



Everybody Says Hello

Michael Kun

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Dear Reader,

Sid Straw, barely recovered after a break-up, moves from Baltimore to Southern California to take a mid-level computer sales job from which he is promptly fired. Along the way he is publicly defamed, defrauded, embarrassed, nearly arrested, and may or may not have moved out of the seedy motel where he poisoned a cat and into the guesthouse of the actress Heather Locklear. How does Kun make the journey fun?

Easy. Sid writes letters. To everyone, about everything. Letters and letters and letters, page after page of letters, only letters, and if anyone answers those letters the reader will have to sort out for himself from the occasional cryptic clues and outrageous retorts.

Poor sod. From the start of his drive across country, nothing goes Sid's way, starting with a misfiring in-room adult movie ordering system. On the West Coast, everything gets worse as he bungles his way from one recklessly dimwitted and ill-advised comment, action, and letter to another. And what does he get for his clumsy attempts at the fading art of letter-writing? He is bilked, amateurishly blackmailed, and bounced out of a job.

It should be mentioned that sometimes those who read Straw's letters will not really know what is going on, not really. That Heather probably really is *that* Heather, but that there also is another Heather in the mix, and last names are not always used. That Straw also tosses in old college newspaper "humor" columns which may or may not be funny. That at times the letter conceit gets stale, but most of the time, the pages turn at such a brisk pace and the graphic appeal of the formatting makes it all more than okay. That the author (of the letters and, yes, of the book) somehow manages to make sense of a mix that includes, but is not limited, to references to Dr. Seuss, Internet dating, porn movies, Las Vegas, Obama, journalism, joblessness, transvestites, Locklear's celebrity, bug spray, folk singers, the alleged humor of silly lists, deceptive veterinarians, cats in comas, streetwalkers, and lovesickness.

Sincerely, Your Reviewer

P.S. Perfect for a cross-country plane trip.

P.P.S. Sid gets back at everyone in the end, of course. How? He writes letters.

P.P.S. Reading Kun's well-received *The Locklear Letters*, from 2005, where Straw first surfaces, is recommended, but not required.

LISA ROMEO (Summer 2012)

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