

A Whole Life



When Mr. Morris, the acting director at my school, had asked me to paint the technical director, Mike, the only thoughts I had were worries. He had asked this of me two days before he was planning to present it to Mike, in a gift basket he had made.

Mike, a perfectionist, who spent weekends and after-school hours meticulously working on the school productions, had not gotten a break in a month, and Mr. Morris wanted to show his appreciation. The opportunity was exciting, and I too wanted to show Mike how much we value him.

He taught the students to safely use tools, and when discussing creative concepts in class, he considered each student's idea with the same technical standards as he would a professional designer. He was the one students would go to for industry advice, and he always had a dad-joke or two up his sleeve. His presence and knowledge in the theatre were inspiring, and my idea for the painting was already clear, so despite my worries, I agreed to the project. There were, however, still multiple problems to solve. So with the forty-eight hours I had left, I got to work.

The first struggle, obviously, was time. Painting is a majorly stationary activity. It requires materials that are difficult to transport, and moving the painting would risk smudges. Because of the time constraints, I'd have to paint at school, and work between classes, so timing and transportation had to be planned out meticulously. That night I mixed colors, putting paint in empty pill bottles to take to school. The next day, I used my english class to sketch out the face, and after school I'd finish painting. That day, every minute of class was spent watching the clock. When the bell finally rang, I rushed to the theatre, and hid myself in the girls dressing

room. I would have to do everything in my power to make sure that Mike didn't see the painting, while stuck in the very building he was guaranteed to be in. I got to work.

Everything was rushed. I opened bottles, scrubbed brushes, switching between painting and stepping back to judge my work. I wanted to capture Mike as I saw him. As the bright, inspiring mentor I knew. A whole life, in one image. Each brushstroke used my appreciation, my admiration, to add to the final image. When I finished, I took a step back, and looked at my work. The next day, I passed it to Mr. Morris.

This experience showed me the value of my experience as a tool in creating art, as this painting would not be the same without my personal relationship to its subject, and solidified my faith in my own artistic ability. (459)