

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Episode 1

'Recalled to Life'

Written by

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Based on the novel by Charles Dickens

August 2024

N.B. A note on language - dialogue in regular font to be written and spoken in English, dialogue in *italics* to be written and spoken in French

CLOSE ON: YOUNG LUCIE MANETTE (8), SLEEPING PEACEFULLY,

VOICE (O.S.)
Lucie... Lucie.

A hand brushes her cheek. She opens her eyes--

1

INT. LUCIE'S BEDROOM, MANETTE HOUSE, PARIS - NIGHT

1

YOUNG LUCIE'S father, ALEXANDRE (30s), sits by her bed. He's a man of learning and principle. Devoted to his daughter.

But just now he's very pale.

ALEXANDRE
We have to go.

URGENT HAMMERING ON A DOOR SOMEWHERE BELOW,

Alexandre starts, panicked. He thought he had more time.

He hurries to the wardrobe, stuffs a handful of Young Lucie's clothes into a travelling bag. Grabs a pair of her shoes.

YOUNG LUCIE
Papa?

Alexandre just scoops her up in his arms and ducks out to--

2

INT. STAIRWELL, MANETTE HOUSE, PARIS - NIGHT

2

ALEXANDRE carries YOUNG LUCIE - in her nightdress, barefoot - out of her bedroom, the travelling bag in his free hand.

MORE HAMMERING FROM THE FRONT DOOR BELOW,

Young Lucie is terrified. Alexandre presses a finger to his lips as he edges forward. At the foot of the stairs below--

YOUNG ERNEST DEFARGE (18), WEARING A SERVANT'S UNIFORM,

Stands by the bolted front door. Just as scared as Alexandre.

VOICES (O.S.)
Doctor Alexandre Manette! Open up!

A look between Young Ernest and Alexandre. An understanding.

YOUNG ERNEST
My master is not home.

ANGRY SHOUTS and HAMMERING on the front door. But Young Ernest braces his back against it, resolute despite his fear.

Alexandre nods his gratitude - then turns and runs, with Young Lucie in his arms, along the corridor and down--

3

INT. SERVANTS' STAIRCASE, MANETTE HOUSE, PARIS - NIGHT

3

The HAMMERING and SHOUTS continue as they clatter down the stairs, ALEXANDRE spilling clothes from the bag, his daughter in his arms. YOUNG LUCIE isn't crying. She's too scared.

They reach the bottom of the stairs. Alexandre struggles to open the stiff lock on the rear door with his free hand--

THE SOUND OF THE FRONT DOOR BEING SMASHED OPEN BEHIND THEM,
Sounds of violence. YOUNG ERNEST'S voice being drowned out.

Alexandre's desperation. He puts Young Lucie down, pulls frantically at the lock. She turns back towards the stairs--

FOOTSTEPS THUNDERING ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE,

The sound of rooms searched and torn apart. Getting closer...

Young Lucie shrinks back, clings to Alexandre in terror...

Finally the lock turns. He grabs her hand, drags her out to--

4

EXT. STREET BEHIND THE MANETTE HOUSE, PARIS - NIGHT

4

A long narrow street, hemmed in by houses. Rain is coming down hard, making the cobbles slick in the moonlight.

SUPER: 'PARIS, 1764'

ALEXANDRE pulls YOUNG LUCIE along at a breathless run--

SHE SLIPS, CRIES OUT AS SHE FALLS HEAVILY ONTO THE COBBLES,

Alexandre stops; opens the bag; pulls out one of her shoes...

YOUNG LUCIE

Papa...

He turns to follow her terrified look--

SILHOUETTES IN THE UPPER WINDOWS OF THEIR HOUSE BEHIND,

ANGRY SHOUTS. They've been spotted.

Alexandre drops the bag, snatches Young Lucie up in his arms and runs headlong for the end of the street where--

A SMALL TWO-PERSON COUPÉ WAITS, A DRIVER AT THE REINS,

The door swings open, and a figure leans out--

JARVIS LORRY (40s), an avuncular and loyal ally.

JARVIS

Hurry, my friend!

Alexandre practically throws Young Lucie inside to Jarvis. He puts one foot on the step. Then stops. Senses something. He turns back, towards the far end of the street--

A LARGE ORNATE CARRIAGE CLATTERS INTO VIEW,

Drawn by a magnificent team of horses. The carriage shimmers in black and gold. A distinctive FAMILY CREST on the door.

A PASSENGER sits hidden within, his hand resting in the open window. Moonlight catches a large CHEVALIER RING.

Alexandre looks from the carriage's SIX STAMPING STALLIONS to his coupé's PAIR OF HORSES. They'll never outrun them.

FIVE ARMED HEAVIES BURST OUT OF THE MANETTE HOUSE,

They look to the carriage for their orders. The Passenger within gestures towards Alexandre - 'Take him'. The Heavies sprint towards the little coupé, weapons raised.

Alexandre looks at Young Lucie. Terrified. Then, to Jarvis--

ALEXANDRE

They're here for me. Just me.

He steps down from the coupé and away from Young Lucie.

YOUNG LUCIE

No!

ALEXANDRE

*You be good for Mr Lorry. I'll join
you in London soon.*

(to Jarvis)

Go. Now!

He slams the coupé's door shut. The Driver cracks the whip and the horses lurch forward.

Young Lucie screams, fights Jarvis. But he holds her fast. She turns to look back through the moving coupé's window--

ALEXANDRE STANDS IN THE RAIN, STARING AFTER HER,

The Heavies surround him. He turns to face the carriage, hands raised in submission - one holding Young Lucie's shoe.

Suddenly a Heavy's CLUB is swung at his head--

SMACK,

Alexandre drops like a stone, and as he falls--

CRACK,

His skull smashes off the kerb. Blood runs into the street. Alexandre's body twitches on the cobbles - then goes still.

INSIDE THE MOVING COUPÉ,

Young Lucie is in hell. The last thing she sees is the armed Heavies stood around the lifeless body of her father.

TITLES: 'A TALE OF TWO CITIES'

CLOSE ON: LUCIE MANETTE (20s), STARING AT A TICKING CLOCK,

The innocent little girl is gone. In her place is a restless, rebellious young woman, unsure of her place in the world.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Lucie. Lucie.

Lucie snaps out of her daze, turns to the room--

5

INT. OFFICE, TELLSON'S BANK, LONDON - DAY

5

LUCIE sits next to HESTER LORRY (60s, formidable but formal). Both women wear black. They sit across from an oily CLERK.

HESTER

(to the Clerk, apologetic)

The last few days... Mr Lorry's passing was very sudden. Came as a terrible shock. To both of us.

CLERK

We at Tellson's were all deeply saddened. Your husband was a proud servant of this bank's interests here and in Paris for over four decades. A true man of business.

Lucie reacts, unimpressed. Hester shoots her a look.

LUCIE

He was so much more. More than a guardian to me. And he loved you.

Gentle, vulnerable. But Hester looks away. An awkward beat.

CLERK

Mr Lorry took you in as his ward after bringing you to London?

LUCIE

He believed that's what my father would have wanted.

(her rising emotion)

I don't know if I ever really thanked him... If he ever knew...

HESTER

He knew.

An edge to her tone. Impatience. Jealousy? Lucie hears it.

CLERK

You have no family to speak of?

Half a look from Lucie to Hester. Then Lucie shakes her head.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Then, Miss Manette, you are now without a legal guardian.

LUCIE

I'm a grown woman. I don't need to be anyone else's ward.

HESTER

I agree.

Lucie glances at her - is she being supported? Or disowned?

CLERK

You misunderstand me. Since you are no longer subject to a wardship, your father's holdings with our Paris branch now revert to you.

He slides a portfolio of BALANCE SHEETS across the desk.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Dr Manette's assets were modest at the time of his death. However, Mr Lorry invested them judiciously on your behalf in the years since.

Lucie and Hester take in the number at the bottom. It's big.

HESTER

It seems you are a young woman of means. Free to live independently.
(off Lucie's surprise)
It's what Jarvis would have wanted.
Your father too.

LUCIE

How do you know what my father wanted? You never met him.

Harsher than she means to. Hester recoils, hurt. But Lucie can't, won't back down. She turns away, her head spinning.

JERRY CRUNCHER (40s, whip-lean and rough-mannered), leans on a parked carriage, chewing an apple.

He smiles at a passing FLOWER GIRL. She ignores him. Jerry, annoyed, spits pips after her.

He's approached by a grubby RECRUITING SERGEANT in uniform.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Do you love your country, friend?
(off Jerry's shrug)
Course you do. Join up today and
His Majesty will drop a bounty of
three pounds into your own pocket.
Two years glorious service in the
Americas, sticking it to Yankee
rebels and the bastard French. Then
home a hero when we win the war.

JERRY
We're winning, are we?

The Sergeant's smile disappears. Jerry nods down the street.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Try the gin-house. Some poor sod
might be drunk enough to buy it.

The Sergeant moves off, grumbling, as HESTER leads LUCIE out of the bank, the tension between them still palpable.

Jerry gives the last of his apple to the horses, then kicks down the step for the women to climb up into their carriage.

7 **I/E. CARRIAGE (MOVING) / LONDON STREETS (VARIOUS) - DAY** 7

The CARRIAGE rumbles along. HESTER and LUCIE sit in silence.

The streets outside are alive with activity - FRUIT-SELLERS, TRADESMEN, MERCHANTS. A prosperous, vibrant cityscape.

They cross Blackfriars Bridge, and Lucie stares out at--

THE THAMES, TEEMING WITH HUNDREDS OF SHIPS,

SUPER: 'LONDON, 1782'

Lucie stares down at a HUGE SHIP moored at the quayside below. Dozens of WOUNDED REDCOATS are disembarking - carried on stretchers, limping on crutches, several missing limbs.

Lucie leans forward, watches the wounded carefully. Rapt.

Hester glances at Lucie across the carriage. Her concern.

8 **EXT. LORRY HOUSE, LONDON - EVENING** 8

Comfortably middle-class, but rather dark and austere.

JERRY pulls the CARRIAGE to a halt outside.

9

INT. HALLWAY, LORRY HOUSE, LONDON - EVENING

9

The walls are hung with mourning black, oppressive.

LUCIE enters, striding ahead of HESTER. Then--

HESTER

You're right. I never knew your father. But I did meet your mother once. Before she left London.

Lucie stops, turns to her. She's never heard this before.

HESTER (CONT'D)

She was just like you. The same willfulness. Same passion. An opinion on everything - art, music, politics. She was...

Lucie, defensive, waits for the rebuke. But Hester smiles--

HESTER (CONT'D)

... remarkable. Truly. Heaven knows what she made of me.

Self-effacing. A little vulnerable. Lucie is moved.

HESTER (CONT'D)

What you've been through, losing them both so young... You deserve better. A new life.

She takes a step towards Lucie, trying her best to be gentle.

HESTER (CONT'D)

You think this is cruel. Maybe it is, so soon after Jarvis... But you mustn't lose yourself in grief. Don't waste your youth shut up here with an old widow.

LUCIE

You want me to leave?

HESTER

I want you to be free. Buy yourself a home. Or travel. Go out into the world. Live however you wish.

LUCIE

Just not here.

A GRANDFATHER CLOCK CHIMES SOMEWHERE IN THE HOUSE,

Lucie reacts. Suddenly aware of the time.

LUCIE (CONT'D)

I need some air.

She turns and strides out. Hester watches her go, deflated.

10 **EXT. POORER STREETS, LONDON - NIGHT**

10

LUCIE hurries through the cramped, dirty streets. DRUNKS, PIMPS, and WHORES spill out of taverns and knocking-shops.

Lucie loosens her collar. Breathes. Somehow at home here.

She reaches a dingy doorway. She steels herself, so nervous.

11 **INT. TANNERY, POORER STREETS, LONDON - NIGHT**

11

The noxious stink of leather-working. TWO LABOURERS wash spades and a pick-axe, hands and faces filthy with dirt.

LUCIE enters. The Labourers stop and stare. Lucie can't meet their eyes. She crosses quickly to the gnarled TANNER.

TANNER

You're late.

LUCIE

You have it?

He holds her eye a hard beat. She pulls out a purse.

The Tanner leads her to a cart, pulls back a cloth revealing--

SOMETHING LARGE AND FOUL-SMELLING,

Lucie stares, fights the urge to retch, to cover her mouth.

LUCIE (CONT'D)

I said fresh.

TANNER

Best we could do. Lads almost bottled it and ran halfway through.

Lucie glances at the shaken Labourers, still staring at her. She hands the Tanner the purse. Then adds another.

LUCIE

For their discretion. And yours.

12 **EXT. BACK-ALLEY, LONDON - NIGHT**

12

A door opens on a WIZENED OLD MAN in a bloodied apron. He is missing teeth and a finger. He peers out into the darkness--

LUCIE STANDS BY A HORSE-DRAWN CART, THE TANNER AT THE REINS,

Lucie pulls back the cover on the cart to reveal--

A FRESHLY EXHUMED CADAVER.

13 **INT. BACK-ALLEY SURGERY, LONDON - NIGHT**

13

The CADAVER lies on a gurney in the middle of a crude operating theatre. Sawdust on the floor. Benches at the sides. Light pours down from a candelabra, dripping hot wax.

LUCIE stands over the cadaver in a worn leather apron, hair pinned, sleeves rolled up. All her nerves gone now. Resolute.

The OLD MAN / SURGEON counts his money. He's satisfied.

SURGEON

Let's begin. Tracheostomy. First...

But Lucie has already selected a SCALPEL from a tray of well-worn saws, knives, drills. She readies the blade. Breathes--

THEN MAKES A DEEP CONFIDENT INCISION ALONG THE WINDPIPE,

Calm and focused. Exactly where she's supposed to be.

14 **EXT. PICTURESQUE STREET, SOHO, LONDON - NIGHT**

14

LUCIE walks home - lighter, adrenalised from her tutorial.

She stops under an oil-burning streetlamp. Looks across to--

AN IDYLIC CORNER HOUSE, WHITE STONE AND CHERRY BLOSSOMS,

Lights behind the curtains, the sounds of MUSIC and LAUGHTER. Friends eating and drinking together. Light, carefree.

Lucie stands on the dark street, watching the house. She looks at her hands - the crusted blood under her fingernails. Traces of sawdust, matted with viscera, stuck to her shoes.

A long beat on Lucie. What does she want for her life?

PRE-LAP: URGENT KNOCKING,

16 **INT. HALLWAY, LORRY HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT**

16

HESTER - flustered, wrapped up in a night-robe - strides ahead of JERRY, similarly bed-headed. He holds an oil-lamp.

JERRY

Won't give his name. Won't wait
'til morning neither.

VOICE (O.S.)

What's going on?

They turn to LUCIE, at the top of the stairs - still fully clothed. Hester takes this in as Lucie descends to join them.

HESTER
You told him Mr Lorry is deceased?
(off Jerry's look)
Why ever not?

JERRY
He's a Frenchman, missus. Who knows
what he's scheming.

Hester stiffens, pulls her robe closer. Lucie sighs inwardly.

They reach the front door, and Hester opens it on--

CHARLES DARNAY (30s), a dashing, cocksure, and committed idealist. But just now he's tense, a wild look in his eye.

A tiny beat as he registers Lucie. Then, to Hester--

CHARLES
Forgive the hour... I must speak
with the master of the house.

HESTER
I am master and mistress here.
(over his protest)
Jarvis Lorry was my husband, sir.
Whatever message you had for him,
you may give to me.

CHARLES
No... For his ears only.

He staggers, unsteady. Lucie takes half a step towards him.

JERRY
Drunk, missus?

HESTER
Fetch the watch.

CHARLES
No. Please...

HE SUDDENLY COLLAPSES AT LUCIE'S FEET,

Jacket hanging open - blood soaks his shirt. Hester recoils.

HESTER
The watch, Jerry, now.

Lucie crouches down to inspect Charles' wound. It's not good.

LUCIE
Help me get him inside.

HESTER
 Certainly not. He could be any sort
 of villain.

LUCIE
 He's losing too much blood. He'll
 be dead long before the watch get
 here. We have to help him.

Pleading with her. Hester hesitates, deeply disturbed.

17

INT. DINING ROOM, LORRY HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

17

LUCIE and JERRY carry/drag CHARLES inside, trailing blood
 across polished floors and carpets. HESTER follows, fretting.

Lucie sweeps ornaments off the dining table onto the floor.

LUCIE
 Help us. Hester.

Hester, appalled, helps them lift Charles onto the table.

He groans as Lucie rips his shirt open to reveal--

A CRUDELY BANDAGED KNIFE-WOUND IN HIS SIDE, PULSING BLOOD,

LUCIE (CONT'D)
 Towels, muslin, water, scissors.
 (off Jerry's hesitation)
 Go! And bring more light.

Jerry obeys, grumbling. Hester stares at Lucie, agog.

Lucie goes to the dying fire, stokes it furiously. She takes
 a POKER from the rack and shoves it into the hottest embers.

HESTER
 ... what on earth? Lucie?

Lucie ignores her, snatches up a table cloth, rips it into
 strips. She presses one to the bleeding wound. Charles moans.

LUCIE
 Press down hard.
 (off Hester's hesitation)
 Do you want this man to die on your
 dining table?

Hester, stunned, does as she's told, as Lucie works the
 bellows furiously to fan the fire in the grate.

Jerry returns with the supplies. Lucie grabs a towel.

HESTER
 Lucie? What are you doing? Lucie.

Lucie turns, holding the RED-HOT POKER with a wrapped towel.

LUCIE
Hold him. Hard. Both of you.
(to Charles)
I have to seal your wound or you'll
bleed out. There's no time to
stitch it. Do you consent?

CHARLES
... no watch...

LUCIE
Good enough.

She slides a piece of kindling between his teeth, raises the poker and presses the glowing point against Charles' wound.

Charles thrashes, Jerry and Hester fighting to hold him down.

Lucie waits until she's sure the wound is fully cauterised...

Then she pulls the poker away, drops it in the fire.

Long beat as they all stand back, breathless, shaken. Then--

LUCIE (CONT'D)
Brandy.

JERRY
For him?

LUCIE
For all of us.

Jerry goes, relieved. Hester stares at Lucie, lost for words.

HESTER
... we're going to talk about this.

LUCIE
Later.

Hester hesitates. Then she too goes, pale.

Lucie breathes. She's shaking. But feels alive.

She goes to the semi-conscious Charles, cleans his wound.

LUCIE (CONT'D)
It's going to be ugly, if it heals.

She studies his features in the firelight. Refined, proud.

She's suddenly aware they're alone. She looks over his torso, the rise and fall of his chest. On the skin of his ribs--

A SPRAY OF OLD BULLET WOUNDS,

Who is this man? She reaches out to touch the scar tissue--
 HE SUDDENLY GRABS HER HARD BY THE WRIST,
 His eyes locked on hers, dangerous. She tries to pull away.

CHARLES
My message... Mr Jarvis Lorry...

LUCIE
No, monsieur. You're too late.

Charles' eyes flutter, losing consciousness. His grip weakens, sinking back to the table. Then, barely a whisper--

CHARLES
'Alexandre Manette'.

Lucie stops breathing. Ringing in her ears.

LUCIE
 How do you know that name?

CHARLES
... 'recalled to life'.

He passes out cold.

Lucie, desperate, shakes him by the arms, slaps his face.

LUCIE
 No. No! Who are you? Who are you?

18

EXT. STREETS OF SAINT ANTOINE, PARIS - DAY

18

Broken houses. Broken bodies lying in doorways and gutters. Mud, filth, and disease. These people have nothing.

Moving between the listless traffic, a fish out of water--

CHARLES DARNAY, FRESH-FACED AND UNHURT,

SUPER: 'PARIS, THREE DAYS EARLIER'

Charles takes in the squalor, the starving faces, sunken eyes. He's deeply moved by the grim, desperate scene.

A small CROWD has gathered around a BAKER'S SHOP. The BAKER and his APPRENTICE are pushing people back as they angrily try to grab at the few stale loaves on the shelves inside.

BAKER
What can I do? It's not my fault.

CROWD (VARIOUS)
Thief! Lies! That's almost double what it cost last month.

BAKER

I don't set the prices. Talk to the grain merchants.

He finally gets the shutters down. Charles watches the angry, starving Crowd hammer on the windows, the door. Then--

VOICE (O.S)

You will not silence us!

Charles turns to see CONSTABLES dragging GASPARD (30s, a loudmouth) out of a dingy PRINTER'S SHOP across the street. A tray of printing type is carried out and tossed into the mud.

LOCALS peel themselves from doorways and gutters to wander over, muttering dissent. Angry faces appear at windows.

GASPARD

(to the gathering crowd)

*The King sits on his fat arse,
wasting millions on a foreign war
as his own people starve!*

Cheers and murmurs of support from the watching Locals.

CONSTABLE

You shut your mouth, printer.

GASPARD

Meanwhile his Austrian (whore)--

CRACK,

He is silenced by the Constable's club to his jaw.

The Locals react, outraged. They step forward to protect Gaspard, one of their own. The Constables push them back.

Charles can't help himself. He steps forward, angered--

CHARLES

What is this man's crime?

CONSTABLE

*Illegal pamphleteering and libel
against the Crown. And who are you?*

He takes a step towards Charles. Then a cheer goes up as--

PAMPHLETS RAIN DOWN OUT OF THE SKY,

Charles plucks one out of the air. In smudged ink--

'THE PIG AND HIS SHREW GORGE THEMSELVES WHILE THE FARMER'S FAMILY FIGHT FOR SCRAPS'.

A crude cartoon caricatures LOUIS XVI and MARIE ANTOINETTE as animals ignoring the STARVING CHILDREN begging them for food.

GASPARD
*That's my girl! Give 'em hell,
 Juliette.*

Charles looks to the ROOF of the printer's shop--

JULIETTE (10, old beyond her years) crouches like a cat on the roof tiles, throwing pamphlets out over the crowd.

The Locals shove the Constables as they drag Gaspard away. It's turning ugly and violent, Charles caught in the middle--

HE'S SUDDENLY GRABBED BY THE COLLAR AND DRAGGED AWAY,

In a dark doorway he finds himself face to face with--

ERNEST DEFARGE (late 30s). No longer a youthful servant but a barrel-chested wine merchant. He glowers at Charles.

ERNEST
The hell are you playing at?

CHARLES
The printer, they have no right...

ERNEST
Forget him. We have work to do.

He pushes Charles away from the chaotic scene and into--

19

INT. DEFARGES' WINE SHOP, PARIS - DAY

19

Low light, low voices. A local place for those who know.

CHARLES follows ERNEST inside. His gaze is caught by--

THERESE DEFARGE (30s), a dark shadow. Life has made her angry and wary, but with a ruthless sense of loyalty too.

She sits at the very rear of the shop, knitting. LOCAL WOMEN sit around her, talking in hushed tones.

Everyone stops when Charles enters. They all look to Therese.

Long beat as Therese stares at Charles. He's intimidated.

Then Therese picks up her knitting once more. He's OK.

Charles follows Ernest into the back as the chatter resumes. Therese stares after the two of them. Doesn't like it.

Her attention is caught by a small window levering open on the far side of the shop. A figure drops quietly inside--

JULIETTE,

THERESE

You're sure you lost them?

Juliette gives her a look - 'please'. She pours herself a cup of wine from a barrel at the bar, drinks it off in two gulps.

JULIETTE

My father?

THERESE

*He'll be taken to La Force. The
warder's a notorious lecher. We'll
have Gaspard out in a week.*

At a nod from Therese, one of the Local Women holds out a handful of grubby coins to Juliette.

THERESE (CONT'D)

For bread.

JULIETTE

Don't need your charity.

THERESE

*I'm not asking. That press has to
keep running.*

Juliette hesitates - then takes the coins. Suddenly wraps her arms around Therese's neck, plants a big kiss on her cheek.

Surprisingly, Therese allows it. The girl turns to go--

THERESE (CONT'D)

Juliette. The wine.

Juliette, caught, replaces the bottle she had tucked under her shirt. She grins at Therese, exits through the window.

Therese watches her go. Liking her enormously.

20

INT. BACK ROOM, DEFARGES' WINE SHOP, PARIS - DAY

20

CHARLES sits across from ERNEST. Trying to hide his nerves. Ernest slides a PACKET OF PAPERS across the table.

ERNEST

*You're returning to London from
Holland with two English servants.*

Charles eyes a ragged HUSBAND and WIFE sat across the table from him. They're tense. Charles tries a reassuring smile--

CHARLES

What are your names?

HUSBAND

Better you don't know.

Charles flushes, foolish and naive. Ernest pours wine for the four of them - his eyes never leaving the anxious Charles.

CHARLES

Can you tell me what you did?

The Wife looks to Ernest - who nods.

WIFE

They accuse us of inciting a protest against the King.

CHARLES

Did you?

WIFE

We barely have enough to feed ourselves. Now we must hand that over too? For what? Some tax to buy more soldiers, more guns?

Charles takes the Wife and Husband in. Their grim defiance.

ERNEST

If they're caught they'll be executed. Anyone helping them too.

Charles' nerves redouble. Ernest eyes him carefully.

ERNEST (CONT'D)

Not too late to change your mind.

CHARLES

I know the risks. I want to help.

Resolute. The Husband and Wife nod - grateful, reassured.

Ernest watches Charles drink, weighing a big decision.

21

EXT. DEFARGES' WINE SHOP, PARIS - NIGHT

21

CHARLES mounts a COVERED CART, stacked with wine barrels. He fidgets with the reins. The horses stamp, sensing his nerves.

ERNEST ushers the HUSBAND and WIFE out of the wine shop. They hurry to climb into the cart, hide amongst the barrels.

Ernest steps up to Charles, a little anxious. He speaks low--

ERNEST

One more thing.

He draws a SLIP OF PAPER from his coat. Charles scans it.

CHARLES

What does it mean?

ERNEST
Just memorise it. The address too.
For his ears only.

So important to Ernest. Charles repeats the text. Nods.

Ernest takes the paper back - then offers his hand. Charles shakes it, encouraged. He flicks the reins and drives off.

THERESE comes to stand next to Ernest, watching the cart go.

THERESE
You risk too much.

ERNEST
We can't ask them to stay. Not now.

THERESE
I'm not talking about them.

She glances up to the garret of their building high above--

A SHADOW RETREATS BACK FROM THE GARRET WINDOW.

22

EXT. PARIS CITY WALLS - NIGHT

22

CHARLES drives the CART up to the gatehouse. Vehicles are being checked. A GUARD waves him down. Charles tenses. Shit.

CHARLES
What's all this, friend?

GUARD
*A prison break at La Bastille three
 nights ago. You didn't hear?*
 (off his 'no')
What's in the cart?

CHARLES
Wine.

The Guard eyes him - then steps behind the cart. Charles is sweating, heart pounding. They're going to be caught...

VOICE (O.S.)
Don't bother.

Charles and the Guard both turn - a SENIOR GUARD approaches.

SENIOR GUARD
From the merchant in Saint Antoine?
His stuff tastes like warm piss.
Not worth the trouble.

The other Guard hesitates - then moves off, disappointed.

Charles exhales. He's shaking.

SENIOR GUARD (CONT'D)
Through you go. Nice and slow now.

He holds Charles' eye meaningfully. Charles nods, grateful.

He flicks the reins, and the cart rumbles out of the city.

23 **EXT. CART (MOVING), OUTSKIRTS OF PARIS - DAWN / DAY** 23

CHARLES drives the CART out of the sleeping city as the sun comes up. He passes PEASANTS and LABOURERS toiling in the fields and roads. They wear rags, many are barefoot. They are just as underfed and overworked as those in Paris.

24 **EXT. SMALL HARBOUR TOWN, FRENCH COAST - NIGHT** 24

CHARLES, filthy from the road, steers the CART to the wharf. He scans the masts, ships, SEAMEN on the quayside. Tense.

VOICE (O.S.)
 Wine merchant send you?

Charles turn to find JOHN BARSAD (50s, a gruff and sneering English smuggler) staring up at him.

CHARLES
 You must be Barsad.

He dismounts and offers his hand. Barsad scoffs.

BARSAD
 Christ, where did he find you.

Charles is offended. Barsad ignores him, looks to the HUSBAND and WIFE huddled uncomfortably in the back of the cart.

BARSAD (CONT'D)
 Two? Never said nothing about two.

CHARLES
 Shall I look for another ship?

A hard beat between them... Then Barsad relents.

He leads Charles, the Husband and Wife to a small CARGO SHIP.

They make themselves as comfortable as possible as Barsad and his CREW slip the moorings and quietly put out to sea.

Charles allows himself a tiny exhale. Another hurdle cleared.

25 **EXT. BARSAD'S SHIP (MOVING), ENGLISH CHANNEL - NIGHT** 25

The sea is rough. The HUSBAND and WIFE are green with nausea.

CHARLES - struggling to keep his balance - pulls himself along the rail to BARSAD, stood tall at the ship's wheel.

CHARLES
How much longer?

Barsad's finger to his lips. He points into the darkness--

A HUGE SHIP'S LIGHTS IN THE DISTANCE,

BARSAD
English patrols. Ever since your
lot joined the war for the
Americans. Board or fire on us if
we get too close. Got to tack
around.

Charles gets it. He goes to turn away, satisfied--

BARSAD (CONT'D)
Price agreed was for one stowaway.
Going to cost you double to take
'em both into London.

Charles is outraged. But Barsad stares levelly back.

CHARLES
Take it up with the wine merchant.
You won't get a penny from me.

He turns away, disdainful. Barsad stares daggers after him.

Charles approaches the Husband and Wife. They're pale.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Go below, get out of the wind.

THE SHIP SUDDENLY LURCHES,

The Wife stumbles, Charles catches her - and stops dead.

She's pregnant. Clearly showing through her dress.

The Wife looks to him, desperate, afraid. Charles is stunned.

26

EXT. PORT OF LONDON - DAY

26

Hundreds of vessels crowd the Thames - galleys, slavers, merchantmen. Smaller boats ferry to and from the quayside. CUSTOMS OFFICERS carefully inspect all the new arrivals.

BARSAD steers his SHIP into port. Ropes are thrown, tied off.

CUSTOMS OFFICER
Port of departure?

BARSAD
Rotterdam. Best Dutch grain.

27 **INT. HOLD, BARSAD'S SHIP, PORT OF LONDON - DAY**

27

From a porthole, CHARLES watches the OFFICER move off. He turns to the exhausted WIFE and her HUSBAND.

CHARLES
*We wait until dark. Then a safe-
house, food and rest. Almost there.*
(an encouraging smile)
But English only from now on, just
to be safe.

They stare at him, uncomprehending. Charles' rising panic.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
You do speak English?

Suddenly BARSAD clatters down the steps, flanked by TWO CREW.

BARSAD
Out. Now.

CHARLES
No, we (agreed)--

BARSAD
The longer they're on board, the
more risk to me and my lads. Pay me
what I'm owed for two stowaways. Or
get them off my ship.

CHARLES
Listen, smuggler. This (woman)--

BARSAD
I've had enough of your mouth,
crapaud. Think I won't drag you up
there, turn you in for the King's
reward? You got any idea what they
do to French spies at Newgate?

Hard beat between them. But Charles is outnumbered.

28 **EXT. BARSAD'S SHIP / QUAYSIDE, PORT OF LONDON - DAY**

28

CHARLES - heart hammering in his chest - leads the terrified HUSBAND and WIFE out of the hold, closely followed by BARSAD.

Charles heads down the gangplank, onto the wharf, eyes down--

CUSTOMS OFFICER (O.S.)
You there.

Charles stops. Shit. The Officer steps to face them.

From the gangplank behind, Barsad watches on carefully.

CUSTOMS OFFICER (CONT'D)
Name and nationality?

CHARLES
Charles Darnay. French.
(off his hostility)
I'm a tutor. Lived here ten years,
teaching in some of the finest
homes in London. It's all here.

The Officer inspects his papers carefully. They're legit.

CUSTOMS OFFICER
(to the Husband and Wife)
And you?

CHARLES
My servants. English.

CUSTOMS OFFICER
Their papers?

Charles hands over the PACKET OF FORGED PAPERS Ernest gave him. Long beat as the Officer inspects them. Charles waits. The Husband and Wife wait. Barsad waits. Unbearably tense...

Then the Officer nods, satisfied. Hands the papers back.

Charles' huge internal relief. He goes to move off--

CUSTOMS OFFICER (CONT'D)
What about your master's luggage?

Panic in the uncomprehending Husband and Wife.

CHARLES
I'll have it sent on.

CUSTOMS OFFICER
Give me the address.
(his growing suspicion)
Not you. Them.

He takes a step closer to the terrified Husband and Wife.

Charles looks from the pregnant Wife to Barsad, listening in, pretending to check the moorings. Charles' big decision.

CHARLES
(to the Wife and Husband)
Get ready to run.

CUSTOMS OFFICER
What was that?

CHARLES TURNS AND GRABS BARSAD BY THE THROAT,

CHARLES
This man is a smuggler!

Barsad, enraged, swings for him. Charles slams his forehead into Barsad's eye. They go crashing to the ground, fighting. OFFICERS and Barsad's CREW pile in. It's a violent mess.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Go. Now!

The Husband and Wife suddenly understand. They make a break for it, running along the quay, disappearing into the crowd.

Charles is pinned by Officers; then feels a blow in his side--

BARSAD HAS STABBED HIM WITH A RIGGING KNIFE,

CUSTOMS OFFICER
Knife!

The Officers briefly let go of Charles to swarm Barsad--
CHARLES HAULS HIMSELF UPRIGHT AND RUNS AS FAST AS HE CAN,
Shoving his way past staring eyes, sprinting headlong for--

29 **EXT. STREETS AROUND THE PORT OF LONDON (VARIOUS) - CONT.** 29

CHARLES spots an alley, dives into it. Flattens himself in a doorway. He waits, breathless. Long, agonising seconds...

No pursuers. He sinks to his haunches--

BLOOD PULSES FROM THE DEEP WOUND IN HIS SIDE,

He rips his shirt - ties a bandage as tight as he can bear.

Then heaves himself upright - checks the coast is clear - and limps out of the alley and away along the busy street.

30 **EXT. POORER STREETS, LONDON - EVENING** 30

CHARLES limps along in the crowds, disoriented and pale.

SOLDIERS suddenly spill out of a tavern, almost knock into him. Charles tenses. But they don't give him a second glance.

He finally spots a grubby LINK-BOY, hurries over.

31 **EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE LORRY HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT** 31

The LINK-BOY - his pitch torch flaming - points out the Lorry house. CHARLES gives him a coin and the Boy goes.

Charles reaches into his jacket - his hand is wet with blood. His head spins, dizzy. But he made a promise to Ernest.

He steels himself - and crosses the street towards the house.

CLOSE ON: CHARLES' EYES FLICKERING OPEN,

He struggles to make out his unfamiliar surroundings--

32

INT. BEDROOM, LORRY HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

32

CHARLES lies in bed, groggy. Winces at the pain in his side.

VOICE (O.S.)

Wasn't sure you'd make it.

He turns to find LUCIE sat by the bed, watching him intently. Charles looks down to see fresh bandaging over his wound.

CHARLES

This was you?

(off her nod)

How long?

LUCIE

Three days. Your fever broke on the second night. You were talking in your dreams.

CHARLES

(anxious)

What did I say?

LUCIE

Hard to tell. You were angry.

Charles studies her for more - but she's poker-faced.

CHARLES

How do I know I'm not dreaming now?

A moment between them. Then Lucie reaches out - and lightly places a fingertip on his bandaged wound. Charles flinches.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I'm awake.

LUCIE

'Alexandre Manette, recalled to life'.

(off his silence)

You were sent to deliver a message. To Jarvis Lorry. My guardian.

Charles takes this in, brain scrambling to catch up.

He reaches for a jug of water by the bed. But Lucie moves it.

CHARLES

I was given a name and address.
That's all I know.

LUCIE

Who gave you the message? Are you
really a tutor? Is your name even
Charles Darnay?

Charles looks to the sideboard - his PAPERS lie open.

LUCIE (CONT'D)

You need to start talking - right
now - or I'll have the watch here
before you can get dressed.

CHARLES

My name is Darnay. I am a tutor.
(beat)
I can't tell you who gave me the
message. I won't. There are lives
at stake, other than mine.

Lucie searches for the lie in him. Can't see one. She hands
him the water. He drinks greedily.

LUCIE

How did that happen?
(his stab wound)

CHARLES

A disagreement with a colleague.
One of yours. An Englishman.

LUCIE

I'm French.
(off his look, stung)
*I was born in Paris. You don't
believe me?*

CHARLES

I do, mademoiselle. But you seem...

LUCIE

What? What do I 'seem'?

CHARLES

Different.

His smile. A beat between them. A flicker of chemistry.

LUCIE

Different how?

CHARLES

In Paris, young women don't go
around cauterising strangers' stab
wounds.

LUCIE
You're welcome, by the way.

CHARLES
Must be an English thing.

LUCIE
Actually you were my first. Women
in England aren't permitted to
practice medicine any more than
they are in France.

CHARLES
But you do. Rather well.

Another beat. His charm, thawing her... She pulls back.

LUCIE
Where do I find the person who gave
you this message?

CHARLES
I can't...

LUCIE
In Paris?

CHARLES
I already told (you)--

LUCIE
Alexandre Manette was my father.

Charles stops. Stunned.

LUCIE (CONT'D)
He was a doctor too. Respected by
the nobility. But he was loved by
those who had nothing. He never
charged for his services if the
patient couldn't afford the fee.
(she leans in closer)
*I'm not that kind of doctor,
monsieur. I want answers.*

CHARLES
Am I your prisoner then?

A big beat between them. Danger. Attraction.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Some bread. It's been days. Then
I'll tell you what I can.

Lucie hesitates - then stands, goes to leave. At the door--

CHARLES (CONT'D)
What's your name?

LUCIE
Lucie. Lucie Manette.

She goes, leaving Charles staring after her. Captivated.

33 **INT. CORRIDOR, LORRY HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT**

33

LUCIE exits the bedroom, locks the door. She leans against the wall, head spinning, heart pounding. Is her father alive?

She looks up to see JERRY sat on a chair down the corridor.

LUCIE
He tries anything.

Jerry gives her a look - he doesn't need to be told.

34 **INT. KITCHEN, LORRY HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT**

34

LUCIE hurries to throw some bits of food onto a tray.

VOICE (O.S.)
He's alive then? This Frenchman?

Lucie turns to find HESTER in the doorway, censorious.

HESTER
We should send for a magistrate,
let them deal (with)--

LUCIE
(impassioned)
No. No one must know he's here.

HESTER
Lucie...

LUCIE
He knows something about my father.

HESTER
Why? Because he claims to carry
some 'message'? How can you trust
him? How can you believe anything
this man says?

Lucie turns on her, years of anger rushing to the surface.

LUCIE
Why did you never let me go back?

HESTER
(wrong-footed)
It was too dangerous. You were
there, you saw what happened to
your poor father.

LUCIE

But not why. Who was responsible.
Why did Mr Lorry stop looking for
answers?

HESTER

He tried. For years.

LUCIE

Then gave up. Did you tell him to?

Hester is pierced. Lucie sees it. Regrets it. But too late.

LUCIE (CONT'D)

I'm going to get to the truth.

She exits with the tray. Hester is quietly crushed.

35

INT. BEDROOM, LORRY HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

35

CHARLES sits by the bed, the tray emptied. LUCIE stands.

CHARLES

I left France ten years ago. Had my
reasons. I found work here as a
tutor. But I never really settled.
Always felt like an outsider.

On Lucie, moved, hearing her own feelings spoken aloud.

LUCIE

Why didn't you go back until now?

CHARLES

What do you remember of Paris? Nice
family home, nice neighbourhood?
It's a fantasy. Children are
starving. Men and women lie dying
in the streets. The poor are put to
death for the most trivial crimes.

(beat)

Friends of mine, they knew a man. A
wine merchant. He was helping
people get out of France -
political prisoners, those speaking
out against the monarchy. I offered
to help. He refused. I kept asking.
Finally I was vouched for, given a
job. Bring two fugitives to London.
And a message. Which led me to you.

His eyes on hers. Another flicker of chemistry between them.

LUCIE

And now?

CHARLES

I'll leave. Try to find a way back
to France before the Customs men
catch up with me.

He stands. In pain. She steps closer. Close enough to touch.

LUCIE

You're too weak.

CHARLES

I've put you in danger long enough.

LUCIE

Nobody knows you're here, they'd
have come by now. Two, three days
to gather your strength. Then leave
for Paris. And I'm going with you.

(over his protests)

You owe me a life. I've spent
eighteen years grieving my father.
Alive or dead, I'll know what
happened and why.

Ironclad. Charles takes her in. Who is this woman?

CHARLES

I was right. You are different.

A pregnant beat, eyes on each other. Definite chemistry.

LUCIE

Take me to this wine merchant.

Another beat - then Charles nods. Lucie's unbridled relief.

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR,

LUCIE (CONT'D)

One moment, Jerry.

(to Charles)

*Rest. I'll find us a passage to
France.*

She unlocks the door, opens it on--

HALF A DOZEN ARMED WATCHMEN,

In the corridor beyond. They push past her into the room.

LUCIE (CONT'D)

No!

WATCHMAN

Charles Darnay, I arrest you in the
name of the King.

Rough hands seize Charles, force him to his knees.

Lucie tries to intervene - but Charles stops her with a look.

CHARLES

*Don't say anything. You found me
wounded on the street. That's all.*

Lucie turns to find HESTER in the doorway. Lucie stares at her, incensed. This unforgivable betrayal.

HESTER

I did this for you. Ask them what
this man is charged with.

WATCHMAN

Treason, miss. He's a French spy,
in the pay of the Americans.

CHARLES

That's a lie!

He is floored by a blow, dragged unconscious from the room.

Hester, shocked at the violence, tries to catch Lucie's eye.
But she stares after Charles. Not knowing what to believe.

CLOSE ON: TWO COCKERELS, TEARING VICIOUSLY AT EACH OTHER,

Steel-tipped talons rip feathers, blood soaking the floor of--

36

INT. BACK ROOM, TAVERN, LONDON - DAY

36

PUNTERS crowd the crude dirt arena, cheering the bloodsport.
Spilled drinks, laughter, the sweaty thrust and grab of cash.

In a corner, drinking alone and watching on, detached--

SYDNEY CARTON (30s). A dissolute, capricious drunk. His
jagged outer shell masks a brilliant mind and wasted heart.

The fighting reaches its climax. Sydney whistles to a BOOKIE.

SYDNEY

Five crowns on the little one.

BOOKIE

You mad? He's done in.
(off Sydney's insistence)
You ain't got five crowns.

SYDNEY

I will in an hour.

The Bookie shrugs - your loss. He makes a note in his book.

Just then the bloodied smaller cockerel finds a sudden burst
of fight - and rips out the throat of its larger opponent.

Cheers of victory and howls of defeat from the Punters.
The crestfallen Bookie looks back to Sydney - but he's gone.

37 **EXT. TAVERN, LONDON - DAY**

37

SYDNEY exits the tavern, dishevelled. Blinks in the sunshine.
The INNKEEPER is unloading crates of beer from a cart.

INNKEEPER
Here, what about your tab?

SYDNEY
Get it from the bookie. I just won
five crowns.

INNKEEPER
You owe me ten.

But Sydney's already gone, taking a bottle of beer with him.

38 **EXT. POORER STREETS, LONDON (VARIOUS) - DAY**

38

SYDNEY pulls on the beer as he shambles along. He gets nods
of recognition from DRUNKS, WORKING GIRLS and filthy PEDLARS. *

HAWKERS cry their wares - oysters, coal, matches. Chamber
pots are emptied out of upper storey windows. BUTCHERS throw
buckets of blood and offal out into the overflowing gutters.

Sydney breathes it all in. His London.

39 **EXT. NEWGATE PRISON, LONDON - DAY**

39

A huge, imposing structure. SYDNEY stops outside, splashes
his face with filthy water from a horse trough. Better.

40 **INT. COURTROOM, OLD BAILEY, NEWGATE PRISON, LONDON - DAY** 40

SYDNEY slips in through a side door, stands in the shadows.

C.J. STRYVER (30s, a bombastic lawyer) stands in front of the
JUDGE'S bench, mid-flow. A flamboyantly dressed MADAME is at
the bar. A PARSON sits flanked by his PROSECUTION LAWYER.

STRYVER
... for what crime, m'lud? Devoting
a lifetime to the happiness of
others? One might even say charity?

Sydney spots someone at the rear of the courtroom - a WOMAN
IN BLACK, her face hidden by a veil. Sydney's curiosity.

PROSECUTION LAWYER

The defendant runs a notorious
whorehouse. Charity doesn't come
into it.

Stryver looks anxiously from his pocket-watch to the door.

STRYVER

But the good christian parson...

PROSECUTION LAWYER

My client sold the property
adjoining his in good faith. Now
all manner of harlots rut and
fornicate outside his door.

Stryver, floundering, looks back to the courtroom door.

STRYVER

Romance, m'lud. Is love a crime?

PROSECUTION LAWYER

My client seeks the right to
repossess the property.

STRYVER

Leaving this poor woman destitute?

JUDGE

The defendant appears neither poor
nor destitute, Mr Stryver.

The Madame smiles winningly at the Judge from beneath her
enormous hat. Stryver glowers at her - 'not helping'.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

I've heard enough.

The smug Prosecution Lawyer stands. Stryver sits, despairing.

PROSECUTION LAWYER

Thank you, m'lud. My client...

SYDNEY

Is a pimp.

A collective gasp. All eyes turn to him as he steps out of
the shadows. The Woman in Black leans forward in her chair.

STRYVER

My esteemed associate!

JUDGE

You are late, Mr Carton. Again.

Sydney nods a curt apology and crosses to the defence table
where the deeply relieved Stryver hands him a lawyer's gown
and wig. Sydney shrugs them on over the following--

SYDNEY

Madam, you purchased your property
from the parson here.

MADAME

That's right.

SYDNEY

And you have been running a bawdy
house there ever since.

Everyone reacts, confused. Stryver throws him a look - what
are you doing? But Sydney gestures for the Madame to speak.

MADAME

... I have?

SYDNEY

But when you bought the house, the
parson refused to sell you the free-
hold. He has been charging you a
lease. In fact, he has doubled the
cost of the lease every year since.

He picks up a FREEHOLD DOCUMENT from the defence table.

PROSECUTION LAWYER

M'lud, this is not a crime.

SYDNEY

Illegal? No. Unchristian?

JUDGE

Get to the point, Mr Carton.

SYDNEY

The good parson remains the
freeholder of the property. Under
law, he is responsible for any
business conducted on the premises.

Silence. Then everybody talking at once. The Parson and his
Lawyer outraged, the Madame laughing, Stryver triumphant.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

A pimp, by his own hand.

He hands the document to the Judge who scans it, weary.

JUDGE

This court finds for the plaintiff.
However, I am going to compel said
plaintiff to re-purchase the
property from the defendant for the
original price she paid.

(to the Madame)

Conduct your business elsewhere,
madam, if you must.

MADAME
Thank you, my lord.

JUDGE
(to the Parson)
Choose your neighbours more
prudently, sir, especially if you
wish to fleece them. Dismissed.

Everybody goes to leave, the Parson arguing with his Lawyer.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
Mr Carton, Mr Stryver. This is not
a twopenny theatre. Next time
you'll both be in contempt.

STRYVER
Wise as Solomon, m'lud.

The Judge goes. Stryver crosses to the relieved Madame.

Sydney pulls off his wig, satisfied. He glances to the back
of the courtroom - but the Woman in Black has disappeared.

41 **INT. STRYVER AND SYDNEY'S CHAMBERS, LONDON - NIGHT** 41

A chaos of books, legal gowns, dirty plates, empty bottles.

STRYVER smokes in a garish robe. SYDNEY rummages in the mess.

STRYVER
Not your best work. The madame will
only pay our fee in house credit.
Could head over there tonight?

SYDNEY
Where are the lemons?

STRYVER
Might do you good, a little female
company. When was the last (time)--

SYDNEY
You go. You were never shy about
taking all the credit.

STRYVER
(his greedy smile)
Sydney, you wound me.

A KNOCK AT THEIR DOOR,

They look at each other, surprised. Stryver gestures for
Sydney to answer it. Irritated, he opens the door on--

THE WOMAN IN BLACK, who now lifts her veil to reveal--

LUCIE,

Big beat between her and Sydney. An instant spark.

LUCIE
Mr Carton? Forgive the late hour.

STRYVER
Not at all.

He rises, bustles her inside. Sydney stays by the door.

STRYVER (CONT'D)
C.J. Stryver, advocate to the
innocent and needy. Mrs...?

LUCIE
Miss Lucie Manette.

Offering a handshake - but Stryver kisses it instead. Sydney rolls his eyes - used to Stryver's lechery.

Stryver clears a chair for Lucie, then takes his seat across the table, the grand man. Sydney stays at the door, watching.

STRYVER
How may I be of service?

LUCIE
I require a legal defence.

STRYVER
And you shall have one. But what
crime can a charming young (lady)--

LUCIE
Not for myself. A friend.

STRYVER
Ah. And what offence is the
gentleman charged with?

Lucie flushes, caught. Sydney spots it, disappointed.

STRYVER (CONT'D)
When a beautiful woman - unmarried -
calls on a lawyer at this hour...

LUCIE
Treason.

Stryver stops in his tracks. Sydney studies Lucie, intrigued.

LUCIE (CONT'D)
I can pay.

STRYVER
Such a charge...

She puts a heavy PURSE on the table. Stryver lights up.

STRYVER (CONT'D)
Your friend is as good as
acquitted, Miss Manette. Now...

LUCIE
I want him.

She turns to Sydney. Another beat between them. Friction.

STRYVER
My associate, Sydney Carton, will
assist me.

LUCIE
No. I want him to lead the defence.

SYDNEY
I'm not available.

STRYVER
He's joking, of course.

But Sydney just turns on his heel and ducks out.

STRYVER (CONT'D)
Rest assured, I (will)--

But Lucie has grabbed the purse and followed Sydney out.

42

EXT. STRYVER AND SYDNEY'S CHAMBERS, LONDON - NIGHT

42

SYDNEY shuffles down the street. LUCIE hurries to catch him.

LUCIE
Mr Carton.

SYDNEY
No.

LUCIE
Why not?

SYDNEY
I don't waste my time with star-
crossed sweethearts.

He turns a corner, but she quickens her pace to overtake him.

LUCIE
Neither do I. He's French, a tutor.
We only met a few days ago.

SYDNEY
He works fast even for a Frenchman.

He steps around her to a closed SHOP. Bangs on the door.

LUCIE
We're not lovers.

Stepping in front of him, up in his face. He's taken aback.

SYDNEY
So why do you care?

LUCIE
Why does it matter?

A stand-off, their faces close. Lucie blinks first--

LUCIE (CONT'D)
He's a fellow countryman, unjustly
persecuted. That's all.

Sydney doesn't buy it. Even Lucie hears how thin it sounds.

A window opens above, and a SHOPKEEPER'S head pokes out.

SYDNEY
Half a dozen lemons.

SHOPKEEPER
Middle of the bleeding night.

SYDNEY
I'll pay double.

SHOPKEEPER
Bugger off or I'll call the watch.

The window shuts. Sydney kicks the door, angry, stalks away.
Lucie follows, matching him stride for stride.

LUCIE
I won't give up, you know.

SYDNEY
Dozens of lawyers in London.

LUCIE
I tried them. Nobody will touch it.
Don't want to ruin their reputation
defending an unwinnable case.

SYDNEY
What makes you think I do?

LUCIE
You represent pimps, whores, and
thieves. You don't have a good name
to lose.

Sydney stops and turns on her, provoked. She smiles back.

SYDNEY

No case is unwinnable.

LUCIE

The attorney-general thinks so. An eye witness, the selling of state secrets. All a pack of lies, but the way things are just now - the war with America all but lost, the newspapers whipping up a panic about 'Foreign agents in our midst'. You think any jury will give a Frenchman a fair trial?

(off his hesitation)

I watched you in court today. Beating the odds, skewering a hypocrite. That's what you thrive on, isn't it? He's an innocent man.

Full of passion, conviction. Sydney hesitates, taking her in.

SYDNEY

Nobody is innocent, Miss Manette.

LUCIE

He didn't do this. He doesn't deserve to die.

A final step towards him. Eyes on his. Has she done enough?

But instead he steps around her and ducks inside--

43

INT. GIN-HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

43

Heaving with rowdy DRINKERS. Sweat, booze, tobacco, sex.

SYDNEY weaves, nodding curt greetings to fellow REGULARS. LUCIE does her best to follow - roughly jostled, feeling their eyes on her. But she won't be cowed. Sydney sees it.

LUCIE

Just meet him, at least?

He pushes through to the LANDLADY at the bar. Lucie squeezes in next to him, their bodies pressed close by the crowd.

SYDNEY

The usual. And any lemons you have back there.

LANDLADY

Ain't got none, Sydney.

Sydney rankles. The Landlady pours his drink - a half-pint of very strong, noxious gin. He drinks off half in one gulp.

LUCIE
I'll get you as many lemons as you
want, an entire bloody tree of
them.

He ignores her. So she grabs his glass, drinks it off. She
winces at the raw alcohol. Sydney watches her, speechless.

LUCIE (CONT'D)
Will you - God, that's foul - will
you meet him?

SYDNEY
No.

He turns away and ducks out.

44

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE GIN-HOUSE - NIGHT

44

LUCIE follows SYDNEY out, frustrated. The night air hits her,
the booze in her system making her a little unsteady.

LUCIE
Why not?

He turns on her, angry, his face close to hers.

SYDNEY
Because I won't be lied to, Miss
Manette. I might not have a good
name, or any reputation to speak
of. But when you've spent your life
surrounded by cheats and criminals
you learn to smell a fraud.
(off her indignation)
You claim to barely know this man,
yet here you are chasing me across
the worst part of town in the
middle of the night, offering five
times the going rate to save his
neck? No. Make it make sense to me,
or we have nothing to discuss. What
is he to you?

Big beat on Lucie. Can she trust him? Does she have a choice?

LUCIE
... I was eight years old when I
watched my father die. Every day
since I've asked myself... if I
hadn't slipped... if I'd only run
faster... could I have saved him?

Her pain, her raw vulnerability. Sydney's eyes on hers,
unable to look away. Something resonating deep inside him.

LUCIE (CONT'D)

But now a stranger arrives from Paris with a message. 'Recalled to life'. I don't know what it means, but I can't lose this chance. If he dies...

Her eyes on his, asking for his help. He hesitates.

SYDNEY

You understand what you're risking, defending this man? The danger to you if he's convicted? How do you know he's innocent of the charges against him? How can you be sure?

LUCIE

I can't. But he's all I have.

On Sydney, somehow stung by this. Compelled.

45

INT. CELL, NEWGATE PRISON, LONDON - NIGHT

45

An awful, medieval place. Damp, disease, suffering.

CHARLES sits against the wall. Unshaven, filthy. So anxious.

VOICE (O.S.)

Frenchman.

A GAOLER stands at the bars to his cell. Charles rises, crosses towards him, uncertain. What's going on?

The Gaoler goes to unlock the cell - but a hand stops him--

SYDNEY,

Stands in the shadows behind. Watching Charles. At his nod the Gaoler holds his lantern up to illuminate Charles's face.

Charles can only make out Sydney's silhouette in the shadows.

CHARLES

Who's there? Who are you?

Sydney studies Charles. His face, his bearing. Voyeuristic.

Charles feels eyes on him, assessing him. He stands straight.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Show yourself.

Sydney hesitates - then turns away, followed by the Gaoler.

Charles is plunged back into solitary darkness.

46

EXT. NEWGATE PRISON, LONDON - NIGHT

46

A little side door opens and the GAOLER shows SYDNEY out. Sydney hands the Gaoler a coin - then holds out another.

SYDNEY

Tomorrow. I may have need of you.

The Gaoler nods and goes. Sydney stands on the empty street.

47

I/E. STRYVER AND SYDNEY'S CHAMBERS, LONDON - NIGHT

47

LUCIE approaches from the street, her arms full of LEMONS. She goes to knock - but the door is already ajar. Within--

SYDNEY SITS AT THE DESK, BENT OVER A STACK OF PAPERS,

He goes to turn a page - but the paper shakes in his hand. He stares at it, almost curious, unable to stop the tremors.

Lucie stares at him, shocked. Sydney turns and sees her stood in the doorway. A pregnant, exposing beat between them.

He rises, wordlessly takes the lemons from her. Goes to work juicing them into a wide PEWTER BOWL filled with sugar cubes.

LUCIE

... are you taking the case?

He hesitates, won't meet her eye... then nods. Her relief.

LUCIE (CONT'D)

Thank you. Thank you.

She places the PURSE on the table. Sydney looks at it, cold.

SYDNEY

After. If we win.

LUCIE

Call it a show of faith.

Her smile, holding his eye. Again, he's wrong-footed by her.

LUCIE (CONT'D)

Should we get to work?

SYDNEY

I am.

He grabs a kettle from the fire, pours boiling water into the bowl - empties two bottles of brandy and rum into the mix.

Lucie reacts, shocked - what the hell is he doing?

Carton dips a tankard into the hot punch - downs it in one. He holds Lucie's eye, brazen, unapologetic - 'this is me'.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

You can go.

He refills the tankard and sits at the desk with his back to her, the bowl of punch at his elbow.

Lucie stands there, reeling. She turns to go, dazed--

Then stops at the door. He thinks he can scare her off? No.

She rummages in a pile of clothes on the floor, pulls out a crumpled towel. Sydney watches askance as she pours cold water into an empty bowl; dunks the towel; wrings it out.

She crosses to Sydney and before he can stop her she wraps the wet towel around his head. A kind of crude turban.

LUCIE

Wet it every hour. It will cool
your blood.

A charged beat. Her hands on his temples. His eyes on hers.

She goes. Sydney stares after her. Still feeling her touch.

48 **EXT. STRYVER AND SYDNEY'S CHAMBERS, LONDON - DAWN** 48

LUCIE closes the door behind her. The sun is just coming up.

She looks back at the door. Has she just made a huge mistake?

49 **INT. CELL, NEWGATE PRISON, LONDON - DAWN** 49

CHARLES - filthy in his prison rind - drinks in the dawn from the cell's tiny window. He knows it could be his last.

The GAOLER opens his cell. He holds clothes and a razor.

GAOLER

Thank your fairy godmother.

50 **INT. HALLWAY, LORRY HOUSE, LONDON - EARLY MORNING** 50

LUCIE lets herself inside, as quiet as she can--

HESTER STEPS OUT OF AN INTERNAL DOORWAY,

Exhausted. She has waited up all night. A tense beat.

HESTER

Tell me this isn't that Frenchman.
(off her silence)
Lucie.

But Lucie's already heading upstairs. Hester's grave concern.

51 **INT. STRYVER AND SYDNEY'S CHAMBERS, LONDON - DAY** 51

SYDNEY drains the last of the punch, then stretches, sore and red-eyed. He unwraps the towel from his head. A mess of handwritten notes cover the desk before him.

Lucie's PURSE sits to one side. He picks it up, heavy in his hand. Who is this woman? Why is he so drawn to her?

Sunlight catches the empty PEWTER PUNCH BOWL, reflecting into Sydney's eyes, blinding him. He goes to move it...

Then stops. Struck by something. An idea.

52 **INT. LUCIE'S DRESSING ROOM, LORRY HOUSE, LONDON - DAY** 52

LUCIE puts finishing touches to her reflection in the mirror. She breathes deep. So nervous. Everything riding on this.

53 **EXT. COURTYARD, NEWGATE GAOL, LONDON - DAY** 53

CHARLES - freshly shaven, clean set of clothes - is escorted across the yard. He feels all the PRISONERS turn to stare.

A grim GALLOWS stands at the far end. His stomach clenches.

54 **INT. COURTROOM, OLD BAILEY, NEWGATE PRISON, LONDON - DAY** 54

The court is packed with SPECTATORS. Sweaty, airless, a hum of febrile excitement. The MEN OF THE JURY mutter, impatient.

LUCIE squeezes inside, finds a seat. Her nerves fraying.

She looks up and spots HESTER, escorted in by JERRY (elbowing people aside to make room for them to sit). Hester eyes Lucie - 'what have you got yourself into?'. Lucie just turns away.

She spots STRYVER at the defence table - but where is Sydney? Lucie looks around, increasingly anxious. Then--

SYDNEY ENTERS, CLEAN-SHAVEN IN LAWYER'S WIG AND GOWN,

Lucie, relieved, stands to speak to him - but he sweeps straight past her and slumps into the seat next to Stryver. Sydney stares down at the floor, hungover, hollow-eyed.

Lucie's anxiety redoubles.

 SENIOR JUDGE
 Bring in the prisoner.

The whole room goes silent, as two GAOLERS enter with--

CHARLES, STANDING TALL DESPITE HIS INNER TURMOIL,

Vocal hostility from the Spectators as Charles is escorted to the bar. People crane to get a look at him, mutter insults.

A LARGE MIRROR hangs above Charles, reflecting sunlight into his face so the Jury and Spectators can all get a good look at him. He shifts, uncomfortable. Feeling all eyes on him.

SENIOR JUDGE (CONT'D)

Charles Darnay, you stand indicted on a charge of treason against the British Crown. At the forfeit of your life, how do you plead?

A tense beat, the court holding its breath.

CHARLES

Not guilty.

Anger erupts. Insults are shouted, Charles is jostled and spat on by the Spectators nearest him. It's a bear pit.

Charles catches Lucie's eye - a fearful beat between them.

55 **INT. COURTROOM, OLD BAILEY, NEWGATE PRISON, LONDON - LATER** 55

BARSAD in the witness-box. One eye is heavily bandaged.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

What did you see as you were unloading at the docks?

BARSAD

The prisoner meeting with two sailors on the quayside.

At the bar, CHARLES shakes his head. These lies.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Why were your suspicions aroused?

BARSAD

They were talking French.

The COURT reacts angrily around LUCIE. She sits straighter.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

What happened then?

BARSAD

The sailors handed him some papers and left.

The Attorney-General brandishes some documents to the court.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

These papers?

(off Barsad's nod)

(MORE)

ATTORNEY-GENERAL (CONT'D)

The jury will note these documents
detail the movements of British
naval forces in the Americas.

The court reacts, outraged. The JURY mutter. Lucie's eye is
caught by HESTER - not pleased exactly, but vindicated.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL (CONT'D)

What did you do then, Mr Barsad?

BARSAD

I went over. Asked him what his
business was.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

A noble action. And he tried to
flee? So you held him?

BARSAD

He swung for me, broke my eye here.

He turns to show the Jury his bandage. A murmur of sympathy.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

But you were able to snatch these
papers from him as he ran?

BARSAD

That's right.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Honest patriot. Your country thanks
you for your act of courage.

The Attorney-General sits to a wave of approving muttering.
If the Spectators could applaud Barsad they would.

Lucie catches Charles' eye. Hope quickly draining away.

SENIOR JUDGE

The defence may question the
witness.

Lucie looks to SYDNEY - time to step up, save the day...

BUT INSTEAD IT'S STRYVER WHO STANDS AND CROSSES TO BARSAD,

Lucie reacts. But Sydney won't look at her, disconnected.

STRYVER

Mr Barsad, are you a smuggler?

BARSAD

Never.

STRYVER

Never been arrested by the
excisemen for unpaid duties?

BARSAD

Never went to prison for it.

A ripple of laughter. The Spectators are on Barsad's side.

STRYVER

What do you expect to gain by this evidence?

BARSAD

I just want to see justice done.

STRYVER

You haven't been promised a spy-catcher's bounty by the government?

BARSAD

I'm a patriot. That's all. I hope there are many here like me.

Playing to the crowd, red meat. It gets a big cheer.

Lucie and Charles share a despairing look. Bad to worse.

Sydney gives Stryver a little signal - enough. Stryver sits. Sydney stands. Lucie leans forward in her seat. Finally.

SYDNEY

Mr Barsad. You claim you saw the prisoner talking with two others on the quayside?

(off his nod)

How far away was that? Roughly?

BARSAD

About as far as he is from me now.

SYDNEY

The Port of London is the busiest in the world. Must be quite a din?

(off Barsad's shrug)

Yet you overheard three men speaking French at this distance?

BARSAD

That's right.

SYDNEY

M'lud, I'll ask the court to talk amongst themselves a moment.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

What is the point of this?

SYDNEY

To prove the witness' evidence.

SENIOR JUDGE
 Make it brief, Mr Carton.
 (to the court)
 Converse with your neighbour.

The court, amused, does as it's told. Loud chatter.

Lucie and Charles share a look - what the hell is he doing?

Sydney talks low to the nearest GAOLER flanking Charles (the same man he paid for access to Charles' cell at Newgate).

After a few seconds Sydney holds up a hand for quiet.

SYDNEY
 Mr Barsad, what language was I
 speaking to this gentleman just
 now?

BAR SAD
 ... French.

SYDNEY
 You're sure?

BAR SAD
 Yes.

Sydney nods to the Gaoler. He turns to the Judge--

GAOLER
 It were English, m'lud. He asked
 what time the nearest tavern opens.

The court laughs. Barsad glowers.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL
 M'lud, this circus act is an insult
 to the court. The prisoner is
 accused of a capital crime. He
 stands to lose his life.

The room goes silent. Charles looks down. Lucie clenches.

SYDNEY
 (to the Jury, sincere)
 Charles Darnay is a simple tutor
 who made his home here ten years
 ago. He has never set foot in the
 Port of London - nor had he ever
 set eyes on Mr Barsad before today.

Charles and Lucie react. Is this Sydney's defence? It's thin.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL
 This man is a French spy. He was
 observed trading in state secrets.

SYDNEY
Observed by this witness only.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL
Who has sworn to it.

SYDNEY
Will you swear to it now, Mr Barsad? Could you identify the prisoner from another man? Even with that eye you claim is broken?

BARSAD
From any man, night or day, in a crowd or fifty yards away.

SYDNEY
What about in this room?

SENIOR JUDGE
The witness has answered the question. If there are no more...

He goes to pick up his gavel. A collective intake of breath. Charles and Lucie both tense, ready for the axe to fall...

SYDNEY
One more.

He quickly crosses the room, approaches the bar...

THEN STEPS AROUND IT TO STAND NEXT TO THE ASTONISHED CHARLES,

The court murmurs surprise. Charles stares in confusion at Sydney beside him. Lucie reacts - what is he doing?

SENIOR JUDGE
Mr Carton.

SYDNEY
My final question, on my honour.
(turning to Barsad)
Identify the man you saw.

BARSAD
The man to your right.

Sydney nods - then shrugs off his lawyer's gown and wig--

UNDERNEATH HE WEARS ALMOST IDENTICAL CLOTHES TO CHARLES,

He has even pulled his hair back into the same style.

Lucie stares - they're so alike they could almost be twins.

SYDNEY
What about now?

The court laughs - titillated, enjoying the theatre.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL
(standing)
I must protest!

Sydney nods to Stryver, who takes his cue. He stands to argue loudly with the Attorney-General - blocking Barsad's view.

CHARLES
(to Sydney, low)
What are you doing? What is this?

Sydney catches Charles' eye in the mirror above them - it's the first time the two men have made direct eye contact.

SYDNEY
You want to live? Then do exactly
as I do.

He quickly swaps places with Charles. Then reaches up and spins the mirror above their heads. It swings on its chains, throwing light haphazardly around the courtroom.

Throughout all this, Lucie's eyes are on Sydney, transfixed.

Sydney gives Stryver another tiny nod - now.

STRYVER
(over the din)
Identify the man again, Mr Barsad.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL
M'lud, really!

STRYVER
The prosecution's case rests
entirely on this man's testimony.

The Judge bangs his gavel for order. The hubbub subsides.

SENIOR JUDGE
The witness will identify the
prisoner or I will have to dismiss.

The court goes silent. The Attorney-General reluctantly sits.

All eyes turn to the disoriented Barsad. New pressure. He sweats, floundering, squints through his one un-bandaged eye--

BUT THE LIGHT FROM THE SPINNING MIRROR KEEPS BLINDING HIM,

Blurring his vision of Sydney and Charles stood side by side.

Pin-drop silence. The entire court holds its breath.

Lucie leans forward in her seat, rapt. Then--

BARSAD

... The man to the left.

STRYVER

My left?

The mirror spins... the light flaring in Barsad's eye...

BARSAD

Yes... No. My left.

A precarious beat... Then Sydney steps down from the bar.

SYDNEY

I'm afraid not, Mr Barsad.

Uproar. The Spectators shouting. Hester baffled. Barsad and the Attorney-General furious. Stryver clamouring triumphantly for a dismissal. The Judge calling for order. Chaos.

In the middle of it all, Charles' disbelief. He's saved.

Lucie stands, elated, emotional. Her eyes fixed on Sydney for long, searching moments - desperate for him to turn around. To show him what this means to her.

Sydney crosses slowly to the defence table, eyes down. Then, for the very first time, he allows himself a look to Lucie--

BUT IN THAT SPLIT SECOND SHE TURNS AWAY TO SMILE AT CHARLES,

Unbridled relief and joy coursing between the two of them.

Sydney sees it. Mistakes it. And something breaks inside him.

56

EXT. NEWGATE GAOL, LONDON - DAY

56

The prison gates close behind CHARLES. Still barely able to believe he's a free man. He turns and spots--

LUCIE, SMILING AT HIM FROM ACROSS THE BUSY STREET,

He crosses to her. Doesn't have the words to thank her.

CHARLES

It seems I owe you two lives.

LUCIE

One will do.

57

INT. LIBRARY, LORRY HOUSE, LONDON - DAY

57

HESTER sits at the desk, sorting through papers and letters. She spots a book. A memory. She opens it up to a handwritten inscription within, faded with time. It makes her emotional.

She looks up to see LUCIE at the door, holding a small travelling case. Hester shuts the book.

LUCIE
You wanted me gone.

Ready for a fight. But Hester doesn't rise to it. Gently--

HESTER
There are patrols in the Channel.

LUCIE
I'll find a way.

HESTER
Yes. I believe you will.

Lucie's surprise. Hester rises. Puts something in her hand--
A WALLET, FILLED WITH BANKNOTES,

HESTER (CONT'D)
If you need more - if you need
anything - go to Tellson's in
Paris. Tell them I sent you.

Lucie is taken aback, emotional. Hester is too. A sense there's more both of them would say... But neither of them know how.

HESTER (CONT'D)
There's something else you should
have. I found them yesterday.
Jarvis had kept them locked away.

She goes to the desk - pulls out a PACKET OF LETTERS.

58

INT. GIN-HOUSE, LONDON - DAY

58

STRYVER is at the centre of a crowd, loudly toasting victory. Amongst his gang of DRINKERS is the GAOLER from Newgate.

CHARLES enters, unnoticed. He scans the room and spots SYDNEY, alone at the bar. Even more dissolute than usual.

CHARLES
Mr Carton? I owe you more than I
can ever repay.

He waits - but no response. Eventually Charles turns to go--

SYDNEY
How does it feel? To have had your
neck in the noose? To be saved?

CHARLES
I hope I've expressed (my)--

Sydney turns on him. Leans in close. Charles is taken aback.

SYDNEY

A strange mirror. Do you see
anything you recognise? Beyond skin
and bone? Are we at all alike?

A provocative beat. Sydney nods, reading Charles' answer.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

I gambled your life on the toss of
a coin. If the smuggler had guessed
right you'd be a dead man and I'd
be drinking in peace.

CHARLES

I've offended you somehow. I'll
leave you to your own company.

SYDNEY

You'll drink a toast with me. My
fee. One drink.

He nods at the LANDLADY, who fills two glasses.

CHARLES

What shall we toast?

SYDNEY

Your saviour.

CHARLES

To your health.

Sydney shakes his head. Dawning realisation in Charles. Her.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

To Miss Manette, then.

SYDNEY

To Lucie Manette.

Tense beat. They drain their glasses, eye to eye...

THEN SYDNEY SMASHES HIS GLASS TO PIECES AT CHARLES' FEET,

The entire room goes silent.

A dangerous beat. Charles might swing for him. But instead--

CHARLES

That was you last night. Hiding in
the shadows. I was a prisoner,
waiting to die. Today I'm a free
man.

He places two coins on the bar, turns and leaves.

Sydney stares after him. Knowing he just lost. Seething.
On Charles, walking out of the bar - victorious, free.

59

EXT. STRYVER AND SYDNEY'S CHAMBERS, LONDON - NIGHT

59

SYDNEY shuffles towards the door. He's been drinking all day.

VOICE (O.S.)

Sydney.

He turns to find LUCIE waiting for him in the shadows.

LUCIE

Thank you.

Full of feeling. She steps in closer to him.

LUCIE (CONT'D)

You did a good man a great service.

SYDNEY

Didn't do it for him.

It stops her in her tracks. Big beat, eyes on each other.

LUCIE

Maybe I won't find answers in
Paris. Maybe it's false hope. But I
have to try. I think you understand
that. Better than anyone.

She stands there a beat. Then goes to turn away--

ON A SUDDEN IMPULSE SHE STEPS FORWARD AND TAKES HIS HAND,

LUCIE (CONT'D)

Come with me tomorrow.

It shocks her as much as him. But she means it.

Huge beat between them. Sydney so vulnerable at her touch.

He puts his free hand on hers. She smiles, hopeful. Then--

SYDNEY

You don't know me.

It hits her like a slap. She pulls her hand away - to find he
has returned the PURSE she left with him the previous night.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

Won't Mr Darnay be with you? Seems
an ideal escort for a young lady.

His pettiness, his jealousy.

Big beat on Lucie. Her conflict of emotions. Then--

LUCIE
The Port of London, tomorrow
morning. I hope you'll be there.

She turns and goes. Sydney stares after her. Hating himself.

60

INT. BACK ROOM, DEFARGES' WINE SHOP, PARIS - DAY

60

THERESE sits at the table, knitting.

ERNEST comes down the narrow flight of stairs, carrying an uneaten tray of food.

ERNEST
Hardly a mouthful. Will you try?

THERESE
We don't owe him anything.

Ernest reacts - 'this again'. He puts the tray down.

ERNEST
*He was good to me when I had
nothing. You know that.*

He turns and exits - but she follows, angry, to--

61

INT. DEFARGES' WINE SHOP, PARIS - DAY

61

THERESE
*So what? You paid the bribes to get
him out, isn't that enough?*

ERNEST goes around wiping chairs and tables. Therese follows.

THERESE (CONT'D)
*They're not going to stop searching
for him. An escaped prisoner,
especially one in his condition -
it's a humiliation.*

ERNEST
*Good. That's the least they
deserve.*

He goes to lift a chair down - but she stops his arm.

THERESE
*And what happens when they discover
he's being hidden in Saint Antoine?
Because eventually someone will
talk - for bread, or to save their
own skin.*

(MORE)

THERESE (CONT'D)

What happens when soldiers come instead of constables? Who has to die for his sake? Our friends, our neighbours? Gaspard and Juliette? They're the ones who deserve our protection.

ERNEST

Nobody's going to talk. Nobody knows he's here. Besides, it won't be long now.

He gently removes her hands, goes back to his work.

THERESE

You've had word from the tutor then?

(off his 'no')

A wide-eyed cub. You were a fool to use him. If they weren't stopped crossing the Channel they were caught arriving in London. The three of them are as good as dead.

ERNEST

You don't know that.

But he has doubts. He should have heard from Charles by now.

THERESE

You trust too easily. It was always your weakness.

He turns to her, puts his arms around her.

ERNEST

I have faith. What else is there? Without that, we're animals.

He kisses her. She takes his face in her hands. Holds it.

THERESE

One week. Then that man is gone.

Ernest hesitates - then nods. Powerless to refuse her.

62

EXT. DEFARGES' WINE SHOP, PARIS - DAY

62

The DEFARGES open up their shop. The streets are stirring into life, windows and doors opening in the morning sunshine.

The same starving Saint Antoine LOCALS fill the streets - sleeping rough in broken doorways and filthy alleyways.

A CART pulls up by the wine shop, laden with BARRELS.

ERNEST
 (to the CARTER)
*Start with the big ones. I'll give
 you a hand.*

JULIETTE is opening up the shutters of the PRINTER'S SHOP.

THERESE
Your father?

JULIETTE
*Released last night. The warder
 said the prison was too full.*

She runs across, laughing. It makes Therese smile. Juliette suddenly wraps her arms around Therese's waist.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Therese looks down at the girl embracing her. Heart full.

VOICE (O.S.)
I should've stayed inside, Therese.

GASPARD, half-asleep, is at the window of the printer's shop.

GASPARD
*I'd take the rats and beatings over
 my daughter's nagging any day.*

JULIETTE
*One week in prison and he thinks
 he's a tough guy.
 (then, excited)
 I designed a new pamphlet. Pure
 filth. You'll love it. Stay there.*

She runs back across to the printer's shop. Suddenly--

ANGRY SHOUTS AND THE CLATTER OF WHEELS IN THE DISTANCE,

Therese turns towards the noise as--

A LARGE ORNATE CARRIAGE COMES HURTLING AROUND THE CORNER,

The same black and gold, same FAMILY CREST from our prologue.

A stab of recognition in Therese. She stops dead, stares at the speeding carriage as it careers up the busy street.

Everything suddenly happening too fast--

ERNEST SHOUTS AND WAVES AT THE CARRIAGE TO SLOW DOWN;

THE DRIVER IGNORES HIM, SWERVES AT SPEED TO AVOID THE CART;

JULIETTE STEPS OUT OF HER SHOP, WAVING A PAMPHLET AT THERESE;

THERESE - TOO LATE - SEES THE DANGER, CRIES OUT TO WARN HER;
THE CARRIAGE SMASHES INTO JULIETTE.

She's trampled beneath horses' hooves and carriage wheels.
 Therese screams. Gaspard cries out from the window up above.
 The carriage collides with a crate, slows to a halt.
 Therese runs to Juliette. Cradles her broken, twisted body.

THERESE
No. No no no. Please.

Juliette tries to speak. But her lungs are filled with blood.
 Therese holds the dying girl close. Gently strokes her hair.

THERESE (CONT'D)
Hush. It's alright. You're alright.

OUTRAGED LOCALS SWARM THE CARRIAGE, LED BY ERNEST,

They're baying for blood. The FOOTMEN and Driver struggle to
 repel them as the carriage is rocked violently on its axles
 by the mob. The PASSENGER within is going to be lynched.

Gaspard runs out of the printer's shop, straight over to
 Therese. She's distraught, cradling Juliette's lifeless body.

THERESE (CONT'D)
... she's gone.

Gaspard is in agony. He clutches his daughter's body to him.
 Therese stares into space. Her heart is shattered.

From the carriage, a hand appears at the window - it wears
 the same CHEVALIER RING from our prologue. Two panicked
 Footmen lean in for orders - then push through the crowd as
 others fight to keep the mob from ripping the carriage apart.

One Footman heads for the BARRELS outside the wine-shop. He
 picks up a crowbar from the cart--

AND SMASHES OPEN THE BIGGEST BARREL,

Crimson wine gushes out into the street. The Footman smashes
 another barrel, another. A river of wine.

Ernest shouts, enraged. But he's trapped in place by the mob.

The other Footman heads to the BAKER'S SHOP, forces the door,
 and starts throwing loaves of bread out into the street.

A cry goes up and the crowd of starving Locals turn from the
 carriage.

Hands scoop wine up from the cobbles, mouths drink straight from the gutter, faces stained blood-red. Friends fight and climb over each other to get to the precious bread.

Ernest pleads, tries to pull them apart. But it's no good.

The Footmen quickly go to work freeing the trapped carriage.

Therese watches wine mix with blood in Juliette's hair. Then--

A COIN LANDS AT HER FEET,

Thrown from the moving carriage as it starts to drive away.

Therese is incensed. She stands, hands and dress stained with blood. She claws her way past the brawling Locals, eyes fixed on the moving carriage as a face appears at the window--

THE MARQUIS ST EVREMONDE (60s, powdered, wigged disdain),

He takes in the sea of filthy bodies as he passes. Pathetic.

Therese recognises him. She breaks into a run. She's ten yards away... five... she reaches for the carriage door--

MARQUIS ST EVREMONDE

Drive on.

The Driver cracks the whip and the carriage lurches forward - just out of Therese's grasp. It clatters away up the street.

Therese stares after it. Radiating furious vengeance.

63

EXT. PORT OF LONDON - DAY

63

LUCIE stands on the quayside. Excited, anxious, determined.

CHARLES shakes hands with a ship's CAPTAIN. Approaches Lucie.

CHARLES

Two first-class cabins to Ostend.
Then we travel overground to Paris.

She nods, distracted. Glances around, waiting for someone.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

(sensing her hesitation)
Or wait a day, take another ship?

A beat on Lucie - then she resolves. He's not coming.

LUCIE

No. No more waiting.

She picks up her bag and leads Charles up the gangplank.

64 **INT. GARRET ABOVE THE DEFARGES' WINE SHOP, PARIS - DAY** 64

A FIGURE stands at the window, watching the chaos down below - the starving LOCALS fighting over wine and bread.

He turns from the window, muttering, and shuffles across to--

A WORKBENCH,

Laden with well-worn tools. He picks up a scrap of LEATHER.

65 **EXT. SHIP (MOVING), PORT OF LONDON - DAY** 65

The CREW cast off. Charles goes to speak to the CAPTAIN.

LUCIE looks to the horizon. Hopeful, nervous. From her coat she pulls out the PACKET OF LETTERS Hester gave her.

She open the first LETTER - and stops dead. As she reads--

ALEXANDRE (V.O.)

Jarvis, my dear friend. I write to beg your help. I cannot say too much within these pages, but Lucie and I must leave Paris tonight.

The huge sail unfurls above Lucie. She doesn't even look up.

ALEXANDRE (V.O.)

I fear for our lives. More than that, I fear for our country. Lucie's mother, she sensed the disaster ahead. Even at the end of her illness she was still writing, still trying to warn us all...

Lucie is transfixed, hardly breathing, as she reads on--

ALEXANDRE (V.O.)

'It was the best of times,
It was the worst of times...'

66 **INT. DINING ROOM, LORRY HOUSE, LONDON - MONTAGE** 66

HESTER eats alone, waited on by the surly JERRY. She eyes the empty chair at the other end of the table.

ALEXANDRE (V.O.)

'It was the age of wisdom,
It was the age of foolishness...'

67 **EXT. DEFARGES' WINE SHOP, PARIS - MONTAGE** 67

ERNEST and THERESE stand and watch the bedlam around them - the drunk LOCALS; GASPARD cradling the dead JULIETTE to him.

ALEXANDRE (V.O.)
 'It was the epoch of belief,
 It was the epoch of incredulity...'

68 **EXT. SHIP (MOVING), PORT OF LONDON - MONTAGE** 68

CHARLES stands tall in the prow of the ship, looking to the horizon. He turns to smile at LUCIE behind - but she has her back to him, eyes glued to the LETTER in her shaking hand.

ALEXANDRE (V.O.)
 'It was the season of light,
 It was the season of darkness...'

As the ship pulls out into the busy traffic of the river, it's watched by a lone FIGURE stood on--

69 **EXT. BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE, LONDON - MONTAGE** 69

SYDNEY watches the ship head down-river towards the sea. He can just make out LUCIE and CHARLES, stood on the deck.

ALEXANDRE (V.O.)
 'It was the spring of hope,
 It was the winter of despair.'

Sydney stares after the ship a final beat - then turns away.

70 **INT. GARRET ABOVE THE DEFARGES' WINE SHOP, PARIS - MONTAGE** 70

The FIGURE finishes what he has been busily working on--

AN EXQUISITE GIRL'S SHOE,

He places it carefully alongside--

DOZENS OF IDENTICAL SHOES, LINING THE FLOOR OF THE GARRET,

Sunlight catches an old scar on his temple, and we recognise--

DOCTOR ALEXANDRE MANETTE,

A shell of the man he was. Translucent, barely alive.

He takes up a fresh piece of leather and sets to work, muttering away to himself--

ALEXANDRE
*... It was the best of times, it
 was the worst of times...*

END OF EPISODE