

**JEAN: A PLAY IN
PROLOGUE &
THREE ACTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649409884

Jean: A Play in Prologue & Three Acts by Harry Tighe

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Cover @ 2017

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HARRY TIGHE

**JEAN: A PLAY IN
PROLOGUE &
THREE ACTS**

JEAN : A Play

IN PROLOGUE AND THREE ACTS

BY
HARRY TIGHE

LONDON
ELLIOT STOCK 62, PATERNOSTER ROW
1901

23 May 1887

PREFACE

THIS play, which deals with the sufferings of a woman and then of her child, Jean, is sent forth into the world to take its chance among the masses of literature published every year. Should it pass unnoticed by the majority of readers, the author trusts it may fall into the hands of some who are sorely tempted, and help them to stand firm; or into the hands of sufferers, to give comfort and trust in a God who rules all things seen or unseen, understandable or unfathomable.

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CHARACTERS

IN THE PROLOGUE.

A WOMAN (*she is prematurely aged; her hair is streaked with grey and drawn away from her big brown eyes, which have a wild expression of intense suffering*).

THE ABBÉ (*a finely made old man, of reverend mien*).

BROTHER ANDRÉ (*middle aged, tall and thin, with a slight hesitation in his speech*).

A LAY BROTHER.

JEAN (*a child*).

IN THE PLAY.

THE ABBÉ.

A FRIAR (*a fair man with symmetrical features but with an expression of cunning*).

BROTHER DOMINIC

BROTHER JOSEPH

BROTHER GEORGE

BROTHER JACQUES

BROTHER PHILIP

JEAN (*a youth*)

} *Monks. Dominic is young ;
Joseph a small man, with
a slight lisp.*

Several other Monks, mostly well on in years.

The action of the play takes place in the valley of the Rhone, Switzerland.

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PROLOGUE.

SCENE.—*A lonely road by the side of a pine forest, through which the wind bearing up the coming storm is moaning. Now and again an extra strong gust rises to bend the boughs and blow down a shower of pine needles, which are whirled hither and thither until there is a slight lull and all is silence, save for the faint moaning amid the pines. Far away through an opening a gray stone monastery is seen. Two people—a woman, poorly clad, thin and ill, with difficulty creeps along, her breathing growing more and more difficult as the road is mounted: a child of some six years old seems weary, and gradually ceases to play and be amused with whirling pine needles. His tired limbs stumble over a fallen branch, but he jumps up without a murmur. A few birds fly over and away to seek shelter from the coming tempest. The time is late autumn, with a keenness in the air; as it is already early winter on the mountain peaks,*

whereon the eye rests for a moment before wandering away into space.

THE WOMAN.

(Turning to lean against a tree sees the child some way behind.) Come, Jean, if you stay to rest we shall never reach this day's journey's end ere the darkness hides us. Come, haste my son! *(She brushes back her wind-tossed hair and closes her eyes with fatigue.)*

JEAN.

I want to stay here, ma mère! I'se so tired and hungry. Is there nothing to eat? *(He stops as he sees a bird fly overhead.)* I wish I was a bird; for God feeds them and forgets little people. *(The WOMAN has fallen to a sitting position. JEAN runs to her.)* Ma mère! *(He pulls her dress, but she does not heed.)* I'll say my prayers and ask God to let the holy Virgin Mary take care of me. She knows how, for you told me about her little boy, and in the church He is always in her arms. P'waps she'll have me too.

THE WOMAN.

God forbid you should forsake me, my child
—you who know neither sorrow nor disgrace