Chapter 6: All the World’s a Stage

# Drama as a Genre

Like fiction, **drama** features characters caught up in a plot. In fact, some plays have been based on novels, and novels on plays. Yet, whereas the narrator of a novel can spend pages painting a picture of the story’s circumstances for the reader, a play is restricted to the space of the stage and the time frame of a couple of hours. What strategies are available to the playwright to ensure that the play successfully conveys its intended effects and themes?

To provide the story’s setting, a play requires sets. If you’ve ever been involved with a play, you know that the **set** can be made up of detailed backdrops, specifically designed props, strategic lighting, and sometimes even background noise. A set, along with the characters’ subtle indications of the scene, can generate a full setting in the audience’s imagination.

Another difference between fiction and drama is that usually a play’s **plot** is primarily forwarded through dialogue and action. Although a novel’s narrator can describe in detail the thoughts and impressions of its characters, a play’s effects depend much more heavily on what the characters say and do. A play is a performance, a spectacle, rather than words on paper. Some plays do include a narrator or a chorus, to introduce the scene or set the tone of the play, but the bulk of the production’s effect is generated through the dialogue and its visual devices, and since the play’s **script** dictates what the characters will say and often, through **stage direction**, its production strategies as well, the script is crucial to a successful performance.

# A One-Act Play

Although the following script is only that, a script, it does give us a place to start as we investigate drama as a genre. *Trifles* is a **one-act play**, which is a drama that can usually be performed in an hour or less and in which the entire story is performed in one *act* as opposed to several. Although a one- act play can contain scene changes, this one only employs one scene.

*Trifles*

By Susan Glaspell

First performed by the Provincetown Players at the Wharf Theatre, Provincetown, Mass., August 8, 1916.

GEORGE HENDERSON (County Attorney)

HENRY PETERS (Sheriff)

LEWIS HALE, A neighboring farmer

MRS. PETERS

MRS. HALE

SCENE: *The kitchen is the now abandoned farmhouse of* JOHN WRIGHT, *a gloomy kitchen, and left without having been put in order—unwashed pans under the sink, a loaf of bread outside the bread-box, a dish-towel on the table—other signs of incompleted work. At the rear the outer door opens and the* SHERIFF *comes in followed by the* COUNTY ATTORNEY *and* HALE. *The* SHERIFF *and* HALE *are men in middle life, the* COUNTY ATTORNEY *is a young man; all are much bundled up and go at once to the stove. They are followed by the two women—the* SHERIFF*’s wife first; she is a slight wiry woman, a thin nervous face*. MRS. HALE *is larger and would ordinarily be called more comfortable looking, but she is disturbed now and looks fearfully about as she enters. The women have come in slowly, and stand close together near the door*.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

(*rubbing his hands*)

This feels good. Come up to the fire, ladies.

MRS. PETERS

(*after taking a step forward*)

I’m not—cold.

SHERIFF

(*unbuttoning his overcoat and stepping away from the stove as if to mark the beginning of official business*)

Now, Mr. Hale, before we move things about, you explain to Mr. Henderson just what you saw when you came here yesterday morning.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

By the way, has anything been moved? Are things just as you left them yesterday?

SHERIFF

(*looking about*)

It’s just the same. When it dropped below zero last night I thought I’d better send Frank out this morning to make a fire for us—no use getting pneumonia with a big case on, but I told him not to touch anything except the stove—and you know Frank.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

Somebody should have been left here yesterday.

SHERIFF

Oh—yesterday. When I had to send Frank to Morris Center for that man who went crazy—I want you to know I had my hands full yesterday. I knew you could get back from Omaha by today and as long as I went over everything here myself—

COUNTY ATTORNEY

Well, Mr. Hale, tell just what happened when you came here yesterday morning.

HALE

Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes. We came along the road from my place and as I got here I said, I’m going to see if I can’t get John Wright to go in with me on a party telephone.’ I spoke to Wright about it once before and he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—I guess you know about how much he talked himself; but I thought maybe if I went to the house and talked about it before his wife, though I said to Harry that I didn’t know as what his wife wanted made much difference to John—

COUNTY ATTORNEY

Let’s talk about that later, Mr. Hale. I do want to talk about that, but tell now just what happened when you got to the house.

HALE

I didn’t hear or see anything; I knocked at the door, and still it was all quiet inside. I knew they must be up, it was past eight o’clock. So I knocked again, and I thought I heard somebody say, ‘Come in.’ I wasn’t sure, I’m not sure yet, but I opened the door—this door

(*indicating the door by which the two women are still standing*)

and there in that rocker—

(*pointing to it*)

sat Mrs. Wright.

(*They all look at the rocker*.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY

What—was she doing?

HALE

She was rockin’ back and forth. She had her apron in her hand and was kind of—pleating it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

And how did she—look?

HALE

Well, she looked queer.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

How do you mean—queer?

HALE

Well, as if she didn’t know what she was going to do next. And kind of done up.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

How did she seem to feel about your coming?

HALE

Why, I don’t think she minded—one way or other. She didn’t pay much attention. I said, ‘How do, Mrs. Wright it’s cold, ain’t it?’ And she said, ‘Is it?’—and went on kind of pleating at her apron. Well, I was surprised; she didn’t ask me to come up to the stove, or to set down, but just sat there, not even looking at me, so I said, ‘I want to see John.’ And then she—laughed. I guess you would call it a laugh. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: ‘Can’t I see John?’ ‘No’, she says, kind o’ dull like. ‘Ain’t he home?’ says I. ‘Yes’, says she, ‘he’s home’. ‘Then why can’t I see him?’ I asked her, out of patience. ‘’Cause he’s dead’, says she. *‘Dead*?’ says I. She just nodded her head, not getting a bit excited, but rockin’ back and forth. ‘Why—where is he?’ says I, not knowing what to say. She just pointed upstairs—like that

(*himself pointing to the room above.*)

I got up, with the idea of going up there. I walked from there to here—then I says, ‘Why, what did he die of?’ ‘He died of a rope round his neck’, says she, and just went on pleatin’ at her apron. Well, I went out and called Harry. I thought I might—need help. We went upstairs and there he was lyin’—

COUNTY ATTORNEY

I think I’d rather have you go into that upstairs, where you can point it all out. Just go on now with the rest of the story.

HALE

Well, my first thought was to get that rope off. It looked...

(*stops, his face twitches*)

... but Harry, he went up to him, and he said, ‘No, he’s dead all right, and we’d better not touch anything.’ So we went back down stairs. She was still sitting that same way. ‘Has anybody been notified?’ I asked. ‘No’, says she unconcerned. ‘Who did this, Mrs. Wright?’ said Harry. He said it business-like—and she stopped pleatin’ of her apron. ‘I don’t know’, she says. ‘You don’t *know*?’ says Harry. ‘No’, says she. ‘Weren’t you sleepin’ in the bed with him?’ says Harry. ‘Yes’, says she, ‘but I was on the inside’. ‘Somebody slipped a rope round his neck and strangled him and you didn’t wake up?’ says Harry. ‘I didn’t wake up’, she said after him. We must ‘a looked as if we didn’t see how that could be, for after a minute she said, ‘I sleep sound’. Harry was going to ask her more questions but I said maybe we ought to let her tell her story first to the coroner, or the sheriff, so Harry went fast as he could to Rivers’ place, where there’s a telephone.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

And what did Mrs. Wright do when she knew that you had gone for the coroner?

HALE

She moved from that chair to this one over here

(*pointing to a small chair in the corner*)

and just sat there with her hands held together and looking down. I got a feeling that I ought to make some conversation, so I said I had come in to see if John wanted to put in a telephone, and at that she started to laugh, and then she stopped and looked at me—scared,

(*the* COUNTY ATTORNEY, *who has had his notebook out, makes a note.*)

I dunno, maybe it wasn’t scared. I wouldn’t like to say it was. Soon Harry got back, and then Dr. Lloyd came, and you, Mr. Peters, and so I guess that’s all I know that you don’t.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

(*looking around.*)

I guess we’ll go upstairs first—and then out to the barn and around there,

(*to the* SHERIFF.)

You’re convinced that there was nothing important here—nothing that would point to any motive.

SHERIFF

Nothing here but kitchen things.

(*The* COUNTY ATTORNEY, *after again looking around the kitchen, opens the door of a cupboard closet. He gets up on a chair and looks on a shelf. Pulls his hand away, sticky*.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY

Here’s a nice mess.

(*The women draw nearer*.)

MRS. PETERS

(*to the other woman*)

Oh, her fruit; it did freeze,

(*to the* LAWYER)

She worried about that when it turned so cold. She said the fire’d go out and her jars would break.

SHERIFF

Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and worryin’ about her preserves.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

I guess before we’re through she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about.

HALE

Well, women are used to worrying over trifles.

(*The two women move a little closer together*.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY

(*with the gallantry of a young politician*)

And yet, for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies?

(*the women do not unbend. He goes to the sink, takes a dipperful of water from the pail and pouring it into a basin, washes his hands. Starts to wipe them on the roller-towel, turns it for a cleaner place*)

Dirty towels!

(*kicks his foot against the pans under the sink*)

Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?

MRS. HALE

(*stiffly*)

There’s a great deal of work to be done on a farm.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

To be sure. And yet

(*with a little bow to her*)

I know there are some Dickson county farmhouses which do not have such roller towels.

(*He gives it a pull to expose its length again*.)

MRS. HALE

Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men’s hands aren’t always as clean as they might be.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

Ah, loyal to your sex, I see. But you and Mrs. Wright were neighbors. I suppose you were friends, too.

MRS. HALE

(*shaking her head*)

I’ve not seen much of her of late years. I’ve not been in this house—it’s more than a year.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

And why was that? You didn’t like her?

MRS. HALE

I liked her all well enough. Farmers’ wives have their hands full, Mr. Henderson. And then—

COUNTY ATTORNEY

Yes—?

MRS. HALE

(*looking about.*)

It never seemed a very cheerful place.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

No—it’s not cheerful. I shouldn’t say she had the homemaking instinct.

MRS. HALE

Well, I don’t know as Wright had, either.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

You mean that they didn’t get on very well?

MRS. HALE

No, I don’t mean anything. But I don’t think a place’d be any cheerfuller for John Wright’s being in it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

I’d like to talk more of that a little later. I want to get the lay of things upstairs now.

(*He goes to the left, where three steps lead to a stair door*.)

SHERIFF

I suppose anything Mrs. Peters does’ll be all right. She was to take in some clothes for her, you know, and a few little things. We left in such a hurry yesterday.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

Yes, but I would like to see what you take, Mrs. Peters, and keep an eye out for anything that might be of use to us.

MRS. PETERS

Yes, Mr. Henderson.

(*The women listen to the men’s steps on the stairs, then look about the kitchen*.)

MRS. HALE

I’d hate to have men coming into my kitchen, snooping around and criticizing.

(*She arranges the pans under sink which the* LAWYER *had shoved out of place*.)

MRS. PETERS

Of course it’s no more than their duty.

MRS. HALE

Duty’s all right, but I guess that deputy sheriff that came out to make the fire might have got a little of this on.

(*gives the roller towel a pull.*)

Wish I’d thought of that sooner. Seems mean to talk about her for not having things slicked up when she had to come away in such a hurry.

MRS. PETERS

(*who has gone to a small table in the left rear corner of the room, and lifted one end of a towel that covers a pan*)

She had bread set.

(*Stands still*.)

MRS. HALE

(*eyes fixed on a loaf of bread beside the bread-box, which is on a low shelf at the other side of the room. Moves slowly toward it.*)

She was going to put this in there,

(*picks up loaf, then abruptly drops it. In a manner of returning to familiar things.*)

It’s a shame about her fruit. I wonder if it’s all gone.

(*gets up on the chair and looks.*)

I think there’s some here that’s all right, Mrs. Peters. Yes—here;

(*holding it toward the window.*)

this is cherries, too.

(*looking again.*)

I declare I believe that’s the only one.

(*gets down, bottle in her hand. Goes to the sink and wipes it off on the outside.*)

She’ll feel awful bad after all her hard work in the hot weather. I remember the afternoon I put up my cherries last summer.

(*She puts the bottle on the big kitchen table, center of the room. With a sigh, is about to sit down in the rocking-chair. Before she is seated realizes what chair it is; with a slow look at it, steps back. The chair which she has touched rocks back and forth*.)

MRS. PETERS

Well, I must get those things from the front room closet,

(*she goes to the door at the right, but after looking into the other room, steps back.*)

You coming with me, Mrs. Hale? You could help me carry them.

(*They go in the other room; reappear,* MRS. PETERS *carrying a dress and skirt,* MRS. HALE *following with a pair of shoes.*)

MRS. PETERS

My, it’s cold in there.

(*She puts the clothes on the big table, and hurries to the stove.*)

MRS. HALE

(*examining the skirt.*)

Wright was close. I think maybe that’s why she kept so much to herself. She didn’t even belong to the Ladies Aid. I suppose she felt she couldn’t do her part, and then you don’t enjoy things when you feel shabby. She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir. But that—oh, that was thirty years ago. This all you was to take in?

MRS. PETERS

She said she wanted an apron. Funny thing to want, for there isn’t much to get you dirty in jail, goodness knows. But I suppose just to make her feel more natural. She said they was in the top drawer in this cupboard. Yes, here. And then her little shawl that always hung behind the door.

(*opens stair door and looks.*)

Yes, here it is.

(*Quickly shuts door leading upstairs.*)

MRS. HALE

(*abruptly moving toward her*)

Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS

Yes, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE

Do you think she did it?

MRS. PETERS

(*in a frightened voice*)

Oh, I don’t know.

MRS. HALE

Well, I don’t think she did. Asking for an apron and her little shawl. Worrying about her fruit.

MRS. PETERS

(*starts to speak, glances up, where footsteps are heard in the room above. In a low voice*)

Mr. Peters says it looks bad for her. Mr. Henderson is awful sarcastic in a speech and he’ll make fun of her sayin’ she didn’t wake up.

MRS. HALE

Well, I guess John Wright didn’t wake when they was slipping that rope under his neck.

MRS. PETERS

No, it’s strange. It must have been done awful crafty and still. They say it was such a—funny way to kill a man, rigging it all up like that.

MRS. HALE

That’s just what Mr. Hale said. There was a gun in the house. He says that’s what he can’t understand.

MRS. PETERS

Mr. Henderson said coming out that what was needed for the case was a motive; something to show anger, or—sudden feeling.

MRS. HALE

(*who is standing by the table.*)

Well, I don’t see any signs of anger around here,

(*she puts her hand on the dish towel which lies on the table, stands looking down at table, one half of which is clean, the other half messy.*)

It’s wiped to here,

(*makes a move as if to finish work, then turns and looks at loaf of bread outside the breadbox. Drops towel. In that voice of coming back to familiar things.*)

Wonder how they are finding things upstairs. I hope she had it a little more red-up up there. You know, it seems kind of sneaking. Locking her up in town and then coming out here and trying to get her own house to turn against her!

MRS. PETERS

But Mrs. Hale, the law is the law.

MRS. HALE

I s’pose ‘tis,

(*unbuttoning her coat.*)

Better loosen up your things, Mrs. Peters. You won’t feel them when you go out.

(MRS. PETERS *takes off her fur tippet, goes to hang it on hook at back of room, stands looking at the under part of the small corner table*.)

MRS. PETERS

She was piecing a quilt.

(*She brings the large sewing basket and they look at the bright pieces*.)

MRS. HALE

It’s log cabin pattern. Pretty, isn’t it? I wonder if she was goin’ to quilt it or just knot it?

(*Footsteps have been heard coming down the stairs*. The SHERIFF enters followed by HALE and the COUNTY ATTORNEY.)

SHERIFF

They wonder if she was going to quilt it or just knot it!

(*The men laugh, the women look abashed*.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY

(*rubbing his hands over the stove*)

Frank’s fire didn’t do much up there, did it? Well, let’s go out to the barn and get that cleared up.

(*The men go outside*.)

MRS. HALE

(*resentfully*)

I don’t know as there’s anything so strange, our takin’ up our time with little things while we’re waiting for them to get the evidence.

(*she sits down at the big table smoothing out a block with decision*)

I don’t see as it’s anything to laugh about.

MRS. PETERS

(*apologetically*)

Of course they’ve got awful important things on their minds.

(*Pulls up a chair and joins MRS HALE at the table*.)

MRS. HALE

(*examining another block*)

Mrs. Peters, look at this one. Here, this is the one she was working on, and look at the sewing! All the rest of it has been so nice and even. And look at this! It’s all over the place! Why, it looks as if she didn’t know what she was about!

(*After she has said this they look at each other, then start to glance back at the door. After an instant* MRS. HALE *has pulled at a knot and ripped the sewing*.)

MRS. PETERS

Oh, what are you doing, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE

(*mildly*)

Just pulling out a stitch or two that’s not sewed very good.

(*threading a needle*)

Bad sewing always made me fidgety.

MRS. PETERS

(nervously)

I don’t think we ought to touch things.

MRS. HALE

I’ll just finish up this end.

(*suddenly stopping and leaning forward*)

Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS

Yes, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE

What do you suppose she was so nervous about?

MRS. PETERS

Oh—I don’t know. I don’t know as she was nervous. I sometimes sew awful queer when I’m just tired.

(MRS. HALE *starts to say something, looks at* MRS. PETERS, *then goes on sewing*)

Well I must get these things wrapped up. They may be through sooner than we think,

(*putting apron and other things together*)

I wonder where I can find a piece of paper, and string.

MRS. HALE

In that cupboard, maybe.

MRS. PETERS

(*looking in cupboard*)

Why, here’s a bird-cage,

(*holds it up.*)

Did she have a bird, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE

Why, I don’t know whether she did or not—I’ve not been here for so long. There was a man around last year selling canaries cheap, but I don’t know as she took one; maybe she did. She used to sing real pretty herself.

MRS. PETERS

(*glancing around.*)

Seems funny to think of a bird here. But she must have had one, or why would she have a cage? I wonder what happened to it.

MRS. HALE

I s’pose maybe the cat got it.

MRS. PETERS

No, she didn’t have a cat. She’s got that feeling some people have about cats—being afraid of them. My cat got in her room and she was real upset and asked me to take it out.

MRS. HALE

My sister Bessie was like that. Queer, ain’t it?

MRS. PETERS

(*examining the cage.*)

Why, look at this door. It’s broke. One hinge is pulled apart.

MRS. HALE

(*looking too.*)

Looks as if someone must have been rough with it.

MRS. PETERS

Why, yes.

(*She brings the cage forward and puts it on the table*.)

MRS. HALE

I wish if they’re going to find any evidence they’d be about it. I don’t like this place.

MRS. PETERS

But I’m awful glad you came with me, Mrs. Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone.

MRS. HALE

It would, wouldn’t it?

(*dropping her sewing*)

But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs. Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when *she* was here. I—

(*looking around the room*)

—wish I had.

MRS. PETERS

But of course you were awful busy, Mrs. Hale—your house and your children.

MRS. HALE

I could’ve come. I stayed away because it weren’t cheerful—and that’s why I ought to have come. I—I’ve never liked this place. Maybe because it’s down in a hollow and you don’t see the road. I dunno what it is, but it’s a lonesome place and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now—

(*shakes her head*)

MRS. PETERS

Well, you mustn’t reproach yourself, Mrs. Hale. Somehow we just don’t see how it is with other folks until—something comes up.

MRS. HALE

Not having children makes less work—but it makes a quiet house, and Wright out to work all day, and no company when he did come in. Did you know John Wright, Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS

Not to know him; I’ve seen him in town. They say he was a good man.

MRS. HALE

Yes—good; he didn’t drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, and paid his debts. But he was a hard man, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him—

(*shivers.*)

Like a raw wind that gets to the bone,

(*pauses, her eye falling on the cage.*)

I should think she would ‘a wanted a bird. But what do you suppose went with it?

MRS. PETERS

I don’t know, unless it got sick and died.

(*She reaches over and swings the broken door, swings it again, both women watch it*.)

MRS. HALE

You weren’t raised round here, were you?

(*MRS. PETERS shakes her head.*)

You didn’t know—her?

MRS. PETERS

Not till they brought her yesterday.

MRS. HALE

She—come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself—real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and—fluttery. How—she—did—change.

(*silence; then as if struck by a happy thought and relieved to get back to everyday things.*)

Tell you what, Mrs. Peters, why don’t you take the quilt in with you? It might take up her mind.

MRS. PETERS

Why, I think that’s a real nice idea, Mrs. Hale. There couldn’t possibly be any objection to it, could there? Now, just what would I take? I wonder if her patches are in here—and her things.

(*They look in the sewing basket*.)

MRS. HALE

Here’s some red. I expect this has got sewing things in it.

(*brings out a fancy box*)

What a pretty box. Looks like something somebody would give you. Maybe her scissors are in here.

(*Opens box. Suddenly puts her hand to her nose*)

Why—

(MRS. PETERS *bends nearer, then turns her face away*)

There’s something wrapped up in this piece of silk.

MRS. PETERS

Why, this isn’t her scissors.

MRS. HALE

(*lifting the silk*)

Oh, Mrs. Peters—it’s—

(MRS. PETERS *bends closer*.)

MRS. PETERS

It’s the bird.

MRS. HALE

(*jumping up*)

But, Mrs. Peters—look at it! It’s neck! Look at its neck! It’s all—other side *to*.

MRS. PETERS

Somebody—wrung—its—neck.

(*Their eyes meet. A look of growing comprehension, of horror. Steps are heard outside*. MRS. HALE *slips box under quilt pieces, and sinks into her chair. Enter* SHERIFF *and* COUNTY ATTORNEY. MRS. PETERS *rises*.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY

(*as one turning from serious things to little pleasantries*)

Well ladies, have you decided whether she was going to quilt it or knot it?

MRS. PETERS

We think she was going to—knot it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

Well, that’s interesting, I’m sure.

(*seeing the birdcage*)

Has the bird flown?

MRS. HALE

(*putting more quilt pieces over the box*)

We think the—cat got it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

(*preoccupied*)

Is there a cat?

(MRS. HALE *glances in a quick covert way at* MRS. PETERS.)

MRS. PETERS

Well, not now. They’re superstitious, you know. They leave.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

(*to* SHERIFF PETERS, *continuing an interrupted conversation*)

No sign at all of anyone having come from the outside. Their own rope. Now let’s go up again and go over it piece by piece.

(*they start upstairs*)

It would have to have been someone who knew just the—

(MRS. PETERS *sits down. The two women sit there not looking at one another, but as if peering into something and at the same time holding back. When they talk now it is in the manner of feeling their way over strange ground, as if afraid of what they are saying, but as if they can not help saying it*.)

MRS. HALE

She liked the bird. She was going to bury it in that pretty box.

MRS. PETERS

(*in a whisper*)

When I was a girl—my kitten—there was a boy took a hatchet, and before my eyes—and before I could get there—

(*covers her face an instant*)

If they hadn’t held me back I would have—

(*catches herself, looks upstairs where steps are heard, falters weakly*)

—hurt him.

MRS. HALE

(*with a slow look around her*)

I wonder how it would seem never to have had any children around,

(*pause*)

No, Wright wouldn’t like the bird—a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that, too.

MRS. PETERS

(*moving uneasily*)

We don’t know who killed the bird.

MRS. HALE

I knew John Wright.

MRS. PETERS

It was an awful thing was done in this house that night, Mrs. Hale. Killing a man while he slept, slipping a rope around his neck that choked the life out of him.

MRS. HALE

His neck. Choked the life out of him.

(*Her hand goes out and rests on the bird-cage*.)

MRS. PETERS

(*with rising voice*)

We don’t know who killed him. We don’t *know*.

MRS. HALE

(*her own feeling not interrupted*)

If there’d been years and years of nothing, then a bird to sing to you, it would be awful—still, after the bird was still.

MRS. PETERS

(*something within her speaking.*)

I know what stillness is. When we homesteaded in Dakota, and my first baby died—after he was two years old, and me with no other then—

MRS. HALE

(*moving.*)

How soon do you suppose they’ll be through, looking for the evidence?

MRS. PETERS

I know what stillness is.

(*pulling herself back.*)

The law has got to punish crime, Mrs. Hale.

MRS. HALE

(*not as if answering that.*)

I wish you’d seen Minnie Foster when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons and stood up there in the choir and sang.

(*a look around the room.*)

Oh, I *wish* I’d come over here once in a while! That was a crime! That was a crime! Who’s going to punish that?

MRS. PETERS

(*looking upstairs.*)

We mustn’t—take on.

MRS. HALE

I might have known she needed help! I know how things can be—for women. I tell you, it’s queer, Mrs. Peters. We live close together and we live far apart. We all go through the same things—it’s all just a different kind of the same thing,

(*brushes her eyes, noticing the bottle of fruit, reaches out for it.*)

If I was you, I wouldn’t tell her her fruit was gone. Tell her it *ain’t*. Tell her it’s all right. Take this in to prove it to her. She—she may never know whether it was broke or not.

MRS. PETERS

(*takes the bottle, looks about for something to wrap it in; takes petticoat from the clothes brought from the other room, very nervously begins winding this around the bottle. In a false voice.*)

My, it’s a good thing the men couldn’t hear us. Wouldn’t they just laugh! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a—dead canary. As if that could have anything to do with—with—wouldn’t they *laugh*!

(*The men are heard coming down stairs*.)

MRS. HALE

(*under her breath.*)

Maybe they would—maybe they wouldn’t.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

No, Peters, it’s all perfectly clear except a reason for doing it. But you know juries when it comes to women. If there was some definite thing. Something to show—something to make a story about—a thing that would connect up with this strange way of doing it—

(*The women’s eyes meet for an instant. Enter HALE from outer door*.)

HALE

Well, I’ve got the team around. Pretty cold out there.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

I’m going to stay here a while by myself,

(*to the* SHERIFF.)

You can send Frank out for me, can’t you? I want to go over everything. I’m not satisfied that we can’t do better.

SHERIFF

Do you want to see what Mrs. Peters is going to take in?

(*The* LAWYER *goes to the table, picks up the apron, laughs*.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY

Oh, I guess they’re not very dangerous things the ladies have picked out.

(*Moves a few things about, disturbing the quilt pieces which cover the box. Steps back*)

No, Mrs. Peters doesn’t need supervising. For that matter, a sheriff’s wife is married to the law. Ever think of it that way, Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS

Not—just that way.

SHERIFF

(*chuckling*)

Married to the law.

(*moves toward the other room*)

I just want you to come in here a minute, George. We ought to take a look at these windows.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

(*scoffingly*)

Oh, windows!

SHERIFF

We’ll be right out, Mr. Hale.

(HALE *goes outside. The* SHERIFF *follows the* COUNTY ATTORNEY *into the other room. Then* MRS. HALE *rises, hands tight together, looking intensely at* MRS. PETERS, *whose eyes make a slow turn, finally meeting* MRS. HALE*’s. A moment* MRS. HALE *holds her, then her own eyes point the way to where the box is concealed. Suddenly* MRS. PETERS *throws back quilt pieces and tries to put the box in the bag she is wearing. It is too big. She opens box, starts to take bird out, cannot touch it, goes to pieces, stands there helpless. Sound of a knob turning in the other room*. MRS. HALE *snatches the box and puts it in the pocket of her big coat. Enter* COUNTY ATTORNEY *and* SHERIFF.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY

(*facetiously*)

Well, Henry, at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to—what is it you call it, ladies?

MRS. HALE

(*her hand against her pocket*)

We call it—knot it, Mr. Henderson.

(CURTAIN)

(1916)

### Questions for Consideration:

Discuss what sort of backdrop, props, and costumes would be required to perform this play. How much of this detail is dictated by the stage directions and how much of it is left for the director to create?

How are the characters revealed? Which lines of dialogue are especially tell-tale regarding certain characters’ values and personalities?

How does the play develop the audience’s impression of Mrs. Wright, though she never appears in the play?

In light of the play’s themes, what does the bird cage symbolize? How does that symbol develop our impression of Mr. and Mrs. Wright?

How does the metaphor of the quilt serve to develop the theme of women’s undervalued work?

Consider the order and pace whereby clues are revealed to the audience. How does the plot unfold to generate suspense and interest for the audience?

In *Trifles*, Glaspell employs some round characters and some flat, or stock, characters. Round, complex characters, like Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Hale, and Mrs. Peters, reflect the complicated personalities and experiences that most of us can identify with. When Mrs. Peters seems torn between following the wishes of her husband, who represents the law, and showing sympathy with Mrs. Wright, we understand her conflict. Most of us have encountered similar conflicts in our daily lives. However, we tend to dislike Mr. Henderson, partly because he insults Mrs. Wright, but also, notably, because he is a flat character. He does not reveal the capacity or the habit of complex thought, but rather reacts to his surroundings based on his stereotype-based assumptions. Since the male characters represent dominant male society, including familiar patriarchs (Mr. Wright is the authority in his house), a society in which women have not yet been granted the right to vote, and a legal system that does not recognize women as full citizens, they are sustained as flat. While it may seem that the use of flat characters would yield a weak play, it is important to consider why writers use flat characters at all. Since these characters carry with them a ready-made impression, less dialogue has to be devoted to developing them, thereby creating more dialogue-space for other important characters or ideas. In this short play, most of the script focuses on the dialogue and actions of Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, allowing Glaspell to develop the theme successfully.

# Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*

In a longer play, of several acts, a playwright has more room for development. Like the novel relative to the short story, a longer play can elaborate on the central theme and can even develop several plot and theme threads. Consider William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and the various storylines he develops in this play.

CHARACTERS:

Prospero, former Duke of Milan; father of Miranda

Miranda: Prospero’s young daughter

Iris, Juno, Ceres, Nymphs, Reapers: Spirits

Trinculo, a jester

Sebastian, Alonso’s brother

Stephano, a drunken butler

Gonzalo, an old and honest lord

Antonio, Prospero’s brother

Ariel, an airy spirit, servant to Prospero

Adrian and Francisco, noblemen; companions of Alonzo

Alonso, king of Naples; father of Ferdinand

Ferdinand, son and heir of Alonso

Caliban, Prospero’s servant, savage and deformed; son of Sycorax

Master of a Ship, Boatswains, Mariners

SETTING: A ship at sea during a terrible storm; later, a Mediterranean island to which Prospero has been banished with Miranda since she was a young child and where the ship’s travelers come ashore

ACT I

SCENE I. On a ship at sea: a tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard.

*Enter a Master and a Boatswain*

Master

Boatswain!

Boatswain

Here, master: what cheer?

Master

Good, speak to the mariners: fall to’t, yarely,

or we run ourselves aground: bestir, bestir.

*Exit*

*Enter Mariners*

Boatswain

Heigh, my hearts! cheerly, cheerly, my hearts!

yare, yare! Take in the topsail. Tend to the

master’s whistle. Blow, till thou burst thy wind,

if room enough!

*Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, FERDINAND, GONZALO, and others*

ALONSO

Good boatswain, have care. Where’s the master?

Play the men. 10

Boatswain

I pray now, keep below.

ANTONIO

Where is the master, boatswain?

Boatswain

Do you not hear him? You mar our labour: keep your

cabins: you do assist the storm.

GONZALO

Nay, good, be patient.

Boatswain

When the sea is. Hence! What cares these roarersfor the name of king? To cabin: silence! trouble us not.

GONZALO

Good, yet remember whom thou hast aboard.

Boatswain

None that I more love than myself. You are a

counsellor; if you can command these elements to 20

silence, and work the peace of the present, we will

not hand a rope more; use your authority: if you

cannot, give thanks you have lived so long, and make

yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance of

the hour, if it so hap. Cheerly, good hearts! Out

of our way, I say.

*Exit*

GONZALO

I have great comfort from this fellow: methinks he

hath no drowning mark upon him; his complexion is

perfect gallows. Stand fast, good Fate, to his

hanging: make the rope of his destiny our cable, 30

for our own doth little advantage. If he be not

born to be hanged, our case is miserable.

*Exeunt*

*Re-enter Boatswain*

Boatswain

Down with the topmast! yare! lower, lower! Bring

her to try with main-course.

*A cry within*

A plague upon this howling! they are louder than   
the weather or our office.

*Re-enter SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, and GONZALO*

Yet again! what do you here? Shall we give o’er

and drown? Have you a mind to sink?

SEBASTIAN

A pox o’ your throat, you bawling, blasphemous, 40

incharitable dog!

Boatswain

Work you then.

ANTONIO

Hang, cur! hang, you whoreson, insolent noisemaker!

We are less afraid to be drowned than thou art.

GONZALO

I’ll warrant him for drowning; though the ship were no stronger than a nutshell and as leaky as an

unstanched wench.

Boatswain

Lay her a-hold, a-hold! set her two courses off to

sea again; lay her off.

*Enter Mariners wet* 50

Mariners

All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost!

Boatswain

What, must our mouths be cold?

GONZALO

The king and prince at prayers! let’s assist them,

For our case is as theirs.

SEBASTIAN

I’m out of patience.

ANTONIO

We are merely cheated of our lives by drunkards:

This wide-chapp’d rascal—would thou mightst lie drowning

The washing of ten tides!

GONZALO

He’ll be hang’d yet,

Though every drop of water swear against it

And gape at widest to glut him.

*A confused noise within: ‘Mercy on us!’—* 60

*‘We split, we split!’—’Farewell, my wife and children!’—*

*‘Farewell, brother!’—’We split, we split, we split!’*

ANTONIO

Let’s all sink with the king.

SEBASTIAN

Let’s take leave of him.

*Exeunt ANTONIO and SEBASTIAN*

GONZALO

Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an

acre of barren ground, long heath, brown furze, any thing. The wills above be done! but I would fain

die a dry death.

*Exeunt*

SCENE II. The island. Before PROSPERO’S cell.

*Enter PROSPERO and MIRANDA*

MIRANDA

If by your art, my dearest father, you have 70

Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.

The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch,

But that the sea, mounting to the welkin’s cheek,

Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffered

With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel,

Who had, no doubt, some noble creature in her,

Dash’d all to pieces. O, the cry did knock

Against my very heart. Poor souls, they perish’d.

Had I been any god of power, I would

Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere 80

It should the good ship so have swallow’d and

The fraughting souls within her.

PROSPERO

Be collected:

No more amazement: tell your piteous heart

There’s no harm done.

MIRANDA

O, woe the day!

PROSPERO

No harm.

I have done nothing but in care of thee,

Of thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter, who

Art ignorant of what thou art, nought knowing 90

Of whence I am, nor that I am more better

Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell,

And thy no greater father.

MIRANDA

More to know   
Did never meddle with my thoughts.

PROSPERO

‘Tis time

I should inform thee farther. Lend thy hand,

And pluck my magic garment from me. So:

*Lays down his mantle*

Lie there, my art. Wipe thou thine eyes; have comfort. 100

The direful spectacle of the wreck, which touch’d

The very virtue of compassion in thee,

I have with such provision in mine art

So safely ordered that there is no soul—

No, not so much perdition as an hair

Betid to any creature in the vessel

Which thou heard’st cry, which thou saw’st sink. Sit down;

For thou must now know farther.

MIRANDA

You have often

Begun to tell me what I am, but stopp’d 110

And left me to a bootless inquisition,

Concluding ‘Stay: not yet.’

PROSPERO

The hour’s now come;

The very minute bids thee ope thine ear;

Obey and be attentive. Canst thou remember

A time before we came unto this cell?

I do not think thou canst, for then thou wast not

Out three years old.

MIRANDA

Certainly, sir, I can.

PROSPERO

By what? by any other house or person? 120

Of any thing the image tell me that

Hath kept with thy remembrance.

MIRANDA

‘Tis far off

And rather like a dream than an assurance

That my remembrance warrants. Had I not

Four or five women once that tended me?

PROSPERO

Thou hadst, and more, Miranda. But how is it

That this lives in thy mind? What seest thou else

In the dark backward and abysm of time?

If thou remember’st aught ere thou camest here, 130

How thou camest here thou mayst.

MIRANDA

But that I do not.

PROSPERO

Twelve year since, Miranda, twelve year since,

Thy father was the Duke of Milan and

A prince of power.

MIRANDA

Sir, are not you my father?

PROSPERO

Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and

She said thou wast my daughter; and thy father

Was Duke of Milan; and thou his only heir

And princess no worse issued. 140

MIRANDA

O the heavens!

What foul play had we, that we came from thence?

Or blessed was’t we did?

PROSPERO

Both, both, my girl:

By foul play, as thou say’st, were we heaved thence,

But blessedly holp hither.

MIRANDA

O, my heart bleeds

To think o’ the teen that I have turn’d you to,

Which is from my remembrance! Please you, farther.

PROSPERO

My brother and thy uncle, call’d Antonio— 150

I pray thee, mark me—that a brother should

Be so perfidious!—he whom next thyself

Of all the world I loved and to him put

The manage of my state; as at that time

Through all the signories it was the first

And Prospero the prime duke, being so reputed

In dignity, and for the liberal arts

Without a parallel; those being all my study,

The government I cast upon my brother

And to my state grew stranger, being transported 160

And rapt in secret studies. Thy false uncle—

Dost thou attend me?

MIRANDA

Sir, most heedfully.

PROSPERO

Being once perfected how to grant suits,

How to deny them, who to advance and who

To trash for over-topping, new created

The creatures that were mine, I say, or changed ‘em,

Or else new form’d ‘em; having both the key

Of officer and office, set all hearts i’ the state

To what tune pleased his ear; that now he was 170

The ivy which had hid my princely trunk,

And suck’d my verdure out on’t. Thou attend’st not.

MIRANDA

O, good sir, I do.

PROSPERO

I pray thee, mark me.

I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated

To closeness and the bettering of my mind

With that which, but by being so retired,

O’er-prized all popular rate, in my false brother

Awaked an evil nature; and my trust,

Like a good parent, did beget of him 180

A falsehood in its contrary as great

As my trust was; which had indeed no limit,

A confidence sans bound. He being thus lorded,

Not only with what my revenue yielded,

But what my power might else exact, like one

Who having into truth, by telling of it,

Made such a sinner of his memory,

To credit his own lie, he did believe

He was indeed the duke; out o’ the substitution

And executing the outward face of royalty, 190

With all prerogative: hence his ambition growing—

Dost thou hear?

MIRANDA

Your tale, sir, would cure deafness.

PROSPERO

To have no screen between this part he play’d

And him he play’d it for, he needs will be

Absolute Milan. Me, poor man, my library

Was dukedom large enough: of temporal royalties

He thinks me now incapable; confederates—

So dry he was for sway—wi’ the King of Naples

To give him annual tribute, do him homage, 200

Subject his coronet to his crown and bend

The dukedom yet unbow’d—alas, poor Milan!—

To most ignoble stooping.

MIRANDA

O the heavens!

PROSPERO

Mark his condition and the event; then tell me

If this might be a brother.

MIRANDA

I should sin

To think but nobly of my grandmother:

Good wombs have borne bad sons.

PROSPERO

Now the condition. 210

The King of Naples, being an enemy

To me inveterate, hearkens my brother’s suit;

Which was, that he, in lieu o’ the premises

Of homage and I know not how much tribute,

Should presently extirpate me and mine

Out of the dukedom and confer fair Milan

With all the honours on my brother: whereon,

A treacherous army levied, one midnight

Fated to the purpose did Antonio open

The gates of Milan, and, i’ the dead of darkness, 220

The ministers for the purpose hurried thence

Me and thy crying self.

MIRANDA

Alack, for pity!

I, not remembering how I cried out then,

Will cry it o’er again: it is a hint

That wrings mine eyes to’t.

PROSPERO

Hear a little further

And then I’ll bring thee to the present business

Which now’s upon’s; without the which this story

Were most impertinent. 230

MIRANDA

Wherefore did they not

That hour destroy us?

PROSPERO

Well demanded, wench:

My tale provokes that question. Dear, they durst not,

So dear the love my people bore me, nor set

A mark so bloody on the business, but

With colours fairer painted their foul ends.

In few, they hurried us aboard a bark,

Bore us some leagues to sea; where they prepared

A rotten carcass of a boat, not rigg’d, 240

Nor tackle, sail, nor mast; the very rats

Instinctively had quit it: there they hoist us,

To cry to the sea that roar’d to us, to sigh

To the winds whose pity, sighing back again,

Did us but loving wrong.

MIRANDA

Alack, what trouble

Was I then to you!

PROSPERO

O, a cherubim

Thou wast that did preserve me. Thou didst smile.

Infused with a fortitude from heaven, 250

When I have deck’d the sea with drops full salt,

Under my burthen groan’d; which raised in me

An undergoing stomach, to bear up

Against what should ensue.

MIRANDA

How came we ashore?

PROSPERO

By Providence divine.

Some food we had and some fresh water that

A noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo,

Out of his charity, being then appointed

Master of this design, did give us, with 260

Rich garments, linens, stuffs and necessaries,

Which since have steaded much; so, of his gentleness,

Knowing I loved my books, he furnish’d me

From mine own library with volumes that

I prize above my dukedom.

MIRANDA

Would I might

But ever see that man!

PROSPERO

Now I arise:

*Resumes his mantle*

Sit still, and hear the last of our sea-sorrow. 270

Here in this island we arrived; and here

Have I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit

Than other princesses can that have more time

For vainer hours and tutors not so careful.

MIRANDA

Heavens thank you for’t! And now, I pray you, sir,

For still ‘tis beating in my mind, your reason

For raising this sea-storm?

PROSPERO

Know thus far forth.

By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune,

Now my dear lady, hath mine enemies 280

Brought to this shore; and by my prescience

I find my zenith doth depend upon

A most auspicious star, whose influence

If now I court not but omit, my fortunes

Will ever after droop. Here cease more questions:

Thou art inclined to sleep; ‘tis a good dulness,

And give it way: I know thou canst not choose.

*MIRANDA sleeps*

Come away, servant, come. I am ready now.

Approach, my Ariel, come.

*Enter ARIEL*

ARIEL

All hail, great master! grave sir, hail! I come 290

To answer thy best pleasure; be’t to fly,

To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride

On the curl’d clouds, to thy strong bidding task

Ariel and all his quality.

PROSPERO

Hast thou, spirit,

Perform’d to point the tempest that I bade thee?

ARIEL

To every article.

I boarded the king’s ship; now on the beak,

Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,

I flamed amazement: sometime I’ld divide, 300

And burn in many places; on the topmast,

The yards and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,

Then meet and join. Jove’s lightnings, the precursors

O’ the dreadful thunder-claps, more momentary

And sight-outrunning were not; the fire and cracks

Of sulphurous roaring the most mighty Neptune

Seem to besiege and make his bold waves tremble,

Yea, his dread trident shake.

PROSPERO

My brave spirit!

Who was so firm, so constant, that this coil 310

Would not infect his reason?

ARIEL

Not a soul

But felt a fever of the mad and play’d

Some tricks of desperation. All but mariners

Plunged in the foaming brine and quit the vessel,

Then all afire with me: the king’s son, Ferdinand,

With hair up-staring,—then like reeds, not hair,—

Was the first man that leap’d; cried, ‘Hell is empty

And all the devils are here.’

PROSPERO

Why that’s my spirit! 320

But was not this nigh shore?

ARIEL

Close by, my master.

PROSPERO

But are they, Ariel, safe?

ARIEL

Not a hair perish’d;

On their sustaining garments not a blemish,

But fresher than before: and, as thou badest me,

In troops I have dispersed them ‘bout the isle.

The king’s son have I landed by himself;

Whom I left cooling of the air with sighs

In an odd angle of the isle and sitting, 330

His arms in this sad knot.

PROSPERO

Of the king’s ship

The mariners say how thou hast disposed

And all the rest o’ the fleet.

ARIEL

Safely in harbour

Is the king’s ship; in the deep nook, where once

Thou call’dst me up at midnight to fetch dew

From the still-vex’d Bermoothes, there she’s hid:

The mariners all under hatches stow’d;

Who, with a charm join’d to their suffer’d labour, 340

I have left asleep; and for the rest o’ the fleet

Which I dispersed, they all have met again

And are upon the Mediterranean flote,

Bound sadly home for Naples,

Supposing that they saw the king’s ship wreck’d

And his great person perish.

PROSPERO

Ariel, thy charge

Exactly is perform’d: but there’s more work.

What is the time o’ the day?

ARIEL

Past the mid season. 350

PROSPERO

At least two glasses. The time ‘twixt six and now

Must by us both be spent most preciously.

ARIEL

Is there more toil? Since thou dost give me pains,

Let me remember thee what thou hast promised,

Which is not yet perform’d me.

PROSPERO

How now? moody?

What is’t thou canst demand?

ARIEL

My liberty.

PROSPERO

Before the time be out? no more!

ARIEL

I prithee, 360

Remember I have done thee worthy service;

Told thee no lies, made thee no mistakings, served

Without or grudge or grumblings: thou didst promise

To bate me a full year.

PROSPERO

Dost thou forget

From what a torment I did free thee?

ARIEL

No.

PROSPERO

Thou dost, and think’st it much to tread the ooze

Of the salt deep,

To run upon the sharp wind of the north, 370

To do me business in the veins o’ the earth

When it is baked with frost.

ARIEL

I do not, sir.

PROSPERO

Thou liest, malignant thing! Hast thou forgot

The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy

Was grown into a hoop? hast thou forgot her?

ARIEL

No, sir.

PROSPERO

Thou hast. Where was she born? speak; tell me.

ARIEL

Sir, in Argier.

PROSPERO

O, was she so? I must 380

Once in a month recount what thou hast been,

Which thou forget’st. This damn’d witch Sycorax,

For mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible

To enter human hearing, from Argier,

Thou know’st, was banish’d: for one thing she did

They would not take her life. Is not this true?

ARIEL

Ay, sir.

PROSPERO

This blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child

And here was left by the sailors. Thou, my slave,

As thou report’st thyself, wast then her servant; 390

And, for thou wast a spirit too delicate

To act her earthy and abhorr’d commands,

Refusing her grand hests, she did confine thee,

By help of her more potent ministers

And in her most unmitigable rage,

Into a cloven pine; within which rift

Imprison’d thou didst painfully remain

A dozen years; within which space she died

And left thee there; where thou didst vent thy groans

As fast as mill-wheels strike. Then was this island— 400

Save for the son that she did litter here,

A freckled whelp hag-born—not honour’d with

A human shape.

ARIEL

Yes, Caliban her son.

PROSPERO

Dull thing, I say so; he, that Caliban

Whom now I keep in service. Thou best know’st

What torment I did find thee in; thy groans

Did make wolves howl and penetrate the breasts

Of ever angry bears: it was a torment

To lay upon the damn’d, which Sycorax 410

Could not again undo: it was mine art,

When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape

The pine and let thee out.

ARIEL

I thank thee, master.

PROSPERO

If thou more murmur’st, I will rend an oak

And peg thee in his knotty entrails till

Thou hast howl’d away twelve winters.

ARIEL

Pardon, master; I will be correspondent to command

And do my spiriting gently.

PROSPERO

Do so, and after two days 420

I will discharge thee.

ARIEL

That’s my noble master!

What shall I do? say what; what shall I do?

PROSPERO

Go make thyself like a nymph o’ the sea: be subject

To no sight but thine and mine, invisible

To every eyeball else. Go take this shape

And hither come in’t: go, hence with diligence!

*Exit ARIEL*

Awake, dear heart, awake! thou hast slept well; Awake!

MIRANDA

The strangeness of your story put

Heaviness in me. 430

PROSPERO

Shake it off. Come on;

We’ll visit Caliban my slave, who never

Yields us kind answer.

MIRANDA

‘Tis a villain, sir,

I do not love to look on.

PROSPERO

But, as ‘tis,

We cannot miss him: he does make our fire,

Fetch in our wood and serves in offices

That profit us. What, ho! slave! Caliban!

Thou earth, thou! speak. 440

CALIBAN

*[Within]* There’s wood enough within.

PROSPERO

Come forth, I say! there’s other business for thee:

Come, thou tortoise! when?

*Re-enter ARIEL like a water-nymph*

Fine apparition! My quaint Ariel,

Hark in thine ear.

ARIEL

My lord it shall be done.

*Exit*

PROSPERO

Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself

Upon thy wicked dam, come forth!

*Enter CALIBAN*

CALIBAN

As wicked dew as e’er my mother brush’d

With raven’s feather from unwholesome fen 450

Drop on you both! a south-west blow on ye

And blister you all o’er!

PROSPERO

For this, be sure, to-night thou shalt have cramps,

Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up; urchins

Shall, for that vast of night that they may work,

All exercise on thee; thou shalt be pinch’d

As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging

Than bees that made ‘em.

CALIBAN

I must eat my dinner.

This island’s mine, by Sycorax my mother, 460

Which thou takest from me. When thou camest first,

Thou strokedst me and madest much of me, wouldst give me

Water with berries in’t, and teach me how

To name the bigger light, and how the less,

That burn by day and night: and then I loved thee

And show’d thee all the qualities o’ the isle,

The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile:

Cursed be I that did so! All the charms

Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!

For I am all the subjects that you have, 470

Which first was mine own king: and here you sty me

In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me

The rest o’ the island.

PROSPERO

Thou most lying slave,

Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have used thee,

Filth as thou art, with human care, and lodged thee

In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate

The honour of my child.

CALIBAN

O ho, O ho! would’t had been done!

Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else 480

This isle with Calibans.

PROSPERO

Abhorred slave,

Which any print of goodness wilt not take,

Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee,

Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour

One thing or other: when thou didst not, savage,

Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like

A thing most brutish, I endow’d thy purposes

With words that made them known. But thy vile race,

Though thou didst learn, had that in’t which 490

good natures

Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou

Deservedly confined into this rock,

Who hadst deserved more than a prison.

CALIBAN

You taught me language; and my profit on’t

Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you

For learning me your language!

PROSPERO

Hag-seed, hence!

Fetch us in fuel; and be quick, thou’rt best,

To answer other business. Shrug’st thou, malice? 500

If thou neglect’st or dost unwillingly

What I command, I’ll rack thee with old cramps,

Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar

That beasts shall tremble at thy din.

CALIBAN

No, pray thee.

[*Aside*] I must obey: his art is of such power,

It would control my dam’s god, Setebos,

and make a vassal of him.

PROSPERO

So, slave; hence! 510

*Exit CALIBAN*

*Re-enter ARIEL, invisible, playing and singing;*

*FERDINAND following*

*ARIEL’S song.*

Come unto these yellow sands,

And then take hands:

Courtsied when you have and kiss’d

The wild waves whist,

Foot it featly here and there;

And, sweet sprites, the burthen bear.

Hark, hark!

*Burthen dispersedly, within*

The watch-dogs bark!

*Burthen Bow-wow* 520

Hark, hark! I hear

The strain of strutting chanticleer

Cry, Cock-a-diddle-dow.

FERDINAND

Where should this music be? i’ the air or the earth?

It sounds no more: and sure, it waits upon

Some god o’ the island. Sitting on a bank,

Weeping again the king my father’s wreck,

This music crept by me upon the waters,

Allaying both their fury and my passion

With its sweet air: thence I have follow’d it, 530

Or it hath drawn me rather. But ‘tis gone.

No, it begins again.

*ARIEL sings*

Full fathom five thy father lies;

Of his bones are coral made;

Those are pearls that were his eyes:

Nothing of him that doth fade

But doth suffer a sea-change

Into something rich and strange.

Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell 540

*Burthen Ding-dong*

Hark! now I hear them,—Ding-dong, bell.

FERDINAND

The ditty does remember my drown’d father.

This is no mortal business, nor no sound

That the earth owes. I hear it now above me.

PROSPERO

The fringed curtains of thine eye advance

And say what thou seest yond.

MIRANDA

What is’t? a spirit?

Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir,

It carries a brave form. But ‘tis a spirit. 550

PROSPERO

No, wench; it eats and sleeps and hath such senses

As we have, such. This gallant which thou seest

Was in the wreck; and, but he’s something stain’d

With grief that’s beauty’s canker, thou mightst call him

A goodly person: he hath lost his fellows

And strays about to find ‘em.

MIRANDA

I might call him

A thing divine, for nothing natural

I ever saw so noble.

PROSPERO

[*Aside*] It goes on, I see, 560

As my soul prompts it. Spirit, fine spirit! I’ll free thee

Within two days for this.

FERDINAND

Most sure, the goddess

On whom these airs attend! Vouchsafe my prayer

May know if you remain upon this island;

And that you will some good instruction give

How I may bear me here: my prime request,

Which I do last pronounce, is, O you wonder!

If you be maid or no?

MIRANDA

No wonder, sir; 570

But certainly a maid.

FERDINAND

My language! heavens!

I am the best of them that speak this speech,

Were I but where ‘tis spoken.

PROSPERO

How? the best?

What wert thou, if the King of Naples heard thee?

FERDINAND

A single thing, as I am now, that wonders

To hear thee speak of Naples. He does hear me;

And that he does I weep: myself am Naples,

Who with mine eyes, never since at ebb, beheld 580

The king my father wreck’d.

MIRANDA

Alack, for mercy!

FERDINAND

Yes, faith, and all his lords; the Duke of Milan

And his brave son being twain.

PROSPERO

[*Aside*] The Duke of Milan

And his more braver daughter could control thee,

If now ‘twere fit to do’t. At the first sight

They have changed eyes. Delicate Ariel,

I’ll set thee free for this.

*To FERDINAND*

A word, good sir; 590

I fear you have done yourself some wrong: a word.

MIRANDA

Why speaks my father so ungently? This

Is the third man that e’er I saw, the first

That e’er I sigh’d for: pity move my father

To be inclined my way!

FERDINAND

O, if a virgin,

And your affection not gone forth, I’ll make you

The queen of Naples.

PROSPERO

Soft, sir! one word more.

[*Aside*]

They are both in either’s powers; but this swift business 600

I must uneasy make, lest too light winning

Make the prize light.

*To FERDINAND*

One word more; I charge thee

That thou attend me: thou dost here usurp

The name thou owest not; and hast put thyself

Upon this island as a spy, to win it

From me, the lord on’t.

FERDINAND

No, as I am a man.

MIRANDA

There’s nothing ill can dwell in such a temple:

If the ill spirit have so fair a house, 610

Good things will strive to dwell with’t.

PROSPERO

Follow me.

Speak not you for him; he’s a traitor. Come;

I’ll manacle thy neck and feet together:

Sea-water shalt thou drink; thy food shall be

The fresh-brook muscles, wither’d roots and husks

Wherein the acorn cradled. Follow.

FERDINAND

No;  
I will resist such entertainment till

Mine enemy has more power. 620

*Draws, and is charmed from moving*

MIRANDA

O dear father,

Make not too rash a trial of him, for

He’s gentle and not fearful.

PROSPERO

What? I say,

My foot my tutor? Put thy sword up, traitor;

Who makest a show but darest not strike, thy conscience

Is so possess’d with guilt: come from thy ward,

For I can here disarm thee with this stick

And make thy weapon drop. 630

MIRANDA

Beseech you, father.

PROSPERO

Hence! hang not on my garments.

MIRANDA

Sir, have pity;

I’ll be his surety.

PROSPERO

Silence! one word more

Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee. What!

An advocate for an imposter! hush!

Thou think’st there is no more such shapes as he,

Having seen but him and Caliban: foolish wench!

To the most of men this is a Caliban 640

And they to him are angels.

MIRANDA

My affections

Are then most humble; I have no ambition

To see a goodlier man.

PROSPERO

Come on; obey:

Thy nerves are in their infancy again

And have no vigour in them.

FERDINAND

So they are;

My spirits, as in a dream, are all bound up.

My father’s loss, the weakness which I feel, 650

The wreck of all my friends, nor this man’s threats,

To whom I am subdued, are but light to me,

Might I but through my prison once a day

Behold this maid: all corners else o’ the earth

Let liberty make use of; space enough

Have I in such a prison.

PROSPERO

[*Aside*] It works.

*To FERDINAND*

Come on.

Thou hast done well, fine Ariel!

*To FERDINAND*

Follow me. 660

*To ARIEL*

Hark what thou else shalt do me.

MIRANDA

Be of comfort;

My father’s of a better nature, sir,

Than he appears by speech: this is unwonted

Which now came from him.

PROSPERO

Thou shalt be free

As mountain winds: but then exactly do

All points of my command.

ARIEL

To the syllable.

PROSPERO

Come, follow. Speak not for him. 670

*Exeunt*

ACT II

SCENE I. Another part of the island.

*Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, GONZALO, ADRIAN, FRANCISCO, and others*

GONZALO

Beseech you, sir, be merry; you have cause,

So have we all, of joy; for our escape

Is much beyond our loss. Our hint of woe

Is common; every day some sailor’s wife,

The masters of some merchant and the merchant

Have just our theme of woe; but for the miracle,

I mean our preservation, few in millions

Can speak like us: then wisely, good sir, weigh

Our sorrow with our comfort.

ALONSO

Prithee, peace. 680

SEBASTIAN

He receives comfort like cold porridge.

ANTONIO

The visitor will not give him o’er so.

SEBASTIAN

Look he’s winding up the watch of his wit;

by and by it will strike.

GONZALO

Sir,—

SEBASTIAN

One: tell.

GONZALO

When every grief is entertain’d that’s offer’d,

Comes to the entertainer—

SEBASTIAN

A dollar.

GONZALO

Dolour comes to him, indeed: you 690

have spoken truer than you purposed.

SEBASTIAN

You have taken it wiselier than I meant you should.

GONZALO

Therefore, my lord,—

ANTONIO

Fie, what a spendthrift is he of his tongue!

ALONSO

I prithee, spare.

GONZALO

Well, I have done: but yet,—

SEBASTIAN

He will be talking.

ANTONIO

Which, of he or Adrian, for a good

wager, first begins to crow?

SEBASTIAN

The old cock. 700

ANTONIO

The cockerel.

SEBASTIAN

Done. The wager?

ANTONIO

A laughter.

SEBASTIAN

A match!

ADRIAN

Though this island seem to be desert,—

SEBASTIAN

Ha, ha, ha! So, you’re paid.

ADRIAN

Uninhabitable and almost inaccessible,—

SEBASTIAN

Yet,—

ADRIAN

Yet,—

ANTONIO

He could not miss’t. 710

ADRIAN

It must needs be of subtle, tender and delicate temperance.

ANTONIO

Temperance was a delicate wench.

SEBASTIAN

Ay, and a subtle; as he most learnedly delivered.

ADRIAN

The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.

SEBASTIAN

As if it had lungs and rotten ones.

ANTONIO

Or as ‘twere perfumed by a fen.

GONZALO

Here is everything advantageous to life.

ANTONIO

True; save means to live.

SEBASTIAN

Of that there’s none, or little.

GONZALO

How lush and lusty the grass looks! how green! 720

ANTONIO

The ground indeed is tawny.

SEBASTIAN

With an eye of green in’t.

ANTONIO

He misses not much.

SEBASTIAN

No; he doth but mistake the truth totally.

GONZALO

But the rarity of it is,—which is indeed almost beyond credit,—

SEBASTIAN

As many vouched rarities are.

GONZALO

That our garments, being, as they were, drenched in

the sea, hold notwithstanding their freshness and

glosses, being rather new-dyed than stained with 730

salt water.

ANTONIO

If but one of his pockets could speak, would it not

say he lies?

SEBASTIAN

Ay, or very falsely pocket up his report

GONZALO

Methinks our garments are now as fresh as when we

put them on first in Afric, at the marriage of

the king’s fair daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis.

SEBASTIAN

‘Twas a sweet marriage, and we prosper well in our return.

ADRIAN

Tunis was never graced before with such a paragon to

their queen. 740

GONZALO

Not since widow Dido’s time.

ANTONIO

Widow! a pox o’ that! How came that widow in? Widow

Dido!

SEBASTIAN

What if he had said ‘widower Aeneas’ too? Good Lord,

how you take it!

ADRIAN

‘Widow Dido’ said you? you make me study of that:

she was of Carthage, not of Tunis.

GONZALO

This Tunis, sir, was Carthage.

ADRIAN

Carthage?

GONZALO

I assure you, Carthage. 750

SEBASTIAN

His word is more than the miraculous harp; he hath

raised the wall and houses too.

ANTONIO

What impossible matter will he make easy next?

SEBASTIAN

I think he will carry this island home in his pocket

and give it his son for an apple.

ANTONIO

And, sowing the kernels of it in the sea, bring

forth more islands.

GONZALO

Ay.

ANTONIO

Why, in good time.

GONZALO

Sir, we were talking that our garments seem now 760

as fresh as when we were at Tunis at the marriage

of your daughter, who is now queen.

ANTONIO

And the rarest that e’er came there.

SEBASTIAN

Bate, I beseech you, widow Dido.

ANTONIO

O, widow Dido! ay, widow Dido.

GONZALO

Is not, sir, my doublet as fresh as the first day I

wore it? I mean, in a sort.

ANTONIO

That sort was well fished for.

GONZALO

When I wore it at your daughter’s marriage?

ALONSO

You cram these words into mine ears against 770

The stomach of my sense. Would I had never

Married my daughter there! for, coming thence,

My son is lost and, in my rate, she too,

Who is so far from Italy removed   
I ne’er again shall see her. O thou mine heir

Of Naples and of Milan, what strange fish

Hath made his meal on thee?

FRANCISCO

Sir, he may live:

I saw him beat the surges under him,

And ride upon their backs; he trod the water, 780

Whose enmity he flung aside, and breasted

The surge most swoln that met him; his bold head

‘Bove the contentious waves he kept, and oar’d

Himself with his good arms in lusty stroke

To the shore, that o’er his wave-worn basis bow’d,

As stooping to relieve him: I not doubt

He came alive to land.

ALONSO

No, no, he’s gone.

SEBASTIAN

Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,

That would not bless our Europe with your daughter, 790

But rather lose her to an African;

Where she at least is banish’d from your eye,

Who hath cause to wet the grief on’t.

ALONSO

Prithee, peace.

SEBASTIAN

You were kneel’d to and importuned otherwise

By all of us, and the fair soul herself

Weigh’d between loathness and obedience, at

Which end o’ the beam should bow. We have lost your son,

I fear, for ever: Milan and Naples have 800

More widows in them of this business’ making

Than we bring men to comfort them:

The fault’s your own.

ALONSO

So is the dear’st o’ the loss.

GONZALO

My lord Sebastian,

The truth you speak doth lack some gentleness

And time to speak it in: you rub the sore,

When you should bring the plaster.

SEBASTIAN

Very well.

ANTONIO

And most chirurgeonly. 810

GONZALO

It is foul weather in us all, good sir,

When you are cloudy.

SEBASTIAN

Foul weather?

ANTONIO

Very foul.

GONZALO

Had I plantation of this isle, my lord,—

ANTONIO

He’ld sow’t with nettle-seed.

SEBASTIAN

Or docks, or mallows.

GONZALO

And were the king on’t, what would I do?

SEBASTIAN

‘Scape being drunk for want of wine.

GONZALO

I’ the commonwealth I would by contraries 820

Execute all things; for no kind of traffic

Would I admit; no name of magistrate;

Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,

And use of service, none; contract, succession,

Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;

No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;

No occupation; all men idle, all;

And women too, but innocent and pure;

No sovereignty;—

SEBASTIAN

Yet he would be king on’t. 830

ANTONIO

The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.

GONZALO

All things in common nature should produce

Without sweat or endeavour: treason, felony,

Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,

Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,

Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance,

To feed my innocent people.

SEBASTIAN

No marrying ‘mong his subjects?

ANTONIO

None, man; all idle: whores and knaves.

GONZALO

I would with such perfection govern, sir, 840

To excel the golden age.

SEBASTIAN

God save his majesty!

ANTONIO

Long live Gonzalo!

GONZALO

And,—do you mark me, sir?

ALONSO

Prithee, no more: thou dost talk nothing to me.

GONZALO

I do well believe your highness; and

did it to minister occasion to these gentlemen,

who are of such sensible and nimble lungs that

they always use to laugh at nothing.

ANTONIO

‘Twas you we laughed at. 850

GONZALO

Who in this kind of merry fooling am nothing

to you: so you may continue and laugh at

nothing still.

ANTONIO

What a blow was there given!

SEBASTIAN

An it had not fallen flat-long.

GONZALO

You are gentlemen of brave metal; you would lift

the moon out of her sphere, if she would continue

in it five weeks without changing.

*Enter ARIEL, invisible, playing solemn music*

SEBASTIAN

We would so, and then go a bat-fowling.

ANTONIO

Nay, good my lord, be not angry. 860

GONZALO

No, I warrant you; I will not adventure

my discretion so weakly. Will you laugh

me asleep, for I am very heavy?

ANTONIO

Go sleep, and hear us.

*All sleep except ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, and ANTONIO*

ALONSO

What, all so soon asleep! I wish mine eyes

Would, with themselves, shut up my thoughts: I find

They are inclined to do so.

SEBASTIAN

Please you, sir,

Do not omit the heavy offer of it:

It seldom visits sorrow; when it doth, 870

It is a comforter.

ANTONIO

We two, my lord,

Will guard your person while you take your rest,

And watch your safety.

ALONSO

Thank you. Wondrous heavy.

*ALONSO sleeps. Exit ARIEL*

SEBASTIAN

What a strange drowsiness possesses them!

ANTONIO

It is the quality o’ the climate.

SEBASTIAN

Why

Doth it not then our eyelids sink? I find not

Myself disposed to sleep. 880

ANTONIO

Nor I; my spirits are nimble.

They fell together all, as by consent;

They dropp’d, as by a thunder-stroke. What might,

Worthy Sebastian? O, what might?—No more:—

And yet me thinks I see it in thy face,

What thou shouldst be: the occasion speaks thee, and

My strong imagination sees a crown

Dropping upon thy head.

SEBASTIAN

What, art thou waking?

ANTONIO

Do you not hear me speak? 890

SEBASTIAN

I do; and surely

It is a sleepy language and thou speak’st

Out of thy sleep. What is it thou didst say?

This is a strange repose, to be asleep

With eyes wide open; standing, speaking, moving, And yet so fast asleep.

ANTONIO

Noble Sebastian,

Thou let’st thy fortune sleep—die, rather; wink’st

Whiles thou art waking.

SEBASTIAN

Thou dost snore distinctly; 900

There’s meaning in thy snores.

ANTONIO

I am more serious than my custom: you

Must be so too, if heed me; which to do

Trebles thee o’er.

SEBASTIAN

Well, I am standing water.

ANTONIO

I’ll teach you how to flow.

SEBASTIAN

Do so: to ebb

Hereditary sloth instructs me.

ANTONIO

O,

If you but knew how you the purpose cherish 910

Whiles thus you mock it! how, in stripping it,

You more invest it! Ebbing men, indeed,

Most often do so near the bottom run

By their own fear or sloth.

SEBASTIAN

Prithee, say on:

The setting of thine eye and cheek proclaim

A matter from thee, and a birth indeed

Which throes thee much to yield.

ANTONIO

Thus, sir:

Although this lord of weak remembrance, this, 920

Who shall be of as little memory

When he is earth’d, hath here almost persuade,—

For he’s a spirit of persuasion, only

Professes to persuade,—the king his son’s alive,

‘Tis as impossible that he’s undrown’d

And he that sleeps here swims.

SEBASTIAN

I have no hope

That he’s undrown’d.

ANTONIO

O, out of that ‘no hope’

What great hope have you! no hope that way is 930

Another way so high a hope that even

Ambition cannot pierce a wink beyond,

But doubt discovery there. Will you grant with me

That Ferdinand is drown’d?

SEBASTIAN

He’s gone.

ANTONIO

Then, tell me,

Who’s the next heir of Naples?

SEBASTIAN

Claribel.

ANTONIO

She that is queen of Tunis; she that dwells

Ten leagues beyond man’s life; she that from Naples 940

Can have no note, unless the sun were post—

The man i’ the moon’s too slow—till new-born chins

Be rough and razorable; she that—from whom?

We all were sea-swallow’d, though some cast again,

And by that destiny to perform an act

Whereof what’s past is prologue, what to come

In yours and my discharge.

SEBASTIAN

What stuff is this! how say you?

‘Tis true, my brother’s daughter’s queen of Tunis;

So is she heir of Naples; ‘twixt which regions 950

There is some space.

ANTONIO

A space whose every cubit

Seems to cry out, ‘How shall that Claribel

Measure us back to Naples? Keep in Tunis,

And let Sebastian wake.’ Say, this were death

That now hath seized them; why, they were no worse

Than now they are. There be that can rule Naples

As well as he that sleeps; lords that can prate

As amply and unnecessarily

As this Gonzalo; I myself could make 960

A chough of as deep chat. O, that you bore

The mind that I do! what a sleep were this

For your advancement! Do you understand me?

SEBASTIAN

Methinks I do.

ANTONIO

And how does your content

Tender your own good fortune?

SEBASTIAN

I remember

You did supplant your brother Prospero.

ANTONIO

True:

And look how well my garments sit upon me; 970

Much feater than before: my brother’s servants

Were then my fellows; now they are my men.

SEBASTIAN

But, for your conscience?

ANTONIO

Ay, sir; where lies that? if ‘twere a kibe,

‘Twould put me to my slipper: but I feel not

This deity in my bosom: twenty consciences,

That stand ‘twixt me and Milan, candied be they

And melt ere they molest! Here lies your brother,

No better than the earth he lies upon,

If he were that which now he’s like, that’s dead; 980

Whom I, with this obedient steel, three inches of it,

Can lay to bed for ever; whiles you, doing thus,

To the perpetual wink for aye might put

This ancient morsel, this Sir Prudence, who

Should not upbraid our course. For all the rest,

They’ll take suggestion as a cat laps milk;

They’ll tell the clock to any business that

We say befits the hour.

SEBASTIAN

Thy case, dear friend,

Shall be my precedent; as thou got’st Milan, 990

I’ll come by Naples. Draw thy sword: one stroke

Shall free thee from the tribute which thou payest;

And I the king shall love thee.

ANTONIO

Draw together;

And when I rear my hand, do you the like,

To fall it on Gonzalo.

SEBASTIAN

O, but one word.

They talk apart

*Re-enter ARIEL, invisible*

ARIEL

My master through his art foresees the danger

That you, his friend, are in; and sends me forth— 1000

For else his project dies—to keep them living.

*Sings in GONZALO’s ear*

While you here do snoring lie,

Open-eyed conspiracy

His time doth take.

If of life you keep a care,

Shake off slumber, and beware:

Awake, awake!

ANTONIO

Then let us both be sudden.

GONZALO

Now, good angels

Preserve the king. 1010

*They wake*

ALONSO

Why, how now? ho, awake! Why are you drawn?

Wherefore this ghastly looking?

GONZALO

What’s the matter?

SEBASTIAN

Whiles we stood here securing your repose,

Even now, we heard a hollow burst of bellowing

Like bulls, or rather lions: did’t not wake you?

It struck mine ear most terribly.

ALONSO

I heard nothing.

ANTONIO

O, ‘twas a din to fright a monster’s ear, 1020

To make an earthquake! sure, it was the roar

Of a whole herd of lions.

ALONSO

Heard you this, Gonzalo?

GONZALO

Upon mine honour, sir, I heard a humming,

And that a strange one too, which did awake me:

I shaked you, sir, and cried: as mine eyes open’d,

I saw their weapons drawn: there was a noise,

That’s verily. ‘Tis best we stand upon our guard,

Or that we quit this place; let’s draw our weapons.

ALONSO

Lead off this ground; and let’s make further search 1030

For my poor son.

GONZALO

Heavens keep him from these beasts!

For he is, sure, i’ the island.

ALONSO

Lead away.

ARIEL

Prospero my lord shall know what I have done:

So, king, go safely on to seek thy son.

*Exeunt*

SCENE II. Another part of the island.

*Enter CALIBAN with a burden of wood. A noise of thunder heard*

CALIBAN

All the infections that the sun sucks up

From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall and make him

By inch-meal a disease! His spirits hear me

And yet I needs must curse. But they’ll nor pinch, 1040

Fright me with urchin—shows, pitch me i’ the mire,

Nor lead me, like a firebrand, in the dark

Out of my way, unless he bid ‘em; but

For every trifle are they set upon me;

Sometime like apes that mow and chatter at me

And after bite me, then like hedgehogs which

Lie tumbling in my barefoot way and mount

Their pricks at my footfall; sometime am I

All wound with adders who with cloven tongues

Do hiss me into madness. 1050

*Enter TRINCULO*

Lo, now, lo!

Here comes a spirit of his, and to torment me

For bringing wood in slowly. I’ll fall flat;

Perchance he will not mind me.

TRINCULO

Here’s neither bush nor shrub, to bear off

any weather at all, and another storm brewing;

I hear it sing i’ the wind: yond same black

cloud, yond huge one, looks like a foul

bombard that would shed his liquor. If it should thunder

as it did before, I know not 1060

where to hide my head: yond same cloud cannot

choose but fall by pailfuls. What have we

here? a man or a fish? dead or alive? A fish:

he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fish-

like smell; a kind of not of the newest Poor-

John. A strange fish! Were I in England now,

as once I was, and had but this fish painted,

not a holiday fool there but would give a piece

of silver: there would this monster make a man; any

strange beast there makes a man: 1070

when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame

beggar, they will lazy out ten to see a dead

Indian. Legged like a man and his fins like

arms! Warm o’ my troth! I do now let loose

my opinion; hold it no longer: this is no fish,

but an islander, that hath lately suffered by a

thunderbolt.

*Thunder*

Alas, the storm is come again! my best way is to

creep under his gaberdine; there is no other

shelter hereabouts: misery acquaints a man with 1080

strange bed-fellows. I will here shroud till the

dregs of the storm be past.

*Enter STEPHANO, singing: a bottle in his hand*

STEPHANO

I shall no more to sea, to sea,

Here shall I die ashore—

This is a very scurvy tune to sing at a man’s

funeral: well, here’s my comfort.

*Drinks*

*Sings*

The master, the swabber, the boatswain and I,

The gunner and his mate

Loved Mall, Meg and Marian and Margery,

But none of us cared for Kate; 1090

For she had a tongue with a tang,

Would cry to a sailor, Go hang!

She loved not the savour of tar nor of pitch,

Yet a tailor might scratch her where’er she did itch:

Then to sea, boys, and let her go hang!

This is a scurvy tune too: but here’s my comfort.

*Drinks*

CALIBAN

Do not torment me: Oh!

STEPHANO

What’s the matter? Have we devils here? Do you put

tricks upon’s with savages and men of Ind, ha?

I have not scaped drowning to be afeard now of your 1100

four legs; for it hath been said, As proper a man as

ever went on four legs cannot make him give ground;

and it shall be said so again while Stephano

breathes at’s nostrils.

CALIBAN

The spirit torments me; Oh!

STEPHANO

This is some monster of the isle with four legs, who

hath got, as I take it, an ague. Where the devil

should he learn our language? I will give him some

relief, if it be but for that. if I can recover him

and keep him tame and get to Naples with him, he’s a 1110

present for any emperor that ever trod on neat’s leather.

CALIBAN

Do not torment me, prithee; I’ll bring my wood home faster.

STEPHANO

He’s in his fit now and does not talk after the

wisest. He shall taste of my bottle: if he have

never drunk wine afore will go near to remove his

fit. If I can recover him and keep him tame, I will

not take too much for him; he shall pay for him that

hath him, and that soundly.

CALIBAN

Thou dost me yet but little hurt; thou wilt anon, 1120

I know it by thy trembling: now Prosper works upon thee.

STEPHANO

Come on your ways; open your mouth; here is that

which will give language to you, cat: open your

mouth; this will shake your shaking, I can tell you,

and that soundly: you cannot tell who’s your friend:

open your chaps again.

TRINCULO

I should know that voice: it should be—but he is

drowned; and these are devils: O defend me!

STEPHANO

Four legs and two voices: a most delicate monster!

His forward voice now is to speak well of his

friend; his backward voice is to utter foul speeches 1130

and to detract. If all the wine in my bottle will

recover him, I will help his ague. Come. Amen! I

will pour some in thy other mouth.

TRINCULO

Stephano!

STEPHANO

Doth thy other mouth call me? Mercy, mercy! This is

a devil, and no monster: I will leave him; I have no

long spoon.

TRINCULO

Stephano! If thou beest Stephano, touch me and

speak to me: for I am Trinculo—be not afeard—thy

good friend Trinculo. 1140

STEPHANO

If thou beest Trinculo, come forth: I’ll pull thee

by the lesser legs: if any be Trinculo’s legs,

these are they. Thou art very Trinculo indeed! How

camest thou to be the siege of this moon-calf? Can

he vent Trinculos?

TRINCULO

I took him to be killed with a thunder-stroke. But

art thou not drowned, Stephano? I hope now thou art

not drowned. Is the storm overblown? I hid me

under the dead moon-calf’s gaberdine for fear of

the storm. And art thou living, Stephano? O 1150

Stephano, two Neapolitans ‘scaped!

STEPHANO

Prithee, do not turn me about; my stomach is not constant.

CALIBAN

[*Aside*] These be fine things, an if they be not sprites.

That’s a brave god and bears celestial liquor.

I will kneel to him.

STEPHANO

How didst thou ‘scape? How camest thou hither?

swear by this bottle how thou camest hither. I

escaped upon a butt of sack which the sailors

heaved o’erboard, by this bottle; which I made of

the bark of a tree with mine own hands since I was 1160

cast ashore.

CALIBAN

I’ll swear upon that bottle to be thy true subject;

for the liquor is not earthly.

STEPHANO

Here; swear then how thou escapedst.

TRINCULO

Swum ashore, man, like a duck: I can swim like a

duck, I’ll be sworn.

STEPHANO

Here, kiss the book. Though thou canst swim like a

duck, thou art made like a goose.

TRINCULO

O Stephano, hast any more of this?

STEPHANO

The whole butt, man: my cellar is in a rock by the 1170

sea-side where my wine is hid. How now, moon-calf!

how does thine ague?

CALIBAN

Hast thou not dropp’d from heaven?

STEPHANO

Out o’ the moon, I do assure thee: I was the man i’

the moon when time was.

CALIBAN

I have seen thee in her and I do adore thee:

My mistress show’d me thee and thy dog and thy bush.

STEPHANO

Come, swear to that; kiss the book: I will furnish

it anon with new contents swear.

TRINCULO

By this good light, this is a very shallow monster! 1180

I afeard of him! A very weak monster! The man i’

the moon! A most poor credulous monster! Well

drawn, monster, in good sooth!

CALIBAN

I’ll show thee every fertile inch o’ th’ island;

And I will kiss thy foot: I prithee, be my god.

TRINCULO

By this light, a most perfidious and drunken

monster! when ‘s god’s asleep, he’ll rob his bottle.

CALIBAN

I’ll kiss thy foot; I’ll swear myself thy subject.

STEPHANO

Come on then; down, and swear.

TRINCULO

I shall laugh myself to death at this puppy-headed 1190

monster. A most scurvy monster! I could find in my

heart to beat him,—

STEPHANO

Come, kiss.

TRINCULO

But that the poor monster’s in drink: an abominable monster!

CALIBAN

I’ll show thee the best springs; I’ll pluck thee berries;

I’ll fish for thee and get thee wood enough.

A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!

I’ll bear him no more sticks, but follow thee,

Thou wondrous man.

TRINCULO

A most ridiculous monster, to make a wonder of a 1200

Poor drunkard!

CALIBAN

I prithee, let me bring thee where crabs grow;

And I with my long nails will dig thee pignuts;

Show thee a jay’s nest and instruct thee how

To snare the nimble marmoset; I’ll bring thee

To clustering filberts and sometimes I’ll get thee

Young scamels from the rock. Wilt thou go with me?

STEPHANO

I prithee now, lead the way without any more

talking. Trinculo, the king and all our company

else being drowned, we will inherit here: here; 1210

bear my bottle: fellow Trinculo, we’ll fill him by and by again.

CALIBAN

*Sings drunkenly*

Farewell master; farewell, farewell!

TRINCULO

A howling monster: a drunken monster!

CALIBAN

No more dams I’ll make for fish

Nor fetch in firing

At requiring;

Nor scrape trencher, nor wash dish

‘Ban, ‘Ban, Cacaliban

Has a new master: get a new man. 1220

Freedom, hey-day! hey-day, freedom! freedom,

hey-day, freedom!

STEPHANO

O brave monster! Lead the way.

*Exeunt*

ACT III

SCENE I. Before PROSPERO’S Cell.

*Enter FERDINAND, bearing a log*

FERDINAND

There be some sports are painful, and their labour

Delight in them sets off: some kinds of baseness

Are nobly undergone and most poor matters

Point to rich ends. This my mean task

Would be as heavy to me as odious, but

The mistress which I serve quickens what’s dead

And makes my labours pleasures: O, she is 1230

Ten times more gentle than her father’s crabbed,

And he’s composed of harshness. I must remove

Some thousands of these logs and pile them up,

Upon a sore injunction: my sweet mistress

Weeps when she sees me work, and says, such baseness

Had never like executor. I forget:

But these sweet thoughts do even refresh my labours,

Most busy lest, when I do it.

*Enter MIRANDA; and PROSPERO at a distance, unseen*

MIRANDA

Alas, now, pray you,

Work not so hard: I would the lightning had 1240

Burnt up those logs that you are enjoin’d to pile!

Pray, set it down and rest you: when this burns,

‘Twill weep for having wearied you. My father

Is hard at study; pray now, rest yourself;

He’s safe for these three hours.

FERDINAND

O most dear mistress,

The sun will set before I shall discharge

What I must strive to do.

MIRANDA

If you’ll sit down,

I’ll bear your logs the while: pray, give me that; 1250

I’ll carry it to the pile.

FERDINAND

No, precious creature;

I had rather crack my sinews, break my back,

Than you should such dishonour undergo,

While I sit lazy by.

MIRANDA

It would become me

As well as it does you: and I should do it

With much more ease; for my good will is to it,

And yours it is against.

PROSPERO

Poor worm, thou art infected! 1260

This visitation shows it.

MIRANDA

You look wearily.

FERDINAND

No, noble mistress;’tis fresh morning with me

When you are by at night. I do beseech you—

Chiefly that I might set it in my prayers—

What is your name?

MIRANDA

Miranda.—O my father,

I have broke your hest to say so!

FERDINAND

Admired Miranda!

Indeed the top of admiration! worth 1270

What’s dearest to the world! Full many a lady

I have eyed with best regard and many a time

The harmony of their tongues hath into bondage

Brought my too diligent ear: for several virtues

Have I liked several women; never any

With so fun soul, but some defect in her

Did quarrel with the noblest grace she owed

And put it to the foil: but you, O you,

So perfect and so peerless, are created

Of every creature’s best! 1280

MIRANDA

I do not know

One of my sex; no woman’s face remember,

Save, from my glass, mine own; nor have I seen

More that I may call men than you, good friend,

And my dear father: how features are abroad,

I am skilless of; but, by my modesty,

The jewel in my dower, I would not wish

Any companion in the world but you,

Nor can imagination form a shape,

Besides yourself, to like of. But I prattle 1290

Something too wildly and my father’s precepts

I therein do forget.

FERDINAND

I am in my condition

A prince, Miranda; I do think, a king;

I would, not so!—and would no more endure

This wooden slavery than to suffer

The flesh-fly blow my mouth. Hear my soul speak:

The very instant that I saw you, did

My heart fly to your service; there resides,

To make me slave to it; and for your sake 1300

Am I this patient log—man.

MIRANDA

Do you love me?

FERDINAND

O heaven, O earth, bear witness to this sound

And crown what I profess with kind event

If I speak true! if hollowly, invert

What best is boded me to mischief! I

Beyond all limit of what else i’ the world

Do love, prize, honour you.

MIRANDA

I am a fool

To weep at what I am glad of. 1310

PROSPERO

Fair encounter

Of two most rare affections! Heavens rain grace

On that which breeds between ‘em!

FERDINAND

Wherefore weep you?

MIRANDA

At mine unworthiness that dare not offer

What I desire to give, and much less take

What I shall die to want. But this is trifling;

And all the more it seeks to hide itself,

The bigger bulk it shows. Hence, bashful cunning!

And prompt me, plain and holy innocence! 1320

I am your wife, if you will marry me;

If not, I’ll die your maid: to be your fellow

You may deny me; but I’ll be your servant,

Whether you will or no.

FERDINAND

My mistress, dearest;

And I thus humble ever.

MIRANDA

My husband, then?

FERDINAND

Ay, with a heart as willing

As bondage e’er of freedom: here’s my hand.

MIRANDA

And mine, with my heart in’t; and now farewell 1330

Till half an hour hence.

FERDINAND

A thousand thousand!

*Exeunt FERDINAND and MIRANDA severally*

PROSPERO

So glad of this as they I cannot be,

Who are surprised withal; but my rejoicing

At nothing can be more. I’ll to my book,

For yet ere supper-time must I perform

Much business appertaining.

*Exit*

SCENE II. Another part of the island.

*Enter CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO*

STEPHANO

Tell not me; when the butt is out, we will drink

water; not a drop before: therefore bear up, and

board ‘em. Servant-monster, drink to me. 1340

TRINCULO

Servant-monster! the folly of this island! They

say there’s but five upon this isle: we are three

of them; if th’ other two be brained like us, the

state totters.

STEPHANO

Drink, servant-monster, when I bid thee: thy eyes

are almost set in thy head.

TRINCULO

Where should they be set else? he were a brave

monster indeed, if they were set in his tail.

STEPHANO

My man-monster hath drown’d his tongue in sack:

for my part, the sea cannot drown me; I swam, ere 1350

I could recover the shore, five and thirty leagues off

and on. By this light, thou shalt be my lieutenant,

monster, or my standard.

TRINCULO

Your lieutenant, if you list; he’s no standard.

STEPHANO

We’ll not run, Monsieur Monster.

TRINCULO

Nor go neither; but you’ll lie like dogs and yet say

nothing neither.

STEPHANO

Moon-calf, speak once in thy life, if thou beest a

good moon-calf.

CALIBAN

How does thy honour? Let me lick thy shoe. 1360

I’ll not serve him; he’s not valiant.

TRINCULO

Thou liest, most ignorant monster: I am in case to

justle a constable. Why, thou deboshed fish thou,

was there ever man a coward that hath drunk so much

sack as I to-day? Wilt thou tell a monstrous lie,

being but half a fish and half a monster?

CALIBAN

Lo, how he mocks me! wilt thou let him, my lord?

TRINCULO

‘Lord’ quoth he! That a monster should be such a natural!

CALIBAN

Lo, lo, again! bite him to death, I prithee.

STEPHANO

Trinculo, keep a good tongue in your head: if you 1370

prove a mutineer,—the next tree! The poor monster’s

my subject and he shall not suffer indignity.

CALIBAN

I thank my noble lord. Wilt thou be pleased to

hearken once again to the suit I made to thee?

STEPHANO

Marry, will I kneel and repeat it; I will stand,

and so shall Trinculo.

*Enter ARIEL, invisible*

CALIBAN

As I told thee before, I am subject to a tyrant, a sorcerer, that by his cunning hath cheated me of the island.

ARIEL

Thou liest.

CALIBAN

Thou liest, thou jesting monkey, thou: I would my 1380

valiant master would destroy thee! I do not lie.

STEPHANO

Trinculo, if you trouble him any more in’s tale, by

this hand, I will supplant some of your teeth.

TRINCULO

Why, I said nothing.

STEPHANO

Mum, then, and no more. Proceed.

CALIBAN

I say, by sorcery he got this isle;

From me he got it. if thy greatness will

Revenge it on him,—for I know thou darest,

But this thing dare not,—

STEPHANO

That’s most certain. 1390

CALIBAN

Thou shalt be lord of it and I’ll serve thee.

STEPHANO

How now shall this be compassed?

Canst thou bring me to the party?

CALIBAN

Yea, yea, my lord: I’ll yield him thee asleep,

Where thou mayst knock a nail into his bead.

ARIEL

Thou liest; thou canst not.

CALIBAN

What a pied ninny’s this! Thou scurvy patch!

I do beseech thy greatness, give him blows

And take his bottle from him: when that’s gone

He shall drink nought but brine; for I’ll not show him 1400

Where the quick freshes are.

STEPHANO

Trinculo, run into no further danger:

interrupt the monster one word further, and,

by this hand, I’ll turn my mercy out o’ doors

and make a stock-fish of thee.

TRINCULO

Why, what did I? I did nothing. I’ll go farther off.

STEPHANO

Didst thou not say he lied?

ARIEL

Thou liest.

STEPHANO

Do I so? take thou that.

*Beats TRINCULO*

As you like this, give me the lie another time. 1410

TRINCULO

I did not give the lie. Out o’ your

wits and bearing too? A pox o’ your bottle!

this can sack and drinking do. A murrain on

your monster, and the devil take your fingers!

CALIBAN

Ha, ha, ha!

STEPHANO

Now, forward with your tale. Prithee, stand farther off.

CALIBAN

Beat him enough: after a little time

I’ll beat him too.

STEPHANO

Stand farther. Come, proceed.

CALIBAN

Why, as I told thee, ‘tis a custom with him, 1420

I’ th’ afternoon to sleep: there thou mayst brain him,

Having first seized his books, or with a log

Batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake,

Or cut his wezand with thy knife. Remember

First to possess his books; for without them

He’s but a sot, as I am, nor hath not

One spirit to command: they all do hate him

As rootedly as I. Burn but his books.

He has brave utensils,—for so he calls them—

Which when he has a house, he’ll deck withal 1430

And that most deeply to consider is

The beauty of his daughter; he himself

Calls her a nonpareil: I never saw a woman,

But only Sycorax my dam and she;

But she as far surpasseth Sycorax

As great’st does least.

STEPHANO

Is it so brave a lass?

CALIBAN

Ay, lord; she will become thy bed, I warrant.

And bring thee forth brave brood.

STEPHANO

Monster, I will kill this man: his daughter and I 1440

will be king and queen—save our graces!—and

Trinculo and thyself shall be viceroys. Dost thou

like the plot, Trinculo?

TRINCULO

Excellent.

STEPHANO

Give me thy hand: I am sorry I beat thee; but,

while thou livest, keep a good tongue in thy head.

CALIBAN

Within this half hour will he be asleep:

Wilt thou destroy him then?

STEPHANO

Ay, on mine honour.

ARIEL

This will I tell my master. 1450

CALIBAN

Thou makest me merry; I am full of pleasure:

Let us be jocund: will you troll the catch

You taught me but while-ere?

STEPHANO

At thy request, monster, I will do reason, any

reason. Come on, Trinculo, let us sing.

*Sings*

Flout ‘em and scout ‘em

And scout ‘em and flout ‘em

Thought is free.

CALIBAN

That’s not the tune.

*ARIEL plays the tune on a tabour and pipe* 1460

STEPHANO

What is this same?

TRINCULO

This is the tune of our catch, played by the picture

of Nobody.

STEPHANO

If thou beest a man, show thyself in thy likeness:

if thou beest a devil, take’t as thou list.

TRINCULO

O, forgive me my sins!

STEPHANO

He that dies pays all debts: I defy thee. Mercy upon us!

CALIBAN

Art thou afeard?

STEPHANO

No, monster, not I.

CALIBAN

Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises, 1470

Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.

Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments

Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices

That, if I then had waked after long sleep,

Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,

The clouds methought would open and show riches

Ready to drop upon me that, when I waked,

I cried to dream again.

STEPHANO

This will prove a brave kingdom to me, where I shall

have my music for nothing. 1480

CALIBAN

When Prospero is destroyed.

STEPHANO

That shall be by and by: I remember the story.

TRINCULO

The sound is going away; let’s follow it, and

after do our work.

STEPHANO

Lead, monster; we’ll follow. I would I could see

this tabourer; he lays it on.

TRINCULO

Wilt come? I’ll follow, Stephano.

*Exeunt*

SCENE III. Another part of the island.

*Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, GONZALO, ADRIAN, FRANCISCO, and others*

GONZALO

By’r lakin, I can go no further, sir;

My old bones ache: here’s a maze trod indeed

Through forth-rights and meanders! By your patience, 1490

I needs must rest me.

ALONSO

Old lord, I cannot blame thee,

Who am myself attach’d with weariness,

To the dulling of my spirits: sit down, and rest.

Even here I will put off my hope and keep it

No longer for my flatterer: he is drown’d

Whom thus we stray to find, and the sea mocks

Our frustrate search on land. Well, let him go.

ANTONIO

[*Aside to SEBASTIAN*]

I am right glad that he’s so out of hope.

Do not, for one repulse, forego the purpose 1500

That you resolved to effect.

SEBASTIAN

[*Aside to ANTONIO*]The next advantage

Will we take throughly.

ANTONIO

[*Aside to SEBASTIAN*] Let it be to-night;

For, now they are oppress’d with travel, they

Will not, nor cannot, use such vigilance

As when they are fresh.

SEBASTIAN

[*Aside to ANTONIO*] I say, to-night: no more.

Solemn and strange music

ALONSO

What harmony is this? My good friends, hark! 1510

GONZALO

Marvellous sweet music!

*Enter PROSPERO above, invisible. Enter several*

*strange Shapes, bringing in a banquet; they dance about it with gentle actions of salutation; and, inviting the King, &c. to eat, they depart*

ALONSO

Give us kind keepers, heavens! What were these?

SEBASTIAN

A living drollery. Now I will believe

That there are unicorns, that in Arabia

There is one tree, the phoenix’ throne, one phoenix

At this hour reigning there.

ANTONIO

I’ll believe both;

And what does else want credit, come to me,

And I’ll be sworn ‘tis true: travellers ne’er did lie,

Though fools at home condemn ‘em. 1520

GONZALO

If in Naples

I should report this now, would they believe me?

If I should say, I saw such islanders—

For, certes, these are people of the island—

Who, though they are of monstrous shape, yet, note,

Their manners are more gentle-kind than of

Our human generation you shall find

Many, nay, almost any.

PROSPERO

[*Aside*] Honest lord,

Thou hast said well; for some of you there present 1530

Are worse than devils.

ALONSO

I cannot too much muse

Such shapes, such gesture and such sound, expressing,

Although they want the use of tongue, a kind

Of excellent dumb discourse.

PROSPERO

[*Aside*] Praise in departing.

FRANCISCO

They vanish’d strangely.

SEBASTIAN

No matter, since

They have left their viands behind; for we have stomachs.

Will’t please you taste of what is here? 1540

ALONSO

Not I.

GONZALO

Faith, sir, you need not fear. When we were boys,

Who would believe that there were mountaineers

Dew-lapp’d like bulls, whose throats had hanging at ‘em

Wallets of flesh? or that there were such men

Whose heads stood in their breasts? which now we find

Each putter-out of five for one will bring us

Good warrant of.

ALONSO

I will stand to and feed,

Although my last: no matter, since I feel 1550

The best is past. Brother, my lord the duke,

Stand to and do as we.

*Thunder and lightning. Enter ARIEL, like a harpy; claps his wings upon the table; and, with a quaint device, the banquet vanishes*

ARIEL

You are three men of sin, whom Destiny,

That hath to instrument this lower world

And what is in’t, the never-surfeited sea

Hath caused to belch up you; and on this island

Where man doth not inhabit; you ‘mongst men

Being most unfit to live. I have made you mad;

And even with such-like valour men hang and drown

Their proper selves. 1560

*ALONSO, SEBASTIAN &c. draw their swords*

You fools! I and my fellows

Are ministers of Fate: the elements,

Of whom your swords are temper’d, may as well

Wound the loud winds, or with bemock’d-at stabs

Kill the still-closing waters, as diminish

One dowle that’s in my plume: my fellow-ministers

Are like invulnerable. If you could hurt,

Your swords are now too massy for your strengths

And will not be uplifted. But remember—

For that’s my business to you—that you three 1570

From Milan did supplant good Prospero;

Exposed unto the sea, which hath requit it,

Him and his innocent child: for which foul deed

The powers, delaying, not forgetting, have

Incensed the seas and shores, yea, all the creatures,

Against your peace. Thee of thy son, Alonso,

They have bereft; and do pronounce by me:

Lingering perdition, worse than any death

Can be at once, shall step by step attend

You and your ways; whose wraths to guard you from— 1580

Which here, in this most desolate isle, else falls

Upon your heads—is nothing but heart-sorrow

And a clear life ensuing.

*He vanishes in thunder; then, to soft music enter the Shapes again, and dance, with mocks and mows, and carrying out the table*

PROSPERO

Bravely the figure of this harpy hast thou

Perform’d, my Ariel; a grace it had, devouring:

Of my instruction hast thou nothing bated

In what thou hadst to say: so, with good life

And observation strange, my meaner ministers

Their several kinds have done. My high charms work

And these mine enemies are all knit up 1590

In their distractions; they now are in my power;

And in these fits I leave them, while I visit

Young Ferdinand, whom they suppose is drown’d,

And his and mine loved darling.

*Exit above*

GONZALO

I’ the name of something holy, sir, why stand you

In this strange stare?

ALONSO

O, it is monstrous, monstrous:

Methought the billows spoke and told me of it;

The winds did sing it to me, and the thunder,

That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounced 1600

The name of Prosper: it did bass my trespass.

Therefore my son i’ the ooze is bedded, and

I’ll seek him deeper than e’er plummet sounded

And with him there lie mudded.

*Exit*

SEBASTIAN

But one fiend at a time,

I’ll fight their legions o’er.

ANTONIO

I’ll be thy second.

*Exeunt SEBASTIAN, and ANTONIO*

GONZALO

All three of them are desperate: their great guilt,

Like poison given to work a great time after,

Now ‘gins to bite the spirits. I do beseech you 1610

That are of suppler joints, follow them swiftly

And hinder them from what this ecstasy   
May now provoke them to.

ADRIAN

Follow, I pray you.

*Exeunt*

ACT IV

SCENE I. Before PROSPERO’S cell.

*Enter PROSPERO, FERDINAND, and MIRANDA*

PROSPERO

If I have too austerely punish’d you,

Your compensation makes amends, for I

Have given you here a third of mine own life,

Or that for which I live; who once again

I tender to thy hand: all thy vexations

Were but my trials of thy love and thou 1620

Hast strangely stood the test here, afore Heaven,

I ratify this my rich gift. O Ferdinand,

Do not smile at me that I boast her off,

For thou shalt find she will outstrip all praise

And make it halt behind her.

FERDINAND

I do believe it

Against an oracle.

PROSPERO

Then, as my gift and thine own acquisition

Worthily purchased take my daughter: but

If thou dost break her virgin-knot before 1630

All sanctimonious ceremonies may

With full and holy rite be minister’d,

No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall

To make this contract grow: but barren hate,

Sour-eyed disdain and discord shall bestrew

The union of your bed with weeds so loathly

That you shall hate it both: therefore take heed,

As Hymen’s lamps shall light you.

FERDINAND

As I hope

For quiet days, fair issue and long life, 1640

With such love as ‘tis now, the murkiest den,

The most opportune place, the strong’st suggestion.

Our worser genius can, shall never melt

Mine honour into lust, to take away

The edge of that day’s celebration

When I shall think: or Phoebus’ steeds are founder’d,

Or Night kept chain’d below.

PROSPERO

Fairly spoke.

Sit then and talk with her; she is thine own.

What, Ariel! my industrious servant, Ariel! 1650

*Enter ARIEL*

ARIEL

What would my potent master? here I am.

PROSPERO

Thou and thy meaner fellows your last service

Did worthily perform; and I must use you

In such another trick. Go bring the rabble,

O’er whom I give thee power, here to this place:

Incite them to quick motion; for I must

Bestow upon the eyes of this young couple

Some vanity of mine art: it is my promise,

And they expect it from me.

ARIEL

Presently? 1660

PROSPERO

Ay, with a twink.

ARIEL

Before you can say ‘come’ and ‘go,’

And breathe twice and cry ‘so, so,’

Each one, tripping on his toe,

Will be here with mop and mow.

Do you love me, master? no?

PROSPERO

Dearly my delicate Ariel. Do not approach

Till thou dost hear me call.

ARIEL

Well, I conceive.

*Exit*

PROSPERO

Look thou be true; do not give dalliance 1670

Too much the rein: the strongest oaths are straw

To the fire i’ the blood: be more abstemious,

Or else, good night your vow!

FERDINAND

I warrant you sir;

The white cold virgin snow upon my heart

Abates the ardour of my liver.

PROSPERO

Well.

Now come, my Ariel! bring a corollary,

Rather than want a spirit: appear and pertly!

No tongue! all eyes! be silent. 1680

*Soft music*

*Enter IRIS*

IRIS

Ceres, most bounteous lady, thy rich leas

Of wheat, rye, barley, vetches, oats and pease;

Thy turfy mountains, where live nibbling sheep,

And flat meads thatch’d with stover, them to keep;

Thy banks with pioned and twilled brims,

Which spongy April at thy hest betrims,

To make cold nymphs chaste crowns; and thy broom-groves,

Whose shadow the dismissed bachelor loves,

Being lass-lorn: thy pole-clipt vineyard;

And thy sea-marge, sterile and rocky-hard, 1690

Where thou thyself dost air;—the queen o’ the sky,

Whose watery arch and messenger am I,

Bids thee leave these, and with her sovereign grace,

Here on this grass-plot, in this very place,

To come and sport: her peacocks fly amain:

Approach, rich Ceres, her to entertain.

*Enter CERES*

CERES

Hail, many-colour’d messenger, that ne’er

Dost disobey the wife of Jupiter;

Who with thy saffron wings upon my flowers

Diffusest honey-drops, refreshing showers, 1700

And with each end of thy blue bow dost crown

My bosky acres and my unshrubb’d down,

Rich scarf to my proud earth; why hath thy queen

Summon’d me hither, to this short-grass’d green?

IRIS

A contract of true love to celebrate;

And some donation freely to estate

On the blest lovers.

CERES

Tell me, heavenly bow,

If Venus or her son, as thou dost know,

Do now attend the queen? Since they did plot 1710

The means that dusky Dis my daughter got,

Her and her blind boy’s scandal’d company

I have forsworn.

IRIS

Of her society

Be not afraid: I met her deity

Cutting the clouds towards Paphos and her son

Dove-drawn with her. Here thought they to have done

Some wanton charm upon this man and maid,

Whose vows are, that no bed-right shall be paid

Till Hymen’s torch be lighted: but vain; 1720

Mars’s hot minion is returned again;

Her waspish-headed son has broke his arrows,

Swears he will shoot no more but play with sparrows

And be a boy right out.

CERES

High’st queen of state,

Great Juno, comes; I know her by her gait.

*Enter JUNO*

JUNO

How does my bounteous sister? Go with me

To bless this twain, that they may prosperous be

And honour’d in their issue.

*They sing:*

JUNO

Honour, riches, marriage-blessing, 1730

Long continuance, and increasing,

Hourly joys be still upon you!

Juno sings her blessings upon you.

CERES

Earth’s increase, foison plenty,

Barns and garners never empty,

Vines and clustering bunches growing,

Plants with goodly burthen bowing;

Spring come to you at the farthest

In the very end of harvest!

Scarcity and want shall shun you; 1740

Ceres’ blessing so is on you.

FERDINAND

This is a most majestic vision, and

Harmoniously charmingly. May I be bold

To think these spirits?

PROSPERO

Spirits, which by mine art

I have from their confines call’d to enact

My present fancies.

FERDINAND

Let me live here ever;

So rare a wonder’d father and a wife

Makes this place Paradise. 1750

*Juno and Ceres whisper, and send Iris on employment*

PROSPERO

Sweet, now, silence!

*Juno and Ceres whisper seriously;*

There’s something else to do: hush, and be mute,

Or else our spell is marr’d.

IRIS

You nymphs, call’d Naiads, of the windring brooks,

With your sedged crowns and ever-harmless looks,

Leave your crisp channels and on this green land

Answer your summons; Juno does command:

Come, temperate nymphs, and help to celebrate 1760

A contract of true love; be not too late.

*Enter certain Nymphs*

You sunburnt sicklemen, of August weary,

Come hither from the furrow and be merry:

Make holiday; your rye-straw hats put on

And these fresh nymphs encounter every one

In country footing.

*Enter certain Reapers, properly habited: they join with the Nymphs in a graceful dance; towards the end whereof PROSPERO starts suddenly, and speaks; after which, to a strange, hollow, and confused noise, they heavily vanish*

PROSPERO

[*Aside*] I had forgot that foul conspiracy

Of the beast Caliban and his confederates

Against my life: the minute of their plot

Is almost come. 1770

*To the Spirits*

Well done! avoid; no more!

FERDINAND

This is strange: your father’s in some passion

That works him strongly.

MIRANDA

Never till this day

Saw I him touch’d with anger so distemper’d.

PROSPERO

You do look, my son, in a moved sort,

As if you were dismay’d: be cheerful, sir.

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,

As I foretold you, were all spirits and

Are melted into air, into thin air: 1780

And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,

The cloud-capp’d towers, the gorgeous palaces,

The solemn temples, the great globe itself,

Ye all which it inherit, shall dissolve

And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,

Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff

As dreams are made on, and our little life

Is rounded with a sleep. Sir, I am vex’d;

Bear with my weakness; my, brain is troubled:

Be not disturb’d with my infirmity: 1790

If you be pleased, retire into my cell

And there repose: a turn or two I’ll walk,

To still my beating mind.

FERDINAND AND MIRANDA

We wish your peace.

*Exeunt*

PROSPERO

Come with a thought I thank thee, Ariel: come.

*Enter ARIEL*

ARIEL

Thy thoughts I cleave to. What’s thy pleasure?

PROSPERO

Spirit,

We must prepare to meet with Caliban.

ARIEL

Ay, my commander: when I presented Ceres,

I thought to have told thee of it, but I fear’d

Lest I might anger thee. 1800

PROSPERO

Say again, where didst thou leave these varlets?

ARIEL

I told you, sir, they were red-hot with drinking;

So fun of valour that they smote the air

For breathing in their faces; beat the ground

For kissing of their feet; yet always bending

Towards their project. Then I beat my tabour;

At which, like unback’d colts, they prick’d their ears,

Advanced their eyelids, lifted up their noses

As they smelt music: so I charm’d their ears

That calf-like they my lowing follow’d through 1810

Tooth’d briers, sharp furzes, pricking goss and thorns,

Which entered their frail shins: at last I left them

I’ the filthy-mantled pool beyond your cell,

There dancing up to the chins, that the foul lake

O’erstunk their feet.

PROSPERO

This was well done, my bird.

Thy shape invisible retain thou still:

The trumpery in my house, go bring it hither,

For stale to catch these thieves.

ARIEL

I go, I go. 1820

*Exit*

PROSPERO

A devil, a born devil, on whose nature

Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,

Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost;

And as with age his body uglier grows,

So his mind cankers. I will plague them all,

Even to roaring.

*Re-enter ARIEL, loaden with glistering apparel, &c.*

Come, hang them on this line.

*PROSPERO and ARIEL remain invisible.*

*Enter CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO, all wet*

CALIBAN

Pray you, tread softly, that the blind mole may not

Hear a foot fall: we now are near his cell.

STEPHANO

Monster, your fairy, which you say is 1830

a harmless fairy, has done little better than

played the Jack with us.

TRINCULO

Monster, I do smell all horse-piss; at

which my nose is in great indignation.

STEPHANO

So is mine. Do you hear, monster? If I should take

a displeasure against you, look you,—

TRINCULO

Thou wert but a lost monster.

CALIBAN

Good my lord, give me thy favour still.

Be patient, for the prize I’ll bring thee to

Shall hoodwink this mischance: therefore speak softly. 1840

All’s hush’d as midnight yet.

TRINCULO

Ay, but to lose our bottles in the pool,—

STEPHANO

There is not only disgrace and dishonour in that,

monster, but an infinite loss.

TRINCULO

That’s more to me than my wetting: yet this is your

harmless fairy, monster.

STEPHANO

I will fetch off my bottle, though I be o’er ears

for my labour.

CALIBAN

Prithee, my king, be quiet. Seest thou here,

This is the mouth o’ the cell: no noise, and enter. 1850

Do that good mischief which may make this island

Thine own for ever, and I, thy Caliban,

For aye thy foot-licker.

STEPHANO

Give me thy hand. I do begin to have bloody thoughts.

TRINCULO

O king Stephano! O peer! O worthy Stephano! Look

what a wardrobe here is for thee!

CALIBAN

Let it alone, thou fool; it is but trash.

TRINCULO

O, ho, monster! we know what belongs to a frippery.

O king Stephano!

STEPHANO

Put off that gown, Trinculo; by this hand, I’ll have 1860

that gown.

TRINCULO

Thy grace shall have it.

CALIBAN

The dropsy drown this fool I what do you mean

To dote thus on such luggage? Let’s alone

And do the murder first: if he awake,

From toe to crown he’ll fill our skins with pinches,

Make us strange stuff.

STEPHANO

Be you quiet, monster. Mistress line,

is not this my jerkin? Now is the jerkin under

the line: now, jerkin, you are like to lose your 1870

hair and prove a bald jerkin.

TRINCULO

Do, do: we steal by line and level, an’t like your grace.

STEPHANO

I thank thee for that jest; here’s a garment for’t:

wit shall not go unrewarded while I am king of this

country. ‘Steal by line and level’ is an excellent

pass of pate; there’s another garment for’t.

TRINCULO

Monster, come, put some lime upon your fingers, and

away with the rest.

CALIBAN

I will have none on’t: we shall lose our time,

And all be turn’d to barnacles, or to apes 1880  
With foreheads villanous low.

STEPHANO

Monster, lay-to your fingers: help to bear this

away where my hogshead of wine is, or I’ll turn you

out of my kingdom: go to, carry this.

TRINCULO

And this.

STEPHANO

Ay, and this.

*A noise of hunters heard. Enter divers Spirits, in shape of dogs and hounds, and hunt them about, PROSPERO and ARIEL setting them on*

PROSPERO

Hey, Mountain, hey!

ARIEL

Silver I there it goes, Silver!

PROSPERO

Fury, Fury! there, Tyrant, there! hark! hark!

*CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO, are driven out*

Go charge my goblins that they grind their joints 1890

With dry convulsions, shorten up their sinews

With aged cramps, and more pinch-spotted make them

Than pard or cat o’ mountain.

ARIEL

Hark, they roar!

PROSPERO

Let them be hunted soundly. At this hour

Lie at my mercy all mine enemies:

Shortly shall all my labours end, and thou

Shalt have the air at freedom: for a little

Follow, and do me service.

*Exeunt*

ACT V

SCENE I. Before PROSPERO’S cell.

*Enter PROSPERO in his magic robes, and ARIEL*

PROSPERO

Now does my project gather to a head: 1900

My charms crack not; my spirits obey; and time

Goes upright with his carriage. How’s the day?

ARIEL

On the sixth hour; at which time, my lord,

You said our work should cease.

PROSPERO

I did say so,

When first I raised the tempest. Say, my spirit,

How fares the king and’s followers?

ARIEL

Confined together

In the same fashion as you gave in charge,

Just as you left them; all prisoners, sir, 1910

In the line-grove which weather-fends your cell;

They cannot budge till your release. The king,

His brother and yours, abide all three distracted

And the remainder mourning over them,

Brimful of sorrow and dismay; but chiefly

Him that you term’d, sir, ‘The good old lord Gonzalo;’

His tears run down his beard, like winter’s drops

From eaves of reeds. Your charm so strongly works ‘em

That if you now beheld them, your affections

Would become tender. 1920

PROSPERO

Dost thou think so, spirit?

ARIEL

Mine would, sir, were I human.

PROSPERO

And mine shall.

Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling

Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,

One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,

Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?

Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick,

Yet with my nobler reason ‘gaitist my fury

Do I take part: the rarer action is 1930

In virtue than in vengeance: they being penitent,

The sole drift of my purpose doth extend

Not a frown further. Go release them, Ariel:

My charms I’ll break, their senses I’ll restore,

And they shall be themselves.

ARIEL

I’ll fetch them, sir.

*Exit*

PROSPERO

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves,

And ye that on the sands with printless foot

Do chase the ebbing Neptune and do fly him

When he comes back; you demi-puppets that 1940

By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,

Whereof the ewe not bites, and you whose pastime

Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice

To hear the solemn curfew; by whose aid,

Weak masters though ye be, I have bedimm’d

The noontide sun, call’d forth the mutinous winds,

And ‘twixt the green sea and the azured vault

Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder

Have I given fire and rifted Jove’s stout oak

With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory 1950

Have I made shake and by the spurs pluck’d up

The pine and cedar: graves at my command

Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let ‘em forth

By my so potent art. But this rough magic

I here abjure, and, when I have required

Some heavenly music, which even now I do,

To work mine end upon their senses that

This airy charm is for, I’ll break my staff,

Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,

And deeper than did ever plummet sound 1960

I’ll drown my book.

*Solemn music*

*Re-enter ARIEL before: then ALONSO, with a frantic gesture, attended by GONZALO; SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO in like manner, attended by ADRIAN and FRANCISCO they all enter the circle which PROSPERO had made,and there stand charmed; which PROSPERO observing, speaks:*

A solemn air and the best comforter

To an unsettled fancy cure thy brains,

Now useless, boil’d within thy skull! There stand,

For you are spell-stopp’d.

Holy Gonzalo, honourable man,

Mine eyes, even sociable to the show of thine,

Fall fellowly drops. The charm dissolves apace,

And as the morning steals upon the night, 1970

Melting the darkness, so their rising senses

Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle

Their clearer reason. O good Gonzalo,

My true preserver, and a loyal sir

To him you follow’st! I will pay thy graces

Home both in word and deed. Most cruelly

Didst thou, Alonso, use me and my daughter:

Thy brother was a furtherer in the act.

Thou art pinch’d fort now, Sebastian. Flesh and blood,

You, brother mine, that entertain’d ambition, 1980

Expell’d remorse and nature; who, with Sebastian,

Whose inward pinches therefore are most strong,

Would here have kill’d your king; I do forgive thee,

Unnatural though thou art. Their understanding

Begins to swell, and the approaching tide

Will shortly fill the reasonable shore

That now lies foul and muddy. Not one of them

That yet looks on me, or would know me Ariel,

Fetch me the hat and rapier in my cell:

I will discase me, and myself present 1990

As I was sometime Milan: quickly, spirit;

Thou shalt ere long be free.

*ARIEL sings and helps to attire him*

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:

In a cowslip’s bell I lie;

There I couch when owls do cry.

On the bat’s back I do fly

After summer merrily.

Merrily, merrily shall I live now

Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

PROSPERO

Why, that’s my dainty Ariel! I shall miss thee: 2000

But yet thou shalt have freedom: so, so, so.

To the king’s ship, invisible as thou art:

There shalt thou find the mariners asleep

Under the hatches; the master and the boatswain

Being awake, enforce them to this place,

And presently, I prithee.

ARIEL

I drink the air before me, and return

Or ere your pulse twice beat.

*Exit*

GONZALO

All torment, trouble, wonder and amazement

Inhabits here: some heavenly power guide us 2010

Out of this fearful country!

PROSPERO

Behold, sir king,

The wronged Duke of Milan, Prospero:

For more assurance that a living prince

Does now speak to thee, I embrace thy body;

And to thee and thy company I bid

A hearty welcome.

ALONSO

Whether thou best he or no,

Or some enchanted trifle to abuse me,

As late I have been, I not know: thy pulse 2020

Beats as of flesh and blood; and, since I saw thee,

The affliction of my mind amends, with which,

I fear, a madness held me: this must crave,

An if this be at all, a most strange story.

Thy dukedom I resign and do entreat

Thou pardon me my wrongs. But how should Prospero

Be living and be here?

PROSPERO

First, noble friend,

Let me embrace thine age, whose honour cannot

Be measured or confined. 2030

GONZALO

Whether this be

Or be not, I’ll not swear.

PROSPERO

You do yet taste

Some subtilties o’ the isle, that will not let you

Believe things certain. Welcome, my friends all!

*Aside to SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO*

But you, my brace of lords, were I so minded,

I here could pluck his highness’ frown upon you

And justify you traitors: at this time

I will tell no tales.

SEBASTIAN

[*Aside*]

The devil speaks in him. 2040

PROSPERO

No.

For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother

Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive

Thy rankest fault; all of them; and require

My dukedom of thee, which perforce, I know,

Thou must restore.

ALONSO

If thou be’st Prospero,

Give us particulars of thy preservation;

How thou hast met us here, who three hours since

Were wreck’d upon this shore; where I have lost— 2050

How sharp the point of this remembrance is!—

My dear son Ferdinand.

PROSPERO

I am woe for’t, sir.

ALONSO

Irreparable is the loss, and patience

Says it is past her cure.

PROSPERO

I rather think

You have not sought her help, of whose soft grace

For the like loss I have her sovereign aid

And rest myself content.

ALONSO

You the like loss! 2060

PROSPERO

As great to me as late; and, supportable

To make the dear loss, have I means much weaker

Than you may call to comfort you, for I

Have lost my daughter.

ALONSO

A daughter?

O heavens, that they were living both in Naples,

The king and queen there! that they were, I wish

Myself were mudded in that oozy bed

Where my son lies. When did you lose your daughter?

PROSPERO

In this last tempest. I perceive these lords 2070

At this encounter do so much admire

That they devour their reason and scarce think

Their eyes do offices of truth, their words

Are natural breath: but, howsoe’er you have

Been justled from your senses, know for certain

That I am Prospero and that very duke

Which was thrust forth of Milan, who most strangely

Upon this shore, where you were wreck’d, was landed,

To be the lord on’t. No more yet of this;

For ‘tis a chronicle of day by day, 2080

Not a relation for a breakfast nor

Befitting this first meeting. Welcome, sir;

This cell’s my court: here have I few attendants

And subjects none abroad: pray you, look in.

My dukedom since you have given me again,

I will requite you with as good a thing;

At least bring forth a wonder, to content ye

As much as me my dukedom.

*Here PROSPERO discovers FERDINAND and MIRANDA playing at chess*

MIRANDA

Sweet lord, you play me false.

FERDINAND

No, my dear’st love, 2090  
I would not for the world.

MIRANDA

Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,

And I would call it, fair play.

ALONSO

If this prove

A vision of the Island, one dear son

Shall I twice lose.

SEBASTIAN

A most high miracle!

FERDINAND

Though the seas threaten, they are merciful;

I have cursed them without cause.

*Kneels*

ALONSO

Now all the blessings 2100

Of a glad father compass thee about!

Arise, and say how thou camest here.

MIRANDA

O, wonder!

How many goodly creatures are there here!

How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,

That has such people in’t!

PROSPERO

‘Tis new to thee.

ALONSO

What is this maid with whom thou wast at play?

Your eld’st acquaintance cannot be three hours:

Is she the goddess that hath sever’d us, 2110

And brought us thus together?

FERDINAND

Sir, she is mortal;

But by immortal Providence she’s mine:

I chose her when I could not ask my father

For his advice, nor thought I had one. She

Is daughter to this famous Duke of Milan,

Of whom so often I have heard renown,

But never saw before; of whom I have

Received a second life; and second father

This lady makes him to me. 2120

ALONSO

I am hers:

But, O, how oddly will it sound that I

Must ask my child forgiveness!

PROSPERO

There, sir, stop:

Let us not burthen our remembrance with

A heaviness that’s gone.

GONZALO

I have inly wept,

Or should have spoke ere this. Look down, you god,

And on this couple drop a blessed crown!

For it is you that have chalk’d forth the way 2130

Which brought us hither.

ALONSO

I say, Amen, Gonzalo!

GONZALO

Was Milan thrust from Milan, that his issue

Should become kings of Naples? O, rejoice

Beyond a common joy, and set it down

With gold on lasting pillars: In one voyage

Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis,

And Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife

Where he himself was lost, Prospero his dukedom

In a poor isle and all of us ourselves 2140

When no man was his own.

ALONSO

*To FERDINAND and MIRANDA*

Give me your hands:

Let grief and sorrow still embrace his heart

That doth not wish you joy!

GONZALO

Be it so! Amen!

*Re-enter ARIEL, with the Master and Boatswain amazedly following*

O, look, sir, look, sir! here is more of us:

I prophesied, if a gallows were on land,

This fellow could not drown. Now, blasphemy,

That swear’st grace o’erboard, not an oath on shore?

Hast thou no mouth by land? What is the news? 2150

Boatswain

The best news is, that we have safely found

Our king and company; the next, our ship—

Which, but three glasses since, we gave out split—

Is tight and yare and bravely rigg’d as when

We first put out to sea.

ARIEL

[*Aside to PROSPERO*]

Sir, all this service

Have I done since I went.

PROSPERO

[*Aside to ARIEL*]

My tricksy spirit!

ALONSO

These are not natural events; they strengthen

From strange to stranger. Say, how came you hither? 2160

Boatswain

If I did think, sir, I were well awake,

I’ld strive to tell you. We were dead of sleep,

And—how we know not—all clapp’d under hatches;

Where but even now with strange and several noises

Of roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains,

And more diversity of sounds, all horrible,

We were awaked; straightway, at liberty;

Where we, in all her trim, freshly beheld

Our royal, good and gallant ship, our master

Capering to eye her: on a trice, so please you, 2170

Even in a dream, were we divided from them

And were brought moping hither.

ARIEL

[*Aside to PROSPERO*]

Was’t well done?

PROSPERO

[*Aside to ARIEL*]

Bravely, my diligence. Thou shalt be free.

ALONSO

This is as strange a maze as e’er men trod

And there is in this business more than nature

Was ever conduct of: some oracle

Must rectify our knowledge.

PROSPERO

Sir, my liege,

Do not infest your mind with beating on 2180

The strangeness of this business; at pick’d leisure

Which shall be shortly, single I’ll resolve you,

Which to you shall seem probable, of every

These happen’d accidents; till when, be cheerful

And think of each thing well.

[*Aside to ARIEL*]

Come hither, spirit:

Set Caliban and his companions free;

Untie the spell.

*Exit ARIEL*

How fares my gracious sir?

There are yet missing of your company 2190

Some few odd lads that you remember not.

*Re-enter ARIEL, driving in CALIBAN, STEPHANO and TRINCULO, in their stolen apparel*

STEPHANO

Every man shift for all the rest, and

let no man take care for himself; for all is

but fortune. Coragio, bully-monster, coragio!

TRINCULO

If these be true spies which I wear in my head,

here’s a goodly sight.

CALIBAN

O Setebos, these be brave spirits indeed!

How fine my master is! I am afraid

He will chastise me.

SEBASTIAN

Ha, ha!

What things are these, my lord Antonio?

Will money buy ‘em? 2200

ANTONIO

Very like; one of them

Is a plain fish, and, no doubt, marketable.

PROSPERO

Mark but the badges of these men, my lords,

Then say if they be true. This mis-shapen knave,

His mother was a witch, and one so strong

That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs,

And deal in her command without her power.

These three have robb’d me; and this demi-devil—

For he’s a bastard one—had plotted with them

To take my life. Two of these fellows you 2210

Must know and own; this thing of darkness!

Acknowledge mine.

CALIBAN

I shall be pinch’d to death.

ALONSO

Is not this Stephano, my drunken butler?

SEBASTIAN

He is drunk now: where had he wine?

ALONSO

And Trinculo is reeling ripe: where should they

Find this grand liquor that hath gilded ‘em?

How camest thou in this pickle?

TRINCULO

I have been in such a pickle since I

saw you last that, I fear me, will never out of 2220

my bones: I shall not fear fly-blowing.

SEBASTIAN

Why, how now, Stephano!

STEPHANO

O, touch me not; I am not Stephano, but a cramp.

PROSPERO

You’ld be king o’ the isle, sirrah?

STEPHANO

I should have been a sore one then.

ALONSO

This is a strange thing as e’er I look’d on.

*Pointing to Caliban*

PROSPERO

He is as disproportion’d in his manners

As in his shape. Go, sirrah, to my cell;

Take with you your companions; as you look 2230

To have my pardon, trim it handsomely.

CALIBAN

Ay, that I will; and I’ll be wise hereafter

And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass

Was I, to take this drunkard for a god

And worship this dull fool!

PROSPERO

Go to; away!

ALONSO

Hence, and bestow your luggage where you found it. 2240

SEBASTIAN

Or stole it, rather.

*Exeunt CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO*

PROSPERO

Sir, I invite your highness and your train

To my poor cell, where you shall take your rest 2250

For this one night; which, part of it, I’ll waste

With such discourse as, I not doubt, shall make it

Go quick away; the story of my life

And the particular accidents gone by

Since I came to this isle: and in the morn

I’ll bring you to your ship and so to Naples,

Where I have hope to see the nuptial

Of these our dear-beloved solemnized;

And thence retire me to my Milan, where

Every third thought shall be my grave. 2260

ALONSO

I long

To hear the story of your life, which must

Take the ear strangely.

PROSPERO

I’ll deliver all;

And promise you calm seas, auspicious gales

And sail so expeditious that shall catch   
Your royal fleet far off.

[*Aside to ARIEL*]

My Ariel, chick,

That is thy charge: then to the elements

Be free, and fare thou well! Please you, draw near. 2270

*Exeunt*

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN BY PROSPERO

Now my charms are all o’erthrown,

And what strength I have’s mine own,

Which is most faint: now, ‘tis true,

I must be here confined by you,

Or sent to Naples. Let me not,

Since I have my dukedom got

And pardon’d the deceiver, dwell

In this bare island by your spell;

But release me from my bands

With the help of your good hands: 2280

Gentle breath of yours my sails

Must fill, or else my project fails,

Which was to please. Now I want

Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,

And my ending is despair,

Unless I be relieved by prayer,

Which pierces so that it assaults

Mercy itself and frees all faults.

As you from crimes would pardon’d be,

Let your indulgence set me free. 2290

(1611)

### Questions for Consideration:

1. Unlike *Trifles*, this play is written in verse. Most lines tend to contain 10-11 syllables and some can be read as blank verse, unrhymed iambic pentameter. Why would Shakespeare have written it this way in his day? What is the effect of this use of verse in the characters’ lines?

Gonzalo comments that he believes the boatswain’s fate is to be hanged rather than drowned. What point is he making? What larger notion of fate in the play is introduced in this passage? How does Prospero’s magic affect our notion of fate?

What do we learn of Miranda’s character in her first speech?

What does Prospero reveal to Miranda in their first exchange?

In *The Tempest*, how does Shakespeare develop the theme of ambition and its power to corrupt?

What evidence does the play present of Prospero’s magical powers?

Why is Ariel loyal to Prospero?

How does Prospero describe Caliban, son of Sycorax?

How does Miranda feel about Caliban? Why?

How does Caliban feel about Prospero? Why?

Is Prospero good?

How does Shakespeare use “asides” to convey to the audience character attitudes and information that some characters are not privy to?

Why does Prospero treat Ferdinand so roughly in the beginning?

What is the effect of metaphors and similes in the play?

How does Gonzalo describe the perfect commonwealth?

Find a passage in the dialogue of Act I, Scene 2 that reveals Antonio’s character.

What is the effect of the play-within-a-play, the masque put on by Juno, Ceres, and Iris for Miranda and Ferdinand?

How does Prospero’s epilogue further develop the audience’s acknowledgement of the play’s being a play? In what way has the audience’s power kept Prospero “confined” to the island?

How is the script a kind of fate for the characters?

As traditional to Greek drama, tragedies end in death, comedies in marriage. As a comedy, how does this play resolve its conflicts in the final events, including the impending marriage of Miranda and Ferdinand?

Shakespeare’s influence on Western culture is undeniable. Not only is his work a touchstone for Western literature in general, but many of his characters have both drawn from and shaped important literary **archetypes** (figures that appear over and over again in literature for their familiar roles in general human dynamics). *The Tempest* has certainly made its mark in this regard, establishing Prospero and Caliban as two important widely- recognized archetypes. Prospero is the magician: a powerful figure able to orchestrate events and control outcomes, but held accountable on some level for his decisions in doing so. Caliban is the savage: tragic, malformed, and yet sensitive to the injustice of his circumstances. Further, this play’s archetypal influence is evidenced by the many versions of it that have been produced—in theatre, film, and fiction—since Shakespeare’s time. For example, Paul Mazursky’s 1982 film *Tempest*, set in the twentieth century yet based on Shakespeare’s play, stars John Cassavetes as the self- exiled architect Philip Dimitrius (Prospero) and Molly Ringwald as his teenaged daughter Miranda. In two other interesting retellings of the story, Julie Taymor’s 2010 film *The Tempest* stars Helen Mirren as Prospera, and Gloria Naylor’s 1988 novel *Mama Day* employs the storm as plot-vehicle as well as featuring Mama Day herself as a black female Prospero-type figure.

The themes of *The Tempest*, then, are considered by many to be “universal” in their connection to common human experiences such as feeling relegated to an unjustly-restricted and inferior status (as Caliban is) and deciding whether use of one’s power to alter others’ lives is justified or not (like Prospero). Dramatic productions have great potential to move an audience, and both *Trifles* and *The Tempest* offer examples of how a play might do so. Through effective use of dramatic strategies and powerfully written lines, a play can tap into the most basic and profound aspects of human experience.