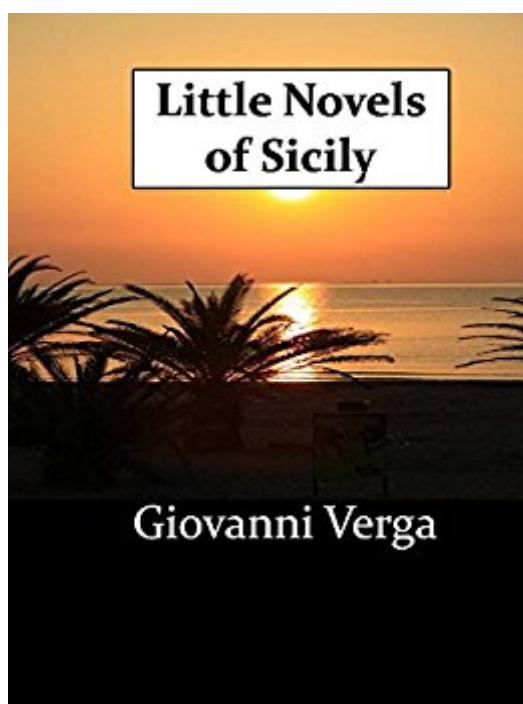


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# Little Novels Of Sicily



## Synopsis

Giovanni Carmelo Verga (2 September 1840 – 27 January 1922) was an Italian realist (Verismo) writer, best known for his depictions of life in his native Sicily, and especially for the short story (and later play) *Cavalleria Rusticana* and the novel *I Malavoglia* (The House by the Medlar Tree). This book is a description of Sicilian life: the class struggle between property owners and tenants, the relationship between men and the land, and the unsentimental, sometimes startlingly lyric evocation of the landscape. Just as Lawrence veers between loving and despising the industrial North and its people, so too Verga shifts between affection for and ironic detachment from the superstitious, uneducated, downtrodden working poor of Sicily.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The whole world is a small town is a sicilian phrase that means no matter where you travel, people will be basically the same. Reading this work by G. Verga gave this saying a whole new meaning for me. I learned that people in Sicily are basically the same today as they were 120 years ago.

Giovanni Verga was born and lived in a small town in Sicily called Vizzini. This is the same town that my parents are from. I have spent many summers with my grandmother there. The distant past was

always portrayed as somehow better by my grandmother. According to her, our ancestors did not succumb to petty human weaknesses. After enjoying these short stories I realize that my grandmother remembered her youth more with nostalgic fantasy than historic accuracy. This work wonderfully portrays human motivations, strengths and weaknesses. It was a wonderful revelation to realize that the whole world is a small town, not only in the dimension of space but also in the dimension of time.

This is a wonderful little collection of short stories by the Sicilian author Giovanni Verga. I had never read any Sicilian literature before Verga, and I'm so glad that I started with this book! It has further piqued my interest in Sicilian culture and the Sicilian language. Verga uses his words very carefully in order to paint the pictures of the sorrows, joys, sufferings and moments of rejoicing in eastern Sicily. This is definitely worth the money for anyone who is interested in Sicilian or Italian literature.

I am doing historical research on Italy and Sicily and this book gives a wonderful view into the lives of ordinary people of the Sicilian countryside. Very frank accounts that are not sugar-coated.

In 1883, when *LITTLE NOVELS OF SICILY* was first published, literacy remained a mark of privilege, which is why so much 19th century literature focused on the upper class. In Giovanni Verga's *LITTLE NOVELS OF SICILY* those gilded trappings are peripheral, and the reader is immersed in hard scrabble slivers of Sicilian peasant life. Verga's Sicily is rife with gossip, poverty, violence, brutality, and sheer, moving beauty. All of these stories swell with originality and heart. The people are small, but the emotions and conflicts are incisive. Each story contains the best quality of good fiction - the ability to sweep you away. Take "Malaria," a story about a village devastated by the disease where the trains still pass through the blighted railroad station, trains filled with healthy, wealthy people. "The Gentry" is a tale that could have been written by Cormac McCarthy as it unflinchingly describes Garibaldi's Expedition of the Thousand and the bloody purges it inspired. The final story in this collection is "Across the Sea." This is the story that shows why DH Lawrence loved *LITTLE NOVELS OF SICILY*. It's that perfect dirge of love unrequited and love interrupted - the love that continues to orbit even when the star has died. The supple descriptions of scenery are redolent of Lawrence's best work. A recurring flaw shows itself when too many characters are packed into one story, with very little to differentiate them other than a name. It's a confusing technique that results in some overcrowding. Despite its age, there is nothing genteel about the characters in this volume. It's a revolving cast of corrupt clergy,

backstabbing neighbors, and striving heroes, all united by the haunted speck of land on which they make their lives. LITTLE NOVELS OF SICILY is truly a forgotten gem.

Verga's Little Novels of Sicily, originally titled *Novelle rusticane*, or *Country Stories*, was translated by D.H. Lawrence who no doubt saw in Verga's characters and themes an echo of his own early fiction. The small Sicilian towns of Verga's stories are going through the pain of moving from a feudal rural life to an uncertain modern one; in the process, all the corruptions of southern Italian society are exposed. The peasantry is preyed upon by the priests and gentry and even by their own kind, the growing class of rich peasants. Verga's stories capture a unique time and place in Sicily's history. The stories are rich in loving detail and color even as they are scathingly honest and critical.

It is a wonderful art to be able to write short stories in which there is a depth of thought, real life and characters that come alive. Giovanni Verga achieves this with distinction. One gets a real insight into the time and circumstances of the people described. I highly recommend this book! Gordon Hay

The perfect book for the avid reader, these are well written and enjoyable. These tales bring a flavor of life to the reader that is rare in writing today.

Loved it too! And there is also the bilingual edition for Kindle *Novelle Rusticane - Little Novels of Sicily: Bilingual parallel text - Bilingue con testo inglese a fronte: Italian - English / Italiano - Inglese (Dual Language Easy Reader Book 20) !*

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