

THE WORLD'S GREATEST

By Emmalisa Horlacher

INT. CAR - DAY

ALEX

Yellow car!

Alex punches Franklin in the arm. Alex and Franklin are in the back seat of the car while Stephen sits up front with dad. Stephen is playing a game on the phone. Franklin spots a car.

FRANKLIN

Yellow-

ALEX

Yellow car!

Alex smacks Franklin in the arm again.

ALEX

I'm too fast for you! I'm lighting!

DAD

He floats like a butterfly, stings
like bee!

The boys in the car all look at dad. They are really confused and concerned.

DAD

What?

FRANKLIN

Who thinks butterflies and bees are
cool. That's super lame.

DAD

That's a quote from Muhammad Ali.
Don't you boys know who that is?

The boys all shake their heads no.

DAD

What kind of education have you boys
been getting? Muhammad Ali, the boxer,
there wasn't anybody like him not on
this earth. He used to say, "I am the
greatest."

ALEX

I can do that no peezy. Can't you'all see! I am the greatest!

Stephen and Franklin laugh. Dad pulls over.

DAD

Now, there's a difference between saying you're the best and being the best. Muhammad Ali WAS the best.

FRANKLIN

Oh yah? What made him so great.

DAD

Ain't nobody could stop him! He was lighting on his feet, he was power in his punches. That man, Stephen, pull up some videos about Muhammad Ali.

TRANSITION TO:

Dad, Alex, Franklin and Stephen are all gathered around the phone screen.

INSERT - A CLOSE UP OF THE PHONE'S SCREEN

Show a close up of the phone screen. The phone shows quick flashes of Muhammad's fights where he knocks out his opponents.

BACK TO SCENE

The boys look amazed and impressed.

INSERT - A CLOSE UP OF THE PHONE'S SCREEN

The phone screen shows Muhammad's face. It shows flashes of him giving different quotes.

MUHAMMAD ALI

He's too ugly to be the world champion! The world Champion needs to be pretty like me!

Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.

I shook up the world!
Ain't nobody better than me! I am the

greatest!

BACK TO SCENE

FRANKLIN

He really was the greatest.

ALEX

Can I be like that?

STEPHEN

You? You're too ugly to be the world champion. The champ needs to be pretty like me!

Stephen pushes Alex.

ALEX

Oh yah? I shook up the world!

Alex pushes Stephen back.

DAD

Get in your seats boys, we need to make it to your mom's before she starts complaining that we're late.

The boys get in their seats and continue driving.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF MOM'S APARTMENT - DAY

DAD

We're here.

The boys open the car doors and race out while dad gets the luggage.

ALEX

Hey mom! I am the greatest!

MOM

Yes you are.

ALEX

Ain't nobody faster than me.

Alex, Franklin and Stephen all start to play box.

STEPHEN

Float like a butterfly sting like a bee!

FRANKLIN

You can't touch me I'm so pretty!

Stephen laughs at that and Alex gets a hit on Stephen. Alex pumps his fists in victory.

ALEX

I am the king of the world!

STEPHEN

Let's see how you do in round two!

Stephen is about to tackle Alex but mom gets in between them.

MOM

And what's all this?

Alex gives his mom a big, tackle hug.

ALEX

Muhammad Ali! He's the greatest boxer of all time! Came from a lot of nothing and grew to be a big lot of something! We're all going to be just like him, isn't that right!

STEPHEN

Bet your teeth it is!

FRANKLIN

Ain't nobody going to be better than us.

MOM

Is that so.

Mom gives dad an accusatory look. Dad shrugs then kneels down and addresses the boys.

DAD

You be good for your momma now alright boys. And Franklin, make sure to check in with your parents so they know you're good alright.

FRANKLIN

Yes sir.

DAD

Good, Alright. I love you boys, I'll come Sunday evening to pick you up.

The boys wave and call out their goodbyes.

MOM

You boys ready to have some fun while you're here? I've got a great weekend planned.

BOYS

Yah!

Alex and Franklin tackle Stephen while dad drives away. Mom pulls the group off of each other.

MOM

Okay, okay, none of that. How about a trip on the Subway?

The boys look excited.

MONTAGUE: THE GROUP SPEDNING THE EVENING WITH MOM

A) Day - The group riding on the Subway.

B) Afternoon - The group walking on the sidewalk and getting passed by a bunch of yellow cars. Alex and Franklin go crazy punching each other's arms trying to count the taxis. Mom pulls them apart frustrated.

C) Evening - The group in central park passing by an outdoor concert. Alex, Franklin and Stephen all dance a bit to the music.

D) Evening - The group sitting down eating food truck food.

E) Night - The boys are back home in their room and Mom is tucking them into bed while she's on the phone.

MOM

(On the phone)

Yes... no...

(To the boys)

goodnight boys!

The mom shuts the door to the boy's bedroom.

INT. MOM'S APARTMENT - MORNING

MOM

I heard you boys like to play so I thought it might be fun if we went to a court and I watched you.

The boys all share an excited knowing look.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - MORNING

The boys racing onto the basketball court and immediately starting up a game of Alex and Franklin against Stephen. Mom is on the sidelines making phone calls. Eventually, the ball gets knocked out of Alex's hand and goes towards Mom but Mom catches it.

MOM

I'm going to have to call you back.

Mom hangs up the phone then stands up and smiles, then she goes onto the field, dribbles a bit, then shoots from farther back than the free-throw line and makes it in. Alex and Franklin immediately go into an OOOOOOOH! While Stephen chases after the ball.

ALEX

Can you teach me how to do that!

MOM

I can show you! You boys against me, Franklin, you're on my team.

Mom joins in the game for a bit but then checks her watch and stops playing.

MOM

Sorry to cut it short boys but we have to have a change of plans. I've got to take over the store for a bit. You'll have to come and see where I work. Is that going to be okay?

FRANKLIN

(Whispering to Alex)
Alex, I hate books. You know that.

ALEX

Mom's bookstore is the best. You've got to see it!

Franklin rolls his eyes.

INT. MOM'S BOOK STORE - MORNING

The boys walk into the store and run over to the kids book section. Mom goes to the counter.

FRANKLIN

Alex look, there's a book on Muhammad Ali!

Franklin opens it up. On the page is a picture of Muhammad Ali with a quote in a speech bubble.

FRANKLIN

Here's this! He said this, "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win." I need that on my sneakers.

STEPHEN

You don't put quotes on sneakers you dork, you put it on T-Shirts.

FRANKLIN

It says he wrote poetry too!

STEPHEN

No way! Let me see that.

Alex looks over to the room where his mom is at the cash register. A handsome man comes in and leans against the counter.

MOM

Hey Kyle.

MAN

Hey you, how've you been?

MOM

I can't complain. Yourself?

MAN

Sweet as can be.

The man notices Alex.

MOM

That's my son. Alex. Say hi Alex.

Alex waves a hesitant hello.

MOM

Did Franklin find a good book? How about you go check it out?

ALEX

Yah, okay.

Alex turns towards Franklin and Stephen who are laughing and imitating Muhammad Ali. The day gets later. Alex and Franklin are stacking books, making a fort while Stephen is lounging and reading a book. Mom comes in.

MOM

Alright, let's get this cleaned up and get going.

INT. MOM'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Everyone sits around the dinner table and eats.

MOM

I'm sorry boys but I'm going to be busy again tomorrow. I'll leave Stephen in charge. You boys can go to the b-ball court down the street or the playground. Make sure to have your phone and be safe. If anything happens call me.

STEPHEN

Okay, sounds good mom.

FRANKLIN

Yah, thank you ma'am. It's so nice of you to let me come stay.

MOM

Not a problem Franklin.

ALEX

Do you like being so busy mom?

MOM

I do. Of course I'd rather be busy with you boys but that's just not my life right now. I hope you know how much I love you all.

INT. THE BOY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mom is tucking the boys in bed. She leaves the room and Alex turns to the other boys.

ALEX

I have an idea for tomorrow. Mom likes

books, so let's write her a book tomorrow.

STEPHEN

I like that idea. We can use one of the poems from Muhammad Ali but make it fit for mom.

FRANKLIN

Only if I can draw the pictures.

ALEX

Deal.

INT. MOM'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The boys are collaborating and creating a book. Paper, markers, and pencils are everywhere on the living room floor. They finished it and the cover is a drawn picture of their mom with the title, "The Greatest" The contents, "You done wrestled with an alligator, You done tussled with a whale; handcuffed lightning, thrown thunder in jail; only last week, you murdered a rock, injured a stone, hospitalized a brick; You're so (crossed our mean) sweet you make medicine sick.

The boys eat lunch then wait around for Mom to get back. Opened jars of peanut butter and jelly lie in a mess on the table. Stephen gets a call.

STEPHEN

oh... no, we've been around here. We made you something! No... no... sure mom. Yah, we can do that... Okay. Yah, bye.

Stephen gets off the phone.

STEPHEN

Dad's coming early and Mom isn't going to be able to say goodbye to us before dad comes to pick us up. She said she'll try to make it back but she isn't sure she will. She said to call her when dad shows up.

FRANKLIN

So then we aren't going to get to read the book to your mom?

Alex and Stephen both look down at their sandwiches. Alex puts his sandwich down.

ALEX
I'm not hungry anymore.

STEPHEN
You guys want to go on the street and
play some ball?

Alex and Franklin nod.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF MOM'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

The boys playing with the basketball on the street, just passing it around and trying to get it away from one another. A car pulls up and it's their dad. Stephen goes to call their mom while their dad gets out of the car.

DAD
Hey boys! You all packed up?

ALEX
We got to go get it.

The boys run inside. Franklin rushes out with his luggage. Alex sees their book and puts it on the table for mom to find. Then he comes out with the luggage. Dad gets the luggage packed into the van.

DAD
Is this everything? Did you boys have
fun?

Alex nods.

FRANKLIN
We sure did! We went to a bookstore
and we wrote a book! I drew the
pictures. We got to play ball a little
bit with Alex's mom, she was sooo
good!

DAD
Glad to hear it.

Stephen gives the phone to Alex.

MOM
I'm sorry Alex.

ALEX
It's okay mom. I love you.

MOM

I love you too. Be safe okay, and do good. You boys are my world. You know that right?

ALEX

Right mom. Bye.

MOM

Bye sweetie.

ALEX

Bye.

Dad watches as the boys sadly go into the car.

DAD

I saw you boys playing, you need a hoop! We got some time before we need to get back, how about we find ourselves a court and play some ball!

The boys light up.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - EVENING

They go to a court and all get out and start playing. Dad is terrible at basketball but they all have fun. Then, Dad is worn out he sits on the sidelines and rests. The boys, Franklin and Stephen sit next to him. Alex comes right in front of Dad, facing him. He points at him.

ALEX

(Mimicking Muhammad Ali)
You are the greatest! Ain't nobody better than you!

STEPHEN

(To Dad)
You float like a butterfly, sting like a bee!

FRANKLIN

Nobody can hit you, you so pretty.

Dad laughs and pulls all the boys into a hug.

DAD

You boys are the greatest!

He shakes them around in his hug.

DAD
You shook up the world!

They all laugh.

DAD
You boys ready to go home?

ALEX
Yah dad. We are.

Fade out.