



# Transmission

By Hari Kunzru

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In **Transmission**, award-winning writer Hari Kunzru takes an ultra-contemporary turn with the story of an Indian computer programmer whose luxurious fantasies about life in America are shaken when he accepts a California job offer.

Lonely and naïve, Arjun spends his days as a lowly assistant virus- tester, pining away for his free-spirited colleague Christine. Arjun gets laid off like so many of his Silicon Valley peers, and in an act of desperation to keep his job, he releases a mischievous but destructive virus around the globe that has major unintended consequences. As world order unravels, so does Arjun's sanity, in a rollicking cataclysm that reaches Bollywood and, not so coincidentally, the glamorous star of Arjun's favorite Indian movie.

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## Transmission By Hari Kunzru Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The e-mail says "Hi, I saw this and thought of you. Check it out." When the attachment, *Leela.exe*, is opened, a radiant image of 21-year-old Bollywood starlet Leela Zahir dances on the screen. Meanwhile, behind the scenes in the guts of the computer, a nasty virus takes root. Arjun Mehta, the timid, unlucky antihero of Kunzru's newest witty and wicked creation (after *The Impressionist*), released the virus in a desperate attempt to regain his job at a global securities company. Instead, his creation ends up causing billions of dollars in damages and disrupting the lives of young British entrepreneur Guy Swift, his glamorous girlfriend Gabriella and the actual starlet, Leela Zahir. It's often the kiss of death to have an author narrate his or her own audiobook—not so in Kunzru's case. His reading is strong, yet subtle. Although he does not give each of his complex characters their own identifiable voice (except when a character hails from a different country), he makes up for that fact with his dramatic prowess. Each line of dialogue is not read so much as spoken, with all the inflection and emotional impact that a talented actor would convey. This is a thrilling audio experience and an intelligent look at contemporary culture gone awry. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—Arjun Mehta, computer programmer and extreme Bollywood fan, dreams of a different life than his native India offers him. It seems like magic when a placement service in the U.S. offers to fly him to the states and help him find a job. After several weeks in limbo, he takes a position with a software developer specializing in virus protection. He befriends Chris, a heavily tattooed, bisexual rock-and-roll chick who takes pity on him. She exposes clueless Arjun to pieces of U.S. culture that challenge him in ways that are both humorous and thought-provoking. After a sexual interlude that ends his friendship with her, Arjun finds himself on a list of employees to be laid off. In desperation, he creates a computer virus around the image of a popular Bollywood star and unleashes it on the Internet. He plans to present a solution for it, making money for his company, saving his job, and turning himself into a hero. But, of course, things go awry as the virus takes on a life of its own. Kunzru's details of the technology are thrilling and accessible, bringing to mind William Gibson's classic cyberpunk novel *Neuromancer* (Ace, 1984). The point of view switches to other characters to show the effects of the virus on a more personal level. Ultimately, this is a mainstream-style novel with strong characters and situations that has just enough science-fiction elements to satisfy readers of both genres.—*Matthew L. Moffett, Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale*  
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From [The New Yorker](#)

When Indian programming whiz Arjun Mehta's dreams of success in America are imperilled by the collapse of the Internet bubble, he unleashes a virus on the world's computers, wreaking havoc on a scale surpassing even his own expectations. Named after a Bollywood star, the Leela virus halts trains, crashes power grids, and brings international commerce to a halt. Caught up in the chaos is Guy Swift, a smug star of the new economy working to keep his London branding agency afloat. Kunzru flits dexterously between Guy's bullish hubris and Arjun's desperate toils, creating a sharp snapshot of the heady time when everyone was "surfing the wave of innovation" in a seemingly boundless boom. The insistent trendiness of the novel's preoccupations risks becoming tiresome, but Kunzru's engagingly wired prose and agile plotting sweep all before them, as the characters career toward ruin.

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