

WE OPEN on a painting, divided down the middle by a red line. On the left, somber colors depict a lone man by a blank canvas, desperate and frail. On the right, vibrant colors depict a beautiful woman with a similar blank canvas, surrounded by crowds of adoring fans.

We focus inward on the man, towards the canvas, until...

It becomes a whiteboard, filling up with various math equations. Teenage STUDENTS chatter and fill up their notebooks with work. In the back, a boy who clearly will grow into the man in the painting squints his eyes, struggling to stay awake while scribbling something in his notebook. The TEACHER yells at him to focus, and gives him detention.

In detention, CARLOS SERA struggles with his busywork, all while continuing to scribble to the side of his notebook. The teacher gets impatient with him, and goes up to him, taking his notebook.

The teacher looks at what he's doing, and is shocked to see in the notebook dozens of beautifully-crafted drawings, the best they've ever seen. They ask Carlos why he never took an art class, why he's bothering with advanced calculus.

Carlos explains that his parents told him he needs to take advanced classes to prepare him for "real jobs", and that his "doodles" won't get him anywhere. The teacher tells him he has a real talent, and tells him they can pull some strings with the school to get him transferred into a studio art class. Carlos reluctantly agrees.

They walk to the door together, and step through...

Into the future, at an art college out west. Carlos, now aged in his early 20s, is the star of his art program. He has a full scholarship, the adoration of his professors, and of course, the attention of many young women drawn to his newfound confidence and his status. Carlos, now convinced of his own genius, has no problems at all with the legions of women throwing themselves at him.

At an exhibition on campus, Carlos is in the midst of showcasing his magnum opus, a sensual depiction of the Greek goddess Aphrodite. The audience loves it, every girl in attendance shoots bedroom eyes at him. All except one...

A young woman who is unmistakably the woman from the opening canvas, shifts around to the side, trying to get her own painting out of her bag awkwardly. A rude MALE STUDENT yells at her to get out, Sera's already won! Carlos hears this and, in a cocky tone, shuts down the student while implicitly hitting on the girl, DAHLIA WILKINS.

Dahlia rolls her eyes at him, and unveils her painting. It is beyond any work we've seen thus far, work beyond the level of a student. A depiction of a garden, with a lone young woman, who looks very much like Dahlia, surrounded by terrifying, masculine trees.

Suddenly, the crowd splits. Some, like the most "dudebro" of the men and the most "in love with Carlos" of the women stay by him. Most of the rest move over to Dahlia's painting. Even Carlos is stricken by its skill and beauty. Despite some women coming over to him, offering themselves to him, even he leaves his own painting behind.

He arrives at Dahlia's painting, stun-locked. She turns to him, asks if he has anything to say now. All he can say?

"It's better than mine"

She shoots him the first smile she's given. And with that smile, Carlos never wanted another woman again.