

THE TEMPEST by William Shakespeare

The magician **PROSPERA** (Helen Mirren), rightful Duchess of Milan, and her daughter, **MIRANDA** (Felicity Jones), have been stranded for twelve years on an island after Prospera's jealous brother **ANTONIO** (Chris Cooper)—helped by the King of Naples, **ALONSO** (David Strathairn) —deposed her and set her adrift with the then three-year-old Miranda. **GONZALO** (Tom Conti), the King's counselor, had secretly supplied their boat with food, water, clothes and the most-prized books from Prospera's library. Possessing magic powers due to her great learning, Prospera is reluctantly served by a spirit, **ARIEL** (Ben Whishaw), whom Prospera had rescued from a tree in which he had been trapped by the witch Sycorax. Prospera maintains Ariel's loyalty by repeatedly promising to release the "airy spirit" from servitude. Sycorax had been banished to the island, and had died before Prospera's arrival. Sycorax's son, **CALIBAN** (Djimon Hounsou), a deformed monster and the only non-spiritual inhabitant before the arrival of Prospera, was initially adopted and raised by her. He taught Prospera how to survive on the island, while Prospera and Miranda taught Caliban religion and their own language. Following Caliban's attempted rape of Miranda, he had been compelled by Prospera to serve as the magician's slave. In slavery, Caliban has come to view Prospera as a usurper and has grown to resent her and her daughter. Prospera and Miranda in turn view Caliban with contempt and disgust.

The film begins as Prospera, having divined that her brother, Antonio, is on a ship passing close by the island, has raised a tempest which causes the ship to break apart. Also on the ship are Antonio's friend and fellow conspirator, King Alonso of Naples, Alonso's brother, **SEBASTIAN** (Alan Cumming), Alonso's son, **FERDINAND** (Reeve Carney), and the King's advisor, Gonzalo. All these passengers are returning from the wedding of Alonso's daughter, Claribel, to the King of Tunis. Prospera contrives to separate the shipwreck survivors into several groups by her spells, and so Alonso and Ferdinand are separated believing the other to be dead.

Three plots then alternate through the film. In one, Caliban falls in with the King's butler, **STEPHANO** (Alfred Molina) and the court jester, **TRINCULO** (Russell Brand), two drunkards, whom he believes to have come from the moon. They attempt to raise a rebellion against Prospera, which ultimately fails. In another, Prospera works to establish a romantic relationship between Ferdinand and Miranda; the two fall immediately in love, but Prospera worries that "too light winning [may] make the prize light", and compels Ferdinand to become her servant, pretending that she regards him as a spy. In the third subplot, Antonio and Sebastian conspire to kill Alonso and Gonzalo so that Sebastian can become King. They are thwarted by Ariel at Prospera's command. Ariel appears to the "three men of sin" (Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian) as a harpy, reprimanding them for their betrayal of Prospera. She manipulates the course of her enemies' path through the island, drawing them closer and closer to her.

In the conclusion, all the main characters are brought together before Prospera, who forgives Alonso. She also forgives Antonio and Sebastian, but warns them against further betrayal. Ariel is charged to prepare the proper sailing weather to guide Alonso and his entourage (including Prospera and Miranda) back to the Royal fleet and then to Naples, where Ferdinand and Miranda will be married. After discharging this task, Ariel will finally be free. Prospera pardons Caliban. Prospera has resolved to break and bury her magic staff, and "drown" her books of magic. Shorn of her magic powers, in her epilogue, over the end credits of the film, she invites the audience to set her free from the island with their applause.