

Title

Les Miserables Questions

“Fantine”

1. Using examples from the novel, explain the meaning of the narrator’s statement “*Ignominy thirsts for respect,*” .
2. What is the effect of the Bishop’s kindness on Jean Valjean?
3. Why does Fantine leave Cosette, and why do the Thenardiers take her in?
4. Why does Monsieur Madeleine reveal his true identity even though it means he must go back to prison?

“Cosette”

1. What is it, according to the narrator that keeps Jean Valjean-and all of us-“good?”
2. Explain the kindness of Fauchelevent, the gardener at the convent in Paris.

“Marius”

1. Explain why Marius leaves the home of his grandfather, and why he refuses money from him.
2. To what is Hugo referring when he writes, “*For five years Marius had lived in poverty, in privation, in distress even, but he perceived that he had never known real misery?*”
3. The author states “*Marius almost reproached himself with the fact that he had been so absorbed in his reveries (daydreams) and passion that he had not until now cast a glance upon his neighbors. Paying their rent was a mechanical impulse; everybody would have had that impulse.*” Why does Marius say this and do you agree?
4. Describe the type of person Jondrette (Thenardier) is. Use examples from the text for support.

“Saint Denis”

1. What does Marius discover can be even more hideous than the evil rich, and to whom specifically is he referring?
2. Explain what Cosette discovers about herself in this section of the book.
3. Hugo states, “*The power of a glance has been so much abused in love stories, that it has come to be disbelieved in. Few people dare now to say that two beings have fallen in love because they have looked at each other. Yet it is in this way that love begins, and in this way only.*” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain.
4. Why is Marius eager to put his life in jeopardy by going to fight at the barracks?

“Jean Valjean”

1. Why does Jean Valjean go to the barracks where Marius is, after receiving Gavroche’s note from Marius to Cosette?
2. When given the opportunity to shoot Javert, why does Jean Valjean let him go free?
3. Explain what happens to Javert and why you think he does what he does.
4. Explain why Jean Valjean reveals his past to Marius.
5. What is ironic about Thenardier going to Marius to tell him that Jean Valjean was an assassin and robber?
6. Why does Jean Valjean tell Cosette that they must forgive the Thenardiers?
7. Explain the significance of the title. Refer to the “Marius” section for help.

FINAL QUESTION

Does Hugo’s novel *Les Miserables* convey wisdom that you can use in your life? Explain.

