

START QUASIMODO

The bells... *(He indicates his ears.)* Can still hear a little. And read lips, to understand.

From this point forward, ESMERALDA makes sure QUASIMODO can see her face when she speaks.

ESMERALDA

What is your name?

QUASIMODO

(Bashful in her presence.) Quasimodo.

ESMERALDA

I'm called Esmeralda. *(He nods.)* I thought I heard you talking when I came up here...

QUASIMODO

Not me. Gargoyles.

ESMERALDA

The gargoyles? They talk to you?

QUASIMODO

Everything talks to me... Windows, statues, bells...all, my friends. *(Suddenly embarrassed.)* No, that's stupid.

ESMERALDA

No, it's not. I like your friends. Have you lived here a long time?

QUASIMODO

Whole life.

ESMERALDA

Really? It seems like a wonderful place to live.

QUASIMODO

Yes. But. In winter – cold.

ESMERALDA laughs. This makes QUASIMODO smile. Eager to continue to please her, he begins to point out things over the railing.

#12 TOP OF THE WORLD

QUASIMODO

Can see everything from up here. City gates. River Seine.

ESMERALDA

Yes. It sparkles in the light... *(She gazes down.)* Small problem. I'm afraid of heights. *(She gets dizzy. QUASIMODO helps her away from the railing.)* Thank you. You're very strong.

QUASIMODO

(Proudly.) I am.

ESMERALDA

Still, I'm glad I can get to...to see things down there.

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GAZING DOWN FROM THE TOP OF THE WORLD
SUDDENLY SEEING A DIFFERENT CITY
THINGS LOOK TINY AND FRIENDLY AND FAIR
SEEN FROM THE TOP OF THE WORLD
WHEN YOU LOOK FROM HIGH ABOVE
EVERYTHING SEEMS PRETTY
SEEING LIFE FROM THE TOP OF THE WORLD
NOTHING NEEDS FIGHTING AND NO ONE NEEDS PITY
THANKS FOR GIVING THIS MOMENT TO ME
WHEN JUST FOR A MOMENT THINGS STOP
HERE AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD...

EUGÈNE

FOR ALL THESE YEARS
YOU'VE STAYED ALONE
AND FREE FROM DANGER

LUCRÈCE

WE SHARED YOUR FEARS
IT WASN'T SAFE
TO TRUST A STRANGER

NICODÈME

BUT MAYBE WE WERE WRONG HERE

ANGÉLIQUE

COULD SHE BELONG HERE?

CÉLESTINE

THIS GIRL APPEARS
AND SHE IS KIND
AND WE'RE ADMITTING

GARGOYLES

WE'D GIVE THREE CHEERS
TO SEE YOU BOTH

The two new friends sit and gaze out at the city of Paris spread out before them. QUASIMODO has never been happier in his life than to share this with her. Overwhelmed with joy, he goes and begins to ring the bells.

START QUASIMODO

Marie! Thibault! Gabrielle! Françoise! Pasquelle! Ring for her! Sing for Esmeralda!

ESMERALDA

(In awe:) So loud!

QUASIMODO

Yes?

ESMERALDA

Beautiful – but loud!

QUASIMODO

All are in good voice today. Knew today was going to be special. And look – up there – hot lead.

ESMERALDA

Hot lead?

QUASIMODO

I use to fix the bells – I show you. But careful – very, very hot—

FROLLO appears at the top of the bell tower stairs.

FROLLO

Quasimodo! What are you doing, ringing the bells at the wrong time? Since when have you ever— *(He sees ESMERALDA.)* My child, I looked for you after Mass. I thought you had left...But instead, I find that my charge has distracted you! Quasimodo, you shouldn't have.

ESMERALDA

It was my fault, Your Grace.

FROLLO

Ah. My son, don't you have duties to perform?

QUASIMODO

(Nervous.) Yes, master.

FROLLO

Don't stray too far.

QUASIMODO hesitantly exits down the steps of the bell tower and out.

FROLLO

Filling the boy's head with dreams?

ESMERALDA

No. Just thoughts. Nothing wrong with thoughts, is there?

FROLLO

That depends. You can see how impressionable he is. Little more than a child.

ESMERALDA

Looking at him, I don't see a child.

FROLLO edges closer to her.

FROLLO

But you are. In a way. You indicated a willingness to learn. A soul who wishes to be saved is already halfway there. I could instruct you in the gospels, share with you our Lord's grace. You could come here every day. Or better yet, perhaps you could stay here...

ESMERALDA

Stay?

FROLLO

In the Cathedral. With me.

ESMERALDA

I don't think that would be a good idea.

FROLLO

No?

ESMERALDA

I see the way you look at me.

FROLLO is aghast.

FROLLO

How dare you! Your soul is so unclean you can't imagine goodness in others. I should have known no Gypsy would truly want to be saved.

ESMERALDA

I don't think I'm in need of saving.

FROLLO

Of course not. Your kind never does. *(He calls down the steps.)* Captain! *(A beat.)* I could be a good friend to you. But I warn you, I could also be a terrible enemy.

~~PHOEBUS~~

~~(Entering below, calling up.) Your Grace?~~

FROLLO

Escort this Gypsy out of the church. And see that she never sets foot here again. If she does, she'll be arrested.

PHOEBUS begins to move ESMERALDA toward the doors of the cathedral. She leaves, but not before looking back at QUASIMODO, who has entered quietly.

FROLLO

(Seeing him.) Quasimodo. That Gypsy girl—

QUASIMODO

She—she was kind to me.

FROLLO

Was she? And what do you know about people and their feelings, my boy?

QUASIMODO

Feelings? I ... nothing.

FROLLO

Quasimodo, do you ever have thoughts? Impure thoughts?

QUASIMODO

Impure?

FROLLO

A boy like you, already grown in body...possessing these urges and ideas that come to a young man...you must stop them. You must stop these feelings. You must not follow in the footsteps of your father—

QUASIMODO

(Eager; this is a rarely discussed topic.) My father?

FROLLO

He was weak. And you have his corruption inside you. Listen to me, Quasimodo. I'm warning you about this girl. She's dangerous. She was put in our path for a reason – to tempt us. We've resisted. Promise me you won't think of her again.

QUASIMODO

Won't – think?

FROLLO

Promise me.

QUASIMODO

Promise.

FROLLO

Good. So then, we're well rid of her.

ENSEMBLE

(Whispering from the darkness, voices in FROLLO's head:) Esmeralda...Esmeralda...

FROLLO

It is just the two of us, my boy...you and I against the world.

QUASIMODO

Yes, master.

FROLLO

That's a good boy. Now, sound the bells and send the city to sleep. Good night...

QUASIMODO

Good night, master.

STOP

FROLLO exits. QUASIMODO is lost in thought as he ascends the stairs to the bell tower. We move to...