

THE IDEA FOR THE PICTURE

My name is Brian Christian. What's your name? I would like this picture to be a picture of both of us. I am a writer, so I want to be writing in the picture. You are a painter, and I want you to be painting in the picture.

I would like the picture to be a picture of yourself painting a picture of me.

Here are some examples of pictures where the painter is painting in the picture.

(See folder **01_Examples**)

(You can use any of these as inspiration, or you can do it a different way if you want.)

This way we can both be in the picture together, even though we've never met.

MY PART OF THE PICTURE

I'm a writer, and I write books about science for a living. I don't know how to paint. Painting seems very mysterious to me.

When I look at these photos of myself writing I feel happy. I'm always happy when I'm writing. I'm happy when I'm surrounded by books.

I just finished writing a book called *Algorithms to Live By*. I am happy with the book, but now that I'm finished writing it, I'm sad to be done. Is painting like that for you?

I would like you to paint me the way I look in **02_01_Brian-face.jpeg**, but not in that room. I want to be in the room that is in **02_02_Brian-room.jpeg**. (I have also included **02_03_Brian-extra.jpeg**, just in case you want an additional reference for what I look like.) If you want to crop the room in **02_02_Brian-room.jpeg** and just use part of it, that's fine.

Maybe you can make my office a little bit better. The red box in front of my desk is a vacuum cleaner. It's ugly. Can you remove that? A lot of those wires are ugly. You can remove them too. Maybe the plant on my desk could be better. Maybe I could be surrounded by even more books. Can you make the room appear better, with more books? Also, there are two computers. You don't need to paint the smaller one on the left.

Here is a picture of my favorite mug. I love to drink coffee when I write. Can you put that on my desk?

I live in San Francisco, California. It's a very beautiful city. It has a famous red bridge that connects many green hills to the city. (See [03_01_Marin-Headlands-Afternoon.jpg](#)) I love to cross the bridge and walk around in the hills. Maybe there can be a window in my room where you can see part of San Francisco. You could even make the entire back wall a window, if you wanted to.

The three most important people to me are my mother, my father, and my girlfriend. My girlfriend is named Rose. Can they be in the picture somehow? Maybe there can be a picture of Rose and me on the desk or the wall (See [04_01_Rose.jpeg](#)). Maybe there can be a picture of me and my parents too. Or maybe they could even be in the room. It's up to you what you think would be the best.

The picture will be mostly a true picture of what my room really looks like and what my life is like, but it's also like a dream. It combines the best parts of my life. Later in my life I will be able to look at this painting and feel happy about the things I enjoyed during this time of my life.

YOUR PART OF THE PICTURE

Your part of the picture will show you painting.

What kind of room do you paint in? Is it large or small? What color is it? Are you alone or are there many other people there?

I think it would be interesting if you paint something that looks very much like the actual room you are in. However I think you can improve it slightly, just like you can improve my room slightly.

For example, I asked you to include my favorite coffee cup with coffee in it. Maybe you can include your favorite cup with your favorite drink in it. (See **05_01_CoffeeCup.jpeg**)

Do you have a favorite painting that inspires you? Perhaps you can include it in the background or something! That would be interesting.

What does your city look like? Where are your favorite places to go? Maybe there is a way to include them, through a window or in a picture.

Who are your favorite people? Perhaps a friend or someone from your family could be in your picture somehow.

I want you to include things that make you happy. Your part of the painting will be true and very realistic, just like my part. But it will also be slightly better than the truth. It will be slightly like a dream. Later in life, if you think about this painting or if you see the painting, hopefully it will make you happy.

You can also include sad things too, if you want to. You can choose what you want to do.

THE TITLE OF THE PICTURE

What do you think the painting should be called? We could call it “Collaborators” if you want. We could also call it “Meeting for the First Time.” I’m curious what you think it should be called. Maybe you have a better idea for the title.

What’s your name? We could call the painting “By _____ (*Your Name*) and Brian Christian.” Your name can go first because you did most of the work.

Maybe the painting can include a reference to our names and the years we were born. Like this:

“Brian Christian (1984–)”

“*Your Name (Your Birth Year–)*”

Maybe we will never meet in real life, but I hope that we will learn something about each other and that we will both be happy when we look at the painting.