

Les Miserables, Fantine's Arrest

(Bamatabois is a well dressed gentleman.)

Bamatabois

Here's something new, I think I'll give it a try.
Come closer you! I like to see what I buy
The usual price, for just a slice of your pie

Fantine

I don't want you, no, no, M'sieur, let me go.

Bamatabois

Is this a trick? I won't pay more!

Fantine

No, not at all.

Bamatabois

You've got some nerve, you little whore
You've got some gall.
It's the same with a tart as it is with a grocer
The customer sees what he gets in advance
It's not for the whore to say 'yes sir' or 'no sir'
It's not for the harlot to pick and to choose
Or lead me to a dance!

(He hits her with his stick, she claws at his face, drawing blood.)

Fantine

I'll kill you, you bastard, try any of that!
Even a whore who has gone to the bad
Won't be had by a rat!

Bamatabois

By Christ you'll pay for what you have done
This rat will make you bleed, you'll see!
I guarantee, I'll make you suffer
For this disturbance of the peace
For this insult to life and property!

Fantine

I beg you, don't report me sir
I'll do whatever you may want

Bamatabois

Make your excuse to the police!

(Javert enters, accompanied by constables.)

Javert

Tell me quickly what's the story
Who saw what and why and where
Let him give a full description
Let him answer to Javert!
In this nest of whores and vipers
Let one speak who saw it all
Who laid hands on this good man here?
What's the substance of this brawl?

Bamatabois

Javert, would you believe it
I was crossing from the park
When this prostitute attacked me
You can see she left her mark

Javert
She will answer for her actions
When you make a full report
You may rest assured, M'sieur,
That she will answer to the court.

Fantine
There's a child who sorely needs me

Please M'sieur, she's but that high
Holy God, is there no mercy?
If I go to jail she'll die!

Javert
I have heard such protestations
Every day for twenty years
Let's have no more explanations
Save your breath and save your tears
Honest work, just reward,
That's the way to please the Lord.

(Fantine gives a last despairing cry as she is arrested. Valjean emerges from the crowd.)

Valjean
A moment of your time, Javert
I do believe this woman's tale

Javert
But M'sieur Mayor!

Valjean
You've done your duty
Let her be
She needs a doctor, not a jail.

Javert
But M'sieur Mayor!

Fantine
Can this be?

Valjean
Where will she end -
This child without a friend?
I've seen your face before
Show me some way to help you
How have you come to grief
In a place such as this?

Fantine
M'sieur, don't mock me now, I pray
It's hard enough I've lost my pride
You let your foreman send me away
Yes, you were there, and turned aside
I never did no wrong

Valjean
Is it true, what I have done?
To an innocent soul?
Had I only known then... Fantine
My daughter's close to dying
If there's a God above
He'd let me die instead

Valjean
In His name my task has just begun
I will see it done!
I will see it done!

Javert
But M'sieur Mayor!

Valjean
I will see it done!

Javert
But M'sieur Mayor!

Voices
Look out! It's a runaway cart!