



CHAPTER 3

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Paroled from the galleys after a five year sentence for stealing a loaf of bread, Jean Valjean, with revenge in his heart, stumbles into the home of kindly old Bishop Bienvenu and finds in him at least one man with faith in the world and willing to trust an ex-galley-slave. With renewed faith, confidence and vigor he starts out to conquer the world anew.

The Road Back

With courage born of the bishop's words, Jean's progress in the next five years bordered on the miraculous. Under a new name, he has established himself in a town in Alsace, and step by step has worked his way up in the respect and esteem of the small community.

As M. Madeleine, he has changed completely. There is a streak of grey in his hair, but otherwise he is clean-shaven and is smiling, cheerful, good-humored. He has been eminently successful in turning an absolutely bankrupt manufacturing firm into a thriving business organization. We find him in the best of spirits as he bids good-night to a group of prominent townfolk who have come to inform him of his appointment as mayor and magistrate.

Left alone with the aftermath of a successful and happy day, Jean turns to the fireplace. On the mantelpiece are the bishop's candlesticks. He smiles at the thought of all these symbols have done for him.

"We've come a long way together, haven't we?"

There is a knock at the door, and the housekeeper shows in a man in police uniform. As the man comes forward, Jean's hands, still holding the candlesticks, drop slightly. It is Javert, warden of the prison-ship. The two men come face to face, but Javert is precise and also deferent-

"And who is the magistrate?"

"You."

To Jean's surprise, Javert takes out his official police passport and puts it on the table, continuing: "You must prefer charges against me. You have a right."

As Jean protests, Javert continues, his words tumbling over one another, brokenly, breathlessly.

"Yes, yes, yes, I tell you, you must prefer charges. I, who demand justice of others, must demand it for myself. You see, I denounced you to the prefect of police."

"As what?"

"A former convict."

"Well?"

"After that incident with the woman, Fantine, when you so oddly distinguished between the law and justice and refused to prosecute, I began to ferret out your past. I resented your interference with my carrying out my duty. I questioned your authority, so I went to work. Secretly I traced you. By studying the records of escaped criminals and those who had failed to report for parole and by an exhaustive process of elimination, I finally became convinced that you were a convict named Jean Valjean."

"What was that name?"

"Jean Valjean."

"Ah. And what was his crime?"

"As an ex-convict he was ordered to report to the police at Pontarlier. He has never reported. He has been missing five years. I traced him to the Bishop Bienvenu. He stole silver, but the bishop would not charge. The trail ended there, and although I had no positive proof, I was so sure—I denounced you."

"Real" Valjean Fought

"And—what—what answer did you get?"

"That I was mad. I must have been mad to make such a mistake—worse, I was a fool, for the real Valjean has been found."

Jean looks at Javert in amazement.



"I have denounced you, sir, as an ex-convict."

tial, showing no sign of recognizing Jean.

"M. Madeleine?"

Jean nods.

"My name is Javert. I am the new inspector of police assigned to this district, reporting for duty to the new mayor and to pay my respects."

Jean remains thoughtful for a moment after Javert's departure. He looks up at the candlesticks and then at the door. The sudden appearance of Javert has troubled and disturbed him.

It is shortly after that Jean actually buys little Cosette, daughter of Fantine Lesroilles, employed in his factory, from the proprietor of the Sergeant of Waterloo Inn and his grasping wife to look after until her mother is well and able to take care of her herself.

Jean and Cosette are playing checkers on the floor. Cosette suddenly dives her hand on the board and makes an obvious move. Jean laughs:

"You win!"

The two are the picture of contentment.

Javert Again

Toussaint, the old housekeeper, comes into the scene.

"M. Javert is here."

"Javert?"

"He wants to speak to you privately. I asked him if I could take a message, but he said it concerned you only. He spoke in such a peculiar way—"

Javert is not the calm, stoical, austere person one would expect. He is apparently under stress of emotion. He wipes the sweat from his forehead; his hand is trembling. He hears the noise of the latch and the two men come face to face.

Javert speaks in a husky undertone:

"I am sorry to disturb you at this hour, but I have a duty—an urgent duty to perform."

"Go on."

"As soon as I was sure—I had to act at once."

"Yes?"

"M. Madeleine, a criminal act has been committed."

Jean nods to him to go on.

"An agent of the government has committed a crime—a crime against a magistrate."

Jean is surprised and puzzled.

"Agent? Who is this agent?"

"It is I."

"Yes, they arrested him last week at Arras. He goes by another name, Champmathieu, but he was caught for theft. The dates of his disappearances are identical with Valjean's record—witnesses will swear to him—a fellow-criminal recognized him. Undoubtedly they have the man, Valjean."

"Well?"

"I made the mistake. I allowed a personal grievance to interfere with my duty. I must be dismissed."

Jean now takes a different tone and says:

"You did your duty—it is your place to suspect."

Now for the first time we learn something of Javert's creed. His confession is in a husky whisper, a man deeply and sincerely ashamed and broken by his failure.

"No. There is more to it than that. I, too, have my creed, M. Madeleine. They call me hard and brutal, but I am not—I am just. But I've always said to myself, 'Yes, you're hard, you're ruthless when you are in the right, but look out—one day you, yourself, will trip. Then will you be just?' I swore I would."

That time has arrived, M. Madeleine. I have caught myself. I have committed a crime. I have been unjust from anger, resentment, jealousy—what you will. I stand for justice—I have failed."

Seeing Jean is about to protest, Javert goes on:

"What I have always demanded for others—the law, good or bad, but the law to the letter—I now demand for myself."

Jean looks closely at Javert, and now it is Javert who is tormented and Jean who is almost consoling him.

"I make no charge against you."

"You must. If you don't, then I must."

"You have your creed, Javert; I have mine. As mayor, I refuse to accept your resignation. I order you to think it over."

Javert bows to authority.

"You are too lenient, M. Madeleine, but I will do as you say."

Jean moves to the door with him and stops.

"When and where is this Jean Valjean to be tried?"

"Arras—Monday."

"Tomorrow? There is no doubt about the case?"

"None. Everything is clear—he will be convicted. Goodnight, sir."

TO BE CONTINUED

Classified - Legals

PIANO—A BEAUTIFUL USED piano in this community being returned to us. Rather than expense of shipping to factory, will sell for the balance due. Terms to suit. No reasonable cash offer refused. Address Lee Piano Co., Lynchburg, Va. June 7, 14, 21

NOTICE

Sale Of Valuable Property Under and by virtue of power and authority in me vested by a certain mortgage deed executed to me on the fifth day of February, 1929, by W. A. Chappell, which said mortgage deed is duly recorded in the office of Register of Deeds for Perquimans County in Book 16, at page 495, I shall offer for sale to the highest bidder for cash at the Court House door in Hertford, Perquimans County, N. C., the lands conveyed in said deed of trust as follows: Those two certain tracts of land in New Hope Township, Perquimans County, described as follows: 1st. Bounded on south by J. W. Jackson, on west by B. Small, east by Zach Ivey, and north by Zach Ivey land containing 18.9 acres by David Cox, Jr., survey, and known as part of the Nichols land. 2nd. Bounded on west by B. Small, south by Z. Ivey, on east by Smith land, owned by D. Norse, and north by Body road, being a piece of land bought by B. Small and wife containing 28 acres, more or less.

Reference is hereby made to the above mentioned map and deed above referred to for further description.

It being the same lands sold to W. A. Chappell by M. M. Hurdle and wife by deed dated February 5, 1929, and duly recorded in the office of Register of Deeds of Perquimans County in Book 16, at page 495.

This the 14th day of May, 1935.

M. M. HURDLE, Mortgagee.

Dated and posted this, the 14th day of May, 1935.

May 17, 24, 31, June 7

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION

Having qualified as Administrator of the estate of Dock Morse, deceased, late of Perquimans County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at Durants Neck, N. C., on or before the 22nd day of May, 1935, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment.

This 22nd day of May, 1935.

ERNEST MORSE, Administrator of Dock Morse.

May 24, 31, June 7, 14, 21, 28

NOTICE

Sale of Valuable Property

By virtue of a Mortgage Deed executed to me by Henry B. Williams for certain purposes therein mentioned which said Mortgage Deed bears date February 20th, 1929, and is registered in the office of the Register of Deeds of Perquimans County in Book 17, Page 216, I shall on Friday, June 14, 1935, at 12:00 o'clock, offer for sale at Public Auction, for cash, at the Court House door in Hertford, N. C., the property conveyed to me in said Mortgage Deed: A certain town lot situated in the town of Market Street, bounded on the North by the lot of Timothy Morgan, on the East by the store lot of Wm. Madre, on the West by the Thos. Hoffer lot, and on the South by said

Market Street, being same lot this day conveyed to said Henry B. Williams by W. J. Felton and wife.

HENRY CLAY STOKES, Substitute Trustee.

Dated and posted May 14, 1935.

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May 17, 24, 31, June 7

NOTICE

By virtue of a deed of trust executed to me by Dock Morse, for certain purposes therein mentioned which said deed of trust bears date May 1st, 1929, and is registered in office of Register of Deeds of Perquimans County in M. D. Book 17, page 262, I shall on Monday, the 1st day of July, 1935, at 11:30 o'clock A. M., offer for sale to the highest bidder for cash at the Court House door in Hertford, Perquimans County, N. C., the lands conveyed in said deed of trust as follows: Those two certain tracts of land in New Hope Township, Perquimans County, described as follows: 1st. Bounded on south by J. W. Jackson, on west by B. Small, east by Zach Ivey, and north by Zach Ivey land containing 18.9 acres by David Cox, Jr., survey, and known as part of the Nichols land. 2nd. Bounded on west by B. Small, south by Z. Ivey, on east by Smith land, owned by D. Norse, and north by Body road, being a piece of land bought by B. Small and wife containing 28 acres, more or less.

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