

# The Tempest

## The Tempest Plot Summary



Close to a Mediterranean island, a storm overcomes the ship that carries King Alonso of Naples, his son Ferdinand, his brother Sebastian, their friend Antonio the Duke of Milan, and various members of the court. On the shore of the island, Prospero, the former Duke of Milan, watches the storm with his fifteen year old daughter Miranda. As they watch events develop, Prospero tells Miranda their story. Prospero explains that twelve years ago his brother Antonio removed him from power. Antonio claimed Prospero's rightful dukedom for himself, forcing Prospero to leave. Prospero escaped in a boat with only the infant Miranda and his books of magic. They came to the island and made it their home and made the only native inhabitant -- Caliban -- their slave. Their only other companion is Ariel, a sprite that Prospero rescued and enslaved. Prospero reveals that he has arranged the storm and shipwreck, so he can get revenge on those who deprived him of his dukedom.

The court members come to shore all right but King Alonso is extremely upset, believing his son Ferdinand drowned when the ship was destroyed. In fact however Prince Ferdinand has landed elsewhere and is quite fine. Ferdinand meets Miranda and they fall immediately in love with each other.

### Vocabulary

**native (adj)** - relating to the first people to live in an area

**inhabitant (n)** - a person or animal that lives in a particular place

**slave (n)** - someone who is owned by someone else and has to work for them

**sprite (n)** - elf or fairy

**shipwreck (n)** - the destruction of a ship at sea

**dukedom (n)** - area ruled by a duke

**to deprive (v)** - to take something away from someone

**to drown (v)** - to die because you are underwater and cannot breathe, or to kill someone in this way

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Prospero decides to test the possible future husband of his daughter and captures Ferdinand, putting him to work carrying wood for his fire.

At Prospero's request, Ariel uses magic to lure the courtiers away while Antonio and Sebastian plan to kill King Alonso. Their plan is stopped however by Ariel who leads them all onwards seeking food and help. Meanwhile the court fool Trinculo has come to shore and discovered Caliban with whom he hides under a big coat until the storm has passed. The two are found by the ship's butler Stephano who, a bit tipsy, wonders if they are a two headed monster! Together they all get drunker and set off to find Prospero, deciding to kill him and make Stephano lord of the island. Ariel reports their plan to Prospero.

Prospero has decided that Ferdinand has passed his test and celebrates his engagement to Miranda by holding a masque ( that is, a dance in which the guests are all traditionally masked) attended by spirits and goddesses. However halfway through he remembers Caliban's plot.

Finally Prospero asks Ariel to bring all the shipwrecked people together before him, but instead of acting out his revenge, he decides to forgive them -- claiming that he has been moved by Ariel's statement that even he, a spirit, feels for the humans. He accepts the return of his dukedom from Antonio, and Ferdinand and Miranda are formally betrothed. Ariel is set free and Caliban and the drunken sailors get a stern rebuke. The play ends with (almost) everyone celebrating their reunion.

## Vocabulary

**tipsy (adj)** - slightly drunk

**drunk (adj)** - unable to act normally due to having had too much alcohol

**masked (adj)** - to have a covering or partial covering for the face

**engagement (n)** - an agreement to marry someone

**revenge (n)** - something that you do to punish someone who has done something bad to you

**stern(adj)** - serious

**rebuke (n)** - expression of disapproval

**reunion (n)** - an occasion when people who have not met each other for a long time meet again