



The Poor Farm Experiment III
The Poor Farm
Manawa, WI, USA
2011

The Document by Diego Leclery

CHARACTERS:

PLAIN TEXT: Has pen.
Plain text is a wanderer and curious

BOLD TEXT: Has no pen.
Bold text is a completely different character in every scene

Each scene must be performed in a different room, or location, of the Poor Farm, indoor or out.

PERSON IN BOLD: HAS NO PEN
PERSON IN PLAIN: HAS PEN

Excuse me!

What is that you're looking at?

I wonder if maybe you can help me with this thing.

What's that you're looking at?

I don't understand what it's saying.

It's a map, genius, like mine.

You have one?

his thing, right here, it's a map. I try to act like it's something less important, but I'm kind of lost around here.

Shit. OK. Well. Does yours look like this?

Yes, I'm sure it's the same exact map. What are you looking for? I see here there's a room nearby. Would you mind going in there with me?

Where are you going?

I'm a drifter. But I come from Dallas. I was in Missouri recently. I'm going through to Alaska, eventually. I have a wife, kids.

You read this.

Well, I actually made it up though. I mean, I'm the one who wrote it down here. As of today. I go around talking like this.

I'm a drifter. But I come from Dallas. Mine says the same thing, more or less. Funny.

And then?

I don't know yet. Hey, do you know what this symbol here is? Can you pronounce it? Is this the female sex symbol, like, sideways?



No, I'm looking at my document I don't see it here. Mine has this quirky diagram of a room. It has an arrow, look. So what does yours say next?

I don't think that's an arrow. I see it as a pine tree, or a cedar.

Jerk. You joke but you have no idea how "this thing" works. It's a stage direction pointing towards the house.

So if you're really lost, how do you know it means this house?

Look here, I have a list. I have a pen. I've tried a lot of other houses, it's a process of elimination. I never go back to the same house twice. But I look at every room. This document tells me to do that and so I do it, because I agreed to do it. Nothing else to it. You did too, but it's on a different page. You find out and you are amazed, I'm sure it's the same document as mine. Anyway, keep up the chatter, see where it gets you. Are you feeling these mosquitos?

Yes. Actually, this document has been pretty useful at keeping them away.

Oh, I never thought of that. Let's go in.

There are mosquitos inside too. How do I know? I don't know, it seems obvious. So you have children? How many?

Let me see. 3. Or maybe 8. It's hard to tell.

Three makes more sense, you don't look old enough to have eight children.

You're just reading that.

No, I actually mean it, though.

You're reading that too. Listen, it's OK, I know what it's like.

This is fun now, for the first time. I can tell that someone is having fun here.

Not me, I'm getting eaten alive. So my husband one day tells me he wants me to make more money—

Hold on, you're not supposed to say that, I am.

Let's go inside.

No.

I am going inside.

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Show me your document. Hmm. Looking at my document, it looks as though you're not where you're supposed to be.

Let me take a look. No, sir, if you will excuse me: this is the same room, in the same town, at the same time. You are the same guard. Look at me closely.

I'm sorry sir, I am looking at my document and I don't see anything here that mentions you. How dare you speak to me like that anyway, don't you know I'm the law? I'm here to serve your interests? I'm a cop, man.

I know. I mean, it tells me right here, third page, fourth paragraph: talk to the cop, show your document. The cop will be a dick but will let you through.

It does not say that, sir, you are lying. That is a crime.

I'm reading it right now.

Sir, I know what your document says, I've seen a lot like them. It says the cop will "resist" but let you through. So go ahead.

Thanks.

I mean, stay a minute if you want. Let me tell you a story for you to take on your journey.

Journey? No thanks.

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Oh, so there's a person in every room of this house.

So far.

So what you're saying is there's a room where I'm eventually alone.

Yes? Heck, I don't know. It just says here: "YES."

So, is it going to be fun? I mean, is this room fun? I don't see anything here that would indicate—

Fun? I'm not sure. Let me check. It's not very fun for me. I'm not sure.

Well, so far, so good I think.

Huh? Yeah, I guess I feel pretty good too, I never thought of that.

Not part of the Q&A?

Q&A?

This chit chat, this scripted thing we do.

You're bored, move on. It's OK, I can go back to my reading.

No, what are you reading?

Nothing. It's about a fly and a princess, but it's a "contemporary" fairy tale, so the princess is the... head cheerleader. There's a picture here, it's funny, you kind of look like the fly character.

Ohhhhhhh, is that what that picture is? I didn't understand that. Now I get it. It must mean I'm up to that part of this document where I understand this drawing of the fly. It's kind of racist, don't you think?

I think the nose is very uneven, the way it's treated.

Yeah.

So it says here you're from Alabama?

It does. On mine, too: Alabama.

Me? No. You? No. Who?

No, me, I guess.

That was kind of like Q&A, don't you think?

Listen, it could be read as fun, if you read it—here, let me see—if you read it differently. I could still be having fun if we read this differently.

"I was enjoying it, 'til the whole thing became too Q&A."

I'm sorry. That was my choice of words.

It wasn't. It's written in this room. See, there.

Oh. I think I have an arrow pointing to that, I think they are in the same font.

There is a list of fonts in here. Do you want me to check?

Nah. I don't think it means anything.

The Dalai Lama? Wait, should I be writing this stuff down? I have a pen.

"An Inheritance of Despair"

I have to confess to a problem.

"The Architect of Tomorrow's Dreams"

This isn't my paper. I took this paper from the other person. That's who's supposed to be here, not me.

"Every Man For His Business"

Ugh. This one looks dull.

"Where 'The Wall' Never Fell"

Can I take your document and see if I can use it in the next room or something? I should be doing more than just reading from this thing and talking to people.

Don't touch me.

Did you say "Can't Touch This?" Or...

I'm asking you to please not interrupt my prayer.

You expect me to see the humor in that?

If it was funny I would be laughing, so would everyone else.

They should have better signage?

So you're looking for something?

Not really. I mean, says right here: wife, kids, a place where I'm going, a way of getting there. This document, you, this house. I will sleep here tonight. There's not much for me to look for.

So you need an empty room?

No.

Let me see here: there's me, my room. Then, that room, there's that guy, the other room is for the other one. There IS one empty room, but YOU'RE not really supposed to be spending the night there. It looks like... you know who you should ask? Let me see here.

I'm sorry, did I offend you by saying that? "You people"? I just don't know how to piece everything together yet. I guess I want there to be... I wish... look at all this space, look at how much I might have to get through. Can I find an excuse to go to the basement? Will one of you send me to the basement? Are there scary parts? Is this the scary part, where I get no answer and you just stand there as if I'm crazy? Is it what I said about "weird gatekeepers"? Or that I think this thing is about outsmarting you? What made you shut up? Should I just go to the next room? That thing about the basement is true, I've seen houses like this before. What does it say here? You're supposed to say that next line, you're supposed to, it says right here, "interrupt me in mid-sentence." "Interrupt me mid-sentence," I'm reading it right here. Right here. You're saying, "Interrupt."

No, it doesn't say that.

Ha ha tricked you. No, please, talk to me. Or, tell me that I've annoyed you enough so that I can move on. Maybe I don't have to wait for you to let me move on, maybe I can just move on. I will read what it says here, maybe this will put you to sleep or something. "The man or woman who lives next door is the person you are looking for." Ha, didn't see that one coming! "You are not looking for anyone though, and you are not looking for yourself either. So just go to the next room. Why? Because I'm telling you to, because it says right here. This is the point of this exercise. You read this and everything is explained. Not in some kind of 'meaning of life' kind of way. Small potatoes. This is a script, you know the point of a script. Wait, what was it you were looking for?" Gosh this is terrible, worse than the fucking "Alchemist."

I loved that book. Still do.

Paulo Coelho? Oh man, you are so the person writing this script. This is the same shtick: a journey, with signs... it's the same thing... I have to do all the work to give it some kind of meaning that actually, oh, I'm sick of this.

Reading?

Yes. You too?

No, I like reading. Eyes fixed to a page, looking at it, looking away from it, looking through it, at it, away from it.

Yuck. I don't mind reading, I guess. I mind having to read. I mind reading as a thing.

There's something different looking down from looking out.

It's next door, isn't it?

The end?

