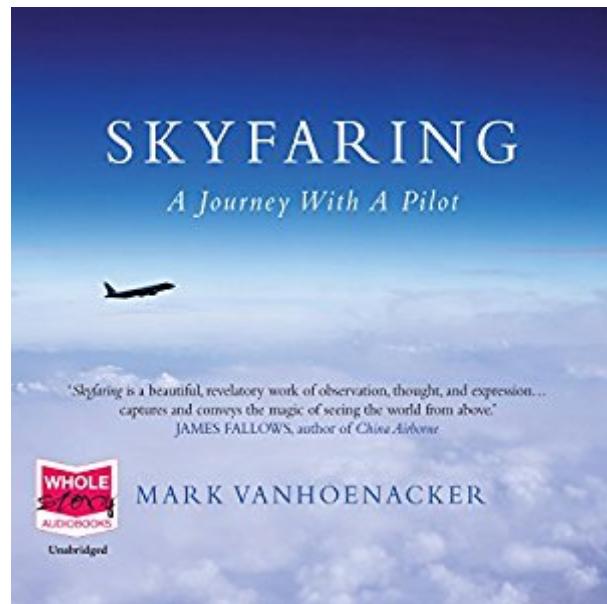


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# Skyfaring



## Synopsis

In *Skyfaring*, airline pilot and flight romantic Mark Vanhoenacker shares his irrepressible love of flying on a journey from day to night, from new ways of mapmaking and the poetry of physics to the names of winds and the nature of clouds. Here, anew, is the simple wonder and transcendent joy of motion and the remarkable new perspectives that height and distance bestow on everything we love.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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## Customer Reviews

Pleasant reading from a warm and friendly pilot. If you're interested in what goes on in a cockpit of a 747 (and some other equipment) this book is a good start. It is not technical however the author is very good at explaining technical concepts such as air speed vs. ground speed or how air, moisture, temperature, etc. all affect flight. What makes this an interesting read is that the pilot shares his personal relationship with flying and traveling, going into his family history and past flights and trips, as well as reporting on his time in the cockpit. In fact, for the first two chapters I was thinking that this would be more an autobiography and travelogue than what I expected it to be. In the end, it is a nicely balanced book; you get to know the author and, like him (or at least I did) and you get to know more about what happens in the front of the plane as well as how the pilots spend their time on the ground. A good read, As a very frequent flier (many years of 100k-350k miles) I would have liked there to have been a bit more mechanics, but I was satisfied with what was there. I learned a bit more about what was happening as I slept at 40,000 feet. Capt. Vanhoenacker is obviously well

educated, has a feel for the arts and expresses himself in a manner that is pleasant to read as well as educational.

If you enjoyed "Crime and Punishment" by Dostoevsky, you may enjoy Skyfaring. This is both a testament to the author's skill and the reason you may end up abandoning the book after the first couple of chapters. This book is not so much about aviation as about the author. Most of the prose is dedicated to his personal experience... not even flying, but living: the childhood memories, his sense of time, place, purpose of life and so on. As other reviewers have noticed, there is very little about technical aspects of flying, although some random bits are unexpectedly well covered in great detail, comparable even to textbooks: for example he goes into explaining indicated vs actual airspeed. I actually managed to read all of it, but not because I was enjoying the endless self-reflection of the author, but because I was looking for a specific answer to the obvious question of how did he manage to become a major airline pilot so quickly and so late in life? There are myriads of private pilots with multiple ratings racking up their CFL hours in hopes of joining a regional airline some day, but in his case it was more like "I decided to become a pilot at 26 and here I am flying a jet on international routes 4 years later". Perhaps the job market for pilots was better in the UK in 2004?

This is an unusual book that might appeal to a wide range of readers: Those interested in aircraft, airliner passengers, and those who enjoy good writing irrespective of the subject. The author is a US-born pilot who, after starting his career as a business consultant, took commercial pilot training in the UK and now flies 747s for British Airways as a First Officer. The book ranges widely over the author's experiences as a pilot and as a passenger. The technical aspects of pre-flight, flight, and the duties of the pilot are described but are not the focus of the story. Instead, the author muses on his reactions to the strange life of a pilot in which one crosses immense stretches of the globe in less than a day, crossing time-zones, weather patterns, deserts, and mountain ranges with often only a brief contact with the destination before returning to the point of departure. Strange, too, that a pilot rarely flies with the same crew again. Instead, this small group of professionals, in the cockpit and in the cabin, coalesce in the preflight briefing, perform as a unit for the duration of the flight, and then disband, maybe never to reunite again. Mr. Vanhoenacker brings a literary background and a poet's sensibility to his writing. But, perhaps, the most remarkable aspects of the book are his powers of observation coupled with an introspection that vividly conveys how he is affected by what he sees. We share his delight at the

changing light, at multiple sunrises and sunsets on the same journey, at the moon on the ocean nearly 40,000 feet below, and at an aircraft, coming to meet its shadow as it lands.

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