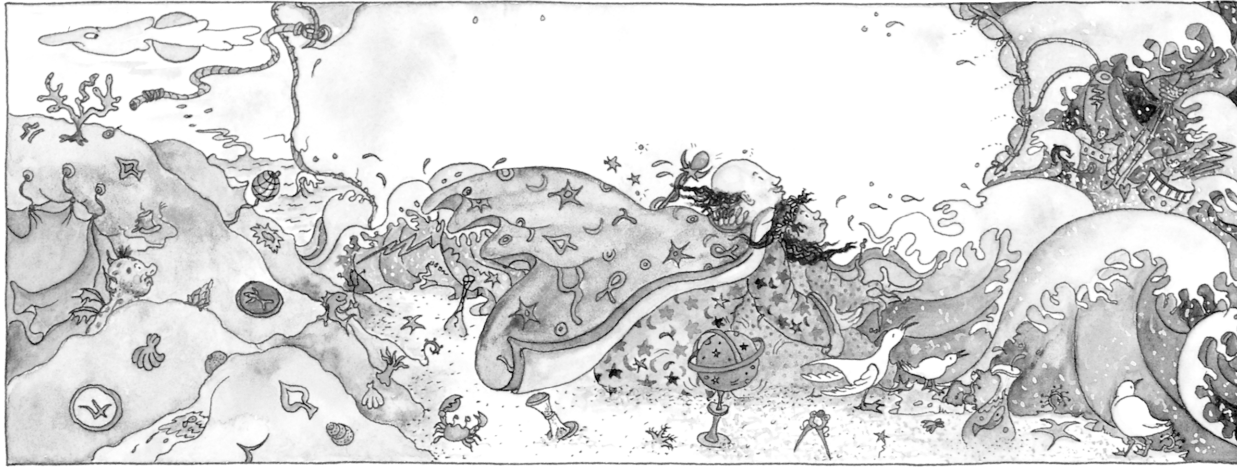


In which Miranda
learns the truth.

Many years ago, off the shore of a small, mystical isle, a ship struggled in the eye of a terrible tempest. The thunder roared, the lightning cracked and the waves raised the ship up towards the stormy clouds. There it seemed to rest for a moment, only to be dashed down into the brink by the raging sea. No ship could survive such a battering. No sailor could survive in such waters.



From the island, Miranda, a young and very beautiful girl, watched in horror as the ship fought to survive and the sailors cried out in fear. Sitting beside Miranda was her loving father, Prospero, his cloak flapping in the wind and his great staff held out towards the storm. He had been preparing for this moment for years. From his cell-like dwelling on the island, Prospero had been developing his magic powers from

a rare book. Now his skill was so great that he could even control the elements.

Miranda suspected that her father had caused the storm, but

had no idea why such a gentle man should wish to harm anyone. "If by your art, my dearest father, you have put the wild waters in this roar, allay them," she pleaded, clutching at his arm.

"Be collected," replied her father. "No more amazement. Tell your piteous heart there's no harm done. 'Tis time I should inform thee farther. Lend thy hand and pluck my magic garment from me."

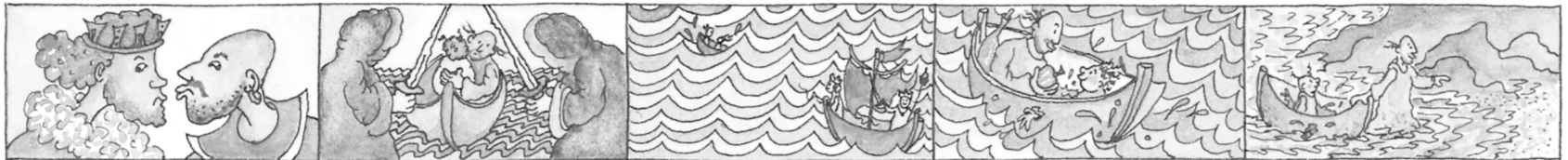




Prospero laid his cloak and great staff beside him and took his daughter's hands in his. "Canst thou remember a time before we came unto this cell?" he asked. "I do not think thou canst, for then thou wast not out three years old."

Bit by bit, Prospero revealed how he and Miranda had been cast away on the island, twelve years before. In those days, Prospero had been Duke of Milan, but he was always in his library studying his books, and he left

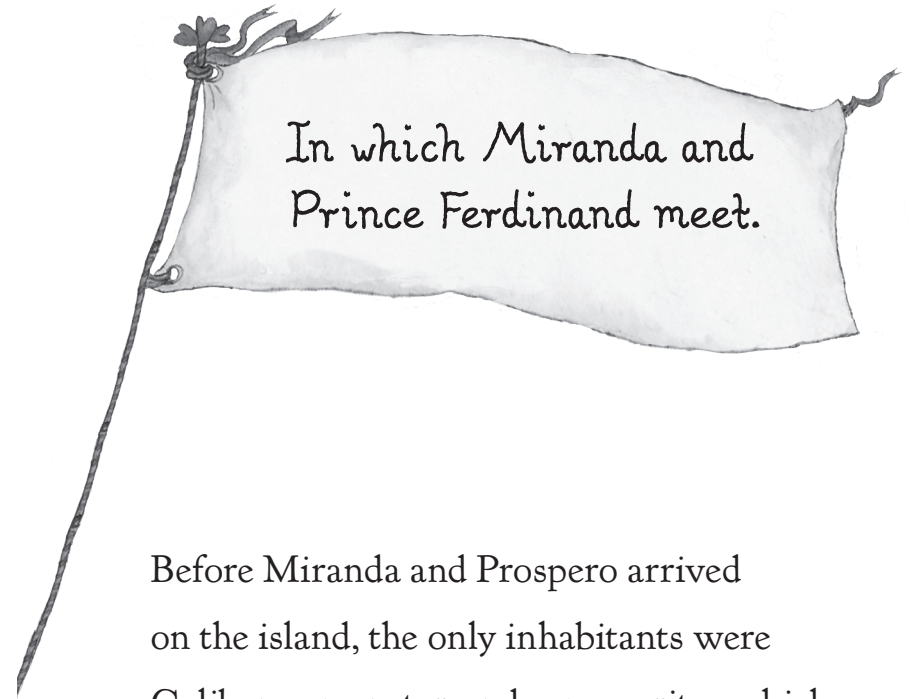
most of his duties to his brother Antonio. Eventually Antonio decided that if he was to do all the work, he should have Prospero's title as well! Aided by Alonso, King of Naples, he set about seizing the dukedom and getting rid of his brother. Prospero was very popular with the people of Milan, so Antonio and King Alonso did not dare kill him outright. Instead, they set him and his little daughter, Miranda, adrift in a tiny boat. Luckily Prospero's friend Gonzalo had



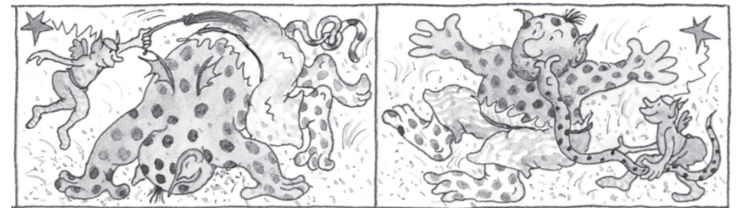
secreted some clothes and other provisions on board, as well as Prospero's most precious books. These sustained the duke and his daughter until, after many long nights and days, they drifted to their island.

"Dost thou attend me?" Prospero asked his Miranda as their history unfolded.

"Your tale, sir, would cure deafness," she replied in wonder.



Before Miranda and Prospero arrived on the island, the only inhabitants were Caliban, a monster, and some sprites which Caliban's mother, a foul witch, had trapped in trees before she died. Caliban, a strange





and unearthly creature, became Prospero's servant, as did Ariel, an airy little sprite who was invisible to all but Prospero. Ariel had been freed from a tree by Prospero's magic and in return had promised to serve him faithfully for twelve years.

Because Miranda had lived nearly all her life on the island, she could not really remember ever seeing another human apart from her father. Now, Prospero told her, she was about to see that not all humans were as grey and aged as him; for, along with the sailors, the storm-tossed ship had brought

his friend Gonzalo, his enemies Antonio and King Alonso, and the king's son Prince Ferdinand to the island.



As Prospero was telling Miranda this, Ariel approached. Prospero put his magic cloak back on and, with a wave of his staff, he sent Miranda to sleep.

“Approach, my Ariel; come!” he called.

“All hail, great master, grave sir, hail! I come to answer thy best pleasure,” replied the sprite.

Ariel was triumphant, for he had managed to rescue all those aboard the ship. He had



brought the vessel safely into a hidden inlet and spirited everyone ashore, isolating all but Antonio, Gonzalo and King Alonso. Thanks to Ariel and Prospero's ingenuity, Prince Ferdinand thought his father must have drowned. Indeed, each thought he was the only survivor of the tempest.

"But are they, Ariel, safe?" pressed Prospero, who had no desire to cause lasting harm.

"Not a hair perish'd," Ariel reassured him with pride.

Prospero smiled. He was pleased with the sprite, but told him there was still more work to be done.

"Is there more toil?" grumbled Ariel.

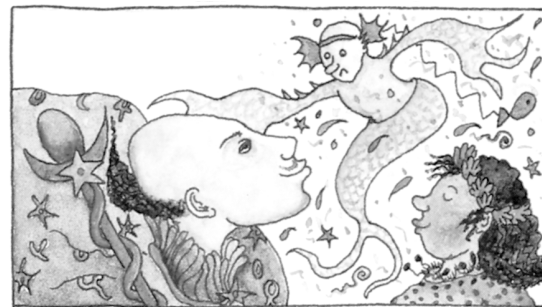
"How now? Moody?" admonished

Prospero sharply. "Dost thou forget from what a torment I did free thee?"

"No," sulked the sprite.

"If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak and peg thee in his knotty entrails till thou has howl'd away twelve winters!" threatened Prospero.

This was enough to make Ariel hang upon Prospero's every word! Off he went as ordered, in the guise of a sea nymph, to bring the young Prince Ferdinand to Prospero's cave.



Prospero then called upon Caliban to go and gather wood.

“There’s wood enough within,” grumbled Caliban.

“Hag-seed, hence!” snapped Prospero. “Fetch us in fuel; and be quick.”

“I must obey: his art is of such power,” said Caliban, who secretly longed for every toad, beetle and bat to land on his master.

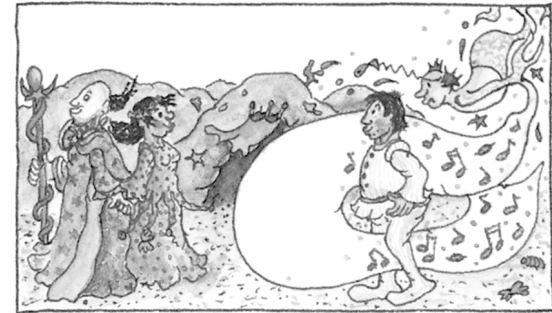
Moments later, Ferdinand was drawn towards Prospero’s cave by Ariel’s singing. Miranda woke to a sight so new to her that she could only stare in wonder and delight.

“It carries a brave form: but ’tis a spirit,” she murmured.

“No, wench,” smiled her father. “It eats and sleeps, and hath such senses as we have.”

“I might call him a thing divine,” she said, and her heart missed several beats!

Then Ferdinand saw Miranda and his heart also missed several beats! He had seen many fair faces, but never had he seen one to compare with Miranda’s.



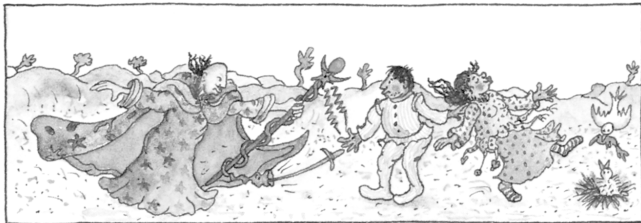
“O you wonder!” he gasped. “My prime request is if you be maid or no?”

“No wonder, sir,” smiled Miranda, “but certainly a maid.”

So it was that these two youngsters fell in love at this first meeting, just as Prospero



had planned. Yet Prospero, thinking that love so easily and quickly come by might not last, decided to throw a few problems in their path. Adversity, he hoped, would seal their lovers' bond. With this aim, he accused Ferdinand of spying.



“Thou hast put thyself upon this island as a spy, to win it from me, the Lord on’t,” he charged Ferdinand.

“No, as I am a man,” protested Ferdinand.

“There’s nothing ill can dwell in such a temple,” cried Miranda, devastated at her father’s angry tone.

“Speak not you for him,” snapped Prospero. “He’s a traitor! Come, I’ll manacle thy neck and feet together.”

Prospero forbade Miranda to talk to Ferdinand, and set him to shift logs. Being a prince, Ferdinand was not used to such labour, but he did it willingly to stay close to his new love.



Ferdinand hauled logs for hours, but as soon as Prospero’s back was turned, Miranda went to offer him her help. “I’ll bear your logs the while,” she said.

“No, precious creature,” puffed Ferdinand.





“I had rather crack my sinews, break my back, than you should such dishonour undergo.”

Ferdinand continued to move the logs and Miranda continued to distract him with her presence, so that each log took longer and longer to haul. The pair were so absorbed in each other that they failed to notice Prospero, who was hidden nearby, watching their love blossom. When he had seen enough to reassure himself of Ferdinand’s good intentions, he appeared

suddenly, making them both jump. Miranda expected to be admonished for disobeying her father’s orders and keeping company with Ferdinand, but Prospero smiled and turned to Ferdinand. “If I have too austere punished you, your compensation makes amends – take my daughter,” he said.

He then conjured up a flock of nymphs to sing a blessing on their engagement, and told them to rest and talk together all they liked, for he had work to do. Miranda and Ferdinand were delighted.