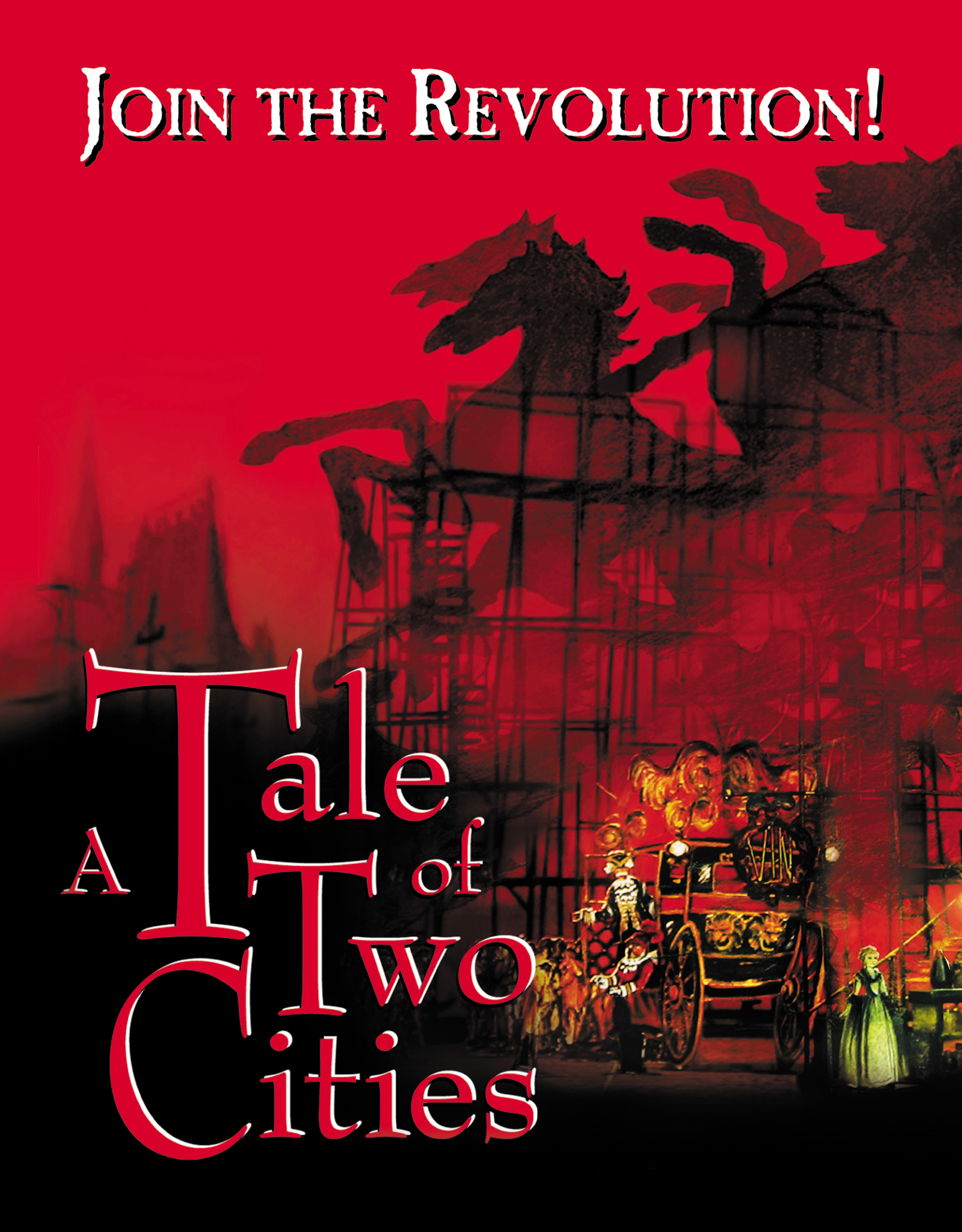


JOIN THE REVOLUTION!

A Tale of Two Cities



# Story Synopsis

After 17 years of unjust and secret imprisonment in France, Dr. Alexandre Manette is released from the infamous Bastille and given over to the care of his former servant, Ernest Defarge, and his wife, Madame Defarge. The Defarges send for Manette's daughter, Lucie, to retrieve him. No one knows why the doctor was imprisoned many years ago; Manette has lost his memory and can offer no explanation. Meanwhile, the Defarges don't hesitate in showing Manette to others as an inspiration for the revolution they hope to incite. In Paris, Manette and Lucie are united and she promises to help him build a new life in England.

On their voyage home, Lucie and Dr. Manette are befriended by a young Frenchman, Charles Darnay, the nephew of the despised Marquis St. Evrémonde, has renounced his inheritance and is attempting to distance himself from the Marquis. Another passenger on the ship is John Barsad, a spy in the service of the Marquis. To ensure his nephew will never return to France, the Marquis gives Barsad false documents to plant in Darnay's belongings, incriminating Darnay as a spy against England. Upon their arrival in England, Darnay is arrested and brought to trial.

At Darnay's trial for treason, he is rescued by the efforts of a drunken but brilliant lawyer, Sydney Carton, who is a lost soul: cynical and self-loathing. Carton falls in love with Lucie Manette, who shows him an understanding and compassion he has never known. But Lucie's heart is with Darnay, and although Dr. Manette has misgivings about the Frenchman, he gives his blessing and Darnay and Lucie are married. Soon after, they are blessed with a daughter. Carton never stops loving Lucie; he remains a close friend to them both and loves their daughter with a special tenderness.

The murder of Darnay's aristocratic uncle, the Marquis, and the pleas of an old friend lure Darnay to France just as the revolution begins. Upon his arrival in Paris, Darnay is arrested and charged with crimes against the people as a former aristocrat. Dr. Manette and Lucie follow Darnay to Paris and at the trial Manette speaks for his son-in-law and wins his freedom. But Madame Defarge halts the celebration, producing a letter that Manette wrote in the Bastille. The letter tells the tale of Manette's imprisonment and ends with Manette's bitter curse on the Evrémonde family. The crowd turns on Darnay and condemns him to death by guillotine.

Sydney Carton arrives in Paris to offer his help to Lucie and her family. Carton discovers he can gain access to Darnay through the spy John Barsad, now working in France. He also learns that Madame Defarge is not finished and plans to come after Lucie and the rest of her family. Fueled by the knowledge of this threat, Carton springs into action and makes arrangements for them to flee Paris. He then goes to the prison and tells Darnay that he has a plan to return him to his family but refuses to reveal it and begs Darnay to do exactly as he says. Darnay agrees and the story moves swiftly to its surprising and unforgettable conclusion.

# Teachers Do Make a Difference



Just ask Jill Santoriello, the author of the new musical, *A Tale of Two Cities*.

When playwright and composer Jill Santoriello was first introduced as a teen to Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, she was so stirred by the powerful story of love overcoming hate, courage, and second chances that she immediately starting writing songs inspired by the novel.

She continued to work on the book, lyrics, and music throughout her college years and never lost sight of her dream of creating a musical based on Dickens' story. After earning a degree in journalism from Ohio University, Jill was selected for membership in the prestigious BMI and ASCAP Music Theater Workshops based upon songs written as a teenager for *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Since then, Jill has been awarded grants for her work on *A Tale of Two Cities*. The show was a finalist in the International Musical of the Year Competition where the song, "If Dreams Came True," was a best song finalist. The world premiere of *A Tale of Two Cities* at the historic Asolo Repertory Theatre in Sarasota, Florida, opened to sold-out audiences and rave reviews. And as can only happen "when dreams come true," it opened on Jill's 42nd birthday!

Now Jill's dream comes true for rapt audiences each evening on the stage of the Al Hirschfeld Theater.

Learn more about Jill at [www.talemusical.com/educators](http://www.talemusical.com/educators).

## About Charles Dickens



Dickens was the master storyteller of his day, mobbed by crowds with the same passion as today's rock stars and celebrities. Dickens' enduring popularity (his books have never gone out of print) was based on his ability to tell a riveting story while capturing the titanic forces of history and the universal qualities of human behavior.

Nearly two hundred years since his birth in 1812, his works continue to amuse, touch, and inspire people around the world. His own life story is the stuff of dreams. From the hardship of his impoverished childhood and his traumatic separation from his parents, who were sent to Debtors Prison, and his back-breaking work at the age of 12 pasting labels on jars for 10 hours a day in a boot-blackening factory in London—to becoming a publishing mogul and a worldwide celebrity, his own story will inspire students to see that dreams can come true.

Learn more about Dickens at [www.talemusical.com/educators](http://www.talemusical.com/educators).

Photograph by Carol Rosegg





Photograph by Carol Rosegg

# Discussion Questions and Classroom Activities

## Literature and Language Arts

- Have students listen to the score and then work in teams to choose one of the following lines from a song in *A Tale of Two Cities* and debate the message conveyed:

“You can stand there doing nothing, hating everyone you see, or you can fight to make a world where men are free...”

“I knit a picture of the way it ought to be...”

“There’s just no honest way...”

“If we don’t come too near, it’s as if we’re not here...and there’s nothing to fear...”

- Dickens was an actor as well as an author, and his appearance in a play by his friend Wilkie Collins about sacrifice, love, and redemption inspired him to write *A Tale of Two Cities* a story with similar themes about sacrifice, love, vengeance, and rebellion. Ask students to choose one of these timeless themes and trace that theme and how it relates to the main characters through *A Tale of Two Cities*, a movie they have seen, a book they have read, and a current news story. Students can present their findings in a PowerPoint presentation tracing the theme they have chosen.

- Ask students to select one of the characters from *A Tale of Two Cities* and write a diary describing the events from that character’s point of view. Their diary entries should give insights not only into the events but also into the character’s feelings, fears, hopes, and dreams. Students can then share their entries or compile them into a class *Tale* magazine or blog.

- Have students imagine that they are reporters covering the events of the French Revolution from various points of view. They can “file” their reports and compile them into a class broadcast or newspaper that covers various aspects of the conflict. Some students work on news stories recounting the events, some are court reporters, others are feature writers conducting “man on the street” interviews, or interviews with key characters, others

write fashion or travel reports, or are political commentators, editorial page writers, columnists, or writers of obituaries for the characters who die in the play.

- The theme of rebirth is an important theme in *A Tale of Two Cities*. This theme links Carton and the French Revolution itself. In both cases, death and/or violence takes place in order to redeem a flawed character or to build a better world. Ask students to work in pairs, one playing the role of Carton, the other the interviewer—both meeting in Carton’s cell in the Bastille. Have students record the interview. What questions will they ask? Do they think his sacrifice was worth the cost? Why or why not?

- Have students listen to the lyrics of Sydney Carton’s powerful song, “If Dreams Came True,” and then rewrite the lyrics to reflect their own dreams and aspirations.

See more *Literature and Language Arts* activities at [www.talemusical.com/educators](http://www.talemusical.com/educators).

## History

- Dickens’ epic novel of *A Tale of Two Cities* written in 1859 opens with the memorable words, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness...” Ask students if Dickens’ words still apply today. Have them find the complete opening passage of the novel and use it as the starting point for comparing 1859 to today and discuss whether today is still the best of times and the worst of times.
- What incites people to take action? Do students think that in the age of television and the Internet, the events of *A Tale of Two Cities* would have unfolded differently? Have students discuss how the story might have changed if it took place today.
- Have students choose a country that has had a revolution in the past few decades. Have them report back to class on what led up to the revolution and how the lives of the people in that country changed since the revolution. What commonalities do they have with the events in *A Tale of Two Cities*?

## The Characters

### SYDNEY CARTON

Clever but depressed alcoholic English lawyer.

### CHARLES DARNAY

Young Frenchman really named EVRÉMONDE who has distanced himself from his evil uncle, the Marquis, and has tried to build a new life in England.

### LUCIE MANETTE

Young woman loved by both Sydney Carton and Charles Darnay.

### Dr. ALEXANDRE MANETTE

Lucie’s father, a prisoner in the Bastille for many years.

### ERNEST DEFARGE

Owner of a French wine shop and member of the Jacquerie, a secret revolutionary movement; once servant to Dr. Manette.

### MADAME THERESE DEFARGE

A vengeful revolutionary who knits the names of those targeted for execution.

### JARVIS LORRY

A banker and friend of Dr. Manette.

### MISS PROSS

The devoted, loyal nanny/housekeeper of the Manettes.

### MARQUIS ST. EVRÉMONDE

Cruel uncle of Charles Darnay.

### JOHN BARSAD

Perjurer, informer, and spy.

### JERRY CRUNCHER

Bodyguard and secretly a body snatcher.

### MRS. CRUNCHER

His wife.

### STRYVER

Rash, arrogant, ambitious lawyer, and Sydney Carton’s employer.

### GABELLE

Servant to the Evrémondes.

### GASPARD

A peasant.

### LITTLE GASPARD

Gaspard’s son.

### JACQUES 1 and 2

Peasants plotting the revolution.

### YOUNG LUCIE

Lucie and Darnay’s daughter.

### SEAMSTRESS

A young woman sentenced to death at the guillotine.



Photographs by Carol Rosegg

- ✦ What was the French Revolution all about? Ask students to research the French Revolution, and create a timeline of events and personalities.
- ✦ Ask students to create a political advertisement using the medium of their choice to advocate for reform as if they were living in France just prior to the French Revolution.
- ✦ Do the ends justify the means? Students can look at historical events and debate whether tyrants like the evil Marquis deserve to be assassinated. Was Madame Defarge justified in what she did? When the peasants took power, was their approach more or less humane than the aristocrats? What do they think was Dickens' view of the French Revolution?

See more *History activities* at [www.talemusical.com/educators](http://www.talemusical.com/educators).

## Drama

- ✦ Have students improvise a conversation between Lucie Manette (condemning the bloodshed) and Madame Defarge (defending the bloodshed).
- ✦ The role of Sydney Carton is a challenging one for any performer because of the complexity of Carton's character and his transformation as the drama unfolds. Think of the questions you would like to ask James Barbour about his role. After seeing his performance, how well do you think he achieved his objective and conveyed the complexity of his character? Students can find an interview with James Barbour at [www.talemusical.com/educators](http://www.talemusical.com/educators).
- ✦ Ask each student to choose a character from the play and develop and act out a monologue from that character's perspective. Make sure all the key characters from the show are represented.
- ✦ How much does the setting, costuming and lighting contribute to a story being brought to life on stage versus a film? Have students choose a film

they enjoy and restage it as a musical. They can form teams and decide their roles: lyricist, makeup artist, hair stylist, composer, special effects, librettist (writer of the script and dialogue), etc. Students can create play-bills and posters. Students can present their musicals to the school. To hear how the pros approached their task of bringing *A Tale of Two Cities* to the stage, students can see interviews with Jill Santoriello, Warren Carlyle, Tony Walton, and others (on the website [www.talemusical.com/educators](http://www.talemusical.com/educators))

See more *Theater Arts activities* at [www.talemusical.com/educators](http://www.talemusical.com/educators).

## Music

- ✦ Have students listen to the score and discuss how Jill Santoriello's music conveys the message and moves the narrative along. What is it about putting words into lyrics that gives them an extra dimension? Have students look at several songs from *A Tale of Two Cities* and read the lyrics aloud, then sing the songs to see how the feelings are conveyed. Then they can choose a poem and set it to music of their own creation. Discuss if the new song conveyed the poem's message more effectively or not.
- ✦ *West Side Story* was staged as a contemporary version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Have students envision *A Tale of Two Cities* done to rap or reggae music. What factors of poverty and injustice unite the themes of Dickens' novel with the social and cultural experiences and background that helped create these musical forms? Depending on interest, students might write some music in these forms to depict the messages outlined in the songs from Jill Santoriello's production.
- ✦ Have students listen to a soundtrack of the musical compositions from Jill Santoriello's production of *A Tale of Two Cities*. What instruments convey the emotions behind the songs? What types of voices were chosen to sing the selections? Ask students to pick one song and restyle it in a way that they think reflects the message just as effectively, using their choice of instrumentation and vocal style.

See more *Music activities* at [www.talemusical.com/educators](http://www.talemusical.com/educators).

The Weiner Nusim Foundation, a non-profit organization that delivers free public-service educational programs to schools and community groups, is happy to send this material to you. Although the material is copyrighted, you may make as many photocopies as necessary to meet the needs of your students. Feel free to share this guide with fellow teachers. If you wish to download additional copies of this resource guide, visit our Web site at [www.weinernusim.com](http://www.weinernusim.com)

The Weiner Nusim Foundation provides imaginative, effective educational programs that increase learning while requiring minimum preparation time. The Foundation's policies are intended to foster an open exchange of ideas in an educational or community-based environment.

The  
Weiner  
Nusim  
Foundation

20 Stoney Ridge Lane  
Riverside, CT 06878  
[weinernusim.com](http://weinernusim.com)