



# **Amalia's Tale: A Poor Peasant, an Ambitious Attorney, and a Fight for Justice**

*David I. Kertzer*

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This quintessential David-and-Goliath saga tells the story of a wholly unexpected triumph of the poor against the rich and of a crusading city attorney who fought on behalf of an impoverished peasant.

Amalia Bagnacavalli, an illiterate young peasant from the mountains near Bologna, is forced by poverty to take in a child from the city's foundling home to wet-nurse. When Amalia contracts syphilis from the sickly and malformed baby given to her, the city fathers callously dismiss her pleas for treatment and restitution. Bewildered and frightened, she seeks out Augusto Barbieri, an ambitious attorney looking to make a name for himself. He takes up Amalia's cause, fighting the case for years through the Italian courts before winning an unprecedented and stunning victory for his by now broken client. The unforgettable story of a landmark struggle for basic human rights, *Amalia's Tale* is the moving drama of a rural woman whose life was ruined and the man from the city who would not stop -- or so it seemed -- until he had seen justice done.

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