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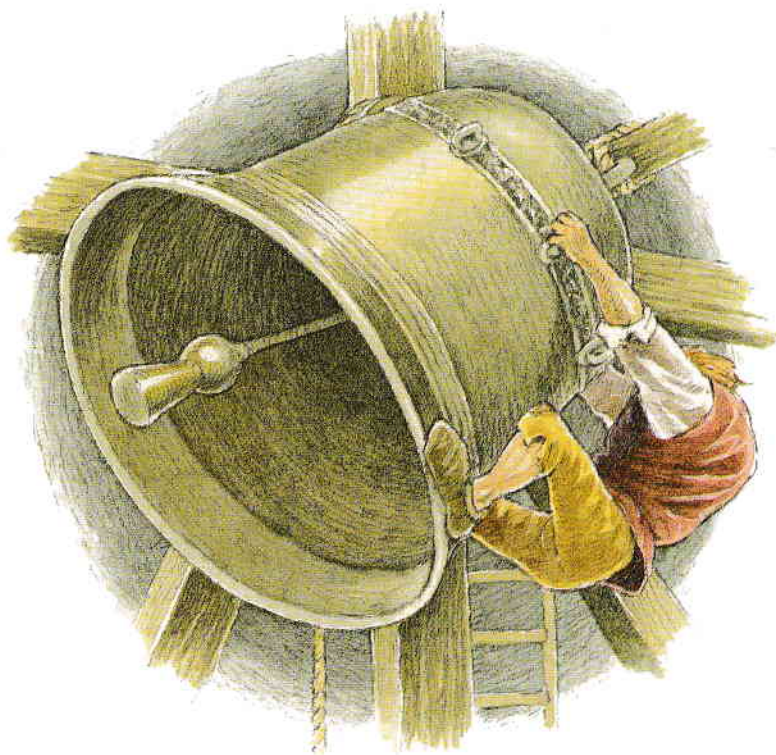
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The Hunchback of Notre Dame

By Victor Hugo

Retold by Tim Wynne-Jones

Illustrated by Bill Slavin



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It was the night of the Festival of Fools.

All of Old Paris was crazy with excitement. Crazy to dance in mad costumes around the Maypole, to drink and sing around the bonfire in the Place de Grève. And crazy to crown a new King of Fools.

The stage at the Palace of Justice was set for Tragedy, but Clopin the Beggar King had other ideas. "This is no time for actors with long faces!" he heckled. "The crowd is hungry for Comedy!"

Clopin punched a hole through the scenery with his scruffy head. "Who can pull the funniest face? Line up! Line up!"

What an odd cavalcade trooped onto the stage! Then, suddenly, through the hole appeared a face that brought a gasp from the crowd.

"Ahhh!"



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It was like a face that had been smashed into a thousand pieces and stitched back together all wrong. Quasimodo the hunchback. Quasimodo the bell ringer at the cathedral of Notre Dame.

"Crown him!" clamored the crowd. How proud Quasimodo was in his cardboard tiara, his tinsel-covered robes, holding the gilded wooden crosier they gave him.

"He's as wicked as he is ugly," yelled someone.

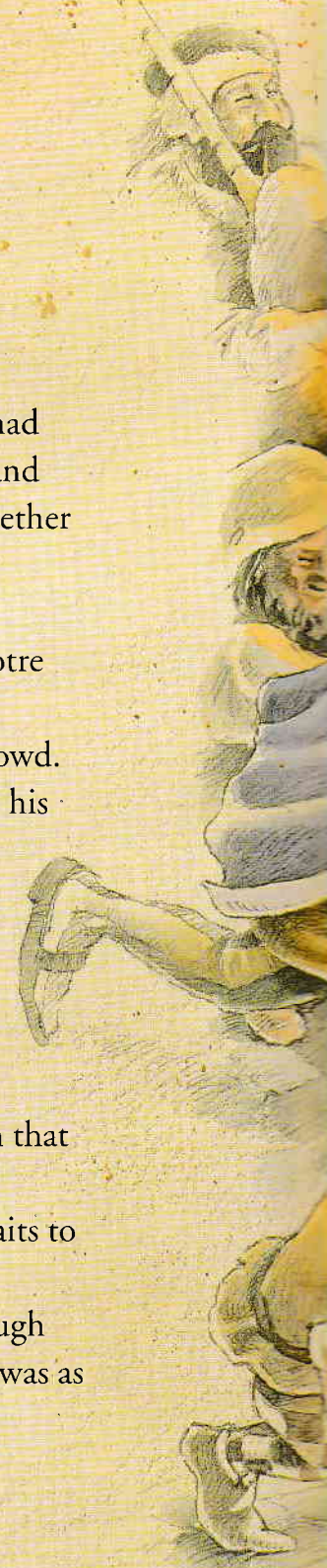
"A Cyclops."

"The devil's handiwork."

But Quasimodo heard only the muffled roar of their applause. He was deaf. The bells of the church had made him that way.

"To the Place de Grève!" cried Clopin. "La Esmeralda waits to dance before her king."

Onto a brightly colored litter Quasimodo leapt. For though his body was as heavy as a bear's and hideously deformed, he was as agile as a lizard.



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