

September 29

Dear Stranger:

Congratulations!

Like Alice when she fell down her rabbit hole, you have decided to follow the instructions written upon a random item and have thus launched yourself upon an Adventure!

But don't worry. I can almost 100% guarantee that the results of reading a letter marked 'Read Me' will be far less confusing and trippy than eating a cookie marked 'Eat Me.' Nothing can be entirely guaranteed in this life, of course, but I promise that should you start to feel as if you've changed several times since this morning, and if that feeling unsettles you, you may inform me that I am nothing more than a pack of cards, and our time together can come to an end. And now that I've gotten carried away with the Alice in Wonderland metaphor, I suppose I should introduce myself.

My name is Zoe, dear stranger, and this is your official invitation to participate in a social experiment.

Two choices lie before you. If you want nothing more to do with me and my strangeness, you may fold this letter up and return it to the location whence you found it, its remaining pages unread. However, if your curiosity has been piqued, you may continue onto page 2, and I will see you there!

Still with me? Excellent.

As I said, you are a potential participant in a Social Experiment. Allow me to provide some details for you: I am seventeen, a junior in high school, and, most relevantly, a student in Mr. Zephran's Sociology class. He has instructed the 22 of us to develop and implement a Social Experiment.

Now, most of my classmates are going to stand backwards in elevators or something else we've discussed in class, and my friend Jimmy will probably organize a flash mob a la Improv Everywhere, but I have this problem with making people uncomfortable. I will do almost anything in my power to help alleviate any discomfort being suffered by any person in my general vicinity. Do you see the problem? The majority of social experiments require making people uncomfortable.

So, I have developed an experiment that avoids that, or at least avoids my proximity to it.

(But seriously. If you're uncomfortable, please stop reading. I do honestly mean that.)

In seven strategic locations around the city of San Diego, I have placed these letters for strangers to find. What happens next is up to you. You can take up the challenge, or you can not. If you would like to continue with the experiment, turn to page 3. If not, turn to page 4. In either case, thank you very much for your time, and please, have a fabulous day.

Zoe Ballard

Taking up the challenge? I'm so excited! Or, just reading to hear the challenge before you make up your mind? Fair enough. That makes a lot of sense, dear stranger. I like the way you think.

The Challenge:

Write me a letter. My address is on the back of this page. Don't get excited – it's a P.O. Box I took out for this purpose. I'm trusting you, stranger, but not that much.

But my social experiment is as simple as that. Write a letter to a stranger. You know my name, my age, that I live in San Diego, and who my Sociology teacher is. But other than that, I am a stranger. Are you willing to write a letter to a stranger? If so, answer the questions below. If not, see you on Page 4.

1. What is your name?
2. What is your quest?
3. Were you expecting this question to be about the airspeed velocity of pigeons?
4. Describe your best friend in ten words.
5. When was the last time you read your horoscope?
6. What is your favorite ice cream topping?
7. Do you consider yourself to be an introvert or an extrovert?
8. Have you ever participated in or observed a social experiment before?
9. Where did you find this letter?
10. Do you want me to reply?

I look forward to hearing from you!

You have chosen not to participate in the challenge. I understand, honestly, I do. I thank you sincerely for reading this far, and I have just one small favor to ask before you go, a short and simple task that will help me immensely with my assignment. Please take one of the slips of paper in this envelope, fill in the blanks of the sentence printed on it, put the slip back in the envelope, and go about your beautiful and happy life, dear stranger!

I will remove the envelope from this location in two weeks' time, should you change your mind.

Zoe

Hey, Zoe. You seem _____.

Your letter made me _____

because _____.

But I'm choosing to end our correspondence here because
_____.

I wish you and your project nothing but
_____!

Sincerely,

Age:

PS -