### **Les Misérables: Quotes-n-Notes**

**Fantine:**

**Theme:**

**Quote (Love and Compassion):***"Now," said the bishop, "go in peace. By the way, my friend, when you come again, you need not come through the garden. You can always come in and go out by the front door... Forget not, never forget that you have promised me to use this silver to become an honest man."* (Page 33)

❖ **Note:** In this quote, the Bishop shows Jean Valjean a lot of love and kindness. Even though Jean stole from him, the Bishop doesn’t punish him. Instead, he forgives him and tells him to use the silver to turn his life around. This moment is really important because it’s what starts Jean’s journey toward redemption. The Bishop’s compassion is what pushes Jean to want to be a better person.

**Quote (19th Century French Social Injustice):***"It was a harrowing sight to see in the winter time the poor child... shivering under the tatters of what was once a calico dress, sweeping the street before daylight with an enormous broom in her little red hands and tears in her large eyes."* (Page 47)

❖ **Note:** This quote shows how unfairly Cosette is treated by the Thénardiers. She’s made to work like an adult, even though she’s just a little girl, and she’s cold and hungry. It shows how the poor were treated so badly in 19th-century France, especially women and children. Cosette’s situation is made worse by the fact that she’s seen as a “bastard” because of her parents. The way she’s forced to work in such harsh conditions is a clear example of the social injustice that was so common back then.

**Conflicts/Tensions:**

**Quote (Self vs. Self):***"Do what he might, he always fell back upon this sharp thought dilemma... to remain in paradise and there become a demon! To re-enter into hell and there become an angel! The torment... broke loose anew within him."* (Page 76)

❖ **Note:** This quote is about Jean Valjean’s internal conflict. He’s torn between staying in his safe, comfortable life as M. Madeleine and keeping his secret, or revealing who he really is to help save an innocent man. If he stays, he’s comfortable but doesn’t feel right. If he confesses, he risks losing everything. This internal struggle shows how difficult it is for Jean to choose between doing what’s easy and doing what’s morally right.

**Quote (Self vs. Society):***"He drew from his pocket a large sheet of yellow paper... “There is my passport, yellow as you see. That is enough to have me kicked wherever I go... Jean Valjean, a liberated convict... ‘...This man is very dangerous.’ There you have it! Everybody has thrust me out; will you receive me? Is this an inn? Can you give me something to eat, and a place to sleep? Have you a stable?”* (Page 17)

❖ **Note:** Jean Valjean’s struggle with society is a major part of his story. The yellow passport is a symbol of his past as a convict, and it’s something that keeps people from accepting him. Even though he’s trying to change, society won’t let him. This quote really shows how hard it was for ex-convicts to get a fresh start, because everyone judges them for their past, even when they’re trying to be a better person. The Bishop is one of the few people who gives him a chance.

**Symbols:**

**Quote ("The Lark"):***"In the place [Cosette] was called The Lark. People like figurative names and were pleased thus to name this little being; not larger than a bird, trembling, frightened, and shivering, awake every morning first of all in the house and the village. Only the poor lark never sang."* (Page 47)

❖ **Note:** The nickname “The Lark” is ironic because larks are usually seen as happy birds that sing a lot, but Cosette is the opposite. She’s poor, abused, and has no joy in her life. This symbol shows how Cosette’s innocence has been taken away from her by the harsh conditions she’s forced to live in. Even though she’s named after a bird that’s supposed to be happy, she can’t be happy because of how badly she’s treated.

**Quote (Forty-sous silver coin):***"He took a sheet of paper and wrote: These are the ends of my loaded club and the forty-sous piece stolen from Petite Gervais... He took from a wardrobe an old shirt which he tore into several pieces and in which he packed the two silver candlesticks. In all of this there was neither haste nor agitation."* (Page 106)

❖ **Note:** The forty-sous coin and the silver candlesticks represent two sides of Jean Valjean’s life. The coin represents his past mistakes and his time as a convict, while the candlesticks symbolize the kindness and second chance given to him by the Bishop. These items show Jean’s internal conflict between his past (the coin) and his future (the candlesticks). The two symbols are connected to important moments in his life, representing his journey from guilt to redemption.