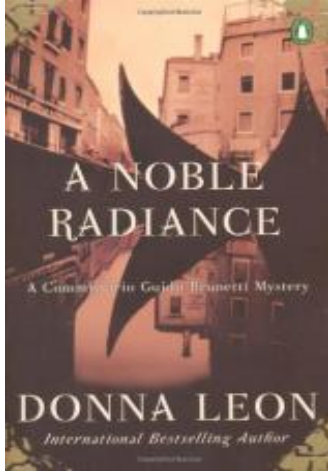


# A Noble Radiance

by Donna Leon

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## About the Book

Donna Leon has topped European bestseller lists for more than a decade with a series of mysteries featuring clever Commissario Guido Brunetti. Always ready to bend the rules to uncover the threads of a crime, Brunetti manages to maintain his integrity while maneuvering through a city rife with politics, corruption, and intrigue.

In **A Noble Radiance** a new landowner is summoned urgently to his house not far from Venice when workmen accidentally unearth a macabre grave. The human corpse is badly decomposed, but a ring found nearby proves to be a first clue that reopens an infamous case of kidnapping involving one of Venice's most aristocratic families. Only Commissario Brunetti can unravel the clues and find his way into both the heart of patrician Venice and that of a family grieving for their abducted son.

## Discussion Guide

1. Pucetti says to Brunetti, "We're getting a lot of Albanians and Slavs, and you know what thieves they are." Brunetti notes that while he tends to agree with Pucetti, his wife Paola would have reacted angrily to such a statement. What do you think this says about Brunetti's character? Why did the author choose to include the disclaimer about Paola?
2. When Brunetti discusses nuclear science with his medical radiology researcher brother, he laments the technological advances at the expense of human lives. Roberto Lorenzoni turns out to be a peripheral victim to nuclear power, an Icarus who falls because of his own curiosity. Do you think, as Brunetti seems to, that Chernobyl was reason enough to stop building new nuclear reactors? Why or why not?

3. Brunetti is "In love with his wife, proud of his children, capable of doing his job well, why would he worry about happiness, and what more than these things could happiness be comprised of?" How might one answer such a question? In what ways might happiness be separate from the things he listed?

4. What was Count Lorenzoni's motive for killing his nephew Maurizio? What motivates the count's actions? Was it love for his wife or love of himself?

5. Brunetti quotes from Cicero, "To understand the relationship between one phenomenon and another and the causes and consequences of each one." What is the significance of this quote? How does it relate to the events of Roberto Lorenzoni's short life? How does it relate to Brunetti's own life? In what ways do you think justice has been served with respect to Count Lorenzoni? What kind of punishment do you think Paolo Filippi deserved?

## Author Bio

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. Commissario Brunetti made her books world-famous. Donna Leon lived in Italy for many years, and although she now lives in Switzerland, she often visits Venice.

## Critical Praise

"Goes a long way to confirming Donna Leon's claim to have taken literary possession of Venice? **A Noble Radiance** finds her at the height of her power. It gives the reader a delightful foretaste of summer holidays to come, but it also offers much more than that?"

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