

**Liz:**

My big brother went on a mission. Went to Switzerland. Yeah. He was the good kid. I however was the black sheep - by the time I was thirteen, I refused to go to church, told my dad I didn't believe in God. Even had to move out of the house, went to live with my aunt and uncle in Boise until I graduated. But not my big brother - he was a good Mormon. He wrote me a letter a few months into his mission, he told me he was cold all the time. That he was cold all the time, and lonely, but he preferred being out there in Switzerland because he didn't want to come back and get married.

Dad had set it all up, pushed him into getting engaged to this girl from the church he barely knew. When he came back, he refused to go through with the wedding. Fell in love with someone else, started a whole new life. Until one day, when he went back to the church - I don't know what the hell they did to him that day, but it sure fucked him up. And after that he just started wasting away until he was just - gone.

That was my brother. Alan. My big brother who was crushed under the church that you think can save Charlie.

**Charlie:**

I think I owe you all an apology. I've been teaching you all to rewrite and rewrite and rewrite, to edit your thought and change them and make them clever, more precise, more objective. And I'm starting to realize that that's horseshit. I don't have any true reaction to these books because I've taught you to edit your reactions, to reshape them and reconfigure them over and over. And after all that, you don't even have a reaction at all. You just end up hating it.

How about this? Don't write about the book. Forget the assignment, forget the readings. Hell, forget everything you know about what makes a good essay, and just - write. Just sit down, and write me something. Just give me something honest. Okay?

**Ellie:**

You think I don't understand it? You're just like my idiot teachers. You think because I don't go nuts over some stupid little poem, it's because I'm too stupid to understand it.

Maybe I *do* understand it. Maybe I understand *exactly* what this poem is about, but I just don't care. Because it was written by some self-involved moron, and even though he thinks that his "metaphor for the self" is deep and shit, it doesn't mean anything because he's just some worthless nineteenth-century faggot. How about that?

## Elder Thomas:

He just...he didn't care. About anything. We'd go out every day, we'd try to talk to people, and no one would listen, and he *didn't even care*. I tried to talk to him about different sections of town we could go to, different ways to engage them, different ways to *help* these people...But you could tell, if we spent our whole mission there ministering and hadn't helped *one single person*, he wouldn't have cared. His faith was just -. He didn't need to earn it or prove it *at all*. And one day, we were out in this little farming community, and we weren't helping anyone, and he kept complaining about being hungry, and how hot it was out that day, and - I just lost it. I went nuts.

He told me his parents would sue me, that I'd go to jail. All I wanted to do was finish the mission, I wanted to see Mormonism help *one person*. So, I just got on a bus. I still have a few thousand dollars left in my checking account. I went to the church here in town a couple times, I found this nametag in the common room.