

### **Chapter 22: The Sea Still Rises**

**Vocabulary:** chary- wary

Portentously- in a manner indicating something is about to occur, usually negative

Miscreant- **evildoer**

Winnowing-separating, sifting

Viands- food

**Summary:** One week after the storming of the Bastille in **Paris**, back in Saint Antoine, Defarge arrives bearing news of the capture of Foulon, a wealthy man who once declared that if people were starving they should eat grass. Foulon had **faked** his own death to avoid the peasants' fury but was later discovered hiding in the country. The revolutionaries set out to meet Foulon, led by Madame Defarge and a woman known only as The **Vengeance**. The mob strings Foulon up, but the rope breaks and he does not die until his **third** hanging. The peasants then behead him and put his head on a pike and fill his mouth with grass. When they have finished, the peasants eat their "*scanty and insufficient suppers*," parents play with their children, and lovers love.

### **Chapter 23: Fire Rises**

**Vocabulary:** Swart- dark-skinned

Benighted- ignorant

Kine- **crows**

Sacristan- sexton, responsible for caring for the church property

Tocsin- **alarm** bell

Conflagration- fire

Edifice- building, esp a large, imposing one

Begirt- shrouded

**Summary:** The French countryside lies ruined and desolate. An unidentified man, weary from travel, meets the **mender** of roads. They address each other as "Jacques" to indicate their status as revolutionaries. The mender of roads directs the man to the chateau of the murdered Marquis. Later that night, the man sets the castle **on fire**. A rider from the chateau urges the village soldiers to help put out the fire and salvage the valuables there, but they refuse, and the villagers go inside their homes and put "*candles in every dull little pane of glass*." The peasants nearly kill Theophile **Gabelle**, the local tax collector and servant of the Marquis, but he escapes to the roof of his house, where he watches the **chateau** burn. The narrator reports that scenes such as this are occurring all over France.

### **Chapter 24: Drawn to the Loadstone Rock**

**Vocabulary:** mote- speck

Dissimulation- hiding behind a false appearance

Munificent- very generous

Vapouring- **idle**, extravagant speech

Craven- coward

Recompense- **repay**

Sequestration- seizure of property

Remitted- refrained from collecting

Imposts- taxes

Succor- come to the **aid** of

Dolorous- miserable, sorrowful

Latent- present but inactive

Reservation- something withheld

**Summary:** Three years pass by. Political turmoil continues in France, causing England to become a refuge for persecuted aristocrats. Tellson's Bank in London becomes a "*great gathering-place of Monseigneur*." Tellson's has decided to dispatch Mr. Lorry to its Paris branch, in hopes that he can protect their valuable **ledgers**, papers, and records from destruction. Darnay arrives to persuade Lorry not to go, but Lorry insists, saying that he will bring Jerry Cruncher as his bodyguard.

Lorry receives an urgent letter, addressed to the Marquis St. Evrémonde, along with instructions for its delivery. Lorry laments the extreme difficulty of locating the Marquis, who has abandoned the **estate** willed to him by his murdered uncle. Darnay, careful to let no one suspect that he is in fact the **missing** Marquis, says that the Marquis is an acquaintance of his. He takes the letter, assuring Lorry that he will see

it safely delivered. Darnay reads the letter, which contains a **plea** from Gabelle, whom the revolutionaries have imprisoned for his upkeep of the Marquis' property. Gabelle begs the new Marquis to return to France and save him. Darnay resolves to go to Paris, with a "*glorious vision of doing good.*" After writing a farewell letter to Lucie and Doctor Manette, he **departs**.

**Analysis: Chapters 22–24** Before writing *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens had made one other attempt at historical fiction, entitled *Barnaby Rudge* (1841). Dissatisfied with the outcome of that **venture**, Dickens set out to craft a novel that combined the panorama of history with his typical cast of **exaggerated** characters. Most critics agree that *A Tale of Two Cities* somewhat sacrifices its characters to its historical scope.

However, debate continues as to whether Dickens's use of history ultimately warranted this sacrifice. Some consider the author's treatment of the revolution to be a triumphant success, while others believe that Dickens's indomitably fantastical imagination only **waters down** his history. Without doubt, Dickens relied heavily upon Thomas Carlyle's history of the French Revolution, a work that impressed Dickens greatly. Many of his details come directly from Carlyle's work, such as the description of the death of **Foulon**, which *A Tale of Two Cities* portrays as follows: *Once, he went aloft, and the rope broke, and they caught him shrieking . . . then, the rope was merciful, and held him, and his head was soon upon a pike, with grass enough in the mouth for all Saint Antoine to dance at the sight of.*

The similarity to Carlyle's portrayal of the same incident in *The French Revolution* is obvious: *Only with the third rope (for two ropes broke, and the quavering voice still pleaded) can he be so much as got hanged! His Body is dragged through the streets; his Head goes aloft on a pike, the mouth filled with grass: amid sounds as of Tophet, from a **grass**-eating people.*

Dickens acknowledges his debt to Carlyle in *A Tale of Two Cities*' preface, in which he states that he "*hopes to add something to the popular and picturesque means of understanding [the French Revolution], though no one can hope to add anything to the philosophy of Mr Carlyle's wonderful book.*" Dickens's debt to Carlyle, however, runs deeper than the level of historical **detail**, extending to the book's philosophical outlook as well. Dickens believed, as Carlyle did, that history is an evolutionary phenomenon. In other words, one **era** must be destroyed before a new one can develop and thrive, or, as Carlyle noted, "*each new age [is] born like the **phoenix** out of the ashes of the past.*"

Yet although Dickens promotes this view of history in which the destruction of the old makes way for the new, he remains ambivalent about the violence accompanying the cycles of eradication. While he acknowledges the evils and oppression that motivated the peasant uprising—he does this most notably in the chapters chronicling the events that lead up to the death of the Marquis—he never goes so far as to **romanticize** the revolutionaries' struggles or idealize their cause. Indeed, it is with great horror that he recounts the fall of the Bastille and the ensuing chaos in the streets. The violence may serve to cleanse society of the injustices of the French aristocracy, but it nevertheless creates its own sort of **pollution**. In describing the peasants' carefree return to eating, playing, and loving after their bloodthirsty execution of Foulon in Chapter 22, Dickens points toward a fundamentally **corrupt** side of the **human** soul. While it is human, it is not humane.