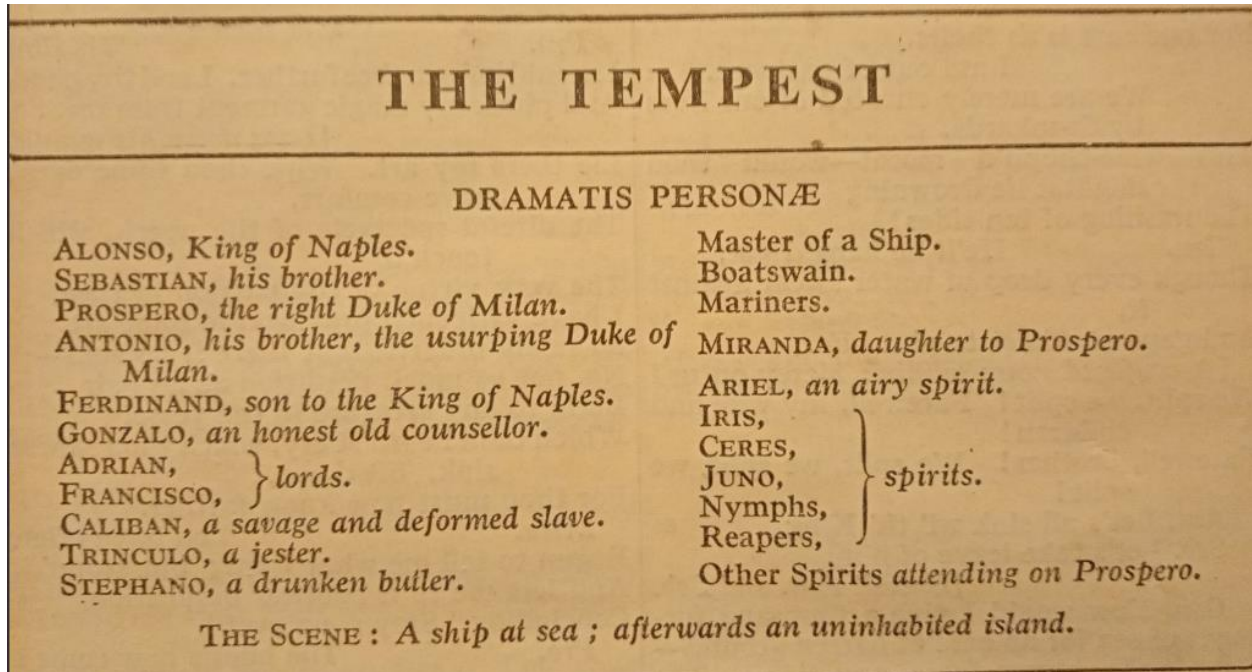


The Tempest 1611



Source:

THE TUDOR EDITION OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
THE COMPLETE WORKS
COLLINS
LONDON AND GLASGOW
APRIL 1959

A new edition, edited with an
Introduction and glossary by
PETER ALEXANDER
*Regius Professor of English Language
and Literature, University of Glasgow 1959*

David Akenhead, CEO Akenhead crosswords currently enjoying 506,832 visits at his Visits page on his website at crosswordsakenhead.com where there is a link to his crossword challenges:

A joint copyrighted 27 x 27 digital Times Jumbo has to be a First in On-line crossword competitions generally thanks to AI, two individuals and Microsoft.

Source

Howard Staunton (1810-1874) on proof of authorship (extracts)

The following memorandum from the ‘Accounts of the Revels at Court,’ is positive testimony that the play had been presented by the King’s Players in 1611 – Hallomas nyght was presented at Whithall before ye Kinges Matie, a play called The Tempest.

The title of *The Tempest* was determined by the shipwreck of Sir George Sommers and Sir Thomas Gates on the coast of the Bermudas in 1609; of which an account was published by Silvester Jourdan, one of the crew, in the following year entitled *A Discovery of the Barmudas; otherwise called the Isle of Divels; by Sir Thomas Gates, Sir George Sommers, and Captayne Newport, with divers others*. It is highly probable, too, that

Jourdan’s and other accounts of the Bermudas, by some of which they are said to be enchanted and inhabited by witches and devils, suggested the expression ‘still-vexed Bermoothes,’ and induced the poet to possess his hero with necromantic influence and supernatural agency.

Dr Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) pre-eminent Shakespearean scholar.

“It is observed of *The Tempest*, that its plan is regular. But whatever might be Shakespeare’s intention in forming or adopting the plot, he has made it instrumental to the production of many characters, diversified with boundless invention, and preserved with profound skill in nature, extensive knowledge of opinions, and accurate observation of life. In a single drama are here exhibited princes, courtiers, and sailors, all speaking in their real characters. There is the agency of airy spirits, and of an earthly goblin; the operations of magick; the tumults of a storm, the adventures of a desert island, the native effusion of untaught affection, the punishment of guilt, and the final happiness of the pair for whom our passions and reason are equally interested.”

David Akenhead (1946 -) Theatre Manager. Producer, actor, singer

The epilogue to this play sees Shakespeare himself masquerading all the while as Prospero, the Magician, pleading with his King for redemption, alas to no avail here, or in his last Play at the Globe, subsequently as Prologue in Henry VIII yet punchy to the last!

. . . But release me from my bands
With the help of your good hands.
Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails . . .
As you from crimes would pardon'd be
Let your indulgence set me free.

Story courtesy of John Goodwin RSC's Short Guide to Shakespeare's Plays 1990 – extracts.

The Tempest, one of the masterpieces of all literature. People see in the central character, Prospero - who possesses a power of magic which he finally relinquishes – the figure of Shakespeare himself saying farewell to his own genius.

The plot, which is of storm and shipwreck, and the survival of men on an island, was without much doubt inspired by the actual adventures of the crew of a British ship, *Sea Adventure*, bound for Virginia in 1609. Caught in a storm and partially wrecked, her mariners landed on an island thought to be inhabited by demons, and found it beautiful and healthy. Reports of this adventure reached England at the time *The Tempest* was written and were much commented upon. Shakespeare certainly read the letters and pamphlets about the episode, for he used factual details from them in his play.

The story tells how Prospero, usurped as Duke of Milan by his brother Antonio, and cast adrift in 'a rotten carcass of a boat' with his little daughter, Miranda twelve years before the action begins, now lives with her on an island. He is served by a spirit, Ariel, and an earth and seamonster, Caliban.

Using magic, Prospero raises a storm, and by shipwrecking his brother Antonio, together with Alonso King of Naples, Alonso's brother Sebastian and son, Ferdinand, and other lords and seamen, brings them to the island and, unknown to them, into his power.

Whilst they are there, Sebastian plots to kill his brother so as to become King of Naples; and the court jester and a drunken butler are persuaded by Caliban to try to seize the island from Prospero, for Caliban tells them it is his. But Prospero prevents these plans, is reconciled with his brother, gives his blessing to the love which has grown between Miranda and Ferdinand, sets Ariel free and pardons Caliban.

Despite this happy conclusion, in *The Tempest* there is a note of pessimism.

Prospero is a great magician who can raise storms, darken the sun at noontide and raise the dead to life. But, writes Anne Barton, ‘What his art cannot do is the thing which ultimately matters most; he can never change the nature and inclinations of the human heart.’

In the end Prospero breaks the magic staff, and drowns his book of power deep in the sea. He will, he says, go back to Milan ‘where every third thought shall be my grave’, and Anne Barton true to her word.

The Tempest 1611

Above part of my legacy to Shakespeare, courtesy of my former wife, Celia Ruth Staunton and her celebrated ancestor Howard Staunton (1810-1874), supreme Shakespearean authority from his Globe Illustrated Shakespeare, and a former English Chess Grand Master to boot! Enjoy my digital Jumbo crossword evolved from two chess supremos: Howard Staunton and Edmund Akenhead former Times crossword editor 1965-1983 via his mother, Myrtle Akenhead nee Nicholson Grant MacGregor, former Ladies Chess Champion of Somerset who I had the audacity to beat aged 10 with hitherto unconventional moves using the Queen’s pawn!

David Akenhead, February 2026.