

## Jake's Adventures



**Part Six:** A high tide floats all Venice boats and the furniture in Jake's hotel, but not before our vacationing couple learned to negotiate the narrow city streets. In this installment, we learn for whom the bell tolls.

### *Aloha Venezia!* Does the Last Supper ring a bell?

**By Jake Satin-Jacobs**

Even though it continued to rain, the tide had subsided and the streets of Venice were passable the next morning.



So, in the midst of a downpour, we boarded a vaporetto for San Giorgio Maggiore, a basilica on an island in the lagoon that fronts Saint Mark's Square and which, Patti had assured me, housed the "Last Supper." I sat in the warmest part of the vaporetto wondering what would happen to my paper underwear if it got wet.

We were blown from the vaporetto to the church. Along the way, the first of three umbrellas was permanently turned inside out.

The church was empty and dark. As is customary in some places, it was necessary to toss lire into a machine to generate light to see the artwork. We looked at several thousand lire worth of Renaissance art, before we arrived at the "Last Supper." It turned out to be not DaVinci's, but Tintoretto's version of the same biblical scene.

Mid-viewing, my lire expired and the lights went out. It was just before noon and we decided to take a trip to the top of the bell tower for that precious view, before returning to the center of town.

In the elevator sat a very sullen, gaunt, gray, middle-aged man. He was squinting into a dense German religious text. I spoke to him in cheery Italian. He responded in bored, flat English. I thought of John Carradine.

#### **Slow ride to the summit**

I gave Mr. Happy a gazillion or so lire – the equivalent of a dollar – to ferry us to the summit. The ride up was silent and slow. We were deposited unceremoniously at the top, the elevator doors closed behind us and the sullen man headed back down to pick up his next passengers or to resume reading his book.

We stood silently, huddled together, and looked across the lagoon toward the city, buried in the haze in the distance. The cold, wet wind slapped against our faces. I tried to smile, but silently I prayed for warm air and sunshine. I thought of Hawaii. And then it was twelve o'clock and the giant bell ten feet above us began to swing.

Before either of us could react, the clapper struck the side for the first time. Patti jumped as though she had received an electrical shock. The bell continued to chime and I took off running in a circle around the elevator shaft in search of a silent place that did not exist. There was no escape.

Thirty long seconds later, it was over. We were grateful that there was no

special hourly performance, nothing besides the 12 strikes to mark the noon hour.

When the morbid elevator operator returned, he was smiling. Something told me it wasn't the first time he had abandoned his charges to the noontime bells.

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