

Me: Stories of My Life Study Guide

Me: Stories of My Life by Katharine Hepburn

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Contents

Me: Stories of My Life Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapter I.....	4
Chapter II.....	7
Chapter III.....	10
Chapter IV.....	14
Chapter V.....	16
Chapter VI.....	18
Characters.....	20
Objects/Places.....	23
Themes.....	25
Style.....	27
Quotes.....	29
Topics for Discussion.....	30



Plot Summary

Ms. *Stories of My Life* by Katharine Hepburn is a unique autobiography in which Ms. Hepburn seems to open up her heart and soul to everyone including herself.

Ms. Hepburn tells her life story in short bursts, taking the reader through some of the most influentially important moments in her life. The author describes the deaths of her most beloved family members, her mother, brother Tom, and the love of her life Spencer Tracy in such a way that allows an insight into the very soul of Ms. Hepburn. She reexamines her career as well as her personal relationships with the people who helped her achieve her goals. At times she makes apologies to those she feels she has wronged along her path to fame.

The book is the journey of a young girl living in Hartford with her family, leading an idyllic life and suddenly having to deal with the unexpected death of her brother. Ms. Hepburn leaves her home and family to go to college and soon after graduation starts out in the theater. Ms. Hepburn soon makes her cross into motion pictures and ultimately stardom. All along she has the love and support a very close circle of family and friends, including Ludlow Smith, Ms. Hepburn's husband. Although the two are only married a relatively short time, Luddy remained a part of Ms. Hepburn's life until his death.

Ms. Hepburn candidly discusses her famous relationships with men such as Leland Hayward and Howard Hughes. She also introduces the reader to the people she worked with throughout the years like director George Cukor and John Wayne.

Ms. Hepburn revisits most, if not all, the movies and plays she has been in over the years. She gives the reader firsthand accounts of how she gets the roles as well as memorable events that may have taken place while making the show. In the case of 'Rooster Cogburn' in which she acted with John Wayne, Ms. Hepburn gives such a moving tribute to Wayne that it makes you fall in love with him also.

Ms. Hepburn shares her twenty-seven year love affair with Spencer Tracy, including the days surrounding his death in their home in California. Ms. Hepburn seems to realize, almost as she is writing this biography, how past relationships were one-sided until she fell in love with Tracy. She also admits her feelings on the fact that Tracy never divorced his wife. Ms. Hepburn searches for answers to questions she has concerning this relationship with Tracy in a letter addressed to Tracy himself.



Chapter I

Chapter I Summary and Analysis

In Chapter I, Parents, Ms. Hepburn describes her life beginning with her childhood in Hartford, Connecticut in a house filled with brothers and sisters, her move to college, and then to New York to start her acting career. Ms. Hepburn tells the stories of her life in films, her romantic relationships, and even the loss of those very close to her like her brother Tom and the love of her life Spencer Tracy. Ms. Hepburn even learns things about herself in the process of writing this autobiography and she shares all these things in a very kind and poetic way.

Ms. Hepburn introduces us to her family in this section. Her mother's father, Alfred Houghton, killed himself on the railroad tracks leaving his wife, Caroline, to raise their three daughters. Soon after his death, Caroline dies of cancer and the girls are passed between relatives until Ms. Hepburn's mother, Katharine is old enough to be given guardianship of younger sisters. Caroline had wanted her daughters to attend college, which was not common for girls in this day and Katharine made sure that they all went to college. Katharine Houghton learned early to take what life gives you and make the best of it. She did not complain and always chose to think positively. She taught these values to her own children.

Ms. Hepburn's father, Dr. Thomas Hepburn, came from an Episcopal background. Dr. Hepburn was very close to his mother and learned to be sensitive to women through this relationship. Dr. Hepburn and Katharine meet while Dr. Hepburn is studying medicine at John's Hopkins.

Dr. and Mrs. Hepburn are involved in women's rights issues, and Katharine is, a one point, the President of the Connecticut Women's Suffrage Association, and a member of the National Women's Party. Dr. Hepburn is very involved in educating the public about the dangers of venereal diseases. Dr. Hepburn and Katharine have six children called Tom, Katharine, Dick, Bob, Marion, and Peg. They remain a very close family. Ms. Hepburn never has children of her own but she used to treat her younger siblings like they were her children when they would come to visit her. Ms. Hepburn's sister Marion died at the age of seventy and her oldest brother Tom died when he was sixteen but other than those two at the time of this autobiography, Ms. Hepburn still has the rest of her siblings and they are still very close.

In the section titled, "Hartford," Ms. Hepburn describes Hartford, Connecticut where she was born and raised. In this section, Ms. Hepburn shares memories of her youth in Hartford, playing games with her father and brother, Tom. Ms. Hepburn talks a lot about her father letting her and her siblings on adventurous activities that her mother sometimes thought were too dangerous, like some of the dives off the diving board or climbing in the trees. Ms. Hepburn says her parents were a perfect balance to each other and that her mother would allow them to do these things even though they scared



her so that the children could have these adventures and experiences. Ms. Hepburn also mentions how lucky she feels to have had the parents she had. She also describes how she used to pretend she was a boy and her name was Jimmy. She talks about some of the people who lived with them in Hartford like their cook, Fanny Ciarrier and her son. Fanny stayed with the Hepburn family until she died shortly before Ms. Hepburn's mother died.

While the family was still living in Hartford, Ms. Hepburn's oldest brother, Tom dies. Ms. Hepburn and Tom are staying with a family friend and Ms. Hepburn finds Tom dead. Tom's death is ruled a suicide but Dr. Hepburn never believed this to be true. He always felt responsible because he thought Tom was practicing a trick that Dr. Hepburn had told him about. Ms. Hepburn says this is the only time she ever saw her mother cry, on the ferry on the way to crematorium. They never really talked about Tom after that day either. Her parents did not see any sense any dwelling on the fact that he was gone, they had to move on with their lives, and that is what they did, but they missed Tom.

Ms. Hepburn's mother dies in 1951. Ms. Hepburn and her father come home one afternoon and find Katharine in bed dead. They deal with her death in the same way they dealt with Tom's. Some years later Dr. Hepburn remarries a woman named, Santa. Ms. Hepburn and her brother Bob take care of Dr. Hepburn until he dies in 1962. Santa moves in with her sister instead of staying in the big house all alone and the Hepburn family moves out of the Hartford home and leave it to Hartford University.

In the section titled, "Fenwick," Ms. Hepburn describes their vacation home. Fenwick is the vacation home of the Hepburn family find in 1913. From the time the Hepburn children are young until they are grown with children of their own, they meet for weekends and holidays at this location. At the time that Dr. Hepburn dies, Dick has already made Fenwick his permanent home.

Ms. Hepburn recalls how she and her friend, Alice Barbour, would break into homes in Fenwick, not to damage them but for the excitement of doing it. This all ended when they let a boy, Bob Post, come along with them. Bob busted down the door of the home so they could get in, and then the three of them made a mess in the house with talcum powder they found inside the home. They were caught and Bob had to pay for the door. Ms. Hepburn and Alice were very embarrassed and never again broke into any of the homes.

Ms. Hepburn describes all the changes made to the house in Fenwick over the years, and how it stands today. Dick is living here full time and everyone else trickling in on weekends and holidays.

In the section titled, "Bryn Mawr," Ms. Hepburn describes the college she attended. Ms. Hepburn attends Bryn Mawr after she graduates high school. Ms. Hepburn's mother and grandmother both attended Bryn Mawr as did both of Katharine Houghton Hepburn's younger sisters. While attending Bryn Mawr Ms. Hepburn acts in a few plays and with the exception of being suspended for eight days for smoking in her room. She enjoys her time at Bryn Mawr.



Just before she finishes with college, Ms. Hepburn meets Jack Clarke, who puts her in contact with Edwin Knopf. Clarke is also the best friend of Ludlow O. Smith, who Ms. Hepburn will later marry. Knopf runs a theater company in Baltimore and Ms. Hepburn drives to Baltimore and asks Knopf for a job. He tells her to write to him when she finishes with college. Instead, she drives back to Baltimore and Knopf gives her a job on the spot.

While working on her first play, Ms. Hepburn is one of the last to get a costume and she gets an ugly and ill-fitting dress. One of the other girls in the play offers to switch costumes with her. The other girl tells Ms. Hepburn she thinks she will be a star someday. Ms. Hepburn cannot remember this girl's name.

During her second play, Ms. Hepburn decides she needs to take voice lessons. Dr. Hepburn sends her money to go to New York and take lessons from Frances Robinson-Duff. Ms. Hepburn turns twenty-one while in New York. Her father was never thrilled about her choice of careers but he still supported her whatever she decided to pursue.



Chapter II

Chapter II Summary and Analysis

In Chapter II, Luddy, Ms. Hepburn meets her future husband, Luddy while living in New York taking voice lessons. She is dating H. Phelps Putnam when she first meets Luddy. Phelps is married at this time and both he and Ms. Hepburn have little money. Dr. Hepburn tells Phelps he will shoot him if he lays a hand on his daughter. This could have had little to nothing to do with how things turned out for the two but eventually the relationship turns into more of a friendship. When the relationship with Phelps ends, Ms. Hepburn begins to spend more time with Jack Clarke and Luddy. Soon Ms. Hepburn and Luddy are dating.

In the section titled, "Early Career," Ms. Hepburn describes how she had little trouble getting acting jobs. However keeping them was quite another story. She did very well during the auditions but would be fired soon after opening night. Whether her nerves got the better of her or she simple thought she was better than she actually was, Ms. Hepburn rarely made it to the third night, much less the duration of the entire play.

On her first job called 'The Big Pond,' Ms. Hepburn is the understudy but when they hear her read the part, they give her the lead. She gets so overconfident that her voice gets too high and she is talking too fast. The next day she is fired. Ms. Hepburn goes back to the theater and congratulates the actress who got her job. Ms. Hepburn's family was unable to attend the opening night show and they joked with her that they would never miss another for it could be her only performance.

Ms. Hepburn gets another job with Arthur Hopkins after being fired by Knopf. She does 'These Days' and 'Holiday' with Hopkins. After finishing the play 'Holiday,' Luddy and Ms. Hepburn are married at her family home in Hartford. Ms. Hepburn decides to quit acting and moves to Pennsylvania with Luddy. This move only last two weeks and Ms. Hepburn is back in New York asking for her job back. Luckily, Arthur Hopkins is willing to take Ms. Hepburn back.

In the section titled, "The Warrior's Husband," Ms. Hepburn talks about how she got this role, how originally they wanted Hope Williams for the lead, and it kept going back and forth until finally it is given to Ms. Hepburn. She plays the part of Antiope and is dressed in a silver leather costume with a cape. This is the first play that people really get to see how wonderful Ms. Hepburn is.

Ms. Hepburn also tells a story in this section about Luddy catching their house on fire and almost himself.

In the beginning of the section titled, "First Trip to Hollywood," Ms. Hepburn starts by telling about being offered five hundred dollars for one performance. She accepts only to find out in the end that the people had no money to pay the actors. The other actress



that had gone to Philadelphia with Ms. Hepburn for this play had thought this was the case and had asked for her money up front, and ended up being the only one who got paid for this play.

Ms. Hepburn and her friend, Laura travel to Hollywood, so Ms. Hepburn can make her first movie, 'A Bill of Divorcement.' On the train, Ms. Hepburn gets a piece of metal in her eye. She does not have time to see a doctor before her meeting with the movie director, so by the time she gets to the meeting her eyes are red and swollen. The director, as well as the star, John Barrymore think Ms. Hepburn has been drinking. Ms. Hepburn tries to explain and ask where she can find a doctor but is constantly interrupted. When the meeting is finally over and she has met with all the hair and makeup people, she is able to get the address of a doctor. The doctor is able to get the metal out of her eye, but she is given an eye patch to wear. This interferes with her make up rehearsal set up for the next morning.

In the section titled, "Early Films," Ms. Hepburn discusses some of her early movies including 'A Bill of Divorcement,' Christopher Strong, Morning Glory, Little Women, and Spitfire.

In the section titled, "The Return to New York," Ms. Hepburn starts this section by talking about her move back to New York after a year and a half of making films in Hollywood. Luddy stayed in New York while Ms. Hepburn was making her movies and the two would see each other on weekend visits and in between movies. At some point before 1941 Luddy and Ms. Hepburn are divorced; however she does not give a more exact date. She does mention that Luddy remarries after 1941 and has two children.

Ms. Hepburn then goes on to talk about the way she treated Luddy during and after their marriage. Soon after they are married, Ms. Hepburn makes Luddy change his name to S. Ogden Ludlow because she does not want to be called Mrs. Smith. Luddy is the giver in this relationship and Ms. Hepburn is the taker. Their marriage was never a two-way street since Ms. Hepburn was always focused on her career and Luddy did his best to help make her dreams come true. While the two are married, Ms. Hepburn does not realize that she is taking Luddy for granted. It is not until after they are divorced and Luddy becomes ill and is close to death that Ms. Hepburn finally realizes how badly she has treated Luddy all these years and how helpful Luddy was to the success of her career. She spends the remainder of Luddy's life trying to make it up to him.

In the section titled, "The Lake," Ms. Hepburn is working on 'The Lake' with Jed Harris. In the beginning, the two get along well and Ms. Hepburn even takes Harris to Fenwick with her for the weekend. While in Fenwick, Harris meets Luddy and learns that he is Ms. Hepburn's husband. It is never clear if Harris is romantically interested in Ms. Hepburn but considering his drastic change in behavior towards after this weekend, it seems that he must have been.

When Harris and Ms. Hepburn return from Fenwick, Harris does everything he can to make sure that Ms. Hepburn not only looks bad in the play but is also miserable the entire time. In the end, Ms. Hepburn is forced to pay Harris to let her out of her contract



with him, and end the play. Several years later Ms. Hepburn's agent, Myron runs into Harris where Harris is asking Myron to be his agent. Myron refuses and he tells Harris that it is because he is Ms. Hepburn's agent and she does not like Harris. Harris asks why she does not like him and Myron reminds him that Ms. Hepburn gave him everything in her checkbook to get out of the play. Harris gives Myron a check to give to Ms. Hepburn, returning the money she paid him. When Ms. Hepburn receives the check, she tears it up. Some years after this incident, Harris admits to Leland Hayward that he had tried and failed to destroy Ms. Hepburn.

Ms. Hepburn is invited to have tea with President Roosevelt while working on the 'The Lake' in Washington. She thought he was very funny and charming and she said it was the best part of the Washington tour.



Chapter III

Chapter III Summary and Analysis

In the section titled, "George Cukor," Ms. Hepburn introduces us to people that were not only very close to her throughout her career, but also very instrumental to her success. George Cukor is a movie director and a very close friend of Ms. Hepburn. The two work together on several movies throughout her career. In this section, Ms. Hepburn describes in great detail Cukor's home. Ms. Hepburn tells about all the dinners she shared in Cukor's home. On one particular evening they got together to celebrate Ethel Barrymore's 70th birthday. Judy Garland sang happy birthday to Barrymore.

Ms. Hepburn explains the kind of man Cukor is. She talks about the pictures they made together. She believes that Cukor never received the credit he deserved as a director because when he was interviewed he always credited the actors for the success of the films.

In the section titled, "Leland Hayward," Ms. Hepburn introduces the reader to Leland Hayward. He is an agent and for a brief time one of Ms. Hepburn's boyfriends. Ms. Hepburn dated Leland shortly after her split from Luddy. In fact there is a much published photo of Ms. Hepburn and Leland in the beginning of their relationship, but the man is often identified as Luddy. They are complete opposites, but somehow they make the relationship work. Ms. Hepburn likes to eat in and early, Leland likes to eat late and out. The compromise would be that Leland would have a glass of wine when she had dinner then when she was ready for bed, he would leave to go have supper.

Ms. Hepburn and her friend, Laura are sharing a house that they believe is haunted. Leland is spending a lot of time with the girls in this house. Ms. Hepburn and Leland have a very good relationship and he has asked her to marry him several times, each time she has refused. Leland goes East for a play one of his clients is working on, and he falls in love with, Margaret Sullivan one of the other actresses in the play. Leland marries Sullivan and sends Ms. Hepburn a wire telling her of his marriage. Ms. Hepburn is heart broken, but all her family and friends tell her it is her own fault; after all Leland had proposed to her several times.

In addition to discussing her relationship with Leland, Ms. Hepburn also tells a few funny things that happened around her neighborhood while she was with Leland. For instance, she tells about a rattle snake getting into her living room. Ms. Hepburn was with two of her friends this day when both the men left the room and Ms. Hepburn got the snake out of the house.

In the section titled, "Howard Hughes," Ms. Hepburn first meets Hughes while she is filming 'Sylvia Scarlett' with Cary Grant. Hughes and Grant are friends. Ms. Hepburn is having a picnic lunch with Cukor and Grant when Hughes lands his plane near where they are eating. In the beginning, Ms. Hepburn does not like Hughes because she



thinks he is too full of himself. Hughes follows the play that Ms. Hepburn is performing in from town to town, and in time the two begin to date.

Ms. Hepburn takes Hughes to Fenwick to meet her parents and Luddy is also there. Luddy is taking pictures of everyone and Hughes gets upset, Dr. Hepburn tells Hughes that Luddy has been around long before he got there and will be there long after he is gone.

Hughes and Ms. Hepburn play golf together and they are dating when Hughes breaks the record for flying around the world. Ms. Hepburn admits to falling in love with Hughes but in the end she moves back East and he stays West. They remain friends until the end of Hughes life.

In the section titled, "Hurricane," Ms. Hepburn tells about a hurricane that destroys her family's vacation home in Fenwick in 1938. It is late September, and most of the residents of Fenwick have already left. Ms. Hepburn has stayed in Fenwick with her mother, her brother, Dick, her cook, Fanny, and friend John Hammond. They are all in the house when the hurricane first hits, and the windows are blown out of the house, and the house is shaking. They all make it out of the house to safety just as the house floats away. The next day when they return to where their home was all is left is a bathtub and a toilet. After some digging the family is able to recover a tea service and some of their flatware. When they locate where the house finally rested, they find that the whole top floor of the home is dry, and Ms. Hepburn's brother Dick is able to retrieve the papers he had been working on.

Just before the storm hits, Ms. Hepburn has her car moved to a safer location because she has just had the car painted and did not want it hurt. Her car was not damaged during the storm. Ms. Hepburn and her family rebuild the home in the same location.

In the section titled, "L. B. Mayer," Mayer is the head of a studio company. While working with Mayer on 'The Philadelphia Story' Ms. Hepburn meets Spencer Tracy. Hughes has bought the rights to the movie for Ms. Hepburn and she wants Tracy for one of the leads. Mayer and Ms. Hepburn haggle and finally come to an agreement on the price for the movie and how will play in it. Ms. Hepburn wants Tracy and Clark Gable to star in this film. In the end they agree on an unspecified amount.

In the section titled, "Movies," Ms. Hepburn re-visits some of her movie roles. During the making of Alice Adams, Ms. Hepburn works with director George Stevens. In one of the scenes, Stevens wants Ms. Hepburn to cry while looking out of a window as the rain runs down the window. The problem is the cold water is leaking in on her arm and she can not cry because of this distraction. Ms. Hepburn tries, unsuccessfully, several times to cry, but can not. Stevens gets very upset when Ms. Hepburn suggests that they shot the scene differently. In the wake of his anger Ms. Hepburn finishes the scene like Stevens wants. Later Ms. Hepburn explains the problem to Stevens and he tells her that he almost walked off set that day.



Ms. Hepburn acted in 'Sylvia Scarlett' with Cary Grant. George Cukor is the director. Ms. Hepburn was very pleased with Grant's performance in this film but not her own.

'Mary of Scotland' was directed by John Ford. Ms. Ford almost kills Ford while trying to sober him up so he could finish this movie. Ms. Hepburn is told that Ford is drunk and not finishing the movie and in an attempt to sober him up she has him drink a mixture of castor oil and whiskey. Ford gets very ill but in the end he is able to pull himself together and finish the picture.

While making the movie 'The Philadelphia Story,' Ms. Hepburn works with Cary Grant and Jimmy Stewart. Stewart won an award for this film.

'Woman of the Year' is the first movie Ms. Hepburn makes with Spencer Tracy. She later admits that this is when she first fell in love with him, although she does not mention if this is when the two started their relationship.

'Stage Door' was directed by Gregory La Cava, and co-starred Ginger Rogers. Lucille Ball and Ann Miller were also in this film with Ms. Hepburn.

While making 'Bring Up Baby,' Ms. Hepburn works with a leopard. During one of the scenes, Ms. Hepburn is in a long dress that swings when she walks and the leopard jumps on Ms. Hepburn's back. She is not hurt but they do not let her work so openly and closely with the leopard after this incident.

There are many more films that Ms. Hepburn discusses in this section. Her main focus on these movies is to tell briefly who produced or directed them. However when discussing 'Rooster Cogburn,' Ms. Hepburn has no shortage of beautiful, poetic, kind, and sentimental words about her co-star John Wayne. Ms. Hepburn spends the entire section explaining not only his physical characteristics but also his personal ones as well. There is no doubt how much she respected and truly liked John Wayne.

While filming 'On Golden Pond,' Ms. Hepburn works with Henry Fonda and his daughter Jane. Ms. Hepburn tells a funny story about Jane Fonda having to a dive off a spring board for a scene. Ms. Hepburn had spent much of her childhood doing these same types of dives with her father. Now the much older Ms. Hepburn calls to Jane Fonda, "If you can't do it, dear, I'll do it for you. It's one of my specialties." Fonda did the dive herself.

In the section titled, "Shakespeare," Ms. Hepburn does a tour of Shakespeare plays in the late 1940s.

In the section titled, "Spencer," Ms. Hepburn gives the reader a brief look at Spencer Tracy. She does not discuss their relationship. Instead, we are only given a glimpse of Tracy as she saw him. In a strange way she gives a character description of Tracy in a poetic fashion. Everything Ms. Hepburn tells about Tracy still leaves you wondering who Spencer Tracy was, including the words she uses to describe him are beautiful and loving but they do not seem to ever get to the soul of Tracy. There is no doubt that Tracy was a wonderfully talented actor but that seems to be as much as he was willing to



share with even Ms. Hepburn at times. Ms. Hepburn says that Tracy was a talented actor who has the ability to change his face for each picture. She talks a little bit about not feeling like she ever really knew him. Ms. Hepburn shares Tracy's feelings about the movie 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.' She also gives a quick overview of what this movie is all about and some of Tracy's thoughts on how the role should be played. Tracy did not want to do the role the same way it had been done before. Tracy had always wanted the same actor to play both roles, but his suggestion was never taken.



Chapter IV

Chapter IV Summary and Analysis

In Chapter IV, Memorial Day, Ms. Hepburn, her secretary Phyllis, David and Sandy Lean spend the weekend planting in Ms. Hepburn's front yard over the weekend. Ms. Hepburn describes in detail how hard they all worked and which plants went where and how tired she was. She is ready to call it a day and rest but everyone is still busy and she refuses to let them outwork her. She talks about all the aches and pains she has when this weekend is over but she is able to keep up with everyone else and she never quit while there were still plants to be planted.

In the section titled, "Willie Rose and His Maserati," Ms. Hepburn meets Willie Rose while they are working on the film 'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner.' The two have a rocky start, because Ms. Hepburn wants to change the name of one of the characters and Rose flips out. Eventually they become close friends and Rose just did not want anyone rewriting one of his scripts. Some years later Ms. Hepburn is working on a script with producer Irene Selznick and Ms. Hepburn decides to ask for help from Rose. She finds him drunk and not working at the time because of his drinking. While talking to Rose, he tells Ms. Hepburn about his new car that will be ready in Italy in a few days. Ms. Hepburn suggests that the two of them make the trip together to get the car. She is hoping it will help Rose sober up and get back to productive work.

Ms. Hepburn takes a trip to Italy with Willie Rose to pick up his new car from the factory. In this section, Ms. Hepburn has written it in play form. This ended up being one of the most enjoyable sections of the book because of the play form.

The relationship between Rose and Ms. Hepburn is very interesting. You can tell from the dialogue that they are attracted to one another but there is never any mention of a romantic relationship. Ms. Hepburn seems to be too concerned that Rose is too young for her. Rose is in his fifty's at this time and Ms. Hepburn is still not admitting to her own age to Rose, only that she is older.

The two have a generally enjoyable trip with the exception of the occasional disagreement over directions. These disagreements always led back to the discussion over the age difference.

In the section titled, "The Corn is Green," Ms. Hepburn mentions the many problems with making the film titled "The Corn is Green."

The first problem is that the people working on the costumes back out at the last moment. Ms. Hepburn is angry and hurt because she considered these people her friends and that as friends and professionals you just do not leave people hanging like that. After finding new costume people Ms. Hepburn learns that the lighting people are leaving as well. Once all these problems are solved, filming begins. The crew sets up at

a local farm in Whales. The family that owns the farm is the Hughes. The Hughes are very kind to the whole crew and they even give Ms. Hepburn a dressing room inside their home.



Chapter V

Chapter V Summary and Analysis

In Chapter V, Phyllis, Ms. Hepburn talks briefly about her secretary Phyllis. Phyllis is more than a secretary and she does everything for Ms. Hepburn.

In the section titled, "Brief Encounter," Ms. Hepburn, her friend Sarah Forbes and Phyllis are on their way to New York when they have a flat tire. None of them are able to change the tire and they finally flag down a man driving by to help them. The young man not only helps the two women change the tire but shows Ms. Hepburn how to change the tire. Then he tells Ms. Hepburn she looks a lot like Katharine Hepburn. When she tries to tell him that she is Katharine Hepburn the young man does not believe her. Ms. Hepburn finally has to take out her wallet and show the young man her driver's license and her name on her credit cards to convince him that she is in fact Katharine Hepburn. The young man is thrilled to have met Katharine Hepburn. Ms. Hepburn tells the man she will send him a picture, so he gives her his name and address.

In the section titled, "Voice," Ms. Hepburn had taken voice lessons years ago with Frances Robinson-Duff. Duff had tried unsuccessfully to teach Ms. Hepburn to use her diaphragm. However she did give Ms. Hepburn the desire to continue to try to learn what Duff was teaching.

Ms. Hepburn talks about taking voice lessons once again and only this time it is because she has completely blown her voice out. Ms. Hepburn has yet to learn to use her diaphragm properly therefore she loses her voice often while performing in plays. She meets Alfred Dixon who is finally successful in teaching her the concept of using her diaphragm more and her throat less. This is the same thing that Frances Robinson-Duff had tried to teach her years earlier.

She takes voice lessons with Sue Seton again because she gets a role in 'Without Love' in which she has to sing. She is able to sing well enough for the movie and to be featured on the album. Ms. Hepburn gives her brother a copy of this album, but he never listens to it.

This is the one area that Ms. Hepburn does not always seem to be confident in. She never believed she had a nice sounding voice and she always wished she could sing, but never thought she was good at it. Still she took the roles that called for her to sing, because she would not let anything get the best of her, she took the voice lessons and did her best. She was a little sad that her brother never played to album she sang on. She always thought of him as being musical and the fact that he would not listen must have meant that he knew she was not any good but did not have the heart to tell her this; at least this is what she thought.



In the section titled, "Eyes," Ms. Hepburn is not happy with her droopy eyes and is talking to eye doctor's in the United States about what she should do about them. She is sent to a doctor in Scotland and after an office visit with this doctor, Ms. Hepburn leaves for the surgery.

Ms. Hepburn travels to Scotland to have her eyes done Her chauffeur David and her secretary Phyllis go with her on this trip. After the operation Ms. Hepburn is sent to her hotel room to rest. David is driving and Phyllis is in the back with Ms. Hepburn when she can tell something is wrong on the car ride back to the hotel. By the time they arrive at the hotel, Ms. Hepburn's incisions are bleeding badly. Ms. Hepburn is laying in the bathroom floor trying to stop the bleeding but she can not even tell where it is coming from because of all the blood running down into her eyes. When Phyllis calls the doctors office to find out what they should do, the nurse tells Phyllis that she will contact the doctor but in the mean time they should drink some whiskey to calm themselves down. Ms. Hepburn never explains what happened next but she simply ends this section with the passage about being told to drink the whiskey. Nothing more is mentioned about this trip or her eyes.

In the section titled, "Happy New Year," Ms. Hepburn and Phyllis are hurt in a car wreck in which Ms. Hepburn is driving. Ms. Hepburn runs into a telephone pole. They are not hurt badly but both end up with several broken bones, enough to keep them in the hospital of the Christmas and New Years holiday. The two end up spending New Years in the hospital. One of the reasons that Ms. Hepburn is still in the hospital is because she was just getting over her second surgery on her shoulder, and the leg and foot that are broken are on the same leg that she has the fake hip. Her doctors are concerned she will not take care of her previous surgeries. Ms. Hepburn does not mention which New Year's this is. Ms. Hepburn gives the details of the wreck and talks about the people who take care of them in the hospital. The nurses who give up their own holiday time to take care of Ms. Hepburn and Phyllis. Ms. Hepburn also describes having to wash her over the toilet on New Years Eve because her hair smells so badly and with her leg in a cast up to her hip she can not take a shower. Once again we see Ms. Hepburn's determination come into play and how she will always find a way to get things done.



Chapter VI

Chapter VI Summary and Analysis

In Chapter VI titled "Love," Ms. Hepburn is thirty-three years old when she falls in love with Spencer Tracy. In this section, she talks about loving someone more than she loves herself for the first time in her life. This individual is Spencer Tracy.

Ms. Hepburn and Tracy were together for twenty-seven years but they never got married. In fact, Tracy was already married and never got divorced the entire time he was with Ms. Hepburn. Ms. Hepburn and Tracy lived together in California and Ms. Hepburn did everything she knew to do to please him and take care of him. She even changed things about herself that she thought he did not or would not like. Even though Ms. Hepburn considers Tracy the love of her life, she never really seemed to know him or gets close to him. When Tracy died in 1967, he left Ms. Hepburn with a lot of questions. She still considers him the love of her life but you have to wonder if she was the love of his life. The relationship between the two seems to be as one-sided as the relationship between Ms. Hepburn and Luddy where the only difference is that Ms. Hepburn is the one doing all the giving in her relationship with Tracy. Ms. Hepburn definitely loved Tracy and her entire life revolved around him. She even put her acting on hold towards the end of Tracy's life. Previously, Ms. Hepburn had lost out on love because she put her career first and now she is leaving acting altogether for the sake of one man, Spence Tracy.

Tracy and Ms. Hepburn acted in nine movies together over the years, including 'Woman of the Year,' 'Without Love,' and 'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner.' 'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner' was finished just a couple of weeks before Tracy died. She says she fell in love with him while they were making their first movie together. After Tracy's death Ms. Hepburn strikes up a friendship with Tracy's daughter, Susie.

In the section titled "Leaving the California House," Ms. Hepburn describes the California house that she shared with Tracy. Ms. Hepburn actually begins this section with a 'goodbye' letter to the house. In this letter, she describes the house in detail and all it stood for, which was her life with Tracy. This is where they lived together and this is where Tracy died. When Tracy had died Ms. Hepburn had thought of moving from the home immediately but then changed her mind and stayed so she could feel closer to Tracy. Ms. Hepburn then tells about the days before and the night that Tracy died. Tracy has not been feeling well and Ms. Hepburn has been sleeping on the floor beside his bed until he falls asleep. She wakes up in the middle of the night or early in the morning to get up and make him tea. On the night he dies, she hears him get up to make his own tea and she gets up to go talk to him while he is having his tea. On her way into the kitchen she hears him falls. By the time she gets to him, he is already dead. Ms. Hepburn calls all the necessary people including Tracy wife and children and soon her home is full of all these people.



Tracy's wife tells Ms. Hepburn a few days later that until that night she thought Ms. Hepburn was just a rumor. Ms. Hepburn does not attend the funeral but instead says her goodbyes at the funeral home the morning of the funeral.

In these passages Ms. Hepburn seems to be having a discussion with Tracy, almost like they are remember this event together. She wonders if Tracy had made life harder for his wife by not divorcing her in the beginning. She talks about the fact that Tracy was already separated from his wife when she met him. Ms. Hepburn thinks Tracy stayed married because of his deaf son. Tracy could bring himself to leave his wife even when their handicapped son was grown. He felt in some way responsible for the boy's handicap. Ms. Hepburn and Tracy tried to keep their relationship as private as possible in an attempt to spare his wife and children any pain. In the end, Ms. Hepburn wonders if this did not add to the pain that Tracy's wife felt and that maybe their keeping the relationship a secret gave Tracy's wife false hope that the marriage would some day be saved. Ms. Hepburn and Tracy never talked about getting married and therefore never talked about the need for Tracy to divorce his current wife. This is just one of the questions Tracy left Ms. Hepburn with. Why did he not divorce his wife?

In the section titled, "Dear Spence," Ms. Hepburn writes a letter to Tracy twenty-four years after his death. In this letter, she talks about their last days together and how they spent them. She also asks him some of the questions that he did not answer for all these years, and she even tries to answer the questions herself. It seems that what she is really wanting to know is did he really love her as much as she still loves him. Did all the things she did for him really mean anything to him or had he simply taken them for granted like she had done when Luddy had done things for her? Did he love her? She spent so much of her time with Tracy trying to please him and make him happy she did not consider her own needs and wants. She never took the time talk to him, and now it is too late to get the answers she needs.

At times it seems as though she is trying to remember Tracy. She reassures him what a wonderful actor he was and how people still think of him as one of the best in the business. She talks to him about his old friends and the funny stories he used to tell. he once said that was what she loved the most about Tracy was his sense of humor.

In the final section titled, "With Help," Ms. Hepburn thanks all the people in her life for the roles they played in her success.



Characters

Katharine Hepburn

Ms. Hepburn is the main character of this autobiography. Born in Hartford, Katharine's parents are Thomas and Katharine Hepburn. She has three brothers, Tom, Dick and Bob. She has two sisters, Marion and Peg. When she is fourteen years old Ms. Hepburn finds her oldest brother Tom dead from an accidental hanging. She has trouble in school after Tom's death but finally graduates and moves to Boston to go to college at Bryn Mawr. After college, Ms. Hepburn is given her first acting job by Edwin Knopf. While in New York taking voice lessons for this job, Ms. Hepburn meets her future husband, Ludlow Smith. She and Luddy separate and soon divorce while she is commuting to and from Hollywood making movies. After divorcing Luddy, Ms. Hepburn dates Leland Hayward and Howard Hughes. Both of these relationships end because Ms. Hepburn puts her career ahead of anything or anyone. While making the movie 'The Philadelphia Story,' Ms. Hepburn meets and falls in love with Spencer Tracy. They have a love affair for twenty-seven years but never marry. They remain together until Tracy's death in 1967 in the home they shared. They starred in a total of nine movies together, including 'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner,' which wrapped up shortly before Tracy's death. Ms. Hepburn continues to make several movies after the loss of Tracy. She co-stars in 'Rooster Cogburn' with John Wayne as well as 'On Golden Pond' with Henry Fonda and his daughter Jane.

Ms. Hepburn loves her family and spends weekends and holidays with them at Fenwick throughout her childhood and acting career. She also maintains friendships with the men she has dated over the years, including her ex-husband Luddy, who later remarried and had children with his second wife. Ms. Hepburn never has any children of her own and she never again married after Luddy.

As a child, Ms. Hepburn's father taught her to swim and play golf, both of which she does regularly throughout her life. She loves to swim, no matter what the season.

Ms. Hepburn considers herself to be very lucky and to have lived a lucky life. Throughout her life, Ms. Hepburn chose to see her experiences as mostly lucky. She felt she was lucky to have the parents she had, lucky to be hired to this job or fired from that one, lucky to have the people around her that love her, and lucky that she loves. She is lucky to be Katharine Hepburn.

Spencer Tracy

Although Tracy does not have a main role in this autobiography, he obviously had a main role in the life of Ms. Hepburn. He had a twenty-seven year love affair with Ms. Hepburn while still married. He had two children with his wife, Alice and a son who was deaf, John. He is the only man Ms. Hepburn admits to loving more than herself. He



shared a home with Ms. Hepburn in California. He died in this house on June 10, 1967. He acted in a total of nine movies with Ms. Hepburn. He also acted in 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.' When he died, he left not only Ms. Hepburn with many questions but his wife and children as well.

Willie Rose

Rose is a script writer. He writes the script for 'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner.' Rose and Ms. Hepburn take a trip to Italy together to pick up his new Maserati. There is never a confession of a relationship between the two but there seems to be an attraction.

Howard Hughes

This individual was dating Ms. Hepburn when he broke the record for flying around the world. He was deaf but refused to tell people he could not hear them. Their relationship ended when Ms. Hepburn moved back East and Hughes stayed West.

Leland Hayward

This individual is an agent and also one of Ms. Hepburn's boyfriend's. He asked Ms. Hepburn to marry him several times and she always refused. He met and fell in love with Margaret Sullivan while away on business. He sent Ms. Hepburn a wire informing her of his marriage. They still remained friends, although it took some time for Ms. Hepburn to get over the hurt.

Phyllis Wilbourn

Phyllis is Ms. Hepburn's secretary. She is the one who was with Ms. Hepburn during the car wreck that left both in the hospital over New Years. Phyllis also went with Ms. Hepburn to Scotland when she had her eyes done.

Laura Harding

Laura is Ms. Hepburn's friend. The two are so close that it was rumored that they were a couple.

George Cukor

Cukor is a movie director. Ms. Hepburn and Cukor worked together on many films and were very good friends. He directed A Bill of Divorcement, Sylvia Scarlett, Adam's Rib, and The Corn is Green.



Ludlow O. Smith

Luddy is Ms. Hepburn's only husband. He changed his name after they were married because Ms. Hepburn did not want to be called Mrs. Smith. They divorce early in Ms. Hepburn's career but remain in each other's lives until Luddy dies of cancer. After his divorce from Ms. Hepburn, Luddy remarries and has two children.

Frances Robinson-Duff

This is Ms. Hepburn's voice teacher while she working on her first play. Ms. Hepburn worked with her one other time.

Edwin Knopf

This individual gave Ms. Hepburn her first job in acting.

Katharine Houghton-Hepburn

This individual is Hepburn's mother. She was the oldest daughter in her family. Both her parents die and she is left to care for her younger sisters. After starting her own family, Katharine becomes very active in women's rights issues.

Thomas Norval Hepburn

This individual is Ms. Hepburn's father. He was a doctor who tired to educate the public on the effects of venereal disease.



Objects/Places

Hartford

This is where Ms. Hepburn lived until she went to college. Her father lived here until he died and the children turned the property over to the Hartford University.

Fenwick

This is the Hepburn family vacation location. They have a home here that was destroyed by the 1938 hurricane and then the family rebuilt another home in its place. Ms. Hepburn's brother Dick lives here. Although Fenwick is technically a town, Ms. Hepburn refers to their home here as Fenwick

Bryn Mawr

This is the college in Boston that Ms. Hepburn attended. Her mother also attended this college. At Bryn Mawr, Ms. Hepburn is suspended for eight days for smoking in her room.

The California House

This is the house that Ms. Hepburn and Spencer Tracy lived in together. This is also the same house that Tracy died in on June 10, 1967. Ms. Hepburn lived in this house for several years alone after Tracy's death.

The Grand Hotel

This is a hotel that Ms. Hepburn and Willie Rose stayed at while on their trip to Italy to pick up his new Maserati.

Hartford Hospital

Ms. Hepburn and her secretary, Phyllis were in this hospital on New Years after a car wreck. Ms. Hepburn was driving the car.

Coldwater Canyon

This the house Ms. Hepburn shared with her friend, Laura. They thought the house was haunted.



Ambassador Hotel

Ms. Hepburn and Howard Hughes stayed in this hotel together but in separate rooms. The following day the press falsely reported that the two were going to be married that day.

Whales

This was the location for the filming of 'The Corn is Green.' Ms. Hepburn stayed with the Hughes family that owned the farm.

Hollywood, California

Ms. Hepburn's first trip to Hollywood was to work on a movie with John Barrymore called 'A Bill of Divorcement.' Ms. Hepburn had gotten a piece of metal stuck in her eye and when she met with the director and Barrymore they both thought she had been drinking.



Themes

Luck

Ms. Hepburn contributes luck to the vast majority of her life. She seems to choose to look for the luck, whether good or bad in most situations. Ms. Hepburn talks a lot throughout this biography about how lucky she is to have the parents and family she has. She sees the best traits of each of her parents in herself and feels lucky to be the product of the best of both of her parents. Ms. Hepburn credits these qualities to much of her success as well as the luck she finds in each individual situation propelled her career.

Even when faced with the loss of the love of her life, Spencer Tracy, Ms. Hepburn tries to find the silver lining. She comments to a friend that Tracy's manner of death through a coronary disease was a lucky way to die and the best way to go.

While working on one of her first plays, Ms. Hepburn is the last to get a costume and ends up with an ill-fitting and ugly dress. One of the other women in the play, who was first to get a costume, trades dresses with Ms. Hepburn so she can have the better dress. The woman tells Ms. Hepburn that she believes Ms. Hepburn will be star someday and wants her to have the better dress. Ms. Hepburn is quick to credit the hand of luck in this situation.

Luck does seem to follow Ms. Hepburn throughout her life, whether it is getting this part or meeting this person. Luck always seems to be there when she needs it. It is very easy to see the luck in your life especially when you are always looking for it.

Determination

Ms. Hepburn's determination can be seen throughout this biography. She was determined to be a great actress and she did what ever she had to do to succeed. Ms. Hepburn took voice lessons to make her voice more attractive on more than one occasion. She did not let bad reviews get her down. Instead, she used them to make herself better. She had a do or die trying attitude about everything. Even knowing her own limitations did not stop her from trying to overcome those limitations. Ms. Hepburn knew she was not a good singer. When a role called for her to sing, she took lessons and after a lot of hard work she did well in the role, including singing.

Quitting was never an option for Ms. Hepburn. It did not matter what she was doing she finished the job. On a Memorial weekend, a few friends had come over to her home to help her plant in her front yard. A few hours into the planting and Ms. Hepburn was ready to call it a day. Her friends on the other hand were still working away, and she refused to even take a break in fact she worked even harder to keep up with them. Ms. Hepburn's friends tried to get her to go inside and rest but she would not stop until the



job was finished. By the time the yard was done Ms. Hepburn had hurt her back, but the job was done.

No matter how tough life got for Ms. Hepburn, she was determined to finish whatever she started and she always did just that.

Love

In this autobiography, Ms. Hepburn talks a lot about love and the first situation we see is Luddy's love for her. Ms. Hepburn was so busy becoming a star that she took Luddy for granted. Luddy never stopped loving or taking care of her. When they got married, he not only did he move cities for her but he also changed his name for her. Ms. Hepburn did not want to be called Mrs. Smith, so Luddy changed his name to S. Ogden Ludlow. Even after they were divorced, he continued to do whatever she needed him to do, he was always there for her and her family. Ms. Hepburn's sister, Peg, needed blood at one point and Luddy was right there with the right blood type and saved her life. It was not until close to the end of Luddy's life that Ms. Hepburn finally realized how much Luddy had always loved her and begin to repay him.

Ms. Hepburn had other boyfriends after she and Luddy divorced, one of which was Leland Hayward. She claimed to have loved Leland. However, she refused all of his proposals. While Leland was away on business, he fell in love and married someone else. Ms. Hepburn was heartbroken. Howard Hughes was another one of Ms. Hepburn's boyfriends and this relationship ended much the same as the others. She chose her career over love. Ms. Hepburn seemed to love acting more than anything or anyone else. She was good at acting and she knew it but was not conceited about it.

It was not until she met Spencer Tracy that loving someone else would become the most important thing to her. Ms. Hepburn and Tracy had a twenty-seven year affair but were never married. Ms. Hepburn fell hard for Tracy. This time she would be the one who would do whatever it took to make someone else happy, including living for twenty-seven years with a man who was married to someone else. Their relationship ended when Tracy died in 1967.

Style

Perspective

The perspective of this autobiography is told from the author to reveal Ms. Hepburn's point of view. She has chosen a very unique way of making the reader feel he is engaged in a conversation with Ms. Hepburn rather than reading her story. She pulls you in with questions you the reader are actually asking yourself and then she answers the same questions. Ms. Hepburn paints such a picture of the places she has been, whether she is describing a home or a setting, that you feel as though you are not just reliving the moment with her but actually there when it happened. This detail would not have the same feel to it if it were told by a second person, or even narrated. The book in its entirety would not be as enjoyable, because you would not get the impression of being there with her or realizing that she is realizing things about herself and her past as she is remembering her life.

Tone

The tone of this autobiography is opinionated and conversational. The bulk of this biography is based on Ms. Hepburn's opinion of how things happened in her life. While parts of it are based on facts such as what movies she made or who she may have dated the details are how she saw them. Ms. Hepburn also gives her opinion frequently while describing the people in her life, such as Howard Hughes. Ms. Hepburn believes that the fact that Hughes was deaf and refused to acknowledge this fact to people played a large role in people labeling Hughes as an oddball. She also believes all this contributed to Hughes death. When discussing the movie 'Rooster Cogburn,' Ms. Hepburn never touches on the movie itself. Instead she spends a page and a half on a very opinionated description of John Wayne with hardly any facts.

Another example of an opinionated viewpoint occurs when she discusses her love life. Throughout this autobiography, Ms. Hepburn talks about how lucky she has been and how lucky a life she has lead. However, most would not see her life as quite as lucky. She let relationship after good relationship end because she choose her career over love. Then when she finally finds someone who she can finally love enough to put them before her career and he is married to someone else for their entire twenty-seven years together. Ms. Hepburn is not even allowed to attend Tracy's funeral. Instead, she has to say he good byes at the funeral home. This would not be everyone's opinion of a lucky life.

This autobiography is similar to having a conversation with Ms. Hepburn. Throughout the entire book, she has a way of making you feel like you are sitting with her in her home and she is simply telling you stories of her life. One story may make her think of another story and she will trail off briefly and then return to the original story. Somehow



the reader is easily able to keep up with her train of thought. This autobiography is very enjoyable to read and the tone of conversation is a large part of the reason.

Structure

This autobiography is comprised of six chapters and each chapter has three to eight sub-chapters. The chapters are approximately one hundred pages long. The chapters are not titled however the sub-chapters are titled giving a glimpse of which part of Ms. Hepburn's life will be discussed.

This biography as a whole does not follow chronological order but the sub-chapters do keep to a time line. Ms. Hepburn may mention the death of someone in one chapter but not discuss them personally in any detail for several chapters. In other cases like when talking about her parents, she may tell when or how they died, but they will continue to be in the next few chapters.

There are some passages where Ms. Hepburn stops telling the story altogether and begins writing letters to people, and in one instance a house she is moving out of. At times the order in which things are happening or have happened becomes so blurred because she will get off track and begin talking about something else that she was reminded of while telling the first story. The confusion is always short lived and she will get herself back on track and finish the first thought.

This is an excellent biography and offers a fast-paced reading experience. The chapter breaks makes it almost impossible to put down. You almost feel as though it would be rude to interrupt her and put the book down.



Quotes

"You're my girl, aren't you? You're my favorite girl in the whole world" (Chapter 1, pg. 46.)

"Can you imagine anyone being so generous? Wasn't I lucky?" (Chapter 1, pg. 79.)

"Listen, let me tell you-yes, he was my beau but- and that's the biggest but you've ever heard: He was my friend!" (Chapter 2, pg. 94.)

"I was just full of the joy of life and opportunity and wild desire to be absolutely fascinating" (Chapter 2, pg. 124.)

"My dear, the only interest I have in you is the money I can make out of you" (Chapter 3, pg. 169.)

"I think that this weakness went a long way toward ruining Howard's life and making him into an oddball" (Chapter 3, pg. 194.)

"You've got to dream up everything" (Chapter 3, pg. 224.)

"He is so tall a tree that the sun must shine on him whatever the tangle in the jungle below" (Chapter 3, pg. 259.)

"If you can't do it, dear, I'll do it for you. It's one of my specialties" (Chapter 3, pg. 265.)

"Spencer's face was his canvas-and he painted from the inside out-with magic" (Chapter 3, pg. 272.)

" So just keep a-going-you can win. It's when you stop that you're done" (Chapter 4, pg. 349.)

"You give because you love and you cannot help giving. If you are lucky, you may be loved back" (Chapter 6, pg. 388.)



Topics for Discussion

What is the name of Ms. Hepburn's sibling that died? How did this child die?

When Ms. Hepburn was a child and pretended that she was boy, what was her name?

Who gave Ms. Hepburn her first acting job and when?

What was the reason or reason's for her divorce from Luddy?

Why did Jed Harris try to destroy Ms. Hepburn's career? What movie were they making when this happened?

What are the two main differences between Ms. Hepburn's relationship with Luddy and Tracy?

Give three movies Ms. Hepburn made with George Cukor.

How many movies did Ms. Hepburn make with Spencer Tracy?