

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Thoughtful questions to explore moral disengagement, prejudice, compassion, and what it means to see the human in everyone.

“The world is a very unjust place. If you don't learn to deal with that, you'll go mad.”



WATCH & NOTICE

Before diving in, take a moment to watch with fresh eyes.

- ♥ What details stand out to you?
- ♥ What emotions come up as you watch?
- ♥ Who do you feel closest to? Who is hardest to understand?

1 OTHERING AND PREJUDICE



- ♥ How is difference treated in Quasimodo's world?
- ♥ When do the citizens show compassion, and when do they reject?
- ♥ Where do we see “us vs. them” thinking in our own lives?

2 THE MACHINERY OF MORAL DISENGAGEMENT



- ♥ Which of the mechanisms (see infographic) does Frollo use?
- ♥ How does he justify harm he knows is wrong?
- ♥ How can good people do harmful things while believing they're right?

3 POWER, CONTROL, AND DISPLACED DESIRE



- ♥ How does Frollo's unacknowledged desire turn into control and cruelty?
- ♥ How does power distort love into possession?
- ♥ What helps us keep our emotions in check rather than act on them?

♥ TAKE IT DEEPER

REFLECT

What beliefs or fears make it easier to judge others? What helps soften those beliefs?

WRITE

Write a letter from Quasimodo to his younger self. What would he say?

ACT

Think of one person who might feel alone or unseen. How can you make a space for them to belong?

4 THE CAPTIVE CHILD



- ♥ How does Frollo's upbringing shape Quasimodo's self-view?
- ♥ What messages did Quasimodo believe about himself?
- ♥ How can we help children build worth that isn't based on looks or approval?

5 ESMERALDA: SEEING THE HUMAN



- ♥ How does Esmeralda challenge the crowd's prejudice?
- ♥ What does it look like to see people as whole, not as labels?
- ♥ How can we practice this every day?

6 COMPASSION IN ACTION



- ♥ What moments show courage to choose compassion?
- ♥ How can small acts of kindness change the story?
- ♥ What will you do this week to include, protect, or be kind?

The opposite of love is not hate—
it is the failure to see someone's humanity.



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Understanding
minds.



Strengthening
connections.