



## The Girl of His Dreams

By Donna Leon

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Donna Leon's Commissario Guido Brunetti mysteries have won legions of fans for their evocative portraits of Venetian life. In her novels, home-cooked food, family, renaissance art, Italian history, and local politics play as central a role as an unsolved crime. *The Girl of His Dreams* opens with a major event in Brunetti's family, and keeps the theme of family close to the fore.

When a friend of Guido Brunetti's brother, a priest recently returned from years of missionary work in Africa, calls on the Commissario with a request, Brunetti suspects the man has hidden motives. An American-style Christian sect has begun meeting in private homes in the city, and it's possible the priest is merely apprehensive of the competition. Nevertheless, Brunetti and his wife, Paola, decide to go undercover. But when a girl's body is found floating in a canal, Brunetti must put everything aside to investigate the secretive world of her people, the gypsies, who exist on the fringes of society. Thought provoking, eye opening, and profoundly moving, *The Girl of His Dreams* is classic Donna Leon—and a spectacular, heart-wrenching addition to the series.

“A showcase of nuanced characterization, acute observation and seamless plotting.”—*The Washington Post*

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best of the Month, May 2008: Reading *The Girl of His Dreams* leaves you no choice but to reconsider what makes a mystery novel so good. Certainly there's no denying the appeal of a hard-boiled crime story, where more often than not a brilliant yet battered P.I. drives you white-knuckled to the edge of your seat, but Donna Leon's Guido Brunetti--at once exactly inquisitive and disarmingly sensitive--bucks that genre convention entirely. Here, in Leon's seventeenth Brunetti mystery, is a man who investigates the tragic drowning of a young Gypsy girl relentlessly, yet--in his thoughtful meanderings through the streets and cafes of Venice--also struggles to understand the human warps and weaknesses that make his beloved city so vulnerable. In the end, it's this pure love and curiosity for life (and, I admit, his lusty appreciation of daily luxuries like prosecco, good coffee, or a burst of sunshine) that make Brunetti such a seductive hero--so much so that you're willing to follow him wherever he goes. --*Anne Bartholomew*

### From [Booklist](#)

**\*Starred Review\*** Leon's latest Guido Brunetti novel begins and ends with funerals—the first for Brunetti's mother and the second for an 11-year-old gypsy girl whose body washes up in Venice's Grand Canal. As he launches what he knows will be a fruitless investigation of the girl's death, Brunetti is assailed by the ironies of police work in contemporary Italy, where corruption is rampant and where his boss, Patta, king of the bureaucrats, prattles on about multicultural awareness while trying to protect the well-connected from any exposure in the matter of an insignificant gypsy's death. But just as Brunetti is incensed by the way his peers ignore the marginalized members of society, so is he appalled by the callousness with which gypsy fathers groom their young children for lives of petty crime. More and more in Leon's remarkably rich series, crimes have no solutions, and the problems of daily life yield no answers. And yet, as Brunetti reflects on his loss of the "capacity for instinctive trust," we feel just that kind of trust in Brunetti himself, in the idea of a man overwhelmed by a malfunctioning society who soldiers on, doing what good work he can and finding solace in small moments of love and tranquility. It isn't much, but in lives bookended by funerals and filled with frustrations, it's what we have. This series becomes less about crime and more about daily life with each new entry, and as it evolves, it becomes clear that Leon deserves her place not only with the finest international crime writers (Michael Dibdin and Henning Mankell, for example) but also with literary novelists who explore the agonies of the everyday (Margaret Drabble and Anne Tyler, among others). --*Bill Ott*

### Review

"Gorgeously written . . . the seventeenth book in this superlative series restates Leon's themes with more intensity than usual."

-Marilyn Stasio, *The New York Times Book Review*

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#### Donald Andrews:

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**Charles Morris:**

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