

Janis Butler Holm

DOOR-TO-DOOR LOVE

I took my time getting downstairs. My walker has wheels, and I'm afraid of falling. But the man was still there when I reached the front door.

"Good afternoon, ma'am. I'm Andy Love from the Love Foundation Ministries, and I'm wondering if I could have a few moments of your time." He was very well-mannered.

"Of course," I said. "Won't you come in?"

"Thank you so much." He seemed slightly surprised to be invited inside. I hobbled toward the living room with Mr. Love behind me.

"I represent the Love Foundation Ministries, a spiritual fellowship that brings divine love to the hearts of millions. We sponsor *As the World Burns* and *The Old and the Dutiful*, dramatic daytime television on the Love network."

"Oh, yes." I'd heard about these shows although I hadn't seen them.

"Through these critically acclaimed programs, we teach millions of viewers the wages of sin and the glory of redemption."

"Um—hmm," I said.

"But these television dramas are expensive to produce, and so we rely on viewers like yourself to help us continue to spread our sacred message."

"Wait right here, Mr. Love." I limped and rolled to the kitchen, where I put cookies on a plate and poured a glass of the milk I keep on hand to help me sleep. Then I returned to the living room. "Please, eat something. Your work must make you hungry."

"Why, thank you!" Mr. Love seemed thrilled with this further hospitality. He bit into a cookie and gulped down some milk. "This is very kind of you."

"My pleasure," I said. "Now, you were saying..."

"We go from door to door, asking good people to help us spread the

word. We ask for whatever folks feel comfortable giving.”

“Well,” I said. “I don’t have a lot, but I could write you a check.”

“Why, that would be wonderful!” Mr. Love looked truly pleased. “We’re really very grateful for whatever you can do. It’s believers like yourself who make our holy work possible.” He raised his half-empty glass in a toast to believers and downed some more milk.

I paused and then said, “I keep my checkbook in the basement. You never know whom to trust, so I hide it downstairs.”

Mr. Love took this little confession in stride. “Right,” he nodded wisely. “Better safe than sorry.”

“Could I ask you to get it? It’s in the cardboard box at the foot of the stairs.” I motioned toward the basement door off the kitchen.

“Why, certainly. I’d be happy to retrieve it.” Mr. Love was positively glowing. We both got up and headed toward the door. I pulled it open and flipped the basement light switch.

“Watch your step,” I warned. Mr. Love groped the railing at the top of the stairs. Then his knees buckled. The narcotic in the milk had taken effect. I gave him a push, shut the door behind him, and turned the bolt in the lock.

After he woke up, he yelled for two days. It’s been five days now, and things are pretty quiet. But I’ve been watching *As the World Burns* and enjoying the show. As for *The Old and the Dutiful*, I just couldn’t get into it.