

Never Let it Happen Again

By artface31

Submitted: June 4, 2006

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When Alex finds a box of old letters from his grandfather in the attic of their house, he begins to read them not realizing they will change the way he looks at the world forever.

As World War II spreads across Europe, a small family in Germany is

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<http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/artface31/34533/Never-Let-it-Happen-Again>

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1 - Prologue

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"Communism!" he shouted. The teenagers surrounding him laughed. The teacher shook his head and turned to head towards the front of the room once more.

"No, Alex. Communism did not lead the Americans and British into Normandy on D-day," the teacher mumbled. Alex relaxed into his seat.

"My bad," Alex said. The man glanced back at him with narrowed eyes. "I mean; sorry, Mr. Brown." Mr. Brown sighed.

"Alex, is there nothing I can do to keep you awake in my class?" the man asked. Alex thought for a moment.

"You can stop being such a liberal," he replied.

"Your mouth is getting you nowhere, kid," Mr. Brown shot. "It's 8th period. I understand you're antsy to get out of here and home. But, that doesn't mean I won't fail you if you continue to fall asleep in my class." Alex rolled his eyes.

"What good is this going to do me? I mean, knowing about World War II and all?" he asked. Mr. Brown practically fainted.

"Have I taught you nothing in this course all year?" he gasped.

"Is that a rhetorical question?" Alex replied.

"Do you want it to be?"

"Now, that was a rhetorical question," Alex stated. Mr. Brown sat down in his chair in front of the room. "Alexander. Knowing and understanding the horrors of World War II is the first step to preventing it from ever happening again," the man said.

"It's not like I'm gonna start another war like Hitler did," Alex argued.

"You'd be surprised who'd start a war nowadays," Mr. Brown said.

"President Bush," someone coughed. The teenagers laughed.

"Not what I was going to say," Mr. Brown sighed. "Do any of you understand why I want you to learn this so badly?"

"To...make us better individuals?" someone asked.

"Partly, thank-you, Katie," Mr. Brown said. Everyone looked to the large girl sitting in the back of the class.

"Mr. Brown?" a girl asked, raising her hand high in the air.

"Yes, Veronica?" Mr. Brown asked eagerly. The girl smirked.

"Can I go to the bathroom?" she cackled. The man at the front of the room sighed and nodded his head.

"Write a pass..." he mumbled.

"She goes every day in this class," one of the boys whispered.

"Shut-up, James," the girl he was talking to said. "She goes to get outta class. We all know that."

"Yeah, Robin. All of us besides Mr. Brown," James replied.

"I want you to understand the mistakes people made so something like World War II is never repeated. And if there is a possibility, you people will recognize the signs and stop it from happening."

"I don't care..." Alex mumbled.

"You don't care?" Mr. Brown asked.

"Do you even know what people had to go through in that war?" a girl, Evelyn, asked from the front of the room.

"No; and I don't care," Alex replied.

"You don't know because you don't pay attention in class," another girl, Keri, spat. The boy turned to her.

"You pay attention just as little as I do," he replied.

"Oh, yeah?" Keri asked. "What's the day of Pearl Harbor?"

"Huh?" Alex raised an eyebrow.

"See?!" Keri smiled and threw an arm in the air. "Knew it!"

"I didn't know anyone in that war and I never will be in a war like that; so why the hell should I care?!" Alex complained.

"What's your last name, Alex?" Mr. Brown asked slowly, after a long pause. Alex fidgeted in his seat.

"Steinburg," he said.

"Steinburg. Is that...?"

"It's German. I'm not a Nazi," Alex said sharply.

"I never said you were." Mr. Brown smiled. "You might want to look into that name. It sounds familiar."

"What are you-?" Alex was interrupted when the bell for the end of the day rang.

"Tomorrow we watch a video of The Holocaust. Everyone be ready," Mr. Brown said before leaving the room.

Alex mumbled to himself as he walked home that afternoon. Kicking cans across the street, the hazel-eyed fifteen-year old kept his hands in his pockets and his eyes on the road in front of him.

"Stupid, no good, rotten, Mr. Brown. Dirty bastard thinks he can insult me," Alex cursed. He turned right at a house behind the woods on the empty street. Walking through the front door after crossing the lawn, Alex shouted to his family in the house. "Ma! I'm home!" he shouted. He proceeded to hop onto the couch and turn on the TV and start to watch Oprah.

The front door opened a half of an hour later, revealing a young boy of twelve. The boy had bright, blue eyes that smiled as he ran into the room where Alex was seated.

"Hey, Al!" he shouted. Alex freaked and switched the channel when he heard his little brother's loud voice.

"Holy-!" Alex yelled. "Don't fracking do that! You know not to disturb me when I'm watching..." He looked to his younger brother. "...sports interviews!"

"Uh-huh," the younger boy said, throwing his backpack on the ground and going to get a bag of Cheetos. "Sure."

"I was!"

"Yup."

"Say that again, Jay! I swear-"

"I only said yes. What's so wrong with that?" Jason asked, popping open the bag of food. Alex grumbled and threw down his controller.

"That's it!" he shouted, jumping off the couch. Jason widened his eyes and 'eeked' as he turned to run up the stairs. "Get back here, you coward!"

"I'm not a coward!"

“Then why are you running?!”

“You smell!”

The floor creaked as Alex tiptoed across the wooden planks in the attic. Jason held his breath and waited for his older brother to come in and pummel him with his fists.

“Jaaaaasooooon,” Alex cooed, drawing out the syllables. Jason only hid his face in his knees. “I’m not gonna hurt you,” the elder boy called out. The light leaked into the dusty room through a tiny hole in the wall that was a window. Jason coughed slightly when he felt dust in his throat. Alex heard this, and looked to where the sound came from. He smiled when he saw a small boy sitting in the corner of the room behind a large trunk. He slowly moved closer to his brother. “Oh my God!” Alex shouted. “It’s Jay’s Beatles record! I thought he lost this months ago!” Jason immediately stuck his head out from where he was, face all smiles and chestnut hair a wreck. As soon as he was out and in plain sight, the younger brother regretted his move and ‘eeked’ once more. But, Alex ran at him so he could no longer get away.

“You tricked me!” Jason shouted once Alex had him in a headlock.

“It’s your fault, Jay!”

“Why?”

“You’re the one who insulted my man ego!”

“You don’t even ha-”

“Don’t say it!” The two fought each other for a few minutes until Jay backed into the trunk he had hidden behind. The young boy stared at it for a moment until Alex snapped him out of it. “What’s with you?” the elder asked. Jason shook his head.

“What’s this?” he asked. “I’ve never seen it up here before.” Alex stared at the box for a while longer.

“It was Grandpa’s,” he said finally. “Remember when he died? We got all his old stuff, so Dad put it up here.” Jason ran a finger along the dusty edge slightly.

“Can we open it?” he asked.

“We don’t have a key,” Alex replied.

“Then why’d Grandpa give it to us?” Jay questioned.

“I think he lost the key a long time ago and just didn’t want to get rid of the trunk. It must be pretty important,” Alex said.

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“Sorry, Jay.” Alex shrugged.

“Can you pick it or something?” Jason asked. He looked at his older brother with extremely wide eyes. Alex sighed.

“I can try.”

“Did ‘ya get it yet?”

“No.”

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“It’s just a bunch of papers,” Jason complained.

“I think they’re letters,” Alex sifted through the sheets. Some of them were old photographs. “Hey...look at this one, Jay.” The younger boy turned his head to Al’s hands and smiled.

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"No it's not, Jay," Alex said, squinting his eyes at the photograph. "It looks like us, though."
"Then who are they?" Jason asked, staring at the picture of two boys standing beside each other and smiling.
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Remember when this all started? I think it was the day you and I went to Frank's and heard about the Reichstag being burnt down...remember?

EChP

1 - Prologue

Present Day

Deep, hazel eyes watched as the clock ticked. 'Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock.' The boy sighed, blowing long, tan hair out of his eyes as he let his face fall on the desk in front of him. The teacher paused from where he was and cleared his throat.

"Alex," the man said at the front of the room. The boy on the desk remained face-down. The teacher walked a bit more towards him. "Alex?" he asked. The boy remained in his position. "Alexander!" The boy jerked his head up with a gasp.

"Communism!" he shouted. The teenagers surrounding him laughed. The teacher shook his head and turned to head towards the front of the room once more.

"No, Alex. Communism did not lead the Americans and British into Normandy on D-day," the teacher mumbled. Alex relaxed into his seat.

"My bad," Alex said. The man glanced back at him with narrowed eyes. "I mean; sorry, Mr. Brown." Mr. Brown sighed.

"Alex, is there nothing I can do to keep you awake in my class?" the man asked. Alex thought for a moment.

"You can stop being such a liberal," he replied.

"Your mouth is getting you nowhere, kid," Mr. Brown shot. "It's 8th period. I understand you're antsy to get out of here and home. But, that doesn't mean I won't fail you if you continue to fall asleep in my class." Alex rolled his eyes.

"What good is this going to do me? I mean, knowing about World War II and all?" he asked. Mr. Brown practically fainted.

"Have I taught you nothing in this course all year?" he gasped.

"Is that a rhetorical question?" Alex replied.

"Do you want it to be?"

"Now, that was a rhetorical question," Alex stated. Mr. Brown sat down in his chair in front of the room. "Alexander. Knowing and understanding the horrors of World War II is the first step to preventing it from ever happening again," the man said.

"It's not like I'm gonna start another war like Hitler did," Alex argued.

"You'd be surprised who'd start a war nowadays," Mr. Brown said.

"President Bush," someone coughed. The teenagers laughed.

"Not what I was going to say," Mr. Brown sighed. "Do any of you understand why I want you to learn this so badly?"

"To...make us better individuals?" someone asked.

"Partly, thank-you, Gina," Mr. Brown said. Everyone looked to the large girl sitting in the back of the class.

"Mr. Brown?" a girl asked, raising her hand high in the air.

"Yes, Katie?" Mr. Brown asked eagerly. The girl smirked.

"Can I go to the bathroom?" she cackled. The man at the front of the room sighed and nodded his head.

"Write a pass..." he mumbled.

"She goes every day in this class," one of the boys whispered.

"Shut-up, Kevin," the girl he was talking to said. "She goes to get outta class. We all know that."

"Yeah, Lisa. All of us besides Mr. Brown," Kevin replied.

"I want you to understand the mistakes people made so something like World War II is never repeated. And if there is a possibility, you people will recognize the signs and stop it from happening."

"I don't care..." Alex mumbled.

"You don't care?" Mr. Brown asked.

"Do you even know what people had to go through in that war?" a girl, Danielle, asked from the front of the room.

"No; and I don't care," Alex replied.

"You don't know because you don't pay attention in class," another girl, Carey, spat. The boy turned to her.

"You pay attention just as little as I do," he replied.

"Oh, yeah?" Carey asked. "What's the day of Pearl Harbor?"

"Huh?" Alex raised an eyebrow.

"See?!" Carey smiled and threw an arm in the air. "Knew it!"

"I didn't know anyone in that war and I never will be in a war like that; so why the hell should I care?!" Alex complained.

"What's your last name, Alex?" Mr. Brown asked slowly, after a long pause. Alex fidgeted in his seat.

"Steinburg," he said.

"Steinburg. Is that...?"

"It's German. I'm not a Nazi," Alex said sharply.

"I never said you were." Mr. Brown smiled. "You might want to look into that name. It sounds familiar."

"What are you-?" Alex was interrupted when the bell for the end of the day rang.

"Tomorrow we watch a video of The Holocaust. Everyone be ready," Mr. Brown said before leaving the room.

Alex mumbled to himself as he walked home that afternoon. Kicking cans across the street, the hazel-eyed fifteen-year old kept his hands in his pockets and his eyes on the road in front of him.

"Stupid, no good, rotten, Mr. Brown. Dirty bastard thinks he can insult me," Alex cursed. He turned right at a house behind the woods on the empty street. Walking through the front door after crossing the lawn, Alex shouted to his family in the house. "Ma! I'm home!" he shouted. He proceeded to hop onto the couch and turn on the TV and start to watch Oprah.

The front door opened a half of an hour later, revealing a young boy of twelve. The boy had bright, blue eyes that smiled as he ran into the room where Alex was seated.

"Hey, Al!" he shouted. Alex freaked and switched the channel when he heard his little brother's loud voice.

"Holy-!" Alex yelled. "Don't fracking do that! You know not to disturb me when I'm watching..." He looked to his younger brother. "...sports interviews!"

"Uh-huh," the younger boy said, throwing his backpack on the ground and going to get a bag of Cheetos. "Sure."

"I was!"

"Yup."

"Say that again, Jay! I swear-"

"I only said yes. What's so wrong with that?" Jason asked, popping open the bag of food. Alex grumbled and threw down his controller.

"That's it!" he shouted, jumping off the couch. Jason widened his eyes and 'eeked' as he turned to run up the stairs. "Get back here, you coward!"

"I'm not a coward!"

“Then why are you running?!”

“You smell!”

The floor creaked as Alex tiptoed across the wooden planks in the attic. Jason held his breath and waited for his older brother to come in and pummel him with his fists.

“Jaaaaasooooon,” Alex cooed, drawing out the syllables. Jason only hid his face in his knees. “I’m not gonna hurt you,” the elder boy called out. The light leaked into the dusty room through a tiny hole in the wall that was a window. Jason coughed slightly when he felt dust in his throat. Alex heard this, and looked to where the sound came from. He smiled when he saw a small boy sitting in the corner of the room behind a large trunk. He slowly moved closer to his brother. “Oh my God!” Alex shouted. “It’s Jay’s Beatles record! I thought he lost this months ago!” Jason immediately stuck his head out from where he was, face all smiles and chestnut hair a wreck. As soon as he was out and in plain sight, the younger brother regretted his move and ‘eeked’ once more. But, Alex ran at him so he could no longer get away.

“You tricked me!” Jason shouted once Alex had him in a headlock.

“It’s your fault, Jay!”

“Why?”

“You’re the one who insulted my man ego!”

“You don’t even ha-”

“Don’t say it!” The two fought each other for a few minutes until Jay backed into the trunk he had hidden behind. The young boy stared at it for a moment until Alex snapped him out of it. “What’s with you?” the elder asked. Jason shook his head.

“What’s this?” he asked. “I’ve never seen it up here before.” Alex stared at the box for a while longer.

“It was Grandpa’s,” he said finally. “Remember when he died? We got all his old stuff, so Dad put it up here.” Jason ran a finger along the dusty edge slightly.

“Can we open it?” he asked.

“We don’t have a key,” Alex replied.

“Then why’d Grandpa give it to us?” Jay questioned.

“I think he lost the key a long time ago and just didn’t want to get rid of the trunk. It must be pretty important,” Alex said.

“I wanna open it!” Jay shouted.

“Sorry, Jay.” Alex shrugged.

“Can you pick it or something?” Jason asked. He looked at his older brother with extremely wide eyes. Alex sighed.

“I can try.”

“Did ‘ya get it yet?”

“No.”

“How about now?”

“No.”

“...Now?”

“N-! Oh wait; yeah I think I got it!” Alex shouted in happiness as he pulled open the top of the trunk. The two brothers looked inside.

“It’s just a bunch of papers,” Jason complained.

“I think they’re letters,” Alex sifted through the sheets. Some of them were old photographs. “Hey...look at this one, Jay.” The younger boy turned his head to Al’s hands and smiled.

“It’s you and me!” he shouted.

"No it's not, Jay," Alex said, squinting his eyes at the photograph. "It looks like us, though."
"Then who are they?" Jason asked, staring at the picture of two boys standing beside each other and smiling.
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