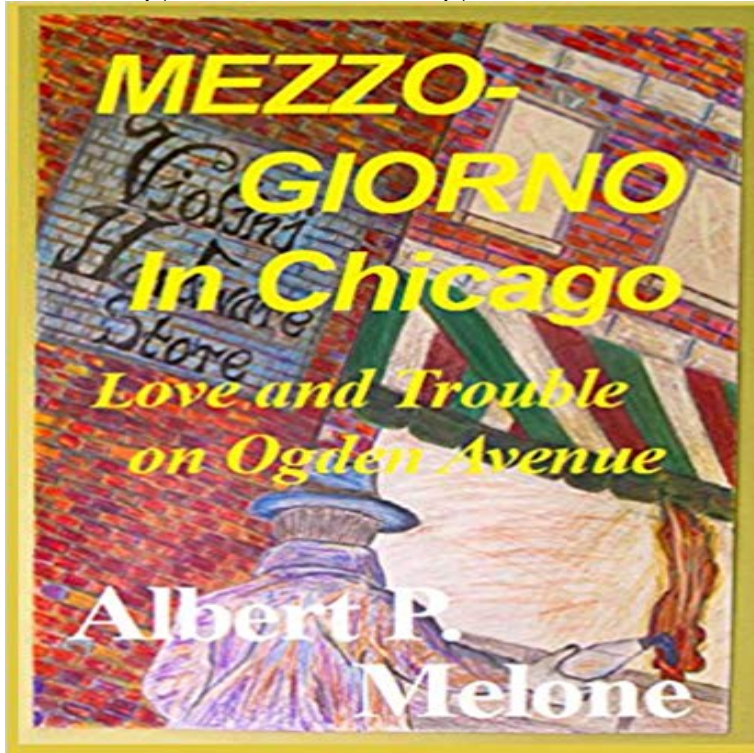


Mezzogiorno in Chicago: Love and Trouble on Ogden Avenue



This novel is a tale of a family that immigrates at the turn of the twentieth century from Italys Mezzogiorno to Chicago. It features the struggles of Rachela who jilts her betrothed in favor of a new found love ushering in a wave of violence and revenge while also creating opportunities for personal happiness and family success in the new world. As a work of historical fiction, it details the dramatic personal travails of the Russo and Violini families through sixty-six turbulent years of American history within the larger panorama of important national and international events that influence how Rachela and her family meet the demands of living in a foreign land. Inspired by actual events, the author treats the reader to a host of lifes lessons fermented first in the warm soil and gentle mountain streams of southern Italy and then spread however unevenly to the cold brick and concrete of Chicago streets and the bone chilling winds blowing off Lake Michigan. Rachela and her family struggle to live by a moral and religious code that is ill-suited and yet awkwardly workable for the challenges of the new world. Viewing themselves as law abiding, they must cope with violence, death, prejudice, extortion, kidnapping, corruption, war, economic depression, and ignorance to share in the promise of a better life. As a matter of pragmatic survival, the cross-pressured characters sometimes blur the line between law and order, and self-defense. This compelling American story portrays a recurring theme of tension between individual attainment and community well-being, including the meaning of what is love beyond mere Eros to its more inclusive and broader applications of love of community and God. It is a tale of both the bright and dark sides of the American dream while representing little understood views that are contrary to the conventional wisdom and stereotypes surrounding the Italian

immigrant experience.

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