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Family Plays

VICTOR HUGO'S

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

Drama adapted by
TIM KELLY



THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

Victor Hugo's novel, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, is one of the great classics of world literature. It has been filmed many times, turned into operas and stage extravaganzas. Whatever the format, it is always a crowd pleaser.

Drama. *Adapted by Tim Kelly from the novel by Victor Hugo. Cast: 14m., 14w., flexible (may be increased with extras or reduced with doubling).* This exciting dramatization by Tim Kelly, one of America's most popular playwrights, captures the essence of the famous original. It brings to life on the stage some of the most memorable fictional characters ever created: the pitiable but good-hearted bell-ringer of Notre Dame Cathedral, Quasimodo; the vain, handsome Captain Phoebus; the villainous Frolo; the temperamental poet, Pierre Gringoire (Hugo himself, no doubt); the colorful Beggars of Paris, and the beautiful, innocent, naive gypsy, Esmeralda, whom they all love. The famous settings of the novel are also here, but in a manner that negates the necessity of pauses for scene changes. With simple shifts in lighting and with the addition or removal of simple set props—carried on and off by the characters—the audience sees the rollicking Festival of Fools; the notorious Court of Miracles, where the blind see and the lame walk; the murder of Captain Phoebus; the lashing of Quasimodo on the pillory and the rescue of Esmeralda from her place of execution on a charge of witchcraft. The play ends on an upbeat note without the tragic denouement of the novel. Here, for actors and audiences of teenagers and adults, is a significant and entertaining look at Victor Hugo's famous story. *Designed for easy production, the play can be as simple or as grand as the producer chooses. Basically, the setting is the bare stage with a few props moved on and off. The play should flow as if it were a film, with fades and dissolves but no pauses. For staging suggestions, consult the production notes in the script. Approximate running time: 100 to 120 minutes. Code: HE7.*

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The Hunchback
of Notre Dame

VICTOR HUGO'S
THE HUNCHBACK
OF NOTRE DAME

Adapted and Dramatized in 2 Acts

by

TIM KELLY

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311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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Dedication

**The author wishes to thank the
THEATRE LAUREL ACTING COMPANY
of Los Angeles, California,
for its help in developing this script**

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

Cast of Characters (In order of speaking)*

Woman 1 }
 Woman 2 } Citizens of Paris
 Woman 3 }
 Dom Claude Frollo, Archdeacon of Notre Dame and King's Attorney
 Soldier 1 } On duty
 Soldier 2 } in Paris
 Old Simone, crazed old woman who hates gypsies
 Citizen 1
 Fra Michael
 Pierre Gringolre, poet
 Venus, actress in Pierre's play
 Death, actor in Pierre's play
 Clopin Trouillefou, king of Paris beggars
 Elizabeth, Clopin's wife
 Citizen 2
 Quasimodo, the hunchbacked bell ringer of Notre Dame Cathedral
 Esmeralda, a gypsy girl
 Phoebus, Captain in the Paris Guard
 Henriette, a beggar
 Blind Man, another beggar, a fake
 Isabel }
 Aloise } beggars
 Barbedienne, aged magistrate, nearly deaf
 Clerk, Barbedienne's assistant
 Torturer
 Catherine } in love
 Claire } with Phoebus
 Yvonne, old woman, innkeeper
 Optional extras, if desired

*(See Production Notes at end of playbook for suggestions on doubling and smaller or larger cast size)

The action takes place in Fifteenth Century Paris
Prologue: The steps of Notre Dame
Act I: 20 years later. Various places in and around
 the Cathedral of Notre Dame
Act II: The same, a short time later

ABOUT THE PLAY

Victor Hugo's novel, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, is one of the great classics of world literature. It has been filmed many times, starring notable actors like Lon Chaney, Charles Laughton, and Anthony Quinn as the grotesque hunchback. It has been turned into operas and stage extravaganzas. Whatever the format, it is always a crowd pleaser.

This exciting dramatization by Tim Kelly, one of America's most popular playwrights, captures the essence of the famous original. It brings to life on the stage some of the most memorable fictional characters ever created: the pitiable but good-hearted bell-ringer of Notre Dame Cathedral, Quasimodo; the vain, handsome Captain Phoebus; the villainous Frollo; the temperamental poet, Pierre Gringoire (Hugo himself, no doubt); the colorful Beggars of Paris, and the beautiful, innocent, naive gypsy, Esmeralda, whom they all love.

The famous settings of the novel are also here, but in a manner that negates the necessity for pauses for scene changes. With simple shifts in lighting and with the addition or removal of simple set props—carried on and off by the characters—the audience sees the rollicking Festival of Fools; the notorious Court of Miracles, where the blind see and the lame walk; the murder of Captain Phoebus; the lashing of Quasimodo on the pillory; the rescue of Esmeralda from her place of execution on a charge of witchcraft. The play ends on an upbeat note without the tragic denouement of the novel.

Designed for easy production, the play can be as simple or as grand as the producer chooses. Basically, the setting is the bare stage with a few props moved on and off. The play should flow as if it were a film, with fades and dissolves, but no pauses. For staging suggestions, consult the Production Notes beginning on page 60.

Here, for actors and audiences of teen-agers and adults, is a significant and entertaining look at Victor Hugo's famous story. The very flexible cast of 14 women and 14 men may be increased with extras or reduced with doubling (see page 62).

Playing time is about two hours.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Properties

On stage throughout :

Elevated area (platform)

Railing leading to cathedral entrance (optional)

ACT I

Prologue

Doll in ragged blanket to simulate infant, downstage of platform

Scene 1: *Festival of Fools*

Scrolls—Soldier 1, Soldier 2

Colored scarves on pole, apples in basket, miscellaneous merchandise—
Peddlers

Scythe—Death

Mask painted gold—Pierre

Tambourine—Esmeralda

Handkerchief—Frollo

Spears—Soldiers

Battered throne or crudely decorated stool—Citizen 1

Ragged cape, sceptre, crude crown—another Citizen

Scene 2: *Frollo's Study*

Small table with stool, ink pot, quill—brought on during scene change

Sheet of parchment—Frollo

Scene 3: *Street*

Sword, optional golden breastplate—Phoebus

Rope, spears—Soldiers

Scene 4: *Court of Miracles*

Table(s), bench, stools

Mugs—Barmaid

Crutch—Lame Beggar

Crude neck sign reading "BLIND"; blindfold—Blind Beggar

Small cart—Beggar

Long pole—two Beggars

Stuffed dummy to resemble a man, covered in tiny bells; noose with dan-
gling rope—another Beggar

Scene 5: *Esmeralda's Room*

Bench

Small dagger—Esmeralda

Scene 6: *Small Courtroom*

Table with 2 stools

Ink pot, quill, ledger—Clerk

Papers—Barthelemy

Spears—Soldiers

Scene 7: *Inside the Cathedral*

Small book—Frollo

Scene 8: *The Pillory*

Spears—Soldiers

Ragged blanket; whip—Torturer

Orange or apple—Citizen 1

Flask with water—Esmeralda

Scene 9: Room at the Golden Dolphin

Table, chair
 Candle; wine bottle—Yvonne
 Small mirror, gloves—Phoebus
 Knife; monk's robe with hood—Frollo

Scene 11: Large Courtroom

Benches, stools or chairs
 Ledger and quill—Clerk
 Torture boot—Torturer

ACT II*Scene 1: Open Stage*

Large cross on pole—Clerk
 Executioner's hood—Torturer
 Coarse white gown; noose with rope—Esmeralda

Scene 2: Bell Tower

Stool
 Food basket; whistle—Quasimodo

Scene 3: Street

Coins—Phoebus

Scene 4: Bell Tower

Stool

Scene 5: Court of Miracles

Table

Scene 6: Street, outside Notre Dame

Pickaxes, hoes, scythes, clubs, swords, spears—Beggars
 Club—Clopin
 Spears—Soldiers
 Scroll—Phoebus

Scene 7: Bell Tower

2 monks' robes with hoods—Pierre
 Whistle—Esmeralda
 Long dagger—Frollo

Sound

Lively "Festival of Fools" music, church music or Gregorian chants, thunder, loud ringing of cathedral bells, drumbeat, dramatic march music

Lighting

Light changes are indicated in the text; most frequently, changes from night to day and vice-versa. Interior scenes should be shadowy. In some scenes the light will be focused on a controlled area (Frollo's Study, Esmeralda's Room, Room at the Golden Dolphin, etc.). A shift in the lighting will mean a change in time and place. Special attention should be paid to the Beggars' march on Notre Dame. **NOTE: Except where indicated, there should be no complete blackouts nor pauses in the action; props may be moved on and off by the actors during the dissolve from one scene to another.**

Staging

Avoid choppiness. One scene blends swiftly into another, either by a lighting dissolve from one stage area to another, or by dimming lights up or down. The few blackouts should not last more than 3 to 5 seconds.

Sound effects will add much to the atmosphere. Musical background at suitable moments will also prove effective.

For a more elaborate set, consider a painted backdrop or film projections depicting a view of Paris. A painted column or columns, with gargoyles, jutting out from the wings, Stage Left, may suggest a section of the cathedral wall. A ramp may lead to the cathedral.

The few stage props are moved on and off by cast members while the action plays around them.

At some point a procession of monks might cross upstage. Same for Death.

Esmeralda's goat, Djali, is dispensable and unnecessary. However, if a goat is available (and trained for the stage), it could make an appearance when Esmeralda first appears. A beggar or citizen can guide it on and off.

Costumes

For the most part it's a drab collection of dirty clothing and rags. Exceptions include **Monks'** robes with hoods. **Soldiers** wear some kind of appropriate uniform. **Phoebus** should be dressed as handsomely as possible. **Claire** and **Catherine** are young ladies of fashion. **Esmeralda's** gypsy costume should be colorful and eye-catching. **Frollo** and **Barbedienne** wear dark, severe garb.

Flexible Casting / Doubling of Roles

With doubling and no added extras, the production can be performed with a cast of no more than 20. Some male roles (**Citizen 2**, **Death**, **Blind Man**, **Clerk**) can easily be switched to female if more female roles are needed. Some roles can be combined (e.g., **Blind Man** with **Citizen 2**, **Woman 3** with **Yvonne**). Make whatever cast modifications are needed to accommodate your individual needs. The following is only a suggestion of some doubling possibilities:

Woman 1 might also portray **Henriette** or **Old Simone**. Double **Woman 2** & **Yvonne**; **Woman 3** & **Isabel**; **Venus** & **Catherine** or **Claire**; **Death** & **Clerk** & **Beggar**; **Citizen 2** & **Blind Man**; **Torturer** & **Beggar** (Act II, Scene 5); **Clerk** & **Extra Soldier** (Act II, Scene 6). There are other possibilities. Where logical, various characters play members of the **Paris Mob** and/or double as **Beggars**.

Additional performers may be added if desired: **Citizens of Paris**, **Monks**, **Beggars**, **Soldiers**, assistant for **Torturer**, more costumed **Players** for **Pierre's** play, etc.

*Scene Breakdown with Characters for Rehearsal Purposes***ACT I**

Prologue: **Woman 1**, **Woman 2**, **Woman 3**, **Frollo**

Scene 1: **Soldier 1**, **Soldier 2**, **Old Simone**, **Citizen 1**, **Frollo**, **Fra Michael**, **Pierre**, **Venus**, **Death**, **Clopin**, **Elizabeth**, **Citizen 2**, **Quasimodo**, **Citizens/Beggars**

Scene 2: **Frollo**, **Fra Michael**, **Esmeralda**, **Quasimodo**

Scene 3: **Pierre**, **Venus**, **Esmeralda**, **Quasimodo**, **Phoebus**, **Soldier 1**, **Soldier 2**

Scene 4: Pierre, Clopin, Elizabeth, Henriette, Isabel, Aloise, Esmeralda, Beggars

Scene 5: Pierre, Esmeralda

Scene 6: Barbedienne, Clerk, Soldier 1, Soldier 2, Quasimodo

Scene 7: Frollo, Fra Michael

Scene 8: Quasimodo, Torturer, Soldier 1, Soldier 2, Pierre, Clopin, Elizabeth, Frollo, Fra Michael, Esmeralda, Citizen 1, Citizen 2, Isabel, Old Simone, additional Citizens for Mob, Phoebus, Catherine, Claire

Scene 9: Yvonne, Phoebus, Esmeralda, Frollo

Scene 10: Death, Citizen 1, Citizen 2, Catherine, Claire, Old Simone

Scene 11: Frollo, Barbedienne, Fra Michael, Clerk, Yvonne, Esmeralda, Soldier 1, Soldier 2, Torturer, Death, Citizen 1, Citizen 2, Catherine, Claire, Old Simone. Optional extra citizens and judges

ACT II

Scene 1: Entire cast

Scene 2: Quasimodo, Esmeralda

Scene 3: Phoebus, Claire, Catherine, Yvonne

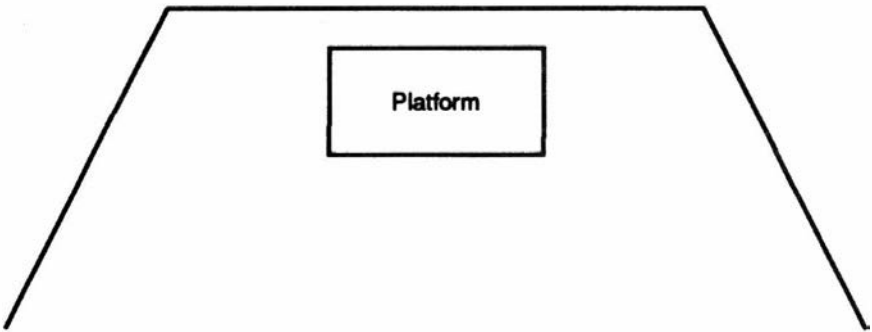
Scene 4: Esmeralda, Frollo, Quasimodo

Scene 5: Clopin, Elizabeth, Pierre, Henriette, Aloise, Isabel, Blind Man, other Beggars

Scene 6: Entire cast with the exception of Esmeralda, Pierre, Frollo, Quasimodo

Scene 7: Esmeralda, Pierre, Quasimodo, Frollo

Floor Plan



THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

ACT I

Prologue

[Before Prologue begins, SOUND OF CATHEDRAL BELLS. Gradually, they FADE and LIGHTS DIM UP. It is early morning. There is a low platform Up Center.

WOMAN 1 and WOMAN 2 are at the platform's edge looking down at an abandoned baby wrapped in a ragged blanket. Both WOMEN are horrified by what they see]

WOMAN 1. Whatever can it be?

WOMAN 2. I'm no great judge of children, but it must be a sin to look at one such as this.

WOMAN 1. It's only got one eye. It has a great wart for the other.

WOMAN 2. The devil was its father. You can always tell. That wart is an egg. Inside that egg is another devil. Only not as powerful as the father.

WOMAN 1. I think it's some kind of ape. A misshapen baboon.

WOMAN 2. What's to become of us if this is the way they make children now!

WOMAN 1. This is no child. It's witchcraft.

WOMAN 3. *[Enters, carrying straw basket on one arm]* What have we there? Another foundling left on the steps of Notre Dame?

WOMAN 1. Foundling, you say? If only it were. Come and have a look.

[WOMAN 3 crosses to the infant. As she does DOM CLAUDE FROLLO, a young priest and clerk at the cathedral, enters and watches. He wears a monk's robe with the hood up. He is serious, brilliant, and intimidating. WOMAN 3 looks at the foundling, covers her mouth to stifle a scream. Quickly, she makes the sign of the cross and turns away]

WOMAN 3. Merciful heaven, what is that thing?

WOMAN 1. We think it's a boy.

WOMAN 2. A boy like no other. Ugh.

WOMAN 1. Look how twisted it is. *[Realizing]* Its back is broken! It won't be able to walk.

WOMAN 2. It probably won't be able to stand.

WOMAN 3. A creature like that will only bring trouble on Paris. There'll be a plague. Mark my words. It would be better for the inhabitants of Paris if that—"thing"—were given to the fire.

FROLLO. I will adopt the child. *[WOMEN turn to the sound of the voice. On seeing Frolo they step back. They are afraid of him]*

WOMAN 1. *[Almost a frightened whisper]* Dom Claude. *[FROLLO steps to the infant, looks closely. He shows no emotion. He picks it up in his arms. WOMEN are aghast]*

WOMAN 2. No, no, Dom Claude! You mustn't.

WOMAN 3. It's a monster.

WOMAN 1. Devil's work! Don't touch it.

FROLLO. Be silent. Have you never heard that charity given on earth will be rewarded in heaven?

WOMAN 2. What you're holding in your arms, Dom Claude, does not belong to earth.

WOMAN 3. It belongs to hell.

FROLLO. Enough!

WOMAN 1. What will you call the creature?

FROLLO. *[Thinks for a moment]* Do you know what day this is?

WOMAN 2. Sunday.

WOMAN 3. First Sunday after Easter. Low Sunday.

FROLLO. Or, as we say in Latin—Quasimodo. I shall call this child Quasimodo.

WOMEN. *[In awe]* Quasimodo. *[FROLLO exits with the infant. the WOMEN stare after him]*

WOMAN 1. Quasimodo! *[She spits in disgust]*

WOMAN 2. *[Hushed tone]* They say Dom Claude Frolo is a dabbler in the black arts. A sorcerer. I never believed it until today. Who but a sorcerer would take such a child?

WOMAN 3. It's a wise demon that knows its own.

WOMAN 1. Quasimodo? I'd sooner give milk to a vampire. *[The WOMEN hurry off]*

[LIGHTS fade to a brief BLACKOUT]

Scene 1

[Twenty years later. Midday. Festival of Fools. SOLDIER 1 enters forestage, Down Right. SOLDIER 2 enters forestage from Down Left. Each holds an open scroll and reads from it as he walks]

SOLDIERS. *[Proclaiming in unison]* “By this proclamation we, Louis, King of France by the grace of God and the comfort of the Virgin Mary, declare that this year’s Festival of Fools be held to honor the Flemish ambassadors who journey to the Court of Paris to sign the Treaty of Marriage between the Dauphin and the Flemish Princess Margaret. . . *[They meet Down Center and turn to face the audience]* On this day all petty restrictions are declared unenforceable—in order that the good citizens of Paris can enjoy merriment and all lawful pleasures. Be this Festival of Fools a day of great happiness for the City of Paris. We so declare it.” *[MUSIC—joyous and lively. SOLDIER 1 exits Down Right; SOLDIER 2, Down Left. As they make their exits, they repeat the edict]* “By this proclamation, we Louis, King of France . . .” *[Etc., fading out offstage]*

[As soldiers exit, CITIZENS OF PARIS begin to fill the stage. A PEDDLER with brightly colored scarves on a pole, a SELLER of apples, a PICKPOCKET, BEGGARS, OTHERS as desired.

Three ACTORS enter and move onto the platform. A female actor is dressed to resemble the Roman Goddess of Love and Beauty, VENUS. A male actor is costumed to represent DEATH. He carries a scythe. The third actor is actually the young playwright, PIERRE GRINGOIRE. He gives final instructions to his players in pantomime. MUSIC fades.

A young gypsy girl, about 16, enters dancing and playing a tambourine. This is ESMERALDA. (A few CITIZENS may follow Esmeralda in and delight in watching her. See Production Notes at the end of this playbook for possible inclusion of Esmeralda’s pet goat.) As ESMERALDA dances, the CROWD grows larger. A crazed woman, OLD SIMONE, points a finger at Esmeralda and denounces her]

OLD SIMONE. Gypsy! *[ESMERALDA stops dancing]* What’s the matter with all of you! Can’t you see what she is? One of the cursed race! A daughter of Egypt!

CITIZEN 1 [FEMALE]. Pay no attention to her, gypsy. It's only Old Simone. Mad as they come. Howling dogs make more sense. Go on dancing, gypsy.

[A bit hesitant, ESMERALDA continues to dance with the tambourine. She moves Down Center and her small BAND OF ADMIRERS follows along.]

FROLLO enters, dressed somberly, but not in clerical garb. In the 20 years since we first saw him, he has become the King's attorney. With him is an ambitious young monk, FRA MICHAEL]

FROLLO. You're certain Quasimodo isn't hiding somewhere in the bell tower?

FRA MICHAEL. I searched everywhere, Your Worship. It's because of this Festival of Fools. He's like a child in so many ways.

FROLLO. There is no need to remind me, Fra Michael. You should have locked the bell tower. He has no place outside the Cathedral of Notre Dame. *[OLD SIMONE moves to Frolo and grabs his hand. On instinct, FROLLO snatches it away]* Take care, old woman.

OLD SIMONE. Your Worship, you are the King's attorney. You must do something. *[FROLLO takes a handkerchief from his costume and wipes the hand Old Simone touched]*

FRA MICHAEL. What is it you're babbling about, old woman?

OLD SIMONE. *[Points to Esmeralda]* The gypsy. The one they call Esmeralda.

FRA MICHAEL. What about her?

OLD SIMONE. Gypsies are forbidden to dance in the streets, are they not?

FROLLO. That is the law.

OLD SIMONE. Then arrest her, Your Worship.

FROLLO. This is the Festival of Fools. It's not like any other day.

OLD SIMONE. She'll cause mischief. She's wicked. All gypsies are wicked.

FROLLO. Be off with you.

OLD SIMONE. But, Your Worship, the gypsy—

FRA MICHAEL. You heard Dom Claude. *[Gestures her into the crowd]* Away.

OLD SIMONE. There'll be trouble with that Esmeralda. There always is with gypsies.

FRA MICHAEL. Didn't you hear me!? *[He gives another angry gesture and OLD SIMONE slips away. FROLLO stares at dancing ESMERALDA]*

FROLLO. There is something in what the old woman says. I've seen that girl before. And I have forbidden her to dance in the street. See that she is brought to me. I shall continue to search for Quasimodo.

FRA MICHAEL. Yes, Your Worship.

[FROLLO exits. FRA MICHAEL moves toward ESMERALDA. She sees him and can tell by the way he is bearing down she's in trouble. She stops dancing and quickly leaves the scene. FRA MICHAEL follows her. The excitement of the CROWD heats up]

CITIZEN 1. What are we waiting for? Give us the play! The play! *[Instantly the CROWD picks up the chant and moves toward the platform]*

ALL. The play! The play! The play! *[PIERRE jumps onto the platform and holds up his hands for silence]*

PIERRE. Messieurs and mesdemoiselles— *[Some CITIZENS hoot, some boo, some applaud]* You see standing before you one Pierre Gringoire! Poet! *[He bows]*

ALL. Poet!

PIERRE. Playwright! *[Another bow]*

ALL. Playwright!

PIERRE. Lover of truth and beauty! *[Another bow. Laughter from the MOB]* Today, ordered by the King himself, a mystery entitled—"The Good Award of Our Lady." I play Jupiter.

ALL. *[Mockingly]* "I play Jupiter!" *[The MOB hoots and holiars. It's a playful mood. PIERRE is a bit of a ham and takes himself far too seriously. He takes the hand of VENUS and brings her forward]*

PIERRE. Speak. Tell them who you are.

VENUS. You see standing before you—Venus. *[The MOB likes this much better: "Aaaaaaah." Scattering of applause]* Goddess of Love. Goddess of Beauty. Sister to Aphrodite. *[VENUS steps back and PIERRE motions DEATH to step forward. Now this the MOB really likes. Cheers, applause]*

DEATH. And here! Death himself. So much a part of life!

CITIZEN 2. Long Live Death! *[A mighty CHEER goes up. DEATH begins to mime the cutting down of people with the scythe. The MOB pulls back with "oooooooohs" and "ahhhhhhhhs"]*

PIERRE. And more. You will meet more. Many more. Actors supreme in their craft. All enacting this wondrous mystery play that I, Pierre Gringoire, have created from the great talent I possess. *[He strikes a dramatic pose. Hoots, scattered applause, laughter from the MOB. They press in for a closer look and listen. Two BEGGARS, a man and a woman, move into focus downstage. The male beggar is CLOPIN TROUILLEFOU and the woman is his wife ELIZABETH]*

CLOPIN. How's trade?

ELIZABETH. Not good, not good at all. I don't like stealing when they're all standing together. A mob can turn. If they weren't watching that play, it'd be easier.

CLOPIN. No telling how long the play will last.

ELIZABETH. I can tell you. Too long.

CLOPIN. I'll put a stop to it.

[While Clopin and Elizabeth are speaking, PIERRE begins his first scene speech. As the two BEGGARS melt back into the crowd, PIERRE's voice grows louder. He holds a golden mask to his face]

PIERRE. "Behold! Jupiter! He who rules over all people. Behold! Venus! *[VENUS strokes her hair]* She who embodies mankind's need for love and beauty! Behold! Death! *[DEATH makes another pass with the scythe]* Death the inescapable!"

CLOPIN. Behold boredom! How much of this claptrap are we to endure? *[Laughter from the MOB. PIERRE removes the mask, frowns. He continues on. During the following dialog, SOLDIER 1 and SOLDIER 2 enter carrying spears. They survey the crowd and, eventually, move off]*

PIERRE. "Each day we move one step closer to the inevitable. We cling to Venus."

CLOPIN. And your words cling to my ear—and they hurt! *[More LAUGHTER, louder than before. PIERRE loses his temper]*

PIERRE. Be silent! Beauty is spoken upon this stage.

CLOPIN. But it isn't coming out of your mouth! *[This time the MOB breaks into raucous laughter. PIERRE and his ACTORS look very uncomfortable]*

PIERRE. Please, please, good citizens. Give us a chance to amuse you, to enlighten you. To instruct you.

CLOPIN. We didn't come here for instruction!

ELIZABETH. *[A shout]* Let's have some real fun! Let's crown the King of Fools! *[On mention of "King of Fools" the MOB goes wild. Cheers, laughter. SOME jump up and down. OTHERS hop about in glee]*

CITIZENS. The King of Fools! The King of Fools! The King of Fools! Crown the King of Fools! *[CITIZEN 1 rushes off, only to return quickly with a battered throne chair or stool. ANOTHER hurries out and returns with a ragged cape and crude "crown" and a jester's stick for a kingly sceptre. PIERRE does his best to calm the Citizxens, but it's a lost cause]*

PIERRE. Please! Please! Good citizens, if you only permit us to continue, you'll enjoy the play. I know you will. *[CLOPIN jumps to the platform and shoves Pierre aside]*

CLOPIN. Enough beauty for one day, my friend. *[Dejected, VENUS and DEATH step aside, too]* I know what the people of Paris want. Ugliness!

PIERRE. No, beauty! Truth!

CLOPIN. I'll give you truth. This is the Festival of Fools and, on this day, we give the crown to the ugliest face in Paris! *[MOB cheers]* Come on. There's enough ugliness in this crowd to go around. Who's first?

ELIZABETH. I'll go! *[CHEERS. ELIZABETH gets onto the platform and makes a horrid face. SOME in the crowd laugh, but MOST boo]*

CLOPIN. Let's have another! *[CITIZEN 1 takes the place of ELIZABETH, who rejoins the crowd. CITIZEN 1 makes an ugly face and accompanies the grimace with some awful grunts. The CROWD is indecisive. Some applaud, some boo]* Come on, citizens! Let me see the ugliness of Paris. I know you're there. *[LAUGHTER. CITIZEN 2 leaps to the platform and energetically twists and distorts his face. CITIZEN 1 rejoins the mob. Same reaction as before. SOME applaud, SOME boo. CLOPIN shoves CITIZEN 2 aside]* Is this the best Paris has to offer!?

[As if to reply, a MISSHAPEN FORM lopes in from offstage and hops onto the platform, its back to the mob (and the audience). This is the baby from the Prologue, grown to manhood. Between his shoulders there's a large hump. One eye, lower than the other, is permanently closed. The hair is matted. He looks like a storybook giant that had been broken and awkwardly mended. At

first, the MOB doesn't know who or what it is. A hush falls. Slowly, QUASIMODO turns and the MOB gets a good look. The sight is so distressing, the CITIZENS give a communal gasp and look away. Then, slowly, the MOB turns back for a better look]

CITIZEN 1. It's Quasimodo. [*QUASIMODO grins at the crowd*]

ELIZABETH. The bell ringer of Notre Dame!

OLD SIMONE. If you're with child, don't look at him!

CITIZEN 2. What could be better for our King of fools than a humpbacked cyclops!?

ELIZABETH. **Make Quasimodo the King of Fools!**

ALL. [*Chanting*] Quasimodo! Quasimodo! King of Fools. King of Fools!

CLOPIN. Give me the crown. [*CITIZEN hands Clopin the crown*]
You're a fortunate man, Quasimodo. We're crowning you King.

OLD SIMONE. You're wasting your words on him. He's deaf.

CLOPIN. Deaf, eh? So much the better. Words are a waste of time, anyway. [*To Quasimodo*] Take your throne, Your Majesty. [*He nudges QUASIMODO, who doesn't understand. QUASIMODO turns to face Clopin and makes a threatening gesture. ALL react in fear*] Now, now, Your Majesty. Don't you want the crown? Don't you want to be King of Fools and rule over all Paris? If only for a day. [*QUASIMODO watches Clopin's lips, and it's clear that he can read them. A pause, and then, almost childlike, QUASIMODO nods and sits where CLOPIN indicates.*]

QUASIMODO. King. [*The MOB cheers*]

CLOPIN. Give me the sceptre. [*It is passed to CLOPIN. He hands it to QUASIMODO, who is becoming more and more delighted by all the attention. CLOPIN steps behind the "throne," the cheap imitation crown raised high in his hands. The MOB is motionless and silent*] I crown thee, Quasimodo, bell ringer of Notre Dame Cathedral—King of Fools! [*On goes the crown, and the MOB explodes—cheers, laughter, jumping about. MUSIC. CLOPIN motions that Quasimodo should step from his throne and move among his people. Growing more and more pleased, QUASIMODO does so. The ragged royal "robe" is thrown over his shoulders. The procession begins to move Right*]

ALL. **The King of Fools! The King of Fools! The King of Fools! Modo-Modo-Quasimodo! Modo-Modo-**

Quasimodo! [*FROLLO enters and stands motionless, rigid, as the procession nears*] **Modo-Modo! Quasimodo! King of Fools!**

[On seeing the King's attorney, the MOB stops its chanting. At first, QUASIMODO doesn't understand, and then he sees his protector]

FROLLO. [*Severe*] How can you shame me in this fashion? [*Like a whipped dog, QUASIMODO lowers his head. FROLLO pulls away the robe, grabs the sceptre. He drops them to the ground*]

CITIZEN 1. You can't do that! [*FROLLO has only contempt for the Mob. He turns and exits. No one speaks. All eyes are on Quasimodo. Slowly, pathetically, he takes off his crown, and lopes after his master*]

ELIZABETH. Frolo can't take away our King!

ALL. NO! [*They start to move after Frolo, and QUASIMODO quickly turns. He can sense that they mean some harm to his master and he'll have none of it. He makes a guttural sound, like a wild animal, and lunges toward the MOB; it pulls back. QUASIMODO exits*]

CITIZEN 1. There goes our fun. [*Dispirited, the CITIZENS begin to exit this way and that. Someone picks up and carries off the robe, sceptre, and throne. PIERRE, who has not joined in the celebration, is despondent*]

PIERRE. Beauty! I wanted to give them beauty, and all they wanted was ugliness!

OLD SIMONE. It's all that gypsy girl's fault. I knew there'd be trouble. I warned them. But no one listens to Old Simone. [*Recalls the proclamation*] A day of great happiness? Bah. [*Chuckling to herself, a lost, demented soul, she joins the exodus. So does PIERRE*]

[LIGHTS dissolve to next scene]

Scene 2

[Corner of Frolo's study in the cathedral, Stage Right, represented by a small writing table and chair or stool. Skull, ink pot with quill atop table. Except for this dismal corner, the rest of the stage is in DARKNESS.]