

THE COLORS OF MY DREAMS

By

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FADE IN:

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Eric, a teenage, is up in his room working on his art. There are several of his paintings all around his room, decorating the walls, and a couple of paintings which have been recently finished, that are lying on his desk. He has a current work in progress on his easel as he paints on it.

Eric's art is a mix of abstract and expressionism. One of these paintings shows the face of a dark-haired woman who will appear to him later on in his life.

The style of his art shows the world through a different lens, and objects are given halos of wild colors around them. We see some of these unusual colors in a shot from Eric's point of view as he's working on the painting. The colors highlight the painting and trace out the brush strokes as he's doing them. The colors become brighter and more intense and there is a flash as the scene becomes blurry.

The point of view switches back to Eric standing in front of his painting. He stiffens up and then drops the paint brush as his arms begin to twitch. He lets out a scream, which drops into a long moan as he falls to the floor.

His mother runs in and finds him lying there. She screams his name as she shakes him, but he doesn't respond to her. His eyes are closed as he continues to make choking moans.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Eric, what's wrong?!...
Please answer me...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. NEUROLOGIST'S OFFICE

Eric's parents sit in the doctor's office, as he tells them what is wrong with their son.

NEUROLOGIST

Your son's condition has

stabilized. He had a bad seizure, but it's passed and we're monitoring him.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Can we see him?

NEUROLOGIST

Not right now, he's sedated and we're going to let him sleep through the night. You can see him in the morning.

ERIC'S FATHER

So what's wrong with him?

The neurologist turns on a computer monitor which is sitting on his desk. He swivels it around so Eric's parents can see it. The monitor shows a cat scan of Eric's brain. The doctor uses a pen to point out a section of Eric's brain which is a darker gray than the surrounding tissue.

NEUROLOGIST

We found this when we did a cat scan of your son's brain.

Both of Eric's parents show deep concern at hearing this.

ERIC'S MOTHER

(*gasps*) Is it a tumor?

NEUROLOGIST

We thought that at first, but it doesn't appear to be.

He presses a couple of virtual buttons on the touch-screen of the computer monitor, and it zooms in on the strange growth, showing more detail.

NEUROLOGIST

It's different than a tumor. A tumor is a lumpy mass, while this growth has convolutions which are somewhat similar to the morphology of the surrounding areas.

He sees the looks of confusion on Eric's parents' faces and he continues his explanation. He also points out a specific area of the brain scan on the monitor.

NEUROLOGIST

What I mean is that it has wrinkles which are a lot like the other areas of the brain, they just look different. Such as here, where there wrinkles are actually more dense.

ERIC'S FATHER

So it's not a tumor, but what can you do?

NEUROLOGIST

It's too deep in his brain to operate on, and even if we could, I'm not sure what we could do.

Eric's parents faces show their worries growing. Eric's mother grabs her husbands hand for support.

ERIC'S MOTHER

But you just can't do nothing! What will happen to him?

NEUROLOGIST

I can assure you I know how concerned and confused you both are. I'm worried for him to. The areas affected by this growth are serious. It's impinging on his visual cortex right now and his vision could be impaired if it gets worse.

There are also the seizures to worry about. He had a bad one tonight, and they will likely increase if we cannot stop this. However, we do

have a couple of things we can try.

ERIC'S FATHER

That's all you can do, is guess?

NEUROLOGIST

Please understand that this is a special case. I've been conferring with another neurologist in New York on your son's scans, and neither of us have seen a growth like this before.

We've both agreed on a medication regimen to put Eric on. There is a series of anti-seizure drugs which target the affected locations of the brain. Our hopes are that they will help combat the effects of this growth. We'll run more tests on Eric, but for now that is all we can do.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Eric is sitting up in his hospital room. A nurse is cleaning up the tray with his lunch on it.

NURSE

Well, I must say you've certainly improved in the last couple of days. How are you feeling? You haven't had any more headaches or feelings like the seizures would come back have you?

ERIC

No, I'm feeling much better now.

NURSE

That's great. Your doctor will be happy to hear that you're responding to the medication.

ERIC

Could you hand me the art pad my parents left me? I'd like to work on that some.

NURSE

Sure, hon.

The nurse retrieves the art pad and some markers from the stand near his bed. She hands them to Eric and smiles at him. She then leaves him alone to work on his art.

Eric opens the book. He flips past some pages with existing art and then comes to a blank pages. He takes a marker in his hand with a look of happy determination. He then pauses as he looks down at the blank sheet in front of him. He makes a few half-hearted attempts to draw something on the pages, but he makes each mark with a listless motion. He stares down at the page with a look of frustrated confusion, as the art refuses to come to him.

INT. NEUROLOGIST'S OFFICE

Eric is talking to the doctor with his parents. The doctor has a new cat scan up on the computer monitor, which shows that the abnormality in Eric's brain has begun to shrink.

Both Eric's parents and the doctor listen to Eric explain the colors he was seeing, in both his dreams and when he was painting, and they don't really understand what he means. Eric's parents look a little confused as he's talking, but are also relieved that he is doing better.

NEUROLOGIST

The vision tests all came out fine, Eric. You don't have any loss of visual acuity, nor is there any trace of color blindness.

ERIC

But I'm trying to tell you,
the colors that I was seeing
before, they've gone.

NEUROLOGIST

With the way the growth was
invading your visual cortex,
I think you may have been
starting to have some
hallucinations. That's a good
thing that they've
disappeared. It's stopped
your seizures as well.

ERIC

But it's the same colors I
was seeing in my dreams. It's
been two weeks and none of my
dreams have been that bright.

NEUROLOGIST

It's a unique case, son, and
we don't fully understand it.
You're responding well to the
medication and the area of
growth has shrunk. The
effects of it and the
seizures were very dangerous.
I know it's a period of
adjustment for you, but
you're very lucky that it's
working and we could help
you.

ERIC

But I miss the colors, and I
haven't been able to work on
my art. I don't want to lose
it.

The doctor is silent, as is not quite sure what to say.
Eric's parents look at him with concern as well. His mother
finally breaks the moment of silence, as she puts her hands
on Eric's shoulder, and gives him a reassuring touch.

ERIC'S MOTHER

All that matter's right now
is that you're getting
better, hon. We'll work
through this.

Eric looks up at her, with a doubtful look in his eyes.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. ERIC'S ROOM, THEN OUTSIDE LOCATIONS

Eric's life is shown changing in a montage. He tries doing art some more and then gives up. The artwork in his room fades away. He puts away his easel and art materials, to be packed away in a desk and the closet. The pictures he's painted are removed one by one, to be replaced by other posters of typical teenage fancy, rock bands, sports, swimsuit models, etc.. Only one of his old paintings remains up on his wall.

This montage also shows how he replaces the art with other things, such as interactions with friends and sports. Eric is sad when he has to put his art away as he realizes he can no longer do it, but then he is shown being happy with the new activities which take the space of his artwork in his life.

The montage suggests that he forgets most of what the art and his strange visions of the colors meant to him. He's shown looking at the wall of his room a few times during the montage, as his artwork is put away and then replaced with other posters. One of the last shots shows him looking at the remaining painting with an odd look of remembrance on his face. His gaze then turns on to something else, such as a book he's reading, or looking at something on a computer or TV.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM, COLLEGE APARTMENT - MORNING

Several years have passed. Jump to when Eric is a young adult and now in college. He shares an apartment with his roommate, John.

Eric wakes up with a groan when his radio alarm goes off. He is slow to get out of bed. He has fallen asleep with a textbook for "macro economics" laying down on his chest, on top of the sheets and blankets.

INT. BATHROOM

Eric finally stumbles out of bed and makes his way to the bathroom. He splashes water on his face to wake up, but he still looks sleepy. He grabs the container of his anti-seizure medication and takes a pill without any ceremony, as it has become routine for him.

INT. KITCHEN

Eric stumbles into the kitchen to make himself some instant coffee. His roommate John comes in all refreshed from an early-morning run. John catches him at breakfast of coffee and pop tarts and he chuckles at that.

JOHN

Ah, the breakfast of champions. Damn dude, you look tired, even for you in the morning.

ERIC

Yeah, I was up pretty late studying for macro economics.

JOHN

Ouch.

ERIC

It's the first test this semester, so I want to do well on it. I think I understand it pretty well though.

JOHN

Well good luck with it dude. I'm gonna grab a shower and

get ready for class.

ERIC

Thanks. I just wish we didn't still have these early-morning tests. I'd hoped that was only for freshmen.

John laughs at Eric's complaint.

JOHN

Hey, they never said it was going to be all easy for you business majors.

Eric laughs and gives John a playful punch on the arm.

ERIC

At least I'm not stuck in all the geek classes like you.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - MORNING

Eric walks to class in a bit of a stupor, as he's still waking up. It is autumn, and there are just hints that the leaves of the trees and the ivy of the buildings will soon start changing colors. There are a couple of spots of early color emerging already, but Eric pays them no attention.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM

Eric is shown taking a test with a room full of other students. He gets through the test okay and hands it in with the other students at the end of the test period. He doesn't look worried like some students, but doesn't look all that excited either.

INT. DINING HALL - LUNCHTIME

Eric and his friend and classmate, Jason are walking through the lunch line. They talk as they get their food

and then settle down to a table to start eating.

JASON

Man, that test was pretty tough, especially for the first one.

ERIC

Yeah, but I think I did okay on it.

JASON

Man, you're lucky, you really take to this stuff.

ERIC

I guess so. It did take a lot of reading, but then it clicked. To tell you the truth, now that I get it, it doesn't seem that much different from economics last year.

JASON

That's because you're so good at it.

ERIC

Maybe, but it doesn't really feel like that. Once I got it, it kind of feels like we're just doing the same things over again.

Jason shakes his head at hearing that.

JASON

Man, you're making me feel even worse now.

ERIC

Sorry guy, I didn't mean it like that.

JASON

I know dude, but I'll still

call you on bragging.

Jason flashes a smile at Eric. Eric tries to smile back, but his smile is a bit thin and forced.

ERIC

It's just that none of my classes are really exciting this semester. I was hoping that things would get better this year. And chemistry is still kicking my butt for the second time. I can't fail it again.

JASON

Don't worry, it's still early in the semester. You have time to make it up. I'm sure it'll just click for you, like everything else.

ERIC

I guess so...

JASON

Besides, we're supposed to be having fun at college, before we have to grow up and work for a living. We're going to make it a good semester, dude. The weekend's almost here. You're coming out to the pub tomorrow night, right?

ERIC

Yeah, that'll be good.

Eric still looks unconvinced by Jason's attempts to cheer him up, but he does his best to make his smile have more warmth. Jason looks satisfied with that.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Eric is sitting in a lecture for an art history class. The

teacher, is displaying slides of various painting with a projector, as she goes through her lecture.

The first image is of an early an unassuming work by van Gogh, "Still-Life, arranged by Anton Mauve and executed by Van Gogh, December 1881."

PROFESSOR ARKIN

This next artist is someone I'm sure you've all heard of, but you won't recognize him from his early work, like this still life. He started out doing work in Impressionism, but his style changed throughout career. And even though he was only painting during the last ten years of his life, Vincent van Gogh produced over two thousand pieces and had a phenomenal impact on the art world.

She then flips to some more slides as she's talking. They include, "Backyards in Antwerpen" and "The Potato Eaters."

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Vincent started out painting in primarily somber colors, but he is most known for the vivid colors he used later in his career. His most-known and easily recognizable works occurred in the last two years of his life. This later piece, with the sunflowers, is a striking difference to the early still life I showed you first. It shows van Gogh's new style emerging, which defined both his life and his work. This style also started the Expressionism movement.

The images on the screen now flip through van Gogh's later works: "The Café Terrace on the Place du Forum, Arles, at

Night," "The Red Vineyard," and "The Starry Night." Eric's attention is caught by the last picture. His eyes show his focus and interest at seeing "Starry Night." He looks on with rapt attention, as if he's lost in the painting, and not listening to the teacher's words.

PROFESSOR ARKIN (VOICE OVER)

We can see from these pieces, especially "The Red Vineyard" and "The Starry Night," that not only had van Gogh's style changed, but it is indicative of how he perceived the world. He was hospitalized several times and suffered from hallucinations and paranoia, starting in 1889. He suffered from deep depression and finally died from self-inflicted wounds he sustained after shooting himself with a gun in the midst of a depressive fit. He had not realize he was fatally wounded, and returned to his house where he died in bed two days later. Van Gogh probably never realized the impact he had on the history of art. He was a man of both great talent and vision, as well as being plagued with torments most of us could not imagine or hopefully have to endure ourselves. Many interesting arguments have been made as to how his madness affected his art, if it ultimately helped or hindered him. We can only imagine how his work might have been if he was in a different state of mind.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM, COLLEGE APARTMENT - EVENING

Eric is sitting at his desk in his room. He is reading his art-history book with rapt attention. He is also idly drawing in his notebook, making random swirls below the notes he took in class.

He then notices what he is doing and he stares down at the random lines he's drawn. They don't look like anything, but the look on his face shows more recognition for him. He focuses his attention more on his sketches and tries to make some more doodles. His hand falters and slows down. He has a harder time getting the random lines to flow as easy as when he was letting it just happen.

He stares at the swirls of ink on his paper, and then looks back at one of van Gogh's paintings. He stays like that, with rapt attention, for several moments, before his roommate's voice finally breaks his concentration, as he calls to him from another room.

JOHN (VOICE OVER)

Hey dude, the movie's almost on.

ERIC

Okay, I'm coming.

Eric blinks as he comes back to the present and answers him. He grabs his art-history book and stands up to leave the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Eric walks out to the living room, where John is already sitting on the couch, watching TV. He sees the textbook Eric is carrying and he comments on it.

JOHN

Hey, haven't you done enough studying tonight? Take a break dude.

ERIC

Sure, I just want to look at some more of these paintings. They're pretty interesting.

Eric shows the book to John.

JOHN

Oh yeah, van Gogh, he did some funky stuff. He was batshit insane though.

ERIC

Yeah, we were going over that in class, and I've been reading more about him too. It's amazing how someone that screwed up could paint some really haunting images.

JOHN

Well, I think they just show how messed up he was, how scary the world looked to him. Did you get to the part where he cut off his ear for some girlfriend of his?

ERIC

Actually he did it because his friendship with another painter, Gauguin, was falling apart.

John chuckles at that.

JOHN

Man, what a fruit.

Eric grins at John's comments.

ERIC

Oh, he had his share of experience and trouble with women too... I just find it all really fascinating. It's also neat how his early work was all dark, but then when he started having more mental problems, his colors are much more vivid, even if his visions are distorted.

JOHN

It is pretty wild. I wouldn't want to be him, but I do think some of his paintings are pretty neat, like that one with all of the swirly stars there.

ERIC

I really like that one too. It reminds me of visions out of dreams or something.

JOHN

Cool. Hey, the movie's starting.

The two of them sit and watch a movie on TV. It could be a mindless comedy, or perhaps a B-movie horror or science-fiction piece. Whatever it is, the two of them have fun as they start to watch it. Eric still steals glances down at the art book and the pictures of van Gogh's paintings though.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM, COLLEGE APARTMENT - MORNING

Eric wakes up with another groan when his radio alarm goes off, but he doesn't look quiet as sleep-deprived as the morning before. He is still slow to get out of bed though. He fell asleep with the art-history textbook for laying down on his chest, on top of the sheets and blankets. He picks it up and takes another look at it. A groggy smile crosses his face as he takes in the art once again

INT. BATHROOM

Eric finally stumbles out of bed and makes his way to the bathroom. He splashes water on his face to wake up. He grabs the container of his anti-seizure medication and takes out a pill, still without any ceremony.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - MORNING

Eric walks to class. He is more awake than the previous morning. He smiles as he looks around him and the sunny morning. He doesn't make a big deal of his surroundings, but he looks as if he may be noticing things a little more.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM

Eric is sitting in a chemistry lecture. He is only partly paying attention to the notes and diagrams on the blackboard, and to what the professor is saying. Without even realizing it, he starts to make idle sketches again. He draws the random swirls on his notebook, under the diagrams of chemical molecules.

CHEMISTRY PROFESSOR

So we can see that there are different types of bonds, as are illustrated here. There is the standard carbon bond for organic molecules, which can be denoted with single or double bond lines.

Eric notices that he's drawing random sketches again, and his attention is drawn to the patterns of lines he's put in his notebook. He then grabs his art book out of his backpack and opens it up to the familiar section on van Gogh. He stares at the swirls of color in "Starry Night" and compares that to the haphazard sketches he's made in his notebook. The professor continues the lecture, but Eric ignores it.

CHEMISTRY PROFESSOR

There are also these bonds here which are known as covalent bonds. Instead of one atom taking a spare electron from another one, it is possible for two atoms to share an electron between them, as we have here...

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM, COLLEGE APARTMENT - EVENING

Eric calls his mother while he sits at his desk, with his art book open. Eric's mother is seen when the camera cuts to her at home, and also heard as a voice-over on the telephone handset.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Hello?

ERIC

Hi Mom.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Eric, it's so good to hear from you! How are you doing? How's school going this semester, hon?

ERIC

It's going okay. I had my first test yesterday, in macro economics. I think I did pretty good in it.

ERIC'S MOTHER

That's so good. How do you like it?

ERIC

Oh it's okay, but kind of more of the same. I was hoping it would be more interesting this year.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Well it's still early hon. Give it time. How is chemistry going this time?

Eric swallows hard and looks a little uncomfortable at the mention of chemistry class.

ERIC

Uh, it's still kind of tough, mom. I don't know, maybe I just won't get it.

ERIC'S MOTHER

You've done well in everything else so far. You've just got to hang in there and keep on trying. You can look into a tutor too.

ERIC

I know Mom. I'll think about it. That's not why I called though. Do you remember some of the art I used to do, back around middle school I guess?

ERIC'S MOTHER

Hmmm. Hmmm... I think so. The last stuff you were working on, with all the bright colors and crazy lines?

ERIC

Yes, that's it. We've been studying some neat art in my art history class, and it reminded me of some of the stuff I used to paint. I'm really interested in it and would like to see some of my old work to see if it's like I remember it. It would be fun to compare it to the stuff in our book. I might be able to work a class project out of it too.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Oh, that sounds neat. And it's so nice to hear you excited about one of your classes, Eric. I'll see if I can find some of your old pictures that you put in storage and I can send them to you, okay?

ERIC

That would be great, Mom!

ERIC'S MOTHER

I remember how much you used to love art. I don't know what you gave it up, I guess you just got interested in other things. You always liked in in grade school, and you were painting more and more. Dad and I didn't always get it, but I guess it's something like all that modern art. I'm sure your teacher would be interested in it though.

ERIC

Yeah, I'm curious to what she thinks of it.

ERIC'S MOTHER

You always did have such a creative streak and such a good imagination. I remember when you were little, you used to have a couple of imaginary friends you'd tell everyone about. You kept them longer than other kids did, and we were a little worried, but you had real friends too, so we didn't see the harm of it. My you used to tell some wonderful stories too...

Eric looks a little self-conscious at hearing his mother's description of his childhood. He forces a laugh at her story, then cuts her off.

ERIC

Well, I've got to go Mom. I'm meeting some friends soon.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Okay hon. It was good talking to you. I'll look for those pictures and mail them to you.

ERIC

Thanks again, Mom.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Love you, hon.

ERIC

I love you too, Mom.

Eric puts the phone down and he looks contented.

INT. STUDENT UNION PUB - NIGHT

Eric is out with a group of friends at the pub. It is probably more of a hangout place in the student union than an actual bar. The characters will not be of age to legally drink, so they couldn't realistically be shown drinking in a bar. So instead they're just hanging out drinking soft drinks and having fun.

Eric is playing a game of table football with Jon, Jason and Dan, another friend of theirs. They have some fun banter over the game, taunting each other and cheering or groaning when someone scores.

Kathy, Eric's ex girlfriend shows up near the end of the game. Kathy has lighter-colored hair, as opposed to the dark-haired woman Eric will meet later. After the game is over, the rest of the guys go off to hang out at a table or play something else, and Eric and Kathy talk.

ERIC

Hey Kathy, it's good to see you. You haven't been around lately.

KATHY

I know. I've been kind of busy.

ERIC

I've missed you.

Kathy pauses at his comment, and looks unsure of herself for a moment.

KATHY

I've found someone I'm
interested in, Eric...

Now it's Eric's turn to look taken aback.

ERIC

Oh...

KATHY

You know it's been a couple
of months. Look, I'm sorry
Eric, but I still want to
remain friends.

ERIC

I know... I shouldn't be
surprised... It's okay, I'm
still glad to see you.

Eric forces a smile, and Kathy accepts it. He then challenges her to a game of table football. That helps break the ice between them. They both get to laugh at the game and relax and have fun with it.

ERIC'S DREAM-SCAPE

The scene shows a brief interlude of dream imagery. There are swirls of color which shift and change to form random patterns. They finally coalesce into the scene from the "Starry Night" painting by van Gogh. The painting then becomes framed by a window. Eric is seen in a darkened room looking out through that window, with the weird light from those painted stars.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - LATE MORNING

Eric comes awake on his own, without being woken up by an alarm clock. He wakes up slowly and looks relaxed. He opens his eyes and smiles. He lies in bed and looks out the window. The view shows a tree, with its leaves all still green, and the blue sky behind it. Eric sees a couple of big clouds through the window. He raises his hand up to

trace around them in languid motions, as if he's holding an imaginary brush and he's painting the scene.

EXT. GRASSY PLAYING FIELD OR PARK - DAY

Eric is playing a game of touch football with a group of guys. They have fun playing the game and goofing around, much like at the pub the night before. It's a sunny and warm day out, and a nice lazy early fall day.

The game ends and the group breaks for everyone to head they're separate ways. As he's walking home, Eric notices that some of the leaves on a tree are beginning to change color. This catches his attention and he takes a closer look at the leaves, which are green, with splotches of color starting to break out on them. He picks two or three of the leaves off the tree and puts them in his pocket.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM

Eric sits down on his desk and takes the leaves out to look at them again. He traces his fingers over the spots of color which are starting to bleed over the green of the leaves. He rips a piece of paper out of one of his notebooks and then grabs hi high-lighter markers. He has a few different colors of markers, so he can make a colored picture.

He tries drawing the leaves on the paper, using the different markers to color in the spots of color. He tries swirling the colors around, but he doesn't look satisfied with his work. His movements are slow and stilted and his art looks amateurish. He frowns as he stares at the leaves and then looks back at his work and how he was trying to capture the colors.

INT. COLLEGE LIBRARY

Eric walks into the library and heads to the section with the books on the arts. He takes his time peering over the books there. He pulls out different volumes of books on the arts and looks through them all.

He finally chooses two or three books which really interest him and he heads down to the checkout desk, where a female student is working. She sees the books he's checking out and makes a comment about them.

STUDENT LIBRARIAN

Whoa, it looks like you've got a big project coming up. Good luck with whatever paper you have to write on these.

ERIC

Nope, I've just become really interested in art lately. It's all so fascinating.

STUDENT LIBRARIAN

Huh, that's different. Well enjoy your reading then.

Eric smiles at her and her reaction.

ERIC

I'm sure I will. Thanks.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM

Eric is shown at home in his room, pouring over the books once again. His face lights up with wonder as he pages through the books of various art.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM

Eric is shown back in class, listening to another lecture. It is a business class and Eric is paying a little more attention now, though he is still drawing random squiggles of lines in his notebook, in amongst the notes he's taking in class. The professor drones on with his lecture.

BUSINESS PROFESSOR

...and taking the inputs of capitol and investments, we can follow this case through to the conclusion. Once we've amortized for the expenditures and depreciation, and paying out the costs associated with the business, we can see the net gains over the five-year study period are as follows...

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Eric is walking home through campus. His eyes are show looking around the trees and he spots a few more places where the leaves are starting to change color.

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON OR EVENING

Eric returns home and finds a package from his mother on the table. He picks it up and looks very excited as he carries it back to his room.

ERIC'S ROOM

Eric sets the package down on his desk and looks very excited as he opens it up with a pair of scissors. The package contains several of Eric's old paintings, as well as his old art book.

Eric looks through his paintings first. He takes them out one at a time and takes his time looking at them. He looks at them slowly, as his eyes take in all of the details. He whispers to himself as he's looking at his old art from years ago.

ERIC

Wow... I did all that?

One of his paintings shows a woman with dark hair. Eric looks at it, but his eyes show no recognition of who the person might be. He gives that painting the same consideration as the others, then he moves on to the next one.

Eric then comes to his old art book. He pages through that just as slow. The pages show his work with pen and marker.

ERIC

I wish I could remember doing this...

Finally, Eric reaches the last page of his art. The book is only half filled, but all of the pages beyond it are empty. He flips through them all to verify that. Then he stares at the last couple of pages again. They show his futile attempts to make art back when he was in the hospital, recovering from his first big seizure, and when his medication had kicked in. Eric stares at those pages, his eyes searching for answers.

ERIC

Why did I stop? Why would I stop...?

Eric's musings are cut short by his roommate yelling to him from out in the living room.

JOHN (OFF CAMERA)

Hey dude, "Ultimate Ninja Challenge" is starting in a couple of minutes. Hurry up or you'll miss it.

Eric looks up, pulled out of his reverie. He puts his old artwork down and answers his roommate, yelling back to him.

ERIC

Okay, I'll be right out.

INT. PROFESSOR ARKIN'S OFFICE

Eric goes to see his art-history professor, to show her his old art and talk with her about it.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Hello, Eric come in. What can I do for you.

ERIC

Thank you, professor. I've been really interested in the lectures in class lately, especially with van Gogh.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Oh yes, I find a lot of students really enjoy him, not just his art, but the story of his life as well.

Eric nods back at her.

ERIC

Yes, it's fascinating, but really sad as well. Do you

think he had to be that crazy? Do artists really need to suffer for their art like that?

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Well certainly not all of them, but as we'll see as we go along in class, it is one of the themes that reoccur. It makes an interesting debate, as to what drives an artist. Some of them certainly do seem to suffer, but not all of them. Sometimes it's the different way they see the world which contributes to their art. But did you have a specific question in mind, Eric?

ERIC

Well it's just that seeing van Gogh's art, it reminded me of something I'd remembered... I used to do some painting, and it reminded me sort of how my pictures used to look.

Professor Arkin smiles at his comments, and gives him a small chuckle.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Ah, comparing yourself to one of the greats now are you...?

She sees his reaction and she tones down her demeanor.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

I didn't mean anything of it Eric. I've seen a few budding artists take bloom from my classes, and it's always very rewarding to see. I love seeing students enthusiasm. It's one of the rewards of

being a teacher.

Eric relaxes at that, and gives her a small smile.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

So you say you used to make art, but you don't any more?

ERIC

No, I did it years ago, but haven't gone back to it since then. But when I saw the pictures from van Gogh, I got interested in it again, and I asked my parents to find some of it for me.

Professor Arkin looks interested at that.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Oh, so do you have any of it with you? I would like to see it.

ERIC

Yes, I've got it here.

Eric retrieves some of his old pieces from his backpack and shows them to her. She takes them from him and studies them.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Hmmm, these are interesting. I can see why you were reminded of these from looking at van Gogh. They're not the same, but they do show some of the expressionism style. Do you know what prompted you to paint like this? Do you remember if you'd seen some of van Gogh's work back in school maybe?

ERIC

I'm not sure. I don't remember too much from art

classes back in school. I think I just started painting and it grabbed my attention. I don't think it was from any class I'd taken. I think I kind of remember it coming from some dreams I had, and I guess I just painted what I could remember from them.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

That's really interesting Eric. If that's true, then you could have a true gift with the art. Do you know why you stopped working at it?

Eric gets a ponderous look on his face, as he thinks about it for a few moments, then he finally shakes his head.

ERIC

No. I wish I could remember more from it. Just looking at these pictures really inspires me, and I can't figure out why I'd give it up. I've tried drawing things in these past couple of days and I can't do it like I used to. It's almost hard to believe I used to be able to do work like that.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Have you thought about taking some art classes? This work is rough, but it does show a lot of promise. I'd hate to think of you not pursuing it to its fullest.

ERIC

Yeah, I had thought about taking an art class. I'd really like to be able to paint like that again.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

That's good to hear. And I'm so happy to see what an effect my course is having on you.

ERIC

Thank you for talking with me, professor.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

You're welcome Eric, and I hope when you do start doing art again.

ERIC'S DREAM-SCAPE

Eric has a dream where he's in a gallery or his old room, where all his art hangs on the walls. At first he's very happy to see all of his artwork, but then he becomes shocked to see the colors of his paintings start to fade. He grabs a paint brush to try and fix the paintings, but no matter how fast he tries to paint, the colors continue to fade. The colors then start dripping off of his paintings. They fall off in gray blobs, which disappear as they fall to the floor. Very soon he is left staring at empty canvases hanging on the wall, in a dull-gray room.

The scene then fades to Eric lying in a hospital bed, with the neurologist talking to his parents, who are only seen in shadows. The neurologist is lit in a harsh light, to make him seem foreboding.

NEUROLOGIST

Eric is a sick young man. We've seen something is wrong with his mind, and we must cure him before it is too late.

ERIC

But you're taking my art away from me...

NEUROLOGIST

The visions are only a symptom of the problem. We need to make you well again...

Eric tries to scream, but his screams come out silent and choked off. The color and light then drain from the hospital room, to leave only darkness and silence.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Eric comes slowly awake, and goes about his normal routine. He gets out of bed and shuffles still half-asleep to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

Eric washes his face in the mirror, then he reaches into the medicine cabinet to pull out his bottle of medication. He looks at the bottle with a quizzical look on his face. He stares at it for a few moments, as a dawning look of realization comes across his face. He looks to be remembering his dream from the past night.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM

Eric takes the bottle of medication back to his room. He sits down on his bed and continues to look at it. He then looks to the pieces of art, and he mutters to himself.

ERIC

So that's what happened...

Eric shakes his head as he says then, then he puts his head in his hands and sighs loudly. He finally ends up putting the bottle of medication on the back corner of his desk, without having taken a pill from it. He gets ready for

school, then finally leaves his room. He casts one last look back at the bottle, as he's leaving.

MONTAGE SCENES

There is then a montage of several days of activity for Eric. We see him going to classes, having lunch with his friends, and hanging out and watching TV with his roommate John. There are shots of him doing homework, but also looking at artwork, both his own and going through the various art books again. He casts the odd glance towards his medicine bottle too.

Eric tries to make some art a few times, both with the high-lighter markers and pens. He has some small improvements, but nothing impressive, not yet. He looks hopeful though. He also starts doodling more during classes, in between taking notes.

There are also more shots of him looking at the bottle of medication each morning, as he decides what he should do. Finally, he makes a decision. He has not taken any medication for several days, but he also puts the bottle away in one of the drawers of his desk, to show that he has made the decision to really go off his medication.

INT. STUDY AREA - DAY

Eric and Jason are in a study area on campus, perhaps in a room in the student union. Eric is helping Jason with some homework in one of their business classes. Eric points out text from the book and the corresponding work needed on the worksheet in front of them.

ERIC

So what's left.

JASON

Um... just the depreciation
of the equipment, right?

ERIC

Yup, that's right. Now that's all given in terms of years, like this one, fifty thousand over five years. But we need to covert that to a monthly value to plug it balance sheet calculations. So five years is sixty months, and fifty thousand divided by sixty is eight-hundred, thirty-three and thirty-three cents each month.

JASON

Okay, that makes sense, and the cost of the upgrade to the facility is spread out over ten years, so that's one-hundred twenty months.

ERIC

Right. Now, once we get all the numbers into the balance sheet, we just crunch the numbers.

Eric watches Jason run the numbers with his calculator. He nods as Jason gives him a questioning look.

ERIC

So what do we end up with?

JASON

We're breaking even at a production level of one hundred thousand units a month, and after that, we make a profit of five hundred for every extra ten thousand units produced.

ERIC

That's right. See, it wasn't so hard, you just have to follow it through.

JASON

Yeah, but I still say you're a natural at this.

Eric smiles at him

ERIC

Maybe, it's nothing too exciting or stressful, but that's okay for right now.

JASON

You seem to be in a better mood lately, what's up. You were all hating this semester awhile ago.

ERIC

I guess I've found something to take my interest, and keep me busy. That's helped a lot.

JASON

Oh? What's that.

Eric pauses and looks at Jason, as if he's considering what to say.

ERIC

Well, I've really been enjoying my art-history class, and I've been doing some extra work looking up art.

Eric watches Jason's response, but Jason just nods at him, so Eric continues.

ERIC

It's just really interesting. I never thought I'd care that much about some old artist's paintings, but the way their art shows how they saw the world is kind of fascinating.

JASON

That's cool. There's some neat stuff in some of those old paintings. I remember this one guy who painted this really messed up scene of hell. Then there's always the naked ladies...

Jason smirks at Eric and they both chuckle.

ERIC

Heh, well it's no playboy, but yeah, some of the woman are pretty, and it's stuff they wouldn't have showed you back in school. But it's more than that, it all just really fascinates me. I used to do some painting, back in middle school I guess it was. And seeing all this artwork has got me thinking I should try taking it up again.

JASON

Hey that's neat. You should try taking an art class then. At least it's something you're interested in, and it's better than some of the humanities they make us take here.

ERIC

I've thought about that. I think that would be pretty cool. I kind of feel like it's calling to me to take it up again and I want to try that out.

JASON

Cool. So what kind of stuff did you use to paint? Did you paint any of that freaky abstract stuff? I love how messed up some of that looks.

A subtle look of annoyance flashes across Eric's face at Jason's comments, but Jason doesn't catch it.

ERIC

Nah, not really, I mostly painted what I saw.

JASON

Oh well, that's cool too.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

ERIC'S DREAM

Eric has another dream. He's back in the blank room with white or gray walls, where his paintings disappeared before. He's sitting there with a box in front of him. He opens his box and some of his old paintings fall out, but they're all shades of gray, instead of being colored.

Eric sifts through them and looks confused as to why there isn't any colors. He turns the box over to look inside it and all of a sudden a bunch of colors spill out of it. Eric lets out a happy squeal of surprise, and as he watches the colors change his paintings as they wash over them.

The colors seep into his old paintings and then the pool of colors sweeps out across the floor and begins to climb the walls. The walls then become painted in more of his artwork, with swirls of color and wild expressionistic patterns and images covering the walls. As Eric watches the colors deepen and become more vivid. There are also flashes of colors here and there, colored halos that appear around various parts of the paintings.

Eric hears a woman's voice.

UNSEEN WOMAN (MARA) (VOICE OVER)

The colors are all returning to you now. Make good use and enjoy them.

Eric looks around to try and see who spoke, but all he sees is the wonderful images of the artwork. He looks slightly confused, but then turns his attention back to the colors

on the walls.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Eric comes awake on his own. He slowly opens his eyes and there is a lingering smile on his face, as if he may have retained some of the memory of his dream. He turns to look at his clock and sees that he's woken up early. He shrugs and lets out a lazy yawn, as he lies in bed.

Eric's attention then wanders over to the window. He sees the morning light coming in through it. The camera then shows his point of view, as there is a brief flash of color. Eric blinks and looks again and there is another short burst of color, as a reddish-purple halo glows around the leaves of the tree which Eric can see through the window.

Eric sits up and looks again. The halo doesn't appear, but he can see that the leaves on the tree have changed color more. The colors are spreading out onto the leaves now, taking over more of the green on them.

Eric sits up and reaches for his old art notebook. He grabs his highlighter markers and pen and starts scribbling out some sketches. His art is still rough, but the work comes easier to him now. He fills up one page, then flips over to a new one, to try again. The second picture he makes looks better. He looks down at his work and smiles.

INT. HALLWAY IN ERIC'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Eric exits the bathroom after his shower with a towel wrapped around him. He's humming to himself as he heads back towards his room. John catches him as he's heading out of his room, dressed in his gear for a morning run. John gives a double-take at seeing Eric up so early.

JOHN

Whoa, what's gotten you up so early?

Eric smiles back at him.

ERIC

Nothing, I just woke up. It's a beautiful day out and I feel really good.

JOHN

That's a change from you normally dragging yourself out of bed. Well, since you have so much energy, how about going out for a run with me?

Jason grins at Eric when he says that.

Eric chuckles back at him.

ERIC

Heh, no thanks. I'm going to do some work and play around with some art some more.

JOHN

Suit yourself...

John heads outside, and Eric heads back to his room.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - MORNING

Eric walks through the campus looking happy and eager. The trees are all starting to change more into their fall colors. He looks at the trees and they have halos of color around them too. He notices some flickers of colors around some of the people he sees too, which fascinate them. The bits of color around people are not as bright and more fleeting than those around the trees though. Eric smiles as he takes it all in.

He brings his hand up and makes motions as if he's holding an invisible paint brush and daubing color over a canvas before him. One girl sees him doing that and giggles at him. Eric blushes, and then smiles back a little sheepishly. He turns to pretend to paint her as she walks

by though, and she gives him another giggle.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM

Eric goes to his class, but his attention is more focused on drawing sketches in his notebook than in taking notes or in what the professor is saying.

INT. ART STORE - AFTERNOON

Eric hits an art store and picks up a bunch of painting supplies. He looks excited as he goes up and down the aisles of the store and gathers his supplies. He grabs another art book, and a big pad of painting paper. He grabs a set of oil paints and a few brushes, as well as a real set of art markers.

His basket is overflowing by the time he finally gets to the checkout of the store. The woman at the cash register gives him an amused look.

CASHIER

Well, it looks like somebody's got a big art project or two.

ERIC

I'm taking up art again...
I'm really excited about it.

CASHIER

I can tell that hon. You have a great time finding your muse then.

Eric gives her a proud smile.

ERIC

I sure will. Thanks!

CASHIER

Sure thing, hon.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - AFTERNOON

Eric spends the afternoon sitting out on the lawn of the campus, under a tree. He takes out his art notebook and does more drawing with his pen and also coloring with the new markers he brought.

He goes through several more sheets of paper as he works on the art. He makes different pictures of the scenes around him. He captures a few of the trees and the buildings with their classic look with the ivy climbing the bricks. He even makes rough, expressionistic sketches of some of the people walking around.

He sees some flashes of colors and halos of light here and there, which guide his attention. He looks around at one point and notices a dark-haired woman standing near a tree. She looks like the woman from his old painting, but he doesn't notice that. She also has a strong halo of color around her.

Eric starts to draw her. He looks up again to catch more of what she looks like. She sees him looking at her and drawing and she gives him a big smile. He smiles back at her and gives her a quick wave with his hand that holds the marker, then he turns his attention back to the paper. He draws more of her standing next to the tree in that scene and when he looks up again, she's gone. He shrugs and continues to work on the picture.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN: INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON OR EVENING

Eric is busy painting in his room. He has a big sheet of paper propped up on an easel as he works on it. There are several other paintings and some marker pieces around the room as well. His roommate John comes in and comments on it.

JOHN

Wow, you've really been going
all out here. You've done all

these in the last few days?

ERIC

Yeah, I've been busy.

JOHN

I know you said that you've gotten back into painting, but it's been awhile. I didn't think you'd get this much done. It's pretty impressive.

ERIC

Thanks. I can't believe how quickly I picked it back up to. What do you think of it?

John picks up a couple of Eric's finished pieces and looks at them.

JOHN

These are pretty funky. I guess they look pretty abstract.

Eric chuckles.

ERIC

Well those are some of my first pieces. I'm still getting the hang of it. I'm getting better though. Take a look at this.

Eric motions John to come around and look at the piece he's working on. It still has his expressionism touches, but it looks more skilled. The painting is mostly finished. It also has the familiar figure of the dark-haired woman in it.

JOHN

That's pretty good. Things look like they're coming together more and I can see things better. The colors look neat.

ERIC

Thanks. I really like the colors too and want them to stand out.

JOHN

I still can't believe all the work you've been putting into this. I haven't seen you this obsessed over anything.

ERIC

Well, I wouldn't call it obsessed, but it has really grabbed me. I guess I'm just remembering what it used to be like to do art, like I used to back in school.

JOHN

You still can't remember why you gave it up?

Eric pauses for a moment, then he answers John.

ERIC

No, I'm not sure, but I'm glad to be back at it.

JOHN

It's cool that you've been able to pick it up again too.

ERIC

I guess I'm lucky, or it's like riding a bike. It feels really good to be back doing it though. I love being able to take something I see in my mind or something I feel and get it down on paper like that. I can't believe I'd lost that.

JOHN

Hmmm, neat. So who's the woman there?

ERIC

She's nobody, just someone I saw in a dream.

John laughs at that.

JOHN

Oh really, was it a good dream then...?

John winks at Eric and Eric laughs back at him.

ERIC

No, it wasn't like that you perv. It's just that I've been having more vivid dreams lately, since I started getting back into art. I saw her in one of them and she stood out for some reason. I don't know, maybe she's someone I saw around campus.

JOHN

Well, when you start seeing mystery women in your dreams, you've been working too long. I think you could use a break from all this art. They're showing Japanese monster movies at the retro cinema this week.

ERIC

Okay, that sounds fun. The painting can wait I guess.

INT. MOVIE THEATER

Eric and John are watching a movie in the theater. The crowd is mostly college kids. They're seen laughing at the film, which shows actors in rubber monster suits rampaging

through a model set of downtown Tokyo.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eric and John return from the movie in good spirits.

ERIC

Man, that was great. Thanks for dragging me out tonight, John. I haven't laughed that good in awhile.

JOHN

I told you it was worth it. You can't go wrong with a classic Toho film. I've got to get to bed though.

ERIC

Okay, good night.

JOHN

'Night. Don't stay up all night painting, Renoir.

Eric laughs at John's comment and then heads to his room.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eric walks in his room. He looks at the painting on the easel, but instead he grabs his art notebook and markers from his desk. He sits down on his bed and starts to work. He smiles as he sketches away. He is shown working on several pages of art.

He does some pictures reinterpreting the absurdity of the Japanese monster movie he just watched, with both a feeling of kitsch and appreciation. He has the dark-haired woman show up in at least a couple of them. In one she's running or cowering from the destruction of the city, and in other she's a giant human, facing off against the monster

herself. Eric looks very intent while he's working on his art.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - MORNING

Eric is asleep on the bed, with the art book laid out across his chest and the markers spilled around his bed and the floor. The view through his bedroom window shows the tree outside in the morning sun. The leaves are further along in their changing of colors.

Eric comes awake with a groan. He blinks his eyes and finally looks at the clock. He groans again as he realizes that he forgot to set his alarm and it's late. He stumbles out of bed and shuffles over to his desk. He drops his art book on it and his calendar catches his eye. He focuses his attention on the current day and he comes alert quickly.

ERIC

Shit, the test!

Eric grabs some clothes and throws them on quickly. He grabs his backpack and runs out of the house in a panic.

INT. BUSINESS PROFESSOR'S OFFICE - MORNING

Eric stands before his business class professor, nervously making his argument.

ERIC

I swear, I just missed setting my alarm. I've been so busy.

BUSINESS PROFESSOR

Well, you did come to me right away, so I don't think you could've talked to the other students about it. I can cut you some slack this time. That is of course if you're ready to make the test up right now?

ERIC

Um, yeah. I can do it...
Thank you.

The professor has Eric sit down at a table in his office and gives him the test to work on. Eric takes a few moments to calm down before he can work on the test, but he soon gets into it. He looks fairly confident as he's working on it.

INT. BUSINESS PROFESSOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUED

Eric finishes the test and hands it to the professor.

BUSINESS PROFESSOR

Very good. I hope you did well on it?

ERIC

Yeah, I think I did.

BUSINESS PROFESSOR

Good. You're showing promise in class, so I'd hate to see a mistake cost you.

ERIC

Thanks again.

BUSINESS PROFESSOR

Sure. I'll see you in class next time, right?

Eric gives him a sheepish grin and nods at him.

ERIC

Yes, I'll be there.

INT APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Eric sits on the couch in the living room. He has his chemistry book open and he looks at it intensely, with a worried look on his face. He then looks up when John comes

home.

JOHN

Hey dude what's up? Why so worried?

ERIC

I screwed up. I've been so busy with my art, that I slept through a business test this morning. Luckily the professor let me take a make-up exam for it.

JOHN

Okay, so you recovered from that.

ERIC

That's not the real problem though. I flaked on chemistry too, and there's a test coming up for that soon. And that's hard for me. I can't fake my way through that.

JOHN

Okay, chill out. I still remember most of chemistry from last year. I can help you out with it.

ERIC

Oh thank you...

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - CONT.

The scene fades to show John and Eric working at the living room table. They have the chemistry book open and also have Eric's notebook in front of them. John has helped Eric make some new notes and charts.

JOHN

Okay, so we look at the periodic table again to see

which column the element is in to determine it's valence electron state.

ERIC

So Oxygen has a valence of six.

JOHN

Right, so you put that down on the equation. That's the last one, so now you just have to balance everything. You have to have the same number of electrons given as borrowed.

ERIC

Oh, so it's just like a business balance sheet. Now I get it.

JOHN

See, I told you it wasn't that difficult. Once you know how to get the number of free electrons, everything else just falls into place.

ERIC

Okay, so how about co-valence bonding?

JOHN

Sure, that's a little tricky, but not much, once you see how it works...

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM

Eric is in chemistry class the next day. He is putting more effort into paying attention. He also has the special notes which John helped him put together. He refers to those and he looks like he's understanding it more. He gives a confident smile or a nod as he hears the professor explain

something, and he points to something in the notes.

Note: There needs to be some dialog for the professor here, to fill in the details of his lecture.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Eric comes home and goes to his room. He puts his backpack down and drops some books on his desk. He looks like he might be considering doing some reading or schoolwork, but then he looks over at his unfinished painting.

He then gets his paint supplies out and goes back to work on it. He starts in on the painting and he gets a look of contentment and fulfillment, mixed with concentration.

INT. STUDENT PUB - EVENING

Eric and John go to hang out with the gang at the pub, along with Jason and Dan.

DAN

Hey Eric, it's been awhile since we've seen you around.

JOHN

Yeah, he's been busy. Renaissance Man here has taken up art and it's all I can do to drag him away from his paintings.

John says this with a laugh and smiles at Eric when he says it. Eric takes it in stride and chuckles back at him.

ERIC

You're just jealous that I'm the one who found out he has the skill.

JOHN

Well at least I'm not
sleeping in late because of
it.

John's retort isn't meant to sound cruel. Eric laughs it off and gives him a playful punch in the shoulder.

JASON

Hey, have you painted any
naked ladies yet?

ERIC

There you go with that
again... But you do have a
good idea. Maybe I could pick
up a Penthouse on the way
home, unless you can get your
sister to pose for me...

They have a few more rounds of general jokes as they get down to a game of table football.

A few minutes later Kathy shows up with her new boyfriend. Eric keeps his composure, though his face does betray a hint of mixed emotions at seeing her with someone else. The other guys have met him, but she introduces him to Eric.

KATHY

Hi guys. Hey Eric it's good
to see you again. I'd like
you to meet David.

ERIC

Oh... Hi David.

The two men shake hands.

DAVID

Hello Eric, it's nice to meet
you. Kathy has told me a lot
about you.

ERIC

Only the good things I hope.

Eric half forces a smile. David warms up to the joke as Kathy fakes a groan.

DAVID

But of course...

They have some polite small-talk. Then David excuses himself to play table football with the guys, leaving Kathy and Eric to talk.

Note: There needs to be more dialog to their interaction.

KATHY

Thanks for being so good about that Eric.

ERIC

Of course, you know I wouldn't be a jerk about it.

KATHY

I know, but I still know it's hard for you.

ERIC

Thanks. Yeah, I still miss you some.

KATHY

I'm glad we've stayed friends though.

Eric nods, then pauses for a couple of moments, before speaking again.

ERIC

He seems nice. So where did you guys meet?

KATHY

Thanks. I met him in my acting class. We hit it off after working on a couple of scenes together. In fact he even got me to audition for the campus play.

ERIC

Really? Did you get in it?

KATHY

Yes, I just found out I got a part. I'm so excited!

ERIC

That's great Kathy!. I remember how much you liked your first acting class, so that's awesome that you're getting a chance to do more with it.

KATHY

That's so sweet of you to remember.

ERIC

I've rediscovered the arts myself. I used to do some painting back years ago and my art-history class opened me back up to it. I've started painting again and I've found I really love it.

KATHY

Oh wow, I never knew you had that side of you, Eric. Good for you.

ERIC

It surprised me as well, but now I understand how it can be a passion for artists.

Kathy smiles and becomes more animated as they talk.

KATHY

I know. I really love how it feels getting into a character. I can get shivers from some scenes, when I manage to nail it just right. Is it like that for you with your painting.

ERIC

Yeah, it has been. It's a rush seeing something I've done, that I've taken from my head and put down on paper. It feels so good.

KATHY

I love having a creative outlet like that too. Everyone should be that lucky. Oh Eric, I'm so happy for you to find that.

Kathy gives Eric a quick warm and friendly hug. He looks a little surprised, but he accepts it easily.

KATHY

You'll have to show me your art some time. I'd love to see some of it.

ERIC

Sure, that'd be good.

Note: There is a possible extension to the scene, which adds more to a plot thread, but I think that the scene may end better without it.

They could talk some more and the conversation turns to general topics. Eric could then look distracted as he looks at someone across the pub. Kathy asks him who he's looking at. His point of view shows a glimpse of the dark-haired woman, but when he looks again, she's gotten lost in the crowd of other students. Eric says he thought he saw a woman who looked familiar, someone he's seen around, but he lost her. Kathy jokes and asks him if he's trying to make her jealous, but he smiles and says no.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eric sits on his bed looking through some old pictures. He stares at one picture of Kathy with affection and longing. A bright halo of color flares up around her picture.

Eric goes to his easel and takes down the picture which he

was working on. He puts up a new sheet of art board and starts in on a new painting, one of Kathy. He places her picture near by, as a reference. His face shows mixed emotions once more, from the intensity of working on art, to lingering feelings for Kathy. His eyes start to water as he works and her face takes shape on the canvas.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

ERIC'S DREAM

The scene is hazy and lit with diffused light for effect. Eric and Kathy are talking together at the moment when she broke up with him.

KATHY

I'm sorry Eric. I care about you, but I don't love you. We can't stay together.

Kathy moves away from him, even though Eric tries to hold onto her. She goes further away and it gets darker. The scene dissolves to show him looking at the picture he painted of her. He is in a dark space, while the picture is the only thing lit up. He reaches out to place his hand on the picture of Kathy, as his eyes tear up once again.

ERIC

I still love you...

MARA (VOICE OVER)

That's good Eric. Strong emotion drives art. You've come so far with this.

Eric turns around to seek the source of the voice. He looks shocked when he sees the dark-haired woman standing there. A soft glow of colors illuminate her.

ERIC

Who are you?!

MARA

You'll remember me very soon...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

ERIC'S ROOM - MORNING

Eric comes awake with a start when the alarm goes off in the morning. He jerks up and hits the snooze button to silence the alarm. He blinks his eyes and looks around the room. He looks a little confused and worried. His gaze passes over the painting of Kathy he'd done the night before and he gets a look of sad realization.

He stares at the picture for several moments, and his face shows more concentration, like he's trying to remember something. He then mutters to himself.

ERIC

No..., that's right... but
who is she?... Wait...

Eric's face shows the glimmer of an idea. He gets out of bed and heads over to his desk. He starts rooting around amongst his schoolwork and books and his assorted art. He then finds his old art from the package his mother had sent him. He sorts through that and finally finds the picture he's looking for. He comes to the picture which shows the dark-haired girl, the same woman he's been seeing all along, and who was in his dream. A halo of color lights up around the painting as he looks at it.

Eric stares at the picture and shakes his head.

ERIC

No, but how... it can't be
her.

MARA (UNSEEN) (VOICE OVER)

But why couldn't it be me?

Eric turns around frantically, to see the source of the voice. The camera pans to show the dark-haired woman standing in his room, looking at him.

Eric lets out a cry of surprise. His eyes go wide as he looks at her.

ERIC

It's you... but how? Who are you?!

MARA

You called me Mara. You named me yourself. Don't you remember?

Eric stares at her, unable to answer.

MARA

It's been so long. I guess you've forgotten when you played with me as a child, and all the ideas for games and stories I gave you...

Eric shakes his head.

ERIC

No, this isn't happening. You're not real. You're not here...!

MARA

You couldn't see me when you got older, but you still listened when I inspired you with your art. And now your artistic sight has gotten stronger and you can see me again. I've been waiting for you for so long... there's so much I want to show you, Eric.

Eric cradles his head in his hands. His eyes are starting to water up and his face is red with his panic.

ERIC

No, you're not here. I'm not crazy. I don't want to be like van Gogh...

Mara comes closer to Eric. She stands near him, but does

not touch him. She then bends down to whisper in his ear. Her voice is soft and caring.

MARA

You're not crazy. You're just finally able to see again. Your special sight has opened up your eyes and now you can see more. It's been driving your art, and now I want to help you do more with it. Please, just accept it...

ERIC

No, I can't. You can't be here...

MARA

Eric, I don't want to hurt you. I'm only here to help, to inspire you. I've been with you all along, you just weren't able to see me... But if you want I can go. I will be there when you're ready.

Eric doesn't reply, he just lets out a low moan. Mara gives him a sad look, then she disappears in a flash of light. Eric stays like he is for several moments. After several moments of silence, he finally dares to look. He opens his eyes and raises his head to look around. He blinks his eyes in disbelief, then rubs them, to make sure she's really gone. He happens to look down at the old painting of Mara again and he lets out a long sigh.

INT. PROFESSOR ARKIN'S OFFICE - LATER MORNING

Eric is in Professor Arkin's office, showing her several of his new art pieces. He's brought his notebook with his marker work, but also a couple of his paintings. He looks a little nervous as he watches Professor Arkin look at them.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

These are pretty good Eric,
and you said you've just

started working on art again?

ERIC

Yes, just in these past couple of weeks.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Then that's even more impressive, that you were able to pick up from where you were so many years ago. You have quite a gift, Eric.

ERIC

Are you sure?

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Of course! Why do you even have to ask me that? Your work is still rough in spots, and you could use some formal training. However, you've already shown that you have an understanding of the basics and you've established some of your own style, even if it does borrow from expressionism. I really think you should take an art course next semester.

ERIC

Thanks, but I don't know...

PROFESSOR ARKIN

You aren't interested in the class anymore?

ERIC

No, it's not that, it's just that I've been a little worried about the art... I've really loved getting back into it, but it's been taking a lot of my time. I'm worried that I'm getting obsessed with it.

Professor Arkin lets out a chuckle, a warm little bit of laughter, not making fun of him.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Is that's what's bugging you?
That's nothing to worry
about. You've just
rediscovered a creative
talent which you'd thought
you'd forgotten. It's no
wonder that you'd be so
focused on it... Are you
having problems in class
because of it? We can do
something about that.

ERIC

Well some, but I think I've
got that mostly under
control. I just worry that
art is becoming too much a
part of my life, that it
might take everything over.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

You're looking at it from the
wrong angle Eric. Art and the
rest of life shouldn't be
opposed to one another.
They're both important. There
are other things that need to
be done, but art is what
makes life more exciting and
worthwhile, the way it shows
us how to look at life and
think of things in different
ways, the way it shows us how
to see things...

Eric eyes snaps to attention, catching the last of her comments.

ERIC

You're right about that. It
has shown me how to look
differently at things. I
really liked that, and I've
loved the feeling of taking

what I see and how I feel and getting it out in a picture. That's a rush, but I'm worried that it might be too much for me...

PROFESSOR ARKIN

What do you mean, Eric?

ERIC

Remember when we were talking about different artists and I'd asked you about van Gogh? Do you think he had to suffer how he did to make his art?

Professor Arkin's expression turns to one of concern as she looks at Eric.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Eric, is something going on? Is there something you need help with?

Eric is silent. He hesitates to respond to her, as if he's thinking of what to say. He finally answers back.

ERIC

No, it's nothing...

Eric then stands up to leave. Professor Arkin grabs his arm and holds it for a moment, before she lets him go.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

I want you to know Eric, that if you do have a problem, whatever it is, that you can come to me. I will be here for you if you need any help.

ERIC

Thank you, professor...

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Eric, you've got a rare gift and you need to take care of that. Whatever problems

you're having, they can be
worked out...

Eric says nothing and he leaves her office, leaving
Professor Arkin looking concerned and confused.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - AFTERNOON

Eric wanders through the campus in an aimless pattern. He
looks confused and upset.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. COLLEGE APARTMENT, KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Eric comes home and pauses in the kitchen. He yells out to
see if his roommate is home.

ERIC

Hey John, are you home yet?

Hearing nothing, Eric makes his way into the living room,
then he looks down the hallway at his closed door. He stops
and hesitates as he looks at it. He finally lets out a long
sigh and walks to the door. He opens the door slowly and
looks in.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM

Eric looks in his room and lets out his breath when he sees
that it is empty. He drops his backpack beside his desk and
sits down at his desk chair. He looks down at the picture
of Mara which is still there. He closes his eyes and takes
several deep breaths.

MARA

Are you feeling better now
Eric? Are you ready to talk
to me yet?

Eric's body gives a slight jerk in surprise, but he does

not scream this time. He opens his eyes to see Mara standing in front of him again. He looks at her for a few moments, before speaking.

ERIC

Who are you? Why are you here?

MARA

When you were a small child, your parent's called me your imaginary friend, but as you grew older I became something else. The Greeks and Romans would call me your muse.

ERIC

I've read about that in my art history class. They were seen as almost goddesses back then, but now muses aren't considered real, they're a concept, they're part of an artist's...

MARA

Part of an artist's mind, the creative part to be exact, right?

Mara smiles at Eric, who still looks confused.

ERIC

Yes, but...

MARA

Can you remember how you reacted when you started seeing the colors which helped you paint?

ERIC

I think I tried to explain them to my parents once, but they didn't understand it.

MARA

But you could see those

colors, even if nobody else could, and they didn't bother you, right?

ERIC

No, but that's different. I realized the colors just were accenting things, bringing my attention to something interesting, or something I cared about.

MARA

So why is it so hard to believe that you can see me now, just like those colors?

ERIC

But you're not here, you're not real...

MARA

Please don't be so mean Eric.

Mara gives him a smile at that.

MARA

You have dreams which you know aren't happening, or thoughts you don't voice, but you don't call attention to those parts of your mind and you aren't upset because they aren't real in a physical sense do you?

ERIC

No, but I shouldn't be seeing you. I don't want to be crazy.

MARA

You're not crazy Eric. You know that I'm not physically here, and I'm not going to tell you anything or try to get you do something crazy.

ERIC

But I shouldn't be seeing
you...

MARA

You can see me because you've
been given this special gift
of sight and it's allowed you
to come back to your art so
far so fast. Now that you can
see me, it means you're ready
to go further with it. You
don't want the colors or the
art to go away again, do you?

ERIC

No, of course not!

MARA

Then I guess you're stuck
with me. No I'm not going to
drive you crazy, but I will
be there to help you with
your art. I can give you
ideas, and like muses do, I
can inspire you. I can always
go away again, or at least
stay invisible, but if you
want help with your art, then
I'm here. Do you want to do
more with your art?

ERIC

Yeah, but I worry that I'm
getting too caught up in it.
I need to keep up with
schoolwork. I don't want to
be obsessed or pushed too far.

MARA

I'm not a demon or an angel
Eric. I'm part of your mind.
You brought me back, when you
decided to pursue your art
again and opened up yourself
to your abilities. I will
give you ideas and
inspiration, and I can be

insistent at times, but I will never push you any further than you want to be.

ERIC

You almost sound like my girlfriend...

He chuckles at that and Mara laughs back with him.

MARA

Well, I can't quite be like that for you, but I will share the ecstasy of creation with you. You will still need other people, so I will be a kind mistress to you. But you can't always keep me from whispering in your ear when you're busy with other things. Sometimes the creative urge just comes.

Eric smiles at her and she returns his smile. A couple moments later, his expression darks and he looks concerned, as if he's thought of something else.

ERIC

Okay, that's all well and good and all. I guess it's okay seeing you, as long as I know you're not a ghost or that I'm going crazy. Still, I can't go around having conversations with an imaginary friend. I'm no longer a little kid and I don't want people thinking I'm going insane.

MARA

It doesn't have to be like that. We can talk in your mind, without needing to speak. You can think of it as a vivid daydream, but nobody

else needs to know. It's all for you anyway.

ERIC

Well that's better, I don't need to worry about when my roommate is going to come home and catch me talking to myself then.

They laugh again. Eric hears a voice behind him.

JOHN (VOICE OVER)

Hey dude, are you awake...

Eric blinks as he lifts his head up. Mara disappears in another flash of color and Eric appears as if he's been having a daydream. He looks at John, who laughs at him.

JOHN

Are you awake now?

ERIC

Yeah, sorry I guess I was just lost in my thoughts... I was thinking about a big project.

JOHN

Okay, whatever. I don't want to cook tonight so I was just thinking of ordering delivery from the Chinese kitchen, and I wondered if you wanted to get in on an order.

ERIC

Yeah, that sounds good.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. ERIC'S DREAM

Eric is dreaming again. He's back in the space which symbolizes his old room and has now morphed into more of an

artist's studio. The walls are no longer gray, instead they have large patches and swatches of colors on them, like someone had splattered the wall with lots of paint, from different sized brushes.

Eric is standing there, in front of a blank canvas, as Mara stands beside him.

ERIC

Okay, I'm here what do you have in mind.

MARA

Ah, so you're ready now are you?

Eric grins at her.

ERIC

I said I was listening, so what do you have for me now?

MARA

Well, how about this?

Mara leans in and whispers to Eric. His faces lights up with her unheard words. He grabs the brush and takes on a look of purpose as he begins to paint on the canvas. His strokes bring wild colors to the empty canvas, much more than would be possible in reality, as he covers the board very quickly and a picture begins to form.

MONTAGE SCENES

Show another montage of Eric's work progressing as he gets comfortable with talking with Mara and he tries to balance out his art with his schoolwork.

Eric does more artwork, sometimes with Mara looking on, but sometimes by himself. He is also seen going to lectures. He looks like he's trying to pay attention, but he does draw some doodles in his notebook some of the time. His notebook sketches are getting better all the time too.

One of the times Eric is doing a painting, John walks by

his room, on the way to his own room. He sticks his head in to give a bit of friendly sarcasm.

JOHN

Hey dude, don't spend all your time at the art. Remember you've still got to hit the books to.

ERIC

I know. The next round of tests are coming up, and I'm going to be ready for them. I'm allowed to have some fun too.

JOHN

Heh, I know. Let me know if you need more help with Chemistry too.

ERIC

Sure, that would be good thanks.

Eric is shown making some time for schoolwork too. He's seen sitting at his desk reading books a few times. Mara whispers in his ear once when he's in the middle of homework and he shakes his head at her. He does more schoolwork and classes, and then show him back at the books and she whispers in his ear again. He smiles at her, puts away the book and goes and does some art. His face shows the concentration as he works, but he also smiles at it.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eric is in his room, working on another panting. Mara stands beside him and watches him work.

MARA

Now aren't you glad that you've listened to me?

ERIC

Yes, I can't believe what

you've showed me so far. The art is flowing even better now.

MARA

Your work is getting stronger and it's easier to inspire you now.

Mara makes a gesture with her hand towards the painting. An area on the canvas is illuminated with a familiar halo or color. Eric nods at it. He moves his brush there and starts to work on a feature of the image in that area.

ERIC

It's been really good having you for my inspiration. Thank you.

MARA

You're welcome, but I need to thank you as well. I live to inspire it feels good when you listen to me and I see the work you create that I helped form.

ERIC

So you get the same rush that I do from the art?

MARA

Of course, I told you I'm part of you, part of your mind. I was asleep for so long, and now it feels good to be back with you.

ERIC

It's still a little weird to see you, but I'm glad you came back too. I hadn't realized how much I'd missed my art, until I started again. So I'm glad you're here now... as long as you don't get too pushy.

Eric glances at her and smiles. His words come out with a chuckle. Mara grins and laughs back at him.

MARA

Hey, I've been good haven't I? I've let you keep at your work, and you've got it all done right?

ERIC

Yeah, you've been behaving.

MARA

Just as long as you give me some attention, I won't get too jealous.

The continue chuckling at each other.

Then Eric glances back at the books on his desk, and then at his alarm clock. It reads 12:10, after midnight.

ERIC

And speaking of getting work done, I should get too bed soon...

MARA

Just another half an hour...

ERIC

Okay, you win this time.

He smiles at her again. She leans in to whisper in his ear, again without touching him. His face registers inspiration at the unheard idea and he picks up his pace at working on the painting.

ERIC

I still don't know if I'll ever get used to that, but I really like it when you surprise me like that... as long as I'm not too busy.

MARA

I imagine most artists feel

that way. At least that's what I'd gather from everything we've heard about it and read for your classes. I like seeing you respond to my suggestions too, Eric.

ERIC

That reminds me, I need to think about taking an art class next semester. I think that'd be a lot of fun. How do you think I'd do?

MARA

Well, you did enjoy a lot of your art classes in your early schooling. There were a couple of bumps in the later years though, when you got better at it. The teacher wanted you to do things her way, but you had your own vision... I guess I'm a little to blame for that.

Mara giggles at that.

ERIC

Hmmm, well I hope it will be better in college.

MARA

You will have to learn their rules for some things, but some formal training might help you out. It would be interesting to see what they have you do anyway. Besides, if you get into life drawing, that could be fun. You'd get to paint some naked ladies...

Eric stops the work on the painting and turns to look at her with an incredulous expression on his face. Mara just

chuckles at him.

MARA

Oh come on, you can't tell me the idea hasn't crossed your mind. I know you've liked some of the nudes in your textbooks, and even though you've laughed it off when your friends mentioned it, you still were curious. Besides, I know you've looked at some magazines too... If you wanted I might even pose for you...

ERIC

What... Are you supposed to do that?

MARA

Eric, I'm your inspiration and where do you think fantasies come from? You don't have to hide them from me. You can use them to help you express all kinds of ideas. I know you still think of Kathy too, I could help with those feelings too...

Eric stiffens up at the mention of Kathy and his expression grows very dark and serious.

ERIC

Don't talk about her!

MARA

Okay. Calm down, Eric. I know how you feel. We don't have to talk about her now.

Mara whispers in his ear again and Eric relaxes. He then turns his attention back to the painting.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. COLLEGE APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Eric and John are hanging out on the couch and watching TV.

JOHN

Well, you've been pretty busy lately. I haven't seen you out of your room much.

ERIC

I know. There's the tests to prepare for and I've been working on my art more.

JOHN

You really love it, don't you?

ERIC

Yeah, I know it's hard to explain, but I just love being able to create things.

JOHN

That's cool. It's been good to see you happier this semester, dude.

ERIC

Thanks, it feels really good too...

Eric lets out a groan and bends over as his hand goes to his head.

JOHN

Are you okay?

Eric lets out a few deep breaths and groans again, before he replies.

ERIC

Oh man. I just got a killer headache. Ow! I think I'll be okay, it just came on so quickly.

INT. BATHROOM - CONT.

Eric gets up and goes into the bathroom. He grabs a bottle of headache medication. He takes a couple of pills with a swig of water, then heads back to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONT.

Eric sits back down on the couch. John is watching him with some concern, but his expression eases up when he sees Eric looking a little better.

ERIC

I'm okay.

JOHN

Okay, you had me worried there for a bit, especially since you don't get sick that easily.

ERIC

I must just have stayed up too late last night. I'll have to crash earlier tonight.

John nods at him and they go back to watching TV. Eric has a look of dull pain on his face, but he appears to be feeling better.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eric walks into his room with the bottle of headache medication and a glass of water. He takes a couple more pills from the bottle and washes it down with some of the water, leaving water left in the glass. He kicks off his pants and gets into bed to go to sleep.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

ERIC'S DREAM

Eric hears snippets of repeated conversation, remembered from when the neurologist was talking to him and his parents when he was in the hospital several years ago. The scene is dark at first, but then it resolves itself to a setting similar to the neurologist's office, though the setting is still mostly gray.

Eric sees the neurologist standing before him, he then looks down and sees the bottle of his seizure medication in his hands.

ERIC

No, I don't want this. It took away my art.

NEUROLOGIST

This is serious son. We don't know much about the growth in your head. It could get bigger and get dangerous. If you don't stop the seizures we don't know what could happen to you.

ERIC

But I don't want to give up the colors I see or the inspiration I've found.

Eric looks over and sees that Mara is standing near them now. He calls to her but she stands there silently.

ERIC

Mara, tell him about the gift you've shown me. Tell him about my art...

NEUROLOGIST

Perhaps it's a curse. If you don't get treatment you could be in bad shape.

ERIC

But I don't want to lose my art again.

NEUROLOGIST

Are you willing to die for
it? Like van Gogh?!

ERIC

No... I don't know... I don't
want this...!

Eric stares back at the neurologist and a look of rage crosses his face. He takes the bottle of medication and throws it down on the floor. It disappears in a cloud of smoke. Eric then screams as he brings his hands up to cradle his head and he collapses to his knees. He lets out another groan of pain. The screen cuts to black.

ERIC'S ROOM - THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Eric wakes up with a start and a strangled scream caught in his throat. He snaps on his bedside light and sits up. He gets out of bed and goes to his desk. He looks through the desk drawers before he finally finds the bottle of his seizure medication. He stares at it for several long moments.

MARA (UNSEEN) (VOICE OVER)

I know you're worried Eric...

Eric turns to see Mara. His expression is dark again.

ERIC

You knew about this?!

MARA

No, no more than you did. You put it out of your mind and wanted to forget about it when your art came back. It's just like you forgot about your art for all those years while you were on the medication.

ERIC

But you wanted me to go off
it didn't you, and to stay
off it?

MARA

No Eric, I was still waking up then. You made the decision when you first thought of your art again. I can inspire you, but I can't make you do anything you don't want to. You know that.

ERIC

So now what do we do. Do I have to go back on it again?

MARA

That might be the safest way.

ERIC

But I don't want to lose my art again, not now after I've gotten it back. I don't want to lose all the colors, the inspiration... I don't want to lose you.

MARA

And I don't want to go to sleep again, to be nothing more than a memory of a dream, but we may not have that choice.

ERIC

It's not fair...

MARA

Life usually isn't it. You just have to take the times when it comes up in your favor and enjoy them while you can.

ERIC

I don't want to have to go back to the doctors. They don't understand about any of this.

MARA

I know, but it might be for the best. We need to keep you healthy.

ERIC

What happens if I do start taking it again. Will everything dry up like before.

MARA

I think so.

ERIC

So I wouldn't see you again?

MARA

No, I could only talk to you in some dreams, and then you probably wouldn't remember.

ERIC

No, I don't want to be alone again.

MARA

You have your friends...

ERIC

You know what I mean, and I know you don't want it either... And the art, I wouldn't have that any more either?

MARA

You could try to keep at it, but it wouldn't be like it is now for you. It would be like when you were first trying it out again. You'd be all rough and you'd need to learn it all again. You could take some classes maybe, but it would be slow. You wouldn't

come as fast as you have with the gift, it would be hard for you.

ERIC

No, I can't start over like that, especially if I can remember how it used to be and I might never get there again...

MARA

I'm sorry Eric.

ERIC

What happens if I don't go back to it, how bad could it get?

MARA

You know neither of us knows the answer to that Eric. Only the doctors can tell you.

ERIC

But maybe it's just the headaches. I could learn to live with that, maybe they wouldn't be so bad.

Eric groans again and touches his forehead.

ERIC

Dammit, not now!

MARA

It could be getting worse... do you want to risk it.

ERIC

I don't know...

Eric lets out another moan and curls up on his side on the bed. Mara lays down next to him, but again she doesn't actually touch him. She does lean in to whisper into his ear again though. Eric's expression looks less pained and he closes his eyes with a long sigh.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - MORNING

Eric comes awake with a sleepy groan. He finally gets up and feels his head. He doesn't do it with the same pained insistence as the night before though. He looks to be feeling a little better.

He stops to take another long look at the bottle of his seizure medication, but he finally picks up the bottle of headache medication instead. He takes another couple of pills and washes them down with the rest of the water in the glass on his desk.

ERIC

Maybe it will be okay...

INT. CLASSROOM

Eric is in another lecture. He is paying attention to the professor and taking good notes. He then lets out a stifled groan and grabs his head once again. A couple of nearby students look over at him, first with annoyance, then with some concern. Eric waves them off and grabs the bottle of headache medication and swallows more pills. He takes three of them that time. He grimaces at having to swallow them dry.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - LATE MORNING OR AFTERNOON

Eric walks across the college grounds looking deep in thought and very concerned. The day is sunny and bright and the trees are all decked out in colors, just past the time of peak fall foliage. Other students are walking along talking in small groups and most everyone looks to be having a good day, but Eric ignores them.

INT. STUDENT UNION STUDY ROOM - AFTERNOON

Eric meets with Kathy in an empty room. Eric looks tired and a little sick.

ERIC

Thanks for meeting me Kathy.
I needed to talk to someone.

KATHY

No problem, what's up? You
don't look very good.

ERIC

No, I didn't get much sleep
last night and I'm not
feeling good. Somethings
wrong, I think I'm sick,
something serious...

Kathy looks concerned as she talks to Eric.

KATHY

What is it? If it's that bad
you need to see a doctor,
what are you doing here?

ERIC

I know, but it's not that
simple. It's something I did,
something I didn't want to
admit, and something I don't
want to be true...

KATHY

Eric, what are you talking
about? You're starting to
scare me!

ERIC

You know how much you love
acting? What if you couldn't
do it anymore?

KATHY

What do you mean? What's that got to do with it?

ERIC

What if you were sick and you knew you needed to get better, but the only way you could do that was if it took away your acting?

KATHY

But that doesn't make sense, how could getting sick affect that?

ERIC

I can't explain it. I don't really know. I think that's the way it is though. Somehow the same thing that's making me good art art again, is making me sick.

KATHY

But that's impossible... Eric, please tell me you're joking.

Eric shakes his head and looks at her with a pained expression.

ERIC

No, I wish it wasn't this way. I wish I hadn't gone and found my art again, only to have to lose it again. It's not fair!

KATHY

But you don't know that for sure, do you?

ERIC

I think so. It's all

happening again. I got sick before, which is why I had to stop the last time. I don't want to lose it Kathy. You know what it feels like to create like that. I don't want to lose the colors again...

Eric lets out a groan and winces. He puts his hand up to his head.

KATHY

Are you okay? We need to get you to the doctor now!

Eric shakes his head, but his face is showing his pain, even though he tries to hide it.

ERIC

No, not yet. I can hold out. I don't want to lose it, not yet.

KATHY

This could be serious Eric, is it worth risking it?

ERIC

What would you do if you had to give it up? Could you do it? Would you want to?

Kathy stares at him with an uncertain and concerned look on her face. She does not answer him.

Then Eric groans again, this time louder. A moment later his moans begin to tremble and his body starts to shake. He is then caught in the grips of a seizure. He falls out of the chair and lies on the floor as his body convulses. Kathy reaches for him.

KATHY

Eric, what's wrong? Eric please talk to me! You've got

to be okay!

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Eric is lying in hospital bed. A doctor is in the room talking with him. The doctor is a different one than the neurologist in the earlier scenes.

DOCTOR

How are you feeling?

ERIC

My head still hurts, but not as much as it did. I feel a little dizzy though.

Eric tries to sit up and lets out a moan and then lies back down.

DOCTOR

That's to be expected, but you're doing much better now that we've got you stabilized. You had us worried there for awhile, especially when we look at your cat-scan results.

The doctor is holding a copy of the cat-scan, along with some other medical files. It shows the growth in Eric's head is bigger than the first cat scan in the earlier scene. Eric stares numbly at it.

DOCTOR

We didn't know what to make of that at first. Luckily I was able to pull up your file and get your old records from your hospital back home. I spoke to the neurologist who worked on your case too.

ERIC

Am I going to be okay?

DOCTOR

We think so. We were both worried that the growth has reasserted itself, but we can increase the dosage of your medication to combat that. We've given you some in your IV already and the initial responses look good.

Eric frowns slightly at hearing that, but the doctor doesn't pay any attention to it.

DOCTOR

You're damn lucky you were with someone when you had your seizure. One that big could have been serious, especially if you were alone. Your friend may have saved your life by calling the ambulance. It's also lucky that we caught the growth in time. We're going to have to monitor it more closely from now on, even if you do respond well to medication this time.

ERIC

It's not fair...

DOCTOR

I know son. I see a lot of people who life holds out luck on. There's a good chance we can help you out and you'll get better though.

Eric doesn't reply, he just lays there looking sad. The doctor pauses a few moments, then excuses himself.

DOCTOR

Well I'll let you get some rest. Your parents have been

notified and they'll be hear
in the morning. We can talk
more then. In the meantime,
there is someone else who
would like to see you quickly.

The doctor turns to leave and when he opens the door, he
lets Kathy in the room. She looks nervous, but her
expression shows relief when she sees Eric is awake. She
goes to stand next to his bed.

KATHY

Eric, I'm glad you're okay.
You really scared me there.

ERIC

I know, I'm sorry Kathy. You
were right, I should have
gone to the doctors earlier,
but I didn't want to admit
what it meant.

KATHY

They told me a little bit of
what's going on. It's a tumor
in your head?

ERIC

No, not quite, it's different
than that, but it might as
well be. It's not cancer, but
it is a growth that's making
me sick, as well as...

KATHY

That's what let you do your
art?! Is that what you were
talking about?

ERIC

Yes, I know it doesn't make
any sense. I don't bother
trying to explain it; nobody
gets it, but I thought you
might understand.

KATHY

So it was giving you hallucinations, and allowing you to paint so well? If you weren't here in the hospital, I don't think I would believe you.

ERIC

I know, but now can you see what I was trying to tell you. It made me sick, but it was also a gift. If you had that power, would you want to give it up, like with your acting?

KATHY

So you knew you were going to get sick?

ERIC

Not at first, but I guess I wasn't thinking, I just remembered doing my art and I wanted to be able to get back there.

A look of realization flashes across Kathy's face.

KATHY

Wait, they said it had started growing again, even though you were on medication. Did you stop taking it, did you do it on purpose?

ERIC

Yes... I didn't realize how big a risk it was at first, but then I couldn't give it up. I didn't want to lose it, what I could see, and what I could show with my art.

KATHY

So it was worth risking your

life over?

ERIC

What would you have done
Kathy? If it was your
creative gift, would you have
been so ready to give it up?

Kathy stares back at him and doesn't respond for several moments. She finally reaches out to place her hand on his arm.

KATHY

I don't know Eric... I'm
sorry you had to make that
choice. I just want you to
get better now... You've got
a lot of friends who care
about you, you know.

They look at each other in silence for a few more minutes,
until a nurse opens the door.

NURSE

I'm sorry to break things up,
but he really needs his rest.
You can visit with him some
more tomorrow.

KATHY

Okay... Good night Eric,
you'll be okay...

The nurse shuts the door after Kathy leaves, leaving Eric alone in the room. When the door shuts, he sees Mara standing in the corner of the room. He calls to her but she doesn't move, she just stares at him with a sad look on her face. She looks weak and unable to move.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Eric and his parents sit in the office of the second

doctor. He has some new cat-scans hanging up on the wall, which show the growth in Eric's head has shrunk again.

DOCTOR

Once again Eric has shown marked improvement in response to the new dosage of medication.

ERIC'S FATHER

But how do we know this won't happen again?

DOCTOR

We don't, which is why I'd like to do periodic cat scans to check Eric's condition, to make sure the drugs are still working. Other than that, I think Eric is okay to be discharged.

ERIC'S MOTHER

That sound good, but can we schedule them at the hospital back home too? Eric's going to be taking some time off from school.

ERIC

No Mom, we talked about this and I want to try and finish up this semester. I can catch up and I don't want to get behind. Besides, I don't want to be stuck at home feeling like an invalid.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Hon, I don't think that's such a good idea.

ERIC'S FATHER

Ruth, he's getting to be an adult, I think we should let him make his decision, as

long as the doctor's okay
with it.

DOCTOR

I think that's okay. As I
said, he's doing well enough
now to be discharged, and as
long as we keep an eye on
things, he should be okay.
Getting back to work might be
the best thing for him.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Oh okay...

ERIC'S FATHER

I'm proud of you son.

ERIC

Thanks.

MONTAGE SCENES

Eric is shown back on campus, going through his daily life. He does schoolwork at home and goes to lectures. He does it all in a daze though and does not show any happiness or excitement. He walks through the college campus and pays no attention to the scenery. The day is cold and gray, with a cloudy sky and the trees have lost a lot of their leaves.

INT. COLLEGE APARTMENT - EVENING

Eric and John are watching TV again.

JOHN

So how are you doing with
everything? Are you catching
up with work okay?

ERIC

Yeah. Thanks again for the
help on Chemistry. That
helped a lot.

JOHN

Sure thing, dude. Hey, I haven't seen you working on any art lately? Are you too busy for that.

Eric lets out a sigh.

ERIC

No, it's just that after being in the hospital, I haven't been able to do it as well...

JOHN

Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't know it affected you that way... Well I hope you'll get to feeling better and get back to it. I'm just glad you're okay dude. You got everyone all freaked out.

ERIC

Yeah, thanks...

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM

Eric is in his art history class. At the end of the lecture, Professor Arkin calls out to him.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Eric, could you stay after class for a moment.

She waits until the other students have left before continuing.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

How are you doing Eric? I heard some of what happened and I wanted to make sure you were okay.

ERIC

Yeah, I'm okay.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

I'm glad to hear it, and not just because you're one of my promising students.

She gives Eric a smile, but he doesn't return it. He gives her a depressed look.

ERIC

I haven't been able to work on any art since I got sick... The way things are going, I don't think I'll be able to.

Eric taps the side of his head to indicate what he means. Professor Arkin gives him a concerned look.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Oh Eric, I'm so sorry. I didn't realize that... So you can't do anything?

ERIC

I don't think so. I've tried and nothing works.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

Give it some time, maybe it will get better.

ERIC

No, I don't think so. It's just too hard and nothing's coming out

PROFESSOR ARKIN'

You could still try and art class next semester, that might help you re-learn things.

ERIC

I don't think I could deal with that. It's not just

starting over from scratch.
The spark's gone and nothings
there. I think it would just
feel empty trying to do it
again.

Professor Arkin looks at him for several moments, unsure of
what to say, before she finally responds.

PROFESSOR ARKIN

I'm so sorry Eric. I don't
know what it must be like for
you right now, but I do know
how much love you showed for
your art. I'm sorry you had
to lose it... I know it's got
to be tough right now, but
give it time and think it
over. Maybe you can get some
of it back.

ERIC

I don't know...

Eric finally turns to leave, but as he's walking out the
door, he adds one thing.

ERIC

Thank you...

INT. COLLEGE PUB - EVENING

Eric and the guys, John, Jason and Dan are out at the
college pub again.

JASON

Hey Eric, it's good to see
you again.

DAN

Yeah, welcome back to the
land of the living.

ERIC

Heh, thanks guys.

DAN

Serious though, we're all glad that you're okay. It sounded pretty scary

ERIC

It was... Thanks again.

JOHN

Well that doesn't mean that we're going to go easy on you at the games though...

They laugh, even Eric, who looks to be having some fun in the moment. They get down to another game of table football.

They play a couple of games and then Kathy shows up. She and Eric end up talking alone together, away from the guys.

KATHY

How are you doing Eric?

ERIC

I'm okay, I'm feeling better and getting caught up on school again...

KATHY

That's not what I meant. How are you doing with everything else?

ERIC

Well, I can't make art anymore, so I've had to give that up, again. That feels kind of empty, but at least I'm alive, right?

KATHY

You shouldn't joke about that Eric. I know what you lost, but your health is still important.

ERIC

I know, but with my art gone

again, everything seems so dull. I feel like I'm sleepwalking. I wonder how much life is worth without it...?

KATHY

Don't even say that Eric! You've still got a lot that matters, and there are people who care about you. Don't forget that.

ERIC

Okay. Look, I'm still taking my medication, so you don't have to worry about that, but it's still a lot to lose. I thought you'd at least understand.

KATHY

Oh Eric, I think I do, and I worry about you. Please be okay.

She gives Eric a hug, which he accepts kind of stiffly.

ERIC

I'll try...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eric sits in his room. He's going through his old art and looking at it. He comes to a recent picture he painted of Mara and he stares at it.

ERIC

I miss you so much Mara...

He then looks over at the bottle of his new medication, which is sitting on his desk. He grabs it and throws it against the back wall of his desk. It crashes against it

with a loud rattle, but does not shatter.

ERIC

Dammit, it's not fair!

Eric is scowling at the medicine bottle, where it landed on his desk when his roommate John stick his head in his room.

JOHN

Hey dude, I forgot to mention it earlier, but I'm going to be gone for the weekend tomorrow.

ERIC

Uh, okay.

JOHN

Well, I uh, wanted to make sure you'd be okay... with you just having been in the hospital and all...

ERIC

I'm not a cripple! I'm okay, I'll be alright.

JOHN

Okay. I'm sorry I brought it up.

ERIC

No, that's okay... Thanks for watching my back.

JOHN

Sure, well good night.

ERIC

Yeah, good night.

John leaves his room and leaves Eric alone again. Eric turns his attention back to the medicine bottle and stares at it some more.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - MORNING

Eric gets up and goes about his normal routine as he wakes up. When he gets to his desk, his attention falls to the bottle of his medication once again. He picks it up and looks at it.

ERIC

I've got the weekend, that
could be enough time...

Eric gets a determined expression on his face and he puts the bottle back down on his desk. He grabs his backpack and heads out of the apartment.

MONTAGE SCENES

Show a few more scenes of Eric passing the time during the day at school. He walks across the campus grounds looking hopeful and determined. He tries making some more sketches in his notebook during one of his lectures. It doesn't come out as anything, but he still looks determined.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eric is back in his room. He has his art supplies out again and he's trying to work on some art. He tries working in his art book with pencils and markers, but there is still nothing coming together for him. He looks a little annoyed at first, but then the look of determination returns. He turns to another page and tries again. Eric finally falls asleep with the art supplies all around him on his bed and the art book across his chest.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - MORNING

Eric wakes up slowly, at a leisurely pace. He sees the art supplies all around him and he turns his attention back to them. He opens his art book and starts working on it again.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - ALL DAY, MONTAGE

Eric is shown working through the day. He takes a quick break to get some quick food for lunch, which he eats in his room, then he goes back to working on the book. Eric's hair is still partly messy from sleep, and he didn't change his clothes from what he had been wearing the previous day and had slept in.

Late in the afternoon or evening, he's still working on it.

ERIC

Come on, I don't have a lot
of time...

As he's talking to himself, Eric sees a pale flicker of color. It flashes near his pencil. Eric watches and then he sees another small flicker appear on the page.

ERIC

All right, that's it...

Eric sees a couple more flickers of color and they guide his hands over the page of the art book. He makes another attempt at drawing some more and the lines flow a little easier from him. His drawing is still rough, but things are coming back to him.

He draws a few more pages in the book. He is shown working on them as the montage continues and the sun's light as seen from the window slowly fades.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - NIGHT

It is night and the sky is dark as seen through the windows in Eric's room. He's turned on his light. He looks happy and determined as he sets up his easel and gets out his

paints. He stands in front of the easel with the paintbrush in his hand and pauses as he looks at the canvas. He then hears Mara's voice behind him.

MARA (UNSEEN)

Eric, what are you doing?

Eric turns to see Mara standing beside him. He looks happy and relieved to see her again.

ERIC

Mara, it's so good to see you. I've missed you so much!

MARA

I've missed you too Eric, but you shouldn't be doing this. You know how dangerous it could be, especially after what happened last time...

ERIC

I know, but I couldn't leave things the way they were. I couldn't just lose my art like that. I couldn't lose you like that...

MARA

So you want to risk getting hurt again, or worse?!

ERIC

I have to. I needed some way to say good-bye. It's just for the weekend, then I can stop. I should be okay.

MARA

That's still a big risk to take.

ERIC

I know, but I need to do this. You know that. Besides, aren't you the one who's supposed to be inspiring me?

Eric offers Mara a weak grin, and she manages a small smile back at him.

MARA

I still worry about you, but yes of course, I can do that too. We need to be careful, Eric.

ERIC

I will be. I think I know how long I can push it. That doesn't matter now though. We don't have a lot of time... So, do you know what I want to paint.

Mara's smile grows more genuine and she nods at Eric.

MARA

Of course, you know I do.

She leans in and whispers in his ear. She still does not touch him, but she gets just almost close enough to do so. Eric's face brightens as she whispers to him, then he looks determined again as he starts to paint on the canvas.

Eric paints all through the night. Mara stands beside him, watching him paint and occasionally saying something to him or pointing to something on the canvas. Eric adds in a detail to the painting when she gives him those clues. Mara looks happy and proud at seeing him work on the paintings, under her inspiration.

Eric looks tired at points, but he pushes on and then gets more energy. He also brings his hand up to hold his head once or twice. Mara looks worried for him, but then relaxes when he recovers and goes back to painting.

Eric finishes two paintings in the span of the night.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - MORNING

Eric has been painting all night, with Mara at his side. He looks worn out and disheveled, as he hasn't changed clothes in a couple of days. He is at work on a third painting. The painting is not finished, but it is most of the way there

and there are enough details to see what it is going to be. The painting shows Eric, looking sad and reflective.

A phone rings off in another room, but Eric ignores it.

Eric lets out a groan and brings his hand to his head again, as another headache hits him. Mara looks more concerned at that.

MARA

Eric, they're getting worse.
You need to stop now.

ERIC

No, I can't. I'm so close.
I've almost got it all out.

MARA

Please just take a break
then. I want you to be okay.

ERIC

We're running out of time. I
just need to push through it
and get this done. Then I can
let it go. Please stay with
me.

MARA

Okay...

Eric makes a few more brush strokes on the painting. He then lets out another groan. Mara gets a shocked and scared expression on her face.

MARA

Eric, we're too late...

Eric turns and looked at her with a confused expression, for a moment, then his body goes rigid. A big seizure hits him and his groan turns into a modulated moan as his body shakes. This is the biggest seizure he has had and the throes of his body shows that. He finally collapses and falls to the floor. He lies there motionless and he looks much worse than the previous times. This time he looks dead.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

The phone in the living room is ringing again. The answering machine picks up.

ANSWERING MACHINE (JOHN'S VOICE)

Hey, this is Eric and John's place. You know the drill...
(beep).

KATHY (VOICE OVER)

Eric, this is Kathy. If you're there, please pick up. I know John's gone for the weekend and that you've been feeling bad about things, so I just want to make sure you're okay. Please call me back.

The camera moves from the answering machine to track a path down the hall, toward the open door to Eric's room.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - DAY

The camera enters Eric's room, to show Eric's body sprawled out on the floor, lying dead in front of the easel. Mara is sitting next to him, looking sad. She's cradling Eric's body in her arms. She can touch him now.

The camera pans up to show the view out the window. A single brown leaf is left on the tree outside, all the others have fallen off. As the camera watches, that leaf is caught by a gust of wind and it falls off as well.

FADE OUT:

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - DAY (ALTERNATE ENDING)

Note: I did think of this possible alternate ending. It shows a different choice and set of consequences, while still showing some loss as well. I don't think it works as well and is as powerful as my original idea for the ending, and I still favor that one, but I'll list this alternate ending as well, since it was part of the flow of the story.

Eric is shown lying on the floor, but it isn't obvious if he's dead or just unconscious. The phone message which Kathy left could also mention her coming over to check on him.

As the camera finds Eric's body lying on the floor, it then tracks up to the not-quite-finished painting Eric was working on, of himself looking pensive. The camera focuses on that painting and zooms in so the painting fills the entire frame.

The picture then dissolves as it looks like the camera is passing into the picture. The scene then resolves to one of Eric sitting on his bed. He's got his medication bottle in his hand and he takes one of the pills and swallows it. Then he sighs and shakes his head sadly as he begins to pack up all his art, storing it away once more. The scene ends with him looking at a new picture of Mara which he had painted. His eyes tear up as he stares at her picture.

ERIC

Good-bye Mara...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - DAY (EPILOGUE)

Note: These epilogue scenes are only for the original ending, not the alternative ending.

The scene opens on the closed door to Eric's room. The door then opens as John leads Eric's parents into Eric's room.

Eric's parents are still visibly grieving and John looks a little uncomfortable at being with them.

JOHN

Here it is. I tidied things up a little bit, but I didn't go through everything, as I thought you'd like to do that.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Thank you.

ERIC'S FATHER

Yes, we can take care of everything. Thank you John.

JOHN

I did organize his art for you a bit, to make it easier. He really got into it and he made so much of it these past weeks.

ERIC'S MOTHER

Yes, he'd mentioned that when he'd called me and asked about his old artwork. I guess he got inspired from an art class he was taking?

JOHN

Yeah, it was Art History and that got him all fired up with it. He kind of went overboard with it at times... It was nice seeing him so excited about it though.

ERIC'S MOTHER

I'm just glad he found something he liked that much, and he was doing something he loved at the end...

Eric's mother's words crack and she starts to cry a little, but tries to hold it back. Eric's father holds her arm in support. His expression is stoic, but his eyes are starting

to water up a little as well. John does his best to hold his composure and hide his uneasiness.

JOHN

Yeah... well I'll give you guys some time to go through Eric's stuff... Oh wait, I did want to ask you if it would be okay if I kept this painting of Eric's. I enjoyed seeing him come up with this one.

John points to the painting inspired by the Japanese monster movie he and Eric had seen. Eric's parents both nod to John.

ERIC'S MOTHER

I think Eric would like you to have that...

John takes the painting and holds it gingerly in his hands. He nods back at Eric's parents as he takes the painting and leaves the room.

JOHN

Thank you.

ERIC'S FATHER

You're welcome. Thank you again, John.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. KATHY'S ROOM - DAY (EPILOGUE)

Kathy sits in her room on her bed or at her desk. She's holding the picture of her which Eric had painted. She looks at it with sadness, then closes her eyes as she starts to cry.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. PROFESSOR ARKIN'S OFFICE - DAY (EPILOGUE)

Professor Arkin sits at her desk. She's just opened a package which contains some of Eric's paintings and perhaps one of his art books. She has them out on her desk and she's looking at them. She struggles to hold back the tears as she looks at his art and reads the note which his mother had written and enclosed in the package.

The note reads: "Eric's roommate John has told me how much your Art History class meant to Eric. From what he said, it really inspired him and he was so happy to get back to his art again. We may never understand how much Eric's art meant to him, but you may know more of that. We know that Eric would want you to have some of his work, to remember him by. Thank you so much for touching his heart and mind and inspiring him like that."

FADE OUT:

THE END