

# SYNOPSIS

## ACT I

Prospero and his baby daughter Miranda wash ashore on a swampy, water-covered island where the creature Sycorax lives with her son Caliban. Sycorax, afraid for her child, attacks Prospero, who gains the upper hand and kills her. Prospero soon discovers the helpless Caliban and adopts him.

Prospero then releases the spirit Ariel, confined in a tree. Ariel shows Prospero all the wonders of the island, vowing to loyally serve his new master.

Years pass and Miranda grows to adulthood, Prospero telling her how they came to be on the island: Immersed in his study of magic, Prospero, one-time Duke of Milan, was ambushed by his sister Antonia's minions and those of her co-conspirator, King Alonso of Naples. Antonia became ruler of Milan, paying Alonso tribute, while Prospero and Miranda were exiled.

Soon after, Caliban, unable to control his impulses and desires, assaults Miranda, his childhood playmate. He is stopped by Prospero, who disowns Caliban and enslaves him.

## ACT II

Prospero realizes Antonia and King Alonso are on a ship, passing near the island. He and Ariel raise a tempest to drown them, but Miranda begs her father to spare their lives. Prospero relents and Antonia, Alonso, Alonso's son Ferdinand and his scheming brother Sebastian—as well as the servants Stephano and Trinculo—are washed ashore.

Alonso is heartbroken to discover a torn garment, assuming his son Ferdinand has drowned. Ariel appears and soothes Alonso to sleep. Antonia attempts to seduce Sebastian into murdering his brother the King, but Ariel wakes Alonso before they can strike.

Elsewhere, a drunken Stephano is reunited with his friend Trinculo. The two then meet Caliban and give him some of their liquor. The manipulative Caliban, full of rage at Prospero for killing his mother and enslaving him, concocts a plot: If Stephano and Trinculo will help Caliban murder Prospero, Caliban will set them up as rulers of the island.

Meanwhile, Ferdinand, alive and well, explores the island. Miranda discovers him and, under the watchful eye of Prospero, the two fall in love. But, feigning anger, Prospero intervenes and puts Ferdinand to work, testing his devotion to Miranda.

## ACT III

Ariel toys with Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban, as Alonso, Antonia, and Sebastian wander the island, hopelessly lost.

Miranda goes to Ferdinand and offers to assist with his labors, the pair becoming secretly engaged.

## ACT IV

Before Prospero releases him from service, he and Ariel set out an array of fine clothes as bait for Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban. A horde of the island's demons are then unleashed, tormenting Caliban and his cohorts.

Meanwhile, Antonia, Alonso, and Sebastian continue to aimlessly wander the island, exhausted, tortured by visions of relief that Ariel presents to them. Ariel transforms into a massive beast—a harpy swooping down on Prospero's enemies. But the horrifying apparition vanishes as Prospero himself appears, suspending Antonia, Alonso, and Sebastian in a magic circle.

## ACT V

Prospero reveals himself to Antonia, Alonso, and Sebastian. Moved by his daughter's happiness, Prospero, rather than kill his betrayers, forgives them. Alonso is joyfully reunited with his son as Stephano, Caliban, and Trinculo rush in, still chased, terrified.

The errant servants are put to work, the rest of the group celebrating Ferdinand and Miranda's marriage. As promised, Prospero releases Ariel and forswears his powers forever, "drowning" his book of magic. Returning home with the rest, he abandons Caliban on the island.