

Diogenes

Donna Leon
Backstage

Published by Diogenes as *Backstage*



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»In the hands of great authors, characters are like real people, merely realer«, Donna Leon once said. Perhaps this is why her life is so rich in characters and people accompanying her, both real and fictional. *Backstage* presents a colorful troupe: the rock genius Frank Zappa, Venices most famous diamond dealer, a courageous sex worker and womens rights activist, a clever composer, tragic heroes and admired colleagues. In the hands of Donna Leon, these encounters turn into sparkling jewels. A treasure trove of delightful discoveries.

Book factsheet

Biographies, Contemporary Literature,
Bestseller
256 pages
11.6 x 18.4 cm
June 2025

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Rights currently sold:

English/UK (William Heinemann)
English/USA (Grove /Atlantic)
Finnish (Otava)
French (Calmann-Lévy)
Spanish/world (Planeta)

📺 Movie adaptations

2019: Ewige Jugend

Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Jens-Frederik Otto
Cast: Mit: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Annett Renneberg, Karl Fischer, Michael Degen. In Episodenrollen: Max von Thun, Nadja Bobyleva, Hildegard Schmahl, Andreas Pietschmann, Nina Kronjäger.

2019: Stille Wasser

Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Stefan und Florian Iwersen Holtz
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Karl Fischer, Annett Renneberg, Marie Leuenberger, Suzanne von Borsody

2018: Endlich mein

Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Stefan Holtz und Florian Iwersen
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Michael Degen, Annett Renneberg. In Episodenrollen Leslie Malton, Edin Hasanovic und Jürgen Tarrach.

2017: Tod zwischen den Zeilen

Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Stefan und Florian Iwersen Holtz
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Karl Fischer, Annett Renneberg, Michael Degen und Julia Jäger. In Episodenrollen: Jenny Schily, Thorsten Merten, Harald Schrott.

2016: Das goldene Ei

Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Florian & Stefan Holtz Iwersen
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Michael Degen, Juliane Köhler, Imogen Kogge

2015: Tierische Profite

Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Florian Iwersen
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Annett Renneberg, Karl Fischer, Michael Degen, Alice Dwyer, Florian Bartholomäi, Max Hopp, Walter Kreye



Donna Leon, born in New Jersey in 1942, has worked as a travel guide in Rome and as a copywriter in London. She taught literature in universities in Iran, China, and Saudi Arabia. The Brunetti novels brought her to world-wide fame. Donna Leon lived in Italy for many years, and although she now lives in Switzerland, she often visits Venice.

📺 Movie adaptations (cont'd)

2014: Reiches Erbe

Director: Sigi Rothemund
 Screenplay: Florian Iwersen
 Cast: Neben dem beliebten Stammensemble um Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Annett Renneberg, Karl Fischer und Michael Degen spielen in Episodenrollen David Rott, Lisa Wagner, Tilo Prückner, Renate Delfs und Liv Lisa Fries.

2013: Auf Treu und Glauben

Director: Sigi Rothemund
 Screenplay: Holger Joos
 Cast: Mit der bewährten Besetzung rund um Uwe Kockisch, in Episodenrollen u.a. Jeanette Hain, Stephan Grossmann und Nicole Heesters

2012: Schöner Schein

Director: Sigi Rothemund
 Screenplay: Holger Joos
 Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Karl Fischer, Annett Renneberg, Michael Degen, Julia Jäger. In Episodenrollen u.a Michael Mendl, Esther Schweins und Merab Ninidze.

2011: Das Mädchen seiner Träume

Director: Sigi Rothemund
 Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Michael Degen Annett Renneberg, Jasmin Tabatabai, Martin Feifel, Valerie Niehaus

2010: Lasset die Kinder zu mir kommen (TV)

Director: Sigi Rothemund
 Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Karl Fischer, Annett Renneberg, Michael Degen und Julia Jäger. In Episodenrollen u.a.: Nadeshda Brennicke, Michael Gwisdek und Gregor Törzs

2009: Wie durch ein dunkles Glas

Director: Sigi Rothemund
 Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Michael Degen und Annett Renneberg. In Episodenrollen Heikko Deutschmann, Katharina Wackernagel und Birge Schade.

2008: Die dunkle Stunde der Serenissima

Director: Sigi Rothemund
 Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Karl Fischer, Annett Renneberg, Michael Degen, Julia Jäger, Axel Milberg, Katrin Sass, Bettina Zimmermann, Rike Schmid

2008: Blutige Steine

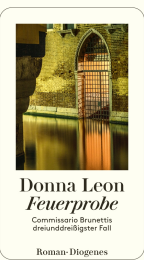







Director: Sigi Rothemund
 Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Karl Fischer, Annett Renneberg, Michael Degen, Julia Jäger, Helmut Zierl, Ernest Allan Hausmann, Rosel Zech

2006: Endstation Venedig

Director: Sigi Rothemund
 Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Esther Schweins, Heiner Lauterbach, Monica Bleibtreu

2006: Das Gesetz der Lagune

Director: Sigi Rothemund
 Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Tim Bergmann, Laura-Charlotte Syniawa

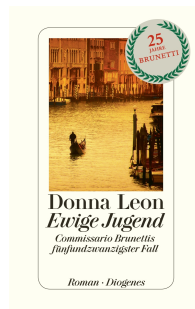
 <p>Donna Leon <i>Feuerprobe</i> Commissario Brunetti's dreißigster Fall Roman · Diogenes</p> <p>A Refiner's Fire 336 pages 2024 🏆 Bestseller</p>	 <p>Donna Leon <i>Wie die Saat, so die Ernte</i> Commissario Brunetti's zweiunddreißigster Fall Roman · Diogenes</p> <p>So Shall You Reap 320 pages 2023 🏆 Bestseller</p>	 <p>Donna Leon <i>Ein Leben in Geschichten</i> Diogenes</p> <p>Wandering Through Life 192 pages 2022 🏆 Bestseller</p>	 <p>Donna Leon <i>Milde Gaben</i> Commissario Brunetti's einunddreißigster Fall Roman · Diogenes</p> <p>Give Unto Others 352 pages 2022 🏆 Bestseller</p>
 <p>Donna Leon <i>Flüchtliges Begehren</i> Commissario Brunetti's dreißigster Fall Roman · Diogenes</p> <p>Transient Desires 320 pages 2021 🏆 Bestseller</p>	 <p>Donna Leon <i>Mit Brunetti durchs Leben</i> Brevier für nochdenkliche Optimisten Diogenes</p> <p>Brunetti's Miscellany 400 pages 2021</p>	 <p>Donna Leon <i>Geheime Quellen</i> Commissario Brunetti's neunundzwanzigster Fall Roman · Diogenes</p> <p>Trace Elements 320 pages 2020 🏆 Bestseller</p>	 <p>Donna Leon <i>Ein Sohn ist uns gegeben</i> Commissario Brunetti's achtundzwanzigster Fall Roman · Diogenes</p> <p>Unto Us a Son Is Given 320 pages 2019 🏆 Award winner 🏆 Bestseller</p>



The Temptation of Forgiveness
336 pages
2018
📺 **Bestseller**



Earthy Remains
352 pages
2017
📺 **Bestseller**



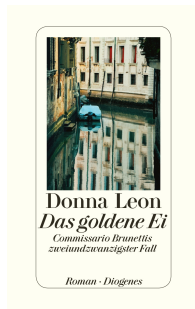
The Waters of Eternal Youth
336 pages
2016
📺 **Bestseller**



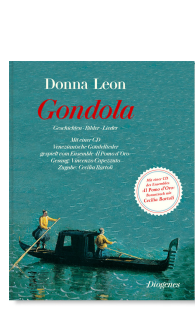
Falling in Love
320 pages
2015
📺 **Bestseller**



By its Cover
288 pages
2015
📺 **Bestseller**



The Golden Egg
320 pages
2014
📺 **Bestseller**



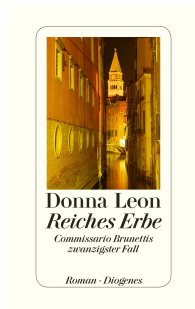
Gondola
140 pages
2013



Beastly Things
336 pages
2013
📺 **Bestseller**



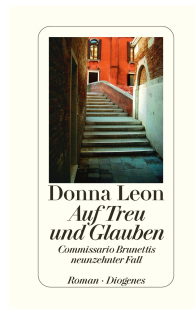
The Jewels of Paradise
304 pages
2012
📺 **Bestseller**



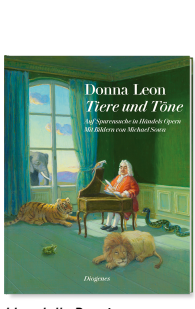
Drawing Conclusions
320 pages
2012
📺 **Bestseller**



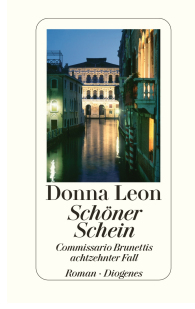
Venetian Curiosities
80 pages
2011



A Question of Belief
320 pages
2011
📺 **Bestseller**



Handel's Bestiary
144 pages
2010



About Face
352 pages
2010
📺 **Bestseller**



At Table with the Brunettis
288 pages
2009



The Girl of His Dreams
352 pages
2009
📺 **Bestseller**

📺 **Movie adaptations (cont'd)**

2005: Beweise, dass es böse ist
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger u.a.

2005: Verschwiegene Kanäle
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger u.a.

2004: Sanft entschlafen
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger u.a.

2004: Acqua Alta
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger u.a.

2003: Venezianisches Finale
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger u.a.

2003: Feine Freunde
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger u.a.

2002: Nobiltà
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Joachim Krol, Barbara Auer

2001: In Sachen Signora Brunetti
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Joachim Krol, Barbara Auer

2001: Davon stirbt man nicht
Director: Christine Hartmann
Cast: J. Prochnow

2000: Vendetta
Director: Christian Castelberg
Cast: Joachim Krol, Barbara Auer

2000: Venizianische Scharade
Director: Christian Castelberg
Cast: Joachim Krol, Barbara Auer

🏆 **Awards**

- 2024 ›Ehrenpreis des Bayerischen Ministerpräsidenten‹ für ihr Werk
- 2024 ›Ripper Award‹ von der Jury des Europäischen Preises für Kriminalliteratur
- 2021 ›Gaudium Award‹ des Breukelein Institutes
- 2019 ›Lifetime Achievement Award‹ vom Strand Magazine
- 2019 Ein Sohn ist uns geboren war auf der Shortlist des ›Golden Dagger Award‹
- 2018 ›B.Z.-Kulturpreis‹ (Berliner Zeitung)
- 2016 ›Premio Pepe Carvalho‹ anlässlich des Krimifestivals BCNegra von der Stadtregierung Barcelonas
- 2006 Das Hörbuch *Mein Venedig* ist auf den 1. Platz des österreichischen Publikumspreises ›Buchliebbling‹ gewählt worden, der Roman *Verschwiegene Kanäle* erzielte den 3. Platz in der Rubrik ›Krimis und Thriller‹



Brunetti's Venice
368 pages
2008



Suffer the Little Children
368 pages
2008

Movie Adaptation
 Bestseller



Through a Glass Darkly
352 pages
2007

Movie Adaptation
 Bestseller

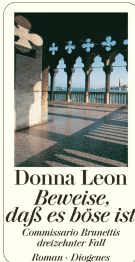


Blood from a Stone
368 pages
2006

Movie Adaptation
 Bestseller



On Venice, Music, People and Books
352 pages
2005



Doctored Evidence
336 pages
2005

Movie Adaptation
 Bestseller



Uniform Justice
336 pages
2004

Movie Adaptation
 Bestseller



Wilful Behaviour
384 pages
2003

Award winner
 Movie Adaptation
 Bestseller



A Sea of Troubles
336 pages
2002

Movie Adaptation
 Bestseller



Friends in High Places
336 pages
2001

Award winner
 Movie Adaptation



Fatal Remedies
320 pages
2000

Movie Adaptation



An American in Venice
96 pages
2000

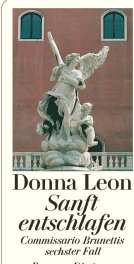


A Noble Radiance
304 pages
1999

Award winner
 Movie Adaptation
 Bestseller



Latin Lover
112 pages
1999



Quietly in Their Sleep
352 pages
1998

Movie Adaptation
 Bestseller



Acqua alta
384 pages
1997

Movie Adaptation

Awards (cont'd)

- 2005 ›Silver Award‹ in der Kategorie ›Krimi/Thriller‹ des britischen Hörbuchpreises ›Spoken Word Awards‹ für das englische Hörbuch *Blood from a Stone* (dt. *Blutige Steine*)
- 2003 Donna Leon erhält den ›Corine – Internationaler Buchpreis‹ für *Die dunkle Stunde der Serenissima*
- 2000 Donna Leon ist im Rahmen der Veranstaltungen zum Welttag des Buches für *Nobiltà* mit dem ›Goldenen Buch‹ des Österreichischen Hauptverbandes des Buchhandels ausgezeichnet worden.
- 2000 Donna Leon erhält den ›Silver Dagger‹ der Crime Writers' Association für *Friends in High Places* (dt. *Feine Freunde*)
- 1997 3. Platz für *Venezianische Scharade* in der Internationalen Sparte beim 13. ›Deutschen Krimi-Preis‹
- 1991 Japans renommiertes ›Suntory‹-Preis für *Death at la Fenice* (dt. *Venezianisches Finale*)

Praise

Backstage

›Even readers unfamiliar with Leon's fiction will be delighted by these dispatches.« – Publishers Weekly, New York

›At last, readers can join Leon on the canals of Venice as she tells them about some of her favorite things.« – Marcia Welsh / Library Journal, Dublin (OH, USA)

›As always, location is as much a character as Brunetti himself, and Leon brings Venice and its colorful, and sometimes annoying, citizenry to life through vibrant vignettes. Delightful, breezy, and illuminating.« – Carol Haggas / Booklist, Chicago

Donna Leon

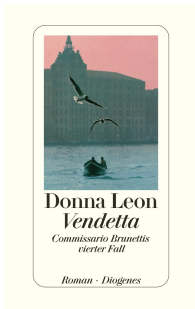
›Brilliant.« – Sunday Times, London

›A splendid series . . . with a backdrop of the city so vivid you can almost smell it.« – The Sunday Telegraph, London

›Donna Leon can paralyze the reader with joyful suspense.« – The Mail on Sunday, London

›[Donna Leon] has never become perfunctory, never failed to give us vivid portraits of people and of Venice, never lost her fine, disillusioned indignation.« – Ursula K. LeGuin / The New York Times

›The most obvious appeal of Donna Leon's novels about Commissario Guido Brunetti is that they are so supremely civilized. For readers with a certain mindset—distaste for violence, love of Italy's cultural and sensual pleasures and scorn for officialdom—Donna Leon's novels are always a pleasure.« – Patrick Anderson / The Washington Post



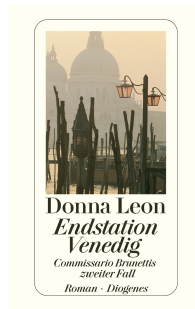
Death and Judgment
352 pages
1997

Movie Adaptation



Dressed for Death
384 pages
1996

Award winner
 Movie Adaptation



Death in a Strange Country
400 pages
1995

Movie Adaptation



Death at La Fenice
352 pages
1993

Award winner
 Movie Adaptation

Praise (cont'd)

»Donna Leon guides us through Venice like James Ellroy through Los Angeles or Manuel Vázquez Montalbán through Barcelona: with an eye used to detect what lies behind the façade.« – Le Figaro, Paris

»Donna Leon is a top thriller writer, on a par with Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, Patricia Highsmith and Ruth Rendell. Women, so it would seem from literary history, have always been in their element with the genre of murder and violence.« – Sonntags Zeitung, Zurich

»Brilliantly evokes Venetian atmosphere. The characters of Brunetti and his family continue to deepen throughout this series.« – The Times, London

»Donna Leon is the undisputed crime fiction queen.« – Sarah Weinman / Baltimore Sun

»In the footsteps of Brunetti, endowed with a ruthless humor and a healthy appetite, Donna Leon's readers discover Venice better than with a guide book.« – Le Monde, Paris

»Brunetti's humane police work is disarming, and his ambles through the city are a delight.« – The New York Times, Book Review

»Brunetti remains unique – an everyman who's also extraordinary.« – Publishers Weekly

»Donna Leon's Venetian mysteries never disappoint, calling up the romantic sights and sound of La Serenissima even as they acquaint us with the practical matters that concern the city's residents.« – Marilyn Stasio / The New York Times Book Review

»Donna Leon's books are a joy.« – The Guardian, London

»When writing about her beloved Venice, Donna Leon can do no wrong.« – The New York Times

»[Leon] has never become perfunctory, never failed to give us vivid portraits of people and of Venice, never lost her fine, disillusioned indignation.« – Ursula K. Le Guin / New York Times, New York

»Hers is an unusually potent cocktail of atmosphere and event.« – The New Yorker, New York

»[Leon] uses the relatively small and crime-free canvas of Venice for rips about Italian life, sexual styles and – best of all – the kind of ingrown business and political corruption that seems to lurk just below the surface.« – Chicago Tribune, Chicago

»Leon started out with offhand, elegant excellence, and has simply kept it up.« – The Guardian, London

»Leon whips up a brilliant narrative storm.« – Sunday Times, London

Praise (cont'd)

»Her depiction of Venice, its crimes and beauties, villains and heroes, high and low and the character of Brunetti and his family and friends has long been a delight for discerning readers. The warmth, understanding and shrewdness with which Leon's elegant, witty prose depicts this particular part of Italy is a joy. She is one of the best European novelists around, and her unflinching address to current affairs makes her worthy of the highest regard.« – Amanda Craig

»She has reinvented Venice.« – Kristina Maitt-Zinke / Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich

»Her love for this city shines through from every line of her crime novels.« – Maria Wiesner / Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurt

»Leon's pedagogical eros is akin to that of Mary Poppins. Who could resist it?« – Simone Dattenberger / Münchner Merkur, Munich

»To read her is to restore the soul.« – Mark Sanderson / The Times, London