

“The Stupid Dummy's Guide To Better Self-Esteem” Sample #2

(Continuing...) *(At this point several people walk back and forth --repeatedly-- in front of her table as they shop. None are interested in her or her book.)*

Linda: This is totally humiliating! *(Linda picks up the copy of her book and opens it.)* I think I need to take a chapter from my own book. My self-esteem is taking a real beating today.

(A finely-dressed lady stops at her table, looking past her at the Self-Help shelves.)

Lady: Excuse me, do you work here?

Linda: *(Looking up.)* No, but I'm familiar with most of the books in this section, I'll help if I can.

Lady: Thank you. Do you know where I could find a good book on bolstering one's self-image? My husband needs some help in that area.

(Standing, Linda walks to stand beside the lady in front of the table.)

Linda: Is your husband a little insecure?

Lady: Insecure? That's not the word for it. The little shrimp refuses to speak up for himself, no matter how I berate him for it. He's afraid to stand up to his boss and ask for a raise, the coward. I've told him over and over and over that he needs to get some guts and ambition. For some reason he feels inadequate, and he blames it on his hair loss, or his spare tire, or his ulcers, or some other foolish thing. Harold's inadequate because he's a wimp. But I'll make him a man, yet. *(She turns away to look over the books on the shelf.)* I thought a book on self-esteem might help.

Linda: Um, I can see that he does have a problem.

(While the lady is looking away, Linda plainly mouths the word "you" and points with both index fingers at the lady's back.)

Lady: *(Turning back to Linda, who has snapped back to normal.)* Do you have any suggestions for a title?

Linda: Now that you mention it, I do. *(She picks up her own book and holds it up.)* Here's a great one that I think will help.

Lady: "The Stupid Dummy's Guide to Higher Self-Esteem." Now that sounds about right. The stupid dummy needs a good healthy dose of self-esteem. *(She takes the book and looks it over.)* Are you familiar with this title?

Linda: Oh, very. I know the author personally. A wonderful writer and person.

Lady: Hmm, it seems good enough, but the cover art is awful. Whoever designed this has horrible taste.

Linda: *(Weakly, with a sickly smile.)* Well, as they say, you can't judge a book by it's cover...

Lady: I hope it reads better than it looks. All right, I think I'll buy it for the little milk-toast. If it gives him some self-confidence it will be worth it.

Linda: *(Brightening.)* Great! I know you won't be disappointed. And just for today, as a special bonus for buying this book, you get a free T-Shirt featuring original art by the author. *(She holds up up the T-shirt toward the lady, away from the audience.)* Maybe your husband would enjoy wearing it!

Lady: *(Making a face at the shirt.)* Uh, no thanks. I wouldn't let the little twerp wear something like that, it would make him look even more sickening.

Linda: *(Dropping it down in disappointment.)* Oh.

Lady: Now could you point me toward the shelf with books about improving your love life? Harold needs help in that area too.

(Linda points resignedly in another direction and the lady walks off.)

Linda: *(Mutters to herself.)* I can see why, poor fellow.

(She sighs heavily, refolding the shirt and putting it in the box. She sits down and puts her head in her hands.)

Linda: Boy, if things get any better I may jump off a bridge in sheer joy. I never dreamed this would turn out to be the Book-Signing Day From Hell.

(Finally one man in a suit stops at her table. She looks up in hope.)

Suit Man: Excuse me, are you Linda Weller?

Linda: Yes, I am!

Suit Man: And are you the author of "The Stupid Dummy's Guide to Higher Self-Esteem"?

Linda: I certainly am!

Suit Man: I wonder if you would mind signing something for me...

Linda: I'd be thrilled to!

(He hands her a piece of paper which she signs and hands back to him. Examining the signature, he nods, then takes an envelope out of his suit pocket.)

Suit Man: *(Handing her a business card.)* My name is Melvin Langdon. I represent the Excelsior Publishing Company out of New York. They're very interested in your work and would like to meet with you at your earliest convenience.

Linda: *(Impressed.)* Really? That's a huge company! They only publish the best manuscripts. I'm flattered. And they wish to meet with me?

Suit Man: Oh, yes, very much. *(He hands her the envelope.)* This is for you.

Linda: *(Looking at it with awe.)* What is it, a publishing proposal? An advance on a contract?

Suit Man: Not exactly. It's a summons.

(Linda's jaw drops.)

Linda: Say what?

Suit Man: You're being sued by the company for infringing on their line of trademarked "Stupid Dummy Guides" titles. You're to appear along with my client in court on the 16th of next month. I would suggest you bring along your lawyer.

Linda: *(Staring blankly at the envelope in her hands, she stammers.)* But... but... but...

Suit Man: Spoken with a true writer's eloquence. Good day, Ms. Weller. See you in court. *(He walks briskly off.)*

Linda: *(Still staring in shock at the envelope, she protests.)* But I thought **anyone** could write a book for stupid dummies!

(Taking down the picture holder and books, she places them in the box, and folds up the table, bitterly berating herself all the time as she does.) (Continues...)