

Justine
- A miniature -

Roles:

Narrator (actor)
Juliette (actress)
Justine (soprano, dressed like a priest, and played by a doll)
Conte de Bressac (countertenor)
Ensemble Chorus

Narrator:

Medames et Mesieurs we are in France!

The floor is French. The air is French. Des femmes are French

(touches doll suggestively)

Even this petit gilet is French.

'Tis a lugubrious

(doesn't quite manage to pronounce it) tale I have to tell of vicious crimes victorious and divine virtue defeated.

We find ourselves in Rueil-Malmaison, where misfortune has befallen the Bordelet girls

Juliette was fifteen, Justine only twelve, douce et sensible cettes deux petites filles

Their parents are dead, quell malheur! So what to do in this world in which poverty is rather unlovable?

The wanton Juliette choses lust, vice and merriment, and soon swims in murdered lovers and many a louis d'or

The virtuous Justine, fair haired and mild, choses virtue and takes her faith for a spin, on the caroussel of sin.

(the doll is being pushed around, and covered in blood)

Justine:

(lying on the floor, covered in blood)

Vice is punished, virtue rewarded

So my father told me

So my priest told me

So the Holy Father tells me

Who owns my heart, my soul,

my body, all

Bashful, honest, chaste and good I am and I shall ever be.

For vice is punished, virtue rewarded

Narrator:

Thus she said when the Count de Bressac found her in a forest near Luzarches.

Count Bressac:

(comes riding, pushes the doll gently with his foot)

A pretty pile of meat no doubt.

Justine:

(sees him and leans against his leg)

Vice is punished, virtue rewarded

So my father told me

So my priest told me

So the Holy Father tells me
Who owns my heart, my soul,
my body, all
Bashful, honest, chaste and good I am and I shall ever be.
I cast my lot with God, who is omnipotent, benevolent and good.
Who punishes vice and rewards virtue.

CB:

Evidently. So what crimes did you commit to turn into that pile of meat?

Narrator:

And so la petite Justine told her story.

In Nantes, she moved a priest so much with her misery
He had to close the church's door quite urgently

In Bordeaux, the good Monsieur de Barry
Told her that virtue didn't sell as well as she

In Versailles, the Marquis de Bretonne loved her little foot so much
He begged her to let him cut it off

In Colmar, Madame Duvergier, saved the girl from death and dread, just to
sell her maidenhead

In Orleans, she saved the Conte Florent's immortal soul from hell
And in exchange he robbed her of what she wouldn't sell

In Fontainebleau, six holy men used her tender limbs
For sixty most unholy hymns.

In Montpellier, she saved a man from certain death
Who thanked her, and hung her from the ceiling by a ribbon that was
stripped to her ears and little fingers.

Chorus (Ensemble):

Poor Justine, she doesn't learn

CB:

If you are looking for suckers, you will have to improve your style.
But your virtue is useful to me, so come, live with me and my aunt.

N:

And so she did and spent six blissful months working for the comtesse as a
maid. And was quite happy, until...

CB:

Ma chère Justine. Does two plus two equal four? Does four minus two equal
two?

(he whips her brutally)

Traitor, heretic, liar, two plus two equals five! Say it: two plus two
equals five!

J:

Vice is punished, virtue rewarded
So my father told me

So my priest told me
So the Holy Father tells me
Who owns my heart, my soul,
my body, all
Bashful, honest, chaste and good I am and so I shall ever be.
I cast my lot with God, who is omnipotent, benevolent and good.
Who punishes vice and rewards virtue.

(he whips her again, until he is evidently tired out. He gets her to sit
on his lap)

Chorus:
Poor Justine she doesn't learn.

CB:
Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent.
Is he able, but not willing? Then he is not benevolent.
Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil?
Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?

J:
Vice is punished, virtue rewarded
So my father told me
So my priest told me

CB throws her to the floor, whips her again. Gently massages his penis as
he is doing so.

Chorus:
Poor Justine she doesn't learn.

CB:
Faith has its uses I will give you that. They serve interests.
Those of incestuous fathers, perverted priests, avaricious statesmen and
kings
But ma chère Justine, the only faith our class believes in is that of
money.
And thus we teach you to believe nonsense, for nonsense makes us rich.
Weak minds fall prey to fanaticism, women shriek, madmen howl, fools turn
summersaults.
Thus examine your beliefs Justine, and you shall be free.

CB caresses Justine, gently kisses her.

CB:
Now my darling pupil.
Is murder not destruction but transformation, an alteration of form?
Does Nature value one form over the other?
If not, who are we to do so?
The state murders thieves, the church murders heretics out of necessity.
For thieves and murders hinder church and state and harm us all.

J:
Vice is punished, virtue rewarded
So my father told me...

CB: (Interrupts her)
I side with nature, I love humans as I love worms. Am I not good?
My aunt's life harms mine, for she is rich and I want her riches.
Kill my aunt Justine, I want you to.

J: (shocked)
Vice is punished, virtue rewarded, ...
Bashful, honest, chaste and good I am and so I shall ever be.
I cast my lot with God, who is omnipotent, benevolent and good.

N:
Logic had lead the count away from the path of Righteousness, but whatever
arguments Justine made, he could not be persuaded.

CB:
Poor Justine, listen to me and learn!

He whips her

Chorus:
Poor Justine, she doesn't learn.

CB:
Half of what her death gives me, I will give to you.
Then you will be rich, and thus be free.

J:
Vice is punished, virtue rewarded
Bashful, honest, chaste and good I am and so I shall ever be.

CB lets the dogs out on her. They leave her lying bloody, nearly dead on
the stage. Narrator dresses himself as a newspaper boy. The signs reads

"Vicious Maid kills the Comtesse de Bressac. Nephew devastated." (In
French: "Servante vicieuse tue la Comtesse de Bressac. Neveu est devasté")

He rings his bell and yells out the above line.

J: (feebly)
Vice is punished, virtue rewarded
So my father told me
So my priest told me
So the Holy Father tells me
Who owns my heart, my soul, my body all
Bashful, honest, chaste and good I am and so I shall ever be.
I cast my lot with God, who is omnipotent, benevolent and good.
Who punishes vice and rewards virtue.

N:
Meanwhile, the vicious Juliette...

A beautifully dressed Juliette dances across the stage, steps over her sister, with evident disgust. The narrator kisses her hand.

Chorus:

Oh poor Justine, she doesn't learn, doesn't own her body, doesn't own her mind, so the fathers, priests and noblemen can use it, if only she would learn to think.