

Alvin Elam

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Alvin and Leslie are talking to Alvin's VA counselor. Alvin will not go to see the counselor so the counselor came out to their home.

Leslie: I am Alvin's brother I am a senior this year at Brooke High School. You may have read about me in the Free Lance Star. They say I am the best running back in years to make the team. But that's not what I want to talk about, Alvin is my older brother. In 2004 he was the quarterback and considered a high candidate for a good college scholarship. He did not go to college he joined the U. S. Army and was trained for work in the Special Ops unit. He had a perfect SAT score, made all A's and took a number of advanced placement and honors classes. He speaks German, Spanish and Arabic. He was deployed to Iraq three times. Six months ago he chose not to reenlist and was discharged. He says he wants to go to college on the GI Bill, but all he does is sit around the house and write in his laptop. He does occasionally eat supper with us. I try to talk with him, but he avoids me.

Alvin: I know the kid is talking to you about me, but I am okay. I need a bit of time to adjust.

Leslie: From my viewpoint he is getting worse.

Alvin: I will talk with him when I am ready. Just give me a little time.

Leslie: It's been six months and he just mopes around the house. I think he is getting worse. In his sleep he cries out for Jamil. We don't know who Jamil is.

Alvin: All she wanted to do was to create a girl's school. I did all I could to help and protect her. I should have been able to stop them.

Leslie: Man, what are you talking about?

Alvin: Jamil was a local lady with a dream of a school for girls. I helped her and worked with her to build a school and recruit teachers. The village pitched in and it was a great accomplishment.

Leslie: Where was this?

Alvin: You know where I was.

Leslie: What happened?

Alvin: I don't want to talk about it.

Leslie: Maybe I can help.

Alvin: I loved that woman. I would have married her if I could.

Leslie: Man, what are you talking about?

Alvin: We built the school and recruited the teachers. Then 186 girls showed up to enroll. Everything was peaches and cream. Jamil was headmistress. I sometimes worked nights with her to organize everything.

Leslie: Tell me more.

Alvin: I became very fond of Jamil, but we were just working partners. Now I think we should have been married. We were seen too often late at night together.

Leslie: Was she beautiful?

Alvin: She was the most beautiful woman in the world with the kindest heart.

Leslie: What happened to her?

Alvin: They came in the early evening and pulled her out of her house. They labeled her an adulteress and stoned her to death. Then they burned the school down. They told the villagers that if they started a school again they would burn the entire village.

Leslie: Where were you?

Alvin: One of the little girls came running for me, but it was too late.

Leslie: I'm sorry. Is that why you decided to leave the army?

Alvin: Yes, I want to learn more and to be able to fight these slobes by international law or to become a politician that can pass programs to stop them. I have come to think that might does not make right. We have to learn to stop this through non-violent means.

Leslie: But weren't you doing all you could to rebuild and improve these peoples world?

Alvin: I just hope there is a better way. I need to learn all I can to be able to negotiate and use the power of diplomacy.

Leslie: But Alvin all you are doing is sitting around and feeling sorry for yourself. If you are going to college you must apply for entrance.

Alvin: Yeh, you're right.

Leslie: Were you in love with Jamil?

Alvin: I never thought of it that way, but we spent a lot of time together and now that she is gone I believe I was in love with her and that after the war we might have been able to marry. I dream about her and think about her all the time.

Leslie: Where you ever in actual combat?

Alvin: Are you crazy we were always in danger of IEDs. There were some times when we were in a firefight, but no actual big battle if that is what you mean.

Leslie: Were any of your buddies killed?

Alvin: What do you think I have been talking about? I was there for three tours of duty certainly I lost some of my friends. War is not a fun thing. Some were killed and some were wounded and everyone's head was mixed up.

Leslie: What are you going to do now?

Alvin: I have to get my act together and apply for college.

Leslie: Maybe we can be in college together. I think I am going to Virginia Tech.

Alvin: We will see how it all turns out.