

**THE TEMPEST WITH  
AN INTRODUCTION  
AND NOTES**

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The Tempest with an Introduction and Notes by K. Deighton & William Shakespeare

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**K. DEIGHTON & WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

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SHAKESPEARE

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THE TEMPEST

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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## INTRODUCTION.

OF the exact date at which *The Tempest* was written we have no positive knowledge; but that it was between 1603 and 1613 there is something like evidence from three sources. First, Gonzalo's picture of an ideal commonwealth, ii. 1, 143-164, bears too close a resemblance to a passage in Florio's translation of Montaigne's *Essays* for that resemblance to be merely accidental, and Florio's translation was published in 1603. Secondly, in the MS. of Mr. Vertue, discovered by Malone, it is stated (though the authenticity of this source has been questioned) that *The Tempest* was acted by John Heminge and the rest of the King's company before Prince Charles, the Lady Elizabeth, and the Prince Palatine Elector, at the beginning of 1613. Prince Frederick had then come over to receive his bride, and it is conjectured that the play was written for the marriage occasion, Ferdinand representing Frederick, and Miranda the Lady Elizabeth. Thirdly, in the Induction to Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, which play was written between 1612 and 1614, there is an almost certain allusion to *The Tempest* in the passage, "If there be never a *Servant-monster* i' the Fair, who can help it, he says; nor a nest of Antiques? He is loth to make nature afraid in his plays, like those

Date of composition.

that beget Tales, *Tempests*, and such like *Drolleries*"; and this allusion would scarcely be made unless *The Tempest* was a recent play. The more generally accepted date is 1610 or 1611, but whatever the precise year, internal evidence, from style, thought, and metre, proves beyond doubt that it belongs to Shakespeare's latest period of authorship, and is of the same group as *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *King Henry the Eighth*.

The source of  
the plot.

The source of *The Tempest* is even more doubtful than its exact date, and no novel or play has been discovered from which Shakespeare can be conclusively shown to have derived his plot. *The beautiful Sydea*, by a German, Jacob Ay rer, which is by some supposed to be a translation of an old English drama not now extant, bears in many of its incidents a remarkably close resemblance to *The Tempest*; and it is believed by the German critic Tieck, and others, that Shakespeare was acquainted with this work. In *A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Isle of Devils* (Jourdan, 1610), we have an account of the wreck of the admiral's ship, with the residence of those who escaped upon the uninhabited Bermudas; and this is supposed to have furnished Shakespeare with some hints—a supposition confirmed by his mention of the "still-vexed Bermoothen," the older name of the islands. But whatever the hints he has taken, we may easily believe that the essentials of the story were of his own imagination.

Locality of  
the island.

Persistent endeavours have been made by certain matter-of-fact critics to identify the "local habitation" of Prospero and Miranda. Chalmers was convinced

that the Bermudas satisfied all the conditions of the story; Hunter discovered another equally accommodating island, Lampedusa, midway between Malta and the African coast: and both critics enter into the question as if it were one that could be decided by scientific investigation. In other words, because Shakespeare has given us an island not inconsistent in its features with actually existing islands, has not, that is, made his island of the same fanciful texture as Ariel and Caliban, we are to believe that he thought it necessary to choose out some particular spot of earth before he could imagine Prospero and Miranda as he intended them to be. Surely Shakespeare's humour would be infinitely tickled by the compliment thus paid him.

The story is simple, and may be told at no great length. Prospero, Duke of Milan, has, by his devotion to intellectual pursuits, virtually made over the management of his state to his brother, Antonio, whose ambition, thus stimulated, determines to possess itself of both appearance and reality. With the support, therefore, of the King of Naples, he, "one midnight fated to the purpose," puts Prospero and his infant daughter, Miranda, into a leaky, unrigged boat, has it towed out to some distance, and then left to the mercy of the winds and waves. The boat is borne to an island whose sole tenants are a creature named Caliban, half man, half monster, and a spirit named Ariel, who by Caliban's dead mother, Sycorax, has been pent up in a tree, from which Prospero liberates him. Here Prospero and Miranda pass the years until the latter has reached maidenhood. At this time the King of Naples, with his brother

The plot of  
the play.