

Les Misérables

Background: Based on the novel by French author Victor Hugo, Les Misérables tells the life story of an ex-convict named Jean Valjean, against the background of a country embroiled in political and social revolution. The basic problem of Hugo's work is stated in its title: Les Misérables, or "the miserable ones" (the poor). During the nineteenth century in France, the poor contributed to several revolutions against governments that did not care for them. In the musical, there is great unrest in Paris (in 1832, according to the libretto) because of the likely demise of the popular leader General Lamarque, the only man left in the Government who shows any feeling for the poor. At a political meeting in a small café, a group of idealistic students prepare for the revolution they are sure will erupt on the death of General Lamarque. When the urchin Gavroche brings the news of the General's death, the students, led by Enjolras, stream out into the streets to whip up popular support. After a fight against the French National Guard, the rebels are all killed.

AT THE END OF THE DAY

THE POOR

At the end of the day you're another day older
 And that's all you can say for the life of the poor
 It's a struggle, it's a war
 And there's nothing that anyone's giving
 One more day standing about
 What is it for?
 One day less to be living!
 At the end of the day you're another day colder
 And the shirt on your back doesn't keep out
 The chill
 And the righteous hurry past
 They don't hear the little ones crying
 And the winter is coming on fast
 Ready to kill
 One day nearer to dying!
 At the end of the day there's another day dawning
 And the sun in the morning is waiting to rise
 Like the waves crash on the sand
 Like a storm that'll break any second
 There's a hunger in the land
 There's a reckoning still to be reckoned and
 There's gonna be hell to pay
 At the end of the day!

FOREMAN

At the end of the day you get nothing for nothing
 Sitting flat on your butt doesn't buy any bread.

WORKERS

There are children back at home
 And the children have got to be fed
 And you're lucky to be in a job
 And in a bed
 And we're counting our blessings!

WOMEN

Have you seen how the foreman is fuming today
 With his terrible breath and his wandering hands?
 It's because little Fantine won't give him his way
 Take a look at his trousers, you see where
 He stands!

WORKERS

At the end of the day it's another day over
 With enough in your pocket to last for a week
 Pay the landlord, pay the shop
 Keep on grafting as long as you're able
 Keep on grafting till you drop
 Or it's back to the crumbs off the table
 You've got to pay your way
 At the end of the day! . . .

LOOK DOWN

BEGGARS

Look down and see the beggars at your feet
 Look down and show some mercy if you
 can
 Look down and see
 The sweepings of the street
 Look down, Look down
 Upon your fellow man!

GAVROCHE

How do you do? My name's Gavroche.
 These are my people. Here's my patch.
 Not much to look at, nothing posh
 Nothing that you'd call up to scratch.
 This is my school, my high society
 Here in the slums of Saint Michele
 We live on the crumbs of humble piety
 Tough on the teeth, but what the hell!
 Think you're poor.
 Think you're free?
 Follow me! Follow me!

BEGGARS

Look down and show some mercy if you
 can.
 Look down, look down upon your fellow
 man.

OLD BEGGAR WOMAN

What d'you think yer at
 Hanging round my pitch?
 If you're new around here, girl,
 You've got a lot to learn!

YOUNG PROSTITUTE

Listen, you old bat . . .
 Crazy bloody witch . . .
 'Least I give my customers
 Some pleasure in return!

OLD BEGGAR WOMAN

I know what you give.
 Give 'em all the pox!
 Spread around your poison
 Till they end up in a box.

PIMP

Leave the poor old cow.
 Move it, Madeleine.
 She used to be no better
 Till the clap got to her brain.

BEGGARS

When's it gonna end?
 When we gonna live?
 Something's gotta happen now or
 something's gonna give
 It'll come, It'll come, It'll come
 It'll come, It'll come, It'll come, It'll come.

ENJOLRAS

Where are the leaders of the land
 Where are the swells who run the show

MARIUS

Only one man – and that's Lamarque
 Speaks for these people here below.

BEGGARS

See our children fed
 Help us in our shame
 Something for a crust of bread
 In Holy Jesus' name.

URCHIN

In the Lord's Holy name

BEGGARS

In his name
 In his name
 In his name

MARIUS

Lamarque is ill and fading fast
 Won't last the week out, so they say.

ENJOLRAS

With all the anger in the land
 How long before the judgment day?
 Before we cut the fat ones down to size?
 Before the barricades arise?

BEGGARS

Look down and show some mercy if you
 can
 Look down, look down
 Upon your fellow man.

RED AND BLACK**STUDENTS**

At Notre Dame
The sections are prepared!
At Rue du Bac
They're straining at the leash!
Students, workers, everyone,
There's a river on the run;
Like the flowing of the tide
Paris coming to our side!

ENJOLRAS

The time is near
So near it's stirring the blood in their veins
And yet beware
Don't let the wine go to your brains
For the army we fight is a dangerous foe
With the men and the arms that we never can
match
It is easy to sit here and swat 'em like flies
But the National Guard will be harder to catch
We need a sign
To rally the people
To call them to arms
To bring them in line!
Marius, you're late

JOLY

What's wrong today?
You look as if you've seen a ghost.

GRANTAIRE

Some wine, and say what's going on.

MARIUS

A ghost you say, a ghost maybe
She was just like a ghost to me
One minute there . . . then she was gone!

GRANTAIRE

I am agog!
I am aghast!
Is Marius in love at last?
I have never seen him 'ooh' and 'aah'
You talk of battles to be won
And here he comes like Don Ju-an
It's better than an o-per-a!

ENJOLRAS

It is time for us all
To decide who we are
Do we fight for the right
To a night at the opera now?
Have you asked yourselves
What's the price you might pay?
Is it simply a game
For rich young boys to play?
The color of the world
Is changing day by day . . .
Red – the blood of angry men!
Black – the dark of ages past!
Red – a world about to dawn!
Black – the night that ends at last!

MARIUS

Had you been there tonight
You might know how it feels
To be struck to the bone
In a moment of breathless delight!
Had you been there tonight
You might also have known
How the world may be changed
In just one burst of light
And what was right seems wrong
And what was wrong seems right!
Red – I feel my soul on fire!
Black – my world if she's not there!
Red – the color of desire!
Black – the color of despair!

ENJOLRAS

Marius, you're no longer a child
I do not doubt you mean it well
But now there is a higher call.
Who cares about your lonely soul?
We strive towards a larger goal
Our little lives don't count at all!

STUDENTS

Red – the blood of angry men!
Black – the dark of ages past!
Red – a world about to dawn!
Black – the night that ends at last!

DO YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE SING?**ENJOLRAS**

Do you hear the people sing?
Singing the song of angry men?
It is the music of a people
Who will not be slaves again!
When the beating of your heart
Echoes the beating of the drums
There is a life about to start
When tomorrow comes!

COMBEFERRE

Will you join in our crusade?
Who will be strong and stand with me?
Beyond the barricade
Is there a world you long to see?

COURFEYRAC

Then join in the fight
That will give you the right to be free . . .

CHORUS

Do you hear the people sing?
Singing the song of angry men?
It is the music of a people
Who will not be slaves again!
When the beating of your heart
Echoes the beating of the drums
There is a life about to start
When tomorrow comes!

FEUILLY

Will you give all you can give
So that our banner may advance?
Some will fall and some will live
Will you come up and take your chance?
The blood of the martyrs
Will water the meadows of France!

CHORUS

Do you hear the people sing?
Singing the song of angry men?
It is the music of a people
Who will not be slaves again!
When the beating of your heart
Echoes the beating of the drums
There is a life about to start
When tomorrow comes!