EXCERPT FROM SHAKESPEARE’S THE TEMPEST
(STUDENT-FRIENDLY VERSION)

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

(A ship is in a storm. The CAPTAIN comes in and talks with the BOSUN.)

CAPTAIN: Bosun!

BOSUN: Aye, aye, sir.

CAPTAIN: Pipe all hands on deck! Be quick about it, or we’ll run ourselves aground. Hurry! (He blows his whistle and dashes off.)

(Sailors run in and haul at the ropes.)

(ALONSO, king of Naples, comes in, with SEBASTIAN (his brother), FERDINAND (his son), ANTONIO (the Duke of Milan), GONZALO (an older statesman), and other passengers.)

ALONSO: Bosun! Safety! Where’s the captain?

BOSUN: You’re in the way. Keep to your cabins! You’re only helping the storm.

GONZALO: Be patient, dear fellow . . .

BOSUN: I will when the sea does! Go! Don’t get in our way! Do you want us to sink?

SEBASTIAN: May you choke, you bawling, swearing dog!

BOSUN: Do some work then! Heave ho! Raise the mainsail! Turn her around!

(SAILORS enter, soaking wet, panicked.)

SAILORS: It’s no good! On your knees! It’s hopeless! (They leave.)

(Everyone screams.)

ANTONIO: Let’s all go down with the king!
ACT 1, SCENE 2

(The Island. In front of Prospero's cave. Prospero enters followed by Miranda, his daughter.)

MIRANDA: Father, did your magic raise this storm at sea? If so, please make it stop!

PROSPERO: I have done nothing harmful. I’ve only done what is best for you. You, my daughter, who doesn’t know anything about where you came from or who you are.

MIRANDA: I never thought of wanting to know more.

PROSPERO: It’s time I let you know. Give me a hand removing my magic cloak. (She helps him remove the cloak, and he puts it on a rock.) Sit down. Now I’ll tell you more.

MIRANDA: Sometimes you’ve tried to tell me, but you’ve always stopped. It’s left me wishing you’d tell me more.

PROSPERO: It’s time now. Twelve years ago I was the duke of Milan, a powerful prince.

MIRANDA: What happened to make us leave? Was it good or bad?

PROSPERO: Both. Wicked things happened to make us leave, but we were also lucky. My brother—your uncle—was named Antonio. Next to you, I loved him more than anyone else in the world, and I trusted him to manage my kingdom. I left the business of government to him, but I was so busy reading my books and improving my mind that I neglected everything else. Antonio started to think that he was the Duke, because he was carrying out my duties.

MIRANDA: Oh, heavens!

PROSPERO: The king of Naples, an enemy of mine, listened to Antonio. They decided that I, and my family, should be forced to leave our country. They raised an army and, one night, opened the gates and hurried us through.

MIRANDA: Why didn’t they kill us?

PROSPERO: Fortunately, Gonzalo, a noble man in charge of getting us out, gave us some food, fresh water, fine clothes, and other things to keep us alive. Out of the kindness of his heart, knowing I loved my books, Gonzalo also gave me books from my library that I prized more than my kingdom.

MIRANDA: Thank heavens! And now, because I can’t stop thinking about it, what is your reason for making this storm at sea?
PROSPERO: Oddly, good luck has brought my enemies to us. Ask no more questions. (He puts his hand over her eyes.) You feel sleepy.

(Miranda falls asleep, hypnotized. Prospero calls quietly.)


ARIEL: All hail, great master! I come to answer your call, be it to fly, to swim, to dive into the fire, or to ride on the clouds. Ariel and all his fellow spirits are at your command.

PROSPERO: Spirit, have you done what I ordered you to do?

ARIEL: Everything. I boarded the king’s ship. With fire, I struck terror. With lightning flashes, fire, explosions, and bold waves. I took care of everything. Everyone on board was afraid. The king’s son, Ferdinand, was the first one to jump overboard.

PROSPERO: But are they safe?

ARIEL: No one was hurt. And just like you ordered, I’ve scattered them around the island in groups. I, myself, landed the king’s son.

PROSPERO: What have you done with the ship?

ARIEL: The ship is safely in the harbor. I hid it in a deep cove.

PROSPERO: You have carried out my orders exactly. But there’s more work to do. We both have to make the most of our time between now and six o’clock tonight.

ARIEL: More hard work? Since you are so demanding, may I remind you of what you promised but have not given me?

PROSPERO: What?

ARIEL: My freedom.

PROSPERO: Before the time is out? Absolutely not!

ARIEL: Remember that I have served you well. I’ve told you no lies, made no mistakes, and served without grumbling about it. You promised to give me my freedom a year early.

PROSPERO: Have you forgotten the torture I freed you from?

ARIEL: No.
PROSPERO: You were the servant of the witch Sycorax. She was banished from Algiers for doing things too horrible to mention. She imprisoned you in a split pine tree because you refused to obey her. In great pain inside the tree, you were imprisoned for 12 years. Then she died and left you there.

ARIEL: Thank you for rescuing me. I’ll do whatever you command.

PROSPERO: Do it. And in two days, I will release you. (Pause) I want you to make yourself a water nymph. You need to be invisible to everyone but me. Now go, do this, and return.

(Ariel leaves. Prospero looks at the sleeping Miranda.) Wake up, dear one, wake up!

MIRANDA: Your strange story made me sleepy.

PROSPERO: Come, and we’ll visit my slave Caliban.

MIRANDA: He’s a bad person. I don’t like to see him.

PROSPERO: We can’t do this without him. He lights our fires, fetches our wood, and is useful to us. Caliban! Slave! You! Answer!

CALIBAN: (Inside) There’s enough wood.

PROSPERO: Come out! There are more jobs for you. Come here!

(Ariel comes in, looking like a water nymph. Prospero turns to whisper to him.) You look good, my ingenious Ariel! I need to have a word with you.

ARIEL: I did what you asked.

PROSPERO: (Speaking to Caliban) You poisonous slave! Get out here! (Caliban enters. He is ugly and deformed.)

CALIBAN: May a southwest wind blow on you and blister you all over! This island is mine because of my mother Sycorax, and you are taking it from me. When you first came, you gave me water with berries and taught me what to call the big light in the day and the small light at night. I loved you then and showed you everything on the island—the fresh springs, the barren spots and the fertile ones. Curse me that I did that! May all the spells of Sycorax—toads, beetles, and bats—light on you! I am the only subject you have, and I was once my own king! You put me in a cave and keep me away from the rest of the island.

PROSPERO: You lie! It works better when I punish you than when I am kind to you! You are dirt! And I have treated you well. I even let you sleep in my cave.
MIRANDA: You disgusting slave! You don’t understand goodness! I used to feel sorry for you, and taught you to speak. But you are so disgusting that it’s better that you are in a cave. But prison would be better!

CALIBAN: May I be cursed for learning your language!

PROSPERO: Leave! Bring in some firewood for us and you had better be fast! If you disobey me, I’ll punish you and make you roar so that beasts will tremble when they hear you.

CALIBAN: Don’t! (Turns to the audience) I’ve got to obey him. His magic is so powerful it could control my mother!

PROSPERO: So, slave, go! (Caliban leaves. Ariel enters, invisible, singing; Ferdinand follows.)

(To Miranda.) Open your eyes and tell me what you see.

MIRANDA: (Looking at Ferdinand) Oooh! What is it? A spirit? How does it look around? It is very handsome, but it’s a spirit.

PROSPERO: No, girl. It eats and sleeps and has the same senses we have. This man you see was in the shipwreck. Except for being full of sorrow, you could call him nice looking. He has lost his friends and is wandering about trying to find them.

MIRANDA: Hmmm. He’s handsome, but I have never seen anything on earth so noble.

PROSPERO: (To the audience.) It’s turned out just as I hoped it would. (To Ariel) Spirit! Fine Spirit! I’ll free you in two days for this.

FERDINAND: (To Miranda) The heavens smile on me to meet you! May I know whether you live on this island? Tell me how I should act here. And then, and this is the most important question, are you a mortal woman or not?

MIRANDA: Don’t wonder, sir. I most assuredly am a mortal woman.

FERDINAND: I am the king of Naples. I have been crying over watching my father die in a shipwreck.

MIRANDA: Oh, that’s terrible!

FERDINAND: Yes. Everyone on board died, including the Duke of Milan and his brave son.
PROSPERO: *(To the audience)* The Duke of Milan and his daughter could find you wrong if this were the right time. It is love at first sight. Delicate Ariel, I’ll set you free for this.

*(To Ferdinand)* May I have a word, sir? I think you are wrong.

MIRANDA: Why is my father so rude? This is the third man I’ve ever seen, and the first one who has turned my heart. May pity move my father to understand my heart.

FERDINAND: If you don’t have someone else, I’ll make you queen of Naples.

PROSPERO: Enough! A word with you!

*(To the audience)* They are in love with each other, so I must make this more difficult so he’ll value “the prize” more.

*(To Ferdinand)* Listen to me. You are a fake, and you have come to this island as a spy so you can take it from me!

FERDINAND: No, upon my honor!

MIRANDA: Nothing bad could be in him. If evil were in such a handsome body, good would drive it away.

PROSPERO: *(To Ferdinand)* Follow me.

*(To Miranda)* Don’t speak for him. He’s a traitor!

*(To Ferdinand)* Come. I’ll chain your neck and feet together.

FERDINAND: No! I won’t let you do it! *(He draws his sword, but Prospero puts a spell on him, and he can’t move.)*

MIRANDA: Oh, father! Don’t hurt him! He’s a good man and not a threat to you.

PROSPERO: Do you think I think with my feet?

*(To Ferdinand)* Put your sword up, you traitor! You are too full of guilt to be able to strike me. I can disarm you with this stick. *(He knocks Ferdinand’s sword away with his magic wand.)*

MIRANDA: Father, please!

PROSPERO: Silence! Compared with him, most men are angels.

MIRANDA: I have no problem in seeing a man who is more handsome.
PROSPERO: (To Ferdinand) Come on, obey me! You are as helpless as a baby!

FERDINAND: I feel like I’m in a dream. I’ve lost my father . . . the shipwreck . . . not to mention you. Even if I were in prison, it would be worth it to see this girl one more day. Free men can have all the space they want. I would have enough room in a jail if I could see her.

PROSPERO: (To the audience) It’s working.

(To Ferdinand) Come!

(To Ariel) Well done, my fine Ariel! Follow me. I need something else done.

MIRANDA: (To Ferdinand) Don’t give up. My father is better than his words tell you. He’s just acting strange right now.

PROSPERO: (To Ariel) You shall be free as the mountain winds, but you must do as I say.

ARIEL: I’ll follow every word.

PROSPERO: (To Ferdinand) Come. Follow me.

(To Miranda) Don’t say anything more in his favor.

ACT TWO, SCENE 1

(Another part of the Island. Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, Adrian, Francisco, and other survivors enter.)

GONZALO: (He tries to be comforting.) I beg you, please cheer up. At least we have our lives, and what we’ve lost is nothing compared to that. Every day, some sailor’s wife, the ship’s owners, or the traders have the same reason for sorrow that we have. But for the miracle—our survival—few people could be as lucky.

ALONSO: That’s enough. Don’t say any more.

GONZALO: There’s everyone one could wish for here.

ANTONIO: (To the audience) True. Except what we need to support life.

SEBUSTIAN: (To the audience) There’s little or nothing of that.

GONZALO: How green the grass looks!

ANTONIO: (To the audience) The grass is dry, actually.
SEBASTIAN: *(To the audience)* There are patches of green.

ANTONIO: *(To the audience)* He doesn’t miss much.

SEBASTIAN: *(To the audience)* No. Just the truth.

GONZALO: It’s amazing that our clothes, even though they were soaked in the sea, still look quite good. They look fresh and are not stained with salt water.

ANTONIO: *(To the audience)* If one of his pockets could speak, would it say he was lying?

GONZALO: I do think our clothes are as fresh as when we first wore them in Africa at the marriage of the king’s daughter Claribel to the king of Tunis.

ALONSO: You are forcing me to listen to things I’d like to forget. I wish I’d never let my daughter marry there! Because, while coming home my son drowned. And my daughter is lost, too. I’ll never see her again. Oh, my son! What strange fish has eaten you?

FERDINAND: Sir, he may still live. I saw him swim strongly and ride the waves. I don’t doubt that he reached land and is alive.

ALONSO: No, no. He’s dead.

SEBASTIAN: Sir, you have only yourself to thank for this loss. All of us begged and prayed that you would do something else. Your daughter was torn between a desire to obey you and an unwillingness to marry. She didn’t know which to choose. If we have lost your son forever, it’s your fault.

GONZALO: You rub the sore when you should be bandaging the wound.

*(Turning to Alonso)* If I were the king of this island, I would allow no trade. There would be no wealth, no poverty, and no slavery. No fences. No use of metal, corn, wine, or oil. There’d be no work. Nature would produce everything for our good. No one would break the law. There would be no swords, spears, knives, or guns. Nature would provide all crops and harvests to feed my people.

SEBASTIAN: Would your subjects marry?

ANTONIO: No. They wouldn’t. Long live Gonzalo! *(They laugh.)*

ALONSO: No more. You are talking nonsense!

GONZALO: How about laughing me to sleep? I feel very tired.
ANTONIO: Sleep!

(Everyone falls asleep except Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio.)

ALONSO: Asleep so soon? I wish I could shut my thoughts out by closing my eyes. They want to close.

SEBASTIAN: Well then, sir, don’t resist the feeling. Sleep can be a comfort.

ANTONIO: We two will guard you while you sleep and keep you safe.

ALONSO: Thank you. (He yawns and falls asleep. Ariel leaves.)

SEBASTIAN: How very sleepy they are!

ANTONIO: They fell asleep as if a thunderbolt struck them. What if….? What if….?

SEBASTIAN: Say it. You’ll burst if you don’t say it.

ANTONIO: It’s this, sir. It is impossible to think the king’s son did not drown.

SEBASTIAN: I have no hope that he survived.

ANTONIO: Then tell me, who is the next heir to the throne of Naples?

SEBASTIAN: Claribel.

ANTONIO: She is the queen of Tunis and lives more than a lifetime away. She cannot get news in less than 14 years, unless the sun is a postman. Do you see what I mean?

SEBASTIAN: I think I do.

ANTONIO: And how does this stroke of luck apply to you?

SEBASTIAN: Remember, you overthrew your brother, Prospero . . .

ANTONIO: That’s true. My brother’s servants were then my equals. Now I pay them to do things for me.

SEBASTIAN: Dear friend, just as you got Milan, I will get Naples. Draw your sword. In one stroke, I can kill Gonzalo. Then I’ll be the new king.

ANTONIO: Let’s draw our swords at the same time. When I raise my hand, you raise your hand, and we will bring both down on him. (Raising sword) Let’s be quick!
GONZALO: *(Suddenly waking up)* May the good angels preserve the king!

*(The others wake up and are surprised.)*

ALONSO: What’s going on? Everyone’s awake?

*(To Antonio)* Why is your sword drawn? Why the ghastly looks!

GONZALO: What’s the matter?

SEBASTIAN: *(Thinks quickly and drops his sword.)* While we stood here guarding you, we heard a bellowing, like bulls, or maybe lions. Didn’t it wake you? It was very frightening to me!

ALONSO: I heard nothing.

ANTONIO: The noise would have frightened a monster and made an earthquake! It was surely the roar of a whole herd of lions!

ALONSO: Did you hear this, Gonzalo?

GONALO: Upon my honor sir, I heard only a humming, a strange humming, which woke me up. I shook you, sir, and shouted at you. I opened my eyes and saw their weapons drawn. There was a noise. That’s certain. We’d better be our on guard or leave here. Let’s draw our weapons.

ALONSO: Lead the way, and let’s continue to search for my son.

GONZALO: May heaven keep him from these beasts! He is surely on the island.

ALONSO: Lead the way.

ARIEL: Prospero shall know what I have done. So, King, go safely to look for your son.

**ACT 2, SCENE 2**

*(Another part of the island. Caliban enters with a load of wood. Thunder can be heard.)*

CALIBAN: May all kinds of diseases fall on Prospero, little by little. I can’t stop cursing him. His spirits won’t frighten me with ghosts unless he orders them to. Sometimes they make faces at me and bite me. Sometimes they seem like hedgehogs, all curled up in my way, so when I walk with bare feet I step on them. Sometimes I have snakes all over me, driving me mad.

*(Trinculo enters.)* Here comes one of his spirits now to torment me for bringing firewood so slowly. I’ll lie flat. Maybe he won’t notice me.
TRINCULO: There aren’t any bushes or shrubs here to keep off the weather, and there’s a storm brewing. If it thunders like before, I don’t know where to find cover. That cloud is about to rain bucketfuls.

(He sees Caliban) Oh, what have we here? A man or a fish? Dead or alive? A fish. He smells like a fish, a very old fish! A strange fish! If I were in England now, people would pay to see a monster like this. (He looks closely at Caliban) He has legs! I’ve changed my opinion. This isn’t a fish, it’s an islander who was killed by a thunderbolt.

(Thunder is heard) The storm’s coming! There is no other place to find shelter. I’ll stay here till the storm is over. (He takes shelter by Caliban)

(Stephano enters, singing. He has a bottle of water.)

CALIBAN (To Trinculo) Do not torment me! Oh!

STEPHANO: What? Do we have devils here? (He inspects what is on the ground, with two sets of legs sticking out.) Is this some freak show? Four legs?

CALIBAN: This spirit is tormenting me. Oh!

STEPHANO: This is some island monster with four legs who has a fever, I think. Where did he learn to speak our language? I’ll give him some medicine, if that’s all that is wrong. If I can make him better, keep him tame, get him back to Naples, he would be a present for any king.

CALIBAN: (To Trinculo) Don’t torment me, I pray. I’ll bring my firewood home faster.

STEPHANO: He’s having a fit now and not talking much sense. He can have a taste of my bdrink. This should help him. If I can cure him and tame him, I’ll not take too much from him—just every penny I can get!!!

CALIBAN: (To Trinculo, whom he assumes is possessed by a devil.) You haven’t hurt me yet, but I think you will because of the way you are shaking. Prospero is working on you!

STEPHANO: Come here. Open your mouth. This water will help! This will stop the shaking! Open your mouth!

TRINCULO: I should know that voice! It has to be . . . but he is drowned. These are demons! Help me!

STEPHANO: Four legs and two voices—what a monster! His front voice speaks good words, and his back voice speaks criticism. I’ll cure his fever with this bottle of water. (Pours water into Caliban’s throat)
(Goes to Trinculo’s throat) Come! I’ll pour some in its other mouth.

TRINCULO: Stephano!

STEPHANO: Is it your other mouth calling me? (He seems afraid.) Mercy! Mercy! This is a demon, not a monster! I’ll leave him and not eat with the demon.

TRINCULO: Stephano! If you are really Stephano, speak to me. I’m Trinculo. Don’t be afraid—I’m your good friend Trinculo.

STEPHANO: If you are Trinculo, come here. (Takes hold of Trinculo) I’ll pull you by your two small legs. If any of the legs belong to Trinculo, they are the ones. (Trinculo stands up.) Trinculo!

TRINCULO: (Pointing at Caliban) I thought he had been killed with a thunderbolt.

(Looking at Stephano) But you weren’t drowned, Stephano? I hope you aren’t drowned! Is the storm over? I hid myself under the dead monster’s cloak for fear of the storm. Oh, Stephano! Two Neapolitans survived!

STEPHANO: Don’t spin me around! My stomach is still churning!

CALIBAN: (To the audience) These are fine creatures if they aren’t spirits.

STEPHANO: (To Trinculo) How did you escape? How did you get here? I escaped by floating on a cask the sailors threw overboard.

CALIBAN: (Kneeling at Stephano’s feet) I’ll swear on that bottle to be your loyal subject. The water is heavenly!

STEPHANO: Tell me how you escaped.

TRINCULO: I swam ashore, like a duck. I can swim like a duck, I swear.

STEPHANO: Though you can swim like a duck, you look like a goose! . . .

(To Caliban) Well now, monster. How are you doing?

CALIBAN: Are you from heaven?

STEPHANO: From the moon, actually. I was once the man in the moon . . .

TRINCULO: This is a very foolish monster! Me afraid of him? He is very weak, the man in the moon!
CALIBAN: I’ll show you every fertile inch of this island, and I will kiss your feet. Please be my king.

TRINCULO: This is a most interesting monster!

CALIBAN: I’ll kiss your feet. I’ll swear to be your subject. I’ll show you the freshest water. I’ll pick berries for you. I’ll fish for you and get the firewood you need. Curse the tyrant I serve! I won’t carry logs for him anymore, but I will serve you, o’ wondrous man. Will you go with me?

STEPHANO: All right, then. Lead the way, but don’t speak another word. We’ll take over this place.

CALIBAN: Farewell, master. Farewell.

TRINCULO: A howling monster!

CALIBAN: (Singing) 
I’ll make no more dams for catching fish;
nor fetch in kindling wood.
Not scrape his plates, nor wash his dish.
‘Ban, ‘Ban, Caliban
Has a new master—got a new man!
Freedom! High-day! Freedom! Freedom!

STEPHANO: O brave monster! Lead the way. (Exit)