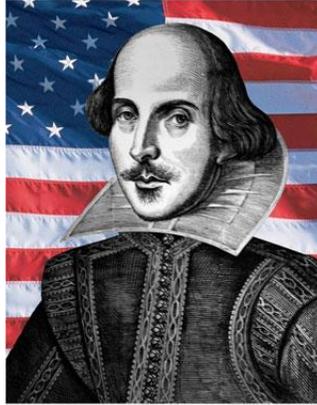


Study Guide for William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
PRESENTS



SHAKESPEARE
IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

This production of *The Tempest* is
part of *Shakespeare in American Communities*,
a program of the National Endowment for the Arts
in partnership with Arts Midwest

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
for the **ARTS**
 arts.gov

Arts
M I D W E S T

Study Guide prepared by
Catherine Bush
Barter Playwright-in-Residence

The Tempest

By William Shakespeare

*Especially for Grades 9 and up

Barter at the Moonlite, Barter on Demand, Spring 2021

(NOTE: standards listed below are for reading *The Tempest* and seeing a performance as well as completing the study guide.)

Virginia SOLs

English – 9.1, 9.3, 9.4, 9.6, 10.1, 10.3, 10.4, 10.6, 12.1, 12.3, 12.4, 12.6

Theatre Arts – TI.8, TI.9, TI.10, TI.11, TI.12, TI.13, TI.16, TI.17, TH.9, TH.11, TH.12, TH.15, TH.16, TH.21, T3III.7, TH.8, TH.9, TH.12, TH.17, TIV.12, TIV.13

Tennessee Common Core State Standards

English/Language Arts - Reading Literacy: 9-10.1, 9-10.2, 9-10.3, 9-10.4, 9-10.5, 9-10.6, 9-10.9, 9-10.10, 11-12.1, 11-12.3, 11-12.4, 11-12.5, 11-12.7, 11-12.10

English Language Arts – Writing: 9-10.1, 9-10.2, 9-10.4, 9-10.6, 9-10.9, 9-10.10, 11-12.1, 11-12.2, 11-12.4, 11-12.6, 11-12.10

Tennessee Fine Arts Curriculum Standards

Theatre 9-12 – HS1.T.Cr1, HS1.T.R1, HS1.T.R3, HS2.T.Cr1, HS2.T.R1, HS3.T.Cr1, HS3.T.R1, HS4.T.Cr1, HS4.T.R1

North Carolina Common Core State Standards

English/Language Arts - Reading Literacy: 9-10.1, 9-10.2, 9-10.3, 9-10.4, 9-10.5, 9-10.6, 9-10.9, 9-10.10, 11-12.1, 11-12.3, 11-12.4, 11-12.5, 11-12.7, 11-12.10

English Language Arts – Writing: 9-10.1, 9-10.2, 9-10.4, 9-10.6, 9-10.9, 9-10.10, 11-12.1, 11-12.2, 11-12.4, 11-12.6, 11-12.10

North Carolina Essential Standards

Theatre Arts – B.C.2, B.A.1, B.AE.1, B.CU.1, B.CU.2, I.C.2, I.A.1, I.CU.1, I.CU.2, P.C.1, P.A.1, P.CU.2, A.C.2, A.A.1, A.CU.1, A.CU.2

Setting

Various locations on a magical island somewhere in the Mediterranean...



Characters

Prospero – rightful Duke of Milan

Miranda – Prospero’s daughter

Ariel – a spirit in service to Prospero

Caliban – servant of Prospero and a savage monster

Antonio – Prospero’s brother, the usurping Duke of Milan

Alonso – King of Naples

Ferdinand – Alonso’s son

Sebastian – Alonso’s brother

Gonzalo – an old, honest lord; friend to Prospero

Trinculo – a jester, part of the shipwrecked crew

Stephano – a drunken butler, part of the shipwrecked crew

Spirits – Ariel’s comrades

Note: Cast Size and Doubling of Actors

In this production of *The Tempest* we will be using only seven actors, with some actors playing more than one role. Doubling of actors requires distinction between characters. In this production, characters will be distinguished by costume, voice and other physical character traits.



Biography of the Playwright

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon in England, and his birthday is traditionally celebrated on April 23. At the age of eighteen he married Anne Hathaway, with whom he had three children. By 1592, he was living in London and working as an actor and playwright. He was part owner of the acting company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later called the King's Men), which built and performed in the Globe Theatre. Over the course of his career Shakespeare wrote 37 plays, 154 sonnets and many other poems. He died April 23, 1616 and was buried at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford.



Define the following vocabulary words

boatswain

topsail

allay

meddle

perdition

perfidious

reputed

confederates

temporal

inveterate

extirpate

infuse

fortitude

precursor

manifold

cloven

abhor

vile

vassal

canker

manacle

chide

malice

vouchsafe

usurp

dolor

spendthrift

enmity

nimble

repose

perpetual

conspiracy

scurvy

credulous

sinew

prattle

appertain

valiant

nonpareil

jocund

repulse

vigilance

viands

surfeit

aspersion

dalliance

abstemious

conspiracy

insubstantial

infirmity

cleave

indignation

frippery

penitent

abjure

auspicious

indulgence

Synopsis

A storm strikes a ship carrying Antonio, the Duke of Milan, and his entourage who are returning home to Italy from a wedding in Tunis, Africa. As the storm increases in fury, the royal party begin to fear for their lives. Lightning flashes, thunder cracks, and the sailors cry that the ship has been hit. Everyone prepares to sink.

Meanwhile, on the shore, Prospero and his daughter Miranda watch the tempest-tossed ship. Miranda, fearing for the lives on board, begs her father to stop the storm, which he created with his magical powers. Prospero assures her all will be well and finally reveals the truth of their past:

Prospero was the Duke of Milan until his brother Antonio, conspiring with Alonso, the King of Naples, usurped his position. Kidnapped and left to die on a raft at sea, Prospero and young Miranda survived because Prospero's friend Gonzalo supplied them with food and water and Prospero's books, which are the source of his magic. Prospero and Miranda arrived on the island where they have lived now for twelve years. Prospero then reveals that his enemies are on that ship, and he has raised the tempest in order to exact his revenge upon them.



After telling this story, Prospero charms Miranda to sleep then calls forth Ariel, his servant-spirit. Ariel assures his master that everyone on board the ship made it to shore safely, though they are now separated into small groups. Ariel also asks Prospero for his freedom. Prospero chastises Ariel and reminds him of the horrible fate from which Prospero rescued him. Ariel assures Prospero of his loyalty. Prospero orders Ariel to become invisible to all but Prospero and sends him off to find Ferdinand, the son of Alonso, who was on the ship.

Miranda awakens, and she and Prospero visit Caliban, a native to the island and Prospero's slave. Caliban curses Prospero, and Prospero and Miranda berate him for being ungrateful for all they have taught him. Prospero sends Caliban to fetch firewood. Ariel enters playing music and leading Ferdinand. Miranda and Ferdinand instantly fall in love. Prospero is pleased to see that his plan for Miranda's future is working out but wants to prevent their relationship from developing too quickly. He accuses Ferdinand of pretending to be the Prince of Naples and threatens him with imprisonment. When Ferdinand draws his sword, Prospero charms him and leads him off to prison, ignoring Miranda's cries for mercy. He then sends Ariel on another mission.

Synopsis (cont.)

On another part of the island, we find Alonso, his brother Sebastian, Antonio, and Gonzalo. Alonso is worried that Ferdinand didn't survive the storm. Gonzalo tries to cheer them all up by commenting on the beauty of the island, but to no avail. Ariel appears and plays music that puts all but Sebastian and Antonio to sleep. These two contemplate assassinating their sleeping companions. Antonio reminds Sebastian that if he were to kill Alonso, he would become the King of Naples, now that Ferdinand is presumed dead. The two are about to stab the sleeping men when Ariel causes Gonzalo to wake with a shout. Alonso wakes as well, and Antonio and Sebastian concoct a ridiculous story about having drawn their swords to protect the king from lions. Ariel goes back to Prospero while Alonso and his party continue to search for Ferdinand.



Caliban, meanwhile, is hauling wood for Prospero when he spies Trinculo, the royal jester who also survived the storm. Caliban, mistaking Trinculo for a spirit sent by Prospero to torment him, hides under his cloak. Another storm is brewing, and Trinculo, seeking shelter, crawls under the cloak with him. Stephano, the ship's drunken butler, enters singing and stumbles upon the bizarre spectacle of Caliban and Trinculo huddled under one cloak.

Stephano decides that this monster requires liquor and attempts to get Caliban to drink. Trinculo recognizes his friend Stephano and calls out to him. Soon the three are drinking together.

Prospero puts Ferdinand to work hauling wood. Miranda, thinking that her father is asleep, flirts with Ferdinand and then proposes marriage. Ferdinand accepts. Prospero, who has been watching the whole time, is pleased with this development.

Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban are now drunk. Ariel provokes them to fight with each other by impersonating their voices and taunting them. Caliban proposes that they kill Prospero, take his daughter, and set Stephano up as king of the island. Stephano agrees to the plan, and the three set off to find Prospero. They are distracted, however, by the music that Ariel plays on his flute, and they decide to follow this music first. Ariel slips away and informs Prospero of their plot.

Meanwhile, on another part of the island...

Synopsis (cont.)

Alonso, Gonzalo, Sebastian, and Antonio grow weary from traveling and pause to rest. Antonio and Sebastian secretly discuss killing Alonso and Gonzalo that evening. Prospero, watching the men from his hiding place, magically produces a banquet for them all to eat. Just then Ariel appears as a harpy, causing the banquet to vanish. He accuses the men of usurping Prospero and informs them that as punishment for this sin, Alonso's son Ferdinand has been taken. Ariel vanishes, leaving Alonso feeling vexed and guilty.

Prospero softens toward Ferdinand and welcomes him into the family as Miranda's fiancé. Prospero then asks Ariel to call forth some spirits to perform a masque for Ferdinand and Miranda. The spirits perform a ritual celebrating the rites of marriage and the bounty of the earth, but they are suddenly interrupted when Prospero suddenly remembers the plot against his life. He sends the spirits away and asks Ariel about Trinculo, Stephano, and Caliban. Ariel tells him how he led the men into a filthy pond near Prospero's cell. Ariel and Prospero then set a trap by hanging beautiful clothing in Prospero's cell. Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban enter looking for Prospero and, finding the beautiful clothing, decide to steal it. They are immediately set upon by spirits in the shape of dogs and hounds, driven on by Prospero and Ariel.



Prospero uses Ariel to bring Alonso and the others before him. Prospero confronts Alonso, Antonio, and Sebastian with their treachery, but tells them that he forgives them. Alonso tells him of having lost Ferdinand in the tempest and Prospero says that he recently lost his own daughter. Clarifying his meaning, he draws aside a curtain to reveal Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess. Alonso is thrilled that his son survived. Ferdinand tells his father about his marriage. Prospero also explains that the ship and its sailors are unharmed, and that they will be able to return to Italy where Prospero will once more reign as Duke of Milan.

First, though, Ariel brings forth Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano, who enter wearing their stolen clothing. Prospero and Alonso demand they return it at once. Prospero breaks his staff and gives it to Caliban, essentially restoring ownership of the island to him. Then Prospero gives Ariel one final task—to make sure the seas are calm for the return voyage—before setting him free. Finally, Prospero delivers an epilogue to the audience, asking them to forgive him for his wrongdoing and set him free by applauding.



A Brief History

Barter Theatre was founded during the Great Depression by Robert Porterfield, an enterprising young actor. He and his fellow actors found themselves out of work and hungry in New York City. Porterfield contrasted that to the abundance of food, but lack of live theatre, around his home region in Southwest Virginia. He returned to Washington County with an extraordinary proposition: bartering produce from the farms and gardens of the area to gain admission to see a play.

Barter Theatre opened its doors on June 10, 1933 proclaiming, “With vegetables you cannot sell, you can buy a good laugh.” The price of admission was 40 cents or the equivalent in produce, the concept of trading “ham for Hamlet” caught on quickly. At the end of the first season, the Barter Company cleared \$4.35 in cash, two barrels of jelly and enjoyed a collective weight gain of over 300 pounds.

Playwrights including Noel Coward, Tennessee Williams and Thornton Wilder accepted Virginia ham as payment for royalties. An exception was George Bernard Shaw, a vegetarian, who bartered the rights to his plays for spinach.

Today, Barter Theatre has a reputation as a theatre where many actors performed before going on to achieve fame and fortune. The most recognized of these alumni include Gregory Peck, Patricia Neal, Ernest Borgnine, Hume Cronyn, Ned Beatty, Gary Collins, Larry Linville and Frances Fisher. The list also included James Burrows, creator of *Cheers*, Barry Corbin, and the late Jim Varney.

Robert Porterfield passed away in 1971. His successor, Rex Partington, had been at Barter in the 1950s as an actor and in the 1970s as stage manager. Rex returned as chief administrator from 1972 until his retirement in 1992. In March 2006, he passed away.

Richard Rose was named the Producing Artistic Director in October 1992. During his tenure, attendance grew from 42,000 to more than 163,000 annual patrons. Significant capital improvements were also made, including renovation of the main stage (now Gilliam Stage) in 1995 and the 2006 addition of The Barter Café at Stage II (now the Smith Theatre). Rose retired in December of 2019 and Katy Brown, who had been at Barter since 1998 as the Director of the Barter Players and as an Associate Artistic Director, was named the fourth Producing Artistic Director – and is the first woman to hold the position.

Barter represents two distinct venues of live theatre: Barter Theatre’s Gilliam Stage, and Barter’s Smith Theatre. Gilliam Stage, with over 500 seats, features traditional theatre in a luxurious setting. Barter’s Smith Theatre offers seating for 167 around a thrust stage in an intimate setting and is perfect for more adventurous productions. Barter Theatre is also home to The Barter Players, a talented ensemble of actors who produce plays for young audiences throughout the year.

History is always in the making at Barter Theatre, building on legends of the past; Barter looks forward to the challenge of growth in the future.

Questions/Activities

1. Prospero is furious with his brother Antonio for usurping him as Duke of Milan and taking his power. Yet when Prospero finds himself marooned on Caliban's island, he has no qualms about enslaving Ariel and Caliban in order to achieve his ends. What does this say about Prospero's sense of justice? **Discuss.**

2. In this play, Caliban is described by others as monster, villain, savage, and filth. Given that Caliban is a native of the island, what do you think he actually looks like? **Discuss.** What did Caliban do for Prospero when he first arrived on the island? How did Prospero treat Caliban before he enslaved him? Why did Prospero eventually enslave Caliban? Do you think Prospero's treatment of Caliban is justified? **Discuss.** How does Prospero's treatment of Caliban compare with the early colonists' treatment of Indigenous Americans? **Discuss**



PERSUADE ME!

Caliban desires his freedom more than anything on earth. As Caliban, write a letter to Prospero explaining why you deserve to be free.

EXTRA CREDIT: Write your letter in free verse instead of prose!

3. Prospero is overthrown by his brother Antonio before the play even begins. Political uprising is a frequent plot point in Shakespeare's works. How is that theme relevant today? **Discuss.**

4. At the end of the play, Prospero decides to forgive his enemies. If your brother or a close friend stole your kingdom and forced you into exile on a deserted island for 12 years, would you forgive them? Why do you think Prospero does this? What are the playwright's intentions? **Discuss the power of forgiveness.** What does Prospero gain from this act?

5. Scholars believe the inspiration for *The Tempest* comes from an account Shakespeare may have read of a sea voyage that took place in 1609. On July 24th of that year, a fleet of nine English vessels was nearing the end of a supply run to the Jamestown colony when it ran into “a cruel tempest” (a hurricane) near Bermuda. One of the vessels in the fleet, *Sea Venture* ran ashore. One of the survivors recalled seeing a light in the sky, a phenomenon now known as “St. Elmo’s Fire.”

ACTIVITY

Individually or in groups, research one of the following topics:

The Bermuda Triangle 17th Century shipping

Famous shipwrecks

St Elmo's Fire History of Bermuda

Famous Hurricanes Jamestown

The Sea Venture



Present your findings to the class!

Comedy vs. Tragedy



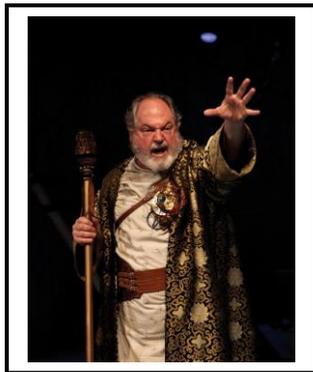
comedy: a dramatic work that is light and often humorous or satirical in tone and that usually contains a happy resolution of the thematic conflict.

tragedy: A drama or literary work in which the main character is brought to ruin or suffers extreme sorrow, especially as a consequence of a tragic flaw, moral weakness, or inability to cope with unfavorable circumstances.

Given these definitions, would you categorize *The Tempest* as a comedy or a tragedy? **Cite three samples from the play to support your position. How much does a character's point-of-view determine whether an event is comic or tragic?** For example, how might Ferdinand's opinion on the play's end differ from that of Caliban's? **Discuss.**

The Magic of Shakespeare

The supernatural can be found in several Shakespeare plays, and magic, in particular, is woven into the plots of both *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Consider these two characters:



Prospero – *The Tempest*



Oberon - *Midsummer*

Write a paper comparing and contrasting Prospero and Oberon. How do they use their magic? On whom do they use it and why?

Blank Verse

Shakespeare wrote most of *The Tempest* in “blank verse.”

blank verse: unrhymed verse having a regular meter, usually of iambic pentameter.

iambic pentameter: a common meter in poetry consisting of an unrhymed line with five feet or accents, each foot containing one **unaccented** syllable followed by one **accented** syllable, like this:

ba-DUM, ba-DUM, ba-DUM, ba-DUM, ba-DUM

Consider the line in Act IV where Prospero tells Ferdinand:

“Be not disturb’d with my infirmity...”

Can you count the five stressed accents in the line? Do you notice how the word “Be” at the beginning of the line is unstressed?

**What is the difference between poetry and prose?
How does Shakespeare use both?**

ACTIVITY

Below, Miranda implores her father to stop the storm. Rewrite this in prose!

*If by your Art (my dearest father) you have
Put the wild waters in this Roar; allay them:
The sky it seems would pour down stinking pitch,
But that the Sea, mounting to th’ welkin’s cheek,
Dashes the fire out. Oh! I have suffer’d
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.*



Did you know...?

The moons of Uranus are named after characters in *The Tempest*: Ariel, Miranda, Caliban, Sycorax, Prospero, Stephano, Trinculo, Francisco, Ferdinand, and Setebos.

6. How would knowing history of the *Sea Venture* or the geography of the Mediterranean Sea better help you understand this play? How does knowledge of the different poetic styles and meters – and Shakespeare’s use of them – make the play more accessible? **Discuss how the various subjects studied in school often overlap.**



7. Characters in a play or a book always have a reason for doing what they do. This is referred to as their “motivation.” What motivates Caliban to plot Prospero’s murder? What is Prospero’s motivation for seeking revenge on Antonio?

Make a list of the characters in *The Tempest*. Next to each name write that character’s primary action in the play and their motivation. **Cite passages from the play to support your reasoning.** Did interactions with the other characters change or alter their motivations? If so, how did this affect the plot?

8. Define “protagonist.” Who is the protagonist of *The Tempest*? Why? **Discuss.**

9. How many characters are in *The Tempest*? How many characters are in this adaptation? Did you think the story was still told in spite of the fact that several scenes and characters were eliminated?

10. How many actors performed this play? What did the actors change, besides their costumes, to become new characters? How were the various locations in the play represented? **Discuss.**

11. **Write a critique of Barter’s production of *The Tempest*.** Be sure to include descriptions and analyses of the individual performances, the directing/staging choices, and the design elements (costume, set, props, sound). Why do you think some of these artistic choices were made? How would you have done it differently?

12. Breaking into groups, **pick a scene from *The Tempest*, rehearse it and perform it for your class.** Now **pick another scene and rewrite it in contemporary English** for a contemporary setting. Rehearse and perform it for your class. Compare the two experiences.

Back in the olden days...

The *Tempest* was written and first produced in 1611. Using the internet, research how the original production would have looked – set, costumes, acting style, etc. How does it **compare and contrast** to The Barter Players' production?

13. What was your personal response to this production of *The Tempest*? Were you entertained? What did this play teach you about the human experience? **Discuss.**

14. Pick your favorite scene from *The Tempest* and **design a set** for it. Keep in mind time, place and location. Is it the deck of the ship? The island? Is it day or night? Also consider the entrances and exits of your characters. How do they enter the scene? How do they exit? Draw a picture of what your set should look like. Then make a model of it and present it to your class, explaining how it will work when built.



Suggested Reading/Links

Books about William Shakespeare

Shakespeare: The Biography by Peter Ackroyd

Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare by Stephen Greenblatt

Shakespeare: An Ungentle Life by Katherine Duncan-Jones

Soul of the Age: A Biography of the Mind of William Shakespeare by Jonathan Bate

Shakespeare Links

To find out more about William Shakespeare, his life and his works, check out the links below...

Folger Shakespeare Library

<http://folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=863>

Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/>