

This is Poop Patrol!

by Roz Warren

Sherry and I stand on the sidewalk on a sunny morning, watching her dog take a dump. She's new to the neighborhood and we've just introduced ourselves. The dog, a handsome poodle, does the deed efficiently.

"See you later, Gloria!" Sherry says cheerfully, walking away.

"Hey -- you're supposed to pick that up!" I call after her.

She turns around. "Sorry!" She shrugs. "I forgot to bring a bag."

"Then I'll need your full name, address and phone number."

"What on earth for?"

"To give to the person whose lawn your dog just soiled, in case she wants to complain to the township."

"Oh, lighten up!" she giggles. "It's not the end of the world."

"Well, it's the end of a nice clean lawn for that homeowner. Why don't you go home and get a poop bag?"

"I'm running late." she whines.

"It's never too late for common courtesy."

"Who appointed you queen of the world?" she snaps, stalking away.

"I did, girlfriend!" I shout, running to catch up with her. "And this is Poop Patrol!"

I started up Poop Patrol after I retired from the library. It gives my life purpose and it gets me out of the house. My husband says I'm exactly like Lady Bird Johnson, only in reverse, with turds instead of buttercups.

She beautified her world by filling it with flowers. I beautify mine by promoting unsoiled sidewalks.

A block later, Sherry turns on me. "Stop following me."

"Glad to. As soon as you pick up after your dog."

"Get a life!"

"This is my life."

"You're a lunatic."

"No, I'm a visionary!"

Grace approaches with Butch, her Bichon. "Have you met Sherry? I ask. "She's our new neighbor. She doesn't scoop her poop."

"That's hardly the most important thing about me," Sherry huffs.

"To Gloria it is," says Grace. "Welcome to the neighborhood, Sherry." She pulls a plastic bag from her back pocket and hands it to our new neighbor. "Lucky for you, I always bring extra."

"Are you a lunatic too?" Sherry asks.

"All I know," says Grace, is that when Gloria is on Poop Patrol, she's relentless. She'll follow you home and stand on your porch ringing the doorbell till you clean up what your dog left."

"That's insane."

"But it works." Grace grins. "You'll never live in a cleaner neighborhood."

The three of us return to the scene of the crime. Sherry is bagging poop when an elderly woman emerges from the house. "You actually came back to clean up your dog's mess!" she says to Sherry. "Thank you!"

"Please don't thank me," Sherry moans.

"Thank Gloria!" says Grace. "And Poop Patrol. Thanks to you, Gloria, this neighborhood is a much tidier place."

"I still think you're a lunatic," Sherry mutters.

I'm only half listening. Down the block is a man with a schnauzer. The dog is turning in pre-poop circles and the dude isn't holding a poop bag! I'm off to investigate...

