



# The BookWOMAN

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A Quiz for Bookwomen, from *The Bookwoman*, vol. 3, no. 1.

Are you employed in a bookshop? And how good are you at finding a solution to such vital questions as those given below? To each of the three bookwomen who send in the most convincing answers to the following questions, THE BOOKWOMAN offers a year's membership in the Women's National Book Association. Send no money - buy nothing. Simply write your answers and sign your name, business address, and position held, on any paper (letterhead preferred but not required) and mail to the editor, Alice Klutas, 98 Woodruff Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y., on or before January 15, 1939. The judges are the staff of THE BOOKWOMAN. The winners! will be announced in the February 1939 issue of THE BOOKWOMAN, and the winning answers will be printed as rapidly as space will permit. The questions, as you may have guessed, are by those master quizzers - RoseJeanne Slifer and Louise Crittenden. Let's go!

## QUIZ

1. What is the correct answer to the pompous, "I want to talk to someone who knows the stock"?
2. is it better to be truthful and lose the sale or evasive and make it when the customer asks if you have read every single book you suggest?
3. What line of action do you pursue when you are told of a book you recommend, "Oh but that got an unfavorable review"?

4. What age level is advisable to suggest to the customer who says, "My son is nine, but he has the mentality of an eleven year old"
5. Are more books damaged or is more customer goodwill gained by allowing a customer to copy recipes from cook books or to look up her latest dream in 100,000 Dreams Interpreted?
6. How old can a latest book be, when a customer says, "Oh, that's not new. I saw that reviewed three weeks ago"?
7. When Junior wants a certain book and his mother wants him to have a different one, what do you say?
8. What is the wisest thing to do with an author who repeatedly offers to autograph her books -- which you never stock?
9. What do you answer when madame says, "I can't see why you don't have that book. very other store in town carries it"?
10. How can you dispose of the browser, who having spent the afternoon "just looking" shows no sign of leaving, twenty minutes after closing time?

#### ANSWERS

1. The correct answer to the pompous, "I want to talk to someone who knows the stock" in my case is "I believe I shall be able to help you Madam (or, Sir) as I ordered the entire stock myself and I am in the book business because I do want to help people select books."
2. It IS better to be truthful and lose a sale than be evasive and make it when the customer asks if you have read every single book you suggest. Why? Because in not too many years of tramping or bookselling, as you will, you will recommend the wrong biography of Mary Baker Eddy to a devout Christian Scientist; you will sell Asbury's French Quarter to the sweet old lady who wants something interesting on New Orleans; and you will sell a good author's pot-boiling contract-filler to someone who has liked his earlier and better things. And that

is all very well if you have let the buyer now you have not read the books and are not responsible personally for his disappointment.

3. When the retort is "Oh, that got an unfavorable review!" my answer is (depending on the book) "Well, reviewers are human, you know and perhaps the reviewer whose opinion you read did not like whimsy (or satire, or Texas, or realism in inland Mississippi, or whatever it may be) but I really believe that this is a book you will enjoy. Frankly, it demand a discriminating reader."
4. When the proud mother says, "My son is nine but he has the mentality of an eleven year old" the best age level is 8 to 10. To be very sure you may inquire as to the things he has just read and if he liked Westward Ho or if he's read Wind in the Willows. If you can get the mother to talk sensibly about his reading that will be a clue. However, the mother who pulls the mentality IQ stuff usually doesn't talk sensibly.
5. Although I believe that more books are damaged in allowing customers to check on their dreams or copy recipes than goodwill is gained, I do not know the answer when you decided to say "No!" Then there is always the story of the old man who read about his dream and was so encouraged by it that he bought the \$4.50 book on sex rejuvenation.
6. The answer to "Oh, that's not new. I saw that reviewed three weeks ago" is "Isn't it funny, though that books like Gone With the Wind, Green Light and Anthony Adverse are years old and still selling like new books. You know it doesn't matter how old a book is, if it is worthwhile it continues to sell and to please its readers. I think if you have not read.....you will enjoy it thoroughly."
7. When Junior wants a book and his mother wants a different one, either bring out a third book (preferably a dollar more) or side with the mother in a delicate way and bring out a point about the mischievous nature of the young boy in the book the mother has selected. Or you might fall back on Tom Sawyer.

8. When the author repeatedly offers to autograph his books which you have never stocked, the wisest thing to say is, "But, sir, I am just not able to keep your books in stock - the customers buy it for gifts and don't wait to get it autographed." Or, you might say "Shall I order the books from you or your publisher?"
  
9. When Madame says, "I can't see why you don't have that book. Every other store in town carried it!" the bookseller can at least come back with "I have had such remarkable sales on .....that I have been forced to re-order several times. At the present moment I have a shipment coming in and I shall be glad to send a copy out to you tomorrow."
  
10. When the browser - who has spent the afternoon "just looking" shows no sign of leaving twenty minutes after closing time, you might say, "I'm so sorry to have to disturb you, but a man from the termite company is coming to spray the floors. I'm afraid the odor will be terrific. But you WILL come back."