

Chapter 1 : Little Dorrit by Charles Dickens: Character Summary

This page presents a summary of the plot and characters of Little Dorrit, a novel of social criticism by Charles Dickens.. Little Dorrit Summary Little Dorrit is a book by Charles Dickens published in serial instalments between and

Buy Little Dorrit at the Rereading Little Dorrit this past summer, I was reminded of my diminutive maternal grandmother, born less than a decade after her "beloved Dickens" died, who liked nothing better than to spend wet afternoons reading his novels aloud to her granddaughters. I remember my mother, too, choking up over the last chapter of A Tale of Two Cities. But the tradition ended with me. I could never interest my own children in Dickens; they demanded Tolkien, or the television. So I belong, I suppose, to the last Dickensian generation, though I have no recollection of Little Dorrit from early days. Of course, by the time I had settled in England, I was at least superficially a modern woman, and my tastes favoured Henry James and Virginia Woolf. I returned to the novel in the 1980s when an enlightened BBC began to serialise Dickens on television. In fact, it was seeing an old video of Little Dorrit that set me writing about it. Despite a superb cast Alec Guinness, Derek Jacobi the film version is not a success. But now, having pushed myself to read every word of those pages no skipping! I begin to wonder if these long, highly symbolic novels are not all but impossible to film. The drama in Dickens lies in the exuberance of his language. Shakespeare, by contrast, had to cut and fashion his plays to fit five performable acts. Another is that Shakespeare left everything he wrote wide open to interpretation. He has never dated. While Dickens, who is the presiding spirit in his books, seems to belong to a faraway, more leisurely era when readers had time to relish the glories and ironies of Victorian prose. Dickens also handicapped himself by giving free rein to his capricious invention and packing his novels with more characters - or caricatures - than he could easily weave into his plots. Little Dorrit does tell a coherent story, but its characters are so implausibly linked that a good deal of disbelief begs to be suspended throughout. Even Little Dorrit herself has moments of seeming to be vulnerable and alive. There is even a cloak-and-dagger villain with three French names, whose black moustache disappears under his hooked nose and whose nose comes down over his moustache every time he laughs heh-heh-heh. Yet, despite the Grand Guignol, Little Dorrit is deeply serious on levels that have not at all dated and are as relevant to our time as to his. We are reminded constantly that Dickens began his career as a reporter in a court of law. In his great novels, the merry journalist has become an acid critic, a coldly sardonic social analyst that no amount of "entertainment" can disguise. If Shakespeare is a greater psychologist than Freud, then Dickens is at least as ruthless a critic of capitalist greed and self-serving bureaucracy as Marx. That magnificent creation the Circumlocution Office is a case in point. Allowing for exaggeration, the Circumlocution Office and its policy of "How not to do it" epitomises the delays of office, anywhere, in any time. Mr Merdle, a fraudulent banker whom society lionises as a repository of rock-safe investments, is a recognisable predecessor of Mr Robert Maxwell and the directors of Enron. Little Dorrit is essentially a morality play, an allegory of the imprisonment and ordeal of Everyman, who sets forth on a journey whose ultimate end is freedom of the spirit through disinterested love for Dickens, the only salvation. Images of incarceration fold into one another throughout the story like Chinese boxes. It begins in an actual prison in Marseille, where the devilish Rigaud later, Blandois is being held for murder. The Everyman-like Arthur Clennam, returning from another kind of imprisonment in China, encounters in the same foreign city a random group of travellers who later affect his life. Every person and object associated with the symbolically paralysed Mrs Clennam speaks of her Old Testament hatred, which has blighted the life of her dead husband and her presumed son. Arthur elects to leave the family business and start a new life, but while he is tidying up the accounts he encounters a diminutive seamstress who comes by day to work for his mother. The first book, "Poverty", chiefly contrasts the willed imprisonment of Mrs Clennam with the necessitous vanity and self-deceit of "The Father of the Marshalsea". His daughter Amy Little Dorrit darts between the two prisons like a ray of hope. For the fable demands that Little Dorrit be as much its good angel as Blandois its evil genius. Other characters are ranged between them in a colour code of vices and virtues, extending from the inky black and blackmailing villain through shades of murky grey Mrs Clennam, Mr and Mrs Merdle, Mr Caseby, Mr Flintwinch, Miss Wade

through a lighter, gradually brightening, region the other Dorrits, Flora Finching, the Meagles family, Mr Pancks, Daniel Doyce to the pure white, saintly figure of Amy. On any other terms than those of allegory, angelic Amy would be squirmingly hard to swallow. As it is, her goodness is indispensable to the story. Born in the Marshalsea, she is the only character whose wishes are wholly unselfish and whose unbreakable will to love and be loved frees her metaphorically from every prison, literal and social. All the other major characters excepting the artist-engineer, Daniel Doyce are imprisoned by discontent, by poverty, by ignorance, by personal ambition, even by ill-judged kindness; but most conspicuously by an insatiable desire for money, power and status. The principal targets of the satire are even more seriously imprisoned after they gain their ends. For in the second book, "Riches", Mr Dorrit, through the efforts of Clennam and Mr Pancks, is discovered to be heir to a large fortune. He removes with his family and a vast entourage to Venice and Rome where, abetted by his selfish older children, he endeavours to bury his ignominious past, abandon his former friends and embark on a brand new life as a Gentleman in Society. Because the allegory in Little Dorrit has been woven into a typically Dickensian plot, parts of the novel - particularly its denouement - read like an over-manipulated detective story. And of course Dickens delights in working up storms of melodrama or sentimentality where a novelist today would avoid over-writing. On the whole, though, the writing is so brilliant that flaws can be overlooked. Unlike Shakespeare, who lets his plays speak for themselves, Dickens, the journalist-poet, never lets us forget he is the story-teller. His views appear everywhere; we see every detail through his eyes; we know what he feels about every moral issue he so vigorously raises. Yet Dickens the man, as opposed to Dickens the showman, is curiously invisible. After finishing the novel, I had a dream in which I was explaining to a class that Dickens had created an entire universe in his head - an earth-centred universe that represents reality only in exaggerated essentials. Having put himself in charge of his own stars and constellations, he found it expedient, like Ptolemy, to embellish his plots with epicycles. Little Dorrit is rich in epicycles: At the same time, Little Dorrit is a wonderful read - a tragical-comical-satirical-poetical mystery story that turns out to be an allegory of love.

Chapter 2 : The Charles Dickens Page - Little Dorrit

Little Dorrit was the 11 th novel of Charles Dickens. The novel was published in installments from December of through June of The novel was published in installments from December of through June of

Plot summary[edit] Poverty The novel begins in Marseilles "thirty years ago" c. Arthur Clennam is detained in Marseilles with a group of travellers in quarantine. He meets new friends in the quarantine. He is returning to London to see his mother after 20 years in China with his father, handling that part of the family business. His father died there. On his deathbed, his father had given him a mysterious message, murmuring "Your mother," which message and a watch Arthur mails to Mrs Clennam. It is a message, but the implacable Mrs Clennam, who now uses a wheelchair, refuses to tell him what it means. The two become estranged. His three children are Edward, Fanny and Amy. Amy is known as Little Dorrit and she was born there. Their mother died when Amy was 8 years old. His older brother Frederick lives with his elder daughter Fanny outside the prison The grown children are free to pass in and out of the prison as they please. Little Dorrit, devoted to her father, supports them both through her sewing. To the honour of her father, who is embarrassed to acknowledge his financial position, Little Dorrit avoids mentioning her work outside the prison or his inability to leave. Mr Dorrit assumes the role of Father of the Marshalsea, and is held in great respect by its inhabitants, as if he had chosen to live there. After Arthur tells his mother that he will not continue in the family business, Mrs Clennam chooses her clerk Jeremiah Flintwinch as her partner. When Arthur learns that Mrs Clennam employs Little Dorrit as a seamstress, showing unusual kindness, he wonders whether the young girl might be connected with the mystery of the watch. Arthur follows the girl to the Marshalsea. While at the Circumlocution Office he meets the successful inventor Daniel Doyce. Doyce wants a partner and man of business at his factory and Clennam agrees to fill that role. Her father Mr Casby owns many rental properties, and his rent collector is Mr Pancks. The indefatigable Pancks discovers that William Dorrit is the lost heir to a large fortune, enabling him to pay his way out of prison, altering the status of the entire family. Riches The now wealthy Dorrits decide that they should tour Europe as a newly respectable rich family. They travel over the Alps and take up residence for a time in Venice , and finally in Rome , displaying pride over their new-found wealth and position, unwilling to tell their past to new friends. Little Dorrit finds it difficult to adjust to their wealth and new social position, and slowly comes to appreciate the new places and new sights. Fanny adjusts rapidly to the ways of society, and is sought by the same young man, Edmund Sparkler, who pursued her in her poverty in London, but with a new start that is acceptable to his mother. In Rome, at a party, Mr Dorrit falls ill, and dies at their lodgings. His distraught brother Frederick dies that same night. Little Dorrit, left alone, returns to London to stay with newly married Fanny and her husband, the dim-witted Edmund Sparkler. Clennam is now imprisoned in the Marshalsea, where he becomes ill. When Little Dorrit arrives in London, she slowly nurses him back to health. Held in the prison, he sends this undesirable man to his mother, who has advertised to find him. As Blandois he tries to blackmail Mrs Clennam with his full knowledge of her past. Mrs Clennam had insisted on bringing up little Arthur and denying his mother the right to see him. Mrs Clennam feels this is her right to punish others, because they hurt her. Mrs Clennam knows of this inheritance and fails to tell Little Dorrit, or to tell Arthur about his real mother. Unwilling to yield to blackmail and with some remorse, the rigid woman rises from her chair and totters out of her house to reveal the secret to Little Dorrit at the Marshalsea. Mrs Clennam begs her forgiveness, which the kind-hearted girl freely grants. Returning to home, Mrs Clennam falls in the street, never to recover the use of her speech or limbs, as the house of Clennam literally collapses before her eyes, killing Rigaud. Affery was outdoors seeking her mistress, and Jeremiah had escaped London before the collapse with as much money as he could find. Rather than hurt him, Little Dorrit chooses not to reveal any of this to Arthur; when he is well, she asks him to burn the papers. Mr Meagles seeks the original papers, stopping to ask Miss Wade. She has them but denies it; Tattycorum slips back to London with the papers and presents them to Mr Meagles, who gives them to Little Dorrit. Arthur is released from the prison with his fortunes revived, his position secure with Doyce, and his health restored. Arthur and Little Dorrit marry. Sub-plots[edit] Little Dorrit contains numerous

sub-plots. Miss Wade is ruled by her anger, and she was a jilted sweetheart of Gowan. Another subplot concerns the Italian man John Baptist Cavalletto who was the cellmate of Rigaud in Marseilles, though jailed for a minor crime. He makes his way to London, meets up by chance with Clennam, who stands security for him as he builds up his business in wood carving and gains acceptance among the residents of Bleeding Heart yard. This action brings about the revelation of the secrets kept by Mrs Clennam. The other major subplot is the satire of British bureaucracy, named as the Circumlocution Office, where the expertise is how not to do it.

Characters[edit]

Rigaud: European man who is in prison in Marseilles awaiting trial for murdering his wife. He demands that others treat him as a gentleman, though he does not treat others as a gentleman would. He is also known as Lagnier in an inn in France after he persuades the jury he is not guilty, while the most of France knows he was guilty. In England he is known as Blandois, with a plan of blackmail. Italian man awaiting trial for minor smuggling in Marseilles, and put in the same cell with Rigaud. Returning from China, he spent weeks in quarantine in Marseilles, having travelled through a place with plague. He is 40 years old and single, meets new friends in the quarantine. He is a man of honour and kindness, with skills in business. Wife of Mr Clennam, who ran the family business in London. She was raised in a strict and harsh religious sect and keeps up the ways of her childhood. She sent him away for to work with his father in China. Uncle to the father of Arthur Clennam, and who started the family business. He is not alive in the time of this story, but 40 years earlier, when Arthur was born. The mother of Arthur Clennam: She was pushed away by Mrs Clennam and Gilbert Clennam. She takes care of Mrs Clennam and of Arthur before he went to China. She is afraid of both her husband and her mistress. She hears the sounds of the building, all mysterious to her. Clerk to the Clennam business until Arthur announces that he will not work in the family business on his return to London. Mr Flintwinch is raised up to be partner with Mrs Clennam. When Mrs Clennam became an invalid needing much care, she decided that Flintwinch and Affery should marry, so they did. After the blackmail attempt, he fled London and was said to be known as Mynheer von Flyntevynge in Amsterdam and The Hague. He is an Englishman travelling in Europe with his wife, daughter and the maid for his daughter. He is a retired banker. He and his family are held in quarantine at Marseilles, having travelled through an area with plague, though none are ill. He becomes friends with Arthur Clennam. Wife of Mr Meagles and mother of their daughter. Daughter of Mr and Mrs Meagles, survivor of twin girls. She is a beautiful young woman, spoiled by her parents, and known as Pet to them. Maid to Minnie Meagles. She was an orphan taken in by the Meagles. She is younger than Minnie, with rich dark hair, and has a temperament that can run to anger. Her name was Harriet Beadle. She lives with the family in Twickenham, then with Miss Wade in London and in Calais until she returns to the Meagles. Another traveller held in quarantine in Marseilles. She is aloof, but makes a connection with Tattycorum. She once was wooed by Henry Gowan. She is linked with Rigaud, and with whom he left the valuable box of Clennam family papers. Over time he becomes the father of the Marshalsea, based on his social ways, maintaining the expectations of the class in which he was raised. She arrived at the prison a day after her husband, with their two children. She was pregnant, and about seven months later gave birth to their third child and second daughter. Mrs Dorrit died when the girl was about 8 years old. The eldest child of the Dorrits, also called Tip, who enters the prison at about age 3. He grows up to become a gambler. The elder daughter of the Dorrits, who enters the prison at age 2. She grows to be an attractive and active young woman, who takes training in dancing for the theatre. Later she marries Edmund Sparkler.

Chapter 3 : Little Dorrit (TV Series) - IMDb

Little Dorrit is a novel by Charles Dickens, originally published in serial form between and The story features Amy Dorrit, youngest child of her family, born and raised in the Marshalsea prison for debtors in London.

Rigaud recounts the history of his marrying a rich young local widow, and her sudden death following an altercation between them. He is taken away to face trial. He is in quarantine with the Meagles family, to whom he relates his harsh upbringing. Mr Meagles recounts the history of their daughter Pet and her curious maid, Tattycoram. On release they make their adieux, and Tattycoram complains ambiguously to the mysterious Miss Wade. He possesses a watch given to him by his dying father. Flintwinch catches his wife and threatens her in a menacing manner. His mother immediately appoints Flintwinch as a business partner. Affrey then tells Clennam about Little Dorrit, which arouses his curiosity. It includes the birth of his daughter Amy in the prison. She becomes a guardian to her helpless father, and finds employment for her elder sister Fanny as a dancer. Clennam meets Amy and her brother and sister. However, Clennam is caught by the night curfew and is forced to spend the night in the prison. He perceives a link between the Dorrit family and his mother. She asks for understanding and tolerance for her father, and reveals that his main creditor is Tite Barnacle. On return they meet her simple and undeveloped friend Maggy. Barnacle Junior refers him to Tite Barnacle in Grosvenor Mews, who refers him back to the Office, where various officials are completely obstructive. He meets Mr Meagles, who is frustrating the enquiries of the patient inventor Doyce. They all repair to Bleeding Heart Yard, where Doyce lives. Mr Flintwinch has a mild attack of irritability Ch. He meets Cavalletto at a boarding house in Chalons-sur-Soane and seeks to enlist him as a servant again " but Cavalletto escapes early the following morning. Mrs Plornish explains their connections with Little Dorrit which come via Casby, the landlord of the Yard. He also meets Panks, the rent-collector, then his childhood sweetheart Flora Casby, who has become an embarrassing featherbrain. He feels so sorry for her that he accepts an invitation to stay for what turns out to be a comic dinner. Afterwards he walks with Panks into the city and comes across Cavalletto, who has been run over by a mail coach. She thinks Mrs Clennam has learned the secret of her prison home from Flintwinch. Amy and Maggy are locked out of the prison because it is so late, and spend a grim and frightening night in the streets, where they encounter a woman who is about to commit suicide. She is menaced by her husband once again. Clennam thinks of falling in love with Minnie Pet Meagles, but then decides against it. Tattycoram has been in touch with Miss Wade, who has offered her a position if she needs one. Clennam asks Meagles for advice regarding a plan to join Doyce as partner. He presents cigars to William Dorrit on a Sunday, then locates Amy on the Iron Bridge, where he wishes to declare his feelings for her. But she refuses to let him do so. He falls into a passion of maudlin self-pity, alternating with periods of delusory self-aggrandisement. Amy watches over him throughout the night. Fanny takes Amy to see Mrs Merdle whose son has proposed marriage to her. Fanny has misled Mrs Merdle into thinking that she comes from a distinguished family. However, Mrs Merdle thinks it would be social suicide to have her son marry socially beneath him and she bribes Fanny to stay away from the boy, who is a hopeless booby. Fanny complains unjustly to her sister in a patronising manner. Maggy " Little Mother Ch. His step son Sparkler is a feckless wastrel who proposes marriage to young women at random. Merdle throws a lavish reception attended by prominent people from the Law, the Church, and the Treasury who toady up to him and dine at his expense whilst he consumes very little himself. Gatekeeper Chivery asks Clennam to visit his wife, who reveals that her son has fallen into a permanent fit of despair because he has been rejected by Amy. Clennam meets Amy on the bridge, then Maggy, who bears begging letters from Dorrit and Tip addressed to Clennam. He pays Dorrit, but not Tip. Flora flirts with Clennam, claiming that she wants to help Little Dorrit. Clennam tells him, on condition that Panks reveals any new information about them. Panks then collects rents in the Yard. Flora paints an over-romanticised picture of herself and Clennam designed to establish a claim on him. After-dinner Panks interviews Amy: After this he becomes omnipresent in the lives of the Dorrits. He invites John Chivery to a Sunday lunch and introduces him to Anastasia Rugg who has sued a local baker for breach of promise. Panks also befriends Cavalletto who is now lodging in Bleeding Heart Yard. Mrs Gowan quizzes

Clennam about Pet, claiming that the Meagles are social climbing, trying to make an alliance with her family. Clennam tries to explain that this is not the case but she refuses to believe him. They trace her to an old house in Mayfair where she is staying with Miss Wade. Meagles entreats her to return to the family but she refuses. Miss Wade behaves scornfully to the two men and reveals that she like Tattycoram is an orphan with no name. Clennam thinks that she is destined to be unhappy but swallows his unrequited love and congratulates her. Little Dorrit tells her nothing. When Panks leaves, Affrey accidentally shuts herself out of the house, but Blandois Rigaud suddenly appears in the street and climbs through a window to let her in. Blandois has arrived with a letter of introduction and credit from Paris. He wishes to meet Mrs Clennam who is surprisingly open and even confessional with him. He asks Flintwinch to show him around the house, tries and fails to get him drunk, and predicts that they will become close friends. Yet next day he goes straight back to Paris. The birthday treat is paid for by Clennam who joins them whilst Dorrit loftily patronises Old Nandy. Tip appears and insults Clennam for not lending him money. Dorrit reproaches his son. He fails to see that she is in love with him. She feels completely embarrassed by his revelations regarding his feelings for Pet Meagles. Panks suddenly appears, takes Clennam to meet Mr Rugg, and reveals that they have uncovered some important documents. Mrs Merdle then reproaches her husband for being too preoccupied with his work. Edmund Sparkler appears and confirms that he is a dimwit who knows virtually nothing. The marriage goes ahead and is attended by many of the Barnacles. He has financed the search with his own money plus loans from Rugg and Casby. Clennam goes to the Casby house where Flora is as garrulous as ever but kind to Amy. Clennam and Little Dorrit go to the prison and break the news to Dorrit, who promises to repay everybody. There is a celebratory feast for all the Collegians then a grand departure at which they forget Amy. Clennam brings her down from her room where she has fainted. Little Dorrit meets Pet Meagles now Mrs Gowan for the first time, befriends her, and shows her a message from Clennam. Mrs General is devoid of opinions and is entirely composed of surface polish. Dorrit mediates but thinks Clennam should cease to be acquainted with their family. Dorrit protests when he finds someone in their hotel rooms, but backs down when outfaced by Mrs Merdle. Amy now feels separated from her father and oppressed by the presence of a maid. The party eventually reaches Venice where Amy travels around alone. She also tells him that she misses the Dorrit of old, and that she wishes to be remembered as she herself was previously. She asks Clennam not to forget her. He then cruelly reproaches Amy on entirely selfish grounds "to which Mrs General responds by offering tips on pronunciation. When Amy wishes to meet the Gowans, Tip reveals that they are friends of the Merdles. Dorrit sees this as a seal of approval " at which his brother Frederick suddenly erupts in protest against all this snobbery and money worship. On the way back, Fanny and Amy meet Sparkler who is besotted with Fanny. He is invited into the house and then in the evening to the opera, where Blandois reveals that the dog is now dead. Sparkler is still in pursuit of Fanny. Henry Gowan grudgingly accepts a commission from Dorrit. There is a patronising visit from Mrs Merdle after which the family transfer to Rome. He is missing Little Dorrit and starting to feel that he is now too old for sentimental attachments. Dowager Mrs Gowan calls on the Meagles and patronises them regarding her son and his wife. She continues to maintain the fiction that they pursued her family. Henry Gowan has run up further debts.

Chapter 4 : Little Dorrit Summary

Dickens used the new Maria as the basis for Flora Finching, Arthur Clennam's former lover in Little Dorrit. Flora is fat and tiresome, although sincerely good natured. Flora is fat and tiresome, although sincerely good natured.

But it is much, much more than that. By now Dickens had established himself as a literary phenomenon. He was an enormously popular novelist, but he was keen to sustain his literary status as well as entertain the crowds. He lived in Folkestone, Paris, Boulogne and London, as well as travelling for speeches and business. He continued to write, edit, and give public readings, be involved in the lives of his children, and was as enthusiastic about the theatre as ever. He produced and acted in 6 plays and farces during this time, helped by his friend Wilkie Collins, although Dickens was very much the driving force behind them. And his letters reveal that he was approaching a domestic crisis, and increasingly frustrated with his marriage. He was preoccupied by the idea of freedom in all areas; freedom assumed a greater and greater importance to him, and he was increasingly impatient with the Victorian constraints of his time. Little Dorrit is the novel which comes out of this state of mind. The themes of prisons and being trapped in various ways, both physically and psychologically, permeate throughout the book. Dickens certainly felt himself trapped, whatever others thought. Of course, the irony was that the only way for those incarcerated to survive there, was by purchasing items to keep themselves fed and clothed. Getting out was well nigh impossible, as being incarcerated, they could rarely earn any money! It was very much like a village behind bars, and although it was 30 years since his father had been imprisoned there and the prison had been closed down in , Dickens had never returned to look at it. Only when he came to write Little Dorrit, did Dickens nerve himself to visit the parts of it which were still standing. If there is just one, it would be Arthur Clennam. Dickens may well have decided to name his novel after Amy, since she is one of the very few virtuous unaffected characters, always seeking opportunities for each of her family, and through sheer determination, working towards the best life they can all have. She may be small in stature, but her heart and courage are great indeed. We also follow the story of Arthur Clennam. She is attended by Flintwinch, a malicious man, twisted in both body and mind, who has wheedled himself into being her business partner, and forced the family servant, Affery, to marry him. These three form a unholy trio. The scenes set here have a gothic unearthly quality, and Affery, with her terrified nonsensical babbling, comes across as some kind of wise seer. There is hatred and malevolence here; a deep-seated resentment, but we are not privy to its cause, and neither is Arthur. There are myriad minor characters who make this novel sparkle, although it is a sinister sparkle, perhaps as in sparkly vampires. There is the avaricious Casby, with his flowing white hair and twinkly eyes, with a semblance of benevolence shining out of his bald head. Maria, like Flora, was pretty and flirtatious, and the daughter of a highly successful banker similar enough to a property-owner. Dickens found her talkativeness especially irritating, and quickly attempted to extricate himself from all but the most essential social contact with her "and always strictly in public. Perhaps an old affection did temper his pen, however. Although it seems a cruel, heartless portrait initially, Flora reveals herself to have a heart of gold, and hidden perceptiveness, as the novel proceeds. The silent ones are often more shadowy. But Flora is an appalling delight, and some scenes which feature her may well make you laugh out loud: There is Mr Merdle, the financier and greatest man of his time: It was deposited on every lip, and carried into every ear. There never was, there never had been, there never again should be, such a man as Mr Merdle. Nobody, as aforesaid, knew what he had done; but everybody knew him to be the greatest that had appeared. John Sadleir had resigned his ministerial position, when he was found guilty of being implicated in a plot to imprison a depositor of the Tipperary Bank, because the individual in question had refused to vote for him. John Sadleir had ended his life by drinking prussic acid. She values her own status, money and etiquette above all else. And the kindly Meagles family: She grows greatly in character, but initially has understandable feelings of resentment. She was a foundling, who has ostensibly been adopted by the Meagles. We have a veritable panoply of characters then, full of energy and life, spilling from the pages, as always in a novel by Dickens "and there are many more I have not mentioned. And the dastardly villain of the piece? For this novel does not start out in the dank gloom of the

Marshalsea, but in an oppressive hellhole of a prison in the blistering heat of the South of France. Mysteries abound in this novel. There is truth, but mostly there are lies, and secrets. There is the collapse of an institution, both metaphorically and in a very dramatic literal scene. It is doom-laden, with delusions and dreams; mysterious creaking sounds are seen to be prophetic. There is a suicide and a murder and animal cruelty. In the second part, there is restitution of a sort, and there is punishment. Poverty is transformed into riches, and those who were kind to each other when they were poor, become more spiteful or selfish, considering such earlier behaviour to be humiliating. Starting in Marseilles, the action removes to London and then Venice a crumbling, decaying edifice, reflected in the degeneration of the characters within it. In *Little Dorrit* any prosperity is almost a guarantee that the wealth will be put to bad use. Even that decidedly decent fellow Daniel Doyce, intelligent and kind, the inventor of an unspecified mechanical wonder, is unable to get a patent for it in the Circumlocution Office, and we fear for his future. Nothing in *Little Dorrit* is what it appears to be. Almost all the characters are self-seeking, and the message of the novel is a very bleak one indeed. It has a far wider purview Dickens here attacks the whole of British society. The novel *Little Dorrit* does not merely indicate a dark view of human nature, but is a savage indictment of the corruption at the heart of British institutions, and the effects of British economic and social structure upon every single individual. Dickens shows with this embittered novel that he believes British society to be rotten to the core, and riddled with deceit. This is another metaphor for that great destroyer of originality, the Circumlocution office. Together with the Stiltstalkings, the Barnacles infest both government and society, going around in circles, spewing red tape, and accomplishing nothing. They ensure that no business which might promote the common good is ever done, crushing both originality and initiative, and rendering all relationships false. Dickens was well placed to comment on the Civil Service, and his view was savage, waspish and also very witty. The extraordinary achievement of *Little Dorrit* is that such a devastating and dour indictment of British society and institutions can be so very readable, so topical, yet at the same time so current, in its description of the never-ending wheels grinding on in the Civil Service and to contain such delightful characters. And now I can see the final scene in the book open up before my eyes. The two characters we have been rooting for most, come out of the church of St George the Martyr, in Southwark, and are swallowed up in the roar of the city: Went down into a modest life of usefulness and happiness If you approach the altar and look up at the left panel of the magnificent stained glass window behind it, you will see the figure of St George, see that his foot is resting on a piece of parchment. Directly beneath this is a much smaller, kneeling figure of a girl, whose hands are clasped in prayer, and whose poke-bonnet is dangling from her back.

Chapter 5 : Charles Dickens's Little Dorrit.

Introduction and Notes by Peter Preston, University of Nottingham Little Dorrit is a classic tale of imprisonment, both literal and metaphorical, while Dickens' working title for the novel, Nobody's Fault, highlights its concern with personal responsibility in private and public life.

This page presents a summary of the plot and characters of Little Dorrit, a novel of social criticism by Charles Dickens. Little Dorrit Summary Little Dorrit is a book by Charles Dickens published in serial instalments between and Poverty Reproduction of the Original Cover for Little Dorrit William Dorrit is a distinguished gentleman but an incompetent businessman. Later, the Dorrits have a daughter, Amy, who is born in prison. Amy is referred to as Little Dorrit because of her size and youth. When Little Dorrit is eight years old, her mother dies. A few years later Mrs. Bangham, who had helped deliver Little Dorrit when she was born, and the jailer, who had formed a special bond with Little Dorrit also die. Little Dorrit dutifully supports her family with the money she earns by sewing. The lives of the Dorrits are intertwined in a mysterious way with the Clennam family. Arthur Clennam, who is in his forties, has just returned to London after being to the Orient on family business. His own father has died the year before, and Clennam has come back to see his mother. F on it which stood for "Do Not Forget". Thinking that the watch was intended for his mother, Arthur has it shipped back home to his mother from China. However, his mother angrily refuses to discuss the meaning of the watch or the note. On his return to Europe, Arthur docks at the French port of Marseilles and is quarantined with a number of other passengers. Here Arthur meets Miss Wade, a husband and wife by the last name of Meagles and their daughter "Pet", and Tattycorum, an orphan that they have adopted and who works as their servant. Eventually Arthur returns to London with the intention of telling his mother that he has left the firm, but he is oppressed by the feeling that there his family is guilty of something perhaps an unpaid debt and that there is a mystery at the heart of the relationship between his parents. Clennam, where Arthur meets her for the first time. Little Dorrit is now 22 years old. The Marshalsea Becomes and Orphan, illustrations by Phiz Arthur finds Little Dorrit attractive and when she returns to her home at the Marshalsea jail, where she still lives with her father, he decides to follow her. It is then that Arthur realizes the extreme poverty in which she lives and he decides to be her protector. Little Dorrit falls in love with Arthur but she is far too shy and feels too inferior socially to reveal her true feelings. Meanwhile Little Dorrit does not realize that the son of the Marshalsea jail warden is in love with her. Arthur makes enquiries about the Dorrit family. He asks Little Dorrit if she had ever heard the name Clennam before going to work for his mother, but she replies that she had not. Little Dorrit, the Brothers. Barnacle is a bureaucrat in the slow moving government ministry called the Circumlocution Office, where papers are pushed on and on, with nothing ever done. Barnacle and his Circumlocution Office are an allegory about government waste and inefficiency. While at the Circumlocution Office Arthur meets Mr. Meagles again and an inventor named Daniel Doyce, with whom he enters into a business partnership. With the help of a tireless debt collector named Panck, Arthur finally discovers that William Dorrit is the heir to a large fortune. Wealth Suddenly wealthy and respectable again, Mr. Dorrit decides to take his family on a holiday to Europe. Dorrit and his children, except for Little Dorrit, take on snobbish airs. Dorrit begins to frequently criticize Little Dorrit, who had once been his favorite child, for not having good social graces and not fitting in to the high society in which they are now mingling. Little Dorrit then goes to live with her now married older sister and her foppish husband, Edmund Sparkler. This financial collapse also ruins Arthur, and the Dorrits and Arthur are now all imprisoned for debt in the Marshalsea prison. It turns out that Arthur was the love child of his father and a beautiful singer. The child had been raised as their own. Clennam confesses to Little Dorrit that she has hidden this secret from her and from Arthur and begs for forgiveness. It is indeed the fall of the house of Clennam. Little Dorrit decides not to tell Arthur because she knows that he will be crushed to learn the truth about his mother. As a result, she passes up the opportunity to claim her inheritance. But in yet another melodramatic and improbable plot twist all ends well anyway. Little Dorrit and Arthur then get married and live happily ever after, which might not have been a very long time given the short life expectancies of Victorian England and the twenty year age difference

between them. One subplot involves Mr. Meagles, whom Arthur had first met at Marseilles in the company of Miss Wade and their daughter Pet as well as their foster daughter and servant Tattycorum. Pet marries an artist named Gowan, while Tattycorum is lured away by Miss Wade a sinister man-hating character who is an accomplice of the criminal Rigaud. In some ways these subplots are filler meant to create a rich landscape of characters and incidents.

Chapter 6 : Little Dorrit - Wikipedia

Charles Dickens' Little Dorrit is an intricate tale with a wide cast of characters, each leading a seemingly separate life, who become interwoven in a story contrasting the poverty of social prominence with the wealth of a commonplace life. Prison, both physical and social, is a recurrent theme.

Chapter 7 : Little Dorrit (film) - Wikipedia

Charles Dickens dedicated Little Dorrit to the painter Clarkson Stanfield. A prominent marine and landscape artist, Stanfield was a personal friend of Dickens who worked with him on creating scenery for plays and illustrations for his works.

Chapter 8 : Little Dorrit - a tutorial and study guide

Little Dorrit by Charles Dickens Little Dorrit is a classic tale of imprisonment, both literal and metaphorical, while Dicken's working title for the novel Nobody's Fault, highlights its concern with personal responsibility in private and public life.

Chapter 9 : Editions of Little Dorrit by Charles Dickens

On top of that, the great care put into the selection of costumes and locations made Little Dorrit a real feast for the eye, perfectly accompanied by the wonderful score by John Lunn. May this be a 'true Dickens' or not, what it surely is, is Grand TV.