



ACT 1

Summary

A ship goes down in a storm.

Meanwhile, on a nearby island, Miranda suspects that her father has used his magical powers to cause the storm. She laments the loss of life she is sure has occurred. Her father, Prospero, assures her that no harm has been done. He then reveals to her the story of how the two of them came to be stranded on the island.

Twelve years earlier, when Miranda was not even three years old, Prospero had been ousted as the Duke of Milan. His own brother, Antonio, with the help of Alonso, the King of Naples, had arranged to have Prospero and Miranda taken out to sea and put on a “rotten carcass of a ship” with no sail, mast, rigging, or tackle. Without the help of a noble Neapolitan named Gonzalo, they would not have survived. Gonzalo had provided them with food, water, books, and other supplies.





For the past 12 years, Prospero has had the help of Ariel, a spirit with magic powers, and Caliban, a deformed human who has lived on the island since birth. He keeps these two servants as his subjects by his own magic powers.

As Miranda and Prospero talk, Ferdinand, a prince of Naples and a survivor of the shipwreck, approaches them. Miranda and Ferdinand fall in love at first sight. Prospero decides to make it difficult for them, so that the reward of their love will seem more valuable. He accuses Ferdinand of being a spy who has come to take over the island and forbids Miranda to defend him.





Scene 1

A ship tosses and rocks during a storm. The **captain** and the **boatswain** come out on deck.

CAPTAIN: Boatswain!

BOATSWAIN: Here, Captain. How goes it?

CAPTAIN: Good fellow, speak to the sailors.

Hurry, or we will soon run ourselves
aground. Hurry!

(**Captain** exits, blowing his whistle. **Sailors** run by and start pulling at the sails.)

BOATSWAIN: Heave ho, my hearties!

Work harder! Quickly! Take in the
topsail. Obey the captain's whistle.

(*Defiantly, to the storm*): Blow until you burst
your lungs, as long as we can sail on.

(**Alonso** enters, along with **Sebastian, Antonio, Ferdinand, Gonzalo,** and **others**.)

ALONSO: Boatswain, where's the captain?

BOATSWAIN: Don't you hear him? You're
in the way! Stay below. You're helping the
storm.

GONZALO: No, good fellow, be patient.





BOATSWAIN: When the sea is! (*Pointing to the huge waves*) What do these care about kings? To your cabins! Silence! Get out of our way!

GONZALO: Good sir, remember who is on board.

BOATSWAIN: None that I love more than myself. You are a counselor. If you can command this storm to silence, do so. If not, give thanks that you have lived so long, and go to your cabin. Prepare for trouble, if it comes along.

(*To the passengers*): Get out of our way, I say!

(**Boatswain** exits, shouting orders.)

GONZALO: This fellow gives me great comfort. He wasn't born to be drowned—but hanged instead. Fate, stick to his hanging. Make the rope of his destiny our anchor, for our own is not helping us. If he has not been born to be hanged, we're in trouble.

(**Alonso** and **others** exit. **Boatswain** enters again.)



BOATSWAIN (*to sailors*): Down with the topmast!
Quick! Lower, lower!

(Shouts are heard from the passengers below decks.)

Blast all this howling! They are louder
than the weather.

(**Sebastian**, **Antonio**, and **Gonzalo** enter again.)

You again? What are you doing here?
Shall we give up and drown? Do you
want to sink?

SEBASTIAN: May you choke, you bawling dog!

BOATSWAIN: Do some work, then.

ANTONIO: Hang, you dog! Hang, you
loudmouth! We are less afraid of
drowning than you are.



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GONZALO: I guarantee he won't drown, even if
the ship were no stronger than a nutshell.

BOATSWAIN (*to the sailors*): Heave ho!
Raise the mainsail! Out to sea again.
Turn her around!

(**Sailors** enter, soaking wet and frightened.)

SAILORS: All is lost. Say your prayers! It's
hopeless. (*Sailors exit.*)

GONZALO: The king and the prince are at
prayers. Let's join them. It seems to be
our only hope.

(A confused noise is heard. "Mercy on us! Farewell, my
wife and children. Farewell, brother! Oh, no! The ship
is splitting up, splitting up!")

ANTONIO: Let's all go down with the king.

SEBASTIAN: We must say farewell to him.

(**Antonio** and **Sebastian** exit.)

GONZALO: Now I would give a hundred
miles of sea for an acre of barren ground!
God's will be done! But I would much
rather die a dry death.

(**Gonzalo** exits.)