

SCENE 19

(The scene shifts to the Manettes' home in London. Lucie and Miss Pross enter. Lucie is upset. Miss Pross has to work hard to keep up.)

MISS PROSS

Miss Lucie! Miss Lucie! What on earth is wrong?

LUCIE

He has oppressed no man. He has imprisoned no man. Rather than harshly exacting payment of his dues, he relinquished them of his own free will. He left instructions to his steward to give the people what little there was to give. And for this service, he is to be imprisoned.

MISS PROSS

What are you talking about, Miss Lucie?

LUCIE

The decree.

MISS PROSS

What decree? There have been so many decrees I've lost count.

LUCIE

They are arresting emigrants.

(The doorbell rings.)

MISS PROSS

But you remember what Mister Carton said, how unreliable the news is from France during these troubled times.

LUCIE

I must go to him.

MISS PROSS

You what?

LUCIE

If I leave now, there is a chance I may overtake him before he arrives in Paris.

(Carton enters.)

MISS PROSS

Oh, Mister Carton! Thank goodness. Do talk some sense into her.

CARTON

I, Miss Pross? When have I ever been known to talk sense?

MISS PROSS

She's got it in her head to go to Paris!

CARTON

She... what? Lucie, you can't be serious.

LUCIE

I am quite serious. Charles would do no less if our positions were reversed.

CARTON

Charles would not have let you go to Paris in the first place.

LUCIE

Do you make a joke, sir?

CARTON

What? No, of course not.

LUCIE

You make it sound as if Charles had a choice.

CARTON

Didn't he?

LUCIE

You believe he would abandon the happiness of his chosen home, the life he has made for himself, the family he has begun, if he thought there was a choice? If he did so, then he would not be the man I chose for my husband.

CARTON

Lucie, please--

LUCIE

I did not give you leave to be so familiar! Why do you still come here? So many nights you have wandered here, moody and morose. When you care to talk, it is overshadowed by this cloud of caring for nothing. How weak you are in your misery.

MISS PROSS

Miss Lucie!

LUCIE

I fear he is not to be reclaimed. There is scarcely a hope that anything in his character or fortunes is reparable now.

(Carton is dumbstruck.)

Miss Pross, I must ask you to take care of my father while I

am gone.

MISS PROSS

I'm sorry, Miss Lucie, but I'm afraid I can't do that.

LUCIE

What? Why not?

MISS PROSS

I'm going with you.

LUCIE

I cannot ask that of you.

MISS PROSS

You cannot ask me not to. Since you were a small child I have been your shadow and protector, and there is no thing more important in my life. I shall endure any French tomfoolery to see my Ladybird safely home again.

LUCIE

But you have heard the danger--

MISS PROSS

The short and the long of it is that I am a subject of His Most Gracious Majesty King George the Third, and as such, my maxim is: Confound their politics, frustrate their knavish tricks, on him our hopes we fix, God save the King!

LUCIE

Miss Pross, I--

(Doctor Manette enters.)

DOCTOR MANETTE

Lucie, you needn't worry. I shall accompany you as well.

LUCIE

Are you certain, Father?

DOCTOR MANETTE

I am. Remember, I have been a prisoner of the Bastille. Such a reputation may serve as valuable currency under the new regime.

(Lucie embraces Doctor
Manette.)

We shall find him, my dearest. Hold fast to that.

LUCIE

I must prepare. Miss Pross?

(Lucie and Miss Pross start to
exit.)

CARTON

Mrs. Darnay...

(Lucie pauses. She does not
turn back. She and Miss Pross
exit.)

DOCTOR MANETTE

I believe you deserve more consideration and respect than
was expressed to you this night, Mister Carton.

CARTON

Did she mean it, do you think?

DOCTOR MANETTE

Did she mean it? Yes, I think she did. But do you know why?

(Carton shakes his head.)

Because she is sure that you are capable of good things,
gentle things, even magnanimous things. The only thing
preventing it is yourself. Perhaps you have seen the common
shoemakers' bench kept here?

CARTON

I have.

DOCTOR MANETTE

I once yearned so frightfully for that occupation, and it
was so welcome when it came. No doubt it relieved my pain
much, by substituting the perplexity of the fingers for the
perplexity of the brain. I have never been able to bear the
thought of putting it quite out of reach. Even now the idea
that I might need that former employment and not find it
gives me a sudden sense of terror. But does not the
retention of the thing involve the retention of the idea? If
the thing were gone, might not the fear go with it?

CARTON

I do not understand.

DOCTOR MANETTE

I have a simple favor to ask you, regarding that shoemakers'
bench.

CARTON

Anything.

DOCTOR MANETTE

When we are gone, get rid it for me.

(Doctor Manette exits. The
Resurrection Man enters.)

RESURRECTION MAN

Sadly, sadly, the sun rose on no sadder sight than a man of good abilities and good emotions, incapable of their directed exercise, incapable of his own help and his own happiness, sensible of the blight on him, and resigning himself to let it eat him away.

(Carton exits.)

SCENE 20

(The Resurrection Man dons his red cap as the scene shifts to the prison.)

RESURRECTION MAN

For Charles Darnay it is not easy, with the face of his beloved wife fresh before him, to compose his mind to what it must bear. There was a turbulent and heated working of his heart that contended against resignation.

(Darnay enters. He looks rough. The Resurrection Man switches to his French accent:)

Ah, welcome at last, Monsieur! I apologize that you had to wait so long for your accommodations to be ready. The prison is always full to bursting, Evremonde. Fortunately some more room has been made available. Thirty-one today.

DARNAY

Thirty-one?

RESURRECTION MAN

A fine number. But it's early days yet. Wait here, Monsieur.

(The Resurrection Man exits. The Seamstress enters from another direction. Her imprisonment has taken a toll on her appearance and her sanity.)

SEAMSTRESS

Hello, Monsieur.

DARNAY

Hello.

SEAMSTRESS

It would be impertinent of me elsewhere, but may I ask your name and condition?

DARNAY

Charles Darnay. I am here... because that was not always my name. It was once Evremonde.

(The Seamstress recoils.)

SEAMSTRESS

Evremonde? That name... is known to me.

DARNAY

I fear it is not a happy association. I have lived in England for many years. I came here because I hoped to set right some of my family's wrongs.

SEAMSTRESS

If you could have foreseen this, would you still have made the journey?

DARNAY

Troubled as the future was, it was still unknown, and in that ignorance lingers the shadow of hope. How could such frightful deeds have a place in the conceptions of a gentle mind?

SEAMSTRESS

I hope you will not be here long, and that your term ends happily.

DARNAY

Thank you. But what brings you here?

SEAMSTRESS

"Plots." Though Heaven knows I am innocent of any. I was a seamstress. What plots could I lay?

DARNAY

Have you been here long?

SEAMSTRESS

Long enough. I shan't go home again.

DARNAY

Why do you say that?

SEAMSTRESS

I have no one to speak for me. My husband is gone. I have only a cousin, who lived far from me and would not have heard what has become of me. Those who knew me will be too afraid to come forward on my behalf. It is only a matter of time before my name is called and I am taken to the Conciergerie.

DARNAY

What happens there?

SEAMSTRESS

That is where the condemned spend their last days, until they are taken before Madame La Guillotine. Thirty-one today.

DARNAY

Thirty-one.

(The Seamstress starts to exit.)

Wait! Please. When I was sentenced, the man told me I was to be held "in secret." Do you know what it means?

SEAMSTRESS

I am sorry for you, Monsieur.

DARNAY

Why?

SEAMSTRESS

No one will be told you are here. You may write letters, but no one will receive them. No one will come for you. They have buried you alive. I hope for your sake, Monsieur, that you have friends who love you, and who will know where to look for you.

(The Resurrection Man enters, and gestures toward the exit.)

RESURRECTION MAN

(French accent:)

This is yours, emigrant.

DARNAY

Am I to be kept apart from the others?

RESURRECTION MAN

Those are my instructions.

DARNAY

But this young woman is allowed the freedom of the prison.

RESURRECTION MAN

She is not held in secret, emigrant.

(Darnay looks back to the Seamstress, who lowers her head and exits. Darnay exits into his cell.)

And here they left him, as if he were dead. Five paces by four and a half, five paces by four and a half, the prisoner walked to and fro in his cell, counting its measurement, and

the roar of the city arose like muffled drums with a wild swell of voices added to them.

(The sound of a massive crowd cheering swells as the Resurrection Man exits.)

MONSIEUR DEFARGE

Liberty!

ALL

Liberty!

REVOLUTIONARY #1

Equality!

ALL

Equality!

REVOLUTIONARY #2

Fraternity!

ALL

Fraternity!

MADAME DEFARGE

Or Death!

ALL

Or Death!

(The sound of a falling blade silences the crowd. The crowd exits.)

SCENE 21

(The cheers continue as the scene shifts to a small apartment in Paris, where Lucie and Miss Pross are waiting. Their bags are still unpacked. Lucie is looking out a window.)

LUCIE

What is that noise?

MISS PROSS

Miss Lucie! Your father told you to stay away from the windows.

LUCIE

Yes, but is it because he doesn't wish us to be seen, or he

doesn't wish us to see what is happening in this dreadful city?

(Doctor Manette enters.)

Father? Any news?

DOCTOR MANETTE

Your apprehensions were right, my dear. He was arrested the moment he arrived in Paris. He can send no messages to the outside world. If we had not come, we might never have learned of his fate until it was too late.

LUCIE

How did you find him?

DOCTOR MANETTE

He is called before the tribunal today.

LUCIE

Today! Father, what can we do?

DOCTOR MANETTE

I have some hope that I may be able to do some good here. I have been a prisoner of the Bastille. There is no patriot in France who would not open his door to me. I believe I can rescue him from danger. It is a strange thing, though.

LUCIE

What?

DOCTOR MANETTE

You recall the man who looked after me before you found me? The wine shop owner?

LUCIE

Monsieur Defarge, yes.

DOCTOR MANETTE

It appears he has risen to a position of some prominence in the new regime. I believe he may be the one sitting in judgment at today's proceeding.

LUCIE

But surely he would be inclined to help you, wouldn't he?

DOCTOR MANETTE

If I recall correctly, it is not his good opinion we should be courting.

LUCIE

Who's, then?

(There is a knock at the door.)

DOCTOR MANETTE

Do not be frightened. As I have said, it appears I have a charmed life in Paris.

(He opens the door. Madame Defarge enters.)

MADAME DEFARGE

I received word that you had arrived in Paris. I wished to be sure I could identify you, for your safety. You are the wife of Evremonde?

LUCIE

I am Lucie Darnay. You are Madame Defarge, are you not?

MADAME DEFARGE

I am.

LUCIE

You are very welcome here. This is Miss Pross; she was my governess.

MISS PROSS

How do you do.

(Madame Defarge ignores Miss Pross completely, focused instead on scrutinizing Lucie's face.)

I'm sure I'm quite well, thank you!

LUCIE

Please, can you tell me if my husband is well?

MADAME DEFARGE

He was in good health, when last I saw him.

LUCIE

Bless you, Madame.

(Lucie takes Madame Defarge's hand and kisses it. "There was something in its touch that gave Lucie a check.")

MADAME DEFARGE

I have seen what I came here to see. Good day.