

Prospero was Duke of Milan, a city in Italy. He ruled the city well, but as time passed he became more and more interested in studying magic and enchantment. He was married, but his wife died giving birth to a baby daughter who was named **Miranda**. Prospero also had a brother, **Antonio**, who had for a long time been jealous of Prospero's title and position. Antonio, full of envy, wanted to get rid of his brother and take control of the city. After his wife died, Prospero became even less interested in the affairs of his city and spent more and more time with his books of magic. Antonio decided that no-one in the city would be too concerned if Prospero just disappeared and so he took his chance to take over the city. He plotted to have Prospero killed - but not directly: Prospero was to be put into a small boat, with baby Miranda, and cast adrift. If (as Antonio hoped and expected) they were to die, well, no-one could say he *actually murdered* them!

As Antonio planned, one day the city woke to find Prospero gone and Antonio offering himself as the new Duke. As Prospero had been so busy with his studies, the citizens did not miss him much and soon it was business as usual, with Antonio ruling the city. It looked like Antonio's plan had worked ...

1. Draw a family tree and enter any details about the people we have met.
2. In your group, discuss what you think happens to Prospero and Miranda.

The story continues:

However, the plan had not gone perfectly. Antonio did not know that **Gonzalo**, a loyal and faithful servant to Prospero, had found out about the cruel plan. Even though it was dangerous for him, Gonzalo hid some food and water - as well as Prospero's precious books of magic - in the boat.

Prospero and his tiny daughter drifted for days, while their supplies of food and water dwindled, until at last they landed on the shores of a strange island. At first it seemed deserted, but in fact there were two creatures living there already: **Ariel** and **Caliban** - neither creature human.

Ariel was a sprite, a spirit of the air, who many years ago had been imprisoned inside a tree by the evil witch who used to live on the island. Caliban was also a strange creature. He had lived alone as 'ruler' of the deserted island since his mother, a witch, had left many years earlier. He was like a savage: he was completely uneducated and had never seen people until Prospero and Miranda arrived. Prospero used his magic to release Ariel and he started to teach Caliban. Prospero wanted Caliban and Ariel to serve him, to repay him what he had done for them.

3. In your groups, discuss how you think Ariel and Caliban feel about Prospero and Miranda.
4. Create a role-play to show how you think they get on together on the island.

Twelve years have passed and the play is about to begin. In the time Prospero and Miranda have lived on the island, Caliban has been an ungrateful servant, resenting Prospero's power and wanting to rule the island himself. He once tried to attack Miranda, and he hates Prospero and curses him. Ariel, on the other hand, has been a helpful and loyal servant.

Out in the world, there has been a very important wedding, between the daughter of the **Alonso, King of Naples** and the Prince of Tunis. All the noblemen in Italy have been to the wedding, and are now sailing home. On board one particular ship we see some very important people. There is King Alonso, his beloved son **Prince Ferdinand**, and the King's brother, **Sebastian**. Also travelling with them is **Antonio** - Prospero's treacherous brother and now the false Duke of Milan. There are servants, too: faithful Gonzalo, a butler, **Stephano** and a jester, **Trinculo**.

This is where the play starts. Prospero tells Ariel that he will have his freedom after helping Prospero with one final, important, task.

What do you think this task is? What is Prospero planning?

Summary: Who's Who in the play

Character	What do we know about them so far?
Prospero	
Miranda	
Ariel	
Ferdinand	
Caliban	
Trinculo	
Stephano	
Alonso	
Sebastian	
Gonzalo	
Antonio	