

5 A Tale of Two Cities  
 11 A Story of the French Revolution  
 17 By Charles Dickens (Copyright 1859)

23 Book the First—Recalled to Life

26 I. The Period

32 *It was the best of times,*  
 38 *it was the worst of times,*  
 44 *it was the age of wisdom,*  
 50 *it was the age of foolishness,*  
 56 *it was the epoch of belief,*  
 62 *it was the epoch of incredulity,*  
 68 *it was the season of Light,*  
 74 *it was the season of Darkness,*  
 80 *it was the spring of hope,*  
 86 *it was the winter of despair,*

102 we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to  
 120 Heaven, we were all going direct the other way— in short, the period was so far like the  
 135 present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good  
 145 or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

164 There were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a plain face, on the throne of  
 184 England; there were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a fair face, on the throne of  
 201 France. In both countries it was clearer than crystal to the lords of the State preserves of  
 212 loaves and fishes, that things in general were settled for ever.

226        It was the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. Spiritual  
240        revelations were conceded to England at that favoured period, as at this. Mrs. Southcott  
253        had recently attained her five-and-twentieth blessed birthday, of whom a prophetic  
267        private in the Life Guards had heralded the sublime appearance by announcing that  
280        arrangements were made for the swallowing up of London and Westminster. Even the  
296        Cock-lane ghost had been laid only a round dozen of years, after rapping out its  
310        messages, as the spirits of this very year last past (supernaturally deficient in originality)  
326        rapped out theirs. Mere messages in the earthly order of events had lately come to the  
339        English Crown and People, from a congress of British subjects in America: which,  
352        strange to relate, have proved more important to the human race than any  
365        communications yet received through any of the chickens of the Cock-lane brood.

381        France, less favoured on the whole as to matters spiritual than her sister of the shield  
393        and trident, rolled with exceeding smoothness down hill, making paper money and  
406        spending it. Under the guidance of her Christian pastors, she entertained herself, besides,  
421        with such humane achievements as sentencing a youth to have his hands cut off, his  
436        tongue torn out with pincers, and his body burned alive, because he had not kneeled  
453        down in the rain to do honour to a dirty procession of monks which passed within his  
471        view, at a distance of some fifty or sixty yards. It is likely enough that, rooted in the  
486        woods of France and Norway, there were growing trees, when that sufferer was put to  
502        death, already marked by the Woodman, Fate, to come down and be sawn into boards, to  
520        make a certain movable framework with a sack and a knife in it, terrible in history. It is  
536        likely enough that in the rough outhouses of some tillers of the heavy lands adjacent to  
550        Paris, there were sheltered from the weather that very day, rude carts, bespattered with

565 rustic mire, snuffed about by pigs, and roosted in by poultry, which the Farmer, Death,  
581 had already set apart to be his tumbrils of the Revolution. But that Woodman and that  
595 Farmer, though they work unceasingly, work silently, and no one heard them as they  
609 went about with muffled tread: the rather, forasmuch as to entertain any suspicion that  
618 they were awake, was to be atheistical and traitorous.

632 In England, there was scarcely an amount of order and protection to justify much  
645 national boasting. Daring burglaries by armed men, and highway robberies, took place in  
660 the capital itself every night; families were publicly cautioned not to go out of town  
670 without removing their furniture to upholsterers' warehouses for security; the  
685 highwayman in the dark was a City tradesman in the light, and, being recognized and  
699 challenged by his fellow-tradesman whom he stopped in his character of "the Captain,"  
714 gallantly shot him through the head and rode away; the mail was waylaid by seven  
731 robbers, and the guard shot three dead, and then got shot dead himself by the other four,  
746 "in consequence of the failure of his ammunition:" after which the mail was robbed in  
760 peace; that magnificent potentate, the Lord Mayor of London, was made to stand and  
773 deliver on Turnham Green, by one highwayman, who despoiled the illustrious creature in  
788 sight of all his retinue; prisoners in London gaols fought battles with their turnkeys, and  
804 the majesty of the law fired blunderbusses in among them, loaded with rounds of shot and  
819 ball; thieves snipped off diamond crosses from the necks of noble lords at Court drawing-  
833 rooms; musketeers went into St. Giles's, to search for contraband goods, and the mob  
849 fired on the musketeers, and the musketeers fired on the mob, and nobody thought any of  
865 these occurrences much out of the common way. In the midst of them, the hangman, ever  
879 busy and ever worse than useless, was in constant requisition; now, stringing up long

891 rows of miscellaneous criminals; now, hanging a housebreaker on Saturday who had  
907 been taken on Tuesday; now, burning people in the hand at Newgate by the dozen, and  
922 now burning pamphlets at the door of Westminster Hall; today, taking the life of an  
936 atrocious murderer, and tomorrow of a wretched pilferer who had robbed a farmer's boy  
938 of sixpence.

956 All these things, and a thousand like them, came to pass in and close upon the dear old  
969 year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. Environed by them, while the  
984 Woodman and the Farmer worked unheeded, those two of the large jaws, and those other  
1001 two of the plain and the fair faces, trod with stir enough, and carried their divine rights  
1016 with a high hand. Thus did the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five  
1029 conduct their Greatnesses, and myriads of small creatures—the creatures of this chronicle  
1039 among the rest—along the roads that lay before them.