

# Diogenes

Friedrich Dürrenmatt

*The Minotaur/ The Assignment; or, On the Observing of the Observer of the Observers/ Midas*

Published by Diogenes as *Minotaurus / Der Auftrag / Midas*  
Original title: *Minotaurus/Der Auftrag/Midas*



## Dürrenmatt *Minotaurus* *Der Auftrag* *Midas*

Eine Ballade, eine Novelle  
und ein Film zum Lesen

Diogenes

Friedrich Dürrenmatt became one of the most celebrated and critically acclaimed playwrights of the second half of the twentieth century. But from our perspective today, we can see that Dürrenmatt's career from start to finish embraced fictional works whose quality and significance are undeniable. His novellas and short stories are searing, tragicomic explorations of the ironies of justice and the corruptibility of institutions. The best known and most successful of them are *The Judge and His Hangman*, *Suspicion*, *The Pledge*, *Greek Man Seeks Greek Wife*, *Justice*, *The Tunnel*, *Traps*, *The Minotaur* and *The Assignment*.

Book factsheet

Contemporary Literature  
208 pages  
11.3 x 18 x 1.3 cm  
October 1998

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### Movie adaptations

**2015: Im Labyrinth / Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Der kritische Geist der Schweiz**

Director: Sabine Gisiger  
Screenplay: Sabine Gisiger

**2010: Schurkenstück**

Director: Torsten C. Fischer  
Screenplay: Eva Zahn  
Cast: Katharina Schüttler und Oliver Korritke

**2008: Der Besuch der alten Dame**

Director: Nikolaus Leytner  
Screenplay: Thomas Eiffler  
Cast: Christiane Hörbiger, Michael Mendl, Muriel Baumeister, Rolf Hoppe, Rüdiger Vogler

**2001: The Pledge**

Director: Sean Penn  
Cast: Margaret Larsen, Helen Jackson

**1997: Es geschah am hellichten Tag**

Director: Nico Hofmann  
Cast: Joachim Król, Barbara Rudnik, Axel Milberg

**1996: Es geschah am hellichten Tag**

Director: Bernd Eichinger  
Cast: Joachaim Krol, Barbara Rudnik, Axel Milberg

**1995: Tod im kalten Morgenlicht**

Director: Rudolf van den Berg  
Cast: Richard E. Grant, Lynsey Baxter, Perdita Weeks

**1994: Der Wiedertäufer**

Director: Heinrich Koch

**1994: In the Cold Light of Day**

Director: Rudolf van den Berg  
Cast: Richard E. Grant, Perdita Weeks, Simon Cadell

**1993: Justiz**

Director: Hans Werner Geißendörfer  
Cast: Maximilian Schell, Thomas Heinze, Matthias Gnädinger, Anna Thalbach

**1992: Hyänen / Hyènes, Ramatou**

Director: Djibril diop Mamberty  
Screenplay: Djibril diop Mamberty  
Cast: Mansour Diouf, Ami Diakhate

**1992: Hyènes**

Director: Djibril diop Mamberty  
Cast: Mansour Diouf, Ami Diakhate



Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921 – 1990) was born in Konolfingen near Berne as the son of a protestant minister. He studied philosophy, German literature and history of art in Berne and Zurich and worked as a playwright, novelist, essayist and painter in Neuchâtel, where he lived with his family.



**Subject Matter**  
2352 pages  
2021



**The Plays**  
1584 pages  
2015



**The Crime Novels**  
992 pages  
2011



**His Life in Pictures**  
376 pages  
2011



**Labyrinth / Turmbau (Subject Matter I-IX)**  
736 pages  
2002

**My Switzerland**  
256 pages  
1998



**Max Frisch, Friedrich Dürrenmatt - Correspondence**  
240 pages  
1998



**Switzerland - A Prison**  
80 pages  
1997

## 📺 Movie adaptations (cont'd)

### 1989: Die Welt ist ein Irrenhaus: Achterloo IV

Director: Roman Brodman

### 1988: Abendstunde im Spätherbst

Director: August Everding

Cast: Mario Adorf, Horst Bollmann

### 1988: Achterloo

Director: Friedrich Dürrenmatt

Cast: Helmut Lohner, Georg Preusse

### 1982: Der Besuch der alten Dame

Director: Max Peter Ammann

Cast: Maria Schell, Adolphe Spalinger, Günter Lamprecht

### 1982: Der Besuch der alten Dame

Director: Max Peter Ammann

Cast: Maria Schell, Günter Lamprecht, Ruedi Walter

### 1975: Der Richter und sein Henker

Director: Maximilian Schell

Cast: Jon Voight, Jacqueline Bisset, Helmut Qualtinger, Robert Shaw, Friedrich Dürrenmatt

### 1974: Der Mitmacher

Director: Friedrich Dürrenmatt

Cast: Buddy Elias, Elmar Schulte, Werner Schumacher

### 1973: Der Wiedertäufer

Director: Werner Schlechte

Cast: E. Marks, F. Schütter, V. Lechtenbrink

### 1973: Der Besuch der alten Dame

Director: Hans/Cella Gaugler/Ettore

Cast: Hasle Rüegsau

### 1972: La piu bella serata della mia vita

Director: Ettore Scola

Cast: Alberto Sordi, Michel Simon, Pierre Brasseur

### 1971: Porträt eines Planeten

Director: Friedrich Dürrenmatt

Cast: W. Reichmann, H. Lohner, Ch. Hörbiger

### 1971: König Johann

Director: Vaclav Hudcek

Cast: H. Qualtinger, H. Seeböck

### 1967: Der Meteor

Director: Leopold Lindtberg

Cast: Leonard Steckel, Wolfgang Forester, Gert Westphal, Peter Brogle

### 1967: Frank V. Opfer einer Privatbank

Director: Friedrich Dürrenmatt

Cast: Therese Giehse, Hubert von Meyerneck

### 1966: Griechen sucht Griechin

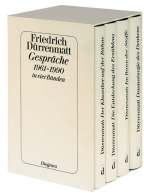
Director: Rolf Thiele

Cast: Heinz Rühmann, Irina Demick, Charles Regnier

### 1965: Romulus der Große

Director: Helmut Käutner

Cast: Romuald Pekny



**Conversations 1961-1990**  
1296 pages  
1996



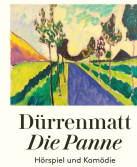
**Dürrenmatt  
Das Versprechen**  
Roman · Diogenes

**The Pledge**  
160 pages  
1996

**Movie Adaptation**



**The Pensioner**  
200 pages  
1995



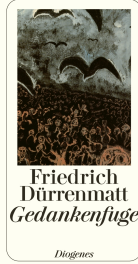
**Dürrenmatt  
Die Panne**  
Hörspiel und Komödie

**Traps**  
144 pages  
1995

**Movie Adaptation**



**The Enormity of the Possible**  
144 pages  
1993



**Gedankenfuge**  
208 pages  
1992



**Greek Man Seeks Greek Wife**  
160 pages  
1992

**Movie Adaptation**



**The Vale of Confusion**  
176 pages  
1989



**Trials**  
184 pages  
1988



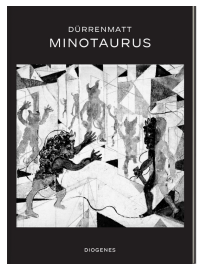
**The Judge and His Hangman**  
128 pages  
1986



**The Assignment**  
136 pages  
1986



**Suspicion**  
128 pages  
1986

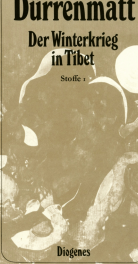


**The Minotaur**  
56 pages  
1985



**Justice**  
376 pages  
1985

**Movie Adaptation**



**The Winter War in Tibet**  
192 pages  
1984



**Achterloo**  
128 pages  
1983

**Movie adaptations (cont'd)**

**1964: Die Physiker**

Director: Fritz Umgelter  
Cast: Therese Giehse, Gustav Knuth, Kurt Ehrhardt, Wolfgang Kieling, Siegfried Lowitz

**1964: Ein Engel kommt nach Babylon**

Director: William Dieterle

**1963: The Visit**

Director: Bernhard Wicki  
Cast: Ingrid Bergmann, Anthony Quinn, Hans-Christian Blech

**1961: Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi**

Director: Kurt Hoffmann  
Cast: O.E. Hasse, Johanna von Koczian, Martin Held, Charles Regnier, Max Haufler

**1960: Abendstunde im Spätherbst**

Director: Rudolf Noelte  
Cast: Ernst Schröder, Friedrich Maurer, Günter Meissner

**1959: Der Besuch der alten Dame**

Director: Ludwig Cremer  
Cast: R. Wanka, E. Flickenschildt, A. Schradiek

**1958: Es geschah am hellichten Tag**

Director: Ladislao Vajda  
Screenplay: Friedrich Dürrenmatt  
Cast: Heinz Rühmann, Michel Simon, Gert Fröbe

**1957: Die Panne**

Director: Fritz Umgelter  
Cast: Peter Ahrweiler, Carl Wery, Harry Hardt

**1957: Der Richter und sein Henker**

Director: Franz Peter Wirth  
Cast: Herbert Tiede, Maria Körber, K.G. Saebisch

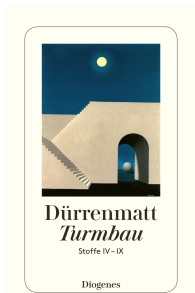
**Praise**

*The Minotaur/ The Assignment; or, On the Observing of the Observer of the Observers/ Midas*

»The Minotaur stands out, not only as an illustration of Dürrenmatt's life-long obsession with Greek mythology, but for his unique perspective on the old tale. For his minotaur is no rapacious monster whose only role is to make a hero of some Theseus, but a sympathetic creature, capable of melancholy and happiness, who is trapped in a labyrinth of mirrors, confused and tormented by reflections, longing for companionship in a world that offers only mockery and cruelty.« – Michael Butler / Times Literary Supplement, London

**Friedrich Dürrenmatt**

»Even after the death of its author, his huge and unique work is still a dark continent, largely unilluminated and untested, a continent in motion, always good for intellectual surprises and dramatic adventures.« – Gert Ueding



**Dürrenmatt  
Turmbau**  
Stoffe IV–IX  
Diogenes

The Winter War in Tibet/  
Lunar Eclipse/ The Rebel  
360 pages  
1981

**Movie Adaptation**



**Dürrenmatt  
Zusammenhänge**  
Essay über Israel  
Nachgedanken  
Diogenes

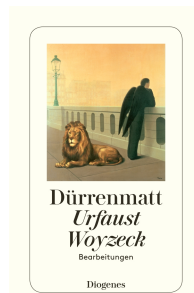
Nexus  
240 pages  
1980



**Dürrenmatt  
Die  
Wiedertäufer**  
Komödie  
Diogenes

The Anabaptists  
144 pages  
1980

**Movie Adaptation**



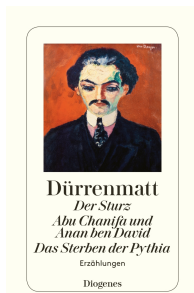
**Dürrenmatt  
Urfaust  
Woyzeck**  
Bearbeitungen  
Diogenes

Urfaust/ Woyzeck.  
Adaptations  
208 pages  
1980



**Dürrenmatt  
Theater**  
Essays, Gedichte und Reden  
Diogenes

Theatre  
272 pages  
1980



**Dürrenmatt  
Der Sturz:  
Abu Chanifa und  
Anan ben David/  
Das Sterben der Pythia**  
Erzählungen  
Diogenes

The Coup/ Abu Chanifa  
and Anan ben David/  
Smithy/ The Dying of the  
Pythia  
160 pages  
1980



**Dürrenmatt  
Romulus  
der Große**  
Ungeschichtliche  
historische Komödie  
Diogenes

Romulus the Great  
176 pages  
1980

**Movie Adaptation**



**The Complete Prose  
Oeuvre**  
3024 pages  
1980



**Dürrenmatt  
Politik**  
Essays, Gedichte und Reden  
Diogenes

Politics  
192 pages  
1980



**Dürrenmatt  
Play Strindberg/  
Portrait  
of a Planeten**  
Übungsstücke für Schauspielerei  
Diogenes

Play Strindberg/ Portrait  
of a Planet  
208 pages  
1980

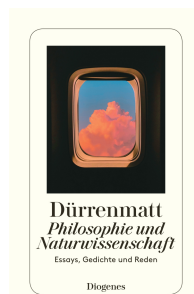
**Movie Adaptation**



**Dürrenmatt  
Die Physiker**  
Komödie  
Diogenes

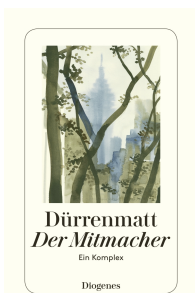
The Physicists  
96 pages  
1980

**Movie Adaptation**



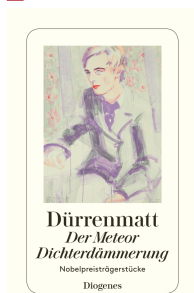
**Dürrenmatt  
Philosophie und  
Naturwissenschaft**  
Essays, Gedichte und Reden  
Diogenes

Philosophical Essays  
208 pages  
1980



**Dürrenmatt  
Der Mitmacher**  
Ein Komplex  
Diogenes

The Conformist  
336 pages  
1980



**Dürrenmatt  
Der Meteor  
Dichterdämmerung**  
Nobelpreisträgerstücke  
Diogenes

The Meteor/ Twilight of  
the Poets  
208 pages  
1980

**Movie Adaptation**



**Dürrenmatt  
Literatur  
und Kunst**  
Essays, Gedichte und Reden  
Diogenes

Literature and Painting  
240 pages  
1980



**Dürrenmatt  
Kritik**  
Kritiken und Zeichnungen  
Diogenes

Reviews  
176 pages  
1980

## Praise (cont'd)

»One of Europe's most important postwar dramatists.« – The Daily Telegraph, London

»Dürrenmatt was addressing the real crowd assembled in real theaters with all their swiftly changing feelings, their ignorance, bad habits and vaulting possibilities. At the same time he was a philosopher-poet with one eye on the picture of the real, on artifice, and on the long preoccupations of philosophy and art through the ages.« – Arthur Miller

»Dürrenmatt has always been too impulsive for his times but the chaotic world has quickly caught up with him. That's why his work will last. The purifying force of his irony becomes the more important and useful – particularly because it is driven by the profound humanity that Dürrenmatt's friends always knew in him.« – Peter Brook

»Now, like an avalanche in far-off mountains, comes Friedrich Dürrenmatt, a detective-story writer with a genius for the theater, to give us a new theme, or rather to remind us of an ancient one: justice. His vision is a cold one but pure, and very nearly unique in our day, for in his devotion to the idea of justice he has succeeded in casting across an age committed to false Love the dark shadow of the scales.« – Gore Vidal

»It was once observed by Oscar Wilde that a writer should be able to write anything. Mr. Dürrenmatt meets Wilde's requirement. He adopts a manner well liked by some of our better writers, that of a Roman of the later Empire, a golden weariness. Mr. Dürrenmatt chooses compression of style and strictness of form, but the late Imperial feeling is still there.« – Saul Bellow

»One of the greatest writers of our century.« – Corriere della Sera, Milan

»Next to Kafka and Camus, he is one of the great questioners of this world.« – Martin Ebel / Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich

»Friedrich Dürrenmatt belonged to the most cheerful apocalyptic writers of the 20th century.« – Thomas Hürlimann / Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Zurich

»Universal, uncomfortable and visionary: Friedrich Dürrenmatt is the worthy reigning literary monarch of the year.« – Wener Krause / Kleine Zeitung, Graz

»He is evil, he doesn't think anything good of humanity, and he describes this – but he does it with wit.« – Elke Heidenreich / SRF2, Zurich

»Friedrich Dürrenmatt is a centennial author, because he saw the century that was to follow him too.« – Daniele Muscionico / Aargauer Zeitung, Aarau



**Dürrenmatt**  
*König Johann  
Titus  
Andronicus*  
Shakespeare-Umarbeitungen  
Diogenes

**King John/ Titus  
Andronicus**  
240 pages  
1980  
 **Movie Adaptation**



**Dürrenmatt**  
*Der Hund  
Der Tunnel  
Die Panne*  
Erzählungen  
Diogenes

**The Dog/ The Tunnel/  
Traps**  
112 pages  
1980



**Dürrenmatt**  
*Herkules und  
der Stall des Augias  
Der Prozess im  
des Esels Schatten*  
Griechische Stücke  
Diogenes

**Hercules and the Augean  
Stables/ The Trial about  
the Donkey's Shadow**  
240 pages  
1980



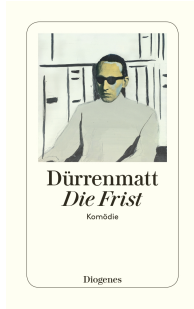
**Dürrenmatt**  
*Grieche  
sucht Griechin  
Mister X  
macht Ferien*  
Grottesken  
Diogenes

**Greek Man Seeks Greek  
Wife/ Mr. X Goes on  
Holiday/ News about the  
State of Press during the  
Stone Age**  
208 pages  
1980



**Dürrenmatt**  
*Nächtliches Gespräch  
mit einem verachteten  
Menschen*  
Hörspiele und Kabarett  
Diogenes

**Nocturnal Conversation  
with a Scorned Man/  
Stranitzky and the  
National Hero/ The Vega  
Enterprise**  
160 pages  
1980



**Dürrenmatt**  
*Die Frist*  
Komödie  
Diogenes

**The Deadline**  
160 pages  
1980



**Dürrenmatt**  
*Frank  
der Fünfte*  
Komödie einer Privatbank  
Diogenes

**Frank V**  
176 pages  
1980  
 **Movie Adaptation**



**Dürrenmatt**  
*Es steht geschrieben  
Der Blinde*  
Frühe Stücke  
Diogenes

**It Is Written/ The Blind  
Man**  
336 pages  
1980



**Dürrenmatt**  
*Ein Engel kommt  
nach Babylon*  
Fragmentarische Komödie  
Diogenes

**An Angel Comes to  
Babylon**  
144 pages  
1980  
 **Movie Adaptation**



**Dürrenmatt**  
*Die Ehe des  
Herrn Mississippi*  
Komödie und Drehbuch  
Diogenes

**The Marriage of Mr.  
Mississippi**  
224 pages  
1980  
 **Movie Adaptation**

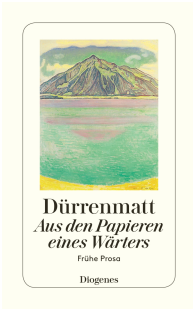


**The Complete Dramatic  
Oeuvre**  
3408 pages  
1980



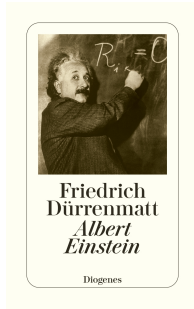
**Dürrenmatt**  
*Der Besuch  
der alten Dame*  
Tragische Komödie  
Diogenes

**The Visit**  
160 pages  
1980  
 **Movie Adaptation**



**Dürrenmatt**  
*Aus den Papieren  
eines Wärters*  
Frühe Prosa  
Diogenes

**Early Prose: Christmas/  
The Torturer/ The  
Sausage/ The Son/ The  
Old Man/ Portrait of  
Sisyphos/ The Theatre  
Director/ The Trap/  
Pilatos/ The Town/ From  
the Papers of a  
Guardsman**  
208 pages  
1980



**Friedrich  
Dürrenmatt**  
*Albert  
Einstein*  
Diogenes

**Albert Einstein**  
80 pages  
1979