

# Active Reading

## *The Tempest Act 5*

In Act 5, several of the plot complications in the play are brought to resolution. Characters gain new knowledge, earlier mysteries are explained, and events foreshadowed (hinted at) in the opening scenes come to pass. As you read, use the chart below to note how the plot developments listed are resolved.

Developments	Resolution
1. Prospero's enemies are completely in his power.	<i>He decides to forgive them.</i>
2. Prospero has accomplished everything with his art that he wants.	
3. Prospero tells Antonio and Sebastian that he knows they tried to kill Alonso.	
4. Alonso grieves because he believes Ferdinand was drowned.	
5. Alonso wonders if the girl with Ferdinand is a goddess.	
6. The shipwrecked courtiers believe that the ship sank with all its sailors.	
7. The courtiers wonder what happened to Stephano and Trinculo.	
8. Caliban has taken Stephano for his lord and master.	
9. Ariel has longed for freedom.	

# Responding

## *The Tempest Act 5*

### Personal Response

What do you think of the ending of the play and the epilogue?

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If you had written the play, would you have ended it differently? Explain your answer.

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### Analyzing Literature

#### Recall and Interpret

1. How are Ferdinand and Miranda revealed to the others? How does the language and imagery used reflect the theme of rebirth and regeneration?

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2. What ironic comment does Prospero make when Miranda marvels at the “brave new world” (Scene 1, line 186)? What do you think he means by this comment?

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3. What significant gesture does Antonio not make at the end of the play? What might Shakespeare be saying about the power of art by this omission?

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# Responding

## *The Tempest Act 5*

### Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

#### Evaluate and Connect

4. In many ways Prospero is similar to a god. In other ways, he is not. List characteristics that make him seem both like *and* unlike a god. Then decide what Shakespeare thought about Prospero's godlike status. Use the evidence you list to support your position.

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5. Prospero forgives all of the men who have wronged him, even those who have not repented. Was he right or wrong to forgive all of them? In the **Focus Activity**, you shared experiences about forgiveness. Apply your answer to real life. Under what circumstances should people convicted of crimes be paroled or pardoned?

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### Literature and Writing

#### Turning Point

Reread the dialogue between Prospero and Ariel at the beginning of Act 5 (lines 20–32). At this point, Ariel describes how, if he were human, his affections would become tender at the sight of Gonzalo weeping for Alonso. In what way might this be considered the turning point of the play? What does Prospero realize and then decide to do? On a separate sheet of paper analyze these lines and summarize Prospero's chain of reasoning. Then explain how events earlier in the play have led up to this moment.

#### Extending Your Response

##### Literature Groups

Unless characters in a play speak an "aside," the audience may not understand what the characters are secretly thinking. In your group, choose one of the characters who appear in Act 5. For the character you choose, write an aside that reveals what the character is secretly thinking. Share your aside with the rest of the class and explain why you think it is appropriate to the character.

##### Learning for Life

Prospero uses his art in the play for a number of purposes: to restore the moral order; to bring about changes in other people; to help sinners recognize their wickedness and repent their evil deeds; and to instruct others about virtue. However, all of these positive changes take place on the enchanted island, not in Milan and Naples. Do you believe these kinds of changes are also possible in the real world? With a partner, find examples of how Prospero's art achieves positive results. Then discuss what real-life powers have this ability to change people, their behavior, and society. Support your opinion with evidence from history and current events.



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