

Les Miserables Character Descriptions

- JEAN VALJEAN** is the hero of the show. It is his life journey that we follow. Jean Valjean is supposed to be stronger than other men, and so physically should appear robust. He should reasonably carry himself as mature and paternal. Valjean's ability to change is his greatest asset. The key to his character is his great humanity and compassion. Jean Valjean is a vocally demanding role.
Low A to High A
- JAVERT** is the inspector who serves as antagonist to Jean Valjean. Javert is unswerving in his belief that men cannot change for the good. "Once a thief, always a thief" is his mantra. At first glance Javert might appear to be the villain of the story, but on closer examination it is clear that he is not an evil man. He is aware that in society some people achieve control through evil and others through power of the law. He is a dedicated policeman, with a profound sense of duty. Unlike Valjean he cannot change. His attitudes are rigid and unmovable. He is stern, forbidding and lacking in compassion. Javert should be an actor who can convincingly stand up to Jean Valjean.
Low F to High F sharp
- CHAIN GANG** The Chain Gang consists of Jean Valjean's fellow prisoners. There are four soloists (indicated as convict 1,2,3,4.) The overall vocal range of the convicts is low and they should be able to sing in a rich baritone if possible.
Low F to High E flat
- CONSTABLE 1 & 2** There are two Constables with solos in the show.
E to High E
- FARMER** The Farmer has solo lines that are a bit difficult to sing. There may be additional non-singing farmers.
Middle C to D flat
- LABOURERS** The Laborer has solo lines that are a bit difficult to sing. There may be additional non-singing laborers.
A sharp to D flat
- BISHOP OF DIGNE** The Bishop is a good man who saves Valjean with his compassion. Don't overlook the importance of this role. The Bishop of Digne's compassion carefully establishes the premise of the show by literally buying Jean Valjean's soul for God.
Low A to High E
- FANTINE** Fantine is the beautiful young girl who, abandoned by her lover, is left to fend for herself and her daughter Cosette. She is rejected by society and forced through circumstances to become a prostitute. She is a brave woman defeated by life, sustained by her love for her daughter and clinging to her dignity. Sick with consumption, we witness her descent through poverty, hunger, cold, loneliness and destitution to death. She is a noble character, whose life becomes a series of terrible events that rob her of her pride, character, and ultimately her life.
G flat (below middle C) to D
- FOREMAN** The Foreman begins Fantine on her downward spiral of desperation. He should be virile, commanding and a bit sleazy around the edges.
D (below middle C) to D
- FACTORY GIRL (GIRL 5)** The Shop Girl who fights with Fantine. She is mean, catty, and selfish. She also is most likely having an affair with the Foreman and jealous of Fantine.
E (below middle C) to D flat (above middle C)
- SAILORS** three sailors begin The Docks scene. All three have solos.
Low C to middle C

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- BAMATABOIS** Bamatabois is the "customer" who taunts Fantine into violence. He is dressed in expensive clothes. He is a wealthy dissolute young man who thinks of himself as a gentleman. He is drunk and in a sadistic mood and chauvinistically feels it is his right to buy anything, even Fantine.
D (below middle C) to High D
- OLD WOMAN** The Old Woman is a nice feature part. This is the character that purchases Fantine's hair.
E (above middle C) to D
- PIMP** The Pimp controls the prostitutes at the docks. he is mean, aggressive and abusive. The Pimp has a small solo line in The Docks.
E (below middle C) to D
- FAUCHELEVANT** is the victim of the cart crash. The role requires a few solo lines and some painful yelps.
B (below middle C) to E flat
- JUDGE** The Judge or Judges are non-singing roles.
- IMPOSTER JEAN VALJEAN AND FAMILY** These characters are also non-singing. This is the man who Javert believes to be Jean Valjean.
- YOUNG COSETTE** is the child of Fantine. She is the ward of the Thenardiers forced into child labor and sings "Castle On A Cloud." She is a trembling little creature, underfed, beaten by Madame Thenardier and bullied by Eponine. make sure Cosette is small and looks properly pathetic and yet warms the audience's heart who should be sympathetic to her plight.
A (below middle C) to C
- MADAME THÉNARDIER** She is the wife of Thenardier, Madame Thenardier is as "one" with Thenardier. Together they con the world as partners in crime. They were made for each other, although she complains about him, she loves him deeply. She is coarse and vulgar, unhappy in her existence without knowing why. She is romantic, greedy, stupid, evil and larger than life. She is mean and nasty to Young Cosette and able to improvise in nearly any situation.
G sharp (below middle C) to D
- THÉNARDIER** is the true villain of Les Miserables. He is embodiment of evil. That said, he should also possess a wicked sense of humor. He delights in cheating, robbing, fraud and blackmail, relishing every aspect of them with glee. He is tough, greedy, brutal, stupid and crafty and yet irresistible. He hates society and blames it and everyone else for all his misfortune. Thenardier is also the opportunist and realist of the show. He is a thief, a liar, a cheat, steals valuables from the dead with no remorse. He is also the comic relief of the production. However, his comedy is based in reality and shouldn't be too exaggerated. He is married to Madame Thenardier and father to Eponine and Gavroche (although he has abandoned Gavroche to the streets of Paris.)
C (below middle C) to G sharp (above middle C)
- YOUNG EPONINE** Little Eponine is the pampered daughter of the Thenardiers. She does little except enter the stage and taunt Little Cosette. The role requires no singing or speaking. She should be a smaller version of grown Eponine and resemble Eponine in appearance and features.
Non-singing
- GAVROCHE** Gavroche is Thenardier's son. He is left to fend for himself and lives by his wits in the streets of Paris. His "arch enemy" is Javert the Policeman. He is brave and witty. Think a young Artful Dodger. Gavroche has a very dramatic death at the barricade.
B (below middle C) to G
- GAVROCHE'S GANG** Paris at this time would be full of orphans (due to years of wars and revolutions).

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- EPONINE** is the daughter of the Thenardiers. She is a young girl who is streetwise and tough, but also sensitive and lonely. She is in love with Marius, knowing that he will never love her. She bravely follows Marius to the Barricades in the hope that they will die there together. Once grown up, Eponine moves with her family to Paris where they fall on hard times. Now poor, living hand to mouth, she survives by helping her father break the law. Eponine is a tragic character, hopelessly in love with Marius. She sings one of the most famous numbers in the show, "On My Own," and should therefore be an excellent singer with a contemporary edge to her voice and an excellent actress.
F sharp (below middle C) to E
- ENJOLRAS** Is the student leader. He is handsome, brave and daring, although youthful. He combines his revolutionary ideals with a strong charismatic leadership. He is described by Victor Hugo as "a thinker, and a man of action". On the barricade he physically and vocally should dominate everyone else. He should ooze with charisma, be a natural leader, be good looking, and have a very strong high baritone or a tenor voice. Remember, Enjolras must lead the students to fight and ultimately die. His death at the barricade is one of the dramatic highlights of the show.
A to G (above middle C)
- MARIUS** is the handsome romantic hero of the story. He is impulsive, passionate, willful and headstrong. His moods change according to his circumstances. He is sweet and tender but also capable of great courage and compassion. In Act 1 Marius plays Romeo to Cosette's Juliet. Marius matures after the Cafe Song as a result of his experiences on the barricade. Marius should have a lovely, lyrical voice with a contemporary edge.
Low A to High A flat
- COSETTE** is the beautiful daughter of Fantine. She is strong willed and loving. She is an intelligent, inquiring, personable girl. She is not in any sense a "soppy" romantic heroine. Once adopted by Jean Valjean, Cosette lives a comfortable, if secluded life. She is challenging to Valjean, behaving always with imagination and dignity. She falls instantly in love with Marius, changing her world and her priorities.
B flat (below middle C) to High C (2 octaves above middle C)
- BRUJON** Member of Thenardier's gang of thieves. Physically very strong. The body of a bear and a pea sized brain. A genuine gangster, he is stupid and evil.
C sharp (below middle C) to E
- BABET** Member of Thenardier's gang of thieves. Physically frail. He is lean and cunning.
C sharp (below middle C) to E
- CLAQUESOUS** Member of Thenardier's gang of thieves. Tough, dangerous and secretive.
C sharp (below middle C) to E
- MONTPARNASSE** Member of Thenardier's gang of thieves. A teenager. Handsome and dangerous. Kills with a knife. He is well dressed, strongly built and supple.
C sharp (below middle C) to E
- COMBEFERRE** Member of the ABC Society. The philosopher and believer in peace. He is gentle, humane, strong and brave.
Low A to F
- FEUILLY** Member of the ABC Society. A worker, self-educated and an orphan. A believer in "nationality." Affectionate, warm and poetic.
Low A to F
- COURFEYRAC** Member of the ABC Society. A student. He is youthful, passionate and fearless.
Low A to F

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JOLY

Member of the ABC Society. A medical student. Eccentric and light-hearted, although sometimes morbid. His name is derived from the English word "Jolly."

Low A to F

PROUVAIRE

Member of the ABC Society. A student of social studies. He is kind, softly spoken and at the right moments strong and masterful. He is also a poet.

Low A to F

LESGLES

Member of the ABC Society. A student. Cheerful, laughing at life but unlucky. His close friend is Joly.

Low A to F

GRANTAIRE

Member of the ABC Society. A student. He is the opposite of Enjolras. He believes in nothing. Although he admires Enjolras, he loves to mock him. Witty and drunken, he is happy being with the group and the put up with him because of his good humor. He also keeps a watchful eye on Gavroche, the mascot of the group, and is most heartbroken when Gavroche is killed. So much so that Grantaire abandons his cynicism and rushes to die on the barricade.

Low A to F