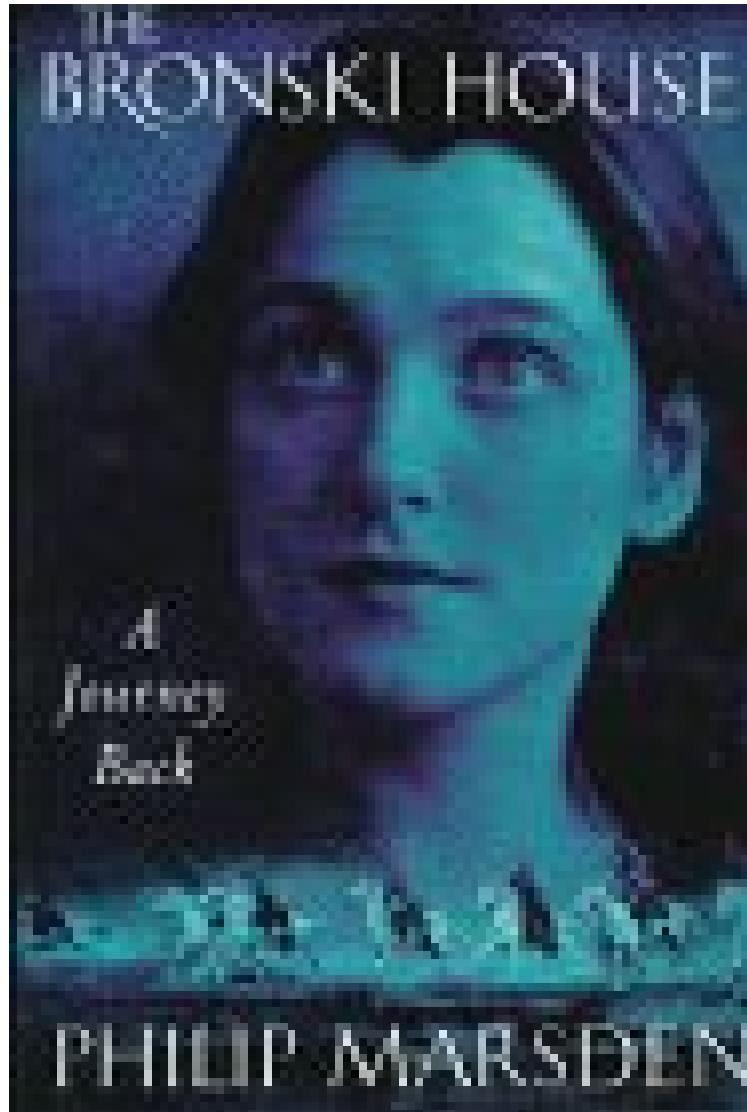


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## The Bronski House

*Philip Marsden*

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**Philip Marsden : The Bronski House** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Bronski House:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By tjdrossos Beautifully told. Touching. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. could not put this book down !! By Melissa White I found this book online and was so excited to find a copy on . The two main female characters are actually distant family members, my great aunt and my great great aunt. I never knew either as they lived out of the USA. Thanks to this book, I was able to learn what strong and smart women my ancestors were !! 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Journeys By

keetmomIf you ever stumble across "The Bronksi House" buy it or borrow it, but read it you must. I count it as one of the greatest reading privileges of my life. Philip Marsden invites his reader to accompany him on a set of journeys, deeply personal, unforgettably moving and incredibly uplifting. Marsden's writing is poetry, so light and inviting you are engrossed in the tale he reconstructs in an instant. The people in his story are real and so are the places, they just happen to have been the cauldron that was Eastern Europe during the years of two World Wars, revolution and collapse of empires. The social turmoil this gave rise to provides the dramatic backdrop to a book which is a tapestry of life, filled with hope, sorrow, striving, laughter and above all, love. In a short read, you will be transported beyond all the boundaries that seem to constrain our being - time, death and war - to share something magical from a forgotten corner of Europe's badlands.

More than fifty years after fleeing the Russians and Nazis, poet Zofia Ilinska returns to the tiny Eastern European village of her birth to find her old home and to rediscover her childhood and the history of her family."

From Library Journal "This whole terrible world is upside down," exiled Polish poet Zofia Bronska Ilinska tells English author Marsden (*The Crossing Place: A Journey Among the Armenians*, LJ 4/15/95) as they revisit the Eastern Europe of her childhood. Published in Britain in 1996, this work combines an account of 1990s Belarus, based on Marsden's travels with Ilinska, with an interpretation of the past, drawn from her mother's journals and papers from the outset of World War I to the start of World War II. The traumas of war are intermingled with the everyday life of two generations of young women coming of age. In scenes reminiscent of *Doctor Zhivago*, the book powerfully depicts the effects of war on a wealthy family who became impoverished refugees. Plagued by constantly shifting borders, the family also moved from place to place as they fled the ever-changing enemy?sometimes German, sometimes Russian, sometimes their Belorussian neighbors. A moving account; highly recommended for all libraries.?Denise J. Stankovics, Rockville P.L., Vernon, Ct. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist The late poet Zofia Ilinska, nee Bronski, fled Poland in September 1939 at the start of World War II; she was 17. Along with her mother, Zofia settled on the English coast in Cornwall. In 1993, after receiving a letter from a cousin in Poland asking her to visit, Zofia returned to her native village. She was accompanied by her longtime friend, writer Philip Marsden. She looked for the family home and the silver candlesticks she had buried in the forest. She found neither, but a few of the villagers remembered her. Marsden intertwines the story of Zofia's journey with her mother's letters, notebooks, and diaries, hundreds of pages that bring the world of Zofia's family's prewar past in Europe to life. Both a requiem for a vanished world and a tribute to a remarkable woman. George Cohen From Kirkus sA chronicle of one ,migr, Polish aristocrat's return to her family's abandoned estate is transformed by an award-winning British writer into an evocative narrative complete with two remarkable heroines and two world wars. That poet Zofia Ilinska had a colorful and mysterious past was apparent early on to Marsden, who as a boy summered in the Cornish village where Ilinska lived. Yet nothing quite prepared him for the drama, pain, and courage that were revealed to him when he accompanied his old friend on a journey to her ancestral homes in and around the city of Vilnius, in Poland's former eastern borderlands. Marsden's English voice, with its combination of curiosity and distance, drives and shapes this fascinating tale of Ilinska and her mother, Helena, and their vanished, rarefied world of Poland's landed aristocracy. Helena, who witnessed both world wars and the start of the Russian Revolution in St. Petersburg, is a woman of courage, charm, and innocence who inspires in the reader a combination of awe and pity. Working from her papers and diaries, Marsden vividly captures the spirit of Helena and the customs, mores, and prejudices of her society and family. By going back a generation, he provides Ilinska's own remarkable story of love and misfortune with added depth and perspective, highlighting the ``patterns of loss" that plagued mother, daughter, and Poland, whether caught between lovers or armies. During her journey home, Ilinska finds her family's estate in ruins and the family graves looted. Her response is pragmatic. She restores the family chapel, declaring that it is for the locals, both Orthodox and Catholic, to use. With this act she brings a sense of closure to her own past while infusing hope into historic local, national, and religious tensions that surrounded her family's private world. A fascinating and dramatic tale of love and loss on both a personal and national scale. -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.