

## Court Case: Nobleman and Slave Involved in a Brawl

**Characters:** Judge 1 Nobleman  
Judge 2 Slave

**Judge 1:** *(Speaks with contempt.)* Our next case involves a brawl between this nobleman and this slave. You must decide the punishments for both participants in this shameful display of violence.

**Judge 2:** I would like to begin by questioning the nobleman. Please tell the Assembly what happened.

**Nobleman:** *(Rises lazily to his feet. Speaks scornfully.)* The slave threw garbage out his front door, and it hit me as I walked by. I was so angry I hit him in the face and blinded him.

**Judge 2:** Did you do any other damage?

**Nobleman:** *(Smiles as if pleased with himself.)* Well, when the slave lunged at me, I grabbed his arm and broke it.

**Judge 2:** To what class do you belong?

**Nobleman:** *(Speaks proudly.)* I am a nobleman.

**Judge 2:** I would like to question the slave. What happened when the nobleman attacked you?

**Slave:** *(Kneels. Keeps his eyes on the floor while speaking.)* When the nobleman rushed at me, I slapped him in the face to protect myself.

**Judge 2:** *(Looks shocked.)* And to what class do you belong?

**Slave:** *(Whispers.)* I am a slave.

**Judge 1:**

*(Looks at the audience.)* Enough evidence has been heard for the Assembly to give a decision. Members of the Assembly, you must decide the punishment for the nobleman and the slave. In making your decision, consider these laws from the Code of Hammurabi that you have before you:

1. If a nobleman has broken the bone or destroyed the eye of a nobleman's slave, he shall pay the other nobleman one half of the slave's value.
2. If a nobleman has knocked out another nobleman's tooth, his own tooth shall be knocked out.
3. If a nobleman has knocked out the tooth of a commoner, he shall pay the commoner one third of a mina of silver.
4. If a nobleman slaps another nobleman, he shall pay that nobleman one mina of silver.
5. If a slave slaps a nobleman, the slave shall have his ear cut off.

**Judge 2:**

Ladies and gentlemen, you have heard the evidence and have read the laws. You must now judge the case.

Stop Here  
& Discuss



- **What is the legal problem in this case?**
- **Why was the nobleman angry with the slave?**
- **What injuries did the slave suffer in the fight?**
- **What did the slave do to the nobleman?**