The Hunchback of Notre Dame

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF VICTOR HUGO

Victor Hugo was born in Franche-Comte, in France, in 1802. His parents, Léopold and Sophie, had differing political and religious views. Léopold had been a supporter of Napoleon and the people's Republic during the French Revolution, which took place in 1789 and in which the French monarchy was deposed, while Sophie was a strict Catholic and Royalist. Léopold was an officer in the French army and Hugo and his family travelled throughout Italy and Spain while Hugo was a child. As a young man, Hugo took his mother's side in politics and religion and wrote several pieces of work that showcased his loyalty to the monarchy and the Church. However, as he grew older, his views began to change and, by the end of his life, Hugo supported democracy and the idea of a people's Republic to keep the monarchy in check. Hugo married his childhood friend Adèle Foucher in 1822 and the pair had five children, one of whom died in infancy. Hugo had several affairs throughout their marriage, and he traveled extensively with his long-time mistress, Juliette Drouet. He was devastated by the loss of his eldest daughter Léopoldine, who died in 1843. Hugo published his first novel in 1823 and, by the 1830s, Hugo was a well-respected poet, playwright, and prose writer. His novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* was published in 1831, and it was followed by *Les Misérables* in 1862. Hugo was an extremely famous public figure in France and a vocal advocate for many political causes. In 1855, when Napoleon III reinstated the monarchy in France, Hugo was exiled for his criticisms of Royalism and went to live on the island of Guernsey. He returned to Paris 1870 and died there in 1885. Over two million people attended his funeral.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Hunchback of Notre Dame was written in 1830 and is set in 1482. It concerns both historical events from 1482, which Hugo had meticulously researched, and later historical events, such as the French Revolution, which had taken place in 1789, just before Hugo was born. The novel refers to the history and architecture of Paris throughout the medieval period, as different monarchs rule the city and as the city expands with growing industrial trades. In 1482, when the novel is set, France is under the rule of Louis XI, who is a cruel and tyrannical leader and a minor character in the novel. The frequent use of capital punishment in the novel is linked to the reign of Louis XI, as the monarch was a great believer in public execution and interrogation techniques, such as torture, which he used on political prisoners. The novel also discusses aspects of French life in the 1830s and laments that capital punishment and public executions were still used in the French justice system at the time of the novel's writing. Capital punishment was still legal in France until 1977. Certain events in the novel, such as Louis XI's appearance in the Bastille (a famous prison in Paris) while a riot rages outside Notre Dame, foreshadow the French Revolution, when a riot broke out in Paris and protestors stormed the Bastille, released the prisoners, and executed the royal family. The novel also inspired the real-life renovation of the cathedral of Notre Dame, which took place after the publication of the novel and was largely the result of Hugo's passionate praise of Gothic architecture.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

The Hunchback of Notre Dame is a Gothic novel. With its medieval setting, inclusion of stock Gothic characters (such as the demonic and lust driven priest, Claude Frollo) ,and tragic ending, Hugo's novel is similar to Gothic novels from the 18th century, such as *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole and *The Monk* by Matthew Lewis. The use of historical events in the novel, particularly those which concern the lives of ordinary people rather than famous political figures, is reminiscent of historical novels by Walter Scott, such as *Waverley* or *Ivanhoe*. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is also similar to James Hogg's novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, which deals with themes of fate, predestination, and fanatical religious belief. In its combination of Gothic plot and encyclopedic information about history and architecture, Hugo's novel is like Herman Melville's 1851 novel *Moby-Dick*, which combines an adventure story with information about marine life and historical whaling techniques. The 19th-century British author Charles Dickens was heavily influenced by Hugo and uses aspects of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, such as historical references to the French Revolution and criticism of and justice system, in his novels *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Bleak House*. With its detailed descriptions of Paris and Parisian culture, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is also related to novels by Emile Zola, such as *Thèrese Raquin* and *The Ladies' Delight*. Hugo also recycles themes from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, such the repression of the poor and the unjust use of capital punishment, in his 1862 novel *Les Misérables*. Historical and regional descriptions of Paris, mixed with Gothic themes, can also be seen in Anne Rice's novel *The Vampire Lestat*.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** The Hunchback of Notre Dame
- **When Written:** 1830

- **Where Written:** Paris, France
- **When Published:** 1831
- **Literary Period:** Romantic
- **Genre:** Gothic novel
- **Setting:** Paris, France
- **Climax:** Claude Frollo finally succeeds in having Esmeralda hung for witchcraft and, while he watches her execution from the tower of Notre Dame, is pushed to his death by Quasimodo.
- **Antagonist:** Dom Claude Frollo
- **Point of View:** Third-person

EXTRA CREDIT

War to the Demolishers. Before he wrote *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Victor Hugo wrote a furious pamphlet called *War to the Demolishers*, in which he railed against the damage done to historical architecture by modern architects and developers in the city of Paris. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* was a continuation of this idea for Hugo and caused a widespread interest in the preservation and protection of historical buildings in France.

Capital Punishment. Hugo was passionately opposed to the death penalty and gave many influential speeches in the French Parliament on this topic. One of his early novels, *The Last Day of a Condemned Man*, charts the final hours of a prisoner destined to be executed. Hugo's campaign against capital punishment contributed to the abolishment of this practice in Portugal, Columbia, and Geneva.

PLOT SUMMARY

It is 1482 and the people of Paris have gathered to watch a play in the Palace of Justice to celebrate the "Feast of Fools" (a popular medieval carnival). The play's author, Pierre Gringoire, is extremely proud of his work and excited to show it to the public. Unfortunately for him, the guests of honor—a group of visiting ambassadors—are late and the crowd, who are squeezed into the hall, grow restless as they wait for the festivities to begin. At last, afraid for the safety of the actors (who are scared the crowd will hang them for making them wait), Gringoire orders them to start the play. A few moments into the prologue, however, the ambassadors arrive, and the crowd are distracted by the procession of famous politicians who enter the hall. Among these ambassadors is a Flemish man named Jacques Coppenole, who was a clothmaker before he was a nobleman and who dislikes the pomp and ceremony among the French upper classes. Coppenole dislikes Gringoire's play, which he finds stuffy, and tells the crowd that, in his country, they have a face-pulling contest to celebrate the "Feast of Fools" and whoever pulls the ugliest face is crowned the fool's pope. The people love this idea; Gringoire's work is immediately forgotten and a face-pulling contest is quickly arranged. The crowd are delighted with the variety of hideous and terrifying faces that are on show. Finally, a winner is chosen, and the crowd draw back in horror as they see how ugly he is. The Parisians recognize the man as Quasimodo, the hunchback bell-ringer of **Notre Dame** cathedral. The crowd are afraid of Quasimodo because of his hideous appearance, but they crown him the fool's pope and parade him through the streets. Gringoire watches in dismay as the whole audience follows this procession from the hall.

After the day's events, Gringoire finds himself with no money (he has not been paid for his play) and nowhere to sleep for the night. He wanders into the square of the Place de Grève (which is often used for public beatings and executions) where a crowd has gathered around a bonfire. The crowd watches, enthralled, as a beautiful gypsy girl named Esmeralda dances for them and does tricks with her pet goat, Djali. Gringoire notices that another man, Claude Frollo, the Archdeacon of Notre Dame, also watches Esmeralda intently. Frollo shouts that Esmeralda is a witch and Esmeralda makes to leave the square. Just then, the fool's pope procession enters the square and, seeing Quasimodo among them, Frollo rushes up to the hunchback and signals furiously to him to leave. Quasimodo obeys Frollo and the two men leave the square. Esmeralda begins to dance again, but another woman, Sister Gudule—a recluse who lives in a cell in the square and who hates gypsies because she believes they murdered her child—screams that Esmeralda is a demon and Esmeralda flees. Gringoire follows her to see if she will lead him to a bed for the night.

As Gringoire follows Esmeralda through the streets, he witnesses two men try to attack her. One of the men is Quasimodo and the other is Frollo. Gringoire is knocked down during the scuffle and Esmeralda is rescued by Phoebus, a young solider who is the captain of the King's guards. Phoebus arrests Quasimodo—Frollo escapes—and Gringoire gets lost in the sprawling maze of streets that he has followed Esmeralda into. Gringoire suddenly finds himself surrounded by beggars and realizes he has stumbled into the "Court of Miracles," an infamous den of thieves. The thieves take Gringoire to their leader, Clopin Trouillefou, who wants to hang Gringoire for trespassing. Esmeralda reappears, however, and says that she will marry Gringoire to save him from death. Clopin performs the marriage ceremony and, relieved, Gringoire follows Esmeralda to her home and tries to seduce her. Esmeralda fends off his advances, however, and Gringoire accepts some food instead and agrees to be like a brother to her. While Gringoire eats, Esmeralda dreamily asks him what "Phoebus" means and Gringoire says it means "sun." Delighted with this, Esmeralda dashes off to her own room and locks the door.

Claude Frollo was once a passionate and generous young man and a devout religious scholar. He adopted Quasimodo, who

was abandoned as an infant, and he also adopted his own younger brother, Jehan Frollo, after their parents died. Frollo dedicated his life to Jehan's education—in the hope that Jehan would grow up to be a brilliant scholar—and taught Quasimodo to speak and gave him the job as bell-ringer in Notre Dame. Unfortunately, however, Quasimodo went deaf because of the noise from the bells. Jehan grows up to be a debauched and thoughtless young man and Quasimodo is widely hated and feared because of his deformed appearance, so as the years pass, Frollo grows bitter and feels that all his plans are doomed to fail. He begins to experiment with alchemy (a medieval science focused on turning certain metals into other substances and, particularly, with making **gold** and discovering the secret to eternal life) and develops a reputation in Paris as a sorcerer who has sold his soul to the devil. He becomes a powerful religious figure in the city and even King Louis XI visits Frollo for medical advice. One day, Frollo sees Esmeralda dancing in the square and becomes infatuated with her. He believes that she has been sent by the devil to tempt him and begins to put together a case to accuse her of witchcraft.

Although it was Frollo's idea to abduct Esmeralda so that he could rape her, Quasimodo is put on trial for her abduction—which Gringoire witnessed—and is sentenced to a public beating. During this beating, Quasimodo cries out for water and Esmeralda approaches and offers him a drink. Quasimodo is touched by her kindness and falls in love with Esmeralda himself. Esmeralda, however, is in love with Phoebus, who is engaged to marry a young noblewoman named Fleur-de-Lys. One day, Fleur-de-Lys and her friends see Esmeralda dancing in the square while Phoebus is with them. Fleur-de-Lys notices Phoebus's interest in Esmeralda and invites her inside, where she and her friends insult Esmeralda because they are jealous of her beauty. Phoebus is very struck with Esmeralda and arranges a private meeting with her. The day that he is due to meet Esmeralda, Phoebus bumps into Jehan, who has just visited Frollo and borrowed money from him. Jehan and Phoebus go to the pub together to spend this money and Frollo sneaks after them, having followed Jehan after his visit. When Phoebus emerges from the pub that evening and sets off to meet Esmeralda, Frollo follows him. Phoebus heads for an inn and Frollo stops him just before he goes inside. Frollo offers Phoebus money and says that he wants to spy on Phoebus's meeting with Esmeralda. Phoebus agrees and Frollo enters the inn with Phoebus and hides in a cupboard in the room, while Phoebus goes to get Esmeralda. Frollo watches Phoebus begin to undress Esmeralda—who has taken a vow of chastity and tries to resist his advances—but then Frollo flies into a jealous rage, bursts out of the cupboard, and stabs Phoebus before escaping out the window. Horrified, Esmeralda faints and wakes up to find herself under arrest for Phoebus's murder. Esmeralda is tried for witchcraft—she is accused of using magic to lure Phoebus to his death—and is sentenced to be hung. Esmeralda is mad with fear and grief and does not know that Phoebus is, in fact, still alive but has abandoned her to her fate. As she is led to the gallows to be hung, Frollo approaches her and says that he will save her if she will agree to be his lover. Esmeralda refuses and Frollo flees the square. Just as Esmeralda is about to be hung, Quasimodo rushes out of Notre Dame, snatches Esmeralda, and carries her inside the church, where he cries out for "asylum"—a medieval law that meant condemned prisoners could take refuge in certain religious buildings. When Frollo returns to Notre Dame, he believes that Esmeralda is dead and thinks he sees her ghost in the bell tower.

Quasimodo cares for Esmeralda while she hides in Notre Dame. One night, he visits Phoebus and tries to persuade him to prove Esmeralda's innocence, but Phoebus thinks Quasimodo is a demon and hurries away. Frollo discovers that Esmeralda is alive and hiding in the cathedral. He tries to rape her one night and Quasimodo pulls him off her. Frollo then realizes that Quasimodo is in love with Esmeralda too and he becomes jealous of the hunchback. One night, Frollo approaches Gringoire, who still lives in the "Court of Miracles," and asks for his help rescuing Esmeralda, who he says is trapped in Notre Dame. Gringoire organizes a riot among the thieves who live in the Court and these men besiege Notre Dame and try to free Esmeralda. Quasimodo, however, believes that the rioters want to see her hung and tries to fight them off, leaving Esmeralda alone. In the confusion, Frollo sneaks into Notre Dame and kidnaps Esmeralda. He takes her to the Place de Grève and tells her that she can either become his lover or he will call the guards and have her killed. Esmeralda tells him she will never love him and Frollo gives Esmeralda to Sister Gudule to hold while he goes to fetch the guards. Esmeralda asks Sister Gudule why she hates her so much and Sister Gudule says that gypsies killed her daughter, who would have been Esmeralda's age by now. Esmeralda desperately explains that she was abducted by gypsies as a baby and shows Sister Gudule a **baby shoe**, which is the only sign she has of her parentage. Sister Gudule is horrified. She has the other shoe, which means that Esmeralda is her daughter. The guards reappear and, though Sister Gudule desperately tries to protect Esmeralda, Esmeralda is dragged away to be hung. In the struggle with the guards, Sister Gudule is knocked down and killed. Frollo watches Esmeralda's execution from the bell tower of Notre Dame. While Frollo watches, Quasimodo appears behind him and, seeing what Frollo has done, pushes him to his death. Esmeralda is buried in a mass grave and Quasimodo leaves Notre Dame and lies down in the grave with her body, where he dies of grief.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Quasimodo – Quasimodo is a young man with a hunchback

who lives inside **Notre Dame** and works as the cathedral's bell-ringer. Quasimodo is abandoned by his parents as a baby and swapped for the beautiful infant Esmeralda when Esmeralda's mother leaves her unsupervised. Quasimodo is then put up for adoption in Paris and taken in by Claude Frollo, a young priest who later becomes the Archdeacon of Notre Dame. Quasimodo is severely physically deformed and goes deaf because of the noise of the cathedral bells. He cannot talk easily and struggles to communicate with anyone other than Frollo, who teaches him a language of signs. Quasimodo is widely feared and hated in Paris—he is an object of ridicule and a victim of malicious gossip—and he comes to hate the outside world because he feels that people hate him. He is at home in Notre Dame and feels intimately connected with the cathedral. Quasimodo often behaves violently towards people when he is out in public because he has come to expect brutal treatment from them. At one point in the novel, he undergoes a public beating after Frollo orders him to try and kidnap Esmeralda. Despite his vicious exterior, Quasimodo is extremely loyal to Frollo and views him as his master and adoptive father. Although Quasimodo will do anything for Frollo, their relationship comes under strain when Quasimodo falls in love with Esmeralda, whom Frollo is sexually obsessed with. Frollo becomes jealous of Quasimodo and Quasimodo finds himself torn between the two individuals he loves most—Frollo and Esmeralda. Quasimodo's essentially gentle nature is further demonstrated when he rescues Esmeralda from execution (she is accused of being a witch) and cares for her while she is under his protection in Notre Dame. Quasimodo is self-aware and kind, and he astutely observes that society is often fooled by beautiful appearances, while it rejects those who appear ugly but are kind underneath. He is associated with Gothic architecture throughout the novel, and his death at the novel's end symbolizes a decline in interest in architecture with the end of the medieval period.

Esmeralda – Esmeralda is a beautiful young woman who dances and performs tricks with her pet goat, Djali, in the square outside **Notre Dame**. Although Esmeralda has been raised by gypsies and is thought of as a gypsy by the people of Paris, she is in fact the daughter of Paquette la Chantefleurie (or Sister Gudule), a recluse who believes that her baby (Esmeralda) was killed by gypsies. In addition to her immense beauty, which attracts the attention of many of the male characters in the novel, Esmeralda is extremely virtuous and kind. When Quasimodo tries to kidnap Esmeralda on Frollo's orders, she forgives him and even offers him water after he has been publicly beaten for her attempted abduction. She also agrees to marry Pierre Gringoire (a stranger to her) after he wanders into the "Court of Miracles," where Esmeralda lives with her gypsy friends, to save him from being hung as a trespasser. Esmeralda is a vivacious and joyous young woman; she loves her freedom and her ability to dance and wander wherever she likes. She is frequently compared to birds and flying insects throughout the novel, which represent her desire to be free. Her love of life and nature is emphasized through her love of sunlight and her infatuation with the handsome Captain of the guards, Phoebus De Chateaupers, whose first name means "sun." Esmeralda is innocent and naïve, however. She falls in love with Phoebus, even though he is only interested in seducing her, and she believes that her virtue (Esmeralda has taken a vow of chastity) will protect her against evil. Esmeralda is tragically proved wrong: she becomes the victim of relentless and unjust persecution when Claude Frollo, who is tormented by his infatuation with her, tries to have her hanged as a witch. Esmeralda is executed on a charge of witchcraft at the end of the novel and her death represents the fragile state of beauty and freedom in a violent and ugly world.

Claude Frollo – Claude Frollo is the Archdeacon of **Notre Dame** and the adoptive father of Quasimodo. Frollo is also Jehan Frollo's older brother and he cares for Jehan when their parents die while Jehan is still a baby. In his youth, Frollo is a naturally compassionate and caring man. He dotes on his baby brother and adopts Quasimodo because he feels sorry that Quasimodo has been abandoned. Frollo is a passionate scholar and loves all types of knowledge. As he grows older, however, Frollo becomes bitter, and his passionate nature becomes more and more obsessive and strange. Frollo is a priest and begins his career as a deeply religious man. As he ages, his belief in orthodox Christianity wavers and he begins to experiment with alchemy. Frollo is obsessed with the process by which **gold** is formed underground (something which philosophers and alchemists at the time did not understand and which they associated with eternal life) and he feels that, if he can discover where gold comes from, he will be able to understand God. At the same time, however, Frollo has a deeply fatalistic worldview and feels that, like the many thinkers and philosophers before him, he is destined to fail in his quest for ultimate knowledge. Frollo's belief in fate becomes fanatical when he falls in love with Esmeralda and becomes sexually obsessed with her. Although Esmeralda does nothing to invite his attention, Frollo believes that she has bewitched him and thinks that it is his destiny to either seduce her or kill her. As Frollo's obsession progresses and Esmeralda expresses her disgust for him, Frollo goes to extreme lengths to try and possess her. He also becomes extremely jealous of other men and even stabs Phoebus when Phoebus seduces Esmeralda. Although Phoebus survives, Frollo accuses Esmeralda of his murder and has her tried and hung as a witch. Frollo blames the destruction of his life entirely on Esmeralda and is intensely bitter that she will not be his lover, even when he threatens her with death as the alternative. Frollo eventually dies when Quasimodo pushes him off the bell-tower of Notre Dame, where Frollo stands to watch Esmeralda's execution.

Pierre Gringoire – Pierre Gringoire is a writer and philosopher and a comic figure throughout the novel. Gringoire is a mildly

ambitious man who is commissioned to write a play for the arrival of a Flemish princess in Paris. This play is performed during the "Feast of Fools" and is not popular with the crowd. Gringoire is arrogant and self-aggrandizing and believes that the play's reception shows that the Parisian public is too stupid to appreciate his art. Gringoire meets and becomes married to Esmeralda after he wanders into the "Court of Miracles," a notorious den of thieves, and is almost hung as a trespasser. Esmeralda saves Gringoire's life and agrees to marry him so he will not be killed. Although Gringoire believes he is a great artist, he is oblivious to great beauty and immune to extreme emotions—he prefers all things in moderation. While he is attracted to Esmeralda, who is widely considered to be extremely beautiful, Gringoire prefers Djali, Esmeralda's pet goat, whom he finds very pretty and endearing. Gringoire ultimately chooses to save Djali, rather than Esmeralda, at the novel's end and this demonstrates that he is a petty, ignorant man who does not truly appreciate beauty or goodness. Gringoire is also a cowardly figure and is not willing to risk his life to save Esmeralda, even though she saved him from being killed. Although Gringoire generally means well, he is self-interested and likes to lead an easy life. He gives up his artistic career when he realizes that he can make more money as a street performer and he often gives things up as soon as they start to bore him. In this sense, Gringoire is the opposite of characters like Frollo, who grow obsessive about certain things to the point of madness. Although he is an extremely ignoble character and gets Esmeralda and many of the "truants" killed with his thoughtless actions (he organizes a riot against **Notre Dame** which gets out of hand), Gringoire is one of the only characters in the novel who does not meet a tragic end, which suggests that his approach to life may be somewhat wise after all.

Phoebus De Chateaupers – Phoebus is the Captain of the King's guards, a brave soldier, and a handsome young man. Although he is engaged to a young noblewoman, Fleur-de-Lys de Gondelaurier, Phoebus is a womanizer and lives a drunken, bawdy life when he is not on duty. Phoebus is really an extremely rough, vulgar man, but his good looks convince people that he is noble and refined. Esmeralda falls in love with Phoebus after he rescues her from Quasimodo and Frollo, who try to abduct her. Although Phoebus is attracted to Esmeralda and tries to seduce her, he has no interest in her beyond this and has no desire to marry her. He does not take into consideration how important Esmeralda's virtue is to her and tries to manipulate her into sleeping with him by suggesting that, if she does not have sex with him, then she does not love him. Phoebus is extremely proud and impulsive and almost challenges Frollo to a duel because Frollo calls him a liar. He is egotistical and cares a great deal about his reputation. This is demonstrated when, after he is stabbed by Frollo, who is jealous of his relationship with Esmeralda, Phoebus leaves Paris because he is embarrassed and worried for his reputation, even though he knows that Esmeralda will probably be blamed and hung for his attempted murder. Phoebus is very superstitious and is a sensual character—he struggles to repress his natural urges or to be denied what he wants. Although Phoebus's name means "sun," he does not represent a source of light, hope, or life to Esmeralda but rather, indirectly, contributes to her death.

Jehan Frollo – Jehan is Claude Frollo's younger brother and a student at the University in Paris. Jehan is adopted by Frollo at a young age, after their parents die from the plague. Although Frollo provides the best possible education for Jehan, Jehan squanders his time at university and spends all his money drinking and visiting prostitutes. Jehan is notorious for his involvement in many brawls on campus and does not respect Frollo, despite the many sacrifices Frollo has made for him. Instead, Jehan believes his older brother is mad and foolish and only visits him when he wants money. Like Frollo, however, Jehan is prone to extreme emotions and is very impulsive. While Frollo represses this side of himself, Jehan gives in to all his emotions and sensual urges and does so with relish. He loves pleasure and wants to live a life of debauchery. This is demonstrated when Jehan finally decides to give up his respectable education for good and become a "truant." Jehan's extreme personality and impulsive nature are eventually his downfall when he joins the riot against **Notre Dame** and throws himself into the fighting. He is killed by Quasimodo, who defends the cathedral during this riot.

Clopin Trouillefou – Clopin Trouillefou is a notorious thief and begger in Paris and is known among the "truants" as the "King of Thunes." Clopin begs for alms in the city and wears a fake wound to try and illicit public sympathy. Despite this, when he returns to the "Court of Miracles" at night, where he lives as leader of the "truants," Clopin is a virile and fearsome leader. Clopin considers himself a brother to Esmeralda, who lives among the "truants," and he is the person who doles out justice in the "Court of Miracles." The thieves who live in the "Court" do not abide by the laws of Paris but live according to their own rules. They hang innocent trespassers as revenge for the many thieves who are hung by the real courts. Clopin nearly hangs Gringoire in this manner, when Gringoire wanders into the "Court" by accident. Clopin explains to Gringoire that the "truants" live by these brutal laws because the official law of the land is also a vicious and brutal one. Although he is a criminal, Clopin is a noble man who keeps his word; he tries to save Esmeralda when she is trapped in **Notre Dame**, but he is executed for witchcraft.

Fleur-de-Lys de Gondelaurier – Fleur-de-Lys de Gondelaurier is a beautiful young noblewoman who is engaged to Phoebus. She is training to be a companion to a Flemish princess who has recently married a French noble, and she is the daughter of Aloïse de Gondelaurier. Fleur-de-Lys resists Phoebus's amorous advances during their engagement because she is worried about her reputation and does not want to lose her

virtue. Although she is very pretty, Fleur-de-Lys is spiteful, and she and her friends mock and belittle Esmeralda when they invite her to dance for them, because they are jealous of her beauty. Fleur-de-Lys eventually marries Phoebus, although she is still suspicious about his relationship with Esmeralda, and she and Phoebus have an unhappy marriage.

Paquette la Chantefleurie/Sister Gudule – Paquette la Chantefleurie is a woman from Rheims who lives as a recluse in Paris, in a horrible cell known as the "rat-hole." She is also Esmeralda's mother. The two were separated when Esmeralda was a baby as Esmeralda was stolen by gypsies and replaced with the infant Quasimodo. The inhabitants of Paris know Paquette as Sister Gudule, but her true identity is revealed when Mahiette, a woman from Rheims, visits the "rat-hole" and recognizes Paquette. Paquette was once a poor young woman in Rheims and became a prostitute to support herself. Although she was almost ruined by this, her life changed when she had a daughter, whom she loved more than anything. The baby (Esmeralda) was kidnapped by gypsies, however, who raised her as their own. After the loss of her daughter, Paquette goes mad with grief and develops a virulent hatred of gypsies, who she believes killed her child. She travels to Paris and locks herself in the "rat-hole," where she plans to live out her days as a penitent (or martyr) and meditate on the loss of her child. All Paquette has left of her daughter is a pink **shoe**, which she made for the baby, and she stares at it all day long. Paquette is vengeful and particularly hates Esmeralda, whom she sees in the square and whom she wishes would be hung. Paquette's wish comes true and Esmeralda is sentenced to death for witchcraft. However, right before Esmeralda's execution, Paquette discovers that Esmeralda is her daughter—she has the other pink shoe in the pouch she wears around her neck. Paquette's fate is tragic, and she dies as she fights the guards who try to take Esmeralda to the gallows.

Louis XI/Compere Tourangeau – Louis XI is the King of France and is an old man in the period in which the novel is set. Louis XI is depicted as a stingy and vicious king who only cares about power and suppressing the populace. He has grown bitter in his old age and is obsessed with his health. This makes him gullible and he bestows money and favors on his doctor, Jacques Coictier, who exaggerates Louis's condition and promises to cure him from his ailments in exchange for these riches. Louis XI is merciless with political prisoners—he keeps one man in a cage for 14 years because he has allegedly committed treason—and spends large amounts of money on public torture and execution as, he believes, this keeps the people in line. He is susceptible to flattery and lets Gringoire go when Gringoire is brought before him during the riot at **Notre Dame**, because Gringoire begs for mercy by appealing to the King's vanity. Louis XI is also superstitious and afraid of losing his power. He visits Frollo (under the false name of Compere Tourangeau) to learn about astrology (although the Archdeacon does not believe in astrology) and is terrified by the idea that the people may turn against him. This is suggested to him by the Flemish ambassador, Jacques Coppenole, during the riot at Notre Dame. The historical figure of Louis XI died one year after the events in the novel.

Jacques Coppenole – Jacques Coppenole is a Flemish politician and a hosier (a clothmaker) by trade. He is in Paris to supervise the marriage of a French noble to the Flemish princess. Jacques Coppenole is a popular figure with the people of both Flanders and Paris. He is not interested in the events laid out for the nobles and would rather have a "face-pulling contest" to mark the celebration, which proves incredibly popular with the people of Paris. He is friends with Clopin Trouillefou and does not keep himself separate from common people the way that the French nobles and monarchs do. Coppenole represents the gradual swing away from elitism and monarchy that would take place after the medieval period and in the build-up to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Coppenole symbolizes populism and democracy, which emerged in the aftermath of the French Revolution (during which the monarchy was overthrown in 1789), and his presence in the novel foreshadows these political events. He also serves as a stark contrast to Louis XI, who keeps himself locked away from the people in the Bastille, a famous prison in Paris which was broken into during the French Revolution.

Jacques Charmolue – Jacques Charmolue is a priest and a prosecutor for the court. He is a student of Claude Frollo, who teaches him alchemy, and he is responsible for finding evidence against those accused of witchcraft or sorcery. Charmolue helps build the case against Esmeralda when Frollo accuses her of witchcraft. He also suggests that Esmeralda should be tortured during her trial.

La Falourdel – La Falourdel is the landlady of the inn where Phoebus tries to seduce Esmeralda. Phoebus is stabbed by Frollo, who has been watching the seduction from a cupboard. La Falourdel believes that Frollo is a ghost and that Esmeralda is a witch who has stabbed Phoebus. La Falourdel is a witness in Esmeralda's trial.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Jacques Coictier – Jacques Coictier is Louis XI's doctor.

Pierrat Torterue – Pierrat Torterue is the torturer for the court. He tortures Esmeralda during her trial.

Olivier le Daim – Olivier le Daim (or Olivier the Bad) is an advisor to Louis XI and a real historical figure.

Guillaume Rym – Guillaume Rym is a Flemish ambassador and a sly and ruthless politician.

Mahiette – Mahiette is a woman from Rheims who has come to visit Paris. She is friends with Oudarde and Gervaise and has a son named Eustache. During her visit, she recognizes Sister

Gudule and reveals her true identity to be Paquette la Chantefleurie.

Gervaise – Gervaise is a Parisian woman and a friend of Oudarde and Mahiette.

Oudarde – Oudarde is a Parisian woman and a friend of Gervaise and Mahiette.

Tristan l'Hermite – Tristan l'Hermite is a soldier and Louis XI's bodyguard.

Heriet Cousin – Heriet Cousin is a guard.

Eustache – Eustache is Mahiette's young son.

Djali – Djali is Esmeralda's pet goat.

Robin Poussepain – Robin Poussepain is a friend of Jehan's.

Aloïse de Gondelaurier – Aloïse de Gondelaurier is the mother of Fleur-de-Lys.

Robert d'Estouteville – Robert d'Estouteville is the Provost of Paris.

Florian Barbidienne – Florian Bardedienne is a deaf magistrate.

The Cardinal – The Cardinal is a religious official who attends the "Feast of Fools."

TERMS

Pillory – A pillory is a place of public punishment, sometimes known as "the stocks." It is usually a wooden board with three holes in it—one for the head and two for the hands—where prisoners can be held for long periods of time on display or where they can be restrained while being beaten. This was common in several European countries during the medieval period. In the novel, the pillory at the Place de Grève in Paris is the site where **Quasimodo** is flogged after he is arrested for trying to abduct **Esmeralda**.

Truants – "Truants," or "truands," in the novel, are thieves, beggars, or street performers who live in the "Court of Miracles" and exist outside the usual city laws. Instead, the truants live by their own social code known as the "truant's law." **Esmeralda** lives among the truants because she is a gypsy and a street performer, and the truants almost hang **Gringoire** when he wanders into the "Court of Miracles" by mistake.

Romanesque/Neo-classicist – Romanesque architecture is architecture in the style of ancient Rome and refers to pre-Christian and pre-medieval architecture. Hugo notes that this style of architecture (which used rounded arches and simple, harmonious designs) predated Gothic architecture which became popular in the medieval period, when the novel is set. Neo-classicist architecture refers to the style of architecture that became fashionable *after* the medieval period, when Gothic architecture had fallen out of fashion. It is referred to as Neo-classicist (new Classical) because it imitates the earlier Romanesque style but adds modern elements to it. Gothic, medieval architecture was considered unfashionable for a long time after the medieval period, until the early 19th century when writers like Victor Hugo revived public interest in it.

Renaissance – The Renaissance was a period of scientific, philosophical, and cultural development in Europe that lasted approximately from the 15th to the 17th centuries. Hugo sets *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* at the end of the medieval period, which came right before the Renaissance, and suggests that the society that he writes about is on the brink of a major cultural change with the impending arrival of the Renaissance.

Provost – A provost is a government official and head of civil authorities, such as the police force, in certain areas. In Hugo's novel, **Robert d'Estouteville** is the Provost of Paris and is responsible for overseeing legal trials there.

Litter – A litter is a type of chair which was used to carry people in the medieval period.

Quasimodo Sunday – Quasimodo Sunday is the medieval term for the beginning of Easter.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE, HISTORY, AND ART

The Gothic cathedral of **Notre Dame**, in Paris, is a central motif in Victor Hugo's novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. The novel documents the lives of several characters who live in and around Notre Dame, including Quasimodo, the titular "hunchback" who lives in isolation in the cathedral. Hugo's novel was written in the 1800s but is set during the medieval period (specifically the 1400s), when Notre Dame was still relatively new. The cathedral is an example of Gothic architecture (recognizable by its pointed spires, great height, and decorative gargoyles), which was popular during the medieval period. Gothic architecture was largely replaced by neo-classicist architecture (which favored round shapes and harmony over the extremes of the Gothic) during the Renaissance (a period of intensive scientific and philosophical enlightenment in Europe), which would arrive in France soon after the years in which the novel is set. The constant presence of Notre Dame in the novel, especially combined with the lengthy descriptions of Gothic architecture elsewhere in Paris, suggest that, although Gothic architecture

was no longer fashionable in the 1800s, Hugo believed that it was an artform which should be preserved and appreciated, despite its often grotesque appearance. Hugo suggests that Gothic architecture is a collective artform, reflecting the experience of humanity as it develops over time and across different historical periods.

Hugo argues that architecture is something vital and alive. This is most clearly demonstrated through the relationship between Quasimodo and Notre Dame. Due to his deformity, which leaves him an outcast from society, Quasimodo has spent most of his life inside the cathedral. He is so familiar with the building that he feels that Notre Dame is alive. Furthermore, his presence "seems to infuse the whole building" with life. His presence also brings the cathedral to life for the inhabitants of Paris, who associate Notre Dame with Quasimodo and see them as one and the same: Quasimodo is the spirit of the church. This suggests that, when architecture is viewed imaginatively, it is a lively artform. Similarly, the surrounding city of Paris, which was mostly Gothic in the medieval period, is given a sense of vitality when Hugo describes the main streets as "arteries." He also frequently describes people seeming to "turn to stone" or to look like "statues" throughout the story. This suggests that the lines are blurred between the people and the architecture of Paris and that people's surroundings shape who they are. After the medieval period, Hugo suggests, people lost their connection to Gothic architecture and began to dislike its apparent deformity in comparison with the neater neo-classicist style. In this sense, Quasimodo's deformity reflects the "disfigurement" of Notre Dame as the cathedral ages. Quasimodo's death at the novel's end represents the decline of interest in Gothic architecture, something Hugo considers a tragic loss.

While Gothic architecture featured grotesque shapes, such as the gargoyles on the facade of Notre Dame, neo-classicist architecture preferred forms that were neat and picturesque, in line with classical ideas of beauty as comprised of symmetry and harmony. Hugo rejects this idea in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and suggests instead that all types of people and experiences—classically beautiful or not—can be portrayed in art. This is demonstrated in his description of the face-pulling contest during the "Feast of Fools," when the crowd takes turns making the most horrifying faces they can. This not only connects the faces of the populace with the stone gargoyles on the walls of Gothic cathedrals, but it also highlights the idea that human experience is varied, and that life is not only beautiful; ugliness, violence, and horror also play a part. Hugo further supports this idea through the range of characters he includes in his novel, from beggars to the King of France. The contrasts in the characters' statuses are highlighted by their interaction with Gothic architecture. In the novel, people frequently observe each other from a great height, from the towers of Notre Dame, or from far below, from the square beneath the cathedral. These extremes of height and depth also reflect the extreme emotions which the characters experience throughout the novel, such as The Archdeacon of Notre Dame's (Claude Frollo) sexual obsession with Esmeralda, a gypsy girl who dances in the square beneath the cathedral. Hugo, therefore, views Gothic architecture as a medium to express the scope of human emotion and suggests that all kinds of experience can be suitable subjects for art.

The idea that architecture is a mode of artistic expression is further expanded upon through the idea that buildings can be *read*. During his description of Paris, Hugo refers to the architecture of the city as a "chronicle in stone." This suggests that the city tells a story and that, like a book, architecture can be examined in order to gather a picture of those who created it. This idea is further developed through the character of Claude Frollo. Frollo is a philosopher as well as a priest and he practices alchemy, a form of medieval science interested in the transformation of chemicals and metals. Rather than work from books, few of which existed in the medieval period, Frollo studies buildings, specifically the carvings on the facade of Notre Dame and several other historical sites around Paris. This suggests that architecture is a fount of knowledge, in terms of what it reveals about the past and also because, before people had access to books, they carved knowledge and ideas into stonework. Hugo states that before the advent of the printing press, which provided easy access to books and increased literacy, "anyone born a poet became an architect." This supports his thesis throughout *Notre Dame* that medieval architecture is not only worthy as an artform but can be read like a history book in order to understand the past. This further supports Hugo's overall idea: that all forms of art and architecture are valuable because they reflect varied and historical facets of human experience from which people can learn.

LUST, SIN, AND MISOGYNY

Lust is associated with sin in the medieval period, while purity is associated with holiness and spiritual rewards. Due to these attitudes, many of the characters in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* try to repress their feelings of lust and desire. However, the repression of these urges, which Victor Hugo suggests are natural and healthy, does more harm than good to some of the characters, despite their beliefs in the power of purity.

Frollo represses his lustful urges (because he believes they are sinful) and this repression causes his sexual desires to manifest in unhealthy ways. In his early life, Frollo is a naturally passionate man and is prone to extreme emotions. At first, these passions manifest in generous ways. When he is 19, Frollo adopts his baby brother, Jehan, after their parents die, and makes it his sole aim to provide for him. This suggests that Frollo is prone to intense emotions, and, when these are

expressed openly, they yield positive results. Furthermore, as a young man, Frollo is described as feeling a "lust for knowledge," which leads to his success as a student and to his illustrious career. This suggests that passion can be a positive and motivating force when it is not repressed. Frollo does not try to repress his love for Jehan or his passion for knowledge, because these types of passion are sanctioned by the priesthood, of which Frollo is a member. As a priest, Frollo must remain celibate and cannot express desire towards women, because he (and the Church) considers this impure. Although Frollo actively believes that lust is sinful, he becomes sexually obsessed with Esmeralda after he sees her dance in the square. Whereas his affection for Jehan causes Frollo to behave generously, his lust for Esmeralda causes him to behave destructively—he hounds Esmeralda to death because he cannot satisfy his lust and destroys himself in the process. This suggests that, when passionate emotions are repressed, they do not disappear, but instead grow more intense and reemerge in destructive ways.

Purity is believed to be a protective force in the novel: several of the characters fight to preserve their purity because they believe this will bring them rewards and protect them from punishment. Although Frollo actively persecutes Esmeralda, he does so partly because he believes that his attraction to her is a sign of his own spiritual damnation. Frollo wants to retain his purity because he believes that this will protect his soul and that he will, ultimately, be rewarded in Heaven for his abstinence. Similarly, Esmeralda tries to maintain her sexual innocence because she believes that she will be rewarded (she will be reunited with her parents, whom she was separated from as a baby) if she remains pure. This is demonstrated by her vow of chastity and the amulet she wears around her neck. This amulet contains a baby's **shoe** and is the only clue she has to the identity of her parents. When Phoebus, a handsome young soldier whom Esmeralda is in love with, tries to seduce her, Esmeralda resists his advances because she believes that, if she has sex with him, she will never see her family again. Again, lust is clearly associated with punishment. Lust, or allegations of sexual behaviour, could also incite literal punishment, especially for women. Although Esmeralda *does* remain pure throughout the novel, she is accused of witchcraft and of using her magic to incite lustful thoughts in men, and she is eventually executed for this. This demonstrates that, although the characters believe they will be rewarded or protected if they stay pure, this is not really the case. In fact, Esmeralda's purity does not help her avoid punishment (because no one believes she *is* pure) and Frollo's attempts to remain pure actively lead to his own demise and moral disintegration, as his repressed sexual urges lead him to extreme and immoral behaviour. This suggests that a quest for purity often does more harm than good, even for those who believe deeply in it.

What's more, misogynistic beliefs in the medieval period mean that women are held responsible for men's sexual urges. Although Frollo actively pursues Esmeralda, even when she tells him explicitly that she is not interested, Frollo holds Esmeralda accountable for his sexual interest in her—he believes she has cast a spell on him. Frollo's refusal to listen to Esmeralda, and to take her seriously when she refuses him, reflects his misogynistic attitude to women in general and suggests that he does not respect Esmeralda's decisions or feel the need to examine his own behavior. Instead, Frollo simply blames Esmeralda, not only for *his* sexual desire, but also for the tragic turn his life takes, which is the result of his own destructive behavior. Although Esmeralda never encourages Frollo's affections, his inability to take responsibility for his own desires (which he feels a deep shame for experiencing because he considers lust impure) leads to Esmeralda's death and demonstrates the terrible consequences that these misogynistic beliefs can have for women. In contrast to Frollo, who tries to bully Esmeralda into loving him, Quasimodo also falls in love with her but allows her to choose how she feels about him. Unlike Frollo, Quasimodo takes responsibility for his attraction to Esmeralda and does not blame her for his suffering when she rejects him. Unlike the other characters in the novel, Quasimodo has not grown up among society and has not learned that purity is considered virtuous, whereas lust is considered sinful. This suggests that the desire to repress natural emotions, such as lust, is socially learned. Overall, Hugo suggests that repressing natural desires, or holding others accountable for those desires, is extremely damaging to both men and women.

APPEARANCES, ALIENATION, AND HYPOCRISY

People are primarily judged on their appearances, rather than their internal characters, in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Victor Hugo argues, however, that appearances can be deceiving, and that judging people based on how they look can often cause people to be treated unfairly and even ostracized by society. This alienation from society often causes people to reject society because it has rejected them, and in turn to behave in malicious ways. This behavior seems to confirm society's view of these ostracized individuals, but it is actually a symptom of social alienation and not a reflection of their true character. Furthermore, a society which focuses primarily on what people *appear* to be, rather than what they really are, is likely to be exploited by hypocrites, who pretend to be virtuous in public while being selfish or malevolent in private.

Hugo paints a portrait of medieval society as a place where external appearance is believed to reflect people's inner personalities. The people of Paris reject the hunchback Quasimodo because of how he looks. When he appears in public he is jeered at, and people believe malicious rumors

about him, including the idea that the sight of him causes pregnant women to miscarry. This suggests that people in medieval Paris are willing to trust appearances and speculate based on superficial factors. Although the people of Paris do briefly accept Quasimodo, during the "Feast of Fools," they only do so in order to crown him the "Fool's Pope," a derogatory title which signifies that he has the most hideous face in all of Paris. It is clear from this that they view Quasimodo as a spectacle or entertainment because of his unusual appearance. They do not empathize with him or see him as a person with feelings. Esmeralda is also frequently judged on her looks by the people of Paris. Although the beautiful Esmeralda seems to be the opposite of Quasimodo, in fact she and the hunchback have a great deal in common in this sense. When Fleur-de-Lys, a young noblewoman, and her friends invite Esmeralda to join them after they see her dance in the square, the young women belittle and sneer at Esmeralda because she is poor and badly dressed. In reality, the women are jealous of Esmeralda's beauty (especially Fleur-de-Lys, whose fiancée, Phoebus, is present and is clearly attracted to Esmeralda). Esmeralda has done nothing to provoke this criticism and is ostracized by the women purely because of her appearance. Her beauty is later used against her when she is tried as a witch and is accused of using her looks to lure men to their deaths. Like Quasimodo, Esmeralda is a virtuous character inside, and she is unfairly judged based purely on the way she looks, which demonstrates that appearance is more important than behavior in medieval society.

In Quasimodo's case, being constantly judged and rejected based on his appearance leads him to become alienated from society. Because he is not accepted by society and is treated cruelly whenever he goes among people, Quasimodo has grown up in almost total isolation inside **Notre Dame**. Hugo notes that the cathedral is "the whole of nature" to Quasimodo, which implies that it has become his natural environment. He can imagine very little of the outside world and this makes it harder for Quasimodo to integrate into society, as he lacks basic knowledge of etiquette and social grace. The cruelty that society demonstrates towards Quasimodo also teaches him to be "vicious" in return. Quasimodo behaves violently towards several members of the crowd during the "Feast of Fools" and this confirms the crowd's belief that he is dangerous. However, Quasimodo only behaves like this in response to the crowd's mockery. Even if they are not mocking him at the time, he has come to expect this treatment from them because it is what he has consistently experienced throughout his life. This suggests that people are products of their environments, and that cruel behaviors are not often the result of innate badness but rather of social issues. Quasimodo's true nature is revealed later in the novel when he falls in love with Esmeralda and saves her from being executed. Quasimodo is kind to Esmeralda because she has been kind to him (she offered him water while he was undergoing a brutal public punishment), and he cares for her while she hides in the cathedral. This suggests that Quasimodo's true nature is not vicious but rather gentle, and that he is capable of love and kindness when he is shown these traits and can learn by example, as he does with Esmeralda. Through their relationship, Hugo suggests that cruelty breeds cruelty, whereas people who are treated kindly are more likely to be kind themselves.

In contrast to Quasimodo and Esmeralda, who are unfairly judged by society because of how they look, other characters in the novel use their appearances to hypocritically hide their true natures. Although Phoebus appears dashing and virtuous, his looks disguise the fact that he is selfish and thoughtless. His heroic outward appearance, however, causes Esmeralda and many other women to fall in love with him and demonstrates that people are easily taken in by appealing appearances. Unlike Quasimodo, who appears to be ugly but who genuinely cares for Esmeralda's wellbeing, Phoebus is only interested in seducing her. This suggests that beauty can hide internal ugliness and vice versa. This hypocrisy also shows up in the character of Claude Frollo, who *appears* to be holy (he is a priest) when, really, he is driven by lust and ambition. Hugo suggests that, when society judges people based on appearance rather than behavior, it is easy for hypocrites to hide their true intentions, while virtuous people are often shunned and unfairly treated because of how they look.

FATE AND PREDESTINATION

In *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, many of the characters suffer tragic fates through no fault of their own. Some characters, like Claude Frollo, believe in predestination (the idea that humans lives follow a set plan which is preordained by God and, therefore, unchangeable), while others try to resist their fates. Victor Hugo suggests that while some aspects of life may be unavoidable, believing in predestination can cause people to engage in destructive behaviors since they believe that no matter how they act, their fate will always be the same.

There is a sense of inevitable fate about many aspects of the novel. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is set in a society headed toward immense change: the late medieval period, which would soon to give way to the Renaissance. Medieval anxieties about these changes are reflected in Frollo's belief that developments in technology, such as the invention of the printing press, will drastically alter society and take power out of the hands of the Church. Hugo suggests that this change *did* occur, with the gradual movement towards belief in science over religion, which began in the Renaissance and developed into the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, from which Hugo is writing. Therefore, Hugo suggests that this societal change is not something which could be averted and is simply the inevitable result of time. This idea of destiny is further represented through the character of Quasimodo, who, Hugo

states, has a "kind of fatality" about him. He is born deformed, then abandoned by his parents. When he is adopted by Frollo, Frollo teaches him to speak, but Quasimodo goes deaf because of the noise from the bells of **Notre Dame**, and therefore he cannot communicate easily. This string of unfortunate events suggests that Quasimodo is destined for tragedy even before the events of the novel unfold. Quasimodo's attempts to save Esmeralda, who is wrongly convicted of witchcraft and sentenced to be hung, are similarly doomed despite his best efforts. Although Quasimodo shelters Esmeralda in Notre Dame, a fatal misunderstanding leads to her being recaptured when a mob attacks the cathedral. Although the mob is led by Esmeralda's friend Clopin Trouillefou, who wants to rescue her, Quasimodo believes that the crowd wants to hang her and so he tries to fight them off. In the commotion, Frollo abducts Esmeralda and has her executed. Quasimodo's futile attempts to protect Esmeralda subtly symbolize the inevitable fate of Notre Dame itself, which will go into decline and be forgotten once the medieval period has ended and its faithful bell-ringer has died of grief for Esmeralda.

Some characters actively struggle to shape fate, only to have their efforts frustrated. In the preface to the novel, Hugo notes that he was inspired to write the story after he saw the word "fatality" written in Greek on the wall of a cell inside the cathedral. This word appears in the novel when Frollo carves it into the wall of his cell and is seen doing this by his brother, Jehan. This is pertinant because Frollo tries to raise Jehan as a devout scholar, but, despite his best efforts, Jehan grows into a debauched and thoughtless young man. This suggests that Frollo's struggle to shape Jehan's fate has been in vain and that people cannot predict how things will turn out. The word "fatality" also reflects Frollo's feelings of frustration with life in general. Frollo is a scholar and is deeply aware that human life and the possibility for human understanding are limited by mortality. Frollo struggles against this with alchemy (a medieval science associated with the quest for eternal life) but eventually realizes that his efforts will likely fail and that he is destined to die without understanding the universe. Frollo's process of accepting the idea of predestination suggests that individual efforts to understand fate can only go so far. While characters like Frollo rail against their fates, the opposite is true of Pierre Gringoire, an artist who marries Esmeralda. Although at first Gringoire believes he is destined to be a great artist, he abruptly gives this up when he realizes that being a street performer is more lucrative and less effort. Unlike most of the other characters in the novel, Gringoire escapes a tragic fate and this suggests that, since fate is something that people cannot control, it is more sensible (though perhaps less noble) to give in to it.

Belief in predestination, however, can be used to justify problematic behavior. During his passion for Esmeralda, Frollo feels that her fate is entwined with his and that this is the will of God. This belief is symbolized by the image of a spider with a fly in its web: Frollo views himself as the spider and Esmeralda as the helpless fly. However, because of his belief in predestination, Frollo feels that he too is a helpless victim of circumstance and that it is his destiny to kill Esmeralda, just as it is the spider's nature to eat the fly. This twisted understanding of fate suggests that committing too fully to a belief in destiny can give people an excuse to continue behavior that they know is destructive. This attitude is demonstrated elsewhere in the novel when Jehan, after growing more and more debauched, decides that he may as well become a criminal. This ends tragically, however, when he joins the mob of "truants" (thieves) as they attack Notre Dame in the riot organized to rescue Esmeralda. Jehan is killed in the riot, and his death suggests that belief in a certain fate can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Overall, throughout the novel, characters seem to have little control over their destinies and face a choice between succumbing to their fates or resisting with little hope of success. However, Hugo suggests that, although humans may have little control over many aspects of their lives, it is still better to try and resist destructive behaviors when one can, rather than justifying them with the idea of predestination.

THE SUPERNATURAL, RATIONALISM, AND KNOWLEDGE

In *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Victor Hugo presents the medieval period as an intensely superstitious age in which people often believe in supernatural explanations for events rather than rational ones. Hugo undermines this attitude and provides a logical explanation for every supposedly supernatural occurrence in the novel. This demonstrates the difference in knowledge between the medieval period, in which the novel is set, and the 1800s, in which Hugo wrote the novel. In the 1800s, there was a widespread belief in rationalism and a growing understanding of the natural sciences, and Hugo uses the events of the novel to support the value of this perspective. By contrasting it with a medieval worldview, Hugo also suggests that superstition played an important role in medieval society as it helped people to rationalize seemingly inexplicable events.

The characters in the novel are extremely superstitious. Medieval society is presented as a time in which belief in superstitions, such as the belief in ghosts, astrology, or witchcraft, is normal. Many of the characters believe that Frollo is a sorcerer (in reality, he practices alchemy, which was an early form of experimental science) and he is thought ridiculous because he does not believe in astrology. This suggests that, in the world of the novel, it is considered more reasonable to believe in supernatural forms of knowledge like astrology than in natural science. Similarly, people genuinely fear the supernatural and feel it is a real threat to their wellbeing. For

example, when Phoebus is approached by Quasimodo in the street at night, he is frightened by Quasimodo's appearance and thinks he must be a supernatural entity. Phoebus rushes away before he hears Quasimodo's message from Esmeralda, who has taken refuge in **Notre Dame** to avoid being executed and who desperately needs Phoebus's help to escape. Phoebus's behavior shows how much power ideas about the supernatural carry in the medieval period. Characters often jump to supernatural conclusions before rational ones. When Frollo accompanies Phoebus to a brothel, where Phoebus plans to seduce Esmeralda, the landlady who greets them sees both Frollo and Phoebus, although Frollo is disguised by a dark cloak. During the seduction, Frollo hides in a cupboard and then escapes out the window after he stabs Phoebus in a jealous rage. The landlady, who finds only Esmeralda and Phoebus in the room, assumes that Frollo must have been the devil, or a demon monk who has been rumored to haunt the streets, rather than concluding rationally that he was simply a man who escaped through the window. This supernatural explanation gains popularity in Paris, however, and demonstrates that the supernatural is considered rational by the medieval populace.

Hugo counteracts these superstitions and provides rational explanations for events in the novel. While the characters in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* take apparently supernatural events at face value, Hugo's narration shows the reader that nothing supernatural really takes place. For example, although the people of Paris believe in the story of the demon monk, Hugo reveals to the reader that it is really Frollo in disguise. Instances like this emphasize Hugo's point that the supernatural is not actually prevalent, as medieval society believes, and that most events have rational explanations. Hugo takes a skeptical approach to the supernatural because he writes from a 19th-century perspective. During the Enlightenment, which lasted approximately from the 17th to the 19th century in Europe, developments in philosophy and science meant that people gradually moved away from superstitious beliefs and, instead, looked for natural explanations for things. It is through the character of Frollo that this attitude is most clearly demonstrated, as, before his obsession with Esmeralda, Frollo is interested in science, shuns superstition, and wishes to develop a more rational understanding of the world. This suggests that society is already moving in this direction during the medieval period and that, although he is the antagonist of the novel, Frollo is ahead of his time. In fact, it is when Frollo abandons his studies that his responses to the world grow more irrational and he falls back on his belief in witchcraft, accusing Esmeralda of bewitching him and causing his obsession. This suggests that the pursuit of scientific knowledge, which took place across the Enlightenment period, improved society because it dispelled many ideas, such as belief in witchcraft, that previously led to widespread persecution in Europe.

However, Hugo also makes it clear that medieval society's reliance on superstition is understandable. Hugo argues that the advent of Enlightenment thought in Europe began with the invention of the printing press. The reproduction of books allowed information to spread rapidly among the population and increased literacy levels. Hugo describes books as "a flock of birds" that carried information across the world and helped explain many natural occurrences which had previously been thought supernatural. But despite the progress made by these changes, Hugo suggests that belief in the supernatural was a rational response to a world in which events could not be explained by science. Although many Enlightenment writers and philosophers looked down on the medieval period as an irrational and barbarous time, Hugo delves into the psychology of people in the medieval period and empathizes with their perspective. By doing so, he is able to recognize the important difference that widespread literacy made to the world, while also acknowledging the imagination and ingenuity of medieval society as it looked for ways to explain and understand mysterious events. This balanced perspective reflects Hugo's overall thesis that there is knowledge to be gained from examining other cultures and time periods. Though he celebrates rational thought, he also indicates that limiting oneself to *only* a rationalist, Enlightenment perspective is as ignorant and arbitrary as the superstitious beliefs that many of his medieval characters cling to.

JUSTICE, PUNISHMENT, AND FREEDOM

Victor Hugo presents the medieval Paris of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* as an unjust society, despite the many incidents of apparent "justice" which take place. The characters are often falsely accused of crimes or unjustly imprisoned, and the threat of capital punishment is very real in the novel. However, Hugo indicates that even in the face of a corrupt judicial system, ordinary people nonetheless have the power to overcome injustice through collective action.

Medieval Paris is portrayed as an unjust society in which people may face persecution and punishment at any time. For instance, Quasimodo is tried after he attempts to kidnap Esmeralda on Frollo's orders. Later, Esmeralda is put on trial when she is accused of witchcraft. It's clear from the characters' experiences that Paris in this era has an active system of justice. However, although a justice system is in place, it is a corrupt and often laughable one. This is demonstrated at Quasimodo's trial when he is tried by Florian Barbedienne, who is deaf. To save face, Florian pretends to hear Quasimodo's answers and replies according to what he guesses Quasimodo has said. Quasimodo is deaf too, however, and so he does not hear the questions. The trial devolves into a farce and Quasimodo is sentenced to be publicly flogged even though his evidence has not been heard. This suggests that the justice system will

sentence people based on the whim of the judge rather than on the results of the trial. Similarly, Esmeralda is convicted of witchcraft on dubious evidence. The court believes that her pet goat, Djali, whom she has taught to do tricks, is a demon. During the trial, the judge encourages Djali to perform his tricks to convince the crowd of Esmeralda's guilt. However, the judge knows how to do this because Gringoire, Esmeralda's husband, told Frollo that Djali does tricks based on the sounds of a tambourine. The judge, therefore, knows how to control Djali and easily convinces the crowd of Esmeralda's guilt. Esmeralda's false conviction demonstrates that courts were extremely quick to convict people based on misleading evidence.

What's more, Hugo shows that punishment and so-called justice often serve as entertainment. In the novel, courts are incentivized to convict people because of the popularity of public punishment. Public punishment is depicted as exceptionally cruel when Quasimodo is beaten for several hours in the town square. Hugo is deeply critical of capital punishment and uses its presence in the novel to criticize attitudes towards capital punishment in 19th-century society, as public execution was still a popular spectacle in France in the early 1800s, when Hugo was writing. By including critiques of capital punishment in his historical novel, Hugo suggests that French society has not learned from its mistakes and that its justice system is still unjust because it subjects convicts to this degrading death. These attitudes are parodied again when Gringoire stumbles into the Court of Miracles (a den of thieves who live outside the law and take refuge in this infamous part of the city) and is put on trial for being innocent. The judge of this trial, Clopin Trouillefou, explains to Gringoire that the thieves hang innocent citizens who wander into their midst as revenge for the "truants" who are executed for minor offences. The Court of Miracles is a direct parody of the Palace of Justice and suggests that the judges in the official court are also a group of criminals who take out their frustrations on unfortunate members of society, just as the "truants" do in their court. It is not only the populace, and the "truants," who enjoy cruel and arbitrary punishments in Hugo's novel. In one scene, Hugo depicts the King of France himself, Louis XI, as he visits the famous prison in the Bastille, where political prisoners were kept. The king is totally oblivious to the pleas of a prisoner who has been locked in a tiny cage for 15 years, allegedly for treason. This implies that the people have been led by example and that an oppressive system, in which people live under the sway of a cruel monarch, will breed a cruel and bloodthirsty populace.

However, although medieval monarchs and cruel justice systems wield enormous power in the novel, Hugo also indicates that if the people decide they want freedom, nothing will be able to stop them. The will of the people is a palpable force throughout the novel. The great crowds in Paris are frequently compared to a sea which sweeps everything along in its path. This suggests that the power of the people is like a force of nature—more powerful and lasting than human institutions, such as the monarchy. Fear of the mob is felt by everyone in Paris, including King Louis XI. When Louis XI comes to Paris, he chooses to sleep in the Bastille. The Bastille is a prison and a fortress, and this suggests that, although Louis XI is a powerful monarch, he feels unsafe in the city. This is further demonstrated when a riot breaks out in Paris. At first, Louis XI is happy about this and believes the riot is against one of his bailiffs, whom he sees as a competitor for his power. When he discovers that the riot is against **Notre Dame** and, therefore, against himself (King and Church were closely connected in the medieval period), he is terrified and immediately agrees to the people's terms. This suggests that those who wield power or dole out justice do not have as much control as they would have their people believe. Hugo indicates that these corrupt institutions, though they may seem powerful, can in fact be overthrown by the collective will of the people. Given the parallels between the deeply flawed justice systems in the novel and the similarly unjust institutions of Hugo's own time, he may be suggesting that even in his own present day, readers still have a duty to remain alert to corruption and act to overthrow it when necessary.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

NOTRE DAME

The cathedral of Notre Dame symbolizes the city of Paris and the whole of medieval society. The characters are products of their historical era, just as the Gothic architecture of Notre Dame marks it as a product of the medieval period. In this sense, Notre Dame is the characters' natural environment and the cathedral is frequently compared to a natural organism, a plant, or a living thing. Notre Dame serves as a microcosm of Paris throughout the novel and is portrayed as the heart and center of the city—the whole of Paris, and all other landmarks that the city contains, can be seen from Notre Dame. The major characters live inside the cathedral or find themselves trapped there, and this symbolizes the way that the medieval period was, in some ways, limited: by its lack of scientific knowledge, by strict religious beliefs, and by oppressive systems of government, such as the monarchy. Notre Dame represents the powerful institutions that upheld this oppression, namely the Church and the king; at the time, the king was believed to be appointed by God and was considered head of the Church as well as the state. At the same time, the architectural beauty of Notre Dame symbolizes the

creativity and vitality of the medieval period. Notre Dame is a product of its age in both positive ways and negative ones, so overall, it reflects how the medieval period itself has both sinister and admirable aspects.

GOLD

Gold is associated with alchemy, God, and humanity's quest for knowledge throughout *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Alchemy was a medieval form of natural science which was interested in the transformation of certain metals into other elements or substances. In particular, in literature and art about the medieval period, alchemy is associated with the search for the philosopher's stone, which provides the ability to make gold. Alchemists in the medieval period did not understand how gold was created or how it appeared underground, and many experiments were carried out to try and achieve these ends. The assumption was that, since the presence of gold underground could not be explained or easily achieved by man, then it must be divine and placed there by God. Common theories included the idea that gold was sunlight transformed into metal and that sunlight was a manifestation of God. The ability to create gold, therefore, represented the ability to unlock divine knowledge, to understand the ways of God, and, possibly, to achieve eternal life. In the novel, Claude Frollo, a priest turned alchemist, becomes obsessed with his quest to understand God. Frollo connects gold to fire and believes that, using sparks, he can create gold and understand God. Frollo himself undergoes a metaphorical transformation as he grows more and more obsessed with Esmeralda, a gypsy girl whom he is infatuated with. Frollo is frequently described as having fire in his veins as he wrestles with his feelings for Esmeralda and this suggests that, just as he tries to change other substances into gold, Frollo's passion transforms him into something else. But just as he fails to make gold, Frollo's obsession turns him into a monster rather than making him divine, so gold symbolizes both the desire to understand God and the dangers of trying to do so.

ESMERALDA'S SHOE

Esmeralda's shoe is a symbol of her innocence throughout the novel. Esmeralda was separated from her mother when she was stolen by gypsies as a baby. Her baby shoe is all that she has left to connect her to her parents and she wears it as an amulet, which she considers magical and protective. Esmeralda's shoe is also associated with her dancing and her lightness on her feet. Before her persecution, Esmeralda is associated with lightness, joy, and freedom, which are symbolized by her profession as a dancer. She is compared to things that fly—a dragonfly, a bird, and a wasp—and this suggests that, like the baby shoe which has never touched the ground, Esmeralda is almost unearthly in her innocence, virtue, and beauty. When Esmeralda's shoe is taken from her—when she is reunited with her mother, Sister Gudule, at the novel's end—this represents the end of her innocence and her imminent death, which happens almost immediately after. Throughout the novel, Esmeralda's shoe represents her attempts to flee from the powers of darkness that pursue her, as well as her desire to be joyful and free.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Penguin edition of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* published in 1978.

Book 1, Chapter 1 Quotes

❝ To the onlookers at their windows, the palace square, which was packed with people, resembled a sea into which, like so many river-mouths, five or six streets were constantly disgorging fresh torrents of heads. As they continued to swell, the waves of people collided with the corners of the houses which, here and there, jutted out into the irregular basin of the square like so many promontories. In the center of the palace's tall Gothic facade, twin streams flowed up and down the great staircase without interruption and then, after breaking halfway, below the entrance steps, spread down the two ramps at the sides in broad waves, so that the great staircase emptied ceaselessly into the square like a waterfall into a lake.

Related Themes:

Page Number: 32

Explanation and Analysis

Here, Hugo describes the Parisian people who have flocked to the Palace of Justice to celebrate the "Feast of Fools," a popular carnival, in the year 1482.

Hugo compares the crowd to a sea to highlight their vast numbers and their power when in a group. The sea is a powerful force of nature which humans cannot control, and which can be extremely destructive. Hugo's comparison suggests that, although medieval society is very oppressive (the people live under an absolute monarchy and do not have freedom of speech), the people are nonetheless a potentially powerful force because there are so many of them. Just as the sea can destroy human civilizations and monuments to human power, the Parisian crowd is large and powerful enough—if united—to destroy human institutions, like the monarchy, which seem lasting but are frail under the surface. This idea foreshadows the French

Revolution of 1789, when a Parisian mob overthrew the monarchy.

The corners of the buildings are like "promontories," or cliffs, because, just as cliffs naturally contain and exist alongside the sea, the people and the architecture exist together in a natural harmony. The image of the crowd as it flows in and out of the Palace seems to blur the lines between the people and the architecture and suggests that the people are products of their environment, just as the architecture is a product of the people.

Book 1, Chapter 2 Quotes

❝ Hanged by the populace for waiting, hanged by the cardinal for not waiting; either way he could see only the abyss, that is a gallows.

Related Characters: The Cardinal, Pierre Gringoire

Related Themes:

Page Number: 46

Explanation and Analysis

Pierre Gringoire has written a play, which is to be performed in the Palace of Justice, for the "Feast of Fools" festival. The guest of honor, the Cardinal, is late, however, and the play cannot begin without him. The crowd grow restless and a frightened actor goes onstage to try and appease them.

The actor is afraid of both the crowd, who are ordinary Parisians, and the Parisian authorities: the Cardinal and his guests, for whom the play is meant to be performed. The actor's fear of the people suggests that, in large numbers, the people are a powerful force to be reckoned with and may take the law into their own hands. Hugo suggests that the law in medieval Paris is especially brutal, since people are frequently sentenced to be hung. The people of Paris are thus presented as products of their environment: they behave in brutal ways because they have learned from the cruel establishment that rules them and makes the laws.

Hugo suggests throughout that Parisian society is not free or just and that people are often at the mercy of both the cruel populace and the brutal justice system, which kills people for minor offenses, such as offending the Cardinal. Hugo emphasizes the idea that public execution is a cruel death when he describes it as an abyss, suggesting that the prospect of capital punishment gives prisoners no hope of mercy or rehabilitation.

Book 1, Chapter 3 Quotes

❝ Gringoire was what today we would call a true eclectic, one of those elevated, steady, moderate, calm spirits who manage always to steer a middle course [...] and are full of reason and liberal philosophy, while yet making due allowance for cardinals [...] They are to be found, quite unchanging, in every age, that is, ever in conformity with the times.

Related Characters: Esmeralda, Claude Frollo, The Cardinal, Pierre Gringoire

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 53

Explanation and Analysis

Gringoire, who has written a play for the "Feast of Fools" carnival, is annoyed because the guest of honor, the Cardinal, arrives late and interrupts his work. However, Gringoire is aware that the Cardinal pays his wages, so Gringoire does not wish to offend him.

Gringoire is a very moderate character and provides a contrast to the characters in the novel who have singular interests and who experience extreme emotions. Gringoire is the extreme opposite of characters such as Claude Frollo, who becomes sexually obsessed with the gypsy girl Esmeralda and allows this fanatical obsession to destroy him. Hugo includes a wide variety of characters, many of whom are each other's opposites, to demonstrate the scope of human experience and suggest that all types of experience are appropriate subjects for art.

While the more intense and fanatical characters in the novel end up in tragic circumstances, Gringoire manages to "steer a middle course" throughout the novel. He avoids coming to any serious harm, because he has no principles and is always willing to change his position to go along with whoever is the most powerful group. In this sense, Gringoire is a cowardly and ignoble man, even though his moderation might appear wise. Gringoire also represents the fashionable architects of the 19th century, whom Hugo despises because they prefer Neo-classicist architecture (which became popular after the medieval period and which favored restraint, symmetry, and order over the extreme style of Gothic, medieval architecture.) Hugo suggests that men like Gringoire are found in every age, always go along with fashion, and, therefore, never offend anyone and always survive.

He always went about in the midst of a small court of bishops and abbots of good family, who were bawdy, lecherous and great carousers should need arise; more than once the good worshippers at Saint-Germain d'Auxerre had been shocked, when passing of an evening beneath the lighted windows of the Bourbon mansion, to hear the same voices they had heard chanting vespers during the day intoning, to the clink of glasses, the bacchic proverb of Benedict XII, the pope who added a third wreath to the papal tiara: Bibamus papaliter.

Related Characters: Claude Frollo, The Cardinal

Related Themes:

Page Number: 55

Explanation and Analysis

The Cardinal, a powerful religious figure in the Church, arrives to greet the Parisian crowd during the "Feast of Fools" carnival.

Sensual and physical pleasures, such as drinking and sex, were believed to be sinful in the medieval period, whereas abstinence and physical deprivation were associated with purity and holiness. Despite this, members of the clergy, like the Cardinal and the "bishops and abbots" he spends time with, who are meant to set an example to the populace and be holy and austere, are notorious "bawdy" drinkers and frequently have sex with women (Hugo describes them as "lecherous"). This suggests that members of the Church, who were extremely powerful in medieval society and often persecuted the populace for sinful behavior, are hypocrites who often engage in sinful behavior themselves.

The medieval belief in conflict between the spirit and the body (the idea that one was holy, while the other was impure) is depicted in the contrast between the priests at their prayers in the morning and in a tavern at night. The fact that the priests "chant vespers," or prayers, in the morning and then "Bacchic proverbs" (Bacchus is the Roman God of wine, so this line suggests the priests are drunk) in the evening indicates that those who pretend to be pure are often the most debauched. This is further demonstrated in the novel in the character of Claude Frollo, who outwardly seems to despise women to hide the fact that, inside, he is consumed with lust.

Book 1, Chapter 4 Quotes

We should add that Coppenole was of the people, just as the crowd around him was of the people. Thus the contact between him and it had been prompt, electric and, as it were, on level terms. The Flemish hosier's haughty quip had humiliated the courtiers and aroused, in all these plebian souls, some sense of dignity as yet, in the fifteenth century, dim and uncertain. This hosier who had just answered the cardinal back was an equal: a sweet thought indeed for poor devils used to showing respect and obedience to the servants of the serjeants of the bailiff of the Abbot of Sainte-Genevive, the cardinal's train-bearer.

Related Characters: Pierre Gringoire, The Cardinal, Jacques Coppenole

Related Themes:

Page Number: 60

Explanation and Analysis

Jacques Coppenole is a Flemish politician who was a hosier (a cloth-maker) before he was became a nobleman, and who still considers himself one of the people and dislikes the pomp and ceremony of the upper classes. Coppenole is bored with Gringoire's play and challenges the Cardinal to let the people have a face-pulling contest instead—an idea which proves incredibly popular with the crowd.

Although the Parisian crowd far outnumber the nobles, medieval society is extremely oppressive, and the populace do not have rights or freedom of speech to challenge the ruling classes. The people respond to Coppenole because, although he is a noble, he does not consider himself better than the people. When he stands up to the Cardinal, it wins favor with the public, who wish that they too could stand up to the Cardinal and other powerful men.

Hugo suggests that, although the public do not have rights or political power in the 15th century, figures like Jacques Coppenole foreshadow the changes that will come about in society in the following centuries. As society progressed from the medieval age into the Renaissance and then the Enlightenment, and as wealth and knowledge became more widespread among the general population, powerful institutions like the Church and the monarchy began to lose their hold and society became more democratic as people gained more power and rights. Hugo suggests that, although this seems a long way off in the medieval period, it is an inevitable change.

Book 1, Chapter 5 Quotes

❝ There was something about this spectacle which made the head spin, it had some peculiar power to bewitch and intoxicate hard to convey to a reader of our own day and from our own salons. Picture to yourself a succession of faces displaying all the known geometrical shapes one after the other, from triangle to trapezium, from cone to polyhedron; every known human expression, from anger to lust; every age of man, from the wrinkles of the newly born to the wrinkles of the dying crone; a whole religious phantasmagoria, from Faunus to Beelzebub; every kind of animal profile, from jaws to beaks and from muzzles to snouts. It was as if all those mascarons on the Pont-Neuf, nightmares turned to stone by the hand of Germain Pilon, had taken on life and breath and had come, one by one.

Related Characters: Jacques Coppenole

Related Themes:

Page Number: 68

Explanation and Analysis

Jacques Coppenole, a popular Flemish politician, organizes a face-pulling competition among the Parisian populace to celebrate the "Feast of Fools." The winner will be crowned the "fool's pope," a derogatory title which suggests that they have the ugliest face in all Paris.

Hugo suggests that, while the intellectual and artistic circles (the "salons") of 19th-century Paris are refined and philosophical, they cannot imagine the raw and expressive quality of the face-pulling contest, which was a type of entertainment that was specifically a product of the medieval period. Throughout the novel, Hugo suggests that Enlightenment society (which spanned the 1700s onwards) rejected medieval art, such as Gothic architecture, because it preferred harmonious and pleasant aesthetics to the often-grotesque extremes of Gothic architecture. Hugo suggests, however, that all aspects of life, including those that seem ugly and frightening, are parts of human experience and thus suitable subjects for art.

Unlike the symmetrical shapes of Neo-classicist architecture, which replaced the Gothic after the medieval period, the faces of the Parisian populace are distorted and strange. Hugo compares these faces to gargoyles (monstrous statues that were common in Gothic architecture) to suggest that the people are influenced by and, in turn, influence their environment—the buildings and the people seem to blur together. This suggests that medieval, Gothic architecture was superior to Neo-classicist architecture as it reflected all types of experience (from the sublime to the horrific) rather than limiting its designs only to the classically beautiful.

Book 2, Chapter 2 Quotes

❝ It must be said that a gibbet and pillory, a 'justice' and a 'ladder' as they were then called, stood permanently side by side in the middle of the paving and helped not a little to avert people's gaze from that fateful square, where so many human beings full of life and vigor had met their death, and where, fifty years later, 'Saint-Vallier's fever' would be born, that sickness of the terror of the scaffold and the most monstrous of all sicknesses because it comes not from God but from men.

Related Themes:

Page Number: 80

Explanation and Analysis

Hugo describes the Place de Grève, a site of public execution in Paris that was used both in the medieval period and again during the French Revolution.

Public executions were common in medieval Paris and were a popular form of entertainment. Hugo indicates this when he notes that the "pillory" distracts people from the architecture of the square—they are more interested in watching the executions than in studying their environment. This implies that medieval society is very brutal and that cruel laws, under which the King can sentence people to death indiscriminately, breed a cruel and violent populace that does not value human life. The idea that these execution instruments are known as "justices" suggests that this was what constituted justice in the medieval period, and that modern, rational ideas about rehabilitation or human rights were not yet in place.

Hugo emphasizes that the condemned people are "full of life and vigor" to suggest how cruel it is to kill people (often for trivial or minor crimes) who could otherwise lead long and happy lives. "Saint Vallier's fever" refers to the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution, in which a Parisian mob overthrew and executed the French monarchy. In the months after the Revolution, the populace continued to indiscriminately execute hundreds of people a day and terrorize the population of France. This allusion again suggests that a cruel society breeds irrational and merciless people.

It is comforting, as I say, that today, having lost all the pieces of her armor one by one, her superfluity of torments, her inventive and fantastic punishments, the torture for which, every five years, she remade a leather bed in the Grand-Châtelet, this old suzeraine of feudal society has been almost eliminated from our laws and our towns, has been hunted down from code to code and driven out town-square by town-square, until now, in all the vastness of Paris, she has only one dishonored corner of the Grève and one miserable guillotine, furtive, anxious and ashamed, which always vanishes very swiftly after it has done its work, as if it were afraid of being caught in the act!

Related Characters: Esmeralda

Related Themes:

Page Number: 81

Explanation and Analysis

Here, Hugo expresses relief at the fact that capital punishment, which used to be extremely common in the medieval period, has almost died out in France in the early 1800s.

Hugo says that capital punishment used to be protected by the law and that, for this reason, it was difficult to oppose its practice or to protest it. Torture instruments and punishments are described as capital punishment's "armor" because, although people may have felt it was wrong for a government to kill and torture its people, anyone who complained could be subject to these punishments, because, until the advent of democracy, people did not have freedom of speech to criticize their leaders. The "leather bed" refers to the mattress which people were tortured on and where Esmeralda is tortured later in the novel.

Although the people were once frightened and punished by these practices, Hugo states that, when people organize to fight for social change, they are powerful, which is why capital punishment is rare in the early 1800s. Capital punishment is still used, however, and people are still guillotined (a method beheading which was popularized during the French Revolution) in the Place de Grève, a site of multiple punishments and executions during the novel. However, while capital punishment is still sanctioned by the law in the 1800s, its practice is more widely questioned in society and Hugo suggests that, although courts do get away with sentencing people to death, there is a sense that this practice will end as society progresses.

Book 2, Chapter 3 Quotes

Around her, all eyes were fixed and all mouths agape; and as she danced, to the drumming of the tambourine she held above her head in her two pure, round arms, slender, frail, quick as a wasp, with her golden, unpleated bodice, her billowing, brightly-colored dress, her bare shoulders, her slender legs, uncovered now and again by her skirt, her black hair, her fiery eyes, she was indeed a supernatural creature.

Related Characters: Pierre Gringoire, Esmeralda

Related Themes:

Page Number: 82

Explanation and Analysis

Gringoire wanders into the Place de Grève after the "Feast of Fools" carnival and sees Esmeralda, a beautiful gypsy girl, dance for the crowd.

Esmeralda is described as extremely and unusually beautiful throughout the novel. This connects her to Hugo's argument that Gothic architecture is extremely beautiful and that very little in 19th-century art comes close to this level of beauty. Her beauty is demonstrated here by the rapt attention of the crowd as they watch her perform. Hugo also describes her as "pure" because Esmeralda's beauty reflects her inner virtue and kindness in the novel. She is also sexually pure—she has taken a vow of chastity—and this relates to the medieval belief equating sexual purity with spirituality and holiness.

Esmeralda is associated with birds and flying insects, such as a "wasp," throughout the novel. This reflects her love of freedom—which is constantly under threat, as she is persecuted for her extreme beauty—and sunlight, which again associates her with goodness and purity as God was believed to be the source of all light in the medieval period. However, the description of Esmeralda as "supernatural" also reflects medieval society's superstitious belief that anything that could not be readily explained, such as Esmeralda's extreme beauty, must be supernatural. This passage thus underscores the lack of rational knowledge in the world during this era. It also foreshadows Esmeralda's association with witchcraft later in the novel and suggests that Esmeralda is already in danger of persecution because her looks make her stand out.

[...] it was lit by the harsh red light of the bonfire, which flickered brightly on the encircling faces of the crowd and on the dark forehead of the girl, while at the far end of the square it cast a pale glimmer, mingled with the swaying of the shadows, on the black and wrinkled old facade of the Maison-aux-Piliers on one side and the stone arms of the gallows on the other.

Related Characters: Claude Frollo, Pierre Gringoire, Esmeralda

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 83

Explanation and Analysis

Gringoire and Claude Frollo, a high priest of Notre Dame, watch the beautiful gypsy girl Esmeralda dance for a crowd beside a bonfire in the Place de Grève.

The fire, which casts its shadows across the square and falls on Esmeralda, foreshadows Esmeralda's association with hellfire and witchcraft later in the novel. Frollo, who watches Esmeralda's performance here, is sexually obsessed with her and believes that she is demonic and has been sent from hell to tempt him and to ruin his spiritual purity and his illustrious religious career. The crowd's interest in Esmeralda—they surround her to watch her dance—suggests that her unusual beauty makes her stand out and, although they enjoy her performance, it also makes her a target for persecution.

The Maison-aux-Piliers is a Parisian hotel from the medieval period, built in the Gothic style. The description of the façade as "wrinkled" gives the sinister impression that it is a face watching Esmeralda, and this contributes to the idea that she is objectified by the crowd and viewed as a form of entertainment, instead of a person. This connects to the image of the gallows—where people were frequently executed in the Place de Grève. Public execution was a popular form of entertainment in the medieval period and this passage subtly suggests that, although the crowd currently likes Esmeralda, they are sinister and fickle and would enjoy seeing her hung as much as they enjoy her dance.

Neither crust nor resting-place; he found necessity crowding in on him from all sides and thought necessity mighty churlish. He had long ago discovered this truth, that Jupiter created man in a fit of misanthropy and that, throughout his life, the sage's destiny lays siege to his philosophy.

Related Characters: The Cardinal, Pierre Gringoire

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 85

Explanation and Analysis

Gringoire has no money (he has not been paid for the play he wrote for the Cardinal for the "Feast of Fools") and nowhere to sleep for the night. As he wanders through the streets, he contemplates how cruel fate can be.

In medieval society, kings and nobles controlled most of the wealth and taxed ordinary people heavily. Although Gringoire is an educated man and can read and write—something which was rare in the medieval period—he relies on the nobility to pay him for the plays he writes, so even he quickly falls into destitution if they do not pay him.

The Hunchback of Notre Dame was one of the first novels to feature beggars, like Gringoire has become, as central characters. Hugo does so to show the vast differences in social class which exist in the medieval period—and still existed in the 19th century when Hugo was writing—and to demonstrate that all types of experience are suitable subjects for art. Gringoire believes that humans (he suggests that humans were created by the classical God, Jupiter, rather than the Christian God because, although Gringoire lives in a Christian society, he has some classical education) are destined to suffer because their physical needs cannot always be met. Gringoire suggests that although it is easy to be philosophical about life when one is comfortable, physical wants make it harder to focus on intellectual pursuits.

This was the first taste he had ever had of the delights of vanity. Hitherto, he had known only humiliation, contempt for his condition and disgust for his person. And so, stone deaf though he was, he relished the acclamation of the crowd like a real pope, that crowd which he had detested because he felt it detested him. What did it matter that his people was a pack of fools, cripples, thieves and beggars, it was still a people and he its sovereign. And he took all the ironic applause and mock respect seriously, although it should be said that mixed in with it, among the crowd, went an element of very real fear.

Related Characters: Quasimodo

Related Themes: 

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 88

Explanation and Analysis

Quasimodo, the hunchback of Notre Dame, is elected as "fool's pope" (a derogatory title given out as part of the "Feast of Fools" festival as a reward for having the ugliest face in all Paris) and is carried through the streets by a procession of vagabonds and peasants.

Quasimodo has grown up in isolation in Notre Dame because the Parisians hate, fear, and reject him for his hideously deformed appearance. Medieval society was extremely superstitious and lacked enough rational knowledge about medicine and the human body to sufficiently explain conditions like the one Quasimodo suffers from. As a result, they believe his deformity reflects his personality and feel that he must be unnatural and possibly demonic. As he has always been hated and rejected, Quasimodo hates people in return, and this suggests that people learn by example and become cruel if they live in a cruel society.

Quasimodo enjoys this experience because it is the first taste of acceptance he has ever had. This suggests that people crave acceptance and social contact, even if they grow used to isolation. Quasimodo also enjoys the reversal of roles, as the crowd, who once spurned and rejected him, now venerate him, even if they do so ironically. Still, the crowd is afraid of Quasimodo because he is very strong and quite vicious, but his happiness here highlights that he has learned this viciousness because of his cruel treatment by society.

Book 2, Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ Such voluntary abdication of one's free will, such a subjection of one's own fancy to that of some unsuspecting other person, has about it a mixture of whimsical independence and blind obedience, a sort of compromise between servitude and freedom which appealed to Gringoire, whose mind was essentially a mixed one, both complex and indecisive, holding gingerly on to all extremes, constantly suspended between all human propensities.

Related Characters: Pierre Gringoire, Esmeralda

Related Themes:

Page Number: 90

Explanation and Analysis

Gringoire follows Esmeralda through the streets because he finds her beautiful and because he has no money, nowhere to go, and nowhere he needs to be.

Gringoire is attracted to Esmeralda because he has seen her dance and found her very beautiful. However, he does not pursue her with any purpose but simply on a whim. Gringoire is a philosopher and constantly thinks about the nature of life and fate. He enjoys this experience as an experiment—allowing his destiny to be decided by a stranger who does not know he is there—and feels that it reflects human powerlessness in the face of destiny, which people cannot predict or control. Gringoire feels that, although he has more knowledge than Esmeralda—who does not know he is behind her—he is still a victim of circumstance because he does not know where she will lead him.

Gringoire's perspective here suggests that, even when humans act voluntarily, they still often view themselves as victims of fate. This ties into the novel's theme of predestination, specifically the idea that, if people believe they have no control over their destiny, they can justify negative behaviors that they actually engage in voluntarily. What's more, Hugo indicates that this kind of careless adherence to fate can have serious consequences—in this case, Gringoire is about to narrowly escape execution due to his choice to follow Esmeralda blindly.

❝ Had Gringoire lived in our own day, how beautifully he would have bisected the Classics and Romantics!

Related Characters: Pierre Gringoire

Related Themes:

Page Number: 91

Explanation and Analysis

Gringoire is a philosophical and very even-tempered man who likes to contemplate (but not experience) extreme emotions. He also enjoys classical ideas and pretty, harmonious things.

Hugo refers here to an artistic and cultural debate which went on in the late 1700s and early 1800s, when Hugo was writing—the debate between Neo-classicism and Romanticism. Neo-classicism was an art form, architectural style, and philosophy that was based on Ancient Greek and Roman ideas and imitated classical philosophy. Neo-

classical philosophy became popular after the medieval period, during the Renaissance (a period of intense scientific and philosophical development), and it focused on rational thought, rather than superstition, and on reason and controlled emotion. Neo-classical art featured harmonious and symmetrical shapes, as beauty was thought to be achieved through balance.

In contrast, Gothic art and architecture, which were popular in the medieval period, featured extreme and grotesque designs and were considered barbarous and unintellectual by neo-classicist philosophers. However, the Romantics (a group of poets, artists, and philosophers from the late 1700s) believed that the Gothic was beautiful *because* it was extreme and because it contained both beauty and ugliness, as life does, while neo-classicist work only featured what is classically beautiful. Hugo's novel tries to synthesize these two points of view and it suggests that, while rational thought has improved the world and made people less ignorant, it is not always wise to suppress or control emotion and that all types of experience have a place in art. Gringoire, Hugo says here, is an example of how these points of view can come together in one person's perspective.

Book 2, Chapter 6 Quotes

❝ In this city, the boundaries between races and species seemed to have been abolished, as in a pandemonium. Amongst this population, men, women, animals, age, sex, health, sickness, all seemed communal; everything fitted together, was merged, mingled and superimposed; everyone was part of everything.

Related Characters: Esmeralda, Pierre Gringoire

Related Themes:

Page Number: 100-101

Explanation and Analysis

Gringoire follows Esmeralda into the "Court of Miracles," a notorious den of thieves where beggars and criminals live together in extreme poverty.

Hugo compares the "Court of Miracles" to pandemonium to suggest that it is hellish. *Pandemonium* (or chaos) was a common term for hell in medieval literature. This suggests that the poverty among the beggars is extreme and that, because of this poverty and necessity, they have been forced to resort to crime and become frightening and brutal people as a result of their extreme circumstances.

Hugo indicates that the people are "communal" because they all live on top of each other, because they are so poor, and because their living conditions are so sparse and cramped. However, this passage also suggests that all members of society are connected, and that the poor condition of the beggars reflects a society which is harsh and cruel and does not care about its poorer members. This supports Hugo's broader idea that people in society are not separate from their environment and that the societies that people live in, as well as their literal living conditions, partially shape who they are and how they behave.

❝ As you use our kind among you, so we use your kind among us. The law you apply to the truants, the truants apply to you. If it's a vicious one, that's your fault. We need now and again to see a respectable face above a hempen collar; it makes the whole thing honorable.

Related Characters: Clopin Trouillefou (speaker), Pierre Gringoire

Related Themes:

Page Number: 105

Explanation and Analysis

Gringoire accidentally wanders into the "Court of Miracles" (a notorious den of thieves where only beggars and criminals live). The leader of the thieves, Clopin Trouillefou, orders Gringoire to be hung and explains that, in the Court, they kill innocent people, just as the rest of society kills thieves. The "hempen collar" refers to a noose, as thieves were often hung.

Thieves and beggars were often hung for minor crimes in medieval Paris, even if they committed these crimes out of necessity because they were extremely poor or hungry. Hugo suggests that this is a cruel practice, which supports the idea that French, medieval society is very corrupt and unjust. A cruel society creates a cruel people, because people learn by example and follow the laws that they are taught. In this sense, Clopin and the truants retaliate against French society and kill innocent citizens because this is the example they have been set—after all, many of the truants who are executed are also innocent.

Clopin suggests that French society is hypocritical and only kills people that it does not consider respectable, such as truants and beggars. However, sentencing people to death is not a respectable or civilized thing to do and, therefore, the judges and officials who claim to be respectable, and

who uphold the laws in French society, are in fact hypocrites who are just as brutal and merciless as the truants.

Book 3, Chapter 1 Quotes

❝ […] a vast symphony in stone, as it were; the colossal handiwork of a man and a people, a whole both one and complex, like its sisters, the *Iliad* and the *Romanceros*; the prodigious sum contributed by all the resources of an age where, on every stone, you can see, standing out in a hundred ways, the imagination of the workman, disciplined by the genius of the artist; a sort of human creation, in short, as powerful and as fecund as that divine creation whose twin characteristics of variety and eternity it seems to have purloined.

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 123-124

Explanation and Analysis

Hugo describes Notre Dame cathedral, which is a work of medieval Gothic architecture.

Hugo suggests that architecture is a democratic and collective artform because huge numbers of people are needed to create it. This is supported by the description of Notre Dame as a "symphony," because a symphony may be written by one person but must be executed by many musicians playing together. The same is true of mythic literature, like the *Iliad* (a Greek epic, which was written by Homer but was composed of many cultural myths) and the *Romanceros* (a collection of French romances and fairy stories which, again, has many authors rather than just one). This places Gothic architecture, which was considered barbarous and inferior in the early 19th century, alongside works of art and literature which were revered by Enlightenment (late 1700s and early 1800s) society.

Although Enlightenment society preferred Neo-classicist architecture (which favored harmonious shapes over exaggerated or grotesque ones), Hugo suggests that Gothic architecture is more interesting and expressive because it allows for individual expression, which comes in all kinds of diverse shapes. Although Gothic cathedrals, like Notre Dame, were commissioned by the Church and designed by architects, they also featured various designs and statues which were created by ordinary workmen. In this sense, Notre Dame reflects the perspective of ordinary people, which has as many variations as nature.

❝ And what we have said here of the facade has to be said of the church as a whole; and what we have said of the cathedral church of Paris has to be said of all the churches of medieval Christendom. Everything is of a piece in this logical, well-proportioned art, which originated in itself. To measure the toe is to measure the giant.

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 124

Explanation and Analysis

Hugo describes the cathedral of Notre Dame and the churches of the medieval period in general, which were mainly designed in the Gothic style.

Here and throughout the novel, Hugo contradicts mainstream 19th-century opinions on Gothic architecture. After the medieval period, when society transitioned into the Renaissance and then the Enlightenment, Gothic architecture fell out of fashion and there was a resurgence of interest in classical ideas (neo-classicism), such as the idea that beauty was the result of harmonious shapes and design and that rationalism was superior to extreme or expressive emotions. Gothic architecture, in contrast, was considered ugly because it was often unsymmetrical and included many grotesque statues and shapes, such as gargoyles. It was also thought to be the product of a barbarous and ignorant time.

Hugo contradicts this position, however, and suggests that there is harmony and beauty in Gothic architecture, but that modern critics are too ignorant to see it because they only want to enjoy the picturesque and the classically beautiful. Gothic art is superior, Hugo implies, because life is not composed entirely of beautiful or pleasant experiences and, therefore Gothic architecture is a more honest and expressive art form than neo-classicist designs. Hugo also suggests that, although people did not have easy access to knowledge in the medieval period (as later inventions, like the printing press, contributed greatly to the spread of rational thought in the Renaissance), there is nonetheless a logic to medieval art. This conclusion indicates that, although medieval beliefs were considered barbarous, they were actually a rational response to a world in which many things could not be reasonably explained.

They make us aware to what extent architecture is a primitive thing, demonstrating as they do, like the cyclopean remains, the pyramids of Egypt, or the gigantic Hindu pagodas, that architecture's greatest products are less individual than social creations; the offspring of nations in labor rather than the outpouring of men of genius; the deposit left behind by a nation; the accumulation of the centuries; the residue from the successive evaporations of human society; in short, a kind of formation. Each wave of time lays down its alluvium, each race deposits its own stratum on the monument, each individual contributes his stone. Thus do the beavers, and the bees; and thus does man. The great symbol of architecture, Babel, is a beehive.

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 128-129

Explanation and Analysis

Hugo describes the architecture of early societies and discusses the idea that these buildings reflect the values and ideas of those societies.

Hugo says here that, although architecture is an important art form, it is not an individualistic art form, like the novel, but rather a product of the whole of society. This is because it takes many people to construct a building and, therefore, a single architect cannot control a whole building's construction; the ideas of working people find their way into the design. Hugo also suggests that architecture is a natural expression of human ideas because humans need buildings and shelter, both to survive and for society to function.

Therefore, buildings and cities are humans' natural environments, and they are the natural result of human civilization. Hugo compares the development of cities and civilizations to the gradual development of rock formations, which is a natural process caused by the elements over time. Hugo also suggests that, like animals and the elements, humans are a part of nature and leave their mark on the world.

The Tower of Babel is a biblical story in which the people of the world try and build a tower high enough to reach Heaven. In many religious paintings, the Tower of Babel is depicted as a large, hive-shaped building. Bees have collective societies, so Hugo suggests that human society is similarly collective; all humans contribute to society's development over time.

Book 3, Chapter 2 Quotes

Most of these privileges, be it remarked in passing—and there were better ones than this—had been extorted from the king by revolts and mutinies. Such is the immemorial pattern. The king only lets go when the people snatches.

Related Characters: Louis XI/Compere Tourangeau

Related Themes:

Page Number: 134

Explanation and Analysis

Hugo notes that, while most prisoners are executed in the Place de Grève, students can be hung in the University if the Rector demands it. This is a special privilege which only students are allowed because the Rector has campaigned for it.

Capital punishment was extremely common in the medieval period and people were often hung for very minor crimes or without proper evidence to prove their guilt. The fact that it was considered a privilege to be hung in the University, rather than in the public square (where many people gathered to watch), highlights how unjust medieval society was and how cruel and unnecessary public execution is.

The monarchy had absolute power in the medieval period and the people did not get a say in who became king or how the king ruled. Therefore, the only way for people to get what they wanted was to rebel against the king and threaten his power. As monarchs were usually power-hungry and enjoyed the privileges of their rank, they would often give in to the people on small points to maintain their broader power. This suggests that people in large groups, when they are organized behind social causes, are very powerful and can campaign successfully for what they want. Although these gains seem small, Hugo suggests that they are the only way to slowly gain political power, as rulers will not generally give up their power without being forced to do so.

Book 4, Chapter 2 Quotes

He realized there were other things in the world besides the speculations of the Sorbonne and the verses of Homerus, that man has need of affection, that without tenderness and love life was just a harsh and mechanical clockwork, in need of lubrication.

Related Characters: Esmeralda, Jehan Frollo, Claude Frollo

Related Themes:

Page Number: 161

Explanation and Analysis

As a young man, Claude Frollo is an extremely dedicated scholar and spends all his time on his studies. When his parents die of plague, he adopts his baby brother, Jehan, and his close bond with Jehan teaches him that humans need human connection as well as knowledge.

Claude Frollo is an extremely intense and passionate young man. Hugo suggests that his passions tend to be very singular and that, when he is focused on something, he forgets about all other things. The Sorbonne is the University of Paris, where Frollo studied, and the "teachings of Homerus" refer to Claude's classical education, which very few people (mostly members of the Church) had access to in the medieval period. This description of Frollo's intense character foreshadows his singular attraction to Esmeralda, which becomes a fanatical obsession.

However, although Claude Frollo develops into a fanatical and immoral man, in his youth he is open-minded and loving. He understands that an absence of human connection can make people mechanical and therefore cruel, as they do not relate to or empathize with others. Although Frollo feels that affection is important, his education leads him to enter the priesthood and this means that he can never marry or have sex, as lust was associated with sin in the medieval period. Hugo suggests that, as Frollo is clearly a passionate and loving man, his career causes him to suppress a large part of himself—his attraction to women—and that the repression of these emotions causes them to manifest in dangerous and destructive ways.

Book 4, Chapter 3 Quotes

❝ So it was that, little by little, developing always in harmony with the cathedral, living in it, sleeping in it, hardly ever leaving it, subject day in and day out to its mysterious pressure, he came to resemble it, to be incrusted on it, as it were, to form an integral part of it. […] One might almost say that he had taken on its shape, just as the snail takes on the shape of its shell. It was his abode, his hole, his envelope. So deep was the instinctive sympathy between the old church and himself, so numerous the magnetic and material affinities, that he somehow adhered to it like the tortoise to its shell. The gnarled cathedral was his carapace.

Related Characters: Quasimodo

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 164

Explanation and Analysis

Hugo describes Quasimodo's relationship with Notre Dame, which he lives in and where he grows up in total isolation.

Quasimodo is ostracized from society because of his deformed appearance. Medieval society is not sympathetic and often judges people based on how they look. Therefore, people believe that he is evil or demonic because of his physical deformity. His alienation causes extreme loneliness and means that he grows up cut off from human society. Notre Dame, therefore, becomes like a family or society to Quasimodo and, just as a family or society influences people's values and character, Notre Dame influences Quasimodo and he becomes like the cathedral. The cathedral is made of stone and is an example of Gothic architecture, which is notable for its grotesque statues and dramatic pointed towers. And similarly, Quasimodo's personality is rough and hard like stone; he has never experienced human affection or kindness to temper this.

Hugo's broader point is that society fails to appreciate both outwardly frightening people like Quasimodo and Gothic buildings like Notre Dame. Quasimodo turns out to be deeply kind and caring, but few people notice, since society is so focused on superficial appearances. Similarly, thinkers in Hugo's own time often dismissed Gothic architecture as ugly or extreme, but Hugo indicates that these qualities don't make it any less beautiful; he feels that Gothic architecture is worthwhile precisely because it expresses the full, complex range of human experience.

Book 5, Chapter 1 Quotes

❝ 'No,' said the archdeacon, seizing Compere Tourangeau by the arm, and a spark of enthusiasm rekindling in his lifeless pupils, 'No, I don't deny science. I have not crawled all this time on my belly with my nails in the earth, along the countless passages of the cavern without glimpsing, far ahead of me, at the end of the unlit gallery, a light, a flame, something, doubtless the reflection from the dazzling central laboratory where the wise and the patient have taken God by surprise.'

Related Characters: Claude Frollo (speaker), Jacques Coictier, Louis XI/Compere Tourangeau

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 184

Explanation and Analysis

Jacques Coictier, the king's doctor, takes Louis XI (disguised as Compere Tourangeau), who is ill, to visit Frollo. Frollo is renowned for his wisdom and his knowledge of science and medicine, so the doctor hopes he can help the king.

Frollo is an extremely intense man and his passion for knowledge is demonstrated by the image of a flame kindling in his eyes. Frollo's passions are frequently linked with fire throughout the novel as Frollo is an alchemist (a form of medieval, experimental science which was interested in the transformation of metals into other substances) and believes that, using fire, he can learn to make gold. Alchemists were interested in making gold because gold was believed to be a divine substance (some thought it was light made solid and put on earth by God) and believed that, if they could recreate this process using fire instead of light, they could understand God and have full knowledge of the universe.

Frollo is frustrated by the limited knowledge of science and nature which is available in the medieval period. Books were rare, and people were forced to base much of their understanding of the world on superstition rather than on rational thought, which developed rapidly after the invention of the printing press and as society moved into the Renaissance. Frollo believes that to have rational knowledge of the natural processes that make up the world is to understand divine wisdom and even God. Although Frollo's later turn to superstition shows that he is a product of his time in some ways, his interest in science as expressed here also marks him as being ahead of his time.

Book 5, Chapter 2 Quotes

❝ Firstly, it was the thought of a priest. It was the alarm felt by the priesthood before a new agent: the printing-press. It was the terror and bewilderment felt by a man of the sanctuary before the luminous press of Gutenberg. It was the pulpit and the manuscript, the spoken and the written word, taking fright at the printed word; something like the stupor felt by a sparrow were it to see the angel legion unfold its six million wings. It was the cry of the prophet who already hears the restless surge of an emancipated mankind, who can see that future time when intelligence will undermine faith, opinion dethrone belief and the world shake off Rome.

Related Characters: Jacques Coictier, Louis XI/Compere Tourangeau, Claude Frollo

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 189

Explanation and Analysis

Louis XI (disguised as Compere Tourangeau) and his doctor, Jacques Coicter, visit Claude Frollo, the archdeacon of Notre Dame. While they are there, Frollo complains that books will soon kill the building as a source of knowledge.

Frollo is a priest and, although he can read and write, he gets most of his knowledge about history and religion from "reading," or examining, the carvings on Gothic churches like Notre Dame. Books were rare in the medieval period, before the invention of the printing press (developed in Gutenburg), and so buildings were an important source of knowledge. Frollo predicts, however, that the printing press will revolutionize society, as books are cheap and easy to reproduce and will spread knowledge far beyond the Church (clergy members were generally the only people who could read in the medieval period). Frollo is afraid of this social change because, as a member of the Church, he views it as a threat to his power. He predicts that books will gradually undermine religion as people gain the knowledge necessary to express themselves and question Church doctrine. This proved to be the case as, with the increase in rational knowledge in the centuries after the medieval period, the Church's power went into decline.

Books are described as angels with "six million wings" because, as books were easy to reproduce, millions of copies could be made. They are also like angels because they spread knowledge, which opposes ignorance—and ignorance, Hugo suggests, leads to brutality.

Book 6, Chapter 2 Quotes

❝ In those days they saw everything thus, without metaphysics, without exaggeration, without a magnifying glass, with the naked eye. The microscope had not yet been invented, either for material things or for the things of the spirit.

Related Characters: Paquette la Chantefleurie/Sister Gudule

Related Themes:

Page Number: 215

Explanation and Analysis

Hugo describes medieval society's attitude to Paquette la Chantefleurie, a religious recluse who lives in a cell in the Place de Grève.

Hugo suggests that medieval society takes things at face value and does not examine the psychological reasons why people do things or the emotions behind people's actions. In this sense, they accept Paquette's decision to become a recluse without wondering what has happened to her to make her give up all worldly things. Recluses often lived as hermits and rejected all worldly comforts. This made people view recluses as holy because physical deprivation was associated with spirituality in the medieval period.

Hugo indicates that the perspectives of people in medieval society were limited in this way because they did not yet have access to rational knowledge, which would become widespread in the following centuries through technological and scientific developments, such as the invention of the printing press. The microscope is an instrument associated with science and the minute examination of objects, which did not exist in the medieval period. Therefore, Hugo suggests, medieval society was limited not because people were inherently foolish or barbaric, but simply because they did not have the tools or knowledge to examine their world more deeply.

Book 7, Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ He, who wore his heart on his sleeve, who observed none of the world's laws except the law of nature, who allowed his passions to escape through his inclinations, and in whom the reservoir of strong emotion was always dry, so many fresh drains did he dig for it each morning, he had no idea of how the sea of human passions rages and ferments and boils once it is refused all outlet, of how it accumulates and increases and flows over, of how it scours the heart and breaks out into inward sobs and dumb convulsions, until it has torn down its dykes and burst its bed. Jehan had always been deceived by Claude Frollo's austere and icy exterior, that chill surface of precipitous and inaccessible virtue. That this seething, raging lava bubbled deep beneath the snowclad brow of Etna had never occurred to the cheerful student.

Related Characters: Claude Frollo, Jehan Frollo

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 275

Explanation and Analysis

Jehan Frollo visits his brother Claude and asks to borrow money. Jehan, who is an extremely sensual man, has always believed that Frollo is a cold person. He does not see that, although Frollo disguises it, he is also a passionate man.

Jehan's passions flow freely and channel themselves into what he likes because he never tries to restrain himself, deny himself pleasure, or hold his emotions back. Jehan takes Frollo's stern and spiritual appearance at face value. Frollo is a priest and, therefore, must be seen to reject worldly things, as physical pleasures were associated with sin and impurity in the medieval period. Priests were also celibate because lust and sex were considered impure.

However, Frollo is not what he appears to be. Although he is a very controlled man and has grown good at suppressing his emotions, Frollo is still deeply passionate underneath. Repressing his emotions does not cause them to dissipate—as Jehan's do once they have been expressed—but rather to grow stronger and manifest in strange and destructive ways. Frollo's emotions are likened to lava because lava exists beneath the earth and erupts when volcanoes explode, which often causes widespread destruction. Through this passage, Hugo indicates that repressing one's feelings can lead to similarly dire outcomes. The transformation of positive emotions—like passion, which Hugo sees as a good thing—into negative and destructive emotions also relates to Frollo's studies of alchemy. Alchemy was an early form of science that sought to turn base metals into gold, but Frollo never achieves this positive transformation; instead, he's stuck turning his own strong emotions into destructive forces.

Book 8, Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ When one does evil one must do the whole evil. To be only half a monster is insanity. There is ecstasy in an extreme of crime.

Related Characters: Claude Frollo (speaker), Esmeralda

Related Themes:

Page Number: 329

Explanation and Analysis

Frollo, who is sexually obsessed with Esmeralda, explains to her that he has imprisoned her on a charge of witchcraft because he feels that he is already damned and should take

his immorality to an extreme.

Frollo has an extremely fatalistic worldview and believes in predestination (the idea that events in one's life are planned out by God and, therefore, cannot be changed). Frollo feels that his lust for Esmeralda has damned him and made him sinful, because lust was associated with sin in the medieval period. As a priest, Frollo is meant to remain pure and celibate. However, because he has found himself attracted to Esmeralda, Frollo believes that he is already doomed and that this must be part of God's plan.

Due to his fatalistic beliefs, Frollo makes no effort to curb his obsession with Esmeralda (which only grows more intense) and, instead, goes to more extreme and destructive lengths to pursue her. As she rejects him, and as he believes that he is already damned, he decides that, if he is not meant to love her sexually, then he must be destined to destroy her and destroy himself in the process. In this sense, Frollo's extreme and repressed emotions turn him into a monster, while his belief in predestination allows him to justify his monstrous behavior to himself.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 1

One January morning in the year 1482, the people of Paris are awakened early by the church bells, which ring all over the city. The bells signal a public celebration. Today, however, the excitement in the air is not caused by a riot, a public execution, or a parade of foreign ambassadors, such as the one two days previously which celebrated a marriage between a Flemish dauphin and a French noble. Instead, the bells this morning ring to announce the popular celebration of the "Feast of Fools."

Gothic architecture, which includes the church bells, is immediately presented as central and integral to life in medieval Paris. The bells wake people up, tell the time, and signal public events. This suggests that architecture is not a purely practical or inanimate aspect of the city, but that it also shapes people's lives. Meanwhile, the fact that riots are common suggests that the people are discontented or oppressed in some way. The prevalence of churches in the city, and the way in which the church bells organize people's lives, also supports the idea that medieval life is not particularly free. The Church was heavily connected with the monarchy in the medieval period and people were subject to laws set by the Church and the king. Public executions were also common and were considered a form of entertainment. The "Feast of Fools" was a festival in which ordinary people could temporarily masquerade as monarchs and nobles.

Three different entertainments have been set up for the festival: a Maypole, a bonfire, and a "mystery play" in the Palace of Justice. Due to the cold weather, most people avoid the Maypole and go to either the bonfire or the play. The play is the most popular because the Flemish ambassadors, who are still in the city, plan to attend. The Palace of Justice is also where the crowd will elect the "fool's pope" for the festival.

Mystery plays were plays with religious themes, which were popular in the medieval period. As most people could not read, mystery plays were a way to educate the populace on moral and religious matters, as well as a form of entertainment. Ordinary people attend the play alongside foreign dignitaries, and this demonstrates the wide range of characters from different social classes that Hugo includes in his novel. These extremes of social class—from the peasants to the nobility—are parodied by the idea of the "fool's pope" (a peasant who will pretend to be pope for the day). This role reversal, though comedic, suggests that although the divide between rich and poor seems vast, it is, in fact, something that can be reversed. Along similar lines, the fact that the "fool's pope" is elected by the people subtly foreshadows the advent of democracy in Europe.

The crowd pours into the Palace of Justice. There are so many people that, from above, it looks like a sea of people flooding the vast hall. There is a din of voices and, at the edges of the crowd, the provosts use force to keep order—something the police in Paris still do today. If a Parisian from 1830 were to see the spectacle, they would find it as fresh and exciting as any event in modern times.

By comparing the crowd to the sea, Hugo suggests that groups of ordinary people in large numbers can be extremely powerful—just as the sea is a powerful natural force. Law enforcement is brutal and oppressive in medieval society, but Hugo suggests that this has not changed much in 19th-century France (the "today" from which Hugo is writing) and that the police in the 1800s still abuse their power.

The Palace of Justice is a long hall with seven tall pillars, which support the pointed arch of the roof. The walls are lined with statues of Kings of France and the windows are stained glass. The statues and the ceiling are beautifully painted, but this paint will be worn away with time. The Palace of Justice no longer looks this way; it was renovated after a fire in 1618. This fire was believed either to have been caused by a "flaming star," which fell from the sky, or to have been lit to destroy evidence from a trial concerning the assassination of Henry IV.

The Palace of Justice is an example of Gothic architecture, which was the most popular architectural style in the medieval period. Common aspects of the Gothic style included high ceilings, pointed arches, and decorative stained-glass windows. Gothic architecture fell out of fashion after the medieval period. Hugo supports this with his note that the paint on the cathedral will not be maintained. Medieval society was superstitious and often believed in strange occurrences—like the fallen star—which have no basis in science. However, supernatural explanations could also be used to cover up corruption (such as the destruction of the evidence) because, in a time when people didn't know much about natural science, rational explanations could not be provided to contradict supernatural claims.

Very little is left of the original building, where so many historical events took place. The stained glass and delicate Gothic carvings have all been destroyed. The pointed arches have been replaced with heavy, rounded ones. In 1482 the Palace contains a chapel with a huge slab of marble on the floor. Facing this, propped up by one of the pillars, is a large gold platform where important members of the audience can sit. The mystery play is to be performed on the marble slab and the stage has been set up there.

Hugo contrasts the splendor of the medieval building with its modern condition. Rather than being renovated in its original style, the Palace has been updated by architects who sought to make it more fashionable. After the medieval period, when Gothic architecture fell out of fashion, rounded arches became popular as people sought to imitate the pre-medieval, classical periods, such as the architectural style of ancient Rome, because these periods were considered to be more civilized than the medieval.

The play is due to start at noon, when the Flemish ambassadors arrive. Four guards stand around the stage to keep the crowd back. The audience are crushed together in the hall and begin to grow restless. Many of them have waited in the hall since dawn to see the play. Up on the windowsills of the hall, a group of students have gathered and they make fun of the crowd below. Although this annoys the crowd, the students seem to enjoy themselves.

The presence of the guards suggests that the crowd may get out of control and need to be forcefully subdued. This suggests that medieval society is oppressive, and that force is often used against members of the public who protest. However, the huge numbers in the crowd—compared with the four guards—also suggests that, if the people did decide to protest against oppression or injustice, they would be an extremely powerful force.

One student calls out to another—who clings to a stone edifice to prevent himself from falling off the windowsill—and makes fun of his precarious position. The student being addressed, a young man named Jehan Frollo de Molendino, replies that he has been there since morning and that he heard the dawn mass, which the king funded to save an ailing nobleman. A woman in the crowd shouts that the mass was paid for by the taxpayers and other angry voices contradict her. The students think this is hilarious.

The idea that the king takes money from the people to fund favors for the nobility suggests that medieval Paris is an unjust society in which ordinary people are oppressed by unfair laws and taxes. Members of the audience contradict this idea, however, and this shows that ordinary people do not yet have the knowledge to unify against this injustice in medieval society; many still believe in the benevolence of the Church and king.

Another man in the crowd tries to berate the students, but they recognize him as the bookseller of the university and joke that they will burn his books. Outside the window, the rector of the university and several of the staff go by in a dignified parade. The students turn and jeer at them and Jehan calls the rector an "old gambler." The university bookseller complains to his neighbor in the crowd. He laments that "printing is killing the bookshop" and that the students are getting out of hand.

Although the rector appears very dignified and holy, the students contradict this image of him and claim he is a hypocrite and a gambler. Gambling was associated with sin in the medieval period. The invention of the printing press meant that, rather than being restricted to the few written manuscripts which existed (which the bookseller presumably sells), people could find printed literature from a variety of different sources. The bookseller's words suggest that the medieval period is a society on the brink of change, which will be brought about by new technologies such as the printing press.

Just then, the clock strikes noon and the crowd sighs with relief because it is finally time for the play. The Flemish ambassadors have not arrived, however, and the actors do not appear onstage. The crowd begins to cry that they should hang the guards at the front of the stage. The guards draw back nervously as the crowd advances towards them.

Although capital punishment was a sentence that was usually passed by a legal court, this incident suggests that the crowd are so numerous that they can (and will) hang people themselves if they are sufficiently irritated. This makes it clear that, although the state can threaten individuals with death, individuals in large numbers can also threaten members of powerful institutions, like the state and the Church, if they unite against them. Hugo seems to be hinting that when people live in cruel and unjust societies, they will behave in similarly cruel ways towards each other.

Suddenly, an actor dressed as Jupiter appears from under the stage. He looks very frightened and tries to appease the crowd by explaining that they cannot perform until the Flemish ambassador arrives. Luckily, the crowd is momentarily dazzled by Jupiter's costume and forget their plan to hang the palace guards.

Jupiter is a powerful Roman God, but the actor playing him doesn't feel powerful at all. The actor's fear of the crowd (even though it is not his fault that the play has not started) suggests that the crowd will punish people indiscriminately if they are annoyed. The crowd's fickle behavior mirrors the attitude of the state, which will hang people indiscriminately and often for very minor crimes, and this suggests that people learn by example and that a cruel society breeds a cruel populace.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 2

Once the first impression of Jupiter's costume has worn off, the crowd begins to protest again and demands that the play start immediately. Jehan and his friend Robin Poussepain begin to chant from the windowsills and the crowd joins in. Jupiter now fears that he will be hanged, and he freezes in terror. A man steps out from the shadows at the side of the stage and tells Jupiter to start the play. Relieved, Jupiter announces this development to the audience.

The crowd are dazzled by Jupiter's outfit, which suggests that people in medieval society are easily taken in by appearances. Appearances are shallow and do not last, however, and the crowd quickly loses interest in Jupiter once they are bored by his appearance. Meanwhile, Jupiter fears that the crowd will turn on him. This again highlights the fact that, although they lack political power in the medieval period, large groups of people are still powerful forces.

Jupiter returns to the stage and the man—Pierre Gringoire, the writer of the play—joins two young women in the audience, who beckon him over. The girls, Liénarde and Gisquette, shyly ask Gringoire if the mystery will be as beautiful as one that they saw two years ago that was written for the "legate." Gringoire indignantly replies that this play has been written for the Flemish princess and will be even more beautiful. From the windowsill, Jehan calls again for the play to begin and the actors scramble onstage.

It was common for pieces of creative work—such as plays, buildings, and statues—to be commissioned by monarchs and nobles. These would often be paid for with public funds (taxes), so this brief interaction again suggests that medieval monarchy is oppressive and unjust, because it takes money from ordinary people to use for its own purposes.

The four actors are dressed in glittering costumes and they represent four aspects of the state: nobility, commerce, clergy, and tillage. The play begins with a prologue, which explains that the four characters plan to give a precious **golden** dolphin to the most beautiful princess in the land. The prologue is very wordy and Gringoire stands back and admires his masterpiece.

Like Hugo's novel, Gringoire's play contains people from different social classes. This suggests that people from all walks of life can be portrayed in art. Hugo also suggests that architecture, rather than poetry or theatre, is the dominant artform of the medieval period. Although Gringoire is very impressed by his own written work, the play is dwarfed by the impressive Palace of Justice.

The play is interrupted when a beggar, who is perched on a shelf beneath the platform reserved for the Flemish ambassadors, begins to call out for alms. The beggar has a "large sore on his right arm." When Jehan sees the beggar, he falls about laughing. Jehan cries that the beggar is a fake and the crowd, distracted from the play, turns around to look. Jehan recognizes the beggar as Clopin Trouillefou and says that the sore on his arm used to be on his leg

The Hunchback of Notre Dame was the first novel to use beggars as central characters, rather than as comic relief or in subplots. This choice expresses the belief that beggars like Clopin are important members of society whose stories are worth hearing.

The actors are distracted by these jokes and turn to watch. Gringoire irritably tells them to go on and he looks down once more when Gisquette tugs on his sleeve. She asks Gringoire to explain the prologue to her and Gringoire is shocked to find that she has not understood his work. He thinks she must be very stupid. The actors begin again but the audience has lost the thread of the play.

Gringoire is unusual in the medieval period because he can read and write. Hugo suggests that, despite Gringoire's reaction, people in medieval society were not stupid. Instead, they lacked education because it did not become accessible until the invention of the printing press, when books became widely available and more people learned to read.

The prologue continues, but it is very long; it concerns the journey of the **golden** dolphin as it is carried around the world to the Flemish princess. The play is due to run from noon until four o' clock so it needs to fill up the time. Just as quiet has fallen again, the hall door opens and an usher announces the Flemish ambassadors and their host, the Cardinal.

The golden dolphin emphasizes just how much wealth and luxury the upper classes enjoy, compared to the lower classes who have gathered to watch the play. Even the plot of Gringoire's play subtly reinforces Hugo's point that medieval society is deeply unequal.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 3

Gringoire is dismayed because his play has been interrupted again. He wants to impress the Cardinal and the Flemish ambassadors, however, which is why he has written this flattering play about the Flemish princess. Gringoire knows that the nobility pays his wage and, moreover, he is a very moderate man who never dreams of offending anyone important. At this moment, however, Gringoire is caught up in admiring the beauty of his work and is very upset to be interrupted.

Gringoire is not a very principled character and is happy to write whatever he is told, for whoever pays his wages. This suggests that he does not have strong convictions about his fate—or how his life should turn out—and is happy to just let things happen, rather than try to control them.

The crowd is completely distracted. When the Cardinal appears on the platform, they all turn to look. The Cardinal is a cousin of King Louis XI, and he is a careful diplomat who has spent his life navigating conflicts between different noble groups. Overall, the Cardinal is a cheerful man who likes to drink and flirt with pretty women (he is very good-looking). The people of Paris like him.

The Cardinal is clearly a deceptive man and has spent his political career playing different political sides against each other. Despite this, the crowd are taken in by his appearance and believe he is benevolent because he is good-looking. This shows that people tend to favor attractive people and that an appealing appearance can disguise hypocrisy.

The crowd does not mind that the Cardinal has interrupted the play. They are all very impressed by his appearance. Members of the clergy follow the Cardinal into the hall. The students swear and jeer at them and insult the king as they pass. The students are happy because this is the one day of the year when they can speak their minds without fear of torture or execution. Jehan verbally attacks the Cardinal. Jehan's brother, Claude Frollo, is the archdeacon of **Notre Dame**, so he feels he can get away with it. The Cardinal pays no attention, however, and he is distracted by the arrival of the Flemish ambassadors.

The crowd like the Cardinal because he is good-looking. This suggests that medieval society is easily taken in by appearances and tends to accept things at face value. At the same time, medieval Paris is clearly an oppressive society in which people cannot freely speak their minds or criticize powerful institutions without fear of punishment. The relaxed rules during the festival are a way to appease the populace, who might otherwise rebel against these oppressive conditions.

The Cardinal looks down on the Flemish ambassadors and finds them common. He knows how to flatter nobles, however, and prepares to welcome them graciously. The usher announces the names of these foreign dignitaries as they make their way into the hall. The Flemish ambassadors look sturdy and trustworthy. One figure, however, a wily-looking man named Guillaume Rym, stands out among them because of his devious looks.

The Cardinal looks down on the Flemish ambassadors because of how they present themselves—they appear common. This suggests that medieval French society is shallow and values appearances over behavior or internal values.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 4

As the dignitaries enter the hall, a man in rough workman's clothes pushes in alongside Guillaume Rym. The usher tries to stop this man, who indignantly announces that he is with the Flemish party. His name is Jacques Coppenole, he explains, and he is a hosier. Coppenole irritates the Cardinal, who wishes that Coppenole would present himself more nobly. The Cardinal begs the usher to introduce Coppenole properly. Coppenole, however, insists the usher introduce him as a hosier, which is what he is.

Although Coppenole is a nobleman, he was not born into the nobility and still identifies with his trade (noblemen did not usually work) as a clothmaker, rather than his political office. In this sense, Coppenole represents shifts in the rigid class system of the medieval period, which would soon change as society progressed. During the Renaissance (which came after the medieval period) and the Enlightenment (a period of rapid scientific and philosophical development which came after the Renaissance), the divide between the nobility and the common people became less stark and, eventually, representative democracy—in which ordinary people could join the government—was developed. Coppenole foreshadows this societal change.

The people are pleased with this introduction and Coppenole is very popular among them. They like to see someone ordinary stand up to the Cardinal because this is something they can never do. Even Louis XI is slightly afraid of Coppenole. Coppenole enters the platform confidently, to the approval of the crowd.

Coppenole is popular with the crowd because he foreshadows their own liberation, which will develop as society becomes less hierarchical over time. The enormity of this coming change is why, even at this early stage in the process, the king is threatened by popular figures like Coppenole.

Meanwhile, Clopin Trouillefou climbs further up the pillar beneath the platform and sits directly beneath the Flemish ambassadors. When Coppenole sees the beggar, he taps him on the shoulder. The two men seem to recognize each other, and they cheerfully shake hands. The crowd lets up a delighted cheer and the Cardinal demands that Clopin be thrown out. Coppenole cries that he will not allow it and the Cardinal backs down.

Coppenole's interaction with Clopin suggests that class boundaries—which separated nobles from beggars and ordinary people in the medieval period—are meaningless and can be broken down. Hugo seems to be saying that class differences between people are based on arbitrary factors such as wealth, and that underneath, there is not much difference between a beggar and a king.

Gringoire, meanwhile, furiously tries to restart his play, but the audience has lost interest. They are bored with the stage depiction of nobility and clergy. They have the real thing in front of them on the platform—in the figures of Coppenole and the Cardinal—and they can watch these men squabble in real life. Gringoire begins to chant for the play to continue but Jehan and the students shout him down.

The exchange between Coppenole and Clopin is a real-life meeting of two totally different social spheres. The crowd are fascinated by this, which suggests that people are interested in seeing class divides break down. Hugo uses a range of characters from different social backgrounds throughout his novel and here suggests that this is something people find interesting and meaningful, in comparison to art that only features the nobility.

The Cardinal asks what is causing the commotion and a servant nervously informs him that they have missed the first half of the mystery play. The Cardinal is amused and uninterested in the play. He says that the actors may continue, however, much to the annoyance of the crowd, which is now bored with Gringoire's work. The actors go on, but the usher continues to call out names as more Flemish dignitaries arrive and much of the play's dialogue is lost in the din.

The people are not interested in Gringoire's play because it goes over their heads. This suggests that theater is not an important artform in the medieval period—although it would become so in the next few centuries—and confirms Hugo's thesis that architecture was the most accessible medium of this era.

Gringoire is astounded by the fickleness of the crowd. Just as the play gets going, Coppenole announces he is bored. This type of entertainment, he says, is not fitting for a Feast of Fools. In his country, he explains, they have a face-pulling contest and whoever pulls the most hideous face is crowned the "fool's pope." Coppenole asks the crowd if they would prefer this to the play and the crowd enthusiastically agrees. Gringoire sadly accepts this.

While Gringoire tries to appeal to the nobles with his play—which has been commissioned by and written for the nobility—Coppenole prefers to cater to the public and easily wins their approval because of this. This foreshadows the development of democracy and the disintegration of elitist institutions, such as the monarchy, as society developed beyond the medieval period. Coppenole's behavior is democratic because rather than being forced to adhere to the nobles' taste in entertainment, the people get to vote on how they want to spend the festival.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 5

The face-pulling contest begins. The contestants take turns poking their heads through a broken window in a nearby chapel, which overlooks the great hall. Coppenole wins the crowd over completely and they fail to notice when the affronted Cardinal leaves the hall. The competitors pull spectacularly ugly faces and draw howls of laughter from the crowd. The faces make up a parade of amazing and varied expressions, like nothing the people have ever seen before.

The people's decision on how to spend the festival offends the Cardinal because it symbolizes the triumph of the people's will over the nobility. The faces the crowd pulls mirror the gargoyles on the walls of Notre Dame, which are carved in a range of hideous and bizarre shapes. This suggests that Gothic architecture accurately reflects the variety of people who live in Paris and the range of experiences that these people endure, rather than just appealing to the nobility.

Gringoire is dismayed to see such a spectacle distract from his play. He plans to join the contest so he can pull a face at the crowd as revenge for rejecting his work. He decides against it, however—he will not stoop to their level. A cheer goes up from the crowd, which signals that they have chosen the "fool's pope."

Gringoire is clearly a petty character; he despises the crowd for not appreciating his art. Hugo makes fun of Gringoire for this attitude and suggests that true art is something democratic, rather than elitist, in which a large range of people and experiences can and should be portrayed.

The face of the winner is terrible. He has one large eye, a welt on his brow that hides his other eye, and teeth that stick out at strange angles. The crowd draws back in surprise when they realize that this is the man's real face. He is a hunchback and the crowd quickly recognizes him as Quasimodo, the bell-ringer of **Notre Dame**. Jehan shouts that pregnant women should not look at him and several women quickly hide their faces. Others cry out that Quasimodo is "vicious," that he attends "witch's sabbaths," and that he has an "evil soul." The crowd pulls back as he walks among them.

The crowd judges Quasimodo based on his ugly appearance, rather than his character. This suggests that medieval society is somewhat shallow and takes things at face value. Furthermore, many of these beliefs about Quasimodo are based on superstition rather than on evidence. This brings upt the idea that medieval people are quick to jump to supernatural conclusions and use these beliefs to explain things that seem inexplicable—such as Quasimodo's deformity—because they do not have access to rational or scientific knowledge, which could explain these things in another way.

Robin Poussepain approaches Quasimodo and laughs in his face. Quasimodo picks Robin up and throws him into the crowd. Coppenole congratulates Quasimodo on his "beautiful ugliness." Quasimodo is deaf, however, and he snarls at Coppenole. Amused, Coppenole announces that Quasimodo is "the perfect pope" and Jehan begins to tease Quasimodo from his perch above the hall.

Quasimodo is aggressive towards the crowd because they are aggressive with him, and this suggests that people respond to their environments and learn to behave based on the way they are treated. Extremes and things which seem contradictory are often brought together throughout The Hunchback of Notre Dame. *Coppenole's statement that Quasimodo is beautifully ugly is a contradiction, but it also suggests that things which are widely considered grotesque can also be beautiful. This is relevant to Hugo's thesis about Gothic architecture, as Hugo suggests that, although 19th-century critics considered Gothic architecture ugly, there is something grand and beautiful about the way Gothic architecture captures a range of human emotions and experiences.*

The crowd dresses Quasimodo in his "fool's pope" robes. They hoist him onto a litter to carry him through the streets. Quasimodo seems happy that the strong young men who bear the litter are forced to walk beneath him. He smiles bitterly as he is paraded through Paris.

Quasimodo has grown bitter towards society because they have ostracized him and treated him cruelly because of how he looks. This suggests that people are often products of their environment; they behave in ways that reflect how they themselves have been treated. Quasimodo is amused by the handsome men who are forced to carry him because beauty is usually celebrated, while ugliness is punished in medieval society. Quasimodo's veneration in the parade, therefore, is a reversal of the usual order.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 6

The "fool's pope" procession follows Quasimodo from the hall. Gringoire thinks that perhaps now those left in the audience will enjoy his play. However, the procession pretty much empties the hall and only a few stragglers remain. One of the students in the window looks out into the square and suddenly shouts, "La Esmeralda!" The remaining people in the hall dash out when they hear this and Gringoire despairs. He storms out of the hall and wonders bitterly what "La Esmeralda" means.

The "fool's pope" procession is clearly very popular with the Parisians. Their rejection of Gringoire's play—which has been commissioned by the nobility—suggests that, when the people are free to choose, they know what they want and are able to use the strength of their numbers to get their own way.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 1

It is dark when Gringoire storms out of the palace and begins to tramp through the city. He has nowhere to stay because he owes his landlord six months' rent. He had promised to pay him with his wages from the play, which he has not received. Gringoire knows he must spend the night on the street and decides to make his way to a sheltered doorway that he has seen before, which he thinks looks cozy.

Gringoire is very poor and essentially becomes homeless because he cannot afford his rent. Hugo includes Gringoire's story in his novel because, he suggests, this was a very common experience for people in the medieval period—and in 19th-century France—and one that is worthy of being portrayed in art. Gringoire does not have much control over his fate. His wages are paid based on the whims of nobles, who commission his plays but do not always pay him for his work. Even though Gringoire tries to play by the rules of his oppressive, elitist society, he still can't afford even a place to live.

On his way, Gringoire comes across the "fool's pope" procession and hastily avoids them. He stumbles into a dark street and comes out opposite the river Seine and the "ferryman's hut," which once occupied an island in the center of the river. Gringoire spends a peaceful moment looking at the little hut but he is startled when the ferryman lets off a firework. Irritated, Gringoire decides to go to the bonfire in the Place de Grève, where he might warm up.

Hugo's novel is full of historical detail about the layout of medieval Paris. This emphasis on the city itself underscores Hugo's central point that physical environments shape people's lives profoundly; the city is a vital aspect of the characters' experiences.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 2

Very little remains of the Place de Grève in modern Paris, except for one historical turret. The rest of the square has been built over with modern houses. However, in 1482 the whole square was surrounded by Gothic buildings, which dated back to the 11th century. In the middle of the square there were gallows and a pillory, for which the square later became famous when gallows fever temporarily overran Paris.

The Hunchback of Notre Dame *contains many descriptions of medieval Paris and the Gothic architecture that dominates the city. Hugo contrasts the historical city with the modern city, in which much of the historical architecture has been built over, to show that modern architects and citizens do not appreciate the history contained in these buildings and the knowledge about previous centuries which can be gained from architecture. The Place de Grève is a site for public punishments, which were extremely common in medieval Paris. The reference to gallows fever is an allusion to the French Revolution and Reign of Terror, in which the people of Paris overthrew the monarchy and publicly executed thousands of nobles. This allusion highlights the way that the French social order would soon change, even though it seems inescapable in the world of the novel.*

It is comforting to think that, compared with 1482, when many parts of the city contained places of public execution, punishment, and torture, the only place that remains in 1830 is the gallows in the Place de Grève, where prisoners can still be hanged.

Although French society in Hugo's time has improved in terms of its treatment of prisoners, Hugo suggests that there are still changes to be made. While public execution is not as frequent in 19th-century France as it was in the medieval period, Hugo suggests that the end of capital punishment would be "comforting" and that even the comparatively small number of prisoners who are executed in the 19th century are too many.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 3

Gringoire arrives at the Place de Grève and realizes, bitterly, that the crowd around the bonfire is huge and that he cannot push through to get to warm. However, as he hovers at the back, he notices that the crowd is not watching the bonfire; a beautiful young girl dances in their midst and they watch her instead. Gringoire pushes through to get a closer look and he is amazed by the girl, who is so beautiful that she seems to be an "angel" or a "supernatural creature." This is Esmeralda.

The Parisian crowds features heavily in the novel and reflect the idea that Paris is a crowded, bustling city, even in the medieval period. The ordinary people in the city far outnumber the nobles and officials who control them. Esmeralda is judged on her looks throughout the novel and is often believed to be supernatural because she is so beautiful. This suggests that medieval people are easily taken in by appearances, but also that they are superstitious and do not trust extremes of beauty or ugliness, as they feel that these are unnatural.

As Gringoire watches, Esmeralda's hair falls from its braid and a coin drops to the ground. Gringoire realizes that she is a "gypsy" and that there is nothing magical about her. He enjoys her performance, however, and he is impressed when she begins to dance and spin two swords at the same time.

Gringoire's superstitious belief about Esmeralda is dispelled by rational evidence—she is not an angelic creature, but rather a beautiful, human woman. Gringoire is one of the more rational characters in the novel and, though he is sometimes superstitious, he is often ready to take a rational explanation over a supernatural one.

Among the crowd, Gringoire notices a stern-looking man who stares at Esmerelda with an intense, passionate expression. He is a youngish man, but he has a very stern face and he has already begun to go bald. The man seems lost in thought, though his eyes are riveted on Esmeralda, and every now and then he lets out a mournful sigh. This is Claude Frollo. Esmeralda ends her performance and the people around her applaud.

Frollo is a passionate character and this is immediately demonstrated by his behavior towards Esmeralda. Even though he is in a crowd of people, his attention is focused solely on her, showing that Frollo is prone to intense and singular emotions.

Esmeralda calls her pet goat, Djali, and she sits down on the rug she has been dancing on. She holds out a tambourine to the goat and Djali counts out the month and the year with his little hoof. The crowd is amazed, but Frollo cries out that this is witchcraft. Esmeralda is shocked for a moment. She quickly recovers, however, and tells Djali to imitate the "captain of the pistoleers." The crowd is greatly impressed by the likeness Djali achieves.

Superstition was not limited to common people in the medieval period; the Church was extremely dedicated to stamping out supernatural practices such as witchcraft and sorcery, as Frollo's accusation here demonstrates.

Djali then imitates a member of the church and the crowd falls about laughing. Frollo cries out that this is blasphemy and Esmeralda, who seems to recognize Frollo, quickly gathers up her things and begins to collect money from the crowd. She stops in front of Gringoire, who is embarrassed because he has nothing to give her.

The crowd enjoys Djali's performance because he mocks the Church. The medieval Church was extremely powerful and could legally persecute and punish people for a variety of crimes. The Church, therefore, is an oppressive force in medieval people's lives and they like to see it ridiculed, as this is a subtle form of rebellion.

Just at that moment, a shrill voice screams at Esmeralda to leave the square. It is a religious recluse who lives in a cell known as the "rat hole" in the Place de Grève. Gringoire slips away from Esmeralda while she is distracted and tries to get himself some food from the buffet. It is nearly empty, however, and Gringoire faces the gloomy prospect of no food and no bed for the night.

Religious recluses were common in the medieval period and often voluntarily lived lives of extreme physical deprivation and abstinence. Christian belief at the time maintained that worldly and sensual pleasures were sinful, whereas abstinence and restraint kept people pure and, therefore, holy. Gringoire is not concerned with being holy, however, and he does not care for the deprivation that his situation has forced him into.

In the middle of the square, Esmeralda begins to sing and Gringoire finds her song uplifting. The recluse breaks in again and chides Esmeralda. The crowd is about to turn on the recluse, but they are distracted when the "fool's pope" parade re-enters the square. It has grown since it first left the Palace of Justice and many thieves and rogues have joined the party.

Although, individually, the people have limited power against the ruling classes, in large numbers they are quite a threatening force. The implication that they may turn on the recluse suggests that she may be in physical danger from them. This shows that people in large groups are, in fact, not powerless but strong.

On his litter, still at the center of the procession, Quasimodo enjoys the adulation and respect of the crowd. He has never experienced this before, and he does not care that the crowd respects him because they are afraid of him or that they worship him because he is the "fool's pope." As the crowd moves through the square, however, Frollo rushes out and tears Quasimodo's mock crown from his head.

Quasimodo's situation is entirely new to him. He has always been ostracized from society because of his appearance, but his enjoyment of this experience indicates that he could also enjoy being part of society more generally—if only it would accept him.

The crowd is alarmed—they assume that Quasimodo will hurt Frollo. Gringoire suddenly recognizes Frollo as the archdeacon of **Notre Dame**. Quasimodo leaps down from the litter and kneels before Frollo. Although Quasimodo is much stronger than Frollo, Frollo is commanding and signs to Quasimodo in a strange language he seems to understand.

Frollo and Quasimodo represent two extremes in the novel. Quasimodo is extremely physical—his life has been dictated by his appearance, which has left him alienated from society—while Frollo is extremely intellectual and strives to ignore his body and be spiritually pure, in line with his Christian duties as a priest. These extremes further represent the vast scope of human emotion and variation, which is recurring theme within the novel.

Frollo signals for Quasimodo to follow him and Quasimodo obeys. The thieves and rogues of the procession try to intimidate Frollo, but Quasimodo threatens them, and they pull away. Frollo leads Quasimodo across the square and the crowd parts to let them through. Gringoire thinks this is an amazing spectacle but he wonders where he will find something to eat.

In contrast to Frollo and Quasimodo, who represent extremes in the novel (Quasimodo is extremely physical, whereas Frollo is extremely intellectual), Gringoire has a very even temperament and is never subject to violent emotions. He takes only a passing interest in the strange scene and is more concerned with practical matters. In this way, Hugo shows the variety among people, which he tries to represent throughout the novel.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 4

Gringoire sees Esmeralda leave the square and follows her to see where she will go. As he wanders after her, he enjoys the sensation of giving up his free will and allowing this stranger to decide his fate. Gringoire vaguely hopes that Esmeralda will give him a place to sleep and he continues to follow her as she hurries through the streets. It is a cold night and after curfew, so the streets are deserted.

Gringoire follows Esmeralda because she is beautiful, and her beauty makes her stand out. Although Gringoire does not mean Esmeralda harm, this demonstrates that Esmeralda's extreme beauty could put her in danger and make her a target for men, which will happen later in the novel. Gringoire does not feel a strong sense of control over his destiny and, instead, leaves his fate up to chance. Gringoire is aware that people only have limited control over their lives, which sets him apart from other characters who try to control their fates.

Esmeralda enters the winding, narrow streets that surround the cemetery of the Holy Innocents. Gringoire follows, but he observes that Esmeralda has noticed him and seems to be trying to get away. He hurries to keep up with her but loses sight of her as she turns a corner. As she disappears, Gringoire hears a scream ahead of him and rushes to the spot where Esmeralda vanished.

Esmeralda is afraid of Gringoire because he follows her. This suggests that Esmeralda feels threatened by men. Misogynistic attitudes in the medieval period meant that women were often mistreated or persecuted by men. Esmeralda is also afraid because she wants to remain sexually pure and is afraid of men's advances. Purity was associated with virtue and protection from evil in the medieval period.

Gringoire sees two men catch hold of Esmeralda. Djali bleats frantically and Gringoire calls out for help. One of the men disappears, while the other turns to face him. It is Quasimodo. Quasimodo shoves Gringoire to the ground and begins to carry Esmeralda away. Suddenly, another voice arrives; Phoebus, the Captain of the King's guards, appears and pulls Esmeralda from Quasimodo's grasp.

Phoebus's involvement in Esmeralda's rescue is symbolic. Phoebus is the Greek word for sun, and so his actions to protect her reflect Esmeralda's desire to stay pure and innocent (she is sexually celibate, and celibacy was associated with moral purity and holiness in the medieval period) and to follow the light (which represents goodness, freedom, and God) rather than succumb to the dark forces which pursue her.

Quasimodo makes to attack Phoebus, but the king's guards seize him and drag him away. Esmeralda looks up at Phoebus and sees that he is a handsome young man. She seems momentarily dazzled and thanks him in a dreamy voice. Phoebus sets her down and rides off after the guards, who have captured Quasimodo.

Phoebus is the opposite of Quasimodo: he is extremely handsome, while Quasimodo is ugly and deformed. Appearances can be deceiving, however. The idea that Esmeralda is dazzled by Phoebus suggests that she may not be able to see him clearly and that, like everyone, he should not be judged on appearances alone.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 5

Gringoire lies on the pavement where Quasimodo has thrown him, in front of an effigy of the Virgin Mary. At first, dazed from his fall, he daydreams about Esmeralda. He realizes after a while that he is cold and wet from lying in the gutter and thinks, miserably, that he will have to sleep there for the night. He suddenly remembers that he saw *two* men attacking Esmeralda and, while he knows one of them was Quasimodo, he is sure that the other was Claude Frollo.

Frollo is an Archdeacon (a high ranking official in the Church) and, therefore, is renowned for his holiness and moral purity. It is strange, therefore, that Gringoire sees him attack a young woman. This incident suggests that, beneath his holy appearance, Frollo may be corrupt and a hypocrite.

As Gringoire lies in the gutter, a group of children run down the street, dragging a mattress behind them. They have taken the mattress from the house of a blacksmith who has just died. Without seeing Gringoire, the children throw the mattress on top of him and start to set it on fire. Gringoire realizes he is about to go from one extreme to the other—too cold to too hot—and he struggles to escape.

Hugo suggests that human life is full of extremes, both emotional and physical. Gringoire is a very moderate man and tries to avoid most of these. Gringoire is a comic character, however, and this suggests that, while it may be more pleasurable and practical to avoid extremes, extremes are a part of life, and it's essentially absurd to try and avoid them.

When Gringoire bursts up from under the mattress, the children take fright and run away: they think it is the ghost of the blacksmith come back to haunt them. The next day, the Church confiscates the mattress and puts it on display. The priest who takes it charges people to visit it and claims that the mattress was the site of a miracle—the Virgin Mary exorcised the spirit of the blacksmith, who hid in the mattress to avoid the devil.

Medieval society is extremely superstitious and belief in the supernatural is common among the characters. Before the invention of the printing press, people did not have easy access to scientific knowledge and many natural occurrences were given supernatural explanations. Hugo suggests that the Church exploits this lack of knowledge—in this case, by charging people to see an ordinary mattress because it is superstitiously believed to be the site of a miracle. Of course, readers know that no miracle occurred; the ghost was just Gringoire standing up.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 6

Frightened by his experience, Gringoire charges through the narrow streets and, when he stops, he realizes he is hopelessly lost. He curses himself and remembers that, after the children ran away, he could have slept on the mattress. Even if the mattress is on fire, it would keep him warm. He feels that the mattress is a gift from the Virgin Mary to reward him for his play, which he wrote in her honor.

Gringoire is not particularly religious or superstitious. He is arrogant, however, as his belief about the Virgin Mary demonstrates. Gringoire's belief that the mattress is specifically a blessing for him—rather than a random occurrence or a miracle more generally—suggests that people often belief in fate, or the supernatural, when it suits them or justifies their own beliefs about themselves.

Gringoire tries to find his way back to the mattress but he is lost in the confusing tangle of streets. Finally, he sees a light burning at the end of a passage and begins to walk towards it. As he draws nearer, he realizes that the street is full of figures which crawl along the ground ahead of him. Gringoire is unnerved but he is also very hungry, and so he decides to follow them.

The city is like a character in the novel; it seems to lead the characters on to their fates. Hugo uses descriptions of the tangled streets to show the vitality of Paris in the medieval period, which was a bustling, thriving city and a center of culture, rather than a barbarous or uncivilized place, as many 18th- and 19th-century scholars believed.

When Gringoire gets close to one of the figures, he realizes that they are beggars, who drag themselves along the ground because they cannot walk. As Gringoire progresses down the street, the beggars surround him and Gringoire starts to run. He is amazed to find that a man with no legs, a blind man, and a beggar on crutches begin to run after him. They catch hold of him and Gringoire is horrified to see more beggars emerging from every corner of the street.

The beggars are not what they appear to be. They are actually healthy men who use false appearances to fool the Parisian populace into giving them money. This suggests that people are often not what they appear to be and that it's foolish to judge others based on appearances.

The beggars lead Gringoire into a crowded square lit by several fires. He sees now that the blind man is not blind and that the men who appear to have no legs can, in fact, walk. Gringoire asks where he is and another figure answers that he is in the "Court of Miracles."

The beggars are not what they appear to be and use props to fool Parisians into giving them money. The name "the Court of Miracles" makes fun of religious and superstitious beliefs about miracles, which were thought to be common in the medieval period. The beggars are not miraculously healed when they enter the court, as the name implies, and their seemingly miraculous recoveries have a rational explanation. This suggests that many medieval people were not as ignorant as 19th-century scholars believed and that, while medieval people did believe in some supernatural things, they also exploited other people's superstitions to make money.

"The Court of Miracles" is well known in Paris as a "city of thieves," the place where all the criminals, beggars, and con artists gather at night. Gringoire looks around and is horrified to see beggars removing false wounds and tossing aside their crutches. People cry out that Gringoire must be brought before the king and he is jostled through the square.

Reported miracles often involved people being healed from ailments or injuries. However, the beggars are not really ill or injured; they just use their false appearances to trick people into giving them money.

Gringoire begins to understand the horrible reality of his situation as the beggars set him down outside a tavern at one end of the square. Outside this tavern there is a bonfire and beside the bonfire Clopin Trouillefou sits on a barrel as the "King of Thunes." Gringoire recognizes Clopin from the performance in the Palace of Justice—although, of course, Clopin's fake wound is now gone. Clopin gruffly asks for Gringoire's name and announces that Gringoire will be hanged if he cannot prove he is a criminal.

The Court of Miracles is a parody of Parisian society; it mirrors many aspects of the medieval city to show their absurdity. For example, like the Parisians, the thieves have a king, who wields large amounts of power and can sentence people to death arbitrarily. This suggests that the legitimate system of government in medieval France is corrupt, because it follows the same laws as a group of criminals.

Clopin explains that, in the "Court of Miracles," they hang innocent men and women, just as in the rest of the city they hang thieves. Clopin feels that this makes things fair. Gringoire explains that he is the poet who wrote the morning's mystery play, which Clopin attended. Clopin does not see what difference this makes and Gringoire explains that artists are often considered vagabonds.

Clopin and the truants hang innocent people in retaliation for the way that medieval society treats criminals. Nobles and kings controlled all the wealth in medieval society, and it was difficult for poor people to make a living. Therefore, many people turned to a life of crime out of necessity and then were punished for this by the same system that forced them to become criminals in the first place. The laws the truants follow are brutal because they imitate the real laws of France. Gringoire's absurd dilemma here highlights Hugo's point that a brutal system creates brutal people, because it alienates and punishes people in need rather than helping them.

Clopin thinks this is a waste of time and wants to hang Gringoire immediately. Gringoire insists that he should receive a fair trial and Clopin says that he will spare Gringoire if Gringoire can prove he is a thief. Gringoire says he will do anything they like.

Clopin and his friends offer innocent people trials because their system parodies the official court system of medieval Paris. This suggests that a cruel system, which punishes those in need, breeds cruel people who do not care about innocent lives or the suffering of others—because they themselves have been shown no mercy by the law.

The thieves bring out a dummy, which is hung from a set of gallows and dressed in a costume covered in bells. Clopin explains that if Gringoire can pick the dummy's pocket without ringing any of the bells, then they will make him one of them and only beat him up rather than hang him. Gringoire thinks this is worth a try and he climbs up on a stool beside the dummy.

The trial that the thieves give Gringoire is obviously laughable and almost impossible for him to win. This mirrors the justice system of Paris, which appears to be just but, really, is laughably rigged against poor people, who often steal out of necessity. This is highlighted by the fact that Gringoire has done nothing wrong and is punished for being innocent, just as many of the people killed by the courts are innocent and not given a fair trial.

Gringoire tries to pick the dummy's pocket, but he immediately sets it swinging and all the bells ring. The thieves pull the dummy down and make to hang Gringoire in its place. Gringoire is about to be executed—he feels like a fly trapped by a spider—when Clopin suddenly remembers that, according to the law of the "truants," they must see if any of the women want to marry Gringoire before they kill him.

The image of the spider and the fly recurs throughout the novel. It is associated with the idea that people are often victims of fate and, like the fly who cannot escape the spider's web, cannot escape or control their destinies.

Several women come forward to inspect Gringoire, but none of them want him for a husband. As he is about to be hanged, the crowd parts and Esmeralda appears. She solemnly tells Clopin that she will marry Gringoire and Clopin cuts Gringoire down. Esmeralda hands Clopin a pitcher, which he smashes on the ground before he pronounces them man and wife. Gringoire is baffled by this change in his circumstances and Clopin dismisses him from the court.

Although many of the characters in the novel are not what they appear, Esmeralda is both beautiful and virtuous: her external appearance corresponds with her internal goodness. This is demonstrated here, when she saves Gringoire even though he is a stranger to her. Gringoire feels that he is at the mercy of fate and cannot predict where his life will go next.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 7

Gringoire follows Esmeralda to her room and finds himself alone with her. He is amazed by the night's events and cannot believe that he is not in a fairytale. Esmeralda ignores him and plays with her goat, Djali. Gringoire remembers that he is now her husband and supposes that she must be in love with him. He tries to approach her seductively but Esmeralda dashes away and threatens Gringoire with a small dagger which she hides in her dress.

Gringoire feels that he has experienced several strange twists of fate, which he could neither have predicted nor controlled. Esmeralda aggressively defends herself against Gringoire's advances and this suggests that she strongly desires control over her own body—something that women were often misogynistically denied in the medieval period.

Gringoire is surprised and confused, but he immediately backs down and asks Esmeralda why she has married him. Esmeralda replies that she married him to save him and Gringoire promises that he will not attempt to seduce her. Instead, he asks her for some food. Esmeralda is amused and brings him a plate of supper. Gringoire, who is very hungry, eats it quickly. When he is finished, he notices that Esmeralda pays no attention to him and, instead, seems lost in thought.

Gringoire is not a passionate or an amorous man and quickly gives up on his lust for Esmeralda. This reinforces the idea that he avoids extreme emotions and prefers to enjoy things in moderation and remain philosophical about life. All he wanted earlier in the night was food and a place to stay, and now that he has those things, he's content.

At last, Djali gets Emseralda's attention by chewing her skirt and Gringoire asks Esmeralda if she will be his friend. Esmeralda agrees and says that the difference between love and friendship is that friendship exists between brother and sister, while love is like heaven. Gringoire asks her what sort of man she loves, and she replies dreamily that he must be a man who can protect her.

Esmeralda is sexually innocent and, although she is aware of a difference between familial and sexual love, she still believes sexual love can be pure and holy. This is at odds with medieval Christian doctrine, which taught that sex was sinful while non-sexual love was pure. Esmeralda is a gypsy, however, and not a Christian. Still, she believes that purity is a protective or magical force, and that men and women should be married before they have sex, which suggests that these views were pervasive even outside the Church in the medieval period.

Gringoire suddenly remembers that, earlier in the evening, Quasimodo tried to abduct Esmeralda. He asks her how she escaped. Esmeralda does not reply and Gringoire asks her why Quasimodo followed her. Esmeralda says she does not know and Gringoire asks why the thieves call her "La Esmeralda." Esmeralda shows him an amulet which she wears around her neck and which contains an emerald. She does not know where it came from because she does not know who her parents are.

Esmeralda is innocent in terms of knowledge, as well as sexual experience. Although she was raised by gypsies, she does not know who her parents are and, therefore, she knows little about her identity. This supports the idea that Esmeralda is pure and saintly because, in the Christian Bible, innocence is associated with goodness and holiness, whereas knowledge is associated with sin.

Gringoire then tells Esmeralda his life story. He is an orphan and has tried many different trades, without much success. As a young man, Claude Frollo took Gringoire in and gave him an education in the Church and this allowed Gringoire to become a poet. Esmeralda, who has stopped listening, suddenly asks Gringoire what "Phoebus" means. Gringoire is confused but tells her it means "sun." Esmeralda seems pleased by this so Gringoire tells her that it is also the name of a handsome warrior God.

Gringoire has no specific calling in life—he does not consider himself fated to be anything in particular and, instead, is inclined to see where life takes him. Frollo's behavior towards Gringoire is generous, and this suggests that Frollo was a charitable man in his youth. Esmeralda's attraction to Phoebus is symbolic because Esmeralda is drawn to the natural world, which is associated with sunlight. In the medieval period, God was believed to be the source of all light in the world, so Esmeralda's attraction to Phoebus indicates that, metaphorically, she is on the side of light rather than darkness. She is taken in by Phoebus's heroic appearance—he is a soldier—and connects him to the idea of a godlike warrior who can protect her. However, it will later become clear that Phoebus isn't really the beacon of goodness that she imagines him to be.

At this moment, a bracelet falls from Esmeralda's wrist and Gringoire bends to pick it up. When he straightens up again, Esmeralda has vanished into another room and bolted the door. Gringoire curls up to sleep on top of the table and thinks wistfully about his new situation.

Esmeralda is clearly used to avoiding unwanted attention and uses the bracelet to distract Gringoire. This suggests that Esmeralda's beauty causes her to stand out and that she is often persecuted or harassed because of misogynistic attitudes towards women in the medieval period.

BOOK 3, CHAPTER 1

The cathedral of **Notre Dame** is an extremely beautiful building, even though it has been damaged and worn away over the years. Men, especially artists and architects, have done even more damage than time to the cathedral. The façade of Notre Dame is an example of its beauty and its harmonious design. Its three huge, pointed doorways, its pointed spires, and its statues of the French kings all contribute to the artistry of the overall design.

Hugo argues that Gothic architecture has been neglected because, since the end of the medieval period, architects and members of the public have failed to appreciate its beauty. Instead, post-medieval society tends to prefer neat, balanced architecture (in the Neo-classicist style, which prioritized harmony of shape over decoration or exaggeration) and considers the Gothic, with its extreme heights and grotesque facades, a vulgar and ugly art form. Hugo suggests that this is untrue, however, and that Gothic designs are just as harmonious and beautiful as Neo-classicist ones.

The cathedral of **Notre Dame** is like a symphony or a great work of epic literature, such as "the *Iliad* or the *Romanceros*." It showcases all the creative energy of the age in which it was built, both the creativity of the artist who imagined it and the inspiration of the laborer who built it. The same is true of all medieval architecture, which is all built with the same ideas of proportion and grandeur in mind.

Hugo compares Notre Dame to the Iliad *and the* Romanceros *because these literary works do not have only one author but rather were contributed to by many members of society. The* Iliad, *written by Homer in Ancient Greece, is based on popular myths, which were developed collectively by many individuals. Similarly, the* Romanceros *is a collection of French romances, rather than the work of just one author. In this way they are like buildings, which may be designed by one person but are built by many.*

In 1830, **Notre Dame**'s façade looks very different from the way it did in the medieval period. The steps which lead up to the church have been swallowed up by high modern pavements and the statues of kings on the façade have been partly destroyed and replaced by "insipid" modern carvings. It was not time that damaged the statues, but humans. Inside the church, people have defaced the statues of saints and the "Gothic altar" has been replaced with a marble one.

After the medieval period, when European society entered the Renaissance and then the Enlightenment, Gothic architecture was considered ugly and unbalanced because it showcased a variety of grotesque figures and pointed shapes, rather than only classically beautiful ones. This lack of care for Gothic architecture is demonstrated through the damage done to the cathedral. Hugo suggests that modern, classical styles are "insipid" compared to the Gothic because Gothic architecture reflects the reality of life, which is often cruel and ugly as well as picturesque and beautiful.

Much of the stained glass in **Notre Dame** has been removed and one of its towers has been knocked down and replaced by the design of a more modern architect. These types of renovations to medieval architecture are common across all Europe, but they are particularly common in France. Time, political revolutions, and fashion have "laid waste" to the beauty of Gothic architecture and many Gothic buildings have been renovated in the name of "good taste."

Hugo suggests that modern architects show no regard for the history of Gothic buildings and, instead, carelessly knock them down. Instead of trying to learn from these buildings or appreciate them aesthetically, modern architects are shallowly obsessed with fashion, appearances, and "good taste," which in the 19th century favored picturesque, Neo-classicist styles over exaggerated Gothic ones. Although, Hugo suggests, political revolutions have improved society, disregard for the architecture of previous societies shows that people in the 19th century are not as knowledgeable or civilized as they may imagine.

Notre Dame is not a purely Gothic cathedral—it is a synthesis of the Romanesque and the Gothic, medieval style. It was built after the decline in Romanesque architecture but before the total changeover to the Gothic. Its Gothic features, like the spires, were added gradually on top of the original Romanesque foundations.

Hugo suggests that the Gothic architectural style of Notre Dame shows how European society developed in the early medieval period. From studying the design of the cathedral, one can see that society changed and went from imitating Roman styles to the more expressive and individualistic Gothic style. This suggests that, as medieval society progressed, people became more interested in the individual, rather than in collective ideas. In turn, this shift this paved the way towards modern, Enlightenment ideas such as psychology or individual human rights, which existed in the 19th century when Hugo was writing. Architecture, therefore, is an asset to historical knowledge, as it shows how society thought and expressed itself across different periods. The gradual changes to the cathedral symbolize the growth and development of western society.

The architecture of **Notre Dame** shows not only the history of Europe, but also the development of different technological and architectural techniques. Each section of the building is like a page in a book from its respective time period. This demonstrates that architecture is a collective medium, rather than one based on an individual's vision, and that buildings grow and change with time. They are often quite different when they are finished from what they were when they were started. In this sense, buildings like Notre Dame are like plants or natural organisms.

Architecture can be read like a history book, Hugo implies, and it can be used to see how a society changed and developed over time. Compared with books, however (which generally just have one author and show one perspective), buildings show the ideas and perspective of a whole society because there are so many different skills and types of people needed to build something as complex as a cathedral. Buildings are the natural products of society, just as plants are the natural products of their environments, because humans shape their environments to suit their needs.

The histories of whole nations can be read through their architecture. The architecture of "Christian Europe," for example, can be split into three periods: the Romanesque, the Gothic, and the Renaissance. The Romanesque is the oldest, the Gothic came next, and then the Renaissance followed.

Hugo suggests that humanity would not know as much about its own history if it could not look at the architecture of different societies and observe how it changed over time. Developments in knowledge and culture are visible in the buildings produced by these societies and, in this sense, architecture can be read like a history book to gain knowledge.

These architectural changes only affect the outsides of churches, however. The interior design of churches remains Romanesque throughout and reflects continuity in the style of Christian worship. In this sense, the inside of the church is like the trunk of a tree and the façade is like the foliage that grows on it.

The appearance of buildings comes second to their function. Churches, for example, can be built in many elaborate styles, but their function is always as a place of worship. This suggests that, with buildings as well as people, it is what is inside that really counts.

BOOK 3, CHAPTER 2

One of **Notre Dame**'s most impressive features is the wonderful view of Paris from its towers. In the medieval period, one could look down from the towers onto a city which was almost entirely Gothic in its architecture. Paris in the medieval period was still extremely large and covered much of the surrounding country. The city originally began on a small island in the Seine, with two bridges which connected it to the mainland, and it spread outwards from this point.

The history of Paris and the way in which the city developed (where people chose to build things and why) can be read and interpreted through the study of its architecture. Notre Dame is at the heart of this study, as it is one of the oldest, tallest, and grandest buildings in Paris.

The old city was surrounded by a wall, built under the reign of Philip-Augustus, and bits of this wall can still be seen, though the city has now far exceeded its limits. The city grew like an organic thing, which searches for air and sunlight; eventually, it passed the wall and spread out beyond it. King Charles V built another wall like this in 1397, to symbolize the city's new perimeter. More walls have been built around the city since then, but each one has been bypassed as the city grows.

Kings have tried to exert control over the spread of Paris—by building walls around it—and have failed. Hugo uses this fact to illustrate that cities are living organic things, build by and for the people who inhabit them. Although kings can control the populace to an extent, Hugo suggests that the huge variation in buildings and the continual expansion of the city shows that kings have limited power over the people, who continue to live and change society even under oppressive rulers. Kings' reigns are also temporary and are limited by the mortality of the monarch. In this sense, no king can keep the city the same for long.

In 1482, looking down from the top of **Notre Dame**, one can see that the city is split up into three separate districts: the Town, the University, and the City. The City is the oldest and smallest part of Paris—the part on the original island—and the University occupies the left bank of the Seine, while the Town occupies the right. Although the three areas are quite separate, they each rely on the others to provide the things which they themselves do not produce.

Like an organism or ecosystem, the different parts of the city rely on each other and cannot survive alone. This suggests that, like a natural environment, cities are interconnected, living things which support the people who live there in a variety of diverse ways.

The City is the religious center, where there are many churches, while the Town is where nobles and dignitaries have their palaces. The University is where all the schools and colleges are. Therefore, the bishop controls the City, the "merchant's provost" controls the Town, and the rector controls the University. Each of the three places has its own important cultural sites, its own attractions, and its own famous buildings.

The way that the city is divided up gives modern readers an idea of what was important to people in medieval society and which institutions had power. The Church was one of the most powerful institutions in medieval society and, therefore, an entire district of the city is made up of churches. The University is also a powerful institution because it was a center of knowledge, like the Church. Students and members of the Church were among the few groups who were educated and could read in the medieval period and this gave these groups power in society, when many people lacked knowledge. In this sense, historical knowledge of the city's architecture can allow modern people to read the city like a book and discover facts about medieval life.

Each of the three parts of Paris has its own function in the justice system, too. If a student commits a crime in the University, he will be put on trial in the City, and hanged in the Town. Students could sometimes be hanged in the University if the rector held sway over the king, but kings rarely give up their power unless the people force it from them.

Capital punishment is clearly used frequently in medieval Paris and all parts of the city collude in making this possible. This suggests that medieval society is unjust and that those sentenced to death cannot turn anywhere for help. But Hugo implies that, although monarchs are extremely powerful and will oppress the people to hang on to their power, it is possible for people to overthrow the king if they organize in large numbers to "force" power from him.

The banks of the Seine are now built up and the "ferryman's island" is deserted. In 1482, the Seine has five bridges across it and the city walls are surrounded by a moat with gates to let people in and out. These gates are closed at night. From above, the network of streets seems extremely confusing, but there are two long, straight streets which run right across Paris through all three districts. These streets are like veins which provide life to all parts of the city.

The description of the walls of the city shows that, unlike modern cities, medieval cities were equipped like fortresses to keep invaders out. This gives the modern reader information about the historical city that they could only learn from examining its architecture and suggests that architecture is a valuable tool for learning about history. Hugo personifies the city and suggests that Paris is like a body and the people are like its soul—they are shaped by the city, but they also help shape it to suit their own needs.

A person who climbed the tower of **Notre Dame** in 1482 and stepped out into the air could look down at the maze of streets decorated on either side by Gothic architecture. Some landmarks stand out against the sprawl, however. The first is the island on which the City is built. It is shaped like a ship and reminds the viewer of medieval "blazonry," which has its own language.

Hugo takes the reader on a historical tour of Paris by describing its medieval architecture. The island is the oldest part of Paris and reflects the style of the period in which it was built. Hugo strengthens this idea when he says that the view of the island would reminds the reader of medieval "blazonry." Blazonry refers to designs and crests that medieval families wore to represent their different houses. The symbols used in blazonry cannot easily be understood by modern people because they reflect their historical context. But just like architecture, blazonry can be read and studied to provide knowledge about the past.

In the City, one can look down on the Sainte-Chapelle and the Hotel-Dieu. The City also contains 21 churches, whose towers and spires can be seen from above. On the north tip of the City, there is a busy crossroads and a square which contains a pillory. The Palace of Justice can also be seen, perched on the river's edge, where the Seine is almost completely concealed by bridges and shacks.

Medieval Paris clearly has an active and organized justice system; it contains both a court and several places of public punishment—such as the pillory, where people were publicly beaten. However, although the courts are active in the city, the image of the pillory undermines the idea of medieval "justice" and suggests, instead, that a society which beats its citizens is unjust and cruel.

To the left of the City, the University comes into view, and then, further along, is a row of houses which belong to the wealthy merchants of Paris. There are also several grand hotels visible here. The bank of the river nearby is often busy with the sound of washerwomen, who gossip and sing as they do their laundry—a sight which is still common in 19th-century Paris. The University itself is a set of 42 colleges, tightly packed together so that they almost look like a single building from above.

Even in 1482, when people were generally very poor and kings and nobles kept most of the wealth, the merchants were a wealthy middle class who made their money in trade. Trades continued to flourish as the medieval period gave way to the Renaissance and then the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, which had produced a large, wealthy middle-class population by the 19th century, when Hugo was writing. However, Hugo points out that the poor still exist in the 19th century, despite the progress society has made, and this can be seen on the banks of the Seine in modern Paris in the figures of the poor washerwomen.

There are many abbeys alongside the university buildings, and this ensures that a link exists between the Church and the outside world. A series of Gothic monuments sprang up alongside the abbeys, but most of these no longer exist, and the many church spires among the college roofs add to the harmonious picture of a Gothic city, as seen from above.

Gothic architecture was often seen as grotesque and ugly after the medieval period because of its apparent lack of symmetry. After the medieval period, Neo-classicist architecture (which featured rounded, harmonious shapes, in contrast to the Gothic's extreme and jagged shapes) became popular and was considered high art, whereas Gothic art was considered barbarous. Hugo contradicts this view by highlighting the "harmony" of Paris and suggests that Neo-classicist architects are narrow-minded. They do not see the whole picture, which Hugo shows the reader with his comprehensive view of Paris from above.

On the hilly terrain beyond the University, the houses of the Latin Quarter slope down towards the river, and swarms of people can be seen on the streets. Beyond this, the city stretches into suburbs and countryside. A Gothic nave can be seen on a distant country road, which Napoleon used as a storehouse. The countryside and the distant towers scattered across it, have, in the 19th century, been incorporated into the city of Paris. In the distance, on the horizon, a Gothic monastery can be seen.

Hugo presents medieval Paris as lively and bustling, as opposed to a dead, historical site. Napoleon was the general who took charge of France during the French Revolution, which took place in 1789 when the people overthrew King Louis XVI. Napoleon was an extremely popular political figure in this period and is still associated with democracy and liberty today. The reference to Napoleon's storehouse suggests that the historical architecture of Paris is also part of its political and cultural history and, therefore, is something that people should preserve.

On the right bank of the Seine, the view of the Town is very different from that of the City or the University. The layout of the Town is less harmonious than either of the other districts and seems to divide itself into blocks. One of these blocks is comprised of several palaces, all decorated in the Gothic style. Behind these is the massive Hotel Saint-Pol, where the king stays and which almost contains another city inside itself.

The Town is less unified than the University and the City because it represents the gradual disintegration of the medieval system, which was largely dominated by the Church. Unlike the University and the Church, which were centers of knowledge and wealth in the medieval period (but which kept this knowledge and wealth to themselves and did not share it among the people), the Town is where tradespeople and merchants live. Towards the end of the medieval period, as western society entered the Renaissance and then the Enlightenment, trades grew more important and wealth spread from the Church to the middle classes. With the invention of the printing press in the late 1400s, these tradespeople also learned to read and this meant that knowledge, and therefore power, was no longer kept exclusively in the hands of the Church and society became more diverse and individualistic.

Behind the Hotel Saint-Pol one can see the Logis d'Angoueleme, which is a mixture of both ancient and modern styles, and farther behind this is the Gothic Palace of the Tournelles. From above, this palace looks like a "gigantic stone chess set" because of its decorative towers. To the right of this is the Bastille: a famous French prison, imposingly designed and heavily defended by cannons. Nearby are the Royal Gardens and the tower, where Jacques Coictier, the king's doctor, lives.

After the end of the medieval period, Gothic architecture fell out of fashion and more symmetrical styles, such as Neo-classicism, became popular. In contrast to these modern styles, Gothic architecture was considered ugly and barbarous because it was not picturesque or harmonious in design. Hugo contradicts this with his image of the Gothic palace as a chess set. The two sides of a chess board are symmetrical, so Hugo suggests that Gothic architecture does the same. A chess set is also an appropriate metaphor because Gothic architecture often features extremes of design—such as great heights—and this is evoked by the colors of a chess set, which are extreme opposites: black and white.

The Town center is a mass of houses and, from above, this vast expanse of roofs looks like waves on the sea. A few church spires show through between the houses and the Place de Grève can be seen near here. There are also Gothic monuments, which mingle easily with the common houses. Many of these have now been destroyed by "tasteful" modern developers. The pillory and the gallows can also be seen in this part of town, as well as the sprawling cemetery of Les Innocents. These sights all lead towards the bank of the Seine and the docks, which in 1482 were crowded with ships.

The description of the city as a "sea" links back to Hugo's earlier description of the Parisian crowds as a "sea." This suggests that the people of Paris are like the architecture of Paris because they live among it, shape it, and are shaped by it. The presence of Gothic monuments among poor houses suggests that Gothic architecture is an architecture of the people and a part of their daily lives. Hugo contradicts the idea that modern developers are "tasteful" and, instead, suggests they are vulgar because they destroy important historical artifacts. The presence of the pillory and the gallows reminds the reader that medieval society is unjust, and that people are often sentenced to death or public punishment on minor charges.

Churches and abbeys dominate the third section of the Town. Then come the winding streets, which surround the "Court of Miracles." The "Court" stands out strangely as a "profane" place among the churches. In the fourth section of the Town, one can see the Louvre, which is surrounded by hotels, and which stretches towards the western edge of the city.

Gothic architecture is full of extremes—extreme height, extremely thin or pointed towers—and this is mirrored in Hugo's novel, which is a Gothic work of fiction and contains many extremes of behavior and emotion. Hugo suggests that it is appropriate to write in a Gothic style about a Gothic society (medieval society) because it is a society of extremes, in which beggars live alongside wealth and luxury.

A small suburb stretches out beyond the western side of the wall and a few Gothic churches can still be seen among the fields in the distance. The hillside village of Montmartre, with its many windmills and churches, is visible. In 19th-century Paris, most of Montmartre's churches are gone and only the windmills remain.

The loss of the churches in Montmartre suggests that 19th-century society (which Hugo writes from) does not value religion in the same way that medieval society did and that the power of the Church has waned significantly since then. And again, this passage indicates that architecture provides important information about culture and what the society that built it valued.

This gives the reader a general idea of the shape and design of the city of Paris and the view from **Notre Dame** in 1482. This is the same city which Voltaire claimed only had four impressive monuments before the reign of Louis XIV. This shows that someone can be as intelligent as Voltaire but still know nothing about architecture.

Voltaire was a French philosopher and a proponent of rationalism and Enlightenment thought, which focused on scientific knowledge and careful observation of the natural world. The Enlightenment also considered Gothic art barbarous, because of its extremes and ugly features, compared with art in the classical style, which prioritized beauty and harmony. Hugo suggests that, despite Voltaire's reputation as a rationalist, he is irrational in his claim about Gothic architecture because Gothic architecture is clearly beautiful in its own way and worthy of historical note.

In 1482, the design of Paris only contained two styles of architecture—the Romanesque and the Gothic—so everything in the city looked balanced and like it belonged together. The Renaissance in Europe began around 50 years after 1482 and brought a resurgence in Romanesque architecture, along with modern variations, which began to crowd out and mutilate the Gothic. The Louvre was partially demolished and renovated during this period.

Romanesque architecture refers to early Christian, pre-medieval architecture which used techniques from ancient Rome. Over time, these techniques developed into the Gothic style. The two styles merge and show the development of society. Hugo suggests that Renaissance architecture, which imitated Romanesque architecture and bypassed the Gothic, looks out of place because it is not authentic and does not say anything about society, other than that it tries to artificially recreate a historical period. This suggests that, in the medieval period, architecture was a spontaneous and expressive art form, so now it can tell modern readers something about the society that built it.

Since the Renaissance, the architecture of Paris has undergone many changes and lived through many ages, depending on which monarch reigned and what style was in fashion. The individual characteristics of a monarch show through buildings in the city, even down to details on the houses of ordinary people. Modern-day Paris is a composite of all these different historical moments, and the city continues to grow and change. Architecture cannot keep up with these changes and so houses and monuments are built from cheaper and less grand materials.

Since kings controlled most of the wealth until the late 1700s, when the monarchy in France was overthrown during the French Revolution, their personal taste was reflected in the buildings that they paid for. However, architecture is still an art form of the people, since it is laborers who construct these buildings and who go on to recreate and develop these styles elsewhere in the city.

Many of the modern monuments in Paris are not attractive compared to the old style and instead they look silly or vulgar. Chimneys, pipes, and other modern conveniences also break up the architectural line of these new buildings and many are not designed for the climate. The Palace de Bourse, for example, needs to have its roof swept in winter to get rid of the snow. It is impossible to tell what a modern building is used for by its external appearance. For example, the Palace de Bourse looks like a Greek temple, but really it is a stock exchange.

Modern conveniences, such as plumbing and ventilation, which became more common in the 19th century with the new technologies of the Industrial Revolution, improved life for people in cities. However, Hugo argues that they reflect a society which is more focused on convenience than on beauty. The image of the building that looks like a temple but is really a stock exchange, suggests that current architecture reflects modern values—the importance of money and trade in 19th-century capitalism—just as medieval architecture reflects the values of its society.

Although there are some harmonious and well-constructed buildings in modern Paris, most do not compare to those of 1482, and the view of Paris from **Notre Dame** is not so beautiful as it was then. To get an idea of how the city was in 1482, one should climb to some high point in the city early in the morning and listen to the church bells ring. Although it seems as though they all sound at random, the bells follow each other's patterns and create harmonious music. It is the most joyful sound in the world: the sound of the city singing as it greets the dawn.

The church bells are a relic of the medieval period. Hugo suggests that, when one hears the bells in Paris, one is connected to medieval society because one gets a sense of what medieval people's daily lives were like. The bells were an important symbol in the lives of medieval Parisians—they symbolized the Church's power, acted as a call to worship, and helped organize time—and it is through architecture that modern readers can experience this past for themselves.

BOOK 4, CHAPTER 1

One Quasimodo Sunday, 16 years before this story takes place, a group of old women gather round a bench after the morning service in **Notre Dame**. It is customary for abandoned children to be left on this bench, where they can be adopted by members of the public. The old women are extremely excited because a strange child has been left on the bench. One of them says that it is "a sin" to look at a child as ugly as this one and another suggests that it might be a monkey instead.

Churches are places of charity, as well as powerful institutions. This suggests that, although the medieval Church became extremely powerful and corrupt, its original aims were charitable and generous. People were very superstitious in the medieval period and, because of the baby's unusual appearance, the women believe he must not be human.

The strange child on the bench is extremely upset by all the attention and begins to cry and scream. One of the women says that the baby's presence is a miracle, and another reminds her that this would be the third miracle that month. They discuss the possibility that the creature is a monster that should be drowned or burnt to death. The child is wrapped in a sack and seems too large to be a newborn. His face is deformed, and he has several large teeth already.

People in the medieval period were often extremely superstitious because they did not have access to knowledge of science or natural phenomena to understand the world. This is demonstrated by the women's strange beliefs about the baby and the apparent prevalence of miracles (which likely have rational explanations) in medieval society.

A rich woman goes by but turns away from the strange child in disgust. A wise man then passes with his wife and confidently informs the old women that the cyst above the baby's eye is an egg which contains a demon. He predicts that the creature will suffer terrible misfortunes and that it is an ill omen. The old women are alarmed and think it would be best to burn the baby.

People are easily taken in by appearances in medieval society and tend to take things at face value. Therefore, people often believe that people (even babies) who are ugly on the outside are ugly or evil on the inside. Ugliness is also associated with demonic or evil forces in medieval society because people are extremely superstitious. They do not have the scientific knowledge to understand physical deformities and, therefore, use supernatural explanations to rationalize the baby's strange appearance.

Claude Frollo, who is a young priest at the time, listens nearby. After a few minutes, he pushes past the old women, officially adopts the baby, and carries him off. One old woman says to another that she always suspected Frollo was a magician.

Clearly, Frollo is not superstitious and recognizes that the baby is unfortunate rather than demonic. He is also more sympathetic and loving than the other people around the bench. Frollo is at odds with medieval society in some ways, because he is interested in science and wants to search for rational ways of understanding the world, rather than giving in to superstitious ones. Due to these unconventional interests, Frollo himself is suspected of witchcraft. This suggests that people in medieval society often believed that things outside of the norm were unnatural—even though in this case, Frollo is the most rational of them all.

BOOK 4, CHAPTER 2

Claude Frollo comes from a noble family and has been educated from a young age. He was a somber, thoughtful child and did not play much with the other boys or join in with student pranks. He was always the first to arrive in class and he worked hard at all his subjects. As Frollo grows into a young man, he develops a "lust for knowledge" and expands his studies from religion into medicine and science. Frollo also studies the arts and languages and learns to read Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. He has a passion for knowledge which is like a "fever" and he views it as his only purpose in life.

Frollo is a very intense and passionate young man. This is demonstrated through his hunger for knowledge and his dedication to his studies. Scientific knowledge was very limited in the medieval period, although it would progress rapidly in the following centuries with the dawn of the Renaissance. Frollo is ahead of his time and wants to push the limits of knowledge beyond those of his society. However, Hugo's use of the word "lust" to describe Follo's passion for knowledge indicates that this intense nature might turn into something destructive, since sexual lust was considered sinful in medieval society.

When he is 19 years old, Frollo's parents both die of plague. When Frollo visits their house, he finds his baby brother, Jehan, still alive but without anyone to care for him. Frollo takes charge of Jehan and develops an intense bond with him. Previously, Frollo had only loved knowledge and intellectual pursuits, but his relationship with Jehan teaches him how to care passionately for another human being and, for a time, his brother becomes the sole focus of his life.

Medicine, like all scientific areas of knowledge, was extremely underdeveloped in the medieval period and people often died from diseases which modern societies can cure. Frollo channels his passionate nature into his care for Jehan. This suggests that Frollo is prone to extreme emotions and that he becomes fixated on certain interests and passions.

Through his time spent with Jehan, Frollo comes to realize that there is more to life than knowledge and that, without human connection, people become harsh and inhuman. Frollo believes that a person only needs familial love, however. Frollo is extremely devoted to Jehan. He finds a nurse for him and pays for the boy's education. He devotes his future to Jehan's success and enters the church so that he may have a means to provide for him. With his clerical vows, he vows never to have a wife or children of his own.

Frollo is a priest and, therefore, must remain sexually celibate. Although he clearly has the potential to be a loving person, this love must now be limited to non-sexual relationships, as lust and sex were considered impure and sinful in the medieval period. Frollo is, clearly, aware of his desire for human connection but does not connect this to sexual love because he believes that celibate love is pure while sexual love is sinful.

Frollo becomes a chaplain in **Notre Dame**, where he is a popular priest. Since he is renowned for his intelligence, it is also widely believed that he is a magician. During this period of his life, he comes across the abandoned baby in the church. The poor, orphaned child reminds him of Jehan and he adopts the baby out of compassion. He names the baby Quasimodo after the holiday on which he was found.

Frollo's extreme intelligence singles him out as someone unusual in medieval society because most people could not read and were not educated in this era. Since people lacked the knowledge to explain the world rationally, they tended to be highly superstitious and to suspect anything they could not explain—such as Frollo's extreme intelligence—of being somehow supernatural. Frollo's generous nature as a young man extends beyond his own family and he adopts Quasimodo because he feels sorry for him, indicating again that Frollo's emotional intensity gives him an unusual capacity for empathy.

BOOK 4, CHAPTER 3

In 1482, Quasimodo is 20 years old. Frollo is now the archdeacon of **Notre Dame** and he appoints Quasimodo the bell-ringer of the cathedral. Quasimodo has grown up inside Notre Dame and the cathedral has become a home to him. He is totally familiar with its structures and has seen little of the outside world. He seems to become a part of the building and to be totally in harmony with it. When Frollo firsts hear Quasimodo ring the church bells, he feels as though this is Quasimodo's own language.

Quasimodo is ostracized from society because of his unusual appearance and is forced to grow up in isolation. This suggests that people in medieval society reject or accept people based on how they look. Quasimodo is shaped by his environment—Notre Dame—and grows to be like the building. He is like a work of Gothic architecture because his ugliness is extreme, but Hugo indicates that this doesn't make him any less human; Quasimodo's feelings are as real and valuable as anyone else's, just like Gothic architecture is beautiful and worth understanding.

Quasimodo spends so much time in **Notre Dame** that he seems almost to become part of it. He grows to resemble the building and the building itself shapes him and his ideas about the world. He knows every inch of the church and easily climbs its walls and towers, scaling great heights that would terrify other people. His strange appearance fits in perfectly with the appearance of the cathedral.

Like Gothic architecture itself, Quasimodo is not afraid of extreme heights or frightening statues and he, himself, is extremely ugly in a way that seems to reflect the cathedral itself. He is, therefore, the novel's most extreme example of how people are products of their environments.

Life inside **Notre Dame** also shapes Quasimodo's mind. He lives in extreme isolation and rarely communicates with anyone. Although Frollo taught Quasimodo to speak, fate intervened, and Quasimodo went deaf at a young age because of the noise from the bells. This leaves him further cut off from the world.

Here, Hugo makes it clear that buildings reflect social values and the psychology of the people who built them. This is taken to extremes in Quasimodo, who is totally cut off from other people and can't even hear because of the effect the bells have had on him. Hi condition subtly reflects that of medieval society more generally: Hugo suggests that, because medieval people lack the psychological and scientific knowledge to rationally understand the world, they are alienated from each other and can only take things at face value.

Quasimodo falls into a state of depression after he goes deaf. As his deafness makes it hard for him to speak, people often laugh at his attempts and, therefore, he deliberately remains silent. It is impossible to tell what he thinks about or feels because he cannot express or communicate his thoughts. Due to his lack of experience outside **Notre Dame**, Quasimodo's perspective on the world becomes limited and impossible to easily comprehend. He is like a prisoner kept for a long time in an isolated cage.

Although Quasimodo wants to connect with people, medieval society judges him on how he looks. Quasimodo is alienated because he does not fit in, which suggests that social rejection is extremely painful and causes individuals to become sad and bitter. Eventually Quasimodo stops trying to connect with people because they do not care about getting to know him, highlighting Hugo's point that individuals reflect the societies that shape them.

Locked in isolation in the cathedral, Quasimodo goes slightly mad. He does not understand the outside world, which seems very far away to him, and his alienation makes him "vicious" and defensive. His aggressive nature, however, is not his natural character—it only develops because, everywhere he goes, he is ostracized and insulted. He avoids people and stays in **Notre Dame** because he knows that society hates him.

Quasimodo rejects society because society rejects him and judges him unfairly purely based on his appearance. This suggests that people imitate the behavior that they have experienced; someone who has been treated cruelly is more likely to be cruel than someone who has been accepted and loved. Quasimodo's plight also reflects the plight of Gothic architecture in 19th-century society—it is scorned and forgotten because people think it is ugly, even though it contains valuable insight into humanity's past.

Quasimodo views the statues inside **Notre Dame** as his friends and protectors. While people mock him and try to hurt him, the statues of the saints and monsters on the walls of Notre Dame are companions who accept him. They seem to take his side against humanity, and Quasimodo sees himself as one of the stone gargoyles inside the church, which he sits with all day and talks to.

Hugo blurs the line between the architecture and the people of Paris, since Quasimodo believes that the stone figures are in some way alive. The cathedral has shaped Quasimodo, but here, he shapes it in return; his presence and attention brings the architecture to life. Architecture, therefore, reflects the values and psychology of a society, just as people themselves do.

Notre Dame is the whole world to Quasimodo. He feels that the cathedral is his mother and the bells are like his children, or his pet birds which sing for him. He views the bells as female and gives them women's names. The big bell, Marie, is his favorite. The sound Marie makes shakes the whole bell tower and Quasimodo watches excitedly as the bell swings. Although he is deaf, Marie's chime is so loud that he can still hear it slightly, and this is like beautiful music to him. As the bell swings, Quasimodo goes into a frenzy of excitement and leaps up to pull the cord again.

Quasimodo communicates with Notre Dame in a way that he cannot communicate with people. He is ostracized from society because of his appearance, which people find hideous and frightening. And while he cannot hear people when they talk, he can hear the bells, which he rings. This suggests that Quasimodo has a reciprocal relationship with Notre Dame. He helps the church perform its function and use its voice (the bells communicate time and mark social occasions for the populace), and this allows Quasimodo to express himself and, indirectly, communicate with the Parisians. This supports Hugo's idea that people and architecture live in a kind of dynamic symbiosis.

To the outside world, Quasimodo's presence in **Notre Dame** seems to bring the cathedral to life. The people of Paris often seen him as he scrambles over the stonework and they believe that he has some magical connection with the cathedral. They believe that he can bring the statues to life and that, somehow, the cathedral obeys his commands. People are afraid of Quasimodo and therefore afraid of the cathedral, which they believe he haunts. They come to believe he is a demon, but really he is "the soul" of Notre Dame.

While Notre Dame is forgotten and neglected in 19th-century Paris, to the medieval Parisians the cathedral is a powerful presence. Quasimodo symbolizes medieval society's relationship with Gothic architecture. It is not just something functional or decorative; it is spiritually important and almost magical. Although modern society's approach to architecture has changed, Hugo suggests that historical architecture is an important resource for understanding how previous societies viewed the world.

In the 19th century, with Quasimodo long dead, **Notre Dame** feels deserted and abandoned, like a body that has lost its soul. Without Quasimodo, the cathedral is like a skeleton rather than a body.

Notre Dame is dead because people in the 19th century, when Hugo is writing, no longer believe that Gothic architecture is important. This suggests that people bring architecture to life when they use it, appreciate it, and understand its history. Without this two-way relationship, architecture becomes meaningless and the historical knowledge that it contains is lost—something Hugo considers a terrible shame.

BOOK 4, CHAPTER 4

Although Quasimodo loves **Notre Dame** more than he loves most people, he has great affection for his adoptive father, Claude Frollo. Frollo protected and nurtured Quasimodo when he was a child and, as an adult, Frollo gives Quasimodo the job as bell-ringer in Notre Dame, a position that Quasimodo treasures.

Quasimodo responds to affection with loyalty and love. This suggests that people learn from example and people who are treated kindly are more likely to be kind themselves.

Frollo teaches Quasimodo to sign when he loses his hearing, which means that Frollo is the only person Quasimodo can communicate with. Beyond this, Quasimodo is exceptionally loyal to Frollo and is utterly in his thrall. He will do anything that Frollo asks of him, even if it harms himself, and he will never allow anyone to harm Frollo. Although Frollo is physically weaker than Quasimodo, Frollo intellectually dominates him, and Quasimodo's attitude towards Frollo is that of a dog towards its beloved master.

Frollo is, clearly, a passionate young man, and he channels this passion into raising Quasimodo, whom he goes out of his way to help. Although Quasimodo is ostracized from society because of his unfortunate looks and considered vicious by the Parisian populace who have always been unkind to him, Quasimodo's true nature is pliable and gentle. He is affectionate and loyal towards Frollo because Frollo has been kind to him, which shows that he's only violent toward other people because he has been treated cruelly.

BOOK 4, CHAPTER 5

Frollo is 36 by the time Quasimodo turns 20. Frollo has grown into a stern, serious, and powerful priest and people fear and respect him. His passion for science has not abated and he is still dedicated to the education of his younger brother, Jehan, who has grown into a devilish and witty young man. Although Frollo hoped that Jehan would grow into a pensive scholar, like himself, he is amused by the boy's sense of humor.

Frollo is prone to extreme emotions and interests, which often become fixated on one thing. This serves him well in his career; people respect his dedication to knowledge and fear his singularity of purpose. Frollo's singular approach to things is very rigid, however, and does not allow for twists and turns of fate, which people have little control over. This is demonstrated through Jehan, who is not fated to grow into a scholar, despite Frollo's best efforts to make him one.

Frollo enrolls Jehan in the university, where he himself studied, but he is horrified to find that Jehan grows notorious because of his pranks and antics. Although Frollo often lectures him, Jehan's behavior grows worse. By the age of 16, Jehan has been involved in several drunken brawls and riots around the city. Frollo, disappointed in his relationship with Jehan, throws himself into his scientific studies.

Frollo wants to control Jehan and to be the master of Jehan's fate. However, as Jehan grows up, Frollo finds that he cannot control him, and this suggests that destiny is often outside of people's control.

As a priest who is not allowed to marry, Frollo has few relationships other than with Quasimodo and Jehan. As he pursues his studies, his worldview grows more rigid and his beliefs grow zealous and extreme. When he feels he has come to the end of human knowledge, he wants to push out further into the unknown. However, many people around him speculate that, since he has learned everything he can about the *natural* sciences, he must now be a student of *unnatural* arts.

Frollo is an extremely passionate and intense man, but his passions are limited by his vow of celibacy (which he takes on entering the priesthood) and he cannot expand his worldly experience through marriage or sexual relationships with women. His fervent studies suggest that passions and extreme emotions do not simply dissipate when they are repressed but must be channeled elsewhere. Already, Hugo is hinting that Frollo might be better off if he didn't repress his strong feelings—after all, they're the thing that led him to show such kindness and compassion to both Jehan and Quasimodo. Meanwhile, medieval society is extremely superstitious and lacks rational and scientific knowledge about the world. Frollo wishes to push beyond the limits of knowledge in this society, through his scientific experiments. Since most people cannot explain what he is doing, they feel that there must be a supernatural—rather than a rational—explanation for his behavior.

Frollo has studied all the philosophers, scientists, and theorists of the age. He is known to spend a great deal of time in the cemetery of Les Innocents, where his parents are buried. This is also where the alchemist Nicolas Flamel is buried. Passersby observe that Frollo spends more time examining Flamel's grave than he does his parents' tomb. There are also people who claim to have seen Frollo creeping around Flamel's house, examining the engravings on the walls and digging up the cellar where Flamel was believed to have hidden the philosopher's stone.

Experimental science was relatively new in the medieval period and was mostly focused around alchemy (the ability to change certain metals into others). Nicholas Flamel was a famous alchemist who was believed to have discovered the philosopher's stone: an alchemic process that could turn metal into gold. This ability was associated with eternal life because gold was believed to be a divine substance; people could not naturally explain its existence underground, so it was widely believed to have been put there by God. If one could learn to make gold, it was thought, one could understand the divine and become immortal, like God. This quest for eternal life was considered sinful, however, because Christianity taught that humans should not aspire to be like God. This message is clear in the biblical story of the Garden of Eden, in which Adam and Eve are tempted into eating from the tree of knowledge by a demon, who tells them that knowledge will make them as powerful as God. Therefore alchemy, science, and the quest for knowledge were all associated with the devil and sin in the medieval period.

Frollo also understands the symbols carved on the façade of **Notre Dame**, which is like a "page from a grimoire written in stone." Many of these symbols are believed to be diabolical. Frollo often spends hours in front of the façade, examining the carvings of virgins and saints. People say that the location of the philosopher's stone (if it is hidden in Notre Dame, not in Nicholas Flamel's house) is revealed in the symbols on the church's frontispiece.

A "grimoire" is a spell book. Hugo's comparison of the façade of Notre Dame with a book supports his thesis that buildings are sources of knowledge that can reveal information about history and humanity. Nicholas Flamel was a famous alchemist (an early natural scientist) who was credited with discovering the secret of eternal life through his experiments with the philosopher's stone. Alchemy was considered sinful in the medieval period because the quest for knowledge was associated with aspiring to be like God, something which was strictly forbidden in Christian doctrine. Therefore, knowledge was associated with sin and the knowledge Frollo gleans from the façade of Notre Dame is associated with witchcraft and the black arts—even though the building itself is a church.

In their own ways, Quasimodo and Frollo both love **Notre Dame**. Quasimodo loves it for its beauty and because it is his home and protector, while Frollo loves it as a source of intellectual nourishment. In one of the towers of Notre Dame, which looks down on the square of the Place de Grève, Frollo has a remote study where he can work uninterrupted. Only he has the key. The red light by which he works can be seen across Paris, and people often remark that Frollo conjures spells in his cell and uses hellfire in his magic.

Hugo suggests that Gothic architecture is multi-faceted: that it is worthy of academic study and aesthetic appreciation. In the 19th century, when Hugo was writing, most scholars believed that the medieval period was a barbarous time which produced nothing intellectual and that Gothic architecture was an ugly product of this barbarism. Hugo contradicts this position in his novel, in part by describing Frollo's intense intellectual efforts. Medieval society is very superstitious and uses the supernatural to explain natural occurrences (like Frollo's science experiments) which they cannot understand, but Hugo indicates that their superstitons weren't foolish; rather, they were a reasonable way to try and understand a confusing world.

Although many people in Paris suspect Frollo of sorcery, he takes an active interest in persecuting those suspected of witchcraft or devilry. The people of Paris believe that Frollo does this to distract attention from himself and his own experiments with the black arts. In fact, many people believe that Quasimodo is a demon to whom Frollo has sold his soul and who will eventually drag Frollo to hell. This story is common knowledge all over the city.

Frollo is a hypocrite: he attacks those who do the same as him so that no one will suspect his own behavior. Although Frollo is not a sorcerer, alchemy (a brand of experimental science which was concerned with transforming base metals into precious metals, like gold) was associated with sin and diabolic practices in the medieval period. Frollo wants to turn metal into gold so that he can achieve divine knowledge (gold was believed to be a divine substance, so to create gold was to become like God) and he knows that, according to Christian doctrine, it is sinful for humans to aspire to be like God. Therefore, Frollo hypocritically disguises his sinful practices with his holy exterior as a zealous priest and persecutor of witches.

As Frollo ages, he grows bitter and more intense, as though he is in the grip of some terrible internal conflict. He often frightens choirboys or worshippers who come across him at his prayers. His moral beliefs also grow stricter and less forgiving. In particular, he seems to virulently dislike women and he even refuses to meet King Louis XI's daughter when she visits **Notre Dame**.

Frollo was passionate and loving as a young man. However, as his ages, Frollo finds no new outlets for his passion—as a priest he cannot marry or have sex, and he struggles to connect with other people in general. His passions do not disappear, however, but rather grow stronger the more they are repressed. They are increasingly channeled into things which he finds frustrating and fruitless—his quest for knowledge—rather than loving and nurturing, such as his relationship with Jehan.

On top of this, Frollo despises gypsies and begs the bishop to enforce strict rules to prevent them from performing in the square outside **Notre Dame**. During this time, Frollo also researches historical cases when the devil appeared to witches in the form of a goat. He is dedicated to this work and seems to take it very seriously.

Despite his interest in rationalism and science, Frollo grows superstitious about gypsies and comes believes in witchcraft—presumably because, by believing in witchcraft, he can deny his feelings for Esmeralda, which Hugo will soon describe. As he grows older, Frollo channels his intense passion into persecuting witches—a destructive use of his energy compared with his youthful, generous passion, which inspired him to adopt both Jehan and Quasimodo.

BOOK 4, CHAPTER 6

Quasimodo and Frollo are both widely feared and disliked in Paris: Quasimodo because of his strength and Frollo because of his severity and his powerful position in the Church. When the pair of them walk through the town, people often mock and jeer them—though no one dares to get too close. Old women often say that Quasimodo looks as ugly as Frollo's soul is, but the archdeacon and the bell-ringer are too lost in thought to notice what the people say.

The Church was an extremely powerful institution in medieval society and it decided many of the laws. Frollo is feared, therefore, because he symbolizes the power of the Church, which expects extremely high standards of behavior from the populace and will punish those who do not live up to them. This suggests that the Church (and Frollo) are hypocritical because they expect moral purity from people but brutally punish those who do not conform to these morals—which is itself an immoral *way to behave. Frollo and Quasimodo are opposites. Frollo is a priest and thus appears holy, while Quasimodo's deformed appearance makes him look demonic to the superstitious medieval populace. The idea that Frollo may look holy but be demonic inside suggests that people are not always what they appear—and indeed, the reader already knows that Quasimodo is not as fearsome as he looks.*

BOOK 5, CHAPTER 1

After he refuses to meet the king's daughter, Frollo's reputation as an extremely severe and pious man spreads far and wide. One evening, as Frollo reads in his cell, a knock at the door disturbs him. Irritated, he calls for the visitor to enter and is shocked to see the king's doctor, Jacques Coictier, and another man, who is dressed in dark robes. Frollo ushers them in and he and Jacques Coictier exchange courtly and insincere compliments. The men despise each other, as fellow intellectuals always do, but this diplomatic courtesy is fashionable at the time.

Frollo believes that lust is sinful and rejects sexuality to the point where he refuses to even meet a woman. Lust was widely considered to be sinful in the medieval period, so Frollo's behavior seems, to the medieval populace, to be evidence of his extreme holiness. Frollo and Coictier are both hypocrites: they pretend to like and respect each other, when really they are enemies.

Frollo turns his attention to the man with Jacques Coictier and asks suspiciously if he is a scientist. The man's hood is pulled down over his face and Frollo does not recognize him. The man introduces himself as Compere Tourangeau and he explains that he has come to see Frollo because he has heard of his immense knowledge and wisdom.

Frollo has gained a reputation as an extremely holy and blessed man because he refuses to have any contact with women. Lust and sexual desires were associated with sin in the medieval period, whereas celibacy was associated with purity and divine rewards, so women themselves were thought to be sinful—a clear sign of the misogyny of the times.

Frollo seems to grow distracted and he sinks back into his chair. He sullenly invites the two men to sit down. Compere Tourangeau explains that he is very ill and has come to consult with Frollo about medicine. Frollo directs him to a note written on the wall that reads: "medicine is the daughter of dreams." Jacques Coictier scoffs and whispers to the other man that Frollo is mad.

Frollo does not believe in medieval medicine because it is not based on natural science but rather on superstition. Since medieval scholars did not have access to much information about science, they could not make many of the advances in medicine that would develop over the following centuries. Jacques Coictier believes Frollo is mad because he is not *superstitious, and this suggests that superstition was considered a rational way to explain the world in the medieval period.*

Compere Tourangeau is not convinced, however, and says that Frollo may be right. Jacques Coictier grows indignant and asks Frollo how he can deny the existence of medicine. Frollo replies that he believes medicine exists, but that people do not know how to use it. Coictier angrily replies that Frollo denies general truth and common sense. The other man remains calm and tells Coictier to calm down.

Frollo correctly believes that medicine will improve once people have access to knowledge about the natural world. This increase in knowledge occurred gradually over the following centuries with developments in science and technology. In the meantime, Frollo feels frustrated by the limitations of his own society, which views superstition as common sense because people have no alternative way to understand the world.

Compere Tourangeau then tells Frollo that he has come to ask for his opinions on medicine and astrology. Frollo replies that he does not believe in astrology and Jacques Coictier takes this as confirmation that Frollo is insane. The man then asks Frollo what he does believe. Frollo replies that he believes in God, but his sardonic expression seems to suggest otherwise.

Medieval society is highly superstitious and belief in astrology is considered normal and wise in this period. Frollo is ahead of his time, in this sense, as he is not a superstitious man and, instead, prefers to investigate the world scientifically and look for rational ways to explain mysterious events. Frollo's worldview is more in line with later societies, such as the Enlightenment era, which considered rationalism and scientific discovery to be pinnacles of knowledge. It is implied that Frollo may have lost his faith and that, even though he is a priest, he does not believe in God. Atheism was considered blasphemous in the medieval period and this revelation suggests that Frollo may not be what he appears—his priest's robe may conceal spiritual doubt.

Compere Tourangeau asks Frollo if he no longer believes in science. Frollo grows excited by this and seizes the man's arm. Frollo says that he knows science can achieve amazing things and can even catch God unawares and reveal his secrets. Frollo announces that, above all things, he believes in alchemy which, unlike medicine or astrology, has led to tangible discoveries. The transformation of substances—of ice into crystal or lead into red arsenic—is an observable fact.

Frollo's approach to knowledge is sinful within a medieval context and foreshadows Frollo's declining moral state as the novel continues. Although Frollo believes that science can reveal truth about the world more effectively than superstition can, Frollo wants to access these truths because he feels this will help him understand God. According to Christian doctrine, this is not something that people are able, or should aspire, to do; the quest for forbidden knowledge is associated with sin and damnation in Christianity.

Jacques Coictier irritably tries to interrupt Frollo but Frollo sneers at him. The only true discovery, Frollo says, is the revelation of how **gold** is formed underground. Gold, he says, is the light of the sun made solid and is evidence of God's presence on earth. Coictier shrugs and says, again, that Frollo is mad. Compere Tourangeau seems impressed, however, and asks Frollo if he has learned how to make gold. Frollo smirks and says that, if he had, he would be the King of France.

Medieval alchemists did not have enough knowledge of the natural world to explain the presence of gold underground. Alchemists (who practiced an early form of experimental science) felt that, if they could discover how gold was made, they could explain its presence. This proved impossible, however, and led alchemists to conclude that gold was a divine substance that could only be made by God. Gold is symbolically associated with light because God was believed to be the source of all light (both literal and metaphorical) in the medieval period. The quest to make gold, however, was considered spiritually profane as, according to Christian doctrine, it is sinful for a human to aspire to be like God. Frollo, therefore, although he appears holy, flouts his apparently Christian principles in his search for gold and knowledge.

Compere Tourangeau begs Frollo to make him his student. Frollo says that Tourangeau is too old and will not have time to learn. Tourangeau wants to learn just the same, so Frollo says that he will teach him to read the carvings around Paris and show him the traces of **gold** in a crucible found in Nicholas Flamel's house. Tourangeau confusedly asks what books Frollo has learned all this from. Frollo points to **Notre Dame**'s towers, visible from the window, and explains that *these* are his books. Frollo then points to the printed book on the table and says that "this will kill" the cathedral.

Books were rare and had to be handwritten in the medieval period. This meant that most people could not read or write. Hugo states here that books are not the only sources of knowledge; buildings are an important source of information about the past, as philosophers and artists who could not write or did not have access to books often expressed their theories and ideas in stone. Frollo predicts that the invention of the printing press, which was invented in 1440 (forty years before the novel takes place) will cause architecture to go into decline because books are cheaper and easier to make than buildings. People will no longer need to express themselves in stone and will do so in books instead.

Jacques Coictier is confused and peers at the book. Frollo explains that, in the end, small things destroy great things. The bell rings for curfew and the two men make to leave. As they go, Tourangeau tells Frollo that he must visit him at the Palace de Tournelles and ask for the Abbot of Saint-Martin-de-Tours. Frollo is amazed: he realizes that this man is Louis XI, the King of France.

Frollo has a fatalistic worldview and recognizes that everything in the world—even seemingly great and eternal things—are doomed to decline and decay. This supports Hugo's thesis that time destroys beautiful buildings and suggests that change is inevitable.

BOOK 5, CHAPTER 2

Frollo's statement, "this will kill that," reflects the terror of humankind in the face of a new and vastly superior technology. Printing will bring about freedom for mankind and bring an end of theocracy, or religious rule. In another sense, the book will "kill" architecture because the printing press will, ultimately, end the power of the Church and reduce the need for buildings of worship. As human society changes, the way that it expresses ideas will change too. The architecture of previous ages, which revealed so much about these societies, will be replaced by the printed word as a source of knowledge.

Hugo represents medieval society as a society on the cusp of enormous change. The novel is set at the end of the medieval period, which was about to transition into the Renaissance (a period of intense philosophical and scientific development in Europe). While medieval society was primarily organized around the Church, increased literacy among common people and new understanding of the natural world—which contradicted many medieval superstitions and religious beliefs—meant that people would soon question the Church's power. Ultimately, the Church went into decline. After the invention of the printing press in 1440, books gradually became easily accessible and cheap to produce. Buildings, on the other hand, were still very expensive to construct and people began to express themselves in writing, rather than through architecture.

The first written language was a language of stones, such as the standing stones of ancient societies, which symbolized certain things. As societies progressed, these stones turned into buildings. As society became more complex, these buildings grew more elaborate. Eventually, these ideas became too complicated for architecture and were written in books. Before this, however, architecture was like a huge book that contained the history of human ideas.

Hugo suggests that in early societies, which did not have access to modern technologies such as the printing press, people used architecture to express cultural ideas and beliefs. Historical buildings, therefore, can be read like books that contain information about historical societies.

Architecture changes with society. Early Christian architecture was Romanesque because it was based on the ruins of Rome. These Romanesque churches became symbol of Christianity. Romanesque architecture in this period represented the power of the Church, rather than the power of the individual or of ordinary people. The Crusades (a series of religious wars, in which soldiers traveled from Europe to fight in the Middle East) then caused a massive shift in culture.

Cultural shifts can be seen in architecture because, as culture changes, so does the architecture it produces. As people discover new ideas (such as those brought back from the Middle East during the Crusades) and as institutions gain or lose power, these changes are reflected in architecture.

Feudalism (a system in which kings and nobles owned all wealth and land, charging peasants rent for living on these lands) also created a new architecture. During the feudal era, the noble class began to vie with the Church for social power, and this marked the beginning of Gothic architecture, which symbolized a new freedom from the Church with more personalized and individual building styles.

Architecture is not only a functional art form (in that it provides buildings for people to live in and use), but also an expressive art form that reflects societal values and shifts in culture. Hugo believes that large groups of people have the power to undermine authoritarian institutions (like the Church, which was extremely powerful before and during the medieval period). The decline of the Church throughout the medieval period is reflected in the architecture of the period, which gradually moves out of the Church's control and is used to express individual ideas, rather than monolithic, authoritarian ones.

Architects grew braver and more expressive as the Church's power began to wane. Soon, Gothic architecture became "poetic," rather than just a tool of the Church. Sometimes, anti-Church sentiment was even carved onto the façade of a religious building, such as the carvings which Nicholas Flamel designed on the walls of **Notre Dame**. As people did not have freedom of speech and did not have the tools to write, ideas could be safely expressed in architecture, as they could not be blamed on a single individual.

The early Church was extremely powerful, and people did not have the freedom to publicly or privately contradict its ideas. The decline of the Church's power can be traced in the architecture of the medieval period as people began to express their own, individual points of view—even in carvings on literal churches. The fact that buildings were considered a safe form of rebellion (because so many people work on a building that it's impossible to blame anyone specific) highlights Hugo's broader point that even powerless people can gain strength by joining together.

This changed with the invention of the printing press. Before this, there were two types of architecture: the theocratic and the popular. The theocratic expressed unity and fidelity to a Church or ruling class, while the popular allowed for more individual expression and artistry. Until the 1400s, architecture was symbolic and told the story of the civilization that produced it. Buildings are less easily destroyed than manuscripts and, therefore, it is a safer way to convey ideas and make sure they are passed down to the next generation.

The printing press, which was invented in the 1400s, made books more available and increased literacy. This meant that, for the first time, ordinary people were free to express their points of view in writing and be easily understood by others. Although people might be punished for what they wrote, it was difficult for the Church to censor their ideas, as books could be quickly and easily reproduced.

The invention of the printed book made it easier to convey ideas to large numbers of people. Knowledge, which once had to be painstakingly carved into a building, became easily accessible to the masses and spread around the world. These ideas spread so quickly that they caused a change in society and in the human mind. It took power and information out of the hands of the Church and gave it to the people.

Before books became widely available, people largely relied on the Church for knowledge and education, as members of the Church were usually the only people who had access to written manuscripts or who could read. Therefore, the rise of printed books much more power to average people, even as it diminished the role of architecture in transmitting knowledge.

As printed books were easier to produce and harder to destroy, given their numbers, people switched from architecture to the written word to express themselves. The life went out of architecture and its death coincided with the end of the Gothic era. As people moved into other modes of expression, art forms such as poetry, theater, and sculpture flourished. This freedom and diversity in art led to diversity in political ideas and then to revolutions, such as the Reformation (when the Church divided into Protestantism and Catholicism), which would have been impossible without the printing press.

The Reformation, which was a split in the Church brought about by Martin Luther's criticisms of Church doctrine, was largely driven by printed pamphlets and the idea that everyone should be able to read the Bible for themselves, rather than relying on the Church for religious teaching.

As the life went out of architecture, the grandeur of it disappeared. Plain, practical styles replaced decorative and elaborate ones. By the 16th century, architecture had become a parody of itself and it only recreated older styles rather than producing new ones. Like an aging person, architecture grew senile and demented before it died.

Hugo suggests that the decline of architecture as an art form was inevitable because people no longer needed to express themselves in this way but could instead use cheaper, more individualized methods, such as the written word.

While architecture died, printing became invigorated and all the significant efforts of human thought and achievement appeared in literature. Books killed architecture, partly because books are cheap to make, while building is so expensive. Every now and then, a masterpiece of architecture is built, but architecture is no longer the dominant social art.

Hugo suggests that humans are fundamentally expressive and always need a way to channel their passions and ideas. This suggestion echoes the tension in Frollo's character and subtly foreshadows that he'll have to do something *to express himself—he can't keep his passions bottled up forever.*

Looking back across history, the story of humanity has been written both in architecture and in books. There is something grand and epic about the story written in architecture which books, although they are numerous, cannot recreate. However, like ancient buildings, print culture is democratic and it lets the whole of humanity add their piece to the story—just as many builders worked on the famous buildings of ancient civilizations. Humanity fends off "barbarism" through contributions to this story and tries to fight off confusion and ignorance. In this way, books are like a "second Tower of Babel."

Hugo does not believe that ordinary people in early societies were barbarous. It wasn't that they didn't have sophisticated ideas, but rather that, unlike people in modern society, they did not have a cheap and reproducible way to express these ideas. Although historical buildings were often commissioned by kings or Church authorities, Hugo suggests that these buildings still reflect the perspectives of ordinary people, because ordinary people contributed to their construction. The Tower of Babel is a biblical story in which the nations of the world try to build a tower to Heaven. As punishment, God splits the languages up into different tongues so that people cannot understand each other. Art, Hugo suggests, is a tool to fight ignorance and to help people communicate, whether they do so in the form of architecture or through written books.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 1

In 1482, Robert d'Estouteville has been Provost of Paris for seventeen years. He has clung valiantly to this position, even when Louis XI made significant changes to his political regime. Robert's life is very happy because the pay for the provost is good and he receives a lot of the money in taxes collected throughout the city. He enjoys the respect which his uniform wins him and the power of having a group of soldiers at his command.

Hugo suggests that medieval Paris is very corrupt and that officials like Robert, who earn their living by taking money from the people in unfair taxes and rents, cling to their positions because they enjoy having power over people. This suggests that corruption is rewarded in this society. Robert also, hypocritically, uses his appearance as an enforcer of justice to commit unjust acts.

Robert enjoys doling out justice and pronouncing judgement on those accused of crimes. After sentencing criminals all day, he likes to relax in the gorgeous house which comes with the job. Robert is also responsible for judging political prisoners who have offended the king and who are sentenced to death as a result. He has even had the pleasure of leading those whom he personally dislikes from the Bastille to their execution.

Robert is corrupt because he does not care about justice and, instead, uses his power to his own advantage—to increase his wealth and to punish his enemies. This suggests that medieval Parisian society is unjust because men like Robert wield large amounts of social and legal power.

Despite all these advantages, Robert wakes up one morning in an extremely bad mood. Although it is possible that his temper is due to the holiday the day before, after which the provosts are responsible for cleaning up, it is also possible that he is simply a mean, bad-tempered man. He is due to sit in judgement on a trial that day (judges always hold trials on days when they are in a bad mood and take this mood out on the accused), but he is late and the trial begins without him.

Robert does not care about justice but only about having a leisurely and comfortable life for himself. He does not take his duties seriously and, instead of sentencing people based on evidence, he sentences people based on his own mood to alleviate his own frustrations. This suggests that justice is not truly just in medieval Paris, since it's run by hypocritical people who use the powers of justice to improve their own situations.

Florian Barbedienne, the Provost's Lieutenant, acts as judge in the trial instead. The hall is crowded; many spectators have come to watch the trial. Although Florian is responsible for hearing the trial, he is, in fact, completely deaf. He still frequently passes sentences, however, and he only pretends to listen to the cases brought before him.

Through this absurd scenario, Hugo suggests that the medieval justice system is totally unjust because it does not even hear the evidence of prisoners. Instead, people are condemned based on the whims of the judges, who are corrupt and only care about their own reputations rather than giving people a fair trial.

Jehan and his friend Robin Poussepain are in the audience at the trial. They admire the pretty women in the audience and make fun of Florian Barbedienne, who they say is a gambler and an imbecile. Quasimodo is led into the court and deposited in front of Florian. Quasimodo is tied up but seems calm and sullen. The crowd begins to point and laugh at him.

The crowd do not have sympathy for Quasimodo and, instead, mock him because of his appearance, which is not his fault. This again emphasizes that people in the medieval period do not try to understand people but judge them on appearances instead.

Florian checks over the documents to make sure that he knows the name of the accused and the crime which he is supposed to have committed. This way, he can ask the questions and pretend to hear the answers and the crowd will not know he is deaf. However, half the audience already thinks Florian is an idiot. Some are taken in by his performance, though, and they believe that he is a competent judge.

Although medieval society has an active justice system, Hugo suggests that it is a pretense at justice rather than a genuinely fair system. This is demonstrated by Florian, who only pretends to hear the evidence of the accused, which obviously makes the trial unfair. Florian himself does not care about justice but only about his reputation and appearance.

Florian begins to question Quasimodo, but Quasimodo is deaf and does not hear or respond. Florian thinks that Quasimodo has replied and goes on to the next question. This goes on for some time and the crowd falls about in hysterics. Hearing the laughter, Florian thinks that Quasimodo has made fun of him and begins to shout at Quasimodo. This tirade is interrupted when Robert d'Estouteville arrives and sits down in the judge's chair in front of Quasimodo.

This exchange parodies the medieval justice system and suggests that, although people can be tried, their evidence is not important—because the judges do not listen, and they condemn people based on whims rather than evidence. Accused criminals like Quasimodo may as well not answer the questions or participate in the trial, for all the good it does them. It's clear from this scene that Paris's court system offers nothing more than a thin illusion of justice.

At the arrival of Robert d'Estouteville, Quasimodo states his name and occupation because he thinks Robert is the judge. Robert thinks that Quasimodo is mocking him and sentences Quasimodo to a public beating on the pillory. As Quasimodo is being led away, Jehan shouts something from the audience and Robert, thinking it was Quasimodo who spoke, increases the length of the punishment.

Robert does not care about the evidence or facts of the case. He sentences Quasimodo because he feels that Quasimodo has tried to make him look stupid, rather than because he thinks Quasimodo is guilty. This suggests that the justice system is very unjust in medieval Paris.

Justice is quick in the medieval period and one is usually sentenced to the pillory or the gallows and taken straight there from the court. Jehan approaches the clerk to confirm the sentence and the clerk, who hopes that Florian might lighten Quasimodo's sentence if he understands the situation, explains to Florian that Quasimodo is deaf. Florian, however, does not like to be compared with Quasimodo and lengthens the sentence even more when he hears this.

This sequence again highlights how deeply the justice system lacks any actual justice. People are quickly sentenced to brutal punishment on very little evidence, and they are given no time to defend themselves or have their cases thoroughly examined. Florian does not care about justice (although he is a judge) and, instead, only cares about how he appears to people. He does not want to be compared to Quasimodo as he thinks Quasimodo is stupid and ugly, and he takes his anger out on someone whose crime hasn't even been proven.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 2

In the Place de Grève, the square is littered with debris and confetti from the festival the previous day. Four guards stand around the pillory and wait for a prisoner, who is to be brought out for punishment. A crowd has gathered to see this spectacle. In the corner of the square, built into the side of a mansion called the Tour-Roland, is a narrow cell with no door and only one barred window looking onto the outside world.

Public punishment and execution were popular entertainments in medieval France. This suggests that medieval society was not empathetic and did not try to understand or sympathize with people on a deeper level. Instead, people are interested in being entertained and in seeing their frustrations taken out on someone else.

This cell is very drab and dingy-looking compared with the lively atmosphere of the square, and Parisians call it the "rat-hole." The cell was originally created by Madame de Roland, the mistress of the Tour-Roland. She built the cell after her father's death and walled herself up in it as a testament to her grief. She lived as a recluse in the cell for 20 years before her death. In her will, she dedicated the "rat-hole" to women in need so that they might seek refuge there in times of suffering.

Religious recluses were common in the medieval period. Recluses gave up all worldly and physical comforts because abstinence of this sort was associated with spiritual purity and rewards—people believed that God or the saints might intercede on behalf of a deceased loved one as a reward for one's sacrifices on earth.

Inhabitants of the "rat-hole" survive on scraps given to them through the bars of the window. There is no bed and they must sleep on the floor, constantly exposed to the elements. Although many people stop to worship outside the cell (since the inhabitants, viewed as religious recluses, are considered saintly), the public does not sympathize much with the people inside and simply views their seclusion as a symbolic religious choice. Society in 1482 had not yet developed many of the modern tools that help people look more deeply into one another's minds and motivations.

People view the recluse in the rat-hole as saintly because she has given up worldly things, like good food and comfort. People believe that this makes her holy, as worldly pleasures were associated with sin and temptation in the medieval period, whereas abstinence and physical sacrifice were associated with spiritual purity. Hugo suggests that, before people could read and learn about each other's experiences in books, people took things at face value and valued the appearances of things over their internal substance.

There are several of these cells all over Paris, many of which have recluses living in them. Many women, especially widows, come to pray at the window of Tour-Roland.

Women lacked basic rights in the medieval period and, without the financial protection of their husbands, were often left destitute and vulnerable. Sites of prayer were popular with women, therefore, as women were often powerless to protect themselves and instead had to ask for spiritual protection.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 3

Three respectable women, two from Paris (named Gervaise and Oudarde) and one from a province called Rheims (named Mahiette), walk towards the Place de Grève. The woman from Rheims drags her young son, Eustache, behind her as she walks. Eustache holds a cake and stares at it longingly. The women are eager to reach the pillory to watch the public punishment. As they walk, they gossip about the "Feast of Fools" and compare the delights of Paris, rather competitively, to those of Rheims.

Public punishment and execution were popular and were considered entertaining in the medieval period. This shows that medieval society was not empathetic and did not care about the people who suffered under these brutal and unjust punishments. Hugo thus suggests again that a cruel justice system breeds cruel people.

As they approach the square, they hear Esmeralda's tambourine. Oudarde and Gervaise hurry Mahiette along, eager for her to see the gypsy. When Mahiette hears this, however, she refuses to go any further for fear that Esmeralda will steal her child. The group retreats slightly and Oudarde and Gervaise observe that the "sachette" (or recluse) who lives in the "rat-hole" also believes that gypsies steal children. The women plan to give the cake to the recluse when they pass the cell.

Esmeralda is judged purely because she is a gypsy, not because the women have any evidence that gypsies eat children—these ideas are based on superstition and gossip. This moment foreshadows how Esmeralda will later be persecuted on the basis of superficial characteristics that she can't even control.

Mahiette says that she is afraid of gypsies because of a story she heard about a woman named Paquette la Chantefleurie. Mahiette begins her story by saying that it is Paquette's own fault that she ended up as she did. Paquette was from a good family, but her mother was not a clever woman. Paquette was not educated, though she did grow up very beautiful. Unfortunately, this beauty worked against her and, when Paquette and her mother were very poor one winter, Paquette became a prostitute.

The women are unsympathetic towards Paquette and blame her for her beauty. This suggests that women in the medieval period are misogynistically held responsible for men's attraction to them if they are beautiful. Men's attentions could be dangerous to women because lust was considered sinful and women were considered more sinful than men. Accordingly, women were often accused of leading men on sexually. As a prostitute, Paquette was considered especially sinful, although she only became one out of necessity.

After her mother dies, Paquette is alone in the world and ostracized by society. She is scorned in the street and the police often beat her. This all changes when Paquette gives birth to a daughter whom she loves more than anything in the world. She continues to live as a prostitute but she uses all her money to buy cloth to make clothes for the baby. Among these gifts, Paquette makes her daughter a beautiful pair of pink **shoes**. She is obsessed with her baby's pretty little feet and she constantly thanks God for her child.

Paquette is persecuted because of her sexuality. Lust was considered sinful in the medieval period and women were misogynistically believed to be more sinful and prone to lust than men. Therefore, although men freely use Paquette's services, she is held responsible for their desire and is treated as a criminal and an outcast because of this.

One day, a band of gypsies comes to the town and sets themselves up as fortune tellers. Although people have heard rumors that the gypsies steal and kill children, everyone in the town goes to see them to have their fortunes told. Paquette takes her daughter along and is amazed by the prosperous future that the gypsies predict. When she gets home, she puts her baby to sleep and rushes out to tell her neighbor what she learned.

Although people fear gypsies, because they believe them to have unnatural powers, they also make use of the services the gypsies offer, like fortune-telling. This suggests that medieval people hypocritically ostracize the gypsies based on their appearance, poverty, and social class while taking advantage of the skills they find useful.

When Paquette returns, however, the baby is gone. Although she searches desperately all over Rheims, Paquette finds no trace of her daughter—all that is left is one little pink **shoe**. That night, when Paquette returns from her search, her neighbors tell her that they saw two gypsy women sneak into her house and that they heard a baby crying. Paquette rushes upstairs but, instead of her daughter, she finds a large deformed child in her place.

Paquette is a tragic victim of fate and has lost the child she loved most in the world through no fault of her own. This suggests that people often cannot predict or prevent misfortune.

Paquette then knows that the gypsies stole her child. A group of people from the village rush to the gypsy camp to try to find the baby. The gypsies are gone when they arrive, however, and all they find are a few ribbons and some drops of blood. They assume that the gypsies have killed and eaten the child.

People rationally assume that the baby is dead because of the evidence they find at the camp. However, they jump to this conclusion because they already believe the superstitious rumor that gypsies eat babies. This suggests that the medieval worldview was based in superstition but that this superstition was often an understandable response to mysterious events.

When Paquette hears this, her hair turns white and she falls to her knees and cries over the little **shoe**—all that she has left of her baby. Not long after this, she disappears from Rheims and rumor has it that she has drowned herself in the river. Gervaise asks what happened to the deformed child and Mahiette replies that the bishop blessed the baby and had him sent to Paris for adoption. Mahiette does not know what became of the baby after that.

The baby shoe symbolizes Paquette's love for her child because it is all she has left of her. Paquette is a tragic victim of fate and has lost her child through no fault of her own. Similarly, Quasimodo (the deformed child) is left alone just because he happens to look different from other babies—something he can't control.

The three women have been so busy with their story that they have walked straight past the rat-hole. Eustache asks if he can eat the cake now and Mahiette suddenly remembers, much to Eustache's disappointment, that the cake is for the recluse. The group turns around and Eustache grudgingly sets the cake down on the shelf outside the rat-hole. The three women peer inside the cell and examine the haggard recluse who sits inside.

In the medieval period, recluses gave up all forms of physical comfort because worldly pleasures were associated with sin, while abstinence was associated with spiritual purity. People gave donations to recluses because they believed them to be pure and thought that their charity may be spiritually rewarded.

The recluse wears nothing but a ragged dress and sits as still as a statue on the floor of the cell. Her hands and lips are blue with cold and she stares blankly ahead of her, totally unaware of the outside world. Mahiette suddenly draws back and whispers to the others that this woman *is* Paquette la Chantefleurie. Oudarde and Gervaise are amazed by this. As they look, they realize that the recluse's eyes are fixed on a tiny pink **shoe** in the corner of the cell.

Mahiette realizes that this is not a religious recluse, who has given up worldly things for spiritual reward, but rather a woman who is a tragic victim of fate and has gone mad with grief. Though lots of people believe her to be holy, Paquette is simply devastated—another example of the way in which many characters turn out to be different than than appearances suggest.

Oudarde, Gervaise, and Mahiette begin to weep for the fate of poor Paquette la Chantefleurie. The extremity of Paquette's grief seems to have a religious power. After a moment, Oudarde leans through the bars and tries to get Paquette's attention. Eustache, meanwhile, is excited by the bustle of the square and says something to his mother. The sound of his voice brings Paquette to life. She cries out that God is cruel to show her other people's children, and she begins to shiver with cold.

Extremes of emotion were often thought to have spiritual implications in the medieval period. Extreme sacrifices such as Paquette's (she has given up all worldly comforts because of her grief for her lost child) were considered holy, while extreme emotions, such as consuming lust, were considered demonic. Paquette is so consumed by grief that she forgets she is cold until the shock of seeing Eustache reminds her. Thus, it may be that Paquette really is holy according to the standards of her time—even though she didn't intend to be a religious recluse.

Gervaise, Oudarde, and Mahiette try to offer Paquette cake and a hot drink, but Paquette refuses everything except bread and water. Though the women try to comfort her, Paquette begins to weep for her baby and beats her head against the wall so hard that they think she is dead. Mahiette calls to her through the bars, addressing her as Paquette la Chantefleurie. At the sound of her old name, Paquette leaps up and stands very stiff and straight. Gervaise, Oudarde, and Mahiette draw back, confused. Paquette throws herself at the bars and cries out that "the gypsy" calls her.

Here, Paquette reveals her obsession with Esmeralda, who is a gypsy. Paquette believes that gypsies killed her child, so she hates Esmeralda passionately. This hatred will turn out to be tragically ironic: although Esmeralda appears to be the thing Paquette hates most, she is actually Paquette's own daughter—the thing she loves the most.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 4

Outside the rat-hole, a crowd has gathered to watch the punishment at the pillory. The prisoner, Quasimodo, is strapped to the pillory, ready to be beaten. The crowd is excited to see him: they recognize him as their "fool's pope" from the day before. They do not observe the irony that, the day before, they cheered for him and carried him through the streets, while today they cheer to see him publicly flogged.

The crowd are very fickle. This suggests that, although the people of Paris are very powerful and could easily overthrow injustice if they united behind this cause, they lack the knowledge to do so and behave cruelly instead, because they live in a cruel society and learn by example.

Quasimodo has been tightly bound with ropes and shackles—a practice still used on prisoners in modern France. He does not protest and seems confused and resentful about this treatment. The king's torturer, Pierrat Torterue, climbs onto the pillory, removes Quasimodo's shirt, and begins to flog him. The crowd laughs and jeers. Quasimodo seems shocked by the punishment—though he utters no sound—and he struggles against the straps that hold him. When he cannot break them, he hangs his head and remains silent as the torturer does his work.

Hugo suggests that both medieval French society and modern French society are extremely brutal and careless in their treatment of prisoners. In 1830, when Hugo was writing, public punishment was still common and a popular entertainment in France. This implies that society has, in some ways, not learned from its past mistakes and that 19th-century Parisians still have work to do to build a just society.

Finally, the beating is finished. The torturer climbs down from the platform and Quasimodo is left strapped to the pillory, where he must remain for another hour. No one in the crowd feels sorry for Quasimodo. They are all glad to see him punished and feel that he deserves it. They are as pitiless as young children and will remain so until society teaches them to sympathize with others.

Hugo suggests that the people in the medieval crowd lack the ability to empathize with Quasimodo not because they are innately cruel, but because they do not yet have the tools to understand other people's perspectives. Hugo implies that knowledge destroys ignorance, which often causes people to be cruel, and teaches people to communicate with others so that they can become kinder and more understanding. This became increasingly possible after the medieval period because the invention of the printing press meant that literacy increased, knowledge spread faster, and ignorance declined.

The crowd begins to approach Quasimodo one by one. They insult him and jeer in his face. Although he cannot hear them, Quasimodo can tell by their faces that they hate him. He tries to break his bonds once more but, when he cannot, he quietly lowers his head and his face grows dark with bitterness and hatred.

Quasimodo is ostracized from society and cannot understand why people hate him. His alienation is both literal—he is deaf—and metaphorical—he has grown up in isolation and does not understand that people hate him because he is different. Quasimodo learns to hate them in return, which again suggests that cruel treatment breeds further cruelty.

A few moments later, Frollo rides into the square on a mule and approaches the pillory. Quasimodo looks hopeful and his face is full of love as he watches Frollo approach. However, when Frollo sees that it is Quasimodo, he looks ashamed and hurriedly rides away. Quasimodo sadly lowers his head once more.

Frollo is a hypocrite; he only cares about his reputation and how he appears to the public. He does not help Quasimodo because he does not want people to discover that Frollo ordered Quasimodo to kidnap Esmeralda—which is why he is being punished. This suggests that Frollo cares more about his own reputation than Quasimodo's wellbeing or justice, even though Quasimodo is completely devoted to Frollo.

After Quasimodo has been tied to the pillory for half an hour, he suddenly begins to struggle once more and cries out for a drink. Even if someone in the crowd did pity him, they would not offer him water for fear of the mob, who seem to grow more excited by Quasimodo's pitiful cries. Suddenly, the crowd parts and Esmeralda and Djali walk towards Quasimodo.

Nobody wants to go against the crowd because this may put them in danger if the crowd turns on them. This scene again emphasizes that the people of Paris are very powerful, even though they haven't yet learned to harness that power to end their own oppression.

Quasimodo recognizes Esmeralda because he tried to abduct her the previous evening. He has a vague sense that this is the crime he is being punished for and he thinks that Esmeralda has come to insult him. Instead, she kneels beside him and offers him a drink. Quasimodo is shocked and a single tear rolls down his cheek. Esmeralda presses the water on him, and he drinks for a long time. When he is finished, he tries to kiss her hand to show his gratitude, but Esmeralda instinctively withdraws.

Esmeralda is genuinely brave and virtuous, and her internal character matches up with her outward beauty. Unlike the others in the crowd, Esmeralda does not shun Quasimodo because of his appearance and she is kind to him even though he is ugly. She is frightened of him because he tried to abduct her, but she doesn't let this stop her, suggesting that kindness has to start with someone setting aside fear and embracing compassion instead.

The fickle crowd is moved by the strangeness of this spectacle—the beautiful girl giving water to the hunchback—and they begin to cheer for Esmeralda. Another voice interrupts their cries, however, as Paquette la Chantefleurie screams a curse at Esmeralda.

Esmeralda and Quasimodo reflect the two aspects of Gothic architecture, its beauty and its grotesque aspects, which Hugo feels reflect medieval culture more generally. The people's appreciation of this odd contrast highlights how Gothic architecture has the power to tap into the true complexity of human emotion.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 5

Shocked by the Paquette's curse, Esmeralda staggers down from the pillory and rushes away. The crowd loses interest and begins to disperse—they will not challenge Paquette because she is believed to be holy. Mahiette, who has been watching, suddenly remembers the cake and asks Eustache what he has done with it. Eustache replies that a dog ate it and his mother lovingly leads him away.

People believe that Paquette is holy because she is a religious recluse. Religious recluses rejected worldly pleasures, which were associated with sin in medieval society, in favor of abstinence and physical deprivation, which were associated with spiritual purity. People thus believe that if they offend Paquette, they may offend God and may be punished for this because God controls their fates.

BOOK 7, CHAPTER 1

A few weeks later on a beautiful spring evening in Paris, as the sun sets behind **Notre Dame**, a group of young ladies sits on a balcony overlooking the square. The house belongs to a widow, Aloïse de Gondelaurier, whose daughter, Fleur-de-Lys de Gondelaurier, is being trained as a companion to the new Flemish princess. Inside the house, Aloïse de Gondelaurier sits beside a handsome (but rather arrogant) young man. He seems oblivious to the young ladies on the balcony, who are trying to attract his attention.

Although Phoebus is handsome, his good looks conceal his arrogant nature and suggest that attractive appearances can be deceiving.

This young man is Phoebus, the captain of the guards. He is engaged to marry Fleur-de-Lys, but he is clearly bored with her. Aloïse, who senses Phoebus's lack of interest in Fleur-de-Lys, repeatedly tries to draw his attention to how pretty her daughter is. To keep Aloïse happy, Phoebus sullenly approaches Fleur-de-Lys and makes awkward small talk with her. Fleur-de-Lys is irritated by him and can tell that he does not want to talk to her.

Although Phoebus is very handsome, he is selfish and does not care that he upsets Fleur-de-Lys. He has become engaged to her but resents having to follow through on this commitment. This suggests that Phoebus's handsome appearance conceals his thoughtless nature.

Just then, a little girl among the party leans over the balcony and cries excitedly that Esmeralda is in the square below, dancing for the crowd. The young ladies rush over to see and Phoebus gratefully retreats. Although he was once besotted with Fleur-de-Lys, Phoebus has now lost interest in her and wishes he were not engaged. He feels uncomfortable with refined ladies and has grown used to the rough, bawdy life of a solider.

Phoebus is clearly an impulsive and thoughtless man who does not take responsibility for his behavior. His handsome looks are deceptive; he is not as noble as he appears. He does not take responsibility for his fate, which he has brought on himself, and instead resigns himself to feeling trapped.

Fleur-de-Lys turns to Phoebus and asks him if this gypsy might be the same one that he rescued from two men who wanted to abduct her. Phoebus comes to look and recognizes Esmeralda. As they watch Esmeralda, the group notices a man in the tower of **Notre Dame** who stares down at Esmeralda like a predator eyeing its prey. Fleur-de-Lys recognizes the man as Claude Frollo and says that Esmeralda had better watch out because Frollo hates gypsies.

Frollo's great height on the tower, as he watches Esmeralda, represents his powerful social status, which is far above Esmeralda's. Frollo is frequently referred to as a predator in his relationship with Esmeralda because, as a high-ranking member of the church and a man in a patriarchal society, Frollo has great power over Esmeralda.

Fleur-de-Lys suggests that, since Phoebus knows Esmeralda, he should invite her inside. Phoebus calls down to Esmeralda and she looks up from her dance. When Esmeralda sees Phoebus, she moves towards him like a bird that has been hypnotized by a snake. Phoebus invites her inside and, when Esmeralda arrives upstairs, the young ladies are dazzled by her beauty.

Phoebus has power over Esmeralda because he is handsome and because he is a high-ranking solider, while she is a poor, powerless girl. Medieval society was misogynistic, and men generally had more rights and power than women. In this sense, Esmeralda is powerless to resist Phoebus. The fact that he calls to her from the balcony above her symbolizes his elevated social position and his power over her.

Phoebus asks Esmeralda if she remembers him and Esmeralda says that she does. Phoebus then asks her if she knows why Quasimodo tried to abduct her and Esmeralda replies that she doesn't know. Phoebus is clearly very struck by Esmeralda and this makes the other young ladies jealous. They begin to insult Esmeralda's clothes and Esmeralda meekly tolerates their abuse, unsure why she has been invited inside.

The young ladies attack Esmeralda because she is beautiful. Esmeralda is ostracized for something she cannot help, and, in this sense, she is akin to Quasimodo, who is outcast because of his extreme ugliness.

Phoebus defends Esmeralda and tells her she is beautiful. Fleur-de-Lys looks upset by this, but Esmeralda breaks into a radiant smile. Aloïse watches the scene critically but she is distracted when Djali runs into the room and gets caught up in her skirts. One of the young women recognizes Djali and whispers to her friend that Esmeralda is a witch and that she has taught Djali magic. The girls insist that Esmeralda must do some witchcraft to entertain them, but Esmeralda seems nervous and says she does not know what they mean.

Medieval society was extremely superstitious; the girls believe that Esmeralda is a witch because she can make Djali do tricks that they cannot explain. Witchcraft was a crime and was persecuted by the church. Women, in particular, were often suspected of witchcraft and executed based on rumors and superstitions.

Esmeralda bends down to stroke Djali and Fleur-de-Lys notices a leather pouch tied to Djali's neck. She asks what's in it, and Esmeralda says that it is her secret. Fleur-de-Lys says that, if Esmeralda is not going to entertain them, then she must leave. Esmeralda reluctantly makes for the door, sorry to leave Phoebus. As she goes, however, he calls her back to ask her name.

Fleur-de-Lys and the other girls ostracize Esmeralda because she is beautiful, and they are jealous of her. This highlights how people are often unfairly judged or treated badly because of their appearances.

Meanwhile, the little girl lures Djali into a corner to play and tips the contents of the leather pouch onto the floor. The pouch is full of little blocks with letters on them and, when Djali sees them, he spells out the word "Phoebus" with his hoof. The girl squeals with delight and Esmeralda turns bright red when she sees this. Fleur-de-Lys looks at the letters and bursts into tears. Phoebus seems to understand something and smiles at Esmeralda, clearly very pleased with himself.

Fleur-de-Lys quickly works out that Esmeralda is infatuated with Phoebus because of his handsome and noble appearance, which disguises his conceited and immoral character.

Before Esmeralda can explain, Fleur-de-Lys cries that Esmeralda is a witch and falls into a swoon. Aloïse angrily dismisses Esmeralda, who rushes from the room, and the young ladies carry Fleur-de-Lys to bed. Phoebus is left alone in the room. He dithers for a few moments and then follows Esmeralda and Djali into the street.

Although Fleur-de-Lys is not upset really because she thinks Esmeralda is a witch (she is upset because she knows that Esmeralda is attracted to Phoebus), Fleur-de-Lys uses a supernatural explanation to justify her hatred of Esmeralda. This suggests that, although the supernatural was considered a genuine threat in the medieval period, it could also be used to justify unfair persecution.

BOOK 7, CHAPTER 2

The man who watches Esmeralda from the tower of **Notre Dame** is, in fact, Claude Frollo. He is in his cell inside the tower, where he goes every evening at sunset. The place is full of spiders and bats, who do nothing but eat flies. Tonight, as he climbs the stairs, he hears the music from Esmeralda's tambourine and leans over the parapet to watch her dance.

Frollo watches Esmeralda from a great height and this reflects his powerful social class relative to Esmeralda's lowly and powerless status as a gypsy girl. Throughout the novel, Frollo is often referred to as a predator preying on Esmeralda, because he is so powerful compared with her and can easily use his power against her. The fact that Frollo's cell is full of predators preying on vulnerable flies symbolizes this power dynamic.

Frollo watches Esmeralda with a strange, fiery look in his eyes. He notices that there is a man with Esmeralda in the crowd. The man wears a street performer's outfit and, from time to time, pets Esmeralda's goat, Djali. Frollo wonders who this man is because Esmeralda is usually alone. Frollo begins to descend the tower and, on his way, he passes Quasimodo.

Frollo is a passionate man and his passion is often depicted as a fire that runs through his veins. This suggests that Frollo's emotions, including his response to Esmeralda, are unusually intense and extreme.

Quasimodo also leans over the parapet and stares intently down into the square. Frollo stops to observe him, but Quasimodo is lost in thought and does not notice. Frollo thinks this is odd. He hurries downstairs and bursts out into the square. Esmeralda has gone. Frollo looks around and sees the street performer, who holds a chair in his teeth and balances a cat on it.

Quasimodo is interested in Esmeralda because she is his extreme opposite—he is extremely ugly while she is extremely beautiful. In this sense, Quasimodo and Esmeralda represent the extremes of Gothic architecture—its extreme beauty of design and its grotesque and unappealing elements.

Frollo recognizes this man as Pierre Gringoire and cries out in surprise. Hearing his name, Gringoire is frightened and loses his balance. This sends the chair and cat toppling into the crowd and the audience begins to boo him. Frollo motions for Gringoire to follow him inside the church and Gringoire hurriedly obeys in order to escape from the angry crowd.

Gringoire is afraid of the crowd because large numbers of people are powerful and, if they turn on him, they may hurt him. This brief scene again emphasizes that, although medieval people are oppressed by the monarchy and the Church, they have more power than they realize.

Inside **Notre Dame**, the hall is dark and gloomy. Frollo looks very serious when he turns to Gringoire, and he comments on the strange, colorful outfit that Gringoire wears. Gringoire explains that his own smock fell apart and this was all he could find. Once he had the outfit, Gringoire explains, it was hard not to become a street performer because this was what he looked like. Frollo makes a sarcastic comment, but Gringoire insists that he will starve to death if he cannot make money—he never got paid for his plays or his philosophy.

Gringoire does not fight against his fate but rather goes along with whatever life throws at him. Instead of trying to find a new robe, he simply puts on the first one he finds and changes his career to suit his dress. This suggests that Gringoire is not committed to any role in life and feels that, since he is at the whims of fate, he may as well accept things as they are.


Frollo asks Gringoire how he has ended up as Esmeralda's companion and Gringoire answers that Esmeralda is his wife. At this, Frollo becomes enraged and seizes Gringoire by the collar. He demands to know if Gringoire has slept with Esmeralda, but Gringoire insists he has not, and that Esmeralda is a virgin. Frollo seems to calm down and asks how Gringoire can be sure of this. Gringoire says that Esmeralda has taken a vow of chastity because she believes that, if she remains pure, the amulet she wears around her neck will lead her to her parents, from whom she was separated at a young age.

Frollo is sexually attracted to Esmeralda and is jealous of Gringoire when he thinks Gringoire has slept with her. As a priest, however, Frollo cannot admit to feelings of lust because lust was associated with sin in the medieval period and priests were supposed to be holy and pure. Sexual purity was closely associated with spiritual purity in this era, which is further demonstrated by Esmeralda's belief that her sexual innocence will be rewarded.

Gringoire also explains that Esmeralda carries a dagger to fend off men's advances. Frollo questions Gringoire about Esmeralda and Gringoire tells him everything he knows. Esmeralda is still very young and innocent, she loves to dance and to be outside, and she is a natural wanderer who has traveled all over Europe. The people around her love her and find her kind and cheerful. In fact, almost everyone in Paris seems to like her, except the recluse who lives in the rat-hole (who hates gypsies) and a priest who seems to bear a grudge against her.

As a woman, Esmeralda is under significant threat from men, as medieval society was misogynistic and women did not have legal rights to protect them. Esmeralda is associated with light, freedom, and virtue throughout the novel, and she is constantly pursued by dark forces like Frollo's obsession with her. These extremes (light and dark, good and evil) reflect Hugo's thesis that his Gothic novel is like a Gothic cathedral: it represents the extremes of beauty and horror, which were carved into Gothic buildings and which exist in the world.


When Frollo hears about the priest, he seems upset. Gringoire continues that Esmeralda does not practice witchcraft, so she is not afraid of the priest. Gringoire helps her collect money at her performances and helps care for Djali, to whom Gringoire has grown very attached. People often believe that the goat is magic, Gringoire says, but really, Esmeralda has trained Djali to do different tricks when she moves her tambourine. Esmeralda has also taught Djali to spell out the word "Phoebus" in wooden blocks.

Frollo is the priest who pursues Esmeralda. He is upset because he loves her and learns that she dislikes him. Esmeralda believes that her innocence, both her innocence of supernatural practices and her sexual innocence, will protect her from evil forces. The rational explanation for Djali's tricks that Gringoire reveals here underscores Hugo's point that supernatural things almost always turn out to have reasonable explanations.


Frollo asks Gringoire what "Phoebus" means to Esmeralda, and Gringoire says that she seems to think the word is magical and often murmurs it to herself like a prayer. Frollo suggests that perhaps it is a name, but Gringoire shakes his head and says that gypsies worship the sun. Suddenly, Frollo turns on Gringoire again and demands to know if Gringoire has ever touched Esmeralda. Gringoire assures him he has not and asks why Frollo is so interested.

Although Esmeralda teaches Djali to spell Phoebus because she is in love with a handsome soldier with this name, she is also associated with sunlight throughout the novel—because she is a virtuous character and sunlight is associated with goodness and God. It is ironic that Phoebus is named after the sun because, although he appears handsome and virtuous, he is really a selfish and ignoble man.

Frollo blushes at this and seems taken aback. He says that he is worried for the sake of Gringoire's soul. If Gringoire were to sleep with Esmeralda, Frollo says, then Gringoire would be ensnared by Satan and destined for Hell. Gringoire shrugs at this. He explains that he did, once, try to seduce Esmeralda, but she threatened him with her dagger. Another time, he peeped through the keyhole of her bedroom and saw her getting into bed. When Frollo hears this, he curses Gringoire and storms off into the church.

Frollo is interested in Esmeralda's sexual purity because he is attracted to her and does not want other men to touch her. As a priest, however, Frollo cannot admit this because lust was considered sinful and priests were expected to be pure and voluntarily celibate. Therefore, Frollo hypocritically hides his lustful desires by suggesting that he is worried about Gringoire's soul, rather than admitting to his own sexual desires, which he feels ashamed of.

BOOK 7, CHAPTER 3

The people of Paris start to notice that the bells of **Notre Dame** do not ring as often or as musically as they did before. Although Quasimodo is still in the tower, a change has come over him. It is possible that this change started after his beating at the pillory, but it is also possible that Quasimodo has fallen in love with someone other than his bells.

Quasimodo represents the soul of the medieval period through his connection to Notre Dame. The novel deals with the inevitable end of the medieval period as culture changed and new ideas replaced medieval ones. Accordingly, Quasimodo's gradual neglect of Notre Dame represents the movement away from medieval values, as symbolized by Gothic architecture.

On the morning of the festival of the Annunciation, Quasimodo rises to the ring the bells as usual. As he sets them going, some of his excitement for their music comes back to him and he runs and leaps alongside them. However, when he glances down into the square, he sees Esmeralda laying out her carpet, ready to perform, and he abruptly forgets about the bells. All the bells fall silent, one by one, much to the confusion of the Parisians.

As culture changes and the medieval period comes to an end, society loses its connection to Gothic architecture and to the church bells, which are the spirit of the church and central to the organization of daily life in the medieval period. Quasimodo's loss of interest in the bells symbolically suggests this cultural change and suggests that, as culture moved into the Renaissance, people fell out of love with the Gothic grotesque and fell more in love with pure beauty—like Esmeralda's.

BOOK 7, CHAPTER 4

One morning a few days after this, Jehan gets up and realizes that he has run out of money. After a few moments, he decides that he must go and see his brother, Frollo, to ask for money—even if this means Frollo will give him a lecture. Jehan marches determinedly through Paris, spurred on by hunger (he cannot afford any food), and he arrives at **Notre Dame**. A priest tells Jehan that Frollo is in his cell and Jehan begins to climb the stairs.

Although Frollo tries to raise Jehan to be a thoughtful and godly young man, Jehan grows up spendthrift, careless, and hypocritical (he only goes to see Frollo when he needs money, not because he cares about his brother). Although Frollo has tried to control Jehan's fate, his attempts have been unsuccessful.

Jehan reaches the landing and peers through the door into Frollo's cell. The cell is like a painting by Rembrandt that depicts Doctor Faustus in his study, as he stares in amazement at a word which has appeared by magic on the wall. Frollo is seated in his armchair in a gloomy corner of the room and he looks glum and pensive. He is lost in thought and does not notice Jehan for some time. There are instruments of alchemy strewn about the room and several inscriptions carved into the walls.

Doctor Faustus is a famous character from medieval folklore who is frequently depicted in art and literature as a scholar who sells his soul to the devil for forbidden knowledge. The word that appears on the wall in Rembrandt's painting reflects Frollo's attempts to gain knowledge of alchemy by reading the walls of buildings. Just as Faustus sells his soul to the devil, Frollo's quest for knowledge is sinful according to medieval belief because he wants to acquire knowledge so that he can understand God. In Christian doctrine, it is sinful for men to attempt to be like God; for instance, in the Garden of Eden story, Adam and Eve fell from grace because they ate fruit from the forbidden tree of knowledge.

A manuscript is open on the table before Frollo and he pores over it and murmurs to himself as Jehan eavesdrops. Frollo mutters that fire is the creative force in the world and that the sun is made of fire. Light comes from the sun and **gold** is light made metal. Gold is found underground so possibly, Frollo says, one should try to bury light to make gold. Some women's names, he continues, are believed to be pure: names like "Esmeralda." Frollo cuts himself off and throws himself back in his chair in frustration. He mutters that his mind is always stuck on the same thought.

Alchemy was an early form of natural science concerned with the transformation of certain metals into different substances. In this sense, alchemy was an attempt to understand the world in a rational and observational way and was a precursor to rationalism and modern science. However, medieval alchemists believed that gold was not formed through a natural process but was put on earth by God and that, therefore, learning how to make gold could help an alchemist understand God—something which was considered sinful in the medieval period, since people were not meant to aspire to be like God.

Frollo slams his book shut and laments that all his scientific experiments have recently failed. He says that a singular infatuation taunts his brain and that it prevents him from doing his work. He picks up a small hammer and chisel, rises, and carves a Greek word into the wall of the cell. Once this is done, he slumps down in his chair once more and drops his forehead into his hands like a person with a fever.

Frollo's emotions are extremely passionate and intense and, when he is interested in something, he tends to become fixated on it. When these emotions can find no outlet, however, they begin to physically torment him. It is pertinent that Frollo carves a word on the wall because Frollo reads historical buildings like books to learn the cultural knowledge they contain. This word, therefore, contributes to the knowledge and history of Notre Dame, which can be interpreted and studied by others later on. In fact, Hugo himself was inspired to write the novel after seeing a word carved into the wall of a cell in the cathedral.

Compared with Frollo, Jehan is an open, sensual person who never denies himself any pleasures. Jehan cannot understand Frollo's austere temperament or the passion which rages inside him like a fire. Sensing that this is a private moment that he is not supposed to see, Jehan quietly backs away from the door and then knocks as though he has just arrived. Frollo is startled—he expects a visit from a court official, Jacques Charmolue—and he is irritated when he sees it is Jehan instead.

Although Frollo tried to raise Jehan as a scholarly and thoughtful young man, Jehan's natural temperament is very extreme and passionate, like Frollo's. It is ironic that Frollo himself became a priest because priests are supposed to deny worldly pleasures—which are considered sinful according to medieval doctrine—for the sake of spiritual purity. Although he may appear holy and austere, Frollo is just passionate as Jehan and he suffers with this because, unlike Jehan, he is not allowed to express desires like lust, which are considered sinful and impure. This does not cause his desires to go away, however, but only intensifies and warps them.

Frollo asks Jehan why he has come and Jehan replies that he has come to ask Frollo for some wisdom and some money. Frollo immediately begins to lecture Jehan on some brawls that Jehan has recently been involved in. Frollo questions Jehan about his education and asks him if he has learned Latin or Greek yet. Frollo asks Jehan if can read the Greek word that Frollo has just carved on the wall, and Jehan admits he cannot.

Frollo tried to raise Jehan to be a scholarly and wise young man. Despite Frollo's best efforts, however, Jehan seems destined to live a debauched life and does not care about Frollo's hopes for him. This suggests that, although Frollo has tried to exert his influence over Jehan, people cannot always control others or even determine their own fates.

The word, Frollo tells Jehan, means "fatality." Underneath it, written in the same handwriting (also in Greek), is the word "uncleanliness." Frollo snaps at Jehan to explain why he has come and Jehan says he needs money. Frollo says he doesn't have much to give but Jehan insists that he must have a loan. Frollo asks what Jehan wants the money for and Jehan says that he and some friends want to buy baby clothes for a woman in need.

The presence of these two words together suggests that humans are doomed to be "unclean" or impure. Sexuality was considered unclean in the medieval period because purity was associated with holiness, while lust was associated with sin. Humans are subject to physical desires, however (which Hugo suggests cannot be successfully controlled), and so Frollo's carved words also imply that humans are destined to fail if they attempt to be pure like God—even though that's exactly what Frollo is attempting. Jehan is a hypocrite and pretends that he wants to do good with the money, when really he wants to spend it on himself.

Frollo is suspicious and questions Jehan further. Jehan immediately gives in and admits that he wants the money to visit a prostitute. Horrified, Frollo calls Jehan impure, but Jehan repeats the Greek word written on the wall, which seems to unnerve Frollo. Jehan begs his brother for money but Frollo tells him to go away—he expects another visitor soon. Jehan pretends to cry, which makes Frollo laugh. Jehan grows petulant and threatens to ruin himself when Frollo again refuses him money.

Frollo is a hypocrite and, although he feels strong lustful urges himself, he pretends that he is disgusted by sex. Sex was often considered impure in the medieval period, especially by religious figures like Frollo, who were required to remain celibate. Frollo wants to appear extremely pure, but Jehan can see that Frollo has carved both the words into the wall, so he insinuates that Frollo also has "unclean" thoughts.

Frollo says sadly that Jehan has no soul. Just as Jehan is about to leave, a knock on the door disturbs them. Frollo ushers Jehan under a table and hisses at him to keep quiet. Jehan says that he will keep quiet if Frollo gives him some money and Frollo grudgingly hands over a florin. With Jehan hidden from sight, Frollo calls Jacques Charmolue into the room.

Frollo implies that Jehan is only interested in worldly pleasures and satisfying his sensual urges. People who gave in to such desires were believed to endanger their souls, as sensuality was associated with sin and spiritual punishment.

BOOK 7, CHAPTER 5

Jacques Charmolue enters the cell and greets Frollo courteously. Jehan recognizes the man as a magistrate. Frollo asks Charmolue if he has been successful and Charmolue replies humbly that he has worked away at his fire but has still not been able to make **gold**. Jehan can tell from their interaction that Charmolue is a student of Frollo's. Frollo says that he did not mean these experiments—instead, he is speaking of a prisoner who has been accused of witchcraft. Frollo wants to know if the man has confessed but Charmolue says that even torture has not worked, and that the man's resolve is "like stone."

Frollo is an alchemist and Charmolue is his student. Alchemists were medieval scientists who were interested in the transformation of certain metals into other substances. In particular, alchemists wanted to learn how to turn metal into gold because gold was believed to be a divine substance and, therefore, knowledge of how to make gold was associated with godlike knowledge and the gift of eternal life. Alchemy was considered sinful and heretical by the Church, however, as humans were not meant to aspire to be like God and the quest for gold was akin to a quest for forbidden (and therefore sinful) knowledge. Frollo and Charmolue are both hypocrites: they torture others accused of witchcraft and heretical experiments and hide the fact that they engage in these same activities themselves.

Frollo asks Charmolue if he has searched the house and Jacques reveals a parchment that he found in the man's study. Frollo reads it sternly and confirms that it is littered with Latin spells for conjuring devils. Charmolue then pulls out a crucible, like the ones in Frollo's study, and explains that he took it from the man's house and has tried to use it to make **gold**, with no success thus far.

Frollo and Charmolue are hypocrites. They have condemned a man for witchcraft—the man is an alchemist and has tried to make gold—when, really, they are also alchemists and have stolen the man's instruments to use themselves. This suggests that the Church is a hypocritical institution that persecutes people for actions that priests themselves also engage in.

The pair begins to talk of alchemy and Charmolue suddenly asks Frollo when he wants him to bring Esmeralda in for questioning. The case against her is all prepared, Charmolue informs him. Frollo turns very pale and says that he will give the command when he is ready. Charmolue is satisfied with this and continues to talk about his studies—Frollo has been teaching him how to read the stone carvings on the façade of **Notre Dame**.

Frollo is a hypocrite because he persecutes Esmeralda for witchcraft, when really he is attracted to her and wants to have her imprisoned to remove himself from temptation—he will not have to see Esmeralda in the square and feel his attraction to her if she is out of the way. Books were rare in the medieval period, so scholars like Frollo learned to interpret carvings on historical buildings to learn about the people who made them and the philosophies of earlier periods.

Frollo no longer listens to Charmolue, however. Instead, he stares at the window of the cell, over which a spider's web has settled. A fly, making for the window, gets caught in the web and Frollo watches as a huge spider darts towards it. Charmolue moves to set the fly free but Frollo stops his hand and tells him to "let fatality take its course."

Frollo has an extremely fatalistic worldview and believes in predestination (the idea that events in life are predetermined by God and cannot be altered). Therefore, Frollo believes it is the spider's destiny to eat the fly, because this is how God made spiders, and that Charmolue should not intervene to try and change this.

Frollo murmurs that Esmeralda is like the fly—she loves freedom and seeks sunlight—and that he is like the spider. Alas, he says, he is like the fly too, and he once flew towards the light of knowledge before "fatality" crept up on him and snared him in its web. Charmolue begs that Frollo let go of his arm—Frollo is squeezing it very tightly—but Frollo seems to have forgotten Charmolue is there. Philosophers have always flown towards the light, Frollo goes on, but, even if they can break the spider's web, they will smash against the glass, which "divides all philosophies from the truth."

Frollo believes that it is his destiny to harm Esmeralda in some way, hence his belief that he is the predator and she is the prey. However, because of his belief in predestination (the belief that all events are predetermined by God) Frollo does not believe that he can change this destiny by changing his behavior. Therefore, he sees himself as a victim of fate, just as much as Esmeralda is, and he will not try to alter his behavior towards her. Frollo also believes that humanity's quest for knowledge is doomed to fail as humans are limited in their capacity for understanding and cannot cross the divide which separates them from ultimate knowledge, or God.

Frollo comes back to himself and he and Charmolue make to leave the room. As they make for the door, Charmolue stops in alarm—he can hear someone chewing. Jehan, under the table, has found a scrap of cheese on the floor and begun to gnaw on it. Frollo quickly assures Charmolue that it is his cat and Charmolue slyly suggests that it is Frollo's "familiar." The two men leave the cell.

People in the medieval period were highly superstitious and believed that witches and sorcerers had demonic spirits, known as familiars, which took the form of animals. It is ironic that Charmolue calls Frollo a sorcerer because Frollo is a priest (the Church condemned and punished witchcraft in this period) and is meant to be spiritually pure, whereas witchcraft is considered sinful and corrupt.

BOOK 7, CHAPTER 6

Once Frollo and Charmolue are gone, Jehan scrambles out from his hiding place and begins to poke around the cell. He finds Frollo's wallet, pockets it, and hurries down the stairs. Outside, Jehan hears a man swearing and realizes that it is Phoebus. Jehan asks Phoebus to join him for a drink and shows him the purse full of money. Phoebus happily agrees and the pair set off to the Pomme d'Eve tavern.

Although Frollo has tried to raise Jehan to be an honest and scholarly young man, fate intervenes and Jehan grows into a debauched and dishonest person. Although Phoebus is very good-looking, and is often considered noble, he is also a selfish and debauched man under the surface. The "Pomme d'Eve" (Eve's Apple) alludes Adam's temptation in the biblical Garden of Eden story, in which Eve convinced Adam to eat the forbidden fruit against God's wishes and caused Adam to fall from grace. The name is symbolic here as it represents Frollo's belief that he is sexually tempted by Esmeralda because she wishes to spiritually damn him and that his lustful temptation will be his spiritual downfall.

Frollo, meanwhile, sees Jehan leave and join Phoebus, and he sneaks after them. As he walks, Frollo listens to their conversation—which they conduct at the top of their voices—in which they compare their many sexual conquests. Phoebus tells Jehan to hurry up: he does not want Esmeralda to see him. Jehan asks Phoebus what he wants with Esmeralda and Phoebus smirks lecherously and whispers something to Jehan.

Although Phoebus appears dashing and noble, he is in fact a lecherous womanizer. Frollo believes that Phoebus has had sex with Esmeralda, and that this is what he whispers to Jehan. Frollo is horrified by this because he is sexually obsessed with Esmeralda and does not want other men to touch her.

Jehan asks Phoebus if he is sure Esmeralda will come and Phoebus confidently assures him that she will. Frollo is horrified to hear Esmeralda spoken of in this way and leans against a post for a moment to prevent a swoon. He recovers quickly, however, and follows Phoebus and Jehan a moment later.

Frollo is sexually obsessed with Esmeralda and cannot stand the thought of another man seducing her. Although he wants to possess Esmeralda himself, it is also important to Frollo that Esmeralda be sexually pure because purity is associated with holiness in the medieval period. Although Frollo has lustful urges towards Esmeralda, he still, hypocritically, wants to think of her as pure.

BOOK 7, CHAPTER 7

The Pomme d'Eve is a dingy tavern in the University and is crowded with rowdy drinkers. Outside, Frollo paces back and forth on the pavement. He wears a dark cloak, which he has just bought from a nearby stall, in order to conceal his own attire. At last, Phoebus and Jehan emerge from the pub. Jehan is very drunk but Phoebus is used to drinking and announces that he must go—he is to meet Esmeralda at seven.

The fact that the tavern here is called the Pomme d'Eve (Eve's Apple) hints that, just as Adam fell from grace in the biblical story of the Garden of Eden, Frollo will soon face dire consquences as a result of his obession with Esmeralda. Frollo wears a dark robe to disguise his identity from others and to protect his priestly reputation.

Phoebus asks Jehan if he has any money left, as Phoebus needs some for his meeting with Esmeralda. Jehan says he has spent all the money he took from Frollo. Jehan rambles drunkenly and Phoebus grows irritated and pushes him to the ground, where Jehan immediately falls asleep in the gutter. Phoebus then strolls away to meet Esmeralda. Frollo stops for a minute to look regretfully down at Jehan and then hurries after Phoebus.

Frollo has tried to raise Jehan to be a scholarly and spiritual person. Spirituality and holiness were associated with denial of worldly pleasures and abstinence in the medieval period. However, despite Frollo's efforts, fate has intervened and Jehan has grown into a sensual and debauched young man. As Frollo's obsession with Esmeralda intensifies, he loses sight of all other passions and interests, including his relationship with Jehan.

Phoebus strolls through the University and stops to urinate on a statue of a Cardinal. When he turns around, he sees Frollo, who is like a statue except for his burning eyes, standing and staring at him. Phoebus is alarmed and does not recognize the priest. He thinks he has been followed by the ghostly monk who is rumored to haunt the streets of Paris.

It is ironic that Phoebus urinates on the statue, as the Cardinal is a holy figure and, therefore, is believed to be divorced from worldly things like bodily functions. Phoebus's assumption that he must be seeing something supernatural highlights how normal superstition was at this time; the reader, of course, knows that he's only seeing a mortal man wearing unfamiliar clothes.

Frollo advances suddenly towards Phoebus and seizes his hand. Phoebus tries to draw back but Frollo's grip is very tight. Frollo asks Phoebus whom he plans to meet. Phoebus says it is Esmeralda. Frollo snarls that Phoebus is a liar and, insulted, Phoebus shoves Frollo off and draws his sword. Frollo quickly tells Phoebus that, if he stays to fight, he will be late for Esmeralda. Frollo tells Phoebus that he will cut his throat another time and Phoebus agrees to a duel.

Frollo is sexually obsessed with Esmeralda and the intensity of his passion—which he must suppress because he is a priest and meant to be celibate—leads him to become jealous and possessive. Phoebus is very vain, despite his noble appearance as a handsome soldier, but he cares deeply about his reputation as a brave and honorable man. Both of them actively hide their true natures under superficial appearances of respectability.

About to set off again, Phoebus suddenly remembers that he has no money. Frollo offers him a coin to pay the landlady at the hotel, on the condition that Phoebus allow Frollo to hide somewhere in the room and watch his tryst with Esmeralda. Phoebus agrees to this and takes the money. Frollo follows him to the door of an inn. A wizened old landlady, La Falourdel, lets them in and Phoebus gives her the coin. La Falourdel puts it in a drawer but, as she walks away, a small boy sneaks over and replaces the coin with a dry leaf.

Frollo's desperate lust for Esmeralda—which he cannot express because he is a priest—manifests in unhealthy ways and drives him to extreme behaviors, such as spying on her and Phoebus.

Once they're upstairs in the room, Phoebus tells Frollo that he can hide in a cupboard that looks out into the room. Frollo enters the cupboard and Phoebus shuts the door behind him.

By this point, it's clear that Frollo's attempts to repress his feelings for Esmeralda do not make his desire disappear; instead, they make it grow more intense and push him to extreme actions like this one.

BOOK 7, CHAPTER 8

The cupboard Frollo finds himself in is very low and he is forced to crouch. His thoughts are confused but he feels that there is a terrible sense of fate about the events of the day, which have led him to this point. His head throbs and his face is hot as he peers out through a crack in the door. When he sees Esmeralda enter the room, Frollo faints.

Frollo's belief in predestination (the idea that life's events are planned out by God and cannot be altered) makes him feel that there is nothing he could have done to avoid the situation he finds himself in, even though he knows it probably will not end well for him. But of course, Frollo could have left at any time; his belief in fate lets him avoid taking responsibility for his role in shaping these events.

When Frollo wakes up, he looks into the room once more and sees Phoebus and Esmeralda seated side by side on a pallet bed, beside a broken window. Esmeralda appears nervous and begs Phoebus not to despise her. She has taken a vow of chastity, she explains, and she is afraid of breaking it. Phoebus begins to confess his love for her—in the well-rehearsed manner of a proficient womanizer—and Esmeralda appears delighted and grows playful with him. Frollo watches, a dagger clenched in his fist.

Sexual purity was associated with virtue and spiritual rewards in the medieval period. Esmeralda believes that, if she remains pure, she will be rewarded by being reunited with her parents. The misogynistic belief that women are more sinful than men also meant that women could be punished for sexual behavior, so Esmeralda wants to protect herself from persecution as well.

Phoebus suddenly says that there is a woman who will be jealous of Esmeralda and Esmeralda seems taken aback. Phoebus brushes this off, confesses his love again, and starts to try to undress her. Esmeralda seems alarmed at first, but then she allows Phoebus to continue. She suddenly blurts out that she wants them to be married and Phoebus stops short, confused. He says that marriage is nothing, which seems to concern Esmeralda.

Esmeralda is torn between her sexual attraction to Phoebus and her desire to remain pure, which she feels makes her virtuous and worthy of spiritual rewards, such as a reunion with her parents. Esmeralda also wants to protect herself from misogynistic accusations that she is impure, and therefore sinful, and she wants to marry Phoebus so that their love is spiritually sanctioned: sex within marriage was not considered sinful as it was sanctioned by God.

Frollo watches the scene with increasing fury. His blood seems to burn in his veins and his eyes flash like those of a tiger as it closes in on its prey. Phoebus suddenly exposes Esmeralda's breasts and she draws back, shocked. An amulet dangles around her neck and Esmeralda explains that it is a charm which she hopes will, one day, reunite her with her mother. She begs Phoebus to give her top back, but Phoebus says that she doesn't love him. Esmeralda is horrified by this suggestion and says that she will forsake her chastity and her hope of seeing her mother again to be with him, even as his mistress rather than his wife.

Frollo's passion for Esmeralda grows more intense because he cannot express it; it seems to transform him from the inside out. His emotions are trapped inside him, just as he's trapped in the cupboard here. In this sense, it is fitting that Frollo is an alchemist as alchemists studied the ability to turn certain metals into others, and Frollo's emotional transformation mirrors this process.

Phoebus pushes Esmeralda back onto the bed and climbs on top of her. As she stares up at the ceiling, she suddenly sees Frollo rear up behind Phoebus. Frollo stabs Phoebus in the neck and Esmeralda faints with terror. When she wakes up, she finds that Phoebus has been carried from the room and that La Falourdel has accused her of stabbing him. Frollo is nowhere to be seen.

Although Phoebus appears dashing and noble to Esmeralda, he is clearly selfish and does not care about her or her fears about losing her sexual innocence—he simply wants to seduce her for his own pleasure. Frollo is so obsessed with Esmeralda that he becomes mad with jealously. As Frollo is a priest and must remain celibate, he cannot express his sexual urges to satisfy his desires. The frustration of his desires drives him mad and spurs him on to destructive action. His choice to stab Phoebus is somewhat ironic, since murder is certainly a sin as well; trying to remain pure in one way has only led Frollo to become sinful in another way.

BOOK 8, CHAPTER 1

Gringoire and his companions in the "Court of Miracles" are deeply concerned about Esmeralda. No one has seen her or Djali for several weeks. One afternoon, as Gringoire wanders past the Palace of Justice, he bumps into Jehan and asks him what is going on inside the court. Jehan replies that a witch is on trial for murdering a guard. Frollo is very busy with the case, which annoys Jehan because he wants to borrow more money.

The supernatural was often used to explain inexplicable events in this era, before the widespread availability of rational knowledge provided natural explanations for things. It will soon become clear that the so-called witch on trial is actually Esmeralda—and the reader already knows that magic had nothing to do with the attack on Phoebus.

Gringoire decides to go in and watch the trial. He joins the enormous crowd as it files up the steps into the hall. Many important figures from the king's court are present on the jury and Gringoire wonders who the woman could be. The man beside him in the crowd points out that one of the judges is Jacques Charmolue. La Falourdel is among the witnesses and she stands up to testify.

Justice was a form of entertainment in the medieval period and people flocked to see trials because it gave them something to do. This suggests, however, that court cases were often performed for the spectacle and appearance of justice, rather than because anyone was really interested in seeing justice done.

La Falourdel explains that, one night when she was at her spinning wheel, two men came to her door. One was extremely handsome and the other was dressed all in black and had obscured his face. They paid La Falourdel for an upstairs room and La Falourdel put their coin in a drawer. After this, the handsome man went outside once more and brought in a beautiful young woman and a goat. La Falourdel hates goats because they are satanic and used by witches.

Like most people in medieval society, La Falourdel is extremely superstitious and believes in witchcraft, demons, and the supernatural. She is clearly describing the night that Phoebus seduced Esmeralda.

The handsome man and the girl went back upstairs and, not long after this, La Falourdel heard a splash outside her window. She rushed to the casement and saw a ghostly figure dressed as a priest leap into the river behind her house. A cry rang out from the upstairs room and La Falourdel rushed to investigate. When she entered the room, she found the young girl naked and the handsome man with a knife in his neck. The other man—who La Falourdel is sure was the phantom monk—was gone. When La Falourdel went to take the coin they had given her from the drawer the next day, she found that it had been turned into a dry leaf.

La Falourdel is extremely superstitious—like many medieval people—and she believes that there is a supernatural explanation for these events, rather than a rational one. But Hugo makes sure to remind the reader that nothing supernatural took place; the reader knows that a young boy stole the coin and replaced it with a leaf.

Gringoire listens in horror, terrified by the tale of the phantom monk. One of the judges asks La Falourdel which of the two men gave her the coin and she replies that it was the handsome man. This shakes Gringoire's conviction and a murmur runs through the crowd. Another judge insistently reminds them, however, that in Phoebus's statement he revealed that the other man gave him the money. This proves that the money "comes from Hell."

Although Gringoire is susceptible to superstition—like many medieval people—he also thinks rationally about things. Gringoire is an extremely moderate man and acts as a mediation point between all the extremes in the novel. Although he believes in supernatural events, he is also willing to consider a rational explanation. The judge, however, is not, which shows that the supernatural was taken seriously and used as a genuine reason to persecute and punish people in the medieval period.

At the mention of Phoebus's name, the accused woman jumps up and begs the court to tell her if Phoebus is alive. Gringoire is horrified to see that the woman on trial is Esmeralda. The judges silence her and order the next witness to be brought in. The next witness is Djali. It was common in the medieval period to try to execute animals that were accused of witchcraft. When Djali enters the court, he immediately rushes to Esmeralda's side. Esmeralda is stupefied with terror, however, and she ignores her pet.

The practice of trying animals was considered irrational by the 19th century, when Hugo was writing. Hugo suggests that, because the medieval justice system was built around these types of irrational beliefs, real justice was not possible because people could easily be convicted based on superstitious beliefs rather than rational evidence.

Jacques Charmolue approaches Djali with Esmeralda's tambourine and shakes it. Djali immediately begins to do tricks and the crowd gasps with horror. Although they have all enjoyed Djali's performance in the square, they are now convinced that Djali is a demon. Gringoire shouts out that it is just a trick, but the judge ignores him. Charmolue then tips out the bag of letters tied around Djali's neck and the goat spells out the word "Phoebus."

It is easy to manipulate the crowd because they are so superstitious. Charmolue has learned from Frollo, who has learned from Gringoire, that Djali responds to the tambourine, but the crowd assumes that Djali's powers are supernatural. The judge goes along with the crowd's superstitious reaction, which reinforces the idea that the justice system is hardly just.

One of the judges announces that this proves Esmeralda is a witch and that she lured Phoebus to his death with the help of the ghostly monk. Esmeralda protests, saying that she is stalked by a demonic priest and that he is the one who stabbed Phoebus. Jacques Charmolue suggests quietly to the judge that Esmeralda should be tortured, and the judge agrees. Gringoire watches in horror as Charmolue leads Esmeralda from the court.

The corrupt court uses the crowd's superstitious beliefs against Esmeralda and easily convinces them that there is a supernatural explanation for events. But Esmeralda is superstitious herself, as shown by her belief that Frollo is a demon. This suggests that, although superstition often leads to unjust persecution, it's also a normal and reasonable response to a world in which rational explanations were often unavailable.

BOOK 8, CHAPTER 2

Jacques Charmolue escorts Esmeralda to the torture chamber, where Pierrat Torterue waits. When she sees the instruments of torture and the leather bed on which prisoners are interrogated, Esmeralda flies into a panic. Charmolue and Torterue strap her onto the bed and attach an iron "boot" to her foot. As they tighten the boot, the men ask Esmeralda to confess. Overcome by the pain in her foot—pain like she has never before experienced—Esmeralda desperately confesses.

Esmeralda is innocent but has no way to defend herself against the corrupt justice system, which persecutes her based on false evidence (and because Frollo wants to have her imprisoned to prevent her from sexually tempting him) rather than because they genuinely suspect her of witchcraft. Esmeralda's love of life and freedom is symbolized throughout the novel by her love of dancing, so the "boot" (which crushes her foot) symbolizes the ultimate destruction of these things.

Jacques Charmolue adds many terrible charges of demonology and witchcraft to Esmeralda's confession. Esmeralda admits blindly to every one of them. Charmolue then tells her that she will be executed, but Esmeralda seems resigned to her fate. She has clearly gone mad. The men untie Esmeralda and lead her back to the court to be convicted.

The medieval justice system is extremely corrupt and does not sentence people based on rational evidence. The trial is rigged against Esmeralda because Frollo wants to see her condemned and, as a powerful man in a misogynistic society, has been able to organize this. Furthermore, Hugo suggests that people will confess to most things under torture, not because they are guilty but to spare themselves pain. Therefore, a confession given under torture should not be used in a trial because it is not reliable evidence.

BOOK 8, CHAPTER 3

Back in the courtroom, the crowd grows impatient to hear Esmeralda's sentence. They are relieved when she limps back to her chair and Jacques Charmolue announces her confession. Halfway through his speech, Charmolue points out furiously that Djali is mocking him—the goat is doing an impression that Esmeralda has taught him—and he finds this to be further proof of Esmeralda's satanism. Esmeralda and Djali are sentenced to be hanged in the square outside **Notre Dame**. As she is dragged off, Esmeralda feels she has entered a nightmare.

Rather than feel concern for Esmeralda, the crowd are eager to see the spectacle of her sentence and execution. As the crowd are superstitious, they are biased against Esmeralda and take Djali's trick as further evidence of her guilt. However, Djali's trick has a rational explanation—Esmeralda has taught him to respond to certain cues.

BOOK 8, CHAPTER 4

Underneath Paris, there is a network of chambers and tunnels in which condemned prisoners are kept. Esmeralda is locked in a dark cell, with only a bundle of straw to sleep on and a trapdoor above her head, through which the jailor delivers food. Mad with grief and isolation, she loses track of time and is unsure whether she is awake or dreaming. She has lost all the things she loves: the fresh air, the sunlight, her freedom, and Phoebus.

Hugo suggests throughout that architecture reflects the society that builds it. The tunnels and chambers underneath medieval Paris thus reflect its cruel justice system, in which people (like Esmeralda) are unfairly condemned and then inhumanely punished.

Esmeralda has been in prison for several weeks when the trapdoor opens and, instead of the jailor, a man in a black robe enters the cell. He carries a lantern and is horrified when he sees the conditions that Esmeralda is kept in. At first Esmeralda is apathetic about her fate, but then she begs the man to help her escape. The man agrees. He pulls back his hood and reveals his identity: it is Frollo. Esmeralda draws back in horror when she sees him and says bitterly that he is the cause of all her problems.

The medieval justice system is so cruel and unjust that even Frollo is shocked by it. Esmeralda has feels she is doomed to die., but the sight of a visitor renews her hope, highlighting Hugo's broader point that people shouldn't use fate as an excuse to avoid taking action to improve their circumstance.

Esmeralda sinks to the ground before Frollo, like a bird before a predator, and tells him to kill her. Frollo realizes that he disgusts Esmeralda. She bursts into tears and begs Frollo to explain why he hates her so much. Frollo exclaims that he loves her and Esmeralda shudders. Frollo tells Esmeralda that, before he met her, he was happy and pure, renowned for his chastity and wisdom. Esmeralda meekly replies that she was happy too.

Frollo is like a predator to Esmeralda because he is a powerful man in medieval society, while she is a poor young woman and has no way to defend herself. Frollo blames Esmeralda for his feelings towards her, even though they are not her responsibility. Frollo is completely self-absorbed and only thinks about his own suffering, which is self-inflicted, and not the suffering he has caused Esmeralda, which was totally outside of her control.

Frollo says that one day he saw Esmeralda dance in the square and became intoxicated by her beauty. He felt fate seize hold of him and remembered that Satan often tricks men with beautiful things. When Frollo saw Djali at Esmeralda's side, he knew that the devil had sent Esmeralda to taunt him. He heard Esmeralda sing and was so enchanted by her voice that he collapsed, like someone turned to stone.

Rather than accept that his sexual feelings towards Esmeralda are natural and come from inside himself, Frollo blames Esmeralda for them and assumes that his feelings—which he considers unusually powerful—must be the result of supernatural or unholy powers.

From that day on, Frollo grew more and more obsessed with Esmeralda. He felt that she was taunting him, that she possessed his soul, and that she deliberately distracted him from his studies. He tried several methods to be rid of her: he tried to ban her from the square, he tried to abduct her, and, eventually, he decided that he must do as other great religious men had done and kill the witch who haunted him. He sought to possess her in prison the way that she had possessed him. Although he knows this is wrong, he feels that, if one is going to be damned, one should take it to extremes.

Although Esmeralda has been totally unaware of Frollo's attraction to her—which is very intense and consumes his life—Frollo blames her for his own feelings. He believes himself to be morally virtuous and, therefore, cannot accept that he naturally experiences seemingly sinful emotions like lust. Rather than take responsibility for his feelings and find a way to express them, Frollo tries to destroy Esmeralda so that he will no longer be distracted by her. Frollo's fatalistic belief in destiny helps him justify this behavior to himself as he assumes that, since he feels lust for Esmeralda, he is already damned (he believes that events are predetermined by God and, therefore, cannot be changed), so he may as well take his immoral behavior to extremes. Frollo's logic here comes off as absurd, and it supports Hugo's idea that suppressing desires only leads to unnecessary destruction.

Frollo explains that one day he heard Phoebus speak lecherously of Esmeralda in the street. When Esmeralda repeats Phoebus's name, Frollo seizes her and tells her not to speak that cursed name. Fate has undone them all, Frollo cries. He tells Esmeralda that, although she has suffered through her torture and trial, he has suffered more because he loves her and she has rejected him. He opens his robe and shows her a bleeding wound in his side—he stabbed himself while watching her get tortured.

Frollo projects his own belief in fate onto Esmeralda and believes that, since he is damned, she must be damned with him. He believes that it is God's plan to damn him—either Esmeralda will seduce him, which will lead him to break his priestly vows of celibacy, or he will kill Esmeralda to prevent this, which will make him immoral and a murderer. Although Frollo struggles with the idea of spiritual damnation—and hurts himself in this struggle—the consequences for Esmeralda are far more serious and tragic because she has lost her freedom through no fault of her own.

Frollo falls to the ground and begs Esmeralda to take pity on him and not to be disgusted by him. Esmeralda murmurs Phoebus's name and Frollo begs her to have mercy on him. He implores her to let him save her and to give him her love, just for a short time. He reminds her that, if she refuses, she will be hanged the next day. Again, Esmeralda asks him what has become of Phoebus.

Frollo believes that Esmeralda deliberately tortures him by rejecting him. He does not realize that Esmeralda's suffering—which he has caused by having her unjustly imprisoned—has unhinged her mind and caused her to become fixated on Phoebus, whom she believes is fated to save her.

Frollo coldly tells Esmeralda that Phoebus is dead, and Esmeralda flies at him in a rage. She tells Frollo she will never love him and that he is cursed. Frollo throws her off and staggers towards the trapdoor. As he leaves, he screams again that Phoebus is dead.

Frollo tries to make Esmeralda suffer because he feels she deliberately tortures him by withholding her love. However, Esmeralda is afraid of Frollo, confused about his intentions towards her, and has never knowingly tried to seduce him. Again, Esmeralda is being held accountable for Frollo's emotions, which shows just how little power she has as a woman in an oppressive society.

BOOK 8, CHAPTER 5

In the "rat-hole," Paquette la Chantefleurie laments the loss of her daughter and cries over the little pink **shoe**. The shoe, which once symbolized all the joy that her baby brought her, now torments her as a symbol of her loss. As she sits and weeps, Paquette overhears a boy in the square say that they will hang a gypsy that afternoon. Paquette la Chantefleurie leaps to the bars and sees Frollo hovering near her window. She calls to him and asks who will be hanged that day.

Paquette's grief over the loss of her child has become an obsession. This supports the idea that generous and loving emotions can become warped if they are taken to extremes and can find no outlet. In this case, Paquette cannot fulfill her love for her child because she believes her child is dead, so this love has transformed into a bitter and fanatical hatred of gypsies.

Frollo, who seems distracted, replies that he does not know. Paquette says that she heard it is a gypsy and exclaims that she hates gypsies because they killed her child. She particularly hates Esmeralda, she says, and she has cursed her. Frollo says that she will be pleased, then, as it is Esmeralda who will die today.

Paquette's extreme love for her child has been transformed, through her grief and bitterness, into an obsessive hatred of gypsies. Her specific hatred of Esmeralda will soon be revealed as a tragic irony, since Esmeralda is actually the daughter she loves so much.

BOOK 8, CHAPTER 6

Although Frollo and Esmeralda believe Phoebus is dead, this is not actually the case. Phoebus's wound was serious, but he still recovers quickly. Embarrassed by events with Esmeralda, he decides to leave Paris. Although the court tries Esmeralda with murder, no one is really bothered about the facts of the case—the crowd simply wants to see an execution.

Phoebus does not care about Esmeralda and only cares about his reputation as a noble soldier, which he feels may be damaged if people think he was attacked and could not defend himself. The fact that he's alive also reinforces the point that the justice system is completely unjust; Esmeralda is being executed for a murder that didn't even happen.

Phoebus cannot fully explain what happened to him on the night he was stabbed but he worries that witchcraft was involved. Witches were hanged almost every week in Paris, so he assumes that Esmeralda will be hanged and does not think any more about it. During his time away, Phoebus begins to long for Fleur-de-Lys, whom he had previously almost forgotten about. He decides that it may now be safe to return to Paris.

Phoebus, like many people in the medieval period, is very superstitious and seriously believes in the supernatural. Although Phoebus appears handsome and noble, his appearance does not reflect his inner character and he carelessly abandons Esmeralda, even though she will likely die as a result of his actions.

Fleur-de-Lys is still upset with Phoebus because of his interaction with Esmeralda and because of his long absence. When Phoebus arrives at her house, however, she remembers how handsome he is. Phoebus is passionately attracted to Fleur-de-Lys again and tells her that he was wounded in a duel and that is why he hasn't been to see her. A crowd gathers in the square outside the house and Fleur-de-Lys explains that a witch is being hanged. Phoebus wants to stay inside and flirt with Fleur-de-Lys, but she is worried for her virtue. She insists they go onto the balcony to watch the execution.

Fleur-de-Lys is taken in by Phoebus's dashing appearance and overlooks the fact that he abandoned her for Esmeralda. This suggests that people are easily taken in by handsome exteriors, even when they know what lies underneath. Fleur-de-Lys tries to protect herself from Phoebus's advances because, as a woman (even an upper-class woman), the punishment for promiscuous behavior will be more severe for her. This is further demonstrated by the fact that Esmeralda is about to be hung because of her tryst with Phoebus.

The crowd in the square jeers and shouts to each other as a cage is driven through their midst on a cart. Jacques Charmolue rides in front of the cart and inside Esmeralda and Djali are tied up. Esmeralda is dressed in a white shift that shows her legs. She still wears her jeweled amulet around her neck. Fleur-de-Lys recognizes Esmeralda and points this out to Phoebus, who turns white and tries to retreat inside. Fleur-de-Lys grows suspicious and demands that they stay on the balcony.

This scene shows again that people were often sentenced to death on flimsy evidence for the entertainment of the crowd. Phoebus is a coward and tries to hide when he sees Esmeralda because he knows that he is partly responsible for her death. She has been condemned for his murder, even though he is alive and even though he knows it was not her who stabbed him. Rather than try to help her, however, he is concerned about his reputation and how these events will make him look to his fiancée.

As Esmeralda approaches the gallows, the doors of **Notre Dame** open and a procession of priests approaches and chants a mass for the dead. Frollo is among them, pale as a statue. He stops the cart and asks Esmeralda if she has renounced her sins. Leaning over, he whispers to her that he can still save her if she will agree to love him. Esmeralda says that she will "denounce him" but he replies that no one will believe her.

Frollo is a hypocrite. He is a priest and pretends to be holy and morally virtuous, but, he has charged Esmeralda with witchcraft to cover up the fact that he is sexually obsessed with her and to try and threaten her into sleeping with him. There is nothing Esmeralda can do to change her fate or defend herself from Frollo, because he is a powerful priest and has far more social status than she does.

Frollo glances around the square and sees Phoebus on the balcony. Frollo reels back and, suddenly furious, says that Esmeralda must die. The procession moves away, and the cart resumes its journey to the gallows. Suddenly, Esmeralda also catches sight of Phoebus and cries out desperately for his help. Phoebus and Fleur-de-Lys hurry from the balcony and Esmeralda faints with despair.

Frollo is a hypocrite who wishes to cover up his own crimes. He knows that Phoebus can clear Esmeralda's name—she is accused of Phoebus's murder, but it was Frollo who stabbed Phoebus—but he would rather kill Esmeralda than have his own reputation ruined.

As the cart reaches the gallows, Quasimodo, who has been watching the scene from **Notre Dame**, suddenly appears in the square and snatches Esmeralda from the guards. He carries her into the church, holds her aloft, and cries out the word "asylum." The crowd, which has been cheering for her death, is moved by this scene of defiance and they begin to cheer for Quasimodo instead. They are touched to see one outcast saving another.

People who were condemned to be executed could claim asylum in certain sacred sites, like churches and cathedrals. As execution was common, even for minor crimes, this gave prisoners a chance to escape ruthless and unjust sentences. Although Quasimodo and Esmeralda seem to be the extreme opposites of each other—he is extremely ugly, and she is extremely beautiful—they are both outcasts from society because of their unusual appearances. And in this case, at least, Esmeralda is being rewarded for her virtue; she was kind to Quasimodo when he was beaten, so he rescues her now.

Quasimodo scales the tower of **Notre Dame** with Esmeralda in his arms and a huge roar goes up from the crowd. Paquette la Chantefleurie, who has been eagerly watching the gallows, is confused and waits to see the gypsy hanged.

Quasimodo and Esmeralda reflect two aspects of Gothic architecture—the beautiful and the grotesque—which are brought together in Notre Dame, both thematically in the novel and literally in the architectureof the cathedral.

BOOK 9, CHAPTER 1

Before Quasimodo rescues Esmeralda, Frollo dashes from the square. He heads for the university and finds himself outside the walls of the city, in a field. He is almost mad with passion and fever. His mind reels as he thinks about Esmeralda, who he feels has destroyed him, and whom he has destroyed in return. He contemplates his own nature and realizes that he was doomed as soon as he became a priest because, inside, he is a deeply passionate man. His thoughts turn to evil and a sinister laugh bursts from him as he wanders aimlessly along.

Frollo's passions, which used to inspire him to behave in loving and positive ways, have become twisted and destructive because he has repressed his sexual feelings towards women. Frollo is a priest and must remain celibate, as sex was associated with sin, while celibacy was associated with moral purity in the medieval period. Frollo believes in predestination (the idea that one's life is planned out by God) and feels that, although he thought he was destined to be a holy and wise man, in fact he has always been doomed to fail and to become damned and sinful.

As he walks, Frollo thinks bitterly that Phoebus is still alive. He hates everyone except Esmeralda, and he mourns because he has had her killed. He trusts in fate, however, and he knows that he would do the same again. The image of Esmeralda being hanged torments him and he continues to flee from Paris, often falling and lying with his face upon the earth.

Frollo is sexually obsessed with Esmeralda but, instead of taking responsibility for his emotions, he blames her for how he feels and has her executed on a false charge of witchcraft. Although Frollo knows this is a destructive and immoral decision, he justifies it to himself through his belief in predestination and chooses to believe that it is his fate to act this way—even though it's clear to the reader that he could certainly have made different choices along the way.

As night falls, Frollo finally calms himself and plans to return to the city. Despite his anguish, the possibility of his own death has never occurred to him and he still wants to live. Although he thinks he has run a long way from the city, in fact he has only moved around the external wall. Hallucinating and feverish, Frollo catches a boat along the Seine and tries to make his way back to **Notre Dame**.

Although Frollo is ahead of his time in some ways—in his interest in natural science, for example—in other ways he is clearly a product of his time and society. His beliefs about sexuality as something inherently sinful—which lead him to persecute Esmeralda—are rooted in medieval beliefs that lust was sinful, while purity was spiritual and good. Paris symbolizes the medieval period in the novel, so this scene suggests that, although Frollo has attempted to push the boundaries of knowledge in his own time, he has not come far and is still a product of his environment. His failure to get away from Paris geographically is a metaphor for his failure to escape the philosophies and beliefs of his time.

Frollo stumbles through the streets and stops outside La Falourdel's brothel. He can hear the old woman singing a song about the gallows. When he peeps through the window, he sees Jehan with his arms around a prostitute. At last, he stumbles back to **Notre Dame** and, in the moonlight, he thinks that the white stone towers look like the flesh of a corpse. Inside, the cathedral seems to come to life around him and his hallucinations make the stones of the building appear to rock and sway.

It is pertinent that Frollo sees Jehan in the brothel because, while Jehan openly expresses his natural desires, Frollo represses his and grows sexually frustrated, which spurs him on to destructive behavior. The cathedral seems to turn on Frollo; its beautiful towers look like a dead body to him because he believes he has killed Esmeralda, who is also extremely beautiful.

Frollo reaches his cell and tries to comfort himself by reading the Bible. He opens the book at a passage from Job, however, ("a spirit passed before my face") and thinks of Esmeralda, who he believes is now dead. He decides to visit the bell-tower, to seek solace with Quasimodo, and he begins to climb the stairs. As Frollo steps out onto the platform in the cold night air, the clock strikes midnight and the ghostly figures of Esmeralda and Djali appear before him. Frollo backs into the shadows and the girl passes by. Frollo remembers the passage from Job and shudders.

Frollo believes in predestination (the idea that one's life is planned by God) and feels that, even if he tries to repent for his sins, he is destined to be damned because of his lust for Esmeralda. Although Frollo used to be interested in rational knowledge, his obsession with Esmeralda has led him to abandon these beliefs and he grows more and more superstitious. A common superstition in the medieval period was that ghosts walked at midnight, and Frollo views this sighting of Esmeralda—who is, in fact, alive and has taken asylum in Notre Dame—as a sign of his fate, which he believes is to be damned.

BOOK 9, CHAPTER 2

The harsh and frequent punishments of the medieval period mean that, in every city, there are many different sites where prisoners can claim sanctuary. This balances out the justice of the courts, which can be violent and cruel. However, once a prisoner takes sanctuary, they cannot leave the site again or they will be killed. A place of sanctuary, therefore, can become a prison. From time to time, the parliament can overrule the church and forcibly remove a prisoner from sanctuary, but this is unpopular and does not happen often.

People were frequently sentenced to death in the medieval period, even for minor crimes or on very little evidence. Hugo suggests that the system of sanctuary arose so that people would not feel that the justice system was unfairly stacked against them. The nobility feared that people might start to rebel if they felt that they were being killed indiscriminately with no hope of mercy. Although the justice system is very oppressive, medieval rulers do not like to upset the people, who can be very powerful when they rise up in large numbers.

At first, when Quasimodo snatches Esmeralda, she thinks that she is dead and that her spirit is being carried away. Quasimodo places her in a cell in the tower. When Esmeralda realizes what is happening, she remembers that Phoebus is alive and does not love her. She demands to know why Quasimodo rescued her and he looks very sad and scrambles away, leaving her alone in the cell.

Esmeralda desires freedom but is persecuted and threatened with incarceration throughout the novel. Her relief when she thinks that she is dead suggests that, as a powerless woman in an unjust society, her only chance to be free might be to die.

After some time, Quasimodo returns and tells Esmeralda that she must stay in the cell by day but that, at night, she may go anywhere in the church. Esmeralda is moved by Quasimodo's care for her but, when he leaves her alone again, she feels sorrowful and cut off from the world. She feels something brush against her feet and, looking down, she sees Djali. Comforted by the little goat, Esmeralda curls up with Djali and begins to cry. After this, she feels a little better. That night, she wanders around the tower and looks out at Paris under the moonlight.

Like Quasimodo, Esmeralda is ostracized and cut off from society because of her appearance. While Quasimodo is alienated because of his deformity, Esmeralda is alienated because she is extremely beautiful and this makes her a target of persecution from misogynistic men, like Frollo and Phoebus. Quasimodo and Esmeralda represent two extremes of Gothic architecture—its beauty and its grotesque quality—and together they demonstrate the harmony of Gothic buildings, which combine and express these two essential elements of life.

BOOK 9, CHAPTER 3

The next morning, Esmeralda wakes to find the sun shining into her cell. She is frightened, however, when Quasimodo's face appears at the window. He tells her not to be afraid and says that he only wanted to watch her sleep. Quasimodo seems sad and Esmeralda invites him into her room. At first, he thinks she is shooing him away, but she calls him back and he explains that he is deaf.

Quasimodo expects Esmeralda to reject him and to fear his ugliness because this is how most people treat him. This suggests that people are products of their environment and that they learn to behave according to how they are treated.

Esmeralda is horrified by Quasimodo's appearance, but she tries to see through this to his gentleness underneath. Quasimodo knows she pities him, however, and he laments that her beauty reminds him of his own deformity. Quasimodo is at her service, though. He tells her that, if she says the word, he will die for her. He gives her a whistle, which makes the only pitch he can hear, and he tells her to use it if she needs him. Esmeralda is touched, but before she can respond, Quasimodo hurries away.

Unlike the rest of medieval society, Esmeralda is genuinely compassionate and tries to see through Quasimodo's appearance and judge him on his personality. Quasimodo and Esmeralda are extreme opposites of each other—he is extremely ugly, and she is extremely beautiful—and Hugo suggests that these aspects come together in Gothic architecture (inside Notre Dame) just as they do in day-to-day life. Although Esmeralda's beauty makes Quasimodo sad, he does not blame her for this and instead takes responsibility for his own emotions.

BOOK 9, CHAPTER 4

As the days go by, Esmeralda begins to feel her old love of life return despite her isolation. She listens to the sounds of the church around her and feels soothed by the bells. Her only regret is that Phoebus believes that she stabbed him. She blames herself for this because she confessed to the crime. Esmeralda is still deeply in love with Phoebus and tells herself that he must still love her, and that Fleur-de-Lys (whom she saw him with on the balcony) must be his sister. Quasimodo stays away from her and, although she tries to get used to his appearance, he is aware that she still finds him repulsive.

Esmeralda finds solace in Notre Dame as though the cathedral were a living presence. Esmeralda is fatally loyal to Phoebus and still believes, because he appears noble and dashing, that he will save her. Her fixation on him mirrors Frollo's obsession with her, although in Esmeralda's case she does not blame Phoebus for how she feels, even though he has deceived her by pretending to be in love with her.

One day, as Esmeralda looks down on the square, she sees Phoebus ride by on his horse. Esmeralda throws herself on her knees and cries out to him, but Phoebus does not hear her. He ties up his horse outside Fleur-de-Lys's house. Quasimodo, who watches nearby, begins to weep and laments that one only needs to be handsome to gain the love of a beautiful woman. However, seeing Esmeralda's distress, he approaches and asks if he can fetch Phoebus for her. Esmeralda urgently tells him she will love him if he does and Quasimodo sadly makes his way to the square.

Esmeralda helplessly looks down on Phoebus from the tower and the great distance between them represents the extreme distance between them emotionally—while Esmeralda desperately needs Phoebus's help and still loves him, he has totally forgotten about her. In this sense, the architecture reflects the characters' circumstances; Esmeralda is imprisoned by her feelings, while Phoebus walks freely. Quasimodo can see that Esmeralda is taken in Phoebus's handsome appearance, but he does not blame her for this and still agrees to help her even though this causes him pain.

Phoebus has gone into Fleur-de-Lys's house, where preparations for a wedding are underway. Quasimodo waits outside and Esmeralda watches from the tower above. At one point, Quasimodo looks up and sees Phoebus and Fleur-de-Lys on the balcony above him. Phoebus tries to kiss Fleur-de-Lys and she delicately pushes him away.

Fleur-de-Lys wants to protect her virtue from Phoebus. Sexual promiscuity, especially in women, was viewed as sinful in the medieval period, whereas purity was viewed as virtuous. Phoebus, however, does not care about the potential consequences for Fleur-de-Lys if he seduces and then abandons her, as he has done with Esmeralda.

At last, Phoebus emerges from the house and Quasimodo catches the reins of his horse. Phoebus tries to push Quasimodo away, but Quasimodo insists he wants to lead Phoebus to Esmeralda. Phoebus believes that Esmeralda is dead, so he thinks that Quasimodo must be a spirit or demon. Phoebus kicks Quasimodo in the chest and Quasimodo sadly lets him go.

Phoebus is extremely superstitious and, because of Quasimodo's deformed appearance (and his own guilty conscience about Esmeralda), he jumps to the conclusion that the situation is supernatural rather than natural. This is a fatal misunderstanding, however, as Phoebus could easily clear Esmeralda's name and free her from her incarceration in Notre Dame.

Quasimodo returns to Esmeralda and tells her that Phoebus did not come out of the house. Esmeralda reproaches Quasimodo and says he should have waited all night. After this, Quasimodo does not come to see her in the cell anymore. She hears him singing a lament about how the beautiful only love beauty, although ugly things may also have value. One day he leaves a beautiful crystal vase of flowers on her windowsill. The vase is cracked, however, and the flowers have wilted and died. Beside this there is a lumpy clay pot, which contains a flourishing bouquet.

Quasimodo's gift to Esmeralda symbolizes the idea that appearances can be deceiving. Esmeralda is in love with Phoebus who, although he appears handsome and dashing, is actually selfish and does not care about her. Quasimodo, however, although he is ugly and deformed, genuinely cares for Esmeralda and wants her to be free and happy. The two vases express the same idea: ugly things can hide goodness, and vice versa.

Esmeralda gathers up the wilted flowers and holds them to her breast. Although she does not see Quasimodo after this, one night she discovers that he sleeps on the ground outside her door and guards her while she sleeps.

Esmeralda chooses the dead flowers instead of the live ones and this suggests that she is destined for tragedy; she is fatally drawn to things that are beautiful, even if they clearly have a dark side.

BOOK 9, CHAPTER 5

Once Frollo is back in Paris, he hears that Quasimodo has rescued Esmeralda and that she has taken sanctuary in the church. In despair, Frollo locks himself in his cell and refuses to venture out. From here, Frollo watches Quasimodo and Esmeralda and believes that Esmeralda flirts with Quasimodo. The idea that Esmeralda may prefer Quasimodo to him makes Frollo furious with jealousy and he remembers the time he saw Quasimodo gazing down at Esmeralda while she danced in the square below.

Frollo tried to have Esmeralda killed because he believed that this would end his obsession with her. When he discovers she is still alive, he despairs because he cannot forget her and, instead, must live alongside her in the cathedral. This suggests that, although Frollo tries to suppress his feelings for Esmeralda (because he believes that lust is sinful), he'll never succeed; these feelings will always return in new ways.

One night, Frollo can stand his position no longer. Sensual visions and dreams about Esmeralda torture him and he feels he must possess her. He takes his key for the staircase, which leads to her cell, and makes his way up the tower.

Although Frollo tries to suppress his sexual attraction to Esmeralda, his desires just grow stronger and become more violent and destructive.

BOOK 9, CHAPTER 6

Esmeralda wakes up and sees a man standing over her. She cries out when she sees that it is Frollo. Frollo climbs into bed beside her. She tries to fight him off, but he continues to caress her and beg her to love him. Finally, Esmeralda catches hold of the whistle that Quasimodo gave her and blows into it. Frollo finds himself being lifted off Esmeralda and screams at Quasimodo to stop. Quasimodo cannot hear Frollo, however, and it is dark in the cell. He drags Frollo outside and Frollo knows that Quasimodo will kill him.

Frollo tries to suppress his sexual attraction towards Esmeralda but this only makes the desire grow stronger and manifest in destructive and violent ways. Frollo tries to rape Esmeralda and refuses to listen to her protests because he misogynistically cares more about his own desires than her right to refuse him.

However, once they are outside, the moonlight reveals Frollo's identity to Quasimodo. Quasimodo immediately lets Frollo go and falls on his knees before the priest. Esmeralda is horrified to see this and grabs a sword that Quasimodo has dropped in the struggle. Frollo tries to attack her again, but she brandishes the weapon and spitefully tells him that she knows Phoebus is alive. Frollo staggers back down the stairs and Esmeralda despairs because she knows that Frollo still pursues her.

Frollo and Quasimodo are extreme opposites of each other. Although Quasimodo can dominate Frollo physically, Frollo psychologically dominates Quasimodo, since Quasimodo has always been devoted to Frollo. Their struggle here is a version of the struggle that Frollo is undergoing within himself. He tries to suppress his physical urges with his mind, but he can only sometimes succeed in doing so; sometimes he is overpowered by desire, just as Quasimodo can physically overpower him.


BOOK 10, CHAPTER 1

Although Gringoire is pleased that Esmeralda and Djali have been rescued, he does not want to risk his own safety to visit them in **Notre Dame**. Gringoire has developed a new passion for architecture and this soothes his soul and helps him forget his troubles. He still works as a street performer and prepares to write a diatribe against a bishop who has annoyed him. One afternoon, while Gringoire examines a building, Frollo approaches him.

Gringoire's interest in architecture reflects Hugo's own passion for the subject. However, while Hugo feels that architecture reflects the emotions and spirit of humanity, Gringoire is obsessed with petty things, like his grudge against the bishop, and he only cares about architecture as a way to comfort himself. In this way, Gringoire represents shallow 19th century architects, who are only interested in pretty or fashionable architecture, rather than architectural grandeur and complexity.

Gringoire is surprised to see Frollo and he explains his new love of architecture. Frollo seems bitter and skeptical and asks Gringoire if there is anything that he desires. Gringoire says there is not; his life is in perfect balance. As they talk, Phoebus rides past and Gringoire remarks that Frollo stares at the soldier very intently. Frollo denies this and tells Gringoire that he has a proposition for him.

Frollo resents Gringoire because he can tell that, unlike him, Gringoire has a very even temperament and does not suffer from the extreme passions like the ones Frollo is always trying to repress.



Frollo leads Gringoire to a quiet street and asks him if he is jealous of the soldiers, with their good pay and their handsome uniforms. Gringoire replies that he doesn't see why he should be: he is quite content with his lot in life. Frollo then asks Gringoire what he has done about Esmeralda. Gringoire is confused and says that he heard Esmeralda had taken refuge in **Notre Dame**.

Frollo can see that, unlike himself, Gringoire is a very even-tempered person who does not have strong passions or ambitions. Frollo's passions have made him bitter and destructive because they have not worked out the way he planned, and he resents his fate. Gringoire, on the other hand, accepts his fate and does not try to fight it.

Frollo says that this is true but that, in three days' time, parliament will overrule Esmeralda's sanctuary and she will be hanged. Gringoire says this is a pity but he does not want to be hanged himself; he has just started to write a major work. Frollo reminds Gringoire that Esmeralda once saved his life and Gringoire says that he will try to think of a way to save her.

Gringoire is not a passionate man and cares more about his book, which is a petty diatribe against a bishop he dislikes, than about great beauty or suffering, which are represented through Esmeralda's plight. Unlike Frollo, he does not suffer from intense emotions or desires and, although he likes Esmeralda, he does not care strongly enough about her to risk his life. Gringoire, in this sense, is a parody of 19th century architects, who Hugo feels undervalue Gothic architecture because it is too extreme and emotional for them.

Frollo announces that he already has a plan. He suggests that Gringoire should sneak into **Notre Dame** and give Esmeralda his clothes to disguise herself and escape. At first Gringoire likes this plan but then he realizes that he may be hanged for this. Frollo again reminds Gringoire that he would be dead already if not for Esmeralda, and Gringoire tearfully agrees.

Gringoire's lack of passion comes through again here; he agrees to help Esmeralda because Frollo convinces him he's obligated to, not because he's especially upset at the thought of her dying. Through Gringoire, Hugo shows that while repressing strong emotion can be destructive, it can be just as bad to not have those emotions in the first place.

As Frollo turns to leave, however, Gringoire has a better idea and he rushes after the archdeacon. Gringoire explains that he doesn't want to die but that he has a plan to rescue Esmeralda. The thieves in the "Court of Miracles" are very fond of Esmeralda, he says, and they will riot if he spurs them on. Gringoire leans over to whisper his plan into Frollo's ear. Frollo listens intently and agrees that they must act the next night. Frollo marches off and Gringoire thinks sadly about poor little Djali, who was almost hanged.

Gringoire is a cowardly man who does not suffer from intense emotions or grand passions. Instead, he is mostly interested in saving himself and is willing to manipulate others in order to avoid danger himself. Hugo suggests that intellectuals, like Frollo and Gringoire, often manipulate large groups of people to do their bidding, because people unified in large numbers can be very powerful. Gringoire is too small-minded and petty to appreciate Esmeralda's great beauty and virtue and prefers the pretty goat to her. He is a parody of 19th century architects who Hugo feels reject the Gothic for shallow reasons—because it is not a picturesque or pretty artform.

BOOK 10, CHAPTER 2

When Frollo arrives back at his cell, he finds Jehan waiting for him. Jehan slyly explains that he has run out of money again. He claims that he is deeply ashamed of his behavior and wishes to change his ways, but Frollo does not believe him and answers that he has no money. Jehan, therefore, announces that he will become a thief and Frollo angrily sends him away. As Jehan trudges down the stairs, Frollo opens the window and throws a purse full of coins at Jehan's head. Jehan happily hurries away, his head bruised where the purse hit him.

Despite Frollo's efforts to raise Jehan as a devout and scholarly young man, Jehan is destined to be a debauched hedonist. However, Jehan's belief that he should become a criminal (since he lives a debauched life anyway) is partly a self-fulfilling prophecy. Jehan's belief in fate allows him to justify his immoral behavior to himself, because he believes the same thing will happen no matter what he does.

BOOK 10, CHAPTER 3

In the "Court of Miracles," the inhabitants are louder and rowdier than ever. They congregate in the tavern and every man has a weapon with him. Clopin Trouillefou checks that everyone is armed and says that they will set out in one hour. Beside the fire, Gringoire sits deep in thought. Jehan is in the tavern and he is very drunk. He cries out that, although he was destined to be a rich man, he has squandered it all for the sake of pleasure. He salutes the truants' plan to raid **Notre Dame** and calls to the barmaid for more wine.

Medieval society is very oppressive. The people live under the king's rule and do not have freedom of speech. However, the army of truants suggests that, when large numbers of people are organized, they can be a formidable and powerful force to challenge existing power systems. Although Frollo raises Jehan to be a devout scholar, fate intervenes and Jehan's naturally passionate temperament leads him to become a criminal.

While some of the truants talk of Esmeralda, whom they plan to rescue, others discuss the many precious objects **Notre Dame** contains. Jehan says they should hang Quasimodo and he curses his brother, Frollo. Clopin approaches Gringoire and asks him what he is thinking. Gringoire says that he loves to contemplate the fire because the sparks "contain worlds."

While some of the truants are genuinely interested in saving Esmeralda, others want to use the riot as an excuse to increase their own wealth. This suggests that people will often hypocritically use virtuous causes to justify their own immoral behaviors. Gringoire is not a very passionate man and, in this sense, is the opposite of Frollo. However, like Frollo, Gringoire believes that fire is a source of divine inspiration (Frollo believes that gold is fire made solid and is a divine substance made by God). Unlike Frollo, however, whose extreme passions seem to set his insides on fire, Gringoire's moderate emotions keep him at a distance from the situation and he contemplates it in a detached way, as though he is outside of it, even though he is the instigator of the riot.

Clopin is confused and says that he just wants to rescue Esmeralda. Another truant tells Clopin that the king is in Paris, but Clopin says that this doesn't matter and that they will defy parliament. At the stroke of midnight, Clopin sounds the alarm and the truants begin to creep through Paris and make for **Notre Dame**.

The truants know that, to get their own way, they must defy the ruling class and march against them in large numbers. While they're only trying to rescue Esmeralda at this point, Hugo also foreshadows the French Revolution with this scene, indicating that someday rebels will defy their rulers in a much more direct and lasting way.

BOOK 10, CHAPTER 4

Quasimodo notices that Frollo seems distracted. Frollo has been more aggressive towards Quasimodo recently and he constantly abuses him. Still, Frollo stays away from Esmeralda, although Quasimodo will not stop Frollo if he approaches her. After the church has been locked for the night, Quasimodo climbs the tower and looks down at Paris in the darkness. He thinks the city seems unusually dark and still, and a sense of foreboding fills his mind.

Frollo and Quasimodo are opposites—Frollo is very intellectual and Quasimodo is very physical—and they represent that split between the mind and the body, which medieval scholars believed was natural because the intellect was divine, while worldly pleasures were sinful and corrupt. However, in Hugo's novel, it is Quasimodo—the physical side of life—who is good and tries to protect Esmeralda, whereas Frollo—who tries to suppress his physical side in favor of intellect—is corrupt and tries to destroy Esmeralda. This suggests that suppression of physical urges is not a positive thing, as medieval scholars believed, and, in fact, it destroys good and beautiful things.

As Quasimodo peers down from the tower, he sees strange, black shapes moving through the streets towards **Notre Dame**. It looks like a mass of figures moving silently and in darkness. Quasimodo believes the crowd has come for Esmeralda. As he is an object of public hatred, he believes that Esmeralda is too and that the crowd wants to kill her.

Quasimodo is alienated from society because people judge his appearance and treat him cruelly. Therefore, Quasimodo believes that society is cruel, and that people can only mean harm towards Esmeralda—though in reality, the crowd is coming to rescue her.

Quasimodo wonders frantically what to do. He wants to help Esmeralda escape, but he knows **Notre Dame** may be surrounded. As the crowd draws closer, they light torches and their faces become visible. Quasimodo recognizes many of the people who joined the "fool's pope" procession. Below, in the square, Clopin orders his men to surround the cathedral and orders lookouts to watch for the king's guards.

Quasimodo is afraid of the crowd because, after the procession, they turned on him and refused him water while he was being publicly beaten. Therefore, Quasimodo assumes that the crowd are malevolent because they have been cruel to him, and this shows that people come to expect the treatment they are shown.

It was not uncommon for riots of this sort to break out in medieval Paris. The city was divided up into numerous "lordships" and did not have a unified police force. Although Louis XI tried to regulate this with a curfew and several city-wide laws, these had largely been ignored and the lords still competed for control of different areas of Paris. People, therefore, did not intervene in scuffles that took place outside of their own area.

Medieval society is very repressive. Kings were not elected but were born into power and the people got no say in how the country was governed. Therefore, people often rebelled against their lot in life, especially as they could be arrested and killed for breaking arbitrary laws set by the king. But while Paris seems unified under the rule of the king, in fact the noble class is divided and factions vie for power with each other. This suggests that, if the people united against them, they could overthrow the nobility.

In the square beneath **Notre Dame**, Clopin and Jehan take up a defiant stance at the base of the cathedral. Clopin raises his pitchfork and addresses the bishop in a booming voice. He demands that Esmeralda be released and given back to the truants. Up in the tower, Quasimodo cannot hear Clopin's words. Clopin sounds the attack and the truants begin to work at the doors of Notre Dame, trying to break them open.

There is a fatal misunderstanding between Quasimodo and Clopin, who both want the same thing—to save Esmeralda. As Quasimodo's deafness is simply an accident of fate and keeps him from hearing Clopin, the novel suggests that Quasimodo is a tragic figure who cannot help or change the circumstances he finds himself in.

A huge crash disturbs the truants. A beam of wood has been hurled from the top of **Notre Dame** and crushed several of them. The others draw back hurriedly and tremble as they look up at the church. They can see no one up there, so they suspect supernatural interference. Clopin rallies them and urges his men forward once more. The thieves pick up the beam of wood and use it as a battering ram against the door. The impact shakes the cathedral, but the doors stay closed. Large rocks begin to plunge from the cathedral tower and kill men in the crowd. They continue to ram the cathedral amid the rubble.

Quasimodo has to use the literal building blocks of Notre Dame to defend himself and the church from attack. In this sense, Hugo suggests that Notre Dame is destined to be destroyed by the inevitable onslaught of time and human carelessness, represented here by the army of truants. Although some of the truants want to save Esmeralda, others want to loot the church. This also happened during the French Revolution, when the people of Paris rebelled against the monarchy and destroyed and looted parts of Notre Dame.

Up in the tower, Quasimodo tips rock after rock over the balustrade and onto the truants' heads. He has made his way to part of the tower where building work is underway and he uses the leftover materials as weapons to throw down on the thieves. The attackers do not leave, however, and Quasimodo can see that soon they will break down the door. He rushes over to a pile of lead on the ground and begins to melt it with the flame from a torch. At the thought of all the **gold**, silver, and jeweled relics inside the cathedral, the truants redouble their efforts.

Quasimodo uses parts of the building to defend himself and the cathedral. This ties into the idea that Quasimodo is the spirit of Notre Dame and is intimately linked with the cathedral. Quasimodo represents the medieval period, which cherishes Gothic architecture and wishes to defend it from decay and political destruction—during the French Revolution, in which a mob overthrew the monarchy, parts of Notre Dame were destroyed to symbolize the triumph of the people over the establishment.

Suddenly, a scream goes up from the truants and they glance up, alarmed. Molten lead pours from the mouths of the gargoyles on the tower in two slick streams and scalds the men below. The truants drop the beam and rush away from the door. At the top of the tower, they can see a huge fire glowing. The light from the fire seems to bring all the gargoyles to life on the façade of the church. Quasimodo can just be seen as he walks back and forth on the tower.

Quasimodo uses building materials to try and protect the church. In this sense, Quasimodo represents the preservation of Gothic architecture in the face of historical change—a cause which Hugo champions throughout the novel. The truants represent the passage of time, which destroys the cathedral, as well as the post-medieval architects, who do not appreciate the beauty of Gothic architecture and simply want to destroy it or to steal the valuable relics it contains.

Clopin recognizes Quasimodo, but other members of the crowd are convinced it is a demon. One suggests that churches sometimes defend themselves from attackers. Clopin asks where Jehan is and someone says he is probably dead. Clopin then asks for Gringoire but he is told that Gringoire has snuck off. Jehan suddenly appears, pulling a huge ladder behind him. He recklessly announces that he will use it to climb up to the Balcony of Kings, which he knows is always unlocked.

Medieval society was highly superstitious and often used supernatural explanations to understand seemingly inexplicable events, but in thise case, the crowd's belief is not far off; the church isn't literally defending itself, but Quasimodo is using his own love for the church as motivation to defend it. Jehan's announcement that he will scale the "Balcony of Kings" foreshadows the French Revolution, in which a group of peasants stormed Paris and overthrew the monarchy.

The ladder is propped up against the wall and Jehan begins to climb, followed by a hoard of truants. At the top, Jehan clambers over the balustrade and waves to the onlookers below. Quasimodo appears behind Jehan and seizes the top of the ladder. Quasimodo shoves the ladder away from the wall. It topples and crashes to the ground, killing the men on it and some of those below.

Jehan's climb to the "Balcony of Kings" foreshadows the French Revolution in 1789, when a group of peasants stormed Paris and overthrew the monarchy. Jehan's climb represents ordinary people's ascension up the social ranks, which took place from the medieval period onwards, until, at last, ordinary people represented a real threat to the power of the nobility. However, in the medieval period, society is not yet at this point and Quasimodo, who means well by stopping the truant, but does not understand that he wants the same thing as them, represents the confusion of the medieval period and its inability to threaten powerful institutions in an organized way.

Jehan hides from Quasimodo behind a statue of a king. For a few moments, Quasimodo does not see Jehan and Jehan strings his crossbow. When Quasimodo turns around, Jehan takes aim at him. The arrow punctures Quasimodo's arm but Quasimodo leaps at Jehan and crushes him against the wall. He removes Jehan's armor and Jehans scoffs and sings defiantly in Quasimodo's face. Quasimodo smashes Jehan's skull against the wall and throws Jehan from the tower. Jehan's body lands on a statue that sticks out from the walls. It remains there, suspended above the square.

Jehan's tragic end is the logical conclusion of his determination to lead a debauched and extreme existence. While some of the truants have a good reason to attack the church—they want to rescue Esmeralda—Jehan does so out of the simple desire to be rebellious and destructive, because he believes this is his destiny. This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, however, and Jehan dies as a result of his (voluntary) involvement with the truants.

The truants below cry out for revenge. They find more ladders and ropes and begin to scale the walls. Quasimodo is horrified and cannot fend them all off. They look like hideous monsters besieging the church. The towers of **Notre Dame** glow red with fire and this light can be seen across Paris.

The attack on Notre Dame foreshadows the French Revolution (when a mob overran Paris and overthrew the monarchy), in which Notre Dame was badly damaged. It also hints at the gradual loss of interest in Gothic architecture after the medieval period, when Gothic churches began to be destroyed and neglected. Quasimodo represents the church, while the truants represent the people of France. The people of France built Notre Dame, however, and Hugo suggests that it is ignorance which causes people to destroy historical buildings when, really, these buildings belong to the people's own cultural heritage.

BOOK 10, CHAPTER 5

In the Bastille, another light is burning. This light is a candle in the bedchamber of Louis XI. Unlike other monarchs, Louis XI prefers to sleep in the Bastille rather than in the Louvre. It suits his tastes better and is more heavily protected. There is not much furniture in the room: only one chair and one bed, both for the king. The room has been preserved as it was and can still be visited in modern Paris. Only one candle burns, and four figures stand around the walls of the room.

The Bastille was a famously secure prison in Paris where political traitors were kept. The existence of the Bastille suggests that the French monarchy is oppressive and corrupt, and that people do not have freedom of speech and can be locked up for their political opinions. The fact that Louis XI prefers to sleep in the Bastille, rather than the Louvre (which was a royal hotel at the time and is now a famous art gallery), suggests that he is afraid of losing his power and wants to be protected from the populace, who may rebel against him.

One of these men is a sly-looking nobleman named Olivier le Daim, who holds a manuscript and stands beside the chair in which Louis XI sits. The king is an elderly, decrepit man who is not finely dressed and who hunches over his papers. Further back, in the shadows, stand the two Flemish ambassadors: Guillaume Rym and Jacques Coppenole. A large, well-armed man guards the door.

Olivier le Daim was a real historical figure and a famously devious politician who was involved in many intrigues alongside Louis XI. His nickname translates to "Olivier the Bad" because of his ruthless style of government, which reinforces the point that the nobility was extremely corrupt in medieval France.

Jacques Coppenole complains quietly to Guillaume Rym that he is tired of standing. Guillaume hushes him discreetly. Louis XI suddenly exclaims that Olivier will ruin the Kingdom. The manuscript Olivier reads from is a list of expenses for all the nobles in Paris. Louis XI snatches it from Olivier and looks over it in horror. The king reads the list aloud, coughs, and then complains that luxury should never be allowed to get out of hand in a court.

Louis XI was a famously frugal monarch. However, although he saved money (which was collected from the people in taxes) by cutting back on the nobility's expenses, he did not use this money to benefit the populace and, instead, spent it on wars and political disputes with other nations. This suggests that medieval France is extremely corrupt and that both the ambitious king and the greedy nobles try to take as much money from the people as they can, even if their reasons are different.

Louis XI complains angrily that the nobles bleed money from the king. He prefers the philosophy of "kill the lords, save the people." His bad temper subsides, and he listens sullenly to the rest of the list. When Olivier reaches an entry that accounts for the cost of feeding a prisoner who has been locked up for treason, Louis XI sits up and demands to know why a prisoner is being fed when he should be hanged. The next entry is for instruments of torture and public execution. Louis XI gladly agrees to these expenses as, he says, they are very necessary.

Louis XI was a famously frugal monarch and wanted to cut back on the nobility's power. In the medieval period, nobles got their wealth through taxes that were taken from the people and allocated to them by the king. However, Louis XI would rather give money to the people because the people are more numerous than the nobles and, therefore, more powerful in a group. Louis XI is afraid of the populace, who may rebel against him if they mobilize in large numbers. Louis XI also wants the populace to fear him, however, and he accomplishes this by spending money on public execution. This suggests that he does not care about the people; he simply wants to maintain his power over them by giving them what they want. Although people were, of course, afraid of being executed, public executions were a popular form of entertainment in the medieval period and there was a public demand for them. Hugo suggests that a brutal king who murders his people breeds a brutal populace who fear the king but want to see others murdered.

The next item is a large cage. This seems to jog Louis XI's memory and he suddenly seems excited. He wants to see the cage himself and he invites Guillaume Rym and Jacques Coppenole to accompany him. Louis signals to the man at the door, the Captain of the Bastille, Tristan l'Hermite, and he leads the way from the room. The party wanders through the dingy tunnels of the Bastille.

The Bastille was a vast fortress in which political prisoners were incarcerated. The architectural design of the Bastille, with its many tunnels, contributes to its function as a place that is hard to escape from. In the French Revolution, in 1789, a mob of Parisians stormed the Bastille, freed the prisoners, and overthrew the monarchy.

Deep down, in a cellar of the Bastille, Louis XI shows the Flemish ambassadors a huge wooden cage. It is like a tomb, with barred windows and only one door. Louis XI walks around it admiringly. Olivier reads the inventory and reveals that the cage replaces an old one, inside which a prisoner has lived for several years. From inside the new cage, a voice can be heard pleading for mercy. Although the others wince at this sound, Louis XI seems oblivious to it. The prisoner cries out that he is innocent and that he has lived in a cage for 14 years.

Louis XI is very proud of his power and his ability to torture and imprison people. This suggests that the monarchy in medieval France is very cruel and is interested in frightening and controlling the populace rather than helping them.

As the group makes to leave, the voice cries out in despair. On his way back up the stairs, Louis XI asks casually if there was someone in the cage. Olivier is horrified and tells the king that it is a bishop who was condemned for treason. Louis XI is satisfied with this and makes his way back to his room. Back in his chamber, Louis XI leans over his desk and begins to write.

This incident makes it clear that Louis XI doesn't care much at all about his people; he doesn't even remember when he imprisons prominent figures for treason.

Eventually, Louis XI glances up and says to Olivier that the soldiers have complained about their rations and the conditions of their uniforms. He demands they be punished for their greed. Jacques Coictier suddenly bursts into the room and says that there is a riot in Paris. The King demands to know what is going on and Coictier replies that it is a group from the "Court of Miracles" who rebel against the bailiff, who is lord of that district.

Louis XI is an oppressive monarch. Not only can he imprison people at will, he also oppresses people financially because he does not provide enough for them to eat and live on and then punishes them if they complain. Because medieval society was so oppressive, riots and rebellions among the people were common.

Louis XI seems rather pleased by this. He asks if the mob is armed and Coictier replies that they are. Louis XI says he will send help in the morning, but Coictier pleads with him to intervene earlier. Louis asks Coictier which part of Paris the bailiff controls and Coictier replies that it is the district near **Notre Dame**. Louis XI murmurs happily that the bailiff has a "nice slice of Paris" there. Louis XI suddenly gives an angry cry and complains that there are too many nobles who aspire to be kings in Paris. This is sacrilege, he says—there must only be one king as there is only one God.

Louis XI does not care about the people but wants to use them to get his own way and maintain his power. He feels that the bailiffs, who control districts of Paris, are competitors for his power. Louis XI knows that, when the people mobilize in large numbers, they are powerful and might kill or overthrow the bailiff for him. This suggests that Louis XI is a controlling and power-hungry monarch who is only willing to give the people freedom if doing so suits his own goals.

Coictier says that two of the rioters have been caught and Louis XI demands to see them. The guards bring in two men. One is drunk and stupid and can give the king no information, and the other is Pierre Gringoire. The king dismisses the first man and sends him to be hanged. He then questions Gringoire, who insists that he has nothing to do with the riot and that his arrest is just a cruel twist of fate.

Capital punishment was common in the medieval period and Louis XI sentences people to death indiscriminately, regardless of whether they are guilty or not. Although Gringoire has orchestrated the riot, he now pretends that he is an innocent bystander who has simply been caught up in the revolt, a choice that highlights how Gringoire's lack of passion can lead him to immoral behavior like lying.

Louis XI orders that Gringoire should be hanged too, but Gringoire throws himself at the king's feet and begs for mercy. He begs the king to remember that cruelty only strikes fear in people's hearts, whereas mercy breeds loyalty. Louis XI listens to Gringoire's lengthy tirade, then irritably dismisses him. Gringoire rushes from the chamber, hardly able to believe his luck.

Gringoire's words strike a chord with the king because, although Louis XI wants to be feared by the people, he also knows that, to a certain extent, he must keep the people happy, because otherwise they may turn on him. This suggests that even the most powerful monarchs fear the people because the people greatly outnumber the ruling classes.

Louis XI is clearly in an excellent mood—the attack upon the bailiff has greatly cheered him up. Jacques Coictier asks the king how his chest pain is and the king replies that it is severe. Jacques Coictier takes the king's pulse and then somberly announces that the case is very serious. This is a slight exaggeration, but this is how the king's doctor makes his money. Louis IX is very anxious over his health and asks Jacques Coictier for a cure.

Louis XI dislikes the bailiffs because he feels they are competitors for his power; he wants to shrink the nobility and keep all the money and power for himself. Coictier's behavior demonstrates the way that nobles took advantage of their social system and tried to constantly take money from the king. Coictier knows that the king isn't really sick, but selling him cures is the easiest way for Coictier to get what he wants.

While Coictier considers an appropriate cure, he casually reminds Louis XI that he has a nephew in need of a noble position. Louis XI says that Coictier can have whatever he wants so long as he provides a cure. Seeing that the king is in a generous mood, Olivier reminds him that the Councilor for the Execution of Justice has died and that the position is vacant. Louis XI snaps at Olivier that he is arrogant and orders Olivier to shave him. Olivier sullenly leaves the room to get his razor.

In the medieval period, nobles relied on the king for wealth and social status, which the king could allocate. But clearly, Louis XI doesn't give out positions based on qualifications or worthiness; he ready to let Coictier's nephew take charge of the justice system as a reward for his uncle. This scene highlights just how corrupt Paris's ruling classes and justice system really are.

Louis XI looks out of the window and happily admires the distant fire, which the rioters have lit at **Notre Dame**. Jacques Coppenole joins him by the window and says that it must be a huge revolt, like one that they had in Burgundy a few years previously. Louis XI shrugs this off and says that his guards will easily overcome the mob. Jacques Coppenole warns him not to be too sure of this, as this was not the case in Burgundy.

While Louis XI looks down on the people, Jacques Coppenole knows that people in large numbers, especially those who have legitimate grievances with unjust and oppressive rulers, can be surprisingly powerful. Coppenole is a tradesman rather than a noble by birth, and he represents the gradual development of democracy and decline of the nobility in Europe as the medieval period gives way to the Renaissance.

Louis XI says that the assault in Burgundy was a "battle," not a riot. Jacques Coppenole says that, if this is true, it just means that "the people's hour has not yet come." Louis XI asks suspiciously how he will know if the hour does arrive and Coppenole replies that when the Bastille falls, and when the nobles and soldiers begin to kill each other, then the hour will have come. Louis XI asks Coppenole how a riot starts. Coppenole replies that it is easy: all one needs to do is shout about injustice in the street. The people have all experienced injustice and will readily join in.

Coppenole refers to a skirmish in Burgundy where the people did not just riot but organized an army to fight the nobles. This suggests that ordinary people in large groups can be a powerful force to bring down injustice. Coppenole's mention of the "people's hour" —when the people will reclaim their freedom from the oppressive reign of the monarchy—foreshadows the French Revolution in 1789, when a group of Parisians stormed the Bastille, freed the prisoners, and overthrew and executed the monarchy. It is ironic that Louis XI uses the Bastille as a prison for the people and protection for himself because, one day, the people will use the Bastille to imprison monarchs.

Olivier returns with the provost of Paris and the Captain of the Chevaliers, who both look very worried. Olivier looks secretly pleased and tells Louis XI that the riot is not against the bailiff but against the king himself. He explains that the rioters have attacked **Notre Dame** because a witch, whom they want dead, has taken sanctuary there. Notre Dame, and anyone seeking sanctuary in it, are under the king's protection, so therefore the riot is against the king.

Nobles like Olivier were in constant competition for power and wealth in the medieval period, which is why he's pleased to see the king himself threatened. Louis XI knows that large groups of ordinary people are extremely powerful and that, although the monarchy is the ruling class, he may not be able to suppress large numbers of people who are mobilized against him.

Louis XI flies into a fury. He demands that the soldiers arm themselves and descend upon the mob. He orders every member of the riot to be killed or imprisoned. Olivier asks what should be done with the witch and Louis XI replies that they should hang her. Guillaume Rym slyly whispers to Coppenole that the king murders the people only to give them what they want.

Louis XI is afraid of the people because he is a cruel and unjust monarch and he fears that, because of this, they want to overthrow him. He is willing to use violence to suppress them, which demonstrates that he does not care about the people themselves, but only about maintaining his power. Rym's comment suggests that, before the advent of democracy in Europe, kings controlled the populace by oppressing them with violence and then pandering to their demands when the people finally rebelled against this violent treatment.

After he has given his order, Louis XI falls to his knees and prays to **Notre Dame** for forgiveness. He swears he will only break the sanctity of her refuge this once. Louis XI dismisses Coppenole and Guillaume Rym and orders Olivier to shave him. On their way out, Coppenole complains to Rym that Louis XI is cruel when he is sick.

Gothic cathedrals like Notre Dame were symbolic in the medieval period because they represented the king's power, which was joined to the Church's. Although, as the king, Louis XI has almost unlimited power, according to medieval religious beliefs he still answers to the will of God—which the church symbolizes—and cannot foresee his destiny. Louis XI's power is also limited by his mortality and his ill health, which suggests that, no matter how powerful someone is, they are still subject to the course of time and fate.

BOOK 10, CHAPTER 6

Once Louis XI has released him, Gringoire rushes down to the Porte Baudoyer where Frollo waits for him. Frollo irritably asks Gringoire why he was late and Gringoire replies that it was not his fault. He tells Frollo that he was almost hanged and that this seems to be his destiny. Frollo asks if he has the "truant's password" and Gringoire replies that it is "blazing bayonets." Gringoire asks how they will get inside **Notre Dame** and Frollo replies that he has the key to the tower and another key that will take them out a back door to the river. The two men hurriedly set off towards the cathedral.

Gringoire consistently wriggles out of deadly situations, despite his belief that he is destined to be killed. He has no strong emotions or principles that he feels he must stick to. In this sense, Gringoire is the opposite of Frollo, who is very rigid in his beliefs and who will not change his behavior, even when he feels that his actions are immoral or damning. Although Louis XI views the truants as a disorganized mob, he underestimates them. Their use of the password and their effective surrounding of Notre Dame suggest that, when organized in large numbers, the people are a powerful force.

BOOK 10, CHAPTER 7

On the battlements of **Notre Dame**, Quasimodo loses hope of fending off the truants, who continue to besiege the cathedral. Suddenly a cry sounds below and the king's guard, with Phoebus riding at the front, bursts into the square and attacks the rioters. The truants fight bravely and Clopin Troullefou cuts many soldiers down with his scythe. Eventually, the truants are overcome and they flee the square, leaving the dead behind.

In this situation, the truants represent both the inevitable passage of time and the ability of ordinary people to challenge powerful authorities. As society moves out of the medieval period, people will begin to lose interest in and, therefore, neglect, Gothic architecture, which is reflected in the truants' disregard for the cathedral. However, rebellions like theirs will also be necessary to overthrow the monarchy later on.

Quasimodo sees that the guards have won and falls to his knees to give thanks. He then rushes to Esmeralda's cell but, when he gets there, he finds it empty.

Although Quasimodo believes that the guards are on his side, the guards actually want to kill Esmeralda, because this is what they believe the people wanted when they started the riot. The multiple layers of misunderstanding here lead to tragedy, which reinforces the idea that it's difficult (or even impossible) to know for sure why events happen or what their outcomes will be.

BOOK 11, CHAPTER 1

The noise of the riot wakes Esmeralda up. At first, when she looks out of her cell, she thinks that the rioters are demons who have come to wage war on the church. Gradually, she realizes that they are men figthing in the square and she thinks they have come to hang her. She collapses on her bed, overcome by fear, and, although she is not a Christian, she prays desperately to **Notre Dame** for salvation.

Esmeralda is superstitious and, like many people in medieval society, she believes in demons and evil spirits. And at the same time, she prays to the church—even though she's not a Christian. Her actions here show that, especially in times of desperation, people's choices are deeply influenced by their social contexts.

Suddenly, the door bursts open and two men enter the cell. One is Gringoire and the other, Frollo, is disguised by a black cloak. Gringoire is delighted to see Djali and tells Esmeralda that they have come to rescue her. Esmeralda is relieved, but the presence of the other man unnerves her. The group hurries down the tower stairs and Djali nearly trips Gringoire several times. Gringoire exclaims that this is the way with life and that our best friends often make us fall.

Gringoire prefers the pretty goat, Djali, to the extremely beautiful Esmeralda. This provides comic relief in the novel, but it also supports Hugo's idea that 19th century society—which Gringoire represents—does not appreciate the beauty of Gothic architecture—which Esmeralda reflects—and prefers insipid or picturesque things instead. Gringoire's comment also reflects the tragic irony of the situation—he is Esmeralda's friend and wants to help her, but he has unknowingly led Frollo, who wants to harm Esmeralda, right to her.

Frollo unlocks the back door of the tower, which leads onto the tip of the island on which **Notre Dame** sits. A small boat is moored there and Esmeralda, Gringoire, Djali, and Frollo climb in. Esmeralda is still very unnerved by Frollo and presses close to Gringoire in the boat. Gringoire is oblivious to her fear, however, and he chats away happily as they make their way upstream. He complains that Louis XI is a very cruel king who keeps all the money that he saves for himself.

Gringoire does not understand Esmeralda's extreme fear of Frollo or Frollo's malevolent intentions towards Esmeralda, because he has never experienced extreme passion of any kind. Gringoire represents 19th century society in the novel, which, Hugo suggests, rejects genuine, complex emotion in favor of simplistic pleasantness. Gringoire's comment also supports Hugo's belief that the medieval monarchy was extremely corrupt and oppressive and kept all the money and power for themselves.

Gringoire suddenly asks Frollo if he saw the young man who fell from the tower and was impaled on a statue. This young man was Jehan. Frollo stops rowing for a second and gives a pained sigh. Esmeralda shivers because she has heard this sound before and now knows it is Frollo. Frollo begins to row again. As the boat passes a famous garden, Gringoire remarks that the garden contains a famous "tree of lust" which is responsible for much adultery and sin. Sins of the flesh are terrible, he says, and can incite jealousy and destruction.

The tree reflects Frollo's lust for Esmeralda, which does indeed cause him to behave destructively. Frollo is a priest and must remain celibate, as lust was associated with sin in the medieval period, whereas abstinence was associated with spiritual purity. Because of these beliefs, Frollo is ashamed of his lustful desires and tries to repress them. This does not cause his sexual urges to dissipate, however, but simply causes them to erupt in violent ways. Through Frollo's character, Hugo suggests that it is medieval society's attitude towards sex, and not sex itself, which is dangerous.

They can now hear cries of "hang the witch!" coming from the towers of **Notre Dame**. Esmeralda nearly faints with fear and clings to Gringoire. Gringoire feels conflicted. He is desperate to save Djali and knows that he cannot escape with both Esmeralda and the goat. He reaons that Frollo is very keen to help Esmeralda so, when the boat is moored on the opposite side of the river, Gringoire sneaks away and takes Djali with him.

Gringoire represents 19th century artistic tastes, which, Hugo suggests, favor picturesque and pretty aesthetics over of the extremity and complexity of the Gothic. Hugo uses the idea that Gringoire prefers Djali to Esmeralda to suggest that Gringoire does not understand real beauty or passion and that, like 19th century society, his superficial tastes lead him to make foolish, even absurd choices. The reader already knows that Frollo wants to hurt Esmeralda rather than keeping her safe, but Gringoire remains blissfully ignorant of the consequences of his actions.

Esmeralda is left alone with Frollo. Frollo seizes her hand and drags her towards the Place de Grève. Esmeralda follows helplessly, broken by the futility of her efforts to escape Frollo. She panics when she sees the gallows but there is no one in the dark square to help her. Frollo pulls back his hood and Esmeralda recoils from him.

Esmeralda is a tragic victim of fate. Although she has done nothing wrong and has done her best to escape from Frollo, she cannot shake his influence and fate keeps leading her back to him.

Frollo paces before the gallows and tells Esmeralda that he can still save her. She will be hanged, though, if she does not give herself to him. He begs her not to speak of Phoebus—Frollo will not be able to control himself if she does—and he tells her that he still loves her. Frollo demands that Esmeralda choose between him and the gallows. Esmeralda falls to her knees before the gallows and says that it does not appall her the way that he does.

Frollo's passion for Esmeralda has driven him to fanatical and destructive behavior, because he couldn't come to terms with the strength of his feelings. Frollo's misogynistic beliefs about women—that they are more lustful and, therefore, more sinful than men—and his belief that Esmeralda has deliberately tempted him mean that he does not care for her suffering and only cares about satisfying himself.

Frollo is in despair. He laments that the fiery passion he feels for Esmeralda does not show through his skin. He cries out that it is not his fault he loves her and decries the terrible "fatality" of it all. Esmeralda is a good person, he says, but she is only cruel to him, who loves her most. Frollo covers his face and begins to cry and Esmeralda watches in horror. When he finally looks up, he tells her that he has destroyed his career, his virtue, and his life, all for her.

Although Frollo cannot help his sexual attraction to Esmeralda—which Hugo argues is a natural emotion and should not be repressed—Frollo's fatalistic belief in predestination (the idea that people's lives are planned by God and, therefore, cannot be changed) means that he does not take responsibility for his misogynistic behavior towards her—which he certainly could *help. Instead, he blames her for his own destructive choices, showing again that believing too strongly in fate can lead to cowardly, irrational behavior.*

A horrible expression crosses Frollo's face. He utters the words: "Cain, what hast though done with thy brother?" He begins to weep for Jehan's death and says that it is all Esmeralda's fault because she has caused him to damn himself. He sinks to the ground and, when he looks up again, he is appalled that Esmeralda has watched him cry and has not tried to comfort him. He asks her if she has no pity and tells her that he will still save her if she will give him one kind word.

Before his obsession with Esmeralda, Frollo had a loving relationship with his brother, Jehan, who has been killed in the riot at Notre Dame. Frollo's fixation with Esmeralda has eclipsed all positive emotions in his life, and, now that Jehan is dead, he feels guilty for neglecting him and allowing him to enter a life of crime, which led to his death. But rather than take responsibility for his own behavior, which has had many tragic consequences, Frollo misogynistically blames Esmeralda because, he believes, she has enticed him into abandoning everything to pursue her. Frollo also believes in predestination and feels that, although he pursued Esmeralda voluntarily and she never even knew about his feelings, he had no choice and was compelled by fateful forces outside of his control.

Esmeralda tells Frollo that he is a murderer and Frollo throws himself on her and tries to rape her. Throughout, he murmurs that she must choose between him and death. Esmeralda fights Frollo off and screams at him. She says he is hideous and old compared with Phoebus. Frollo shakes her and tells her that she will die for this. He drags her across the Place de Grève and pushes her against the wall. He asks her one last time if she will give herself to him and, when she says no, he calls out to Paquette la Chantefleurie.

Medieval society is extremely misogynistic—people believe that women are inherently more sinful than men and often hold women responsible for men's lustful feelings towards them. So, as a woman, Esmeralda has no way to defend herself from her horrible fate or from Frollo's advances.

An arm reaches through the grill in the wall and winds around Esmeralda. Paquette la Chantefleurie, the recluse who lives in the "rat hole," holds Esmeralda tight and cackles at her. Frollo tells Paquette that she may now have her revenge and he goes to summon the guards to hang Esmeralda. Esmeralda begs Paquette to let her go but Paquette clings to Esmeralda and laughs at her plight. She tells Esmeralda that she will be hanged as revenge for Paquette's baby, who was eaten by gypsies 15 years ago.

Paquette hates gypsies because she believes they killed her child. Paquette's great love for her child has warped into a terrible hatred of Esmeralda and this suggests that great passions can transform into twisted obsessions if this passion is thwarted by fate or cannot be expressed. Esmeralda is a tragic victim of fate and has done nothing to bring her situation on herself.

Esmeralda cries out that she is looking for her mother, whom she lost just as Paquette lost her baby. Paquette snarls that, if Esmeralda's mother ever comes to look for her in the Place de Grève, Paquette will show her the gallows. Paquette holds a baby's **shoe** through the bars and says that this belonged to her baby. Esmeralda cries out and unwraps the amulet she wears round her neck. She pulls an identical baby shoe from the sachet and Paquette understands suddenly that Esmeralda is her daughter.

This revelation highlights how ironic Paquette's hatred of gypsies is. Because she let her love for her daughter transform into twisted hate, she never bothered to consider that Esmeralda could be her daughter. In other words, she believed she had lost her daugher, and her inability to deal with that painful (false) belief made it so that she really did *lose her daughter in the end.*

Paquette la Chantefleurie begins to weep with joy. She seizes a slab of stone from the floor of her cell and smashes the grate that covers the window. Lifting Esmeralda through it, Paquette begins to fawn and weep over Esmeralda, remarking on her beauty. The sound of the guard's horses as they approach the cell brings the two women back to themselves.

Fate tragically reunites Esmeralda with her mother just when she is about to be executed. It is doubly tragic that Paquette has helped Frollo catch Esmeralda and has, therefore, brought about her own beloved daughter's demise.

Esmeralda begs Paquette to save her. Esmeralda explains she is about to be hanged. Paquette is horrified. She forces Esmeralda into a shadowy corner of the cell and covers her as best she can. Frollo can be heard as he leads Phoebus and the guards towards the cell. Tristan l'Hermite pushes his face into the cell and addresses Paquette. He asks her where the witch has gone, and Paquette says that she escaped.

Tragically, Paquette has helped the guards trap Esmeralda, because before she realized Esmeralda was her daughter, Paquette hated gypsies and wanted to see Esmeralda killed. This suggests that negative obsessions, like hatred or revenge, often have devastating and unpredictable consequences.

The guards make to leave. One man, however, asks why the bars of the cell are smashed. Paquette sneers and says they have always been like that because a cart smashed against the wall. Another member of the guards agrees that he saw this happen. The first man says that, if this is the case, the bars should be smashed in rather than out. Tristan questions Paquette again, more aggressively. Paquette struggles, but she manages to fend off their questions. Eventually, the guards reluctantly turn to leave.

Some of the guards easily take Paquette's story at face value, even though there is clear evidence that it's false. This suggests that information in medieval society is unreliable and that, before rational knowledge became more widespread, many people relied on gossip, superstition, and hearsay, rather than evidence, to understand the world.

Esmeralda huddles in her corner and listens to this exchange between Paquette and the guards. She is almost mad with fear. As the men walk away, Esmeralda hears Phoebus ask if he may now rejoin his own company. This sound strikes hope into Esmeralda's heart and she throws herself at the hole in the wall and screams out for Phoebus to save her. Phoebus does not hear, however, and Tristan and the guards return.

Esmeralda has gone mad because of her ordeal and is fatally drawn to Phoebus because he represents her past, which was full of joy, in contrast to the horror of her current situation. In this sense, her obsession with Phoebus mirrors Frollo's obsession with her; she is so certain that he will help her that she gives away her hiding spot, just as Frollo remains certain that Esmeralda can love him, despite all evidence to the contrary. Through Esmeralda's choice here, Hugo indicates that obsessive emotions are always a bad thing—even when a virtuous person like Esmeralda is the one feeling them.

Paquette tries to put the guards off again but Tristan orders them to break down the wall of the cell. The men get to work, looking somewhat guilty as they listen to Paquette's desperate pleas. Eventually, the men break through the wall and Tristan orders them to take Esmeralda. Paquette begs them not to and begins to tell them her story. The men hear her with tears in their eyes, but they must follow the king's orders. Paquette throws herself upon Esmeralda and the men reluctantly pull her off.

Although the guards feel sorry for Paquette, they will likely face execution themselves if they flout the King's orders. This suggests that a cruel justice or governmental system makes people cruel too, as they are forced to follow its rules or risk harm to themselves. Esmeralda's reunion with Paquette is tragic and suggests that fate is also cruel.

Dawn breaks upon the square and a crowd gathers in the Place de Grève to watch the execution. Heriet Cousin, a guard, weeps as he carries Esmeralda towards the gallows. Paquette follows them and clings to Esmeralda, pleading helplessly for her daughter's life. The noose is fastened around Esmeralda's neck. Paquette sinks her teeth into the hangman's arm, and he shoves her away. She hits her head on the cobblestones and dies. Esmeralda is carried up the scaffold.

Although the guards sympathize with Paquette, they cannot disobey the King's order to hang Esmeralda because they may be hung themselves if they do this. This shows again that a cruel justice system breeds cruel people, as they must follow unjust laws or risk punishment themselves. Paquette's fate is extremely tragic. Although in one way, she gets what always wanted—she wanted Esmeralda dead because Esmeralda is a gypsy, and Paquette believes gypsies killed her child—the fulfilment of her obsessive hatred of Esmeralda also brings about her own destruction because Esmeralda turns out to be her long-lost child. Paquette's bleak end points out again that overwhelming desires become self-destructive when they're not channeled properly.

BOOK 11, CHAPTER 2

Quasimodo desperately searches **Notre Dame** for Esmeralda. Before Tristan found Esmeralda in the square, Quasimodo led him all over the church to try to find her. Quasimodo thinks that the truants are the ones who want to harm Esmeralda and he believes that the guards want to help her. Quasimodo would have accidentally betrayed her if she had not escaped with Gringoire and Frollo. When Tristan leaves, Quasimodo continues to search.

Quasimodo distrusts the people of Paris, like those who joined the riot, because they have always been cruel to him and ostracized him from society because of his deformed appearance. Therefore, Quasimodo believes that they also want to harm Esmeralda, since they have always been unkind to him.


When he can find no trace of Esmeralda, Quasimodo returns to her cell. He finds it still empty and, in a fit of rage and grief, he smashes his head against the wall and knocks himself unconscious. When he wakes up, he suddenly remembers Frollo's attempt to rape Esmeralda. Quasimodo's love and respect for Frollo grieve him and make him feel conflicted. He knows, however, that Frollo has a key to the tower where Esmeralda stayed.

Quasimodo knows that Frollo is sexually obsessed with Esmeralda and will go to any lengths to satisfy his lust for her, even if this means he must hurt her. In contrast, Quasimodo, who also loves Esmeralda, hurts himself because of his love for her. Again, it's clear that outward appearances can often contrast sharply with inner virtue.

As he lies there, Quasimodo notices a figure that paces the aisle above him and looks out from the edge of the tower. It is Frollo. Frollo is extremely distracted and does not notice Quasimodo. Quasimodo climbs up the tower behind Frollo. Frollo is lost in thought and stares out across Paris, which looks beautiful as the sun rises. Quasimodo can see that Frollo's eyes are fixed on one spot—the Place de Grève.

Notre Dame is the center of Paris in the novel and all parts of the city can be seen from its towers. This vivid image again reinforces the theme that Gothic architecture was a central aspect of life in the medieval period.

Quasimodo follows Frollo's gaze and sees the hangman climb the ladder up to the gallows, carrying Esmeralda. Quasimodo watches her hang and, at that moment, Frollo lets out a terrible, satanic laugh. Quasimodo rushes at Frollo and shoves him from the tower. Frollo screams out "Damnation!" as he falls. His robe catches on a waterspout and he clings on with both hands. Quasimodo looks down at Frollo but ignores his pleas for help. Instead, Quasimodo stares at the gallows and weeps for Esmeralda.

Frollo believes that it was his destiny to kill Esmeralda and that, because events in human lives are predetermined by God, that there is nothing he could have done to change this. This has led Frollo to go to extreme lengths to persecute and kill Esmeralda—whom he was sexually obsessed with and whom he blamed for his sexual feelings. In a sense, Frollo's fate plays out as he expects—he kills Esmeralda and falls, literally and morally. However, Frollo's fate is a self-fulfilling prophecy because, as he believed he had no choice but to act in destructive ways, he missed countless opportunities to make things turn out differently.


Frollo tries to hoist himself back onto the ledge via the waterspout. He struggles to cling on and stares around in horror at the stone roofs and pavements below and at the stone monsters on the wall, thinking that everything around him is stone. Finally, the spout gives way and Frollo plunges from the tower of **Notre Dame**. He lands on the roof of a house below, then slides off to the pavement. He is dead before he hits the ground.

Although Frollo has tried to push the boundaries of the medieval society he lives in (through his interest in alchemy and science, which would develop rapidly and lead to the widespread availability of rational knowledge in the next few centuries), his destructive passions and his misogynistic beliefs about women and sexuality have led to his downfall. The way that everything around him seems to be stone reflects his inability to escape this age which has shaped him and his beliefs. His end further suggests that, although people are capable of learning, pursuit of knowledge is always limited by mortality and by people's limited capacity for learning. Frollo's death is the logical result of his destructive quest to destroy Esmeralda and he falls, both literally and morally, from grace, which is symbolized by the beautiful cathedral.

On the tower, Quasimodo weeps as he watches Esmeralda's final death throes. He looks down at Frollo's body on the pavement and cries, "Oh, all that I have loved!"

Quasimodo symbolizes the medieval period, which is about to come to an end in the era when the novel is set. Beautiful Gothic architecture—symbolized by Esmeralda—will not be appreciated in the following centuries, and the power of the Church, which commissioned beautiful buildings like Notre Dame and which Frollo represents, will also go into decline.

BOOK 11, CHAPTER 3

Quasimodo disappears from **Notre Dame** that afternoon. Rumors circulate that the demon Quasimodo has finally carried Frollo's soul to Hell. Frollo is denied a religious burial. The year after these events, Louis XI also dies. Gringoire goes on to be a successful playwright, though he also dabbles in many other things. Phoebus leads an unhappy life as a result of his unhappy marriage to Fleur-de-Lys.

Quasimodo represents the spirit of the medieval period, which valued Gothic architecture and, therefore, brought life it. The novel is set at the end of the medieval period, around the real, historical death of Louis XI, when Europe began to transition into the Renaissance. Hugo suggests that, when the values of the medieval period—including the power of the Church, which was represented through buildings like Notre Dame—ceased to be important, people lost touch with these buildings and no longer saw them as alive or expressive of cultural values.

BOOK 11, CHAPTER 4

Quasimodo is never seen again after this day. After she is hanged, Esmeralda's body is placed in the mass grave in the cellar of a prison called Montfaucon, with the remains of other executed prisoners. Two years after this, Olivier le Daim is hanged and buried in Montfaucon. The grave is opened again so Olivier's body can be removed and buried elsewhere after Charles VIII posthumously pardons him.

The medieval period ended soon after the era the novel is set in, and its concluding events (including the real historical death of Olivier le Daim) reflect this coming change. With Esmeralda's death, Hugo indicates that something real and beautiful came to an end as the medieval period ended. But at the same, time, he also makes it clear that this change was a necessary remedy to social ills—for instance, the mass grave highlights how many people were executed by the corrupt medieval justice system.

During this excavation, two skeletons are found wrapped around each other. One is the skeleton of a woman. A few white rags still cling to her bones. The other skeleton is deformed and has clearly not died from hanging. The guards try to untangle them, but the deformed skeleton turns to ash beneath their hands.

Quasimodo and Esmeralda represent the medieval period and the beautiful and grotesque extremes of Gothic architecture, which symbolizes medieval thought throughout the novel. Hugo suggests that in Gothic architecture, beauty is intertwined with ugliness and that this combination reflects real life, which contains both joy and devastation. With this bittersweet conclusion, Hugo indicates that, although Gothic architecture fell out of favor for several centuries after the medieval period, he hopes to see a revival of interest in this art form, which, although it can never be recaptured in its original form, can provide modern readers with valuable knowledge about both the medieval period and humanity in general.

HOW TO CITE

To cite this LitChart:

MLA

Greenall, Lily. "*The Hunchback of Notre Dame.*" *LitCharts*. LitCharts LLC, 25 Feb 2020. Web. 21 Apr 2020.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Greenall, Lily. "*The Hunchback of Notre Dame.*" LitCharts LLC, February 25, 2020. Retrieved April 21, 2020. https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-hunchback-of-notre-dame.

To cite any of the quotes from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* covered in the Quotes section of this LitChart:

MLA

Hugo, Victor. The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Penguin. 1978.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Hugo, Victor. The Hunchback of Notre Dame. New York: Penguin. 1978.