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World Humanities

Ms. Grgas

The Tempest

Act I, Scene 2

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

Enter PROSPERO and MIRANDA

MIRANDA

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 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
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
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:

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Lays down his mantle
Lie there, my art. Wipe thou thine eyes; have comfort.
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
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?
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,
How thou camest here thou mayst.

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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.

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 help 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--

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

And rapt in secret studies. Thy false uncle--

Dost thou attend me?

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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
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
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,
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

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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,
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.

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,
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.

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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,
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,
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
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.

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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.

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

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