

VALJEAN

A STAGE PLAY

Original Novel by Victor Hugo (1862)

Novel Translated by Charles Wilbour (1934)

Converted to Stage Play by Matt Larsen (2025)

The Characters of the Play:

Lead Characters:

Jean Valjean
Cosette
Javert
Thénardier
Marius
Bishop / Narrator

Supporting Characters:

Enjolras
Fantine
Madame Thénardier
Eponine (teen)
Gavroche (child)
Cosette (child)
Courfeyrac
Grantaire
GrandFather Gillenormand
Combeferre
MAN
WOMAN

Chorus Characters

Dentist, Police
Soldier
Dahlia, Soldier
Baptistine
Young Eponine

Pierre / Dandy / Police / Thief
Felix / Police / Thief
Soldier / Police / Thief
Listolier / Police / Thief
Volunteer/Police/Letterman, Soldier
Magloire/Soldier/Favourite

SPECIAL THANKS TO THOSE WHO HELPED WITH THE SCRIPT:

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ACT ONE

SCENE 1: The Surprise

Location: Café by the sea

LISTOLIER

So deep was his love, that when they tried to separate his skeleton from hers, his bones turned to dust.

DAHLIA

Bravo! Oh I could listen to him spin stories for hours.

FAVOURITE

Yes dear, but he's delaying us on purpose

DAHLIA

He can delay me all day. Another story!

FANTINE

Another?

PIERRE

Perhaps a song?

FAVOURITE

With your Mandolin, yes!

FANTINE

Enough songs and stories. Felix, where is it?

FELIX

Where is what?

FANTINE

Don't play coy.

FELIX

Moi?

FAVOURITE

All day long you have promised us a surprise! Ladies don't wait forever.

FELIX

(quietly to a friend) Au contraire.

FANTINE

What was that?

FELIX

Surprise, yes! Quite so. Gentlemen, I believe the time has come. Favourite, Dahlia we beg your patience and your leave. Fantine my dearest, wait here while we prepare your surprise.

(Men leave, each kissing their mistress on the forehead. FANTINE follows FELIX to the door adoring him.)

FANTINE

Don't be too long!

(Door closes and Fantine turns back to her friends in excitement)

FAVOURITE

What do you think they'll bring?

DAHLIA

One big surprise for us all, or individual gifts?

(Girls all venture excited guesses)

FAVOURITE

Listolier gave us stories, maybe Pierre wrote us a song, and Felix will offer the interpretive dance.

DAHLIA

Dressed as a woman no doubt.

FAVOURITE

If he's dressed at all!

FANTINE

Silence both of you. I won't have you speak of my Felix that way, he is a gentleman. Besides, I know what the surprise is.

DAHLIA

Do tell.

FAVOURITE

Well we know he comes from money, perhaps a month long trip with his favorite wench to the ports of the West Indies?

FANTINE

Not a wench, a wife.

DAHLIA

Wife?

FANTINE

That's the surprise. He's going to propose!

FAVOURITE

A proposal? From Felix?

(Favourite and Dahlia both giggle.)

FANTINE

Why else would he have gone to all this trouble today. The picnic at the lake, dancing in the meadow, picking wildflowers, dinner at this restaurant for me and inviting all of you? He even gave our little Euphrasie a new dress last night. She could wear it at our wedding. Carry her father's hat. She's walking so well she can almost run. Imagine, she could be the flower girl, the ring bearer. Yes. That's the surprise, I know it.

DAHLIA

Oh look! The ferry boats are getting ready to sail.

(Boat horn heard. They watch the boats for a moment until a knock at the door.)

PORTER

I have a letter from the gentlemen for Favourite, Dahlia, and Fantine.

(hands a letter to FAVOURITE)

FANTINE

A letter? For all three of us?

FAVOURITE

(Clears throat and reads) "Here is the Surprise"

(the girls squeal and gather as she starts reading)

Beloved mistresses! Be it known to you that we have parents and they have killed the fatted calf. Good society requires us to become prefects, rulers, gentlemen, fathers of families... Honor us for our self-sacrifice. It has been a splendid two years, but duty calls. Bear us no ill-will. We are clearing out – going, going, gone – on the ferry and across the sea.

Signed, Pierre, Listolier, and Felix.

(reading below)

P.S. *(Fantine looks up hopefully)* The dinner is paid for.

DAHLIA

Oh! The rascallions! I'm sure this was Felix' idea – just like him!

FAVOURITE

A perfect surprise. Come on. I saw a boat dock not two hours ago, scores of sailors are headed downtown. These ones may even have straight teeth.

(Dahlia and Favourite laugh as they leave the room. FANTINE tries to join the laughter nervously, but her laugh turns to crying. The other girls leave and FANTINE closes the door behind them, sinking to her knees in tears.)

-----SCENE CHANGE-----

(Cut to the other side of the stage where BISHOP paces slowly while MAGLOIRE and BAPTISTINE prepare supper.)

SCENE 2: Candlesticks

Location: Bishop's House - Evening

BISHOP

God cannot erase the past, but he can make it useful. That's good, that's quite good, I should write that down.

MAGLOIRE

(to BAPTISTINE)

Useful he says, then he wastes an entire garden box on flowers.

BISHOP

(Calling out) Beauty is also useful. Plants don't have to become salads; they can become bouquets.

BAPTISTINE

I like the flowers; it's the door-locks I worry about. Especially with that dangerous man in town.

MAGLOIRE

Charles, did you hear what Sister Baptistine said?

BISHOP

My ears don't hear gossip. The silence has been delightful. *(pause)* Well? What is it? Are we in danger?

MAGLOIRE

I've heard that a bare-footed gypsy man...

BAPTISTINE

A dangerous vagabond has been skulking about the town.

BISHOP

Skulking? My goodness. *(slightly mocking tone)*

MAGLOIRE

They refused him at the inn and so he went to the jail and asked if he could sleep in a cell!

BAPISTINE

He was last seen knocking doors, begging. The ladies in town warned me to get home immediately, before some evil befalls us.

BISHOP

Lots of evil “befalling” nowadays?

BAPTISTINE

Yes! They say he has a terrible looking face.

BISHOP

He has a face, the audacity?!

MAGLOIRE

It’s true! This house is no longer safe since you removed all the locks.

BISHOP

You still have locks on your bedroom doors.

MAGLOIRE

But why do you always have call out “Come in” even at midnight!

BAPTISTINE

At midnight!

MAGLOIRE

I’ll fetch the locksmith. We still have the old bolts; it will take but a minute. Imagine if he were to come here. I must hurry. There is not a moment to lose before—

(Loud knocking on the door.)

BISHOP

Come in!

(SISTERS shrink in scared silence.)

VALJEAN

What is this place? An Inn? A tavern? I can pay.

BISHOP

No payment needed. Sister Magloire, set another plate if you will. *(MAGLOIRE starts to do so.)*

VALJEAN

Wait. I am a convict. *(MAGLOIRE stops, hesitates, looking to the Bishop. He motions to her to continue)*

Did you hear me? I'm a convict, a galley-slave.

BISHOP

Sister Baptistine, a clean napkin as well for our guest.

VALJEAN

Stop. My name is Jean Valjean, (*Pulling out yellow passport*) and this is my passport; yellow as you see.

BISHOP

So it is. Tell us of your travels how came you to our town?

VALJEAN

I walked twelve leagues today after being cheated by a farmer. I presented myself to the mayors office as required. Then I went to the first Inn. They turned me away. So I went to another, and another, and another. They know what yellow means. It means, "This man committed crimes. This man can never be trusted."
(*MAGLOIRE and BAPTISTINE whispering to each other*)

BISHOP

Or does it mean this man is cold, this man is hungry, this man needs help. It seems the meaning is open to interpretation.

VALJEAN

Read it! 'Jean Valjean, a liberated convict has been nineteen years in the galleys of Toulon: five years for burglary, fourteen years for attempted escapes. This man is very dangerous.' That's who I am!

BISHOP

That's who you were. Perhaps it's who you are. But I find the future is uncertain and depends mostly on what we choose to do right now.

Sister Baptistine, please put clean sheets on the guest bed.

(*BAPTISTINE glares at BISHOP incredulously*)

The one in my room. Your room of course will be locked overnight as always.

(*BAPTISTINE goes to prepare Valjean's bed offstage*)

VALJEAN

Don't, I'm filthy. An hour ago I crawled on the dirt into a dog house hoping to sleep. The dog bit me and ran me off. No sheets.

BISHOP

Sister Magloire, bandages as well, and please draw a bath. Monsieur, you can eat, bathe, have your wounds tended to, both the mental and the physical, and then sleep in a clean bed. With sheets.

VALJEAN

With sheets! A bed with sheets? It's been nineteen years since I slept in a bed with sheets.

BISHOP

Sister Magloire, please put this gentleman's plate as near the fire as you can. You must be cold Monsieur, it's a windy night and twelve leagues is a long walk.

VALJEAN

You are a good man Monsieur Bishop. You take me into your house; you offer me dinner, and you don't care who I am or where I came from.

BISHOP

In the Lord's house we do not ask for names or histories. Besides, I knew your name before you even knocked.

VALJEAN:

You knew my name?

BISHOP

Your name is "my brother."

(BISHOP stands and keeps speaking—addressing the audience—while he goes to the mantle, takes a pair of silver candlesticks, and lights them, walking them back to the dinner table while talking and VALJEAN is eating.)

Amazing what can happen when you treat a man as an equal, a human, rather than a problem to be dealt with. Mine is not a wealthy parish. This house used to be a tiny hospital, and I lived in the large church next door. They needed more space, I needed less, so we traded. I don't mind being poor. The wealthy donate to me, and I pass it on to those in need. I think the Lord prefers it that way. Listen to me, proclaiming my humility while still eating every meal on silver. Plates, forks, knives, bowls, platters. Even the two candlesticks left to me by my great-aunt. Are wealthy indulgences allowed if they are inherited? I guess I'll find out on judgment day. For now I'll indulge, food tastes amazing served on silver, trust me.

(to VALJEAN) Come.

(BISHOP and VALJEAN stand. MAGLOIRE cleans up dinner, the unused dishes and silver, and exits.)

A good night's rest to you brother Valjean. Tomorrow morning, before you go, you shall have a cup of warm milk from our cows.

(BISHOP hands one lit candlestick to VALJEAN and leads him offstage to bed).

(BLACKOUT)

Location: Bishop's house, next morning

(Next morning, BISHOP at the table writing a sermon, Sister MAGLOIRE enters running.)

BISHOP

Though our savior was a carpenter, we find that helping people is less like carpentry and more like gardening. We can't cut people to fit our personal vision of what they should become. We provide the rich soil and then watch them grow in ways we never thought possible. *(to audience)* Sunrise is the best time to write sermons. The world is quiet, at peace. Nothing to disturb the holy Spirit from...

MAGLOIRE

Charles!! Charles! Do you know where the silver basket is?!

BISHOP

I do.

MAGLOIRE

God be praised! I was so worried when I couldn't find it this morning.

BISHOP

Here it is. (*Picks up broken basket off the bench and shows it to her.*) I found it in the flower bed when I went out at first light.

MAGLOIRE

But there is nothing in it! Where's the silver?

BISHOP

Ah! So it is the silver that concerns you and not the basket.

MAGLOIRE

Stolen. That filthy convict robbed us.

BISHOP

Well now let's see. Did the silver really belong to us? We swore an oath to give our wealth to the poor. Between us and Brother Valjean, who's poor?

MAGLOIRE

But what are we going to eat from now? (*MAGLOIRE exits the stage while complaining.*) Tin smells, and iron tastes, and wood...

(*Loud knock on the door.*)

BISHOP

Come in!

(*Three police enter with VALJEAN restrained and being held by them.*)

POLICEMAN

Pardon the interruption Monsieur, but we caught this man fleeing town—

BISHOP

(*interrupting*) Ah, there you are! Valjean, my brother. I am so glad to see you again. But how forgetful you are. I gave you the candlesticks as well. They are silver like the rest and worth at least two hundred francs. Why did you not take them?

VALJEAN

(*Stuttering, unable to answer.*)

POLICEMAN

Monsieur Bishop, then what he said was true? We saw him fleeing town so we stopped him. When we found this silver we arrested him and he said...

BISHOP

(Interrupting) that it had been given him by a friendly old priest with whom he had passed the night.

POLICEMAN

Yes. Yes, he said exactly that.

BISHOP

And so

POLICEMAN

So, we can let him go?

BISHOP

Quite. All a misunderstanding. Thank you for your diligent service officers, you are so adept and responsive. It comforts the sisters to know how vigilant you are in your duty.

(They take the restraints off his wrists.)

VALJEAN

You're letting me go?

POLICEMAN

Did you not hear the bishop? You're free. Go!

BISHOP

Before you go, your candlesticks, How silly of you to have forgotten them. *(BISHOP walks to the mantle and retrieves both candlesticks.)*

(To the police) Officers, thank you, you may retire. *(Police exit.)*

When you come again you need not jump the garden wall. My door is open, day and night, forever.

(Putting the candlesticks in VALJEANs bag) Never forget what has happened here. Never forget that you promised to use this silver to become an honest man.

VALJEAN

I what?

BISHOP

Jean Valjean, my brother; your past is part of you, but it is only part. It does not define you. You can leave the darkness, leave it all behind. With this silver, I have saved you from prison and bought you a second chance. You owe me nothing, I may have bought your soul, but I am giving it to God!

(Blackout)

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 3: Cosette Left Behind

Location: Thénardiers' Inn (Outside)

(A little girl, EPONINE, comes on stage jumping rope, while her mother MADAME THENARDIER enters looking on, sits on a stool, another empty stool beside her. FANTINE enters carrying Cosette. FANTINE appears ragged, Cosette is dressed beautifully. MADAME THENARDIER appears charming and kind)

EPONINE

(singing while jumping rope)

Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques, Dormez-vous? Dormez-vous?
Sonnez les matines! Sonnez les matines!
Din, din, don. Din, din, don.

FANTINE

(over the top of Eponine's singing) You have a pretty child there.

MADAME THENARDIER

(smiles & motions for Fantine to sit down)

That brat? Eponine, my first. What do you call yours?

FANTINE

Euphras...Cosette. Her name is Cosette.

MADAME THENARDIER

(calling out) 'Ponine! *(Pointing at Cosette)* Cosette. PLAY!

(to Fantine) I am Madame Thenardier. My husband and I keep this Inn.
How old is the little whelp?

FANTINE

Three.

(The girls giggle and laugh as they play jump rope.)

MADAME THENARDIER

'Ponine's just turned 4. Look at them, how quickly children trust each other. Jump rope for a bit and already one would swear they were sisters.

FANTINE

(to self) Sisters.

(Takes MADAME THENARDIER. By the hand earnestly) Would you look after my daughter for me?

MADAME THENARDIER

How do you mean?

FANTINE

I cannot take her with me – work forbids it. God has led me to your inn. I see your little one, so pretty, clean and happy. You are a good mother; they could be like sisters.

MADAME THENARDIER

Something like that.

FANTINE

In no time at all I will come back for her. I'll pay for all her expenses. Cosette is kind and well mannered. Will you look after her for me?

MADAME THENARDIER

I'd have to think it over –

FANTINE

I can pay five francs a month.

THENARDIER

(From inside the Inn – unseen)

Not less than six, and half a year paid in advance.

FANTINE

Six months, yes. I have the money.

THENARDIER

And fifteen francs for extras.

MADAME THENARDIER

That's fifty-seven francs.

FANTINE

I have sixty here I can give you now. I will go to work, earn more money, and as soon as I have enough to care for her on my own, I will come for my little love.

THENARDIER

And her father?

MADAME THENARDIER

Yes of course! Where is her father?

FANTINE

Her father left us...with nothing... when he died.

THENARDIER

Does she have clothes?

FANTINE

Yes! Certainly she has clothes (*holding up bag for them to see*) – plenty of everything, even silk dresses, she’s a lady.

THENARDIER

All right. Let’s have the bag and the money, and then you be off. Best to go while she’s playing so she doesn’t fret.

(*Fantine hands over most of the bag and money and leaves Cosette and Eponine playing, wiping her eyes as she goes, yearning to say goodbye*)

THENARDIER

Well, that takes care of tomorrow. I was still 50 francs short. What a neat little trap that turned out to be.

MADAME THENARDIER

Shall we?

(*DURING THE SCENE CHANGE*)

BISHOP

How heavily we weigh first impressions. Fantine never suspected the Hell into which she had just thrust her daughter. Valjean was also weighed heavily by a first impression, yet with opposite effect. The night he arrived in the town of Mon-Sur-Mer he saved two children from a house fire. The police never thought to ask for his passport. Never saw it was yellow. Then Valjean worked, became rich, opened one of the finest workshops in the town. He was so kind, so competent, he was soon appointed Mayor by the King of France.

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 4: Fantine’s Descent

Location: Paris Street

(*FANTINE is talking to a letter writer.*)

FANTINE

More? How can they possibly ask me for more?

LETTERMAN

I’m sorry madame, but the Thénardiens write that they must have fifteen francs a month.

FANTINE

Fifteen? It was supposed to be six! Last month they doubled it to twelve, now fifteen?! Fifteen francs a month, how?

LETTERMAN

My apologies madame.

FANTINE

I'll ask for an advance. I've been a good worker, she'll talk to the mayor, and, and it will all work out.

BISHOP

Valjean rarely stepped foot in the women's workhouse. He had placed in charge a respectable woman: firm, just, upright, full of the charity of giving, but not the charity of understanding. She heard about Fantine's child and dismissed her that very day.

FANTINE

(to used furniture salesman) There must be some way I can return the furniture. I can't pay.

FURNITURE DEALER

You'll pay or I'll have you arrested as a thief. And don't you try and leave town!

FANTINE

(to Landlord) So you see, I just need a few more weeks and then I'll find a new job.

LANDLORD

(leering) You're young and pretty, you can pay.

FANTINE

(to a neighbor) Well, what I say is, if I only sleep five hours a night and work the rest of the time I can just about earn enough to live on. And when you're unhappy you eat less. So what with work and not much food on the one hand, and grieving on the other, I can keep alive.

(FANTINE coughing)

LETTERMAN

I got another letter this morning, Mademoiselle. Thenardiers' say that Cosette is completely out of clothing and that she will freeze this winter. In addition to the monthly fifteen, they need ten more francs immediately to buy a thick wool skirt.

(Fantine pacing in the cold, crying, running into others as she mutters about ten francs and Cosette and she sees the Barbershop and runs inside. She comes back out with a cloth on her head, having shaved her hair off. She has coins in her hand.)

FANTINE

Ten francs will buy the wool skirt—Cosette will not freeze. I have clothed her with my hair.

LETTERMAN

(Reading aloud) "Cosette is sick with a deadly fever. The medicine is very expensive, and we cannot afford it. We need forty francs this week or your little one will die."

FANTINE

(crying) Forty francs? I don't have forty sous!

(DURING SCENE CHANGE)

BISHOP

Her hair, her belongings, her bedframe, even some of her teeth. She was willing to give all to save her daughter. Little did she know Cosette was not sick, never had been. When the next letter requested 100 francs, Fantine sold the only thing she had left.

(FANTINE *pacing back and forth in the cold, DANDY at one corner of the street with other men behind him. JAVERT on the other corner, unseen at first. VALJEAN also visible at the edge of the street. DANDY insulting FANTINE each time she paces in front of him*)

DANDY

Well, aren't you an ugly little tart? Are you—are you trying to hide? Well, how will you sell yourself if no one can see you? How does it feel to kiss with no teeth? Tell us, do you whistle when you breathe? Oh, come on now, smile pretty. Customers will be here soon.

(*Aside to men behind him*)

Watch this, boys. Liven things up a bit.

(DANDY *runs up and puts snow down her back and she screams and wrestles him to the ground.*)

FANTINE

Don't touch me.

DANDY

Get her off me!

FANTINE

I'll claw your eyes out!

(DANDY and FANTINE *fight until Javert approaches and grabs Fantine by the arm. The Dandy runs off. Fantine sees Javert and immediately stops struggling, becoming submissive and silent. Javert never even looks for the Dandy & pulls out his notebook to write his report.*)

JAVERT

(*Unemotional. Handing note to the Gendarme*)

Take her to jail (*Fantine yells and lunges*), under guard. Six months. (*he continues writing his report*)

FANTINE:

(*Distress verging on panic*)

Six months? In prison six months? What about Cosette? My daughter! The debt! Inspector Javert, Monsieur, please I beg your pity. (*VALJEAN steps into the scene, no one notices.*) My daughter won't survive six months. That man threw snow down my back. If you had seen how he taunted and insulted me. Has he the right to throw snow down my back when I'm just going along not harming anyone? Maybe I was wrong. Where is he? I'll

apologize. I will. Only please don't send me to jail. I have to earn money or my child will die! (*FANTINE reaches up to touch JAVERT. JAVERT pushes her arm away, annoyed.*)

JAVERT

(*Cold, unmoved*) Are you quite finished? Off you go. Six months!

(*FANTINE sinks to the floor in despair.*)

VALJEAN

(*stepping forward*)

A moment, if you please.

JAVERT

I beg pardon, Monsieur Mayor, I didn't see you there.

FANTINE

Mayor? You're the mayor?!

(*Spits in VALJEAN's face.*)

VALJEAN

Inspector Javert, (*wiping spittle off his face*) set this woman at liberty.

(*JAVERT stares at VALJEAN while FANTINE rambles, confused.*)

FANTINE

(*to Javert*) At liberty? You'll let me go? I am not going prison for six months? Monsieur Javert, it's not my fault, it was the fault of that vile creature (*pointing at the mayor*). He had me dismissed because of gossip. Well then I earned twelve sous at shirt making, which is nine sous after tax, not enough for rent. We mothers must do what we can. I was forced to become a bad woman to save my child, but you can ask my landlord, I've always been honest.

JAVERT

Monsieur Mayor, this cannot be done. This prostitute attacked a citizen.

VALJEAN

I was passing through the square before you arrested this woman. I saw what happened. The man was at fault. It was he who should have been arrested.

JAVERT

But now this wench has spat in your face. As an officer of the peace I cannot allow this injustice. I am very sorry to resist the mayor; it is the first time in my life I have resisted a superior authority. But I am the Inspector of Police; it is my duty. Prison, six months.

VALJEAN

By the criminal code of France, articles nine, fifteen, and sixty-six, I, the mayor, have the final say in these matters. I order that this woman be set at liberty.

JAVERT

Monsieur Mayor please permit.

VALJEAN

That's enough.

JAVERT

You are technically correct however—

VALJEAN

Inspector, I order you to return to your post.

(JAVERT bows and exits.)

Madame, I have heard you. I believe you. I didn't know you had been turned out of my workshop. Why did you not appeal to me? No matter. You mentioned some debts, and a child. I will care for you now. I will pay your debts; I will have your child brought to you. You shall live here, or in Paris, or wherever you like. You are a good woman, a caring mother. You have never ceased to be a virtuous and holy woman before God.

FANTINE

Cosette, just let me see Cosette.

(FANTINE faints and VALJEAN picks her up and walks her offstage)

(AFTER APPLAUSE, DURING SCENE CHANGE)

BISHOP

After that day, Inspector Javert never took his eye off the mayor. The more he saw him the more he thought "I recognize that man from somewhere." Javert was a hard man. He had been born, literally, in a prison. His mother was a fortune teller; his father a convict. Javert hated them both; he hated all criminals for their weakness. So he had made himself the exact opposite, a policeman. So efficient at his employ that by age forty he was already an inspector.

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 5: A Trial

Location: Mayor's Home

(JAVERT knocks and enters, hat in hand, head downcast, ashamed. VALJEAN is sitting at a desk, a fireplace behind him and on the mantle above are the two silver candlesticks. There is also a wardrobe in the room)

JAVERT

Monsieur Mayor, may I have a moment?

VALJEAN

It's late, what is it?

JAVERT

I come to be dismissed.

VALJEAN

(nods)

Very well, dismissed. *(turns to keep working)*

JAVERT

Monsieur Mayor?

VALJEAN

I dismissed you, yet you remain.

JAVERT:

Monsieur Mayor, please.

VALJEAN

Fine. From what do you seek dismissal?

JAVERT

My position as Inspector.

VALJEAN

You love this job. You resign?

JAVERT

I cannot – resignation would be honorable. I have acted with impertinence, but not impunity.

VALJEAN

Impressive.

JAVERT

Monsieur Mayor!

VALJEAN

What? While I may not enjoy your company, you have never set one foot beyond the pale, ever. What unforgivable sin could you possibly have committed?

JAVERT

Six weeks ago, after that incident with the girl, I was enraged. Two weeks ago I denounced you.

VALJEAN

Denounced me?

JAVERT

I informed my superiors you were a former convict who had broken his parole.

VALJEAN

A convict?

JAVERT

A man called Jean Valjean.

VALJEAN

(turning away so his reaction won't be seen)

What name did you say?

JAVERT

Jean Valjean. A convict I met twenty years ago, when I was a guard at Toulon. After leaving prison, he robbed a bishop. For eight years his whereabouts have been unknown and I've been searching for him. In my resentment and unbridled anger, I denounced you to the Prefect in Paris. Your strength, your voice, even some of your mannerisms ... well, I was wrong. The law requires that I be punished.

VALJEAN

What did the Prefect say?

JAVERT

That I was mistaken, blinded by anger, He was right of course, (VALJEAN *sighs with relief*) for the real Valjean has been found.

(Sudden change in VALJEAN's demeanor.)

VALJEAN

Come again?

JAVERT:

Seven leagues from here in Arras a man stole some fruit and was arrested. In jail, three separate prisoners recognized him from Toulon. He denies it, but it's obvious to everyone. He's Valjean. When the Prefect told me this, I couldn't believe it. I was so certain I'd found you, found him, I went to Arras to prove them wrong.

VALJEAN

And?

JAVERT

Monsieur Mayor, truth is truth. That man is Jean Valjean. I recognized him and testified yesterday morn. I failed you, I failed myself, I failed the law. I have done all I can to correct my error, but punishment is still required.

VALJEAN

Return to your post.

(Awkward silence while JAVERT doesn't leave.)

JAVERT

Monsieur Mayor if you will not dismiss me then I am forced to resign.

VALJEAN

I do not accept your resignation.

JAVERT

Justice dictates that I be-

VALJEAN

Justice is only useful when balanced with mercy. Javert, you are a man of honor and I respect you. You exaggerate your fault. Keep your post.

(VALJEAN stands and offers his hand to JAVERT)

JAVERT

Monsieur, a Mayor does not shake hands with a traitor.

(JAVERT bows his head and turns to the door and opens it. Before he exits he says)

I shall continue in my duties until I am relieved.

(JAVERT exits.)

(VALJEAN sinks into his chair.)

VALJEAN

No more hiding. No need to run. *(looks up to heaven)* He was right. Your Bishop was right. I can finally leave the darkness behind, and become an honest man. This is an answer to prayer. He bought my soul for God, and God delivered me. *(He smiles and begins to unbutton his vest and undress for bed. He opens his dresser, and sees his red prison shirt and pulls it out. He looks up to heaven again.)*

Is this really your answer? Another man wearing my shirt, my name, in prison. The sentence will be longer this time, parole violation is punished severely. He'll be whipped, beaten. How can this be your answer? Why not just pardon me, why punish someone else in my place? This isn't mercy or justice, it's cruelty.

I've been cruel before, I will never do it again.

(He throws the shirt on the floor)

This makes no sense. Why? Why make me mayor? Why let me promise Fantine I would save her daughter when you knew this was going to happen. What happens to my employees? Does the factory close, do all those families starve? Without me it all falls apart. I made a promise to Fantine, and those people.

This is a test. Will I make the hard decision? Will I sacrifice one innocent man to save many, as you did with your son.

(He opens "The Inseparable" and pulls out his yellow passport.)

Goodbye Jean Valjean, and good riddance.

(He tears up the passport and lets the pieces drop to the floor. He then reaches into "The Inseparable" and pulls out the candlesticks)

How do we know? How do we know which instruction applies when? Turn the other cheek, except when they are exchanging money in the Temple, then get out a whip and overturn tables. Thou shalt not kill; but you made your people slaughter seven nations to enter Caanan.

How do we know what to do when? Do we save the one, or the many?

(Staring angrily up at heaven)

Do you ever answer? Do you ever make anything clear?

(looks down defeated)

I don't know what you want me to do. *(Looks at the candlesticks)*

But I think I know what he would do, *(looks up to heaven again)* and that's enough.

(VALJEAN puts the candlesticks back in the "the inseparable" and runs out the door and whistles for a horse and buggy)

Driver! It's seven leagues to Arras. We have to arrive before court adjourns tomorrow. Ready the horses, I'll get the supplies. Hurry!

(VALJEAN exits.)

BISHOP

I think he gives me more credit than I deserve. Valjean rode to Arras, confessed his true identity, and while everyone there was too shocked to move, he ran out of the courtroom before the bailiff could arrest him and hurried home to satisfy his promise to Fantine

(VALJEAN coming back toward the house from the street as SISTER SIMPLICE exits his house)

SISTER SIMPLICE

You may not want to go in.

VALJEAN

Inspector Javert already? I rode as fast as I could, he can't be here already.

SISTER SIMPLICE

The woman, Mr Mayor, Fantine. She's coughing and it might be contagious. The doctor says she isn't likely to make it through the night.

VALJEAN

But he said she may improve!

SISTER SIMPLICE

Only if she saw her daughter. That's all she talks about now, her little Cosette. Even when she's delirious, everything revolves around her little girl.

VALJEAN

We haven't much time. Javert will be here the moment he finds out I. Well that I am...

SISTER SIMPLICE

Go. I need no explanation. If the Inspector comes, I'll... stall.

(VALJEAN enters his home, FANTINE on a bed)

VALJEAN

Fantine. Fantine are you awake?

FANTINE

Cosette?

VALJEAN

Soon

FANTINE

Monsieur Mayor, where is Cosette? Why not put her on my bed that I might see her the instant I awoke?

VALJEAN

I tried. I wrote the Thenardiers three times, sent money and implored them to send her here, but they refused. They won't let her go.

FANTINE

Sister Simplice helped me write a letter, giving you the right to take custody of her. Here!
(coughing as she pulls it out) It's signed and everything.

VALJEAN

Fantine, You will get better, you'll raise her yourself. Besides, I'm not the kind of man you want to leave your daughter too, I'm likely to be arrested before the night is over.

FANTINE

Arrested for what?

VALJEAN

Parole violation

FANTINE

Parole?

VALJEAN

Twenty-Seven years ago I broke the window of baker's shop and stole a loaf of bread. Through more mistakes of my own I spent a long time in prison. When I was released and arrived here in town, I never presented my yellow passport. And today, my past caught up with me.

FANTINE

Why did you steal the bread?

VALJEAN

We really don't have time...

FANTINE

Tell me WHY. I was deceived once and left my child with monsters. I won't fail Cosette again. Why did you steal the bread?

VALJEAN

My sister died and her children were starving. I couldn't earn enough to feed them, so I stole.

FANTINE

(Handing him the letter giving him custody)

Keep Cosette safe, and tell her how much I love her.

VALJEAN

I swear on my life I will keep her safe. I'll bring her to you as soon as I can

FANTINE

I know you will. I can't wait to see her angelic face, her beautiful— *(sound of shocked horror)*

(JAVERT has entered and is visible to FANTINE, behind VALJEAN.)

VALJEAN

Fantine, you're pale as a ghost. What is it? What's happened?

(FANTINE points over his shoulder wordlessly, frozen in terror. VALJEAN turns and sees JAVERT.)

Be at peace, it is not for you that he comes.

FANTINE

Monsieur Mayor!

JAVERT

(laughing) He isn't mayor any longer!

VALJEAN

(whispering) Javert –

JAVERT

Inspector, Javert.

VALJEAN

Inspector Javert, I would like a word in private.

JAVERT

Speak up. People speak clearly when they address a superior.

VALJEAN

This woman needs my help—

JAVERT

I tell you to speak aloud!

VALJEAN

Three days! I need three days to go fetch the child of this poor woman! I will come back and surrender myself, or you can go with me but I must fulfill this promise.

JAVERT

Do you think I'm stupid? Do you think you can really fool me again?

VALJEAN

Please Javert I didn't mean to..

JAVERT

You meant every word. You embarrassed me. You made me a fool. You used your power and position and feigned righteousness to manipulate me, and rob justice.

FANTINE

Please Monsieur, let him get my child. Please Monsieur Mayor!

JAVERT

Hold your tongue, you harlot! Was it fun, pretending? A galley-slave may dress like a mayor, and a whore like a countess, but lies never last.

FANTINE

Monsieur Mayor!

JAVERT

There is no Monsieur Mayor. There is a thief, a convict named Jean Valjean, prisoner number 24601 is going back to Toulon in shackles. That is what there is!

FANTINE

No, If he doesn't get Cosette no one will. Please. Please! My Cosette, my little angel. *(starts coughing and convulsing)*

VALJEAN:

Fantine. *(Sound of FANTINE choking – she stiffens, her face in horror, then falls flat on the bed, dead. VALJEAN stands hand on the bed railing, looking at Javert)*

You have killed this woman.

JAVERT

She killed herself, she broke the law. Mercy cannot rob justice. Now march, or I'll put the handcuffs on you. *(VALJEAN, glaring at JAVERT as he pulls an iron bar apart from the bed frame.)*

VALJEAN

You will give me a moment, I'll put the handcuffs on myself.

(VALJEAN moves to FANTINE's bedside, bends down and speaks into her ear, kisses her hand, lays the iron bar down, and stands)

I am Jean Valjean, Prisoner 24601, and to you Inspector Javert, I surrender. *(VALJEAN is peacefully led off by JAVERT who has been standing still, watching anxiously.)*

(BLACKOUT)

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 6: Cosette Rescued

Location: Thenardier's Inn

(Scene opens with people in the Inn, eating and chatting, MADAME THENARDIER yelling at COSETTE, who is about to go out the door.)

MADAME THENARDIER

Be off, you little rodent, and fetch the water for the horses!

COSETTE

Yes Madame!

(COSETTE makes it out the door with a bucket in hand and looks up and stands transfixed.)

BISHOP

Little Cosette looked like a mouse in the service of an elephant. A red-faced, freckled fat elephant. Dressed in rags Cosette ran out the door but stopped as she looked across the street and saw the beautiful doll in the brightly lit window of the toy shop. Every little girl in town had begged for that doll, including the Thenardier's own daughter Eponine.

(MADAME THENARDIER sees COSETTE from the door and yells.)

MADAME THENARDIER

Still here, little monster? BE OFF!

(COSETTE lifts the bucket and runs into the woods.)

BISHOP

Cosette fled with her bucket, running as fast as she could with tears in her eyes. She filled the bucket at the well and tried to hurry back to the inn, but the full bucket was far too heavy, and her cold feet slipped on the icy ground.

(COSETTE re-enters struggling with the bucket and crying as she slips. VALJEAN enters from behind and reaches down and takes the bucket from her. She looks up at him, a little scared, but mostly just grateful.)

VALJEAN

How old are you little one?

COSETTE

Eight years old, Monsieur.

VALJEAN

And have you come far in this way?

COSETTE

From the spring in the woods.

VALJEAN

Alone? Have you no mother?

COSETTE

I don't know. I don't believe I have. All the rest have mums.
(VALJEAN *pauses and crouches down to look her in the face.*)

VALJEAN

What is your name little one?

COSETTE

Cosette.

VALJEAN

What, but you can't possibly be... Where do you live?

COSETTE

In town, at the Inn.

VALJEAN

Who sent you out to the well alone at this time of night?

COSETTE

Madame Thénardier.

VALJEAN

Did she.

COSETTE

She's my mistress. She keeps the tavern.

VALJEAN

Well, I am planning to lodge there tonight, would you show me the way?

COSETTE

We're almost there now.

(VALJEAN *stops and talks to COSETTE again.*)

VALJEAN

Is there no one else at the inn to get the water?

COSETTE

No.

VALJEAN

You are alone?

COSETTE

No. There is another little girl.

VALJEAN

Another?

COSETTE

Eponine, but she plays.

VALJEAN

All day?

COSETTE

Yes Monsieur.

VALJEAN

And you?

COSETTE

I work.

VALJEAN

All day.

COSETTE

Yes Monsieur. Before we go in, please hand me the bucket.

VALJEAN

What for?

COSETTE

When Madame sees anyone helping me, that night she uses the belt.
(COSETTE *takes the bucket and opens the door. Loud voices inside.*)

MADAME THENARDIER

Oh! It is you, you little beggar! You certainly took your time!
(MADAME THENARDIER *changing to a sweet voice as she sees VALJEAN.*)
Good evening my good man, enter.
(*back to harsh voice*) Cosette, get stitching!

VALJEAN

Madame, why not let her play?

MADAME THENARDIER

She eats; therefore, she works. I don't feed her to do nothing.

VALJEAN

What is she making?

MADAME THENARDIER

Stockings for my baby boy.

VALJEAN

And when will she finish them?

MADAME THENARDIER

It will take her three or four days at least; the lazy whelp.

VALJEAN

And how much might this pair of stockings be worth when it is finished?

MADAME THENARDIER

At least *(raising the price in her head)* thirty sous.

VALJEAN

Would you take five francs for them?

MAN

(With a choking laugh) Five francs? That's a laugh five francs.

THÉNARDIER

(THÉNARDIER still is unseen, he is heard from behind a door)

Yes, monsieur, if it is your fancy, you can have that pair of baby stockings for five francs. We can't refuse anything to our illustrious guests.

MADAME THENARDIER

My husband is right. And! You must pay for them now.

VALJEAN

Done *(placing five-franc coin on the table)*

MAN

(Grabs the coin to examine it) It's real, that's a whole Napoleon.

VALJEAN

Now your work belongs to me. Play, child.

MAN

(Still shocked) A regular hindwheel, and no counterfeit!

COSETTE

Is it true Madame? Can I play?

MADAME THENARDIER

PLAY! Now! You heard the man!

(COSETTE runs over and picks up a ragdoll that EPONINE has left on the ground. EPONINE is playing at the other side of the room, and turn to see COSETTE playing with her doll)

Now Monsieur, will you be having dinner, lodging, what about—

EPONINE

MUM! Look! *(Everyone turns to see COSETTE playing with EPONINE's doll)*

MADAME THENARDIER

Cosette, don't you touch that! You'll get the whip now, you will.

(COSETTE hides under a table and MADAME THENARDIER stomps towards her)

VALJEAN

Madame, you would beat your child for touching a doll?

MADAME THENARDIER

(Kicking at COSETTE under the table)

Stop that noise!

(To VALJEAN) Oh no, Monsieur, she's not mine no! She's a little beggar that we have taken in through charity. She was abandoned here by her worthless mother. And now that little lark dared to touch my child's doll.

VALJEAN

Excuse me madame.

(VALJEAN rises and exits immediately, headed across the street)

MADAME THENARDIER

Where's he off to?

(THENARDIER emerges and we see him for the first time. He is not physically intimidating, not the kind of man who beats you with a club or challenges you in public. He appears weaselly, the kind of man you fear because he will slit your throat while you sleep.)

THÉNARDIER

You fool, chased off a philanthropist. You saw how easily he offered up 5 francs. I'm still 1,500 francs short. We have to think. We have to be wise. The next man that walks through that door you treat like royalty. You hear me? You get down on your knees and you—

(Door opens and VALJEAN enters, the pretty pink doll in hand.)

VALJEAN

Little one, come here. I have bought you a gift.

(COSETTE looks excitedly at the doll but then looks at MADAME THENARDIER, terrified. COSETTE Cautiously then excitedly takes the doll)

COSETTE

Can I name her? Oh. OH! I will call her Catharine!

(COSETTE adores the doll and then runs to the other corner of the room to play with it. VALJEAN looks on, both THÉNARDIERS huddle to discuss.)

MADAME THENARDIER

Now who does he think he is giving a doll like that the Lark? He'll spoil her, ruin her.

THÉNARDIER

Silence woman. That doll cost at least 30 francs. No nonsense now. Down on your knees before the millionaire. Give him anything he wants. He could make us rich tonight!

MADAME THENARDIER

(Sweetest voice possible) So, my good man. *(Slowly kneeling by his side, awkwardly)* What brings such a handsome, attractive, mysterious man to our inn?

VALJEAN

Pardon me madame, I think I shall go elsewhere for dinner. I seem to have lost my appetite.

THÉNARDIER

Oh! Monsieur! Please stay, the times are very hard. If only we had wealthy travelers now and then as benefactors. Monsieur! We have so many expenses! Why, that little girl eats us out of house and home.

MADAME THENARDIER

House and Home, she does.

VALJEAN

Suppose you were relieved of her?

MADAME THENARDIER

Who? Cosette? *(pause)* Oh. Oh yes, Monsieur! Take her, keep her, carry her off! Sugar her, stuff her, drink her, feed her, and blessed be the Holy Virgin and all the saints in Paradise!

VALJEAN

Agreed.

MADAME THENARDIER

Really! You will take her away?

VALJEAN

I will.

MADAME THENARDIER

Now?

VALJEAN

Immediately. Call the child.

MADAME THENARDIER

Cosette!!!!

THÉNARDIER

Monsieur, I must say that we adore this child. Oh, our dear little Cosette! You wish to take her away from us? I cannot allow it. I should miss her too much. She has no father, no mother, we've brought her up since she was little.

MADAME THENARDIER

Very little.

THÉNARDIER

We are not rich, but we must do what is right before God. (*Crossing self, MADAME THENARDIER crossing self as well, but wrong.*)

MADAME THENARDIER

Before God!

VALJEAN

And what is that, what is right before God?

THÉNARDIER

Well Monsieur, as a religious man, an honest man, a humble servant of the people. Well... fifteen hundred.

VALJEAN

What was that?

THÉNARDIER

Fifteen hundred francs and she's yours.

(*VALJEAN takes out his wallet and counts out the bills and lays them on the table with his finger on them.*)

VALJEAN

Done. Fifteen hundred, for your sacrifice. Before God

(*COSETTE enters.*)

Come, Cosette. Bring Catharine, leave the rest. I will buy whatever else you need.

(*They walk out the door. MADAME THENARDIER is laughing and dancing and bragging about their good fortune. EPONINE walks into the room just having woken up*)

EPONINE

(smiling) What's all the singing?

THÉNARDIER

Get knitting you tripe-faced leach, or you'll get the whip this time.

(*EPONINE hurries and picks up COSETTE's knitting from the night before*)\

Too cheap.

MADAME THENARDIER

What?

THÉNARDIER

We gave her away too cheap. He didn't even hesitate. I could have asked for 15,000 and he would have paid it.

MADAME THENARDIER

You think?

THÉNARDIER

I am a fool. Give me my hat.

(THÉNARDIER runs out the door after them, calling.)

Wait! Wait!

(He catches up to VALJEAN and COSETTE.)

I take it back.

VALJEAN

What's that?

THÉNARDIER

I said I take it back.

VALJEAN

Meaning?

THÉNARDIER

I take back Cosette. I can't sell her. *(Offering back the 1500 francs)* I tell you I have reflected, in my heart. I haven't the right to give her to you. I am an honest man, you see. This little girl was entrusted to me by her mother. Only her mother can give her to you. Decency demands it!

(VALJEAN reaches in his coat and pulls out his wallet again. THÉNARDIER gets visibly excited and is almost dancing with joy as he sees all that money in the wallet. VALJEAN pulls out a letter,.)

VALJEAN

For once, you speak the truth. *(hands him the letter from Fantine)* Read that.

THÉNARDIER

(Reading) Mon-sur-Mer, March 25, 1823. Monsieur Thénardier: You will deliver Cosette to the bearer. He will settle all my debts. Fantine.

VALJEAN

You know that signature. Keep it as your receipt.

(VALJEAN and COSETTE turn to leave.)

THÉNARDIER

It's a well-made forgery that's clear. However (VALJEAN and COSETTE walking away) Very well, You have the right to take her. But it says you will settle the debt. That's a large sum. Nearly 15,000....

VALJEAN

Monsieur Thénardier, in January Fantine owed you a hundred and twenty francs; I paid it. You sent her in February a bill for five hundred francs; you received six. I sent extra. Given the months that have elapsed since, there remain thirty-five francs due to you. I have just given you fifteen hundred.

(THÉNARDIER stands dumbfounded. VALJEAN turns to exit with COSETTE.)

Don't look back. We're never going that way ever again.

(All exit, blackout)

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 7: Escape to the Convent

Location: Apartment / Streets of Paris

BISHOP

Twenty Six. That's how old Valjean was the last time he tried to parent. Now, at 55, he carried little eight-year old Cosette into Paris.

(VALJEAN enters carrying COSETTE in his arms. She awakes abruptly, scared)

COSETTE

(frantic) Yes Madame! Here I am. I wasn't asleep. Swear I wasn't. Where's my broom? Oh no where's my...

VALJEAN

It's all right, it's all right. Breathe.

COSETTE

(starts hyperventilating) I'm trying, I'm trying, I can't, I can't!

VALJEAN

Look at your feet, scrunch up your toes, can you feel your toes inside your shoes? Good. Now listen, listen and see what you can hear. Listen to the birds, the wind? Listen to the sound of your own breathing. Listen to my voice. You are here, in Paris, safe with me. Anytime your mind goes back to that awful Inn, remember, all your senses can remind you where you are, and what you're doing. What you see, hear, feel, even what you taste and smell. You're safe.

COSETTE

Do I have to sweep?

VALJEAN

Play.

COSETTE

Play?

VALJEAN

Yes play. While we'll both have chores to do, I think you've learned that lesson well enough for now. Go Play.

COSETTE

In a place as pretty as this?

VALJEAN

Pretty?

COSETTE

Yes, this is the prettiest place I have ever seen.

BISHOP

It may have been dusty roads and dirt floors, but it was calm. It was predictable it was reliable, and that made it the prettiest place on earth. Being whipped was no longer a possibility, and over time waking up late, or spilling milk, didn't scare her. She could explore and play and sing and break something, and she knew she would never, ever be hit again.

COSETTE

See the kites? The market must be bursting with colors, dancers, all sorts of sweets. Can we walk that way, please?

VALJEAN

Yes. Allright, allright! So long as we take a little money to share.

(as they walk they encounter many beggars, and VALJEAN bends down to each one and hands them a coin and whispers an encouragement while Cosette asks questions.

COSETTE

How old is Paris?

VALJEAN

I don't actually know.

COSETTE

How old are you?

VALJEAN

Fifty Five

COSETTE

How old am I?

VALJEAN

Eight?

COSETTE

Why do horses poop so much?

VALJEAN

Because they eat so much?

COSETTE

Are we poor?

VALJEAN

We have each other, we have...

COSETTE

I know, but are we poor?

VALJEAN

We have enough to share.

COSETTE

But you sleep on the floor, if we're not poor, why not buy a nice bed like the one you bought me?

VALJEAN

You're a good daughter, you deserve a nice bed.

COSETTE

You're a good father, why don't you?
(VALJEAN has no response, so he smiles, and just walks on)

BISHOP

Everywhere they walked he gave to the poor and the destitute. He became known in the neighborhood as "the beggar who gives alms"

VALJEAN

(VALJEAN exiting their home, walking into the street and calling back)

I just want to make one more round. You get ready for bed. Lock the door, I'll be back in a minute.

(VALJEAN starts walking down the street, rather care-free. He even tosses a coin in the air. He goes to give a coin to one beggar and the beggar looks up at him intently as he hands him the coin. It is JAVERT in disguise. VALJEAN recognizes him and runs back to the house to get Cosette. JAVERT throws off his beggars cloak, and runs to get more policeman. VALJEAN runs into his house to retrieve COSETTE)

VALJEAN

Cosette! Cosette come now. Now Now NOW! We must leave, immediately. Put on your shoes, there is no time to pack.

(COSETTE comes to the door)

COSETTE

Father what is it, what's so scary?

VALJEAN

It's... It's... It's Madame Thenardier! She's found us and she wants to take you back. We must take our things and run, now, so that she'll never find us again.

(COSETTE and VALJEAN hurry to pack their things. VALJEAN is carrying "the inseparable," the small wooden box which contains the candlesticks.)

JAVERT

(With other officers listening)

Of course it's him. I told you I saw his face. *(JAVERT and other officers grabbing guns and flashlights)* I knew he survived. When I heard about a beggar GIVING alms to other poor, I knew it must be him. Valjean did the same thing in prison as he did when a mayor. His weakness has exposed him. *(Pointing up the street)* This way. I saw him run toward the Gorbeau building.

VALJEAN

Hush. Someone is coming.

JAVERT

You two circle up to the top, I'll start from this end. There is no other exit from this road... he's walked into a trap.

(VALJEAN and COSETTE back up against a wall, police coming in from the sides.)

VALJEAN

Don't say a word, I'll take care of you, I'll keep you safe. But right now I need you to trust me.

JAVERT

Valjean! I know it's you. I know you survived that prison ship. They told me an inmate fell in the sea and you dove in after him. He was saved, but you... you were never found.

VALJEAN

Up, Up on the wall. I'll climb up in a moment.

JAVERT

They assumed you had drowned, but not me. I know you; always deceiving, always hiding. Well you didn't deceive me. Justice is inevitable.

(VALJEAN climbs up on top of the wall with COSETTE)

VALJEAN

We're going to have to jump.

JAVERT

The law is granite. You can stand on the law as a sure foundation, or shatter yourself fighting it.

VALJEAN

Jump Cosette, Jump.

COSETTE

But what's down there? I can't see.

VALJEAN

Jump. Now!

(VALJEAN and COSETTE jump off the wall, out of sight. Javert and the other officers both arrive in the middle of the stage, and meet, bewildered.)

JAVERT

How did you miss them? How did they get passed you? There's no way out. I know this street, there is no exit.

OFFICER

We watched the whole time, no one came out our way.

JAVERT

Valjean! *(quieter, to himself)* He can't hide forever.

(DURING SCENE CHANGE)

BISHOP

Javert had chased Valjean to Montfermeil and found the Thenardiers Inn had closed. He chased Valjean to Paris and nearly caught him when Valjean and Cosette jumped off that wall, they landed in the perfect place to hide. A place where no men are allowed except a gardener: A Convent. So Valjean became a gardener and used the name Ultime Fauchelevent. There they stayed, safe and secure for nine years. But as children grow up they want freedom. Valjean wasn't the only one who would struggle with an impetuous child.

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 8: Old Versus Young

Location: Gillenormand's House

(GILLENORMAND sitting at a desk reading from a news pamphlet. He rings a bell and a servant, BASQUE arrives)

BASQUE

Yes sir?

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

There's a fellow on the eastside who has invented a machine that can make the seams in clothes.

BASQUE

Yes sir.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Well let's make a small order and see what he can do with it. Get me two suits for formal dining, a smoking jacket, riding trousers, an overcoat, *(MARIUS comes into the room)* and the same or Marius.

BASQUE

Yes sir.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Marius, have you heard of this new sewing machine?

MARIUS

A machine to sew clothing? What will become of all the seamstresses? I can't imagine that working out well for the poorer classes.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

If they aren't sewing the clothing they'll be fixing the machine that does. People adapt.

MARIUS

Or they dig in.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

I've ordered you some new clothes for the season. With only one year left in law school it's time you took your socializing seriously.

MARIUS

Socializing?

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Yes. Inheritance is not enough to keep proper position in the world. You need to be seen, discussed, gossiped about.

MARIUS

Gossiped about?

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Yes. Make intelligent comments at parties, have a mistress or two. Always support the monarch. And this one may work out. I think Louis-Phillipe will be far more successful than his predecessor Charles X.

MARIUS

Some of my friends at the law school think this is actually the last gasp of the Bourbons, and that a Republic is imminent.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Republic?

MARIUS

Yes, that even though Napoleon is gone, his spirit lives on in the hearts of the people, and with enough support we can move from a constitutional monarchy, to a democracy.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Enough...Support?

MARIUS

Yes. At the law school there are a number of students who want to fight back.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

You and your law school friends think you can really go play soldier?

MARIUS

We're serious. This matters. There is no God given reason for him to be king.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

And there is no God given reason for you to be a fool, yet here you are. You want to be a red-cap?

MARIUS

I want the people to be free.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Free? Free from what? Wealth? Safety? You think life was better under Napoleon?

MARIUS

At least the people had a choice.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Yes! They could choose any profession they wanted: beggar, thief, assassin, general rabble.

MARIUS

Don't call them rabble, they were warrior poets.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Warrior Poets. You're as deluded as your father.

MARIUS

My father?

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Yes. Your traitorous, useless, abandoning father. Came back from the battle of Waterloo calling himself "Baron Pontmercy."

MARIUS

My father fought at Waterloo?

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

There is a reason we never speak of him.

MARIUS

My father was a soldier, for Napoleon? (*GILLENORMAND glares in silence*)
Who was he?

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Your father was a disgrace. He left your mother sick and dying so he could run off and play hero.

MARIUS

Perhaps he was a hero.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

So where is he? Where is this hero? I'll tell you where. Six feet underground, where he belongs, for abandoning my daughter to chase some childish dream.

MARIUS

Don't talk about my father that way.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

I'm your father. Who gave you the clothes on your back, the bed you sleep in, your tuition at law school? Who made you everything you are? Who stayed when your mother died? Me. Just me. What are you without me?

MARIUS

I am my father's son.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

George had nothing, saved nothing, and amounted to nothing. He gave my daughter nothing.

MARIUS

He gave her Me.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

And look how that's turned out.

MARIUS

What's that supposed to mean?

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

You want to be your father's son? You want to abandon your family, chasing battlefield glory?

MARIUS

I want to live honorably.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

You want your inheritance? You want everything he left you? (*GILLENORMAND goes to the wardrobe and grabs a black winter coat. He pulls a note out of the pocket and hands them both with a shove to Marius.*)

That's the whole of it!

(*MARIUS takes the note and reads it*)

MARIUS

"For my Son. The emperor made me a baron upon the battlefield of Waterloo. Since the Restoration contests this title which I have bought with my blood, my son will take it and bear it."

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

A coat, and a note.

MARIUS

And a title.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Baron? Baron Pontmercy? Baron to who? The corpse of Napoleon?

MARIUS

Down with the Bourbons and the great hog Louis-Phillipe!

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

A gentleman and a Baron cannot remain under the same roof.

(*MARIUS walks out the door. While walking almost runs into GAVROCHE*)

(SWITCH TO STREET OUTSIDE HOUSE)

GAVROCHE

Good day, citizen. I say, might you spare a sou for a lad who ain't seen his mum or dad in months?

MARIUS

You've lost your parents?

GAVROCHE

I'd say they lost me! (*Presents hand.*) Gavroche.

MARIUS

Marius.

GAVROCHE

Pleased to make your acquaintance Monsieur Marius. I'm your local expert, guide, and keeper of lost things, you lost anything?

MARIUS

I'm losing five sous now. Take it and get on your way.

GAVROCHE

I ain't begging for no charity. I'm a workin' lad. What you lost? I'll find it. A coat, shoes, another man's wallet. Five sous is my fee, which I see you've already paid. Good man, payin' up front!

MARIUS

How about a cheap place to sleep? I think I'm not welcome at home anymore.

GAVROCHE

We'll I'd let you stay with me, but you're a big fella, you'd never fit. But... (*snaps fingers*) I know just the place! Follow me citizen! Your palace awaits!

(as they walk off VALJEAN and COSETTE walk on, different street in Paris)

COSETTE

Oh look, Charlemagne street...again

VALJEAN

I like this street. It's familiar.

COSETTE

It ought to be after 47 laps.

VALJEAN

What was that?

COSETTE

Nothing. Just delighting in never doing anything new or original. Ever.

VALJEAN

I live life by a few simple rules, and it keeps me peaceful.

COSETTE

Do you ever break the rules?

VALJEAN

Do I what?

COSETTE

Ever break the rules?

VALJEAN

Do you mean rules like laws? Or God's commands? Or just social etiquette?

COSETTE

I mean the ones you made up all on your own.

VALJEAN

My own rules?

COSETTE

You always walk on my right.

VALJEAN

Well that is just habit.

COSETTE

Only walk at dawn and dusk, but never stay out during shift change.

VALJEAN

That just suits our schedule.

COSETTE

Give a sous to every wandering little boy, as if it were the First and Great Commandment.

VALJEAN

Sometimes we cannot correct our errors, we can't change the result of our sins to the ones we harmed. So we just do better next time.

COSETTE

Always turn left.

VALJEAN

What?

COSETTE

Always turn left.

VALJEAN

I don't always turn left, that's absurd.

COSETTE

I agree. Let's go right.

VALJEAN

Well at this specific moment that is non-sensical. Home is left.

COSETTE

Home is always left. We walk in a circle.

VALJEAN

It's a very lovely circle.

COSETTE

Paris is bigger than one city block! Can't we go somewhere new? Walk the Gardens of the Luxembourg?
(VALJEAN *glares*) I know! I know! The Thenardiers!

VALJEAN

It's not the Thenardiers.

COSETTE

I'm seventeen father, I'm not scared of them anymore. I want to see Paris!

VALJEAN

I'm certain you could handle the Thenardiers on your own. It's just that...

COSETTE

What?

VALJEAN

You're not a cute little girl any longer, you're a beautiful woman.

COSETTE

You finally noticed.

VALJEAN

A father sees his daughter's beauty well before she does. And all fathers were once young men. We know.

COSETTE

We'll only walk in crowded public places. No side streets, no questionable neighborhoods.

VALJEAN

You could still be a nun. The sister's loved you and would gladly take you back.

COSETTE

Father!

VALJEAN

Turn right. The Luxembourg. New territory. *(sighs)* Tomorrow?

COSETTE

Tomorrow.

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 9: Revolutionary Theory Interrupted by Love

Location: The Friends of the ABC Café

(Scene opens in the back room of a café, many men sitting at tables drinking and talking. French flag on the wall in the back. COMBEFERRE and COURFEYRAC are in a heated discussion. GRANTAIRE is resting, perhaps passed out drunk)

COMBEFERRE

“The friends of the abaissés?”

COURFEYRAC

Right, but you pronounce it like a child starting the alphabet. *(French pronunciation)* A, B, C.

COMBEFERRE

This is so juvenile.

COURFEYRAC

It's clever. We're helping the lowest of the low, the abased. The abaissés. The ABC. We name ourselves: The friends of the ABC.

(MARIUS walks in the door)

COMBEFERRE

You expect a law-student like Marius to be a “Friend of the ABC?”

COURFEYRAC

Marius would agree with me. *(calling out)* MARIUS!

MARIUS

(calling out without having heard the argument) I agree with Combeferre

COURFEYRAC

You don't even know what we're talking about!

MARIUS

Yet somehow I'm right.

COURFEYRAC

Marius has been a Bonapartist for barely a month. What does he know?

ENJOLRAS

To help the abased, we'll enflame hate for the king. But what happens when we win? Men taught to hate this government will hate the next one as well.

COURFEYRAC

He's right. We can't convince a whole country to overthrow their government and then say, "but don't overthrow us, we'll be different, trust us?"

ENJOLRAS

Mankind enjoys violence. It always feels good short term to personally punish the wicked. How do we start a fire hot enough to burn down the Bourbons, without being incinerated ourselves?

GRANTAIRE

Wine helps.

COURFEYRAC

Alcohol burns!

GRANTAIRE

Burns good.

COMBEFERRE

Ignore Grantaire. We want men so determined and so good that they can fight one day and they lay down their weapons the next. Embrace their former enemy. We can't just be right, we must be righteous.

ENJOLRAS

Good men with good intent have lost many a battle. We must win the hearts of the people. Paris itself must rise up and join us. We must be inspiring, we must be rousing. We must be-

GRANTAIRE

DRUNK! (GRANTAIRE *grabs at* MARIUS *and jostles him.*)

ALL MEN

Hear hear!

MARIUS

Keep your booze—I am drunk enough with love.

COURFEYRAC

Wait wait wait: This from Marius the studios?

COMBEFERRE

Marius... the poet?

(Men begin to move chairs to crowd around MARIUS)

GRANTAIRE

(To COMBEFERRE) Better than the rubbish you write.

COMBEFERRE

I beg pardon.

ENJOLRAS

Marius... the Stalwart? Who sacrificed his inheritance because he wouldn't swear allegiance to Louis XVIII?

ALL MEN

Hear Hear!

COMBEFERRE

Marius, drunk with love? Oh, this we must hear.

(everyone leans in close around him, GRANTAIRE behind him)

COURFEYRAC

Pull up a chair!

GRANTAIRE

Buy us a round?

COURFEYRAC

Buy a round? I'd Marius rich?

MARIUS

Oh I am rich, with a wealth no king has ever known. And if you had seen my lady today in the Luxembourg. *(As he describes her; GRANTAIRE pantomimes mockingly behind him.)* A noble, beautiful creature, with red hair. *(COMBEFERRE whispers better words in his ear.)* Radiant chestnut hair highlighted with strands of gold, cheeks which seemed *(looks to COMBEFERRE for advice and gets some)* made of rose petals, skin of perfect white, an exquisite smile as bright as a gleam of sunshine, and her voice *(COMBEFERRE shrugs his shoulders leaving this up to him)* ... like music.

MAN

I'll drink to that!

GRANTAIRE

Here! Here!

MARIUS

Enjoy your bottle Grantaire, I'll satisfy my lips on something a bit... softer.

(Everyone laughs as MARIUS leaves through the door.)

(SWITCH TO STREET OUTSIDE)

(BISHOP walking across the stage, narrating, to show passage of time before next scene outside the Café)

BISHOP

There is a reason we fall in love when we are young. When you are young and poor, you know the love is real, because you have absolutely nothing else to offer. It's once you have money, position, and prestige that love becomes difficult. Because along with the love comes doubt.

As happened with most young men who meet a beautiful woman, his love grew and his purse shrank.

(MARIUS is walking and looks down to see an envelope on the floor. He puts the card away and picks up the envelope and then fishes in his pocket, and pulls out a single coin.)

MARIUS

Five sous. Well that won't do.

(MADAME THENARDIER is seen yelling at Eponine who is frantically looking at the ground as she walks the street)

MADAME THENARDIER

What do you mean you lost them! Your father spent hours writing those. Find them you useless little badger.

(MADAME THENARDIER tries to hit EPONINE as she runs away. EPONINE passes MARIUS and he tried to get her attention)

MARIUS

Miss?

(EPONINE looks at him for a moment, then keeps walking, so he tries to get her attention)

Pardon me. Miss?

EPONINE

Whatever I did wrong I didn't mean it.

MARIUS

No, no it's not that I-

EPONINE

I'll move to the other side of the street, sorry for getting in your way.

MARIUS

Stop. You've done nothing wrong.

EPONINE

And I won't. I swear. No more trouble from me.

MARIUS

There's no trouble, I just wanted to say that I overheard. You lost a letter.

EPONINE

I did. I don't know how I could be so stupid. Water on the brain must be. She told me to be careful, but I fouled it up like always.

MARIUS

Miss, Miss! *(EPONINE stops talking as MARIUS holds out the envelope he found on the ground.)*

Is this it?

(EPONINE takes it excitedly)

EPONINE

You found it! Oh you found it. I looked everywhere. I'd walked the whole city. Thank you, thank you! Oh you are so kind, *(EPONINE looks at him and really sees him for the first time)* so tall, so well dressed.

MARIUS

Glad we found them miss...

EPONINE

Eponine! My name is Eponine! And you are?

MARIUS

Marius. *(He notices her torn clothing and bruises)* Are you all right, Mademoiselle Eponine?

EPONINE

Mademoiselle? You're a right Gentleman aren't you?

MARIUS

I don't know about that. But I'm glad I could help.

EPONINE

Well Monsieur Marius, You can help me anytime.

MARIUS

Thank you. I mean, you're welcome. I mean, I'm happy to. I'm at this Café most nights, so if you need anything, just stop in.

EPONINE

Oh I'll stop in every day, if you promise to smile at me.

MARIUS

Gladly.

EPONINE

And always call me Mademoiselle.

MARIUS

As you wish, Mademoiselle.

(EPONINE squeals and runs off. MARIUS walks into the ABC cafe.)

BISHOP

In my days as a priest, I worked with many people, both men and women, who had never had a stable loving relationship, not even with their parents. It's always a little dangerous for them, when they meet someone who is kind. Because they yearn for love, they mistake kindness for romance.

SCENE 10: Marius Defeated

Location: Friends of the ABC Café

(MARIUS walks in frustrated and dejected, taking off his top hat and gloves and overcoat as he rants)

MARIUS

I was a fool. It is all my fault.

COURFEYRAC

Enjolras, I sense, I sense, an unfamiliar presence, a specter in our midst.

MARIUS

I shouldn't have worn my new coat, my nice hat, my shined shoes. I was too obvious.

ENJOLRAS

Marius, we have missed you. We have needed your heart, your spirit. *(MARIUS ignoring all of them completely.)*
Your attention.

MARIUS

Why did I take her handkerchief?

COMBEFERRE

The lass gave you a token? He's doing better than we thought *(Looking at the others as they all know this is a big deal)*

MARIUS

Why did I follow her home?

GRANTAIRE

You followed a woman home? (*To the others*) I don't go that far, even when I'm drunk.

COURFEYRAC

When have you *not* been drunk?

GRANTAIRE

There was that one time, in nursery school.

ENJOLRAS

Quiet. He's serious. Something's wrong. Marius, what is it?

MARIUS

I've lost her. I've lost her forever. They came every single day for months, and now nothing for three days. We have been flirting, making eyes, passing each other as often as possible in the Luxembourg. We were so careful, but her father finally noticed.

COURFEYRAC

Her father! You're courting a woman in public in front of her father?

MARIUS

He never leaves her side; ever! Believe me, we've tried. We are desperately in love but... he is always there!

COURFEYRAC

Well, have a romantic rendezvous someplace else. Bring her here. We'll make this café palatial for your queen!

GRANTAIRE

Take her back to your place.

MARIUS

I would... I mean I've tried... but so far we haven't managed to...

GRANTAIRE

(*To COURFEYRAC*) Seriously, they haven't? What's he waiting for?

MARIUS

No, not that, I mean we haven't...

COURFEYRAC

Kissed?

COMBEFERRE

Held hands?

MARIUS

We haven't actually... *(everyone leaning in)* spoken.

(They all laugh out loud as JAVERT walks up to the café door, and listens through the door, then continues walking away and misses VALJEAN and COSETTE walking and talking behind him)

VALJEAN

You'll like the new place. Nice airy house, protected by a strong rock wall.

COSETTE

A rock wall, just what every girl wants.

VALJEAN

It has a garden.

COSETTE

Have you ever seen me garden?

VALJEAN

Well I can teach you, I learned a lot at the convent.

COSETTE

While trying to make me a nun.

VALJEAN

I wasn't trying to make you a nun. We left didn't we?

COSETTE

Because you were afraid.

VALJEAN

I wasn't afraid.

COSETTE

You weren't? So when we moved again out of the Gorbeau house, we ran 6 blocks in the middle of the night, that wasn't because of fear?

VALJEAN

That was different.

COSETTE

Then our home in the Rue de l'Ouest. We moved out of that one at dawn after packing all night. No fear there?

VALJEAN

Cosette that's not fair.

COSETTE

And what's in the box?

VALJEAN

Box?

COSETTE

The Inseparable Box. The one that never gets left behind. We leave entire wardrobes of clothing, furniture, dishes, everything... except that little box.

VALJEAN

I...

COSETTE

Who are we running from? You said yourself - It can't still be the Thénardiens.

VALJEAN

They could still be a threat.

COSETTE

Stop lying. It's the police you always avoid.

VALJEAN

How did you?

COSETTE

You hide your face every time we see an officer. (*Looks at VALJEAN and mimes turning up a jacket collar*)

VALJEAN

I...

COSETTE

Is it something my mother did? Some awful crime she committed?

VALJEAN

Don't ever talk poorly about your mother.

COSETTE

How am I supposed to talk about her at all? You won't tell me anything. We hide from police, we hide from strangers, we hide from any memory of my mother. What is it? What's her deep dark secret?

VALJEAN

She had nothing to hide.

COSETTE

It's me then! I'm the shame. Was she married and you were her torrid affair? Were my birth parents criminals? Why am I a secret?

VALJEAN

I... we need to buy things for the new house. I'll get the furniture, you get the food.

(Both Exit, BISHOP walks across stage speaking to show passage of time)

BISHOP

Parents. We spend so much time protecting children from imagined evil, they never learn to handle the real things that can destroy, like family secrets.

(MARIUS and GAVROCHE enter and are speaking outside the Café on the street.)

MARIUS

I'm not a stalker. His daughter and I adore each other. As they walked through the Luxembourg every day we would flirt, but he was always by her side.

GAVROCHE

You mean Monsieur White and the Lark?

MARIUS

You know their names?

GAVROCHE

Well that's not his proper name, but with shiny white hair like he has what else was I to call him?

MARIUS

Monsieur White...

GAVROCHE

And she wasn't always pretty, she used to be skinny as a bird, so my sister called her the Lark. Finding her's no trouble. I could help!

MARIUS

Could you find her? Could you really? Oh, I would be in your debt for eternity, I would worship the ground you walk on if only you could—

GAVROCHE

Stop your blubbering, you're making me blush. I'll ask my sister. Eponine watches everybody. *(Runs across to the other side of the street.)* 'Ponine!

EPONINE

(EPONINE runs up to GAVROCHE while glancing behind her.)

Shh! That Police Inspector's back again. He's been watching the café for days now.

(JAVERT walks toward them, unseen by MARIUS across the street. JAVERT goes quietly into the Café)

What are you doing 'round here? If father catches you, he'll put you on a job.

GAVROCHE

He'd have to find me first. *(GAVROCHE takes EPONINE's hand and leads her across the street)* My lady, meet Monsieur Marius.

(Loud sounds of angry people in the background.)

EPONINE

Hello again Monsieur Marius. *(Flirty and touching his collar.)*

MARIUS

(MARIUS distracted by the angry mob in the distance) What? No, no.

EPONINE

No what?

MARIUS

The riots are getting worse... it's too soon.

GAVROCHE

He's looking for the Lark and Monsieur White.

EPONINE

Oh. They just moved a few nights ago, Pops had me following them.

GAVROCHE

What does he want with them?

EPONINE

He's felt cheated ever since White came to the inn and took her away. Wants to squeeze him for even more.

MARIUS

Squeeze who? What's going on—who's your father?

EPONINE

Now don't get cross with me.

GAVROCHE

She's cross 'cause she ain't had the guts to move out yet. She's right scared she is.

EPONINE

Didn't I see a man with a nice pocket watch just go into that store over there.

GAVROCHE

No foolin'? Blimey I gotta run.

(GAVROCHE runs off to see if it's true. Eponine, puts her hand out to touch his jacket again)

EPONINE

Now where were we?

MARIUS

Your father, he was following...

EPONINE

Ah yes, Monsieur White. *(stops and looks intently at MARIUS)* You have nice eyes Monsieur Marius, you should

smile. Promise me that you will smile, and I'll tell you what you want.

MARIUS

What?

EPONINE

I know the home of the old man you seek. Now smile.

MARIUS

Oh! Oh, tell me! Ask me for whatever you will! I'll give anything!

EPONINE

Take my hand and ask me proper.

MARIUS

Mademoiselle Eponine, Please! Please tell me where she lives!

EPONINE

She? Of course. Well, I am not sure of the street or the number. But, offer me your arm and I will take you there myself.

MARIUS

Oh thank you. Thank you, Mademoiselle Eponine!

EPONINE

You smiled. And you called me Mademoiselle! I like you Monsieur Marius! You're kind.

(They exit.)

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 11: Love Speaks at Last

Location: Garden outside the house on Rue Plumet

BISHOP

Even at the new house Cosette never left without her father. Marius couldn't get her attention without alerting Valjean. Marius noticed she often came out in the garden at night and sat alone on a stone bench. (MARIUS enters.) He spent days with Combeferre writing the perfect letter, expressing all he wished he'd said during their silent moments in the plaza.

(MARIUS *sneaks into the garden and places a letter under a stone on the bench. BISHOP steps to the edge of the scene to watch. COSETTE exits the house and goes down to the bench, noticing the rock, picks up the letter. Looking around for who might have left it, she opens it and starts to read aloud.*)

COSETTE

Love is a salutation of the angels to the stars.

Love has the power to change all nature.

Love can occupy and fill eternity.

Love is a glimpse of your smile under a white hat in the Luxembourg.

Love is a divine spark; it is incorruptible, indivisible, imperishable. It is a fire within us, immortal and infinite, which nothing can limit and nothing can extinguish.

(MARIUS *can be heard reading speaking aloud the same words whjich he has memorized, she doesn't hear him yet.*)

MARIUS & COSETTE

O love! Light of two minds which comprehend each other perfectly. (COSETTE *hears the voice, and at first is startled, but then continues to read and walk and search for where he might be, which part of the garden wall he is hiding behind.*)

Love, once discovered, becomes as vital as air. (Still unseen, she realizes who it must be and she can tell they are speaking the same words together) If our love vanishes, the air fails us, we stifle, we suffocate, we die.

(MARIUS *comes to the gate so he can be seen through the bars.*)

MARIUS

Lack of love is the asphyxiation of the soul.

(*Staring at each other through the bars face to face, MARIUS starts speaking quickly because he is so nervous*)

Do you remember the day we first locked eyes?

COSETTE

I remember every day we've shared.

MARIUS

When we first smiled.

COSETTE:

When we first mouthed words to each other.

MARIUS

When you left me your handkerchief on the bench.

COSETTE

My father dropped the handkerchief; it was his. But it was cute watching you caress it thinking it was mine.

MARIUS

What?

COSETTE

It was adorable, I loved it.

MARIUS

You mean the whole time I was smelling it and kissing it...

COSETTE

(she cuts him off)

But did you really think I smelled like a man? And the kissing? I mean I suppose if you were going to love a man, you could do worse. *(MARIUS gasps)* Look at your face! Here, come here. *(COSETTE reaches through the bars and takes his hand)* I know you can fit because you left the letter. That took courage. I'm impressed.

MARIUS

Yes, well, I knew the handkerchief was your father's, I just wanted to make you laugh.

COSETTE

Oh it was intentional was it?

MARIUS

Completely

COSETTE

And the letter of deep and undying love for a woman you've never spoken to?

MARIUS

I...

COSETTE

Was lovely. Just a bit unexpected. It is uncanny. I feel like I already know you.

MARIUS

Like we've talked before.

COSETTE

Like this was supposed to happen.

MARIUS

Meant to be. The thought confirmed by the feeling.

COSETTE

But can feelings be trusted?

MARIUS

You don't think this is real?

COSETTE

I want it to be. I just wish it were easier to know who you can trust. Trust entirely. Who you can open yourself up to and be rewarded for it.

MARIUS

I have some friends I trust like that. I believe my father would have been like that.

COSETTE

Would have?

MARIUS

He died before I really knew him. I thought he'd abandoned me, that he was a coward. I found out too late he was a hero. I wasted so much time hating him.

COSETTE

Same story. (MARIUS *looks at her, intrigued*) My father can be trusted like that. He loves me more than anything in the world, more than his own happiness, and he's not even my real father.

MARIUS

He's not?

COSETTE

No. He thinks I don't know. He thinks that just because I don't talk about it, that I've forgotten the dark hell I lived in before he came and took me.

MARIUS

What happened?

COSETTE

Let's just say I learned the one nice thing about darkness, it makes it easier to recognize the light.

MARIUS

He was light?

COSETTE

He was a light.

MARIUS

He sounds amazing.

COSETTE

He is. Someday he'll see it.

MARIUS

Hmm?

COSETTE

That he's not broken.

MARIUS

You're going to bring peace to the storm? Add my grandfather to the list. Politics have made him angry, spiteful, vengeful. He used to be better. I wish I could...

COSETTE

Bring peace to the storm.

(She rests her head on his shoulder and their conversation continues)

BISHOP

When Cosette and Marius each saw how good the other was, the walls came down. These two hearts poured themselves into each other, so that at the end of an hour it was as if they shared one soul. When they had finished, when they had told each other everything, Cosette laid her head upon his shoulder and asked him.

COSETTE

What is your name?

MARIUS

Marius, Marius Pontmercy. And yours?

COSETTE

I'm Cosette.

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SIDE SCENE: Her Name

Location: Street

(Friends of the ABC walking and joking)

COURFEYRAC

Would you believe it, Enjolras? Marius comes home nowadays at one o'clock in the morning.

ENJOLRAS

Marius, you know we must rest well each night. The revolution is imminent!

COMBEFERRE

Let him love and be loved.

GRANTAIRE

Every young man has his wild oats. Some of us just choose to ferment them.

COURFEYRAC

Come now, my boy, confess.

ENJOLRAS

All right Marius, tell us all her name.

GRANTAIRE

It's Ursula, isn't it! The good ones are always named Ursula.

(MARIUS sits gazing up thinking of her, in silence.)

COMBEFERRE

Monsieur Marius Pontmercy, address: Heaven, kingdom of Dream, province of Hope, capital city: love.

COURFEYRAC

Her name!

GRANTAIRE

Ursula it is!

MARIUS

Not Ursula, but I'm afraid I can't tell you her name, Grantaire, for it is too pure to be uttered by a mouth as filthy as yours.

ALL

Oooooh!!!

COMBEFERRE

Down with the drunk and up with the poet! *(lines over each other)*

ENJOLRAS

Oh, she must be a fine woman indeed!

COURFEYRAC

She has ensnared the best of us.

COMBEFERRE

No man deserves it more. We're happy for you.

ENJOLRAS

To love... and the Republic!

ALL

The Republic!

(Marius leaves to go see Cosette)

ENJOLRAS

The nineteenth century was grand, but the twentieth century will be happy.

COURFEYRAC

Hear, hear!

ENJOLRAS

There will be nothing more like the old history. Men will not fear as they do now, a conquest, an invasion, a rivalry of nations, peace dependent upon a marriage of royal blood, the birth of an heir, a combat of two religions meeting head-on, like two rams of darkness on the bridge of infinity.

Too much?

You're my best friends. I want a thousand more nights like tonight. I want to revel in your poetry, Combeferre.

Wonder at your wit Courfeyrac. And laugh hysterically at your embibed sarcasm Grantaire.

(They all embrace, every one exits except Enjolras)

Sleep well tonight my brothers. For tomorrow, tomorrow we bring the dawn.

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 12: Thieves

Location: Garden and gate outside the house on Rue Plumet

(MARIUS is whistling as he strolls up the street.)

EPONINE

Good evening, Monsieur Marius.

MARIUS

(scared he's been caught) Who's there?! Eponine?

EPONINE

Mademoiselle, in my new dress.

MARIUS

(looking through the gate into the garden)

Nice.

EPONINE

Aren't you happy to see me?

MARIUS

Sure.

EPONINE

Did I, did I do something wrong?

MARIUS

No, you're fine.

EPONINE

Well, I, *(trying to turn it flirtatious)* I thought that you should know...

MARIUS

Know what?

EPONINE

My father is planning...

MARIUS

Good luck with your father. I wish you both well. I need to go.

EPONINE

I thought you might smile if I helped...

(MARIUS sneaks into the garden, EPONINE steps just inside the grating, as men enter the scene with THÉNARDIER. EPONINE hides from them, but we can see her face, see her making the decision as they talk to help the one she loves, even though she is not loved back.)

THÉNARDIER

This is the house.

MAN 1

How do we get in?

MAN 2

Is there a dog in the garden?

MAN 3

The grating looks old.

MAN 4

So much the better—it will be easier to cut.

(They walk up to the gate and grab a file to start cutting through one. EPONINE makes herself visible.)

EPONINE

Fine evening to go back home and have a drink don't you think?

THÉNARDIER

Who is this creature?

MAN 1

Your daughter!

THÉNARDIER

'Ponine? What are you doing here? Are you crazy?

EPONINE

I am here, darling father, because I miss you and, I wanted to help.

THÉNARDIER

You can help by leaving. We have enough for the job. The old man who lives here is a millionaire.

EPONINE

Was! Used to be. He must have squandered it all because I already searched this house, nothing there.

THÉNARDIER

Then we'll check the garden, maybe he's buried it.

EPONINE

The garden, but. *(Peeks behind her checking on MARIUS)*

Hug me instead father! *(EPONINE forcefully embraces THÉNARDIER.)*

It's been so long. You are out of prison then?

(THÉNARDIER tries to free himself from EPONINE's arms.)

THÉNARDIER

Yes, I escaped. Prison was a nuisance. So are you. Be off.

(EPONINE does not loosen her arms one bit. Looks behind to make sure MARIUS is safe and unseen)

EPONINE

You're so genius father, how did you do it? Tell me about it!

THÉNARDIER

Gavroche got me out. (*Pushing past her*)

EPONINE

Family, yes. Where is mother? Give me some news of mama.

THÉNARDIER

Your mother is, I don't know; leave me alone, I tell you be off.

EPONINE

But, dear father, I have done you a great service. The man who lives here volunteers with the National Guard. You would risk imprisonment for nothing. (THÉNARDIER *tries to move past her*) I swear to you that there is nothing in this house. (*Calling out louder*) The garden is empty.

THÉNARDIER

Well. (*Shoves her aside*) Thanks for the reconnaissance, we'll take it from here.
(THÉNARDIER *walks past EPONINE, and the men go to follow him.*)

EPONINE

Well, I... (*Looking back toward MARIUS again*) I won't have it.
(*All the men stop.*)

If you take one more step I'll scream. I will awake the whole street; I shall fetch the police myself and have all of you arrested.

MAN 2

She's serious.

THÉNARDIER

She wouldn't do it.

MAN 3

I think she would.

EPONINE

I'll make sure they arrest you first Father! Do I look scared? I know what kind of men you are, you have no idea the kind of woman I am.

(THÉNARDIER *tries to push past her*. EPONINE *screams*. *All men start to run.*)

THÉNARDIER

Quick—into the sewer!

MAN 2

Have you got the key with you?

THÉNARDIER

Always.

(THÉNARDIER *and men all exit*, MARIUS *runs out of the garden, running into EPONINE.*)

MARIUS

‘Ponine, what are you doing? Her father must have heard, he will catch me!

COSETTE

(*COSETTE unseen*) Marius what was that?

EPONINE

My father was here, I had to scream to save... to save you.

MARIUS

Me? Eponine, you screamed, to save me. (*MARIUS hugs EPONINE*). Thank you. Thank you! (*They hear VALJEAN opening the door to come out*)
(*Whispering loud into the garden*) Cosette, It was thieves. I’ll make sure they’re gone. I’ll be back tomorrow
(*To Eponine*) Eponine take my hand, we have to run. Run!

(*MARIUS and EPONINE both disappear as VALJEAN comes out.*)

VALJEAN

Who was it? An officer, a police inspector? Who was here? Have they found us?

COSETTE

Found us? Why would a police inspector be looking for us? No. It was... burglars. I saw them trying the gate, and I... I screamed. But nothing to worry about, Papa. It was probably just kids, looking for some food to steal.

VALJEAN

(*muttering to himself*) Javert, it’s always Javert. They were probably his spies, just like that young man in the Luxembourg.

COSETTE

Father it’s all right, nothing has happened, no one has found us.

VALJEAN

There is so much I should have told you, my past, Inspector Javert. He doesn’t stop, he never stops. He’ll never... Cosette, pack your clothes.

COSETTE

What?!

VALJEAN

One trunk only. I will settle our affairs. Go, go pack.

COSETTE

No. Please no.

VALJEAN

We don't have a choice.

COSETTE

I pack a trunk, you grab your inseparable little box, and we run again?

VALJEAN

What would you do if I were taken?

COSETTE

Taken where? By whom?

VALJEAN

I promise I'll explain once we are safe.

COSETTE

No. Not again. I am done running.

VALJEAN

This is not up for debate!
(*COSETTE runs into the house crying.*)

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 13: Building the Barricade

Location: Street, then the barricade in front of the ABC cafe

BISHOP

The third of June, 1832; Paris was like a bomb just waiting for a spark to ignite the fuse. That spark was the death of General Lamarque. The people's man, killed by the king, and then paraded about as the King's faithful servant. At Lamarque's funeral, Marius and his friends weren't the only ones to rise up in revolt. They were joined by students of law and medicine. Professors and Poets. Refugees from Spain, Italy, Germany, and Poland. Together they stood, facing the soldiers escorting the coffin. Tension rising on both sides, until finally...
(*gunshot*)

COURFEYRAC

For the Republic!

ALL

Republic!

(commotion and gunshots)

ENJOLRAS

Quickly now, just like we planned. Get to the wine shop. Everyone to your barricades!

GAVROCHE

To the barricade!

MARIUS

Gavroche, what are you doing here? Get back to your statue, you'll get shot!

GAVROCHE

You're twice my size, who do you think'll get hit first, eh?

ENJOLRAS

Citizens of France, join us! Join us in Chanvverie road. Bring your carts, your wagons, your barrels. Break up the road and pile the paving stones!

(JAVERT approaches, dressed in common clothing)

JAVERT

I have a cart; I can carry all the paving stones you need.

ENJOLRAS

Thank you, citizen, bring it along. Courfeyrac, lead this man to our barricade. He has donated his cart and his arm to the Republic.

COMBEFERRE

What did I tell you Enjolras. See! The people will rise. They are joining us already! We won't even have to fight, the people will see the light and make peace!

(EPONINE dressed as a man, joins the ranks of revolutionaries)

EPONINE

Republic!

ENJOLRAS

The king may have more bullets, more soldiers, and more guns. But we, we have the people. We have the tide. We will see the Republic reborn.

(VOLUNTEER starts fighting with a citizen who doesn't want to be involved in the battle)

VOLUNTEER

Give it to me now!

CITIZEN

You have no right to my property. Let go!

(VOLUNTEER rips the gun from the citizens hands)

VOLUNTEER

It's the Revolution and we...

CITIZEN

I'm not part of your revolution. Give me my gun back.

COMBEFERRE

Now now, we don't force anyone. Monsieur we are grateful for your help but this isn't how we do things.

VOLUNTEER

If you aren't with us, you're against us. (*Points the pistol at the CITIZEN*)

COMBEFERRE

What are you— Put that away. Enjolras help me.

(COURFEYRAC and ENJOLRAS run to try to stop it. VOLUNTEER shoots and kills the citizen with his own gun)

VOLUNTEER

(yelling) For the Republic!

COMBEFERRE

NO! No this can't be happening. (*Picking up the man who was shot*). Live! Please live! Enjolras why? Why would he just...

(ENJOLRAS grabs VOLUNTEER by the shoulder from behind and forces him to his knees)

ENJOLRAS

Courfeyrac, Bind him.

(COURFEYRAC ties VOLUNTEER's hands)

VOLUNTEER

What? I am one of you. I did it for the Republic!

COURFEYRAC

A Republic is not lawless. We use guns because we have to, not because we want to.

ENJOLRAS

We cannot let this stand. We cannot start this way.

COMBEFERRE

If the people think this is what we are about, we are lost. We won't last the night. What do we do?

ENJOLRAS

The only thing we can do. (Turning to VOLUNTEER) On your knees!

VOLUNTEER

Pardon, please! I won't do it again

ENJOLRAS

I know you won't. Pray if you like, you have 10 seconds left to live.

COMBEFERRE

Enjolras give him a chance, he can change. People change all the time. If we could just speak sense to him, show him there's a better way.

(ENJOLRAS shoots him dead. COMBEFERRE is inconsolable. Both COURFEYRAC and MARIUS go to hold him and help him)

ENJOLRAS

Throw that outside. *(2 others drag him off stage)*

We are the priests of the Republic, our conduct must be above reproach. I abhor what I have done, but his fate may soon be mine.

COURFEYRAC

We will share your fate.

ENJOLRAS

So be it. In executing that man, I obeyed necessity; but necessity is a monster of the old world. Love, is the future. Death, I use thee, but I hate thee. Citizens, we will create a world with no place for ferocious ignorance, and no need to return blood for blood. In the future no man shall slay his fellow, the earth shall be radiant, the human race shall love. It will come, citizens, that day when all shall be harmony, light, joy, and life. We will make it so. Join me. Come with me and we will make a world worth celebrating. To the barricade!

COURFEYRAC, MARIUS, EPONINE, GAVROCHE, GRANTAIRE, COMBEFERRE, ALL MEN
(said all together) To the Barricade!

ACT TWO

SCENE 1: A Mouse Catches a Cat

Location: The Barricade

ENJOLRAS

It's been hours. We need information. I have to know what's going on on the other side of that barricade. You! Little boy, what's your name?

GAVROCHE

Little yourself! (ENJOLRAS *gives him a look.*) Gavroche, my good man, at your service.

ENJOLRAS

Gavroche, are you willing to help us?

GAVROCHE

Does a dog eat it's own vomit?

ENJOLRAS

Touché. You're small. Which is perfect. Nobody will see you. Go over the barricade, glide along the houses, look about the streets, and come back and tell me how many soldiers there are, and where they are hiding.

GAVROCHE

I'm in! Trust the little folks, distrust the big ones. You see that big fellow there?

ENJOLRAS

The man who brought the cart? Yes.

GAVROCHE

He's a spy.

ENJOLRAS

Are you certain?

GAVROCHE

Two weeks ago, he caught me nipping wallets over on Royal Bridge. He's the chief inspector.

ENJOLRAS

Good lad. I'll take care of him; you go spy for the good guys.

(*to JAVERT*)

Citizen, what is your profession?

(*JAVERT sees Gavroche running out, assesses the situation.*)

JAVERT

That's it then, isn't it? I am and forever shall be a proud officer of the government.

ENJOLRAS

Your name?

JAVERT

Inspector Javert of the Paris Prefecture of Police and faithful servant of his majesty King Louis XVIII

ENJOLRAS

Men! Take this spy, search him, collar him, bind him, and tie him to that post. If we shall lose this fight, use your last round to shoot him.

JAVERT

Why not do it now?

ENJOLRAS

We are economizing powder.

JAVERT

Then do it with a knife. Traitor.

ENJOLRAS

Spy, we are judges, not assassins. We do not stoop as low as police. Some men still have honor.

COMBEFERRE

Enjolras we can't use that boy. He can't be here.

ENJOLRAS

He saved us from that spy!

COMBEFERRE

He's a child, If something happens to him, his blood is on our hands.

MARIUS

I can get him to leave, he knows me. He trusts me.

COMBEFERRE

Thank you Marius.

(GAVROCHE *leaps back into the scene*)

GAVROCHE

Where's my gun? They're right behind me!

MARIUS

Who?

GAVROCHE

The whole bloody French army! They are headed this way. Cannons and all!

MARIUS

Well done Gavroche, well done. That was a brave thing you just did; I need you to do one more, and its very important. Take this letter. Take it to the house your sister showed me. Take it to Cosette, the Lark, at number 55, Plumet street. Take it to her now, before the battle begins!

GAVROCHE

But if I do that, I'll miss all the fighting! How about I leave in the morning?

MARIUS

It will be too late. She has to get that letter tonight. There will probably be fighting tonight, so best not to come back. The barricade may be completely surrounded. You can help us, help us all. Go, right away! For the Republic.

GAVROCHE

Republic my ass

BISHOP

(Interrupting) Ahem! Gavroche may have been better than his parents, but he still had a mouth.

(Lights down on barricade, side scene.)

He ran the letter to the address as quickly as possible.

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 2: The Letter Delivered

Location: Street outside the house on Rue Plumet

VALJEAN

Little boy, what are you doing out so late?"

GAVROCHE

Little yourself! (*VALJEAN is taken aback*) What are YOU doing out so late?

VALJEAN

(Chuckles) I came out to see what all the noise was downtown.

GAVROCHE

Why it's the Revolution. The barricades are built and we're gonna have ourselves a Republic, don't you know nothing?

VALJEAN

You're building barricades and fighting the French Army? How old are you?

GAVROCHE

Nearly twelve

VALJEAN

Eleven years old, already fighting.

GAVROCHE

I'm looking for house number seven.

VALJEAN

What do you want with number seven?

GAVROCHE

I've got a letter for Mademoiselle Cosette.

VALJEAN

That's my daughter, give it here, I'll take it to her.

GAVROCHE

That's right decent of you. (*Handing over the letter.*)

(VALJEAN *hands* GAVROCHE *a large coin.*)

GAVROCHE

Now look here, Monsieur Bourgeois. You can't corrupt me—keep your blood money!

VALJEAN

It isn't blood money, it's a debt I owe, paid forward.

GAVROCHE

So, you're not paying me off to stop breaking streetlamps?

VALJEAN

Break all you like.

GAVROCHE

You're a fine fellow. That letter comes from Monsieur Marius at the barricade in Chanvrière Road. You take that to Cosette, I'm headed back to the barricade. There's gonna be a row the size you ain't never seen when the army attacks. Good night, citizen.
(GAVROCHE *runs off.*)

VALJEAN

(Reading) My dearest Cosette, I told you once that you are my angel, that I couldn't live without you. I have no fortune, no home. I asked my grandfather for funds to wed you, and he refused. So I stand with my friends, knowing that I cannot be with you, and thus I will die. If you wish to see my body, hopefully they will take my remains to my grandfather Gillenormand's home: No. 6, Calvary Street. By the time you read this, it will be morning, and my soul will already be near you, smiling down on you.

BISHOP

It had been ten years since the trial. Ten years since Valjean chose to save that other man's life.

VALJEAN

(*looking up to heaven*) Arras was different, that man was accused of being me, he would have suffered for my crimes. This... not my crime, not my cross to bear.

BISHOP

But the letter to Cosette wasn't the only one he had found that night.

(*VALJEAN pulls out another letter from his pocket*)

VALJEAN

(*reading from the letter*) "My beloved Marius. Alas, my father wishes to leave immediately. We are moving tonight to Rue de la Arme No. 7. In a week we shall be in London. Find me. I will wait for you forever.
COSETTE."

What does she see in him? A rabble rouser. A revolutionary. He's going to get himself killed anyway. If I just put these letters in my pocket by tomorrow morning... it's over.

(*VALJEAN puts the letters in his pocket, goes in the house, and the BISHOP watches him astounded and sad. Then we see VALJEAN come back out of the house with a gun and run toward the barricade.*)

Damn candlesticks. That Bishop will be the death of me.

(*The BISHOP smiles, satisfied.*)

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 3: Revenge not Taken

Location: The Barricade

GAVROCHE

CANNON!

ENJOLRAS

Everyone down!
(*cannon fire*)

COURFEYRAC

Well, I'll be, the barricade held! Our barricade can take a cannon shot!

GRANTAIRE

We should all take a shot. To the wine shop!

ENJOLRAS

Keep your positions. Gavroche, Thank you, we are once again in your debt.

MARIUS

Gavroche, who told you to come back? Did she get the letter?

GAVROCHE

Citizen, I delivered it to the house; she will get the letter when she wakes up.

MARIUS

Gavroche, you have to leave. This is dangerous. you're just a boy.

GAVROCHE

Little people can be useful from time to... Marius, behind you!

(*A French soldier had climbed the barricade and is about to fire in on the men. EPONINE, dressed as a man, runs up and puts her hand on the end of the soldier's rifle as it goes off. She falls at the foot of the barricade.*)

ENJOLRAS

Shoot him, shoot him now!

(*COMBEFERRE fires at and kills the soldier on the top of the barricade.*)

COURFEYRAC

You (*pointing to a revolutionary*) watch the top of the barricade for more! Marius, Marius, are you all right?

MARIUS

I'm, I'm fine. I wasn't hit. Someone... someone grabbed the gun at the last moment, and I wasn't hit.

ENJOLRAS

Everyone to your positions! Sentries on the second floor of the cafe, do your jobs—we can't afford to lose a single man.

GAVROCHE

(Singing faintly in the background off stage while the dialogue continues)

Men are ugly in Nanterre,
'Tis the fault of Voltaire.
And they're dull in Palaiseau,
'Tis the fault of Rousseau.
Kick a soldier in the rear
A girly cry is all you hear
Try to grab him by the pair
Empty hands there's nothing there!

EPONINE

(Whisper) Monsieur Marius, Monsieur Marius. At your feet. Do you not know me?

MARIUS

No.

EPONINE

Mademoiselle Eponine.

MARIUS

Eponine? How did you end up here? What are you doing?

EPONINE

I am dying.

MARIUS

You are wounded! Wait, I will carry you into the wine shop! They will dress your wounds!
(He takes her hand and tries to lift her.)

EPONINE

(Sounds of pain) Don't, don't, it hurts too much!

MARIUS

But I only touched your hand. *(Looks at it.)* What happened?

EPONINE

Did you see a musket aimed at you?

MARIUS

Yes, and a hand stopped it.

EPONINE

That was mine.

MARIUS

People don't die from a shot in the hand. I'll carry you; you'll be all right.

EPONINE

The ball went in through my hand, but it went out through my back. Will you just sit with me?

MARIUS

Of course, I will, 'Ponine you saved my life, I would do anything for you.

EPONINE

Oh! How good you are. I was worried when I showed you her house that you would love her. I hoped you might still have some love left for me.

MARIUS

I have, I do.

EPONINE

It's okay. I came here to save you, because I love you, and I don't need you to love me back. My parents taught me to always expect something back, always bargain. I don't believe that. I love because I choose to, not because it's returned. (*painful anguish*) There's my brother. I can hear him singing. Yes, he is singing my requiem. I do have a dying wish.

MARIUS

Anything.

EPONINE

Save my brother, and if you would, kiss me on the forehead when I am dead. I shall feel it.
(GAVROCHE's *singing fades out.*)

MARIUS

I promise to do both.
(EPONINE *dies*, MARIUS *kisses her on the forehead, and sets her down gently.*)
(*gunshot*)

COMBEFERRE

Gavroche, get back inside the barricade, you'll be shot!
(MARIUS *hears this and rushes to try to fulfill his second promise.*)

GAVROCHE

Citizen, I am filling my basket.

COURFEYRAC

Come back! They are loading the cannon with grapeshot and shrapnel. You'll never survive!

GAVROCHE

Shortly!

(gunshot)

You said you need more ammunition. I'll get it off the bodies and be back faster than a gnat farts.

(GAVROCHE dodges another gun shot, blows a raspberry at the French Army. Then starts singing again)

Kick a soldier in the rear

A girly cry is all you hear

(gunshot)

Try to punch him down below

'Nothing there

(gunshot, GAVROCHE falls injured)

COMBEFERRE

No. NO! He's been hit. A child! How can they shoot a child!

MARIUS

He can't die—I swore to save him! Courfeyrac, we must do something now.

ALL

(Yelling for GAVROCHE to get up, get back, wait for help, while he climbs the barricade.)

GAVROCHE

(GAVROCHE is climbing the barricade, basket in hand) I got it, I got the ammunition. *(MARIUS reaching down to him)*

I did what you asked. I'm a good boy, right?

(gunshot. Gavroche falls against the barricade, dead)

BISHOP

Within minutes of each other, both Thénardier children were gone. They wanted so dearly to be loved, to belong, that when they found it, when they found even a shred of respect, of love, they gave their lives to protect it.

COMBEFERRE

So much hate. They cut down a child? How can we win? How do we fight a moral battle against an immoral foe? Is it hopeless? Enjolras, is our cause hopeless?

ENJOLRAS

It is never hopeless. Even if we die, even if they are immoral now, and they win, there is still hope. People choose good everyday. People change, You'll see.

COURFEYRAC

Enjolras, we've spotted a man sneaking toward the barricade.

ENJOLRAS

Soldier or citizen?

COURFEYRAC

Hard to tell in the dark. He's spotted the small gap on the edge of the barricade, and he's headed there. Should we fire, or wait till he comes through and question him?

ENJOLRAS

(Looks at COMBEFERRE) Give him a chance. *(Louder)* Men, get your guns ready. A man is sneaking through the edge of the barricade. Don't kill him, but don't let him get a shot off either.

(VALJEAN enters, jumping to the ground through the small gap on the side of the barricade. All guns are then aimed at him.)

Citizen, what is your purpose? We'll have no more surprises, no more spies.

VALJEAN

I come to help.

MARIUS

Enjolras, it's okay. I know him.

ENJOLRAS

Your word is enough for me. *(To Valjean)* Citizen, you are welcome to join us, but know that our situation is bleak.

COURFEYRAC

It's lucky for you Marius recognized you; the last volunteer we had was a spy. That's him, tied to that post over there.

VALJEAN

That's not...?

COURFEYRAC

He's a police inspector. Last man standing is to shoot him before we die.

GRANTAIRE

Cannon!

(Cannon fire, then two men standing near the gap VALJEAN came through fall to the ground.)

MAN #1

I'm hit, oh it was grapeshot!

MAN #2

My leg, it's shredded.

COURFEYRAC

Dammit. The grapeshot bounced off the stone wall and ricocheted behind the barricade. We must close that gap!

VALJEAN

Can anyone lend me a double-barreled rifle?

ENJOLRAS

Here's mine, but it's useless against that cannon.

VALJEAN

As I came in I saw a mattress hanging in front of a window to protect the glass. If I can get the mattress down, we can put it in the gap, and it will prevent the ricochet of the grapeshot. I just have to shoot the rope holding it in place.

(VALJEAN *climbs the barricade, aims out, and takes a shot.*)

GRANTAIRE

What a shot!

VALJEAN

Cover me. (VALJEAN *runs out through the gap to grab the mattress.*)

ENJOLRAS

Men, cover him. Hurry, citizen, they are already reloading the cannon.
(*gunshots*)

COMBEFERRE

He's got it.

GRANTAIRE

He's coming back through the gap; the cannon is about to fire!

ENJOLRAS

Everybody down!

(VALJEAN *leaves the mattress in the gap and jumps to the ground as a cannon fires.*)

COURFEYRAC

Who's hit, did the grapeshot get through?

ENJOLRAS

There was no ricochet. He did it, the mattress worked!

COMBEFERRE

Glory to the mattress which nullifies a cannon!

ALL

Hear, hear!

ENJOLRAS

Citizen, the Republic thanks you. Grantaire, go in the Cafe and get this man a bottle; he deserves our thanks.

VALJEAN

You are the commander?

ENJOLRAS

Yes.

VALJEAN

You think that I deserve a reward?

ENJOLRAS

Certainly.

VALJEAN

I ask for one. (*Looking at JAVERT.*) To execute the spy myself.

JAVERT

How appropriate.

ENJOLRAS

So be it. Take the spy, but don't kill him in here. I don't want them finding his traitorous corpse along with ours. You can climb over the little barricade in the back. Execute him there.

(*VALJEAN takes out a pistol, cocks it, takes JAVERT, and starts to lead him out.*)

JAVERT

(*Over his shoulder*) You'll all be dead within an hour; your health is hardly better than mine.

VALJEAN

Walk.

(*VALJEAN and JAVERT cross to the side street, outside the view of those at the barricade*)

JAVERT

Take your revenge

(*VALJEAN puts his pistol under one arm and takes out a knife instead.*)

A knife! That suits you better.

(*VALJEAN cuts the rope securing JAVERT's hands.*)

VALJEAN

You are free.

(*JAVERT is surprised for the first time.*)

I don't expect to leave this place alive. Still, if by chance I survive, I live in Plumet Street, number 55.

JAVERT

Plumet Street?

VALJEAN

Number 55.

JAVERT

Fifty Five.

(JAVERT starts to leave but turns back.)

What trick is this? Kill me now; do not torture me like this.

VALJEAN

I am not that sort of man. Now go.

(JAVERT exits, VALJEAN points his pistol in the air and fires it. He goes back into the barricade.)

SCENE 4: Barricade's Last Stand

Location: The Barricade

BISHOP

Though the night was quiet, it was simply the eye of the hurricane. The other half of the storm was about to crash upon them. At dawn, hundreds of French soldiers assaulted the barricade followed by hundreds more, wave after wave. Drums beating, trumpets sounding, bayonets fixed, they slammed against the barricade like a battering ram.

GRANTAIRE

Courfeyrac, where's your hat?

COURFEYRAC

These men were kind enough to offer me some fresh air by blowing it off. Grab some more wine.

GRANTAIRE

I always knew you were a day drinker like me.

*(GRANTAIRE turns and runs onto the wine shop to grab a bottle.
gunshot kills COURFEYRAC who falls to the ground)*

COMBEFERRE

Courfeyrac no! Marius, Marius what do we do?

MARIUS

We die, taking as many of them with us as we can.

(Marius stands to fire above the barricade and is struck in the shoulder and falls to the ground. VALJEAN appears and picks up MARIUS and carries him behind the Cafe as three soldiers climb over the barricade)

COMBEFERRE

We don't have to kill each other. Violence doesn't have to be our end. We can lay down our weapons and
(all three fire at COMBEFERRE and he falls down dead.)

ENJOLRAS comes out of the Cafe with a rifle in each hand, shoots two soldiers dead and then stabs the third with the bayonet on the end of one rifle. Then 4 more soldiers come over the top of the barricade. GRANTAIRE comes out with a bottle of wine, and drops it to the ground. He looks at ENJOLRAS)

ENJOLRAS

This is the end my friend, we die for the Republic

GRANTAIRE

I never even believed in the Republic, I just wanted to stand with my friends.
(*gunshots, GRANTAIRE collapses dead*)

ENJOLRAS

I may be all that is left. But the Republic does not die with me. The people will rise.

SOLDIER

Men, take aim.
(*Three rifles cock.*)

ENJOLRAS

Long live the Republic!
(*Three gunshots, ENJOLRAS falls dead.*)

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 5: The Price of Repentance

Location: Sewer exit, Gillenormand's House, Notre Dame Bridge

BISHOP

Valjean had taken no part in the combat except to save others, and he never took his eyes off Marius. When Marius was hit Valjean carried him behind the wine shop. There he pried an iron grating from the ground and shimmied down into the sewer, pulling Marius in on top of him. Valjean carried Marius on his back through the most disgusting filth one can imagine. Multiple times the sewer floor had broken away and Valjean fell chest deep into the muck. After five hours Valjean was about to collapse. He could not carry the young man any further when he at last saw an outlet.

(*VALJEAN puts down MARIUS and tries to open the sewer grate. It is locked. He collapses. THÉNARDIER approaches the outside of the sewer grating, unlocks it, opens it, and shuts it again. VALJEAN is lying on the sewer floor with MARIUS.*)

THÉNARDIER

Go halves.

VALJEAN

What?

THÉNARDIER

How are you going to manage to get out? Impossible to pick the lock. So, we go halves.

VALJEAN

What do you mean?

THÉNARDIER

Obviously you have robbed this man, killed him, and you're hiding the body in this sewer. You need out, and I have the key to the grate. Give me half of his money, I will open the door for—

(Light shines enough on VALJEAN's face and THÉNARDIER recognizes him.)

Well well well. If it isn't monsieur threadbare millionaire, buyer of dolls, stealer of kids, and cheater of honest businessmen.

VALJEAN

I am nearly dead. Here is half of all he had.

THÉNARDIER

You think I'll open that grate for a few coins? You think I'm going to—

(THÉNARDIER hears footsteps outside the sewer; turns, and sees JAVERT, who had followed him. VALJEAN has not seen JAVERT.)

I'm a forgiving man, an understanding sort. You give me his coins, I'll open the grate, and we'll all be on our way. No hard feelings.

(THÉNARDIER takes all the coins, and visibly and audibly tears off a bit of MARIUS's coat. He opens the grate, letting VALJEAN lift MARIUS out, then THÉNARDIER closes it, locks it, and laughs as he runs away down the sewer. VALJEAN and MARIUS are on the ground, MARIUS still appears dead, VALJEAN is exhausted.)

JAVERT

You there. You're not the thief I followed down here. What was your business in the sewer? Who are you?

VALJEAN

I—

JAVERT

I said who are you?!

VALJEAN

Jean Valjean. Inspector Javert, you have got me. Since this morning I have considered myself your prisoner. I did not give you a false address, and I did not use the sewer to escape you. Take me. Only grant me one thing.

JAVERT

What are you doing here? Who is this man?

VALJEAN

This man is wounded and needs help. Do with me what you will, but first help me carry him home.

JAVERT

This man was at the barricade. This is he whom they call Marius. He is dead.

VALJEAN

No. Not yet.

JAVERT

Have you carried him all the way here from the barricade?

VALJEAN

Yes. He lives... I... I don't know where. Umm, he...he...wrote down a name and address on a letter.

(VALJEAN takes the letter out of his pocket and reads it.)

Here, his grandfather's name is Gillenormand. No. 6, Calvary Street.

JAVERT

Pick him up, we'll take him.

VALJEAN

You're going to let me help him?

JAVERT

I, I think perhaps... *(JAVERT calls out)* Driver!

(CARRIAGE DRIVER enters on foot.)

DRIVER

Yes, Inspector?

JAVERT

Gillenormand residence, No. 6 Calvary Street.

(VALJEAN and JAVERT pick up MARIUS and carry him toward the carriage offstage.)

DRIVER

I won't have that filth in my carriage. Look at 'em, they're disgusting.

JAVERT

I'll pay for the cleaning. Hop up, Calvary Street, number 6.

(JAVERT and VALJEAN carry MARIUS offstage. Sounds of a carriage. The sewer scene goes off, replaced by GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND's door. Carriage sounds stop. JAVERT walks up to the door and VALJEAN follows behind, carrying MARIUS alone. JAVERT knocks. Door opens by BASQUE, a servant.)

JAVERT

Someone named Gillenormand here?

BASQUE

This is his residence; what do you want with him?

JAVERT

His grandson went to the barricades and got himself killed. Go wake his grandfather, we have brought the body.

VALJEAN

Call for a doctor. He is still alive, but barely.

JAVERT

Take him inside. I'll wait for you in the carriage.

(JAVERT exits to the carriage offstage. GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND comes to the door and falls on Marius.)

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Marius! What happened? Oh, he has got himself killed at the barricade! In hatred of me! Because of me he did this! Misery of my life, he is dead! Pierced, stabbed, cut to pieces! Why? Why, Marius? Just live, please live.

MARIUS

Grandfather?

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Marius! My darling Marius! My dear grandson! He is opening his eyes. Look at me, you are alive, thank God! Thank God! Bring him in!

(VALJEAN helps carry MARIUS full into the house. We hear GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND doting on his grandson, we see VALJEAN come back outside alone. He closes the door and there is silence. He knows he is going to prison. He weeps for a moment and then decides to face his fate. We hear from offstage:)

JAVERT

Driver, Police Post #12 at Notre-Dame Bridge, Go!

(DRIVER calls to his horse and we hear them leaving. VALJEAN is left alone, realizing he has been set free. He exits. The house set is taken off, the Notre Dame bridge is brought on. Along with the lantern outside the poice post door. Sound of a fast-flowing river is heard.)

BISHOP

Seventeen years earlier, Valjean knocked on my door and inside he found mercy, the ability to change.

(JAVERT walks up to the door at the Police station and calls inside)

JAVERT

Officer please join me outside, I wish to dictate a letter for the prefect.

OFFICER

Yes Inspector

(Officer walks out with ink and parchment and sits on a bench and writes as Javert speaks)

JAVERT

Monsieur the Prefect,

I wish to report the following deficiencies which should not continue unaddressed.

First: When prisoners return from examination, they are forced to take off their shoes and remain barefooted upon the pavement while they are searched. This is cruel and... and... Many cough upon returning to the prison which incurs avoidable hospital expenses. To ensure the judicious use of budgetary funds, please correct this practice.

Secondly: The prison at Madelonnettes allows inmates to purchase chairs, and collects the fee, yet then forbids the prisoners having a chair, even after having paid for it. I can find no excuse for this behavior.

Thirdly: the prisoners called barkers make other prisoners pay two sous for calling their name distinctly at roll-call so they are not beaten or fined. This is theft. There is not a law specifically forbidding it, but this is wrong.

Fourthly: Cloth woven by prisoners is discounted ten sous. This is abuse on the part of the contractor, since the cloth is just as good. Convicts can do honest work, and they should be treated as well as any honest man.

Fifthly: The guards are every day heard relating, in the yard of the prefecture, the details of the prisoners accused crimes. This is gossip. It is the duty of officers to hold their prisoners personal lives sacred. Prisoners are still people.

Signed: "Javert, Inspector of the 1st class, Post #12 of Notre Dame Bridge, June 7th 1832, about 1 o'clock in the morning.

OFFICER

(OFFICER stands to go inside)

I'll write it up longhand and have it ready for the prefect in the morning sir.

JAVERT

Wait. *(JAVERT sits, and motions for the OFFICER to sit as well)* How old are you?

OFFICER

Twenty-one Sir

JAVERT

How many years on the force?

OFFICER

This is my second-year sir.

JAVERT

Thirty-three. I have been an officer for thirty-three years. Over half my lifetime. Fifteen years I worked as a prison guard in Toulon. Ever been to Toulon?

OFFICER

No sir

JAVERT

It is a harsh place. A place where you have to treat prisoners as enemies, or they may kill you. That's how it felt. A few did show me kindness, but I was convinced it was all an act, a façade to trick me and manipulate me.

OFFICER

Good to play it safe sir.

JAVERT

Was it? Thirty-three years of treating everyone as a possible threat.

OFFICER

Well we have to sir, only way to stay safe.

JAVERT

But I didn't just treat them as a possible threat. I treated them like they were evil. Condemned by their actions to suffer, but did they need to suffer forever?

OFFICER

Sir?

JAVERT

Why do we assume men don't change? Why do we have to label them once and never let the label be altered?

OFFICER

Well the best predictor of future behavior-

JAVERT

Is past behavior, I know.

OFFICER

Sir. We don't judge men, their actions speak for themselves.

JAVERT

Because the law is clear, absolute. There are statutes, and there are penalties for infractions.

OFFICER

Precisely. We don't have to interpret or judge. The law is the slab of granite. Men can stand on granite as a sure foundation, or

JAVERT and OFFICER

Shatter themselves fighting it.

OFFICER

It's the only way we can be so certain. We are on the side of justice.

JAVERT

And justice is blind.

OFFICER

Yes sir. That's why the statue is blindfolded.

JAVERT

That statue was carved as satire. It was meant as mockery. That justice closes its eyes, and doesn't care about intent, circumstance, or change. It doesn't see the person. Justice shouldn't be blind.

OFFICER

I'm not sure I understand sir.

JAVERT

His mistakes have been real. He was a thief, multiple times. He attempt escape, multiple times. He didn't have one bad moment; he lied, he hid, he broke parole, he was elected under a false name, threatened a police inspector, and just yesterday engaged in treason. His last act was aiding and abetting a fugitive.

OFFICER

Sir?

JAVERT

Why did he help that prostitute? Why save that man on trial? Why carry that boy through miles of sewer? Why save me? I've done nothing but chase him and work to arrest him. Why did he let me go?

OFFICER

Who?

JAVERT

What if there is a crack in the granite?

OFFICER

A crack?

JAVERT

What if the law isn't perfect? What if there is a flaw? The law is good, but incomplete?

OFFICER

I mean what else is there?

JAVERT

What else is there. What is missing? What completes justice?

OFFICER

Mercy?

JAVERT

Mercy. Mercy is doubt. Mercy is weakness. Mercy, is what he gave me, and I cracked, and gave it back. We are officers. We are not weak, we do not doubt, we just enforce every law, every time.

OFFICER

Of course. We can't just pick and choose which laws to enforce when. An officer who does that isn't following the law.

JAVERT

No, no he's not. (*JAVERT stands, and the OFFICER stands in response*) He's breaking it.

OFFICER

Chin up sir. We have the law. (*OFFICER turns and walks in while saying*) Men can stand on granite as a sure foundation. (*OFFICER closes the door*)

JAVERT

Or shatter themselves fighting it.

(*Javert looks down at his chest and takes off the badge. He holds it almost reverently. JAVERT then sets his police badge on the ground and stomps his foot hard on top of it shattering it. He then walks across to the bridge, steps up to the top rail and turns and falls backwards into the river*)

(BLACKOUT)

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 6: Old and Young Reconcile / Questions

Location: Gillenormand's House

(*MARIUS is in bed recovering, still wearing a bandage or two. GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND is ladling him soup.*)

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Soup is fine for a man beginning his convalescence. But you're strong now – I call for steak!

MARIUS

Grandfather.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Call me Papa

MARIUS

Grandfather, it is time for me to say something to you. It has been months. I am able to walk, and I am nearly able to get back to work. I asked you before, but I do not ask your permission now. I tell you emphatically, I will wed Cosette.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Foreseen! (big laugh)

MARIUS

Foreseen? How?

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAN

She comes with her father every day to check on you. Who do think has made all these bandages? You want her? You shall have her! I say have steak, and you say you wish to marry. If only I had known it was so easy. (calling out to his servant) Basque!

MARIUS

Oh, thank you Papa! Thank you.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Of course, my boy. Of course.
(*BASQUE enters*)

BASQUE

Yes Monsieur?

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

He called me Papa! Send for Mademoiselle Cosette immediately.

BASQUE

Mademoiselle Cosette was just leaving Monsieur. She and Monsieur Ultimus just delivered wine, bandages, and an overly perfumed letter. (*Holds up letter*) Seemingly from the lady, but not my place to assume.

MARIUS

Stop them!

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Basque, get them back you fool, run!

(*BASQUE exits quickly to get them*)

Marius my boy, you shall have the grandest wedding purchasable in Paris. A lady as refined and demure as Cosette will no doubt require...

(*COSETTE runs in the room and bumps into GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND as she leaps to the bed and starts kissing Marius vigorously and repeatedly. BASQUE and GILLENORMAND look at each other awkwardly and GILLENORMAND motions for them to leave and they slink from the room quickly and quietly*)

Basque, lights.

(BLACKOUT)

BISHOP

There was a young man named Thomas who lived here years ago as an ambassador from America, He kept talking about our rights to life liberty and the pursuit of happiness. He was smart, well intentioned, and wrong. You can't pursue happiness. It only exists here and now. Whatever you think will bring happiness in the future, it won't. Yes, live the commandments, get married, have children, make money, help the poor. All of those things will help the world and transform who you are...and they will give you new and exciting things to be happy about. But they won't make you happy. You can't pursue happiness, for the moment you attain that thing you pursued. You will seek something new. Cosette found love. And with her love secure, she found a new quest to pursue.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Are we going to have to postpone the wedding? I mean when is she coming back?

MARIUS

She'll be back in time. But what would you do if you had a hole in your memory, a blank section of time, unaccounted for? Days you can't remember?

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

I'm Ninety-one years old, do you have any idea how many days I can't remember?

MARIUS

I have to know what happened at the barricade

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

That horrible day.

MARIUS

I remember the little boy Gavroche, his sister Eponine. Combeferre, Courfeyrac, Grantaire, and Enjolras. There was someone else. Someone carried me away from the barricade and put me in a cabriolet and brought me here to your home. I must find him. I must thank him.

GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND

Cosette doesn't need to spend her days asking questions in the underbelly of Paris. Basque can find out for us, I'll send him right up.

(GRANDFATHER GILLENORMAND leaves and BASQUE enters)

MARIUS

Basque!

BASQUE

Yes Monsieur?

MARIUS

Remember the day I was brought here from the barricades?

BASQUE

Yes Monsieur

MARIUS

Who was it that brought me here?

BASQUE

A police officer and a man covered in mud.

MARIUS

A police officer? There must be a report. Find it! Please Basque, I have to know.

BASQUE

Yes Monsieur.

(As BASQUE exits he announces an arrival)

Mademoiselle Fauchelevent

COSETTE

Euphrasie! My birth name was Euphrasie! Paris, April 9, 1815 born to Father: Felix Tholomyes and mother: Fantine.

MARIUS

Euphrasie?

COSETTE

Don't you ever call me that. My mother was right to change it to Cosette.

MARIUS

Oh thank God. But how did you go from Euphrasie Tholomyes to Cosette Fauchelevent!

COSETTE

My mother and Ulimus must have changed it?

MARIUS

But when did they meet? Were they lovers? Friends?

COSETTE

He won't say, He respects her, and reveres her. But he doesn't answer questions

MARIUS

And if Felix and Fantine were raising you in Paris... How did you end up in Monfermeil with the Thenardiers?

COSETTE

There's one way to find out. (*MARIUS looks wide eyed at her*) It's only a few days travel, I'll be back by the end of the week.

(*COSETTE and MARIUS kiss and she exits. BASQUE enters*)

BASQUE

I'm sorry sir, I checked multiple precincts.

MARIUS

No police report? How is that possible? You said it was an officer that knocked on the door and brought me in that night.

BASQUE

A police officer was at the door indeed, but it was the large man covered in mud who carried you in.

MARIUS

(*muttering*) Who was he?

(*BASQUE exits and as he does he announces VALJEAN*)

BASQUE

Monsieur Fauchelevent

VALJEAN

Marius, I can't be on the marriage certificate. When you marry, there can't be any record of me.

MARIUS

But you're her father!

VALJEAN

If it makes it easier I'll pretend my hand is injured so I can't sign the papers. Her life needs to be perfect, whole, complete, without blemish.

MARIUS

But she loves you, you raised her. You make her happy!

VALJEAN

I have stolen these years of happiness. I was a thief all my life. I stole bread from a baker, a coin from a little boy, the name from an injured man. I won't steal her happiness. If you think I should see her less often, I will abide by your choice.

MARIUS

So what last name is she supposed to use?

(*VALJEAN exits. BASQUE enters*)

BASQUE

Mademoiselle Tholomyes?

COSETTE

Still Fauchelevent

BASQUE

As you wish

COSETTE

Fifteen-hundred Francs. He paid the Thenardiers fifteen hundred francs for me. The month I left with my father, was the same month Thenardier closed the Inn. His neighbors say he paid off his most violent creditors, stiffed the rest and moved to Paris.

MARIUS

But how did you get there?

COSETTE

People in the town had no idea. It's like I just appeared as a toddler at their Inn. Everyone assumed I was an orphan.

MARIUS

Did your mother or father leave you there? Where are they?

COSETTE

I think Felix vanished early, papa knows nothing of him. But when I mention my mother he weeps. She must have died. There must be records of her death. I'll search all the towns between Paris and Montfermeil.
(COSETTE exits and VALJEAN enters, he has a bandage on his hand)

BASQUE

Monsieur...Cosette's father?

VALJEAN

No. I'm not her father. I don't think I deserve that title.

MARIUS

Is she just supposed to call you Ultimus?

VALJEAN

That's not my name either.

MARIUS

Not your name?

BASQUE

Sir, Mademoiselle Cosette is coming up the stairs.

(VALJEAN begins to walk out) So much hiding. (VALJEAN exits)

As Cosette enters BASQUE announces)

BASQUE

Mademoiselle Fau...*(gets cut off)*

COSETTE

Valjean! *(BASQUE throws his hands in the air and walks out frustrated)* That's his name! Jean Valjean. There is a police report from Digne. After he was released from Toulon he was accused of stealing a pair of candlesticks from a Bishop, and a coin from a boy on the highway. He was brought up on charges a few years later in Arras and all charges were dropped thanks to a man named Mayor Madeleine. A reclusive millionaire who disappeared, his entire fortune vanishing with him. You don't think that's where Papa got his money? That Mayor saved him... he couldn't. He wouldn't.

MARIUS

Maybe he's not the man we think he is. Maybe we've been blinded from the bad because we only wanted to see the good. I mean is there any chance he killed the mayor, took his money, and that's where he got all the money he gives away?

COSETTE

We were always running from the police. There was one in particular who terrified my father. Inspector Javert.

MARIUS

What name was that?

COSETTE

Javert, the night before the revolution, someone tried to break into our house. My father became paranoid and irrational and started packing immediately. We had to move, that very night because it might be this officer, the one who would never stop hunting us, Inspector Javert.

MARIUS

Your father was there, that's who he killed.

COSETTE

Killed who?

MARIUS

Your father was at the barricade. I remember now. He helped us, so Enjolras offered him a reward of his choosing. There was an officer who'd been captured as a spy, and that was his name: Inspector Javert. Cosette, your father executed him. I was there.

COSETTE

He couldn't. He wouldn't have. That's not the kind of man he is! Marius it can't be true.

(COSETTE exits)

BASQUE

Monsieur Valjean

VALJEAN enters)

VALJEAN

Monsieur Marius, I received your letter. You're right (*cough*). I shouldn't attend the wedding. Cosette needs to move on. She needs to forget her life with me, and create a new one with you. I guess I can take the bandage off my hand, (*cough cough*) I'm too sick to attend anyway. I do want to do one more thing. I would like to give her a gift. (*Pulls out a cheap wooden box, not "The Inseparable"*) I would like Cosette to have her inheritance, everything I have saved over 64 years. Nearly 1 million francs. I earned it by...

MARIUS

No.

VALJEAN

No what?

MARIUS

No, we don't want your money. We don't want your gifts, we don't want your help. We are getting married tomorrow, and you are not invited, Now please leave, and don't come back.

SCENE 7: The Worst Reveals the Best

Location: Gillenormand's House

BISHOP

Why doesn't God eliminate the sinners? Why does he let them keep causing pain and misery, especially for the righteous? Well for one, I've never met a saint who didn't sin. And, even sinners spend most of their time doing good. (*THÉNARDIER knocks on the door. MARIUS, dressed in his wedding best, answers.*) Well, there are always exceptions.

MARIUS

It's all done now, the wedding is over, but we still have some food. Come in, come in! I'll get my grandfather for you.

THÉNARDIER

Monsieur Marius, it's you I wanted to speak with. I have a secret to sell you.

MARIUS

A secret?

THÉNARDIER

I'll start for free, but after that monsieur, you must pay.

MARIUS

And you are?

THÉNARDIER

A man with knowledge

MARIUS

Go on.

THÉNARDIER

You have in your house a robber and an assassin. This man has glided into your confidence, and almost into your family under a false name.

MARIUS

I am listening.

THÉNARDIER

His name isn't Ultimus Fauchelevant.

MARIUS

I know.

THÉNARDIER

Well, you know now because I told you. But the secret I have concerns a crime he recently committed. It is an extraordinary secret. Worth its weight in gold. I offer it to you for twenty thousand francs.

MARIUS

I know the secret as well as many others.

THÉNARDIER

You do? Of course you do you're a smart man. We'll make a deal, half price. Ten thousand francs, and I will go on.

MARIUS

You have nothing, there is no secret—I know all about him.

THÉNARDIER

Fine. Twenty francs for his name. Then we'll negotiate the price per secret, and they are both deliciously horrid.

MARIUS

His name is Jean Valjean.

THÉNARDIER

Of course a genius gentleman like yourself would know his name, but did you know he's a thief?

MARIUS

Yes! He robbed the mayor of Mon-Sur-Mer, took his whole fortune.

THÉNARDIER

Well that would be some trick, stealing from himself.

MARIUS

Himself?

THÉNARDIER

That old knave had been passing himself off as a Mayor for years. Richer than sin he was. But would he share it with me? No – that cheap prevaricator stole my little girl!

MARIUS

Your what?

THÉNARDIER

Sweet young thing had been left in my charge by her mother. He shows up one night, pays with a pittance and runs off with Cosette.

MARIUS

You're Thenardier?

THÉNARDIER

I see my reputation precedes me. Not only is he a thief but he's also a

MARIUS and THÉNARDIER

Murderer.

MARIUS

I know. He murdered Inspector Javert. He shot him the night the barricade fell. I know, I was there.

THÉNARDIER

Monsieur Marius, you are mistaken. Jean Valjean never killed Javert.

MARIUS

How is that?

THÉNARDIER

Javert killed himself.

MARIUS

What do you mean?

THÉNARDIER

Old bloke committed suicide. It was in the newspaper. The day after the barricade fell he jumped in the Seine and drowned. They found his body on the riverbank the next morning.

MARIUS

The day after the barricade fell? That means he let him go. Jean Valjean didn't execute Javert, he saved Javert! He is a hero! He is a saint!

THÉNARDIER

Uh-uh—he is no saint, and he's no hero. He may not have killed Javert, but he is a murderer. On the 6th of June 1832, about a year ago, the day after the attempted revolution, I was in the sewer near the river Seine. I came across a man carrying a corpse on his back. The man was an old convict, an assassin if ever there was one. He was going to throw this corpse into the river.

MARIUS

Go on.

THÉNARDIER

(More animated, seeing his interest) Well, Monsieur Marius, this secret is quite delectable. Certainly worth a thousand francs. The murderer said to me: "I must get out, you have the key, give it to me." He was a man of terrible strength. There was no refusing him. I stalled to give myself some time. I examined the dead man and managed to tear off, without being noticed, a piece of the dead man's coat—this piece here! A piece of evidence to help the police identify the victim and the criminal. I then let the man out with the corpse on his back. I knew the murderer. I'd recognize him anywhere. Jean Valjean.

(MARIUS takes the torn piece of cloth.)

MARIUS

(Shocked) You tore this from the dead man's coat?

THÉNARDIER

Had to have iron clad evidence—that old snake is slippery.

MARIUS

The corpse was me. I still own the torn coat. You wretched, lying, slandering scoundrel! You came to extort me by accusing this man? Here, take the money. Take your precious francs. GET OUT! *(calling out)* Basque!

THÉNARDIER

Um. Thank you, Monsieur. My eternal gratitude.

MARIUS

(BASQUE enters) I will not waste another minute with you. Basque?

BASQUE

Yes Monsieur?

MARIUS

Throw this trash out.

BASQUE

My pleasure sir.

(THÉNARDIER gets shoved out the door by BASQUE. MARIUS calls for COSETTE, who comes running into the room.)

MARIUS

Cosette! Cosette! Come quick! Let us go. Your father saved my life! He saved Javert. We have to go now.

COSETTE

What? What are you talking about?

MARIUS

Get a carriage, quick. (*Signaling to carriage offstage*) Driver! Plumet Street, number 55. Hurry!

COSETTE

My father saved your life?

MARIUS

Yes, your father! It was him. He saved me. He was the man covered in mud. He saved Javert! He saved you. He didn't rob mayor Madeliene he was mayor Madeleine. We have to get him and bring him. He shall never leave us again. Cosette, it all makes sense now!

-----SCENE
CHANGE-----

SCENE 8: Grace Accepted

Location : Valjean's Bedroom

(MARIUS and COSETTE running into VALJEAN's room. VALJEAN is in bed, the candlesticks and the small box called the inseparable are above him on a shelf.)

COSETTE

Father! Father we are here.

VALJEAN

Who is there, Cosette?

MARIUS and COSETTE

Father!

VALJEAN

I'm not your father. Your father's name was Felix.

COSETTE

Felix also named me Euphrasie. That's not my true name and conceiving me doesn't make him my true father.

VALJEAN

How did you...?

COSETTE

I was better at finding out the past than you were at hiding it.

VALJEAN

Then you know your mother was a...

COSETTE

Yes, I know what her last job was. I know the lengths she went to for me. And, I know she didn't entrust me to Felix, she entrusted me to you.

VALJEAN

But she didn't know, she didn't know my past. I never deserved ...

COSETTE

Deserve? None of us deserve, we do the best we can, and move on

VALJEAN

I stole a loaf of bread.

COSETTE

Bread? This is over bread? Your unforgivable sin... was stealing bread?!

VALJEAN

It's not about the bread. It's about the man I became from 19 years in prison.

COSETTE

You became the best man I've ever known.

VALJEAN

I don't deserve an angel as generous as you.

MARIUS

Generous, what about you? You saved me, you saved Javert. You probably stole the bread to feed beggars in the street.

VALJEAN

My sister's orphaned children.

COSETTE

Your great sin was feeding your orphaned nieces and nephews?

MARIUS

You talk about your past like it's a shameful awful secret, yet you hide the good. Cosette deserves to know what you've done, what kind of man you are.

COSETTE

He raised me. I know already.

MARIUS

Well, good then. Tomorrow you are moving in with us. Forever!

VALJEAN

Tomorrow I will not be here.

COSETTE

You shall never succeed in pushing us away again. We will not let you go. Thenardier told us everything. You need not hide, you need not fear. We love you, all of you. *(She takes his hand)* My God, father, your hands! They are like ice. Are you sick, are you suffering?

VALJEAN

No, no I am not suffering, but I am dying.

MARIUS

Dying?!

COSETTE

You shall live. You have to live.

VALJEAN

Yes, forbid me to die. Who knows? Perhaps I shall obey. I was just dying when you came.

MARIUS

You are a man full of strength and life—you cannot die!

COSETTE

You see? Marius forbids you to die as well.

VALJEAN

It is nothing to die; it is frightful not to live.

COSETTE

Do you want a priest?

VALJEAN

I have one. (*BISHOP visibly enters the scene, but unseen by anyone.*) A bishop, coming to take me to heaven. Marius, it is to you I must offer my last confession. I have not always loved you. In fact I hated you and cursed you out in private many times. Once I even prayed that... I ask your pardon.

MARIUS

It is I who ask your pardon.

VALJEAN

Cosette, open that little box, the one you call “the inseparable.” (*COSETTE opens it and holds up her childhood dress*) Do you recognize it? It was only ten years ago. You were so cold, so frightened. Do you remember the great doll? Catharine? You were such a bright little light. Your mother gave you to me, but I wonder if really she was giving me to you? Your light didn’t change the Thenardiers, but it did change me.

MARIUS

Thenardier! Do you know he tried to...

VALJEAN

Don’t. Yes they are wicked. But still, we must forgive them.

COSETTE

Forgive them?

VALJEAN

For our sakes, not theirs. We forgive others so we can heal, not because they’ve earned it.

COSETTE

But they are still monsters.

MARIUS

The worst kind of people imaginable.

VALJEAN

They never found a way out. They stayed in the misery in which they were born. They are Les Miserables. They taint everything they touch. Their children worked to escape it, and in some ways they succeeded. I’ve spent decades trying to escape my misery, nineteen years in prison. (*COSETTE pulls out the candlesticks*) I’ve been angry; even vengeful. Cosette, those two candlesticks I have carried for fifteen years. I deserved punishment and a kind Bishop gave me grace, invited me to be better. I hope he is satisfied with me. Those are the only two things I wanted to keep. The symbols of when I was given grace, and when I was given you. I’ve spent so much of my life hiding; hiding my time in prison, hiding my name, hiding my history. I’m not hiding anymore. I have been a bread thief, a galley-slave, a fraud. I have also been an uncle, a mayor, a gardener, a friend, and most importantly... (*VALJEAN takes Cosette’s hand and smiles*)

COSETTE

My father.

(*BLACKOUT*)

THE END