, the King's son is alone on another part of the island, and Alonso and the rest of his court are at a third part of the island. Ariel describes the particulars of the storm and then reminds Prospero of his promise of release once this last job is performed. Prospero reminds him of the circumstances of his servitude- Ariel had been imprisoned in a tree by Sycorax, a witch. He languished for seven years till Prospero and Miranda heard his cry. Once Prospero rescued Ariel, he was bound to serve Prospero for a year.

Next, we meet Caliban, the spawn of Sycorax. At one time Prospero and Miranda tried to civilize Caliban but he "didst seek to violate" Miranda and they banished him to a cave, to serve as a slave.

Prospero has Ariel draw Ferdinand to their part of the island and he meets Miranda, apparently by Prospero's design. Caliban meets the fool Trinculo and the servant Stephano. He decides to serve them, rather than Prospero and they introduce him to strong drink.

We learn that the King of Naples, Alonso, just married his daughter Claribell (how's that for a Shakespearean name!) to the King of Tunis. He is despondent because now he has lost his son Ferdinand in the storm and his daughter to marriage in a far distant land. Sea voyages being what they are, he will never see either ever again.

Antonio and Sebastian take advantage of the shipwreck and begin to plot against Alonso's rule. Antonio assures Sebastian, the much younger brother of the King that he can ensure his taking the crown, in the same way he usurped his own brother Prospero long ago.

Gonzalo, the trusty friend of Alonso and Prospero, begins to suspect something is up. As Miranda and Ferdinand begin to fall in love, Prospero sets Ferdinand to several trials, to test his love. Prospero begins to bewitch everyone on the island, including Alonso and his court. As Miranda and Ferdinand begin to fall in love, Prospero sets Ferdinand to several trials, to test his love. Prospero begins to bewitch everyone on the island, including Alonso and his court.

Prospero now has several balls in the air at once- he is orchestrating his daughter's dates, his brother's downfall, the defeat of Caliban's plot to kill Prospero, and finally, the release of Ariel from his servitude.

Prospero summons several supernatural spectacles, to confound Alonso and his court as well as entertain Miranda and Ferdinand. In the end, however, he is chastised by the most inhuman of all the beings on the island, Ariel, for being less than gentle with his captives. Prospero resolves to "break my staff, bury it certain fathoms in the earth, and deeper than did ever plummet sound I'll drown my book"- give up magic and learn to forgive.

Everyone is herded by magic and all appear, under Prospero's command, so that they can learn he is still alive and anxious to return to Milan and take up the mantle of Duke. All are reconciled by the love of Miranda and Ferdinand and at the end, Prospero accepts his loss of magic, as he bids farewell to his Ariel and the audience.