

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Adapted by Ben Kingsland

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A TALE OF TWO CITIES

An Adaptation of the classic tale by Charles Dickens

Adapted by Ben Kingsland

SYNOPSIS: Charles Dickens' masterpiece about the people of France and Britain during the Reign of Terror is vividly brought to life in Ben Kingsland's brisk, bold adaptation. Justice, sacrifice, class, love, and duty are put to the test as leaders are beheaded and a people rebel. As blood flows in the streets, is anyone truly innocent?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5-11 males, 5-6 females, 0-21 either, 0-10+ extras)

MARQUIS D'EVREMONDE (m)	(39 lines)
DEFARGE (m)	(64 lines)
CHARLES DARNAY (m).....	(112 lines)
JARVIS LORRY (m).....	(72 lines)
DR. MANETTE (m)	(79 lines)
SYDNEY CARTON (m)	(66 lines)
STRYVER (m).....	(49 lines)
BOY (m)	(14 lines)
OLDER BROTHER (m).....	(9 lines)
YOUNGER BROTHER (m).....	(11 lines)
HUSBAND (m)	(2 lines)
MME DEFARGE (f).....	(51 lines)
LUCIE MANETTE (f).....	(161 lines)
MISS PROSS (f).....	(31 lines)
WOMAN (f).....	(14 lines)
DARNAY'S MOTHER (f)	(4 lines)
SEAMSTRESS (f)	(9 lines)
FIRST ATTENDANT (m/f)	(2 line)
SECOND ATTENDANT (m/f)	(1 line)
THIRD ATTENDANT (m/f).....	(1 line)
FOURTH ATTENDANT (m/f)	(1 line)
DRIVER (m/f)	(1 line)
GASPARD (m/f).....	(3 lines)
GABELLE (m/f).....	(14 lines)

BARSARD (m/f)	(26 lines)
JERRY CRUNCHER (m/f)	(16 lines)
ENGLISH JUDGE (m/f).....	(7 lines)
ATTORNEY-GENERAL (m/f).....	(15 lines)
GUARD (m/f).....	(2 lines)
WOOD-SAWYER (m/f).....	(3 lines)
FRENCH JUDGE (m/f).....	(16 lines)
SAMSON (m/f).....	(9 lines)
REDCAP (m/f).....	(11 lines)
ENSEMBLE #1 (m/f)	(13 lines)
ENSEMBLE #2 (m/f)	(11 lines)
ENSEMBLE #3 (m/f)	(5 lines)
ENSEMBLE #4 (m/f)	(3 lines)
ENSEMBLE #5 (m/f)	(1 line)

ENSEMBLE and EXTRAS:

French Citizens

British Citizens

Barmaid

Redcaps

CAST DOUBLING OPTIONS (5 M, 5 F)

M1: Dr. Alexandre Manette

M2: Jarvis Lorry / Marquis D'Evremonde / Younger Brother

M3: Jerry Cruncher / Ernest DeFarge / Boy

M4: Charles Darnay/ Sydney Carton / Older Brother

M5: Mr. Stryver / Gaspard / Husband / Redcap

F1: Lucie Manette / Seamstress

F2: Mme Defarge / Woman

F3: Barsard / Gabelle

F4: Miss Pross / Attorney General /Wood-Sawyer

F5: Judge / Samson / Darnay's Mother

Available cast fills in as small speaking parts (e.g. ATTENDANTS, REDCAPS, GUARDS, ENSEMBLE, etc) as needed.

DURATION: 120 minutes

TIME: Before and during the French Revolution

SETTING: England and France

PRODUCTION NOTES

SET: The script is designed to move freely across time and space. Consequently, a set design that allows for the same platforms or areas to serve multiple functions and be transformed quickly with a light change or addition of a piece of furniture or drapery would serve the production well.

The original production asked the actors to become all kinds of set pieces, like the horses of a carriage or the legs of the Marquis d'Evremonde's table. Please play around with how the cast and the audiences' theatrical imaginations can help a big story keep speeding along.

PROPS

NOTE: Many of these items can be pantomimed, if desired

- Cobbler tools and Bag (Manette)
- Knitting (Mme Defarge)
- Samovar, Serving Tray, Cup, Spoon, (2) Napkins (Marquis d'Evremonde)
- Snuffbox (Marquis d'Evremonde)
- Bundled-up Child (Gaspard)
- Coin (Marquis d'Evremonde)
- Paperwork (Gabelle)
- Fork and Knife (Marquis d'Evremonde)
- Locket with hair (Manette)
- Bag of Gold (Marquis and Barsard)
- Flask (Carton)
- Gavel (Judge)
- Papers (Attorney-General)
- Wine and Glasses (Barmaid)
- Birdcage (Lucie)
- Book (Manette)

- Cloth (Pross)
- Sword (Boy)
- Glass (Stryver)
- Book (Marquis d'Evremonde)
- Knife (Gaspard)
- Drum and High Hat (Ensemble)
- Letter (Lorry)
- Papers (Darnay)
- Musket (Redcap)
- Ledger (Lorry)
- Letter (Cruncher)
- Clubs, pikes, torches (Ensemble)
- Paper (Defarge)
- Note (Mme Defarge)
- Letter (Stryver)
- Paperwork and bell (French Judge)
- Manette's letter (Defarge)
- Case of medicines (Younger Brother)
- Collar (Husband)
- Bread (Woman)
- Bag of Gold (Younger/Marquis)
- Lantern (Younger)
- Papers and Quill (Darnay)
- Suitcase and contents (Manette)
- Suitcase or Box (Pross)
- Knife and gun (Mme Defarge)
- Fireplace poker, cane etc (Lucie)
- Cloth and Bottle (Carton)
- Official papers (Barsard)
- Swaddled baby (Lucie)

PREMIERE PRODUCTION

Originally commissioned by Olney Theatre Center, Artistic Director Jason Loewith, Managing Director Debbie Ellinghaus; for the National Players, Artistic Director Jason King Jones.

The world premiere of A Tale of Two Cities was produced by Olney Theater Center and the National Players in Olney, MD on September 9th, 2015. It was directed by Jason King Jones with the following cast:

CHARLES DARNAY/
 SYDNEY CARTON / ELDER BROTHER..... James Sheahan
 JERRY CRUNCHER /
 ERNEST DEFARGE / BOY..... Caleb Cedrone
 JARVIS LORRY / MARQUIS D'EVREMONDE /
 YOUNGER BROTHER Beau Harris
 DR. ALEXANDRE MANETTE..... Andrew Garrett
 MR. STRYVER / GASPARD /
 HUSBAND / REDCAP Mitchell Martin
 LUCIE MANETTE / SEAMSTRESS..... Mackenzie Devlin
 MME DEFARGE / WOMAN..... Tina Munoz Pandya
 JOHN BARSARD / GABELLE Rosie O'Leary
 MISS PROSS /
 ATTORNEY GENERAL / WOOD-SAWYER Libby Barnard
 JUDGE / SAMSON /DARNAY'S MOTHER..... Marion Grey

AT START: *In France, ENSEMBLE of peasants nationwide engages in rhythmic menial labor. DOCTOR MANETTE is hunched over a shoemaker's bench in a cell. MME DEFARGE is knitting. She finishes a section that resembles the French tricolor and stops to admire her handiwork.*

ENSEMBLE: *(As they work.) Un... deux... trois... quatre... cinq... six... sept... huit... neuf... dix... onze... douze...*

ENSEMBLE restarts at "Un", and continues their chant under MME DEFARGE'S line.

MME DEFARGE: *For what do we strive? (Placing her hands on the colors one at a time.) Liberte. Egalite. Fraternite¹. A democratic France, eclipsing the glory of all nations. All low and cruel passions, enchained by the laws. All goodly and generous feelings aroused. Each citizen subject to the magistrate. Each magistrate to the people. All the people to justice. That eternal justice whose laws are engraved, not upon marble or stone, but in the hearts of all men...*

Fanfare. Chanting ceases. FOUR ATTENDANTS enter and dash to their places.

ATTENDANTS: *The Marquis D'Evremonde is about to take his chocolate!*

Processional music as the MARQUIS D'EVREMONDE enters, dressed in finery.

MARQUIS: *It takes four men to conduct the happy chocolate to my lips.*

A beautiful serving tray with samovar, cup, saucer, spoon, etc is revealed by FOUR ATTENDANTS. MARQUIS notes this and makes a small gesture for the ritual to begin.

¹ Liberty. Equality. Brotherhood.

MARQUIS: One lacquey carries the chocolate-pot into the sacred presence.

FIRST ATTENDANT carries chocolate-pot, slowly and with great care.

MARQUIS: A second mills and froths the chocolate with the little instrument he bears for that function.

SECOND ATTENDANT mills and froths the chocolate.

MARQUIS: A third presents the favored napkin.

THIRD ATTENDANT presents a napkin; MARQUIS frowns.

MARQUIS: The favored napkin.

Chagrined, THIRD ATTENDANT presents a different napkin and, with great care, tucks it into MARQUIS' collar.

MARQUIS: A fourth pours the chocolate out.

FOURTH ATTENDANT pours the chocolate.

MARQUIS: And, easing my lacqueys of their burdens... I take it.

MARQUIS takes a sip. He holds it in his mouth. He spits it back into the cup, having lost interest.

MARQUIS: Tedious.

MARQUIS gestures, and the ATTENDANTS whisk away the chocolate gear.

MARQUIS: My coach!

ALL ATTENDANTS rush into action. MARQUIS' coach is brought with DRIVER. MARQUIS takes a pinch of snuff and gets into his coach.

MARQUIS: The estate. Drive hard.

The coach sets off through the streets at a furious pace. ENSEMBLE, GASPARD, MME DEFARGE, and DEFARGE enter as the coach approaches the Parisian neighborhood of St. Antoine. As the coach drives past the ENSEMBLE, they are menaced.

ENSEMBLE #1: *Mon Dieu!*

ENSEMBLE #2: A wild rattle!

ENSEMBLE #3: A clatter!

ENSEMBLE #4: Through streets...

ENSEMBLE #5: Around corners...

DEFARGE and MME DEFARGE are in front of their wine shop and take interest as the coach goes past.

ENSEMBLE #1: *Allez, vite²!*

ENSEMBLE #2: Duck!

ENSEMBLE #3: Hide!

ENSEMBLE #4: Escape!

ENSEMBLE: Or else—!

A squishing, crunching noise. Coach lurches, horses whinny. The coach stops. GASPARD rushes forward from the ENSEMBLE, howling in horror. He cradles a wrapped bundle—a child. DEFARGE rushes forward to join GASPARD. MME DEFARGE follows more slowly, keeping her eyes on the MARQUIS. She pulls out a new color of yarn to match his costume. ENSEMBLE is silent, watchful.

MARQUIS: What has gone wrong?

DRIVER: (*Horrified.*) Pardon, Monsieur the Marquis... it is a child.

GASPARD howls. MARQUIS peeks out, frowning.

² Move, quickly!

MARQUIS: Why does he make that abominable noise? Is it his child?
(*Sighs heavily and pulls out a coin-purse.*)

GASPARD: Killed...! My son! Dead!

DEFARGE: Be brave, my Gaspard! He has died in an instant. Could he have lived an hour as happily?

MARQUIS tosses a gold coin towards GASPARD.

MARQUIS: It is extraordinary that you people cannot take care of yourselves. How do I know what injury you have done my horses?
(*To DRIVER.*) On!

The coach with MARQUIS and DRIVER exits. GASPARD scrambles to his feet, picks up the coin, and hurls it after the MARQUIS. GASPARD weeps. Most of the ENSEMBLE avert their eyes and begin to drift away. Only MME DEFARGE keeps steadily knitting. DEFARGE puts his arm around her.

MME DEFARGE: *Libertie. Egalite. Fraternite.*

MME DEFARGE and DEFARGE: Or death.

Coach with MARQUIS and DRIVER enters, arriving at MARQUIS' home. MARQUIS hands the DRIVER his coat and sits for supper.

MARQUIS: My dinner!

Dinner is brought to MARQUIS. GABELLE, the town Postmaster and tax functionary, enters with some paperwork.

GABELLE: (*Bowing.*) Felicitous return, Marquis. I present the latest ledger of tax receipts from the village. Now, until such time—

MARQUIS: Is this all?

GABELLE: Quite, ah, quite so, Marquis. Until such time as the tax base increases, a potential avenue for closing the budget gap of the estate could—possibly—involve reductions in... spending.

MARQUIS looks at him and continues eating, giving no sense of having understood.

GABELLE: Temporary reductions, only on the most trivial of matters.
Just until—

MARQUIS: (*Calling out.*) My chocolate!

*FOUR ATTENDANTS enter as before and enact the chocolate ritual.
MARQUIS speaks as they do.*

MARQUIS: “Reductions in spending on trivial matters...?” A queer suggestion, Monsieur Gabelle. Whatever do you mean?

GABELLE: I hardly know myself. I leave you to your repast, Marquis.

MARQUIS: (*Dismissing him.*) *Ca va*³.

GABELLE: *A votre plaisir*⁴. *Bonne soir.*

MARQUIS: Mmm. My nephew, whom I expect, is he arrived?

GABELLE: I will inquire.

FIRST ATTENDANT enters, followed by CHARLES DARNAY.

FIRST ATTENDANT: Mister Charles Darnay, announced.

GABELLE: Ah, a happy coincidence.

DARNAY: *Bonne soir*, Monsieur Gabelle. A pleasure to see you again.

GABELLE: The pleasure, as always, is mine, sir. I daresay all the staff are pleased to see you home—except the cook, perhaps!

DARNAY: Shall I never live down my appetite? If he didn’t want a growing boy to eat so much, he should not have prepared such meals for us.

MARQUIS slurps noisily or stabs his fork into a morsel with a loud clatter. They take note of him.

GABELLE: Fond memories. I take my leave and wish you good night, and welcome home.

DARNAY: *Merci beaucoup. Bonne soir.*

³ Fine / That will do.

⁴ At your pleasure

GABELLE bows and exits.

DARNAY: *Bonne soir*, dear uncle.

MARQUIS: (*Standing.*) A very fine evening to you, Charles D'Evremonde.

DARNAY: I call myself Charles Darnay, sir.

MARQUIS: I know. Will you dine with me, nephew?

DARNAY: (*Sitting.*) *Oui, merci.*

MARQUIS: You have been a long time coming.

DARNAY: I meant to come sooner.

MARQUIS: *Ne vous inquietez pas*⁵; why should rising to the responsibilities your father left you be a priority?

Beat.

DARNAY: In fact, dear Uncle, responsibility is what fills the sails of my return here. My responsibility to execute the last request of my dear mother's lips. As you well know, sir, there lives a young woman who was wronged—sorely wronged—by actions taken under this roof in my father's time. On my mother's deathbed, she begged me find this woman and make redress.

MARQUIS: Young Charles, doing what his mother tells him to. *Quelle surprise*⁶.

DARNAY: Sir, I do not wish to spar with you. I will simply repeat my request, with all due deference, for sufficient funds and access to our records to seek out this woman and, when she is found, offer a gesture of recompense for her suffering.

MARQUIS: No. (*Beat.*) Have you no other conversation to offer? I knew life away from society would dull your wit, but I thought the rot would not be so far advanced.

DARNAY: Why not help her, sir?

MARQUIS: I do not care to, sir.

DARNAY: We have done wrong, and are reaping the fruits of wrong. I believe the Evremonde name to be more detested than any name in France.

⁵ Don't worry.

⁶ What a surprise.

MARQUIS: Let us hope so. Detestation of the high is the involuntary homage of the low.

DARNAY: They are not so low, and we are not so high.

MARQUIS: Oh, Nephew, but we are. This village? Those peasants? As they are mine today, they will be yours, if you ever have the sense to claim them. Better to be a rational creature and accept your natural destiny.

DARNAY: I will forge my own destiny, starting by helping that woman.

MARQUIS: Then enjoy making your way through every woman in France. I know I did, once upon a time.

Beat.

DARNAY: I renounce this place.

MARQUIS: It is not yours, but feel free.

DARNAY: I renounce my title. I renounce my name. If this property passed to me from you, tomorrow, I would abandon it as a wilderness of misery and ruin!

MARQUIS: You listen to me. Try the fish, it's quite good.

DARNAY: I am fatigued. I leave in the morning.

MARQUIS: (*Unconcerned.*) Until breakfast, then, dearest nephew! A benevolent repose! What ho!

MARQUIS gestures for an ATTENDANT, who bears a torch.

MARQUIS: Light Monsieur my nephew to his chamber there!

MARQUIS continues to smile as DARNAY exits with ATTENDANT.

MARQUIS: (*To himself.*)—and burn Monsieur my nephew in his bed, if you will.

DARNAY in his room as MARQUIS finishes his meal.

DARNAY: I will find her, mother, with or without his help. I swear it.

LUCIE and LORRY enter together in the streets of St. Antoine. DARNAY and MARQUIS fade away. MANETTE is visible, making shoes.

LORRY: *(Checking a slip of paper.)* Miss Manette? *(LUCIE shakes herself and attends to him.)* I believe our man is here.

The DEFARGES' wine shop. DEFARGE and MME DEFARGE are in low conference with two ENSEMBLE members. LORRY and LUCIE enter the store, looking glaringly out of place. ENSEMBLE members drift away. The DEFARGES watch LUCIE and LORRY very closely with an air of total disinterest.

LORRY: *(To DEFARGE.)* Bonjour, monsieur.

DEFARGE: *(Pointedly, in English.)* Hello.

LORRY: I'm called Jarvis Lorry, Tellson's Bank of London.

DEFARGE: *(Curious, collected.)* Defarge, your servant. My wife. You have come a long way for our wine.

LORRY: Quite. Ah, that is, no. We have come about a gentleman of our mutual acquaintance. May I introduce Mademoiselle Lucie Manette.

This changes everything to DEFARGE and MME DEFARGE.

MME DEFARGE: *(Considering LUCIE.)* Lucie... Manette... *La fille de la docteur*⁷?

DEFARGE: *Bien sur, elle est assez vieille*⁸...

LUCIE: *(Timidly.)* *C'est vrai*⁹, Madame y Monsieur. Doctor Manette is my father.

DEFARGE and MME DEFARGE look at each other.

LORRY: Tell us, DeFarge, is he well?

DEFARGE: ...After me, please.

⁷ The doctor's daughter?

⁸ Of course. She's the right age.

⁹ It's true.

DEFARGE leads LORRY and LUCIE away from the shop. MME DEFARGE watches them go. They wander through the streets of St Antoine, after DEFARGE.

LORRY: Step lively there, Miss Manette. Are you alright?

LUCIE: *(She isn't.)* Yes.

LORRY: Quite a whirlwind, I'm sure... Your father, long thought dead, now discovered, alive! It is not so often that a child, once orphaned, sees the process reversed.

LUCIE: I have no memory of him. Mister Lorry... do you think he will be well?

LORRY: After years detained in the fearful Bastille, he may be greatly changed. Almost a wreck, it is possible, though we would hope for the best...

LUCIE tears up.

LORRY: ...come, Miss Manette. See it as I do, as a man of business. With any asset there is a risk of decline...

LUCIE begins to cry.

LORRY: Forgive me. These affairs are not my strength. Until such time as you need to know what nine times ninepence is, or how many shillings in twenty guineas, perhaps I should hold my tongue.

LUCIE: *(Smiling.)* It's alright.

LORRY offers his arm to LUCIE. She takes it.

LORRY: There's that smile, more precious than any deposit box.

LORRY and LUCIE stop in front of a staircase.

DEFARGE: It is very high. Better to begin slowly.

LORRY: Courage, Miss Manette.

LUCIE: Courage.

They reach a door, near where MANETTE has been working all along. DEFARGE pulls out a key.

LORRY: (*Offended.*) His door is locked, then, my friend? Is that necessary?

DEFARGE: Because he was so long a prisoner in the Bastille, he grows frightened... raves... would tear himself to pieces, if his door was left open.

LUCIE: (*Anxious.*) Can that be?

DEFARGE: *Bienvenu a Paris*¹⁰, *Mademoiselle*. Long live the Devil.

DEFARGE knocks heavily on the door. He inserts and turns the key very noisily. A ritual for the prisoner's benefit. The door is opened. DEFARGE steps back. LUCIE is still. MANETTE hums faintly inside the room and then goes quiet.

DEFARGE: Good day!

MANETTE: (*Slowly, not looking up.*) Good day.

LORRY and DEFARGE are looking expectantly at LUCIE.

LUCIE: Mister Lorry, I cannot... he is a ghost!

LORRY: Courage, dear miss.

LUCIE shakes her head. DEFARGE steps into the room.

DEFARGE: Still hard at work, I see?

MANETTE: Yes. I am working.

LORRY: (*To DEFARGE.*) ...making shoes?

MANETTE looks up slowly at the sound of a new voice. LORRY clears his throat, uncomfortable, and nods hello.

DEFARGE: Come! *Regardez*, you have a visitor, who knows a well-made shoe when he sees one. Show him. Tell monsieur what kind of shoe it is.

¹⁰ Welcome to Paris

MANETTE passes LORRY the half-completed shoe he is working on.

MANETTE: It is a young lady's walking shoe. It is in the present mode.

DEFARGE: And its maker's name?

Pause.

MANETTE: Did you ask me for my name?

DEFARGE nods.

MANETTE: One Hundred and Five, North Tower.

LORRY and LUCIE look at DEFARGE.

DEFARGE: His former cell. He brings it with him.

DEFARGE taps his temple. MANETTE takes the shoe back from LORRY while LORRY is turned away. They watch him work.

LORRY: *(Coming closer.)* Doctor Manette, do you remember nothing of me? Is there no old banker, no old business, *(Indicating DEFARGE.)* no old servant, no old time, rising in your mind?

MANETTE hums suddenly. LORRY backs away. MANETTE becomes silent and continues to work. DEFARGE gestures for LORRY and LUCIE to be cautious.

DEFARGE: In this mood he may strike out.

LORRY: *(Looking to LUCIE, anxious as ever.)* Perhaps we should adjourn? Return tomorrow, when our presence is not so new?

LUCIE begins to approach MANETTE, trembling. DEFARGE moves to stop her, but LORRY draws him away. This is what they came for. LUCIE sits next to MANETTE on his bench. His back is to her and he does not notice. He switches tools and catches sight of her dress. He looks up into her face. Pause.

MANETTE: What is this? You are not the jailer's daughter.

LUCIE shakes her head and touches his arm. MANETTE recoils. She gives him space. He goes back to his shoemaking. He hums, briefly. She chooses to hum as well. He stops and looks at her again. Looks more closely.

MANETTE: *(Slow realization.)* It is the same.

LUCIE: *(Checking in with DEFARGE.)* ...I'm sorry, I don't understand.

Slowly, MANETTE reaches to his neck and takes off a blackened string with a scrap of rag attached to it. He unwinds the rag, revealing a lock of golden hair. He raises it up to look at her face and the hair at the same time.

LORRY: Good God.

MANETTE: It is the same.

LUCIE: That must be from when I was... You have carried me with you all this time?

MANETTE: It is the same?

LUCIE: Yes. Yes, father, it is the same!

MANETTE: How can it be! When...? How...?

He lurches towards her. LORRY and DEFARGE start forward. LUCIE gestures for them to stay away.

MANETTE: No, no, no, it can't be. Too tall, too blooming. She was—and he was—before the North Tower, before... before?

LUCIE: *(Kneeling, embracing him.)* Yes. Before. Look at me. Feel my hair. Do you see? It is the same.

MANETTE pulls away, back to the shoes.

LUCIE: You had a life before, more than this, and I was in it... and you were in mine, in turn, though I do not remember. You remember.

MANETTE stops.

LUCIE: My father! All these years, stolen from us. Push them aside! Push through them and think of all the brighter years before us, away from this wicked land. I was with you all this time in this wisp of hair. Now I am here in the flesh. Join me. Leave this room and these shoes and say you'll build a home with me...

MANETTE is weeping and grasps her in an embrace.

LUCIE: Thank God! Gentlemen, there is blood in this ghost. O, thank God, thank God, thank God...

LORRY: *(Stifling tears.)* Well transacted, young woman.

DEFARGE: *(Satisfied.)* Shall I hire a carriage and post-horses?

LORRY: That's business, and if business is to be done, I had better do it.

DEFARGE: *(Before moving away with LORRY, to LUCIE.)* A good man is in your care, now. As you love him, keep him out of France.

LUCIE: Only life and death would bring us back.

DEFARGE shakes hands with LORRY and LUCIE helps MANETTE stand. LORRY, LUCIE and MANETTE move to one space. DEFARGE exits a different way.

MANETTE: My tools. My work. My tools.

LUCIE: *(Fetching a bag with MANETTE'S tools.)* Here, dear father, they are safe, as are you.

MANETTE clutches the tools, looking miserable. Sound of waves and creaking wood; we realize that they are on a ship crossing the Channel. DARNAY, two well-dressed Frenchmen, and a servant, BARSARD, are in their own conversation, some distance from the pair. LUCIE leads MANETTE towards a chair.

MANETTE: One Hundred and Five, North Tower. One Hundred and Five, North Tower.

LUCIE: *(Keeping up a good face.)* You are free now, father.

MANETTE: *(Continuing.)* One Hundred and Five, North Tower.

LUCIE: The fortress-walls which encompassed you are gone, and you are safe. There is sea spray here, and sun, and breeze—

A gust of wind makes them wince. LUCIE yelps involuntarily. MANETTE drops his bag of tools. He buries his face in his hands.

LORRY: I must find the captain.

LORRY exits. LUCIE glares after him.

MANETTE: *(Despairing.)* My tools! My work...

LUCIE: *(Fetching the bag, trying to coax him back.)* No, no, dear father, your bag is right here.

LUCIE puts the bag in MANETTE'S lap. He is completely unresponsive and hums loudly.

LUCIE: You must be cold. I will help you, and you will stop moaning. Just a moment of patience... *(Wind gust; she begins to undo her cloak.)* There.

LUCIE removes her cloak and offers it to MANETTE. He keeps his face buried. Wind gust. She drapes the cloak over top of him, obscuring his head. DARNAY is standing next to her. She starts.

DARNAY: *Desolee*¹¹, Mademoiselle.

LUCIE: *De rien*¹², Monsieur. I... I regret if my convulsions here on deck have disturbed you. I just want my father to be comfortable.

LUCIE'S cloak is over MANETTE'S head like a cloth on a birdcage.

DARNAY: He looks comfortable. You, by contrast, will become chilled.

LUCIE: *(Rubbing her bare arms.)* With what he has endured, I can go without.

¹¹ I'm sorry

¹² It's alright

Wind gust.

DARNAY: *Would you accept the aid of a fellow-traveler?*

LUCIE: *I would consider it.*

DARNAY: *(To MANETTE.) Excusez-moi, monsieur...*

He changes the angle of MANETTE's chair. He goes to a nearby barrel and, in an unpretentious show of strength, moves it so it rests just next to MANETTE's shoulder.

DARNAY: *The wind blows from here. Let it spend its force against the cask, not your father.*

He gently pulls the cloak off MANETTE's head, tucking it in his lap instead. MANETTE uncovers his face. His hands go to his tools. He looks up at DARNAY, uncomprehending but unafraid.

DARNAY: *J'espere que cela vous plait. Un peu meilleur¹³? (Smiles and bows.)*

LUCIE: *Merci, monsieur, pour votre bonte¹⁴. How can I thank you enough?*

DARNAY: *(Starting to remove her coat to give to her.) Cease your shivering, and I will be content.*

LUCIE: *(Declining.) Non, merci, monsieur. It's... what is the nautical term? Bracing.*

DARNAY: *You are brave.*

LUCIE: *And you are kind.*

They smile. They look at each other for a long time.

DARNAY: *Do you holiday in England?*

LUCIE: *No, it is my home. I was born in Paris, and my father... has been here for many years... but now we are starting a life together. Leaving France for good.*

DARNAY: *I am doing the same.*

¹³ I hope this pleases you. A little better?

¹⁴ Thank you for your kindness

LUCIE: Ah! Well, perhaps we will meet again.

DARNAY: It is a small island.

They enjoy each other some more. He forces himself to break away with a bow.

DARNAY: *Bon voyage, mademoiselle.*

LUCIE: May I ask your name?

DARNAY: ... Charles Darnay.

LUCIE: Lucie Manette. *Bon voyage, Monsieur Darnay.*

DARNAY bows and returns to his companions.

Scene change. The ship fades away. DARNAY lingers by himself. BARSARD begins to exit, but is stopped by the MARQUIS. MARQUIS whispers an instruction and hands BARSARD a bag of gold. BARSARD counts it in excitement and agrees nonverbally to the MARQUIS' terms. MARQUIS and BARSARD exit. STRYVER enters during this business.

STRYVER: Carton!

SYDNEY CARTON bestirs himself to look at his law partner.

STRYVER: *(Disapproving of CARTON's appearance.)* Good God, you're a disgrace to attorneys everywhere.

CARTON: I daresay that's saying something.

CARTON takes a heavy swig from a flask.

STRYVER: The trial is about to begin, and you're drinking yourself blind.

CARTON: Like justice.

STRYVER enjoys this, despite himself. He motions for his friend to hand him the flask and takes a nip himself.

STRYVER: God help this Darnay if you were the only one defending him. As usual, I'll have to carry the day.

CARTON: He'll be fine. He's a professor, he's been in London peaceably five years. There's no earthly way he's guilty of treason.

STRYVER: Tell it to the jury. If we're not careful they'll see him hanged just to watch him swing. I think our character witness will tell well with them; she certainly did with me.

STRYVER and CARTON continue their conference as they enter the Old Bailey. LUCIE, CRUNCHER and LORRY enter.

CRUNCHER: A treason case, Mister Lorry? Bust me! That means this Darnay will be half hanged, sliced up, his inside taken out and burnt while he looks on, then his head chopped off, and the whole package cut in quarters. Seems a bit odd to execute one man so many times, but I s'pose that's the only way he'll learn.

LUCIE: No one will be executing him, Mister Cruncher, because he's innocent. I'm sure I can help the jury see that.

LORRY: Just stay out here, Jerry, until the trial is done, and wait for my instructions.

CRUNCHER: Fine by me. I wouldn't go in the Old Bailey less you dragged me. Which is what the constables did that one time...

CRUNCHER makes himself comfortable. LORRY and LUCIE enter the Old Bailey, anxious, and take their seats. STRYVER sits next to an empty seat where CARTON is. ATTORNEY-GENERAL and BARSARD sit opposite. DARNAY, hands bound behind his back, is led to the front of the courtroom. ENGLISH JUDGE enters and all rise. ENGLISH JUDGE sits.

ENGLISH JUDGE: Charles Darnay, emigrant from France these five years, you are accused of treason and providing military intelligence to a foreign power to the great detriment of our Lord the King of England. How do you plead?

DARNAY: Not guilty, m'lord.

ENSEMBLE murmurs darkly. The ENGLISH JUDGE bangs his gavel and indicates the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, who stands.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Ladies and sensitive gentlemen! Do not let the prisoner's demeanor bewitch you. Charles Darnay emigrated from his native France five years ago for the sole purpose of sowing mischief in our realm. You must find the prisoner Guilty. You can never lay your heads upon your pillows until you do; you cannot tolerate your wives or children to lay their heads on their pillows; there never more can be, for you or yours, any laying of heads upon pillows at all unless the prisoner's head is taken off.

Ensemble buzzes. ATTORNEY-GENERAL sits.

ENGLISH JUDGE: Mr. Stryver.

STRYVER: (*Standing.*) Honored citizens of the jury, let me be frank: I wish I were somewhere else. So should you! This baseless, tasteless, shameless case against a professor of literature is a waste of our time. A traitor? A spy? Pshaw! Just look at him! He is a man of exceptional character and moral decency, as our first witness will establish. The defense calls Miss Lucie Manette to the stand.

LUCIE tentatively takes the stand.

STRYVER: Miss Manette, look upon Mister Darnay.

LUCIE and DARNAY exchange a look.

STRYVER: Have you seen him before?

LUCIE: Yes. On board of a packet-ship returning from France, sir, some five years' hence.

DARNAY: Can it be five years?

LUCIE: Indeed!

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Objection! Fraternizing!

JUDGE: Sustained.

STRYVER: Miss Manette, had you any conversation with the prisoner on that passage across the Channel?

LUCIE: Yes, sir. The gentleman was so good as to advise me how I could shelter my ailing father from the wind and weather, better than I had done. He expressed great gentleness and kindness. I was very glad to have known him.

STRYVER: Thank you, Miss Manette.

STRYVER sits. ATTORNEY-GENERAL stands.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Miss Manette, had the prisoner come on board alone?

LUCIE: No... he was with two other French gentlemen, and this man. *(Indicating BARSARD.)*

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Let the record state that the witness indicated this honorable patriot, John Barsard by name. On that ship, the prisoner conferred together with these others?

LUCIE: Well, yes...

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: *(Holding up a stack of paper.)* Were any papers handed about among them, similar to these?

LUCIE: Some papers may have been handed about, yes.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Let the record state that the defense's own witness just reported seeing Charles Darnay exchange these lists of His Majesty's military forces, sea and land, with mysterious Frenchman still at large.

ENSEMBLE buzzes.

STRYVER: Objection! Speculation!

ENGLISH JUDGE: Overruled.

LUCIE: But... but I only said I saw some papers, not *those* papers. I never said—

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: *(Sitting.)* Nothing further.

LUCIE: The prisoner was open, and kind, and good to my father. I hope I may not repay him by doing him harm today!

ENGLISH JUDGE: *(Banging gavel.)* Next witness!

ENSEMBLE buzzes. LUCIE sits next to LORRY, distressed. STRYVER is fuming.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The noble and unimpeachable John Barsard to the stand.

BARSARD takes the stand.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Sir John, pure soul thou art, tell the jury thy account.

BARSARD: I had been friend to the prisoner Darnay, in an evil hour. Imagine my dismay to discover that he was transporting those lists of His Majesty's military forces.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What did you do?

BARSARD: On discovering the wickedness and guilt of his business, I could not but resolve to immolate the traitor on the sacred altar of my country.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Bless you.

Appreciative murmuring from ENSEMBLE. ATTORNEY-GENERAL sits. STRYVER stands.

STRYVER: Mister Barsard. What is your profession?

BARSARD: Gentleman.

STRYVER: What do you live upon?

BARSARD: My property.

STRYVER: Where is your property?

BARSARD: *(Collected.)* I cannot recall.

STRYVER: *(Referring to some papers.)* Mister Barsard. Ever been in a debtor's prison?

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Objection! Relevance!

BARSARD: Rude, too!

JUDGE: I'll allow it.

STRYVER: Ever been in a debtor's prison?

BARSARD: Yes.

STRYVER: How many times?

BARSARD: Once... or twice... three... five or six times.

STRYVER: Ever live by gambling?

BARSARD: Not more than other gentlemen do.

STRYVER: Ever kicked downstairs for cheating at dice?

BARSARD: Decidedly not. I once received a kick at the top of a staircase and fell downstairs of my own accord.

STRYVER: Ever borrow money of the prisoner, Charles Darnay?

BARSARD: Yes.

STRYVER: Ever pay him?

BARSARD: I can't recall.

STRYVER: What more can you say about these lists of his Majesty's military forces?

BARSARD: Only that I found them during a righteous and pure-hearted search of the prisoner's luggage.

STRYVER: And what compelled you to open Mister Darnay's luggage in, as you say, a righteous and pure-hearted fashion?

BARSARD: To seek the truth. What other reason could I have?

STRYVER: To plant the lists there, for express purpose of "discovering" them yourself?

BARSARD: Why, ha ha ha ha! ...listen to you...!

STRYVER: Mister Barsard, do you need money to pay off gambling debts?

BARSARD: Why? How much do you have?

STRYVER: What would you say if a wealthy party offered you employment to provide evidence and lay traps?

BARSARD: ...nothing.

STRYVER: Your motives, then, in providing this evidence against the prisoner?

BARSARD: Sheer patriotism.

STRYVER: Sheer Patriotism. Nothing further.

ENGLISH JUDGE nods to BARSARD, who steps down.

LORRY: If that's the best they can do, Darnay should come out alright.

LUCIE: Lord, I hope so...

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: (*Holding up a paper.*) My lord, I enter into evidence a sworn affidavit from three honest Britons identifying that some two years ago Charles Darnay was present in a hotel outside Dover – in the dead of night – waiting for a foreign party... and in possession of lists very like these.

ENSEMBLE buzzes.

STRYVER: Objection! Poppycock!

JUDGE: ...Overruled.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What rationale for this midnight rendezvous?

Why, what other could it be, but to arrange the transfer of intelligence to the enemies of our English Prince? The prisoner Darnay was there—there can be no doubt of that! Eyewitness testimony is unimpeachable!

STRYVER: M'lord...

CARTON catches STRYVER's attention. STRYVER bends down to listen to CARTON's whispering.

JUDGE: Well, Mr. Stryver?

STRYVER: *(Standing.)* Mr. Attorney-General, you say your eyewitnesses must be trusted. I beg the court's indulgence to look well upon this gentleman, my learned colleague Sydney Carton...

DARNAY pivots and becomes CARTON, standing next to STRYVER. ENSEMBLE gasps.

STRYVER: Are he and the prisoner very like each other?

ENGLISH JUDGE: Remarkable!

LUCIE: *(Pleasantly surprised.)* Very like indeed...

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: *(Blustering.)* Objection! Your purpose, Mr. Stryver?

ENGLISH JUDGE: *(Curious.)* Indeed. Your purpose?

STRYVER: If we can scarcely tell these men apart in front of our faces, how certain can we be that your witnesses saw Charles Darnay doing what you say in a hotel two years ago in the dead of night? Nothing further.

Murmuring from the ENSEMBLE. STRYVER and ATTORNEY-GENERAL trade rhetoric in a dumb show of the remainder of the trial. CRUNCHER snores loudly while dumb show takes place.

CRUNCHER: *(Waking.)* Oh, an itch. I got an itch. *(Scratches vigorously, until the itch is tamped down. Yawns.)* What'd I miss?

ENGLISH JUDGE bangs his gavel.

ENGLISH JUDGE: The jury has reached a verdict. (*Visibly disappointed.*) Acquitted!

ENGLISH JUDGE bangs gavel. Disorderly noise from ENSEMBLE, who disperse. ENGLISH JUDGE, BAILIFF and ATTORNEY-GENERAL exit. DARNAY comes forward, pleased, disbelieving. He is approached by LORRY and LUCIE.

LORRY: There you are, Mister Darnay! Thank heavens, and congratulations!

DARNAY: Mister Lorry, I thank you. I hardly seem yet to belong to this world again.

LUCIE: Small wonder; you were nearly advanced on your way to another.

They look at each other. He kisses her hand. STRYVER pushes forward.

STRYVER: The free man himself!

DARNAY: (*Pulling away from LUCIE.*) My warmest thanks, Mr. Stryver. You have laid me under an obligation to you for life.

STRYVER: An infamous prosecution, grossly infamous. I am glad to have brought you off with honor. I should present my colleague to you, Mister Sydney Carton. (*Turning.*) Sydney? What are you doing? Stop looming like a vulture—these are people of quality.

DARNAY moves and becomes CARTON.

CARTON: Precisely why I was keeping my distance.

STRYVER: It was Carton's idea to point out the resemblance between you. Uncanny, isn't it?

LUCIE: (*Blushing.*) Quite striking.

STRYVER: Sydney is my jackal...

CARTON: I thought I was a vulture.

LUCIE is amused. CARTON zeroes in on this.

STRYVER: He is my jackal, and I am his lion. Between us, nothing in the jungle stands a chance.

CARTON: You should see us tuck into a corned beef. Quite grisly.

LUCIE: (*Laughing, focused on CARTON.*) Well, for a pair of beasts, you performed quite nobly today.

CARTON: Won't happen again, I swear.

LORRY: (*Can't handle any more flirting. He yawns desperately.*) Well, well, well, what a day it has been! Quite trying, for all parties. I beg an old man's privilege to break up this conference and order us all to our homes. Jerry! Jerry, a coach.

JERRY CRUNCHER goes to flag a coach down. CARTON turns back into DARNAY.

DARNAY: Mister Lorry.

LORRY: Oh, Darnay... Thank heaven for your safe delivery. Thanks to you too, Mister Stryver, and to your associate.

LUCIE: Yes, thank you.

STRYVER grabs her hand and kisses it ostentatiously.

STRYVER: A pleasure, Miss Manette. An honest citizen is worth a hundred solicitors.

LUCIE: (*Glance at CARTON.*) And their jackals?

STRYVER: A thousand of their jackals.

LUCIE turns to DARNAY. He bows deeply.

LUCIE: Mister Darnay, Let us not make it another five years before our next meeting.

DARNAY: Agreed.

LUCIE: (*Shy.*) I... do hope you will call soon to pay your respects... to my father. He will be so glad to see you again.

DARNAY: I should like that very much. *Bonne nuit, Mademoiselle.*

LUCIE: *Bonne nuit.*

LUCIE, LORRY and CRUNCHER exit.

STRYVER: (*Appreciative.*) A little French, that was good.

DARNAY shrugs his thanks. STRYVER pats him on the shoulder and exits. Beat. DARNAY looks at CARTON. CARTON looks at DARNAY.

CARTON: This is a strange chance that throws you and me together.

DARNAY: I agree. Standing with my counterpart is quite a sensation.

CARTON: ...So I am your counterpart, and not the other way around?

DARNAY feels awkward.

CARTON: Why the devil don't you dine?

CARTON strolls down the street. They enter a tavern and stand at the bar. CARTON flags down a BARMAID to bring food and drink.

CARTON: (*As they move.*) You could have died today, for god's sake.

Let's bring you back to this terrestrial scheme again with some meat and potatoes and wine.

BARMAID brings wine and glasses.

DARNAY: Thank you. And thank you, Mister Carton, for the great service you rendered me today. A toast to your health.

CARTON: I'll drink to that.

They drink. The BARMAID walks by and CARTON gooses her or grabs at her or something equally inappropriate. She extracts herself, disgusted, and exits. DARNAY is highly disapproving.

CARTON: So—counterpart of mine—what was it like? Not the trial, not the looming threat of death. What was it like to have such a face regard you with such a look?

DARNAY: I... I'm not sure I take your meaning. Miss Manette? Well... she is a credit to her sex. I am glad to know her.

CARTON: And did you know her on that packet-ship from France, those years ago? Hmm? A bit of time below decks with the Mademoiselle, hmm? Don't answer that. A man like you wants a woman, all he has to do is mumble in French. A man like me has to fight for everything... Mademoiselles most of all. Fight and fail enough times, you learn that it's easier not to try. You wouldn't understand. What have you ever wanted that wasn't given you straight away?

DARNAY: (*Stewing, greatly offended.*) Mister Carton, you may assume whatever fancy suits you about me, but I will not stand for your imprecations about Miss Manette. I thank you once more for your service in the courtroom and take my leave.

CARTON: I'm trying to tell you something. I am a disappointed drudge, sir. I care for no one, and no one on earth cares for me.

DARNAY: Much to be regretted. You might have used your talents better.

DARNAY walks away, stern and self-satisfied. As he walks, he becomes CARTON, later that night.

CARTON: (*Mimicking DARNAY.*) "You might have used your talents better." Thank you, Darnay, for being the first person in my life to utter those words.

LUCIE enters in another space, tending a birdcage.

CARTON: Would you have been looked at by those blue eyes as he was, and commiserated by that face as he was? Well, why not? Think, Jackal. Some things are worth fighting for.

CARTON drains his bottle and exits. The home of DR. MANETTE and LUCIE. MANETTE enters, reading. Sound of birdsong.

LUCIE: *Bonjour, papa.*

MANETTE: (*Delighted.*) Lucie, more songbirds yet?

LUCIE: My only vice.

MANETTE kisses her on the forehead and continues walking and reading. After a moment, he turns to watch *LUCIE* from a distance. *MISS PROSS* enters with a colorful cloth, folded.

PROSS: (*Bowing to MANETTE on her way past.*) Afternoon, Doctor. Cook will have tea out any minute now.

MANETTE: Very well, Pross. Look at her.

PROSS: At our Ladybird? Begging your pardon, Doctor, I feel she's apt to get a swelled head already with all the looking at she's getting from these young gentlemen.

MANETTE: It is to be expected.

PROSS: I don't care for it. That's my little Ladybird, doctor, and she always will be.

MANETTE: Well, you've done splendidly. I can hardly say how much she means to me, Pross. She's my lighthouse on the rocks. She's my North Tower.

PROSS: ...Beg pardon?

MANETTE: (*Unaware of his slip.*) She's my North Star. Fixed on her, I cannot go astray.

MANETTE smiles and wanders on with his book. *PROSS* goes to *LUCIE* with the cloth and they begin a dumb show conversation. *MANETTE* ends up in his study, unexpectedly close to his old shoemaker's workbench and tools. *WOMAN* whispers mysteriously, indistinct, catching *MANETTE'S* attention. *MANETTE* stops reading and looks around.

LUCIE: Papa?

Whisper stops. *LUCIE* enters his study and kisses him on the head.

LUCIE: Papa, Miss Pross and I are going out for the shopping. Will you be alright?

MANETTE: Of course. Be well, my angel. (*Returns to reading.*)

LUCIE: (*Tidying up.*) Cook has scones ready downstairs if you're hungry... (*Notices his shoemakers' tools and bench and stops. To herself.*) Father... must you keep these things?

MANETTE: (*Looking up.*) Hmm?

LUCIE: Nothing. *Adieu.*

MANETTE: *Au Revoir.*

LUCIE exits, troubled. MANETTE looks up after she goes. Eerie flashback.

WOMAN: *(Offstage.) Un... deux... trois... quatre...*

BOY appears with a sword in one hand and the other protecting a bloody wound in his side.

BOY: Have you seen her, doctor?

WOMAN: *(Offstage. Continuing to count underneath.) Cinq... six... sept... huit...*

MANETTE: How has this been done, Monsieur?

BOY: Doctor? Doctor! Have you seen her, Doctor?

WOMAN enters, deeply traumatized, with restraints on her arms.

WOMAN: *Neuf... dix... onze... douze...!*

WOMAN and BOY shriek together. Quiet knocking ends the flashback instantly.

MANETTE: Who's there?

DARNAY: *(Enters tentatively.)* May I be so bold as to announce myself?

MANETTE: *(Standing.)* Charles Darnay! Well, well!

DARNAY: Have I disturbed you?

MANETTE: No! No, hardly, I'm relieved you came. Lucie has gone out on, uh, some household matters, but will soon be home.

DARNAY: Doctor Manette... I took the opportunity of her being from home to beg to speak to you.

MANETTE: ...Oh?

DARNAY: I have had the happiness, Doctor Manette, of being so intimate here, for some year and a half, that I hope the topic on which I am about to touch may not—

MANETTE: *(Raising a hand.)* Is Lucie the topic?

DARNAY: She is. (*Beat.*) You anticipate what I would say. When I first saw you on that packet-ship from France, I knew that between you and Miss Manette there is an affection so unusual, so touching, that it can have few parallels. I have felt, and do even now feel, that to bring another love between you would be to touch your history with something not quite as good as itself. But I love her. Heaven is my witness that I love her!

Beat.

MANETTE: Have you any reason to believe that Lucie loves you?

DARNAY: None. As yet, none.

MANETTE: Do you seek any guidance from me?

DARNAY: ...if, to my great fortune, Miss Manette ever held me in her innocent heart, and told you so, that you should relate to her what I have related to you here.

Beat.

MANETTE: I will.

DARNAY: Oh, Doctor—! You cannot know what happiness this brings me. Your confidence in me ought to be returned with full confidence on my part. I have kept my name—my true name from France—a secret to all those here in my new life. I wish to share it, if you will hear me. I blush to say that I am nobly born Charles D'Evremonde...

Flash of light—shrieks—disturbing images of BOY and WOMAN.

DARNAY: (*Unaware.*) The only son of the Marquis—

MANETTE: Stop!

Noise and images cease immediately. DARNAY is nonplussed.

MANETTE: Spare me. Uh... Fellow exiles that we are, let us... let us leave our pasts buried where they are. Your future is my concern, Charles Darnay, not your past. Pray, do not mention it again.

DARNAY agrees.

MANETTE: She will be home directly. Perhaps it is better she should not see us together tonight.

DARNAY: Of course. I will call again. I am eternally grateful to you, Doctor.

MANETTE: Go! God bless you.

DARNAY exits. MANETTE wanders, and happens to wind up near his shoemaker's bench. Flashback again; BOY appears.

MANETTE: *(Picks up a shoe, absently.)* God save you...

WOMAN appears, weeping. MARQUIS appears, looking more youthful. He holds out a purse of coins.

MARQUIS: I need not tell you the things that you have seen here are not to be spoken of, Doctor.

MANETTE: Devil take you... Evremonde...

WOMAN shrieks. A great crash and a pool of red onstage. Lights out on MANETTE and flashback. France. Ensemble notices the pool of red and moves towards it, surprised and delighted. DEFARGE and MME DEFARGE watch the ensemble.

ENSEMBLE: *(Ad lib.)* Wine! Come, come see! Wine enough for all!

ENSEMBLE #1: A cask tumbled from its cart—

ENSEMBLE #2: And shattered like a walnut-shell!

A festive atmosphere as the ensemble begin drinking the wine any way they can.

ENSEMBLE #1: Use your hands!

ENSEMBLE #2: Bring your mugs, your bowls, your saucers!

ENSEMBLE #3: Soak your handkerchiefs! A drop for yourself...

ENSEMBLE #4: *(Wringing the liquid into her baby's mouth.)* A drop for the baby...

Laughter.

ENSEMBLE #1: Companions all, companions in good fortune!

ENSEMBLE cheers.

ENSEMBLE #1: Dip your fingers!

ENSEMBLE #2: Drain your cups!

ENSEMBLE #3: Suck your rags!

The wine is mostly gone now. Desperate to keep the moment alive:

ENSEMBLE #1: Strain it from the mud!

ENSEMBLE #2: Chew the barrel-wood!

ENSEMBLE #3: Lick the paving-stones!

ENSEMBLE: Before it drains away... Before it slips away... Before it is gone.

The wine is all consumed or contaminated by now. Beat. ENSEMBLE sink back into their routines, the sense of play fading away immediately.

DEFARGE: *(An observation, not a complaint.)* That wine was meant for our shop.

MME DEFARGE: That wine was meant for those mouths. Let them bring another.

DEFARGE: Let them bring another.

ENSEMBLE drift away. DEFARGE and MME DEFARGE close up their wine shop. DEFARGE takes a moment.

MME DEFARGE: Husband?

DEFARGE: I am a little tired. It is a long time.

MME DEFARGE: Vengeance and retribution require a long time.

DEFARGE: Too long, perhaps.

MME DEFARGE: What do you mean? (*Beat. Holding up her knitting.*) I hold here a chronicle of every crime committed by every cultured criminal, on to every citizen, with each passing hour. Rendered in plain sight, until such day as justice can be served, row by row. Every slight. Every theft. Every blow. Every father jailed. Every mother ruined. Every child crushed.

DEFARGE: I know.

MME DEFARGE: These things must be answered.

DEFARGE: I do not question that. I only mean that it has been a long time coming... and it is possible that an end may not come, during our lives.

MME DEFARGE: (*Approaching DEFARGE, tenderly.*) My husband. Can you imagine the Republic?

DEFARGE: Sometimes.

MME DEFARGE: I see it. Clearly as I see these walls, or these hands. We will accomplish the promises of philosophy, to become the model of all nations for all free peoples everywhere. Is that not worth waiting for?

DEFARGE: ...Worth dying for.

MME DEFARGE: The war of liberty against tyranny is coming. It never retreats. It never stops. It is always advancing. (*Staring up into DEFARGE'S face.*) And I believe, with all my soul, that you and I shall see the triumph.

They kiss; a long embrace. England. STRYVER and CARTON at work. STRYVER finishes his bit of reading and stands with a sigh. He pours himself a drink.

STRYVER: I have had enough of this style of life, Sydney. All work. No comfort. (*With other hand, he puts a cigar in his mouth, or eats a pastry, or some other decadent activity.*) I've looked it in the face and made up my mind. I intend to marry, and I recommend you do the same.

CARTON: Do you.

STRYVER: Find a respectable woman with a little property and marry her, against a rainy day. Somebody in the landlady way, that's the kind of thing for you.

CARTON: Capital, perhaps she'll throw in free room and board.

STRYVER: All I'm saying—as a friend—is that you're highly objectionable. If you find a woman who can stomach you, grab her, before a better man does.

CARTON: Sage advice.

STRYVER: (*Finishing his drink.*) My specialty.

STRYVER claps CARTON on the shoulder and exits. CARTON thinks. CARTON drinks. Morning at the MANETTE household. LUCIE at her desk, doing watercolors. PROSS cleaning. CARTON knock on the door. PROSS admits him.

PROSS: (*Displeased.*) Good morning, Mister Carton.

CARTON: Good morning, Proost. (*Mispronouncing PROSS' name.*)

PROSS: (*This is not the first time.*) It's Pross, sir.

CARTON: (*Completely disinterested, handing her his coat.*) Oh? Where is Lucie, then?

PROSS: The drawing-room, sir.

CARTON turns away.

PROSS: Waiting to have her morning spoil. (*Exits.*)

LUCIE notices CARTON as he approaches.

LUCIE: (*Pleasant.*) Mister Carton! I did not know you to be an early riser.

CARTON: On occasion. I woke at 10 AM yesterday and have yet to sleep again since.

LUCIE: No.

CARTON: Like a Hindoo mystic, I have conquered sleep. I also charm snakes, should you have the need.

LUCIE: If ever I see a snake in the parlor, my first action before fainting dead away will be to send for you, my mystical friend.

CARTON: Your friend.

Beat.

LUCIE: (*Not sure what it is going on.*) I beg your pardon?

Beat.

CARTON: What do you paint?

LUCIE: Trees.

CARTON: (*Mustering up as much enthusiasm as he can.*) Ah. I like the... (*He doesn't like anything. He trails off.*)

Beat.

LUCIE: Tell me of your—

CARTON: (*Overlapping.*) Pray forgive me, Miss Manette. I break down before the knowledge of what I want to say to you.

LUCIE is intrigued.

CARTON: Will you hear me?

LUCIE: I will.

CARTON: I am like one who died young. All my life might have been.

LUCIE: Mister Carton—! Hardly! Why would you say such a thing?

CARTON: The truth, you mean? Indeed, I generally have little acquaintance with it.

LUCIE: I have seen ghosts before, Mister Carton, and you are not one.

You are young, you are vital, you are witty—

CARTON: And drifting, and dreary, and dissipated—

LUCIE: (*Touching him on the arm, or the hand.*) I do not see you so.

Beat.

CARTON: You do me too much credit.

LUCIE: A man I loved was in direr straits than yours, once, and I was so blessed as to have played a role in his... rescue. Can I use no influence to serve you? Have I no power for good, with you, at all?

CARTON: Miss Manette, your power with me is... considerable. Usually, my tongue trips me up from flapping too fast. Today I can hardly make it move.

LUCIE: I can wait.

CARTON: Since I have known you... you stir old shadows that I thought had died out of me. Whispers from old voices, impelling me upward, that I thought were silent forever. You kindle me, heap of ashes that I am, into fire.

LUCIE: I am very glad.

CARTON: ...Desired as you are, Miss Manette, you must have heard such things before.

LUCIE: You are the first to say them to my face.

LUCIE and CARTON are very close together. He takes her hand, very gently.

CARTON: (*Thinking about kneeling.*) Lucie Manette, will you—

PROSS: (*Offstage.*) Begging your pardon, Ladybird—

LUCIE and CARTON immediately pull away from each other. PROSS enters.

PROSS: Mister Charles Darnay is coming up the drive.

CARTON goes cold and blank immediately. Beat.

PROSS: Thought you'd like to know.

LUCIE: Thank you, Pross.

PROSS exits.

LUCIE: You... were you about to say something, Mister Carton?

CARTON heads for the door.

LUCIE: Mister Carton...! Sydney, where are you—?

CARTON: I know very well that you can have no tenderness for me. I ask for none. I am even thankful that it cannot be.

LUCIE: What?

CARTON: Just know this: For you, and any dear to you, I would do anything.

LUCIE: Sydney! What were you—?

CARTON: Good afternoon.

LUCIE: Wait!

He all but runs away. LUCIE braces herself against her desk.

LUCIE: But what were you going to say? What was I going to say?
(Tries to compose herself.)

Behind her, DARNAY enters.

DARNAY: (Brightly, not noticing her mood yet.) Bonne journee, mademoiselle. Comment vous sentez-vous cette matin¹⁵?

LUCIE: (Wiping her eyes, smiling.) Comme ci, comme ca¹⁶.

DARNAY: Is everything all right?

LUCIE: Oh, *mais oui, bien sur*¹⁷. Just a touch of sentiment.

DARNAY: None the less real in its effect.

LUCIE: You are kind.

DARNAY: And you are brave.

Beat. She looks at him, considering. DARNAY is unsure what the attention means.

DARNAY: (Before it gets uncomfortable.) What... do you paint?

LUCIE: ...trees.

DARNAY: (Looking closely at her painting.) I have seen this spot!

LUCIE: Surely you have not recognized it from my halting strokes.

DARNAY: *Au contraire*, this is that beautiful elm in the churchyard—

DARNAY and LUCIE: That the children love to climb.

Beat.

DARNAY: You rendered it so skillfully that in my mind there was no doubt, from when I first saw it.

¹⁵ Good day. How are you feeling?

¹⁶ So-so

¹⁷ Sure, of course

LUCIE: Of my favorite spots, I think I like this one the best. Charles. Why did you come here today?

DARNAY: (*Controlling himself.*) Why, merely a social call. Is that inconvenient?

LUCIE: No, no. Just... indirect. (*Contemplating DARNAY.*) So alike, and yet so far apart. Charles.

DARNAY: Lucie?

LUCIE: Why do you call on me so often?

DARNAY: (*Prepares a polite answer, then hesitates.*) Pray forgive me. I break down before the knowledge of what I would say to you.

LUCIE: You men break down like carriages on a mountain road.

DARNAY: You've watched others navigate these cliffs before. Very well, I'll be bold, and I'll be brief.

LUCIE: And I will accept.

DARNAY smiles at her. They clasp hands. PROSS enters.

PROSS: (*As she enters.*) Begging your pardon, Ladybird, but— (*Observing the situation.*) never mind. (*Exits.*)

LUCIE: Father?

MANETTE: (*Enters, reading.*) Yes, my angel?

LUCIE: I have something I should like to tell you.

Split Scene. MARQUIS appears in France, reading a book in dim light. Creaking floorboard. He pays no attention. LUCIE and DARNAY turn to MANETTE. He notices them at last. Creaking floorboard.

MARQUIS: (*Irritated, not looking up.*) Gabelle? What is it?

MANETTE: Look at you... and him...

BOY appears, holding his wound. Only MANETTE can see him.

BOY: (*To MANETTE.*) Can you see her, doctor?

MME DEFARGE appears, watching MARQUIS as she knits. Creaking floorboard.

MARQUIS: (*Turning.*) What in God's name do you—

GASPARD rushes out of the darkness and knocks MARQUIS on his back.

MANETTE: *(Pained, struggling to hold it together.)* You have my blessing.

GASPARD: For my child.

GASPARD stabs MARQUIS in the chest. MME. DEFARGE stabs a needle through her knitting at the same time. LUCIE and DARNAY kiss. The towers of the BASTILLE come into view. ENSEMBLE members enter, armed. MANETTE and BOY exit.

MME DEFARGE: *Libertie!*

FRENCH ENSEMBLE: *Egalite! Fraternite! Or Death!*

DEFARGE: To the Bastille!

The revolution in Paris begins. DARNAY exits, leaving LUCIE to prepare for the wedding. Sounds of battle, gunfire and cannons. DEFARGES lead a struggle in the streets of Paris.

DEFARGE: On with me, Jacques Un, Jacques Cinq, Jacques Dix!

MME DEFARGE: For the Republic, Jacques Deux Mille, Jacques Cent Mille, Jacques Million!

LUCIE wanders peacefully through the battle as if browsing a dressmaker's shop, then preparing for her wedding. Warriors stop to interact with her, dropping seamlessly into her cheerful English world before pulling away into the thick of battle. As this split action continues:

LUCIE: It was the season of Light.

DEFARGE: *(Watching a fellow peasant get gunned down.)* It was the season of Darkness.

LUCIE: It was the spring of hope.

GASPARD: *(Dropping his knife, attacked by a pair of guards.)* It was the winter of despair.

ENSEMBLE #1: (*Watching MME DEFARGE draw out a strategy, worshipful.*) It was the age of wisdom.

PROSS: (*With LUCIE, who does something playful with a veil.*) It was the age of foolishness.

MME DEFARGE: It was the epoch of belief!

ENSEMBLE roars agreement.

DARNAY: (*Smitten, seeing LUCIE during their wedding ceremony.*) It was the epoch of incredulity.

DARNAY and LUCIE: (*After exchanging rings.*) We had everything before us.

DEFARGE: (*After a great crash, seeing that the drawbridges are down.*) We have nothing before us!

LUCIE: In short—

FRENCH ENSEMBLE charge into the BASTILLE. DARNAY kisses his bride. A white flag of surrender rises over the Bastille.

MME DEFARGE: The day is ours!

French ENSEMBLE cheers.

ALL: It was the best of times!

CARTON pulls away, watching the wedding from afar.

CARTON: It was the worst of times.

END OF ACT ONE

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