

TIMELESS SHAKESPEARE



The **Tempest**

William Shakespeare



– BACKGROUND –

Thanks to his scheming brother, Prospero has been banished as the Duke of Milan. For the past 12 years, he has lived on a deserted island with his daughter Miranda, now 15. Prospero's deep interest in study, the cause of his downfall in Milan, has ironically helped him to control the island through magic. Caliban, the deformed son of the dead witch Sycorax, is Prospero's unwilling servant. Ariel, a fairy who had been imprisoned in a pine tree by Sycorax, also serves Prospero. As the play opens, Prospero has caused a tempest at sea leading to the wrecking of a ship carrying his old enemies.

– CAST OF CHARACTERS –

ALONSO The King of Naples

SEBASTIAN Alonso's brother

PROSPERO The rightful Duke of Milan

ANTONIO Prospero's brother, who has taken the position of the Duke of Milan

FERDINAND The son of the King of Naples

GONZALO An honest old counselor

ADRIAN and **FRANCISCO** Lords

CALIBAN A deformed slave

TRINCULO A jester

STEPHANO A drunken butler

CAPTAIN OF A SHIP

BOATSWAIN The officer in charge of the deck's crew and equipment

SAILORS

MIRANDA Prospero's daughter

ARIEL An airy spirit

IRIS, CERES, JUNO, NYMPHS, REAPERS Spirits

ACT 1

| Scene 1 |

*A ship tosses and rocks during a storm. The **captain** and the **boatswain** come out on deck.*

CAPTAIN: Boatswain!

BOATSWAIN: Here, Captain. How goes it?

CAPTAIN: Good fellow, speak to the sailors.
Hurry, or we will soon run ourselves
aground. Hurry!

*(**Captain** exits, blowing his whistle. **Sailors** run by and start pulling at the sails.)*

BOATSWAIN: Heave ho, my hearties!

Work harder! Quickly! Take in the
topsail. Obey the captain's whistle.

(Defiantly, to the storm): Blow until you burst
your lungs, as long as we can sail on.

*(**Alonso** enters, along with **Sebastian**, **Antonio**,
Ferdinand, **Gonzalo**, and **others**.)*

ALONSO: Boatswain, where's the captain?

BOATSWAIN: Don't you hear him? You're
in the way! Stay below. You're helping the
storm.

GONZALO: No, good fellow, be patient.

BOATSWAIN: When the sea is! (*Pointing to the huge waves*) What do these care about kings? To your cabins! Silence! Get out of our way!

GONZALO: Good sir, remember who is on board.

BOATSWAIN: None that I love more than myself. You are a counselor. If you can command this storm to silence, do so. If not, give thanks that you have lived so long, and go to your cabin. Prepare for trouble, if it comes along.

(*To the passengers*): Get out of our way, I say!

(*Boatswain exits, shouting orders.*)

GONZALO: This fellow gives me great comfort. He wasn't born to be drowned—but hanged instead. Fate, stick to his hanging. Make the rope of his destiny our anchor, for our own is not helping us. If he has not been born to be hanged, we're in trouble.

(*Alonso and others exit. Boatswain enters again.*)

BOATSWAIN (*to sailors*): Down with the topmast! Quick! Lower, lower!

(*Shouts are heard from the passengers below decks.*)

Blast all this howling! They are louder than the weather.

(Sebastian, Antonio, and Gonzalo enter again.)

You again? What are you doing here?
Shall we give up and drown? Do you
want to sink?

SEBASTIAN: May you choke, you bawling dog!

BOATSWAIN: Do some work, then.

ANTONIO: Hang, you dog! Hang, you
loudmouth! We are less afraid of
drowning than you are.

GONZALO: I guarantee he won't drown, even if
the ship were no stronger than a nutshell.

BOATSWAIN *(to the sailors):* Heave ho!
Raise the mainsail! Out to sea again.
Turn her around!

(Sailors enter, soaking wet and frightened.)

SAILORS: All is lost. Say your prayers! It's
hopeless. *(Sailors exit.)*

GONZALO: The king and the prince are at
prayers. Let's join them. It seems to be
our only hope.

*(A confused noise is heard. "Mercy on us! Farewell, my
wife and children. Farewell, brother! Oh, no! The ship
is splitting up, splitting up!")*

ANTONIO: Let's all go down with the king.

SEBASTIAN: We must say farewell to him.

(Antonio and Sebastian exit.)

GONZALO: Now I would give a hundred
miles of sea for an acre of barren ground!
God's will be done! But I would much
rather die a dry death.

(Gonzalo exits.)

| Scene 2 |

An island. A cleared place before Prospero's cave.

Prospero and Miranda enter.

MIRANDA: My dearest father, if by your magic
You have raised this storm, stop it now.
The sky seems to be pouring down
flaming tar,
And the sea rises up to dash out the fire.
Oh, I have suffered with those I saw suffer!
A brave ship, which no doubt had some
Noble people on board, was dashed to
pieces.
The cries broke my heart! Poor souls,
they must surely have died!
If I'd been a god with any power, I would
Have sunk the sea into the earth. I would
never
Have let it swallow the good ship and
The cargo of souls within her!

PROSPERO: Calm down. Don't be so upset.
Tell your tender heart there's no harm done.

MIRANDA: Oh, this is a terrible day!

PROSPERO: No harm. I have done nothing
But what's best for you, my dearest
daughter.

You don't know who you are, nor where
I came from. You do not yet know that
I am greater
Than just Prospero, your humble father
Who lives in a humble cave.

MIRANDA: I never thought I should know more.

PROSPERO: It's time I tell you. Lend me a hand.
Help me remove my magic cloak.

(She does so, and he places it on a rock.)

Wipe your eyes. Take comfort.
The dreadful sight of the wreck harmed
no one.
Not even a hair has been hurt on any
creature
You heard crying or saw sinking into the sea.
Sit down. Now you must know more.

MIRANDA: You have often begun to tell me
What I am. But you always stopped and
Left my questions unanswered, saying,
"No more. Not yet."

PROSPERO: The hour has now come.
The very minute tells you to listen.
Now pay attention. Can you remember
A time before we came to this cave?

I do not think you can, for then you
were not
Quite three years old.

MIRANDA: Certainly, sir, I can.

PROSPERO: What can you remember?
Some other house or person?

MIRANDA: It's far off and rather like a dream.
Did I not have four or five women once
to look after me?

PROSPERO: You did, and more, Miranda.
But how is it that this lives in your mind?
What else can you see in that dim past?
If you remember things before you
came here,
How you came here might come back
to you.

MIRANDA: But I do not.

PROSPERO: Miranda, just twelve years ago,
your father
Was the Duke of Milan and a powerful
prince.

MIRANDA: Sir, are you not my father?

PROSPERO: Your mother was a masterpiece
of Virtue,
And she said you were my daughter.
Your father was the Duke of Milan.
His only heir was a princess, equally noble.

MIRANDA: My heavens! What foul play

Did we suffer, that we came to this place?
Or was it something good that we did?

PROSPERO: Both, both, my girl!

We were exiled by foul play, as you said.
But we were helped here by Divine
Providence.

MIRANDA: Oh, Father, my heart bleeds to
think of

The trouble I must have been to you,
Which I don't remember.
Tell me more.

PROSPERO: My brother was called Antonio.

Oh, that a brother could be so wicked!
Next to you, I loved him more than
anyone.

I trusted him to manage my kingdom.
At that time, Milan was the leading
city-state, and

I was the ruling duke. My understanding of
The liberal arts was unequalled. Since
education

Was my obsession, I continued to study.
I left the business of government to my
brother

And became a stranger to my own court.
I was all wrapped up in my secret studies.

Your false uncle—are you listening to me?

MIRANDA: Sir, most carefully!

PROSPERO: He learned how to grant favors, and
How to deny them. He learned who to
promote,
And who to cut down to size. In this way,
He won the loyalty of my supporters.
Having then both personal power
And control over officials, he alone could
call the tune
In my kingdom. He became the ivy that
hid my
Princely tree from view.
He sucked the very life out of it. Are you
listening to me?

MIRANDA: Oh, good sir, I am!

PROSPERO: Listen well. I neglected my worldly
Duties and instead concentrated on
bettering my mind.
This is what waked an evil nature in my
false brother.
My trust, which had no limits, encouraged
An equal and opposite deceit in him.
He was made rich by my income
And powerful by the trust I put in him.
We had switched places, and he took on
My royal duties, with all their privileges.
He began to think like a man who believes
His own lies—that *he* was indeed the duke.
In this way, his ambition grew. Do you hear?