

Classic Readers

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Charles Dickens

retold by Jenny Dooley



Express Publishing

Recalled to Life

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair—in short, it was a period which could only be perceived in extremes. There was a king with a large jaw and a queen with a plain face on the throne of England; there was a king with a large jaw and a queen with a fair face on the throne of France. In both countries, people believed that the world would never change. In England, people were obsessed with ghosts and séances or the fear of being robbed at night by those they trusted during the day. In France, people were being tortured for the slightest violation of petty laws—death to those who did not bow before a monk they did not see fifty yards away. In both countries, the prosperity of the ruling classes increased, as did the poverty of the underprivileged. And in both countries, the king and queen turned a blind eye to the hardships of their subjects, too consumed by their own self-importance to care.

It was a dark November night in the year 1775 and a steaming mist roamed up Shooter's Hill, like a spirit seeking rest and finding none. The Dover Mail was halfway up the hill, on its way to Dover. It was an empty coach pulled by four horses, its passengers walking beside it—not because they wished to exercise, but because the weight of the coach was too heavy for the horses to pull uphill in the mud.

The driver and the guard beside him could hardly see more than a few feet in front of them. They both knew it was a good night for a robbery and Shooter's Hill was the perfect place because it was steep and the coach could get to the top only at a snail's pace.

They both peered into the mist to see if anything was moving, especially anyone on horseback. The guard was holding a gun with a long barrel across his knees. Suddenly he raised it to his shoulder.

"I hear a horse ... coming up behind us! Gentlemen! In the King's name, all of you! Get into the coach!"

The coach stopped and the three passengers got in quickly. They remained still and silent, waiting. The guard squeezed the gun in his hand, ready for the worst. Soon, a horse at a gallop came fast and furiously up the hill. A dark figure appeared out of the mist.

"Stop! Who goes there?" shouted the guard.

"Is this the Dover Mail?"

"It is. Why?"

"I have a message from London for one of your passengers."

"Well, don't try anything funny. I have a gun aimed at your heart. And I've never missed!"

"The message is for Mr Jarvis Lorry of Tellson's Bank, London."

The driver leant over the side of the coach.

"Is there a Mr Jarvis Lorry on board?"

A gentleman of about sixty put his head out of the window.

"Yes, I am Jarvis Lorry."

"A message from London," said the driver. "Get out of the coach and walk across to the rider."





Marriage Proposals

Comprehension

Read or listen to Chapter 5 and put the following events into the correct chronological order.

- a Charles is in love with Lucie and goes to Dr Manette to tell him. _____
- b Carton tells Lucie he loves her and that he would do anything to keep her happy. _____
- c Stryver announces to Mr Lorry that he has decided to marry Lucie. _____
- d In England, Charles works as a teacher. 1 _____
- e Lucie begs Carton to try and change his life. _____
- f Charles promises to tell Dr Manette his secret the day he marries Lucie. _____

What do you think?

A Discuss the following questions.

- 1 Who do you think would be the best husband for Lucy: Sydney Carton, Mr Stryver or Charles Darnay? Why?
- 2 How were marriage proposals made in your country in the past? Are things different nowadays?
- 3 What is the most unusual wedding custom in your country? Can you describe it?

B Find the following extracts from Chapter 5 and discuss their meanings.

- 1 p. 55: "I [Dr Manette] beg you [Charles], do not remind me of that ... forgive me. I do not doubt your love for Lucie."
- 2 p. 59: "I [Mr Lorry] just feel, Mr Stryver, that you should not go about something unless you have a good chance of succeeding".
- 3 p. 60: "No, I [Carton] am useless and always will be. But ... I have at least done one thing worthy in my life."

Language Practice

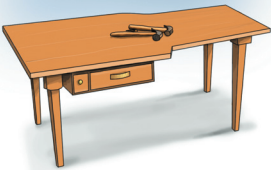
Complete the sentences with the correct words from the box. Some may be used more than once.

for out away to at of with in

- 1 She has always shown devotion her husband.
- 2 This song reminds me my school years.
- 3 Although he got a bad mark, he was not at all put and decided to try harder.
- 4 Don't take an umbrella with you, there is no possibility rain tonight.
- 5 Come on, get serious now! I am no mood jokes.
- 6 Stop staring the poor girl! Can't you see she's blushing?
- 7 I won't help her this time. She must learn to deal her problems alone.
- 8 If you study hard, you'll stand a better chance succeeding in the exams.
- 9 As much as he begged, she always turned him
- 10 The film differs from the original book many respects.

What happens next?

Look at the following pictures. Discuss how these things may be important in the next chapter.



What's in a name?

Depending on history, religion or even literature and mythology, people around the world may name their children after concepts like “love”, “happiness” or “wisdom”, or after objects like “rose”, “coral” or “lion”. Other names may refer to qualities like “beautiful”, “serious”, “brave” or “powerful”. In some Asian countries, a name may indicate whether the child is the first born, third born, etc., in the family. Native American names may be a whole sentence! So, if you ever meet a native Miwok Indian girl named “Yenene”, stay away, because she’s a “wizard poisoning a sleeping person”!

- 1 i) *Read about the origin and meaning of the names of the characters in “A Tale of Two Cities”. Then decide whether you think these names reflect each character’s personality and role in the story; explain how.*

Character	Origin of name	Meaning	Connection
Alexandre (Manette)	From the Greek word <i>alexo</i> which means <i>defend</i> , <i>protect</i> , and the word <i>aner</i> which means <i>man</i> .	<i>defender/ protector of mankind</i>	<i>e.g. a doctor protects people’s health</i>
Lucie (Manette)	From the Latin word <i>lux</i> which means <i>light</i> .	<i>person who radiates light</i>	
Charles (Darnay)	From the Germanic <i>karl</i> meaning <i>man</i> and the Old English <i>ceorl</i> meaning <i>man/free man/peasant</i> .	<i>manly, strong, free</i>	
Sydney (Carton)	From the name Denis which comes from the ancient Greek God <i>Dionysius</i> . Saint Denis is the patron saint of France.	<i>the patron saint of France.</i>	

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

How does fate join the paths of three different lives? How much is one of them willing to sacrifice when the French Revolution breaks out? The height of human goodness and the depth of its evil are captured in Charles Dickens' passionate story of love, war and sacrifice.



Level 1 Level 2 Level 3 Level 4 Level 5 Level 6

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