

In spite of the feud, the play begins with a general air of humour and happiness. The Capulets are giving a feast, and Romeo attends it disguised by a mask. He is in love with Rosaline, but things are about to change.

READ ABOUT ROMEO WHEN HE FIRST SEES JULIET.

ROMEO [*To a Servingman.*]

41 What lady is that, which doth enrich the hand
42 Of yonder¹ knight?

Servant

43 I know not, sir.

ROMEO

44 O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
45 It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
46 Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's² ear;
47 Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!
48 So shows³ a snowy dove trooping with⁴ crows,
49 As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.
50 The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand⁵,
51 And, touching hers⁶, make blessed my rude hand.
52 Did my heart love till now? forswear⁷ it, sight!
53 For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

THE BALL

ROMEO [*To JULIET.*]

93 If I profane with my unworthiest hand
94 This holy shrine⁸, the gentle fine⁹ is this:
95 My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
96 To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

JULIET

97 Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
98 Which mannerly¹⁰ devotion shows in this;

¹ Yonder= over there

² Ethiopian's or any black person's

³ Shows= stands out

⁴ trooping with=among

⁵ The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand=when the dance is over, I'll watch where she goes

⁶ Hers= her hand

⁷ Forswear=deny

⁸ This holy shrine=Juliet's hand

⁹ Fine =penalty

¹⁰ Mannerly=well-behaved

99 For saints¹¹ have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
100 And palm to palm is holy palmers'¹² kiss.

ROMEO

101 Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

JULIET

102 Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

ROMEO

103 O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;
104 They pray — grant thou, lest¹³ faith turn to despair.

JULIET

105 Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake¹⁴.

ROMEO

106 Then move not, while my prayer's effect¹⁵ I take.

[Kisses her.]

107 Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin is purged.

JULIET

108 Then have my lips the sin that they have took¹⁶.

ROMEO

109 Sin from thy lips? O trespass¹⁷ sweetly urged!
110 Give me my sin again.

[Kisses her.]

JULIET

110 You kiss by th' book¹⁸.

¹¹ Saints=statues of saints

¹² Palmers'=pilgrims returning from the Holy Land carried a palm

¹³ Lest=for fear that

¹⁴ Though grant for prayers'sake=grant what is prayed for

¹⁵ Prayer's effect=kiss

¹⁶ Took=taken

¹⁷ trespass: sin

¹⁸ by the book=expertly or formally , without feeling.