

FADE IN:

EXT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

A PAINTING fills the screen, split by a RED LINE. On the left, somber colors depict a frail, lonely man by a blank canvas. On the right, vibrant hues show a radiant woman, her blank canvas surrounded by adoring fans.

The CAMERA PUSHES IN on the man's canvas until it TRANSFORMS INTO --

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

A WHITEBOARD covered in MATH EQUATIONS. Students scribble in notebooks, chatter filling the air.

At the back, a teenage CARLOS SERA (16, tired, scruffy, perpetually distracted) squints, struggling to stay awake. His notebook, rather than filled with numbers, contains INTRICATE SKETCHES.

A stern TEACHER notices, frowns, and approaches.

TEACHER

Carlos! Pay attention!

Carlos startles. His pencil streaks across the page, ruining his latest sketch.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

If you're going to waste time, you can do it in detention. Stay after class.

Carlos sighs, defeated.

INT. DETENTION ROOM - LATER

Carlos slouches, doodling in the margins of his worksheet. A sharp SHADOW crosses his desk. The Teacher picks up his notebook, flipping through it.

The Teacher's stern face SOFTENS as they take in the astonishingly detailed artwork.

TEACHER

Carlos... these are incredible. Why aren't you in an art class?

CARLOS

My parents say I need real classes.
Math, science... things that get
you a job.

The Teacher looks at him, thoughtful.

TEACHER

You have a gift. Let me talk to the
school. We'll get you into studio
art.

Carlos hesitates. Then, a nod.

As the Teacher gestures him toward the door, they step
through—

CUT TO:

EXT. ART COLLEGE - WEST COAST - DAY

Carlos (now early 20s, confident, effortlessly charming)
walks through campus, greeted by peers. He's the GOLDEN BOY
of the art department, thriving on a full scholarship.

INT. ART GALLERY - STUDENT EXHIBITION - NIGHT

A bustling event. Carlos stands before his latest work—A
SENSUAL PAINTING of Aphrodite, bold and magnetic. Around him,
admirers swoon, eyes full of desire.

Carlos soaks it in. Until—

A SHUFFLING SOUND. A young woman struggles to pull out a
canvas from her bag. DAHLIA WILKINS (early 20s, reserved yet
fierce) maneuvers through the crowd.

A RUDE MALE STUDENT sneers.

MALE STUDENT

Give it up, Sera already won.

Carlos smirks, but his cocky tone now has a playful edge.

CARLOS

C'mon, man. Let's see what she's
got.

Dahlia barely acknowledges him. She sets up her piece—a
breathtaking depiction of a LUSH GARDEN, a LONE WOMAN trapped
within towering, ominous trees.

A hush falls over the room. The crowd shifts—many leaving Carlos's side to admire Dahlia's masterpiece.

Carlos, frozen, studies the painting. Even his admirers can't hold his attention.

He steps closer, finally speaking.

CARLOS (SOFTLY) (CONT'D)
It's better than mine.

Dahlia turns, eyes flicking up to his. A small, knowing smile.

And with that smile—Carlos never wanted another woman again.

FADE OUT.