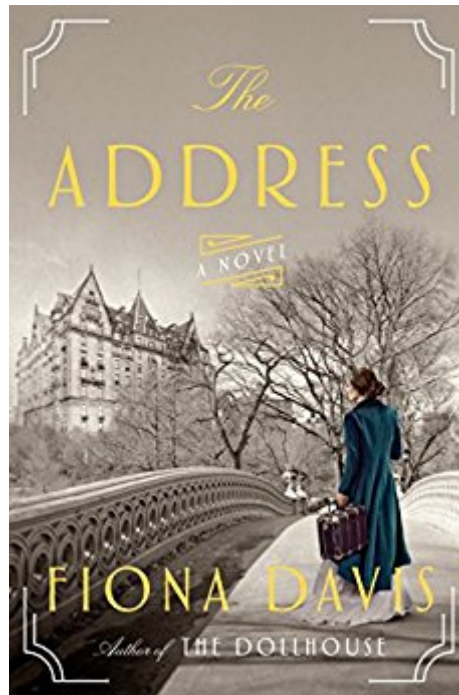




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The Address: A Novel



Synopsis

THE NATIONAL BESTSELLER Fiona Davis, author of *The Dollhouse*, returns with a compelling novel about the thin lines between love and loss, success and ruin, passion and madness, all hidden behind the walls of The Dakota—New York City's most famous residence. After a failed apprenticeship, working her way up to head housekeeper of a posh London hotel is more than Sara Smythe ever thought she'd make of herself. But when a chance encounter with Theodore Camden, one of the architects of the grand New York apartment house The Dakota, leads to a job offer, her world is suddenly awash in possibility—a no mean feat for a servant in 1884. The opportunity to move to America, where a person can rise above one's station. The opportunity to be the female manager of The Dakota, which promises to be the greatest apartment house in the world. And the opportunity to see more of Theo, who understands Sara like no one else...and is living in The Dakota with his wife and three young children. In 1985, Bailey Camden is desperate for new opportunities. Fresh out of rehab, the former party girl and interior designer is homeless, jobless, and penniless. Two generations ago, Bailey's grandfather was the ward of famed architect Theodore Camden. But the absence of a genetic connection means Bailey won't see a dime of the Camden family's substantial estate. Instead, her *cousin*—Melinda—Camden's biological great-granddaughter—will inherit almost everything. So when Melinda offers to let Bailey oversee the renovation of her lavish Dakota apartment, Bailey jumps at the chance, despite her dislike of Melinda's vision. The renovation will take away all the character and history of the apartment Theodore Camden himself lived in...and died in, after suffering multiple stab wounds by a madwoman named Sara Smythe, a former Dakota employee who had previously spent seven months in an insane asylum on Blackwell's Island. One hundred years apart, Sara and Bailey are both tempted by and struggle against the golden excess of their respective ages—for Sara, the opulence of a world ruled by the Astors and Vanderbilts; for Bailey, the free-flowing drinks and cocaine in the nightclubs of New York City—and take refuge and solace in the Upper West Side's gilded fortress. But a building with a history as rich—and often tragic—as The Dakota can't hold its secrets forever, and what Bailey discovers in its basement could turn everything she thought she knew about Theodore Camden—and the woman who killed him—on its head. With rich historical detail, nuanced characters, and gorgeous prose, Fiona Davis once again delivers a compulsively readable novel that peels back the layers of not only a famed institution, but the lives—and lies—of the beating hearts within.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

4.5 starsFiona Davis's new novel focuses on The Dakota in New York City. The title is cleverly drawn from a review of the building following its opening in 1885 in which the reviewer stated that "the Dakota will undoubtedly be known as 'The Address' of New York's West Side." Davis melds historical events with a spectacular tale of greed, passion, love and sacrifice told in a dual timeline format alternating between the mid-1880s and 1985. While I enjoyed both stories, I preferred Bailey's in 1985 because I found poor Sara's story so sad. The ending of The Address was spectacular because Davis cleverly connects the two tales and includes a surprise I never saw coming. It was perfect. My favorite part of the book was the inclusion of so much historical detail regarding The Dakota. It is fascinating to me that the walls are stuffed with thick horsehair and the space between each floor contains three feet of mud. Davis explains why each apartment is shaped differently, and the complex effort it took to accomplish that feat. She also mentions the ghosts that reside there, and the numerous famous people that lived there over The Dakota's life. She includes so many more fabulous stories and descriptions, but I do not have enough time nor space to include them all. Her Author's

Note at the end was welcome as she explained the events she altered a bit for the sake of her story. I always appreciate when an author takes the time to elaborate on his or her inspiration and to clarify purposeful historical inaccuracies. *The Address* is a superb read. I look forward to my next trip to New York City when I plan to walk by The Dakota and pay attention in person to the many details I learned while reading this wonderful book.

I love a book that combines history and mystery. This one is intriguing with a twist. Sad to learn how horrible people were treated and that evil people haven't changed over the centuries.

Fiona Davis's novel *THE ADDRESS* tells a captivating story about life in Manhattan's historic Dakota building. Set in the late 1800s and in the 1980s, two tales told back and forth, about the tangled web created by Theo Camden, one of the fictional architects of the building, and how the unfortunate circumstances of his involvement with the building in what was then the new frontier of the Upper West Side. Mr. Camden lured Miss Sara Smthye from her job at the London's exclusive Langham Hotel to a new position at the soon-to-open one-of-a-kind apartment building and she took a chance on what would be an adventure that was much more than she bargained for. Flash forward to the 1980s and we read about the descendants of Mr. Camden, one legitimate and one not, who are in their own fine mess. Bailey, just out of rehab is trying to turn her life around and her cousin, Melinda, who could use a stint of her own, or at the very least a lesson in kindness, instead she is making a design mess of the gorgeous apartment she inherited at the Dakota where her long lost grandfather once resided. There are so many juicy characters in the storyline and both eras are filled with life. Davis is a magnificent storyteller and adds much richness to both setting, intrigue, and character development. Settle in for the lively history of a bygone era and get lost in the halls and walls of this iconic building while imagining how the residents who once called it home lived.

Somewhat let down at the end. The characters were left a little hanging.

Excellent!

THE ADDRESS is a breathtaking novel from Fiona Davis that has elevated her to one of my favorite authors. Using the Dakota in New York as a backdrop for the story in the 1880s and 1980s, Davis presents us with two female lead characters that you root for from page one. The writing is fantastic.

The imagery is beautiful as Davis is able to place the reader in places they have never been with her descriptions. The characters are all very complex and the plot line has a few unexpected twists that all make perfect sense. I didn't realize how much mystery was in this novel and that made it even better and more versatile for readers. I don't want to give away any plot points as it made the read much better reading it blind but you cannot go wrong by picking up this book and investing your reading time in it. I received an advanced copy of this novel from First to Read.

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