

PLOT SUMMARY OF *THE* **TEMPEST**

This is the story of Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan, who has been deposed by his treacherous brother Antonio. He conspired with Alonso, the King of Naples, to cast Prospero and his infant daughter Miranda adrift at sea. Both are presumed dead. In fact, however, Alonso's virtuous adviser Gonzalo had stocked their boat with supplies, enabling them to survive until washed ashore on a distant unknown island, where they have now been marooned for twelve years.

A powerful magician, and now lord of the island, Prospero is served by two native inhabitants: the spirit Ariel and the beast Caliban. Prospero has freed Ariel from the curse of endless imprisonment imposed by the witch Sycorax, now dead. Caliban is Sycorax's own grudging and malignant son.

With Ariel's help, Prospero now seizes the chance for revenge, conjuring up a great storm to wreck a ship, carrying his enemies, on to the shores of his island. On the ship are King Alonso, his son Ferdinand and brother Sebastian. Among the others aboard are kindly Gonzalo, Prospero's own brother Antonio, as well as other noblemen and servants. All of them are travelling back to Naples from the wedding in Africa of Alonso's daughter Claribel. Ariel puts the crew to sleep, leaving the castaways safely

stranded – but at the mercy of Prospero's plans, which unfold over the next few hours.

The villainous Antonio now seeks to usurp the throne of Naples by persuading Sebastian to murder his brother, King Alonso – now distraught at what he believes to be the drowning of his son Ferdinand. Elsewhere, Alonso's servants, the drunken butler Stephano and the foolish Trinculo, encounter Caliban, who similarly persuades them to assassinate Prospero and take command of his island. Both these conspiracies, however, are closely monitored by Prospero, and each is frustrated by Ariel's enchantments, which lead them all astray.

Meanwhile, Ferdinand has been captured, alive and well, by Prospero, who pretends to enslave him – though his true aim is to test Ferdinand's character in the hope of supplying a worthy partner for his precious daughter Miranda. Prospero's plan works – the couple immediately fall in love – but how severely should he now punish those who have denied him his dukedom? In the end, love and forgiveness triumph over any wish for revenge, and all are reconciled as if awoken from a bad dream. Prospero will return to Milan, once more as its Duke, renounce magic, and at last set Ariel free in payment for his services. The island is Caliban's once more.

