

# A Bell for Adano

By John Hersey



**THE STORY THUS FAR:** The American troops arrived in Adano, with Major Joppolo, the Amgot officer in charge. Sergeant Borth was in charge of security. The Major was determined to hold the confidence of the people and to replace their bell stolen by the Nazis. Despite orders issued by General Marvin, barring carts from the city, Joppolo recalled the orders, to permit food and water to enter the city. The Major placed a ceiling on all prices to stop a black market caused by the generosity of the Americans. Mayor Nasta, who had been placed in the prisoner of war cage, escaped, but was soon retaken. German prisoners, who believed him still a power, had aided his escape.

## CHAPTER XIX

On the evening of their third day, some of them went to Tomasino, and Agnello said: "Tomasino, don't you think you ought to go to the Mister Major and thank him for making it possible for us to go fishing?"

Tomasino was as happy as he could ever be, but that did not mean that he smiled, or that he would answer happily. "I have been to the Palazzo once to see him, because my wife Rosa forced me to. Never again. I hate that place."

The young man named Sconzo said: "Then don't you think we should send Agnello? We think that we owe our thanks to the Mister Major. We were talking about it while we were out today."

Tomasino was not pleased with the suggestion that Agnello should go in his place. "Is Agnello the head of the fishermen?" he said.

"No," Sconzo said, "but if you do not wish to go . . ."

"The best fishing boat in this harbor is named Tina," Tomasino said, and though he spoke gloomily, there was a kind of gaiety in his idea. "Therefore the one for whom that boat is named ought to be the one to go and thank the Mister Major."

The other fishermen thought that that was a fine idea, but Agnello said: "We would all like to be present when you give instructions to your daughter as to what she is to say to the Mister Major." He was afraid that grim old Tomasino would tell her to say something begrudging.

So all the fishermen went up to Tomasino's house and found Tina, and Tomasino said: "Tina, we have an errand for you. The fishermen of Adano want you to go to see the Mister Major for them. . . ."

Tina surprised everyone by blushing and refusing to go.

"But why not?" Agnello asked. "We thought it would be nice if a beautiful girl took our message to the Mister Major instead of a man who stinks of fish."

Tomasino did not like that remark and he said angrily: "Tomasino does not stink of fish any worse than certain other fishermen he knows."

Agnello said: "I did not have any particular fisherman in mind. Do not forget that it was suggested that I should go. I stink too."

"That is true," Tomasino said with a pucker on his face.

Tina said: "I just do not wish to go."

Tomasino turned on her: "Girl, by the same reasoning which made your mother force me to go to the Mister Major against my will, I now order you to go to him also."

Tina lowered her head and said: "Well, if you order me . . ." Agnello said afterwards that he thought by the way she said this, she really wanted to go all along.

Tomasino said: "I want you to tell him that we are glad to be able to go fishing. . . ."

"And that we are thankful to him for making it possible," Agnello said.

"And that we are very grateful for the new rigging," Merendino said.

"Also if he has had anything to do with sending so many fish into our nets, we thank him," Sconzo said.

Tomasino said: "Tell him those things but don't make a fool of yourself, daughter."

She said with more vehemence than was necessary: "Don't worry, I won't."

Tina went to see the Mister Major at eight o'clock the next morning. When Zito led her to Major Joppolo's desk, she said defiantly: "You said that if I had business with you, I should come to your office. I have come."

Major Joppolo had the discretion to wave Zito out of the room before he said: "I am sorry I said that. I have been miserable about it ever since."

Tina said: "Have you?" That much she said softly, then she added harshly: "You ought to have been. You were very rude."

The Major said: "I know I was. I'm really very sorry. I have been trying to find out the thing you wanted to know."

Tina was all softness now: "Do you mean about my Giorgio? Have you found out? Is he a prisoner?"

"I don't know yet. But I may have some word for you on all the prisoners in a few days."

"You may? Good word, Mister Major?"

"Good word, Tina."

"Oh, Mister Major, I thank you, I thank you and I kiss your hand."

Major Joppolo hardly had time to think vaguely that he wouldn't mind kissing Tina's hand before she had

She ran all the way home and when Tomasino asked her if she had said what the fishermen had told her, she said that she had, oh yes, she had, and she threw her arms around her father's neck and kissed him on both cheeks, and he put his arms around her and pressed her a little and said glumly: "My little Tina, I think you are crazy."

The trouble with Errante Gaetano was that he couldn't keep his mind on anything. Or to put it the other way around: whatever had his mind at the moment seized it so wholly that he couldn't think about anything else. It made no difference what his mind ought to be on; whatever it was on, it was really on.

After General Marvin ordered his good mule shot, Errante got another. This one was not as amiable as the first, and was more stubborn in its mind. But it was a mule, and it gave Errante both pleasure and work.

One afternoon Errante was driving this new mule through the town. It was late in the afternoon, the hour when most of the children of the town got out on the Via Umberto the First and shouted for caramels. American military traffic seemed to be particularly heavy at that hour each evening.

As he thought back on it later (and he had plenty of time to think it over in jail), it seemed to Errante

ters—all of them laughed with a tinkling laughter and shouted for caramels as if they really expected to be rolling them on their tongues in no time at all.

What the mind of Errante did not note was that his new mule, either following an accidental whim or fascinated, like its master, by the children, had turned at right angles to the street and had stopped walking.

Swimming War was coming up the street. Gargano the Two-Hands had a vigilant eye out for traffic on the street. The new mule of Errante stood stock-still right across the road. And Errante stared at the children, thinking only of them and not noticing that anything was wrong.

"How nice it would be to be a child!" Errante's one-track mind thought. "Look at the fat little son of the fat Craxi! Look at the thin son of stupid Erba! See how Erba's ragged child holds the hand of the rich little sulphur boy in blue! Noisy old Afronti was shouting to me the other day about democracy. He said my mind was slow. He said I would never understand. I wish he were here now. Here are the true democrats of the world. Childhood is the real democracy!"

All of a sudden a terrible confusion burst in on his thoughts. Errante's slow eyes saw only a flash of uniform. The uniform hurled itself at the head of his mule, wrenching the head to one side. The mule reared and screamed.

That scream did something to Errante's mind. He saw a vision of his other, beloved mule dead beside the road. That awful thing would not happen again while Errante survived to prevent it.

He leaped from his cart. He saw the blur of a uniform running at his mule's head again. He charged at the uniform. Where a head should be at the top of the blur he struck with the heel of his hand. He hit something and heard an angry roar.

The roar, he realized in a few moments, came from Gargano the Two-Hands. It said: "Imbecile! Get out of the road, can't you see the trucks coming? Don't you know that blocking traffic is sabotage? Don't you know that you can be shot for blocking traffic?"

Errante's one-track mind played him a funny trick now. It stopped in the middle of its fury to think: "Look at Two-Hands! Trying to talk and catch my mule at the same time. He has to use his hands to catch my mule, and he has to use his hands to talk. He cannot do either."

But when Gargano gave off trying to talk and concentrated on the mule, Errante's mind went back to its business. He threw himself at Gargano again. He struck another blow with the heel of his hand that was to decorate Two-Hands with a purple spot under the left eye for several days.

Two-Hands roared again with pain and anger. But he did not try to argue now. He grabbed the mule's reins near the bit and tried to pull him to one side. The mule, however, had decided not to move until this hubalaboo was over. Two-Hands could not budge it, so he kicked the flank of the mule.

Errante decided to retaliate in kind. He kicked the flank of Two-Hands. Gargano roared again, and beat the mule in the head. Errante beat Gargano the Two-Hands in the head.

Errante grabbed Two-Hands by the ears, even though Two-Hands' ears were not as handy to grab as the mule's, and he pulled. Gargano the Two-Hands would have lost this battle, for he was fighting against two beasts, but at this moment some American soldiers from the amphibious trucks came running up.

One of the soldiers pulled Gargano the Two-Hands aside. Three of the soldiers went to work on the mule, and succeeded in making it get off to one side of the street. It took four soldiers to put Errante off the street.

When these things were accomplished, the American soldiers went back to their amphibious trucks. All they wanted was to pass.

Major Joppolo enjoyed his afternoons as judge, partly because he liked to see the happy effect of real justice on the people of Adano, and partly because Gargano, the Chief of Carabinieri, acted out every crime as if it were a crime against himself.

Major Joppolo's trials were impressive, because he managed, by trickery, by moral pressure and by persuasion, to make the truth seem something really beautiful and necessary.

Gargano brought in the first culprit, one Monday afternoon, and as he led him in, he said: "We will take the light cases first."

"You have some serious cases, then?" Major Joppolo asked.

Gargano held up his forefinger, and said angrily: "One."

"Then maybe our fines will be high this week," the Major said. He thought he was joking, but he had become almost miserly on behalf of Adano, and each Monday afternoon he used to try to see how much he could net in fines.

"I hope so," said Gargano, vehemently. Then he said: "First case."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## New Uses for an Old Fashioned Knife Box

THESE old fashioned knife boxes are popular as a quaint touch for serving food or drinks or to fill with plants or cut flowers. They are useful for sewing, knitting or reading matter too. And here is good news—you don't have to rummage in antique shops to find one. It may be made right at home without any complicated



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NOTE—Pattern 231 gives actual-size patterns for all parts of the knife box and for the sides of the stand. Illustrated assembly directions, a complete list of materials and directions for an antique finish for both pieces are included. To get Pattern 231, send 15 cents with name and address direct to:

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## U. S. Only Nation to Use Numbers on Its Aircraft

The nationality of all civil aircraft in the world is designated by one or two initials that precede their other identification marks, says Collier's. Of the 67 countries to which these initials have been assigned six use one, Germany having D, France F, Great Britain G, Italy I, Japan J, and the United States N.

For license designations, all countries use a combination of three letters ranging from AAA to ZZZ, with the exception of the first five listed above, which may use four letters. The United States uses numbers and is the only nation permitted to do so.

## AROUND THE HOUSE

If your water bucket springs a leak, don't throw it away. Paint it to match your kitchen and use it for a waste paper can. Paste decorative motifs on it if you like and remove handle or let it remain as desired.

To remove the odor of fish from dishes, wash them in a strong hot solution of salt in water, without the addition of soap.

If an electric cord becomes damp, place it on a flat surface and do not use it for several days until it has dried.

Powdered graphite, in lieu of oil, will keep door hinges from squeaking.

Screws have a habit of disappearing when you need them, and dropping from your fingers when you use them. This can be avoided if you put each screw in a strip of heavy paper. They are not only easy to find, but also are easy to hold in place when you start them with a hammer.

A dress form does not solve all fitting difficulties. If you have one, use it, though, for locating and checking direction of hem and seam lines.

If you treat your new baking tins kindly they will repay you. Before you use them for the first time, rub them all over with lard, then bake in a warm oven for half an hour. In the case of enamel pie dishes, fill them with boiling soda water and allow to get cold. Then wash in hot, soapy water and rinse very thoroughly.

## Prof Found Remarks Had Impressed His Students

At a southwestern university, it is an old custom that if the professor is more than 10 minutes late, the class may walk out. Knowing that he would be delayed one morning, a professor dashed into the room early, dropped his hat on the desk, and disappeared on his errand. When he came in some 15 minutes later, the students had gone.

The next day he prefaced his remarks to the effect that the presence of his hat meant as much as if he himself were present.

On the following day he arrived to find row after row of seats occupied only by hats.

Use cotton thread to mend leather gloves. Silk thread will cut the leather and pull out again.

Never wash china patterned in gold in water containing soda.

Household sponges are kept fresh by soaking in salt water after they have been washed.

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*D. Ross Manning*

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