

A Tale of Two Cities Study Guide Questions

Book the First: Recalled to Life

Chapter 1: The Period & Chapter 2: The Mail & Chapter 3: The Night Shadows

1. What are the two cities of the novel's title?
2. What purpose does the comparison of England and France serve?
3. What further comparison is implied by the connection of England and France?
4. Why is the coachman nervous when he hears a horse approaching?
5. What is the man on horseback's true purpose, and what exchange takes place?
6. What does the narrator reflect upon concerning humankind?
7. For how long has the man in Jarvis Lorry's thoughts been buried?
8. What else do we know of this man who has been "buried"?
9. Why is this all of the information the reader has on this subject?
10. How does this scene end?

Chapter 4: The Preparation

1. What does Mr. Lorry do upon arrival in Dover?
2. Whom does Lorry meet here, and what plans do they make?
3. How does Lorry begin to tell Lucie that her father is not dead?
4. Why does he employ this method?
5. Why does Lorry insist to Lucie that all of his relations are mere business relations?
6. What does Lucie say upon learning that she is going to see her father?
7. What are the two conditions concerning Dr. Manette?
8. What is Lucie's reaction to this?
9. Who comes into the room at this point to help Lucie?
10. What is problematic about this portrayal of Lucie Manette?

Chapter 5: The Wine Shop

1. What is happening at the beginning of this chapter?
2. What does the man write on the wall? What does this foreshadow?
3. What kind of town is Saint Antoine?
4. Who are the proprietors of the wine-shop?
5. What is the significance of the name "Jacques"?
6. What is the impression of Madame Defarge from this chapter?
7. Why does Defarge show Dr. Manette to the "Jacques"?
8. Where is Dr. Manette being held?
9. What is Lucie's reaction upon seeing him?
10. What is Dr. Manette doing when they enter his room?

Chapter 6: The Shoemaker

1. What is Dr. Manette's condition?
2. What does Dr. Manette say his name is?
3. What is the significance of what he says?
4. What helps Dr. Manette begin to remember his past?
5. How soon do they decide to leave France?
6. Why does Mr. Lorry refer to "business" again?
7. What is Lucie's "strength" in this chapter?
8. What is the importance of Dr. Manette returning to the shoe he is making?
9. What does Mr. Lorry say to Dr. Manette?
10. What is the nature of Dr. Manette's reply? What function does his reply serve regarding the plot?

Book the Second: The Golden Thread

Chapter 1: Five Years Later & Chapter 2: A Sight

1. How is Tellson's Bank described at the beginning of the chapter?
2. What is the eighteenth century view of the death penalty in England?
3. Why does Jerry Cruncher call his wife "a conceited female," and what is her reaction to this?
4. What is the significance of the striking physical resemblance between Jerry Cruncher and his son?
5. Why is there such a large crowd in the courtroom?
6. What does Jerry Cruncher ask the man who assumes that Darnay will be found guilty?
7. Why do all eyes in the courtroom turn to Lucie Manette?
8. How is Lucie Manette different from those around her in the courtroom?
9. How is this strength undermined?
10. On what suspenseful note does the chapter end?

Chapter 3: A Disappointment

1. What does the Attorney-General say about the prisoner in his opening statements?
2. Who are the two witnesses that the Attorney-General says will incriminate Darnay?
3. How does Stryver show that these two men are not credible witnesses?
4. Why is Lucie Manette called to the witness stand?
5. What did Darnay tell Lucie on the ship five years ago?
6. What leads to Darnay's acquittal?
7. What problem concerning Dickens' use of plot does this reveal?
8. What happens to Lucie Manette, once again, in this chapter?
9. What is the final line of this chapter?
10. What are the implications of this line?

Chapter 4: Congratulatory & Chapter 5: The Jackal

1. What is happening at the beginning of Chapter 4?
2. How does Darnay greet Lucie?
3. How does Dr. Manette look at Darnay? What does this mean?
4. What does their conversation reveal as the difference between Lorry and Carton?
5. What happens while Carton and Darnay are dining?
6. Why does Carton say that he hates Darnay?
7. Why do Stryver and Carton meet?
8. What does Carton say about Lucie?
9. What else does Carton complain about?
10. What does the final paragraph say about Sydney Carton?

Chapter 6: Hundreds of People

1. Where is Mr. Lorry going at the beginning of this chapter?
2. What is the tone of this chapter?
3. Is Miss Pross' claim that "hundreds of people" visit the house accurate?
4. What has Miss Pross' brother done to her?
5. What has Dr. Manette kept as a reminder of his 18 years in prison?
6. Who else comes to the Manettes' house on this Sunday?
7. What is odd about Dr. Manette's house?
8. Of what is this symbolic?
9. What happens when a storm approaches?
10. What is foreshadowed by the storm?

Chapter 7: Monseigneur in Town & Chapter 8: Monseigneur in the Country

1. What is the Marquis' party like?
2. What does the Marquis believe about himself?
3. Describe what the Marquis looks like.
4. What happens as the Marquis is traveling to his chateau?
5. What is his reaction to this?
6. What does Defarge say to the distraught man in the nightcap?
7. What does Defarge do with the coin that the Marquis throws to him?
8. What does the mender of roads tell the Marquis?
9. What does this man represent?
10. How does this chapter end?

Chapter 9: The Gorgon's Head

1. What is the Marquis' chateau like?
2. What happens when the Marquis sits down to dinner?
3. What does this reveal about the Marquis?

4. Who is the nephew of the Marquis?
5. How does Darnay feel about the family name?
6. What does his uncle reply?
7. What is the larger issue at stake in this conversation?
8. What is the Marquis' final word about class?
9. What does Darnay do concerning the property in France?
10. How does this chapter end?

Chapter 10: Two Promises & Chapter 11: A Companion Picture

1. What is Charles Darnay's occupation?
2. What does this reveal about his character?
3. What do Darnay and Dr. Manette discuss?
4. How does Dr. Manette react when Darnay tells him that he has a secret to reveal to him?
5. What does Dr. Manette do after Darnay leaves?
6. What does this reveal about Dr. Manette's character?
7. How does Lucie help Dr. Manette when she finds him at the shoemaker's bench?
8. What does Stryver wish to confide to Carton?
9. What is Stryver's opinion of Carton?
10. Why is this opinion problematic?

Chapter 12: The Fellow of Delicacy & Chapter 13: The Fellow of No Delicacy

1. What does Stryver decide to do at the beginning of the chapter?
2. What is the gist of Stryver's conversation with Lorry?
3. How does Stryver react to this?
4. What does this say about his character?
5. Is Lorry capable of having both a business life and a personal life?
6. What is Stryver's final comment about Lucie?
7. Who pays a call on Lucie?
8. How does Carton look to Lucie?
9. What does Carton tell Lucie?
10. Why does Carton love Lucie?

Chapter 14: The Honest Tradesman

1. What passes by Tellson's Bank?
2. What is the crowd shouting?
3. What does the crowd do after the body is put in the ground?
4. Mr. Cruncher takes what tools with him when he goes out later that night?
5. Why does young Jerry follow his father? What does he find out?
6. What does Mrs. Cruncher think of her husband's "occupation"?
7. How does Mr. Cruncher view his "occupation"?

8. Why does young Jerry ask his father what a resurrection-man is?
9. What is comedic about his chapter?
10. Whose body could be inferred to have been dug up?

Chapter 15: Knitting

1. Why does Defarge bring the mender of the roads to the wine shop?
2. Who presents the petition to the King and what was the result?
3. What does it mean to be “registered?”
4. How is this register kept secret?
5. Where do the Defarges take the mender of roads?
6. How does the mender of roads act?
7. Why is Ernest Defarge happy with the way the mender of the roads acts?
8. What does Madame Defarge say about dolls and birds?
9. To whom is she referring?
10. How does this scene end?

Chapter 16: Still Knitting

1. Why do the Defarges go to Paris?
2. What do they learn there?
3. What is distinctive about John Barsard?
4. Why does Madame Defarge put a rose in her hat?
5. What is Madame Defarge doing while she speaks with Barsard?
6. What does Barsard tell the Defarges about the Manettes?
7. How does Ernest Defarge react to this?
8. What would happen if Darnay and the Manettes were to come to France?
9. How does Madame Defarge feel about this?
10. What are Madame Defarge and the other women doing as the chapter ends?

Chapter 17: One Night & Chapter 18: Nine Days

1. Of what do Lucie and her father assure each other on the night before her wedding?
2. What does Dr. Manette speak of for the first time?
3. What does Lucie pray for that night?
4. How does Dr. Manette react to hearing Darnay’s secret?
5. Who is present at the wedding?
6. What does Dr. Manette say to Darnay after the wedding?
7. What does this reveal about Lucie’s character?
8. What does Dr. Manette do after Lucie and Charles leave?
9. How does Lorry react to this? What does he try to do?
10. How long does this go on?

Chapter 19: An Opinion & Chapter 20: A Plea

1. What happens after Dr. Manette's ninth day of making shoes?
2. How does Lorry approach Dr. Manette concerning his relapse?
3. What does Dr. Manette say about the cause of this relapse?
4. How does Lorry convince Manette to allow him to destroy the bench?
5. What is the symbolic nature of smashing the bench?
6. Who visits the couple upon their return from their honeymoon?
7. What do Carton and Darnay talk about?
8. What function does this serve?
9. What does Lucie ask her husband to do?
10. Why does she ask this of him?

Chapter 21: Echoing Footsteps

1. How many children does Lucie have? What are their fates?
2. What does the death of the second child signify?
3. What else happens as six years pass?
4. What news does Mr. Lorry bring that marks the beginning of the end of normalcy?
5. What happens in Paris?
6. What does Ernest Defarge do in the midst of the storming of the Bastille?
7. Why is this important?
8. What does Madame Defarge do to the governor's dead body?
9. What does the final paragraph of this chapter have to say about Lucie?
10. To what event does the final paragraph refer?

Chapter 22: The Sea Still Rises & Chapter 23: Fire Rises

1. How does Chapter 22 open?
2. What does Ernest Defarge tell the crowd at the wine-shop?
3. What is the result of this news?
4. How are the women who join Madame Defarge described?
5. What has Foulon said to the peasants before?
6. What is his fate?
7. Who joins him in this fate?
8. How could this relate to Charles Darnay?
9. How does Madame Defarge react towards Foulon?
10. What do the peasants do next?

Chapter 24: Drawn to the Loadstone Rock

1. How many years have passed between chapters?
2. Why does Lorry decide to go to France?
3. Whom does he take with him?
4. What has happened to the French nobility?
5. What is Mr. Stryver's opinion of the situation in France?

6. From whom does Charles Darnay receive a letter?
7. What decision does this letter lead Darnay to make?
8. Whom does he tell of his plans?
9. Why is this decision unbelievable?
10. What is the main function of this chapter?

Book the Third: The Track of a Storm

Chapter 1: In Secret

1. What difficulties does Darnay meet at the beginning of his journey?
2. How does he finally reach Paris?
3. What decrees have been passed since Darnay has left England?
4. How is Darnay referred to by the officer in Paris?
5. Whom does Darnay meet in Paris?
6. What does Ernest Defarge say to Darnay?
7. What ominous phrase is connected with Darnay's imprisonment?
8. What does Darnay learn of the King's fate?
9. What does Darnay think of when in his cell?
10. What is this a reference to?

Chapter 2: The Grindstone & Chapter 3: The Shadow

1. Where is Tellson's Paris branch located?
2. What is on the grounds of this house?
3. Who comes to France in this chapter?
4. What does Defarge bring to Mr. Lorry?
5. Where does Lorry take the Defarges?
6. Why does Madame Defarge accompany them?
7. Is this the only reason?
8. What does Lucie ask of Madame Defarge?
9. What does Madame Defarge reply?
10. What is Mr. Lorry thinking as the chapter ends?

Chapter 4: Calm in Storm & Chapter 5: The Wood-Sawyer

1. What does Dr. Manette keep secret from Lucie?
2. How does Dr. Manette gain influence with the new republic?
3. What is the slogan of this new republic?
4. What new device has led to more beheadings and how is this device described?
5. How does Lucie cope with her husband's imprisonment?
6. What small consolation does Dr. Manette arrange for Lucie and Charles?
7. Where is the coincidental location of this spot?
8. What interest does the wood-sawyer take in Lucie?

9. Yet, who passes by this very spot soon after?
10. How does this chapter end?

Chapter 6: Triumph & Chapter 7: A Knock at the Door

1. How is the court that tries Darnay described?
2. How does Darnay defend himself?
3. From whom did he learn to appeal to the court in this way?
4. What is the result of the trial?
5. To what can this courtroom scene be compared?
6. How does Lucie react upon seeing Charles?
7. What does Lucie do next?
8. What happens when Charles and Lucie return to their apartment?
9. How has this happened?
10. What mystery does the chapter end on?

Chapter 8: A Hand at Cards

1. Who does Miss Pross see in the wine shop?
2. What does Jerry Cruncher ask Solomon Pross, and what is this a reference to?
3. Who provides Jerry with an answer to his question?
4. What does Carton want with Barsad?
5. What do they discuss there?
6. What does Jerry Cruncher reveal about Roger Cly?
7. How does Barsad explain this?
8. To whom does Carton refer to in his comment about crowds and what is the point of this?
9. What does Barsad tell Carton after Carton questions Barsad's access to the prison?
10. How does this chapter end?

Chapter 9: The Game Made

1. Why is Mr. Lorry angry with Jerry Cruncher?
2. What deal has Sydney Carton worked out with Barsad?
3. What is Lorry's reaction to this?
4. Where does Carton go after he leaves Lorry?
5. What does he do there?
6. What does Carton do for the rest of the night?
7. What goes through his head during this long night?
8. Where had he first heard these words?
9. Who is the mysterious third person who has denounced Charles Darnay?
10. How has this denunciation come about?

Chapter 10: The Substance of the Shadow

1. What does this chapter consist of?
2. How do the two men who take Dr. Manette to the “patients” get him to enter the carriage?
3. Who are the two patients?
4. How has the boy received his wound?
5. What is this boy’s fate?
6. What becomes of his sister?
7. What important fact does Dr. Manette not learn?
8. To whom does Dr. Manette confide his secret?
9. How does Dr. Manette learn the name of the two evil brothers?
10. What is the result of the reading of this letter?

Chapter 11: Dusk & Chapter 12: Darkness

1. . What does Lucie ask of the crowd at the trial?
2. Who helps Lucie when she faints?
3. What does Little Lucie say to Carton?
4. What happens to Dr. Manette in this chapter?
5. What does Carton learn about Madame Defarge while he is at the wine-shop?
6. What is ironic about this revelation?
7. What are Madame Defarge’s plans for Dr. Manette and Lucie?
8. What does Carton tell Lorry to do?
9. What does Carton give to Lorry?
10. What is the final condition that Carton gives Lorry?

Chapter 13: Fifty-two

1. How many prisoners are awaiting their deaths?
2. What does Darnay do once he resigns himself to dying?
3. Who is not in Darnay’s mind at all?
4. What does Sydney Carton tell Darnay?
5. How does Carton then proceed with his plan?
6. Whom does Carton call into the room to carry Darnay out?
7. Who does Carton meet as he awaits death?
8. What does this woman say to Carton?
9. What is Carton’s reply?
10. How does this chapter end?

Chapter 14: The Knitting Done & Chapter 15: The Footsteps Die Out For Ever

1. What does Madame Defarge decide at the beginning of the chapter?
2. Where does Madame Defarge then go?

3. What do we learn about Madam Defarge as she makes her way to Lucie's apartment?
4. Whom does Madame Defarge meet at Lucie's apartment?
5. What happens at the apartment?
6. What is the result of this struggle?
7. What does Jerry Cruncher do in this chapter?
8. What does Sydney Carton think of as he awaits the guillotine?
9. What are his thoughts regarding the future?
10. What are Sydney Carton's final thoughts regarding his life?