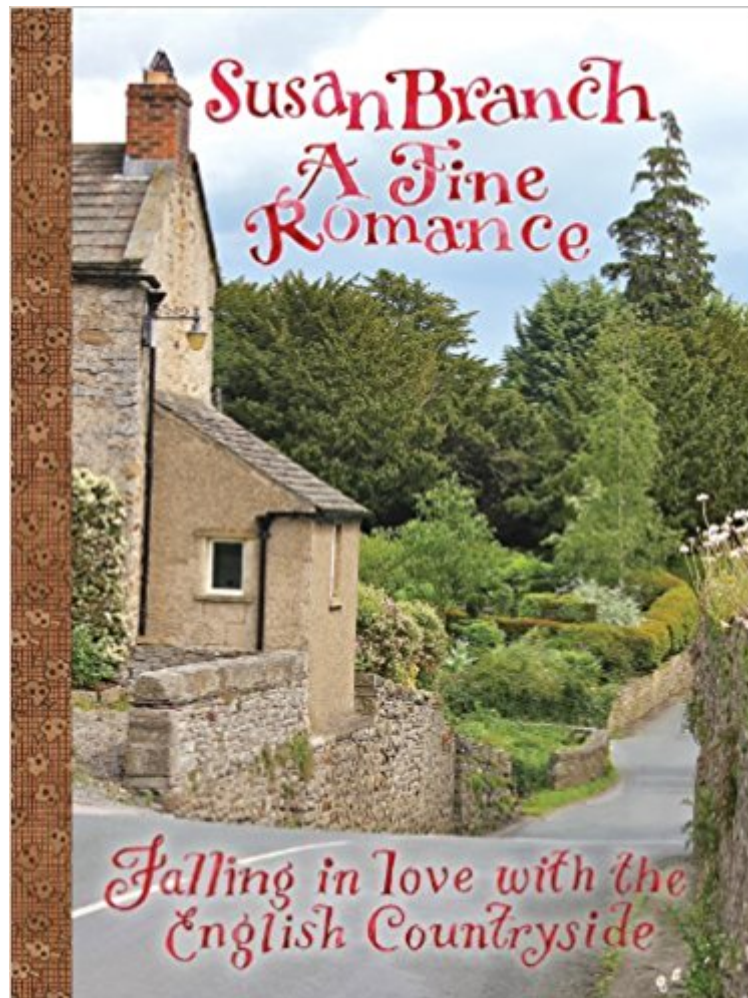




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# A Fine Romance: Falling In Love With The English Countryside



## Synopsis

Travel writing at its best by Susan Branch, New York Times's best selling author, in *A Fine Romance, Falling in Love with the English Countryside*. This charming book is part love story, part travel guide ~ a hand-written and watercolored diary/journal of Branch's six-day transatlantic crossing on board the Queen Mary 2 and two-month ramble through the backroads of rural England. There are over three hundred photos, countless watercolor illustrations, wonderful quotes, recipes, a book list, a movie list, hand-drawn maps and so much more. Travel with Susan as she makes her way through wildflower hedgerows to visit the homes and gardens of her literary and artistic heroes including Beatrix Potter and Jane Austen. It's a travel guide that will help you plan a trip of your own, lovely for the armchair traveler because Susan really does take you there, and perfect for all Downton Abbey anglophiles. When you are finished, go to Susan's website where there is an interactive Appendix to the book .... you can experience driving across the Dales with Susan's own videos and find links to everything she writes about, the cottages and gardens you will want to see yourself. *A Fine Romance* is book three of a Susan Branch trilogy. Book One is *The Fairy Tale Girl*, followed by *Martha's Vineyard, Isle of Dreams*, and then *A Fine Romance, Falling in Love with the English Countryside*. All three are hand-lettered, watercolored, filled with photos, recipes and quotes and, as Susan says, "as much magic as I could possibly stuff between two covers." Bon Voyage!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Reese Witherspoon - Draper James. com A Southern Style Blog FEB 13, 2016 BOOKS DJ READS:

EIGHT BOOKS ABOUT LOVE. This time of year, there is nothing we would rather do than delve into a gripping love story. So we asked eight of our favorite bookstores in the South to give us their picks for books that explore the many facets of love, from tragic romances to unbreakable family ties. Number 2: *A Fine Romance: Falling in Love With the English Countryside* by Susan Branch Chosen by Full Circle Bookstore in Oklahoma City, OK: With beautiful pictures and handwritten print throughout the book, this diary of love in England is a true joy. --Reese Witherspoon

Blog.DraperJames.com Reviewer's Rating: 5 stars. Anglophiles listen up: this book is for you!

Talented artist, writer, and blogger Susan Branch has put together a charming travel journal of her two month long trip to England. *A Fine Romance* is chock full of wonderful photos she and her husband took on their trip interspersed with the colorful drawings and lettering that have set apart her work and style as distinctly her own. The trip starts off with a six day ocean voyage, onboard the Queen Mary 2, from New York to Southampton, England. This dream trip is divided into mainly three areas: the Southwest of England, the Lake District, and the Cotswolds. They visit many attractions familiar to any self-respecting Brit lover such as Sissinghurst, Royal Ascot, Stonehenge, Chawton (Jane Austen's home), and Hilltop (Beatrix Potter's home). But what is really fun is learning about places less familiar, like Bateman's (the home of Rudyard Kipling), Charleston (the home of the Bloomsbury Group's Clive and Vanessa Bell), and Smallhythe Place (home of Victorian stage actress Ellen Terry). Armchair travel at its best! Sarah Askew 4/29/15

Reviewer's Rating: 5 stars. I couldn't have read *A Fine Romance* at a more perfect time. It was the perfect book to read while cooped up in a hospital room waiting for a loved one to heal. I sailed right along with Susan Branch and her husband, Joe, as they journeyed to England via ship and explored the country for two months. This book is not only Susan's diary during their vacation in England, it is also a very informational and exhilarating guide to both well-known and hidden places in England, many of which belong to the National Trust. Above all else, this book is a journey of the senses, using a mixture of her characteristic font that looks like handwriting, gorgeous watercolors, and real photographs to describe, with incredibly absorbing detail, two months of smelling, tasting, and sight-seeing springtime England. The beginning chapters quickly but romantically describe how Susan and Joe met and fell in love. It's an ordinary love story bedecked with remarkable details like the illustration of Joe with an enormous bouquet of flowers--an illustration I cannot help but keep revisiting. After enjoying their first journey to England in 2004, Susan and Joe decide to visit again in 2012, this time documenting their adventures. Susan's diaries wholly reflect their love for history, food, gardens, art, and old-timey movies and music. I was mesmerized by the beauty of this book, often spending several minutes examining pictures and

illustrations--their messy ship room, or rather, cocoon;Â strange English curiosities such as the magnetic soap holder,Â gorgeous illustrations like Susan s black teapot drawing, and inventive mixed media techniques such as the watercolor tea being poured into a picture of a real teacup.Â It took me at least an hour to carefully comb through the Beatrix Potter pages.Â Because of Susan s excellent attention to detail, I felt like I was exploring Hill Top as Beatrix Potter herself. I could smell the raw celeryÂ smell of the air, taste the bangers and beans, and feel the petals of each flower.Â My heart danced with joy each time Susan listed all the springtime flowers, with accompanying illustrations so perfectly lush it looked like the flowers were growing from the pages of the book.Â Ordinary details such as eating hot milk cake while knitting with a friend, wood pigeons cooing My toe hurts, Betty;Â and hillsides dotted with lambsÂ made me fist pump the air in elation. This book is balm for the spirit.Â Whether you are looking for a magical retreat, a helpful and incomparable England travel guide, or inspiration to write a memoir or scrapbook of a special moment in your life, this book has something for everyoneâ |. Hannah Jane Chambers 2/19/16 --Johnson County (Kansas) Public Libraries reviews jocolibrary.org --This text refers to an alternate Hardcover edition.

I love storytelling, and especially, I love doing it in a creatively visual style. I hope you enjoy it too!

OK, color me a Susan Branch fangirl. IÃ¢ÂÂve been collecting her books since the first one, and got my sister hooked on them shortly afterwards. One of my annual gifts to sis is at least one SB calendar. And then I discovered her blog shortly after its inception. Oh, joy. So, when she announced her trip to England and regularly posted about her exploits in advance of the book, I just couldnÃ¢ÂÂt wait for the result. Naturally, I ordered one for my sister, as well. After that intro, itÃ¢ÂÂs obvious that IÃ¢ÂÂm a bit biased, but I can honestly say the book exceeded my expectations. If youÃ¢ÂÂre already a fan of Susan, you wonÃ¢ÂÂt want to miss out on it. If youÃ¢ÂÂre new to Susan, this is a good introduction. If youÃ¢ÂÂre an Anglophile, are thinking of traveling to England, or like beautiful, whimsical art books, then this is also worth a look-see. So, what do you get? Well, this is pretty much a step-by-step recounting of the weeksÃ¢ÂÂ long trip Susan and her husband Joe took, from doorstep to doorstep. Reading about the voyage on the Queen Mary 2 alone is worth the price of admission. A transatlantic crossing by ship is now on my wish list. While in England, Susan and Joe visited friends, went for long walks and drives, stopped by country houses and gardens, shopped, ate at pubs and tea shops, and just breathed in the ambiance of England. If you yearn for the glamour of London or

better known tourist spots, then this probably isn't the book for you. But if you prefer a more quaint and leisurely sort of trip while taking in the quiet beauty of small towns and countryside, then this is most definitely the book you want. And, of course, it's perfect for armchair tourists. You never even have to actually leave home, but can vicariously experience Susan and Joe's journey while in your jammies. Susan has a wonderful writing style. She takes great joy in the small things in life and she infects her readers with her generous spirit and humor. And, as with all of Susan's books, they are a visual delight. All of the text is handwritten in Susan's distinctive calligraphy. The book is also jam-packed with illustrations, predominantly Susan's watercolors, but also photographs. The book isn't just pretty, tho; it also has a serious side. It's very practical and informative and, if you want to know more about any of the sites visited, there's a terrific appendix as well as additional information on her blog. This is a book you could easily devour in one sitting, but then come back to in order to savor individual passages or chapters. Buy one as a treat for yourself. And then buy one (or lots) as a treat for a friend. Enjoy!

This book will be the envy of anyone who has ever kept a travel diary! It helps that Susan Branch is a gifted artist: this book is 'chock a block' with illustrations and artistic embellishments. Many items have that 'tucked in' between the pages feel that working travel diaries accumulate. As examples, there are occasional recipes for iconic dishes (like scones.) The 'handmade' quality of the work is carried through even to the point of 'hand printing' the text. Indeed, the book is in a travel diary sized format (fits a large purse or day pack.) It is just right for reading in bed rather than for exhibiting on a coffee table. The text is warm, friendly and engaging. The travel observations and the sites visited are very well selected (I have been to many/most of them) and the descriptions of the visits are 'spot on!' Armchair travelers will like this book very well but it also shines as a suggested itinerary for independent travelers. What the author describes and illustrates is what I found to be on the ground.

Really enjoyed this book. The lovely pictures, handwritten, and scrapbook effect were very pleasing. It felt like reading a friend's scrapbook of her travels. It is a nice way to find out more about England. I purchased a copy for a friend.

I have just finished this much anticipated journal! I couldn't put it down! Susan's journal, documenting her recent trip to England, takes us along with her and Joe, every step of the way ~ over hill and dale, visiting friends, castles, landmarks, pubs, tea rooms and antique stores. If you

can't get on the QE2, this is, by far, the next best way to see England. This gem is handwritten, and illustrated in Susan's wonderful watercolor style and peppered with lots of fun, candid photos. As an added treat, Susan has an interactive appendix on her website ([...]) complete with tips and additional details about where they went, where they stayed and what not to miss. A great take-along guide if you happen to sail to England!

Susan Branch is one of my favorites. I love her stationary, calendars, note cards, scrapbook stickers and the list goes on. Her writing makes you feel as you are sitting with a friend having a conversation. Her artwork is whimsical, fun and will cause you to pause on each page to appreciate her creativity and talent. A Fine Romance is a beautifully written story of her trip to the English countryside. She and Joe explore the tiny English villages where they stay in apartments, walk the cobblestone streets, visit castles, writer's homes, hike footpaths through the countryside and dine in pubs. You will fall in love with her stories and as you close the book as you finish, you will want to pack your bags and head to England.

This book can cost you money. Every time I lend it to a friend, she loves it so much that I have to buy one for her (four, so far), but the latest one not only wanted a book of her own, now she's obsessed with a crossing on Queen Mary 2. So - even though I'm not a fan of ships, we're plotting ways to pay for this trip of a lifetime. In addition, she says that we must dress for dinner every night, and VERY formally no less, so now I have to diet so that I'll be able to step into the dining room with my head held high, instead of cowering inside a shawl or stole to hide my bulges. So - my suggestion to you - just read your book quietly, don't tell anyone, and send your friends one anonymously. If they mention the book, tell them that you've already read it, and how much you enjoyed it, but if they suggest a crossing, tell them you get seasick. Or do you need to diet also, as I do? Great motivator, an elegant ship. You'll fall in love with Susan Branch and want to become a Girl Friend (as her followers are called), but your journey won't end when you finish this book. She has a blog (her name) and the most delightful reading anywhere.

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