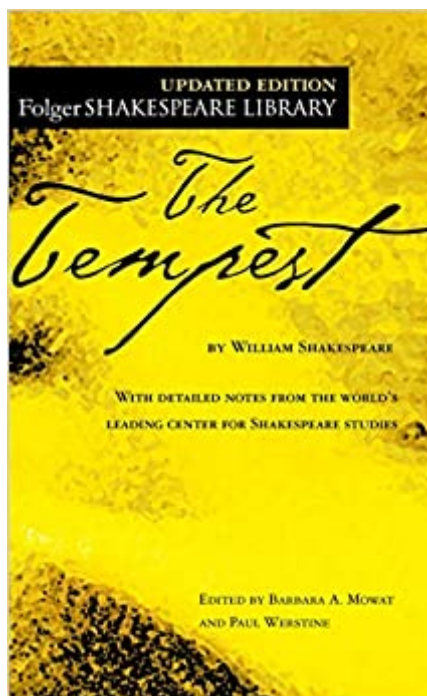


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# The Tempest (Folger Shakespeare Library)



## Synopsis

Putting romance onstage, *The Tempest* gives us a magician, Prospero, a former duke of Milan who was displaced by his treacherous brother, Antonio. Prospero is exiled on an island, where his only companions are his daughter, Miranda, the spirit Ariel, and the monster Caliban. When his enemies are among those caught in a storm near the island, Prospero turns his power upon them through Ariel and other spirits. The characters exceed the roles of villains and heroes. Prospero seems heroic, yet he enslaves Caliban and has an appetite for revenge. Caliban seems to be a monster for attacking Miranda, but appears heroic in resisting Prospero, evoking the period of colonialism during which the play was written. Miranda's engagement to Ferdinand, the Prince of Naples and a member of the shipwrecked party, helps resolve the drama. The authoritative edition of *The Tempest* from The Folger Shakespeare Library, the trusted and widely used Shakespeare series for students and general readers, includes:

- Freshly edited text based on the best early printed version of the play
- Full explanatory notes conveniently placed on pages facing the text of the play
- Scene-by-scene plot summaries
- A key to the play's famous lines and phrases
- An introduction to reading Shakespeare's language
- An essay by a leading Shakespeare scholar providing a modern perspective on the play
- Fresh images from the Folger Shakespeare Library's vast holdings of rare books
- An annotated guide to further reading

Essay by Barbara A. Mowat

The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC, is home to the world's largest collection of Shakespeare's printed works, and a magnet for Shakespeare scholars from around the globe. In addition to exhibitions open to the public throughout the year, the Folger offers a full calendar of performances and programs. For more information, visit [Folger.edu](http://Folger.edu).

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

William Shakespeare was born in April 1564 in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, on England's Avon River. When he was eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway. The couple had three children—an older daughter Susanna and twins, Judith and Hamnet. Hamnet, Shakespeare's only son, died in childhood. The bulk of Shakespeare's working life was spent in the theater world of London, where he established himself professionally by the early 1590s. He enjoyed success not only as a playwright and poet, but also as an actor and shareholder in an acting company. Although some think that sometime between 1610 and 1613 Shakespeare retired from the theater and returned home to Stratford, where he died in 1616, others believe that he may have continued to work in London until close to his death. Barbara A. Mowat is Director of Research emerita at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Consulting Editor of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, and author of *The Dramaturgy of Shakespeare's Romances* and of essays on Shakespeare's plays and their editing. Paul Werstine is Professor of English at the Graduate School and at King's University College at Western University. He is a general editor of the *New Variorum Shakespeare* and author of *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts* and *The Editing of Shakespeare* and of many papers and articles on the printing and editing of Shakespeare's plays.

"The Tempest" is Shakespeare's last great play, and in an oddly appropriate way it is very different from much of his earlier efforts. Unlike most of Shakespeare's work, "The Tempest" seems to have come mostly from the Bard's own mind, and does not have source materials from which Shakespeare lifted the plot. This may explain the weakness of the plot of the play, regardless it does not matter in the big scheme of things. The play takes the form of following three separate groups on an enchanted isle. A group of foul noblemen, who gained power through the usurpation of the rightful ruler, a comic trio who stumble about in drunkenness and plot evil deeds (the play's comic relief) and the "lord" of the island (Prospero) and his faithful spirit world servants. When the three plots converge in the final act of the text Shakespeare gives the reader a satisfying conclusion, but one that still has a hint of sadness and darkness to it. The famous epilogue of the play spoken by Prospero (Now my charms are all o'erthrown...) leaves the reader with a plethora of questions and emotions. This epilogue is one of the most beautiful pieces in the entire canon. It has become fashionable to make "The Tempest" a valedictory play for Shakespeare, and there are many

moments in the text that can be read as Prospero speaking for him. At the play's conclusion Prospero frees his trusty servant Ariel (some say his muse), acknowledges the half human Caliban as "mine own" (some say his own dark nature) and gives up his magic powers (his talent). This is an appropriate reading, and a satisfying one for lovers of Shakespeare. Just be careful not to limit the text to just that interpretation. I think the greater strength in the piece is its portrayal of the absolute humanity of forgiveness, and how lucky we as humans are to be able to practice it. The most poignant scene in Shakespeare begins at the beginning of Act V when Ariel tells Prospero that he would be moved to pity for the people that Prospero has entrapped on the island (with the plan of taking revenge) "were I human". This stunning declaration causes Prospero to recant his vengeful purposes, "the rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance." A grown up Shakespeare has lived a life and seen the capacity for good that humanity can engender. It is hard to imagine the man who wrote "The Tempest" as the same man who wrote the revenge blood fest "Titus Andronicus" so many years earlier. A mature work, from a mature playwright! As for the Pelican Shakespeare series, they are my favorite editions as the scholarly research is usually top notch and the editions themselves look good as an aesthetic unit. It looks and feel like a play and this compliments the text's contents admirably. The Pelican series was recently reedited and has the latest scholarship on Shakespeare and his time period. Well priced and well worth it.

Awesome play. Considered Shakespeare's last play written solo. Henry VIII, The Two Noble Kinsmen came after but Shakespeare co-wrote these with John Fletcher. When reading this you can really see how Shakespeare has mastered his skill as a playwright. Unlike many of his other plays, The Tempest follows the Aristotelian unities of time, place, and action. Like with many of his plays Shakespeare gives us a comical subplot poking fun at the main plot. This is very interesting as it also effectively pokes fun at colonialism. While I would not suggest this as your first read in Shakespeare, I would still call it a 'must read' when studying Shakespeare.

This guide is very simple to follow along, compared to the Old English versions. My sister purchased this edition for her class, and it has greatly helped her to make sense of the writing, rather than to have her mind boggled. The side by side of the original and the modern text, once its able to be grasped the meanings and the contexts, really does allows one to appreciate the beauty of the play and the writings.

Classic Shakespeare at his finest. I had to read this book for school and was satisfied with the read.

The plot, characters, and setting is all so unique and reminds me of the tv series Lost. Although Shakespeare is hard to read at times, this book is rather easy compared to books like Macbeth. It's filled with rich language containing vast amounts of literary devices. The movie is also very good

This is one of the poorest cheap Kindle editions of a Shakespeare play I've downloaded. The optical character recognition software that was used changed "full" to "fun" in a couple of places, "head" to "bead," and similar glaring errors. Shakespeare's language doesn't need these added complications; I feel especially sorry for any reader who might be approaching this great play for the first time with this substandard edition.

One cannot be liberally educated without reading Shakespeare. This is not the view of over educated elites, but this Folger edition profitable for average readers. Folger editions are mini courses on Shakespeare, Elizabethan England and the particular play. Each Folger edition is constructed to Shakespeare's play is on one side with the explanation of terms, sites, meanings, etc. This is very easy because what you may want to know is a glance to the left (Print editions) or a quick scroll in the Kindle edition. It is difficult to find good explanations of how freedom developed in England. Shakespeare's historical novels may give the Best explanation.

I bought this for my English class and it worked great. It's small so it's easy to take back and forth to class and it was for a better price than my school bookstore. The print is a good size (not too small and not too big) for the size of the book. This book was not the exact edition of the book that I needed for class but the only differences were the page numbers and the cover, which is not a big deal. I would recommend for anyone looking for this play and am pleased with my purchase.

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