SEBASTIAN
A plague on your throat, you bawling, uncharitable dog!

BOATSWAIN
What do you here? Have you a mind to sink?

ANTONIO
Hang, cur! We are less afraid to be drowned than thou art.

BOATSWAIN [to ANTONIO and SEBASTIAN]
You work, then!
[to the sailors]
Lay her a-hold, a-hold! Set her off to sea again!

STEPHANO and TRINCULO [holding onto each other, wailing like frightened children]
All lost! All lost!

[Thunder and lightning. The three SPIRITS appear, apart from the action, looking on and holding the drawing of the sailing ship. The following lines are spoken quickly one after the other, almost overlapping:]

FERDINAND
To prayers, to prayers!

STEPHANO and TRINCULO
Mercy on us!
GONZALO
Farewell, my wife and children!

ALONSO [to SEBASTIAN]
Farewell, brother!

ANTONIO [bitterly]
Let’s all sink with the King.

SEBASTIAN [only concerned about himself]
Let’s take leave of him.

STEPHANO and TRINCULO [In a panic; they are thrown apart, one to one side, one to the other.]
We split! We split!

[The SPIRITS rip apart the drawing of the ship. Then they exit.]

GONZALO
The wills above be done! But I would fain die a dry death.

[A crash of thunder—then, sudden silence. All freeze* in postures of drowning and despair.]

SCENE II. ON THE ISLAND.

[PROSPERO and MIRANDA step forth from where they have been watching the shipwreck.]
**MIRANDA** [greatly upset by what she has seen]
If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.
O, I have suffered with those that I saw
Suffer! A brave vessel, dashed all to pieces.
Poor souls, they perished!

**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,
[suddenly more gentle]
Of thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter, who
Art ignorant of what thou art, naught knowing
Of whence I am, nor that I am more better
Than Prospero, no greater than thy father.*

**MIRANDA**
More to know did never meddle with my thoughts.

**PROSPERO** [removing his magician’s robe]
Sit down, for thou must now know further.

---

**your art:** Prospero’s magical powers  
**allay:** put at rest; make calm  
**collected:** calm  
**piteous:** compassionate; sympathetic and caring  
**woe the day:** what a day full of sorrow  
**thee:** old form of “you”  
**naught:** nothing  
**of whence I am:** where I came from  

*Prospero is telling Miranda that she knows nothing about her past, nor does she know where he came from. She knows him as nothing greater than her father.*
MIRANDA
You have often begun to tell me what
I am, but stopped, concluding, “Stay: not yet.”

PROSPERO
The hour’s now come.
Obey and be attentive. Canst* thou remember
A time before we came unto this isle?
I do not think thou canst, for then thou wast not
Yet three years old.

MIRANDA
Sir, I can. ’Tis far off,
And rather like a dream. Did I not have
Four or five women once that tended me?

PROSPERO
Thou hadst, and more, Miranda. What seest thou else
In the dark backward and abysm of time?
Dost thou remember how thou camest here?

MIRANDA
Sir, that I do not.

PROSPERO
Twelve years since, Miranda, twelve years since,
Thy father was the Duke of Milan and
A prince of power.

MIRANDA
Sir, are not you my father?

stay: wait

* Shakespeare’s language uses some old forms of verbs that go
with “thee” and “thou” (which are old forms of “you”). Your ear
will recognize our modern-day verbs in these old forms,
including canst (can), wast (was), heard’st (heard), saw’st (saw),
hadst (had), dost (do), seest (see), and camest (came).

’tis: it is

tended: cared for; looked after

What seest thou else: What else do you see
abysm: a form of abyss, a hole or gap so deep it cannot be
measured

since: ago
Milan: a city in northern Italy, usually pronounced
mih-LAN, but in Shakespeare’s play pronounced MILL-un

aye [pronounced “eye”]: yes
PROSPERO
Aye, thy father, who was Duke of Milan,
And thou his only heir, a princess.

MIRANDA
O the heavens!
What foul play had we that we came from thence?*

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

[As PROSPERO speaks, each of the shipwrecked figures,
when named, rises and stands with a neutral expression,
as though caught in a spell—which they are.]

My brother and thy uncle, called Antonio—
[ANTONIO rises.]
O, 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. For at that time,
I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated
To study and the bettering of my mind—
The government I cast upon my brother
And to my state grew stranger, being lost
And rapt in secret studies.** Thy false uncle—
Dost thou attend me?

MIRANDA
Sir, most heedfully.

*foul play: illegal or dishonest action
*thence: from that place
* Miranda is asking: What evil things were done to us that drove us away from that place? [from the city of Milan, where Prospero ruled as the Duke]

** Perfidious: not able to be trusted; deceptive
manage of my state: management of the government
worldly ends: practical matters
rapt: completely absorbed in or fascinated by
secret studies: studies done in secret; or, studies of secret subjects, such as the mysteries of magic

** Prospero explains that because he was so thoroughly wrapped up in his “secret studies,” he let his brother Antonio take over the governing of Milan.

attend: pay attention to
heedfully: with full attention
The Tempest Act 1, Scene 2

PROSPERO
I pray thee, mark me.
By being so retired, in my false brother
I waked an evil nature—for being thus lorded,
He did believe he was indeed the duke—
Dost thou hear?

MIRANDA
Your tale, sir, would cure deafness.

PROSPERO
Me, poor man, my library
Was dukedom large enough. Antonio,
He thinks me now incapable, and so
Confederates with the King of Naples,
[ALONSO rises.]
An enemy to me inveterate,
And with his traitorous brother, Sebastian.
[SEBASTIAN rises.]

MIRANDA
O the heavens!

PROSPERO
Alas, poor Milan!
Thy false uncle did pay them tribute; whereon,
One midnight, to a treacherous army
Did Antonio open the gates of Milan,
And in the dead of darkness hurried thence
Me and thy crying self.*

* As Prospero explains it, his brother, Antonio, made an agreement with Prospero’s long-time enemy, Alonso, the king of Naples, and the king’s brother, Sebastian. In exchange for money and loyalty, King Alonso agreed to make Antonio the Duke of Milan by sending an army to invade Milan and overthrow Prospero. In the dark of night, Antonio himself opened the city gates to the invaders, who forced Prospero and Miranda—at the time, a crying baby—to leave the city.

pray thee: ask you; urge you
mark me: pay careful attention to me
retired: withdrawn; private and apart
being thus lorded: given such power and authority

confederates: unites; joins as an ally
inveterate: having been for a long time
traitorous: having the character of a traitor, someone disloyal who betrays a cause or country

alas: an expression of sadness
tribute: payment (from one ruler to another)
whereon: an old word meaning, on which; upon which event
treacherous: disloyal; traitorous

alamack: an expression of sadness or dismay
MIRANDA
Alack, for pity!
I, not remembering how I cried out then,
Will cry it o’er again. Wherefore did they not
That hour destroy us?

PROSPERO
Dear, they dared not,
So dear the love my people bore me, set
A mark so bloody on the business. But,
In few, they hurried us aboard a bark,
Bore us some leagues to sea, where they prepared
A rotten carcass of a boat; the very rats
Instinctively had quit it. There they hoist us,
To cry to the sea that roared to us, to sigh
To the winds.

MIRANDA
Alack, what trouble was I then to you!

PROSPERO
O, a cherubin thou wast. Thou didst smile,
Infused with a fortitude from heaven.

MIRANDA
How came we ashore?

PROSPERO
By providence divine.
Some food we had and some fresh water that
A noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo,
[GONZALO rises.]
Out of his charity did give us, with
Rich garments, linens, stuffs and necessaries,
Which since have helped us much; and, in his
gentleness,
Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me
From mine own library with volumes that
I prize above my dukedom.

[He looks at the shipwrecked figures and gestures with
his staff—all silently exit, as though sleepwalking:
FERDINAND leaves in one direction, STEPHANO and
TRINCULO in another, the others—ALONSO, GONZALO,
SEBASTIAN, and ANTONIO—in yet another.* As they
exit, PROSPERO continues to MIRANDA:]

Sit still and hear the last of our sea-sorrow.
Here in this island we arrived, and here
Have I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit
Than other princesses that have more time
For vainer hours and tutors not so careful.

MIRANDA
Heaven 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
Hath mine enemies brought to this shore—

* The actors exit in different directions because, as you will soon see, they end up on different parts of the island.

stuffs: useful items
made thee more profit: done you more good
vainer hours: more careless and unserious time
thus far forth: this much; to this extent
bountiful fortune: generous good luck
But here cease more questions.
[He waves his hand over MIRANDA’s eyes.]
Thou art inclined to sleep.

[MIRANDA falls asleep. PROSPERO picks up his robe and puts it on. Then he lifts his staff and calls to the air.]

Come away, servant, come. I am ready now.
Approach, my Ariel, come.

[Enter ARIEL.]

ARIEL
All hail, great master; grave sir, hail! I come
To answer thy best pleasure, be’t to fly,
To swim, to dive into the fire, or ride
On the curled clouds, to thy strong bidding task
Ariel and all his quality.

PROSPERO
Hast thou, spirit,
Performed to point the tempest that I bade thee?

ARIEL
To every article.
I boarded the King’s ship; now on the beak,
Now on the deck, in every cabin
I flamed amazement. Sometimes I’d divide,
And burn in many places; on the topmast,
The yards and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,
Then meet and join.

② SEE Think About Performance: Costuming (page 247).

All hail: an old expression of greeting
grave: important
To answer thy best pleasure: To fulfill your greatest wish
be’t: be it [whether it be]
bidding: ordering someone to do something
task: assign work to
all his quality: The meaning of this phrase is uncertain.
Some scholars think it means “all his skills.” Some think it refers to “all those like Ariel”—other spirits who assist Ariel in his magical work.
to point: precisely; exactly
bade: ordered

To every article: To the last detail.
beak: the bow; the front end of a ship
yards: the bars from which the ship’s sails are hung
bowsprit: a pole extending from the ship’s bow, for holding the lower edge of a sail
distinctly: in separate places
THE TEMPEST

PROSPERO
My brave spirit!

ARIEL
Not a soul but felt a fever of the mad.
All but mariners plunged in the foaming
Brine and quit the vessel.

PROSPERO
Why that’s my spirit!
But are they, Ariel, safe?

ARIEL
Not a hair perished.
In troops I have dispersed them ‘bout the isle.
And as thou bad’st me, the King’s son, Ferdinand,
Have I landed by himself, whom I left
Sitting and sighing, his arms in this sad knot.

[ARIEL crosses his arms and makes a sad face.]

PROSPERO
How hast thou disposed of the King’s ship?

ARIEL
Safely in harbor is the King’s ship,
The mariners all under hatches stowed,
Who with a charm I have left asleep.

PROSPERO
Ariel, thy charge
Exactly is performed. But there’s more work.
ARIEL [not pleased]
Is there more toil?
Let me remember thee what thou hast promised.

PROSPERO
How now? Moody?
What is’t thou canst demand?

ARIEL
My liberty.

PROSPERO
Before the time be out?* No more!

ARIEL
I prithee,
Remember I have done thee worthy service;
Told thee no lies, made thee no mistakings, served
Without or grudge or grumblings.

PROSPERO
Dost thou forget
From what a torment I did free thee?

ARIEL
No.

PROSPERO
Hast thou forgot the foul witch Sycorax?
Hast thou forgot her?

remember: remind

How now?: An expression with various meanings, here asking: What’s the meaning of this?

* Ariel has agreed to serve Prospero for a certain period of time, which has not yet run out. The following lines in the play explain this agreement.

No more!: Say no more. Speak no further about it.
prithee: pray thee; ask you

Sycorax: pronounced *SICK-oh-rax*
ARIEL
No, sir.

PROSPERO
Thou hast! Thou wast her servant, a spirit
Too delicate to act her abhorred commands—
For which she did confine thee into a
Into a cloven pine, within which rift
Imprisoned thou didst painfully remain
A dozen years, within which time she died
And left thee there. Is not this true?

ARIEL
Ay, sir.

PROSPERO
Then did this island know no human shape—
Save for the whelp that she did litter here—

ARIEL
Yes, Caliban, her son.

PROSPERO
—that dull thing
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 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 howled away twelve winters.

ARIEL
Pardon, master; I will do as you command.

PROSPERO
Do so, and after two days
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 of the sea;
Be subject to no sight but thine and mine,
Invisible to every eyeball else.

[MIRANDA stirs.]
My clever Ariel, hark in thine ear. [He whispers to Ariel.]

ARIEL
My lord, it shall be done!

[Exit ARIEL.]
PROSPERO [to MIRANDA]
Awake, dear heart, awake! Thou hast slept well.
Awake!

MIRANDA
The strangeness of your story put
Heaviness in me.

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. Caliban! Thou earth, thou! speak.

CALIBAN [within]*
There's wood enough within.

PROSPERO
Come forth, I say! There's other business for thee.
Come, thou tortoise! When?

[Enter CALIBAN.]
CALIBAN
A wicked dew blister you all over!
This island’s mine, by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou takest from me! When thou cam’st first,
Thou strok’st me and made 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 showed 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!

PROSPERO
Thou most lying slave,
I have used thee with humane care and lodged thee
In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to harm
My only child.

MIRANDA
Thou know’st I pitied thee,
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
One thing or other. When thou didst not know
Thine own meaning, I endowed thy purposes
With words that made them known.

PROSPERO
Though thou didst learn,
Thou hadst that in thee which good natures
Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou
Deservedly confined into this rock,
Who hadst deserved more than a prison.

strok’st: stroked (petted)
qualities o’: best features of
brine pits: wells or springs of very salty water (which can be collected and then left to evaporate, leaving behind salt)
charms: magic spells
humane: kind and merciful
cell: a small, humble place to live [As used here, cell does not mean a place of imprisonment. On this island, Prospero’s cell was likely a cave.]
endowed thy purposes: supplied your intentions
abide: tolerate; bear; stand
confined into this rock: locked up in this cave
my profit on’t: the good I got from it