

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

By

Max Ryan & Julio Ponce Palmieri

The Hunchback voted Best Screenplay at the: Queens International Film Festival 2007

Life for **QUASIMODO**, the hunchback bell ringer of the majestic Notre Dame Cathedral in 1482 Paris, has been filled with torment and shame. During his dramatic childbirth, a terribly deformed Quasimodo was thought to be a demon and was persecuted by the townspeople, forcing his parents to move to the outskirts of Paris. Their peaceful existence was crushed by the greedy **CLOPIN**, who mercilessly killed Quasimodo's parents in the hopes to kidnap him and make a profitable sale. Quasimodo escaped Clopin's diabolical grasp but was then left an orphan.

Week's later, the priest **FROLLO**, and the **CARDINAL OF BOURBON**, happen upon Quasimodo, living among decaying corpses and disease carrying rats. Disgusted by the boy's atrocious appearance, Frolo refused to aid him. However, when the Cardinal discovered this, he made it Folio's penance to look after Quasimodo for the rest of his years. Frolo resented not only Quasimodo, but also the Cardinal for robbing him of his freedom.

Decades later, rejected by society, Quasimodo lives in solitude in "the cave" of Notre Dame, under the strict abusive ruling of Frolo. It is a dark, claustrophobic space in the high grounds of the grandiose Cathedral. One fateful night Quasimodo saved **ESMERALDA**, a beautiful young gypsy, from a terrorizing wolf attack and since then the gentle hunchback has been fascinated by her. Esmeralda's cultural background is misunderstood by the ignorant mass, led by a ruthless **MAIN SERGEANT**, who believes her to be a sorceress.

Unbeknownst to Quasimodo and Esmeralda, Frolo has become totally obsessed with the gypsy. A torn Frolo cannot control his animalistic desires and eventually concludes that Esmeralda is evil and must be vanquished. Luckily for Esmeralda, she gets unexpected help from **PIERRE**, a smart, resourceful poet.

Using Clopin's greed, Frolo baits Esmeralda into the Cardinal's presence. Frolo kills the Cardinal and frames the shocked Esmeralda for it. With this heinous crime, Frolo frees himself of the duty of looking after Quasimodo, who has grown significantly closer to Esmeralda. This unique emotional connection between the two eats away at Folio's soul, which is filled with acidic jealousy and hatred.

With Esmeralda being sentenced to death, a brave Quasimodo rescues her and offers sanctuary in Notre Dame, the very same structure that houses her biggest threat. All hell breaks loose and Quasimodo, Esmeralda, Clopin, Pierre, Frolo and the Main Sergeant find themselves together under the roof of Notre Dame. The gates of damnation have opened in the house of God, and sacrifices must be made in order to put a stop to the evildoers of the troubled city of Paris.