

A tale of two cities:
character analysis;
sydney carton essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Sydney Carton is probably the most dynamic character in *A Tale of Two Cities*. He first appears to be a lazy, alcoholic attorney who cannot find even the smallest amount of interest in his own life. " Mr. Carton's manner was so careless as to be almost insolent" (Dickens65). He describes his existence as a supreme waste of life and takes every opportunity to declare that he cares for nothing and no one. In chapter 6, when Carton is drinking with Stryver and says, " I had no chance for my life but in rust and repose".

Basically what Carton is saying in this quote is that he had no chance in life but to sit back and waste away and concludes that it is Stryver's fault.

Stryver also asks Carton about Lucie but his response shows no care for her at all. " If a girl, doll or no doll, swoons within a yard or two of a man's nose, he can see it without a perspective-glass. I pledge you, but I deny the beauty. And now I'll have no more drink; I'll get to bed.

" The reader sees that he quickly changes the subject and therefore causes us to sense that Carton in fact feels something that he may not even be able to put into words. Before Lucie weds Darnay, Carton professes his love to her, though he still persists seeing himself as essentially worthless. " If it had been possible, Miss Manette, that you could have returned the love of the man you see before yourself—flung away, wasted, drunken, poor creature of misuse as you know him to be—he would have been conscious this day and hour, in spite of his happiness, that he would bring you to misery, bring you to sorrow and repentance, blight you, disgrace you, pull you down with him. I know very well that you can have no tenderness for me; I ask for none; I am even thankful that it cannot be. "(Dickens 127) This quote shows that

although Carton is in love with Lucie, he is glad that Lucie is not in love with him because he feels he would only make her unhappy.

This scene marks a vital transition for Carton and lays foundation for the supreme sacrifice he makes at the end of the novel. Carton becomes a Christ-like figure, a selfless saint whose death enables the happiness of his beloved and ensures his own immortality. Sydney Carton is indeed a catalyst in this book because he sacrifices himself in order to save the ones he loves.

Carton can be compared to Jesus Christ in that Jesus put others before himself, and he sacrificed himself so that he could cleanse the sins of the human race. Muttering "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die," (Dickens 320) Sydney paces through the streets of Paris on the night before his death. His series of prayers could be a way for Dickens to show readers that Sydney was a man of faith, after all. Moreover, like Christ, Sydney sacrifices his life for the good of other men. In the end, the reader can look back and see that Sydney Carton transformed from a careless, non-loving drunk to a man of faith and proved to have feelings. Through the course of the novel, Carton indeed falls in love with Lucie Manette and ends up sacrificing his life for her safety. His love for Lucie grows throughout the book.

In the beginning, he denies to even think that she's pretty. Then he slowly opens up about his feeling but can still not put into words how he is feeling about the young girl. Later he finds himself and the Manette house confessing his love for Lucie to her face. Finally, he gives his life for her.

Sydney reflects that giving his life for Lucie is one of the best decisions he's ever made.