

Deleted Scene: *First critique*

James didn't show up to art class again. Mr. Beck ran a critique of the first assignment, now that everyone had finished it. "If we all recall, the first assignment was to paint an abstract idea. I'd like each of you to present your painting, say what idea you painted, and say a few words about it."

The first girl to go had carrot-red hair and braces. Her canvas was covered in random splotches of pink and purple. "I chose happiness as my abstract idea," she said softly. "Um... so I chose, uh, happy colors... and tried to make it look happy." The girl sat down quickly, her face as red as her hair.

Another girl went who had painted sadness, then Mr. Beck called on Bethany. "Could you bring up James's as well?" he said. He addressed the class. "Bethany and another student have done something very interesting with their assignment."

Bethany placed her red-slashed black canvas on the sill of the chalkboard beside

James's black-and-red portrayal of the heart. "I did hate and James did love. We decided to use the same colors to see if they would come out very different." Bethany sat down.

"These two paintings are interesting, because they are a pair. The colors and themes connect them, yet the expression of the themes differentiates them. What I find most interesting is how you used the same metaphor to demonstrate both of your abstract ideas. This one," he gestured to Bethany's, "depicts hate as open wounds on skin, an outside force that destroys the body. This one," he turned to James's canvas, "shows love as emanating from inside the human body, invigorating it. Bethany said they decided on the same colors to see how different they could make love and hate look. By accident, or subconsciously, they both chose the human body to express it. That's a lot of similarities. And yet the paintings are also very different. James's painting makes me think of love, despite its graphic representation of the chest cavity. It's in his blending, his careful curving lines. And Bethany's painting makes me

feel hate, because of its stark simplicity and harsh, jagged lines. And making the viewer feel this abstract idea is exactly what the assignment was. You both did a great job,” Mr. Beck said to Bethany. She went up and took down the paintings. On one hand she felt good, but on the other, would he have had such a glowing review if she had worked independently of James?