



T17

Prospero renounces his magic powers

Prospero is preparing to leave the island and to give up his magic powers in order to return to his dukedom.

William Shakespeare
The Tempest
(1611)
Act V, Scene I

PROSPERO Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves¹;
And ye that on the sands with printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune², and do fly him
When he comes back; you demi-puppets³ that
By moonshine do the green sour ringlets⁴ make,
Whereof⁵ the ewe⁶ not bites; and you whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrooms⁷, that rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew⁸, by whose aid –
Weak masters though ye be – I have bedimm'd⁹
The noontide sun, call'd forth¹⁰ the mutinous¹¹ winds,
And 'twixt¹² the green sea and the azur'd vault
Set roaring war: to the dread rattling¹³ thunder
Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak¹⁴
With his own bolt¹⁵; the strong-bas'd promontory
Have I made shake, and by the spurs pluck'd up¹⁶
The pine and cedar: graves at my command
Have wak'd their sleepers, op'd, and let 'em forth¹⁷
By my so potent Art. But this rough¹⁸ magic
I here abjure; and, when I have requir'd
Some heavenly music, – which even now I do, –
To work mine end upon their senses, that
This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff¹⁹,
Bury it certain fadoms²⁰ in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound²¹
I'll drown my book. [Solemn music.]

- 1 Ye ... groves. Voi, o elfi delle colline, dei ruscelli, dei laghi immobili e dei boschi.
2 with ... Neptune. Con passo senza orma inseguite la marea di Nettuno.
3 demi-puppets. Mezzi burattini.
4 green sour ringlets. Piccoli cerchi di erba amara.
5 Whereof. Da cui.
6 the ewe. La pecora.
7 to make midnight mushrooms. Far crescere i funghi a mezzanotte.
8 curfew. Coprifuoco.
9 I have bedimm'd. Ho velato.
10 call'd forth. Suscitato; *qui*: fatto soffiare.
11 mutinous. Ribelli.
12 'twixt. Tra.
13 rattling. Rumoreggante, strepitante.
14 rifted Jove's stout oak. Ho spaccato la forte quercia di Giove.
15 bolt. Fulmine.
16 by the spurs pluck'd up. Dalle radici (*lett.*: speroni) ho divelto.
17 op'd ... forth. Si sono aperti e li hanno lasciati andare liberi.
18 rough. Primitiva, rozza.
19 staff. Lett.: bastone; *qui*: bacchetta magica.
20 certain fadoms. In profondità.
21 did ever plummet sound. Sia mai sceso uno scandaglio.

LITERARY COMPETENCE

➤ VOCABULARY

1 READ the text and find the words and phrases which mean the following.

- 1 are happy
- 2 help
- 3 sky
- 4 tombs
- 5 reject
- 6 sublime, enchanting
- 7 enchantment
- 8 put under water

➤ COMPETENCE: READING AND UNDERSTANDING A TEXT

2 READ the text again and answer the following questions.

- 1 Who does Prospero address?
- 2 Does his gaze turn inwards, towards his immediate surroundings or contemplate the invisible?
- 3 What does he decide to do in the end?



> COMPETENCE: ANALYSING AND INTERPRETING A TEXT

- 3** **COMPLETE** the table below with images of nature and the supernatural.

Nature	Supernatural

- 4** **FIND** words referring to the senses. What is their effect on the audience?

- 5** **EXPLAIN** why Prospero gives up his magic powers and calls them 'rough' (line 18).

- 6** **SAY** what the role of music is in the scene.

> COMPETENCE: FINDING AND UNDERSTANDING LINKS AND RELATIONSHIPS

- 7** **DISCUSS** the meaning of Prospero's speech in the context of the play and of Shakespeare's work.

- 8** **COMPARE** the presentation of the theme of magic and the supernatural in *The Tempest* with the other works by Shakespeare which offer a view on the same subject. Collect your notes in the table below.

<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>The Tempest</i>