

Causes of WWI: A Short Play in One Act

Characters: *Teacher, Students: #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, Student #1*_____,
*Student #2*_____

Teacher: [Speaking to class] Okay, class. We are now going to cover Ch. 29 on World War I.

#7: [Raises hand and starts speaking] The way I see it, there was World War I, right? And before that, there was no war, right? So, there must have been a moment where there not being a war on went away, and there being a war on came along. So, what I want to know is, how did we get from the one case of affairs to the other case of affairs?

Teacher: Do you mean, how did World War One start?

#7: Yeah.

#6: I heard it started when a guy named Archie Duke shot an ostrich 'cause he was hungry.

Teacher: I think you mean it started when the archduke of Austria-Hungary was shot.

#6: No, there was definitely an ostrich involved.

Teacher: Well, the real reason was it was too much effort not to have a war. You see, in order to prevent war in Europe from developing, two alliances formed: the British, the French, and the Russians on one side, and the Germans and Austria-Hungary on the other. The idea was to have two huge apposing armies, with each army acting as the other's deterrent. That way, there could never be a war.

#4: But, there was a war, wasn't there?

Teacher: Yes, that is correct. See, there was one tiny flaw in the plan.

#5: What was that?

Teacher: People are idiots.

#4: So, why World War One?

Teacher: Well, because an Austrian had been killed by a Serb in Bosnia.

#5: Why does an Austrian being killed by a Serb in Bosnia mean war?

Teacher: Because of Russia.

#5: Oh...why?

Teacher: Because Russia supports Serbia, and Austria supports Bosnia.

#8: So, an Austrian had been killed by a Serbian in Bosnia, which meant Austria would invade Serbia, so then Russia would invade Austria.

Teacher: Correct! Any questions?

#1: So, why is it a *world* war?

Teacher: Well, now, _____ [**student #1**], who would you say is your best friend?

#1: Oh, _____[**student #2**]. He's my boy! [Looks at #2]

Teacher: And if I were to punch _____[**student #2**] in the nose, what would you do?

#1: [Stands up] Nobody punches my friend and gets away with it! I've got your back, bro! [points at #2 and sits down]

#2: [points at #1]

Teacher: Exactly. If Russia threatens Austria, Austria's best friend will offer support. And who is Austria's best friend?

#1: _____[**Student #2**]?

Teacher: Germany! Germany is Austria's best friend. So, if Russia were to attack Austria, Germany would attack Russia. But, this would leave Germany undefended on the western side, and who is Russia's friend west of Germany?

#8: France.

Teacher: Yes, good! So if Germany attacked Russia, she would also have to attack France, since France is friends with Russia.

#3: [Blurts out] Where is France?

Teacher: And if Germany were to attack France, that would leave Belgium threatened.

#3: [Blurts out] Where is "*Bell-Jim*"?

Teacher: And Belgium and France were Britain's friends, so that means Britain jumped into the fight. It also meant that all of the colonies of these imperial powers jumped into the fight as well. There is your world war.

#3: [Blurts out] So, where is Bosnia again?

#4: So, World War One happened because of that?

Teacher: Yes.

#9: But millions of people were killed!

Teacher: Yes, but it was for a good cause.

[Students pause and scratch their heads?]

#6 : So the poor old ostrich died for nothing?

The End.

The script thanks Horrible Histories and Black Adder.