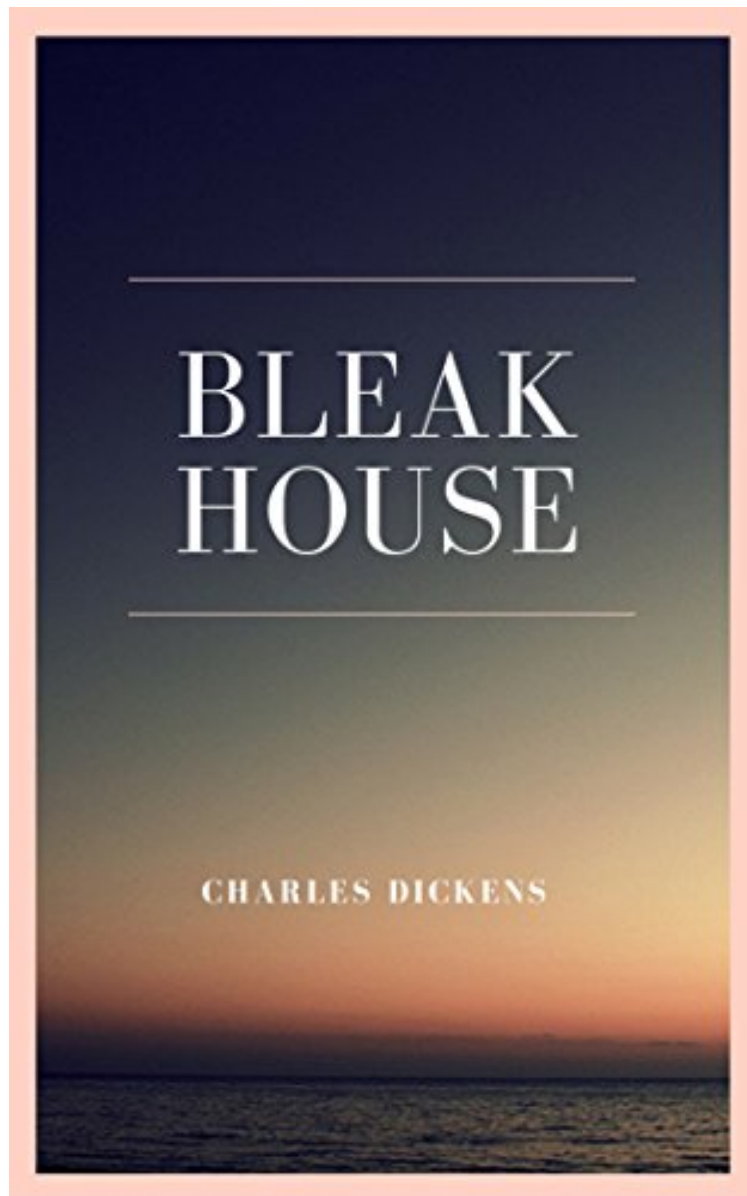


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Bleak House

Charles Dickens

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Charles Dickens : Bleak House before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bleak House:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Amazing charactersBy morehumanthanhumanI loved this sprawling novel, but it definitely isn't for those readers who like their authors to get right to the point. A self-told account of David Copperfield (who is apparently a thinly veiled version of the author himself) from birth to mid-life, the novel

has several peaks of action. Events that modern readers may expect to happen quickly (courtship and marriage) instead may take years. However, Dickens is such a great storyteller that I was glad to go along with him for the ride. The special pleasure of the novel isn't Copperfield himself (he's a capable narrator, but a little bland for my tastes), but the secondary characters Dickens creates for us - the loathsome Uriah Heep, the nasty Murdstones, the entire spoiled Steerforth family, and - my favorites - Mr. and Mrs. Micawber, the man who can't stay out of financial trouble and the woman who swears she will never desert him. I've read hundreds of novels over the years and the Micawbers have to be some of my favorite characters ever. So, yes. It is over a thousand pages and you will be reading it for a while. Some reviewers have suggested that the flaws they see in the novel are a consequence of it being written serially - but who would want to read a novel this long that didn't have several different rises and falls in action? I wouldn't want to wait until page 900 for all the different plot points to come to fruition. The Kindle version of this novel is very readable - I'm sure there were a couple of typos, but nothing that I can remember. Overall, I highly recommend this book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Dickens' David Copperfield is an excellent novel with a great cast of interesting characters. By Gary Hoggatt I recently re-read Charles Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities, and was considering picking up another of his novels. When I saw that a new production of Dickens' semi-autobiographical 1850 novel David Copperfield had just been released narrated by Ralph Cosham, one of my favorite audiobook readers, I eagerly queued the novel up. David Copperfield chronicles the life, from birth to mid-life, of the title character, and is told in first person from Copperfield's point of view. Many elements of Copperfield's life parallel Dickens' own. Child labor, debtors prisons, and endeavors in law, journalism, and writing all have their origins in Dickens' own experience. Other than optimism, Copperfield is largely shaped by the circumstances he finds himself in and the characters he encounters. Dickens does a great job of providing fully-formed secondary characters. Attention is paid to the personality and motivation of virtually everyone Copperfield meets, down to waiters, landlords, and coachmen. My three favorite characters in the novel are Mr. Micawber, Betsey Trotwood, and Uriah Heep. Copperfield lives for a time with Mr. Micawber as a boy, and the pair form a strong connection. Mr. Micawber is characterized by pecuniary difficulties, a taste for the verbose, and faith that something will, in short, turn up. He's amusing whenever he turns up. David's great-aunt Betsey Trotwood is a feisty, strong-willed, no-nonsense woman who is, in fact, quite caring towards those who earn her good graces. Uriah Heep is a despicable clerk, who hides his schemes and ambitions in a cloak of humbleness and subservience. My skin crawled whenever he appeared on scene. In addition to memorable characters, Dickens' crafts some fantastic language in this novel. The dialogue, in particular, is quite good, and many a line will stick with me. The main downside to the story is that there's no central thread to the narrative. While the novel is largely a coming of age story like Dickens' Great Expectation, it lacks any particular goal. Pip strives to become a gentleman and earn Estella's love in Great Expectations, but there's no similar target in Copperfield's mind. He moves from challenge to challenge well enough, but never seems to have any particular direction of his own. While this, most probably, is closer to real life than Pip's goals, it makes for a somewhat meandering novel. I listened to Blackstone Audio's 2012 production of David Copperfield, narrated by Ralph Cosham. Cosham is a favorite narrator of mine, and he does an excellent job here. The novel contains a very large cast of characters, and Cosham manages to make them all sound distinct and memorable. From the despicably conniving and humble Uriah Heep to the solid and seafaring Mr. Peggotty to the adorable and silly Dora, you know as soon as Cosham starts speaking which character you're listening to. Cosham also does a great job of using timing and volume to set a scene. The hands down best example of this is a scene towards the end of the novel featuring Mr. Micawber and Uriah Heep, which is one of my favorite scenes of the novel, in no small part because of Cosham's performance. The unabridged recording runs approximately 34 hours. Dickens' David Copperfield is an excellent novel. The lack of central theme holds it back some, but the many interesting and amusing characters and the memorable dialogue makes it worth reading for anyone looking to give Dickens a go. I highly recommend Cosham's performance of the novel to audiobook fans. Note: I received a complimentary review copy of this audiobook from the publisher.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. An Enduring Classic Worth Reading. By Buzz My interest in Charles Dickens was rekindled when, earlier this year, I visited an exhibition about his life and times, at the London City Museum, to mark the 200th anniversary of his birth. Something I came upon in this very interesting exhibit, indicated that "David Copperfield" was Dickens' favorite creation. Not too long ago, I read and loved "Bleak House" and I felt I was up to the 900 pages of "David Copperfield." The question for me in undertaking to read such a long and leisurely book, is whether it is worth the time spent. As the middle of the book dragged on at a very slow pace, more suited perhaps to the Victorian era than to today, I had my doubts. But, as the narrative picked up, I was very happy to have read this very wonderful book to completion.

Charles John Huffam Dickens was an English writer and social critic. He created some of the world's best-known fictional characters and is regarded as the greatest novelist of the Victorian era. His works enjoyed unprecedented popularity during his lifetime, and by the twentieth century critics and scholars had recognised him as a literary genius. His novels and short stories enjoy lasting popularity. Born in Portsmouth, Dickens left school to work in a factory when his father was incarcerated in a debtors' prison. Despite his lack of formal education, he edited a weekly journal

for 20 years, wrote 15 novels, five novellas, hundreds of short stories and non-fiction articles, lectured and performed extensively, was an indefatigable letter writer, and campaigned vigorously for children's rights, education, and other social reforms. Dickens's literary success began with the 1836 serial publication of *The Pickwick Papers*. Within a few years he had become an international literary celebrity, famous for his humour, satire, and keen observation of character and society. His novels, most published in monthly or weekly instalments, pioneered the serial publication of narrative fiction, which became the dominant Victorian mode for novel publication. The instalment format allowed Dickens to evaluate his audience's reaction, and he often modified his plot and character development based on such feedback. For example, when his wife's chiropodist expressed distress at the way Miss Mowcher in *David Copperfield* seemed to reflect her disabilities, Dickens improved the character with positive features. His plots were carefully constructed, and he often wove elements from topical events into his narratives. Masses of the illiterate poor chipped in ha'pennies to have each new monthly episode read to them, opening up and inspiring a new class of readers. Dickens was regarded as the literary colossus of his age. His 1843 novella, *A Christmas Carol*, remains popular and continues to inspire adaptations in every artistic genre. *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* are also frequently adapted, and, like many of his novels, evoke images of early Victorian London. His 1859 novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, set in London and Paris, is his best-known work of historical fiction. Dickens's creative genius has been praised by fellow writers—from Leo Tolstoy to George Orwell and G. K. Chesterton—for its realism, comedy, prose style, unique characterisations, and social criticism. On the other hand, Oscar Wilde, Henry James, and Virginia Woolf complained of a lack of psychological depth, loose writing, and a vein of saccharine sentimentalism. The term Dickensian is used to describe something that is reminiscent of Dickens and his writings, such as poor social conditions or comically repulsive characters (font: Wikipedia).

.com *Bleak House* is a satirical look at the Byzantine legal system in London as it consumes the minds and talents of the greedy and nearly destroys the lives of innocents—a contemporary tale indeed. Dickens's tale takes us from the foggy dank streets of London and the maze of the Inns of Court to the peaceful countryside of England. Likewise, the characters run from murderous villains to virtuous girls, from a devoted lover to a "fallen woman," all of whom are affected by a legal suit in which there will, of course, be no winner. The first-person narrative related by the orphan Esther is particularly sweet. The articulate reading by the acclaimed British actor Paul Scofield, whose distinctive broad English accent lends just the right degree of sonority and humor to the text, brings out the color in this classic social commentary disguised as a Victorian drama. However, to abridge Dickens is, well, a Dickensian task, the results of which make for a story in which the author's convoluted plot lines and twists of fate play out in what seems to be a fast-forward format. Listeners must pay close attention in order to keep up with the multiple narratives and cast of curious characters, including the memorable Inspector Bucket and Mr. Guppy. Fortunately, the publisher provides a partial list of characters on the inside jacket. (Running time: 3 hours; 2 cassettes) From Library Journal *Bleak House* is such a natural for audio that it comes as no surprise to read in Peter Ackroyd's biography of Dickens that he himself read it aloud to Wilkie Collins and his own family. No matter how good he was as a reader—and he did go on to present public readings regularly after this—Dickens could not have performed better than Robert Whitfield does here. With a motley cast of characters to challenge the skill of any narrator, his brilliant dramatizations range from a homeless street urchin to an arrogant barrister, from a canny old windbag to a high-minded heroine who deserves the happy ending Dickens affords her. Whitfield is also as persuasive as the indignant voice of the author himself, attacking both the injustice of the law and the cruel indifference of society. This may be one of the most Dickensian novels Dickens ever wrote. Highly recommended. A Jo Carr, Sarasota, FL Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.