

# Stupid

by Mark Morelli

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Everything about the interview was stupid. She wore a stupid blue suit, Was up for a stupid sales job. Sat there awkwardly, nodding like a lapdog, giving dumb answers to questions asked by a dopey round-faced man with no hair and a wet lip. On his desk, stupid placards:

*You want it by when?*

*You don't have to be crazy to work here, but it helps.*

So stupid she wanted to scream, but screaming would be stupid. She needed the job. She had two children to feed and an ex who renounced money and lived in a leaky tugboat trying to find himself. She couldn't even sell their house for a decent profit. Bad move, buying that house. How stupid of them to think the neighborhood was on the upswing.

How her stupid blue power suit itched.

But her smile exuded confidence. She crossed her legs and was careful to listen and not speak too much, not finish the man's sentence.

You'd have to pay a third of your major medical, he told her, but the commission rate is great.

Reasonable, she answered eager but cool.

She smiled and arched a brow when Mr. Poopbreathbaldhead outlined the job duties. She nodded when other workers – the cubicle-quarantined bored and boring – passed by in the hall, checking her out.

“Now, Mrs. Brill, here is a question that will require some thought,” he said.

“We’ve gone over your strong points. What would you say is your weakest trait?”

She stammered, pinned under the thumb of Mr. Ladderclimbinglucky. Her eyes darted about nervously.

What a stupid question!

Oh, oh, oh whatever could it be? That she tries too hard? That she stays at the office late into the night to finish her work? My flaw, she could say, is that I come to work too early, invoking the wrath of fellow employees, but that’s something I can live with, sir, because soon everyone shows up early and the company benefits! My flaw is that I’m here on Sundays, separating the entangled paper clips! That I make such damned good coffee that during my vacation the whole company curls up and dies of caffeine withdrawal.

“Weakest trait? Tough one...”

That I cannot help but massage the bosses and do their laundry. I just can’t help it! It’s my weakness!

Mr. Bigbellyballpoint leaned back. What was he thinking? Too slow on her feet? Indecisive? Jowly?

She let that son of a bitch charge everything on her cards, and then he decides to go find himself. Worst of all, he looked better than ever.

Mr. Middlemanagementuglytie twiddled his pencil and snuck a glance at the clock. He was waiting. Time was money.

She looked at him close and hard. they shared that smirk, him across the desk and him on the leaky boat.

What would it be like working here? She'd go home spitting, in tears, and with all these young chippies flouncing around, she'd be reminded that she was old, broke, out of fashion, and unable to remember her last ecstatic romp. Who needed this? She could be a caterer, a stunning and svelte caterer, taking the torch of kitchen expertise from the old Italian ladies, telling all the old men at the banquet that no, she'd better not go out and dance with them, she just couldn't -- she was on the job! What fun!

My weakest trait? Well, I sometimes steal the honor system coffee money."

He blinked and drew back. But he listened.

His face oozed slowly into a knowing smile. He nodded his head affirmatively, gave her an gentle wink and extended his hand.

"That was really something, Mrs. Brill."