

FADE IN:

INT. SERA HOUSE - NIGHT

A pristine living room lies dormant, quiet. Rows of exquisite artwork line the walls. Beautiful, more-artistic-than-functional tables adorn the center of the room. A fireplace crackles. The clean view only disturbed by empty bottles on the floor.

At the edge of the room lies a canvas, upon which lies a stunning image we begin to zoom in on. The image is split down the middle by a harsh, red line. On the right, vibrant primary colors depict a beautiful redhead woman, with a colorful-but-nondescript canvas of her own, surrounded by crowds of adoring fans and photographers.

On the left side of the line, muted colors depict a ghastly, frail man with his own canvas, covered in harsher colors. Nobody is around him, no lights adorn his artwork. He is *alone*.

We zoom in on the man, as his face becomes both younger and more realistic, yet still just as lonely. The environment around us fades until it becomes...

INT. MATH CLASS - DAY

A bland, colorless classroom, with muttering teenagers around the boy. That boy, who will become the man in the picture, is a Latino teenager here, with jet black hair and hazel eyes. This is CARLOS SERA, struggling to stay awake and focus on the advanced placement calculus work being given to him.

TEACHER

Sera, are you with us?

Sera, eyes open but not aware, scribbling in his notebook, doesn't respond.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Mister Sera?

Sera jolts up and looks towards his teacher.

CARLOS SERA

Yes?

TEACHER

Can you tell us the derivative of the equation?

Sera's brows furl, focusing on the equation on the board.

CARLOS SERA

Uh... uh... it's... ummm...

TEACHER

That's detention again Sera. If you'd been paying attention instead of doodling, you'd know how to differentiate a simple quadratic.

Other students chuckle, with the teacher turning back towards the board. Carlos slumps in his chair, continuing to fight sleep.

INT. DETENTION - EVENING

Carlos sits in detention working on a packet of busywork. Or at least, he should be. Instead he's continuing to scribble to the side in his notebook.

TEACHER

Sera. Packet.

No response. The teacher groans, stands, and walks over to Sera. They rip the notebook from Sera, who only just notices.

CARLOS SERA

Hey, that's-

The teacher's stern expression suddenly changes when they eye the book. That "scribbling" is actually incredibly detailed drawings. The girls in class he likes. Landscapes. The ocean. An animal escaping a poacher. An overbearing figure at a door while a young boy cries.

TEACHER

Carlos, these...

CARLOS SERA

I'm sorry, just-

TEACHER

These are incredible.

Carlos, shaking while reaching out for his notebook, goes silent. The teacher looks back at him and hands the notebook back.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Are you taking studio art?

CARLOS SERA

No, I only had one room for one AP class.

TEACHER

Why did you choose Calculus? I'm sure Stevens would love to have you in his class with this caliber of work.

Carlos closes up, shoving his notebook into his backpack.

CARLOS SERA

My mom says "doodling" won't get me anywhere. I need a *real* job.

TEACHER

Carlos, you're hopeless here. This isn't what you should be doing. That is.

CARLOS SERA

My parents-

TEACHER

Won't control you forever. You're seventeen Carlos. And you're failing. You stay in my class, you'll be lucky to graduate. If you let me pull some strings, I can get you into Stevens' class. You'd do better there.

CARLOS SERA

I'd get thrown out.

The teacher sort of pulls Carlos from his chair, shaking their head.

TEACHER

Stevens has a class at the same time as mine. Your mom won't have to know you ditched my class until after you graduate. I'll talk to Stevens. Come on.

They motion for Carlos to follow them into the hallway.

CARLOS SERA

You'd do that?

TEACHER

You need help Carlos. Someone has to.

They step out the door and Carlos follows, still shaking a bit. He steps out...

INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT

And suddenly, four years have passed. Carlos steps into a crowded lecture hall filled with ARTISTS, PROFESSORS, STUDENTS, and JOURNALISTS. Carlos' hair is straightened out, he's standing tall and confident, and he has a noticeable following behind him going in. Mostly women.

Several of the professors greet him with praise and pride, many of the other artists look at him with nothing but spite and jealousy. Carlos walks up to a covered canvas with his name on it, and looks over at the professor who was guarding it. He goes to a nearby mic.

PROFESSOR 1

Now presenting... three-time
exhibition prize-winner, Carlos
Sera!

The portrait, a stunning sensual depiction of the Greek goddess Aphrodite immediately draws the attention of the crowd. The other artists stare in amazement-mixed-with-distaste. The women following Carlos shoot him bedroom eyes. Journalists quickly vacate the other, far lesser works of art.

JOURNALIST

Mister Sera. Do you think it's
likely that this will give you the
fourth win of the year in your
program?

CARLOS SERA

I think this is my best piece so
far, and I haven't seen anything
that topped my first three
Goddesses yet. But there's still a
few covered ones left, anything's
possible.

The last statement rings of sarcasm, showing a clear disdain for the rest of his program. Some of the professors nod, signaling agreement, while one professor rolls her eyes at the bravado, as well as her colleagues encouraging it.

She looks around towards the entrance of the lecture hall to see a young woman, frazzled and out of breath, running in. DAHLIA WILKINS dashes over to the professor.

PROFESSOR 2

Dahlia, where have you been?! You could've upstaged this whole room before Sera showed off!

DAHLIA WILKINS

Car... broken down... too expensive... to fix.

Dahlia catches her breath before processing what her professor just said.

DAHLIA WILKINS (CONT'D)

Really? Another one of Carlos' half-naked women is winning again?

PROFESSOR 2

Hopefully not now.

The professor goes to the mic while Dahlia fixes her hair a bit and stands over by the canvas.

PROFESSOR 2 (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, if you'll keep moving along the exhibition, we now have Dahlia Wilkins presenting *Their World*.

None of the crowd react, staying by Carlos' canvas. The artists in line behind Dahlia begin to pack up, defeated.

Dahlia stubbornly ignores the lack of interest. She takes the mic.

DAHLIA WILKINS

Kiss-asses and wannabe journalists, there's half an exhibition left. You'll get plenty of chances to gaze at Sera's softcore when you hand him the win.

Some journalists in the crowd take notice and reluctantly move away. Some of the artists behind Dahlia snicker. Most of the students stand by Carlos. One particular DUDEBRO STUDENT turns around and yells loud enough for the crowd to hear.

DUDEBRO STUDENT

What, like your feminist scholarship isn't enough, you need to take the *man's* win away too!

A not-insignificant amount of the students laugh, though Carlos shakes his head.

CARLOS SERA

Excuse me, sir, you in the back?
None of that. Everyone in this
program worked hard to get here,
alright. We should give her the
attention and respect she deserves.
I'm sorry miss, go ahead and
present. I'd be more than happy for
you to come out on top.

His last line reeks of sleaze, simultaneously hitting on her and acting as though he's accomplishing something by speaking for her. Still, Dahlia takes in the influx of attention and uncovers her portrait.

It is beyond anything we've seen so far. It depicts a garden with a lone young woman, who looks very much like Dahlia, surrounded by terrifying, masculine trees. The work seems too advanced for a student. All but the most dudebro of the men in the crowd flock to her.

Some of the women stand by Carlos, offering him their numbers and propositioning him. But suddenly, he has no interest. His eyes lock onto Dahlia's painting, taken by it. Carlos ignores the women crowding him and strolls over to Dahlia's painting.

Dahlia takes questions of her own, some constantly mentioning her being one of the few women in the program. Carlos begins to walk a bit too close to Wilkins and the podium. Dahlia takes notice.

DAHLIA WILKINS

I'm sorry, Mister Sera, do you have
something to say.

She glares at him. He's looking at her as though he'd never seen her before, despite being in the same art program. He's caught off guard by her sharpness as well, stumbling through his words until a simple truth pops out.

CARLOS SERA

It's... it's better than mine.

She rolls her eyes a bit, but a brief sincere smile pops out. Carlos steps back, no longer staring at the painting, but at her.