**Summary**

Nancy is a young English woman who works as a guard at a detention centre for asylum seekers in the East End of London. She left school early and gave up her ambitions to be a writer when discouraged by her older boyfriend Tom. She now lives comfortably with Tom in a big house with plenty of money, but she is dissatisfied with the empty life they lead, in which shopping is the most important thing. Her job has given her financial independence for the first time, although Tom resents it.

When a fellow guard at work reprimands an asylum seeker (George) for breaking the centre’s rules about how many biscuits they can take, she starts to move away from Tom and her old life towards something of greater value. She is further estranged from Tom when he rails against asylum seekers at a dinner party given by Nancy’s best friend Harriet and her boyfriend Steve.

She is attracted to George. She admires his defiance of authority and his kindness towards the child to whom he gave the biscuits. When he tells her he is leaving she gives him her phone number, which is against the rules. Some time later George writes a letter to Nancy at work. She realises she is falling in love with him, and so when she gets a text message from George she arranges a meeting, and they express their feelings and seal it with a kiss.

She leaves Tom immediately, sets up home in a small flat and sees George every day. But then she travels to Scotland to Harriet and Steve’s wedding. On her return, George has disappeared, her flat has been turned over, and several valuable things are missing. Of course, George is the obvious suspect because he had a key, but Nancy doesn’t think it was him.

At Harriet and Steve’s post-honeymoon party she meets Tom, gets drunk and allows herself to be taken back to Tom’s. Tom is hoping for a reconciliation. But she finds her watch hidden in his house, and Tom admits he did the ‘robbery’ to try and get her back by making George seem like a criminal.

Nancy calls the police, and next day Harriet takes her to visit George. They are delighted to see each other again, confess their love, although wisely know that the future won’t be easy for them.

**Before reading**

1. It shows a young woman looking through a (wire-netting) fence.
2. Student’s own answer.
3. Nancy has a job and a boyfriend. George comes from another country. They want to be together but it is difficult.
4. George is an asylum seeker, Nancy works as a guard and her boyfriend’s name is Tom.
5. London
Within High Fences  Penny Hancock

Check your reading

Chapter 1
1. a T, b T, c F, d T, e F
2. a, c, e
3. police officer, fireman, soldier, postal worker, traffic warden, etc.

Chapter 2
1. a a card which shows who you are, b a person who goes to another country for help because of problems in their own country
2. a, d, e
3. That they are not their friends; that they agree with all the rules.
4. She wants the man to know that she is a friend; she thinks it is a nice thing to give the boy the biscuits.

Chapter 3
1. b, c
2. a Nancy, b George, c Nancy, d Nancy, e George
3. She feels that it’s changing (and she and Tom can’t stop this).

Chapter 4
1. c, f, a, d, b, e
2. That they steal things, they take jobs and houses, and come to get a good life.

Chapter 5
1. 1 d, 2 a, 3 c, 4 c, 5 b

Chapter 6
1. She gives George her telephone number, and tells him to phone her if he has any problems.
2. Student’s own answers.

Chapter 7
1. She starts to hate her life with Tom.
2. She gets a letter from him.

Chapter 8
1. That she is falling in love with him.
2. b, c
3. He kisses her.

Chapter 9
1. a Tom, b Nancy, c Nancy, d Tom, e Nancy
2. a, and possibly b

Chapter 10
1. c, a, d, e, b
2. She decides to become a writer. She wants to do something she believes in.
3. That everything is not going to be perfect.

Chapter 11
1. 1 c, 2 c, 3 a, 4 b, 5 d
2. CD player, small TV, gold watch

Chapter 12
1. a T, b F, c F, d T, e T

Chapter 13
1. a George, b Paris, c thief, d party, e alone
2. Someone says her name.

Chapter 14
1. d, b, f, a, e, c

Chapter 15
1. 1 b, 2 a, 3 b, 4 b, 5 b, 6 a, 7 b, 8 a

After reading
1–10. Student’s own answers.