

# 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 order, to permit food and water to enter the city. Lord Runcin, high British official on the Amgot, called upon Major Joppolo, and after receiving reports on the work done at Adano, expressed himself as well satisfied with the progress made. The Major was naturally pleased. Lord Runcin told the Major how he might get a bell.

## CHAPTER XVI

I found that your barbarians had smashed my terra cotta head, it was done by the Florentine Camiliani in the sixteenth century. What value can you place on that? They tore my Venus; it was by Giorgione. What is the price of that? They smashed the glasses in which my mother drank her bridal toasts in Venice. How many lira do you think they were worth to me?"

Quattrocchi began to cry, and became incoherent.

Major Joppolo was furious. He called up Captain Purvis and said: "Purvis, what's the matter with your men? Did you know they'd been behaving like a bunch of wild men in their billet? This fellow was good enough to let them use his house and some of the stuff in it, why the hell did they have to abuse it? I want you to find out who busted up the stuff down at your billet and have them in your office in fifteen minutes." And he hung up without waiting for the astonished Captain to take a deep breath.

Major Joppolo walked around to the other side of his desk and patted the sobbing Quattrocchi on the shoulder. He said: "Come, Quattrocchi, let's go down to your house and see exactly what they did."

So the two men walked down the street to the beautiful house. Quattrocchi led the Major through the rooms on the second floor and showed him the broken things.

Major Joppolo was terribly depressed by what he saw. "There is no excuse for it," he said softly to Quattrocchi, who was beyond fury.

Major Joppolo took Quattrocchi up to the M.P. headquarters. Captain Purvis had Chuck, Bill and Polack there. As soon as the Major came in, the three boys stood at attention.

"At ease," Major Joppolo said, "but listen."

"The three boys stood at ease." "You fellows ought to be sent home to the States," he said. "What kind of an example do you think you men are for the people here? How do you think we'll ever persuade them that we're decent people if you behave like we all live in the woods and have shaggy fur?"

Polack said: "We didn't mean no hurt, Major."

The Major said: "Your intentions don't make the slightest bit of difference. It's the result that matters."

Polack said: "We was doin' it for you, Major."

"What do you mean, doing it for me? How could you think I would want you to do anything like that?"

Polack said: "We was lookin' for a present for you, sir." Polack thought that if the Major stacked up to all the boasting Chuck Schultz had done about him the night before, he ought to be able to talk their way out of this fix.

The Major said: "Why would you want to get me a present? I've never seen you before."

Polack said: "We're just enlisted men. We seen you before."

Major Joppolo said: "I still want to know how you thought you were getting me a present, and why you were."

Polack said: "It was goin' to be a goin'-away present."

The Major said: "Who's going away?"

Polack said: "Well, Corporal Schultz here said—"

Chuck Schultz said: "You let me handle this, Polack."

Major Joppolo turned on Corporal Schultz: "Say, what is this all about anyway?"

Chuck Schultz saw that there was no way out. He said: "There wasn't no excuse for what we done, Major. We was very drunk. I think Polack here's still a little drunk."

Polack raised a threatening fist and said: "Why you . . ."

Major Joppolo said: "What's all this about a present?"

Chuck said: "Sir, we just got some kind of a drunk idea that you was about the best officer we ever seen, and we figured we wanted to give you a present. We thought maybe we could find a present for you in the house. We knew you was Italian, more or less, and we thought you'd like something Italian from the house. That's all there was to it."

Major Joppolo said, and his voice was much softer: "I'm not Italian, boys. I'm American, and sometimes I'm not as proud of it as I'd like to be."

these men who committed the crime are sorry for what they did, now that they realize how cruel they were to you. I wish to tell you, Quattrocchi, that I feel less proud of being an American than I did yesterday. These men will be punished justly and severely for what they have done. I want you to file a claim for payment for what was destroyed, and I wouldn't blame you for doubling the prices. That's all I can say, Quattrocchi."

Quattrocchi said: "I don't know about most Americans, but I know I can always get justice from you, Mister Major."

The Major said: "Good day, Quattrocchi. From now on your house will be kept nicely, I can promise you that."

Quattrocchi left. The Major turned to the three boys. He said: "I don't know whether you realize yet what you've done to this Italian. It's as if you had cut his arm off. He loved those things you busted up. Now I just told him that you three would be punished severely—as severely as you have hurt him."

The three boys stiffened up a little.

The Major said: "I'm going to make this your punishment: to have this man's unhappiness on your conscience, and from now on to keep his house as clean as if everything in it belonged to your own mother. That's all. You're dismissed."

Chuck said: "Yes sir, thank you, sir."

Polack said: "Thank you, sir." Bill said: "Thank you, sir. We'll take care of the house."

Polack said: "Yes sir, we sure will."

As soon as they were outside.

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States. Here are four examples that Major Joppolo dug up, which show exactly how the black market and inflation grew up:

He traced the black market in wine to the house of Carmelina, wife of the lazy Fatta. The very first person who bought wine from Carmelina, on the very first night of the invasion, was Corporal Chuck Schultz. Carmelina's story to the Major was that the Corporal had just handed her a dollar and walked away. Schultz's story was that the Italian lady had haggled and shouted and threatened to call the police. In any case, Schultz paid a dollar. The regular price for that grade of wine before the invasion had been twenty lira, or twenty cents.

Four soldiers sauntered into a barber shop one morning, and made motions with their fingers around their skulls that indicated they wanted haircuts. None of them could speak Italian, so they based their payment on what they had last paid for haircuts in the States. Each plunked down a fifty cent piece and said: "Keep the change, Joe." The regular price for haircuts had been three lira, or three cents. Shaves had cost two lira. Here in one morning's work, the barber had made two hundred lira. He retired to a life of leisure, and refused to cut any hair for three weeks, till his money gave out.

To stop, or at least to curb, the black market, Major Joppolo did three things: he put the town out of bounds to American soldiers, who from then on could enter only on business; he had the Carabinieri stop all foodstuffs from leaving the town; and he fined anyone caught selling over-price or under-measure three thousand lira—a lifetime's savings for a poor Italian peasant.

Sergeant Trapani's having addressed the purple slip reporting the countermand order on the carts to the wrong person did not help much. As soon as the wrong person opened up the envelope and read the slip, he forwarded it to the right person.

The right person was Lieut. Col. W. W. Norris, G-One Officer of the 49th Division. The wrong person put the purple slip on his desk. Col. Norris, who was burdened down with much too much paper work, did not even read it all the way through. He just read the first part, about General Marvin's issuing the order that carts should be stopped on the outskirts of Adano.

Then he wrote in pencil on the upper left hand corner of the slip: "Usual copies for Division files. One extra copy to be sent to Colonel Middleton marked 'For General Marvin's Information.'" And then he tossed the slip in his outgoing basket.

A couple of hours later a Technical Sergeant emptied Col. Norris's outgoing basket, and in time got around to making three copies of the purple slip for the files of the 49th Division, where they would be buried, never to be seen again. One copy went under M.P.'s, one copy into the Personnel file, and the third into the Intelligence files under Occupied Territory, Disciplinary Measures. The Technical Sergeant recopied the purple slip, so that he could make a clean top copy for Colonel Middleton and the General. He wanted to get ahead. He didn't want to do anything sloppy. He was so careful in his typing that he didn't even notice what the purple slip said.

The Technical Sergeant put the four copies and the original purple slip into Col. Norris's incoming basket.

It happens that Col. Norris had an assistant, one Lieutenant Butters, who was very inquisitive. He annoyed the Colonel often by reading over his shoulder. He always wanted to know what the Battle Order was the moment it was drawn up, before it even went to regimental commanders.

The only advantage of Lieutenant Butters' curiosity was that he usually read Colonel Norris's mail more carefully than either Colonel Norris or his Technical Sergeant.

The morning after the Technical Sergeant put the purple slip and the four copies into the Colonel's incoming basket, Lieutenant Butters got up bright and early, dressed, shaved out of his helmet, and before breakfast went to Colonel Norris's desk and went through his incoming basket.

When he came to the purple slip and the four copies, he took the papers out of the pile, read until he had finished, put the pile back into the incoming basket, and then tucked the purple slip and the four copies into a portfolio on his own desk.

Later in the day, when the Colonel was out to a conference, Lieutenant Butters took out the purple slip and the four copies. He called the Technical Sergeant over to his desk.

"Did you see these?" the Lieutenant asked.

The Technical Sergeant, who was afraid he had made a mistake in typing, said merely: "Yes, sir."

"Well, that Major was right," the Lieutenant said.

The Technical Sergeant, who hadn't the faintest idea what the purple slip was about, said: "He was?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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Boiling in soda will remove grease and dirt from agate ware.

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