

1: Our Mutual Friend

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Major characters[edit] John Harmon " is heir to the Harmon estate, under the condition that he marry Bella Wilfer. Harmon also uses the alias Julius Handford upon first returning to London. When her intended husband, John Harmon, is reported to be killed, she is left without future prospects. She learns of the trouble money can bring when taken in by the newly-rich Boffins. Initially described as a "mercenary young woman", [10] who describes herself upon meeting Lizzie Hexam as having "no more character than a canary bird", [10] Bella undergoes a significant moral change in the novel. Although originally completely preoccupied with money, her complexity is eventually displayed in her ability to defy the societal pressures to achieve happiness unrelated to wealth. She is praised for her "vivacity and lifelikeness", [11] with greater complexity than some of the other, more static characters. Her relationship with her father is more like that of a mother and son,[citation needed] as she consistently dotes upon him, calling him her "cherub". He is illiterate, but wants to fit the image of a wealthy man, and so hires Silas Wegg to read to him in hopes of gaining more intelligence and worldliness. He is nearly blackmailed by Wegg. He assumes the role of a miser to show Bella the dangers of wealth, but eventually admits this behaviour was an act and gives his money to Bella and John. This indicates "another progressive development for Dickens as his female characters undertake a more active role in social reform". She is an affectionate daughter, but knows that Charley must escape their living circumstances if he is to succeed in life, so she gives Charley her money and helps him leave while their father is away. Later she is rejected by Charley after she remains in poverty. She in effect acts as the moral centre of the story and is by far the "most wholly good character [â€] almost bereft of ego". Her "capacity for self-sacrifice [â€] is only slightly more credible than her gift for refined speech", [11] making her slightly unbelievable in comparison to her uneducated father and Jenny Wren. However, her moral character attracts Wrayburn and her inherent goodness is rewarded with marital happiness. Originally a very caring brother. Dickens uses him to critique both the schooling available to the poor, which was often over-crowded and noisy, [14] as well as the snobbish tendencies of those who manage to rise in status. Hexam is presented as "morally corrupt", [13] because of how he distances himself from his past, and from his loving sister, in the name of his own upward movement. Mortimer Lightwood " is a lawyer, who is an acquaintance of the Veneerings and a friend of Eugene Wrayburn. In addition, he also serves as the "commentator and a voice of conscience" [12] with sarcasm sometimes covering his concern. Both these characters act as foils to Wrayburn. She is crippled with a bad back, though not ugly. She is very motherly towards her drunken father, whom she calls her "bad child". She may have a romance with Sloppy at the end of the book, which the reader may surmise will end in marriage. He cares for and assists Lizzie Hexam and Jenny Wren when they have no one else. Some critics believe that Riah was meant by Dickens to act as an apology for his stereotyping of Fagin in *Oliver Twist*, and in particular a response to Mrs. However, he ignores her and falls in love with Lizzie Hexam, whom he pursues passionately and violently, though his advances are rejected. He then develops an insane jealousy towards Eugene Wrayburn, whom he follows at night like an "ill-tamed wild animal" [10] in hopes of catching him with Lizzie together. He disguises himself as Rogue Riderhood and almost succeeds in drowning Wrayburn. Silas Wegg " is ballad-seller with a wooden leg. He is a "social parasite", [9] hired to read for the Boffins and teach Mr Boffin how to read, despite not being entirely literate himself. He wishes to buy back his own leg as soon as he has the money, which is an attempt to "complete himself". Mr Venus " a taxidermist and articulator of bones, who is in love with Pleasant Riderhood, whom he eventually marries. Dickens is said to have based Mr. Mr Alfred Lamble " is married to Sophronia Lamble. Both of them, at the time of their marriage, was under the false impression that the other was fairly wealthy. Subsequently, they are forced to use their overabundance of charm and superficiality, in attempts to make influential acquaintances and gain money through them. Mrs Sophronia Lamble " is described, early in the novel, as "the mature young lady" and a proper young woman. However, this turns out to be ironic as she is later shown to be greedy, cold, and

manipulative. She married Alfred Lamble because she believed he had money, and when it turned out he did not, the two of them formed a partnership that involves swindling money from others. She is courted by Fledgeby, through Alfred Lamble, though not with honourable intentions, and nearly finds herself trapped in a marriage with Fledgeby until Sophronia Lamble suffers a change of heart. Mr Fledgeby "called Fascination Fledgeby is a friend of the Lambls. In revenge for that slight he falsely turns Gaffer in as the murderer of John Harmon, in the hope of receiving a reward. Later, Riderhood becomes a lock-keeper, and Headstone attempts to frame him for the murder of Eugene Wrayburn. After attempts to blackmail Headstone, the two men fall in the river Thames during a fight and both drown. In his "literally irredeemable villainy", [11] Riderhood represents an opportunistic character who will change his behaviour according to whatever suits his needs best at any given moment. Dickens describes him in almost childish terms and he is often called "the Cherub".

Minor characters[edit] Mr Inspector "a police officer, who acts as a witness to several important events, such as when the corpse from the river is mistakenly identified as John Harmon, when Gaffer Hexam is taken into custody, and when the real John Harmon is named. However he is not particularly effective in his administration of the law, and this leads to doubt about the justice system in the novel. Mr John Podsnap "a pompous man of the upper middle class, married to Mrs Podsnap and the father of Georgiana, who is smug and jingoistic. Forster, like Dickens, rose with difficulty from an impoverished middle-class background. Though she embodies the materialistic ideals of her husband and daughter, Mrs Podsnap is the least prominent of the family. She is described as a "fine woman" [10] in her embodiment of the typical upper-class wife. Vocal and opinionated, she is the only character who will stand up to Mrs Wilfer by matching her derisiveness and audacity. In some ways, she acts as a foil to Bella, and while Bella overcomes her desire for money and appreciates other aspects of life, Lavinia remains resentful in her poverty. Mr Melvin Twemlow "the well-connected friend of the Veneerings, who is often cultivated for his supposed influence with powerful people, such as Lord Snigsworth. Mrs Lamble tells him about their plot to marry Georgiana Podsnap and Fledgeby, to whom Twemlow owes money. She is old and poor, and portrayed sympathetically as pitiable. Johnny "the orphan great-grandson of Betty Higden. Sloppy "a foundling who assists Betty Higden in taking care of children. Raised in the workhouse, he has a learning disability, but is nevertheless adept at reading the newspaper for Mrs. He is portrayed as inherently innocent because of his disability, and carts away Wegg at the end of the novel. Jesse "Gaffer" Hexam "a waterman and the father of Lizzie and Charley, who makes a living by robbing corpses found in the river Thames. A search is mounted to find and arrest Gaffer, but he is discovered dead in his boat. As a result, Gaffer disowns Charley as a son. In a sense, Gaffer predicted the alienating effect education would have on Charley. Pleasant Riderhood "the daughter of Rogue Riderhood, who works in a pawn shop, and, like Jenny Wren and Lizzie Hexam, is another daughter caring for her abusive father as though he were her child, and who, in vain, tries to steer him along the path of right. Mr and Mrs Veneering "a nouveaux-riches husband and wife whose main preoccupation is to advance in the social world. They invite influential people to their dinner parties where their furniture gleams with a sheen that they also put on to make themselves seem more impressive. They "wear" their acquaintances, their possessions, and their wealth like jewellery, in an attempt to impress those around them. Veneering eventually goes bankrupt and they retire to France to live on the jewels he bought for his wife. Miss Abbey Potterson "mistress of the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters, she keeps the inn respectable, and only allows patrons to drink as much as she sees fit. She is a "good and harmless" character, though she displays an "addiction to rules and forms". Jenny calls him her "bad child", and treats him accordingly. As his daughter is really named Fanny Cleaver, his name might be Mr. Cleaver, but he is never called by a name other than "my bad child", or "Mr Dolls" in the novel. George Radfoot - third mate on the ship bringing John Harmon back to England, whose dead body, found in the river by Gaffer Hexam, is identified as being Harmon, because of the papers found in his pockets. He had been involved in crimes and schemes with Riderhood, who most likely was responsible for trying to kill Harmon and killing Radfoot. By his will, his fortune goes to his estranged son John Harmon, who is to return from where he has settled abroad possibly in South Africa to claim it, on condition that he marries a woman he has never met, Miss Bella Wilfer. The implementation of the will is in the charge of the solicitor, Mortimer Lightwood, who has no other practice. The son and heir does not appear,

though some knew him aboard the ship to London. A body is found in the Thames by Gaffer Hexam, rowed by his daughter Lizzie. He is a waterman who makes his living by retrieving corpses and taking the cash in their pockets, before handing them over to the authorities. Papers in the pockets of the drowned man identify him as the heir, John Harmon. Present at the identification of the water-soaked corpse is a mysterious young man, who gives his name as Julius Handford and then disappears. They take the disappointed bride of the drowned heir, Miss Wilfer, into their household, and treat her as their pampered child and heiress. They also accept an offer from Julius Handford, now going under the name of John Rokesmith, to serve as their confidential secretary and man of business, at no salary. Rokesmith uses this position to watch and learn everything about the Boffins, Miss Wilfer, and the aftershock of the drowning of the heir John Harmon. When the Boffins purchase a large home, Wegg is invited to live in the old Harmon home. Wegg hopes to find hidden treasure in the house or in the mounds of trash on the property. As a result of the accusation, Hexam is shunned by his fellows on the river, and excluded from The Six Jolly Fellowship-Porters, the public house they frequent. Lizzie stays with her father, to whom she is devoted. Before Riderhood can claim the reward for his false allegation against Hexam, Hexam is found drowned himself. Lizzie has caught the eye of the work-shy barrister, Eugene Wrayburn, who first noticed her when accompanying his friend Mortimer Lightwood to the home of Gaffer Hexam. Wrayburn falls in love with her. However, he soon gains a violent rival in Bradley Headstone, the schoolmaster of Charley Hexam. Charley wants his sister to be under obligation to no one but him, and tries to arrange lessons for her with Headstone, only to find that Wrayburn has already engaged a teacher for both Lizzie and Jenny.

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With that said, this connection to LOST is absolutely not the reason why I decided to read this book. So there we are. You all are wrong respectfully. Oh, sure, I get it. And, well, I like big books and can not lie. This is the darkest Dickens I have read so far, and I wonder how much of that has to do with the fact that he was older when he wrote it already in his 50s , was probably spending a lot of time contemplating his life and the fact that he never got that sports car he always wanted, had an anorectal fistula ahem, a different sort than the fistulas we deal with, Rhonda , and whatever. He was probably just an old curmudgeon by that point anyway. He was so darling. Rowling not being able to stop writing about that pesky Harry Potter. As opposed to his other books which deal largely with the lack of money, this book actually focuses on people with money. This leads to a different dynamic than his other books. Wikipedia references 19 major characters and 16 minor characters. Jenny Wren is probably the most fascinating characters in literary history, for example, but I could probably babble on about everyone else as well. Apparently Henry James had a problem with the characters not being realistic or something. Whatever, Hank, suck it. The book is almost 1, pages long. That shows Dickens was a wordsmith. A pretty darn good one at that. Someone buy that man a thesaurus! The whole thing is intentional. From beginning to ending, Dickens knew what he was doing and it all means something and Just like the creators of LOST!

3: Illustrations of Dickens's "Our Mutual Friend" by Sol Eytinge, Junior

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Our Mutual Friend (written in the years) is the last novel completed by Charles Dickens and is in many ways one of his

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most sophisticated works, combining deep psychological insight with rich social analysis.

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The multiple plots of Our Mutual Friend, Dickens's last complete novel, twine around the miser John Harmon's legacy of profitable heaps of refuse ("dust").

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