“A Tale of Two Cities” Character List

Charles Darnay - A French aristocrat by birth, Darnay chooses to live in England because he cannot bear to be associated with the cruel injustices of the French social system. Darnay displays great virtue in his rejection of the snobbish and cruel values of his uncle, the Marquis Evrémonde. He exhibits an admirable honesty in his decision to reveal to Doctor Manette his true identity as a member of the infamous Evrémonde family. So, too, does he prove his courage in his decision to return to Paris at great personal risk to save the imprisoned Gabelle.

Sydney Carton - An insolent, indifferent, and alcoholic attorney who works with Stryver. Carton has no real prospects in life and doesn’t seem to be in pursuit of any. He does, however, love Lucie, and his feelings for her eventually transform him into a man of profound merit. At first the polar opposite of Darnay, in the end Carton morally surpasses the man to whom he bears a striking physical resemblance.

Doctor Manette - Lucie’s father and a brilliant physician, Doctor Manette spent eighteen years as a prisoner in the Bastille. At the start of the novel, Manette does nothing but make shoes, a hobby that he adopted to distract himself from the tortures of prison. As he overcomes his past as a prisoner, however, he proves to be a kind, loving father who prizes his daughter’s happiness above all things.

Lucie Manette - A young French woman who grew up in England, Lucie was raised as a ward of Tellson’s Bank because her parents were assumed dead. Dickens depicts Lucie as an archetype of compassion. Her love has the power to bind her family together—the text often refers to her as the “golden thread.” Furthermore, her love has the power to transform those around her. It enables her father to be “recalled to life,” and it sparks Sydney Carton’s development from a “jackal” into a hero.

Monsieur Defarge - A wine shop owner and revolutionary in the poor Saint Antoine section of Paris, Monsieur Defarge formerly worked as a servant for Doctor Manette. Defarge proves an intelligent and committed revolutionary, a natural leader. Although he remains dedicated to bringing about a better society at any cost, he does demonstrate a kindness toward Manette. His wife, Madame Defarge, views this consideration for Manette as a weakness.
Madame Defarge - A cruel revolutionary whose hatred of the aristocracy fuels her tireless crusade, Madame Defarge spends a good deal of the novel knitting a register of everyone who must die for the revolutionary cause. Unlike her husband, she proves unrelentingly blood-thirsty, and her lust for vengeance knows no bounds.

Jarvis Lorry - An elderly businessman who works for Tellson’s Bank, Mr. Lorry is a very business-oriented bachelor with a strong moral sense and a good, honest heart. He proves trustworthy and loyal, and Doctor Manette and Lucie come to value him as a personal friend.

Jerry Cruncher - An odd-job man for Tellson’s Bank, Cruncher is gruff, short-tempered, superstitious, and uneducated. He supplements his income by working as a “Resurrection-Man,” one who digs up dead bodies and sells them to scientists.

Miss Pross - The servant who raised Lucie, Miss Pross is brusque, tough, and fiercely loyal to her mistress. Because she personifies order and loyalty, she provides the perfect foil to Madame Defarge, who epitomizes the violent chaos of the revolution.

Marquis Evrémonde - Charles Darnay’s uncle, the Marquis Evrémonde is a French aristocrat who embodies an inhumanly cruel caste system. He shows absolutely no regard for human life and wishes that the peasants of the world would be exterminated.

Mr. Stryver - An ambitious lawyer, Stryver dreams of climbing the social ladder. Unlike his associate, Sydney Carton, Stryver is bombastic, proud, and foolish.

John Barsad - Like Roger Cly, John Barsad is a British spy who swears that patriotism is his only motive. Barsad falsely claims to be a virtuous man of upstanding reputation.

Roger Cly - Like John Barsad, Roger Cly is a British spy who swears that patriotism alone inspires all of his actions. Cly feigns honesty but in fact constantly participates in conniving schemes.

Gabelle - The man charged with keeping up the Evrémonde estate after the Marquis’ death, Gabelle is imprisoned by the revolutionaries. News of his internment prompts Darnay to travel to France to save him.