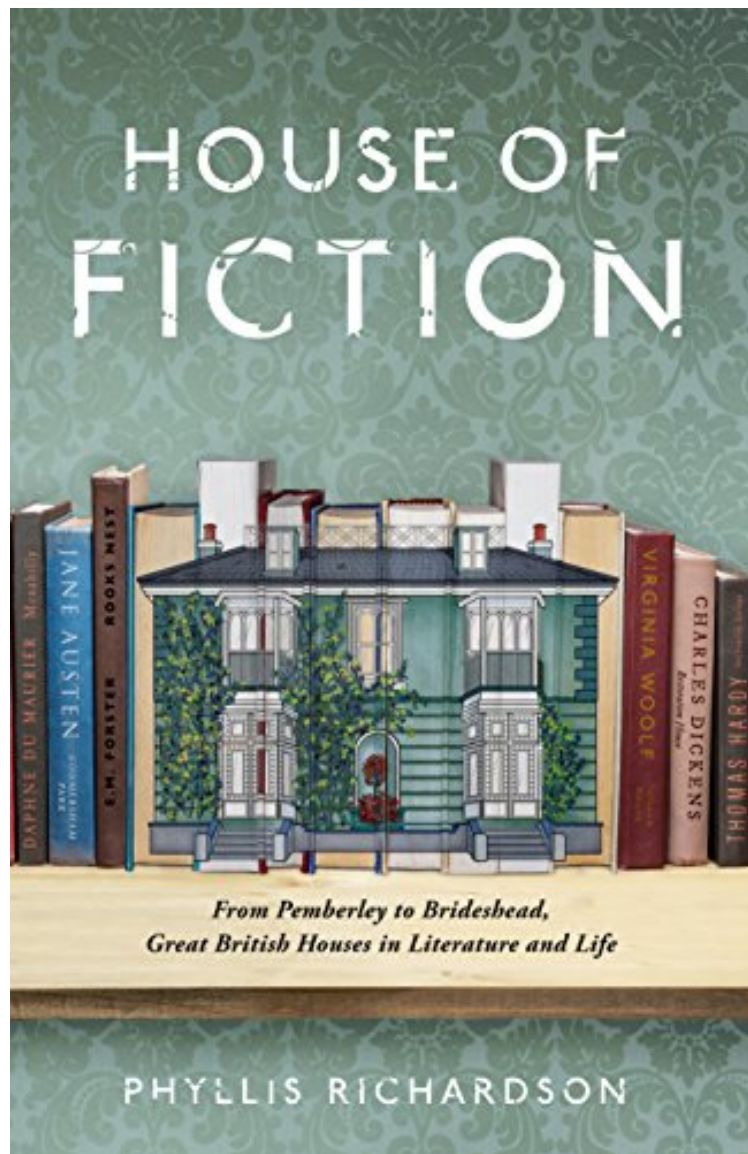


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The House of Fiction: From Pemberley to Brideshead, Great British Houses in Literature and Life

Phyllis Richardson

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very dense so I would recommend not to read it all in one

SessionBy GonzaOne interesting essay about the most famous mansion in Literature, some of which became characters in itself. Very dense so I would recommend not to read it all in one Session.

Houses in literature have captured readers' imaginations for centuries, from Gothic castles to Georgian stately homes, Bloomsbury townhouses and high-rise penthouses. Step on to a tour of real and imagined houses that great English writers have used to reflect the themes of their novels... houses that became like characters themselves, embodiments of the social and historical currents of their time. Phyllis Richardson takes us on a journey through history to discover how authors' personal experiences in their homes helped to shape the imaginative dwellings that have become icons of English literature: Virginia Woolf's love of Talland House in Cornwall is palpable in *To the Lighthouse*, just as London's Bloomsbury is ever-present in *Mrs Dalloway*. E.M. Forster's childhood home at Rook's Nest mirrors the idyllic charm of *Howards End*. Evelyn Waugh plotted Charles Ryder's return to *Brideshead* while a guest at Madresfield. Jane Austen was no stranger to a manor house or a good ballroom. And Horace Walpole's 'little Gothic castle' in Twickenham inspired him to write the first English Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*. But the English country house, from the idyllic to the unloved, is also viewed through a modern lens – Kazuo Ishiguro's *Darlington Hall*, Ian McEwan's *Tallis House*, Alan Hollinghurst's *Two Acres*. Using historic sources, authors' biographies, letters, news accounts, and the novels themselves, *The House of Fiction* presents some of the most influential houses in Britain through the stories they inspired, while offering candid glimpses of the writers who brought them to life.

"If you want a good read should the weather turn, I recommend *The House of Fiction*, which tells Virginia Woolf's love of Talland House, in Cornwall, dramatised in *To the Lighthouse*, and the confessional delight of Jane Austen drinking "too much wine" in the lavish ballroom of a Hampshire manor house." -- *Summer Picks* * *Sunday Times* * "Fascinating... [Phyllis Richardson's] research is formidable. Her book does much more, though, than track real architectural detail in made-up houses. It reveals key imaginative shifts in British authors' attitudes to homes over the years." * *Sunday Times* * About the Author Phyllis Richardson is the author of the *XS* series, *Nano House*, and *Superlight*. She has written for the *Financial Times*, the *Observer*, *DWELL* magazine, and the now-defunct *Los Angeles Times Book* .