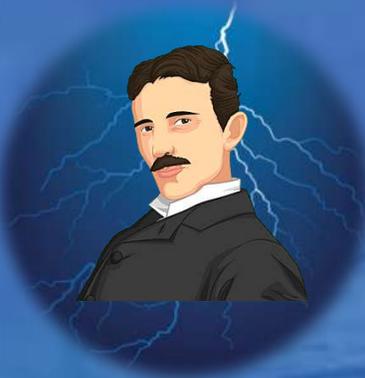


Boys Who Grew Up to Change the



Nikola Tesla Oscar Wilde Roald Dahl Salvador Dali



Steven Hawking Steven Spielberg Trevor Noah

Nikola Tesla

(1856-1943)



In a small village in Croatia, in the midst of a deafening thunderstorm, a boy called Nikola was born. The midwife worried that the thunder was a bad sign.

‘This child will be a child of darkness,’ she said.

‘No,’ Nikola’s mother replied, ‘he will be a child of light.’

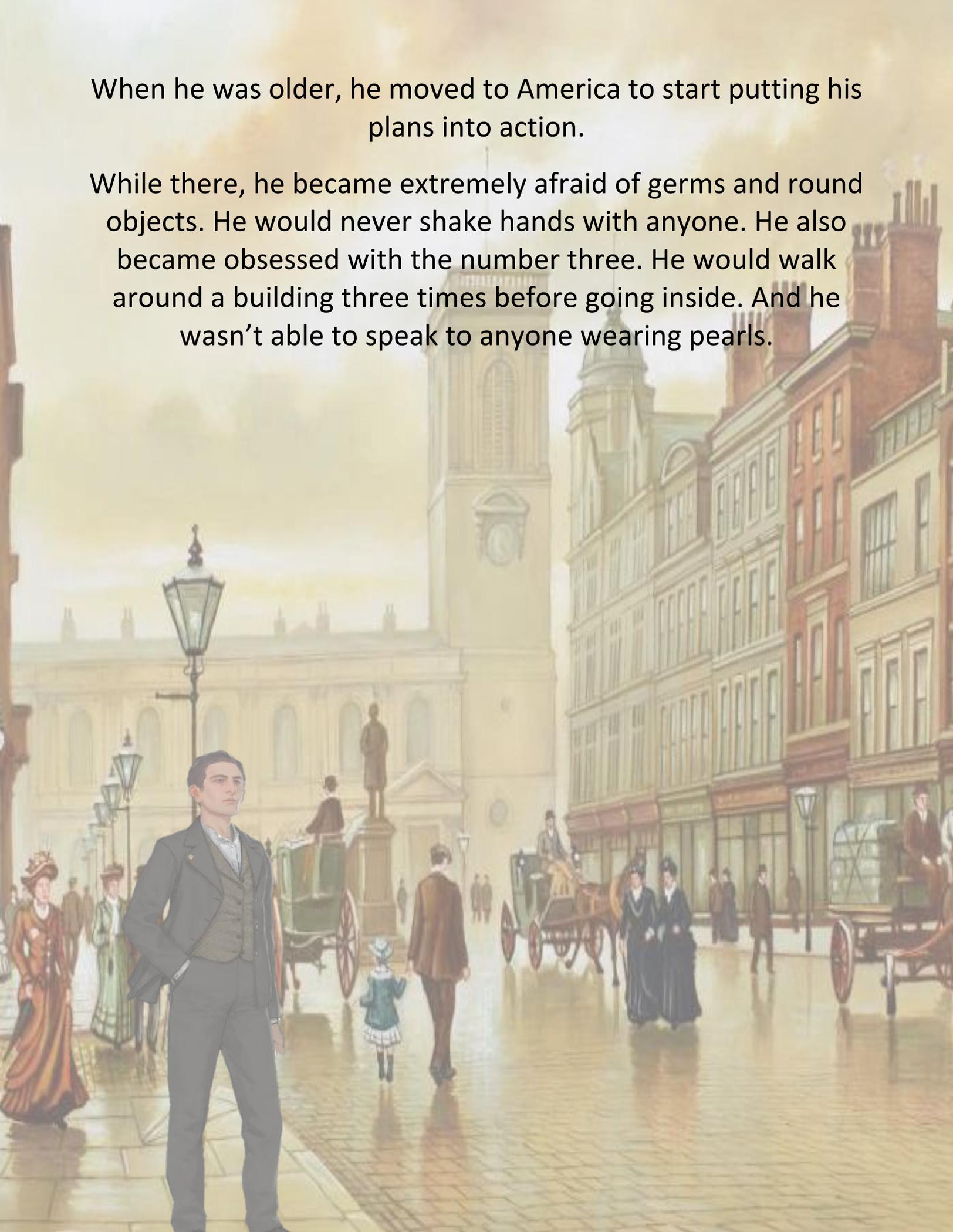


From a young age, Nikole had a lot of grand plans. After seeing a drawing of Niagara Falls, three of the most powerful waterfalls in the world, Nikola told his uncle that one day he'd put a giant wheel under it and use it to make power.



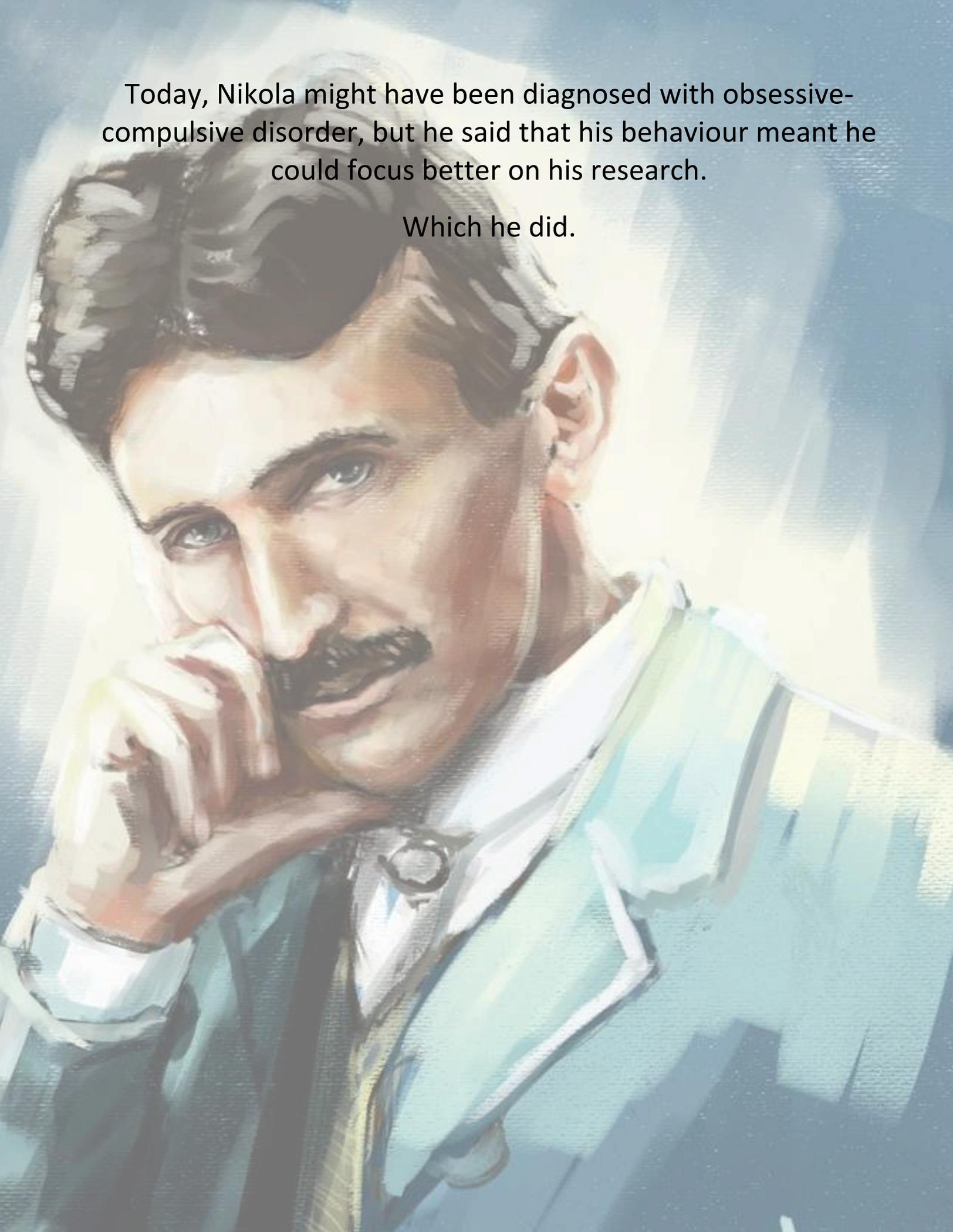
When he was older, he moved to America to start putting his plans into action.

While there, he became extremely afraid of germs and round objects. He would never shake hands with anyone. He also became obsessed with the number three. He would walk around a building three times before going inside. And he wasn't able to speak to anyone wearing pearls.

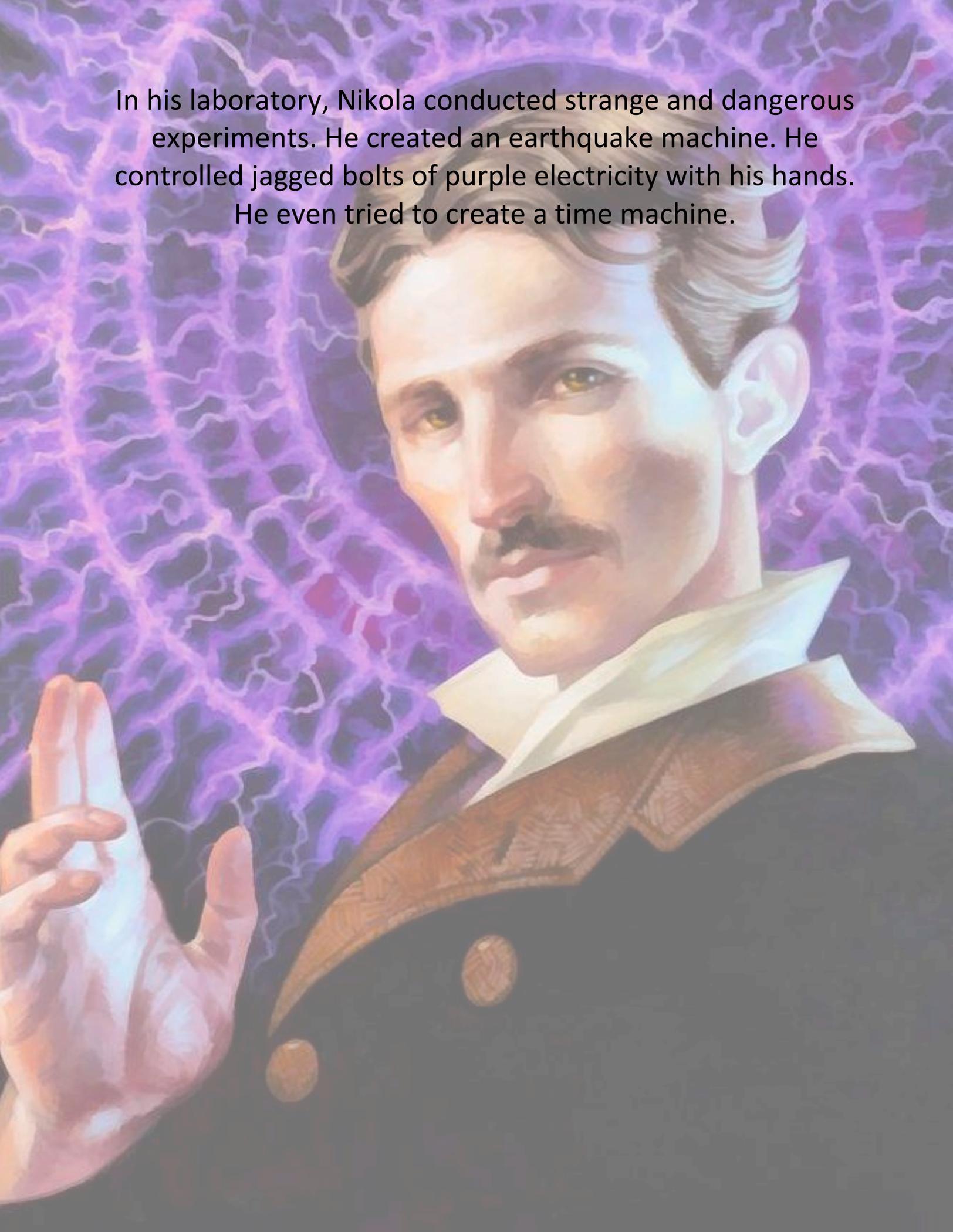


Today, Nikola might have been diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder, but he said that his behaviour meant he could focus better on his research.

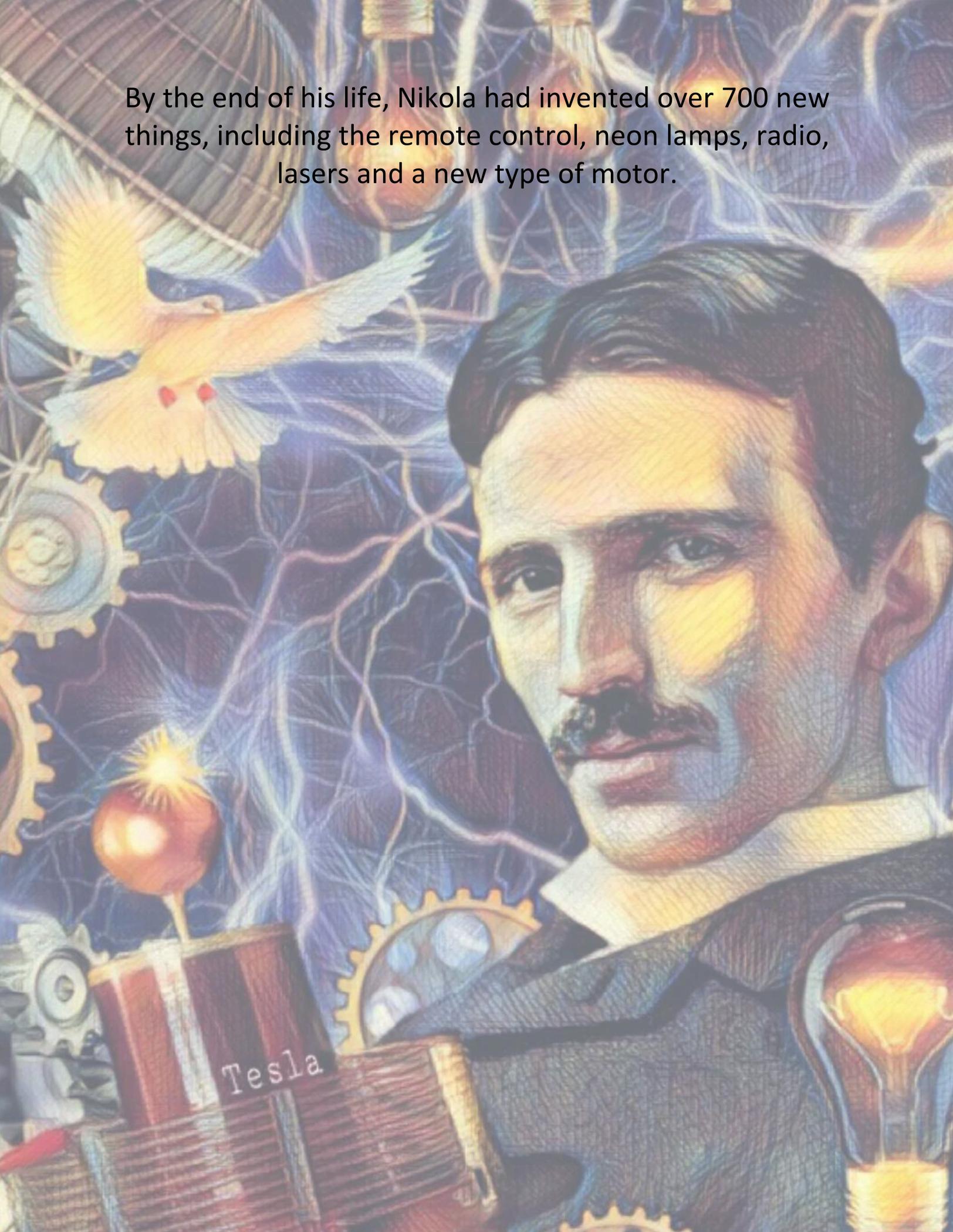
Which he did.



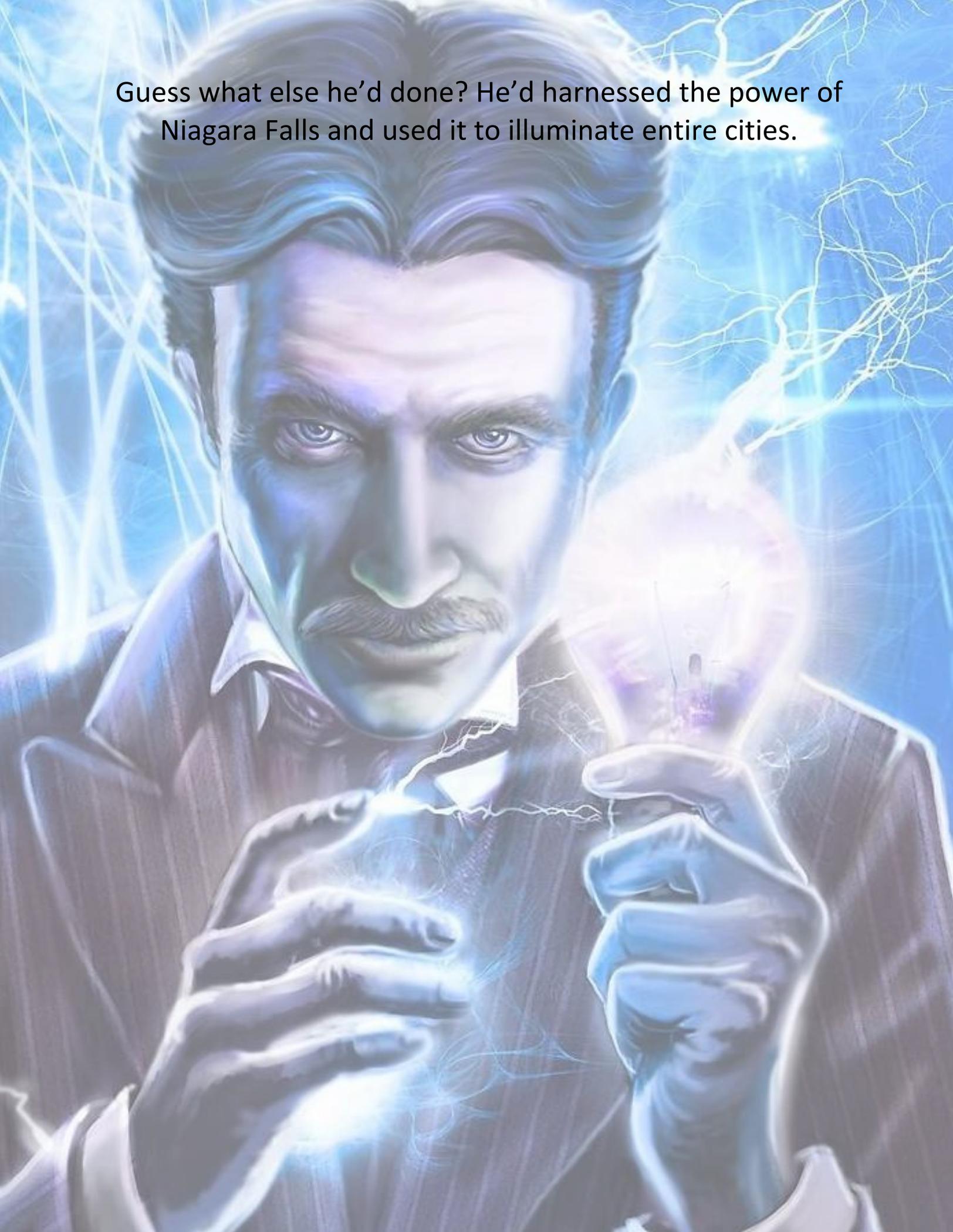
In his laboratory, Nikola conducted strange and dangerous experiments. He created an earthquake machine. He controlled jagged bolts of purple electricity with his hands. He even tried to create a time machine.



By the end of his life, Nikola had invented over 700 new things, including the remote control, neon lamps, radio, lasers and a new type of motor.



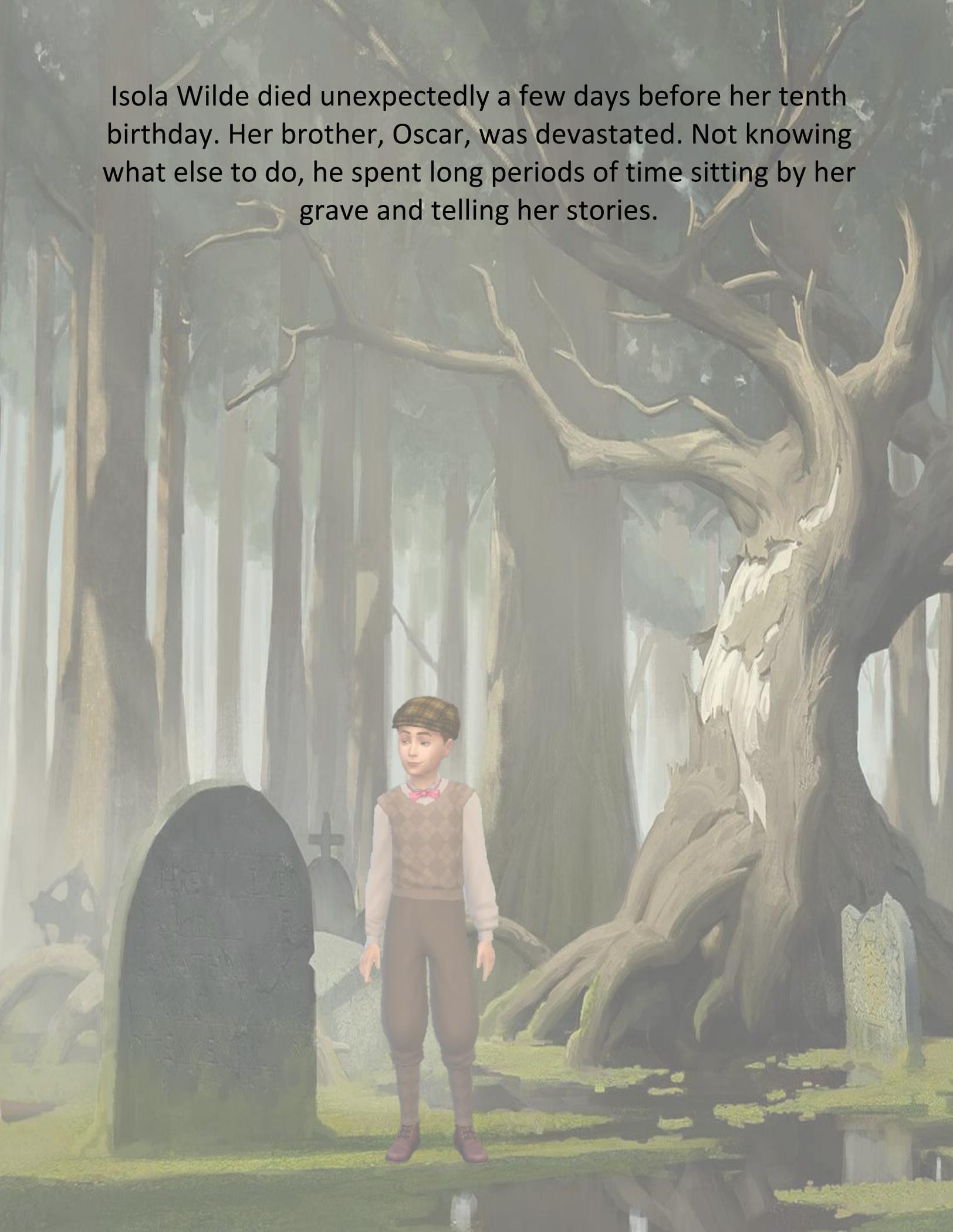
Guess what else he'd done? He'd harnessed the power of Niagara Falls and used it to illuminate entire cities.



Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)



Isola Wilde died unexpectedly a few days before her tenth birthday. Her brother, Oscar, was devastated. Not knowing what else to do, he spent long periods of time sitting by her grave and telling her stories.



As he grew older, Oscar became a famous poet and playwright, and was often seen wandering around dressed in strange clothes and wearing huge flowers.



He was known everywhere for being hilarious, confident and loud, but people said that if he ever started talking about his sister, which he often did, he'd get quieter and softer.



One of his most famous poems was written for her; the first lines are:

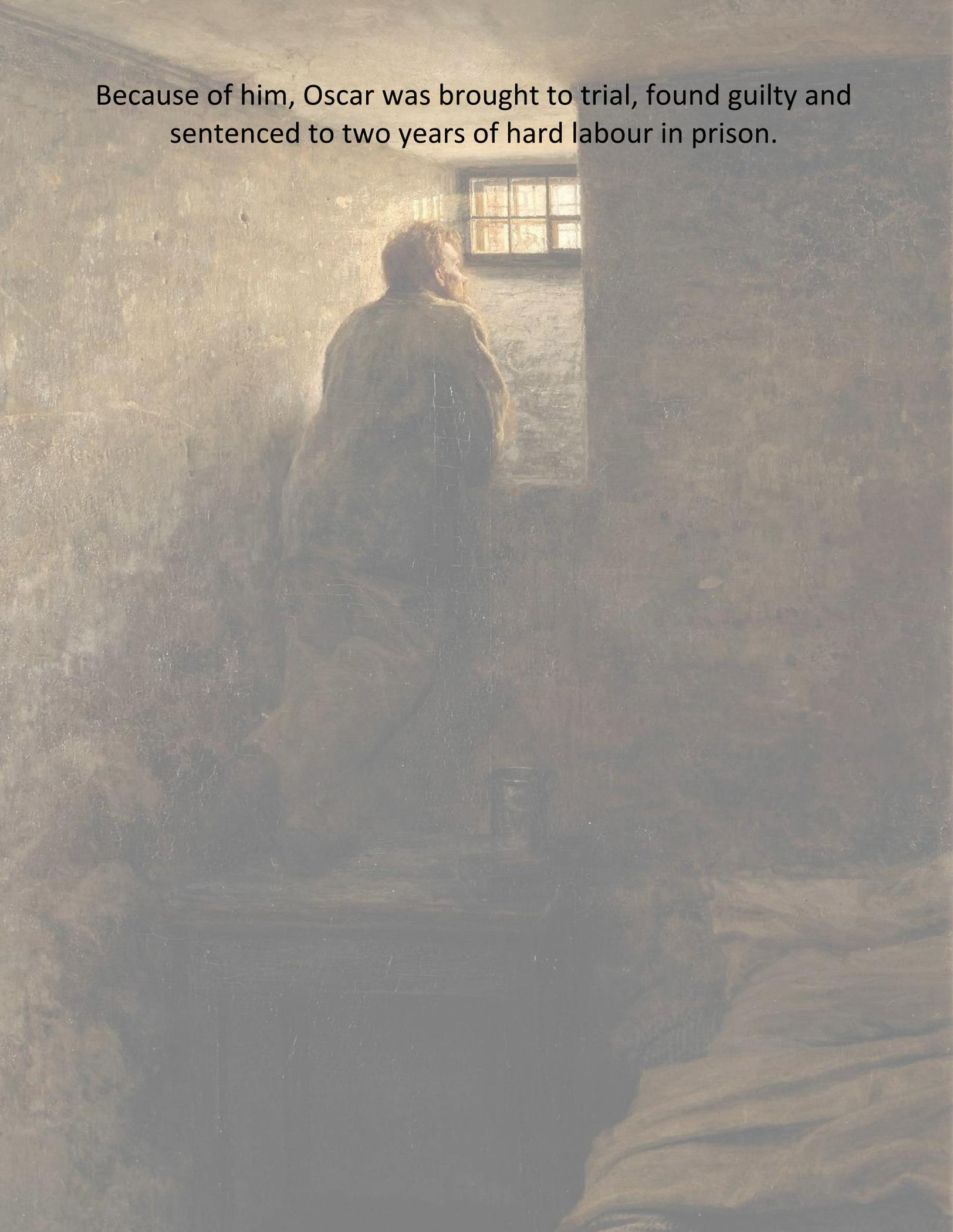
***Tread lightly, she is near
Under the snow,
Speak gently, she can hear
The daises grow.***



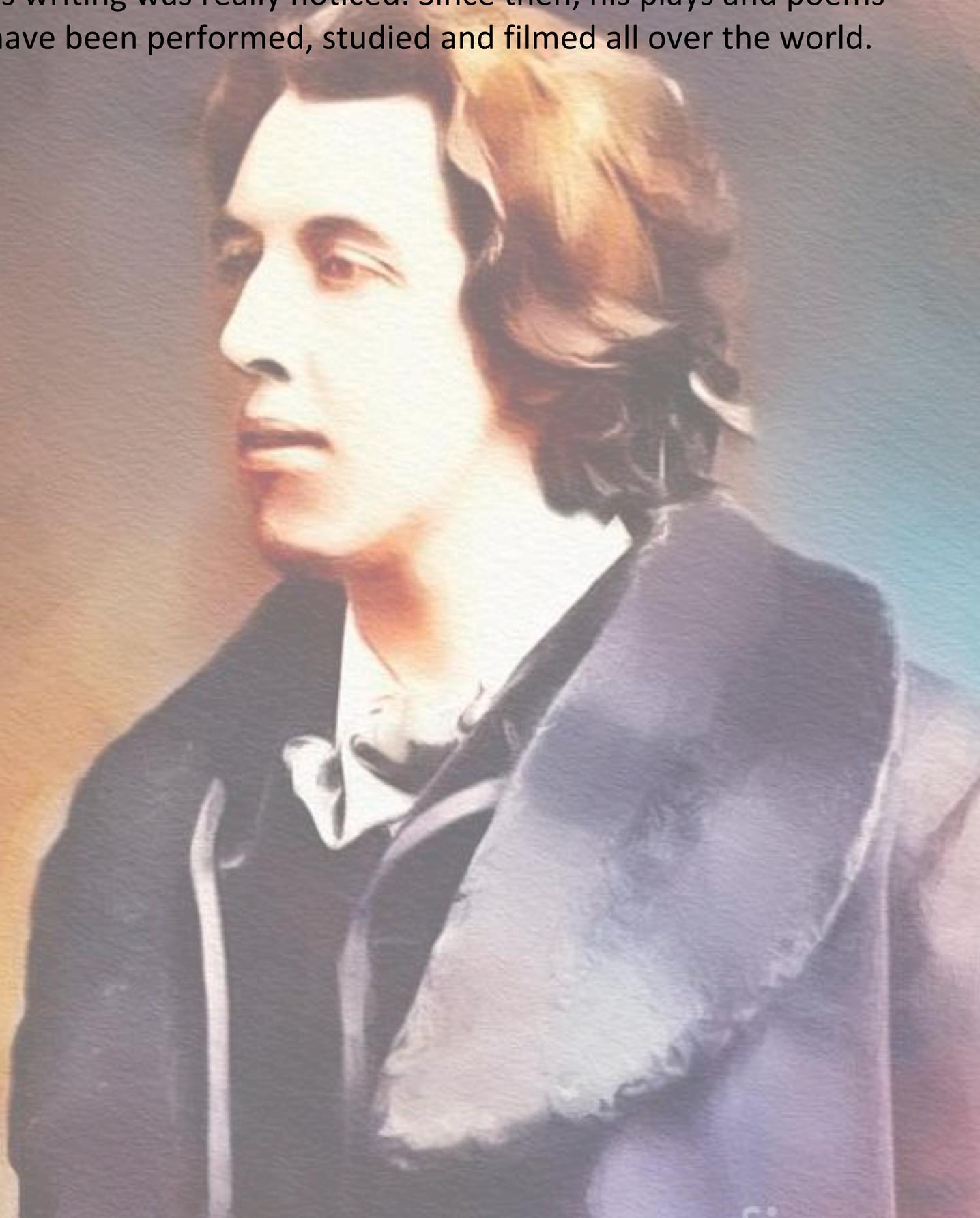
Oscar was gay and he fell in love with a young lord whose father was cruel and intolerant.



Because of him, Oscar was brought to trial, found guilty and sentenced to two years of hard labour in prison.



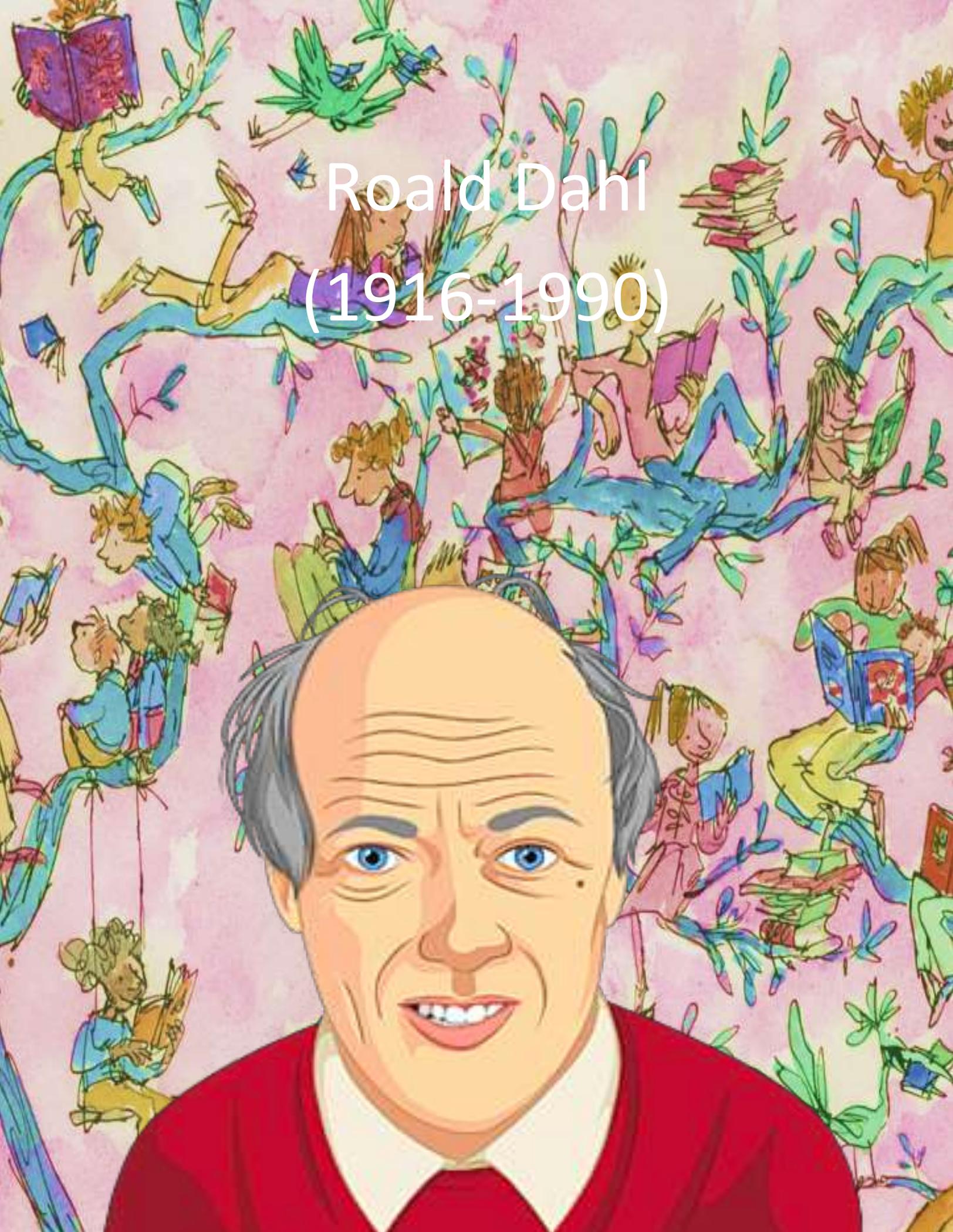
When he got out, Oscar moved straight to France. He was sick and poor, and died a few years later. It wasn't until after his death that his writing was really noticed. Since then, his plays and poems have been performed, studied and filmed all over the world.



'We are all in the gutter,' he once said, 'but some of us are looking at the stars.'

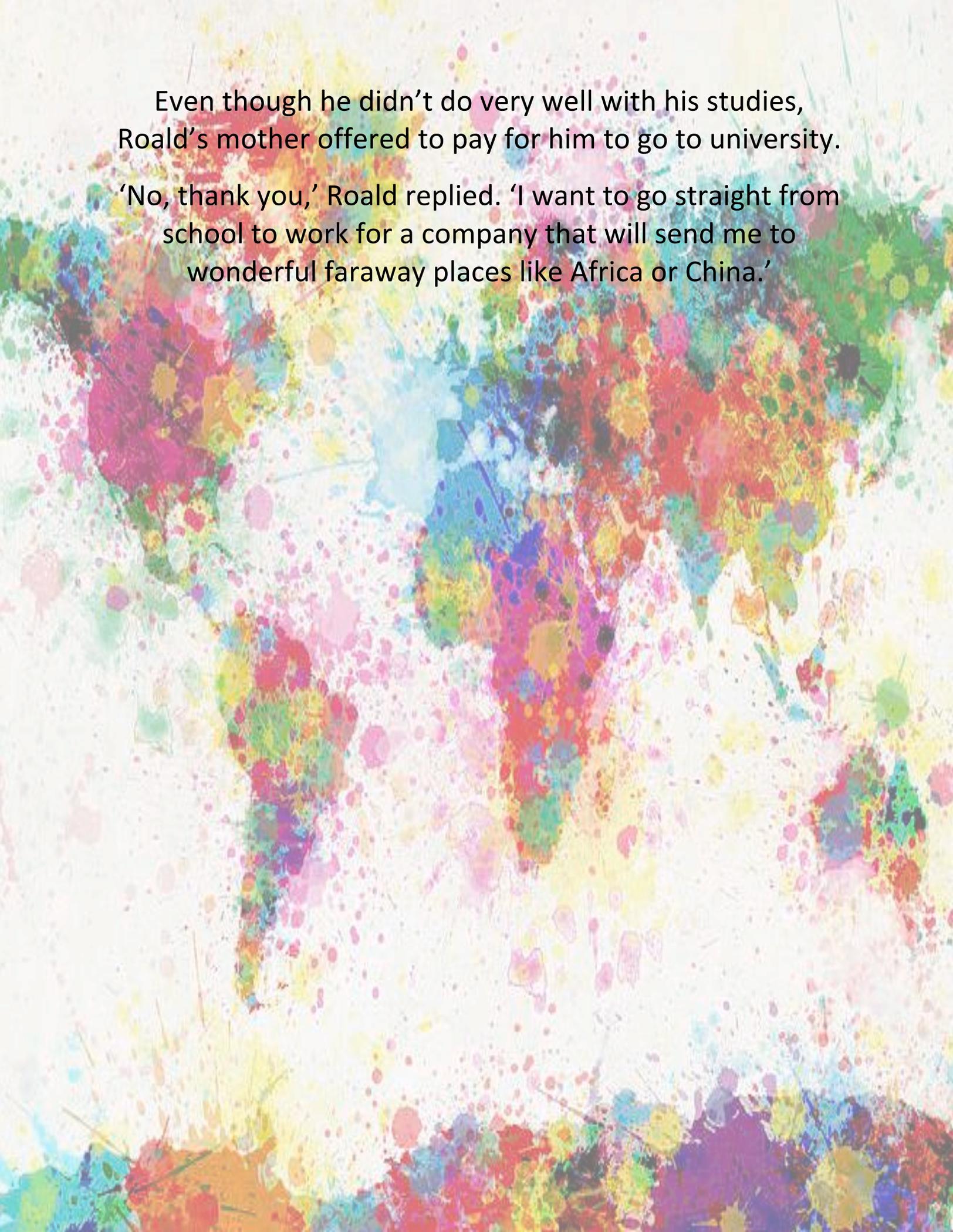


Roald Dahl
(1916-1990)



Roald was sent away to boarding school as a boy. He didn't like all the rules, but he did like how Cadbury's would send new chocolates for his class to test.





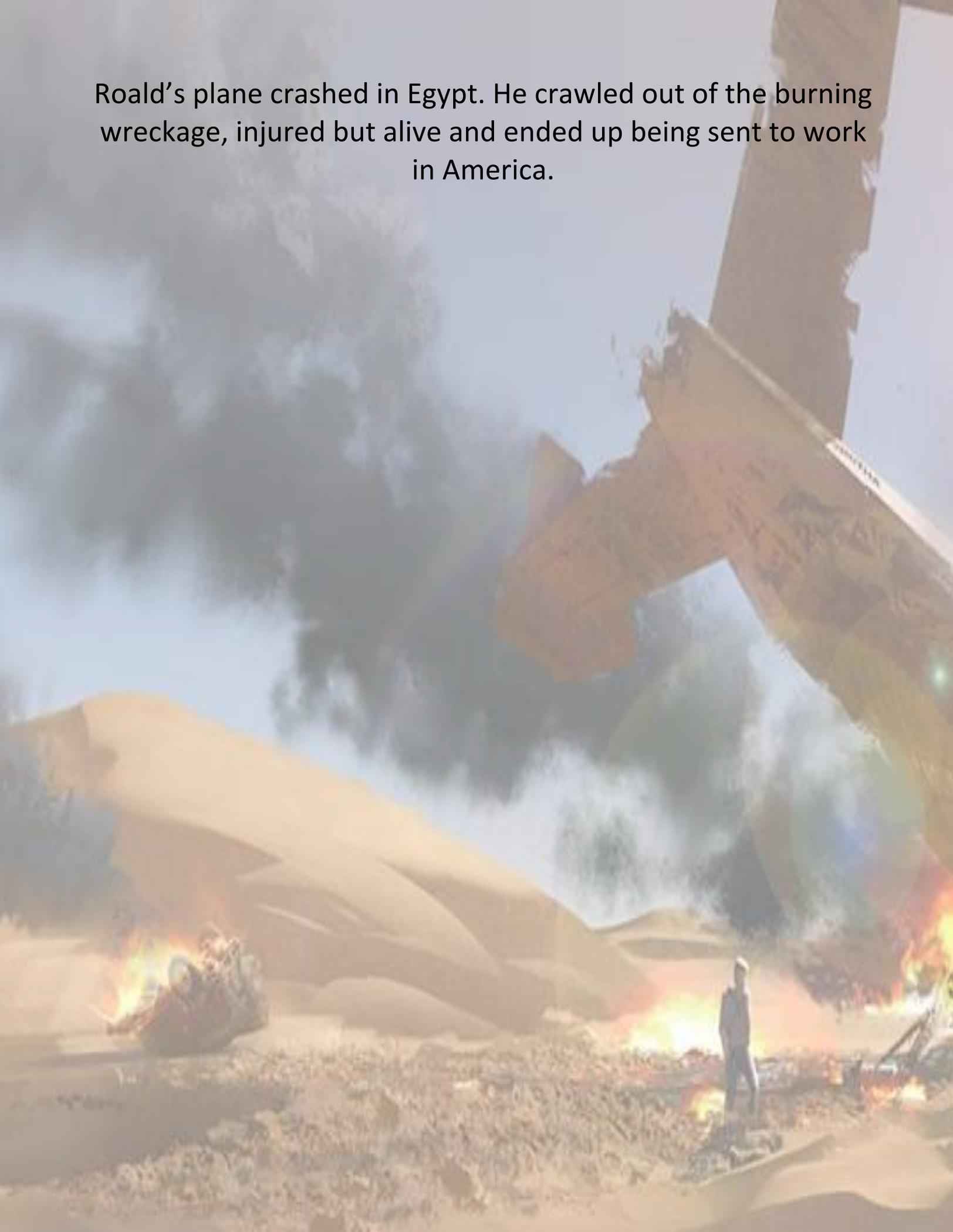
Even though he didn't do very well with his studies, Roald's mother offered to pay for him to go to university.

'No, thank you,' Roald replied. 'I want to go straight from school to work for a company that will send me to wonderful faraway places like Africa or China.'

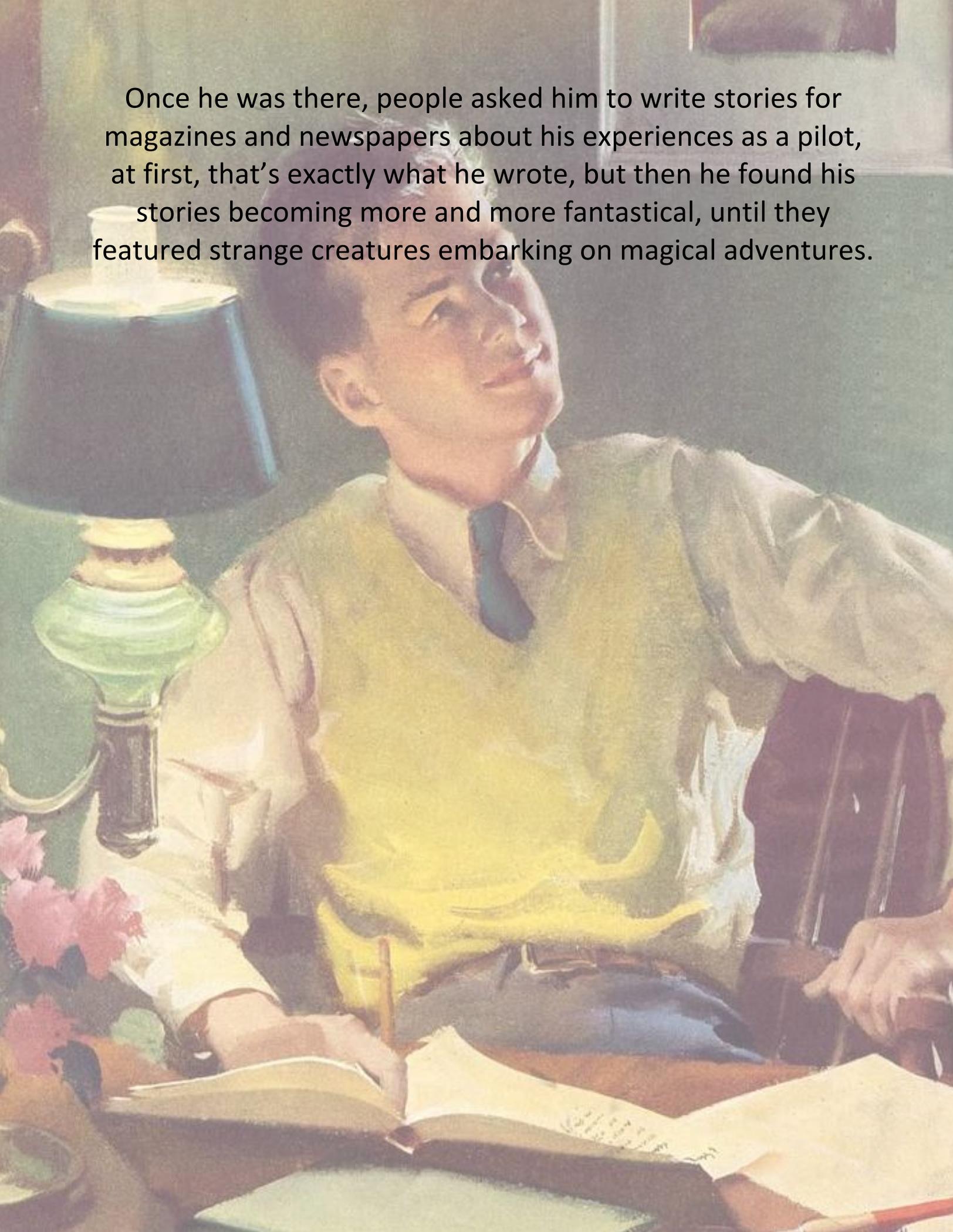
And he did, until war broke out and he signed up as a fighter pilot, soaring over the islands of the Mediterranean.



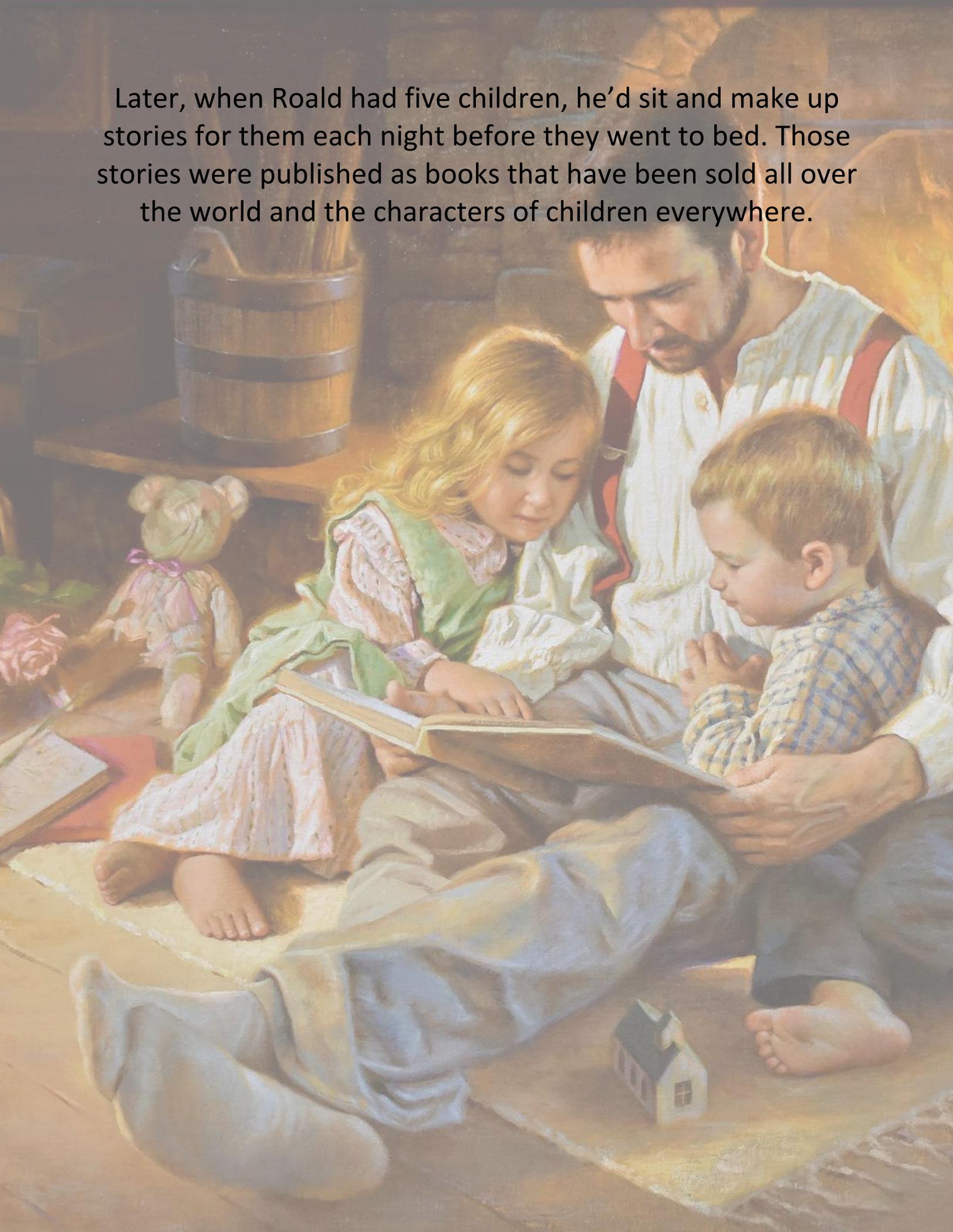
Roald's plane crashed in Egypt. He crawled out of the burning wreckage, injured but alive and ended up being sent to work in America.



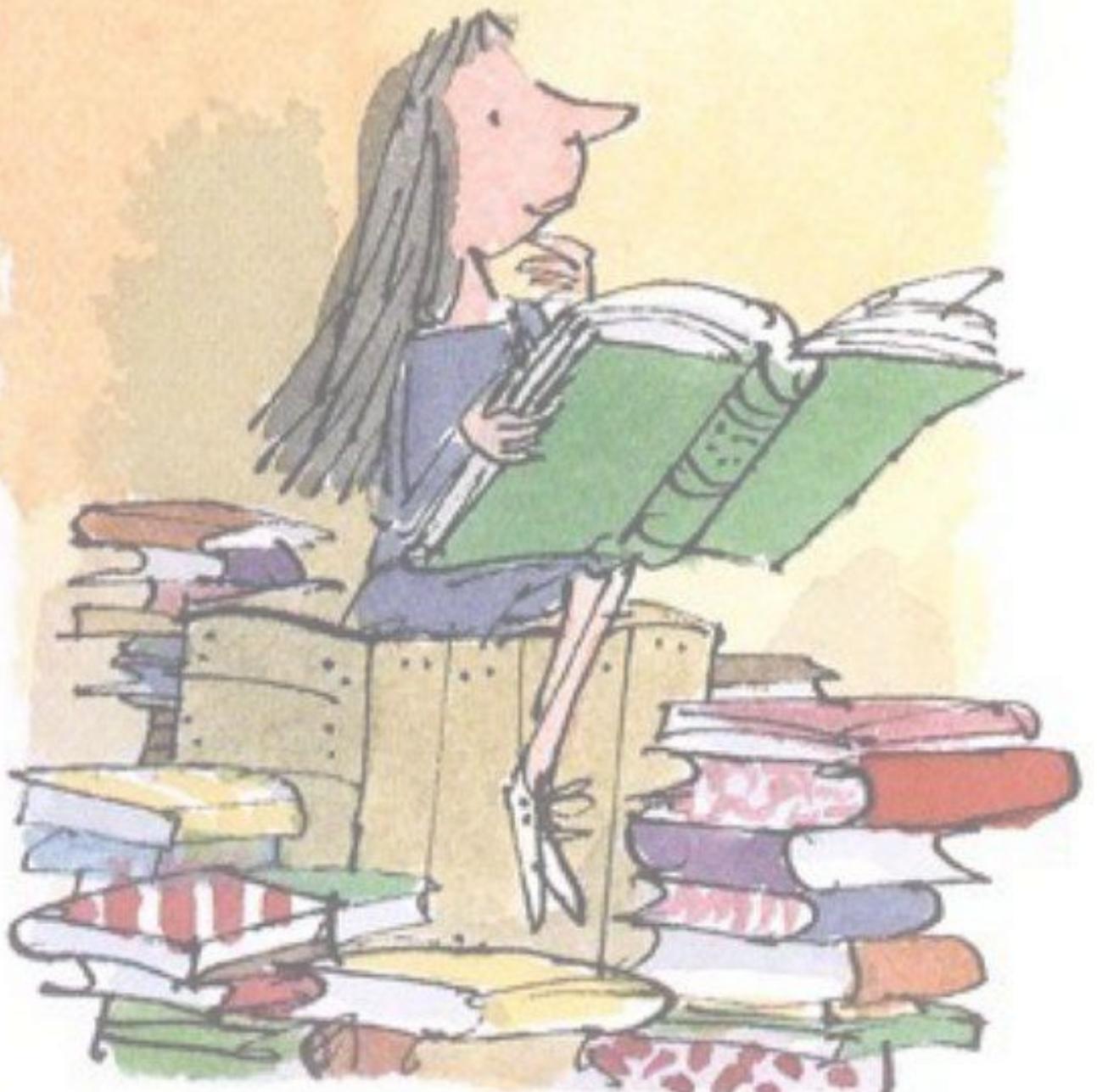
Once he was there, people asked him to write stories for magazines and newspapers about his experiences as a pilot, at first, that's exactly what he wrote, but then he found his stories becoming more and more fantastical, until they featured strange creatures embarking on magical adventures.



Later, when Roald had five children, he'd sit and make up stories for them each night before they went to bed. Those stories were published as books that have been sold all over the world and the characters of children everywhere.



Like Matilda Wormwood, who discovers she has psychokinetic powers and uses them to overcome adults who harm children.



Or Sophie, who teams up with snozzcumbermunching BFG to put an end to the evil giants that eat human beans.



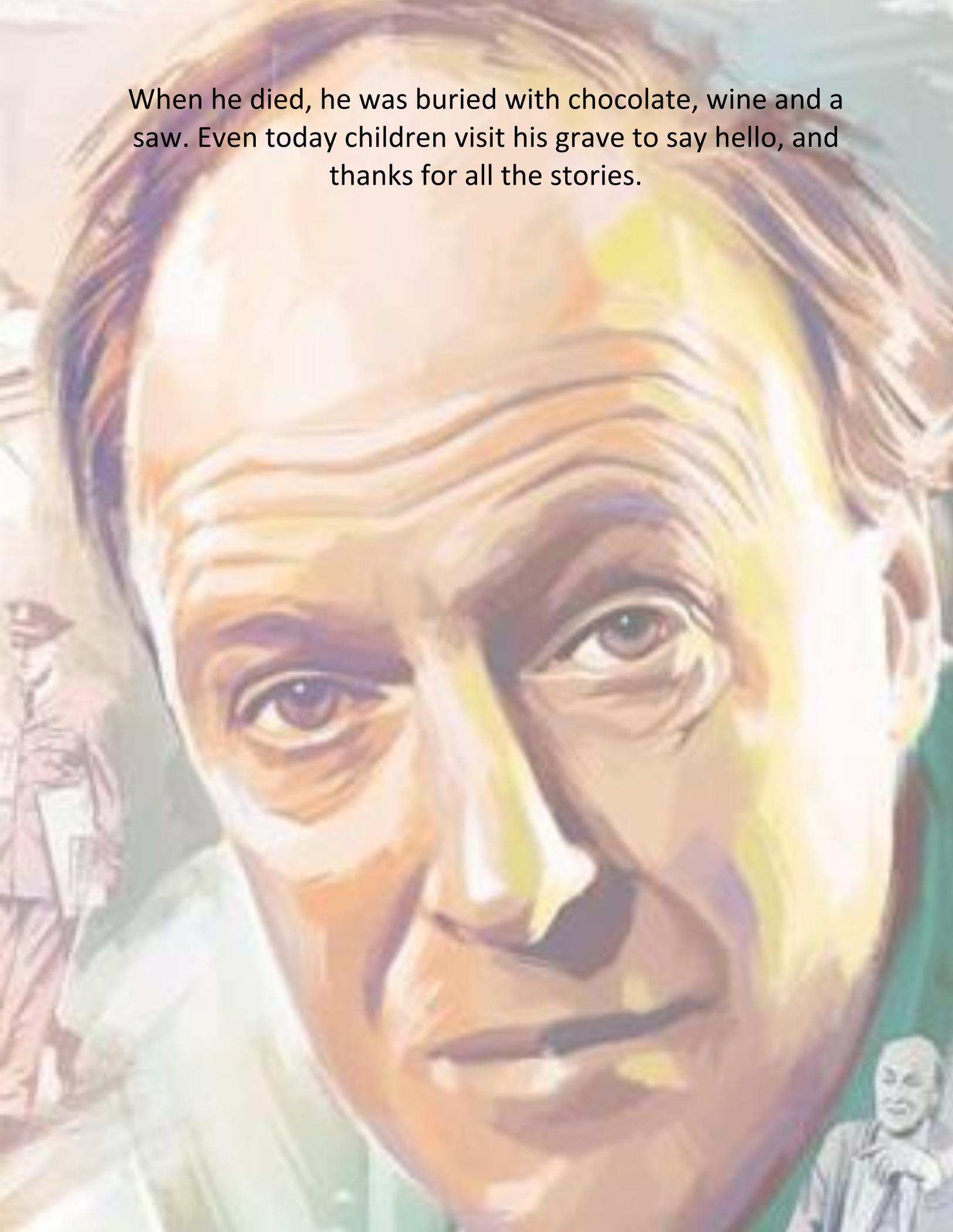
And Charlies Bucket, who finds a ticket to a magical chocolate factory, similar to the place Roald imagined was sending him all those chocolates as a boy.



'Those who don't believe in magic will never find it,' Roald said.



When he died, he was buried with chocolate, wine and a saw. Even today children visit his grave to say hello, and thanks for all the stories.

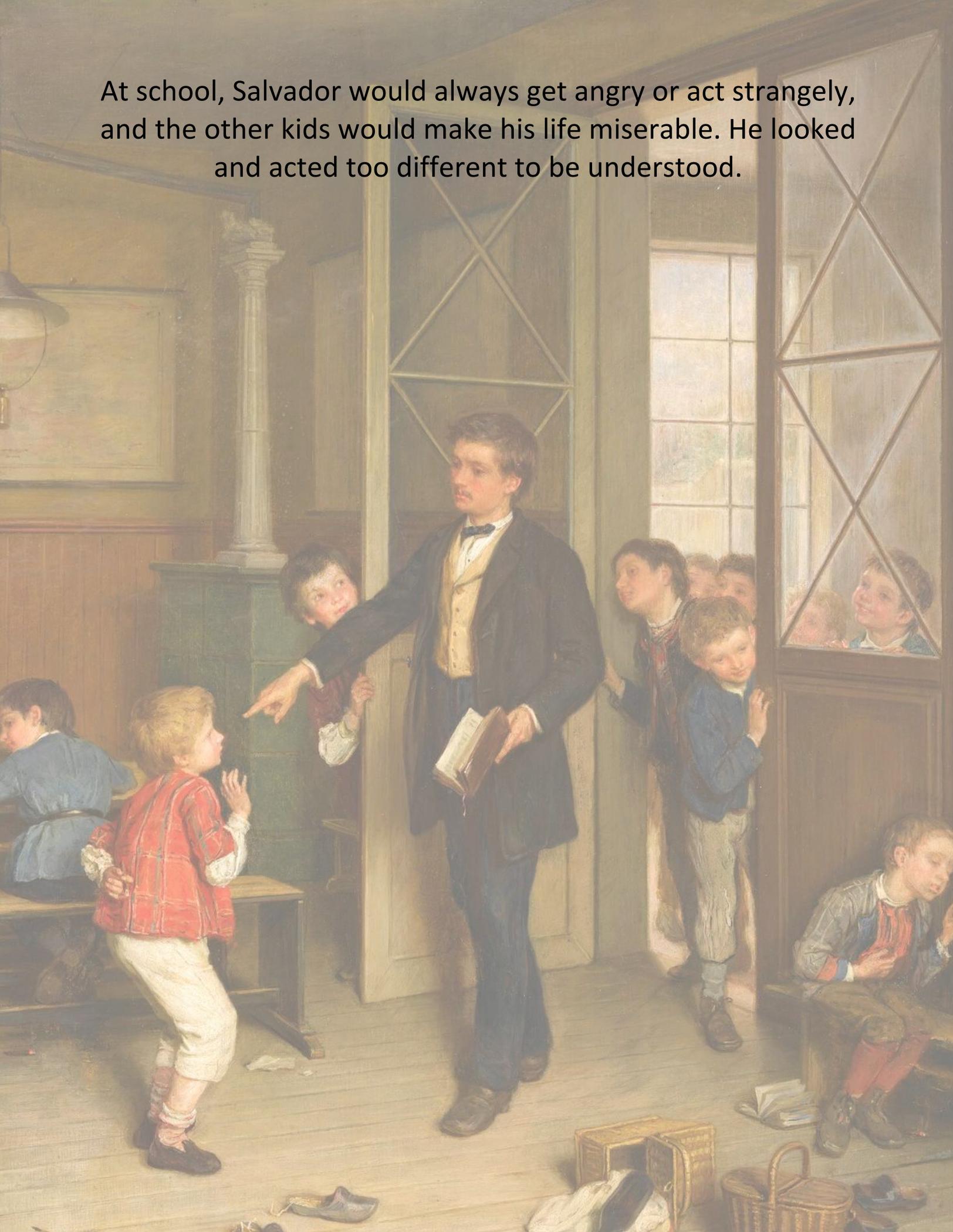


Salvador Dali

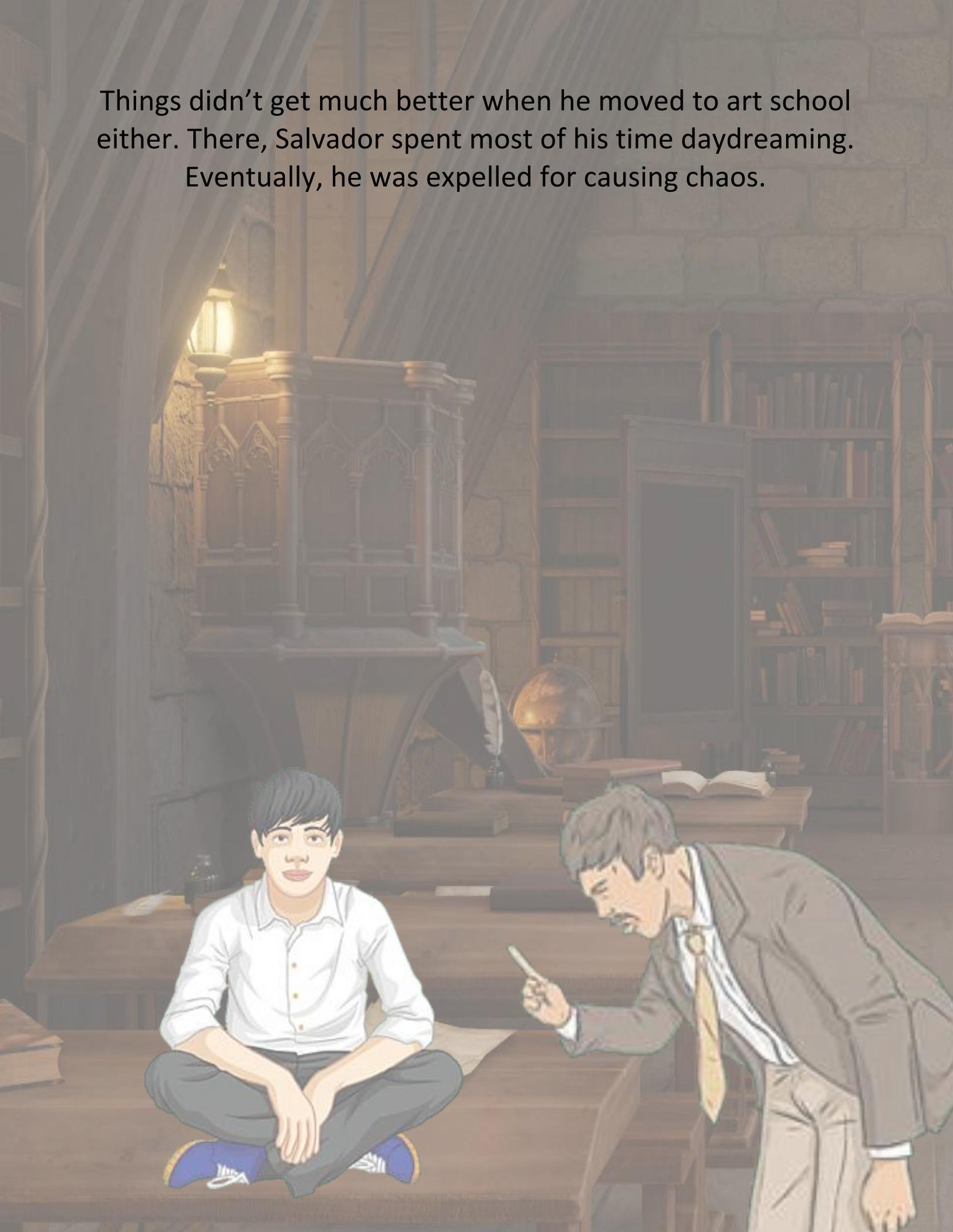
(1904-1989)



At school, Salvador would always get angry or act strangely, and the other kids would make his life miserable. He looked and acted too different to be understood.



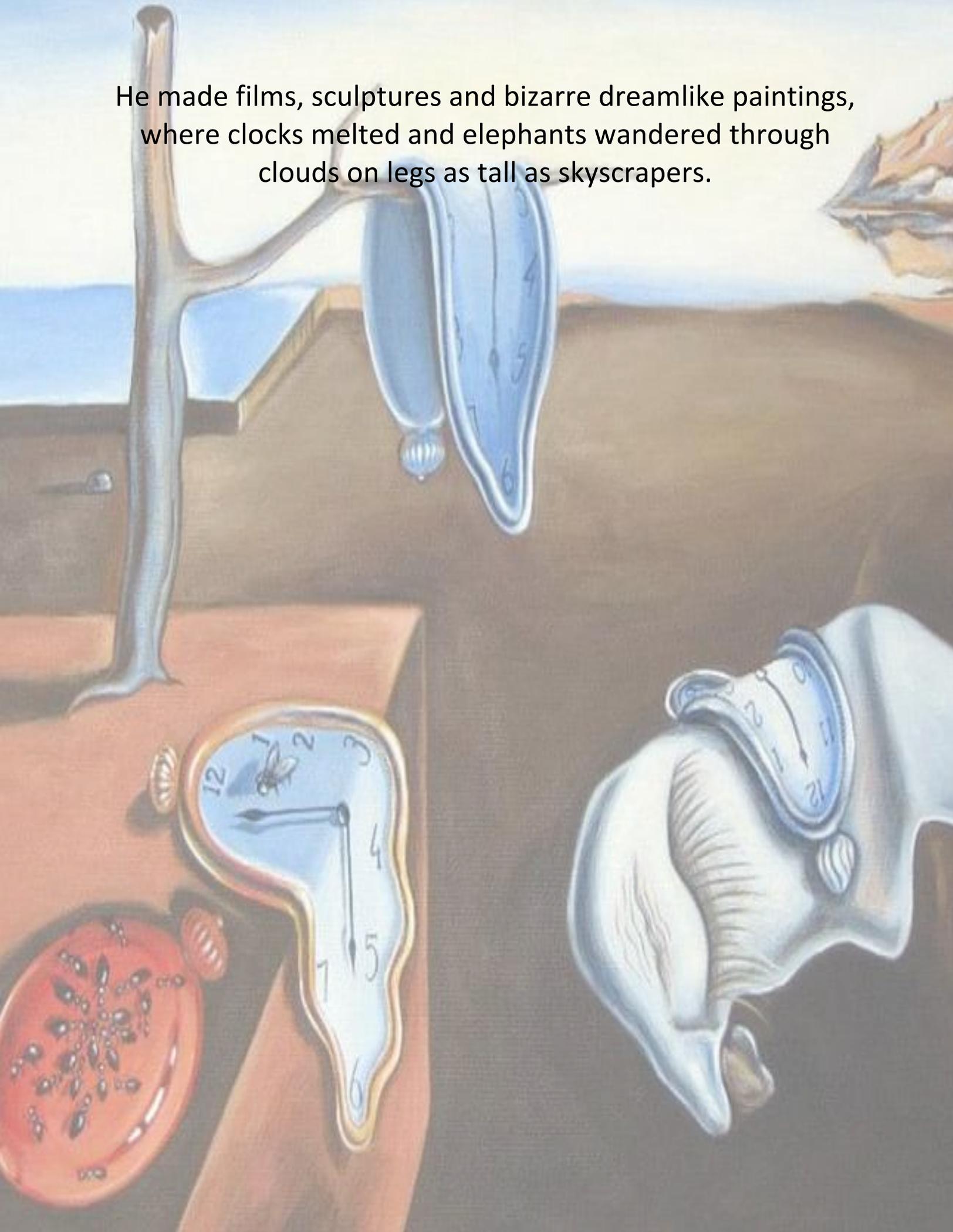
Things didn't get much better when he moved to art school either. There, Salvador spent most of his time daydreaming. Eventually, he was expelled for causing chaos.



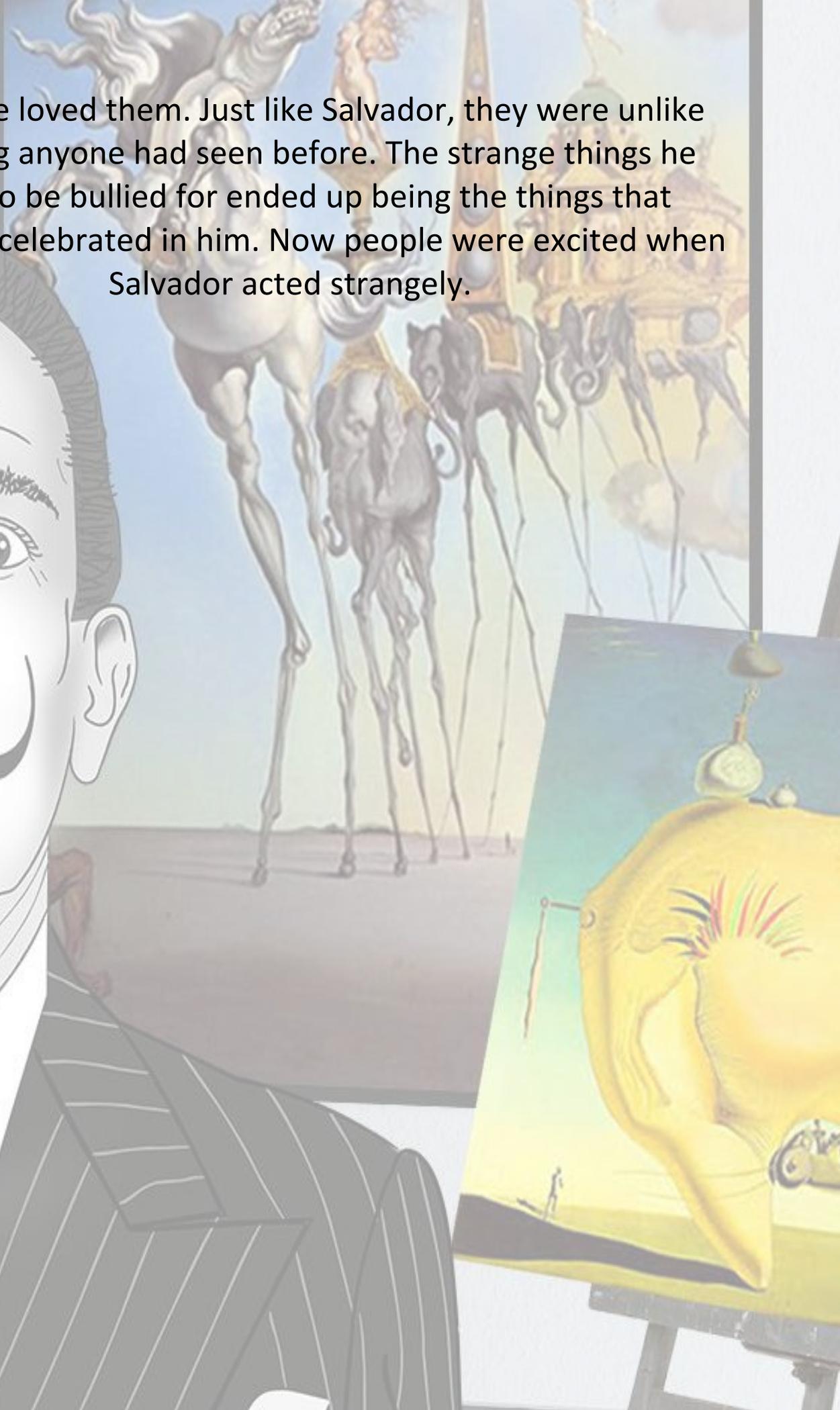
Salvador travelled to Paris instead, to hone his craft among other artists.



He made films, sculptures and bizarre dreamlike paintings, where clocks melted and elephants wandered through clouds on legs as tall as skyscrapers.



Everyone loved them. Just like Salvador, they were unlike anything anyone had seen before. The strange things he used to be bullied for ended up being the things that everyone celebrated in him. Now people were excited when Salvador acted strangely.



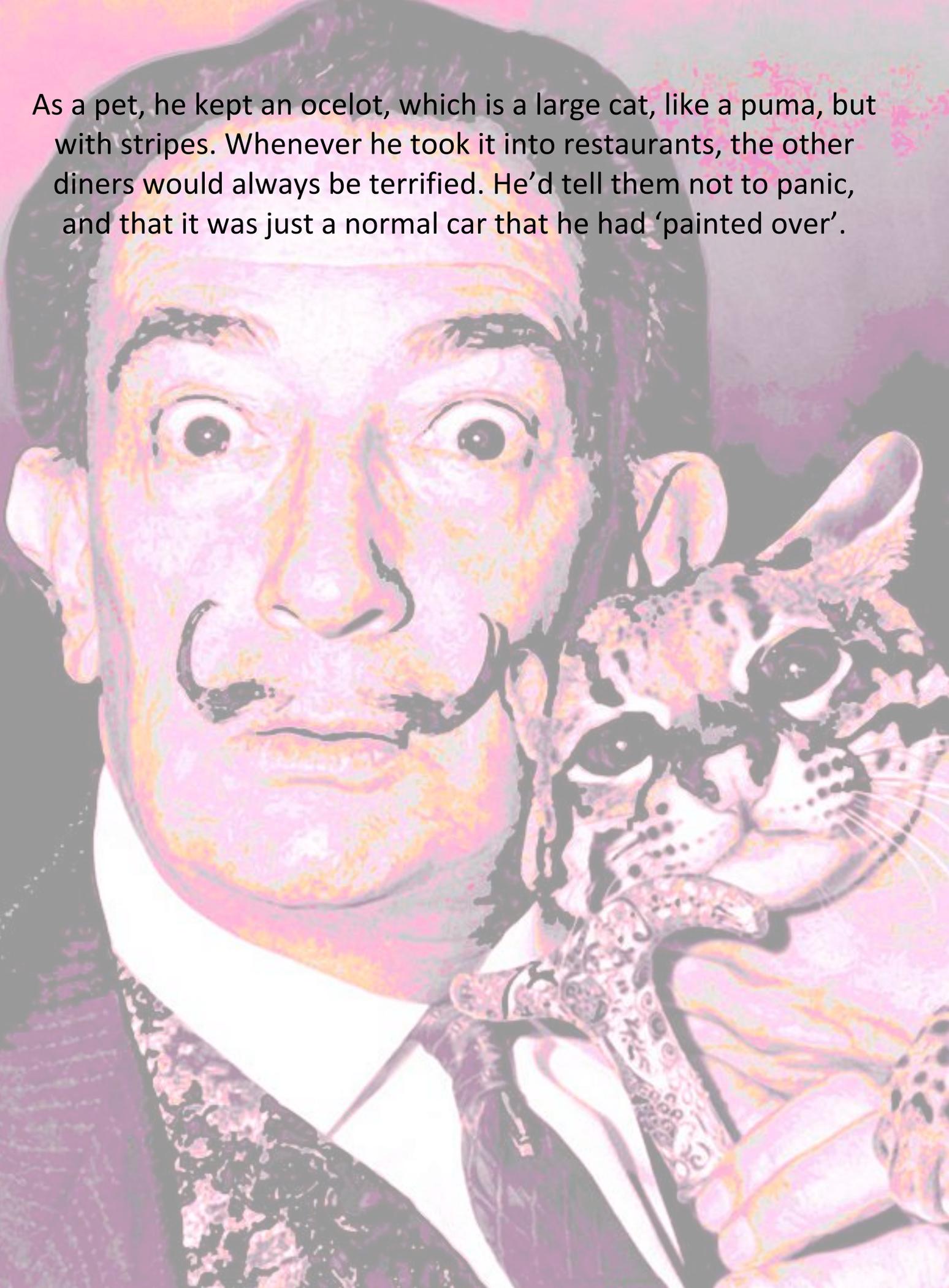
Once, he filled his car with hundreds of cauliflowers and drove through the streets of Paris, handing them out.



Another time, he gave a lecture in a deep-sea diving suit.



As a pet, he kept an ocelot, which is a large cat, like a puma, but with stripes. Whenever he took it into restaurants, the other diners would always be terrified. He'd tell them not to panic, and that it was just a normal car that he had 'painted over'.



Salvador was so popular that all kinds of people, places and companies wanted his work. If you've ever had a Chupa Chupa lollipop, then you've seen a piece of his art, because it was Salvador who designed the logo.



Ultimately, Salvador became one of the most iconic and best-loved figures in art history, all because he stayed true to himself.



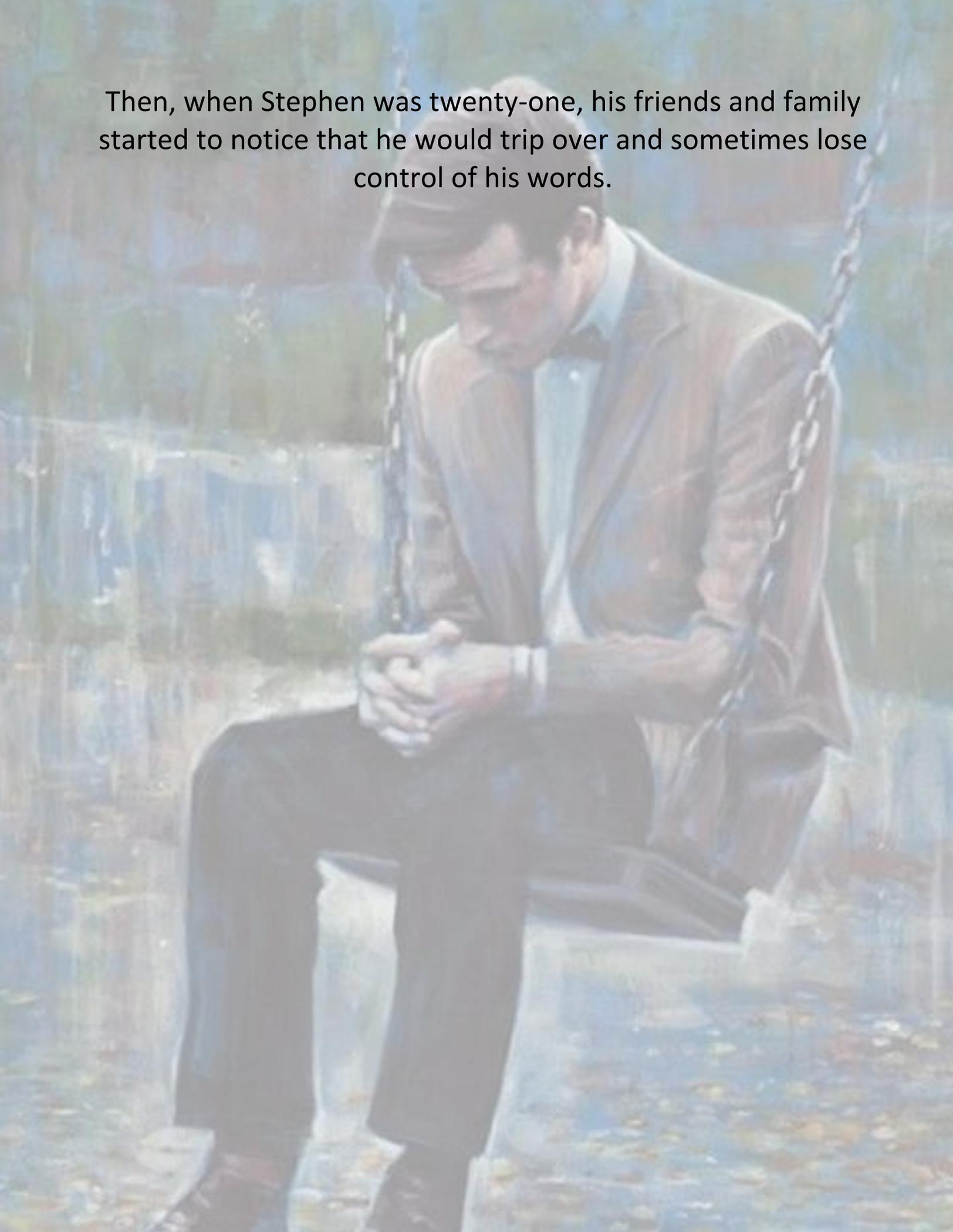
School bored Stephen, so he was thrilled when it finished and he could move to university in Cambridge, to learn about cosmology, the study of everything to do with our universe.

Stephen had a lot of big questions. How did the universe start? And why? What came before it? And what exactly are black holes?

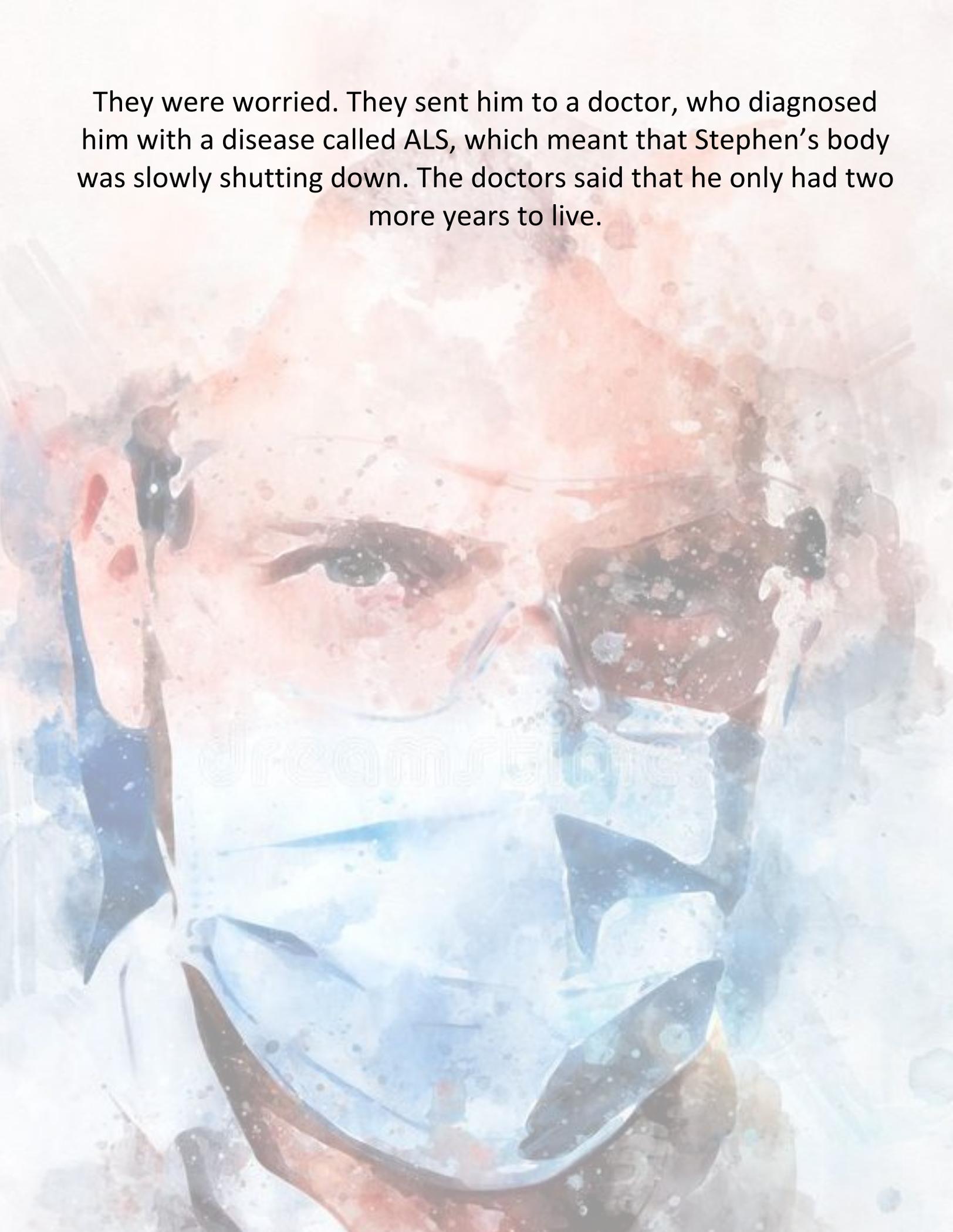
He had a special mind and his work quickly impressed everyone.



Then, when Stephen was twenty-one, his friends and family started to notice that he would trip over and sometimes lose control of his words.



They were worried. They sent him to a doctor, who diagnosed him with a disease called ALS, which meant that Stephen's body was slowly shutting down. The doctors said that he only had two more years to live.



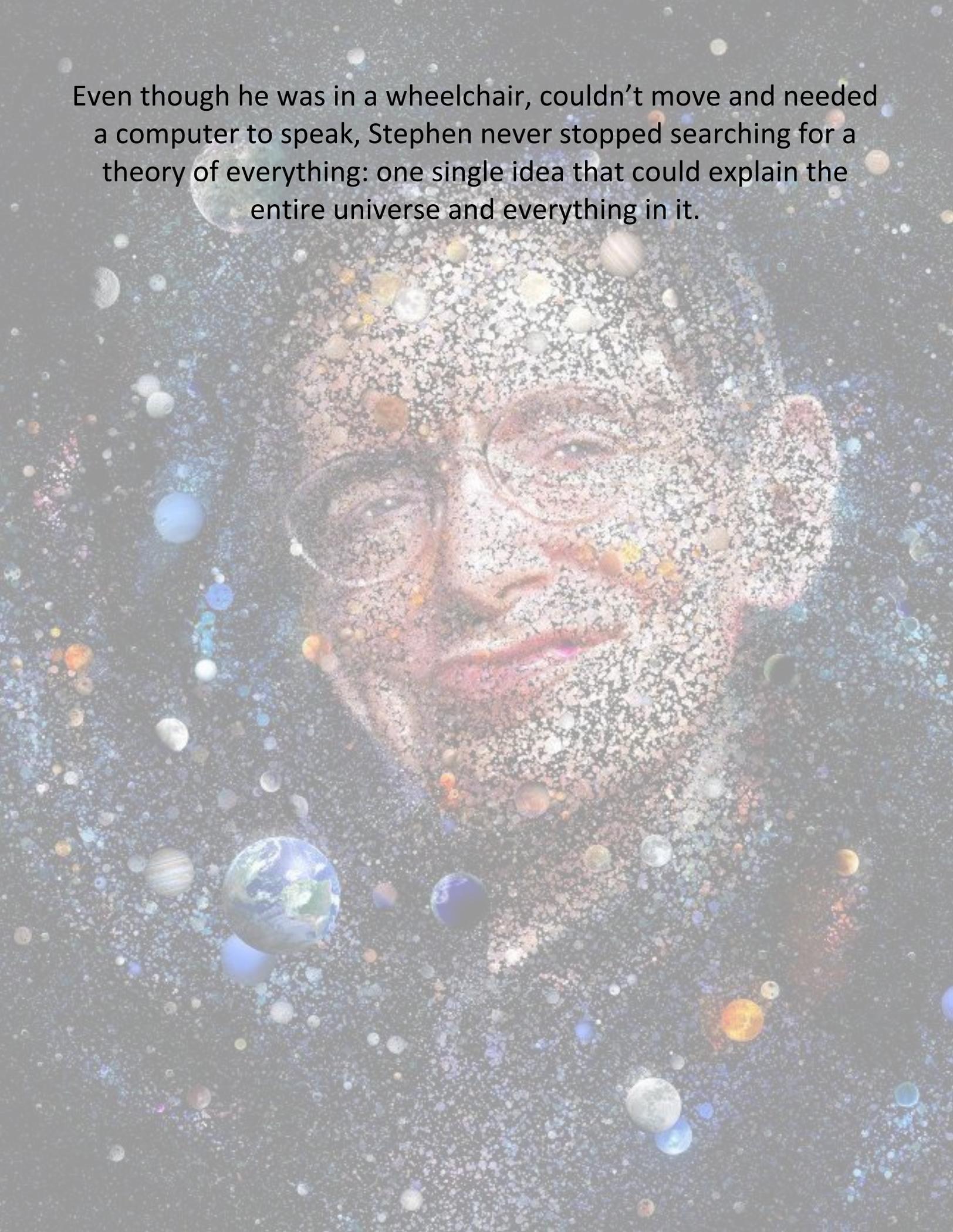
Hearing that, Stephen threw himself straight back into his investigation of the cosmos.



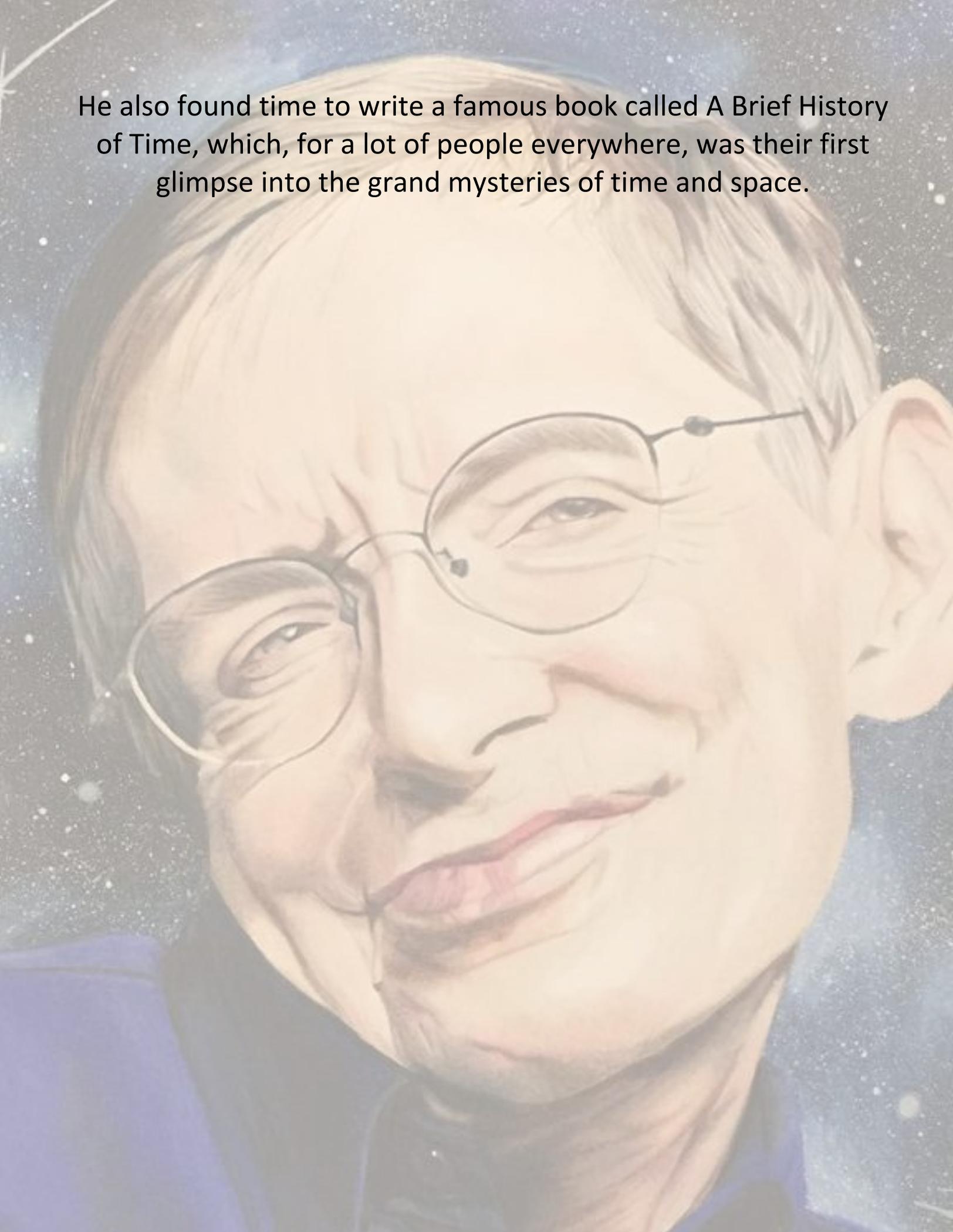
Despite the doctor's fears, he lived for another fifty years, and he became one of the most important physicists in the world.



Even though he was in a wheelchair, couldn't move and needed a computer to speak, Stephen never stopped searching for a theory of everything: one single idea that could explain the entire universe and everything in it.



He also found time to write a famous book called A Brief History of Time, which, for a lot of people everywhere, was their first glimpse into the grand mysteries of time and space.



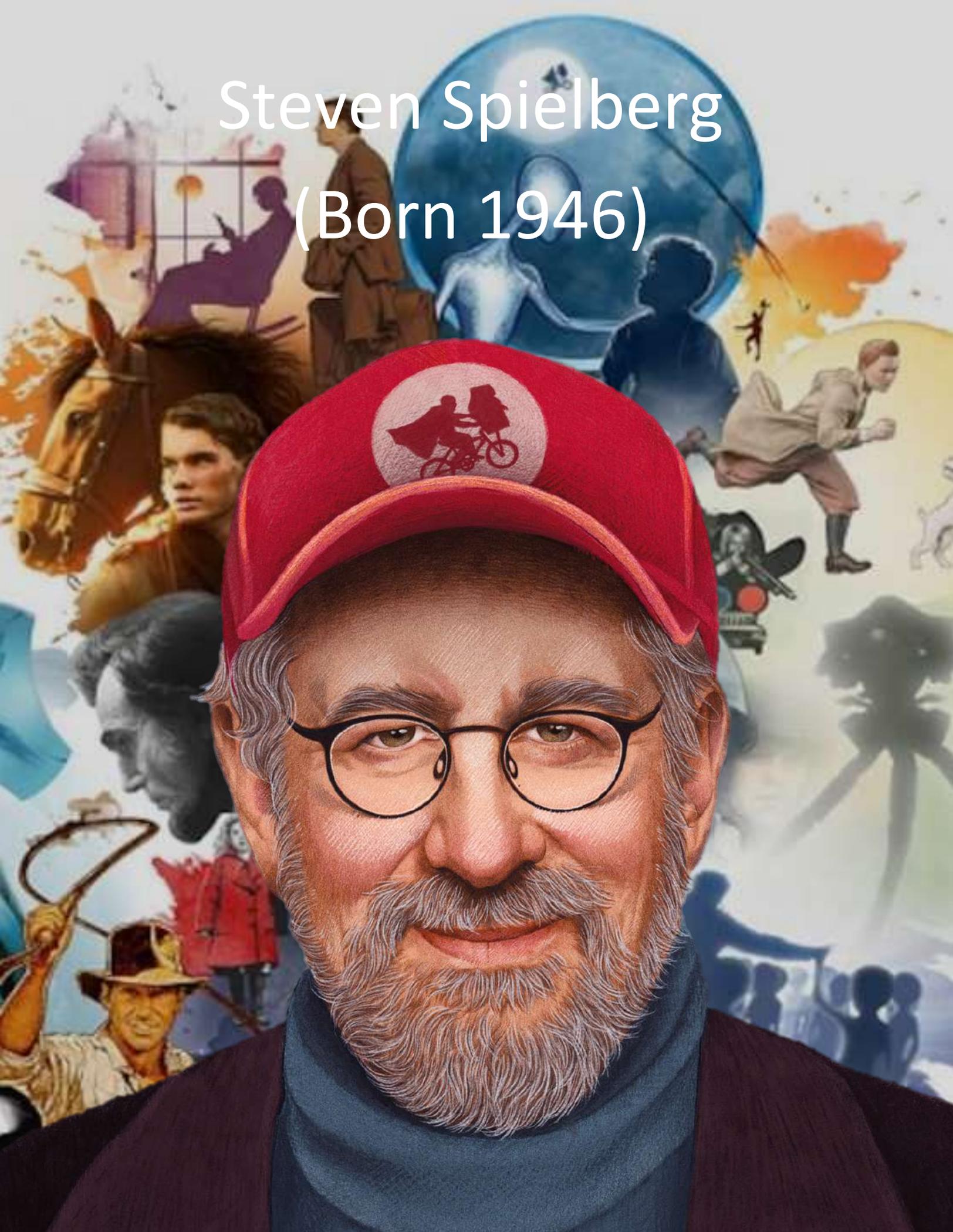
As his illness got worse, Stephen spent time with his children and grandchildren, continued his research and travelled to give lectures on the cosmos.



‘However difficult life may seem,’ he said, ‘there is always something you can do and succeed at. It matters that you don’t just give up.’



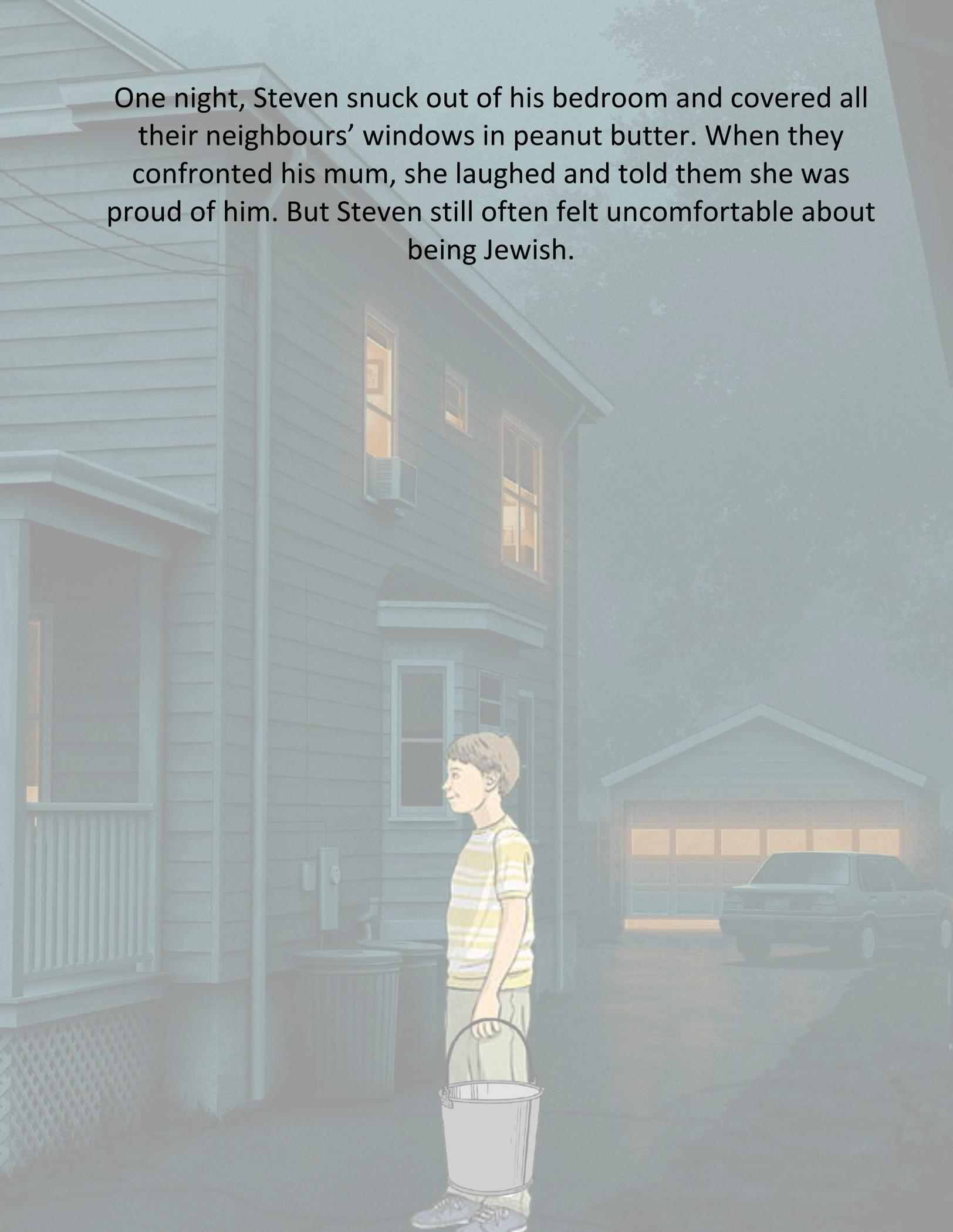
Steven Spielberg (Born 1946)



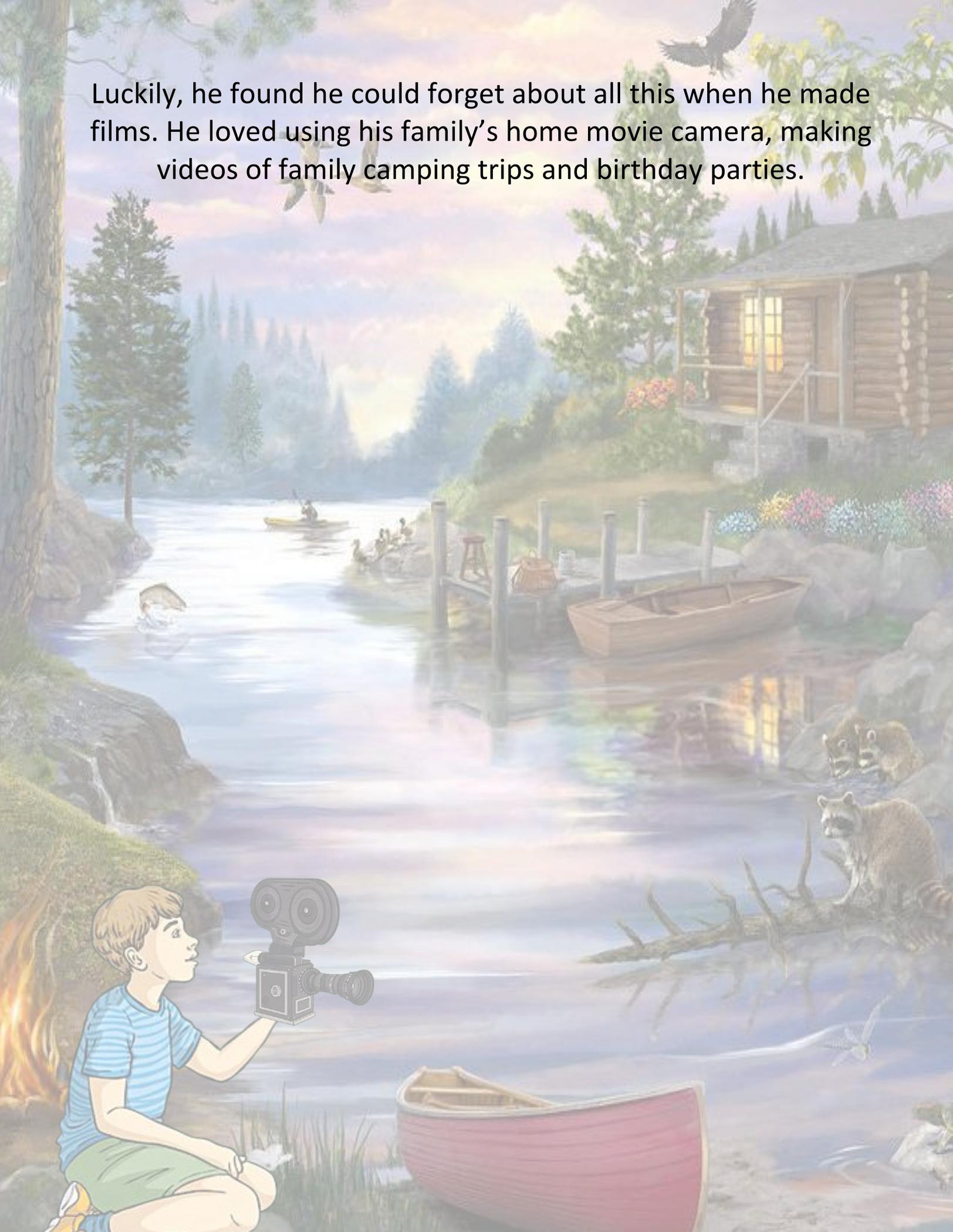
Growing up was difficult for Steven. His family was Jewish and neighbours and kids at school would shout insults at him because of it.



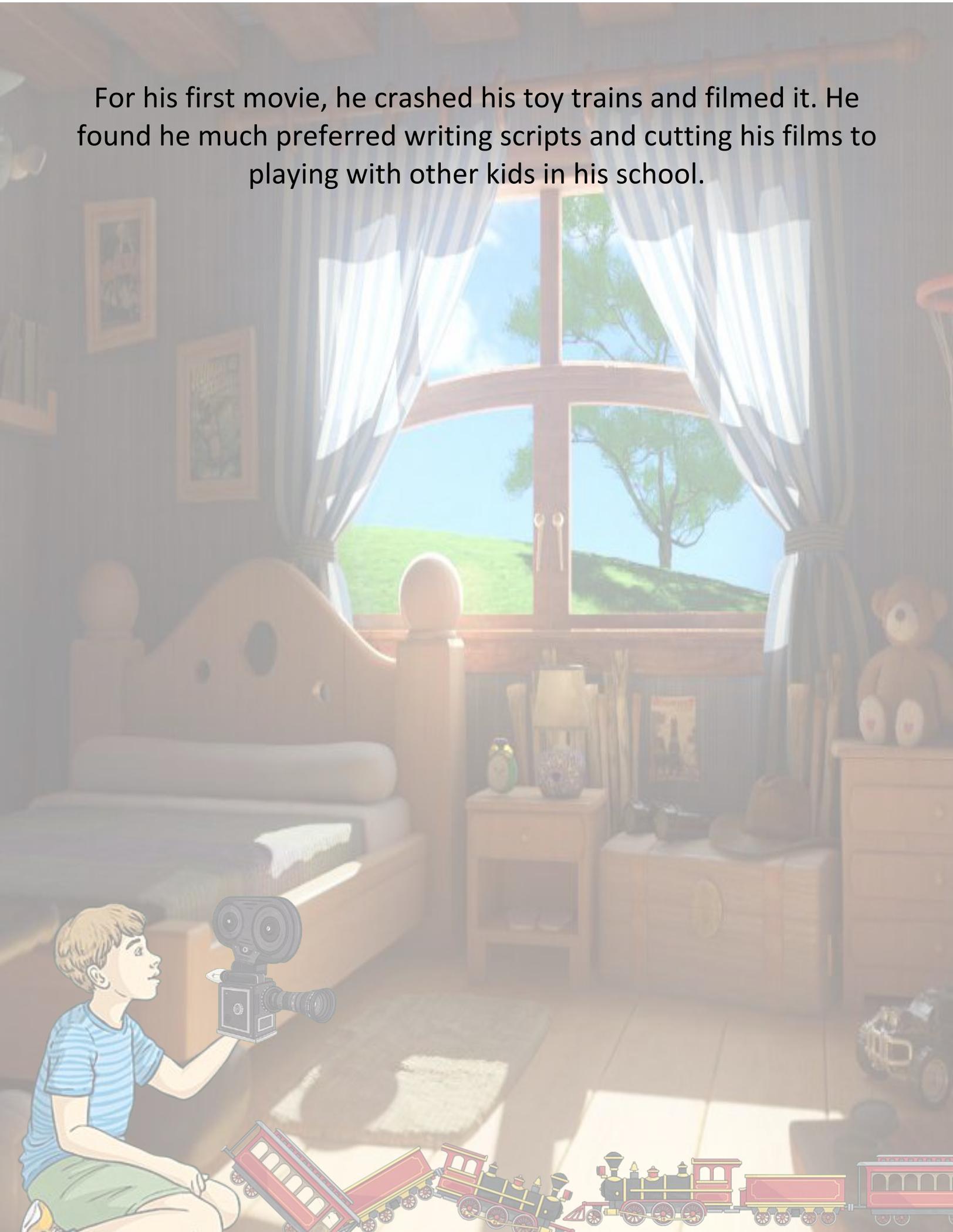
One night, Steven snuck out of his bedroom and covered all their neighbours' windows in peanut butter. When they confronted his mum, she laughed and told them she was proud of him. But Steven still often felt uncomfortable about being Jewish.



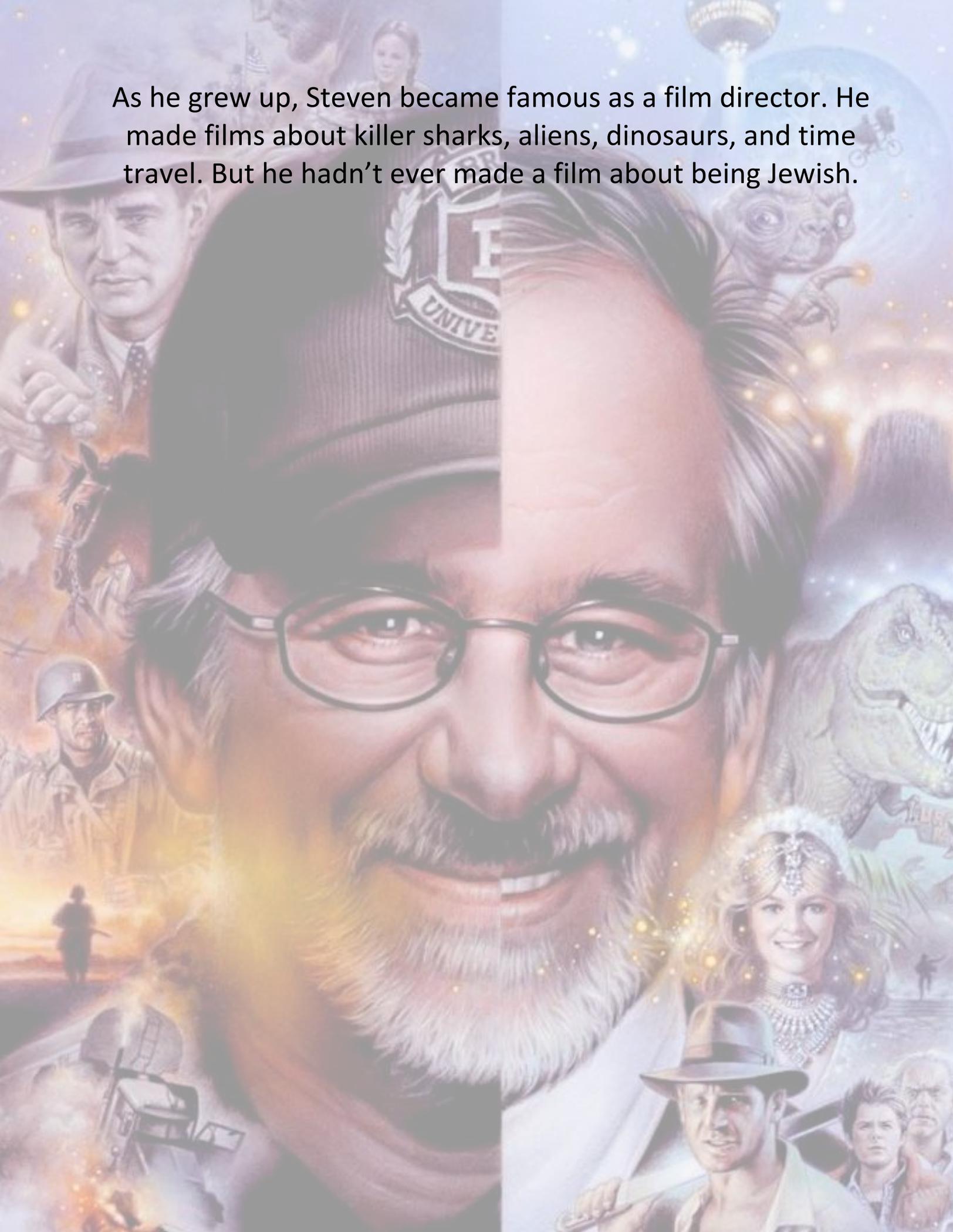
Luckily, he found he could forget about all this when he made films. He loved using his family's home movie camera, making videos of family camping trips and birthday parties.



For his first movie, he crashed his toy trains and filmed it. He found he much preferred writing scripts and cutting his films to playing with other kids in his school.



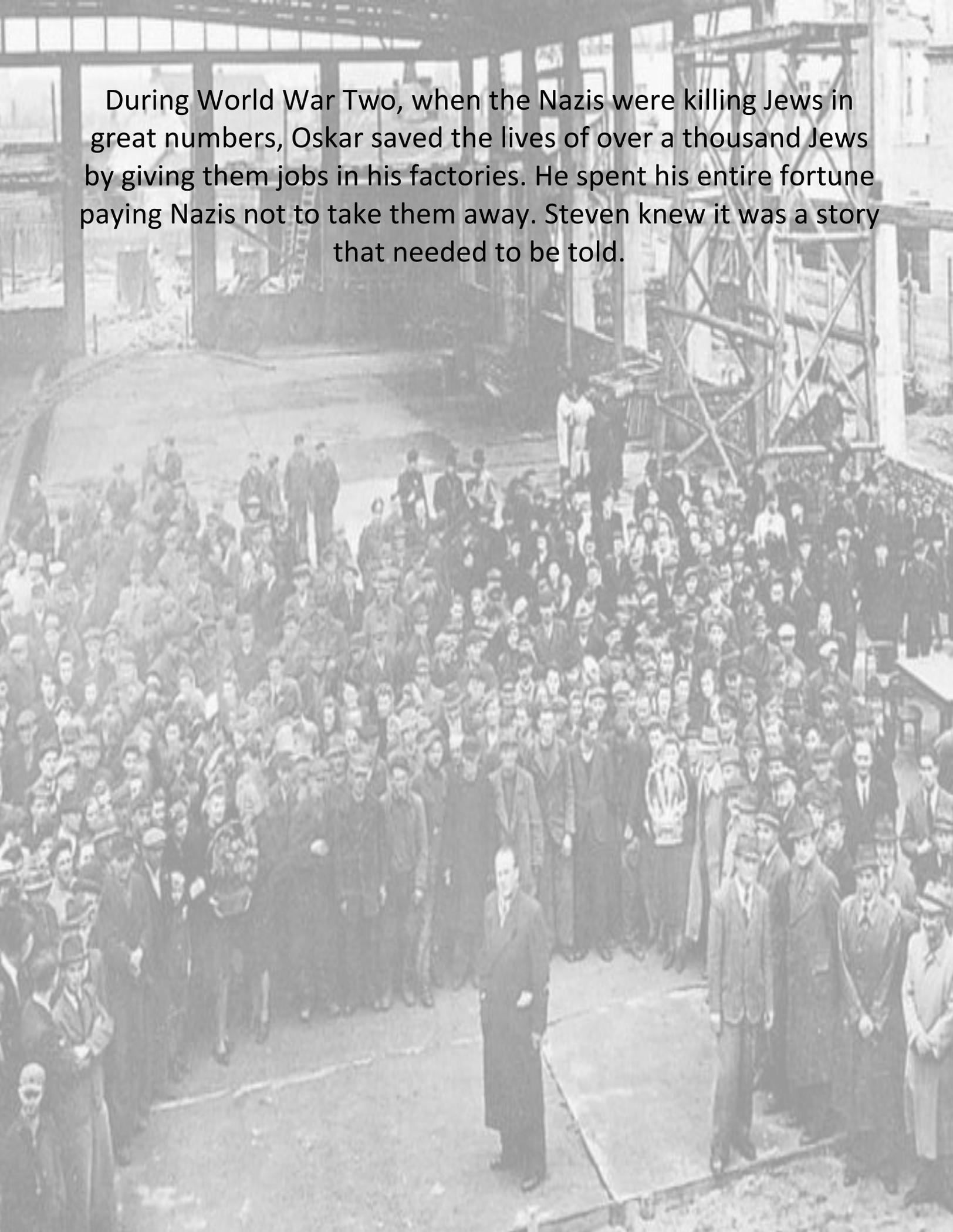
As he grew up, Steven became famous as a film director. He made films about killer sharks, aliens, dinosaurs, and time travel. But he hadn't ever made a film about being Jewish.



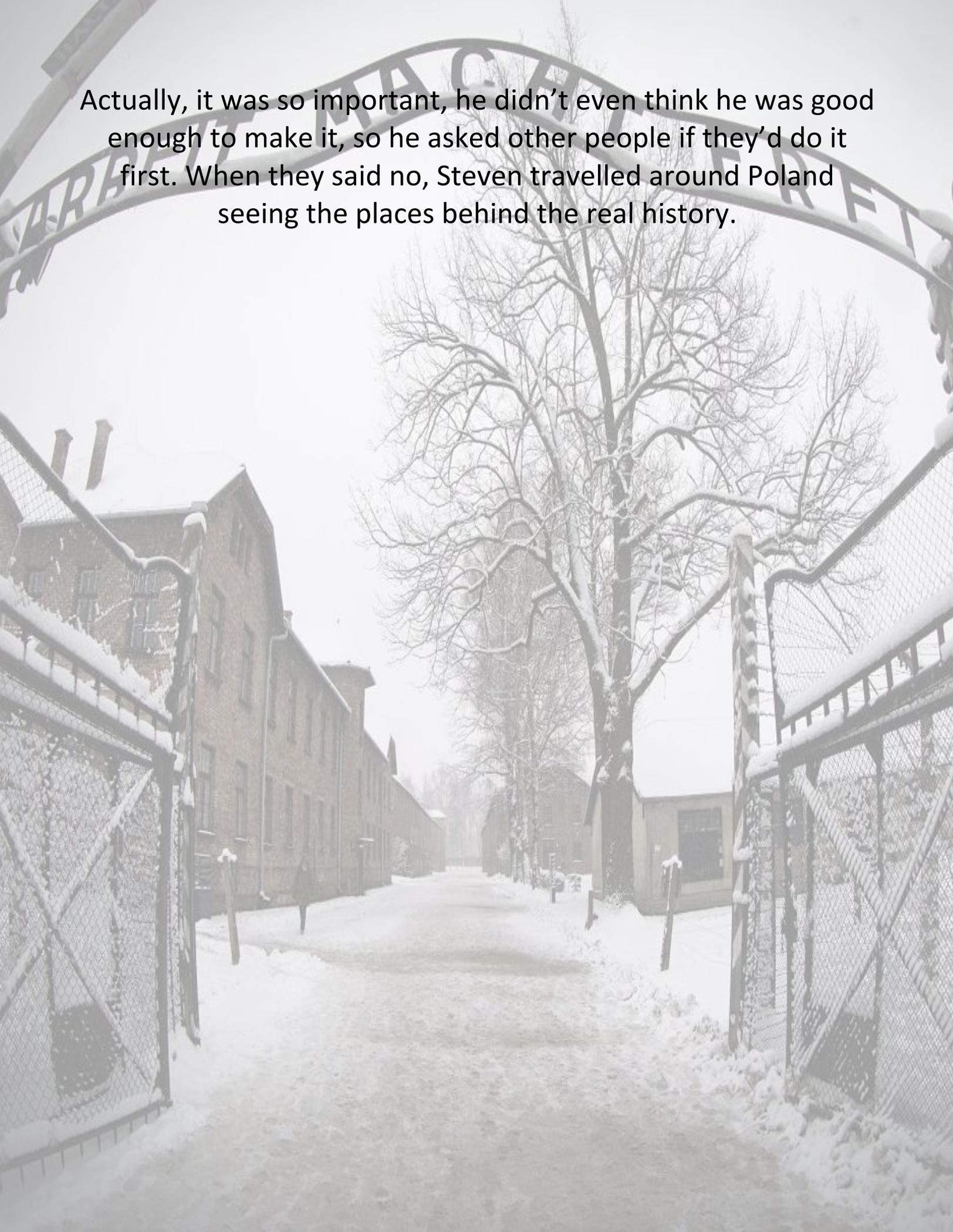
Then he heard the story of
Oskar Schindler...



During World War Two, when the Nazis were killing Jews in great numbers, Oskar saved the lives of over a thousand Jews by giving them jobs in his factories. He spent his entire fortune paying Nazis not to take them away. Steven knew it was a story that needed to be told.



Actually, it was so important, he didn't even think he was good enough to make it, so he asked other people if they'd do it first. When they said no, Steven travelled around Poland seeing the places behind the real history.



'Jewish life came pouring back into my heart,' he said. 'I cried all the time.'



Once it was released, the film earned over twenty awards. It's now classed as one of the best films of the past hundred years.

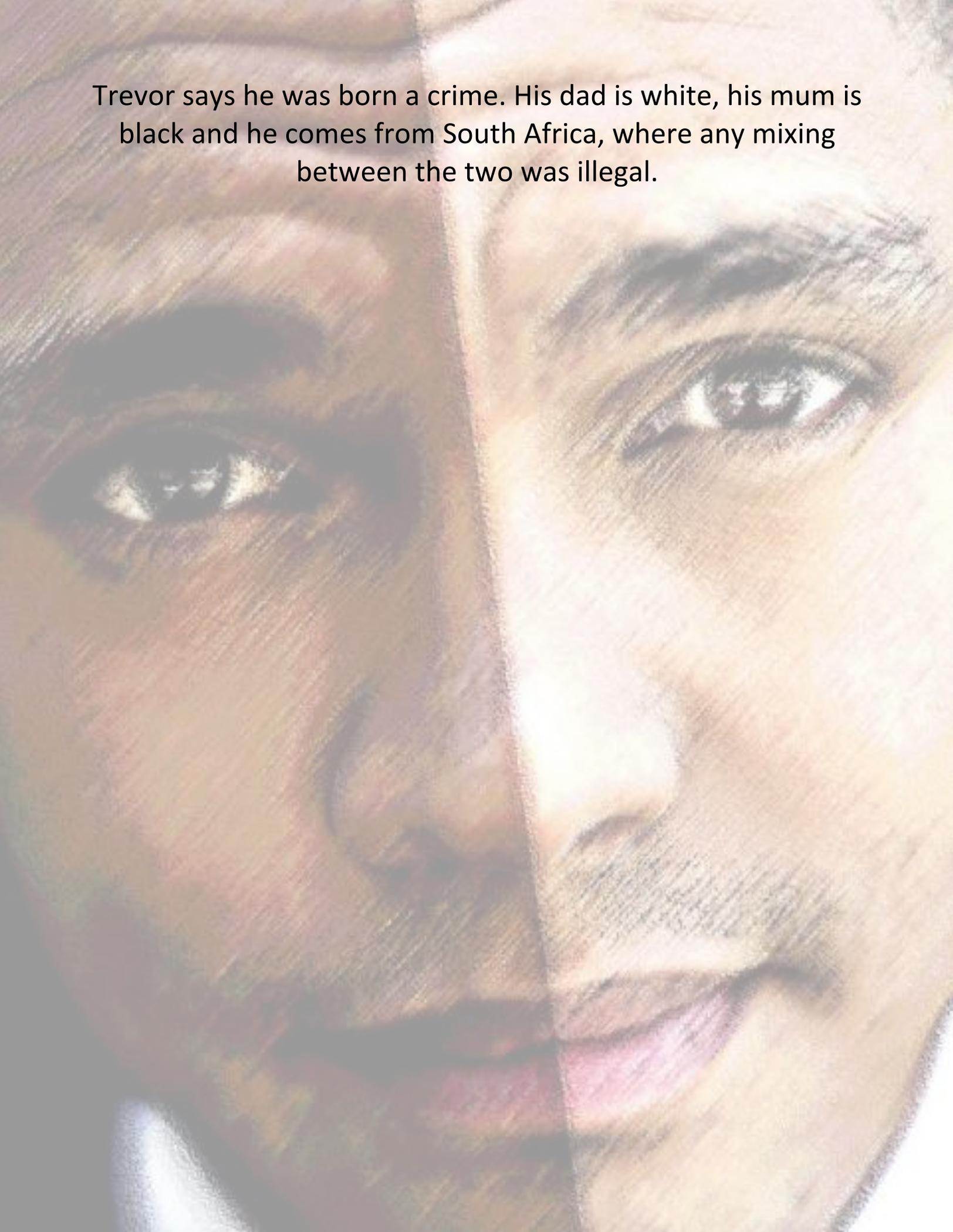


Trevor Noah

(Born 1984)



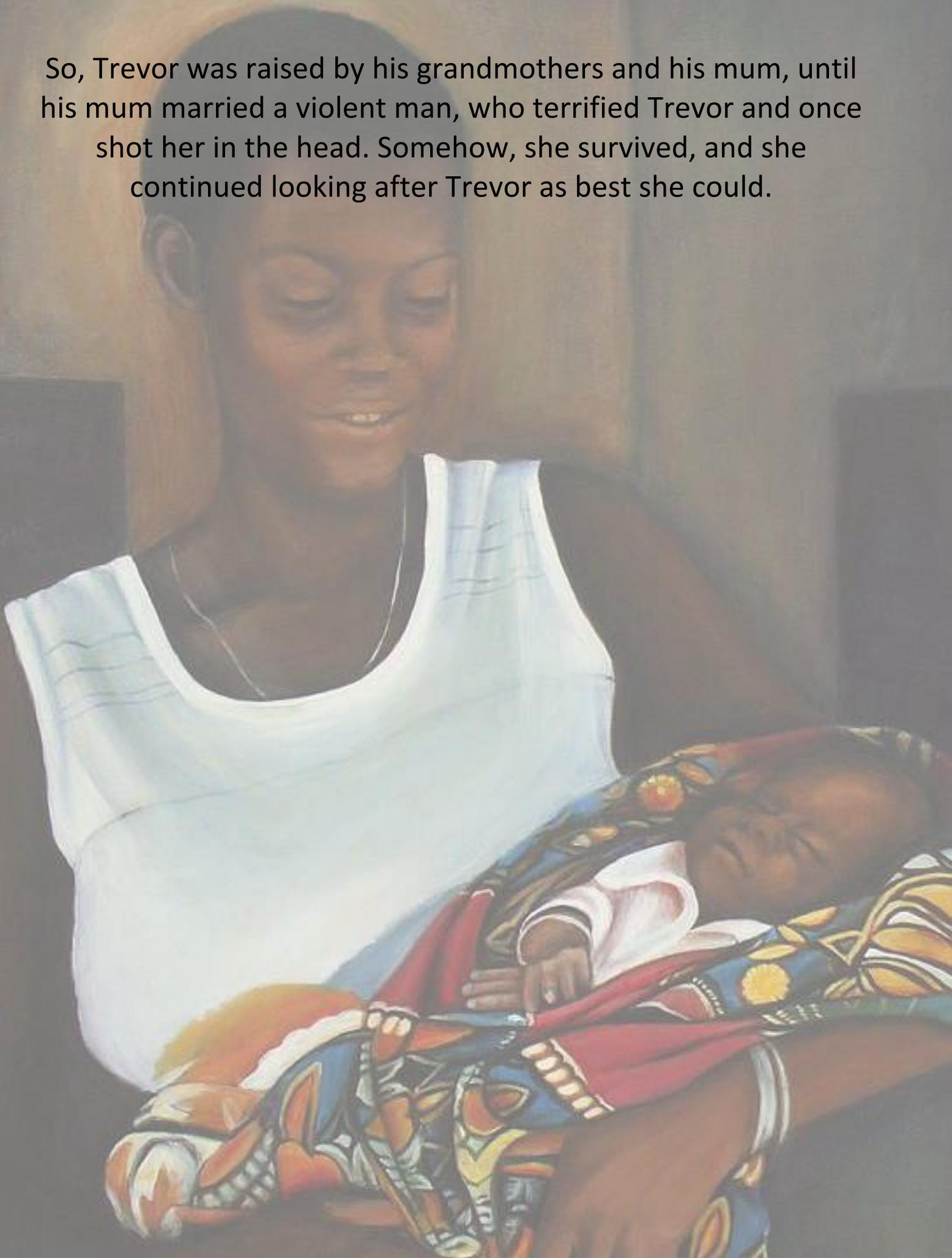
Trevor says he was born a crime. His dad is white, his mum is black and he comes from South Africa, where any mixing between the two was illegal.



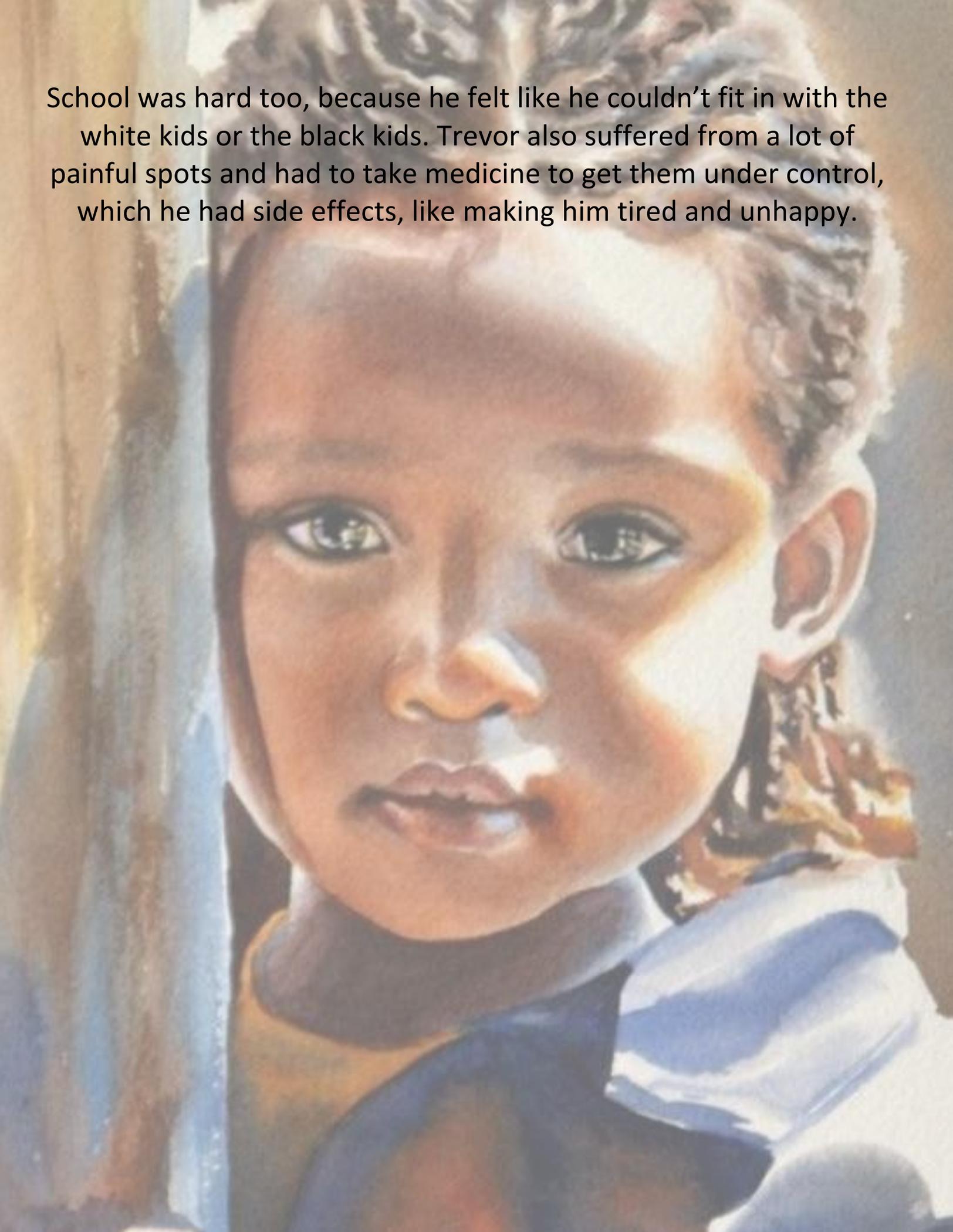
When his mum was caught in his dad's building, she was put in jail. If they were outside together, his mum wasn't allowed to hold his dad's hand and his dad would have to walk on the other side of the road.



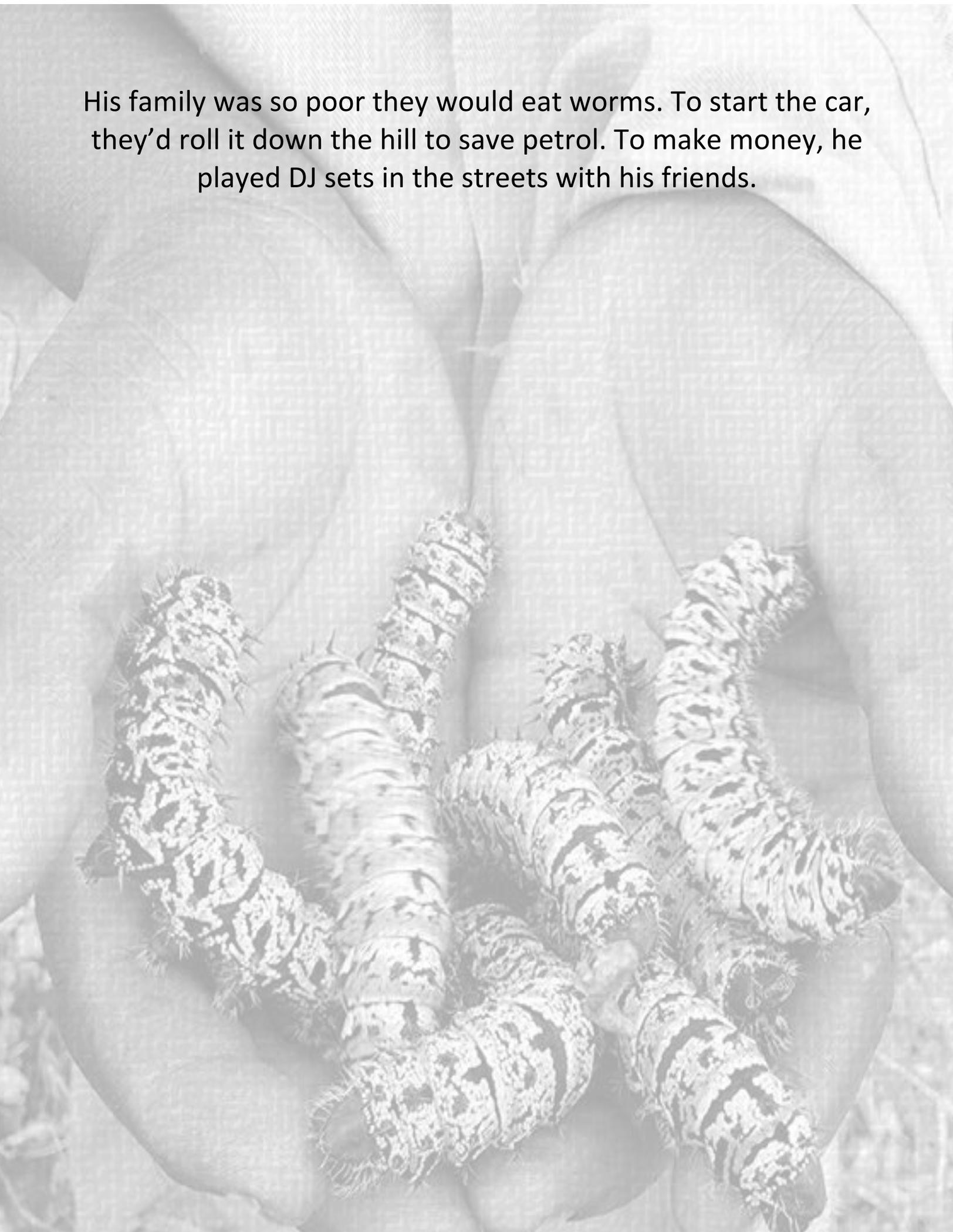
So, Trevor was raised by his grandmothers and his mum, until his mum married a violent man, who terrified Trevor and once shot her in the head. Somehow, she survived, and she continued looking after Trevor as best she could.



School was hard too, because he felt like he couldn't fit in with the white kids or the black kids. Trevor also suffered from a lot of painful spots and had to take medicine to get them under control, which he had side effects, like making him tired and unhappy.



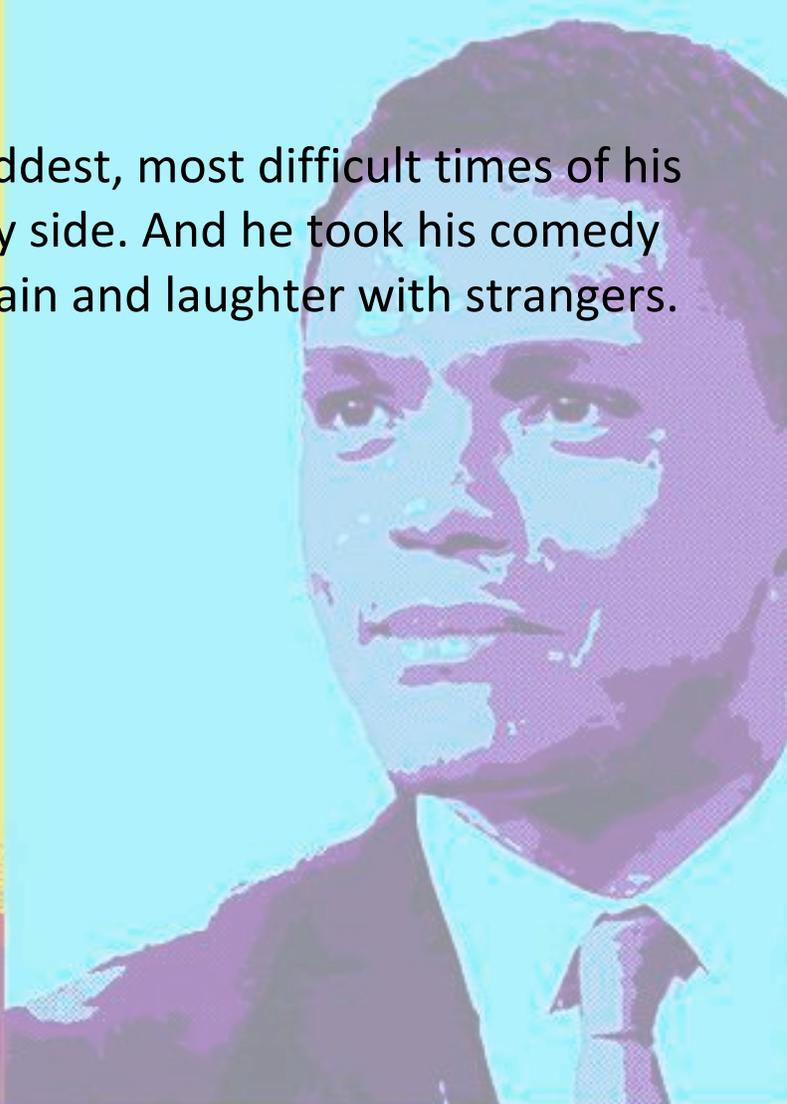
His family was so poor they would eat worms. To start the car, they'd roll it down the hill to save petrol. To make money, he played DJ sets in the streets with his friends.



As he grew up, Trevor decided to make use of everything he'd been through. He wanted to put his experiences into comedy.



Even when he talked about the saddest, most difficult times of his life, he managed to find the funny side. And he took his comedy all over South Africa, sharing his pain and laughter with strangers.



Trevor's since moved to America. He hosts the biggest American comedy news show and is a famous stand-up comedian. He says he owes it all to his mum's determination that he would get out of poverty.



'In my world,' he said, 'a woman was the most powerful thing that I knew. Still is.'



