MLLE. GILLENORMAND. I am surprised you are still at home, Marius. *(Startled by her arrival, MARIUS attempts to hide the pamphlet behind his back.)*

MARIUS. I had forgotten the time.

MLLE. GILLENORMAND. You don't deceive me, nephew.

MARIUS. Deceive?

MLLE. GILLENORMAND. When a young man who has never before displayed an interest in flowers and manicured lawns suddenly becomes a nature-lover -- well, that is, I mean to say --

MARIUS. What are you trying to say, aunt?

MLLE. GILLENORMAND. There must be a young lady in the picture. *(She sits.)*

MARIUS. You're perceptive, aunt. There is a young lady, yes.

MLLE. GILLENORMAND. What is her name?

MARIUS. "Cosette."

MLLE. GILLENORMAND. And when you are together what do you talk about?

MARIUS. I talk of love. Cosette talks of her father. He guards her as if she were made of spun gold. So far, we have had only stolen moments.

MLLE. GILLENORMAND. You've missed your calling, Marius. You should have been a poet.

MARIUS. Cosette makes me feel like a poet.

MLLE. GILLENORMAND. What are you hiding behind your back?

MARIUS. What am I hiding?

MLLE. GILLENORMAND. Please don't parrot my words. A love letter? Hmmmm?

MARIUS. No.

MLLE. GILLENORMAND. Whatever it is, may I see it? *(MARIUS is reluctant. Then -- )*

MARIUS. As you wish. *(He hands her the pamphlet. She quickly scans it.)*

MLLE. GILLENORMAND. You're incorrigible. These seditious writings, treasonous! How can you have such slanderous pamphlets in your possession? I have only to look at you to see your father. *(MARIUS tenses.)*