



## Dialogue on Peace Skot Davis

I was going to sit down and eat my lunch but I saw a man sitting a few benches down. He looked like a good prospect so I picked up my pack and walked down to him.

He was a strange looking man, and I thought him a good prospect because his face was not hard. As I approached, he didn't really look like an easy touch, and I hesitated before reaching his back. When I stopped, he looked toward me, with apparently no need to avert his eyes. He stared at me with a look that implied that he'd been crying.

This whole thing was annoying because when you are canvassing you must have the upper hand in energy to get the person to contribute. I chided myself and stepped forward, sitting next to him on the bench.

Reaching into my pack for a pamphlet I said, "Hi. I'm working with an international peace organization to try to put an end to world conflict..." I couldn't find the damn pamphlet. "Always put them in the front flap," I tell myself, but I never do.

"What do you want?" the man asked. I love a hard canvass, so as soon as he said this I was ready to work, even though he sounded like he just wanted to avoid a waste of time.

I finally found the pamphlet and held it out to him. "We're conducting a campaign to raise money for world peace," I began.

"The fight for peace," he said. I nodded and began to go on but I caught the irony in his words. I was annoyed. "We work hard," I said, holding the pamphlet at my stomach. This was a good man, I sensed, and I should be able to show him the need for giving his money.

His head was turned away though, and he looked like he was almost ready to stand up and walk off.

"Leaving?" I said. "Not afraid of a discussion are you?" I didn't want to sound like a little kid giving a challenge, but every dollar is important.

He turned back smoothly, looking annoyed, but then he laughed, folded his arms, and said, "Am I challenged to combat by the worker for peace? I'm still young enough to be interested."

I smiled and thought maybe we were getting somewhere.

I brought my left leg up on the bench beneath me and faced the man, who sat relaxedly forward, turning his head toward me when we spoke.

"What's your name?" he asked me, turning his now alive, though almost expressionless face toward me.

I told my name and he told me his. The conversation we had was strange, and I hope I set it down here faithfully, though I was angry or confused through much of it, and that may blur attempts at truth.

I was relaxing my mind, looking for the correct angle to take when he said: "Why do you work so hard for this organization?"

I was going to ask him how he thought he knew I worked so hard, but then I guessed that he was asking why I worked for them at all. "I work for them because I love peace and because I have a dream about it, I guess." I love to tell of my dream, and it sometimes sells people too, but this man's stare as I spoke grew somewhat disconcerting. "I always wondered when I was a little kid why people fought, but everyone just shrugged and said, 'It's just one of those things; you'll understand when you grow up.'" Here his gaze grew even more disconcerting, but I fought off the urge to falter and went on. "But I still have yet to discover why people find conflict necessary. I don't think it is. I think that nations, and people, could be more peaceful, and treat each other with more respect." Here I did stop, and it was with the feeling, as his eyes fixed mine, that my words were shallow and meaningless. But I did feel that way, and I still do.

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