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A Tale of Two Cities

Charles Dickens

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A Tale of Two Cities

Charles Dickens

A Tale of Two Cities Charles Dickens
With a large 7.44"x9.69" page size, this Summit Classic edition is printed on heavyweight bright white paper with a fully laminated cover featuring an original full color design. Page headers and modern design and page layout exemplify the attention to detail given this collector-quality volume. With well over 200 million copies sold and opening and closing lines that are among the most familiar in all of literature, "A Tale of Two Cities" (1859) is one of the best known and most widely-read books in all of literary fiction. Set against the backdrop of the French Revolution, the novel depicts the suffering of the French peasantry at the hands of the aristocracy and the subsequent abuses of the revolutionaries and their brutality against the aristocrats. Dickens, ever the social critic, manages to draw parallels to English society, and especially the stratified society of London, while creating his hallmark complex characters and compelling story. It has been remarked that Sydney Carton, a dissolute and disillusioned London barrister, is nonetheless the only protagonist in any of Dickens' major works who is, in the classical sense, heroic. While following several characters, the central plot revolves around Carton, Charles Darnay, a virtuous French aristocrat who falls prey to the wide-ranging and unreasoning fury of the Revolution, and Darnay's wife. Born in Portsmouth England on February 7, 1812, Charles Dickens enjoyed a comfortable childhood until his father lost his post at the Navy Pay Office and ultimately landed in debtors' prison. Young Charles embarked upon an horrific stint pasting labels on jars of bootblack in a rat-infested slum. He would later find work as a newspaper writer, covering politics and then the courts. These experiences, with his almost photographic memory, would provide him with material for the colorful characters and vivid depictions of life in England which would characterize his work for decades. The publication of "The Pickwick Papers" in serial form in 1836 brought Dickens success. Within a few years he had become an international literary celebrity. Ultimately he would become the foremost novelist of the Victorian era and one of the most widely read writers in history. His books have never gone out of print, have been turned into films and plays, and are still widely read today. Along with his compelling storylines and unforgettable characters, Dickens' stories served as vehicles for social commentary, often harshly critical of class stratification and public institutions. In particular, and contrary to prevailing views, Dickens championed the poor, whom he saw as wretched not because of their own weaknesses and moral failures but because of their helplessness before society's attitudes and institutions. And yet Dickens managed throughout to maintain a humorous element, and satire and caricature fill the pages of his works. Dickens died on June 9, 1870, following a stroke. Given the body of work he left behind, it is striking to note that Charles Dickens was just 58 years old at his death.

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