



Hush Hush

Steven Barthelme

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If you're up \$16,000 at the casino and missing dinner with the woman you love, how do you find the strength to drive away? If you give up your career and your beautiful wife and find yourself drinking vodka and fixing cars for a living, is that necessarily a step down? In *Hush Hush*, Steven Barthelme gives us a simultaneously twisted, heartbreaking, and hilarious account of learning to quit when you're ahead.

The collection, which includes the Pushcart Prize-winning "Claire," exposes the surprising dignity in lying on your belly in the pouring rain, in ringing your ex-girlfriend's doorbell at 4 A.M., in sleeping with your dead wife's best friend. Co-author with his brother Frederick of the brilliant and devastating casino memoir, *Double Down: Reflections on Gambling and Loss*, Steven Barthelme seems to cast an eye at his own history and the characters he's known. These are men and women who are down --- but stirringly, not quite out. An unmissable, arresting book from one of the most seminal short story writers of the last twenty years.

Hush Hush Details

Date : Published October 23rd 2012 by Melville House (first published January 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9781612191591

Author : Steven Barthelme

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From Reader Review Hush Hush for online ebook

beentsy says

Wonderful collection of short stories. A few of them seem to be saying that the cats might just be the answer to everything that ails us. This seems like a pretty good idea to me.

Akeiisa says

A collection of short stories mostly about people down on their luck, who haven't given up on life (yet). While most of the stories are humorous in one way or another and all are well-written, a few were hard to read (Hush Hush) and at a certain they started to feel repetitive.

Mikhael Tarigan says

It's about family, relationship, cats, and death. But mostly cats.

Annette Boehm says

I really enjoyed this book. I think it would make a great travel companion. Here's why:

- The stories are short. Really short. As in, you can finish one on the bus / subway.
- The stories draw you in right away.
- The characters are memorable and interesting.
- Yes, as others have noted, there are cats. But they're not cute.

For a more in-depth discussion of the book and some of its very cool characters, you can visit my blog right here: <https://outsideofacat.wordpress.com/2015/05/03/hush-hush-by-steven-barthelme/>

Highly recommended.

Aaron says

A lot of stories about sad men, the cats the only like begrudgingly, and the women routinely disappoint. If you're into that kind of thing, this is the short story collection for you.

CK Malone says

Quick, light read, though if you've ever read anything by Steven's brother Donald Barthelme you already know the writing style (tone-wise it feels more related to Raymond Carver than Donald). There are 20 efficiently written stories that feel like you're observing lonesome people who travel late at night down winding interstates trying to figure themselves out. There are a pair of longer stories, Claire and Hush Hush that I think work more effectively than the shorter 2 to 3 page stuff. Finally, The whole thing's bookended by stories about child geniuses.

Dan says

First!
Good book.

Elizabeth Hegwood says

Steve was my teacher. I love him, I love his stories. I have to admit that the title story is hard to swallow, but affecting all the same. The writing in all of these is beautiful, and the empathy will break your heart.

Daryl says

It was fine. Some nice observations, occasionally a poignant moment. He often does the thing lots of writers do where they leave an ending sort of unraveled or ambiguous and make you put together what it means. Sometimes this can be neat, but more often than not, it just feels like the author's using a gimmick or didn't quite know how to tie the story up. With Barthelme (as in most cases), it tends to feel like the latter.

I got the book by accident, picking it up from the publisher's table at a conference after mistakingly thinking I was getting something by his brother Donald Barthelme. I liked it well enough but didn't generally find it inspiring and probably wouldn't seek this Barthelme out in particular in the future. I'll read him with interest if I run across him in a magazine, though.
