

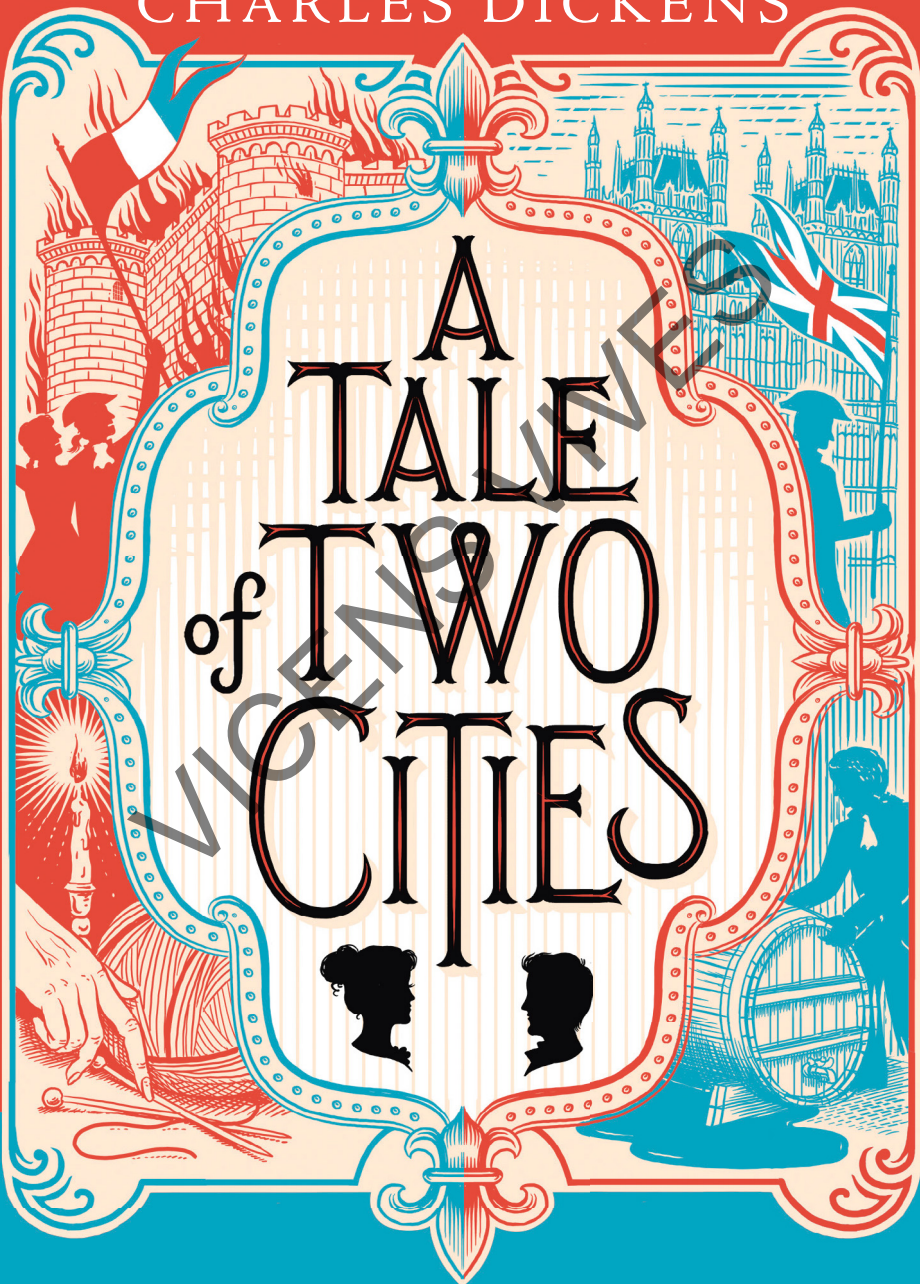
Penguin



Readers

CHARLES DICKENS

A
TALE
of TWO
CITIES



Penguin  Readers

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

CHARLES DICKENS

LEVEL

6

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ILLUSTRATED BY HABLOT KNIGHT BROWNE
SERIES EDITOR: SORREL PITTS



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CHAPTER ONE

Recalled to life

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 season of light, it was the season of darkness. It was the spring of hope, it was the winter of **despair**. We had everything before us, we had nothing before us.

A king and an ugly queen ruled England; a king and a beautiful queen ruled France. In both countries, it was clear to those who ruled that nothing could ever change. It was the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five.

France rolled smoothly downhill, making paper money and spending it. To keep **order**, judges gave out **cruel** punishments in the **courtrooms**. A young man had his hands and tongue cut off, and his body burned alive, for not kneeling in the dirt when **monks** passed by. In England, there was less order. There were **robberies** every night in London and on the highways. Men shot at each other as they searched for stolen goods. Nobody thought any of this was extraordinary.

These things, and a thousand like them, happened that year. Meanwhile, the two kings and the two queens carried on their great business, and the millions of ordinary little people, the people of this story among them, travelled the roads that lay before them.

On a Friday night in late November, three passengers walked up the hill beside their carriage. The hill was too **steep** and the carriage was too heavy for the horses to manage the passengers' extra weight. None of the three men looked at or spoke to the others, for in those days anyone on the road might be a **robber**. No one could be trusted.

At last, the horses reached the top of the hill and stopped to rest. Suddenly, the three passengers, the driver and the **guard** heard the sound of a horse hurrying up the hill behind them.

The guard pointed his gun and shouted, "You there! Stop! I'll shoot!"

The horse stopped at once and a man's voice called out of the darkness, "Is that the coach to Dover?"

"Why do you want to know?" answered the guard.

"I want a passenger. Mr Jarvis Lorry."

"Who wants me?" one of the passengers asked. "Is it Jerry?"

"Yes, Mr Lorry," replied the man. "I have a message for you."

The horse approached and the rider handed the passenger a note.

"There's nothing to fear," Mr Lorry said to the guard. "I work for Tellson's Bank and I'm going to Paris on business. I'll read this message quickly."

He opened the paper and read:

Wait at Dover for the young lady.

Then he looked at the **messenger** and said, “My answer is ‘Recalled to life’. Take that message back to Tellson’s and they will know I’ve received this. Thank you, Jerry, and goodnight.”



With those words, Mr Lorry climbed into the coach behind the other two passengers and the horses set off again. The messenger was left alone, wiping the dirt from his face with a **cloth** and shaking his head.

“That’s a very strange message, wouldn’t you say, Jerry?” he said to himself.

Inside the Dover coach, Mr Lorry slept, dreaming that he was on his way to dig someone out of a **grave**. “How long have you been **buried**?” the sleeping Mr Lorry asked in his dream. “Eighteen years,” the answer came back.

The sun rose and Mr Lorry awoke. “Eighteen years!” he said to himself, looking at the sun. “Buried alive for eighteen years!”

The coach arrived at Dover and stopped outside the Royal George Hotel. A **servant** opened the door and Mr Lorry got out.

“I’ll take the boat to Calais tomorrow,” he said. “Until then, I’d like a bedroom and breakfast.”

When Mr Lorry had washed his face and changed his clothes after his long journey from London, he appeared at breakfast. He was dressed in a formal brown suit and wore a tidy little **wig**. He was 60 years old and, although his face was lined with age, it looked healthy and untroubled.

“I’m expecting a young lady here sometime today,” he told the servant. “Please prepare a room for her and let me know when she has arrived.”

It was not until the evening, just as Mr Lorry was finishing his dinner, that the servant came to announce that Miss Lucie Manette had arrived from London.

Mr Lorry followed the servant to Miss Manette’s room. Standing by the fire was a young lady of no more than 17, still holding her travelling hat in her hand. Her golden hair and blue eyes reminded him at once of the young child he had brought from France to England fifteen years earlier.

“Please sit down, sir,” she said. “I received a letter from Tellson’s Bank yesterday, asking me to meet you in Paris on business. The letter said that something has been discovered there that you’ll explain to me. I only know that it’s connected with my poor father, who died before I was born. But I wanted to travel with you to Paris, sir, for protection, so I asked the bank to send you a message to wait for me here.”

“And I was happy to agree,” said Mr Lorry. “Now, it’s very

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After eighteen years in the Bastille prison, Dr Manette finally leaves France and goes to live with his daughter, Lucie, in England. There, two very different men fall in love with Lucie. Lucie finds happiness, but in France a storm is coming. Soon, Lucie and her family must face the French Revolution.

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	CEFR level	Story word count	Headwords
5	Pre-A1	400-600	350
1	A1	1,000-1,600	550
2	A1+	3,000-5,000	700
3	A2	7,000-10,000	1,000
4	A2+	11,000-14,000	1,200
5	B1	15,000-18,000	1,600
6	B1+	18,000-22,000	2,000
7	B2	22,000-26,000	2,500

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