

TEXT ADVENTURE

*'HELLO,
CRUEL
WORLD'*

stanley lieber

1

Terp was on the line with Richard Hair. Could not understand the words coming out of his mouth.

"Speak English fresh, all right?"

Nothing. Richard continued to babble, aimlessly.

Terp's patience was nearing its end.

"This sentence is a lie," Richard finally claimed.

"Can't argue with you there, Rich."

2

More debugging. Well, as near as one could come to debugging with Richard on the line. Terp realized he had skipped a few steps, so he doubled back to start over from the beginning.

"First, state your assumptions," instructed Terp.

"Wait, is that even possible?" asked Richard. "What is that even supposed to mean?"

The manual held no answer for his question.

Terp muted his headset and poked his head above his cubicle wall, scanning the room for a co-worker.

Stranded, he sunk slowly back into his seat.

3

Things were not going well. Terp considered the attempted bug report a wash.

"I just don't think I can help you."

Richard figured he was no worse off than he had been when the call had started.

"Oh, Hell, that's okay, it's just nice to hear your voice. I suppose I can just use my other machine."

Terp wondered how many machines Richard had stockpiled in his apartment. Could the number possibly prove sufficient for whatever it was he was trying to do?

And what was Richard even trying to do with his machines?

Terp had never considered the tone of his voice as a source of comfort.

4

Shift finally over, Terp shed his gear and, exasperated, walk/stumbled the set of blocks back to his private entrance to the basement.

Door wouldn't budge.

This had never happened before.

Terp sat himself down in the alley and fumbled with his leaf, trying to call up the contact information for technical support.

Promptly fell asleep.

NOTES

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