

HallsNotes

2008

III. 7-8 A Knock at the Door
A Hand at Cards

A Tale of Two Cities

Summary:

Chapter 7:
A Knock at the Door

Charles Darnay has just returned home for LaForce. He is at home with Dr. Manette, Lucie, Little Lucie, Miss. Pross, and Jerry Cruncher. Lucie hears footsteps from within her house that do not seem normal but her father assures her that there is nothing to worry about. As he says this, there is a knock at the door. Four soldiers are there to re-arrest Darnay.

Chapter 8:
A Hand at Cards

Miss. Pross and Jerry Cruncher have gone out shopping. After they have purchased a few groceries they come upon a wine shop. Inside is Solomon, Miss. Pross's long lost brother. Jerry Cruncher seems to recognize him from somewhere but can not remember his name. Sydney Carton appears and states his name, John Barsard. Solomon has been under a fake identity. John Barsard is an English spy that was a witness against Charles Darnay at his first trial.

Characters:

Sydney Carton

Sydney Carton: Sydney Carton believes that anyone can control and change fate by taking control. He shows us as the readers that if you play your cards right you can control fate.

Literary Devices:

Irony

Irony: Doctor Manette says, "... the staircase is as still as Death" (280). It is ironic that Doctor Manette relates the staircase to death because the footsteps being heard throughout the house represent the death of Charles Darnay.

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing: The re-arresting of Charles Darnay foreshadows the death of Charles Darnay. The death of Charles Darnay represents the revolutionaries' idea of fate. The revolutionaries' idea of fate foreshadows what will happen to Charles Darnay if his fate is never changed.

Motifs:

Footsteps

Footsteps: Lucie says, "I thought... that I heard strange feet upon the stairs" (280). Footsteps represent the revolutionaries' idea of fate. Just before Charles Darnay is re-arrested, Lucie thinks she hears footsteps upon her staircase. In reality, they are the four soldiers coming to re-

arrest Charles Darnay. The footsteps Lucie hears represent the fate of Charles Darnay.

Parallel Images

Parallel Images: The four soldiers that re-arrest Charles Darnay represent the four fierce figures.

Historical References:

None.

Themes and Issues:

Identity

Identity: Solomon, or John Barsard, is under a fake identity. At first, Solomon's identity was a secret. He is then recognized by Jerry Cruncher and Sydney Carton as being one of the witness's against Charles Darnay at his first trial. We can identify ourselves with different names, but that will lead to one identity conflicting with other identities.

Fate

Fate: Fate is inheritable. Fate is a parallel image of a deck of cards. A deck of cards is like a game of chance. A game of chance represents fate. A hand of cards is only as good as you play them. If you play your cards right, you can control your fate. This is what Sydney Carton is trying to show us by playing his cards right and controlling his fate.

Glossary:

Calamity

Calamity: a great misfortune or disaster.

Subornation

Subornation: to bribe or induce (someone) unlawfully or secretly to perform some misdeed or to commit a crime.

III. 14-15 The Knitting Done The Footsteps Die Out For Ever

A Tale of Two Cities

Summary:

14: The Chapter opens with Madame Defarge, the wood-sawyer, Vengeance, and the three Jacques (Jurymen), and Madame Defarge is talking of the weakness of Mr. Defarge how he does not want to kill the Doctor or Lucy. Madame Defarge decides to go find Lucy to accuse her of mourning for a prisoner (which is a crime worthy of La Guillotine) and finds Miss Pross, her mirror image. Madame Defarge and Miss Pross begin to fight, and when Madame Defarge takes out her gun Miss Pross takes it and shoots her. As a result Miss Pross kills Madame and goes deaf from the gunshot.

15: The tumbrels bring the prisoners to the La Guillotine, where Vengeance and other women are knitting in the front row counting the falling heads. Sydney Carton walks hand in hand with the Seamstress and a guard calls for the Evremonde to the guillotine, making a mockery of him. John Barsad, the spy, feels pity for Carton knowing his decision and tells the guard to be quiet. After the Vengeance calls for Madame Defarge, who is missing from her seat, the beheading begins, Carton being the twenty-third head. In these last few moments Carton imagines seeing Lucy, and Darnay happy in England, and he sees the future of France, and the revolution.

Characters:

Seamstress: In the Prison of Paris, Sydney Carton meets a Seamstress who was in the prison of La Force with Darnay. The Seamstress is the double of Lucy, seeing Cartons secret heart, and realizing his bravery.

Literary Devices:

Suspense: As Madame Defarge talks of pursuing Lucy, and as Madame Defarge walks towards the carriage of Miss Pross.

Irony: Although the French Revolution is to resolve the problem of poverty, the people are still in poverty, and vengeance is more important to the revolutionaries.

Motifs:

Echoes: **“But, the Evremonde people are to be exterminated, and the wife and child must follow the husband and father” (444).** This is an echo of when the Marquis Saint Evremonde says, “I would ride over any of you very willingly, and exterminate you from the earth” (132). Madame Defarge shows the same hatred as the Marquis, showing the Distortion of Justice.

Mirror Images: **“Such a heart Madame Defarge carried under her rough robe” (448).** This is a mirror image of when Carton reveals his secret heart to Lucy, but the heart of Madame Defarge is full of vengeance and sorrow.

Doubles: “**Brave and generous friend, will you let me ask you one last question?**” (463). The Seamstress is a double of Lucy Manette because she recognizes the bravery of Sydney Carton, and is not afraid to die even though she is innocent.

Historical references:

Place de la Revolution: “**this place... not a trace of this day’s disfigurement**” (465). Darnay describes this Place, now the Place de la Concorde, as changed, and nothing like it was when they performed executions. After the revolution Louis Philippe changed the Place adding an obelisk, and other ornaments in 1839.

Themes/Issues:

Fate: Fate being roads, footsteps, knitting, water and other motifs represented at first that fate could not be controlled, then changing to the theme that you can control your own fate, and if you do not someone else will.

Guillotine: The guillotine being described as, “razor” of France that shaves close, and it seems to be more of a contest of how many people they can kill, “We have not half enough as it is. We ought to have six score a day” (444).

Distortion of Justice: The intentions of the revolution are getting out of hand and what first seemed like just causes of the revolution turned into madness and bloodshed of innocent people. Like the quote above the guillotine is used frequently even when not necessary, and the cruelty of the aristocrats does not justify for the killing of thousands.

Glossary:

Epicure- A person with refined tastes, usually in food and wine. This was used as contradictions in this quote, “Ogre that he was, he spoke like and epicure” (444).

Tumbrils- A crude cart used to carry condemned prisoners to their place of execution. These were described as death carts carrying the days wine to the Guillotine.

Perturbation- A cause of mental disquiet, disturbance or agitation.

Twopence- A bronze coin used in Britain equal to two pennies. It can also be used to describe a small amount.