

Donna Leon

Wandering Through Life

Published by Diogenes as *Ein Leben in Geschichten*
Original title: *Wandering Through Life: A Memoir*



Donna Leon
*Ein Leben
in Geschichten*

Diogenes

Donna Leon has led an adventurous life, and with her tell-tale knack for observation, she turns her experiences in America, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Italy (of course) and Switzerland into a captivating read. She takes us on a journey around the world, from growing up on a farm, to curfew pajama parties in Iran, financial straits, and a Fiat 600. And we join Donna as she arrives in Italy as a chaperone, as she hunts for the perfect cappuccino, and as she encounters small marvels in the mountains.

»There is no worse crime than not having loved.«
Donna Leon

Book factsheet

Contemporary Literature, Biographies,
Bestseller
192 pages
11.6 x 18.4 x 1.6 cm
September 2022

World rights are handled by Diogenes

Rights currently sold:

Catalan (Edicions 62)
English/UK (William Heinemann)
English/USA (Grove /Atlantic)
Finnish (Otava)
French (Calmann-Lévy)
Polish (Noir sur Blanc)
Spanish/world (Planeta)

📌 Bestseller

#12 Spiegel Bestseller (non-fiction)
#12 Swiss Bestseller (non-fiction)

🎬 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

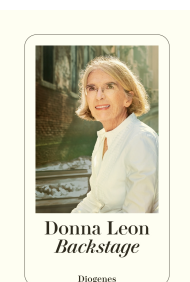
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Stefan und Florian Iwersen Holtz
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Karl Fischer, Annett Renneberg, Michael Degen und Julia Jäger. In Episodenrollen: Jenny Schily, Thorsten Merten, Harald Schrott.

2016: Das goldene Ei

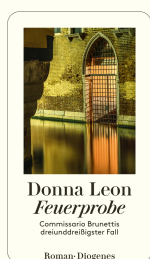
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Screenplay: Florian & Stefan Holtz Iwersen
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Michael Degen, Juliane Köhler, Imogen Kogge



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.



Backstage
256 pages
2025



A Refiner's Fire
336 pages
2024
Bestseller



So Shall You Reap
320 pages
2023
Bestseller



Give Unto Others
352 pages
2022
Bestseller



Transient Desires
320 pages
2021
Bestseller



Brunetti's Miscellany
400 pages
2021



Trace Elements
320 pages
2020
Bestseller



Unto Us a Son Is Given
320 pages
2019
Award winner
Bestseller

Movie adaptations (cont'd)

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

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

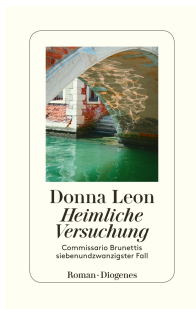
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Karl Fischer, Annett Renneberg, Michael Degen, Julia Jäger, Axel Milberg, Katrin Sass, Bettina Zimmermann, Rike Schmid

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



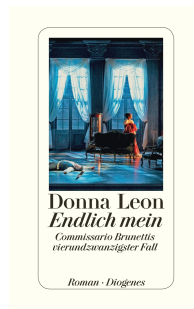
The Temptation of Forgiveness
336 pages
2018
📺 **Bestseller**



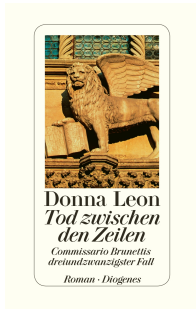
Earthly Remains
352 pages
2017
📺 **Bestseller**



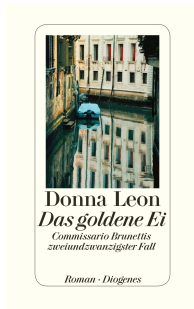
The Waters of Eternal Youth
336 pages
2016
📺 **Bestseller**



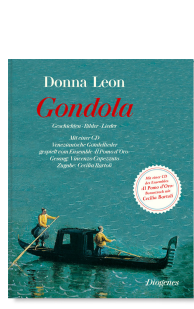
Falling in Love
320 pages
2015
📺 **Bestseller**



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



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



Gondola
140 pages
2013



Beastly Things
336 pages
2013
📺 **Bestseller**



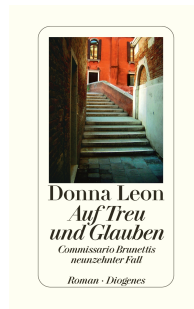
The Jewels of Paradise
304 pages
2012
📺 **Bestseller**



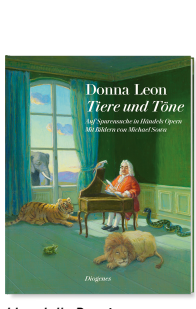
Drawing Conclusions
320 pages
2012
📺 **Bestseller**



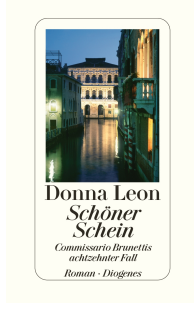
Venetian Curiosities
80 pages
2011



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)**

2006: Das Gesetz der Lagune
Director: Sigi Rothemund
Cast: Uwe Kockisch, Julia Jäger, Tim Bergmann, Laura-Charlotte Syniawa

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



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

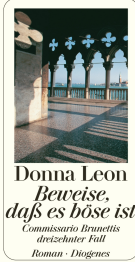


Blood from a Stone
368 pages
2006

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)

- 2006 Das Hörbuch *Mein Venedig* ist auf den 1. Platz des österreichischen Publikumspreises ›Buchlieblich‹ gewählt worden, der Roman *Verschwiegene Kanäle* erzielte den 3. Platz in der Rubrik ›Krimis und Thriller‹
- 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 renommierter ›Suntory‹-Preis für *Death at la Fenice* (dt. *Venezianisches Finale*)

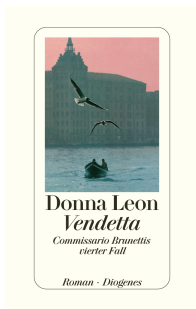
Praise

Wandering Through Life

»Wandering through Life is subtitled ›A Memoir‹, but this does not do justice to such a remarkable book. It is not, by any means, a conventional memoir. It is a series of short, sometimes directionless excursions into facets of Leon's life and view of the world, some autobiographical, some philosophical and some purely whimsical . . . Leon has created a beautifully crafted looking glass into her world.« – Justin Washaw / Times Literary Supplement, London

»In this book, Ms. Leon puts Brunetti firmly in the background and brings herself to the fore . . . Her book is full of spontaneous decisions and aimless meandering . . . Warm, witty, and engaging.« – Malcolm Forbes / Wall Street Journal, New York

»The bestselling detective novelist sold tomatoes in New Jersey and taught English in Iran, before finding happiness (and murder) in Venice . . . So how has La Maestra achieved so much? A delightful companion in life and on the page, she says her high-flying literary career is due to a 'general chipper stance towards the world' and, despite her Catholic parents, a Protestant work ethic. Let's call them the wings of Leon.« – Mark Sanderson / The Times, London



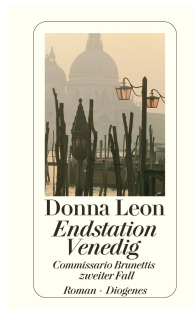
Death and Judgment
352 pages
1997

Movie Adaptation



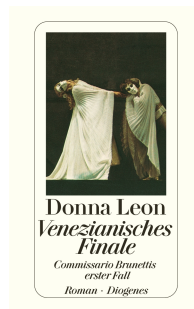
Dressed for Death
384 pages
1996

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)

» [Leon's] memoir invites readers into her world of adventures, and she's certainly had plenty . . . She vividly and engagingly describes her love of crime, Venice, and opera, her dream of finding the perfect cappuccino (more difficult than one might imagine), and the games she created with friends throughout the world. Leon's wit and life well-lived will draw in varied audiences, who can live vicariously through her. Fans of her series will certainly enjoy this memoir and the brief letter she includes to dissuade them from trying to find Guido Brunetti at the Questura.« – Library Journal, Plain City

»Charming . . . Delightfully approachable.« – Kirkus Reviews, New York

»Although celebrated crime writer Leon describes herself as 'feckless and unthinking by nature,' she is anything but in the pages of her sprightly memoir, where she focuses the same keen eye for detail and backstory that infuses her beloved, long-running Venetian mystery series featuring Guido Brunetti . . . Leon is coy and discerning in the anecdotes she selects to chronicle her 80 years on Earth, whether lamenting Venice's environmental degradation or reveling in the works of Handel. Though fans will bask in these candid glimpses, one need not be a devoted Brunetti aficionado to appreciate Leon's delightfully spirited account of a life well lived.« – Booklist, Chicago

»Leon narrates in a very personal way – and addresses her audience directly, almost as if they were old acquaintances and friends.« – Berliner Morgenpost, Berlin

»And yes, this woman really has something to tell.« – Welf Grombacher / Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung, Heidelberg

»In *A Tale of One's Own*, Donna Leon lets us in on her ironic humour and her way to handle truth.« – Christiane Oelrich / Münchner Merkur, Munich

»And yes, this author really has something to say.« – Welf Grombacher / Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, Essen

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

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