

ENGLISH LITERATURE

CLASS XII

THE TEMPEST- ACT IV SCENE I (Part -1)

Assignment - 4

Prospero, admitting that he has been harsh, now promises a reward that will rectify the young lovers' momentary suffering. Realizing Ferdinand and Miranda's love for one another and they have overcome successfully the trials that Prospero has set before them, he offers Miranda to Ferdinand as his wife. Prospero gives Ferdinand his blessing to marry Miranda, saying that Ferdinand has stood up well to Prospero's tests of his love. He threatens harsh consequences, however, if Ferdinand takes Miranda's virginity before an official wedding ceremony takes place. Ferdinand pledges to obey Prospero's wishes. Prospero next calls Ariel to help stage a celebration of the betrothal. The celebration includes a masque, presented by the spirits of the island.

Prospero orders Ariel to gather his band of spirits to put on a celebratory masque, or performance, for the new couple. The masque begins when Iris, the Greek goddess of the rainbow, calls Ceres, the harvest goddess, to come and join her in celebrating the marriage. Juno, wife of Zeus and queen of the gods, appears next. Juno bestows her blessing on the couple, wishing them wealth and honor, while Ceres blesses them with wishes of prosperity. In awe, Ferdinand wishes he could stay on the island forever, with Miranda as his wife and Prospero as his father. Iris commands nymphs and harvest spirits to perform a country dance.

Suddenly Prospero remembers the three conspirators who have set out to murder him and he calls an abrupt end to the festivities and the spirits vanish. Ferdinand is unsettled by Prospero's change in demeanor. Prospero reassures him, saying that an end must come to all things: "We are such stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a sleep" (4.1.). He instructs the lovers to go and rest in his cave without telling them any more details of what is going on.. He then summons Ariel, who reports that he led the three men, all of whom are very drunk, through a briar patch and into a filthy pond, where he left them wallowing. Prospero instructs Ariel to leave garish clothing on a tree to tempt the men.

Soon Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo appear, foul smelling and wet. Stephano and Trinculo lament the loss of their bottles but are much cheered when they see the clothing hanging nearby. The two ignore Caliban's pleas to continue on their mission and his warnings that their hesitation will lead Prospero to catch them. At that moment, Prospero and Ariel enter with spirits, disguised as hunters and hounds. The three conspirators flee, with the spirits in pursuit. Prospero, acknowledging the power he now holds over all his enemies, promises Ariel that he shall soon be free.

For the first time, Prospero can fully reveal his true nature. Finally, there is no need to be punitive or autocratic, and he can simply enjoy his daughter's happiness. For these few moments, the audience can witness what Prospero is like without the weight of revenge or control motivating his actions. Even in his gentleness and goodwill toward Ferdinand, Prospero does not forget that he is still Miranda's father, and as such, he is responsible for her until she is safely wed. Consequently, a

significant amount of time is spent warning Ferdinand that he must control his lust until the wedding takes place. Prospero warns the young man that "barren hate, / Sour-eyed disdain, and discord," will be his reward if he cannot control his lust (IV.1, 19-20). All of this is in keeping with the expected parental role. Miranda is even more innocent than most young women, having had none of the socialization that other young women would experience. Because of her isolation, she is more vulnerable, and her father is aware of her purity of heart. However, he is also a father, facing the imminent loss of his only child, and so his excessive warnings to Ferdinand to control his lust are to be expected.

The betrothal ceremony is enriched with a masque, and, in keeping with the design of reality and illusion this masque draws on goddesses of Greek and Roman mythology. The goddesses are selected for their symbolism and connections to nature and represent the promise of fertility and fecundity (fruitfulness), heavenly harmony, and an eternal springtime of love. As the goddess of the rainbow, Iris is the promise of spring rains leading to a bountiful harvest. As a messenger from Juno, she also represents the gods' blessing on this betrothal. When Juno appears, her presence affirms the blessing of the heavens, and since Juno is the goddess of marriage and childbirth, her presence is the promise of a happy union for the couple and a blessing of many children. Finally, Ceres' appearance also promises nature's blessing on this marriage. Together, the goddesses are the promise of celestial harmony, fruitful harvests, and eternal seasons without winter. Venus, with her emphasis on abandon and sexual love is deliberately excluded, since the focus of the masque is on honourable marriage.

[The pastoral tradition focuses on a nostalgic image of the peace and simplicity of the life of shepherds and other rural folk in an idealized natural setting. Pastoral poetry is characterized by a state of contentment and a focus on the contemplative life. As is the case with most masques, Prospero's masque focuses on these pastoral motifs, with reapers and nymphs celebrating the fecundity of the land. The land is green, the harvesters sunburned, and the harvest worth celebrating. Love is innocent and romantic and not sexual. The country life, with its abundance of harvests and peaceful existence is an idealized world that ignores the realities of country life with its many hardships. But a wedding masque is not the time to remind the young couple of the possible hardships that they will face. Instead, Prospero focuses on the blessings of a happy marriage and the contentment that Ferdinand and Miranda will bring one another.

At the conclusion of the mask, Prospero addresses Ferdinand and tells him that we are such stuff "As dreams are made on"(IV.1,). This is a reminder that the masque, with all its heavenly creatures, is not real. Like the masque, life, too, will come to its inevitable end. Prospero reminds Ferdinand that each man's life is framed by dreams. The evidence of that life, with its earthly possessions, is only temporary. Again, this points to the role of the young couple as redeemers for their father's sins. Alonso, and through him, Antonio and Sebastian, have placed too much emphasis on worldly possessions and titles. Even Prospero, with his focus on books, has forgotten that they are also only temporary vestiges in this life. This reminder that corporeal riches are only temporary also seems to be directed toward Stephano and Trinculo.]

Assignment

Write down the extract and the following questions to the Eng.Literature copy.

If I have to austerely punished you,
Your compensation makes amends; for I
Have given you here a third of mine own life,
Or that for which I live who once again
I tender to thy hand; all thy vexations
Were but my trials of thy love, and thou
Has strangely stood the test.

Read the lines given above and answer the questions that follow:

- 1. Who speaks these lines and to whom? Is there any third person present there?**
- 2. Whom has the speaker punished severely? How has he done so?**
- 3. What is going to be the compensation for punishment received by the other person?**
- 4. What is described as the trial of love? How has the person stood the trial?**
- 5. Why has Ferdinand reason to believe that he is getting a rich gift?**