

ACT 3: PLOTS AND MAGIC – READING COMPREHENSION

This week, as the plots thicken, there are two passages to read. In the first we read about Ferdinand, hard at work trying to impress Prospero and Miranda. In the second passage we find out what is happening on the other side of the island to King Alonso and his crew.

PART 1

A little way from Prospero's dwelling—a rough house of wood, sufficient to keep out the weather and keep in comfort and warmth—the King Of Naples' son was carrying logs. Back and forth he toiled, pausing only to wipe the sweat from his brow. He had sworn that he would gladly endure enslavement if only he could see Miranda once a day; and Prospero had put him to the test. Suddenly the house door opened and Miranda, with a quick, backward glance, came running out. "Alas!" She cried, seeing Ferdinand bent, like a beckoning finger, under his heavy burden, "pray you, work not so hard!" She begged him to rest. "My father is hard at study" she promised, with another backward glance. "He's safe for these three hours"

A shadow stirred in the doorway. Prospero was indeed at study, but it was nearest, not books. He smiled at the innocence of his daughter's conspiracy. "If you'll sit down" urged Miranda, "I'll bear your logs the while."

Ferdinand shook his head. Though the work was heavy, there was a pleasure in it; it was not for a harsh master that he laboured, but for a mistress, as fair as the sun

Again, Prospero smiled. He had given the young man Caliban's task so that he might seem a Caliban in Miranda's eyes: but Ferdinand laboured willingly and the harsh toil, far from debasing him, had made him seem more noble than ever.

"The very instant that I saw you" panted Ferdinand, between logs, "did my heart fly to your service..."

"Do you love me" asked Miranda, more used to plainer speech and hoping she had understood. He did indeed, and told her so again and again, and she, weeping with happiness, confessed the same. Then she left him, for the endless space of half an hour; and he went on heaving logs that seemed as light and airy as dandelion clock. And Prospero, the hidden observer, shook his head, and sighed, and smiled.



PART 1 QUESTIONS

1. What is a 'dwelling'? Find the phrase in the same sentence that explains what a dwelling is

2. "Back and forth he toiled, pausing only to wipe the sweat from his brow"
How do we know Ferdinand was working hard? Use evidence from the text to support your answer

3. Was Ferdinand happy to be a slave? Use evidence from the text to justify your answer

4. "*Suddenly the house door opened and Miranda, with a quick backward glance, came running out*"

Circle three words in this sentence that tell us that Miranda was hurrying?

5. *She begged him to rest. "My father is hard at study" she promised, with another backward glance. "He's safe for these three hours"*

Do you think Miranda is confident her father is "hard at study". Use evidence from the text to justify your answer

6. "*Again, Prospero smiled. He had given the young man Caliban's task so that he might seem a Caliban in Miranda's eyes*"

Why do you think Ferdinand doesn't seem like Caliban to Miranda?

7. "*Do you love me*" asked Miranda, more used to plainer speech and hoping she had understood

Why do you think Miranda is used to "plainer speech"?

"Prospero, the hidden observer, shook his head, and sighed, and smiled"

Why do you think Prospero smiled?



PART 2

“I can go no further, sir” groaned Gonzalo as the King’s party came into a glade that seemed the very imaged of a glade they had not long left. “I must needs rest me.”

The King sighed and took pity on the weary old man, and consented to rest awhile.

“The next advantage will we take thoroughly,” breathed Sebastian to Antonio, as their companions sank down exhausted on the ground. His resolve was as firm as ever Antonio could have wished; both men were now eye-deep in thoughts of blood. “I say tonight-“

He fell silent and clutched Antonio by the sleeve; and amazement seized the glade. A rich music had invaded the air. The trees wavered like trees painted on a veil, became unreal, then seemed to be drawn aside, as if to reveal, briefly, the true face of the haunted isle. Filmy shapes appeared in the air, as if they had always been present, and wanted only clearer sight to be seen. Some had heads like birds, others like wolves or bears or stags. They were grim in aspect, but gentle in movement. They carried a great table, laden with fruits and meat and tall flagons of wine, which they placed upon the ground; and with courteous bows and gestures, invited those present to partake of the feast. They they dissolved, leaving the table behind.

“What were these?” marvelled the King; and he spoke in admiring tones of the gentleness of the spirits.

“Praise in departing,” murmured Prospero, the invisible watcher of the scene. For as the hungry lords approached the feast, there was a roar of thunder and a glare of lightning! The glade darkened, there was a thudding of huge wings, and down flew a hideous bird, with the head of a hag and with talons like grappling irons! It perched on the table, clapped its wings, and the feast vanished! Then it turned its red-punched eye accusingly on Alonso, the King of Naples, Sebastian, his brother, and Antonio, Duke of Milan, and shrieked: “You are three men of sin!”

From Shakespeare Stories by Leon Garfield and Michael Foreman



PART 2 QUESTIONS

1. *"The King sighed and took pity on the weary old man, and consented to rest awhile".*

A. Circle the two words that show Gonzalo is not a young man.

B. Circle the synonym for '*consented*'

argued agreed persuaded decided

2. *"both men were now eye-deep in thoughts of blood".*
What does this mean?

3. Why did Sebastian clutch Antonio by the sleeve? Give two examples from the text to support your answer

4. What did the strange, magical creatures bring in to the glade?

5. *"There they dissolved, leaving the table behind"*
What does dissolved mean here?

6. Why do you think the author used the word "*dissolved*"?

7. What flew down and perched on the table?

8. Who do you think made the table appear and disappear? Give reasons for your answer.

9. *"You are three men of sin!"* Which man do you think is the most sinful? Give reasons for your choice