

The Tempest

By William Shakespeare

*As edited by
C. Michael Perry*

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STORY OF THE PLAY

The entire story is there - the plotting - the revenge - the tempered justice - requited love - compassion and forgiveness - in Shakespeare's fantasy-comedy masterpiece adapted for shorter playing time. This is not an adaptation but merely an editing of the archaic terms and unnecessary business and dialogue. Perfect for High School and College Theatre Departments.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(11M, 5F + extras as nymphs, reapers, spirits and sailors)

PROSPERO: The right Duke of Milan.
MIRANDA: Daughter of Prospero.
ARIEL: An airy spirit. *(female or male)*.
ALONSO: King of Naples.
ANTONIO: Brother of Prospero; the usurping Duke of Milan.
SEBASTIAN: Brother of Alonso.
GONZALO: Honest old counselor.
FERDINAND: Son of Alonso.
CALIBAN: A savage and deformed slave.
STEPHANO: A drunken butler.
TRINCULO: A jester.
FRANCISCO: A lord.
ADRIAN: A lord.
IRIS: Presented by a spirit.
CERES: Presented by a spirit.
JUNO: Presented by a spirit.
NYMPHS: Presented by female spirits.
REAPERS: Presented by male spirits.
OTHER SPIRITS: Attending on Prospero.

SCENE SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Scene 1. A ship at sea.
Scene 2. The island: before Prospero's cell.

ACT II

Scene 1. Another part of the island.
Scene 2. Another part of the island.

ACT III

Scene 1. Before Prospero's cell.
Scene 2. Another part of the island.
Scene 3. Another part of the island.

ACT IV

Scene 1. Before Prospero's cell.

ACT V

Scene 1. Before Prospero's cell.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

"The Tempest" was a delight from start to finish. The students really caught on to the plot, characters and message of Shakespeare's final play - forgiveness and compassion. (*It is true that "Henry VIII" was produced after this one, but it was written some years prior.*) With this play Shakespeare, like Prospero, was laying aside his magic mantle and returning to the place from whence he came. While on the earth he used his magic to control Kings, create spirits, connect and disconnect people. And his world, not like Hamlet's, 'bounded in a nutshell', was anything he made it. Yet, Shakespeare was still "The King of infinite space."

SETTING

Our setting consisted of a central cave created from burlap on a chicken-wire frame with an entrance from the back and an open front. Across the front of the cave we would occasionally draw a black scrim and light the inside to reveal Prospero at work with his charms. There was a Pinnacle on stage right for Ariel to scare the King's company from. Ariel flew by swinging from a series of ropes dangling conveniently in several places. Other scenes happening on other parts of the isle were played with lighting changes in front of the cave structure. And there was a curtain of "forestry" type material on stage left to indicate that part of the island. The ship was down center and extended a bit into the audience. This platform was also used for Caliban to be able to enter from below. (*since our stage had no trap doors*). Other places on the island were placed at extreme down left and extreme down right.

MUSIC

Much of the Prelude, Scene change, background, Postlude music and even the Sprites dance were taken from a CD of *Georg Zamphir's Pan Flute* music. It fit this piece perfectly. Other songs were composed for the play and appear in the back of the script. Feel free to use them or write your own.

**ACT I
SCENE 1**

(A ship at sea: a tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard. Enter a SHIP-MASTER.)

SHIP-MASTER: Fall to't yarely, or we run ourselves a-ground: bestir, bestir.

(Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, FERDINAND, GONZALO, and others.)

SHIP-MASTER: *(Cont'd.)* Keep below. Out of our way, I say. *(Exit.)*

GONZALO: Stand fast, good Fate, to his hanging! *(Exit.)*

(Enter SHIPMASTER.)

SHIP-MASTER: Down with the topmast! *(A CRY within.)* A plague upon this howling! They are louder than the weather or our office.

(Enter SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, and GONZALO.)

SHIP-MASTER: *(Cont'd.)* Yet again! What do you here? Shall we give o'er, and drown? Have you a mind to sink?

SEBASTIAN: A pox o' your throat, you bawling, blasphemous, incharitable dog!

SHIP-MASTER: Work you, then.

ANTONIO: Hang, cur, hang! We are less afraid to be drown'd than thou art.

GONZALO: I'll warrant him for drowning;

SHIP-MASTER: Set her two courses off to sea again!

(Enter ALONSO, FERDINAND, and others. All wet.)

OTHERS: All lost! To prayers, to prayers! All lost!

(A confused NOISE follows, - "Mercy on us!"- "We split, we split!"- "Farewell, my wife and children!"- "Farewell, brother!"- "We split, we split, we split!")

ANTONIO: Let's all sink with the king.

SEBASTIAN: Let's take leave of him.

(BLACKOUT as the STORM rages on.)

END OF SCENE 1

SCENE 2

(The island: before Prospero's cell. Enter PROSPERO and MIRANDA.)

MIRANDA: If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch,
But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. A brave vessel,
Dash'd all to pieces. O, their cry did knock
Against my very heart! Poor souls, they perish'd!

PROSPERO: Be collected; No more amazement: tell your piteous heart there's no harm done.

MIRANDA: O, woe the day!

PROSPERO: No harm. I have done nothing but in care of thee, Of thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter,
who Art ignorant of what thou art, naught knowing Of whence I am, nor that I am more better Than
Prospero, master of a full poor cell, And thy no greater father.

PROSPERO: Lend thy hand, and pluck my magic garment from me.

So: (Lays down his mantle.)

Lie there, my art. Wipe thou thine eyes; have comfort.
The direful spectacle of the wrack, which touch'd
The very virtue of compassion in thee,
I have with such provision in mine art
So safely order'd, that there is no soul-
Which thou heard'st cry, which thou saw'st sink. Sit down;
For thou must now know further.

MIRANDA: You have often begun to tell me what I am; but stopp'd.

PROSPERO: The very minute bids thee ope thine ear:

Obey, and be attentive. Canst thou remember
A time before we came unto this cell?
For then thou wast not
Out three years old.

MIRANDA: Certainly, sir, I can.

PROSPERO: By what? By any other house or person?

Of any thing the image tell me that
Hath kept with thy remembrance.

MIRANDA: 'Tis far off,

And rather like a dream than an assurance
That my remembrance warrants. Had I not
Four or five women once that tended me?

PROSPERO: Thou hadst, and more, Miranda. But how is it

That this lives in thy mind? What see'st thou else
In the dark backward and abysm of time?
If thou rememb'rest aught ere thou camest here,
How thou camest here thou mayst.

MIRANDA: But that I do not.

PROSPERO: Twelve year since, Miranda, twelve year since,

Thy father was the Duke of Milan, and
A prince of power.

MIRANDA: Sir, are not you my father?

PROSPERO: Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and

She said thou wast my daughter; and thy father
Was Duke of Milan; thou his only heir,
And princess, no worse issued.

MIRANDA: O the heavens!

What foul play had we, that we came from thence?

Or blessed was't we did?

PROSPERO: Both, both, my girl:

By foul play, as thou say'st, were we heaved thence;

But blessedly help hither.

MIRANDA: O, my heart bleeds

To think o' the teen that I have turn'd you to,

Which is from my remembrance! Please you, further.

PROSPERO: My brother, and thy uncle, call'd Antonio, that a brother should

Be so perfidious! - He whom, next thyself,

Of all the world I loved, and to him put

The manage of my state;

The government I cast upon my brother,

And to my state grew stranger, being transported

And rapt in secret studies. Thy false uncle-

Dost thou attend me?

MIRANDA: Sir, most heedfully.

PROSPERO: Being once perfected how to grant suits,

How to deny them, who t'advance, and who

To trash for over-topping, new created

The creatures that were mine, having both the key

Of officer and office, set all hearts l' the state

To what tune pleased his ear;

And suck'd my verdure out. Thou attend'st not.

MIRANDA: O, good sir, I do.

PROSPERO: I pray thee, mark me.

I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicate

To closeness, and the bettering of my mind, in my false brother

Awaked an evil nature; and my trust,

Like a good parent, did beget of him

A falsehood, in its contrary as great

As my trust was; which had indeed no limit,

A confidence sans bound. He being thus lorded,

Not only with what my revenue yielded,

But what my power might else exact, like one

Who having into truth, by telling of it,

Made such a sinner of his memory,

To credit his own lie, he did believe

He was indeed the duke; out o' the substitution,

And executing the outward face of royalty,

With all prerogative: hence his ambition growing,

Dost thou hear?

MIRANDA: Your tale, sir, would cure deafness.

PROSPERO: To have no screen between this part he play'd

And him he play'd it for, he needs will be

Absolute Milan. Of temporal royalties

He thinks me now incapable; confederates

With the King of Naples

To give him annual tribute, do him homage,

Subject his coronet to his crown, and bend

The dukedom, yet unbow'd, - alas, poor Milan!

To most ignoble stooping.

MIRANDA: O the heavens!

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