

# Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

M/M UA, Kn, R&D, SS, SmS

Act I, Scene 1

**Verona. A public place.**

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[Enter SAMPSON and GREGORY, of the house of Capulet, armed with swords and bucklers]

**Sampson**. Gregory, o' my word, we'll not carry coals.

**Gregory**. No, for then we should be colliers.

**Sampson**. I mean, an we be in choler, we'll draw.

**Gregory**. Ay, while you live, draw your neck out o' the collar.  
20

**Sampson**. I strike quickly, being moved.

**Gregory**. But thou art not quickly moved to strike.

**Sampson**. A dog of the house of Montague moves me.

**Gregory**. To move is to stir; and to be valiant is to stand:  
therefore, if thou art moved, thou runn'st away. 25

**Sampson**. A dog of that house shall move me to stand: I will  
take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's.

**Gregory**. That shows thee a weak slave; for the weakest goes  
to the wall.

**Sampson**. True; and therefore women, being the weaker  
vessels, 30  
are ever thrust to the wall: therefore I will push  
Montague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids  
to the wall.

**Gregory**. The quarrel is between our masters and us their men.

**Sampson.** 'Tis all one, I will show myself a tyrant: when I 35  
have fought with the men, I will be cruel with the  
maids, and cut off their heads.

**Gregory.** The heads of the maids?

**Sampson.** Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads;  
take it in what sense thou wilt. 40

**Gregory.** They must take it in sense that feel it.

**Sampson.** Me they shall feel while I am able to stand: and  
'tis known I am a pretty piece of flesh.

**Gregory.** 'Tis well thou art not fish; if thou hadst, thou  
hadst been poor John. Draw thy tool! here comes 45  
two of the house of the Montagues.

**Sampson.** My naked weapon is out: quarrel, I will back thee.

**Gregory.** How! turn thy back and run?

**Sampson.** Fear me not.

**Gregory.** No, marry; I fear thee! 50

**Sampson.** Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin.

**Gregory.** I will frown as I pass by, and let them take it as  
they list.

**Sampson.** Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them;  
which is a disgrace to them, if they bear it. 55

[Enter ABRAHAM and BALTHASAR]

**Abraham.** Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

**Sampson.** I do bite my thumb, sir.

**Abraham.** Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

**Sampson.** [*Aside to GREGORY*] Is the law of our side, if I say  
60  
ay?

**Gregory.** No.

**Sampson.** No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I  
bite my thumb, sir.

**Gregory.** Do you quarrel, sir? 65

**Abraham.** Quarrel sir! no, sir.

**Sampson.** If you do, sir, I am for you: I serve as good a man as  
you.

**Abraham.** No better.

**Sampson.** Well, sir.

**Gregory.** Say 'better:' here comes one of my master's kinsmen.  
70

**Sampson.** Yes, better, sir.

**Abraham.** You lie.

**Sampson.** Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy  
swashing blow.

[They fight]

[Enter BENVOLIO]

**Benvolio.** Part, fools!  
Put up your swords; you know not what you do.

[Beats down their swords]