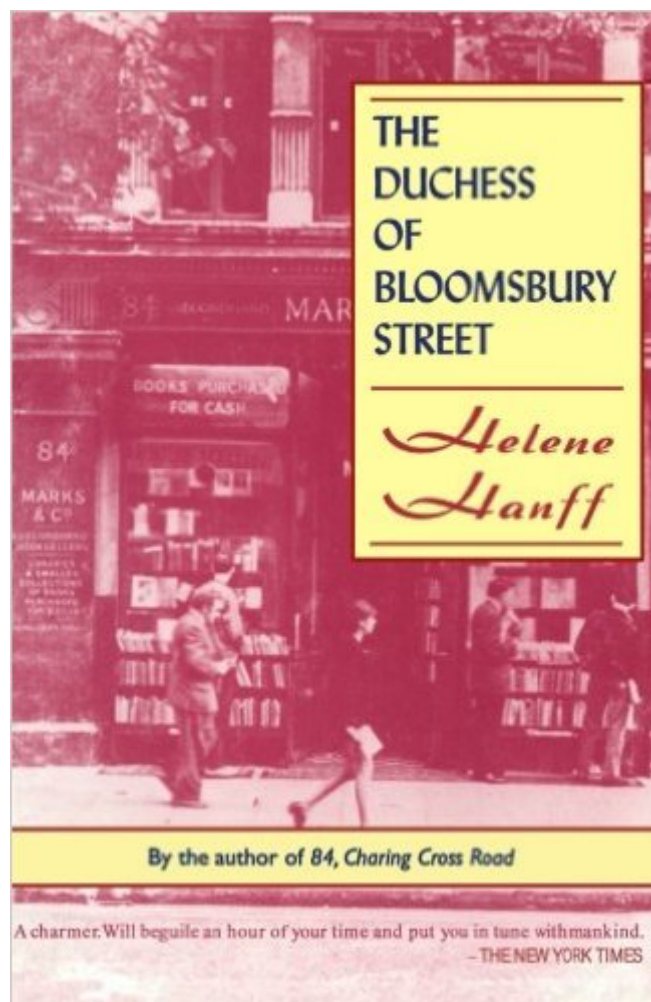


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# Duchess Of Bloomsbury Street



## Synopsis

A zesty memoir of the celebrated writer's travels to England where she meets the cherished friends from 84, Charing Cross Road.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Perhaps nothing will make you want to see London as much as reading this inspired sequel to "84, Charing Cross Road." Reading this book was like visiting London with a dear friend. I loved the images Helene evoked: entering Claridge's for a fashionable lunch just like Noel Coward's characters; gawking at Elizabeth Barrett's home in Wimpole Street; thrilling at the sight of Dickens' home in Doughty Street; seeing a play at the Old Vic; watching the flag fly at Windsor Castle signalling the Queen is in residence; making a purchase at Harrod's, and so much more. What a great book to read before flying across The Pond yourself. Duchess chronicles the second part of Helene's story when she finally makes the trip of a lifetime and visits the England she has hungered for all her life. Her meeting with the Doel family and other characters is heartwarming and proves that dreams do come true!

I first read this book and 84, CHARING CROSS ROAD ten years before visiting London for the first time. Before I made my second trip (this time travelling with my mother), I reread them and all but forced my mother to do the same. So strong an effect did they have on both of us that when we walked past the Kenilworth Hotel and I mentioned to my mother that that was where Helene had

stayed, she didn't even ask, "Helene who?" And we were both touched to see that, although Marks and Co. is long gone, there is now a plaque on Charing Cross Road indicating where it once stood, so that all who loved the books can feel a little closer to Helene and Frank.

Helene Hanff was a writer whose dream was to go to London and experienced the Englishness she read and saw on movies. She yearned to see it for herself, she was unable to do so in her 20 years letters correspondence with Frank. At last, her chance arrived when she was invited to go... This book is more like a sequel to "84 Charing Cross Road", Helene long overdue visit to London. Like her diary, this is a collection of her encounters, thoughts and emotions when she finally stepped foot on London, her feeling for the book store-Marks & Co. and her meeting with Frank's wife, Nora and daughter, Sheila. An enchanting book filled with Helene's passion for London. In this journal, Helene expressed her love for London and books. Accounted her sights and thoughts and answered a few doubts about "84 Charing Cross Road". It's full of brilliant, facetious comments and of course a page-turner!

When people dream about going somewhere for a very long time, their hopes are often let down when they get there because they have idealized it for so long. This is certainly not the case for Helene Hanff. After the publishing of her correspondence with a London second-hand bookshop, (titled "84 Charing Cross Road"), Ms. Hanff finally visits her beloved England and feels London's sidewalks beneath her feet. She went looking for the "England of English Literature", and it was indeed there. The truth in this statement unravels with each line of this wonderful book. By the end, one has not only read an account of a trip to England full of humor and happiness, but also met a true kindred spirit who will never be forgotten by her readers.

After reading "84 Charing Cross Road" and now "The Dutchess of Bloomsbury Street", I can't understand why Helene never made it as a writer. She is a master wordsmith that learned well from her mentors John Donne etc... This travelogue is a true gem. Helene takes us along on her quirky trip through London and the countryside; introduces us to the new personalities and phobias and makes us feel we're there with her. As she portrayed herself in "84", Helene Hanff is no shrinking violet and takes to her new celebrity well. I think we've all known people like Helene Hanff. Thank God her "literature" lives on for through these pages, she is still us... Horray !!

I loved Hanff's book, 84 Charing Cross Road, and I have to say this sequel to the story is fantastic.

Hanff was a witty, intelligent, and incredibly well read writer who does not mince words. Her opinions are stated without apologies, and even if you don't always agree with her assessments of literature, history, and England, you have to admire her for telling things like they are or rather were in 1971. Despite the nearly 30 years, her observations do not come across as dated or trite but sharp and, I believe, useful for any traveler venturing to London. Even if you never get over to the U.K., this book offers a vicarious thrill for those who (like myself) dream of doing and seeing exactly what Hanff did in London. Only complaint, the book is too short!

A nice sequel to "84, Charring Cross Road", this book details Hanff's travels, in diary form, when she makes her long-awaited trip to England. It was lovely to read of travel in a kinder, gentler, more innocent time when one did not need to fear flying nor the strangers one might meet. And meet them she did! Hanff went to England knowing no one, with a few introductions, and spent time with so many people that it made my head spin. What a gal! She is brash and lovable, and never minces words when giving her opinions, which are plentiful throughout this book. It was a delight to read of her travels, her emotions, and her reactions.

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