



A Bell for Adano

By John Hersey

W. N. U. FEATURES



THE STORY THUS FAR: The American troops arrived at Adano, with Major Joppolo, the Amgot officer in charge. Sergeant North was in charge of security. The Major was determined to hold the confidence of the people and to replace the town bell stolen by the Nazis. Despite orders issued by General Marvin, barring carts from the city, Major Joppolo recalled the order, to permit food and water to enter the city. M. Cacopardo came to the Major asking for permission to see General Marvin, and deliver information on important German troop movements. He was given his pass and set out for the General's headquarters. He was determined to aid the Americans against the Nazis.

CHAPTER XIII

"Oh," said the sentry, "why didn't you say you had a pass? Sure, the General's here." And he shouted: "The Old Man's in, ain't he, Buck?" "Yeah, I think His Nibs came in about half an hour ago." "What you want to see him about?" "Yeah, he's in," the sentry said. "What you want to see him about?" Cacopardo pulled out the tissue paper. "I can tell you where are the Germans," he said.

"Right up there," the sentry said, pointing up the driveway to the main door of the villa. "Right in that there door."

The jeep drove up to the main door. There was another sentry there. When Cacopardo tried to go in, the sentry put his bayoneted rifle across the path. Cacopardo jumped back, alarmed. "I am no enemies," he said. "I have the paper to see General Marvin," and he stretched out the pass. Cacopardo learned quickly, for a man his age.

The sentry took the pass. "Brother, I doubt if you can see the General right now," he said. "He don't like to see no one in the mornings. You stand here a minute." The sentry called the corporal of the guard.

The corporal of the guard came right back. "This way, brother," he said.

He led Cacopardo to a man at a desk.

"Name," the man said gloomily. "Cacopardo."

"Is that a first name, or a last name?" the sour man said.

"That is the name of my family," Cacopardo said.

"How you spell that?"

Cacopardo spelled it out. The man wrote laboriously: Cacaporato.

"First name," the unhappy man said.

"Matteo."

"You got to spell those Dago names."

Cacopardo spelled it and the man misspelled it.

"Who you want to see?"

"General Marvin."

"You haven't got a chance of seeing him," the man said. "There's a war going on, Dago. What you want to see the General about?"

Cacopardo reached in his pocket for the tissue paper. "I can show you where are the Germans," he said.

"You'll have to talk with G-two about that," the man said, and he pointed with his pencil. "First door on the right, where it says Colonel Henderson."

Cacopardo went to the door marked Colonel Henderson, and he knocked.

"Walk in," a voice shouted.

"General Marvin?" Cacopardo asked.

"Upstairs, upstairs," the impatient voice, which belonged to a full colonel, said. Cacopardo started out. "Say, wait a minute."

Cacopardo turned around. The colonel said: "Who are you, anyway?"

"Cacopardo Matteo, I was sent to see General Marvin."

"General Marvin doesn't like Italians," the colonel said. "What do you want to see him about? You better not ask him for any favors, he'll kick you out, personally, himself."

Cacopardo reached in his pocket for the tissue paper. "I can show you where are the Germans," he said.

"You've got no business taking that kind of thing to General Marvin. What do you think we have a G-two section for around here? You can just show that to me."

"I was sent to see General Marvin. That is the one I am going to see."

After an argument with Colonel Henderson, Cacopardo was sent upstairs under guard, was stopped and questioned by a sentry at the head of the stairs, was sent downstairs because he did not have a proper Division pass, was given a pass, was taken upstairs again, was questioned as to age, religion, political beliefs and sex by a sergeant, was interviewed by a staff officer who

doubted whether the General would be free to see him, was referred to Colonel Middleton, the General's Chief of Staff, was questioned by Colonel Middleton's secretary, who thought the Colonel was busy, was finally admitted to Colonel Middleton, who, after an argument, agreed to see whether the General would see Cacopardo, which he doubted.

At the moment, General Marvin was playing mumble-te-peg with Lieutenant Byrd, his aide. They had found that a certain mahogany table took the knife beautifully. The General had just reached the double flip off the forehead.

Colonel Middleton walked in just as the General let the knife go off his forehead. The surprise of Colonel Middleton's entrance was just enough to throw the General off his aim, and the knife clattered on the table and did not stick in. This annoyed the General.

"Haven't I told you to knock, Middleton?"

"Yes, sir. There's an old Italian here wants to see you."

"Middleton, what's the matter with you? Didn't I tell you I didn't want to see any more Italians?"

"Yes, sir. But this one seems to be above the average. He was sent to you by one of our people. He says he has some information you would want."

"Well, show him in. What are you standing there for? Show him in."

And so Cacopardo was finally brought into the presence of the General. By this time he was just as angry as the General, and being



"You are a barbarian," he said. some twenty years the General's senior, he considered it his privilege to vent his anger first.

He found perfect expression for his anger in what he saw on the surface of the mahogany table.

"You are a barbarian," he said. "A what?" the General bellowed in his famous voice.

"I said, you are a barbarian. How dare you chop and pick at the surface of my friend Salatiello's table?"

For the sake of argument, it would have made no difference whatsoever if General Marvin had known that Salatiello had been thirteen years dead. The General could not possibly have been more outraged. He bellowed at the walls, "who is this wop, anyhow?"

"That table was made circa 1775, when your country had not even begun to exist, barbarian. It was carved by Vincenzo di Lucca of Parma. I cannot calculate the values of that table. You are a pig to chop and pick at it."

The General shouted: "Take this crazy wop out of here."

Colonel Middleton and Lieutenant Byrd rushed into the room. They grabbed old Cacopardo, and started to push him out.

"Wait!" the General roared. "Who sent that idiot here, Middleton?"

"I don't know, sir, it was some Major."

"You don't know? It's your business to know."

Colonel Middleton asked Cacopardo: "Who was it who sent you here?"

"My friend Major Joppolo, who is not a barbarian."

Colonel Middleton said: "What unit is this Major from?"

"Adano, from Adano," old Caco-

pardo said. "From my home, Adano."

"Adano," the General shouted. "There's something about that place. What is it about Adano, Middleton? What is it?"

"The cart, General," Colonel Middleton said. Colonel Middleton would never forget Adano as long as he lived.

"The cart? What cart? Don't talk in riddles, Middleton. What cart?"

"The cart that we threw off the road, sir. The mule we shot, sir." General Marvin remembered, and the memory turned his face a shade darker. "So that's the Major who sent you," he roared. "What was that name again? I want to remember that name."

"Joppolo," Middleton said.

General Marvin shouted: "Joppolo. Write that down, Middleton, remember that name. That Major's a wop, too. I remember now, he's a wop himself, isn't he, Middleton?"

In the interests of justice, Colonel Middleton said: "I don't remember, sir."

General Marvin shouted: "Well, I do. Now throw this crazy Italian out of here, and if you let any more Italians in here, Middleton, I'll break you back to a second lieutenant."

Behind Major Joppolo's back, Captain Purvis was very critical of him. To his face, the Captain was cordial, even friendly.

The two men now had, besides their mere community of tongue, another thing to draw them together: they both knew the same girls. In a foreign land, that is enough to make Damon and Pythias out of two sworn enemies.

One day at lunch they talked about the girls. They talked as American men do talk about girls when they are abroad.

The Captain said: "That younger one, that Francesca, she sure is nice."

"Just a matter of taste," the Major said.

"Yeah," the Captain said. "What do you say we go up there tonight and see 'em?"

"Let's do that," the Major said.

"That would be fun." Then he wondered why he had reacted so quickly and so happily to the Captain's suggestion. The Captain's attitude toward these girls disgusted the Major. The Captain regarded the girls as trash; he seemed to think of them as something to buy and sell, like Italian watermelon and grapes and red wine. The Major refused to believe that he was falling into this way of thinking.

The family of Tomasino and their guests spent the next five minutes on their hands and knees picking up the chicken feathers. When that was done Rosa said to Tomasino: "Sad one, put the girls to bed." Tomasino led the little ones out without gentleness. Rosa retired to the kitchen with the feathers and the bird, to finish her job.

As soon as the two officers and the two girls in pajamas were left alone, Tina said: "Mister Major, I want to talk with you," and she stretched out her hand for his and led him into her bedroom. Captain Purvis's sober shouts followed them this time: "Hey, don't desert me. I can't talk to this lovely thing. Where you going?" And he subsided, and settled down for an evening of desperate sign language.

Tina sat down on her bed and the Major sat down on a chair by a wooden dressing table.

"I want to ask you something, Mister Major," Tina said.

"Yes?" the Major said. He did not know what to expect, but he expected it would please him, whatever it was.

"How long do you think the war will last? Here on Italian soil, I mean."

The Major found that he was not pleased. "That's a very serious question," he said. "Let's not talk about war. That's all I have all day long, war, war, war."

"But I have a special reason for wanting to know," Tina said. "How long do you think it will last?"

"How should I know?" the Major asked. His voice was a little testy. "If I knew that, I would have to know a lot more about our plans for the campaign, and if I knew the plans, I would know military secrets, and I couldn't tell you secrets if I knew them."

"But you can guess, Mister Major."

"All right, I guess two more months."

"And how long do you think it will be after those two months before our Italian prisoners of war are released?"

Major Joppolo got the point very quickly, and it did not please him in the least. "You have a sweet-heart who has been captured?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

ASK ME ? ANOTHER ?

A quiz with answers offering information on various subjects

The Questions

1. What does "comme il faut" mean?
2. How do Washington's Japanese cherry trees differ from our native cherry trees?
3. What technical term is applied to a government by women?
4. Who elects congressmen at large?
5. The Singhalese are inhabitants of what country?
6. What is the longest monosyllable in the English language?

7. Why do leaves turn up before an impending rainstorm?

The Answers

1. Proper. As it should be.
2. They do not bear fruit.
3. Gynarchy.
4. All the voters of a state.
5. Ceylon.
6. Strength.
7. It is due to an increase of atmospheric moisture. Therefore the leaf stalk absorbs more moisture, and "warps," turning the leaf over.

AROUND THE HOUSE

Fingers from discarded rubber gloves make excellent guards for injured fingers. Bandage injury as usual, cut one of the fingers from the glove, and slip it over the bandage. Protects it from the dirt.

Cover the bottom of your scouring powder can with adhesive tape. Then when can stands in your white enameled sink, it will leave no rust stains.

The water in which rice is boiled is just right for starching organdy blouses and white shirts.

Fancy household linens, put away to save time and effort, should be washed and aired occasionally to keep them fresh and white. Ironing is not necessary.

To separate a head of lettuce, cut the core out in a cone shape and place the opening under the faucet, allowing the running water to separate the leaves without breaking them.

Rustic furniture with the bark still on is mighty hard on stockings. They are much less apt to catch on the wood if the chair is given a coat of clear varnish.



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