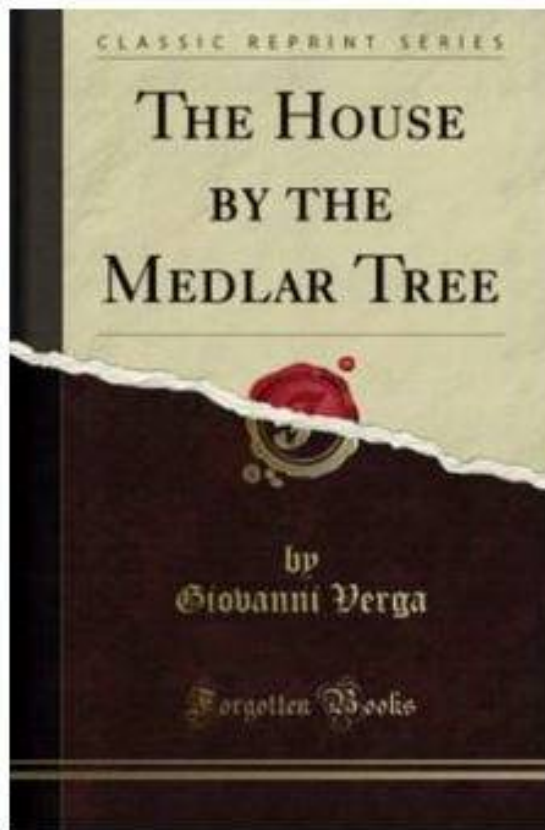


September 2017



“The Malavoglia had once been as numerous as the stones on the old Trezza road. There had been Malavoglia at Ognina and Aci Castello; all good, honest sea-going folk, just the opposite of what their name implied.”

This is our introduction to the Toscano family. Their epithet, The Malavoglia, with its connotation of some sort of reluctance, also continues to contradict nature of the present incumbents of the title; an elderly patriarch, his son and daughter-in-law and their five children. A family that relies heavily on the prodigious work ethic of its members and the income provided by their boat, the *Provvidenza*, to maintain their social standing in the small Sicilian fishing village of Aci Trezza and the house which gives the

book its name: [The House by the Medlar Tree](#).

Set shortly after Garibaldi's unification of Italy, this novel chronicles the socio and economic misfortunes of a proud and ancient family. Triggered by the necessity of finding an alternative income during a particularly lean season, Master 'Ntoni makes the ill-advised decision to buy, on credit, a quantity of lupins that were “somewhat the worse for wear” and take them, on the *Provvidenza* to sell in Riposto. Not long into the voyage, the boat is caught in a storm and the crew, including Master 'Ntoni's son, Bastiano, are drowned and the cargo lost.

First published in the early 1880's, this novel is considered to be [Giovanni Verga's](#) masterpiece. A Sicilian native himself, albeit from the middle classes, this work is a stark account of not just the vagarious nature of what it is to be a family but also the capricious and ostensibly claustrophobic environment in which the Malavoglia lived. The malicious gossip, innuendo, superstitions, rivalries, alliances and, of course, the corruption, while intrinsically fundamental to the story, did, at times, overwhelm this reader.

Read a [great article](#) about Giovanni Verga written by the English expat in Italy, Tim Parks.

Ratings: Alexa DNF, Claudia DNF, Di 3.5, Gail DNF, Janet 3, Judith 1, Kim 3, Margie 2.5, Penny DNF and Viv 2.5.

Next month we get together on the 11/09/17 at 6:30pm at [Preece House, 50 Nerang St Bischof Pioneer Park, Nerang \(next to 54 Nerang St. shops\)](#) to discuss [See How Much I Love You](#) by [Luis Leante](#). This continues our year of European novels in translation. Hope to see you there and Happy Reading!

Other Books We Read

September 2017

Our book this month was [The House by The Medlar Tree](#) by [Giovanni Verga](#), but we also read other books. Maximum rating is 5.

My Family and Other Animals by Gerald Durrell, 3.5

Moon Tiger by Penelope Lively, 3.5

Siracusa by Delia Ephron, 3

Stay With Me by Ayobami Adebayo, 3.5

The Birds by Tarjei Vesaas,

Barkskins by Annie Proulx, 4

Tirra Lirra by the River by Jessica Anderson, 4

Nothing Holds Back the Night by Delphine de Vigan ,3.5

A Manual for Cleaning Women by Lucia Berlin, 4

My Cat Yugoslavia by Pajtim Statovci, 3

Based on a True Story by Delphine de Vigan, 3.5 and 4

Am I Black Enough For You? By Anita Heiss, 3.5

The Husband Hunters by Anne de Courcy, 4

Victoria by Julia Baird, 3