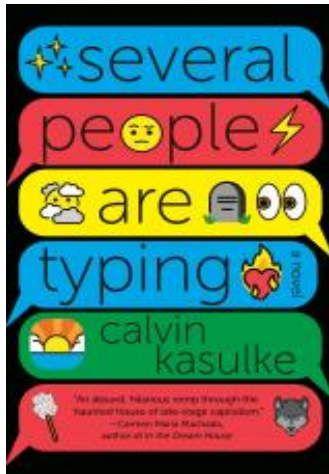


Several People Are Typing

by Calvin Kasulke



About the Book

A work-from-home comedy where WFH meets WTF.

Told entirely through clever and captivating Slack messages, this irresistible, relatable satire of both virtual work and contemporary life is "The Office" for a new world.

Gerald, a mid-level employee of a New York-based public relations firm, has been uploaded into the company's internal Slack channels --- at least his consciousness has. His colleagues assume it's an elaborate gag to exploit the new work-from-home policy, but now that Gerald's productivity is through the roof, his bosses are only too happy to let him work from...wherever he says he is.

Faced with the looming abyss of a disembodied life online, Gerald enlists his co-worker Pradeep to help him escape and to find out what happened to his body. But the longer Gerald stays in the void, the more alluring and absurd his reality becomes.

Meanwhile, Gerald's colleagues have PR catastrophes of their own to handle in the real world. Their biggest client, a high-end dog food company, is in the midst of recalling a bad batch of food that's allegedly poisoning Pomeranians nationwide. And their CEO suspects someone is sabotaging his office furniture. And if Gerald gets to work from home all the time, why can't everyone? Is true love possible between two people, when one is just a line of text in an app? And what in the hell does the :dusty-stick: emoji mean?

In a time when office paranoia and politics have followed us home, Calvin Kasulke is here to capture the surprising, absurd and fully relatable factors attacking our collective sanity and give us hope that we can still find a human connection.

Discussion Guide

1. Discuss the pros and cons of having a body. Can you relate to the times when Gerald enjoys having a separate consciousness? Have you ever felt disconnected from your own body?
2. The novel is written entirely in Slack messages. How did this unique format affect your reading experience? Have you read other untraditional works (epistolary novels, novels written in text messages or emails, etc.)? If so, how did this experience compare?
3. Despite none of the novel taking place in the physical world, there are reoccurring themes that point to sensory details, including light, darkness and dust. Discuss how these motifs allow you to "see" the environment through Slack messages and how experiencing something like a sunset through a screen differs from experiencing it in the physical world.
4. How does Slackbot evolve throughout the novel? Do you see Slackbot as a villain?
5. What do you think was happening to Lydia? Why is Rob the last person who remembers her?
6. Discuss the progression of Gerald and Pradeep's relationship. Did you predict that they would become a couple?
7. How do the characters in the novel perform differently in the different Slack channels, particularly in the #gents-only channel? Do you think they would have the same conversations face-to-face?
8. Emojis and gifs play a big part in the characters' conversations. Discuss the meanings of the various emojis and how they shift as the book goes on. What does our preference to speak through images instead of words say about society and our ability to communicate?
9. Throughout the novel, the characters are reminded that none of their Slack messages are actually private. Do you expect your messages and internet use will be monitored at work? How does working remotely impact those expectations/boundaries? How would you feel if someone else read all your DMs?
10. Discuss your own experiences working from home. Do you prefer working remotely or being in the office? Why?

Author Bio

Calvin Kasulke is a writer based in Brooklyn, New York. A Lambda Literary Fellow, his writing and reporting have been featured in *VICE*, *BuzzFeed* and *Electric Literature*. *SEVERAL PEOPLE ARE TYPING* is his first book.

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