

A Bell for Adano

By John Hersey

THE STORY THUS FAR: The American troops arrived in Adano, with Major Joppolo, the Angot officer in charge. Sergeant Byrd 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 prices to stop a black market caused by generosity of the Americans. General Marvin finally received the note from Captain Purvis telling of the Major's granting carts entrance to town. He issued orders to have the Major recalled at once.

CHAPTER XXI

The General said: "Right, stop the carts. Lousy Italians trying to hold up the whole damn invasion. They better carry out the order."

Lieutenant Byrd droned on, hardly noticing what he read: "On July 20, guards were removed on order of Major—"

Lieutenant Byrd suddenly realized what he was reading. He put the memorandum down and picked up the next.

But the General Roared: "Finish it, finish it."

The Lieutenant read: "—were removed on order of Major Victor Joppolo, Civil Affairs Officer, town of Adano, because carts were essential to town and town was—"

Now the General had forgotten about finishing the memorandum. "Joppolo," he shouted, and his face was the color of distant mountains. "Joppolo."

General Marvin's memory worked in a peculiar fashion. "Middleton!" he shouted. "Come in here, Middleton."

The Colonel came in. "Middleton, remember the name of Joppolo, a lousy little wop named Joppolo?"

Colonel Middleton said, with a tired face: "Yes, sir. The carts."

General Marvin bellowed: "I just remembered something. That wop was out of uniform that day. You remember? He had on pinks and a khaki shirt. You remember that, Middleton?"

Colonel Middleton said with a tired voice: "No, sir."

"Damn him, he had the nerve to let the carts back in that town, what the hell was the name of that—"

Lieutenant Byrd said: "Adano, sir."

"Adano. Damn upstart."

Colonel Middleton said: "Perhaps there was some reason why he had to—"

"Damn you, Middleton, you're getting too independent minded."

Colonel Middleton said: "Yes sir."

Lieutenant Byrd said: "It goes on to say here, sir: 'carts were essential to town and town was in bad shape without same.'"

The General stood up. He said: "I've had enough of that little wop, Middleton."

"Yes sir," the tired voice said. "Make out an order recalling that Italian wop from that town, what's the name—"

Lieutenant Byrd said: "Adano, sir."

"Order him to report back to Algiers for reassignment. Make out a separate report to Algiers explaining why. I'll fix that little wop. Get it off today, too, none of your delays, Middleton."

"Yes sir," the tired voice said. "The day before the party, the fisherman named Agnello and his men talked about it as they fished."

"Are you going, Merendino?" Agnello asked.

Merendino, who was not one to commit himself too far, said: "I have been invited."

Sconzo, the youngest of Adano's fishermen, said: "I am going. You'd better go, Merendino. I hear that we fishermen are lucky. Mostly the guests will be officials and big people, but because of Tomasino—"

Agnello said: "And perhaps because the daughters of Tomasino are not pock-faced."

Sconzo said: "Perhaps," and laughed.

The men hauled in their net. They spilled the shining, flopping fish into the bins. They were good fish, mostly of the four- and five-lira grades.

Sconzo said: "It is a rare chance for us fishermen, Merendino. You'd better go."

Merendino said: "I will think about it."

They let the net over the side again, and Merendino took the wheel as the boat moved away from the net. As they slowly pulled away, Sconzo lay down at the very bow, with his cheek on the hawser eye, and he watched the forefoot cutting the water and the reflection of the upper parts of the bow moving across the glassy water. It was one of those rare Mediterranean days with not a breath of air on the deep blue water.

Agnello said: "Merendino, don't you think perhaps we are getting too far inshore?"

Merendino said: "I will look at the chart."

Sconzo said: "He's just trying to get away from Tomasino's boat. Old Tomasino splashes his net so much that he scares the fish away. Tomasino has such a bad temper, he's probably angry with the fish and that's why he splashes the net. Merendino's just trying to work the boat away from Tomasino's, aren't

you, Merendino?"

Merendino said: "I do not think Tomasino is angry at the fish."

Agnello said: "We'd better not get in too far. We were warned about what would happen if we went out of the zone which they marked for us on the chart."

Merendino looked at the chart and then at the headlands up and down the coast and he said: "Perhaps we are a little far inshore." And he put the wheel over and headed out, but diagonally away from Tomasino's boat.

Sconzo said: "Personally I like the younger daughter of Tomasino better than the blonde. I like honesty in the color of hair."

Agnello said: "Not that either of Tomasino's daughters would pay any attention to you, Sconzo."

Sconzo said: "Oh, I think I could make an impression if I wanted to."

Agnello mimicked Sconzo: "If I wanted to." And then he said: "What makes you think you could? Your nose is too big."

Sconzo said: "What makes you think the daughters of Tomasino are so hard to impress? What do you think, Merendino?"

Merendino said: "I think that people with big noses who are fishermen are apt to retain a smell of fish in their nostrils after working hours, and sometimes they attribute the smell of fish to the young ladies they are with. I think it is time to pull the net in."

The three men stood and began to tug at the net.

"We have a good catch this time," Sconzo said. "Feel that load."

They pulled some more, then Agnello said: "It feels sluggish. It



"Order him to report back to Algiers for reassignment."

does not have the lively feeling of a good haul of small fish. Don't you agree, Merendino?"

Merendino said: "I never divide the fishes into grades until they are in the bins."

But as the net came in it became more and more obvious that the net had something besides little fish in it.

Sconzo said: "Maybe Lojaccono's painting has attracted a porpoise. Maybe Lojaccono painted a she-porpoise and maybe it is the mating season among porpoises."

Agnello said: "It doesn't feel right. It feels like the time we pulled in the hogshead of nafta."

Merendino made a positive statement: "It feels like something we do not usually catch."

The boat had come around as the men hauled at the net. They were pulling the dripping net in over the starboard bow by this time.

When the net was almost in, Sconzo said: "Wait a second, let me look and perhaps I can see what we have before we haul it aboard."

He lay down at the bow again, and put his cheek on the hawser eye again, and looked. What he saw was the last he ever saw.

"Stop!" he shouted. "Stop hauling!"

But it was too late. The slow forward motion of the boat and the slow reactions of the heaving fishermen drove the bow onto the mine.

The explosion could be heard easily in the town. The wives of farmers and land laborers thought it was just some blasting by engineers. But the wives of fishermen ran down to the harbor and looked out over the water.

There they saw unusual activity among the fishing boats. They were all clustered together, and there were one, two—only five!

At the moment of the explosion, Tomasino turned toward the point where Agnello's boat had been. Fortunately Tomasino had his net in and could move fairly quickly.

When they reached the place they found only splinters of wood, many dead fish floating, dead Agnello floating, dead Merendino, and some pieces of Sconzo.

Tomasino and his men hauled the two whole bodies aboard as the

er fishing boats came up.

Tomasino shouted to the others: "Continue to fish. Move farther offshore. I will take Agnello and Merendino in."

Someone from another boat shouted: "And Sconzo?"

"Sconzo," said Tomasino, not looking at the small pieces of Sconzo floating in the water, "is missing."

As soon as they tied up, Tomasino jumped ashore and walked quickly uptown to the Palazzo. He was the first to bring the news to the Major.

"Good afternoon, Tomasino," the Major said cheerfully. "I'm looking forward to the party tomorrow night. I hear you are one of the hosts."

Tomasino's face was black with misery, but the Major had not thought that unusual.

"I cannot go," Tomasino said. "Why not, Tomasino? It wouldn't be the same without you."

Tomasino said grimly: "I came to talk about the explosion. Did you hear the explosion?"

Major Joppolo said: "I did hear an explosion. About half an hour ago, was it?"

Tomasino said: "About half an hour ago."

"What was it?"

"One of my ships. A mine, I suppose, just as you warned."

The Major stood up. His face had gone white as soon as Tomasino started talking about the explosion. He went around his desk to Tomasino and put a hand on his arm.

"It is my fault, Tomasino, not yours," he said.

"It was Agnello's fault," Tomasino said. "He was too far in. I took bearings, and I know that he was outside the fishing zone."

"I am sorry," the Major said.

Tomasino said: "Why are you sorry? I thought you would be angry."

"I feel as if I had killed your men, Tomasino."

"Accidents happened here before you came, Mister Major. Men have died here before."

And so it happened that before he left, Tomasino was consoling the Major instead of being berated by him for allowing carelessness in the fishing fleet.

As Tomasino started to go, the Major said: "You will continue to fish?"

Tomasino said: "Of course. Four of the boats are still out."

The Major said: "Good, Tomasino." Then he said: "I'm sorry about tomorrow night."

Tomasino said: "I am sorry too. But it would not be decent. I am supposed to be the head of the fishermen."

Major Joppolo hesitated. Then he said, trying to sound delicate about it: "Do you feel that your family should stay away as well?"

Tomasino looked at Major Joppolo's face. Tomasino looked no less sad as he said: "No, I think Tina should go."

The day of the party came, and many things happened.

At about 9:30 in the morning, a U. S. Navy truck pulled up in front of the Palazzo. A Chief Petty Officer and five men unloaded a crate from it onto the sidewalk, and the Chief went inside and delivered a note for Major Victor Joppolo.

Major Joppolo was busy at his desk, and had not noticed the truck. He opened the note and read: "Dear Major:

"The U. S. Navy is delighted to be able to do the U. S. Army a favor. Here is your bell. . . ."

The Major jumped up and shouted: "Where is it?"

Zito the usher said: "Where is what, Mister Major?"

The Major said: "The bell! The bell! They have brought us our bell." And he ran out on the balcony just in time to see the Navy truck pull away. He saw the crate sitting there on the sidewalk.

Major Joppolo shouted down to an M.P. in front of the Palazzo. "Hey, stand guard over that box, don't let anybody walk off with that."

The M.P. grumbled out loud, but not loud enough for Major Joppolo to hear: "From the way them sailors was grunting and groaning, don't strike me that nobody's goin' to strut off with that thing."

The Major hurried back inside, and he said to Zito: "How long did you say it took them to take the old bell down, Zito?"

Zito said: "They had to use six sets of block and tackle. It took them two days to get it down. Then one day to crate it."

The Major said: "I can't wait that long."

He went to the phone and called up the Engineers.

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Soaking Vegetables
Soaking fresh vegetables, especially after they are cut, draws out juice that contains both food value and flavor. If vegetables need freshening, wash and put them in a covered container in the refrigerator. If potatoes are to be peeled before cooking, peel them just before they go on the stove. The common method of peeling ahead of time and then keeping potatoes soaking in water to prevent darkening means a loss of food value. To save the juice of strawberries, wash them before (not after) hulling. Hold juicy fruits like oranges and cherries over a bowl when slicing so none of the juice will be lost as it drips.

Enrich Garden
Liberal additions of organic matter to garden soils have three important effects: organic matter aids in absorption and storage of moisture in the soil for the use of plants, this being true whether the water comes from rain, sprinkling or irrigation; organic matter is the best all-round soil conditioner, making heavy clays friable and easier to cultivate and sandy soils more loamy and capable of holding water, and well rotted organic matter supplies some plant food—manure supplies a good deal—and makes chemical fertilizers more efficient.

No Vanilla Substitute
An orchid that is grown for its fruit rather than its flower as the end product is the vanilla plant. Dr. Donovan Correll, plant specialist of the department of agriculture, describes vanilla as "the most important and famous flavoring substance which the Americas have contributed to the world. There are artificial substitutes, but Dr. Correll says "the essence of the natural product has not been completely captured by the test tube."

Banana Plantations
The world's largest banana plantations are on the Atlantic coast of Middle America where the hot weather and high degree of rainfall make the conditions ideal for banana cultivation. In huge clearings cut from the tropical jungle 250 feet above sea level, these great farms extend only a few miles inland from the Caribbean.

Nutrition Needs
A moderately active man can get 10 per cent of his protein from one cup of milk; or 20 per cent of the needed iron from a half-cup of cooked beans; and a hundred per cent of his vitamin A from two-thirds of a cup of carrots or winter squash.

Manila Hemp
Manila hemp is not a hemp at all, but a fibre called abaca. Since this fibre grew plentifully in the Philippines and was exported chiefly from Manila, its common name originated there, but it is also grown in Middle America.

Honey Flavors
Just as there are many species of plants that produce nectar so there are many kinds of honey. The nectar obtained by the bees from each species of plant may carry with it an individual color, flavor and aroma.

Air Freight
There are few limitations to the commodities which can be flown by air express today, since the cargo compartments of air liners now carry up to 3,000 pounds and without passengers up to three tons.

Peaceful Nation
Called "the world's most peaceful country," Costa Rica has more school teachers than soldiers! Coffee, tropical fruits and various hardwoods are exported and cattle are raised extensively.

Dark Hogs
It is thought dark-skinned breeds of hogs are more susceptible to rickets than light-skinned breeds. Reason is that the dark skins absorb less ultraviolet light rays from sunshine.

Pantry Treatment
One Hollywood actress goes to the pantry for her beauty treatments. A facial of peanut oil softens her skin; orange juice whitens it; and cream is used as a lubricating night cream.

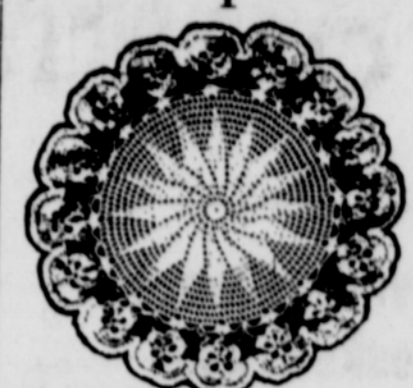
Frying Fish
The secret of frying fish crisp and brown, without egg or bread crumbs, is to dry the fish well, sprinkle both sides with plenty of flour and then plunge the fish into boiling fat.

Varnish Brushes
Varnish brushes should be kept in a mixture of turpentine and varnish (not turpentine alone) when not in use. Clear turpentine makes the bristles rough and coarse.

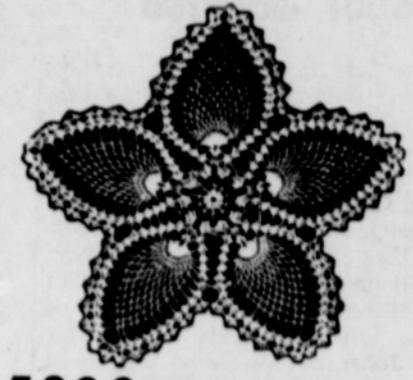
Crude Light
Grease soaked reeds were used for light in early American homes where time and materials were not available for candlemaking.

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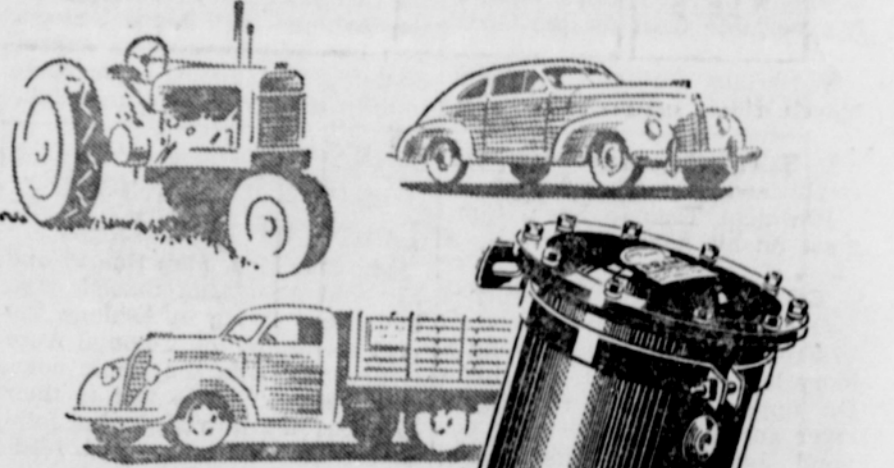
He Recognized Dripping Sarcasm From Elephant

One afternoon a famous conductor was rehearsing an operatic group for a performance of "Aida." The singers were all in bad form and for the life of him he could not get them to sing a certain passage in the required manner.

He was about to give up in disgust when one of the elephants which was to appear in the performance lumbered out from the wings, lifted his trunk and drenched them with a shower of water.

Observing the discomfort of the singers with amusement, the conductor turned to the elephant and made a sweeping bow.

"Frightful stage manners," he murmured, "but what a critic!"



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