

The Tempest:

A Comedy by William Shakespeare





You have arrived at your destination...

The sea somewhere between Africa and Italy early in the 17th century.

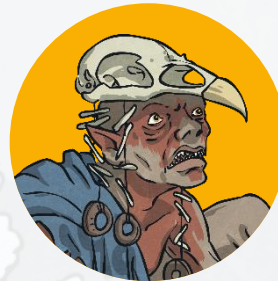
Who Are the Characters We Meet?



Prospero



Ariel



Caliban



Miranda



Trinculo



Ferdinand



King Alonso



Sebastian



Antonio



Stephano

A tremendous storm blows up and hits a ship carrying King Alonso of Naples along with Ferdinand, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, Stephano and Trinculo.

They are travelling back to Italy from the wedding of Alonso's daughter, Claribel, to the Prince of Tunisia.

Suddenly, the ship is hit by lightning...



Meanwhile, on a quiet island in the middle of the sea, Prospero, who is a magician and the previous Duke of Milan, and his daughter, Miranda, are looking out at the shipwreck.

Prospero and Miranda have lived on the island for twelve years with two servants that they found there: Ariel (a magical servant that was saved by Prospero) and Caliban (a half-man/ half-animal that had lived on the island when they arrived).

Prospero tells Miranda the story of how they came to be on the island...



In the past, Prospero had been the Duke of Milan until his brother, Antonio, hatched a plot with Alonso to take his place as Duke.

They had Prospero and Miranda kidnapped and put on a raft that drifted out to sea. Luckily, they managed to find land and that's how they came to live on their island. Another bonus was that Gonzalo had left them supplies and also Prospero's magic books.



We soon learn that Prospero and Ariel used their magical powers to create the storm that caused the shipwreck.

However, the travellers aren't dead...
Ariel has actually made sure that they all end up alive on Prospero's island. The groups of survivors though are separated, so they are not aware of each others' fates.



Prospero charms Miranda to sleep and then tells Ariel to be invisible to all but him for the next part of his plan.

When Miranda wakes up, Ariel has led Ferdinand, who has been separated from the others, to her and they instantly fall in love. This is all part of Prospero's plan.



Fearing their relationship is developing too quickly, Prospero tries to slow down his plan. He deliberately accuses Ferdinand of pretending to be the Duke of Naples. Annoyed by the accusation, Ferdinand draws his sword after which, Prospero imprisons him much to Miranda's disgust.



Next, Ariel is sent on another mission to find the other men lost on the island: Alonso, Antonio, Sebastian, Stephano and Gonzalo. They all think Fernando is dead as they haven't seen him since their ship was destroyed.

Ariel puts everyone to sleep apart from Sebastian and Antonio. While everyone else is sleeping, Sebastian and Antonio start to talk about killing Alonso to become King.

Desperate to stop the murder, Ariel wakes everyone up just as they get close to Alonso. The men make their excuses as to why they had their swords out and everyone moves on.



Elsewhere on the island, Trinculo (the jester) and Stephano find Caliban and end up getting drunk with him. During their merriment and drunken singing, they plan to kill Prospero.



Prospero now makes himself invisible to spy on Miranda and Ferdinand. He sees them declaring their love for each other.

Miranda proposes to Ferdinand after which, Prospero appears and is pleased that his daughter has found happiness.



As the last part of Prospero's plan, Ariel gathers everyone together in front of Prospero. Alonso realises that his son is not dead, but is now married to Miranda.

Prospero chastises the group for banishing him but also tells them that he forgives them.



Prospero readies a ship to take everyone back to Milan where he will resume his role as the rightful Duke of Milan.

Ariel and Caliban will be freed.

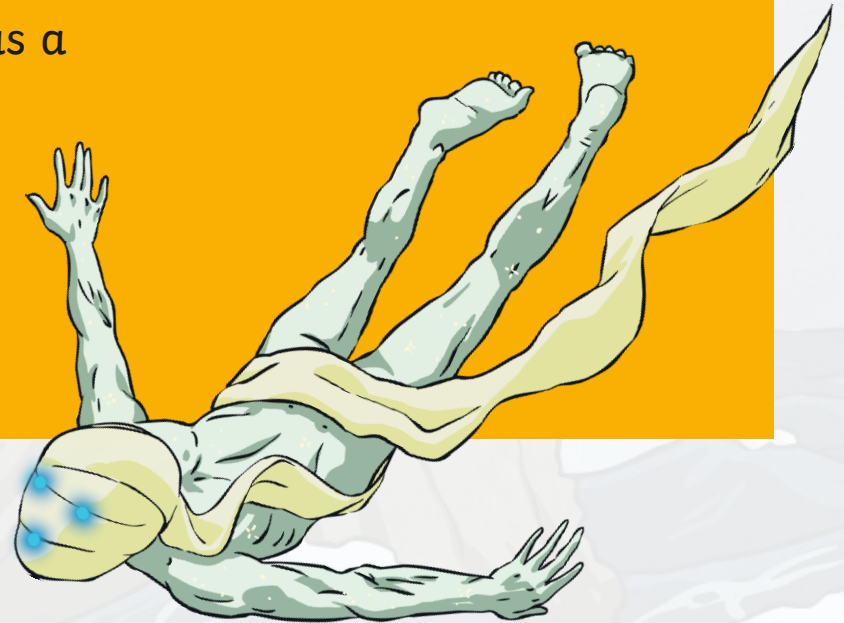
Everyone is happy.



Interesting Facts about The Tempest

The Tempest play is based on a rumour that went around London in the late 16th century about a shipwreck in Bermuda.

The BBC News Broadcasting House has a statue of two characters: Ariel and Prospero on the front of the building. This is because Ariel is known as the spirit of the air, which fits well with the idea of broadcasting.





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