

The Duchess of Bloomsbury Street Study Guide

The Duchess of Bloomsbury Street by Helene Hanff

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Plot Summary

The Duchess of Bloomsbury Street by Helene Hanff is a sequel to Ms. Hanff's wildly successful book, *84, Charing Cross Road*. Ms. Hanff received many fan letters after the publication of her book asking what happened next, so she published this detailed account of a visit she made to London for the English publication of *84, Charing Cross Road*. In this book, Ms. Hanff met the widow of Frank Doel, the man with whom she corresponded for twenty years in *84, Charing Cross Road*. Ms. Hanff also fulfilled a lifelong dream of seeing many of the literary landmarks in England, including Trinity College where John Donne often walked in the yard. *The Duchess of Bloomsbury Street* is a tour through England seen through the excited eyes of a woman who has dreamed of this trip all her life.

Ms. Hanff left New York just days after leaving the hospital, excited to finally see the country she has always wanted to visit. Ms. Hanff worried on the plane of what would happen if no one remembered to meet her plane, but reassured herself with the many letters she had received not only from her publisher, but fans as well. Ms. Hanff was going to London for the English publication of her book, *84, Charing Cross Road*, which chronicled a correspondence she had with Frank Doel, the chief buyer for the booksellers, Marks & Co.

Ms. Hanff arrived and was paged to meet a man waiting to meet her. This man was The Colonel, a fan of her book who happened to work at the airport. The Colonel helped Ms. Hanff through customs and helped her find her friends, Nora and Sheila Doel. From there, Ms. Hanff checked into her hotel and spent several minutes trying to convince herself she was really in London. The following day, Ms. Hanff went to see Marks & Co., which had since closed down with a photographer, and to be interviewed with Nora about the correspondence Ms. Hanff shared with her now deceased husband.

For the next few days, Ms. Hanff was busy with interviews and book signings. Soon, however, Ms. Hanff was free to tour London at her leisure. A friend in New York had arranged for Ms. Hanff to meet a friend of hers, Pat Buckley, who could show her around. This visit went well, despite a rocky start. Ms. Hanff saw a pub where Shakespeare once drank and drove past the Tower of London to witness the locking of the gates.

Ms. Hanff met up with some old friends from Texas who were visiting the city and had lunch at Claridge's. Later they had a nice dinner after nearly crashing a play in their dirty, day clothes. Ms. Hanff also met Joyce Grenfell, an actress she had long admired, and took a trip to Oxford with The Colonel. Ms. Hanff also met Leo Marks, the son of the Marks who owned Marks & Co, and his wife Ena, a portrait painter. Ena would eventually convince Ms. Hanff to sit for a portrait, something that made Ms. Hanff very nervous because she hated to have her picture taken in any form.

Ms. Hanff stayed in London nearly a month, visiting every place she had ever read about. Ms. Hanff often walked through the streets alone, enjoying the sights and sounds

of England. When it came time to go home, Ms. Hanff found herself thrown several goodbye parties. Finally, on the plane, Ms. Hanff wished a wistful goodbye to London and began to focus on life back in New York City.



Up, Up, and Away; Thursday, June 17, Midnight; Friday, June 18; and Saturday, June 19

Up, Up, and Away; Thursday, June 17, Midnight; Friday, June 18; and Saturday, June 19 Summary and Analysis

Ms. Hanff is the author of the book, *84, Charing Cross Road*, a book that chronicles her twenty year correspondence with the chief book buyer at Marks & Co., Booksellers. Ms. Hanff's book was about to be published in England and she was requested to visit in order to attend some publicity events surrounding the publication of the book.

In *Up, Up, and Away*, Ms. Hanff had just boarded the flight to London despite the fact that she had just been released from the hospital after an unscheduled surgery. Ms. Hanff had always wanted to go to England and was not going to let anything stop her. At a going away party, several friends had given her a gift certificate to Harrods and her brother had given her a hundred dollars to spend; therefore, she was hoping to stay in London at least two weeks. Ms. Hanff was going to England to promote the publication of her book, *84, Charing Cross Road*, therefore she was also planning to use her advance on the book to pay for her stay. Ms. Hanff was nervous, however, frightened that no one would meet her plane. Nora and Sheila Doel, the wife and daughter of her pen pal at Marks & Co. were supposed to meet her, as was a fan of her book who had written and told her he worked at the airport. Ms. Hanff read their letters again to reassure herself they would be there.

On Thursday, June 17, Midnight, Ms. Hanff discovered that her fan was waiting, as promised when she landed. The Colonel was a big man who had recently been widowed. The Colonel helped Ms. Hanff through customs and helped her to find Nora and Sheila. Together, they all took Ms. Hanff to her hotel, pointing out a few important sites including Charing Cross Road, before wishing her a good night. Before going to bed, Ms. Hanff read through a note Carmen, the assistant at her publishers, had sent outlining the interviews she was to do over the next few days. On Friday, June 18, Ms. Hanff attempted to take a shower and discovered the shower was designed poorly. Afterward, she rushed out to see London. Ms. Hanff had always wanted to see London ever since she was a small girl and learned of her English Quaker ancestry. Afterward, Ms. Hanff went to her publishers' office from where she was taken to 84, Charing Cross Road. The store was closed by then, but Ms. Hanff toured it for the first time anyway. Afterward, her picture was taken out in front.

On Saturday, June 19, Ms. Hanff called Pat Buckley in response to a note he sent her about a tour of London. Ms. Hanff was embarrassed when Mr. Buckley seemed



unhappy with the idea of her wearing pants, something she does routinely. Later in the day, Ms. Hanff and Nora Doel were interviewed at Broadcasting House and asked what it was like meeting after so many years. Afterward, Nora drove Ms. Hanff to her house for dinner, where she learned more about the wife and daughter of her pen pal. Back at the hotel, Ms. Hanff read an article about her arrival in London and was amused that the reporter called her chic.

In these first few entries, the reader is introduced to Ms. Hanff. Ms. Hanff is a writer who has always dreamed of seeing England. A book she wrote that has become something of a popular read has given her that chance. Ms. Hanff is frightened at the uncertainty of the trip, but excited to finally see all the places she has only ever read about. Ms. Hanff had not planned on the generosity of the people she would meet; therefore, she is deeply grateful for her fan, The Colonel who met her plane, and the family of her correspondent about whom her book is based. Ms. Hanff has been a writer all her life and published many stories and a few books, but this is the first time she has experienced real success. Ms. Hanff is humbled, excited, and ready to be a tourist in the country she admires, illustrating for her readers the theme of dreams fulfilled.



Sunday, June 20; Monday, June 21; Tuesday, June 22; Wednesday, June 23; Thursday, June 24; Friday, June 25; and Saturday, June 26

Sunday, June 20; Monday, June 21; Tuesday, June 22; Wednesday, June 23; Thursday, June 24; Friday, June 25; and Saturday, June 26 Summary and Analysis

On Sunday, June 20, Ms. Hanff visited Russell Square where she met a ticket taker with whom she discussed roses. Later Ms. Hanff went Pat Buckley's home where they had dinner before taking his car to a pub where Shakespeare used to be a regular customer. Ms. Hanff was annoyed by the other customers until she realized many of them were most likely the same kind of people Shakespeare would have seen on his visits. Ms. Hanff and Mr. Buckley then drove around the city and saw the Tower of London. Ms. Hanff commented on the ceremony of the guards locking the gate and learned they had done that every night for more than seven hundred years, even during wars. On Monday, June 21, Ms. Hanff went out with a couple of friends from Texas who happened to be visiting London. Eddie and Isabel were conservative people at home, but in London they were relaxed. Ms. Hanff was horrified when they insisted on having lunch at Claridge's without returning to the hotel to change. Ms. Hanff finally had to put her foot down when Eddie suggested they see *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, again without changing. Instead, they went and had a pleasant dinner.

On Tuesday, June 22, Ms. Hanff visited a handful of booksellers before going to a book signing for her book. Ms. Hanff was afraid no one would show up and was surprised to find a sizeable line of people waiting for her, including Mr. Buckley, to whom she insisted on giving a copy of her book. When she returned to the hotel, Ms. Hanff found a note waiting for her from Joyce Grenfell, a famous actress she had long admired. That night Ms. Hanff went to a dinner party and returned to the hotel feeling like a duchess. On Wednesday, June 23, Ms. Hanff went to lunch with Nora where she was told a story of how Nora and Frank once knew a rare book dealer who turned out to be a Russian spy. On Thursday, June 24, Ms. Hanff spent the day alone touring Regent's Park. When she returned to the hotel, Ms. Hanff found a note from Mr. Buckley inviting her to go for a ride to Windsor and Eton.

On Friday, June 24, Ms. Hanff went to Deusch's to get some of royalties to pay the hotel bill and was given a note from Leo Marks, the son of the owner of Marks & Co. When Ms. Hanff found out the publishers were not giving out her address to her fans, she told Carmen to feel free to give out the address. That night, Ms. Hanff went to see a play with Nora and Sheila. On Saturday, June 25, Ms. Hanff drove to Windsor with Mr.



Buckley. First they visited the home of two elderly sisters whose house, Ms. Hanff learned, had once been haunted by a ghost who would grow upset every time they planned to take a trip. From there, Ms. Hanff and Mr. Buckley went to Eaton where Mr. Buckley had once been a student and saw an historic wall where many of the past students had their names carved upon graduation, including Shelley. After Eaton they visited Marlborough House but discovered it was closed. Buckley encouraged Ms. Hanff to visit the Royal Chapel the following day, however. Back at her rooms, Ms. Hanff got a call from a fan who invited her to visit Oxford. Ms. Hanff agreed because she wanted to see the college that John Donne, John Henry Newmann, and Arthur Quiller-Couch had attended, three writers whom Ms. Hanff credits with teaching her a great deal about writing.

In these sections, Ms. Hanff begins to tour the country she has wanted to see for so long. First, however, she is forced to do some business to promote her book. Ms. Hanff is a private person who does not like to have her picture taken; therefore, it is difficult for her to be the center of attention in such a way. However, she is deeply pleased to have so many people enjoy her book and she likes the fuss people make over her. In fact, Ms. Hanff is beginning to feel like a duchess as she attends parties that are thrown specifically for her. Ms. Hanff also meets new people because of her book, such as Joyce Grenfell, an actress she has long admired, and a young woman who lives in Oxford, a place Ms. Hanff would deeply enjoy visiting because of the literary history of a nearby college. It seems Mr. Pat Buckley is the new acquaintance who has made the biggest impression on Ms. Hanff, however. Mr. Buckley does not like Americans who stay in their hotel rooms and refuse to see the real England; therefore, he greatly enjoys Ms. Hanff's determination to see everything about England. This friendship starts off on a rough footing, but quickly begins to appear to be Ms. Hanff's favorite thus far.



Sunday, June 27; Monday, June 28; Tuesday, June 29; Wednesday, June 30; and Thursday, July 1

Sunday, June 27; Monday, June 28; Tuesday, June 29; Wednesday, June 30; and Thursday, July 1 Summary and Analysis

On Sunday, June 27, Ms. Hanff went to services at the Royal Chapel and instantly discovered she was the center of attention, causing her a great deal of discomfort. Later that afternoon, Ms. Hanff spent the afternoon in St. James' Park where she recalled an afternoon in New York where she and two friends had a picnic on Dog Hill that was interrupted by a group of hungry dogs. Ms. Hanff thinks how a park reflects the people of the city it is in, and how much she would miss Central Park if she ever left New York. That night, The Colonel called and when he learned of her trip to Oxford, he suggested that he drive her and they stay overnight in Stratford-on-Avon on the way. Ms. Hanff agreed. On Monday, June 28, Ms. Hanff attempted to get her silk dress pressed, but discovered the hotel was not set up for that sort of service, so she sent the dress to the cleaners. That night, Ms. Hanff met Joyce Grenfell, her husband, Reggie, and a couple from Australia at the Waldorf for dinner. Afterward, they saw *A Midsummer's Night Dream*. Ms. Grenfell drove Ms. Hanff home afterward, having difficulty finding a way to get to the hotel's front door with all the one way streets that surround it.

On Tuesday, June 29, Ms. Hanff decided to take it easy to nurse a cold she caught. Ms. Hanff spent most of the day in dining room watching the other tourists and reading the newspaper. That night, Ms. Hanff went to dinner with Leo Marks and his wife, Ena. Ms. Hanff had a delightful time and greatly enjoyed Ena. On Wednesday, June 30, Ms. Hanff received several phone calls while attempting to eat her breakfast. Afterward, she went across the street to get some cold medicine and supplies only to discover a bulletin board covered in questionable advertisements. That night Ena arrived with some home remedies for Ms. Hanff's cold. Ena begged Ms. Hanff not to return home too early and to consider staying in their country house for the summer. On Thursday, July 1, Ms. Hanff drove to Stratford-on-Avon with The Colonel. On the way, The Colonel entertained Ms. Hanff with stories of how he tries to cheer travelers up in the airport. Before reaching Stratford-on-Avon, Ms. Hanff told The Colonel about a little village near there that a friend had once sent her a postcard of. The Colonel took her there and they stopped for some drinks, causing a sensation among the villagers. Afterward, they arrived in the tourist trap of Stratford-on-Avon, where Ms. Hanff had a luxurious hotel room.

In these sections, Ms. Hanff discovers how different England is from New York. Ms. Hanff admires the calm and quiet of London, but misses the chaos that reigns in New



York. Ms. Hanff also gets to meet more new people, including the actress, Ms. Grenfell, as well as the son of the owner of Marks & Co. Ms. Hanff finds all of these people to be kind and generous. Everyone seems to want to help Ms. Hanff or show her around England. Ena even offers her the use of their country home. All this kindness touches on two themes of the novel, friendship and fanfare, as all of Ms. Hanff's fans appear to be becoming her friends as well. For example, Ms. Hanff takes an overnight trip with The Colonel even though she has only met him once before. The setting of the novel perhaps helps explain this to modern readers, as the world was a different place in the early seventies. However, this behavior also touches on Ms. Hanff's character, implying to the reader that she was a generous, trusting person herself.



Friday, July 2; Saturday, July 3; Sunday, July 4; Monday, July 5; Tuesday, July 6; Wednesday, July 7; and Thursday, July 8

Friday, July 2; Saturday, July 3; Sunday, July 4; Monday, July 5; Tuesday, July 6; Wednesday, July 7; and Thursday, July 8 Summary and Analysis

On Friday, July 2, Ms. Hanff and The Colonel continued their journey to Oxford where they went to the home of Laura Davidson, the fan who had invited Ms. Hanff to Oxford. From there they had lunch and then went to see Bodleian Reading Room and Wadham before Ms. Hanff had a temper tantrum, insisting on seeing Trinity College and Oriel. Finally Ms. Hanff got to see these two places, but was restricted to the chapel at Oriel and the yard at Trinity. Afterward, they went back to Laura's for tea and then returned to London. On Saturday, July 3, Ms. Hanff got a note from Mark Connelly, a playwright her mother admired. Mr. Connelly had sent Ms. Hanff a fan letter and they had had lunch once in New York. Later, Ms. Hanff went to see Buckingham Palace in hopes of spotting a royal, but had no luck. Afterward, Ms. Hanff went to the hotel bar where she had a gin martini she had had to teach the bartender to make. On Sunday, July 4, Ms. Hanff had lunch with Mark Connelly. That afternoon, Ms. Hanff went for a walk in Regent where she got lost and found herself walking through a prosperous neighborhood that made her think of royalty.

On Monday, July 5, Ms. Hanff was asked to write three pages on the English fan mail she received to be printed with an article she wrote on American fan mail for the Reader's Digest. Afterward, Ms. Hanff found a note from Mr. Buckley offering to take her out on Wednesday. On Tuesday, July 6, Ms. Hanff had her hair done before having dinner with an English couple who live in a mew, which is a converted stone barn with no windows. The couple told Ms. Hanff they had once gone to New York City but were too afraid of being murdered to leave their hotel room. On Wednesday, July 7, Mr. Buckley took Ms. Hanff to see Syon House and Osterly Park. On the way back to his house, Mr. Buckley told Ms. Hanff about some work he did in Hollywood and how he once showed an architect some English pubs to help him design a pub style bar in New York. On Thursday, July 8, Mary Scott took Ms. Hanff on a walking tour of Knightsbridge and Kensington. Afterward they visited Harrods then went to Mary's house for salmon mousse. At the hotel, a tourist talked to Ms. Hanff about some of the sites of the city, recommending places she could visit.

In the beginning part of this set of dates, Ms. Hanff shows her true temper when she becomes angry that The Colonel and Laura Davidson, another fan, are not showing her the things she wants to see. Ms. Hanff is angry because she has to return home soon, but these people can see these sights every day. While Ms. Hanff has a point, her way

of getting what she wanted was unpleasant and shows the reader a deeper, darker side to her character. At the same time, Ms. Hanff continues to see wonderful sights in London, filling the book with the excitement and wonder she feels every time she sets eyes on something she has only read of, illustrating the theme of fulfilling dreams. Ms. Hanff also seems to piling up the celebrities and friends that seem to be drawn to her, impressing even the reader with her newfound celebrity status.



Friday, July 9; Saturday, July 10; Sunday, July 11; Monday, July 12; Tuesday, July 13; Wednesday, July 14, and Thursday, July 15

Friday, July 9; Saturday, July 10; Sunday, July 11; Monday, July 12; Tuesday, July 13; Wednesday, July 14, and Thursday, July 15 Summary and Analysis

On Friday, July 9, Ms. Hanff did an interview and made arrangements to meet a friend of her neighbor in New York. Mr. Buckley sent a thank you note for some roses Ms. Hanff sent him. On Saturday, July 10, Ms. Hanff went shopping and tried to have lunch in the shop, but discovered they were closed. Afterward Ms. Hanff went to see the Temple and when she was done, it was raining so she took a bus back to the hotel. It was a harrowing experience. On Sunday, July 11, Ms. Hanff went to see Westminster Abbey with Nora and Sheila. Ms. Hanff was shocked to discover that Henry Irving was buried there, but not his frequent co-star, Ellen Terry. Outside the Abbey, they passed the War Office where a guard in a wool uniform sat on a horse. On the way to dinner, they stopped at Waterlow Park where they could see the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral.

On Monday, July 12, Ms. Hanff received a check from Reader's Digest that made it possible for her to extend her stay for ten more days. To stretch her wardrobe, Ms. Hanff went to Harrods to buy another dress, but discovered they were all too expensive, so she bought the dress at Harvey Nichols and bought a shoulder bag at Harrods with the gift certificate her friend gave her. That night Ms. Hanff had dinner with Leo and Ena. Ena asked if Ms. Hanff would sit for a portrait, as Ena was a portrait artist and had done the portraits of some celebrities. Ms. Hanff agreed, but only if Ena would do the painting in Russell Square. On Tuesday, July 13, Ms. Hanff attempted to see Joyce Grenfell present a dialogue at a church, but could not find it. Later, Ms. Hanff met the Grenfell's for dinner at their home. Afterward, the Grenfell's took Ms. Hanff on a driving tour of London.

On Wednesday, July 14, Ms. Hanff had lunch at the Savoy with a reporter who was surprised at how happy Ms. Hanff had been in London. Afterward, Ms. Hanff went to St. Paul's Cathedral where she thought of John Donne the entire time. On Thursday, July 15, Ms. Hanff returned to Marks & Co. with a photographer from Reader's Digest to take more pictures. While there, Ms. Hanff collected the letters that once announced the name of the store so she could take them home with her. That night, Ms. Hanff had dinner with Jean and Ted Ely. On the way, Ms. Hanff stopped at Grosvenor Square to see the Roosevelt Memorial. Not impressed with the statue, Ms. Hanff was pleased with the story of how the statue came to be and that so many Englishmen loved FDR.



Ms. Hanff continues to live her dream, touching on the theme of fulfilling dreams, by touring every inch of London whenever she can. Ms. Hanff saved Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral for the last so she would have something to look forward to and was pleased with both visits, if a little annoyed that a famous actress she admired was not buried in the Abbey beside her co-star. Ms. Hanff continues to struggle with the differences in culture as well, especially when she takes a bus and nearly falls flat on her face when it begins to move before she has stepped clear. The whole experience continues to be a joy for Ms. Hanff, despite the doubts of a cynical reporter who has lived in London all her life. In fact, Ms. Hanff has extended her stay by ten days because she is so happy there. However, the reader is beginning to sense Ms. Hanff misses home as she mentions visiting a few American inspired sites as well.



**Friday, July 16; Saturday, July 17;
Sunday, July 18; Monday, July 19;
Tuesday, July 20; Wednesday, July 21;
Thursday, July 22; Friday, July 23;
Saturday, July 24; Sunday, July 25; and
Monday, July 26**

**Friday, July 16; Saturday, July 17; Sunday, July 18;
Monday, July 19; Tuesday, July 20; Wednesday, July
21; Thursday, July 22; Friday, July 23; Saturday, July
24; Sunday, July 25; and Monday, July 26 Summary
and Analysis**

On Friday, July 16 Ms. Hanff was to go to a dinner at Nora's, but the car that was to drive her never showed up. Ms. Hanff attempted to take a taxi, but discovered they would not drive to that area. Ms. Hanff had to call a minicab which cost more but would go anywhere. Ms. Hanff's driver was an intern at a local hospital who drove cabs to make extra money. He entertained Ms. Hanff with stories all the way to Nora's house. The party consisted of rare book dealers who brought Ms. Hanff small gifts. One was a notebook that Ms. Hanff wrote in, but apparently she was not supposed to, so it caused a bit of a stir.

On Saturday, July 17, Ms. Hanff found a note from Mr. Buckley inviting her to have lunch with Charles Dickens, so she decided to visit a few Dickens sights even though she had never been truly interested in him. Afterward, Ms. Hanff went to the Actor's Church to see Ellen Terry's ashes. When she found a plaque announcing the location of Vivien Leigh's ashes, Ms. Hanff began to cry. On Sunday, July 18, Ms. Hanff spent the morning sitting in Russell Square for Ena. Afterward they had lunch and went to the National Portrait Gallery where Ms. Hanff was fascinated with the portraits of sixteenth and seventeenth century figures. On Monday, July 19, Ms. Hanff met Mr. Buckley for sherry at Old Wine Shades in Martin Lane, Cannon Street. From there they went to the Bank of England and then to George & Vulture for lunch. After lunch they went to Lombard Street where they saw the emblems hanging outside the banks.

On Tuesday, July 20, Ms. Hanff sat for Ena again. Afterward they had lunch and returned to the National Portrait Gallery. On Wednesday, July 21, The Colonel took Ms. Hanff to see Gray's churchyard. Afterward they had dinner with his sister-in-law. Over dinner, Ms. Hanff attempted to explain the America fascination with Gray, explaining that



it has something to do with how he wrote about the inglorious nobodies. This explanation also helped Ms. Hanff understand Englishmen's fascination with Dickens. On Thursday, July 22, Ms. Hanff sat for Ena once again. Leo showed up early and ruined the mood. Ms. Hanff went to dinner with Ena and Leo where an acquaintance of hers showed up unexpectedly and joined them for dinner. This acquaintance, Dorothy, was shocked by the level of importance Ms. Hanff had somehow gained in London. On Friday, July 23, Sheila took Ms. Hanff to see Hatfield House where Queen Elizabeth I grew up. Afterward, Nora gave Ms. Hanff some pictures of Frank to take home.

On Saturday, July 24, Ms. Hanff had dinner with Mr. Buckley and the Elys. On Sunday, July 25, Ms. Hanff sat for Ena one last time. They attempted to see the Tower of London, but the line was too long. That night, The Colonel threw a going away party for Ms. Hanff. It was delightful, but Ms. Hanff could barely remember the names of the guests or what they talked about. On Monday, July 26, Ena drove Ms. Hanff to the airport where they were met by The Colonel. As the plane took off, Ms. Hanff tried to recall the faces of the people she had met, but her mind returned to business waiting for her at home.

In these sections, Ms. Hanff makes a social faux pas by writing in an antique notebook that was given to her as a gift. However, Ms. Hanff does not see the harm in writing in a notebook. She figures that is what they are for. Ms. Hanff continues to see the sights. At the same time, she agrees to sit for portrait painter, Ena, despite the fact that she hates having her picture taken in any form. This shows a more considerate side to Ms. Hanff's character, even though she insists on having the portrait done outdoors where Ena will be observed, something that makes her nervous. Ms. Hanff is a kind person, but not always considerate. When it is time for Ms. Hanff to leave, all her friends rally around and give her separate farewell dinners and parties. Ms. Hanff enjoys the attention once more, but by the time she gets on the plane, all the fanfare begins to disappear and she finds herself concentrating on the business at home. It was a delightful trip, but now it is done and Ms. Hanff is happy to be going home.



Characters

Helene Hanff

Ms. Hanff was a writer who had wanted to be a playwright, but had little success. Ms. Hanff wrote for television, as well as several non-fiction books and various articles for magazines. For twenty years, Ms. Hanff had an ongoing correspondence with the chief buyer at a London bookstore called Marks & Co. After all those years, Ms. Hanff took their correspondence and wrote a book about it called *84, Charing Cross Road*, the address of the booksellers. This book was much more popular than Ms. Hanff expected, earning her a great deal of fan mail from people who wanted to know what happened next.

For Ms. Hanff, what happened next was the publication of the book in England. Ms. Hanff was invited to visit London in order to attend several publicity events surrounding the book. Ms. Hanff had always wanted to go to London; therefore, she jumped at the chance. Despite having had surgery just before her plane was due to take off, Ms. Hanff was excited to finally get her chance to see all the places she had only read about. Ms. Hanff's plane was met by a fan of the book who directed her through customs and to the waiting arms of Nora and Sheila Doel, the widow and daughter of her faithful pen pal.

Ms. Hanff had been a fan of many English writers; therefore, she spent much of her time in London visiting the places once lived in by these people. Ms. Hanff was also a great fan of English history and she adored Queen Elizabeth I, so she visited several places associated with her as well. Ms. Hanff was gracious to her many fans during much of her trip, only losing patience a time or two. Ms. Hanff was very happy to be in London and showed her appreciation, both to her fans and to the reader she took along for the ride.

Pat Buckley

Pat Buckley was an English friend of one of Ms. Hanff's friends and was invited to show Ms. Hanff around London. Pat Buckley was a gruff man who had little patience for American tourists who did not want to see the real England; therefore, he was rude to Ms. Hanff during their first conversation. However, when Ms. Hanff proved she truly was interested in the real England, Pat Buckley became more friendly and took some pride in showing her some of the more obscure sites of his beloved country.

Pat Buckley was one of Ms. Hanff's favorite companions throughout the book and it soon became clear that she had a special affection for him. The reader was amused by the many notes Pat Buckley sent to Ms. Hanff's hotel, all of them signed, in haste. Ms. Hanff seemed to look forward to the arrival of these notes and enjoyed Pat Buckley's attentions. Toward the end of her visit, Ms. Hanff sent Pat Buckley a bouquet of roses to



thank him for his help and in return he bought her a lapel pin with the motto of London on it.

The Colonel

The Colonel was a fan of 84, Charing Cross Road, and worked at Heathrow Airport. The Colonel met Ms. Hanff's plane and escorted her through customs and helped her locate her friends. Afterward, The Colonel followed Ms. Hanff to her hotel, only to become upset when he learned he had sent roses to the wrong hotel. Later, The Colonel arranged to take Ms. Hanff on an overnight trip to Oxford by way of Stratford-on-Avon. Ms. Hanff had a wonderful time, but became testy when The Colonel delayed her visit to Trinity College.

The Colonel continued to be a good tour guide, taking Ms. Hanff to a few other sites before throwing her a going away party the night before she was scheduled to leave London. The morning she left, The Colonel met her at Heathrow Airport and helped her reach her plane on time. The Colonel then promised to take Ena, who had driven Ms. Hanff to the airport, on a tour of the airport's buildings.

Jean Ely

Jean Ely was a friend of Ms. Hanff's from the States who she had met because of 84, Charing Cross Road. Jean was a retired actress. Jean would often spend time in London and had befriended Pat Buckley. It was on Jean's request that Pat Buckley contacted Ms. Hanff and took her on a tour of London. Later, Jean and her husband would visit London and take Ms. Hanff to dinner. Ms. Hanff was continuously amazed at how beautiful Jean and Ted were, and how they barely looked older than forty even though they were in their seventies.

Leo Marks and Ena Gausson

Leo Marks was the son of the Marks who co-owned Marks & Co. Leo contacted Ms. Hanff soon after she arrived in London and invited her to dinner with him and his wife, Ena Gausson. The night they took Ms. Hanff to dinner, she had a cold, so Ena brought her some natural remedies the following day. The next time they had dinner together, Ena asked that Ms. Hanff agree to sit for a portrait. Ena was an accomplished portrait painter who had painted such subjects as the actress Hailey Mills. Ms. Hanff agreed on the condition that they do the sittings in Russell Square and that Ena not force Ms. Hanff to look at the completed picture. They spent several mornings together for the sittings and then would spend the afternoons sightseeing. Ms. Hanff and Ena became good friends.



Reggie and Joyce Grenfell

Joyce Grenfell was an actress who was well known not only for her movies, but for many one-woman plays she would write and perform. Ms. Hanff was a fan of Ms. Grenfell's, so she was surprised and excited to learn Ms. Grenfell was a fan of 84, Charing Cross Road and wanted to meet her. Ms. Grenfell took Ms. Hanff out to dinner and to see *A Midsummer's Night Dream* at a sold out performance in a London theatre. Ms. Hanff found Ms. Grenfell very charming and enjoyed the way she would pronounce her husband, Reggie's, name with a long e at the end. Ms. Hanff would spend several evenings with the Grenfell's.

Frank, Nora, and Sheila Doel

Frank Doel was the chief buyer at Marks & Co. Ms. Hanff and Mr. Doel had a twenty year correspondence on which Ms. Hanff based her book, 84, Charing Cross Road. This book was well received by many people both in America and England. Ms. Hanff was shocked by the reception the book got and loved the fact that it allowed for her to finally visit England, a place she has always greatly admired.

Nora Doel was Frank's wife. Nora met Ms. Hanff's plane and did many interviews with her during her first few weeks in London. Frank had passed away; therefore, Nora was the closest the reporters could get to interviewing Frank. Sheila was Frank's daughter. Sheila and Nora had a relationship that was closer than some mothers and daughters. Ms. Hanff spent a great deal of time with Nora and Sheila, even visiting some of the rare book dealers who were good friends of Frank's during his time at Marks & Co.

Andre Deutsch and Carmen

Andre Deutsch was the publisher of 84, Charing Cross Road in England. Ms. Hanff spent a great deal of time corresponding with him during the weeks before the publication of the book in England. When it was decided Ms. Hanff would go to England, it was through Mr. Deutsch and his company that many of those arrangements were made. Carmen was Mr. Deutsch's assistant. Carmen made hotel arrangements for Ms. Hanff and took care of the scheduling of interviews and public appearances. Ms. Hanff once went to Carmen and complained that many of her fans were not receiving the address of her hotel in order to reach her, a problem Ms. Hanff wanted corrected so she could visit with all her fans.

Eddie and Isabel

Eddie and Isabel were friends of Ms. Hanff's from Texas. Eddie and Isabel happened to be in London at the same time as Ms. Hanff, so they decided to get together. Ms. Hanff knew Eddie and Isabel as highly conservative people, but in London they were more relaxed. When they saw Claridge's, an expensive restaurant, Eddie insisted they go



even though they were not dressed in their best clothing. Later, Eddie wanted to go see a play without first going to their hotels to change. Ms. Hanff realized that being outside of their norm, outside the country, that Eddie and Isabel had lost some of their inhibitions while she had gained a few.

Marc Connelly

Marc Connelly was a playwright that Ms. Hanff's mother greatly admired. After the publication of *84, Charing Cross Road*, Ms. Hanff received a letter from Mr. Connelly praising her writing. When Ms. Hanff came to London, Mr. Connelly took her out to lunch and then to his men's club. Ms. Hanff was impressed with the club, but became bored when Mr. Connelly fell asleep while watching cricket. However, she could not blame him because Mr. Connelly was in his eighties at the time.



Objects/Places

Portrait

Ms. Hanff sat for her portrait to be painted by Ena Gausson, the wife of the son of the co-owner of the bookstore Marks & Co.

Fan Letters

Ms. Hanff got many fan letters regarding her book, 84, Charing Cross Road. Many of these fans who resided in London invited Ms. Hanff out for dinner, allowing her to stay in London much longer than she originally planned.

84, Charing Cross Road

84, Charing Cross Road was the name of the book Ms. Hanff wrote about the correspondence between her and Frank Doel, the chief buyer who worked for Marks & Co. Booksellers. This book is a sequel to 84 Charing Cross Road.

Reader's Digest

Reader's Digest ran a story about Ms. Hanff's fan letters written in response to her book, 84, Charing Cross Road. The payment for that article, fifty pounds, allowed Ms. Hanff to remain in London an extra ten days.

Marks & Co., Booksellers

Mark & Co, Booksellers is a bookstore in London. Ms. Hanff corresponded with the book chief buyer at Mark & Co., Mr. Frank Doel, for more than twenty years.

Bloomsbury Street

Bloomsbury Street is where Ms. Hanff's hotel was located. Ms. Hanff began referring to herself as the Duchess of Bloomsbury Street because the attentions of the fans of her book made her feel as though she were a Duchess, at least for the duration of her stay in London.

Russell Square

Russell Square is a lovely park where Ms. Hanff went often during her stay in London. It was also in Russell Square where Ms. Hanff insisted Ena paint her portrait.



Heathrow Airport

Heathrow Airport is the international airport in London where Ms. Hanff arrived for her visit in London. The Colonel also worked at Heathrow and was able to help Ms. Hanff go through customs.

Tower of London

The Tower of London was one of the places Ms. Hanff wanted to visit because of its historical significance, but never found the opportunity due to long lines.

Harrods

Ms. Hanff went to Harrods to purchase a new dress when she realized her stay would be longer than expected, but discovered their prices were too high. Instead, Ms. Hanff bought a shoulder bag with a gift certificate a friend had given her in anticipation of her trip.

Kenilworth

Kenilworth is the name of the hotel where Ms. Hanff stayed during her visit to London.

Claridge's

Claridge's is the restaurant where all of the characters in Noel Coward lunch. Ms. Hanff was a fan of these writings and was excited to see the restaurant, but somewhat embarrassed to dine there without first changing into more appropriate clothing.

Trinity College and Oriel

Ms. Hanff insisted on seeing Trinity College, where the yard is that John Donne walked and Oriel, where she sat in John Henry's chapel.



Themes

Friendship

Ms. Hanff had always been a solitary creature. Writers tend to keep to themselves in order to make it easier to pursue their profession. At home, Ms. Hanff had few friends, but those she had she cherished. In London, Ms. Hanff discovered she had more friends than she ever imagined, including people she had never met. When Ms. Hanff arrived, her plane was met by the Colonel, a kind man who had read her book and declared himself her companion. The Colonel met her plane and escorted her through customs, then followed her to her hotel. Later, The Colonel would take her on a drive to Oxford, showing her many sights on the way and escorting her to the home of another fan. Also while in London, Ms. Hanff would make friends with the son of the co-owner of Marks & Co., as well his wife, a portrait painter who would ask Ms. Hanff to sit for her. Ms. Hanff would also befriend an actress she admired and a playwright her mother admired.

Ms. Hanff had always been fascinated with England and would dream of one day seeing it. In her everyday life, however, Ms. Hanff resigned herself to reading about England. In her pursuit of finding many books by some of her favorite English authors, Ms. Hanff began a writing campaign with a bookstore's chief buyer that would last more than twenty years. At the end of this friendship, Ms. Hanff wrote a book about the correspondence called *84, Charing Cross Road*, the address of the bookshop where she sent her letters. This book was a touching memoir of a long friendship between two people who never met. As a result of this book, Ms. Hanff not only had the touching memories of a long friendship, but discovered she had two more friends she had not had before. Nora and Sheila Doel, the wife and daughter of Frank Doel, the chief buyer. Ms. Hanff was able to get to know these two women well when she flew to London, allowing her a connection to her deceased friend she had not had before. It is for these reasons that friendship is a theme of the novel.

Fans

Ms. Hanff had been a struggling writer all her life. Ms. Hanff had wanted to be a playwright, but had to settle as a writer for television, as well as a freelance writer of many articles. Ms. Hanff also published several non-fiction books in her career. However, celebrity passed Ms. Hanff by until the publication of *84, Charing Cross Road*. When that book was published, Ms. Hanff surprisingly found herself the subject of many fan letters. Many people the world over loved *84, Charing Cross Road* and took every opportunity to send her letters. In fact, Ms. Hanff even found herself the recipient of a fan letter from a playwright her mother had deeply admired, a man Ms. Hanff would later meet in person and call her friend.



Ms. Hanff would learn later that her book was to be published in England. When Ms. Hanff arrived in England, she discovered that many people there loved her book as well. In fact, when Ms. Hanff was told she was to do a book signing, she was concerned because she did not believe anyone would show up. However, Ms. Hanff was deeply pleased to discover that many people had come to see her. Soon Ms. Hanff was getting fan letters nearly every day at her hotel room and many of them included invitations to dinner and to see the sights of London. So many fans bought Ms. Hanff dinner that she was able to extend her visit. Not only that, but an article she wrote for the Reader's Digest about these fan letters allowed her a check that made it possible for her to stay in London an extra ten days. If not for the fans, Ms. Hanff's trip to London would not have been possible, making fans a theme of the novel.

Fulfilling a Dream

Ms. Hanff had always admired England and always dreamed of going there. When Ms. Hanff wrote 84, Charing Cross Road, she never imagined it would be received as well as it was. Therefore, when the opportunity to travel to London arose, Ms. Hanff jumped at the chance despite an operation that nearly derailed her plans. Sick or not, Ms. Hanff was going to London.

This book is like taking a trip to London with a young child on their first visit to Disneyland. Ms. Hanff visits all the sights with the eye of one who is a great fan of English literature, visiting every sight that has anything to do with some of her favorite writers, including Shakespeare, John Donne, and Bernard Shaw. Ms. Hanff even visits the church where Ellen Terry's ashes are interned, an actress who was often partnered with Henry Irving. Ms. Hanff also sees some of the sights associated with Charles Dickens even though she claims not to be a fan of his although it seems everyone in London is deeply proud of his works. Ms. Hanff is clearly excited to be in London throughout her visit there, as though she has finally fulfilled a long awaited dream, making this a theme of the novel.



Style

Perspective

The perspective of this book is highly subjective. Ms. Hanff visited London in the aftermath of her book 84, Charing Cross Road, a trip she had always wanted to make and finally could thanks to the royalties for her book. Ms. Hanff arrived shortly after the publication of the book in England and kept a journal so that she would never forget her experiences in London. This book is the journal she kept, giving the fans of 84, Charing Cross Road a sequel to the book that describes what happened after the first book was published, something many fans wanted to know. This book is also a sort of tour guide to London, sharing with readers the excitement of some of the sights in London that might be overlooked by the everyday tourist or under appreciated by London residents.

The perspective of this book works because it is a personal book that tells a story from the point of view of the writer in a most personal sort of format. The book is written like a journal and it tells the story of how Ms. Hanff felt from the moment she arrived in London until the moment she left. Ms. Hanff felt as though she were a duchess, being treated to all the best restaurant and shows, and having the perfect escorts to all the most exciting sights. Ms. Hanff was fulfilling a dream with her visit to London and that fact is clear in every exciting detail of her story.

Tone

The tone of this book, like any well written book, changes as the book progresses through the story. The first part of the book is filled with an optimistic tone that reflects the author's excitement at finally arriving in the country she has always wanted to visit. As the book progresses, however, the tone changes to one of barely controlled temper as Ms. Hanff becomes too accustomed to the preferred treatment she has been receiving and she becomes a bit more demanding of attention. The tone begins to mellow out again as Ms. Hanff sees the end of her trip coming and begins to feel some sadness at having to leave. Finally, the tone becomes one of acceptance and guarded optimism as Ms. Hanff boards the plane that will take her home again.

The tone of this book works because it changes alongside the perspective of the novel. The perspective is subjective; therefore, it flows with the thoughts and opinions of the author. At the same time, the tone changes with the moods and emotions of the author. This book is almost like reading the diary of a good friend, and it reflects the ups and downs of that person's everyday life. The book is happy, then sad, then frustrated, and the tone reflects this change in mood and emotion in such a way that the reader feels as though they are there beside Ms. Hanff, visiting some of these sights and suffering some of the frustrations on missing out on other sights. It is for these reasons that the tone of this book works well.

Structure

This book is divided into many small sections that are marked by a change in date. The sections vary in length, some consisting of more than ten pages, some as short as a single paragraph. The book begins with the title, up, up, and away, describing the author's feelings as her plane takes off to take her to London. Each title after that is either a specific date or a time. The book is told mostly in exposition or internal dialogue, though the author does include some dialogue that she heard or participated in.

The book tells only one story as the book follows Ms. Hanff through her travels in London. The book follows a linear time line, beginning as Ms. Hanff takes off on a flight to London and follows her through her stay in London, and ends as her plane takes off from Heathrow Airport. Ms. Hanff visited many historical sites while in London, some common and often visited by people from other countries while others were more obscure and important only to Ms. Hanff because of her love of literature and movies. The book is almost a tourist's brochure that should be followed by anyone with the same interests and loves as Ms. Hanff.



Quotes

"Theoretically, it was one of the happiest days of my life. The date was Thursday, June 17, 1971; the BOAC lifted from Kennedy airport promptly at 10am; the sky was blue and sunny, and after a lifetime of waiting I was finally on my way to London." *Up, Up, and Away*, p. 9

"When I was completely relaxed, the voice in my head inquired what I planned to do if something went wrong and nobody met the plane. To forestall panic, I got the letters out of my shoulder bag and read them over. Those letters were my lifeline." *Up, Up, and Away*, p. 11

"There's a radio in the headboard of this bed, the BBC just bid me goodnight. The entire radio system here goes to bed at midnight." *Thursday, June 17, Midnight*, p. 15

"I lie here listening to the rain, and nothing is real. I'm in a pleasant hotel room that could be anywhere. After all the years of waiting, no sense at all of being in London. Just a feeling of letdown, and my insides offering the opinion that the entire trip was unnecessary."
Thursday, June 17, Midnight, p. 19

"The two large rooms had been stripped bare. Even the heavy oak shelves had been ripped off the walls and were lying on the floor, dusty and abandoned. I went upstairs to another floor of empty, haunted rooms. The window letters which had spelled Marks & Co. had been ripped off the window, a few of them were lying on the window sill, their white paint chipped and peeling." *Friday, June 18*, p. 22

"You can't imagine how funny it strikes me when somebody calls me chic. I'm wearing the same kind of clothes I've worn all my life and for years I was looked on as a bohemian mess." *Saturday, June 19, Midnight*, p. 26

"I've been sitting on the edge of the bed for an hour in a complete daze. I told him if I die tonight I'll die happy, it's all here, everything's here." *Sunday, June 20, Midnight*, p. 29

"Not until I got home did it dawn on me that they and I had completely reversed roles. Coming abroad, where nobody knows them, Eddie and Isabel have rid themselves of a lot of social inhibitions. Coming abroad, where nobody knows me, I've acquired a whole set of inhibitions I never had at home. Wild?" *Monday, June 21*, p. 34

"Got home at midnight, swept into the lobby and informed Mr. Otto and the boys at the desk I am hereafter to be known as the Duchess of Bloomsbury. Or Bloomsbury Street, at least." *Tuesday, June 22, 1a.m.*, pp. 38-39



"Lying in peaceful St. James's, I realize how much a city's parks reflect the character of its people. The parks here are tranquil, quiet, a bit reserved, and I love them. But on a long-term basis I would sorely miss the noisy exuberance of Central Park." Sunday, June 27, Afternoon, p. 56

"From now on I remember Reader's Digest in all my prayers. I picked up mail at the desk, there was a letter from the London Digest office, I assumed it was page proof on the three new pages. I opened it and inside was a check for FIFTY POUNDS. I thought I would die where I stood." Monday, July 12, p. 100

"I sit here on the plane trying to see faces, trying to hold onto London, but the mind intrudes with thoughts of home: the mail piled up waiting for me, the people waiting, the work waiting." Monday, July 26, p. 137



Topics for Discussion

What is 84, Charing Cross Road? Why is it significant to this book? Why is it often mentioned by the people Ms. Hanff meets in the book? What relationship is the core of that book? Why is that relationship rarely mentioned in this book? What is Ms. Hanff's main intention while visiting London? How is that connected to 84, Charing Cross Road? Why has Ms. Hanff come to London?

Who is Ms. Hanff? What kind of writer is she? How many books had Ms. Hanff published before 84, Charing Cross Road? Why is Ms. Hanff surprised by the fan mail she has received? What impact do those letters have on Ms. Hanff's visit to London? How do those fans make it possible for Ms. Hanff to stay in London longer?

Who is Charles Dickens? Why are there many tourists locations devoted to him in London? What did he write? Why is Ms. Hanff not a fan of his? Why does Ms. Hanff believe many people in London are fans of his? Why does Ms. Hanff decide finally to visit some of these tourist locations associated with Dickens?

Who is John Donne? Why does Ms. Hanff visit Trinity College? What is this college's connection to John Donne? What poem does Ms. Hanff quote in the book that tells her how his name is pronounced? Why does Ms. Hanff find this poem significant? Who is the woman mentioned in the poem? Why is Ms. Hanff a fan of John Donne's?

What is Russell Square? Why does Ms. Hanff visit there so often? Who is her friend the ticket taker? What does he sell tickets for? Why does Ms. Hanff choose that as the location for her portrait to be painted? Why does Ena declare this location as peaceful and highly appropriate for the portrait? How does this location compare to Central Park?

What is Westminster Abbey? Why does Ms. Hanff become upset that Ellen Terry is not buried there? What conclusion does Ms. Hanff come to about that oversight? Where does Ms. Hanff go to see Ms. Terry's ashes? What other actor does Ms. Hanff notice is buried there? Why does Ms. Hanff begin to cry when she sees the plaque for this other actor?

Discuss tone. What is tone? How is tone represented in this novel? How does the tone change as the novel progresses? Why does this happen? Discuss the tone of some of the poetry Ms. Hanff quotes in the book. What is the tone of some of these poems? Why does Ms. Hanff quote these poems? How do these poems reflect Ms. Hanff's emotion at the time she quotes them?