

# The Hunchback of Notre Dame

Victor Hugo



# THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE-DAME

VICTOR HUGO

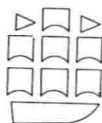
Simplified by  
Michael Davis and Michael West

*Illustrated by Ann Tout*

---

1500 word vocabulary

---



LONGMAN

LONGMAN GROUP LIMITED  
London

*Associated companies, branches and representatives  
throughout the world*

This edition © Longman Group Ltd 1963

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Copyright owner.

*First published 1963*  
*New impressions \*1964; \*1966; \*1967;*  
*\*1968; \*1969; \*1970; \*1971;*  
*\*1973; \*1974; \*1977; \*1978*

ISBN 0 582 53494 1

*Printed in Hong Kong by  
The Hongkong Printing Press (1977) Ltd*

# Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. THE DANCER	1
2. QUASIMODO	7
3. DANGEROUS STREETS	16
4. THE BROKEN CUP	23
5. THE MARRIAGE NIGHT	31
6. THE PILLORY	38
7. SPELLING THE SECRET	45
8. FROLLO ASKS QUESTIONS	51
9. THE CAPTAIN AND THE GIRLS	57
10. AT THE HOUSE BY THE RIVER	60
11. THE TRIAL	67
12. TORTURE	73
13. A WAY OF ESCAPE	76
14. THE ROPE	79
15. ABOVE THE CITY	87
16. THE PLAN OF ATTACK	92
17. NOISES IN THE NIGHT	98
18. THE LOST AND FOUND	106
QUESTIONS	115
EXTRA WORDS	122

# One

## THE DANCER

“I’m cold and I’m hungry,” said Pierre Gringoire, “and I haven’t any money to buy my supper. No one wants the poems and the plays that I’ve written, and no one wants me.”

Paris, twelve days after Christmas in the year 1482, was a cold city; and many people who lived there were as cold, poor and thin as the poet Pierre Gringoire.

“I must give up being a writer,” he said, “I shall die of hunger if I do not.” He pushed his hands into his empty pockets and walked towards the square called the Place de Grève. “Look at that crowd! They seem to be warm enough; I’ll join them round their fire.”

Many men and women were standing in the middle of the square. They looked black against the red light of a big fire of wood burning on the stones. Gringoire hurried across. There seemed to be a large open space between the people and the fire.

“I’m freezing!” said Gringoire, pushing into the crowd. “Why don’t we all move nearer to the fire?”

“Because we must leave room for Esmeralda, of course!” replied a fat fellow beside him.

“Who? I’ve never heard . . .”

“Well, use your eyes. Look at her; isn’t she lovely?”

Gringoire made himself tall enough to see over the hat of the woman in front of him, and then he understood. There was Esmeralda! She was dancing between the watching crowd and the bright fire.

Gringoire, the poet, was not sure at first whether the graceful dancer was a girl or a fairy! She was small, with a dark skin and black hair. Her eyes were black too, and they shone as she danced. Her little feet moved on a rich Persian cloth which she had thrown over the stones of the square. Her dress was of many colours, bright with gold. Her legs and her shoulders were beautiful. In her right hand she carried a little drum with bells on it, and she hit it as she danced round and round.

"No," Gringoire said aloud, "she's not a fairy; I've seen *gipsies* with hair and eyes like those—but not as beautiful!"

"Of course she's a gipsy," said the fat fellow. "She's one of those wandering people who live in tents and move about from place to place, and she knows all the gipsies' tricks. . . . See there!"

Esmeralda picked up two swords from the ground, and made them stand on their points on her head. Then she danced round one way, while the swords went the other way. The red light from the fire added magic to her trick, and the crowd watched and wondered in silence.

"I could write a poem about this," thought Gringoire. He looked across the fire, at the corner of the square where the terrible *gibbet* stood. Many men and women had hung by the neck from that

wooden arm. Gringoire felt suddenly afraid. "But why am I afraid?" he wondered; "I haven't broken the law."

Then he looked at the other corner of the square, at the little building called the Rat-Hole. Sister Gudule lived in the Rat-Hole, in one room with iron bars across its only window. She could never come out: the Rat-Hole had no door. Everyone knew that she hated gipsies. She could not have seen Esmeralda, or she would have shouted curses, as she always did when gipsies came into the Place de Grève.

Esmeralda danced faster and faster, and the eyes of one face in the crowd around Gringoire were fixed on her with a strange look. The face was calm and still; but the eyes burned. The man was not more than thirty-five years old, but there were only a few hairs left on his head, and they were grey. Gringoire could see only his head: the man's clothes were hidden by the crowd.

The girl, breathless, stopped dancing, and the crowd shouted for more.

"Djali!" cried Esmeralda.

Gringoire then saw a little white goat come up to her. Its feet were golden, and it wore a silver chain round its neck. Gringoire had not noticed the goat before, because it had been lying down to watch Esmeralda dance.

"Djali," she said, "now it's your turn." She sat down and held out her drum to the goat.

"Djali," she asked, "what day of the month is it?"

The goat lifted its foot and, to the delight of the people, hit the drum six times.

"Well done, Djali!" shouted the children in the front of the crowd.

"What a wonderful beast!" cried the fat fellow.

"Djali," said the gipsy, moving the drum round a little, "which hour of the day is it?"

Djali lifted a gold foot and hit the drum seven times. At that moment the clock in the tower beside the square struck seven.

"It is all done by black magic," said an evil voice in the crowd. It was the voice of the man whose eyes were always on the gipsy girl. She turned round quickly, but the crowd shouted and the shouts hid the man's words.

"Djali," said the girl to please the crowd, "how do priests speak to people in church?"

The goat sat down and began to make a silly noise, waving its front feet in the air in a funny way. The people laughed and shouted as loud as they could.

"It is wrong! It is bad!" cried the voice of the man with only a few grey hairs.

The gipsy turned round again.

"Oh!" she said, "it's that ugly man!" and she put out her tongue at him. But there was fear in her eyes as she turned from him and went round among the crowd to collect money on her drum.

The people were generous, and when she came to Gringoire her drum was covered with big and little coins of gold and silver. Without thinking, Gringoire put his hand in his pocket. Of course he found



that it was empty. "The Devil!" said Gringoire, feeling hot and foolish while the pretty girl stood in front of him with her drum. She watched him with her beautiful eyes, while he felt more and more silly. If he had been rich, he would have given all his wealth to her!

A voice saved him, the voice of a woman from the far corner of the square.

"Go away! Bad girl! Gipsy!" cried the voice of the holy woman from the Rat-Hole.

This voice, which frightened Esmeralda, pleased the children and made them laugh.

"It's Sister Gudule!" they shouted. "Hasn't she had her supper? She must be hungry! We'll find her some food!" And they ran away.

That made Gringoire remember how hungry he was and wonder where he would find any supper himself.

"Poor Sister Gudule!" said the fat fellow beside him. "She doesn't have much fun. I wonder what sorrow made her leave the world and go to live a holy life in the Rat-Hole."

"Don't you know her story?" asked Gringoire. "I thought everybody in Paris knew that."

"Of course I know the story that her baby daughter was stolen by gipsies, but I don't believe one word of it. Poor old Sister Gudule is far too ugly ever to have a child worth stealing."

"Sorrow has made her ugly," said Gringoire. "I can believe that she was beautiful sixteen years ago, when the gipsies changed her baby for a boy who was four years old."

"A boy with only one eye, and arms and legs all the wrong shape. I know that story, but I still don't believe that Sister Gudule . . ."

"Haven't you seen the little baby's shoe in her Rat-Hole? And haven't you seen her weeping over it? Her heart is broken. If you had any poetry in you, you would understand that the story fits the facts."

"Poetry!" he laughed. "You'll tell me next that you're a poet yourself!"

Gringoire said nothing, because he heard the music of a strange but very sweet song. Esmeralda was singing it. The words, in the gipsy language, were full of joy, and her voice was as bright and pure as that of a bird.

The children had gone to find some food for Sister Gudule; they came back from a dark, narrow street into the square. The biggest girl carried a cake. They came to the front of the crowd and stood there, listening to the wonderful song. The children were hungry too; they broke pieces off the cake and ate them while they listened to Esmeralda singing.

The music did not last long.

From the Rat-Hole came another ugly shout in Sister Gudule's voice. "Won't you be silent? Won't you stop that noise and let us have some peace?"

The song stopped suddenly. "You have broken the loveliest music I ever heard!" Gringoire cried.

The people were angry too, and shouted. Some of them called:

"The Devil take Sister Gudule!" and, as they

cursed her, the crowd began to move angrily towards the Rat-Hole.

Just then something caused them all to turn round and move towards the other side of the square. Out of the dark, winter evening, another crowd was marching towards them with lights and shouts and strange, ugly music.

The children quickly ate the rest of the cake as they ran towards the marching crowd: they forgot Sister Gudule. So did all the other people in the square, because the men and women marching towards them were carrying in the air somebody whom they very much wanted to see: they were carrying the High Priest of Fools.

## Two

### *QUASIMODO*

Every year the people of Paris chose a different High Priest of Fools, and that morning they had chosen one in a new way.

In one of the churches there was a broken window with a hole in it as big as a man's head. All the ugliest men of Paris went into the church, and one after another they pushed their faces through the hole where the glass had been, so that the crowd outside could decide which face was the ugliest of them all. The man with the ugliest face would be the High Priest of Fools for the year 1482.

The crowd had a lot of fun choosing him.

"Curse me if I ever saw a nose as big as that before!" shouted an old soldier.

"Only look at that mouth!" cried a farmer with a cow on a rope.

"Let's see another. Come on!"

Another face appeared. "Look!" shouted a tall man. "He's just like that cow over there!"

"What big ears! He can't get them through the window."

The crowd laughed louder and louder at the different faces, until at last one face made them all shout out together:

"That's him! That's the face our High Priest should have! We want him! The ugliest of them all!"

The face had dirty red hair all round it. There was only one eye, yellow and dim. There was a big bush of hair above that eye, and an even bigger bush of hair stood above the grey circle where the other eye should have been. A few big teeth stuck out of the great, smiling cave of a mouth, and the skin was covered with black spots.

"Bring him out of the church!" shouted the crowd. "We must carry our High Priest through all the streets and squares of our city. Come out! We want you, High Priest of Fools!"

Quasimodo, the *hunchback*, was laughing happily as he came onto the steps of the church. This was a wonderful moment for him: he had never been famous before. People usually hated and feared him because he was so ugly, with his nasty great back, his

ugly big head sunk down below his shoulders, and his thick arms and legs all the wrong shape. But now the crowd wanted him. He did not know why: he could not understand because he could hear nothing. The drums of his big ears had been broken by the noise of the bells which he rang every day in the church of Notre-Dame. He loved his bells, although he could not hear them until they made their loudest music. He could only feel them ringing, and the bells pleased him more than anything in his sad life.

Gilles Clopin, a nasty young man, danced up the steps of the church and stood like Quasimodo, with his head down below his shoulders. He made a rude face at Quasimodo. Although the hunchback could not hear, he could see with one eye. Clopin was making fun of him, and the hunchback was angry. The crowd laughed, but the hunchback did not. He stepped quickly to Clopin, picked up the young man in his strong, ugly hands, lifted him high into the air as if Clopin were as light as a baby, and threw him down the steps.

The people were silent; then they shouted more loudly than ever: but most of the women felt afraid of Quasimodo.

"He's as ugly as a monkey!" said one woman.

"And as evil as he is ugly!" said another.

"I live near Notre-Dame, and I hear him running about on the roof all night long."

"Like a cat."

"If you're going to have a baby, Louise, keep away from the hunchback," said a grandmother.

"He's really terrible."

But the men were pleased with the hunchback, and they laughed and shouted when they saw his strength. The beggars in the crowd brought a crown of paper and a length of bright, painted cloth. They put the crown on Quasimodo's head and hung the cloth over his ugly body. Then they pushed a big cross of rough wood into his hands. They lifted him onto an old door which they had broken down, and carried him through the city with ugly music, songs and laughter. "Quasimodo!" they shouted, "High Priest Quasimodo! Make way for the High Priest of Fools!"

Sixteen years before the beginning of this story, on a fine day in spring, a child was found after the morning service in the church of Notre-Dame. He was lying on a step. His body was covered with a dirty old cloth, and he was crying in a strange way.

Little babies, whom their mothers did not want, were often left at that place in the church: kind women took them away and cared for them as if the children were their own. But this little boy was already four years old; he had red hair, only one eye, and a body all the wrong shape. Nobody wanted this child.

Some women stood looking at him.

"What can it be?" asked one.

"God help us if that is how babies are born now!" said another.

"Let me see! I can't see!" cried a pretty little girl in lovely clothes.

"No, Fleur dear, it's not nice, it's not at all nice,

come away this minute! ” and Fleur’s rich mother pulled her away by the hand.

The little baby boy wept loudly. He did not cry like other children.

“ I think it’s a magic animal, not a boy at all,” said a frightened old woman. “ A bad magician has made it.”

“ You’re right,” said another. “ It’s a strange, evil animal.”

A man stood behind the women and listened to their talk. He was young Claude Frollo, an important priest in the church of Notre-Dame, and already one of the most learned men in Paris. People were afraid of his serious face, and some even whispered that he was so clever he knew how to do magic. When the women noticed Frollo they hurried away.

Frollo stood looking at the little boy, and his heart filled with pity. “ No woman wants you, child, because you are different from other children,” he thought. “ But God made you, and God wants everybody whom He has made. We must love the ugly people as well as the beautiful ones, just as He does. Come to me, poor boy! ”

Frollo picked the child up in his arms, and it stopped crying. The priest felt suddenly at peace. He knew that he was doing what God wanted him to do.

“ I will take care of you, my boy,” said Frollo. “ Now you belong to me, my child. Come.” He walked through the church with the child in his arms.

Frollo named the little boy Quasimodo. Quasimodo had only one eye, but there was nothing wrong with his ears at first. He could speak, too, but not as clearly as he could hear. His voice was rough and strange. Frollo tried to teach him to speak better, and the child worked very hard to improve. But Quasimodo's body was so ugly that he did not want other people to see him. He ran away from men and women and other children, and hid in the tower of the church. He would stay with Frollo, but with no one else. Frollo cared for him and taught him to ring the bells of Notre-Dame.

The bells ruined his ears, and made them *deaf*, so that he could not hear anything: then Quasimodo stopped speaking. He was too afraid of other people to let them hear his strange voice. If he spoke they might laugh. Frollo had tried to set Quasimodo's tongue free, but Quasimodo made it silent.

Although he could not speak with his own tongue, the hunchback could speak to the whole of Paris through the bells of Notre-Dame. He loved everything in that beautiful church, but he loved the bells most of all, especially the great bell named Marie. Marie hung in the south tower, with a small bell called Jacqueline. In the second tower there were six other bells; and the six smallest were in the centre tower, with the wooden bell that was only rung when people died. So Quasimodo had fifteen bells to love. But Marie was his favourite.

Quasimodo's joy when he could ring all the bells on special days was wonderful. He and Frollo spoke



together by strange signs. As soon as Frollo told the hunchback that he could start the bells, Quasimodo rushed up the stairs quicker than any other man could run down. He hurried into the room of the great bell, and touched Marie with his hands as if she were a good horse setting out on a long journey. He pitied her for the work that she was about to do.

Then he made a sign to the men down below who pulled the ropes. The first sound of the metal tongue made the floor on which Quasimodo stood shake like a leaf in a storm. Quasimodo shook with the bell. His breath came louder and quicker as the bell rang faster. His one eye opened wide, and seemed to shine with a light of its own in the dark tower.

Then all the bells began to ring and the whole tower shook, stone and wood and metal together, from the top to the bottom. Quasimodo seemed to go mad. He ran from bell to bell, and laughed at the great noise, which was almost the only noise that his ears could hear. Then he stood beside a little bell, and jumped up and down as it swung. At last he left it: he ran to Marie, jumped into the air and hung onto the bell with his feet and his hands. He felt as if he were riding on the clouds of a storm, as he did in his dreams.

The people of Paris often stopped in the streets and listened to the wonderful music of the bells. When it was all finished, Quasimodo came down to Frollo and they talked to each other with the signs which only they knew.

Now Quasimodo, High Priest of Fools, was