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**THE POET, THE COUNT, AND  
THE PEDDLER**  
A GRIPPING AND GRITTY TALE OF  
INTRIGUE, WONDER, AND LOVE

*In Florence, Italy, in 1321 a young man sat silently on a grassy bank at the edge of the Arno River. A white rose with its tender petals perfectly in place floated by in the gentle waters. His heart leaped in ecstasy. As he reached for the rose, a shadow loomed at his side. Startled, he turned and looked directly into the dark eyes of the poet Dante Alighieri, who whispered, "Always remember the darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis."*

***The Poet, The Count, and The Peddler, Chapter 1***

*Challenge institutions! Challenge theologies!  
Challenge traditions!*

*Mario Ferrara*

***The Poet, The Count, and The Peddler***

**ONCE IN A WHILE SOMEONE  
FIGHTS BACK!**

Leaving an oppressed and poverty-stricken Sicily, nine-year-old Mario Ferrara and his family begin a new life in what they believe is the Promised Land. However, the American dream soon becomes tainted. Living in New York City's Little Italy affords the Sicilian immigrants opportunity but brings with it a struggle against discrimination and injustice.

Decades later, an Italian witch-hunt spearheaded by a relentless congressman sows seeds of rebellion in Mario's heart. He becomes exasperated by the riots and violence of the turbulent '60s, a time when growing discontent due to racial turmoil culminates in a fierce civil rights movement and anger over a deadly Vietnam war gives

rise to a mass movement in opposition to the government.

Tormented by the chaos of the times and driven by a strong sense of heritage and his love of *la famiglia*, Mario takes on the fight against the power, greed, and corruption in business, government, religion, and society. This revolutionary man's tenacious persistence threatens his life and all he holds dear—his family, his friends, and his heritage.

A vindictive prosecutor, a manipulative businessman, and a ruthless cardinal tied to the Vatican Bank are out to destroy him. His efforts to right wrongs drag him deeper and deeper into an abyss of conflict. Disorder, betrayal, prejudice, and fear lead to a tumultuous murder trial.

His dreams transport him to the depths of hell and to the wonderful, mystical, and fantastic lands he heard of in childhood. These journeys reshape his rebellious idealism and activism in mysterious ways.

Never giving up his quest for liberty, Mario, the Peddler, passionately dares to challenge the very fabric of society's traditions, institutions, and belief systems. The real question is: "Is he a quixotic figure fighting windmills of his mind or a dauntless hero fighting a very real battle?"

Anthony Bottagaro has given us in *The Poet, The Count, and The Peddler* a captivating blend of historical fiction, mystery, philosophical truths, and imaginative fantasy.

For the most part, however, the world of *The Poet, The Count, and the Peddler* is a very real world—a world of city streets filled with immigrant families, of courtrooms and boardrooms, and of offices belonging to high-ranking religious and political figures.

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**Anthony Bottagaro** is a seasoned executive, an acclaimed speaker, and an award-winning author. In his quest for justice and peace, he has met with leaders of Congress, the State Department, the Pentagon, the White House, and the United Nations. He has also met with noted religious leaders including Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. His works have received national and international recognition. Bottagaro narrated and produced the award-winning documentary adaptation of his first book, *To Create a World More Human and More Divine*, that premiered at the United Nations.

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For further information or to schedule an author interview please contact Joyce Miller at 303-981-9100. An electronic copy of this release and other publicity materials including digital pictures of the author can be obtained at [www.rockawaypress.com/PR](http://www.rockawaypress.com/PR).

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