

Fantine's Death from Les Miserables by Victor Hugo

"Sir, I ask your pardon. I sincerely ask your pardon. Once I would not have spoken as I have now, but so many misfortunes have befallen me that sometimes I do not know what I am saying. I understand, you fear excitement; I will wait as long as you wish, but I am sure that it will not harm me to see my daughter. I see her now, I have not taken my eyes from her since last night. Let them bring her to me now, and I will just speak to her very gently. That is all. Is it not very natural that I should wish to see my child, when they have gone on purpose to bring her to me? I am not angry. I know that I am going to be very happy. All night, I saw figures in white, smiling on me. As soon as the doctor pleases, he can bring Cosette. My fever is gone, for I am cured; I feel that there is scarcely anything the matter with me; but I will act as if I were ill, and do not stir so as to please the ladies here. When they see that I am calm, they will say: 'You must give her the child.'"

"Did you have a pleasant journey, Monsieur the Mayor? Oh! how good you have been to go for her! Tell me only how she is. Did she bear the journey well? Ah! she will not know me. In all this time, she has forgotten me, poor kitten! Children have no memory. They are like birds. Today they see one thing, and tomorrow another, and remember nothing. Tell me only, were her clothes clean? Did they keep her neat? How did they feed her? Oh, if you knew how I have suffered in asking myself all these things in times of my wretchedness! Now, it is past. I am happy. Oh! how I want to see her! Monsieur the Mayor, did you think her pretty? Is not my daughter beautiful? You must have been very cold in the diligence? Could they not bring her here for one little moment? they might take her away immediately.

"I hear her! Oh, darling! I hear her! Oh! It is my Cosette! I know her voice! How happy we shall be! We will have a little garden in the first place; Monsieur Madeline has promised it to me. My child will play in the garden. She must know her letters now. I will teach her to spell. She will chase the butterflies in the grass, and I will watch her. Then there will be her first communion. Ah! when will her first communion be? One, two, three four... she is seven years old. In five years. She will have a white veil and open-worked stockings, and will look like a little lady. Oh, my good sister, you do not know how foolish I am; here I am thinking of my child's first communion!"

"Monsieur Madeline, save me! ... My child! Going for my child! Then she is not here! Sister, tell me, where is Cosette? I want my child! Monsieur Madeline, Monsieur the Mayor!"