

# *A Tale of Two Cities*

ADVANCED PLACEMENT IN ENGLISH  
LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

Study Guide  
Student Copy

BOOK THE FIRST  
Recalled to Life

## Chapter 1 - The Period

1. The first sentence in this novel is one of the most famous first lines in English literature. How is it and the paragraph that follows an example of parallelism?
2. What does Dickens establish with his list of parallel contrasts?
3. What is Dickens' apparent opinion of the list of complaints that the Continental Congress of 1775 sent to Parliament?
4. What allusions does Dickens make to the approaching French Revolution?
5. What is foreshadowed in Dickens' beginning this novel with a description of the period?

## Chapter 2 - The Mail

1. How does Dickens begin his actual story?
2. Briefly identify Mr. Lorry and Jerry. What does the answer “recalled to life” suggest to the reader about the nature of Mr. Lorry’s business in Dover?
3. What does Dickens achieve by his reference to The Captain and the fear and distrust of the travelers?

## Chapter 3 - The Night Shadows

1. What effect does Dickens achieve with his occasional lapses into first-person narration?
2. Briefly describe the first dream Mr. Lorry has on the Dover mail.
3. Consider the message Mr. Lorry sends with Jerry Cruncher. What is revealed by the imaginary conversation Lorry keeps repeating in his mind?

## Chapter 4 - The Preparation

1. What has Mr. Lorry told Lucie in order to get her to go to Paris with him?
2. What hints are there in this chapter that Mr. Lorry's secret mission resurrects some issues from his own past?
3. What are the blank forms for consignment mentioned in this chapter? How do they contribute to Mr. Lorry's need for secrecy and his use of the code "Recalled to Life"?
4. How do Dickens' characters conform to the literary conventions of his day?

## Chapter 5 - The Wine-shop

1. What do you think the spilled wine foreshadows in this chapter?
2. What effect does Dickens achieve with personification in this chapter?
3. What does the following passage from this chapter say about the character of Madame Defarge?

“...one might have predicated that she did not often make mistakes against herself in any of the reckonings over which she presided.”
4. What information about Lucie's father's state of mind is revealed to Mr. Lorry during the climb up the five flights of stairs to Dr. Manette's room?
5. What is implied by the way the Defarges call the men “Jacques”?

## Chapter 6 - The Shoemaker

1. What makes the faintness of the Shoemaker's voice so horrible?
2. What is significant about the Shoemaker's name?
3. What detail finally begins to bring the Shoemaker to his senses?
4. How does Lucie begin to meet stereotypical expectations of an ideal woman?

## BOOK THE SECOND

### The Golden Thread

#### Chapter 1 - Five Years Later

1. What is Dickens suggesting with the following: “In this respect the House was much on a par with the Country; which did very often disinherit its sons for suggesting improvements in laws and customs that had long been highly objectionable, but were only the more respectable”?
2. What is implied by Jerry’s anger at his wife’s “flopping,” the mud on his boots and the rust on his hands?
3. What effect does Dickens achieve by the scene in the Cruncher home?

#### Chapter 2 - A Sight

1. What is Jerry Cruncher’s opinion of execution by quartering?
2. For what crime is Charles Darnay on trial?
3. When, according to their testimony, did Dr. Manette and Lucie meet Charles Darnay?
4. With what other popular “entertainment” does Jerry compare attending a trial? How do the two compare?

## Chapter 3 - A Disappointment

1. Briefly outline the charges the Attorney General presents against Mr. Darnay.
2. How does Mr. Solicitor-General try to discredit John Barsad's testimony?
3. How does Mr. Solicitor-General try to discredit Roger Cly's testimony?
4. In what ways is Miss Manette's testimony against Mr. Darnay both helpful and damaging to his case?
5. How does Mr. Carton help Mr. Stryver cast doubt on the testimony of the witness who was in the Dover mail with Mr. Lorry five years earlier?
6. What is revealed about Mr. Carton's character by his behavior toward Lucie and Mr. Darnay?
7. One of the major themes in this novel is the idea that resurrection is possible. How does this theme apply to Charles Darnay's acquittal for treason?

## Chapter 4 – Congratulatory

1. Briefly describe Mr. Stryver. How does he use Mr. Carton?
2. Why is Carton so rude to Darnay?
3. What does Carton confess to himself after meeting with Darnay?

## Chapter 5 - The Jackal

1. What is the secret to Stryver's success as an attorney?
2. Briefly describe how Carton looks when he is working at Stryver's desk.
3. What do we learn about Carton's childhood? What does Carton blame for his miserable life?
4. What is the significance of people's calling Carton Stryver's jackal?
5. What predominant character traits of Carton's are revealed in this chapter?

## Chapter 6 - Hundreds of People

1. Miss Pross' complaint about "hundred of people" is an example of what figure of speech?
2. Why do the visits of these "hundreds of people" bother her?
3. Who is Solomon?
4. What questions does Mr. Lorry ask Miss Pross concerning the Doctor and his shoe making tools?
5. Why is Dr. Manette afraid to remember his past?
6. What is suggested by Sydney Carton's story about the prisoner's letter found in the Tower of London?
7. Comment on Dickens' use of foreshadowing at the end of this chapter when Lucie, Carton, and Darnay discuss the crowds in the streets of London.
8. What are the two significant meanings of the title of this chapter?

## Chapter 7 - Monseigneur in Town

1. What tone does Dickens achieve at the beginning of this chapter? How does he achieve it?
2. Who is the Farmer General, and what is his relationship to the Monseigneur?
3. What has passed between Monseigneur and the Marquis?
4. Read the following passage. What do you think the water in the fountain may symbolize in this story?

“The water of the fountain ran, ...so much life in the city ran into death according to rule, time and tide waited for no man, ...all things ran their course.”

## Chapter 8 - Monseigneur in the Country

1. Why is the Marquis annoyed with the Mender of roads?
2. How did the poor woman's husband die? What does she want from the Marquis?
3. What family connection is suggested at the end of this chapter?

## Chapter 9 - The Gorgon's Head

1. What is the family relationship between Charles Darnay and the Marquis?
2. What evidence is there that Darnay suspects the Marquis contributed to the treason charges he faced in England?
3. What were the reasons for Darnay's frequent trips to France that resulted in his charges of treason?
4. What important information is alluded to in the following passage?

"I believe that if you were not in disgrace with the Court, and had not been overshadowed by that cloud for years past, a letter de cachet would have sent me to some fortress indefinitely."

...

"We have done wrong?" repeated the Marquis, with an inquiring smile, and delicately pointing, first to his nephew, then to himself.

"Our family; our honourable family, whose honour is of so much account to both of us, in such different ways. Even in my father's time, we did a world of wrong, injuring every human creature who came between us and our pleasure, whatever it was. Why need I speak of my father's time, when it is equally yours? Can I separate my father's twin-brother, joint inheritor, and next successor, from himself?"

"Death has done that!" said the Marquis.

"And has left me," answered the nephew, "bound to a system that is frightful to me, responsible for it, but powerless in it; seeking to execute the last request of my dear mother's lips, and obey the last look of my dear mother's eyes, which implored me to have mercy and to redress; and tortured by seeking assistance and power in vain."



## Chapter 10 - Two Promises

1. How does Darnay earn his living in England?
2. What are the two promises suggested by the title of this chapter?
3. What promise concerning his past does Darnay make to Dr. Manette?
4. What does Dr. Manette's reaction to Darnay's attempt to reveal his true identity suggest?
5. What further evidence is there that Dr. Manette is disturbed by the prospect of a marriage between his daughter and Charles Darnay?

## Chapter 11 - A Companion Picture

1. What does the title of this chapter suggest?
2. How does Stryver's attitude toward marriage differ from Darnay's?
3. Why does Stryver suggest that Carton consider finding a wife for himself?

## Chapter 12 - The Fellow of Delicacy

1. What does Mr. Lorry say to Stryver to discourage him from proposing marriage to Lucie?
2. How does Mr. Stryver handle the situation when Lorry comes to visit him later that evening?
3. Who is the Fellow of Delicacy suggested in this chapter's title?
4. Is Mr. Lorry's role in Stryver's proposal consistent with his claim that he is nothing more than a "man of business"?

## Chapter 13 - The Fellow of No Delicacy

1. Why does Carton say that he is grateful that Lucie does not love or want to marry him?
2. What secret does Carton ask Lucie to keep as the "last confidence" of his life?
3. What might the promise Carton makes in this chapter foreshadow?

## Chapter 14 - The Honest Tradesman

1. What is Jerry Cruncher's secret occupation that results in mud on his boots and rust on his fingers?
2. List three examples of mischief in which the crowds following Roger Cly's funeral engage after the casket is buried. Why does the mob finally disperse?
3. Why do you think young Jerry wants to be a Resurrection-Man? What does the phrase "no fish for breakfast" suggest about the success or failure of Mr. Cruncher's nighttime occupation?
4. What does the absence of a body in the grave suggest?
5. Who is/was Roger Cly, and where have we met him before?

## Chapter 15 – Knitting

1. How do you know that the Mender of roads is a revolutionary? Where does Monsieur Defarge take the mender of roads?
2. Who is the tall man described by the mender of roads? What is his crime? Why do the people of the village have hope that he will not be executed?
3. Why is the method of Gaspard's execution particularly cruel?
4. What do the Jacques mean when they vote to register the Marquis' château and "all the race"?
5. What does the following metaphor say about Monsieur Defarge's plans for the Mender of roads: "Judiciously show a dog his natural prey, if you wish him to bring it down one day" ?

## Chapter 16 - Still Knitting

1. Why does Madame Defarge register John Barsad as one of the men who is marked for death in her knitted registry of names?
2. What does Madame Defarge do to alert the other customers that a spy has entered the wine shop? What does the spy say that upsets Monseieur Defarge?
3. What is the “structure yet unbuilt” mentioned in the following passage? Why do you think Dickens makes reference to it at the end of this chapter?

“So much was closing in about the women who sat knitting, knitting, that they their very selves were closing in around a structure yet unbuilt, where they were to sit knitting, knitting, counting dropping heads.”
4. How does the description of the wine shop emphasize the poverty of the residents of Saint Antoine?

## Chapter 17 - One Night

1. What does Dr. Manette mean when he says that for his daughter to have no knowledge or memory of him would be worse than being dead?
2. Why do you think Lucie checks in on her father while he is sleeping the night before her wedding?

## Chapter 18 - Nine Days

1. What is the subject of Charles Darnay and Doctor Manette's private conversation on the morning of Lucie's wedding?
2. What is suggested by the fact that Dr. Manette begins to make shoes after Lucie's wedding?
3. How does Mr. Lorry decide to ease Dr. Manette out of his relapse?

## Chapter 19 - An Opinion

1. What is Mr. Lorry and Miss Pross' plan once they realize that Dr. Manette is awake on the tenth morning and no longer making shoes?
2. Mr. Lorry carefully discusses Dr. Manette's condition with the old man. What three questions does Mr. Lorry ask Dr. Manette to answer in the course of this discussion?
3. Why does the doctor resist the idea of giving up his shoe making tools?
4. Under what conditions does the doctor agree to the removal of the shoe making tools?

## Chapter 20 - A Plea

1. Why does Carton ask Darnay for his friendship?
2. Why does Lucie ask her husband to be especially patient and kind with Sydney Carton?
3. What practical purpose would Charles Dickens have for having Lucie make this request?

## Chapter 21 - Echoing Footsteps

1. Rather than advance the plot significantly, Dickens uses this chapter for what literary convention?
2. What occurs on July 14, 1789?
3. What is suggested about Defarge's search of 105 North Tower?
4. How was this search foreshadowed earlier in the book?
5. What is the significance of the echoes the Manettes, Darnays, Carton, et al hear from the corner in Soho? How are Lucie's and Carton's reactions to the echoes different?

## Chapter 22 - The Sea Still Rises

1. Briefly describe The Vengeance.
2. Who is old Foulon, and why is he marked for death by the Defarges? What happens to his son-in-law?
3. How do the killings by the peasants of Saint Antonine impact the lives of the poor and hungry peasants?

## Chapter 23 - Fire Rises

1. Who is the man in wooden shoes? What does he do?
2. Who is Monsieur Gabelle? How does he escape the people of his village?
3. Why do you think the mender of roads and the other village people decide to light candles in all of their windows?

## Chapter 24 - Drawn to the Loadstone Rock

1. What is the significance of the title of this chapter?
2. Why is Mr. Lorry traveling to France? Who is he taking with him?
3. What naive reasons does Darnay give Mr. Lorry for desiring to return to France?
4. What does Mr. Stryver think of the mysterious Marquis St. Evrémonde?
5. What other reasons does Darnay have, besides Gabelle's plea, for wanting to return to France?

## BOOK THE THIRD

### The Track of a Storm

#### Chapter 1 - In Secret

1. What is significant about the fact that Darnay is placed under escort as soon as he arrives in France.
2. What decree is passed by the revolutionary government of France the same day that Darnay leaves the safety of England to travel to Paris?
3. Why does Defarge refuse to help Darnay by contacting Mr. Lorry at Tellson's bank?
4. In the prison, why does Darnay compare the aristocrats jailed with him to ghosts?
5. What does it mean to be kept "In secret"?
6. How does Dickens remind the reader of Dr. Manette's imprisonment that ended at the beginning of this novel?

## Chapter 2 - The Grindstone

1. What effect does Dickens create with the imagery of the people at the grindstone?

2. Why does Dr. Manette think he can help his son-in-law?

3. What is the significance of the metaphor in the following passage?

“...the sun was red on the courtyard. But, the lesser grindstone stood alone there in the calm morning air, with a red upon it that the sun had never given, and would never take away.”

4. What scene does the redness of the sun shining on the blood-stained grindstone echo?

## Chapter 3 - The Shadow

1. What is “The Shadow” referred to in this chapter title? How is it an example of foreshadowing?
2. What evidence is there that Mr. Defarge does not want to mark Lucie and her family for death but is doing it because of his wife?
3. What compliment does Lucie unwittingly pay Madame Defarge?
4. Why do you think Dickens repeats the message of the shadow’s sinister nature two more times, once from Lucie and again from Mr. Lorry at the end of the chapter?
5. What does Madame Defarge mean when she says, “It is the daughter of your father who is my business here.”
6. What is the significance of Madame Defarge identifying Little Lucie as “his daughter”?

## Chapter 4 - Calm in Storm

1. What is the significance of the title of this chapter?
2. Why does Dr. Manette believe his past imprisonment “all tended to a good end, ...it was not mere waste and ruin”?
3. What aspect of Doctor Manette’s character is revealed in this chapter?
4. List three of the jokes the people of the time made about the guillotine.

## Chapter 5 - The Wood-sawyer

1. Where does Lucie go at three o’clock every afternoon?
2. Who is the “Samson of the firewood guillotine”? What does Lucie do to gain his good will?
3. What is the Carmagnole, and why is Lucie afraid of it?

## Chapter 6 – Triumph

1. How does Dickens show how insensitive the Republic's prisoners have become to the carnage all around them?
2. What evidence is presented by the following witnesses in Darnay's defense?
3. What is the "car of triumph" used to carry Darnay away from the prison? How does he feel while he is being carried by the mob?

## Chapter 7 - A Knock at the Door

1. What is inscribed on the door of Dr. Manette's house?
2. Now that Charles is released from La Force, why do they not all return immediately to England?
3. Who comes to arrest Darnay again? Who has denounced him?

## Chapter 8 - A Hand at Cards

1. What is the relationship between John Barsad and Miss Pross? How has he harmed her in the past? Where has Sydney Carton seen him before?
2. List the three “cards” Carton holds which will force Barsad to help him with his plan to free Darnay.
3. How does Jerry Cruncher help convince Barsad to cooperate with Carton?

## Chapter 9 - The Game Made

1. What reasons does Jerry Cruncher give to convince Mr. Lorry that it would not be fair of him to fire Jerry from his Tellson’s job just because he is a grave robber?
2. In what capacity does Barsad agree to help Carton?
3. How is the theme of resurrection emphasized in this chapter? What is being suggested about Carton’s plan?
4. Who is Darnay’s third denouncer, who was not named in the previous chapter?

## Chapter 10 - The Substance of the Shadow

1. What narrative technique does Dickens employ in this chapter?
2. Where has the doctor hidden his journal? How was the reading of this letter foreshadowed earlier in the novel?
3. Who are the two brothers who employ the Doctor?
4. Why does the woman in the journal count to twelve over and over as part of her feverish ravings?
5. What happens to the woman's brother, father, and younger sister?
6. What is the significance of the title of this chapter?

7. What does the wife of the Marquis want from the doctor?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What does the wife of the Marquis fear?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. How was Ernest Defarge, the wine shop owner, connected to Dr. Manette before his imprisonment?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What does the doctor say in this journal that condemns his son-in-law to death?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. Ironically, who else is condemned by the Doctor's journal.

## Chapter 11 – Dusk

1. What is the significance of the words Carton murmurs against Lucie's cheek when he kisses her, "A life you love"?
2. What, most likely, is Carton's plan to save Darnay? How has this been foreshadowed?

## Chapter 12 - Darkness

1. Why does Carton go to the wine shop?
2. What does he learn there about Dr. Manette, Lucie, her child, and Madame Defarge?
3. What final piece of the Defarge / Manette / Evremonde puzzle is finally revealed?
4. Why do the Defarges speak so freely in front of Carton?

## Chapter 13 - Fifty-two

1. What is the significance of the title of this chapter?
2. How does John Barsad help Carton with his plan to save Darnay?
3. How does the plight of the seamstress illustrate one of the main flaws of the Revolution?
4. What effect is created by Dickens' shift to first-person narration?

## Chapter 14 - The Knitting Done

1. Why does Madame Defarge visit Lucie before her husband's execution?
2. Why does Jerry Cruncher change his mind about his wife's flopping?
3. What theme is suggested by Darnay's escape and Miss Pross' being strong enough to defeat Madame Defarge?
4. What evidence of nationalistic pride does Dickens reveal in this chapter?

## Chapter 15 - The Footsteps Die Out for Ever

1. The last words of this chapter are some of the most famous ever written: "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far far better rest that I go to than I have ever known." In what ways is this statement true for Sydney Carton? Why do you suppose this has become such a famous last line from a novel?