

**Friedrich Dürrenmatt**  
***The Pledge***

Published by Diogenes as *Das Versprechen*  
Original title: *Das Versprechen*



## Dürrenmatt *Das Versprechen*

Roman · Diogenes

A suspenseful tale of a police inspector's unremitting search for a psychopathic killer his superiors claim does not exist. But more than a novel of crime and detection, Friedrich Dürrenmatt's deeply moving drama is the eloquent account of a decent man's gradual decay. With grim irony, the master storyteller shows how a dedicated law-enforcer's obsession for truth and justice can lead him to bait a trap as morally offensive as the evil strategy used by the maniacal murderer he relentlessly pursues.

## Book factsheet

Crime Fiction, Contemporary Literature,  
Compulsory Reading  
160 pages  
11.3 x 18 x 1.5 cm  
January 1996

World rights are handled by Diogenes

### Rights currently sold:

Arabic (Al-Karma)  
Basque (Txalaparta)  
Chinese/CN (People's Literature)  
English/UK (BBC)  
English/UK (Pushkin)  
English/USA (University of Chicago)  
English/world (University of Chicago)  
French (Gallmeister)  
Georgian (Palitra)  
Greek (Printa / Roes)  
Italian (Adelphi)  
Mongolian (Monsudar)  
Portuguese/BRA (Estação Liberdade)  
Russian (Azbooka)  
Spanish/world (Navona)  
Swedish (Natur och Kultur)  
Turkish (Yapi Kredi)

### 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 Eifler  
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



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

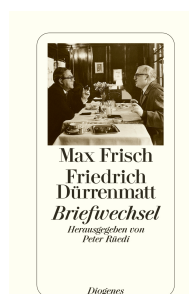


**Labyrinth / Turmbau (Subject Matter I-IX)**  
736 pages  
2002

**My Switzerland**  
256 pages  
1998



**The Minotaur/ The Assignment; or, On the Observing of the Observers/ Midas**  
208 pages  
1998



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

## 📺 Movie adaptations (cont'd)

### 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

### 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, Jacquerline 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



Switzerland - A Prison  
80 pages  
1997



Conversations 1961-1990  
1296 pages  
1996



The Pensioner  
200 pages  
1995



Traps  
144 pages  
1995

**Movie Adaptation**

**Movie adaptations (cont'd)**

**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

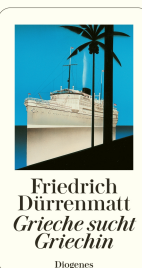
**1967: Frank V. Opfer einer Privatbank**  
Director: Friedrich Dürrenmatt  
Cast: Therese Giehse, Hubert von Meyernick



The Enormity of the Possible  
144 pages  
1993

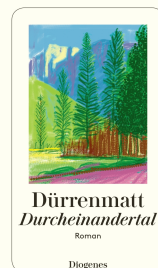


Gedankenfluge  
208 pages  
1992



Greek Man Seeks Greek Wife  
160 pages  
1992

**Movie Adaptation**



The Vale of Confusion  
176 pages  
1989

**1966: Grieche sucht Griechin**  
Director: Rolf Thiele  
Cast: Heinz Rühmann, Irina Demick, Charles Regnier

**1965: Romulus der Große**  
Director: Helmut Käutner  
Cast: Romuald Pekny

**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



Trials  
184 pages  
1988



The Judge and His Hangman  
128 pages  
1986



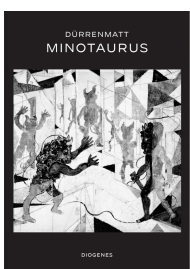
The Assignment  
136 pages  
1986



Suspicion  
128 pages  
1986

**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

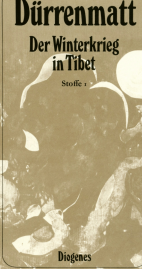


The Minotaur  
56 pages  
1985



Justice  
376 pages  
1985

**Movie Adaptation**



The Winter War in Tibet  
192 pages  
1984



Achterloo  
128 pages  
1983

**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

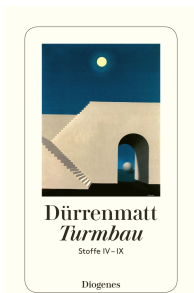
**1958: Es geschah am helllichten Tag**  
Director: Ladislao Vajda  
Screenplay: Friedrich Dürrenmatt  
Cast: Heinz Rühmann, Michel Simon, Gert Fröbe

**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 Pledge*



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

**Movie Adaptation**



**Nexus**  
240 pages  
1980



**The Anabaptists**  
144 pages  
1980

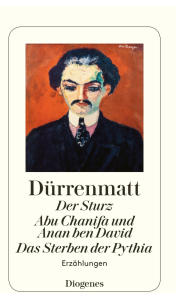
**Movie Adaptation**



**Urfaust/ Woyzeck. Adaptations**  
208 pages  
1980



**Theatre**  
272 pages  
1980



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

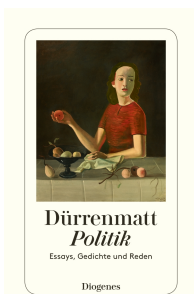


**Romulus the Great**  
176 pages  
1980

**Movie Adaptation**



**The Complete Prose Oeuvre**  
3024 pages  
1980



**Politics**  
192 pages  
1980



**Play Strindberg/ Portrait of a Planet**  
208 pages  
1980

**Movie Adaptation**

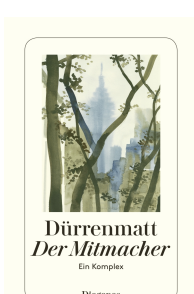


**The Physicists**  
96 pages  
1980

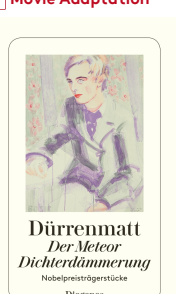
**Movie Adaptation**



**Philosophical Essays**  
208 pages  
1980



**The Conformist**  
336 pages  
1980



**The Meteor/ Twilight of the Poets**  
208 pages  
1980

**Movie Adaptation**



**Literature and Painting**  
240 pages  
1980



**Reviews**  
176 pages  
1980

## Praise (cont'd)

»Perhaps Dürrenmatt's best work.« – Anderson / Wall Street Journal, New York

»Dürrenmatt reinterpreted the detective novel and pushed it in a new, postmodern direction, passing the baton to the likes of Umberto Eco and Paul Auster.« – Malcolm Forbes / The National Newspaper, Abu Dhabi

»A stark essay in crime and pursuit, as terse and assured in construction as the best of Simenon.« – Spectator, London

»A shocker done on the level of high art. Every word falls into place like a footstep of approaching doom.« – Newsweek

## 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

»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



**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 Aegean  
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

**Praise (cont'd)**

»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**  
*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



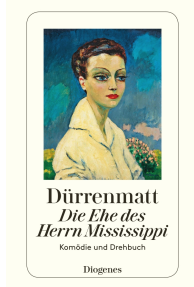
**Dürrenmatt**  
*Frank  
der Fünfte*  
Komödie einer Privatbank  
Diogenes  
Frank V  
176 pages  
1980  
 **Movie Adaptation**



**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**



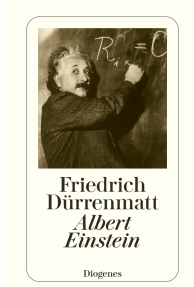
**The Complete Dramatic  
Oeuvre**  
3408 pages  
1980



**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  
Guardman  
208 pages  
1980



**Friedrich  
Dürrenmatt**  
*Albert  
Einstein*  
Diogenes  
Albert Einstein  
80 pages  
1979