

84 ROMEO AND JULIET [ACT I
Samph. My naked weapon is out. Quarrel, I will back thee.
Greg. How, turn thy back and run?
Samph. Fear me not. 35
Greg. No, marry! I fear thee!
Samph. Let us take the law of our sides: let them begin.
Greg. I will frown as I pass by, and let them take it as they list.
Samph. Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them, 40
 which is disgrace to them if they bear it.
Abram. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?
Samph. I do bite my thumb, sir.
Abram. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?
Samph. Is the law of our side if I say ay? 45
Greg. No.
Samph. No sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir.
Greg. Do you quarrel, sir?
Abram. Quarrel, sir? No, sir. 50
Samph. But if you do, sir, I am for you. I serve as good a man as you.
Abram. No better.
Samph. Well, sir.

Enter BENVOLIO.

Greg. Say 'better', here comes one of my master's 55
 kinsmen.
Samph. Yes, better, sir.

41. disgrace] Q2, Q1; a disgrace Q3, 4, F. 45. of] Q2-4, F; on Q1. 51. But if] Q2-4; If F, Q1. 57. sir] Q2-4; not in F, Q1.

Romeo's servant in v. i and v. iii is called Balthasar; Abram is so called in speech prefixes but not named in the dialogue.

32. *naked weapon*] Peter quibbles in the same sense at II. iv. 155.

34. *turn . . . run*] Gregory takes (or pretends to take) *I will back thee* to mean 'I will turn my back'.

40. *bite my thumb*] 'to threaten or de-

fie by putting the thumbe naile into the mouth, and with a ierke (from the upper teeth) make it to knock' (Cotgrave).

57-78. *Samph.* *Yes, better . . . seek a foe.*] Q1 substitutes the S.D.: *They draw, to them enters Tybalt, they fight, to them the Prince, old Mountague, and his wife, old Capulet and his wife, and other Citizens and part them.*

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Abram. You lie.
Samph. Draw if you be men. Gregory, remember thy washing blow. *They fight.* 60
Ben. Part, fools, put up your swords, you know not what you do.

Enter TYBALT.

Tyb. What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds? Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.
Ben. I do but keep the peace, put up thy sword, 65
 Or manage it to part these men with me.
Tyb. What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word, As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee: Have at thee, coward. *[They] fight.*

Enter three or four Citizens with clubs or partisans.

Citizens. Clubs, bills and partisans! Strike! Beat them 70
 down! Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!

Enter old CAPULET in his gown, and LADY CAPULET.

60. washing] Q2, 3, F; swashing Q4; not in Q1. 63-4.] *As Pope; prose in Q2-4, F; not in Q1.* 67. drawn] Q2-4; draw F; not in Q1. 69. S.D. [*They] fight*] F (*Fight*); not in Q2-4; var. Q1. 69. S.D. Citizens] ed.; *Offi.* Q2-4, F; not in Q1.

60. *washing*] Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Golding (1567, ed. Nims, 1965), v. 252: 'Astyages . . . Did with a long sharpe arming sworde a washing blow him give'. *Swashing* has the same meaning in Stanyhurst's *Aeneis*, I. 19: 'This Queene wyld lighteniges from cloudes of Iuppiter hurling Downe swasht theyre nauy' (1582), but there is no need of emendation to the Q2 reading.

63. *heartless hinds*] A quibble: (i) cowardly menials, (ii) female deer without a male hart to protect them. Tybalt accuses Benvolio of ignobility in drawing on servants rather than a worthy opponent of gentle rank.

64. *Benvolio*] i.e. of good will (in Italian). The name is not in the sources, and is expressive of his peacc-

making role; Tybalt may be glancing ironically at this.

69. S.D. *partisans*] broad-headed spears, about nine feet long.

70. *bills*] a long-handled weapon with a concave blade, or a kind of concave axe with a spike at the back and a spear-tipped shaft (OED).

72. S.D. *gown*] Capulet's entrance presents a vivid and simple image of violated domestic peace and dignity, and suggests the implications of the feud. Disturbed by the riot, he has thrown on a dressing-gown and dashed out with characteristic rashness. The opening scene of *Othello*, also presenting violation of domestic order, similarly has Brabantio 'in his gown'.