



# A Tale of Two Cities: A Reader's Companion

*Charles Dickens*

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## **A Tale of Two Cities: A Reader's Companion** Charles Dickens

You're reading *A Tale of Two Cities* for the first time—or perhaps for the third or fourth time. But what are gaols, bumpers, tocsins, farmer-generals, and the Court of King's Bench? Where are Shooter's Hill, Temple Bar, and La Force, and who on earth was Mrs. Southcott? And did all those starving French people have baguettes in mind when they wanted bread?

The *Reader's Companion* is not a literary analysis of Dickens's novel, but a source of information for the new reader, the longterm fan, and the student, about things, people, places, and events mentioned in the text. In 780 notes to the unabridged novel, historical author Susanne Alleyn explains Dickens's references to things and places familiar to 19th-century Londoners, illustrates his many literary allusions and Victorian expressions, and provides an in-depth, factual background to his gripping but often misleading depiction of the French Revolution—a period that owes much of its distorted image today to the popularity of *A Tale of Two Cities* itself.

“I was probably in college the last time I read *A Tale of Two Cities*, and I enjoyed it very much. This time, reading Alleyn's wonderful annotated edition full of helpful comments and clarifications, I found the experience doubly enjoyable.” (Brian Strayer, Ph.D., Department of History, Andrews University)

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