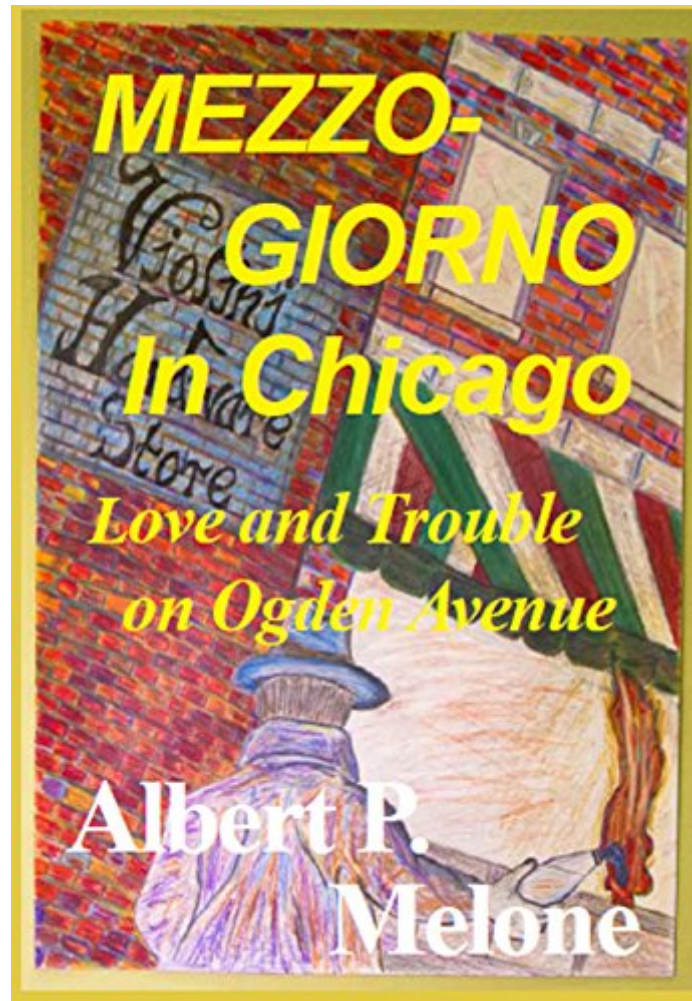


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# Mezzogiorno In Chicago: Love And Trouble On Ogden Avenue



## Synopsis

This novel is a tale of a family that immigrates at the turn of the twentieth century from Italy's 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 life's 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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

After working hard all day at back-breaking jobs, the Italian immigrants crowded into their living quarters where lack of space forced a togetherness that they might have preferred not to have... So when Dominic was feeling a bit lonely and pulled out the picture of his sister Rachela, it was bound to draw attention of the, perhaps, ten men who sat on the floor after dinner. One of them was close enough to see Rachela's beauty and grabbed the picture to get a closer look. Dominic became angry and the two men almost came to blows until Frankie apologized and returned the photo. As simple as that interaction was, nobody would have known what it would bring about... Dominic had declared that he did not mind talking about his family as long as it was respectfully done. And so Frankie asked more and more about Rachela, finally after time had passed, asking Dominic about the possibility of Rachela joining with Frankie in marriage! As Frankie became persistent, they talked about the money necessary to make that happen and Frankie agreed, finally, to pay for passage of Rachela and her mother to come to America...and also to not expect the normal dowry, which the family could not provide. So it was that Dominic would go back home to talk about Frankie's proposal. Pleasantly surprised by those who lived in his village at their recognition and welcome home, he realized how wonderful it was to be around so many people he knew and cared about...After they had all caught each other up with news, Dominic explained what he had to present to Rachela. It happened at a time when she was willing to listen--the boy she was in love with had become a priest! His love for God had come first, leaving Rachela confused and in turmoil.

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