



## Lala Pettibone's Act Two

**Heidi Mastrogiovanni**

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*This comical take on a woman's second coming-of-age is breezy and whimsical.*

Heidi Mastrogiovanni demonstrates that even middle-age adults can come of age in the hilarious and uplifting *Lala Pettibone's Act Two*. Its whimsical protagonist proves that everyone gets second chances to live the life they desire, no matter how old they are.

Poor Lala Pettibone struggles to put her life in order. After losing her beloved husband, she spent years adrift and purposeless. Fate appears to have other plans, however, as she discovers that her latest crush has a stunning girlfriend and her upscale New York City apartment proves to be a health hazard. To cope with these unexpected events, she travels to California to stay with an old family friend, reasoning that perhaps the change in scenery will inject some much-needed direction into her life. Lala must do some soul-searching and self-reflection, which is easier said than done.

Everyone can use a second coming-of-age, as Lala's misadventures so aptly illustrate. With minimal navel-gazing, the novel proceeds at a quick pace that never fails to entertain. While some of Lala's encounters may seem too coincidental or convenient to be believable, they add to the escapist approach of the narrative. Mastrogiovanni's inclusion of sly observations and snappy quips further supports this execution.

Lala faces an unrelenting string of mishaps and personal catastrophes with refreshing irreverence. Her ability to navigate life's unexpected turns paints an endearing picture that you cannot help but cheer on. While at times cringeworthy, her story nevertheless proves that even disasters can be salvaged with fortitude and determination. After all of Lala's various trials and travails, the novel's satisfactory conclusion feels well-earned and inevitable.

*Lala Pettibone's Act Two* provides a breezy, enjoyable read full of clever humor and whimsical situations. Despite the comical take, Lala's journey of self-discovery serves as effective inspiration for people seeking to get themselves out of a rut.

VERNIEDA VERGARA (March/April 2017)

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