

## **"The Stupid Dummy's Guide To Higher Self-Esteem" Sample #1**

*(The teenage Books-A-Billion employee walks in, carrying some books. A customer enters the store.)*

Employee: Welcome to Books-a-Billion! May I help you find something?

Linda: Yes, I'm Linda Weller, I'm here for the book signing.

Employee: *(Blankly.)* Book signing?

Linda: Yes... you know, for the book, "The Stupid Dummy's Guide to Higher Self-Esteem."

Employee: Oh, wait, there is one today, I forgot. Every third Saturday is "Meet The Author" day.

Linda: I wanted to get here a little early in case of a crowd.

Employee: *(Laughs.)* A crowd? For that author of *that* book? I doubt it. You'll probably be their only fan.

Linda: *(Somewhat peeved.)* I don't think you understand. I **am** the author. I'm here to set up for the book signing.

Employee: *(Embarrassed.)* Oops. Sorry about that. I didn't realise...

Linda: Where can I set up for it?

Employee: *(Looking around.)* Um, let's see... how about over near the Self-Help section?

Linda: *(Reluctantly.)* I was kind of hoping to have a table near the entrance...

Employee: Sorry, but "Beeno the Clown" will be there today making balloon sculptures for the kids.

Linda: Oh. Well, I guess the Self-Help section will have to do, then. Wouldn't want to upset Beeno. Where is it?

Employee: *(Chuckling.)* Well, if I told you that, it would be defeating the purpose of the Self-Help section, wouldn't it?

*(Linda just looks at him with a deadly expression.)*

Employee: *(Losing his grin.)* Uh, sorry, it's a little bookstore joke.

Linda: I've heard it before. It's still not funny.

Employee: *(Directing her to the center of the stage.)* It's over there. I'll get you a table.

Linda: Thanks.

*(He leaves and comes right back with a card table and a folding chair, which he sets up.)*

Employee: There you go! Anything else?

Linda: Oh, could I get some copies of the book from the shelf to sign?

Employee: Sure thing, I'll go get them.

Linda: *(Gesturing behind her.)* Wouldn't they be here in the Self-Help shelves?

Employee: Normally, but that title is already in the ninety-nine cent Bargain Bin up front.

Linda: *(Taken aback.)* The Bargain Bin? But it's only been out for a month!

Employee: Well, we haven't sold any copies, and shelf space is at a premium with all the new books coming out.

Linda: *(Disbelieving.)* You haven't sold a *single* copy?

Employee: *(Shrugging.)* Well, maybe *one*. Sorry about that. *(Helpfully.)* Maybe it was the cover art that put folks off. It looked pretty crummy.

Linda: *(Frostily.)* I painted that cover myself. I'm also an artist.

Employee: Ulp. *(Hastily excusing himself.)* I'll... go get those copies now.

*(Linda shakes her head in exasperation at the clerk and takes a folded T-Shirt from the box and places it on the table, along with a plastic page holder that has her picture on it. She takes a chair and places it behind the table.)*

Employee: *(returning with a box.)* Here they are.

*(He takes one out and hands it to her, and she places it on the table next to her picture. He puts the box under the table.)*

Linda: There we go. I've brought along some T-Shirts of my paintings to sell also, do you mind?

Employee: Not at all. *(Looking at the one lying on the table.)* You might want to display another one, though. It looks like somebody threw up all over that one.

Linda: *(Dangerously.)* That's my self-portrait.

Employee: *(Doing a double-take, he looks at the T-shirt again, then back at her.)* Oh... sorry. I can see the resemblance now.

Linda: *(With effort to control herself.)* Maybe you should leave while you still can.

Employee: ...Right. I think that's a good idea. If you need help...

Linda: Then I'll call someone else.

*(The employee hurriedly beats it offstage. Linda sits down behind the table and puts her fingers to her temples to collect herself.)*

Linda: *(To herself.)* Nice steady, deep breaths. I am calm. I am centered. I am in control.

Employee: *(Over the loudspeakers.)* Attention, Books-a-Billion shoppers. Bring the kids to the front of the store to meet Beeno the Clown, who will be making free balloon sculptures for everyone! Today is also "Meet The Author" Day, and in the Self-help section you can meet... *(Pauses as if consulting some notes.)* ...Linda Teller, author of "The Stupid Dummy's Guide to Higher Self-Esteem."

Linda: *(With irritation, speaking to the air.)* That's *Weller!*

Employee: *(Continuing.)* Ms. Teller will be available for the next hour to sign your copies of the book, give autographs, and discuss the book with you. Be sure to stop by and say hello!

Linda: That didn't go *too* badly.

Employee: *(Continuing.)* By they way, Books-a-Billion is giving away a copy of the book free to all customers who buy the new release, "Toenail Clipping Photos of Famous Celebrities," now on sale in the Biographies section.

*(Linda covers her eyes with one hand in disgust.)*

Linda: I spoke too soon.

*(Continues...)*