

**THE WOMAN &
THE PRIEST**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649173938

The woman & the priest by Grazia Deledda

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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GRAZIA DELEDDA

**THE WOMAN &
THE PRIEST**

The Woman and the Priest

Novels of To-day

(Uniform with this volume)

The Highbrows *by* C. E. M. Joad

The Age of Consent *by* Evelyn Fane

A French Girl in London *by* A. Orna

My Daughter Helen *by* Allan Monkhouse

People *by* Pierre Hamp

The Woman & the
Priest *by* Grazia Deledda

Translated from the Italian by Mary G. Steegmann



Jonathan Cape
Eleven Gower Street, London

First published in 1922
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Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner, Frome and London.

Translator's Note

THE Woman and the Priest * is an unusual book, both in its story and its setting in a remote Sardinian hill village, half civilized and superstitious. But the chief interest lies in the psychological study of the two chief characters, and the action of the story takes place so rapidly (all within the space of two days) and the actual drama is so interwoven with the mental conflict, and all so forced by circumstances, that it is almost Greek in its simple and inevitable tragedy.

The book is written without offence to any creed or opinions, and touches on no questions of either doctrine or Church government. It is just a human problem, the result of primitive human nature against man-made laws it cannot understand.

* Translated from the Italian novel *La Madre*.

Chapter I

TO-NIGHT again Paul was preparing to go out, it seemed.

From her room adjoining his the mother could hear him moving about furtively, perhaps waiting to go out until she should have extinguished her light and got into bed.

She put out her light, but she did not get into bed.

Seated close against the door, she clasped her hands tightly together, those work-worn hands of a servant, pressing the thumbs one upon the other to give herself courage; but every moment her uneasiness increased and overcame her obstinate hope that her son would sit down quietly, as he used to do, and begin to read, or else go to bed. For a few minutes, indeed, the young priest's cautious