

FADE IN:

EXT. LARGE CANVAS - NIGHT

A massive painting, split down the middle by a red line.

LEFT SIDE: Somber hues. A lone MAN stares at a blank canvas. He's frail, desperate.

RIGHT SIDE: Bursting colors. A stunning WOMAN, same blank canvas, adored by a vibrant crowd.

We ZOOM IN on the man, into the canvas... until-

INT. HIGH SCHOOL MATH CLASSROOM - DAY

A WHITEBOARD fills up with equations. Teenagers work, chatter. In the back, CARLOS SERA (16), exhausted, scribbles in a notebook. His eyelids droop.

TEACHER

Carlos. Eyes up. Detention.

INT. DETENTION ROOM - DAY

Carlos ignores his worksheet, sketching furiously in the margins.

The TEACHER (40s) leans over, grabs the notebook.

TEACHER

What is this...

Stunned. Dozens of jaw-dropping sketches.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Why the hell are you in calculus?

= Unprofessional

CARLOS

My parents. They say art won't pay rent.

= Decent line

TEACHER

You have a gift. Let me talk to someone.

Carlos hesitates. Nods.

They walk to the door...

CUT TO:

INT. ART COLLEGE - GALLERY - NIGHT

Early 20s Carlos. Confident. Surrounded by admirers. He stands by a huge painting of APHRODITE, basking in attention.

Dahlia not in focus yet

~~RUDE STUDENT~~

Get outta the way, Dahlia. Sera already won!

A woman struggles with a canvas. This is DAHLIA WILKINS (20s).

~~CARLOS~~

Hey. Let her show her stuff.

carlos wants to be meaner

She unrolls a haunting, surreal garden. Trees loom over a lone girl. Stunning.

Crowd parts. Most drift toward Dahlia's painting. Carlos too. He stares.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

It's better than mine.

~~DAHLIA~~

(smiling)

Took you long enough.

Implies connection that is not there

MONTAGE:

- Carlos and Dahlia painting side by side.
- Press events. Interviews. Dual showcases.
- Success builds. So does love.

- No images

INT. GALLERY - NIGHT

They unveil solo pieces. Carlos' is skillful but stale. Dahlia's? A girl alone in a quiet home. Evocative.

PRESS flocks to her.

Carlos watches. Plasters on a smile.

Rushed

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Fights. Accusations. Drinking.

CARLOS

You'd be broke if I hadn't pulled you into my spotlight!

DAHLIA
I eclipsed you the day we met!

No heart

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Carlos drinks. Flirts. Never follows through.

INT. THEIR HOUSE - LATER

She moves out. Carlos drinks alone. Collapses.

DREAM SEQUENCE:

Carlos alone. Slums. Dahlia happy, married to another. Carlos breaks.

What?

INT. AA MEETING - DAY

Carlos gets a six-month token.

Time anchor

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Dahlia sits in her car, debating. Carlos walks up.

Not in

CARLOS
I can't paint. Not without the chip
on my shoulder. I loved you more
than my ego.

car

He shows her the painting from the opening.

DAHLIA
Stay sober. Don't paint until
you're ready.

Robotic
Dialogue

They embrace.

MONTAGE:

- Carlos behind-the-scenes at Dahlia's events.
- Interviews. He praises her. Downplays himself.
- At home, romantic dinners.

CARLOS
Sketched something...

She unfolds a napkin. A sketch of her. Carlos on one knee.

~~?~~ Reality was never in 24 ish 4.
REALITY: He's proposing. She says yes.

WEDDING - DAY

Joy. Artist friends jealous. Promises of love and family.

? ? NIGHT ?
Carlos sneaks to the canvas. He
stares. Nothing comes.
What?

MONTAGE:

-- Dahlia thrives. Carlos tries to paint. Nothing.

-- He admits he only paints from longing. Now he just...
longs to paint.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Dahlia throws up. Wheezing. Carlos insists on a doctor.

INT. GALLERY - LATER

She faints. Hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

DAHLIA
I'm pregnant.

Fear. Then joy.

INT. STUDIO - LATE NIGHT

Carlos paints. First time in years. Dahlia watches silently,
smiling.

MORNING
Canvas: them, holding a baby.
Carlos asleep beside it.

DAHLIA (V.O.)
Whatever happens, our child will
know love.

No narration

INT. HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM

Baby born. Dahlia weak. Machines beep. She holds her daughter.

DAHLIA
Her name's Bailey.

Robotic

Flatline. Screams. Nurses.

INT. LIVING ROOM - YEARS LATER

Carlos works a normal job. Picks Bailey (4) up from school.

BAILEY
I drew you!

It's a child's drawing. Looks like Dahlia's early style.

CARLOS
Mommy and I used to draw like this.

BAILEY
Show me!

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

He shows her his paintings. She asks why he stopped.

CARLOS
I can only paint Mommy. And that hurts.

BAILEY
Then paint me too.

Okay

INT. GALLERY - TWO YEARS LATER

Children's exhibit. Bailey (6) presents.

BAILEY
Me and Daddy painted this. It's my family.

She unveils a joint painting. Carlos and Bailey painted Dahlia together.

Carlos tears up. Proud. Not sad.

We ZOOM IN on the canvas... Dahlia's painted face smiles.

FADE OUT.

THE END

Horribly incoherent
ramblings.