

"Venice takes you back to your beginning in the amniotic fluid," an elderly painter tells the newly arrived journalist Suzannah Barclay. "You see yourself clearly again. Find your lost soul." Both Suzannah and Julian are searching for their untainted selves, both feel robbed of their individuality and natural joy, so they end up in Venice.

A Novel Of Venice

Behind the Mirror — *A Novel of Venice*

by Sharon Feinstein

Feinstein, an acclaimed journalist and author of three novels, brings her sharp eye and lyrical voice to the city of water and its illusive reflections.



Venice, a city floating "like a shiny fish," is like a fortune teller who sees the long passage of life written in the cards.

"Venice is like Medusa — you can't look her in the face. You must trap her image in a mirror and gaze at the glass, and there you will see yourself. And if you look closely enough — you will see Behind the Mirror."

"A fast-moving story of betrayal, abandonment, blood feuds and lifelong love... the city itself emerges as the star of this intriguing drama."

Susie Dowdall — Deputy Literary Editor, Daily Mail

The Prologue

Venice, 1789. A child of the noble Renier family drowns in the canal during a spectacular ball staged by the noble Candiano family. Was she pushed or did she fall? The Reniers blame the Candianos and an ancient vendetta is unleashed. In 2010 Suzannah and Julian, who have never met, arrive in the city that can effect change – Julian's marriage unravelling, Suzannah's career gone stale. Unwittingly, they are swept up in the brutal vendetta.

Ancient Rules

"Time dissolves in this city," Contessa Claudia Candiano tells Suzannah. "We still live in the sixteenth century, by ancient rules. Vendettas are as alive as they were then."

A modern murder investigation, led by the Questore of Venice, an international financial crime which involves financial investigator Julian Dias, and an English journalist who wants new meaning in her life, become Venice's pawns.

"It wasn't chance," Claudia says of the accident that first brought Suzannah to her palazzo door. "It was the hand of destiny."

The Man Who Walked Out

In the moments of shock when Julian walks out on his family, he feels little anguish. The anguish begins later, when he has to find a place to sleep, a way to live, and try to eliminate his memories.

Behind The Mirror

An antique mirror hangs in a villa on Sant'Erasmo island, its silvering worn thin. Venice cannot be seen directly, says the Contessa. It must be caught in glass.

Suzannah learns this on her journey through the dreamlike city: carrying her grief for the sister she could not save; lured into a love affair with the young and fascinating Candiano countess; meeting Julian in flight from his family.

The Book

Approx. 105,000 words. A Prologue and ninety-odd interwoven chapters moving between Venice, London, Moscow, the Scottish Highlands and Africa, spanning 1789 to the present day.

Her first novel, with two further manuscripts completed. A standalone — which opens the door to a second.

Genre

- Literary Fiction / Upmarket Suspense
- Dual-Timeline Historical Fiction
- Extraordinary Sense of Place
- Family Vendetta & Inheritance
- Financial Crime & Espionage

Readers

For readers who love the doomed romance of *The English Patient* and the moral unease of *The Talented Mr. Ripley* — and for those who have stood on a Venetian bridge at dusk and found themselves transported.

- *The Talented Mr. Ripley* — Patricia Highsmith
- *The House of the Spirits* — Isabel Allende
- *The Quiet American* — Graham Greene
- *Murder in Paris '68* — Edward Chisholm

"How fragile we are," a boatman thinks in the Prologue, watching a five-year-old's coffin vanish into a sealed tomb. "Beneath our show of strength and make-believe: how insubstantial."

Suzannah sits down beside a stranger on the plane, as the city disappears below. And then comes the shock.

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Seen From Her Window

The Venice of this novel — photographed by the author, captioned in her words.



"They turned into a small courtyard where the walls were painted terracotta. At the centre was a marble well."



"Venice moves at a human pace, to the rhythm of the heart, the dip of oars."



"But look at La Salute. There's nowhere more extraordinary than Venice."

Pale ivory asparagi in crates, sweet tomatoes stacked into glowing pyramids — Feinstein's Venice is built from produce and light as much as from plot.

On The Book

"Vividly evoking its beauty, art and sumptuous cuisine, she also reveals a dark side to the Floating City. Feinstein weaves together disparate characters and storylines, skilfully exploiting the city's inherent atmosphere of mystery across the centuries. In amongst the plot twists, passions and long-held vendettas, the city itself emerges as the star of this intriguing drama."

Susie Dowdall — Deputy Literary Editor, Daily Mail

On Julian's Son

"You're ashamed of your son. He doesn't belong in your perfect, ordered world. He's a stain you cannot erase."



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An acclaimed journalist and the author of three novels, Sharon Feinstein brings her sharp eye and lyrical voice to the city of water and its illusive reflections. Every photograph on this page is her own, taken in Venice — the courtyard, the marble well, the green canal beneath a window — the city that lies *Behind the Mirror*.

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