

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

25 *Pink Dominoes*

*“They are fools who kiss and tell” —*

*Wisely has the poet sung.*

*Man may hold all sorts of posts*

*If he'll only hold his tongue.*

Jenny and Me were engaged, you see,  
On the eve of the Fancy Ball;  
So a kiss or two was nothing to you  
Or any one else at all.

Jenny would go in a domino — 5  
Pretty and pink but warm;  
While I attended, clad in a splendid  
Austrian uniform.

Now we had arranged, through notes exchanged 10  
Early that afternoon,  
At Number Four to waltz no more,  
But to sit in the dusk and spoon.

I wish you to see that Jenny and Me  
Had barely exchanged our troth;  
So a kiss or two was strictly due 15  
By, from, and between us both.

When Three was over, an eager lover,  
I fled to the gloom outside;  
And a Domino came out also  
Whom I took for my future bride. 20

That is to say, in a casual way,  
I slipped my arm around her;

With a kiss or two (which is nothing to you),  
And ready to kiss I found her.

She turned her head and the name she said 25  
Was certainly not my own;  
But ere I could speak, with a smothered shriek  
She fled and left me alone.

Then Jenny came, and I saw with shame  
She'd doffed her domino; 30  
And I had embraced an alien waist —  
But I did not tell her so.

Next morn I knew that there were two  
Dominoes pink, and one  
Had cloaked the spouse of Sir Julian Vouse, 35  
Our big Political gun.

Sir J. was old, and her hair was gold,  
And her eye was a blue cerulean;  
And the name she said when she turned her head  
Was not in the least like "Julian." 40

Now wasn't it nice, when want of *pice*  
Forbade us twain to marry,  
That old Sir J., in the kindest way,  
Made me his *Secretarry*?

1886

(From *Rudyard Kipling's Verse*. Definitive edition.  
London, 1940)