**RASHOMAN  
by Fay Kanin** *Tajomaru*

Tajomaru fall from a horse? *(He spits at the* DEPUTY, *who retreats a little.)* There\*s no horse living can throw Tajomarul I was sick—poisoned! *(Contemptuously.) He* captured me! *(With one foot, lie kicks at the* DEPUTY, *who recoils.)* Go away, little bug, before I step on you! *(To the Magistrate.)* Do we have to listen all day to this puffing about what a great hero he is? You want to know what happened? I\*ll tell it myself. Tajomaru thrown from a horse— Ha! He was a good horse, that one, strong and surefooted. I ran him hard all day. But it was hot—I got thirsty. Near the Osaka Pass is a stream—you may know it—the water comes down sweet from the mountains. But it wasn\*t sweet this day. Something must have poisoned it—a dead serpent, maybe, in the upper stream. I rode on an hour or so and then my belly began to swell. I got dizzy. I don\*t feel pain like other men, but this— *(His face contorts.)* Near the river bed I couldn\*t bear it any longer. I got off the horse and doubled over on the ground and— *(He stops, doubled over, remembering the agony. Then he shakes off the weak moment.)* Tajomaru fall off a horse! Only a fool could have such a foolish idea. *(As the Magistrate directs a question to him.)* . . . The man? Did I kill him? *(He shrugs.)* I know I\*ll hang from a tree on the execution ground no matter what I say. I can see you\*ve decided the time has come for me to pay for my crimes—the ones I\*ve done, the ones you think I\*ve done and the ones you\*re afraid I might do. So why should I lie? *(Breaking his bonds in a gesture of strength and defiance.)* Yes, it was I, Tajomaru, who killed the man! . . . Why? *(He smiles.)* Because of a little breeze.*(Nodding.) . . .* You heard it right. A little breeze that swept through the green leaves. If it hadn\*t been for that, the man would never have been killed.As I said—a little puff of air. And I saw a woman\*s face. Or was it a vision?I had to know. In that first moment, I made up my mind to take her. Even if I had to kill the man. *(He squats down, facing the Magistrate.)* To me, killing isn\*t a matter of great importance. Blood is ugly to you "polite" people who kill with power and money instead of the sword. Sometimes you even say it\*s for their own good, the ones you destroy. They don\*t squirm or cry or bleed —they\*re in the best of health. But all the same— *(He stops at the Magistrate\*s obvious reprimand.)* . . . I *am* giving you the facts. Didn\*t I say I killed the man? You asked me why. I kill to live, to eat, to have pleasure. Whenever I capture a woman, I always have to kill her man. But this time, it\*s funny—this time I didn\*t mean to kill him. I thought if I could take a woman once without killing the man, it would be— *(There\*s a pause. Then he shrugs, unable to explain it.)* So I made my plans to get him out of the way and have the woman alone. It was easy. He was greedy, like all of them are. He went with me to the bamboo grove. When we got there, I seized him from behind. He was a trained warrior and strong—\*--I had to take him by surprise. He struggled like a trapped tiger. But I tied him up to the root of a bamboo. *(He shakes his head ruefully at the memory of the struggle.)* Then I thought of the woman—