

The Untold Story Revealed: The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara – A Shocking Tale of Religious Persecution

It was the year 1858 when an innocent boy named Edgardo Mortara was brutally snatched away from his family in Bologna, Italy. Born to a Jewish family, Edgardo's life took an unexpected turn when his baptism as a Catholic resulted in his abduction by the Papal States authorities. This haunting incident became a symbol of religious persecution and sparked outrage across the globe.

The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara stands as a chilling example of the power dynamics between religious institutions and individuals' freedom of faith. In this article, we delve deep into the shocking details of this incident, shedding light on the historical context, the motivations behind it, and the lasting impacts it had on both Edgardo Mortara and the world.

The Historical Context: The Papal States and Jewish Life

During the 19th century, Italy was divided into various states, with the Papal States being one of the most powerful. At the heart of these states was the Vatican, the center of the Catholic Church's influence. Religious tension surrounded the Jewish community, as they faced persistent discrimination and exclusion.

The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara

by David I. Kertzer (Kindle Edition)

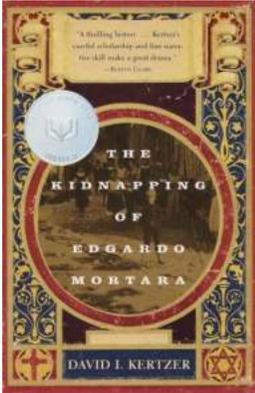
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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 367 pages



Within this tumultuous environment, the story of Edgardo Mortara unfolded, challenging the perceptions of religious acceptance and the limits of state power.

The Shocking Abduction: A Twist of Fate

In 1858, when Edgardo was just six years old, a servant claimed that she secretly baptized him when he fell ill as an infant. This revelation led to a series of events that would change Edgardo's life forever.

When the authorities of the Papal States discovered this alleged baptism, they deemed Edgardo as a Catholic by birthright, regardless of his family's Jewish faith. Ignoring his parents' protests, they abducted him, ripping a young child away from his home and family.

The International Outcry: The Moral Battle Begins

The kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara sent shockwaves throughout the world. As news of the incident spread, voices opposing the Catholic Church's actions grew louder. Prominent figures, including Victor Hugo, the renowned French writer, condemned this act of religious persecution and demanded justice.

Many liberal thinkers of the time recognized this event as a symbol of the Vatican's oppressive rule and used it to highlight the need for religious freedom and the separation of church and state.

Edgardo Mortara's Life in Captivity: A Clash of Identities

Separated from his family, Edgardo Mortara was thrust into a completely new environment. Raised by Catholic authorities, he grew up torn between his Jewish roots and his Catholic upbringing, causing an ongoing internal struggle.

Hundreds of letters from Edgardo to his family reveal his yearning to reunite with them, illustrating the emotional toll this abduction had on his young mind.

Meanwhile, in the wider world, debates on the legitimacy of his baptism and his right to be with his biological family raged on.

The Legacy: A Turning Point in History

The kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara triggered a significant turning point in history. It laid bare the Catholic Church's iron grip on power and its insensitivity towards religious diversity. The incident fueled calls for reform and spurred the growing movement for religious tolerance and individual freedoms.

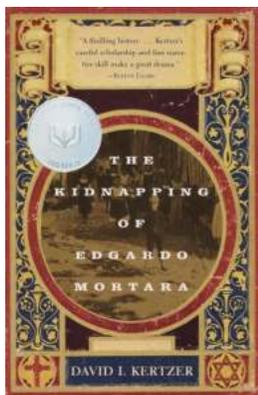
While Edgardo Mortara's eventual fate is known, the echoes of his story continue to resonate. The international outcry and condemnation of religious persecution served as a catalyst for change, contributing to the ideological shifts that unfolded over the decades and, ultimately, in the dawn of the 20th century.

In

The kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara serves as a stark reminder of the dark chapters in history where religious intolerance clashed with personal freedoms.

This haunting tale highlights the importance of valuing diversity and protecting religious autonomy, even in the face of powerful institutions.

Let this poignant story remind us that freedom of faith is a fundamental right that must be vigorously defended, ensuring that no person is subjected to the horrors endured by Edgardo Mortara.



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Soon to be a major motion picture from Steven Spielberg.

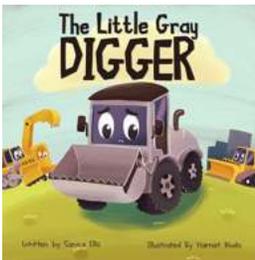
A National Book Award Finalist

The extraordinary story of how the vatican's imprisonment of a six-year-old Jewish boy in 1858 helped to bring about the collapse of the popes' worldly power in Italy.

Bologna: nightfall, June 1858. A knock sounds at the door of the Jewish merchant Momolo Mortara. Two officers of the Inquisition bust inside and seize Mortara's six-year-old son, Edgardo. As the boy is wrenched from his father's arms, his mother collapses. The reason for his abduction: the boy had been secretly

"baptized" by a family servant. According to papal law, the child is therefore a Catholic who can be taken from his family and delivered to a special monastery where his conversion will be completed.

With this terrifying scene, prize-winning historian David I. Kertzer begins the true story of how one boy's kidnapping became a pivotal event in the collapse of the Vatican as a secular power. The book evokes the anguish of a modest merchant's family, the rhythms of daily life in a Jewish ghetto, and also explores, through the revolutionary campaigns of Mazzini and Garibaldi and such personages as Napoleon III, the emergence of Italy as a modern national state. Moving and informative, the Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara reads as both a historical thriller and an authoritative analysis of how a single human tragedy changed the course of history.



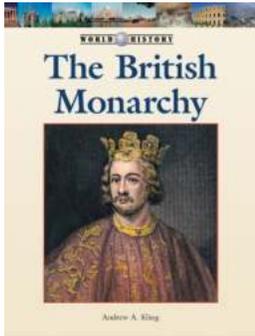
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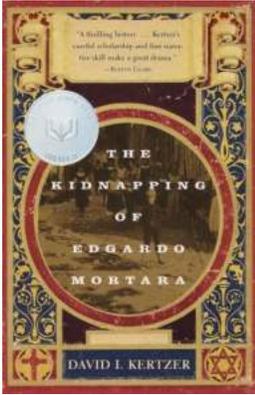
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