

Year 9: Shakespeare Study - The Tempest

Brief Plot Summary
The Tempest (I.i) Alonso, the King of Naples, is on a ship with his son Ferdinand and his companions. They are struck by a terrifying storm and are washed ashore in different places. The island seems to be abandoned.
After the Storm (I.ii) Miranda watches the huge tempest. She lives with her father Prospero. Prospero tells his daughter of their past. Prospero has created the storm to bring his brother to the island.
Ariel and Caliban (I.ii. cont./II.i) Prospero is a powerful magician who controls the spirit Ariel who completes tasks for him. Prospero has agreed to release Ariel after this last mission. Caliban is also under Prospero's control. He is the son of an old witch, Sycorax, and is a native of the island. Prospero taught Caliban how to speak but Caliban resents the control Prospero has over him.
Kind Alonso (II.i) King Alonso and his brother Sebastian, as well as Antonio wander around the island. King Alonso weeps as he believes his son Ferdinand is dead. Sebastian and Antonio plot to kill Alonso so that Sebastian can be king. They are stopped by Ariel's magical intervention.
Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo (II.ii, III.ii) Caliban is found by Stephano and Trinculo. They give him alcohol to drink and he gets drunk. Caliban offers to serve Stephano because he believes he is a god because of the heavenly drink! Caliban explains to them how Prospero has treated him and that he will be their guide on the island if they overthrow him. The three drunks go to find and kill Prospero.
Ferdinand and Miranda (I.ii, III.i) Ferdinand has survived the storm. He is safely on the island and is found by Miranda. They fall instantly in love. Prospero wants to test that the love is real. Ferdinand has to endure hard labour to prove his intentions are honourable. Miranda pities Ferdinand and wants to marry him. Prospero blesses their marriage.
The End (IV.i, V.i) A marriage for Ferdinand and Miranda is arranged. It is interrupted when Prospero recalls the threat from Trinculo, Stephano and Caliban. Prospero and Ariel send spirit dogs to scare them away. King Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio meet Prospero. He explains what has been happening on the island. He shows them Ferdinand and Miranda who are now married. King Alonso is filled with regret and asks for forgiveness from Prospero which he grants.
Epilogue Prospero declares that he will be giving up his magic. Ariel is released from his service. The party travel back to Milan. We do not know what has happened to Caliban.

Key Characters
Alonso – King of Naples
Antonio – Prospero's brother. Antonio stole Prospero's title as Duke of Milan.
Ariel – an airy spirit. A slave of Prospero's who earns his freedom
Caliban – a native of the island. Being kept as a slave by Prospero because he tried to attach Miranda.
Ferdinand – Alonso's son
Gonzalo – the old counsellor to the King of Naples
Miranda – Prospero's daughter
Prospero – the rightful Duke of Milan
Sebastian – Alonso's brother
Stephano – a drunken butler
Trinculo – a jester

Dramatic Devices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genre – tragicomedy • Protagonist • Antagonist • Prose • Verse • Iambic pentameter • Monologue • Soliloquy • Stage directions • Dramatic irony • Foreshadowing • Parody • Comic relief • Exclamative sentence • Interrogative sentence • Imperative sentence • Declarative sentence

Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power and conflict • Magic and supernatural • Teaching and learning • Freedom • Justice and revenge • Empathy and forgiveness

Context
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1600s • Jacobean era • Witchcraft, magic • Fate • Patriarchal society • Colonialism • Shipwrecks and storms • Chain of being