

### **Chapter 10: Two Promises**

#### **Vocabulary:**

Attainments- the goal, achievement, toward which one has **worked**

Exalted- held in high **regard**

Fervent- passionate intensity

**Summary:** A year later, Darnay makes a moderate living as a French **teacher** in London. He visits Doctor Manette and admits his love for Lucie. He honors Manette's special relationship with his daughter, assuring him that his own love for Lucie will in no way disturb that **bond**. Manette applauds Darnay for speaking so "feelingly and so manfully" and asks if he seeks a promise from him. (Promise #1) Darnay asks Manette to promise to vouch for what he has said, for the true nature of his love, should Lucie ever ask. Manette promises as much. Wanting to be worthy of his confidence, Darnay attempts to tell Manette his real name, confessing that it is not **Darnay**. Manette stops him short, making him promise to reveal his name only if he proves successful in his courtship. (Promise #2) He will hear Darnay's secret on his wedding day. Hmmm. Hours later, after Darnay has left, Lucie hears her father cobbling away at his shoemaker's bench. Frightened by his relapse, she watches him as he sleeps that night. Why did he relapse? **Prediction:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Chapter 11: A Companion Picture**

**Vocabulary:** incorrigible- incapable of being corrected or reformed

Ostentatious- pretentiously **showy** (extra)

**Summary:** Late that same night, Carton and Stryver work in Stryver's chambers. In his puffed-up and arrogant manner, Stryver announces that he intends to marry Lucie. Carton drinks heavily at the news, assuring Stryver that his words have not upset him. Stryver suggests that Carton himself find "some respectable woman with a little property," and marry her, lest he end up ill and penniless.

### **Chapter 12: The Fellow of Delicacy**

#### **Vocabulary:**

Magnanimous- generous and noble

Self-abnegating- self-denying

Forensically- argumentatively

Bootless- **useless**

**Summary:** The next day, Stryver plans to take Lucie to the Vauxhall Gardens to make his marriage **proposal**. On his way, he drops in at Tellson's Bank, where he informs Mr. Lorry of his intentions. Lorry persuades Stryver to postpone his proposal until he knows for certain that Lucie will accept. This admonition upsets Stryver. He almost insults Lucie as a "mincing **Fool**," but Lorry warns him against doing so. Lorry asks that Stryver hold off his proposal for a few hours to give him time to consult the family and see exactly where Stryver stands. Later that night, Lorry visits Stryver and **reports** that his fears have been confirmed. If Stryver were to propose, the Manettes would reject his offer. Stryver dismisses the entire affair as one of the "vanities" of "empty-headed girls" and begs Lorry to forget it.

### **Chapter 13: The Fellow of No Delicacy**

#### **Vocabulary:**

Profligates- wastefully extravagant people

**Summary:** Carton, who frequently wanders near the Manettes' house late at night, enters the house one **August** day and speaks to Lucie alone. She observes a change in his face. He laments his wasted life, despairing that he shall never live a better life than the one he now lives. Lucie assures him that he might become much worthier of

himself. She believes that her tenderness can save him. Carton insists that he has declined beyond salvation but admits that he has always viewed Lucie as “the last dream of [his] soul.” She has made him consider beginning his life again, though he no longer believes in the possibility of doing so. He feels **happy** to have admitted this much to Lucie and to know that something remains in him that still deserves pity. Carton ends his confession with a pledge that he would do anything for Lucie, including give his life.

**Analysis: Chapters 10–13** In this section, Dickens develops the love triangle among Lucie, Carton, and Darnay. Rather than simply writing an encyclopedic account of the French Revolution, Dickens balances history with the more private struggles of his principal characters. He links the two sides of his novel thematically, as each raises questions about the possibilities of revolution and resurrection—Carton, for example, like France itself, strikes out for a new life.

It is in Chapter 13 that Dickens lays the foundation for Carton’s eventual turnaround. Upon seeing Carton, Lucie observes a change in his demeanor. Much of this change owes to Carton’s feelings for her. Just as Carton shares Darnay’s physical countenance, he also shares Darnay’s **devotion** to Lucie. Yet Carton’s confession strikes the reader as more touching and profound than that of his counterpart. The reader certainly believes Darnay as he informs Manette, “Dear Doctor Manette, I love your daughter fondly, dearly, disinterestedly, devotedly. If ever there were love in the world, I love her,” but this declaration, while direct, seems rather vapid and unimaginative.

The alliteration of “dearly, disinterestedly, devotedly” highlights the flat—almost bored—tone of the declaration as it slogs through its sequence of adverbs. The closing sentence seems almost a parody of Romantic love poetry. Darnay touts his love as a great force of the universe but does so with the most mundane possible phrasing, and the repetition of the word love is dogged and uninspired.

Carton’s words, on the other hand, betray a deep psychological and emotional struggle, suggesting the existence of feelings more **complex**, perhaps even more worthy of reciprocation, than Darnay’s:

*In my degradation I have not been so degraded but that the sight of you with your father, and of this home made such a home by you, has stirred old shadows that I thought had died out of me. . . . I have had unformed ideas of striving afresh, beginning anew, shaking off **sloth** and sensuality, and fighting out the abandoned fight.*

In his depiction of his love, Carton opens himself to the reader’s sympathy in a way that Darnay does not. Whereas Darnay makes an objective, almost factual statement of his love for Lucie, Carton describes his emotions, tinged as they are by realistic insecurity (“my degradation”) and uncertainty (“unformed ideas”). He also speaks poetically of “old shadows” and “the abandoned **fight**”; his use of metaphor seems to reflect his inability to grasp fully his profound feelings. Darnay, in contrast, categorizes his experience simply as “love,” not pausing to ponder the emotions behind the word.

Lucie’s conjecture on whether she can “recall [Carton] . . . to a better course” **echoes** the beginning of the novel, when Lorry recalls Doctor Manette to life. Manette had to suffer a death of sorts—wasting nearly twenty years in prison—before being reborn into the life of love and devotion with Lucie. Now, Carton, too, shall have to

undergo a sort of death or sacrifice in order to win the fight for love and meaning that he claims to have abandoned.

Many characters have **secrets** in *A Tale of Two Cities*, but none reveals itself as painfully as Sydney Carton's does. He loves without hope, and his love for Lucie has made him aware of how much potential happiness he has squandered through his dissolute lifestyle. He tells her, "I am like one who died young. All my life might have been." Carton's situation somewhat parallels Doctor Alexandre Manette's imprisonment: As a young man, Carton has buried himself alive with a long, empty life stretching before him. The strength of his love for a woman gives him the **dream** of freedom, but it also torments him because he cannot have her. Unlike Doctor Manette, however, Carton inflicted his own imprisonment, and he lacks the strength to recall himself to life.

Dickens's characteristic humor shines through in his depiction of Stryver in Chapter 12. Dickens uses Stryver's name to suggest the essential nature of his character. Coldly ambitious, the man ruthlessly strives to distinguish himself as a great businessman and here, in Chapter 12, endeavors to win the hand of Lucie Manette. Dickens ironically entitles the chapter "The Fellow of Delicacy," bringing Stryver's coarseness into greater **comic** relief. In Stryver's surly refusal to heed Lorry's gentle advice and postpone his courtship of Lucie, we see clearly one of Dickens's greatest talents—the ability to capture a character through dialogue.

*"Were you going [to Lucie's] now?" asked Mr. Lorry.*

*"Straight!" said Stryver, with a plump of his fist on the desk.*

*"Then I think I wouldn't, if I was you."*

*"Why?" said Stryver. "Now, I'll put you in a corner," forensically shaking a forefinger at him. "You are a man of business and bound to have a reason. State your reason. Why wouldn't you go?"*

The directness of Stryver's response to Lorry ("Straight!") and the emphatic nature of his accompanying thump on the table demonstrate his blind and unshakeable ambition. His finger-wagging and blustery imperative demanding to hear Lorry's "reason" reveal his aggressive nature and refusal to be hindered in his pursuits. In his interrogating and intimidating mannerisms, Stryver acts as if he were arguing a legal point or cross-examining a witness. It is clear to the reader that he approaches the courtship as he would a case in court—as a way to gain money and stature—and not out of fondness for Lucie. He thinks he will be successful, because, even though he is a very large, and a very boisterous man, he is eligible, **prosperous and advancing**. And any woman who would not want him "obviously lacks **common sense.**"

The second ironic chapter in this group is "The Fellow of No Delicacy" since Carton has been the most delicate courtier of Lucie thus far out of the "hundreds of people" in love with her.

**Questions, Literary Devices and Allusions (Chp 10-13)**

#	Item	Pgs.	Explanation
1.	Promise #1	Guide	Manette promises to vouch for Darnay's love
2.	Promise #2	Guide	Manette promises to hear Darnay's secret
3.	Lucie is empty-headed and vain	149	Stryver's response to being rejected by Lucie
4.	Old shadows and abandoned fight	Guide	The metaphors in Carton's declaration of love
5.	Manette and Darnay (Carton)	Guide	Two characters that are "Recalled to Life"
6.	Irony in title #1	Guide	The Fellow of Delicacy, Stryver, is not a delicate guy: He's loud, rude and arrogant
7.	Irony in title #2	Guide	The Fellow of No Delicacy, Carton, has been the most delicate courtier of Lucie thus far
8.	Stryver's character as Parody		

**Chapter 14: The Honest Tradesman**

**Vocabulary:**

Vociferating- clamoring (noisy), yelling  
 Refractory- unmanageable

Apostrophizing- addressing an absent or personified thing rhetorically

**Summary:** One morning outside Tellson's Bank, Jerry Cruncher sees a funeral pass by. Jerry asks a few questions and learns that the crowd is preparing to bury Roger Cly, a convicted spy and one of the men who testified against Darnay in his court case. Cruncher joins the motley procession, which includes a chimney-sweep, a bear-leader and his mangy bear, and a pieman. After much drinking and carousing, the mob buries Cly and, for sport, decides to accuse passers-by of espionage in order to wreak "vengeance on them." At home that night, Cruncher once again harangues his wife for her prayers. He then announces that he is going "fishing." In reality, he goes to dig up Cly's body in order to sell it to scientists. Unbeknownst to Cruncher, his son follows him to the cemetery, but runs away terrified, believing that the coffin is chasing him. The next day, he asks his father the definition of a "Resurrection-Man"—the term describes men like Cruncher, who dig up bodies to sell to science. He announces his intentions to have this job as an adult.

**Chapter 15: Knitting**

**Vocabulary:**

Vinous- relating to wine

Parricide- person who murders his mother, father, or close relative  
 Superciliously- haughtily

**Summary:** In Paris, Defarge enters his wine shop with a mender of roads whom he calls "Jacques." Three men file out of the shop individually. Eventually, Defarge and the mender of roads climb up to the garret where Doctor Manette had been hidden. There they join the three men who recently exited the shop, and whom Defarge also calls "Jacques." The mender of roads reports that, a year ago, he saw a man hanging by a chain underneath the Marquis' carriage. Several months later, he says, he saw

the man again, being marched along the road by soldiers. The soldiers led the man to prison, where he remained “in his iron cage” for several days. Accused of killing the Marquis, he stood to be executed as a parricide (one who murders a close relative). According to rumor, petitions soon arrived in Paris begging that the prisoner’s life be spared. However, workmen built a gallows in the middle of town, and soon the man was hanged.

When the mender of roads finishes his recollection, Defarge asks him to wait outside a moment. The other Jacques call for the extermination of the entire aristocracy. One points to the knitting work of Madame Defarge, which, in its stitching, contains an elaborate registry of the names of those whom the revolutionaries aim to kill. He asks if the woman will always be able to decipher the names that appear there. Later that week, Defarge and his wife take the mender of roads to Versailles to see King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette. When the royal couple appears, the mender of roads cries “Long live the King!” and becomes so excited that Defarge must “restrain him from flying at the objects of his brief devotion and tearing them to pieces.” This performance pleases the Defarges, who see that their efforts will prove easier if the aristocrats continue to believe in the peasantry’s allegiance.

**Analysis:** Of the many shadows throughout the novel, that of death looms most largely. Given the novel’s concern with resurrection, death acquires an inevitable presence. Although young Jerry Cruncher’s aborted trip to the cemetery at the heels of his grave-robbing father serves little dramatic purpose, it functions as an important scene. As the boy runs home with visions in his head of Roger Cly’s coffin chasing behind him, Dickens creates a suggestive symbol of the death that overshadows and pursues everyone.

In the scene’s emphasis on bizarre and freakish imagery, we see a clear example of Dickens’s characteristic sense of the grotesque. The scene’s importance also lies in its depiction of the throng attending Cly’s funeral. Here, Dickens continues his criticism of mob mentality. Although Dickens intends the scene as largely comic, he also prepares the reader for his later, darker scenes of mindless frenzy and group violence in Paris. For example, as Cruncher participates in the burial of a man he does not know, his spirited condemnation of the deceased testifies to the contagious nature of the crowd’s anger and excitement. Indeed, once the body is interred, the mob’s energy remains unexhausted. Thus the group sets off to harass casual passers-by. Dickens later taps into the same frightening group psychology in the scene that portrays the French revolutionaries as they gather around the grindstone (in Book the Third, Chapter 2) and dance the Carmagnole (in Book the Third, Chapter 5).

The comedic atmosphere effected by Cruncher quickly lapses into a tone of ominous danger as the story comes to focus on Madame Defarge. For this woman possesses a vengeance and hatred that exceed all bounds. Indeed, the preceding scene presages her vindictive nature: the funeral-goers’ boisterous accusations of espionage against innocent passers-by, which they voice for the sake of “vengeance,” foreshadow the sweeping tide of hatred that consumes the revolutionaries, and Madame Defarge in particular. Two of the chapters in this section center around her knitting, her symbolic hatred of the aristocracy. When one of the Jacques inquires as to whether Madame Defarge will always be able to decipher this register, his query presages a time in which the woman will seek death even for those objectively innocent of any oppressive

behaviors, a time in which her monomaniacal bloodlust will drive her to murder without heed of her scrupulous register.

Dickens derived his knitting motif from historical record: many scholars have recorded that women of the period would often knit as they stood and watched the daily executions. In the hands of Madame Defarge, however, the pastime takes on symbolic significance. In Greek mythology, the Fates were three sisters who controlled human life: one sister spun the web of life, one measured it, and the last cut it. Dickens employs a similar metaphor. As Madame Defarge weaves the names of the condemned into shrouds, her knitting becomes a symbol of her victims' fate, their death at the hands of a vengeful peasantry.

**Questions, Literary Devices and Allusions for Chp. 14-15:**

#	Item	Pgs.	Explanation
1.	Burial/ Resurrection theme		
2.	Roger Cly reference (where did you see him before?)	1. ____ 2. ____	Book 2, chp 3
3.	Extended Metaphor of Fishing: give details		
4.	"Resurrection Man" definition	Guide	
5.	Coffin dream	Guide	Suggestive of:
6.		Guide	Testifies to the contagious nature of the crowd's anger and excitement ("mob mentality")
7.	Foreshadowing of Mme. Defarge's vengeance	Guide	
8.	Knitting Motif	Guide	Symbolic of: