

But the handsome officer is not dead. Phoebus de Châteaupers left the hospital after a few weeks. Nobody thought this information was important to the court. Phoebus quickly forgot about Esmeralda. In fact, on the day of her hanging, he is in Paris again. He is at the Gondelauriers' house, enjoying the conversation of Mademoiselle Fleur-de-Lys.

"Where have you been for two months?" the young lady asks.

"I'm a soldier," answers Phoebus. "I work for my king. We were at Queue-en-Brie. Look, what's happening in the square?" He does not want to answer any more questions.

The young lovers stand at the big open window and look across the square at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame.

"They are going to hang a witch at noon. She's preparing herself at the church," Fleur-de-Lys explains.

"What has she done?" asks Phoebus.

"I don't know. Listen, Phoebus. We're getting married soon. Have you ever loved another woman?" asks Fleur-de-Lys.

"My dear, of course not," Phoebus lies. "You're my one true love." Even he believes his own words at that minute. But then he sees Esmeralda outside the church, on her knees. "Let's go into the other room and talk to your mother," he suggests.

"No," says Fleur-de-Lys, "I want to watch."

Esmeralda is at the front of the cathedral. She is wearing a simple white dress and no shoes. Her beautiful black hair falls over her shoulders and around her neck is the little bag with her secret inside.

The priests carry the cross to Esmeralda, but she does not look up. One priest goes near her and puts his mouth very close to her ear.

"Will you have me?" the priest asks. Only the girl can hear his words. "I can save you right now."

Esmeralda looks at him and says, "You're a devil. Go away or I'll tell everyone your story."

Father Claude smiles a terrible smile. "They will not believe you. But answer me quickly. Will you have me?"

"Where's my Phoebus?"

"He's dead!" answers the priest. But he looks up at that minute and sees Phoebus de Châteaupers at the window of the Gondelauriers' great house. He cannot believe his eyes. "Die then! Nobody will have you!"

Claude Frolo turns his back on the girl and returns to the cathedral with the other priests.

After the doors of the cathedral close, the guards move toward the girl. Suddenly, Esmeralda looks up and cries happily, "Phoebus!" She, too, has seen him at the window. He is alive! The judge and the priest lied to her!

Esmeralda's eyes meet the officer's eyes. His handsome face changes when he sees her. He takes Fleur-de-Lys by the arm and quickly moves away from the window.

Esmeralda understands everything. She is going to die for the murder of Phoebus de Châteaupers. But he is alive! And he does not love her. He does not want to know her or help her.

Everyone is looking at the girl. They have not noticed a man in one of the lower towers of the cathedral. He has seen everything. As the guards pull Esmeralda away from the church, this man jumps to the ground. He knocks down the guards, and with one hand he picks up Esmeralda. He carries her over his shoulder and runs inside the church. A little goat runs out from the crowd and follows them. In a loud voice, the man cries, "Sanctuary!" Esmeralda is safe.

The crowd is silent. Then everyone shouts, "Sanctuary! Sanctuary!" They wanted a hanging, but now they are happy for Esmeralda. Nobody can touch her inside the walls of Notre-Dame.

Inside the church, Esmeralda sees that her friend, her helper, is Quasimodo, the hunchback. But now he is not ugly. To Esmeralda, and to the crowd outside, he is brave and good—the best man in