

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds"

1. Let me not to the marriage of true minds
2. Admit impediments. Love is not love
3. Which alters when it alteration finds,
4. Or bends with the remover to remove:
5. no; it is an ever-fixed mark,
6. That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
7. It is the star to every wandering bark,
8. Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
9. Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
10. Within his bending sickle's compass come;
11. Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
12. But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
13. If this be error, and upon me prov'd,
14. I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

1. What do you think the first sentence of the sonnet means?
2. In what way might 'marriage' have a double meaning here?
3. Why does Shakespeare claim it is not love 'which alters when it alteration finds'?
4. What do you think the 'ever-fixed mark' is? Think about something that might look down on a storm (tempest) and not move. Why is this a clever image to use?
5. What might a 'wandering bark' be? Think about modes of transport in Shakespeare's time and also how people were able to tell the direction they needed to go in.
6. What is a sickle? What does the poet say it does to 'rosy lips and cheeks'?
7. What do you think is personified in line 10?
8. Why are 'hours and weeks' described as 'brief'?
9. What is the poet suggesting in line 13?
10. Why is this shown to be impossible in line 14?
11. Can you summarise the topics in the octet and the sestet?
12. How is the poem made beautiful to read? In other words what makes it sound good?
13. Literary techniques – alliteration; assonance; metaphor; rhyme and repetition are all used to good effect in this poem. Firstly describe what these words mean; secondly find examples of them in the poem and thirdly explain how they are used effectively in this sonnet. You might like to draw a table for your answers.
14. What similarities can you see between this sonnet and 'Shall I compare thee ...'? Make a table to show your findings.