

A Tale of Two Cities

Charles Dickens

Why does Dickens let the seamstress understand Carton's sacrifice before the narration explains it?

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes	Carton and the seamstress
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FIND THE ANCHOR TEXT

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

SECTION / LOCATION	Book III, Chapter XIII · Fifty-two
START	Citizen Evrémonde, she said, touching him with her cold hand. I am a poor little seamstress, who was with you in La Force.
END	Hush! Yes, my poor sister; to the last.
PASSAGE ID	sec-ttc-04

THE MOVE

Use brief dialogue to define sacrifice

WHY THIS PASSAGE

The seamstress recognizes Carton's sacrifice through a few quiet questions instead of through an explanatory speech. Her understanding gives the scene moral clarity while Carton remains restrained, so sacrifice is defined by what he is willing to do rather than by what he claims about himself.

MARK

Underline each question the seamstress asks that shows she is piecing together Carton's plan. Circle Carton's shortest answers. Star the exchange that most clearly reveals the sacrifice without either character naming it directly.

NOTICE

- What does the seamstress understand before Carton explains anything at length?
- Why do Carton's brief answers make the scene more powerful than a heroic speech would?
- How does the seamstress's response help the reader judge Carton's action?

THINK

Answer provisionally: Why does Dickens let the seamstress understand Carton's sacrifice before the narration explains it? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: Why does Dickens let the seamstress understand Carton's sacrifice before the narration explains it? Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and explain why.

STRONG ANSWER	The seamstress understands Carton's sacrifice through his short answers and presence beside her, so the reader sees the meaning of his action in another person's recognition before the narrator labels it. Sacrifice is defined by what he is doing, not by a heroic speech.
EVIDENCE	Use the seamstress's questions, Carton's restrained replies, and the way she infers his identity or purpose from the situation.
WATCH FOR	Do not summarize that Carton is sacrificing himself. The lesson asks how dialogue lets another character make that meaning visible first.
SOLO	Read the exact passage independently.
SUPPORTED	Use narration and sentence highlighting while reading the same passage.
LISTENING	Listen to the exact passage; visual following is optional. Same question and evidence demand.

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OPEN THE MARKED PASSAGE IN TUMBLELIT

SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration + highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the exact passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK - Underline each question the seamstress asks that shows she is piecing together Carton's plan. Circle Carton's shortest answers. Star the exchange that most clearly reveals the sacrifice without either character naming it directly.
2. NOTICE - What does the seamstress understand before Carton explains anything at length? Why do Carton's brief answers make the scene more powerful than a heroic speech would? How does the seamstress's response help the reader judge Carton's action?
3. THINK - Answer provisionally: Why does Dickens let the seamstress understand Carton's sacrifice before the narration explains it?
4. WRITE - Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.

Use evidence from the assigned passage. Show what you noticed and how the text supports your interpretation.