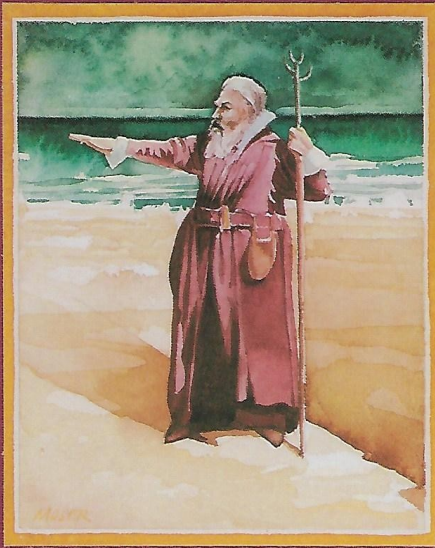


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Cymbeline
The Winter's Tale
The Tempest

THE GUILD

Shakespeare

CYMBELINE
THE WINTER'S TALE
THE TEMPEST

BY
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EDITED BY
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Editor's Introduction to *CYMBELINE*, *THE WINTER'S TALE*, and *THE TEMPEST*



The Guild Shakespeare draws to a close with an aging showman's reflections on the "Magic" that has long enabled him to flourish as a behind-the-scenes manipulator.

Like a lordly impresario, this purveyor of special effects has circled the "Globe" for trophies to ornament his crowd-pleasing extravaganzas. Like a shrewd carnival proprietor, he has conjured up "Music," "Viands," and "golden Palaces." Like a skilled sorcerer, an alchemist of the imagination, he has exploited all the secrets of an "Art" that works with "great creating Nature" to produce a "New World" too wondrous to be regarded as merely "Natural" (*The Tempest*, IV.i.153; III.iii.19, 41; IV.i.152; V.i.50; *The Winter's Tale*, IV.iv.88; *The Tempest*, V.i.182, 226).

But now this instigator of haunting "Noises" and edifying "Visions" is compelled to take stock. With the prescience of a

seasoned astrologer, he divines that his "Charms" are on the verge of being "o'er-thrown." He discerns that his "Sails" will soon depend upon the "Breath" he can solicit from forces beyond his ken. And he confides that, like a "Deceiver" whose devices have been discovered, he will wind up in "Despair" unless he "be reliev'd by Prayer" (*The Tempest*, III.ii.139; IV.i.151; Epilogue, lines 1, 7, 15-16).

For all his magisterial aura, the wizard who orchestrates this volume's culminating "Pageant" (IV.i.155) is a self-confessed fraud: the vulnerable if ostensibly omnipotent human being beneath the persona of a domestic and political patriarch, the sparing if stern principal of a drama that repeatedly directs our attention to the ventriloquist on the other side of the rear stage curtain.

The name he bears is Prospero, and he presides over an island with analogies to the "Wooden O" (*Henry V*, Prologue, line 13), the three-tiered amphitheatre, that accommodated public performances by His Majesty's Servants in the suburbs of early seventeenth-century London. Like a manager of the King's Men, as these Servants were known to their fellows, he oversees his attendant ministers as a troupe of "Actors." He fabricates subtle illusions out of "thin Air." He conducts puppet-like playthings through mazes as intricate "as e'er Men trod." He wields fierce "Vexations" and restorative "Dreams." He erects "solemn Temples" and fills the Heavens with "Cloud-capp'd Tow'rs." And in the process he prompts his audience to ponder the relationship between the protagonist's own endeavors and those of the poet who begot him (*The Tempest*, IV.i.148-49; V.i.241; IV.i.5, 157, 151-53).

When Shakespeare penned Prospero's lines, he was nearing the terminus of a distinguished career as England's foremost knitter of riddling "Distractions." He was shortly to bid adieu to the "Cell" in which he had plotted so many thespian diversions, and he no doubt pined for the tranquility he expected to possess when he retired to the "Dukedom" of his birth. He may have known that he would enjoy his reclaimed state only briefly before he too commended his soul into the hands of a higher authority. He may have intuited that he would be wise to devote "Ev'ry third Thought" to his "Grave." The only thing we can assert with certainty is that, whatever his motive, he took the occasion to produce a drama that gives eloquent expression to Everyman's yearning for a "Sea-change," a "second Life," to gainsay "the Dark-backward and Abyss of Time" and preserve his spirit for eternity (III.iii.89-90; V.i.300; Epilogue, line 6; V.i.311; I.ii.398; V.i.194; I.ii.50).

The Tempest is by no means unique in its preoccupation with the quest for an answer to the anxieties provoked by mutability and mortality. The same concern pervades *Love's Labor's Lost*, *King Lear*, and Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. Variations on it animate *Richard II*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and several other plays. But the strain resonates with greatest intensity in *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Henry VIII*, the four late works that commentators now link with the drama a venerable tradition interprets, rightly or wrongly, as the playwright's farewell to his profession.

The tragicomedies with which Shakespeare rounded out his tenure as a man of the theatre are normally classified today as "Romances." Though they all have what can be defined as

happy endings, they differ from the author's earlier comedies and tragicomedies in the earnestness with which they engage the grim realities of "State and Woe" (*Henry VIII*, Prologue, line 3). In *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Henry VIII*, for example, we either witness or hear reports of the demise of dramatis personae, and in *The Tempest* we feel that death is a real danger until the moment when Prospero's own "Release" is accomplished (V.i.11).

The term "Romance" might appear to suggest sentimental escapism. But Shakespeare's experiments in the genre force us to confront a universe in which even the most ordinary pilgrimages are fraught with real peril. As a group these dramatic works reverberate with a sense of the ominous, and they frequently imply that the only way to evade life's snares is through some mysterious suspension of Nature's usual functions.

Taken together, these late tragicomedies offer a panoramic view of the human condition. Often they do so by emphasizing that the occurrences they depict are widely dispersed in time, location, and circumstance, as in *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Winter's Tale*. On other occasions they do so by basing their events upon action that took place in the murky past, as in *The Tempest*, or by orienting their action to events that will transpire in some remote future, as in *Henry VIII*.

Most of them contain incidents that seem wildly implausible, if not shocking, as when Antigonus exits pursued by a bear in *The Winter's Tale*, and they rely heavily on storms, shipwrecks, and other "acts of God" to propel the narrative forward. In patterns that recall *The Comedy of Errors*, a proto-Romance from Shakespeare's earlier years, families are separated on land or at

sea, doomed to wander for seemingly interminable sieges of distress, and then astonishingly reunited at the close. Terrible calamities are but narrowly averted, and then only because of reversals that stem from sudden changes of heart or from unprecedented visitations by "the Pow'rs above" (*Cymbeline*, V.v.467). Cordelia-like daughters, maidens with symbolic names or pseudonyms (Marina in *Pericles*, Fidele in *Cymbeline*, Perdita in *The Winter's Tale*, Miranda in *The Tempest*), intervene as instruments of special grace, restoring hope and perception to fathers who have lost their bearings and would otherwise perish in their guilt and grief.

Rather than conceal or disguise their improbability and artifice, Shakespeare's Romances tend to revel in it, on the one hand reminding theatregoers that what they are witnessing is only make-believe, on the other hand laying the foundation for some climactic marvel that will turn out to have been the *raison d'être* of the drama. In these works what initially appear to be opaque "Fumes," impenetrable obstacles to "Clearer Reason" (*The Tempest*, V.i.67-68), suddenly transfigure themselves into designer clouds with silver linings. "Things Dying" there may be, but in the cosmos of these latter-day miracle plays they almost always become metamorphosed into, or serve as precursors of, "Things New-borne" (*The Winter's Tale*, III.iii.117).

Like the Tragedies, the Romances are suffused with suffering; but unlike most of the Tragedies, they depict pain as purgative and even beautifying. In these plays "the Seas threaten" and they sometimes drown; but in the last analysis they show themselves to be "Merciful." For if there is a first principle of Romance ecology, it would seem to be this: that anything that can

be made "Rich and Strange" will be recycled and refined until it emerges as an emblem of the Providence that burnished it and made it lustrous (*The Tempest*, V.i.177, I.ii.399).

Shakespeare probably began serious thinking about the work that opens this volume shortly after he completed *Pericles*, the earliest of his mature tragicomedies, in 1607–8. A physician and astrologer named Simon Forman recorded a Court performance of *Cymbeline* in April 1611, but there is nothing to indicate that this was the first time the play had been acted. The King's Men had begun using their small, exclusive Blackfriars theatre in the City in 1609, and it is more than likely that Shakespeare's second Romance was written around that time with an eye to the tastes of an aristocratic clientele that could afford the higher admission prices the company charged in its new indoor venue. Meanwhile the playwright and his colleagues continued to cater to popular audiences at the larger, unroofed Globe south of the Thames, at least during the warmer months, and there is a good possibility that *Cymbeline*, in common with *Pericles* and the other Romances, was also offered in that setting.

Along with the texts that follow it in the present *Guild* edition, *Cymbeline* made its debut in print in 1623 in the commemorative collection now referred to as the First Folio. There, unlike *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*, which opened and closed the "Comedies" section at the front of the tome, it was situated at the end of the third and final section, the one designated for "Tragedies."

To the extent that it partakes of the qualities we associate with grave historical drama, *Cymbeline* evokes the same legend-laden epoch of early Britain as does Shakespeare's tragedy about

another irascible ruler who drives a loving daughter into exile. It is conceivable that as the playwright was perusing Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1587 edition) in preparation for the writing of *King Lear* and *Macbeth* in 1605–6, he came upon his favorite source's account of a monarch whose name had been rendered "Cunobelinus" by the first-century Roman historian Suetonius and "Kymbelinus" by the twelfth-century English chronicler Geoffrey of Monmouth.

A contemporary of the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6), Cymbeline had been reared in Rome as a protege of the Caesar who as Augustus would establish the "Pax Romana," the "Universal Peace" (*Antony and Cleopatra*, IV.vi.4), that prevailed when a child named Jesus was born in one of the Empire's minor provinces. Shakespeare teases the audience with veiled allusions to this transhistoric moment, and as his treatment of Cymbeline's reign approaches its astounding "at-one-ment" a British magistrate whose wrath has appeared almost tyrannical becomes a peacemaker in his own right.

At the outset the title character operates under the spell of a wicked Queen who aspires to position upon the throne her loutish son from a previous marriage. Before the play attains its climax, however, both Cloten and his mother undo themselves. Freed from their pernicious influence, the King quickly becomes reconciled to a son-in-law he has banished, a virtuous daughter who has fled from the Court to join her twice-abused husband, and an old soldier who had kidnapped Cymbeline's infant boys when the King unjustly ostracized him some twenty years previously. Having just won a battle with Rome over his country's refusal to pay further tribute to Caesar, Cymbeline magnani-

mously rescinds the policy that has occasioned the conflict: of his own accord he pledges to renew Britain's annual remittances. Then, since "Pardon's the Word to all" (V.v.422), the King releases the noble general of the Emperor's defeated army and dismisses a host of other detainees.

The dynastic theme implicit in *Cymbeline* is the dawning of Britain's consciousness of herself as a nation ordained for greatness. As in *King John* and in *Henry VIII* (where a later King achieves his destined majesty only after corrupting elements have been removed from his counsel), Shakespeare hints at developments that will bear fruit in the fullness of time. While doing so he suggests that at the inception of the Christian era it was still too early for a "Scepter'd Isle" in the west (*Richard II*, II.i.40) to declare its independence from a Rome that was centuries away from the decline that would eventually compel it to relinquish its hold on smaller and less mature polities.

But if *Cymbeline* is another Shakespearean exploration of the roots of British patriotism, it is also, and perhaps more fundamentally, a work about the trials of love and personal honor. The King's daughter Imogen must endure several tests of her fidelity before she is ultimately rewarded with the marital bliss her admirers wish for her in the speeches that introduce the drama. With a perseverance that earns her a niche alongside such previous heroines as Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Rosalind in *As You Like It*, and the Helenas in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *All's Well That Ends Well*, she proves equal to an ordeal that calls for unusual resourcefulness. She stands by her principles; she surmounts odds that would overwhelm a character of meaner mettle; and in a denouement that pulls together all the

strands of an extraordinarily complicated plot she exposes the intriguer who has tried to beguile her out of a husband (catalyzing a heartfelt confession from a Iachimo whose only prior indication of eligibility for redemption has been his awe at the radiant Imogen's unassailable chastity), forgives and embraces the spouse who has been gulled into seeking her destruction, and exemplifies the "Deliv'rance" that highlights a concluding scene of near-celestial "Harmony" (*Cymbeline*, V.v.370, 467–68).

At the beginning of the play the youth who has garnered Imogen's affection is defined as worthy merely by virtue of "her Election" (I.i.53). But subsequent events will make it obvious that Posthumus Leonatus is not yet ready for a woman of this Princess' elevation. Like Protheus in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Bertram in *All's Well That Ends Well*, and Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, but even more like Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing*, he is deficient in knowledge of himself, of his beloved, and of a world that frequently cozens men by appearances and by crafty appeals to their pride. As a consequence, Posthumus is fated to lapse into error, behave foolishly and shamefully, and then deplore his mistakes so devoutly that he seeks to sacrifice his own life in recompense for the one he believes he has stolen from his dear wife.

In due course he finds himself in prison awaiting execution at the hands of the victorious British forces. Having welcomed a "Bondage" he regards as his means to "Liberty," Posthumus is stunned by a visionary embassy from Jupiter, who descends from the Heavens to announce "Whom best I love I cross, to make my Gift, / The more delay'd, delighted." Shortly thereafter, to his amazement, the young man is proclaimed the "Lord

of Lady Imogen, / And happier much by his Affliction made" (V.iv.3-4, 101-2, 107-8). Only then does it become manifest that a ritual crucifixion and burial have been the pre-conditions for a spiritual resurrection that brings Posthumus Leonatus at last to the identity his name has signified from birth.

For the portions of *Cymbeline* that focus on Posthumus and the rash wager that gets him into difficulties, Shakespeare probably found his most important precedent in a duping described in Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1353), an anthology the author could have read either in the original Italian or in a 1545 French translation. But the playwright also seems to have derived some details from *Frederick of Jennen* (1518), an anonymous English version of essentially the same story. For the relationship between Imogen and Posthumus, the poet adapted *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune*, a play that seems to have been performed as early as 1582, though its first publication was in 1589. For Imogen's misadventures in Cambria, Shakespeare borrowed from another anonymous theatre script of the 1580s, *Sir Clyoman and Clamydes*, which had been available in print since 1599.

When he turned to *The Winter's Tale* around 1610-11, the dramatist gently twitted the ghost of a curmudgeonly predecessor. In 1592, in a diatribe advertising itself as Robert Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, an embittered veteran of London's literary wars had warned his play-writing associates to beware of an "upstart Crow," a parvenu "Shake-scene," who'd come to the metropolis as a lowly actor and was now bedecking himself with the "feathers" of his betters. If Greene was the actual progenitor of the pamphlet bearing his name (the publication came out after his death, and some scholars now believe its true author to have

been Henry Chettle, the deceased writer's testamentary executor), and if he was accusing Shakespeare of plagiarism as well as presumption, the dead poet's bones must have done back-flips when word got out some two decades later that his erstwhile nemesis was still up to the same old tricks.

For the first three acts of *The Winter's Tale*, and for much of the fifth-act finale, Shakespeare appropriated material from *Pandosto, The Triumph of Time*, a prose work that Greene had seen through the press in 1588. Then, as if in an effort to make his pilfering impossible to ignore, the dramatist larded Act IV with incidents and phrases he had lifted from Greene's 1591-92 "Cony-catching" tracts about the swindlers and petty thieves who lay in wait for unwary travelers on the highways and byways of sixteenth-century England.

Autolycus, the merry-hearted rogue who enters *The Winter's Tale* in IV.iii, employs many of the same ruses that Greene had advised his fellow citizens to watch for. Like the sly playwright who created him, Shakespeare's quick-thinking cutpurse is a "Snapper-up of Unconsidered Trifles." He notes, paradoxically, that when he wanders "here and there" he most goes "right." He observes that though he is not "naturally Honest," he is "so sometimes by Chance." And he provides the poet a wry means of thanking Robert Greene for the "Charitable Office" he has done a younger rival. After all, not only has the cooperative Greene supplied the narrative skeleton for the primary plot of *The Winter's Tale*; he has discharged an equally valuable service for the subplot by enumerating the techniques that confidence men like Autolycus use to outwit their less clever victims (IV.iii.26-27, 17-18; IV.iv.735-36; IV.iii.81).

But of course Greene was not Shakespeare's only source for *The Winter's Tale*. As he had so often done in the past, the playwright also capitalized upon his lifelong love for Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In Act IV, for example, he dramatized the return of "the Sweet o'th' Year" in a manner that would echo the Roman poet's version of the myth of Proserpina, the lass whom Pluto had abducted and installed as Queen of his gloomy Underworld. Shakespeare knew that after her indignant mother Ceres protested to the Olympian council, Proserpina was given permission to spend the sunny months of the calendar helping the Goddess of Bounty assure Nature's fruitfulness. So when he composed the great sheep-shearing scene that counterbalances the icy first half of *The Winter's Tale*, the dramatist endowed "The Queen of Curds and Cream" (IV.iv.161) with many of the attributes that Ovid had ascribed to Proserpina as an embodiment of Spring, Summer, and Harvest-time.

In Act V the playwright returned to Ovid for a brilliant variation on the story of Pygmalion, a sculptor so devoted to the female form he'd carved in stone that he was able to persuade the Gods to instill it with life. In this instance Shakespeare reconfigured the myth so that the transformation that occurs at the key turning point of *The Winter's Tale* can be viewed as an antidote to the perverse metamorphoses that have resulted from earlier misconstructions by the play's protagonist.

As the drama commences, Leontes, King of Sicilia, is suddenly possessed by the conviction that his wife Hermione has committed adultery with the monarch's closest friend, the visiting King Polixenes of Bohemia. What is evident to everyone else, most notably Leontes' faithful steward Camillo and Hermione's

lady-in-waiting Paulina, is that the King's suspicions are utterly groundless. Unfortunately Leontes is under the sway of a black humour; he is incapable of hearing either the demurrals of his advisors or the Delphic oracle that pronounces his loving wife innocent. Because of his irrationality Leontes ends up divesting himself of Polixenes (who flees Sicilia when Camillo informs him of his old friend's jealousy), his son Mamillius (who is frightened to death by what has come over his father), Hermione (who falls into what the indignant Paulina declares to be a mortal swoon), and his infant daughter Perdita (whom Leontes brands a bastard and orders abandoned in some exposed locale where the elements will prove fatal to her).

Once the King realizes that the Heavens are passing judgment on his behavior, he comes out of his seizure and vows to do penance for the rest of his days. By this point it is too late to reinstate his devastated Court or to call back Antigonus and the bark that has taken him and the baby to the Seacoast of Bohemia. It is not too late, however, to set in motion a sequence of happenings that will nurture Leontes' remorse and gradually replenish his "Faith" (V.iii.94), and by the end of the play a King who had become resigned to total "Loss" finds himself "standing in Rich Place." He undergoes a final agony with "a Taste as Sweet / As any Cordial Comfort," and in a consummation that prepares the way for *The Tempest* he sees a "World ransom'd" bloom from what had appeared to be a world "destroyed" (V.ii.60, I.ii.6-7, V.iii.75-76, V.ii.18).

The earliest recorded performance for *The Winter's Tale* took place on May 15, 1611, when Simon Forman attended it at the Globe. We also know of a Court production that occurred on

November 5, 1611. *The Tempest* had been presented at Court a few days earlier, on November 1, 1611, and it too was probably acted at the Globe, if not at the Blackfriars, prior to that date.

Although *The Tempest* was not the last of Shakespeare's dramatic works, the valedictory note it carries has always made it seem as if it should have been. It has steadily attracted the interest of those in search of the "real" playwright. It has inspired far more than its allotment of artistic progeny. It has secured a much-honored place in the repertory. And it will long maintain a special hold on the imaginations of those who share its love and lament for the fragile glories of an art form that can fulfill its nature only by dissolving into the ethereal nothing that brought it into being (IV.i.148-58).

But if this philosophical drama is a study of what the Prince of Denmark calls "the Purpose of Playing" (*Hamlet*, III.ii.24), it is also a meditation on the "baseless Fabric" of the "Isle" an "unworthy Scaffold" attempts to confine within its charmed theatrical circle (*The Tempest*, IV.i.151, III.ii.139; *Henry V*, Prologue, line 10). And whether we think of Caliban's tormented domicile as a dot in the Mediterranean or as a counterpart to the "still-vest Bermoothes" (I.ii.229) in the eye of a tropical Atlantic hurricane, it is difficult to resist the inference that what the poet is really representing in *The Tempest* is a microcosm of the marbled gem our own bold voyages have revealed anew to Earthlings as a "demi-Paradise" (*Richard II*, II.i.42) against the silent backdrop of an ever-deepening void.

In June of 1609, under the auspices of a Virginia Company whose members were acquaintances of the intrepid spirits in Shakespeare's own enterprise, a convoy of ships sailed from

Plymouth to transport a newly appointed Governor to England's first permanent settlement in the Americas. As it happened, the fleet encountered a violent storm, and on July 24th the vessel carrying Sir Thomas Gates foundered off the coast of the Bermudas. To the joy of everyone who had been on the flagship, there were no casualties. To their further relief, "the Devil's Islands" on which they had landed proved surprisingly "temperate." Not only did all the mariners survive; by May of 1610 they had pieced together two pinnaces and completed the rest of their journey to Jamestown.

Before the year was out, several accounts of the Bermuda adventure were circulating in London. They all praised Providence for a rescue that seemed little short of miraculous, and they spawned an atmosphere that Shakespeare drew upon for *The Tempest*. When it suited his design the playwright alluded to details his audience would recognize from what they had read and heard about their nation's recent forays into "unpath'd Waters" (*The Winter's Tale*, IV.iv.581). But the poet also took material from other travel narratives, and from speculations about them in volumes such as John Florio's 1603 translation of Michel de Montaigne's essays on cannibals and other topics. For the storm and shipwreck that opens the play Shakespeare recalled the New Testament story about the Apostle Paul's role in saving the occupants of a Roman sailing vessel (Acts 27). For the meanderings of the Neapolitans in the wake of their arrival on Prospero's island, the dramatist invoked parallels with the Exodus of the Children of Israel. Meanwhile, as usual, he borrowed at will from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which he probably read both in Latin and in Arthur Golding's 1567 English version. And as in

Antony and Cleopatra, he incorporated both structural paradigms and incidental matters from the *Aeneid*.

In many respects the enveloping frame of *The Tempest* reiterates Vergil's epic. The playwright suggests analogies between the excursion that Alonso and his companions undertake from Tunis to Naples and the mission that conveyed Aeneas from Dido's Carthage to the Latium that would become his new Troy. By doing so Shakespeare reminds us that these modern Trojans can arrive at their destination only by negotiating a "Vast" (*The Winter's Tale*, I.i.35) that is totally unfamiliar to them.

According to its only aboriginal, a character the First Folio cast list describes as "a salvage and deformed slave," the "Isle" on which the men find themselves "is full of Noises." But on one point the normally observant Caliban is incorrect: not all the "Sounds" to be heard here are "sweet Airs, that give Delight and hurt not" (III.ii.139-40). The acrimonious Duke who has ruled the island for twelve years and who commissions these disturbances appears at times to be a spiteful Lear—more sinn'd against than sinning, to be sure, but at first unable to register the degree to which his own neglect has contributed to the "Evil Nature" he awakened at the hands of a perfidious recipient of his favor (I.ii.92-93). The intemperance Prospero displays in his initial conversation with Ariel, an obedient sprite who has never done anything to offend his master, makes the old man come across as an iron-fisted despot. The Duke then acts so imperious with a gentle youth like Ferdinand, and even with his own daughter, that we can't help wondering about the agitation that underlies his presumably beneficent ministrations. And notwithstanding Prospero's comments about a surly "Monster" who is

supposedly incapable of the least "Print of Goodness" (II.ii.155, I.ii.350), the exchanges we witness suggest that Caliban's ruler may finally be disclosing more than he perceives when he says "this Thing of Darkness I / Acknowledge mine" (V.i.274-75).

There can be no question that the lord of *The Tempest* was designed to cut a magnificent figure on the Shakespearean stage. Like Duke Senior in the Forest of Arden, he is a man who has profited from pastoral "Adversity" (*As You Like It*, II.i.12); and like Duke Vincentio in *Measure for Measure*, he endeavors to model himself after the Good Shepherd. But though his effects on the lives of others turn out in general to be salutary, he fails in at least one of his aims: he never extracts so much as an admission of wrongdoing from his brother. And if it is Prospero who achieves the drama's "most majestic Vision," he arrives at it only by way of a psychological and spiritual progress that depends upon his forswearing "Vengeance" for the "Rarer Action" of a compassionate "Virtue" (IV.i.118; V.i.27-28).

What Prospero hopes to bestow on each of the play's characters, friend and foe alike, is a spirit of "Grace" and an informed understanding of his or her own "Meaning" (V.i.294, I.ii.354). Before he can minister to the needs of lesser mortals, however, the isle's physician must first address his own ills. He must take part with the "nobler Reason" that is his only salve for the "Fury" that continually threatens to sabotage a well-intended "Project" (V.i.26-27, 1); he must submit himself to the truth in Ariel's observation that to be fully human is ultimately to be "Humane" (V.i.20). Prospero eventually breaks his "Staff" and drowns his "Book" (V.i.54-57); but even then the once and future Duke of Milan leaves us asking if he has really learned all

he'll need to know if he proposes to bequeath a better world to his posterity.

Shortly after he finished *The Tempest*, Shakespeare appears to have shifted his primary residence from London to the New Place he had purchased more than a decade before in his native Stratford. Two years later, when he was back in the capital for an early performance of *Henry VIII*, the final play to bear his name as sole author, he was probably on hand to see "the great Globe" burn to the ground, leaving "not a Rack behind" (*The Tempest*, IV.i.153, 156). A year hence a new theatre stood where the original structure had been. But by 1616 its foremost playwright was in permanent repose, in the same sanctuary where he had been christened a little more than half a century earlier.

Sometime prior to 1623 a monument to Shakespeare's memory was placed above his tomb in Holy Trinity Church, and that sculpted tribute is still on view today. But of course the poet's greatest memorial is the legacy he left in works that will keep his Art "potent" forever (V.i.50). In the words and actions that animate his poems and plays, in the performances that enrich our theatres and silver screens, in the countless offshoots to be found in the efforts of subsequent writers, and in the influence the dramatist continues to exercise in one cultural sphere after another, the genius behind *The Tempest* remains a "brave God" who "bears Celestial Liquor" (II.ii.126).

CYMBELINE

