

Right and Proper

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Right and Proper

by [Miss M.\(missm\)](#)

Summary

Valjean again knelt at Javert's feet and raised his hands to the wound. "By your leave," he said and gently unravelled the bloodied rag.

Notes

For Esteven's prompt: "Est Relationship: Javert injured on duty and Valjean fussing like a maniac, being snarked at during recovery, even though J will let Vj do some fussing, knowing that his husband needs that." They aren't exactly "married" here – more like going steady – but I still hope you'll like it, Esteven.

The note came about a quarter past ten, by which time Valjean was beginning to get nervous. He accepted the slip of paper gratefully, pressed a coin into the messenger boy's hand, and folded out the paper, drawing a sigh of relief at the sight of the well-known hand.

A few minutes later, he had put on his coat and hat, packed a few items into a basket, and headed out.

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Valjean had been to Javert's quarters some times since the beginning of their friendship, and the landlady recognised him without difficulty; Javert did not have many visitors. Still, she frowned at the lateness of the hour, politely suggesting that monsieur l'inspecteur might not wish to receive guests at this time of night.

"He does," Valjean said with conviction. "He invited me himself."

Though the good woman seemed doubtful at this, she did let him in, and a moment later Valjean was knocking on Javert's door.

There was silence for a minute or two, then a irritated, tired-sounding voice growled, "Who's there?"

"It's me," Valjean said. "Fauchelevent."

"Oh, for..." The door opened, revealing Javert. He still had his greatcoat on, and he looked pale and worn. "Didn't you get my note?"

"I did," said Valjean with a glance at the landlady, who had followed him up the stairs and stood wringing her hands. "I came as soon as I could."

Javert closed his eyes for a moment. "Of course you did," he muttered. Then he nodded to the landlady. "Thank you, Madame. Come in, Fauchelevent."

Valjean entered the tiny flat, glancing around. A lamp was lit in the corner, but there was no fire on; the room was cold and uninviting – no wonder Javert had kept his greatcoat on. Letting the door fall closed behind Valjean with a thud, he folded his arms across his chest, no doubt trying to look stern but too obviously exhausted for the effect to be successful. "So either you missed my company to the extent that going without it for one night was unbearable to you, or you chose not to trust me when I said that it would be better for the both of us if I spent the night here and we saw each other tomorrow instead. Which is it?"

"Which one would you prefer?" Valjean said, removing his coat and hat and tossing them onto a table. He scrutinised Javert, who seemed to be swaying where he was standing, and frowned. "Are you hurt?"

Javert harrumphed. "Just a minor graze – hardly a bruise."

"You should let me look at it."

"There is no need."

Valjean raised an eyebrow. Javert sighed. He unfolded his arms and took a step forward, but the movement seemed too sudden for him and he swayed again, more violently; Valjean flung out an arm and caught him.

"Clearly no need at all," he muttered, steering Javert towards one of the two chairs in the room. "Let me start a fire and then we'll have a look."

"I tell you, it's nothing," Javert insisted. "One of the scoundrels had a knife which he waved about like a lunatic, but it could have been so much worse – ow!" One of his thighs – the one that must be hurt – had bumped against Valjean's as he sat down. "I wound a rag around it. It should have stopped bleeding by now; it was only a small cut."

Valjean knelt by the fireplace and started to place the logs together. "Then why did you come here and not to my quarters, as we had agreed?"

"Because I knew you'd be fussing like a mother hen." Javert's voice was more resigned than truly annoyed; he'd closed his eyes and let his head fall back. "Truly, there is nothing like hunting criminals all day and, after having successfully arrested three of them, coming home to your very own ex-convict who seems bent on adding playing the nursemaid to his many talents!" He opened his eyes again, looking rueful all of a sudden. "I didn't want you to worry," he mumbled, picking at the buttons of his greatcoat.

"Too late for that." Valjean had managed to start the fire; now he got to his feet and bent over Javert. "Get your coat off."

Javert sighed, apparently defeated. He started to unbutton his coat, and let Valjean help him get it off. One of his trouser legs was torn right above the knee, and the cloth was stained. Valjean frowned. "The trousers, too."

Javert rolled his eyes, but obediently loosened his belt and lifted his hips so Valjean could tug his trousers down. He knelt by Javert's feet, inspecting the wound. It was a gash – not very wide, but it had bled through the rag Javert had used to dress it. Valjean could not help but be upset at the sight of the blood, though he knew full well that Javert had sustained worse in his time. His mouth tightened. "That needs to be cleaned. And properly bandaged."

Javert gave another sigh. "And you volunteer for the task, I'll wager."

"If you will let me." Valjean suddenly became aware that he was level with Javert's groin, something which had no place in his thoughts now that there were more pressing matters to deal with. Studiously keeping his eyes from trailing along the line of Javert's naked thigh, he caught a large hand between his own and kissed it. "I have seen more fearsome wounds."

Javert let out his strange laugh at that. "I daresay you must have! And yet you trouble yourself with... Well." His thumb traced over Valjean's lower lip. "If you insist."

Valjean kissed his hand again. Though the words flowed more easily between the two of them now than what had been the case a year ago, sometimes simple gestures seemed the best course of action. He rose to his feet, reluctantly letting go of Javert's hand. "I'll ask your landlady for some hot water. Don't move."

"Wouldn't think of it," Javert said. His voice was weary, but a corner of his mouth quirked upwards.

The landlady had indeed some hot water left after having made herself a cup of tea, so Valjean was back in mere minutes. He placed the basin of water on the floor next to Javert's chair and bent to see to the wound. "Do you have any bandages on hand?"

Javert nodded towards the small cupboard next to the bed. Valjean went there and found, to his contentment, fresh bandages; Javert, being nothing if not practical, also had a supply of towels and rags at the ready. Taking a few of these with him, Valjean again knelt at Javert's feet and raised his hands to the wound. "By your leave," he said and gently unravelled the bloodied rag.

The bleeding did not start again, which was a relief. He wiped away the dried blood, watching the water in the basin turn red. Javert did not wince, but watched him with stoicism. There was a subdued look in his eyes which Valjean had finally learned to recognise as tenderness, strange as it had been at first.

It still seemed unfathomable to him, sometimes, that this man, for so many years a symbol of everything he feared, should hold such a place in his heart and in his life – that the two of them should be bound together like this: by amiable moments in fire-lit parlours, by heated moments in dark bedrooms, by quiet moments in each other's arms, when all was peace and drowsiness and nothing needed to be said.

This love, so different from the one he felt for his daughter and still so very new, had worried him at first, making him fear it was yet another whisper from the darker side of his nature, but after much contemplation, he had concluded it could not be so. His desire for Javert stemmed not from the desire to break and conquer but from the need to give love and receive it in return, and what could this need be, if not God's greatest gifts to His children? Yet his fears had not subsided entirely before, one night, he had dreamed of the Bishop of Digne.

In his dream, he had knelt before the Bishop with his eyes downcast, whispering, "I have come to care deeply for this man, not only with my heart but with my body; I long to touch him and lie with him and know him in the most intimate of ways. This is new to me and I do not know if it is a sin, for it does not feel sinful; there were words for it in prison but they all seem wrong." Trembling, he had raised his eyes to the Bishop: "Do you know what they are, these feelings?"

"I do know their name," the Bishop said, and Valjean trembled again. "Their name is love." He reached out a hand and touched Valjean's head in gentle benediction. "Do not deny yourself this comfort."

When he woke up, the words were already fading from his mind and later he could not recall them. But after that night he had ceased to be afraid.

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Now he carefully wrapped the clean bandage around Javert's thigh, watching Javert's face as he fastened it. "Is that too tight?"

"It's fine." Javert's eyes had fallen shut; now he opened them and met Valjean's gaze. He cleared his throat. "Thank you."

"It's nothing." He wiped his hands on a towel, then planted a kiss on Javert's knee, liking the slight hitch in Javert's breath. "You would have done the same for me."

"It still amazes me," Javert muttered, lifting a hand to caress Valjean's cheek, "how sure you are of that. What makes you trust me so?"

"The fact that we are here, like this," Valjean said. He rested his head in Javert's lap and closed his eyes. Javert's hand stroked his hair. "What other proof would I need?"

Javert gave a sigh. "I have never known anyone like you," he said softly. Valjean, hearing the unspoken declaration in his words, caught his hand and kissed it. Then he glanced at the basket he'd brought. "Are you hungry?"

"No."

"You still ought to eat something. I brought wine. And bread, and cheese."

"Well, I wouldn't deny you your supper," Javert said, a tone of dry humour in his voice. "Especially since we were going to dine together."

"Precisely." He got to his feet; then, for the first time that evening, he leaned in and kissed Javert on the mouth. Javert's lips parted under his with a sigh. Valjean pulled back and smiled. "I will consider that my reward."

Javert snorted. "You could have had that anyway," he said, not quite able to hide his answering smile. "Let's eat, then, so that you will not have brought the meal for nothing."

Valjean pulled the small table and the other chair close to where Javert was sitting, and they shared a meal in companionable silence, easily passing the bread and cheese between them, their eyes meeting ever so often over the raised glasses of wine. Valjean made sure Javert helped himself twice – "I don't need to be fed like a babe," Javert grumbled, though he complied both times – and refilled their glasses until the bottle was empty and Javert was leaning back in his chair, now looking relaxed rather than haggard.

When they had finished eating, Valjean cleared away the rest of the food, the plates and the glasses. Then he fought back a yawn. "I hope you are not going to work early tomorrow?"

"I'm scheduled for an afternoon shift."

"Good." Valjean looked at the bed. It was narrow, not quite spacious enough for two large men, but they had managed before. "Would you like me to stay, or should I go home?"

Javert looked surprised at the question. Then he cleared his throat. "I would like you to stay," he said, sounding slightly awkward. "If you don't mind."

The words warmed him, so much so that he had to look away, fighting down a smile. "I do not."

Javert sat down on the edge of the bed. Valjean knelt by his feet and started to unlace his boots. "I can do that myself," Javert muttered, squirming a bit.

"I know." He pulled off one boot, then the other. Javert's hand stroked his cheek. "To see you kneeling at my feet," he said, a tone of wonder in his voice. "Once I would have thought it right and proper, but now –"

"It is still right and proper," Valjean said, leaning into the touch. "But not for the same reasons." He kissed Javert's thumb, which had come to rest against the corner of his mouth. "As I said, you would have done the same for me."

Javert gave a weak laugh. "Quite so." He caressed Valjean's cheek once more. "You amaze me," he said again, softly. "I will never quite understand you."

Valjean flushed under his gaze. "Let's talk no more about it."

He put out the lamp, helped Javert take off his uniform and get into bed, again to some protest – "I have a bandaged thigh, not a foot in the grave!" – and then quickly stripped off his own clothing, sliding in beside Javert, who moved close to the wall to make room for him.

They lay on their sides, Valjean with an arm around Javert's waist, his brow resting against the back of his neck. "Are you comfortable?" he whispered after a while.

Javert's right hand came down to take Valjean's where it rested on his stomach. He twined their fingers together; then, slowly and deliberately, moved the clasped hands down to his groin. "Very," he said, and there was quiet laughter in his voice.

"Javert!" Valjean could not quite stop himself from laughing as well; given Javert's tiredness, he had not quite expected this. "You need to sleep, not..."

"Oh, I am guaranteed to fall asleep afterwards," Javert said, a distinct slyness in his voice. His hand pressed Valjean's, tightening around hot flesh, and Valjean felt the beginnings of an answering heat spread throughout his own body. "We will just have to make it simple."

He turned slightly as he spoke. The only light in the room came from the dying fire, but Valjean could still see how Javert's eyes sought his own. He brushed Javert's neck with his lips, then leaned in. Their mouths met, and Javert's hardness grew harder still under his fingers. "If you wish," Valjean murmured as they paused for breath, "I won't say no."

Javert grinned against his mouth. "Always the man of mercy."

Valjean kissed him once more. "You would have done same for me," he said again, and knew it to be true.

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