

TEXT ADVENTURE

*'IT'S A
DIFFERENT
WORLD'*

stanley lieber

Paris Mold crawled out of the ocean, across California and Nevada.

Headed for New York.

Progress was slow, but his technique had proven effective, down through the centuries. Each iteration seemed easier, shorter than the last. He noticed himself noticing the fact.

Presently, comms came back online.

"Depressed."

It was Lunsford.

"Can't talk now. Crawling."

Paris continued to crawl.

"Feel like killing myself."

Lunsford sounded depressed. He'd just said as much. However, Lunsford's proposal didn't follow.

Patience.

"Did you go to class today?"

"No."

"Speak with anyone else?"

"No."

"What happened to your guests?"

"Don't know."

"Okay. Just keep going."

"Can't."

Paris switched off, lowered his face back into the dust.

Overhead photography.

2

Dwayne Wayne yanked the visor off of his face and inspected its inner surfaces from a greater distance. There were no moving parts. By what principle, then, could this device possibly function? Dwayne Wayne shrugged. He replaced the visor to his face, flipped up each individual UV lens, then proceeded to his office, unimpeded by technological considerations.

Door refused to budge.

Dwayne Wayne kicked the door open with his Reebok Pump.

Something had changed.

In the hours, days since he'd last presided over a class, since he'd last been present on campus, someone had altered the settings of his office equipment. Unconscionable. He thought to contact security, but after some rudimentary investigation he concluded that the settings were in fact precisely as

he'd left them.

In fact, he'd simply locked himself out.

Then, no. Something else was different. Something was wrong out of proportion to his usual absentmindedness. Hillman itself had changed.

Placcard on his desk:

Deus Nondum Te Confecit

had been replaced with:

Et Facta Est Lux

What?

Research.

So, Hillman into Morehouse. But why? And why had he suddenly never heard of Hillman?

Dwayne Wayne spent the rest of the day pursuing leads, forming conclusions. Starting the whole process over again when some new fact didn't fit his leading theory.

Routine background check indicated that his own credentials from the university were fraudulent. He did not recall making any false claims about his education, but the evidence was irrefutable, staring him in the face. Problem: the terms of his employment were settled based upon the fact that he had held a degree from a leading university.

Dwayne Wayne pulled on his goatee as he pondered the ramifications.

3

Paris Mold crawled into New York and set himself up in a cheap LES loft. First month's rent and security deposit. Loyalty oath. No pets. But: balcony. Gradually, he weighed the pros and cons.

It would do.

Presently, Paris assembled his gun.

Only thing left was to wait. Hours, days, weeks, months, years—it didn't matter. Target would eventually present itself.

Paris settled himself into the floor.

This was the job.

4

Dwayne Wayne purchased his ticket for New York and tried to calm himself down.

"I've been at this for a quarter of a decade," he thought to himself.

Time served seemed to hold no sway. Facts changed before his eyes and his memories of prior arrangements were invalid, meaningless.

Dwayne Wayne was a professor of history.

"This job," he thought.

He realized this concluded his summary.

5

Albert Lunsford loaded up the last of his boxes. Everyone was leaving, vacating the basement. He was worried about his books.

Movers were stuck.

In fact, there had been an excess of books. Lunsford considered that nobody read anymore. His inventory could only be liquidated at a loss.

Again, he dialed Paris Mold.



massivefictions.com