

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens (1859)

This classic novel is based on the French Revolution.

1775 things were changing; hunger & chaos were common. Tellson's Bank of London was trying to protect the assets of the rich French as the revolution was taking them away. Dr. Monette wasted away in prison [105 north tower, Bastille] with no charge against him. When released, he was but a shell of a man & stayed in the attic above a wine shop [owned by the Defarges] mindlessly making shoes. Mr Lorry [of the bank] & the doctor's daughter, Lucie, took him back to London, where Lucie's love brought him back to life.

1780 there was a trial that Lucie's testimony set Charles Darnay free. He became one of the many suitors for Lucie. Most French land barons were very rich & hard on the poor. Monsieur the Marquis was really bad & eventually murdered. His nephew didn't like the situation & went to England [where he was known as Charles Darnay]. Charles tried to tell the doctor who he was, but the doctor did not want to know. Charles & Lucie were married.

By 1789 the Defarges were at the center of the revolution & blood was in the streets. Prisoners of the old king were set free & anyone who supported the old king was arrested or killed. 1792 a servant of the Marquis was imprisoned & asked for help from Darney. Charles went to Paris & was immediately arrested. Lucie, the doctor & My Lorry soon followed to help.

After 15 months, the French Revolutionist's honored the past prisoner of Bastille as a hero & set Charles free. But arrested him again, then sentenced him to the guillotine for the deeds of his uncle. Sydney Carton was deeply touched by Lucie's compassion & came to see if he could help. Looking similar to Charles & feeling he never did anything worthwhile, he traded places with Charles in prison & was willing to die in his place.

Mr Lorry got travelling papers before the trial & soon after they were in a carriage with who they thought was Sydney. Meanwhile Ms Defarges came looking for Lucie & the unborn baby to kill. The housekeeper was the only one home, there was a struggle & Ms Defarges was killed.

Quotes:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known." [Charles Dickens]

Books:

Oliver Twist; A Christmas Carol; David Copperfield [Charles Dickens]
Guns, Germs & Steel; Measuring Earth [Zucough]
Collapse [Jim Missner] (about Alaska)