

Student Essay on Les Miserables Quote Analysis

Les Miserables Quote Analysis by Victor Hugo

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Essay

"After he had fully determined that the young man was at the bottom of this state of affairs, and that it all came from him, he, Jean Valjean, the regenerated man, the man who had labored so much upon his soul, the man who had made so many efforts to resolve all life, all misery, and all misfortune into love; he looked within himself, and there he saw a specter, Hatred."

The quote is a good example of Valjean's mental struggle of morals. The visual I drew shows Jean Valjean looking into a mirror on the wall, and he sees a frightening "evil" face, one that's very much different from his ordinary outer appearance. In one hand, he's holding a pair of white candle sticks, which represents how he had tried to redeem his sins earlier. In his other hand, he holds a heart, which represents his love for Cosette. These two symbols show that the man has experienced lots of goodness, and has tried extremely hard to make himself a good man. He is still able to, however, see the evil "sinister" person inside of him, despite all the "goodness" he had experienced.

This quote shows that no matter how good a man is, he is still susceptible to temptation if he is capable of getting what he desires. Valjean was tempted to kill Marius so that he can keep Cosette, and Valjean easily sees the evil in that act. Valjean is disgusted with seeing the evil, and decides to push it down, tries to bring him back to Cosette.