

# [PDF] The Music Room: A Memoir

William Fiennes - pdf download free book

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**Books Details:**

Title: The Music Room: A Memoir  
Author: William Fiennes  
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**Description:**

**From Publishers Weekly** Just after Fiennes (*Snow Geese*) was born, his family moved into a medieval English estate that included a castle surrounded by a moat. The estate was an inheritance passed down from his father's ancestors since the 14th century. The castle in particular proves to be the book's most evocative metaphor for how every man is and is not an island. The book is part memoir, part journalistic profile and philosophical digression, all revolving around Richard, Fiennes' eldest brother, who suffered from extreme epilepsy. In taut and exacting prose that profits grandly from vivid descriptions of the estate grounds and the working-class people who care for it, Fiennes recounts life alone in a home that was mostly only semiprivate. It was often used by TV and film

crews as a backdrop. His older twin brother and sister went to boarding school while Richard convalesced in an insane asylum. Fiennes recalls the trials of familial love punctuated by a brother's violent seizures and outbursts (once scalding their mother's face with a hot cast-iron pan). His portrayal of Richard, moreover, is at once affectionate and brazenly honest. Fiennes allows him to come off as sick, magical yet somewhat boring (he talks incessantly about his favorite soccer team). The book feels fluffed up at times with asides on the history of epilepsy, but more often than not these serve the greater purpose of evoking a sense of continuity and reflection. *(Sept.)*

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**From** This sublimely evocative memoir details the author's experience of growing up in a fourteenth-century moated castle in Oxfordshire. The medieval structure turned Tudor stately home once employed fourteen gardeners, and has a "groined passage" and rooms that were slept in by kings and queens, but the drama of the place is overshadowed by the story of Fiennes's older brother Richard, afflicted with severe epilepsy from a young age. Richard's seizures leave him disoriented, "downput," and, eventually, so violent that he must be institutionalized, but in his stable moments he is charming and charismatic. Fiennes's account of his childhood is interwoven with passages about science's evolving understanding of epilepsy, which provide a clinical counterpoint to the emotional, elegiac narrative of a family living "in a country of undamaged brains," from which one member is "forever excluded."

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