

Story 1 – Canvassing

Knock, knock, knock.

“Hi, have you heard about the latest threat to the Mount Hood National Forest?” Geri said.

“No habla ingles,” the couple at the door said.

Sherry rushed in with a smile and began speaking to them about the issues en español. Geri stood there smiling, feeling out of place. A while later they took a \$5 donation from the couple, smiled, said, “Gracias, thank you,” and moved on.

“Wow, you’re so good at this. I took Spanish in high school but I can’t remember a thing.”

“It’s all about practice. That’s all there is to it.”

“If you say so,” Geri said with a smile.

They walked to the curb at the corner and Sherry checked her watch. “Ooh, 9:20 p.m., time to go back to the meeting point and get picked up.”

“Okay.”

“So what do you think of the job?” Sherry said as they began walking back.

“Whew, I think canvassing is hard. And I don’t think I’m good at sales. I’m also not good at memorizing things.”

“Well, it’s not for everyone. And we have some phone canvassing jobs you could try. The script would be right in front you. You wouldn’t have to memorize the whole thing.”

“Oh, okay. Yeah, I’d try that.”

“Great. Oh, I love this job. I really feel that I’m making a difference.”

“Yeah, I know what you mean. It’s like I said in the interview, if I have to work some job it may as well be one where I’m actually using my time and energy to make a difference in society.”

“Yeah, exactly. I love working on making this a better world for my kids. You’re going to feel even better about the work you’re doing when you have kids. Do you have any kids now?”

“I’m 22.”

“Is that a no?”

“Yes, it’s a no.”

“Oh well, there’s still plenty of time. You’re just going to love having kids, especially if you have any Scorpio in your chart, which I feel you do—I have a Scorpio rising and feel so close to my kids. You’ll just love it.”

“No, I don’t want any kids.”

“Oh, it’s okay to think that at your age.”

“I’ve actually never wanted kids. That’s not going to change.”

“Uh, huh,” Sherry said with a smile.

“No, seriously, I’m not having kids.”

“Yeah, a lot of women think that at your age. Oh, you’ll just love kids when you have them. Oh look, they’re here,” Sherry said as an old, beater, generic van pulled up.

They got in the van and were driven across town by their boss, who stared straight ahead while driving, not checking side streets or mirrors for traffic, then answered his cell phone without stopping, through busy traffic, the gritting metal grating across Hawthorne Bridge, the hectic Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, past the large white Rose Garden Arena, the twin glass towers of the Convention Center, and East West College of the Healing Arts, the nationally famed massage school, and to their office.

In the office they turned in their clipboards and did the paperwork for the night. Then the office manager approached Geri.

“Sherry tells me you might want to work the phones.”

“No, actually, I’m looking for something more progressive,” she said and walked away.

(From *A View from the Bottom: Short Stories* by Ava Collopy;
Available through Amazon/Kindle, free on Kindle Unlimited, and elsewhere.)