

the crowd from the Great Hall following behind. Nobody asks Quasimodo for his opinion of all this, but his ugly face looks almost happy.

At the Great Hall, Pierre Gringoire sits sadly in the empty theater. He knows that his dream is at an end. "Nobody listened to my play. Nobody paid me any money. They chose to listen to a foreigner from Ghent, and now they've followed a hunchback through the streets. What shall I do now?"

Night comes early in Paris at the beginning of a new year. The sky is already dark when the young writer reaches the Place de Grève. He is hoping to get warm at the big fire and to find some free food. He is also worried about a bed for the night because he cannot return to his apartment. He hasn't paid the owner of the building for the last six months, and the man is waiting for his money.

The writer walks toward the big fire in the middle of the square, but he cannot get near it. A crowd of people is watching a beautiful young gypsy girl. She sings and dances like someone from a different world. Gringoire pushes to the front of the crowd for a closer look. The girl has dark gold skin and very black hair, and eyes that shine brightly in her beautiful face. In her colorful gypsy dress, she moves like a foreign princess from an old storybook.

Every face in the crowd watches the girl, but a quiet, serious man seems to study her very closely. This man is wearing a long black coat and his pale face has deep lines, maybe from worry or from study. He is already losing his hair, but he is probably only about thirty-five years old. His eyes never leave the girl's face, but he does not seem to enjoy watching her.

Finally, the girl stops dancing and the crowd begins to shout, "Don't stop, Esmeralda! We want more!"

Esmeralda, the gypsy girl, calls for Djali, her pretty white goat.

"Djali," says the dancer, "now it's your turn. What day of the month is it?"

The goat lifts one little foot and hits the ground six times.

"And what time is it?" asks Esmeralda.

Djali hits the ground seven times, and then the clock on the church rings seven o'clock.

"This is evil," shouts a voice in the crowd. It is the man in the long black coat. But the crowd wants more.

"Djali," says the girl, "how does Monsieur* Charmolue, the King's lawyer, walk?"

The goat walks on two legs, exactly like Monsieur Charmolue. Everyone laughs and shouts for more.

But the same serious man cries again, "The girl is evil, and that goat is a devil."

Esmeralda turns her head. "Oh, it's that terrible man. Why does he follow me everywhere? Why does he hate me?"

Then the crowd hears another voice. "Go away, gypsy girl. We don't want you here." This time it is not the man in the black coat. It is a woman's voice, full of hate.

"It's Sachette, the witch from the Tower of Roland," shout some children.

The witch has locked herself in the Tower of Roland at one corner of the Place de Grève. She hates all gypsy women. She shouts at them when they come near her prison.

The people forget about Sachette when they hear loud noises at the entrance to the square. The Pope of Fools and a great crowd of thieves and gypsies run into the Place de Grève.

Quasimodo has no friends, and he has never known love, but today he is a king. It is exciting to be part of the people's great day of fun and parties. His heart is filled with happiness for the first time in his short, painful life.

It is no surprise that Quasimodo's happiness does not last long. The same quiet man in the black coat hurries out of the crowd.

* Monsieur, Madame, Mademoiselle: the French words for Mr., Mrs., and Miss