

Introductory Lesson

Before Reading

- ① *Look at the title of the book and cover. Can you guess which two cities they refer to? How would characters living in two different places relate to each other? What would bring them together/keep them apart?*
- ② *The story takes place during the French Revolution. What is a revolution? Do you know anything about the French Revolution, e.g. why it happened?*
- ③ *Read the biography on Charles Dickens and answer the following questions:*
 - a Why did Dickens leave school and go to work?
 - b What helped give Dickens an understanding of the poor?
 - c What gave Dickens the background of legal information he used in his novels?
 - d When did Dickens begin his career in fiction?
 - e What did Dickens do to get inspiration?

Charles Dickens



Charles John Huffam Dickens is commonly considered the greatest English novelist of the Victorian Era. Of middle class origins, he was born 7 February, 1812 in Portsmouth, England, the second of eight children. His father earned a respectable salary, but his tendency

to waste money eventually landed him in debtor's prison. Charles was then pulled out of school and put to manual labour in a factory to support the family. The distress of his working class period affected him deeply and left him with great sympathy for the poor. Dickens returned to school when his father was released from prison and later became a law clerk and a court reporter, jobs which afforded him the legal facts he often used in his novels. We can see this influence in "A Tale of Two Cities", published in 1859. He began his career in fiction in 1833, writing short stories in periodicals. "The Pickwick Papers", serialised in 20 installments, made him the most popular writer of his day in England. In 1836 he married Catherine Hogarth. Though very much a public figure, he loved home and family life and was devoted to his many children. Dickens required being alone to write and took long walks through the streets at night to stimulate the creative process. "A Tale of Two Cities" was one of his final novels. Dickens died 9 June, 1870.

④ Read the following letter, which is addressed to one of the characters in the book, and answer the following questions:

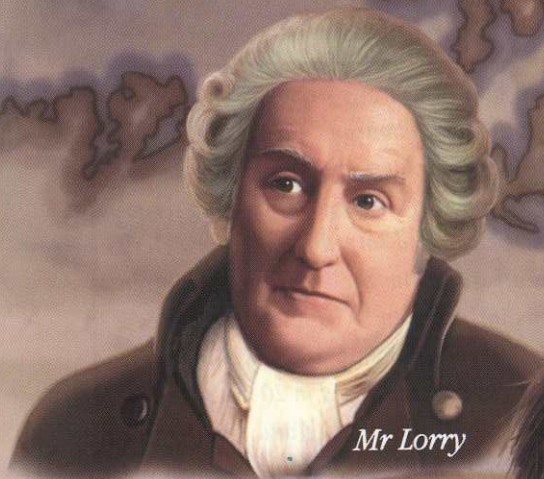
- a What has happened to Gabelle? What situation is he in?
- b What does he ask the recipient to do?
- c Who do you think "the People" are?

Dear Monsieur le Marquis,

My life is in danger and my house has been burnt to the ground. The crime for which I am accused, having helped and served you, is treason against the People. I have in vain tried to explain that I have acted for the People according to your commands; that I have collected no taxes or rent and returned the money they had paid in the past. The only response of the Tribunal is that I have acted for an emigrant, and where is that emigrant?

My dear sir, I once risked my life to help you leave the country. I desperately need your help now. I was true to you, Monsieur le Marquis. I pray you will be true to me.

*Your servant,
Gabelle.*



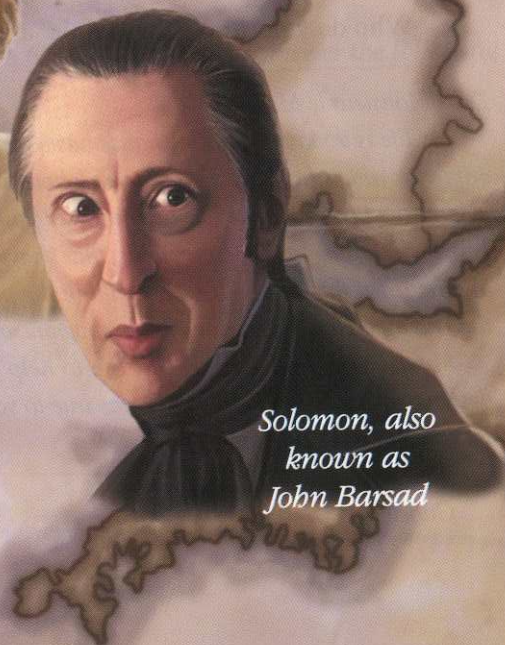
Mr Lorry



Jerry Cruncher



Miss Pross

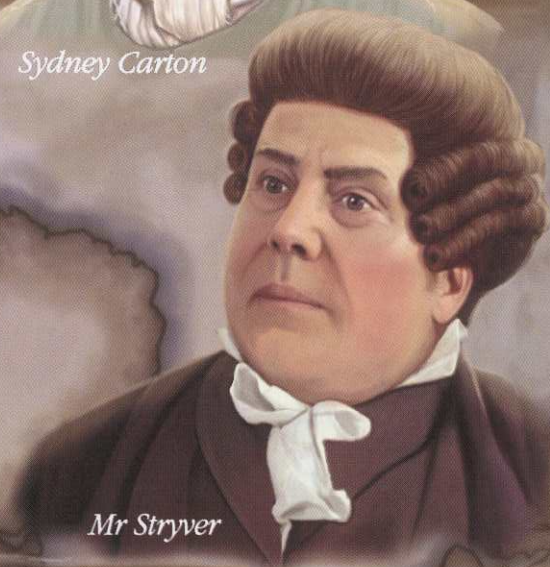


*Solomon, also
known as
John Barsad*



Sydney Carton

ENGLAND



Mr Stryver

London

Dover

FRANCE



Dr Manette



Lucie Manette



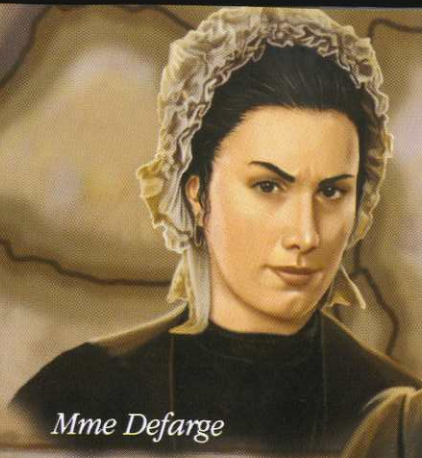
Little Lucie



The Marquis of St Evrémonde



Charles Darnay



Mme Defarge



M Defarge

● Paris

FRANCE



Jacques One



Jacques Two



Jacques Three



Jacques Five



Jacques Four

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."



Mr Lorry got out and confidently approached the horse and rider standing some distance away.

“Good evening, Mr Lorry, sir.”

At once Mr Lorry recognised the rider's London accent.

“Jerry Cruncher! Not a night for riding all the way from London.”

“No, sir, but they say it's important.”

Mr Lorry took the small folded paper handed to him and held it close to the coach lamp. He read the message aloud, “Meet Mademoiselle at Dover,” and then looked up at the rider.

“Jerry, say that my answer was, ‘Recalled to life’.”

“That's a strange answer, Mr Lorry, sir!”

“It is enough. They will understand. Now have a safe journey back to London. Good night.”

“Come on! Come on!” said the driver impatiently. “We haven't got all night!”

Next morning Mr Jarvis Lorry was putting the finishing touches to his appearance before going for breakfast in the dining room of the Royal George Inn. It was going to be a very difficult day. As a man who had devoted his life to the impersonal business of financial affairs, he was not looking forward to a meeting that had to do with a deeply emotional matter.

Unlike most gentlemen of his age, Mr Lorry had never married. He would willingly admit that he was married to his work and, if asked, he would almost certainly say he had no regrets. Already he had worked for Tellson's Bank for more than thirty years and was one of their most trusted employees.

