

Childsplay presents the WORLD Premiere of



By **Dwayne Hartford**

Adapted from the novel by Charles Dickens

Directed by **David Saar**

Scenic Design by **Carey Wong**

Costume Design by **Connie Furr**

Lighting Design by **Rick Paulsen**

Sound Design by **Brian Peterson**

Dramaturg: **Graham Whitehead**

Stage Manager: **Alexandra Corder**

Cast of Characters

Sydney Carton.D. Scott Withers
Dr. Manette.Graham Whitehead
Mr. Lorry.Andrés Alcalá
Lucie Manette.Amanda Schaar
Miss Pross, etc.Katie McFadzen
Defarge.Christopher Mascarelli
Madame Defarge.Debra K. Stevens
Charles Darnay.Joseph Kramer
Marquis, etc.Jon Gentry
Gaspard, etc.Tim Shawver

Tempe Center for the Arts, Studio Theatre
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**Preview Guide for Teachers and Parents to
Childsplay's Production of**

A Tale of Two Cities

We hope you find this guide helpful in preparing your students for an enjoyable and educational theatrical experience. Included you'll find things to talk about before and after seeing the performance, classroom activities that deal with curriculum connections and education standards, and resource materials.

The Story: Set during the terror of the French Revolution, this new adaptation of *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens shows the influence of historical and political upheaval on a small group of individuals. In the end, it reveals the destructive power of hate and the redemptive power of love.

The play begins in France in 1759. A young Dr. Manette has been summoned by two noblemen to care for an ailing young woman and her brother who has been stabbed. The brother tells the doctor of the evil things the noblemen have done to his sister and his family. He curses them and their lineage and dies.

We then skip forward to 1778. Jarvis Lorry, an elderly banker from London, arrives in Paris with Lucie Manette to retrieve her father who was recently released from the Bastille Prison. They go to the wine shop of Monsieur and Madame Defarge. Defarge, Dr. Manette's former servant, has taken care of Manette since his release. The eighteen years of solitude have driven the doctor into madness. He spends his time cobbling shoes. Seeing Lucie, who resembles her late mother, a door opens in Manette's mind and hopes are raised for recovery.

Five years later in London, a young Frenchman named Charles Darnay is on trial, accused of being a spy. Lucie and her father are reluctant witnesses for the prosecution. Darnay is represented by the bumbling Mr. Stryver, who is assisted by Sydney Carton, a brilliant but lazy lawyer. Carton's lack of ambition and fondness for wine lead him to a rather empty existence. After an eyewitness swears that Darnay is the man she saw four years ago, Carton points out the resemblance between Darnay and himself, suggesting a case of mistaken identity. Darnay is acquitted.

Both Darnay and Carton become fixtures in the Manette household along with Lorry and Lucie's faithful guardian, Miss Pross. As the flames of love for Lucie Manette are fanned in the hearts of both Darnay and Carton in London, the flames of revolutionary ardor and hatred against oppression are fanned in the hearts of the Defarges in Paris. The callous Marquis de Evrémonde runs down a poor child with his carriage and, taking the typical attitude of the aristocracy toward the poor, he curses the peasantry for being in the way. Madame Defarge records this outrage, along with all the others, in her knitting.

Back in London, Darnay asks Manette for permission to marry Lucie. When Manette grants it,

Darnay tells the doctor that Darnay is an alias. Manette sees that Darnay is a man of good character and tells him that he doesn't care to know his real name, and that if Darnay insists, he can reveal his identity after the wedding. Darnay agrees to the arrangement.

Later that night, a drunk Carton appears on the Manette doorstep. He knows that Lucie loves Darnay and not him, but he pledges his love to her, stating that he would die for her or anyone she loves.

Now that he is to wed, Darnay goes back to France to meet with his uncle and only relative, the Marquis de Evrémonte. Darnay had left France because of his shame and repugnance for the treatment the peasants received at the hands of the aristocracy, especially his family. Hoping to share the family heritage with his wife and future children, Darnay asks the Marquis to atone and make retributions. When the Marquis rebuffs him, Darnay renounces the Evrémonte name.

After the wedding, Darnay reveals his true identity to Manette. That night, Manette relapses into his old prison habit of making shoes while in France, Gaspard, the father of the child killed by Evrémonte, sneaks into the Marquis' chambers and kills him.

The year is now 1789. The peasants in Paris, accompanied by Monsieur and Madame Defarge, storm the Bastille and the French Revolution begins. The revolutionaries murder aristocrats in the streets.

Three years later, Lorry travels to France on bank business. Darnay receives a plea for help from the Evrémonte estate keeper who has been imprisoned for the crime of working for the aristocracy. Darnay goes to France where he is arrested. Hearing of his arrest, Lucie, Manette and Miss Pross follow him to Paris, where they meet up with Mr. Lorry.

As a former prisoner of the Bastille, Manette is respected by the revolutionaries. He uses his influence to find Darnay. Lucie reveals her pregnancy to a surprised Madame Defarge.

Months pass, the guillotine takes the lives of many, including the King, and Manette works to bring Darnay to trial. Lucie gives birth to a healthy baby girl. Upon hearing the news of the birth, Carton realizes that he must go to Paris to honor his commitment to Lucie.

At Darnay's trial, Defarge produces a letter that he discovered in Manette's old jail cell in the Bastille. The letter explains the opening scene of the play. The noblemen were Evrémontes, Darnay's father and uncle. Disgusted by the acts of the nobles, Manette refused payment for his help. The brothers had him arrested to silence him. In the letter, Manette condemns the Evremonde brothers and all their descendants. Darnay is sentenced to death for the crimes of his ancestors.

Later that night, at the wine shop, the Defarges argue. Madame wants to have Lucie and the baby executed as well. Defarge says that they have their revenge and to leave the rest alone. Madame reminds her husband that she is the surviving sibling of the man and woman killed by the Evrémontes, and the revenge is hers. Carton arrives and learns of the danger to Lucie and the baby. He runs into a guard at the prison where Darnay is

being held. Carton formulates a plan and bribes the guard into letting him see Darnay the next morning. Carton then goes to Lorry and arranges to have him and the Manette family meet him in a carriage in the morning to flee France. He asks Lorry to hold his travel permit until then.

In the prison cell, Carton drugs Darnay, and begins changing clothes. Meanwhile, Mr. Lorry, Dr. Manette, Lucie and the baby leave for the carriage. Ms. Pross stays behind a few minutes so as not to raise suspicions. Madame Defarge arrives. The two women struggle and Madame Defarge is killed by her own gun. Miss Pross escapes to the waiting carriage where Darnay, now disguised as Carton, has been delivered safely.

Carton goes to the guillotine in Darnay's place and dies for Lucie, fulfilling his earlier promise to her. He is at peace with his sacrifice, realizing that this final act is far better than anything he has ever done.

Hold That Thought: Ask students the questions in **bold type** on this page before seeing the play and talk about their answers afterwards!

About this production:

► The play excludes several scenes and characters that are in the book. There are ten actors who play a total of twenty five characters. For most of the play, the actors remain onstage and when not involved, they watch the action. **What do the actors do to differentiate between the characters they play?**

► One set represents many locations in both England and France in the late 1700s. The set is made up of two leveled scaffolding backed with bricks providing many entrances, nooks, storage spots, and playing areas. The world or the play is complex, urban, without sunlight, openness or joy. **How does the scenic designer suggest the many locations in the story? How does he create mood and atmosphere with textures and colors?**

► The costumes are a combination of 18th century fashion and punk or goth. The design was influenced by Japanese street fashion (also known as Gothic and Lolita) made popular internationally by FRUiTS Magazine. All characters will have a base look that will be added to or subtracted from for different characters. Some changes happen "a vista" or in front of the audience. **What do the costumes communicate about a character's personality, age, occupation and social status?**

► The lighting design creates the atmosphere of the play. Light will be used to create the concept of spilled wine and blood. The lights will also help define locations and time. **How does the lighting designer use light to communicate mood?**

► The sound designer's job in this production is to use sound effects to enhance the crowd scenes, the sound of the guillotine, gunshots, etc. as well as provide music. **What are the various sound effects that you remember from the play and how did they support the action?**

Theater Etiquette: Please take a moment to review the rules of theater etiquette before seeing the play. For assistance, go to www.childsplayaz.org to access the extended online version of this guide.

Topics for discussion, activities, or lesson plans:

French Revolution * Dickens and 18th century London * Courts of law * Self sacrifice * Revenge vs. forgiveness * Aristocrats and the common people * Redemption * The guillotine * Page to stage

Read the Book! Read the book or at least review the synopsis and characters in this guide before seeing the play. Reading the book after seeing the play is also a good idea. **How do you think the book will translate to the stage? What do you think the similarities and differences will be?**

Some Words to Know

Before the Show:

► **La Bastille:** prison where Dr. Manette is held. The storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789 marked the beginning of the French Revolution. Bastille is a French word meaning "castle" or "stronghold".

► **La Force:** a prison in Paris where Darnay is held

► **Jacques:** a name the revolutionaries used to refer to each other so as not to get caught by the police or aristocracy.

► **Guillotine:** a device used to carry out executions by decapitation, especially popular during the French Revolution.

► **Old Bailey:** London's central criminal court, 1674-1834

► **Packet ship:** a ship that originally carried post office mail packets to British colonies and outposts. Also transported bullion, private goods and passengers.

Vocabulary Words to Review:

mademoiselle * monsieur * virtuous * oppressors/oppressed * cobblestones * epoch * incredulity * superlatives * traitor * treason * rebellion * imprisonment *

acquittal * disconcerting * revolution * anecdotes * abominable * exterminate * jeopardize * ambition * morality * folly * resentment * tyrants * vile * vermin * renounce * vulgar * rabble * perpetrators * vengeance * compassion * revulsion * turmoil * digressed * fortuitous * ethical * tribunal *

Themes to Explore:

sacrifice * resurrection * redemption * social injustice/oppression * vengeance/retribution * fruitless nature of revolution and causes of revolution * irony * destructive power of hate * redemptive power of love * life and death, love and sacrifice * family * money and power * the strife of the poor * faithfulness * peace and war * power and abuse of power

Discussion Starters or Journaling Questions:

► While the play is an adaptation of the book, it is an abbreviated version. **How does the play differ from the book? Which characters or incidents were left out of the play or presented differently in the play? Why do you think the playwright chose to make the changes?**

► Charles Darnay renounces the Evrémonde name. **Do you think he was just in doing so? What would a family member have to do for you to renounce them?**

► Dr. Manette and Charles Darnay both spend extended amounts of time in jail and away from their families. **How would it feel to be forced away from your family and friends for an extended time? What would it be like when you came home again?**

► Sydney Carton makes a huge sacrifice when he trades places with Darnay. **What is the greatest sacrifice you have made for another? What is the greatest sacrifice that was made for you?**

Activities Linked to Standards:

Creative Drama/Theater:

► Choose a scene that wasn't included in the play but is in the book that you can adapt for the stage. Include both dialogue and stage directions. Stage your scene and share it with the class. **T-S1C4-102**

► What if this story happened in 2008? Choose one of the scenes in the play (or book) and play it as if it were happening today. **T-S1C4-301**

► You are a director and must cast the movie version of *A Tale of Two Cities* using current film actors. Cast 5 characters and be able to explain why those actors should play the roles. Compare your casting with others. **T-SC5-301**

Visual Art:

► Choose one of the themes from *A Tale of Two Cities* (revenge, revolution, sacrifice, etc.) and create a collage that reflects the theme.

Use clippings from magazines and any other medium available to you.

VA-S1C2-201

► Draw a picture of the final garment that Madame Defarge's knitting would have produced. How did she "record" information in her knitting? **VA-S1C4-302**

Reading:

► Read and review another Charles Dickens book. Compare and contrast it with "*A Tale of Two Cities*." **R-07-S3C1**

Writing:

► Write a eulogy (speech praising a person) or an obituary (notice of a person's death often printed in papers that includes a biography) for Sydney Carton, the seamstress, the Marquis or Madame Defarge. **R-07S3C2-2**

► Look at the sentence "love and forgiveness bring much greater peace and happiness than hatred and vengeance." Using a short essay format, talk about this in relationship to the play and in relationship to life today. **R-07-S3C5-01**

Some Dickens Facts:

Birth Name: Charles John Huffman Dickens • **Born:** February 7, 1812 • **Birth Place:** Portsmouth, Hampshire, England • **Married to:** Catherine Hogarth • **Number of children:** Ten • **Died:** June 9, 1870 • **Cause of Death:** Stroke

For a detailed biography, go to:
www.dickens-literature.com

Interesting Internet Connections:

www.helsinki.fi/kasv/nokol/dickens.html

-Charles Dickens site

www.fidnet.com/~dap1955/dickens/

-more on Dickens

<http://charlesdickenspage.com/index.html>

-yet another Dickens page

www.english.uwosh.edu/roth/VictorianEngland.htm

-French revolution

www.metaphor.dk/guillotine/Pages/Guillot.html

-the guillotine

www.blastmilk.com/decollete/guillotine/

-lots of fascinating info related to the guillotine

www.discoverfrance.net/France/Paris/Monuments-Paris/Bastille.shtml

-all about La Bastille



The Writings of Charles Dickens

-*The Pickwick Papers* (Monthly serial, April 1836 to November 1837)

-*The Adventures of Oliver Twist* (Monthly serial in Bentley's Miscellany, February 1837 to April 1839)

-*The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* (Monthly serial, April 1838 to October 1839)

-*The Old Curiosity Shop* (Weekly serial in Master Humphrey's Clock, April 25, 1840, to February 6, 1841)

-*Barnaby Rudge: A Tale of the Riots of 'Eighty* (Weekly serial in Master Humphrey's Clock, February 13, 1841, to November 27, 1841)

-*A Christmas Carol* (1843)

-*The Chimes* (1844)

-*The Cricket on the Hearth* (1845)

-*The Battle of Life* (1846)

-*The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain* (1848)

-*The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit* (Monthly serial, January 1843 to July 1844)

-*Dombey and Son* (Monthly serial, October 1846 to April 1848)

-*David Copperfield* (Monthly serial, May 1849 to November 1850)

-*Bleak House* (Monthly serial, March 1852 to September 1853)

-*Hard Times: For These Times* (Weekly serial in - Household Words, April 1, 1854, to August 12, 1854)

-*Little Dorrit* (Monthly serial, December 1855 to June 1857)

-*A Tale of Two Cities* (Weekly serial in All the Year - Round, April 30, 1859, to November 26, 1859)

-*Great Expectations* (Weekly serial in All the Year Round, December 1, 1860 to August 3, 1861)

-*Our Mutual Friend* (Monthly serial, May 1864 to November 1865)

-*No Thoroughfare** (1867)

-*The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Monthly serial, April 1870 to September 1870. Only six of twelve planned numbers completed)

-*The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices* (1890)

*with Wilkie Collins

A Tale of Two Cities Booklist

Prepared with the help of
Tim Wadham, Youth Services
Coordinator for the Maricopa
County Library District



5-8th Grade

French Revolution

Why Not, Lafayette? By Jean Fritz

The Lacemaker and the Princess by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

The Golden Hour by Maiya Williams

Dickens and 18th century London

Charles Dickens: The Man Who Had Great Expectations by Diane Stanley

Mr. Dickens Hits Town by Jan Mark

Dickens: His Work and His World by Michael Rosen

The Ravenmaster's Secret: Escape from the Tower of London by Elvira Woodruff

Self sacrifice

Ho Yi the Archer and Other Classic Chinese Tales by Shelley Fu

Revenge vs forgiveness

Touching Spirit Bear by Ben Mikaelson

Whirligig by Paul Fleischman

What Hearts by Bruce Brooks

Hamlet by William Shakespeare retold by Bruce Coville

Aristocrats and the common people

Thomas Jefferson: The Revolutionary Aristocrat by Milton Meltzer

Redemption

Weasel by Cynthia DeFelice

9-12th Grade

French Revolution

Marie Antionette and the Decline of the French Monarchy by Nancy Lotz

Dickens and 18th century London

Barnaby Rudge by Charles Dickens

Black Jack by Leon Garfield

Courts of law

They Broke the Law, You Be the Judge: True Cases of Teen Crime by Thomas A. Jacobs

Revenge vs forgiveness

Hamlet by William Shakespeare

The Sin Eater by Gary D. Schmidt

Redemption

Pastwatch: The Redemption of Christopher Columbus by Orson Scott Card

Aristocrats and the common people

The Printer's Devil: A Remarkable Story by Paul Bajoria

Smith by Leon Garfield

Montmorency on the Rocks: Doctor, Aristocrat, Murderer? by Eleanor Updale

A People's History of the American Revolution: How Common People Shaped the Fight for Independence by Ray Raphael

The Guillotine

The Guillotine: It's Legend and Lore by Daniel Charles Geroud

All materials are available through your local library. Check it out!