

**“The Mystery of John Jasper and Lieutenant Tartar:
Understanding a Murderer and Pulling a Hero From Obscurity”**

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This paper, “The Mystery of John Jasper and Lieutenant Tartar: Understanding a Murderer and Pulling a Hero from Obscurity,” works with Charles Dickens’ unfinished novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* to explore the relationship between villain and hero in the story. Scholars have not been able to identify the story’s hero because the novel is unfinished. John Jasper is the villain and this paper is set up in a way that uses the villain to explain the importance of his “antidote,” or the story’s hero, Lieutenant Tartar. Very little scholarly work has been done on exploring Lieutenant Tartar’s role as hero: as it stands in the critical conversation, none of the novel’s characters are strong enough to serve as the “antidote” to Jasper’s villainy, even though most scholars agree that a hero would act in this capacity. The paper builds from analyzing John Jasper as a character, connecting the character’s moral and social struggle with dual natures to the book’s author, Dickens, and, symbolically, other characters in the story. From discussing Jasper’s role and significance, the paper moves on to understanding the role of hero in terms of what the villain is to the story. Special emphasis is put on the fact that both Jasper and Tartar are characters with dual natures. Filtering the potential hero characters through the sieve of Jaspers’ characteristics, and linking them to Jaspers’ goal throughout the story (the young woman, Rosa Bud), this paper shows how Lieutenant Tartar is the only existing character who could have been an effective hero. This paper relies heavily on primary text analysis to compare Jasper to Tartar, but ends with the acknowledgement that nothing can be proven because the ending was never written. However, this paper leaves readers with the ability to think about what villain and hero mean in the story by exploring how non-integrated dual natures can destroy human potential for peace.