

Hunchback

A play in one act
by Reid Conrad

*Based on the characters in The Hunchback of Notre-Dame
By Victor Hugo*

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DEDICATION

To *Thalia and Melpomene*, or whomever your muse may be.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Born a hunchback, Quasimodo finds himself in love with Fleur, a wealthy socialite hoping for a position with the queen. Frollo, Quasimodo's brother, seeks to influence the queen, and Fleur easily agrees to be his pawn but refuses to become his wife. Enraged, Frollo tricks Quasimodo into a plan to kill Fleur. Seeking to free Quasimodo from his heartache, Esmerelda, a kind, brave gypsy woman, also designs to kill Fleur. Easy staging with a single bench. Based on the characters in *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* by Victor Hugo.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

October 2015, University High School, Orange City, FL with the following cast and crew: Mark Monge, Anthony Uccello, Jared Hoozky, Francesca Toledo, Brenden Adams, Brianna Rodrigues, Alex Marchione, Collin Gunn, Amber Bell, Amber LeBron, Monyka Shoemaker, Shelby Suarez, Savannah Sicurella, Gami Arroyo, Josh Olivares, Ashley Plowden, Angelique Plowden, Harmony Milligan, Lucy Ayala, Catherine Murphy, Luke Murphy, Jessica Brandt, Dustin Ortiz, Brandon Vollaro, Alfie Rivera, Hailee Ballou, Lauren Sevcech, Haleigh Patterson, Jared Forst, and Angie Conti-Benkert.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 2 w, 6 flexible, many extras)

GRACCUS: A minstrel.

PIERRE GRINGOIRE: An activist.

QUASIMODO: A deformed hunchback.

ESMERELDA: A gypsy girl.

PHOEBUS DE CHATEAUPERS: The Captain of the Guard.

FLEUR-DE-LYS DE GONDELAURIER: A wealthy socialite.

CLAUDE FROLLO: The elder brother of Quasimodo and archdeacon.

DOCTOR LABISE: A physician.

PEASANT 1-6: Townspeople.

EXTRAS: Townspeople, two guards, and 16 set guardians who remain on stage for the duration.

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SETTING

The set is simple with a single bench, drapes, and Guardians who remain on stage for the duration of the play. The drapes allow for a silhouette to be seen and must release from above. As the scene changes, a GUITAR strums a few chords, LIGHTS alter, GUARDIANS shift, and the character on stage moves the bench to designate a new setting.

COSTUMES

All characters wear period clothing of the Late Middle Ages, Paris, France, during the reign of Louis XI (1461-1483.) Quasimodo wears a fool's crown/cap on his head. Fleur wears in a gown and carries a fan and purse. Phoebus wears a military costume. Frollo has a whip. Esmerelda needs to wear a belt pouch from which she can withdraw a flask, a small dagger, and a small folded paper.

PROPS

A snare drum, banners on poles, flowers, handkerchief, flask, a letter, fan and purse, whip, dagger, smaller dagger, chalice, gold coins, and small folded paper.

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(GRACCUS, in silhouette, appears UC through a screen of set piece. He crosses DC and beats a military rhythm on a snare drum. SIXTEEN SET GUARDIANS, eight on each side of stage, enter in step with the drumbeat carrying banners on poles which they hold vertically. The Guardians turn, face the audience, and present the banners. Graccus steps back UC. He stops drumming and disappears behind the screen. LIGHTS alter.

TOWNSPEOPLE, including PIERRE and ESMERELDA, who is holding flowers, enter from UR, cheering and cavorting. They urge QUASIMODO to enter.)

TOWNSPEOPLE: Quasimodo! Quasimodo! Quasi, King of Fools! *(Etc.)*

(QUASIMODO enters, hesitant, but at the CROWD'S urging becomes emboldened and begins to join in the revelry, clowning and relishing his audience's approval. Quasimodo stands atop the bench UCR.)

PIERRE: Speech! Speech! Words of wisdom from our king!
King Quasimodo!

TOWNSPEOPLE: Quasimodo! King of Fools! Speech! *(Etc.)*

QUASIMODO: *(Adopting a regal air.)* My subjects! I am your king! And you...are my flock! I am the shepherd an' you are my sheep! Baa, little sheep. Baa! Baaaaa!

TOWNSPEOPLE: *(Laughing and joining in.)* Baa! Baaaa!

QUASIMODO: Such good little sheep. Such loud little sheep!

(TOWNSPEOPLE grow louder.)

QUASIMODO: *(Cont'd.)* Quiet now, my sheep! Quiet I say!
The king will have his way!

PIERRE: *(Jumping up on bench.)* But where is Bo Peep?
She will quiet the sheep! Bo Peep! Bo Peep!

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(PIERRE spots someone in the crowd, jumps down, and then drags ESMERELDA onto the bench.)

PIERRE: *(Cont'd.)* Look, everyone, Bo Peep have I found.
Be quiet now and attend your mistress fair.

ESMERELDA: Hush now, my darlings, my little ones. Hush and be still. It is not the time for losing our way. The king is here, and he holds sway.

PIERRE: *(At foot of bench.)* Behold all! The king and the gypsy girl! The highest of the high and the lowest of the low! But which is which? Royalty...or beauty. Who here holds beauty above royalty? A show of hands for the beautiful Esmerelda!

(TOWNSPEOPLE unanimously throw their hands in the air and cheer for ESMERELDA.)

PIERRE: *(Cont'd.)* There you have it. Beauty wins the day! Sorry, Quasi, old king, but we have taken a fairer route. Wouldn't you agree, Quasimodo? Beauty wins the day? *(QUASIMODO looks earnestly at ESMERELDA, then turns away.)* Why, look, little sheep. She blinds with her beauty. *(To QUASIMODO.)* What's this, Quasimodo? Gone shy with the Gypsy girl? Not the King of Fools! Here, give her a kiss!

TOWNSPEOPLE: Give her a kiss! Kiss the girl! The king is slain by beauty! *(Etc.)*

(QUASIMODO, ever withdrawn, tries to leave the bench, but several TOWNSPEOPLE hold him on it. They push him toward ESMERELDA, who, for a second, gasps and recoils. She immediately feels badly and gives her flowers to him. As he looks at them she gives him a peck on the cheek. Townspeople cheer.)

TOWNSPEOPLE: *(Cont'd.)* Beauty and the Beast! The Gypsy and the King of Fools! Hurrah! *(Etc.)*

End of Freeview

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