

A tale of two cities – a  
novel about the  
devotion of a family



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One of the most well-known books is A Tale of Two Cities. A novel that tells the devotion of a family while England and France are in a major war. There are many elements to this story, including the plot, characters, and quotes, and this story's elements are very different than other stories'.

The plot is one of the essential things to a story, and this story is no exception. Our story starts out in 1775. We find Mr. Lorry, a businessman, with a young woman, Lucie, going to free a prisoner with no crime over his head. The prisoner, whose name is Doctor Manette, and is also Lucie's father, has been held in France for the past 18 years. When they go to free him, they don't meet Doctor Manette though, in his place is a broken man who makes shoes. They head back to France with the broken Doctor Manette. Five years later, we head off to a trial, the trial of Mr. Charles Darnay, who is thought to be a spy. Miss Lucie and Doctor Manette are key witnesses in this case, and we see that the Doctor is no longer as broken as he was. During the trial, however, they reveal how Charles has a look-alike stranger, Mr. Sydney Carton. Darnay is called innocent. Both Carton and Darnay have taken a liking to Miss Lucie. Later on, Charles Darnay actually does marry Lucie. On their wedding day, Charles has a long talk with Doctor Manette about his life before he came to England. He is actually Charles Evremondes and is apart of a rich family in France. But as it turns out, the rest of his family are jerks. The Doctor decides that Charles is not like the rest of his family. France is not doing too great. Charles uncle, the Marquis, has been stabbed in the night and is dead. The Marquis though has made a lot of enemies.

So many enemies in fact, that the caretaker of the mansion has been arrested and put in prison. Charles receives a letter from this caretaker as he asks Charles to come and witness to his trial, so without telling his wife or father-in-law, he heads off to France. His timing couldn't have been worse, as the revolution is happening. When he gets to France, he has been taken prisoner. Luckily, his favorite family is to the rescue. It takes a long time, but the Doctor does free Charles. Sadly though, the same night he is released, he is arrested again. The next day, a trial is held, a man named Defarge, the leader of the rebellion, produces a letter that Doctor Manette wrote when he was in his prison cell, depicting why he was arrested. His letter contains a tale of death, rape, and horrible human beings, these horrible human beings were Charles' father and uncle. The Jury decides to kill Charles for his father's crimes. The night before he is executed, Sydney Carton, Charles' look alike stranger, shows up and takes Charles' place. He wants to die for Charles, so Charles can live a long life with his wife and daughter. The next day, Sydney dies by the guillotine, as he says that it is the best action he has ever taken. This plot is exciting, adventures and amazing for its time.

Characters are also very significant to the story. Two significant characters are Doctor Manette and Lucie. Doctor Manette is an outstanding guy, especially considering all the hardships in his life. He was a prisoner for a long 18 years. He became a broken man as he started making shoes to keep himself sane. His daughter pieced him back together. We soon see that he is just an overall good guy. The night before Lucie's wedding, she has set out a time just for the two of them to sit and talk. She is worried that he will suffer from her marriage, but he says to her. " My future is far brighter, Lucie, seen

through your marriage than it could have been than it ever was without it... Believe it love! Indeed it is so. Consider how natural and how plain it is, my dear, that it should be so. You, devoted and young, cannot freely appreciate the anxiety I have felt that your life should not be wasted-wasted my child-should not be wasted, struck aside from the natural order of things, for my sake.

Your unselfishness cannot entirely comprehend how much my mind has gone to this' but only ask yourself, how could my happiness be perfect, while yours was incomplete?" There is no question that he only wants what is best for his child, even if it's not the best for him. But the fact that he is selfless isn't what makes him a good character in my mind, but that he is still haunted by his imprisonment. Whenever times get hard, he goes straight to his old ways and starts making shoes. He copes with his feelings this way because he doesn't know how to do anything else. He goes into this trance that he used have during his prison time. But he wouldn't have made it out of this trance if it wasn't for his daughter, Lucie Manette. " She was the golden thread that united him to a Past beyond his misery, and to a Present beyond his misery." Lucie always has her father's best interest in mind. She wants to make sure that he is doing well, is happy, and that he isn't troubled by the choices she makes. She is selfless, just like her father, and she loves people so much. She just about faints when they call her husband to the guillotine but pulls herself together because she wants to be there for Charles. Lucie and Doctor Manette go hand in hand and are two of the most important characters in Tale Of Two Cities.

One thing every book needs are good quotes.

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I think there are two outstanding quotes in this story. In the first quote, Doctor Manette has just come out of a “depressed” state, which he went to making shoes on his workbench. His friend, Mr. Lorry is asking him to explain why this experience might have happened. “‘You see,’ said Doctor Manette, turning to him after an uneasy pause, ‘it is very hard to explain, consistently, the innermost workings of this poor man’s mind. He once yearned so frightfully for that occupation, and it was so welcome when it came; no doubt it relieved his pain so much, by substituting the perplexity of the fingers for the perplexity of the brain, and by substituting, as he became more practiced, the ingenuity of the hands, for the ingenuity of the mental torture; that he has never been able to bear the thought of putting it quite out of his reach. Even now, when I believe he is more hopeful of himself than he has ever been, and even speaks of himself with a kind of confidence, the idea that he might need that old employment, and not find it, gives him a sudden sense of terror, like that which one may fancy strikes to the heart of a lost child.’” (Page 201.)

This is talking about how Doctor Manette deals with pain, he uses his hands to create something new, in his case, shoes. He wants to keep his workbench by him just in case he might need it whenever that pain comes to him. It frightens him to think about what he would do if he didn’t have that workbench to help him release his feelings and thoughts. I love the analogy of this quote as those who have had this experience understand, while those who haven’t experienced it simply don’t. Another quote that is incredibly descriptive talks about one of the ways the French used to kill people for their crimes, the Guillotine. Above all, one hideous figure grew as familiar as

if it had been before the general gaze from the foundations of the world—the figure of the sharp female called La Guillotine. It was the popular theme for jests; it was the best cure for a headache, it infallibly prevented the hair from turning grey, it imparted a peculiar delicacy to the complexion, it was the National Razor which shaved close: who kissed La Guillotine, looked through the little window and sneezed into the sack. It was the sign of the regeneration of the human race.

It superseded the Cross. Models of it were worn on breasts from which the Cross was discarded, and it was bowed down to and believed in where the Cross was denied. It sheared off heads so many, that it, and the ground it most polluted, were a rotten red. It was taken to pieces, like a toy-puzzle for a young Devil, and was put together again when the occasion wanted it. It hushed the eloquent, struck down the powerful, abolished the beautiful and good. Twenty-two friends of high public mark, twenty-one living and one dead, it had lopped the heads off, in one morning, in as many minutes. The name of the strong man of Old Scripture had descended to the chief functionary who worked it; but, so armed, he was stronger than his namesake, and blinder, and tore away the gates of God's own Temple every day." (Page 272.) I love how it says that it is like a toy-puzzle for a young devil, who might take it apart for a while, meaning he doesn't use it, or he might play with it every day, meaning he uses it a lot. It explains how people thought that God had abandoned them. Another fascinating part to me is that if you didn't know what the Guillotine was, then you had no clue how it stopped people's hairs from turning gray, was the best cure for a headache

or was a razor that shaved close. These two quotes describe something in a way no one would expect it, which is why they are my favorite quotes.

Everyone's opinion matters and everyone has a different opinion. My opinion is that I would recommend A Tale of Two Cities. It is a novel bursting with action, romance, plot twists and lessons I think everyone should learn. But if you are lucky enough to read and understand A Tale of Two Cities, I think you will be very impressed and delighted by the story.

There are key points that every book must have like plot, characters, quotes and how people see the book/recommend it. A Tale of Two Cities is bursting at the seams with so many different aspects, including romance, action, deep characters, and even deep quotes. So let me ask you, what other books have you read that carry the same complexity, same detailed plot and characters, and the same thought-provoking quotes as A Tale of Two Cities?