THE TEMPEST

by William Shakespeare

Adapted by
John Dilworth Newman

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STORY OF THE PLAY

On an enchanted island, a powerful man named Prospero uses his magic to create a tempest to shipwreck his enemies on his shores. Once they are on land, Prospero leads the castaways about with the help of his fairy servant, Ariel, who has long been promised her freedom. The conspiring nobles who once usurped Prospero's dukedom are haunted by Ariel, and their plot to murder one of their own is thwarted. Meanwhile, one of the shipwreck survivors, a kind prince, falls in love with Prospero's daughter. Prospero's monstrous servant, Caliban, meets up with the ship's captain and first mate who tame the creature and conspire with him to destroy Prospero. While Prospero seems determined to avenge past wrongs, a higher passion ultimately overcomes him as he strives toward reconciliation with those who wronged him and those he may have wronged. About 45-60 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

3 m, 5 w, 3 flexible

MALE

PROSPERO: The banished Duke of Milan.
FERDINAND: Prince of Naples.
CALIBAN: A monster of the island.
***GONZALO:** Honest, noble old counselor.
***STEPHANO:** A sea captain.
***TRINCULO:** Stephano's first mate.

FEMALES

MIRANDA: Prospero's daughter.
ARIEL: Prospero's fairy servant.
ALONSA: Queen of Naples.
ANTONIA: Usurping Duchess of Milan.
SEBASTIA: Alonsa's sister.

**Written as male, could be played as female.*

SCENE SNYPOSIS

ACT I
Scene 1: On the island near Prospero's dwelling and on board the ship.
Scene 2: Outside Prospero's dwelling.

ACT II
Scene 1: On another part of the island, where Alonsa's party has landed.
Scene 2: On another part of the island, where Stephano and Trinculo have landed.

ACT III
Scene 1: Outside Prospero's dwelling.
Scene 2: On another part of the island, with Stephano and Trinculo.
Scene 3: On another part of the island, with Alonsa's party.

ACT IV
Scene 1: At Prospero's dwelling.

Act V
Scene 1: At Prospero's dwelling.

ABOUT THIS ADAPTATION

This adaptation was originally created for secondary school students to perform for elementary, secondary, and adult audiences.

My primary goal in this adaptation was to clarify and simplify the plot and dialogue so that the characters and language would be readily comprehensible to a modern audience of various ages. Since our target audience included elementary school students, who often react better to the visual than to the verbal, I have shown things in this script, such as the events in Milan and the creation of the tempest, which occur offstage in the original. I have preserved the feel and rhythm of the language but modified the vocabulary by updating some of the archaic terms and phrases.

For clarity and unity, I have reduced the cast to eleven, eliminating a few inconsequential characters but retaining all those who are significant to the plot. I have combined some roles so as to introduce all eleven characters in the opening sequence.

For practical and artistic reasons, I maximized the number of female roles. Ariel is actually male in Shakespeare's script, but in modern productions the role is cast as female at least as often as male, and I personally prefer a female Ariel because of her relationship with Prospero. I made the decision to make the conspirators female, which creates an interesting gender dynamic. Gonzalo, the collaborator with the new female regime, remains male in the script but could be played as female if necessary. After playing Stephano and Trinculo as female in the original production, I decided that I would have preferred for them to be male, though they work relatively well as females. This offers the director the option of casting up to eight females whereas Shakespeare's original configuration allowed for only one.

The last speech of the play is a combination of Prospero's "Our revels now are ended" speech, which appears in the fourth act of the original, and Prospero's epilogue, which is often regarded as Shakespeare's final ode to the theatre. Whether or not Shakespeare played the role of Prospero is a matter of speculation, but dramatically and poetically, he ought to have done so.

-John Dilworth Newman

ACT I
Scene 1

(On one side of the stage, an actor dressed as William Shakespeare dons Prospero's costume. PROSPERO conjures with his staff and book. He summons ARIEL, who appears, comprehends his silent gestures, and exits. On the other side of the stage, MIRANDA looks out to sea and observes a ship. Center stage, we see STEPHANO at the helm, steering the ship through still waters. Commanded by Prospero's gesture, Ariel creates a tempest which suddenly rocks the ship and threatens to destroy it. TRINCULO appears on board.)

STEPHANO: *(To Trinculo.)* Take in the topsail or we run ourselves aground! *(To the wind.)* Blow till thou burst!

(ALONSA, GONZALO, and FERDINAND appear on deck.)

TRINCULO: I pray now, keep below.
ALONSA: Where is the master?
STEPHANO: Do you not hear him? You mar our labor.
TRINCULO: Keep to your cabins; you do assist the storm!
STEPHANO: The sea cares not for the name of queen or prince!
TRINCULO: Trouble us not!
GONZALO: Remember whom you have aboard!
STEPHANO: None that I love more than myself.
TRINCULO: You are a counselor. Can you command these elements to silence?
STEPHANO: Out of the way, I say.

(GONZALO and ALONSA step out of the way but TRINCULO enlists FERDINAND'S assistance.)

TRINCULO: *(To Ferdinand.)* Down with the topmast! Lower, lower!

(ANTONIA and SEBASTIA appear.)

ANTONIA: Shall we give o'er and drown?
SEBASTIA: Have you a mind to sink?
STEPHANO: Yet again?
TRINCULO: What, do you hear?
ANTONIA: A pox on thy throat!
SEBASTIA: Thou bawling, blasphemous, incharitable dog!
TRINCULO: We are less afraid to be drowned than you are.
STEPHANO: *(To Ferdinand and Trinculo.)* Lay her ahold! Off to sea again! Lay her off!
FERDINAND: All lost! To prayers! To prayers!

(ALONSA kneels in prayer.)

ANTONIA: The Queen at prayers?
GONZALO: *(He kneels.)* Let's assist!
SEBASTIA: I am out of patience!
ANTONIA: We are cheated of our lives by drunkards.

(The ship begins to tear apart.)

ALONSA: Mercy on us!
GONZALO: Let's all sink with the Queen.
ANTONIA: *(To Sebastia.)* Let's take our leave of her.
STEPHANO: We split! We split! We split!

(The ship is torn apart and the characters on deck are divided three ways as they exit. FERDINAND exits alone, STEPHANO and TRINCULO another direction, and ALONSA, GONZALO, ANTONIA, and SEBASTIA a third direction. The scene shifts back to MIRANDA and PROSPERO, who have remained visible throughout the scene.)

End of Scene

End of Freeview

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