

The Tempest

There was a certain island in the sea, the only inhabitants of which were an old man, whose name was Prospero, and his daughter Miranda, a very beautiful young lady. She came to this island so young, that she had no memory of having seen any other human face than her father's.

They lived in a cave or cell, made out of a rock; it was divided into several apartments, one of which Prospero called his study; there he kept his books, which chiefly treated of magic, a study at that time much affected by all learned men: and the knowledge of this art he found very useful to him; for being thrown by a strange chance upon this island, which had been enchanted by a witch called Sycorax, who died there a short time before his arrival. Prospero, by virtue of his art, released many good spirits that Sycorax had imprisoned in the bodies of large trees, because they had refused to execute her wicked commands. These gentle spirits were ever after obedient to the will of Prospero. Of these Ariel was the chief.

The lively little sprite Ariel had nothing mischievous in his nature, except that he took rather too much pleasure in tormenting an ugly monster called Caliban, for he owed him a grudge because he was the son of his old enemy Sycorax. This Caliban, Prospero found in the woods, a strange misshapen thing, far less human in form than an ape: he took him home to his cell, and taught him to speak; and Prospero would have been very kind to him, but the bad nature, which Caliban inherited from his mother Sycorax, would not let him learn anything good or useful: therefore he was employed like a slave, to fetch wood, and do the most laborious offices; and Ariel had the charge of compelling him to these services.

When Caliban was lazy and neglected his work, Ariel (who was invisible to all eyes but Prospero's) would come slyly and pinch him, and sometimes tumble him down in the mire; and then Ariel, in the likeness of an ape, would make mouths at him. Then swiftly changing his shape, in the likeness of a hedgehog, he would lie tumbling in Caliban's way, who feared the hedgehog's sharp quills would prick his bare feet. With a variety of such-like vexatious tricks Ariel would often torment him, whenever Caliban neglected the work which Prospero commanded him to do.

Having these powerful spirits obedient to his will, Prospero could by their means command the winds, and the waves of the sea. By his orders they raised a violent storm, in the midst of which, and struggling with the wild sea-waves that every moment threatened to swallow it up, he showed his daughter a fine large ship, which he told her was full of living beings like themselves. "O my dear father," said she, "if by your art you have raised this dreadful storm, have pity on their sad distress. See! the vessel will be dashed to pieces. Poor souls! they will all perish. If I had power, I would sink the sea beneath the earth, rather than the good ship should be destroyed, with all the precious souls within her."

"Be not so amazed, daughter Miranda," said Prospero; "there is no harm done. I have so ordered it, that no person in the ship shall receive any hurt. What I have done has been in care of you, my dear child. You are ignorant who you are, or where you came from, and you know no more of me, but that I am your father, and live in this poor cave. Can you remember a time before you came to this cell? I think you cannot, for you were not then three years of age."

"Certainly I can, sir," replied Miranda.

"By what?" asked Prospero; "by any other house or person? Tell me what you can remember, my child."

Miranda said, "It seems to me like the recollection of a dream. But had I not once four or five women who attended upon me?"

Prospero answered, "You had, and more. How is it that this still lives in your mind? Do you remember how you came here?"

"No, sir," said Miranda, "I remember nothing more."

TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE - A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Charles Lamb was an English essayist, poet and antiquarian best known for his Essays of Elia and for the children's book Tales From Shakespeare, co-authored with his sister Mary Lamb.

In 1805, he was commissioned by William Godwin to write Shakespeare's plays in the form of stories for children. He undertook the task jointly with Mary. Mary Lamb was responsible for the comedies, while Charles wrote the tragedies.

Marina Warner, in her introduction to the Penguin 2007 edition, says that Mary did not get her credit on the title page till the seventh edition in 1838.

The Tempest

Word Meaning:-

1. Inhabitants - (Plural) - People or things who live in a place.
2. Apartment - A conceptual space used for separation in the threading architecture.
3. Enchanted - Charmed, Enraptured.
4. Execute - To perform.
5. Mischievous - Naughty.
6. Yorment - Yorture.
7. Grudge - To be dissatisfied.
8. Inherit -> To receive a characteristic from one's ancestors by genetic transmission.

Questions

1. Who are the only inhabitants of the island? Why had not the girl have any memory of having seen any human face other than her father?
2. What kind of book did the old man chiefly have in his study? Who was Sycorax? Was she alive when Prospero reached the island?
3. What did Prospero do after arriving to the island? Who was Caliban? Why did Ariel torment him?
4. What did Prospero find Caliban? Did he try to rectify his character?

WORD MEANING:-

1. Slyly - Cunningly
2. Tumble down - To totter and fall.
3. Mire - Deep mud.
4. Hedgehog - A small mammal of the family Erinaceidae characterised by their spiny back.
5. Quill - A sharply pointed, barbed and easily detached needle-like structure that grows on the skin of a - hedgehog.

5. How did Ariel torment Caliban?

6. "See! the vessel will be dashed to pieces!"

(a) Who is the speaker? (b) To whom is it being spoken? (c) Why is the speaker so worried?

(d) How does the person, spoken to here, comfort the speaker?