

Getting to know the ground

By chance, my mother got me in touch with a news agency. She had mentioned in one of her English classes that I had studied journalism, and her teacher remembered that he knew someone in the business. "Sometimes it's the only way to get these jobs," my mother advised me, "so, for God's sake, if you're even remotely interested, accept it."

5 I was to ask for a man named Fredi. The receptionist who attended to me was the same one who made the appointment and told me to bring a portfolio. She notified him of my arrival and led me to a small room. Fredi kept us waiting, arriving twenty-five minutes late. He was a much younger man than I had expected, at least his casual attire was misleading. I followed him as he arrogantly showed me around the premises. We climbed some metal stairs and crossed the office until we reached a room with a conference table, a small kitchen, a sofa, and a television. He invited me to sit down. He sprawled out in his chair.

"Let's see what you've got," he said bluntly.

15 My clumsiness made its timely appearance when I tried to take the portfolio out of my backpack and it got stuck. I managed to get it out and handed it to Fredi. I've never liked anyone who has turned their name into a vulgar nickname like his. He leafed through the pages, which contained photographs and articles, with a light touch and the air of a harsh judge.

"This reminds me of when I was starting out." His tone oscillated between cocky and paternalistic.

20 He picked up the pages from the edge, as if he were disgusted to touch them. He paused at some of them, suggesting that not everything seemed despicable to him.

"Why did you study journalism?"
"My dream was always to be a photojournalist," I replied.

25 He seemed to become more and more interested, returning to some of the pages he had skimmed through with insulting speed, as if suddenly finding something worthy in them.

He looked at me for a few seconds and grimaced in disagreement.

"Are you sure about that?"
"Of course," I replied, trying to convey firmness.

30 He twisted his lips and furrowed his brow as if he didn't believe my words. He closed the portfolio, letting the pages fall at a ninety-degree angle. He leaned back in his chair and crossed one leg over the other. The time for reviewing my work was over. I kept my steady, my forearms resting on the table and my hands clasped together.

35 "I don't know if you realize that you're speaking in the past tense, as if you've already given up on your dream," he began. "Many people, especially in this industry, have too many fantasies. I don't do that. I have to stick to reality, you understand? When Michelangelo, who was not considered a painter per se, was commissioned by Pope Julius II to decorate the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, in 1508, he might have thought it was a dream. But he painted it, he was able to do it." Anyway, he said, returning to the table and placing his hands on it, "Peter told me you were going to show me your work, and I promised him I would look at it."
40 I've known Peter for a long time, I owe him a few favors. Yes. "He was rambling." But this isn't going to be one of those favors I owe him. Definitely not, I'm afraid.

Text C – Getting to know the ground

The following statements are either true or false. Tick [✓] the correct option, then justify it using words as they appear in the text. Both parts are required for [1 mark].

1. My mother begged me not to let any opportunity that came my way slip away.

<input type="checkbox"/> True	Justification:
<input type="checkbox"/> False

2. Fredi welcomed me right on time.

<input type="checkbox"/> True	Justification:
<input type="checkbox"/> False

3. Fredi showed me around the organization, acting all cocky.

<input type="checkbox"/> True	Justification:
<input type="checkbox"/> False

4. Fredi looked through the portfolio with my material quickly, giving the impression of a ruthless critic.

<input type="checkbox"/> True	Justification:
<input type="checkbox"/> False

5. He flipped through all the pages without stopping at any of them, as if he thought the entire portfolio was terrible.

<input type="checkbox"/> True	Justification:
<input type="checkbox"/> False

What do the following words mean in the text? Choose the appropriate words from the list.

- 6. speed (line 25) ☐
- 7. disagreement (line 26) ☐
- 8. firmness (line 28) ☐
- 9. posture (line 31) ☐

- A. opinion
- B. stability
- C. position
- D. pace
- E. determination
- F. incompatibility
- G. lack of agreement

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To whom or to what do the underlined words refer? **Answer using words as they appear in the text.**

10. ...and handed it to Fredi. (line 14)

.....

11. ...as if suddenly finding something worthy in them. (line 25)

.....

12. ...he was able to do it. (line 38)

.....

Choose the correct answer.

13. Which expression best describes Fredi's attitude when reviewing the portfolio?

☐

- A. Showing distrust with his facial expressions.
- B. Taking care not to crease the pages of the portfolio.
- C. Being patient when reviewing the candidate's portfolio.
- D. Adopting positive body language.