MME. THENARDIER. Good day.
FANTINE. Good day, Madame. Is this the road to Paris?
MME. THENARDIER. It is. That your child?
FANTINE. Yes. *(MME. THENARDIER stands, moves to get a closer look.)*
MME. THENARDIER. I'm fond of children. I have two of my own. Both baby girls. *(Looks at infant.)* A pretty thing. Boy or girl?
FANTINE. It's a girl. Cosette.
MME. THENARDIER. May I hold her?
FANTINE. Of course. *(MME. THENARDIER takes the infant, rocks it in her arms.)*
MME. THENARDIER. My name is Thenardier. My husband and I keep this inn. It's not easy, I don't mind telling you.
FANTINE. It's a lovely spot, Madame. The air is so clean. The country is a good place for children.
MME. THENARDIER. None better. My babies are Eponine and Azelma. Cosette. Eponine and Azelma -- they might be sisters.
FANTINE. Yes. *(Quickly.)* Madame -- will you look after my daughter for me?
MME. THENARDIER. What -- ?
FANTINE. I can't take her with me where I'm going. I have to find work and it's not easy if you have a child. You have girls of your own. As you say, they would be like sisters. She'd be no trouble. She never cries. No one's taught her to smile, but she smiles all the time. She's a happy baby.
MME. THENARDIER *(suddenly cold)*. How much could you pay?
FANTINE *(a moment's hesitation)*. I could pay six francs a month.
THENARDIER's VOICE *(from inside inn)*. Seven!

(THENARDIER comes into view. It's plain he's been eavesdropping.)

THENARDIER. Not less than seven, and six months in advance.
MME. THENARDIER *(to FANTINE)*. My husband.
FANTINE *(curtsies)*. Monsieur.

THENARDIER. Six times seven makes forty-two.
MME. THENARDIER. And another fifteen francs for extras. There are always extra expenses with a baby.
THENARDIER. Total, fifty-seven francs. Can you pay that?
FANTINE. I have eighty francs. I'll have enough to get to Paris if I go on foot. I'll find work there and when I've saved a little, I'll come for her.
THENARDIER. Has she enough clothes?
MME. THENARDIER. You can't expect us to take on that expense.
FANTINE *(holds up bag)*. She has a beautiful little wardrobe. Here in the bag.
THENARDIER. Very well then. Come inside. We'll settle matters over a glass of wine.
FANTINE *(to MME. THENARDIER)*. Let me have her.
MME. THENARDIER *(passes INFANT to FANTINE)*. Don't worry about a thing. I'll take good care of her. *(FANTINE forces a smile. THENARDIER motions to the inn and FANTINE and BABY enter. When she's out of earshot -- .)*
THENARDIER. Seven a month. Not bad.
MME. THENARDIER. If she makes the payments.
THENARDIER. She'd better. Otherwise, the brat goes into the river.
MME. THENARDIER. The baby clothes ought to fetch a fair price. I'll sell them tomorrow.
THENARDIER. Did she mention a husband?
MME. THENARDIER. Do they ever? *(THENARDIER shrugs, goes into inn. MME. THENARDIER picks up the bowl, follows after.)*