

Book of second: the golden thread

[People](#), [Charles Dickens](#)



Book of Second: The Golden Thread Chapter 16: Still Knitting Summary On their return to Saint Antoine, a policeman tells the Defarges that there is a spy in their neighborhood. He gives them a description of his appearance, as well as his name- John Barsad. Madame Defarge decides to knit his name into the register. When they finally arrive at their home, Madame Defarge counts the money that was made while they were away and Defarge concedes to his fears and doubts about the revolution. Madame Defarge encourages him in her comparison of the revolution to lightning and earthquakes. Lightning storms and earthquakes both take some time to form, but when they are ready, they can destroy anything in their paths. The revolution may take a very long time to begin, but when it does, it would be unstoppable. The next day, Barsad, the spy, comes into the wine-shop looking to glean a little information from the Defarges. As he walks in, however, Madame Defarge recognizes him from the description previously given to her. She picks a up a rose from beside her and casually puts it in her hair. As they notice, customers start to trickle out of the store. Barsad carries the pretense of a friend and advocate to the revolution, comments on the cruelty shown to the peasants, and addresses the “ apparent" unrest the area was under following Gaspard’s execution. The Defarges admit to nothing and feign indifference. When he sees no succeeding in his approach, Barsad tells the Defarges the news about Miss Lucie Manette. He tells them she is going to marry a Mr Charles Darnay, a French nobleman who is, in fact, the late Marquis’ nephew and heir. After hearing this news, Madame Defarge knits the name Charles Darnay into the registry. Analysis Charles Dickens uses this chapter to expand on characters and set the mood for

future events. Dickens uses allusion and symbolism to amplify the topic of death (which is vital for the theme of resurrection). He more fully develops the Defarges, paying a particular interest to Madame Defarge. Monsieur Defarge shows a human wariness and self-doubt towards his plan, whereas Madame Defarge shows an unnerving resilience concerning the revolution. Madame Defarge can be compared to Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth in this chapter, as she encourages her husband to continue on in his murderous ambitions. She can also be compared to the Three Fates in Greek mythology. The Fates decide the fate of mortals through strings and yarn. If a person is to have a long life, they will have a long string; whereas a short string would be the equivalent of a short life. A cut string marks the death of that person. This is much like Madame Defarge's knitted register. If one's name was placed on the register, one could be certain that death was imminent. Madame Defarge can, lastly, be compared to Miss Lucie Manette, her foil. Madame Defarge ties and "threads" (as the title of this book of second suggests) the peasants together through her hate of the aristocracy. Lucie Manette "threads" people together through her love. Where Lucie loves, cares, protects and nurtures, Madame Defarge despises, plots, and murders.