

SYNOPSIS

Weary with hunger and fatigue, forty-six-year-old Jean Valjean, a former convict, knocks at the door of Monseigneur Myriel, who offers him food and a warm bed. Friendless and nearly alone in the world, Jean has incriminated himself while trying to provide for his sister and her poverty-stricken family. During the night, the convict steals the bishop's silver candlesticks, but is caught. When the authorities return Jean to the scene of the crime, the bishop denies that Jean stole anything, presses him to take the silver plate as well, and blesses him as he departs, pledging his soul to God.

Jean travels to Montfermeil, near Paris, where he changes his life. Under the name of Father Madeleine, he revives the manufacture of jet jewelry with a new process and treats his employees with kindness and encouragement. He becomes mayor of the town and furthers his reputation by rescuing Fauchelevent, who is trapped under a cart. His feat of strength catches the eye of police inspector Javert, who recognizes the strong hands as those of Jean Valjean. Jean continues his role as Madeleine until word of the arrest of an innocent man for his own crimes causes Jean to reveal his identity in a courtroom at Arras.

He returns to Montfermeil. At the bedside of Fantine, a downtrodden woman who worked in his factory, Javert confronts Jean Valjean. Fantine, stricken with terror, dies; Jean Valjean blames Javert for her death. Returned to a prison galley, Jean Valjean saves a prisoner who dangles helplessly from a rope at the top of the mast, but fails to save himself. He falls into the sea and again escapes, leaving the impression that he drowned. Hurrying to an inn where Fantine's daughter lives in misery with cruel foster parents, the Thénardiens, he takes the little girl to Paris and begins a new life.

Jean Valjean is overjoyed to have Cosette as a daughter, but Javert continues to stalk him. Cornered in a blind alley, Jean Valjean and Cosette escape over a wall into the Convent of Petit Picpus, where Fauchelevent, the man whom he rescued in Montfermeil, serves as gardener. Grateful to Jean Valjean for his merciful deed, Fauchelevent aids him in establishing a new identity as his brother, Ultimus Fauchelevent. Jean becomes assistant gardener; Cosette attends school at the convent.

When Cosette grows into a young woman, she meets Marius, grandson of M. Gillenormand, an elderly but cantankerous tyrant. Deceived by his grandfather about his father's love for him, Marius leaves home and joins a group

of idealists. When the police again discover Jean, now known as M. Leblanc because of his snowy white hair, he and Cosette move to another residence. Marius searches for her. Although he finds her once more, their happiness is threatened by the violence in the streets. Jean Valjean once again plans to move Cosette to a safe residence, this time in London.

Jean, who has succumbed to jealousy, reads the couple's letters and realizes that Cosette loves Marius. He hurries to the barricades and attempts to protect her sweetheart. The battle between the royalists and the rebels rages in the streets. Many are killed, including a pathetic street urchin named Gavroche, who served as Marius's messenger. Jean has an opportunity to shoot Javert, whom the rebels capture and condemn for spying, but he chooses to let the police inspector go free.

When Marius is wounded, Jean shoulders the young man's body and hurries into an underground cistern which opens into a maze of dark passageways. Hurrying four miles through the sewers of Paris, Jean arrives at the Seine, weary with fatigue, hunger, and thirst, and is once again in the custody of the vigilant Javert.

Jean and Javert hire a carriage and return Marius to his grandfather's care. Javert, seeing the compassion and goodness in his quarry, lets Jean go. Overwhelmed by his act, Javert leaps into the Seine and drowns. Marius, unaware of the identity of his savior, slowly recovers his health and marries Cosette, whom Jean endows with a fortune. To save the young couple any embarrassment over his wretched past, Jean chooses to stay away from Cosette.

Thénardier, who comes seeking money, reveals to Marius the identity of his rescuer. Marius, realizing that he has wronged Cosette's stepfather, tells her the whole story of Jean Valjean's past. They hurry to his bedside, but arrive too late to renew their acquaintance with the frail old man. After wishing them happiness, he dies and is buried according to his dictates—beneath an unmarked stone in a neglected corner of Père-Lachaise Cemetery.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born in 1802, Victor Marie Hugo suffered an unsettled childhood because his father, General Joseph Léopold Hugo, a hero of the Napoleonic era, was absent much of the time on military business. Because his mother disdained the deprivations of distant outposts in Italy and Spain to which the family was assigned, in 1812 she took her three sons to Paris, where Victor, the youngest, began his first formal schooling. After his parents obtained legal separation, he

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attended boarding school. The boy quickly attained honor for his poetry in a national contest sponsored by the Académie Française in 1819.

Victor rejected legal training and devoted himself to literary study, particularly the poetry of Virgil. With his brothers, Abel and Eugène, he founded the *Conservateur Littéraire*, a literary magazine which served as an inspiration to the neophyte romantic movement. In 1822, after publishing his first collection of poems, *Odes et Poésies Diverses*, which won him an annual pension of 1,000 francs from Louis XVIII, Victor married Adèle Foucher, a neighbor's daughter whom he had loved from the time he was fifteen.

Attuned to the influence of romanticism, Victor Hugo's first novel, *Han d'Islande* (1823), imitated the example of the romantics with its emphasis on the macabre. It was followed the next year with *Nouvelles Odes*, and two years later by *Odes et Ballades*. The influence of romanticism by this time had eradicated his early interest in classical poetry, as is evident in *Les Orientales* (1829), a collection of exotic Middle Eastern verse, and *Les Feuilles d'Automne* (1831).

With the publication of *Hernani* (1830), a great financial success, Hugo established his reputation as a playwright. A string of popular dramas followed over the next thirteen years, during which time he also wrote *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831), one of his most popular works. About this time, he left his wife and formed a lifelong liaison with actress Juliette Drouet, who traveled with him as his secretary.

This high period in his career ended when the failure of *Les Burgraves*, his last drama, and a personal tragedy, the drowning of his daughter Léopoldine, deprived him of the will to continue working. To absorb his restlessness, he threw himself into politics and was elected to the legislature, where he arose to the post of deputy to the Constitutional Assembly.

With the *coup d'état* of 1851 and the return of the Empire, Victor Hugo, an outspoken republican, was forced to flee to Brussels, where he wrote scathing diatribes against the regime of Napoleon III, including his brilliant poems, *Les Châtiments* (1853). From 1855 to 1870, he lived on the islands of Jersey and Guernsey, where he completed *Les Misérables*, his masterpiece of social commentary. When the Third Republic was proclaimed in 1870, he returned triumphantly to Paris and received the gratitude of an adoring public.

His last years were filled with more losses, the deaths of two of his sons, his wife, and his mistress. Broken in health, he was forced to give up his senatorial post in 1878 and retire to Guernsey. A poet to the end, he finished his great epic history, *La Légende des Siècles*, in 1883, after a quarter century of work on it. He died in 1885, was honored with an elaborate state funeral under the Arc de Triomphe, and was buried in the Panthéon among the great men of France.

CRITIC'S CORNER

A mixture of the themes and endeavors of his entire life, *Les Misérables* is a monument to the man. It combines his

absorption in history, poetry, drama, romanticism, religion, humanism, and social issues in one sweeping novel. Its main character, Jean Valjean, has become a symbol of the downtrodden in world literature. The name Cosette has become a synonym for innocence. The opening episode, featuring the story of the Bishop's candlesticks, has been repeatedly excerpted as a model of moralistic fiction.

Though Victor Hugo violates convention with his mix of battle scenes, coincidental meetings, splintered families, tender love scenes, deathbed drama, feats of strength and daring, and improbable escapes, he unleashes a masterful criticism of man's inhumanity to man and, at the same time, a strong plea for compassion, reconciliation, and hope. For a century and a quarter, *Les Misérables* has found an enthusiastic audience, not only for the novel but for film versions and the more recent hit musical of the same name.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the reasons for rebellion, both in the human spirit and in society as a whole.
2. To examine the nature and purpose of charity.
3. To discuss forgiveness as a necessity for the function of the family.
4. To account for the human desire to escape danger and oppression.
5. To analyze the manifold nature of the novel—as a record of human achievement, warning of inherent evil within the human spirit, criticism of avaricious and relentless bureaucrats, and artistic recreation of the human condition.
6. To note the underlying use of dramatic technique as a means of expression.
7. To discuss the three basic types of love—*phillios* or belonging, *eros* or passion, and *agape*, unselfish or Christian love.
8. To isolate examples of coincidence and explain their effect on the plot.
9. To discuss the theme of disguise as it applies to Valjean and Thénéardier.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To follow the interwoven thread of recurring characters and motifs, such as the confession, act of gratitude, and coming to knowledge.
2. To contrast Marius and Jean Valjean as fugitives from themselves.
3. To compare Valjean and Javert in terms of their inner drive.
4. To note the shifting backdrops for the most stirring scenes from the novel, including the barricades, the Paris sewers, the courtroom, and the Bishop's home.

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5. To contrast Gillenormand and Valjean as fathers.
6. To explain the effect of the Bishop's charity on Valjean.
7. To isolate key symbols in the novel, including the candlesticks and the stolen coin.
8. To compare Marius and Valjean in terms of their acts of courage.
9. To contrast Valjean's physical and moral strengths.

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have a particular meaning in the story. Explain the meaning each has in this book. Page numbers are given so that you can note the context from which the item is taken.

1. a contraction of *Voilà Jean*. (p. 30)
(Jean Valjean bears the same name as his father, whose surname is probably a contraction of the French phrase, "There is John.")
2. People without a fixed abode. (p. 57)
(Javert, who receives his police appointment from "Monsieur Chabouillet, the secretary of the Minister of State, Count Anglès, then prefect of police at Paris," becomes the "terror of all that class which the annual statistics of the Minister of Justice include under the heading" of wanderers and vagrants, in short, the homeless of Paris.)
3. Jean-the-Jack, (p. 82)
(Jean Valjean's nickname, which he received from other convicts, indicates his reputation for great strength, which he demonstrates by removing a cart from a man's body and saving a sailor who hangs helpless in the rigging of a ship.)
4. the genuine bourgeois of the eighteenth century, (p. 133)
(Marius's vigorous nonagenarian grandfather, M. Gillenormand, exemplifies the tastes, attitudes, and values of the middle class—he "walked erect, spoke in a loud voice, saw clearly, drank hard, ate, slept, and snored." Despite his advanced age, he terrorizes his fifty-year-old unmarried daughter, tyrannizes his grandson, and abuses his servants. Self-centered and hard-headed, M. Gillenormand contrasts the humane, compassionate behavior of such men as his brave son, Baron Pontmercy; Jean Valjean; the Bishop; the wily street urchin, Gavroche; and M. Gillenormand's outcast grandson, Marius.)
5. named the daughter *Mademoiselle Lenoire* [Black] and the father *Monsieur Leblanc* [White], (p. 162)
(Courfeyrac, one of Marius's fellow students, names the unidentified pair for their stark coloration—Jean becomes "Leblanc" for his white linen and snowy hair; Cosette is named "Lenoire" for her "dress, at once aged and childish, peculiar to the convent school-girl, an ill-fitting garment of coarse black merino." The names stick and Marius, too, begins to refer to Jean as "Leblanc.")
6. *Les Misérables*, (p. 175)
(After he leaves home, Marius, who develops into an idealist and a mystic, devotes his idle hours to spying on the Jondrettes, the family who live in the room next to his. To him they seem "very depraved, very corrupt, very vile, very hateful, even, but those are rare who fall without becoming degraded . . ." He concludes that "there is a point, moreover, at which the unfortunate and the infamous are associated and confounded in a single word, a fatal word, Les Misérables." He ponders their pitiable circumstance, wondering whether this is not the time when "charity ought to be greatest.")
7. the unexpected dénouement, (p. 201)
(Victor Hugo, a noted playwright, resorts to stage terminology to describe Javert's ambush of the Thénardier gang and the resulting arrests. He compares the events to the falling action, the part of a play which provides answers to foregoing mysteries and unravels conflicts that occupy the rising action, the earlier segment of the drama.)
8. This is perhaps my mother, this man! (p. 210)
(Deprived of information about Fantine, Cosette fuses the role of father and mother into one. Although she is curious about her mother, Cosette exults in the security Jean Valjean brings to her life. He, too, "overflowed with an angelic joy; he declared in his transport that this would last through life . . . and he thanked God, in the depths of his soul, for having permitted that he, a miserable man, should be so loved by this innocent being.")
9. The jet is lighter, more precious, more costly. (p. 318)
(Jean Valjean, aged and ill, pens a note to Cosette in which he details a commercial venture for the making of jewelry and personal ornaments out of jet, a hard, black variety of lignite that holds its polish. Unrelated to the other forms of the word, it takes its name from a town and river in Lycia in Asia Minor.)
10. in the cemetery of Père Lachaise, in the neighborhood of the Potter's field, (p. 333).
(An unpretentious section of the famous cemetery in Paris where Jean Valjean lies buried. His tombstone, marked by mold, moss, and bird droppings, turns black and green from time and weather. The high grass discourages visitors. Even if someone should venture toward it, there is no name to mark the spot.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and

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you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages from the book.

Questions 1-5 Literal Level

1. Describe the conditions which led Jean Valjean to commit his first criminal act.
(After his parents' death, Jean Valjean was reared by his sister, whom he in turn supported when her husband died and left her with seven children to feed. He worked at his father's trade, pruning, and had no time for sweethearts. When pruning season was over he "hired out as a reaper, workman, teamster, or laborer." One winter, when work became scarce and the family had not even bread to eat, Jean Valjean broke the window of Maubert Isabeau's bakery shop and stole a loaf of bread. ". . . Isabeau pursued him and caught him. The thief had thrown away the bread, but his arm was still bleeding.")
2. Describe Jean Valjean's residence at Gorbeau House.
(After retrieving Cosette from the Thenardiens' care, Jean Valjean takes her to a street of Paris, wilder, at night, than a forest, and gloomier, by day, than a graveyard." In a section known as the Horse Market, in a "frightful broken-down structure," where the courtyard is darkened by lofty walls, Jean and Cosette occupy a garret room at the top of the stairs. The furnishings are sparse—a table, a few chairs, a mattress, a stove, all lighted by the dim gleam of a street lamp.)
3. What are Jean Valjean's dying words to Cosette and Marius?
*(Unable to speak at great length, Valjean motions for the couple to draw near for his last words. He looks forward to death and is pleased to know that Cosette still loves him. He explains that the six hundred thousand francs he left Cosette is honest money, earned from his factory in Montfermeil. He leaves an unfinished letter, bequeathing the bishop's silver candlesticks to Cosette.
His final remarks concern his desire for an unmarked burial plot where, he hopes, Cosette and Marius will visit him. He reminisces a bit about the day he found Cosette carrying the water-bucket at Montfermeil and regrets that he has been parted from her. His last admonition is that they should love each other. "There is scarcely anything else in the world but that: to love one another." He places his hands on their heads and falls backward, where the "light from the candlesticks fell upon him . . .")*
4. Explain how M. Leblanc escapes Thénardier's gang.
(Thénardier, posing under the names Jondrette and Fabantou, holds Jean Valjean in his garret and overpowers the man who, because of his white hair, is known as M. Leblanc. Thénardier, Cosette's former guardian, accuses Jean of being a child-stealer and, assuming that the former mayor is wealthy, demands

two hundred thousand francs. He dictates a note to Cosette, summoning her to his side. Jean signs the note "Urbain Fabre."

By the time Thénardier realizes that the address and signature are false, Jean has cut himself free from the bonds that hold him to the bed. He demonstrates his defiance by branding his own arm with a hot chisel. Before the criminals can murder him, Marius passes a note through a hole in the wall announcing the arrival of the police. In the furor of Javert's appearance, Jean Valjean disappears.)

5. What questions does the prioress ask of Jean Valjean at the Convent of the Petit Picpus?
(At the door of the convent, the prioress scrutinizes Jean and asks the gardener a series of questions about him: is he Fauchelevent's brother, what is his name, birthplace, age and trade. Her questions never varying in length and intensity, she demands, "Are you a true Christian?" Receiving a positive reply, she adds, "Is this your little girl?" Fauchelevent replies that Cosette is Jean's granddaughter. During the entire interrogation, Jean, content to let Fauchelevent do the talking, never speaks a word.)

Questions 6-8 Interpretive Level

6. Why does Marius leave home?
*(M. Gillenormand, who took charge of his grandson after the boy's mother died, despises his son-in-law, even though Colonel Pontmercy is a war hero and received a battlefield promotion from the Emperor himself. In Gillenormand's eyes, Pontmercy is a blockhead and a bandit, whom his father-in-law disdains to mention. Marius grows up thinking that his father does not care for him, but learns too late that his grandfather caused the family's separation.
Acquainted for the first time with his title, Marius has cards inscribed with "Baron Marius Pontmercy." When M. Gillenormand snoops in Marius's room and finds the cards, they quarrel. Marius exclaims, "My father . . . was a humble and heroic man, who served the republic and France gloriously . . ." Jealous that Marius could apply the title of "father" on Pontmercy, M. Gillenormand resurrects old political slogans and condemns Pontmercy for being a Bonapartist. Stretching his arm toward his grandson, he ends their relationship with two words, "Be off.")*
7. How does Jean Valjean behave when he has the opportunity to obtain vengeance?
(The rebels, seeking information beyond the barricade, send Gavroche, the street urchin, to "glide along by the houses, look about the streets a little, and come and tell" what is happening. True to his assignment, Gavroche labels Javert a spy. Enjolras and his comrades take the man into custody and tie his arms to a post at the basement wall. Enjolras proclaims, "You will be shot ten minutes before the barricade is taken."

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After Jean Valjean ingratiates himself with the rebels through brave, selfless deeds, he asks a suitable reward for his valor: "To blow out [Javert's] brains myself." Alone with his prisoner, Valjean hauls him by the neck to the street. He cuts the rope that binds Javert and sets him free, confessing both his alias and his real address. To indicate that he has executed the prisoner, Jean Valjean fires a shot into the air as Javert walks away, a free man.)

8. How does Jean Valjean do penance for his crime against the bishop and Petit Gervais?

(Six years after Jean Valjean knocked on the bishop's door, he reads in the newspaper that the bishop has died at the age of eighty-two. Jean, who is known in Montfermeil as Monsieur Madeleine, dresses in deep mourning. People notice his respectful response to the news and ask if Jean is a relative. He replies, "In my youth I was a servant in his family." Throughout his life he remains faithful to the silver candlesticks, which symbolize his dedication to goodness.

To commemorate his despicable treatment of Petit Gervais, Mayor Madeleine also gives money to young Savoyards "in search of chimneys to sweep." Word circulates among the little Savoyards, who make an effort to pass through Montfermeil to avail themselves of the mayor's generosity.)

Questions 9 and 10 Critical Level

9. What is the effect of Victor Hugo's use of coincidence? (*Les Misérables*, like the novels of Dickens, is marred by the frequent use of chance meetings, dramatic revelations of true identity, and Hugo's overdependence on happenstance, all of which suggest the influence of romanticism on the author. The likelihood that Thénardier would be Cosette's guardian, Colonel Pontmercy's "savior," and Marius's neighbor is almost too much to accept. His reappearance in the final episode, in which he reveals Jean Valjean's identity to Marius just in time for a deathbed farewell stretches credulity to the limit. If the overall effect of the main plot were not so moving and absorbing, the reader might reject Hugo's attempt to resolve the far-reaching plot and numerous subplots.)
10. How does Victor Hugo employ the motif of reconciliation as a major theme in the novel? (Marius, like Cosette, suffers an estrangement from the person he has thought of as father. When he learns the truth about his famous father, Marius incurs the wrath of his grandfather and initiates another estrangement. Just as Marius renews his acquaintance with his deceased parent and rebuilds faith in the Pontmercy name, Cosette learns that Jean Valjean is her husband's rescuer and hurries to Jean's bedside.

In contrast to Marius's situation, however, Cosette is innocent of her separation from Jean, for he himself and Marius are to blame. The girl never condemns her foster father for his past because Marius keeps the information from her. The tragedy of their final moments together is that they might have enjoyed more happy times as a family if Marius, like his hard-headed grandfather, had not assumed the worst about Jean and agreed to the voluntary separation.)

Question 11 Creative Level

11. Write an in-depth analysis of the theme of parenthood as revealed by the following relationships: Cosette and Jean Valjean, Marius and Colonel Pontmercy, Marius and M. Gillenormand, Cosette and Fantine, Cosette and the Thénardiens, Jean Valjean and his sister.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Write an exegesis in which you develop Victor Hugo's remarks in the Author's Preface, page 11. Use events from the novel to justify your position.
2. Contrast the life of Victor Hugo with that of other expatriate authors, such as Ovid, Ernest Hemingway, Stephen Crane, Gertude Stein, Isak Dinesen, or Henrik Ibsen.
3. On a map of France, draw a dotted line from town to town representing the wanderings of Jean Valjean. Include an inset map of Paris and mark significant places in the novel, especially Père Lachaise, Jean's burial place.
4. Contrast the themes, settings, and motifs of the novel with some of Victor Hugo's poems or plays. Discuss the historical and social backgrounds of each.
5. Make a timeline of the romantic movement in Europe and America, including authors, composers, artists, sculptors, and philosophers and their works.
6. Compose a fitting epitaph for several characters who die in the course of the novel, such as Javert, Eponine, the Bishop, Fantine, Col. Pontmercy, and Jean Valjean.
7. Contrast *Les Misérables* with other stirring period novels, such as *Vanity Fair*, *The King Must Die*, *The Persian Boy*, *Dr. Zhivago*, *Nicholas and Alexandra*, *The Once and Future King*, *Centennial*, *Hawaii*, *Shogun*, *The Golden Warrior*, *The Crystal Cave*, *The Hollow Hills*, *Gone with the Wind*, *Roots*, *War and Peace*, or *Jubilee*.
8. Using a French dictionary, look up French terms from the novel, such as the "Trois Dauphins," the three Dolphins; "Rue de l'Homme Armé," the street of the armed man; or "Monseigneur Bienvenu," Monsignor Welcome.
9. Make an oral report on Victor Hugo's belief in the

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common man, supporting your thesis with dramatic examples which you read aloud from the book.

10. Write an explanation of the chapter headings in each of the five sections of the book. Explain metaphoric references, such as "War Between Four Walls," "A Dark Chase Needs a Silent Hound," and "The Conjunction of Two Stars."
11. Write a "dramatis personae" for the novel, listing the major characters in the order in which they appear, an explanation of their importance, and any aliases they may use.

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TEACHING NOTES

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VOCABULARY TEST

Complete each of the following quotations with a vocabulary word from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- _____ 1. There resulted what is called in geometry the _____ image; so that the writing reversed on the blotter was corrected by the mirror, and presented its original form . . .
- _____ 2. He perceived distinctly, at the bottom of the implacable evocation of memory, the unknown prowler of the Luxembourg, that wretched seeker of _____, that romantic idler, that imbecile, that coward . . .
- _____ 3. I am sure I have seen him somewhere. At all events, I at least am not his _____.
- _____ 4. Her _____ had become whiteness, and her cheeks were glowing.
- _____ 5. They heard the tumultuous clamour of the patrol ransacking the _____ and the street, the clatter of their muskets against the stones, the calls of Javert to the watchmen he had stationed, and his imprecations mingled with words which they could not distinguish.
- _____ 6. Marius judged that the time had come to resume his place at his _____.
- _____ 7. Some balls, which _____ from the cornices of the houses, entered the barricade and wounded several men.
- _____ 8. Another had already _____ Courfeyrac, who was crying "Help!"
- _____ 9. Our pedestrian, if he trusted himself beyond the four tumbling walls of this Horse Market . . .; this bold _____, we say, would reach the corner of the Rue des Vignes-Saint-Marcel, a latitude not much explored.
- _____ 10. "She won't _____ me," he exclaimed, "I will confound her with the brat in the midst of her concealment."
- _____ 11. Without returning his _____, the gendarme looked at him attentively, watched him for some distance, and then went into the city hall.
- _____ 12. This villain had succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the police; he had changed his name, and had even been adroit enough to _____ the appointment of mayor in one of our small towns in the North.
- _____ 13. Marius could make nothing out of it, Jondrette being between him and the picture; he merely caught a glimpse of a coarse daub . . . colored in the crude and glaring style of strolling _____ and paints upon screens.
- _____ 14. He crossed the thicket and went to the _____ near the steps.
- _____ 15. Was there nothing more to be done? Had Marius _____ the convict also?

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| A. amours | F. observatory | K. prostrated |
| B. cul-de-sac | G. pallor | L. recess |
| C. dupe | H. panoramas | M. ricocheted |
| D. espoused | I. procure | N. salutation |
| E. humbug | J. promenader | O. symmetrical |

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COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Quotation Identification (30 points)

Match each of the following quotations with the name of the speaker from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- _____ 1. My children, you will not forget that I am a poor man, you will have me buried in the most convenient piece of ground under a stone to mark the spot.
- _____ 2. And still when I saw him aiming at you, I put up my hand upon the muzzle of the musket.
- _____ 3. You save people's lives, and you hide it from them! You do more, under pretence of unmasking yourself, you calumniate yourself.
- _____ 4. By the way, my friend, when you come again, you need not come through the garden. You can always come in and go out by the front door.
- _____ 5. I understand, you fear excitement: I will wait as long as you wish, but I am sure that it will not harm me to see my daughter.
- _____ 6. Do you know I should have had a sheriff and a protest? You have proved a good mousetrap with your little ones.
- _____ 7. Since the Restoration contests this title which I have bought with my blood, my son will take it and bear it.
- _____ 8. It is no use for you to be a saint, you are a man; and no men come in here.
- _____ 9. There is no stone on the bench, any more than there was a man with a round hat in the garden; I dreamed the stone as I did the rest.
- _____ 10. Vainglory is a squandering. If it is the duty of some to go away, that duty should be performed as well as any other.
- _____ 11. Come here, Marius. Your aunt, although she has a right to you, will allow it. This arm-chair is for you. It is legal, and it is proper.
- _____ 12. I want my piece! my forty-sous piece!
- _____ 13. Yes, your honor, I was the first to recognize him, and still do so. This man is Jean Valjean, who came to Toulon in 1796, and left in 1815.
- _____ 14. There is a robber, there is a brigand, there is a convict called Jean Valjean, and I have got him!
- _____ 15. And hurry yourself, Monsieur What's-your-name, for Mamselle What's-her-name is waiting.

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| A. Bishop Myriel | F. Eponine | K. Jean Valjean |
| B. Brevet | G. Fantine | L. Marius |
| C. Colonel Pontmercy | H. Fauchelevent | M. M. Gillenormand |
| D. Cosette | I. Gavroche | N. M. Thénardier |
| E. Enjolras | J. Javert | O. Petit Gervais |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- _____ 1. When M. Thénardier sees Cosette sitting in the park beside Jean Valjean, he urges Marius to make her his mistress.
- _____ 2. Jean Valjean tricks Gavroche into giving him Marius's letter, which is meant for Cosette.

LES MISÉRABLES

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

Match each of the following descriptions with a character from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- _____ 1. steals forty sous from Petit Gervais
- _____ 2. helps Marius locate Cosette
- _____ 3. learns from Thénardier the name of the man who saved his life
- _____ 4. asks Jean Valjean why he did not take the plates
- _____ 5. finds work in her hometown in a factory that makes jewelry
- _____ 6. lives next door to Marius under the name Jondrette
- _____ 7. rises to the rank of baron at Waterloo
- _____ 8. the gardener of the Convent of the Petit Picpus
- _____ 9. refers to herself as "Madame You"
- _____ 10. the only survivor of the assault on the barricade
- _____ 11. is gratified to be called "father"
- _____ 12. sings "with his hurdy-gurdy at his side and his marmot box on his back"
- _____ 13. sixty-year-old convict who identifies Jean Valjean
- _____ 14. spies on the operations at the barricades
- _____ 15. fills a basket with cartridges-boxes of the National Guard

A. Bishop Myriel

B. Brevet

C. Colonel Pontmercy

D. Cosette

E. Enjolras

F. Eponine

G. Fantine

H. Fauchelevent

I. Gavroche

J. Javert

K. Jean Valjean

L. Marius

M. M. Gillenormand

N. M. Thénardier

O. Petit Gervais

Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

Supply a word or phrase to answer the following questions. Place your answer in the blank provided at left.

- _____ 1. Whose reputation spreads for reviving the manufacture of jet-work?
- _____ 2. Whom does Jean observe peacefully asleep in the moonlight beneath a crucifix?
- _____ 3. Who delivers a message of thanks from Jondrette to Marius?
- _____ 4. Who asks to be buried under an unmarked stone?
- _____ 5. Beside whose corpse does Sister Simplice watch?
- _____ 6. What does Jean Valjean use to read Cosette's five-line message to Marius?
- _____ 7. Who advises Marius to read fewer books and look more at girls?
- _____ 8. What was Jean Valjean's prison nickname?

LES MISÉRABLES

- _____ 9. To what city does Jean take Cosette after he rescues her from the Thénardiens?
- _____ 10. Who asks for a kiss on the forehead when she dies?

Part III: Multiple Choice (30 points)

Select a phrase to complete each of the following statements. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- _____ 1. As the conflict threatens the barricades, (a) Eponine piles up blocks to protect the defenders (b) Cosette returns to the safety of the convent (c) Marius resigns himself to death by firing squad (d) Jean Valjean makes plans to move to London.
- _____ 2. In 1795, Jean Valjean is brought before the tribunals on a charge of (a) night burglary (b) kidnapping Cosette from the Thénardiens (c) escaping the prison ship *Orion* (d) poaching.
- _____ 3. In her sleep, Cosette cries out for (a) Fantine (b) Sister Simplicie (c) her forty-sous piece (d) her broom.
- _____ 4. On each of Marius's hundred cards is printed, (a) "Long Live the Republic!" (b) the initials U.F. (c) Baron Marius Pontmercy (d) "Down with the Bourbons!"
- _____ 5. Mme. Gillenormand sends Théodule to learn (a) the names of the National Guardsmen at the barricade (b) where Marius is going (c) what Gavroche stole from the Jondrettes (d) how the convict escaped from the cul-de-sac.
- _____ 6. After the king commutes his death sentence (a) Jean Valjean is sent to the galleys at Toulon (b) Brevet is exonerated of the charge of murder (c) Jondrette assembles a gang of thieves (d) the former mayor goes to prison for stealing a loaf of bread.
- _____ 7. Marius agrees with Jean Valjean that it would be best if (a) Marius kept his father's name and title (b) Jean not see Cosette again (c) Marius returned to his grandfather's house after the wedding (d) Enjolras led the charge over the barricade.
- _____ 8. The officer at Arras hands the judge a paper indicating (a) the true identity of the convict with the yellow passport (b) that a gentleman wishes to testify as a witness (c) the cause of Fantine's death (d) the mayor's part in an old crime.
- _____ 9. The prioress at the Convent of the Petit Picpus predicts that (a) the beggar is Javert in disguise (b) Ultimus Fauchelevent will become head gardener (c) Cosette will be homely (d) Jean Valjean will be discovered in the sewer near the Seine.
- _____ 10. Jean Valjean keeps silent about his part in Marius's rescue because (a) Javert could trace him if others knew his whereabouts (b) he is too old and ill to run again (c) he fears he might be an embarrassment. (d) the bishop made him promise to say nothing.

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

1. Describe the changes that occur in Marius after he learns of his father's military record.
2. Contrast the courage of two minor characters, such as Gavroche, Enjolras, Courfeyrac, the bishop, Fauchelevent, or Fantine.

LES MISÉRABLES

VOCABULARY TEST ANSWER KEY

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. O | 6. F | 11. N |
| 2. A | 7. M | 12. I |
| 3. C | 8. K | 13. H |
| 4. G | 9. J | 14. L |
| 5. B | 10. E | 15. D |

COMPREHENSION TEST A ANSWER KEY

Part I: Quotation Identification (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. K | 6. N | 11. M |
| 2. F | 7. C | 12. O |
| 3. L | 8. H | 13. B |
| 4. A | 9. D | 14. J |
| 5. G | 10. E | 15. I |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. F |
| 2. T | 7. T |
| 3. T | 8. F |
| 4. T | 9. F |
| 5. F | 10. T |

Part III: Fill-In (20 points)

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| 1. Sister Simplice | 6. Javert |
| 2. U.F. | 7. sewer |
| 3. Jean Valjean | 8. convict |
| 4. Marius | 9. convent |
| 5. names | 10. Fantine |

COMPREHENSION TEST B ANSWER KEY

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. K | 6. N | 11. M |
| 2. F | 7. C | 12. O |
| 3. L | 8. H | 13. B |
| 4. A | 9. D | 14. J |
| 5. G | 10. E | 15. I |

Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Jean Valjean/M.
Madeleine | 6. mirror |
| 2. Bishop Myriel | 7. Courfeyrac |
| 3. Eponine | 8. Jean-the-Jack |
| 4. Jean Valjean | 9. Paris |
| 5. Fantine | 10. Eponine |

Part III: Multiple Choice (30 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. D | 6. A |
| 2. A | 7. B |
| 3. D | 8. B |
| 4. C | 9. C |
| 5. B | 10. C |



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