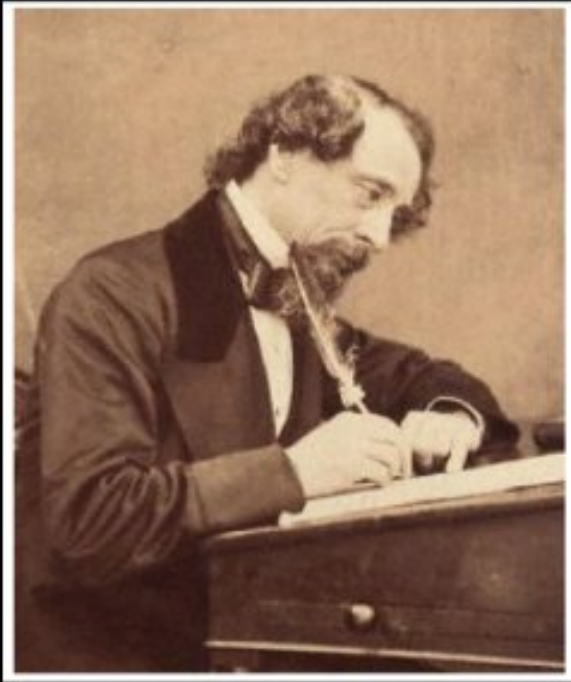


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OUR MUTUAL FRIEND (Annotated) (English Edition)



Our Mutual Friend

by
Charles Dickens

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurIn these times of ours, though concerning the exact year there is no need to be precise, a boat of dirty and disreputable appearance, with two figures in it, floated on the Thames, between Southwark bridge which is of iron, and London Bridge which is of stone, as an autumn evening was closing in. The figures in this boat were those of a strong man with ragged grizzled hair and a sun-browned face, and a dark girl of nineteen or twenty, sufficiently like him to be recognizable as his daughter. The girl rowed,

pulling a pair of sculls very easily; the man, with the rudder-lines slack in his hands, and his hands loose in his waistband, kept an eager look out. He had no net, hook, or line, and he could not be a fisherman; his boat had no cushion for a sitter, no paint, no inscription, no appliance beyond a rusty boathook and a coil of rope, and he could not be a waterman; his boat was too crazy and too small to take in cargo for delivery, and he could not be a lighterman or river-carrier; there was no clue to what he looked for, but he looked for something, with a most intent and searching gaze. The tide, which had turned an hour before, was running down, and his eyes watched every little race and eddy in its broad sweep, as the boat made slight head-way against it, or drove stern foremost before it, according as he directed his daughter by a movement of his head. She watched his face as earnestly as he watched the river. But, in the intensity of her look there was a touch of dread or horror. This edition includes:- A complete biography of Charles Dickens- A index with direct links chapters.com Our Mutual Friend was the last novel Charles Dickens completed and is, arguably, his darkest and most complex. The basic plot is vintage Dickens: an inheritance up for grabs, a murder, a rocky romance or two, plenty of skullduggery, and a host of unforgettable secondary characters. But in this final outing the author's heroes are more flawed, his villains more sympathetic, and the story as a whole more harrowing and less sentimental. The mood is set in the opening scene in which a riverman, Gaffer Hexam, and his daughter Lizzie troll the Thames searching for drowned men whose pockets Gaffer will rifle before turning the body over to the authorities. On this particular night Gaffer finds a corpse that is later identified as that of John Harmon, who was returning from abroad to claim a large fortune when he was apparently murdered and thrown into the river. Harmon's death is the catalyst for everything else that happens in the novel. It seems the fortune was left to the young man on the condition that he marry a girl he'd never met, Bella Wilfer. His death, however, brings a new heir onto the scene, Nicodemus Boffin, the kind-hearted but low-born assistant to Harmon's father. Boffin and his wife adopt young Bella, who is determined to marry money, and also hire a mysterious young secretary, John Rokesmith, who takes an uncommon interest in their ward. Not content with just one plot, Dickens throws in a secondary love story featuring the riverman's daughter, Lizzie Hexam; a dissolute young upper-class lawyer, Eugene Wrayburn; and his rival, the headmaster Bradley Headstone. Dark as the novel is, Dickens is careful to leaven it with secondary characters who are as funny as they are menacing--blackmailing Silas Wegg and his accomplice Mr. Venus, the avaricious Lammles, and self-centered Charlie Hexam. Our Mutual Friend is one of Dickens's most satisfying novels, and a fitting denouement to his prolific career. --Alix Wilber From School Library Journal Grade 7 Up- With a cast of characters that covers the whole spectrum of London life, Dickens weaves a tapestry of tales that are by turn funny, moving and tragic. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.