

# A Tale of Two Cities

By Brian McEleney  
based on the novel by  
Charles Dickens  
Directed by Tyler Dobrowsky





# Education

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Prepared by Joi Wright & Trinity Rep's Education Department  
Designed by Jessica Thomas

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# Theater Audience Etiquette & Discussion

**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY AND GO OVER WITH YOUR CLASSES BEFORE THE SHOW**

## TEACHERS

Speaking to your students about theater etiquette is ESSENTIAL. Students should be aware that this is a live performance and that they should not talk during the show. If you do nothing else to prepare your students to see the play, please take some time to talk to them about theater etiquette in an effort to help the students better appreciate their experience. It will enhance their enjoyment of the show and allow other audience members to enjoy the experience. The questions below can help guide the discussions. Thank you for your help and enjoy the show!

## ETIQUETTE

What is the role of the audience in a live performance? How is it different from seeing a film? Why shouldn't you talk during the play? What can happen in live theater that cannot happen in cinema?

Reiterate that students may not talk during the performance. Please make sure all cell phones and alarms are turned off. Recording devices and cameras are strictly prohibited. If there is a disturbance, they will be asked to leave and the class may not be invited back to the theater. Students may not leave the building during intermission.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW AT TRINITY REP:

What are the differences between live theater and cinema? (Two dimensional vs. three dimensional; larger than life on the screen vs. life-size; recorded vs. live, etc.) Discuss the nature of film as mass-produced, versus the one-time only nature of live performances. Talk about original art works vs. posters. Which do they feel is more valuable? Why? What is the responsibility of an audience when watching a play? What is the responsibility of an audience when watching a Shakespeare play?

### Observation #1

When you get into the theater, look around. What do you see? Observe the lighting instruments around the room and on the ceiling. Look at the set. Does it look realistic or abstract? Try to guess how the set will be used during the show.

### Observation #2

Discuss the elements that go into producing a live performance: The lights, set, props, costumes, and stage direction. All the people involved in the "behind the scenes" elements of the theater are working backstage as the play unfolds before the students' eyes. Tell them to be aware of this as they watch the show. Observe the lighting cues. How do special effects work? How do the actors change costumes so fast?

Pay attention to when you're excited about something on stage. What excited you? Pay attention to when you're bored. Why were you bored? What would you have done differently to make the play more interesting? ***Actors in a live performance are very attuned to the audience and are interested in the students' reactions to the play.*** Ask the students to write letters to the actors about the characters they played and to ask questions of the actors.

***Send these letters to:*** Trinity Repertory Company, c/o Education, 201 Washington St., Providence, RI 02903 or email to: [education@trinityrep.com](mailto:education@trinityrep.com).

# USING THIS STUDY GUIDE IN YOUR CLASSROOM

## A Letter from Associate Education Director Matt Tibbs

*Welcome* to Trinity Rep and the 54th season of Project Discovery! The education staff at Trinity Rep had a lot of fun preparing this study guide and hope that the activities included will help you incorporate the play into your academic study. It is also structured to help you to introduce performance into your classroom through the following elements:

- **COMMUNITY BUILDING IN YOUR CLASSROOM**
- **INSPIRATION AND BACKGROUND ON THE ARTIST**
- **ENTERING AND COMPREHENDING TEXT**
- **CREATING TEXT FOR PERFORMANCE**
- **PERFORMING IN YOUR CLASS**
- **REFLECTING ON YOUR PERFORMANCE**

Trinity Rep's Project Discovery student matinées help high school students in the following common core areas (for more information on the National Core Arts Standards, visit <http://nationalartsstandards.org/>)

- Initiate and participate effectively in a ranges of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively (CCS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1)
- Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme (CCSS.RL.9-10.3)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (CCSS.RL.9-10.44)
- Investigate how cultural perspectives, community ideas, and personal beliefs impact a drama/theatre work (TH: Cn10.1.I.)
- Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple drama/theatre works (TH: Re8.1.I.)
- Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices (TH: Re7.1.I.)
- Evaluate and analyze problems and situations in a drama/theatre work from an audience perspective (TH: Re9.1.I.)

***Enjoy the show!***



MATT TIBBS, Associate Education Director



2019–20 Season at the Lederer Theater Center

under the direction of

**Curt Columbus**

**Tom Parrish**

*The Arthur P. Solomon and*

*Executive Director*

*Sally E. Lapidés Artistic Director*

# A Tale of Two Cities

by Brian McEleney • based on the novel by Charles Dickens

## THE ARTISTIC TEAM

*Directed by Tyler Dobrowsky*

*Music Direction & Original Music by Joel Thibodeau*

*Set Design by Eugene Lee*

*Costume Design by Toni Spadafora*

*Lighting Design by Kate McGee*

*Sound Design by Peter Sasha Hurowitz*

*Production Stage Managed by Kristen Gibbs\**

**February 20 – March 22, 2020**

*in the Elizabeth and Malcolm Chace Theater*

Sponsored by **Navigant**  
CREDIT UNION

Many thanks to **The Providence Public Library**  
for its assistance on this production.

Trinity Rep's 56th Season is sponsored by



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PICTURED ON THE COVER: RACHAEL WARREN  
COSTUME BY AMANDA DOWNING CARNEY • IMAGE BY MICHAEL GUY

## THE CAST (in alphabetical order)

*Monsieur Defarge Stephen Berenson\*‡*

*Ensemble Rudy Cabrera*

*Marquis, Ensemble Matt Clevy\**

*Mr. Lorry Tim Crowe\*‡*

*Ensemble Jackie Davis\**

*Miss Pross, Ensemble Rachel Dulude\**

*Sydney Carton Daniel Duque-Estrada\*‡*

*John Barsad, Ensemble Jotae Fraser*

*Lucie Manette Rebecca Gobel\*‡*

*Charles Darnay Taavon Gamble\**

*Doctor Manette Brian McEleney\*‡*

*Ensemble David Rabinow*

*Madame Defarge Rachael Warren\*‡*

*Musicians Christopher Sadlers, Joel Thibodeau*

*A Tale of Two Cities* is performed **with one intermission**.

*Production Director Laura E. Smith*

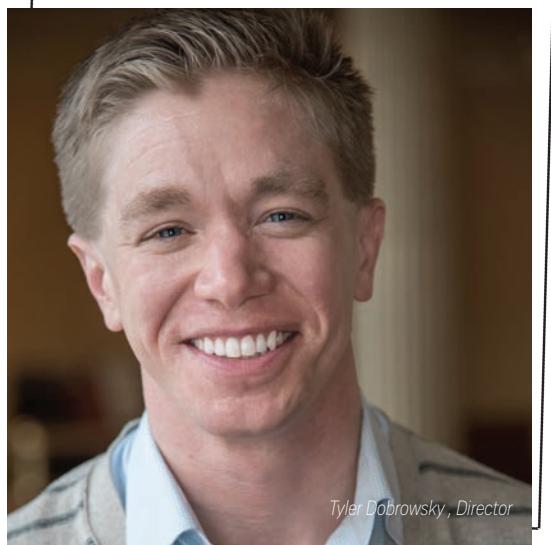
*Assistant Stage Manager James Kane\**

\* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors & stage managers

‡ Trinity Rep Resident Acting Company member

**PLEASE TURN OFF** cell phones and alarms during the performance. Texting and cell phone use are limited to intermission, outside the theater. **Photography, videotaping, and/or other video or audio recording of the performance by any means are strictly prohibited.**

## A Conversation with the Director: Tyler Dobrowsky



Tyler Dobrowsky, Director

**Joi Wright: In your own words could you walk us through the story of Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*?**

**Tyler Dobrowsky:** Basically there's a love triangle between two guys that look exactly the same and a young woman named Lucie, and the love triangle happens during the French Revolution when all the poor people of France rose up and murdered all the rich people. So...pretty exciting stuff!

**JW: Thus far, what excites you most about this production of *A Tale of Two Cities*?**

**TD:** What I love about this production of *A Tale of Two Cities* is how fleet and actor-centric the adaptation is. It feels like every actor on stage is telling the story, and there is a real propulsive energy to it. We're also not doing the play traditionally, like it's a period piece, but instead it has a real contemporary feel to it (particularly the sets and costumes). The contemporary stuff doesn't feel intrusive, though — rather it's just removing a barrier that says, "This play is set so long ago, and it has nothing to do with today." Hopefully this will make the play feel a bit more immediate to the audience (and particularly the young people coming to see it!).

**JW: What has been some of your greatest challenges thus far with working on this production?**

**TD:** There is a fair amount of imaginative staging that has to happen with this adaptation. And that is mostly very exciting, but it also requires a lot of planning and then a lot of thinking on your feet in the rehearsal room. Plus, there are fourteen actors, a huge set by Tony-Award-winner Eugene Lee, live music... there's a lot going on! And truly it's all very thrilling, but there are a lot of moving pieces to keep track of! Luckily, I have some terrific actors and a great stage management team.

**JW: Is there a particular character or scene that you connect with in this show, and why?**

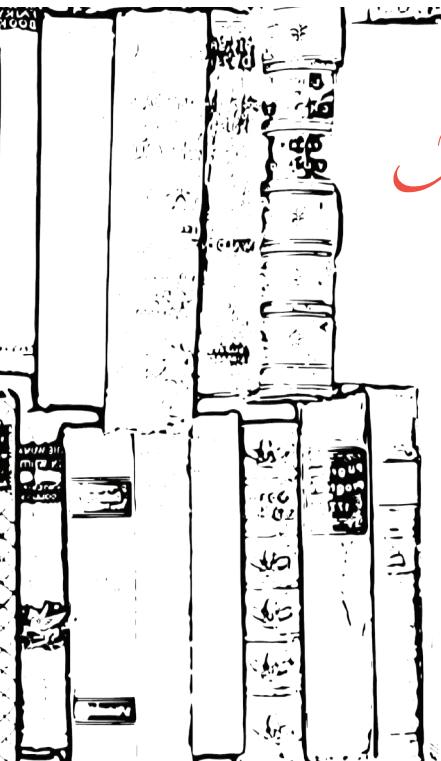
**TD:** I like several scenes in the play, but the reunion between Lucie and her father at the beginning and Carton's speech at the conclusion of the play are definitely standouts. I also love all the original music written and performed by Joel Thibideau.

**JW: The play seems to wrestle with some major themes such as; social injustice, resurrection and sacrifice. What would you say are some major themes of this production?**

**TD:** Yeah, those are definitely some resonant themes in the play. I would add that, what I love about this piece and why I think it's important today, is that it talks about political unrest and upheaval and how that's connected to economic and social inequality. When a society is unequal or unjust, it can only survive for so long before it's toppled... and then what fills that vacuum? Once something is dismantled, what takes its place? That's certainly apparent in the French Revolution, and I think it's a worthy conversation to have today. Plus, I love how the book and the play marry the larger political issues to personal stories.

**JW: What are you most excited for the students to see in your production and what are some things you would like a student audience to take away from this production of *A Tale of Two Cities*?**

**TD:** I hope they like the staging and the music and the story. I hope they are taken on a ride, and see how fun this book and this play can be. The story itself is so fun and rich, and Dickens' language so vivid and heartfelt...so I hope the students get a kick out of all that. And then I hope they enjoy it as a piece of theater, too!



## About the Director & Playwright

### Tyler Dobrowsky: Director

Tyler Dobrowsky has been a member of the education, literary, community engagement and artistic teams since 2003. He oversees Trinity Rep's new play development initiatives, where he has commissioned writers such as George Brant, Charise Castro-Smith, Jackie Sibblies Drury and Lauren Yee, as well as the New York Times best-seller, *The Prince of Providence* by Mike Stanton. He founded Trinity Rep's summer program for children, the Young Actors Summer Institute (YASI), and, in partnership with Rhode Island Latino Arts, created Teatro en el Verano, the theater's free, mobile, bilingual summer series. Directing credits at Trinity Rep include: *Little Shop of Horrors*; *Into the Breeches!* (world premiere); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Romeo and Juliet* (with Rhode Island Latino Arts); *Julius Caesar*; *A Flea in Her Ear*; *A Christmas Carol*; *Love Alone* (world premiere); and *It's a Wonderful Life*. His work has also been seen at the following theaters: ART/Oberon (upcoming); Asolo Rep; Elemental Theater; Gamm Theater; PlayMakers/UNC; The Public Theater. He has taught at NYU's Tisch School for the Arts, the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA program, RISD, and Rhode Island College. Tyler serves on the board of Rhode Island Latino Arts and is a proud member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Union. He received his MA from Brown University and his BA from Holy Cross. He lives in Providence with his wife, Taibi.

### Brian McEleney: Playwright

**Trinity Rep/Actor:** Over 75 plays, including *King Lear*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Glass Menagerie*, ... *Edgar Allan Poe*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, *The Odd Couple*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *The Cider House Rules*, *Angels in America*, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Cherry Orchard*, *Amadeus*

**Director:** Over 25 productions as Trinity Rep Associate Director, including *Death of a Salesman*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Blues for Mister Charlie*, *Ivanov*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *House & Garden*, *Absurd Person Singular*, *The Crucible*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Dreams of Antigone*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *All the King's Men*, *Our Town*, *Hamlet*, *Measure for Measure*.

**Other:** A graduate of Trinity College and the Yale School of Drama, he is Head of the Brown University/Trinity Rep M.F.A. Acting Program



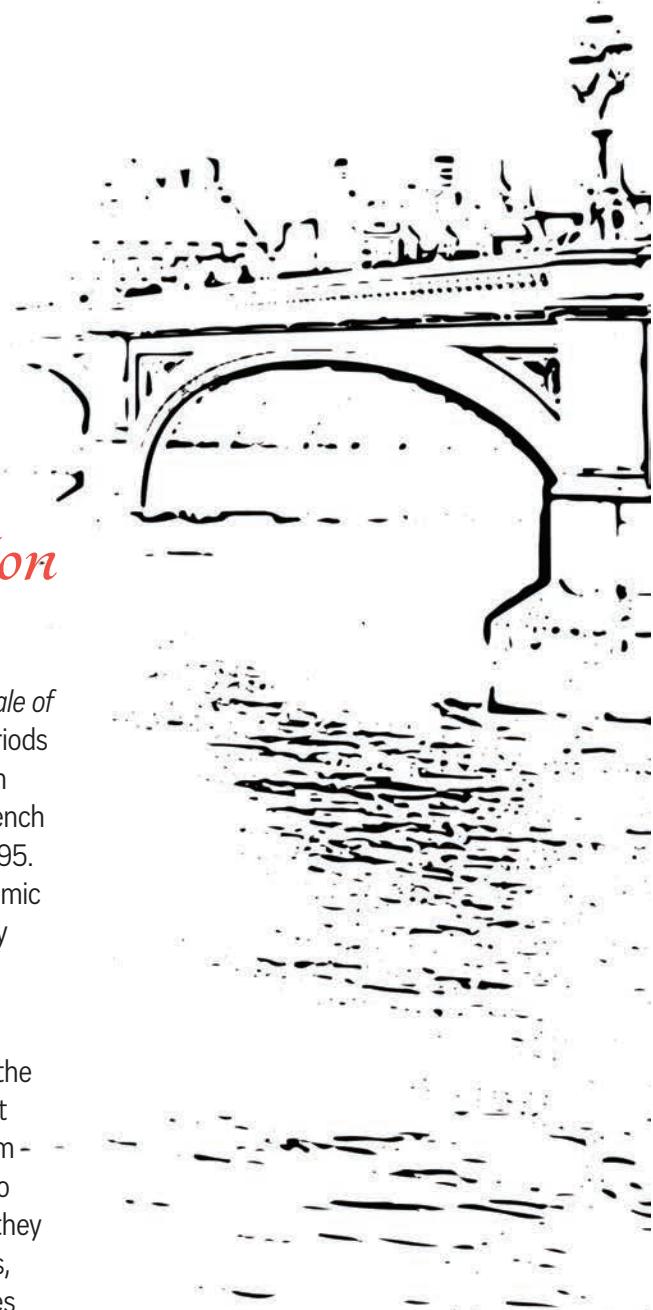
Brian McEleney, Playwright

## *Historical Context: Behind the Setting & The French Revolution*

*A Tale of Two Cities* is an 1859 historical novel by Charles Dickens, set in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution. Dickens sets *A Tale of Two Cities* primarily in Paris and London during one of the most turbulent periods of European history, the French Revolution. The novel covers events between 1775 and 1793, referring also to incidents occurring before that time. The French Revolution began in 1789 and continued in various forms through at least 1795. He did not concern himself with the revolution's immediate political or economic causes but focused on the human suffering that he believed warped the very humanity of individuals on both sides of the battle lines.

The French Revolution began on May 5, 1789, when the Estates-General (representatives elected to represent the clergy, the nobility, and the rest of the population) gathered together for the first time in more than 150 years. Most of the French population was frustrated by heavy taxes and a political system that put virtually all power in the hands of aristocrats. Revolutionaries tried to seize power, which led to rioting and violence in Paris, and on July 14, 1789, they stormed the Bastille fortress. Many French aristocrats fled to other countries, including England, and French revolutionaries attacked and burned the homes of the wealthy. In August 1789, the Revolutionary government published the Declaration of the Rights of Man, proclaiming a new vision of social and political equality.

Despite the hopes of creating a more just and equal society, violence and unrest continued. The French King and Queen were executed during a period known as the "Reign of Terror," which lasted from 1793 to 1794. During this time, anyone perceived as disloyal to the Revolutionary government could be imprisoned or executed. In total, more than 16,000 people were executed. The violence of the Revolution led other European countries to eventually declare war against France. The Revolution finally came to an end when a French general named Napoleon was recognized as the leader of the French state. The wars which began during the Revolution lasted until 1815, when Napoleon was defeated for the final time.



# *Plot Synopsis*

## *by Audrey Rowland*

*A Tale of Two Cities* is a big story set in a sweeping world, where people try their best in a political and economic system that does not make it easy to be a good person.

In 1775, Lucie Manette is reunited with her father, the haunted Dr. Manette, newly released from the infamous Bastille fortress. The pair flee France in crisis and share a boat with the wry, but kind, Charles Darnay on their way to England. Five years later, when Darnay stands accused of treason, Lucie and the Doctor attest to his good character. After some skillful legal maneuvering, Sydney Carton – a prison official and a known drunk – wins Darnay an acquittal, saving him from the death penalty.

Despite Carton's intercession on Darnay's behalf, and despite the strange physical similarity between the two men, Darnay and Carton soon realize that they do not care for each other at all. They do, however, care deeply for Lucie Manette. This leads Darnay to propose, and to reveal his family secret: although he has disowned his inheritance, he is a member of the elite Marquis family. Lucie accepts his proposal, and they

soon have a daughter, Little Lucie. However, Lucie is still committed to helping Carton cast off his bad habits, like over-drinking, and embrace his best self.

Meanwhile, in France, the lord Marquis runs into trouble of his own. After accidentally running over a child in his carriage, killing him instantly, the Marquis responds to the shock and horror of the locals with disinterest. The next day, the Marquis is found with a knife in his heart and a note, written by the child's father, Gaspard, taking responsibility for the lord's murder. At the advice of Monsieur Defarge and his wife, Madame Defarge, prominent leaders in the French Revolution, Gaspard resists arrest, and the revolution begins in earnest.

Darnay returns to France, where his true identity is discovered, and he is arrested for his status as an aristocrat. At the trial, Monsieur and Madame Defarge use a note that Dr. Manette wrote in prison, condemning the Marquis and his descendants as evidence against Darnay. Dr. Manette's pleas on behalf of Lucie's husband are ignored, and Darnay is sentenced to death. This devastates Lucie, but

with her daughter in mind, she is determined to save her family.

Carton, Lucy's former suitor, is determined to help her. With the help of Barsad, one of his friends, Carton sneaks into the jail where Darnay is held. The two switch clothes, and Carton drugs Darnay. Carton remains behind in Darnay's clothing, and a surprised Barsad carries the unconscious Darnay out of the prison and back to his family. A shocked and grateful Lucie, Darnay, and daughter return to England as quickly as possible. Darnay's escape heightens tensions within the revolutionary camp, and Madame Defarge is killed. In response, Monsieur Defarge stops the search for Darnay and his family to mourn his loss.

In the prison, a seamstress jailed alongside Darnay sees through Carton's deception and blesses him for his sacrifice. Carton walks to the guillotine and reflects on the love that Lucie introduced to his life.



## Major Themes & Discussion Questions

### COLLECTIVE GUILT

The theme of collective guilt is certainly present in *A Tale of Two Cities*. It is this concept that fuels the terror that Paris descends into during the French Revolution. We see it wielded as a blunt instrument by the likes of Madame Defarge as she seeks revenge on all members of the French aristocracy no matter how insignificant their own offenses may have been.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

When you experience guilt, do you tend to respond by making others pay for it, dismissing it, or hiding it? Why do you think you respond the way you do?

### LOVE

It is love that reunites Lucie Manette with a father she has never known. After Dr. Manette has been imprisoned in the Bastille for eighteen years, Lucie Manette learns that her father has been freed. Both Darnay and Carton also love Lucie, and particularly Carton sacrifices his life so that the woman he loves can be happy.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Is this a prominent theme in a lot of young adult content — books, film, music — where is it most seen? Does it seem like there are certain social expectations and pressures surrounding love?

### SACRIFICE

The theme of sacrifice is most strongly apparent in Sydney Carton's decision to take Charles Darnay's place, even though doing so means being executed. When the seamstress asks Carton if he is dying for the sake of Darnay, Carton agrees, and adds "And his wife and child". Carton's love for Lucie and her daughter encourages him to sacrifice himself because her happiness is more important than anything else. As a man who does not have a family of his own, he places more value on Darnay's life than on his own. Carton is also aware that he has lived an unproductive and dissolute life, and that he has not offered much to the world. Carton believes that his act of sacrifice will redeem everything that has come before, and make his life meaningful. As he reflects to himself, "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done before".

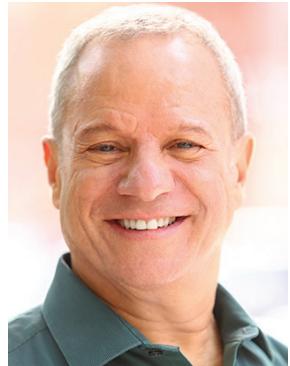
#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What does sacrifice mean to you? What are some sacrifices, big or small that you have made for the sake of someone else?

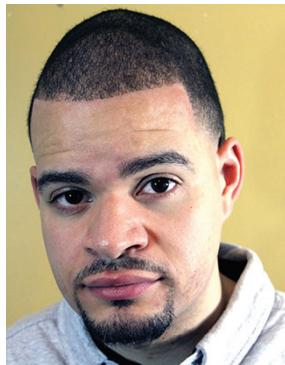


# *Unit 1: Background*

## *Characters & Cast*



**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**  
STEPHEN BERENSON



**JACQUES 3, ENSEMBLE**  
RUDY CABRERA



**MARQUIS, ENSEMBLE**  
MATTHEW CLEVY



**MR. LORRY**  
TIM CROWE



**JACQUES 2, ENSEMBLE**  
JACKIE DAVIS



**MISS PROSS, ENSEMBLE**  
RACHEL DULUDE



**SYDNEY CARTON**  
DANIEL DUQUE-ESTRADA



**JOHN BARSAD, ENSEMBLE**  
JOTAE FRASER



**LUCIE MANETTE**  
REBECCA GIBEL



**CHARLES DARNAY**  
TAAVON GAMBLE



**DOCTOR MANETTE**  
BRIAN MCELENNEY



**JACQUES 2, ENSEMBLE**  
DAVID RABINOW



**MADAME DEFARGE**  
RACHAEL WARREN

## A Conversation with the Director & Playwright

Before Associate Artistic Director Tyler Dobrowsky began rehearsals for Trinity Rep's production of *A Tale of Two Cities*, adapted by resident acting company member Brian McEleney, he talked to Brian to find out more about his interest in the Charles Dickens classic and how he approached adapting the novel to the stage.

### Tyler Dobrowsky: What made you want to work on *A Tale of Two Cities* in particular?

**Brian McEleney:** I was looking to work on a piece that I felt would resonate in our particular moment in history. There is so much division and so much political tumult in our country and in the world in general, that I thought Dickens' novel might have something to say to us now. I've always loved this novel. The writing is passionate and poetic; the characters are full of life and specificity, and the overall impression you get from reading it is what it feels like to be caught up in the force of history, of not knowing what will happen next or how it's all going to turn out. The confusion, the anxiety, the partisan hatreds, the danger — it's all in there.

### TD: Your adaptation is remarkably fleet and fast-paced, especially for such a dense story, and it also feels of a piece with Trinity Rep's historically actor-driven aesthetic... what was the process like turning such a classic text into a piece of theater?

**BM:** I've never really written a play before, so this project seemed foolhardy and over-ambitious. But as I thought about it I reflected that I've been in over 25 versions of a very successful Dickens adaptation. [Former Artistic Director] Adrian Hall's "fleet and fastpaced version" of *A Christmas Carol* was my model... and my inspiration to take this on. And I was also encouraged by the knowledge that all of Adrian's adaptations for Trinity Rep were done for this company of actors, in this particular aesthetic. I knew that I would have a group of collaborators who would understand my vision for how this production could come to fruition. A lot of it isn't on the page; it depends on vigorous acting, lively music, and inventive direction to make it come to life.

### TD: You produced this at the Bread Loaf School of English two summers ago. What did you learn from that?

**BM:** I learned that it worked, for starters. There's virtually nothing in this piece that doesn't come from Dickens. I trusted the genius of his storytelling and the poetic power of his writing, and tried to not get in the way. I was encouraged to find that non-realistic staging let the audience use its imagination to create the world of the play. And I learned that music is a tremendously important element of this piece; it lifts the language into the higher realm of emotion and poeticism that Dickens' writing demands, and lends an air of contemporary immediacy to the production.



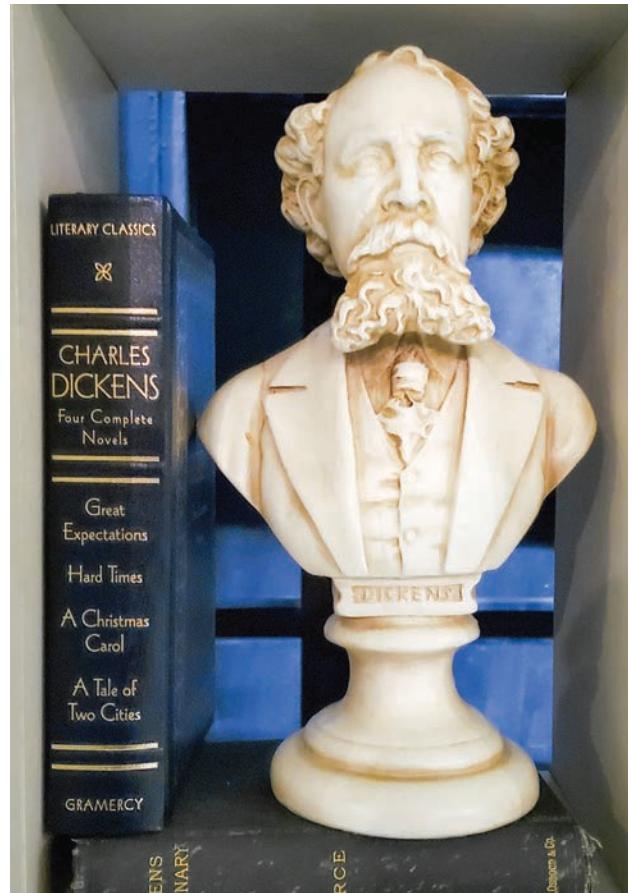
Brian McEleney in last season's production of *An Iliad*

**TD: You are also playing Doctor Manette in this production — which are you looking forward to most, working as the writer/adaptor or working as an actor in the play?**

**BM:** I'm thrilled to be doing both! This is one of the wonderful things about being a member of the Trinity Rep acting company: you get opportunities that you would never have in other institutions! The challenge of rewriting and editing during the process while at the same time playing a complex dramatic character like Doctor Manette seems really exciting... and daunting! There are very few models for the process we're about to enter, and — who knows? — it might turn out to be a disaster, and we'll all wish I was only doing one job at a time. But it may turn out to be wonderful; it will certainly be a great adventure. At the very least, I know I can count on your direction and support, as well as the support of all my colleagues in the acting company and on the design team.

**TD: Anything else you want us to know about the show?**

**BM:** I certainly want to assure people that they won't need to be familiar with the novel to appreciate the production. And also that it won't be a dusty museum piece. I was constantly thinking about our contemporary world as I wrote this adaptation and tried to make that come through in the writing. I hope it will!



*Set design; Inspired by the Providence Athenaeum & designed by Eugene Lee*

## Biography of Dickens

In his childhood, Charles Dickens (1812-1870) experienced first-hand the effects of poverty and suffering. His early education was interrupted at the age of twelve, when his father was sent to prison for debt. His entire family was imprisoned at Marshalsea in London, and the young Charles was sent to work in a boot-blacking factory, alone and miserable, living and working in atrocious conditions. However, after three years Dickens was able to return to school, and from there he went on to become a clerk in a law office. In 1828 he started working as a freelance journalist, a job which eventually developed into the illustrious career as a well-known journalist, novelist, and playwright.

Dickens achieved literary fame with novels such as *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Great Expectations*. These works focused on timeless themes that spoke to the Victorian society as much as they do to modern readers: the importance of friendship and family, helping the poor or suffering, and being compassionate to strangers and loved ones alike. These ideas were explored through the social issues of his time, like poverty and child labor, using vivid and enchanting characters; Scrooge, Tiny Tim, Oliver, and the Artful Dodger are all still memorable cultural symbols today. With the success of his writing career, Dickens was able to travel broadly and establish himself as a philanthropist, embodying the compassion for suffering that is the main theme of his works.

In 1836, Dickens married Catherine Hogarth, with whom he went on to have 10 children. He continued to travel the world and work as a writer, speaker, and philanthropist. *A Tale of Two Cities*, originally published from April through November of 1859, appeared in a new magazine that Dickens had created called *All the Year Round*. Dickens started this venture after a falling-out with his regular publishers. Indeed, this period in Dickens's life saw many changes. While starring in a play by Wilkie Collins entitled *The Frozen Deep*, Dickens fell in love with a young actress named Ellen Ternan. Dickens's twenty-three-year marriage to Catherine Hogarth had become a source of unhappiness in recent years, and, by 1858, Hogarth had moved out of Dickens's home.

In June of 1870, Dickens suffered a stroke and passed away. His last novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, remained unfinished with the identity of the murderer still unknown. Dickens was buried at Westminster Abbey alongside Geoffrey Chaucer, Ben Jonson, Edmund Spencer, and many other prestigious writers.





Illustration for *A Tale of Two Cities* by  
Hablot K. Browne (Phiz), 1894



### Warm-Up 1

#### *One Word At A Time*

In a circle, the story is started, with each person in turn adding one word. It usually starts with 'Once – upon – a – time'. The idea is to keep your thoughts free flowing, so that you don't try to guess what is coming or force the story in a particular direction. It is not always easy to maintain a logical flow for the story, although it is always amusing. If the group is too large, break into smaller groups.

##### **Story Toss**

- Another variation is to throw or roll a ball around the circle in any order.
- Add your word as you pass the ball to the next person.
- This ensures that people are more attentive; although you should make sure everyone is included.

Try playing the game in pairs, where both participants act the story out as it is told. In this case, tell the story in the present tense and as 'we'. For example, 'We – are – climbing – a – mountain. – Look – a – giant -spider – coming – towards – us. Quick – run!' You can soon create an adventure story in this way. You can also use the one word at a time technique to create characters made up of two or more people – great fun for interview scenes!

## **Warm-Up 2**

### *Ten Second Objects*

Divide everyone into small groups (4-6 people). Call out the name of an object and all the groups have to make the shape of that object out of their own bodies, joining together in different ways while you count down slowly from ten to zero. Usually every group will find a different way of forming the object. These ones are good to try: a car, a clock, a washing machine, a volcano, a fire.

- Encourage groups to think about using different levels with their body shapes, e.g. high, medium and low
- Choose objects from a play you are rehearsing or a theme you are exploring
- Groups can be given a couple of minutes to devise an object of their own which the rest of the class try to guess
- It can be fun to make objects that involve movement (and sound)
- You can use the shapes as a quick way to create ideas for physical theatre

**Discussion Questions:** Why would we play this game? What are objects that might be in *A Tale of Two Cities*?

## **Warm-Up 3**

### *What are you doing?*

#### **Directions**

1. Stand in a circle.
2. The first person (A) starts miming an activity, such as eating an apple.
3. The person to their left (B) says "What are you doing?".
4. A keeps miming and at the same time says the name of a different activity. For example, if A was miming eating an apple, they could say "playing the piano".
5. B then starts playing a piano.
6. A stops their mime.
7. Now the third person (C) asks B , "What are you doing?".
8. B keeps playing the piano and names a different activity, which C must mime. And so it goes on.

There should be no repetition and no similar activities. For example, if you are miming climbing a ladder you cannot say, "climbing the stairs". Equally you should not name an activity that looks like the one you are actually doing. For example, if you are cleaning a window you cannot say "waving good-bye" – because it looks very similar!

**Discussion Questions:** Why is using your body critical for an actor? Can you tell a story without words?

## **Exercise 1**

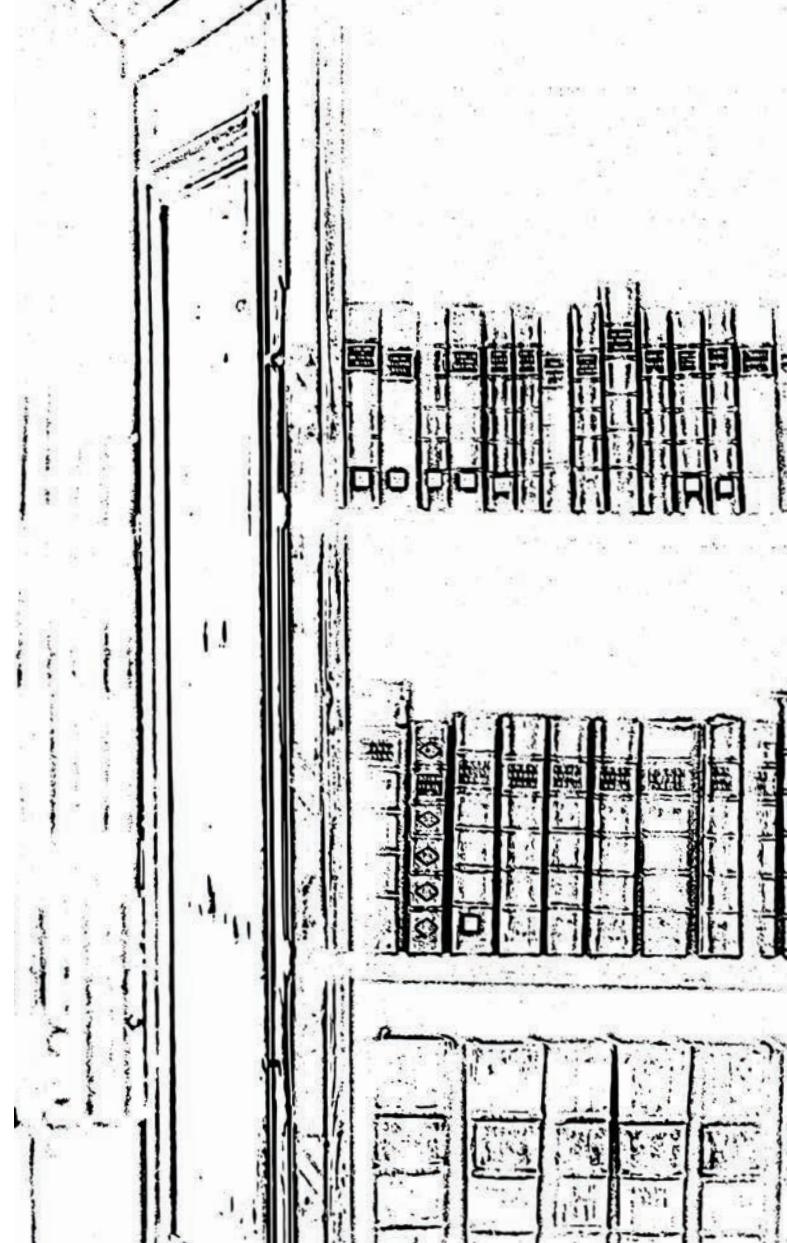
### ***Love, Hate, and Ambivalence***

Have the class walk around the room neutrally. Try to keep the space balanced. Do not touch each other, or talk to each other. As the class walks around, give them directions on how to change and alter their movements. Encourage them to stay with the directions and listen carefully. Have the class walk as "love", not interacting with anyone. How does love walk, where are love's eyes, how does love breathe? From there, have the class walk as "hate" and "ambivalence" with the same directions.

Once you have gone through these, choose one student to walk as love in a sea of hate. The students can now interact, encourage them not to touch, but they can look at each other and communicate. All the hate should hate the same thing, encourage them to follow the movement of the group and for the one love to explore the group. From there, have:

- 1 student as love walk in a sea of hate
- 1 ambivalence walk in a sea of hate
- 1 hate walk in a sea of love
- 1 ambivalence walk in a sea of love
- 1 love walk in a sea of ambivalence

Explore how the relationships change as you add more students to the minority side. What happens to the group if there are 2 students walking as love in a sea of hate. What happens if the group is split in half, 50% are love and 50% are hate?



#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What did your body tell you?
2. Which felt the most comfortable?
3. Which was the hardest to keep up?
4. Which was the hardest to keep it going?
5. What was the difference in numbers and how did that change your relationships?
6. What does this tell you about the power of each of these things?
7. How do you see these relationships played out today?
8. What interactions were the most interesting?
9. What were the differences physically between these feelings and the differences in interactions between these feelings?

## Exercise 2

### *What's in a Role?*

In small groups, have each individual note which gender they would traditionally expect in that position off the top of their head. Afterwards, have the small groups discuss their answers and the reasons for them...

- Caretaker
- Doctor
- Nurse
- Actor
- Lab technician
- Stay at home parent
- Clothes maker
- Teacher
- Computer programmer
- Photographer
- Model
- Construction worker

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Why did you assign the genders to these roles?
2. What did you discover about the expectations you and your small group have for traditional (fe)male roles?
3. Discuss in your group what it might look like to have a person of another gender in each of these work roles. Is it hard to picture? Why is that?

## Exercise 3

### *I'm Not Bad, I'm Just Drawn That Way*

One of the most important jobs for an actor is to figure out why their character does what they do. Even if an actor is playing a villain, it is important that the actor not judge or criticize their character's actions—instead, they must play them truthfully.

- Assign each student (or depending on the class, a group of students) one character from the play. They must take an in-depth look at that character.
- Have them come up with things that the character say about themselves and lines that other characters say to describe them.
- Each student or group of students must then make a presentation as to why their character is not so bad after all. Whether or not they actually believe it, encourage students to think about their character's motivations for their actions in the play.
- Discuss with your students how actors, writers and directors must always ask why people behave the way they do.

## Exercise 4

### Letters to a Character

The first part of the following activity gives students the opportunity to interact with the characters and plot points of the story. The second half of this activity allows students to get inside the character's head and understand the story from his or her perspective.

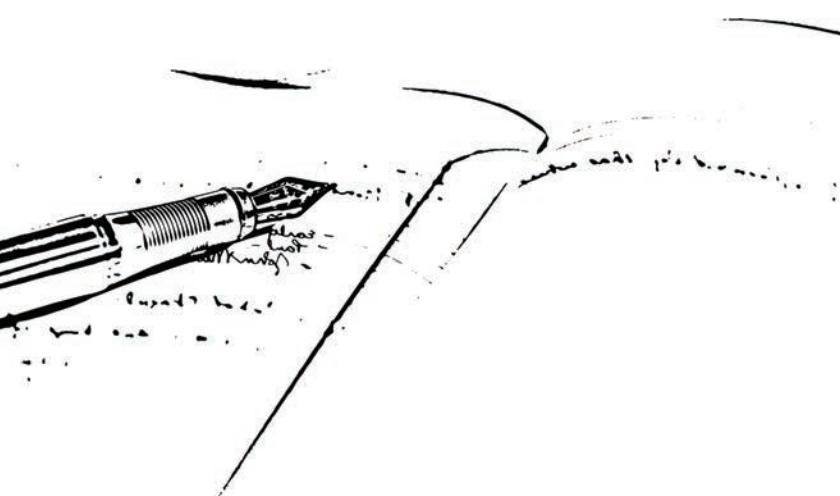
1. Have your students choose a character from the play and, using any of the following prompts, write a letter to that character: What advice would you give the character at this point in the story? What is something important that you want this character to know right now? Tell this character about an event in the story that hasn't happened yet.
2. Once everyone has finished, collect the letters and redistribute them to other students in the class.
3. Now, each student must imagine that they are the character that the letter is addressed to, and respond to it from his or her perspective.
4. Optional performance opportunity: your students could also write their responses in the form of a monologue and perform them for the class.
5. Afterwards, take a moment to debrief with your students: which part of the activity did they like the best?

## Exercise 5

### 101 Ways to Read a Monologue

A monologue, or soliloquy, is a long speech made by one person. Sometimes it can be a challenge for a young actor to take on a piece of text and perform it on his or her own, so this activity is a way to get your students to forget their inhibitions and have fun with it. Pick one or more of the monologues below, and hand them out to your students. You can assign or let them choose which monologue they want to do, and give them a few minutes to read it over a few times and familiarize themselves with it.

- In partners, let them read it out loud to one another a few times in whichever way they want to.
- After this, using your own suggestions and those of your students, throw out different ways to read the monologue. Feel free to be as wacky as you want -- this is supposed to be fun. You can filter the suggestions, and pick one that you think would work and let them do it that way. Some examples of different ways to read it include (but are definitely not limited to): an aerobics instructor, an army general, a drunk, someone who desperately has to go to the bathroom, a squirrel, the laziest person in the world, singing it, whispering it, telling it like it's a scary story, like an interpretive dancer, like they are in a musical, like a President, or a King...you can even use celebrity names and have them imitate them using the monologue.
- This can be done with all of the students working in partners or on their own at the same time. If this is a particularly brave group, you can challenge them to take your suggestions and perform individually in front of the class.
- After every willing student has performed, take some time to talk about what they got from it. Did it help them understand the monologue better? If so, how? Did they find that any of the interpretations, as silly as they may have been, actually worked and made some sense? Which ones, and why? How does this help them as actors?



# Monologues

## LUCIE

O, sir, at another time you shall know my name. You shall know who my mother was, and who my father, and how I never knew their hard, hard history. Oh, sir, if you hear in my voice any resemblance to a voice that once was sweet music in your ears, weep for it, weep for it! Your agony is over. I have come to take you to England, where I shall tell you of my name, of my father who is recalled to life, and of my mother who is dead. Weep for it! Weep for her, my poor mother, who hid your torture from me.

## CARTON

Do you particularly like the man? Why should you particularly like a man who resembles you? There is nothing in you to like; you know that. A good reason for taking to a man, that he shows you what you have fallen away from, and what you might have been! Change places with him, and would you have been looked at by those lovely eyes as he was, and commiserated by that agitated face as he was? Come on, and have it out in plain words! You hate the fellow.

## MISS PROSS

You wasn't ending it, I suppose. I say, when you began it, it was hard enough, not that I have any fault to find with Doctor Manette, except that he is not worthy of such a daughter, which is no imputation on him. But it really is doubly and trebly hard to have crowds and multitudes turning up, to take Miss Lucie's affections away from me. There never was, nor will be, but one man worthy of Ladybird, and that was my brother Solomon, if he hadn't made a mistake in life.

## DARNAY

In making some alterations, the workmen came upon an old dungeon. Every stone of its inner wall had been carved upon by the prisoners – dates, names, prayers. On one wall, a prisoner, who seems to have gone to execution, had cut as his last work, three letters. At first they were read as D.I.C. but on more careful examination, the last letter was found to be a G. After many guesses about whose initials they might have been, it was discovered that the letters were not initials, but the complete word: DIG. In the earth beneath were found the ashes of a paper. What the unknown prisoner had written will never be read, but he had written something, and hidden it away to keep it from the gaoler.

## MADAME DEFARGE

She stood immovable close to the grim old officer, and remained immovable close to him; remained immovable close to him through the streets, as Defarge and the rest bore him along; remained immovable close to him when he began to be struck from behind; remained immovable close to him when the rain of stabs and blows fell heavy; was so close to him when he dropped dead, that, suddenly animated, she put her foot upon his neck, and with her cruel knife – long ready – hewed off his head.

**Scene 1: Two Characters**

**MR. LORRY**

Later, alone in his own room at the Bank, Mr. Lorry heard a foot upon the stair. Who are you?

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE** (*entering with MADAME DEFARGE*)

Don't you know me?

**MR. LORRY**

I have seen you somewhere.

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

Perhaps at my wine-shop?

**MR. LORRY**

You come from Doctor Manette?

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

Yes. I come from Doctor Manette.

**MR. LORRY**

And what says he? What does he send me?

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

This paper from La Force.

**MR. LORRY** (*reading*)

"Charles is safe; but I cannot safely leave this place yet. I have obtained the favor that DeFarge has a short note from Charles to his wife. Let DeFarge see Lucie." This is from Dr. Manette?

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

Yes.

**MR. LORRY**

Will you accompany me to where his wife resides?

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

Yes.

**MR. LORRY**

Does madame go with us?

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

Yes. That she may be able to recognize the faces and know the persons. It is for their safety.

**Scene 2: Four Characters**

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

You are still hard at work, I see?

**DOCTOR MANETTE**

Yes . . . I am working.

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

Are you going to finish that pair of shoes today?

**DOCTOR MANETTE**

What did you say?

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

Do you mean to finish that pair of shoes today?

**DOCTOR MANETTE**

I can't say that I mean to. I suppose so. I don't know.

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

You have a visitor.

**DOCTOR MANETTE**

What did you say?

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

Here is a visitor. Come! Here is a mademoiselle, who knows a well made shoe when she sees one.

**LUCIE**

I am afraid.

**MR. LORRY**

Courage, dear miss!

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

Show her the shoe you are working at. Take it, Mademoiselle. Tell her what kind of shoe it is, and the maker's name.

**DOCTOR MANETTE**

I forget what it was you asked me. What did you say?

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

I said, couldn't you describe the kind of shoe, for mademoiselle's information?

**DOCTOR MANETTE**

It is a lady's shoe. It is a young lady's walking shoe.

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

And the maker's name?

**DOCTOR MANETTE**

Did you ask for my name?

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

Assuredly I did.

**DOCTOR MANETTE**

One Hundred and Five, North Tower.

**MONSIEUR DEFARGE**

Is that all?

**DOCTOR MANETTE**

One Hundred and Five. North Tower.

**MR. LORRY**

You are not a shoemaker by trade?

**DOCTOR MANETTE**

No. I learned it here. I taught myself.

### Scene 3: Five Characters

**ATTORNEY-GENERAL**

How many were with him.

**LUCIE**

Two French gentlemen.

**ATTORNEY-GENERAL**

Were any letters handed about among them?

**LUCIE**

Indeed, I do not know.

**ATTORNEY-GENERAL**

Now, to the prisoner's conversation, Miss Manette.

**LUCIE**

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

**ATTORNEY-GENERAL**

Did he say anything about America, Miss Manette? Be particular.

**LUCIE**

He said, in a jesting way, that perhaps George Washington might gain almost as great a name in history as George the Third. (an uproar in the Court.) But there was no harm in his way of saying it. It was said laughingly, to beguile the time.

**ATTORNEY-GENERAL**

Doctor Manette, look upon the prisoner. Can you identify him as your fellow passenger, or speak to his conversation with your daughter?

**DOCTOR MANETTE**

Sir, I can do neither. It has been my misfortune to undergo a long imprisonment, without trial, or even accusation, in my native country. My mind is a blank. A gracious God has restored my faculties, and I have found myself living in London with my dear daughter here. I have no remembrance of the process.

**BARSAD**

A witness named John Barsad is next questioned. I was the prisoner's friend, but I managed to ferret out his treasonous schemes. I was struck with horror at his infamy, and resolved to immolate the traitor on the sacred altar of my country.

**ATTORNEY-GENERAL**

This witness, gentlemen of the jury, is a great patriot. After hearing the testimony of this immaculate and unimpeachable witness for the Crown, the jury, being a loyal jury (as I know you are), must positively find the prisoner Guilty, and make an end of him, whether you like it or not.

**CARTON**

One moment, your worship. May I ask a few questions?

**ATTORNEY-GENERAL**

Who are you, sir?

**CARTON**

Sydney Carton, Esq. Second assistant to the Prisoner's Counsel.



Scenes continued on next page

## **Scene 4: Two Characters**

**CARTON**

Ever kicked down stairs?

**BARSAD**

Decidedly not.

**CARTON** (offering evidence)

Your worship . . .

**BARSAD**

Once I received a kick on the top of a staircase, and I fell downstairs of my own accord.

**CARTON**

Kicked on that occasion for cheating at dice?

**BARSAD**

Something to that effect was said by the intoxicated liar who committed the assault, but it was not true.

**CARTON**

Swear it was not true?

**BARSAD**

Positively.

**CARTON**

Sir, have you ever borrowed money of the prisoner?

**BARSAD**

Yes

**CARTON**

Ever pay him?

**BARSAD**

No.

**CARTON**

Sir, was not your supposed intimacy with the prisoner in reality a very slight one, forced upon him in coaches, inns and packets?

**BARSAD**

No.

**CARTON**

Mr. Barsad, are you sure you saw the prisoner with these alleged letters?

**BARSAD**

Certain.

**CARTON**

You know no more about these letters?

**BARSAD**

No.

**CARTON**

Did you not procure them yourself, for instance?

**BARSAD**

No.

**CARTON**

Do you expect to get anything by this evidence?

**BARSAD**

No.

**CARTON**

Not in regular government pay and employment, to lay traps?

**BARSAD**

Oh dear no.

**CARTON**

You swear to that?

**BARSAD**

Over and over again.

**CARTON**

No motives but those of sheer patriotism?

**BARSAD**

None whatsoever. Patriotism is my only motive. I am a true Briton, and I hope that there are many like me.

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