

CORNWALL

Cornwall is one of the most beautiful places in the world, and it's only right that the windswept loneliness of it should be full of ghosts."

~ Daphne du Maurier

Cornwall's wild coastline, moorland mists, and tight-knit villages have long captured the imagination of writers. From gothic mysteries and smuggler legends to poetic reflections on land and loss, Cornwall's stories are shaped by both its elemental power and its quiet depth.

This guide brings together books, authors, and literary places that reflect the spirit of the southwest.



Set in Cornwall

Daphne du Maurier – ***Rebecca***

- ❖ A windswept gothic classic set in the fictional estate of Manderley, inspired by du Maurier's own life in Cornwall.

Winston Graham – ***Poldark***

- ❖ Historical drama meets Cornish mining life in this enduring series full of romance, politics, and windswept cliffs.

Patrick Gale – ***Notes from an Exhibition***

- ❖ Set in Penzance, this novel traces the life of a troubled artist and her family, unfolding memory by memory.

Helen Dunmore – ***Zennor in Darkness***

- ❖ A lyrical novel set during WWI, weaving fiction with real figures like D.H. Lawrence and his time in coastal Zennor.

Evie Wyld – *After the Fire, A Still Small Voice*

- ❖ Though not entirely set in Cornwall, this novel captures the isolation and emotional undercurrents of its rural setting.



Linked to Cornwall

- ❖ Daphne du Maurier – The region's most iconic literary figure, based for much of her life at Menabilly, the model for Manderley.
- ❖ Charles Causley – Cornish poet known for his plainspoken yet lyrical style, deeply rooted in local life and folklore.
- ❖ Patrick Gale – A contemporary novelist who lives in Cornwall and frequently uses it as a setting in his intimate, character-driven fiction.
- ❖ John Betjeman – Poet Laureate and longtime Cornwall lover; his verse captures both its beauty and fading traditions.
- ❖ Wyl Menmuir – Booker-longlisted author of *The Many and The Draw of the Sea*, Menmuir writes atmospheric fiction and nonfiction deeply connected to the Cornish coastline.
- ❖ Catrina Davies – Memoirist and musician whose book *Homesick* offers a raw, personal look at housing, inequality, and survival in modern Cornwall.
- ❖ Natasha Carthew – A working-class writer whose fiction is grounded in the rural and rugged edges of Cornwall; a fierce voice for social and environmental justice.



Literary Sites

- ❖ Fowey – Home to the Daphne du Maurier Festival and a town filled with literary charm and estuary views.
- ❖ Zennor – Visit the rugged village where D.H. Lawrence lived, walked, and wrote.
- ❖ Launceston – Birthplace of Charles Causley; don't miss the Causley Trust and literary house.
- ❖ St Ives – A longtime artists' and writers' haven with literary connections and inspiring sea views.
- ❖ The Morrab Library (Penzance) – A beautiful independent subscription library tucked away in a Victorian villa, filled with old volumes and palm-filled gardens.
- ❖ Bodmin Moor – A brooding, atmospheric landscape that has inspired gothic and historical fiction alike, including du Maurier's Jamaica Inn. Visit the real Jamaica Inn for a taste of smuggler lore and windswept mystery.
- ❖ Truro Cathedral Bookshop – A peaceful spot in Cornwall's only city, with a strong selection of poetry, regional writing, and spiritual texts—perfect for a quiet literary pause.



Explore more...

Bookshops worth a detour

- ❖ Falmouth Bookseller – A beloved independent bookshop with a great local section.
- ❖ The Edge of the World Bookshop (Penzance) – Beautifully curated and perfectly named.
- ❖ Bookends of Fowey – Great for second-hand du Maurier editions and Cornish finds.
- ❖ The Bodmin Bookshop – A friendly stop for fiction, maps, and local history.
- ❖ Clemo Books - Small but mighty shop just off Newquay high street with a beautiful curation of modern literature.

A Literary Walk

Start in Fowey, wandering the harbour paths and woods that inspired du Maurier. Continue along the South West Coast Path to Polridmouth Cove, thought to be the setting of Rebecca's climactic scenes. End with a bookshop stop and cream tea in town—jam first, of course!

