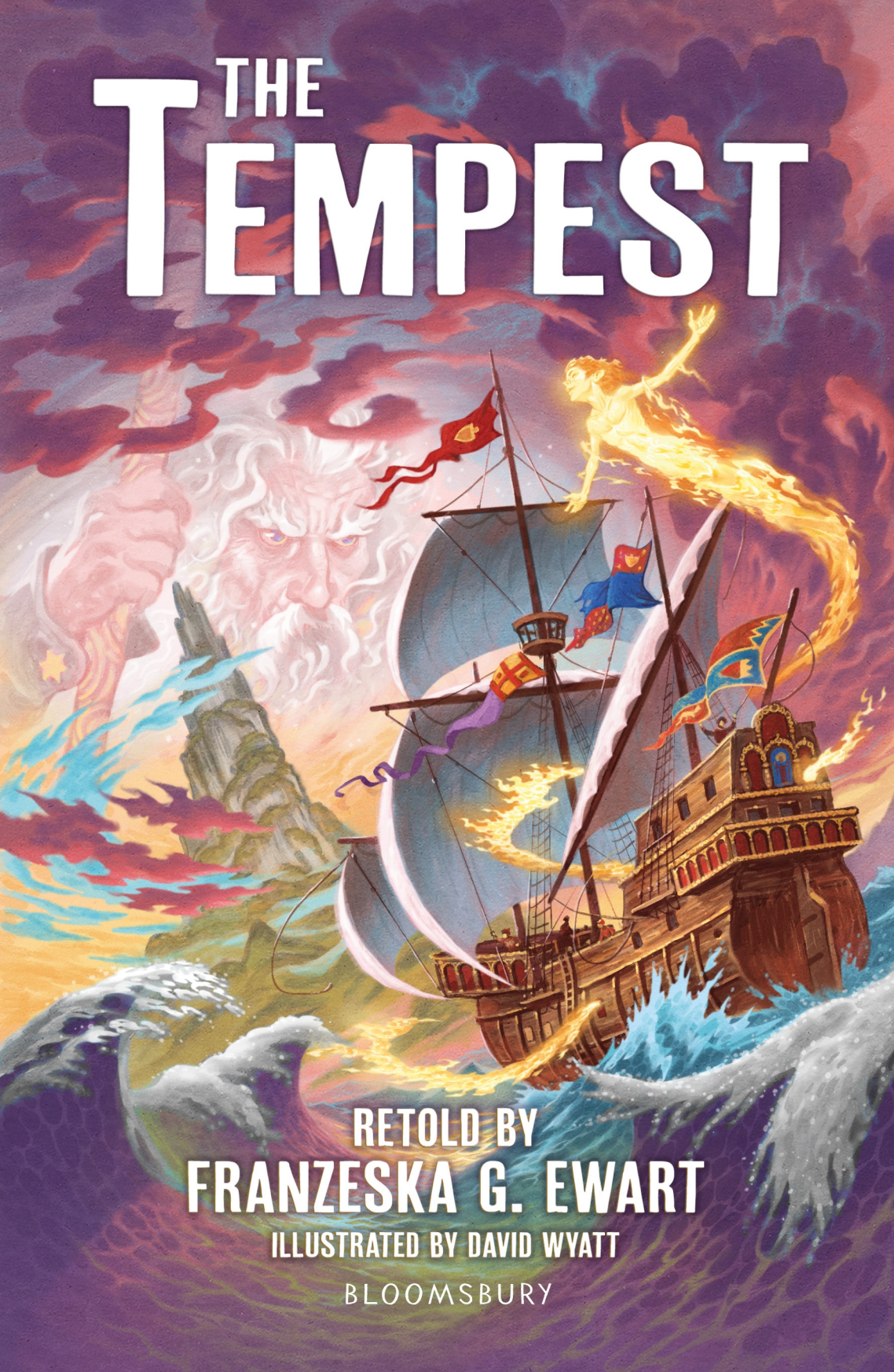
THE TEMPEST



RETOLD BY
FRANZESKA G. EWART
ILLUSTRATED BY DAVID WYATT

BLOOMSBURY

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

THE TEMPEST



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Ferdinand, *Alonso's son*

Prospero, *a magician and rightful Duke of Milan*

Miranda, *his daughter*

Antonio, *Prospero's brother, the usurping Duke of Milan*

Ariel, *an airy spirit*

Caliban, *a man Prospero keeps as a slave*

Gonzalo, *an honest old councillor*

Adrian and Francisco, *lords*

Trinculo, *a jester*

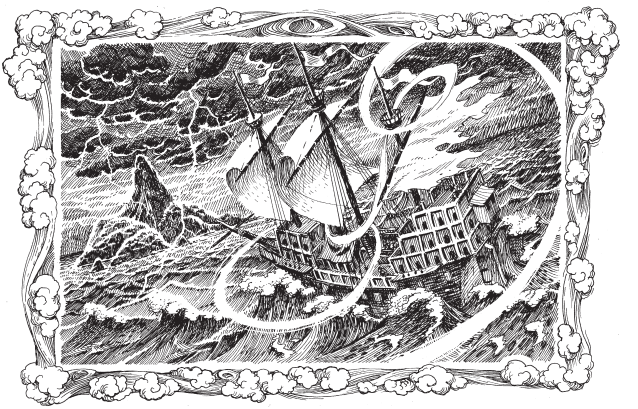
Stephano, *a drunken butler*

Iris

Ceres *represented by nymphs*

Juno

ACT ONE



All hail, great master! Grave sir, hail! I come
To answer thy best pleasure; be't to fly,
To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride
On the curled clouds. To thy strong bidding task
Ariel and all his quality.

Those were the first words I spoke to my master, Prospero, on that magical day – the day of the tempest. I'm sure you'll agree they were brave words indeed!

I knew, you see, that the day was going to be special. From the moment it dawned, the whole island seemed to hold its breath. The air hardly moved, and it felt as if every plant, every animal, and every spirit was waiting silently...

You've heard of 'the calm before the storm'. That's what it was like. We all knew that very soon Prospero would raise his mighty staff, and the sun would disappear. Then the wind would begin to howl, and the island would be filled with a magic more powerful than any it had ever seen before. So it was no wonder that I, Ariel, was willing to do anything, however dangerous, to make that happen.

My job, you see, was to carry out Prospero's spells and, believe me, I was *brilliant* at it! You'll soon see how brilliant, because I've come back to this beautiful island, where it all happened, to tell you. Listen well, for you're about to hear the story of *The Tempest* – a tale of love, and adventure, and murder plots, and *magic*.

Now, before you say you've heard a hundred magic stories, let me tell you that this magic was no ordinary sorcery. Oh no – it was in a class of its own! For the enchantments that took place on that day were so powerful that they changed everyone who fell under their spell. No one's life was ever the same again.

My life wasn't the same again, either, for in those few hours I gained something that's more important than life itself. After years and years of being a slave, I gained my freedom. Which is why, today, I could hop onto the back of a bat and fly here – back to this island paradise that for so long was my prison.

Did you see me swooping above, holding handfuls of bat-hair in my fists and waving down at you? Did you hear me, singing at the top of my wild and wonderful voice?

No – I thought not! You didn't see or hear a thing, and how could you? To catch a glimpse of me, you have to have the eyes

to see, and that means *magical* eyes. For I, Ariel, am an airy spirit, as my name tells you. And, since I'm sure you've never met anyone like me, let me try to explain.

Being an airy spirit means that my body is made of air, unlike yours, which is flesh and blood and bones. Where you walk on two legs, I fly, and dive, and hover, and soar. And where you are stuck, your whole life long, with one body, which hardly changes except to grow old and die, I live for ever; and I take as many different shapes as I like. I can be as huge as the greatest wave, or as tiny as the lowliest barnacle. I can have the most friendly form imaginable, or the most scary. I can also be invisible.

Come close and look at me now. I've made myself very tiny and curled up among the petals of a cowslip flower, so I'm powdered pollen yellow. My eyes are heavy with perfume and I'm holding them tight shut, for I'm listening to those words of mine again. They're echoing in my memory

now, drowning out the pounding of the waves and the seabirds' cries, taking me – and you – back to that magical day: the day of the tempest.

At that time, my master Prospero was the ruler of the island, and the greatest magician who ever lived. But, powerful as Prospero's magic was, he still needed spirits to help him carry it out, and there was no spirit more able and willing than me.

Of course, I did have my 'gang' to help me. Prospero may have been my master, but I was in charge of a whole band of spirits who did as *I* commanded them! We carried out spectacular sorcery together, but the star of Prospero's magic shows was always *me*. And the show that began this story was the tempest, the sea-storm.

Prospero had been planning that storm ever since he and his daughter, Miranda, had arrived on the island. And when I tell you that Miranda was two when they were shipwrecked, and on that day she was a

young woman of fourteen, you'll realise just how long that plan had taken.

Prospero and Miranda, you see, had not *chosen* to live their lives in a humble cave on an almost-deserted island with only sea-sounds to bring comfort to their ears. Would a duke, used to living in a palace in the fine city of Milan, with rich furniture and servants, *choose* to raise his little daughter far away from civilisation and the company of others?

For indeed, my master Prospero was a duke! In fact, he was Duke of Milan – the greatest state in Italy, which he had governed for many years. When I met him, though, his dukedom was just a memory; his royal gowns, his hat and his rapier were all stored away at the back of his cave. And instead of robes of office, he wore a magic cloak.

So of course this island life was not chosen. Prospero and Miranda's banishment from Milan was the result of a wicked plot, and when I tell you that this plot was