Act 1 Scene 4 Discussion Point and Questions

*Scene: A street near the Capulet house – in the evening of the Capulet masque, or costume ball. Imagine the guests proceeding through the darkened streets with torches to light the way. Romeo and his friends Mercutio and Benvolio join the procession. Their masks will prevent Romeo's and Benvolio's face from being recognized as Montagues. Mercutio and Benvolio are in a playful, partying mood, but Romeo is still depressed by his unanswered love for Rosaline. Romeo has also had a dream that warned him of the harmful consequences of this party. He senses trouble.*

1. Do you agree with Romeo when he says, "You can't lose if you don't play the game"?
2. What is Mercutio's explanation for where dreams come from?

Queen Mab-the queen of the fairies, who visits people while they are sleeping, riding her wagon made from an empty hazelnut. The content of a person's dreams is determined by which part of the body she gallops over or through, or perhaps which body part she tickles.

1. What do Mercutio's comments about Queen Mab reveal about his character?
2. He is very imaginative, playful, and perhaps that he loves to hear himself talk (he is a very talented storyteller)
3. How does Mercutio feel about dreams? Why do you suppose he told this to Romeo?
4. Characterize Mercutio.
5. Identify two puns in lines 11-22. What effect do they have on the mood of this scene?

In line 12, Romeo makes a pun by using the word heavy to mean both "sad" and "of great weight" and the word "light" to mean "luminous" and "of little weight." In line 15, Romeo's pun comes from pairing the words soul and soles when explaining his unhappiness. In lines 19-20, Romeo puns on the words sore ("in pain") and soar ("fly"). The effect of the puns is to lighten the mood. Although Romeo is sad, his puns show that he can still joke with his friends.

1. Do you believe it's possible to fall in love with a person at first sight?

Need more than just a look to fall in love...you can be infatuated with someone or have a crush on someone that you barely know, but in order for it to be love, people need time, information, and experiences.

Act 1 Scene 5 Discussion Point and Questions

*Scene: A hall in Capulet's house; the scene of the party – This is the scene of the party at which Romeo and Juliet finally meet. Romeo and his friends, disguised in their masks, arrive as uninvited guests. As he watches the dancers, Romeo suddenly sees Juliet and falls in love at first sight. At the same time, Tybalt recognizes Romeo’s voice and knows he is a Montague. Tybalt alerts Capulet and threatens to kill Romeo. Capulet, however, insists that Tybalt behave himself and act like a gentleman. Promising revenge, Tybalt leaves. Romeo and Juliet meet and kiss in the middle of the dance floor. Only after they part do they learn each other’s identity.*

1. What are some examples of cause and effect in this scene?

Romeo sees Juliet --> He falls in love; Tybalt recognizes Romeo --> Tybalt gets angry, complains to Capulet, and leaves; Capulet learns that Motagues are at the party --> he insists upon peace

1. Lines 42-41: Romeo sees Juliet for the first time and declares his sudden love, even though he hasn't met her yet
   1. To what objects does Romeo compare Juliet? How are these objects similar?
   2. What does Romeo imagine will happen when he touches Juliet's hand?
   3. How does Romeo feel about Rosaline now? How can you tell?
2. Romeo's awestruck speech is in rhymed couplets, not blank verse. Why do you think Shakespeare chose to use rhymed verse here?

He wanted to draw attention to this moment in the play. Romeo's depression has now been suddenly replaced with love and adoration and this is now a turning point in his life. The rhymed verse shows that, and also, it is more romantic because it is sweet and easy to listen to.

1. What does Tybalt want to do to Romeo?
2. Why does Capulet refuse to let Tybalt act upon his hate and anger for Romeo? How does he speak to Tybalt?

Capulet says that Romeo is behaving himself and that he does not want to cause a scene at his own party by confronting Romeo; Capulet talks to Tybalt as a child...

1. Do you think Tybalt is going to let go of the anger he felt towards Romeo at the party?

Benvolio couldn't talk him out of a fight in scene 1, so it's safe to say that while he might suppress the anger for the moment, he won't let it go

1. Pun: Holy Palmers (Line 98-99) What's the effect of this pun?
2. Describe the first meeting of Romeo and Juliet.

Usually, first meetings are awkward...but not Romeo and Juliet. They just met and already idolize each other (shown by all of the religious references...calls her a saint, holy shrine, pilgrim lips, sin, etc.)

1. What do you think each lover has learned about the other in this scene?

Learned that the other has a similar sense of humor and religious intensity. They both sense a mutual physical attraction and emotional intensity as well.

1. What great irony has Juliet just begun to grasp about love and hate?

It is possible—and indeed her fate—to love someone whom she was taught to hate

1. What do you think Capulet and Montague will do if they found out their children fell in love?

They will forbid the lovers to meet and will probably be angry that the two do not understand the feud and how it makes their love impossible

1. When Juliet asks the nurse to identify different guests as they leave, what does she really want to know?

She really wants to know the identity of the young man with whom she has just exchanted words of love (Romeo)

1. How does Juliet feel about the fact that she fell in love with the son of her father's enemy?

She's unhappy she didn't learn Romeo's identity until after she had fallen for him. She seems confused about what to do next.

1. How can you tell that Juliet is worried about the future?
2. Why does she hide from her nurse the truth about what happened?