

## Our Mutual Friend by Charles Dickens

1 Student's own answers. Possible answers:

- (a) The Harmon Murder/Lizzie's Secret/The Attack
- (b) Another Death/'You Are The Ruin Of Me'/'What Use Is My Life To Me?' (c) Bella's New Life/John Harmon Comes Home/'I'll Never Let You Go'
- (d) 'The Golden Dustman'/'What Are You Doing?'/Let Him Go Unpunished'

2 Student's own answers: (a) and (b) Main details:

*First Section* (1) A body, believed to be that of John Harmon, is found by Jesse Hexam and his daughter, Lizzie, in the River Thames./Julius Handford comes to see the body./Lizzie sends her brother, Charley, away so he can get an education./John Rokesmith comes to lodge with the Wilfers./The Boffins inherit old Mr Harmon's fortune./Mr Boffin tells Rokesmith to come and see him about a job. The Boffins invite Bella Wilfer to stay with them because John Harmon, her fiancé is dead./Rogue Riderhood accuses Jesse Hexam of Harmon's murder but Hexam is later found dead. (2) Hexam finds Harmon's body and then is found dead./The Boffins inherit old Harmon's money, ask Bella Wilfer to stay, and Mr Boffin tells John Rokesmith to come and see him about a job./Lizzie Hexam sends away her brother./Lightwood and Wrayburn are involved because Lightwood was old Harmon's lawyer. (*John Harmon appeared in the Preface; all the other characters are new. Harmon only appears as a dead body in this section. George Radfoot does not appear.*) (3) – (5) Student's own answers.

*Second Section* (1) Rokesmith is the Boffins' secretary./Bella is enjoying her new life, but becoming proud and spoilt./Charley is being taught by the schoolmaster, Bradley Headstone./They visit Lizzie at her new home with Jenny Wren, the Doll's Dressmaker./Lizzie and Jenny accept Wrayburn's plan to educate them. Wrayburn cannot explain to Lightwood why he is doing this./Charley and Headstone are angry as it was their plan to educate Lizzie too. They visit Wrayburn./Bella is shamed by Rokesmith into visiting her family./Jenny finds out that Lizzie loves Wrayburn but thinks she cannot have him because she is not a lady./Headstone asks Lizzie to marry him and she refuses. He is very angry because he sees Wrayburn as a rival./Charley is angry with Lizzie./She moves away so Wrayburn cannot find her – she is worried that Headstone would harm him. (2) Rokesmith and Bella are taking notice of each other while pretending not to./Lizzie is caught between Headstone and Wrayburn. (*Rogue Riderhood does not appear.*) (3) – (5) Student's own answers.

*Third Section* (1) Rokesmith (*Harmon*), in disguise, visits Riderhood and works out that George Radfoot had decided to murder him but had been murdered himself. (*Radfoot's body was believed to be that of Harmon.*)/He wonders about whether to reveal his identity and decides against it./He asks Bella to marry him and she refuses./He makes Riderhood sign a letter to Lizzie saying that her father did not murder Harmon and sends it to her last address./Bella finds out that Mr Boffin is becoming an unpleasant man because of his money./He starts to treat his secretary, Rokesmith, very badly./Rokesmith and Bella visit Lizzie who still fears that Headstone will harm Wrayburn./Lizzie says that she

loves Wrayburn, but because she isn't a lady she isn't good enough for him so she doesn't want him to find her./Wrayburn tells Lightwood that Headstone follows him everywhere he goes./Riderhood, who hates Wrayburn, agrees to look for Lizzie for Headstone./Mr Boffin makes Rokesmith leave his house./Bella now realizes she loves him, refuses to have any of the Boffins' money, leaves too and goes home. She and Rokesmith get married. (2) Bella and John Rokesmith marry after Mr Boffin's ill-treatment of John makes Bella realize that she loves him more than money./Headstone continues his hatred of Wrayburn./Riderhood is shown to be the evil murderer of Radfoot, keen to use people to get money. (*No new characters. We find out definitely that Julius Handford, John Rokesmith and John Harmon are the same man. Jenny Wren and Charley Hexam do not appear.*) (3) – (5) Student's own answers.

*Fourth Section* (1) Headstone follows Wrayburn as he searches for Lizzie. Riderhood watches him, worried because he is dressed like Riderhood./Headstone attacks Wrayburn and thinks he has killed him./Headstone throws away his boatman's clothes but Riderhood collects them and keeps them./Lizzie rescues Wrayburn from death and marries him. Wrayburn refuses to name Headstone as his attacker because he does not want Lizzie to suffer./Charley Hexam turns against Headstone./Riderhood tries to blackmail Headstone about the attack on Wrayburn./Headstone attacks Riderhood and both are drowned in the river./A year after their marriage, Bella is told that John Rokesmith is John Harmon and that Mr Boffin pretended to become unpleasant in order to make her realize she loved John and marry him./Lizzie is accepted by Society as Wrayburn's wife and as a lady. (2) Lizzie and Wrayburn, Bella and John Harmon, the Boffins are all happy./Riderhood and Headstone get what they deserve for their wrongdoing. (*All the main characters appear.*) (3) – (5) Student's own answers.

3 (a) Student's own answer. Possible answers: Put together: 1 Bella and John Harmon, 2 Lizzie Hexam and Eugene Wrayburn, 3 Bradley Headstone and Rogue Riderhood, 4 Jesse Hexam and Charley Hexam, (b) Student's own answer. Possible answers: 1 and 2 They fall in love and get married. 3 Both men do evil things and are drowned together at the end of the story. 4 Father and son both care for Lizzie but want to decide what she will do with her life.

4 The river seems very powerful. It is cold, dark and 'a place of fear and death' (page 14). People like Jesse Hexam and Rogue Riderhood make their living on and near it. Lizzie hates it. She and her brother have better lives when they get away from it. Many events take place in or near the river. The river claims the lives of the evil people in the story: George Radfoot, Rogue Riderhood and Bradley Headstone. It also nearly claims the lives of good people too, John Harmon and Eugene Wrayburn.

5 Student's own answer. Students can use their answers to Question 2 to remind them of relevant details.