

Dickens Peter Ackroyd

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Becoming Dickens Robert Douglas-Fairhurst 2013 This provocative biography tells the story of how an ambitious young Londoner became England's greatest novelist. Focused on the 1830s, it portrays a restless, uncertain Dickens who could not decide on a career path. Through twists and turns, the author traces a double transformation: in reinventing himself Dickens reinvented the form of the novel.

Dickens Peter Ackroyd 2002 Based upon an examination of original sources, this is a biography in which the figure of Charles Dickens and the moving spirit of his age are combined. The author also wrote "The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde", "Hawksmoor", "Chatterton", "T.S.Eliot" and "First Light".

Coffee with Dickens Paul Schlicke 2008-01-01 This quiet talk with Dickens' ghost conveys all the 19th-century author's vigor, warmth, and humanity--and provides a scintillating tour through his life, career, eccentricities, and trenchant opinions.

Three Brothers Peter Ackroyd 2014-03-04 Rapier-sharp, witty, intriguing, and mysterious: a new novel from Peter Ackroyd set in the London of the 1960s.

Three Brothers follows the fortunes of Harry, Daniel, and Sam Hanway, a trio of brothers born on a postwar council estate in Camden Town. Marked from the start by curious coincidence, each boy is forced to make his own way in the world—a world of dodgy deals and big business, of criminal gangs and crooked landlords, of newspaper magnates, backbiters, and petty thieves. London is the backdrop and the connecting fabric of these three lives, reinforcing Ackroyd's grand theme that place and history create, surround and engulf us. From bustling, cut-throat Fleet Street to hallowed London publishing houses, from the wealth and corruption of Chelsea to the smoky shadows of Limehouse and Hackney, this is an exploration of the city, peering down its streets, riding on its underground, and drinking in its pubs and clubs. Everything is possible—not only in the new freedom of the 1960s but also in London's timeless past.

Dickens Peter Ackroyd 1992 Informed by the author's access to all of Dickens' correspondence, this biography represents a detailed portrait of Victorian London and an insightful profile of the complicated, intensely ambitious, and painfully insecure author

Queer City Peter Ackroyd 2018-05-08 A history of the development of London as a European epicenter of queer life. In Queer City, the acclaimed Peter Ackroyd looks at London in a whole new way—through the complete history and experiences of its gay and lesbian population. In Roman Londinium, the city was dotted with lupanaria (“wolf dens” or public pleasure houses), fornices (brothels), and thermiae (hot baths). Then came the Emperor Constantine, with his bishops, monks, and missionaries. And so began an endless loop of alternating permissiveness and censure. Ackroyd takes us right into the hidden history of the city; from the notorious Normans to the frenzy of executions for sodomy in the early nineteenth century. He journeys through the coffee bars of sixties Soho to Gay Liberation, disco music, and the horror of AIDS. Ackroyd reveals the hidden story of London, with its diversity, thrills, and energy, as well as its terrors, dangers, and risks, and in doing so, explains the origins of all English-speaking gay culture. Praise for Queer City “Spanning centuries, the book is a fantastically researched project that is obviously close to the author’s heart.... An exciting look at London’s queer history and a tribute to the “various human worlds maintained in [the city’s] diversity despite persecution, condemnation, and affliction.””—Kirkus Reviews “[Ackroyd’s] work is highly anecdotal and near encyclopedic. . . . the book is fascinating in its careful exposition of the singularities—and commonalities—of gay life, both male and female. Ultimately it is, as he concludes, a celebration as well as a history,” —Booklist “A witty history-cum-tribute to gay London, from the Roman “wolf dens” through Oscar Wilde and Gay Pride marches to the present day,” —ShelfAwareness

The Clerkenwell Tales Peter Ackroyd 2005-11-08 From the foremost contemporary chronicler of London’s history, a suspenseful novel that ingeniously draws on Chaucer’s The Canterbury Tales to recreate the city’s 14th century religious and political intrigues. London, 1399. Sister Clarice, a nun born below Clerkenwell convent, is predicting the death of King Richard II and the demise of the Church. Her visions can be dismissed as madness, until she accurately foretells a series of terrorist explosions. What is the role of the apocalyptic Predestined Men? And the clandestine Dominus? And what powers, ultimately, will prevail?In Peter Ackroyd’s deft and surprising narrative, The Miller, the Prioress, the Wife of Bath and other characters from Canterbury Tales pursue these mysteries through a pungently vivid medieval London.

The Mystery of Charles Dickens John Paulits 2012-05-10 History records that on June 9, 1870, Charles Dickens died of a cerebral haemorrhage. History, however, is wrong. June 9, 1870, is the day on which Emile de la Rue murdered Charles Dickens. During a stay in Genoa in 1844-45, Charles Dickens, an accomplished mesmerist, used his mesmeric abilities to treat a young Englishwoman, Augusta de la Rue, attempting to cure a years’ long malady of hers that included facial spasms and phantom-filled dreams. During her trances she revealed to Dickens a truth she had long suppressed the knowledge that her husband murdered a rival so he could have her for himself. Dickens, at that time, was helpless to act on the devastating admission, but twenty-five years later Emile de la Rue shows up in London, and Dickens finally seeks justice. De La Rue cannot let this happen and stops at nothing to keep Dickens from revealing his secret.

The Great Fire of London Jacques Roubaud 2006 First paperback edition, 1992; second printing [revised], 2006. Original French publication, 1989.

Dickens Peter Ackroyd 1991 This comprehensive biography of the great 19th-century novelist combines extensive research and documentation, including much new speculation on the nature of his affair with Ellen Ternan, with imaginative reconstruction of the writer's thoughts.

Peter Ackroyd’s Dickens Peter Ackroyd 2000

Wilkie Collins Peter Ackroyd 2015-10-06 A gripping short biography of the extraordinary Wilkie Collins, author of The Moonstone and The Woman in White, two early masterpieces of mystery and detection. Short and oddly built, with a head too big for his body, extremely nearsighted, unable to stay still, dressed in colorful clothes, Wilkie Collins looked distinctly strange. But he was nonetheless a charmer, befriended by the great, loved by children, irresistibly attractive to women—and avidly read by generations of readers. Peter Ackroyd follows his hero, “the sweetest-tempered of all the Victorian novelists,” from Collins' childhood as the son of a well-known artist to his struggling beginnings as a writer, his years of fame, and his lifelong friendship with that other great London chronicler, Charles Dickens. In addition to his enduring masterpieces, The Moonstone—often called the first true detective novel—and the sensational The Woman in White, he produced an intriguing array of lesser known works. Told with Ackroyd’s inimitable verve, this is a ravishingly entertaining life of a great storyteller, full of surprises, rich in humor and sympathetic understanding.

Charles Dickens and the Great Theatre of the World Simon Callow 2012-08-07 A short biography of Charles Dickens by acclaimed actor and writer Simon Callow that offers a fresh perspective on one of the greatest novelists in the English language in a lively, highly readable account. "It has all the gusto that a popular biography of Dickens—a man who “could do nothing by halves”—should possess. . . . The best biography for Dickens newcomers and a wonderful read for all.”—Library Journal Dickens was one of the first true celebrity authors. Thousands of fans in Britain and America eagerly awaited each new installment of his stories and flocked to see him on his legendary speaking tours. Not only did he create an incredible cast of characters on the page, but he was also a dazzling mimic and storyteller, and he wrote, stage-managed, and acted in plays for the public. Throughout his life, from his childhood performances in pubs to his legendarily powerful reading tours, Dickens was fanatical about the stage. Callow reveals Dickens’s genius on and off the page and offers a compelling insight into a life that was driven as much by performance and showmanship as by literature.

Hawksmoor Peter Ackroyd 2013 'There is no Light without Darknesse and no Substance without Shaddowe.' So proclaims Nicholas Dyer, assistant to Sir Christopher Wren and man with a commission to build seven London churches to stand as beacons of the enlightenment. But Dyer plans to conceal a dark secret at the heart of each church - to create a forbidding architecture that will survive for eternity. Two hundred and fifty years later, London detective Nicholas Hawksmoor is investigating a series of gruesome murders on the sites of certain eighteenth-century churches - crimes that make no sense to the modern mind . . . Cover art by: Barn 'whether the book addresses graffiti explicitly, evoke a city from the past, or are considered cult classics, the novels all share the quality - like street art - of speaking to their time.' Guardian Gallery

Poe Peter Ackroyd 2009-01-20 Gothic, mysterious, theatrical, fatally flawed, and dazzling, the life of Edgar Allan Poe, one of America’s greatest and most versatile writers, is the ideal subject for Peter Ackroyd. Poe wrote lyrical poetry and macabre psychological melodramas; invented the first fictional detective; and produced pioneering works of science fiction and fantasy. His innovative style, images, and themes had a tremendous impact on European romanticism, symbolism, and surrealism, and continue to influence writers today. In this essential addition to his canon of acclaimed biographies, Peter Ackroyd explores Poe’s literary accomplishments and legacy against the background of his erratic, dramatic, and sometimes sordid life. Ackroyd chronicles Poe’s difficult childhood, his bumpy academic and military careers, and his complex relationships with women, including his marriage to his thirteen-year-old cousin. He describes Poe’s much-written-about problems with gambling and alcohol with sympathy and insight, showing their connections to Poe’s childhood and the trials, as well as the triumphs, of his adult life. Ackroyd’s thoughtful, perceptive examinations of some of Poe’s most famous works shed new light on these classics and on the troubled and brilliant genius who created them.

Introduction to Dickens Peter Ackroyd 1992 Describes the background of each of Dickens' major works, looks at their relationship to events from his life, and discusses his style and themes

The Life of Charles Dickens John Forster 1870

Dickens Peter Ackroyd 2005-04 Charles Dickens's life is a story of rags to riches, complete with bankruptcy, prison, forced child labour, and fame and fortune overshadowed by guilt and secrecy - rather like the plot of one of his novels. Indeed, Dickens drew strongly on his own experiences as the source for much of his fiction. Here the author offers a fresh view of Dickens's remarkable life story. Dickens's novels brim with references: they are located in the places he lived in and visited, peopled with characters he knew, and inspired by the preoccupations that haunted his mind. Ackroyd highlights the reality of Victorian life, warts and all, and the issues that sparked Dickens's fervent calls for social reform; and he also charts the influential landmarks of that era, such as the coming of the railways, the effects upon society of the industrial revolution and the expansion of the British Empire. Dickens was a complex personality. He apparently had everything - fame, success, wealth - but he died harbouring the great sadness he had carried with him all his life, and he was humble enough to forbid a grand funeral. Like many eminent Victorians, he led a double life. Although he insisted that nothing in the newspapers he edited should offend his middle-class readers, he regularly indulged in dubious night-time escapades with fellow-author Wilkie Collins and, for the final 13 years of his life, kept a secret mistress, Ellen Ternan.

The Mystery of Edwin Drood Charles Dickens 2011-10-31 Charles Dickens's final, unfinished novel has inspired generations of speculation ... Choirmaster John Jasper is a man of deep hypocrisy. His public reputation is flawless yet privately he leads an immoral life, frequenting squalid opium dens. And although outwardly he seems delighted with the betrothal of his nephew Edwin Drood to Rosa Bud, one of his choristers, secretly he is consumed by jealousy. But he is not alone in hoping for Edwin’s demise. Among others, hot-tempered Neville Landless has also made an enemy of Drood - so when Edwin disappears, at whom should the accusing finger point?

Thames Peter Ackroyd 2008-11-04 In this perfect companion to London: The Biography, Peter Ackroyd once again delves into the hidden byways of history, describing the river’s endless allure in a journey overflowing with characters, incidents, and wry observations. Thames: The Biography meanders gloriously, rather like the river itself. In short, lively chapters Ackroyd writes about connections between the Thames and such historical figures as Julius Caesar and Henry VIII, and offers memorable portraits of the ordinary men and women who depend upon the river for their livelihoods. The Thames as a source of artistic inspiration comes brilliantly to life as Ackroyd invokes Chaucer, Shakespeare, Turner, Shelley, and other writers, poets, and painters who have been enchanted by its many moods and colors.

Milton in America Peter Ackroyd 2012-04-25 When Peter Ackroyd, one of Britain's undisputed literary masters, writes a new novel, it is a literary event. With his last novel, The Trial of Elizabeth Cree, “as gripping and ingenious a murder mystery as you could hope to come across,” in the words of the San Francisco Chronicle, he reached a whole new level of critical and popular success. Now, with his trademark blending of historical fact and fictive fancy, Ackroyd has placed the towering poet of Paradise Lost in the new Eden that is colonial America. John Milton, aging, blind, fleeing the restoration of English monarchy and all the vain trappings that go with it (“misrule” in his estimation), comes to New England, where he is adopted by a community of fellow puritans as their leader.

With his enormous powers of intellect, his command of language, and the awe the townspeople hold him in, Milton takes on absolute power. Insisting on strict and merciless application of puritan justice, he soon becomes, in his attempt at regaining paradise, as much a tyrant as the despots from whom he and his comrades have sought refuge, more brutal than the “savage” native Americans. As always, Ackroyd has crafted a thoroughly enjoyable novel that entertains while raising provocative questions—this time about America's founding myths. With a resurgence of interest in the puritans (in the movie adaptations of The Scarlet Letter and the forthcoming The Crucible), Milton in America is particularly relevant. It is also entirely absorbing—in short, vintage Ackroyd.

Dickens was Dead; to Begin with Lars Christensen 2001

English Music Peter Ackroyd 1993

The Man Who Invented Christmas (Movie Tie-In) Les Standiford 2017-09-19 As uplifting as the tale of Scrooge itself, this is the story of how Charles Dickens revived the signal holiday of the Western world—now a major motion picture. Just before Christmas in 1843, a debt-ridden and dispirited Charles Dickens wrote a small book he hoped would keep his creditors at bay. His publisher turned it down, so Dickens used what little money he had to put out A Christmas Carol himself. He worried it might be the end of his career as a novelist. The book immediately caused a sensation. And it breathed new life into a holiday that had fallen into disfavor, undermined by lingering Puritanism and the cold modernity of the Industrial Revolution. It was a harsh and dreary age, in desperate need of spiritual renewal, ready to embrace a book that ended with blessings for one and all. With warmth, wit, and an infusion of Christmas cheer, Les Standiford whisks us back to Victorian England, its most beloved storyteller, and the birth of the Christmas we know best. The Man Who Invented Christmas is a rich and satisfying read for Scrooges and sentimentalists alike.

Introduction to Dickens Peter Ackroyd 1991 A sequel to Dickens, this is a resume of all the scholarly research and imaginative reinterpretation which were the hallmarks of the previous book. It is a long essay on the life and work of Dickens in which Ackroyd demonstrates his argument for connecting the life and work, and, in the process, throws light upon both. In addition he has written 20 introductions to the whole range of Dickens' published work, from novels to journalism, in which he analyzes the writings themselves while at the same time providing an account of the novelist's career. Chatterton and First Light and his biography of T.S. Eliot was awarded the Whitbread PRize for the best biography of 1984.

Dickens Peter Ackroyd 2005-12-01 The acclaimed chronicler of London, Peter Ackroyd, explores the life and times of Charles Dickens, the great Victorian author. It is a story of rags to riches, demonstrating how much Dickens drew upon his own experiences in his fiction and what drove him to call for social reform. Charles Dickens's life is a story of rags to riches, complete with bankruptcy, prison, forced child labour, and fame and fortune overshadowed by guilt and secrecy - rather like the plot of one of his novels. Indeed, Dickens drew strongly on his own experiences as the source for much of his fiction. Here the author offers a fresh view of Dickens's remarkable life story. Dickens's novels brim with references; they are located in the places he lived in and visited, peopled with characters he knew, and inspired by the preoccupations that haunted his mind. Ackroyd highlights the reality of Victorian life, warts and all, and the issues that sparked Dickens's fervent calls for social reform; and he also charts the influential landmarks of that era, such as the coming of the railways, the effects upon society of the industrial revolution and the expansion of the British Empire. Dickens was a complex personality. He apparently had everything - fame, success, wealth - but he died harbouring the great sadness he had carried with him all his life, and he was humble enough to forbid a grand funeral. Like many eminent Victorians, he led a double life.

The Collection Peter Ackroyd 2001 Journalism, reviews, essays, short stories, lectures from the chief book reviewer for the Times.

London Under Peter Ackroyd 2011-11-01 In this vividly descriptive short study, Peter Ackroyd tunnels down through the geological layers of London, meeting the creatures that dwell in darkness and excavating the lore and mythology beneath the surface. There is a Bronze Age trackway below the Isle of Dogs, Anglo-Saxon graves rest under St. Pauls, and the monastery of Whitefriars lies beneath Fleet Street. To go under London is to penetrate history, and Ackroyd's book is filled with the stories unique to this underworld: the hydraulic device used to lower bodies into the catacombs in Kensal Green cemetery; the door in the plinth of the statue of Boadicea on Westminster Bridge that leads to a huge tunnel packed with cables for gas, water, and telephone; the sulphurous fumes on the Underground's Metropolitan Line. Highly imaginative and delightfully entertaining, London Under is Ackroyd at his best.

Charles Dickens Claire Tomalin 2012 Chronicles the life of the nineteenth-century literary master from the challenges he faced as the imprisoned son of a profligate father, his rise to one of England's foremost novelists, and the personal demons that challenged his relationships.

Blake Peter Ackroyd William Blake was a poet, painter, engraver and visionary. The author traces Blake's life through his childhood, apprenticeship and studies, to his full maturity when he produced his masterpieces. We see Blake in the context of his period, caught up in the Gordon riots, tried for sedition, remaining true to his own vision of the world. This biography reveals the true affinities between Blake's art and his poetry.

Dickens Peter Ackroyd 2002 The acclaimed chronicler of London, Peter Ackroyd, has already written three books on Dickens. This volume explores the life and times of the great author.

The Christmas Stories Charles Dickens 2011-10-31 After the success of A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens' name became so synonymous with Christmas that on hearing of his death in 1870 a young girl in London asked, "Mr. Dickens dead? Then will Father Christmas die too?" But A Christmas Carol is just the most famous of his Christmas stories, and those contained here in this unforgettable collection - The Cricket on the Hearth, The Battle of Life and The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain - show Dickens at his heartwarming best.

The Mystery of Charles Dickens A.N. Wilson 2020-08-04 Winner of the Plutarch Award for Best Biography A lively and insightful biographical celebration of the imaginative genius of Charles Dickens, published in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of his death. Charles Dickens was a superb public performer, a great orator and one of the most famous of the Eminent Victorians. Slight of build, with a frenzied, hyper-energetic personality, Dickens looked much older than his fifty-eight years when he died—an occasion marked by a crowded funeral at Westminster Abbey, despite his waking wishes for a small affair. Experiencing the worst and best of life during the Victorian Age, Dickens was not merely the conduit through whom some of the most beloved characters in literature came into the world. He was one of them. Filled with the twists, pathos, and unusual characters that sprang from this novelist's extraordinary imagination, The Mystery of Charles Dickens looks back from the legendary writer's death to recall the key events in his life. In doing so, he seeks to understand Dickens' creative genius and enduring popularity. Following his life from cradle to grave, it becomes clear that Dickens’s fiction drew from his life—a fact he acknowledged. Like Oliver Twist, Dickens suffered a wretched childhood, then grew up to become not only a respectable gentleman but an artist of prodigious popularity. Dickens knew firsthand the poverty and pain his characters endured, including the scandal of a failed marriage. Going beyond standard narrative biography, A. N. Wilson brilliantly revisits the wellspring of Dickens’s vast and wild imagination, to reveal at long last why his novels captured the hearts of nineteenth century readers—and why they continue to resonate today. The Mystery of Charles Dickens is illustrated with 30 black-and-white images.

The Life of Thomas More Peter Ackroyd 2012-06-27 Peter Ackroyd's The Life of Thomas More is a masterful reconstruction of the life and imagination of one of the most remarkable figures of history. Thomas More (1478-1535) was a renowned statesman; the author of a political fantasy that gave a name to a literary genre and a worldview (Utopia); and, most famously, a Catholic martyr and saint. Born into the professional classes, Thomas More applied his formidable intellect and well-placed connections to become the most powerful man in England, second only to the king. As much a work of history as a biography, The Life of Thomas More gives an unmatched portrait of the everyday, religious, and intellectual life of the early sixteenth century. In Ackroyd's hands, this renowned "man for all seasons" emerges in the fullness of his complex humanity; we see the unexpected side of his character—such as his preference for bawdy humor—as well as his indisputable moral courage.

Tudors: The History of England from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I Peter Ackroyd 2013-10-08 Peter Ackroyd, one of Britain's most acclaimed writers, brings the age of the Tudors to vivid life in this monumental book in his The History of England series, charting the course of English history from Henry VIII's cataclysmic break with Rome to the epic rule of Elizabeth I. Rich in detail and atmosphere, Peter Ackroyd's Tudors is the story of Henry VIII's relentless pursuit of both the perfect wife and the perfect heir; of how the brief reign of the teenage king, Edward VI, gave way to the violent reimposition of Catholicism and the stench of bonfires under "Bloody Mary." It tells, too, of the long reign of Elizabeth I, which, though marked by civil strife, plots against the queen and even an invasion force, finally brought stability. Above all, however, it is the story of the English Reformation and the making of the Anglican Church. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, England was still largely feudal and looked to Rome for direction; at its end, it was a country where good governance was the duty of the

state, not the church, and where men and women began to look to themselves for answers rather than to those who ruled them.

The Life and Times of Charles Dickens Peter Ackroyd 2003 In this stunning new illustrated biography, Peter Ackroyd introduces us to the public and private life of one of Britain's best loved literary giants, Charles Dickens. Dickens's own story is one of rags to riches; from bankruptcy, prison and enforced child labor in his youth to a life of fame and fortune in adulthood, yet one that was overshadowed by guilt and secrecy. His life seems to echo the plots of his epic novels: indeed he was strongly influenced by personal experience and his stories brim with references to the places and characters he knew and the preoccupations that haunted his life. At a remarkably young age, Dickens achieved the public respectability, wealth and international fame he had craved during his impoverished childhood. However, his road to personal happiness was a far less successful one. Scarred by the memory of his father's bankruptcy, he experienced continued anxieties over money and he often found himself supporting members of his family financially. Dickens, a writer who celebrated domestic harmony and familial affection in his work, had also to brave the shame of public anger when he separated from his wife of over twenty years for his secret mistress, Ellen Ternan. As a strong supporter of social reform, Dickens's writings frequently addressed issues of contemporary concern. In *Dickens - Public Life and Private Passion*, Peter Ackroyd highlights the reality of life in the Victorian era and the great landmarks and events of the time, all of which were to be profound influences on Dickens's life and work. Dickens was a mercurial character, with enormous vitality, wit and humor, yet he also lived a sense of loss and longing that constantly reiterated itself in his work. He died having achieved success and riches he aspired to, while still harboring the deep sadness he had experienced all his life. Illustrated with contemporary images and photographs, Ackroyd presents a fascinating introduction to his best-loved and his time. In this stunning new illustrated biography, Peter Ackroyd introduces us to the public and private life of one of Britain's best loved literary giants, Charles Dickens.

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Barnaby Rudge Charles Dickens 1866

The Plato Papers Peter Ackroyd 2007-12-18 From the imagination of one of the most brilliant writers of our time and bestselling author of *The Life of Thomas More*, a novel that playfully imagines how the "modern" era might appear to a thinker seventeen centuries hence. At the turn of the 38th century, London's greatest orator, Plato, is known for his lectures on the long, tumultuous history of his now tranquil city. Plato focuses on the obscure and confusing era that began in A.D. 1500, the Age of Mouldwarp. His subjects include Sigmund Freud's comic masterpiece "Jokes and Their Relation to the Subconscious," and Charles D.'s greatest novel, "The Origin of Species." He explores the rituals of Mouldwarp, and the later cult of webs and nets that enslaved the population. By the end of his lecture series, however, Plato has been drawn closer to the subject of his fascination than he could ever have anticipated. At once funny and erudite, *The Plato Papers* is a smart and entertaining look at how the future is imagined, the present absorbed, and the past misrepresented.

Our Mutual Friend Charles Dickens 1865 One of Charles Dickens' lesser known works, *Our Mutual Friend* is nevertheless a classic well worth taking the time to read.

Shakespeare Peter Ackroyd 2010-04-21 A TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR Drawing on an exceptional combination of skills as literary biographer, novelist, and chronicler of London history, Peter Ackroyd surely re-creates the world that shaped Shakespeare--and brings the playwright himself into unusually vivid focus. With characteristic narrative panache, Ackroyd immerses us in sixteenth-century Stratford and the rural landscape--the industry, the animals, even the flowers--that would appear in Shakespeare's plays. He takes us through Shakespeare's London neighborhood and the fertile, competitive theater world where he worked as actor and writer. He shows us Shakespeare as a businessman, and as a constant reviser of his writing. In joining these intimate details with profound intuitions about the playwright and his work, Ackroyd has produced an altogether engaging masterpiece.