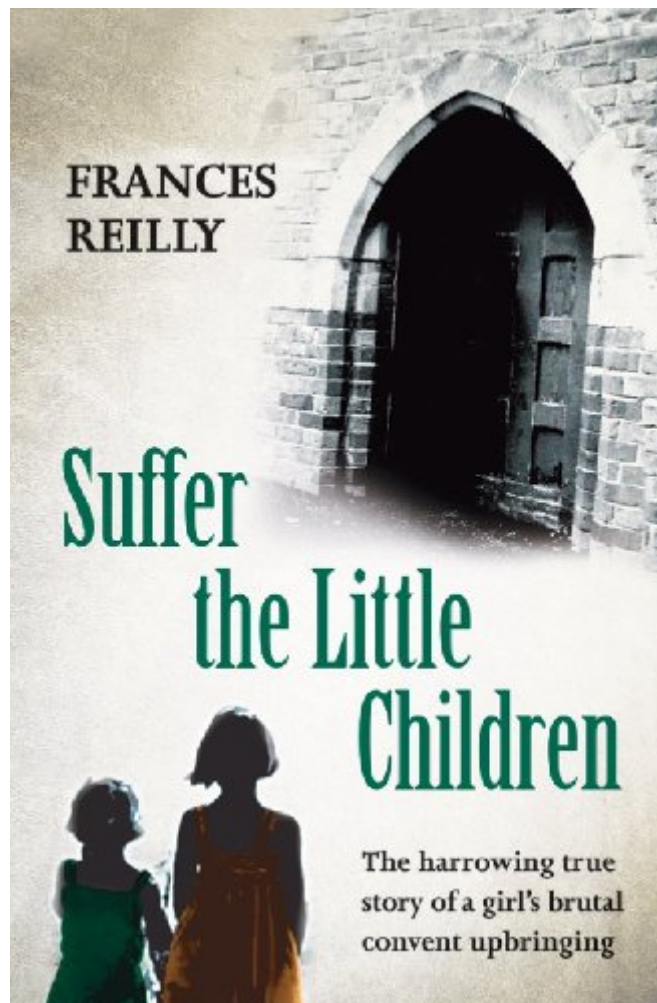




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Suffer The Little Children: The True Story Of An Abused Convent Upbringing



Synopsis

The heartbreaking yet inspiring account of a young girl who suffered at the hands of nuns in the Nazareth House Convent in Northern Ireland. Frances Reilly and her sisters were abandoned by their mother outside Nazareth House Convent - a Belfast orphanage run by nuns. Little did they know the unimaginable cruelty they'd endure within its walls. Frances suffered horrifically at the hands of the Sisters: brutally beaten, worked like a slave, abused and molested, the convent regime stripped her of everything - education, innocence and childhood. But the hope of rescue or escape never left her. Years later, Frances would face her demons in court, bringing to account those who so viciously stole her youth. *SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN* is a gripping and moving story of one child's spirit of survival.

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Customer Reviews

This book exposes the stupidity of government regulations regarding illegal adoptions in Italy.

Donna Leon's Commissario Guido Brunetti is caught between the law he is supposed to enforce and the plight of a father whose illegally-adopted son has been torn from his arms by the Carabinieri during a brutal midnight raid. Brunetti's superior, Vice-Questore Patta has become a well-groomed, fawning caricature; this time the object of his abject toadying is a right-wing politician who happens to be the father-in-law of the man who lost his little boy to the Carabinieri. Meanwhile Brunetti's colleague, Inspector Vianello is investigating a money-making scam between pharmacists and physicians in Venice. Doctors are charging for patient visits that never took place, and one of the pharmacists, who is illegally accessing patient records, seems to be involved in a blackmailing scheme. At the very least he has made someone angry enough to trash his pharmacy. All of these plot lines eventually tangle together in one of the grimmer books in this long-running series. Brunetti and his friend and colleague Vianello still find much to enjoy and marvel at in beautiful La Serenissima, in spite of mean-spirited politicians, the ever-present hordes of tourists, and the little orphans who are the real victims of Italy's medieval adoption laws.

I just love this series. This one is not a whodunit in the classical way. Commisario Brunetti investigates events surrounding the illegal adoption of children by wealthy Venetian couples. Will those unwanted children be better off in an orphanage? This and many other questions are in Brunetti's mind while following up on possible leads to find out what really happened. It's not really his job, he does it for himself. All the rest of the usual characters are here - Brunetti's undercover sojourn with Signorina Elettra is simply hilarious, and Donna Leon's sense of humor is, as always, a wonderful treat.

The familiar and enjoyable elements of Donna Leon's Commissario Brunetti novels--trenchant observations of the beautiful and corrupt city of Venice, and an engaging and humane hero with rich collegial and family relationships --are abundantly present in "Suffer the Little Children." Unfortunately Ms. Leon has thrown the book off balance: her understandable distress at the situation she is depicting (the sale of babies for adoption) overpowers the story. It seems more something we are being educated about, rather than something exposed naturally in the course of Brunetti's investigation. We are not allowed to develop our own sense of indignation and sadness at what people will sink to and what terrible decisions we make--Leon does it all for us. Although "Suffer the Little Children" is better than some of her recent work, it does not achieve the high standard Ms. Leon set for us in the earlier Brunetti novels.

As an overview comment, I would point out that as many books as Leon has written that I have read, I never felt as if I should have started with the first one. They all stand alone although if you've read a few you have more perspective about the characters and the related relationships of the main characters overall. This book is predominantly about child trafficking but with a unique set of circumstances and many twists and turns including the surprise ending. There is a sub-plot that emerges during the primary story per another case that some of the officers developed an strong interest in pursuing. While the book held my attention in most places, I found my attention span wandering at some points. Because of that, I realized I missed some subtle aspects of the sub-plot which would have had a bit more impact if I paid closer attention. Regardless, it is a good book that covers a sad and complex topic but in a way that keeps you guessing . Just at that point where you figure you "know" the outcome ... Leon throws some "curve balls". I'd recommend this to anyone who has interest in light mysteries absent too much graphic detail of the crimes.

This is my 12th Commissario Guido Brunetti book and is one of if not THE best so far. The opening event of a child adopted and greatly loved only to be taken from the father who made him his own after 18 month tears at the heart and impacts enfolding events. Misplaced self-assumed high morality and corruption at every turn add texture to the story. As expected and greatly appreciated, there is Venice as a character, wonderful description of the food Paola serves and Guido orders in various eateries, and the treat of being party to the relationship between Guido and Paola. All the elements we love. I would have liked a bit more of Signorina Elettra having been spoiled by her prominent role in *A Sea of Trouble*.

The great enjoyment in Donna Leon's "Suffer the Little Children," and virtually all of the other books in this series, comes from the focus on the book's varied characters and the city backdrop, Venice. The plot of this particular book, involving illegal baby adoption, but also marital betrayal and the intrusion into peoples' lives by an unprincipled moralist, is secondary and only serves as the device that allows for an examination of the professional and personal life of Guido Brunetti, Commissario of Police in Venice. By the time you finish this book (and any of its predecessors), you're ready for a visit to Venice and have a yen to drop in on Brunetti and his family (however aware you are that, sadly, they don't exist). Other readers have been disappointed with "Suffer the Little Children" for its flaccid plot and generally slow pace. I think those are valid criticisms, but there is still plenty of pleasure catching up with the series' hero and colleagues and listening to the author's gentle rant about troubles in paradise.

Love Commissario Brunetti, love Venice, love the series. This was a good but not great addition to the canon, as usual asked some difficult questions without easy answers. The subject was a tough one

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