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Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



The Hunchback of Notre-Dame

by Victor Hugo

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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The Hunchback of Notre-Dame

Characters

The Cardinal – the high church official whose late arrival disrupts Pierre Gringoire’s morality play.

Quasimodo – the disfigured bell ringer of the Cathedral de Notre-Dame. He can see out of only one eye because a huge wart covers the other. He is deaf from ringing the bells. Claude Frollo, the priest at Notre-Dame, brought him up. He falls in love with La Esmeralda.

Master Coppenhole – the popular hosier from Ghent who suggests a new way of electing the Pope of Fools. The crowd abandons the morality play and rushes to elect Quasimodo as the Pope of Fools.

Captain Phœbus de Chateaupers – the brave but shallow Captain of the Archers that Esmeralda falls in love with. When he tries to seduce her, Claude Frollo stabs him with a dagger. La Esmeralda is tried for his murder, but he lives and goes back to his fiancé, Fleur-de-Lys. He leads the attack on the Gypsies to drive them away from the cathedral.

Archdeacon Dom Claude Frollo – a priest of Notre-Dame. He raises Quasimodo in the cathedral and is his master. He becomes obsessed with La Esmeralda and when he realizes he will never have her, he makes sure no one else can have her. He stabs Captain Phœbus and tries to eliminate Gringoire. He allows La Esmeralda to die on the gallows because he knows she will never love him.

La Esmeralda – the beautiful and mysterious gypsy girl who charms everyone with her singing, dancing, and strong spirit. She performs with her pet goat Djali, who can count and do imitations of local churchmen and politicians. We find out near the end that she is the missing daughter of La Sachette.

Pierre Gringoire – a playwright and philosopher who has studied with Claude Frollo. When La Esmeralda marries him to save him from hanging by the gypsies, he becomes a street performer with her. Claude Frollo calls on him to lead an attack by the gypsies on Notre-Dame as they try to free La Esmeralda. He does not fight, but instead helps Claude Frollo escape in a boat with La Esmeralda. When it comes time to choose between saving La Esmeralda and Djali, he turns and runs off with the goat instead of his “wife.”

The Hunchback of Notre-Dame

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. identify and trace the events in the main plot and the subplots.
2. draw inferences about the major and minor characters of the novel and identify and discuss their relationships.
3. identify and discuss the Romantic Movement and how this novel fits into that movement.
4. identify the historical and geographical setting of the novel.
5. analyze the writing style of Hugo.
6. identify and discuss the reasons that this novel is able to move most readers both intellectually and emotionally.
7. understand the vocabulary words of the novel.
8. identify and discuss Hugo's use of architecture as a symbol.
9. identify the major themes of the novel and cite incidents from the novel that support those themes.
10. identify and discuss how Hugo creates mood in the novel.
11. define and find examples of the following literary terms:

- symbol
- allegory
- mood
- pun
- antagonist
- simile
- metonymy
- litotes
- allusion
- metaphor
- theme
- protagonist
- tragic hero
- flashback
- romanticism

The Hunchback of Notre-Dame

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Who are the main characters of the novel and what are their relationships to each other?
2. Why are Quasimodo and La Esmeralda perfect complements to each other?
3. Discuss Hugo's use of detail in the description of the architecture of Notre-Dame and the city of Paris. Why is this important?
4. Hugo explored the theme that appearances can be deceiving. What are some examples of this from the novel?
5. Hugo also explores the theme of fate and how it affects people's lives. What are some examples of this from the novel?
6. Why is Quasimodo considered the protagonist of the plot? Explain his antagonists and the outcome of his story.
7. Give examples that foreshadow the tragic conclusion of the novel.
8. Discuss symbolism and Hugo's use of symbols in *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*.
9. Discuss Quasimodo's relationship to the bells. What causes his relationship with his beloved bells to change?
10. Discuss the mood of the novel and give specific examples of how Hugo achieves that mood.
11. Give examples of why *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* is a Romantic novel.
12. Discuss the role of the spectator and the spectacle in the novel and give examples.
13. Explain whether you feel the ending of the book is sentimental, coincidental, believable, or melodramatic.

stave – to smash a hole in
fetes – lavish outdoor entertainments, large parties
beadles – English parish officers
buffets – strikes sharply
rector – clergyman, pastor in charge of a parish
decretist – one who issues judicial decisions
plaudits – acts of applause
disputations – verbal controversies
doge – the chief magistrate in the republics of Venice and Genoa
serpentine – winds sinuously
bombards – to attack; to assail
genuflections – low bows, curtsies
harangue – to speak pompously; to declaim

1. How does the novel begin?

2. The first chapter is called “The Great Hall.” Why? What is the significance of opening the novel here?

3. What is the name of the morality play written by Pierre Gringoire?

4. Why is the morality play being performed?

2. What figure of speech is used in the quotation, “The girl’s bodice slipped through his hands like the skin of an eel”?

3. The couple gets to know each other a little better in this chapter, but someone else distracts Esmeralda. What word does Esmeralda ask Gringoire about, and what does he tell her it means?

4. How is Esmeralda depicted midway through the chapter? What is the literary term called?

2. How did it come to be called the Rat-Hole?

Chapter 3 – The Story of a Wheaten Cake

VOCABULARY

equerry – an officer in charge of the horses of a prince or noble

1. What are the names of the women bringing the cake to La Sachette?

2. What are the different names of La Sachette?

3. What story does Mahiette relate to her friends?

4. What happens when the women try to give La Sachette the cake, some wine, and a cloak?

2. What is your reaction to the scene in which the murderer confronts the condemned and asks for her love?

Chapter 5 – The Mother

VOCABULARY

breviary – a holy book of prayers

1. La Sachette is mourning the loss of her daughter and looking at the tiny slipper that once belonged to the child. What happens when she is told of the gypsy's impending death?
