



Rosa: The Life of an Italian Immigrant (Wisconsin Studies in Autobiography)

Marie Hall Ets

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This is the life story of Rosa Cavalleri, an Italian woman who came to the United States in 1884, one of the peak years in the nineteenth-century wave of immigration. A vivid, richly detailed account, the narrative traces Rosa's life in an Italian peasant village and later in Chicago. Marie Hall Ets, a social worker and friend of Rosa's at the Chicago Commons settlement house during the years following World War I, meticulously wrote down her lively stories to create this book.

Rosa was born in a silk-making village in Lombardy, a major source of north Italian emigration; she first set foot in the United States at the Castle Garden immigrant depot on the tip of Manhattan. Her life in this country was hard and Ets chronicles it in eloquent detail—Rosa endures a marriage at sixteen to an abusive older man, an unwilling migration to a Missouri mining town, and the unassisted birth of a child, and manages to escape from a husband who tried to force her into prostitution. Rosa's exuberant personality, remarkable spirit, and ability as a storyteller distinguish this book, a unique contribution to the annals of U.S. immigration.

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