

A Tale of Two Cities

By Charles Dickens

Paraphrased into "Easy English"

By

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Smashwords Edition

The First Book: Called Back to Life

1. The Year 1775

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. It was the age of wisdom; it was the age of foolishness. It was the spring of great hope; it was the winter of no hope at all. We had everything; we had nothing. We were all going straight to heaven; we were all going straight to hell. In short, the time was much like the present, in that everything rested on who you listened to.

There was a king with a big jaw and a queen with a humble face in England, and there was a king with a big jaw and a queen with a beautiful face in France. In both countries it was perfectly clear to these, the ruling class, that all was well.

It was the year 1775. People then, like people now, looked for revelations. There were magic chickens in some places or spirits knocking on tables in others, that would tell you London or the government were going to be destroyed. But there were revelations also coming to the crown from people who lived across the Atlantic, revelations which had no magic. People would soon see that these revelations were far more important than anything the chickens could tell them.

[The next year, 1776, America broke away from England to become a free country on her own.]

France, which was not as religious as England, was moving smoothly down a hill, spending money as fast as she could print it. Her spiritual leaders entertained her by doing such wonderful things as cutting a boy's hands off, pulling his tongue out with pliers, and then burning his body while he was still alive, because he did not drop to his knees in the rain when a group of religious leaders walked by him from some distance away. I should think that at the time this was happening there were trees growing in France or in a neighbouring country that were already marked to be used to make a machine with a sharp knife in it and a bag to catch the head of the person killed by it. And I should think that on the farms close to Paris there were at that time rough wagons covered with mud, that would be used to carry people to their death at the mercy of those machines. But the ones planning all of this worked quietly at that time, for fear others would think their plans made them enemies of God or guilty of treason.

There was little in England at that time to be proud of either. People were robbed in their homes and in the streets every night in London. Families were told not to leave the city without moving their furniture to some safe place. Robbers by night became city workers by day. One such robber, who was pointed out by another worker, just shot the man in the head and ran. A mail coach was stopped by seven robbers. The guard killed three of them before running out of bullets, and then he was killed himself, after which the other four robbers finished their job in peace. The Mayor of London was robbed in an open park, in front of all his helpers. Prisoners often started fights with the prison guards, and the police would open fire on them. Robbers cut diamond crosses from around the necks of the rich. And men with guns returned fire on a crowd of smugglers after the smugglers started shooting at them. All of this would happen without anyone thinking that there was anything strange about it.

In the middle of all this, the man whose job it was to hang people, and who was never of any real use to anyone, was always busy: first hanging a long line of mixed criminals, then hanging a man on Saturday for breaking into a house on Tuesday; one day burning marks into the hands of people at the prison, and the next day burning leaflets outside the house of government; today taking the life of an awful killer, and tomorrow taking the life of a man who robbed a small coin from a farm boy.

All these things and a thousand more like them happened around the year 1775. There were the farmer and the woodcutter making their plans for a takeover in France, and there were those two men with faces so much the same and their wives with faces so different, each confidently doing what they believed was God's will. The year 1775 moved the Great ones — and other less great ones that you will meet in this story — along the road that was to change them all.

2. The Dover Mail

The first person of interest in this story was on his way to Dover on a Friday night in late November. He was walking slowly, along with two other passengers, up the muddy road on Shooter's Hill. Beside them was the Dover Mail coach. They were not walking because they wanted exercise, but because the mud and the hill had forced the horses to stop three times already. Once the horses had even pulled the coach to the side, planning to turn it back down the hill if they could. But that had been when the driver and the guard, with ropes and a whip, had proved that animals do not have a mind of their own. The team of horses had obeyed and returned to their climb.

With their heads hanging and their tails shaking, the animals pushed through the thick mud, moving this way and that as if their legs were about to fall off. Each time the driver would let them stop for a rest, one of the lead horses would shake its head and its whole body as if to say, "It's not possible; we'll never make it." As the horse shook, so did the nerves of the passengers.

Below them was heavy fog. It had moved up to them now, like an evil spirit looking for a place to rest. It was wet and cold, moving like waves on a dangerous ocean. It was so thick that, even in the light of the coach lanterns, one could see but a few yards ahead. The clouds coming from the noses of the tired horses joined with the fog, to make it look like it had all come from them.

The three passengers were covered up to their eyes, and over their ears, and they all were wearing heavy boots. Not one could say what the others looked like, and they did not talk either, as they each tried to hide what they were thinking. In those days, anyone could be a robber or be working for a robber. Every stop on the way had people who were being paid to tell secrets. The guard on the Dover Mail was thinking about that on that Friday night in November, 1775, as he stood on his shelf at the back of the coach, stamping his feet and keeping an eye and a hand on the weapon box. In it were six or eight guns with bullets already in them; and there was a covering of knives at the bottom of the box. The guard did not trust the passengers; the passengers did not trust each other or the guard; and the driver trusted only the horses, and then he only trusted that they were not good enough for the job.

"Whoa!" said the driver. "So then, one more pull and we'll be at the top, no thanks to you animals, for all the trouble you've been." And then, "Hey, Joe!"

"Hello?" the guard answered.

"What time do you make it?"

"At least ten minutes after eleven."

"Good God! And still not at the top. Go! Get on with you!"

The horse that had been shaking itself stopped when the whip hit it, and it started climbing again. The others followed. The coach was moving, and the passengers walked close beside it in the deep mud. If any of them had tried to run ahead into the fog, they would have been in danger of being shot by a highway robber.

That last push carried the Dover Mail to the top of the hill. The horses stopped there to breathe deeply. The guard jumped down to set the brake for the trip down the other side, and to open the door for the passengers to climb in.

"Hey, Joe!" the driver called down in a warning voice, from his seat on the top.

"What is it, Tom?" They both stopped to listen.

"Sounds like a horse walking this way, Joe."

"Running's more like it, Tom," the guard answered, leaving the door and jumping to his place at the back. "People! In the King's name, all of you!" he said as he picked up his gun and looked down the hill behind them.

The passenger we are most interested in was standing on the step, and the others were still on the ground. He stayed there, half in and half out. They all looked from the driver to the guard and back to the driver... and they listened. The driver and guard looked behind them, and even the lead horse turned its head and lifted its ears.

Now that the noise of climbing the hill had stopped, it was very quiet. The heavy breathing of the horses shook the coach quietly, in a way that made the coach, too, look worried. Hearts were pumping, and the breathing was that of tired people... if one could say that anyone was breathing at all.

They could hear a fast horse racing up the hill.

"You there! Stop, or I'll shoot!" the guard cried out.

The horse stopped and from the fog a man's voice asked, "Is that the Dover Mail?"

"Not your business what it is!" the guard shouted back. "What are you?"

"Is that the Dover Mail?"

"Why do you want to know?"

"I want one of your passengers if it is."

"What passenger?"

"Mr. Jarvis Lorry."

The man on the steps showed that it was his name. The others looked at him like he was dangerous.

"Stay where you are," the guard said to the voice in the fog. "If I have an accident with this gun, you won't live to know of it. Now, Lorry, you answer him."

"What's wrong?" the man on the step shouted back. "Who is it? Is that you, Jerry?"

"I don't like Jerry's voice," the guard said to himself. "Too deep and rough for me."

"Yes, it is, Mr. Lorry."

"What's the problem?"

"A letter from T. and Company."

"I know this man," he said to the guard as he stepped down. The other passengers were happy to have him out of the way. They quickly climbed in, shut the door, and pulled up the window.

"Let him come up. There's no danger," Lorry said.

"I hope not; but I can't be sure of it either," the guard said to himself. "Hello there!"

"Hi to you too," Jerry said in his deep voice.

"Just come at a walk. You hear me? And if you have a gun on your saddle, don't let your hand go near it. My nerves make me jump a lot, and when I do bullets fly. So let's look at you."

The shape of a horse and a rider came slowly out of the cloud, and over to the side of the coach. The rider leaned over to give a small, folded piece of paper to the passenger, looking up at the guard as he did it. His horse was tired, and the horse and its rider were covered in mud, from the horse's feet to the rider's hat.

"Guard?" said the passenger with the confidence of a businessman.

The guard, with his right hand ready to shoot, his left on the gun's barrel, and his eye on the rider, answered, "Sir?"

"There's nothing to fear. I'm from Tellson's Bank. You must know Tellson's Bank, in London. I'm going to Paris on business. I'll buy you a drink. May I read this?"

"If you do it quickly."

He opened it in the light of the lantern on that side of the coach, and read it, first to himself, and then out loud. "Wait for the woman at Dover."

"You see, it's not long at all. Jerry, say that my answer is *Called back to life.*"

Jerry moved in his saddle. "That's a strange answer."

"You tell them that; and they'll know that it's from me. Be careful as you go; and good night to you."

With that, the passenger climbed inside the coach. The other passengers did nothing to help him in. They had each secretly tried to hide their watches and money in their boots, and were now trying to make him think that they were asleep. There was no good reason for doing it, but it protected them from having to make a choice about what else to do.

The coach moved off, with the fog becoming thicker as they rolled down the hill. The guard returned his gun to the weapon box.

"Tom!" he called softly over the top of the coach. "Yes, Joe," answered the driver.

"Did you hear what he said?"

"Yes, I did, Joe."

"What do you make of it?"

"Nothing at all, Joe."

"Strange that," the guard said almost to himself. "Because that's just what I made of it too."

Left alone at the top of the hill, Jerry gave his horse a rest, and and cleaned some of the mud off his face.

"*Called back to life.* That's a strange thing to say," he whispered to himself. "Very strange, I'm sure."

3. Night Shadows

Think about this: Each person is in some way a secret from all others. We are made that way. When I come into a city at night, I know that each house holds a secret. Each room in each house holds a secret. And each person on earth hides in their heart at least one secret from everyone else, even to the one who is closest to them. People are not like books or bodies of water. You may read a page or two of a person, but they will close up long before you know all that is in them. The water that is a person will freeze over before you can see all that hides under it. It is like part of every person is dead to all others, and will never be known. My friend is dead; my neighbour is dead; the love of my life is dead, and in this I too am dead to them. Is there any body buried in this city that is harder for me to know now than are the people who are still alive in it?

In this, the rider on the horse was no different to the King, the head of government, or the richest businessman in London. And the same was true of the three passengers crowded together in the one old mail coach. They each knew as little about the others as they would know if they had been travelling in three different coaches, with many cities between each of them.

The rider on the horse did not hurry back to London. He stopped for drinks on the way; but he kept to himself, and he kept his hat pulled down over his eyes. His eyes were black, but shallow in colour and too close together, like they were each afraid to be alone. His eyes made a triangle with the hat above, and they looked down on a very long scarf that covered the man's throat and chin before dropping down almost to his knees. He would pull the scarf away from his mouth with his left hand, far enough to pour in his drink, and then move it back into place.

"No, Jerry, it would never do," the man said to himself as he was riding slowly toward London. "You cannot change the words when your job is to tell what you were told. He did say, 'Called back to...' But break my head if he wasn't drunk when he said it!"

Jerry was thinking so much about the words that he had been asked to carry, that he took off his hat from time to time to scratch his head.

The horse moved slowly along the road to Temple Bar, where Jerry would tell those words to the night watchman, waiting at the door to Tellson's Bank. Above and around him, the shadows of the night took shapes to him that grew out of what he was thinking. And the horse must have been seeing shapes that grew out of its thinking too, for it would jump to the side in fear from time to time.

At the same time the mail coach rolled roughly along the road in the opposite direction, with its three strangers sleeping inside. The shadows of the night took different shapes for each of them. Their dreams were built on the thoughts that had been going through their heads when they fell asleep.

Tellson's Bank was doing big business in the Dover Mail that night. The bank passenger had one arm through a leather loop on the wall of the coach, which did what it could to stop him from falling over onto the passenger next to him. His eyes were only half shut. Light from the coach lantern, coming through the window, and movements from the passenger opposite him became the lights and movements of a busy bank. The sound of the ropes on the horses were the sound of money. He did more business in five minutes than the whole bank had ever done in three times as long. Then the passenger would go into the strong rooms that were under the bank, carrying in one hand the big keys to the boxes there, and a candle in the other. He would find them safe and strong as they always were.

Part of him was in the bank, and part of him was in the coach. But another part of him was on his way to dig up a person who had been buried for many years. The faces would change in the shadows of the night, and the emotions of the buried man would change. At times the man would be proud, or angry, or sad or broken, and he would be very thin, with the colour of death in his skin.

The passenger knew that the man would be 45 years old, and in every picture, the man's hair had turned white from what he had been through.

"How long have you been buried?" he would ask.

And the answer was always the same: "Almost 18 years." "Did you lose all hope of someone coming to dig you up?" "Yes, long ago."

"You know that you have been called back to life?"

"Yes, that is what I have heard."

"Do you want to live again?"

"I don't know."

"Should I bring her in? Or do you want to go and see her?"

The answers to this question were many, and often they were quite different. At times they were, "Wait! It would kill me if I saw her too soon." At times there were quiet tears, and then it was, "Take me to her." And at other times it was wide open eyes, and a confused look, followed by, "I don't know. I don't understand."

After such talk, the passenger, in his mind, would start digging, first with a shovel, and then with a big key, and then with his hands, trying to dig this poor man out. And when the man was out, with dirt on his face and hair, he would turn to dust, and the passenger would come awake and open the coach window to let the fog and rain touch his cheek and bring him back to what was real.

But even when he was awake, looking out on the fog and rain, seeing the light of the coach on the bushes and trees that moved past the window in jumps and shakes, the night shadows outside would join with the night shadows inside. The real bank, the real business of the past day, the real strong rooms, the real news, and the real words that he sent back with the rider all returned to him. And from the middle of all that, would rise the ghost-like face and he would be talking to it again.

"How long have you been buried?"

"Almost 18 years."

"Do you want to live again?"

"I don't know."

Dig, dig, dig, until an angry movement from one of the other two passengers would lead him to close the window, put his arm back through the leather loop, and watch the other two passengers while his mind returned to the bank and to the place where the man was buried.

"How long have you been buried?"

"Almost 18 years."

"Did you lose all hope of someone coming to dig you up?" "Yes, long ago."

The words were still sounding in his head-- as strongly as any words he had ever heard -- when the sleepy passenger opened his eyes to see that there was light outside, and the shadows of the night were gone.

Dropping the window, he looked out at the sun as it came up. He could see a plough lying in a high field, where its owner had left it the night before, when the horses pulling it had finished for the day. Behind that were trees with leaves of burning red and golden yellow to mark the time of year. The ground was cold and wet, but the sky was clear and the sun was beautiful, bright, and full of peace.

"Eighteen years!" the passenger said to himself. "Good God! To be buried alive for 18 years!"

4. Preparing

Later that morning, when the Mail reached Dover, the head doorman at the King George Hotel opened the door with some special words of welcome. A coach arriving from London in winter was special, and the travellers in it would have been brave to have made the trip.

By that time, there was only one passenger left in the coach to receive the words of welcome; for the two others had left earlier, at other places on the way. The smell inside the coach was not very nice, because of the straw that had been put on the floor... straw that was no longer dry, and that was dirty with mud from the boots of the passengers. The darkness inside the coach and the smell of the dry grass made it

seem more like a big house for dogs than a place for people. And Mr. Lorry himself seemed more like a big dog as he shook the straw off his mud covered legs and stepped out in his heavy coat and hat.

"Will there be a ship to France tomorrow, doorman?"

"Yes, sir, if the weather stays clear and the wind does not become any worse. The water level will be best around two in the afternoon. Would you like a bed, sir?"

"I will not go to bed until this evening. But I would like a room, and a barber."

"And then breakfast, sir? Yes, sir. That way, sir, if you please. Show him the Concord room! Take his bag and some hot water there! Take his boots off when he gets there. (You will find a nice fire of coals there, sir.) Send the barber to Concord. Get moving, now, everyone!"

The Concord room was always saved for a passenger on the mail coach, and because passengers on the mail were always covered with coats and scarves from head to foot, workers at the King George Hotel always found it interesting to see what they were like when they came out of the room. They all went in looking the same, but each one was different when they came out.

Because of this, another doorman, two male workers, a few female workers and the woman who owned the hotel were all spaced, by accident you must understand, over the way between the Concord room and the coffee room, when a sixty-year-old man in a very nice brown business suit left the room on his way to breakfast.

The man in brown was the only one in the coffee room that morning. His table was set by the fire, and as he waited for his meal, he was as still as he would be if he was being painted.

His look was one of perfect control, with one hand on each knee, and a loud watch ticking in his pocket like it was competing with the sound of the fire, to see which one was more important. The man had good legs, and he was proud of it, having covered them in top quality, long brown socks. His shoes were clean and neat. He had on a strange little white wig that was clearly not made from real hair. His shirt was not of such good quality as his socks, but it was as white as the tops of the waves that broke on the beach near there, or as the little white sails that one could see on the boats far out in the water. In his perfectly controlled face were two bright eyes that must have been difficult for him to teach, over the years, to hide their feelings, in keeping with the rules of Tellson's Bank. There was a healthy colour in his cheeks, and his face, apart from a few lines to show his age, was free from signs of worry. That may have been because it was his job to think only of other people's worries; and other people's worries are easy to take off, as one can do with other people's clothes.

As often happens to one who is sitting for a painting, Mr. Lorry dropped off to sleep. But when his breakfast arrived, he came awake quickly, moved his chair closer to the table, and said to the waiter. "I'll need a room for a young woman who will be arriving here sometime today. She may ask for me by name, or she may only ask for a man from Tellson's Bank. Please do let me know when she comes."

"Yes, sir. Is that Tellson's Bank in London, sir?" "Yes."

"We often have people from your bank staying here, sir, on their travels between London and Paris."

"Yes, our bank in France is quite big, as is the one in England."

"Yes, sir. You yourself do not travel much?"

"Not these days. It's fifteen years since we... that is, since I... last came here from France."

"Is that true, sir? That was before my time here, sir. In truth, it was before our people's time here, sir. The George was in other hands at that time, sir."

"I believe it was."

"But I would say, sir, that Tellson's was a big business not just fifteen years ago, but more like fifty years ago."

"You can add that three times over if you like, for if you had said 150 years ago, you would not be far from the truth."

"You don't say, sir!"

Opening wide both his mouth and his eyes, the waiter moved back to where he could stand comfortably, and he quietly watched the traveller eat, the way waiters do at all times and in all places.

When Mr. Lorry had finished his meal, he went for a walk. The little town of Dover tried to hide behind the chalk cliffs that dropped down to the beach, while the beach itself was like a desert, with hills of water throwing stones around. The waves did what they liked, and what they liked most was to destroy things. The waves shouted at the town and shouted at the cliffs. The air around the houses smelled so much like fish that one would think that sick fish might go there to breathe the air in the same way that sick people from the town went down to the water for healing. A few people fished in the ocean each day, and many people walked around at night, looking out at the ocean. This happened most when the water level was up. Business people who did no business at all would often become rich quickly without an honest reason for it; and it is strange that no one in the town had any interest in putting up lights at night!

(Dickens is trying to say that the town secretly smuggled things in from across the ocean, under cover of darkness.)

As evening came closer, and the air, which had been so clear that one could see across the ocean to France earlier in the day, turned to clouds, Mr. Lorry's thoughts seemed to take on clouds too. When he was back in the coffee room waiting for his evening meal, his mind was busily digging, digging, digging in the hot red coals on the fire.

A bottle of good red wine after dinner does not hurt the mind of one who digs in hot red coals, apart from putting an end to the digging. Mr. Lorry had stopped his digging sometime earlier, and was pouring the last glass of wine from the bottle with a happy look on his face when he heard the sound of timber wheels on the stone street, just before they turned into the hotel yard.

He put down his glass without touching the wine in it. "She's here!" he said to himself.

In a few minutes the waiter came to say that Miss Manette had arrived from London, and would like to see the man from Tellson's.

"So soon?"

Miss Manette had been eating on the way and was not hungry. On the other hand, she was hungry to hear what the man from Tellson's had to say, as soon as he was able to see her.

The man from Tellson's finished his glass of wine without feeling, smoothed his strange little wig around his ears, and then followed the waiter to Miss Manette's room. It was a big dark room, with heavy, dark furniture that had been oiled so much that the light of two tall candles went deeply into each board on the table where they were sitting. It was like the candles themselves were buried in the black timber, and one needed to dig the light out of them.

It was so dark that Mr. Lorry, finding his way over the rug, was thinking that the woman must be in a neighbouring room. But when he was past the two candles, he could see her standing there in the same room, beside another table.

She was a young woman, not looking more than 17, still in her riding coat, and still holding her hat by its string. Mr. Lorry's eyes rested on a short, thin, beautiful woman with golden hair and blue eyes that met his own with a questioning look. The smooth skin on her forehead could lift itself in a way that showed a mixture of enthusiastic interest, fear, confusion, and surprise. As he looked at her, he remembered a child whom he had held in his arms on another crossing of the Channel between France and England. It had been very cold. The waves had been high, and little pieces of ice had been thrown at him by the wind. The picture in his mind became invisible as quickly as breathing on the tall mirror behind her would have disappeared from the mirror. And he bowed in her direction.

"Please take a seat, sir." Her voice was clear and beautiful, with only the softest French sound to it.

"I kiss your hand, Miss," said Mr. Lorry before taking a seat.

"I received a letter from the Bank yesterday, sir, saying that you had learned... or that you had found..."

"Either word will do, Miss."

"...that you learned something about my poor father, whom I have never seen, him being so long dead..."

Mr. Lorry moved in his chair, and turned a worried look toward the mirror behind Miss Manette.

"And that I needed to go to Paris, where I would meet a man from the Bank who was going there from here."

"That's me."

"And that is what I thought, sir."

She bowed to his age and wisdom. And then she bowed again.

"Because I have no parents, and I have no friend to go with me, I asked the bank if I could travel with you to Paris. They said you had already left London, but they sent a man to find you, and ask you to wait for me here."

"And I was happy to do that," said Mr. Lorry. "I shall be even happier to travel with you."

"Sir, I truly thank you. I was told that you would tell me more about what I must do; and they said that I should be prepared for a surprise. I have tried to be prepared for anything, but I have a strong interest in knowing what this is all about."

"I can understand that," said Mr. Lorry. "Yes... I..." He smoothed his wig once again.

"It is very difficult to start."

He did not start. He just looked at her. Her forehead lifted itself in that way that showed so many different emotions at once. Then she lifted her hand, like she was trying to touch a shadow.

"Do I know you?"

"Should you?" he asked, opening his hands and projecting them toward her, with a smile as his only argument.

The emotion showing in her forehead became deeper, as she sat down in the chair that she had been standing beside. He watched her as she thought deeply, and when she looked up at him again, he went on:

"Because you live in England now, can I call you Miss Manette?"

"If you like, sir."

"Miss Manette, I am a man of business; and I have a job to do. As you listen, think of me only as a talking machine, for I am not much more than that. If you will let me, I will tell you the story of one of the people that I have served."

"Story?"

He chose not to hear or to answer what she was really asking, as he went on quickly. "Yes, one of the people I have served. He was a French scientist. A doctor."

"Not from Beauvais?"

"Why, yes, from Beauvais. Like your father, Mr. Manette. And like your father, he was well known in Paris. I was proud to have known him there. We secretly did business together. At that time I had been in our French office for about twenty years."

"At that time? May I ask what time that was, sir?"

"I am talking, Miss, of twenty years ago. He married an English woman. His business, like the business of many other French men and families, was fully in the hands of Tellson's Bank. I have served hundreds of people like that in my job. They are not friends, and there are no emotions between us... just business. In short, I have no feelings about these things. I am only a machine. So, to go on..."

"But this is my father's story, sir." And her forehead was rougher than ever now, as she looked deeply at him. "I am starting to think that, when my mother died, two years after my father, it was you who carried me to England. I am almost sure it was you."

Mr. Lorry touched the shy little hand that had reached out to take his, and he lifted it to his lips, after which he walked with her back to the chair she had left. Then, with his left hand on the back of the chair, he busied his right hand with touching his chin, smoothing his wig, and making movements to go with what he went on to say. She sat looking up at him as he talked.

"Yes, Miss Manette. It was I. And you can see that I was only doing my job when you remember that you have not seen me since. It has been the business of Tellson's Bank to care for you; but I myself have been busy with other people. Feelings? I

have no time for them. I spend my whole life, Miss, working for a very big machine that is there only to make money."

After this strange way of talking about his job, Mr. Lorry used both of his hands to smooth the wig (which was not needed, for it could not be smoother or flatter than it was already), and then returned his left hand to the back of the chair.

"As you have seen, the story has been about your father. But now comes a difference. If your father had not died when he did... Don't be afraid! My, how you jumped!"

And she did truly jump. With both of her hands she took hold of his right wrist.

"Please," said Mr. Lorry softly, bringing his left hand over to put it on the shaking hands that were holding his right wrist. "Please control yourself. This is nothing but business. As I was saying..."

But her look made him forget for a second what he was saying. So he started again.

"As I was saying, if Mr. Manette had not died, if he had only disappeared, if he had been carried away secretly, if it had been difficult to say to what awful place he had been taken, if he had an enemy in that country who could fill in papers to have him put in prison with no one knowing where it was, and if his wife had asked the king, the queen, the court, the church to do something with no effect, then the story of your father would be the story of the poor man I served, the doctor from Beauvais."

"I beg you to tell me more, sir." "I will. I will. Are you up to it?"

"What I am not up to is waiting."

"You sound relaxed. And, yes, you do look relaxed. That's good!" (But he did not sound as confident of this as his words may have seemed.) "Back to business. Think of it as business... business that must be done. Now if this doctor's wife, a strong, brave woman, had been through so much before the birth of her child..."

"The child was a daughter, sir?"

"Yes, a daughter. Just... just... business. Do not worry. Miss, if the poor woman had been through so much before the child was born, that she wanted to shield the child from going through the same things, by letting her believe that her father was dead... No, don't get down on your knees in front of me like that! In heaven's name, why are you doing that?"

"For the truth. Oh good kind sir, for the truth!"

"This is... is... business. You have confused me, and how can I do my job if I am confused? Let us think clearly. If you could, shall we say, tell me how much nine times nine is, or how many shillings are in a pound, it would encourage me to go on. I would be much more confident about how much you are in control of your emotions."

She did not do as he asked, but when he had softly lifted her to the chair, she sat so quietly, and her hands, which were still holding his wrists, were so much more relaxed, that Mr. Jarvis Lorry felt better about going on.

"That's good. Very good. Be brave. Business. You have business before you. Business that will help you. Miss Manette, this is what your mother did with you. When she died -- I believe from a broken heart -- never having stopped in her looking for your father, she left you, at two years of age, to grow up beautiful and happy,

without the dark cloud of not knowing how your father was, or if he was dead or alive."

As he said this, Mr. Lorry looked down with loving sadness on her long golden hair, as if he was thinking that it might already be turning grey.

"You know that your parents were not rich, and that what they had has been given to you. We have not found more money or land for you. But..."

He felt her squeezing his wrist, and he stopped. The rough lines on her forehead that so interested him before, became even deeper as they showed her pain and fear.

"But he has been... been found. He is alive. I am sure that he will have been deeply changed. It is possible that his mind has been destroyed by what he has been through, but we'll hope for the best. Yet, he is alive. Your father has been taken to the house of an old servant in Paris. That is where we're going. I will go with you to know if it is truly him, and you will go to bring him back to life, to show him love and help him return to the world.

There was a little shaking that moved through her body, and he could feel it. She said, in a low, clear, but surprised voice, as if she were saying it in a dream, "I am going to see his ghost. It will not be him. It will be his ghost."

Mr. Lorry quietly rubbed the hands that were holding his arm.

"There, there, there! See now? See? You now know the best and the worst. You are now well on your way to see your poor wronged father, and with a good trip over the ocean and a good trip over the land, you will soon be by his sweet side."

In the same low voice, but whispering now, she said again, "I have been free and happy, never thinking about his ghost."

"Only one thing more," said Mr. Lorry quite strongly, hoping that it would bring her back to thinking clearly. "He has been found under another name. We do not know if he is hiding his old name or if he has forgotten it. There is no need to even ask now. There is also no need to know if he has been free and hiding for long, or if he has been a prisoner all this time. There is no need to ask questions of important people now, because it could be dangerous. It would be best not to talk about his past anywhere or in any way, but to take him -- at least for a while -- out of France. Even I, protected by being from England, and Tellson's, which is important to the wealth of that country, try not to say anything about what happened. I do not have any paper on me with writing about this business. What we are doing must be kept secret. Who I am and what I am doing is covered only in four secret words: *Called back to life*. It could mean anything. But what is happening? You are not listening to a word that I'm saying! Miss Manette!"

Perfectly still and quiet, without even falling back in her chair, she now sat under his hand without any feeling. Her eyes were open and looking at him, with that same strange look on her face, like it was shaped in stone now. She was holding so strongly to his arm that he feared he would hurt her if he tried to pull her hands away. So he did not move, but called out loudly for help.

A wild-looking woman with red hair, dressed in a tight red dress, and wearing a big cylinder-shaped hat, came running into the room, followed closely by some hotel workers. The woman quickly fixed the problem by putting a big strong hand on Mr. Lorry's chest and sending him flying back against the nearest wall.

Mr. Lorry's first thought, as he hit the wall, was that this must be a man, and not a woman.

"Why, look at you all!" shouted the woman, turning to the servants. "Why don't you get something to help, instead of standing there looking at me? Am I really so interesting? Go and get something. You'll hear from me if you don't bring smelling-salts and cold water, and bring it quickly. Do it or you'll hear from me!"

They all left at once, and she softly carried the young woman over to the couch, calling her "Ladybird" and "my little one" and smoothing her golden hair to the side and over her shoulders, with great pride and care.

"And you in brown!" she said, turning angrily to Mr. Lorry, "couldn't you have said what you needed to say without scaring her to death? Look at her, with her beautiful white face and her cold hands. Do you call that being a banker?"

Mr. Lorry was so baffled by a question that he had no answer for, that he could only look on, at a distance, feeling humbled and sorry for Miss Manette, while the strong woman, having scared the workers away with a promise that they would "hear from her" something too awful to name, was able, just by looking at her, to slowly bring the young woman back to life.

"I do hope she'll be okay now," said Mr. Lorry.

"No thanks to you in brown, if she is. My poor sweet thing!"

"I hope," said Mr. Lorry after another time of feeling weak and humble, "that you are here to travel with Miss Manette to France?"

"I don't think so!" answered the strong woman. "If I was to go over the ocean, do you think that God would have put me on an island?"

This being another question that was too hard for Mr. Jarvis Lorry to answer, he left the room to think about it.

5. The Wine Shop

A big barrel of wine had been dropped and broken in the street. The accident had happened in getting it out of the wagon. It had landed with a bang, breaking the metal rings holding it together; and now the barrel was on the stones near the front door of the wine shop, like the shell of a big broken nut.

All who saw it dropped what they were doing and ran to drink what wine they could save. The rough stones in the road, made to cripple any who tried to walk over them, had places between them that were like little lakes, each catching some of the wine. And by each little lake was a group of people pushing to get to the wine. Some men were face down near the wine, getting what they could in their two hands. Some were giving some to women who leaned over their shoulders. Others would put a cup into the liquid, and a few women even put their head scarves into it before squeezing the wine into the mouths of their babies. A few made little walls of dirt to stop the wine from running away. And there were those who, following directions from people leaning out of high windows, ran here and there to where they believed the most wine could be found. Others were happy to pick up pieces of the broken barrel, drink what little was on them and then chew on them, to get the taste of the wine out of the wet timber.

Very little wine was lost, and not only was the wine itself picked up, but an equal measure of mud was picked up with it, making it look like a miracle-working street cleaner had been there.

There was a lot of laughing and many happy voices for as long as the job of cleaning up the wine lasted. The people were not rough with each other, but it was more like they were playing a game. Those who were able to win a good taste of the wine would shake hands, laugh, dance, and hug each other. When the wine was finished, people returned to what they were doing. The man who had left his saw in a piece of timber he was cutting for the fire, returned to his cutting. The woman who had been trying to warm herself and her hungry child by a container of hot coals, returned to the coals. Men without coats who had come into the winter light from the basements where they worked, returned to the basements. And a sadness returned to the street that was more a part of it than was light from the sun.

The wine had been red wine, and it had painted the ground red there in the Saint Antoine part of Paris. Red too were the hands and faces and cold feet of the people who had come. The hands of the man cutting timber left red marks on the branches that he was cutting now. The woman who had given wine to her baby now had a red mark on her head, where the head scarf had been returned. Those who had chewed on the timber pieces of the barrel had wide red marks on both sides of their mouths. And one tall man, rubbing his finger in the bitter seeds at the bottom of the barrel, used them to write BLOOD on a wall.

A time was coming when that red liquid would be poured out on the street too. And many of these same people would have blood on themselves like the red wine that marked their bodies now.

Now that the clouds were back over Saint Antoine, the darkness in that place was heavy. Cold, dirt, sickness, and hunger were the servants of the poor saint after whom the place was named. Antoine's servants were all strong, but hunger was the strongest. These people had been through many troubles, and they were not the kind of troubles that kept old people young. Everywhere you looked, you could see, instead, young people who had been turned into old people because of their troubles. The children had the faces and voices of adults, and adults had the deep lines of old age, all of it coming from that devil called hunger. You could see hunger in the broken clothes hanging on the lines outside the tall houses. Hunger was there in every little piece of firewood that the man was cutting. It looked down on them from the chimneys that had no smoke coming out, and it looked up at them from the street, where there was not the smallest piece of food thrown away. Hunger was there in the bread shop, where only a few very rough loaves of bread could be found, and in the butcher shop, where dead dogs were cooked and made into sausages. You could hear the dry bones of hunger in the chestnuts that were cooking in a turning cylinder, and in the little bowls of rough potato pieces, cooked in a few small drops of oil, that were to be sold for the smallest coin.

The place and its people were equal to the hunger that lived there. It was a narrow bending street with more narrow bending streets coming off of it. All of them were full of bad smells and of sick-looking people dressed in rags like so many scarecrows. But in these people there was also the hope that things could change. Sad and slow as they were, there were still eyes of fire, tight lips (from all that they were holding back) and serious faces. The lines on their faces were like the ropes that they knew could be used to hang them or could be used by them to hang their enemies.

The dangerous stones on the road, with room between them for mud and water, were not made for walking. Down the middle of the road was a channel for rain water, but in a storm, by the time the channel filled, water would already be working its way into many of the houses. Ropes across the road here and there each held one rough lantern, that the lantern-lighter would lower each night, put a light to, and lift back up on the rope. When one looked at all of these lights moving from side to side in the wind, it gave the feeling of being in a storm on a ship. And in real life a storm was building up there that could have serious effects.

The time would come when the thin scarecrows living in that part of Paris would have watched the lantern-lighter so long that they would have started to think of pulling bodies up on those ropes and putting fire to them. But the time was not yet. For now, the scarecrows would shake in the wind while the birds in their beautiful feathers would go on singing their beautiful songs without any interest in the warnings.

The wine shop was a corner shop, better than most, both in its size and in its looks. Its owner had stood outside in his yellow top and green pants, watching as the people raced for the wine.

"It's not my problem," he had said, lifting and dropping his shoulders to show how little interest he had in it all. "The people from the market dropped it, so they'll just have to bring me another."

Then he saw the tall joker writing his word on the wall. He called out to him from across the street, "Say there, what do you think you're doing?"

The man pointed to his joke, proud of what he had written, as is often the way with his kind. But the joke missed its mark and did not bring a laugh. That too is often the way with his kind.

"What now? Do you want to be locked away as crazy?" asked the wine shop owner as he crossed the road. He picked up mud in his hand on the way, and rubbed it over the word. "Why do you write here on the wall? Is there... listen to me... is there no other place where you can write words like this?"

In saying this, he dropped his clean hand (maybe by accident and maybe not) on the foolish man's heart. The joker pushed it away and jumped high in the air only to come down in a dancing movement, with one shoe pulled off and in his hand. He reached out to the wine shop owner with his shoe.

"Put it on. Put it on. You should call wine wine and leave it at that." With that, he rubbed his dirty hand on the clothes (if you can call them that) that the joker was wearing, as if to say that he was the reason that the hand had become dirty in the first place. Then he returned across the road and into the wine shop.

This owner was a strong man of thirty, with a thick neck. One could understand him being angry, because it was very cold out and he did not have a coat on (but he carried one over his shoulder). Even the sleeves of his shirt were rolled up, leaving his brown arms with no covering to the elbows. He did not wear a hat either, to cover his short dark hair. He was a dark man all over, with good eyes and a good distance between them. On the whole he was friendly, but he was not the kind of person one would want to argue with, or to meet on a narrow road with water on each side.

Madam Defarge, his wife, was sitting in the shop behind the counter, when he came in. She was a heavy woman of about his age with an eye that looked at nothing and everything at the same time. She had a few heavy rings on her fingers, an interesting

face, and a quiet spirit. She had an air of confidence about her that would make one think she was not often wrong in anything she did. Not liking the cold, Madam Defarge was covered in animal skins, with a big scarf turned around her head, but not enough to cover the big rings hanging from her ears. She had been knitting, but she had stopped to pick at her teeth with a match stick. She was so busy doing this, with her left hand holding up her right elbow, that she said nothing when her husband came in. She just made a very little cough and lifted her eyebrow by the smallest distance, as if to say that he needed to look around the shop and see if there were any new people who had come in while he was out.

He looked around to see if there was anyone new in the shop, and he saw an older man together with a young woman, both seated in a corner. There were also two people playing cards, two playing dominoes, and three people at the counter talking. As he walked over to the counter, he heard the older man in the corner say to the young woman, "There's our man."

"What the devil do I have to do with him?" Mr. Defarge asked himself. "I don't know him."

He did not show any interest in the new people, but started talking to the three men at the counter instead.

"How is it, Jack?" said one of the three to Mr. Defarge. "Did they drink all of the wine?"

"Every drop, Jack," answered Mr. Defarge.

At this point, Madam Defarge coughed another little cough, and lifted her eyebrows a little more than she did the first time.

"It is not often," said the second of the three to Mr. Defarge, "that many of these poor animals know the taste of wine, or of anything but black bread and death. Isn't that true, Jack?"

"That's true, Jack," Mr. Defarge returned.

At this, Madam Defarge, still quietly using her match stick to clean her teeth, gave another little cough, and lifted her eyebrows a little higher than she had just done.

The last of the three put down his cup, rubbed his lips together and had his say: "Ah, so much the worse for them! Now they will always have that bitter taste in their mouths. The poor cows do live a hard life, do they not, Jack?"

"You're so right, Jack," Mr. Defarge answered.

This is when Madam Defarge put down her match stick, holding her eyebrows up, and moved a little in her seat.

"Stay there!" whispered her husband. "Men... my wife!"

The three men took off their hats to Madam Defarge, and she answered back by bowing her head and giving them a little look. Then she looked quietly around the wine shop, picked up her needles with what looked like a happy spirit, and turned her whole mind to knitting.

"Good men," said her husband, "the room that you had been asking to see is on the fifth floor. The steps leading up to it start in the little closed yard to my left here, close to the shop window. But now, as I remember, one of you has been there already, and so he can show you all the way. You may go, my friends!"

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