

## The Tempest – Character Revision

### PROSPERO

- ◆ Like a theatre director he stages the Tempest.
- ◆ Are all the other characters like his actors.
- ◆ He may be viewed as well intentioned or harsh.
- ◆ Prospero is Latin for “I cause to succeed, make happy and fortunate”.
- ◆ Once he was Duke of Milan.
- ◆ Has a child called Miranda.
- ◆ He seems to be a kind, loving and devoted father.
- ◆ He is on the stage more than any other character.
- ◆ Controls fate of all others.
- ◆ His magic can control nature.
- ◆ We wonder if he uses his powers wisely.
- ◆ He failed to recognise brother’s ambition.
- ◆ He neglected governing Milan.
- ◆ He became too engrossed in his studies.
- ◆ He used his books to learn magic.
- ◆ He enslaved Caliban when he reached the island.
- ◆ He freed Ariel from a tree.
- ◆ He created the illusion of the Tempest.
- ◆ He has lost his trust in others since being cast to sea.
- ◆ He tests Ferdinand’s love for Miranda .
- ◆ He seems sometimes cruel, sometimes kind to Ariel.
- ◆ He feels love and gratitude towards Gonzalo.
- ◆ He forgives those that have behaved in an evil way.
- ◆ Seems harsh towards Caliban - Caliban tried to rape Miranda.
- ◆ When he returns to Milan will he govern well?

## ARIEL

- ◆ Is a spirit of the air.
- ◆ Has been played by men and women.
- ◆ Is swift and delicate
- ◆ Can take on different forms e.g. light in the storm, Ceres in the masque, a Harpy at the banquet, a nymph of the sea.
- ◆ Provides the music in the play.
- ◆ His melodies have magical control over characters.
- ◆ Once was servant to Sycorax.
- ◆ Was imprisoned by Sycorax in a tree.
- ◆ Was saved from the tree by Prospero.
- ◆ Helps Prospero create the Tempest.
- ◆ Has magical abilities and can do near impossible tasks.
- ◆ Wants total freedom but is willing to serve Prospero.
- ◆ Prospero often speaks to him with affection.
- ◆ Prospero calls Ariel “Bird”, “Chick” and “My fine spirit”.
- ◆ Ariel shows some pity for the humans.
- ◆ His character contrasts Caliban.
- ◆ His character may have less depth than Caliban’s.
- ◆ He is obedient to Prospero.
- ◆ He shows a childlike eagerness to please.
- ◆ Some people think he represents Prospero’s imagination.
- ◆ Some people think he is like a secret policeman.
- ◆ Is freed at the end of the play.

### FERDINAND

- ◆ Handsome, courageous and honourable.
- ◆ Miranda thinks he is wonderful ('thing divine.')
- ◆ He was brave when he jumped into the raging sea.
- ◆ He is also brave when Prospero imprisons him.
- ◆ He grieves for his father.
- ◆ His love for Miranda is instant.
- ◆ He says he will give up his throne for Miranda.
- ◆ He is gentle and protective to Miranda.
- ◆ He is touched when she offers to share his work.
- ◆ He will not let her help and suffer.

### MIRANDA

- ◆ She is the only woman in the play.
- ◆ Her name means 'the wonderful one'
- ◆ Her name symbolises her beauty, innocence and modesty.
- ◆ Almost fifteen.
- ◆ She has lived on island 12 years.
- ◆ Ferdinand thinks that she must be a goddess.
- ◆ Miranda feels sympathy for suffering of others.
- ◆ Her first words are of concern for those in shipwreck.
- ◆ Dislikes Caliban because he attempted to rape her.
- ◆ She tries to avoid seeing Caliban.
- ◆ Miranda falls in love at first sight.
- ◆ She wants to marry Ferdinand almost as soon as they meet
- ◆ She is direct and open in her expressions of admiration.
- ◆ Her love is immediate but it seems as if it will endure.
- ◆ Her love is a generous love.
- ◆ She wants to help Ferdinand carry logs
- ◆ Beautiful, sympathetic and without blemish.
- ◆ She is an ideal of womanhood.
- ◆ Some people may feel that she seems too perfect.

## CALIBAN

- ◆ One of the most interesting characters in the play.
- ◆ A savage and deformed slave with a comic aspect.
- ◆ In Shakespeare's time 'savage' meant wild and uncivilised
- ◆ In Shakespeare's time uncivilised people were thought to be further from God than civilised people.
- ◆ Shakespeare may be questioning the values of civilised people.
- ◆ Caliban's name may be connected to the word cannibal.
- ◆ His name could also relate to the Carib Indians.
- ◆ Caliban is deformed; we don't know exactly how.
- ◆ In the play he is called a tortoise, a fish, a snake, a dog, a monkey and a beast. He was once played as a tortoise
- ◆ He is closely connected to nature.
- ◆ Prospero calls him "This misshapen nave".
- ◆ Prospero is prejudiced against him as he tried to rape Miranda.
- ◆ Caliban is about 24
- ◆ He had lived on the island 12 years before Prospero came.
- ◆ At first Caliban was Prospero's friend.
- ◆ He does not regret trying to rape Miranda.
- ◆ He thinks the island is his and that Prospero has taken it.
- ◆ He plots with Stephano and Trinculo to kill Prospero.
- ◆ Caliban seems intelligent and has learned Prospero's language.
- ◆ He wants his island back but they just want power and wealth.
- ◆ Caliban knows the island is beautiful.
- ◆ He says, "the island is full of noises, sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.

### ALONSO

- ◆ King of Naples.
- ◆ He treated Prospero badly.
- ◆ Antonio inspired his crime
- ◆ He was weak in succumbing to Antonio.
- ◆ He has a keen desire to repent.
- ◆ He was cruel to allow Prospero and Miranda to put in the sea.
- ◆ He has a number of redeeming qualities.
- ◆ He loves his son deeply.
- ◆ Though he is tired he searches the island for Ferdinand.
- ◆ Alonso inspires the devotion of Gonzalo.
- ◆ Gonzalo defends him against Sebastian's criticism.
- ◆ When Ariel speaks of his crime against Prospero and Miranda, he is very upset.
- ◆ He thinks about committing suicide.
- ◆ Antonio and Sebastian claim that he married his daughter just to make an alliance. We do not know if this is true.
- ◆ He can't believe his eyes when he sees Prospero.

### GONZALO

- ◆ A noble Neapolitan who helped Prospero and Miranda.
- ◆ An old man with good intentions.
- ◆ He is talkative and comments on the plot.
- ◆ Sebastian and Antonio make fun of his chatter.
- ◆ He is cheerful even in the middle of disaster.
- ◆ He has been loyal to Alonso for many years.
- ◆ His sense of justice persuaded him to be kind to Prospero.
- ◆ He provided Prospero and Miranda with food water garments and books. This shows his kind nature.
- ◆ Prospero praises Gonzalo's loyalty.
- ◆ He calls him "My true Preserver"

## ANTONIO

- ◆ Prospero's brother.
- ◆ Prospero loved and trusted him.
- ◆ Antonio proved false.
- ◆ He made an arrangement with Alonso to deprive Prospero of his dukedom.
- ◆ He paid a yearly levy to the king.
- ◆ He wanted to kill Prospero and Miranda.
- ◆ He has lived well since Prospero left.
- ◆ He is on good terms with the king.
- ◆ He was invited to the wedding of Alonso's daughter.
- ◆ He does not feel guilty about what he has done.
- ◆ He tempts Sebastian to kill Alonso.
- ◆ He offers to kill Alonso himself.
- ◆ He thinks men will follow those in power no matter how they got it.
- ◆ He is aware that Gonzalo is loyal to Prospero and Alonso
- ◆ He advises Sebastian to kill Gonzalo.
- ◆ He mocks Gonzalo.
- ◆ He has cruel humour.
- ◆ He is frightened by the spirits but is prepared to fight them.
- ◆ He shows no sign of repenting for his crimes.
- ◆ Prospero forgives him but he does not thank him for this.
- ◆ He does not comment on the loss of the Dukedom.
- ◆ It is a hard punishment for an ambitious man.
- ◆ He loses the power he fought so hard to gain.

## SEBASTIAN

- ◆ Alonso's brother.
- ◆ Friend of Antonio.
- ◆ Similar character to Antonio.
- ◆ He mocks Gonzalo.
- ◆ Does not seem to be involved in Prospero's banishment.
- ◆ Ariel criticises him with Alonso and Antonio.
- ◆ Ariel says, "You are 3 men of sin".
- ◆ He agrees with Antonio's temptation to kill Alonso.
- ◆ He promises Antonio a reward.
- ◆ He is prepared to fight the spirits.
- ◆ He has some courage.
- ◆ Like Antonio, he does not seem to repent.
- ◆ He is included in Prospero's forgiveness.
- ◆ He seems to rejoice when Ferdinand is found.
- ◆ Perhaps his evil is triggered by Antonio rather than by his nature.