

*Lady Dedlock by Mervyn Peake*

*Bleak House*: The Dark Heart of Charles Dickens

5 biweekly sessions: every other Saturday, April 28 – June 23 | 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Led by Edward G. Pettit, Manager of Public Programs at the Rosenbach

Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* lives up to its title, exploring the bleakest parts of London and the dark desires of its inhabitants. The novel opens in fog, then takes the reader into the circuitous byways of the slum Tom-all-Along's and the through the interminable legal case of Jarndyce v. Jarndyce. With Dickens' usual flair for names, we encounter Lady Dedlock, Inspector Bucket, Summerson, Skimpole, Tulkinghorn and Krook. Mysteries of identity and murder need to be solved before the end. Even spontaneous combustion makes an appearance as one character suddenly bursts into flame. *Bleak House* is the novel to read when you want to wander through the dark streets of Dickens' imagination.

Edward G Pettit is the Manager of Public of Programs at the Rosenbach. In 2012, Pettit served as the Charles Dickens Ambassador for the Free Library of Philadelphia's yearlong Bicentenary celebration of the author's birth and wrote the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion's 2013 mystery play, *Twisted*, in which he played Dickens. He has lectured widely on Dickens and given public readings of Dickens' Christmas stories. For the Rosenbach, Pettit has taught many courses, including Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and *Nicholas Nickleby*.

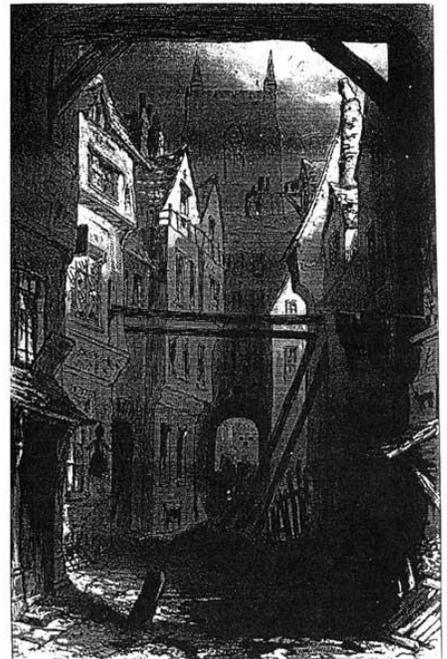
We will break the novel into four readings, covering each part in a session, then we'll have a final fifth session for open discussion of the novel in its entirety. I will also touch on film, TV and radio adaptations of the novel in the final meeting. I will also provide some short supplementary materials on Dickens and the Victorian age for further discussion each week.

Our reading schedule:

Week 1, April 28: Chs 1-16

Week 2, May 12: Chs 17-32

Week 3, May 26: Chs 33-49



Week 4, June 9: Chs 50-67

Week 5, June 23: adaptations and wrap-up