



## Cosette: The Sequel to Les Miserables

By Laura Kalpakian, Victor Hugo

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**Cosette: The Sequel to Les Miserables** By Laura Kalpakian, Victor Hugo

Written by an authority on Victor Hugo's classic novel, this sequel chronicles the life of Cosette, the adopted daughter of Jean Valjean, and her romance with Marius Pontmercy, while revolution continues to envelop France. 100,000 first printing. \$100,000 ad/promo.

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## **Cosette: The Sequel to Les Miserables By Laura Kalpakian, Victor Hugo Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### From Publishers Weekly

Kalpakian trades the intimate scale of her quirky *Graced Land* for the sprawl of a historical saga, picking up Victor Hugo's 1862 classic where it ended. Though named after Cosette, the adopted daughter of the indomitable Jean Valjean, this sequel shines the spotlight equally on the now-grown-and-married waif's husband, Marius, and other scene-stealers. Marius goes from 1832 resistance fighter to publisher of *La Lumiere*, a reformist newspaper for the French working class. In the civil uprising of 1848, he's imprisoned for his anti-royalist views but rallies to support the masses. Another key figure is a fleet-footed street kid known as "the Starling." In homage to Valjean's kindness, Cosette adopts the latter, enlisting him as a newspaper hawker and a messenger during times of strife; Cosette's teenage daughter, Fantine, predictably falls for the brave lad. Kalpakian tirelessly constructs these recklessly romantic characters and captures the original's defiant, tragic spirit. Yet, in altering her voice for period authenticity, the author is more melodramatic than literary (Cosette "locked her fingers into Marius's coat as if he were the branch and she the autumn leaf, and this revolutionary gale was about to blow them apart forever"). The bittersweet conclusion, however, is true to the genre Kalpakian emulates. 100,000 first printing; \$100,000 ad/promo; author tour.

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#### From Library Journal

Kalpakian is best known for her stories (e.g., *Fair Augusto and Other Stories*, LJ 2/1/87), but here she presents a novel ambitious enough to pick up where *Les Miserables* left off. The 100,000-copy first printing suggests that the publisher has high hopes for this tale.

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#### From Booklist

Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* is as grand, complex, and magnificent as a Gothic cathedral and is infused with passionate morality. Jean Valjean, his unforgettable hero, has inspired such popularized interpretations as *The Fugitive*, the musical "Les Miz," and now this rather nervy and calculated spin-off, a book that has "concept" stamped all over it. Kalpakian, author of the novel *Graceland* (1992), was commissioned to write the story of Jean Valjean's adopted daughter, Cosette, as part of a movie and/or miniseries package, backed up by a megamarketing campaign. We may wince at such commercialization but can't deny that it's a clever idea. For her part, Kalpakian has steeped herself in Hugo's phenomenal narrative and striven for high drama, suspense, romance, and even some character development. *Cosette* begins with Valjean's dismay over the love between his adored daughter and the poor student Marius. Kalpakian rewrites a chunk of Hugo's story, but thank goodness, extracts herself and moves the action forward by about 15 years. Cosette and Marius, parents of two nearly adult children, have become enemies of the state by virtue of the views they express in their radical newspaper. Their adventures involve numerous acts of perfidy and heroism, and Kalpakian has animated lots of entertaining characters (especially the villains), managed some satisfying character reversals, and created a viable historical context. It all adds up to a shiny new summer blockbuster, and why not? Kalpakian's *Cosette* is admirable and may even inspire readers to return to the source. *Donna Seaman*

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