

The Works of Donna Leon

The Commissario Guido Brunetti series

Over the years, the Donna Leon's best-selling Commissario Guido Brunetti series has conquered the heart of lovers of finely-plotted character-driven mysteries all over the world. Brunetti, both a perceptive sleuth and a principled family man, has exposed readers to Venice in all its aspects: its history, beauty, architecture, seasons, food and social life, but also the crime and corruption that seethe below the surface of *La Serenissima*.



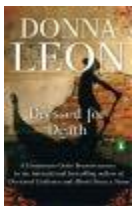
Death at La Fenice [1992]

Venice's canals have always been shrouded in mystery. But when the celebrated opera house, La Fenice, is the scene of a murder, the Commissario of Police, Guido Brunetti, has to step behind the lights into the bitchy world of opera to investigate.



Death in a Strange Country [1993]

The second novel to feature Guido Brunetti, Commissario of the Venice Police. Brunetti confronts the grisly sight of the body of an American soldier in a canal. He becomes suspicious and discovers toxic waste-dumping and a high-level cover-up that extends from the Mafia to the US Army.



The Anonymous Venetian [1994]

Commissario Brunetti's hopes of a refreshing holiday with his family are dashed when a body is found in Marghera so badly beaten that the face is unrecognizable. Brunetti searches in vain for someone who can identify the body. Then he receives a call promising some tantalizing information.



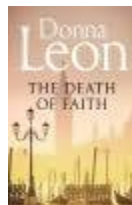
A Venetian Reckoning [1995]

When a lorry crashes on one of the treacherous hair-pin bends in the Italian Dolomites even Commissario Guido Brunetti of the Venice Questura is appalled when he learns of its terrible cargo.



Acqua Alta [1996]

Commissario Guido Brunetti of the Venice Questura is shocked to hear that his friend Brett Lynch, lover of La Scala diva Flavia Petrelli, has been savagely beaten. Then a man's body is found and a terrible confrontation awaits Brett in the Capra family palazzo.



The Death of Faith [1997]

Maria Testa, better known to Brunetti as the nun who once cared for his mother, turns up at the Commissario's door. Maria has left her nursing convent after the suspicious deaths of five patients. Is she creating fears to justify abandoning her vocation, or is there a more sinister scenario?



A Noble Radiance [1997]

The new owner of a farmhouse in a small village at the foot of the Dolomites disturbs a macabre grave, and sets in motion a murder investigation. A vital piece of evidence leads Commissario Guido Brunetti to the heart of aristocratic Venice.



Fatal Remedies [1999]

For Commissario Guido Brunetti it began with an early morning phone call. A sudden act of vandalism had just been committed in the chill Venetian dawn, a rock thrown in anger through the window of a building in the deserted city. But soon Brunetti finds out that the perpetrator is no petty criminal intent on some annoying anonymous act. For the culprit waiting to be apprehended at the scene of the crime is none other than Paola Brunetti. His wife. As Paola's actions provoke a crisis in the

Brunetti household, Brunetti himself is under pressure at work: a daring robbery with Mafia connections is then linked to a suspicious accidental death and his superiors need quick results. But now Brunetti's own career is under threat as his professional and personal lives clash - and the conspiracy which Paola had risked everything to expose draws him inexorably to the brink...



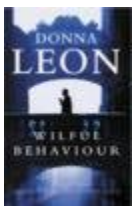
Friends in High Places [2000]

When Commissario Guido Brunetti is visited by a young bureaucrat concerned to investigate the lack of official approval for the building of his apartment years before, his first reaction, like any other Venetian, even a cop, is to think of whom he knows who might bring pressure to bear on the relevant local government department. But when the bureaucrat rings him at work, clearly scared by some information he plans to give Brunetti, and is then found dead after a fall from scaffolding, something is clearly going on that has implications rather greater than the fate of Guido's own apartment. Brunetti's investigations take him into unfamiliar areas of Venetian life – drug abuse and loan-sharking – while the deaths of two young drug addicts and the arrest – and subsequent release – of a suspected drug-dealer, reveal, once again, what a difference it makes in Venice to have friends in high places.



A Sea of Troubles [2001]

The murder of two clam fishermen off the island of Pellestrina, south of the Lido on the Venetian lagoon, draws Commissario Brunetti into the island's close-knit community, bound together by a code of loyalty and a suspicion of outsiders worthy of the Mafia. When the Questore's secretary Signorina Elettra volunteers to visit the island, where she has relatives, Brunetti finds himself torn between his duty to solve the murders, concerns for Elettra's safety, and his not entirely straightforward feelings for her....



Wilful Behaviour [2002]

When one of his wife, Paola's, students comes to visit him, with a strange and vague interest in investigating the possibility of a pardon for a crime committed by her grandfather many years ago, Commissario Brunetti thinks little of it. But when the girl is found dead, clearly stabbed to death, Claudia Leonardo suddenly becomes Brunetti's case, no longer Paola's student. Claudia seems to have no discernible living family – her only

familial relationship is with an elderly Austrian woman, who was the lover of her grandfather, but was not herself Claudia's grandmother. Brunetti is both intrigued and stunned by the extraordinary art collection the old woman keeps in her small, unprepossessing flat, and when she in turn is found dead, the case seems to have be about to open up long buried secrets of collaboration and the exploitation of Italian Jews during the war, secrets few in Italy are happy to explore...



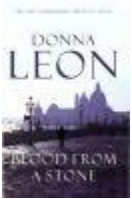
Uniform Justice [2003]

Neither Commissario Brunetti nor his wife Paolo have ever had much sympathy for the Italian armed forces, so when a young cadet is found hanged, a presumed suicide, in Venice's elite military academy, Brunetti's emotions are complex: pity and sorrow for the death of a boy, close in age to his own son, and contempt and irritation for the arrogance and high-handedness of the boy's teachers and fellow-students. The young man is the son of a doctor and former politician, a man of an impeccable integrity all too rare in Italian politics. Dr. Moro is clearly and understandably devastated by his son's death; but neither appears at all keen to talk to the police nor involve Brunetti in any investigation of the circumstances in which he died. As Brunetti - and the indispensable Signorina Elettra - investigate further they are faced by a wall of silence, as the military protects its own and civilians are unwilling to talk. Is this the natural reluctance of Italians to involve themselves with the authorities, or is Brunetti facing a conspiracy of silence?



Doctored Evidence [2004]

When the body of an wealthy elderly woman is found, brutally murdered in her Venetian flat, it is soon clear to the police that the prime suspect is her Rumanian maid, who has disappeared and is heading for Rumania. When the woman is approached by the border police as her train is leaving Italy, she makes a run for it and is killed as she crosses the tracks in front of an oncoming train. She has a considerable sum of money on her and her papers are obvious forgeries. Case closed. But when the old woman's neighbour returns from a business trip in London, it becomes clear that the maid could not have had time to kill the old woman before catching her train, and that the money on her was not stolen. Commissario Brunetti decides – unofficially – to take the case on himself. As Brunetti learns more of the old woman's family, it becomes clear that this is probably not a crime motivated by Greed, rather that the probable motive connects with the temptations of Lust. But perhaps Brunetti is following a false trail and thinking of the wrong Deadly Sin altogether...



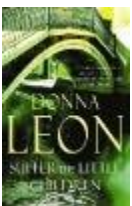
Blood From a Stone [2005]

Two mysterious white men carry out a professional hit on one of the Somali traders who illegally hawk counterfeit luggage in a local square, and for some reason, Brunetti's superiors are remarkably keen that the case be left unsolved. Is this mere casual institutional racism, or something even more sinister? Brunetti, like many other fictional policemen, has no particular gift for obedience to unreasonable orders, and has also a left-wing academic wife to prod his already active conscience.



Through a Glass Darkly [2006]

With her latest novel, *Through a Glass, Darkly*, Leon takes us inside the secretive island of Murano, home of the world-famous glass factories. On a luminous spring day in Venice, Commissario Brunetti and his assistant Vianello play hooky from the Questura in order to help Vianello's friend Marco Ribetti, arrested during an environmental protest. They secure his release, only to be faced by the fury of the man's father-in-law, Giovanni De Cal, a cantankerous glass factory owner who has been heard in the bars of Murano making violent threats about Ribetti. Brunetti's curiosity is piqued, and he finds himself drawn to Murano to investigate. Is De Cal the type of man to carry out his threats? Then, one morning, the body of De Cal's night watchman is found. Over long lunches, on secret boat rides, in quiet bars, and down narrow streets, Brunetti searches for the killer. Will he unravel the clues before the night watchman's death is allowed to be forgotten?



Suffer the Little Children [2007]

When Commissario Brunetti is summoned in the middle of the night to the hospital bed of a senior pediatrician, he is confronted with more questions than answers. Three men – a young Carabinieri captain and two privates from out of town – have burst into the doctor's apartment in the middle of the night, attacked him and taken away his eighteenth-month old baby boy. What could have motivated an assault by the forces of the state so violent it has left the doctor mute? Who would have authorized such an alarming operation? At the same time, Brunetti's colleague Inspector Vianello discovers a money-making scam between pharmacists and doctors in the city. But it appears as if one of the pharmacists is after more than money.



The Girl of His Dreams [2008]

In *The Girl of His Dreams* when a friend of Brunetti's brother, a priest recently returned from years of missionary work, calls with a request, Brunetti suspects the man's motives. A new, American-style Protestant sect has begun to meet in the city, and it's possible the priest is merely apprehensive of the competition. But the preacher could also be fleecing his growing flock, so Brunetti and Paola, along with Inspector Vianello and his wife, go undercover. But the investigation has to be put aside when, one cold and rainy morning, a body is found floating in a canal. It is a child, a gypsy girl. Brunetti suspects she fell off a nearby roof while fleeing an apartment she had robbed. He has to inform the distrustful parents, encamped on the mainland, and soon finds himself haunted by the crime – and the girl.



About Face [2009]

In *About Face*, Leon returns to one of her signature subjects: the environment, which has reached a crisis in Italy. Incinerators across the south of Italy are at full capacity, burning who-knows-what and releasing unacceptable levels of dangerous air pollutants, while in Naples, enormous garbage piles grow in the streets. In Venice, with the polluted waters of the canals and a major chemical complex across the lagoon, the issue is never far from the fore. Environmental concerns become significant in Brunetti's work, when an investigator from the Carabinieri, looking into the illegal hauling of garbage, asks for a favor. But the investigator is not the only one with a special request. His father-in-law needs help and a mysterious woman comes into the picture. Brunetti soon finds himself in the middle of an investigation into murder and corruption more dangerous than anything he's seen before.



A Question of Belief [2010]

In *A Question of Belief*, Brunetti must contend with ingenious corruption, bureaucratic intransigence, and the stifling heat of a Venetian summer. With his hometown beset by hordes of tourists and baking under a glaring sun, Brunetti's greatest wish is to go to the mountains with his family, where he can sleep under a down comforter and catch up on his reading. But before he can go on vacation, a folder with court records has landed on his desk, brought by an old friend. It appears that cases at the local court – hardly known as a model of efficiency – are being delayed to the benefit of one of the parties. A

creative new trick for corrupting the system, perhaps, but what can Brunetti do about it? And just when it looks like Brunetti will be able to get away, a shocking, violent crime forces him to stay in Venice.



Drawing Conclusions [2011]

Late one night, Brunetti is suffering through a dinner with Vice Questore Patta and his nasty Lieutenant Scarpa when his *telefonino* rings. A old woman's body has been found in a Spartan apartment on Campo San Giacomo dell'Orio. Her neighbor discovered it when she went to pick up her mail, after having been away in Palermo. Brunetti sees some signs of force on the old woman – the obvious wound on her head, what could be a bruise near her collarbone – but they could just as easily have been from the radiator near where she fell. When the medical examiner rules that the woman died of a heart attack, it seems there is nothing for Brunetti to investigate. But he can't shake the feeling that something may have created conditions that led to her heart attack, that perhaps the woman was threatened.

Brunetti meets with the woman's son, called into the city from the mainland to identify the body, her upstairs neighbor, and the nun in charge of the old age home where she volunteered. None of these quiet his suspicions. If anything, the son's distraught, perhaps cagey behavior, a scene witnessed by the neighbor, and the nun's reluctance to tell anything, as well as her comments about the deceased's "terrible honesty," only heighten Brunetti's notion. With the help of Inspector Lorenzo Vianello and the ever-resourceful Signorina Elettra Zorzi, perhaps Brunetti can get to the truth, and find some measure of justice.



Beastly Things [2012]

When the body of man is found in a canal, damaged by the tides, carrying no wallet, and wearing only one shoe, Brunetti has little to work with. No local has filed a missing-person report, and no hotel guests have disappeared. Where was the crime scene? And how can Brunetti identify the man, when he can't show pictures of his face? The autopsy shows a way forward: it turns out the man was suffering from a rare, disfiguring disease. With Inspector Vianello, Brunetti canvasses shoe stores, and winds up on the mainland in Mestre, outside of his usual sphere. From a shopkeeper, they learn that the man had a kindly way with animals. At the same time, animal rights and meat consumption are quickly becoming preoccupying issues at the Venice Questura, and in Brunetti's home, where conversation at family meals offer a window into the joys and

conflicts of Italian life. Perhaps with the help of Signorina Elettra, Brunetti and Vianello can identify the man and understand why someone wanted him dead.



The Golden Egg [2013]

In *The Golden Egg*, as the first leaves of autumn begin to fall, Brunetti's ambitious boss, Patta, asks him to look into a seemingly insignificant violation of public vending laws by a shopkeeper, who happens to be the future daughter-in-law of the Mayor. Brunetti, who has no interest in helping Patta enrich his political connections, has little choice but to ask around to see if the bribery could cause a scandal.

Then, Brunetti's wife Paola comes to him with an unusual request of her own. The deaf, mentally disabled man who worked at their dry-cleaners has died of a sleeping-pill overdose, and Paola's kind heart can't take the idea that he lived and died without anyone noticing him, or helping him.

To please her, Brunetti begins to ask questions. He is surprised when he finds that the man left no official record: no birth certificate, no passport, no driver's license, no credit cards. The man owns nothing, is registered nowhere. As far as the Italian government is concerned, the man never existed. It is even more surprising because, with his physical and mental handicaps, both he and his mother were entitled to financial support from the state. And yet, despite no official record of the man's life, there is his body.

Stranger still, the dead man's mother is reluctant to speak to the police and claims that her son's identification papers were stolen in a burglary. As clues stack up, Brunetti suspects that the Lembos, a family of aristocratic copper magnates, might be somehow connected to the death. But could anyone really want this sweet, simple-minded man dead?



Brunetti's Cookbook [2010]

Among their many pleasures, Donna Leon's Commissario Guido Brunetti novels have long been celebrated for their mouth-watering descriptions of food. Multicourse lunches at home with Paola and the children, snacks grabbed at a bar with a glass of wine or two, a quick sandwich during a busy day, or a working lunch at a neighborhood trattoria in the course of an investigation have all delighted Brunetti, as well as Leon's readers and reviewers. And then there's the coffee, the pastries, the wine, and the grappa.

In *Brunetti's Cookbook*, Donna Leon's best friend and favorite cook brings to life these fabulous Venetian meals. Eggplant crostini, orrechiette with asparagus, pumpkin ravioli, roasted artichokes, baked branzino, pork ragu with porcini—these are just a few of the over ninety recipes for antipasti, primi, secondi, and dolci. The recipes are joined by excerpts from the novels, four-color illustrations, and six original essays by Donna Leon on food and life in Venice. Charming, insightful, and full of personality, they are the perfect addition to this long awaited book.

Non-Series Books



The Jewels of Paradise [2012]

Donna Leon has won heaps of critical praise and legions of fans for her best-selling mystery series featuring Commissario Guido Brunetti. With *The Jewels of Paradise*, Leon takes readers beyond the world of the Venetian Questura in her first standalone novel.

Caterina Pellegrini is a native Venetian, and like so many of them, she's had to leave home to pursue her career. With a doctorate in baroque opera from Vienna, she lands in Birmingham, England. Birmingham, however, is no Venice. When Caterina gets word of a position back home, she jumps at the opportunity.

The job is an unusual one. After nearly three centuries, two locked trunks, believed to contain the papers of a baroque composer have been discovered. Deeply-connected in religious and political circles, the composer died childless; now two Venetians, descendants of his cousins, each claim inheritance. Caterina's job is to examine any enclosed papers to discover the "testamentary disposition" of the composer. But when her research takes her in unexpected directions she begins to wonder just what secrets these trunks may hold.

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