

What's So Special About Dickens

Charles Dickens

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Charles John Huffam Dickens (; 7 February 1812 – 9 June 1870) was an English novelist, journalist, short story writer and social critic. He created some of literature's best-known fictional characters, and is regarded by many as the greatest novelist of the Victorian era. His works enjoyed unprecedented popularity during his lifetime and, by the 20th century, critics and scholars had recognised him as a literary genius. His novels and short stories are widely read today.

Born in Portsmouth, Dickens left school at age 12 to work in a boot-blackening factory when his father John was incarcerated in a debtors' prison. After three years, he returned to school before beginning his literary career as a journalist. Dickens edited a weekly journal for 20 years; wrote 15 novels, five novellas, hundreds of short stories and nonfiction articles; lectured and performed readings extensively; was a tireless 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*, a publishing phenomenon—thanks largely to the introduction of the character Sam Weller in the fourth episode—that sparked *Pickwick* merchandise and spin-offs. Within a few years, Dickens had become an international literary celebrity, famous for his humour, satire and keen observation of character and society. His novels, most of them published in monthly or weekly instalments, pioneered the serial publication of narrative fiction, which became the dominant Victorian mode for novel publication. Cliffhanger endings in his serial publications kept readers in suspense. 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 own 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 would individually pay a halfpenny to have each new monthly episode read to them, opening up and inspiring a new class of readers.

His 1843 novella *A Christmas Carol* remains especially popular and continues to inspire adaptations in every creative medium. *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* are also frequently adapted and, like many of his novels, evoke images of early Victorian London. His 1853 novel *Bleak House*, a satire on the judicial system, helped support a reformist movement that culminated in the 1870s legal reform in England. *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859; set in London and Paris) is regarded as his best-known work of historical fiction. The most famous celebrity of his era, he undertook, in response to public demand, a series of public reading tours in the later part of his career. The term *Dickensian* is used to describe something that is reminiscent of Dickens and his writings, such as poor social or working conditions, or comically repulsive characters.

Dora Annie Dickens

Dora Annie Dickens (16 August 1850 – 14 April 1851) was the infant daughter of English novelist Charles Dickens and his wife Catherine. She was the ninth

Dora Annie Dickens (16 August 1850 – 14 April 1851) was the infant daughter of English novelist Charles Dickens and his wife Catherine. She was the ninth of their ten children, and the youngest of their three daughters.

Hazel Dickens

Hazel Jane Dickens (June 1, 1925[a] – April 22, 2011) was an American bluegrass singer, songwriter, double bassist, guitarist and banjo player. Her music

Hazel Jane Dickens (June 1, 1925[a] – April 22, 2011) was an American bluegrass singer, songwriter, double bassist, guitarist and banjo player. Her music was characterized not only by her high, lonesome singing style, but also by her provocative pro-union, feminist songs. Cultural blogger John Pietaro noted that "Dickens didn't just sing the anthems of labor, she lived them and her place on many a picket line, staring down gunfire and goon squads, embedded her into the cause." The New York Times extolled her as "a clarion-voiced advocate for coal miners and working people and a pioneer among women in bluegrass music." With Alice Gerrard, Dickens was one of the first women to record a bluegrass album. She was posthumously inducted into the International Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame alongside Gerrard in 2017.

Mary Dickens

reminiscences about her father, and in conjunction with her aunt, Georgina Hogarth, she edited the first collection of his letters. Mamie Dickens was born

Mary "Mamie" Dickens (6 March 1838 – 23 July 1896) was the eldest daughter of the English novelist Charles Dickens and his wife Catherine. She wrote a book of reminiscences about her father, and in conjunction with her aunt, Georgina Hogarth, she edited the first collection of his letters.

Douglas Booth

cast someone "so distractingly lovely" in the role of Pip: "It's not that Douglas Booth was bad, it's just that one can't imagine Dickens ever intended

Douglas John Booth (born 9 July 1992) is an English actor and musician. He first came to public attention through his performance as Boy George in the BBC Two film *Worried About the Boy* (2010). He went on to star in the BBC adaptations of *Great Expectations* and *Christopher and His Kind* (both 2011), Carlo Carlei's film adaptation of *Romeo & Juliet* (2013), and the Netflix biopic *The Dirt* (2019).

Booth also appeared in Darren Aronofsky's *Noah* and Lone Scherfig's *The Riot Club* (both 2014) and co-starred in The Wachowskis' *Jupiter Ascending* (2015).

A Tale of Two Cities

Cities is a historical novel published in 1859 by English author Charles Dickens, set in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution. The novel

A Tale of Two Cities is a historical novel published in 1859 by English author Charles Dickens, set in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution. The novel tells the story of the French Doctor Manette, his 18-year-long imprisonment in the Bastille in Paris, and his release to live in London with his daughter Lucie whom he had never met. The story is set against the conditions that led up to the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror.

As Dickens's best-known work of historical fiction, A Tale of Two Cities is said to be one of the best-selling novels of all time. In 2003, the novel was ranked 63rd on the BBC's The Big Read poll. The novel has been adapted for film, television, radio, and the stage, and has continued to influence popular culture.

Ellen Ternan

literature with a special interest in Charles Dickens, Michael Slater, in his 2009 biography of Dickens. On the "many speculations about the exact relationship

Ellen Lawless Ternan (3 March 1839 – 25 April 1914), also known as Nelly Ternan or Nelly Wharton-Robinson, was an English actress known for her relationship with the older Charles Dickens.

Gary Cooper

Dickens 1970, p. 9. Meyers 1998, pp. 63–64. Swindell 1980, p. 122. Dickens 1970, p. 87. Dickens 1970, pp. 89–91. Dickens 1970, pp. 92–93. Dickens 1970

Gary Cooper (born Frank James Cooper; May 7, 1901 – May 13, 1961) was an American actor known for his strong, silent screen persona and understated acting style. He won the Academy Award for Best Actor twice and had a further three nominations, as well as an Academy Honorary Award in 1961 for his career achievements. He was one of the top-10 film personalities for 23 consecutive years and one of the top money-making stars for 18 years. The American Film Institute (AFI) ranked Cooper at number 11 on its list of the 50 greatest screen legends.

Cooper's career spanned 36 years, from 1925 to 1961, and included leading roles in 84 feature films. He was a major movie star from the end of the silent film era through to the end of the golden age of classical Hollywood. His screen persona appealed strongly to both men and women, and his range included roles in most major film genres. His ability to project his own personality onto the characters he played contributed to his natural and authentic appearance on screen. Throughout his career, he sustained a screen persona that represented the ideal American hero.

Cooper began his career as a film extra and stunt rider, but soon landed acting roles. After establishing himself as a Western hero in his early silent films, he became a movie star with his first sound picture, playing the title role in 1929's *The Virginian*. In the early 1930s, he expanded his heroic image to include more cautious characters in adventure films and dramas such as *A Farewell to Arms* (1932) and *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer* (1935). During the height of his career, Cooper portrayed a new type of hero, a champion of the common man in films such as *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), *Meet John Doe* (1941), *Sergeant York* (1941), *The Pride of the Yankees* (1942), and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1943). He later portrayed more mature characters at odds with the world in films such as *The Fountainhead* (1949) and *High Noon* (1952). In his final films, he played nonviolent characters searching for redemption in films such as *Friendly Persuasion* (1956) and *Man of the West* (1958).

A Christmas Carol

Christmas, commonly known as A Christmas Carol, is a novella by Charles Dickens, first published in London by Chapman & Hall in 1843 and illustrated by

A Christmas Carol. In Prose. Being a Ghost Story of Christmas, commonly known as A Christmas Carol, is a novella by Charles Dickens, first published in London by Chapman & Hall in 1843 and illustrated by John Leech. It recounts the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, an elderly miser who is visited by the ghost of his former business partner Jacob Marley and the spirits of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come. In the process, Scrooge is transformed into a kinder, gentler man.

Dickens wrote A Christmas Carol during a period when the British were exploring and re-evaluating past Christmas traditions, including carols, and newer customs such as cards and Christmas trees. He was influenced by the experiences of his own youth and by the Christmas stories of other authors, including Washington Irving and Douglas Jerrold. Dickens had written three Christmas stories prior to the novella, and was inspired following a visit to the Field Lane Ragged School, one of several establishments for London's street children. The treatment of the poor and the ability of a selfish man to redeem himself by transforming into a more sympathetic character are the key themes of the story. There is discussion among academics as to

whether this is a fully secular story or a Christian allegory.

Published on 19 December, the first edition sold out by Christmas Eve; by the end of 1844 thirteen editions had been released. Most critics reviewed the novella favourably. The story was illicitly copied in January 1844; Dickens took legal action against the publishers, who went bankrupt, further reducing Dickens's small profits from the publication. He subsequently wrote four other Christmas stories. In 1849 he began public readings of the story, which proved so successful he undertook 127 further performances until 1870, the year of his death. A Christmas Carol has never been out of print and has been translated into several languages; the story has been adapted many times for film, stage, opera and other media.

A Christmas Carol captured the zeitgeist of the early Victorian revival of the Christmas holiday. Dickens acknowledged the influence of the modern Western observance of Christmas and later inspired several aspects of Christmas, including family gatherings, seasonal food and drink, dancing, games and a festive generosity of spirit.

Miriam Margolyes

careless about doing the stunts, I have to object“.[clarification needed] In 1989, Margolyes co-wrote and performed a one-woman show, *Dickens’s Women*, in

Miriam Margolyes (MAR-g?-leez; born 18 May 1941) is a British and Australian actress. Known for her work as a character actor across film, television, and stage, she received the BAFTA for Best Supporting Actress for her role as Mrs. Mingott in Martin Scorsese's *The Age of Innocence* (1993), and achieved international prominence with her portrayal of Professor Sprout in the *Harry Potter* film series (2001–2011). Margolyes was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 2002 New Year Honours for Services to Drama.

After starting her career in theatre, Margolyes made the transition to film with a small part in the British comedy *A Nice Girl Like Me* (1969). Subsequent credits include *Yentl* (1983), *Little Shop of Horrors* (1986), *Little Dorrit* (1988), *I Love You to Death* (1990), *Immortal Beloved* (1994), *Balto* (1995), *Different for Girls*, *Romeo + Juliet* (both 1996), *Magnolia*, *End of Days* (both 1999), *Being Julia*, and *Ladies in Lavender* (both 2004). She voiced roles in *Babe* (1995), *James and the Giant Peach* (1996), *Mulan* (1998), *Happy Feet* (2006), *Flushed Away* (2006), and *Early Man* (2018).

Margolyes appeared in the television films *Poor Little Rich Girl: The Barbara Hutton Story* (1987), *Orpheus Descending* (1990), *Stalin* (1992), *Cold Comfort Farm* (1995), and *The Life and Death of Peter Sellers* (2004). Her other credits include *Blackadder* (1983–1988), *Vanity Fair*, *Supply & Demand* (both 1998), and *Doctor Who* (2023), as well as the recurring roles of Prudence Stanley in the Australian drama series *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* (2012–2015), and Sister Mildred in the BBC1 drama series *Call the Midwife* (2018–2021).

On stage, Margolyes toured her one-woman show, *Dickens' Women*, between 1989 and 2012, which earned her an Olivier Award nomination; starred as Sue Mengers in the Australian premiere of *I'll Eat You Last* (2014); and originated the role of Madame Morrible in *Wicked* (West End, 2006; Broadway, 2008). Outside acting, she has fronted various travelogue series and written two memoirs: *This Much is True* (2021) and *Oh Miriam!* (2023).

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