

## THE TEMPEST

PROSPERO, THE DUKE OF MILAN, WAS A learned and studious man, who lived among his books, leaving the management of his dukedom

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to his brother Antonio, in whom he had complete trust. But that trust was ill-rewarded, for Antonio wanted to wear the Duke's crown himself, and, to gain his ends, would have killed his brother but for the love the people bore him. However, with the help of Prospero's great enemy, Alonso, King of Naples, he managed to get into his hands the dukedom with all its honor, power, and riches. For they took Prospero to sea, and when they were far away from land, forced him into a little boat with no tackle, mast, or sail. In their cruelty and hatred they put his little daughter, Miranda (not yet three years old), into the boat with him, and sailed away, leaving them to their fate.

But one among the courtiers with Antonio was true to his rightful master, Prospero. To save Prospero from his enemies was impossible, but much could be done to assist him in this dark hour. So this worthy lord, whose name was Gonzalo, secretly placed in the boat some fresh water, provisions, and clothes, and what Prospero valued most of all, some of his precious books.

The boat was cast on an island, and Prospero and his little one landed in safety. This island was enchanted, and for years had lain under the spell of a witch, Sycorax, who had imprisoned in the trunks of trees all the good spirits she found there. She died shortly before Prospero was cast on those shores, but the spirits, of whom Ariel was the chief, still remained in their prisons.

Prospero was a great magician, for he had devoted himself almost entirely to the study of magic during the years in which he allowed his brother to manage the affairs of Milan. By his art he set free the imprisoned spirits, yet kept them obedient to his will, and they were more truly his subjects than his people in Milan had been. For he treated them kindly as long as they did his bidding, and he exercised his power over them wisely and well. One creature alone did he treat with harshness: this was Caliban, the son of the wicked

old witch, a hideous, deformed monster, horrible to look on, and vicious and brutal in all his habits.

When Miranda was grown up into a maiden, sweet and fair to see, it chanced that Antonio and Alonso, with Sebastian, Alonso's brother, and Ferdinand, Alonso's son, were at sea together with old Gonzalo, and their ship came near Prospero's island. Prospero, knowing they were there, raised by his art a great storm, so that even the sailors on board gave themselves up for lost; first among them all, Prince Ferdinand leaped into the sea, and was believed to be drowned. But Ariel brought Ferdinand safe ashore, and all the rest of the crew. Although they were washed overboard, they landed unhurt in different parts of the island. The good ship herself, which they all thought had been wrecked, lay at anchor in the harbor, where Ariel had brought her. Such wonders could Prospero and his spirits perform.

While the tempest was raging, Prospero showed his daughter the brave ship laboring in the sea, and told her that it was filled with living human beings like themselves. She, in pity of their lives, prayed him who had raised this storm to silence it. Then her father bade her to have no fear, for he intended to save every one of them.

Then, for the first time, he told her the story of his life and hers, and that he had caused this storm to rise in order that his enemies, Antonio and Alonso, who were on board, might be delivered into his hands.

When he finished his story, he charmed Miranda into sleep, for Ariel was at hand, and Prospero had work for him to do. Ariel, who had longed for his complete freedom, grumbled to be kept in drudgery, but on being threateningly reminded of all the sufferings he had undergone when Sycorax ruled the land, he ceased to complain, and promised faithfully to do whatever Prospero might command.

"Do so," said Prospero, "and in two days I will discharge thee." Then he bade Ariel take the form of an invisible water nymph and sent him in search of the young prince Ferdinand. Ariel found and hovered near him, singing the while—

*"Come unto these yellow sands  
And then take hands:*