

PLOT

Prospero and her daughter, Miranda, were settled into the fight to survive on a strange Mediterranean island until one fateful day when their long-lost enemies sailed into view returning from a wedding. The play begins when Prospero, usurped and exiled by the Duke of Milan, conjures a terrible storm with magic in an act of revenge to torment a ship bearing the king of Naples and his court, including Prospero's treacherous brother, Antonio, now Duke of Milan. When Miranda questions her mother's actions, Prospero shares the twelve-year-old story of a coup that led to her betrayal.

With aid from the king of Naples, Antonio had arranged for the kidnapping and murder of Prospero and her infant daughter. The two escaped and were set adrift at sea. They landed on an almost uninhabited island formerly ruled by a witch named Sycorax. Hearing her wailing cry, Prospero rescued Ariel from a tree and claimed her as her spirit-servant. She conns Caliban, son of Sycorax, into a life of servitude — robbing him of his birthright as ruler of the island. Ultimately, Prospero continued to hone her magic and the exiled mother and daughter made the island their new home.

All those stranded in the wreckage are scattered ashore on various parts of the island. Prospero uses her magic to put Miranda under a sleeping spell and meets with Ariel to devise a plot to deal with the men who washed ashore. Ariel laments about her freedom, and Prospero promises to grant it after the completion of a few more tasks. Ariel lures the king's son, Ferdinand, to Prospero. At first sight, he falls madly in love with Miranda. Thinking his intentions are impure, Prospero uses her magic to force Ferdinand into her service.

While the king desperately searches for his son, who he believes has drowned, Antonio and another of the king's courtiers, Sebastian, hatch a plan to kill the king in his sleep. Ariel foils their plot by waking the king and his advisor, Gonzalo, with a song. On another side of the shore, the king's jester and butler happen upon Caliban. In a drunken stupor, Caliban mistakes the two men for gods and suggests they kill Prospero in exchange for one of the two men becoming lord of the island. Ariel, who had made herself invisible to the conspirators, reports this evil plan to Prospero.

Prospero spots her daughter and Ferdinand pronouncing their love, and in an act of goodwill, she frees Ferdinand and gives her blessing for their marriage. Remembering the wicked plot against her life, she sets a trap for the three conspirators, and they are chased away by spirit hounds.

The king pleads for the men to rest, exhausted from the search for Ferdinand. A banquet table magically appears before them, but it vanishes before they are able to begin their feast. Ariel appears as a strange hybrid bird and scolds the men. She says their crimes against Prospero are the cause of the tempest and the disappearance of the king's son, Ferdinand. The men are undone.

Ariel lures the king and his courtiers to Prospero. Instead of exacting her revenge, Prospero forgives them and accepts the king's promise to return her dukedom. To the king's amazement, Prospero reveals Ferdinand is alive and betrothed to her daughter, Miranda. The two lovers are then revealed playing a game of chess. When word arrives that their ship can again set sail, Prospero asks Ariel to complete one final task before granting her freedom: to ensure their safety for a pleasant journey back to Italy.

Having made amends with all, Prospero begins her epilogue, renouncing her magic. She begs the audience to release her from the play with their applause.

CHARACTERS

On the Island

Prospero – A powerful magician; exiled Duke of Milan and mother of Miranda

Miranda – Prospero's young daughter

Ariel – A spirit of the air in Prospero's service

Caliban – Son of Sycorax; described as a monster enslaved to Prospero

In the Shipwreck

Alonso – King of Naples and father of Ferdinand

Sebastian – Alonso's brother who plots against him

Ferdinand – Alonso's son and love interest of Miranda

Antonio – Prospero's treacherous brother; current Duke of Milan

Gonzalo – Honest advisor to the king of Naples; friend to Prospero

Characters *cont.*

Trinculo – The king's jester

Stephano – The king's drunken butler

Boatswain – An officer on the ship

Francisco – A lord attending the king of Naples

Adrian – A lord attending the king of Naples

Other characters: mariners, spirits, reapers

SETTING

A remote Mediterranean island. The present.